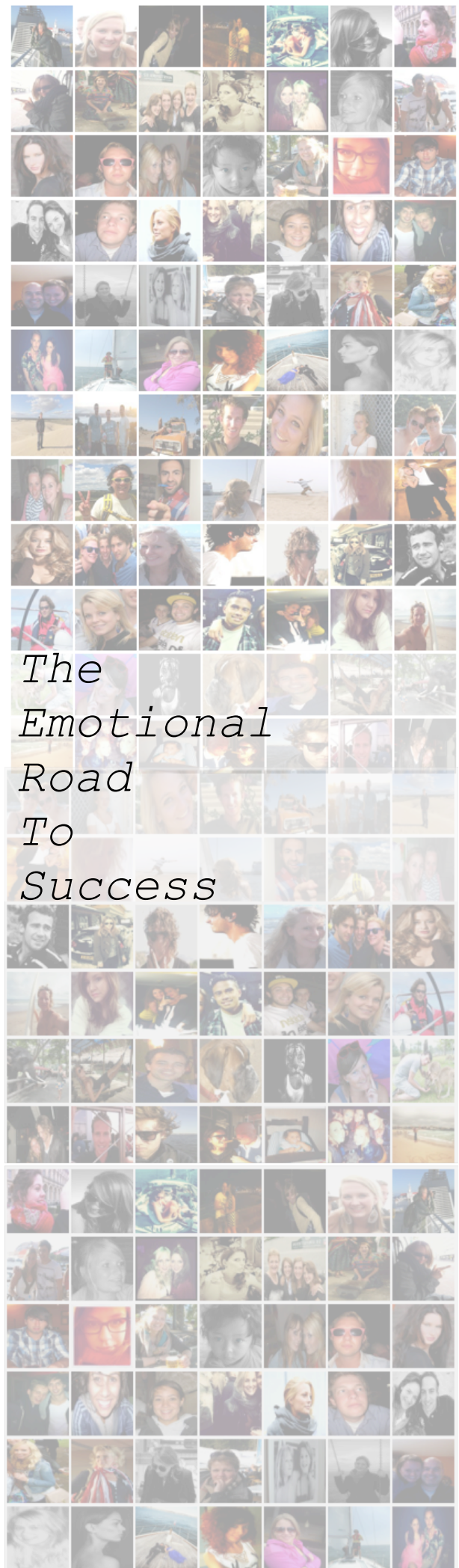


Engaging with Consumer Tribes



*The
Emotional
Road
To
Success*

University of Applied Sciences Utrecht
Communicatiemanagement
International Commercial Communication

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Date: 04-06-2012

Preface

It is already a year ago that I did my internship at Tick Yes and that I was living the 'laid-back Ozzy life'. And after a year I can still say that my internship in Australia was a valuable experience that will help me with my career in the future. Online marketing is a relatively new subject and does not play a big part yet in education. Doing my internship at Tick Yes was a great opportunity for me to get to know all the ins and outs of an online marketing agency. I was involved with everything that was going on in the company, which gave me a great understanding of what the tasks are of an online marketer. Therefore I would like to thank Peter Applebaum and Summer Howcroft to enable me to develop my professional skills and to feel at home in one of the best places of the world; Sydney.

After finishing a second specialization course the time was there to write this thesis on behalf of Tick Yes. What I noticed is that the online world never stands still. The newest Social Media platforms of last year are now well-established platforms and new platforms of which I did not even knew they existed a year ago are now more popular than ever. The fast developments in online marketing make this thesis a start of a research that is an ongoing process. There are always new things to discover and Tick Yes should adapt on these trends by always be informed about the newest developments in the virtual world.

It took a while to write this thesis, sometimes because of my lack of motivation and sometimes because of the many distractions around me. I prioritized drinking coffee with friends, checking out my Facebook (too many times) above writing my thesis. Luckily I did also find some time to finish my thesis and I would like to thank Ed Olijerhoek for all his feedback and valuable tips he gave me while writing it.

Enjoy reading!

Willemijn van den Broek
04-06-2012

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Abstract:

Motivation:

This thesis is written on behalf of Tick Yes, an online marketing agency based in Sydney, Australia. Tick Yes is an agency that wants to build up strong relationships between their clients, the brands, and the (potential) consumers of these brands. During the internship became clear that there are three challenges while writing a marketing communication plan, which ask for a new approach, this is due to several developments in the online world and the behaviour of consumers. The three main challenges are:

- Defining the right target group
- Reaching the right target group with the right communication
- Create engagement and finally brand loyalty

The following main question has been developed to come to a solution for the three challenges:

How does Tick Yes need to adjust their marketing communication plans in order to create engagement between brands and consumers and to create brand loyalty in the long run?

The main question is supported by three sub questions, which are divided into three research parts:

- Research part 1: What global trends affect the behaviour of consumers?
Research part 2: What behaviour of consumers derives from these trends?
Research part 3: What are the most popular social media platforms, and how do consumers make use of it?

These questions are researched by doing an in depth literature study and online desk research. Also different blogs that are written by experts in the field are followed in order to get an understanding of the latest developments in online marketing.

Results of the research:

Part 1: What global trends affect the behaviour of consumers?

There are three main global trends that are responsible for the developments of the behaviour of consumers nowadays:

The first trend is **Participation**, which shows the urge of consumers to collaborate with each other, and the importance of the opinion of other consumers.

The second trend is the trend of the Globalization paradox. Where on the one hand a universal culture occurs where everyone around the world can connect despite nationality or culture, but on the other hand it reinforces the urging for traditional culture.

The last macro trend is the **Creative Society**, which shows the importance for consumers to express themselves with their creativity.

Next to these global trends there are also two micro trends being researched. The most important findings were that brands need to show their **imperfection** to be seen as a reliable brand by its consumers. Another important trend is that brands need to

work together with their consumers in order to win their loyalty, which can be done by setting up a **co-creation**.

Part 2: What behaviour of consumers derives from these trends?

The most important findings of this research part are two features that characterize the behaviour of consumers nowadays. First of all the consumer is looking for consuming emotions. The emotions seem to outweigh the ratio when it comes to the buying decision of consumers.

Next to that the consumer want to link themselves with other consumers and want to identify themselves with people with the same interests. This group forming is also known as the consumer tribes.

Part 3: What are the most popular social media platforms, and how do consumers make use of it?

The four social platforms that are the most popular are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest. Research showed that every platform has its own purpose and that every platform has a different way of communication. To reach the target group it is important to make use of different platforms and to integrate the core message on different platforms.

Advice:

The advice consists of a guide that helps Tick Yes to create marketing communication plans that are adjusted to the behaviour of consumers nowadays. It gives a solution to the three main challenges that needed a different approach:

Six elements are developed that enables a new approach for the three challenges:

How to define the right target group:

- Element 1: Define reason for existence of the brand

To appear as an appealing brand towards consumers it is important to tell a story around the brand that defines the reason for existence of the brand.

- Element 2: Define consumer tribe

The target group should be segmented on a shared interest instead of shared demographics.

How to reach the right consumer target group with the right communication

- Element 3: Define the communicator of the messages

Choosing the right communicator to communicate with the target group is crucial to appear as a personal brand.

- Element 4: Choose the right Social Media platforms

Every Platform has its own purpose, which should be taken into consideration when choosing the platforms to communicate with the target group.

How to create engagement and finally brand loyalty

- Element 5: Communicate the right message

The message that is going to be communicated needs to be appealing for the consumer tribe and needs to be developed for every specific platform.

- Element 6: Facilitate conversation between consumers

To create loyal customers it is important that the brand facilitates the conversation between consumers on the several platforms.

1. Introduction

“Social media is the media we use to be social. That’s it.”

- The social media bible

We cannot deny it anymore: People spend more and more time on social networks these days. But why are people spending this much of their time on social networks? There are several reasons for that. First of all because it is fun; people want to stay informed about what their friends are doing and they want to share their own affairs with whoever is interested. It is also the perfect place to get back in touch with people you know back from the old days. Another reason is that people want to develop themselves in their specialism and increase their business network and possibly find a new job that fit their interests. We like to follow the crowd, we cannot leave behind. Not having a Facebook page almost seems to mean that you are isolated from your friends. We add more and more value to the connection we have with other people and the online world makes it possible to keep in touch with our relationships everywhere at any time.

Bernard Cova (1997) has argued that the ‘links’ (social relationships) are more important than ‘things’ (brands, products, experiences, ideas). At the moment we live in a world that goes beyond the ‘postmodern world’ that stands for being individual and making your own choices. Instead of striving for differentiation it is striving for ‘de-differentiation’ that seems to be guiding individual action. Nowadays we still make our own decisions and have a strong opinion of what we like and dislike, but we are looking for confirmation from people around us. We are social beings who add emotional value to the brands we choose. We want to express our identities by the brands we consume, and with these identities we want to be part of different groups.

In the last years the behaviour of consumers and the way brands need to communicate has remarkably changed, due to new technologies that have developed rapidly. We live in the so-called ‘new-wave technology’ (Kotler, 2010), which stands for the technology that connects and interacts between individuals and groups. This new technology makes it easy accessible for everyone worldwide to be present in the virtual world. For companies it is therefore very important to know how people make use of social networks and what motivates them to start a conversation with a brand via online platforms. Why spending millions of dollars on television campaigns when the social networks are affordable, easy accessible and the right place to find your target group?

Tick Yes wants to build up strong relationships between their clients, the brands, and its consumers via online platforms. By starting the conversation with the right target group via brand communities on social platforms Tick Yes wants to create strong company-consumer relationships. That ‘being online’ is important for a brand is quite obvious. But one of the challenges is to segment and reach the right target group, which goes further than just segmenting the consumer by its demographics or only focussing on a one-on-one relationship with a consumer. It would be a great advantage for Tick Yes if the agency knows more about the (online) behaviour of consumers and could use this to create successful marketing programs for their clients.

2. Motivation & Structure Thesis

2.1 The company

This thesis is written on behalf of Tick Yes. Tick Yes is a digital and social media marketing agency based in Sydney, Australia that uses digital relationship marketing strategies to help clients improve brand awareness, increase market share and meet profit objectives.

The company was founded in January 2001 by Peter Applebaum. He is already a long-time fan of the principles of direct marketing, Peter realized that the advent of the Internet and advances in mobile phone technology made it possible for brands to create stronger relationships with their stakeholders using 20th century direct marketing strategies allied with 21st century technology.¹

2.2 Motive

Tick Yes is an online marketing agency that anticipated on the online trend in an early stage. Tick Yes wants to create strong company-customer relationships for their clients by starting the conversation online with the right target group via brand communities on social platforms.

However, practice showed that there are some hard challenges when it comes to communicating with the right consumer. The old way of segmenting consumers by its demographics does not seem to be relevant anymore. It appeared that in the online world people come together because of a shared interest and not because they have the same age, sex or location. At the same time we are living in a world where people are exposed to numerous messages a day, which makes it impossible to focus on every message we come across. This makes it a real challenge to grab the attention of the right consumers and to hold on to them.

During my internship it became clear that developing a marketing communication plan asks for a different perspective nowadays. Macro trends and trends in marketing communication have a big influence on the behaviour of consumers. That is why several elements that belong in a marketing communication plan need a different focus that adapts on the changing (online) behaviour of consumers nowadays. This thesis provides a research on the developments of the behaviour of consumers and how this behaviour requires a new approach for brands to reach (potential) consumers.

This thesis focuses on three main challenges that need a different approach when developing a marketing communication plan. These challenges are:

- Defining the right target group
- Reach the right target group with the right communication
- Creating engagement and finally brand loyalty

¹ Website Tick Yes - About

These three challenges are the motive of the thesis and the objective of this thesis is to provide Tick Yes with a guide with a new approach directive. The guide consists of elements that need to have a different approach while creating a marketing communication plan that adapts on the new behaviour of consumers. In the following three case studies the three main challenges will be illustrated.

With the rise of the internet and social media platforms people have access to every product and service all over the world. There are no boundaries anymore when it comes to place and time. People's shopping behaviour is based on their lifestyles and interests. That segmenting the target group by just its demographics is not the most effective way anymore to reach (potential) consumers will be illustrated by the following case study.

Case study 1: Naprogesic

Challenge: Define the right target group

About:

Naprogesic is a product manufactured by Bayer Consumer Health. It is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory. It is a medicine that is specifically designed for women to treat the cause of period pain. Tick Yes was asked to come up with a strategy that would improve the online identity of Naprogesic to gain exposure from its target audience and to further cement the brand as a market leader in period pain relief.

Strategy:

Tick Yes created an online branded community 'A Pampered Life' for Australian women in the age group 18 to 25. The site would allow Naprogesic to organically build relationships with consumers, increase brand loyalty and improve sales. A combination of online promotions, email marketing and media relations would attract new members and encourage existing members to be actively involved. The website was constantly updated with new, relevant content to maintain traffic to the website.

Point of improvement:

The problem with the strategy is that it is only focussed on a small age group of women that are suffering from period pain. Most girls with the age of 18 already have their period for several years and the same counts for women older than 25. By only focussing on women with the age 18 till 25 a large group of women is left behind. It would be more logical if Tick Yes focussed on women who suffer from period pain and who do not want this to affect their daily lives. And this has nothing to do with the age of women.



Figure 1: Screenshots community 'A pampered life'

Segmenting the right target audience is not the only problem that is crucial for creating a successful marketing communication plan. It is important for a brand to communicate the right message that is interesting for the segmented target group and that will grab their attention. Consumers are exposed to thousands of messages a day and they are simply not able to absorb every message they see and hear. That communicating the right message towards the right consumer can be a challenge is illustrated in the following case study.

Case Study 2: Bayer Animal Health

Challenge: Reach the right target group with the right communication

About:

Bayer Animal Health manufactures niche pet-health products that are only sold at veterinary clinics. Their main target group are cat and dog owners. Tick Yes was asked to connect and build an intimate relationship with the broader community of dog and cat owners to increase sales and broaden the brand exposure of their product range for the brands they manufacture.

Strategy:

Tick Yes developed two online communities, one for cat owners and one for dog owners with a great love for pets. The names of the community is Cat Diaries and Dog Diaries. Tick Yes has developed a community website, a twitter account and a Facebook page. The interactive website allows users to share videos and photos of their pets, respond on articles and communicate using the online forum. The Facebook page and Twitter account posted articles from the website. To support the interaction several competitions are held via the website and social platforms.

Point of improvement:

For this marketing program it is a great advantage that people who use the product for their pets all have a shared emotion; they love their pets and want to take good care of them. However, the interaction on the website is limited. Visitors did post a photo of their pet and some visitors use the forum but for because there was a lack of integration of the different platforms it is not clear what the core objective is of the communities. Next to that it is unclear who the sender is of the message. The brand is not well represented on the community, which also makes the objective of the community vague.



Figure 2: Screenshots community 'Cat & Dog Diaries'

The next and last challenge this thesis will be based on is that the platforms Tick Yes uses do not enable much interaction. Most of the community websites are still designed for the passive consumer. And the social platforms that do enable interaction are not used a lot by the consumers. It is important that it is possible for consumers to interact with the brand and with other consumers on the different platforms. Next to that it is important that the consumer is encouraged to interact on the platforms. The following case study shows that even when there are great opportunities to enable interaction between consumers, it does not get off the ground.

Case study 3: Landcom

Challenge: Creating engagement and finally brand loyalty.

About:

Landcom is a masterplanner of living communities and has developed residential commercial and industrial properties for close to 30 years in New South Wales. To raise awareness for the existing living communities and new projects Landcom created an online community platform where residents can come together to share tweets, photos and videos, promote their favourite cause, or simply post about the latest-best-place they have discovered. The name of this online community is People Places. Tick Yes was asked to maintain this community website by adding new content like news articles, best places to visit and events. Next to that Landcom wanted to have social media platforms to support the community website People Places.

Strategy:

Tick Yes has created a Facebook page, a Twitter account and a YouTube page for People Places. On the social platforms residents can come together and start a conversation with other residents about their neighbourhoods. Next to that People Places posts the latest news from the community website on the social platforms to drive traffic to the website and connect the social platforms with the community website.

Point of improvement:

The concept of People Places is strong; bring offline communities online to create a strong bond between the residents in those communities. However there is not much interaction on the website and on the social platforms. People Places is the one who posts the most on for example the Facebook page and it is mainly focussed on releases of new projects. There is no real interaction between the residents as supposed to be. The marketing program does not create a natural situation where consumers feel like they help each other by sharing their favourite places and events.



In the previous three case studies the different challenges are pointed out. The following main question has been developed to come to a solution for the three challenges, as pointed out previously:

How does Tick Yes need to adjust their marketing communication plans in order to create engagement between brands and consumers and to create brand loyalty in the long run?

The main question is supported by three sub questions:

- 1. What global trends affect the behaviour of consumers?*
- 2. What behaviour of consumers derives from these trends?*
- 3. What are the most popular social media platforms, and how do consumers make use of it?*

This main question and sub question will give a solution for the challenges that are pointed out in the case studies. To get an answer on the sub questions and in the end the main question an in depth research on consumer behaviour needs to be done.

It is important to get an understanding of the global and marketing trends that influence the behaviour of the consumers. Next to that it is important to study what behaviour is remarkable for the consumer of these days and which platforms they use for which purpose and how brands can communicate with consumers on these platforms.

After the research Tick Yes will be advised in how the company can help brands with:

- Defining the right target group
- Reaching the right target group
- Creating engagement and finally brand loyalty.

2.3 Structure of Research

To cover all the information that is needed to answer the sub-questions and the main question, the research is split up into three research parts, where every research part covers one sub question:

- Part one: Trend report
- Part two: Consumer Behaviour
- Part three: Online Behaviour of Consumers

In **Part one** different macro trends will be researched to get an understanding of what movements influence the behaviour of consumers nowadays. It gives an understanding of trends on a global level that influence the way consumers behave. Next to the global trends some micro trends will be researched to see what trends are influencing the way brands need to market themselves.

In **Part two** it is important to get an understanding of the behaviour of consumers nowadays; what influences their purchase decision. Preliminary research already showed that emotions are becoming more important for consumers when it comes to their shopping behaviour. Personal emotions but also shared emotions influence the

behaviour of consumers. Consumers want to be connected with other consumers and we like to copy identities of each other.

In **Part three** the way consumers use social media will be studied. It is important to know on which social platforms consumers are active and how they make use of these platforms. This research is important to know how brands can communicate the right message at the right place.

After getting through the three research parts, **conclusions** of the research are drawn. These conclusions give an overview of how the main problems, discussed in case studies, can be solved.

The final **advice** will consist of a guide that includes all the new elements that Tick Yes needs to take into account when developing a marketing communication plan.

2.4 Research Methods

Below the research methods are described per research part.

Part 1: For this part a literature study has been done and several websites were consulted about the latest trends. Kotler's book Marketing 3.0 describes the main global trends that affect the behaviour of consumers. Trend sites like trendswatching.com, frankwatching.com and trendtablet.com translate these macro trends into marketing/consumer trends, which will be defined as micro trends.

Part 2: This part consists of a literature study. Three books are important, firstly 'Emotionele Innovatie' that explains the importance of human's emotions and how this is becoming more important in the shopping behaviour than the ratio. The book Consumer Tribes will give an understanding of why people want to be part of groups and how this affects their behaviour. Next to that several academic articles will be consulted and interviews with experts in the field who work with community marketing will give a clear understanding of how the theory is used into practice.

Part 3: Online desk research will be important for this part. Social media platforms are getting more visual and the newest platforms are not described in books yet. To get a view on the newest platforms blogs of experts in the field and social media news sites will be consulted. Next to that the books Social Media Bible and Complete Web Monitoring will give an understanding about how consumers use online platforms and what that means for brands.

Throughout the research several experts are followed that gave their view on marketing subjects covered in this thesis. This input is collected by following interesting bloggers and by visiting events and seminars about new marketing.

2.5 Delimitation

Social Media is wide subject as well as the field of marketing approaches. It is not possible to include everything in one research.

This thesis is delimited to a research on marketing via Social Media with the objective to engage with the consumer. Offline marketing and campaigns for the short run are not part of this research.

Trends that are researched are only the trends that have effect on the behaviour of consumers and mainly their online behaviour.

There are many social networking sites on the Internet. This thesis only focuses on the social networking sites that are popular in Australia and that are focused on business-to-consumer marketing communication. Professional networks like LinkedIn have a big presence on the Internet but this is focused on business-to-business and is therefore not included in the research.

3 Part one: Trend report

3.1 Macro trends

Over the years marketing has gone through many developments. The economy has changed enormously on macro-level and this affects the behaviour of consumers and the way brands should approach them with their marketing. One of the biggest influences on the behaviour of consumers is the rapidly developing technology. Internet has a powerful force on the decision-making process of consumers and the way brands should market their products.

The rapidly developing technology is defined as the new-wave technology. This new-wave technology enables connection and interaction between individuals and groups. It exists of three fundamental forces: Affordable computers and mobile devices, affordable Internet and open source. These forces are powerful because it makes the virtual world easy accessible for almost everyone in the world. This technology is responsible for the developments of the macro trends that will be discussed in this chapter.

Kotler describes in his book ‘Marketing 3.0’ three macro trends that have a strong force on the behaviour of consumers and the way brands should communicate with them. These macro trends are:

- Participation
- Globalization Paradox
- Creative society

The first trend **Participation** describes the developments of the importance of collaboration between consumers. Social media create a strong connection between people, and therefore of course consumers, and makes it possible for everyone in the world to come together.

A reaction on this trend is the development of the **Globalization Paradox** where on the one hand a universal culture occurs where everyone around the world can connect despite nationality or culture, but on the other it reinforced the urging for traditional culture.

The last macro trend that will be discussed is the trend of the **Creative Society**, where consumers want to express themselves by their creativity. With the rise of Social Media it becomes more easily to develop people’s creative side.

In the following subchapters the trends will be subscribed in depth and it will show in what way these trends influence the behaviour of consumers.

3.1.1 Trend: Participation

Marketing 3.0 describes that the trend Participation (McNaily) is driven by the new-wave technology. This trend shows the development from the passive consumer that receives messages of companies towards a well-informed consumer who likes to give their feedback to companies. In the old days the government and authorities knew what was best for consumers and there was not a wide choice in products. Now, with the wide range of products, the consumer is in a position to be picky and to have demands.

The crowd does not only consume news, entertainment and ideas anymore; people are becoming the creators of it. This phenomenon changes the consumers into 'prosumers'. There is an exchange of news, entertainment and ideas between people and it are not only authorities anymore that provide news.

The trend also shows that consumers are mutually connected. Social media enable the consumer to share opinions and experiences and these opinions and experiences have a powerful influence on other people in the same network. The influence that commercials of companies have on the shopping behaviour is decreasing; consumers are more willing to take advice from other consumers instead of businesses. The many product reviews that can be found online are evidence of the power of opinions of consumers.

How is this trend related to the behaviour of consumers?

The consumer is well educated about products and marketing messages and has a strong opinion concerning their shopping behaviour. Consumers want to share their opinion with companies and want to be heard by companies. The interaction between consumer and company are essential but what is characteristic for this age is the importance of the collaboration between consumers. It is harder for a company to influence the shopping behaviour of consumers and consumers are more willing to listen to each other then to what companies have to say.

3.1.2 Trend: Globalization Paradox

Globalization is already an upcoming trend for several years and the trend is still continuing in existence. In the article 'Beyond Porter' Larry Downes already explains that every business, even the ones that are not oriented on a global level are operating in a global market. Improvements in distribution logistics and communication allow almost every business worldwide to sell their products and cooperate with companies worldwide. In the meanwhile the consumer has the change to shop and compare products on a global level. The new-wave technology makes a small village of the world where everything is accessible for everyone.

Globalization affects the whole world, and because the world is still dealing with many different parties, several paradoxes occur. According to Marketing 3.0 the

paradoxes lead to a new trend; the trend of the Globalization Paradox. Products and services are due to the technologies accessible for everybody globally, but on the other hand the national boundaries will never fade because they are controlled by politics and psychology.

Thomas Friedman and Robert Samuelson both have their own point of view of what globalization causes. Thomas Friedman says that the world is flat and that there are no boundaries because products, services and people are exchanged all over the world because of affordable transport and the information technology. Samuelson says in his article 'The World is Still Round' that national boundaries will stay because they are controlled by politics and psychology. This shows that there is a paradox when it comes to globalization.

Globalization causes three macro paradoxes; on political, economic and social-cultural level. The social-cultural paradox has the largest consequences on the behaviour of consumers. Benjamin Barber demonstrated that we live in an age with two opposing principles; we live in an age of tribalism and globalism. With globalism there is one universal and global culture because people can get in touch with each other all over the world, what makes everybody equal. But the globalism is reinforcing the traditional culture as a reaction on the global culture. Ethnicity and religion brings people back together and are fragmenting consumers into smaller tribal units.

How is this trend related to the behaviour of consumers?

These globalization paradox influences the way consumers behave. The paradox leads towards a consumer with a more conscious understanding of social issues like; poverty, injustice, environment, sustainability, community care and social objectives. Consumers want brands with a sense of responsibility that takes consumers seriously and want to create a better world. Consumers live in a world of uncertainty and expect brands to be transparent towards the consumer.

3.1.3 Trend: Creative Society

Technology is again the primary motive for the last trend Creative Society. The role of creativity in the society is increasingly dominant. The group of creative people in the world is still relatively small, but they are playing a prominent role in society. In a world where collaboration is taking the lead because of the new-wave technology creative people are the intersection between consumers. They are the most collaborative, expressive consumers who make the most use of social media.

According to Zohar (1990) people distinguish themselves from others by their creativity. Creative people always want to improve themselves and the world. This is a logic reaction on the globalisation paradox where people are more conscious about public interests and the pursuit towards a better world.

Creative people are looking for experiences that touch their spiritual side. Spirituality can be defined as the appreciation for the nonmaterial aspects of life and the suggestion of a sustainable reality. Spirituality is the heart of the human and the

organisation. It is a process that mainly concerns on an affective level and has interfaces with our deepest existential experience of being alive. Spirituality is space of the inner freedom where creativity has infinite possibilities. It is our awareness of what is valuable in life. It is hard to understand spirituality with a rational mind, and that is the moment where the creative imagination reaches its climax. Spirituality is about how people deal with the inner path that enables a person to discover the essence of his/her being.

It seems that Maslow's hierarchy of needs is turning upside down; in the western world we are living in the psychological needs and safety needs are not as important anymore because they are seen as obvious needs. Self-actualization is becoming the primary need of human beings. People are looking for fulfilling their spiritual needs next to their material needs.

Melinda Davis (2002) believes that spiritual satisfaction belongs to the most essential human needs and may be the ultimate a marketer can differentiate itself from its competitors. Brands should make use of creativity to connect with consumers in order adapt on the spiritual needs of human beings.

How is this trend related to the behaviour of consumers?

Consumers do not just want to consume products anymore. They want to express their creativity and experience their spiritual side. Brands can adapt on this by asking creative input of the consumer when it comes to developing a product or commercial. Consumers are honored when a brand asks them to share their creativity with others.

3.2 Micro-trends

The previous paragraph showed how global trends affect the behaviour of consumers. Consumers are collaborative and relationships with other consumers are becoming more valuable and they consider opinions of other consumers more reliable than messages of brands. Than because of the globalization paradox consumers are becoming more aware of poverty, injustice, environment, sustainability, community care and social objectives. This means that consumers feel more attracted to brands that operate in a sustainable way that cares about public concerns and react on them. By choosing socially responsible brands gives consumers the feeling that they are socially responsible as well. And last because we are living in a time where our primary needs are no longer a challenge to achieve consumers are looking for self-actualization. Creativity plays a significant part in self-actualization; that explains that consumers want to develop their creative side, and even spiritual experiences.

This behaviour that arose from the global trends have their influence on how brands should position themselves in order to attract the attention of consumers and to differentiate themselves from competitors. These trends are the so-called microtrends.

3.2.1 Trend: Imperfection

Many companies still strive for perfection; they want to be the first in what they do and want to be the best in what they do. They want to be liked by everyone and always want to be ahead of their competitors. But according to trendwatching.com consumers do not want brands to be flawless, they want brands to show their imperfections. Consumers want brands to have flaws, because this shows that brands are able to show empathy, generosity, humility, flexibility, maturity, humor, some character and humanity. The brands that are not perfect and are open about it are the most sincere brands, and that is what consumers are looking for; imperfect brands. Brands should act like human beings, and human beings make mistakes. And because other consumers are more reliable than brands it is important to be on the level of consumers and to stop being the perfect brand that stands above their consumer. There are two key drivers that support this trend where brands need to show their minor flaws:²

- Human Brands
- Transparency

Human Brands:

Customers are looking for brands with some personality. Four developments are converging that makes the consumer more focused on the attitude and behaviour of brands.

- Consumers are no longer interested in the typical corporate attitude of companies. They are expecting an open attitude and an honest way of operating. Consumers want companies to be involved on personal and social level.
- Consumers are aware of the fact that a commercial company can be personal and that there is no need to act like a successful corporate company when it earns its profits. Consumers expect a human brand.
- Consumers expect an open, direct interaction with companies. In the online culture it is not excepted anymore to have a stiff and a corporate appearance. They expect companies to have the same attitude as their friends and people in their network.
- Companies need to show their weak points and imperfections because it is in people's nature to get in contact and to be close with people that appear to have no imperfections.

Transparency:

Another significant driver that is important for imperfection is that with the rise of the internet and social media there are many reviews, ratings, reports and leaks online about brands. All the information of a company, even the secret information for the outer world will be accessible online. It is important to have in mind that it is not a bad thing if a negative review pops up on the internet, the key is to react on this negative review and admit that the brand is not perfect in every way. And that is what the consumer attracts to the brand. Consumers tend to believe in brands that have positive and negative reviews instead of the brands with only positive reviews because only positive reviews are seen as a sign of incredibility. There is not a single

² Trend Briefing April 2012: Flawsome – trendwatching.com

brand or product that has no unsatisfied customers.

3.2.2 Trend: Involve the consumer

As said before with the wide choice of products and services the consumer is becoming more specific and demanding. Consumers want to share their opinion with brands and want to participate in the development of products. Some consumers want to show the whole world how talented they are in creating value, they want to express their creativity. There are also consumers that want products or services that are custom-made for their specific lifestyles. There are several motivations for consumers to have the urge to collaborate with companies; some are participating because of the rewards that companies provide. Some consumers are doing it for a living, but there is also a big part of consumers who are participating for recreation.

It is important nowadays for brands to adapt to the urgency of consumers to have a voice. Symbolic value is becoming more influential than materialistic value. Brands need to give dimension for this symbolic value. Not only the products or services are important for the consumer but the interaction between brands and consumers are the most valuable. This collaboration between brands and consumers is co-creation and with the growing developments online the possibilities are endless. Marketers do not have total control anymore over their brands because they are competing with the collective power of consumers. The consumer wants to mean something to others, wants to participate and wants to share experiences. That is why brands need to collaborate with consumers.

It is clear that brands need to involve the consumer, but how can brands create this involvement? Brands can involve the consumer in different ways; they could involve them with inventing and developing of:

- new products and/or services
- new packaging
- a new website
- advertisements/commercials
- banners/virals
- a new marketing campaign

4 Part Two: Consumer Behaviour

4.1 The evolvement of consumer behaviour

In the previous chapter global trends are researched that influence the behaviour of consumers. Also trends in marketing are researched about brand positioning and communication, derived from the global trends. For this chapter an in depth research has been done about the behaviour of consumers arisen from the macro trends.

The trends that are being researched in the previous chapter all have a powerful influence on the behaviour of consumers nowadays and this behaviour is remarkable different that some decades ago. In the nineties leading companies and the government had authority when it came to the product choice consumers had. The consumers could zap their lifestyle together by choosing the products shown on the television. There was not much choice and the consumer was quite passive in the demand of products. But the authority of leading companies and the government has faded and with that the behaviour of consumers changed.

The life of the consumer nowadays is confusing and unpredictable; life is being dominated by thousands of media impressions and product choices. We are not able to receive every message we see or hear, so we are selective consciously and unconsciously on what message we absorb.

One important phenomenon when it comes to the behaviour of consumers is that the consumer wants to 'consume' emotions. Consumers are looking for products that offer more than rational features; they are looking for an emotional value that a product delivers. The emotion seems to outweigh the ratio when it comes to the buying decision of consumers.

Another phenomenon that is linked to the emotional consumer is that the consumer is looking for valuable relationships with others. As Cova explains in his book 'Consumer Tribes' relationships are becoming more valuable to us than actual products. One-to-one relationships between a brand and a consumer are not always effective anymore; the consumer wants to be linked to other consumers and want to identify themselves with people with the same interests. This group forming is also known as tribalization of consumers.

This chapter will give an in depth explanation of how emotions and tribalization affect the behaviour of consumers these days and how this can be used by marketers to reach their target group.

4.2 The emotional consumer

4.2.1 From commonsense to emotion

The consumer of these days wants to ‘consume’ emotions instead of basing their buying decision on only commonsense. Unconsciously we are basing our buying behaviour on the emotions we undergo when we see or use products or services. Buying is not just about fulfilling our primary needs anymore; it is also about having an experience that fulfils our desires and connect with our feelings. The purpose of consumption is the ability to intensify people’s positive emotions and to moderate negative emotions.

Back in the old days people were constantly confronted with threats; hunger, cold, fatally diseases and violence were daily concerns. The number of negative emotions was relatively big. Over the years these threats and negative experiences are structural reduced. The structural reduction of these threats makes it possible for people to consume more positive than negative emotions. When people structurally consume more positive than negative emotions the consumption of emotions is driven by a pursuit of happiness. This is because the everyday threats people had to deal with in the past fell away.

This brings us back to the theory of Maslow’s ‘upside-down’ hierarchy of needs, discussed in the macro trend of Creative Society, where self-actualisation is becoming the most important layer to achieve. Psychical and safety needs are no longer our main concerns; self-actualization is taking the lead.

4.2.2 Emotions & Values

Before looking at how emotions changed the economy of today it is handy to know what emotions exactly are. Also, it is important to know what values are, because values and emotions are strongly connected to each other. A short definition:

Emotion:

Emotions are called up by a physical reaction and are hard to control. Emotions can be divided into primary and secondary emotions. The primary emotions are the emotions that just happen to someone; they are spontaneous reactions like, for example, when you cannot stop yourself from laughing, being angry or crying.

The secondary emotions are based on our didactic ability and our imaginative power. A secondary emotion arouses from information that we already learned in the past. The secondary emotion is a feeling that is caused by a primary emotion. For example, when a child is going to MacDonald’s he will show the primary emotion happiness, but this emotion is aroused secondary, because the child learned that when he goes to MacDonald’s he will get a toy with his Happy Meal.

Values:

A value is something that someone finds important, and want to strive after. Values lead to a certain attitude and this attitude will cause our emotions. Values can be seen as the compass towards our emotions.

Where many people will have the same values, everyone will have their own realization of these values because we all experience emotions in our own way. Take for example the value happiness. Happiness is for most people an key value, which takes a dominant place in fulfilling the meaning of peoples' lives. But the realization of happiness and the way people experience it is a different combination of feelings and emotions for everyone.

A research for the book 'Emotionele Innovatie' concluded that there are 192 different values. Schwartz created ten universal values, the so-called mindsets, which are covering all the 192 values. These are the ten mindsets with two important belonging values:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| - Universality | Equality & Justice |
| - Security | Protection & Trust |
| - Power | Authority & Status |
| - Tradition | Conservative & Discipline |
| - Harmony | Respect & Reasonableness |
| - Vitality | Challenge & Exciting live |
| - Achievement | Looking for Admission & Strive for success |
| - Independence | Establish Goals & Creativity |
| - Hedonism | Fun & Comfort |
| - Care | Equality & Solidarity |

4.2.3 Emotion Economy

After knowing what emotions and values are, a close look can be given on how emotions affect the economy of today.

Pine and Gilmore (1998) noted that emotions are influencing the economy of today. According to them the consumer in the current society wants more than just a product and is willing to spend money on an experience. An experience can be defined as an occasion where a person is actively and emotional involved and which has value and meaning for the individual. The value a customer attaches towards the experience a product offers determines the price of that specific product or service.

This is the so-called Experience Economy. In the experience economy the consumer has to be reached on an emotional level, at the right place, time and with the right voice.

There are some critics on the theory of Pine and Gilmore because they limit their theory only on events that should give consumers memorable experiences. This is quite limited because also consuming products and services evoke emotions, there does not have to take place an actual event. It goes further than the experience; consumers want to consume emotions and are looking for an added value that

products and services offer. Lier describes this extended economy in his book 'Van Experience naar Challenge Economy' .

Lier (2009) takes the experience economy to a higher level. Experiences are a good way to grab the attention of the consumer, but they are not lasting and consumers will get bored of the same experience after a while. Offering a challenge will create a new value for the consumer. The challenge economy is about the impact a product or service has on the personality of the user. The added value that a product or service offers is seen as the 'challenge' . The challenge should dare the consumer to work on its personal improvements. If the consumer actually improves itself, the consumer is situated in the transformation process.

Take for example free-range eggs; people are willing to spend more money on these biological eggs because they know that the chickens had a decent life. By their decision they helped towards a better life for chickens and they feel better about themselves.

4.2.5 Emo-markets

In today's economy brands need to sell products with an added value to touch the emotions of consumers. However, this does not always mean that people want to improve the world or society with every purchase they do. An interesting way to touch the emotions of the self-indulgent consumer is to reach consumers in their emo-worlds.

Van Kralingen (2009) describes in 'Emotionele Innovatie' that there are numerous of different markets in the emotion economy where a certain emotional theme calls up emotions. These markets are sources of emotion and inspiration. People live in different emotional worlds, the so-called emo-worlds or emo-markets.

18 most important emo-worlds are the world of religion, music, art and culture, literature, sport, politics, nature, enterprise, family, fashion, travelling, entertainment, cooking, living, spirituality, children, animals and love. These are all emo-worlds that call up positive emotions, but there are also negative emo-markets. These are, for example, the markets to cure diseases, financial risks and divorces. These are also large markets and therefore important; life does not only exist of positive emotions.

In one emo-world different product categories can be found that all call up different emotions. Also, within those categories different brands call up different emotions. Consumers are always shifting from one emo-world to another. They are on the look for changes in their emotional consumption.

Every world has its own icons, which are the heroes of that specific emo-world. These heroes are the so-called masters of emotions; they inspire us and connect with our emotions. These heroes can be celebrities, artists, designers, politicians, Chiefs of leading companies (e.g. Steve Jobs) and so on. These are influential people who can reach many people with their opinions and experiences in certain emo-worlds. They are the powerful people that brands should keep an eye on to reach the mass.

There is a contradiction notable in the way people consume emotions. At one hand we see the self-indulgent consumer who is focused on experiencing emotions for themselves. But there is also emotional consumption with in mind the responsibility for the society, focused on the meaning of life and the 'us'. The next subchapter contains a research about the emotional consumer that is focused on 'us' and want to share emotions.

4.3 Consumer Tribes

In the previous sub-chapter it already came clear that human beings are social. In the emo-worlds we want to share our emotions with other people with the same compassion. Whether it is the same taste for music, fashion or art. It can even be a combination of different emo-worlds, people who wear shoes of the same brand and listen to the same music and go to the same sort of festivals.

Emo-worlds are the evidence of that segmenting a target audience on their demographics is not effective anymore. People with the same sex, age and nationality can be opposites when it comes to lifestyles and interests. A woman of 30 can have the same passion and interest as a girl of 20 or a man of 65. Take for example sailing; people of all ages and with all types of social status can be a fanatic sailor. It can be possible that sailing is the only shared passion the man and women have, but they do can be active in the same community. People do not belong to only one tribe, but they belong to many different tribes.

4.3.1 Why do people want to belong to tribes?

Emotions are contagious and that is why people are inclined to copy the behaviour of others.

Not only in our emotions but also our thoughts are copied from others, this phenomenon is the so-called groupthink. Groupthink means that one specific thought will cause that the whole group will have thoughts in the same direction. It is an important factor in the group behaviour of small and large groups.

There is an explanation for our urge to copy others in our surrounding with the same interest and who share certain values or emotions. People have a strong feeling for empathy. Empathy is the capacity to recognize and share feelings that are being experienced by another person. The Age of Participation has a great influence on the collaboration between consumers. The new-wave technology facilitates many possibilities to connect people with each other with the same interest or compassion for something. Online communities for example are a great way for people to share their empathy for each other.

Sharing emotions is characterizing the consumer of today. And these 'links' (social relationships) are becoming more important for consumers than the 'things' (brands or products) (Cova, B. 1997). For brands it is important to find the group value, also known as the glue value, of a tribe and find the shared values and norms of

interest and behaviour. People with the same compassion are connected to each other and form a tribe. This tribalization of people on and offline makes it possible to share their shared emotions and share their experiences.

4.3.2 Four different roles

Cova, B. and Cova, V. (2002) distinguish four different roles of individuals when it comes to consumer tribes; sympathisers, participants, devotees and practitioners. The roles all have a different participation in a consumer tribe:

- Sympathisers/Spectators: This group has the least emotional connection with the product. They do not belong to any formal organisation or tribe and do not use the product on a daily basis. Their knowledge about the product is relatively small.
- Participants: These people are the ones that socialize with the tribe online as well as offline. They attend special gatherings.
- Devotees: These members have a long-standing passion, knowledge and involvement with the tribe. Devotees join clubs or organizations. They might be not as frequently active, but the shared link is a central part of their self-identity.
- Practitioners: These are the people who make regularly use of the product that connects the tribe's shared interest. They adopted the use of the product on their day-to-day lives, but they do not attend special gatherings or join any clubs or organisations.

In the following model the different four roles are classified by their contribution towards a tribe. The horizontal axis is the 'visible' axis and shows the physical evidence of a tribe. These are the moments that tribes come together; this can be a physical meeting place or a virtual place where people come together. The vertical axis is the invisible axis and is divided into signs coming from consumer's day-to-day activities and from trends in society.³

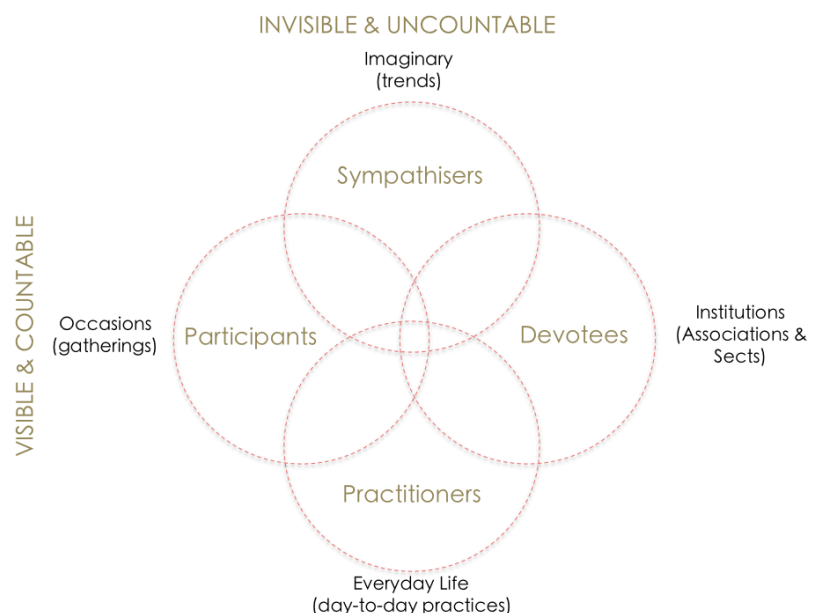


Figure 4: Roles of Tribe Members

As can be seen in the model, the sympathisers and practitioners are the invisible and uncountable consumers. There is not a concrete number of consumers that fulfil these roles. These groups on the invisible axis are rich in consumer potential.

³ Tribal Marketing (2002) Model of four roles of Tribe Members

The participants and devotees are the visible and countable consumers. These are the consumers that actually come together for their rituals, whether it is on or offline. The number of consumers who participate on events or in online communities are easy to register.

As the model explains, not everyone is equally active in a tribe and not everyone has to know each other in one tribe. Sometimes a glue value can lead to many local sub tribes or to a tribe that is that big that it is impossible to know everyone. The only thing they can have in common is the same compassion for a product, brand or lifestyle.

4.3.3 How brands should adapt on consumer tribes

Brands should market themselves with the thoughts that they do not want to talk to consumers, but want to talk through consumers. The consumer is the most reliable source of information for other consumers. Because of this brands do not have to reach everyone that is participating in a tribe. Only reaching the ones that have a great compassion with the subject, like the devotees, can be enough to reach the whole tribe.

Same counts for the masters of emotions discussed in the previous sub chapter. They have a great influence on the people that admire them. When they are enthusiastic about something they can easily convince others with great stories about the subject.

To engage with a tribe it is not only important to have a conversation or facilitate the conversation. It is important to enable people to tell stories about themselves and each other. In a tribe people are all enthusiastic about a certain subject and they want to share their experiences about it.

5 Part three: Consumer behaviour online

In the previous research it already came clear that people like to collaborate and want to share their emotions with each other. Social media have a significant influence on this. That is why this last research part includes a research about different types of social networks. How consumers make use of them and why they are interesting for brands to use as a communication tool. Some case studies will visualize how brands can use these platforms.

5.1 So, what is Social Media?

The most straightforward explanation is that social media is the media that we use to be social. It is all about sharing content about ourselves with others. But what are social media exactly? Social media are Internet applications that make it possible to share information with each other on a user-friendly and mostly engaging way. The content regards to written text, sound, images and movies. Social media allow the creation and exchange of user-generated-content.

The media that we use to express ourselves and share our feelings and happenings with each other are called expressive social media (Kotler 2010). These expressive social media are interesting for companies because this is the place where people connect and where the conversation is going on. It is the ideal place for businesses to get to know the market they are operating in and to get in touch with their (potential) consumers.

There are many different social media platforms as shown in the Conversation Prism by Brian Solis and JESS3 in the appendix page II, and it is impossible to cover them all in this chapter. This chapter focuses on Australia's most popular international platforms used these days⁴. The platforms that are researched in this chapter are:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------|
| - Social networking sites | > | Facebook |
| - Microblogging | > | Twitter |
| - Content communities | > | YouTube & Pinterest |

Different questions are answered about these social platforms to give an understanding of how consumers make use of these platforms and how brands should use these platforms. The question that are answered in this chapter are:

- What type of platform is it and how does it work?
- What is the main reason for consumers to participate on the social platform?
- What is the main reason for brands to participate on the social platform?
- How are people linked with each other?
- How can a brand communicate on the social platforms?

⁴ infographic: Asia-Pacific Social Media Statistics

5.1.1 Social networking sites

Social networking sites are communities built around the personal relationships of their members. Social networking sites are keeping track of whom each participant knows and how they know each other. Each member creates a private community through a white list of known friends and acquaintances. This list is able to see all your personal details and interests and content updates that are post on their personal account. The most popular social networking site is Facebook. This platform has the largest number of members at the moment. It is a platform much used by brands to create exposure and engagement.

Facebook

Facebook is a platform where users can connect with their friends, family and colleagues in various network groups. Users are notified when someone in their network updates their page or status. Personal data, pictures, status updates, videos or experiences can be shared with the personal network. The network site also offers a page where people can share their interests for books, movies, television programs, people, events and brands.

Facebook has at the moment more than 500 milion members and the number is still growing.⁵ This great amount of members means that a large group of potential consumers is active on Facebook. 50% of the active people log on to Facebook every day and people spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook which is almost 24 hours per person per month on average. The easy usability and the fact that people can go online to see how their friends are doing makes Facebook anextremely popular Social Networking Site.

5.1.2 Microblogging

Microblogging applications are small messages that contain only a small number of characters shared with a group. The goal of microblogging is to make it possible to share the hottest news and sometimes even quicker than authorities do. People are as well creators as consumers of the news spread on the platform.

There are many microblogging platforms, but the most popular one is Twitter. It is possible to follow people, but people do not automatically follow you back. Twitter is the biggest international microblogging website at the moment.

Twitter

Twitter is an information network, where millions of people, organizations, and businesses share and discover new information. The platform exists of short messages no longer than 140 characters, also known as ‘tweets’ . The messages are public to everyone and anyone can read, write and share these messages. When you are having an account you can subscribe to other accounts to automatically follow their messages, which show up in your timeline.⁶

⁵ Statistics according to Facebook's Company Info – Key Facts, April 2012

⁶ Twitter Help Centre: Twitter Basics, via support.twitter.com

Unique features are that you can mention people of your network in your tweets, and the tweet will appear on the person's profile too. It is also possible to add a # hash tag in front of keywords to make these go viral and make them appear in the trending topic.

5.1.3 Content communities

Content communities are communities that are focused on sharing particular kinds of content. The most popular content communities share photos, videos or bookmarks. The largest content community is YouTube, a community where only video content can be shared. A new and upcoming content community, which is worthwhile looking at, is Pinterest. Pinterest is a community where inspirational photos and images can be shared. According to Mashable, Pinterest is the third in the rank of website traffic.

YouTube

Also before the rise of the internet it already came clear that video is a powerful way to attract the attention of people. And now in combination with social media people are able to share their own video content online with others. Where people are passive when it comes to watching television, is YouTube all about the interactive way of watching video content.

YouTube started as a private company. In October 2006 Google Inc. bought the platform. At the moment it is the world's largest video sharing service, with over 100 million videos viewed every day. YouTube is an open platform; you do not have to subscribe to watch the videos. You do need to be a member to create a channel of your favourite videos and to upload your own videos. The viral nature of YouTube makes it easy for people to copy and paste YouTube videos and share them on other social platforms and blogs. This enhances the chance that a video goes viral.

Pinterest

Pinterest, founded in March 2010, is a relatively new player in the world of Social Media. This platform is a virtual pinboard where people can share photos and images. The goal of Pinterest is that people can share their interests with the use of visuals. Popular sections on the platform are: Fashion, food, interior and architecture, design, art, craft projects, travelling, weddings and health/fitness.

The platform is very popular among women between the age 25 and 54. Members can create their own pinboards with certain themes where they can categorize their inspirational images and photos they found on other websites or on other pinboards. All the images posted on Pinterest need to refer to the source of where it is found, so that others can see where it is coming from.

In the following chapters the purpose of every platform will be discussed for as well the members as brands. Also the way people are linked will be discussed and how brands can communicate via the different platforms.

5.2 Facebook

Main reason usage for members:

The main reason for Facebook members to use the platform is to stay in touch and to share their happenings with the people in their whitelist. The content can differ from written updates, photos/videos to links. People mostly share happenings about their personal lives. Every member has its own news feed page where the latest updates of friends are outlined. This makes it easy to follow the lives of friends even when they are on the other side of the world. The news feed is constantly changing when new messages of friends are updated.

Main reason usage brands:

The main reason for brands to be present on Facebook is to be part of the virtual day-to-day lives of consumers. Facebook is a platform where people share their personal stories and where people like to express their lifestyles by showing what interests they have and what brands they like. By having a big group consumers liking your brand can be valuable for the brand. Because this means that people feel connected with the brand and want to show this to others.

Social links between members:

Facebook is all about the personal relations between members. Important characteristics of the connection between members on Facebook are:

- People who connect with each other are mainly friends/family/acquaintance. It is more aimed at personal relations than professional.
- There is a two-way connection between people. Members need to invite each other in order to get into the white list. Friend requests need to be accepted in order to get someone's updates in the personal news feed.
- Facebook makes it possible to categorize people in groups on how you know someone.
- There is a distinction between profiles of persons or companies/organisations that have branded pages.

In the scheme on the right the connections between people are sketched. As can be seen the people are connected with each other and belong to different groups, for example family, association or soccer club. These are all dynamic groups and

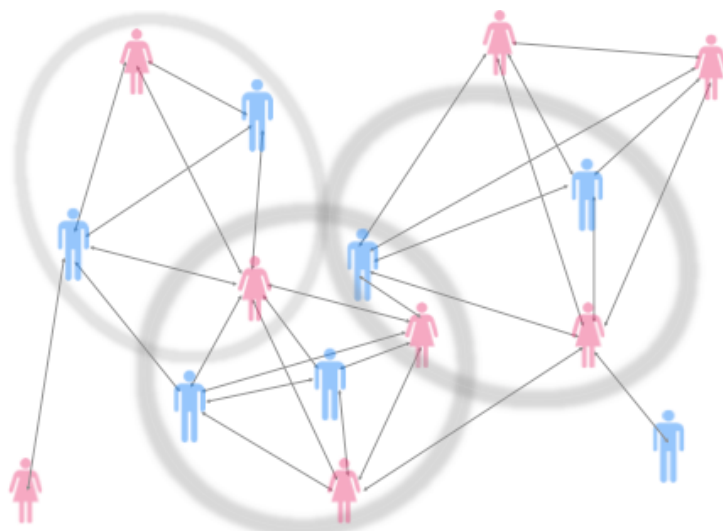


Figure 5: Social Links between members: Facebook

people belong to several groups.

Social links between brands and consumers:

When a brand starts a branded Facebook page people can like that page if they feel that the brand fits their lifestyle or interests. After liking the branded Facebook page, it will appear on the profile of that person. This makes it possible for friends and family to see what the interests of their network is. When visiting a branded Facebook page people can see which friends of their network already likes that certain brand. Branded pages differ from member pages. Where members need to send friend requests brands cannot request a connection. Members have to like the page and brands do not have any influence on who likes their brand and who not.

Communication:

Brands cannot influence the members who like and who do not like the brand. Important is to communicate the right message to the right target group in order to attract the right members. Facebook has different ways to start the conversation with and between consumers. A brand can post updates or photos/videos where consumers can respond on. There is also a feature to create a poll to get the opinion of consumers. And by asking questions consumers are appealed to react on it. The best way of engagement is when people share your content on their own wall. Facebook tracks the engagement by measuring the number of people who talked about the brand in the past week.

Facebook also has a unique feature, called Facebook Groups. This is a discussion board where people with the same interest come together to share experiences and knowledge. This can be a great tool for brands to facilitate a place where consumers can communicate with each other.

5.3 Twitter

Main reason usage for members:

The main reason for people to use Twitter is for networking with others, on personal or business level. People follow others because of their interests or occupation. Members like to share short updates about their personal lives and about developments in their specialism. Another reason for using Twitter is to stay up to date with the latest news.

Main reason usage brands:

The main purpose for brands to participate on Twitter is to gain brand exposure and tweet updates about the latest developments within the company and its environment. It is also a great platform to moderate opinions of consumers about your brand and to actively get involved in the conversation about your brand.

Twitter is a Social networking site where people like to share their opinion. Because of the short and quick messages, people are most of the time placing a tweet impulsively. This means that if someone has an opinion about your brand it can be online within seconds, either positive or negative.

Brands can almost not ignore it anymore that it is important to be present on Twitter these days. According to Philip Ferdinand, every brand is participating on Twitter, no matter if you are actively participating or people just talking about you. Twitter is full of opinions about brands, whether they are Twitter members themselves or not.

Social links between members:

Important characteristics of the connection between members on Twitter are:

- You can follow someone you find interesting, but that person does not have to follow you back.
- Influential people or companies can have a large group of followers. (e.g. Actors, singers, politicians, news channels) Where for most members it takes time to create a large network influential people can create this
- Organisations and people have the same profile.
- Members with valuable content will have a larger group of followers than members who hardly have any content. Having more followers than people you follow is a sign of credibility and that a member tweets valuable information.

In the scheme on the right there is a clear distinction between the influential people who have many followers and the persons that are less influential. Some people do follow each other, which means that they know each other or that they have a like-minded interest about a subject.

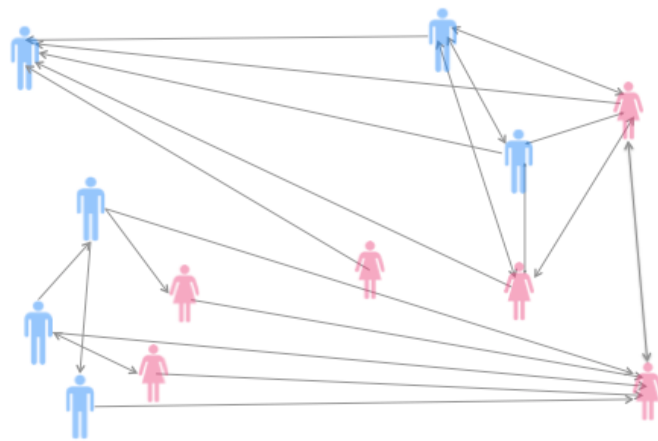


Figure 6: Social Links between members: Twitter

Social links between brands and consumers:

Twitter has the unique feature that people can follow your brand but that you do not have to follow that person back. Getting exposure, which means many followers on Twitter, takes time. Following influential people with many followers can help increasing the number of followers of a brand, on condition that those followers are potentially interested in your brand. Like said before it is important to have a larger group of followers than people that are followed, to get a positive Twitter reputation and appear as a reliable brand.

Communication:

Twitter is a huge network and when a member has a large personal network the profile can get quite unclear, because new messages are added on your profile all the time. There are different ways to make the conversations on Twitter more clear:

- Mention: You can mention an account by using the @ symbol followed by the account name. The Tweet will then appear on that person's news feed.
- Retweet: You can use the retweet button to share someone else's Tweet with your followers.
- Message: You can send a private/direct message to someone who is following

you by starting your Tweet with DM followed by the @ symbol, the name and then your message.

- Hashtag: You can use the # symbol before important words in your tweet. By clicking on these words you can see who else tweeted about the same subject.

The # symbol is really important if you want to start a conversation with consumers. Every message with a # followed by the used keyword can be monitored. Also by using the @ symbol the conversation can get more personal.

5.4 YouTube

Main reason usage for members:

Main reason for people to use YouTube is to share own-made videos and watch videos of others. Some people use it to share their talents with the world hoping to get discovered or people make and share videos just for fun. YouTube is all about entertainment but it can also be informative. Everyone who has the tools to make a video can share the video on YouTube no matter how amateur-like the content is.

Main reason usage brands:

People like to tell and hear stories and YouTube is a great platform for brands to tell stories about their brand. YouTube videos are most of the time videos made with a hand camera and brands do not have to produce professional videos anymore. By making amateur-like videos, people will believe the message you say. The videos will show the personality behind the brand, which creates a sense of reliability.

Social links between members:

Important characteristics of the connection between members on YouTube are:

- Interesting about YouTube is that you do not have to be a member to watch videos of others. All the channels and videos can be watched without subscription.
- If you are a member it is possible to share videos, rate videos of others and give comments.
- Members can subscribe to members' video channel to stay up to date with the videos.

In the scheme on the right the links between members is illustrated. People can follow each other, but this is not necessary the case.

Social links between brands and consumers:

Brands can create a branded channel where they can upload all their videos. Consumers can subscribe to these branded channels to be up to date with the latest videos. It is important that a

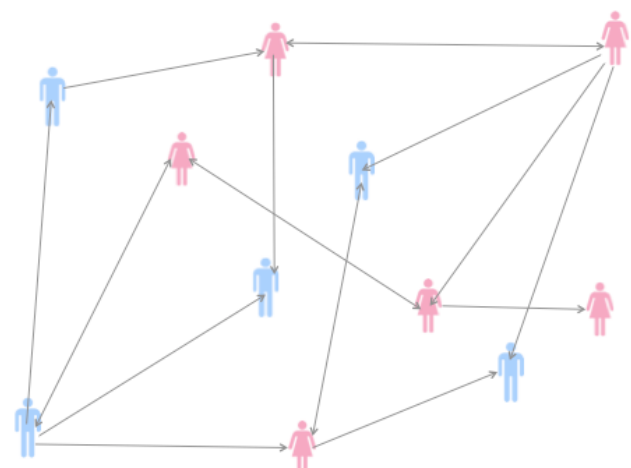


Figure 7: Social Links between members: YouTube

brand puts up new content regularly to make the consumers come back to the video channel. Brands can also react on videos of their fans in order to create interaction and to show that there is a person behind the brand. There are also many consumers who will watch the videos without being a YouTube member, it is not possible to start a conversation with them. But it does create awareness around the brand and these people are able to share the videos on their social platforms.

Communication:

Compared to the other platform, it is quite difficult to start the conversation on YouTube. Consumers do not have to be a member when they want to watch the videos. This means that they do not have to subscribe in order to get access to the content. Only by commenting on videos a conversation can start. However, YouTube can be a great tool to engage with consumers, because the nature of the videos is that they can go viral easily. It is a great platform to use together with other social media platforms. Brands can create a branded channel where they can put all their videos and add additional information about the brand. When people subscribe to the channel people are notified when a new video is posted. This can lead towards loyal visitors of your channel. And when people keep coming back they are willing to comment on the videos and even share them on their social media accounts.

5.5 Pinterest

Main reason usage for members:

Main reason for people to use Pinterest is to share images and photos of their interest. It can also be a video, but it are mainly images. People participate on Pinterest to inspire people and to get inspired by others. The unique character of Pinterest is that the content members share on their personal pinboard does not have to be their own content.

Main reason usage brands:

The main purpose for brands to be on Pinterest is to visualize their brand and to inspire people with the things that the brand inspires. It is also a great way to get to know a brand' s target group to see what their interests are. Where YouTube is a perfect platform to tell stories with their videos, Pinterest is a perfect platform to tell stories by visuals. Images are a strong way to create an ambiance around the brand.

Social links between members:

Important characteristics of the connection between members on Pinterest are:

- The connection on Pinterest is quite similar to the connection of people on YouTube. You can follow people of which you think they have interesting content on their pinboards. Also on this platform it is possible to view the content without being a member of Pinterest.
- It is possible to like images and to 'repin' images on your own pinboards.
- People connect with others because of the same sort of interest or lifestyle.

Because the connection on Pinterest is similar to the connection of people on YouTube it also has the same illustration as YouTube.

Social links between brands and consumers:

Pinterest is a great way to find out what the interests are of a brand's target group. People who follow the brand or repin the images that a brand pinned are the people who

are interested in your product, or at least the story behind the product. Tracking this group of people makes it possible to get an insight of where the target group is interested in, in order to learn more about their personalities. Pinterest has, just like Twitter, a group of influential people who have many followers. When an influential person likes a brand's pinboard it is important to follow this person to create more followers through this influential people.

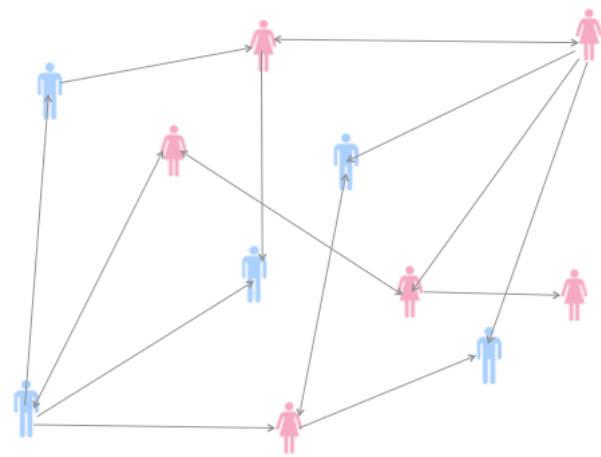


Figure 8: Social Links between members: Pinterest

Communication:

Pinterest communicates by images. People can react on those images and that's where the conversation can take place. It is a great way to engage with consumers because the images are powerful tools to show the lifestyle around the product and it is easy for consumers to refer with the lifestyle around the brand. By choosing the right images people will 'repin' them on their own board and people of their network can 'repin' it again. In this way consumers are the ones that share images and brands only facilitate them.

5.6 Case Studies

For this research four case studies are written to get a better understanding of how brands communicate via the social platforms mentioned above. Here, a short conclusion of the four case studies can be found. To read the whole case study with screenshots go to the appendix page III.

Case Study 4: AllSaints uses music to connect people on Facebook

AllSaints Spitafield is a clothing brand that mixes Fashion with Culture and Music. The brand wanted to bring people together with the same passion that goes beyond fashion. The consumer tribe they wanted to reach are artistic people who are a great fan of fashion and music, in particular festivals and live performances.⁷

AllSaints came up with the Basement Sessions, which are weekly recorded sessions of live performances, insightful interviews and upfront podcasts for a global audience featuring new artists, pioneers and bastions within the industry. The brand decided to share these sessions on YouTube and syndicate these videos on Facebook. The Basement Session is a huge success that creates great interaction between consumer and brands and between the consumers.

Case Study 5: Vodafone Australia's Customer Service on Twitter

Vodafone decided to not ignore the negative comments that appeared on Facebook but to face them. The mobile phone network created two Twitter account to facilitate Customer Service via Twitter. One account is there to talk about random subject. Another account is there to answer questions of customers who have problems with their network or mobile phone.

This Social Media strategy is a success is because by helping customers instantly and take away the long waiting times for callings Vodafone creates a loyal and positive relationship with its customers.

Another reason for the success is that the tweets from Vodafone are personalized with initials and on the homepage you can see who answered your query. This makes the contact with the brand more personal.

⁷ Branded Facebook Page AllSaints – About section

Case Study 6: How Old Spice made a comeback on YouTube

Old Spice, a brand that produces deodorant, antiperspirant and fragrances for men, is already 71 years old and wanted to make its comeback and attract a younger target audience. They decided to start a Social Media campaign that turned out to be a great success.

Old Spice started with just posting commercials with one mail actor as the main character of the commercials. These commercials already caused interaction with consumers. But Old Spice wanted to increase the success of the Social Media campaign and started the Social Response campaign. The brand started to produce personalised videos aimed at people who tweeted about the videos. This became a great success and made this campaign one of the most viewed Social Media campaigns ever.

Case Study 7: How does Michaels Stores make use of Pinterest

Michaels Stores is the largest specialty retailer that sells a selection of arts, crafts, framing, floral, wall décor, bakeware, beads, scrapbooking and seasonal merchandise for hobbyists and do-it-yourself home decorators.

Michaels started to use Pinterest to communicate with their consumers. They started inspirational pinboards about different DIY projects. Whether you like to knit, make things from recycled materials, or bake, there are pinboards for many types of people and hobbies. The people do have one thing in common which is their passion for craft and DIY projects.

Michaels Stores wants to inspire other people via the Social Platform. Next to that the brand wants to create engagement with their followers. The brand has a pinboard where it shares projects from their followers. In this way consumers inspire each other with their craft projects.

6 Conclusion of research

The previous research parts gave insight about the behaviour of consumers and the use of the most popular Social Media platforms. This chapter gives a conclusion of the most important findings that give answer to the three sub questions.

6.1 What global trends affect the behaviour of consumers?

In the first research part the objective was to research the most important trends on macro and micro level that affect the behaviour of consumers. Kotler describes in his book Marketing 3.0 that there are three important macro trends: Participation, Globalization Paradox and Creative Society.

It became clear that the new-wave technology, which enables consumers to interact and connect with each other via online platforms, is an important force on the developments of these trends.

Participation:

This trend turns the consumer of nowadays into ‘prosumers’. They are not anymore the ones that only consume products, news, entertainment and ideas; they are now also the creators of it.

The consumer expects to collaborate with brands, but more important is the collaboration between consumers. Consumers see each other as the most reliable source when it comes to information. Consumers are more willing to believe each other than the promises a brand make.

Globalization Paradox:

Globalization stays an important trend. It is found that there is a paradox when it comes to globalization. Because people are connected with each other all over the world, people become equal to each other, everyone is the same. There is one big universal culture. On the opposite we see that consumers urge towards their traditional cultures as a reaction on this globalization.

Consumers get more conscious about social issues and expect brands to take their responsibilities and be transparent towards the consumer.

Creative Society:

The hierarchy of needs of Maslow seems to turn upside down; self-actualisation is the most important effort for people. Consumers are looking for ways to express their creativity and want to touch their spiritual side to explore their meaning of live.

There are also interesting micro trends being researched. The most important findings were that brands need to be imperfect to be reliable and that brands need to work together with the consumer in order to win their loyalty.

Imperfection:

For brands to appear reliable it is important to be imperfect. Imperfection is a sign of humanity and that is what consumers find important these days. Brands need to be open to consumers and communicate on the same level as the consumers.

With the many reviews and ratings online about almost every product it is important that there is no need to have only positive reviews. Some negative reviews will show that the brand is not perfect and that is a sign of credibility for consumers.

Co-Creation:

Another important micro trend is that brands should make use of co-creation. Macro trends showed that consumers want to collaborate and show their creativity, and with co-creation brands involve the consumer with inventing and developing for example new products/packaging or commercials.

6.2 What behaviour of consumers derives from these trends?

The previous research part already showed that the behaviour of consumers changed. This research part took a closer look at how consumers behave when it comes to making decisions and consuming products. Two features appeared to be important. The consumer is emotional when it comes to making decisions and consuming products. Thereby, they are looking for social links with other consumers that have the same interest or lifestyle.

Emotional Consumer:

Brands need to offer more than just a product. Consumers are looking for an added value when it comes to purchasing and consuming products. Consumers base their buying behaviour on the emotions they undergo and not only with their commonsense. We consume to create positive emotions or to moderate the negative ones.

Van Lier discusses that we are living in the challenge economy where consumers are looking for an added value and want to improve the world and their personality. A good example is biological food. People are willing to spend more money if they know it is better for the world. This gives them a better feeling about themselves. Emo-worlds are also important to keep an eye on as a brand. These worlds have certain emotional themes that call up emotions; for example music, art, fashion and travelling. Every world has its own icons, the so-called masters of emotions. This can be artists, celebrities, politicians and designers. They are seen as the heroes of the emo-worlds and have a big influence on the group in that emo-world.

Consumer Tribes:

Segmenting a target audience by its demographics is not effective anymore. People with different demographics can have a wide range of interests and lifestyles. People with the same interests like to connect with each other and the online world is an ideal tool to make this possible. For brands it is important to find the glue value that keeps the group together. This glue value is an important factor for a brand to base their communication on.

People can have different roles in a tribe. Cova and Cova distinguished four different roles:

- Sympathisers: Only have a small knowledge about product and has the least emotional connection with it.
- Participants: These people are the ones that socialize with the online as well as offline. They attend special gatherings.
- Devotees: They do not use the product on a frequently basis, but the shared links with others is a central part of their self-identity.
- Practitioners: These are the people who consume the product on a day-to-day life, but they do not feel that connected that they want to participate on special gatherings or institutions.

This distinction shows how people can participate in a tribe. Every group needs a different way of communication. Where the sympathisers are relatively new to the product the devotees see it as an important value in their lives. Here the devotees can act like the ambassadors of the brand and can influence the sympathisers and practitioners.

6.3 What are the most popular social media platforms, and how do consumers make use of it?

After researching the different platforms it appeared that every platform has its own features and a different purpose to use it both for brands as for consumers. The following tables on the page give an overview of the most important characteristics of the platforms.

	Facebook	Twitter
Reason consumers	Stay in touch with friends, family and acquaintance about their day-to-day lives.	Create a network of people and businesses with the same interests or occupation.
Reason Brands	Being present in the personal day-to-day lives of (potential) consumers.	Monitor opinions of consumers about the brand and actively get involved in the conversation about the brand.
Social Links consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two-way connection between people - Possibilities to categorize people in how you know someone. - People who connect with each other are mainly friends or family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You can follow someone you find interesting, but that person does not have to follow you back. - Influential people or companies have a large group of followers. - Organisations and people have the same profile.
Social links brands-consumers	Brands have a different profile than regular members. People can like the brand and this appears on their interests page. Other people can see this and when they visit the Facebook page of a brand, they can also see which brands like that brand.	Twitter has the unique feature that people can follow your brand but that you do not have to follow that person back. To get exposure it is important to have a large number of followers. For a good brand reputation it is important to have more followers than people that are followed by the brand.
Communication	Facebook Groups is an important feature on Facebook. It is a discussion board where people with the same interest come together to share experiences & knowledge. To communicate with consumers a brand can post updates or photos/videos. There is also a feature to start a poll. These ways of communication can all be used to create a conversation between consumers.	Twitter is a great platform to share news updates about the brand. It can also be used to act like a customer service tool. Where consumers can ask their queries and get immediately response. @mentions, #hashtags and retweets are enabling the conversation with and between consumers.

	YouTube	Pinterest
Reason consumers	Share homemade videos with each other.	Share photos and images to inspire each other
Reason Brands	Tell the brand's story by making use of amateur-like videos.	Tell a story around the brand by making use of visuals.
Social Links consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You do not have to be a member to watch videos of others. - Members can share videos, rate videos of others and give comments. - Members can subscribe to members' video channel to stay up to date with the videos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You can follow people of which you think they have interesting content on their pinboards. - Members can like images and 'repin' images on their own pinboards. - People connect with others because of the same sort of interest or lifestyle. - Content is visible for people who are not a member.
Social links brands-consumers	<p>A branded YouTube channel can create brand awareness among YouTube members and people who are not a member.</p> <p>Members are able to react and rate the video and are able to share the videos on their social media platforms. People who do not have a YouTube account cannot interact on YouTube but they can share the videos.</p>	<p>Brands should have inspiring pinboards in order to attract the attention of consumers. When there is a connection between brand and consumer, they can share each others images and follow pinboards of members. Brands should find influential people that are willing to share the content on the brand's pinboards in order to increase the awareness for the brand.</p>
Communication	<p>A conversation can be started on YouTube by enabling consumers to comment on videos. However, YouTube is more used as a tool to share videos on other platforms. The platform is a great tool to engage with consumers, because the videos can go viral easily and can be integrated with all the other platforms.</p>	<p>Pinterest communicates by images. People can react on those images and that's where the conversation can take place. By choosing the right images people will repin them on their own board and people of their network can repin it again. In this way consumers are the ones that share the images and brands only facilitate them.</p>

7 Advice

7.1 Six Elements for new approach

In the previous chapter the findings of the research are concluded and the sub questions are answered. With this findings the main question can be answered and an advice can be given to solve the main question:

How does Tick Yes need to adjust their marketing communication plans in order to create engagement between brands and consumers and to create brand loyalty in the long run?

As concluded a lot of changes are going on when it comes to the behaviour of consumers and how brands need to approach these consumers. Because of these changes the old way of segmenting and reaching the target group is not effective anymore. There need to be a different focus when developing a marketing communication plan.

This advice provides Tick Yes with a guide of six elements that helps Tick Yes to develop marketing communication plans for its clients that fit better to the world of today. The six elements are divided into the challenges discussed in the beginning:

- How to *define* the right target group

Element 1: Define reason for existence of the brand

Element 2: Define consumer Tribe

- How to *reach* the right target group?

Element 3: Define the communicator of the message

Element 4: Choose the right Social Media Platforms

- How to *engage* with the target group and create brand loyalty?

Element 5: Communicate the right message

Element 6: Facilitate conversation between consumers

Now the six elements will be further explained. After the explanations the guide will be provided with recommendations on how Tick Yes should approach each step.

Element 1: Define reason for existence of the brand

Tick Yes should firstly set up a brand' s profile, which defines what reasons a brand has for its existence. To create a strong marketing program it is important to define a story around the brand. The story should be engaging and should inspire the consumer.

When a brand is socially involved it is recommendable to make this the leading part in the story. Consumers are more willing to choose for a brand that has a sense of responsibility for the world that we are living in. It is important that the profile also consist of an explanation on how the brand is transparent towards its consumers.

Because consumers feel that they have the rights to be aware of the happenings within a company.

Element 2: Define consumer tribes

Now the reason of the brand's existence is defined, the target group can be segmented. The advice is to not segment the target audience on demographics but to create consumer tribes. Consumer tribes are held together by a shared value. Tick Yes should first define the glue value that characterizes the brand.

After choosing the glue value the consumer tribe can be defined. This consumer tribe needs to be a group of consumers that all have a strong emotional connection with the glue value. Sometimes there is only one tribe, but there can also be several tribes that have a connection with the glue value.

To engage with the consumer it is advisable to choose one or several emo-worlds to be the inspiration source for the consumer and for the communication with and between the consumer.

Element 3: Define the communicator of the messages

Now the consumer tribe is defined it is advisable to choose how the brand needs to communicate with the tribe. It can be possible that a Master of Emotion communicates with the consumers. Important is to choose a Master of Emotion that has affinity with the emo-world and that this person can act like a role model towards the consumer tribe.

If there is no proper person that can accomplish the role of the Master of Emotion it is important that the brand communicates with personality. Consumers want brands to act like humans, which means it is important for a brand to create a person behind the brand. This can be an actual person, like the strategy of Vodafone Australia where real people answer queries of customers. It is also possible that the brand creates a certain personality around the brand; like AllSaints does in their communication with their consumers. The personality of AllSaints is hip, urban and rough and with its messages it tries to level with the consumer.

Element 4: Choose the right Social Media platforms

Every Social Media Platform that is discussed before has its own purpose. Sometimes it is recommendable to make use of all the platforms, but this is not always the case. It is important to base the choice for a platform on the content that the brand needs to use. The social links between consumers should also be considered when choosing a platform.

Element 5: Communicate the right message

After defining the consumer tribe and choosing the right Social Media Platforms it is crucial to communicate the right message to the target group. Firstly Tick Yes should list the sort of content that is going to be published on the platforms. It is important that the content has the right tone of voice that fits the personality of the brand. And it also has to appeal with the consumers and give a possibility for engagement.

Element 6: Facilitate conversation between consumers

Not only the communication from brands towards consumers is important to include in the strategy. Brands should also facilitate the conversation between consumers, so that the consumers can communicate with each other. Consumers are each others most reliable sources for information, so it is very valuable if they start to talk about the brand.

It is important that the content that is published is inviting the consumer to give their comment. It also needs to be easy to share the content with their network so that the content can be shared by their network to create a larger reach.

It is also advisable to set up a co-creation to involve the consumer so that the consumer gets the feeling that they are important for the brand. This also creates a conversation between consumers because consumers are honoured to be part of the brand.

On the next page the guide that consists the different elements is provided. The list consists of several questions per element that will help to develop an answer to every element discussed above. With the guide Tick Yes can adapt on the newest developments of the moment and set up a marketing communication plan for its clients that reaches the (potential) consumers of the brand. In the appendix page XIII a template is developed that can be used by Tick Yes to fill in the guide for implementing elements.

Guide for implementing elements

How to define the right target group:

- ➔ **Element 1: Define reason for existence of the brand**
 - What is the purpose of the brand?
 - Is the company socially involved?
 - In what way is the brand transparent towards its consumers?
- ➔ **Element 2: Define consumer tribes**
 - What is the glue value of the brand?
 - What consumer tribes are relevant for the glue value?
 - What emo-worlds are relevant to these consumer tribes?

How to reach the right target group:

- ➔ **Element 3: Define the communicator of the messages**
 - Is there a relevant Master of Emotion that can be used to communicate?
 - If not, what kind of personality sends messages to the consumer tribe?
- ➔ **Element 4: Choose the right Social Media platforms**
 - What platforms need to be used to communicate with the tribes?
 - What part does every platform play in communicating with the tribes?

How to create engagement and finally brand loyalty:

- ➔ **Element 5: Communicate the right message**
 - What is going to be communicated on the several platforms?

Then it is important that all content meets the following requirements:

 - Is the tone of voice right?
 - Is the content appealing?
 - Does the content fit the proposed platform?
 - Is there a possibility for engagement?
- ➔ **Element 6: Facilitate conversation between consumers**
 - How does the content on the several platforms facilitate the communication between consumers?
 - What way of co-creation can be used to involve the consumer?