

**SOCIAL MEDIA AS A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION TOOL BY
SAFARICOM LTD**

By

DAISY CHEBET MUTAI

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DECLARATION

This research project is my own original work and has not been presented for award of a degree in any university.

Signature. . . S f c ^ C Date

DAISY CHEBET MUTAI

D/61/P/8497/04

This research project has been submitted for review with our approval as University supervisors.

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ELIUD O. MUDUDA

Lecturer

School of Business

University of Nairobi

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Finally and most importantly, I thank the almighty God for bringing me this far and for giving me the strength and good health to do this project. I pride in His name because He means well for me all the time. Indeed God is good all the time and all the time God is good.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to the happy memory of my late father, Mr. Caleph Mutai whose love and guidance I dearly miss. He instilled in me the values of discipline and a thirst for knowledge from an early age.

To my mother who has been a daily source of strength, encouragement and a role model.

To my husband for believing in me and offering both academic and moral support throughout the project.

To my children for their love.

ABSTRACT

The emergence of new digital technologies and social media has also had a dramatic impact on the invariable change in communication and changed the rules for strategic communications. This growing popularity is making its mark on companies as well as individuals. With the increased use in companies' activities, it has become important to understand the impact of the on communications practice and; strategic communications being a fairly recent phenomenon, the literature on the topic is somewhat limited. This study examined the usage of social media as a strategic communication tool in service delivery in Kenyan firms. Specifically this study sought to; determine the factors that have influenced the adoption of social media in service delivery and also establish how the application of social media as a strategic communication tool enhances service delivery by Safaricom Limited.

This study was a case study. The population of study consisted of managers of Safaricom Limited in selected departments. Stratified sampling was employed. Primary data was collected from managers through use of interview guides. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires. The filled and completed interview guides containing data were first edited then coded to facilitate analysis. Data was analyzed through content analysis. SPSS software aided in carrying the analysis; this included frequency distribution tables and charts.

The study found out that social media ensured faster and instant information dissemination of information on the product and services and further ensured faster responses and feedback from customers. Social media was also employed in communication with the public on company matters; in customer relations management and managing a crisis with the company's. The study concludes that Safaricom has highly adopted social media tools on most of its major day to day activities and it has been effective in the service delivery. The study recommends for continued embrace of social media for any organization which wants to remain competitive in the market; however, social media tools need to be handled with high professionalism owing to the damaging effect they have on a company's reputation if mishandled.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.1.1 Kenyan Context	2
1.1.2 Communication Process	3
1.1.3 Strategic Communication Tool	4
1.1.4 Safaricom Limited	5
1.2 Research Problem	5
1.3 Objectives of the Study	6
1.4 Value of the Study	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2. Social Media Approaches	8
2.2.1 Social Network Theory	8
2.2.2 Resource-Based Perspective	9
2.2.3 The Dynamic Capabilities Approach	10
2.3. Technology and Strategy Adoption	11
2.4 Factors Influencing Growth and Adoption	13
2.5 Social Media and Service Delivery	15
2.5.1 Social Media on Customer Relations Management	15
2.5.2. Social Media and Customer Problem Resolution	17
2.5.3 Effect of Social Media on Advertising and Marketing	18

2.5.4 Increase the Brand awareness	19
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	21
3.1 Introduction	21
3.2 Research Design	21
3.3 Data Collection	21
3.4 Data Analysis	22
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	23
4.1 Introduction	23
4.2 Background information	23
4.3 Social Media and Service Delivery	25
4.4 Discussion of the Results	33
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	35
5.1 Introduction	35
5.2 Summary of the Findings	35
5.3 Conclusions	39
5.4 Recommendations	40
5.5. Suggestions For Further Research	40
5.6 Limitations of the Study	40
REFERENCES	43
APPENDICES	48
Appendix I: Interview Guide	48

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Academic Qualification Level.....	24
Table 4.2 Social Media and Communication with the Public on Company Matters.....	28
Table 4.3 Social media Effectiveness in Internal Communication and Interaction among Employees.....	29
Table 4.4 Adoption of Social Media Tools in Customer Relations Management.....	30
Table 4.5 Use Social Media Tools in Managing a Crisis With The Company's Stakeholders.....	31

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 Age Of the Respondents.....	23
Figure 4.2 Duration worked at Safaricom.....	24
Figure 4.3 Respondents Department.....	25
Figure 4.4 Social Media and Advertising, Marketing and Selling of Products/Services ..	27

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The emergence of the Internet and social media has had a tremendous impact on the theory and practice of public relations, advertising and on marketing practitioners as tools for communicating with strategic publics. For instance, according to Center for Media Research, (2004), advertising spending on the Internet has outpaced all other traditional media Wright and Hinson (2009) also established that public relations professionals perceive social media positively with respect to strategic communication. Strategic communications, as defined by Hallahan et al. 2007, is "purposeful use of communications by an organization to fulfill its mission" (p.4).

Modern media practices have evolved significantly from their traditional forms, with the key concepts of this 'new media' being participation and interactivity (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 1) (Anderson, 2007). As social networking sites continue to grow in popularity, firms can no longer solely rely on traditional mediums (print, radio, TV, etc.) to enforce public perception of their product. Conversely, these new communication channels also provide organizations with a way to discover and maintain a persistent connection with their most vocal constituents. By harnessing this social networking information organizations can use it to help identify their most influential consumers, drive participation in product development, and improve brand sentiment. While some organizations may still question the business relevance of social networking, un-monitored conversations that impact their business are likely occurring online right now. And as many companies have learned, it is important to be involved in those conversations. Ultimately, social networks should be viewed as a channel that organizations need to monitor and engage in.

The growing popularity of social media and Web 2.0 applications is making its mark on companies as well as individuals. With more than 500 million people using Facebook, for example, organizations have realized that they need to be where their customers, future employees and other stakeholders are. The potential benefits of social media for organizations are several: in addition to customer contact, social media-can be used for facilitating knowledge work within the organization, faster and easier information

transfer, and increased co-operation between departmental barriers (Fuchs-Kittowski et al. 2009).

1.1.1 Kenyan Context

The emergence of new digital technologies and social media has also had a dramatic impact on the invariable change in communication. The term, social media, is the new "buzz word" in the communications and marketing industry (O Reilly, 2005). It is the current label for digital technologies that allow people to connect, interact, produce and share content. Among the most popular social network services include Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, and Foursquare. In addition to social network services, there are many other services including social bookmarking tools and news sites, such as Digg, Delicious and Mixx, online platform sites, such as Ning, which allow people to create their own social network, and video sharing websites, such as YouTube, all of which make up the social media landscape.

In Kenya, the adoption of Social Media within organizations is a new phenomenon. The social web is a fast-moving, constantly changing network of information in organizations. A new report released in January 2012 places Kenyans as the second top users of Twitter in Africa. Kenya was ranked behind South Africans, and tweet more than giants Nigerians, Egyptians and Moroccans despite having a lesser population. The study conducted by Portland's Communications also adds that 57 per cent of these tweets are from mobile devices and are driving the growth of social media in Africa (Daily Nation, 27th January 2012). Social media has become a vital tool for coordinating many activities globally. Kenya has not been left out since internet penetration is rapidly growing, though still low at about 4 million internet users which represent around 10% of the population. For example, Facebook penetration is estimated to be 2.7% of the population and 79% of the internet users which is relatively low. Facebook and twitter are the most used social media platforms in Kenya and have been used successfully to coordinate many activities. Social media upsurge was really felt during the time for the Kenyans for Kenya Initiative where over 650,000,000 Shillings was collected to help the hunger stricken Kenyans. "Kenyans4kenya" trend was used on twitter to mobilize for funds as well as on

Facebook. Consequently, the Kenyan doctors' strike has not been spared by this technology as evident in the Facebook group. They have used both Facebook and twitter to coordinate their activities successfully in what they call the Blue Revolution.

Various Kenyan companies especially in the service and financial sectors have recently incorporated social media in their activities. This has mostly been incorporated in their customer care services, marketing; branding; product development and innovation through feedback and comments from customers who help the gain insight on new product development or enhancement. Social media has also facilitated data mining- that is, there is a lot of intelligence gathering of data from customers through monitoring and listening; this on the other hand gives the customers perception on the products and the organizations image at large.

1.1.2 Communication Process

Communication is a complex, ongoing process that brings us into contact with the people in our world. Often communication is viewed as a straightforward exchange of messages between a speaker and a listener, but this is a naïve view. As indicated in this chapter, communication is a symbolic process of sharing meanings. A key to interpreting communication is to find the meanings of messages, and those meanings are found in people, not in words (Galvin & Wilkinson, 2006).

Communication is a continuous process that begins with a first encounter between people and does not end until the last encounter in their lives. These encounters may involve functional messages that serve practical purposes, or, in cases of close ties, the encounters may also involve nurturing messages that convey a sense of caring and personal connection. Over time, members of a relationship develop increasingly predictable communication patterns and, if they become close, create a relational culture or similar worldview (Wood & Julia, 2000).

Effective communicators are those who are able to select the most appropriate symbols or messages for specific other persons and who are able to interpret the intended message symbols of other speakers. For effective communication to occur, the speaker and

listener must share the same meanings for the symbolic messages they exchange (Galvin & Wilkinson, 2006).

1.1.3 Strategic Communication Tool

Strategic Communication can mean either communicating a concept, a process, or data that satisfies a long term strategic goal of an organization by allowing facilitation of advanced planning, or communicating over long distances usually using international telecommunications or dedicated global network assets to coordinate actions and activities of operationally significant commercial, non-commercial and military business or combat and logistic subunits. It can also mean the related function within an organization, which handles internal and external communication processes (Argenti et al 2005).

In many cases, strategic communications is aligned with an organization's overall strategy and includes advertising, public relations and marketing as disciplines under its umbrella (Hallahan et al., 2007). The emergence of the Internet and social media has had a tremendous impact on the theory and practice of advertising, public relations and marketing disciplines (Chung, Kim, Trammell & Porter, 2007; Pavlik, 2007; Scoble & Israel, 2006; Scott, 2010; Wright & Hinson, 2010). Marketing, advertising and public relations programs were once developed well in advance and released on the practitioners' timetable, but social media have created a demand for real-time, two-way communication programs that engage publics and evolve based on the conversation (Scott, 2010). Because of its ability to organically connect people, social media have become essential to public relations, advertising and marketing practitioners (also commonly known as strategic communicators) as tools for communicating with strategic publics. Social media allow marketers to communicate with segmented markets virtually automatically

1.1.4 Safaricom Limited

Safaricom Ltd is a leading mobile network operator in Kenya. It was formed in 1997 as a fully owned subsidiary of Telkom Kenya. In May 2000, Vodafone group Pic of the United Kingdom acquired a 40% stake and management responsibility for the company. As of January 17, 2011, Robert Collymore is the CEO; he succeeded Michael Joseph on November 1, 2010, after Joseph's ten years as Safaricom CEO (Emmanuel, 2010). Recent reports appearing in the cross section of the press indicate that Vodafone Pic of UK only owns 35% and the remaining 5% is owned by a little known company, Mobitelea Ventures Limited.

Safaricom employs over 2500 people mainly stationed in Nairobi and other big cities like Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru and Eldoret in which it manages retail outlets. Currently, it has nationwide dealerships to ensure customers across the country have access to its products and services. Safaricom has been in the forefront in using social media tools such as Face book, twitter in its service delivery since it's adoption over one year ago.

1.2 Research Problem

According to Lewis (2010), professionals in various industries have endured the "trial by Fire" method of learning how to effectively use social media as strategic communication for products and businesses, and there is still much to be learned. The communication environment has changed significantly during the last two decades. These changes have affected both the theory and practice of all areas of communication. Among these changes include a more integrated approach to organizational communication including, but not limited to, blurring the lines of advertising and public relations. The different areas of communications were once very compartmentalized in their respective silos. Marketing, public relations, advertising, sales promotions, events and personal selling were often separate entities with different communications and objectives. Those areas are merging to consolidate the messages and communicate more meaningfully with customers on a united front.

A number of Kenyan companies are now experimenting with social media. Many of these businesses have come to understand the potential value of social media and have gone

ahead to act on it. From creation of Facebook Fanpages, a presence on Twitter, and even blogging for some, these businesses are now active in social channels. Social media has already become an indispensable tool for communication here in Kenya; recent activities on Kenyan firms on social media should convince anyone of the benefits and especially as a business owner. However, some of these organisations have been caught off-guard by the sheer number of technologies and are at loss on which technologies to use, to what end, and most importantly how best to integrate them within the very structure of their organizations. This scenario can be averted if there is enough and reliable research on social media adoption by firms in the Kenyan environment.

As Wright and Hinson (2009) established, it is important to understand professionals' attitudes and perceptions on social media to better understand its impact on communications practice. Social media and its impact on strategic communications is a fairly recent phenomenon, so the empirical research on the topic is somewhat limited. Social media adoption in Kenyan firms being a new phenomenon, there is little literature on their impact on Kenyan firms' activities. From the researcher's observation no notable study has been conducted on the relationship between social media and strategic communication of Kenyan firms and more so in the telecommunication industry where social media has been adopted to a larger extent. Hence this left a research gap that needed to be filled. It is from the background that the research sought to conduct a study to examine the usage of social media as a strategic communication tool in service delivery in Kenyan firms, and more specifically on Safaricom Ltd. The study was expected to establish tangible ways that organizations can extract measurable business value from social networking by leveraging it in customer relationship management (CRM) solutions. The study sought to answer the following research questions: first, what were the factors that had influenced the adoption of social media in service delivery at Safaricom Ltd? Secondly, how does the application of social media as a strategic communication tool enhanced service delivery by Safaricom Ltd?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The research objectives of this study were:

- i. To examine the application of social media as a strategic communication tool in various divisions within Safaricom.
- ii. To determine how social media enhances service delivery by Safaricom Ltd.

1.4 Value of the Study

The findings of this study would be of great importance to the following:

This study was expected to be of great significance to the management of Safaricom while making policies and strategies on strategic communication. The study provides more information on the usage and impact of social media on the organisation service delivery hence it would help the management appreciate the role played by social media in the organisation and therefore make appropriate decisions on how to tap into the existing potential provided by social media. The finding would help in informing the organisation communication/public relation strategy.

This study was of help to government institutions such as communication commission of Kenya (CCK) while making strategies to regulate or control social media. CCK is responsible for facilitating the development of the information and communications sectors (including multimedia and telecommunications services). This study would guide them in future while carrying out their responsibilities and specifically on social media.

The studies on social media remain largely unexplored. This study would therefore contribute additional information on this new innovation in public relation. Other researchers may find necessary information in their future scholarly work on similar area. The study would also make recommendations for further studies that can be a platform of future scholarly research studies.

This study sought to examine the usage of social media as a strategic communication tool in service delivery in Kenyan firms. The study was limited to Safaricom Limited, a leading telecommunication company in Kenya. This organization was chosen for the study due its high adoption of Social media in its service delivery.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the information from other researchers who have carried out their research in the same field of study. The specific areas covered here are theoretical; which discusses the theories that support and are related to the study. The next area of discussion is the empirical review which the study explores and compares the findings of other researchers in this field of study.

2.2. Social Media Approaches

Majority of businesses use social media to enhance their relationships with their customers. But more than half are also expanding their use of social media to drive innovation in their products and services, and for recruitment. Companies are finding a wide variety of business uses for social media. Around the world, majority of the organizations are either expanding or initiating plans to utilize social media for sales and marketing purposes.

This section discusses the theories that guide the study. It provides definition of relationships between the variables so the reader can understand the theorized relationships between them. This study will review social network theory, the resource based approach and the dynamic capabilities approach.

2.2.1 Social Network Theory

Social networks and network theories are of interest to various research fields and have also gained popularity among larger audiences during the past years due to the rapid increase of web-based social network sites (SNSs) (Lewis et al., 2008). Social networks have, however, existed as long as humans have; they are not a new phenomenon, demons (2009) defines social networks as *"ongoing relations among people that matter to those engaged in the group"*. Social networks may exist for a specific reason (e.g. cancer support group) or for a more general reason (families, friends) and can be either relatively permanent or flexible and change over time (demons, 2009).

Social network theory views social relationships in terms of nodes and ties. Nodes are the individual actors within the networks, and ties are the relationships between the actors.

There can be many kinds of ties between the nodes. In its most simple form, a social network is a map of all of the relevant ties between the nodes being studied. The network can also be used to determine the social capital of individual actors. These concepts are often displayed in a social network diagram, where nodes are the points and ties are the lines. According to Westland (2009) "Social networks are structures consisting of members (represented as nodes on a network graph) that share one or more specific types of special interests, such as values, visions, ideas, financial exchange, friends, kinship, dislike, conflict, trade, web links, and so forth."

The power of social network theory stems from its difference from traditional sociological studies, which assume that it is the attributes of individual actors - whether they are friendly or unfriendly, smart or dumb, etc. - that matter. Social network theory produces an alternate view, where the attributes of individuals are less important than their relationships and ties with other actors within the network. This approach has turned out to be useful for explaining many real-world phenomena, but leaves less room for individual agency, the ability for individuals to influence their success; so much of it rests within the structure of their network.

Social networks have also been used to examine how companies interact with each other, characterizing the many informal connections that link executives together, as well as associations and connections between individual employees at different companies. These networks provide ways for companies to gather information, deter competition, and even collude in setting prices or policies. The study of social networks has also become easier with people living digital lives and thus the data being easier to retrieve (Adamic et al., 2003).

2.2.2 Resource-Based Perspective

The resource-based approach sees firms with superior systems and structures being profitable not because they engage in strategic investments that may deter entry and raise prices above long run costs, but because they have markedly lower costs, or offer markedly higher quality or product performance. This approach focuses on the rents

accruing to the owners of scarce firm-specific resources rather than the economic profits from product market positioning.

The resource-based perspective puts both vertical integration and diversification into a new strategic light. Both can be viewed as ways of capturing rents on scarce, firm-specific assets whose services are difficult to sell in intermediate markets (Teece, 2007). Empirical work on the relationship between performance and diversification by Wemerfelt and Montgomery (1988) provides evidence for this proposition. It is evident that the resource-based perspective focuses on strategies for exploiting existing firm-specific assets. However, the resource-based perspective also invites consideration of managerial strategies for developing new capabilities (Wemerfelt, 1984). Indeed, if control over scarce resources is the source of economic profits, then it follows that such issues as skill acquisition, the management of knowledge and know-how (Shuen, 1994), and learning become fundamental strategic issues.

2.2.3 The Dynamic Capabilities Approach

The global competitive battles in high-technology industries such as information services, and software have demonstrated the need for an expanded paradigm to understand how competitive advantage is achieved. Well-known companies like IBM, Texas Instruments, Philips, and others appear to have followed a 'resource based strategy' of accumulating valuable technology assets, often guarded by an aggressive intellectual property stance. However, this strategy is often not enough to support a significant competitive advantage. Winners in the global marketplace have been firms that can demonstrate timely responsiveness and rapid and flexible product innovation, coupled with the management capability to effectively coordinate and redeploy internal and external competences. (Shuen, 1994).

The term 'dynamic' refers to the capacity to renew competences so as to achieve congruence with the changing business environment; certain innovative responses are required when time-to-market and timing are critical, the rate of technological change is rapid, and the nature of future competition and markets difficult to determine. The term 'capabilities' emphasizes the key role of strategic management in appropriately adapting,

integrating, and reconfiguring internal and external organizational skills, resources, and functional competences to match the requirements of a changing environment (Andrews, 1987). The notion that competitive advantage requires both the exploitation of existing internal and external firm-specific capabilities and developing new ones is partially developed in Wernerfelt (1984). Several writers have recently offered insights and evidence on how firms can develop their capability to adapt and even capitalize on rapidly changing environment. The dynamic capabilities approach seeks to provide a coherent framework which can both integrate existing conceptual and empirical knowledge, and facilitate prescription.

2.3. Technology and Strategy Adoption

Adoption of technology in organizations is an unfolding process consisting of stages. The initiation stage, which is the point where a new idea is introduced, sanctioned, and accepted for adoption (Rogers, 1983). The implementation stage which consists of the actual management of changes that occur in the organization as the innovation is put into operation. Zaltman et al. (1973) model emphasizes the innovation process beginning with the individual's awareness and decision to adopt an innovation. In the second stage, it focuses on organizational characteristics that affect the innovation process. Rogers (1983) model similarly focuses on both the initiation and implementation stages of organizational innovation but considers organizational characteristics in both stages. The initiation stage of this model begins when the organization searches the environment for innovations of potential value to the organization. In the implementation stage, the innovation is modified to fit the particular organization structure and its needs.

Internet and World Wide Web technology offer opportunities for creating new and significantly different educational applications. But technological functionality is not the sole force currently driving its rapid adoption. Rather, the hope held by many in the educational community that new ways of teaching and learning that the technology makes possible appears to be increasing the rate of adoption. Concomitantly, many instructional technologists and educators now reject technical superiority alone as a sufficient basis for the successful diffusion of Internet and Web-based innovations.

David Jaffee (1998), in his analysis of resistance to asynchronous learning networks (ALN)—which would include many Internet/Web based learning applications—reminds us that classroom teaching is an established practice and cultural tradition of the teaching faculty. It centralizes power and influence with the instructor and serves as a focal point of professional identity. Jaffee suggests that institutionalization of the classroom teaching model is a major factor in reluctance to adopt ALN technology. He also observed that faculty exhibit less opposition to the use of televideo for transmission of classroom lectures, perhaps because the classroom setting is maintained between transmission and reception sites. The virtual classrooms afforded by ALNs and Web based learning modes, on the other hand, can be viewed as a threat in this context. He notes, however, that where professional identity is based on classroom presentation and student "reaction" to it, a disinterested and disengaged student audience might adversely affect that identity. Given that circumstance, Jaffee suggests that the ALN (Internet/Web) based virtual classroom concept might be conceived, or at least presented and promoted, as professionally enhancing.

Thus the focus of the process has shifted to the potential adopter and the organization into which the technology will be integrated. An adopter based, instrumentalist approach incorporating both macro-and micro-level perspectives now appears to be the most widely used to promote the adoption and diffusion of Internet technology. Ernest Burkman's (1987) user-oriented development approach exemplifies those currently favored for the adoption and diffusion of instructional technology generally and Internet technology in particular. It consists of 5 adopter-focused steps: 1) potential adopter identification, 2) measurement of their relevant perceptions, 3) user (adopter)-friendly product design and development, 4) informing the potential user (adopter) of the product, and 5) support after adoption. An alternative model developed at the University of Minnesota's Telecommunication Center recommended a complete analysis of educational need and user characteristics along with the identification of a new educational technology's relevant and appropriate features and factors (Stockdill and Morehouse, 1992).

Tessmer (1991) stresses the need to analyze the environment in which the potential adopter is expected to use the technology. This process includes identifying the relevant physical and use characteristics of both the instructional situation and the support system. The approach is intended to ensure actual, correct and continual product use. An adoption analysis approach (Farquhar and Surry, 1994) considers the process from the broader perspective of both user-perception and organization attributes, resulting in a plan for carrying out the adoption of technology that is rooted in an organizational context and addresses issues of concern to the intended user. Product and application design and development are also significantly influenced by this approach.

No single approach or process may be sufficient to ensure successful innovation adoption. But clearly, Internet and Web-based technology is individual-user based in application, and the adoption/diffusion process should start at that level. It should focus on the potential adopters and address their characteristics in the context of the environment in which they will be using the technology.

2.4 Factors Influencing Growth and Adoption

As social networking sites explode in popularity, the hype and interest continue to build. Facebook alone topped 200 million users in 2009 (Wauter 2009) and it's now estimated to be more than 500 million people. But sorting the fact from the hype can be a challenge. Social networking at a high level is described as the convergence of technologies that make it possible for individuals to easily communicate, share information, and form new communities online. But the big question today is not what social networking is, but rather what it means for businesses. While social networks began as the province of individuals, businesses are now trying to capitalize on this trend as they search for specific strategies and tactics to derive value from it. In fact, Gartner Research shows a large increase in investment in social networking by businesses (Metz, 2008). Used effectively, social networking sites can enable marketing professionals, salespeople, and customer service agents to develop meaningful relationships with customers in new ways. But the true value from social networking can't be achieved in isolation. Rather, organizations need to take stock of their core business processes and customer

management initiatives and identify how social networking can further enhance and extend those initiatives.

2.3.1. Online and Collaborative Security

The initial response to Internet was poor because of people's perception and concern about online security. But multiple forms of security have been introduced since then and online banking usage has significantly increased with customers becoming more confident. Recent studies in the US internet banking show that the number of reported data breaches has dropped significantly: 404 in 2010 with 26 million records exposed, compared to 604 in 2009 with 221 million records exposed (Javelin Strategy & Research, 2011).

Customers will use social media sites for organization activities only if they are convinced about its security and privacy aspects and confident about transaction authenticity. Many institutions are unsure of how to use social media effectively in their businesses. They are grappling with issues like balancing privacy requirements of customers against use of new forms of marketing. While there are no readymade solutions available today, technology and collaborative processes will surely evolve over a period of time, allaying these fears and making business via social media highly secure and reliable (Metz, 2008).

2.3.1.2 Increasing Online Population

Broadband and mobile penetration has increased manifold in the recent past and the number of social media users has improved tremendously. Also, new services such as gaming and downloadable applications are all interwoven to provide a complete experience for the customer. Networking sites therefore, are expected to grab a higher share of the time spent by customers on the Internet (Metz, 2008).

2.3.2 Widening Social Media Services

Social media services were introduced with the primary objective of providing a simple tool to network and communicate with friends. However, they have gradually expanded to offer other kinds of services to keep the user hooked and glued. Alongside this, an

increasing number of Gen Y members have entered the workforce and customer base with multiple relationships. Organizations are trying to make consolidated viewing possible, a facility already provided by some independent service providers. But customers want more than just consolidated information, which can be made possible by partnering with social media (Wauter 2009).

2.5 Social Media and Service Delivery

With more and more business activities now leveraging social media, the need for a coordinated and consistent approach becomes critical. In part, this is to ensure that social networks are being used properly and appropriately across the business. But it also enables the enterprise to achieve better synergies between individual projects to encourage the sharing of best practices and risk management. In particular, the need for greater coordination on marketing, business development and product development will become increasingly important as these three functions begin to engage customers in two-way conversations over social networks.

The integration of social media in customer service companies revolutionized the way companies respond to their customers' needs and wants. A lot of enterprises today have equipped their customer service departments with email and SMS messaging. This can improve customer satisfaction, as consumers feel that they can communicate with the company through a channel readily available to them. Social media platforms allow customer networks to be bigger, faster and better organized. They increase the downside of getting service wrong and the upside of getting it right. In this section of the study the researcher discusses the research work of other authors on the impact of social media in the day to day activities of organizations.

2.5.1 Social Media on Customer Relations Management

At the heart of any business are customers and social networking represents an opportunity to build even more mutually rewarding and candid relationships with those customers. But for organizations to realize tangible business benefits, they need to better plan, manage, and measure their social networking efforts. This is precisely where CRM intersects with social networking. Adam Sarner, Gartner analyst, contends that in social

networking, "CRM is where you are going to see the ROI in the business model as opposed to anywhere else. It's all about connecting and engaging in new ways with customers," (McKay 2009). Customers using social networks want meaningful engagement with companies. And businesses want a way to manage and measure their forays in social networking. When social networks and CRM work together well, businesses gain the ability to better listen to customer conversations and engage social customers on their own terms while managing and measuring their efforts to do so. Social networks, by bringing in otherwise untapped and unmanaged online conversations, also help organizations get closer to a true 360-degree view of the customer so they can further optimize their marketing, sales, and customer service efforts (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

The combination of social networking and CRM provides an enormous opportunity to enrich customer interactions and give businesses a way to manage and measure how they use social networking while successfully engaging social customers. A Gartner Research report calls social networking a "disruptive influence" on the CRM market, challenging companies to innovate and adjust (Metz, 2008).

There are, however, some basic strategies that can help organizations better leverage social networking as part of their overall customer management strategy: i). Treat social networking as a new channel within CRM - Many companies already use CRM solutions to manage customers, contacts, interactions, and communications, so it makes sense to continue to use customer management tools when these activities move into social networking channels, ii). Enhance and extend CRM through social networking - While social networking activities can be considered as an additional channel in CRM, they also extend and enhance the capabilities of CRM with new ways of engaging customers and managing conversations, iii). Play to the strengths of both CRM and social networks - Use CRM and social networking sites together to better listen to customers, analyze information, and respond to customers in a way that's meaningful to them (Fluss & Eisenfeld, 2009).

Social networking sites also offer the chance of communication in cases where mobility is often a hindrance to social interaction. Another benefit to communicating through social networking sites is the promotion of education and news. People can share information via links, reviews and applications. They may source this information from other places and share them with others or provide their own information for education, updates of news or support. Businesses are also honing in on the ability to market and advertise through social networking sites. "New media shifts the balance of control for production and distribution of content between corporations and consumers" (Young, 2006) and social networking sites form part of this balance. Through online social networking, companies are better able to advertise to specific markets or discover, monitor and engage with loyal brand advocates. Conversely, they can also "discover disgruntled customers and realise their concerns" (Hunter, 2008). In addition to advertising through these sites, they can notify of products, announcements or competitions (Hunter, 2008) or research target markets and industry trends. They can socialise and network with industry peers (Hunter, 2008), build industry contacts (Jansson, n.d.) (Hunter, 2008), research industry trends and updates (Reitsma, 2010), or tag and track discussions on specific topics or events (Hunter, 2008). Communication through social networking sites can also help employment through job advertising (Jansson, n.d.) or by showcasing of talent. Many aspiring artists show off their skills through such sites as *YouTube* or *DeviantArt*.

2.5.2. Social Media and Customer Problem Resolution

Social media isn't all upside, however, and its potential to dramatically publicize poor performance has been well documented. Blog posts and YouTube rants can attract wide readership and cause significant damage to brand reputations. Musician Dave Carroll's YouTube video "United Breaks Guitars"⁵ received more than 9.4 million views and secured what nine months' fruitless correspondence via phone, email and fax with customer service could not—an offer from the airline to repair damages to his guitar, as well as flight vouchers worth \$1,200 (Caroline & Wollan, 2011).

At the same time, one of the largest opportunities to tap the potential of social media is in customer service. Innovative companies are using social media to be more proactive in

seeking customer feedback and engaging customers to diagnose and resolve problems. From Microsoft to Dell and from Best Buy to Comcast, companies are using social media to enable customers to get answers directly from other customers or specially trained employees—empowering their most knowledgeable customers to serve as an informal ecosystem of answer centers. Other innovations include cloud monitoring services such as those offered by RightNow and Salesforce.com, which provide the ability to track and respond to Twitter-borne and other online complaints customers make (Caroline & Wollan, 2011).

2.5.3 Effect of Social Media on Advertising and Marketing

Attracting and retaining customers, and growing customer relationships, have always been top priorities for business. But in a globalized economy it is more critical - and challenging - than ever to build vibrant customer relationships across geographies, industries and at all levels throughout organizations (Scott, 2007). In a study by Coleman Parkes Research on the survey of companies and how they use social media technologies to attract and retain customers; several key themes emerged: that is; Social media technologies have the potential to transform the way companies build and manage relationships with their customers.

Companies that understand the impact of these trends can improve their competitive position in the market. Those that do not adapt to rapid changes or move fast enough to respond to those changes will lose customers and fall behind in the market. Social media technologies are reaching a turning point - no longer lingering outside the domain of IT departments. Facebook, LinkedIn, blogs, wikis, instant messaging, live Web chat, short-text blogging such as Twitter, and user comments such as product reviews and submissions to sites such as Digg have combined to create a powerful means of communications, collaboration and knowledge sharing for large and small businesses (Avanade, 2008).

Marketing, public relations, advertising, sales promotions,, events and personal selling were often separate entities with different communications and objectives. Those areas are merging to consolidate the messages and communicate more meaningfully with

customers on a united front. As the industry has moved to a more integrated approach, advertising and public relations education also has evolved (Larsen & Len Rois, 2006). Many programs have moved to an integrated curriculum, which includes integration of advertising, public relations, and marketing concepts through a strategic communications approach.

The consumer is now creating his/her own sales experience. As a result, the control of the message is now in the hands of consumers, which is often a scary proposition to most marketing and strategic communications professionals. But smart marketers and "brave clients" embrace this notion and seek to empower consumers with that control. Strategic communications professionals have to find ways to entice customers to engage with their clients' brands in an honest and authentic way. To do so involves in depth research and interaction with the community wherein the target audience resides, and the ability to give them what they need. Scott (2007) reports, "Web marketing is about delivering useful content at just the precise moment that a buyer needs it" (p. 15). Engagement with customers and "joining the conversations" has replaced former objectives of exposure and delivering one-way messages. Social media have enabled strategic communications to meet customers and strategic publics where they are and join in the conversation. For example, in a niche social network such as 918moms.com for mothers in the Tulsa, Oklahoma area, representatives from local organisations can read and respond to discussions or provide offers based on the opinions of users. In a large, non-niche social network like Facebook, a business may have a profile or fan page for a representative or brand mascot. The business can actively become part of the conversation-among their friends or fans and provide information, videos, photos, special offers and more.

2.5.4 Increase the Brand awareness

Social networking sites can also provide a wealth of information about customers and their interests, lifestyles, and attitudes-data that might otherwise be difficult or impossible to acquire. Paired with the right analysis capabilities, publicly available customer data from social networking sites can provide an additional layer of insight into customer preferences, behaviors, and sentiment, which can lead to more successful sales interactions. The first step in engaging social customers is to listen to what they're

saying. While social networking sites provide a rich source of customer opinions and attitudes, the challenge is to capture this information in a useful form and in a way that benefits the business. Social networking also provides an effective channel for introducing new products and services to customers while gathering real-time feedback (Scott, 2007). Ford Motor Co. broke with tradition by launching its 2011 Explorer crossover vehicle on Facebook, achieving higher levels of customer interest than an ultra-expensive Super Bowl commercial (which ran to nearly \$3 million for a 30-second spot in 2010) for significantly less money (Caroline & Wollan, 2011).

The Social Networking can help organizations increase the awareness of their brand and products and improve market sentiment by: Identifying key influences in each product area to increase brand awareness; automatically tracking public online conversations of interest within the customer system of record; rating and tracking the sentiment of specific social networking conversations; tracking online reaction to new announcements or developments; keeping track of competitors by monitoring their public online conversations and; using social networks as a source of market research by creating online focus groups (Ganley et al., 2009).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the method that will be used to carry out the study. The success or failure and the credibility or confidence on the results of this research process will depend largely on the methods, techniques among other factors. This section of the study entailed the research design, data collection procedures and the data analysis process.

3.2 Research Design

This research problem can best be studied through the use of a case study. The case study method gave in-depth information on the usage of social media as a strategic communication tool in service delivery by Safaricom limited. The importance of a case study is emphasized by Young (1960) and also by Kothari (1990) who both acknowledge that a case study is a powerful form of qualitative analysis that involves a careful and complete observation of a social unit, irrespective of what type of unit is under study. A case study entails an in-depth investigation of one participant. The advantages of case study methods are that they provide a great amount of description and detail about a particular case. This research design was therefore deemed fit for the study since it sought to get in depth information and description from Safaricom managers and through the use of an interview guide.

3.3 Data Collection

Data collection is gathering empirical evidence in order to gain new insights about a situation and answer questions that prompt undertaking of the research (Flick, 1998). Both Primary and secondary data were collected. Data was collected from various managers in charge of selected units. Preferably, these were managers in such units as Customer Service, Marketing and Public Relations. The study used an interview guide in collecting information from such managers as it gathered in depth information. The secondary data was sourced through a review of journals, library books, reports and publications.

3.4 Data Analysis

Information obtained was cleaned up, ordered and appropriately categorized. The responses were then analyzed through content analysis technique. The analyzed data was presented in distribution tables and charts.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on data analysis, interpretation and presentation of the data collected in the study. The purpose of the study was to examine the usage of social media as a strategic communication tool in service delivery in Safaricom Ltd. To show the relationship between variables, data was presented in form of tables and charts. The study targeted a sample of 9 employees of Safaricom Ltd of which 8 responses were obtained.

4.2 Background information

In this section, the research sought to find out the personal characteristics of respondents who took part in the study; this includes information such as age, department, years worked in the Company and Highest academic qualification attained. The results are presents as below

4.2.1 Age of the Respondents

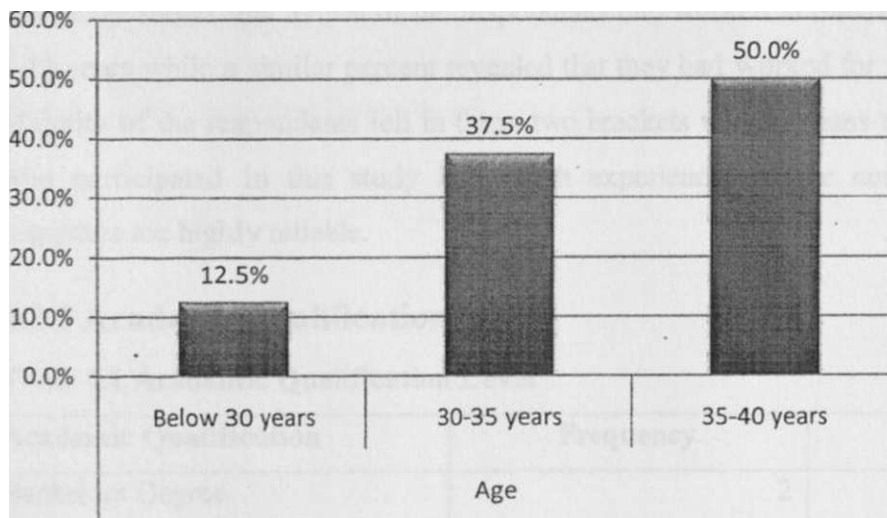


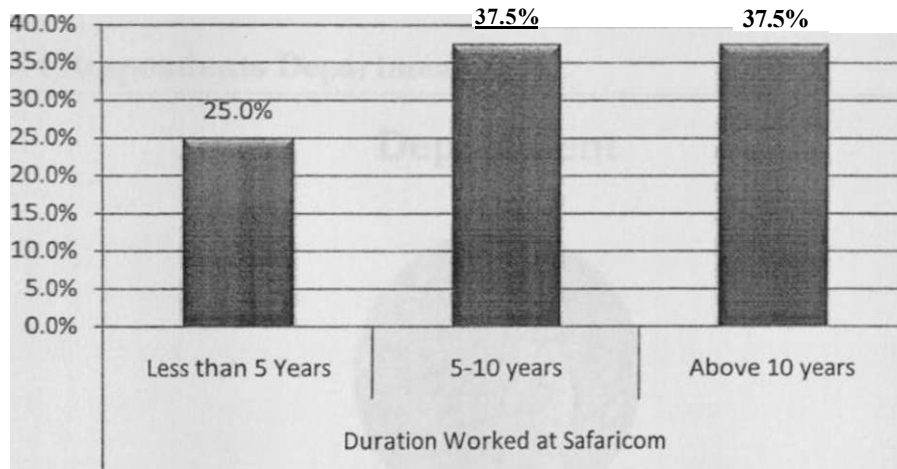
Figure 4.1 Age Of the Respondents

Source: Survey Data, 2012

The study shows that majority (50%) of the respondents were between ages 35-40 years of age while 37.5% were between 30-35 years of age. The respondents to the study were managers from various departments at Safaricom and hence majority of the respondents

were expected to be of mature age hence majority fell between this two age brackets. However, 12.5% of the respondents revealed that they were below 30 years of age.

4.2.2 Duration worked at Safaricom



Source: Survey Data, 2012

Figure 4.2 Duration worked at Safaricom

The study shows that 37.5% of the respondents had worked at Safaricom for a period of 5-10 years while a similar percent revealed that they had worked for more than 10 years. Majority of the respondents fell in these two brackets which means that the respondents who participated in this study had much experience on the company hence their responses are highly reliable.

4.2.3 Academic qualification Level

Table 4.1 Academic Qualification Level

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Bachelors Degree	2	25.0
Chartered Marketer	1	12.5
Post graduate (MBA, Diploma)	5	62.5
Total	• 8	100.0

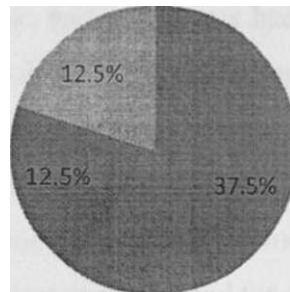
Source: Survey Data, 2012

On the respondents' academic qualification, 62.5% of the respondents revealed that they had reached post graduate level while 25% revealed that they had attained a bachelors

degree as their highest level of education. This shows that, the respondents were highly educated and knowledgeable; this also increases the reliability of the information given by the respondents.

4.2.4 Respondents Department

Department



- Call Centre/Customer Care
- Corporate Communications
- Marketing

Source: Survey Data, 2012

Figure 4.3 Respondents Department

The study targeted a number of departments and from the findings, 37.5% of the respondents were in the call centre/ customer care department while 12.5% were in the marketing and corporate communications departments respectively. The researcher targeted these departments since they interacted with social media tools regularly in their day to day activities. They were rich in information in regard to the usage of social media tools in service delivery in Safaricom.

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4.3 Social Media and Service Delivery

4.3.1 Mode of Social Media Adopted in Safaricom

In this section, the study sought to find out the various forms/ modes of social media that Safaricom had adopted in its service delivery. Majority of the respondents stated that

Facebook and twitter were the mostly used modes of social media at Safaricom. Others included internal chat forum, Google+. One of the respondent stated that Safaricom has adopted an integrated social media approach, harnessing the various available platforms within the online space to achieve a wide range of marketing, customer service excellence and stakeholder engagement objectives.

4.3.2 Factors That Prompted Safaricom to Adopt the Social Media

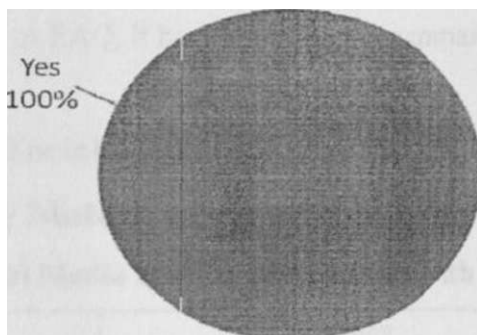
Tools

The respondents revealed that various factors had prompted Safaricom to adopt social media tools. These factors include: customer changing needs to adopt social media; staff available capability to handle requests, need to communicate faster and effectively; customer driven queries and complaints well being; increased use of social media such as facebook and twitter and which are known to most customers. Internet penetration in Kenya and its growth had aggressively pushed the operators to adopt social media as well as the increased manufacture ring and penetration of the smart phones in the market. There has also been a continued decline in data costs making the internet more accessible.

The respondents further revealed that with majority of Kenyans using Facebook and twitter, customers with data enabled devices found it easy to channel queries and feedback on social networks; social networks allow customers to intimate their feelings with products and services. Hence the need to connect with customers on their channel of choice to offer customer support to collect feedback and online marketing had played a role in adopting social media tools at Safaricom; According to one of the respondent, approximately three quarters of those who write about brands do so to praise, while two thirds ask advice about brands. With this insight, it was therefore imperative for Safaricom to embrace Social Media and Digital media as a whole in order to proactively engage the consumers through thevarious brand and products touch points. Moreover, the respondents revealed that, social media is an alternative channel for customer from the voice and SMS which are perceived as not accessible.

4.3.3 Social Media in the Advertising, Marketing and Selling of Safaricom's Products/Services

Social Media in advertising and marketing



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Source: Survey Data, 2012

Figure 4.4 Social Media and Advertising, Marketing and Selling of Products/Services

All the respondents (100%) were in agreement that Safaricom had adopted social media in its advertising, marketing and selling of the Products/Services.

The respondents further explained that this has had an impact on the company whereby customers give feedback for improvement and enhancement of products and services, customers are also able to evaluate and compare with the competitor products, gather market intelligence, and quick review of promotions impact.

The respondents stated that social media had facilitated faster information dissemination, instantaneous on the product and services faster response/ feedback from customers, wider reach of customers through a short time frame, creation of awareness of the products and services which in time can reduce advertising cost on mainstream media. According to the respondents, Social Media provides the company with a direct and targeted approach to selling/promoting, cross sell and up sell the products with immediate feedback and measurable results. With Digital Media as an advertising tool, the company is able to immediately measure the effectiveness.

The respondents indicated that there have been inquiries for products and services via social media, customers have also been called back as leads via twitter and Facebook hence this has improved customer perception towards the brand and customer service in general, it has given customers more information on the products and quick channel to clarify an issue or FAQ, it has also made the campaigns more interactive.

4.3.4 Use of Social Media Tools in the Communication with the Public on Company Matters

Table 4.2 Social Media and Communication with the Public on Company Matters

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	100.0
No	.	.
Total	8	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2012

Table 4.2 above shows that all the respondents (100%) overwhelmingly indicated that Safaricom used social media tools in the communication with the public on company matters.

The study further probed whether social media tools used ensured effective external communication with the public. The respondents revealed that the tools used were effective since they provided almost immediate reaction to issues being addressed. The respondents revealed that the company is able to gauge sentiments whether positive or negative almost instantly and get quick feedback on any communication; when customers get feedback from a fellow user they relate with it much easier, customers prefer to get information from peers who are experts and this is enhanced through social media tools. According to the respondents the customers in this space are opinion leaders who can sway others.

Further the respondents revealed that that the tools used were effective due to the nature of the tools which made them act as a public forum media; hence information penetration is high and within the shortest time. According to the respondents, social media is an

interactive and engaging platform which allows for one-on-one communication, which could be detailed but also tailored to each audience hence its quite effective. The respondents indicated that through social media it's possible to target a specific group in the market; moreover, the information is carefully crafted for the target market.

4.3.5 Whether social Media Tools Facilitated Effective Internal Communication and Interaction among Employees

Table 4.3 Social media Effectiveness in Internal Communication and Interaction among Employees

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	62.5
No	3	37.5
Total	8	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2012

The study shows that majority (62.5%) agreed that social media tools facilitated effective internal communication and interaction among employees. According to the respondents employees are able to be in touch with the happenings, and that employees are able to discuss the queries and provide feedback very fast. They further revealed that because the feeling of not being spied on is eliminated, there is free flow of information; the respondents revealed that the company used various interactive digital tools to better keep the employees engaged. The respondents stated that a consortium of tools including a digitized daily staff bulletin, an internal chat room, a video portal and digital media screens are used; the internal chat forum allowed for visible and interactive communication across the business, hence they facilitated effective internal communication.

However 37.5% indicated that social media did not actually facilitate effective internal communication among employees. According to the respondents, social media use internally has not been highly encouraged in the company and that mostly email and

intranet were used internally to communicate. According to the respondents social media **tools** have not really been officially used in internal communication in Safaricom hence **not** very effective; however, the some respondents were quick to admit that a number of **staff** had opened Facebook and twitter accounts to check what goes on, on Safaricom **pages**.

4.3.5 Adoption of Social Media Tools in Customer Relations Management

Table 4.4 Adoption of Social Media Tools in Customer Relations Management

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	100.0
No	.	.
Total	8	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2012

Here, the study sought to find out whether Safaricom had adopted social media in its customer relations management (CRM) and all the respondents (100%) overwhelmingly agreed that social media had been adopted in the CRM in Safaricom.

The study further sought to establish how effective the social media tools adopted were in facilitating effective customer care and customer relationship management. The respondents revealed that the company was using social media to offer customer support and enhance customer relation through two way feedback process; social media is part of the accessibility options for customers and details here are used to profile customers for CRM enhancement. According to the respondents, it's faster to pass on information; especially when there are system outages, customers either twit or post on the Facebook page and get quick response; customers are communicated on a timely manner. Increased accessibility to services, immediate response and resolution or escalation make customers find social media tools to be a friendly interaction.

Moreover, the respondents revealed that social Media has been crucial in supporting the delivery of customer service excellence. The platform has provided a solid alternative to

other customer relationship management channels and has harnessed the online customers who are able to get help within their environment. CRM on social media has been critical in changing consumer perception on the brand as a whole from an arrogant brand to an easily accessible and effective brand. This has also been a key contributor to the change of sentiment from predominantly negative to mainly positive.

4.3.6 Use Social Media Tools in Managing a Crisis with the Company's Stakeholders

Table 4.5 Use Social Media Tools in Managing a Crisis with the Company's Stakeholders

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	100.0
No	-	-
Total	8	100.0

The study sought to find out whether Safaricom used social media tools in managing a crisis with the company's stakeholders such as customers, shareholders. All the respondents (100%) agreed that they used social media to manage a crisis with the company's stakeholders.

The study further probed how the social media helped discover and solve a crisis with disgruntled stakeholders and realize their concerns; the respondents revealed that social media provides opportunities for personalized engagement with various stakeholders including the customers. The tool has been crucial in managing potential crisis situations such as service outages where through constant engagement and communication with customers, negative situations have been managed and the result has been happy customers. According to the respondents, the use of social media has helped the company pass on quick information on any outages or disruption and this has been a key channel in identifying areas and services affected quickly. For instance, when a product /service do not meet customer expectations, they quickly put this online and others comment and is easy to find a solution.

4.3.7 Comparing the Effectiveness of Social Media and Traditional Mainstream Media in the Service Delivery in Safaricom

On comparing the effectiveness of social media and traditional mainstream media in the service delivery in Safaricom, the respondents revealed that each medium has its pros and cons. While traditional media has a wider reach, social media has a niche reach and offers better opportunities for segmentation and targeting with objective methods on how to measure ROI. However, the respondents revealed that social media is more targeted, more real time and trendy. Social media allows quiet customers to raise their views; it allows engaging customers on any topic on company's matter or products and services.

The respondents further revealed that social media by nature is public therefore, penetration levels is high within a shorter time; it has revolutionized the company's interaction with its customers, i.e. it reaches the customers using and makes it possible to give their feedback immediately. According to the respondents, the use of social media has been effective to a large extent though it's not able to reach as many people as the traditional mainstream media has.

4.3.8 Challenges Experienced In the Adoption and Usage of Social Media in the Service Delivery in Safaricom

The respondents highlighted a number of challenges experienced in adoption and usage of social media tools at Safaricom; this includes: acceptability and adoptability, its prone to abuse, it can have damaging effect if mishandled- it concerns checking what is put in the social media especially when it comes to chat; it doesn't reach the mass market and its only for a specific group.

It was also revealed that some users don't appreciate efforts by businesses to interact with their customers on social media and instead post negative comments; staffing of the channels, scheduling workforce, ideal platform that monitor customer service, that is, time to train and build a pool of internal staff who use the interaction language of social media can also face challenge. Moreover, the respondents stated that there is a challenge

m entrenching social media as a key channel for integrated marketing, stakeholder management, customer relationship management, internal communications and even crisis communications.

4.4 Discussion of the Results

The study found out that Facebook and twitter were the mostly used modes of social media at Safaricom. This are the most highly used social media tools in Kenya according to the CCK statistics whereby they revealed that penetration of Facebook is high amongst Kenya of the population using internet. A study conducted by Portland's Communications also adds that 57 per cent of the tweets are from mobile devices and are driving the growth of social media in Africa (Daily Nation, 2012). According to Wauter (2009) Facebook topped 200 million users in 2009 and it's now estimated to be more than 500 million people. The study found out that with majority of Kenyans using Facebook and twitter, customers with data enabled devices found it easy to channel queries and feedback on social networks by Safaricom.

The study found out that all the respondents were in agreement that Safaricom had adopted social media in its advertising, marketing and selling of the Products/Services. The respondents explained that this has had an impact on the company whereby customers give feedback for improvement and enhancement of products and services, customers are also able to evaluate and compare with the competitor products, gather market intelligence, and quick review of promotions impact. This is in line with Scott (2007) who reported that "Web marketing is about delivering useful content at just the precise moment that a buyer needs it". Engagement with customers and "joining the conversations" has replaced former objectives of exposure and delivering one-way messages.

The respondents overwhelmingly indicated that Safaricom used social media tools in the communication with the public on company matters. The respondents revealed that the tools used were effective since they provided almost immediate reaction to issues being addressed. The respondents revealed that the company is able to gauge sentiments whether positive or negative almost instantly and get quick feedback on any communication; when customers get feedback from a fellow user they relate with it much

easier, customers prefer to get information from peers who are experts and this is enhanced through social media tools. This is in line with the findings of Caroline & Wollan (2011) who found out that companies were using social media to engage customers to diagnose and resolve problems. From Microsoft to Dell and from Best Buy to Comcast, companies are using social media to enable customers to get answers directly from other customers or specially trained employees—empowering their most knowledgeable customers to serve as an informal ecosystem of answer centers. Other companies such as RightNow and Salesforce.com were found to provide the ability to track and respond to Twitter-borne and other online complaints customers make.

The study further sought to establish how effective the. The study found out that the company was using social media to offer customer support and enhance customer relation through two way feedback process; social media is part of the accessibility options for customers and details here are used to profile customers for CRM enhancement. That is, social media tools adopted were facilitating effective customer care and customer relationship management. This agrees with Adam Sarner, who revealed that in social networking, CRM is where you are going to see the ROI in the business model as opposed to anywhere else. McKay (2009) also revealed that it's all about connecting and engaging in new ways with customers.

Moreover, the respondents revealed that social Media has been crucial in supporting the delivery of customer service excellence. This provided a solid alternative to other customer relationship management channels and has harnessed the online customers who are able to get help within their environment. CRM on social media has been critical in changing consumer perception on the brand as a whole from an arrogant brand to an easily accessible and effective brand. This is in line with findings of Baird & Parasnis (2011) who revealed that social networks are bringing in otherwise untapped and unmanaged online conversations, also help organizations get closer to a true 360-degree view of the customer so they can further optimize their marketing, sales, and customer service efforts.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the summary of key data findings, conclusion drawn from the findings and recommendation made there-to. The conclusions and recommendations drawn were focused on addressing the usage of social media as a strategic communication tool in service delivery in Safaricom.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study established that various modes of social media had been adopted in Safaricom in its service delivery whereby according to the respondents, the company majorly adopted Facebook and twitter. Others included internal chat forum, Google+. The integrated social media approach according to the respondent stated that Safaricom has adopted harnessed the various available platforms within the online space to achieve a wide range of marketing, customer service excellence and stakeholder engagement objectives.

On the factors that had influenced Safaricom to adopt social media tools. The respondents revealed that various factors had contributed to this, the factors include: customer changing needs to adopt social media; staff available capability to handle requests, need to communicate faster and effectively; customer driven queries and complaints well being; increased use of social media such as facebook and twitter and which are known to most customers; Internet penetration in- Kenya and its growth, penetration of the smart phones in the market as well as the continued decline in data costs which has made it easy to access internet.

The respondents also stated that the increased use of Facebook and twitter had influenced customers with data enabled devices to channel queries and feedback on social networks hence there was need to reciprocate. The need to connect with customers on their channel of choice to offer customer support also prompted this development as well as the company's need to collect feedback and do online marketing. The study established that approximately three quarters of those who write on the Safaricom established social

media tools, discussed issues about brands while two thirds asked advice about brands and it is with this insight, that Safaricom has continually embraced Social Media and Digital media in order to proactively engage the consumers. The convenience and quick feedback of social media tools in conveying information as compared to voice and SMS has also influenced adoption of the social media tools an alternative channel for customer.

All the respondents were in agreement that Safaricom had adopted social media in its advertising, marketing and selling of the Products/Services. This has had an impact on the company in terms of customers giving feedback for improvement and enhancement of products and services. Through social media, customers are able to evaluate and compare with the competitor products, while on the company's side; it is easy to gather market intelligence, and quick review of promotions impact.

The study established that social media had facilitated faster and instant information dissemination on the product and services and further ensured faster responses and feedback from customers. The study established that Safaricom created awareness of the products and services through social media tools; in time this reduces advertising cost on mainstream media. Moreover, the study found out that social media provides the company with a direct and targeted approach to selling/promoting, cross sell the products with immediate feedback and measurable results; the company is also able to measure the effectiveness. The respondents indicated that there have been inquiries for products and services and clarification of issues via social media; this has improved customer perception towards the brand and customer service in general.

On the use of social media tools in the communication with the public on company matters all the respondents were in agreement that Safaricom used social media tools to communicate on company matters. The respondents revealed that the tools used were effective in disseminating the information to the public since they provided almost immediate reaction to issues being addressed. The respondents revealed that the company is able to gauge sentiments whether positive or negative almost instantly and get quick feedback on any communication.

The respondents established that that the tools used were effective due to the nature of the tools which made them act as a public forum media; hence information penetration was high and within the shortest time. According to the respondents, social media is an interactive and engaging platform which has allowed for one-on-one communication between the company and Customers and that it can also tailored to each audience hence its quite effective. The respondents indicated that through social media it's possible to target a specific group in the market; moreover, the information is carefully crafted for the target market.

On the use of social media on communication and interaction among employees, majority of the respondents agreed that social media tools facilitated effective internal communication and interaction among employees. The respondents revealed that employees are able to be in touch with the happenings, and that employees are able to discuss the queries and provide feedback very fast. The respondents stated that a consortium of tools including a digitized daily staff bulletin, an internal chat room, a video portal and digital media screens are used; the internal chat forum allowed for visible and interactive communication across the business, hence they facilitated effective internal communication. However a few of the respondents were of the contrary opinion whereby, they revealed that social media did not quite facilitate effective internal communication among employees since social media use had not been highly encouraged internally; mostly email and intranet were used internally to communicate. However, the respondents acknowledged that a number of staff had opened Facebook and twitter accounts to interact on the Safaricom pages.

On whether Safaricom had adopted social media in its customer relations management (CRM) and all the respondents agreed that social media had been adopted. The respondents established that the company was -using social media to offer customer support and enhance customer relation through two way feedback process; social media is part of the accessibility options for customers and details here are used to profile customers for CRM enhancement. According to the respondents, it's faster to pass on information; especially when there are system outages where customers can either twit or post on the Facebook page and get quick response. The respondents further revealed that

social media had been crucial in ensuring customer service excellence and that the platform provided a solid alternative to other customer relationship management channels.

On whether Safaricom used social media tools in managing a crisis with the company's stakeholders such as customers, shareholders; all the respondents agreed. The respondents further stated that that social media provides opportunities for personalized engagement with various stakeholders including the customers. The respondents acknowledged that the adopted tools were crucial in managing potential crisis situations such as service outages through constant engagement and communication with customers; negative situations have also been managed through social media and the result has been happy customers. The respondents revealed that the use of social media had helped the company pass on quick information on any outages or disruption and this has been a key channel in identifying areas and services affected quickly; through online interaction it's easy to find a solution.

The study also sought to compare the effectiveness of social media and traditional mainstream media in the service delivery in Safaricom, and it was established that each medium has its pros and cons. The respondents revealed that traditional media has a wider reach while social media has a niche reach and offers better opportunities for segmentation. The respondents on the other hand revealed that social media is more real time and trendy and that it allows engaging customers on any topic on company's matter or products and services. The penetration levels are high and within a shorter time and according to the respondents, it has revolutionized the company's interaction with its customers, due to its potential to reach the customers using the tools and give feedback immediately. The respondents, on overall revealed that the use of social media has been effective to a large extent though it has not been able to reach as many people as the traditional mainstream media.

The study also established that there are a number of challenges experienced in adoption and usage of social media tools; according to the respondents the social media tools have not been fully accepted and that they are prone to abuse. According to the respondents social media can have damaging effect if mishandled; social media also doesn't reach the

mass market but only for a specific group. Staffing and scheduling workforce are also a challenge since there is need to train and build a pool of internal staff to use the social media. Integrating social media as a key channel for service delivery and especially on marketing, stakeholder management, customer relationship management, internal communications and even crisis communications is also a challenge.

5.3 Conclusions

The following conclusions were made based on the summary of the findings:

The study concludes that Safaricom has adopted social media tools in its service delivery with Facebook and Twitter being the major social media tools adopted. Various factors influenced Safaricom to adopt social media tools; these include: customer changing needs; staff available capability to handle requests, need to communicate faster and effectively; customer driven queries and complaints; increased use of social media by the public; internet penetration and its growth, penetration of the smart phones in the market and the continued decline in data costs which has made internet access easy.

Safaricom has highly adopted social media tools on most of its major day to day activities which include: in advertising, marketing and selling of the products/services; in communication with the public on company matters; on customer relations management (CRM) and in managing crisis with the company's stakeholders. However, internally social media tools are used to a very little extent instead traditional mainstream media are ones highly used as a communication and interaction among employees.

On comparing social media and traditional mainstream media in the service delivery in Safaricom, each has its own advantages and disadvantages. While traditional mainstream media reached large masses, social media was considered as the best mode of communication that offers better opportunities for segmentation, facilitates interactions and ensures feedback is given immediately and timely. Lastly, adoption of social media tools comes with challenges. They include but are not limited to: unacceptability, prone to abuse and damaging effect (if mishandled), staffing (in terms of know how to handle the -tools and training) and scheduling workforce; and difficulties in integrating the tools in various departments.

s.4 Recommendations

the following recommendations were made based on the summary of findings and the conclusions of the study.

The study recommends that Safaricom should continually embrace social media if they want to remain competitive in the market. Social media is hereto stay and let stakeholders have a voice **and** become active citizens and consumers. The study has shown that Social media has **been** effective in service delivery especially in advertising, marketing, CRM, and crises management. With the increasing growth of internet users and low internet cost social **media** is expected to grow further and hence the need for Safaricom to lay an effective **strategy** for the adoption of social media tools even in the future.

Due to its damaging effect if mishandled, the researcher recommends that Safaricom should ensure that social media tools are handled by well trained and knowledgeable staff who can handle sensitive information and queries from the customers to avoid any sentiments that can damage the company's image. Moreover, there is need to avoid any channels that can lead to the abuse of the social media tools.

5.5. Suggestions For Further Research

This study looked at social media as a strategic communication tool in Safaricom, the researcher suggests that a future study be conducted on other Telecommunication companies in Kenya for comparison of results.

A future study should also incorporate the responses from the general staff who interact with the social media so as to have a better understanding on research area. It should also examine whether there are challenges that come with social media and how the companies are coping with the challenges

5.6 Limitations of the Study

As with any pursuit for information, the researcher expects there to be shortfalls and **factors that** may hinder access to information. The following are some of the challenges **expected** during the investigation period.

Lollected data may not have equal representation of all the companies in the **Telecommunication** industry. The research relied on data collection from managers who **were busy and** were not readily available to give the expected information and in some **instances** they needed some clarification and explanation on the intentions of the **research.**

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide

Section A: Background information:

1. Age (in years) :
3. **For how** long have you worked at Safaricom?.
4. What is your highest level of academic qualification? .
5. Which is your Department?

Section B: Social Media and Service Delivery

6. Which mode of social media have you adopted in your organization?

7. What factors prompted you to adopt the social media tools selected above into your organization?

8. Have you adopted social media in the advertising, marketing and selling of company's products/ services?
Yes C D No •
- b).** If yes, Explain the impact social media tools has had on advertising, marketing and selling of companies products/ services?

9. Do you use social media tools in the communication with the public on company matters?

Yes • No •

t). If yes, do the social media tool used ensure effective external communication with the public?

Explain

10 Has social media tools facilitated effective internal communication & interaction among employees?

Explain

11. Has Safaricom adopted social media tools in Customer relations management?

Yes • No O

b). If Yes, How effective has the social media tools adopted facilitated an effective customer care and customer relationship management

12. Do you use social medial tools to manage a crisis with the company's stakeholders such as customers, shareholders?

Yes • No •

b). If yes, how did the social media help discover and solve a crisis with disgruntled stakeholders and realize their concerns.:

3. **How, would** you compare the effectiveness of social media and traditional mainstream media in the service delivery in your organization?

Are there any challenges you have experienced in the adoption and usage of social media in the service delivery in the organization?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION