

**CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING  
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS IN KENYA'S  
TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY**

**BY**

**KENNEDY OCHIENG OUKE**

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**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

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## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university.

Signature.....

Date.....

**KENNEDY OCHIENG' OUKE.**

**D61/72310/2011**

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

Signature.....

Date.....

**DR JOHN YABS**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.**

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## **DEDICATION**

To my loving mum and the rest of the family.

## **ABSTRACT**

The current level of competition in the international business front has and still is experiencing a lot of advancements than in the past few years. This is largely driven by dynamics in the global business environment that continuously push firms to keep changing and adopt new ways enhancing much better flow of business activities such as communication. Since a firm is an open system, it interacts with both the internal environment comprising of employees and management while at the same time interacting with the external environment which consists of customers, suppliers and competitors continuously; the interaction that is mainly aided by communication. Emergence of social media over the past few years has become a game changer on how firms communicate with both the external and internal environment. It has emerged as a very powerful frontier for businesses to meet their business objectives ranging from marketing, sales, public relations, branding, reputation management, customer care, customer relationship management, product development, to communications. It has made information flow borderless, seamless, real time and less expensive while at the same time within reach of millions in the shortest time. The project explored the understanding of the potential impact of social media to international businesses when well executed, because the future of business requires a holistic approach to adopting and integrating emerging trends on social media. The study adopted a descriptive research design in conducting a survey of firms that participate in international business that are based in Kenya. Data was collected from 10 firms based in Nairobi out of the targeted 10 through questionnaires, which is 100% expected response. The data was analyzed using measures of central tendencies, excel and statistical packages for social sciences and was presented in tables, graphs and charts. The findings indicate that most of firms that participate in international business actually have adopted the use of social media as one of their main communication channels to the customers, suppliers and competitors. Most of them have also reorganized the organizational structure and created a separate department that entirely deals with social media; in so doing, they have managed to greatly improve customer service, increased sales and marketing, reduces costs, increased their competitiveness and even aided realization of several organizational objectives. The study recommends that the influence of social media towards growth of international business is so significant to any organization participating in the international business and as such it is imperative for a firm to pay special attention and adopt active use of social media in order promote its growth of international business front.

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the study

International business refers to all those business activities which involve cross border transactions of goods, services, resources between two or more nations as well as between two or more organizations of different countries. Transactions usually comprises of economic resources which includes capital, skills, people etc. for international production of physical goods and services such as finance, banking, insurance, construction etc.

An organization that participates in international business is referred to as multinational enterprise (MNE) or multinational corporation (MNC). They have a worldwide approach to markets and production). Well known MNCs include fast food companies such as McDonald's and Yum Brands, vehicle manufacturers such as General Motors, Ford Motor Company and Toyota, consumer electronics companies like Samsung, LG and Sony, and energy companies such as ExxonMobil, Shell and BP. Most of the largest corporations operate in multiple national markets. International business is influenced mainly by political, economical, social, technological and legal factors which have diverse degrees of influence. The management of socio-political settings has thus become central to international business success (Buckley & Ghauri, 2004; Peng, 2004).

Socio-economic factor is one of the influential aspects in international business. Social factors entails: cultural sensitivity, population size, and population growth, consumption patterns among others while economic factors are: economic growth, interest rates, inflation rates and levels and national income. One of the vital Cultural aspects in international business is language and communication. Increased globalization is forcing a growing number of business managers and

employees to interact across linguistic boundaries. The issue of language barriers is particularly critical during intercultural encounters, where the people/customer and the service provider are from different cultures, is very common in the service sector, such intercultural service encounters may be influenced not only by cultural differences but also by language barriers. Markets for sociopolitical activity are, however, not limited to consumers, but are also considered to include investors, employees, suppliers, media, politicians and civil society organizations, a view strongly argued for in the stakeholder approach (Clarkson,1995; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1984). The fact that most service providers in the U.S. only speak English for instance, may greatly affect international customers. Customers may find it difficult to communicate or even get necessary information regarding products or services if they do not understand and are unable to clearly communicate in English. Language barrier generates negative emotional and cognitive responses, and prevents people/customers from taking certain actions such as seeking necessary information or complaining about service failures. During any communication, language is expressed verbally face to face or through telecommunication mediums, through sign language and written form. Previous studies suggest that language is more than just a communication tool (Imberti, 2007; Luring, 2008) and can influence different aspects of an encounter. Accordingly, it is essential to better understand how language barriers affect communication in international business.

### **1.1.1 Concept of international business and environmental factors.**

The concept has only recently (i.e. in the 20<sup>th</sup> century) been popularized through the spread of multinational enterprises (MNEs). Its roots, however, date back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century when European nations struggled to establish empires worldwide. The Dutch and the British East India companies were perhaps among the earliest MNEs.

In late 18<sup>th</sup> century, many European firms started by setting up manufacturing facilities in their colonies to extract raw materials. In mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, many US firms began by setting up business plants in various parts of the world. In late 20<sup>th</sup> century, most Japanese firms joined the globalization race. By the 1970s, the process of internationalization propelled by the MNEs was quite entrenched, marked by tremendous movement of people, knowledge, goods, services, and technology across borders. The most important modes of technology in international business include electronic communication such as emails, texts, faxes and virtual conferences. However, in the early 1700s, international trade was impeded by economic forces that included wildly fluctuating currency exchange rates, handwritten correspondence via an unreliable postal service, and common supply-chain disruptions such as theft and vandalism of passing ships. Currently, International Business processes are easy due to advances in technology.

This process has effects on human well-being (including health and personal safety), on the environment, on culture, and on economic development and prosperity of societies across the world.

Culture is a human created environment that guides how people belonging to that particular environment behave, international business has influenced culture by aiding the exchange of ideas between people and organizations, exposure to different religions and political systems of different nations of the world as people interact with one another. In the process of cultural

exchange communication takes place through speaking, sign language and writing. Verbal communication can either take place through face to face conversation or through telecommunication. Telecommunication is a telephone aided exchange of information that has been widely used for both verbal and written way and has been embraced as the simplest, easiest, fastest and cheapest way for communicating in the 21st century by both individuals and organizations alike.

### **1.1.2 Social media and International business.**

Older generations of the world weren't able to connect with those around the world like people do today. The closest they were to each other was through mail. There wasn't email, and there definitely wasn't social media like Facebook and Twitter. Since the beginning of the world, people have been striving to become more connected to those far away from them and through trade routes, electronic money transfers, and global corporations. Nowadays people everywhere are closer than they have ever been before as a result of advanced telecommunication means.

Telecommunication in earlier days was confined to immobile telephones gadgets within desk tops in offices or homes which were seen as the best way of communication, as technological advancements grew remarkably from 20<sup>th</sup> century through to 21<sup>st</sup> century discovery of mobile phones have made communication much easier. In fact in the 21<sup>st</sup> century more technological innovations has led to discovery of even more sophisticated telecommunication gargets like tablets, ipads, iphones and more sophisticated and advanced mobile phones. As these discoveries kept evolving, telecommunication medium technology, tools and channels for sharing information has been disrupted and open for true global advancements, while effectively changing how people interact with each other.

Today we no longer search for news, content and information. Instead our friends and followers continually push them to us on social media all day long. Through smart phones, one can get alert on new received message, news and prompts of another user request to chat with the other. Social media has changed and continues to shape the way we exchange of information, share content and add to it as well as pass it on and discuss ideas. Through this interaction, it is influencing to a very big extent how organizations around the world do their businesses. With brands translated into economic value, the social legitimacy of brands is now part of business success (Annette 2002). It determines how and what media and brands communicate thus redefining how companies respond to the marketplace, including customers, stakeholders, and influencers.

Listening is never enough. Customer service and interactions is no longer about people calling “you” but “you” finding them wherever they are talking about you and responding to them where they are be it on a blog, on Facebook and of course on Twitter. For instance, Twitter is a real-time social network and customer care definitely lends itself to it. When organizations listen, response is always the difference that makes the difference. They can make Twitter part of the customer care itinerary and have people monitoring and responding to tweets directed at you or mentioning your company. Soon enough, you will begin seeing more traction via twitter and less from their call centres since the former is cheaper, faster, and progressively the preferred choice

If for instance there’s a storm erupting via blogs about an organization, about its products or services, your customers will expect the organization to respond via those same blogs, not via a carefully-worded press release four days later. If there’s a crisis on Twitter regarding your product or service then you need to listen and respond via the same platform! Social media

presents a great opportunity to create and share content in various multimedia formats that can be consumed on multiple screens so why wouldn't an individual or organization want to fully exploit this opportunity? Millions of the social media users around the world today have transacted businesses with different organizations they have learnt about only in social media around the world through the same social media platform. (Denise, 2012) argue that 65% of shoppers tap social media for the perfect gift. By embracing and adapting the use of smart phones and social media platforms in various areas of business, the organization can gain many advantages in terms of accessibility to a customer or supplier in any part of the world, speed of operations, and reduction in man power among other things.

Due to the ease of the internet access even at the palm of the hand through mobile phones, it is possible to conduct buying and selling transactions irrespective of geographical location while on the other hand internet banking helps in the speedy execution of payments and settlement of accounts. In the current world, a website or a Facebook account can be a virtual showroom, where products can be displayed, demonstrated, and sold. Such a website can also provide various after- sales service tips and suggestions, launch discussions forums, ask for customer feedback, and educate the customer To put it bluntly social media is a complete change in the way we communicate, it's here to stay so whether you have an individual or organization have natural fear of it, they must remember your friend or customer is already there. Worse or better still the conversation takes place with or without "you"! It is safe to say that companies investing in social media to better connect with their customers now will most definitely have an advantage over those that wait and see what happens to this social media thing since it presents a massive opportunity.

### **1.1.3 Social media in Kenya**

“Today unlike yesterday”, communication comes in the form of sharing ideas, words and news through social media networks that allow the information to be faster than the news media in some cases. Social media comes in many different shapes and forms, while the basic concept upon which all instances of social media rely is that users can create and share content with other users, easily and instantly. These many forms includes blogs and microblogs, forums and message boards, social networks, wikis, virtual worlds, social bookmarking, tagging and news, writing communities, digital storytelling and scrapbooking and data, content, image and video sharing, podcast portals, and collective intelligence. And generally speaking, social media allows content accessibility to all.

There are lots of well-known sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, Google, YouTube, Skype, Flickr, WordPress, Blogger, Typepad, LiveJournal, Wikipedia, Wetpaint, Wikidot, Second Life, Del.icio.us, Digg, Reddit, Lulu, badoo and many others. In Kenya today social media has totally occupied a significant part of lives of both individuals and organizations, just like the rest of the world. The Twitter and Facebook community here in Kenya is always abuzz when it comes to News, Local Programs, Tech Conferences, Games, Business, Politics among other things, and you will always find people’s reactions to these as they happen. When you are in the process if doing something and you want honest feedback, just do a quick search on twitter and it will be amazing how many responses comes within a short period of time.

Social networking has become integral to the lives of many individuals and organizations (research shows it’s harder to resist than sex). To zoom in on Kenya; users of social media

represent the most influential and economically able section of the population (Your customers, clients, prospects, suppliers and even sponsors). The proliferation of mobile phone, affordable smart phones and notebooks in the country completely changes the when, where and how brands connect and interact with their communities online. This growth of social media in business and communication in Kenya presents a massive opportunity for growth of international business, but also a serious risk to your business. However, whether or not an organization is active doing the right thing on social media, it is already something that cannot be ignored at all.

## **1.2 Research problem.**

A big concern with regard to social media has been “how to take it off social media” Most business whether local or international wants to know how to convert their followers from social media customers into customers in their shops. First they have to be on social media, then have followers with whom to engage with actively and only then can they get them to their doorstep. The other thing that is common to all the social media forums like twitter, facebook, linked-in among others is the community aspect. People are there to give as well as to receive. You may have a question to which I have an answer, I answer it and vice versa. It is about building a community of loyal customers, followers and friends who share their knowledge and experiences with your products; all the organization have to do is give them a platform and facilitate the forum discussions when you have to.

Quite a number of organizations in forums usually emerge as authorities because they identify with their customers, answer most questions satisfactorily and usually in good time. It is therefore imperative to note that there is no choice on whether or not to do social media; the

concern is how well we do it. We are living in a knowledge-driven era, where everyone has access to information thanks to internet and social media. The market is dominated by those, who translate information into knowledge and use the knowledge to improve productivity and efficiency of their enterprises and organizations for more growth. Therefore, the research problem is; what is the contribution of social media to international business in Kenya?

### **1.3 Research objective.**

The research objective was to determine the contribution of social media in promoting international business in Kenyan telecommunication industry.

### **1.4 Value of the research.**

The study thus will provide a body of knowledge that will assist individuals and organizations to formulate strategies in communications, organization structuring, customer service as well as strategies of growing profitability in doing both domestic and international business. When people like a brand or follow a company on Twitter they are connecting to the business for a reason(s) which varies amongst various social media users. So is a business providing a variety of content/information when and in formats that all these users need it? Do they find it valuable and reliable? Is it provided in a timely manner? Who have the organization given the task to be its 'voice' on social media? Social media is customer service, sales, HR, legal, research and development PR & communications and marketing all combined, so the organization needs someone with the right mix of skills who understands what it takes to shoulder the communication of a brand on social media.

Firms need to have a professional with the right skills, expertise and experience to ensure a return on investment in their social media efforts. Most of the social media is under corporate communications and PR while others use it for marketing however there's something in it for every department in your organization on social media. You can do a customer survey, hire and recruit talent through social media, showcase products and services, handle enquiries, get people involved in your CSR activities, the sales department may use it for prospecting and sales. You need a social media manager to ensure all these departments benefit from social media channels. In doing this Kenyan businesses can reduce costs greatly by building a community and facilitating it instead of increasing the capacity of their customer service employees who are based in call centres.

The study also will provide research institutions with knowledge on further research on social media future trends and its strategic use to create a positive impact in the economic development in the world economies. Institutions of higher learning will be able to evaluate the huge impact of social media to the society and even be able to structure courses to include social media studies.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIVEW**

### **2.1 Introduction.**

The largest world economies like America, Britain, China, Japan and others pride themselves today to be where they are thanks to globalization. Businesses are run real time across the globe

from Asia to Africa and America to Britain due to growth and advancement in telecommunications, international business practices and cross border interactions. When its night in America, it's daytime in African, an American based company is selling its goods and services in African market. Telecommunication has made easy the information flow from one end of the world to another and has taken International business to another level.

## **2.2 Theoretical basis.**

Social media can be defined as a social communication platform that can present opportunities for both individuals and businesses to interact with a very wide range of individuals. (Haenlein, 2010) defines social media as a group of internet based application that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. Social media emergence has led to a revolution that has continued to change the way several things are done around the world, be it education, interaction, business, and even communication. This emergence has left organizations feeling a lot of pressure to find a way to incorporate their activities and communication to the online communities; this is basically due to the fact that billions of the world population uses social media as their main information source tool. (Nielsen, 2009) asserts that 18% of internet users rely on social networking sites as their main information discovery tools and trust what their online friends say about a particular brand or product. This is also the same argument by (Christopher, 2009) who says “90% of users trust peer recommendations, only 14% trust adverts.”

The emergence of social media has provided impetus for a rapid growth in business and interaction among people of different origins; (Efraim Turban et al, 2008) argues that “entering

the third millennium, we are experiencing one of the most important changes to our daily lives- the move to an internet based society.” Social media is the idea that we can be connected to all cultures and products around the world, it promotes e-commerce (international business), most organization do their trading through the internet while it is not strange to see many individuals have embraced internet as a way of doing their shopping. According to research, Lady Gaga, Justin Bieber and Britney Spears have more followers on twitter than entire population of Sweden, Israel and Greece, and over 95% of these followers buy every single of their albums and chart releases from internet. Many of these fans also attend their show performances whenever they go. It is not surprising therefore why most of the musicians in America are among the richest people in the world.

It is almost unbelievable that just about four years ago social networking began to make its way into the mainstream and by 2011, it has become such a phenomenon that Mashable called it “one of the most powerful vehicles for change the world has ever experienced.” Thanks to the smart phones and tablets, it has become engrained into daily life. Social media emerged as and continues to be a cultural phenomenon (Frost and Suvillan, 2011). Today organizations do not rely on print and broadcast media to relay information concerning its business to its clients, but rather rely more on social media to do so because social media finds customers where they are unlike other means that the customer has to look for to get the same information. In fact, one twitter feed can be viewed and retweeted to more than 1 million audiences in a matter of a minute. These social media innovations are not only inspired by the fact that people are logging on via mobile, but also by where and when they are doing it. The Nielsen report highlights the

social TV trend, where smartphone and tablet owners communicate via social media while tuning into their favorite programs.

Facebook showed up specifically for college students and soon spread to everybody not just in the United States but around the world. This one website revolutionized how people could connect and share information. Facebook is a prime example of modern day globalization. It is used to promote individuals, but also to promote companies. According to the video “Social Media Revolution,” “Facebook tops Google for weekly traffic in the US. This is huge considering how global and popular the search engine Google is. Twitter followed Facebook, but amped up social media at the same time. Instead of users focusing on themselves they could focus on spreading news and current events to their followers. Twitter is all about being concise and getting straight to the point. Twitter narrowed down what Facebook had started.

This correlates to globalization because as the world becomes more globalized information is sent faster and slimmed down the smallest or cheapest it can be; Twitter did just that. The popularity of social media is growing every day. The more it grows the more globalized it becomes. “According to web measurement company Comscore, the number of global Twitter users last year surged from 1.6 million to 32 million”. This is one major jump in just one year. People around the world are catching on and catching on quickly. Imagine what this means for a bad or good customer experiences. (Boyd, 2007) argues that what makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate what and make visible their social networks. Social media helps conversation to reach a wider audience leveraging the “long tail” concept, (Simeon, 2011) meaning conversations that can be conveyed to different forums.

Recent studies have shown that there was a growth of about 30% users which accounts to about 10million internet users in Kenya between 2009- 2010 and over 4 million social media users in Kenya. In fact for any profit making entity, advert in social media accounts for over 1% of advertising revenues in a company. People are increasingly looking to their twitter and facebook feeds to get abreast on news, follow favorite organization and even engage frequently with these organizations. As a business or individual, if you have something to communicate, Twitter and Facebook should become central to your communication strategies. Communication is not just one way, but it's an engagement involving sending of information and receiving of response. Actually if there is something to learn, is that the more you engage, the better you will be received. We have questions to ask and answering them is part of this engagement.

### **2.3 Social media influence and International business.**

“News no longer breaks, it tweets” is the new reality. Social Media is transforming the way the world does business. Today the implications are huge and the prizes are enormous for those businesses & individuals who handle it right. However a few organizations today can actually show tangible results on their efforts on social media. Why? Most organizations jumped into the social media bandwagon without a strategy, a budget to sustain it and a dedicated social media team! Social media marketing eliminates the middlemen, providing brands the unique opportunity to have a direct relationship with their customers. Digital marketing is a field that's constantly evolving. With each new social platform, mobile device or website redesign, a brand's strategy for reaching new audiences while engaging current ones changes (Ryan, 2013)

The contribution of social media towards development in any economy is very significant. In fact, Forrester research reports that the easy connections that social computing has give us has made a major impact on the global economy. It is influencing the business of how and what media and brands communicate thus redefining how companies respond to the marketplace, including customers, stakeholders, and influencers (Chaffrey, 2009) writes that “the internet and other digital media have transformed marketing. For customers, they give a much wider choice of products, services and prices. For organizations marketing these products and services, it gives the opportunity to expand into new markets, offer new services, apply new online communication techniques and compete on a more equal footing with larger businesses.

For those working with these organizations it gives opportunity to develop new skills and to use the internet to improve the competitiveness of the company.” For sure using internet and social media provides several opportunities and treats for all users. According to research, 93% of marketers use social media for business and return on investment of social media is that your business will still exist in 5 years.

One of the recent experiences in use of social media in Kenya was Kenyans for Kenyans initiative in which the response by Kenyans was overwhelming and humbling. Through Facebook and Twitter urban affluent including abroad were sensitized, through mobile phones people in the rural areas. Television, radio and print publications just reinforced the message to the general population. About 19 million Kenya shillings were collected through M-Pesa on the second day of the launch of the initiative and close to \$10 million within two weeks (Julie,2012). The use of social media in international business is the way to go in convincing customers to buy a product or service because the social media is effectively used through to gaining publicity.

Social Media has over the past few years emerged as a very powerful frontier for businesses to meet their business objectives ranging from marketing, sales, public relations, branding, reputation management, customer care, customer relationship management, product development, to communications.

In Kenya, the adoption of Social Media within organizations has just begun and businesses here like everywhere else are facing the same painful adoption process, it is now a serious business and Kenyan companies are already treating it with the seriousness it deserves lest they get left behind. Many Kenyan businesses and organizations are using social media and at the same time more and more companies getting onto social networks, from government to non-government organizations, companies, business entities all the way to small and medium enterprises. Many small businesses are selling their goods to social network friends within the country and across East Africa via social media and having them delivered through courier services to the customer location without many problems. The social web is a fast-moving, constantly changing network of information and organizations trying to adopt these emerging technologies without a strategy involved in attempts at futility. Most of these organizations 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.

Today, social media has not only promoted both local and international business, it has also created opportunities for birth of other businesses. There is emergence of companies providing social media services to other companies and organizations on a contractual basis; this is especially for companies that have not designed their organizational structures to accommodate

social media specialist or manager. They design the service to for a company by focusing on creating brand, building online communities of people, professionals, and business owners who share common interest and activities or who are interested in exploring the interest and activities of others. They do strategy and concept development by identifying content, brand messages, communities and influencers with the greatest potential for their clients' social media engagement. Using this information, they create a roadmap based on marketing materials and goals to coordinate and execute social media marketing campaigns as a key component of the overall search engine marketing strategy. These social media companies also create a wide range of web applications for their clients through social media like Facebook, manage clients social media initiatives like campaign management, monitor media conversations around clients brands and that of competitors which provides insight on whom these companies should be talking to, and trains the companies' employees and management on how to effectively integrate social media into future marketing strategies.

The contribution of social media towards international business in Kenya is enormous and serious to organization competitiveness in current business environment. Organizations therefore need a social media team with defined job descriptions and working under a manager to plan, formulate strategy, monitor social media, spot trends, disseminate reports to various business units to guide decision making, review tools and advice the business on adoption, train staff on communication on new media and be tasked with managing brand reputation on social media. There is need someone who can handle blogger relations and outreach, keep tabs on the influencers and track

conversations on blogs, message boards and basically the whole social media space. That needs a social media manager!

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction.**

This section describes the methodology that will be used in this study. The specific issues addressed include, research design, the study area and population, subjects and sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and analysis

### **3.2 Research design**

The study adopted a descriptive study in an attempt to ascertain whether social media contributes to the growth of international business in Kenya. Descriptive study technique was appropriate as it involved a careful in depth study and analysis on the contribution of social media in the international business sector in terms of service delivery, cost management, achievement of objective, security and interactions among others. It has provided immense value in illuminating the positive and negative effects of social media to international business.

### **3.3 Population of the study.**

The study involved 10 organizations across five sectors within telecommunication industry involved in international business in Kenya based in Nairobi. They were picked through both stratified sampling according to the sectors: service providers, manufacturers, consultants, marketers and service consumers. Simple random sampling was used to pick the two firms from each category.

### **3.4 Data collection instruments/procedures used**

The main research instrument used was questionnaires since they are reliable in collecting information about the same questions on the subject from different respondents and also in view of the fact that the targeted respondents have tight schedules especially within a relatively short period of time. The questionnaire had both open ended and close ended questions so as to follow

for further probing in view of getting in-depth responses and structured answers. A pilot study was also be conducted to establish the reliability and validity of the instruments before the actual study, in order to determine the adequacy of the items in relation to the information the researcher expected to obtain.

The researcher worked with either the head of sales, customer service, marketing or public relations of each company to get perfect information on the degree of exploitation of social media towards promotion of international business in those organizations. This was due to the fact that these are the departments that are directly involved with the use of social media in any organization.

### **3.5 Data analysis methods.**

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data: Percentages, graphical presentations, frequencies and tables that describe the phenomena under investigation was used. Discussions on data analysis, interpretations followed thereof.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings and interpretations with respect to the objective of the study. The study was designed with the aim of knowing the contributions of social media towards international business, survey of organizations in Kenya. The chapter dealt with the presentation of findings derived from respondents from the sampled firms. The information was obtained through the use of questionnaires, which provided the primary data. Having received data from various respondents, the responses were then coded to facilitate easy analysis. The findings were then presented in form of tables and graphs.

## 4.2 Data Analysis and Presentation

Quantitative analysis refers to a scientific method of investigation based on numeric; data is represented in form of numbers and categories, where tables and graphs are also used.

### 4.2.1 Response rate

**Table 1.1 Response Rate**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Questionnaires given</b>	<b>Questionnaires returned</b>	<b>Response percentage</b>
Corporate section Staff	6	6	60%
Social Media Section staff	4	4	40%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author (2013)

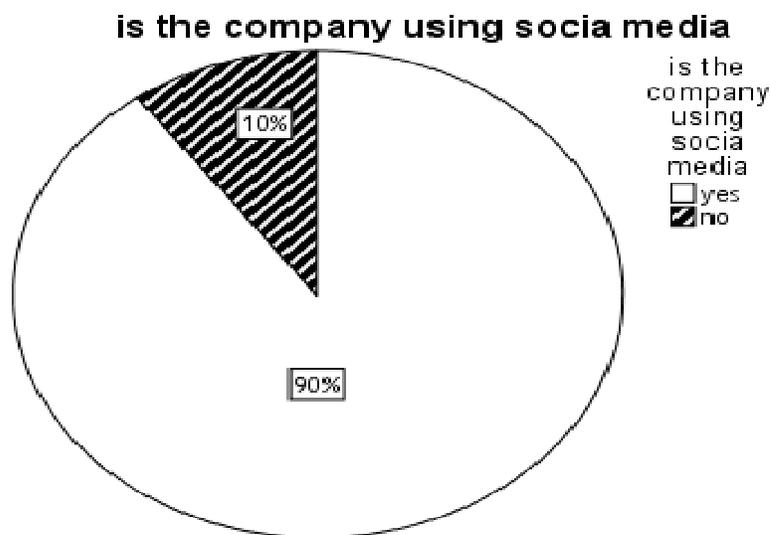
The study targeted a population of 10 respondents. The response rate in the duration of data collection was a total of all the intended respondents. In other words 100% was the percentage

response rate, which was enough and adequate to warrant reliable information. This is illustrated in table 4.1 above.

#### 4.2.2 Social Media Use by Companies

Although many companies are grappling with the reality of social media in conducting their businesses, not all companies have embraced its use. Some are still planning to adopt its use in business. In this case the respondents were asked whether their respective organizations have adopted the use of social.

**Figure 1.1 Usage of social media**

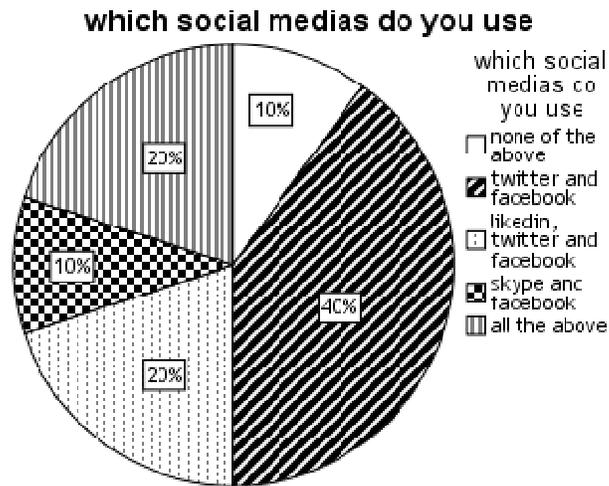


Out of the 10 firms under the study only one firm that does not use social media representing a percentage of 10%. All the other firms use social media representing 90% percentage.

### 4.2.3 Social Media Accounts used

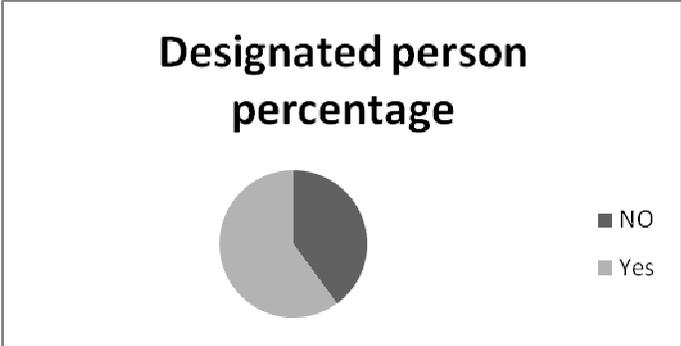
There are different social media platforms that are available for adoption. However each organization adopts only what they think is more relevant to them. Respondents were asked to indicate the ones that are exploited by their organizations

**Figure 1.2 Social media Accounts Used by the Firms**



The majority of the respondents showed that they use twitter and facebook. 20% of the firms use LinkedIn, facebook and twitter, 10% of the respondents use skype and facebook while 20% use facebook, skype, twitter, linkedin and other social media accounts. Only 10% showed that they don't use any of the social media accounts, meaning that they don't use social media at all.

**Figure 1.3 Designated person for social Media**



60% of the respondents showed that they have designated certain staff members to handle the social media accounts only. 40% don't have social media staff but rather the accounts are either handled through the corporate section or they don't have at all.

**4.2.4 Achievement of Objectives through Social Media**

**Table 1.2 objectives achieved through social media**

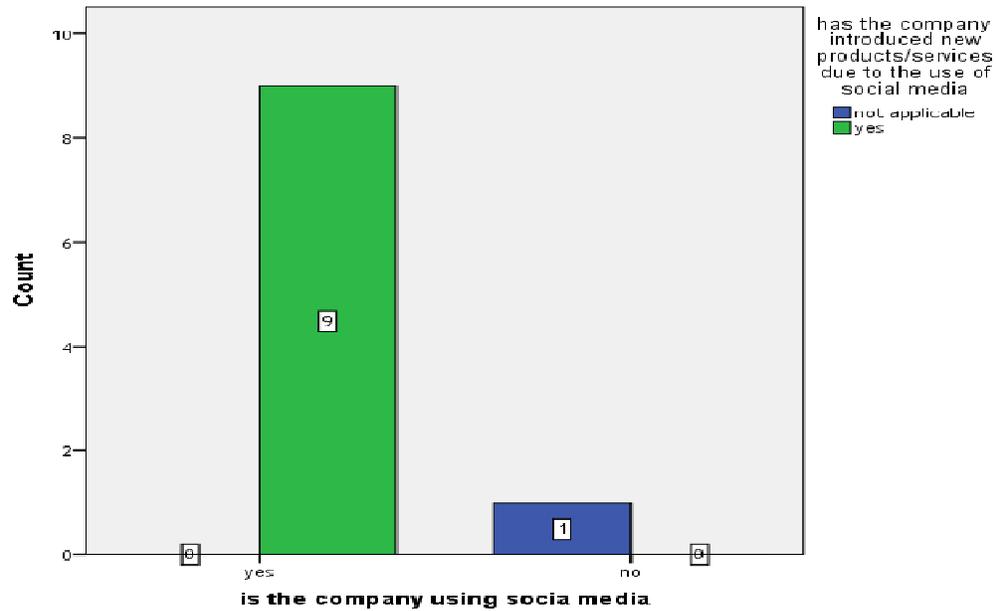
**what percentage would you allocate to the company objectives achieved through the social media**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	none of these	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
	below 50%	3	30.0	30.0	40.0
	51-60 %	5	50.0	50.0	90.0
	61-70 %	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

50% of the firms indicated that they have been able to achieve between 51-60% of their objectives through social media. 30% of the firms indicated that their objectives have been met below 50% while 10% said that their objectives have been met within a range of 61-70%. Only 10% did not achieve any objective through social media.

#### 4.2.5 Invention and Innovation through Social Media

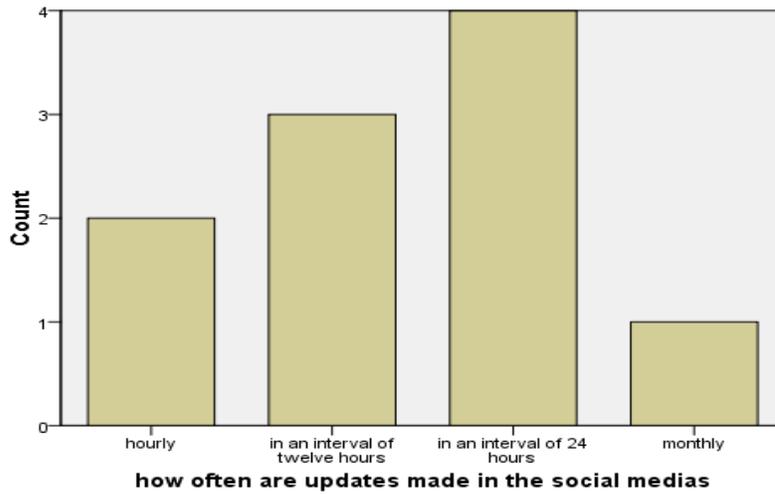
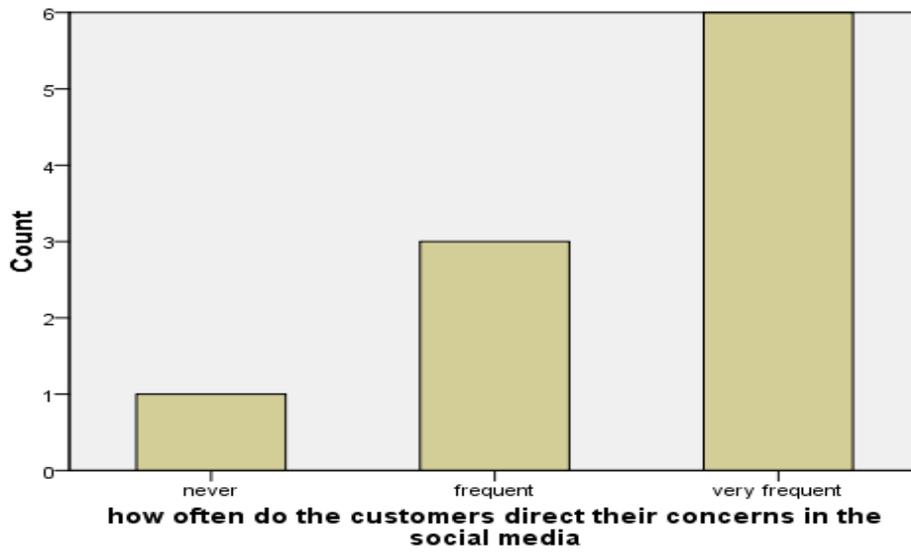
Figure 1.4 New products developed through social media



All the firms that use social media show that they were able to develop new products after using social media. Probably through suggestions during customer interactions. 90% indicated they were able to innovate and invent new products and services.

#### 4.2.6 Customer responses versus companies' updates

Figure 1.5 Customer response versus companies updates



Six out of ten respondents indicated that their customers raise concerns very frequently while the companies respond to them mostly within an interval of 24 hours, 12 hours and hourly in that order. They also indicated that they update on their social media accounts frequently.

#### 4.2.7 Effectiveness of Social Media to Achievement of set targets

**Table 1.3 Effectiveness of social media in achieving set targets**

**The social media is effective in achieving the set targets.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not applicable	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
	agree	1	10.0	10.0	20.0
	strongly agree	8	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

From the research, 80% of the respondents strongly agreed that social media is a powerful tool in achieving the set targets, 10% strongly agreed while 10% did not respond since they were not using social media in their organization.

#### 4.2.8 Response to concerns.

**Table 1.4 Response to concerns**

**How does the organization respond to the concerns raised in the social media?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid none of the above	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
through television	1	10.0	10.0	20.0
through the radio	1	10.0	10.0	30.0
through the social media	7	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

From the respondents, 70% said they respond to questions and comments posted on their social media page or mentions in the social media only through the same channel of social media 10% of them use both television and social media to respond to concerns raised by their customers, 10% through radio. 10% did not respond.

It therefore clear from the above response that social media is the most effective channel of interaction between organizations and clients; the concerns that are raised through social media are mostly responded to through the same social media. Other few concerns that might need a general treatment are addressed through other channels of communications like television and radio as revealed by study.

#### **4.2.9 Effectiveness of social media**

**Table 1.5 Effectiveness of social media**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Effective	7	70.0	70.0	70.0
	Effective	2	20.0	20.0	90.0
	Not effective	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

70% of the respondents indicated that after using social media, they have seen the use of social media being very effective in their organizations, 20% indicated that they have been effective and 10% indicated that it has not been effective.

#### 4.2.10 Social Media and Customer service

**Table 1.6 Social media in serving customers**

##### **Social media helps in serving customers better**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	none of these	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
	neutral	2	10.0	10.0	20.0
	agree	3	20.0	20.0	40.0
	strongly agree	4	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the firms strongly agreed that social media helps in serving customers better, 20% just agreed, 10% were neutral and 10% did not respond. This shows that social media is a strong tool to customer service.

#### **4.2.11 Challenges on the use of social media.**

Only 10% of the organization indicated that challenge of high cost to maintain the social media. 10% whose organization did not use the social media platform indicated that the challenge is as a result of lack of commitment by the organization in social media use and fear of negative effects of social media. 10% sited lack of tools for monitoring while the remaining 70% indicated that they face no challenge in the use of social media platform.

#### **4.3 Discussion of the findings**

The study has provided a true picture of the way in which social media (web platforms) is increasingly being used as the main communication strategies. In fact, the study has given a strong signal that it is the next frontier as far as communication strategies is concerned across the world. The effectiveness and efficiency of companies in carrying out their operations has tremendously improved due to the adoption of the use of the social media. From the study, operations, marketing, finance and human resource are all the areas in an organization that rely on social media in decision making since it provides first-hand information which is very crucial. In doing international business, location has become less important when using technology. If this characteristic is coupled with the portability of wireless technology and computer-based applications, it can potentially be used almost anywhere, making social media technology an increasingly integrated part of firms everyday lives. This was very evident in the study as all

majority of the respondent actually ascertained that their organizations have embraced the use of social media. Such developments on the other hand also contribute to widening the gap between technology users and the technologically excluded, both within and between international business arena. This probably increases the need for almost all the organizations involved in international business within the telecommunication industry to adopt the full use of social media.

The adoption of social media technology regarding communication is a linchpin of international business. The ability to instantaneously communicate with a manager in another country, for example, allows companies to expand regionally and even overseas. In fact some of the respondents explained that ease of communication is a very key factor in achieving set objectives of growth and expansion; most of the organizations indicated that social media has immensely propelled the firms to achieve certain set objectives to about 60%. Though multinational companies existed before the Internet and social media, the ease of communication allows companies to outsource their operations with greater assurance: the public relation service providing firms actually ascertained this fact.

The extent to which social media innovation contributes to lower cost of production in international business is great. Technology allows companies to produce products for less money; video monitoring of factory and working conditions, inexpensive conference calls to consultants working in different countries, reduction in man power and cheap long-distance phone calls are just a few of the ways social media technology has facilitated international business trade and operations within telecommunication industry while aiding the reduction in

the cost. This was explanations from most the customers who responded. Furthermore, companies have a wider selection of different social media platforms from which to choose which lowers the cost as well.

The integration of social media and internet has provided a very effective platform for electronic marketing or e-marketing. E-marketing means using digital technologies to help sell your goods or services. This is different from a conventional market place, where sellers display their goods and buyers can touch and feel the goods and bargain with sellers. Social media page can be a virtual showroom, where products can be displayed, demonstrated, and sold it also provides various after- sales service tips and suggestions, launch discussions forums, ask for customer feedback, and educate the customer. Social media is effective in handling companies' businesses. If a modern competitive enterprise seeks to hold an edge over the market. Social media helps provide this competitive advantage through its various applications tools. By adapting these tools in various areas of business, the organization can gain many advantages in terms of accessibility to a customer or supplier in any part of the world and speed of operations. Over 70% of the respondents said that social media is an effective tool in handling firms operations and in customer service. This is very possible due to the fact that as customers and other stakeholder raise their issues through social media, a firm uses the same platform to provide explanation and answers immediately and the engagement is real time. Majority of respondents said they respond to social media through social media because it is like a face to face engagement even though the customer and the company are not together.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The final chapter of the research represents a summary and answers to research questions or research finding from the previous chapter, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research. The study was carried out with the aim of finding out the extent to which social media influences international business. Specifically, the researcher wanted to establish whether the use of social media helps achieve businesses objectives, serve their customers better and respond to issues raised in international business.

To facilitate the study, a research questionnaire was formulated and hand delivered to the corporate staff of sampled firms. Tables with frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data while graphical representation summarized the same.

### **5.2 Summary of the findings**

From the ten firms examined through the questionnaires, the responses have revealed that social is widely used within the telecommunication industry just like many other sectors to conduct their businesses in the international arena. It has proved to be very effective in handling varied organizational issues and increases firms' efficiency in resource allocation and use. From the data provided, social media has a great impact on the way international businesses are run and has shown that most of the firms that use social media are able to meet their set objectives to a degree of between 61%-70%; the objectives of any organization is contributed by all the departments of management within that organization. Social media impact cuts across all these

departments ranging from human resource, finance, marketing, operations and others.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study findings shed adequate light to draw major conclusions based on the summary of the findings. Most of the organizations that participate in international business have embraced the use of social media as a strategic tool in conducting their businesses in order to remain relevant in the wake of social media reality. The study has thus led to the conclusion that due to the fact that social media is part and parcel of businesses; it has immensely contributed to the development of international business.

### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

In carrying out a research survey, it is common for the researcher to encounter some limitations that could be related to resources required to produce perfect explanations of the research objectives. This research was no exception and was faced with some limitations: limited time as the data collection took more time than initially estimated due to nature of the respondents. Most of them had busy work schedules. Although the respondents turn-out was 100%, it was also evident in certain instances; some organizations were very skeptical and reluctant in allowing their staffs to respond to the questionnaire as they did not want to reveal the organization's data and information for research purposes

### **5.5 Recommendations**

From this study, several facts are clear, that the use of social media is very important to the development of international business by the organizations in Kenya. The researcher has several recommendations to make, in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in interaction with

both external and internal environment through use of social media in the international businesses.

Social media is not a fuss, it's a reality. It has literally changed the way of doing business in the Kenya and in the rest of the world. Its effectiveness and efficiency in terms customer interaction, innovation, communication, cost reduction, objectives achievement, public relation, research, sales and marketing among other things is evidently great. Businesses should continue to exploit this new opportunity and for those not yet started should embrace and adopt the use social media. Therefore all firms that engage in international business should maintain accounts such as facebook, twitter and linked-in where most people are.

In communication, business trends are so dynamic, hence it is up-to the firms to adjust their ability to cope with these trends and adopt the use of social media as one of their main strategies to remain competitive.

## **5.6 Suggestions for further research**

Further research should be carried out on to establish contribution of social medial specifically to customer service for international clients. This is because most researchers dwell on the general effects of social media on the market share, customer service and market research. A lot of research should be carried out on the adoption and use of social media by specific departments within an organization, in so doing it will greatly assist firms in policy making and practices within the entire organization

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# APPENDIX I: UNIVERSITY INTRODUCTION LETTER



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**  
**MBA PROGRAMME**

Telephone: 020-2059162  
Telegram: "Varsity", Nairobi  
Telex: 22095 Varsity

P. O. Box 30197  
Nairobi, Kenya

DATE 26<sup>TH</sup> AUG, 2013

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

The bearer of this letter KENNEDY OCHIENG DUKE  
Registration No. D61/72310/2011

is a bona fide continuing student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program in this University.

He/she is required to submit as part of his/her coursework assessment a research project report on a management problem. We would like the students to do their projects on real problems affecting firms in Kenya. We would, therefore, appreciate your assistance to enable him/her collect data in your organization.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organizations on request.

Thank you.

  
  
**PATRICK NYABUTO**  
**MBA ADMINISTRATOR**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

## APPENDIX 1I: LETTER TO THE RESPONDENT

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI,  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,  
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION,  
P.O. Box 30197,  
NAIROBI.

To the Respondent,

**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT A STUDY.**

I am a post graduate student pursuing a master's degree in Business administration from the School of Business-University of Nairobi. I am currently conducting a research on the topic "A survey on the contribution of social media to international business in Kenya",

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge on this topic.

You have been selected as one of the respondents in this study. I kindly request you to fully complete the questionnaire attached as accurately as possible. The information provided will be used strictly for academic purposes only and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Your response will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Kennedy OchiengOuke

### APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is intended to gather general information for a research which seeks to establish the contribution of social media on performance, operations and effectiveness in conducting international business in Kenya. Kindly respond to all the questions.

Q1. Currently, is the company using social media? \_\_\_\_\_

Q2. If yes, which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Q3. Does the company have a designated position/a person that handles social media issues?

Yes( ) No( )

Q4. How frequent does the company use social media in doing international business? (Tick appropriately)

Several times a day	
Once daily	
2-3 times per week	
Weekly	
Monthly	

Q5. What are some of the frequent use of social media in your organization? (1-never, 2-rare, 3-frequent, 4-very frequent)

	1	2	3	4
Customer service				
Public relations				
Marketing and selling				
Interaction				

Q6. Social media is very effective in handling the above issues, do you agree?

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
I don't agree	

Q7. How frequent does the clients of the organization direct questions, mentions and concerns through social media?

Very frequent	
Frequently	
Less frequent	
Never	

Q8. How does the organization responds to the mentions, comments and questions directed through the social media.

Through television	
Through radio stations	
Through social media	
Never respond to social media	

Others, Specify \_\_\_\_\_

Q9.To what extent in terms of percentages did/has the company achieved its objectives in the use of social media?

Below 50%	
50%-60%	
60%-70%	
80%-90%	
90%-100%	

Q10.What are the major challenges encountered in the use of social media by the organization?

- i. lack of comittment by the company in socila media use
- ii. Lack of designated personel to handle social media.
- iii. Cost
- iv. Fear of the negative effects of social media.


Q11. The company mitigates Challenges.

Yes( ) No( )

Q12.Has the organization introduced a new product/service due to the use of social media?

Yes( ) No( )

Q13 .Using the likert scale of 1 to 5 as follows, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements with respect to social media.

Statements ...1.Strongly agree 2.Agree 3.Neutral 4.Disagree 5.Strongly disagree

Social media in the organization. -

Scale

	1	2	3	4	5
i. Helps in serving customers better.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
ii.					
iii. Leads to lower cost of customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>				
iv. Improves efficiency of business operations	<input type="checkbox"/>				
v. Support product development and Modification.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Q14. The following are some of the negative effects that come with social media in an organization; tick appropriately if your company has experienced any of the effects.

1. High system maintenance Cost
2. Layoffs as fewer employees are needed.
3. Disruption of customer service.
4. Bad reputation
5. None of the above


Q15. If your organization was not using social media, would you recommend/suggest it to the management?

Yes( )      No( )

16. In your own analysis, how would you rate the effectiveness of social media towards performance of certain operations?

Very effective	
Effective	
Not sure	
Not effective	

Q17. What is your opinion of social media towards doing international business\_\_\_\_\_

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THANK YOU.

## **APPENDIX IV: LIST OF RESPONDENTS**

Nation Media Group

Gina Din corporations international

Airtel Kenya

Safaricom Limited

Samsung Kenya

Nokia Kenya

Kenya Civil Aviation Authority

Kenya Airports Authority

Bonfire Adventures International

Kenya Tourist Board