Creating Value Through Brand-Consumer Interactions:
A Social Media Perspective

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October 25, 2014
Social media have increasingly become important platforms for brands seeking to build customer value (Adjei, Noble, and Noble 2012; Gensler et al. 2013; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010; Labrecque 2014; Rishika et al. 2013; Rohm, Kaltcheva, and Milne 2013). On one hand, social media marketing has been called “the next generation of business engagement” (Deepa and Deshmukh 2013, p. 2461), where customer engagement refers to the creation of experiences that enable companies to develop emotionally-immersive interactions with their customers (Calder, Malthouse, and Schaedel 2009; Economist Intelligence Unit 2007). Recent studies point to the importance for brands to create engaging social media interactions for their customers in order to generate social return on investment (ROI) (Kumar and Mirchandani 2012), social customer relationship management (CRM) (Malthouse et al. 2013), and favorable parasocial relationships (Labrecque 2014).

On the other hand, researchers caution that attempts to engage consumers on social media may be unwelcome and intrusive (Fournier and Avery 2010). Research shows that consumers may initiate social media brand interactions not out of a desire for longer-term engagement with the brand but for purely short-term utilitarian reasons (Rohm, Kaltcheva, and Milne 2013) such as to access deals, discounts, and promotions (LaPointe 2012).

Taken together, research investigating the influence of customer engagement on social media is mixed, and it suggests that creating social content that aims solely to engage consumers may be a suboptimal strategy under certain conditions. In order to investigate this further, we conducted a longitudinal study in which participants were
asked to record their social media interactions with a brand over a two-month period, and rate their levels of satisfaction and engagement with each interaction. *Interaction satisfaction* is defined as consumers’ favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the interaction (Fisk, Brown and Bitner 1993; Smith and Bolton 1998), and *interaction engagement* is defined as the extent to which consumers are emotionally immersed in the interaction (Salanova, Agut, and Peiro 2005; Schaufeli et al. 2002).

Using a structural equations model, we simultaneously estimated the effects of the levels of interaction satisfaction and interaction engagement, and their trends over time, on the different types of customer value: customer lifetime value (CLV), customer influencer value (CIV), and customer knowledge value (CKV) (Kumar et al. 2010). Our findings suggest that a one-size-fits-all strategy to social media marketing developed to foster deeper-level engagement in lieu of tactics that appeal to more utilitarian motives (such as publicizing upcoming new products or sales) may be a suboptimal strategy for certain businesses and brands.

**REFERENCES**


