

A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA: MCDONALD AND STARBUCKS WEBSITES IN 2015

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ABSTRACT

A growing interest in active brand participation on Social Media platforms, content marketing, and user engagement has resulted in a burgeoning field of research and practice; however, few studies have provided empirically grounded and comprehensive typologies for assessing, categorizing, and thus informing the historical development of Social Media marketing communications. This study presents the results of a content analysis of specific posts shared by McDonald's and Starbucks—of Facebook and Twitter Page messaging data, monitored the nature of responses, and user engagement with responding back to the posts to gain a better understanding of the emerging concepts of brand listening and brand communication over social media platforms. The analysis provides useful theoretical and empirical implications for developing Social Media marketing strategies and directing the design and development of effective Social Media marketing communications. Future research directions and brand managers' implications are emphasised.

Keywords: McDonald, Starbuck, Social Media, Brand Communication, Brand Building.

Introduction

Communication is essential in today's environment in all facets. The internet, and

particularly social media, are leaders in communication. Social media sites, blogs, and so on are examples of social media. Almost all sorts of businesses now use social networking sites as a primary means of communication. Online technology have made it simple for any company to develop and distribute content on these social networking sites. These systems are open source and participatory for interacting with internet users.

Social media is a online tool where brands not only receive appreciation (in the form of likes) from vast audience from no geographically boundaries but also delivering valuable content, forming favourable attitude towards brands and targeting final call of action (Rohm et al., 2013). Moreover, it is a tool to create, share, appraise Brand-Generated Data (BGC) and User-Generated Content (UGC) among the entire online community (Salogub, 2022, Hollensen et al., 2017).

The rest of this article will go as follows. We begin with a review of the existing literature before delving into hypotheses, and methodology. We present our findings and conclude with some limits, and suggestions for further research. Lastly, we discuss the ramifications for management.

Literature Review:

Many researchers found Brands consistently using social media platforms, including

Facebook to communicate with their target groups to strengthening their respected brand identities and personalities (Tan & Kim, 2013). Being present and actively run brand's social media webpages and engaging the existing and potential consumers consistently, it costs heavily. The major aim is to move the brand in terms of business and for that content and communication is one important element. On this parameter, startbuck is doing great by offering digital content worth watching/reading. The success can be measure by the ideas Starbuck received 80000 ideas (reciepes) through active participation by their users on social media, out of which has been implemented at Starbuck's store (York, 2010).

Research Methodology:

The research will be conducted on two well-known social networking sites (Facebook and Twitter). The text analysis is carried out on the websites of two US corporations, McDonald's Company and Starbucks Corporation. Furthermore, the researchers select a piece of content posted by McDonald's and Starbucks on their respective Facebook Fan pages and Twitter pages in March 2015'. Because the thread of communication via comments, replies, and likes is very long, a few screenshots are utilised as needed. This study examines the communication flow between two companies (McDonald's and Starbucks) and online users via their official Social Media pages (Twitter and Facebook) using the following parameters: Level of interaction, Problem Solving, Rumor Rectification, Acknowledgement, Extra Point of Contact, page layout, order of comments, language, and image of post.

Research Objectives:

1. To investigate Social Media Platforms as a responsible and dependable communication

tool for two specific firms (McDonald's and Starbucks).

2. To comprehend the scope of opportunities for improving communication and enhancing the company's image.

Case 1: McDonald's Corporation

McDonald's in Social Media Marketing:

McDonald's, like many other organisations, has a presence on numerous social media platforms such as Facebook fan pages and Twitter to reap the benefits. The following is a quick explanation of the company's two social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, as well as an analysis of a few materials uploaded by the company:

2015: McDonald's Facebook Fan Page



Figure 1 McDonald Facebook Home Page

McDonald's developed its Facebook page for its massive number of fans/customers, and as of March 2015, it had over 57 million fan members (total number of likes) and over 17 million people have visited McDonald's Facebook page. McDonald's frequently updates its Facebook page with news, product updates, marketing activities, business updates, CSR activities, employee updates, and any other material linked to the firm that may be of interest to its followers or customers. After the company released any content, its fans and other people (connection of fans) began commenting on the post, with their individual viewpoints being unfavourable or positive.

Facebook Post 1 – "My best friends are the coolest #BFF #McFlurry #TGIF"

McDonald's posted a simple comment, "My best friends are the coolest #BFF #McFlurry #TGIF," and it alluded to an offer of their ice-cream product, which is available in two different flavours, Oreo and M&M. This message is accompanied by a snapshot of the merchandise with the hashtag "#bestfriends," indicating that it is intended for friends. Friendship is a relationship that can exist between any two individuals; a husband and wife can be friends. As a result, McDonald's is indirectly attempting to target the entire population. This message is intended to promote something. The caption's wording is simple and appealing, reflecting the feelings of the younger generation. This post by McDonald's, a simple statement that says "My best friends are the coolest #BFF #McFlurry #TGIF," has 1560 likes, 29 shares, and 39 comments. Positive, negative, general, and unrelated comments have been received. We will discuss each with the help of the specific comment and the screenshot below.

Positive comment: It is mostly engaged with the ice cream's flavour. (comment no. 1 and 2).



Figure 2 Screenshot of the positive post

Negative comment: They are primarily about the corporation and its products. (See comment 14). In this comment, a user attempts to disprove a story about utilising dog meat to meet excessive demand. The user shares the news link, which is accompanied by an image. Yet, McDonald's has not responded to any of the users' remarks, even those that are critical of the company's image.



Figure 3 Screenshot of the negative comment

Neutral comment: They are those that are not directly related to the company's original post but share some of its other great news/video/or product. As a result, it is unconnected to the original post yet beneficial to the company. Users post the link to the YouTube page with some previous McDonald's marketing campaigns ("McDonald's - Build your taste" and "McDonald's to give out 45,000 free McMuffins as part of National Breakfast Day in West and South India"). This contributes to McDonald's image building in the eyes of other users.





Figure 4 Screenshot of the Neutral comment



Figure 5 Screenshot of the unrelated comment

Unrelated Comment: There is also one unrelated comment that is not related to the original post or the McDonald's itself. (Fig. 5).

Observation: On the part of users, we discovered that dialogue on the original post occurs on an individual rather than a group basis. Users act by clicking like, share, and leaving individual comments on the original post without responding to any other user's comments. We have also noted that McDonald's engagement is nil, not even for negative comments that could harm the company's image among Facebook users.

McDonald's Twitter Handle

McDonald's launched its USA Twitter page in September 2008 to cater to its massive following, and it now has over 2.76 million followers as of March 2015. McDonald's frequently updates its Twitter feed with news, product updates, marketing activities, business updates, CSR activities, employee updates, and

any other material linked to the corporation that may be of interest to its followers. Following the uploading of any content by the company, its followers and other people (connection of followers & Twitter users) began commenting on the post, with their individual views being unfavorable or positive.



Figure 6 Screenshot of McDonald's twitter home page

Twitter Post 1 – "It's not a season wrap party without Happy Meals and #ShamrockShakes, Thanks for the invite, @MindyKaling!"

"It's not a season wrap party without Happy Meals and #ShamrockShakes, Thanks for the invite, @MindyKaling!" says McDonald's in this post. is posted, and it is related to an offer of its well-known Happy Meal combined with Shamrock Shakes (Brewages). This statement emphasises the significance of the offer during the party or celebration time.



Figure 7 Screenshot of McDonald's post on the Twitter page

The phrase "Thanks for the invite" expresses the delight of the invitees when they discover Happy Meal with ShamrockShakes at the celebration. As a result, this article is part of a direct promotion ploy for McDonald's offer "Happy Meals and #ShamroackShakes" for the entire population. The language is clear, and it emphasises the value of the offer for party time. This post was published on March 3, 2015, at 3:45 a.m. and has been retweeted 83 times, added by 228 users as their favourite (As on March 10, 2015). People leave comments that are positive, bad, generic, or unconnected.

Positive Comment: The positive comments primarily concerned with the taste and nature of the offer.



Figure 8 Screenshot of positive post (comment no. 2, 5 and 7)

Negative Comment: There aren't many nasty comments on it, and if there are, it is merely a snarky query (Comment 10) that is promptly and gently handled by McDonald's (Comment no. 17).



Figure 9 Screenshot of negative comment

Neutral comment: Those are those that are not directly related to the original post of the company, but rather some additional questions, as illustrated in the image below. In comment number 11, a person inquired about the amount of companies for which McDonald's advertises. Another person has a business question in comment number 12. McDonald's has yet to respond. These comments are also unconnected because they have nothing to do with the original content.



Figure 10 Screenshot of General/Unrelated comments

Observation: The communication on the original post is mainly on an individual level rather than a conversation basis; users just like, share, and comment on the original post without talking to each other, with the exception of one case where McDonald's replied to one user. Other from that, there is no user conversation. McDonald's engagement is identified only once, which may have an impact on the company's image among users. If customers have questions for McDonald's, the company should react in order to build its image..

Case 2: Starbucks Corporation Starbucks in Social Media Marketing:

Starbucks has also maintained an official Facebook fan page and a Twitter account since 2006 in order to increase contact with its fans/followers. This is a quick summary of the company's two social media platforms,

Facebook and Twitter, as well as an analysis of a few of its posts.

Starbucks Twitter Page

Starbucks launched its Twitter page in September 2006, and it already has a large number of followers. It has around 7.33 million followers as of March 2015. Starbucks' Twitter page is constantly updated with the most recent news. Updates include posts on their products, services, marketing campaigns, events, CSR, and anything else that connects the company's image with the interests of its followers.



Figure 11 Screenshot of Starbucks twitter home page

The language they utilised is basic, appealing, and simple to grasp, making consumers feel at ease to provide feedback or ask questions. As a result, the communication thread grows longer.

These remarks are a mix of positive and bad, general and unrelated aspects of communication. We assess these many facets of communication using the following content produced by Starbucks:

Twitter Post 1 – “Cup art for dayyys at starbucks cupart.tumblr.com”



Figure 12 The Screenshot of Starbucks' Post on the Twitter page

Starbucks alerted its online followers about the cup art available for their Starbucks coffee cups in fig. 12 uploaded by Starbucks "Cup art for dayyys at starbucks cupart.tumblr.com."

The following screenshot shows a Starbucks coffee cup with the statement "don't stop your day dream" put on it in a highly artistic style, making the Starbucks Coffee package more fascinating and appealing. The above-mentioned remark can also be used to describe Starbucks' main product. Starbucks aspires to present itself as the people's dreaming. Daydreaming is something that many individuals like doing. We work all day to make our aspirations come true. As a result, Starbucks attempts to connect its main product with people's daydreams and then asks them not to quit it, i.e., they motivate people either not to abandon their dream or not to quit Starbucks Coffee for the start of their day. We also notice something else regarding cup art. In general, products that require the user's own time to consume, such as eatables/drinks, have the ability to connect with people. For example, while eating chips, we usually begin reading the information on the wrapper. Perhaps this is why

a firm like Lays begins to write stories about it and leverages celebrity imagery to make it more appealing. Once it creates interest, users start buying the product again not only for the satisfying and delicious tastes but also to read the latest content. Similarly, users of Starbucks Coffee, while drinking, they might have interacted with the cup art, try to read it and then try to connect themselves with it. And then, at their next cup of coffee, they might expect something new, creative and interesting written on their cup.

Few words, such as 'quit,' 'your,' and 'dream,' are difficult to read at once in the above cup art. It takes the consumer longer to read it. So, more Starbucks Coffee time. Aside from the creative and content aspects, the main goal is to sell Starbucks' main product, which is coffee. This entry was published on March 11, 2015, at 3:02 AM. It has been retweeted 653 times, and 2032 people have highlighted it as their favourite. This post has 41 comments as on March 12, 2015 (07:00 PM). Here are some of the comments, along with their good, negative, general, and unrelated reactions.

Positive Comment: They are particularly concerned with the enthusiasm among fans for these new cup art coffee cups. Only a few of them are as (comment no. 1, 2, 11, 14, 16, 21, 29 and 37). The positive comments show that people appreciate Starbucks' initiative to include cup art on its coffee cups and wish to order the same (Comment no. 1, 2, 11 and 21). They also like quotes since they may relate the quote to the product and their own lives (comment no. 29).

Negative Comment: There aren't many negative comments on it, and if there are, they're mostly snarky (Comment no. 10). I don't

believe it is required to respond to this. There is nothing serious wrong with these comments. We also discovered a bad comment that Starbucks had not yet examined (Comment no. 33).

General Comment: Those are ones that are not directly related to the original post of the firm, but rather some other inquiries about the company itself. We didn't come across anything like that.

Customer Problem Comment: These are the comments where the follower is also a customer who is experiencing a difficulty. There is a comment in which a customer lost her wallet containing her Starbucks Gold Card and refuses to block it. Here, Starbucks quickly communicates with her and provides her with pertinent information.

Starbucks Facebook Fan Page



Figure 13 Starbucks Facebook Home Page (2015)

Starbucks begins its voyage on the Facebook network in September 2006 and quickly gains a large number of admirers. As of March 2015, it has over 38 million followers and over 21 million visitors to its Facebook page.

We also notice a few items on its Facebook page, such as a part that connects users to its

International Communities, which are further divided into the following categories: (1) Americas, (2) Europe, Middle East & Africa, and (3) Asia. Also, communities are shown the number of likes they have received to date. We also uncover a few more items in its 'more' area. It contains Video, Places, Likes, Available Jobs, and Events. Each one has its own page with full information and constant updates for its users.

Starbucks' Facebook page is constantly updated with the most recent and planned updates. It includes posts on their products and services, marketing and CSR initiatives, events, and anything else that has some engagement capability that can connect their image with its followers.

The language of postings is generally considered clear, beautiful, and easy to comprehend in order to serve two distinct but linked purposes: one, it should make users feel comfortable providing feedback. Second, it should be aimed for the masses (people from various cultures, countries, age groups, and so on) and allow the masses to derive nearly the same meaning from it. For example, an Indian should be able to grasp and express the same meaning of the post as an American. As a result, the communication thread becomes longer. These comments cover a wide range of communication topics, including favourable, negative, general, question, unconnected, and so on. We analyse these many components of communication using the content provided by Starbucks below:

Facebook Post 1 – “Dreaming of.....right now. #EspressoRoast”

Starbucks published the aforementioned text on March 3, 2015. The title of this post is

"Dreaming about.... Right now." #EspressoRoast". Starbucks sent an unexpected heading with one of their products, **'EspressoRoast'**, to its followers. Their internet fans were told about **'EspressoRoast'** and its availability at their café.

In fig. 14, In terms of language, the title is far from punctuation and sentence completion. It appears to be a modern language that the younger generation uses and understands. Yet, it is not as difficult to understand for other populations.

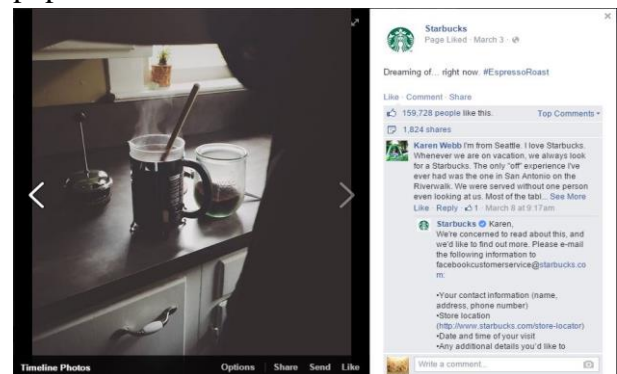


Figure 14: The Screenshot of Starbucks' Post on the Facebook page

The tagline refers to the drink as the people's dream. As a result, it is intriguing and appealing. We discovered numerous characteristics of feelings among internet users in its communication thread, such as Positive, Negative, Rumors linked, Complaints, Disappointments, general, unrelated, and so on. Some of the comments, along with a brief description and screenshots, are included below. The complete list can be found in the Appendix.

Positive Comment: They are primarily concerned with the fans' excitement and pleasure with the items or services. It could also be satisfaction with the company's rapid resolution of a client concern. A few of them

are listed below, including (comment no. 13, 15, 16, 19 and 20). Starbucks responds to some good comments. There are a couple others that are good in nature, but have received no response from the company. Some of them are as follows: (Comment No. 22, 23, 25). Starbucks responded to five positive remarks, demonstrating the company's interest in its customers and what they thought of it. It is necessary to resolve issues, but it is also important to appreciate compliments. And it was done by Starbucks. Although it is not possible to acknowledge the entire communication thread, balancing the various categories of communication and solving the problem, as well as creating trust among fans, are critical to success. As a result, a few praises were not acknowledged by the company, but that is fine.

Negative Comment: There are relatively few straight negative remarks on it; they are either the result of a rumour or a complaint about the product/service. We also discovered certain flaws with the product's price that were not addressed. Starbucks attempted to dispel the misconception in the minds of its customers by responding to 11 such remarks. It's admirable that Starbucks went to such lengths to dispel the myth among its customers. In addition, we discovered that Starbucks went above and beyond in noticing and resolving the fans' problems/complaints. This will assist them in gaining trust and developing a strong favourable image. The following comments are connected (Comment Nos. 1, 7, 14, 18, and 21):

Customer Problem/Complaint Comment: There are also a few more customer problems/complaints about quantity, services, flavour, rumour, cost element, competitor's products & services, advice/suggestions, request for old product, and so on that every

firm should examine and acknowledge in order to maintain its clients.

Aside from the Starbucks Customer Care team's efforts to be present in resolving some crucial remarks, they also overlooked some of them. The remarks that are relevant but are not observed by Starbucks are discussed among users as well, but are not noticed by the corporation. That may have an adverse effect on the company's image. As a result, the corporation should be more cautious about such serious issues and accountable.



Figure 15 Unnoticed Complaint by a fan for miscommunication via advertisement

The language might indicate the level of displeasure and annoyance. Once again, the firm was unconcerned.

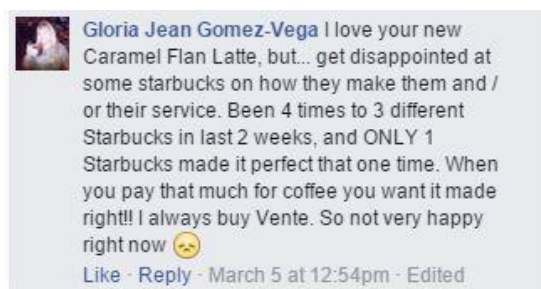


Figure 16 Unnoticed Complaint by a fan for poor service



Figure 17 Unnoticed Complaint by a fan for bad taste.



Figure 18 Unnoticed Complaint by a fan for a negative rumor.

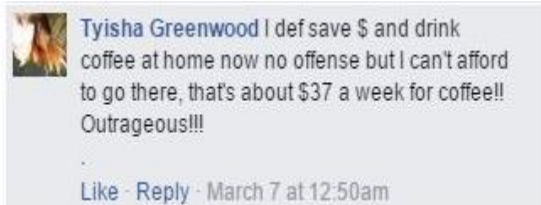


Figure 19 Unnoticed Complaint by a fan for high cost



Figure 20 Unnoticed Complaint by a fan for high cost



Figure 21 Unnoticed Comment by a fan for better competitor's product

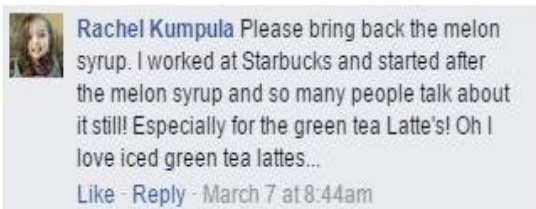


Figure 22 Unnoticed request by a fan cum ex-employee for re-launch of an old product



Figure 23 Unnoticed suggestion by a fan to avoid the rumor

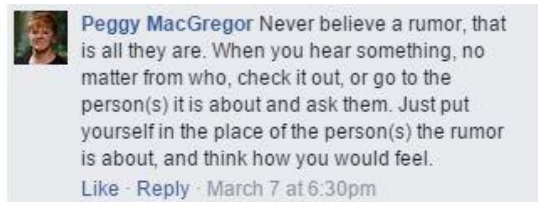


Figure 24 Unnoticed advice by a fan to other people for rumors

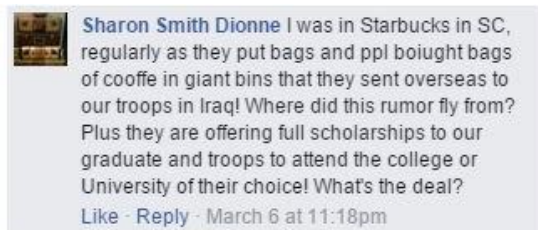


Figure 25 Unnoticed suggestion by a fan cum ex-employee to avoid the rumor

A **General Comment** is one that is not directly related to the initial post of the firm but does raise some issues about the company itself. We didn't come across anything like that.

An **Unrelated Comment** is one that has nothing to do with the original content submitted by Starbucks or the company itself. There was just one comment in this category (fig. 26).



Figure 26 Unrelated Comment

Observation:

The researchers have made a few observations. For starters, there is a significant level of interaction on Facebook by both Starbucks and its followers. A few fascinating items were discovered throughout the review of the entire conversation. To begin with, dialogue on the initial post is primarily on an individual basis, although engagement from fans and Starbucks is really high. There are also many discussions where users just respond to each other's comments. They genuinely converse with one another. Second, we discovered many users engaging in discussions about issues other than Starbucks' content, such as rumour, complaints, competitor's items, satisfaction-dissatisfaction with Starbucks, enquiry, and so on, but they are truly conversing or assisting them other. As a result, we found a healthy conversation. Finally, Starbucks' engagement is determined to be very high. It responded to 11 comments about the rumour, 5 comments about the complaint or enquiry, and 5 comments about the positive elements. It responded to 21 user comments in total. They've set up an email address for Facebook clients (facebookcustomerservice@starbucks.com).

Hence, if users have any questions or issues with Starbucks, they can also resolve them through social networking sites. Fourth, we discovered numerous other posts that were relevant but were overlooked by Starbucks. As a result, the organisation should take care to strengthen its image and trust.

Conclusion:

The increasing complexities and changing level of customer awareness and participation via/on micro-blogging sites of social media platforms has resulted in a need to comprehend the potential of micro-blogging sites and its positive and possible outcomes. We compare the content posted by McDonald's Food Chain and Starbucks Coffee on their official Facebook and Twitter pages on various parameters such as Level of interaction, Problem Solving, Rumor Rectification, Acknowledgement, Extra Point of Contact, page layout, order of comments, language, and image of post in this study. It is based on the following parameters: Interaction level: Starbucks Coffee is more engaging with its internet customers.

Issue Solving: We found Starbucks to be more careful and active in this dimension than McDonald's. McDonald's has not responded to its Facebook post and has only responded once to its Twitter post. Starbucks, on the other hand, responded once in a Twitter post and 21 times in a Facebook post debate.

Rumor Correction: Starbucks is dealing with rumours among its customers, which it is doing its best to dispel. It responded to all 11 comments on this topic.

Acknowledgement: Sometimes acknowledging a favourable or praiseful comment is more vital because positive comments are written by pleased existing customers, and retaining them is more important. In this regard, Starbucks outperforms McDonald's by acknowledging 5 such comments on Facebook. McDonald's did not recognise the one.

Further Points of Contact: Starbucks has launched an email address for its Facebook

customers:

facebookcustomerservice@starbucks.com.

Please use this address when responding to any customer's concern on Facebook. We didn't come across anything from McDonald's.

Page Layout: We discovered something unusual in their display arrangement. Starbucks uses a similar display design on both Facebook and Twitter's home pages. McDonald's has a different one.

Order of the Comments: Starbucks arranges the comments that were most debated and had a response at the top of the conversation. It could be to provide information to forthcoming users or to establish a positive picture of the organisation. This is not the case with McDonald's.

Language: We discovered that language is short, straightforward, and appealing.

Post Image: The images in this post are of a similar kind. They are genuine products.

Suggestions:

Businesses should encourage extensive interaction on the post. As a result, companies will have a better understanding of what their online consumers want and will be able to adjust their future plans and regulations based on the feedback they receive during contact. Businesses should become more involved in areas such as gratitude, client queries/problems, rumours, unfavourable comments, and anything else that requires personalised and personal attention. Companies, like Starbucks, should provide more "points of contact" to help their customers reach them right away. Starbucks should recognise the efforts of its

followers who are assisting them in dispelling the misconception and also offer advise to Starbucks and other fans. Starbucks may gain the trust of their customers in this manner. Businesses should pay attention to every posts and never fail to respond. It is critical in terms of image and trust.

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