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Social Media and Prosumerism: Implications for Sport Marketing Research

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10 Social media and prosumerism: implications for sport marketing research

James Santomier and Patricia Hogan

1 INTRODUCTION

The future envisioned by Alvin Toffler in his trilogy *Future Shock* (1970), *The Third Wave* (1980) and *Powershift* (1990) is a testament to Toffler's prescience. His predictions of monumental social, cultural and economic change wrought by new information technologies and a shift to a prosumer economy have become reality (Siegel, 2008). Toffler foretold that an increase in knowledge (owing to new, more effective ways to communicate information) will lead to de-massification, where mass marketing gives way to niche and micro-marketing, where mass production is replaced by increasingly customized production and where knowledge (that is, the ability to apply information to the solving of problems or to the creation of opportunity) is power.

The pressure to de-massify, Toffler suggested, is being driven by the increasing awareness of better-informed and empowered individuals and is becoming practiced through the unstoppable development of information technology (Chartered Management Institute, 2001). These better-informed and empowered individuals were termed 'prosumers' (Toffler, 1980), networked individuals who simultaneously can produce, distribute and consume their own goods or services, usually outside the monetary economy (Ferguson, 2009). The unstoppable information technology is social media, including mobile media, made possible due to Web 2.0. Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) indicate that the emergence of the Internet followed by the materialization of Web 2.0 (that is, interactive or social web) technologies and the social media (such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) it spawned have provided a showcase and launch pad for the prosumer economy. 'Prosumption was clearly not invented on Web 2.0, but given the massive involvement in, and popularity of, many of these developments (for example, social networking sites), it can be argued that it is currently both the most prevalent location of prosumption and its most important facilitator as a "means of prosumption"' (ibid.: 13).

Web 2.0 and social media are making it possible for millions of sport fans to become prosumers. Fans, along with athletes and sport organizations worldwide, can directly correspond and interact using social media. For example, fans are empowered to participate on sport-specific organization or team wikis, homepages, blogs, micro-blogs, pictures, podcasts, video sites, Twitter, Facebook, iTunes, and so on. Soon it may be possible for fans to use tele-immersion technologies to insert themselves into sporting events on their HD/3D televisions or mobile devices, and, given empathetic social media now being developed, to actually feel the impacts in football or other sports (Kelly, 2009). In addition, many sport enterprises such as Nike, Adidas and Prince are using content-based social media in efforts to directly engage customers, build brand communities, build long-term customer relationships and market products. Definitely, as
Dolles and Söderman (2011: 4) point out: ‘The proliferation of information-technology has made it possible to serve the needs of fans all over the world. They can consume [prosume] an event either real-time or recorded from virtually anywhere. As a result of this, the opportunities for the promotion of sport, and the benefits for sport and its partners, are significant.’

Yet, despite the rapid development and integration of social media into the marketing strategies of many sport and sport-related brands worldwide, many organizations have neither developed an efficacious social media measurement strategy nor determined how well social media compares with other digital marketing initiatives relative to the important metrics of business (Linnell, 2010). And, many are still trying to understand the phenomenon that is social media. Social media marketing in general and social media sports marketing in particular, therefore, represent fruitful areas for research and for developing new research methodologies.

Social media is changing the way businesses, including sport businesses, communicate in the pursuit of brand building and commerce, and is compelling these businesses to create new and innovative ways to capitalize on the prosumer economy (MarketingSherpa, 2010). As such, there is a call for the rethinking of marketing and its metrics for social media (Light, 2010; Rust et al., 2010). And, there will definitely need to be a rethinking of sport marketing and its metrics, now that the fans (prosumers) are in charge (Sports Marketing2.0, 2010; also Dolles and Söderman, 2013 in this volume). Such new territory represents a rich opportunity for new research. Given (1) the call for rethinking marketing efforts and metrics (or, e-metrics) for the social Web due to the roles social media and prosumerism are playing in this economy; (2) the quickly expanding use and potential of social media in sport and sport related industries, especially in sport marketing, and (3) the bountiful opportunities for research and for inventing research methodologies in the realm of social media marketing, we explore the following question in this chapter: what are the implications of social media and the prosumer economy for research in sport marketing?

More specifically, we discuss the need to rethink marketing in light of social media and the prosumer economy in this chapter, explore the current frontier of theory and practice in marketing using social media (where, for research concerning practice we mainly use www sources owing to the fact there is no systematic research in this rapidly emerging area), and address the implications of the aforementioned for research in sport marketing for scholars, organizations and/or marketing professionals. Finally, research idea-matrices based on major concepts, definitions, theoretical foundations, metric models and tools, and research models are included as a quick reference to generate variables or ideas for research.

2 SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE NEED TO RETHINK MARKETING AND ITS METRICS

Social media supports the democratization of knowledge and information, transforming people from content consumers into content producers and consumers – or ‘prosumers’ (Davis, 2009). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 59) define social media as ‘a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations
of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (UGC) or consumer-generated media (CGM). Lietsala and Sirkkunen (2008: 3-4) categorized social media into six areas (which may serve as useful delineations for research in social media): (1) content creation and publishing (for example, blogs, v-blogs or video-blogs, podcasts); (2) content sharing (for example, Flickr, YouTube, del.icio.us, Digg.com); (3) social networking websites (for example, Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace); (4) collaborative productions (for example, Wikipedia/Wikis, OhmyNews); (5) virtual worlds (for example, Second Life, WOW) and (6) add-ons (for example, RockYou, Slide, Friends for Sale). However, given the rapidly changing nature and growth of social media, new categories may be added — for example, immersion or empathetic social media (Kelly, 2009).

Figures from the 2009 Nielsen Report on social media indicate that the amount of time spent surfing social networking and blogging websites has almost tripled (that is, time spent on social networking and blogging websites accounted for 17 per cent of the total time spent online) from 2008 to 2009, ‘suggesting a wholesale change in the way the Internet is used’ (Perez, 2009: 1). Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Blogger.com, and Wikipedia all were ranked in the top 15 on Alexa (which posts the top 500 websites) in April 2010 (Alexa, 2010). Similarly, Viralblog reported (in July 2010) that YouTube receives over 200 million views per day (with 24 hours of video uploaded every minute) where over 70 per cent of activity is from outside the United States. Also, it is estimated that over 50 million tweets are sent per day on Twitter. These numbers are astounding; more and more it appears the Internet is being used to stay connected and to communicate and share in social networks, and advertisers/marketers have taken notice of this social media phenomenon: where before, advertisers were somewhat wary of social media properties, they are now spending more than ever buying prominent spots on social networking sites. Even as companies decreased their overall advertising expenditures, they increased their spending on top social networks and blogs — up 119 per cent (that is, US$108 million in August 2009 up from US$49 million in August 2008) (Perez, 2009: 1). When broken down by category, the increases are even more dramatic. The entertainment industry, for example, has increased spending by 812 per cent year-over-year on social network sites, and the travel industry increased spending by 364 per cent (ibid.: 1).

Vitrue’s Social Media Index (SMI), which assigns brands and products a score based on overall buzz from status updates, videos, photographs and blog posts, has tallied its 2010 results and has released its top 100 social brands based on index scoring (Vitrue, 2011). The iPhone was once again ranked number one. Many sport or sport-related brands, however, were in the list as well (for example, NBA rank 18; Nike 24; Adidas 34; NFL 36; Converse 51; ESPN 55; NHL 65; Major League Baseball 68; Puma 70; NASCAR 73). Visa moved up 45 spots (from Vitrue’s 2009 tally) to rank 42 on the list, probably because it was a title sponsor of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa where it placed significant resources into Facebook and YouTube — such as the campaigns ‘Go Fans’ and ‘VISA Match Planner’ — in multiple languages to generate tremendous buzz worldwide. Even though the Vitrue SMI ‘focuses on consumer mentions and reactions — as opposed to indexing brand engagement via social media — the list is still a veritable powerhouse of information in terms of consumer buzz and word-of-mouth recommendations’ (Van Grove, 2010: 1). However, solid research data related to brand
engagement via social media represents a needed, potential area for research in sport marketing.

Although for some professionals in the advertising industry, social networks may still seem like an emerging medium, if an advertising medium at all, the 2010 Media Planning Intelligence Study Report by the Center for Media Research on the media buying plans of advertisers and agencies indicated that having a presence on social networks is one of the top priorities of their media plans for next year. The report specified that 57.7 per cent of respondents ideally plan, and 56.3 per cent realistically plan to include social media in their media plans next year. ‘That finding is significant because it shows the rapid speed with which social media, including social networks like Facebook, microblogging services such as Twitter, and other new and emerging formats connecting people to each other online have taken a precedent with both consumers and marketing industry professionals’ (Mandese, 2009: 1).

As indicated earlier, however, social media is not concerned with consumers, but with prosumers – yet traditional marketing and marketing research assumes a consumer. For example, Morgan and Summers (2005: 106) define marketing research as ‘the function that links the consumer [emphasis added], customer, or public to the marketer through information – information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve marketing performance’. And, Mullin et al. (2008: 2) define sport marketing as consisting of ‘all activities designed to meet the needs and wants of sports consumers [emphasis added] through exchange processes. Sport marketing has developed two major thrusts: the marketing of sport products and services directly to consumers of sport, and marketing of other consumer and industrial products or service through the use of sport promotions’. Sport promotion, part of the traditional marketing mix, represents ‘the deployment of a fully integrated set of communication activities intended to persuade consumers [emphasis added] toward a favorable belief or action as a tactical component of the overall marketing campaign’ (Irwin et al., 2008: 3). Another area for research, therefore, could consider the role of sport marketing, especially social media sport marketing, in the age of the prosumer versus the consumer.

Definitions for social media marketing focus on ‘reader customers’ who will share their experiences, attitudes and information about the brand with their social networks through, for example, blogging, Facebook, Twitter, or specialized wikis. Braithwaite (2010: 1) identifies a common definition for social media marketing:

social media marketing usually centers around efforts to create content that attracts attention, generates online conversations, and encourages readers to share it within their social networks. The message spreads between users and resonates because it is coming from a trusted source, as opposed to the company or brand. Through social media marketing, organizations increase their brand awareness and facilitate conversations with the customer. Social media marketing is therefore, basically an effort to humanize a company or brand by encouraging customers and prospective customers to engage, thus driving loyalty and preference.

Getting the attention of the customer is an important component of the marketing effort, and traditional sport promotion efforts (for example, sponsorships, athlete appearances, infomercials, endorsements, sales presentations, websites, speeches, demonstrations, ticket brochures, advertisements, autograph sessions, community projects,
DVDs and videos, press conferences, media guides, interactive analog exhibits, exhibitions, hospitality areas, national-anthem singers, contests, video games, stadium tours, museums, fantasy leagues and competitions) are not as effective in the current marketing environment (Irwin et al., 2008), and need to be adapted to the prosumer economy through social media via digital marketing. Digital marketing is ‘marketing that leverages the interactive connections between seekers and providers enabled by digital media and devices’ (Walsh, 2009: 1). The efficacy of using digital marketing in sport marketing also represents a promising area for sport marketing research.

Although a recent report from Knowledge Networks indicated that 83 per cent of the Internet population (ages 13 to 54) participates in social media (47 per-cent do so on a weekly basis), less than 5 per cent of social media users reported that they regularly turn to these sites for guidance on purchase decisions in any of nine product/service categories. Also, currently, only 16 per cent of social media users say they are more likely to buy from companies that advertise on social sites (Loechner, 2009). Basically, the report finds that social media is having a profound impact on the way people connect with each other, but that it does not seem to be a very meaningful way for people to connect with brands, or advertising that is promoting brands. This kind of research could be applied to sport marketing as well to determine if conclusions are consistent.

As mentioned previously in reference to Visa as a product marketed through sport, the social media phenomenon and attempts at digital marketing were particularly pronounced in the marketing of the 2010 Football World Cup, where participants engaged in a global conversation. Fans used Twitter’s hashtag #WorldCup, and practically every game hit Twitter’s trending topics list. Facebook offered The Facebook Guide to the World Cup, which explained worldwide live streaming partnerships (including one in the US for ESPN), as well as Facebook’s Support Your Team Leaderboard that tracked elements such as fan ‘intensity’. In the mobile location world, Foursquare partnered with CNN to offer specific badges for users that check-in to over 100 viewing venues in 32 countries around the world. Similarly, Gowalla partnered with Major League Soccer to create trips in local areas that highlight soccer. And, the New York Times tracked athlete Facebook mentions in the World Cup and compiled the data for fans. Finally, and contrary to the Knowledge Networks report regarding brand connection, social media appeared to have provided a platform for ambush marketing and usurping perceptions of official sponsorship status for the World Cup. Although Nike was not an official sponsor of the World Cup (Adidas was an official sponsor), its three-minute ‘Write the Future’ YouTube soccer video went viral and garnered the record for the largest audience in the first week of its campaign with 7.8 million views (Learmouth, 2010). Given the aforementioned, new ideas for research include looking at effective social media marketing models in sport and the role of ambush marketing in sport through social media.

Even though many sport teams, sport product representatives, athletes, and so on currently use social media (especially websites, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube) in their marketing plans, the metrics touting the efficacy of those efforts relative to return on investment (ROI) including measures related to return on objectives (ROO) or on customer relationship management (CRM), currently seem to be in their infancy and only measured in terms of number of clicks or click-throughs (Emarketer, 2009; KLM, 2010). For the most part, the data focused on by marketing professionals to evaluate social media include: (1) internal sales and distribution data; (2) consumer behavior studies
for target identification; (3) media channel data for media consumption information and (4) buzz data related to buzz or viral marketing. However, many are still struggling to fully understand social media and to measure the efficacy of social media marketing initiatives (given the time and effort they take) relative to ROI and ROO (Emarketer, 2009). Yet, as Gummesson (2008: xii) admonishes, we must remember that ‘marketing deals with the generation of revenue and revenue must exceed costs. Don’t ever forget it! The cry for marketing accountability and metrics is currently loud — again’. Indeed, however, some claim that social media marketing will not lend itself to ROI (Mandese, 2009). Research that could document the role of social media in sport relative to ROI and/or ROO would be most welcome.

Currently most sport enterprises and sport-related industries seem to be only monitoring visits to their social media websites. For example, the backend of the National Hockey League (NHL) website, which was constructed by a third party firm, contains analytics features that enable the NHL to monitor hits, clicks and session length (Sherman, 2009). Social media websites related to brands or events typically allow participants to interact by describing, rating/evaluating and discussing the product or services or content (Lefer, 2008). Others use coupons: measuring the success of social media marketing can be difficult, but using a variety of hard and soft ROI metrics is one solution. For example, distributing a coupon via a social network and monitoring its redemption can put a concrete number on social success. Marketers can also assign a dollar value to soft metrics, such as number of fans or followers, to measure ROI (Emarketer, 2009).

Ultimately, then, in light of the social media networked, prosumer economy, the new purpose of a business may be to serve a customer who creates other customers (Stern, 2010). The sheer volume of potential customers in social media and the continuing exponential growth of social network platforms demand marketers’ attention. It appears necessary for companies and/or brands to integrate social media into their overall marketing strategies. Customer service aspects of social media in general is a viable topic for research, and proposed integration models that have been researched and provide evidence-based information represent another area for proposed research.

3 SOCIAL MEDIA USE FOR MARKETING IN SPORT BUSINESS

In spite of the current ROI/ROO limitations related to social media marketing, there have been many predictions about increased and enhanced social media use in the sport industry. Rose (2009) identifies the following predictions (which could be measured and researched) for what the future holds for athletes using social media platforms:

1. Athletes will embrace new and creative outlets and platforms, such as Ustream (live broadcast site), to connect with fans. [In essence, the athlete can now become a media platform by creating and atomizing exclusive multi-media content, having a broad social footprint, and owning relationships with fans (Marobella, 2009).]
2. Social media numbers may become a part of contract negotiations with athletes.
3. Teams and management will increase content restrictions for athletes.
4. Social media will become an integral part in the philanthropic endeavors of athletes. 
5. There will be more involvement from retired athletes.

Also, Peck (2009) presents his ‘Sports and social media predictions 2010’ – containing predictions from a number of sport marketing experts and thought-leaders – concerning the use of social media in sport. Major predictions include the use of social media for ‘glocalization’ (simultaneous local and global) of brands, teams and leagues attempting to build communities using their own proprietary networks, properties redefining and creating new rules concerning tweeting in order to reduce image problems, sport blogging personalities (athletes) becoming even more popular, experts being hired to manage sport social media campaigns, sport businesses figuring out ways to make money on social media (perhaps resulting in social media websites becoming more public relations oriented), fans wanting even deeper and more meaningful interaction with sport teams and athletes, the move to video, mobile and virtual games with consumer involvement in co-creation, and brands fine-tuning their measurement efforts past just counting hits. In addition, the rise of ‘social business’ in sport is predicted where the need for measurement efforts focused on ROI often come up as a theme in social media use for marketing and promotion. Any of the aforementioned areas represent new avenues for potential research.

Social media has changed the dynamics of marketing. According to Gillin (2007: i), the ‘real influencers are no longer marketing experts, nor the traditional media that has always controlled and filtered marketing messages, but millions of ordinary people who are determining in direct and powerful ways what people hear, say, and believe’. Consumers increasingly turn away from print media; skip television commercials and ignore 1990s-style cost-per-thousand banner advertisements (ibid.). But customers or fans are still seeking information, and many are embracing social media, a media that empowers consumers and facilitates their metamorphosis into prosumers. A comparison of prosumer attitudes towards traditional versus new media marketing in sport may be an area of research interest for some.

Underhill and Kurit (2009) emphasize that since Google has over 200 million look-ups per day and there are over 600 million people on Facebook, social media is an important marketing area: They contend social media marketing is about content, not commercials, about relationships, not selling. The focus should be on developing authentic relationships (people prefer to buy from people they know, like and trust) since, ultimately, it is difficult to make money directly through social media. However, Alvin Toffler states that we have so far not adequately recognized the extent and power of the interactions between the non-money, or ‘prosumer’, economy and the money economy (Fisher, 2006: 1). He contends that although prosumer activities are very different from the money economy, they have a powerful aggregate impact on the money economy since the cyber structure allows prosumers to create value and rapidly disseminate it across the globe, where others can commercialize it: ‘Recognize that it [prosumer economy] can take activities out of the market, the way Napster took music out of the money economy and transferred it into the non-money economy. Then iTunes used the Web to move music downloading back into the money economy, creating a very viable business that did not exist before’ (ibid.: 2). The rapid rise of prosumerism on the social Web has major implications for both the global economy and for humanity in general – implications that have been largely unmeasured and underestimated according to Toffler and Toffler.
(2006). It appears that businesses, including sport businesses, have a need to rethink marketing and its metrics in the realm of social media, and that there is a plethora of research that could be done around the areas of social media, prosumerism and sport business.

4 RETHINKING MARKETING: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

A number of business thought leaders have proposed a rethinking of marketing due to new media and to prosumerism, and any of their models could be applied to research in sport marketing. Tables 10.1 to 10.5 found in the final section of this chapter provide a quick reference summary for research topics and ideas and include a summary of the following thought leaders and their proposed models for potential research.

Vargo and Lusch's (2004: 1) talk of businesses evolving to 'a new dominant logic for marketing'. They indicate a need to move from the logic of the exchange of goods (which focused on tangible resources, embedded value, and transactions) to a logic focused on intangible resources, the co-creation of value; and relationships as a 'service-centered logic'. They define service as 'the application of specialized competences (knowledge and skills) through deeds; processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself' (ibid.: 1). From their perspective, primary marketing activities should now include the Tofflerian focus on 'interactivity, integration, customization, and coproduction' (ibid.: 11). In their customer-focused and relational model, where value 'is defined and co-created' with the customer 'rather than embedded in output' (ibid.: 6), the goals of marketing are 'to customize offerings, to recognize that the “consumer” is always a co-producer, and to strive to maximize consumer involvement in the customization' (ibid.: 12). The stated goals reflect the conceptual shift of the consumer to a co-producer - prosumer.

Gummesson (2002: 587) called for marketing practitioners and scholars to change their theoretical approach to marketing, and recommended a reduction in the distinction between producer and consumer, conceptualizing the consumer as an 'active co-producer, user, and value creator'. He (Gummesson, 2007) proposed, based on Vargo and Lusch's (2004) service-dominant logic, that marketers abandon services marketing (as in goods and services) and embrace service marketing (relationships) as defined by Vargo and Lusch. Gummesson (2008) recommends marketing strategy moves from the 4Ps (product, price, promotion, place) of traditional marketing to the 30Rs (30 relationships identified in his text), a new marketing paradigm. These 30Rs are distributed thusly: 3Rs in classic market relationships; 14Rs in special market relationships; 6Rs in mega relationships and 7Rs in nano relationships.

Another proposed model for successful social marketing in the networked era involves a play on the 4Ps of marketing. Clark (2009) introduced the 5Fs of social media which he contends should increase the likelihood of ROI in social media brand promotion. Clark's 5Fs are familiarity, fortune, fame, fun and forwardability.

The advent of social media is a contributing factor in naming this era the 'attention age' or 'attention economy'. This age began with the emergence of social media in the first years of the twenty-first century (Sullivan, 2009), and is marked by the ability of individuals to become prosumers, to create and consume information instantly and
freely as well as share it on the Internet using social media – most wikis and blogs are developed and maintained by prosumers. However, Toffler and Toffler (2006) contend those who call it the attention economy assume attention means intention (of social media participants to purchase products or services), but, owing to the nature of prosumers, they claim that attention does not mean intention and that marketers need to change their ways to embrace social media and the prosumer economy it ushers in. Esther Dyson concurs in the interview by Kleiner (2009: 3):

The online and media worlds are dealing with a crumbling economy across almost all sectors. Advertising revenue is going down; venture capitalists are getting nervous. And separately, there is a change in the way people spend their time and buy things, as a result of being online, that has begun to affect all marketing and media enterprises. A lot of marketers call the Internet an ‘attention economy’. They are looking for consumers who will pay attention to their product, and they try to calculate consumers’ propensity to purchase. They think that attention means intention. But it doesn’t. The reality is, people don’t go online to give attention, but to get it. They don’t want to be part of the audience. They want to perform and to be heard, to be present. That’s why digital media are replacing old media so rapidly – and why this new era is so difficult for marketers. They need to learn to join the conversation rather than interrupt it.

Similarly, Kunz (2008) argues that marketers need to be aware of the three modes or mindsets (that is, receiving, hunting and doing) people engage when using interactive communications, and match business marketing strategies accordingly. ‘The entire mindset of a person engaged on MySpace or LinkedIn is different from that of a hunter on a search engine. A Google user is walking into a store. A Facebook user is walking into a bar’ (Kunz, 2008: 1).

Deighton and Kornfield (2007) assert that the anticipated new model of marketing, in which digital media facilitates the delivery of marketing messages, has not developed and consider the word ‘consumer’ to be of limited value in understanding the current new media marketing context. Rather than the consumer, there exists a model of consumer collaboration or prosumerism, where consumers communicate among themselves ‘responding to marketing’s intrusions by disseminating counterargument, information sharing, rebuttal, parody, reproach and, though more rarely, fandom’ (ibid.: 2). They identify five discrete roles for interactive technology (ibid.: 8): thought-tracing (search), ever-present connectivity, property exchange, social exchange and cultural exchange. They claim these roles are actually ‘responses to the diminution of marketing’s power relative to the consumer in the new media environment’ (ibid.: 13), and if the ‘marketer wants to survive it has to be by becoming an ally, someone who is welcomed into social or cultural life and is, perhaps, even sought out as someone with cultural capital’ (ibid.: 13).

Prahalad (2009) argues, as do Vargo and Lusch (2004) and Gummesson (2002, 2007, 2008), that companies have not made enough use of the opportunities provided by globalization and prosumerism, and calls for value co-creation of companies with prosumers: the move from a product-centric view of value creation to an experience-centric view of value co-creation. He argues that the rules of the game and the role of the players have changed, thanks to the Internet, and that companies need to adapt to the new rules, rules that involve the co-creation of value with customers. Steps in the co-creation of value process include (Ramaswamy and Prahalad, 2006):
1. Defining clear objectives for the project (for example, social media marketing plan).
2. Figuring out who are the right customers to involve in the process (who to involve in the network).
3. Working with customers to find out what they really want to include in a product or service.
4. Designing products/services or systems jointly to meet those customers' needs.
5. Deciding how to share the value.
6. Overcoming internal resistance to change – within seller, buyer and partner organizations. This is a critical step to ensuring that you control the channel.

According to Kelly (2009) companies are going to have to be more agile, more collaborative, and transition from traditional models of competition to shared webs of innovation. Dyson elaborates (Kleiner, 2009: 1): marketers will use the new media to interact with consumers directly, leaving the traditional content providers in the lurch. Increasingly, consumers are interested in talking to one another, rather than reading the precious words of the experts. That does not mean the death of professional content, but it does mean a dramatic change in the content providers' business models. Meanwhile, marketers will have to integrate themselves into conversations already taking place on the Web. The really good marketers will become much more clever about what they do, and engage with people more effectively (ibid.).

Rust et al. (2010), given the cyber structure and the prosumer economy, also call for a rethinking of marketing and its metrics in the direction of relationships. They recommend that companies shift their focus from marketing products to cultivating customers in order to maximize customer lifetime value, replace the chief marketing officer with the chief customer officer, and adopt a new set of metrics (that is, customer profitability versus product profitability, customer lifetime value versus current sales, customer equity versus brand equity and customer equity share versus market share) for measuring success. 'Never before have companies had such powerful technologies for interacting directly with customers, collecting and mining information about them, and tailoring their offerings accordingly' (ibid.: 96).

The social media-prosumer movement and relationship economy requires that marketers change their focus from that of pushing products or services on consumers to building long-term customer (fan) relationships (Light, 2010; Rust et al., 2010). Such a customer-focused business involves leading customer-driven innovation based on customer needs and desires (Light, 2010) through seeing customers as prosumers. Social media allows sport 'consumers' or fans to directly participate and relate to sport teams and players in real ways never before possible: social media allows the public to interact with sport organizations and high-profile personnel who may have otherwise been inaccessible because of time and security constraints. Thus, targeted use of social media, especially when used consistently with other marketing and publicity activities, may exponentially expand fan involvement and loyalty for sports programs. Sports organizations and players who are actively engaging fans via social media are generally finding that use to be a net positive, and the most progressive among them realize that social media will be a vital part of fan outreach in the future (Sideman, 2009).

However, many others (Emarketer, 2009; Peck, 2009; Prahalad, 2009) argue that the marketing and promotion game has changed and that businesses need to learn how to
use social media marketing even though ‘online social network applications are mainly used for explaining and maintaining personal networks, and most adults, like teens, are using them to connect with people they already know’ (Lenhart, 2009: 3). They argue that it is a matter of time before these websites are used to generate ROI. Any of the aforementioned models could be used as a theoretical framework for social media marketing research in sport business.

5 CURRENT MODELS AND METRICS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Models for developing social media marketing plans that account for the prosumer phenomenon abound online, many in multi-media forms. For example, Dailey (2009) presents a comprehensive online guide for a social media marketing strategy that focuses on insuring authenticity (where real people communicate with real people in unfiltered, genuine ways), transparency, immediacy and a trusted community. He contends that the social media department (comprised of marketing, communications and public relations personnel) of any company or agency will deal with social media strategy and functional alignment, channel selection, compliance, metrics, managing blog operations, reputation and brand managing, crisis management support, bringing social media innovation and best practices to the company, and external outreach. Using social media for research and development (instead of focus groups) will, according to him, save much money. Research concerning the relative costs of traditional versus social media marketing in sport business represents a potential endeavor.

Social media monitoring tools are potential starting points for gaining a better understanding of how effective brand marketing is within the social media space. Internet searches will result in a significant number of free and paid tools to choose from. Companies such as Spredfast.com and Radian6 have developed comprehensive Web-based software and e-guides that help companies manage their social media marketing efforts. This software not only measures audience size and engagement, but also allows coordinated planning and automated posting across multiple social media platforms, where the goal is to inform companies as to whether or not the time put into social media is helping build brand awareness and why. Generally,

Web-based software counts how many people view a company’s Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, and Flickr updates, as well as posts managed by several popular blogging platforms, such as Moveable Type, WordPress, Blogger, Lotus Live, and Drupal. It also measures how the audience is interacting with all this content — for instance, how much they are commenting on posts, clicking on links, or retweeting updates. (Jonietz, 2009: 1)

However, how all that data relates to ROI is a question businesses will have to address and is ripe for research.

Braithwaite (2010) states that the essential steps to a successful social media marketing plan involve: (1) listening (to determine what is being discussed and how you can contribute before launching your company or brand into the social media world); (2) positioning your brand around an ethos; (3) clarifying and determining an overall objective and outlining a social media plan to fit it; (4) setting trackable goals
(defining specific measurable goals to provide a benchmark against which to evaluate performance); (5) developing a content strategy in order to attract and engage your target; (6) choosing appropriate social media tools (such as Facebook and Twitter) to maximize your social media bang; (7) implementing and engaging the plan by joining the conversation and participating as a genuine member of the community and (8) monitoring and evaluating progress through appropriate measurement and monitoring systems.

Maynard (2009) explains the need for social media marketing campaigns and indicates that since the brand is the company’s face to the world, how it is perceived and what people say about it are measures of success. She recommends that companies, first, make their website the hub of all social media activity and, second, use social media for buzz, customer service, brand loyalty, search engine optimization (SEO), networking, thought leadership, promotion and sales, driving traffic, deepening relationships and getting feedback. She provides a general framework for a social media marketing strategy (objectives, target audience, perceptions, desired response, tone/personality, and brand values) and gives guidance in applying this general framework to Twitter and Facebook.

Many sport organizations, and marketing professionals may approach social media simply as a list of technologies (blogs, podcasts, and so on) that can be deployed as required, depending on the marketing goal. However, this may not be the best method of deploying social media initiatives. Rather, a more coherent approach is to start with the target audience and then determine the type of relationship that the organization wants to build with them (Radian6, 2010). Happe (2010) warns that metrics should be selected based on relevance to the company or brand goals and objectives, and lists potential social media marketing metrics: (1) activity metrics (page views, unique visitors, members, posts – ideas/threads, number of groups – networks or forums, comments and trackbacks, tags/ratings/rankings, time spent on the website, contributors, word count, referrals, completed profiles, connections between members, relationship ratios, periods – day, week, month, year and frequency of visits, posts and comments); (2) survey metrics (satisfaction, affinity, quality and speed of issue resolution, referral likelihood and relevance of content and connections) and (3) ROI measurements (marketing/sales, cost per number of engaged prospects – community versus other initiatives), number of leads/period, number of qualified leads/period, ratio of qualified to non-qualified leads, cost of lead, time to qualified lead, lead conversion, number of pre-sales reference calls – to other customers, average new revenue per customer, lifetime value of customers, customer support, customer satisfaction, number of initiated support tickets per customer per period, and support cost per customer in community). Similarly, and as identified earlier, Rust et al. (2010) identify customer (fan-) profitability, customer lifetime value, customer equity, customer equity share as important metrics in a customer-centric (versus product/service-centric) marketing campaign, whereas Gummesson (2008) recommends the 30Rs.

Hanna and Donelley Interactive (2009) reported in their business social media benchmarking study that companies typically judge social media success based on metrics of engagement (with prospects and customers), brand impact (awareness and reputation) and leads (quantity and quality). Actually, a number of digital social media marketing e-handbooks concerning the how-tos of social media measurement and analyses are also available online. Specific examples include Radian6 (Practical Social Media Measurement and Analysis), Freeman (Social Media: Extending and Growing
Your Brand) and Social Media for Small Business guides on Facebook. In addition, many Web analytics companies such as Click Tale Limited, Coremetrics, Omniture, WebTrends and One Stat have emerged to help organizations collect, measure, analyse and report social media data to optimize social media usage in the service of organizational objectives. Web analytics can help organizations measure traffic and do business and market research. According to Wikipedia (2011) there are two categories of web analytics: off-site (measurement of brand’s potential audience – opportunity, share of voice – visibility and buzz), and on-site (measurement of what landing pages encourage people to make a purchase, of social media performance fit with key performance indicators, and so on).

Lake (in Social Media Optimization, 2009) identified the following metrics as appropriate for measuring the efficacy of a social media marketing venture: traffic, interaction, sales, leads, search marketing, brand metrics, PR, customer engagement, retention and profits. MarketingSherpa (2009: 14) identifies the following metrics for social media marketing: increase brand or product awareness; improve brand or product reputation; improve public relations; increase website traffic; increase lead generation; increase offline sales revenue; and increase online sales revenue. According to the MarketingSherpa search media report (2010: 14) social media is believed to be a more effective tactic (than search engine optimization) for marketing for objectives that are new to measurement (for example, improved brand or product reputation and public relations). Even though many marketers think these objectives are difficult to measure, the growth of social monitoring tools (for example, Trackur, Spiral16, Radian6, search.twitter.com, Facebook Business Page) makes it possible to define brand reputation and reach.

The annual e-metrics optimization summit (see Emetrics 2010) may be a resource for learning about website optimization, search analytics, campaign optimization, behavioral targeting, competitive analysis, customer experience, public sector metrics, statistical analysis, business implementation and multi-channel marketing metrics. The Sports Social Media Index (SSMI) was developed by Sports Geek (2010) to rate the performance of social media used by sport franchises. The SSMI covers the key platforms of social media, how each platform is used and how each team engages its fan base. The SSMI also rates teams on their execution on social media platforms relative to the teams' fit with best practices engaged in by teams (such as the Dallas Mavericks, LA Kings and New York Knicks) in the vanguard of digital sport marketing.

Researchers interested in sport social media may consider joining a sport marketing social networking group such as Sport Marketing 2.0 (www.sportsmarketing20.com), which provides up-to-date insights regarding best practices in sport media marketing, how to utilize available platforms, who uses sport media well, and the latest technologies. In addition, the Social Media and Sport Summits and BeyondSport.org provide information relevant to social media marketing and research in sport. Sideman (2009) contends digital marketing through social media can address the following media goals of most sport enterprises, goals that could also be used as metrics: generate fan participation and discussion; establish control over team messages and news; announce signings, injury updates or other breaking news; create relationships among fans, athletes and coaches; provide fans with 'inside' information and product promotions; boost traffic to the official team website, and sell more tickets.
Overall, however, the landscape regarding why, what and how to implement effective marketing strategies through social media seems to be changing almost daily, given the exponential growth and use of social media outlets and the trial and error nature of the research into this burgeoning field. The current status of sport social media, the changing nature of marketing, causal complexity and the dynamic nature of social media marketing provide unlimited opportunity for those interested in research focused on social media and sport marketing. Relative to research related to social media marketing in sport business, however, any of the aforementioned models or guides could form the basis for evaluating sport business social media marketing efforts.

6 OVERALL IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH IN SOCIAL MEDIA SPORT MARKETING

‘Research is the systematic activity directed towards objectively investigating specific problems in order to discover the relationships between and among variables. It seeks to answer specific questions’ (Nyanjui, 2010). Fundamentally, therefore, research is about asking questions and then answering them through observation, survey or experiment in an organized fashion in order to describe, explain and/or predict phenomenon or control events. According to the Web Center for Social Research/Methods (2006) there are three basic types of research questions (descriptive, correlational, or causal) that can be applied (usually in combination) to research in social media sport marketing:

1. **Descriptive:** when a study is designed primarily to describe what is going on or what exists. For example, ‘How are sport enterprises using social media in their marketing efforts?’

2. **Correlational:** when a study is designed to look at the relationships between two or more variables. For example, ‘What is the relationship between the level of social media used in a marketing campaign and team (or athlete) brand awareness or brand recognition?’

3. **Causal:** when a study is designed to determine whether one or more variables (for example, a social media campaign) causes or affects one or more outcome variables (for example, ticket sales). For example, ‘What is the effect of a new pre-season social media campaign on the number of season tickets sold?’

The basic research process may still be able to function as the fundamental framework for any research study related to social media and sport marketing, whether from the perspective of a scholar or a marketing professional. Researchers in academe, whether engaging in qualitative or quantitative forms of research, typically employ some version of the following: first, identify the research problem or question, review the literature, choose a research design, identify the data collection method, design the data collection forms, select the sample, collect, analyse and interpret the data relative to the research problem or question, and do the research report (Morgan and Summers, 2005). Whereas, although such methods have been criticized as inadequate.
(Ehrenberg and Barnard; 2000), those in sport marketing research may choose the DECIDE method: Define the marketing problem; Enumerate the controllable and uncontrollable decision factors; Collect relevant information; Identify the best alternative; Develop and implement a marketing plan, and Evaluate the decision and the decision process.

It is clear that the fast-paced, constantly changing, networked, integrated and relentlessly competitive (but simultaneously cooperative) business environment of today has changed the world and appears to demand a change in thinking in order to more successfully navigate through the current milieu in order to collect data, address problems and capitalize on opportunities. Martin (2009) contends that deductive and/or inductive thinking are necessary but not sufficient for this rapidly changing world and suggests the addition of abductive thinking:—integrative or design thinking that builds its own way of understanding what’s going on and then goes on to develop ways to address the problem. The abductive thinking stance involves merging models or creating new models to creatively develop new options for solving problems, addressing issues or creating opportunity. This thinking has four components (salience, causality, sequencing and resolution) and involves the logic of ‘what might be’—it is critical to the creative process according to Martin (2005).

The webifying of the world ushers in the need for changes in the way that research is conducted. As an example, the Inspired Research Wiki (2010) which was designed for sharing creative research methods used by planners, researchers and the design community, is replete with innovative ideas for collecting data using interactive media and for sparking new ideas for ‘what might be’. Abductive-thinking researchers may want to visit that wiki to obtain or adapt ideas and methods for their planned research. Similarly, Taylor and Coffee (2008: 13) identify categories and examples for different forms of innovation in research. The following represents an expansion of these three categories. These categories could be adapted and applied to any of the social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and so on) using specific digital technologies (Internet, mobile, and so on) for sport business research in social media.

1. **New designs or methods:**
   - new ways of collecting or generating quantitative or qualitative data (for example, on-line interviews or observations, enhanced use of photography and other audio/visual methods, sensory ethnography, soundscapes, eliciting creative writings from respondents);
   - new analytical techniques (for example, the development of new software packages, undertaking critical discourse analysis);
   - new representations of qualitative research (for example, visual ‘texts’, using hypermedia, ethnographic fiction, multilayered and multi-vocal texts).

2. **New concepts:**
   - generating new ways of thinking about research (for example, drawing on autobiographical practices, practitioner-led research, multi-modal research practices);
   - developing new methodological concepts (for example, hypermedia ethnography, qualitative longitudinal research).

3. **New ways of doing research:**
   - working with new participants or new groups;
- combining methods and methodologies (for example, textual with visual, qualitative with quantitative);
- cross-disciplinary research;
- responding to changing research landscapes (for example, enhanced information and communication technology (ICT) capacities, new ethical challenges and guidelines).

In addition, the Research Information Network (2011) provides an extremely helpful guide (replete with links and resources) to assist researchers to use social media in their research. Academic and research blogs, research and writing collaboration tools and project management tools are also presented in this guide. Those interested in applying social media research to sport business would find it a very worthwhile reference that could stimulate a number of ideas for research. An example of innovative research methodology (for scholars and marketing practitioners) using social media and an integrative, cross-organizational (that is, university business schools, sport business, research companies, and so on) format involves the ESPN XP project. ESPN XP provides a vehicle to introduce new techniques and innovative methodologies (cross-media measurement) to sport industry research:

in March 2010 ESPN Research+Analytics revealed plans for ESPN XP, an encompassing research initiative, to study consumer behavior around major sporting events beginning with the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa. Using one of the largest collections of research companies ever assembled, plus a top-tier business school, ESPN XP attempted to measure media usage and advertiser effects for the World Cup across all media platforms—television, radio, Internet, mobile and print—in order to advance knowledge about multi-media use and the total and incremental impact it has on their clients' media campaigns. Initial research companies joining ESPN in this initiative included the Keller Fay Group, Knowledge Networks, the Media Behavior Institute, the Nielsen Company and the Wharton Interactive Media Initiative (WIMI) [of the Wharton Business School]. ESPN will take the best of what is learned from the World Cup and apply it to football in the fall and other sports during 2011. The goal is to create a scalable research plan to measure cross-media audiences 12 months out of the year by 2012. Wharton's focus on online behavior using ESPN.com, ESPN Mobile, ESPN3 and ESPN Deportes (the Spanish-language portal) is to build a state-of-the-art predictive model to understand and project 'multichannel' behaviors of its audience across digital properties (Internet and mobile). The academic involvement means opportunities for graduate students as well. From this project they hope to develop a rich database and predictive models for academic researchers as well as for professional marketers. (ESPN Media Zone, 2010)

The commercial goal of most sport enterprises regarding their digital initiatives is to leverage as much of their sport content across as many multi-media platforms as possible in order to aggregate as many consumers as possible. Therefore, researchers may want to focus on any one or more of these dimensions at any point in the digital media value chain, which includes: (1) various types of sport content and digital rights ownership; (2) technical aspects of digital production; (3) distribution channels including sport specific portals, websites, and so on; (4) delivery technologies such as broadband, satellite, cable, and so on, and (5) reception by consumers via specific digital devices. In addition, there may soon be synergistic mergers of different social media to build partnerships (for example, iTunes + Facebook + ?) to accomplish business or social
Table 10.1  Major concepts matrix

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<tr>
<th>Author/s and year</th>
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<td>Competi­tion vs co-creation of value</td>
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Table 10.2 Relevant definitions for marketing and social media

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<tr>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Idea/concept</th>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Idea/concept</th>
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responsibility goals, and the impact of such synergy on sport marketing would be an interesting study.

For the purposes of flexibility and creativity, especially given the colossal pace of change in information technology, a number of research idea-matrices (Tables 10.1 to 10.5) are presented that can be used by scholars and/or marketing practitioners to generate research ideas. These, of course, should be considered flexible for additions or deletions given the time-dependent nature of the work and the quickly changing social media environment, but could represent a quick reference for identifying variables or generating ideas for (descriptive, correlational or causal) research or evaluation related to social media and the marketing of sport or of the marketing or products/services through sport. These matrices include: major concepts, relevant definitions, theoretical foundations, other metric models and tools, and models for social media application for research.

In conclusion, it must be recognized that social media and the techniques and processes related to marketing using social media are changing at an incredible rate and will require continual monitoring for those involved in social media research. As such, we identified the need for sport marketing researchers who are abductive thinkers who can design, combine and use innovative research methodologies as stimulated by the continually evolving technology. Ultimately, however, research prospects related to social media and sport marketing are vast for scholars and marketing professionals alike, and are replete with opportunities for designing new research methodologies.
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<td></td>
<td>Service-centered logic vs services centered logic</td>
<td>Relationship or R marketing</td>
<td>Social media promotion</td>
<td>Mindsets of modes marketing model</td>
<td>Discrete roles for social media</td>
<td>Move from marketing products to cultivating customers</td>
<td>Customer co-creation of value, new form of strategic capital vs product-centric view of value creation</td>
<td>Comprehensive guide to social media marketing</td>
<td>New rules for marketing and PR</td>
<td>Essential steps to a social media marketing plan</td>
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<td>Author/s (company) and year</td>
<td>Proposed model or concept</td>
<td>Content areas and metrics</td>
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<td>Chris (in Social Media Optimization, 2009)</td>
<td>Metrics for social media campaigns</td>
<td>Increase brand or product awareness</td>
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<td>Marketing Sherpa (2010)</td>
<td>Goals for social media</td>
<td>Improve brand or product reputation</td>
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<td>Sideman (2009)</td>
<td>Goals for social media in sport</td>
<td>Improve PR</td>
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<td>Sports Geek (2010)</td>
<td>Sport Social Media Index (SSMI)</td>
<td>Increase website traffic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spredfast.com, Radian6, and so on</td>
<td>Web-based companies that set up and manage social media marketing plans and strategies</td>
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<td>ClickTale, Coremetrics, Omniture, WebTrends, One Stat</td>
<td>Help organizations collect, measure, analyse, and report social media usage in the service of organizational objectives</td>
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<tr>
<th>Traffic</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Leads</th>
<th>Search marketing</th>
<th>Brand metrics</th>
<th>PR</th>
<th>Customer engagement</th>
<th>Retention</th>
<th>Profits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase brand or product awareness</td>
<td>Generate fan participation and discussion</td>
<td>Establish control over team messages</td>
<td>Announce signings, injury updates, or other breaking news</td>
<td>Create relationships among fans, athletes, and coaches</td>
<td>Provide fans with 'inside' information and product promotions</td>
<td>Boost traffic to the official team website</td>
<td>Sell more tickets</td>
<td>Rates the performance of sports franchise using social media</td>
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</table>

SSMI covers key platforms of sports social media, how each platform is used and how fan base is engaged.
### Table 10.5 Models for social media applications and research innovation around descriptive, correlational or causal research questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s and year</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Wharton School with ESPN research model</th>
<th>Kelly (2009), Rose (2009), Peck (2010)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Martin (2005, 2009)</td>
<td>Abductive thinking (or integrative or design thinking)</td>
<td>ESPN XP project</td>
<td>Predictions for social media use in sport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### REFERENCES


