

ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ И ВЫЗОВЫ EWOM

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Аннотация. Статья описывает маркетинг из уст в уста («сарафанное радио», англ. word-of-mouth, WOM) как важный инструмент, оказывающий влияние на поведение потребителей. Выполнен анализ исследований в области современного состояния электронного маркетинга из уст в уста (electronic word-of-mouth, eWOM), описаны средства сбора данных о клиентах с помощью интернет-технологий. Даны рекомендации по использованию данных WOM при тагетировании в маркетинге и определении маркетинговой стратегии. Обсуждаются возможные пути развития eWOM.

Ключевые слова: маркетинг из уст в уста, WOM, поведение покупателей, электронный маркетинг, eWOM, измерения в маркетинге.

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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF EWOM

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Abstract. The article describes word-of-mouth marketing (WOM) as an important tool that influences customers' behavior. The analysis of research in the field of electronic word-of-mouth marketing (eWOM) current state was made, the means of collecting customer data using Internet technologies are described. Recommendations for using WOM data for tagging in marketing and defining a marketing strategy are given. Possible ways of eWOM developing are discussed.

Keywords: word-of-mouth marketing, WOM, customers' behavior, electronic marketing, eWOM, measuring in marketing.

1. From word-of-mouth to electronic word-of-mouth

Word-of-mouth (WOM) means that information or recommendations are passed on orally. In the context of marketing, this means that someone expresses their opinion about products, brands, companies or services. A positive opinion can help companies extremely and increase sales. According to Ismagilova et al. [4] word-of-mouth can be defined as followed: "Oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator, whom the re-

ceiver perceives as non-commercial, concerning a brand, product, service, or organization.”

Studies confirm that WOM is more effective than conventional media and has a significant impact on customers' buying behaviour. The main effects of WOM include increasing brand awareness, changing attitudes and buying intentions. If people are deliberately looking for WOM, it's to minimize risk. How WOM works depends on various factors. For example, the connection strength of the people involved, the properties of the communicator and the expertise of the recipient. WOM is not only used to report positively about a service or a product, but also when someone is dissatisfied [4].

The company Vorwerk gives an example of successfully using WOM marketing. The all-round kitchen helper Thermomix cannot be bought in a shop or online, but is only offered in direct sales. The Thermomix can only be purchased after a representative has presented the device to potential customers at home by cooking together. By helping the customer to cook with the Thermomix, a sense of achievement and a good experience is generated and the word-of-mouth effect starts. This leads to a recommendation business and then leads to new sales. This works so well for Vorwerk that there is almost no additional advertising [9].

Digitization affects not only society's consumer behaviour, since online shopping is very easy and practical, but also communication behaviour. In America, people are said to be confronted with 4,000 to 10,000 advertisements a day [8]. Even if it depends very much on where and how a person lives, the mass of advertisements with which people are confronted is enormous, not only in the physical environment, but also online.

This mass of information can hardly be processed by people and that's why most of it is immediately forgotten or even hidden unconsciously. This underlines the effectiveness of the WOM principle. With WOM there is no need to evaluate a flood of information and advice is often given by familiar people. But the classic WOM is supplemented, if not massively expanded, by electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in times of the Internet. The Internet is used by many consumers to find information about products or companies.

The Internet and the popularity of online trading as well as the spread of social media applications led to the creation of eWom [4].

It is very easy for people to share their opinions online. Companies can benefit from this, but they can also lose recognition. Usually people on the Internet not only share their opinions with their personal surroundings, but with other people all over the world. In this way, products or services can also be evaluated online and provided with comments, and the exchange of experience thus gains completely new dimensions. Although eWOM mostly confronts the opinions of unknown people, its public availability makes it stronger than the traditional WOM. Ismagilova et al. [4] define eWOM as followed: “eWOM is the dynamic and ongoing information exchange process between

potential, actual, or former consumers regarding a product, service, brand, or company, which is available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet.”

2. The importance of eWOM

There are numerous platforms where eWOM happens on the Internet. Many sellers offer a rating system directly on their websites. These can be for goods, but also services such as travel. In addition, it can appear on blogs, in forums, in videos, by email, etc. On social media channels, influencers have specialized in spreading opinions for their followers. They often also work together with companies and are paid for positive opinions about products or services. In addition to traditional advertising, these rating systems are crucial for a purchase decision and therefore very important for companies. Especially before people buy expensive products, they inform themselves more frequently and more precisely before making a purchase decision.

The importance of eWOM can also be proven by evaluations. 87 % of consumers get information about a product online, whether they want to buy it online or in a store. 28 % begin their search on platforms such as ebay or amazon [1]. Ismagilova et al. [4] state that 63 % of consumers are more likely to shop on a website that allows ratings. Already 50 reviews can lead to a conversion rate increase of 4.6 percent. Descriptions of the manufacturers are mostly only positive, which is why customer reviews are perceived as up to 12 times more trustworthy. On average, eWOM leads to an increase in sales of 18 %.

According to Moran and Muzellec [7], whether eWOM is credible depends on four different factors. On the one hand, the community, i. e. the relationship between sender and receiver. On the competence of the sender and the recipient. On the content of the rating. In addition to that the consensus, that means that reviews are more credible if several people have the same opinion.

Good reviews can be extremely helpful to a business or company. At the same time, bad reviews can destroy businesses. An example of this is a case from India. A poor rating in 2013 for the Lemp Brewpup & Kitchen restaurant in Guargaon caused the store's reputation to be completely destroyed. After a visit, eight friends reported on an online platform about a visit to the store, which they were extremely dissatisfied with and a dispute arose between them and the staff. The visit allegedly ended at the police station. The blog started a big wave and within a few hours Lemp Brewpup & Kitchen was rated over 600 times on the platform www.zomato.com. Most of the comments were negative. The shop soon had to close [6].

3. The measurability of eWOM

In contrast to traditional WOM, it seems that eWOM can be measured more easily. Offline WOM can usually not be tracked. At eWOM, everything is presented on the Internet for everyone to access and you don't have to be in the same place. Therefore, while people at WOM know the people better

and their ties to them are stronger, the Internet tends to confront the opinions of unknown people. In addition, people are more anonymous on the Internet. Therefore, they may be more honest, but may also become abusive more quickly. In addition, statements in the eWOM are very easy to manipulate. As a result, the usefulness of the information must always be questioned.

Even if eWOM can be boosted by targeted marketing, it is not foreseeable what people disseminate for reviews on the Internet. The influence of WOM on a company is usually not understandable, since WOM takes place orally in a private circle and is therefore difficult to understand. eWOM can be associated with many factors such as branding or an improved / deteriorated image, but in the end, of course, the units sold is the important result from this. To measure the extent to which eWOM messages are related to sales, they first have to be evaluated.

To begin with measuring eWOM messages can be classified through two factors. On the one hand volume, how many ratings there are and on the other hand valence, i. e. whether the ratings are positive or negative. Various studies have shown that online reviews have a very noticeable impact on the number of products sold, both positive and negative. This even goes so far that online office ratings of films can be used to predict box office sales [2]. Nevertheless, this type of measurement must also be viewed with caution. Many important factors are left out and ignored, for example the strength and statements of individual evaluations. For example, if you know or trust a person who makes a recommendation, you are more likely to follow their recommendation. Bughin et al. [3] include this aspect in their recommendation for measuring evaluations. They also complain that recommendations work differently in the different product categories. The effects of the various recommendations are to be determined more precisely by the WOM equity index. The measurement not only includes the content of the assessment, but also the identity of the person from whom the message comes and the environment in which the WOM is made. This approach seems very logical and can also be applied to eWOM. However, it must be noted that the identity of the person is mostly anonymous. Nevertheless, these people are often trusted. eWOM also takes place on the Internet on various platforms, which have an impact on credibility.

Ismagilova et al. [4, pp. 104–105] present three other methods to analyse eWOM: content analysis, sentiment analysis, and network text analysis. A combination of all three analyses is more effective. Every company has to find a way to analyse eWOM and to interpret the results correctly. As stated there are many possibilities.

4. Targeted marketing

The aforementioned case shows how important online evaluations can be for a company. That is why it is important to include eWOM in the marketing strategy. eWOM brings many advantages to the traditional WOM. eWOM

leaves traces and can be understood by people who have access to the Internet. In addition, large numbers of people are reached. WOM mostly takes place in private and small circles. eWOM can spread very quickly. The possibility to give users a platform on which they can rate products not only creates security for customers, but also gives direct insight for entrepreneurs what customers think about the product or service. Therefore, evaluations can also be used to learn from mistakes and improve your own performance, i. e. for product development and quality control. However, the competitors can also use comments to improve their own product. Positive opinions about a product or a company can help to acquire new customers. Products or services can often be rated on different platforms. In addition to the sales website, Google, Facebook or specialized websites also offer rating systems. People are often more willing to write negative comments than positive ones. This is to relieve frustration. Positive experiences are often taken for granted. This creates incentives for some sellers to get a rating. After making an online purchase, many sellers send an email asking them to receive a rating. Sometimes you even get discount codes for the next purchase for good ratings.

Especially the quantity of positive or negative comments is crucial for a purchase decision. The environment where eWOM communication is carried out definitely plays a role. For example, there are rating portals that appear less serious. On the e-commerce site amazon, on the other hand, product reviews are often trusted. Although eWOM seems easier to measure and manage than WOM, it is not necessarily easy. A lot of positive reviews can have a positive impact on a purchase decision, but this also depends on many other factors such as argument quality, eWOM credibility, eWOM usefulness, trust in message, valence, volume, age of eWOM receiver, attitude towards online shopping, attitude towards website, attitude towards product, emotional trust etc. [5].

There are many marketing techniques that can influence eWOM. These include viral marketing, buzz marketing, word of mouth marketing and referral marketing. The strategies often flow smoothly into one another, but all aim to reach WOM (offline or online). There are many ways that companies can promote eWOM. Great marketing campaigns often help people talk about a product or company and automatically recommend it. Collaborating with influencers online who share their opinions about products publicly can help increase brand awareness and sales. There is no direct recipe for success. Every company has to develop campaigns for themselves or their products, which can, for example, trigger a buzz and promote WOM and eWOM. This can be done with great effort, but e. g. even with a touching video. Marketing can be tailored to challenge consumer response, but it shouldn't be too provocative, otherwise it can trigger a wave of negative responses.

5. Recommendations for action in dealing with eWOM

Businesses can always thank for ratings and comments. It is important not to let too much time pass. If comments are not permitted, such as personal attacks or verbal excesses, the company should ensure that they are deleted promptly. There are various strategies to deal with negative comments. It is best to try to apologize and sometimes offer reparations. Under no circumstances should negative comments be deleted or users blocked, unless it is obviously challenged. Otherwise the credibility of the company is at risk. The reactions of the companies should be adapted to the different platforms where eWOM takes place. Consumers should be encouraged to write positive reviews. It is not only the quality of the product or service that plays a role, but also whether the consumer is encouraged to leave a review. Encouragement can be given by speaking directly, for example after visiting a restaurant, but also by sending an email, etc. However, companies can manipulate people so that they write positive comments. For example, there are companies that make products available to customers free of charge if they write a positive comment about them. These are misleading practices because these statements have been manipulated. Companies should try to get good reviews without unethical practices. The possibility of reaching a company easily and directly (for example via a customer hotline or social media channels) often saves companies from having a bad rating, because then the ratings are often used to directly relieve frustration. Every company should come up with a strategy to provoke reviews, but also to respond to them correctly.

6. Conclusion

The work showed to what extent eWOM can influence companies, to what extent one can react to it with marketing methods and how companies can deal with eWOM. In any case, companies should take eWOM seriously, record and analyze it. Once a product has received many positive reviews, it will automatically sell better in most cases. It is therefore particularly worth investing in marketing measures to improve eWOM. Marketing can specifically provoke eWOM, but it can hardly be controlled. Campaigns can be planned in such a way that they challenge positive reactions. If evaluations and reactions are successful, the company should pursue a reaction strategy that is adapted to the different platforms. If you upset the customers, negative reactions can also result. Therefore, eWOM only offers opportunities, but also risks for a company. Not only for customers, but also for the companies themselves, it can be difficult to see through manipulation of reviews. It is advisable for customers to check whether products or services have also been rated in other portals. It can also help if it is made visible whether the sales are verified. A rating system, in which it can be agreed whether a comment was helpful and helpful comments are displayed first, simplifies the process of rating evaluation for customers. All in all, it can be said that eWOM offers great opportunities for companies, which they should pay close attention to and which they can specifically promote through marketing.

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СИСТЕМНЫЙ ПОДХОД К УПРАВЛЕНИЮ РЕСУРСНЫМ ПОТЕНЦИАЛОМ ПРОИЗВОДСТВЕННОГО ПРЕДПРИЯТИЯ

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается анализ управления ресурсным потенциалом предприятия с помощью системного анализа на базе логико-лингвистического моделирования в целях увеличения финансовой устойчивости. Целью исследования является анализ и оценка ресурсного потенциала предприятия в