

# **Diálogos bilaterales** **Bilateral dialogues**

**entre investigadores de la Glasgow Caledonian University (Reino Unido) y la Universidad de Alicante (España).** **between researchers from Glasgow Caledonian University (United Kingdom) and University of Alicante (Spain).**  
**Estudios interdisciplinarios** **Interdisciplinary studies**

**Irene García-Medina y Victoria Tur-Viñes (Coords.)**

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***Bilateral dialogues between researchers from Glasgow Caledonian University (United Kingdom) and University of Alicante (Spain). Interdisciplinary studies***

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## **Customer engagement on social media. A literature review**

### ***El compromiso del cliente en las redes sociales: Una revisión de la literatura***

#### **Abstract**

Despite social media being a topic that has been researched for a decent amount of time, there is still no consensus on what social media engagement is or, indeed, how to achieve it. This is partly due to social media's constantly evolving and adapting nature. However, the resulting effect has been inefficient social media strategies. Inefficient social media practices will, in a best-case scenario, cause resource wastage or, in the worst instance, result in lost competitiveness. It is imperative companies are better aware of what social media engagement is. This article is a literature review on previous research regarding social media engagement, discussing the various definitions of social media and the arguments surrounding social media engagement. This review concludes with elements identified contributing towards effective social media engagement, such as frequency of contact and customer motivation. This essay deliberately does not discuss measures or return on investment, instead focuses on understanding social media engagement from a broader perspective to discern where there focus of social media engagement should be. It will then be possible to identify areas of further research to help develop knowledge, strategies and measures within the social media engagement field.

#### **Keywords**

Social media; Customer engagement; Literature review.

#### **Resumen**

A pesar de que las redes sociales son un tema que se ha estado investigando desde hace bastante tiempo, todavía no hay consenso respecto a cuál es el compromiso de las redes sociales o, de hecho, cómo lograrlo. Esto se debe en parte a la naturaleza en constante evolución y adaptación de las redes sociales. Sin embargo, el efecto resultante ha derivado en estrategias ineficientes en las redes sociales. Las prácticas ineficientes de las redes sociales, en el mejor de los casos, causarán un malgasto de recursos o, en el peor de los casos, conllevarán una pérdida de competitividad. Es imprescindible que las empresas sean más conscientes de lo que es el compromiso de las redes sociales. Este artículo es una revisión de la literatura sobre investigaciones previas del compromiso de las redes sociales, discutiendo las diversas definiciones de las redes sociales y los argumentos en torno el compromiso de las redes sociales. Esta revisión concluye con elementos identificados que contribuyen al compromiso efectivo de las redes sociales, como la frecuencia de contacto y la motivación del cliente. Este ensayo no discute de manera deliberada las medidas o el retorno de la inversión, sino que se centra en la comprensión del compromiso de las redes sociales desde una perspectiva más amplia para discernir dónde debe concentrarse el compromiso de las redes sociales y cómo debe ser. Será posible entonces identificar futuras líneas de investigación para ayudar a desarrollar conocimientos, estrategias y medidas dentro del campo del compromiso de las redes sociales.

#### **Palabras clave**

Redes sociales; compromiso con el clientes; revisión de literatura.

## 1. Introduction

Social media engagement is a topic that has gained popularity over recent year (eg. Van Doorn et al., 2010; Holleebeek et al., 2014; Muchardi et al., 2016; Harrigan et al., 2017), yet academics and practitioners are still unable to state what helps customer engagements on social media and what strategies must be used (Chen et al., 2014; Bitter et al., 2016; Hudson et al., 2016) . In fact, some research contradicts each other. Van Doorn et al. (2011) explain that engagement requires customers' goals to be aligned with the company's goals whereas Labrecque (2014) believes it is possible to influence customer engagement by creating a perception of openness. In another instance, Luarn et al.'s (2015: 514) research illustrates that "interactivity exerts a strong effect on the level of engagement" but, in contrast, Kim and Drumwright's (2016) study indicates there is no relationship between interaction and increased proactive customer participation on social media.

Part of the issues is due to the nature of social media; it is about communication and relationships (Garcia-Medina, and Correia Pereira, 2012; Chen et al, 2014; Kim and Dumwright, 2016) and, thus, it is constantly evolving. It also makes social media rather context dependent, its form reliant on the type of industry, the company's own communication style as well as the individual customers' communication preferences and personality. As such, it will be difficult to construct strategies that will be successful. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify elements in previous research which contribute to better customer social media engagement.

This essay deliberately does not discuss measures or return on investment. The lack of certainty regarding customer engagement on social media creates a need to understand engagement from the beginning, using recent studies on social media engagement to guide and build knowledge. In particular, this essay is a literature review on customer social media engagement with an aim to discern the elements or factors that contribute engagement.

## 2. Literature Review

Hollebeek (2011) and Chan et al (2014) observe that there is no agreed definition of customer engagement on social media. Chan et al (2014) proposes that customer engagement differs from discipline to discipline within the business literature. For example, Chan et al (2014) notes that marketing tends to view customer engagement as a psychological process whilst information systems view engagement as the level of participation in an activity. Engagement is a topic studied in various fields, from organisational behaviour to education (Dessart et al, 2015) to psychology (Hollebeek, 2014), but not within the context of social media, which is surprising given the increased popularity of this subject (Hollebeek, 2011a). The concept of customer engagement on social media is still a relatively new subject for marketing and academic literature regarding this context is limited (eg. Gummerus et al, 2012; Chan et al, 2014; Dessart et al, 2015).

The absence of an agreed definition can be attributed to the lack of "theoretical basis" regarding customer engagement on social media (Bowden, 2009 p68). However, this gap in the literature is being addressed; academics and practitioners alike are realising the limited understanding regarding customer engagement on social media (Chen et al, 2015), leading to much of the recent literature (i.e. 2014 onwards) to study this topic within an explorative or interpretivist framework (eg. Hienonen, 2010; Dijkman et al, 2015; Parrott et al, 2015; Vlieghe et al, 2016). However, a review of the literature also shows engagement tends to be studied on a small scale, using one platform to conduct a study at most; most studies focus on one social media platform or one company as a case study (eg. Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012; Shen and Bissell, 2013; He et al, 2013; Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014). Consequently, the insights these studies provide is rather limited.

Customer engagement literature within marketing does exist. Such an example would be customer relationships management. Van Doorn et al.'s (2010: 260) definition of engagement is made up of "cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural" elements and, though this definition was developed for a general view of customer engagement in marketing, Dessart et al (2015) upholds it is transferable to customer engagement online. Van Doorn et al.'s (2010) concepts align with Dessart et al.'s (2015) study, that found customer engagement to be made up of multidimensional behaviour. However, Dessart et al.'s (2015) definition of customer engagement online is researched within the context of online brand communities. This, naturally, limits the scope of findings as those within communities will behave differently to those not part of communities. Nonetheless, the findings are critical for highlighting that online engagement also involves multiple elements.

Social media engagement theories mostly draw upon psychology or sociology instead of existing engagement theories within marketing literature, although some studies do utilise previous marketing studies (Hollebeek, 2011; Peters et al, 2013). This highlights the interdisciplinary nature of marketing but it can



also highlight a need for a new way of thinking with the emergence of social media. Peters et al (2013: 282) would agree with the latter view as he asserts that social media requires a different strategy and a different way of interacting due to its different nature; it is more "egalitarian" where the brand has "no authority" and therefore the relationship between brands and customers becomes important and "needs constant nurturing".

Peters et al (2013) believes interaction and participation makes nurturing relationships possible. The idea that interaction and engagement is needed for developing relationships with customers has been much discussed in marketing literature, ranging from relationship marketing (eg. Sonkova and Grabowska, 2015) to competitive strategy (eg. Kangal, 2009) or online brand communities (eg. Wirtz et al, 2013). As Kang et al (2015: 1666) believes that participation is not just important but it is the "basis for building strong brand relationships with customers and their study has observed that customers are "less influenced by momentary benefits" and instead may desire "meaningful information related to a brand and emotional bonds with others who support the same brand" (2015: 1676). Many of the customer engagement theories put forward the view that the act of interaction develops a sense of loyalty towards the company (eg. Lim et al, 2015; Muchardie et al 2016; Muniz and O'Guin, 2001).

Kabadayi and Price (2014), on the other hand, assert that loyalty is a form of engagement and that it is the highest form of engagement. The benefits of loyalty is well documented within marketing literature, including reducing marketing costs (Aaker, 2009) and creating barriers to entry into the market (Kitamura et al, 2016). Whilst there are academics, such as Zheng et al (2012), who believe consumer engagement on social media is related to loyalty, Hollebeek et al (2014) maintains that loyalty is only one of the customer behaviour outcomes of engagement and does not mention loyalty being a form of engagement. Neither does Hollebeek et al (2014) classify the kind of loyalty businesses can expect to achieve with engaged customers, despite research such as McMullan and Gilmore (2008) establishing that there are different levels of loyalty. Customers having different levels of loyalty may suggest there are different levels of engagement within social media. This raises questions of what is the highest level of engagement companies can expect on social media and how can they achieve this? Some studies have attempted to answer this by identifying which customers' behaviours yield result considered desirable (eg. Kim and Ko, 2013; He et al, 2013). The flaw of these studies is that they take the assumption that some activities are better than others, namely that comments, sharing and talking about brand are the most effective forms of engagement (eg. Fisher, 2009; Leung et al, 2013; Nobre and Silva, 2014), and aims to establish how these activities can be encouraged and increased.

It is true that the most common method of classifying customer engagement on social media is through the activities customers make, such as liking a post, commenting, retweeting or sharing, following organisations, uploading or watching videos and accessing reviews for opinions (eg. Heino, 2010; Hollebeek, 2011; Chiu et al, 2015; Chen et al, 2015). Within these activities, the literature often differentiates engagement by how passive or active the activity – for example liking is often seen as a passive activity when compared to the level of effort required for thinking and writing a comment, with the latter viewed as the ideal form of engagement and interaction within the literature and amongst practitioners (Gummerus et al, 2012). Much of the research assumes that companies want more comments and more active forms of communication on their social media platforms (eg. Labrecque, 2014; Dijkmans et al, 2015; Kim and Dumwright, 2016), perhaps believing that such activity will develop a better relationship between customer and company. Indeed, there has been a rise in the number of studies conducted on how to improve the customer relationship on social media (eg. Van Doorn et al (2010); Chen et al (2011); Dessart et al (2015); Chan et al (2015)). Most of these studies appear to focus on improving or increasing active customer engagement.

Neiger et al (2013) dismisses the idea that one type of engagements is better than the other, contending that each type of engagement or interaction on social media contributes something. Dijkmans et al (2015) affirms with this view, giving the example from his study that customer interaction on social media had the power to influence positively or negatively other customers' perception of corporate reputation. It can be argued that each engagement becomes an important building block for the company's online and offline success. Instead, Neiger et al (2013: 159) recommend organisations identify the desired outcome or behaviour before deciding on which level of engagement is necessary. For example, low engagement – characterised by "one-way messaging by the organisation" – is adequate if the organisation is trying to spread awareness. In situations where organisations wish to have more active participation, social media strategies that encourage involvement should be implemented. In such cases, Neiger et al (2013) stresses the need for measuring offline interaction as high level of engagement often manifests itself in offline behaviour.

According to Kang et al (2015: 1677), another contribution of social media engagement is providing businesses a way to obtain feedback direct from the customers. By "analysing members' communication

can help marketers understand how community members estimate their brands and further assist them in creating brand value with members". This enables firms to gain valuable insight into customers' thoughts without the need for paying a third company or undertaking costly market research. Customer engagement can also provide companies with a form of advertisement. Loyal customers and satisfied customers are more likely to spread word of mouth about the brand (Aherns et al, 2013) . Dwyer (2007) has observed that word of mouth is more likely to be influential in customers purchase decision making than advertising, which Parrot et al (2014) would attribute to the finding that customers are more likely to trust the opinion of another customer. Loyal customers can take their loyalty one step further and become brand advocates, who are individuals that feel a strong connection to a brand (Kemp and Bui, 2012; Parrott et al, 2014).

Furthermore, the viewpoint that businesses should worry less about how passive customer engagement is and focus on other aspects within social media engagement is gaining more popularity. Gummerus et al (2012: 869) take such a view, they do not believe engagement should be based on classifications such as passivity but on frequency and behaviours being positive or negative. They give the example of "positive 'liking' versus negative commenting" to convey the one-sidedness of classifying engagement based on what is passive or not. Lim et al (2014: 159) would also argue that engagements should not be classified based on whether behaviour is passive or not but by the motivation behind engagement. They believe there are three main motivations for customer engagement on social media and these are functional – "co-creating, conversing and sharing the content", emotional – "the emotional attachment a user has toward a brand is a key aspect of consumer engagement that can affect consumer behaviours"- and communal - where "users to feel a sense of community while communicating" with others.

Classifying engagement by motivation shares common themes with Kietzmann et al (2012: 108) and Heinonen's (2010) research, who have grouped various consumers' social media activities according to purpose. Whilst Kietzmann et al (2012) have grouped their classifications to seven "functionalities", Heinonen (2010) created a matrix consisting of nine different behaviours that result in different activities, such as information needs or entertainment seeking. Interestingly, both studies have used different data collection methods but they both found similarities in social media usage. Keitzman et al (2012) reviewed literature from variety of background, such as marketing, psychology and organisational behaviour, whereas Heinonen (2011) used a diary method filled in by individuals. Both studies show that social media usage was influenced by information and social needs; individuals wanted information to help them collect information and opinions, share and converse with others whilst social needs were met through activities such as conversing, building relationships or belonging to a community. The information seeking behaviour is documented by Kang et al (2012) who found customer use information to obtain advice and opinions as well as assess the trustworthiness of a company.

The latter points to a behaviour in Dijkmans et al.'s (2015) study has similarly discovered. This consumer trend may be viewed as customers are trusting companies less or it may be that customers are utilising the different methods of obtaining information and opinions to make up their own decisions. Heinonen's (2011: 360) study also found that entertainment factor, such as "entertaining oneself" or "self-expression", was another element in social media engagement. This links with Gummerus et al.'s (2012) suggestion that entertainment encourages customers to interact- or to seek interaction- with a company's social media page, as well as Dessert et al.'s (2015) study that suggests entertainment is a value customers seek in social media interactions. Consequently, it can be seen that motivation is an important influence in customer engagement on social media.

Kim and Drumwright (2016) also believe in the role of motivation within customer engagement and they classify motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Extrinsically motivated customers are motivated by the economic benefits gained from social media, such as discounts. Kim and Drumwright (2016: 975) have found them to be less inclined to engage others on social media although they have observed that such customers do show "intention to engage in content-consuming behaviour" for example viewing pictures or videos. Intrinsically motivated customers, on the other hand, are motivated by their interest in the brand and this makes them more likely to contribute to the social media content. This research would suggest that customer engagement is out with the control of businesses. Van Doorn et al (2010: 257) also believe customer engagement is dependent on 'individual customer traits', and again, this is not something the business can control. However, the literature is slowly able to identify certain features which help customers become more engaged, or at least able to encourage more positive interaction. Van Doorn et al.'s study (2010), for example, suggested customer engagement was mostly determined by whether customers were interested in the brand and an interest in the group was a secondary motivation for engagement.

This would suggest encouraging customer engagement starts with creating an interest in the brand. However, companies should take care not to solely focus on creating interest as this is rather one-sided.

Labrecque (2014) and Kim and Drumwright (2016) remind academics and practitioners that social media is about communication and relationships. Peters et al (2013) adds that social media needs to be viewed as an egalitarian structure, where customers' inputs are as important as the companies' own posts and contributions. Both views hark back to Gummerus et al.'s (2012) assertion that companies should focus on communication, as opposed to measuring frequency of activity. Chan et al (2014: 88) agrees that engagement is more than just "attitude" – a measurable construction - but a reflection of the extent to which an individual is "attentive and absorbed in ... their role in the community". In other words, Chan et al (2012) is in agreement with Labrecque (2014) and Kim and Drumwright's (2016) view that social media is about relationship and communication.

These views suggest that social media is a two-way communication, constantly adapting and evolving to the individuals' contributions to social media. As such, it becomes hard to measure and difficult to predict what practices or activities enable a decent level of customer engagement. Bowden criticized the customer engagement literature in 2009 for having most of its foundations in practice and not in academic theory, which he maintained gave customer engagement the appearance of a being a "management fad". This issue continues to persist today; there is no agreed definition on engagement and limited academic insight into engagement, both from a strategic or customer perspective (eg. Holleebeek 2011a; Chen et al, 2015; Dessart et al, 2015). Studies from 2012 onwards have tried to fill this gap but customer engagement is still an elusive topic, partially due to the constantly evolving nature of social media (Peters et al, 2013) and partially due to the two-way communication method of engagement adding an element of complexity to the subject. Customer behaviour becomes an important part of the equation in solving customer engagement but the subject of customer behaviour and human psychology itself is also constantly evolving and adapting to modern life (Solomon et al, 2013; Alexander and Shelton, 2014).

However, customer engagement is an important gap to address. As social media permeates into customers' daily lives and habits, it becomes important for businesses to be accessible on social media in order to attract and communicate with customers. The traditional marketing methods used with mass communication - where the company could broadcast its message to a wide market and had more control over its message and image (Blythe, 2014; Baker, 2000) – do not suit the egalitarian (Peters et al, 2013) and constantly moving (Gensler 2013) nature of social media. Much of the literature states a need for further investigation to develop a better understanding of customer engagement on social media (Chan et al, 2014; Lim et al, 2015).

Academics talk about companies increasing interest in customer engagement on social media (eg. Chan et al, 2014; Holleebeek, 2014; Dijkamns et al, 2015; Kim and Drumwright, 2016). The reasons for this interest can be surmised from the previous sections. Namely, that customer engagement facilitates direct feedback from customers (Kang et al, 2015) and customer loyalty (Zheng et al, 2012), as well as spreading word of mouth (Aherns et al, 2013) and influence perceptions of a company's reputation (Dijkmans et al 2015). Malthouse et al (2013) maintain social media has the potential to be used as a customer relationship management (CRM) tool, which is supported by Chau and Banarjee (2013: 239) who also see the potential of social media to be used as a "powerful crisis management tool". Customer engagement, weighs in Chan et al (2014: 83), is a "retention and acquisition strategy" that assists companies to sustain competitive advantage. However, for social media to be used thus it requires customers that are willing to engage with the company.

Customers interested in the company are more likely to share their positive experiences (Aherns et al, 2013), and forgive mistakes (Mattila, 2011). This assists with crisis management, and customers less likely to avoid the company's advertising or promotional efforts (Fill, 2002), consequently enabling CRM. In turn, an effective CRM facilitates relationship development and aids customer retention. Baurmol et al (2016) recognises that businesses can access the customers' networks. This is a valuable asset; businesses do not need to spend as many resources on finding potential customers and can use their existing customers to spread the word and influence perception. Research by Parrot et al (2012) and has demonstrated that customers trust the opinions of other customers, inferring that social media make for a more effective and efficient promotional tool. These potential consequences of social media make it a highly-prized tool, hence the interest in social media or online customer engagement within academics and practitioners.

These studies construct a strong argument for utilising social media and the need for engaged customers on social media. Veloutsou (2009) interprets that engagement could potentially provide much more advantages for firms, including the creation of strong, emotionally-bonded communities. However, due to the lack of knowledge regarding social media engagement it is difficult to harness the possible benefits of engagement. Academic focus on engagement has typically centred on websites (Chua and Banarjee, 2013) and Online Brand Communities (OBC) (Wirtz et al, 2009; Dessart et al, 2015), largely neglecting other aspects of customer engagement on social media.

This has contributed to the pressing issue of a lack of agreed definition of customer engagement within the literature (eg. Dessart et al, 2015; Hollebeek, 2011a). Despite the recent popularity and interest in customer engagement (Hollebeek, 2014), there is still much that academics cannot answer regarding customer engagement on social media. Nevertheless, academics have identified important themes within the subject area centre around interaction and participation, with other prominent themes also including entertainment and customisation (Kim and Ko, 2012), sharing and contributing to content (Sashi, 2012) as well as the possibility of receiving benefits, although this does not necessarily refer to monetary benefits (Stockburger-Sauer, 2010). Gummerus et al (2012: 854) suggest factors such as "trust, satisfaction, commitment" are also important theme within customer engagement theory. Many of the early studies in social media consumer engagement have applied original engagement marketing theories (eg Van Doorn et al, 2010; Sashi, 2012; Gummerus et al, 2012).

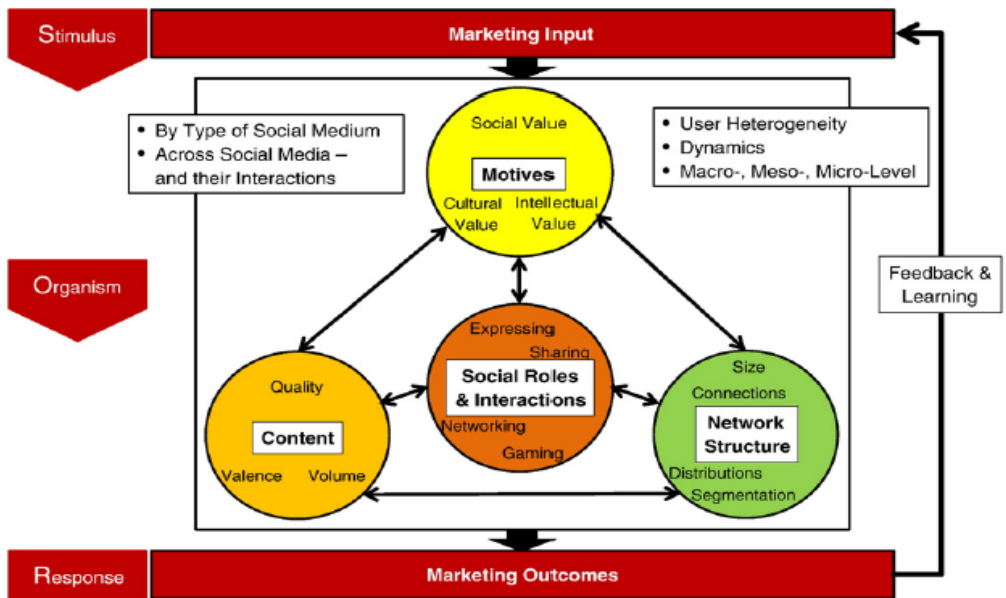
While such theories can be transferable to a digital environment, Peters et al (2013: 283) argue that the unique nature of social media means customer engagement should be specially adapted to social media. They believe social media engagement needs to consider how "marketing input interacts with social media to produce desired marketing outcomes". This is an interesting statement because few studies appear to highlight the importance of marketing input working together with social media, although some studies do acknowledge that social media contributes to marketing communications (eg. Kim and Ko, 2012) and customer relationship management (eg. Malthouse et al, 2013). Peters et al (2015: 286) have used the SOR (stimulus- organism- response) paradigm to develop four core elements to social media engagement; motives, content, network structure and social roles and interaction. This paradigm shares some similarities with other studies, such as Kim and Ko's (2012) five elements of social media marketing activity and Lim et al.'s (2015) three aspects of engagement. All three theories highlight the importance of interaction, although Lim et al.'s (2015: 159) interactions are split into three different purposes that are functional, emotional and communal. Communal interaction showing the highest form of engagement because it encourages user's to "feel a sense of community".

All three theories also highlight the importance of content, albeit for slightly different reasons. Kim and Ko (2012) believes content should provide entertainment to encourage interaction while Lim et al (2015) stresses that engagement needs to satisfy the three functions (functional, emotional and communal) in order to develop highly engaged and loyal customers. Peters et al (2015: 287), on the other hand, conducted an analysis on previous studies regarding content on social media and identified "three sufficiently distinct aspects". These aspects include "content quality", regarding "content characteristics (eg. interactivity, vividness) ... content domain (eg. education, entertainment)", "content valence", regarding "emotions...and tonality" and finally "content volume", regarding "counts and volumes".

Kim and Ko's (2012) and Lim et al.'s (2015) views regarding content overlap with Peter et al.s (2015) three aspects, as do other general literature about social media such as Singh and Sonnenburg's (2012) study of the role content, plays in a brand's success on social media and Jahn and Kunz's (2012) study which explored the role of content in building loyalty on social media brand fan pages. These studies may have different approaches about how content should be used but they all agree that content should be developed with the intention of encouraging interaction from online users. This would suggest that the role of content is important for overall marketing strategy and that there has been a shift in modern marketing. However, Hollebeek (2011a: 559) cautions that engagement is a "multidimensional perspective". Simplifying engagement to singular elements such as content would mean disregarding other elements which also influence customer engagement on social media.

That is why Peters et al.'s (2013: 282) model chooses to use more than one element in their model. Elements they considered to be the most influential in social media engagement – "content", "motives", "social roles and interactions" and "network structure" - were used and Peters et al (2013) illustrated that these elements interacted with each other to create outcomes that then feed back to the marketing input (see figure 1 below). Peters et al.'s (2013) model considers external factors influencing engagement when most of the previous studies did not consider these in their hypothesis or suggestions (eg. Bowden, 2009; Chua and Banarjee, 2013; Hollebeek, 2014). External factors considered are usually other consumers or other types of media (eg. Henning-Thurau et al, 2010).

Figure 1. Customer engagement model.



Source: Peters et al. (2013)

This model was developed using the literature on customer engagement on social media and the purpose was to develop metrics and guidelines for companies to encourage consumer social media engagement. However, rather than discussing metrics, Peters et al (2013) instead asks the readers to be aware that metrics should not just be about numbers and quantity but quality of conversation and content. This is good advice for a field that often is focused only on measurement (eg. Killiekar et al, 2013), however by not stating the types of metrics, quantitative or qualitative, the validity of this framework is not robust and is open to questioning.

Peters et al (2013) does not state what type of metrics this model intends to investigate. Uncertainty regarding measures is common issues within the field; the literature on social media has thus far struggled to establish what metrics should be measured (Bowden, 2009; Baumal et al, 2016) or indeed what to measure as different studies suggest different things should be measures, such as setting competitive benchmarking (He et al, 2012), frequency of interaction (Gummerus et al, 2012). Peters et al.'s (2013) framework attempts to offer guidelines for measuring metrics and a guideline for social media engagement, however, these are two different types of activities. It can also be argued that it is difficult to develop a model that does measures both activities.

Moreover, this framework is not intended for a specific industry or type of company. As such, it is rather generic and this is a limitation for a study that takes the viewpoint that external factors influence social media engagement. Though Peters et al (2013: 282) points out the type of external factors that affect engagement, the study is not specific about which external factors are influencers and the generic terms, such as "dynamics" or "macro" level, does not offer explicit guidelines for a business. There is scope to adapt this framework to more precise criteria and it is possible that, in doing so, the external factors can be become more specific and the framework can offer more guidance.

Another limitation of Peters et al.'s (2013) work is it only considers literature from customer social media engagement, making it possibly one-sided. As previously mentioned, Holleebeek's (2014) review of the literature shows that engagement is well researched in other fields but there is a limited understanding of engagement within social media. This could suggest that Peters et al (2013) is restricted by the limited of knowledge within the field of consumer engagement on social media. Perhaps widening the field of literature would have helped contribute complementary knowledge to encourage and cultivate interaction on social media.

However, Peters et al.'s (2013) model is still beneficial; it is a framework that is easy to understand and summarises the key points within social media engagement from an internal and external point of view.

The main contribution of Peters et al.'s (2015) model is it illustrates that social media is constantly reacting and adapting to the environment. Highlighting this changing nature of social media makes it difficult to predict a pattern or to pinpoint singular, most influential elements which impacts on customer engagement.

Though Peters et al (2013) agrees that social media is hard to control, and often difficult to understand and predict, they also suggest practices that can help to encourage positive behaviour from customers. One such practice, according to Chan et al (2014) is to create a value to the community on social media, which typically take the form of providing support and facilitating communications between members. This is, of course, taking the assumption that the company has created an online brand community. According to Chan et al (2012), community places an important role in encouraging customer engagement.

Brand communities, though have varying definition, typically have three elements central to it; a shared sense belief and shared goals, an attachment to the brand – though there is scope for the strength of this attachment to vary – and a shared sense of culture, borne out of the brand itself but also through the rituals and practices developed by the brand community (Muniz and O'Guin, 2001; Dholakia et al, 2004; Fournier and Lee, 2009; Schau et al, 2009). Some researchers have taken brand communities further, calling them consumer tribes due to the strong attachment consumers feel towards a brand or group having an almost tribal-like atmosphere (Mitchell and Imrie, 2011; Goulding et al, 2013). Canniford (2011) emphasises that consumer tribes are not brand communities; they are much more complex and harder to control by businesses.

The characteristics of a consumer tribe are described as "multiplicity, playfulness, transience, and entrepreneurialism" (Canniford, 2011: 595) whilst brand communities are identifiable by the "moral responsibility" and "zeal" the community creates around the brand (Canniford, 2011: 594). Whether a business establishes a brand community or consumer tribe, Stockburger-Sauer (2009: 364) expresses that "community marketing is a powerful tool for company success". The ability of such communities to tap into primal human needs, such as the need to belong to a group (Fournier and Lee, 2009) and social identity (Muniz and O'Guin, 2001) have made them powerful tools for the fostering of stronger ties and loyalty to the company (Cova and Cova, 2006).

In recent years, brand communities studies have informed the development of literature in online brand communities (OBC) (e.g. Cova and Cova, 2006 Stockburger- Sauer, 2009; Laroche et al, 2012; Kelly and Alden, 2016; Schembri and Latimer, 2016) due to the assumption that using new, online technologies can be used to facilitate brand communities and the benefits of brand communities (Fournier and Lee, 2009). Laroche et al (2012: 1757) asserts that technology has "made the constraint of geography almost irrelevant". Studies focused on brand communities a correlation between belonging to brand community and developing an attachment to the brand (eg. Alexander et al, 2002; Cova and Pace, 2006). In fact, Fournier and Lee (2009) credits the use of brand communities as saving Harley Davidson from "extinction"; brand communities as a business strategy enabled Harley Davidson to re-establish bonds with customers and company decisions were "grounded in the community perspective" (online). OBCs can benefit companies less dramatically as well.

By communicating with customers or following the tone of conversations customers have with each other, companies can learn more about their customers' perspectives (Laroche et al, 2012). This is a similar benefit that social media offers to companies (Nakara et al, 2012) but with the added value of customers being part of a community. Schembri and Latimer's (2016) study indicates that individuals who felt part of a brand community are more likely to visit a website daily, thus offering companies with more opportunities to encourage customer interaction (Schau et al, 2009). Increased interaction between customer and company, as previously mentioned, improves customer engagement (Gummerus et al, 2012; Kang et al, 2015) and in turn the relationship with the brand (Dholakia et al, 2004). De Valck's et al (2009) study adds that OBCs help spread positive word of mouth for the brand but also expands a more powerful use of OBCs; OBCs can be influential in the consumer decision making process. It has the potential to influence at every stage of the consumer decisions process, although De Valck et al (2009) argues that four stages are the most relevant due to the "interaction and interpersonal influence based on information exchange between virtual community members" (188). These stages are need recognition, search for information, pre-purchase evaluation and post-purchase evaluation. These stages are also more orientated towards information seeking behaviours, which De Valck et al.'s (2009: 201) research finding suggest is due to the consumers use of OBCs as a "source of information".

De Valck et al (2009: 196) reflect that the type of community will impact OBC behaviour. A community developed around "serious health subjects" are "less likely to ...focus on recreational activities". This reflection is in agreement with Schau et al.'s (2009: 35) emphasis on the importance of alignment of "practices ... [working] together to drive one another". Schau et al (2009) point refers to business activities,

that business strategy must complement and enhance the brand image if positive OBCs are mean to be built around them. However, De Valck et al.'s (2009) reflection that community type is an important influencer does connect with Schau et al.'s (2009) point; that every element within the business must work together to give alignment. This will create a cohesive brand image (De Chernatony, 2010), enabling customers to know what to expect from the brand and develop trust (Copley, 2004) and thus facilitating brand attachment.

Online brand communities (OBCs) aid with customer engagement in two important ways. Firstly, by engaging with customers on an emotional level, businesses are able to develop bonds and attachment to the brand (Malar et al, 2011). In turn, this aids brand loyalty. Secondly, Hade and Kellet (2012) recognise that customers feel empowered when they join OBCs. Their participatory nature develops a sense of ownership to the brand and customers feel part of the brand development, rather than the brand being owned by a business. This Hede and Kellet (2012) proffer, not only create a dialogue between brand and customers, enabling enables customers to take part in brand innovation, but also enabling customer to customer dialogue due to the perception of brand ownership.

Having the opportunity of a customer to customer dialogue, articulates Chan et al (2012) increases the likelihood of customer interacting and engaging with one another. Having communications lines open also makes it more possible for customers to seek advice and offer support to one another, a behavioural norm on OBC platforms (eg. Alexander et al, 2002, Schau et al, 2009; Wirtz et al, 2013). Other customers of the brand willingly answering questions and offering support serves to build trust and develop a positive brand image due to the perception that other customers will be more truthful than an advertisement (Dwyer, 2007).

The availability of advice and support is an appeal for customers. Both De Valck et al (2009) and Schembri and Latimer's (2016) research demonstrates customers seeking information – whether technical, personal advice or opinions- from the OBCs. This phenomenon can be described as a cycle; an opportunity for interaction facilitates engagement and dialogue (Chan et al, 2014) that is often used for seeking advice and support (De Valck et al, 2009; Schembri and Latimer, 2016). Increased interaction enables individuals to become friends (Zhou et al, 2012) and the sharing of information, advice and supports contributes to the customer empowerment (Hede and Kellet, 2012). Both factors encourage higher commitment from individual members (Zhou et al, 2012 Hede and Kellet, 2012). Schau et al (2009) and Chan et al.'s (2014) study recognised that individuals seeing other members' commitment influenced their level of commitment to the brand or rituals, too. Subsequently, these factors create a cycle.

This cycle offers an insight into how an online brand community (OBC) can be developed. To this cycle, Chan et al (2014) would expand the need to have a recognition or rewards system in order to develop an OBC. Such a system, they argue, would encourage more engagement by rewarding commitment and therefore encouraging more commitment to the brand. Chan et al (2014) also draws attention to the need for members expressing their opinions and experiences. This allows individuals to feel part of the brand and prevents the perceptions that the brand is wholly controlled by the business.

Dessart et al (2009: 27) concurs with Chan et al (2014), adding that "positive online interaction", which include an OBC member defending negative content or the business offering good customer care after a bad experience, aids sustainable loyalty. Further to his, for an OBC to develop it must have a community value. This refer to both a purposive or utility value, such as seeking information (e.g. Schembri and Latimer, 2016), or a shared value (Dholakia et al, 2004), such as rituals (Schau et al, 2009).

However, Chan et al (2014: 85) cautions that the community itself is not enough and that customers must also be "attentive" and "absorbed" in their community that is the business' social media, inferring that firms should provide customers with another added value. This may explain the importance Gummerus et al (2012) attaches to entertainment, asserting that providing entertainment to customers encourages them to visit the social media page more often. Certainly, Holleebeek's (2011a) findings show that being entertained is one of the activities customers seek when using social media. Peters et al.'s (2013: 282) framework for developing customer engagement has an element labelled "content", referring to the message of the posts and communications past between the community and brand. Peters et al (2013) content differs from Gummerus et al.'s (2012) entertainment value in that it should not be an isolated action but something that reacts to the community and the community's interactions. It is, according to Dessert et al (2015), the feeling of pleasure experienced by customers from customers when interacting and responding with community members that encourages engagement on social media. This line of thought - Gummerus et al.'s (2012) entertainment, Dessert et al.'s (2015) pleasure and Peter et al.'s (2013) content-shows similarities with the reward/need satisfaction theory by Byrne and Clore (1970), whereby individuals are attracted to certain people through classical (ie. through associating with positivity) or operant conditioning (ie. through positive stimuli). Byrne and Clore's (1970) theory was applied to individuals but,

given many companies give brands human qualities and personalities (De Chernatony, 2010) and that recent literature suggest businesses give brands human-like characteristics (Avis, 2011; Guido and Pelusso, 2015)– called anthropomorphism (Miles, 2014)- it can be argued that a theory about human relationships would be transferable and relevant to brands.

The proposition that customers need rewards to encourage engagement is echoed in another of Chan et al.'s (2014) suggestions, who believes showing recognition of active participation is likely to increase brand loyalty. Chan et al (2014: 88) also adds the need for customer obligation, whereby customers "develop a strong emotional obligation and...are more willing to be engaged (cognitively, emotionally and physically) in the brand community to reciprocate the firm's active relationship-building efforts and friendliness". Though Chan et al (2014) notes rewards do not have to be monetary, Kim and Drumwright's (2016) study found reward to be motivation dependent, where extrinsically motivated customers were better influences with economic rewards and intrinsically motivated customers were satisfied by sharing knowledge. Further to this, how a customer was motivated also influences their social media behaviour; extrinsically motivated customers were passive content-viewers whereas intrinsically motivated customers were more likely to talk about the brand.

Kabadayi and Price's (2014: 216) study investigated the influence of three personality types on social media usage. In summary, the study identified that those who show openness to experiences and are extraverted "might appreciate the social benefit created by the opportunities for one-to-many interaction" on the brand's Facebook page and were more likely to exhibit commenting or liking behaviours. Customers with neuroticism as their personality trait, on the other hand, were less likely to engage in commenting and liking behaviours. A similar to the study was also conducted by Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky (2002), which looked at the role of personality and Facebook usage and found there to be a clear link between the two. The five-different type of personalities- extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness- showed different usage patterns, such as neuroticism personalities posting more pictures and extraverts having the most friends on Facebook (although not necessarily interacting with them).

Personalities and being intrinsically or extrinsically motivated are aspects out with the control of companies, however, there may be a way around this issue. As previously mentioned, Kietzmann et al (2012) and Heinonen (2011) have grouped their social media activities into purposes and these purposes can be considered as, and re-classified as, motivations. It was also proposed within this literature review that motivation is an important influence in customer engagement on social media. As such, it could be that said that if companies can determine the customer goals, they may be able to create communications which appeal to customers' specific needs.

Van Doorn et al (2011: 256) explain that customers' engagement behaviours are influenced by their motivation, calling this "customer goals". Motivation can be divided into three facets, with the most common driver of social media usage is seeking information. Lim et al (2015) call this a "functional engagement" and Holleebeek (2011a: 360) calls it an "information seeking" behaviour. Such information may be for practical needs to help save time or money for customers or simply to satisfy an individual's curiosity, although both Lim et al (2015) and Holleebeek (2011) add consumers do not just seek information but some also share their knowledge. According to Sashi (2012) this ability for customers to be able to share and ask for advice or knowledge is an important element of customer engagement. Being able to interact meaningfully with others would enable customers to become absorbed and attentive with the social media and may help establish roles within the community, both of which Chen et al (2014) argue are essential for encouraging positive engagement behaviour. In fact, Chan et al (2014: 81) labels the ease and ability of customers interacting with one another as "systems support" and includes it as one of the suggested practises for customer engagement.

Chen's (2014) study identified that individuals used Facebook and Twitter to obtain information, in particular the latter platform. Chen's (2014) study found that customers prefer Facebook to engage with others and this agrees with Baird and Parasnis' (2011) study that also found customers like to interact with friends and family on social media. Additionally, it has been documented in the literature that customers use social media as a form of word of mouth referral, perceiving it as more honest than marketing messages from a company (eg. Cheung and Theodani, 2010; Aherns et al, 2011).

Whilst, Chen's (2014) study found customers used Facebook or Twitter to access information, customers also turned to social media for recreational use. This is in line with Holleebeek's (2011) study that found entertainment was an important motivation for customer social media usage and Gummurus et al.'s (2012) and Kim and Ko's (2012) assertion of the importance of entertainment. Heinonen (2011: 363) believes a managerial implication of entertainment need is to provide "participation activities related to entertainment motives". According to Gummerus et al (2012), entertainment acts as a form of incentive



for more frequent visits to the social media page, and it could be that as customers spend more time recreationally on the business's social media they start to develop a familiarity and a bond with the brand. Kang et al (2015) also shares the belief that frequency of contact encourages development of a relationship, although adds that communication without quality of information is not effective.

Frequency of contact increases familiarity (Sutcliffe et al, 2012). According to Reis et al.'s (2011: 10) study, familiarity creates a cycle; familiarity increases "knowledgeability", a term Reis et al (2011: 10) uses to explain individuals learning more about another individual, which helps increase comfort with that individual. This in turn encourages "responsiveness", i.e. interaction between individuals. Continued interactions develop trust and commitment (Reis et al, 2011), two elements that Sashi (2012) considers essential to the continued customer engagement on social media. Perceived satisfaction during interaction was also an essential component in Reis et al.'s (2011) findings, once again highlighting the value of entertainment, information quality and availability as well as positive experiences in social media engagement.

"Immersion" (Reis et al's, 2011: 565) and "passion" (Reis et al.'s, 2011: 566) were also identified by Hollebeek (2011b) as requirements for social media engagement, both of which are emotional components. The emotional aspect of social media engagement is noted by academics such as Sashi (2012), Lim et al (2015) and Desert et al (2015) would also add emotional need as motivational force for customers engaging on social media, proposing that an emotional connection is necessary to start a relationship. Whilst the extent of this could be argued- for example, it may be access to satisfactory information that starts the relationship between customer and brand- it is a common theme within marketing literature, especially branding literature, that businesses should create an emotional connection between brand and customer (eg. Pitta and Franzak, 2001; De Chernatony, 2010; Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010, Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012). Certainly, an emotional connection or an emotional driver would foster the sense of obligation Chen et al (2015) advocates as influential in maintaining customer engagement. This obligation, Kang et al (2015) expands, helps to build bonds between the community members on social media; between customers and company and between customers.

Yan (2011) believes social media satisfies customers' needs for transparency and, yet, there is no evidence that social media makes companies more transparent. Although it does, as Peters et al 2013) points out, give the consumer more power and allowing them to ignore content or challenge company's messages. Dijkman et al (2015) have also identified that customers, as well as non-customer, can also influence other people's perceptions of the company. Social media may give customers the perception of transparency, in which case it can be argued that the need for transparency could be a need for trust. Trust, Sashi (2012) and Kang et al (2015) have found, is an important factor in encouraging customer engagement.

Interestingly, Hollebeek (2011b) classifies a need for trust as an emotional driver in one study and but classifies seeking information – information, according to anthropologist Sutcliffe et al (2012), provides the basis for building trust amongst humans- - as a pragmatic activity in another study (2011a). Other academics follow this pattern such as Xiang and Gretzel (2009), Wirtz et al (2013) and Chan et al (2014); all these academic emphasise emotional bonds in customer engagement and show awareness of customers using social media to obtain information, however, they do not appear to illustrate the link between obtaining information, building consumer trust and customer social media engagement.

Labrecque's (2014) study, however, demonstrates there is a connection; his study has discerned that perceived openness, such as sharing seemingly personal information, within a company's social media communications does cultivate relationships with customers. These findings draw parallels with Sutcliffe et al.'s (2012: 160) assertion that information enables the development of trust amongst individuals, that is to say "the degree to trust is therefore related to emotional closeness".

Developing and maintaining relationships is often cited as an advantage of social media (eg. Kim and Ko, 2012; Shen and Biseell, 2013; Kim and Drumwright, 2016) and it can be inferred from Labrecque's (2014) study the allusion of intimacy is another advantage of social media. It may be that this allusion of intimacy is due to reduced communication barriers on social media. Unlike with traditional media, customers can communicate with the company almost simultaneously as well as learn about the positive and negative opinions and experiences of other customers (Peters et al, 2013). Additionally, social media makes it possible for customers to alter or challenge message put up by companies (Peters et al, 2013; Dijkmans et al, 2015). All of these capabilities reduce the barriers for customer interaction and encourage more frequent and more transparent communications. Therefore, enabling customers to learn more about businesses, create dialogue and relationships with businesses.

However, Labrecque (2014) adds that intimacy, or openness, goes hand in hand with interactivity, which is defined as showing the company is listening and responding. The importance of ensuring two-way communications is similarly highlighted by Castronovo and Huang (2012) and Shen and Bissell (2013). The

latter has criticised business for focusing on selling products on social media, rather than developing relationships or communities. Labrecque (2014) also reminds readers the importance of two-way communications within social media, emphasising the role of interaction in building intimacy and relationships between customers and business.

To maintain and encourage fully engaged customer interaction, Chiu (2015: 154) contends that companies need to use a "various instruments". This is a statement that agrees with Chan et al.'s (2014: 81) successful customer engagement practice of "systems support", whereby providing customers the "quality of means, capability and opportunity that facilitate the communication and interaction between" customers encourage more engagement. Chua and Banarjee (2013: 244) have noted that Starbucks' success on social media can be attributed to their various social media platforms "generally complement one another to mutually reinforce their overall impact". Sociologist Duck (2007: 192) notes in his book about human relationships that the usage of multiple communication channels between individuals showed "considerably higher" levels of intimacy than those that used a limited number of communication channels. These would suggest that businesses, too, need to consider a variety of tools to communicate, whether different types of posts or content to be as Lim et al (2015) suggests or using different social media platforms.

In addition to the use of various tools, Malthouse et al (2013) contends that the business' customer relationship management (CRM) should be woven into the social media strategy or communications. To treat social media as separate to the business, they explain, would be missing out on the benefits an integrated CRM could bring. One such benefit is social media's ability to enhance CRM by providing "contact points" (Malthouse et al, 2013: 272), points at which customers and businesses can communicate with each other (Malthouse et al, 2103). Offering various contact points, explain Malthouse et al (2013), allows customers to choose where and when to communicate with the company, a fitting strategy for a changing business landscape where the consumer has more power over when and business communications. Further to this, contact points enable a more flexible approach to customer care. Customers can seek advice through various platforms and may also seek advice from other customers. Other customer may give information gained from personal experiences and personal interest that may not be known to the business' employees (Wirtz et al, 2013).

### **3. Conclusions**

This literature review has identified elements and themes that contribute towards customer social media engagement. A summary of these can be found in Table 1 below.

The elements identified in the table illustrate the complexity of social media engagement. There are many factors at play, some of which are interlinked with one another – such as trust being linked with transparency – and some which are complimentary to one another, as can be seen with the elements content and customer motivation. Likewise, companies must consider factors out with their control that influence engagement, including customer motivation and personality. This can be counteracted with factors that companies can control and thus use to improve likelihood of customer social media engagement, for instance ensuring customers have accessibility to and support on the company's social media.

Whilst this essay has identified the individual elements involved in social media engagement, there is still need for further research. It is essential to better understand these elements. Further studies will determine whether all the elements are needed or if certain combinations produce the most effective social media engagement. Additionally, further research needs to address the issue of developing effective social media engagement strategies and measures.

**Table 1: Elements contributing towards social media engagement**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>How it contributes towards social media engagement</b>
Accessibility	Chan et al (2012)	This refers to being found easily by the customer and being present when they wish to communicate with the business.
Content (relevant to customer)	Peters et al (2013) Kim and Ko (2012) Jan and Kunz (2012)	This is complementary to customer motivations as the customer is less inclined to be engaged on social media if the company's messages and posts do not satisfy their wants or needs.
<i>Creating emotional bonds between customer and company</i>	Gummerus et al (2012) Chan et al (2014)	This enables the development of loyalty to the company, increasing the likelihood of customer interaction.
Customer empowerment	Chan et al (2009) Heinonen (2011) Hade and Kellet (2012) Peters et al (2013)	Allowing customers to express themselves or provide feedback enables customers to feel their contributions are important. Believing they are in an equal role, rather than being talked to, also allows for better engagement.
Customer motivation	Van Doorn et al (2011) Heinonen (2011) Kietzmann et al (2012) Peters et al (2013) Chan et al (2014) Lim et al (2014) Kim and Drumwright (2016)	Customers' reasons for using social media differ greatly, ranging from information seeking to entertainment to wanting to remain in contact. Consequently, these influences the way customers use social media and thus affects customer engagement on social media.
Customer personality	Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky (2002) Kabadayi and Price (2014)	These studies demonstrate customers' own personalities influence how they communicate with the business on social media, potentially signalling a mismatch between customer expectation and communication accessibility offered by businesses.
<i>Creating emotional bonds between customer and company</i>	Gummerus et al (2012) Chan et al (2014)	This enables the development of loyalty to the company, increasing the likelihood of customer interaction.
Entertainment	Hollebeek (2011) Heinonen (2011) Gummerus et al (2012) Kim and Ko (2012)	This prevents the company's communications being too focused on sales, increasing customers' interest with the company's social media communications and encouraging interaction.
<i>Frequency of interaction/contact</i>	Reis et al (2011) Zhou et al (2012) Kang et al (2015)	Increased frequency of communications and contact allows customers to build a relationship with the company, which helps to develop trust, loyalty and possibly emotional bonds.
<i>Having a community or an online brand community</i>	Gummerus et al (2012) Hade and Kellet (2012) Chan et al (2014) Lim et al (2014) Dessart et al (2015) Schembri and Latimer (2016)	Establishing or creating community on social media enables naturally creates relationships and interaction amongst other customers or social media users. Further interaction then encourages further engagement. Customers' sense of empowerment increases when they join online brand communities. The interaction and responses develop a sense of ownership with the brand or company and helps build relationships with other individuals. Additionally, being part of a community also creates a sense of obligation or responsibility, whereby customers feel they must interact and respond to communication. Thus, encouraging more interaction on social media.
Support	De Valck et al (2009) Sashi (2012) Chan et al (2014) Schembri and Latimer (2016)	This differs slightly to customers' motivation of seeking information, though it is complimentary. In this instance, if the rest of the customers or business on social media is helpful then the customer is more likely to interact on social media due to perceiving the users as helpful and useful.

Transparency	Yan (2011) Sashi (2012) Labrecque (2014) Kang et al (2015)	Customer seeks cues that demonstrate a company is trust-worthy. These authors maintain that showing transparency enables companies to build customer trust. In turn, this trust encourages repeat business and repeat interactions on social media.
Trust	Reis et al (2011) Sashi (2012) Kang et al (2015)	This is complementary to the element regarding frequency of interaction. As customers interact and communicate more with the business, they start to build trust. This also helps to maintain and encourage further interaction.
Two-way communication	Castronovo and Huang (2012) Shen and Bissell (2013) Chan et al (2014) Labrecque (2014)	A two-way communication also prevents the company's social media page from becoming sales focused. By responding and interacting with customers, companies are better enabling the development of relationships and creating a perception of customer empowerment.
Multiple channels	Chua and Banrjee (2013) He et al (2013) Malthouse et al (2013) Chiu (2015) Lim et al (2015)	This is similar to the point raised in accessibility in that it is important to be easily available to the customer. Additionally, a variety of social media channels helps compliment and reinforce marketing communications and further strengthen relationships.
Reward and recognition	Peters et al (2013) Chan et al (2014) Kim and Drumwright (2016)	By acknowledging certain behaviours and offering something in return helps to boost customer loyalty and, in turn, encouraged more customer interaction.

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A scenic landscape featuring a dirt road that leads towards a blue body of water, possibly a lake or a bay, under a clear blue sky. The foreground is filled with dry, brownish vegetation, and the background shows a distant shoreline with some buildings and trees.

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