

**A DETERMINATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH SOCIAL
MEDIA MARKETING IS PRACTICED BY SMALL AND MEDIUM
HOTELS IN NAIROBI**

JACKLINE WAKABA



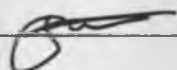
**A Management Research Proposal submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the award of Master in Business Administration
Degree of the University of Nairobi**

OCTOBER 2011

DECLARATION

This management project report is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other university

Signed



Date

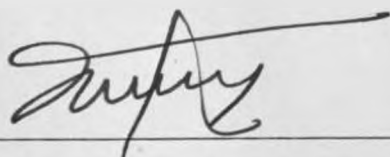
07/11/2011

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This management project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor

Signed



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DEDICATION

To Dr. and Mrs. Wakaba, Matt and Carol, without whom the skies would be permanently gray.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My sincere gratitude is extended to my supervisor Dr. Justus m. Munyoki for his guidance and advice throughout the period in which I undertook this study.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the University of Nairobi for according me the chance to learn under the best of circumstances. Many thanks to all the lecturers for the knowledge imparted in me, the non teaching staff for making the learning process smooth and enjoyable and all my friends and classmates for the wonderful times in class.

Lastly I would like to thank the hotels that participated in the survey for the cooperation, knowledge and support and Oscar David for the assistance with data collection

ABSTRACT

Social media marketing has been identified as the new way to promote businesses in the world over. Consumers are turning away from the traditional sources of advertising: radio, television, magazines, and newspapers. Social media tools have provided a platform where consumers can demand what they want and be able to communicate that with the producers. This study had two objectives. One was to find out the extent to which small and medium businesses practice Social Media Marketing and the other was to establish the problems associated with the practice.

In undertaking this study, small and medium hotels in Nairobi were targeted. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The research instrument was administered directly by the researcher within the selected areas. The data collected was analyzed using percentages and frequency tables. Qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis of the written materials drawn from expressions of the participants.

The study found that 14% of the small and 36% of medium hotels had adopted social media tools for their marketing practices and the majority of the small and medium hotels still relied on traditional media to promote their services. The problems identified included unreliability of internet services providence by the service providers and lack of technological knowhow to effectively engage in SMM.

On the basis of the study, it was suggested that further research be carried out in other industries as well and recommended that small and medium businesses adopt SMM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
List of Tables	ix
Abbreviations	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background To The Study.....	1
1.1.1 Social Media Marketing	2
1.1.2 Small And Medium Hotels.....	3
1.2 Research Problem	5
1.3 Research Objectives.....	6
1.4 Value Of The Study	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Social Media.....	8

2.3 Social Networks Sites	10
2.4 Marketing By Small And Medium Hotels	11
2.5 Social Media Marketing	13
2.6 Social Media As A Promotion Mix Component.....	15
2.7 Social Media Branding	16
2.8 Social Media Role In Customer Relationship Management	18
2.9 Problems Associated With Social Media Marketing.....	19
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	22
3.1 Introduction	22
3.2 Research Design.....	22
3.3 The Population	22
3.4 Data Collection.....	22
3.5 Data Analysis	23
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTEPRETATION	24
4.1 Introduction	24
4.2 Profiles Of Respondents	24

4.3 Engagement In Social Media Marketing	24
4.4. Reasons For Not Adopting Social Media Tools	29
4.5 Problems Faced While Marketing On Social Media	31
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.	33
5.1 Introduction.....	33
5.2 Summary.....	33
5.3 Conclusion.....	34
5.4 Recommendations.....	35
5.4.1 Recommendations and policy implications.....	35
5.4.2 Suggestions for further research	35
5.5 Limitations Of The Study.....	36
REFERENCES.....	37
APPENDICES.....	41
APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE.....	41

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Engagement in SMM by hotels	25
Table 4.2: Clients targeted on social media by hotels	25
Table 4.3: Social networking sites used to market hotels.....	26
Table 4.4: Frequency with which content on Social Networking Sites is updated	27
Table 4.5: Effectiveness of use of social media tools for marketing activities	28
Table 4.6: Reasons for not engaging in SMM by small and medium hotels.....	29
Table 4.7: Other forms of media used by small and medium hotels for promotional purposes	30
Table 4.8: Importance to be More Online or Web Focused	31

ABBREVIATIONS

SMM: Social Media Marketing

SNS: Social Networking Sites

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Media communications have changed over time. Traditionally, the term “media” has been expressed in the context of how one communicates to another. Today new forms of media have emerged that not only allow one to communicate to others, but allow the recipient of the message to interact with the author. In traditional forms of media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and billboards, the author sends their message to many people and is often disengaged from any reaction about the message. Marketing practices are shifting from traditional platforms to social media platforms. They are now engaging in social media marketing. Consumers are turning away from the traditional sources of advertising: radio, television, magazines, and newspapers. Consumers also consistently demand more control over their media consumption. They require on-demand and immediate access to information at their own convenience (Rashtchy et al, 2007; Vollmer & Precourt, 2008).

There has been an increase in the number of small and medium businesses engaging in social media marketing. A survey carried out by PeoplePerHour.com found out that small businesses in America are actively embracing social networking as a way to develop sales as reported by Techworld.com (Mon, Jan 03, 2011). The survey revealed that the most popular social media site for small businesses was Facebook, which was ahead of LinkedIn and Twitter. Another study done by an Alterian integrated marketing services

provider on social media marketing adoption in 2009 found that 66 percent of respondents will be investing in Social Media Marketing (SMM) in 2010. Of those, 40 percent said they would be shifting more than a fifth of their traditional direct marketing budget towards funding their SMM activities. The survey also found more than a third (36 percent) of respondents were investing in social media monitoring and analysis tools.

1.1.1 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing refers to the process of promoting business or websites through social media channels. It is a powerful marketing medium that is defining the way people are communicating. It is one of the significantly low-cost promotional methods that provide businesses with large numbers of links and huge amount of traffic. Companies manage to get massive attention and that really works in favor of the business. Social media marketing is a method applied by progressive companies for selling their products/services or for just publishing content for advertisement revenue.

Williams (2009) defines SMM as the marketing strategies that smart businesses are employing in order to be part of a network of people online. Just as friends gather in public pubs, coffee shops, or barber shops, groups of people are gathered and connected through various online tools and websites. These people rely on their online network of friends for advice, sharing, and socializing. Social media marketing is a type of marketing that many small businesses could benefit from, if only to find out more about what their customers are thinking and saying about their brand and their products.

There are 3,359,600 Internet users in Kenya as of June 2009 that is 8.6% of the population according to the Internet Usage and Telecommunications Report (2009). Online consumers in Kenya are spending more time on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn than on e-mail, which signals a major change on internet consumer behavior. This is according to digital life report, Business daily (04/11/2010). The report also pointed out that Kenya is ahead of its peers in East Africa in social networking with an average consumer spending at least 6.5 hours per week, followed by Tanzania (1.6 hours per week) and Uganda (1.5 hours per week). With the number of internet users increasing steadily every day, there is need for marketers to shift their marketing practices from the traditional ones to social media marketing.

1.1.2 Small and Medium Hotels

Nairobi offers an array of accommodation options. These include lodges, guest houses, hotels, hostels, furnished apartments and campsites. Most of the accommodation is found in the Nairobi Central Business District (CNBD), near the NCBD, and near the airport. Campsites and lodges are found all over the city with lodges and guest houses dominating due to their nature to handle a small number of guests. Marketing practices by accommodation providers varies from business to business. Some businesses are very active in the market place linking their accommodation with other providers for cooperative advertising opportunities and packaging while others rely on location and heritage to promote their businesses.

The Tourism Performance Overview (2010) estimates that in 2010 Nairobi had a total of 1,662,200 hotel night bed occupancy from foreign as well as domestic tourism. In their

paper on the Impact of Tourism on Environment in Kenya: Status and Policy, Ikiara & Okech (2002) reckon that The coast and Nairobi have jointly accounted for over 80% of total bed-nights since the 1970s. Conference tourism (especially in Nairobi) is also important. This they explain is where a tourist spends a day or two in the city before heading to the coast for holiday. Domestic tourists visit the towns on a myriad of activities which include business, work and pleasure among others.

Hotels are classified according to several parameters according to Barjaktarovic & Barjaktarovic (2009). The size of a hotel can be expressed through the hotel's capacity (number of rooms and beds), number of employees and number of square meters, sum of invested money or some other parameters. There are different approaches to hotel size segmentation. Hotels are divided as follows: small hotels; up to 30 rooms / up to 60 beds, medium hotels from 30 up to 120 rooms/ up to 250 beds and large hotels above 120 rooms / above 250 beds in Serbia.

The tourist office of Malindi classifies small-scale accommodations as facilities that have less than 40 beds. Accommodations that offer more than 40 beds are categorized as middle to large facilities. (Joosten & Marwijk 2003). The city council of Nairobi 2011 defines medium lodging houses/hotels as those with 40-100 rooms and small ones as those with less than 40 rooms. For the purposes of this study, small hotels will therefore be those with between 2 to 40 rooms and medium will range from 41 to 100 rooms. Hotels in this context will mean facilities that offer accommodation and meals. They will exclude furnished apartments, hostels and guest houses.

1.2 Research Problem

Research done on Social Media Marketing indicates that social marketing media is taking over from traditional marketing. According to Williamson (2009), social networking is rapidly expanding; estimating that there was an 11 percent increase of people visiting social networking sites between 2007 and 2008, with "79.5 million people—41% of the U.S. Internet user population" visiting the sites in 2008 alone, the trend will continue, and, by 2013, the number will increase to 52 percent. According to an e-Marketer study (2008), nearly six out of ten United States users now communicate with businesses and believe that the businesses must "interact with their consumers" and "deepen the brand relationship" via online social networking.

Advertising is shifting from the usual media like bill board and advertisements on television and newspapers to advertisement on the internet. The most trusted form of advertising today is a recommendation from another person who is like them. In this light companies can no longer just issue information to the media in the hope that they share the clients' stories with the public. To reach the target audience successfully there is need to start telling success stories directly, and do it in a way that allows and encourages conversations. Consumers spend more and more time defining their own content and distributing their own contents, while the marketers take advantage of the situation to market their products using social networking sites (Wamucii 2011).

Social media are very good avenues for marketing practices but many businesses are yet to adopt them as marketing platforms Since the internet and social media marketing are relatively new fields, there is suspicion that people regard business done over the internet

with. This study will look into the variables involved and how small and medium hotels use social media to market their products, create brand awareness and to promote behavior change. This study will also seek to establish why there is reluctance by small and medium hotels to use social media. It will seek to determine the reasons for the suspicion with which social media tools are regarded with as well as what can be done to lessen them and make the internet a safer place for transaction of businesses.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To determine the extent to which social media marketing is practiced by small and medium hotels.
- ii. To establish the problems associated with social media marketing and how they can be mitigated

1.4 Value of the Study

The findings of this research will provide marketers with information on the practices of social media which will include the benefits associated with it. It will further provide marketers with information on the different platforms on which to practice social media marketing. It will also provide marketers with information on the social media marketing mix which will enable them to catch up with regions like The United States of America who are now spending 3.5% of their budgets on social media marketing. This figure is expected to rise 13.7% in the next five years (Guna 2009). This study will go ahead and provide the users of social media with information on the field. This will bridge the

existing gap of information in this marketing field. Lastly, it will provide a point of reference for scholars since there is not much research done on this field yet.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to the study based on the following sub-thematic areas: social media, social networks sites, social media marketing, social media as a promotion mix component, social media branding, customer relationship management and problems associated with social media marketing

2.2 Social media

The emergence of internet-based social media has made it possible for one person to communicate with hundreds or even thousands of other people about products and the companies that provide them. The impact of consumer-to consumer communications has been greatly magnified in the marketplace. Social media is also known as consumer generated media. This form of media “describes a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues” (Blackshaw & Nazzaro, 2004).

According to Mangold and Faulds (2009), social media serves the purpose of allowing companies to talk to customers and customers to talk to other customers. They further add that social media has amplified the power of consumer-to-consumer conversations in the marketplace by enabling one person to communicate with literally hundreds or thousands of other consumers quickly and with relatively little effort. What is unique

about social media as a communications channel is that, compared with getting coverage in traditional media, social media are inexpensive to access and can lead to a message disseminating rapidly within and across audiences over a wide geographic scope (Reuber and Fischer 2010).

Social media uses web- based technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogues (O'Reilly, 2006). Web 2.0 is the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the internet as a platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform. Chief among those rules is building applications that harness network effects to get better the more people use them. Musser and O'Reilly (2006) assert that Web 2.0 is a site that allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as consumers of user generated content in a virtual community which is contrasted to websites where users are limited to the active viewing of content that they created and controlled.

Social networking sites, blogs, wikis, video sharing sites, hosted services and web applications are examples of Web 2.0. Web 2.0 technologies are rapidly enabling entirely new forms of customer engagement. By intelligently integrating both phone and Web-based support channels with communications capabilities made possible by Web 2.0, companies are now delivering a new kind of customer experience. Web 2.0 tools allow companies to leverage the web to build social and business connections, share information and collaborate on projects.

McKenzie, Neiger & Thackeray (2009), assert that Web 2.0 applications can directly engage consumers in the creative process by both producing and distributing information

through collaborative writing, content sharing, social networking, social bookmarking, and syndication. They further add that Web 2.0 can also enhance the power of viral marketing by increasing the speed at which consumers share experiences and opinions with progressively larger audiences. The consumer is in control of how information is generated, created, organized, and shared. In the case of social marketing promotion, this information is about products such as behaviors (physical activity), ideas (recycling), tangible items (bicycle helmets), services (mammography screening), or causes (energy conservation)

Web 2.0 is a marketing channel that needs to be integrated with other traditional marketing channels, and considered as part of the marketing mix. New media is not a replacement of traditional marketing tools such as local newspaper, TV, or radio station, but another tool that is able to reach the community which prefers electronic media. Unlike other traditional marketing tools, the advantage of this new electronic channel is that it is able to communicate globally and enrich the marketing to the personal level (Brandt, 2008).

2.3 Social Networks Sites

Social network sites are defined in various ways. Bolotaeva and Cata (2010) define social networking sites as instruments for building virtual communities, or social networks, for individuals with similar education, lifestyles, interests, or activities. Burke (2006) defines social networking sites as: “a loose affiliation of people who interact through websites”. The web enables any person to build a vast number of relationships with others, regardless of geographical distance. According to Browning (2010), social networking

sites (SNS) have quickly inspired the manner in which people communicate and connect with each other. These SNS by design or by default facilitate relationship building with the help of software as system technologies such as Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn (Li & Bernoff, 2008).

These SNS are free of cost for their users but rely on money generated by selling user demographic characteristics and other data to businesses (Stokes, 2008). Most social networking sites also provide other means of online communications, such as email, instant messaging, chat, blogs, discussion group, and others. Dwyer, Hiltz, and Passerini (2007) advise that the main motivation for social networking is communication and maintaining relationships.

Members of social networks serve two roles; they both supply and consume content. The creators of content are typically highly engaged consumers and, as a result, influential. If the proper influencers are reached with a message that they perceive as valuable, it can become viral. This is tremendously powerful to marketers, as users don't feel that the information is being pushed at them, but referred to them by a trusted friend in a trusted network (red bridge marketing, 2008).

2.4 Marketing by Small and Medium Hotels

Small and medium-sized businesses are widely acknowledged as key national actors that foster socio-economic development in an increased globally interconnected environment (Sachs, 2002; UNCTAD, 1998; Buckley and Mirza 1997; Fujita, 1997). They have a major role in the growth of a given country's economy. Kotelnikov (2007) identifies the functions of Small and Medium businesses as the drivers of economic growth and



innovation. Small and Medium hotels rely heavily on marketing to promote business growth.

Kotler and Armstrong (2004), define marketing as being critical to the success of every organization no matter whether it is large or small, for profit or non-profit, domestic or global Marketing has to be understood as satisfying customer needs. According to Reijonen (2009) adds that marketing plays a significant role in small and medium businesses. On the one hand it is one of the biggest problems owner-managers face in their business operations and, on the other hand, it is recognized as one of the most important business activities and is essential to the survival and growth of the enterprises (Stokes 2000b, Simpson & Taylor 2002). Obbelode (2009) goes ahead and says that marketers have to understand consumer demands, to develop and innovate products with superior value, to set an optimal price, to distribute and to promote them effectively in order to sell these products easily.

Kotler, Bowen, and Makens (1996) in their book on Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism define hospitality as the businesses that provide accommodation, prepare food and beverage service as well as entertainment. Varey (2001) adds that a hotel may be described in terms of the following for advertising and promotional purposes: location, form of ownership, facilities, type of client, standard, star rating and size which includes the number of beds or bedrooms. Hotels offer basic standard accommodation which may include simply furnished, adequate lighting or well maintained with an average standard of furnishings and fittings; well appointed; comfortable standard of accommodation,

furnishings, lighting, cooling and heating with rooms containing telephone, clock radio, tea & coffee facilities with light breakfast available; exceptional standard hotels come with high quality furnishings and fittings high standards in presentation and guest services; restaurant on site, air conditioned rooms, comfortable lounge, hair drier, with extensive range of first-class services including 24-hour room service, and additional shopping and recreation facilities.

Marketing in hotels primarily involves the marketing of services. Grönroos, (2000) describes a service as a process consisting of a series of more or less intangible activities that normally, but not necessarily always; take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems. Effective marketing is of greatest importance due to its perishability, as an unsold room one day is income lost forever (Mawson, 2000).

2.5 Social Media Marketing

Marketing in small businesses is defined by Logenecker et.al (2010) as consisting of those business activities that direct the creation, development, and delivery of a bundle of satisfaction from the creator to the target user and that satisfy the targeted user. The success of marketing strategies depends not only on establishing an appropriate value proposition; it is also a function of the ability to effectively communicate it to the target market. New technology such as social networks and the consumer empowerment accruing from them have created a new breed of consumers, forcing marketers to

consider how they communicate this value proposition to this group and engage with them.

There is a need for marketers to change their marketing strategies. Sawhney & Kotler, (2001) assert that marketers can no longer rely on mass media channels to “push” their communications to consumers in this new customer-focused environment; they must embrace new strategies if they wish to succeed. The cost efficiency and the potential benefits that can be derived from the consumer empowerment are two major motivators behind the increasing use of social networks as marketing tools. Williamson (2006) predicts that due to the attractive costs involved, spending on marketing through social networks will grow exponentially, with an estimated US\$2.5 million being spent by 2010. This has important implications for marketers.

Mitchell (2001) and Nwankwo and Gdabamosi (2011) argue that the traditional industrial age marketing model of stimulus-response is getting outdated by the era of information technology, rapidly moving towards a new model of sense-and respond enhanced by the new opportunities of two-way communication. They acknowledge that the internet today has emerged as an attractive marketing channel for small businesses to explore and exploit by posting their content and building traffic to it effectively. Christodoulides (2008) adds that technology makes it possible to interact with companies and communities on a personal level, rather than broadcasting impersonal mass-messages. It is possible for a company to speak directly to its customers.

Social media marketing, according to Weston (2008), facilitates finding talent, building brand awareness, finding new customers, and help conducting brand intelligence and market research. The communication in social network gets shoppers to listen to one another, review ratings for products and services, and provide product knowledge and personal information. According to Charlene and Bernoff Li (2008), the participation and diffusion of social media technologies to a great extent depends on how these tools facilitate users to connect in new way with their friends, convenience in registration, peer pressure, the altruistic impulse, the prurient impulse, creative impulse, validation impulse, the affinity impulse and so on (Charlene & Li, 2008).

2.6 Social Media as a Promotion Mix Component

Social media is greatly seen as an extension of the promotion mix. According to McConnell & Huba, (2007), the fundamental characteristic about social media is that it exponentially multiplies the number of one, enabling one person alone to either create widespread excitement or negative buzz without the use of expensive traditional marketing channels.

This is contrasted to the traditional marketing sense where, according to Mangold and Faulds (2009), the elements of the promotional mix are coordinated to develop a communication strategy, and the content, frequency, timing, and medium of communications are dictated by the organization in collaboration with its paid agents (advertising agencies, marketing research firms, and public relations consultants). They add that social media is argued to be a hybrid element of the promotion mix because it combines characteristics of traditional communication tools where companies talk to

customers with a highly magnified form of word-of mouth that involves customers talking to one another.

The social media is trusted more as a source of information about products than advertisements. This is demonstrated by Foux (2006), who says that social media is perceived by consumers as a more trustworthy source of information regarding products and services than corporate-sponsored communications transmitted via the traditional elements of the promotion mix. Mangold & Faulds (2009) say that in the new paradigm, information about products and services also originates in the marketplace and this information is based on the experiences of individual consumers and is channeled through the traditional promotion mix. They however caution that marketing managers cannot control the content and frequency of such information that is generated and transmitted by consumers. Their control over the content, timing, and frequency of information is being severely eroded in the era of social media.

2.7 Social Media Branding

Social media is used extensively for branding purposes. Jensen, (2009) argues that social media is currently in an early phase, but it has already put its mark on modern marketing and branding –and the emphasis has grown rapidly in recent years. The brand has changed from its traditional sense. According to Jensen, (2009) a brand has grown to become much more than merely a logo and product packaging. Whilst the tangible communication elements used to support a brand are often referred to as the brand, it is however the intangible concept of a brand that truly makes the brand valuable. The brand

is a promise which holds a distinctive position in the customers mind derived from the totality of perceptions a customer has about a company, its product and/or its service.

A conference commentary (Christodoulides, 2008) argues that people's perception of brands are influenced more by opinions on the web, including blogs, Wikipedia, YouTube, epinions.com and so on, rather than the traditional one-way marketing communications material pushed at customers. He further goes on to argue that value is being created in a dialectical process, which results in the need for brands to engage in open conversation with people.

Word-of-mouth is especially considered to have tremendous power on a brand, as people tend to believe more in what friends says about a product rather than what a company says (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006). Social media facilitates many-to-many conversations, and extends the reach of word to mouth as real people are talking to other real people sharing their experiences. According to Inskip (2004), internal marketing is as important as external marketing and that branding should be concerned with giving the organization and particularly its employees a clear and visible identity and sense of what it stands for.

The era of interactive electronic marketing presents new opportunities for marketers and brand managers to target their audience. Kotler & Pfoertsch (2006) argue two specific advantages are offered by the online environment; information and simplicity. With the online world one is able to instantly distribute and update the information available, whereas simplicity makes it possible for business transactions to take place anytime anywhere. Each and every online visitor to a company's website is a one-to-one interaction with the brand, and should be treated accordingly; instead of pushing the same

information on all the visitors, the website can be customized to every single visitor (Kotler and Pfoertsch). On the same note, Pettey (2008) adds that businesses can utilize the amount of traffic generated by social networks.

Social networks used to appeal more to the young audience however, they are now gearing to other demographic groups, such as "career-based social networks, shopping-based social networks, and employee groups." As a result, businesses can collect consumer feedback, establish a brand presence, or, perhaps, just observe the way their brands are discussed and perceived.

The main advantage of having a social network presence as identified by Sachoff (2008) is the amount of information an organization can gain about its customer base. The data collected can be used for new product development, getting customer feedback and loyalty management. This collection of data can be used for marketing as well as an entire customer-focused organization. Nwankwo & Gbadamosi (2010) add that now more than ever marketers can get a full view of the marketing landscape and measure the moods of the consumers and their perceptions about the brand by monitoring feedback. The internet enables small businesses to collect market research intelligence quickly and relatively cheaply.

2.8 Social Media Role in Customer Relationship Management

Customer relationship management has become an important phenomenon in today's business where loyal customers are regarded as an essential determinant of an organization's success and as a source of long term profitability. It is a fundamental concept in marketing and its pursuits an important goal for businesses (Berry, 1983:

Webster, 1994). Indeed, businesses of all sorts now devote considerable energies on tracking customers' satisfaction. Webster & Keller (2004) point out that industrial buying and marketing the last decade has evolved towards relationship management, where the focus has shifted from a transactional perspective to a long-term relationship view, with an orientation of co-operation in order to create win-win situations. Values such as trustworthiness, reliability and credibility will have a significant impact for branding in markets where long-term relationships are of importance.

Social networking sites enable businesses to develop and nurture relationships with their customers. Pettey (2008) says that these sites give a business capability to develop a trusting relationship with a customer by direct interaction via Web 2.0 features, address their needs and concerns, or even conduct market research. Tools in the online environment lower the threshold for interaction between a company and its customers on an informal basis; social media is a tool which supports and facilitates relationships (Berry, 1983; Webster, 1994).

2.9 Problems Associated with Social Media Marketing

Small and medium businesses are slow at adopting social media marketing because of the risks involved with practicing it. Newman and Thomas (2009) say that while allowing employees to utilize social networks is essential for innovation, there is also the strong possibility that the lines between professional and personal habits become blurred. Many people utilize social networks at work as an extension of their personal lives. There is also the risk of employees broadcasting sensitive or defamatory information through email.

Advertising in a social network brings risk to product brands. Social networks are user-generated content where end users write about their experiences with products, services, customer service, etc. The content in such networks may be critical to the product and companies have very little control in what end users share in their social network (Slavin, 2009). Special social networks, such as those dealing with the medical field, have a massive amount of unfiltered discussions between patients, caregivers, and physicians (Ellerin, 2009). Monitoring general perceptions of brands from the online community and addressing issues discussed online that had not been previously considered, is extremely important for product/service brands. The other aspect of lack of brand control involves employees. According to Newman and Thomas (2009), there is the risk of someone posting the wrong information on a network. For example they may do so by exaggerating a product's qualities.

Pettey (2008) establishes that social networking is an opportunity to collect consumer data but she adds that these data pools cannot just be tapped into. She continues to say that, as the time goes by, social network users are more wary regarding sharing their private data. In order to have access to the consumer information, businesses must build widgets and applications that will require that a user share at least some personal data. However, the topic is always controversial, and, it is projected that the privacy issues will not allow easy access to consumer private data. Data mining companies are collecting free information from personal posts and applications.

Social media marketing is also very involving and one may need to spend a lot in terms of resources like time. Jensen (2009) says that even though it is a trivial task to engage in

social media, it is far more resource demanding to establish a presence, create interesting content, participate in the discussions, and monitoring, maintain and managing the presence.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the methods of conducting research that were employed by the researcher based on the following sub thematic areas as shown in the study; research design, the population, sample design, data collection and data analysis.

3.2 Research design

This study was descriptive. Descriptive studies are aimed at finding out "what is". Observational and survey methods are therefore frequently used to collect descriptive data. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to achieve the outlined objectives.

3.3 The population

The population consisted of small and medium hotels drawn from the Westlands and Kamukunji districts. The two districts were selected randomly from the 9 districts in Nairobi province. A total of 36 hotels participated in the study.

3.4 Data collection

Data collection was based on primary sources and the data was obtained through the use of questionnaires as the main data collection instrument. Questionnaires contained both open ended and closed questions. The questions were quantitative as well as qualitative in nature which facilitated the capture of all aspects of social media marketing as perceived and practiced by small and medium hotels in the industry. The questionnaires developed were administered through the drop and pick method and telephone interviews.

3.5 Data analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics. This involved the use of frequency tables and percentages. Frequency tables were used for arraying data obtained to facilitate working out percentages. Percentages revealed the proportions of different attributes that were being studied for relative comparison. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis of the written materials drawn from expressions of the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The collected data was analyzed and interpreted in line with the objectives of the study mainly to determine the extent to which small and medium hotels were engaging in social media marketing and to establish the problems associated with social media marketing. The study's response rate was 71%. This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the study

4.2 Profiles of Respondents

The study found that 61% of the hotels that participated in the study were small hotels with between two and 40 rooms while 39% were medium hotels with between 41 and 100 rooms.

Of the hotels surveyed, 23% were found to be having a connection to the internet and could access services from the internet all the time. Of the hotels with internet connection, 23% of the small hotels were found to have connection to the internet while 29% of the medium hotels were found to have the same

4.3 Engagement in SMM by small and medium hotels

This section presents findings on the extent to which SMM is practiced by small and medium hotels as well as the period during which they have been practicing SMM and the activities carried out by the hotels when using social media tools.

The respondents were asked if they used social media tools in their marketing activities. This was to enable the researcher to find out what proportion of the small and medium hotels in Nairobi engaged in social media marketing.

Table 4.1: Engagement in SMM by hotels

Hotels	Small Hotels		Medium Hotels		Total	
	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	%
Engaging in SMM	4	11	5	14%	9	25
Not engaging in SMM	18	50	9	25	27	75
Total	22	61	14	39	36	100

Source; Research data

According to the findings in table 4.1, 25% of small and medium sized hotels were practicing SMM while 75% relied wholly on conventional marketing practices. 50% of the small hotels and 25% of the medium hotels did not engage in SMM.

The respondents were then asked which clients they targeted when marketing using social media. The findings are presented in the table 4.2

Table 4.2: Clients targeted on social media by hotels

Clients Targeted on SMM	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
All clients	5	62.5
International clients	2	25
Youth	1	12.5
Total	8	100

Source: Research Data

According to table 4.2, 62.5% of the respondents said they targeted all clients while 25% targeted international clients. 12.5% targeted the youth while using social media tools

The respondents on being asked which social networking site they used in their marketing activities using social media tools gave the responses presented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Social networking sites used to market hotels

Social networking sites used in SMM by small and medium hotels	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Face book	7	75
YouTube	1	12.5
Twitter	1	12.5
Total	9	100

Source: Research Data

The study findings indicate that only three SNS are used by small and medium hotels in SMM. 75% of the respondents reported to be using Facebook while 12.5% used twitter and 12.5% used YouTube.

The respondents were asked how frequently they used social media tools to update web content, respond to queries, and carry out surveys among other things. Among those who engage in social media marketing. The results are presented in table 4.4

Table 4.4: Frequency with which content on Social Networking Sites is updated by hotels

Frequency with Which Content is updated	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Regularly	5	63%
When need arises	3	37%
Total	8	100

Source: Research Data

As indicated in table 4.4, 63% of the small and medium hotels marketers updated content, responded to mails among other things while 37% updated their content when the need arose.

The respondents also, on being asked what length of time they had used social sites to market their services, 50% of the small and medium hotels practicing SMM had been doing it for less than one year while the other half been practicing for between 1 -2 years

Among the activities identifies as core while using social media tools is the conducting of client satisfaction surveys on SNS. The researcher sought to find out if small and medium hotels while using social media carried out client satisfaction surveys on their SNS. 33.3% of the respondents reported to conducting satisfaction surveys on SNS while 66.6% indicated that they did not.

The researcher sought to find out the level of skill on use of social media tools. The respondents were asked to rate their skills as either excellent, good, fair or poor with

regards to the effective utilization of social media tools. The objective of this question was to gauge the technological knowhow of the small and medium hotels' managers with regards to the use of social media tools.

Table 4.5: Effectiveness of use of social media tools for marketing activities

The Effectiveness of Use of Social Media Tools for Marketing Activities	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Excellent	1	12.5
Good	4	50
Fair	1	12.5
Poor	2	25
Total	8	100

Source: Research Data

According to table 4.5, 12.5% of the respondents rated their skills as excellent, 50% reported they were good at the use of social media tools, 12.5% indicated they were fair and 25% had poor skills in the use of social media tools.

The researcher, in this section wanted to find out among those practicing SMM, how many of the hotels had a department wholly engaged in social media marketing. Among the hotels practicing SMM 37.5% of the small and medium hotels had a department wholly dedicated to the practice of marketing on social media while 62.5% did not have such a department.

4.4. Reasons for not adopting Social Media Tools

In this section, the researcher wanted to find out the reasons why the hotels that were not engaging in SMM failed to do so and which other media they used for their promotional activities as well as their likelihood of adopting internet based strategies in the future

The respondents who did not engage in SMM were asked to give the reasons for not doing so.

Table 4.6: Reasons for not engaging in SMM by small and medium hotels

Reason for not engaging in SMM	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Lack of internet connection	11	39
Lack of knowledge on social media marketing	3	11
Do not see the need to engage in social media marketing	7	25
Lack of time to engage in social media marketing	7	25
Total	28	100

Source: Research Data

39% of the respondents cited lack of internet connection as the reason for not engaging in SMM, 25% lacked the time to engage in it, 11% lacked the expertise and 25% had no reason to engage in SMM.

The researcher sought to find out which forms of traditional media were used by the hotels to market their products as well as the ones that were used by those engaging in

SMM by asking the respondents which other media the small and medium hotels used to market their hotels. The respondents were required to tick as many options from the list provided as was applicable.

Table 4.7: Other forms of media used by small and medium hotels for promotional purposes

Media	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Bill Boards	3	8
Brochures	5	13
Magazines	8	22.2
Newspapers	17	47
Radio	7	19.4
Television	5	13.8
Word of Mouth	9	25

Source: Research Data

As indicated in table 4.7 newspapers were reported to be the most favoured media with 47% of the hotels advertising in them followed by word of mouth at 25% and magazines in which 22.2%. television and brochures had 13.8 respectively and 13% advertising on them. Only 8% of the hotels used bill boards in their marketing activities.

The researcher sought to find out if the respondents found it would be important to shift towards web focused marketing with time. To find that out the question on how

important an issue it is to shift organization marketing strategies to be more online or web focused was posed to the respondents.

Table 4.8: Importance to be More Online or Web Focused

Importance to be more online or web focused	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Very important	6	20
Important	7	23.3
Somehow important	8	26.6
Not important	3	10
Indifferent	6	20
Total	30	100

Source: Research Data

As indicated in table 4.8, 6% of the small and medium hotel marketers found it to be very important to be more online focused, 23.3% the respondents were of the opinion that it would be important to shift to internet based marketing while 26.6% found it to be somewhat important. 10% of the respondents felt it would not be important while 20% were indifferent to the idea of being more online or web focused.

4.5 Problems Faced while Marketing on Social Media

The respondents were asked what problems they faced when marketing on social media. The researcher from this question sought to find out the problems associated with SMM for those who were practicing it as well as perceived risks among those who were not engaging in it yet.

The study revealed that constant interruptions in network access posed a major problem. This was occasioned by failure among the service providers which would leave the respondents without internet services for a while. A related problem among those without internet connection as revealed by the study finding was the cost of internet. A large majority cited the start up cost of installing internet as a barrier to their engaging in SMM.

The internet, according to the respondents is mainly used by younger people. Social networking sites are primarily visited by the youth. This, according to the respondents, posed a problem with the clients they hoped to target since only one group could be reached on social media sites. The respondents also cited the lack of adequate technological knowhow to fully optimize the social media tools. Due to this successful engagement in SMM has proven to be a hard task. The amount of time required for effective SMM was identified by the respondents as an obstacle to effective social media marketing. This was due to the fact that social media marketing was found to be time consuming since it requires constant monitoring of the social networking sites and immediate response to questions, complaints and queries

Lastly, social media sites allow for interaction between businesses and clients. Due to this, the hotel owners were found to be wary of allowing customers to write on their walls due to fear of negative comments being written that would communicate the hotels were incapable of serving their clients well. There was also the issue of competitors mining for information on their sites and using it to their advantage that made them wary of using the social networking sites.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The objectives of this study were to determine the extent to which small and medium hotels were engaging in Social media marketing and the problems associated with the same. To address the objectives, this chapter summarizes the findings based on the analysis in chapter four and gives the conclusions as well as the recommendations about the study.

5.2 Summary

The research established that only 25% of the small and medium hotels had access to the internet. SMM requires that internet connection be available in order to successfully engage in the practice. As a result therefore 14% of small and 36% of medium sized hotels are practicing SMM. The hotels use social networking sites to inform clients of new products as well as give information on directions and how to contact them. A few 33% also use the sites to carry out client satisfaction surveys. The rest of the population relies on traditional media like newspapers, radio, and word of mouth among others for promotional purposes with newspapers being the most favored form of advertising followed by word of mouth. Those engaging in SMM also use the traditional media channels for marketing purposes since SMM is mainly a promotional tool that complements other promotional methods.

The study also shows that the most popular networking site used by the respondents is Facebook with 75% of the hotels using it. It is followed by twitter and YouTube with 12.5% each.

From the study, one of the advantages identified for using SMM over traditional media is that it is a cheaper media compared to newspapers, television and radio among others and content can be updated in real time. There is also a platform for interaction and feedback can be given instantly as and when required.

The findings identify that the problems faced when marketing using social media tools are constant interruptions in network access, cost of internet among those who had no connection, difficulty in reaching all clients and lack of skills to engage in SMM. Other problems included exposure of business ideas to competitors and time consumption when engaging in SMM to which the respondents were of the opinion that a full time manager in charge of SMM only should be employed.

5.3 Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that a majority of small and medium hotels do not engage in social media marketing. The lack of knowledge, skill and expertise to fully engage in the practice is one of the hindering factors as well as the high cost of accessing the internet. At the same time, the hotels seem to be satisfied with the traditional marketing media and do not feel like there is a need to engage in online based marketing at present

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the recommendations as well as suggestions for further research.

5.4.1 Recommendations and Policy Implications

Firstly, small and medium hotels should pursue social media marketing as a promotion method because it is cheaper and faster. SMM should however be approached with caution especially since it is very time consuming. Given that businesses are shifting from the conventional media to online based media, the businesses should incorporate internet based strategies in their strategic plans.

Secondly, social media tools can be used to carry out customer satisfaction surveys, ask clients which services they would like to see improved or introduced, get feedback and inform them of promotional activities like price cuts and discount offerings. Given this, the hospitality industry can fare better.

Finally, the problems associated with SMM can be countered by having a fulltime manager in charge of SMM and having them fully trained on social media tools use in order to maximize their output in terms of increased business and customer satisfaction.

5.4.2 Suggestions for further Research

This study focused on SMM practices among small and medium hotels. It is therefore recommended that a similar study be carried out on large hotels or in a different industry to find out other advantages of using social media marketing as well as look for ways of

solving the current problems and risks posed by marketing using social media tools and other ways in which social media tools can be optimized for business purposes

In addition, research can be carried out to compare conventional marketing mix versus social media marketing in terms of performance.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

There was reluctance by respondents to participate in the study due to fear of information being divulged to competitors among other reasons. The lack of clear procedure to follow as well as reluctance by the Nairobi City Council to avail accurate data on hotels was a huge problem. Time for data collection was limited.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Social Media Marketing Questionnaire for Small and Medium Hotels in Nairobi

Section A

- 1) Name of hotel: _____ Number of rooms _____
- 2) Name: _____
- 3) Job Title _____ Department _____
- 4) Web-Site (If Any): _____
- 5) How often you make use of Internet?
 - a. Regularly
 - b. As and when need arises
 - c. May be once in a week

Section B

Personal use of social media

- 6) Please rank your knowledge of social media in general i.e., how familiar are you with various forms of social media and how they are used?
 - a) Excellent []
 - b) Very Good []
 - c) Good []
 - d) Fair []
 - e) Poor []

7) Do you personally have a Profile or account with a Social Media site? Social networking and micro blogging sites like Facebook , Twitter, YouTube , MySpace or the others.

Yes []

No []

8) List down the name of different sites you use for Social Networking?

9) How often do you check/interact/update content on your social media sites?

Daily

[]

Weekly

[]

Once a month []

Work related use of social media

10) (a) Do you use Web 2.0 or/and other social media tools in your line of work?

a. Yes _____

b. No _____

(b) If no to (a) above, why don't you use social media?

i. Lack of internet connection

ii. Lack of knowledge on use of social media

iii. Do not see the need to use social media for marketing activities

iv. Do not have time to engage in social media marketing

v. Other (please specify) _____

11) To what extent you make use of social-media tools in your daily work?

a. I don't need it in my work

b. Regularly

c. As and when need arises

12) If yes, for what length of time have you used social sites to market your services?

- a. Less than 1 year _____
- b. Between 1 and 2 years _____
- c. More than two years _____

13) How do you gauge the use of social media in your place of work?

- a. Excellent _____
- b. Good _____
- c. Fair _____
- d. Poor _____

14) Which social site do you use for social media marketing for your company?

{Please tick against}

- a. Facebook _____
- b. Twitter _____
- c. YouTube _____
- d. Blogs _____
- e. Wikis _____
- f. Others _____

15) What target market does this social networking tool enable you to reach?

- a. All clients _____
- b. Local clients (corporations) _____
- c. Local clients (individuals) _____
- d. International Clients _____
- e. Youth _____
- f. Other _____

16) Does your social media presence promote your hotel brand?

17) How do you use the social networking sites to promote your brand?

18) In your opinion does the information got about your products on various social-networking sites persuade clients to purchase your services?

19) What are other media do you use to market your hotel?

- a. Television
 - b. Bill boards
 - c. Newspapers,
 - d. Magazines,
 - e. Radio
 - f. Others (please specify) _____
-
-

20) Have you identified any business advantage of using social media sites over traditional media?

- a. Yes []
- b. No []

(If yes, please specify) _____

Section C:

21) Do you have an internet marketing strategy?

- a. Yes []
- b. No []

22) To what extent you make use of social networking web-sites for promotional purposes?

- a. Very frequently []
- b. Frequently []
- c. Indifferent []
- d. Rarely []
- e. Never []

23) How important is social media marketing in your marketing plan?

- a. Very Important []
- b. Important []
- c. Somehow important []
- d. Not important []
- e. Indifferent []

(b). Is social media marketing fully integrated in your marketing plan?

24) Do you inform your customers of new products/services and promotions on social networking sites?

25) How important an issue is it for your organization to shift your marketing to be more online or web focused?

- a. Very Important []
- b. Important []
- c. Somehow important []
- d. Not important []
- e. Indifferent []

26) Is your company delivering or planning to deliver targeted/ personalized messages on your websites/social media networking sites?

27) Successful social media marketing requires meaningful participation, value and real engagement. Do you feel you give this and how?

28) (a) Does the organization you work for have a dedicated department to manage communication via social media?

Yes []

No []

29) (b) If no to (a) above, do you think it's useful to employ a fulltime social media marketing manager? _____

30) Is your social media participation involving customer relationship management by incorporating engaging and dynamic content for your clients?

31) How do you measure your use of social media in achieving your targets?

- a. Hits Counters _____
- b. Number of fans/friends _____
- c. Clients surveys _____
- d. Other _____

32) Do you carry out customer satisfaction surveys on social media networking sites?

Yes [] No []

33) If you find a negative comment for example a complaint by a customer, on the social media channels what do you do?

34) Do all the employees engage with each other on social media? Are they allowed to post their comments or questions on the hotel's website or social media site?

Section D:

35) What problems do you face when marketing on social media?

36) (a) Do you feel like competitors may use social media sites to get information about your products and services and use them to gain advantage over your hotel?

Yes []

No []

(b) If yes to (a) above, how do you deal with this issue
