Sample research proposal on building brand image by outsourcing online reputation...

Marketing Research Proposal

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Online reputation management is a fundamental aspect for any organization to manage their reputation. However, some companies don't realize the importance of managing their reputation especially in the context of today's internet era, where a customer searches on the internet for any information he/she wants. On the internet there are several blogs, feedback mechanisms and social networking sites which provide a medium to customers to get information and give feedback about a particular brand. With respect to availability of feedback, these mediums offer potential customers an honest and trustworthy opinion about a product or organization. It adds an advantage to the organization, as potential customers are quickly attracted, and a positive brand image is formed in the customer's mind.

The trend of blogging and social networking site has convinced the companies to invest in online reputation management. But, the question is that what would happen, if the company decides to outsource this function to a professional firm? Our research tries to find whether outsourcing online reputation management is the right option for companies to pursue or not like it either positively affects perceived brand image or negatively affects it.

Objectives

The objective of this proposal is to study the impact of outsourcing online reputation management on perceived brand image. It is required to know

what effect; the decision of outsourcing online reputation management has on perceived brand image in the mind of the customer.

Definitions

Perceive: Common meaning of perceiving is to understand or interpret something in a particular way.

Perceived Brand image: It's a perception upheld by person about the brand or in others words it means what is the image of that brand in the mind of the customer.

Outsourcing Online Reputation Management: Firstly online reputation means to manage and maintain the company's reputation and goodwill in the online world, and that includes filtering the information. Outsourcing online reputation management means giving the job of online reputation management to a third party or a professional firm.

Background Analysis

One of the most significant factors is to increase the consumer's loyalty, for the establishment of a long-term relationship with them, and it is the basic objective of every e-commerce website.

The relationship between customers' loyalty and satisfaction is dependent upon customers perceived value, which means the more the perceived value, the higher the level of customer loyalty and satisfaction. It reflects that perceived value is the most significant aspect of increasing the level of retention for consumers. Satisfied customers can also switch to another brand which gives more and better value to customer (Chang & Wang, 2010). Consumers process the product information through self -regulatory

process that represents the current goals of customers about the product and its usage. In order to achieve these goals people tends to adopt behavioral strategies. In a virtual environment the effectiveness of the word of mouth is not present, which is used to be present in actual and physical environment. This gap exists because of the unavailability of social and environmental cues (Zhang, Craciun, & Shin, 2009).

A social networking site should be formalized so that members and users can easily learn the rules and values of social network. If the structure of the social network has some impact on the behaviors of participants that means, that organization is going to be successful because it is a significant way to manage the virtual environment and the advertisement. These are the potential source of revenue for every social networking site depend upon the number of members and the worth of membership in the eyes of people (Ganley &Lampe, 2009).

Ogba and Tan (2009) always insist that Reputation management is directly tied with the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as they are the parameters to calculate reputation of any brand. Therefore, studies have been conducted in these areas but there is very less concentration on the non-western markets. Brand image is proportional to the future revenues it can produce. So companies give high importance and serious attention if they plan to put reputation management in someone else's hands.

According to Chang and Wang (2010), the online shopping websites must take into account the effectiveness of differentiated marketing for different customers. Customers can be attracted through emotional and logical aspects of a brand because when customers initiate the buying process, they

will evaluate the product or brand with two aspects. The first aspect is emotional and the other is rational. Among them the emotional aspect is considered more significant and vital in pre-purchase stage or purchase stage and then logical one is more efficient in after purchase stage.

The goals that people associate with the product can alter the evaluation procedure about product and can moderate the consumer persuasiveness. When people perceive or link any benefit with the product, which is ideal for them and give positive results, these people can be attracted through developing promotion system. These systems are based on the behavioral strategies which lead people towards positive end state. And when people perceive avoidance goal from the product, which prevent them from some negativity, they can be attracted through developing avoidance system based on vigilance strategies. Vigilance strategy will keep them away from negative end state (Zhang, Craciun, & Shin, 2009). The brand image becomes more important in IT based industries because the element of trust gains more importance than any other component which increases loyalty. However, research on brand image should be molded as per the environment of the non-western world. Variables should be independent, and each variable should have a strong influence on other factors. There is a big market of less loyal customer who has expressed a commitment towards brands (Ogba & Tan, 2009). While brand image is been studied through customer, its reputation is increased by networking and strong relations with other companies. A company that has established a healthy mechanism of knowledge sharing with good cooperation and coordination improve their status in their respective environment. Eventually, they serve customers well

and succeed to establish a good brand image. Contrary, this interconnected networks increase firm reputational risk as the company becomes more dependent on each on each other, and their reputation is connected with the stakes of others (Christopher & Gaudenzi, 2009).

There are some aspects that organizations have to monitor carefully developing their brand image. For e. g. if a company's image is not coherent with the identity it claims for, the stakeholders get suspicious on the standing of the firm. Moreover, the firm doesn't just have to look after its stakeholders, but it has to take preferences of all the stakeholders included in the system. As a conclusion, companies have to make a strategic shift in reputation management from branding the company or product to branding the network. In IT business or online markets, reputation and trust are the core elements which attract traders. Therefore, they certify themselves with several trust certifications to increase their reputation and credibility in the market.

Research Method

Quantitative Approach

Quantitative research is about measuring a business sector and evaluating that estimation with information. Frequently the information obliged identifies with business size, piece of the overall industry, entrance, introduced base and business development rates. Notwithstanding, quantitative research can likewise be utilized to measure customer disposition, fulfillment, responsibility and a scope of other valuable business information that can follow about whether.

Quantitative research can likewise be utilized to measure customer mindfulness and mentality to diverse makers and to comprehend general customer conduct in business by taking a statistical specimen of customers to comprehend the business overall. Such procedures are amazingly capable when joined with methods such division investigation and imply that key groups of onlookers can be focused on and observed about whether to guarantee the ideal utilization of the showcasing plan.

On the theoretical grounds, quantitative research is the statistical specimen. Incredible consideration must be taken in selecting the specimen furthermore in the outline of the example poll and the nature of the analysis of information gathered. Statistical surveying includes the accumulation of information to acquire understanding and learning into the needs and needs of customers and the structure and elements of a business sector. In almost all cases, it would be unreasonable and time intensive to gather information from the whole populace of a business. Appropriately, in statistical surveying, broad utilization is made of examining from which, through cautious configuration and dissection, Marketers can draw data about the business.

Quantitative studies are best to actualize when you require definitive responses to research questions. Not at all like qualitative studies, has quantitative analysis included significant example sizes where the review inquiries are characterized and particular, instead of exploratory. The objective of quantitative research is to give statistical data about research addresses so that precise conclusions can be drawn from the information. We frequently direct quantitative studies to help our customers see what

number of individuals will purchase their item or administration and to profile these prospective customers in a statistically substantial manner. Due to the extensive specimen measure and " arranged" reactions to questions, the information can be collected and evaluated. It makes it conceivable to reach inferences that are " projectable" to the intended interest group you need to reach. That group of onlookers can be comprised of the company's current customer base or their " potential" customer base.

Conducting Quantitative Research

Quantitative research utilizes systems, for example, questionnaires and studies with set inquiries and answers that respondents tick from a predefined determination. Answers can be measured in qualities of feeling, for example, 'firmly concur' " dissent" or numbers, for example, scales out of 10.

This type of research is exceptionally adaptable as far as how its helped out, for example, through the post, online or much via telephone. In the event that you are completing research, verify that you have a reasonable cross area comprising of respondents. Moreover, it is also essential to ensure the availability of enough of them to give a more prominent scope of dependable information.

The detriment of quantitative statistical surveying is that the exchange with the specimen isn't adaptable, says Greg Rice, the primary of Kelton Research, a statistical surveying firm situated in California. Companies can get a ton of profundity in their inquiries, and they can do things like watch individuals' responses, and not so much what they say. However, the way in

which they respond with non-verbal communication is critical.

The focal point of quantitative statistical surveying, however, is that it is simpler to extend your inquiries to a greater specimen, which, thusly, can bring about a more precise depiction of the business sector.

Timing

Leading research is a constant methodology. As the economic situation advance, an organization needs to keep its finger on the beat of its customers. If somebody is doing something risky, and it's going to cost them a great many dollars to dispatch, then it's worth the trouble to use the additional cash to check the possibilities. It also helps them to get an idea whether there's any enthusiasm toward the commercial center whatsoever.

A few sorts of research studies are possible in 48 hours, specialists say. Nonetheless, this is just if the inquiries are general, and there's a wide crowd. Studies and surveys with a fast turnaround cost anyplace in the middle of $1, 000 and $1, 500 for every inquiry.

At the same time if the organization needs to track the value of their brand on various diverse measurements and they have customers far and wide, it will be prone to take somewhere around 4 and six weeks. Studies like these can run in the many thousands, depending how enormous your example is and how vigorous the report must be. Different studies could continue for the term of the year, in the same way as fulfillment studies because it tracks customer transactions over a time of time.

Chosen Method of Data Collection

The method of Data Collection and procedure is:

" Personal survey method"

For this research, a closed-ended questionnaire has been designed which

helped researchers to examine the data conveniently. The respondents were

marketing personnel, concerned with brand image of the company.

The close-ended questionnaire filled by taking appointment from marketing

and brand managers of various organizations from using personal

references, as well randomly visiting offices of different companies. For few

questionnaires researchers also mailed the respondent's online survey so

that they could conveniently fill them.

Independent variable: Outsourcing Online Reputation Management

Dependent Variable: Perceived Brand Image

Sampling Technique

The Sampling technique that is used in this research is:

" Convenience based sampling"

The sample selected was according to the convenience and

Brand/Product/Marketing managers are respondents. For this research, a

closed-ended questionnaire has been designed which helped researchers to

examine the data conveniently.

Sample Size

The sample size is: " 153."

Which is an appropriate sample size for this research, and it comprises of

Brand/Product/Marketing managers whose job includes reputation

management, so they are the appropriate ones to be asked.

Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument of data collection is closed-ended questionnaire that is filled

by respondents consisting of marketing and Brand managers.

Research Model

There is the relationship between outsourcing online reputation management

and perceived brand image:

Statistical Technique

The statistical technique that is use in this research is " Regression Analysis"

or " Simple Linear Regression Technique". Regression Analysis gives the

answer to the question that whether an outsourcing online reputation

management has an effect on perceived brand image.

We have preferred linear models for philosophical as well as for reasonable

reasons. Linear models are simpler to put to test again in replication and

cross-approval studies. Linear models are less unreasonable to put into

practice in foreseeing and controlling the result later on. The philosophical

purposes behind leaning toward basic models ought not to be downplayed,

then again. Less complex models are simpler to comprehend and

acknowledge, and subsequently have a " magnificence" that their more

convoluted partners regularly need.

Dissimilar to the multiple regression models, in most of the cases the general

linear model can also be used to break down any ANOVA outline with all out

indicator variables. It is, usually, utilized to dissect plans with persistent

indicator variables. Any ANCOVA plan with both downright and consistent indicator variables and in addition any regression plan with constant indicator variables. Impacts for straight out indicator variables can be coded in the outline network X utilizing either the over parameterized model or the sigma-confined model.

Reporting

This marketing research will be presented to the leading marketers of various firms in order to educate them about the increasing popularity of online medium. The technological culture has entirely evolved the business dimensions. Managers and marketers have started exploring the value added possibilities through which they can implement a more focused growth strategy. This research will help those managers in understanding the effectiveness of online reputation. They will get the knowledge of their consumer with much better insights. Eventually, this research is very helpful for managers to analyze the possible ways through which they can gain competitive advantage for their companies.

Discussion

The concept of reputation management has arrived sailing in recent years with the advent of social networking sites like Orkut, Facebook and Twitter, etc. Organizations realized that how important customer feedback is to pursue strengthening of the products market. With the rising trend of blogging, chatting and posting comments on groups, forum and Facebook pages, it became easier for organizations to manage their reputation and keep a check on image of the brand in customers mind. Specialized firms

with expert resources on this subject have introduced various offers that are being used by organizations to manage their online reputation.

Survey Questionnaire

Age: Gender:

Educational Level:

(Where, 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

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