Chapter 7
A New Marketing Trend in the Digital Age: Social Media Marketing

Selay Ilgaz Sümer

Abstract Technology plays an important role in the lives of businesses. For this reason, today, it is not possible for a company to maintain its existence without using technology. In the digital age, along with increasing technology usage, the distance between businesses and consumers has disappeared. In other words, technology serves as a bridge between these two parties. With such technology usage in the activities of businesses, the companies have tried to reach their target markets by using their websites. However, today, they have also started to use social media networks as a way to attract their customers' attention to their products and, thus, communicate with them more easily. In social media, it is not just the businesses that promote products and services. Consumers can influence each other's preferences through comments that they share over social media. Their comments on social media are important in the promotion of goods and services. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that social media is an effective marketing tool in today's business environment. This chapter is aimed at examining the concept of social media marketing and its effects on the marketing activities of businesses.

7.1 Introduction

Contemporarily, technology has an important place in the lives of businesses. For this reason, firms that can keep up with technology can continue their existence, and others will disappear. Therefore, businesses that are open systems should follow the changes in the external environment and adapt themselves to new technological developments.

One of the most important technological developments affecting the lives of businesses is the internet. By means of the internet, businesses have begun to follow their environment more comfortably and have strengthened their relationships with

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S. Ilgaz Sümer (✉)
Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Baskent University, Etimesgut, Ankara, Turkey
e-mail: silgaz@baskent.edu.tr

their customers. At this point, the webpages created by businesses play a very important role in such relationships. Through webpages, businesses and consumers can strengthen their communication with each other. In addition, webpages can be used as an effective tool for firms to communicate information about their goods and services to their target markets. Customers who visit the website of the company will be able to obtain detailed information about the products and request information from the companies at certain points in time.

In addition to the webpages that have been used by businesses since the introduction of the internet, social media has become a common meeting point for firms and consumers. According to the 2018 reports of "We Are Social", there are 4.021 billion internet users, 3.196 billion active social media users, 5.135 billion mobile phone users and 2.958 billion active mobile social media users in the world (https://wearesocial.com/us/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018). The data show that there is a mass of people in the world that are willing to use the internet and social media. The increase in the number of smart phones that consumers have also has an important impact on social media usage. At this point, businesses have tried to turn the current situation into an advantage, and it is common for them to use social media as a bridge in their relations with customers. Thus, in marketing, a new trend, called social media marketing, has emerged.

Social media marketing can be considered one of the most important aspects of the marketing activities of the digital age. Social media can be considered a new marketing tool for both small and large businesses. By means of the marketing activities carried out through social media, businesses have been able to reach a wide audience. Businesses can do this at a low cost. Consumers have the opportunity to find and access detailed information about the products produced by businesses. Consumers also have the opportunity to make comments about goods and services through social media. Social media, which is used extensively by businesses, helps them market products while also contributing to the development of customer relationships. It would not be wrong to say that one of the main reasons why social media marketing is effective is related to two-way communication between the businesses and their customers.

In this chapter, social media marketing, which plays a very important role in the marketing activities of businesses, will be examined. In this context, the social media concept, the development of social media, social media tools, comparison of social media with traditional media, and the features of social media will be emphasized. Afterwards, social media marketing, characteristics of social media marketing, advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing, social media marketing process, consumer behaviour in social media, emerging social media marketing activities in the digital age will be discussed.

7.2   The Concept of Social Media

The emergence of the digital age has led to significant developments in communication between individuals. One of the most important developments in communication is the intense use of social media in the digital age.

In the literature, various definitions of social media have been put forward. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 61), "social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content." Greysen, Kind, and Chretien (2010: 1227) explained the concepts as "content created by internet users and hosted by popular sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Wikipedia and blogs." According to Zeng et al. (2010: 13), "social media refers to a conversational, distributed mode of content generation, dissemination and communication among communities." Neti (2011: 2) defined social media as "communication/publication platforms which are generated and sustained by the interpersonal interaction of individuals through the specific medium or tool." Howard and Parks (2012: 362) defined the concept of social media in three main parts. According to them, "social media is consisting of (a) the information infrastructure and tools used to produce and distribute content; (b) the content that takes the digital form of personal messages, news, ideas and cultural products; and (c) the people, organizations, and industries that produce and consume digital content."

When these definitions in the literature are examined, it can be seen that although the concept of social media is defined in different ways, there are some keywords to be used in explaining the related concept. Web 2.0 and user-generated content are among these keywords. The concept of Web 2.0, introduced by O'Reilly Media in 2004, covers second-generation internet-based services. Through Web 2.0, people use a virtual environment to share information with each other and, sometimes, to generate or share content. In the definitions of Web 2.0, the user-generated content that we encounter in the above definitions includes all kinds of content produced by end users that is accessible to everyone in the virtual environment. At this point, Wikis, social networking sites and folksonomies are used by people (Turban, King, Lee, Liang, & Turban, 2012). In Web 2.0, users are people who not only consume content but also become content-producing individuals. By using Web 2.0 applications, it becomes easier to share these thoughts and comments with many people at the same time. In short, Web 2.0, which enables people to communicate with each other simultaneously, has a structure that combines humans and technology in the same pot. Furthermore, through Web 2.0, electronic word of mouth (EWOM) has now started to replace traditional word of mouth. At this point, blogs and social networks are being used as an important tool for internet users to share comments (Akrimi & Khemakhem, 2012). Within this context, Facebook, Flickr, Myspace, and YouTube are among the major social network services used by many people. By using these network services, consumers have the opportunity to share their positive

and negative thoughts about goods and services with other consumers, make comments about various issues and share them with people all over the world.

It can be seen that the social media activities that emerged with Web 2.0 have enabled passive consumers to become active, and the relations between the parties have strengthened. For this reason, social media plays an important role for both businesses and consumers, as will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

7.3   The Development of Social Media

In the periods when internet publishing first appeared, there was a one-way flow of messages, just as with other mass media such as televisions, radios, journals, etc. Along with the introduction of Web 2.0, a concept that has been introduced to the literature by O'Reilly Media, the direction of communication has changed. Hereafter, the media and media users have become the centre of communication. Thus, two-way communication has begun to be on the agenda (Aktaş & Ulutaş, 2010).

In fact, the infrastructure of Web 2.0, which plays an important role in bringing social media to the present level, is quite old. When the building blocks of social media are examined, Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis come to mind first. In 1979, Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis, who were graduate students at Duke University, made important contributions to the development of social media. They created Usenet, which enabled people to send and publish social content messages to each other. Afterwards, in 1979/1980, the online role-playing game Multi-User Dungeon emerged, created by Roy Trubshaw and Richard Bartle. In 1989, Bruce Abelson and Susan Abelson founded Open Diary, which enabled online diary writers to gather in a single area. The first website was created in 1991, which can be considered an important turning point for the social media adventure. In 2001, Wikipedia, which is an editable and open encyclopaedia, emerged (Aktaş & Ulutaş, 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2012; Karadeniz & Gözüyukarı, 2015). After all these developments, the social media adventure has continued its journey with the emergence of new social networking sites. In 2003, LinkedIn was launched. LinkedIn is a social network that aims to bring together all professionals in the world. At this point, it would not be wrong to say that LinkedIn is a key to creating and enlarging social capital in particular (Cooper & Naatus, 2014). In 2004, Facebook was launched by Mark Zuckerberg (Bhagwat & Goutam, 2013). According to statistics, as of January 2019, Facebook is the largest social networking site, which exceeds 1 billion registered accounts and has 2.27 billion active users monthly in the world (https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/). In 2005, people were introduced to YouTube. With a large number of visitors, YouTube operates as a social network service that allows users to share their videos with each other (Khan, 2017). In 2007, the YouTube CEO said that the number of active users of YouTube surpassed 1.5 billion; video viewers who did not log into YouTube are not included in this figure. This means that approximately one-third of the world's population are YouTube users (https://www.cnnturk.com/

teknoloji/youtube-kullanici-sayisini-acikladi). In 2006, a free microblogging service, Twitter, was launched. Based on Twitter's 10/26/2018 data, the total number of active Twitter users monthly is 326 million, and the total number of tweets sent per day is 500 million (Çalışkan & Mencik, 2015; Turban et al., 2012; https://www.omnicoreagency.com/twitter-statistics/). Instagram is another famous platform that was launched in 2010. According to the statistics about the profile of Instagram users in the world, in January 2018, it was found that the people who are using Instagram the most are in the age range of 18–24 years old. On the other hand, the age group who preferred Instagram the least was over 65 years old (Çalışkan & Mencik, 2015; https://wearesocial.com/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018).

7.4   The Features of Social Media

Along with the emergence of Web 2.0 and social media on the agenda, there have been some significant changes in the media sector. When social media is compared with traditional media, the gaps of traditional media are closed by social media, which plays a very important role in the digital age. At this point, it would not be wrong to say that social media, based on its features, has important effects on traditional media.

In some of the studies conducted by various authors, it is seen that the basic features of social media are listed with emphasis on certain points. Michael Fruchter noted that social media has five main characteristics. Fruchter called these characteristics the "5Cs of Social Media". According to Fruchter, conversation, community, commenting, collaboration and contributions are the 5Cs of Social Media (Tokatlı, Özbükerci, Günay, & Akıncı Vural, 2017).

With regard to Lietsala and Sirkkunen (2008), the main characteristics of social media can be listed as sharing user-generated contents, enabling the evaluation of such content, creating high social interaction, providing content to other external networks and having profile pages for active members. These authors expressed that the above points are the five major characteristics of social media.

As can be understood, together with the transition from traditional media to social media, a new media order has emerged with its own features. Through social media, individuals who have assumed the role of the receiver in the communication process in previous periods have now become the senders of the messages. In other words, individuals can now produce content on the one hand, while on the other hand, they have access to a variety of media content with little effort. In short, a two-way communication process in social media has emerged. The increase in the number of participants in the communication process and the openness of social media to feedback have further increased the effectiveness of this process. Hereby, the participants who started to take part in the process have become active participants in the communication process, sometimes by making comments on certain issues, by sharing information on any subject, by voting on various issues, etc. (Solmaz & Görkemli, 2012). One of the most important features of social media is its low cost.

Social media allows for internal content creation so that such content can be shared by almost everyone at almost zero cost. This can be seen as one of the most interesting aspects of social media. In traditional media, content is created by business professionals, while in social media; this task is also performed by non-experts. Another feature of social media is that it offers simultaneous information. Information on an event that takes place at any time in any part of the world can be reached in a short time via social media. Through social media, individuals can share their comments about events in a very short period of time (Çalışkan & Mencik, 2015).

When the basic features of social media and the privileges it brings with it are examined, it is seen that the social media has brought a new breadth to mass communication and makes important contributions to the digital age and that almost every consumer has started to play an active role in mass communication.

7.5 Social Media Marketing

Through the development of technology and the transition to the digital age, mass media have diversified. In the digital age, individuals have tried to communicate with each other using social media. After a while, the intensive use of social media among individuals has become influential on the ways in which businesses communicate with their customers. Hereby, businesses have the chance to be able to address the world by using social media. Now, they have begun communicating their messages related to goods and services to their target audiences through social media and social media ads. Along with the use of social media in marketing activities, in the marketing literature, the so-called social media marketing concept has come into existence. It can be seen that social media marketing has been used by many businesses in recent years. Among these businesses, in addition to well-known brands such as McDonald's, Pizza Hut, and Ben & Jerry's, it is also possible to see many small businesses that are using social media as a marketing channel.

In the related literature, it is possible to find various definitions of the concept of social media marketing. Weinberg (2009: 3) defined the concept as "a process that empowers individuals to promote their websites, products, or services through online social channels and to communicate with and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional advertising channels." According to Neti (2011: 3), "social media marketing is a marketing using online communities, social networks, blog marketing and more." Turban et al. (2012: 336) noted that "social media marketing is a term that describes 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." According to Chaffey and Chadwick (2016: 528), "social media marketing is monitoring and facilitating customer interaction and participation throughout the web to encourage positive engagement with a company and its brands."

In the literature, it is mentioned that social media marketing should be realized within the framework of having various purposes. In this context, while some of the authors express that social media marketing will contribute to the promotional activities of businesses, some of the authors say that social media marketing will contribute to reputation management, brand loyalty and image management (Kara, 2012). In general terms, it can be stated that social media marketing is realized within the framework of creating brand awareness, identifying opinion leaders, spreading certain messages rapidly, increasing return visits to the site and attracting users to the webpage of the businesses (Weinberg, 2009). As a result of the research conducted on the reasons why brands take part in social media platforms, answers such as establishing sincere relationships with consumers, providing promotions, providing informative content about products, sharing different visuals, entertaining, suggesting special offers to consumers and making negative propaganda about competing companies were provided (Gümüş, 2018).

In fact, social media marketing is the easiest way to reach consumers concerning their sincere thoughts about the goods and services of the businesses. This situation sometimes causes social media to create difficulties for companies. The reason for this is that positive comments can be made by consumers regarding goods and services, and vice versa. As a result of previous research, it was found that 14% of internet users believe and trust the advertisements in traditional media, while 78% of internet users consider the comments made by other users in the virtual environment (Kara, 2012). These results provide important clues about how important it is for the social media platform to be controlled and properly managed by businesses. As a result of another study conducted by Madni (2014), it was found that 53% of consumers considered the forums, social media accounts, company's website and peer reviews of the product before buying a good or service over the internet.

Today, it is known that social media marketing has a feature that enriches traditional marketing activities. Therefore, using social media in a controlled manner and supporting traditional promotional activities by using social media are important for the success of the marketing activities of modern businesses.

7.6   Characteristics of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing, one of the brightest marketing activities in recent years, differs from traditional marketing in various aspects. In fact, the following features make social media marketing attractive for businesses.

One of the main features that distinguish social media marketing from traditional marketing activities is the fact that the points they focus on are different. In social media marketing, the focus is on people rather than products, and the advertiser of goods and services is mainly the consumer. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge that the party that the business should focus on is actually the people. Consumers will be able to significantly influence the purchasing decisions of other consumers through their comments on goods and services in a social media

environment. For this reason, the comments made by consumers in the social media environment may cause the business to shine or be discredited in the eyes of some consumers (Chaudhry, 2014). In a study conducted in 2013, it was found that 54% of the participants who had negative experiences transferred these negativities to the people around them fivefold (https://www.marketingcharts.com/digital-28628).

Social media marketing enables businesses to establish two-way communication with both their current and potential customers. This feature, which is unique to social media marketing, enables marketing managers to address the positive and negative criticism made by consumers about their businesses in a fast way. However, collecting feedback from customers in traditional marketing activities is more time-consuming and costly (Hudson, Huang, Roth, & Madden, 2016).

Social media marketing requires the use of various social networking services such as Twitter and Facebook. Businesses will be able to strengthen their relations with customers by using these platforms. In short, social media marketing provides different content to customer relationship management (CRM), thus increasing business-customer interactions (Kara, 2012).

Social media marketing enables consumers to reach the products they think will meet their demands and needs in a short period of time. Through social network services, the information shared by consumers about the products will enable other consumers in the virtual environment to be aware of these products as well (Can & Serhateri, 2016).

Social media marketing allows for word-of-mouth marketing to be realized in a more modernized way. Many businesses offer different alternatives such as discounts to consumers if they like their Facebook pages. It is possible to evaluate this as a in which to generate positive word of mouth (Toksarı, Mürütsoy, & Bayraktar, 2014).

A significant change has occurred in the role of the businesses in social media marketing. Businesses that are trying to present themselves to their target audiences using traditional marketing have now started to strive to understand consumers (Narcı, 2017).

Marketing in social media has changed the subject of marketing activities. More precisely, the subject of "I" has been replaced by the subject of "we" (Narcı, 2017). In other words, the consumers who came together in a virtual environment created a unity among themselves by supporting each other with the content they generated and the comments they made, and they became a large family by adding businesses to this unity.

The marketing activities carried out in social media are aimed at increasing consumer awareness of products through user-generated content (Narcı, 2017). Rather than directing consumers to buy a product, by using social media as a tool, businesses first draw attention to the product. At this point, users rather than businesses have the important tasks. The correct operation of the business will ensure that the user-generated content will be positive.

Social media marketing ensures that brands and the goods or services offered by businesses become known within a shorter period of time (Neti, 2011). When we think that today's consumers consider taking part in social media an important part

of their lives, it would not be wrong to say that social media marketing is quite effective compared to traditional marketing efforts.

Through social media marketing, it is possible to apply various methods to inform consumers about businesses. At this point, it would be appropriate to talk about the social media accounts of businesses and their banner advertisements on social media (Şahin, Çağlıyan, & Başer, 2017).

One of the major purposes of social media marketing is to establish a relationship. Accordingly, sales can be considered a benefit of established relationships. Thus, social media marketing differs from traditional marketing in terms of its purpose (Eren Erdoğmuş & Çiçek, 2012).

According to statistics, as of January 2018, it was found that marketing decisions makers use the following major social media platforms: Facebook (94%), Instagram (66%), Twitter (62%), LinkedIn (56%), YouTube (50%), Pinterest (27%) and Snapchat (8%) (https://www.statista.com/statistics/259379/social-media-platforms-used-by-marketers-worldwide/). These statistics show that social media is used intensively by marketers who use various platforms. These findings have promising expectations for the future of social media marketing, which incorporates many important features.

7.7   Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Media Marketing

As a new trend of the digital age, many factors are effective in the use of social media marketing by various businesses. To better understand social media marketing, it is necessary to consider the major advantages and disadvantages separately and plan and control marketing activities on social media platforms.

The advantages of social media marketing have led to this new marketing channel being preferred in recent years. The most important advantage of social media marketing is its low cost. Compared to traditional marketing activities, advertising and promotional activities on social media are less costly, which is also an effect of advertisements made by consumers, expressed as word-of-mouth marketing. As previously mentioned, rather than the advertising activities carried out by businesses, the party that makes the actual marketing of the product has been consumers (Chaudhry, 2014).

Social media marketing is also one of the fastest and easiest ways to create brand awareness. Especially with the use of smart phones, consumers who spend most of their time on social media play an important role in creating this awareness (Chaudhry, 2014).

Social media platforms play a very important role in acquiring information about consumers. This information helps to convey the marketing messages to the right people. In other words, the businesses that follow the tracks of consumers in the virtual environment will be able to achieve success by offering the correct messages

to the right people. By following the tracks of potential consumers, it will also be possible to reach new customers (Chaudhry, 2014).

Social media marketing provides businesses the opportunity to market their products and helps businesses to address their customers' suggestions and opinions. Through social media, the businesses that reach the masses can increase the sales of their goods and services (Neti, 2011).

Informal communications with the target market through social media bring the parties closer together and facilitate the marketing activities of the products. Close relationships with people through social media will enable businesses to create appropriate marketing campaigns aimed at the appropriate consumers. For example, when a consumer who is constantly purchasing the same product sees a campaign for the relevant product, or when a new product similar to that product is introduced by a business, such a product can be announced to the consumer (Whiting & Deshpande, 2014).

Through social media marketing, businesses have been able to reach consumers 24 h a day, 7 days a week. In addition, using social media provides businesses with a strong brand image and prestige. The marketing activities of the businesses also include activities that started before the sale. Using social media, businesses have been able to bring the voice of the customer into the business. This makes it easy to design and produce products that can meet consumer demands and needs. In other words, at the design stage of a new product, by using the feedback of the customers, businesses can create suitable products for their target markets (Koçak Alan, Tümer Kabadayı, & Erişke, 2018).

Social media marketing has a flexible structure. Hereby, changes that need to be made in the marketing mix elements will be performed very quickly (Şahin et al., 2017). For example, changing the prices of the goods and services according to the macro environmental factors can be easier on social media than in the traditional market.

Social media marketing allows consumers and businesses to compare goods and services with each other (Şahin et al., 2017). Businesses have an opportunity to make this comparison from various angles. Similarly, consumers can make some comparisons to choose the product that can best meet their needs and wants. It is known that this comparison affects consumers' decision-making processes in a positive manner.

As a result of a worldwide study in January 2018, the benefits of using social media for marketing purposes are as follows: increased exposure (87%), increased traffic (78%), generated leads (64%), developed loyal fans (63%), marketplace insight (54%), improved sales (53%), increased business partnerships (49%) and increased thought leadership (46%) (https://www.statista.com/statistics/188447/influence-of-global-social-media-marketing-usage-on-businesses/).

In addition to the advantages of social media marketing, it is possible to discuss its disadvantages. The major disadvantages of social media marketing can be examined with a focus on five main issues. These topics include being time-intensive, trademark and copyright, trust, privacy and security, user-generated content, and negative feedback issues. Social media marketing is time-sensitive, and if businesses do not control social media marketing, it can be a problem. One of the

most important features of social media marketing is that it is open to two-way communication. This situation requires that every business benefiting from social media respond to the comments made by consumers and to the questions about the product in a timely manner. Otherwise, consumers who cannot find an answer can feed negative thoughts about the business. Sometimes, trademark and copyright issues may arise as a disadvantage to businesses in social media marketing. Businesses that use social media as a tool for marketing their goods and services should take the necessary precautions to protect their brands, goods and services against malicious people. Another problem in social media marketing is related to trust, privacy and security. Confidence in the virtual environment is still not fully satisfied. For this reason, consumers do not want to share their information with another party. Traditional marketing can be seen as safer by consumers. The most important reason for this is the possibility of face-to-face communication between the salesperson and the customers at the sales stage. Sometimes user-generated content may also be a disadvantage to businesses in social media marketing. It must be admitted that user-generated content has more of an influence on other consumers. At this point, it is very important for businesses to address such content. In addition, it should also be remembered that negative feedback may be a disadvantage for businesses in social media marketing. In social media marketing, where consumers are actively involved, comments shared by unhappy customers will affect both the existing and potential customers' thoughts about the businesses. Therefore, following unsatisfied customers, communicating with them on social media and providing necessary motivating answers or attempting to solve their problems will have a direct impact on the success of the businesses in social media marketing (Nadaraja & Yazdanifard, 2013).

7.8   Social Media Marketing Process

Today, social media plays an important role in the marketing activities of modern businesses. However, every business that benefits from social media may not be successful in social media marketing. The success of businesses in social media marketing depends on the proper and controlled implementation of the social media marketing process. In short, if there are steps to be followed in planning the process of marketing activities in traditional marketing, a similar situation applies in social media marketing.

The social media marketing process consists of several steps. The steps of social media marketing, in short, "L-I-S-T-E-N", include listen, identify, solve, test, engage and nurture (Narcı, 2017). Listening is one of the most important parts of social media marketing. In this way, the business will listen to the consumers' positive and negative criticism on social media platforms, and thus, they will be able to make marketing plans by coming to a conclusion (Miranda, Young, & Yetgin, 2016). The second stage in the social media marketing process is identifying. The way to succeed in this process is related to success in the previous stage. On the basis of

what the companies are listening to on social media, they need to identify information about their goods and services on social media in a way that is appropriate for the target market (Narcı, 2017). Solving is the third step of the social media marketing process. As stated in the previous sections, social media marketing has brought a new breadth to customer relationship management. At this stage of social media marketing, empathy should be attempted with customers, and the problems raised by the customers should be solved (Narcı, 2017). It is not enough for businesses to find solutions for the current problems. For this reason, testing is important in the social media marketing process. In other words, the solutions found need to be tested to see if they work. The best way to do this is to listen to the customers (Narcı, 2017). Today, it is very important to create brand loyalty in a highly competitive environment. At this point, the social media platform has an important place creating brand loyalty. In the engaging stage, businesses can use social media to establish intimate and strong emotional ties with consumers (Koçak Alan et al., 2018). The way to do this is to use the creativity of the businesses. The last stage of the social media marketing process is nurturing. Some of the opportunities that will be offered by businesses to consumers during the nurture stage of the social media marketing process that establish an individualized connection with consumers will further strengthen the degree of this connection (Narcı, 2017).

As can be understood, the social media marketing process is actually a loop. The steps in the process look similar to a chain, with links that are connected to one another. If one of the links of this chain breaks, the chain will break down. In a similar vein, it is important to remember that all the steps in the process of social media marketing, such as a chain, are closely linked to each other. As a result, the success of social media marketing is based on the fact that processes such as the links of a chain are closely connected.

7.9   Consumer Behaviour in Social Media

Today, consumers are at the centre of marketing activities. Understanding and offering value to consumers who play a triggering role in the movement of businesses play an important role in modern marketing activities. In this context, businesses are trying to understand the behaviour of consumers, although it is not so easy. Solomon (2006: 7) defined the concept of consumer behaviour as "the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires."

Currently, developments in technology have also affected the behaviour of consumers. In traditional marketing, consumers select, purchase, use or dispose of the goods and services in physical environments. However, with modern marketing, they have now begun to perform these activities by using social networks. In the related literature, the analogy of the consumption market for social networks is used. Thus, social networks have assumed the role of the consumption market. Through the use of social networks, consumers have been freed from being alone in the

processes of selecting, purchasing and using the products and services. Consumers who are not alone in the decision of selecting and purchasing processes have started to provide the same support to other consumers via virtual environments after using the products. In particular, user-generated content, blogs and forums have been instrumental in helping consumers to refer products to each other (Terkan, 2014). In addition, individuals belonging to Generation Z are trying to make use of technology as much as possible in their daily activities as consumers. It is almost impossible to think of Generation Z as disconnected from social media. Considering the effects of the individuals belonging to Generation Z and the effect of their families on purchase decisions, it is known that these individuals exhibit different behaviours than the consumers in Generations X and Y (Horuztepe, 2018).

Factors affecting consumer behaviour, such as cultural, psychological, social and personal factors, also have an effect on consumer behaviour in social media. For this reason, it is necessary to take care of these factors when businesses are preparing their social media marketing activities and developing the strategies that will be used (Bayazıt Hayta, 2013; Rani, 2014).

Social media has significantly affected consumer behaviour and consumer decision-making processes. As a result of a previous study, it was determined that virtual communities have gradually become increasingly accepted by consumers, replacing advertisements sent by mail, salespeople, and even brochures to a certain extent (Jepsen, 2006). As a result of a study conducted on university students, it was found that social media had significant effects on both pre-purchase and post-purchase behaviours (Sarıtaş & Karagöz, 2017).

It is possible to examine the effects of social media on consumer behaviour based on three basic points. These points can be listed as follows:

- Behaviours that have an impact on the consumer's consumption.
- Given information and suggestions of the other consumers about the products and services that affect the consumption behaviour of consumers.
- Consumer behaviours related to expressing thoughts about products by using social media platforms (Bayazıt Hayta, 2013).

Since technology has entered our lives, significant effects on consumer behaviour have emerged. At this point, businesses that analyse consumer behaviours in a social media environment will succeed, and others will fail. As is understood from all these accounts, social media is a tool that cannot be denied in terms of today's businesses.

7.10 Emerging Social Media Marketing Activities in the Digital Age

Through the transition to the digital age, significant developments have occurred in the marketing activities of businesses. Businesses are trying to reach their target audiences and influence their potential customers through marketing activities

carried out in this period. Compared to traditional marketing, marketing activities in the digital age are much more interesting and attract more consumers in the marketing process of products. In this section, viral marketing, influencer marketing and electronic customer relationship management (E-CRM), which are among the main marketing activities that have emerged with social media, will be examined briefly.

7.10.1   Viral Marketing

The expansion of the internet and the development of social media have changed word-of-mouth advertising activities in traditional marketing. This change caused viral marketing to start sprouting. Kaplan and Haenlein (2011: 255) defined the term viral marketing as "electronic word-of-mouth whereby some form of marketing message related to a company, brand, or product is transmitted in an exponentially growing way, often through the use of social media applications."

The concept of viral marketing was first included in the article "The Virus of Marketing" in 1996, and thus, the concept was introduced to the marketing literature. There is an analogy between a virus and viral marketing. The main reason for this analogy is related to the spreading of electronic messages quickly (Rakić & Rakić, 2014). In fact, individuals who send electronic messages in viral marketing are taking on the role of the salesperson of the business by spreading the messages rapidly among themselves and taking part, personally, in the marketing activities of businesses (Argan & Tokay Argan, 2006). It is also a fact that consumers take more notice of messages from other people, such as consumers similar to themselves, than those sent by businesses. For this reason, viral marketing is a more effective way of promoting goods and services than third-party advertising (Jurvetson, 2000).

In short, among the main advantages of viral marketing are the low cost, reaching a large number of people, being more convincing, enhancing brand awareness, and the ease of changing messages (Khaneja, 2016). On the other hand, the major disadvantages of viral marketing are damage to a brand, difficulties in measuring the effectiveness of a marketing campaign, reaching the wrong customers with viral videos, not being noticed by target markets of the viral videos, being met by a negative reaction, and the possibility of not being able to access consumers that do not use such technology (Chopra, 2017).

Recently, many viral marketing activities have been carried out for commercial and social purposes. One of the most famous of these activities is the Ice Bucket Challenge. The main aim of this campaign was to create awareness of ALS disease and attract attention to viral videos. In this context, between June 2014 and September 2014, over 17 million Ice Bucket Challenge videos were shared on Facebook. At the end of the period, it was determined that more than 440 million people watched these videos on social media (Phing & Yazdanifard, 2014).

7.10.2   *Influencer Marketing*

As a result of the widespread use of social media, a new marketing tool, called influencer marketing, emerged. After a certain period of time, influencer marketing started to be used by businesses as a shining star, especially with the change in the resources of consumers in the information collection phase. Consumers now rely more on interpersonal sources and take into account information from these sources in the purchasing decision process (Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

Influencer marketing is "a process of identifying and activating individuals who have an influence over a specific target audience or medium, in order to be part of a brand's campaign towards increased reach, sales, or engagement (Sudha & Sheena, 2017: 16)." In influencer marketing activities, social media is indispensable. Influencers use social media networks such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to attract the attention of consumers towards specific products and brands (Glucksman, 2017). The selection of celebrities, and especially those with a high number of followers, in the selection of the influencer will increase the confidence and persuasion of the messages presented (Mert, 2018).

Influencer marketing has some advantages and disadvantages. The major advantages are relationships based on trust between the influencer and followers, high reach, and quick and easy access to feedback. On the other hand, selecting the wrong influencers, reaching the wrong people and the cost of advertising on YouTube are among the disadvantages of influencer marketing (https://socialmediaagency.one/criticism-influencer-marketing-disadvantages-hypes/).

Coca-Cola is one of the brands that has benefitted from influencer marketing activities. In the 1920s, by using the Santa Claus figure, the company attracted the attention of consumers to sell their product. In fact, this advertisement is considered to be one of the oldest examples of influencer marketing (https://alphaconcepts.co/blog/coca-cola-humanizing-products-through-influencer-marketing/). Today, Coca-Cola continues its influencer marketing activities.

7.10.3   *Electronic Customer Relationship Management (E-CRM)*

Today, E-CRM is one of the most effective ways for businesses to communicate with their customers. Through developments in technology, businesses that communicate with customers by using traditional channels have begun to establish this communication on an electronic platform.

E-CRM "is the implementation of e-technology or internet-based technology in order to attain customer relationship management (CRM) objectives (Nikou, Selamat, Yusoff, & Khiabani, 2016: 1133)." The major aims of E-CRM activities are enabling strong relations with customers by improving customer services and maintaining relationships with the potential and key customers of the company.

Through E-CRM, low-cost communication is established with consumers. In addition, it becomes possible to provide some suggestions, customized solutions and support. For example, Amazon offers suggested books to returning customers based on their past visits and purchases (Kennedy, 2006).

Today, businesses have become closer to their customers through social media. The use of social media in customer relationship management has further increased customer loyalty and allowed for feedback to be received in a short period of time. However, using social media in CRM also creates some problems related to the privacy of user data (Patil, 2014). As a result, it would not be wrong to say that E-CRM makes life easier for businesses.

7.11   Conclusion

After the transition to the digital age, significant changes occurred in the lives of businesses. Technology is now the main tool of these businesses. The digital age and technology have created the concept of social media for businesses. In this way, it is effective for consumers to use social media intensively for the purposes of entertainment and access to information.

Since the emergence of social media, some of changes have been made in the activities of businesses. Social media network services enable businesses to open many doors in the digital age. Such intensive use of social media has paved the way for a new trend called social media marketing. Businesses that have started to use social media in marketing activities have removed a large part of the difficulty they encounter in traditional marketing activities. Most importantly, social media marketing has increased the sincerity in the relationships between businesses and customers, and the messages have been directed to the appropriate consumers. The slogan of the right message to the right consumer enables businesses to realize their marketing activities based on the principle of cost effectiveness. In short, social media marketing has become a useful tool in the lives of businesses; as such marketing has many advantages. After a while, social media marketing diversified the marketing activities of businesses. Marketing activities such as viral marketing, influencer marketing and E-CRM have emerged in the modern business world. After a while, the companies that use these activities in a proper and controlled manner have begun to achieve significant success.

As a result, it seems that social media marketing has become an important factor for businesses. Therefore, the use of social media in the marketing activities of a company can be expressed as an important point to consider.

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Selay Ilgaz Sümer is an Assistant Professor in Department of Management at Baskent University in Ankara (Turkey). She holds a Master Degree in Production Management and Marketing from Gazi University in Ankara (Turkey). She received a PhD in Business Administration at Gazi University. Her research interests cover topics in the field of marketing, such as marketing strategies, consumer behaviour, digital marketing, international marketing and services marketing. She published several articles and book chapters. Besides, she took part into different national and international conferences.