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## Prosumption use in creation of cause related marketing programs through crowdsourcing

Witek Lucyna<sup>a\*</sup>, Hall Hanna<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Rzeszow University of Technology, The Faculty of Management, Department of Marketing, ul. Powstancow Warszawy 8,  
35-959 Rzeszow, Poland

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### Abstract

The main aim of this article is to develop a new approach to Cause Related Marketing (CRM) that shows the use of the innovative potential of prosumption through crowdsourcing practices to contribute to CRM campaigns. The article focuses on consumers' attitudes towards CRM and aspects of their involvement in the CRM creation. Research results show that young consumers in the Polish market connote CRM positively, but they are bored with existing CRM programs and assess them as uninteresting. The test results showed the desire of consumers to share knowledge with companies but, as it comes about the involvement, young people do not show much interest.

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*Keywords:* Cause Related Marketing (CRM); prosumption; crowdsourcing; consumer involvement; donation.

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### 1. Introduction

The challenges of sustainable development, globalization, permanent competition and changes in consumer behavior according to Bednarova et al. (2015) mean that companies are seeking more and more innovative and effective approaches to marketing. In recent years, Cause Related Marketing (CRM) has become an increasingly strategic tool used in marketing companies. Companies using the knowledge, creativity and willingness to engage consumers can open up and develop strategies to contribute CRM through the crowdsourcing practice. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages, but they become active participants who use modern forms

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\* Witek Lucyna. Tel.: +48-17-865-1598.  
E-mail address: [lgarbacz@prz.edu.pl](mailto:lgarbacz@prz.edu.pl)

of communication, observe and evaluate the activities of companies and share their knowledge in order to contribute to the creation of new business solutions and business development.

The study is interdisciplinary. It contributes to a widening of the current state of knowledge and allows companies to have a critical look at the consequences of the current practice and the development of solutions for CRM effectiveness. The prosumption concept is the perfect complement to the traditional approach to create a CRM campaign. The main purpose of this article is to develop a new enriched approach to CRM that shows the use of the innovative potential of prosumption through the practice of crowdsourcing to contribute to the CRM campaigns. The article focuses on consumers' attitudes to CRM and aspects relating to their involvement in the development of CRM.

## 2. Theoretical framework

According to Dean (1999), Tsai (2009) and Witek (2015) in European countries, only in the late 90's, socially involved marketing became an often used marketing approach. CRM was regarded as a strategic marketing tool that involves the brand with considerable societal need for the common benefit by engaging consumers, and at the same time providing support for non-profit organizations by Pringle and Thomson (1999), Fellman (1999), Demetriou et al. (2010). According to Strahilevitz and Myers (1998) a positive impact of combining donations with products that the company offers to customers was emphasized, where during an exchange the customers got the selected product and the additional satisfaction of doing good. Varadarajan and Menon (1988), Polonsky and MacDonald (2000) describe a critical look appeared where CRM was regarded as another tool used in order to make the biggest profits based on public involvement of profitable organizations with non-profitable ones. According to Green and Pelozo (2011) CRM development is associated with the growing public awareness of consumers, Broderick et al. (2003). It generates for them emotional, social and functional value. Non-profit organizations benefit from CRM by obtaining funding for their activities and receive additional publicity for their business. Varadarajan and Menon (1988) suggest that an increased awareness of consumers about the activities of the non-profit organization may bring direct donations in the future. According to Endacott (2004) companies have much greater benefits than the organizations which they help.

According to Hawkins et al. (2001) CRM allows customers to contribute directly to solve the problem and express the core values or concerns. Adkins (1999) defines the relationship between the company, non-profit organizations and consumers as a so-called win-win-win situation. Consumer perception towards CRM is determined by many factors, among others, demographics, social, knowledge, level of commitment and trust and the level of public awareness. According to Moosmayer and Fuljahn (2010) women are more sensitive to social issues than men. Results of research work of Garcia et al. (2003) show that young consumers are proving strong anxiety towards social aspects. According to Bester and Mlenga (2012) consumer attitudes are also conditioned by their cultural environment and may be subject to temporal and spatial variation.

In terms of development of CRM campaigns young people who are very skilled in the Internet environment provide huge potential for companies to use. Prosumption is a new form of interaction between a producer and a consumer and it shifts some tasks to the consumer. According to Toffler (2006) increasing consumer engagement is based on the performance of the duties which previously were performed for him. Today the Internet is an essential source of information and plays a key role in the process of obtaining and sharing information about companies, their activities and products. Fuchs (2011), Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) claim that prosumption has become an important feature of Web 2.0. According to Radziszewska (2013) development of social media stimulates the activity of internet users by allowing independent content creation, interaction with other network users and exchange of information. Young people have broad access to technology and, consequently, many tools that shape their lives in many ways, and thus favor prosumption. Jenkins (2006) describes young people as digital prosumers who use new technologies to appropriate, remix, resample and rework existing cultural artifacts, messages and images. According to Jenkins et.al (2009) these activities are not only an integral part of the market economy, but have a high potential for productive citizenship and creative activism.

Pietraszewski (2014) explains that prosumption seems, on the one hand to stimulate consumers to act and to greater involvement in various businesses, on the other one, it is a measure of the latter to increase profits thanks to this commitment. According to Bauer and Gegenhuber (2015), Cova et al. (2015) in recent years the debate on the

working consumers and their increasing role in the organization has continued. Howe (2008), the creator of the concept of crowdsourcing draws attention to the need to use external sources of knowledge, e.g. the Internet communities to solve different types of problems. Kleemann et al. (2008), Wexler (2011) describe that crowdsourcing is the situation in which a company 'appoints' consumers to perform tasks that previously were carried out within the company in order to use (usually for free) potential customers as those creating value of sources. According to Arvidsson and Colleoni (2012), Fuchs (2014) companies create value together with partners in the network in the long term.

Various forms of value creation in the Web 2.0 environment can create new challenges for open business models based on customer participation were described by Wirtz et al. (2010). According to Vargo and Lusch (2004), Cova et al. (2011) the customers are the main partners of companies and are always co-creators of value. Thanks to the use of new technological channels, social networks, blogs and wikis, companies can seek external resources in order to acquire new ideas and improve marketing efforts. Crowdsourcing is criticized by Denegri-Knott and Zwick (2012) because information about consumers who, through interactions online are subject to supervision, where information is stored in databases of customers and then allows companies not only to redesign products but also to identify brands that match specific customer groups. Prosumption processes in developing countries are not as developed as in developed countries, which is reducing the use of crowdsourcing. In the Polish report market, Gemius (2008), broadly defining the prosumer, indicates 36% prosumers. These are men aged 19-34 years with higher education.

### **3. Research methodology**

On the basis of literature sources and primary research the article combines prosumption concept, crowdsourcing and CRM, providing a new approach that differs from the traditional one that takes into account the co-participation and co-creation of CRM by consumers. The study was conducted on 05-31 January 2015 among 342 students from the Rzeszow University of Technology. The research was exploratory in nature and was carried out by a direct survey. The aim of the study was to examine the attitudes of young consumers to share their knowledge with companies and their willingness to contribute in CRM campaigns. To measure the attitudes a 5-point Likert scale was applied in order to determine the degree of acceptance of each statement. The structure index was calculated with the application of SPSS package. The study included 69% of women and 31% men. The pilot study was conducted among 10 students. The study attempted to answer the question of whether young consumers in the Polish market were willing to share their knowledge with companies in the field of co-creation of CRM.

Students consumers were subject to the study. According to Turner (2015) the study selected this group as the students belong to the generation that is normally associated with modern technology and more than any other generation lives in a time where technology is readily available at such a young age. Eisner (2005) suggests that Young people treat the Internet as a tool for work, leisure and integral part of their life. Prosumption can be seen by Duncum (2011) as a creative method which young people use in everyday life while surfing the internet. In the research the following hypotheses were made:

- H1: Young consumers have a positive perception of brands that CRM programs have, but think that the offered related marketing campaigns are uninteresting.
- H2: Young consumers are willing to share their knowledge with the company on its operations and products because they believe that the products and marketing activities will be designed in accordance with their own interests and at the same expect good entertainment and spontaneous fun.
- H3: Respondents are worried that companies want to use their knowledge to achieve the marketing and economics objectives.
- H4: The surveyed consumers poorly assess their knowledge about CRM and do not want to be engaged in CRM actions to a greater extent than before.

### **4. Findings**

Research results show that young consumers, on the one hand connote CRM positively, but on the other one, they are bored with existing CRM programs, assessing them as uninteresting. Consumers are watching companies'

activities. Most young people use the Internet to search for information about companies, their brands and CRM programs (88%). As many as 94.6% use social media, 80% use social networking sites to search for information on the activities of companies towards the environment and society. Thanks to the social media that information is shared by 49.2% of students. In spite of the entire range of tools available, users do not use the interactive power of the Internet. According to Kesicka (2015) much more often they use a new medium to the same extent as the old one, mirroring their habits with the real world, where, after impact on shaping the product is negligible, and if it takes place, it requires enormous time and financial investments. A large group talk with their friends about interesting marketing activities (73.9%). They are willing to send information about the initiatives of companies to their peers, but on the condition that they find them interesting. They are ruthless for companies that fail them. As many as 85.4% of the surveyed students transfer to their friend negative information on company operations or their products to warn them. The respondents are positively disposed to share their knowledge, their ideas and thoughts with companies and contribute to such programs, but they are afraid that companies can use their knowledge for economic and marketing purposes. More than half of respondents (56.9%) do not trust such cooperation. In spite of the positive feedback and positive approach to the campaign, CRM has a passive attitude towards encouraging the immediate environment to support the CRM campaign (44.9%). Only 27% actively encourage others to participate in the CRM campaign. The respondents assessed their knowledge of CRM programs relatively weakly. Only 35.2% think that they have a thorough understanding of CRM campaigns. As many as 31.7% of students did not agree with this statement and 21.1% totally disagreed. One third of respondents (33.1%) would like to be more involved, while as much as 44.1% did not express their opinion. Only a small group is willing to get more involved than ever before.

Table 1. Details of consumers' attitudes to share knowledge and contribute to the CRM campaign (%)

Variables	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither...nor /not answer	Agree	Strongly agree
<i>Assessment of CRM campaigns</i>					
I appreciate companies that have CRM	1,8	13,2	1,2/0,3	54,2	29,3
I pay attention to CRM campaign	2,3	21,1	13,2/0,0	42,9	20,5
I'm bored with CRM campaigns that are uninteresting	12,9	19,0	14,9/0,3	17,0	35,9
I'd like to have influence on co-creation of CRM campaign	16,1	24,0	1,9/0,0	45,0	14,0
I have some doubts that companies want to take advantage of me in order to achieve their economic and marketing goals	9,9	29,0	3,9/0,3	35,0	21,9
<i>Personal sources and their role</i>					
I talked to your friends about interesting marketing activities	12,0	11,1	3,0/0,0	61,9	12,0
I am happy to send information to my friends, if there is something interesting	10,2	5,0	2,3/0,0	50,4	32,1
I give a friend the negative information on the activities of companies or their products to warn them	2,3	11,1	1,2/0,0	11,1	74,3
I encourage my closest environment to support social campaigns and CRM	14,1	30,8	28,1/0,0	19,0	8,0
<i>Social media</i>					
In the Internet I look for information about brands and their support for non-profit organizations	2,1	7,9	1,2/0,6	28,0	60,2
I use social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter	3,0	1,2	1,2/0,0	40,1	54,5
I am looking for information about companies, products, activities on the environment and society	2,1	14,9	12,0/0,0	37,1	33,9
I share social media information about companies	14,1	25,0	21,7/0,0	23,1	16,1
<i>Attitudes towards CRM co-creation</i>					
I have big knowledge about CRM campaigns	21,1	31,7	12,0/0,0	25,0	10,2
I would like to get more involved in the CRM than before.	7,9	14,9	44,1/0,0	20,2	12,9
I want to share with companies my feelings about their actions	3,0	18,1	14,9/0,0	38,9	25,1
Sharing information with the company I can only see advantage as products and activities are in line with my interest.	6,2	22,0	5,9/0,0	36,9	29,0

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I am looking for good entertainment in co-creating CRM	9,0	5,0	5,0/0,0	48,0	33,0
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Young people, in spite of this conservative attitude, see the benefits of sharing their feelings with companies regarding their activities (65.9%). They believe that this company will prepare such products and activities that are consistent with their interest, and at the same time they will have a good time (Table 1). The test results provide, on the one hand, the desire to share knowledge with companies, but on the other one, when it is said already about the involvement, young people do not show much interest. Such a situation may arise that the consumer has no experience related to CRM campaigns, where he could be actively involved.

On the other hand, it may be the result of a relatively superficial consumer interest in this type of capability. Any small action like issuing a comment or sending “the like” do not require careful and time-consuming commitment on the part of the consumer. Other studies of Ziemia and Eisenhardt (2014) have shown that in the area of consumer activity on feedback and comments, we can see a fairly large activity and the desire to share knowledge and individual experiences, but in the area of product innovation, fewer respondents declare their activity here.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

Crowdsourcing blurs the roles of consumers and producers by hiring consumers to use their time, effort, knowledge and becoming a consumer-supplier. Bauer and Gegenhuber (2015) draw attention to several motivating factors that contribute to the development of crowdsourcing: self-actualization and meaning, join and entertainment, skill development and signaling, belonging and recognition, income and interest. The results of the study clearly confirm that consumers, especially young and well advised in the Internet environment, provide huge potential for companies to use. Modern prosumers constitute a reservoir of creative ideas and solutions, they are eager to engage in the exchange of experiences and share their consumer knowledge. Crowdsourcing is an excellent opportunity to deliver entertainment and spontaneous fun to the young consumer. Development of social media creates the conditions for co-participation and co-creation of CRM programs. The results are the guidance for managers on the expectations of consumers who are looking for fun, humorous and interesting and innovative CRM campaigns. A large group (44.1%), who did not give an approval to engage more than ever, can be convinced to participate actively in the activities of the CRM through the use of modern tools of marketing communication. It is important to keep in mind that consumers may be tired of popular social media. Research by Pew Research Center (2013) conducted in 2013 showed that teenagers had a declining enthusiasm for Facebook.

Crowdsourcing allows to minimize costs and through the involvement of a large number of people increases the amount of knowledge, which enables the acquisition of new ideas, the involvement of users and publicity in social media. Polish consumers have positive attitudes to help other people and CRM campaigns, but do not show much interest in sharing what probably prevents the use of crowdsourcing in marketing on a large scale. The report by TNS Poland (2013) shows that 61% of the Poles claim that they can act in a group, 82% said that the actions in the group gave them satisfaction, but complain that Poland lacked space for creating social initiatives in which one can easily get involved. According to Budzanowska-Drzewiecka and Lipinska (2011) at this early stage of concept development the reference to the experience of more developed markets and an indication of the possibilities of using the process in customizing marketing efforts to customer needs seems to be right.

Therefore, the study which was carried out only at one university should be expanded by the population of students from other universities. This study is an introduction to further research in this area. There is a need for future studies, both quantitative and qualitative ones.

This approach, which allows for an active and creative participation of consumers in the CRM, leads to the minimization of costs, the acquisition of knowledge and publicity in social media. This implies value to society by helping to solve social problems. It implies values to society, to assist in solving social problems. By contrast, it provides opportunities for customers to meet their changing needs. The findings suggest that managers need to

create a business model based on crowdsourcing and use it to raise innovation and enterprise dialogue with the customer. Understanding benefits is important for decision-making under turbulent environment. Crowdsourcing should be conducted ethically and within the existing legal framework. An important issue for managers is to build confidence in the company, removing concerns of consumers that companies want to take advantage of them. To achieve it one should focus on developing and implementing procedures for optimal utilization of prosumption processes. Managers should pay attention to create friendly conditions, as long registration process or complicated software or applications discourage to engage in co-creation of CRM. Prosumer action can also be seen as another ad, hence consumers can avoid this type of participation.

The use of crowdsourcing is especially important for small and medium-sized companies for which gaining collective knowledge of online communities is not as costly as with traditional methods. According to Radziszewska (2012) this is not an easy task, because the use of Internet creativity, their innovative potential, activity and social engagement require appropriate tools and effective methods of obtaining new ideas and concepts. Research shows that businesses face many challenges in order to convince consumers to be more involved. The research subject does not use up the subject matter and it may be a contribution to further research on the use of prosumption in marketing activities.

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