

The Proposed of Social Media Strategy Framework for Private Businesses

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This research study investigates the current situation of Social Media (SM) usage by private sector businesses. This paper also proposes a SM strategy framework aimed at helping on the alignment of the business strategy. This study is an empirical research with concurrent mixed method approach to collect data from data from business owners, senior IT and marketing managers, using 418 businesses from surveys, incorporating semi-structured interviews from 21 different businesses. The findings reveal that the use of SM is relatively superficial and ad hoc in the absence of a formal integrated marketing strategy and policy framework. Business size, sector, type, age of business and leadership knowledge and skills of Marketing and IT are critical factor for SM in strategy formulation. Additionally, the integration of both findings has further extended into the development of proposed practical framework called a 'SM strategy house' to illustrate how SM should be carried out from a business's strategic perspective. The limitations of the study are its subjective and self-reported nature of the data. Thus, the study focuses on a single developing country may limit the generalizability of the findings to other countries.

Key words: *Social media; SMEs; Social media strategy, Social media framework; Private business*

Introduction

The emergence of SM which has connected and empowered customers, challenges the fundametal of the way people and businesses interact via the Internet (Loanăs, 2013; Maecker et al., 2016). Businesses are now beginning to incorporate and integrate the phenomenon of SM into their existing business model approaches. This changes such as fast transfer of advertising and promotion messages to the existing customers and prospects, contributes to the

speed of spread and increases impact with a lower cost than the traditional channels of marketing (Kumar et al., 2016). That this has implications for business is clear to the managements of businesses, as business owners and executives observe the rapid adoption and use of SM platforms by their customers (Hajli, 2014a; Newby et al., 2014; O'Reilly, 2007). Recent developments and changes in such technologies including the development and growth of online communities have brought about a situation that has potential for new styles of relationship between businesses and their customers (Hajli, 2014b). This coupled with a widespread adoption of the SM and smart phone applications aligned with customer-centric management strategy, results in a rapidly growing need for businesses to engage socially with their customers leading to the development of a strategic SM approaches (Agnihotri, 2020; Busca & Bertrandias, 2020; Elena, 2016; Hollebeek & Macky, 2019; Rangaswamy et al., 2020).

In Thailand, small, medium, and large businesses are generally defined based on the number of employees and fixed capital excluding land and properties as introduced by the Ministry of Industry of Thailand, 2002. The business size was classified by four sectors including Manufacturing, Wholesale, Retail and Service. As this study focuses on wholesale, retail, and service sector. Thus, a small enterprise is defined as a business with fewer 30 employees with fixed capital not more than THB 30 million (1 million USD). A medium enterprise is defined as a business with employees between 31 to 100 persons with fixed capital not more than THB 100 million (3 million USD (OECD, 2020). A large enterprise is defined as a business with employees more than 100 persons with fixed capital more than THB 100 million (more than 3 million USD) Small and medium businesses in Thailand account for 99.7 per cent per cent of all Thailand businesses. There were approximately 3.01 million small and medium businesses in Thailand, which constituted 99.7 per cent of all enterprises. They altogether contributed to 42.2 per cent of the country's GDP and accounted for 78.5per cent of total private sector employment (OECD, 2020).

This study selected focus on Lower Northern of Central Business District (LNCBD) of Thailand with two reasons. First, Thai users being the highest levels of the internet access in 2020 (75 per cent of population) based on Digital 2020 Global Overview (Kemp, 2020) and Thai consumers representing amongst the world's heaviest users of SM; especially, there were 52.00 million SM users which increased by 2.3 million (+4.7per cent) between April 2019 and January 2020 representing for positioning the country in the ninth place of the world (Kemp, 2020). In the same vein, as recently reported by the Digital 2020 Global Overview, the uptake of SM by Thais businesses has continually increased over the years with 48 per cent of SMEs and 79 per cent of large businesses being present on SM. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic is obviously speeding up the pace of change, is perhaps most evident in the retail and service sector. Business owners and customers who did not use SM for ordering food, products and services have now learned to do so. Businesses that are close to customers, in particular, have seen radical changes. Consequently, behaviour of customers has changed because they are

unable to leave their homes, so businesses without a SM channel are unable to sell their products. Second, the growth of tourism social enterprises helps local businesses hit by coronavirus outbreak. Many local businesses started selling products and services from villages through SM. In response to high demand for the village products, some businesses set up a separate business to handle the e-commerce platform.

This paper explores the current stage of SM usage in private sector by addressing the following research questions:

- What is the current stage of social media usage by local private businesses?
- What are the key factors and requirements of social media strategy formulation?

The aim of this study is to explore the current stage of SM usage and to define the strategic approach adopted by such businesses. This study research also propose a descriptive framework—**A- strategic SM framework house**— that developed from (Malthouse et al., 2013) framework in helping both academics and practitioners to better understand a strategic approach to SM engagement and to motivate further research in this area.

Literature review

SM use based on business context

Previous research indicated that business size, industry sector, type of market served, and the perception of business context and environments have influence on the adoption of SM by private businesses (Agnihotri, 2020; Busca & Bertrandias, 2020; Hassan et al., 2015; Iankova et al., 2019; Rangaswamy et al., 2020). The size of a business has often been considered as one of the most important determinants of any innovation. In this study, however, it considers that as SM usage is not in the early stages, the adoption of such initiative is determined by the specific contextual conditions of individual business, involving other factors such as the perception of Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) strategies, objectives and benefits of such adoption and internal challenges faced by businesses in terms of the availability of resources and capabilities that determine the feasibility and cost—effectiveness of such adoption. Although, SM may not be seen as a primary business strategy, it considers as an important step towards modes of business engagement and to support other strategies such as marketing (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). This may raise the question whether business size sector, type, period of operated, owner visions and knowledge (in terms of sophisticated existing marketing/IT strategies) are crucial factors influencing the decision-making to adopt SM as a primary business strategy or not (Rangaswamy et al., 2020; Venkatesan, 2017).

Strategic approach in SM marketing

SM can serve as advertising, communication, collaboration tools for businesses (Agnihotri, 2020; Barry & Girona, 2019; Venkatesan, 2017). Once SM strategy has established, the extent of SM activity and attribute of its planning is always based on marketing activities, but SM offer a unique marketing communication and collaboration methods (Eagleman, 2013). Prior, the objectives of SM activities aligned with marketing strategy, emphasises on customer acquisition based on a various SM activities business provided. However, research suggests that such SM activity could not only considered as tactical plan marketing automation, but a strategic plan (Osatuyi, 2013). It enables the production of information and being collaborate among users to create interactive medium where group of existing/potential customers, and users/groups member interacting, co-creating, sharing, discussing, and modifying of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Thus, it is necessary to create official SM strategy, to recognise the place of content within the organisation which enhances brand post popularity (Voorveld, 2019), attract potential customers (Li et al., 2021), build brand awareness, increase sales and build loyalty (Stojanovic et al., 2018).

By manipulating the user generated content has enable businesses to forecast the future purchasing behaviour of their customers more accurately (Appel et al., 2020). SM strategy that emphasises on content engagement adopts a long-term view of what's needed, for whom, why and how it will be evaluate (Voorveld et al., 2018). It is such a valuable resource. Such initiatives strategies focus on communication, advertising, and collaboration-based activities to accumulate information about customer's needs and preferences before developing relationship with them. Businesses that have a strong brand and strategic marketing plans and technology-supported infrastructures are more likely best suited for such type of initiative (Alford & Page, 2015).

Customer engagement across SM platforms

The level of customer engagement depends on the level of use of SM aspects together with variety of business's sophisticated strategies designed to meet the complex needs of customers and prospects (Barger et al., 2016; Dessart et al., 2015; Venkatesan, 2017). The intensity of SM use by businesses depends on how often an individual customer connects to SM, and leverage mobile and web-based technologies to create a meaningful relationship each other. It is therefore important for a business to understand that SM is not a technology upgrade; rather, it is a fundamental change in the quality of business interactions with its customers, and designed to make these communications more effective and more profitable for the business (Yawised et al., 2017a). Research suggests that business initially begins SM in their customer acquisition efforts begin by uploading photos, news and advertising spots on their currently SM use (Juntunen et al., 2020). Then running promotion on a website and Facebook Fan page or providing information and reviewing about their products/services on YouTube stream live or even Blog. Existing customers and prospects with lower levels of engagement may simply

consume such information and product reviews, or they might interact with it by liking it, commenting it or sharing it (e.g., on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TiTok or Twitter) (Malthouse, 2013). The highly engaged customers via SM must be responders, purchasers and become evangelists. Thus, difference of business had a different level of SM strategy for customer engagement and the higher level of customer engagement strategies must have a specific and more strategic engagement approaches which giving them experience is about so much more than just the sales journey. At this stage, the integration of SM modules into their initiative Customer Relationship Management program known as “Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM)” has been conducted that helps in ensuring service provisions for higher retention and engagement of the customers (Yawised et al., 2017a). Consequently, customer engagement increases customer loyalty program and higher customer engagement rates also more revenues which leads to higher ROI in business.

The implication of SM resources

In small and medium business, SM marketing adoption process is directly affected by top management where all decisions from daily functions to future investments are made by them (Hosseinianzadeh, 2015). Each individual resources on its own is not sufficient for an outcome to occur, with the need for combinations of different existing business resources where the utilization of multi-resources and capabilities can lead to the same outcome (Barney, 1991). Thus, executive’s role can lead to a higher level of commitment and participation among the member and workers, and consequently a stronger involvement in technology adoption (Wilson et al., 2008). Leaders who are well informed about emerging technologies can induce other employees to consider their use. Top-level executives who are positively disposed towards SM deployment encourage and support the innovations leading to the formulation of SM strategies (Karaduman, 2013). Small businesses that adopt IT more likely to have CEOs who possess positive attitude, innovative and knowledgeable towards adoption of technology (Karaduman, 2013). Compared to smaller firms, large businesses with more resources and capabilities tend to leverage SM for business’s purposes more frequently and proactively. Larger businesses with more sophisticated marketing techniques, resources, capabilities (e.g. human capital)—were also more likely to have the official SM strategy and CRM system developed by an outsourcing vendor or by their own IT/marketing department. However, using external consultants to help in the planning and execution of SM was commonly used not only in large businesses perhaps due to availability of financial resources but also in smaller businesses perhaps due to a scarcity of knowledge, expertise and time (Mack et al., 2017; Yang & A. Kankanhalli, 2014).

Method

Research design

In this paper, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used for data collection and analysis. The study design consists of two components. The first component utilises a quantitative survey to gain a broad understanding of the current stage of SM usage by local business. The second component involves the use of semi-structured interviews to gain a deep understanding of the key factors and requirements of strategy formulation underlying SM adoption (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Data collection

This study uses a quantitative approach based on a survey questionnaire. The survey was used to sample 4,000 local businesses across all sectors, randomly selected from the population of private businesses from the north province of Bangkok, Thailand. Meanwhile, twenty-one businesses that indicated, in the survey questionnaire and convenience sample listed by researcher, their willingness to participate in an interview were contacted by email to arrange a convenient time for the interview. These businesses, all of which currently use SM, were selected from the list of 30 businesses. For each interview, a single participant per business was identified. All selected interview participants were only one of either Owners, IT or marketing managers at each business.

Data analysis

The survey received 437 responses, from out of 4,000 targeted businesses (after eliminating responses with missing values), representing a 10.9 per cent response rate. Quantitative data from surveys carried out using descriptive statistics. Also, qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews were used thematic analysis by applying the principles of grounded theory to support thematic coding in order to generate a theme. Ideally, the data were transcribed followed by the creation of categories process. By doing this, grouping data on the basis of similarity in meaning with summary codes, was conducted (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Each group is provided abstract name after grouping summary codes. The grouping of codes into categories was operated by examining constant comparative method to identifying new phenomenon in the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Once categories were created, it acted as an umbrella term under to cover a number of individual summary codes, reflecting a general idea of classifying the various components of the data under the key headings. The categories from the open codes stage were collated and accrued to form sub themes of similar phenomena leading to a “main theme” (Boyatzis, 1998) that entails the various factors influencing the SM business usage along with such activities and existing strategic use of SM.

Findings

Of 437 respondents, 95.6 per cent reported the usage of SM by their business. Thus, the analysis of quantitative data is restricted to the 418 businesses (small=384, medium=28, large=6 businesses—hereinafter referred to as ‘SM business usage’) that reported adoption of SM.

Table 1: Sample characteristics (418 respondents from both Survey and Interviews)

Characteristics of respondents from survey			Characteristics of respondents from interview		
Respondent's current position	N	%	Respondent's current position	N	%
Owner	303	72.5	Owner	10	47.6
General Manager	84	20.1	General Manager	6	28.5
Marketing Manager	25	6.0	Marketing Manager	3	14.4
IT Manager	6	1.4	IT Manager	2	9.5
All respondents	418	100.0	All respondents	21	100.0
Size of business (Thailand's definition)			Size of business (Thailand's definition)		
	N	%		N	%
Small (1-30)	384	91.9	Small (1-30)	13	62.0
Medium (31-100)	28	6.7	Medium (31-100)	6	28.5
Large (100 or more)	6	1.4	Large (100 or more)	2	9.5
All respondents	418	100.0	All respondents	21	100.0
Market type			Market type		
	N	%		N	%
Business to Customer	367	87.8	Business to Customer	15	71.4
Business to Business	44	10.5	Business to Business	5	23.8
Business to Government	7	1.7	Business to Government	1	4.8
All respondents	418	100.0	All respondents	21	100.0
Business sector			Business sector		
	N	%		N	%
Service	214	51.2	Service	11	52.4
Agriculture	118	28.2	Agriculture	2	9.5
Industry	43	10.3	Industry	2	9.5
Consumption	19	4.5	Consumption	4	19.0
Financial	19	4.5	Financial	1	4.8
Technology	5	1.3	Technology	1	4.8
All respondents	418	100.0	All respondents	21	100.0
Age of respondent			Age of respondent		
	N	%		N	%
Between 18-20 years	10	2.4	Between 18-20 years	0	0.0
20-29 years	100	23.9	20-29 years	3	14.4
30-39 years	187	44.7	30-39 years	10	47.6
40-49 years	97	23.2	40-49 years	7	33.3
50-59 years	22	5.3	50-59 years	1	4.8
50 or more	2	0.5	60 or more	0	0.0
All respondents	418	100.0	All respondents	21	100.0
Age of business			Age of business		
	N	%		N	%
Less than 1 year	45	10.8	Less than 1 year	4	19.0
1 to less than 3 years	71	17.0	1 to less than 3 years	8	38.1
3 to less than 5 years	109	26.1	3 to less than 5 years	1	4.8
5 to less than 10 years	95	22.7	5 to less than 10 years	1	4.8
10 years or more	98	23.4	10 years or more	7	33.3
All respondents	418	100.0	All respondents	21	100.0

Also, of 21 respondents from 21 businesses, the analysis of qualitative data is restricted to the 21 businesses that reported usage of such SM initiatives (e.g., small=13, medium=6, large=2 businesses). **Table 1** presents the characteristics of the research sample, a summary of the survey findings for SCRM adopters.

- **Objectives for SM**– The findings shown at **Table 2**, revealed the most important objectives for SM usage by local businesses found from both the survey and the interviews including disseminating business information (94.5 per cent), increasing brand awareness regarding

products and services (59.5 per cent), linking group of customers to marketing activities (55.7 per cent) and enhancing customer engagement and interaction with the businesses (44.5 per cent). The findings from the interviews add additional insights into business objectives for SM usage, by suggesting that such an activity linked with the compelling of brands to ensure that more focus is placed on customers and producing actuator behaviour of content marketing challenge to generate traffic on their SM sites.

Table 2: Objectives of SM usage collected from respondents' perspectives

Objective of SM usage from survey	N	%	Theme of SM usage from Interview	N	%
Information dissemination	395	94.50	Brand awareness (Challenge and building generating content marketing)	18	85.70
Increasing brand awareness	249	59.57	Information dissemination (to target audiences and prospects)	16	76.20
For marketing activities (sales)	233	55.74	Customer engagement	14	66.66
Enhancing customer engagement	186	44.50	Online communities	14	66.66
Branding image	173	41.39	Marketing activities (e.g. sales)	13	61.90
Customer relationship management	165	39.47	Drive more traffic to business Web	10	47.61
Categorising level of customers	147	35.17	Technology opportunities	8	38.09
Online communities	131	31.34			

- SM strategy** – Most of the business using SM (83.9 per cent) indicated the presence of unofficially SM strategy in place where small and medium-sized businesses were still a learning process with limited knowledge. Adapting to a new way of learning themselves regarding SM trends and best practices was currently used by small, medium sized businesses (52.6per cent). Meanwhile, long-established businesses were more likely to adopt an official SM strategy and related guidelines compared to new business ($df=4$, $\chi^2=4.54^{***}$). Such strategy defines the goals of SM usage including SM measurement metrics measurement such as buzz analysis, SM intelligence, brand tracking, and monitoring over SM platforms. Further findings from interview indicated that SM used by small and medium businesses have been relatively ad hoc, superficial (even primitive), and usually not supported by a formal integrated strategy and policy framework, top management admitted that no time whatsoever had been devoted to strategy development. However, large business did place a high priority on the learning and development of employees in implementing SM. Strategic difference of SM tools has been used for different purposes and customer targets. Such strategies have been supported by top management.
- Perception of SM used**– The findings from both the survey and interviews reveal that perception of SM used based on characteristics of a business including business size (SM used focusing on target group) ($df=2$, $\chi^2=3.95^*$), business sector (creating SM as business strategy) ($df=5$, $\chi^2=5.83^{**}$) and age of business ($df=4$, $\chi^2=8.83^{***}$), and the type of market served (executive oriented support) ($df=2$, $\chi^2=3.76^*$)— are critical factors. Plus,

several SM adopters from the interviews indicated technological knowledge of top management have influence on the decision of SM adoption (See **Table 3**).

- **Creation of SM strategy** – the survey findings at **Table 3** reveal that business size ($df=2$, $\chi^2 = 6.03^*$) and business sector ($df=5$, $\chi^2 = 9.41^{***}$) and business ($df=4$, $\chi^2 = 6.94^{***}$), drive the creation of each level of customers strategy. Interestingly, business sector considers that creation of SM strategy is crucial in all aspects. This imply that strategies for customer engagement via SM used could be either united or even classified based on marketing activities by their business. As a result, the intensity of SM use and business goals might affect to decision making of the creation of multi-level customer engagement strategy. Each of business sector needs to use SM differently according to the requirements of their customers and their business context. The findings from interviews further supported that achieving this level of engagement with customers requires a content strategy that is built upon a foundation of obsessing over them and imparting the greatest value to them. This value is not about prices/discounts; it is not offering them the best deals, but rather the best experience, whether that is through creating a superb end-to-end customer journey, helpful and insightful streaming live content, strong customer support or other means.
- **SM practice and activity** – Both survey and interview findings reveal that Facebook (FB), Line, Instagram (IG) and YouTube are the most common used as SM platform to create SM marketing activities. For SM sites, Facebook dominates the SM space (89.4per cent), followed by Line (80.3per cent), FB messenger (69.1per cent), Instagram and YouTube (each about 40per cent). A majority (70 per cent) of local businesses reported the use of 1 to 3 platforms of SM already exists in place. The most common activities reported were proactively looking for new ways of using SM to engage with customers; use SM as a complementary channel to traditional media for advertising; creation of valuable contents regarding products and services and building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement. Further findings from interviews indicates that small and medium businesses use different types of SM sites for different purposes by revamping business's website and connect it to their SM platforms.
- **Factors support of SM strategy** — findings from both survey and interview reveal the factors support of SM strategy where top management support and resources remains the key factors driving the decision-making of strategy formulation. Interestingly, no significant effect of business size, sector, market type was observed, but age of business – established for at least one year, has significantly effect on the creation and SM strategy usage as shown at **Table 4**.

Table 3: SM that related to level of SM usage and SM strategy as ‘very high’ or ‘high’ in important by business characteristic

	<i>Percentage (%) perception of Social media used</i>						<i>Percentage (%) creation of SM strategy</i>				
	N	SM must be created as business strategy	SM must be only marketing tools	SM should focus on specific target audience	Executives support SM usage in business	Leader with IT or marketing knowledge	SM strategy must be created for each level of customers	SM should not be a strategy, but a policy and procedure	Creating SM strategy must have IT and marketing knowledge	Data derived from SM strategy have been analysed in a systematic manner	SM strategy must be set SM authority access and usage
Business size											
Small (1-30)	384	84.64	90.10	93.23	92.19	92.19	88.28	88.02	89.84	77.76	86.46
Medium (31-100)	28	92.86	92.86	92.86	96.43	89.29	92.71	82.14	100.00	78.57	82.14
Large (100 or more)	6	83.33	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	50.00	100.00	80.40	85.71
Chi-square (df = 2)		0.764	1.244	3.956*	2.730	3.177*	6.038*	0.634	4.264*	2.841	0.130
Business Sector											
Service	214	91.59	89.72	94.39	92.52	91.12	94.86	88.32	92.99	87.38	90.65
Agriculture	118	75.42	86.44	90.68	89.83	90.68	79.66	77.97	83.05	81.36	79.66
Industry	43	79.07	93.02	93.02	97.67	95.35	90.70	95.35	95.35	93.02	93.02
Consumption	19	92.16	94.8	95.01	94.74	94.74	94.74	100.00	94.74	100.00	84.21
Financial	19	68.42	89.47	89.47	94.74	100.00	73.68	94.74	100.00	94.74	68.42
Technology	5	85.64	93.18	100.00	100.00	98.4	93.41	97.85	94.08	90.12	80.00
Chi-square (df = 6)		5.833***	2.732*	1.852	1.874	2.341*	9.417***	4.428***	3.306**	3.550**	3.362**
Market type											
B2C	367	85.01	90.46	93.19	92.64	91.83	88.56	87.74	90.19	87.47	86.10
B2B	44	86.36	81.82	95.45	90.91	95.45	85.45	84.09	93.18	86.36	88.64
B2G	7	85.71	100.00	85.71	100.00	85.71	85.71	81.43	100.00	85.71	85.71
Chi-square (df = 2)		0.052	3.203*	0.218	3.769*	0.034	1.024	1.319	0.769	0.619	0.303
Age of business											
Less than 1 year	45	86.67	93.33	86.67	84.44	86.67	82.22	73.33	77.78	82.22	80.00
1 to 3 years	71	74.65	81.69	88.73	90.14	91.55	85.92	80.28	91.55	83.10	81.69
3 to 5 years	109	74.31	90.83	94.50	95.41	92.66	84.40	93.58	93.58	88.99	85.32
5 to 10 years	95	92.63	90.53	94.74	93.68	92.63	95.79	92.63	87.37	86.32	87.37
10 years or more	98	96.94	91.84	96.94	93.88	93.88	93.88	85.71	95.92	91.84	92.86
Chi-square (df = 4)		8.839***	2.047	2.091	3.040*	0.448	6.948***	4.540***	4.294**	1.309	0.480

(*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001)

- **Challenges to SM usage** – The primary challenge of social media usage and adoption

by both survey and interview respondent's reported, was to (i) the business context does not need SM as solely strategy because it could be used align with other business strategy (63.16 per cent), (ii) lack of qualified personnel or insufficient skills implementing SM due to technological changes (57.7 per cent), (iii) the benefits of SM usage as a strategy are often not immediately apparent in the short term (54.1 per cent), (iv) lack of information on how to effectively implement SM usage particularly such as a business case (46.8 per cent), and (v) how to convert Likes, Shared, Tweets and Commination to sales (33.7 per cent). From further interviews, the length of time required to manage and monitor SM sites was reported as barrier by a large majority of SM usage also (6 respondents), and employee misuse of SM sites (wasting of time), were more often reported (5 respondents).

Table 4: SM that related to factor support of SM strategy usage as 'very high' or 'high' in important by business characteristic

	N	Top management support for adopting and implementing	As biz. resource restriction, SM strategy is formulated	SM strategy helps to cluster target customers	SM strategy helps to engage customers for long run	Real-time interaction and communication	Technology as a force for change	SM strategy for creating online community
Age of business								
Less than 1 year	45	95.56	84.44	93.33	95.56	91.11	93.33	80.00
1 to 3 years	71	95.77	91.55	95.77	94.37	95.77	92.96	78.87
3 to 5 years	109	93.58	91.74	93.58	89.91	91.74	97.25	85.32
5 to 10 years	95	95.79	89.47	89.47	87.37	86.32	87.37	83.16
10 years or more	98	98.73	93.88	93.88	89.80	91.84	90.82	91.84
<i>Chi-square (df = 4)</i>		2.548*	3.900**	11.731***	9.506***	8.320***	8.659***	6.538**

Description of the framework

Based on the combined findings, a strategic SM framework house is proposed as shown in **Figure 1**. Moving left to right, the framework depicts how businesses can decide to evolve and adopt more collaborative customer engagement modes for SM usage. The SM frame places emphasis on strategies for businesses with limited resources or those that generally require specific resources and transitioning to strategic and large-scale development arrangements with expanded budgets and multiple corporate resources.

SM strategy

The way in which a business develops its SM strategy – including the methods of profiling, segmenting and targeting customers, as well as the levels and types of strategy chosen – are

likely to be shaped by the specific context in which the business operates (Andersson & Wikström, 2017). SM may be created as a business strategy or strategic intent, while for the others SM could be formed as part of the corporate strategy. In formulating SM strategy, businesses in different size classes tend to follow different paths based on different sets of resource endowments and organisational characteristics used to generate their managerial and operational capabilities (Martin et al., 2020). Specifically, benefits from SM implementation are contingent upon the factors internal to a business, including those that relate to the characteristics of business, the support and technological knowledge of top management and multi-organizational collaborations (Martin et al., 2020). Barriers and challenges facing businesses in the adoption of SM can also be mitigated by all these internal factors of the business.

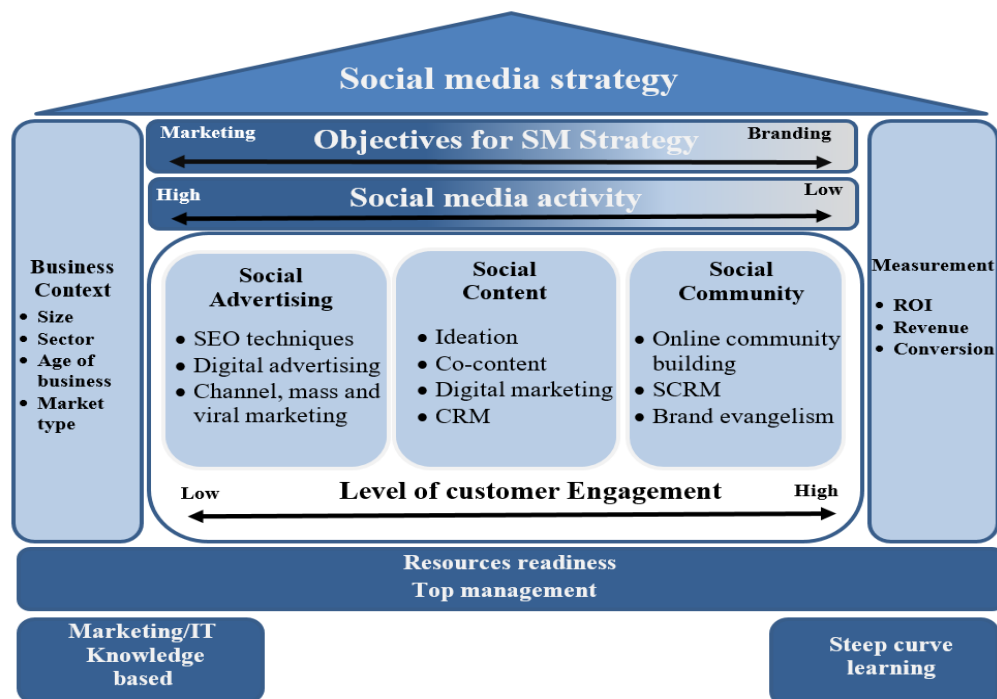


Figure 1: A strategic SM framework house

Clear of SM objectives

Regardless business size and sector, creating clear SM objectives enables business on how social actions align with business and departmental goals (Cartwright et al., 2021). The initially SM usage of SMEs, smaller business is more likely to spend so much money on customer acquisition marketing using multi-channel advertising via SM for gaining awareness and interest in their brand. Meanwhile, larger business typically anticipates the benefits in terms of building brand capabilities through interaction and engagement with target customers. These benefits, encouraged by the specific context of a business, frame two main objectives for SM engagement: exposing a brand to a large audience (Xie & Lee, 2015), and engaging with customers (Malthouse, 2013). These objectives subsequently determine the design and development of strategies and activities for SM.

Selecting appropriate SM sites and activity

Once, business has a clear SM objective, the consideration of a number of SM channels/sites and its activities will be assigned based on specific purposed. For small business, obviously, using one or two channels would be appropriate, one for official use and other for personal use. Medium and large businesses could have up to four channels. This because more SM sites with no active participation and presence results in unprofessional behavior that impacts on attitude towards brand. Overall, usage patterns of SM sites should be '*Entertainment*' (e.g. live streaming, sharing marketing promotions, sharing other's life experience, spreading gossip and so on), '*Self-expression*' (e.g. sharing information themselves respect to business brand, sharing other related brand products) and '*Social interaction*' (e.g. sharing contents, reposting other's contents and developing social relationship) at the initial stage. Meanwhile, medium-sized business, emphasis and concern must also be placed on business knowledge resources, and successful implementation will also require a carefully planned programme based on their limited resources. Thus, SMEs business must be accumulating several quality and interesting best practices and adapting it with their context. Such best practices could be applied when formulating future official SM strategy for address specific needs respects to business's objectives. Indeed, marketing-related resources are considered as a determining factor in the creation of SM activity leading to a strategy. (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Schultz & Peltier, 2013).

Level of engagement

SM strategy could be distinguished by two levels of customer engagement (lower and higher) and that a business should determine SM strategy according to: the level of engagement that its customers are likely to show; and the SM objectives that the business wishes to achieve.

(i) *Lower engagement*— at this stage, the purpose of business focuses on the attitude of consumers toward brand perception, SM activities and consumer' SM involvement is mainly conducted with the aim of raising brand awareness (Hutter et al., 2013), information dissemination (Choi et al., 2015) and online marketing-related activity (Schulze et al., 2014) at initial stage. The intensity of an consumers' participation in and connection with business's content and activity, is low in which they only passively consume content or use very basic forms of feedback (e.g., 'liking,'re-posting', 'sharing' and 'commenting'). The most popular method across all business sizes is to put links to SM on the business's website. Apparently, business tends to select the most suitable SM tools that fit well with their business context to transmit messages to a broad audience, and link such tools to their business's website in order to boost up their website traffic to get any potential customers/prospects to visit website, increase online attendance, and receive maximum traffic in turn (Busca & Bertrandias, 2020). Encourage sharing/retweeting/re-posting enables consumers to forward their own or someone else's posts to their followers (e.g., friends, family and fan-page), that reaches more people.

These actions can help businesses to create awareness and change attitudes among prospective customers, thereby contributing to the acquisition of new customers. As a result, such activities engage users in interpersonal conversations with those who have commented, posted, shared, or even liked a content (Venkatesan, 2017). This can lead to a number of followers in which having more followers enable business to focus on more engagement in the long run. These engagement statistics are visible for all users in real time and are widely accepted as measures of the popularity of SM content. This means that a customer may not only be influenced by shared content, but also by how others have reacted to it. By doing this, digital marketing tactics includes using SEO techniques and advertising, Social media content (by using co-create contents for public/individual techniques) and viral marketing relates to the promotional and manifest content created by businesses are suggested (See **Table 5**).

(ii) *Higher engagement*—at this stage, business uses most frequently to cultivate relationship with both existing and potential customers with a more focused place on in depth personally engage relationship. To establish a long-term mutual-trust, engagement, relationship with customers, creating online community (Rheingold, 1995), SCRM (Greenberg, 2009) and brand engagement (Barger et al., 2016) program have established (See **Table 5**). Within such communities and those programs, customers trust each other and often search for peer reviews about businesses. This could change the way a customer or potential customer sees the business. In regard to SM activity, the intensity of an individual/group’s participation in and connection with business’s offering and activities is high. This imply that individual and group activities pertaining to brand-related contents on SM platforms will increase, leading to increase in interaction, conversation and a chance of collaboration between both business and existing and potential customers. As a result of group of customers, they are no longer interested in being sold to. Instead, they want to engage with their favorited brands and experience their respective brand culture in ways that were not previously possible. Online community together with CRM programs leveraging by SM platforms called “SCRM” has been occurred in this stage that allow businesses to revitalise the relationship with customers/people by creating a deep-seated change in brand attitude, building a new meaningful relationship that places a particular focus on the idea of conversations, and incorporating customers’ more positive experiences into brands (Yawised et al., 2017b). By doing this, selecting a key existing customer who is brand evangelism affects customer loyalty, received a business’ message and letting them reviews products and shares it with them as a personal recommendation through the use of SM channel such as live streaming platforms, YouTube, Blog, Vlog, TikTok and so forth. Make it viral and share it on all business SM channel like Facebook, YouTube and any online video live streaming platforms. This is how it would become popular among business target audience. Otherwise, business can create marketing contents by sharing their opinions, advice, and experiences through the online channels that are most popular among their peers. As a result, they are inclined to promote business to their peers. Once prospects come to trust business’s brand as an expert, business can more engage in conversation with content that educates them



on how products/services of business can effectively solve their pain points, then business marketing strategy with a detailed of sales will be later executed (**See Table 5**).

Table 5: A summary of a strategic SM activity related to level of customer engagement

Level of engagement	Objectives	SM platforms/sites/software	SM Tactics	Activity
Lower level engagement	Brand awareness (Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt, & Füller, 2013)	Google Ads Websites performance in search Facebook (FB) Instagram (IG)	SEO techniques and manifest content	-What business is/story/contributions -Keywords search, voice search, content search -Brand product/service name and logo -Picture of product/ brand context/quotes -Business identity/image/testimonials -Positioning and differentiation
	Information Dissemination (Choi, Jiang, Xiao, & Kim, 2015)	Facebook (FB), FB messenger YouTube Line OA TikTok Twitter Instagram (IG)	Items advertising / Knowledge for public and individual	-Information sharing product/service -Business's experience/ expertise -Product story/pinpoint -Headline business news—product/service -Articles related business's product/service -Video and pictures in actions -Teaching content/E-book /E-course -Newsletters
	Online marketing-related activity (Schulze, Schöler, & Skiera, 2014)	Facebook (FB), FB messenger YouTube Line OA TikTok Twitter Instagram (IG)	Items/reviews Co-content SM marketing Viral marketing	-Marketing campaign/event/entertainment -Marketing challenge -Reviewer/peer/influencer -Facebook/YouTube/TikTok creating content -links to business's website
Higher level engagement	Online communities (Rheingold, 1995)	Public/private Online SM platforms e.g. FB, fan page, Line, YouTube, LinkedIn, smart-phone applications	Group/Virtual community	-Action community- peer, reviewer, influencer and live video streaming in educating, travelling, challenging, experimental activities. -Local Community-Entertaining engagement/challenge -Professional community – e.g. Career and B2B -Word-of month
	SCRM (Greenberg, 2009)	Google analytics Conversation analytics CRM software provider	SM and traditional CRM program	-Two-way communication engagement -Exchange information -Active listening to customers/experience/perception
	Brand engagement strategy (Barger et al., 2016)	Online SM platforms e.g. FB, fan page, Line, YouTube, LinkedIn, smart-phone applications	SM marketing, Consumer/firm engagement	-Individual engagement -Privilege/private offers -Co-create corporate strategy -Co-create products/services -Co-create useful content/Collaboration

Resources readiness

Planning for SM system is so central to strategic planning that coupling between marketing strategic planning and IT project planning is likely to be very close. Marketing person (department) is responsible for ‘front-end development’ including planning implementing, managing and controlling SM activities (e.g., creating contents, posting/re-posting, sharing information, responding to potential customers, creating contents, monitoring, measuring and analysing SM activities). Meanwhile, IT person (or department) is responsible for the ‘back-end development’ of the SM platforms and related technical requirements. This suggests that business must have a key person who is mainly responsible to help in building or improving a brand’s or a business’s website traffic, build brand awareness, create and implement marketing and brand strategy and one is expected to respond to queries, commenting on brand pages, taking customer feedback, creating content for general, informative as well as marketing purposes. That person should have marketing and IT-based knowledge. Indeed, small and medium sized businesses that are early technology adopters and have (or are able to have) a solid cash flow, are capable of adopting SM. This is because these businesses can spend more out of budgets looking for a practical and easy-to-use SM platform from outsources, vendors, which helps complement their lack of current technological knowledge and hence enables a better management of their internal operations. Also, young businesses of age are unlikely to adopt new technologies if their owner-managers do not see the benefits of such an adoption or cannot apply new technologies to business practices.

The strong knowledge and know-how of top management in both marketing and IT can help such businesses with a lack of financial resources to form linkages with internal and external resources, acquire new resources and absorb them for effective SM adoption. Under this circumstance, such businesses at the early stage of SM strategy adoption understand the need to master a steep learning curve and are prepared to work with new SM technologies including new smart phone applications platforms. These businesses also prefer not to change their current successful strategies, but rather to add new strategies that support SM activities to their successful ones. The view adopted by these successful businesses is that growing business too fast can rapidly bring a lot of problems that are difficult to be managed effectively.

Conclusion

Based on our findings, several conclusions are drawn. First, although most of all business characteristics are implementing SM presences, there is still a considerable number of many businesses particularly SMEs that have not yet to embrace the strategic SM business opportunities. Second, the level of SM usage remains as a tool for dealing with customer interaction, it is not considered as a strategy where merely large business have an official strategic approach and clearly implementation plans compared to SMEs with absence of a formal integrated business strategy for SM. Third, there appears to be a lack of understanding



on the part of SMEs of how SM might best be implemented effectively. Finally, a lack of available resources particular specific knowledge, appears to constitute the major impediment to successful SM strategy formulation. In the light of these conclusions, and the structural characteristics of the local business context, this research proposes a strategic SM framework that is a starting point for business owners and practitioners and those which are willing and able to 'self-help' in successfully formulating SM strategy. However, there will be a limitation of this research; first, our findings are limited by the subjective, self-reported nature of the data. Second, the study's focus on a single developing country may limit the generalizability of the findings to other countries.



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