

An Application of Social Media Marketing for Community Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Though the social marketing approach has been developed from commercial marketing, it is a holistic approach from various social sciences disciplines like marketing, psychology, sociology, mass communication and economics. It is basically an art to explore new ways of analyzing problems and solving them effectively. For instance, social marketing influences sustainability through the use of marketing principles to increase awareness, understanding, change attitudes, and motivate the society to change, adopt, or sustain a particular behavior. This paper attempts to explore a framework of social media in light of disseminating the knowledge of a community-wide sustainability plan among various stakeholders. Policy makers nowadays no longer only talk to people, they are trying to listen and generate conversations, and convert implementation plans or call-to-actions that are responsive. This objective can be realized through a viral, guerilla or events-based marketing in a cost effective manner when integrated with social media.

Social media is paving the way to a brand new way of looking at markets as organizations that are realizing the value of the Internet as a primary component of their communication platform. This digital platform is no longer just another messaging channel. In social marketing, the question is how to increase the connection as well as engagement between policy makers and ultimate individual beneficiaries. For instance, online social networks are increasingly important platforms for people communicating and sharing environmental topics, such as climate change (Newell & Dale 2015), and behaviors (Robelia, Greenhow & Burton 2011).

This research constructs a framework that provides the insight of social media marketing in establishing sustainability stakeholder among various topics, engaging local or municipal communities, and eventually building or enhancing relationships among the societal members. Knowledge dissemination is the process of transferring academic findings to researchers, policy makers and practitioners (Gagnon 2011) while knowledge mobilization is the process of “moving research into the hands of research users” (Gainforth 2015, p. 56). By using knowledge

dissemination as a reference to the practice of transferring academic research to knowledge users, this research has detailed a substantial social media marketing strategies and methods enable the knowledge of sustainability development to be shared among audiences (Murphy & Salomone 2013).

Moreover, it has explored how to integrate social media, including LinkedIn and Twitter as effective communication tools to enhances participants' understanding of environmental issues, and these communications foster environmental action (Robelia et al. 2011). Knowledge dissemination is a relatively new research area as opposed to product promotion. Marketing strategies employed for new products aim at raising public awareness and then increasing product sale. Previous studies have explored various platforms for spreading product information among the public, and these methods transfer information through buzz, word-of-mouth, social media, and other internet-based platforms. In addition, the effectiveness of communication platforms has been measured based on audience engagement. These communication platforms—referred to as intermediaries in this study—have different degrees of impact on audience behavior. Appropriate communication channels for new products lead to desired purchasing behaviors. By analogy, proper knowledge transfer through social media communication platforms to target audiences—such as policy-makers, practitioners and other researchers—is expected to change and improve sustainability practices.

Finally, broadcasting ideas and expertise from academia to external audiences accelerates and enhances the understanding of sustainable development. The dissemination of sustainable knowledge is a response to the call for knowledge transfer. For the sake of spreading research, scholars more likely want to know the functionality of dissemination channels and look for the most effective ways to transfer knowledge. Although adopting sustainability research as a domain, the research framework presented in this paper is also transferable to other disciplines if applicable. Recognizing the significance of knowledge dissemination, this study has proposed directions of assessing the effectiveness of knowledge intermediaries in disseminating sustainability-relevant information.

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Relevance to Marketing Educators, Researchers and

Practitioners: Huang et al. (2015) proposes directions of assessing the effectiveness of social media platforms in disseminating sustainability-relevant information and the consequent policy making.

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TRACK: Social Media Marketing