

# EXPLORING SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: A CASE STUDY OF ART ORGANISATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

Social media marketing has undergone massive growth in the number of users over the past few years. Social media marketing provides information, advertising, and marketing. Prior research has affirmed the significance of social media marketing in various industries, yet little research has investigated social media marketing techniques that affect performance. The purpose of this paper is to explore social media marketing techniques that would provide support for sales or the size of audiences in the arts. The paper describes art organisations including art museums and art galleries. The research surveyed 38 owners or marketing directors in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and Thailand. The result demonstrates that art organisations have already tended to apply Facebook and Twitter to their marketing strategies. This paper proposes an interactive AIDAM model of social media marketing for art. The paper also illustrates metrics for social media marketing effectiveness. Finally, the paper presents guidance for applying social media marketing in art organisations.

**Key Words:** Social media marketing, Art organisations, A case study

## INTRODUCTION

Indicating a new version of the World Wide Web after the dot-com bubble burst in 2001, Web 2.0 brought an unprecedented change in the online users' behaviour (Chan and Guillet, 2011). In Web 2.0, websites are collaborative, dynamic and interactive, and users are actively participating in enrichment of content (Adebanjo and Michaelides, 2010; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Accordingly, companies worldwide use a popular new tool called social media (Hogan, 2010). Social media marketing holds great promise for many nonprofit arts organisations (Arnold and Tapp, 2001). Art museums have relied heavily on benefactors for donations of works of art. Recently, these donations have declined (quickly) as a result of the changing tax laws (Blattberg and Broderick, 1991). Therefore, museums must reevaluate their marketing strategy. For support, museums and art galleries increasingly have to compete for funds and provide evidence of their own attempts to attract visitors and, hopefully, donations (Todd and Lawson, 2001). Clearly, goal-oriented museums focus on the number of visitors, while the objective of most art galleries is based on sales (Baker et al, 1998).

The purpose of this paper is to explore social media marketing techniques that would provide support for sales or audience size in the arts. To achieve this research goal, the relevant literature on the topic of social media marketing and art organisations will be described. Also, the study will present the consumer decision process model. Case studies of art organisations are also shown. The paper will be rounded off by a short discussion of the results; additionally, a number of managerial implications and future research directions will be discussed.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Social Media Marketing and Art Organisations

Social media reached a penetration of 70.2, 74.6, and 60.6% in the United States, Europe, and Asia-Pacific, respectively, in 2008 as a percentage of the total number of Internet users (Comscore, 2009). Social media marketing presents to consumer-generated media "a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by

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consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues” (Blackshaw and Nazzaro, 2004). Social media marketing is perceived by consumers as a more trustworthy source of information concerning products and services than corporate-sponsored communications transmitted via traditional media (Foux, 2006). Social media marketing techniques help to increase content quality (Chen and Wang, 2011) and speed of outreach and maintain loyal customers more effectively than traditional media. Bickart and Schindler (2001) indicate that social media provides an unparalleled platform for consumers to publicise their personal evaluations of purchased products and thus facilitate word-of-mouth communication. Obviously, social media encompasses a wide range of online sites, word-of-mouth forums including blogs, company-sponsored discussion boards and chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer e-mail, consumer product or service ratings websites and forums, Internet discussion boards and forums, moblogs (sites containing digital audio, images, movies, or photographs), and social networking websites (Mangold and Fauld, 2009).

Social media has become a buzzword in arts organisations. Social media marketing connects users with similar interests who make fully customisable profiles displaying their identity and then share these with friends or fans. Social media marketing is particularly helpful for performing arts organisations. The most used social network, Facebook, also integrates other applications. This helps to make marketing in the arts through social media cost-effective (Hausmann and Poellmann, 2013). To support sales or audience growth in the arts, social media platforms have challenged basic assumptions concerning the purchasing process. Hudson and Thal (2013) studied the impact of social media on consumer decision-making processes in the tourism industry. Social media is a platform for consumers to publicise their personal evaluations of purchased products (Chen, et.al, 2011). Obviously, social media marketing has become a main factor in influencing various aspects of the consumer decision process.

### **Consumer Decision-Making Process**

Lately, an increasing number of marketing scholars have examined the implications of online consumer product reviews (Chen, Wang, and Xie 2011; Chen and Xie 2008) and the usefulness of online consumer product reviews for consumer decision-making (Sen and Lerman 2007; Smith, Menom and Sivakumar 2005). Social media marketing has become a main factor influencing various aspects of the consumer decision process, including awareness, information acquisition, attitudes, purchase behaviour, and post-purchase communication and evaluation. The consumer decision-making model is composed of four stages: (1) consider; (2) evaluate; (3) buy; and (4) enjoy, advocate and bond. Social media makes the “evaluate” and “advocate” stages increasingly relevant (Court, et.al, 2009). This study will examine five steps in the consumer decision-making process model: 1) need recognition; 2) information search; 3) alternative evaluation; 4) purchase; 5) post-purchase evaluation (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012).

The process starts with the stimulation of a need where the consumer is faced with an imbalance between the actual and desired states of need. After that, the consumer searches for information about the various alternatives available to satisfy the need. The consumer’s information search will ultimately yield a set of preferred alternatives. The consumer evaluates and compares alternatives. Purchases are made based on the chosen alternative. Post-purchase evaluation is carried out with a view to aiding future decision-making. Good experience with a brand will provide information that may lead the customer to that brand when a similar product is to be purchased. Dissatisfaction may result in post-purchase dissonance. In other words, the message should gain Attention, hold Interest, arouse Desire, and elicit Action, a model known as AIDA (Lin and Huang, 2006). In practice, few messages take the consumer all the way from awareness through to purchase. Nevertheless, the AIDA framework proposes desirable qualities for any communication (Kotler, 2010).

Based on the consumer purchase decision-making process, there are five factors that may affect consumer intentions to shop online or offline: channel-risk perceptions, price-search intentions, search effort, evaluation effort, and delivery time (Gupta and et al, 2004). Peterson and Balasubramanian (1997) compared the Internet to conventional retail and catalogue distribution channels on dimensions of product features and kinds of consumer decision-making processes. Ranganwamy (1997) shows findings on how consumer choice in electronic settings differs from traditional in-store choices. Beatty and Smith (1987) showed that search effort is related positively to purchase involvement, time availability and attitudes towards shopping. Obviously, social media techniques such as discussion boards influence a customer's adoption and use of products and services (Subramani and Rajagopalan, 2003).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study selects the case study approach. The research surveys 38 owners/marketing directors of art organisations among three countries: the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and Thailand. The sample was representative of members of art organisations among three regions. The author surveyed 10 art directors of art museums that are members of the Art Marketing Association in the United Kingdom: Tate, Mima, Barbican, etc. The author surveyed 18 owners of art galleries who are members of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association. Further, the author surveyed 10 owners of art galleries in Thailand, such as Number 1 Gallery, Koi Art Gallery, Akko Gallery, etc. The questionnaire is based on the AIDA model and social media marketing techniques. Careful analysis of holistic messages confirms the effect of the social media marketing techniques on the AIDA model.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This study proposes social media marketing techniques for art organisations that would support sales and a higher number of visitors. The research presented here suggests that art organisations should concentrate on implementing social media marketing techniques. The research demonstrates that art organisations, both museums and art galleries, have already tended to use Facebook and Twitter. However, other social media techniques are also popular in different countries. For example, YouTube is ranked the number three most popular social media marketing technique among art organisations in the United Kingdom. Ranking number four and five in popularity of social media marketing techniques used by art organisations in the United Kingdom are Pinterest and blogs respectively.

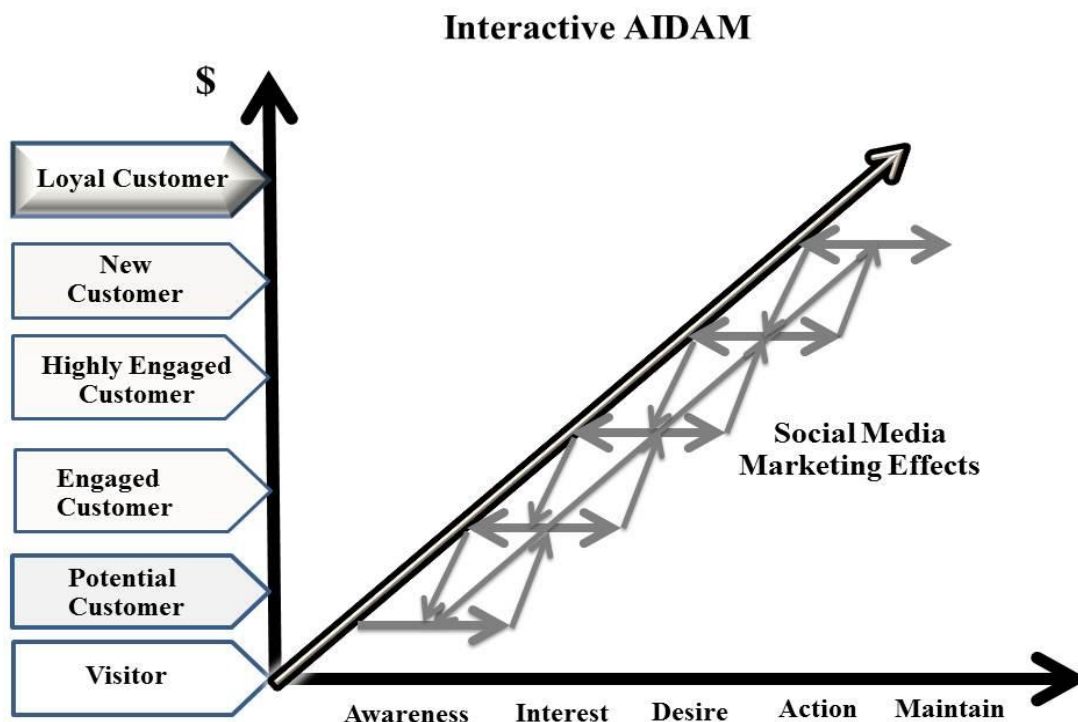
As Figure 1 identifies, the model of social media marketing for art is called “Interactive AIDAM”, which is social media marketing effects in consumer decision-making process. The goal of this model is to identify maximum sales or audience numbers. Horizontal axis and vertical axis present consumer decision-making process and the level of customer engagement of each customer. Horizontal axis stands for awareness, interest, desire, action, and maintain respectively. Vertical axis illustrates the levels of customer engagement have been shown to be: 1) visitor; 2) potential customer; 3) engaged customer; 4) highly engaged customer; 5) new customer; and 6) loyal customer.

Awareness step relates to visitor or potential customer. The organization creates awareness for customer to perceive about artwork products such as Facebook fanpage or blog. Interest step presents to higher level of customer engagement than visitor that called engaged customer. The organization needs to urge target audience from visitor or potential customer become engaged customer. Desire step indicates highly engaged customer. This step should explain about source and detail of artwork in order to urge emotion of engaged customer to become highly engaged customer. Action step relates to new customer. This step shows that customer purchases artwork from the art gallery or customer becomes a membership of museum. Maintain step identifies to creating loyal customers. The loyal customer revisits or repurchases social media of art organisations, and also shares the artwork of organisations to

friends. Marketing directors of art organisations should develop visitors to become new customer and then loyal customer. Then, art organisations can expect to receive continuing revenue from such customers.

Once social media marketing techniques apply the “Interactive AIDAM” model, each step in the customer decision-making process can be back and forth. Also, the starting step of customer decision-making process does not require starting at awareness step. The first step of the process can be interest or desire or maintain step. The research shows three empirical cases of this model. Case A: The customer reads good reviews of a close friend’s experience with an online purchase of the artwork, so the starting step of AIDAM could be the desire step. The awareness and interest steps are skipped. On the other hand, if a customer reads negative reviews of a close friend’s experience in an online purchase of the artwork, the starting step of AIDAM is awareness of negative perceptions. As the result, a customer would not interest to buy this artwork. As Case B: a customer follows and shares Facebook fanpage art gallery to his/her friends, the customer’s friends see the fine artwork on their own news feed. They are quite interested in artwork then they click “like” to that facebook fanpage art gallery. As a result, they continually receive information about the artwork and art gallery event or activities. Finally, they buy the artwork from this art gallery. Thus, the starting step of AIDAM in this situation is interest step, then it is desire and action step respectively. The awareness step is skipped. As Case C: The starting point of consumer decision-making process is desire stage. A customer intends to buy this artwork since a customer like the art piece. Nevertheless, a customer gets a positive comment about other artworks of previous customer in new feeds. Accordingly, a customer believes it and wants to buy this new artwork. As can be seen, from desire step in one artwork is changed to be desire step in another artwork as quickly.

**Figure 1: Interactive AIDAM**



The results of this study indicate that most art organisations are applying social media marketing as a promotional mixing of tools. A few art organisations apply social media marketing with e-commerce. The study illustrates that the Interactive AIDAM model needs to be applied with efficient social media marketing tools. As the result, it will lead to higher sales

and/or increasing number of visitors. In support, the effectiveness metrics of social media marketing are noteworthy. Art organisations can apply any social media marketing techniques and social media measurement in each step of the consumer decision-making process.

The first step in the consumer decision process is Awareness. Art organisations may use Facebook to promote its brand to visitor or potential customer. Facebook metrics employ the number of visits and number of shares.

Secondly, Facebook and Twitter may apply to the Interest step. Facebook metrics employ the number of “likes” of friends’ feeds. Twitter metrics indicate the number of accounts followed and followers.

Thirdly, the Desire step may identify items using Facebook and blogs. Facebook metrics in this step present the number of visitors with comments that can be both positive and negative. Blogs indicate the number of user-generated items (i.e. replies). Consumers feel more engaged with products and organisations when they are able to submit feedback (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). For instance, Toyota facilitates its customers’ provision feedback on a broad range of issues via its “Open Road Blog” (Toyota, 2008).

The fourth step, Action, uses Facebook and websites. The Facebook metric is based on the number of registrations of an event. The website metric identifies the number of purchases.

Maintain is the last step in the consumer decision process. Art organisations may apply Facebook and YouTube. The Facebook metric indicates number of reposts or shares as well as the number of responses to friend referral invites. And the YouTube metric specifies the number of reposts or shares.

In summary, art organisations apply social media techniques since it diminishes time spent in communication with the customers versus traditional media. Visitor can quickly become new customer and loyal customer. On the other hand, loyal customer can rapidly become potential customer. Besides, social media techniques are measurable.

## CONCLUSIONS

Art organisations are likely to have differential effects on sales or audience size in the arts, depending on the social media marketing technique that they employ for their target audience. The paper proposes the interactive AIDAM model – Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action, and Maintain which is dynamic. The model is beneficial for top management, or the marketing director of an art organisations in adapting social media marketing tools to customer decision-making process. The model supports sales and/or audience size; it proposes faster time in communicating with the target audience. In addition, the interactive AIDAM model accelerates the customer decision-making process versus applying traditional media techniques. The visitor rapidly becomes new customer and loyal customer.

For managerial implementation, the art organisations should realize about notability of artist and message or content that communicate to customer especially creating step of desire, action and maintain. Likewise, the art organisations should propose the story and value of artwork, including regular updates for the awareness step in AIDAM. The study demonstrates that art galleries/museums also can maintain their audience by using social media marketing techniques such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to communicate their artworks and activities such as exhibitions and artwork promotion. Besides, art organisations should send the right art pieces to the right customer in order to maintain customer interest. This study recommends future research to explore a quantitative survey of how each social media marketing tool affects the consumer decision-making process model. Also, future research could examine the effect of different cultural regions on the consumer decision-making process via online purchases.

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