

Digital and Social Media Marketing in Business Education: Implications for the Marketing Curriculum

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The *Journal of Marketing Education (JME)* is considered a premier outlet for educational scholarship as related to teaching and learning in marketing. The journal was one of three principal marketing education journals used by Brennan (2012) to determine the major themes as related to marketing education between 2008 and 2012. The four major themes that evolved from a review of the marketing literature were: (1) teaching and learning; (2) ethics, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability; (3) employability; and (4) the digital challenge in curriculum design.

Harrigan and Hulbert (2011, p. 254) focused on this digital challenge when they claimed that “the marketing curriculum has been left behind by advancements in marketing practice, particularly with regard to the enabling power of technology in marketing.” The 21st century is experiencing a communications revolution, and digital and social media marketing is changing the way consumers receive and use messages. While changes in the traditional roles of consumers and companies have created the need for material that can both shape and contribute to the emerging and evolving digital and social media landscape, these same changes have created innovative teaching and learning opportunities in our marketing classrooms. Digital and social media marketing is a fact-moving phenomenon, and marketing educators must stay abreast of the times. Not only are the tools changing constantly, the issues related to the tools are also expanding rapidly.

Marketing is in the midst of constant reinvention, with social media technologies engendering radically new ways of interacting (Elliott, 2013; Hansen, Shneiderman, & Smith, 2011). Social media is expected to become the number one channel of marketing communications for many companies by 2017 (Hood & Day, 2014). As noted by Prensky (2001a), however, the single biggest problem facing education at the turn of the century was that of Digital Immigrant instructors. That is, marketing educators speak an outdated language and struggle to teach a population of Digital Natives, who speak an entirely new digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet. According to Frederiksen (2015), “University marketing departments are behind the curve,” with Harrigan and Hulbert (2011, p. 261) quoting a campus recruiter who said, “We are a big fan of employing graduates, but unfortunately we aren’t seeing the skills we need in

marketing graduates—we’re employing a lot of stats and IT graduates to do our marketing roles.”

A Look Back: The Digital Challenge in Marketing Education

The *JME* had a considerable focus on digital in 2011. The year began with an article by Wymbs (2011) in which it was suggested that students of marketing would need to learn traditional marketing skills while also creating new mental models with regard to the co-evolution of consumers and business in a socially mediated world. This socially mediated world would be crafted around consumer touch points (e.g., social networks, search, mobile, e-commerce, apps, and e-mail) and firm conversation interfaces (e.g., digital advertising, market research, e-mail, e-design, channel integration, search engine optimization, content development, and e-commerce integration), with digital marketing serving as the bridge between the two. To this end, a radical redesign of the marketing curriculum was proposed with digital at the centerfold.

Following on the heels of the Wymbs (2011) article, Granitz and Pitt (2011) edited a special issue of *JME* that focused on teaching marketing with innovative technology. Within this special issue, contributions on marketing education and technology were categorized according to efficiency, effectiveness, and emergence. With regard to *efficiency*, the contribution by Buzzard, Crittenden, Crittenden, and McCarty (2011) explored student and faculty preferences for technology tools in the learning environment. In sum, this set of researchers found that students preferred to engage with their faculty via “traditional” digital tools (i.e., websites, e-mail), while faculty preferred to engage with students via course management systems (which was further elaborated in the same issue by McCabe and Meuter, 2011). Additionally, an important efficiency finding offered

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by Dowell and Small (2011) in that special issue was that the use of instructional technology had a positive impact on teaching and learning. From an *effectiveness* perspective, special issue authors Debusse and Lawley (2011) and Hollenbeck, Mason, and Song (2011) reported that technological use led to higher student satisfaction, which was tied to greater learning. The special issue had four articles that were classified as emergent and offered insights into the use of social media platforms in the marketing classroom; two of the emergent articles shared findings on the use of Twitter, one on the use of YouTube, and one on Second Life. With these three categorizations, the Granitz and Pitt (2011) special issue of *JME* offered something for everyone.

Buzzard et al. (2011) suggested that educational scholarship examined technology in the classroom both broadly (i.e., efficiency and effectiveness) and specifically (i.e., emergent) and provided a comprehensive overview of research in both areas. With regard to the specific implementation of technology in the classroom, the American Marketing Association's Teaching and Learning Special Interest Group, around the same time, began recognizing the use of technology in its decisions regarding its innovative teaching award. For example, the Special Interest Group's Pearson Prentice Hall's Solomon-Marshall-Stuart Award for Innovative Excellence in Marketing Education was awarded to Leyland Pitt in 2010 for his technological innovations related to the case study process, to Jamie Murphy in 2011 for his major role in the development of the Google Online Marketing Challenge, and to Victoria Crittenden in 2013 for her creation of the brand fan page project. Thus, not only were projects and processes being created and implemented, they were also receiving recognition from the marketing educators' premier academy, the American Marketing Association.

With what appears to have been the beginnings of a paradigm shift in marketing education to accompany the rapid growth of online practices, the AACSB International (2013) offered Standard 9 with regard to curriculum content. This standard stressed the importance of information technology and the ability of students to use current technologies in business and management contexts. While this standard was not related specifically to the marketing function, it did provide marketers the educational support and impetus to advance programs in digital and social media marketing.

Building on the works of Wymbs (2011) and Zahay, Scovotti, Peterson, and Domagalski (2010), Parker (2014) presented insights and challenges into the development of an Internet marketing undergraduate major and, using data from Marketing Edge, offered an overview of degree-granting programs in internet marketing and e-business. Faulds and Mangold (2014) described the comprehensive process in which they engaged to develop a social media and marketing course. From program goals to learning objectives to instructional activities, this author team described the development and implementation of a social media and marketing course

that employed social media pedagogically while examining social media's role in strategic marketing practice. It was largely with these broad-based developmental projects that marketing educators used teaching and learning models to lay the foundation for the work in which they were engaged.

Learning Models, Theories, Frameworks, and Guides

Regarding the nature of technology and its link to marketing, Harrigan and Hulbert (2011) referred to substantive theory (technology is an autonomous force) and instrumental theory (technology is a tool largely under human control) in which the nature of who/what is doing the leading and who/what is doing the following is delineated, and they contend that the marketing discipline was being driven and led by technology. Related to this, the authors adopted the position that marketing educators must teach the skills that are required by marketing practitioners, and the principal one needed in the 21st century is that of the integration of technological skills. To this end, marketing educators must use instructional models that are able to accommodate the rapidly changing world of social media (Faulds & Mangold, 2014).

Three popular models/theories/frameworks for capturing learning within marketing education have been Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model, Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956), and Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory. Yet operationalizing a learning style is not an easy endeavor, and the diversity of disciplines and domains in which educational research is conducted has led to fragmentation and a disparate approach to usage and understanding (Cassidy, 2004). According to Smith (2003), there is a surprising lack of attention to what learning actually entails, and as such, he offered a summation of four major orientations to learning: (1) behaviorist, (2) cognitivist, (3) humanist, and (4) social and situational. If one follows the trajectory suggested by Prensky (2001b) in which he suggests that there is strong evidence that one's thinking patterns change depending on one's experiences, the social and situational learning orientation is critical to understanding the relationship between marketing practice and marketing education. However, McLaughlin (2014) contends that active learning in today's world of faculty and student engagement challenges the educational models often used in the past.

To this end, it appears that building digital technologies into the marketing curriculum has encompassed instructional models somewhat differently than those used by educators attempting to understand the learning style of students. This is likely because the Digital Natives in today's college classrooms have grown up with technology, and the assumption that these Digital Natives student learn in the same way has come into question (Prensky, 2001a). Rather than building around learning models and theories, recent marketing educators have

focused on design models for building digital into marketing curricula.

Wymbs (2011) used the Association of the Computer Machinery/Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers-Information Technology undergraduate curriculum model as a guide for a digital marketing major (Koohang, Riley, Smith, & Floyd, 2010). This model consists of Phase I (formulation of the program mission, program accreditation, and establishing career goals and program competencies) and Phase II (designing specific courses in the curriculum). Recognizing the need for an instructional model to guide their course development, Faulds and Mangold (2014) used the four-phase process design advocated by the Kemp Instructional Design Model (Kemp, Morrison, & Ross, 1994): (1) student characteristics and instructional challenges, (2) development of course objectives, (3) development of course content and activities, and (4) development of evaluation and continuous improvement procedures. Rather than create new courses or programs, McCabe and Meuter (2011) chose to use the “Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” (Chickering & Gamson, 1987) as a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of technology integration into the traditional marketing classroom environment.

Based on this review, there are well-regarded learning models that guide the learning process itself. However, “how students learn” may have changed, with linear thought processes not geared toward the learning styles of Digital Natives (Prensky, 2001b). These Digital Natives know how to use social media (probably more efficiently than the Digital Immigrants teaching the marketing classes), as college students use a variety of social media platforms in their personal lives (Frederiksen, 2015). Thus, educational efforts need to be adapted accordingly.

While educators should still be interested in student learning and attempting to tap into the most appropriate learning orientation, students know how to use the technology—the key, academically, is to discern how to best create the marketing academic environment in which students can use their skills related to parallel processing, graphics awareness, and random access most effectively, so as to turn those social media skills into online marketing skills (Frederiksen, 2015; Prensky, 2001b). As noted by Urban (2013), “knowing how to tweet and update your status is not the same as using social media to influence and analyze trends, engage customers, and grow businesses.”

A Look Ahead: The Digital Necessity in Marketing Education

The new world of on-demand marketing has created consumer demands in four major areas, and the technology to fulfill these demands exist currently (Dahlström & Edelman, 2013). These four areas are as follows:

1. *Now*: Consumers will want to interact anywhere at any time.
2. *Can I*: Consumers will want to do truly new things as disparate kinds of information are deployed more effectively in ways that create value for them.
3. *For me*: Consumers will expect all data stored about them to be targeted more precisely to their needs or be used to personalize what they experience.
4. *Simply*: Consumers will expect all interactions to be easy.

Frederiksen (2015) contends, however, that the topics needed to satisfy these consumer demands are “chronically under-taught in universities.” These chronically under-taught topics include content marketing, search engine optimization, social media, marketing software skills, and online-lead generations strategies. Thus, this special issue sought to understand the perceived deficiency in marketing education with regards to social media content. To this end, the articles in the special issue focus on what is being done and how it is being done.

The response to the call for papers on “Digital and Social Media Marketing in Business Education” was exceptional. The quality and quantity of submissions were high, resulting in the special issue becoming two special issues. The contributions in the first issue of the two-part series provide a look at the topics that are being taught with regard to digital and social media marketing—that is, the *what* with regard to digital and social media knowledge transferal in our classrooms. The second issue in the two-part series explores social media with regard to student and professor engagement on particular platforms and the perceived success of those educational touch points—that is, the *how* with regard to helping students of marketing understand the utilization of social media tools for marketing success.

The Marketing Curriculum: The What

There is no doubt that technology has transformed the way businesses use marketing and the way marketers use technology. Additionally, technology is transforming the way marketing educators teach students and the way students learn about marketing (McCorkle, Alexander, & Reardon, 2001). As a content area still somewhat in its infancy academically, marketing scholars are striving to understand how schools and departments have incorporated digital and social media marketing into the curriculum. If marketing professors are to take the lead in preparing students for careers in marketing, then it would follow that marketing academicians should begin to set the standard or expectations for such courses. Yet there is concern that there is not general consensus as what digital and social media marketing curricula should entail.

In “Social Media and Marketing Education: A Review of Current Practices in Curriculum Development,” Brocato,

White, Bartkus, and Brocato report that while a variety of course titles still exist, Social Media Marketing is definitely the frontrunner with Digital Marketing and Social Media tied for second place. Importantly, the authors report that consensus is beginning to emerge with regard to topics covered in the course. At the same time, however, Muñoz and Wood reveal that course topics identified as important by practitioners are not being covered in the curricula as explored in their study and reported in "Update Status: The State of Social Media Marketing Curriculum."

While Brocato et al. and Muñoz & Wood explore the curriculum from the perspective of the marketing professoriate and are finding some degree of consensus, Duffy & Ney gather the tripartite views of industry practitioners, educators, and undergraduate students in "Exploring the Divides Among Students, Educators, and Practitioners in the Use of Digital Media as a Pedagogical Tool." Corroborating findings by Muñoz and Wood, the results of their study suggest that marketing educators are not perceived as delivering on the technological and practical aspects of digital and social media marketing. The work by Spiller and Tuten presented in "Integrating Metrics Across the Marketing Curriculum: The Digital and Social Media Opportunity" offers support for both Muñoz & Wood and Duffy & Ney by suggesting that the marketing curriculum still does a poor job integrating metrics into the overall marketing curriculum, leaving the metrics of social media to occur in a dedicated marketing analytics course.

The articles in this issue provide considerable information about content and expectations in current courses and programs. The sharing of such material should encourage innovation and, ultimately, improve the classroom experience for students of marketing. It becomes clear in reading the articles that marketing educators are far from an agreed-upon curriculum for digital and social media marketing. It may be that the field is too broad to reduce it to a limited domain or course topics, and/or it could be that the constantly evolving nature of the topic itself prohibits standardization of material or presentation. Regardless, all the articles in this current issue provide an overview of what is being done in our marketing curricula.

Student Engagement: The How

Just as the academy has not coalesced on course titles, content, materials, delivery, and so on, there do not appear to be common techniques for engaging students with digital and social media in the classroom. But, as will be portrayed in the articles in the second part of the special issue on "Digital and Social Media Marketing in Business Education," the student experience with regard to social media in marketing classrooms is a critical component of learning, and several platforms and providers do tend to arise more often than others.

The next part of this special issue series will feature articles by a variety of authors from around the world. The issue has four articles by Neier and Zayer; Mostafa; West, Moore, and Barry; and Northey, Bucic, Chylinski, and Govind that explore student engagement with social media in the classroom. After these broad-based explorations of using social media tools in the classroom for engagement purposes, specific examples of experiential learning using blogs and Facebook will be described. In these two articles, readers will hear from the author teams of Fowler and Thomas, and Bal, Grewal, Mills, and Ottley.

Thus, this first part of the special issue on "Digital and Social Media Marketing in Business Education" offers a broad-based approach to what is happening with regard to digital and social media in our marketing classrooms, while the second part of the special issue captures student involvement in classroom usage.

Digital Immigrants Engaging Digital Natives

While Prensky (2001a, 2001b) refers to the perils faced by professors who are Digital Immigrants teaching Digital Natives and others such as Frederiksen (2015) suggest that the marketing academy is behind the times with regard to content delivery, the articles in both parts of this special issue show that the marketing professoriate is making great strides in developing curricula that engage students productively in digital and social media. Given that an increasing range of marketing activities rely on tools and techniques traditionally developed outside of the marketing discipline, today's businesses demand integration across what were once considered functional silos (Grewal, Roggeveen, & Shankaranarayanan, 2015). Thus, it may be that, theoretically, digital and social media marketing is requiring an intertwining of the substantive and instrumental theories, since technology is a force typically contrived outside of the marketing domain, yet also a tool that marketers have to learn to control in the new world of co-creation.

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