

Today's Technological Age

The use of social media and other marketing tools to build better relationships with Taekwon-Do martial-artists and future members of the organisation

Introduction

In the world of marketing today, this can be seen from many different angles, and with technology advancing rapidly, online marketing and the use of social media has become a very intriguing tool to utilise to reach targeted audiences and also to gain the attention of new consumers. Social media is gaining in leaps and bounds in popularity, often becoming viral and is becoming a huge driver for many businesses and organisations to spread the word and provide information. With the advancement of today's technology, people are always trying to find new ways and innovations to reach consumers to build favourable relationships and future markets.

Many organisations today are finding ways to operate social media platforms as marketing channels, and this has become an essential tool to building modern marketing strategies. By focusing and strategising through social media forums can help maintain and gain consumers and to retain loyalty to their cause. By continuing to analyse the brand relationship and engagement through social media, this will help better understand the affects and complications to sustain consumers.

Having graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Marketing, International Business and Sales, I have seen first hand that online marketing and the use of social media is and could be an effective tool to maintain contact with Taekwon-Do practitioners not only nationally but also internationally. This will benefit everyone that is associated to the organisation and keep them to date with upcoming and recent events, relevant information and changes in the world of the International Taekwon-Do Federation.

Throughout this essay, I will discuss different tools and strategies that could benefit our Taekwon-Do club(s) and organisation with a view to reaching more people within the organisation and also those keen to become members. I will also illustrate the Taekwon-Do's online presence, the current advancements in technology, how to build relationships and loyalty, the value of social media and its contribution to marketing of the ITF Taekwon-Do organisations, how consumers (non Taekwon-Do practitioners) can engage and how to effectively use word of mouth to spread the message.

ITF Taekwon-Do – Their Online Presence Today

The art of Taekwon-Do has been around for many years, which was first developed by General Choi Hong Hi, in the 1950s and 1960s. The meaning of Taekwon-Do can be expressed in three parts. "Tae" means to jump or kick with the foot; "Kwon" means to punch with the hand or fist; and "Do" means art or way (ITKD website).

Understanding the history and background knowledge of this martial art can provide many great aspects to peoples lives today. With its various events of sparring, patterns, power breaking and special techniques, this is sport is suitable for all ages, size and abilities.

Today, this is the biggest martial art in New Zealand with many members coming and going. Having an online presence is extremely important for any organisation to share information with members of the society. Currently, ITF Taekwon-Do is online with their own website that can also take you to the ITF website and can directly link you to their social media platforms. Each of their social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are highly beneficial, especially when reaching their targeted audiences and today most teenagers are on these platforms and are easiest to reach and connect with. 72% of the population in New Zealand are on Facebook, making it one of the best ways to communicate with people in the organisation and future members (OraHQ intranet database).

Advancement in Technology Today

Today's modern technological age is developing rapidly to where social media has become a popular forum for organisations to reach out to their members and potentially to reach new members. Despite this paradigm, many markets are still

unsure how to measure social media effectively and do not have a clear understanding of the value and strategy of social media marketing (Keller, 2013). It is especially an important part to any organisations marketing strategy that want to accomplish relationships with their clients and consumers.

Marketing can be expressed in many different ways through the impact of social media and how consumers facilitate interactions with one another (Erragcha & Romdhane, 2014). Technology today has been one of the main drivers for this form of marketing for any organisation to reach their targeted demographics. Because of the popularity of new technology and innovations that are continuously being created, this has been known to be the best way to get your brand and service acknowledged. Many organisations today are investing more into digital and social media to get their services out for opportunity more so than traditional marketing (MC, 2014).

With the new technological advancements in mobile phones, tablets and other devices, the world has suddenly become virtually amassed with organisations and online trends. Because the Internet is so easily accessible through mobile devices, everyone across the world can access any kind of information. Many corporations both large and small are being touched in some way by technology advancements, which have opened the door widely for mobile marketers to capitalise on this phenomenon.

The use of advertising through social media and being mobile friendly (the website adjusts itself to fit the screen of the device without having to zoom in or out), this will especially makes it easier for an industry to grow on the online world. Keeping up to date with the technology is definitely important for our Taekwon-Do organisation to draw in new members to join so that firstly you can be found online, provide the correct information and secondly be easily contacted either via email, phone or social media.

Building Relationships and Loyalty

The spread of digital media and technology is transforming the environment for consumers, brands and even for the research industry. Any relationship in marketing is important for any organisation so that they can form a bond and create customer

loyalty. Trust and commitment are hugely important factors that need to be considered in the development for any successful relationships.

Relationship marketing has been developing over the years, gaining more attention and interest throughout organisations (Armstrong, et al., 2014). Stated by Payne (1995) “The fundamental principle upon which relationship management is founded is that the greater the level of customer satisfaction with the relationship - not just the product or service - then the greater the likelihood that the customer will stay with us”. Relationship marketing highlights maintaining and building lucrative long-term relationships with customers through generating superior customer satisfaction and value.

Studies have shown that those who are highly motivated, good at closing the deal and selling the product or service are their best people to start building relationships and good at solving problems if any occur. This can be translated into the digital world where organisations are looking for new people to join their community. Building relationships is a key marketing tool that can always be developed further. Once a relationship has been built, people need to think positively on how they use these relationships through all marketing channels to gain useful input from either party (Armstrong, et al., 2014).

This can be seen through those members that are continuously staying loyal and training on a regular basis will frequently discuss the benefits and attributes on how great the service (Taekwon-Do) is to others. Always maintaining a high standard and providing great training with informative instructors is key for future growth. Maintaining a good relationship with the instructor will benefit anyone’s development within the organisation.

Social Media Marketing

Over the last few years, research has shown that social media strategies for any size organisation are creating new and exciting strategies to communicate to their future consumers (Schaupp, 2014). Consumers are jumping on board because of its popularity and technology becoming so accessible. It is important for any

organisation to understand the right approach to their consumers and providing the right information to promote their brand and service. Most individuals today own a portable device i.e. mobile phone or tablet and are given the opportunity to access their social media accounts at anytime of the day. The main social networks that are generating awareness are the likes of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest and now Snapchat. Social media is an attractive tool to any marketer looking to increase brand image, brand awareness and engagement.

Social media marketing is a large platform that has been adopted into consumer engagement and acknowledgement of the company. One of the biggest social media frenzies is Facebook that was first established in 2007 with the idea of helping businesses and organisations to connect with people (Facebook Page Basics, 2014). Now that Facebook is still establishing itself as one of the biggest social networks, according to Paradiso (2015) Facebook changes are becoming a lot harder for businesses and organisations especially small ones to reach their targeted markets. However there are ways at testing the market to find the right engagement for your consumers such as incentivising their engagement e.g. adding a promotional service or tool that can help their business.

Overall social media is an ideal tool to use for any organisation to promote their image, brand and service. Using these tools and the Internet right can help an organisation reach their target segments without struggle and can be done at a very low cost if done correctly and using the simple communication channels.

Taekwon-Do in New Zealand is on the right track with their online presence through their social media platforms. Constant interaction on these is key for engagement to occur on a frequent basis. Interactions from the Seniors is always helpful to provide insight into the organisation for those that are junior as they like to look up to them as well as high performance athletes e.g. those that have competed at a World Championships on International competition.

Increasing Value to Social Media

An important role in a modern marketing strategy is social media to help assist in meeting marketing objectives. Like many communication channels, social media has

a large impact on the likelihood of sales for any organisation as they are contributing to their marketing objectives. These objectives include improving traffic to their websites, leading the generation in the right direction and customer relationships. Naslund (2010) suggest that connecting social media with data, organisations can calculate whether social media affects their marketing measures.

Social media is attractive to many marketers looking to increase brand awareness, engagement, word of mouth and more. With such a young communications channel and new marketing practices, it is fairly limited at this time. There are fewer marketers that understand the best practices within this field of social media as it keeps on growing. Identifying the best way to uncover the ideas for increasing value to social media is essential for any organisation.

Having a social media presence allows brands to move their interaction with consumers outside the normal outlet of their stores and websites. This strengthens relationships with the consumer and organisation over their branding. An online database I used at University showed a study that looked at a social media at the top twenty US restaurant brands to get an idea at how their online presence was being shown (Euromonitor International, 2014).

This study focused on Facebook, which showed their total of Facebook 'fans' and 'likes' activity over a given month, which was measured through fan activity whether they were 'talking about this'. While total Facebook fans are a valuable indicator to measure a brands reach, fan activity is a more important measure as it shows the fans engaging with the brand. Even though Facebook is not the only way to leverage consumers via social media, most business that have an online presence are succeeding through domestic and international engagement (Euromonitor International, 2014). Increasing the value of social media is highly important and ideal for any organisation to build relationships with the targeted segment, which can build further engagement with members to the public.

Currently, our Taekwon-Do organisation is on Facebook with a closed group page and a TKD Coaching page. Having two pages is great, however if there is no direct link attached to the website, this can be quite hard to find unless you know what you

are searching for. Looking at the TKD Coaching page, this page seems to get the most attention than their other page from their followers and likes on their posts. This is a great start for monitoring who is engaging with the page, whether it is members of the organisation or people who could be interested. With the new generation of students coming through with the new technology and social media, preparation of digital marketing is needed. Creating a learning environment about the analytics and skills of what social media can do to help organisations will have them ready by the time they finish their studies (Atwong, 2015).

Engaging among the other social media networks allows you to draw traffic and monitor what ones are working for your organisation or not. By managing traffic through the likes of Google Analytics and Search Engine Optimisation will best analyse where to invest more money and time for any organisation. Social media can effectively contribute to any organisation overall objectives whether it attracting more people to their site or people using their services. It can be shown that social media can be an effective marketing tool as it is opening up another communication channel to reach their consumers and to build a steady relationship. For any business or organisation, it can be a challenge at first to introduce social media into a marketing strategy. Realising the benefits of this to engage and be present with their consumers, will give them a more personal experience through the online world.

Consumer Engagement

Consumer engagement is the centre of social media and without users or interaction, content is worthless and would be unnecessary. Many marketers focus on increasing engagement through social media, as there is a high level of involvement today with audiences interacting among the marketing messages. Generating more presence online through social media, organisations to offer interesting content on their page so that they can engage the community and their consumers they are targeting. This can be done more directly or casually in a personal way to gain the users attention (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012). This is a bit of a change from traditional marketing as content that is shared through social media is usually informal and may not be directly related to the brand at times. It also demonstrates that social media is more relaxed and personal to encourage engagement.

In the world today, we are seeing more command and control of brand communications. Consumers today are becoming more educated about new technology and ways of communicating with what they want. Allowing them to participate with brands they wish to choose means brands today have to work harder on their content to engage and attract the segment they are after. Those brands that demonstrate this are the likely ones to pull in consumers for their products and can build a favourable relationship with as they offered what they were looking for (Bird, 2014).

Additionally, to generate and/or increase engagement, posting interesting, visual and original content is believed to drive the most engagement according to trends from 2013 (NZTE, 2014). Posting original content shows that the company has more knowledge in-house and is likely to be more favoured through a Google search. Our Taekwon-Do organisation is currently doing this well with posts and uploading information for current events in advance. By significantly focusing on social media and engaging with consumers is a key way to building favourable relationships as technology is continuously changing and adapting to meet their needs. This is where we can improve our engagement further than what it is in the coming years.

Word of Mouth

With the development of the Internet, consumers have found it easy to access and obtain information and are able to compare the product or service with others. As a result of this, consumers are no longer restricted to finding out what they want in order to get recommendations or information (Barreto, 2014). They are able to gain information from a friend or through a friends' friend through social networks as it is easier and gives you a sense that you know them, even if it is through Facebook or LinkedIn. This facilitates a spread of information through various social media networks and also engagement.

More specifically this type of online recommendation can be defined as an electronic word of mouth as this is transferred through online, differently from your traditional word of mouth. Depending on the channel used, both traditional and electronic word of mouth are doing the same job whether it is a conversation in person or a conversation through a social media network (Barreto, 2014). Integrating social

media into current and new marketing strategies seems to be the way to attract consumers and assist with this particular marketing channel.

Regardless, the fact is that, with the growth of popular websites, word of mouth is becoming a more important phenomenon for businesses and organisations. They are realising that they can take advantage of the same online communication channels and can influence the consumers search habits for information, leading them to engage in their word of mouth behaviours. Establishing a close relationship between the brand and consumer can help extend their viewers through word of mouth, which could greatly benefit their businesses and achieve an economical advantage (Reichheld 1996).

Word of Mouth today is definitely affective in our organisation. A good example of this is with the Kiwi Sports being implemented into schools across the country. With the help of our senior black belts today, teaching primary school children of these benefits, this allows kids to share their news to the parents who can pass on the information to fellow parents at different schools of what their children are learning. This is good for clubs all around the country that have been involved in the Kiwi sport program.

Dangers in Social Media

There are always risks when utilising social media for marketing and it can either make or break a campaign if not done and used correctly. Social media is an informal tool to reach and target consumers as everyone today is on at least one social media network. What social media does is that it starts a 'buzz' or a 'spread' so information can be passed on whether it is formal or informal.

An example of a good campaign that was launched was Heineken who implemented a smart visual idea. For every like on their Facebook page, they would blow up a green balloon in the office. As more people liked the page, the more balloons filled the office and the more engagement they got. Photos were uploaded and the images got funnier as the office was being filled up with balloons (Gray, 2014). However, this is just an example of a good campaign that was launched.

Sadly, there are as many examples of high profile social media marketing disasters also. Not only was that a smart campaign to draw in engagement to their page, it could have breached safety hazards. Given that social media can be highly unpredictable and can change at any time, there are dangers to be considered when using social media as a marketing tool. It could influence both positive and negative campaigns.

Summary

By utilising the advancements in technology and understanding the marketing tools above can be applied to our Taekwon-Do organisation. Understanding the social media forum in particular, the Taekwon-Do community will be able to “spread the word” and keep current members and future members informed and up to date with valid information.

Having the basic knowledge of how to better engage online, especially through social media marketing could reach more people that have never had an interest in a martial art or contact sport.

I believe that being successful in social media marketing is key to building relationships, loyalty and brand awareness for existing and new customers. To acknowledge these opportunities I recommended that those who are doing any marketing for our Taekwon-Do organisation should follow the below:

1. Integrate a social media-marketing plan (Ideas into ways to reach more of the targeted segment).
2. Be active on each of the social media networks you are on so that original and constant posting is happening so you don't lose interest from your followers.
3. Post interesting content that is valid (upcoming events) so that engagement is always occurring
4. Leverage 'hot topics' that may be trending that is relevant or interesting that can attract followers to your page.

Personally, I would have never heard about Taekwon-Do if it wasn't for word of mouth and finding a fabulous club that I have been part of for nearly 14 years now. From the information I have used and researched, there are areas I think that we can improve on and could add great value to the organisation for marketing and social media presence. This could be by having a non-closed Facebook page for people to find out more about our organisation, start an Instagram account with members of our organisation of competition photos etc. and advertise through some Facebook campaigns, which can pop up on people's pages that fit the organisations demographics. Keeping up to date with online trends is most definitely key for reaching new members to being part of a great organisation and family.

References:

Armstrong, P., Tomes, A., Clark, M. (2014). Relationship marketing and design participation. Research Methodologies. Retrieved December 4, 2014 from <http://www.warc.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/>

Barreto, A. M. (2014). The word-of-mouth phenomenon in the social media era. International Journal of Market Research. 56(4). Retrieved December 5, 2014 from <http://www.warc.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/>

Bird, G. (2014). Building Relationships that matter: Engaging with the multi-channel consumer. ESMOAR-Digital Dimensions. Retrieved November 28, from <http://www.warc.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/>

Erragcha, N., Romdhane, R. (2014). Social networks as marketing tools. Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce. 19(1), 3-12. Retrieved November 23, 2014 from <http://www.warc.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/>

Euromonitor International. (2014). Social Media is a versatile as it is valuable. Retrieved from www.portal.euromonitor.com

Gray, R. (2014). How to avoid social media meltdowns. Market Leader: Quarter 3, 2014. Retrieved December 5, 2014 from <http://www.warc.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/>

Keller, K. L. (2013). Strategic Brand Management (4th Ed.). England: Pearson Education Limited.

MC. (2014). Most Marketers Believe Digital Spend Will Soon Overtake Traditional Media. Retrieved December 1, 2014 from <http://www.marketingcharts.com/traditional/most-marketers-believe-digital-spend-will-soon-overtake-traditional-media-42311/>

Naslund, A. (2010). Measuring social media's contribution to the bottom line: 5 Tactics. Retrieved December 3, 2014, from <https://www.marketingsherpa.com/article/how-to/5-tactics12>

Overview (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.itkd.co.nz/about-taekwon-do/>

OraHQ Database – Online Intranet (My workplaces database)

Papasolomou, I., & Melanthiou, Y. (2012). Social Media: Marketing Public Relations' New Best Friend. Journal of Promotion Management, 18(3), 319-328.
doi:10.1080/10496491.2012.696458

Payne, A., Christopher, M., Clark, M., and Peck, H. (1995), Relationship marketing for competitive advantage: Winning and keeping customers, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.

Reichheld, F. (1996) The Loyalty Effect. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.