Social Media Marketing & The Role of Influencers

by

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Abstract: This paper examines the impacts, both positive and negative, of recent social media marketing changes, largely influenced by the creation of influencers. It identifies the ways in which 21st century marketing strategists have transitioned from print to social media marketing, implementing a variety of online platforms. Additionally, it identifies the numerous forms of social media platforms that allow marketers to reach larger target audiences than ever before.

Data has been collected from a variety of sources, including peer-reviewed journals, text books and case studies. The data examines a variety of life components, demonstrating that these changed strategies are truly affecting all forms of marketing. This paper highlights the importance of the role of the influencer in today's marketing strategies and how these individuals work both independently and in coordination with specific companies to promote products and relay information on special deals.

Since social media platforms reach hundreds of thousands of potential customers a day, it is important to understand and identify the relationship between these platforms, influencers and companies in order to understand the consumer's new role amidst 21st century marketing strategies. This paper examines the impacts, both positive and negative, of recent social media marketing changes, largely influenced by the creation of influencers. It identifies the ways in which 21st century marketing strategists have transitioned from print to social media marketing, implementing a variety of online platforms.

Additionally, it identifies the numerous forms of social media platforms that allow marketers to reach larger target audiences than ever before. Data has been collected from a

variety of sources, including peer-reviewed journals, text books and case studies. The data examines a variety of life components, demonstrating that these changed strategies are truly affecting all forms of marketing. This paper highlights the importance of the role of the influencer in today's marketing strategies and how these individuals work both independently and in coordination with specific companies to promote products and relay information on special deals. Since social media platforms reach hundreds of thousands of potential customers a day, it is important to understand and identify the relationship between these platforms, influencers and companies in order to understand the consumer's new role amidst 21st century marketing strategies.

"Advertising brings in customers, but word-of-mouth brings in the best customers." –

Author & Marketing professor, Jonah Berger

In the 21st century, marketers and entrepreneurs and businesses are able to use the virtual mouths of existing customers to bring in more customers than ever. Billboards, neon signs and commercials are all effective marketing strategies of the past. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have allowed not only businesses to reach new audiences, but also have been able to provide information on their products or services, allowing individuals to market themselves and provide online-exclusive discounts through the application being used. These social media platforms have created influencers, who have drastically changed marketing practices and strategies in the last ten years by quickening and transforming the transition from print media to online, viral media marketing.

FORMS

First, it is important to identify the various forms of social media. According to "New Methods of Online Advertising: Social Media Influencers" (2018), social media includes "Internet forums, social blogs, wikis, podcasts, photos and videos" (Zeljko 42). Furthermore, the social media platforms referred to throughout the remainder of the paper include technologies that include "blogs, sharing pictures, video blogs, sending to the wall, email, sending real-time messages, music sharing, Internet telephony and many more" (Zeljko 42). These technologies therefore encompass not only Twitter, Facebook and Instragram but also Skype, Spotify and Gmail, to name a few. Each of these platforms serves a different purpose but all can be used by marketers and influencers to advertise their products, content and services.

Influencers are able to utilize many of the technologies available from these platforms to reach their audiences, though their focus is mainly on Facebook and Instagram. Once individuals subscribe to an influencer, the individual may send out weekly or daily e-mails about upcoming promotions, offering new information or programs. Additionally, dependent on the influencer's business, s/he may use Skype for video calls with customers. These are most often seen with exercise program influencers who utilize Skype or Facebook video chat to communicate with customers actively utilizing their programs. These influencers include Herbalife promotors, fitness trainers and Keto advocates. While not all influencers utilize Gmail and Skype, more and more of them are beginning to use it as an option. These technologies allow for the influencer to not only market their products and services but also to reach new audiences.

IMPACT

Identifying the importance and the impact social media has on today's users is critical when beginning to grasp how marketing practices and strategies have changed. Because social and traditional media differ, there are numerous advantages to each of them, especially when it comes to cost. According to Zeljko et. al (2018), "social media is inexpensive and accessible for anyone to publish, while in traditional media, they mostly need significant resources to broadcast some information" (42). Today's marketing departments do not have time or money for the resources necessary to portray the information to their customers. The inevitable cost factor makes it much easier for companies and individual entrepreneurs to be more inclined to choose social media marketing moving forward.

This does however bring up the fact that companies have started reaching out to well-known influencers for sponsored posts. In the last few weeks, scrolling through Instagram, it is easy to find more and more influencers posting videos on their stories or creating posts with the

hashtag “ad.” This would indicate that these individuals are getting paid for the post and may or may not actually use the product, which occasionally causes backlash. For example, in March of this year, Khloe Kardashian received backlash for posting a Flat Tummy meal replacement ad. Bonner (2019) writes about the comments posted on the post: “rang[ing] from people saying Khloe should be shouting out her *gym* time instead to people worried about the message she’s sending to young women…and obviously this post is #ad, which means Khloe’s being paid some serious money to promote this product.” However, just how much Khloe was paid was not revealed on any source found. Regardless of the backlash, Khloe has kept the post up, in hopes that it continues to reach her 92.6 million fans.

The need for constant updates is also evident in “Challenge of Social Media Marketing & Effective Strategies to Engage More Customers” by Bae & Zamrudi (2018), “social media feeds have become the staple of millennial society, providing news and updates instantly. The social media channels offer two- way communication mechanism, thereby attracting exciting media marketing strategies” (851 – 2). Enabling two-way communication is important when it comes to marketing needs as it provides instant feedback to the marketer – they gain the information immediately from the consumer as to how likeable, popular and practical the item or service being advertised is. Consumers now have the option of messaging or commenting on an ad or a post, directly asking questions. This promotes brand loyalty and fosters a relationship between producer and consumer that was not available prior to the explosion of social media marketing. No longer must the marketer wait until the customer has time to go shop, they have access to the likeliness that the customer will purchase the product, whether through the online availability or in a store.

Bae & Zamrudi (2018) continue to discuss the extent that digital influence can affect sales and strategies, which "'tend to drive in-store sales and customers' purchasing behavior" (852). These behaviors are easily accessible to the marketer through social media marketing by analyzing the activity of users surrounding the advertisement placed, allowing marketer real-time feedback to allow for changes to be made, as necessary based on the information attained from two-way feedback. Since there is a clear correlation between the two, it is easy to understand one of the ways in which just how impactful social media is.

ADDRESSING LIMITATIONS OF TRADITIONAL MARKETING

In addition to social media's impact and widespread influence, there are limitations to traditional marketing. These limitations, that do not exist with social media marketing, have forced traditional marketing strategists to turn the existing limitations into necessary changes to keep up with the changes in society. There are numerous retailers who are still transitioning from traditional marketing to social media marketing and have been implementing slight changes to their marketing strategies to ease and smoothen the transition.

In the last few years, food, drug and mass channels have made drastic changes to their set up in order to compete against online retailers. Among these changes are the creation and increase of on-site beauty advisors and in-store events that promote rewards programs and additional incentives to attract people to the stores. In order to compete in the market, these food, drug and mass channels are "offering smaller brands, a growing number are partnering with online-only labels. They are also employing in-store consultants to advise shoppers on product use, while featuring exclusive lines that tap into new trends and differentiate them from their online and offline competitors" (Garbto 89). These changes are essential especially when a retailer has "limited or no social media presence to increase their efforts…to maximize their

network reach" (Bae & Zamrudi 867). Since these food, drug and mass channels are multitasking—trying to keep their current in-house customers while reaching new audiences online—they continue to innovate how to bridge these two types of target audiences, to increase in online competitors using social media to advertise and gain new customers.

One of the most admirable components of social media marketing is "the reach, the engagement and constant feedback from customers" (Paswan 8), making it currently "the most popular tool for marketing" (8). No longer are advertisements limited to the consumers who received magazines, drive by a billboard or turn on the television. The creation and expansion of numerous online platforms allows advertisements to run twenty-four hours, seven days a week, as long as the individual has access to their smart phones and the internet.

INFLUENCERS

All of the above-mentioned online platforms have allowed for the creation of influencers. In order to understand how these influencers are impacting purchasing trends, it is imperative to understand what an influencer is and how an individual can become one.

In the book *Influencer: Building Your Personal Brand in the Age of Social Media*, Hennessey (2018) identifies what the word "influencer" is most "commonly ascribed to—someone who has clout through digital channels, or as some like to call it, 'social currency.' Whether [the individual] has a lot of followers or really high engagement, when [s/he] speaks, the audience listens, they act, and – most importantly to brands—they buy" (1). This allows for the individual to potentially influence the decisions and purchasing patterns of hundreds of thousands of people.

Hennessey (2018) also differentiates between types of influencers, referencing the *New York Times* article, which discusses celebrity influencers, such as Kendall Jenner and Gigi Hadid, "all people who are technically 'influencers' because they have millions of followers" (2). These celebrities are different from individuals who become influencers based on the content presented on their pages since they became well known "through their offline activities (singer/actress/athlete/model) and that influence follow[ed] them online." This makes them different from the self-created influencer, because they are not creating content, products, or services but using their appearance and already existing amount of followers to mainstream the products they are paid to endorse.

The self-created influencer, which will be referred to as the influencer, throughout the remainder of this paper, can be thought of in one of two ways, as identified by Hennessey (2018): "content creators and life casters. Content creators are people who are creating blogs, vlogs, and Instagram photos out of thin air. Life casters are people who are just living their best life and you're following them because their feed exudes sheer awesomeness" (3). Hennessey then continues, identifying ten different types of influencers (i.e. bloggers, vloggers, entrepreneurs, high-end models and the notables) and categorizes them into the above-mentioned categories of influencers.

It is important to note that both types of influencers—those who are already popular due to previous success and those who become successful because of their social media presence—can switch roles dependent on the success of their product. Influencers are not limited to promoting outside company products, they can endorse their own products or products that they believe in. Fitness influencers often times create work out videos—the content is theirs but these fitness moves can be seen on numerous channels, just not in the same order as organized by the

fitness influencer. These individuals are able to control what they put on their feeds, what image they cultivate and how they respond to consumers, without the necessity of a third-party.

Motives

Hennessey (2018) delves into why someone would want to become an influencer further in the introduction. One of the main reasons individuals become influencers is to add value to their careers. Hennessey (2019) writes: "If you're an expert, special talent or notable, having a high follower count amplifies all the work you are doing in real life" (7) Hennessey provides the example of an actress or comedian who spends hours "each day working on her skill and booking gigs, but she keeps being asked about her Instagram following. This is because businesses are always looking for easier, cheaper and faster ways to market their products and services" (7). Because an individual's following can help promote business, the more followers an influencer, like a model looking to book a job, has can ultimately save money for the signer if her following can attract new customers, ultimately saving money on developing other promotion types.

This upsets individuals who are just starting out as influencers as their follower count on Instagram or Twitter is lower than previously established influencers. The amount of followers can "seem to be more important than talent, but it's really about firing on all cylinders. In today's version of show business, the business part is happening online" (7) Hennessey explains. Therefore, influencers are not only influencing what information and products individual followers see, but they also link the opportunity to purchase the product or service immediately from their story or from their social media post.

This allows for eapopsy online tracking to seeing how many followers are actually purchasing the product or at least visiting the page on which the product is available for purchase. This information is critical not only for the influencer but also for the producer of the product being advertised. When followers use the link to access the page, they are more likely to purchase the product than those who do not use the link to access the page. This cycle continues daily, weekly, monthly, dependent on the influencer's posts. Then, once an influencer gains the amount of followers necessary to begin making income, the business, to an extent begin to run itself as the links are available 24/7. Influencers can then insert the link on their page or on a post instead of on their stories, which disappear after twenty-four hours.

Another reason as to why individuals may be driven to become influencers is to promote a self-created company. Becoming an influencer not only allows for additional income, but may help someone leave their current job, if income from the online business is high and stable enough. This can only be achieved if the influencer has enough followers and has made enough connections with other brands that would allow him/her to prioritize the online social media marketing job over their regular 9-5.

Individuals motivated by a sef0created company can be seen on websites such as Teachers Pay Teachers and Etsy. Once they have "established [their] presence online, [they] can use [the] platform to showcase new products and services, show[ing] followers the life behind their new favorite brand, and of course, acquire new customers" (7). Once they've expanded their following and established themselves as credible influencers, they can reach out to others for collaborations. These collaborators "want to know who they are partnering with and make sure the brand's aesthetic is in line with theirs. The first thing people do when they see an ad for [a] company is to check out the profile, so maintaining that social channel should be a big part of

[the] marketing plan' (9). This then allows for further growth, the potential for new consumers and increased brand awareness.

INFLUENCER IMPACT

The influence and impact of an influencer is still being measured as it is considered a new phenomenon. However, the impact is undeniable. *Adweek*, cited by Meyers (2017) in "Social Media Influencers: A Lesson Plan for Teaching Digital Advertising Media Literacy," "fans build very strong parasocial connections with influencers. In a parasocial relationship, a fan may feel she 'knows' a celebrity although that celebrity does not know her. Social media influencers seem even more accessible than movie stars or pop stars." According to the study, though limited, in her class, Meyers' students identify that these millennials "often describe the influencer they follow as 'just like a friend' or 'just like me.'" This connection allows for audiences to relate to influencers on more of an individual basis than just in a mass marketing way, increasing sales because of the connection felt.

According to a study cited by Garbto (2019), "ninety-eight percent of the beauty industry thinks influencer marketing is effective" (91). While this statistic is specific to the beauty industry, the numbers transfer to other industries as well. According to Zeljko (2018), "individuals like certain bloggers and similar public opinion leaders have a stronger influence and credibility than traditional media such as the Wall Street Journal. Since social networks have become ubiquitous, they have also found their place in business, or exploitation of human resources" (42). Such staggering statistics can only come from the trust developed by these online influencers through product reliability and customer satisfaction. This is readily available to all—other marketers, influencers and of course, new potential customers based on the number

of likes received on post, previous customer reviews and a quick Google search which would indicate how likely other Google users are to recommend the product or service.

MARKETING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Just how can marketing departments and influencers use social media to mass market their products? The ways seem almost endless: "customer engagement, enhanced relationships with customers, information dissemination, and enhanced reach and targeting" (Venciūtė 133-4). These possibilities are so wide ranging coupled with the positives of social media are colossal as they begin to eliminate the need for traditional marketing.

Social media marketing can be used to identify current gaps in marketing. According to Bae & Zamrudi (2018), "the creation of suitable social media content aims to fill the gap between marketer and consumer with respect to delivery and receipt of information" (852). Since influencers and marketing departments are able to creatively appeal to their targeted audiences after filling such gaps, they are able to create effective "selling propositions, superiority and undifferentiated product class. The content designed in response to this could match the brand with customer's aspirations, experience and feelings" (Bae & Zamrudi 852). Following these steps allows marketers to successively reach current and prospective consumers.

Relationships

Such influencers can branch out and create relationships with other brands and influencers, to not only increase their own popularity but also to meet marketing goals, including reaching a larger target audience with a common interest and converting them into purchasing consumers. According to "Measuring Social Media Marketing: Moving Towards a Relationship-Approach" (2017), these goals are met when "organizations use them to understand customer

needs, increase their satisfaction, and enhance relationship value for customers" (Achen 33). Before these goals are met, influencers must create and maintain positive relationships with other influencers in their fields.

Social media not only allows for the creation and ease of relationships with customers but also allows for the cultivation of them. Creating these relationships with customers can help reach larger audiences. As described by Venciūtė (2018): "Social media enables organizations to create relationships with existing and potential customers, and helps to build interactive and collaborative communities, which allows firms [and influencers] to recognize and solve potential customer problems as well as improving customer relationship management processes" (133). Social media platforms make it easy for influencers to follow Venciūtė's advice, providing real-time feedback from current customers concerning any issues that may rise. Once the influencer identifies any existing problems, s/he can immediately begin to work to solve the problem and prevent it from occurring again.

REACH

Because of their nature, these online platforms make it easy to reach billions of users on a daily basis. According to Paswan 2018, "recent statistics show that Facebook has 2 billion active users, Instagram has 800 million users, Twitter has 330 million active users and LinkedIn has 260 users" (8). These users regularly visit the above-mentioned sites "to network, engage in conversations and build relationships" (8). As validated by Venciūtė in "Social Media Marketing—From Tool to Capacity," social media is a phenomenon that has become "a channel for firms to interact with its current and potential customers on a global scale" (133). This is a colossal difference from traditional marketing forms. Since these individuals are already spending time on these platforms, marketers and influencers are able to take advantage of their

activity by presenting them with advertisements, discounts and social-media exclusive promotions while they are simply networking with friends and staying up to date with current events.

As per Bae & Zamrudi in "Challenge of Social Media Marketing & Effective Strategies to Engage More Customers: Selected Retailer Case Study" (2018), "marketing campaigns are run on social media, which serves as a channel for building relationships with customers, performing research on buyers, generating leads, promoting sales, and branding" (852). Individuals can then create their own content after analyzing "customer engagement behaviors and activities such as book marking, linking, clicking, referring, subscribing, and submission of enquiries" (852). All this information can then be used by the marketers or influencers to forecast future purchasing patterns and generate ideas for new products that can be sold online rather than in store.

Because of the amount of people who actively use social media platforms daily, marketers and influencers must know how to use all the information provided to them. As stated by Paswan (2018), "it is imperative for digital marketers to fully understand the reach and design content and campaigns that can touch the sensitive points of customers/target audience. Social media marketing is highly effective in reach not only because of the number of people accessing it but also because analytical information and success rate can be calculated for improvising strategy in real time" (11). This important analytical stage is critical for future success as it reveal information necessary for future steps and would allow as data back up if the marketing plan should change. This data was already used by food and drug channels to create changes in their marketing strategies, as discussed earlier. Additionally, taking time when first starting out

in terms of analyzing data collected allows for realtime decisions to be made in the future, especially since exposure to customers is daily with social media platforms.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Understanding consumer behavior is imperative to being able to successfully utilize social media platforms to reach large audiences. Consumers are constantly providing this information almost voluntarily, ready to be used. According to E. Constantinides and S.T. Fountain, as cited in Venciūtė (2018), "social media allows firms to create consumer 'communities' where they discuss products, services and brands as well as participate in the product development processes" (133). Since the information is readily available, digital media marketers can therefore dissect it.

Paswan (2018) identifies the steps a marketer, or influencer, need to take to create an effective social media strategy: "First and foremost a marketer needs to understand the customer, which may involve looking at attributes like their demographics, tastes and preferences, location and the like. Second the marketer needs to look at what are the resources at hand to device a marketing campaign. And third be absolutely clear about the goals one wishes to achieve from the campaign" (9). While these steps are similar to the ones traditional marketing strategists would use, the resources for current marketers and influencers are social media based, allowing for two-way communication and real-time feedback. Both of these elements of social media make it slightly easier to create an effective social marketing strategy. Following these steps, along with the following mentioned ones, would help any marketing strategist and influencer ensure their content is reached by the target audience.

Oftentimes, influencers utilize advise and information given to marketing departments to help grow their personal brand. According to Achen (2017), corporations and marketing departments are "encouraged to use likes, comments and shares as indicators of popularity, commitment, and virality respectively to measure the level of reactivity, dialogues and engagement" on these platforms (42). Specialists suggested that since these measures are so "easily accessible on the social networking site, corporations [can] use them to evaluate the influence of their content and content of their competitors" (Achen 42). The same holds true for influencers. These individuals can take the data gained from their profiles and from the profiles of their competitors in their selected industry to change or amend their social media identities. The information provided in the data is critical in assisting the growth of their personal brand.

ANALYZING INFORMATION

As online marketing continues to move grow with the increase in phone applications, marketing research has shifted to include and focus on online sentiment analysis. As per Bae & Zamrudi (2018): "With respect to online retail activities, social media has introduced exciting ways in which a user can gather information about a product and make purchase decisions. The marketing strategies are designed as such so as to influence an individual's perception about the marketplace" (852). This information on an individual's perspective can also be used to determine marketing strategies in terms of colors, fonts, and images.

According to Micu, et.al (2017), "sentiment analysis is vital for determining customers' opinions on brands and services and thereby understanding consumer attitudes" (1094). This allows the researcher to increase knowledge and understanding of how marketing affects customers' attitude and future purchasing behavior. In conjunction with the sentiment analysis, "marketers can explore social media data to detect and discover new knowledge that is related to

brand awareness and behavioral patterns" (Micu et. al 2017). Brand awareness and behavioral patterns can affect brand loyalty.

However, the analysis on social networks is slightly different from a traditional sentiment analysis in the sense that it "is based not only on negative or positive expressed opinions (contextual polarity of words and concepts), but also on the syntactic framework of online reviews" (Micu, et. al 1094). These online reviews have become a baseline for new customers when deciding which new store, shop or restaurant to try.

CUSTOMER INPUT

Online marketing is no longer solely controlled by the influencer or the marketing department. Instead, online marketing is also dependent on customer feedback through reviews. According to Micu et. al (2017), "empirical data have shown that Yelp restaurant reviews affect consumers' food decisions" (1094). This is even bigger and more impactful than the traditional word of mouth as online reviews on Yelp or Google cannot be deleted or undone by the company or individual whose product is being reviewed.

However, the company or individual in question has the opportunity to reply to a negative review, showcasing their care and commitment to the consumer to anyone viewing the review or website. This allows the marketing team or the influencers to utilize the two-way communication to their advantage, making changes as necessary.

Additionally, Bae & Zamrudi (2018) speak to the influence social media has since users are able to manipulate and control content: "the new pattern of usage includes the active participation of users, wherein they constantly participate in generation and consumption of data.

In this manner, the users these days are not merely passive viewers of the information, but also continue to add value to the internet platforms, which allow them to do so" (852).

According to Bae & Zamrudi (2018), there are numerous opportunities when it comes to online, real time feedback from customers, including "providing competitive edge, brand recognition, improvement of brand loyalty, gaining brand authority, creating rich consumer experiences and receiving improved consumer insights" (853). Because of the rapid nature of feedback through these platforms and online channels, they can "prove both a positive and negative attribute" (853). Because of this see-saw, there are is a necessity to ensure that consumer feedback is attended to.

Park, Lee & Han (2007), cited in "Analyzing User Sentiment in Social Media: Implications for Online Marketing Strategy" found that "online customers reflect upon the quality of reviews to assess whether the information is sufficiently persuasive to support an informed purchase decision" (1095). This is where multiple positive, or negative, reviews come into play: "According to Chua and Banerjee (2016), the higher the quality of the information in online reviews (in terms of comprehensibility, specificity, and reliability), the more consumers will find them trustworthy and helpful" (1095). Therefore, the amount and credibility of reviews provided about a service, product or even an individual, can and will affect future customers.

Influencers can take on an important role when it comes to providing feedback and reviews for companies and services. Since these influencers are in charge of their brand and image, they already have an established base of followers who value and appreciate their content. Therefore, their opinions matter even more so than Joe Smith or Jackie R. on a Yelp or Google Review – they've created a name for themselves, that hundreds of thousands of people *worldwide* know, making their opinions more valuable. Because these influencers have hundreds

of thousands of followers, getting their support in the ways of a positive review can potentially change the outlook of an individual on a recently reviewed service or company.

Additionally, since many consumers voluntarily post a variety of reviews, customer service management and firm performance is easier to maintain and change, as necessary. According to Bae & Zamrudi (2018): this information can be used to "indicate the significance of factors of believe, community participation, monetary, and psychological factors in influencing the consumer's perception in judging the relevance of social media marketing" (867). Knowing and understanding this significance is key to understanding to which side consumers may veer when writing a review.

According to Venciūtė (2018), "social media competencies are considered to be a cohesive set of technologic resources that may lead to a competitive advantage and improve firm performance" (138). Firms and influencers can use the information provided to gain a marketing advantage on their competitors, "generating better access to customer information" (Venciūtė 138) than traditional means, including surveys.

MOVING FORWARD

Understanding how the internet, social media and influencers have changed marketing strategies in the last few years allows for an implication of how much it will continue to change marketing strategies. Even with the current social media marketing and position of influencers, there are already some obstacles. Francisco V. Ordenes (2019) identifies ways in which consumers connect with online content. The data shared in this article showcases how the study conducted can be utilized to identify rhetoric that would allow influencers and social media marketing directors to reach large audiences.

In these new form of marketing, which allows for daily, hourly communication, the consumers play "a pivotal role in distributing social media brand content through their message sharing. However, as more brands join online conversations and content expands, it becomes harder to capture people's attention and engage consumers in the active distribution of branded content" (Ordenes 2019). Therefore, Ordenes continues in "Cutting through Content Clutter: How Speech and Image Acts Drive Consumer Sharing of Social Media Brand Messages" (2019), "the managerial focus thus has shifted toward compositional issues, as they relate to individual traits and message streams, and ways to ensure brand content gets shared through social media." In order to ensure these customers are reached, there are a few suggestions made by Ordenes.

The first suggestion Ordenes (2019) makes is understanding that customers are humans with emotion. Therefore, they are "more willing to share brand messages with informational or emotional content, rather than demands or commands" (1005). How these messages are portrayed to potential customers is also critical. Ordenes (2019) continues: "stylistic message properties must be used strategically, according to the social network" (1005). Each social media platform-- Facebook, Instagram and Twitter would use different methods to ensure engagement. Specifically, as per Ordenes (2019), "Facebook represents more of an advertising-oriented social network, so rhetorical devices are more likely to result in engagement. On Twitter, explicit advertising cues (e.g. directive messages, including repetition or alliteration) will turn customer's attention elsewhere" (1005). For this to be successful and ensure engagement, networks and social media influencers must know how to identify and analyze this information.

The next suggestion made by Ordenes (2019) is for influencers and marketing departments of these social media platforms to "consider each message according to the specific sequences or communication streams in which it appears. The preceding presence of assertive or

expressive messages increases subsequent sharing of directive messages; managers therefore should take advantage of benefits of complementary sequences, rather than posting the same message type consistently.

Lastly, Ordenes (2019) makes a suggestion based on the study conducted, which provides "insights into the use of visuals. Content managers should combine different intentions at the text and image levels, because action images in combination with assertive or expressive messages will result in greater engagement than action images with directive messages, which instead overburden consumers" (1005). If influencers and online platform marking departments take these suggestions and utilize them, they can ensure future years of success in terms of using social media marketing to their benefit, attaining increased levels customer engagement and therefore, profit.

CONCLUSIONS

The ease of access to technology in the twenty-first century has changed how society functions, how people access information and how consumers purchase products. The internet has changed buying patterns, marketing strategies and even created new jobs; its influence is insurmountable.

With the internet, influencers have become possible. With the billions of individuals who use social media platforms on a daily basis, individuals can become a helpful, understanding and influential "middle man" between companies, brands and social media users. These individuals have varying motives, all including a financial component in some capacity.

Influencers have allowed for a recreation of the American Dream, heavily incorporating and relying on technology, which is not going to cease in the near future. Using social media

platforms allows influencers to reach thousands of people in a short amount of time, creating brand awareness, sharing promotions and even allowing for collaborations. These individuals have forced big retailers to change how they market to the 21st century consumer through methods more effective than ever before as they allow for real time feedback.

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