Managing Brands in a Converging Media Environment 10

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Chapter Objectives
1. To understand how media convergence changes consumers' daily life and thereby affects consumer-brand-relations.
2. To comprehend how consumers are influenced by brands and their communication.
3. To learn how brand communication should be applied for different types of consumers with regard to their involvement and their motivation.
4. To learn how brands should respond to consumer-generated content that is negative for the brand and how to cope with social media crises.
5. To learn how to receive brand insights from consumers' online brand-related activities.

10.1 Introduction: The Challenges of a Converging Media World

What does media convergence mean for our daily life? Let's consider a typical day in the life of the 22-year-old student John Doe to understand the effects of converging media.

7.20 am: John wakes up to the alarm of his mobile phone. He instantly notices the push messages he has received from different apps. He quickly reads these new messages. Still in bed, he checks his Facebook account and writes comments on his friend's posts. 7.40 am: John gets up. On his way to the bathroom, he passes the kitchen and turns his new Hybrid Broadcast Broadband TV (HbbTV) set on. While having a shower, he listens to his favorite radio station. 8.00 am: John has breakfast and browses through his favorite sports

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magazine. The TV morning program is running in the background. John views a Nike ad that contains a quick response (QR) code. Being excited about the advertised shoe, he scans the code with his mobile device and is directed to the linked "microsite." He stays there for several minutes and carefully reads the given brand information. He distributes the information about the new Nike shoe to all his 190 friends on Facebook. 8.09 am: John's attention is suddenly attracted to a TV program summarizing the preceding day of a big sport contest. He leaves the Nike site and focuses on the TV show. 8.18 am: Meanwhile, John has finished breakfast. He goes back to his Facebook account and browses his "wall" for interesting new posts. John's attention is attracted to a post from a friend that contains a link to a TV program that was broadcasted yesterday evening. The TV show criticizes a well-known computer brand for its exploitative working conditions and the pollution caused in third world countries. John decides to watch the TV show. The TV program and the many negative posts provided by other users persuade John not to buy this brand. He decides to write a very critical comment about the brand on his favorite internet forum. 8.35 am: John reads a post from the Kellogg's fan page which encourages customers to participate in a contest to create a new type of cereal. John clicks the link and leaves Facebook for the brand page. He engages for almost 10 minutes in creating a new type of cereal. As John is interested in healthy nutrition, he fills in the order form for a booklet on healthy living. 8.45 am: John suddenly realizes that he is late. He grabs his bag and leaves home for university. On the bus, he reads the New York Times on his mobile phone. 10.00 am to 6.00 pm: John attends lectures and seminars at the university. He checks Facebook and comments on posts every hour at least. 7.10 pm: After a successful day at university, John returns home. He switches his Playstation on and plays the racing car simulator Gran Turismo. 9.00 pm: He surfs the internet on his new tablet PC. At the same time, he follows a national crime series on HbbTV. Instead of revealing the identity of the suspect, the crime show ends with a request to search for the suspect on the internet. Attracted by this opportunity, John presses the 'red button' on the remote control of his new TV set and is automatically connected to the related murderer search website. 11.20 pm: John writes approximately 100 text messages throughout the day. Already in bed, John posts his new lap time record and the news about the crime series on Facebook. 11.30 pm: John turns the light and all electronic devices off (except his mobile – he never turns it off).

The John Doe example illustrates that consumers are already living in a converging media environment. The traditional distinction between the "three screens" television, computer, and mobile phone is rapidly losing its relevance. Nowadays, consumers can easily get access to all different kinds of media by using one of the traditional screens. Modern TV sets are equipped with internet access, mobile phones can be used to watch television, and desktop computers are multimedia devices that support all different kinds of media. Meanwhile, even a fourth screen has been born: The tablet computer can be seen as a "true convergence device" that merges different channels in a highly convenient way (Shust 2011). Within seconds, consumers can switch from one medium to another. Thereby, the way consumers use media has dramatically changed. It seems that consumers are permanently multitasking and thus continuously splitting their attention between different online and offline media, different contents, and different actions.

Media convergence has changed the traditional notion of brand-to-consumer communications (e.g., Schultz et al. 2012; Kozinets 1999). Consumers like John Doe actively produce brand-related content. They are highly connected with other individuals and permanently share their opinions about brands in the form of comments on various social media pages, rather than just being passive receivers

of brand communication. Thereby, consumers can exert strong effects on brand image.

Besides the difficult question of how to integrate offline and online media, media convergence is challenging brand managers due to the above-described change in the way consumers communicate with and talk about brands online. This cultural change is enabled by technological innovations that are important drivers of this development. The "new kind" of media usage is becoming more and more characteristic for consumers of all social classes and genders.

10.2   Media Convergence and Its Consequences for Brand Management

10.2.1 From Technological Convergence to a Converging Media Culture

The concept of media convergence is strongly related to developments in different fields such as the progress in digital technologies, the blurring of the boundaries between different media, the emergence of new products and services, and the cultural change of communication behaviors (e.g., Jenkins 2001, 2004, 2006; Wirth 2006). Thus, (at least) three levels of convergence can be distinguished: technological, channel, and cultural convergence (Fig. 10.1).

Technological Convergence. The technological progress in the information and telecommunication (ICT) industry was the prerequisite for the development of new technological devices for consumers. Online- and mobile-based technologies in particular have been key drivers of media convergence. Through the technological advances in the ICT industries and the ongoing digitization, the usage boundaries of different devices are blurring. Thus, mobile phones have developed into multimedia gadgets that not only provide access to different media and different channels but also enable consumers to produce and distribute media content whenever they want and wherever they are.

Recent studies indicate that the process of technological convergence will further increase. Morgan Stanley Research (2009) proposes that mobile devices will have replaced the classical desktop computer as the primary access medium to the internet by 2015. The futurist Ray Kurzweil brings this rapidly accelerating technological development to the point: *"So what used to fit in a building now fits in your pocket, what fits in your pocket now will fit inside a blood cell in 25 years"* (Kurzweil 2009).

For brand managers, these technological developments are highly relevant since they mark the communication possibilities of the future. Technological convergence has already changed the way multichannel campaigns have to be planned and executed.
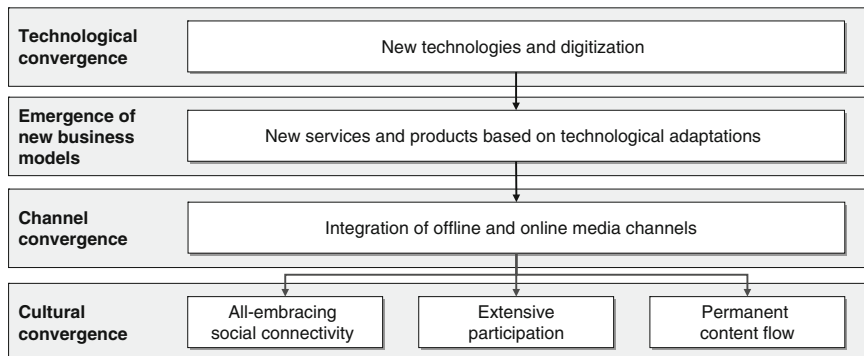
Technological convergence	New technologies and digitization		
Emergence of new business models	New services and products based on technological adaptations		
Channel convergence	Integration of offline and online media channels		
Cultural convergence	All-embracing social connectivity	Extensive participation	Permanent content flow

Fig. 10.1 The different levels of convergence

The Emergence of New Business Models. Based on the technological convergence, new business models have emerged in the form of new digital products and services. Driven by the web 2.0 movement, interactive and collaborative thought became increasingly important for online businesses (e.g., O'Reilly 2007). Characteristically, the users of web 2.0 businesses deeply engage with the Web site. For example, consumers upload videos to YouTube, cultivate their friendships via Facebook, and share their knowledge on Wikipedia. Generally, these web 2.0 business models are based on *engaging consumers* that *share* contents, *connect* with each other, and also *co-create* by bringing in personal experience, knowledge, and ideas (e.g., Wippermann 2010). Figure 10.2 illustrates these consumer engagement types and provides examples of typical web 2.0 business models. These web 2.0 businesses strongly depend on the consumers and the content that they generate. Thus, the consumer in the converging media environment has transformed into a prosumer that simultaneously *pro*duces and con*sumes* contents (e.g., Ritzer 2010).

Channel Convergence. In a converging media environment, consumers are frequently switching between different media channels looking for entertainment or information. Thus, brands are increasingly forced to convey their advertising messages across different media and different channels. Thereby, the different communication instruments can fulfill different tasks depending on consumer's situational involvement. To integrate online and offline advertising successfully, managers have to define the role each advertising instrument has to play in a converging multichannel campaign. Magazine ads, for example, usually receive very little attention; gaze durations are short (approximately 2 s for a 1-page ad). Thus, this medium is mainly suited to convey quick messages that foster brand awareness and brand image. Consumers actively visiting brand Web sites, however, possess a higher situational involvement and are more likely to be interested in receiving brand-related information. Thus, brand Web sites provide the opportunity to convey more detailed brand information.

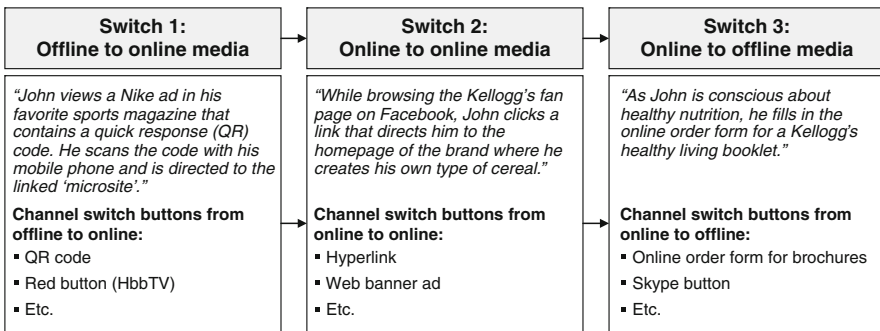**Fig. 10.2** Web 2.0-based business models. *Source*: Wippermann 2010

Switch 1: Offline to online media	Switch 2: Online to online media	Switch 3: Online to offline media
"John views a Nike ad in his favorite sports magazine that contains a quick response (QR) code. He scans the code with his mobile phone and is directed to the linked 'microsite'."	*"While browsing the Kellogg's fan page on Facebook, John clicks a link that directs him to the homepage of the brand where he creates his own type of cereal."*	*"As John is conscious about healthy nutrition, he fills in the online order form for a Kellogg's healthy living booklet."*
Channel switch buttons from offline to online: ▪ QR code ▪ Red button (HbbTV) ▪ Etc.	**Channel switch buttons from online to online:** ▪ Hyperlink ▪ Web banner ad ▪ Etc.	**Channel switch buttons from online to offline:** ▪ Online order form for brochures ▪ Skype button ▪ Etc.

Fig. 10.3 Channel switch buttons supporting media convergence

In order to reach maximum persuasion power, companies should develop strategies to enhance consumer involvement and attract consumers' attention from low involvement media to higher involving media. To support such channel changes, companies can employ "*channel switch buttons*" that link the different channels with each other and, thereby, help to direct consumers from one channel to another (Fig. 10.3). The inclusion of a Web site address in a print ad, a TV, or a radio commercial, for example, is a commonly used device to direct consumers from a brand's offline communication to its online activities. However, a much more convenient channel switch button is the QR code. It can be reproduced in any form of visual communication. By scanning a QR code with a mobile phone, consumers are directed to a Web site. The tiresome typing of the Web site address is obsolete. Furthermore, QR codes can be used to convey a wide range of information, such as contact details, geo data, or short text messages. The "red button" is a device that links TV programs to Web sites in HbbTV. Thereby, brands can link their TV commercials with their online activities. By pressing the red button, consumers interested in the offer can easily jump to the brand's Web site to receive further brand-related information. Switches between different online media can be supported via hyperlinks that are provided in Web sites, banner ads, email ads, etc. Switches from online to offline communications mainly happen if

consumers are becoming involved in an offer and want to contact the brand. Such channel changes are supported by the provision of company contact details such as phone numbers, addresses, or online forms to order brand brochures. Figure 10.3 provides an overview of different devices ("channel switch buttons") that support channel changes.

Cultural Convergence. With the emergence of the Internet, the communication culture dramatically changed (e.g., Jenkins 2006). Information about nearly everything was suddenly ubiquitarily available. However, the Internet still took the form of a unidirectional mass communication. Consumers were able to view information on Web sites provided by brands, organizations, and people. Web 2.0 radically changed the character of the internet communication. All of a sudden, the internet became a participative social medium. Every consumer is able to distribute messages all over the world within seconds. Jenkins (2006, 3) brings this development to the point: *"In the world of media convergence, every important story gets told..."*

However, the extent to which and the way how consumers use web 2.0 opportunities still vary a lot across different age groups. In general, analyses of media usages show that consumers tend to spend more time with media they have been socialized with (e.g., Nielsen 2012). Consumers who have been brought up with print media and TV spend significantly more time with these media channels than consumers who already have experienced the Internet in their early childhood (e.g., Nielsen 2009). Thus, concerning the communication culture, roughly, the two user groups "digital natives" and "digital immigrants" can be distinguished (Prensky 2001a, b; Wippermann 2010). *Digital immigrants* are born before 1980 and were raised in a world in which print media and TV still were prevalent. Whereas, *digital natives* (born since 1980) grew up with the Internet, mobile phones, DVD, and modern computer games. John Doe, from the introduction of this article, is a typical digital native. They spend a considerable amount of their lives on the internet. Digital natives readily share private information about their "lives, relationships, memories, fantasies, desires" and frequently create new content in areas they are interested in (Jenkins 2006, 17; Wippermann 2010). Recent business models such as Facebook, YouTube, or Flickr further accelerate this change in communication culture. In contrast, digital immigrants are more reluctant about sharing personal information; they try to protect their privacy (Wippermann 2010). Even if they use the internet extensively, digital immigrants produce user-generated content to a significant lesser extent than digital natives. Wippermann (2010) points out that those digital immigrants will always stay guests in the digital world.

10.2.2 Brand Management Challenges in the Convergent Media Environment

Media convergence and the ongoing radical change of consumers' communication culture offer, besides plenty of new opportunities, many new risks for brands. A pivotal benefit of media convergence results from the opportunity to directly interact with consumers. Additionally, consumer needs can be better understood by closely paying attention to the brand-related contents posted on various pages like Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Twitter, and in blogs. However, consumer-generated content can also cause massive threats to brands (e.g., Chiou and Cheng 2003). These threats often emanate on social media pages and converge into classical mass media like TV or newspapers. These changes in consumers' communication culture that are of paramount importance for brand management are summarized next.

All-Embracing Social Connectivity. Digital natives are highly socially interconnected. Most of these social interactions take place in social media networks such as Facebook, Google+, or in specialized blogs. On Facebook, for example, the average user is connected to 190 friends (Ugander et al. 2011). In the U.S., nearly 80 % of the active internet users regularly visit social network Web sites and blogs (Nielsen, NM Incite 2012). Meanwhile, more than 50 % of young female consumers report that the majority of their personal communication takes place online (and not face to face anymore) (Oxygen Media 2010). These younger consumers are accessible all of the time: They check their inbox highly frequently and never switch their mobile phone off.

Extensive Participation. The high level of social connectivity enables a high speed diffusion of information. Within the social web, consumers share information about any topic they are interested in. This kind of participation is a preeminent characteristic of web 2.0 (Jenkins 2004). Within a week, billions of contents are shared on the social media networking site Facebook alone (Econsultancy 2010). Within this jungle of user-generated information, also numerous brand-related posts appear. Consumers recommend brands to friends, report negative or positive experiences, share pictures of their products and brands with others, or establish brand communities. Apps like Seesmic Ping further foster the speed of content flow since they allow, for example, posting to various social media sites at the same time with one entry. Brands get more and more affected by this user-generated content—positively as well as negatively (Muntinga et al. 2011; Christodoulides et al. 2012). Thereby, communication for brands gets less controllable for companies (Mangold and Faulds 2009; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). In the old days of brand management, companies could control what has been said about their brands. Nowadays, in the world of convergent media, companies have to accept that a considerable amount of brand-related information is generated by users and is not any more under the control of the brand. Thus, brand management is becoming a

"more democratic process" in which consumers may exert a considerable impact on a brand's image.

Permanent Content Flow. Content flow among different media channels is another key characteristic of the convergent media environment (Jenkins 2004). Brand-related content—no matter who produced it—is spread all over the web. Content that has been produced by person A is distributed by person B—often without the knowledge of the original sender. This usually happens in an uncontrolled and irreproducible way. Again, social networks are an important enabler. In this context, Jenkins (2006, 1 et seqq.) reports the example of Dino Ignacio, a high school student, who published a self-made photo collage on his Web site that showed Sesame Street's Bert next to Osama Bin Laden. The collage was part of the series Ignazio called "Bert is Evil." What began as a student's fun on a personal computer, ended up as an excellent example of content flow in a convergent media culture: To his surprise, while watching a CNN news report about an anti-American protest in Pakistan, protest placards with Bert and Bin Laden appeared. The contents from Dino's personal Web site have travelled around the world via the Internet, popped up, and found their way back through another media channel. For brands, this example illustrates what can potentially happen with brand information generated by the brand itself and by users. This content flow within digital media channels further adds to the lack of controllability of user-generated brand communications. *To sum up,* brand managers should be aware of the following challenges:

- Social media platforms are a catch basin of brand-related communication.
- Social media interactions are an important part of consumers' everyday communications — and brands are a part of these.
- Companies have to accept that a considerable amount of brand-related information is generated by consumers and is no longer under the control of the brand.
- Even a minority of consumers may raise their voice loudly enough to be heard by a large number of passive consumers. Thus, a minority can exert a considerable impact on a brand's image.
- The speed of content flow has enormously accelerated. If contents are of interest for consumers it is very likely that they pop up anytime, anywhere.

10.3 Strategies and Tactics to Manage Brands in the Converging Media Environment

10.3.1 Towards a Brand Management Model for the Converging Media Environment

Considering the dramatic change in communication culture that has been caused by media convergence, one can easily get the impression that the principles for building and managing brands must have radically changed. However, the recipients of today's brand messages possess brains that date back to ancient times. Of course, human evolution has not been accelerated by media convergence.

The way consumers perceive, process, and encode advertisements has not changed. Thus, most of the strategies and principles we are employing in offline advertising, still hold true for building and managing brands in a converging media environment (e.g., Rossiter and Percy 2012). These means just have to be adjusted to new media conditions.

What Makes a Brand Strong?   Awareness and image are the main determinants of a brand's long-term success (Keller 1993, 2008). They are the key to the persuasion power of strong brands. Thereby, awareness is the necessary condition to ensure that a brand plays a role in the purchase decision. A brand unknown to consumers will usually not be considered as a relevant option to buy. The brand image goes beyond brand awareness. It is defined "as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory" (Keller 1993, 3). In other words, the brand image is the sum of all associations that are connected in a consumer's mind with a brand. Consumers prefer brands that hold a strong, favorable, and unique image (Keller 1993, 2008, 2009). To sum up, the more familiar (brand awareness) a consumer is with a brand and the more positive, unique, and strong his/her associations (brand image) with the brand are, the more likely he/she will buy it one day (Esch et al. 2006). Thus, the building and maintaining of brand awareness and brand image is the superordinate target of brand management.

10.3.1.1 Strategies to Build Strong Brands

Brand positioning is the starting point for building strong brands. All brand communication-related decisions have to be aligned to a brand's positioning strategy. Positioning refers to the position a brand intends to gain in the consumers' mind (Keller 2008). It "*involves identifying and establishing points of parity and points of difference [. . .] to create the proper brand image*" (Keller et al. 2008, 94). In the positioning strategy, the brand management defines the core associations the target group should connect to the brand. These associations have to meet three requirements (Keller 2008; Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011): Firstly, they must differentiate the brand from competitors; secondly, they must be attractive and relevant to the target group, and, thirdly, they have to have a long-term relevance for the costumers. Milka, for example, fulfills these requirements with its positioning of being "the ultimate tender alpine milk chocolate" (Fig. 10.8). Or, Beiersdorf uses the associations of "gentle," "protective," and "caring" to position its body care brand Nivea (Keller et al. 2008).

10.3.1.2 Techniques to Build Strong Brands

In order to foster awareness and image, brand management has to anticipate the way how consumers perceive and process brands. Thus, brand management has to follow vital psychological principles to successfully establish strong brands. The broad range of persuasion techniques that has been provided by branding and advertising literature (e.g., Armstrong 2010; Rossiter and Bellman 2005; Keller 2008) can be condensed to four vital communication tactics (McGuire 1978; Belch and Belch 2007; Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011). Following the idea of McGuire's

information-processing model, these are attention, liking, comprehension, and retention (McGuire 1978).

Attention—Getting in Contact with the Target Group. The first obstacle a brand has to take is to become noticed. The brand, its products, and its communications must attract the attention of the target group—otherwise it is impossible to convey a message. Due to increasing media clutter, getting in contact with the consumer is becoming increasingly difficult.

Liking—Eliciting Positive Emotions. At every consumer-brand contact, the brand has to elicit positive emotions in order to establish brand liking. Negative (and even neutral) brand associations lead to dislike and dislike hampers sales. However, brand liking is an interstage; in the end it is brand preference that is aimed at. Consumers shall prefer the brand over its competitors (e.g., Rossiter and Bellman 2005, 110 et seqq.). Whether a brand relies more on *emotions* and/or *information* is determined by its positioning strategy that in turn depends on the target groups' buying motives.

Comprehension—Conveying Relevant Information. The brand management has to ensure that the relevant brand information are perceived and understood by the customer. However, this is difficult since most of today's brand contacts happen under low consumer involvement. Gaze durations are short and the level of cognitive processing is low. Thus, relevant information has to be conveyed quickly. Only high involvement consumers are interested in detailed brand information and exhibit longer gaze durations (e.g., Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011).

Retention—Establishing Brand Knowledge. Brand communication has to be designed in a way that a brand's message (in particular the brand positioning) can be easily remembered. Many consumer-brand contacts are taking place in situations in which the potential customer is low involved and not planning to purchase a product offered by the brand. However, it is important to establish awareness and image in the early phases of the customer buying cycle to ensure that consumers include the brand in their purchase considerations.
Finally, after having passed these communications steps successfully, consumers may show a positive *behavior* towards the brand such as purchase, brand recommendation, or the creation of positive brand-related content. The extent to which consumers participate in creating user-generated content depends on their type and level of involvement (Muntinga et al. 2011, Fig. 10.4).

10.3.1.3 The Moderating Role of Involvement and Consumer Motives

Consumers differ in the way they are involved with a brand. Involvement can be differentiated concerning its intensity (high versus low) and its quality (affective versus cognitive) (e.g., Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011). The intensity of brand involvement can vary over time. It increases before and during the purchase decision is made and decreases after the product has been bought. Brand
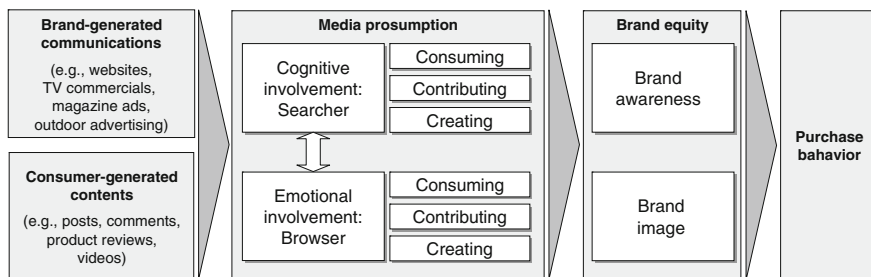
Fig. 10.4 Convergent media brand management model

involvement further underlies a situational impact whether a consumer has the time to engage in brand activities in the moment he or she gets in contact with the brand. This so-called situational involvement overrules the enduring brand involvement.

Involvement can be considered as a "*super variable*" that largely influences the consumer behavior. It determines, for example, whether and how consumers search for information, how they perceive and process brand-related content, and how actively they engage in a brand.

How Does Involvement Affect Media Usage? The situational involvement determines how consumers use different media. Following the suggestion of Gall and Hannafin (1994), made for the study of hypertext, we adopt the differentiation in browsing and searching. Accordingly, *searchers* actively search for (brand-related) information and therefore exhibit a higher involvement. The quality and structure of the information presented are important in the persuasion of this audience. *Browsers*, in contrast, have no search target. They wander around in a hypermedia basis, flip through TV channels, or scan a print magazine, mostly to satisfy affective needs such as having fun and getting entertained. Browsers may stop and engage in an activity as their attention is attracted by an object. Thus, browsers can become searchers when their involvement rises. The other way round, searchers can become browsers when they stop or interrupt their search.

How Does Involvement Affect Brand-Related Activities? The level of brand involvement determines the extent to which consumers engage in brand-related activities. Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit (2011, 2012) distinguish three types of "consumers' online brand-related activities" (COBRA): consuming, contributing, and creating. Accordingly, lowly involved consumers primarily consume. They scan the information provided at a brand's Web sites, watch brand-related videos on YouTube, play advergames, or view the posts of other users on Facebook. Contributing and creating, however, require an enhanced involvement. The first encompasses activities like becoming a member of a brand's fan page, commenting on other consumers' posts, or engaging in product ratings. Whereas, the latter refers to the generation of complex contents such as the production of brand-related videos or articles (Muntinga et al. 2011).

Type \ Level	Consuming	Contributing	Creating
Browser (Entertainment-driven)	_	Emotional involvement	+
Searcher (Information-driven)	_	Cognitive involvement	+

Fig. 10.5 Consumers' brand-related activities

How Do Consumer Motives Affect Brand-Related Activities? Combining the different qualities and levels of involvement with the COBRA framework of Muntinga et al. (2011) provides six different ways of how consumers can engage in brand-related activities (Fig. 10.5). According to this, consuming, contributing, and creating can be driven by cognitive and/or affective motives. Emotionally involved consumers, for example, may take part in brand-related crowdsourcing activities such as designing burgers at McDonald's or inventing new flavors of potato chips at Lay's. Rather cognitively involved consumers are more likely to rate products and brands. The higher their brand involvement is, the more likely consumers get involved in creating. Highly emotionally involved consumers, for instance, may engage in producing a brand-related movie or in designing commercials. On the other hand, highly cognitively involved consumers may write extensive product reviews or articles about the brand.

However, overall, consumers seem to be rather passive. A study of the market research company Chadwick Martin Baley (2011) shows that the majority of consumers (77 %) on Facebook simply consume information about their liked brands instead of contributing and only 13 % of the consumers post brand-related contents.

10.3.2 Getting in Contact with Consumers in a Converging Media Environment

A raising number of brands, products, and services fight for consumers' attention. The number of advertising messages dramatically increased during the last decade. Additionally, more and more private electronic communication takes place. Furthermore, consumers are developing strategies to ignore ads. Phenomena such as *banner blindness* (e.g., Cho and Cheon 2004) where consumers have learnt to avoid fixations on web banner ads or *channel hopping* while TV commercials are on screen (e.g., Lim et al. 2008) additionally complicate the communication task for brands. To sum up, it is becoming increasingly difficult for brands to get in contact with its target consumers. Thus, companies have to develop strategies to gain attention for their brands.

10.3.2.1 Attention Tactics I: Gaining Initial Contact

Consumers are permanently exposed to brands. While walking through a town we pass outdoor ads, in the underground we may be confronted with an ambient advertising, while browsing a magazine or searching the internet for information we are exposed to various ads. Whether these ads gain our attention or not, depends largely on the ad's *structural features* such as the size of the ad, the size of the ad's pictorial element, the ad's color, and the ad's layout (Rossiter and Bellman 2005, 188). For gaining the first contact, an ad's message content is of secondary importance. This holds true both for searchers and browsers.

In general, companies have to ensure that their Web sites and their brand-related contents can easily be found. Thus, every brand should optimize its page ranks in *search engines*. Being among the first entries in Google, for instance, can strongly increase the possibility for getting in contact with the target consumer.

Size. The bigger an ad is, the more likely it gains attention (Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011; Rossiter and Bellman 2005). This holds true for all different kinds of brand communication. Rauschnabel et al. (2012) found, for instance, that the size of a brand posting on Facebook significantly affects the number of "Likes" the posting generates.

Picture. In general, the use of pictures significantly increases the likelihood that an ad receives fixations (e.g., Pieters and Wedel 2004). Pictures should, therefore, be used in all types of advertisements. Ads that depict faces (and eyes) of humans or animals, human or animal babies, erotic, or emotional scenes are particularly eye-catching (Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011; Rossiter et al. 2004; Rossiter and Bellman 2005). In low involvement conditions, Rossiter and Bellman (2005, 200) recommend that the picture should be as large as possible. Rauschnabel et al. (2012) report that postings on Facebook stimulate more "Likes" and comments if they contain pictures, whereas long texts decrease the likelihood of consumer-brand interactions.

Color. Color has a strong positive impact on attention. Even ads in a colorful environment such as in broad audience or general business magazines benefit from color. For example, the attention probability for such magazine ads is reduced by approximately 30 % if black and white ads are used compared to four-color ads (Rossiter and Bellman 2005, 199).

Placement. The position of the ad is especially relevant for banner ads. Due to banner blindness, web banner ads should avoid the typical positions such as the top and the right end of a Web site (e.g., Cho and Cheon 2004; Sherman and Deighton 2001; Athenia Association 1997). Meanwhile, consumers have learnt to avoid fixations on these positions since they are mainly used for advertisements. Banner ads that are included in the text of a Web site are more likely to gain attention.

10.3.2.2 Attention Tactics II: Holding and Intensifying Contact

Whether an advertisement successfully holds or intensifies attention is mainly due to its message content. Companies should try to engage consumers in an involving interaction with the brand in order to increase the positive effects on awareness and image. The more involving a brand contact is, the better the brand will be anchored in consumer's mind and the more associations can be connected to the brand. Still, raising involvement is a very challenging task since consumers' inertia is enormous. It is easier for high involvement (emotional) brands (e.g., Apple, Harley-Davidson, Mini) to overcome consumer inertia than for low involvement brands (e.g., Newcastle Brown Ale, Lay's potato chips). However, only ads that exactly meet consumer interests have the chance to increase involvement.

Tactics to Persuade Browsers. The motivations of browsers and searchers to engage in interactions with brands differ. The media consumption of the predominantly emotionally involved browsers is largely entertainment driven. Thus, *enjoyment* and *remuneration* are the main motives for them to consume, contribute, or create brand-related content (Muntinga et al. 2011). There are many opportunities for brands to entertain their target consumers (e.g., advergames that are related to a brand's positioning; entertaining podcasts). In the case of remuneration, consumers interact with the brand because they are aiming at receiving some sort of reward (e.g., a prize). Muntinga et al. (2011, 28) report consumer statements that illustrate how these motives can interact: *"then I started to actually like playing the game; so, I initially played to win a trip, but I finished it because I thought it was amusing"* (female, 25). Ambient advertisements can be particularly helpful to direct very lowly involved consumers to visit a brand's Web sites. An example of Newcastle Brown Ale illustrates how effective a combined stimulation of entertainment and remuneration motives can be to raise consumers' involvement: The brand placed giant dummies of a Newcastle Brown Ale beer glass in the entrance of the Del Mar Race Track (*Attention tactics I: Gaining initial contact due to size*). People were able to step behind the glass; this looked like they were standing inside it (*Attention tactics II—Holding contact due to enjoyment*). Consumers were invited to upload their pictures of standing inside the beer glass on Facebook or foursquare for receiving a Newcastle Brown Ale T-shirt (*Attention tactics II—Intensifying contact due to remuneration*) (Fig. 10.6). In the end, such extensive brand contacts foster brand awareness and brand image.

Tactics to Persuade Searchers. Searchers, on the other hand, follow a concrete search target. Their motivations for consuming, contributing, or creating brand-related contents differ from the motives browsers have. They are primarily looking for information. Thus, searchers read product reviews that have been written by others, they ask questions in brand communities, or go to a brand's Web site to receive latest information about a product they are interested in. Muntinga et al. (2011) identified four motivations to consume brand-related content: Information seekers want to improve their brand and product *knowledge*, they want to stay

Fig. 10.6 Newcastle Brown Ale multichannel campaign. *Source*: Newcastle Brown Ale 2011

updated about the consumption situation of their *social environment* (e.g., which brands do my friends like?), they are looking for reliable *pre-purchase information*, or they are aiming at *inspiration* (e.g., watching friend's holiday pictures to get ideas for their own holidays). To hold the contact with searchers, information should be presented in a way that supports their search. Search engines on the brand's Web site should be intuitive and brand-related information should be easy to understand. Nevertheless, searchers can also be motivated to involve in brand interactions by satisfying *remuneration* motives (Muntinga et al. 2011).
Recommendations for getting in contact:

- Brands should use attention tactics (size, color, structure, and placement) to ensure that their advertisements get noticed.
- Search engine page ranks should be optimized.
- Brands should develop strategies to involve their target consumers in intensive brand interactions.
- To hold the contact with browsers, brands have to satisfy their entertainment and remuneration needs.
- To hold the contact with searchers, brands have to facilitate their information search.

10.3.3 Conveying Emotions in a Converging Media Environment

Eliciting emotions is an important prerequisite for successful brand communications (e.g., Heath et al. 2006; Poels and Dewitte 2006). Emotional attitude formation is a fast and unconscious process (e.g., Damasio 1994; LeDoux 1996). While cognitive thinking is demanding for the human brain, relying on feelings is less demanding and an automatic process. Thus, consumers' emotional assessments are always ahead of their cognitive thinking. The formation of an emotional attitude is finished within a fraction of a second. In no more than 100 ms, subjects are, for example, able to give an emotional assessment of a stranger and can decide whether they like or dislike this person (e.g., Willis and Todorov 2006). It is assumed that the same holds true for consumer evaluations of brands.

Positive affect causes liking which in turn has a positive effect on purchase behavior. Hence, the conveyance of positive affect is an important prerequisite for building strong brands. Companies can use emotions to persuade consumers in two ways: either peripherally or centrally (Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011). The first is related to the creation of a positive atmosphere. The latter refers to the development of an ultimate emotional and sensorial brand experience.

Creating a Positive Emotional Atmosphere. In this case, emotional stimuli are used to create an emotionally pleasant background mood in the brand communication (Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011). Pleasant colors, surroundings, odors, background music, or objects (e.g., beautiful flowers) can be used to establish a positive atmosphere. Information is more likely to be accepted and remembered better when it is presented in a pleasant atmosphere compared to a negative or neutral (Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011). To sum up, companies should ensure that they establish a pleasant emotional atmosphere at every brand contact.

Providing an Emotional Brand Experience. In this approach emotions are used in a central way to persuade consumers. Here, the brand aims at providing a vivid emotional experience that is strong and unique (Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011). Brand experiences can build the basis for strong and enduring consumer-to-brand relations (e.g., Brakus et al. 2009; Schmitt 2009). At this point, emotional experience is the main reason why consumers are buying the brand. Brands like Bacardi ("150 years of starting parties"), Harley Davidson ("Your ride to freedom"), or Milka ("The Alpine Milk Chocolate Experience") follow such a strategy and provide their emotional experiences consequently across all brand contacts. Harley Davidson draws a consistent picture of its emotional experience of independence, unlimited freedom, and American way of living across all media. Embedded videos or aesthetic pictures, for instance, are telling stories about customers experiencing their Harley and undergoing the feeling of freedom and independence.

Tactics to Persuade Browsers. Due to their emotional involvement, browsers want to get entertained and stimulated in the first place. Pictures, videos, music, or advergames are particular suited to trigger brand experiences. The TV station Fox Crime, for example, advertised the start of the crime series blue bloods on large billboards. People could use their smart phone for interacting with the billboard and playing a shooting game, which matched the brand positioning. Many people passed by and watched others experiencing the fun of playing the game and also started it. The activity was also linked to Twitter.

Tactics to Persuade Searchers. Searchers are primarily interested in information and facts about brands. Entertainment is of secondary relevance. Nevertheless, brand-related information should always be presented in a pleasant and entertaining way since this positively affects brand-related cognitions (e.g., Batra and Stayman 1990).

Recommendations for eliciting emotions:

- Companies should create a positive emotional atmosphere at every brand contact.
- Emotional brand experiences should be used to establish strong and enduring consumer-brand relations if they match the brand's positioning.

10.3.4 Conveying Information in a Converging Media Environment

Most of today's brand contacts take place under an extremely low involvement. Consumers are distracted and brand exposures are short. Thus, cognitive processing mostly takes place on an extremely low level. Already a decade ago, participants of the study of Lenhart et al. (2001) showed a dramatic increase of multitasking among young consumers: *"I multi-task every single second I am online. At this very moment, I am watching TV, checking my emails every two minutes, reading a newsgroup about who shot JFK, burning some music to a CD and writing this message (17-year-old boy)."* Up to now, the extent to which consumers multitask even further increased (Rideout et al. 2010, Fig. 10.7).

The moments in which brands receive full attention become rare. Even searchers are often multitasking while they are looking for information. The average exposure time of a 1-page print ad in a broad audience magazine is, for instance, approximately 2 s (e.g., Armstrong 2010, 246). Thus, companies generally have to take care that their advertising messages are easy to understand. Hence, the old *KISS principle* ("Keep it Short and Simple") has not lost its relevance.

Many brand touch points are frequented by both searchers and browsers. Magazine ads, web banner ads, outdoor ads, or postings on a brand's fan page on Facebook are confronted with consumers of varying involvement (albeit browsers are often the majority). To ensure that such contacts are effective for both groups of consumers, brand information should be presented in a hierarchical manner (e.g., Armstrong 2010; Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011). Thus, the most important information (e.g., the brand's positioning, the ad's key message) has to be conveyed by such ad elements that are fixated in the first place (image and headline). Information that are of inferior relevance for the advertising message should be included in the copy text. This kind of *hierarchical information design* ensures that both low and high involvement consumers perceive the advertising messages at a glance, whereas information seekers additionally have the opportunity to receive deeper information, for example, through the copy text. Additionally, brands should link their low involvement advertisements (e.g., TV commercials, magazines ads, outdoor ads) via *channel switch buttons* (e.g., QR codes, red button at HbbTV) to high involvement media (e.g., brand Web site) that provide detailed information about the brand. Thereby, information seekers can satisfy their enhanced information needs conveniently by switching from one channel to another.

Tactics to Persuade Browsers. Lowly involved consumers primarily watch the images and headlines but hardly ever read any copy text (e.g. Kroeber-Riel and
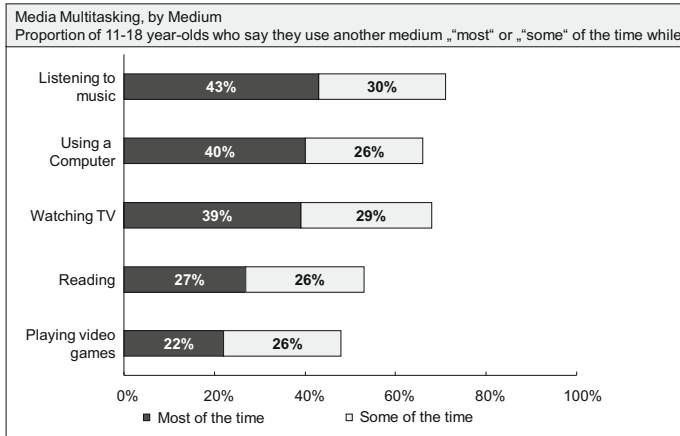
Fig. 10.7 Media multitasking by medium. *Source*: Rideout et al. 2010, 33

Esch 2011). Pieters and Warlop (1999) showed that this even holds true for the perception of product packages during brand choice: Consumers under time pressure focus more on pictorial elements than on textual elements. Hence, the advertising message must be communicated by images and meaningful headlines. The same applies to online advertising and the design of Web sites. Even on brand-related social media pages, browsers prefer images and videos instead of reading longer texts (e.g., Rauschnabel et al. 2012). Finally, mystery ads do not work for lowly involved consumers since they are too passive to solve the mystery.

Tactics to Persuade Searchers. Consumers that are in the pre-purchase phase often exhibit an extensive information interest. They are more willing to read information in a textual form than browsers (e.g., Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011). Hence, searchers often use high involvement advertising such as brand brochures or brand Web sites. Nevertheless, information should be provided in a convenient way so that information seekers find it easy to get and comprehend the information they are aiming at. Thus, companies should use images, videos, graphs, or mp3 besides textual information to support perception and processing of information. Furthermore, highly involved consumers attach great importance to the quality of brand information and evaluate it more critically than browsers. Due to their enhanced involvement, searchers also often engage in brand-related social media communication. They post comments, ask questions in blogs, or rate products. Thus, they also create brand-related communication besides consuming it. Finally, well-trained employees should be responsible for answering the questions asked by consumers quickly and reliably.

Recommendations for conveying information:

- Information has to be provided in a hierarchical manner.
- The advertising message must be communicated by images and meaningful headlines (avoid mystery ads).

- Companies should provide reliable and true information in a comprehendible manner.
- Channel switch buttons should be used to support the enhanced information needs of searchers.
- Companies should define guidelines how employees have to handle consumers' questions and comments.

10.3.5 Retention of Brand Information in a Converging Media Environment

Building strong brands is a process in which the consumer learns to connect positive and unique associations to the brand (e.g., Keller 2008). For this purpose, repeated exposures to a brand and its communication are necessary. As we said before, the brand building process is becoming increasingly challenging due to today's difficult communication conditions. In order to advertise in an effective and efficient manner, each contact with the brand should help to build brand equity (Naik and Raman 2003; Reid et al. 2003). The concept of *integrated advertising* supports brand building especially against the background of today's advertising clutter. Accordingly, every advertisement has to be designed in a way that consumers promptly recognize the sender of the message ("formal integration") and perceive and process the brand positioning quickly ("content-related integration") (Esch 1998; Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011).

Formal Integration. Formal integration refers to the idea of a "one look approach" (Esch 1998; Belch and Belch 2007). For this purpose, every consumer contact should use the brand's corporate design. The consistent use of these brand specific elements (e.g., color, logo, brand name, brand-specific layout) ensures that the consumers quickly recognize the advertised brand in every single brand contact. Formal integration significantly contributes to establishing brand awareness (Esch 1998).

Content-Related Integration. Content related-integration refers to the "one voice approach" (Esch 1998; Belch and Belch 2007). The messages a brand conveys across all different contact points should be coordinated. In general, the brand's positioning should be conveyed at every single contact point as far as possible. Content-related integration can be realized by using same images, music, scents, haptics, or verbal messages across all communication contacts. Thereby, content-related integration supports to establishing brand image (Esch 1998).

The chocolate brand Milka consistently uses its lilac color and the unique written brand name (*formal integration*). Furthermore, the emotional "alpine milk chocolate experience" is conveyed across all media (*content-related integration*): Images (and if possible sounds and odors) of the alpine world and the lilac cow are prevalent in every single contact (Fig. 10.8).
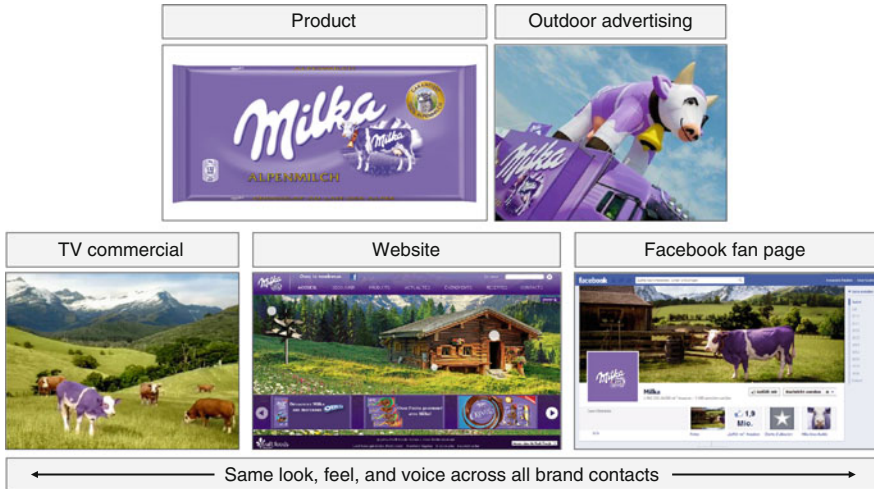
Product	Outdoor advertising

TV commercial	Website	Facebook fan page

← Same look, feel, and voice across all brand contacts →

Fig. 10.8 Integrated advertising from Milka

Recommendations for retention of brand information:

- Brands should apply formal integration: Every brand contact should have the same "look" to ensure that even lowly involved consumers quickly recognize the advertised brand (supports brand awareness).
- Brands should apply content-related integration: A brand should communicate with the same "voice" across all contact points to support the establishment of brand image.

10.4   Tactics to Solve Social Media Brand Crises

In the convergent media environment, it is necessary to constantly monitor online media for brand-related conversations as a brand's image can sincerely be damaged by negative word-of-mouth (WoM). By monitoring brand-related conversations closely, brands can actively engage in discussions with consumers, gain deeper insights in the needs of their target consumers, and have the chance to immediately respond to negative WoM. The latter point is pivotal in the social media landscape. Furthermore, it is of major importance that customer complaints are taken seriously. As shown by prior research, 34 % of negative WoM is caused by unsatisfactory handled customer complaints (Sundaram et al. 1998).

Tools like Radian6, Sysomos, or Brandwatch allow a tracking of consumer generated brand-related contents. Dell, for example, established an extensive monitoring center called "Social Media Listening Command Center", which monitors the internet in different languages (Menchaca 2010). Dell's Chief Blogger Lionel Menchaca reports that they monitor on average more than 22,000 company-related

postings every day. Since Dell considers social media interactions as crucial, they also train employees how to behave in these conversations (Menchaca 2010).

For today's brands, it is of paramount importance to be prepared for social media crises since they can affect every brand. Domino's Pizza, for instance, was involved in such a crisis in 2009. They were confronted with a disgusting video that was uploaded on YouTube by two employees (Beaubien 2009). Soon after the video was released, the company published a video on the same social media platform. There, Patrick Doyle, president of Domino's Pizza in the USA, explained the incident and apologized to the consumers.

The following activities help to solve social media crises:

- *The company must react immediately*. Rapid reactions in the form of statements and explanations help to decelerate the spread of negative WoM.
- *The company must take the crisis seriously*. Social media crises do not arise without any reason. Senior brand representatives like the CEO should communicate with the public to express that the brand will do anything to defuse the crisis. Additionally, companies should consider personally mailing customers to provide them with comprehensive information about the crisis.
- *The company must be open to the fears of the public*. The company should reflect negative WoM with openness and should try to understand the concerns of the consumers. Brand replies have to be honest statements and do not allow for any unserious argumentation. This will further encourage negative WoM.
- *The company must act transparently and honestly*. Brands must be aware of the danger that is related to fake comments that are posted by employees of the company. Sooner or later this will leak out and will seriously damage brand trust.
- *The company must provide permanent feedback*. Brands should establish their own feedback channels such as a crisis-related blog and a twitter account to ensure a permanent interaction with the public (Gregory 2009). Thereby, further diffusion of negative WoM to other communication channels is inhibited. Finally, brands should immediately reply to consumers within the same channels the negative WoM was articulated in.
- *The company should stop their advertising during the crisis*. The advertising stop helps to avoid mixed messages. If advertising went on as if nothing happened, the public could get the impression that the company takes the crisis not seriously enough (Gregory 2009).

10.5 Gaining Consumer Insights in a Converging Media Environment

Brands can profit from interactions with consumers in the form of gaining valuable insights concerning the consumer needs and strengths and weaknesses of their products. Volkswagen for example launched the "People's Car Project" in China in order to understand future demands and consumer needs. About 33 million users accessed the project's Web site and over 119.000 ideas have been submitted (Volkswagen 2012). Submissions included funny as well as sophisticated examples

illustrating the high emotional and cognitive involvement of the participating consumers. A selection of ideas was shown at "Auto China 2012" in Beijing and also converged into other media. In addition, actively engaging in a dialogue in the social media landscape offers the chance to strengthen the relationship with consumers, enhance their satisfaction and helps to build as well as sustain brand equity (Keller 2009).

Despite the great opportunities related to engaging and listening to social media conversations, only 5 % of the brands on Facebook make use of the interactivity potential of this channel (Socialbakers quoted after AllFacebook 2011). General Motors (GM), for example, used their Facebook page primarily for conveying information about GM and not for engaging in an active and meaningful dialogue with their customers (Ochman 2012). As a consequence of their social media crisis, Dell launched a Web site called "Ideastorm" where consumers provide ideas and improve Dell's products. To date, over 18,736 ideas have been submitted and over 530 have been implemented already (Dell 2013). This shows that brands can strongly benefit from channeling customer-generated insights and add lasting value to the brand.

However, consumer insights based on an analysis of social media conversations bear the risk that these results are *not representative* and might be biased by heavy users of the analyzed media. As mentioned before, results by Chadwick Martin Baley (2011) show that a majority of consumers (77 %) just consume information about the brands they like on Facebook, whereas a minority (13 %) posts brand-related content.

Recommendations for gaining consumer insights:

- Brands should use social media to gain insights into consumer needs as well as into the strength and weaknesses of the brand.
- Brands should not open up accounts on Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube if they cannot provide enough content.

Conclusion

One-sided brand-to-consumer communication is now complemented by con-sumer-to-brand and consumer-to-consumer communication. Media convergence is leading to a continuing increase in consumers' multitasking. Thereby, con-sumer involvement is further decreased. It is rare for brands to receive the full attention of the consumer. On the other hand, social media—which has become an integral part of our everyday communication—gives consumers the ability to participate in brand communications and to interact with other consumers about brands. Consequently, a large body of decoupled brand-related conversations is growing within our data-driven communication environment from day to day. As a consequence, brand management runs the risk of losing control. Thus, brands have to implement more knowledge about communication processes and its effects on consumers to cope with this challenge. Brand monitoring has become crucial to brand success in this communication environment.

As the technological progress will continue, different communication mechanisms and devices will play a pivotal role for brand success in the future. Augmented reality will mark a new step in our communication life. For example, Google's Android-based "Project Glass" will assist consumers interactively in every situation by displaying information about their real world surroundings. Furthermore, virtual reality formats will open an elusive number of possibilities to convey brand messages to consumers.

Questions on the Text

1. What are the fundamental developments that serve as a basis for today's convergent media environment?
2. What are the key characteristics of cultural media convergence and how do they impact today's brand management processes?
3. What are the objectives for a successful brand management in the convergent media environment?
4. How can today's consumers be categorized according to their behavior in using digital media?
5. What are the strategies and tactics companies can employ to manage brands successfully in the convergent media environment?
6. How should brand managers act to solve a social media crisis?
7. How can brand managers gain consumer insights in the converging media environment and what are the potential pitfalls of these insights?

Further Discussion

1. Think about the technological progress for the next 20 years. How will the convergent media environment look like?
2. Discuss potential strategies that brands can follow to avoid the potential dangers of losing control over their brand.
3. Discuss approaches of tracking brands in a convergent media environment.

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