

2015

Social Media Marketing Strategies to Engage Generation Y Consumers

Christopher Tingley
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>

 Part of the [Advertising and Promotion Management Commons](#), and the [Marketing Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Christopher Tingley

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Tim Malone, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Lynn Szostek, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Richard Snyder, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2015

Abstract

Social Media Marketing Strategies to Engage Generation Y Consumers

by

Christopher M. Tingley

MBA, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, 2006

BA, Gannon University, 2004

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

June 2015

Abstract

Consumers of the Generation Y cohort, also referred to as *Millennials*, include approximately 75 million Americans who have significant purchasing power. These consumers access social media on a daily basis, but they often ignore advertisements that are targeted to them. Previous studies on social media marketing to Generation Y consumers have focused on consumer input but lacked data from marketing professionals. The purpose of this phenomenological study of social media marketers in the United States was to determine successful strategies to engage Generation Y on social media. The study's conceptual framework was *attitude toward the ad*. The data were gathered through semistructured telephone interviews conducted with 20 social media marketing professionals who were recruited through email and social media. The data were coded using inductive codes of reoccurring themes. Social media marketers were found to be most successful when remaining honest and transparent, and when personalizing their communications to their target audiences. Marketers reading this study can gain insight into the social media behavior of Generation Y consumers and can apply the strategies presented in this study in their social media campaigns. This study may promote social change by improving the relationship between social media marketers and Generation Y consumers, allowing Generation Y consumers to gain a stronger voice in marketing, and by highlighting the need for marketers to communicate and advertise more honestly with their consumers.

Social Media Marketing Strategies to Engage Generation Y Consumers

by

Christopher M. Tingley

MBA, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, 2006

BS, Gannon University, 2004

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

June 2015

Dedication

I dedicate this study to “Uncle” Kenny Tingley. He was my godfather, uncle, and best friend. I know he would be proud of me, and I miss him every day of my life. As the Iced Earth song goes, “Oh I know, he’s watching over me.”

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank everyone who has been with me along the way through all the laughs and all of the tears. I hope I have done you proud.

To quote Willy Wonka, “We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams.”

Table of Contents

Section 1: Foundation of the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	1
Problem Statement	3
Purpose Statement.....	3
Nature of the Study	4
Research Question	6
Interview Questions	6
Conceptual Framework.....	7
Definition of Terms.....	8
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations.....	10
Assumptions.....	10
Limitations	11
Delimitations.....	11
Significance of the Study	12
Contribution to Business Practice.....	12
Implications for Social Change.....	13
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	13
Transition and Summary.....	39
Section 2: The Project.....	40
Purpose Statement.....	40
Role of the Researcher	41

Participants.....	41
Research Method and Design	43
Method	43
Research Design.....	45
Population and Sampling	46
Ethical Research.....	47
Data Collection	48
Instruments.....	48
Data Collection Technique	50
Data Organization Techniques.....	50
Data Analysis Technique	51
Reliability and Validity.....	53
Reliability.....	53
Validity	55
Transition and Summary.....	56
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change	57
Overview of Study	57
Presentation of the Findings.....	58
Applications to Professional Practice	69
Implications for Social Change.....	70
Recommendations for Action	71
Recommendations for Further Study	72

Reflections	72
Summary and Study Conclusions	73
References	74
Appendix A: Interview Questions	92
Appendix B: Informed Consent Form	93
Appendix C: Interview Transcripts.....	96

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Social media has allowed consumers the opportunity to become co-creators of marketing information and has driven a business model of customer interaction and user-generated content (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011). Consumers of the Generation Y cohort, also referred to as *Millennials*, include approximately 75 million Americans who have significant purchasing power (Schewe et al., 2013). They access social media on a daily basis and have a direct effect on how marketers successfully engage consumers on social media (Smith, 2011). Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter have become an integral part of the lives of Internet users (Saxena & Khanna, 2013).

Generation Y consumers are considered digital natives and have been connected to digital technology most of their lives (Williams, Crittenden, Keo, & McCarty, 2012). Internet consumers in the Generation Y cohort consume a significant number of advertising messages, especially through social media (Wright, Khanfar, Harrington, & Kizer, 2010). These consumers often multitask while using social networking and become skeptical and uninterested in engaging with advertisements on social media (Sashittal, Sriramachandramurthy, & Hodis, 2012). This requires marketers to overcome obstacles not only in reaching their target markets, but also in capturing continuous engagement (Hanna et al., 2011). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore social media marketing strategies that will allow marketers to successfully engage with Generation Y consumers.

Background of the Problem

Generation Y, the generational cohort whose members were born after 1981, is

the second largest generational cohort in the United States, comprising approximately 75 million consumers (Schewe et al., 2013). The cohort is made up of consumers in the United States who have been able to access digital technology most of their lives (Williams et al., 2012). As consumers, they are brand loyal, very conscious of fashion, and motivated by the establishment of trust with a brand (Noble, Haytko, & Phillips, 2009). They exhibit a strong reaction to a positive brand experience and will most likely become brand loyal when they have received a positive brand experience (Qader & Omar, 2013). More than consumers of other generations, they are most likely to support a brand that they find is socially conscious, when their own social concerns align with the social concerns of that organization (Furlow, 2011).

Generation Y has become an important target demographic for marketers because of the cohort's vast size and significant purchasing power (Schewe et al., 2013). These consumers have had a profound effect on marketers due to their regular use of and familiarity with social media (Smith, 2011). Despite their regular use of social media, Generation Y consumers almost never notice advertisements targeted to them in favor of paying attention to other Internet content (Hadija, Barnes, & Hair, 2012). Their lack of engagement in social media advertising creates a problem for marketers who are trying to capitalize on their social media usage.

Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter are examples of popular social media websites. Retailers, nonprofit organizations, and manufacturers around the world use social media to market their products (Pate & Adams, 2013). When aligned with traditional marketing methods, social media can be an effective tool for marketers if the

obstacle of engaging Generation Y is overcome (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As stated by Lutz (1985) in his seminal work, consumers' attitudes toward the specific characteristics of a brand, or to a specific type of advertisement, can have significant effects on their perception of and responses to advertisements. Social media presents a new opportunity for marketers to embrace their consumers. However, to be successful, an organization must stay connected and develop two-way communication with consumers to create a sense of value (Wright et al., 2010).

Problem Statement

Generation Y consumers access social media on a daily basis and have a direct effect on how marketers use social media (Smith, 2011). Generation Y consumers will likely have purchasing power of \$1.2 trillion by 2015 (Williams et al., 2012). However, achieving marketing objectives online has become more difficult due to media fragmentation and the increasing number of daily media exposures (Lapido, Nwagwu, & Alarpe, 2013). As a result, Generation Y consumers frequently pay less attention to social media advertisements and often deliberately try to avoid advertisements that hinder their enjoyment of web content (Yeu, Yoon, Taylor, & Lee, 2013). The general business problem was that advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media has become more difficult. The specific business problem was that some social media marketers have limited strategies to engage Generation Y consumers through social media.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore what social media strategies marketers need to engage Generation Y consumers through social

media. I conducted the study through in-depth, semistructured qualitative interviews with a sample that included a minimum of 20 social media marketing professionals located in the United States. These professionals had worked in social media marketing for a minimum of 3 years, had marketed directly to Generation Y consumers, and had demonstrated skills in the use of social media channels (Fischer & Reuber, 2010).

Social media marketing professionals can use the results of this study to promote improvement of business practice by using strategies to become more effective in engaging Generation Y consumers through social media. This study may benefit marketers by providing information that allows them to deliver more engaging, informative, and educational social media advertising, resulting in well-informed Generation Y consumers who are responsive to social media advertising. Marketers can use social media to allow consumers to become co-creators, rather than passive recipients, of a brand's message and thus become part of a two-way marketing exchange (Hanna et al., 2011). Social change may result from more consumers becoming better informed due to improved social media advertising.

Nature of the Study

I chose a qualitative method and phenomenological design for this research study because it was rooted in the lived experiences of those being studied and could be used to examine the phenomenon within its natural setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I designed this study to understand why online social media advertisers are having increased difficulty engaging Generation Y consumers online due to the deliberate avoidance of advertisements placed through social media (Yeu et al., 2013). Using a

qualitative research method allowed for the best understanding of these consumers' experiences with advertising avoidance and lack of engagement with advertisements on social media due to the use of open-ended questions and the in-depth understanding that was achieved.

Researchers best use quantitative research when a statistical method of data collection is appropriate to confirm or disconfirm hypotheses (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). A quantitative research design was not appropriate to the study, as it would have involved measuring variables to predict or control phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Quantitative researchers gather information quickly from a variety of points, whereas qualitative researchers identify a single phenomenon in depth (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). In this study, a variety of information was less desirable than in-depth information on one phenomenon.

The five most popular qualitative research designs are (a) ethnography, (b) phenomenology, (c) grounded theory, (d) narrative, and (e) case study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Ethnography allows a researcher to examine an entire cultural group in an in-depth analysis (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001), which was not appropriate for this study because the participants were specifically social media marketers. Performing case study research enables the researcher to obtain characteristics of real-life events and is preferred when the researcher cannot manipulate behaviors within the study (Yin, 2009), but it requires focus on one or more bounded units. Using grounded theory involves developing a theory from gathered data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Conducting narrative research entails constructing a story of the lives of a group of people who are often unrepresented

(Marshall & Rossman, 2011); this approach was unrelated to the research problem.

Phenomenological researchers aim to discover the meaning of an experience for a group of people who are able to provide a description of the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Qualitative interviews allow an understanding of events from the perspective of the interviewed subject (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). By using qualitative interviews, I gained an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of marketing professionals.

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to explore which social media strategies marketers have used to successfully engage Generation Y consumers through social media.

Qualitative researchers design an effective research question to examine established knowledge in society (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011). The central research question for the study was as follows: What strategies have social media marketers used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

Interview Questions

1. How would you define *social media*?
2. What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?
3. What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?
4. What are your least successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?
5. What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y

consumers on social media?

6. How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?
7. What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?
8. What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?
9. What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

Conceptual Framework

Attitude Toward the Ad

In this study, I used the *attitude toward the ad* concept as the conceptual framework. Lutz (1985) defined attitude toward the ad (A_{ad}) as a consumer's predisposition to have either a favorable or an unfavorable reaction to a specific type of advertising stimulus. The understanding of the predisposition toward an advertisement can provide a deeper understanding of the reasons why Generation Y consumers do not frequently engage with social media advertising. I investigated how social media advertisers can more effectively market to Generation Y consumers.

Attitude toward the ad allows for an understanding of the inferences that consumers generate and how those inferences can affect behaviors and purchase intentions (Kim, Baek, & Choi, 2012). *Consumer beliefs* develop from thoughts by a consumer relating to consequences of objects; the consumer's evaluation of those

thoughts creates beliefs (Wang & Sun, 2010). For example, consumers can believe advertising to be promoting materialism and misleading or deceiving audiences (Wang & Sun, 2010). Consumers can develop negative attitudes from these beliefs, which can negatively affect their decision to purchase a product.

Research on attitude toward the ad has expanded into application across a variety of media including television, direct marketing and online advertising, resulting in a less generalized understanding of the concept (Pyun & James, 2011). Advertisers must approach consumer attitudes differently across mediums to elicit positive attitudes (Pyun & James, 2011). Including more positive elements in an advertisement can allow for a greater opportunity for a positive response that can counteract negative attitudes on that medium (Chowdhury, Olsen, & Pracejus, 2011). By understanding how to elicit a positive response, marketers can more effectively advertise to their target market.

When consumers view online content, their reaction to the advertising content and the embedded brand are important in understanding the effectiveness of the advertisement (Huang, Su, Zhou, & Liu, 2012). Huang et al. (2012) found that interaction with online advertisements (e.g., sharing video content) and the processing of brand information are significantly interrelated. I applied the attitude toward the ad framework in this study to understand how marketers can understand Generation Y's predisposition toward avoiding social media advertising to effectively market to this demographic.

Definition of Terms

Consumer-generated media: Marketing messages and exchanges created by consumers to create word-of-mouth communication about a product or brand

(Papazolomou & Melanthiou, 2012).

Customer relationship management (CRM): The use and management of customer information to establish a customer relationship and maximize lifetime value for the customer (Malthouse, Haenlein, Skiera, Wege, & Zhang, 2013).

Digital marketing: Digital or online advertising that is designed to deliver a message to an audience. Also referred to as *e-marketing* (Smith, 2011).

Digital natives: Consumers who have grown up with digital technology and have become technologically perceptive and more visually sophisticated than previous generations (Williams et al., 2012).

Media fragmentation: An increasing number of media channels that are available for a consumer to choose from (Lapido et al., 2013).

Media multitasking: Engaging in two or more media activities simultaneously (Wang & Tchernev, 2012).

Microblog: Social media site that allows users to post statements that are 140 characters or less in size. The most popular of these sites is Twitter (Fischer & Reuber, 2010).

Millennials: Also known as *Generation Y*. Generation Y consumers were born after 1981 and are the second largest generational cohort in the United States (Schewe et al., 2013).

Mobile marketing: Marketing activity conducted through a network in which consumers are constantly connected through mobile devices (Kaplan, 2012).

Mobile social media: Mobile marketing applications that allow user-generated

content (Kaplan, 2012).

Social commerce: Conducting commercial activities on social media to encourage the sharing of product information or the selling of goods and services through social media (Liang, Ho, Li, & Turban, 2012).

Social networking site: A website that allows a user to create a personalized profile, as well as create and maintain a network of friends for social or professional interaction (Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009).

Viral marketing campaign: The development of an online message with the intention of stimulating Internet users to forward the message to other users (Lans, Bruggen, Eliashberg, & Wierenga, 2010).

Web 2.0: The growth of Internet use over time to include video sharing, blogging, and social networking (Corrocher, 2010).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

My assumptions for this study included the following: (a) the research participants answered the interview questions truthfully and without personal agendas; (b) I understood the responses made by the participants; and (c) the interviewees described their lived experiences of the phenomena studied. I used a qualitative phenomenological design to understand the authentic lived experiences of the participants to understand how they had effectively marketed to Generation Y consumers through social media (Lien, Pauleen, Kuo, & Wang, 2012).

I selected the study participants on a solely volunteer basis, and they were

currently employed marketing managers with professional social media experience. I could not provide the participants with any monetary benefit to respond to the questions, nor did I ask for any information that the participants could view as specific trade secrets of their organization. The open-ended questions allowed for an understanding of the thought processes of the participants (Roberts et al., 2014).

Limitations

The identified limitations of this study were as follows: (a) the participants volunteered for the study, and (b) I selected the participants through a purposive sample, which can provide answers unique to the sample that is selected (Price & Murnan, 2004). Participants who volunteer for studies can have special interests, whether positive or negative, in the researched topic (Price & Murnan, 2004). The participants who volunteered for the study could have provided information that was not relevant to other social media marketers and may only have volunteered for the study to increase their own understanding of how to market to Generation Y.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study included specific variables or criteria that I purposely omitted from the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The delimitations within my control for this study were as follows: (a) only marketing managers who had directed social media at Generation Y consumers were interviewed; (b) no further demographic variables were studied about the participants; and (c) the participants were all currently employed as social media marketing professionals. By selecting interviewees who fit these delimitations, I gained an understanding of a narrow segment of marketing

professionals.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Social media is becoming a daily part of the lives of hundreds of millions of people across the world, and marketers are working to increase their knowledge of how to use social media to engage with Internet users (Akar & Topcu, 2011). Generation Y consumers are an important demographic for social media marketers, as they are connected to social networking and place value on the opinions of their peers on social media (Pate & Adams, 2013). Marketers would benefit from a better understanding of how to best capitalize on advertising to the Internet population (Hadija et al., 2012). This study provides an increased understanding of how to develop strategies to engage with Generation Y and capitalize on their social media usage.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore what social media strategies marketers need to engage Generation Y consumers through social media. The value of the study was in developing promotional strategies for marketers that could allow for a better potential return on investment when advertising to Generation Y consumers who have power in the marketplace and the potential for significant future purchasing power (Noble et al., 2009). Marketers reading this study could learn strategies of how to connect with these users and overcome challenges presented by social media marketing (Sashittal et al., 2012). Marketers who can best connect with the members of Generation Y have the best chance of gaining access to their future purchasing power.

The findings of this study fill gaps of understanding regarding how marketers

effectively engage with Generation Y consumers by capturing the experiences of professional social marketing managers who have targeted Generation Y consumers. Previous researchers who conducted similar studies directly studied college students and their opinions on social media advertising (Akar & Topcu, 2011; Hadija et al., 2012; Pate & Adams, 2012). This research study involved capturing the understanding of marketing professionals and thus adds to the body of understanding of social media.

Implications for Social Change

In a society in which Generation Y consumers use a variety of social media in their daily lives, understanding how to effectively engage in communication can help consumers feel less like spectators on social media (Williams et al., 2012). Instead of consumers acting as passive recipients, social media can allow them to become co-creators of a brand's message and part of a two-way marketing exchange (Hanna et al., 2011). By effectively engaging in the sharing of information with consumers and focusing on making social media content significant to consumers, marketers can be most effective (Saxena & Khanna, 2013). The understanding of the lived experiences of experienced marketing professionals can also benefit nonprofit organizations that promote social change.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Introduction of the Literature Review

Marketing on social media has evolved by using word-of-mouth marketing, providing users with a vessel to share preferences, opinions, and experiences while having access to the same information from other users (Trusov et al., 2009). Social

media affects the way that marketers reach consumers, and understanding how to engage with Generation Y consumers on social media has become an important step for marketers (Smith, 2011). By understanding the behavioral characteristics of Generation Y consumers who have grown up surrounded by digital technology, companies can tap into their future purchasing power and use this knowledge to their advantage (Williams et al., 2012).

Organization of the Literature Review

I organized the literature review into subsections on related. I listed the research chronologically by publication date within each subsection. The literature review features important themes related to the research question and the conceptual framework.

As a strategy for finding research, I conducted a search through Google Scholar and used Google Scholar alerts. The use of Google Scholar made for a comprehensive search of multiple databases in which to find scholarly articles. The use of Google Scholar alerts allowed for an alert any time there was a published piece of literature related to the themes. The themes that I used were *social media*, *social media marketing*, *social media advertising*, *Internet advertising*, and *Generation Y*.

When I found articles that were relevant to the literature review, I proceeded to download and print them. I read each article, made notes and highlighted important passages, and if I deemed an article relevant to my study, I included it in the literature review. I saved articles that did not seem to be relevant in a file cabinet for future reference if necessary.

Attitude Toward the Ad

Mackenzie, Lutz, and Belch (1986) studied the process in which advertising or other forms of communications can influence consumer behavior. Lutz (1985) found that consumers' attitudes that are relevant to specific characteristics to the brand or type of advertisement can have an effect on their response to the advertisement itself. Mackenzie et al. (1986) found that attitude toward the ad is an important factor in how a consumer can form an opinion of a brand and can have a strong effect on brands that are in a product class of low importance to a consumer. By using this conceptual framework, I gained an understanding of Generation Y's predisposition toward social media marketing and how marketers use this knowledge.

Wang and Sun (2010) identified five common beliefs and measured the significance of each as a predictor of attitudes toward ads. The beliefs measured were entertainment, information, credibility, economy, and value corruption. All of these beliefs were significant predictors of attitudes; however, economic belief was the strongest factor. An advertisement can positively affect consumers' attitudes when they become convinced that purchasing the advertised product can raise their standard of living. Consumers who perceive advertisements to be informative are most likely to favor the advertisement, and when the entertainment creates an emotional link with the consumers, they will focus their attention on the message (Wang & Sun, 2010).

Advertising avoidance has become a subset of attitude toward the ad and has grown by television viewers having the ability to invest in technology that specifically allows for advertising avoidance, such as a DVR or TiVo (Stuhmeier & Wenzel, 2011). The viewers' ability to avoid advertisements through this technology has decreased the

value of advertisements and negatively impacts advertisers. Stuhmeier and Wenzel (2011) found that modern technology has made it more comfortable for viewers to avoid advertisements but that viewers might have an even more negative attitude toward advertising that is harder to avoid.

Johnson (2013) also studied advertising avoidance and its effect on attitude toward the ad. Johnson found that firms have gained an increased ability to target consumers despite their access to advertising avoidance tools. Johnson found that consumers actually frequently underuse tools to block advertisements. Consumers who have a more positive attitude toward the advertisement will generally have a higher valuation for the product, which can expand the potential of targeting (Johnson, 2013).

Liu, Sinkovics, Pezderka, and Haghirian (2011) studied consumer perceptions of mobile marketing. Similar to consumer beliefs about sponsored ads, if a consumer believes that the message is trustworthy, then a positive attitude toward the ad is likely. Entertainment was a strong predictor of a positive response to marketing. In agreement with other studies, Liu et al. found that by creating an emotional connection with the consumer, a marketer could be most successful in an ad, and entertainment is an effective way to establish this connection.

Pyun and James (2011) found that sports offer a platform for organizations to receive a favorable attitude to their marketing efforts. Strong emotional and psychological connections between consumers and sports teams have a positive influence on consumers and can lead to a positive bias toward advertising when sports connect with marketing efforts. By better understanding the psychological connections that consumers

have with sports, marketers can grow their understanding of the attitudes present in consumers, and that can lead to advertising that is more successful.

Acquisti and Spiekermann (2011) researched the effect of advertisements that interrupt a user and how these advertisements affected a consumer's willingness to purchase products from a company. Consumers who are interrupted are significantly less willing to purchase an associated product. Interrupting a consumer can increase awareness but can affect the sales that result from the advertisement (Acquisti & Spiekermann, 2011).

Akar and Topcu (2011) researched attitude toward social media marketing in undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 24. Frequent social media use had a positive effect on a consumer's attitude toward social media marketing, as did using a social media application and having a higher level of income. However, Internet shopping did not have a significant effect on consumers' attitudes. Social media users, in general, did not consider marketing on social media to elicit a positive attitude.

Sung and Cho (2012) studied how different media types affected attitude toward mobile advertisements. Motion pictures had the strongest potential to change the attitude of the consumer; however, the effect decreased over time. To elicit a positive attitude toward mobile advertisements, marketers should use motion picture advertisements in the short term and should pay close attention to the message content (Sung & Cho, 2012).

Hadija et al. (2012) studied attitudes toward social media ads in college students who were heavy users of social media. The participants did not have a negative attitude toward the advertisements; however, the advertisements went completely unnoticed.

Brand recognition was much lower through advertisements on social media than it was in traditional media outlets. The attitudes of the participants were also affected by the abundance of content available on social media, which makes advertising avoidance much easier (Hadija et al., 2012).

Bright and Daugherty (2012) applied the theory of attitude toward the ad to media customization on the Internet. Customized online environments had a stronger sense of engagement with consumers and elicited a higher intention to purchase a product. However, advertisements within a customized Internet environment led to a less positive attitude than did advertisements within a noncustomized environment. This complicated the understanding of consumers' attitudes toward ads online (Bright & Daugherty, 2012).

Huang et al. (2013) applied the attitude toward the ad theory to viral videos. Attitude toward the viral ad is a major factor contributing to the likelihood of an Internet user forwarding the content, which is the key component to the success of a viral marketing campaign. In viral videos, consumers most often focus their attention on the video itself instead of focusing on the brand, which allows a consumer to treat the video simply as entertainment instead of advertisement or marketing content. Similar to viral videos in mobile marketing, when consumers view the videos as entertainment, they are more likely to respond to the ads and share them with their contacts online (Huang et al., 2013).

Social Media Marketing

The goal of Internet marketing is to target communications to the market through instantaneous and collaborative messages (Wei-nian, 2007). Internet marketing is similar

to traditional marketing, as the goals can be the same despite differences in message delivery. Wei-nian (2007) found that websites should be designed to cater to the target market, the marketing needs to be personalized to the consumer, and information needs to be readily accessible to the consumer. Institutions should make use of forums, email, and newsgroups to maintain communication with the market (Wei-nian, 2007).

Social media marketing has evolved in its use of word-of-mouth marketing. It provides users with a vessel to share preferences, opinions, and experiences while having access to the same information from other users (Trusov et al., 2009). In a study of the effects of word-of-mouth advertising on social networking sites, Trusov et al. (2009) found that word-of-mouth referrals have a strong effect on new customer acquisition. The elasticity of member growth from word-of-mouth marketing online was approximately 20 times higher than that of marketing events and 30 times higher than that of media appearances (Trusov et al., 2009). These results are significant to this study because social media provides an organization a format to harness word-of-mouth communication.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) identified challenges and opportunities that face social media as marketing tool and made recommendations for using social media. Marketers should carefully choose social media applications, as it would be too time consuming to embrace all avenues of social media. The activities that marketers use across the different platforms need to be aligned with each other. Social media and traditional media should align with each other for maximum potential. When using social media, a company should be active, interesting, humble, honest, and often,

unprofessional (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Twitter use by entrepreneurs can increase opportunities to interact with their customers (Fischer & Reuber, 2010). In a qualitative study of Twitter use by new entrepreneurs, Fischer and Reuber (2010) discovered how social media, especially Twitter, could allow an ability to observe and connect with companies. Twitter use, though still in the infancy stage, was most effective when consumers and organizations used the application for opportunity creation and exploration, instead of organizations simply communicating with customers (Fischer & Reuber, 2010).

Viral marketing campaigns are an effective social media strategy and can reach a large audience in a short amount of time (Lans et al., 2010). Viral marketing campaigns are often inexpensive because the customer is responsible for spreading the campaign, though not all viral campaigns are successful. Marketers can increase the forwarding rate of the users by creating incentives to forward, and by sending emails during the weekdays when users are most likely to read and forward emails (Lans et al., 2010).

Kelly, Kerr, and Drennan (2010) performed a qualitative study of teenagers to discover their perceptions of social media and their reasons for avoiding advertising delivered through social media. The participants were distrustful of social media advertising, and many had negative experiences in the past with contracting computer viruses, which made them reluctant to click on an advertisement. Teenagers often ignore advertisements on social media and consider them just a cost of using a free network (Kelly et al., 2010).

Corrocher (2010) performed an empirical analysis of 300 users of social

networking, video sharing, and social bookmarking. Users' needs and behaviors related to the use of video sharing, social networking, and the experience level of the user (Corrocher, 2010). Corrocher also found that users who are concerned mainly with extrinsic motivations are more likely to be frequent users of social media due the motivation to share personal information with their online friends.

Social networking sites began as entertainment but became a marketing strategy due to advantages they hold in marketing (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011). Social media presents advantages for time and cost and allows for direct marketing to audiences. Firms need to use relevant content on social media while listening to and communicating with stakeholders. Compared to traditional media, social media is the best instrument to reach global customers and is a strong choice for firms seeking to save on media costs (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011).

Chu and Kim (2011) examined how electronic word-of-mouth transmits through social networking sites. Trust influence was positively associated with word-of-mouth behavior from the social networking site, meaning the higher the level of trust with the site, the greater likelihood that an opinion is passed along (Chu & Kim, 2011).

Psychological association with significant contacts and friends can lead to an increase in word-of-mouth transmission (Chu & Kim, 2011).

Toubia, Steven, and Freud (2011) conducted a large-scale experiment of the effects of viral marketing compared to traditional marketing. Coupon redemption rates, an evaluation survey of online and offline interaction, and surveys from panel members were sources of data for the study. Viral marketing compared well to print advertising,

though most viral marketing activity takes place offline, and offline and online social interactions do not substitute for each other in a viral campaign (Toubia et al., 2011).

Through the rising use of social media, consumers have become not the recipients but the co-creators of communication exchanges within the business world (Hanna et al., 2011). Hanna et al. (2011) found that communication through social media needs to focus on two-way conversations and cannot be solely about reach; it must also be about continued engagement. Social media use does not require an elaborate budget but does require the ability to be unique to give consumers a reason to engage (Hanna et al., 2011).

Chen, Fay, and Wang (2011) performed a quantitative study of reviews posted by consumers about automobiles from 2001 to 2008. The findings showed multiple patterns and factors that affected consumer posting. First, high-quality products were most likely to create the strongest awareness on social media without a large promotional or advertising budget, whereas lower quality products had less success. Second, price was less of a factor relating to consumer awareness, and a very high price increased the average number of ratings that the products received.

Kunz, Hackworth, Osborne, and High (2011) examined how social media marketing was used by retailers. Many top retailers had multiple Facebook pages to communicate their social networking presence and used both Twitter and YouTube (Kunz et al., 2011). Based on their research, Kunz et al. predicted that retailers will increase their use of social networking during holiday seasons, though online retailers will most likely use social media marketing to drive consumers to their websites more than a brick-and-mortar retailer will.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) researched viral marketing campaigns and how to combine social media and viral marketing campaigns most effectively. For a viral message to be successful, it must target to the right group, the message must be memorable and interesting, and the message must not exceed a threshold of a manageable number of people to first relay the message (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). When a viral campaign transmits through social media, it requires a strong use of traditional forms of communication and a strong use of the marketing mix (Kaplain & Haenlein, 2011).

Social media users utilize their voice about social responsibility of brands, and want to know that they have influence over the brand to which they connect (Yan, 2011). Yan (2011) found that organizations using social media can provide a sense of belonging to their external audiences and can communicate their social responsibility more frequently and to a higher extent than they could through traditional media alone. By following these recommendations, companies will have the opportunity to increase their brand equity, brand association, and perceived quality (Yan, 2011).

Patterson (2011) researched the Facebook brand and its uses for marketing managers. Over half of the participants studied had friended at least one brand and engaged in dialogue with a brand at least once. Some engaged in dialogue frequently. Facebook users gained satisfaction from the ability to find updated information about brands that they like and can be satisfied about using Facebook solely by information provided about brands they like. Sports teams, musicians, and artists were strongly associated with satisfaction of communication with brands through Facebook (Patterson, 2011).

Social media allows a company access to customer information which was not previously available, and can give a company a creative and effective method of communication with those customers (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011). Pookulangara and Koesler reported that consumers consider it bad business not to utilize social networks as a part of a company's marketing mix. To successfully market on social media, marketers should address the attitudes, lifestyles and behaviors of their target market and should concentrate on the various market segments that they are serving across the globe (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011).

Berton, Pitt, Plangger, and Shapiro (2012) recommended that managers need to understand five points to be able to properly understand the opportunities and threats of social media. These include the following: (a) understanding that social media is a direct reflection of technology, culture, and government; (b) local events often become larger; (c) global events likely change at a local level; (d) consumer creations are a result of culture, technology and government; and, (e) technology is dependent on history. Berton et al. also recommended that managers engage customers while embracing technology, and train their employees to invest their interests into social media.

Waters and Lo (2012) studied the effect of culture on social media usage by nonprofit organizations in the United States, China, and Turkey. Waters and Lo found that nonprofit organizations in all three countries are using Facebook to educate and communicate with their stakeholders worldwide. Marketers can use Facebook to reinforce or alter cultural values from their given country (Waters & Lo, 2012).

Kaplan (2012) defined mobile marketing and studied how a firm can use mobile

social media. Mobile media was useful in research, communication, sales, and customer loyalty programs. To be successful in a mobile marketing program, Kaplan suggested integrating activities into the lives of the users and individualizing the activities for each user's own preferences and interests. Kaplan also recommended involving the user in conversations, and initiating the creation of user generated content to realize the benefits of mobile social media marketing.

Social commerce and social sharing have become increasingly popular on social networking sites, though they differ from typical customer reviews due to the popularity of sharing information with friends as opposed to unknown shoppers (Liang et al., 2012). Liang et al. (2012) found that social support has a positive effect on the relationship with consumers, which can have a positive relationship with the continued use of a particular website and the increase of social commerce. Consumers best utilize online commerce when they consider social factors, and when social networks increase the comfort level of interactions (Liang et al., 2012).

In a qualitative study of college aged social media users, Hadija et al. (2012) sought to discover why college students ignore social media advertisements. Through in-depth interviews of 20 college students who were regular users of social media, Hadija et al. discovered that the participants did not dislike social media advertisements; however, they did not notice that they were present at all. Social media creates less brand recognition than traditional media. These students focused on internet content or information from their peers, and that they only noticed advertisements for a split second if there were features of the advertisements that caught their attention (Hadija et al.,

2012).

De Vries, Gensler, and Leeftang (2012) performed a quantitative study of 355 brand posts on brand fan pages on social media from 11 international companies. De Vries et al. (2012) discovered that positioning a brand at the top of the fan page can help to increase popularity, but interactive posts can enhance the amount of engagement with the post. De Vries et al. recommended managers share both positive and negative comments to increase the interaction from their customers.

Naylor, Lamberton, and West (2012) studied the effect of *likes* on social media and the decision for online supporters to hide or reveal their demographic characteristics to other consumers. Consumers responded equally positively when other brand supporters were revealed or hidden. However, when a brand is extending into a new target market, revealing the demographic characteristics of their current supporters can be detrimental to the brand. Social status of the consumers can have a profound effect on future target markets (Naylor et al., 2012).

Papasolomou and Melanthiou (2012) found social media to be a platform that encourages two-way conversation between consumers and marketers. When corporations capitalize on the conversation, both the customers and businesses can benefit. Papasolomou and Melanthiou recommended that firms focus their efforts on interesting content and engagement with their customers, as that this will cause customers to be more receptive toward marketing efforts from firms that market their favorite brands. The key point was managers should use social media to talk with customers instead of talking at them as with traditional media sources (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012).

Jenkins-Guiarneri, Wright, and Hudiburgh (2012) investigated how different personality traits and attachment styles can affect a consumer's use of Facebook. Facebook was one of the most popular social networking sites for Generation Y consumers, and they chose Facebook as the sole social networking site for their study. Jenkins-Guiarnieri et al. studied self-esteem, attachment, interpersonal competence, and extraversion to find their relationship of the intensity of Facebook use. Facebook use was the most attractive to extraverted users, and extroverts were more likely to be intense Facebook users (Jenkins-Guiarneri et al., 2012).

Xu, Ryan, Prybutok, and Wen (2012) performed a study of why consumers use social networks to help businesses understand how to better connect with their customers on social networks. After conducting a survey of 148 social networking users, Xu et al. found that businesses should focus their social networking on their customers' utilitarian and hedonistic gratifications. By incorporating a sense of humor and using website features that will seem attractive to their target markets, businesses can be more successful on social networking (Xu et al., 2012).

To further understand Facebook users, Reich, Subrahmanyam, and Espinoza (2012) examined the overlap between online and offline friends of adolescent users. Internet users utilize social networks mostly to connect with people in their offline lives, and teenagers most often correspond with their own peers, instead of adults or businesses. Reich et al. found that interaction with offline peers is the most common use of social networking sites, which can have implications for managers who are attempting to advertise to or communicate with social media users

Major companies use social media because the companies are either strong social media marketers, or due to the fear of not using social media to reach customers (Gilfoil & Jobs, 2012). However, Gilfoil and Jobs (2012) found that it is difficult to measure the actual or potential return on investment in social media, which has led to most companies spending only a small portion of their advertising budgets on social media. For companies to increase their investment on social media, social media marketers will need to show that it yields direct results from investment. To achieve higher results, transparency, responsibility, confidentiality, and the ability to know your audience; build a community, add value, and train employees to utilize social media, are vital.

Dzamic (2012) argued that marketers do already have the metrics that they need to measure the effectiveness of social media; however, there are inadequate methods of tracking the different online platforms. Hard tracking by using cookies through apps can help to create a clearer picture of the effects of social media investment, but does not alone provide marketing solutions (Dzamic, 2012). Dzamic recommended that 70 percent of the funds used should be on hard tracking, which will allow for a company to measure and use the right metrics for their advertising on social media.

Sashittal et al. (2012) found that Facebook users are often not interested in cognitive engagement with advertisements on Facebook. In a study of 141 college students, Sashittal et al. found that the participants perceived ads on Facebook annoying and intrusive, and almost none of them received any benefit to the exposure to the ads. Facebook messages must be directed to the voyeuristic or narcissistic views of Facebook users or they will be seen as irrelevant, or simply boring to college age Facebook users

(Sashittal et al., 2012).

Guo and Saxton (2013) investigated the social media use of nonprofit groups, and performed an in-depth study of their Twitter use. Twitter is a powerful communication tool for public education, but is less successful as a tool for mobilization. Most of the messages published were to provide information to stakeholders, some to build an online community, and least frequently for a call to action (Guo & Saxton, 2013). Guo and Saxton recommended Twitter use to follow a three-stage pyramid model for advocacy including: (a) reaching out; (b) keeping the flame alive; and, (c) calling followers to action.

Due to the vast number of social media outlets available, the role of customers has become more powerful due to their ability to post information and opinions to large audiences (Malthouse et al., 2013). Malthouse (2013) suggested that, for customer relationship management (*CRM*) to exist, it must to be adapted for the use of social media and the understanding that customers are no longer passive. This empowerment of consumers has also lead to the ability for customers to filter out CRM messages, and firms must now produce contact points for the consumer so that the two-way communication can be utilized and not ignored (Malthouse et al., 2013).

Brand management has also become more difficult due to the rise of social media (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, & Wiertz, 2013). Through a literature review of academic journals from 2006 to 2013, Gensler et al. (2013) found a shift in the authorship of brand stories in the brand process through the high level of interactivity of customers and the brands themselves. Gensler et al. recommended that brand managers listen

carefully to customers, respond accordingly, and gain a cultural resonance through showing an understanding of the social media environment, or create branded artifacts for consumers to work with the brand.

Peters, Chen, Kaplan, Ognibeni, and Pauwels (2013) defined six groups of social media: (a) collective projects; (b) blogs and microblogs; (c) content communities; (d) social networks; (e) massively multiplayer role-playing games; and, (f) social virtual worlds. In agreement with other literature, Peters et al. recommended that firms use social media to encourage engagement, modification, and sharing from their customer base. The organization should not ignore the participation of their customers and the generation of dialogue, and should respond to both quickly and consistently across social media.

Saxena and Khanna (2013) conducted a quantitative study of the effectiveness of social networking sites in promoting products and services. Marketers were most successful with advertising on social networking when they provided entertainment and product information. Consumers derived the most utility from advertisements when there was functional information while they were also being entertained, and companies that utilize social networking should reduce any content that would irritate their customers (Saxena & Khanna, 2013).

Kamal, Chu, and Pedram (2013) studied young American and Arab consumers to discover their attitudes toward social media advertisements in relation to their values toward materialism. Social media use was a predictor of materialism as well as a favorable attitude toward social media advertisements. Kamal et al. recommended that advertisers are most well served to standardize their social media campaigns when

segmenting consumers by their values toward materialism and luxury brands. However, advertisers should adjust their messages when dealing with themes such as centrality of goods and social status (Kamal et al., 2013).

The online audience has become an important segment to marketing managers, and should create a buyer persona and facilitate a marketing strategy according to the interests of that persona (Vinerean, Cetina, Dumitrescu, & Tichindelean, 2013). Vinerean et al. (2013) categorized online consumers as engagers, expressers and informers, networkers, and watchers and listeners. A focus on customer commitment, as opposed to a transaction focus, will help companies better relate to these groups of online customers; such a focus has a positive effect on perceptions of online advertisements (Vinerean et al., 2013).

Lee (2013) studied YouTube and the effect of social media on advertising, finding that the key factor for success is for a marketing manager to understand that social media is a tool for conversation with consumers. YouTube was imperative for any advertiser that is trying to reach a large number of consumers, and was very effective in advertising to younger generations. YouTube has practical uses for managers of consumer products, and by taking advantage of the social nature of YouTube, there are increased chances for success in advertising on social media (Lee, 2013).

The effectiveness of social media advertising can also change with the age of the user and the time of day that the user is exposed to the ad (Goodrich, 2013). Older adults pay closer attention to online ads than their younger counterparts, and have with a greater inclination to purchase if they see the ad later in the day (Goodrich, 2013). Older

individuals also have a great susceptibility to persuasion, with seniors having the highest risk of purchasing products which they might not need (Goodrich, 2013).

Nelson-Field, Riebe, and Newstead (2013) studied the drivers of video sharing through research on 400 user-generated videos and 400 commercial videos. An audience's emotional reaction to a video can trigger a user to share the video, but only when their emotions are highly aroused (Nelson-Field et al., 2013). Nelson-Field et al. recommended that generators of online content should aim their messages at gaining a strong emotional arousal to be most effective in an online viral marketing campaign.

Laroche, Habibi, and Richard (2013) conducted a survey of 441 respondents to understand how brand loyalty can be affected by social media. Brand communities that are created through social media platforms positively affect the relationship between the consumer and the product as well as the consumer and the brand. Larhoce et al. found that social media can enhance brand loyalty when used by a brand.

Rapp, Beitelspacher, Grewal, and Hughes (2013) studied how social media affects consumer interactions with sellers and retailers. Consistent with Laroche et al. (2013), social media was shown to positively affect brand performance and loyalty between the consumer and the retailer. Social media was found to give retailers an outlet to communicate with their consumers' up-to-date information from the supplier, thus improving the relations between the three groups (Rapp, Beitelspacher, Grewal, & Hughest, 2013).

Edwin, Chandramohan, Rao, and Rao (2014) studied social media marketing in small businesses. Edwin et al. found that there were numerous advantages for small

businesses to market on social media, including the ease of customer acquisition and direct customer interaction. However, many small businesses are not devoting their efforts to social media marketing, often due to time restraints from the business owners (Edwin, Chandramohan, Rao, & Rao, 2014).

Ming and Yazdanifard (2014) studied how companies can maximize their efforts in social media marketing. For a company to most effectively use social media marketing they must engage their consumers frequently to develop a long term relationship with their customers. The managers can use social media to collect data from their customers, and build a trustworthy image with their target market to achieve maximum profitability (Ming & Yazdinifard, 2014).

Generation Y

Noble et al. (2009) reported that Generation Y would have an unprecedented effect on the economy in the future due to their potential for a vast purchasing power. Socialization, feelings of accomplishment and connectedness with brands and purchases drive members of Generation Y as consumers. This cohort was very conscious of fashion, brand loyal, and motivated by the presence of trust with a retailer. This phenomenon leads to repeat purchases from retailers that they can trust (Noble et al., 2009).

Jang, Kim, and Bonn (2011) studied the behavioral intentions of Generation Y in the restaurant industry. Generation Y consumers were found to be the most frequent patrons of all types of restaurants, and have the power to influence their peers and older generations regarding their buying decisions. They are also most likely to prioritize natural, organic, and nutritious ingredients, and are more willing to pay a premium for

these products than other generations (Jang et al., 2011). Jang et al. recommended segmentation of Generation Y in the restaurant industry, paying attention to the health conscious consumer and adventurous consumer types as an important step for marketers.

Furlow (2011) examined marketing campaigns that were effective with members of Generation Y. Generation Y consumers are likely to be the most socially conscious of all generational cohorts, and tend to be brand loyal to companies that support a cause in which they support. A concern found by Furlow was that Generation Y consumers would be critical of businesses that do not meet the social consciousness that they market, and that companies should understand that Generation Y would not continue to support a company that they find to have not followed through with their social conscious efforts.

Wright et al. (2010) found that marketing managers should be prepared to embrace new marketing opportunities. Social media presents a new opportunity for managers to embrace their consumers, and to stay connected with other innovative leaders in the business field. Marketers should leave lines of communication open and highlight the most important aspect of marketing on social media, which is to create value for customers (Wright et al., 2010).

Members of Generation Y access digital media on a daily basis and have become an important target group for online shopping. This target group is most likely to be active in the creation of products, and expect to have input regarding the promotion of a product and their e-commerce will grow along with their discretionary income (Smith, 2011). In a quantitative survey of 571 Generation Y consumers, Smith discovered websites with brightly colored graphics, online reviews, and online discounts could be

some of the most favored social media marketing strategies.

Generation Y, also known as the *Millennial Generation*, was described as being born between 1981 and 2000, and encompasses approximately 51 million consumers in the United States (Williams et al., 2012). The Millennial Generation is the current generation of college aged consumers who have been immersed in technology most of their lives. The members of Generation Y born after 1990 are digital natives who enjoy the creation of online content, are active in social media communities, and enjoy creative industries with less rigid social structures (Williams et al., 2012).

Wang et al. (2012) performed a study of how Generation Y media users, who were currently enrolled in college, and the gratification they receive from media multitasking. Due to media saturation, Generation Y often multitask when using media, including listening to music or using a computer. Wang et al. found that by media multitasking, the user's emotional needs are gratified, even when there is a decrease in cognitive needs. This gratification of emotional needs can lead to users continue media multitasking in the future.

Bolton et al. (2013) distinguished that Generation Y were digital natives, and were the first generation to have grown up with the use of digital technology. Generation Y were shown to have drastically changed the global economy and that organizations will have to restructure their business models to adhere to the cohort's needs. However, additional research is needed to discover how the extensive use of social media from Generation Y can influence firms (Bolton et al., 2013).

In a quantitative study of college students at two southern universities, Pate and

Adams (2013) surveyed college students on various social media habits and their opinions about social media, purchases, and relationships with social media sites. Pate and Adams found that the students surveyed had a strong relationship with social networking, and that electronic word of mouth was a strong predictor of their purchase intentions. Consumers more frequently purchased products that were *liked* by their friends on social networking sites and products that a favorable celebrity endorsed. The students were likely to research the products online; however, they did not trust testimonials on websites from big box retailers (Pate & Adams, 2013).

Serazio (2013) performed an exploratory study of reports from marketers who marketed to digital natives. Serazio recommended that, when marketing to digital natives, advertisers empower the consumer and be flexible with marketing efforts. Generation Y is an independent group that can be very independent from brands and can be critically judgmental of the brands with which they associate (Serazio, 2013). The self-discovery within the generation can be an untapped market for advertisers.

Schewe et al. (2013) defined American Millennials (Generation Y) as the second largest generation and the most technologically savvy due to growing up with access to the internet. They can be entrepreneurial, self-reliant, and have a stronger acceptance to workplace diversity than previous generations. However, there are differences in the belief structure between Millennials in other countries, notably how American Millennials value independence over equality (Schewe et al., 2013). Schewe et al. recommended that marketers approach Millennials differently when developing a global marketing strategy.

Qader and Omar (2013) researched brand experience with Millennials (Generation Y consumers), and concluded that by providing a positive brand experience, a brand can be more successful in reaching Millennial consumers. They found Millennials were buyers of high tech products who will continue to purchase these products if they have a positive experience with the brand that they are buying. Electronic companies were able to benefit from developing a brand experience, and they should shift marketing models to focus on the brand experience instead of traditional marketing objectives (Qader & Omar, 2013).

Krahn and Galambos (2013) studied the differences between North American members of the Generation X and Generation Y cohorts, specifically examining intrinsic and extrinsic beliefs about work values and beliefs. The Generation Y members showed more emphasis on extrinsic rewards and job entitlement than the members of Generation X. The women studied placed a higher value on intrinsic rewards than men, and held an increased sense of entitlement in their jobs (Krahn & Galambos, 2013).

Parment (2013) studied the differences between Generation Y and the Baby Boomers, specifically regarding their retail shopping behaviors. They found Generation Y consumers placed more emphasis on the chosen product than the specific retailer, and showed a stronger tendency to be effected by social risks. Generation Y retail consumers were most likely to choose their retailer based on cost, as opposed to being loyal to a specific retailer (Parment, 2013).

Valentine and Powers (2013) also studied the retail behaviors of Generation Y through a survey of undergraduate students. Valentine and Powers found that male and

female members of the cohort showed a statistically significant difference in their online purchasing behaviors. Both males and females wanted to research the product over the internet before purchasing, however, females were less trusting of internet retailers, while males preferred brick-and-mortar retailers because they wanted the ability to try the product before its purchase (Valentine & Powers, 2013).

Malik and Khera (2014) also studied work values of Generation Y, however, they focused their research on Generation Y members in India. Similarities were found with American members of Generation Y. They were found to be technologically savvy, social, and brand sensitive. Job flexibility and the tendency to switch jobs through their career were found to be similar to that of Americans. Generation Y pose challenges to both marketers and employers despite their vast capabilities (Malik & Khera, 2014).

Naim (2014) studied the importance of talent retention in relation to Generation Y employees. Technological approaches to talent retention, most importantly the use of social media, was found as a strong way to engage and retain members of Generation Y. If managers of organizations can improve their use of social media and become more open with their employees, they can connect with the technological savvy generation and increase their potential for retention.

Jenssen, Gray, Harvey, DiClemente, and Klein (2014) studied the social networking usage of Generation Y, and their most common keyword searches. The participants were most likely to express love or positive feelings on social networks instead of negative behaviors. The participants liked to socialize and share their feelings regarding activities in which they were interested. The younger members of Generation Y

were found to promote mostly positive messages to their online communities (Jenssen et al., 2014).

Kim and Jang (2014) studied motivational incentives for Generation Y consumers related to self-expression and luxury. Kim and Jang found when a consumer from this cohort has discretionary income it is most likely spent on items related to status or prestige. These consumers distinguish a difference between discretionary income and gifted money, and found that discretionary income is often money that can be spent on status items as the money was not earned (Kim & Jang, 2014).

Transition and Summary

Generation Y consumers are the second largest generational cohort in the United States (Schewe et al., 2013). They access social media on a daily basis and have a direct effect on social media marketing (Smith, 2011). However, such consumers frequently pay little attention to social media advertisements (Yeu et al., 2013). The general problem is that advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media has become more difficult. Additional research with social media marketing professionals who have targeted Generation Y consumers will be necessary to gain a better understanding of how marketers successfully engage with this group on social media.

I focused this study on exploring social media marketing strategies to gain an understanding of how marketers effectively engage with Generation Y consumers through social media. I specifically focused the study on the experiences of professional social media marketers. In the next section, I provide a description of the design and methodology of the study and defend the specific instruments used in the study.

Section 2: The Project

The overall goal of this research project was to explore social media marketing strategies for effectively engaging Generation Y consumers through social media. I used a literature review to identify studies on advertising to Generation Y consumers, focusing on college students from this generation and their opinions on social media advertising (Akar & Topcu, 2011; Hadija et al., 2012; Pate & Adams, 2012). While conducting the literature review, I discovered very little research targeting social media marketing professionals who had targeted Generation Y consumers. Through this study, I filled the research gap by focusing on marketing professionals.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore what social media strategies marketers need to engage Generation Y consumers through social media. I conducted the study through in-depth, semistructured qualitative interviews with a sample that included 20 social media marketing professionals located in the United States. These professionals had worked in social media marketing for a minimum of 3 years, had marketed directly to Generation Y consumers, and had demonstrated skills in the use of social media channels (Fischer & Reuber, 2010).

Social media marketing professionals can use the results of this study to promote improvement of business practice by using the strategies to become more effective in engaging Generation Y consumers through social media. The benefits of this study may be in supporting marketers in delivering more engaging, informative, and educational social media advertising resulting in well-informed Generation Y consumers who are

responsive to social media advertising. Marketers can use social media to allow consumers to become co-creators, rather than passive recipients, of a brand's message and thus become part of a two-way marketing exchange (Hanna et al., 2011). Social change may result from more well-informed consumers due to improved social media advertising.

Role of the Researcher

My goal as a qualitative phenomenological researcher was to gather an understanding of the collective human experience of social media marketers (Åkerlind, 2012). When conducting phenomenological research, it is imperative to keep an open mind, reduce and define any bias, and be willing to adjust to the reflections and discussion gained from the research (Åkerlind, 2012). I collected the study data through my personal interaction with the participants.

The role of a qualitative researcher is to explore contextual understanding through inductive reasoning, which was applied by gathering an understanding of the professional experiences of the participants (Yilmaz, 2013). I used semistructured qualitative interviews in an attempt to conduct research that would be relevant and significant to business and interesting to the reader (Tracy, 2010). I continued to gather secondary research from scholarly journals to increase my understanding of the topic.

Participants

I conducted semistructured interviews with social media marketing professionals who had demonstrated the effective use of social media channels (Fischer & Reuber, 2010). The professionals had a minimum of 3 years of experience in actively marketing

to Generation Y consumers through social media and currently held full-time positions in marketing, which allowed for their professional interest in social media marketing to be the focus of their careers.

I performed a purposive sample to select the participants, whom I contacted personally. The sample participants provided answers unique to the selected population (Price & Murnan, 2004). Using personal professional contacts and contact lists from social media conferences, I contacted the potential participants via email. When potential participants expressed interest in participating in the study, I explained anonymity and confidentiality of information. I also informed the participants of the necessary time commitment of approximately 60-90 minutes and stated that one-on-one interviews would take place via Skype or telephone. I established working relationships with the participants through respect for their experiences and clear explanation of ethical standards to allow the participants to feel more inclined to share their experiences.

I planned for specific measures to ensure the ethical protection of the participants in the study. The participants in this study received the results of the study after its completion to provide an incentive for their participation, but they did not receive any monetary incentive for participating in the study. These participants had the ability to withdraw from the study without penalty (Sachs, 2011). During my initial contact with the participants, I informed the participants of their ability to withdraw. I included a written statement describing their ability to withdraw on the consent form.

The consent form, as well as the files, transcripts, and recordings from the research, are to be stored on a private external hard drive for 5 years after the study

concludes to ensure that the rights of the participants remain protected. Ethical guidelines required locking the external hard drive in a cabinet to which only I have access; I will destroy the drive and data after 5 years. A copy of the consent form is available in Appendix B.

Research Method and Design

I chose a qualitative research method for the research study because of the unique ability to address research through descriptions and explanations (Bluhm, Harman, Lee, & Mitchell, 2010). Within the spectrum of qualitative research, I chose a phenomenological design. Phenomenology is used to discover the meaning of an experience by a specific group of people (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Method

The use of qualitative research allows for a descriptive and explanatory method of inquiry (Bluhn et al., 2010). Qualitative methods commonly include observation or interviews, which include open-ended, predetermined questions from an interviewer that allow the participant to relay more detailed and personal responses (Endacott, 2004). In this study, I performed a qualitative method of research, which can be justified by finding a gap in the literature and exploring the experiences of the study participants (Barratt, Choi, & Li, 2011). The qualitative method also allowed for the understanding of a specific experience with a limited pool of participants with a focus on the individual phenomenon (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

With the use of a qualitative research method, I understood the experiences of the participants. The process of qualitative phenomenological research requires the

participants to attempt to make sense of their own experiences and the researcher to interpret the responses from the participants (Bahn & Weatherill, 2013). The qualitative data that I collected through the interpretation of these experiences resulted in understanding the meaning behind the experience and producing an outcome displayed in words or images (Wisdom, Cavaleri, Onwuegbuzie, & Green, 2012).

Methods used by quantitative researchers determine relationships between variables to explain or predict an outcome (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Using a quantitative research method in this study would not have produced the required results that were possible with a qualitative research method. Quantitative research allows for a generalization of numeric results and survey data from various data points but would not have allowed for in-depth information about the specific phenomenon (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Quantitative research methods also require reconstructed responses from participants, which would not have allowed for an understanding of the variety of experiences of the participants (Yilmaz, 2013).

A mixed research method, combining both qualitative and quantitative data, can allow for the strengths of both perspectives of research. However, when one is using a mixed methods approach, one method is generally given priority over the other method, which can cause one of the methods to outweigh the other (Östlund, Kidd, Wengström, & Rowa-Dewar, 2011). Quantitative data would not have produced effective results in this research. Therefore, a mixed methods approach was not required to gain an understanding of the research.

Research Design

The selection of a specific research design derives from the objectives of the research question, and the multiple research designs have strengths and weaknesses (Reiter, Stewart, & Bruce, 2011). A phenomenological research design allows for the discovery and understanding of lived experiences of individuals (Lasch et al., 2010). The participants are capable of describing events they experienced (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological research allows the participants to describe their experiences through their own perspective of the engagement of the experience (Downing & Cooney, 2012). In using a phenomenological design, it was possible to understand the experiences of the social media marketing managers when marketing to Generation Y consumers (Lasch et al., 2010).

During interviews with the participants, a phenomenological design requires conversation-style dialogue so that the meanings of the experiences can be more explicit (Lam & Harker, 2013). Semistructured open-ended questions guided the research, allowing open expression from the participants (Lasch et al., 2010). A phenomenological research design was the best suited qualitative research design to answer the research question.

Other qualitative research designs were not as appropriate for this study as phenomenology. A grounded theory design would have been best suited for a study that focused on developing theory from data to resolve problems, but I based this study on published theory (Adolph, Hall, & Kruchten, 2011). A narrative research design builds on the foundation of describing a story, unlike this phenomenological design, with which I

sought an understanding of the lived experiences of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Case study research and ethnographic research were not appropriate to this study, as they would have required knowledge from one specific cultural or organizational group (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

Population and Sampling

I based this qualitative research on a sample of experienced social media marketing professionals (Fischer & Reuber, 2010). The participants chosen for this study allowed for a deeper understanding of strategies used to effectively market to Generation Y consumers through social media. The participants (a) were currently employed as social media marketers; (b) had a minimum of 3 years of experience in actively marketing to Generation Y consumers through social media; and (c) had held positions of influence in the decision-making process of marketing campaigns. I located and solicited participants through contact data obtained from published lists of speakers at upcoming social media marketing conferences. I also asked the participants to suggest other individuals who might be willing to participate in the study. The interviews with the participants allowed for in-depth exploration of their professional experiences.

The sampling method that I used was a purposive sample of participants who had marketed to a specific generational cohort. Purposive sampling is a nonprobability sampling strategy in which a researcher selects participants based on their experience and knowledge of the subject (Sanderson & Lea, 2012) and is used when it would be difficult to obtain a list of all members of a population (Barratt, Ferris, & Lenton, 2014). I selected the participants based on their fit with the criterion of having demonstrated

effective use of social media channels (Fischer & Reuber, 2010). When the scope of the sample is narrowed, the transferability of the research expands by allowing for a more extensive measurement (Bornstein, Jager, & Putnick, 2013). To achieve data saturation, a researcher must continue conducting interviews until no new information is identified (Trotter, 2012).

The determination of sample size is a difficult but important step for researchers (Ahmed, Mahfouz, & Fdul, 2011). A sample size of 20 participants was selected for this research because qualitative research requires a smaller sample size than quantitative research, and a small sample size allows for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon that is being researched (Dworkin, 2012). Larger sample sizes do not necessarily lead to a further understanding of the research question; therefore, sample size in phenomenological research is based on data saturation. (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013).

I conducted the semistructured qualitative interviews via telephone. I used the interview setting to create the environment for the interviews (Qu & Dumay, 2011). I interviewed the participants at their homes or offices, and I attempted to recognize any hidden messages or ambivalence in the participants through follow-up questions (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

Ethical Research

Ethics in research, which result in the protection of human participants, are recognized both by government and professional regulations (Stiles, Epstein, Poythress, & Edens, 2012). To ensure that ethical guidelines are followed, participants must be given informed guidelines, the risk to the participants should be minimized, and

appropriate methodological procedures should be followed (Wester, 2011). Voluntary consent and confirmation that the participants are over the age of 18 are required for research conducted within ethical guidelines (Harcourt, & Sargeant, 2011).

All participants in the study were required to agree to a consent form. The form contained my contact information, contact information for a representative of Walden University, and a description of the background and purpose of the study. I provided allowance for the participants to withdraw from the study at any point through the conclusion of the study. I informed the participants that any personal data collected would remain confidential, and I provided them with a copy of the consent form and the transcripts of the study at its conclusion. A copy of the consent form is included in Appendix B.

Participants did not receive any monetary incentive for participating in the study and were provided the ability to withdraw from the study without penalty (Sachs, 2011). The consent form, as well as the files, transcripts, and recordings from the research, will be stored on a private external hard drive for 5 years after the study concludes to ensure the protection of the rights of the participants. After that, they will be destroyed.

Data Collection

Instruments

In collecting phenomenological data, I was the instrument used to understand the experiences of social media marketers (Lasch et al., 2010). The data collection took place through in-depth semistructured qualitative interviews with social media professionals. These interviews took place over the phone or via Skype, depending on the availability of

the participants. Telephone interviews can provide insight from participants due to the added participant comfort relative to face-to-face interviews (Trier-Bieniek, 2012). I used Livescribe Smartpen software to transcribe the interviews. The Livescribe Smartpen captures notes that are drawn and audio from the interviews, which are uploaded and saved onto a hard drive (Harle & Towns, 2013).

Noble and Smith (2014) stated that the most commonly used method for qualitative data collection is the individual interview, from which data can be collected using notes, audio recording, or video recording. In addition to audio recordings of the interviews, I transcribed notes during the interviews with a Livescribe Smartpen (Harle & Towns, 2013). By taking notes of vocal inflection and nonverbal cues, I was able to present a more complete understanding of the essence of the experiences of the participants (Endacott, 2004).

I recorded the interviews with the permission of the participants so I could transcribe the interviews in their entirety to ensure that the data did not become fragmented (Noble & Smith, 2014). I found that the interviews required between 60 and 90 minutes to complete. Turner (2010) recommended that the researcher remain neutral during the interviews and not show emotional feelings or personal opinions. The interviews detailed the marketing professionals' experiences in advertising to Generation Y consumers through social media.

Credibility is the element of a qualitative study that allows a reader to recognize the participants' experiences (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Threats to the credibility of this study may have included the selection of specific marketing professionals. These

marketing professionals may have had varied degrees of experience and different causes and explanations for the same effect. The informant feedback from the participants ensured accurate representation of their experiences (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Data Collection Technique

I collected the data through in-depth, semistructured qualitative interviews. Semistructured interviews allow for interview questions and follow up questions to elicit information related to the research question (Rabionet, 2011). I contacted the participants through email to set appointment times for their interviews. I developed a rapport with the participants before the interviews, which provided comfort to the participants and allow for more follow up responses (Turner, 2010). Turner (2010) recommended that interview preparation allow for an unambiguous focus during the interviews. I asked the participants to dedicate 90 minutes of their time for the interviews, and required them to sign the consent form prior to the interview. The participants returned consent form to me via email to show their agreement with the consent form.

I recorded the interviews as well as made notes of the respondents' nonverbal communication, vocal inflection and tone. I used a Livescribe Smartpen to transcribe the phone interviews (Harle & Towns, 2013), in addition to the notes I transcribed (Endacott, 2004). Appendix A contains a list of the interview questions asked to the participants.

Data Organization Techniques

I organized and categorized the data collected from participants by pairing the raw data collected from the interviews with field notes after each interview has concluded. I asked all of the individual participants the same questions, but allowed a degree of

freedom for additional follow-up questions with each participant (Turner, 2010). I recorded the interview data using a Livescribe SmartPen (Harle & Towns, 2013) and used Nvivo 10 to organize and code the data before grouping the data by similar themes and verifying by confirming their representativeness of the data as a whole (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

The participants returned a consent form, which informed them of the privacy guidelines that were set. The participants' names or any other personal identification remained anonymous to anyone other than me. I saved the data on an external hard drive and will destroy it after five years, and did not provide access to the raw data (with participant identities) to anyone else.

Data Analysis Technique

To analyze the interview contents, the data must be transcribed, coded to form overarching themes, and recurring themes must be identified (Noble & Smith, 2014). I used computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (*CAQAS*) method for data analysis by using Nvivo 10 to assist in coding the themes from the interviews (Fielding, Fielding, & Hughes, 2013). By completing this analysis, I made sense of the information to be able to report the data to the reader (Turner, 2010). The knowledge gained from the personal experience of interviewing assisted in coding through the ability to learn the stories and experiences of the participants (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Dierckx de Casterlé, Gastmans, Bryon, and Denier (2012) recommended that a researcher reread the interviews and draw a list of concepts. Once the concepts were drawn, I listed, analyzed, and checked them for accuracy (Dierckx de Casterlé et al.,

2012). I did not conduct a pilot study.

The interview questions were the method in which data was gathered from the social media marketing professionals. The participants' responses to the interview questions contributed to their overall lived experiences with Generation Y. The interview questions were developed to understand how the participants can answer the central research question: What strategies have social media marketers used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media? The interview questions that I asked the participants were as follows:

1. How would you define *social media*?
2. What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?
3. What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?
4. What are your least successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?
5. What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?
6. How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?
7. What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?
8. What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products

to Generation Y consumers?

9. What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

The data that I collected related to the conceptual framework of the study by integrating the concept of attitude toward the ad. Lutz (1985) defined *attitude toward the ad* as a consumer's predisposition to have either a favorable or an unfavorable reaction to a specific type of advertising stimulus. I posed the interview questions to the participants to explore the best methods to advertise to Generation Y consumers through social media.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Ali and Yusof (2012) described reliability as reassurance that other researchers will find similar conclusions in a repeated study, and recommend documentation of data analysis as a method to achieve reliability. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) described the four components of reliable research as: (a) credibility; (b) transferability; (c) consistency; and (d) confirmability. Attention to the reliability of qualitative research is essential for the critique and development of overall academic process (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Thomas and Magilvy (2011) described credibility as checking the data as representative of the participants. I utilized informant feedback to verify the credibility of the interview data by having each participant read the transcript of their interview. This process ensured an accurate representation of their information.

Transferability is similar to external validity in quantitative research and applies

to the ability to transfer findings from one group to another (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011). As recommended by Thomas and Magilvy (2011), I have researched demographic information of Generation Y, and provided this information in the literature review. The recruitment criteria for the participants included a direct professional relationship with Generation Y through their experiences in social media marketing.

Consistency, or dependability, of a study requires another researcher to follow the decisions of the original researcher (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). As recommended by Thomas and Magilvy (2011), I have: (a) described the purpose of the study; and, (b) described the data collection process. Other researchers will have the ability to repeat the study by following the same steps.

Confirmability, which is similar to objectivity in quantitative studies, can only occur when credibility, transferability, and consistency have been met (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). I have established these three standards in the study process, which will better assure the validity of the study. A researcher must transcribe the interviews and report any bias (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Endacott (2004) recommended the search for conflicting evidence, and a detailed notation of choices made in the research. To achieve the goal of searching for conflicting evidence, I researched both supporting and contradicting evidence through peer reviewed journal articles and reported the evidence in the literature review. I also reviewed the transcripts for conflicting views, and took them into account as I developed themes. To meet the goal of detailed notation choices, I have listed the limitations and delimitations in the study.

Validity

Drost (2011) stated that research validity is based on the degree to which the findings of a study are certain. The instruments used to collect research are part of the basis for the validity of the collection of research (Burton & Mazzerolle, 2011). In this research study, I was the main instrument for collecting data through qualitative in-depth interviews. The research conducted was more valid due to a systematic preparation of the data analysis and collection (Nakkeeran & Zodpey, 2012).

To address the validity of the research study, Nakkeeran and Zodpey (2012) recommended an emphasis on the criteria for selecting participants for the study. The marketing professionals that were selected as participants in this study met strict criteria. The criteria required that the participants have direct experience in marketing to Generation Y (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Informant feedback verified the representativeness of the participants' information (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). The participants were full time social media marketers with a minimum of three years of experience in actively marketing to Generation Y consumers through social media, and have held a position of influence in the decision making process of the marketing campaigns.

To address the transferability of the findings, Nakkeeran and Zodpey (2012) recommended avoiding the tendency to quantify the data collected in qualitative research. The in-depth interviews that I collected included open-ended questions, and follow up questions, in addition to the predetermined interview questions. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) recommend research of the demographic information of Generation Y for

transferability of the information. This allowed data collection to be externally valid, without compromising the data collected.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the social media marketing strategies used to effectively engage Generation Y consumers through social media. By using data collected with in-depth semistructured qualitative interviews, I explored the strategies that social media marketers used and experienced. In Section 3 of this research study, I presented the findings of the study and explored how this research can be valuable to the business world, as well as a factor in positive social change.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

In this section of the study, I present the findings from the research study as well as my recommendations and explain how the research relates to the body of literature. Section 3 includes (a) an overview of the study; (b) presentation of the findings; (c) applications to professional practice; (d) implications for social change; (e) recommendations for action; (f) recommendations for further study; (g) reflections; and (h) summary and conclusions.

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to explore social media marketing strategies to effectively engage Generation Y consumers. The central research question to the study was as follows: What strategies have social media marketers used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media? The study sample included 20 full-time social media marketing professionals who marketed to Generation Y consumers through social media marketing campaigns. The inclusion criteria for these professionals included the following: (a) employment as a social media marketer for a minimum of 3 years and (b) having held a position of influence in social media marketing decision making.

I collected the data through in-depth, semistructured qualitative interviews. The steps of the interview process were as follows: (a) contact the participants through email to set appointment times for their interviews, (b) ask the participants to dedicate 90 minutes of their time for the interviews, (c) ask the participants to reply to the consent form stating their agreement, (d) use a Livescribe Smartpen to record the interviews and

take handwritten notes, and (e) conclude the interview and thank the participants for their time. Eight themes emerged from the research: (a) social media channel, (b) incentives, (c) timing, (d) information, (e) selling, (f) transparency, (g) personalization, and, (h) segmentation.

Presentation of the Findings

In this section, I describe the personal experiences of the participants to develop an understanding of their lived experiences of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). After transcribing the qualitative interviews, I grouped the significant statements into themes and presented descriptions of what the participants experienced in relation to those themes. The themes were related to the central research question as well as the conceptual framework and the existing literature.

Research and Interview Question

The central research question of the study was the following: What strategies have social media marketers used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media? I gathered answers to the question through the following interview questions:

1. How would you define *social media*?
2. What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?
3. What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?
4. What are your least successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

5. What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?
6. How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?
7. What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?
8. What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?
9. What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

I asked all 20 participants the same questions to gain an understanding of their experiences related to the central research question. The format of semistructured qualitative interviews allowed the participants to share their understanding of the phenomenon. I identified eight themes by coding the data from the interview transcripts, and I used NVivo 10 software to identify the reoccurring traits for those themes (Fielding, Fielding, & Hughes, 2013). The eight themes that emerged from the coded data were as follows: (a) social media channel, (b) incentives, (c) timing, (d) information, (e) selling, (f) transparency, (g) personalization, and (h) segmentation.

Themes

I found that eight themes emerged from the verbatim interview transcripts developed through the nine interview questions. The first theme, *social media channel*, was composed of statements regarding the use of specific social media channels. The

second theme, *incentives*, was composed of statements regarding contests, incentives, or methods of motivating Generation Y consumers. The third theme, *timing*, stemmed from participants' experiences related to the timing of social media marketing and attention to the changing social media environment. The fourth theme, *information*, contained statements related to providing information on social media as well as reactions to the presentation of information. The fifth theme, *selling*, combined traits related to how to sell through social media and the approach to selling on social media. The sixth theme, *transparency*, was made up of the participants' statements about being open, transparent, or honest on social media. The seventh theme, *personalization*, came from the participants' experiences related to one-on-one communication, personalized communication, as well as input from Generation Y. The final theme, *segmentation*, was composed of traits segmenting members of Generation Y into subgroups and social media groups.

Theme 1: Social media channel. The theme of social media channel is linked to Interview Questions 2, 7, and 8. As supported by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media marketers should carefully choose their social media applications when trying to engage Generation Y. Interviewees reported that all of the major social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube) were effective when marketing to Generation Y. Akar and Topcu (2011) found that the frequent use of social media applications elicits a positive attitude toward social media. However, comments from participants showed that selecting the optimal social media channels happens by knowing which channels customers are using. As noted by one participant,

I'm going to go where the people are. If you're a good marketer, you're going to sit down and figure out where your customers engage and what you can do to integrate yourself into that community. (P10)

Another participant indicated,

Every day there is a new channel, there's a new lingo in the existing channel, there's a new pattern in consumption in existing channels or brought on by the integration of new channels. That's the most difficult thing to keep up with. It's a full-time job to keep up with where your audience is, why they're there, and why it makes sense for you to be there and how to join in on their conversations correctly. (P5)

In support of Fischer and Reuber (2010), 90% of participants in this study found Twitter an effective channel for marketing to Generation Y. Almost half (45%) of the participants mentioned Instagram, while 20% mentioned YouTube for their social media efforts. Patterson (2011) found that Facebook was a strong social media application for consumers; however, although 55% of this study's participants showed support for Facebook, 30% were specifically against Facebook use when marketing to Generation Y. As one participant commented, "although still maybe Facebook is good for some and not for others, I think that Facebook is actually being utilized now more by the older demographics than the younger demographics" (P13).

Theme 2: Incentives. The theme of incentives links to the body of literature and the conceptual framework. Huang et al. (2013) applied attitude toward the ad to viral videos and noted that Internet users are most likely to respond to or actively share

Internet content if they view the ad as entertainment. One participant indicated, “When you can take that constant need to be entertained and stimulated and supplement it with a tangible reward, it's a success” (P16). Wang and Sun (2010) found that economic belief was the strongest predictor of a positive attitude toward the ad. Lans (2010) also found that creating incentives increases the likelihood of engagement.

The results of this study showed a strong link to incentivizing online activity to increase the likelihood of the consumer actively responding, sharing, or completing a referral. Sixty percent of the study participants stated that offering a prize or monetary incentive had a positive effect on user engagement. There were, however, some mixed views as to how to best use incentives. As stated by one participant, “we're running a promo with one of our leasing offices where if you sign up you get a sweepstakes for an Amazon Kindle Fire. They're cheap, but everyone likes a tablet and moms and kids can both use them” (P1). In contrast, another participant noted,

I think it's just getting very played out, but the idea of incentivizing people to take an action, regardless of age group but especially with Millennials really works. In my experience to get them to share a page, to sign up for a service, to refer a friend and send in a promo code and that process is all about making the incentive matched to both your brand offerings. It can't be something random. I think a lot of businesses make a huge mistake of trying to sell by giving away iPads or iPods as an incentive to like their Facebook page. That's just all wrong for any business. If it doesn't relate to your business, then any incentive isn't providing you value. People will still take it, but they have no connection to you. (P5)

Another participant stated, as a caution concerning monetary incentives, “The youngest of the bunch will hit ‘like’ just because they're suckers and they think they can get something for free, but they'll never come back to the page again” (P15).

Theme 3: Timing. Slightly more than half (55%) of the participants responded to the importance of timing of social media usage and understanding what is new in the industry. Goodrich (2013) reported that the effectiveness of social media ads changes with the time of day, and Lans (2010) found that communication during the weekdays had a positive effect on social media engagement. Two participants noted a time-of-day preference. One participant stated a time-of-day preference, noting, “I think some of the things we have learned is there are key times during the day whenever this group of people are interacting the most” (P20). Another participant noted, “This group is really distracted and busy and posting things at 9 in the morning they probably aren't awake, or in class, so putting things out at night or at times that make sense instead of times that are convenient for the person posting the messages” (P11).

The theme of timing was most often noted by the participants as relating to urgency in social media. Peters et al. (2013) found that organizations should respond quickly and consistently across social media channels. Rapp et al. (2013) noted that social media provides retailers an outlet to stay up to date with their consumers. Serazio (2013) found that flexibility with marketing efforts is important when marketing to Generation Y, which also supports the need for attention to timing. One participant stated, “there are times when you are looking at Twitter and you say, ‘this is cool, we can jump into this hashtag or trending topic,’ then you try to, and it's too late” (P14).

Theme 4: Information. The theme of information relates to providing consumers with information and relates to the body of literature and the conceptual framework.

Wang and Sun (2010) found that providing customers with information positively affects consumers' attitude toward the ad. While the participants agreed that providing information to Generation Y consumers is important, care must be taken to avoid information overload and solely posting, reposting, or too frequently posting information. One participant commented,

So what doesn't work most of the time for me is just spitting out information constantly, acting like a robot, and, for instance, if I wasn't responding to replies or thanking people for a retweet, I would notice it dropping off again. (P8)

Attention to consumers' emotional needs will increase the likelihood of a positive attitude toward the ad (Liu et al., 2011; Pyun & James, 2011). Of the study participants interviewed, 45% noted a need to avoid pushing out too much information on social media, in favor of paying closer attention to the emotional or entertainment aspects of social media. One strategy that was discovered to help with relaying information to Generation Y was limiting the size of the post. In support of findings by Hadija et al. (2012), who stated that members of Generation Y will often only notice an advertisement for a split second, one participant found that "you have to think in little bits, we call it 'snackables' or bite-sized bits of information" (P4).

Theme 5: Selling. The theme of selling refers to the ability to sell to Generation Y on social media, as well as methods to most effectively sell a product. Generation Y is self-reliant (Schewe et al., 2013) and more responsive to a brand experience than

traditional marketing objectives (Qader & Omar, 2013). Participants in the study cautioned marketers that while selling on social media is possible, when dealing with Generation Y it is important to empower the market and be careful not to oversell to the audience. One participant stated,

Well, I'm going to play semantics, because I don't think you can sell to Millennials. They buy, and I think that's a mistake that a lot of companies make. If you try to sell to Millennials, I think they'll walk away from you. (P7)

Another participant commented, “Especially with Millennials. They don’t want to be sold to; they want to make their own decisions” (P4).

The theme of selling suggests a careful approach in marketing to Generation Y. Members of Generation Y value independence (Schewe et al., 2013) and want to have input in the marketing of products (Smith, 2011). While Kirtiş and Karahan (2011) noted social media as an outlet for direct marketing, 50% of the study participants commented on care when attempting to directly sell to Generation Y. One participant stated, “A lot of people believe that you can't sell via social media, and that's simply not true” (P10) but followed up by stating, “If you become too ‘salesy,’ Facebook will stop showing your post” (P10).

Theme 6: Transparency. The theme of transparency relates to the suggestion of participants to stay transparent, open, and honest with consumers to establish trust. Wang and Sun (2010) identified credibility as an important component of a consumer’s attitude, and Liu et al. (2011) found trustworthiness to be linked to positive attitudes toward ads. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) found that honesty aids social media marketing in reaching

maximum potential, and Gilfoil and Jobs (2012) included transparency in their recommendations for higher results. Members of Generation Y are most often repeat customers of retailers that they can trust (Noble et al., 2009).

While only 40% of the study participants mentioned the theme of transparency in their marketing objectives, the statements about transparency were in agreement with the literature. One participant commented,

I'm using my voice, but I'm being honest and transparent, and what I have found, because I read every response and I read what people are saying about me, is there is somewhat of a refreshing point of view that someone, at my level in the company, is willing to talk to them and not try and be them, but be honest with them. (P7)

Another participant noted, “The more open you are, the more engaging you are, and that’s why people love you. That's why people follow people” (P3). One participant noted that the least successful strategy for social media engagement is lack of transparency, stating, “So, it seems obvious, but not being honest with your intentions [is a barrier to loyalty]” (P05).

Theme 7: Personalization. The theme of personalization, relating to personalizing communications for an intended audience, is present both in the conceptual framework and the body of literature. Customized online environments lead to a positive attitude toward advertisements (Bright & Daugherty, 2012). Members of Generation Y expect to have input regarding the promotions of a product (Smith, 2011) as well as the creation of the online content (Williams et al., 2012). The need for personalization of the

online message was stated by 65% of the participants. These participants noted that the message should be tailored to the audience.

There were various strategies for personalizing social media content for Generation Y consumers. One strategy was to focus the messages on the individual consumer. As one participant noted, “To me, when people are on Facebook, and see the things that make it more personal than the average franchise restaurant, then that will be in your head when you are thinking of where to go to dinner” (P3). Another participant stated “anything not personalized is going to definitely just get tossed aside” (P1).

Social media users want to have their voice heard (Yan, 2011) and social media marketers need to focus on a two-way conversation (Hanna et al., 2011). A strategy for helping to increase the ways of listening to Generation Y, and personalizing social media content that was provided by participants, was to brainstorm with members of Generation Y. One participant commented,

The best way? Employ one or two Generation Y employees to get a fresh perspective. Brainstorm. We do a lot of brainstorming among ourselves to think outside the box. A lot of companies don't do that enough. Pull in brainstorming sessions. (P1)

One participant added,

We have a roundtable discussing that comprises of current students and I sit in with them and they meet once a week and they develop strategy and they talk back and forth about strategy and ideas and I can share some of those with you. (P20)

Another participant noted, “Because, if it's anything I figure about the Y Generation, as far as advertising goes, it's going to be on their terms” (P16).

Theme 8: Segmentation. The final theme presented from the data, segmentation, is a theme that relates to the conceptual framework and is consistent with the published literature. Johnson (2013) found that consumers with a positive attitude toward the advertisement will allow for the increased potential of targeting their message to specific segments of their market. The literature shows that social media marketing is best used when it targets the right segment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011) and caters to the attitudes, lifestyles, and behaviors of that segment (Gilfoil & Jobs, 2012; Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011).

The participants of the study supported the need for segmenting audiences and understanding their behaviors and needs. Of the participants studied, 65% noted a strong need for market segmentation. Johnson (2013) found that firms have an increased ability to target their audience, and one participant expressed how to use social media to accomplish this. The participant stated, “Adding Twitter handles of specific people who are more influential or who are interested in the particular information, knowing what hashtags are popular with certain types of information and what hashtags are populated by groups of people” (P8). Another participant explained how to use social media to narrow their target by commenting, “honing and seeing things and doing testing and saying ‘ok, this subgroup really responds well to this messaging, this subgroup responds to that messaging’” (P19).

Applications to Professional Practice

The research obtained from this study might provide marketers social media strategies to more efficiently engage Generation Y consumers through social media. Social media marketing can have a strong effect on customer acquisition (Trusov et al., 2009), can increase opportunities to interact with consumers (Fischer & Reuber, 2010), and can provide firms capitalize on two-way conversations with customers (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012). However, Generation Y consumers often multitask when using social media, (Wang et al., 2012) and are a very independent group who can be critical of brands in which they associate (Serazio, 2013).

Social media marketers can benefit from this study by increasing their effectiveness in social media engagement and understanding of the online consumer behavior of Generation Y. The participants' responses in this study lead the following recommendations for social media marketers:

- Understand which social media platforms are being used by a target market and focus efforts on those platforms.
- Offer incentives to Generation Y consumers while ensuring that these incentives are aligned with the business.
- Be aware of the timing of social media campaigns by understanding the time of day that the target market is most active on social media and by staying current with trends.
- When providing information to Generation Y through social media, be sure not to engage in information overload.

- Understand that selling is possible on social media, but when dealing with Generation Y, ensure to empower the audiences' independence, and not engage in hard selling.
- Remain open, transparent, and honest with customers.
- Personalize marketing efforts to the individual consumers.
- Embrace input from Generation Y, and when possible, employ their advice.
- Segment the market by psychographic, geographic, and behavioral characteristics to ensure your message is received by the appropriate audience.

The findings of this study contribute to the academic body of knowledge of social media marketing to Generation Y consumers. There is a strong body of literature on social media marketing, Generation Y, as well as using social media to Generation Y. Previous researchers have conducted similar studies by concentrating on the opinions and attitudes of members of Generation Y (Akar & Topcu, 2011; Hadija et al., 2012; Pate & Adams, 2012). In contrast this research study focused on the experiences of social media marketing professionals. By focusing on their experiences, it allowed for a different perspective to be added to the body of literature.

Implications for Social Change

This study contributes to positive social change by helping to improve the relationships between Generation Y and marketers. Social media provides users the opportunity to become co-creators of a brand's message and allow their voices to be heard (Hanna et al., 2011). Generation Y are focused on self-expression (Kim & Jang, 2014), value their independence (Schewe et al., 2013), and are very critical of brands

(Serazio, 2013). When marketers have a stronger understanding of how to utilize social media to engage Generation Y, it allows Generation Y to be involved and understood by businesses. As one participant stated, “When you show them that you care and you want their input they get excited” (P4).

The findings of this study also can contribute to social change by showcasing the need for marketers to embrace change and stay current with evolving trends in marketing. The findings of this study reflect an understanding that when behaviors in society change, so must business. These findings will allow for social change to be visible in changes in marketing.

A final implication for social change is the strong recommendation for business to remain open, transparent, and honest with their marketing messages. With a push toward transparency, it can allow consumers, specifically Generation Y consumers, an ability to improve their negative opinions of advertising (Sashittal et al., 2012). It can provide motivation for brands to increase their awareness of health conscious offerings that are often found important by Generation Y (Jang, Kim, & Bonn, 2011).

Recommendations for Action

The purpose of this study was to discover social media marketing strategies to engage Generation Y consumers. Achieving marketing objectives online has become more difficult (Lapido et al., 2013), which supports the need for marketers to receive further understanding of social media marketing. The findings of this study can aid marketers who are currently using social media, marketers that are considering shifting to

a social media approach, or marketers that want to increase their understanding of the consumer behavior of Generation Y.

I plan to share the findings of this study through my role in academia. I plan to use the information gained to help prepare students to prepare for a career in business and marketing. I plan to share this information in class directly to my students, and to share the information at business and academic conferences.

Recommendations for Further Study

Delimitations in this study included information that was purposely left out of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). This study purposely left out other demographic information about Generation Y, and concentrated on Generation Y as a whole. After completing this study, it became evident that simply defining Generation Y as an age group or by their accessibility to technology is not sufficient to completely understanding their consumer behavior. Further studies should narrow the scope of Generation Y into specific psychographic, geographic, or behavioral characteristics. For example, a study of the social media usage by Generation Y consumers who live in an urban versus rural area could increase the body of understanding of the phenomenon.

Reflections

My own age allows for an interesting viewpoint of Generation Y. I often find myself trying to understand which cohort I belong, either Generation X or Generation Y. It is easy to simultaneously understand how Generation Y behave, while also looking at Generation Y as young, inexperienced, or even immature. This study provided not only an increased understanding of Generation Y, but a profound amount of respect for their

impact on society. While older generations might look at Generation Y and worry about what could be seen as an addiction to technology, this study has helped me understand the level of engagement and independence that Generation Y require.

I also found, while social media and technology have certainly changed the channels employed by marketers, social media marketing is as connected to traditional marketing as any other marketing method. While I need to pay attention to the emerging trends and new marketing methods, I can't lose sight of the big picture. As one participant commented, "if content is king, activation is queen, but context is the kingdom" (P10).

Summary and Study Conclusions

The data gathered in this study was a result of semistructured, qualitative interviews of 20 social media marketing professionals. The data were gathered to understand social media marketing strategies that were used to engage Generation Y consumers. The data resulted in emerging themes that allowed for recommendations for social media marketers to best capitalize on social media efforts targeted to Generation Y.

The results of this study were shown to be applicable to both business practice as well as positive implications for social change. Both businesses and consumers were shown to benefit from the results of this study. The study also presented not only the importance of social media marketing to businesses, but the importance of creating relationships with Generation Y.

References

- Acquisti, A., & Spiekermann, S. (2011). Do interruptions pay off? Effects of interruptive ads on consumers' willingness to pay. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 25*, 226–240. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2011.04.003
- Adolph, S., Hall, W., & Kruchten, P. (2011). Using grounded theory to study the experience of software development. *Empirical Software Engineering, 16*, 487–513. doi:10.1007/s10664-010-9152-6
- Ahmed, E. A. R. E., Mahfouz, M. S., & Fdul, I. O. (2011). How to determine sample size: The design of sample size in health studies. *Gezira Journal of Health Sciences, 7*(2), 1-17. Retrieved from <http://elearn.uofg.edu.sd>
- Akar, E., & Topçu, B. (2011). An examination of the factors influencing consumers' attitudes toward social media marketing. *Journal of Internet Commerce, 10*, 35–67. doi:10.1080/15332861.2011.558456
- Åkerlind, G. S. (2012). Variation and commonality in phenomenographic research methods. *Higher Education Research & Development, 31*, 115–127. doi:10.1080/07294360.2011.642845
- Ali, A. M., & Yusof, H. (2012). Quality in qualitative studies: The case of validity, reliability and generalizability. *Issues in Social and Environmental Accounting, 5*, 25–64. Retrieved from <http://www.iiste.org>
- Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2011). Generating research questions through problematization. *Academy of Management Review, 36*, 247–271. doi:10.5465/AMR.2011.59330882

- Bahn, S., & Weatherill, P. (2013). Qualitative social research: A risky business when it comes to collecting “sensitive” data. *Qualitative Research, 13*, 19–35.
doi:10.1177/1468794112439016
- Barratt, M., Choi, T. Y., & Li, M. (2011). Qualitative case studies in operations management: Trends, research outcomes, and future research implications. *Journal of Operations Management, 29*, 329–342. doi:10.1016/j.jom.2010.06.002
- Barratt, M. J., Ferris, J. A., & Lenton, S. (2014). Hidden populations, online purposive sampling, and external validity taking off the blindfold. *Field Methods, 26*, 1-19.
doi:10.1177/1525822X14526838
- Berthon, P. R., Pitt, L. F., Plangger, K., & Shapiro, D. (2012). Marketing meets Web 2.0, social media, and creative consumers: Implications for international marketing strategy. *Business Horizons, 55*, 261–271. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2012.01.007
- Bluhm, D. J., Harman, W., Lee, T. W., & Mitchell, T. R. (2011). Qualitative research in management: A decade of progress. *Journal of Management Studies, 48*, 1866–1891. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00972.x
- Bolton, R. N., Parasuraman, A., Hoefnagels, A., Migchels, N., Kabadayi, S., Gruber, T., ... Solnet, D. (2013). Understanding Generation Y and their use of social media: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Service Management, 24*, 245–267.
doi:10.1108/09564231311326987
- Bornstein, M. H., Jager, J., & Putnick, D. L. (2013). Sampling in developmental science: Situations, shortcomings, solutions, and standards. *Developmental Review, 33*, 357–370. doi:10.1016/j.dr.2013.08.003

- Bright, L. F., & Daugherty, T. (2012). Does customization impact advertising effectiveness? An exploratory study of consumer perceptions of advertising in customized online environments. *Journal of Marketing Communications, 18*, 19–37. doi:10.1080/13527266.2011.620767
- Burton, L. J., & Mazerolle, S. M. (2011). Survey instrument validity Part I: Principles of survey instrument development and validation in athletic training education research. *Athletic Training Education Journal, 6*, 27–35. Retrieved from <http://www.nataej.org>
- Chen, Y., Fay, S., & Wang, Q. (2011). The role of marketing in social media: How online consumer reviews evolve. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 25*, 85–94. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2011.01.003
- Chowdhury, R. M. M. I., Olsen, G. D., & Pracejus, J. W. (2011). How many pictures should your print ad have? *Journal of Business Research, 64*, 3–6. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.09.011
- Chu, S. C., & Kim, Y. (2011). Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in social networking sites. *International Journal of Advertising, 30*, 47–75. Retrieved from <http://www.warc.com>
- Corrocher, N. (2011). The adoption of Web 2.0 services: An empirical investigation. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 78*, 547–558. doi:10.1016/j.techfore.2010.10.006
- De Vries, L., Gensler, S., & Leeflang, P. S. H. (2012). Popularity of brand posts on brand fan pages: An investigation of the effects of social media marketing. *Journal of*

- Interactive Marketing*, 26, 83–91. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2012.01.003
- Dierckx de Casterlé, B., Gastmans, C., Bryon, E., & Denier, Y. (2012). QUAGOL: A guide for qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 49, 360–371. doi:10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2011.09.012
- Dowling, M., & Cooney, A. (2012). Research approaches related to phenomenology: Negotiating a complex landscape. *Nurse Researcher*, 20, 21–27. Retrieved from: <http://www.nurseresearch.co.uk>
- Drost, E. A. (2011). Validity and reliability in social science research. *Education Research and Perspectives*, 38, 105-123. Retrieved from <http://www.erjournal.net>
- Dworkin, S. L. (2012). Sample size policy for qualitative studies using in-depth interviews. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 41, 1319–1320. doi:10.1007/s10508-012-0016-6
- Dzamic, L. (2012). The hunt for the red herring: Measuring commercial effects of social media. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 13, 198–206. doi:10.1057/dddmp.2011.46
- Edwin, T. S., Chandramohan, A. C., Rao, S. N., & Rao, S. G. (2014). Role of advertising in small media with reference to small businesses. *International Monthly Referred Journal of Research in Management & Technology*, 3, 67-73. Retrieved from <http://www.abhinavjournal.com>
- Endacott, R. (2004). Clinical research 4: Qualitative data collection and analysis. *Intensive and Critical Care Nursing*, 21, 123–127. doi:10.1016/j.iccn.2004.10.001

- Fassinger, R., & Morrow, S. L. (2013). Toward best practices in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method research: A social justice perspective. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology, 5*, 69-83. Retrieved from <http://jsacp.tumblr.com>
- Fielding, J., Fielding, N., & Hughes, G. (2013). Opening up open-ended survey data using qualitative software. *Quality & Quantity, 47*, 3261–3276. doi:10.1007/s11135-012-9716-1
- Fischer, E., & Reuber, A. R. (2010). Social interaction via new social media: (How) can interactions on Twitter affect effectual thinking and behavior? *Journal of Business Venturing, 26*, 1–18. doi:10.1016/j.jbusvent.2010.09.002
- Furlow, N. E. (2011). Find us on Facebook: How cause marketing has embraced social media. *Journal of Marketing Development & Competitiveness, 5*(6), 61–64. Retrieved from <http://isea.icseard.uns.ac.id/>
- Gensler, S., Völckner, F., Liu-Thompkins, Y., & Wiertz, C. (2013). Managing brands in the social media environment. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 27*, 242–256. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2013.09.004
- Gilfoil, D. M., & Jobs, C. (2012). Return on investment for social media: A proposed framework for understanding, implementing, and measuring the return. *Journal of Business & Economics Research (JBER), 10*, 637–650. Retrieved from <http://journals.cluteonline.com>
- Goodrich, K. (2013). Effects of age and time of day on internet advertising outcomes. *Journal of Marketing Communications, 19*, 229–244.

doi:10.1080/13527266.2011.620618

Gruzd, A., & Goertzen, M. (2013). Wired academia: Why social science scholars are using social media. *2013 46th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS)* (pp. 3332–3341). doi:10.1109/HICSS.2013.614

Guo, C., & Saxton, G. D. (2013). Tweeting social change: How social media are changing nonprofit advocacy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *43*, 57-79. doi:10.1177/0899764012471585

Hadija, Z., Barnes, S. B., & Hair, N. (2012). Why we ignore social networking advertising. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, *15*, 19–32. doi:10.1108/13522751211191973

Hanna, R., Rohm, A., & Crittenden, V. L. (2011). We're all connected: The power of the social media ecosystem. *Business Horizons*, *54*, 265–273. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.007

Hannes, K., Lockwood, C., & Pearson, A. (2010). A comparative analysis of three online appraisal instruments' ability to assess validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, *20*, 1736–1743. doi:10.1177/1049732310378656

Harcourt, D., & Sargeant, J. (2011). The challenges of conducting ethical research with children. *Education Inquiry*, *2*, 421-436. doi:10.3402/edui.v2i3.21992

Harle, M., & Towns, M. H. (2013). Students' understanding of primary and secondary protein structure: Drawing secondary protein structure reveals student understanding better than simple recognition of structures. *Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education*, *41*, 369–376. doi:10.1002/bmb.20719

- Huang, J., Su, S., Zhou, L., & Liu, X. (2013). Attitude toward the viral ad: Expanding traditional advertising models to interactive advertising. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 27*, 36–46. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2012.06.001
- Jang, Y. J., Kim, W. G., & Bonn, M. A. (2011). Generation Y consumers' selection attributes and behavioral intentions concerning green restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 30*, 803–811. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2010.12.012
- Jenkins-Guarnieri, M. A., Wright, S. L., & Hudiburgh, L. M. (2012). The relationships among attachment style, personality traits, interpersonal competency, and Facebook use. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 33*, 294–301. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2012.08.001
- Jensen, B. P., Gray, N. J., Harvey, K., DiClemente, R. J., & Klein, J. D. (2014). Language and love Generation Y comes of age online. *SAGE Open, 4*, 1-8. doi:10.1177/2158244014525894
- Johnson, J. P. (2011). Targeted advertising and advertising avoidance. *RAND Journal of Economics, 44*, 128-144. Retrieved from <http://www.rje.org>
- Kamal, S., Chu, S.-C., & Pedram, M. (2013). Materialism, attitudes, and social media usage and their impact on purchase intention of luxury fashion goods among American and Arab young generations. *Journal of Interactive Advertising, 13*, 27–40. doi:10.1080/15252019.2013.768052
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons, 53*, 59–68. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003

- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2011). Two hearts in three-quarter time: How to waltz the social media/viral marketing dance. *Business Horizons*, *54*, 253–263.
doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.006
- Kaplan, A. M. (2012). If you love something, let it go mobile: Mobile marketing and mobile social media 4x4. *Business Horizons*, *55*, 129–139.
doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2011.10.009
- Kim, J., Baek, Y., & Choi, Y. H. (2012). The structural effects of metaphor-elicited cognitive and affective elaboration levels on attitude toward the ad. *Journal of Advertising*, *41*, 77–96. doi:10.2753/JOA0091-3367410206
- Kim, D., & (Shawn) Jang, S. (2014). Motivational drivers for status consumption: A study of Generation Y consumers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *38*, 39–47. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2013.12.003
- Kirtiş, A. K., & Karahan, F. (2011). To be or not to be in social media arena as the most cost-efficient marketing strategy after the global recession. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *24*, 260–268. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.09.083
- Kunz, M. B., Hackworth, B., Osborne, P., & High, J. D. (2011). Fans, friends, and followers: Social media in the retailers' marketing mix. *Journal of Applied Business & Economics*, *12*, 61-67. Retrieved from <http://www.na-businesspress.com>
- Krahn, H. J., & Galambos, N. L. (2013). Work values and beliefs of “Generation X” and “Generation Y.” *Journal of Youth Studies*, *17*, 92–112.
doi:10.1080/13676261.2013.815701

- Ladipo, P. K. A., Nwagwu, K. O., & Alarape, W. B. (2013). Relative communication power of selected advertising media. *International Business and Management*, 6, 77–87. doi:10.3968/j.ibm.1923842820130602.1035
- Lam, W., & Harker, M. J. (2013). Marketing and entrepreneurship: An integrated view from the entrepreneur's perspective. *International Small Business Journal*, 31, 1-28. doi:10.1177/0266242613496443
- Lans, R. van der, Bruggen, G. van, Eliashberg, J., & Wierenga, B. (2010). A viral branching model for predicting the spread of electronic word of mouth. *Marketing Science*, 29, 348–365. doi:10.1287/mksc.1090.0520
- Laroche, M., Habibi, M. R., & Richard, M. O. (2013). To be or not to be in social media: How brand loyalty is affected by social media? *International Journal of Information Management*, 33, 76–82. doi:10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2012.07.003
- Lasch, K. E., Marquis, P., Vigneux, M., Abetz, L., Arnould, B., Bayliss, M., & Rosa, K. (2010). PRO development: Rigorous qualitative research as the crucial foundation. *Quality of Life Research*, 19, 1087–1096. doi:10.1007/s11136-010-9677-6
- Lee, H. (2013). Social media and Youtube as an attractive marketing tool. *The Journal of American Business Review*, 1, 249-255. Retrieved from www.jaabc.com
- Leedy, P. & Ormrod, J. E. (2001). *Practical research: Planning and design* (7th ed.) Upper Saddle, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Liang, T. P., Ho, Y. T., Li, Y. W., & Turban, E. (2011). What drives social commerce: The role of social support and relationship quality. *International Journal of*

Electronic Commerce, 16(2), 69–90. doi:10.2753/JEC1086-4415160204

- Lien, B. Y. H., Pauleen, D. J., Kuo, Y. M., & Wang, T. L. (2012). The rationality and objectivity of reflection in phenomenological research. *Quality & Quantity*, 48, 189-196. doi:10.1007/s11135-012-9759-3
- Liu, C. L. “Eunice,” Sinkovics, R. R., Pezderka, N., & Haghirian, P. (2012). Determinants of consumer perceptions toward mobile advertising — A comparison between Japan and Austria. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26, 21–32. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2011.07.002
- Lutz, R. J. (1985). Affective and cognitive antecedents of attitude toward the ad: A conceptual framework. In L. F. Awitt & A. A. Mitchell (Eds.), *Psychological Processes and Advertising Effects: Theory, Research and Application* (45-63). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- MacKenzie, S. B., Lutz, R. J., & Belch, G. E. (1986). The role of attitude toward the ad as a mediator of advertising effectiveness: A test of competing explanations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 23, 130-143. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org>
- Malik, S., & Khera, S. N. (2014). New generation—great expectations: Exploring the work attributes of gen y. *Global Journal of Finance and Management*, 6, 433-438.
- Malthouse, E. C., Haenlein, M., Skiera, B., Wege, E., & Zhang, M. (2013). Managing customer relationships in the social media era: Introducing the social CRM house. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 27, 270–280. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2013.09.008

- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. (2011). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ming, C. J., & Yazdanifard, R. (2014). How social media marketing can influence the profitability of an online company from a consumer point of view. *Journal of Research in Marketing*, 2(2), 157–160. Retrieved from <http://www.jormonline.com>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Naim, M. F. (2014). Leveraging social media for Generation Y retention. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(23), 173–179. Retrieved from <http://www.iiste.org>
- Nakkeeran, N., & Zodpey, S. (2012). Qualitative research in applied situations: Strategies to ensure rigor and validity. *Indian Journal of Public Health*, 56, 4.
doi:10.4103/0019-557X.96949
- Naylor, R. W., Lamberton, C. P., & West, P. M. (2012). Beyond the “like” button: The impact of mere virtual presence on brand evaluations and purchase intentions in social media settings. *Journal of Marketing*, 76, 105–120.
doi:10.1509/jm.11.0105
- Nelson-Field, K., Riebe, E., & Newstead, K. (2013). The emotions that drive viral video. *Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ)*, 21, 205–211.
doi:10.1016/j.ausmj.2013.07.003
- Noble, S. M., Haytko, D. L., & Phillips, J. (2009). What drives college-age Generation Y consumers? *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 617–628.

doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.01.020

Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2014). Qualitative data analysis: A practical example. *Evidence Based Nursing, 17*, 2–3. doi:10.1136/eb-2013-101603

O'Reilly, M., & Parker, N. (2013). "Unsatisfactory saturation": A critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in. *Qualitative Research, 13*, 190–197.

doi:10.1177/1468794112446106

Östlund, U., Kidd, L., Wengström, Y., & Rowa-Dewar, N. (2011). Combining qualitative and quantitative research within mixed method research designs: A methodological review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 48*, 369–383.

doi:10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2010.10.005

Papasolomou, I., & Melanthiou, Y. (2012). Social media: Marketing public relations' new best friend. *Journal of Promotion Management, 18*, 319–328.

doi:10.1080/10496491.2012.696458

Parment, A. (2013). Generation Y vs. Baby Boomers: Shopping behavior, buyer involvement and implications for retailing. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 20*, 189–199. doi:10.1016/j.jretconser.2012.12.001

Pate, S., & Adams, M. (2013). The influence of social networking sites on buying behaviors of millennials. *Atlantic Marketing Journal, 2*, 92-109. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/amj/vol2/iss1/7>

Patterson, A. (2012). Social-networkers of the world, unite and take over: A meta-introspective perspective on the Facebook brand. *Journal of Business Research, 65*, 527–534. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.02.032

- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peters, K., Chen, Y., Kaplan, A. M., Ognibeni, B., & Pauwels, K. (2013). Social media metrics — A framework and guidelines for managing social media. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 27*, 281–298. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2013.09.007
- Pookulangara, S., & Koesler, K. (2011). Cultural influence on consumers' usage of social networks and its' impact on online purchase intentions. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 18*, 348–354. doi:10.1016/j.jretconser.2011.03.003
- Price, J. H., & Murnan, J. (2004). Research limitations and the necessity of reporting them. *American Journal of Health Education, 35*, 66-67.
doi:10.1080/19325037.2004.10603611
- Pyun, D. Y., & James, J. D. (2011). Attitude toward advertising through sport: A theoretical framework. *Sport Management Review, 14*, 33–41.
doi:10.1016/j.smr.2009.12.002
- Qu, S. Q., & Dumay, J. (2011). The qualitative research interview. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management, 8*, 238–264. doi:10.1108/11766091111162070
- Rabionet, S. E. (2011). How I learned to design and conduct semi-structured interviews: An ongoing and continuous journey. *Qualitative Report, 16*, 563-566. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/>
- Rapp, A., Beitelspacher, L. S., Grewal, D., & Hughes, D. E. (2013). Understanding social media effects across seller, retailer, and consumer interactions. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 41*, 547–566. doi:10.1007/s11747-013-0326-9

- Reich, S. M., Subrahmanyam, K., & Espinoza, G. (2012). Friending, IMing, and hanging out face-to-face: Overlap in adolescents' online and offline social networks. *Developmental Psychology, 48*, 356–368. doi:10.1037/a0026980
- Reiter, S., Stewart, G., & Bruce, C. (2011). A strategy for delayed research method selection: Deciding between grounded theory and phenomenology. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods, 9*(10), 35-46. Retrieved from <http://www.ejbrm.com>
- Roberts, M. E., Stewart, B. M., Tingley, D., Lucas, C., Leder-Luis, J., Gadarian, S. K., Albertson, B., Rand, D. G. (2014). Structural topic models for open-ended survey responses. *American Journal of Political Science, 00*, 1-19. doi:10.1111/ajps.12103
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sachs, B. (2011). Going from principles to rules in research ethics. *Bioethics, 25*, 9–20. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8519.2009.01744.x
- Sanderson, H., & Lea, J. (2012). Implementation of the clinical facilitation model within an Australian rural setting: The role of the clinical facilitator. *Nurse Education in Practice, 12*, 333–339. doi:10.1016/j.nepr.2012.04.001
- Sashittal, H. C., Sriramachandramurthy, R., & Hodis, M. (2012). Targeting college students on Facebook? How to stop wasting your money. *Business Horizons, 55*, 495–507. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2012.05.006
- Saxena, A., & Khanna, U. (2013). Advertising on social network sites: A structural

- equation modelling approach. *Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective*, 17, 17–25. doi:10.1177/0972262912469560
- Schewe, C. D., Debevec, K., Madden, T. J., Diamond, W. D., Parment, A., & Murphy, A. (2013). “If you’ve seen one, you’ve seen them all!” Are young Millennials the same worldwide? *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 25, 3–15. doi:10.1080/08961530.2013.751791
- Serazio, M. (2013). Selling (digital) Millennials: The social construction and technological bias of a consumer generation. *Television & New Media*, 1-17. doi:10.1177/1527476413491015
- Smith, K. T. (2011). Digital marketing strategies that Millennials find appealing, motivating, or just plain annoying. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 19, 489-499. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2011.581383
- Stiles, P. G., Epstein, M., Poythress, N., & Edens, J. F. (2012). Protecting people who decline to participate in research: An example from a prison setting. *IRB: Ethics & Human Research*, 34(2), 15–18. Retrieved from <http://teenpsychiatry.thehastingscenter.org>
- Stühmeier, T., & Wenzel, T. (2011). Getting beer during commercials: Adverse effects of ad-avoidance. *Information Economics and Policy*, 23, 98–106. doi:10.1016/j.infoecopol.2010.09.002
- Sung, J., & Cho, K. (2012). The influence of media type on attitude toward mobile advertisements over time. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 15, 31–36. doi:10.1089/cyber.2011.0061

- Thomas, E., & Magilvy, J. K. (2011). Qualitative rigor or research validity in qualitative research. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing, 16*, 151–155.
doi:10.1111/j.1744-6155.2011.00283.x
- Toubia, O., Stephen, A. T., & Freud, A. (2011). Viral marketing: A large scale field experiment. *Economics, Management & Financial Markets, 6*(3), 43–65.
Retrieved from <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1469603>
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*, 837–851. doi:10.1177/1077800410383121
- Trier-Bieniek, A. (2012). Framing the telephone interview as a participant-centred tool for qualitative research: A methodological discussion. *Qualitative Research, 12*, 630-644. doi:10.1177/1468794112439005
- Trotter II, R. T. (2012). Qualitative research sample design and sample size: Resolving and unresolved issues and inferential imperatives. *Preventive Medicine, 55*, 398–400. doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2012.07.003
- Trusov, M., Bucklin, R. E., & Pauwels, K. (2009). Effects of word-of-mouth versus traditional marketing: Findings from an internet social networking site. *Journal of Marketing, 73*, 90–102. doi:10.1509/jmkg.73.5.90
- Turner, D. W. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The Qualitative Report, 15*, 754-760. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu>

- Valentine, D., & Powers, T. (2013). Online product search and purchase behavior of Generation Y. *Atlantic Marketing Journal*, 2, 76-91. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu>
- Vinerean, S., Cetina, I., Dumitrescu, L., & Tichindelean, M. (2013). The effects of social media marketing on online consumer behavior. *International Journal of Business & Management*, 8(14), 66–79. doi:10.5539/ijbm.v8n14p66
- Wang, Y., & Sun, S. (2010). Assessing beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral responses toward online advertising in three countries. *International Business Review*, 19, 333–344. doi:10.1016/j.ibusrev.2010.01.004
- Wang, Z., & Tchernev, J. M. (2012). The “myth” of media multitasking: Reciprocal dynamics of media multitasking, personal needs, and gratifications. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 493–513. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01641.x
- Waters, R. D., & Lo, K. D. (2012). Exploring the impact of culture in the social media sphere: A content analysis of nonprofit organizations’ use of Facebook. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 41, 297–319. doi:10.1080/17475759.2012.728772
- Wei-nian, Z. (2007). Online marketing and its strategy. *China-USA Business Review*, 6(3), 67–71. Retrieved from <http://davidpublishing.com>
- Wester, K. L. (2011). Publishing ethical research: A step-by-step overview. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 89(3), 301–307. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2011.tb00093.x
- Williams, D. L., Crittenden, V. L., Keo, T., & McCarty, P. (2012). The use of social

media: An exploratory study of usage among digital natives. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 12, 127–136. doi:10.1002/pa.1414

Wisdom, J. P., Cavaleri, M. A., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Green, C. A. (2012).

Methodological reporting in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods health services research articles. *Health Services Research*, 47, 721–745.

doi:10.1111/j.1475-6773.2011.01344.x

Wright, E., Khanfar, N. M., Harrington, C., & Kizer, L. E. (2010). The lasting effects of social media trends on advertising. *Journal of Business & Economics Research*, 8, 73-80. Retrieved from <http://www.journals.cluteonline.com>

Xu, C., Ryan, S., Prybutok, V., & Wen, C. (2012). It is not for fun: An examination of social network site usage. *Information & Management*, 49, 210–217.

doi:10.1016/j.im.2012.05.001

Yan, J. (2011). Social media in branding: Fulfilling a need. *Journal of Brand Management*, 18, 688–696. doi:10.1057/bm.2011.19

Yeu, M., Yoon, H. S., Taylor, C. R., & Lee, D.-H. (2013). Are banner advertisements in online games effective? *Journal of Advertising*, 42, 241–250.

doi:10.1080/00913367.2013.774604

Yilmaz, K. (2013). Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research traditions: Epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences. *European Journal of Education*, 48, 311–325. doi:10.1111/ejed.12014

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Designs and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How would you define *social media*?
2. What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?
3. What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?
4. What are your least successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?
5. What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?
6. How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?
7. What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?
8. What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?
9. What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

You are invited to be a participant in a research study to explore social media marketing strategies needed to engage Generation Y consumers through social media. Experienced social media marketers across the United States are being invited to participant in this study. The marketing professionals will be full time social media marketers with a minimum of three years of experience in actively marketing to Generation Y consumers through social media, and will have held a position of influence in the decision making process of the marketing campaigns.

This form is to provide you with informed consent so that you understand the study before committing to take part as a participant. The study is being conducted by Christopher M. Tingley, a doctoral student at Walden University.

Procedures:

If you agree to be a participant in this study, you agree to the following:

- Participate in an in-depth interview which will take place over the telephone or Skype and last approximately 60-90 minutes.
- Provide a self-reported bio of related work history which will display your experience that fits within the required criteria
- The conversation will be recorded
- You may withdraw from the research without penalty
- You are at least 19 years of age

Some sample interview questions include:

Interview Question 1. How would you define social media?

Interview Question 2. What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

Voluntary Nature of the Study

This study is completely voluntary, and your decision to decline participation will be respected by the researcher and Walden University. You may stop participation at any time during the study.

Risks and Benefits of the Study

Participation in this study should not pose any risk to health or safety, however could add stress from dedicating time to participate. The potential benefits of this study could be a better understanding of how to engage Generation Y consumers through social media. The in-depth interviews that are gathered in this study will contribute to the field of knowledge on the subject. The results of the study will be made available to all participants, as well as a condensed summary.

Payment

There will be no monetary compensation for participation.

Privacy

Any personal information gathered in this study will be kept strictly confidential. No personal information about participants will be disclosed, nor will any identifying information be reported. Data that is gathered will be kept securely on a personal hard drive and a locked file cabinet. The data will be kept on file for 5 years, and then destroyed. Participants should keep a copy of the consent form for their records.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information and I understand the parameters, risks and benefits, and confidentiality of the study. By replying to the email and stating “I

consent”, I understand and I agree to the terms set within the study. I also understand that I can contact Walden University’s Research Participant Advocate with questions regarding participants’ rights at USA number 001-612-312-1210 or irb@waldenu.edu. I understand that I can contact the researcher with general questions about the study at [REDACTED]. The IRB approval number is **09-26-14-0341332** and expires **September 25, 2015**.

Appendix C: Interview Transcripts

Participant Response for P1

Question 1: How would you define social media?

I would say now a days a lot of it is peer to peer, it's word of mouth. Outside of your standard channels, your Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, all of those that are still generally peer driven as far as vehicles go. Yeah, you say social media and someone says "No, I'm not on Facebook, I'm not on Instagram, I'm not on twitter." But I think it's much larger than that, it's getting much larger than that demographic wise. I mean, you're talking to me, who is Generation X, versus the next generation. They've grown up with it. It's something that's been there all the time. So I think it's definitely much larger than what you'd say even traditional media. It depends if you're looking at it as far as advertising and marketing side, or just word of mouth, or campaigns. It kind of effects everything now a days.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

I would say a lot of them are being where they are. It depends on your demographic. The Generation Y people the next five or six years are going to be in their 20's. My wife is on the cusp of that and it's about finding out where they are. It really depends where in Generation Y they fall. Out of college, I worked through Tumblr and Twitter, that's where they are. That's the social media vehicle they were using. You get to the older demographics they are still using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. It really depends on where your demo is within Generation Y. What I've found through the last few years about Generation Y is they're going to believe something you put out from other peers. So we try to get peer reviews, things like that on board. At the college we tried to get reviews on board. When we did the conventions, we've started doing the convention circuit down here in Florida to interact with that demographic. That way you can be mentioned at the convention that you're going to be there. You can have some place set up. It's a lot more word of mouth. Yeah, digitally having a presence. Presence is the best word. Whether physical or not. Social media or not, having a digital presence where they are. A good example is that the Target thing that just blew up last week. Target has really run with that bit of marketing campaign because that's where that Generation Y is. Using twitter and hashtags. It's literally having a presence at whatever vehicle they're using for social media. I've seen Ikea doing some crazy things in Europe with Instagram. It hits the demographic perfectly. They're college age students and above buying new things for their apartments or home. Marketing presence, that's how I usually mark a roadmap for a position when I first settle in. I usually find out where are we, presence wise. Current job, we have no Pinterest presence and our demo in the next 6 years will be growing more Gen

Y. We are a residential company that leases to apartments to anybody who is coming in. It's one of the larger companies that deals with a larger property or community. So in the next 6 years, I want us to get on Pinterest and get a company Twitter account. I'm frontloading Twitter, and things like that. Getting things set up. We are going to be needing to have a heavier presence when the Generation Y demographic starts being the decision makers. For where they live, what they're going to do.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

I would say, (a) finding what's new, (b) becoming what's new. For strategy, a lot of older companies that I've worked for want you to toe the corporate line. The marketing is an old school marketing plan, where the new school plan is your initiatives have to be more of a referral base. We really try to hit those demographics for that. When I was at [REDACTED], we started brainstorming. It's a construction company. They build homes and communities, so we did "mommy bloggers". That was something we focused on because that demographic, my wife is part of that, are big into blogging. They're into referrals, word of mouth, so it's an initiative that piggybacks off of that. A lot of our demographic the females are the decision makers and on top of that, Generation Y, female decision makers. So we decided to go toward the mommy bloggers because the referral base is what it's all about. At the same time, we hit the decision makers and the demographic also. So it's a nice triangle.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Through the links. Generation Y they want the information and they want it now and reputable. Direct mailers, you mail anything to anybody. When I worked at [REDACTED] they were very heavy handed with the printed direct mail and the new position I have now, my boss is getting away from all print. She wants to go purely digital. She knows that's where the future is going. So anything print or anything not personalized is going to definitely just get tossed aside. I would say those are the two big things that companies are still doing that is overlooked by Generation Y. They don't care. They don't have time for it and they want instant gratification. They don't want to read something and then to a website.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

Adoption rates, acceptance rates. It's what I'd call the gatekeeper syndrome. It's the same thing when you try to call about a job somewhere and the gatekeeper isn't going to get you through to that next person. You need to get through to someone in the group to get acceptance. I always say it's the same with art, which is, what you're selling isn't cool until someone tells the buyers it's cool. You need to get some kind of acceptance from whatever subsection of Generation Y you are marketing to. I think that's the largest problem, is finding that. I mentioned Target before. Someone hit one into left field really easy, with Alex from Target. They get a jump on that. Most companies, I think their number one problem is they see something that's cool and by the time they get around to marketing it it's not cool anymore. The wave has already passed. I saw that at [REDACTED] with the fear of missing out. By the time they got the ad campaign done, it took two months to do it and it was already over. Yeah, I'd say it's an issue for everyone. Timing. Generation Y wants things now and they know when something is cool or not cool. There's a reason why Twitter has such an increase in use and Facebook has had such a decrease. Maybe not decrease, but lack of a significant increase. My mom and grandma and father in law are on Facebook. It's less cool and so you've gotta find what they're using now. Are they on Snapchat now? What sites are people on, what are they advertising on? What are they using? I think timing, in a nutshell, it's all of that in one.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

The best way to do it, honestly, is to give them something. We've done giveaways. That's the same reason why I've tried to get sales people to use social media, and they always ask "What's in it for me?" Generation Y says "what's in it for me? What am I getting out of it?" My time is precious to me. Honestly sweepstakes, giveaways, or letting them get something out of it. Whether it's physical, look at foursquare with its mayor ships. It's phased out. Nobody cares about being the mayor of Starbucks anymore. You need to be relevant. Give them something for their time. It depends on the subsection of Gen Y. Is it the higher end, lower end, are they gamers? It depends. There's a broad sweep of Generation Y. Using focus groups, see what's relevant. If I'm doing t-shirt design, I take a run through Tumblr, Twitter, Instagram. I see what's popular. See what's trending. Popular hashtags. Year to year and a half ago, Beats headsets would go over better than now. We're running a promo with one of our leasing offices where if you sign up you get a sweepstakes for an Amazon kindle fire. They're cheap, but everyone likes a tablet and moms and kids can both use them. So if you already have one, it's a nice addition. I think a lot of us are either on the cusp, but

focus groups are the big thing. Do research. The best way? Employ one or two Generation Y employees to get a fresh perspective. Brainstorm. We do a lot of brainstorming among ourselves to think outside the box. A lot of companies don't do that enough. Pull in brainstorming sessions. Don't fabricate what's cool, find out what's trending.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

It depends on what they're doing. I've worked primarily social media and art, I've also done [REDACTED] for home buying. I did advertising. Currently residential, marketing to renters. All of those are a little older, but I would say the common thread is that marketers use Twitter. Something new to me is big Generation Y is Yelp. We have been using Google reviews. We put ourselves out there and show our ratings on Yelp. Here's our reviews on Google plus. You get a five star rating, many more people will complain that will praise you, but you still get that real impression of people. For what we're doing right now, the sites that rank rentals are really one of the biggest assets for us.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

Selling a product is tougher. Social media is less about selling in my mind. It's more about information, opinion, and referral community. I was at [REDACTED] and my boss always wanted to walk into our welcome home centers. That was something I'd consider successful. I don't care about how many likes we have our reach, or shares we have. I would say, honestly, Youtube videos and blogs are the strongest tools for selling people on anything.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

I would say two ears and one mouth. Keep your eyes open. You can't nail down a game plan for social media. It's going to change week to week, month to month. You need to plan for the next 2-3 years. It's like chess. Social media is much like chess as far as you need to think ahead 4-5 moves. At its core it's always changing, the demographic is always going to be different. Years from now your 25 year olds will be 30 and looking at their next step in life. Your 15 year olds will be in college. What are you selling to them? I'd say don't stop learning, just like any marketing. It's an integral part of digital marketing and it's not going to stop. Like a shark, if you stop moving you die.

Participant Response for P2

Question 1: How would you define social media?

Social media is anything and everything that consists of individuals coming together in one social form. It could be Facebook, Twitter, Myspace if they still post to that site. It could be a blog or it could be forums. Anything that people come together on. No matter how large or small it is. I can say it's when it's at least 100-200 individuals that have a common interest on a certain topic. It's a lot bigger than what people assume. Individuals automatically try to say that Facebook or twitter or some big company that has millions or trillions of individuals are social media. The key word in it is social. It could be a social mixer, or it could be online. Individuals could have some type of forum. When you think about that as a whole, it's the same thing. Social media can consist of many different types of forms. That's why I believe 100 or 200 individuals as far as social media goes as opposed to 20 at a mixer. People come together for one common interest and that's your social group or social core.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

Surprisingly, sex sells. Which many of the things that I have done and jobs I have done dealt with those images, not being nude, but very attractive. It can attract someone to click on a link, go to a certain page, or watch a certain video. The Generation Y is more open to go to it no matter if they're a male or female. The men want to look at the girl and the females want to see what it is about, so you see both ends of the spectrum. Because of that, it is the best way to deal with generation Y. The other half is if you have certain celebrities, and for some reason a lot of the times, they like reality stars over celebrities at times. If you have certain reality stars do things for you or are the face of something a lot of them might be more willing to see what they are doing over what a celebrity is doing. That's what I have seen or interacted with.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Using sex to sell a product, but a physical form or an image of something. It doesn't matter how you post it, but to observe an advertisement it is all in who you have supporting it and where it is posted. I did an event down here two weeks ago and some of the celebrities we had come from the event were from the [REDACTED]. Those people shared it on their social media pages. As far as Twitter,

Facebook and something else that one of them had on their fan pages. That also helped bring people out because they wanted to see those certain stars and having the face of the event you're doing throw it out there and support it helps networking to tell people to do things for you.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Anything that isn't personal. The hardest thing about generation Y is that you try to do it laid back. What I mean by that is if you're just posting random places, for example, if you post it up on a city calendar. No one looks at it. If you post it on Craigslist, that doesn't work. A lot of the times, surprisingly, if you just send out emails a lot of people will ignore it because they will consider it spam and often times it goes straight to their spam folder. Sometimes it works, but sometimes it has a real negative effect because if you send too many emails to an individual they might be upset and delete all of your emails rather than clicking on the link and read what you are doing.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

One of the biggest things that I've run into, personally since I've done so many different events from when I started to compared to what I do now. When I first started I was doing a lot of events for [REDACTED] and the adult industry, and in many circles my real name has been associated with doing things in porn, as opposed to what I do now which is more for kids. It has put a negative aspect to the things that I do, even though I have an extensive network dealing with real big celebrities to dealing with people in the adult industry. It has an effect from going to things that I do if they've known me for a long time, because they first think of porn, then they think of everything else that I've done. I haven't done anything in that industry, graphics or promotions, since 2010. The spam folders as well, if you do an event every week, depending on the company, it can have the effect that people will just show up next week because it's always the same thing. You've gotta make sure that if you're doing a certain even and it's big and huge you have to save who you send things out to. If people get it all the time they won't show up or care what you are doing. The source is very important. Mainly because a lot of individuals, regardless of which generation, they want to be associated with positive things, some of them don't care. If they have knowledge of what that person has done in the past they can look at it with a negative eye. Mainly because they don't want to be around certain things. So in my case, we have that

entire porn background and what I have done for the playboy mansion and the adult world, which helped me do other things, but a lot of them won't look at it because of the source. If a certain adult star tweets out a message to support a certain charity, people might look at the charity in a different way even though it isn't the charities fault at all.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

The hardest thing to do is to get feedback from anybody. It's something that I have done ok at, but getting them to even acknowledge what you did is very difficult. From what I've seen, if you make it so they have to do it, it's the only way that you can get good replies. I know a lot of people ignore feedback opportunities. It's really hard to even get that, because it's something that I've struggled with. I get paid from YouTube videos. I have 11 different videos, but the only feedback I can see are the comments that people leave on the YouTube channels. That's the only thing that I can see, and if people go to pages on Facebook or twitter and they leave comments. It is really hard for anybody to get good or bad feedback unless you force it. For example, there are ways that when you have an event there are click through on the very last page, and they can't submit a document without answering that last question it forces them to answer the question.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

A lot of what I have done, YouTube has helped because I have 11 YouTube channels and the viewership I have over 300 million views total of all of them. YouTube is very good at reaching the generation and the majority of the viewership are the 80's kids. Also, depending on who I have supporting me, Twitter has a lot of great things mainly because a lot of individuals don't like Facebook anymore and refuse to get on it. They don't like it anymore. Currently Twitter is the best to interact with. Sometimes I have good celebrity support in the events that I do by having them put the message out on their pages, and have them retweet things. It's easy to interact with a lot of people very quickly. The one had over 130,000 followers, which has a much bigger reach than if it were tweeted from just my personal account, which has maybe 4000 followers. It really helps out a great deal and great for reaching a lot of people quickly.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products

to Generation Y consumers?

The best way to sell is on Facebook only because we post an upcoming event, people will go it and see what you are selling but not go to the physical event. Then they will click the link to purchase something. It is really hard to do on YouTube because they will see the invitation and ignore it. It can work sometimes on twitter, but a lot of people there are cheap and will just look at it. In my estimation, Facebook is the best one to influence someone to buy something because it is more subtle.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

Social media marketing you gotta go into it knowing that not everything will work for everything you are trying to do you can't think that if you're doing an event that you can use the same context as everything else. Not everybody wants the same things. You have to really look at yourself and pay attention to who you are sending out to. Many people have their own focus. I can't send out an event going from a porn awards show to the same people that I did a [REDACTED] event for. You really have to know your audience, and then if your event is online then everyone can attend it. If you're doing an event in Miami or Chicago or LA, you really have to know who will fly to come to your event, or who is in that physical area. You really have to know your audience and you have to know who likes what. If it's a video you have to know who would like to see that type of video. You can't send a certain things to a certain crowd because it's not what they are expecting to see. You really have to know who will want to watch what, and why they want to watch it. You really have to think about your list. Your email list, Facebook, Twitter list, you have organize it depending on what type of event you are doing and how you want to set it up. Social media is open ended and people can come to it, but opposed to a standard marketing model, I can do it everywhere but not people everywhere can see it. You truly have to know your niche when you are trying to interact with people in social media. Once it is sent out, they can share it.

Participant Response for P3

Question 1: How would you define social media?

It's how everyone finds everything out. Everything I know I learn from social media. I find watching the news depressing so I never do it. Everything I read is because it comes up on my Facebook feed, or they came up on my Twitter. It's

how you communicate, learn about the world. It's like a book. I consider using social media to be RSS feeds, Reddit, all of that social media. I don't use Reddit. My dad and I both use completely different platforms so we both would say that we use social media. We use different things but we are both getting exactly what we are looking for.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

With my sister and I starting on YouTube, basically the more open you are, the more they want to watch you. People feel like you have personality, and you can connect, then they're going to watch my videos more than they're going to watch anybody else's. A lot of what we did that made us successful was we would make it so our viewers felt like they were there. There was a lot of behind the scenes. We would go to NYC to interview someone but we would record the road trip and all of that stuff. That is what gave us personality and "a character" that people connected with and our connection is all that you need to be successful using social media. Right now I do a lot of restaurants social media, I've switched over from celebrity to restaurants. Yesterday was veteran's day and we have [REDACTED] does free meals to veterans, so my managers sent us pictures of our servers and the veteran's because that's what made [REDACTED] more of a home and a personality and makes you feel like you know it. To me, when people are on that Facebook and see the things that make it more personal, than the average franchise restaurant, then that will be in your head when you are thinking of where to go to dinner. I am as engaging as possible and I give everything that I do. I have turned [REDACTED] into a personality and into a person. I talk to people on Facebook, I respond back. I like people's comments, I give away things. I have taken it from a place that you go eat to a place you hang out online. That started with my sister and I. People would email me and ask how it was going with my boyfriend because they felt like they knew me or they were my friends. I would go to concerts and do interviews and then I moved to [REDACTED] people would ask me questions about my life because I was an open book. The more open you are the more engaging you are and that's why people love you. That's why people follow people.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Giving things away and giving them an opinion. Everybody thinks they are right so having an open ended question on Facebook, is what I use at the restaurants but it's the same on twitter. "I'm going to a movie night, where should I go?" or

"which of these sauces do you think is better?" Whenever they can tell you what they think is when you'll get the best responses. If you just put out a tweet, or a Facebook post that says "yum these sauces are so good" you might get 1 or 2 likes. If you put out "which of these is your favorite?" you'll get a lot more because all they want to do is talk.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Just posting to post is the worst thing you can do. Posting to just post is pointless and no one will care. If I am a fan of someone on Facebook it's because I'm interested in what they're saying but if they're just posting these random things, 3 things a day to just be in your face, you're going to get unliked and unfollowed. If you're going to do that you're better off not posting at all than posting something pointless. "Oh this is so yummy" What does that do for your day? It means absolutely nothing. If you're not giving someone a reason to talk. We have a [REDACTED] and I posted a picture of myself yesterday holding 8 boxes of dozens of donuts. I wrote "I'm dropping these off at businesses today leave a comment below let me know where I should go next" or "nominate your business" I could have just posted "dropped off donuts" and it would have gotten a few likes, but adding that sentence at the bottom "nominate your own business" gave people a reason to look at the post, care about it, because then they want free donuts too. Adding that one line took it from not meaning anything to meaning a lot. Giving people a reason to comment on something and see that post.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

It's trial and error and has to do with the brand. I tried something with one brand and it got 600 likes and the same thing a week later with a different brand and it got 2. So you have to know your brand and who that brand reaches out to. So if you're a Harley Davidson brand you shouldn't even be reaching out to Generation Y. I have a teenage brother and there are things that they wouldn't even care about. So it's knowing your target audience, and knowing there are some audiences that don't care about what you're saying.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

They have to get something out of it. It is a very selfish generation, and if someone asks me to share and I'm not going to get anything out of it, I'm not going to do it. But if someone says "we're going to pick one lucky person who shares this picture and they're going to win \$100 gift card" then they're going to share it because they're getting something out of it. It's funny because 30 and 40 year olds will post something random and will share it on their page, but you'll never see a younger person doing that because they're not getting anything out of sharing that post. If there's a prize on the line or something that allows a strong opinion. A football guy got kicked out of a restaurant, I'd ask "what do you think of this?" If it's something in pop culture, then you can get a response on that because they like to give their opinion, but to get someone to share something they have to get something out of it or you will not get the shares.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

Facebook is the easiest, they live on there. I also think, we have a resort and we will post things with a hashtag and randomly have someone post a picture of doing something with this hashtag so it's really easy for us to track it because you can just search for the hashtag. Every post that has that hashtag is there, so it's really easy to track. Facebook is by far the easiest to get people to do what you want them to do.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

Twitter because it's only 140 characters so you're getting your point across very quickly. But I also think that people like pictures, Facebook the pictures are always there. I think pictures, rather than words, are what sell. The new twitter has pictures, but two years ago twitter only posted links which no one wants to click a link. So it's either Twitter or Facebook because of pictures.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

My biggest piece of advice is have a reason to say what you're saying and give them a reason to talk back.

Participant Response for P4

Question 1: How would you define social media?

To me social media is any application vehicle that is open source in the way that there's really no barriers to entry as far as conversation. It is a tool to connect people, find similar interests, and as well to use as a vehicle for marketing and promotion. Examples would include Facebook, which to me is more of a personal form of connection sharing pictures, adding opinions, sharing life updates. Another example is twitter, which I see as more of a news and update platform. It is where people find out about breaking news, where there is a lot of viral spreading of the tweets that are recent. Breaking news its' the place to position yourself to be an industry expert. Linked in I see as purely a professional place to boast about your accomplishments and to connect with industry leaders. The final example would be Instagram which is a way to share your life and your day to day moments through pictures.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

The only strategy that I've used is actually hashtags. When it comes to Generation Y, there isn't a strategy because when they smell it they smell a concept or idea they're quick to shut off. I think that's simply because they don't like to be pitched, there's a lot of originality there's a lot of coming into their own and when they feel there's corporate influence they rebel and push away. I think that using hashtags especially on Instagram and twitter is the only way that I see that they'll engage but it has to be something that is smart, quirky, original that isn't necessarily tied to something corporate. I've worked a lot in the capacity of Generation Y as far as the nonprofit component and I have seen that they love to get involved and be a part of something and they take it to be their own. It hasn't worked when it is tied to a specific brand because I see that when it is a brand they are more likely to rebel because they'd rather be in with the trends and see among their friends than to tie themselves to something.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

In the nonprofit component, long story short in September I produced a prom for kids with cancer and life altering illness. This year I added a component of a street team which was comprised of high school students from freshmen to graduating seniors and what they did was they went in [REDACTED] and handed out flyers so it was like the paparazzi was with them and it was open. The goal was twofold. To get people to the red carpet and to introduce them to the services that we offer, and then to promote one of our programs which is the love basket. Packed with nonperishable food items, and personal items. So the flyers had both

of those on there and with each person they met they asked if they'd like to honor something. By honoring someone it was someone who has or has had cancer, living or deceased. We'd take their picture and ask who they were honoring and hashtag #██████████. It is a hashtag that I came up with that is obviously demographically pointed but at the same time it is wide open as far as what ██████████ believes. It can be from world cup soccer to ██████████ believing in a cure for cancer. It is not tied to the sandbox specifically despite it being our mantra. It works exponentially well because the youth that we targeted as the assembly of the street team and the people on the street. Many of the targeted were like that themselves so there was a comfort level have used it ongoing in their daily lives. We've monitored and watched how to target the youth. Because with the sandbox specifically. When a millennial gets involved with a nonprofit their energy is so great that often their parents get involved. And for us, having a parent involved in a nonprofit means extra volunteer hands but that huge component of end of the year giving as well as during the year giving.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

I think one example is the Taco Bell example or did go because I haven't followed it, but that Taco Bell turned their back on their social media platform and went black to push their mobile apps and they had a hashtag with it and they were trying to make that trip. It is so tied to taco bell and a singular cause and themselves that it didn't take off. Another example is Kim Kardashian and her singular brand of Kim Kardashian, as of two days ago she tried to #breaktheinternet. A lot of people have viewed that as kind of a way to mock her butt. I think when it's so blatant and so consumer driven for a self-serving cause it pushes people away. I think when you are on Twitter and see what hashtag is trending it's linked to current things it is tied to Dancing With the Stars, Glee. Tying to things that aren't necessarily relevant but Millennials can own as their own. So there's a lot of PC millennial generation and them wanting to be original. I think when it comes to a component of social media when anything that is tied to something that isn't original like corporate branding they don't want to be a part of the big company, they don't want to become that. It's what they find interesting, not just a brand. There's too much originality and uniqueness within them to go down that path.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

I think the biggest problem that I've had is that they follow the rules but they make the rules their own. Just as an example with # [REDACTED] the girls that I worked with liked the hashtag, but wanted to make it different to # [REDACTED]. I asked them, in conversation it's not grammatically correct, and it doesn't talk about the community. It talks about a singular. There wasn't a rhyme or reason to it, but they didn't like it. When the campaign started they went behind my back and changed it to # [REDACTED] and we did find a way to overcome that, but I don't if it's rebellion or arrogance, or what it could be but I think as adults and as our generation specifically we are more rule followers. We have creativity but we know our boundaries. The millennials don't know their boundaries, they are quick to judge and they are quick to call something out.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

I think when it comes to motivating them it happens pretty organically. The thing about social media that is great and is also the world's biggest headache is there's really no filtering of it, there's no policing it and people are essentially behind a computer screen or a phone and the things they say they wouldn't necessarily say to your face. So you get the worst of the worst, the people who like to stir things up, and the best of the best which are the people who feel empowered enough to say something that they wouldn't normally say because they don't have the confidence or because they think they'd be hurt. Social media is essentially a megaphone for communication that way. I think as far as motivating millennials goes, the best way is to give them an opportunity to really kind of own their statements. For example, with the youth mentors that I've worked with I've tried really hard to carve out social media piece to be branded and that doesn't work. They just won't do it, but if we work together and collaborate they'll do it and they'll do it as hard as they can because they believe in it so much. So, I think the motivation piece is, as an adult or professional, is lowering your walls and embracing what they have to say. When you show them that you care and you want their input they get excited. At the same time, their excitement stays and then it drops. And I think it's because something shiny and new comes their way and their attention span shifts. So, overall, I think it's empowering them, actually having a conversation, listening to their needs and desires and what their opinions are and giving them enough rope to feel empowered enough to take a stand and get whatever is coming.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

Instagram hands down, without question. I feel like Facebook for the conversations I've had with Generation Y have been is they want to claim Facebook back so they don't feel like they're being watched. They like to showcase their life with pictures. Second to Instagram is Twitter because it's so much like text messaging. It's easy to do a quick update, your friends follow you, get into a conversation and that's where a lot of the people in Generation Y are on, which is twitter. Instagram 1 Twitter number 2.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

I would say the same if I'm selling, because if I'm interested enough in a brand I will follow them on Instagram. They would, in my opinion of them, if they see a product that is advertised in a way that is not selling to them more so day to day use and seeing it in motion. For example, Nike, and I'm launching a new version of air Jordan's if I see a well-dressed attractive person wearing air Jordan's and they fit with my style and with my demographics in the way. If I can picture myself in that way then I'd be more willing to buy that as compared to a more static traditional advertisement. The same thing with Twitter, adding in pictures and videos. If it's not blatant advertising it's more conventional product usage advertising it's much more beneficial.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

I think the biggest thing I'd like to share is the fact that there's a lot of brands that overthink social media. There has to be some sort of strategy, in the way of how are we going to brand on Twitter, what are we going to do on Facebook, should we use YouTube. There has to be a base strategy, but a lot of brands and a lot of people focus on the hard sell on social media. I don't log into Facebook to be sold, I do it to reconnect with friends and family and the brands I choose to connect with. I login to twitter to see what awesome blog posts are up or what is the news topic, what people are saying. I think because of that the vast majority of people on social media take for granted that they don't want to be sold. They want to be heard, they want to learn, and by positioning your brand as an expert voice as someone who is answering question and clarifying problems it's much more beneficial to put yourself in that light and post yourself in that way than to "sell sell sell." Especially with millennials they don't want to be sold to they want to make their own decisions. It's the same things with professionals but not in such an obvious way. They want to see what's going on they to get their questions

answered they want to get up to date with what their friends are doing, but they don't want to leave social media feeling exhausted.

Participant Response for P5

Question 1: How would you define social media?

It's any community online where individuals can interact with one another, it comes in many different forms and there's a lot of common features. The features don't define the social network, it's described as a community that can interact with each other online.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

To engage Millennials, breaking down what the subject and topics that they're most interested in and focusing the message around those subjects and topics. I think a lot of organizations make the mistake of going on social media just to go on social media, and they think their audience cares about it without doing any research. Similarly to what you said earlier, connecting market research, developing strong customer profiles if we don't have an audience yet, so that we can map out who our audience is, what interests them, what are their demographics, what are their ages, etc. If we do have customers, who are they, what segments should we address across our different channels, but one thing that is pretty specific to Millennials and to how businesses, in my opinion, should conduct themselves for the most part on social media is to be very self-aware and not be too serious. So, a good example of that is Progressive that has the commercials with Flo. They have a lot of commercials on TV with Flo, but they also use her as a huge social media outlet on social media to talk to consumers about insurance and create their brand in a very fun way in a very boring industry such as insurance. It's something that seems to be working with a younger generation. I'm not saying make fun of yourself, but I'm saying don't be so serious. Understand that it's interesting as companies we are pretending to be people on these social channels when we should be more aware than that and address that as we approach different topics with our audience. For instance, I just read an article about SpaghettiOs on Pearl Harbor day tweeted a photo of the SpaghettiOs character on Pearl Harbor day holding the flag saying "happy Pearl Harbor Day". That is Spaghettios being not self-aware on social media, that's kind of offensive and goofy and weird and makes no sense for them to be chiming in on the conversation. To actually address their audience they're trying to reach, they have to be more understanding of the conversations they're having, where

they're having them, and the right tone of voice. That is pretty key in having conversations with the younger generations on social media.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Basically, talking in their language. Not losing a brand voice, but specifically commenting on subjects that are trending in the community with the right bearing in mind. SpaghettiOs is a bad example of how to try to do that, and try to activate these real time moments. On a daily basis, having an understanding of what moments to chime in on as they fit your brand. The guidelines of your brand, but also what are of interest to your target audience and finding how to fit in there nicely. That seems to work and drive the most engagement, and doesn't seem forced like just trying to see what is trending on Twitter. It is an actual back and forth of talking with them where they're talking and having conversations. Larger conversations and conversations that directly refer to the brand.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

I think the least successful thing would be trying to sell too much. So, it seems obvious but not being honest with your intentions. It seems like a majority of businesses are on social media trying to having these worthwhile conversations and check content but all under the guise of getting more subscribers on their email list, to generate traffic to their website, to get more sales in the long term. I found that if you try to hide intentions in any capacity, then anyone, especially the younger generations can see right through the bullshit and get right to what you're trying to achieve. This goes back to being self-aware and your use of social media and being honest, up front, and real with your audience. In my experiences and watching other brands and businesses in the industry, that is what does not work is not being fully transparent.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

Keeping up with their behaviors and habits. Everyday there is a new channel, there's a new lingo in the existing channel, there's a new pattern in consumption in existing channels or brought on by the integration of new channels. That's the most difficult thing to keep up with. It's a full time job to keep up with where your audience is, why they're there, and why it makes sense for you to be there and how to join in on their conversations correctly. Otherwise it is forced, outdated,

and you're behind. I think it's really difficult to keep up with both technology as a business as a social space, but also specifically how teens and Millennials are using said technology and it changes really quickly and you have to be really agile.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

So I don't like the traditional idea of doing social content as much anymore. I think it's just getting very played out, but the idea of incentivizing people to take an action, regardless of age group but especially with Millennials really works. In my experience to get them to share a page, to sign up for a service, to refer a friend and send in a promo code and that process is all about making the incentive matched to both your brand offerings. It can't be something random. I think a lot of businesses make a huge mistake of trying to sell by giving away iPads or iPods as an incentive to like their Facebook page. That's just all wrong for any business. If it doesn't relate to your business than any incentive isn't providing you value. People will still take it, but they have no connection to you. First, understanding how the incentive relates to you, how the incentive is interesting to your audience, it's something they can tangibly take away or earn, making it a super simple process. If you're trying to have them take an action on social media or share photos on a hashtag, having the easiest system in place to ensure all the parts in the process have a plan. For instance, if someone is supposed to upload a photo and comment on it, you have to make it as simple as possible or people won't do it. So, offering incentives has been one of the best ways to motivate but there are a lot of details that go into getting those incentives just right. Maybe for some businesses, giving away an iPod might make sense but for the majority it doesn't make sense because, yes people will probably take the action and get an iPod from you, but if you're Coca-Cola, what does that have to do with your brand? If you're a local restaurant, what does an iPad have to do with your brand or offering? There's no connection there. So, you'll generate action but it's worthless. You'll get referrals, you'll get leads, you'll likely get their likes if it's a high value item, but if there is no affiliation or connection to what your business is offering, then those actions are worthless. So it makes sense that it somehow ties into what your business offers. That's when the incentives make the people feel special, and interested in taking part for the right reasons.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

Twitter is really up there because unlike other channels that everyone is using, you can really have that one-to-one conversation like customer service engine. It's a way to directly feed conversation with someone in real time that is shared with the entire audience. Yes, you can talk with an individual commenter on your Facebook page, but it's highly unlikely that they'll feel like they were featured or as special as if some brand reached out to them on twitter. The nature of the back and forth direct communication is wonderful for engaging Millennials. Also anything mobile focused that's doing well today is a great place to reach millennials. Instagram is huge, Snapchat is huge, although Facebook I haven't seen any actual data to prove that Millennials aren't using Facebook anymore, it's actually still highly used by Millennials but very much so on the mobile device. I think that's probably the main consistency across the channels to interact with Millennials is having a mobile focus. They're at school, they're on the go, they're doing this or that and they're checking out your app throughout the day instead of sitting on a desktop being on Facebook like they might have in the past. There's a highly mobile component to all social media that has helped scale it to the next level.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

I would say YouTube, honestly. I think video as a form of constant in general, which can be proliferated on any of these channels, but I don't often approach any of these channels with the goal of a direct sell but I think that YouTube has some of the bestselling power that I've seen among all of the different channels. I don't think someone can be convinced so much so that they make a purchase tomorrow from looking at a Facebook post, although it certainly has an influence. I see a much stronger correlation to a Millennial looking at a YouTube video, seeing how it's used, seeing how to influence its use, discussing why they like it or dislike it. Video has such a strong connection to understanding the ins and outs of something, any idea really, but specifically a product or service. YouTube is probably one of the biggest channels for driving sales and visibility that lead to eventual sales with Millennials.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

I think that in many ways social media is over hyped. It's my bread and butter but it's overhyped in a lot of ways. I don't think social media replaces anything, it just helps to support existing efforts. So, if I have a successful business and I'm not on social media, I could very likely continue to have a successful business without

social media. If I have a successful business and I start using social media actively to engage with my audience, I will likely have a more successful business than I would if I didn't use social media. So, I think that's really something important for all businesses, big and small, to understand that it's not a cure all, it's not magic. You can very well proceed on without it but i can certainly help to scale your efforts in a variety of ways that can be really impactful for your business, just it's not a cure all. A good example of this is Trader Joe's, successful chain of grocery stores, they're not on social media. There's been tons of articles and posts shaming them for not engaging their audience, there's all these different communities of Trader Joe's fans that aren't managed. I do think they would have a lot to gain on social media but they still exist today and to my knowledge they are still a profitable and thriving business without using social media in any capacity. It's really important to understand it's an important accessory not a necessity.

Participant Response for P6

Question 1: How would you define social media?

Content online that can be shared and go viral at no real production cost to us. You're not printing paper, flyers, posters, table tents. You're not buying radio time or TV time. It's basically free. The labor to produce the content is a built in cost with salaries but it doesn't cost to get it to your target audience.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

We post a lot of stories about student success here on campus and that gets picked up by their friends at their home town, their high school and gets forwarded and shared on their wall and retweeted. This probably a little more for the parents but we do also publicize faculty accomplishments so they know they're coming to a good school. Sometimes with the low cost of [REDACTED], they might not associate quality with it. So we are always trying to reiterate quality too. Those two things, when there's high school events on campus we spend a lot of time getting that out on Facebook and Twitter. They might see somebody they know in one of the photos, or retweet it or whatever. XYZ High school group is here today, just posting little things like that engages them because it's more about connecting with their friends. We are in the middle, sort of the invisible entity in between. We are not saying "Please enroll now" we are saying "Your friends are here doing something, isn't that cool?" And then they click "like". I like that it is soft selling and I think that they want to connect with their friends. A lot of what I do is trying to facilitate that. I worked in admissions for 20 years and that job is "we want you

to enroll" and you have numbers in the back of your mind all the time that you need to hit for enrollment, so your actions with students are all geared toward them enrolling. You also help students find another school if they're not a fit for us, but you don't do a lot in admissions in connecting them with friends except maybe at an open house. I think one year we did a Facebook "post your prom pictures", so that was more soft selling. "Oh there's so and so's prom pictures on our Facebook page". Mostly it's about delivering the message, here's your housing, here's your scholarship. It's all a call to action in admissions. That's underlying everything we do here in relations, but it's much more subtle.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

It has varied a lot. When we had a bad storm last October, I took a picture of somebody walking in the blizzard and it got 2,000 shares because it was such an anomaly. That was one example that got shared a lot. I would say that the few videos that I have posted, just the little iPad video with nothing produced or edited, 15-25 seconds at the most, those have been really popular. I took one the first day that we had horses in the arena and that went viral like the storm picture. I have to watch on that one though because of the licensing rules about music. Though it'd be cool to take a video of the choir group warming up or singing a valentine, then you get into licensing issues. So the videos have to be something more original and organic that we own. Horses running around the arena was fine because we owned the content. It's homegrown. We don't repost things. Everything I post is original with a few internal exceptions, where I might repost something from athletics, but I wouldn't say they're huge successes among the Generation Y. The alumni day we did was huge but it was all alumni.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

The really dry information, like a flu shot, you won't get any likes or reposting on that but we post it because it's important. I need to deliver that because it might be of interest to parents. But still, if I type something in it will be more popular than just sharing links with no message tied in. I really studied that and know that if I go to another post and just share it I will get very few views and no shares. But if I type "Look what [redacted] did from [redacted]", the sharing will go up. I think that they want to know that a human typed something in that instead of just clicking "share". Then what I do is use Hootsuite for my scheduling, and it's spelled just like it sounds. So I go in and when I know events are coming up I will schedule a reminder. So if the [redacted] are playing at the [redacted], I just go in and

schedule all of them for the semester or the year. I feel like those are fairly successful because they have to do with entertainment, they are usually at night or on the weekends. It's as if I'm their concierge, I'm telling them fun things to do. They're not hugely successful but they'll get a couple of likes because they have friends in that group or they go there anyway, so they just like being reminded. So, I think another story that was really popular lately. When [REDACTED] got teacher of the year in [REDACTED], people really like to be part of that congratulating people on their success. It reinforces the underlying message that we want to get across. "You are going to a good school because this kid went here and he's teacher of the year". So, it's subtle that way but it reinforces their choice to go here, or to be a recent graduate.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

The biggest thing that has come up lately is the music licensing issues. Even now on the live streaming we have to shut off the video during parts of concerts due to licensing permission and we don't have a way to tell people "this is being shut off because of licensing" so it goes forward with the audio only so we were looking at "how do you tell people that it's not a technical error or us falling asleep at the switch", it's a legal thing as to why we can't broadcast this music performed live. So when that gets on our YouTube channel, people will see this Swiss cheese video where the audio keeps going but the video goes on and off. So, right now I would say that music licensing is the only big issue. I mean, everything else that I post is good news, so I don't get into the hard news. There's nobody unhappy because I posted something that is negative. We stay positive about faculty and students, positive about alumni and basic information. I'm sort of their concierge to send them to do fun things over the weekend. I don't have any problems other than the video problem but that isn't my problem. I have to watch it if I'm out with my iPad and there's six kids practicing for the concert, I can't just film them and post 20 seconds of that because I'm aware of the licensing issue so I can't do that. I'd say that's our number one problem. Everything else is received positively.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

Prizes. The biggest thing we've done is the hockey game that we sponsor once a year. In that package we get so many free tickets so we found out some rules on that too. You can only give prizes, as a [REDACTED] state auditors rule, but you can only give prizes to currently enrolled students. Now that we know that, the contests are limited to current students. So, our contests will be "Come to our

office dressed up in [REDACTED] gear by noon Thursday and we will judge who has the most spirit and that person gets a free ticket". Before we had faculty and alumni, but now we know we can't give prizes to anyone but current students. The spirit one was really successful, the kids threw on everything they had that said [REDACTED] on it and came over and has us take their picture and post it. Everyone that is a student or faculty or alumni gets \$5 off that night and this year it will be Valentine's Day, so we are already starting some chatter about that. Everybody gets \$5 that is affiliated with [REDACTED] at this game, so we are starting to get some low level chatter on that. I'll have to tap into some of the students in our office to get some more ideas for contests, but that's the main prize we offer. We don't go out and buy prizes, this one just comes with the package. Sometimes just asking a simple question, which is risky because they could answer with something off color, but something like "what did you do over Labor Day?" just asking a question. I've noticed that on my personal Facebook page and 3 people will like it, and maybe 1 will comment. If you ask the question like "What's your favorite Mexican spice?" then you'll get like 10 comments and a bunch of likes. I feel like people love to be asked a question. I don't do a ton of that, just because I don't have time and I always try to think of what's the worst possible answer someone could put and how long will it stay up there?

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

The only two I use are Facebook and Twitter. I know that [REDACTED] uses Instagram, but I haven't gone there yet. Basically, time limitations that kind of thing. I feel like the students don't want us to go to Snapchat, and some we just don't belong on. We are pretty conservative, institutional we aren't trying to be "hip". YouTube, Facebook, Twitter. I don't see the overriding benefit of Instagram because I can post pictures on Facebook or Twitter when I'm on campus so I don't see the benefit of opening another account. Email would be the least successful way to get the message out to them.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

You can get a lot more content in Facebook, but Twitter knows that they don't want to read a lot of content. I guess Facebook over Twitter because you can do photo albums, you can post links, you can post video, you can post more text than on Twitter. I just think I hit a milestone the other day, when I hit 7,000 likes on our Facebook account, and it was half of that when I started.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

It's a moving target. We are aware of all of the different options that are out there, but everyday a new one is created. It's keeping your finger on the pulse of what's happening. It helps to have students working in the office because you'll hear them talking or see them using an app that you haven't heard about yet. If they think about it they'll tell us we should be using it. They don't think about a new app as anything different, it's just how they communicate. We do tap into their experience as a student and since they work here you don't have to go through formal, human subjects. "What would be a good way to get the word out about this?" and then just brainstorm with them as part of their job. So, I think it's just working on a train that's going down the tracks at 70 miles an hour, it's not static. We weren't using hashtags at first, but now you use them and it's just staying up with what is going on in social media and keeping on top of it and staying current.

Participant Response for P7

Question 1: How would you define social media?

That's a great question because it was going to be my first comment. Especially when you're looking at millennials, I think part of the issue is that as the generations get younger, or as your studying younger generations, they don't think of social media as social media, it's just there. I think what happens is people who are studying "social media" or are talking about social media and treat it as a thing or a sector, they don't get it. The individual who sends a photo via Snapchat to their friend because they want their friend to see what they just experienced isn't thinking to themselves "Oh, I just went on social media to share a photo". They just shared a photo, it's just part of their DNA. So, I think that the issue is that trying to define social media is the issue. Social is no longer necessary to define it as it would be to define, communication. You wouldn't say "I'm going to communicate today using telephone vs I'm going to communicate today using email", you just do it. So, that's my non-answer to the question. When we talk to marketers, and I spend a lot of time talking to people within the industry, when industry professionals say that they have to have a mobile strategy, what I tell them is, you have to get beyond that. The user, the consumer, they're not thinking of it as a mobile strategy. They think that they happen to be away from their laptop or iPad and they have their phone in their hand, which is always in their hand, but they're not thinking "I've got my mobile device". We stop thinking of these things as things, they just become part of our being. So, understanding that they're just part of the being and that they'll continue to evolve. Will it become wearable? We don't know. We don't know what the next evolution is, but I think,

certainly with the millennials, and with the younger generations, especially those who have grown up with these things, they're not defining them anymore.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

What we always try to do is think of how consumers, whatever age group they might be, how they might be living their life. We don't necessarily think of how they might be shopping, but how they might be living their life. So, we tend to use, with the Millennials, we will use digital solutions that have gamification as part of the solution. Because they want to be entertained. The interesting thing about the millennial generation is that they have a very short attention span, and they have a short attention span not only with what they're paying attention to but in their career. I'm old enough that in my generation, if we moved job to job every two years we were called job hoppers. This generation looks at it as experiencing different things. It's the same way with how they are using technology. It's not surprising that the millennials are moving away from Facebook. It's not that they necessarily dislike it, it's that they want to experience new things. So, this whole idea of short attention span, entertainment, we build it into our strategy. We are constantly changing the way that we are reaching out to the millennials. Not assuming that once we have them on one platform that they're going to stay.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

The way that we are reaching Generation Y, with respect to shopping, because that's the business that we're in, is selling CPG products. We are using technology called ibotta, which lives on your phone whether it's Android or iOS, which means it's immediately focused on mobile. It allows us to reach the consumer when they're in the aisle when they're in the store, it uses geolocation to know where they're located. We want to reach them at the decision making point. And then through gamification, it asks them questions and it rewards them with cash that accrues onto a gift card. You've got the gamification and you've got the instant gratification if you will through this accumulation of cash. The only way that they get it is if they actually buy the product and take a picture and upload the receipt back to ibotta. It's our highest redemption rate of any program that we use and the social media aspect of it is that one of the ways that you earn the cash is by sharing with your friends or through the social media network of your choice the fact that you purchased the product and earned cash on ibotta. It takes all of these things, all of these attributes of what the millennials are looking for and puts them into one program and it's working tremendously well. Someone in my

generation, would say "really? You've gotta go through all of this to earn 75 cents? You gotta take pictures and upload?" but that's because we have to think about it, and we have to say "I have to use the camera on my phone and press this button" whereas Generation Y they just do it. It's just so natural. For them, you're not asking them to do a lot because they take pictures of everything.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Asking them to participate. If you ask someone to do something they most likely won't do it. If you say, "Take a picture and post it on Instagram of you enjoying the product", most of them won't do it because, my experience is that generation doesn't want to be told what to do. They want to experience it but not be told to experience it. I think a lot of companies think that hashtags are great. We will provide a hashtag and people will do it. The reality is, when things are spontaneous, and when you provide the platform and the technology and the experience but you let the individual make it up on their own, and make it spontaneous, then it's going to work. When you ask them to do certain things they tend to reject it because they don't want to be told what to do. There was a great book out once, it was poorly written, but it was a good concept. It was called Chasing Cool, and it was about companies that try to become cool. The reality is, you can't become cool as a brand. The consumer will determine whether or not you're cool. It's the same thing with social media. The consumer is going to determine whether or not they're going to participate, especially the Millennial. You're going to get the 38 year old mom who posts in Pinterest because she wants to win a \$50 gift basket, yes she'll do that but the Millennial won't.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

We believe, and we've seen statistics, but we believe that about 3/4th of the people, especially in that generation, don't believe what a company has to say no matter how transparent you are. They don't trust companies but they trust other people. What's interesting is that they'll trust strangers over a company. Think about it on your own. If you're going to buy a product, and you google that product, the first thing you look at are reviews of people you don't know and hear what they say. If you see two or three negative reviews, who are written by strangers that you never met nor will never meet, you'll turn off on that product and never buy the product. If the company says it's great but three strangers say it's not, most people, 3/4ths of the people will say they're not buying it. What we try to do, instead of advertising, although we do advertise, but instead of spending

a tremendous amount of money on advertising, we spend a tremendous amount of our budget getting other people to talk about our products and provide their opinions. The more positive opinions out there, friends or not, the better chance we have of our message resonating with that generation.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

Being honest and being transparent. We have grown the brand tremendously over the years and it's not coincidental that the brand has grown as I've spent more time online, and I mean me personally. Part of it is strategic, and I'm an older guy and I don't hide that fact. With the millennials, I'm not trying to be their buddy and use lingo like "hey that's rad" or "that's awesome". I'm using my voice but I'm being honest and transparent, and what I have found, because I read every response and I read what people are saying about me is there is somewhat of a refreshing point of view that someone, at my level in the company, is willing to talk to them and not try and be them, but be honest with them. I respond to everyone. By the way, I respond to everyone whether it is through social media or not. So, a lot of the times, because I'm out there on social media, I get a tremendous number of resumes that are unsolicited for job openings that we don't have. Every single person gets an email from me saying, "Sorry we don't have it good luck on your career". I mention this because they go back on social media and say I'm a cool guy, responded to an email that I sent him. It is uncommon and what I think about is, I used to want to be a reporter so when I was eleven years old and moving from one town to another. I wrote the local newspaper and said "I'm moving to your town and would love to know as much information about your city" or some crazy eleven year old statement. They printed the letter in the paper, and I thought to myself that it was the coolest thing ever. Forty years later I remember it. The point being is, people just want to be heard and know that they're being heard and they want to know that there is real people behind the company. With social media, I always say it's the best time to be in marketing because we are allowed to have a dialogue with our consumer. Social media should never be used as a megaphone, it truly is this ability to have a 1:1 conversation with your consumer. The beauty of social media is that that you're able to let everyone eavesdrop on that conversation. By doing that you create this authenticity that has been missing for a long time from many companies. It only hurts companies that have, in essence, it will hurt companies but it really is magnifying companies' problems that are there inherently. It isn't causing the problem, it means that the company has a problem, or the company isn't honest, or they aren't transparent. So it absolutely can backfire, but all it's doing is really magnifying issues that already exist.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

Twitter, more so than Facebook. I think Facebook has screwed themselves up. Facebook decided they wanted to be everyone to everybody and they will wind up being nothing to anyone. Facebook, in my opinion, will become AOL. I think you're seeing it. Less and less people are using it, and certainly the Millennials are getting away from it. I think that Twitter works really well, however, I think it's a very narrow group of people. I don't think it's as widely used as Twitter would like to think they are, but those that use it use it a lot. I think that Instagram is another area that communicating with Generation Y really works. Facebook has to be careful not to make Instagram Facebook. I think because more and more people try and be visual, I think Instagram is used a lot. We're not currently using Snapchat, but I watch it continue to grow. I'm really interested in it, and then you've got all these crazy new sites. Like Yo and Yik-Yak. We're always trying to figure out which is going to be the next big one, but I don't think that's what you're going to see. I think as you move forward you're going to see anyone one major platform, I think you're going to see a lot of smaller ones. It's going to allow you to be closer to your friends, you'll find that all of your friends are using one, and that's where you'll hang out. This is no different than what we did 30 years ago. You hang out where your friends are.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

Well, I'm going to play semantics, because I don't think you can sell to Millennials. They buy, and I think that's a mistake that a lot of companies make. If you try to sell to Millennials, I think they'll walk away from you. So what we try to do is have our story out there, we're really big about story telling. The storytelling may come in a form of a photo or a review, or on something that we're doing as a company. I feel that our job as marketers is to make sure that the information exists, so that the Millennial can make the decision to buy. If they feel that they're making the decision on their own based on information that they've gathered, their loyalty will be greater and their willingness to share their positive experience will be greater. If you try and sell them, I think you risk them rejecting you and rejecting the message.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

Being in the food and beverage industry, it's great because everyone eats. It is the topic of conversation, "Where'd you eat, what'd you eat, how did you enjoy it?" We are at an inflection point at how people are eating and they are changing how they eat. They don't eat meals necessarily as much as they used to, they snack more whether it is 3 times a day or 5 times a day, and the people today in America seem to be more and more conscious, maybe not concerned, about what they are putting in their body. Social media, with this idea of sharing all the time, it's a really unique experience. If you think about it, why do people take a picture they're about to eat or that they're halfway done eating. The answer is, we don't know, we don't know why they do it. What we know is, they do it. And so, I've stopped trying to study the "Why". Some people think they're being narcissistic, other people think they're lonely, but why do so many people want to share so much about their life, and yet we talk about privacy more now than ever before. The answer is, it's a total contradiction. We don't know why they do, so I think what I love to share about social media marketing is to stop trying to figure out the "why" and stop trying to figure out the "what", meaning what will they do next. Just understand that people utilize these platforms and as long as you're able to provide the platforms for sharing and that you're providing the story to share, let those that want to share figure out how they're going to do it. If you try to figure it out ahead of time, you're probably going to miss it.

Participant Response for P8

Question 1: How would you define social media?

Well, to me, social media, what makes it different is that there is some sort of engagement involved with it. There's some way of interacting with your audience while your audience is able to provide feedback in some form or fashion. That's what makes it social versus just sending out information and not getting anything back in return. Email was sort of the first type of social media, but I think people right now these days are more familiar with Facebook or Twitter or YouTube.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

Well, what I've learned is that I can't just spit out information. Originally I looked at social media as a way to spit out information but instead what I've learned is that I use primarily what I like which is Twitter and Blogging. In Twitter, I might call out a specific person's Twitter handle to engage them in conversations or if there is an interesting article, I look at several people's handle to see what they think and that helps engage in the conversation.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Adding Twitter handles of specific people who are more influential or who are interested in the particular information, knowing what hashtags are popular with certain types of information and what hashtags are populated by groups of people. Then, delivering the same information a variety of ways is something that I try and do because people deliver information in a variety of ways and the information sources are always changing as new things come on board. So, I also strive to send the same information several ways with tailored messages for those particular social media platforms.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

When I would just constantly be sharing information and I've got tools to figure out when my followers are on Facebook or Twitter. For a while I was kind of like a robot and delivering everything out. Granted, I do get a lot of retweets or shares from that because those people are online at those times, but they want to see a person behind it. So what doesn't work most of the time for me is just spitting out information constantly acting like a robot and, for instance, if I wasn't responding to replies or thanking people for a retweet I would notice it dropping off again. Partly how I have done that is by calling out specific Twitter handles just to mix it up a little bit and ask questions. Ask people what they think, or not sending tweets on the hour, but doing it randomly. Some of my most successful tweets are when I'm out in the field and it's something really timely that a producer wants to know about and I take a picture and it gets a good reaction. Or when people retweet, I might say something to try to get engagement as well.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

I don't know that I have seen any issues when I've tried to engage them other than the time factor of me not taking the time to be on social media. Right now I'm spending more time trying to figure out how we evaluate engagement and so forth. We have to report everything. That's probably the only other thing is direct messages you sometimes get nasty things showing up or people sending you nasty things so you have to block all of that stuff. Lack of understanding the effectiveness, for me I understand that it is effective but the key is how do we

report that. Our administrators and the people funding it want to see, "ok if we are going to be spending time doing this, what is the difference it makes.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

We haven't done any campaigns where we are offering any incentives. We tend to find that very timely information that is going to impact their health or production, whether it's a farmer or crop consultant in the ag industry, they will retweet it if it is that timely. They'll share it if it's that timely. Also, popular press picks it up and puts it on their online newsletters too. For me, it comes down to the timeliness of the information as the biggest factor.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

For me, in agriculture, I have found that Twitter and blogging are the most successful for myself. For some of my colleagues in food, Pinterest is huge as well as Facebook because food is a lot more visual and so Pinterest is a big platform. It's important to know who your audience is and where they're at. For me, Facebook hasn't been as dynamic except for our top consultants because they're more familiar with it. I've had more farmers send me direct message questions on Twitter because they don't want their other farmer friends knowing what they're asking, but they're used to Twitter. It's really interesting how different people use different platforms.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

Twitter and blogging and also websites in general but we get a huge response with Twitter. My ultimate goal with social media is to drive people. I work for extension and we are unbiased research based and we drive people to unbiased research based information. They have the opportunity to choose any information on the web and I want to drive them to our information and choose our information. So, Twitter is a really good way, as well as a blog, to driving them to the blog or to the website.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

First of all, know who your audience is, who are the influential people? The people who have the followers who the peers are listening to who are the target audience. So you can call them out every once in a while. Not all the time but every once in a while. Know what hashtags you should be using in the tweets. I found I always want at least a hashtag and a link in every one of my tweets. Calling out someone as well. I see a bigger response from those types of situations. Knowing when my followers are online so I can target information to specific people at specific times.

Participant Response for P9

Question 1: How would you define social media?

I would personally define social media is it comes down to an online resource that people use to connect with other individuals. It is as blanket as that.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

The biggest strategies are to use pretty intense graphics or raw photos. They don't have to be professional stock photos, but very authentic in the moment. Those seem to poll really well. Sometimes an almost snarky tone tends to appeal. The thing about Generation Y or Millennials, that snarky tone pulls them in. Sales pitches, or having an end goal of selling, has to be pretty creative with it.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Be very authentic. That comes across in any type of social media post that you put out there. It doesn't happen to be perfect, but it shouldn't be overly professional. I needs to be very real very authentic and show personality. Use the same language that you would use day in and day out. That's the biggest thing that some people get away from. They think that in a professional setting or in a business you have to use terminology. Use language like you were talking to your brother or your mom. That's the quickest way to break apart and to be authentic.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Be very corporate or stoic. If your attorney loves posting it will be terrible.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y

consumers on social media?

Things change quickly especially with Generation Y. Some people are on Facebook for a while, some people are on Twitter then they go over to Snapchat or Instagram. That generation is switching and changing it. They're changing things quickly. It's basically trying to catch up with them.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

The biggest way to motivate them is speaking their authentic language but giving them an incentive they can relate to. If you give them a \$10 gas card, nobody cares. "Hey, here's an opportunity to win an iPod or iPad", something with technology. Something different that they can identify themselves with, that tends to push the more. The biggest thing is to show them some kind of value. "Hey we want you to do this" here's something you'll get right off the bat for taking that action. There's no secret to finding out what is an appropriate incentive, but the biggest thing behind it is it can't be skimpy. A lot of times in social media, especially in the beginning, was "Here do this for \$10". You really have to give them some great value to get them to take action on it. Even an opportunity to win something, the percentages might be low but having the possibly to win something great can push them. A lot of businesses, when social media first started, said "hey we will give you a little bit of cash" nobody picks up on that.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

If you want to do it organically or the paid side. On the paid side, you can really define the ROI with Facebook or Facebook apps because you can target based on interests, behaviors, or anything else you can know about them. Organically, it's more on the Twitter or Instagram side. Small percentages of people, or small percentages of Generation Y are jumping off Facebook but you are talking in [REDACTED] alone, there are a million people on Facebook. How that breaks down is 30 and under, I couldn't tell you exactly how many of them. Even though some are jumping off, the critical masses are still there and you can interact with them.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

Facebook without a doubt. We don't waste our time on anything else. It is tough to monitor other ones. You can do some things on Twitter, but it is so much

harder to monetize. Facebook right now is the best app platforms that there is online or offline. Facebook knows everything about users. If I want to target 18-25 year olds that live in the south part of [REDACTED], that have two dogs and are married with a kid and are registered Democrats who donate \$10,000 a year to a charity, I can target just those people.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

On Facebook, it is changing. If you become to "salesy" Facebook will stop showing your post, and this is changing in January of 2015. That will get shutdown then, so it is meant to give true value back. Things that they can take away, things that they can do for free without having to buy your product. Give them an inherent reason to follow you, those types of things. After that, I think one big change taking place is Generation Y. The other side of it is to not fall in love with the sex appeal. One example is Google plus. A ton of people jumped on Google plus, but it never took off. It's basically dead now. It has some uses as a search side of it, but it's not all that great. Snapchat is hot right now, but I'm waiting for Snapchat to figure out a way to monetize itself before you try to move into a big player in Snapchat. Foursquare was one of the predecessors to Facebook and Instagram. Don't fall in love with the sex appeal, but fall in love with where the critical mass is at. When the critical mass shifts, then be on that new platform. Very rarely are people successful when they jump on a new platform right off the bat. It takes a lot of time, energy, effort, everything that goes into it to establish a brand on that platform. If nobody jumps ship along with you then you just wasted a bunch of time. I guess don't get your ego caught up in "I've gotta be there."

Participant Response for P10

Question 1: How would you define social media?

Social media has been around forever. If you look back into the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's, we had the Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club. It's a gathering of where people get together. High School, colleges, chess club. You can name it, it's just a place where we interchange. Now because of the advent of digital we've been able to reach across the border. It does not have to be an eyeball to eyeball exchange. All it needs to be is connected in some way, shape or form, and you're connected to the community, that you can consider part of your social sphere whether that be family, friends, or in some case, business.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

You use the term Millennials is an age group, but I tend to think that Millennials are Millennials. I consider myself a Millennial, meaning someone who is actively engaged in a different way than what we have done before. This means using more technology. I think that's what it is, but if we are using it as an age group, I call it the four "E's". First you have to get engaged. You have to be engaged. Using the tools or methods or technology that people are using, that's the first. As Sam Kinison once said, go to where the food is. You're living in the desert. The second is educate, it's about that inner exchange that goes back and forth about education. You educate me, I educate you, and together we both grow. I think that is a big portion of what social media is about. It's a better understanding of what we want, and what we need, and how to better give it to each of us. Then comes the excitement that occurs when you have that. Through that engagement and education leads to excitement. That, I think, people become brand evangelists is the next step to that. Where they are actually brand ambassadors for the company or for their friends or network.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Listen. That's the best way to describe it. There's a lot of people saying, it's all about relationships and it's all about listening. When did that ever stop? Now people are finally discovering that's what it is. For years, companies forced people. Some sadistic bastard created the 800 number and forced people into contacting us between 8-4, punch 1 for this, 2 for that, 3 for that. None of that works, nobody likes that. It's about listening and being human.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Treat social media engagement like you treat advertising, it is not the same. By and large, advertising is vomiting up information and intruding into people's lives to draw attention or raise a flag and say "look at me". Social media is not about that, it's about engaging. I have a saying, "if content is king, activation is queen, but context is the kingdom". It's the failure to take the information and its activation and put it into context is the biggest failure.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

I haven't had any if I'm being honest. It's probably because I'm part of that. I'm not part of the age group but I act like it. It's probably being that I don't always adopt everything, and I'm a little bit more rigid personally in my own habits than maybe some people are of that Generation. That causes me to say that something sucks even though I don't use it. It's just a matter of that I don't know what I don't know.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

It's giving it the context. Meaning, a brand is nothing more than a promise delivered. If I'm delivering on the promise, which is what they want the way they want it, and they're going to be fans. They're going to feel comfortable referring you to others. You deliver on your promises, that's it. I mean, nothing special, nothing different, just deliver on what you say you're going to do. Based on that, people respond. It's making like you, or more, making them love you. It's making yourself so indispensable that they don't want to be without it. That's it.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

All of them. You can't say one, because for some people it's still Facebook, for some people it's Instagram. I think they tend to migrate and there's not one dominant channel. I think that's probably what we're learning. It's like how there's not one channel to deal with Baby Boomers, it's not just emails. It's not just mail, it's not just telephone it's all of the above. Those days are done because we have more choices is all. You only had one way to communicate with us for a long time and that was by yelling at someone. Then we invented radio, print, then we invented television. All of those were the new thing.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

I think you can sell everywhere. The bestselling is by referral, bar none. There is no better sale than by a referral. Go up to a plant, and I did this once, where I had a label company where I looked down at the floor plan and you wouldn't believe the number of cars that were red. Well, maybe it was because it was [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I started talking to people and I went out in the parking lot. "Well my friend had one and I liked it so I got one, and then I told my friend" So that's pretty cool. So referrals has always been one of the best ways. You need all of those things, whether they do it by voice or by email or by phone, Snapchat,

Instagram. You need all of them. You're going to spend your time finding out where your customers are at. It could be one or two that are more dominant, but more that they aren't. I look at LinkedIn as your business card on Main Street, it's the sign that you hang out. Then Twitter is more if you're sitting at your front porch and people drive by and yell at you or wave, but they don't come in. We have a conversation as we go by. Facebook is more of the people that we invite inside. Instagram is my photobook that I'm sharing with the world, it's my old fashioned photo album. My old fashioned slide set. In each of those, we could go on with Snapchat or jive, or all of these subsets, and each of those has a different role. I'm going to go where they people are. If you're a good marketer, you're going to sit down and figure out where your customers engage and what you can do to integrate yourself into that community in which then have them help you. That's what you do. It's probably going to be more than one. It's not like you need to spend a lot of money either. Now that all being said, Wal-Mart, I have a good idea of the millions that they spend every year managing their community. It is significant but they're a trillion dollar company. When I was with [REDACTED], my budget was 17 billion dollars and people would say "[REDACTED] it's only \$20,000" and I would say "I don't know where you're from, but \$20,000 is still \$20,000". There's my belief that it's about the context. If it was Walmart putting something into context in a show it becomes much more engaging.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

On Facebook, it is changing. If you become to "salesy" Facebook will stop showing your post. A lot of people believe that you can't sell via social media and that's simply not true. This is the internet this is digital and there are no real rules. You can do that and you can sell. A lot of folks think that you can't scale inside of that. I know that I've participated in Twitter campaigns where we've sold \$400 million worth of product in the campaign. I know other companies that sell multiples of that into the billions and they move it based on social media. Marketing is nothing the inception of the idea all the way through customer satisfaction. So, social media plays a major part of that and we are finally realizing this is about customer relationships and managing those communities. It's a big place.

Participant Response for P11

Question 1: How would you define social media?

My definition of social media would be any way to consume media that you can then easily share and influence other people. So there's the traditional channels that are considered social media channels, but I also think that blogs and different types of forums, websites, are all kind of social channels. It's pretty much a way to share information in a social setting. It's more than a published source like a newspaper, I wouldn't necessarily consider a news website a social source but if there's a blog that came off of it from one of the writers or some other kind of content that you can easily share and create opinions or sentiment, whether positive or negative. It's kind of a little bit of everything. I think there's the traditional social media channels but I think that people forget that there's also web influence in blogs, just ways to pull and share content that is less in the realm of social channels but still have the task of sharing content and crowdsourcing information.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

I think that strategies to engage Generation Y is to first understanding who Generation Y is and how they want to be communicated to. A lot of my job and a lot of what I've done, I enjoy figuring out different ways to communicate and evolving with them. So, I think there's still benefits of using different channels to accomplish different goals. A lot of people now in this generation don't want a lot of text and they want short captions and they want photos, so I use tools such as Instagram and Tumblr to reach that group where they see content and maybe they stop and look at it and engage it and reach the caption and click the link to click through. Using social channels to communicate how they want to be communicated to. They want short hand, they want things that are maybe not fully do this or do that. How do you create tweets or content that their friends will share and be influenced by their friends, we found a really good way to get people to do things is if a friend asks them to do it, or bring a friend, or do something to do with someone else, they are more likely to do it then just to be told what to do. It also just adapting, there's ways to use new channels come out like Snapchat or YikYak, and some people might say don't use those. If that's where your audience is then it's where you should be. If it makes sense for the objectives or your goals then use them. I use channels such as Snapchat to run contests and to do engagement, but I don't use that channel to push news because it doesn't make sense because that's not where they're looking for news. I can influence and communicate with this generation with YikYak, it's a little bit different because it's more everything is anonymous. So maybe they don't know who I am, but you can influence and explain things. The biggest thing with social media is to get some of those brand ambassadors or students their own age to influence them, so

if you can connect with a group of students with high influence rates, maybe they have high clout scores or they have lots of followers or they have a good reputation on campus or within your organization. Having them push messages or share messages or including them in creating the content is really big right now. I think, right now it's important to get these influencers who have just that, influence, to create content for you or to consult on your content. Most of the time they are that age so they know what is popular and what is cool, but also being able to create content quickly and see what works and change it. I think that's where social has done really well for some companies and not so well for others. You have to be completely willing to try new things and be able to pivot quickly. I think the Oreo example at the Super Bowl a few years ago is a great example. They could pivot, they could go real time and put something out there. I think in the past, a lot of people have taken too much time to get things done. Students are, this group don't want things that have to be well thought out. They want things that can just be done and done quickly and are usually humorous or things they can talk to their friends about. That's kind of the benefit and the best part about social media is if you can get them talking about it, then you may be having a bigger audience without spending the money like you would on a traditional ad.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

It's hard for me to answer that just because I do so many different types of things where success is different for me but I think the big thing is just reaching the audience where they're at. Work with them, so a big success for us currently is Instagram to create really cool visuals that people look at and like that they can interact with and it's very passive and it's easy and it's a way to not only interact with them not only from a pushing a message but also receiving from them their attention. Posting their photos on their behalf, or including them in our own streams has been super successful and getting those users to create content that we can share like celebrities or they feel famous for their 15 seconds of fame is really successful.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

I think the least successful is just, personally, being too planned and not being more real time. Trying to plan out huge things that, you know, maybe take a lot of time and they just don't have a lot of success I tried a few things where I wanted to get their attention during something where they were really already distracted at. I

tried to do it during a football game but they were already so distracted with the football game, that trying to insert myself into their conversation was really difficult. I didn't see as high of a success that I had at times. I've learned that you have to adapt and try things out even if they fail. You have to try them out at different times or tweak them slightly so they can work. This group is really distracted and busy and posting things at 9 in the morning they probably aren't awake, or in class, so putting things out at night or at times that make sense instead of times that are convenient for the person posting the messages.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

I think part of it is making sure that they want to see the message. I think it's often times, we try to tell a certain audience we want them to do X, but they don't care about it all. Making sure that if you want them to see it that they'll want to see it or care about it. There's lots of messages out there that you'll see but probably ignore, but if you can tweet them or add an image really helps to get them to at least look at it and stop and think twice. I think a lot of time we time to push all messages the same way on every platform and that does not work and this audience knows that and they don't listen to it.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

So there's kind of two ways to motivate. One is to incentivize, so is there a simple prize that you can give them for doing something? Is there a way that you can share something that is customized to them? If they do "x" we will send them a nice photo that is customized for them so they can share it and kind of feel more important than just a simple photo. Giving out prizes and or some kind of recognition has really helped. Other incentives to get them to talk about is to just surprising them, instead of saying "do x" or "do y" we just show up with something and get them excited and then we had better success with them talking about by kind of a tactic called "surprise and delight". Using that tactic we've had success because they're not expecting it, versus telling to do something to get something in return. So, depending on what we have as a goal, surprise and delight works well but also having some kind of prize and or reward or some kind of exclusivity, going to an event early or getting something different than their friends or other people, motivates a lot of people. So they are more willing to participate if they have the chance to do something that other people can't.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to

communicate with Generation Y consumers?

I think Generation Y still has a little bit more work to do because you have to do a lot, instead of just pick one. With other audiences it's a bit easier, like with elderly people or people my parent's age or a small kid that is a little bit easier to concentrate on. I think this group is still very fragmented and it's very based on psychographics and demographics. We see huge following on Facebook with some of them still, which most stats are saying it's declining but it's not the case in all situations especially when you're dealing with this group internationally. Facebook is still number one. Twitter and Instagram are our two highest use and where we put the most focus on reaching this group. Again it's tailoring our messages with our tweets are written how they want to read them and using engaging photos that want to see and or that they're creating. So creating that content. Also, it's a little bit special with us because we are specifically working with college age so Snapchat has worked really well with giving out messages really quickly and getting a lot of eyeballs on it. I can't measure how well, the click through rate is, or how well they do something, but I can tell you how many people saw it. That is pretty awesome in some situations where they see more snaps than they would ever an Instagram photo or at least liked an Instagram photo or did the liking on it. That's where I put most attention. There's always YouTube and Tumblr, depending on demographics and psychographics. If I was trying to reach this generations female, there's also Pinterest and Tumblr, but I think that wider audience across Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat is a little easier to measure.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

I think that if you're trying to create brand awareness, I think Instagram is great for that but it's hard to get them to do anything because you can't click on the link or have them leave the app. I think brands that really want to get people's attention or show products, or entertain, I think Instagram is awesome. I think it is only going to get bigger, only going to get better. People love photos they love that easy digestible content. They can do quick videos. I think that's where we've seen success with Vine and Instagram. I think that if you actually want them to do something, I think Twitter is where it's a high priority because there's links and ways to get them to easily complete a transaction or an objective. I think Facebook targeting messages, if you have the budget and are willing to spend the cash, there is still a large audience on Facebook and in my opinion they have some of the best targeting tools, where if you really know your audience you can drill down very quickly with a paid ad. You can directly see how successful it is and add more money to it or tweak it very simply. That's where I think the benefit of social marketing, unlike traditional marketing, if

it's not working you can change it early enough where you aren't sacrificing too many dollars or having to wait on a full cycle like you would on traditional media. If you have a lot of information on your audience I think Facebook is helpful. I think if it's depending on click through, Twitter is helpful. I think YouTube is great to create brand awareness and get people to see and live your brand, and then you have the opportunity to click them through to a website or some kind of transaction. I think also pushes people.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

I think it's something that is interesting that some groups depending on the industry, are still saying that things are emerging. I feel that it's no longer emerging, it's where we are at. You have to adapt and to be ready for it. If just now you want to start a Facebook page, or just now you want to start a blog, it's still will probably be successful if you do it right, but it's no longer an afterthought. It needs to something where you put a lot of attention. I think we are going to start seeing trend wise, in regards to transactional marketing, so if you actually are saying "click here, download this, do xyz" social media analytics are only going to become larger and larger as they either are practiced learning that and or full on jobs, measuring its success. I think it's very passive and people understand it and kind of do it but don't do it to the extent they probably could to see a return. I also see on the other end, where maybe you aren't transactional marketing but you're still doing that customer service arm. I look at brands like Nissan or big companies spend a lot of time on social just doing customer service and making sure the customer is happy. They make not be able to measure the exact if it sold a car, but they can measure if they get less complaints or are more people being serviced and get a good sentiment as opposed to a negative one. That's somewhere that social media might not have a direct return or transactional value, but it's necessary to be part of the conversation because that's where your audience is talking about you. So, my final thought is it's only going to get bigger and I think more very specific roles within the industry of social media marketing and experts will emerge and these individual niche parts of it as opposed to somebody that has to know everything, I think it's going to get too big and it's going to very hard to as successful doing all of this by themselves. I'm hoping to C suite will start to see that and start to reallocate some resources from across their organization to better support and use social for a way to build their business.

Participant Response for P12

Question 1: How would you define social media?

I think I'm thinking there is the platform in which you use social media and there's the actual social media that flows through that platform. I think with social media it's a way where there is underlying the sense of having a sort of engagement with people that, hence the term social, is not just broadcasting information but a sense of engaging interaction with people. They will be like on Facebook, where you're interacting, Twitter you're having conversations. People can send in replies and when I think about all that social media that includes any kind of analytics, there's usually a section on there where it measures what kind of engagement. How many people respond or click on something. How many people share on something? It's the old clout score where they go through a range of social media to find out what's happening on there. You're not really considered an influencer unless something is happening as a result of your doing something.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

Specifically about millennial groups? I'm thinking of like some of the groups that I've been an administrator or member. Several Facebook groups of which there are a millennial portion as well as other age groups. What I'm thinking of is whenever I put something up there, there is always at least two criteria. One is that I make it very visual and even if I'm referring back to a website page or something I will personally upload a picture related to that so that it is a very large engaging picture and I make sure it is something that is interesting. I may even put some words or something on it. Also, the second point is I try to think of something other than the "what's in it for me?" where it's not just a tidbit of information. "Here is something you can use or something that would make your life better, or make you a better professional". Those are kind of the two criteria no matter what age group I'm doing it with. I use those types of methods.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

I spoke to a class of Generation Y on this subject and the thing that probably, I would say, it was probably giving people a sense of their own possibilities of what they could do and learn and share through social media. To realize that, say, for example, in this one class we actually had a hands on period where we could discuss the benefits of social media where they can reach out and do it better and telling them how to do better images so that the last time the class was taking pictures and doing things to them and putting them up on social media and sharing them. I think that was a lot of fun because it was a sense of learning and a

way to extend their learning but it played into their own tech stuff. They were taking pictures of them and the person they were dating and putting words on them and sending them out. They'd post on Facebook, "Look what I learned how to do in class". I think, again, just let them utilize their own special skills and to realize the power that they have with that.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

I would think that things that for this group are much more interactive, hands-on, things that don't realize a long attention span. I would say any time I've tried to do something that is long and involved, that it has been the least successful. Too many words.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

I think the thing is, probably, it's more of the interaction helping someone than trying to just talk at them. You have to realize, I use social media a lot but I'm also 68 years old. These are people that could be my grandkids, so with that, there's a little bit of that dynamic going on as well. Working with the younger people that fit into that area, and it's kind of more of a mentor stance. What I've done is that is most effective, again to help them learn, I think they also feel if that old lady can do it so can they. What I have found is the most helpful is to meet with them one-on-one, having them bring their computers, have them do as much of the stuff as possible so they are actively engaged. Having grown up with this, even if I've worked with two people at the same time, one is watching paint dry while I work with the other. I try to meet that person's exact needs and tailor it to their needs and be respectful of that. It's not like, here is the whole deal, where are you at and where do you want to go? Let's get started, and not tell them what to do but be a sounding board. I think that has been the most helpful because people have gone away empowered. They are very busily doing things, while we are together. They're not quite sitting there while I'm doing things or showing them. I'll set it up where they've got their computer, I've got my computer and two screens and we go from there. That to me has been the most fulfilling, and seeing them pursuing their own goals.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

This is an example of, maybe not exactly what you're looking for, but I've worked with one of the professors on campus and trying to get people more information about what extension is doing, and things and the possibilities on the registered dietician nutritionists. What we are doing in the dietician class is to do a type of community learning and I offered to take some people on and let them do a blog post for me on my blog. So these were people definitely under 30, I had about 10 of them that volunteered and what they did was the idea that really appealed to them because it was very hands on. They could pick their own time when they could put it together and basically the only criteria I sent was how to make a food and nutritious point in it. I gave them a recipe database. They did a marvelous job and came all prepared and loved it because they didn't have to show up somewhere except for the two hours they spent with me. I put it up on my blog and in turn they got to call the shots about what kind of feedback system they got, and were encouraged to use social media to promote what they have done. It was a fun experience because they were using their technological ability to contribute to a project. They were rather amazed that they were doing things like this as a dietician and doing it in a professional setting. They were also able to use their own social media skills to promote what they've done. One guy did a post which had national visibility which was bachelor food. He had maybe 49 likes before he left my office just by posting it on Facebook. It was something that playing to their strengths to give them a project that let them be actively involved, but was not a research paper or dedicated to following somebody around for a long time period. It was actually doing something that played to their strong suits but they learned something by putting it together.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

I think you can't lump Millennials all in the same group. A recent experience was to participate in an ongoing Twitter chat, through the [REDACTED] foundation and one of the topics was Millennials and there were a few Millennials on the panel. I think one of the big differences is that some of the technical skills that millennials have, as far as wanting to move forward on doing some of that, and I think there's a sense of sometimes, older people that they work with don't necessarily have those skills or understand them. There's this whole kind of, coming to a common ground, if you will, because in a sense people move so fast. They've grown up with things. I think there's a whole different language going on. I finally posted on there, and people favorited it, and you had to say that older people to learn something new will have to learn something old. Maybe that doesn't make sense to you, but I think the whole technology thing is one of the deals that really separates people out a lot, or can separate them out. I would use Twitter.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

If I were selling people something, in a sense, I guess I would try to group them first, and actually, with that specific group. I have a nephew that is a Millennial that I can do stuff on the computer much more than he's ever tried. So, it varies so, but I would probably point at a specific group that he was interested in. Maybe it was a 4-H group, or something. I would simply ask them, which way, how would they suggest to get some of them the early adapters and innovators, influences, to help with this? Then, go through that method to see. Again, I think you have to target it into your group and decide what you want. I'll give you an example, I have a group that is made up of Generation Y, and they're all on, maybe Snapchat or Instagram, and they follow the Instagram that they do. If they send out a message about a meeting, they write down when the meeting is and where it is and take a picture of it and send it out on Instagram. That was the thing that they told them they would like. Again, I think I would really tailor it to that group. Maybe with another group, they would come up with, "Oh let's have our own special hashtag and get on Twitter and do something and communicate that way". For example, someone suggested in the same group that had Millennials, in order to get onto Twitter and share messages, let's just use this common hashtag to send messages to each other and retweet. I would check with that specific group as far as what they want. If I wanted to influence them, there would be more buying if they helped structure how it went instead of creating steps and telling them to follow it.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

Another fun experience that I was a part of and the kids just did a great job on was like talking about a commodity group, and we gave them fact sheets on different statistics and things about this group. It was a livestock type thing and we gave them some basic information as to how to make iMovies and gave them an iPad and it was amazing. They learned through doing and they made some fantastic videos that they were thoroughly engaged in what they did. They went above and beyond and learned the material while working with it instead of us standing up there doing something. I think it's that, plus they got to work in groups which they are used to doing. It was a fun experience because they could stay busy with it. A key to whatever you have is that they want control over what they are doing and they have a lot of ability for it.

Participant Response for P13

Question 1: How would you define social media?

I think that, initially, when you say social media they say Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, all of those things that are online mediums, versus traditional newspaper, radio, print. It's beyond just as ad. People think of social media as conversational, back and forth, multidimensional, not just "here's an ad". I can actually comment on that, have an opinion on that, have a dialogue on that. That's what happens in the social media aspect as to what people think of traditional advertising. Social media has been around for so long now that it is considered traditional, I think, but I would use that to separate it from television, radio, and print, or whatever was used prior to the internet.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

I've been in this position for 7 or 8 years, and when I first started it was at the advent of social media. What I do is recruit alumni into the community. We have the Facebook page, and Twitter, and job opportunities out there. We put events about the community and we thought that it might be better at engaging that particular generation than a postcard campaign. Most people, myself included, get a postcard in the mail they throw it away, they don't respond to it. I think what we've also seen as it's matured, you used to send people these e-newsletters online and people have the same reaction to email as they do to a postcard. It's junk. It's to the point now where there's going to have to be different strategies in social media because you're having the same problem. For us, with our Facebook page, and our Twitter account, it seems to be a great way of letting people there are job opportunities in the western part of the state to help us recruit. We had a bond issue in [REDACTED] for our Facebook page was important to reaching a demographic that we knew we were going to need to reach in small towns in general. We knew that the older retired people would be more resistant to it because of the property tax issue that we face in [REDACTED] so that's only way we can pay for our schools. So what we knew was that we needed 18-45 year olds, every person to get out to vote, because we knew the older generation would vote but we would use social media to engage that particular demographic. "Yes, we know you are for this issue but you have got to get to the polls. You can't just not vote on this particular election." That was one of the most effective ways to motivate that demographic and to let them know about it versus sending something a postcard, or renting a billboard.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Just exactly like you said, it's been one of our most effective ways at engaging the younger generation versus perhaps traditional means. I don't really have numbers or facts or figures that I can tell you. We had a yard signs and we would distribute yard signs and people would say they wanted one. Without a doubt it was all the younger generation, and it gave us a pretty strong feeling that people wanted yard signs in your yard. It's a big statement when you have a yard sign and not everybody wants that. That's how they would contact us, was through the social media page not through phone numbers or the school website. That worked very very well for us in that particular element.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

I think for us with the social media piece it wasn't just information it was a nice mix. If there was something positive in the school we pushed it out there as well. Just to kind of get people that more well-rounded flavor of, this isn't just about a building but about the activities within the building. I don't know that there was anything we pushed out there that would would say wasn't successful. We kept it very positive, I don't think people needed the negative remarks so we just didn't engage in that kind of conversation.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

On social media? We felt that was our most successful pieces of the campaign and I don't think we saw any issues or roadblocks. It was so easy to do it. I know what you're asking and I haven't experienced anything like that.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

We tried some things like, if you voted early take a picture of yourself voting early with your "I voted" sticker. We hoped that would catch on but it didn't as much we were hoping for. People still went and did it, they just forget to get the picture of themselves voting at the clerk's office. We had several people do it, or even say "I voted" but they didn't put the picture on there. They would comment, but wouldn't take the extra step. So, as long as they even commented it was OK, but it would have been nicer if they took a picture of themselves if they voted

early or at the election. I just think not everyone is comfortable about the voting, it was more personal, but it was being engaged in a whole different level. I don't know that the majority of people were as comfortable with that as they were just commenting on there.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

In our part of the country, in rural [REDACTED], people don't use Twitter a lot. We connected our Twitter page to Facebook and it didn't seem to catch on. We had maybe 1,000 followers on our Facebook page and it just caught on really quickly. I think Twitter is more reserved for the urban population, if you look at maps it will show that Twitter on the whole, in the country, is not as much as it is other places. The high school students use it, but even they don't utilize it the way other people do. That was kind of mostly what we used, was Facebook, and because we knew most people in this part of the country are the most familiar with.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

In this part of the country, it would still be Facebook. From a recruiting standpoint, I use LinkedIn. That's a different aspect I think I have over 1000 connections on there. I'll put a job out there as a strategy on my LinkedIn account to let people know we have positions open in [REDACTED]. If they don't live here, it's just a way of reaching out just as much as the community.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

I think it's like anything, and I find it with myself, and you find what you're comfortable with. Then, although still maybe Facebook is good for some and not for others, I think that Facebook is actually being utilized now more by the older demographics than the younger demographics. That, I think the 40-60 year olds have gotten very comfortable in finding information on Facebook and most of the 18-25 year olds have moved on to something else. That something else seems to change every 30 days, maybe not quite that quickly, but I also know that nothing else has really taken hold as much as Facebook has. They've managed that they've adapted, and found it hilarious, tongue and cheek, that on LinkedIn you can have your cover photo. Twitter did the same thing when they added the cover photo, they were mimicking what Facebook was doing. Whether or not Facebook will go away and something else will become the next great thing, they've been saying

that for years, but I think that 18-25 year olds might not be on Facebook as much as the 30-50 year olds, but I don't know what they're utilizing. Instagram, Snapchat, but it seems like every three months it's a new thing. Nothing has had the teeth in it that Facebook has had.

Participant Response for P14

Question 1: How would you define social media?

So, I would say that social media is what traditional media was to a whole other generation, except it's a two way street. There's a lot of resources and networks where people can engage with one another without leaving their house. That's never been done before so it's pretty much putting social into media, which has never been done before until the age Myspace and bloggers and everything else.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

One of the strategies that took me, I consider myself a Millennial, but I'm on that older side of it, so one of the strategies that took me a while to really want to admit that I had to do was using their lingo. The 140 character speech. Working in journalism, I really want to be precise and offer a long formed thought as to what's going on. However, you have to think in little bits, we call it "snackables" or "bite sized bits of information". That's one thing that we've done is really try to, for lack of a better term, dumb down what we are trying to say so that it can be written in a bite size way. I think some of the other things is to stay on top of everything. If it's 2014 and a business or a band or a group is still promoting their Myspace page, there is a problem. I think it's about staying on top of it too, there's a couple new Snapchat, for instance, I use it personally but not professionally. I'm staying on top of it by seeing where it's going and seeing how we can incorporate it in to what we do. It's sort of a twofold, by being in the moment but also being ahead of the moment with those Millennials who are using those social media apps that are not yet mainstream for lack of a better term.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

I would say the biggest strategy is, I'm going to try a new strategy here, is observing hashtags. Twitter, Instagram, and to some extent, Facebook, but seeing what hashtags are being used and how we can incorporate our message into that. My world in social media, is actually split. I work for a newspaper company but I

also volunteer for a nonprofit and do a lot of marketing and communication work for them. Trying to do the same thing in both worlds, except in one side it's reach out to Millennials for news and on the other is to reach out with our message from the nonprofit. So, by digging into what they're doing, seeing what hashtags are trending and what's popular and what they're talking about, that's really a strategy that I looked at and has opened up a whole new column on different hashtags that they're using. I'll find one or search for a couple hours to see what's being talked about, and you can find so much by just searching clicking a hashtag and seeing what it is about. Maybe it's a goofy TV show, or it's Alex from Target or something like that.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

I guess with that, I could also really incorporate, again, hashtags that don't work. Something that, I can't think of a specific example, but there are times when you are looking at Twitter and you say "This is cool we can jump into this hashtag or trending topic". Then you try to, and it's too late. We have seen examples where, a lot of the award shows, fans will jump into hashtags and it's so irrelevant. J C Penny and the Winter Olympics. That was completely irrelevant yet they thought they were cool by doing it. Definitely have some small little fluffs. Maybe not me personally but people in my company have had small little fluffs where they're trying to be trendy, and it just hasn't worked. I say that probably other fails in strategy is maybe not jumping on board with some social media resources soon enough. I look at Tumblr. We didn't nothing with Tumblr until it became more popular and then once it kind of died off with the Millennials, we were like "Let's get into Tumblr." We were probably behind the boat and still do it, but it's for the people who use Tumblr who see our stuff and it's not as effective as it could have been.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

Dinosaur superiors. People who are, the managers or the editors or the folks who you answer to, not understanding that we need to do it now and we can't have 6 or 7 or 8 people sign off on something before we go and do it. Social media is right now. 40 Years ago, doing a newspaper ad could take a couple of weeks because you had enough time to plan it but today, a tweet or a new type of post on Instagram, you don't have time. If there's a trending topic and you want to be on it you have to do it now and have the blessing of your supervisor and not have to have everything preauthorized or preapproved. That will definitely be one of the

bigger hurdles, is dealing with people who don't get it, or people who work in the industry or your office and do not understand the immediacy of it.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

The one thing we use is, and I've used in the nonprofit world, is rewards. The first person to do something, or the first 50 people to sign up we will put your names in a drawing for whatever. That has been a big help to getting and drawing in Millennials. It's cheap silly things, like a t-shirt. Another thing that our company does is from the Marketing Department, but it's a competition for singing competitions. The more votes they get, obviously, the winner but the specific hashtag for it and we encourage them to use the hashtag and use their High School's video and try to promote the message on their own. The prize for them would be whatever the grand prize is but it is definitely incentivizing them for doing something. Even clicking on a link, or registering for something, the first person to register by 6:00, we will give you something. It's sort of that instant reward that they can feel good about doing whatever it was we had them do. The other thing on that really quick is uploading a photo of themselves. We will have a hashtag "# [REDACTED], upload a photo of yourself and we will post all of those photos into an album." Millennials love seeing themselves so they upload the photos and put it in a gallery and they share it which gives us more traction online.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

I would say, in the past couple of years, or the past year or two, it has definitely been Twitter for Millennials. However, we, in fact just this week we were discussing how we are picking up our Instagram channel and really trying to offer more into that. We have seen the younger side of the Millennials move more to Instagram. The Twitter users for Millennials are probably my age to the 20's, and anyone underneath that we are looking at Instagram users. The Facebook crowd are 30 year olds and up, but Twitter and Instagram are the two. Snapchat is something that we just don't know how to use professionally, but we are trying to figure that out. That would be the one that definitely is on the urge of taking off, I just don't know how to make it take off for what I do professionally.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

I would say, if I was selling a product, because in some senses I do sell product, at this point and time I'd probably still say Twitter. Ask me in 6 months and I'm sure my answer will change.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

I think in terms of Millennials, in the world of social media, I mean a lot of people think that Facebook is dead or dying. What's actually happening is that they are using Facebook, but they are not using it until maybe college when they want to what we have all done with Facebook, is use it to connect with people from your past. They're not using it as actively because there are so many other channels available. It's not dead in the water. I know that there are folks who use Facebook, and we are looking into this, there are brands who use Facebook who create a group for people, Millennials or whatever age group, to have their own private discussion on whatever it might be. They are seeing a lot of success with that project. So, I don't think the problem is that there is more and more social media channels, so it's not about any of them dying, it's about figuring out what groups of people are moving to them. Even with Millennials, you might have, and I don't know the numbers, but you might have a lot more girls on Instagram because it's easier to share pictures of whatever TV shows they're watching or whatever they're doing. Maybe guys are on Twitter because there's more sports news on there. We are starting to really hammer down those kinds of metrics, based on gender, even based on dividing the Millennials to 20 somethings and the teens, and maybe the early 30's. How they're using the individual channels too. Maybe 5 years ago it was clear cut, "Everyone on Facebook post your videos and you're good to go" but it's not that way anymore. Even YouTube can be considered its own social network. Millennials love commenting on videos, watching videos and doing whatever they have to do to share their messages. That's part of it too, is giving a message that they want to share and then responding to them. Not just making it a one way street.

Participant Response for P15

Question 1: How would you define social media?

How would I define social media? In a word, consuming. It's one of those things where you go into it expecting it to be something casual, and it just has taken over everything to where it can swing very quickly being useful and being a hindrance.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through

social media?

For example, there's a lot more people that I've discovered in the last year, I work a lot with comic conventions up and down the east coast, and they tend to do better with Twitter and Instagram and hashtag. Hashtags and pictures reach younger people a lot more probably because they enjoy looking at pictures of themselves or seeing pictures of things they are into. I didn't understand the hashtag at first, but once you get it down it's like throwing a net and seeing how many people you can pull back in. With regards to Facebook, that's been harder. I've tried a couple of different gimmicky things, like "if this page reaches so many likes we are going to give a prize", or a drawing. It's almost like a carrot and a stick and it doesn't necessarily work. Some of it doesn't work. The youngest of the bunch will hit "like" just because they're suckers and they think they can get something for free but they'll never come back to the page again. It's not, to me, a valid connection because they're looking to win something and it's the last you'll see them. People older than that, they're not into gimmicks because they think that you're going to harass them. They don't want to give you their information, they're more guarded about stuff. Literally, of any that I've done, any success on Facebook was with a comic convention from people wanting to know what was going to happen at the event.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Most successful, within the last year, on the non-profit side, they've done well on Facebook. Doing online fundraising. You can put up a picture and they can tell a personalized story, something people can relate to and share and like. Even if it's just spraying the message and educating people, that's worked out well for the nonprofits. That brings in a lot of money. On the business side of it, again my mind is on conventions right now, most recently, about a week or so ago we were trying to drive extra traffic to the website for the comic book store. We went on their Facebook page, it wasn't so much of a contest, but people like to have their voices heard, so we put up a picture of five different characters and said "Which character do you want to see on the next postcard?" People clicked on the link, went to the site and voted. So that's of numbers, but was it on the competitive side of them? I don't know. Was it something interactive that, and was the things that could get to their opinion tends to attract them.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Every new person that likes this page, then we will draw a name at random and they will win a prize. That has failed on more than one occasion, and it's unfortunate because you see a lot of businesses doing it. That's the only reason I did it is because I saw so many others doing it, thinking it must be a great thing but it wasn't. We tried it with two or three business and never had any success with that. Again, you're just trying to drum up the number of likes you have and the amount of traffic and those people won't see anything. They'll click to try to win something and if they don't, they're done with you. They could care less.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

Definitely, across the board, with Facebook and Twitter look at its maturity levels. When you're trying to communicate with someone or trying to present something a lot of people, I'd say, and I've seen some in their early 20's down to teens tend to not think before they type. It's very hard to communicate or get a point across when you have someone that's being ignorant or name calling. Not enough life experience there. When you have someone completely missing the point, what's the point of putting that much energy into it?

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

Like I said, it all depends on which, because I've dealt with multiple business types. If you're doing fundraising, if I'm doing something for [REDACTED], it's the personal touch. It's the, tug at the heart strings. You see people post a picture to help a dog at the humane society. Something that is going to get someone's emotionally involvement. Then they'll usually stick with it, they'll donate something, you'll hear back from them business wise, I don't know what the magic formula is, but the most successful with people in that age group, has been the convention stuff and I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that it's something that particular group has an interest in to begin with, or they wouldn't be there. They are all seeking a certain product or piece of art or autograph. You're giving it to them but asking them what do they want to see next? What do you want your next event to have? I think it has definitely grown the conventions that we have done. Some people just go in, count the money and leave. This has been a group that has spent time, not just hiring somebody out to put up posts for them like a lot of businesses do, they'll hire a social media person to randomly put up articles or to keep the page fresh. We've actually had more success being present, if that makes sense. It's not just someone we've hired to do it, but it's one of us is actually the one doing it and if someone has a question we immediately answer it

and talk to them honestly and get their opinions and actually follow through on their feedback. It's reciprocal. Doing that we've jumped from under 1000 to over 6000 likes. That's cool for a small show, we aren't San Diego. All the vendors that are there are all the same small business owners with us at the show for years. They know it's going to be solid and good. They know we are in constant contact with all of these people and they're going to make money. Sometimes you get artists or store owners who do the show then they leave and do another show someplace else. These are with us every time because they know whatever way it is that we have attracted them in, they don't do a big mailing anymore. They used to do a big mailing with postcards, but they give them out in the store. Literally all of the communication about this convention takes place on Facebook. It's incredible.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

Between the channels, right now the one that probably has the most younger, connections with, would be on Twitter but even that's starting to fade, which I find funny. I feel like the youngest people are, they don't want to be on the thing that their mom is on. People started out on Facebook until their parents joined so they went to Twitter. Parents found Twitter so they went to something else. My daughter is 16 and a half and I can't keep up with her. With her, now it's like if it's not on Reddit, then it doesn't exist. Probably six months from now that will be gone. She jumps from one to another and it started out where I did a lot of blogging a freelance writing too, and so, from a fangirl perspective, I worked Twitter hard. More business stuff on Facebook, and fangirl stuff on Twitter. You get a lot of the people with the hashtags that have a common interest, and so they seek other like-minded people out and where there is a handful of younger people, the youngest ones that I have on there that tap into, aren't even from the United States. I'd say my 18-30 are from the UK and Australia that are fans of the shows that I write about that talk to me and ask questions and read the reviews, they aren't even from here. Almost all of the 1200 people I have on there it is all hashtags. Twitter is now where late 30's to 50's are on there because they see it as the hip thing to do, and I'm one of them. They're on there they hashtag every TV show now. For years they didn't know what it was, it was a pound sign, and now, literally, you can't watch anything on TV, a commercial a show a movie without something scrolling across the screen to go online and talk about it. It's not 18-25 that is sitting there doing that. I don't know what it is, it's literally gone from young people to the other direction.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products

to Generation Y consumers?

Probably the biggest thing now is something like Groupon, somewhere that they don't have to talk to anybody or communicate. They don't want to deal with salespeople just look and say "here's a deal", buy it and go. It's almost like the internet has eliminated the need for face-to-face sales. You're not going to get any personal connection. So anything you put out there has got to speak for you right up front because their attention span is about 3 seconds. They're going to look at something for as long as it takes for their thumb to scroll. Whether it's Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, it's as fast as the thumb scrolls. Every now and then, their eyes focus on the picture and jump in and "oh what's that?" Whichever one you use, it's got to be, across the board, something that will catch their eye. Whether it's humor, a touching photo, or whatever, but anything gimmicky, big sales, they don't even care anymore because they know they can jump on Amazon and find the same item at ten different places for different prices. The world is their oyster for shopping. It depends on what type of business and what you're selling. I feel like, for me, it's starting to go the other direction. I think people are getting tired of it, and I guarantee that in the next couple of years social media will become something else. It started out being that thing and now it's different. If I was a business owner I wouldn't put all of my eggs in social media, I wouldn't you know this, you get on Facebook they have made it where you had to start a separate account for a business page or a personality page, so you turn around and open up those and they have the Facebook official address and even if you turn around and have a lot of followers, only ten percent of what you post goes out in the newsfeeds. That's what you get for free. Then you have to pay, or pay for an individual post to bump a post, it doesn't necessarily go in your market so you have people who blindly pay for it. That's fantastic that your ad is popping up on pages, but the the pages that the young people are ignoring anyway because they don't go on there to look at ads. You don't even know if the ad is even in the area. What good does that do me? I'm not going to frequent that business. It's not going to help that business owner, no one is going to walk into their store if they're not from that state so right off the bat, even trying to do anything other than using Facebook for a billboard. It's a mobile billboard, just information that you want, make it pleasing and beyond that, to me it's hard to get a solid connection with somebody.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

I feel like celebrities are going back to flip phones because of accounts getting hacked and privacy being invaded. The iPhone 6 is carrying a computer that

doesn't even fit in your pocket. It's hitting a point where people are starting to get nostalgic of the days where you didn't have to be. I mentioned earlier how it can be a hindrance, it's just you end up becoming a slave to social media. I know this because I'm an addict and I try not to but if my phone's not connected to me, and the only time it's not is when I'm asleep. The first thing I do in the morning, and the first thing everyone in my household does is wake up, roll over, tip the phone like it's an alarm and you go see what message you missed during the night, or what news did you miss while you were asleep. What great post did I miss, what great ad did I miss? Who cares what happened at 3 in the morning? Yet we've all become, literally a mind meld and we are hooked on it and you see so much of that over the years and it swings I think my generation, generation X, is looking at the beginning of all this started. We were the first video game generation, the first at home personal computer generation, this is the one that started all of this but it's at the point to where now when we look at our kids and say that they are completely missing out on their childhoods. They're overweight, they all have diabetes and they are missing out on so much. Social skills and personal skills because they're all the time on their electronics. I truly feel like it will to start to swing the other direction where people will do better. I have seen small business owners around here do better because they still held on to that personal connection, that face-to-face, that you know, "come into my storefront". For a while there internet shopping did away with that, but I think it's starting to come back. I think that people are getting tired of big box stores monopolizing things, and accounts getting hacked. In time, who's going to stop that and going to talk to someone face to face or on the phone, or get people out of their house for a while, will get a bigger sale on any product being able to speak with someone than you would just buying it online. Or seeing an ad on Facebook or tracking a hashtag on Twitter. Sure, there are some business that it's great. There is one convention we go to, the [REDACTED], the guys who did the [REDACTED] one, their convention this October, turned one year. It's two guys from [REDACTED] who started podcast because they're fans of the show. No different than what I do when I post a recap, every week they do a podcast. They got this great idea, "Wouldn't it be fun to meet the stars?" They put up a Kickstarter page, and right off the bat they are using social media. They were able to fund their first convention. Had almost every star from the show at it. They made enough money that first weekend that they did 6 more shows this year. They are in New York this weekend with the entire cast of celebrities. [REDACTED] is \$100 for an autograph, and there is a line out the door for three days because what these guys did, and they advertise their convention. They have a website but they do all of their communication on Twitter. They managed to tap into something with that age group, completely and totally. Again, that's genre specific, that's for

something that fans look for. Fans following a band or following Star Trek or whatever. I think if you're offering something like that, something entertainment, you'll do well with social media. It's something to talk about and it's all fans talking about it. If you're trying to make a living with your business it's not going to happen. I've seen too many doors closed because they relied too heavily on that and tried to keep up with the Jones'. Putting their money in the wrong things and it just falls flat, but it depends on what you're trying to accomplish.

Participant Response for P16

Question 1: How would you define social media?

I would explain it as social media isn't anything that is new at all, it is just something that is a different way of communicating. So we are taking the same type of stuff that we do, and have done, social gatherings, etcetera, and putting it into a new medium. At least that is what the outside should note, because that's what lures people into it. People think they are going to have some type of substitute, augmentation of real interaction. To some degree, I don't think that's necessarily been the case. So, outwardly, it's supposed to be a digital representation of social interaction. Inwardly, it's the devil. I'm not a huge fan of it, it's probably useful in some ways, but you can't tell me that it's better than anything else. What's it trying to capture? People's attention that is waning at best?

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

Well, I think that the the Youtube stars, the Vine stars, have shown that if you can do something that is amusing or engaging, or oddball or something that is just completely different, you will have your 15 minutes of fame. The ones that my daughter shows me with the fat dad off of Vine, that guy is doing something that is no different that other dads interacting with their kids, he just took it to the next level. A little bit of minor production value and it was shared with the world. I told someone a year or two ago, that if you can't think of something funny every so often don't bother with Twitter. If you have news, if you have access, that other people don't have, you have something to say that is worth Tweeting about. If your life is as boring as everyone else's and you don't have something unique or aren't fast off the cuff, you're probably better off doing something somewhere else. Do a video or something. Never been a huge fan of Twitter. Everyone wants to talk social media, everyone wants to get involved, but not everyone has the staying power. At least the people I encounter that actually have jobs and things

to do. The people who, frankly, do seem to successful, it takes up a lot more of their time than I think they let on.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

It's no different than any other advertising campaign since we figured out how to advertise like in cave paintings. Let's take the language of the day about how we measure success. Like, you know, hits, views, engagement, when internet advertising first started, click-throughs. Wait a second, click-throughs don't produce enough numbers to sell and ad, so let's invent another way. People are going to see an ad even if they don't engage it. So, let's come up and call it an impression and let's sell impression. An impression isn't how many times it's seen or engaged with, an impression is how many times we bothered to put it up there. People buy this stuff all the time. The great thing about the Y Generation, and why I'm excited about it, is the fact that they are a hell of a lot smarter in many cases. They are going to be running streamline and adblocking and making their experience what they want it to be. Because, if it's anything I figure about the Y Generation as far as advertising goes, it's going to be on their terms. If you're going to play it on their terms it's going to be on their turf, and their turf isn't what you have gotten comfortable with. Their turf isn't what you've hired someone to come up with a strategy and make a plan and go after it. By the time you get there they are gone to the next thing. The good thing about that is, you are not going to have the people who make it are going to deserve to make it. The people who get the attention are the ones who deserve to get that attention. I'm not saying they are doing to do anything good with the attention but they will have earned it. I don't think advertising firms with their fingers on the pulse will be able to predict what is going to be interesting beyond extrapolating basic needs and services that looking at a whole, they won't be able to target. Like they maybe were able to target it, but they can't guide it like they were able to guide it. I think advertising is much more reactionary than it should be and it's almost dated by the time it's produced.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Well, I just look at return on investment, and if you're not getting a return, then it doesn't matter how many clicks or how much attention it got, you can file it under "hey we branded ourselves" but if you're out of business with a great brand then somebody else might come along and get it from you. It might be the only thing you've managed to create. The least successful, anything that is strictly, I guess

old school media that didn't have something that was able to be tracked, I would count those among the biggest failures because, and this got me out of the sales game to some degree, if I've gotta sell you on a concept and then have no proof of the success of that, you know what I'm saying, like having percentages or numbers to show this is how it worked or what it cost you, this is your increase to traffic or sales, that's the world that I like to live in. The thing is, its measurable, when it's not measurable then you become not only the salesperson but the cheerleader. This is an old school radio guy telling you this, once you've made the sale and the ads are running you want to make sure you get into there and get people to call in and say "I heard your ad on such and such". Basically, plenty of people will have heard it and reacted to it, but you have to cheerlead it with the client because there's no way to prove it one way or another.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

Well, the language seems to be very specific and that is a very changing thing. By the time you figure out what is hip they change the rules on you, and I'll probably come back to that. Watching the success rates, the launch to adoption to rejection that seems be flash in the pan popular, 2-3 seasons of the show, what becomes retro. You become retro so fast now. I think that's just part of getting older but it seems to be a lot quickly because they are constantly fed so much so the cycle of boredom is fast. Someone with a better idea or a way to improve on it and they've rolled it out and it's Boom boom boom entertainment all day long. So, when you come with something, biggest things that really present a challenge, is grabbing that attention. That is probably a very common statement and has been forever. I think it's, I think the old school "we're going to come up with a message and stick with it" and "once I come up with a logo I should never change it". I tell them, "think of any company you respect and I'd say 95% have done something to change their image especially when it made sense for them." I don't think it matters as much anymore. I told someone recently that a business strategy or campaign was kind of silly. Coming up with a catchphrase that you'd put on all of your products is silly. Keep the brand clean and do it like Pepsi and Coke used to do it, put the new campaign and don't be afraid to push something. If you get mileage, great. If it earns, go with it.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

Well, I'd call it the gamification. I had, and this was just thrown together, I had a situation where people could essentially get something for free but they had to do

a following a website to another link to another link and once you followed link you could get the free item. That worked out pretty well, it was a game like a scavenger hunt. For everybody who participated in it at least that much traffic went through. Five or six participants went through and everybody had likes on their page and it definitely had measurable traffic increases. It was a good success but once again it was mobile optimized. It was something to do, where people aren't without phones anymore. When you can take that constant need to be entertained and stimulated and supplement it with a tangible reward it's a success.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

Snapchat, Instagram, and then you get archaic after that. Monitoring one called Firechat, which uses some pretty cool technology as far as location based and it's really truly anonymous, just because the servers work which is pretty cool, haven't really caught on. I've had the app for a couple of months and I've been watching traffic and it seems to be bigger in the UK. I thought it would catch on, maybe because it is not polished enough to be picked up by the Y generation but at the same point it is pretty cool. Probably Instagram, Vine, right now if you could find a semi-entertaining goofy kid. I was thinking about old school stuff that would work on new school medium like the Little Rascals stuff like when they let the kids get hurt. That would be huge right now.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

Unfortunately, the way we are going, we are the newest slimmer faster whatever, but I'll tell you one thing I've noticed is that, just because devices are getting fancier and smarter and faster, the quality level of what is being produced isn't there. That's from the manufacturing side and the content that is being produced. It doesn't seem to be getting more unique or funnier it just seems there is more of it.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

If you want to engage Y Generation, you have to do something that they do with some degree of skill. For whatever reason it's almost like proving yourself.

Participant Response for P17

Question 1: How would you define social media?

Kind of like a one-liner definition? I would say that social media is really anything that you share online in some way or form can be reached or read or commented on. Pretty much anything that you share online can be classified as social media

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

This has been kind of an interesting one, I have been in my position now for about six months at the university. In my background, I was previously in the agency setting. I had a few different clients. I worked on a pharmacy, a tire brand, an energy company, a nonprofit, a restaurant, so I have been all over the board. Coming to the university was a little bit different for me because we are only targeting Generation Y, 18-25 and younger. Looking at people who are sophomores in high schools etcetera. One challenge that I face is, four years ago when I started it was "What are we doing on Facebook" or "what are we doing on Twitter" and that was everything. I came in to my current position and it didn't exist before and the social channels were a little bit dormant. One of the things I immediately picked back up was they had an Instagram account and it was pretty "meh". They hadn't used it in 6 months and I picked it back up and started posting very transparent pictures, very down to earth all related to the university and we've increased our following by 130% or something crazy like that. So, I mean some of the strategies that I've used are a lot of the same ones that everybody uses. For example, on Facebook, use the 80/20 rule. 80% of our content is fun and engaging, and 20% of it is more, newsy salesy. We've tried, one of the big things that I'm working on implementing that we have done in the past, in my opinion, working for a university some of our best influencers and content creators are right here on campus. Using them as our source of information, encouraging them to share and create user generated content and show all their friends, organically, what a good time they're having. We implemented a campaign contest it was # [REDACTED]ismycampus because the university I work at is [REDACTED]. It was an Instagram contest where you upload pictures and you can win \$150 gift card. That's just one example of encouraging our users to use user generated content. It's a matter of resources for me, to be honest, I'm a one man band. We have been thinking about dabbling in one of the new networks leaning toward Snapchat as a way to connect with future and current students. They are always on their phone and it's what they are using. I've seen, we monitor YikYak, and are working on marketing on it, but Instagram is the one that has just exploded because they are on the phone and on Instagram and they are posting

and liking. I can't even tell you how quickly I get likes and comments on our Instagram. I'm off on a tangent, but that's what we are doing.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

I think the most successful, I would say, talking in terms of network specific for engagement would be the 80/20 rule on Facebook. I think as far as across the board and something I want to do more of is creating, encouraging that user-generated content. I think that with that demographic and with driving that third party validation and traffic to our page.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

I guess the user-generated content is a double edge sword. It was successful but it was also very tough to get off the ground running. I think that some of them were, I dunno if it was timing or how we did it, but some were more reluctant to share that type of stuff. Maybe they thought they were being marketed to and they didn't want to participate or they just had too much stuff going on at that time. In the end, it was successful. I'd say the least successful strategy that I have seen or done is, before I came into my position, they were just in babysitting mode. They put out a lot of content and great stories about the grads, alumni and things like that. They were just taking their stories and plopping them on Facebook and, very long descriptions, not particularly interesting to most people. So it's been one of the least successful that I've seen. I think another thing that people who aren't really familiar with social can get caught up on too is, I think some people who work in social don't know which network to spend their time on. Since I'm a one man band, I can't be everywhere all the time, and I feel like Facebook we should just stop posting on Facebook. They are kind of too far off the wayside for this generation. I'm going off on a tangent again but one of the things I've seen that is interesting and countering some of the things that I've said, is that for this generation they don't want Facebook but we, for our undergraduate admissions, I'm technically in enrollment marketing, so for the class of 2018/2019 we created private groups for anyone who has applied or been accepted and they have been really successful. This is very specific social to a university, I realize that, but it is kind of creating a little community of people before they get here. They are meeting each other online, "hey I'm looking for a roommate" "hey I'm majoring in this", so it kind of is a way for them to feel connected before they get here. We have also seen when someone comes to their Facebook group and says "hey I don't use this", find me on Instagram or Snapchat. That's also been interesting.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

The real issue is keeping up with how much content they can consume and finding a voice that doesn't upset them or have them make fun of you. If I wanted to Tweet today, or use some photo with terms they don't use, they'd be totally turned off and I'd be eaten alive. Other brands can get away with that. IHOP and Denny's do it great and it's almost like they're poking fun at themselves. I think that's maybe one of the roadblocks is find a voice that is interesting enough but not too out there that. They are so quick take something and hate on it, for lack of better words, online because they have seen everything they have grown up with this they are like "Whatever". I think that the trend too, across the board not just with Generation Y, but I feel that people are wising up to social marketing it's no secret. I'd say that's the biggest roadblock is trying to find that authentic voice to reach them.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

My biggest thing is content. You have to have content that is interesting enough that it appeals to an emotion that someone is going to want to share it. When I was working with the tire company, I almost threw up because they were using these crappy stock images with all of their posts. There were ridiculous families in fields and nobody would ever want to share it. I think it's just a matter of making your content shareable. We have dived into motivation Mondays, Throwback Thursdays, tying into those larger trends. Also, obviously giveaways and prizes for free stuff. They have been sporadic, a little less organized than I'd like because of the budget we have to give things away. We have done giveaways. One of the craziest things that I've ever done, and this will be a good tidbit. Have you ever seen, it is on Starz, it's called the chair? It was filmed at ██████████, and one of the guys was a bit of a big deal, before I came to ██████████, but I was there while they were premiering it this seasons. One of the guys on there who is a YouTube guy, Shane Dawson, he has an insane fan base. This is mindboggling what happened. So we were giving away tickets to the premier, and Shane Dawson was going to be there. We had all of these little Shane Dawson fangirls. Everything in their profile was Shane Dawson, they were doing photos, everything Shane Dawson, retweeting. I was live tweeting at the event the one girl in ██████████, she was maybe 13, made her hoodie and asked if she could please get tickets. She said "I have to meet Shane Dawson" and he's just a guy in YouTube videos. I met him and he's like "yeah jetlag". She sat outside the movie theater, during a school

night the week school started, and waiting until 11:00 and she got a picture with him. He came out and say hi to her and he liked her hoodie, that she made that went along with his movie, and he took a selfie with her. You would have thought that like, God had touched her the way she reacted. I was following it later because I was so intrigued. Shane Dawson posted the picture on his Instagram and she was like "I'm never washing this shirt, I met Shane Dawson". It was crazy to me how much influence he had. I had never heard of him before this. It was a shame to me that they didn't use him more in their marketing for selfish purposes before I got there just to build awareness of [REDACTED]. That was one of the things that I don't even know if it had anything to do with the question but it was one of the craziest things I had ever seen.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

I use all of the different channels to reach different audiences. The most successful in reaching Generation Y is definitely Instagram. I can see Facebook and look at our demographics, and our demographic matches our student profile and their moms. It's mostly females 18-24 range, and females in the 40-50 range, but I would say Instagram is way way better just because, it doesn't have an algorithm, they are constantly on it. I recently read an article about teenage girls and Instagram and how they bully each other on it, make birthday collages for their besties, and list out their best friends in their profile. If they take people out they get mad at them. I think of the channels we have right now, Instagram is definitely the winner.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

If I was trying to sell a tangible good, I know you can shop on Instagram right now. As far as directly, ROI tracking clicks and all that, Twitter probably. I think there is some merit in things like Instagram, Snapchat, type of keeping track of that age group. I follow a lot of things out of curiosity. Rue21 is also in [REDACTED], and I follow Aeropostale on Twitter and Instagram to see what kinds of things they are posting and when. So, they are all very active on Instagram posting multiple times a day and getting a lot of engagement. I think that has some merit.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

I think there is going to be a big shift in social media marketing very soon. I kind of tapped into this earlier. I think they are wising up to social media marketing, some of them aren't as responsive. Even myself, the one day I saw on Pinterest, it was a promoted pin from Chevy and it was so dumb, and it was like "Are you going grocery shopping? Pack all of your stuff in a Chevy. If you have a few places to go, store them underneath". It was so silly and the comments tore it apart. I also think, specifically with Generation Y, I'm just so intrigued by their influences like Shane Dawson and Vine, and that's all Vine influencers. I think that there are things that they are doing is crazy and the money they can make from a 6 second video is pretty wild to me. I think that there will be more of that. Marketers will get into it even more and ruin it. This is also one thing I wanted to say was that Generation Y the biggest thing is they've been, since they've grown up with social and everything, and they've had the talks that "everyone can see what you're doing and your mom is on Facebook" the big thing for them, and why I mentioned that, I think the Facebook closed groups work because it's a way for them to hide. They hide on Instagram, and they do their thing, they hide on Snapchat. It's why Snapchat is so successful. It goes away. The other thing, YikYak, is anonymous. I think there will be more of that too coming out of them. Finding places to hide and not be bothered.

Participant Response for P18

Question 1: How would you define social media?

I think social media has become so much a part of everyday life that it has taken on a new definition in the last few years. Originally, I think social media was intended to connect people in a more personal way. Now I think it has become more of something that is a necessity to some people, especially people who have grown up with technology. The way that I see social media and through some of my work experiences I have seen it as a major platform for engagement which I'm sure you are not surprised by. Engagement and relationship management is a huge part of any industry, but especially in higher-ed we are looking for people to engage with our university on a more personal level. If you are a student looking for programs and "Oh wow, I tweeted that I loved my visit and what if they respond to me?" It hits home with that personal connection. So I think social media has become this, maybe like a bridge between things that weren't humanized before like universities and businesses. Anything like that, and humanizing that and getting us that integration and more personal connection to anyone.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through

social media?

We have had some fun with engaging Generation Y, and I think it is all about coming up with creative ways to get feedback from people. One way that is tried and true is people do social media contests, "Share a photo use this hashtag and at the end of move in weekend you can win a prize pack." Those are tried and true ways, but when we don't have things to give away, which is most often. We have done contests for a few different things. I mentioned move in weekend is a big one, because we want students to get more engaged more in that time so there are a lot of events planned that prompt them to talk to their peers. "Tweet us a selfie with your new roommate and use the hashtag". That gets stuff out there with positive reinforcement, so it's kind of a way that weekend to get them more engaged and talking to people on campus. We did one over Thanksgiving that had a giveaway component, which was for anyone not just Gen Y, but we had a lot of Gen Y people responding, and this one was based mostly on Facebook and what we prompted them to do was, we said "Gannon is thankful for blah blah blah" and we said "Share what you're thankful for in your life for a chance to win a [REDACTED] gear prize pack." That one we wanted a lot of people to reply we had a lot great user-generated content. The great thing about user-generated content is that we don't have to make it. The clips that they sent in and posted on Facebook and we could use that on other social media outlets like Twitter and Instagram but that was really cool just to get people talking. Other we have done, it was a cold day out we'd say "retweet this to win a scarf" and someone was selected randomly. Those are the big ones that have a prize component. I think they just liked getting something free. Usually it's a drawstring bag or a t-shirt or whatever, but it doesn't seem to matter what the prize is as long as they get something free.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

The most successful strategy I've had, I think, one is keeping the conversational tone and I think that's where social media is different, that I'm not just giving you facts but I'm asking for information too. I'm going to go off on a tangent but the one thing I forgot to mention, this campaign that was really successful, was [REDACTED], that day we really push the [REDACTED] hashtag, and get people to share their experience. That was huge, we had tons of tweets, stuff on Instagram. There was no prize just that people got to share that they are giving back to the community. I think that is largely popular on Facebook. You'll see it with friends that they did something good and now they want people to know about it. I don't know if it was necessarily a great trait about social media, but [REDACTED] was huge because people were giving back but we saw where people were volunteering.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

When I just push information out there, I get a lot of requests from people asking me to put something on Facebook. This week, for example, it's a week's worth of programming to start conversations of difficult topics such as diversity and race and gender, they want posts put up but it's just information. "Ok, 11:00 today there is a potluck" and you don't see much engagement on them. The views aren't high, a lot of people aren't sharing. Maybe if they're involved in the program they'll retweet it or they'll like it, but it's not a big grab. Putting out information that is just schedule information, that never does well. I'm thinking if there are any campaigns that flopped. When I was in between finishing my master's degree, I was a grad assistant at a college and did social media for them too, and one thing we tried to do was tried to engage alumni to give us their story about what the college did for them. That one, there wasn't a prize component other than getting their photo on Facebook banner, they got that up there for a week. We had like no one at all it was so bad, we were going around trying to find people to do it. We were asking too much. That one flopped.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

It's just that they don't hold back. They are kind of uncensored they will say whatever is on their minds right now. The [REDACTED] hashtag is one that we monitor, and it's just always ridiculous stuff. [REDACTED] sucks, or "man they wouldn't turn on the heat again". Some things will just spread like wildfire. We had a couple of shootings near campus, not on campus but near campus, and there were a bunch of emails that went out about it and there were glitches and it was like, people were getting 10 emails to say to check their email. Social media lit up and it was just like "Thanks [REDACTED] for sending us an email about checking our email." I think that sometimes it's a hashtag takeover, they seem to really latch on to it and put it with everything positive or negative. I think another big thing with social media with Gen Y is that they don't hold back, but that they have an opinion on anything. Sometimes we try to post something really positive and it will just be taken out of context and turned around. We try to think about our posts and figure out what can be interpreted and avoid that. With Facebook, throughout the day, I'll check it and get a notification when somebody posts something. For the most part, I check it every once in a while to make sure nobody posts anything crazy or has comments that are irrelevant or need to have attention. The only time that we are really on it, is when something happens. So if

there's a shooting, I'm monitoring it making sure that there is nothing that is being said that needs to be investigated further. For the most part, it's kind of the day to day casual monitoring of it. A big thing that we do as far as monitoring it, anytime that anytime someone mentions [REDACTED] I'll get in and take a look and see what they're saying. If it's a student, we get a lot of people saying "Oh I was accepted to [REDACTED]" and maybe I'll retweet it or reply and see if they have any questions. We are not monitoring 24/7, I'd probably go crazy.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

Previously responded to in question 2.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

Twitter and Instagram for sure, absolutely. We have seen a shift and this is no secret that Facebook is getting more into the older generations and we see that as a way to interact with parents and alumni, but if we are looking for current students we have to put something out on Twitter and Instagram. Our Instagram numbers, even since August, have increased by 800 or something like that. We started using it more. Instagram and Twitter for sure.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

For Gen Y, I would probably say that it's the same, Twitter and Instagram. Whenever recruitment staff goes out we have social media cards and it gets them in the mindset early. We see a lot of stuff from, for example, the [REDACTED] accepted hashtag has been around for years. We see people's first post is to Twitter. So, I would say it's the same, Twitter and Instagram for selling as well.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

I think that it's going to be interesting to see how social media evolves in the next few years. I've gone into freshman seminar classes and talked about social media and I always ask them "How do you guys use social media, and what do you think is important". I've had a lot of people in this one class who weren't even on Facebook anymore. It was odd because as soon as I got accepted to college I joined Facebook, but it's totally different. It will be interesting in the next few

years to see how much it changes. I think that technology is a big part of that too. As smartphones get more advanced. The iPhone is a computer and people start having tablets instead of laptops, the conversation will naturally shift toward social media. Even for me at work, if I have to ask a colleague someone who is upstairs, I'll message him on Facebook and say "Hey, I've got a question about this" and I think that society is becoming more comfortable with social media. It's interesting and I think about it a lot. I don't know what the next thing is, but I think it's important that people recognize that social media is not going anywhere. It might evolve and change, but for universities and businesses it is important that they understand how to use the technology to interact with students, or sell something that your consumers will look online for a product review. Before I buy anything on Amazon I look and see, were people satisfied. I think that social media is another way that people can google something and see what they said about product X on this thread.

Participant Response for P19

Question 1: How would you define social media?

I would define social media as really any sort of media that is interactive. By that I mean that I don't define social media as necessarily being technology driven but technology has increased the availability of social media. I think that a bulletin with a question on it and people post their answers up on there, is, in a way, social media. I think that, going back to cavemen, drawing on the walls of caves, was interactive. That was storytelling. There were multiple participants getting involved in the same kind of media. It's anywhere that multiple people are collaborating, or someone is putting something out there and multiple people are responding. It's interactive media.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

Personally, some strategies that I have used for Generation Y have been to really focus on the individual. I mean that, I threw out a broad definition, but given the technology that we do have today, we are able, I am able, to hone in on much more specific groups of people that I could have been able to 10, 20 years ago. By focusing on individual wants and needs, or small group needs or wants, you can focus in on what those Generation Y members need and want to hear. That is much more effective than trying to throw against the refrigerator and see what sticks. Honing and seeing things and doing testing and saying "ok, this subgroup really responds well to this messaging, this subgroup responds to that

messaging". Making it not be a hard sell in any sense of the word. It's definitely more about creating an atmosphere or experience, rather than "hey, come to this university" or "Hey, buy this product". It's not so much about that, whereas traditional media is. It's more about creating a collaborative atmosphere where they want you to be involved.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Step one is, I want to target Generation Y, broadly speaking. Step two is to narrow down that audience into subgroups. You can throw Generation Y into a big clump and say "There it is", but I think that with the tools that are available these days that's not as effective as it can be. By segmenting down the population to more specific things, maybe geographic, based on interests, based on what sites they are visiting, it doesn't really matter. Just honing in on what does this group need and want, and differentiating those groups within the major group of Generation Y. Because the generation is based on the individual, so employing that psychology there, and not saying "Hey we are speaking to all of you", it's "I'm speaking to you the individual right now" with information that applies to a lot of people. We are going to ignore that and make it me and you.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Having people call a number, or forcing any additional steps for them to take does not work well. Anything that is non-intuitive that doesn't make them jump from Facebook, or if I'm on Facebook now and there's suddenly an ad saying "I want this product you, call this number for more information". That has never worked for me in the past. For two reasons, it requires them to have a telephone nearby, which they do, but to actually make a call which most of the generation does not like to do. Secondly, it requires them to move away from the space they are in now, be it Facebook or Instagram, and have them move into another realm and have voice to voice interaction.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

The biggest problem is the fact there is so much social media. There is a lot of noise, and the key, I guess, would be to find a way to cut through all of that noise. Which is why, I have found that, honing into these smaller groups has been more effective for me. Generation Y constantly being bombarded with images,

texts, articles, there is so much information out there that is really a battle for the attention of the person. That applies to any generation, but specifically to those that are more technologically savvy I suppose. Cutting through the noise is definitely the biggest struggle when trying to reach out to Generation Y.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

The first thing is to make it easy. I kind of touched on that earlier by saying don't put up any unnecessary roadblocks. If you can have something be, Amazon does this really well, if you see an ad you click on it and you click once more and it's in your cart. Whereas, some other sites or products or so forth, you have to fill out forms and go through all the registration and every single step that you take lessens the chance of completing that referral. So, it's really kind of about eliminating those roadblocks and making it easy. The second thing to do is to make it different. By that, I mean that, I keep going back to the topic, but make it applicable to whatever subgroup that you have identified this individual as. I'm not going to reach out to a Gen Y in Nevada the same way that I would reach out to a Gen Y in Connecticut. I'm not going to reach out to a Gen Y that I know goes to a state school the same way I would reach out to a Gen Y student who goes to a small liberal arts university. By knowing that, you can create a culture that they are used to and content that is engaging to that specific group. By making it easy and accessible and different, you can cut through the noise and make your marketing efforts more effective.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

Twitter is the most successful. Twitter is better at communication because of the fact that is so accessible and so easy to make your own.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

Facebook. The real advantage of Facebook is the targeting and narrowing down which I have mentioned a thousand times, the group mentality is really what is effective when trying to sell to Generation Y.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

I guess that would say that largely, whether you are trying to sell or communicate, or whatever it is you want to do with Generation Y, the strategy is to get that personal interests involved. They are not just going to click on something because of a name or because of something else. There has to be that personal connection and it's really, in my experience, not that different whether you are selling or promoting an event or just get feedback. Generation Y is not going to participate if they don't see it as having some sort of, either grander influence because Generation Y likes to volunteer, or it is a personal interest. Students studying biology have an interest in sciences, so honing in on that you are most likely to communicate and sell you a product by talking about science than you would if I was a humanities major.

Participant Response for P20

Question 1: How would you define social media?

Basically it is a social, first of all it is social and a communication tool that allows people to interact with other people in a social fashion. The thing I always emphasize to people is that I can just post a note up there but it's not at all in socialese language, so it's not going to work all that well in social media. There are certain styles that you write or you talk whenever you are just socializing.

Question 2: What strategies have you used to engage Generation Y consumers through social media?

The first one is the structure of how we handle social media here at the university. We have a roundtable discussing that comprises of current students and I sit in with them and they meet once a week and they develop strategy and they talk back and forth about strategy and ideas and I can share some of those with you. Kind of what they do, I kind of listen in and I say "here in the recruitment arena we really want to get information about visit days, what is a good way to use social media to do that" and they kind of help me. The bulk of the heavy lifting is done by current students as part of a social media roundtable. So what they do is they kind of tap into some of those popular things out there, whether it's vine videos, contests to try to get people to interact with us giving away t-shirts or mugs. The bottom line is we make sure the students write the post so that it looks like it is student to student as opposed to institution to student.

Question 3: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

The contests. We also do interaction with alumni as well. The most successful that we have done here are there a huge number of recognized student groups and we will have photo contests and have them take a picture of their group with a certain type of a background that is recognizable here on campus. Then, people on our Facebook page, they will vote for the favorite photo. What you'll see is the recognized student organizations, is they will be sharing this to each other to encourage people to vote for their photo. You get a lot of engagement going on, then you will have a winner and it's based on a tool that pools the likes down to get a better idea of which one won, and we post that up there. That's given us the most engagement. In that situation they all won a t-shirt. Whatever promo items we have available. The key is, really the contests themselves are not really helping us to get messaging out there. We are posting messages about visit days coming up, key things or questions that we want their answers to. If we have contests and interaction going on while we're posting other things we have a better chance of a larger number of students seeing our message about visit day, seeing our questions and answering them. The whole thing is to build interaction to get the number of people up.

Question 4: What are your most successful strategies for engaging Generation Y consumers?

Well, we have been doing this hardcore for about only 4 years, but we didn't get into it at the very beginning. Social media is relatively new in the whole scope of things. We were, what hurt us is we were over posting. We weren't posting with the right type of style or messaging. The first year, we were just repurposing information that is like newsletters or emails from the university. We weren't tailoring the message to social media. I guess that's what we learned is different from what you are asking. As soon as something doesn't share the numbers, we don't keep doing it.

Question 5: What issues have you encountered when advertising to Generation Y consumers on social media?

I think some of the things we have learned is there are key times during the day whenever this group of people are interacting the most. It's usually in the evenings not during the day. If we work 9-5 we have to think about scheduling our posts for later in the evening. We learned that they communicate and how they communicate, when they communicate, and it's very different than my generation.

Question 6: How have you motivated Generation Y consumers to complete referrals on social media?

Previously responded to in question 2.

Question 7: What social media channels were the most successful for you to communicate with Generation Y consumers?

Twitter, definitely. Over the past year and a half, our demographic, we find people 24-28 are still big on Facebook but the high school student and the college student have really gravitated to Twitter.

Question 8: What social media channels were the most successful for you to sell products to Generation Y consumers?

Again, what you mean by sell a product is getting them to go to a visit day or selling information or to go to the school. Depends on Facebook allows us to put more information out there compared to Twitter. If we want to include photos or something, we can use Instagram or Facebook if photos are important. We found that younger generations have gravitated to Twitter because it's more like texting which they do a lot of. In trying to get people to go back and forth. I guess one example is whenever students have to choose where they want to live. We post the different housing options. You see with Twitter, you see them engaging saying where they are going to be living. They'll ask if anyone else will live there. You can get back and forth, see which housing is most popular, who is choosing which housing and why. It depends on whether or not we want to follow a thread of discussion, if so we use Twitter. We find there is an initial blast of comments on Facebook, but to follow the discussion, Twitter is better for us.

Question 9: What other information regarding social media marketing would you like to share?

The key thing is it is constantly changing, and is changing more than anything I have had to work with in my field which is marketing communications. So, we have two students on our social media roundtable and their job is just to keep me informed of what is new out there. We make a decision when something is new, we decided not to put any effort into Pinterest. We took a look at it and didn't think with our demographics that it warranted our efforts but we are now putting a lot of work into how we do LinkedIn. We have had to tap into our younger alumni to help us with that, because a lot of college students are not yet on LinkedIn. I guess, it's a constantly changing environment that you have to be prepared for something new to pop up and your strategy needs to be very nimble as to how you work through it. You have to listen to the students. We are learning this but this is

what has always been there for them, so they kind of live and breathe social media and they can really give you a lot of insight as to how to get a certain message across and I think the people who are not using their own students to shape messaging are missing the boat.