Lexicon & Marketing Strategy Assignment Paper

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Word of Mouth

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**Abstract:**

For this assignment I selected the Word of Mouth marketing strategy, simply because is the most suitable marketing strategy for the kind of organization being promoted, the music band from Bend, Oregon, Lady Bluntt. The Word of Mouth marketing strategy is based in the simple principle of interchanging information from person to person, which means that the organization presents its product or engages the desired customers directly. One of the main advantages of a Word of Mouth marketing strategy is that in our current times hi-tech advancements have allow this strategy to be propagated not only in person, but also through the use of personal technological devices, such as smart-phones, tablets, and personal computers an reach a greater amount of people with the same message at the same time. In addition to the marketing strategy, this assignment requested the presentation of lexicon words directly related to the strategy; the words I selected from the lexicon pool created on Fall term are: participatory, Environment, Technology, Interpersonal, Quality, and Identity. In this assignment I will present the marketing strategy Word of Mouth, its benefits for any organization, and how these words relate directly to the strategy I selected.

**Word of Mouth**

Word of Mouth (WOM) is marketing strategy that was developed during the 1970’s, and it’s attribute to have been started by psychologist George Silverman. Basically, this type of marketing strategy is focused in promoting a product directly to the customer, interaction that will eventually lead to other developments. It is argued that WOM, if performed effectively, can create a positive snowball like effect for the organization that is exploiting the strategy. WOM allows an organization to participate directly with the customer to spread an idea directly to the customers, who will then share the information around their personal social circle, eventually inciting dialogue, creating community, and personalizing a brand with total control of the organization about what is being marketed. These factors make WOM a very personal strategy of marketing a product; in fact Jonah Berger argues in her article *WOM and Interpersonal Communication* that this strategy is a goal driven strategy that focuses on key elements, which include regulation of emotions, regulation of information, social bonding, and persuasion. All of these terms presented by Dr. Berger, which are key elements of WOM strategy, are very delicate terms and actions, of which the organization is responsible for. For these reasons, WOM is a very delicate marketing strategy, which can propel a company to success or can crashes to the ground into pieces; this is why the selected WOM strategies need to be carefully planned and deploy by the organization.

WOM despite its name, which implies that a mouth is involved in the process, can be deployed by any organization in both forms, personal or impersonal. Personal strategies imply that the message is being delivered in person, either to an individual directly or to a group of individuals at the same time. The strategy not necessarily has to be in the form of a conversation, but it can also be presented in the way of a performance, pamphlets, business cards, posters, and referral to online sites. In addition, an organization can deliver a message and promote the organization WOM while giving away some promotional products like t-shirts, stickers, magnets, hats, etc. This is the most effective and successful way of WOM for an organization, since as authors Patti and Chen explained in their 2009 article: *“Service satisfaction is one of the main determining factors for consumers…to generate positive WOM in the post-consumption phase.”* Meaning that the organization, if utilizes WOM correctly, it has the potential of growing its number of customers.

The second form of WOM strategies is impersonal; these types of strategies have developed thanks to technological advancements that have facilitated its use in the last few years, but an impersonal WOM strategy in the near past, before cellphones were so massively popular, used to be time consuming and very expensive, reasons for which this technique was not very productive for organizations. Although, the recent technological revolution in mobile apps and social media, has made impersonal WOM strategies practically free and very successful, since they still have a personal touch to them. In addition, impersonal WOM through social media channels and technological devices, allow an organization to keep records and be a very important information-gathering tool, which will help the organization to measure effectively the success of the marketing efforts.

A great success story of a WOM marketing strategy that used technology to achieve its success was the doughnut store chain Krispy Kreme. This store is well known for their hot fresh doughnuts and great flavor, but also is known for staying away from the most conventional and massive media promotional sources like television or radio adds, relying solely in WOM campaigns. The quality of their product, in addition to the identity of the organization were able to create a positive environment for their customers, and their campaign generated more than 4 millions followers on Facebook. In addition, with the use of technology and mobile technology, the organization was able to create an app for their clients, which can track all of their stores in the United States and informs customers about when stores have fresh hot doughnuts. The app for Krispy Kreme stores was downloaded more than 230,000 times and prompted more than 42 million searches within 12 months since it was launched (2012). Today, the app generates more than 30% of the customer traffic of their stores in the U.S.

As presented, WOM is a very effective marketing strategy, if use correctly by an organization. It is based around key elements, which include an organization to have to **participate** in the promotion of a high **quality** product or **identity**, through an **interpersonal** interaction with the client, one-on-one or throughout the use of **technological** devices, creating the adequate **environment** for the customer to come back for more. Also, the terms I selected for this assignment from the lexicon pool, are essential to a WOM marketing strategy, and they repeat over and over in different researches, different explanations of marketing strategies, and even in one of my references articles was named “*WOM and Interpersonal Communication”* having the word interpersonal in it.

To finish this assignment, I present in the next few pages a glossary of the words selected for this assignment, their description, my personal take on them, some comments from classmates and academics, an explanation in how they relate to marketing strategies and particularly to a WOM strategy, and how they relate among each other.

**Glossary of Lexicon Words:**

1. **Environment:** The Webster dictionary defines environment as: *“the condition(s) that surround someone or something: the conditions that affect the growth, health, progress, etc., of someone or something.”* An environment in the sense of a marketing strategy, is it; meaning, that if the organization developing any kind of marketing strategy is not able to generate an environment among its customers, it won’t grow, it will be unhealthy, and it will regress any effort the organization makes.
2. **Identity:** The Webster dictionary defines identity as: “the qualities, beliefs, etc., that make a particular person or group different from others.” It is the essence of marketing, to promote the good qualities of an organization and the reasons why customers should prefer them among all of the competition. Halley Perry, in her definition of words for the lexicon pool of past class, defined identity as: *“…the atmosphere of a company…the trait that defines someone or something.”* It is funny that besides that she paraphrased the original definition of the word, in her definition, she included that it is the atmosphere (environment) of a company, exactly what any marketing strategy will try to sell to its customers. Finally, the word again relates to other words mentioned in this glossary, demonstrating that these words are meaningful not only when relating to a WOM marketing strategy, but also they are closely interrelated with each other.
3. **Interpersonal:** The Webster dictionary defines interpersonal as: *“being, relating to, or involving relations between persons.”* This definition describes the center, the motor to any WOM marketing campaign. The organization has to create a personal relationship with its customers, which at the same time have to relate to the organization in some form.
4. **Participatory:** The Webster dictionary defines participatory as: *“Providing the opportunity for people to be involved in deciding how something is done.”* This is the essential pillar of any WOC marketing strategy, to provide opportunities to engage the customers (people), which will eventually decide how the product is done or delivered. Last term I mentioned in my lexicon description how I thought than this word described an “…attempt to involve others in a particular event.”
5. **Quality:** This word is simply described by Webster dictionary as: *“how good or bad something is” or “a characteristic or feature that someone or something has.”* This definition is describing how good or bad something is and how this quality can give an identity to that someone or something; in this case, the organization has to create a good quality product or service in order to create a positive and attractive identity, which will bring customers back and potential new customers.
6. **Technology:** The Webster dictionary defines technology as: *“The use of science in industry, engineering, etc., to invent useful things or to solve problems.”* Technology is an essential tool to our society; it has become also an essential tool in developing any successful marketing strategy. Emily Payne in her lexicon words posted in October 9th, 2014, included the word *Technology*, and in her definition she explained: *“Environments change when technology is added…”* It is interesting that in this small portion of her description of the word *Technology* she immediately mentioned environment, another of the words mentioned in this glossary. In addition, she explained the key factor technology represents, a change in the environment and the mindset of an organization and its customers.

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