

Marketing and Social Media Strategy

BMKT 2515, Spring 2012, 3 credits
Katz MBA (FT/PT)

Instructor:

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Prerequisite:

BMKT 2411
(Marketing Management)

Website:

<http://www.KatzSocialMedia.com>

Class Meetings:

Wednesdays 6:30-9:00pm
Mervis 117

Office Hours:

By appointment

Course Description

The marketing and business worlds are going through fundamental changes in the ways that consumers interact with brands and each other. Social media has helped give consumers a voice, connect them with their friends and other like-minded consumers, and has given them considerable power over marketers and brands. This course is designed to help you understand how marketing has (and has not) changed due to the rise of social media. It will equip you with the relevant knowledge, perspectives, and practical skills required for you to develop marketing strategies that leverage the opportunities inherent in social media and consumer-to-consumer social interactions for achieving business and marketing goals. The focus is on marketing communications and newer “non-traditional” social media-based approaches. Although traditional advertising will be touched on, it is not the main focus of the course and it is assumed that you have a reasonable working knowledge of advertising and how it fits within the overall strategic marketing process. The emphasis of this course is instead on understanding consumers’ social interactions, the various social media channels available to marketers, how to build social marketing strategies, and how to track their effectiveness. Also, since social media is heavily technology-driven we will cover relevant related aspects in digital marketing more broadly, as well as emerging topics in electronic commerce, mobile marketing, and social media startups.

There is a lot of hype surrounding social media, largely due to the rise in popularity (and valuations!) of online social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. While these platforms are important and will of course be discussed, it is important to know in advance that this is not a course solely about Facebook (or Twitter or Google+). There is much more to this new area of marketing and the intention of this course is to broaden your perspectives, not narrow your thinking by focusing on just a few platforms that happen to be important now.

Objectives and Learning Outcomes

From a marketing perspective, consumers now have louder voices than they used to have, they are more socially connected than they ever have been, they expect more from brands, and information reaches them faster than ever before. In light of these fundamental changes, the overarching goal of this course is to help you get a clear perspective on what's really going on in marketing in the age of social/digital/mobile so that you can start to see where the true value—to consumers, to marketers, and to other corporate stakeholders—lies.

After successfully completing this course you should be able to do the following:

- Understand what social media is and how this new type of media and communications technology is impacting how business and marketing is done.
- Understand some key principles of “connected customers” in terms of consumer psychology and sociology and how they feed into social media strategy development.
- Develop the main components of a marketing/communications strategy that incorporates the use of social media either exclusively or in conjunction with other “traditional” channels
- Know the main components of viral/buzz/word-of-mouth marketing campaigns and the best approaches for identifying and selecting the initial “seed” individuals who start spreading information/content/opinions over their social networks.
- Be familiar with some important developments on the horizon that represent the future of social media and digital marketing.

Since this is a new topic and the “jury is still out” on best practices for social media marketing and using social media to support business operations (e.g., CRM) the emphasis is on covering important fundamental principles, identifying areas of opportunity, and pointing out challenges (and developing plans for overcoming challenges).

Textbooks and Materials

There is no textbook for this course. It is simply too new an area and existing books are either already outdated or rely heavily on “marketing guru” wisdom of questionable quality! Instead of a textbook there will be an electronic case pack with case studies. For each session some additional background readings will also be provided (keep an eye on the course website).

The following online resources/blogs are *required* reading on a regular basis in order to keep up with the latest news in the social media world:

TechCrunch:	http://www.techcrunch.com
Mashable:	http://www.mashable.com
Fastcompany:	http://www.fastcompany.com
Social Media Examiner:	http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/

The technology sections of the NYT and WSJ are also worth reading on a regular basis.

Cases are required reading. The case pack can be purchased through Study.net, which gives you electronic access to cases that you can print or view on a laptop or mobile device. Visit http://www.study.net/r_mat.asp?crs_id=30022921 to purchase your case pack.

Ways to Communicate

This is a course on social media. It would therefore make sense to use social media platforms throughout the course to share content, ideas, and thoughts with each other.

General Items of Interest

When I find content related to the course and social media more generally I share links through Twitter. Follow @AndrewTStephen on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/andrewtstephen>) for the feed, and/or like AndrewTStephen on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/andrewtstephen>).

You are encouraged to comment, like, retweet, etc relevant content. You should also feel free to share anything you find on the web that is interesting and relevant to your classmates. Post content to the Facebook page or, if you prefer to tweet, please use the hashtag #katzsocialmedia.

Class-Specific Items

There are two ways to get access to class-specific items of interest, which include updates on projects, guest speakers, class content, etc. I assume you will check these sources regularly:

- Twitter feed for the class: Follow @BMKT2515 (<http://twitter.com/BMKT2515>)
- Course website: <http://www.KatzSocialMedia.com>

In-Person Office hours

I prefer to not set defined office hours. I'm around most of the time. If you have a **quick** question feel free to stop by my office (Mervis 318). If you need to see me for more than 5-10 minutes then email me one or two days in advance (at least) to make an appointment.

Workload and Evaluation

Over the course of the term you will be required to complete a number of exercises and projects. There will also be a midterm exam and a social networking lab session that you must attend. The class is not graded on a curve. For teamwork you should work with the same team throughout the term for all team projects/exercises.

The following table details the components of your grade and their weights.

Item	Individual or Team?	Weight
Midterm take-home exam	Individual	20%
Class attendance, participation, online surveys	Individual	20%
Viral video challenge project	Team	30%
Social media marketing project	Team	30%

Midterm Exam (20%)

There will be a midterm exam. It will be a take-home exam to be completed individually. It will be assigned by email on Monday February 27 at 9:00am. There will not be a class on Wednesday February 29 during class time to give you time to work on this. Details will be given closer to the date. The deadline is Friday March 2 at 5:00pm. The best way to prepare for this exam is to come to all classes and actively participate. You will not need the entire week to work on it. I expect it will take you no more than a total of 5 hours to complete.

Class Attendance, Participation, Online Surveys (20%)

Much of your learning will come from discussions that we have during our class sessions. In each class session your goal should be to help foster a positive, open-minded, and learning-focused environment. You should try to make comments that advance the class discussion. Your contributions should help you and your colleagues learn. Quality is therefore more important than the quantity of your comments, though quantity is necessary to reliably judge the general quality of your comments to give you a participation grade. Remember, that you do not have to be right all the time (in fact, often there are no straightforward “right” and “wrong” answers). But do try to be intelligent!

While attending class sessions is important, active participation is crucial. Please come to class ready to engage in discussions. That means being prepared. Part of your preparation involves completing online surveys prior to some sessions. You will be told of these in advance and will

have plenty of time to complete them. They will usually take less than 15 minutes if you have adequately prepared for class.

Viral Video Challenge Project (30%)

This project will require you to develop and implement a viral marketing strategy in a team.

You and your team will create a (hopefully) viral video aimed at promoting a particular product/brand. You will then disseminate that content and try to make it “go viral.”

Your product/brand is the business undergraduate program at Pitt! This is chosen for pragmatic reasons—it is a “brand” that you are intimately familiar with and don’t need to spend time researching in order to understand it before trying to market it.

Your broad marketing objective is to raise awareness and generate interest in the program. You can choose the particular segment you want to target, the geographic focus, and the theme/message of your campaign. You may choose to emphasize a particular major or be more general, it is entirely up to you.

The following steps must be followed:

1. Develop specific marketing objectives that you hope to achieve with this campaign that fit with the broad objective of building awareness and generating interest.
2. Come up with a theme for your campaign and specific message. E.g., it could be about a range of different kinds of experiences, or it could be about one type of experience, or something else. This is up to you.
3. Develop a preliminary concept for your video. This doesn’t have to be fully fleshed out at this stage. This concept must be formally approved by the Katz School’s marketing communications director and Professor Stephen before you go any further. **Email a short description to Professor Stephen no later than 5:00pm on Friday March 2.**
4. Create the video content. It doesn’t have to be too flashy or “professional” looking. In terms of length, keep it to no longer than approximately 3-4 minutes.
5. Develop a viral marketing plan for distributing/disseminating your video using social media. Who will you seed the video with? What will your message be? What metrics will be important to track and how will you track them? *This will be putting into practice many concepts that you learn in class.*
6. Submit your video for final approval by the Katz marketing communications director and Professor Stephen. **Email a link to a private YouTube video to Professor Stephen no later than 5:00pm on Friday March 30.**

7. Once approved, post your video on YouTube and start implementing your viral marketing plan. **All teams will do this on Tuesday April 3.**
8. Track your video's progress and refine your strategy as needed.
9. Prepare a short report (no more than 8 pages, single-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) giving details of (i) your viral content strategy, (ii) your viral dissemination strategy, (iii) your video's performance on relevant metrics, (iv) how you refined your strategy once the video was live, and (v) what you learned by doing this project. **Submit this by email to the TA no later than 5:00pm on Friday April 20.**

This project is intended to be fun while at the same time giving you the opportunity to put into practice many concepts you learn in class. To keep things interesting there will be a competition. The group whose video gets the most views on YouTube by **5:00pm on Tuesday April 17** (the day before our final class session) will receive a bonus of 10% toward their final grade and a surprise prize! (As well as the honor of winning this competition.)

Here is a list of milestones/interim deadlines for this project:

- March 2, 5:00pm – email video concept to Professor Stephen for approval
- March 30, 5:00pm – email link to private video to Professor Stephen for approval
- April 3 – video approval notifications sent and videos go live
- April 17, 5:00pm – the final count of views is taken to determine the competition winner
- April 20, 5:00pm – email report to TA

Social Media Marketing Project (30%)

This is another team project and will involve working with a company on a real social media marketing project. You can only learn so much with written cases (even if they are excellent!) and class discussions. To really get a handle on this new world of social media marketing you need to do something hands-on so that you learn about the challenges involved first-hand. Therefore, this project is extremely important. But...this is also what you make of it. If you do a mediocre job your learning experience will of course also be mediocre.

Generally speaking, the scope of the client project is to help a client develop a social media marketing strategy for their company/brand/product(s). The specifics will be discussed in the first class session. You should expect to do some or all of the following as part of this project:

- Performing an analysis or audit of the current marketing situation for your client, particularly with respect to their advertising and communications strategies, and focusing on any specific challenges or targets they have identified.
- Identifying the best opportunities for using social media as part of your client's marketing mix to help them achieve their overarching marketing and business goals.

- Developing clear marketing objectives for the social media marketing strategy based on the situation analysis and the identified social media marketing opportunities.
- Articulating a social media marketing strategy designed to achieve these objectives. What is the theme and message to be communicated? Who are the targets? How will they be reached? What types of consumer-to-consumer social interactions will be relied on as part of this strategy? How will target consumers be encouraged to socially interact with other consumers to “spread the word”? What incentives will be offered? What ideas do you have for campaigns as part of this strategy? How will performance be measured and evaluated?

You do **not** have to implement anything for your client. The focus is mostly on analysis and strategy development. Details will be covered in class with respect to the components of a social media marketing strategy and what things should be considered. The final deliverable is a presentation (i.e., a PowerPoint slide deck) that covers all the details of your analysis, proposed strategy, implementation plan, and supporting materials. You will present this in class either on **Wednesday April 11** (the presentation order of teams will be determined randomly the week prior). You will also present to your client (note: this may be in class if they can attend or at a mutually convenient time no later than April 18).

Further details will be provided in class. You need to find yourself a team no later than the second class session (January 25). **The maximum number of students per team is five.**

You are encouraged to think in advance of the first class about your team and who your client could be. This could be a company you currently work for, have previously worked for, or otherwise have some connection to.

Policies on Technology Use in Class and Academic Integrity

When in class please refrain from using your various connected devices (laptops, iPhones, iPads, Blackberries, etc). Sometimes accessing a website may be needed as part of an in-class exercise, which is perfectly fine. But in general, during class discussions, team presentations, guest speakers, and lectures do not use your electronic devices. **If you do use such devices in class when it is not required this will negatively affect your class participation grade.**

Plagiarism, cheating, and any other actions that demonstrate a lack of personal and academic integrity will under no circumstances be tolerated and will be reported to the appropriate office(s) within the school and/or university. If you are caught cheating on any individual assignments you will receive a score of 0 for that assignment and will be reported. Depending on the severity of the offence, you may also be automatically given a failing grade for the course.

Schedule (note: subject to change, last updated 01/02/2012)

Session	Date	Topic/Details	Case
1	Jan-18	Introduction and overview of social media General principles and some pitfalls	Molson Cold Shots
2	Jan-25	Connected consumers and the psychology of social media consumer behavior	OPI Nic's Sticks
	Feb-01	<i>No class – MBA Professional Development Day</i>	
3	Feb-08	Building virality into content, campaigns, and products	Google Street View
4	Feb-15	<i>Guest speaker: Pittsburgh Marathon</i>	
5	Feb-22	Making it last: keeping excitement alive over time	Ford Fiesta Movement
	Feb-29	<i>No class – take-home midterm exam</i>	
	Mar-07	<i>No class – Spring Break</i>	
6	Mar-14	<i>Guest speaker: American Eagle Outfitters</i>	
7	Mar-21	<i>Guest speaker: Pittsburgh Penguins</i>	
8	Mar-28	Social media and new product development Social media and customer relationships	DeltaAssist
9	Apr-04	Using social media to build a company Metrics: social media performance evaluation	iXiGO.com in India
10	Apr-11	Final presentations for social media marketing project	
11	Apr-18	Course conclusion and final thoughts	