Social media as a source of knowledge for customers and enterprises

Marta Zembik, University of Economics in Katowice, marta.zembik@ue.katowice.pl

Abstract

Social media (SM) is a set of tools, such as blogs, social networking sites, forums, wikis, which enable easy communication and cooperation. A multitude and variety of these tools, increasing access and the possibility of a free exchange of information by all users make social media a dynamic, comprehensive and complex IT infrastructure that enables easier, faster and more widespread sharing of information. The information provided in social media is useful for both customers and enterprises. The former benefit from the opinions of other consumers about products, recommendations, and a description of experience in dealing with enterprises, whereas the latter, by monitoring the content of SM, acquire feedback on their market offer as well as data on the target group - its expectations, needs, and socio-demographic and psychographic characteristics. This information is becoming the basis for market decision-making; therefore, it can be stated that on its basis the knowledge of market entities is shaped. Three categories of knowledge are distinguished in the literature: knowledge from customers, knowledge about customers and knowledge for customers. This paper is an attempt to demonstrate that this concept is also reflected in social media. The review of the literature has been conducted and as a result, it has been indicated what type of information makes up the individual categories of knowledge and which social media tools are the best source of such information.

Keywords: social media, knowledge, knowledge management, knowledge for customers, knowledge from customers, knowledge about customers

Introduction

The development of web and mobile technologies, including social media, moved markets closer to a utopian state of existence of perfect market information by reducing the information asymmetry between buyers and sellers (Granados & Gupta, 2013). For buyers, this means easier market decision-making with the ability to search online for alternative offers, price comparison, confirmation of product characteristics presented by retailers with the opinions of real users. In turn, enterprises, through blogs, microblogs or social networking sites, can increase the speed and efficiency of communication with the market. At the same time, by monitoring the content appearing in SM, enterprises have almost no feedback cost of their market offer. Through engaging users in crowdsourcing projects they additionally acquire innovations reflecting the expectations of customers.

According to the DIK model (data-information-knowledge) (Nonaka, 1994), knowledge is created on the basis of information which, in turn, is created on the basis of data (Siemieniuch & Sinclair, 1999). In addition, data are facts gathered on the basis of observations (Clare & Loucopoulos, 1987; Zack, 1999), represented in a formalized manner (Hicks, 1993).

Data is encoded with appropriate symbols, so it can be recorded, processed, and transmitted; whereas information is created by presenting data in a meaningful context (Zack, 1999). Information is created as a result of data interpretation by the receiver. For this reason it is subjective in character (it depends on the interpretative abilities of the receiver). Knowledge

constitutes of information that is interpreted, whether consciously or unconsciously, by an individual at the end of a learning process (Boubaker, Djebabra, Mellal & Chabane, 2012). Zack (1999) defined knowledge as "meaningful and organized accumulation of information through experience, communication or inference" (p.45). In turn, Davenport and Prusak (1998) perceive knowledge as "a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight (...)" (p. 5). They also understand knowledge as data or information in action. There can be distinguished explicit knowledge, which is easy to capture, formalize, and distribute, and tacit knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Polanyi, 1966).

The notion of tacit knowledge was first used by Polanyi, who stated that "we know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 1966, p. 4). He defined tacit knowledge as difficult to communicate and acquired through practice and experience rather than through language. Tacit knowledge depends on individual predispositions and is created in an appropriate context (Kothari et al., 2012). That is why it is difficult to capture, codify, adopt, and share among people, but at the same time very valuable, as it can be the source of the organization's innovation and competitive advantage (Jassimudin, Klein, & Connell, 2005). Explicit knowledge, in turn, can be codified, documented, and transmitted, making it easily and cheaply available to large numbers of people at little or no marginal cost (Jassimudin et al., 2005).

In the modern economy, knowledge is a critical component of an organization's assets (Kowalczyk & Nogalski, 2007; Tsai, Tsai, Li, & Lin, 2012; Ziemba, 2013). The market success of enterprises depends largely on the ability to locate, acquire, analyze, and use knowledge, that is to say, on knowledge management in order to make more and better market decisions (Awad & Ghaziri, 2004; Bukowitz & Williams, 2000; Dalkir, 2005; Kowalczyk & Nogalski, 2007; Ziemba, 2009). Attributes of the contemporary market, such as global competition, diversity, variety, and turbulence require from companies the ability to change rapidly and adapt to new market requirements (Reeves & Deimler, 2011).

The competitive advantage is gained by those enterprises which better understand the trends in the environment and are able to offer customers newer benefits, and provide existing benefits in a new way (Hamel & Prahalad, 1996). In practice, this means that the advantage in the marketplace is gained from enterprises having in-depth knowledge and understanding of the needs and expectations of customers.

The needs and expectations of customers are evolving in the direction of 7R principle: right product, right quantity, right condition, right price, right place, right time, right customer (Sudalaimuthu & Raj, 2009). Not only do customers' requirements refer to the product itself (quality, features, price), but they also include the convenience of purchasing (place, time), the quality of service (speed and complexity), and the manner of communication with the enterprise.

Before the era of social media (SM) all the information customers needed to make market decisions (knowledge for the customer) was provided by enterprises via the traditional media (television, radio, press), which are characterized by a one-way transfer of information. As the Internet developed, the corporate websites have also become the source of knowledge for the customer. They provided more detailed information, but the customer still had to settle for just

the information which the enterprise wanted to share with them. Customers also gained knowledge about the market offer by exchanging information among themselves. The flow of information took place among the immediate family and friends, because there were no technical possibilities to identify and reach out to a wider customer base of the enterprise.

Acquiring customer's knowledge is a challenge for enterprises. There are many methods of gaining this knowledge. Beijerse (1999) mentions the following: assess customers, carry out customer satisfaction research, obtain knowledge from customers, and interview customers (quoted in Stefanou, Sarmaniotis, & Stafyla, 2003). However, apart from the fact that the marketing research methods are time- and cost-intensive, researchers more often encounter problems connected with respondents' reluctance to taking part in research, which translates into the reliability of gained information (Keusch, 2012; Kucia & Jaciow, 2010; Tuckel & O'Neill, 2002).

The purpose of this paper is to present knowledge localized in social media broken down into knowledge *about* customers, *from* customers, and *for* customers. In the cognitive part, the importance of knowledge in the modern economy is indicated as well as the essence and classification of social media are described. Next the concept of three categories of customer knowledge (about, from and for the customer) is discussed indicating the specific social media tools, which are their source. This study may be helpful in taking action in social media aimed at customer knowledge management.

Review of literature

Social media - definition and classification

Social media is the Internet and mobile applications whose overriding idea is to enable social interaction. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange for user-generated content" (p. 61).

In social media, individual users, communities, and organizations discuss, contribute, modify, and share the content generated by other users (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011). This is a fundamental difference in the functioning of SM, traditional media, and the Web 1.0 Internet, and it has triggered a contribution to defining a new model of communication (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In connection with the development of new media, communication has adopted hypermedia nature, characterized by many-to-many communication, which introduces a new type of interaction (Wiktor, 2001).

Social media has given a qualitatively new character to interactions in the communication process, since a personal interaction became possible (seller's communication with the buyer through interactive media), as well as relations with the media (e.g. content creation and web browsing). What distinguishes SM from traditional media of mass communication is the fact that the users themselves decide whether and what, and in what form they want to "browse." They seek information on topics of interest to them, and create content presenting their views and

experiences. This is possible because social media does not have supervision over the content appearing in it (apart from the service administrators' right to delete offensive or vulgar content). Unlike traditional media, which are usually owned by specific enterprises that have a specific strategy and views and do not have complete freedom to publish the content.

Six features of social media can be identified, which make it a user-friendly tool for creating and sharing knowledge resources (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Panahi, Watson, & Partridge, 2012):

1. **The digital nature** of the new media - means that each of us can easily disseminate their own content, or it can be done by others (to create their digital copies), to worldwide recipients bypassing the traditional publishing process and without the cost of publication.
2. **The involvement of the users**, through which the value chain is formed. Additional value in SM is given by adding comments (e.g. about a product), complex forms of cooperation (e.g. beta testing of products), and co-creating of products (e.g. the development of open source software).
3. **Widespread visibility of activities** undertaken in social media. Blog posting, adding an opinion on a forum or photos on the social network are visible to other users, both individuals and enterprises.
4. Access to **real-time** content, so that consumers can exchange real-time experience, for example, using microblogs or chat rooms. Removing content from SM is virtually impossible (**durability of content**), which means the ability to delve into the negative and positive feedback from potential consumers for many years after its publication.
5. **The ubiquity** - thanks to mobile devices we can use social media resources anywhere, anytime. It is possible to write and publish movie reviews, even during the cinema screening, or find opinions about a product at the time of its purchase.
6. **Networking** - social media users create relationships that are the basis for the construction of social networks. Relationships among the members of the network may take the form of: *collaborations* (e.g. Wikipedia), *friendships* (e.g. Facebook), *trade ties* (e.g. LinkedIn), *resource and information folks* (e.g. YouTube.pl, MyStarbucksIdea.com), *social support* (e.g. industry forums), and others (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

The diversity of social media is not without significance for the desire to create and share content there. The presence of multiple categories of SM causes that each user group finds one of their kind, the content and functioning that matches their age group, gender, interests and beliefs. It is more important in the context of the fact that people tend to interact with other people similar to themselves in terms of certain attributes (the phenomenon of homophily) (Kadushin, 2004). Table 1 presents examples of social media.

Table 1. Types of social media

Type	Characteristics	Example
Social networking sites	They attract Internet users, allowing for contact, entertainment and information sharing, and focus around the topics and events of their interest (also around companies and brands)	Facebook, MySpace
Content communities (services enabling multimedia sharing)	They enable publication of videos, photos and presentations as well as their comments and evaluation by other users.	YouTube, Vimeo, iTunes, Flickr, SlideShare
Personal blogs	Diaries written by individuals, often in a particular subject (e.g. fashion, cooking, cultural, political). The author of the blog presents their views, opinions, recommendations enabling comment.	Makelifeeasier (blog by Polish Prime Minister's daughter)
Company-sponsored blogs (corporate blogs)	Online diary run by the enterprise on subjects related to business. It describes the events in the life of the organization; it may also refer to topics related to the industry in which the enterprise operates.	Google Blog, PlayStation Blog
Microblogs	Enable publishing short messages in real time that are visible to people watching user's profile.	Twitter
Forums (Internet Discussion Forum)	Discussion groups on the Internet. They are used to exchange information, opinions and ideas among Internet users. They may be on a general or specialized subject (related to the industry or interests).	Cycling Forum, Audi Club Poland Forum
Business networking sites	Gather community oriented on professional development and the exchange of experiences within a specific profession or interests.	LinkedIn
Collaborative websites	Wikis are collaborative Web sites which can be set up to be edited by anyone or by designated users only.	Wikipedia
Virtual worlds and game	Internet games reflecting reality or fantasy world. It is required to create an avatar, namely a virtual alter ego the player.	Second Life, World of Warcraft
Social bookmarketing sites	Allow the evaluation and recommendation of content found on the Internet.	Digg
Open source software communities	Gather communities jointly creating products (software).	Linux
Crowdsourcing sites	Allow for the exchange of information between the enterprise and the community of customers, including customers reporting product or process innovations and giving opinions on the enterprise's projects.	My Starbucks Idea
Social shopping sites	Allow for the assessment and recommendations of products and enterprises.	Wanelo, Kaboodle

Source: Grzechowiak (2010); Mangold & Faulds (2009).

The types of the presented social media do not create an exhaustive catalogue. The pace of change in the virtual environment and the development of new technologies cause a continuous creation of new solutions recognized as social media, while others, due to the decline in their popularity, disappear from the Internet. Social media, in accordance with the view of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), can be categorized on the basis of the following characteristics:

- The degree of immediacy of perception of interpersonal relationships occurring in SM and the feeling of other people's involvement in the process of communicating with them (social presence theory),
- The amount of information that can be transmitted by a type of SM at the time (media richness theory),
- The required amount of information necessary to disclose about oneself (self-disclosure),
- The possibility of self-presentation.

Table 2 presents a classification of SM based on these characteristics.

Table 2. Classification of Social Media

		Social presence/ Media richness		
		Low	**Medium**	**High**
Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure	**High**	Blogs	Social networking sites	Virtual social worlds
	Low	Collaborative projects	Content communities	Virtual game worlds

Source: Kaplan & Haenlein (2010).

As it is visible, social media includes many "new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues" (Blackshaw & Nazzaro, 2004, p. 2). This content is now one of the most important and most reliable sources of information for consumers and enterprises (Cheema & Papatla, 2010; World Internet Project, 2013). Recommendations from friends and online opinions from unknown consumers are the most reliable sources of information for consumers, according to the global studies by AC Nielsen research agency (Burmaster, Lee & McGiboney, 2009). In turn, the results of Wave 7 studies indicate that consumers engage with the community around the brand in social media because of the need: to gain knowledge, to get the entertainment and social acceptance. Thanks to that fact more than half of Internet users want to have an impact on the development of the product and the opportunity to share their opinion with others (Report Wave 7, 2013). This all makes social media a valuable channel of communication with buyers. On the other hand, enterprises face the challenge of educating buyers while listening to their needs and responding to any problems and negative opinions.

Customer knowledge

Knowledge is a development factor and a source of success for enterprises in the complex and difficult operating conditions in the markets of today. Enterprises face the challenge of continuous acquisition of knowledge about the market, but also the creation of knowledge in order to remain innovative. As it has already been demonstrated in the introduction, customers have become the most important point of reference and the lifeblood of an enterprise's activities. Therefore, it is so important to get to know and understand them. Gaining customer's knowledge becomes the most important task for enterprises.

Many researchers classify customer's knowledge into three categories: knowledge for customers, knowledge from customers and knowledge about customers (Garcia-Murillo & Annabi, 2002; Salomann, Dous, Kolbe, & Brenner, 2005; Smith & McKeen, 2005, Gibbert, Leibold, & Probst, 2002). Knowledge for customers includes all the information to satisfy the information needs of customers about products, services, and activities of enterprises. Knowledge from customers consists of information (including opinions) about products and services used by them, whereas knowledge about the customer concerns the needs, preferences, and motivations of customers, as well as their demographic and psychographic characteristics. Customer's knowledge is also explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge refers to, inter alia, the functionality of a product, its pricing, and place of purchase. In turn, evaluating a product, sharing information about the user, or emotional relationship with the enterprise is tacit knowledge. Social media is an excellent source of the customer's knowledge (Zanjani, Rouzbehani, & Dabbagh, 2008). This what translates into its great value is also the possibility of acquiring tacit knowledge, which "is transmitted verbally and through shared experiences" (Grudzewski & Hejduk, 2004, p. 78). The specificity of social media and the main idea of its operation - enabling communication and establishing relationships, causes customers to articulate freely their desires, motivations and expectations, exchange experiences and opinions.

Research methodology

The focus of this research was a literature review focused on social media as a center of gravity and knowledge sharing tool meeting the needs of marketers and consumers.

Research findings – social media as a source of customer's knowledge

Social media as a source of knowledge for customer

Any decision made by the consumer is a subject to risk. The customer continually makes decisions regarding the choice of a product or service, and the place and time of its acquisition. The uncertainty related to the perceived risk of taking the wrong purchasing decision is often associated with a deficiency of information (the phenomenon of information asymmetry between the buyer and the seller) and it influences consumer behavior on the market (Kieżel, 2000). Thus, the transfer of comprehensive information to the customer (knowledge for the customer) plays an important role at every stage of the purchase decision-making process. Knowledge communicated to customers has a significant impact on the stage of acknowledging the needs (also allows for creating these needs), searching for ways to meet these needs, and assessment of alternatives. It can also minimize the post-purchase dissonance.

Knowledge for customers includes all the information that the enterprise provides for its customers (Gebert, Geib, Kolbe, & Brenner, 2003), in particular, information on the enterprise, its products, as well as markets and suppliers (Garcia- Murillo & Annabi, 2002). The quality and comprehensiveness of this knowledge, its transmission channels, and the speed of transmitting it to customers build customers' idea of the quality of services provided by the enterprise and significantly influence the purchase intentions of customers (Taylor & Baker, 1994). Characteristics of the individual types of social media causes that not every type of information

is suitable for publication in a particular medium. Corporate blogs are addressed to people who expect more information about the product or the enterprise, and the language of the publication is less formal. Information presented on the blog may relate to: **the enterprise** - the enterprise presented as a whole, including its identity, organizational culture, goals, mission and strategy, and way of functioning, sometimes even employees; **the product** - additional product information is published, technical specifications, answers to users' questions (FAQs), tips on how to resolve problems with the use; **the brand** - entries are of an expert nature, they are often created by a team of employees. Their goal is to create a brand as an expert in a particular field, whereby the published content is related to the entire market, industry, there are often presented ideas for product improvement (Mazurek, 2008). The possibility to comment on entries introduces an element of interaction with consumers.

When the purpose of the communication is to build and sustain relationships with customers, then the appropriate contact channels are social networking sites. Their advantage is the largest number of users of all types of SM, the ease of content generation (through sharing), and a high degree of confidence in the opinion of online friends. Increasingly, they perform the function of an aggregator of information from various sources. Thereby they allow for tracking content from friends from the level of a particular portal, but also from other social media (e.g. YouTube videos). This creates an ecosystem of knowledge (Hamsley & Mason, 2013). The role of social networks is not content creation, but relationship creation. This determines the type of information available there. It should aim at providing customers with a certain value and increasing their satisfaction of being a customer of the enterprise. This should be the first channel of the publication of new information about the product or the enterprise ("news" from the life of the enterprise, such as information about discounts or a new offer) (Riemer, Richter, & Seltsikas, 2010).

Adding video content not published anywhere before will encourage the recipients to interact with the enterprise (e.g. advertising spots not broadcast on TV) as well as dedicated applications for entertainment or to get certain benefits, such as a discount voucher. Social networking sites are a good channel to respond to all customer questions and to solve problems at their roots thanks to the ability of "just in time" communication. This is also the function of microblogs, which by means of short messages, allow for responding to customers' questions.

The second most popular type of SM, after social networking sites, are services allowing for multimedia sharing, especially video (e.g. YouTube). Audiovisual transmission is increasingly being used in business communications of enterprises in SM. The best-known form of communication using this tool are viral videos (Botha & Reyneke, 2013). The effect of "viral" video distribution arises due to the lack of delays in getting information to consumers and sharing this, attractive from the point of view of the enterprise, broadcast. The objective of the viral campaigns is to provoke discussion about the enterprise or the product (Dobele, Toleman, & Beverland, 2005; Ho & Dempsey, 2010). On the movie channel, YouTube, customers should also be able to find instructional videos, tips, and inspiration.

The development of social media has meant that enterprises ceased to be the main and the only source of knowledge for the customer. Consumers have a high level of trust in knowledge obtained from other consumers (Kucia & Zembik, 2012; Blackshaw & Nazzaro, 2004).

Therefore, it can be concluded that SM is a source of "knowledge for the customer from the customer." An extremely valuable source of opinions and recommendations are, in particular, blogs, forums, and multimedia sharing sites (YouTube).

Eighty-one percent of consumers seek advice before making a purchase through a social site and 74 percent of those who received such advice, found it to be influential in making a purchase (Wegert, 2010). Out of the nearly one million blog entries per day, most of them present opinions on products and services (Hsu, Lin & Chiang, 2013). Particularly noteworthy is thematic blogs, whose authors are often specialists in the field. Their knowledge does not always result directly from education, but rather from indulging in their passion. They undertake testing of various products, later describing their observations and opinions on the blog (Hsu et al., 2013).

Increasingly, common practice is the cooperation of bloggers with enterprises, which may raise doubts as to the accuracy of the recommendations (Cai & Chen, 2012). However, a comprehensive look at the content of the blog allows readers to infer to what extent the presented opinions are original, and to what extent they are sponsored. Reliable bloggers always include clear information about the cooperation with a particular enterprise.

One of the oldest tools used by consumers for discussion on the Internet are forums. Using the forums is one of the most common activities performed while using the Internet (Eurostat, 2013). A kind of paradox can be noticed - a large part of the discussion held on the forums refers to enterprises and their products, and at the same time they are very rarely actively used by businesses. Most forums have a grading system of evaluating entries by others, committed and experienced forum participants. This, in turn, facilitates the emergence of authorities and opinion leaders who, thanks to their commitment, become brand ambassadors (Tsang & Zhou, 2005). Such persons often act as customer service centers for enterprises, answering questions and solving problems of the new users of the product.

The portals of media sharing are also noteworthy, especially YouTube. As in the case of thematic blogs and opinion leaders, who engage in discussion forums, the filmmakers are often persons exercising a passion. Their broadcasts are characterized by a high degree of professionalism and objectivity. An interesting form of broadcast are tutorials - instructional videos that "step by step" present product operation and support or the possible use of the product. Not always does a tutorial refer to a single product, it is sometimes a presentation of certain tasks for which, in order to be performed, the author recommends some products (e.g. having a makeup done with specific cosmetics). A summary of information sources in social media for a customer is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Information sources in social media for a customer

	Source	Type of information
Knowledge for customer		
Information coming directly from the enterprise	Corporate blogs	- information about enterprise - information about product - information about brand
	Social networking sites	- information about new offer - information about promotions, discounts - "news" from enterprise - additional materials (e.g. advertising spots not broadcast on TV) - competition/entertainment applications - customer service (answering inquiries, solving problems, dealing with complaints)
	Multimedia sharing services (e.g. YouTube)	- instructional videos - advice - inspirations - viral videos
Information coming from other consumers	Thematic blogs	- product testing results - recommendations - entries sponsored by brands (promoting brands)
	Discussion forums	- recommendations and product opinions - advice - answers to inquiries about products and enterprises
	Multimedia sharing services (e.g. YouTube)	- instructional videos (tutorials) - informed opinion on products

Source: Hansson & Søilen, (2013), Levy (2013).

Passing a comprehensive knowledge for the customer by an enterprise builds the image of the enterprise and affects customer's satisfaction when they make decisions under the condition of (almost) full information. At the same time monitoring the knowledge transferred between consumers becomes a challenge. The growing popularity of SM can make even a single negative opinion to become a source of reputation crisis that could have a significant impact on the functioning of the enterprise.

Social media as a source of knowledge from customer and about customer

Acquisition of knowledge from the customer is a key factor in the success for enterprises in the twenty-first century (Garcia-Murillo & Annabi, 2002). Acquiring and understanding what customers know - what are their experiences, needs and motivations as well as learning about their satisfaction and emotional relationships with the product - is extremely important, and yet difficult (Rowley, 2002; Smith & McKeen, 2005). Social media is a source of diverse knowledge for enterprises, in particular as to find out what consumers think about products and the enterprise, about their ideas to improve them, what they think about competitive products, how they evaluate suppliers, whether they predict market trends (Khodakarami & Chan, 2014;

Salomann et al., 2005). Including this knowledge in the assets, an enterprise can create innovation, improve products and services, and provide added value to its customers.   Social media allows for accessing to explicit knowledge, which is expressed in the form of text or multimedia in different types of SM. Moreover, the special value of SM is the chance to discover consumers' tacit knowledge thanks to the possibility provided by SM of carrying out discussions with them or by observing the customer-to-customer conversations.

Reaching knowledge localized in social media requires enterprises to use it actively in their operations and to monitor the web content. Monitoring involves collecting, processing and analyzing the whole discussion and individual content in social media on a topic that is the subject of monitoring (Roszkowski, 2013). On the market there are many applications to monitor content in SM (e.g. Brand24), however, the mechanism of their functioning is similar. After typing a key phrase or a keyword, they search in real time all public entries in SM, where there is a key phrase or a keyword present. On the basis of the search results, the image of the searched notion is built showing, among others: source entries, categories of entries, influential surfers (opinion leaders, brand ambassadors) (Kucia, 2013).

Customers' knowledge is articulated in several types of content (Roszkowski, 2013):
- Exchange of experience - includes information, opinions and recommendations, and inquiries about products and enterprises. Depending on the product category, the participation in the whole content fluctuates between 10 and 70%. However, the vast majority (up to 90 %) of the content takes the form of brief information about the purchase and use of the product, enriched with emoticons indicating the emotional relationship with the product. Their most common sources are social networking sites and microblogs. Extensive opinions and recommendations appear less frequently, and blogs and forums are their sources. They are extremely valuable from the point of view of content, since a wide range of information provided allows for understanding the motivations and attitudes of customers. Online forums are a frequent source of requests for assistance or inquiries about the product
- Sales content - informs about the intention to purchase and mostly takes the form of requests for help and advice. Quick actions undertaken by enterprises in response to such content are characterized by a high degree of effectiveness, as they are directed at people ready to purchase,
- Shared content - content on social networking sites or micro blogs which includes a link to the materials posted onto other types of SM (photos, videos, articles). This type of content is a way of shaping opinion and a form of promotion, it often causes a viral effect. It may comprise up to 60% of the collected content.

Enterprises can increase the flow of knowledge from customers by initiating a dialogue or by boosting customer engagement through appropriate tools. One of them is crowdsourcing projects through which ideas are acquired to improve products or even a product and process innovations (Župic, 2013). Such actions create the image of the enterprise as open to the opinions of customers and strengthen relationships with customers. In addition, new products introduced by crowdsourcing are far more likely to succeed in the market, because they reflect the real needs of customers.

In order to properly define the product and the activities undertaken in the market, the enterprise also needs to have knowledge of who its customers are and what they are like. Knowledge about

customer consists of information about the socio-demographic and psychographic characteristics, current and future relationship with the enterprise, and the current and future requirements and expectations (Day, 2000; Davenport, Harris & Kohli, 2001). Out of all media, the Internet has the best possibilities for analysis, and the value of information available in social media arises from the nature of its availability - free, unforced. The content analysis provides information about the emotional relation with the brand, the context of consumption, market trends as well as identifies the brand value for customers, the effects of an advertising campaign, and helps to understand the behavior of consumers (consumer insight). Many types of social media, especially those with high levels of self-disclosure (the amount of information required to reveal about oneself), provide a very comprehensive knowledge about the users. Data analysis focuses largely on the analysis of quantitative summaries provided by each social medium, and related statistics such as site traffic or, in the case of blogs, the ratio between the number of posts to comments. Such analyzes show that the content raises the interest of customers, thus it helps shape marketing communications. The analysis of the data could also be used to study the structure of the community gathered around the brand, website/brand profile hits statistics, or research on media coverage. Facebook presents the distribution of the users in terms of gender, age, language, and location. The range of data to which we have access depends largely on the profile settings on social networking sites. The public settings allow for gaining comprehensive information about the interests, leisure time, or connections and relationships with others (social graph).

Conclusion

Social media has become an important source of information for all market participants (Panahi et al., 2012). For consumers, it is a trusted source of opinions and recommendations about products. For the enterprise, it provides feedback on the market offer, needs and expectations of customers, and channel of communication with the market (Hsu et al., 2013). As we have seen, social media is the source of three categories of knowledge: for customers, from customers, and about the customer. Enterprises face the challenge of customer knowledge management, and the effective implementation of this concept can become a source of competitive advantage. In this context, constant monitoring of content posted in social media becomes of primary importance. Its analysis allows for the development or modification of the marketing strategy or undertaking day-to-day activities and interactions in order to build the image, establish relationships with customers, and create loyalty.

The cognitive value of the paper is a presentation of social media as a source of the customer's knowledge. Various types of social media have been analyzed by identifying the information contained there as knowledge for customers, knowledge from customers, and knowledge about the customer. The considerations are complemented with the indication of the importance of the customer's knowledge in shaping the strategy of an enterprise's operations and market decision-making by the consumer. The penetration of these issues and their refinement will be carried out during the subsequent stages of research.

Acknowledgment

References

Awad, E., & Ghaziri, H. (2004). *Knowledge Management.* New Jersey, NJ: Pearson Education, Prentice Hall.

Blackshaw, P., & Nazzaro, M. (2004). Consumer-Generated Media (CGM) 101: World-of-mouth in the age of the Web-fortified consumer. Retrieved January 31, 2014 from http://www.brandchannel.com/images/papers/222_cgm.pdf

Botha, E., & Reyneke, M. (2013). To share or not to share: the role of content and emotion in viral marketing. *Journal of Public Affairs, 13(2),* 160–171.

Boubaker, L., Djebabra, M., Mellal, L., & Chabane, H. (2012). Environmental knowledge memory: Contribution of the DIK model. *Safety Science, 50*, 554-562.

Bukowitz, W., & Williams, R. (2000). *The Knowledge Management Fieldbook.* London, ENG: Prentice Hall.

Burmaster, A., Lee, L., & McGiboney, M. (2009), Personal recommendations and customer opinions posted online are the most trusted forms of advertising globally. Retrieved January 31, 2014 from www.blo.nielsen.com

Cai, Y., & Chen, Y. (2012). Mining influential bloggers: From general to domain specific, from explicit to implicit. *International Journal of Knowledge-based and Intelligent Engineering Systems, 16*, 223-233.

Cheema, A., & Papatla, P. (2010). Relative importance of online versus offline information for Internet purchases: Product category and Internet experience effects. *Journal of Business Research, 63*, 979-985.

Clare C., & Loucopoulos P. (1987). *Business Information Systems.* London: Paradigm.

Dalkir, K. (2005). *Knowledge Management in Theory and Practice*. Oxford, Elsevier/Butterworth Heinemann.

Davenport, T.H., Harris, J.G., & Kohli, A.K. (2001). How do they know their customers so well? *MIT Sloan Management Review, 42*(2), 63-73.

Davenport, T.H., & Prusak, L. (1998). *Working Knowledge: How Organizations Manage What They Know*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Day, G.S. (2000). *Capabilities for forging customer relationship*. Cambridge: Marketing Science Institute.

Dobele, A., Toleman, B., & Beverland, M. (2005), Controlled infection! Spreading the brand message trough viral marketing. *Business Horizons, 48*, 143-149.

Garcia-Murrilo, M., & Annabi, H., (2002). Customer knowledge management. *Journal of The Operation Research Society, 53*, 875-894.

Gebert, H., Geib, M., Kolbe, L., & Brenner, W. (2003). Knowledge-enabled customer relationship management: Integrating customer relationship management and knowledge management concepts. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 7*(5), 107-123.

Gibbert, M., Leibold, M., & Probst, G., (2002). Five styles of customer knowledge management, and how smart companies use them to create value. *European Management Journal, 20*(5), 459-469.

Granados, N., & Gupta, A. (2013). Transparency strategy: Competing with information in a digital world. *Management Information Systems Quarterly, 37*(2), 637-641.

Grudzewski, W.M., & Hejduk, I.K. (2004). *Zarządzanie wiedzą w przedsiębiorstwach [Knowledge Management in Enterprises]*. Warszawa, PL: Difin.

Grzechowiak, M., *Social media w Polsce i na świecie [Social Media in Poland and in the World]*. Report Internet Standard: Social Media 2010. Retrieved January 31, 2014 from http://www.slideshare.net/internetstandard/social-media-2010-6326834

Hamel, G., & Prahalad, C.K. (1996). *Competing for the future*. Boston, Harvard Business Review Press.

Hamsley, J., & Mason, R.M. (2013). Knowledge and knowledge management in the social media age. *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce, 23*(1-2), 138-167.

Hansson, L., & Søilen, A. (2013), Optimal ways for companies to use Facebook as a marketing channel. *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society, 11*(2), 112-126.

Hennig-Thurau, T., Malthouse, E.C., Friege, C., Gensler, S., Lobschat, L., Rangaswamy, A., & Skiera, B. (2010). The impact of new media on customer relationships. *Journal of Service Research, 13*(3), 311-330.

Ho, J.Y.C, & Dempsey, M. (2010), Viral marketing: Motivations to forward online content. *Journal of Business Research, 63*, 1000-1006.

Hsu, Chin-Lung; Lin, Judy Chuan-Chuan, & Chiang, Hsiu-Sen. (2013). The effects of blogger recommendations on customers' online shopping intentions. *Internet Research, 23*(1), 69 – 88.

ICT usage in enterprises in 2013 (December 2013). EUROSTAT. Retrieved 31 January, 2014 from http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/4-16122013-BP/EN/4-16122013-BP-EN.PDF

Jasimuddin, S.M., Klein, J.H., & Connell, C. (2005). The paradox of using tacit and explicit knowledge. *Management Decision, 43*(1), 102-112.

Kadushin, C. (2004). *Introduction to social network theory*. Chapter 2: Some basic network concepts and propositions. Retrieved from http://melander335.wdfiles.com/local--files/reading-history/kadushin.pdf

Kaplan, A.M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons, 53*(1), 59-68.

Keusch, F. (2012). How to increase response rates in list-based web survey samples. *Social Science Computer Review, 30(3),* 380-388.

Khodakarami, F., & Chan, Y.E. (2014). Exploring the role of customer relationship management (CRM) systems in customer knowledge creation. *Information & Management, 51*(1), 27-42.

Kietzmann, J., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I.P., & Silvestre, B.S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons, 54,* 241-251.

Kieżel, E. (2000). *Rynkowe zachowania konsumentów [Consumers' Market Behaviour]*. Katowice, PL: University of Economics in Katowice.

Kothari, A., Rudman, D., Dobbins, M., Rouse, M., Sibbald, S., & Edwards, N. (2012). The use of tacit and explicit knowledge in public health: A qualitative study. *Implementation Science, 7*, 20-31.

Kowalczyk, A., & Nogalski, B. (2007). *Zarządzanie wiedzą. Koncepcje i narzędzia [Knowledge Management. Concepts and Tools]*. Warszawa, PL: Difin.

Kucia, M., & Jaciow, M. (2010). Wywiad bezpośredni czy ankieta on-line – dylematy badacza [Direct interview or online survey – researcher's dilemmas]. In. Mazurek-Łopacińska, K. (Ed.). *Badania marketingowe – nowe wyzwania*. Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu nr 96. Wrocław, PL: Published by the University of Economics in Wrocław.

Kucia, M., & Zembik, M. (2012). Polak na e-zakupach, *Imagine, 7,* 10-12.

Kucia, M. (2013). Techniczne aspekty jakościowych badań marketingowych w Internecie [Technical Aspects of the Qualitative Marketing Research on the Internet]. In. Jaciow, M., & Maciejewski, G. (Ed.). *Jakościowe badania marketingowe w Internecie*. Katowice, PL: Published by the University of Economics in Katowice.

Levy, M. (2013). Stairways to heaven: Implementing social media in organizations. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 17*(5), 741 – 754.

Mangold, W.G., & Faulds, D.J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons, 52*, 357-365.

Mazurek, G. (2008). *Blogi i wirtualne społeczności – wykorzystanie w marketing [Blogs and Virtual Communities – Application in Marketing]*. Warszawa, PL: Wolters Kluwer Polska.

Nonaka, I. (1994). A dynamic theory of organizational knowledge. *Organization Science*, 5(1), 14-37.

Nonaka, I., & Takeuchi, H. (1995). *The knowledge creating company: How Japanese companies create the dynamics of innovation*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Panahi, S., Watson, J., & Partridge, H. (2012). Social media and tacit knowledge sharing: Developing a conceptual model. *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology,* 1095-1102.

Polanyi, M. (1966). *The tacit dimension*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Raport Wave 7 (Rynek w Polsce): Społecznościowy kod złamany [Wave 7 Report (The Market in Poland): Community Code Broken]. Retrieved January 31, 2014 from http://www.universalmccann.pl/uploads/images/Gallery/dokumenty/wave7_www_01.pdf

Reeves, M., & Deimler, M. (2011). Adapatbility: The new competitive advantage. *Harvard Business Review, 89*(7/8), 134-141.

Riemer, K., Richter, A., & Seltsikas, P. (2010). Enterprise microblogging: procrastination or productive use? *16th Americas Conferences on Information Systems 2010 (AMCIS 2010), 4*, 4199-4207.

Roszkowski, J. (2013). Monitoring mediów społecznościowych [Social media monitoring]. In. Królewski, J., & Sala, P. (Ed.), *E-Marketing. Współczesne trendy. Pakiet Startowy*. Warszawa, PL: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 336-373.

Rowley, J. (2002). Customer knowledge management. Bangor, University of Wales. Retrieved from http://www.aom-iaom.org/pdfs/jms/JSM-18-06_rowley.pdf.

Salomann, H., Dous, M., Kolbe, L., & Brenner, W. (2005). Rejuvenating customer management: how to make knowledge for, from and about customers work. *European Management Journal, 23*(4), 392-403.

Siemieniuch, C.E., & Sinclair, M.A. (1999). Organizational aspects of knowledge lifecycle management in manufacturing. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies, 51*(3), 517-547.

Smith, H.A., & McKeen, J.D. (2005). Developments in practice XVIII – customer knowledge management: Adding value for our customers. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems, 16*, 744-755.

Stefanou, C.J., Sarmaniotis, Ch., & Stafyla, A. (2003). CRM and customer-centric knowledge management: an empirical research, *Business Process Management Journal, 9*(5), 617 - 634

Sudalaimuthu, S., & Raj, S.A. (2009). *Logistics Management for International Business*. New Delhi, PHI Learning.

Taylor, S. A., & Baker, T. L. (1994). An assessment of the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the formation of consumers' purchase intentions. *Journal of Retailing, 70*(2), 163–178.

Tsai, W., Tsai, M., Li, S., & Lin, C. (2012). Harmonizing firms' knowledge and strategies with organizational capabilities. *Journal of Computer Information Systems, 53*(1), 23-32.

Tsang, A.S.L., & Zhou, N. (2005). Newsgroup participants as opinion leaders and seekers in online and offline communication environments. *Journal of Business Research, 58*, 1186-1193.

Tuckel, P., & O'Neill, H. (2002). The vanishing respondent in telephone surveys. *Journal of Advertising Research, 42*(5), 26-48.

Wasserman, S., & Faust, K. (1994). *Social network analysis: Methods and applications.* Cambridge, ENG: Cambridge University Press.

Wegert, T. (2010), Reach your customers while social media peaks. Retrieved January 31, 2014 from www.clickz.com/clickz/column/1699974/reach-your-customers-while-social-media-peaks

Wiktor, J.W. (2001). *Promocja [Promotion]*. Warszawa-Kraków, PL: WN PWN.

World Internet Project 2013. Retrieved January 31, 2014 from http://technologie.gazeta.pl/internet/1,104530,14894700,Co_jest_wazniejsze___internet_czy_telewizja__Najwazniejsze.html

Zack, M. (1999). Managing codified knowledge. *Sloan Management Review, 40*, 45-58.

Zanjani, M.S., Rouzbehani, R., & Dabbagh, H. (2008). Proposing a conceptual model of customer knowledge management: a study of CKM tools in British dotcoms. *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, 38*, 303-307.

Ziemba, E. (2009). *Projektowanie portali korporacyjnych dla organizacji opartych na wiedzy [Designing Corporate Portals for Knowledge Based Organizations]*, Katowice: University of Economics.

Ziemba, E. (2013). The holistic and systems approach to the sustainable information society. *Journal of Computer Information Systems, 54*(1), 106-116.

Župic, I. (2013). Social media as enabler of crowdsourcing. In. Bondarouk, T., Olivas-luján, M. R. (ed.) *Social Media in Human Resources Management (Advanced Series in Management, Volume 12)*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 243-255.

Biography

Marta Zembik, M.Sc., Poland, University of Economics in Katowice, Institute of Business Information Systems. Her principal research areas are focused on social media marketing, virtual communities, and marketing research on the Internet.