Student Research on Contemporary Marketing Issues
M Sc Marketing 2013
School of Marketing
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Introduction

Welcome to this second edition of Contemporary Research in Irish Marketing from students of the M Sc Marketing at DIT.

This is Ireland’s premier ‘conversion’ programme, recruiting graduates from non-business disciplines such as arts, engineering, media and science and developing their capabilities as excellent marketers in twelve months.

The dissertation task, a central feature of learning and research at the School of Marketing, allows the students to define, shape and research a marketing issue in great depth, using leading-edge theory to formulate a research question. This question is examined ‘out there’ in the word of marketing industry practice and consumer reality through the use of appropriate research methods. Such an engagement with research defines and differentiates these graduates and the ‘black book’ ensures that graduates have demonstrated the core marketing competences needed at the highest level.

Students have provided a summary or abstract of his or her work in their own words. Their academic supervisor is also listed. If you are interested in any particular work you should contact myself or the staff member concerned. Details can be found on http://www.dit.ie/marketing/staff/

This year’s collection features a range of themes around mobile marketing, social media, augmented reality, corporate social responsibility, SMEs and consumer response.

I hope you find the students’ work stimulating and interesting.

Roger Sherlock,

Head of Department of Marketing Studies,

DIT College of Business,

School of Marketing.
Abstract

Advanced mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones are being rapidly adopted by the Irish consumers. These devices have changed the way people live and consume and have emerged as a new channel by which marketers can communicate with their customers. Mobile marketing practices have been therefore hurriedly introduced to the marketing mix of most companies.

Among these practices, innovative mobile marketing techniques such as QR codes, location-based services, or branded mobile apps have emerged as the latest options available to marketers which take advantage of the newest mobile devices and their technologically advanced features.

These techniques are radically changing consumers’ experiences and affecting consumer behaviour because consumers are now interacting with technologies rather than with people. In order to analyse this new consumer behaviour, technology readiness emerges as a crucial area of study. The propensity to use and adopt these innovative techniques is affected by personality traits that can be assessed by using the Technology Readiness Index (TRI).

This research uses the TRI and finds that Irish consumers are highly ready to use innovative mobile marketing techniques. Thus, this study indicates that Irish companies should use these techniques in their campaigns. Moreover, this research finds that both ownership of mobile devices and usage of innovative mobile marketing techniques are high among the Irish consumers and these innovations have therefore successfully crossed the chasm.

In terms of segmentation, this research uses cluster analysis on the four TRI dimensions. TRI emerges as a reliable method for segmenting consumers because it allows finding three significantly different segments: Explorers, Pioneers, and Paranoids. This study finds that each segment has significant differences in terms of adoption of innovative mobile marketing techniques. Thus, different techniques should be used when targeting each segment. However, combining mobile marketing with social networks, using mobile search advertising, and offering branded mobile applications emerge as the best techniques to target the three clusters.
Social Customer Relationship Management & The Irish Craft Beer Industry: An Exploratory Study

Author: Ronan Curtin
Supervisor: Gerry Mortimer

Abstract

Purpose – This dissertation is an exploration of the use of social customer relationship management (SCRM) in the Irish craft beer industry and the consequences of its use.

Design/Method – A qualitative approach was adopted, comprising of five semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from the industry.

Findings – The findings indicate that the level of SCRM implementation within the Irish craft beer industry to be low to non-existent. However, it was identified that firms experienced both a number of benefits and risks associated with SCRM. A number of factors deemed by industry stakeholders as success factors were identified along with a number of challenges firms within the industry faced when implementing a SM program, a number of these correlated with the literature. The author argues that some of the newly identified challenges should be recognised by the literature as they are not industry specific.

Originality/Value – This dissertation seeks to redress the lack of literature relevant to SCRM and by which means the Irish craft beer industry creates mutually beneficial relationships with consumers. Existing literature focused on industries in which SCRM was already being applied. This study concludes that, despite the lack of use of SCRM by the industry, firms were still able to achieve some of the benefits it is directly associated with.
The Motivations and Constraints of Facebook Users to Consume Sport: An Exploratory Study from an Endorsement Perspective.

Author: Graham Curtis

Supervisor: Laura Cuddihy

Abstract

Research on motivations and constraints for consuming sports has predominantly focused on traditional forms of media, such as television, radio and attending sports events themselves. Little research has been conducted on this concept on new forms of media, particularly social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook. Drawing from IMC, sponsorship, team identification and athlete endorsement literature, this research paper will explore the motivations and constraints of Facebook users to consume sports on Facebook from an endorsement perspective. Respondents, which consisted of Facebook users of any age, were asked to complete an online questionnaire which consisted of questions asking them about their motivations and constraints to follow athletes on Facebook as well as their attitudes towards endorsements on Facebook. The data from these questionnaires were analysed using various statistical techniques such as independent samples t-tests and multiple regressions. Findings from the data analysis indicate the main motivation (fanship) and constraints (accessibility and economic) to consume sports on Facebook. However, none of the motivations or constraints were able to significantly explain the variance in attitudes towards endorsements on Facebook. Differences between age groups and gender were also investigated.
Nutritional Labelling on Restaurant Menus in Ireland: A form of Market Orientation?

Author: Neasa Forde
Supervisor: Aidan O Connor

Abstract

The levels of overweight and obesity in Ireland are increasing. Public health authorities are attempting to combat this rise in diet related diseases by implementing a number of initiatives. One initiative proposed by the Minister for Health is to make it mandatory for restaurants and food outlets to include nutritional labelling on their menus. It is believed that this approach will enable customers to make healthier food choices. To date a number of food outlets have implemented this initiative on a voluntary basis. The majority of research surrounding this topic, however, has addressed this subject from a public health perspective. The author feels that it is necessary to investigate this new initiative from the perspective of the businesses themselves and to identify the rationale taken by these food outlets in implementing this approach. In order to do this the researcher applied a theoretical framework based on the concept of Market Orientation. Using this framework a number of key elements of the initiative were investigated:

1. Market Orientation approach
2. Key influencers of the initiative
3. Innovative Approach
4. External and internal forms of collaboration

The researcher interviewed six managers from six different restaurants and food outlets, all of which included nutritional labelling on their menus. The fore-mentioned theoretical framework was used to guide the interview questions. Based on the findings, it was concluded that a different Market Orientation approach is practiced by different food outlets in terms of the inclusion of nutritional labelling on menus. The food outlets interviewed were identified as being either customer orientated or competitor orientated. The rationale for this initiative and the influencers also differ according to the particular food outlets. Additional findings and future recommendations are also outlined.
A Quantitative Investigation into the Effect the Social Media Site ‘Twitter’ has on Brand Loyalty Amongst Young Adult Consumers in Ireland.

Author: Maria Griffin
Supervisor: Kathleen Hughes

Abstract

The development of social media sites such as twitter has enabled new opportunities for consumers and brands throughout the world. As such, it is a concept that continues to draw the attention of academics and practitioners alike. The understanding of social media- what it means, what it includes and how to use it well - continues to evolve. Companies are using Twitter to try and promote their brand or products to consumers. Young adult consumers are considered a profitable market, with adolescents considered to be easily influenced and spending vast amounts on products each year.

This research addresses the action between brands and young adult consumer’s through twitter, looking primarily at the effect it has on their loyalty towards the brands. A review of the literature pertaining to branding, brand loyalty, social media and twitter will be investigated. A quantitative approach is used to analyse specific brand-related activities within the Twitter site and their effect on young adult consumers brand loyalty in Ireland. As this new era of co-creative branding continues to advance so too will consumer behaviour in relation to brands within the online space.
Consumer Perceptions of Daily Deals: A quantitative Study

Author: Suzan Hazer Onem
Supervisor: Gerard Mortimer

Abstract:
Daily deal sites (DDS), as new avenues of e-commerce, have experienced a significant growth in recent years. However, despite the tremendous growth and popularity of this new business model, relatively few studies on this topic have been conducted. Moreover, since group buying is driven by the demand of consumers, one of the fundamental issues within DDS is to understand consumers’ perceptions in order to acquire better customer knowledge, and eventually, to retain them. Therefore, the aim of this dissertation is to examine consumer perceptions of daily deals, and to provide a better understanding of this topic.

Based on research objectives, a review of the literature and the industry in Ireland was conducted. A quantitative approach was employed and the data was collected by using a questionnaire as the research instrument. This data was compiled and analysed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

The findings provide a classification and profiling of consumers according to their usage of daily deals, and investigate consumers’ perceptions in the light of their demographics and psychological characteristics. The author also presents future directions of research, and a set of managerial implications of the current findings.
The Perceived Value of Augmented Reality Marketing

Author: Lisa Kelly
Supervisor: Mary Lawlor

Abstract

The arrival of the digital age has allowed brands to creatively engage with their consumers by bridging the gap between both physical and digital environments and on and offline experiences. Many of today’s leading brands are expanding beyond the first wave of social networking, viral video and user-generated content and are thinking of bigger, bolder and bodacious ways to enhance consumer interaction and engagement. Augmented reality represents a highly sophisticated development in human-technology interaction. The assimilation of the technology into marketing strategies has been influenced by an increased penetration of smartphone and tablet usage, and increased consumer desires for immediacy and stimulation. The concept has been gaining momentum internationally due to the quirky brand extension it offers to marketers however there also exists substantial uncertainty over its sustainability as a marketing tool.

The aim of this study was to investigate both arguments of the debate. It explored consumers’ overall perceived value of augmented reality marketing and the factors influencing consumers to engage in marketing experiences. As a result of the scarcity of research studies on augmented reality marketing, a review of existing literature on digital and experiential marketing was established in order to build the rationale and components of this research project. Quantitative research was conducted, using an online questionnaire to collect the data of 120 respondents (59 male, 61 female). The questionnaire was distributed through the social networking site Facebook and through email links. Case studies were presented through media content integrated into the online questionnaire in order to ensure the desired level of comprehension of the concept among respondents.

Descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, non-parametric statistics, Pearson’s correlation, independent-samples t-test and two-way ANOVA were run on the data generated. The results indicated that the strongest motivational factor for consumers to engage with marketing experiences was experiences that were clearly tailored to their personal interests. The highest perceived value of augmented reality marketing was the potential to provide engaging and memorable experiences for consumers. However, no significant relationship could be established between specific types of augmented reality marketing (entertainment-focused, convenience-focused) and perceived value. The implications and recommendations of this study are presented in the final chapter.
Environmental Scanning Practices Among Irish SMEs

Author: Ruaidhri MagFhloinn
Brendan O’ Rourke.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to outline the frequency and scope of environmental scanning practices among Irish small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs). Up until this point most of the literature has focused on large, US-based firms. Only recently has the focus changed to smaller firms outside the US. This paper further extends the literature in this new direction.

The study adopts a pre-dominantly descriptive approach to the task of recording scanning-practices among Irish SMEs, using a quantitative method to do so. A 20-question survey was disseminated to CEOs or Managing Directors among a sample of SMEs. Respondents were asked to quantify the scope and frequency with which they scanned certain areas of the business environment.

Findings indicate the adoption of a broad scope of scanning among Irish SMEs – i.e. the number of areas scanned was generally large. However, there were substantial variations in the frequency with which each area was observed. Implications for the SME sector in Ireland include the need to improve scanning frequencies in order to assist this sector in helping to strengthen the Irish economy. Implications for the literature include the possibility of further research into the relationship between firm size and scanning, particularly regarding bias where macro and micro-environmental areas are concerned.
An investigation of Social Media and the Second Screen Experience as an Effective Marketing Tool for Engaging Generation Y

Author: Niall Murphy
Supervisor: Kathleen Hughes

Abstract

The trend of multitasking while watching TV is at large in Ireland. Viewers are beginning to interact and communicate about the content they see on TV. Technology has given consumers the ability to skip ads and ignore marketing campaigns on TV, but the idea that consumers would interact with on screen content has the potential to get viewers watching ads again in a more interactive, engaging way. If marketers can hone in on the reasons for viewers using second devices to engage with TV content then they could tailor that content to provide viewers with their desired experiences.

This dissertation investigates Social media and the second screen experience as an effective marketing tool for engaging Generation Y. Based on the theories of experiential marketing; the study explores how a focus on experiences helps to engage TV viewers through interaction.

The study is researched through reviewing relevant theories, secondary research and in-depth interviews with second screen users to examine why they use a second device while watching TV.

The study concludes that by focusing on viewer experiences through the use of Experiential marketing techniques, marketers can engage viewers that use a second screen. Furthermore, when experience based content is produced, users of second devices are very likely to share that content and communicate it to their different groups of friends.
An Investigation into How Social Media Platforms Facilitate the Communication of CSR and Sustainability Initiatives for Local Businesses: A Case Study of The Happy Pear

Author: Phillipa White

Supervisor: Aidan O Driscoll

Abstract

Sustainability is one of the most important issues facing the world today, and yet many businesses are still confused about what the term actually means. In conjunction with this, many organisations are engaging in sustainable measures and failing to effectively communicate such activity to their consumers.

The communication of such undertakings is an area rife with debate, with both academic literature and practice split regarding the ethical nature of communicating sustainable organisational activity. The core of this debate concerns promoting genuine sustainable activity with long term strategic goals and promoting sustainable activity with the sole purpose of enhancing perceptions of the corporation.

Social media has emerged as a strong method of communication between organisations and their consumers. Online engagement promotes and encourages two-way conversations between the parties, and offers organisations endless opportunities to build relationships and offer consumers value whilst simultaneously garnering insights into consumer needs and interests.

Social media act as useful tool for local businesses in the creation of relationships. To be seen in a visually responsible manner online helps build trust and credibility. Local businesses tend to have more intimate relationships with their consumers, and social media further develops these relationships and creates a sense of community.

This research paper draws heavily on case study analysis and relevant literature to assess and draw conclusions relating to the means through which sustainability can be effectively communicated by local businesses to their consumers; and also, how consumers interact with businesses that utilise social media as a tool of communicating sustainable activity. In doing so, this researcher has conducted a case study on The Happy Pear, a locally operated natural food health store and restaurant, operating in Greystones, Co.Wicklow.

The findings of this study indicate that communicating sustainability through social media can prove to be an effective tool for local businesses in both communicating such activity and strengthening consumer relationships and community. The Happy Pear appear to have struck a healthy balance with their online activity, insofar as they have successfully encouraged open dialogue with their consumers, and are also able to garner invaluable consumer support and insights.