

SERVICE GOES SOCIAL

Social Media as a way to enhance Customer Service



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Copenhagen Business School – 2013
Master of Social Sciences in Service
Management

Master's Thesis

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Pages: 76 (STUs: 146,502)

Hand-in date: 26-11-2013

Abstract / Executive Summary

The present paper focuses on gaining insight into how to improve customer service using Social Media. The research is aimed at finding ways to improve customer service on Social Media, with the overall objective of increasing user engagement. A case study is used as the primary unit of analysis.

The research paper explores the role of customer service delivery through Social Media, both from a theoretical perspective, taking into account theories that encompass services and Social Media, and from a practical perspective, observing what exactly is done when performing this delivery.

The methodology used for the data collection is based on deductive reasoning, and the data, which is of qualitative and quantitative nature, is obtained through primary sources. Interviews comprise the main source of qualitative data, while a questionnaire and direct observation of Social Media interactions are the source of the quantitative data. The desire of gathering these data sources and analyzing the current practices is to understand what the state of the phenomena is and what can be done to add value to the case company's activities.

The findings obtained from the investigation revolved around two different themes, namely Social Media strategies and customer satisfaction. The first finding regarding Social Media strategies is that top management must back up Social Media efforts. The following findings relate to the creation of a team which will handle the case company's Social Media presence, and that a knowledge database can support effective customer service on Social Media. The findings regarding the second theme, customer satisfaction, relate to how the case company's employees respond to its users, and that the users' characteristics should be taken into account throughout these interactions.

Keywords: Customer service, Social Media, Service Marketing

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1 Introduction

“Marketers jobs have changed from creating and pushing to one that requires listening, engaging, and reacting to potential and current customer needs.”

- Erik Qualman, *Socionomics*

The evolution of consumer dynamics demands that every company begin to rely on other methods aside from traditional tried-and-true formulas to advertise and sell their product or service. ICT, online exchanges, user input and information sharing are becoming the standard, and this has created a paradigm shift in the way companies and consumers interact. This is especially true when it comes to customer engagement and loyalty. Attracting and engaging a customer has become a stimulating subject in the digital era, and many companies are finding it challenging to understand their customer's changing preferences and how to cater to them online.

According to an article from Mckinsey & Company,

“Marketing executives overwhelmingly agree that an effective online presence is very or extremely important for staying competitive—81 percent of them say so. And more than half of respondents say that over the past two years, the increasing prevalence of digital media and tools has changed their companies’ ability to interact with and serve new customers.”
(Mckinsey Quarterly, 2011).

The article and corresponding questionnaire show that there is, despite the attention online tools have received in recent years, a large gap between the intention to appeal to customers' needs through online media, and the actual outcome of the various efforts. This may be attributed to a number of factors, including a lack of understanding of how to properly use these tools, or not having the proper resources (human or economic) to use them. These disruptive technologies, or *“new technologies that prompt businesses to reappraise their strategic approaches”* (Chaffey, 2009), require fresh skill sets from companies looking to adopt them quickly and successfully. The plethora of articles and books that have been produced recently to help guide companies, especially marketers in

firms, in their efforts utilizing new web technologies attest to the relevancy of exploring this subject. Specifically, the issue of how to help companies use the tools at their disposal to ensure they reach and retain their customers. A method which has been gaining popularity in recent times is that of using internet communication technologies, such as Social Media, to reach existing and potential customers.

Within Social Media, social networks are one of the most commonly used communication platforms. Some of the current leading social networking sites include Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn, but there are many more which exist in this varied landscape. These sites, as well as other types of Social Media and online communication tools are currently being used by more and more companies to get their message out. But this desire to amplify their communication efforts through these newer channels is uncharted territory to most organizations, which makes knowing how to use these tools a complex learning process.

As indicated by the Financial Times website,

“Almost six out of 10 business owners are planning further investments in Social Media this year – mainly to improve customer engagement and strengthen their brands – according to a poll by Inbox Insight, an online marketing business.” (Moules, 2012).

This trend extends to most organizations, regardless of size or industry. Most companies are looking for ways to use tools such as Social Media to gain a better understanding of customers or to increase brand exposure and gain new potential leads, which are usually the prerogative of a company's marketing department. However, Social Media can be used to serve the company and consumers by creating a venue for dialogue. This ability to reach people adds a “personal touch” which can set the company apart from competitors in an age where interactions are becoming more and more depersonalized. The potential use of Social Media to bolster a company's performance online should be exploited. Using this venue of communication to provide additional support to customers looking to buy a product or those who are encountering issues with one they have already purchased is becoming more common, and has become an informal support channel. Providing support to customers when they are online would be a way of improving how they interact on a company's channel, which is a way of optimizing customer service. With the increasing

popularity of e-commerce, companies need to find ways to ensure that their customers can interact virtually with their brand in an online environment which they find comfortable and would want to use repeatedly. This involves creating a channel for users and customers, using the different web technologies available, which leaves them feeling satisfied and with a desire to return to repeat the experience. In order to achieve this, numerous factors, which will be covered in the theoretical analysis, must be taken into consideration. However, due to the focus of this paper, a factor which merits special attention is the way online service and Social Media can be improved.

One approach for using Social Media to improve service would be to use it not only for brand awareness and marketing, but for providing assistance to customer. This can create a feeling of assistance for the potential customer who interacts with a company's Social Media channels. Customers may feel more engaged when they reach out to brand through any and receive additional support from someone they can contact anytime they have a question or concern, and that will personalize the interaction. This personal attention is becoming more and more valuable for many consumers, since it makes them feel valued and less like "a number". The proliferation of various Social Media makes them readily accessible for most companies and individuals. They do, nonetheless, require an investment – especially in time and resources – from any company that wishes to use them.

The following graphic indicates that the desire to invest more in Social Media faces multiple challenges, which may indicate that the effective use of Social Media still remains an elusive concept to companies.

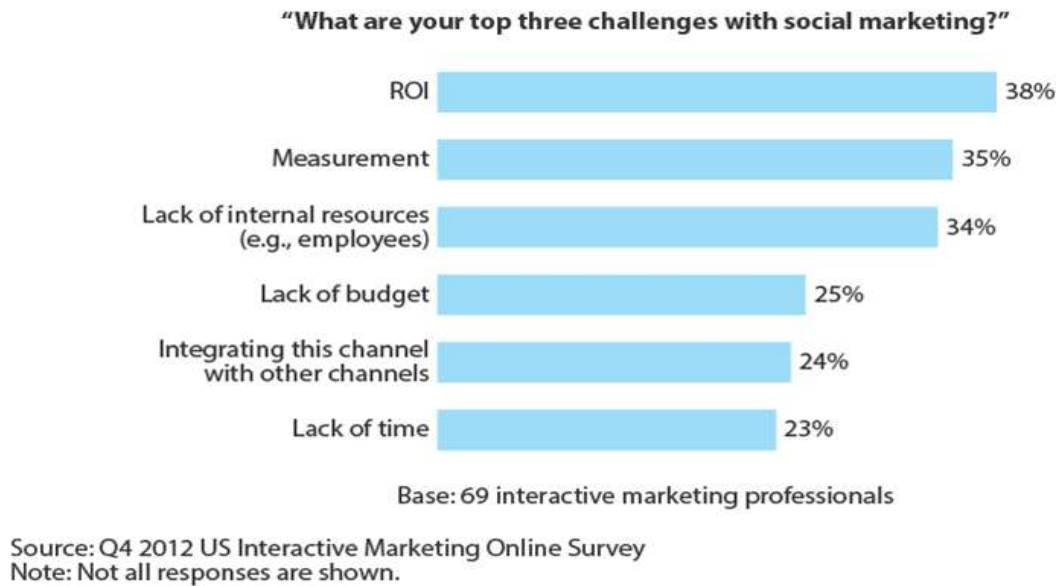


Figure 1 – Top Social Marketing challenges (Forrester, 2013)

Nevertheless, a Social Media presence is important in order to remain competitive in branding, customer engagement and customer service. Once an investment in Social Media is made, the desired outcome would be to eventually obtain higher sales and repeat visits from engaged customers. The overall aim of this paper is not to try to exalt Social Media as a perfect marketing and service tool. The idea, instead, is to demonstrate how companies, including the case company which will be analyzed, can benefit understanding this media and be ready to adapt to novel media such as this in the best way possible based on their intrinsic factors and desired online presence. This means potentially changing behaviors and approaches towards customer service and to utilize new methods of reaching different target groups. Social Media is a currently relevant medium which will be used in the pursuit of attaining improved customer engagement. There is a need for companies to understand their current efforts in the usage of Social Media and other communication tools, as well as the needs and desires of their audience. Consequently, they should be able to adapt to these changes as quickly as they can in order to keep up with current customer dynamics. The focus will therefore be on researching what are the best ways to use Social Media to access and engage current and future customers. This will, in turn, aid in the design of a holistic online communication strategy which incorporates these and future tools to maximize the effectiveness of a company's online presence.

The present paper will utilize a case study in order to gain insight into the question being posed. The case company is Jabra, and it will be further presented in the case section of the present paper.

1.1 Research question

The aforementioned proposition leads to the following research question:

- **How can Jabra improve its customer service through its Social Media channels?**

This project aims to examine how to improve customer service for Jabra's customers, primarily through the use of Social Media, to support and potentially increase customer loyalty and/or engagement.

1.2 Problem owners

The main problem owner is Jabra, and this is due to the focus on Jabra's intrinsic factors and situation. The problem of how to optimize Social Media is an issue that is facing most companies today, regardless of their industry or intrinsic factors. Therefore, other companies providing service through Social Media and attempting to increase user engagement through the Social Media channels covered here can also be considered problem owners.

1.3 Limitations of the problem

The problem only covers the current top Social Media channels, and the specific Social Media types that the researcher has access to. This implies that the research is only directly applicable to comparable cases, though the implications derived from the problem can have broader applications. Another limitation of the focus of this present paper is the exclusion of financial data or specific metrics on return on investment. Aside from the fact that it is quite complicated to quantify the return on investment on certain activities such as marketing and support, the other reason why the financial aspects are not taken into consideration is

that the aim of the research performed for the present paper is to understand one area of interacting on Social Media and how these service encounters can be improved.

2 Theoretical framework

The following literature review presents the relevant theories pertaining to the research question, as well as the context in which the focus is positioned.

2.1 Services and Technology

The aim of this paper is to enhance Jabra's customer service by utilizing Social Media to accomplish this. This involves creating service encounters through Social Media interactions. To create an experience that an individual wants to revisit means making it memorable.

"Carbone and Haeckel (1994) define an experience as the 'take-away impressions formed by people's encounters with products, services and businesses – a perception produced when humans consolidate sensory information'" (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2000).

This explanation seems a bit too organic, so a more comprehensive definition is provided by Fitzsimmons which states that a service experience

"involves learning during a period of time when the customers interact with different elements of a context created by the service provider" (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2000).

According to Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, companies which fail to understand this will treat customers as mere *"passive receivers of external stimuli"*, but as mentioned in the introduction of this paper, the changing dynamics of customer relations demand that to attract and retain customers is not as simple as that. In the online environment, the need to deliver stimulating experiences for users of a company's online channels is vital, and optimizing this interaction is key. Before considering how to optimize the service experience for a customer, the areas which are involved producing this experience must first be examined. First and foremost, what exactly do the terms "services" and "electronic commerce" describe?

2.1.1 Customer service

Services encompass a broad range of activities, yet an intriguing aspect of the ample definition is that they can essentially refer to almost any activity. This is because services can come in many forms.

“Services include all economic activities whose output is not a physical product or construction, is generally consumed at the time it is produced and provides added value in forms (such as convenience, amusement, timeliness, comfort and health).” (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008, s. 6).

Most organizations offer services, and many provide certain services to support their core product, which they tend to provide free of charge. Services can be divided into four main categories: service industries and companies, which form part of the service sector, or whose core offering is a service; services as products, such as IBM selling their IT consulting services as a product; customer service, which are services provided free of charge which are meant to support a company's core product; and derived service, which extends the concept of service to any product and physical good, because they too provide services (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008, s. 6). The services which are part of customer service include answering questions, providing information about the product, or handling complaints. This type of service can help provide the foundation of building good customer relationships. (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008). Customer service is of particular relevance to the present paper, since it is one of the pillars for building a good relationship with users of a company's online service provision. There are many different ways to provide customer service; it

“can occur on-site (as when a retail employee helps a customer find a desired item or answers a question), or it can occur over the telephone or via the internet” (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008, s. 6).

It can also come from call centers designed to work around the clock, to handle customer needs and inquiries anytime (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008). .

To support the notion of delivering services optimally, service quality must be defined. Service quality is composed of various dimensions which are used by customer to judge it. The first is reliability, which is *“the ability to perform the promised service both dependably and accurately”*. The second is responsiveness, which is *“the willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service”*. The next is assurance, or *“the knowledge and courtesy of employees as well as their ability to convey trust and competence”*. The following dimension is empathy which refers to *“the provision of caring, individualized attention to customers. Empathy includes approachability, sensitivity, and effort to understand the customer’s needs”*. The final dimension, tangibles, refers to *“the physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials”* (Fitsimmons, 2011, s. 116).

One way to establish the service quality customers perceive is to apply the Gaps model of service quality. The following graph of the model which depicts the various “gaps” between expected and perceived service. This usually applies to companies which are offering traditional services, but it could easily be applied to services offered through Social Media. The gaps model of service quality should be employed by a company when assessing the service delivery, in order to identify any gaps or deficiencies in the service, and potentially remedy them. The researcher thinks that understanding the shortcomings perceived by Jabra’s Social Media users is crucial to being able to improve these issues and optimize Jabra’s Social Media presence.

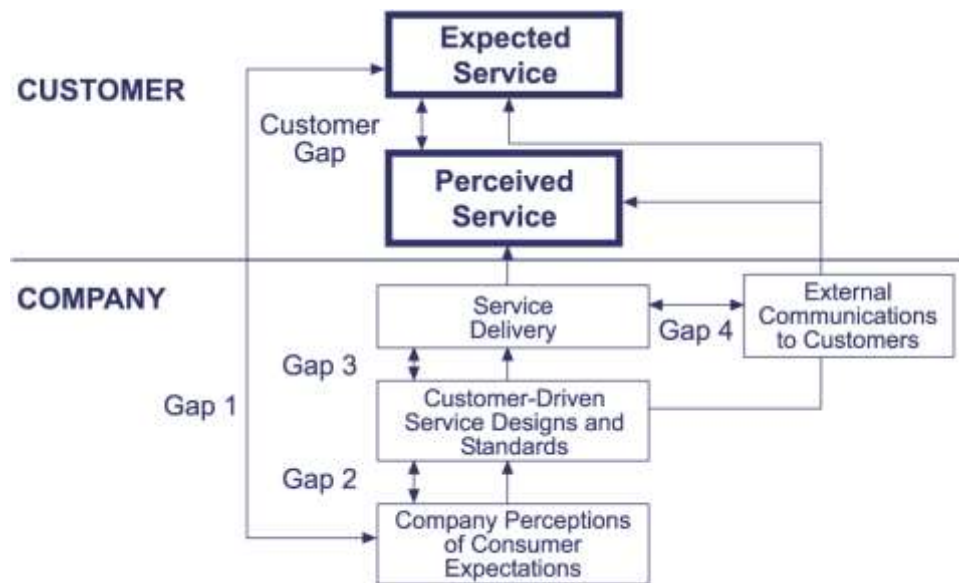


Figure 2 - Gaps Model of Service Quality (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008, p. 115)

The first gap which exists is the market research gap. This gap usually leads managers to lack sufficient understanding of how customers form their expectations from various factors including previous experiences with the company or its competitors, from advertising or from communication with friends/word-of-mouth (this last factor being of particular relevance to Social Media). This can, in theory, be remedied by improving market research, by improving communication between management and frontline employees, and by reducing the levels between management and customers (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008).

The second gap is the design gap. In this gap, management doesn't target a specific level of service to meet customer expectations and translate that to tangible guidelines. Reasons this may occur include a lack of commitment from management to improve service quality or a perception that customer expectations cannot be met. The researcher also ventures that this gap can occur because of a lack of understanding of the area in which service is being offered. In order to deal with this gap, goals for service delivery should be set, as well as standardizing service delivery tasks (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008).

Numerous factors contribute to forming this gap. One such factor is a lack of teamwork between employees. Another reason this gap occurs is because employees are not capacitated to handle the specific tasks they need to. This may be due to poor job design or

a lack of training for the task they need to carry out. Sometimes, the actual delivery of service cannot meet the specifications set by management. This would require a better understanding on behalf of management of the limitations of the service delivery. Gap three, the conformance gap, refers to the company not delivering service according to service and design standards. A factor which is associated with this gap is the lack of service recovery efforts. This may occur because the company is not fully aware of why their customers complain, or how to address service failures. Communication is the focus of the fourth gap. This basically refers to a discrepancy between service delivery and external communication. This could be attributed to exaggerated marketing promises or to a lack of information provided to contact personnel to give customers an optimal service offering. The fifth and final gap is the customer gap. It is a gap between the customer's expectations and perceptions of the service. It refers to what customers expect to receive and their perception of the quality of service received (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008). Customer satisfaction depends on minimizing the four provider gaps that are associated with service delivery, and trying to influence the customer's own perception versus expectation gap in order to achieve satisfaction. Whenever there is an area where there is a gap between what the customer expects and what the company is delivering, measures need to be taken in order to remedy it, and continuously improve the delivery utilizing the feedback received (Fitsimmons, 2011). In order to measure these gaps, companies can use tools such as questionnaires to gather data from their customers. When dealing with service offered through online channels, the data can potentially be obtained from a larger sample group.

Clearly, providing a good service offering is essential to ensuring customer satisfaction. Additionally, in the digital age, service has become increasingly technology based, which often leads to having a technologically facilitated service offering. There are various ways technology can mediate a service encounter, including technology-free, technology-assisted, technology-facilitated, technology mediated, and technology-generated service encounters. The first mode clearly indicates that technology doesn't play a role in the encounter, while the second mode (technology-assisted) only involves the service provider accessing the technology during a face-to-face encounter. The latter modes are therefore more relevant

to the aim of the present paper, since they all involve both the customer and the service provider/company accessing technology in order to enable an exchange.



Figure 3 - Role of Technology in the Service Encounter (Fitsimmons, 2011, p. 96)

The technology-facilitated encounter is relevant when both parties are involved in interacting actively by means of a technological platform. This encounter is the most relevant to the principal aim of the present paper, since it describes how Social Media service is provided. Technology-generated service encounters are the most relevant in self-service, since it is in this mode where the technology enables the customer to “serve” themselves to the company’s offering (Fitsimmons, 2011). The concept of self-service warrants consideration when considering the broader aim of the present paper. This is because improving customer service should be done across the different Social Media channels the company uses, and certain Social Media types are ideal for purveying self-service. Though creating self-service offerings on a company’s Social Media channel may not directly lead to relationship building, it can have other benefits. Self-service technology, or SST, should ideally make the service encounter effective and more efficient for both the customer and the employees of a company (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008). Self-service may have some drawbacks, but it has many advantages for the user and for the company. From the customer’s perspective, self-service technology allows them to access a service unassisted, and to potentially increase their efficiency of service provision (Fitsimmons, 2011) as well as economic scale and increased content (The concept of scalability will be briefly covered later on in the theoretical framework).

In general, technology-facilitated service helps break down physical boundaries in service provision, and enables customers to access a service practically anywhere and anytime they

choose, as long as they are connected. The introduction of technology into services has raised some speculation among opponents of some of its implications, since this improved efficiency comes with a cost, which is the loss of face-to-face human interaction (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008). Aside from the breakdown of traditional personal interaction as a hindrance for building relationships, the lack of face-to-face interaction may allow service failure to occur due certain issues which technology-facilitated service can have. Some issues include technology-readiness and lack of consistent real-time interaction. Service failure is when the service delivery doesn't meet the expectations of the user. Service recovery is basically

“the actions taken to respond to a service failure” (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008, s. 371).

In order to ensure a proper service recovery, employees that are in contact with customers (even through Social Media) need to be empowered with the discretion to *“make things right”* (Fitsimmons, 2011). Confronting and remedying a service failure with the right approach can mitigate negative effects from bad word of mouth, and possibly create positive stories that will help ensure goodwill towards the company. Research (from the Technical Assistance Research Program) has shown that this is indeed what occurs, since

“resolving customer problems effectively has a strong impact on customer satisfaction, loyalty, word-of-mouth communication and bottom-line performance (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008, s. 371).

Surprisingly that same research shows that customers who never complain are the least likely to repurchase, potentially because the company doesn't get the opportunity to perform a service recovery.

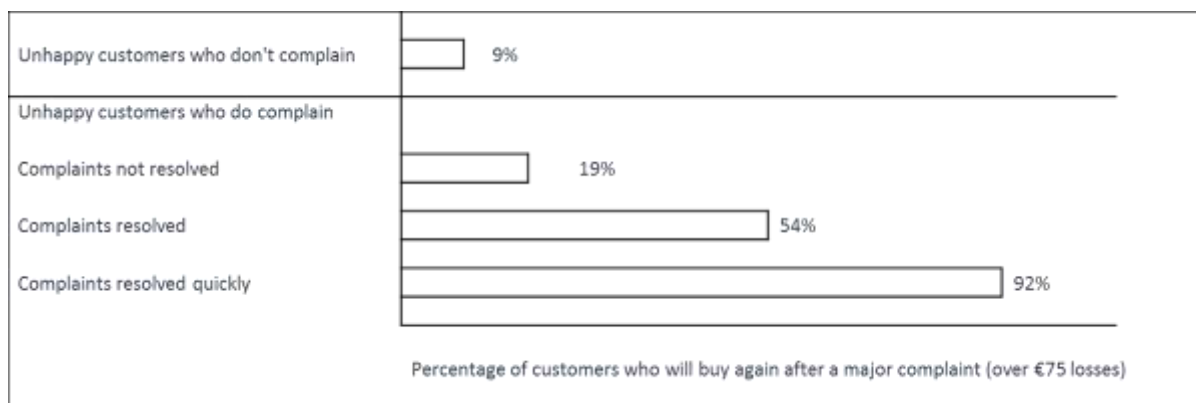


Figure 4 - Customers repurchasing intentions (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008, p. 371)

An important aspect to consider is the readiness of a company's employees and its audience to embrace new technology in order to use it properly to achieve the desired results. This new technology also refers Social Media, and future communication platforms.

"Research on people's reaction to technology identified eight technology-related paradoxes: control/chaos, freedom/enslavement, new/obsolete, competence/incompetence, efficiency/inefficiency, fulfills/creates needs, assimilation/isolation, and engaging/disengaging. These paradoxes imply that technology may trigger both positive and negative feelings" (Fitsimmons, 2011, s. 106).

These paradoxes signify that companies need to take into consideration what the level of technology readiness is of all of its stakeholders and adapt its strategy and offering accordingly. Adapting to this includes redefining its channels for both employees and audience, and ensuring that the right people and skills are being employed at the front-lines of the varied encounters (Fitsimmons, 2011). In order to mitigate some of the potential pitfalls of service, a company needs to consider what tools it has at its disposal to help ensure high service standards, and effective service encounters. Using Social Media to deliver service is still relatively uncharted territory, so there needs to be a thorough understanding of the medium, the target audience and the best practices in order to get the best use out of it. Using the knowledge regarding Social Media service properly can lead to creating fail-safe service encounters. This method basically creates a way to ensure that the

service encounters go smoothly on both the customer's end and the company's side; and could extend to providing additional *fail-safeing* support mechanisms (Fitsimmons, 2011).

2.1.1.1 Service Marketing

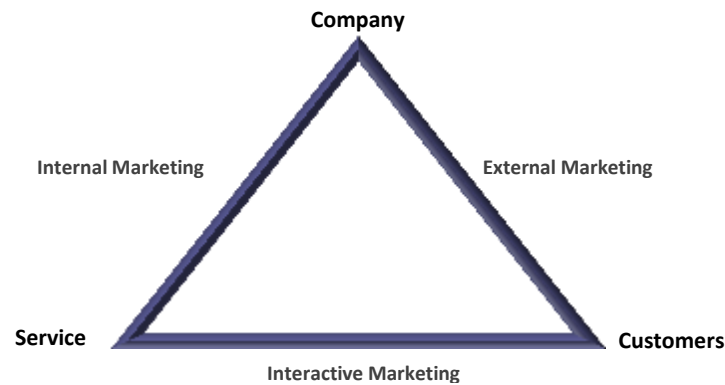


Figure 5 - Services marketing triangle (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008, p. 19)

The service marketing triangle illustrates the three interlinking groups which are involved in the promises made in service marketing. (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008). The three groups are the employees, company and customers. The three interactions are: external marketing (making promises), interactive marketing (keeping promises) and internal marketing (enabling promises).

The employees offering service, the design and content of the Social Media channel (in lieu of physical evidence from a traditional servicescape), and the actual way of delivering service are in large part what set customer expectations. Communications before delivery also establish service promises, and this is what makes up the external marketing side of the triangle. In order to establish a basic relationship with the users of a company's Social Media, the promises set need to be consistent and achievable, or else the user will not find them believable. The second type of marketing activity the triangle depicts is the part of keeping the promises made in external marketing. The interactive marketing is also referred to as real-time marketing – it occurs in the actual moment of truth in which the interaction between customer and company takes place. This part is crucial, since if promises are not kept, customers will become dissatisfied and disengage with the company. In order for a company to deliver on the promises made, they must have skills and resources to do so. This

is the part which refers to internal marketing, and it requires management to enable employees to keep the promises (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008, p. 19).

2.1.2 Technology in service and e-commerce

The concept of service offered through technology, specifically through Social Media, is highly related to e-commerce since offering service online is encompassed under this concept. E-commerce itself refers to

“all electronically mediated information exchanges between an organization and its external stakeholders”. (Chaffey, 2009, s. 10).

E-commerce involves more than just buying or selling on the internet. The definition implies that all electronic exchanges fall within the scope of e-commerce, making non-financial transactions part of this concept as well. According to this designation, it can refer to the delivery of information, products or services (communication perspective); cutting costs and increasing the speed of service delivery (service perspective); or the buying and selling of products and information online (online perspective) (Chaffey, 2009). The present paper focuses on the sell side of e-commerce, which is defined as *“e-commerce transactions between a supplier organization and its customers”*. (Chaffey, 2009, s. 10-11). Within sell side e-commerce, there are four site types. The first are transactional e-commerce sites, which enable purchasing products online, though they also provide information for consumers who prefer to purchase products offline (such as providing a list of local retail stores). The second types of sites are services-oriented relationship building web sites, which provide information to stimulate purchases and build relationships. The following types are brand-building sites, which provide users with an experience to support the brand. The final types are portal, publisher, or media sites, which provide entertainment, news or information about many different topics, and can act as intermediaries that link to other sites. These sites generate revenue through ads and/or sales of customer/user data. Social networks could be considered part of this category, since they are often supported by user data, though they can be relationship building if they are considered from a company's perspective. (Chaffey, 2009, s. 15). This is because if a company decides to use its own social

network in order to help build a relationship with its customers, then the social network would become a brand-building site for said company. A company can have some or even all of these types of sites as part of their online presence, and use them in different ways, targeting different audiences. When used properly, these sites can lead to increased revenue, instantaneous feedback, and potentially strengthen a brand.

For a company to be successful in any aspect of e-commerce, they must first do a comprehensive situation analysis, which is a review of information about its external environment as well as its internal resources in order to formulate a strategy. This involves environmental scanning and analysis, which is to constantly monitor the environment and respond to it (Chaffey, 2009, s. 53). Also, evaluating the online surroundings to identify things such as customer segments, intermediaries and media sites, and also destination sites (Chaffey, 2009). Having done their due diligence an organization should supposedly, be strategically agile, which is the

“capability to innovate and so gain competitive advantage within a marketplace by monitoring changes within an organization’s marketplace and then to efficiently evaluate alternative strategies and then select, review and implement appropriate candidate strategies” (Chaffey, 2009, s. 57).

Something that can make an organization strategically agile is to set up multiple channels which provide different communication styles tailored to different target groups (Chaffey, 2009). This will also allow customers to have agile interactions with a company. Being agile across various online channels would also be the optimal way to ensure there is a sense of brand cohesion.

The phenomenon of customers seeking service through online technology is becoming more prevalent

“On the consumer side, 62% of customers have already used social media for customer service issues.” (Rollason, 2012).

Hence, it is important to understand what drives this surge in popularity. Certain drivers exist which can make consumers want to connect online. They are: content, customization,

community, convenience, choice and cost reduction. These mnemonically simplified benefits of online services are known as the “Six C’s”. Content refers to the information which supports the buying decision or builds the brand. Customization is basically allowing users to tailor their online shopping experience based on personal preference. Community is simply having the ability to share insights, thoughts, etc. with others users. Convenience is being able to find, buy and even use (digital) products and services from the comfort of a desktop pc (and increasingly, from a mobile phone) while having said products be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (in most cases). Choice refers to the broader spectrum of options a consumer has access to when using the web, since there are no physical constraints which limit the amount of products or service offices present. Finally, cost reduction is expected to be an outcome of e-commerce, since lower costs are associated with having less staff, lower distribution costs or less storage space. (Chaffey, 2009, s. 37-38). Of these six C’s, the ones which are of most relevance to the present paper are community, content, and convenience, since those are the aspects which are dealt with when user interact with a company through Social Media.

Even though online communication technologies may seem to be a great way to access customers and potential leads worldwide, the use of these tools can be a double-edged sword. Some of the factors which could lead to a disgruntled user would include a company which doesn’t offer good service online and have a service recovery infrastructure in place (Chaffey, 2009).

“The phenomenal growth of the e-tail sector has not been without its own unique troubles. One of the main issues arising repeatedly concerns the level of service provided during the course of electronic transactions” (Forbes).

Though this may not be directly about Social Media service, it alludes to the need for providing good customer service online. Users may also consider whether the online channel they are accessing provides the information or experience they are seeking (which, if not provided, could be a cause of dissatisfaction, as mentioned previously). The need to ensure user satisfaction is reiterated each time a negative story is mentioned in the media or every time a dissatisfied customer makes their complaint known. In order to try to

prevent these hindrances from affecting their online channels, an organization needs to continuously evaluate their environment and audience, while also reassuring their customers by maintaining high standards of transparency and service on their online channels. Globalization adds another dimension that companies, which operate on a global level, must take into consideration and factor into their cost structure. That is the need to localize their content, offering and online channels to make them accessible and tailored to their international audience (Chaffey, 2009, s. 234).

Despite these potential obstacles, online retail and electronic transactions including online customer service increase. Research from Gefen et al. (2003), to Pavlou and Gefen, (2004) and Chau et al. (2000) seems to indicate that

“Since the electronic channel linking reduces the possibilities for the seller to demonstrate the solidity and the capabilities of the products and the sales organization, trust and content play an important role in the shoppers selection and buying process” (Baier & Stuber, 2010).

These assertions once again convey the importance of trust, communications and reliability in a company’s online presence. Though the aforementioned research is related to online product purchases, it indicates that being a trusted brand can potentially aid in the customer’s selection process. This is one potential source of return on investment, since prospective sales could be supported by a solid Social Media service delivery. The focus of the present paper is on Social Media as a way to enhance customer service, and by doing this, the researcher hopes that trust and relationship quality between a company and its customers can be improved. Therefore, the influence of relationship quality within the online space should be examined.

2.1.2.1 Relationship quality in the online environment

“Relationship quality (RQ) is widely considered a higher-order concept that consists of customer satisfaction, trust, and commitment” (Walsh, 2010).

One of the conclusions from the research by Walsh, which attempted to extrapolate offline relationship building determinants to online channels, is that

“the positive link between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty intentions is a fundamental axiom of the relationship management concept. The satisfaction-loyalty link has been repeatedly examined and confirmed for e-services” (Walsh, 2010).

That same article revealed that due to an increase difficulty to establish a social relationship with customers, it's harder to create loyalty in the online environment. The study goes on to ascertain that customer satisfaction has been found to be an important driver of consumer buying behavior regardless of environment and service context (Walsh, 2010).

Another aspect that should be considered is how consumers feel about a determined brand, product or service. Is it possible for emotions to play an important role, different from logical behavioral patterns? A recent study conducted by market research firm Motista shows that there is a likely correlation between emotional connection and brand loyalty. According to the study, a mere 18% of consumers felt an emotional connection to a retailer, yet almost 80% of those “connected” consumers are very likely to recommend the brand, effectively becoming brand ambassadors, and tend to repeat the shopping experience by going to that brand first when looking for that product or service. The study also proves that these emotionally engaged consumers follow their favorite retailers on Facebook and Twitter four times more often than non-engaged consumers. (Motista, 2011). These findings pose a few intriguing questions. To be precise, how do these emotionally engaged consumers become engaged? Are they engaged prior to interacting with the brand, or do the interactions become the source of engagement? Another key question is what exactly creates an emotional bond? One hypothesis is that it can either be the desire to emulate a lifestyle (aspirational relationship to a brand) or human contact. This departs from the technological aspect of online exchanges and leads to people's social nature, and consequently to the next section of theoretical analysis.

2.2 Social Media

Social Media is defined by Merriam Websters Dictionary as:

“forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)” (Source: Merriam Websters Online Dictionary).

The emergence of Social Media as an online communication technology (and for various interactions) makes it a viable medium which should be analyzed and understood by companies. Social Media contains many different types of electronic media, such as blogs, rich media (video, audio or games), virtual worlds, and social networks (Chaffey, 2009). Within the realm of Social Media, the social network is one of the most commonly used.

“A social network is a site that facilitates peer-to peer communication within a group or between individuals through providing facilities to develop user-generated content (UGC) and to exchange messages and comments between different users.” (Chaffey, 2009, s. 6).

Social networks provide a service to their users, but when companies use these platforms, they can use them as intermediaries for service delivery (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008). A more comprehensive definition of social network is

“a site enabling community interactions between different consumers (C2C model). Typical interactions including posting comments and replies to comments, sending messages, rating content and tagging content in particular categories. Well-known examples include Bebo, Facebook, MySpace and Linked-In. Other startups also have a social network element such as Delicious (social bookmarking or rating web pages), Digg (comment on blog postings), Flickr (image tagging), Technorati (blog postings) and YouTube (videos). In addition to distinct social network sites such as these, they can also be integrated into other site types, in particular into media owned sites. Large social networks such as Facebook or MySpace are effectively media owners and advertising is their main revenue source.” (Chaffey & Smith, 2008, p. 11).¹

¹ The researcher would merely like to point out that social networking sites enable interactions between B2C and B2B as well as C2C.

Within the plethora of social networks available, the most widely used by companies currently is Facebook. This social network has registered over one billion users, with a high percentage being active users. According to the 2012 Facebook earnings report, 59% of Facebook's 1,056 billion monthly users are active on the site daily (Facebook, 2012). According to the report, the mobile user group is increasing rapidly. This indicates a desire from these users to be connected from wherever they are, and therefore have the ability to interact on the platform anytime and anywhere.

Although social networks can be considered communication facilitating technological medium, the term comes from social science, and is used to study human interactions. This simplification of the concept indicates that at their core, people are social beings. Even with the use of technology, people want to make and maintain connections with others. The desire to connect may even extend to becoming familiar with representatives of a company which they engage with, though seeking out a bond with a company is likely more of a practical activity than purely social. According to a Cone Consumer New Media study, media users, when engaging with companies/brands online, primarily seek: incentives (e.g. free products), customer service (product information or problem resolution), and to give feedback on products and services (Cone LLC, 2010).

Using Social Media can potentially lead to increased customer engagement, but the use of it alone will not warrant increased brand equity. According to Erik Qualman,

"Companies that produce great products and services rather than simply rely on great messaging will be winners in a Socialnomic world. The social graph is the world's largest and most powerful referral program" (Qualman, 2009, s. 135).

Now that the definition of social networking has been established, the value of being present and why it is beneficial should be considered. A social network in essence, is dictated by the same fundamental rules which govern most types of networks. Metcalfe's law, written in 1980 (preceding the appearance of major social networks by almost 20 years), states that

"the value of a network grows in proportion to the square of the number of users (Metcalfe 1996; and Downes, Mui, and Negroponete 1998). Just as the value of a telephone to a user depends on the number of other people who also have a telephone, the value of being on a computer network depends on how many other people are also on the network. As a network grows, its value to each individual user increases, and the total value of the network increases much faster than the number of users. This is also referred to as "network effects." (National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics, 2002).

This notion is taken even further by the site SimplyMeasured. The author suggests the concept of virtuous cycle:

"From BusinessDictionary.com: 'A self-propagating advantageous situation in which a successful solution leads to more of a desired result or another success which generates still more desired results or successes in a chain'."

And then relates it to network growth on a social network:

"Audience growth on social media follows the concepts of the Virtuous Cycle. With every new follower you gain, you get access to more potential followers. In addition, as the number of followers you have grows, the perception of your brand in that social network becomes more positive. As that perception becomes more positive, more people follow you." (Bar-Joseph, 2013)

The implication of this law to a company's online strategy is that the value of its network will go up with aggregated users, which is more relevant than a brand's mere presence. That is, to actually be an active participant and establish a relationship with consumers can increase the value of the network. Metcalfe's law was intended to explain the interconnectivity of hardware, and if this is taken metaphorically, then having a computer which is connected to the internet would be enough to create a strong network, which is simply not the case. If the owner of said computer doesn't actively use it to connect, the value of the network is virtually nonexistent. The same is true of a social network. If a company merely creates a social network site, that site will just be a static tool with a low impact on user's engagement. If, however, the company uses the social network to reach out to users and create relationships with them, the value of the company's network goes up gradually, as

should the amount of “followers”. In the book *Socialnomics*, Erik Qualman expands the idea of actively using Social Media,

“It’s better to live a Social Media life making mistakes than living a Social Media life doing nothing” (Qualman, 2009).

He believes that companies don’t have a choice about whether they will use Social Media, but they can decide how well they use it. The statement reflects the belief that it is better to try to engage on Social Media rather than maintaining a stale presence, since even imperfect interactions can lead to dialog which will in turn, potentially enable engagement.

The other Social Media which will be focused on to a lesser extent are content aggregators. Aggregators are sites where content can be uploaded by users which can then be shared with other users on the site. Although there are many aggregator sites on the internet, YouTube is the most well-known and most used since its original launch in 2005. The site acts as a distribution platform for content creators and advertisers, and allows people to upload and share video clips directly on YouTube.com and to be shared on websites, mobile devices, blogs, and email. Most of the content on YouTube has been uploaded by individuals, although many media corporations upload their material via the site, as part of the YouTube partnership program. (YouTube)

It is of interest to note that 100 million people take a social action (“like”, share or comment) on YouTube every week, and that more than 50% of videos on YouTube have been rated or include comments from the community (YouTube - press statistics). Therefore, the site does illicit a desire amongst its users to indicate the content they like and dislike.

“Clicks on the ‘like’ or ‘dislike’ button on YouTube have doubled since the start of 2011. For every ‘dislike,’ we get 10 ‘likes’- people like to tell other people about the stuff they love” (YouTube - press statistics).

Some of YouTube’s social stats are staggering, which makes it possible to see how the content from this site has a large impact on prominent Social Media sites. YouTube is very

present on both Facebook and Twitter, since 500 years of YouTube video are watched every day on Facebook. (YouTube - press statistics).

An interesting note is which type of content seems to be shared most amongst users. On Facebook, videos are shared 12 times more than text and images combined, and photos are liked 2 times more than text updates (M Booth and Simply Measured, 2012). While these figures may not bode well for marketing copywriters, these statistics illustrate that users respond more to visual stimuli than text. Though this paper does not have such a scope to consider neuromarketing implications, this would be an interesting area to investigate for future content development. Yet another implication from those statistics is that content uploaded on one type of Social Media, such as videos on YouTube, can be used to further engage users on another platform, such as providing content for a company's Facebook page.

These statistics of usage make the various social platforms an appealing space for companies to approach. The use of Social Media, however, does not come without risk. This is because there are risks associated with the ability consumers have to access other consumers the minute they have a negative experience with a company. In the recurrently cited *Socialnomics*, Qualman explain that with Social Media, unlike the traditional model of slowly spreading information from person to person through verbal communication, social networking allows one person to spread news or thoughts to an entire network of connected users rapidly.

"World of Mouth is an advancement of Word of Mouth as: (1) it disseminates the information quickly and globally; (2) its digital aspect allows the original integrity of the message to remain intact; and (3) it is traceable to an original source. (Qualman, 2009, s. 37).

Because of this, there is always the possibility that a company will lose goodwill from negative comments made on social networks, since they spread at a vertiginous rate, which could eventually lead to a loss of engagement and loyalty. Qualman's statement could also be viewed in a positive manner. If customers feel well served by a company, and enjoyed their online interaction with a company (and any support received from the company), they may become brand ambassadors by making a positive remark on a social network, and

increase brand exposure through “word of mouth”. When people are satisfied with a product or service, they may want to share this. A questionnaire conducted by Nielsen Company in March 2010 gathered the responses from more than 27,000 Internet users worldwide and may help shine light on this matter. Although, it would seem that a negative experience would incite the majority of people to react based on frustration and a wish to remedy the problem, in reality, a slightly higher percentage of respondents would not want to share the negative incident.

“while most online consumers (59%) said that they are not more likely to share a negative experience online via Twitter or writing a review, 41 percent would”. (Nielsen, 2010)

Based on these results, a company should be aiming to continually engage their customers in a positive manner, endeavoring to encourage them to share positive experiences and good stories related to that company.

Using Social Media to engage customers can be accomplished in a number of ways. One way would be to ask for the users’ feedback on the company’s products and/or services, which can help stimulate customer-centric innovation. Another potential way of utilizing Social Media as an engagement tool is hosting competitions to gain brand exposure or creating content (such as posts) to increase engagement. By asking for input, engagement may increase, and an added benefit will be the creation of feedback mechanisms which may even enable the aforementioned customer-centric innovation. Since users do tend to seek out help from companies directly through their Social Media channels (especially through social networking sites), service provision is an increasingly important area to consider optimizing. This prospect is the main point investigated in the data collection of the present paper.

The incorporation of Social Media into a company’s customer service offering makes it necessary to integrate it into the development of a company’s strategy.

“Strategy development is about discovering how to manage and control the future...it is concerned with capturing the experience and wisdom of organizational members about how they believe an attractive vision of the future can be attained” (Gill, 2006).

This definition makes it clear that when applied to Social Media, the development of strategy should be based on finding out how to approach these and future tools to meet corporate goals. It also shows that it is critical to utilize and support the employees that have insight into the application of these tools. Since Social Media implies a level of participation from the company's end-users, the Social Media strategy should take this into account, and use methods of enhancing customer participation on these types of platforms. Some of the ways users can participate are helping themselves (by using and enjoying the services offered), helping others (community experiences, which could be shared on forums), and promoting the company (by making positive stories public on online platforms). Participation can be encouraged either by recruiting the right customers, by educating them in the proper ways to interact and giving them knowledge, and by rewarding their contributions (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008).

The concept of crowdsourcing is one possible way to encourage participation and make use of user contributions on Social Media. Crowdsourcing refers to

“the act of a company or institution taking a function once performed by employees and outsourcing it to an undefined (and generally large) network of people in the form of an open call. This can take the form of peer-production (when the job is performed collaboratively), but is also often undertaken by sole individuals. The crucial prerequisite is the use of the open call format and the large network of potential laborers”. (Howe, 2006)

The usage of a brand's Social Media users as promoters of the brand and engagers of other users relates to the concept of crowdsourcing, since the most engaged users could create dialog and even respond to user inquiries. These engaged users could act as an unofficial support for Social Media service, but relying on them to provide service could potentially be detrimental to the quality of responses (inaccuracy, biases from personal experiences, and lack of cohesion with the company's goals). The reliance on these users could also hinder dialog and therefore engagement potential between a company's users and its representatives. Yet another challenge regarding crowdsourcing is that not very many online users are active contributors. This relates to the concept of contributors versus lurkers; specifically the 1% rule (coined by McConnell and Huba)

“User participation often more or less follows a 90-9-1 rule: 90% of users are lurkers (i.e., read or observe, but don't contribute); 9% of users contribute from time to time, but other priorities dominate their time; 1% of users participate a lot and account for most contributions: it can seem as if they don't have lives because they often post just minutes after whatever event they're commenting on occurs.” (Nielsen, 2006)

Based on this rule, it is possible to presume that the majority of users on any given site will not be highly active regularly. However, it is possible to infer that the active users could be initiators of dialog and unofficial support on Social Media. The challenge a company will face will be how to utilize the contributions of this 1% and how to motivate the remainder of users to become more engaged.

Considering the concept of crowdsourcing, it is important to understand what return the company has on making any sort of Social Media investment. Embracing Social Media for service provision may not translate to sales per se, but offering service through Social Media could improve a company's cost structure. This is explained through the concept of scalability.

“Scalability is the ability of a firm to improve contribution margins (revenue – variable costs) as its sales volume increases. Infinite scalability can occur only when the variable cost of serving an additional customer is zero. There are three sources of scalability: (1) conduct only information or data-transfer services (e.g. online encyclopedia), (2) allow customers to serve themselves (e.g. online reservations) and (3) let customers serve other customers (e.g. online auctions)” (Fitsimmons, 2011, s. 101).

If a company uses their Social Media channels optimally to serve their customers and even allow the community to engage with itself, they may find that their Social Media efforts help them achieve scalability.

An interesting overall observation when dealing with users on Social Media is to remember that the demographics of these users may differ slightly from what the standard target audience is, and therefore, a different approach may be necessary to communicate optimally with these users. As Marc Prensky states,

“Lest this perspective appear radical, rather than just descriptive, let me highlight some of the issues. Digital Natives are used to receiving information really fast. They like to parallel process and multi-task. They prefer their graphics before their text rather than the opposite. They prefer random access (like hypertext). They function best when networked. They thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games to “serious” work.”.

According to Prensky, the digital natives, (seemingly comprised of Millennials and Gen-Xers) are prone to preferring a less traditional approach, which is why the language and activity on a company’s social media channels will have to be adapted to the demographic which is active on it, while still maintaining the company’s brand image.

2.2.1 Adapted Marketing Mix

The marketing mix (Chaffey & Smith, 2008) was considered in order to place Social Media activity within the scope of tools available. Social Media could be encompassed within the different elements of the marketing mix, though it is not specifically contemplated in the basic model.

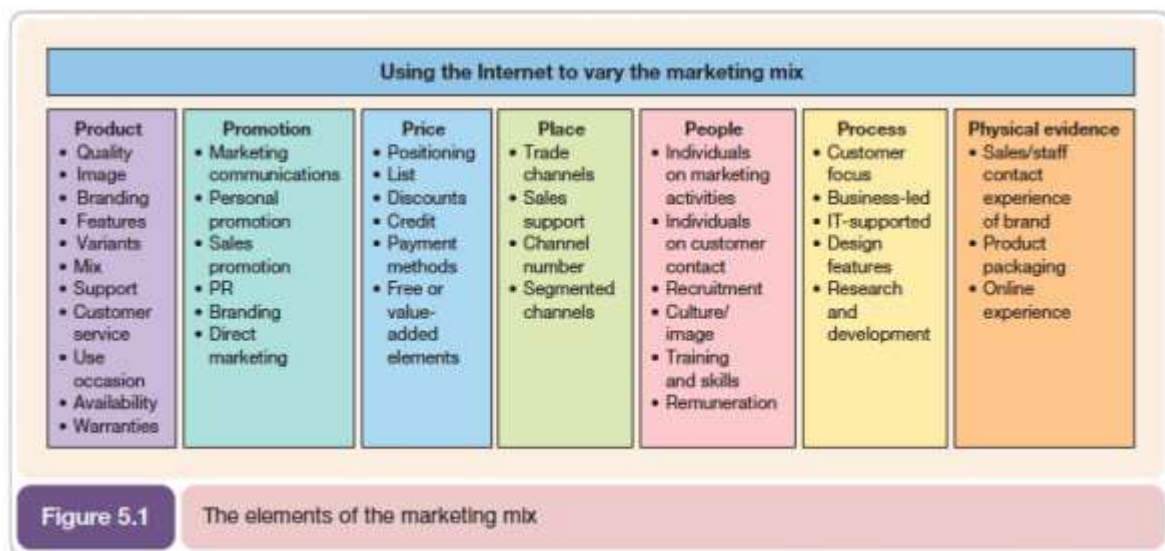


Figure 6 - Marketing Mix (Chaffey & Smith, 2008)

The traditional marketing mix lacked the necessary elements that reflect the placement of such activity in terms of its intrinsic nature. Therefore, the “Adapted Marketing Mix” (Munar & Hvass) has been chosen instead.

“The authors added one element, social activity, to the promotional marketing mix to make it more representative of UGC platforms. This activity relates to content that is purely social in nature and has a purpose of initiating dialog or kindness. It takes into consideration that Social Media platforms are characterised by ‘techspressive’ features and provide pleasure, emotional experiences and social affirmation (Kozinets, 2008)” (Munar & Hvass, 2012).

The adapted marketing mix refers to platforms which enable user generated content; however, the researcher believes it to be applicable to Social Media activity in general due to the description of social activity. Based on this adapted marketing mix, the aspects of particular relevance to Social Media are included in order to help apply this framework to these channels. By defining the way social activity takes place on these platforms, the framework will help understand the way customers interact on the company’s Social Media channels. It is of particular relevance to how a company communicates on Social Media and to the type of content which is delivered. The adapted marketing mix places emphasis on delivering emotionally engaging experiences which are tailored to the social online environment.

The present paper will try to utilize the predefined constructs of services and Social Media to analyze the case company and its current intrinsic and as well as external factors to understand how the company may assess and optimize the use of the tools available to them.

3 Case

The present paper is based on an instrumental case study with the purpose to *“provide insight into an issue or to revise a generalization”* (Silverman, 2005). A case study is a description of a management situation, and is useful for theory development and testing (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2002). The case study method is employed because this project involves an empirical investigation of a particular phenomenon. Since *“many phenomena cannot be understood if removed from their social context”*, the case study method proves useful for grasping the implications of said phenomena. (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2002) The case is used to measure the success of a company’s Social Media service as part of its online

strategy. It presents the current reality of an example of the phenomenon being studied in the present paper, and will permit insight into the factors that contribute it, which will later on be used for drawing a conclusion. For the purposes of the present paper, the focus will be on Jabra's Global Facebook site and Jabra's YouTube channel.

Case presentation

The company which will be used as the case study is Jabra – the brand name of the mobile division of GN Netcom. The company is dedicated to enabling communication via headsets and speakerphone solutions for mobile users, office-based and contact center employees in all parts of the world. The company has approximately 900 employees and has numerous sales offices in various regions of the world. GN Netcom, the subsidiary of GN Store Nord, was founded in 1987 and is divided in two divisions – Mobile and CC&O. The Mobile Division is primarily dedicated to the B2C market, and the CC&O Division, which focuses mainly on the B2B market. GN Netcom's mobile division produces headsets to the global market under the brand name Jabra. The brand is marketed and sold in more than 70 countries. The division which will be the focus of the case study is Mobile. The Mobile product categories consist of Bluetooth® Headsets, In-car Speakerphones, Music & Stereo Headsets, Corded Headsets and Products for PC.

"Our brand, Jabra, is about empowering our customers. We recognize the tremendous potential inherent in technology. It can set us free and empower us to accomplish amazing things, on our own terms. Jabra's products harness this technology and enable their users to work, live and play on their own terms. Always connected, always on and always ahead of the game." (Jabra, 2012)

The researcher will have a strong insight into the case at hand, since during the data collection, she was employed as a student marketing assistant in the Mobile Division, specifically in the Global Marketing department. This created numerous advantages including ease of access to the data and interviews with colleagues in the mobile division. The departments which will be the main focus and source of data collecting are marketing and customer service, since they are the departments which have the most impact on the service offering, including the and Social Media channels. The customer service department

itself is outsourced, but the Global Division controls the majority of Jabra mobile's online communication and Social Media.

The company does not have its own stores, depending on major retailers like CostCo, AT&T, ElGiganten, Best Buy and others worldwide to sell their products. Online commerce for Jabra differs slightly, since apart from selling the products at online marketplaces like Amazon, the company has its own online store, which is currently being restructured².

The main research objective of the present paper is how to improve customer service on Jabra's Social Media. The brand's Social Media channels perform well, but still lag a bit behind some of the direct competitors. This, coupled with a competitive market segment, makes it difficult to attract and retain a large segment of online customers, and therefore creates a challenge for achieving a good online presence and strategy. Therefore, the structuring of the interviews and questionnaires will be focused collecting information that will address the current challenges. As stated in the case presentation, Jabra is one of the world's leading suppliers of hands-free solutions. Though the products are very successful in the market, the brand is not the most highly recognized within its competitive landscape.

3.1 Jabra's Social Media presence

Jabra is present on the majority of popular Social Media sites, including Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Jabra is most active³ on its Facebook pages, followed by its Twitter accounts, and then by its YouTube channel. Due to the activity levels of Jabra's top Social Media sites, the present paper will focus on its Facebook, and its YouTube presence. Twitter has been excluded mainly due to the researcher's lack of interaction with this Social Media type compared to the other two at the company. This is due to the minimal usage of Twitter in Jabra's Global and European markets, which were the markets that the researcher mainly interacted with from the Global Office. Jabra's US office does in fact use Twitter with greater frequency since this Social Media is highly used in that market. Jabra's Facebook presence is divided into Jabra Global, which is the main Facebook page (with English being the language

² March 2012

³ May 2012

used to communicate on it), and the regional sites, which are administered by the regional teams for each respective country. The ranking order⁴ for the top five sites is present on the company's own administrative Facebook interface, though it is subject to change based on the how each territory is performing at any given moment.

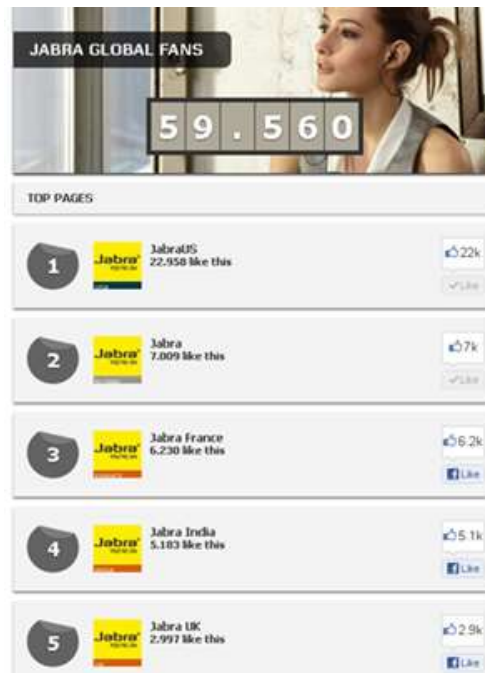


Figure 7 - Jabra top Facebook regions

The corporate communications team at GN created a Social Media Policy⁵, which includes guidelines for all employees belonging to the GN such as “*be yourself*” (indicating that employees utilizing Social Media should try to act with genuine and show transparency regarding who they represent), and to “*always consider consequences*”, (advising employees to reflect on the impact of what is written on these channels). These guidelines have since been modified (as recently as May 2012), though as of May 31st 2012, they had not yet been rewritten as a comprehensive guide. Jabra has elaborated a set of Facebook guidelines⁶, which cover technical aspects of using the site, as well as general communication “dos and

⁴ As established in September 2012

⁵ Published December 2010

⁶ March 2012

don'ts", and also make references to general Social Media usage. These guidelines, however, are incomplete as of June 2012.

The following quote from Jabra's Facebook Guidelines describes the stance of its Facebook presence

"Jabra has been present on Facebook since December 2010. The focus on Facebook started for real in February 2011, and it was decided that Jabra would have one global Facebook page (www.facebook.com/jabra) and multiple regional pages. All regional pages have been approved by the Global Online Marketing team from Jabra's headquarter.

To be on Facebook is a very heavy task, and it has been decided that Jabra must always pay 100% attention to the pages on Facebook. It is extremely important that we take care of all Jabra's pages on Facebook." (Jabra).

In order to understand where the company stands in regards to their Social Media presence, a strategic analysis should be conducted on the existing Social Media activity. However, due to the fact that the case company has not⁷ implemented a Social Media strategy aside from the aforementioned Social Media guidelines, a comprehensive study of the strategy would be for naught. A basic SOSTAC (Chaffey & Smith, 2008) analysis is instead performed:

The SOSTAC framework may be ideal for examining the current state of Jabra's Social Media presence, since it takes into account the different variables that can affect it.

⁷ At the time of empirical data collection

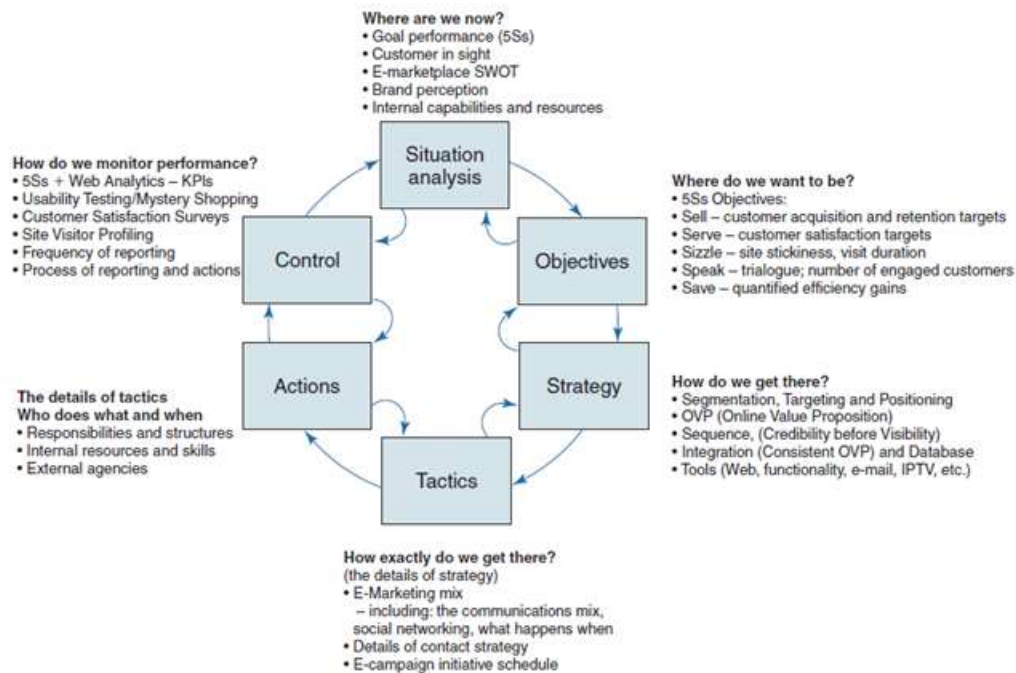


Figure 1.1 SOSTAC® planning framework. SOSTAC® is a registered trade mark of PR Smith (www.prsmith.org)

Figure 8 - SOSTAC framework (Chaffey, Smart Insights, 2011)

Using the framework, the first step in its application is to perform a situation analysis. Taking into account the exposition of the case in relation to “where we are now”⁸, we can basically state that Jabra’s brand perception places them somewhere in between the two main competitors analyzed.

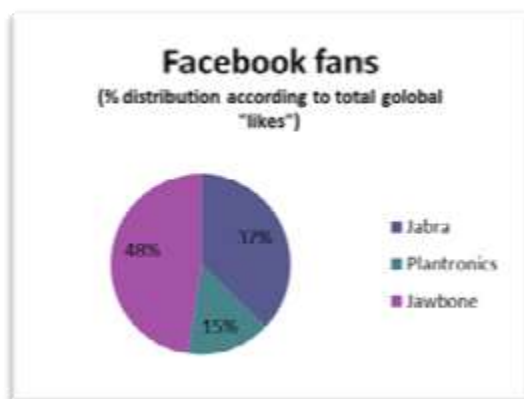


Figure 9 - Facebook fans - total comparison

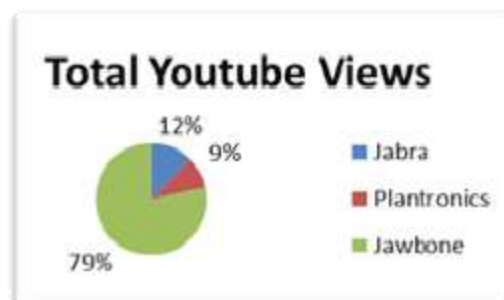


Figure 10 - YouTube views - total comparison

⁸ September 2012

Since there isn't a defined strategy for Jabra's Social Media, goal performance is irrelevant as there are no clear, pre-defined goals. Rather, there is simply a desire to promote content on Jabra's Social Media channels and provide service in a semi-structured manner. As there is not a complete integration of customer service via Social Media, obtaining data from customer insight has not been optimized at present. Jabra's pertinent internal capabilities and resources are difficult to measure, since none have been fully allocated to Social Media. Regarding the objectives the framework refers to, it is possible to argue that the majority are easily applied to Social Media, though the "Sizzle" objective may be translated to fans or views for the Social Media types which were focused on in the present paper. At the moment, Jabra is making some inroads into developing their presence on Social Media, yet none of these objectives have been set as specific targets and there isn't any particular measure being tracked except number of fans and occasionally, amount of likes or views for any given Social Media interaction. The strategy segment of the framework is an aspect that will need to be developed once the Social Media strategy is implemented, and will also require infrastructure and resources, as the framework makes reference to (tools and integration). Regarding tactics, there is currently⁹ a Facebook Global Marketing calendar which is developed by the acting Social Media manager (though her role is of a Marketing Manager). However, it is not comprehensive and is devoted mostly to pushing content or initiating dialog around the products, and not particularly to tracking or developing Social Media service. The actions segment again emphasizes how the company needs to allocate specific resources to Social Media in order to be able to fulfill the requirements of this part of the SOSTAC framework, which it does not currently do. This also includes involving external collaborators and assigning specific responsibilities to the people who will be in charge of managing Jabra's Social Media. Finally, after all the prior segments of the framework are reviewed, the control element is currently not being implemented, since Social Media has not been made into an official service channel by the company. This means that neither customer profiles have been tracked and placed into a database, nor has there been any effort to gauge customer satisfaction via Social Media.

⁹ As of May 2012

The competitive landscape for headsets is vast, which implies that Jabra has many competitors. The following companies have been identified as Jabra's main competitors:

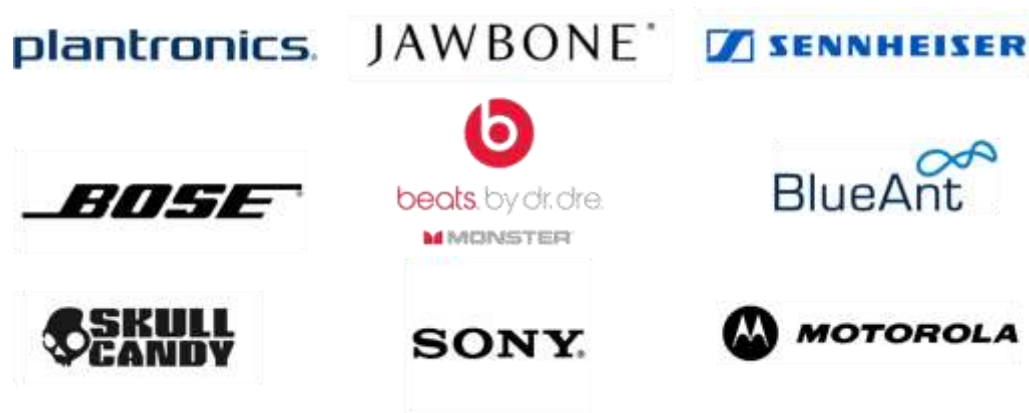


Figure 11 - Competitors

For the purposes of the present paper, two main competitors will be used for the sake of comparison. The first will be Jawbone, due mostly to its numeric success in Social Media (considering its high number of fans). The second will be Plantronics, due to its relative numeric similarities with Jabra's fan following. Additionally, both of these companies seem to have target audiences similar to Jabra.

4 Methodology

4.1 Philosophy of science and deductive approach

In order to analyze and draw conclusions relating to the main research question, the attainment of this knowledge must first be considered. The question of the trend which is being studied in the present paper will be approached by establishing the current state of the issue. This can be related to the philosophical concept of ontology; the specification of a conceptualization. Epistemology addresses the creation and diffusion of the knowledge the study aims to gather (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The present paper aims understand the phenomenon established in the introduction, and to gather sufficient data to draw conclusions based on the analysis of said information. This collection of knowledge relates to the interpretation and negotiation of meanings of social world, known as postmodern

thought (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The present paper uses a deductive approach in order to answer the main research question. Using a deductive approach means that explanations about reality that are made in the project are initially rooted in theories that were found to be relevant (Silverman, 2005).

4.2 Data sources

The data sources that were used were all derived from primary sources. The qualitative data research provided a deeper insight into the area of focus, and conducting it facilitated the elaboration of the quantitative research approach. In order to properly assess the current situation of service provision at Jabra, and consequently offer ways to improve it, empirical data needs to be collected from two main sources. The first are the external sources, which are comprised of Jabra's customer and service users. The primary data obtained for this source quantitative and is comprised of a questionnaire and of online observations. The other primary data sources are internal (Jabra employees) and are comprised of qualitative data gathered from interviews. This paper is aimed at offering recommendations to the case company based on the findings from qualitative and quantitative data analysis. This mixed method of data gathering should provide a fairly comprehensive illustration of the current phenomenon being studied.

4.2.1 Quantitative source

With this in mind, the customers and users of Jabra's Social Media will be a primary quantitative data source. The two sources of quantitative data are the observation and collection of encounters on Social Media, and the other is the questionnaire. The aim of the questionnaire will be to determine the factors presented which users consider are of utmost importance. The sample of users from which the questionnaire data will be gathered will be a systematic sample (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The primary data collected here can be considered awareness and knowledge data, since it indicates

"what respondents know about a particular product and its characteristics" (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2002, s. 83).

Preferably, this data will also shine light on the respondent's intention, since the purpose of the research is to optimize the service offering and data on intentions can

"help in relating intentions to actual behavior, for example how many buyers intended to buy and how many buyers have actually brought the product". (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2002, s. 83).

The other main source of quantitative data is the observation data gathered from comparing patterns on the Social Media channels observed. The patterns will be established based on a numeric compilation of the various interactions observed on the sites.

4.2.1.1 Questionnaire conducted on Jabra's Facebook page

The questionnaire administered will solicit information from the users of Jabra's online channels. The questionnaire has been formatted as self-administered questionnaire and will be accessible through Jabra's Facebook site. The use of questionnaires to gather data from users is done to predict the behavior of a larger group, which would not be possible by conducting time-consuming interviews with individual users (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The questionnaire will give the researcher access to a larger sample of users as well as to make the quantitative data collection as effective and cost-efficient as possible, incurring minimal costs associated with the production and staging of the questionnaire. As mentioned, the questionnaire is structured, so that the questions are clear and unambiguous in order to try to avoid errors in the participant's responses. The following questions are in-depth questions concerning attitude, preferences and perceptions, and the themes in the questionnaire are systematized in order for the questionnaire structured. The questions were structured and utilized a combination of multiple-choice, open-ended and dichotomous options. The multiple-choice options employed an open answer at the end in order to increase the possibility of receiving new information in the responses which was not counted for in the fixed options of responses. Dichotomous questions were utilized as the information from those questions could be illuminated via a simple yes/no question. A pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted on three respondents (the researcher and two colleagues), to ensure that the questionnaire flowed properly and that the questions were formulated in a way that made them easy to comprehend. Once the viability of the

questionnaire was confirmed, the questionnaire was launched on the Global Jabra Facebook page from March 23rd to 27th. In order to participate in the questionnaire, the questionnaire's screening criteria was based on the respondents' status as fans of Jabra's Global Facebook page. The sample size amounted to 50 respondents, which is lower than expected based simply on the amount of fans the page has. The questionnaire which was launched on Jabra's Global Facebook page was created with a simple visual format (all text), and the respondents were not offered any financial stimuli (prizes or free products) in order to get them to respond. As Ghauri & Grønhaug suggest, an appeal on the introduction page was written which explained the motivation for the research; specifically that it was being conducted by a master's thesis student and that their cooperation would be greatly appreciated. The questionnaire was created as a descriptive questionnaire, since it was being used "*to obtain consumer attitudes towards a certain product*" (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2002, s. 95), though the specific "product" in mind was Jabra's Social Media and brand awareness of the users. The questionnaire was created using the guidelines for constructing questionnaires (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2002, s. 98-99). The questionnaire itself contained six basic questions. The first three questions were the following: "*Please indicate your age, gender, and country of origin*". The respondents were asked these three questions in order to segment them and verify the initial expectations based on those criteria. The questions regarding age and gender were asked in order to better understand the active users' demographics. The question regarding the respondent's country of origin was made to understand which countries had the most active users on the global page. The next set of questions started with: "*How did you hear about Jabra? (Check all that apply)*". This question was asked in order to figure out the channel through which most people heard about the brand. It also had a direct correlation to research on the subject, since it reflected the promotion from the adapted marketing mix (Munar & Hvass, 2012) and to the findings from the 2010 Nielson Global Survey, which related to risk theory. The fifth question, "*why do you 'like' Jabra?*" was asked in order to gain insight into what is the main motivator behind the decision to 'like' and engage in Jabra's Social Media activities. The final standard question asked whether users were willing to recommend Jabra. This question is made in

order to understand to what degree the users are engaged with Jabra's brand and feel satisfied with it.

4.2.1.2 Observation – Online data collection

Aside from the collection of quantitative data from the questionnaire, the Social Media channels themselves are scrutinized to assess their current state. This analysis will enable the identification of the ways service via Social Media can be optimized. Observation-based data is gathered in two different manners. The first is simply the researchers' day-to-day interactions with the company's online channels and participation in some of the Social Media initiatives created during her employment at Jabra.

The other data gathering method is the examination of Jabra's Social Media channels and its main competitors in order to evaluate the interactions on these channels. The comparison is performed on the Facebook and YouTube channels belonging to Jabra and two of its main competitors identified, namely Jawbone (Jawbone's Facebook) and Plantronics (Plantronics' Facebook). The main metrics for analysis are overall reach, being amount of fans (Facebook) and views (YouTube). The specific quantitative data collected on Facebook is a comparison of responsiveness for each interaction. Certain specific interactions were of higher importance, particularly those involving a complaint or query. These interactions held significance to the main research question, since each one presents opportunities to engage the user in a service encounter. The initial intention of performing an observational analysis of the Social Media channels is to understand how the current service is being offered¹⁰.

4.2.2 Qualitative Source

The primary qualitative data source which will be analyzed is the set of interviews which are to be conducted with the employees of the marketing, product management and customer service departments. The interviews are held at the company, recorded face-to-face, and transcribed afterwards. The interview questions are non-experimental and pre-designed

¹⁰ As of September 2012

with an attempt to describe both external reality (e.g. facts, events) and internal experiences (e.g. feelings, meanings) of a selected case (Silverman, 2005). These interviews will combine factual and conceptual formats and will be conducted in a semi-structured format using the seven stages of an interview inquiry. These stages are: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying and reporting (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, s. 102). This process should permit a thorough approach for compiling and processing the information gathered. However, relying on this approach alone may lead to a rigid interview which doesn't give room for adaptability, which is why the researcher should also employ an "*interactive design*" Rubin and Rubin suggest while conducting interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, s. 103). The main goal for conducting these interviews will be to understand how the employees that are involved with some aspect of Jabra's service offering and Social Media activity feel about the current situation, and derive an understanding of the challenges faced in the issue. The interviews are conducted with employees from different departments, which is intended to provide diverse perspectives on the offering itself, and what can be done internally to improve it. During the interview, questions are asked in order gain insight into the internal views on Jabra's service offering, including the advantages and challenges faced by the brand's Social Media channels from an internal perspective. Due to the varying responses and the desire to collect the maximum amount of insight into the issue, the interviews are semi-structured, combining open and closed questions. The interviews will be analyzed using the ad hoc approach (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). These interviews are of particular relevance in terms of data collection because they are conceptualized specifically with the case in mind, in order to help achieve the aim of the specific dilemma presented in the research question. This makes the information gathered especially valid for the present paper, since questions related to service and Social Media optimization at Jabra are asked.

4.2.2.1 Interviews

Three interviews are performed; the first with the Customer Service Manager, the second with the Global product manager, and the last with the former Social Media Manager (currently, Marketing Manager).

First stage: Thematization

The interviews that are conducted are all based on the need to obtain knowledge about the usage of Social Media by Jabra, and its potential for delivering customer service. The first of the three interviews is aimed at finding out the current provision of customer service, and whether it was viable to incorporate that activity to Jabra's Social Media channels. The interviews can be found in the *Interview transcripts*: in the appendix. The purpose of the first interview is to delve deeper into the area of customer service. The purpose of the second interview was to try to gain insight to the product management's perspective on the influence of customer complaints and overall satisfaction with the products, and whether having a direct means of obtaining this data would help product development. The last interview is the one of most direct application to the main research question, since it was directly involved with how the company currently manages its Social Media presence and what its views on offering service through these channels are.

The second stage: Design

The interviews are to be conducted with three different managers at Jabra who all have some connection with either the company's service offering or the Social Media offering. The interviews each have their own set of initial questions, due to the different knowledge base each interviewee had. Several of the questions within the interviews are designed to be simple and open questions where the purpose was to receive the respondent's true opinion concerning the subjects without any intentions of leading the subjects being interviewed (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2002). The interviews are designed to be in-depth, in order to allow sufficient time for questions and answers. The interviews are planned in a semi-structured manner, allowing the interviewees to add their own insights and perspectives to the established questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The third stage: Interviewing

The first interview is conducted with the Customer Service Manager. The interview was based around the manager's insight and understanding of the customer service phenomena, as well as her close contact with the call center that handles Jabra's tech and customer support, 5CA. The second interview conducted with a Product Manager, and was based on the need to cover how well the product management team is coordinated with the customer service and online in order to help improve and support Jabra's customers. The third and final interview is with a Marketing Manager, yet she was, until recently¹¹, in charge of Jabra's Global Facebook page. She was not, however, a full-time resource for Social Media management, since there was no employee dedicated solely to Social Media. The interview was conducted in a semi-structured manner, which left some room for additional input from the Marketing Manager in relation to the Social Media activity. The interview's theme is primarily the current and potential usage of Jabra's Social Media channels. Some of the recurring themes that appeared in the course of this interview were the need to structure Jabra's Social Media presence, the absence of a comprehensive Social Media strategy, a support structure for the Social Media channels.

The interviews with each subject lasted approximately 21-36 minutes each, which means based on length, two of the three indeed qualify as in-depth interviews. The second interview conducted with the Product Manager, was shorter due in part to the very specific questions posed to her based on her position and areas of expertise. Since she is involved neither in direct service provision nor in the Social Media administration, the information she provides revolves around how to involve product management with the external service providers in order to improve the overall provision and how to engage users more with Jabra's products and dialog.

The interviews in this research were conducted from April to May 2012 and took place at the researcher and respondents' place of employment, specifically at the Global Marketing Area at Jabra. The semi-structured design provided the researcher with a large amount of

¹¹ As of May 2012

current data on the status of the customer service offering, Social Media presence and product development from the people who work closely with each aspect in their everyday work. Additionally, reflective questions were employed in order to clarify the understanding of the response. At the end of all the interviews, clearing questions were asked to give the respondent the possibility of disclosing additional relevant information which had not been provided in their initial response. The interviews were recorded electronically using the researcher's mobile phone's voice recording application. [See Appendix for transcripts of each of the interviews conducted].

The fourth stage: Transcription

After interviews were conducted, transcripts of each interview were prepared. The full transcripts of each interview can be found in the Appendix. An analysis of the data using a systematic data correlation process is conducted, and main results are compiled along with the quantitative data into two separate "themes".

The fifth stage: Analysis

The newly acquired knowledge from the qualitative research will aim to contribute to causalities from quantitative data obtained through the research. Since qualitative data is far more difficult to code than quantitative data due to its nature (composed of text, and open to interpretation), the data collected in has been organized into categories with the purpose of creating themes and concepts (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The themes of each in depth interview were established prior to conducting said interviews, and have established the structure of the in-depth interviews. Therefore, this categorization was based on the interview themes. The objective of this theme categorization was to examine whether certain themes could be linked into general concepts, which will be correlated to the overall themes and findings of the present paper. Due to the fact that the research which is being investigated in the present paper focuses on a relatively novel phenomenon with somewhat limited existing theory, the interviews are analyzed with the intention of illuminating the significance of what is being said in the interviews, rather than the explicit responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The sixth stage: Verification

The analysis of the research aims to give a fair and accurate portrayal of the respondents' viewpoints. Even though the qualitative data may not be applicable in general terms and the outcome depends on the degree to which the results are consistent as well as on the context of the situation, the results of in-depth interviews are usable for supporting existing theory (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The seventh stage: Reporting

The interviews findings are condensed into the analysis section of the present paper, in order to illustrate the themes and resulting data which resulted from each interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The results of the interviews are presented as components of the themes in the analysis section of the present paper, and will be discussed along with the quantitative data in the main findings.

4.3 Limitations of data

One of the main limitations of the present paper is the amount of data compiled from internal sources, since it will most likely create a bias in the collection of data and the overall approach to the research. This could be partially due to internal bias, since the researcher and the interview subjects (which will be the primary qualitative data sources) may be influenced by their own preconceived views on Jabra's online channels. There may also be knowledge void in the research due to lack of a thorough understanding of customer needs, since access to individual customers will be limited, and restricted to quantitative data collected through questionnaires and online observation. Another limitation of the primary data collection is the researcher's close connection to the company and the issue at hand made it difficult to maintain a fully unbiased perspective on what is being obtained. In relation to the case itself, the main limitation of relying on a case study is that it reduces generalization and applicability to many situations, and may be difficult to comprehend if the phenomenon is removed from its social context (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2002).

Limitations of the questionnaire

The questionnaire has some aspects which contributed to the limitations encountered in the data collection. Even though the questionnaire was active on the Global Jabra Facebook page, it only managed to receive 50 responses. This created a limitation on the primary data source front, but also may indicate the challenge faced in getting Jabra Facebook users to engage in content which does not have a specific stimuli (financial or psychological). Another potential cause of the lack of active participation could be attributed to the lurker vs. contributor rule. The design of the questionnaire, in retrospect, should have been altered. Due to the stringent application of Ghauri and Grønhaug's guidelines, the researcher didn't give the respondents the opportunity to answer additional follow-up questions, which may have provided insight into how they would or could utilize Jabra's Social Media as a service and support tool. Then again, the guidelines indicated that users may have been deterred from answering the questionnaire if they deemed it to be too long. The goal the researcher had in mind when elaborating the questionnaire was to collect as many responses as possible in order to illustrate the engagement level on Jabra's Social Media, which led her to opt for the short questionnaire format. Also, due to the lack of specific focus during the data collection stage, the researcher did not emphasize the extent of service offerings on Social Media, which would have increased the appeal of the questionnaire and garnered more interesting responses. The questions needed to be expanded to delve further into the matter of services on Social Media in order to better explain how users perceive the current and potential offering. The questionnaire, due to its systematic nature, lacked sufficient responses to fully validate the findings which were initially obtained from it. Since the questionnaire was the only quantitative primary data source, its shortcomings make it difficult to make certain assertions with evidence to support the claims. The larger question which is raised from the data obtained from this questionnaire is, aside from the 50 respondents, how can Jabra reach the majority of users that were not engaged enough to respond to it, and how can their needs be met. An aspect overlooked during the empirical data collection was to compare the amount of "likes" the posts had gathered, since that could have given more insight into whether a higher volume of users engaged through "like" actions.

4.4 Validity of the study

The validity of a study refers to whether it investigates what it sets out to achieve. This means that the researcher examines relevant data and asks pertinent questions in order to gain answers about the phenomena investigated (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2002). Furthermore, the validity of the study extends to whether the findings can be generalized beyond the case which has been studied. The present paper aims to discover how current theories regarding to delivering service, as well as existing Social Media theories are applicable once compared to empirical data and scenarios observed in a real-world setting. Since the case is quite similar to many other companies dealing with comparable factors, the researcher believes the study is capable of being reproduced.

5 Analysis

Once the empirical data has been collected, it is possible to witness certain themes emerge from the combined data. Basically, two main themes are present; the first being related to a proposed intrinsic restructuring of the approach to Social Media, and the latter being related to external interactions. These themes are then specified into various findings which are corroborated by both the data and also in most cases, by the theoretical framework. The findings that are summed up in these themes are derived through the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data sources. The following table illustrates how the findings have been divided, and gives a brief description of each of the findings. Based on the data collected, it is possible to distinguish the main categories under which the findings can be placed:

Theme 1 – Social Media Strategies		
Finding 1.1: Top management has to back up Social Media efforts and provide the necessary resources	Finding 1.2: An interdisciplinary team is needed to provide proper customer service through Social Media	Finding 1.3: A knowledge database can support effective customer service on Social Media
Theme 2 – Customer Service		
Finding 2.1: Responsive and real-time communication can influence engagement levels	Finding 2.2: Users may follow a company's Social Media mostly for informational purposes	Finding 2.3: Internationalization and generational divides should be considered when interacting with users on Social Media

Figure 12 - Categorized data findings

5.1 Theme 1 - Social Media strategies

The first of the two main themes revolves around the different Social Media strategies that must be used in order to optimize customer service via Social Media channels. Evidently, the characteristics of both of the Social Media platforms addressed in the present paper will demand that a different approach is taken in order to satisfy the needs of the users on each respective platform. In the findings, we will contemplate the potential best practices for each of these platforms from which a strategy could be developed.

The data collection process revealed the need for proper development of a Social Media strategy. This is particularly apparent from the qualitative findings. This in turn, makes it necessary to have resources which can implement said strategy, which can be covered by the Social Media team. The resources must be allocated by management, and supported by infrastructure. These themes are developed in each of the subsequent findings.

5.1.1 Finding 1.1 – Top management must back up Social Media efforts

One of the most vital aspects of the adaptation of Social Media to a company's overall strategy is that there needs to be recognition of this activity on top management's behalf. Management must understand the relevance of exploiting this medium and be fully committed to its optimization. In order for this to be achieved, financial support is needed. At the time of the data collection¹², management has not set a specific budget aside for Social Media spending. Resources need to be allocated, and a budget should be set specifically for all Social Media activities separate from the marketing budget. A full-time Social Media Manager should be hired, aside from but integrated into a Social Media team (covered in finding 1.1.2) The Social Media Manager should be the one to set up targets for the Social Media efforts, and be backed up by the task force. Ideally, if the company can dedicate more resources to Social Media, the efforts made on said media can be greater, which will in theory lead to greater results. When asked about the goals and strategy for Jabra's Social Media, the Marketing Manager stated:

"a short term goal should be to get a full-time employee". (MS, 2012)

Regarding overall strategy, she added:

"Another goal should be to have some more focus on our Facebook page. I think that Facebook media has more power than what we are currently tapping into. I think we need to spend more time on it. I don't think that we should have a goal that says that we need to have a 40K fans. I think we should have a goal that says: let's implement more customer support to the page. If we do things like that it will get more fans in the end." (MS, 2012)

This point emphasizes that there is a gap in strategic alignment for Social Media, relating to Gap 2 from the Gaps model (Fitsimmons, 2011). The overall lack of any measurable goals for Social Media illustrates how neglected the platform has been at the company, since management was not utilizing sufficiently it for branding or customer service.

¹² May 2012

The literature on the subject does reinforce the fact that resources must be allocated towards optimizing Social Media. As ascertained by Chaffey and Smith,

“It is worth investing in continual staff training as well as in online tools. Benchmark research from Harvard (Kotter and Heskett, 1992) revealed that companies who invest in all three key stakeholders (employees, customers and shareholders) outperform those that invest in only two or less (say customers and shareholders).” (Chaffey & Smith, 2008, p. 81)

The literature on service recovery strategies states that recovered customers are more likely to feel very satisfied with the brand and therefore, are more likely to feel engaged with the brand. The research on the subject of service recovery reveals that unhappy customers that do complain are more likely to repurchase, and as depicted in Figure 2, the highest percentage of repeat customers are those whose complaints were resolved quickly (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008). It is also of note that any resolution, regardless of the speed, had almost twice as much repurchase percentage. The observational data has shown that the speed and efficacy of responses on Jabra’s Facebook page is less than optimal, and this result will be analyzed in Finding 2.1.

5.1.2 Finding 1.2 – In order to provide proper customer support through Social Media, an interdisciplinary team is needed.

This finding is supported by empirical data obtained from the interviews. There is a need for highly coordinated, Social Media team which handles different Social Media types. As the SOSTAC analysis (Chaffey and Smith) revealed in the case chapter, there is no official team which can address all of the needs of the users which interact on the site. The creation of the Social Media team that will address all of the needs exposed through the course of the three interviews. The Social Media team needs to be highly coordinated across all Social Media platforms, multi-demographic and able to address the various areas that customers may demand through Social Media.

This interdisciplinary team will be referred to in the present paper as a Social Media task force, and the need for one is derived from a need to take care of some of the gaps that

were uncovered when conducting the three interviews. These gaps actually coincide with most of the gaps addressed in the Gaps model of service quality (Fitsimmons, 2011).

The application of this theory ties in well with Jabra's intrinsic characteristics, since its Social Media channels can be easily compared with its competitors by its users. The fact that Jabra depends on an outsourced customer service and support call center (5CA) also makes gap 1 something that needs to be taken into account, since the communication between management and 5CA may not always be dynamic. One of the aspects where Jabra is already remedying the gap is by having very few levels which stand between management and the communication to its users. The employees who have been in charge of administering Jabra's Social Media channels are in direct contact with mid-to upper level management, and have the ability to make decisions which impact Jabra's Social Media users directly. Referring to gap 2, this implies the elaboration of full Social Media strategy at Jabra, which should be created by the task force.

The interview with the Customer Service Manager indicated that there were gaps which needed to be addressed. Some of the references are related to gap 2. It can potentially be closed/reduced by creating the task force (or extending the existing resources to make said task force) to cover and improve topics such as: brand development, designing and conducting surveys and questionnaires, creating strategies regarding demographics and reaching non-engaged users. The need to address personalization, structuring, monitorization, pro-activeness (Chaffey & Smith, 2008) of various Social Media efforts would also be covered by this Social Media task force. Also, by focusing on a unified approach to Social Media, the overall "voice" of the brand will be reinforced and internal tools will be optimized as a response to the Social Media activity. The ability to deal with the users' queries and support their participation on the Social Media supports the principles on which most social networks still operate (Chaffey, 2009).

A specification of tasks and responsibilities should be done in order to ensure that each member of the task force is able to carry out their tasks. The proposed task force could be composed of different members of the organization who are qualified in their respective area of expertise as well as in Social Media usage. Ideally, the members will be from the

Marketing, Engineering, Product Management Customer Service and Online departments so that any type of query can be addressed by at least one member of the team. The task force would be required to contribute to the renewed guidelines, though these should serve as a template, and should be dynamic in nature due to the nature of the platform they will be used for. Also, the requirements of how to interact on Social Media should be considered based on the Adapted Marketing Mix, since elements such as social activity are of particular relevance, so providing pleasure, emotional experiences and social affirmation (Munar & Hvass, 2012) should actually be prioritized in the guidelines. The task force should have a clear understanding of what the objectives are for Jabra's Social Media channels, and operate according to the principles of the guidelines created from the Adapted Marketing Mix, which will probably give the task force a fair amount of leeway since social activity is highly context dependent.

From the interview with the Product Manager, it is evident that a comprehensive internal database which is constantly updated by different resources could help make the customer service process smoother on Social Media. The Product Manager stated that

"I would be interested myself, because sometimes I can't answer the question and then I need to get the guys to" though she also noted, "but then you need to maintain that list".
(TP, 2012)

There is also a lack of sufficient video content that can provide support for service and content for marketing.

"...this is great because we have to put videos together, and establish what exactly needs to be the content. And just the fact that we can talk about the product features. I think it is done already with HTC mobile. I think with Sony Ericson mobile as well. They [users] can go and see the examples. Product management is talking about new mobile phones that they just have launched". (TP, 2012)

When referring to optimizing customer self-service on Social Media, it becomes apparent from the qualitative data that a useful tool is YouTube. Creating explanatory, yet interesting videos on Jabra's YouTube channel will not only add value to users by giving them additional

guides to support their products, but also help create content to use on Jabra's own company site, Facebook site and other potential online usage.

The idea of incorporating 5CA to the Social Media taskforce is tempting, since according to the Customer Service Manager,

"I think we are pretty much aligned since we are not doing much here. We can get everything from them (5CA; they are appreciated so much. It is a new thing but we are not focusing so much on it (Social Media service))." (NJ, 2012)

The fact that Social Media service was not a specific area of focus at the time of the interview, and the belief that the outsourced staff is highly capable of providing the service makes it interesting to ponder how to join the outsourced center together with a team at HQ.

5.1.3 Finding 1.3 – A knowledge database can support effective customer service on Social Media

Based on the summation of empirical data, the creation of a knowledge database will directly support the Social Media task force, but also act as a tool which can support the whole organization, external support centers and the users themselves. The knowledge database is treated here as a solution that acts as a support tool for the Social Media Team despite the fact that that it could also be treated as a separate instance because doesn't simply aid Social Media but also the overall organizational, which needs to have an up-to-date knowledge center to satisfy both the internal (Jabra staff and external call center) and external (users) needs.

The interviews all seemed to coincide on a few significant aspects related to this idea. When sifting through the different resources available, it becomes apparent that there is a need for an easier way to access information from within the organization, in order to serve the external stakeholders better and more efficiently. There is a need for a more centralized, easy to use database to be used by all internal parties, from engineering to marketing to customer service.

"We have been talking about having 5CA as users, so they could ask for support at Jabra.

People do not always ask the question on support tab, they just ask on our wall". (NJ, 2012)

Obviously, if users are soliciting support on Jabra's main Facebook page, then it stands to reason that these queries should be attended, and ideally, as effectively as possible, since it is a highly visible area.

Based on the aforementioned themes, it is possible to see that there is need for a dynamic, integrated knowledge base which is accessible by the organization and its external support centers. During the interview, the Product Manager made an intriguing point:

"It [service] is best done when you do not notice it; as soon as you notice it, something is going wrong with the services". (TP, 2012)

This concept does reflect that the services offered on Social Media should feel effortless to the consumer, so that they do not actually feel like it is being provided in such a rigid way. If there is an internal infrastructure that supports the service offered via Social Media, the service can be quicker, more reliable and more effective. To provide swift customer service using Social Media, there needs to be a comprehensive knowledge base, which is updated regularly, to answer all customer inquiries on whichever venue they contact Jabra. It is possible to argue that the database is one element which can provide a fail-safeing (Fitsimmons, 2011) mechanism in providing service via Social Media. Observational findings show that sometimes community members are able to answer one another's questions when posted on Social Media if there isn't any intervention on the company's behalf. When these interactions occur, it is possible to consider the community as yet another fail-safeing mechanism which is in place in case there is not a swift response. This again refers back to the concept of crowdsourcing. Based on observational analysis, if the people in charge of handling queries on Jabra's Social Media sites don't intervene, they will then allow the community to help each other out, possibly fostering the relationship amongst members. The crowdsourcing concept could potentially be applied to feeding content into the community database, which could be moderated by the Social Media task force.

As mentioned earlier, the concept of crowdsourcing could aid this endeavor and be taken further. A current trend amongst companies is to name certain users “moderators” which can help other users seeking help on a company’s Social Media channels, and can keep a dialog going on said channels. This concept could potentially help manage the difficulties encountered by the aforementioned obstacles such as localization and real-time responses. Though, the usage of these moderators does not imply that the Social Media taskforce is expendable; in fact, the crowdsourcing concept could be handled by the taskforce.

This will, however, limit the level of relationship building that occurs between Jabra and its Social Media users and also may not ensure that the questions are always answered correctly, if at all. It might also make Jabra’s Social Media administrators relinquish some of their power to their user base, and potentially make them miss out on valuable opportunities to intervene in a conversation and steer it to the most favorable outcome for the company. According to the 90-9-1 rule, it is helpful to initiate conversation to encourage more users to contribute online (Chaffey and Smith, 2008). One way to strike a balance between the laissez-faire approach and the proactive approach would be to carefully monitor the comments to ensure that the users give correct responses on certain issues, while taking the initiative on questions that are potential sales leads. Questions such as “Which headset do you recommend for insert activity?” should be handled by Jabra’s Social Media administrators, in order to seize the chance to market a determined product and still satisfy the user’s query. As stated by Wilson et al, service recovery can be a lucrative endeavor for companies. Therefore, being able to ensure that a customer’s complaint has been resolved increases the probability of service recovery.

When referring to keeping a comprehensive database, it is also worth noting that maintaining a record of reviews, and related user-generated content in this database will also help ensure that all potential FAQ and issues are being noted by the company. It may be worthwhile to engage some of the reviewers to let them have access to feed their directly into the database if they so choose. However, any and all contributions made by non-employees must be scrutinized by the Social Media task force, in order to ensure that

every bit of content that enters Jabra's channels conforms to the basic guidelines which will be developed in accordance with the brand and company vision.

By creating an easily accessible knowledge center which is optimized for both external and internal stakeholders, and improving video content on Social Media, both customer service and also self-service become simultaneously more engaging and utilitarian. Developing customer service and self-service options in parallel gives the user choice, and that also can free up some resources for users who want to engage. Another sub-finding which emerged from the interview covers the customer feedback platform for centric innovation that will aid the research and development within the organization by giving them access to open, direct conversations with the users. The customer-centric innovation platform is also placed under Social Media taskforce due to belief that Social Media can play a big part in filling this gap and providing a great means by which to encourage innovation if executed correctly. This can satisfy the need to understand the evolving preferences of users on existing and future products and ultimately fulfill those needs. The exploitation of Social Media for innovation can also make Social Media relevant to multiple departments at Jabra. However, the needs of the customer cannot be the sole focus of R&D because utilizing a customer-centric innovation strategy can potentially make the company unable to be ahead of and anticipate new trends and technologies. Therefore, this approach must be used in moderation.

5.2 Theme 2: Customer satisfaction

The second of the two main themes focuses on customer satisfaction. The findings related to this theme illustrate certain issues regarding the current state of Jabra's Social Media service and how to potentially optimize customer service via Social Media channels.

The data which supports these findings has been largely collected via observation and through the questionnaire, and is therefore mainly quantitative data.

5.2.1 Finding 2.1 – Responsive and real-time communication can influence engagement levels

The interviews conducted with the Customer Service Manager, Marketing Manager and Product Manager pointed to one recurring theme: a desire to respond better to customers. The Customer Service Manager stated

“Being pro-active, shows that we really care. I am hoping that we can increment that.” (NJ, 2012)

and this desire to be more proactive with users can be somewhat useful to encourage online community participation.

The need to provide better responses to customer inquiries on Social Media (specifically, Facebook), is apparent when the observational data is considered. The comparison of Jabra against two of its main competitors, Plantronics and Jawbone, shows that the brand that has the most amount of fans on Facebook, and that has the most views on all of its YouTube videos is Jawbone. Plantronics, by contrast, has the least in both categories. Once the data on responsiveness and virality of the Social Media activity is observed, there seems to be a correlation between the numbers (See Figures 9 and 10 – total Facebook fans and total YouTube views).

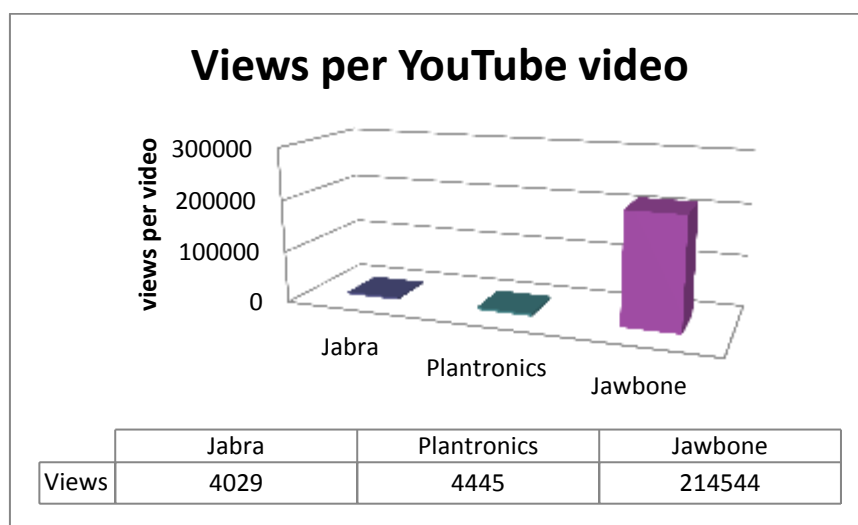


Figure 13 – Average views per YouTube video

The above figure illustrates how Jabra ranks against its competitors in terms of video views in relation to the actual amount of videos each brand has on its channel. It is possible to speculate that the amount of views indicates how engaged the users of the brands are, since Jawbone gathered a significant amount of views for each piece of video content produced, while Jabra and Plantronics lagged behind with almost 5 times less views per piece of content. Although this measurement does not necessarily reflect how the responsive the brand is to its users, it clearly has a higher interest amongst consumers of the headset market. Jawbone is also the brand which has the fastest average response time of the three compared, which indicates that Jawbone is the brand to benchmark in these areas.

However, it is not necessarily the volume of views and fans that are the goal Jabra should be aiming to focus on first. The engagement level of their existing users is important to understand. One potential way to accomplish higher engagement is through personalized service. Generic answers telling users to “visit our website for more information on our product” may seem like the organization is in fact serving the users by responding to their queries, but in fact, a user may not find their question resolved this way. Quite a few of the responses on Jabra’s Facebook page did indeed respond in precisely that manner, or with similarly impersonal responses (See Appendix).



In the above example from Jabra's Facebook page, the user has stated that he already has accessed the call center to receive support for the issue. The Jabra administrative team states that the issue is something they are unaware of, and that the user should insist on contacting customer service again. This is an unsatisfactory response because it is impersonal, does not address the query and took a significant amount of time to be answered.

A way this could be remedied goes back to the proposed Social Media taskforce and to the knowledge database. If there are people on the team knowledgeable in regards to the questions that the users ask, there is no need to direct them to the website to search on their own. This grants not only an opportunity to personalize service, but in many cases, to convert a lead. The knowledge database will also support an efficient response time (finding, since whomever needs to respond will have access to the most current data available within the company).

Here is an example of a negative user comment on Jabra's Facebook wall:

"I have to say I am very disappointed your support for the Jabra Sports Bluetooth headsets. I need replacement ear gels but cannot find them anywhere. I emailed your support and they gave me an email address in Australia that no one has answered. All I want is somewhere to buy replacement ear gels!" (Jabra - Global Facebook)

This was an opportunity for one of Jabra's staff members to address the situation and potentially initiate a conversation with the user about their dissatisfaction. As Fitsimmons, describing service recovery states, a successfully recovered customer can feel a higher degree of satisfaction than one which was never unsatisfied. The above query went unanswered, and this may be due to not having a resource available to answer the query at the right time, or in the corresponding region. Figure 13 depicts Jabra's response time per attended query on their Facebook page. This only shows the queries that were actually answered (independent of the result), and does not account for the queries which went completely unanswered.

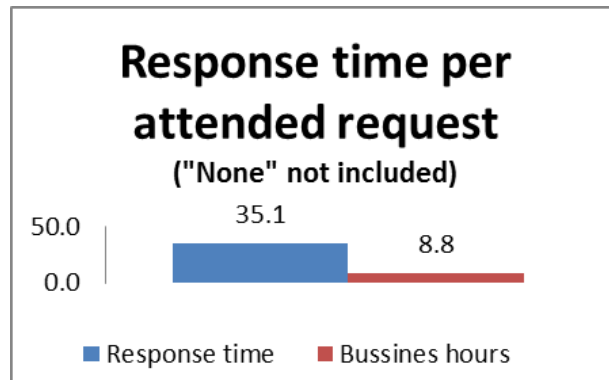


Figure 14 - Jabra: Response time per request on Facebook in hours

When compared to Plantronics (see *Facebook & YouTube statistics – all data sets* in Appendix), it is possible to see that Plantronics, while handling a lower frequency of overall queries within the 30 observed, answered them in approximately 25% less time than Jabra, on average. When Jabra's response time is compared to Jawbone (see Appendix), which handles a higher frequency of overall queries, Jawbone answered the queries almost 70% faster than Jabra. This average makes it easy to compare which brand is most responsive, and according to Wilson et al, 2008, responsiveness is essential when interacting on Social Media. In order for Jabra to improve its metrics, it needs to ensure faster response times on user requests, support, and customer feedback. This finding once again correlates to Gap 2 from the gaps model (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008), since the standards simply are not in place regarding response time objectives.

When compared with competitors, Jabra's results were not as satisfactory as they could have been. Compared to Jawbone's average of 2.4 business hours, the results may indicate that Jabra's lack of quick response to queries could be causing missed opportunities in having service interactions and engaging their younger, more (Facebook) active users. Jawbone has been successful in marketing to a younger audience, and it would be necessary to follow-up this research by seeing the individual factors which affect this. It is also of note to see that many of their videos that have gone viral on YouTube are clearly targeted to a younger audience, and demonstrate an understanding of what these users find interesting enough to view and share (see Appendix).

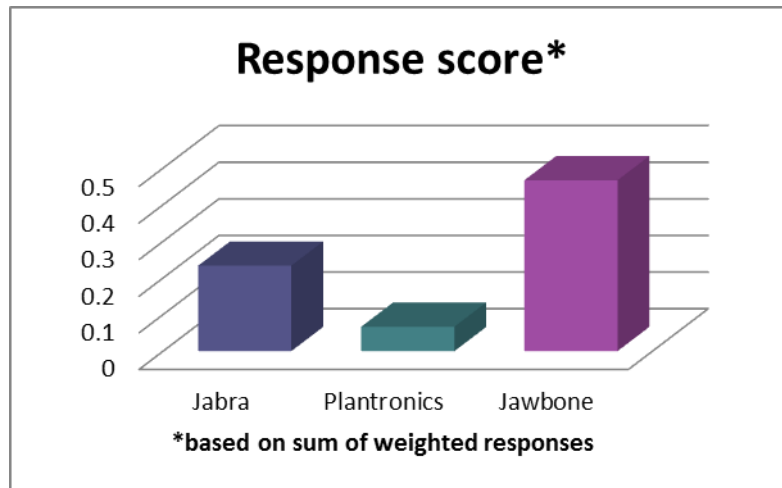


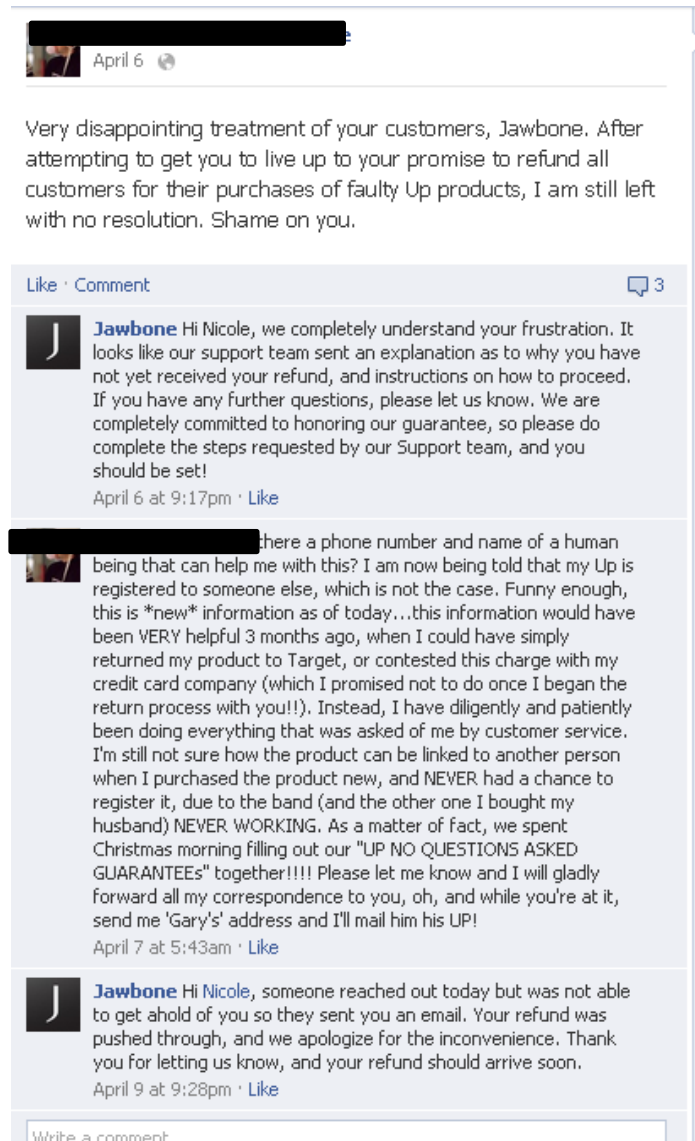
Figure 15 - Compared response score

The response score, covered in the methodology, supports the notion that Jawbone is currently performing better than Jabra and Plantronics. This is again reinforced by the findings on the user queries that were actually resolved by each brand's Social Media administrator.



Figure 16 - Compared resolved requests

In this instance, however, it is possible to see that the figures level out a bit more than the other measures compared. This means that successful resolution of the users' issues is achievable across all three brands.



The above is an example of a potential service recovery interaction which was gathered from Jawbone's Facebook page. In this example, it is possible to witness how quickly Jawbone responded to the query, how they tracked and resolved the issue (possibly tracking the customer through their internal database), and how they addressed the customer's frustration. (An interesting side note is that the particular Jawbone administrator exhibited a degree of EQ by acknowledging the anger and showing empathy. Though it is not investigated in the present paper, another aspect of offering customer service via Social Media should be training the administrators and looking for individuals which already possess the qualities which make them ideal for customer service.) The researcher rates this

interaction as fairly good because it was done in a timely manner and was personalized, which makes the rating high for response time and response quality.

5.2.2 Finding 2.2 – The main reason users follow a company’s Social Media is for informational purposes

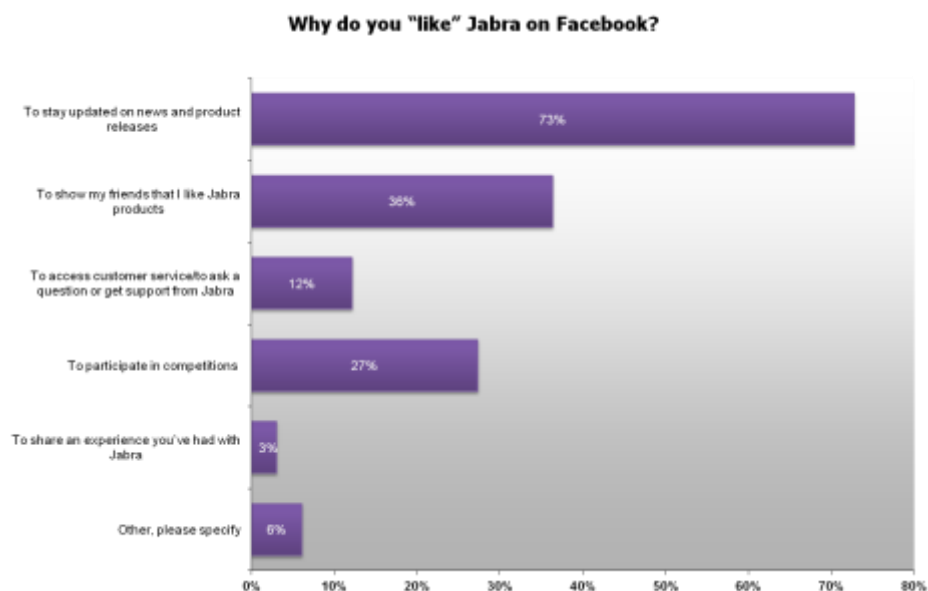


Figure 17 - Reasons respondents “like” or “follow” Jabra

After having witnessed how Jabra performs on customer service via Facebook, it is important to understand why users follow the brand’s page to begin with. The results from the questionnaire show the answer to question #5 which received the highest amount of responses (73%) was “to stay updated on news and product releases”. This shows that the desire to be informed about Jabra’s products ranked the highest amongst users, which indicates that they are genuinely interested in the products Jabra makes. They are not motivated primarily by competitions (gaining free products) or by brand loyalty (to show their friends which brands they support). This coincides with the impression that the brand may not have as many fans as some of its main competitors on Social Media, but that Jabra’s Facebook users are motivated by a high level of interest in Jabra news and releases. Surprisingly, “to access customer service” received a relatively low response rate. As mentioned in the limitations encountered in the questionnaire, the response rate for the questionnaire was somewhat low. This does make its reliability come into question, since

the amount of customer support questions was high in relation to the volume of overall queries. This result could again be correlated to the 90-10-1 rule (Chaffey and Smith, 2008), and therefore indicate that the majority of users are simply “lurkers” which do not actively contribute. Another result from the questionnaire, specifically from question #6, showed that the users who answered this survey were 100% likely to recommend the brand. This indicates that the users who were engaged with Jabra’s Facebook activity felt higher degree of loyalty and may even act as brand ambassadors. Since these users took the time to respond to the questionnaire, it’s possible that they are the most engaged users, and therefore are the ones who would recommend Jabra’s products the most. This probably also corroborates to the 1% rule and could partially explain the volume of responses.

Despite this positive response from users, Jabra faces a challenge when reaching users in order to engage them on their channels and create the potential for service encounters. For one, the amount of users which like Jabra’s main page is less than some of its main competitors. On a positive note, Jabra offers more individualized service interactions than their main competitors with their users via their Social Media channels, specifically on their Facebook page. When compared to the posts made by two main competitors – Jawbone and Plantronics – Jabra had a consistent amount individualized responses to user grievances and comments when the Social Media administrators actually responded (see Appendix). When compared to Jawbone, it’s clearly visible that on Jabra’s page there are quite a few comments on their Facebook page that are either left unanswered or that simply don’t get followed up on once an initial interaction takes place (see Appendix).

When we compare the result of the questionnaire to the literature discussion referring to the gaps model, it is possible to see how the current service offering on Jabra’s Social Media channels could potentially be vulnerable to many of the gaps identified. The most relevant gap here is the conformance gap. This is because there are no specified standards that the service offered via Social Media should strive for. Ideally, a full service-themed survey will be conducted in order to have the customers’ perspective on the service quality. Due to the fragmented and not fully established management of Jabra’s Social Media channels, this could be a challenge.

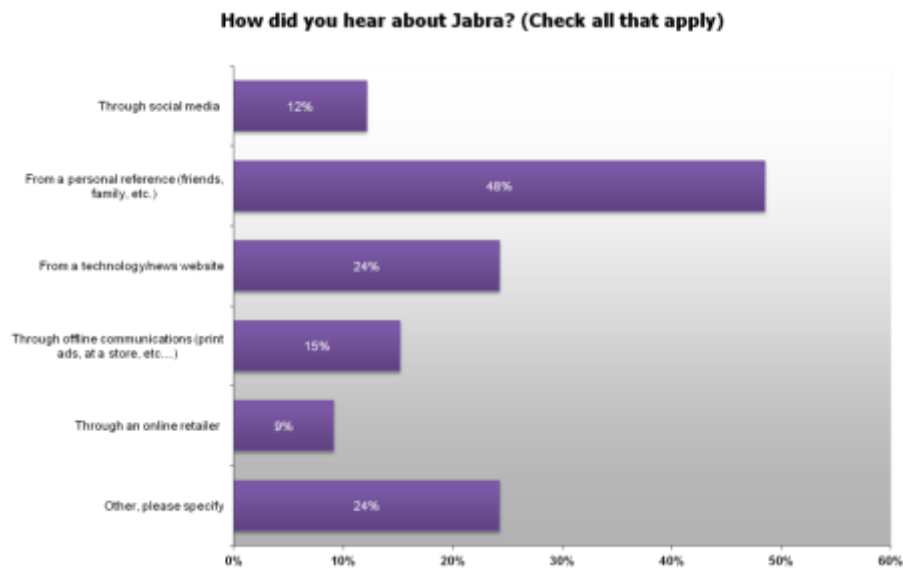


Figure 18 - Means by which respondents heard about Jabra

The answers on this question indicate that the most common way the users who responded to the questionnaire heard about Jabra is through word of mouth. The users who responded to this questionnaire are presumably the most engaged users, though this is somewhat difficult to prove, due to certain factors considered in the methodology. Curiously, the users answered that they heard about the brand from a personal reference, coinciding with the notion that people tend to seek ways to gain trust for a brand (especially online) and avoid risk by looking for peers that are familiar with a company. This could indicate that brands should attempt to strengthen their reputation and familiarity amongst their users in order to promote word of mouth and personal recommendations from their engaged customers. One way to create a relationship with users is by engaging them via Social Media. If the company is able to create a relationship with their users and provide them with individualized service, these users are more likely to trust the brand and potentially pass it along to peers. This concept is reinforced by the literature, which suggests that a positive recommendation from a friend or a relative can ensure a confident service experience, because people tend to feel more comfortable getting a recommendation from someone who experienced the service (Wilson, Zeithami, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008). This word of mouth marketing is tailored to Social Media, making it possible for a brand to have a level of influence on it.

5.2.3 Finding 2.3 – Internationalization and generational divides should be considered when interacting with users on Social Media

The interview with the Customer Service Manager showed that localization and the international scope of the company's user base makes it challenging to create almost anything homogeneously. "Anything" refers to technical aspects such as product voice guidance to customer service issues such as delivering a satisfaction survey or offering support.

"We have lot of people, who need a product in specific languages as it is right now the service [survey] is only for Germany but we know that we have a lot compared to the size of the country. We have lot of Italian customers that are extremely annoyed, that we haven't had a lot of voice props and things like that in Italian. Localization is big concern...it is a big concern, but to some counties more than others. I mean in Denmark a lot of people would understand that hmm, Danish is not on the top 5 list since most people speak English anyway but in Italy they are more local about it. I would really like to understand if they really don't appreciate what we provide them, why that is." (NJ, 2012)

When Chaffey states that globalization needs to be taken into consideration for online services, the findings from the interview and from the questionnaire show how diverse the community Jabra serves actually is, and how it indeed wishes to have locally-tailored content (Chaffey, 2009, s. 234).

It is currently quite a difficult task to consider localizing all Social Media content, but this is probably the best way to ensure users worldwide can have their service issues addressed on Social Media. When considering the users that responded the questionnaire, it is possible to observe that despite the relatively low volume of responses gathered, there is a significant distribution of users worldwide. This basic sample group proves just how challenging it is to localize content for each country the brand offers its products in. Though it hasn't been investigated, the researcher speculates that one potential reason for why the response rate was so low despite the amount of fans on the Global Facebook page was the fact that it was only offered in English. The following figure illustrates that there were respondents from 14 different countries, for which at least 10 different languages can be identified. As mentioned

in the methodology chapter, there was a significant difficulty in coordinating with the other offices to have them launch the survey on their respective pages, and one of the difficulties was the localization requirement.

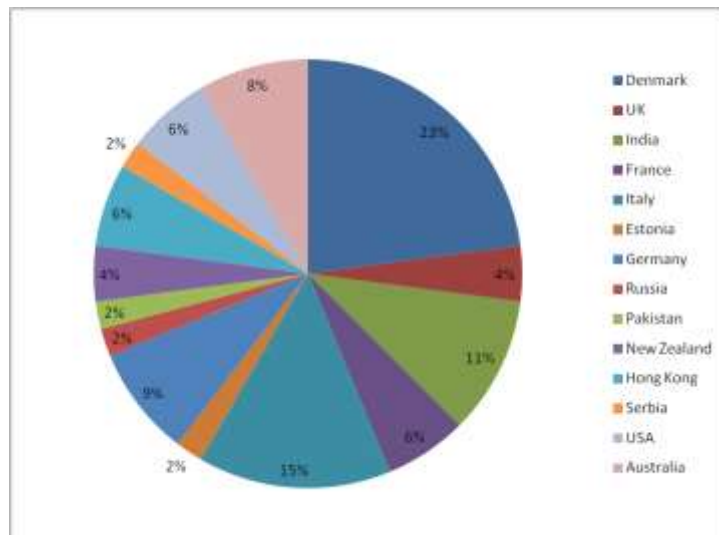


Figure 19 - Country of origin of respondents

In the following example, we can see how a user responded to having their question regarding localization resolved after a significant amount of elapsed time.



The user is suggesting that having this relatively simple question answered earlier would have been appreciated. The answer quality is satisfactory, since it is personalized, detailed and gives the user the impression that their query may lead to adjustments in the product.

So, this particular interaction was rated relatively low on timeliness, but fairly high on quality by the researcher.

When discussing the possible creation of YouTube videos with the Product Manager, she noted

“you can have people talking about how products work and talking with a passion. A problem is language - first you have to have a video and then make different subtitles for that video”.
(TP, 2012)

A potential way to deal with this is to have the local offices do the subtitles for the videos created at HQ. This step creates certain coordination, time and budget issues which therefore require the support of management to enforce these initiatives. Providing content on YouTube which either has more viral appeal or can be used as FAQ for product can help reach users and be used as a way to assist self-service via Social Media.

The importance of understanding being a global brand with a global Social Media presence is reiterated by the Marketing Manager:

“Since we are global brand we should also be a global culture and as I talked about before, the Social Media team that I think there should be in the future, should also have people from different cultures. We should not only just be Danes. We should use our global resources that we have.” (MS, 2012).

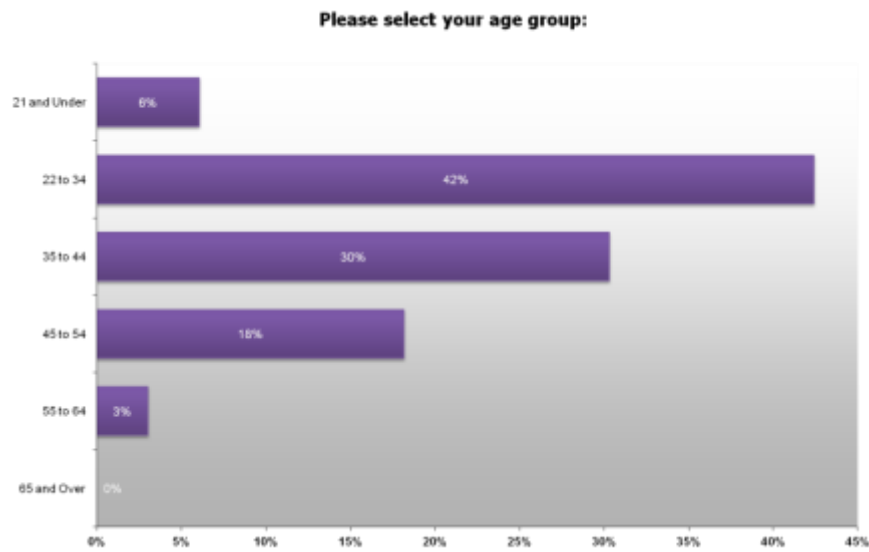


Figure 20 - Age of respondents

The results of the questionnaire indicate that the highest percentage of respondents on Jabra's Global Facebook site range between the ages of 22-34. This illustrates that the user base that was most active on Jabra's Global Facebook page while the questionnaire was active are in this age group. Since the highest percentage of respondents, according to the survey, are users in their mid-20's to early 30's, it would be possible to infer that this is due to the increased likelihood of a younger audience interacting with a brand on a Social Media channel, as opposed to the rest of the customer segments. The Digital Natives, which Prensky refers to, may need a different approach (for younger audience), especially when operating in "their" territory, i.e. Social Media (Prensky, 2001). The literature which discusses examples of conduct for Social Media already covers the manner in which to approach the users on this platform, but Prensky's perspective offers an understanding of some of these users' expectations. If the alleged expectations are in fact true, then the findings on responsiveness are of particular relevance since these users expect more instant gratification and rewards when interacting. It is therefore extremely important to respond to this user demographic as quickly as possible. The following graphic depicts the results of the observational data collected from Jabra's Facebook page and refers to the response time which was previously discussed in the finding regarding responsiveness. It is reiterated here, however, to illustrate the lag in response and how it can be particularly detrimental to the younger Facebook demographic.

5.3 Summary of the findings and recommendations for the case company

Based on the combined findings from the qualitative and quantitative data analysis, it is possible to establish certain areas which can be improved in order to improve Jabra's Social Media channels. One such improvement would be providing content on YouTube which either has more viral appeal or can be used as FAQ for product. Another aspect which is evident is the lack of synchronization on the Social Media channels. Jabra's fragmented Facebook presence is also something which can be addressed by the company if they wish to streamline the service offering on the various channels. It is not enough to have 5CA simply act as Jabra's call center, since they are not really coordinated with the marketing and online teams. Ideally, they should be trained in Social Media service. This could also be conducive to creating an official Jabra Social Media taskforce which is coordinated with external service centers. This team should ideally be a highly coordinated task force that works on all Social Media channels. If the team is spread out in the different sales offices around the world, this would help improve the multicultural dynamic, as well as bolster the quick response rate on questions and comments made on Jabra's channels.

Some questions which the case company will need to look into when attempting to apply the recommendations from the findings are related to how to train the necessary service and relationship building competencies and what the company needs to do to accomplish optimal results. The results from the findings shed light on the fact that responsiveness can be an important factor in delivering service through Social Media. Further research regarding value of response time on Social Media can help Jabra understand how to best serve these users.

Some more technically-demanding changes will be related to IT infrastructure. One potential way is CRM integration. Customer service can potentially be optimized by integrating the customer queries into a general CRM so that customer logs can be followed and the company can ensure that all interactions are recorded, tracked, and ideally, resolved. This does indeed require more infrastructure development from the company, and a closer relationship between it and external support centers such as 5CA, but it will ensure

that all customer queries whether via Social Media, phone, email or chat are being attended. It could also provide insight as to how the users are accessing customer service (whether they are choosing more than one method) and if so, can help provide segmentation information.

YouTube has not been developed sufficiently yet, and therefore, in order to be able to discuss its impact further, Jabra must dedicated resources to improving this media, both for self-service potential and for Social Media marketing. The researcher believes there is a significant amount of potential in YouTube for Jabra. Many users are already creating user-generated content in the form of reviews of Jabra products. How to utilize the UGC and the community interest in products should be investigated. Jabra could consider collaborating with these contributing users in order to help them develop better UGC, by getting them to review products that Jabra sends to them first. Also, Jabra staff should be the ones to create “how to” videos, and FAQs for new products being launched. This will create more content for their Social Media and simultaneously serve as a potential medium for users to obtain self-service if they encounter any issues with products. Visual content is becoming the most popular content on Social Media (M Booth and Simply Measured, 2012), and Jabra needs to develop their visual content to satisfy the increase in demand.

Further development by Jabra should be aimed at finding out how to utilize Social Media service to incentivize customer centric innovation forums. Yet another proposal which should be investigated is the addition of super-moderators chosen from most active users for improved dialog on Social Media. Based on the findings from the research, future investigation should be done into the actual satisfaction levels of users on Jabra’s Social Media channels. The questionnaire with 5CA, which was not included as part of the qualitative sources could shed further insight into what the actual service purveyors encountered in their conversations with Jabra’s customers. A comparison of the findings from this paper to those of the questionnaire could provide a foundation for additional research into how to improve the service offering across media (online and offline).

6 Conclusion

Considering the research conducted on the main question posed, the prevalent theme is that effective Social Media service is a crucial measure of a successful Social Media presence. In order to achieve this, certain factors must be tended to, including the creation of a team dedicated to providing service on a company's Social Media channels. A dynamic set of guidelines must continuously emanate from the people handling Social Media. The purpose of having a strong Social Media presence is to ensure that a company can have a direct dialog with its customers. Never before, in the history of marketing, has it been this easy to reach such a wide audience in order to engage them in a conversation and hear their opinions and issues in such a direct manner. However, any company who is willing to invest in improving their Social Media presence and customer service will want to grasp the value that this offers. Though the topic of intercultural management and studies has not been investigated in the present paper, the findings indicate that further research into those areas would be beneficial to many companies, due to the international activity of global companies. Cloud services and Mobile services are other areas which should be looked into in coordination with Social Media service offerings, since both technologies are compatible with Social Media. Yet another area which should be investigated is the research question solely from the customer's perspective; specifically, which types of initiatives are most valued. Lastly, the return on investment should be researched, potentially by employing a longitudinal study in which each interaction is followed up by a satisfaction measurement, and a log is created to see whether the customer has been satisfied and returns to make more purchases.

Social Media is in fact a social technology, and to quote a wise user from Plantronics Facebook page

"This is cool. Social Media just may allow the rehumanization of companies after all"

The researcher hopes the user is right, and that this is just the beginning of a new way of understanding how businesses and people interact.

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