RUNNING HEAD: STARBUCKS SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

Starbucks, Social Media, and Customer Support

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Purpose

Starbucks Coffee Company is the largest international coffee house in the world and is currently ranked 229 on the Fortune 500 list (“Fortune 500,” 2011). Starbucks, which is headquartered in Seattle, Washington, has over nineteen thousand stores in 58 countries including the United States, Japan, and China. In addition to coffee drinks, Starbucks now sells an assortment of products such as salads, sandwiches, bakery items, and mugs. Starbucks ice cream and coffee are available for purchase at most grocery stores (“Starbucks,” 2012).

Starbucks also has an entertainment division which has developed their Hear Music brand that markets music, books, and movies. In a partnership with Apple, the iTunes Store currently has a Starbucks Entertainment area where digital downloads of songs are sold in addition to the free Starbucks “Pick of the Week” music. Recently, the company has also partnered with MSNBC’s morning news program *Morning Joe* to include their logo and be presented as “brewed by Starbucks” (“Starbucks,” 2012).

As a rapidly expanding international brand, Starbucks has successfully reached a global audience. Over the past two decades Starbucks growth both in the United States and overseas has made the company the leader in the coffeehouse business despite competition from other cafes and coffeehouses. Since Starbucks is an industry leader, is it import to monitor their social media to determine the online conversation about them and to see in what areas they could use improvement and what ways their social media is working successfully to better the company and their image.

Methodology

To research how to analyze Starbucks’ social media usage it was important to look at a wide variety of social media content to identify what the brand is doing online over the period of four weeks. The first step was to identify every type of social media that they have, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Looking at their placement in search engines such as Google, Bing, and Yahoo are also very significant, as well as analyzing the contents of their Wikipedia page. The focus and purpose of their blog, which can be found via the company website, is also an important tool when determining the tone, common topics, and whether or not the Starbucks online content is engaging.

The next important step in researching Starbucks’ social media presence is to monitor what the public is saying about the company, how people are talking about them, and what the tones of their customers are like. This was done by using a variety of tools such as social search engines, TweetStats, doing a Facebook search with openbook, and getting their KLOUT score. Google tools such as Google blogs and Google Analytics also help determine what the online presence of Starbucks looks like.

Results

After looking up Starbucks in a search engine such as Google, Bing and Yahoo, the first website that comes up is the company website for Starbucks ([www.starbucks.com/](http://www.starbucks.com/)). Secondly, there is information about local Starbucks franchises, such as locations and hours of operation, followed by the Starbucks Wikipedia page. Using the social search engine hakia, the company website is listed first and is followed by the Wikipedia page, then recent news stories about Starbucks. It is positive to see that their company-run website has the top placement on these search engines. The website has links to Starbucks’ Twitter, Facebook, and Google+. The most recent four blog posts are also linked to their homepage.

The Starbucks Coffee twitter account (@Starbucks) currently has over two million followers, is following almost 78 thousand accounts, and has tweeted over ten thousand times. According to the TweetStats, Starbucks tweets an average of 9.5 times per day, totaling 230 tweets per month. However, in the past three weeks Starbucks was averaging 14 tweets per day for a total of 267 tweets for the month of April. Most of these Tweets are between noon and 4 o’clock p.m. Monday through Friday, unsurprisingly during regular business hours. Out of all of the total tweets, 88.76% of these are replies to other people. This shows that Starbucks is successfully using their Twitter account to interact with their customers. A very small percentage of Starbucks’ tweets are retweets, and most of them are within the company. In the past four weeks, Starbucks has retweeted @StarbucksJobs, @StarbucksStore, and @EvolutionFresh, all within their company. The web interface was the most used medium; however, TweetDeck and Twitter for iPhone were also used to tweet from the Starbucks account. Very few tweets were from SocialEngage or Instagram (“TweetStats,” 2012). Overall, Starbucks is very active on Twitter by not only posting information, promotions, and news, but by interactively engaging with their followers.

If you search for Starbucks on Facebook you will see a list of places for local Starbucks franchises. By clicking on the individual page for the local Starbucks, contact information is listed; however, there are very few postings or interaction with the page other than people actively “checking-in” at their local Starbucks. Starbucks also has a main page with almost 30 million “likes” and 5 million check-ins. There Facebook page is updated very frequently and utilizes the status updates and photo sharing the most. The Facebook page is used for a variety of ways including promoting events and opportunities as well as sharing news. People are also using the Starbucks Facebook page as an outlet to express both happiness and anger about their Starbucks experiences (“Starbucks Facebook Page,” 2012) A search in openbook can show all activity on Facebook regarding Starbucks, whether posted on the page or not. The Facebook users conversing about Starbucks are from all over the world, but also appears to include a lot of false promotions and freebies (“openbook,” 2012). A recent complaint on the Facebook wall was from a customer who was disappointed in the My Starbucks Rewards program. The post received 88 “likes” as well as 57 comments of people both agreeing and disagreeing, with only two of these comments being responses from Starbucks. Unfortunately, Starbucks wrote that they were unable to reply to individual responses on the post, because you cannot comment on a comment (“Starbucks Facebook Page,” 2012). It is important to note that Starbucks did the best that they could responding to individual complaints on Facebook.

Starbucks does have a YouTube Channel, although it is not directly linked from the company website. Almost 14 thousand people are subscribed to the channel and there have been over 8 million views. Uploaded videos include videos about events and fundraisers that Starbucks supports, such as The Create Jobs for USA Fund and the Starbucks Global Month of Service. There are 246 videos uploaded to the Starbucks Coffee YouTube Channel. (“Starbucks Coffee Channel,” 2012)

Another type of social media that is directly linked from the Starbucks company website is their Google+ account. If you click the Google+ logo that is linked, it automatically says that the user (if they have an account) has given Starbucks +1, however it did not go straight to a specific Google+ page. A search in Google+ will show the most recent discussions about Starbucks, which includes check-ins, news articles, and photos that people are sharing.

The homepage of the Starbucks website also posts the top four most recent blog posts. These blog posts are written by Starbucks employees, such as the director of executive communications and the Food Marketing project manager. Blog posts range from promotions about new products to recipes. The blogs are written in a casual, friendly manner and are easy to read and sometimes even humorous. Readers are commenting on the blogs and all interaction appears to be positive and upbeat (“Starbucks Coffee Company,” 2012) A search on Google Blogs results in blog homepages for Starbucks including Starbucks Gossip, Starbucks and Jane Austen and the Starbucks Coffee Company official blog, the company blog being the third result.

Another social media tactic used by Starbucks is their platform My Starbucks Idea ([www.mystarbucksidea.com](http://www.mystarbucksidea.com)). Here, users post suggestions for what they think would be great for both the company and their customers. Ideas can range from anything from new products and recipes to promotions, and other users vote on them. The ideas with the most amounts of votes are taken into consideration by Starbucks. The presence of this platform has been a huge success and Starbucks has gotten a lot of positive feedback by making changes according to what their customers want (“Starbucks Coffee Company,” 2012).

Conclusion

Starbucks Coffee has a KLOUT score of 78 and is a +K and a Top Influencer because they have “built a very large and engaged network through high quality, trustworthy content.” (“KLOUT,” 2012) Other social media monitoring tools have also provide a more detailed and conclusive analysis on Starbucks online presence, and Starbucks can also be found in online conversations on accounts for various other social media websites.

Starbucks Coffee Company serves as a great model to large organizations in using social media. Through their various social media sites, including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, Starbucks has reached out to a large number of customers and by interacting with them personally to show how much the company really cares. Starbucks’ blogs are conversational, informational, and upbeat and provide a friendly environment for users. The My Starbucks Idea platform has been a huge success, because customers know that Starbucks will make the changes that they want. It’s important for large and international companies such as Starbucks to interact with their customers and to listen to the public’s wants and needs. The success of a company is always reflected by the customer service that the company provides, and Starbucks is doing a great job trying to keep everyone happy.

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