Brand awareness gains wings on social media.
The continued rise of values based marketing.

Nigel Grimshaw-Jones
School of Communication Studies. AUT.

2016

Abstract

Brand values and the communication of them to customers, has become an integral part of marketing with the rise of social media use. Using social media as an active marketing initiative has also received a huge amount of attention in the media and amongst academics alike because of its ability to connect individuals together, creating powerful brand communities where many-to-many communication can flourish.

The marketing and communication characteristics of social media websites like Facebook in particular, are well documented and described by authors such as Grams (2012), Legorburu & McColl (2014), Richardson (2013) and (Leboff, 2013). This study further contributes to this debate, investigating the role social media plays in the use of brand values as an emotional connector between consumers and businesses. Brand values, always a part of the culture of a brand were found to encourage more human contact, mimicking the effects of traditional word-of-mouth. Such grass-roots and inexpensive social media marketing campaign studies, are lacking and the findings suggest that businesses might benefit by humanising and creating more of a business personality around their brand to become more appealing.

A multi-method single case study approach was employed by the researcher in order to gain a holistic understanding of a particular business' journey of rebranding and marketing a business using Facebook alone. This approach used a six-month slice of marketing and general business activity from an Asian fusion take-away brand in Auckland New Zealand, in 2014. Sales figures, website

analytics, social media analytics, customer surveys and an interview with the proprietor all combined to provide cross referenced data for the researcher, who was then able to draw conclusions and gain insights in order to answer the primary research question. Additionally the researcher presents the evidence for his conclusions as well as uncovering the importance of brand communities, customers as co-creators of brands and practical topics businesses could consider around transparency, integrity and authenticity in their marketing initiatives. Brand awareness as a tangible metric is also highlighted by the researcher as currently under explored yet increasingly important by most marketers and suggestions about how this can be improved are considered.

Overall the campaign was a big success for the business with an increase in turnover of over 133% in a year and brand values were identified as the common factor between engagement on Facebook, the online reviews, the customer surveys and the interview with Paul Brandwood, the owner of Wok Express.

The research suggests that the arrival of social media driven activity between customers and businesses is here to stay and introduces how the collection of rich data is and will continue to be, a game changer for both customers and businesses alike. Further research in this area is desirable as the researcher considers the implications.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

Signed:

_____

Nigel Grimshaw-Jones

Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to acknowledge and thank the following: –

– Touch Marketing Ltd

– Paul Brandwood

– Gudrun Frommherz

1.0 Introduction

The primary research question this case study addresses is this: – "How might businesses benefit by creating a values based personality around their brand to take advantage of the humanising impact social media can have upon customer expectations"?

To help answer this question the research used a single case study of Wok Express, a small takeaway business in Auckland New Zealand. Wok Express embarked on a complete re-brand of its three outlets but particularly pertinent to the question, Facebook was chosen as the main marketing channel. Using Facebook alone the idea was to increase sales by generating new business from an entirely new demographic of customers which the restaurant had not previously targeted, those "health conscious" consumers of fast food. Facebook allows the targeting of particular interest groups with its paid advertising model and this was to be a central part of the agency's marketing strategy. As part of the strategy, the core values of the business were re-imagined and purposefully made highly visible. Fresh, additive free and authentic or homemade – were the values introduced. These were expressly marketed to existing customers and the newly targeted ones, as part of the re-brand strategy. The traditional demographic for Wok Express before it was Wok Express, had been customers whose main concern was price and purely price driven marketing material was used in order to attract them. Most of the advertising before the re-brand was done through letterbox drops and local newspaper ads.

The researcher was embedded in the project from the first meetings with the agency and the proprietor. Throughout the campaign he had full administrator access to all the website and social media analytics and was privy to all campaign strategies. The researcher's intention was to study the campaign as it progressed in order to determine four key sub-questions, considered crucial to effectively answer the primary question.

1. Was the campaign successful with Facebook as the prime marketing channel?

2. How did Facebook, primarily a social media channel, change the approach to the branding of Wok Express?

3. What was the role of online communities and engagement with them through shared values?

4. Can the definition of branding be updated in the light of the findings?

Background

People who are active on social media expect and appreciate the free flow of information, the ability to like, share and comment on content and to receive responses from friends and members of their online communities (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). These interactions extend to getting advice about goods and services they may be interested in purchasing. Online communication and the sharing of consumer experiences on social media platforms has become a default practice whenever people seek to make more informed buying decisions (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013).

Within the media and advertising industries as well there have been news, journal articles and books written in an effort to describe the phenomenon of changing

customer expectations because of social media – and how industries should be reacting. In a research article, Oestreicher-Singer, (2013) concluded, that online communities have had significant impact upon consumers' decisions to buy goods. These studies show that the influence on consumers increases as they spend more time using a website, and even more strongly, as they increasingly engage in community participation (Oestreicher-Singer, 2013). Community participation may also be a stronger predictor of influence than is, merely consuming online content. This suggests an increasing importance of online communities to marketers as opposed to merely broadcasting content online (Oestreicher-Singer, 2013).

Some commentators have suggested that centralised control and management of brands is now a strategy of the past and that due to the ability of consumers to discuss a brand amongst themselves, business owners and brand developers operate more like curators and influencers of brands rather than as brand controllers (Grams, 2012). Others are wondering how businesses generally can gain value from social computing initiatives, a very broad term that suggests a lack of knowledge about how the branding industry could respond (Oestreicher-Singer, 2013). Amongst commentators and academics alike, there is general agreement that social media has given consumers the power to respond, share, criticise and praise brands like never before and this new consumer power has fundamentally changed the parameters of branding, (Richardson, 2013).

Part of this research is an investigation into how social media has fundamentally changed the way people interact together online and whether this has affected the branding industry. Websites like Facebook encourage sharing and casual

interactions including comment and comedy. Businesses that attempt to do business within this social framework have to understand that the medium is primarily social and not intended for advertising. Facebook itself released guidelines for advertisers suggesting just this (Reiss-Davis, 2013).

Businesses need to understand how to do social media marketing purposefully, making effort to clarify their strategies to make their advertising more social before they consider advertising on Facebook, (Reiss-Davis, 2013). This suggests working in harmony with the medium, rather than merely seeing it as another marketing channel. Businesses need to join in and become one of the tribe as Richardson (2014) describes the communities of people that form on social media websites.

This paper presents an example of a business, Wok Express that attempted to do social media marketing properly, by using a professional agency with a deliberate strategy plan. The case study is about one brand's journey into marketing on social media. There are few research papers that provide case studies about how social media has affected the branding process and more particularly how the nature of Facebook demands particular marketing responses. Issues include:–

- What assumptions do marketers make about Facebook as a channel?
- What new jargon is involved?
- How should content be treated?
- What is "storytelling"?
- How do customers behave online?
- What is engagement and how do you get it?
- On what level do I engage my customers most effectively?

- Do values matter?

This case study discusses these concerns as it monitors the progress of the company over six-months.

Despite relevant academic studies from (Zhang, Ye, Law, & Li, 2010) on word-of-mouth impact of reviews online, from (Pulizzi, 2012) on the rise of "storytelling" and (Martinka, 2012) on how social media communities affect consumer behaviour, there is currently a lack of live case study examples that deal satisfactorily with these issues.

An informative case study could address some of the practical problems identified above and also suggest a blueprint for businesses and pundits to follow. Grams (2012) and Richardson (2013), have identified similar issues around branding in the social age, including the increased importance of brand values and message integrity. Although this research concurs with these findings, it also practically demonstrates the effectiveness of social media as a branding channel. In particular it shows how online social communities like Facebook were used to inform and actively direct the strategy. The advantage therefore of this real-world case study lies in evidencing how brands can be co-constructed by ad hoc consumer interactions and need not follow a static, preconceived branding model.

The definition of Branding, used in this thesis is straightforward. The agency completely revamped the visual expression of the Wok Express brand. The logo, colours and designs of the outlets were all re-done around a consistent style for all three. To do this the agency used the values fresh, additive free and homemade to inspire the new visual creative. The accompanying strategy was also to use these

values to position the brand strongly within the minds of a health conscious new clientele.

The term Brand Awareness also has a definition within the bounds of this study. When not describing it in general terms, it is used within the bounds of Facebook marketing, to describe a strategy where the emphasis of any marketing activity is designed only to make people aware of the brand values. Although there may be a call to take a specific action within the marketing materials, the primary aim of the exercise was to spread awareness of the brand values message within Facebook and from there to word of mouth. This definition of brand awareness should be borne in mind, when the researcher explains the lack of analytics tools to measure its effectiveness.

This study charts the six-month progress of the re-brand recording how brand values and social media channels worked together in order to create a successful and self-sustaining marketing campaign. The outcome of this organic marketing campaign was a strong and broadly co-owned brand that was able to not only increase sales, but also brand identification. As the campaign progressed, the focus of the research became the study of brand values, of social media as a channel of direct and indirect influence and of online communities as entities that were able to support the brand over time.

The mixed methods analysis employed by this study will use quantitative data from sales spreadsheets, Google Analytics and Sprout Social Media, sales figures, website visits/referrals, Facebook engagement, including shares, likes and comments and responses from online reviews. Further a Google Survey of patrons

16

during the study period, adds more finely-graded data of user opinion and buying behaviour. Qualitative data for the study involved an interview with the brand owner. This was thematically analysed in the context of the results of the quantitative analysis.

The scope of this research covers analysis of one re-brand and marketing strategy implemented as a response to a changing marketing environment. It is bounded within one industry and examines the socialisation of a particular marketplace that is, Asian fast food. The research is limited to asking questions around whether social media marketing works, the importance of brand values when re-branding in today's social media savvy marketplace and how online communities build influence over time.

Although the study touches on the importance of content, it doesn't go into great detail about the specifics of creating it. For instance, the detail of topic, imagery and tone, despite being very relevant to any overall discussion about brand values and communication, is not developed. Copywriting and image development in this environment is an emerging field, tied closely to the behaviour of online communities themselves. Types of content posted, how popular this is and how it is shared online, is of course central to behaviour within an online community and the contribution of this to social age branding is undoubtedly large. Although certain data metrics were available to attempt understanding the above in greater detail, it was considered not within the scope of this study. Certainly it is an area where further study is desirable.

Another identified limitation is the current inability to quantify in a definitive way, the effects of brand awareness upon tangible business metrics like sales figures

17

and return on investment. As part of the case study the researcher was able to use substantial circumstantial evidence supporting the contention that brand awareness can have a huge effect. The findings however are unable to offer a definitive connection, as there is currently no method the researcher is aware of, to do so.

This thesis contains six chapters. Following the introduction, chapter two reviews the available literature and how it has informed discussions within the industry about the development of social media as a viable marketing channel. Discussions include the growth of online communities, how they function and how they have contributed to changes within branding strategies. The literature review also includes a discussion of how brands themselves can change and become co-created with the addition of the end user as stakeholder. Gaps within the available literature are identified and the study's research questions are introduced as worthy contributors to the debate. Chapter three explains the methodological approach to the study and introduces case study as the most suitable model for the investigation. Further, chapter three describes the design of the study including the data types, the methods and processes of data collection and the methods of data analysis. Key findings from the analysis of the data are introduced in chapter four. The quantitative data from the social media channels Facebook and Zomato, visits to the Wok Express website and the customer surveys are introduced using graphs. Chapter five discusses how the findings contribute to answering the research question and is broken down into the three main areas of interest identified: – the success of the Facebook campaign, the changes that social media may or may not have impressed upon branding generally and the use of values to engage customers.

The conclusion, chapter six, summarises the overall findings of the research, answers the research questions, and outlines the limitations of this study and highlights opportunities for further research

2.0 Review of Literature

The development of the internet has empowered consumers like never before.
Today there is considerable interest in researching online marketing and
consumer behaviour, not only by marketers but also within various academic
disciplines, those proponents of digital communication studies and researchers
into online social behaviour. There is good reason to gain a greater understanding
of the influence of social media on consumer behaviour. A series of consumer
statistics compiled by Reinard (2006), show that customers actively search online,
investigate and research their suppliers, read reviews and seek advice and help
from their peers and friends on social networks. All of these activities usually occur
before making purchasing decisions. More recent studies in consumer behaviour
on the internet, particularly around consumers making more informed decisions,
suggest that it has now become a default practice for people to consult friends,
colleagues and peers generally. This may be for gaining advice or making better,
more informed purchase decisions (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013).

Social media marketing has also spawned new terminology as well as breathing
new life into old descriptions and methods. Content marketing for instance has
become a common catchphrase within marketing circles again, but with an
updated meaning. It is accepted that consumers are now more influential, that they
expect a certain level of professionalism and integrity in any advertising they are
confronted with and they expect not to be patronised but to be given verifiable
facts they can check for themselves (Legorburu & McColl, 2014). Any content or
offers put in front of consumers needs to reflect this. Search Engine giant Google
has issued numerous memorandums in the help section of their website for

20

webmasters to consider when marketing online including best practice. These can be found by users when they are searching online. This has traditionally been called "search engine optimization" and involved companies jockeying for the top of the first page following any search query relevant to their business (Google, 2010).

The advice Google offers (Google, 2010), clearly states that content must be relevant, compelling and tightly connected to the actual search result. The intention being, that tricking searchers with keywords purely to increase traffic will no longer be tolerated and webmasters who refuse to change their websites, risk being blacklisted by Google, a very real occurrence. Joe Pulizzi describes content marketing as content created by the brand itself, (Pulizzi, 2012) as opposed to an agency creating on its behalf and taking the form of blogs, newsletters, videos and webinars. The idea says Pulizzi (2012), is to lend an air of authenticity and integrity to the communication.

Another industry buzzword is "storytelling", a term also re-defined in recognition of the impact social media has had. It refers to compelling content associated with a brand that creates more believable interest around companies, personalities and offers. The "storytelling" content style is designed to enhance the personality and character of a business, thereby making it more appealing to consumers. A classic example of old school "storytelling" created by an advertising agency is that of Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame. It doesn't fulfill the contemporary definition of the method however, as "storytelling" nowadays is more often described, as specifically designed to appeal to a relevant and designated online community that has built up around a brand (Legorburu &

McColl, 2014). Nevertheless it's an old form of brand communication redefined that has become hugely relevant because of social media and is now considered an essential component of digital campaigns (Legorburu & McColl, 2014).

Research on this topic has to date particularly concentrated on consumers buying behaviour on social media channels, rather than attempting to gain a holistic understanding of particular situations, circumstances events and campaigns. Leslie Martinka (2012) investigated whether there was evidence that social media community's broadly impacted consumer buying behaviour (Martinka, 2012). Using a Likert scale she conducted a survey of Facebook and Twitter users to establish impact on members purchasing behaviour when using these channels. She found significant influence within the Facebook community but next to none on Twitter (Martinka, 2012). This could be seen as supportive for the richer posting and "storytelling" options Facebook offers, rather than the mere 140 characters allowed on Twitter. The research only tested the impact <u>direct</u> influence and suggestions from peers and other community members had on purchasing decisions, particularly richly worded comments and advice shared from peer to peer. This may explain why the richer content options allowed on Facebook had a greater impact.

However, given that consumer influence on social media comes in many forms, this study does show that the phenomenon of peer-to-peer influence is real, both <u>directly</u> and <u>indirectly.</u> Other studies on peer influence on Facebook have revealed just how important <u>indirect</u> influences can also be. Identifiable and definitive differences between <u>active</u> and <u>passive</u>, <u>direct</u> and <u>indirect</u> influence on Facebook

22

are illustrated in "Creating social contagion through viral product design: A Randomized Trial of Peer Influence in Networks", (Aral & Walker, 2011).

This last study revealed that passive or indirect influences have a far greater effect on peer influence and will be discussed in more detail in a later section of this review. Similarly in a research study of online reviews, Sian Koh (2011) established a direct link between online reviews and consumer purchases using a semantic model. This study was able to establish the value of both client sentiment and the use of the typical website star based rating system, common to online review platforms (Koh, 2011). Sentiments expressed in reviews had greater influence than the star based rating system, suggesting that words and content mean more to users, despite the words not being sent to them as a direct message from a friend (Koh, 2011).

Another example of how influential Facebook can be is a case study around social stream marketing on Facebook (Trattner & Kappe, 2013). They found that paid advertising generated into a user's news feed on Facebook, was connected to increased website visits. This study suggests that activity paid or otherwise and presented into a user's newsfeed can definitely be connected to a positive effect on marketing results.

This study was concerned with the value of individual users within Facebook communities. So-called "power users" who actively share content more than their peers are a recognized phenomenon (Trattner & Kappe, 2013) and responsible for content being more widely distributed throughout a community not directly but indirectly. This happens because of the way Facebook content is automatically served to people with similar interests and is the power behind passive or indirect

23

influence on Facebook. This type of <u>indirect</u> influence contributes to the co-creation of brand effect (Grams, 2012). This means that users of brands have as much to do with public brand perception and take-up as the brand controllers. Emphasised by writers such as Grams (2012), this is now a recognised phenomenon in contemporary marketing circles. Richardson (2013) says that online communities function more like tribes today, including all the associated tribal behaviour and loyalties that entails, (Richardson, 2013). To be seriously effective he suggests that businesses should embrace online community tribes as a stance becoming active tribe members with the emphasis being on participation. This means that businesses need to become accomplished "power users" themselves. This stance supports a previously mentioned study that suggests community participation creates more influence than content on its own (Oestreicher-Singer, 2013). In short active participation within online communities creates the opportunity for more <u>passive</u> and <u>indirect influence</u> by creating a lot of shareable content as opposed to concentrating on individual users <u>directly</u> contacting other individuals with individual posts.

Several writers in marketing studies, including Leboff (2013), consider the traditional "one to many" marketing model as broken. Leboff (2013), argues that talking, engaging and encouraging relationships between customers is where effective new marketing models need to be. Grams (2012) suggests that brands today are built from the "inside out" by supporters, believers and stakeholders, and that this new marketing power builds and feeds upon itself, creating and sustaining brands without the need for extensive and expensive advertising campaigns (Grams, 2012, p. 11).

Legorburu & McColl, (2014) <mark>agree</mark> that traditional marketing needs an overhaul. They contend that today's real marketing power now belongs to the consumer. The online-enabled range of choices and access to information, he affirms, prohibits the successful use of traditional marketing models alone. The predominant appraisal of online marketing, is that social media has turned consumers from passive receivers, into critics and champions of brands, supporting and/or denying a brand because of its perceived qualities and/or weaknesses (Legorburu & McColl, 2014). As consumers interact with brands over time and share information among their peers, trust and integrity become the essential glue that holds a brand together. Mere brand awareness is no longer sufficient, (Esch, Langner, Schmitt, & Geus, 2006).

2.1 The effect of the Internet on consumer behaviour

The speed and nature of communication between customers, businesses and individuals has changed considerably in the digital age according to Jensen (2010). Information is now <u>always on</u>, and aided by the rapid integration of mobile telephony, access to communication is now available for use at any time, (Reed, 1994).

Consumerism today, that is buying and using goods and services, has become more about the interaction of the customer and the internet, with social media channels at the forefront of this influence, (Foxall, 2008). Because of this he considers that a more socially oriented consumer model, rather than the traditional transactional one, is more appropriate and he cites broad academic support for this, (Foxall, 2008). Studies by Solomon (1983) and Close (2012) both suggest that social factors are far more important for consumers than traditionally thought. Solomon (1983), suggests that people, particularly in the way that they come to accept

25

brands, are considerably more affected by their immediate social environment and the influence of their peers. The meanings a product has socially and within its environment are important to consumers when they are thinking about trying or buying new products. Traditional ways of understanding purchasing behaviour are inadequate and fail to take into account the many social factors at work. The opinions of peers and others in a person's social network as well as the product information and characteristics they already personally believe, whether true or not, most definitely influence consumer behaviour. Further, purchasing behaviour does not develop in a vacuum, and buying decisions are rarely made without some kind of assistance from either a shopkeeper, a friend or after reading a review, (Solomon, 1983). Therefore in effect Solomon (1983), argues that consumerism is in essence a social behaviour. Considering this, the substantial increase in the number of and the use of social media websites since the year 2000 will fundamentally compound social influences on people when they are buying products, radically rewriting the mechanisms of brand communication in today's marketing landscape.

Within this context, Close (2012) goes on to show that purchasing goods and services is one of the main activities of people online. She argues that social media has facilitated even greater access to peers' and friends' opinions and that combined with the ease of internet purchase, has enabled people to consume much more easily. She asserts that online shopping has created new desires, many more purchase points of contact and deliberation opportunities that were previously unattainable. Consumers today use the internet to do pre-purchase research with social media websites and blogs being two of the main platforms where such research takes place, (Close, 2012). In one study, Close (2012) shows that 70% of

bloggers discussed brands online and 38% posted reviews about products, services and experiences. Furthermore, consumers have learnt new ways to use their expanded control and purchase opportunities, including mobile purchase options while simultaneously learning to ignore online advertising such as banners and promotions, (Close, 2012).

In 2005 Procter and Gamble identified what they called the First and Second "Moments of Truth" (FMOT, SMOT), (Rowles, 2014). These two critical phases in the consumer purchase journey, were established in an effort to understand how the consumer journey itself had been affected by the ubiquity of the internet (Rowles, 2014). Procter and Gamble (2005) identified, that during the process of purchasing a product, the FMOT is when the purchaser decides to pick the item off the shelf, the SMOT is after the purchase, when the consumer has taken the product home, used it and subsequently formed an opinion about it. Rowles (2014) notes, that in 2011 Google updated this model to include the Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT). This would be the step immediately before even the FMOT when people do their research, compare, contrast and do their homework. Google argued that in this way, the "internet has enabled completely different consumer behaviour", Rowles (2014, p 28). Google also contended that the ZMOT is the most influential of the four step marketing model, (Rowles, 2014).

2.2 Understanding social media's influence on marketing
As the internet has become mainstream there have been attempts by industry insiders and researchers to define what changes social media channels have had on branding and marketing. They also sought to establish what current best practice is. Aaker (2012) questions what traditional brand qualities, brand equity,

27

brand awareness and brand recall, now stand for in this new environment? (Aaker, 2012). To put this desire to understand in context, a quick search of Business Insider (2015), a popular web based weekly that covers business topics, listed over 40,000 articles on the issue of how social media has affected a business or is part of a business plan. This result reveals both the need and the interest businesses and interested consumers have, in understanding the impact social media websites have had on advertising, marketing and branding.

Richardson (2013) suggests that social media and online communities have created what he called "tribes". The very use of the word intimates that these online communities share common traits of tribal behaviour, including for instance, passionate advocacy in promoting favourite brands to non-users or their peers. Leboff (2013) and Richardson (2013) make the point that marketing effectively in this environment means to be right there on as many social channels as possible. It means being part of the communities where people are searching, part of their word-of-mouth recognition and virtually in their area of engagement. This is what it means to be part of the brand community or tribe. Richardson's (2013) concept of tribal marketing describes communities of people that are brand supporters and advocates, supporting each other and recruiting new members into various activities in a tribal way. Identifying and targeting these brand communities through social media and being part of the tribe, is now essential to successful marketing, he says. "Imagine a scenario", Richardson (2013) writes, "where everyone you want to promote your brand to, is so enthusiastic about your brand that they are already promoting it to one another" (Richardson, 2013, p. 1). Furthermore, understanding this effect is key to truly harnessing the power of social media as a channel of influence. The communities Richardson (2013)

28

describes are individuals who are extremely enthusiastic about their chosen activity, TV show or car model and they actively help each other and spread the word about their passion. He argues that it works the same way for brands. Shared emotions, practices and what he calls values are the glue of online brand communities and it is these that are intrinsic to the concept of tribal marketing. Social media platforms like Facebook hugely facilitate the formation and sustenance of brand communities and activities and customers in such tribes are engaged to a high degree. As a consequence, he claims that doing business today requires becoming more social, that is a need for businesses to engage directly with their customers, (Richardson, 2013).

Leboff (2013) too, stresses that the use of social media websites to discover and reach potential audiences is now considered vital, as people spend so much time using online media. Social media websites are now central to marketers' strategies, with their ability to share text and images easily and subsequently reaching large numbers of people, which is seen as a crucial and exciting, (Leboff 2013).

However, marketing researchers and industry insiders including Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), Grams (2012), Leboff (2013) and Richardson (2013), indicate that many businesses today are not yet comfortable with the new social media oriented paradigm of consumer influence.

Community-driven consumer behaviour, internet-enabled consumer control and the rise of social media are seen as threatening to traditional marketing models. Businesses used to be able to centrally control brand messages about products and services. Social media channels have however, made such a centralised model impossible. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) give the example of poor reviews about a

29

children's toy that circulated within a social media channel and included negative information about potential risks to children, (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The example illustrates a type of product information that would not have emerged pre social media. Today however, this type of information sharing is not only available but also ubiquitous. Multi-voiced product information sharing is a new experience for business owners and brand developers alike. Moreover, social media channels are also actively indexed within search engines like Google, Yahoo and Bing, which make all content posted on newsfeeds freely available as search results. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) explain that a search engine query around a product or service would likely produce an array of results right on the front page, many coming from secondary voices such as social media postings. In the light of such easily accessible information, it is no longer difficult for consumers to make informed choices, read bad reviews or learn about poor product performance. It follows that this ability puts greater control into the hands of consumers, making it far easier for them to make better-informed purchase decisions.

It seems that social media has hugely increased a consumer's ability to respond, be less passive and more assertive, making these a major contributor to the way marketing has changed post broadcast media. Leboff (2013) describes how marketing used to be when consumers were merely passive. Traditional marketing was funnel shaped, he explained (Leboff, 2013). Thousands of potential customers were guided into the funnel through TV, radio or more recently, digital media campaigns. Some people would listen to the carefully worded messages but a majority would not. This model describes typical saturation advertising and for businesses, the high miss rate of their communications was usually accepted as an unavoidable side effect of broadcast marketing (Leboff, 2013). According to Leboff

(2013) and Richardson (2013), such purely transactional marketing was only possible because information and choice were scarce for both marketer and the marketed. The crucial aspect contends Richardson (2013) and Leboff (2013), was that consumers remained passive without the means to interact with the brand or with the provider in any way. Social media however, implies that one directional and mono-channel communication no longer applies. Waiting for ponderous marketing campaigns to deliver results is now considered an un-dynamic and lazy marketing model. Leboff (2013) affirms that today the initiative generally lies with the consumer and it is now up to businesses to adapt and learn how to market within this new environment.

Grams (2012) observes that frustrated marketers have often tried to reach out to consumers using social media, but their attempts for more interaction have not always been successful. Businesses forget he says, that treating social media channels as yet another place, to use old-fashioned marketing methods is wrong. Using online media in the same way as traditional channels, lacing internet ads and banners with messages reminiscent of print campaigns and shouting at customers about new offers and specials, is still seen everywhere on the internet says Grams (2012). However, such approaches affirm Grams (2012), fail to understand or appreciate the subtleties of social media marketing. The one-to-many conversation, one business to many consumers, doesn't allow consumers to respond in the way that they are now accustomed says Grams (2014). Today's businesses need to be more sincere and honest in their claims affirms Leboff (2013), suggesting that social marketing done correctly and with a sound understanding of its power, is a far more effective tool for developing loyal and returning customers than any of the traditional one to many methods. Leboff

(2013) says that this is a good development and businesses should see it as an opportunity.

In response to this lack of a deeper understanding of social marketing, (Legorburu & McColl, 2014) and Leboff (2013) ask similar questions. What alternatives do marketers have that do not involve the traditional transactional approach and what are the special requirements to correctly implement a social marketing campaign? Aaker (2012) contended that the idea of building relationships with customers as a way to engage has been a consistent call to action. Indeed the term "relationship marketing" has become a catch cry solution from marketers since the advent of online business models. Broadly speaking, "relationship marketing" uses online social communities such as Facebook to start building relationships with customers says Rowles (2014), but what does this mean in practice? Leboff (2013) particularly, questions the usefulness of the word relationship when talking about business customer relations, arguing that this term does not truly reflect the actual dynamic between businesses, brands and consumers. Instead he stresses, it is up to the customer to decide whether these attempts to constitute a relationship are merely a point of interaction. He argues that relationship is a poor word for describing dealings with customers, because relationships would be real human experiences and difficult to create with marketing initiatives. Relationships according to Leboff (2013) are necessarily reciprocal and non-transactional, involving give and take from both parties. They are dynamic and always evolving becoming deeper and deeper over time. In truth Leboff (2013) affirms, companies are motivated mainly by sales, and from a consumer point of view any commercial relationship is purely transactional. A better and more practical approach to social marketing he suggests, is offering or adding value to clients sincerely and openly

by freely giving customers small units of information and extras that they find useful. Leboff (2013), Richardson (2013) and Grams (2012) all agree, that the model of adding value has far more relevance in the context of social marketing than merely providing information about the latest offers and services that customers will obviously need to pay for. The traditional approach to marketing the authors say, really offers nothing to the consumer except the option to buy. They conclude that today's customers expect and demand much more.

Making the effort to reach out to customers practically and sincerely is explained by Richardson (2013), using the example of a recruitment company. This industry, whose core business is dealing with real people who trust the company to act in their interest, is a good example of an industry that could be more proactive. Practically this could mean, not merely posting latest jobs and trying to match candidates into lucrative contracts but regularly posting useful and informative information, including real giveaways to genuinely help their members. These value adds could include meaningful tips on how to excel at job interviews, free training and up-skilling to make their candidates feel loyal and appreciated. In so doing, Richardson (2013) says, that a company is genuinely engaging and helping and in this way they can become a trusted source of information and support to their members.

Leboff (2013) explains, that adding value freely in this way means to invest in engagement rather than merely in sales and profit figures. He suggests that companies, in order to evaluate their commercial success, should measure engagement rather than traditional ROI's (return on investment). Agreeing with this, an industry blog-post from Business Insider (Heggestuen, 2014), says that

33

measuring engagement in this way is now essential and businesses are dismissing potential and deceiving themselves by not understanding this.

Furthermore, and bearing in mind the ZMOT, Rowles, (2014) and Legorburu & McColl, (2014), argue that seeking more engagement with this sort of freely added value, needs to be done at each stage of the consumer journey and should be freely shared and advertised on social media platforms like Facebook. As institutions embrace these changes, customers will increasingly gain control over the perception of companies and their products by posting, re-tweeting, sharing and liking huge amounts of information from a wide variety of sources (Leboff 2013). Leboff (2013) describes this as the "liberating and empowering power of social media" and is most definitely seen as an opportunity for businesses rather than a problem, (Leboff, 2013, p. 127).

As Google has rightly identified, customers now have the ability to research and receive information about any purchase decision and in many cases, especially with social media use, this becomes a similar process to traditional word-of-mouth. According to Leboff (2013) word-of-mouth has always been more effective than any single piece of advertising and when making purchasing decisions, people either search the web or ask their network in a very informal way. Foxall (2008) elaborates, by explaining three key aspects that influence consumer behaviour:

- Place i.e. the situational area of engagement e.g. where I am buying

- Information i.e. the word-of-mouth from friends and peers

- Utility, i.e. the aspect of need and usefulness of the product.

It seems that online communities and social media platforms have become not just an entirely new situational area of engagement but also word-of-mouth and utility areas of significant influence.

34

2.3 The importance of brand values in social media marketing

Legorburu & McColl (2014) argue that despite being a term businesses use all the time, brand awareness is often used to disguise a lack of understanding about marketing and branding in general. He suggests that branding a company in the digital and social media age is less about logos, design, and big name sponsorships, but rather the sum of all online experiences. He further contends that this has mainly come about because of the ability for consumers to readily respond, to businesses and share advice and research amongst their peers.

Legorburu & McColl (2014) argue that brand control has actually become secondary, with most engagement now being between the customers themselves. This supports Richardson's (2013) tribal marketing concept, adding that nowadays it is much more about what customers are saying to each other about a brand than what the brand is saying about itself. Legorburu & McColl (2014) say that there is a need for businesses to try and understand this many-to-many communication among their customers in a measureable way, similar to Heggestuen's (2014) advice to measure engagement rather than return on investment (ROI). To encourage more engagement Heggestuen's (2014) introduces the concept of the brand being more like the personality of a business. Rather than being centrally controlled, a modern brand grows in the fertile soil of both users and stakeholders. Indeed, the users themselves become stakeholders and co-creators in this new brand universe. This argument of brand co-creation concurs with Grams' (2012) idea of how modern brands are built and sustained that is, from the inside out by the people who really care about it. Rowles (2014) goes a step further asserting, that the personality of a brand becomes the sum of experiences of everything any one person or group has to do with that brand.

35

Because of this, the brand needs to be closely aligned with the objectives of its target audience and all stakeholders. To do this, marketers need to understand the motivation and shared values of the tribe as Richardson (2013) describes, and they need to make sure that any brand strategy or objective aligns with the tribe's shared values.

Brand values, or what a brand stands for, have become a more visible and meaningful part of a brand today, much more so than the contrived brand values messages of yesteryear (Rowles, 2014). When talking about adding value to a brand, says Rowles (2014), there needs to be more of a discussion around the values of the brand than merely around the product itself. It's the brand that needs to be the main reason for engagement with an audience, and brand managers need to create those reasons. They also need to facilitate a dialogue about and around the brand to make those reasons compelling. Rowles (2014) calls this a "promise of value" (Rowles, 2014, p. 15) and describes it as a process of appealing to the brand community and target audience through the brand values. Legorburu & McColl (2014) agree and add that the promise of value needs to be fully encapsulated within the brand values rather than expressed as an individual or one off marketing initiative. Both Rowles (2014) and Legorburu & McColl (2014) suggest that digital channels allow communication of the promise of value encapsulated within a brand much more easily than traditional channels. However Legorburu & McColl (2014) add, that any education around the brand and its values, needs to happen before any actual purchasing decisions are made. In short, Legorburu & McColl (2014) and Rowles (2014) all claim that brand values must come first before potential customers even understand who the company is or what it is selling. In a perfect world, Rowles (2014) says, people would hear about

your great values first – and only thereafter hear about the products for sale. Practically, this type of brand awareness comes down to initiating dialogue and actual content of some form or another, driving and instigating the conversation. The quality of the content needs to be thoughtful and sincere, genuinely speaking to its audience, so adding value and living the values in a real and useful way (Legorburu & McColl, 2014). There are many aspects that make a customer choose a service or buy a product from one brand over another, says Legorburu & McColl (2014) and businesses must remember that good content requires time and effort. Any piece of content may be visited or interacted with many times, therefore it is imperative that it be useful and engaging and crucially, available at every part of the consumer journey.

Sincerity and integrity are crucial elements in this style of branding strategy (Legorburu & McColl, 2014). All communication needs to reflect sincere commitment to durable brand values and not just represent temporary marketing stunts. This commitment becomes what Rowles (2014) calls the "value proposition" (Rowles, 2014, p. 40). The brand needs to live its values because the public can easily tell the difference between a stunt and authentic commitment (Legorburu & McColl, 2014). Authenticity argues Legorburu & McColl (2014), creates immersive worlds rather than just advertisements, and is the correct response for brands when faced with trying to create effective marketing content. Everything in a company's public communication ought to support the brand values ensuring communication with customers is sincere. Legorburu & McColl (2014) define living and breathing your brand values in this way, as "storytelling" or storyscaping.

37

Legorburu & McColl (2014) explain that creating a rich brand needs messaging that conveys a mixture of value, customer experience and story. Traditional marketing still revolves around something as simple as "Buy One, Get One Free" and is almost exclusively around a price-oriented brand message (Legorburu & McColl, 2014). They criticise this type of messaging within a social marketing context as lazy with potentially negative connotations for the brand, possibly even making it seem cheap and poor quality. In comparison, Legorburu & McColl (2014) contend that, if you introduce a story such as "We use a sauce that has been in the family for 100 years and this recipe was taught to me by my grandmother when I was 12 and one of the ingredients is a secret herb", it immediately aligns the brand around a set of standards and values. It creates a level of interest, intrigue and intrinsic brand value. Businesses might increase the brand value even further by improving the consumer experience, for instance making the experience of buying the pizza extremely easy with an online app or offering free delivery. Legorburu & McColl (2014) further contend that the combination of adding great value and great experiences will naturally improve a brand's ability to tell a great story. Conversely, if there is a great story that provides a great experience then automatically more value will be added. They see this relationship between value, experience and story as vital for improving the ability of getting customers to understand any brand's overall values. Furthermore Legorburu & McColl (2014) see value, experience and story as interchangeable and complementary to each other, claiming that overall they will emotionally connect a company to its customers through shared values. The art of "storytelling" using all three ingredients, Legorburu & McColl (2014) they insist, is a practical method to initiate dialogue, add value and share authentic experiences with customers. By picking apart the anatomy of brand loyalty, Legorburu & McColl (2014) help in

38

understanding true brand awareness and value, thereby making any approach to clients sincere and giving them what they are after in the best possible way. Richardson (2013) suggests that content creation is a public display of values. It becomes, how brands can build their online communities and simultaneously, the personality of their business.

It appears that social media has changed the way consumers utlilise and interact with brands. The idea that consumers are no longer passive receivers of advertising and brand material, but instead have become intrinsic co-creators of brands who embrace and are aligned with tangible values they relate to, is reinforced by these authors.

2.4 Consumer empowerment through the development of online communities from a community influence perspective.

Richardson (2013) argues that consumer tribes form, less because of a desire to remain part of a community through a perceived social need, but more because of shared emotions and beliefs and the sense that what they commonly care about really matters. He explains the connection between tribe members thus: "If you don't find the object or practice espoused by the tribe as important as I do, then you and I are not in the same tribe. If you do however, we are in the same tribe and because of this I want to have a social connection with you" (Richardson, 2013, p. 4-6). Richardson's (2013) engagement model is less about relationships or engagement with brands and businesses and more about belonging to a community where similar likes and dislikes are shared. Grams (2012) and Leboff (2013) also partly concur with this, explaining that although a brand may be a

common tie, it is less important than the sense of belonging to a like-minded community.

Online communities are big news in marketing and the development of communities is an area of immense interest to study for marketers and academics alike. Although online communities have been around since the early days of the internet, the large social media channels have more recently brought them firmly into the mainstream (DiMauro, 2015). Insights into online communities suggest that content and community are the two cornerstones of these growing social phenomena. "People come for the content and stay for the community", writes Vanessa DiMauro (2015, para 5). Content draws people into a circle of their peers, where more quality content that directly inspires them can be accessed and exchanged. Over time, an individual might begin to use the other benefits of belonging to the community where there are shared values and desires. Online communities are the centerpiece of social media channels and a powerful way for individuals and businesses to connect with each other (DiMauro, 2015). Engagement and relationship are the buzzwords of marketers as they try to understand and harness the opportunities online communities offer. In contrast to Leboff"s (2013) more narrowly defined understanding of online relationships, the mere act of consuming shared content, particularly within an online community constitutes some form of relationship, DiMauro (2015) affirms.

While engagement is the precursor to relationship, Richardson (2013) argues that engagement within online communities is about interacting with other members thereby proving you belong to the tribe or community through real action. Engagement, according to Richardson (2013), means active participation and

members who do not join in cannot claim to truly be members of that community. Belonging needs to be demonstrated outwardly through some sort of display of shared identity, and non-participation is the only real taboo in online communities he says (Richardson, 2013). Richardson (2013) says that displays of belonging to a tribe can be as wild as wearing costumes publicly or merely sharing photos or posts online. Despite a member being devoted to a particular product, activity or brand, if they do not <u>actively</u> engage in the tribe's activities, they effectively do not belong. Community participation, in the opinion of Legorburu & McColl (2014), means the sharing of values and experiences. Like Richardson (2013), Legorburu & McColl (2014) believe that brand communities have little to do with the visual brand, but far more to do with what the brand stands for. Legorburu & McColl (2014) say that truly belonging to a community is a difficult thing to fake, so it is hard for businesses and marketers to easily exploit this. Naturally, becoming an active and sincere member of the community is the logical conclusion for businesses to take.

Social media websites offer more opportunity for businesses to engage as community or tribe members compared to other forms of online content (Richardson, 2013). Legorburu & McColl (2014) believe that social media is the main reason that there is a discussion about marketing having changed in the first place, insisting that businesses need to understand online communities and the intricacies of engagement and relationship building deeply, in order to understand how to truly take advantage of social marketing.

DiMauro (2015), describes social media channels as gateways to online communities. An individual Facebook page for instance is a community of like

41

minded people who are at least, weakly acquainted with each other, i.e., acquainted through <u>liking</u>, <u>sharing</u> or <u>commenting</u> on shared content (Bakshy, 2012). Over a period of time, Facebook communities offer their members trusted, intimate and personal sharing, akin to actual face-to-face relationships. This translates into direct peer influence of purchasing decisions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), making a Facebook community more effective for trusted communication and authenticity than merely a blog or review site. More pertinent to where real power lies within a Facebook page, is that the community of friends associated with a Facebook page are made up of <u>close</u> but also <u>not so close</u> friends (Bakshy, 2012). This presents the user with a broader range of <u>likes</u> and <u>dislikes</u> which have relevance to how communities and networks create and exert influence he says. The integration of social media communities and networks generally, is linked with how trust works within brand communities.

When fulfilling the obligations extant within social communities, <u>tone of voice</u> becomes crucial in all communications (Legorburu & McColl, 2014). This means listening to your intended target audience, understanding their values position and responding accordingly. Convenience and ease of use are also important, so messaging and responding can be easy to do, hence mobile friendliness (content that looks great on mobile devices) is important. In fact, the growth of mobile telephony has enhanced social media's impact considerably by making it easier for users to be connected at all times. All content posted needs to be easy to understand and easily accessed as a customer moves about (Richardson, 2013).

Targeting and understanding your intended audience, not just demographically but on an intimate community and values based level becomes absolutely

necessary for effective social marketing, claim both Rowles (2014) and (Legorburu & McColl, 2014). They identify various freely available online tools such as "Google keyword search" and "Facebook insights" that can help isolate common search terms used for Google search querys and also the likes and dislikes of target audiences on Facebook. Naturally this opens the gate to the likes and preferences of larger online communities and this information can be used to inform brand strategies (Rowles, 2014). It also informs the marketer how to be authentic, by giving an insight into what matters to this community. Legorburu & McColl (2014) insist, that time needs to be spent on engaging <u>casually</u> within any social network, knowing what to say and how to say it. Richardson (2013), Leboff (2013) and particularly Grams (2012) would concur with this, as authenticity via participation is a particular requirement when creating your tribe, community or brand community within any social media channel. Casual interaction then becomes a very important factor to consider.

Interestingly, this is not the way many marketing managers are currently thinking about social media, brand management and engagement, as a study by Tsimonis (2014) confirms. Fourteen marketing managers interviewed in 2014 said that they made the decision to get their company involved in social media activities because they were an increasingly "popular platform", because there were "viral" opportunities, and they considered it a good thing that people would "discuss their brand online". Furthermore, they moved to social media because their competitors were already active there or because they were "told to do it by their managers", and lastly because it was "cost effective" (Tsimonis, 2014, pp. 333-344).

It was clear from this study that although the managers were aware of the potential benefits social media offered, they did not fully understand about relating to online communities through engagement with values which is something that social media excels at. Rather, the social media marketing activities were seen as something that managers should be doing or because the boss had told them to do. The study also shows that online marketing activities were standard out of the box strategies offered for companies by sites such as Facebook and heavily based around prizes and product offers (Tsimonis, 2014).

There was little thought about long term strategy or about real importance placed upon the activities, nor were there any attempts made to authentically engage or add value (Tsimonis, 2014). The expectations of these companies were mostly around customer engagement and the need to increase brand awareness, yet how that was to be achieved, how this was to be measured or even what was meant by the term engagement, was never really thought about. This confirms what Legorburu & McColl (2014) argued about managers talking about brand awareness without any credibility. Similarly, Richardson's (2013) assertion that companies often revert to using tried and true marketing techniques of <u>sell, sell, sell</u>, to break through and make sales, even when using platforms like Facebook. This confirms the observation that social media is seen purely as a new sales channel.

Richardson (2013) explains how Facebook excels at many-to-many marketing, rather than centrally controlled marketing and this view is shared by, Leboff (2013), Grams (2102) and Legorburu & McColl (2014). Many-to-many or peer-to-peer marketing, these writers explain, is when consumers are selling to each other, representing the brand and sharing stories about its good and bad points, to each

other. This happens within online communities. Industry blogger and recognised social media expert Paul Adams (2010) reveals in "Social circles: How offline relationships influence online behavior and what it means for design and marketing" (Adams, 2010) how Facebook works as a social marketing tool. He says that Facebook practically creates many-to-many marketing opportunities and explains how influence really works within online communities, brand based or otherwise. As a former Google research lead Paul Adams is at the forefront of understanding how people really do utilise social media. He describes the psychological process of today's social media use, comparing and using examples of how people communicate offline and have done so for thousands of years. Adams (2010) says issues like influence and privacy, are things that as individuals we are extremely concerned about, not because we consciously think about them but because we unconsciously do. He gives the example of how we care deeply about how we look to other people by dressing nicely and trying to look our best. Crucially, we are able to isolate and respond to the different groups we are part of in our lives, so we can communicate and dress appropriately for each group. Yet despite social media sites like Facebook closely mimicking these real time relationships, this automatic group isolation Adams (2010) describes, becomes much harder to do in an online community. So, says Adams (2010), a trust based on more than just looks, becomes essential online. Communities are of like-minded people and relationships are formed among members of the community who trust each other (Adams, 2010). Richardson (2013) also believes that trust is an essential requirement within any brand community. We are unlikely to agree to a relationship or to be engaged with a brand just because we are asked to do so, says Richardson (2013), it is essentially about trust. As Adams (2010) suggests, trust has become a key component needed to build any kind of brand relationship or

engagement on a social media website. Network theory helps us understand the ties and trust that exist between peers, family and wider friends. Adams (2010) identifies that trust is something normally associated with stronger ties like family and close friends, weaker ties being those between casual acquaintances. Concurring with this view, Bakshy (2012) found, that strong ties have the biggest influence over purchasing behaviour. However both Ferrara (2015) and Bakshy (2012) have shown, that Facebook is a predominantly weakly-tied network. But they explain that the complexity, abundance and breadth of information shown on a typical Facebook newsfeed combine to prove an exception to this rule – that strong ties mean greater influence.

It was Granovetter (1973) who first illustrated that weak-ties can be more practically useful than strong-ties, i.e. not trusted friends or family members. He showed that weak-ties were more likely to be useful to a person when looking for a job, because he explained, the variety and diversity of opinions and advice that weak ties provided quickly, were more useful to job seekers than those provided by trusted friends and family. There is useful depth and breadth to the information weak-ties provide, as they are more diverse and less typical. In a similar way Facebook, a weak-tie phenomenon, is very effective at influencing large numbers of people, again because of the breadth, abundance and variety of information available to users at any one time (Ferrara, 2015). Bakshy (2012) concurs, describing how Granovetter's findings do seem to be confirmed by contemporary studies of Facebook, adding that the diversity and variety of a Facebook feed makes Facebook a much more effective influencer. If a Facebook newsfeed was predominantly strong-ties, it would become boring and less active, as it wouldn't have the wide variety of opinions and ideas from people without opinions similar

to our own. If bereft of weak ties Bakshy (2012) argues, and full of only friends and extended family members, then new ideas, novel information and opinions would be less likely to appear on a Facebook feed. New brands and ideas would be less able to be seen or gain traction. Ferrara (2015) agrees, explaining that the predominantly weak-tied Facebook continually presents a diverse range of opinions and unique information that individuals would not otherwise come across, particularly if users were limited to chatting with only friends and family. He adds that a new brand needs to be seen by a variety of people in order to actually increase the community exposure (Ferrara, 2015). Because of its unique ability to connect hugely diverse communities, Facebook is able to expose all sorts of opinions to all sorts of people, changing and shaping loyalties and sympathies on the fly (Ferrara, 2015).

According to Aral and Walker (2011), viral marketing owes much to online communities, and is the holy grail of online marketing. A shared piece of information on the internet can "go viral", spreading into numerous social media platforms simultaneously. This ability was highlighted by Tsimonis (2014) in the marketing managers study as a key reason why managers wanted to take their brand onto Facebook. The core of Aral & Walkers (2011) study explains that there are two ways or types of referral that make any content spread virally, and Facebook provides ample opportunity for both. <u>Active</u> referring, say Aral and Walker (2011), is a way of sharing whereby a user is referred to a product directly through the recommendation of a friend, possibly a strong tie. The recommendation may consist of reviews, personal experience, testimonials and invitations. In contrast, <u>passive</u> referring is an automated system of broadcast notifications triggered by normal user activity such as happens when a post is

47

shared, liked or commented upon. Aral and Walker (2011) found that it was the passive broadcast features that generated the most spread, a 246% increase in local peer influence, adding that the more personalised active messaging only generated an additional 98% increase. This finding also supports the value of weakly tied networks being more effective at spreading content. The authors were able to show that personalised engagement or active referrals is time greedy, and this was why there was less of it happening. Again, it seems to be the diverse series of recommendations, ads, jokes and stories that a user is automatically bombarded with on Facebook, that seems to be Facebook's core advantage in the viral spread of information. This indirectly supports Bakshy's (2012) and Ferrara's (2015) assertion that the sheer breadth and diversity of weak ties within Facebook gives it the edge and that the passive and automatic referring attributes within Facebook are able to exploit this best. This remains true despite adoption speeds being only 200% shorter for passively spread content yet 300% shorter for actively spread content, Aral and Walker (2011).

The viral or otherwise spread of information across the internet is not only confined to social media networks however. Kosinski (2013) found that like-minded communities also form inadvertently anywhere across the internet without care for nation, race or any other limiting factor. He showed that one can accurately predict, using commonly available and freely given online information such as found in Facebook likes and common browser histories, a broad range of highly sensitive personal information (Kosinski, 2013). The study showed that what people like and share online does indeed portray personal likes and dislikes with very good accuracy. An invisible online community based around these preferences can then form without any effort at all. These invisible communities

consist of people who do not know each other personally as they are merely connected by the similarities of their likes and online behaviour. Yet, these incognito communities still reflect shared values among their members. Kosinski (2013) contends that such members have not actively joined the community as such. Furtherore he says, Facebook likes are not explicit and definite, meaning that people do not necessarily reveal themselves as gay or vegetarian but they do relate to members of their communities in other not so obvious ways. This brings considerable diversity among the personality types and ages of people that shared the same likes inadvertently joining people together as members of a community of shared likes (Kosinski, 2013).

2.5 Summary

The literature reviewed in this section is able to show how social media channels, the values of a brand and the communities that form on and through them, combine together in order to create an audience of like-minded individuals. Understanding the like minds within these communities gives marketers who understand them properly, many strategic options.

Kosinski (2013) has been able to show that belonging to a tribe of people or brand community with similar likes online, does not necessarily mean this particular tribe needs to conform in other ways and online tribes and brand communities may well be possible between disparate and disconnected individuals. This becomes an area of study that could be expanded upon, that is, understanding how people are becoming members of communities of likes, dislikes and online behaviour without knowing it.

It has become clear that there is much to be learned about developing appropriate social media strategies without resorting to traditional marketing techniques of one-to-many (Richardson, 2013). Additionally, there is more to building relationships with potential customers than just offering them a cheaper deal (Legorburu & McColl 2014). Moreover, it takes effort to create actual online communities of people that really care about things like brands (Grams, 2012; Richardson, 2013; Leboff, 2013). Yet this can be achieved through freely giving people useful information and services, adding value and interacting with them based around a set of shared values.

Tribes and brand communities can be effectively created and sustained online, on social media sites such as Facebook using weakly-tied friend networks. Online communities are encouraged to form when information is varied and considerable, where both active and passive referring is encouraged and easy and where communities of people feel they belong in certain important ways. Brand tribes are made up of like-minded individuals who importantly, trust what they are hearing and seeing.

What is missing in the currently available literature is a case study of a real and newly created brand that was developed by using a purely digital marketing strategy in a co-development and marketing process. There needs to be a case shown of a business that used social media exclusively to facilitate customer interaction, better engagement and an increase in sales. Such a study then needs to measure the results and draw conclusions about the efficacy of a values based strategy.

3.0 Methodology

This chapter explains and justifies the methodological approach used for this research. The first part of this chapter introduces the mixed method design within a single case study that investigates a complex real-life business example. Following this, the research design is described including the data types that were available, the variables used to segment the data, and a brief explanation of why this data is relevant. A description about how the data was obtained and collected is followed by an outline of the methods used to analyse the data.

3.1 Mixed methods single case study

The methodology for this research can be described as a mixed methods single case study using both qualitative and quantitative data for the examination of a real life re-branding exercise using social media. The ethnic fast-food chain, Wok Express, the case, is a chain of three food outlets that prior to the study were under two different brands. The re-brand and marketing strategy brought all three outlets under one cohesive brand, which included creating a common visual identity, brand values and a brand story. The end result was a fully re-branded chain of three outlets that used, and continues to use, a predominantly digital marketing strategy strongly based on brand values in order to win and maintain a new audience of healthy take-away eaters. Previously, the marketing model used was purely a price-based one, a strategy that constantly undermined the financial position of the business.

The framework of a case study was considered an appropriate vessel to contain this research because it allows the case to be studied in real time as it traveled through

its marketing and re-branding journey over a period of six-months. The complexity of recording and understanding the varied data types over time, demanded that the research was informed by a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. This was necessary in order to evaluate user responses comprehensively, using measurable variables relevant to the research. Yin's (2003) suggestion that case study is an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence, is a definition of case study that fits this research perfectly. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) explain that although a case study can often be about an individual or a group, it is more often used to study a phenomenon, an event, a program or an activity within its natural context bounded by space and time.

The case study of Wok Express is a program that uses Facebook exclusively for its marketing and re-branding, and both authors emphasise that capturing a case study within its natural context is crucial for the effectiveness of this type of research. Studying the phenomenon as it occurs over time in its normal everyday environment was necessary in order to understand the details of user expectations and responses to the re-branding of the food chain. Utilising information from a variety of sources became essential for conducting the research holistically and to be able to study the project from a wide perspective. A case study that draws on a variety of data sources becomes a richly descriptive methodology capable of bringing any event to life in its entirety, analysing a variety of real data types as they occur (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Cresswell (2014) justifies the use of a mixed method inquiry as it enables a more complete understanding of a research problem. Being a very public facing business, the case in this research needed to provide the researcher with enough data to enable an understanding of how people's attitudes

have, or have not changed and how values did or did not affect the outcome. The research needed to be firmly focused on the tangible strategy as it unfolded and directly affected the customers. Sales Figures, website metrics, online reviews and social media activities from a variety of angles, were collected and analysed in order to understand not just the efficacy of the new marketing strategy, but also how the customers became heavily involved in creating and sustaining the brand. A customer survey was conducted in order to gain a deeper and a more precise understanding of customers' views, and an interview with the business owner was undertaken in order to get another perspective and allow a element of triangulation with the quantitative data.

Jones and Lyons (2004) describe a typical case study as allowing data to be collected from various sources using different collection techniques, while Woodside (2010) makes it clear that the method is suitable for any individual organisation or programme. Being a progressive study over six-months, the study of actual sales and typical business operations attempts to show how social media has greatly informed the way businesses could now approach marketing and how important branding, more particularly the active promotion of values has become. Likewise, Farquhar (2012) suggests that case study is an excellent way to study a business because of its unique ability to gather numerous data types over an extended period of time.

Finally, Hancock and Algozzine (2006) explain that a case study is more exploratory than confirmatory, meaning that is it is less about proving an existing hypothesis and more about understanding themes, behaviour and events. This research wanted to understand how brand values and community participation have become central

53

to understanding social media as part of a successful marketing strategy. Furthermore, as case studies present a variety of data about a defined or particular problem or question, they then become very useful at identifying additional questions and future research. Simons (2009) suggests that a case study is a great way to gain a holistic view of a case, where previously unknown factors can be uncovered. This particular study is a simultaneous investigation of several influencing factors: the outlet itself (including the new brand), the Facebook marketing strategy, the owner's perception of the new marketing strategy, and the customers perspectives as they react within their online communities. How all these stakeholders interact together creates the holistic understanding that gives the researcher a bird's eye view.

The researcher's decision to study a real world digital marketing strategy and re-brand was prompted by a lack of such studies generally available so when the opportunity arose to do one, it was considered a useful contribution.

The defined research period was six-months from March 2014 to August 2014 but data also included was data from 6 months before and 6 months after in order to provide additional context. Two types of triangulation are relevant to this study, namely data triangulation, which involves multiple data types and the use of multiple tools to collect data, and time triangulation where data was collected multiple times over a period of time (Freeman, 1998; Brown, 2001). Analysing the improvement in sales, before, during and after the study period became a gauge for all case study activities and created a natural over time context. The interview with Wok Express owner Paul provided an excellent before and after appreciation at a very grassroots level, allowing us to see into the mind of the business owner, the primary beneficiary and stakeholder of the exercise.

<u>3.2 Research Design</u>

The defined study period began in March 2014 and ran till August 2014 and during this period the data from Facebook and the restaurant review website Zomato, were collected. The sales figures were however collected from October 2013 when the re-brand first launched, until March 2015. Having sales figures for this longer period, allowed the researcher to provide a useful before and after context for all the outcomes.

From October 2013 the researcher began to plan the most appropriate design for the study in order to best answer the research question. After meetings with the marketing agency that led the re-branding of the fast-food chain and with the owner of Wok Express, the researcher was embedded within the entire process from the initial planning stage through to the development of the strategy and the roll out of the new brand. The researcher had full access to the five key areas of data collection, including:

- sales figures,

- website referrals from Zomato and Facebook,

- social media activity including all post content

- customer surveys initiated by the researcher

- interview with the owner

When considering the research question, "How might businesses benefit by creating a values based personality around their brand to take advantage of the humanizing impact social media can have upon customer expectations?" it immediately became clear that other questions about the success or not of the strategy and re-brand were relevant. Therefore the researcher asked the following: –

1. Was the campaign successful with Facebook as the prime marketing channel?

55

2. How did Facebook, primarily a social media channel, change the approach to the branding of Wok Express?

3. What was the role of online communities and engagement with them through shared values?

4. Can the definition of branding be updated in the light of the findings?

Although there was an in-depth investigation of Facebook activity including metrics around <u>likes</u>, <u>shares</u>, <u>posts</u> and website visits, actual sales figures were also analysed in order to support customer response with hard facts of sales. As background, the owner of Wok Express approached the agency for help in August 2013 as prior to the re-brand his sales figures were in decline, particularly at the Kingsland branch of the business. It follows that the strategy was implemented primarily as an attempt to halt this slide.

The marketing strategists proposed that social media alone could be the sole driver of the desired brand awareness push. The opportunity arose and was suggested to the owner that to increase sales, reaching an entirely new demographic was required and that the best way to target this new demographic was through the social channel Facebook. The sales figures be the best indicator to clarify the success or otherwise of this strategy. The researcher was introduced to the owner of Wok Express who became supportive of the research and then agreed to share the sales figures for the benefit of the research. The researcher used the figures as monthly totals which showed up and down progress for the duration of the study period as well as the before and after periods. These figures were provided directly to the researcher who was then able to plot them, compare them to the marketing activity and note whether the outcomes had indeed been successful.

Another concern for this research was website traffic, particularly where users were coming from and how many were new users. The website is where Wok Express generates 80% of their orders. Studying web traffic and more specifically, where website referrals are coming from, is essential in the day-to-day running of the business but also essential for an understanding of the reasons why and how new visitors came to the website. As Facebook was the only active marketing channel used, a large part of the research focused on that channel's ability to drive direct and indirect traffic to the website. <u>Direct</u> traffic to the website comes from a measureable referral source, another website for instance or clicking a link in an email. <u>Indirect</u> traffic is traffic that has been measured but it is not clear from what source the traffic has come, perhaps a user types the address directly into the URL bar or more usually in this case does a Google search for it. Measuring <u>direct</u> traffic to the website from Facebook was straightforward with Google Analytics providing a useful metric for social referrals. However as the research involved understanding Facebook's ability to refer traffic to a company website <u>indirectly</u>, a large part of the research became understanding the dynamics of engagement. This, being is a unique part of the way Facebook works. This included accumulating circumstantial evidence that Facebook was providing significant <u>indirect</u> website referrals. These <u>indirect</u> referrals were as a consequence of the very significant monthly engagement and brand awareness figures the Facebook statistics were showing.

The researcher used four different variables to create this connection between brand awareness and actual website visits.

1. the real increase in new visitors measured in Google Analytics

2. the keywords that made up the search queries for the huge number of visits that were classed under the acquisition tab in Google Analytics called organic search

3. the steady increase in sales

4. the huge <u>reach</u> and <u>engagement</u> numbers Facebook was generating.

Using a process of deduction the researcher's aim was first to establish whether sales and <u>new</u> website visits were up, meaning that new customers were coming to the site and being referred from somewhere. Secondly, by establishing the largest referrer of new visits in Google Analytics, the researcher would be able to discover where the significant referral traffic was coming from. Finally a deeper inspection of the keywords associated with search engine referrals would reveal the top keyword search queries visitors made before they visited the Wok Express website. This would indicate what the new first-time users were searching for before they came to the website. The study's researcher would then determine any search term that contained the brand name "Wok Express" either by itself or in a sentence. Doing this would establish any word-of-mouth referrals as only Facebook or Zomato could introduce entirely new users to Wok Express by brand name.

On the basis of this, the researcher would be able to conclude that, at least some of the new visits and sales had come via word-of-mouth from Facebook. Facebook has been described as the word-of-mouth channel by Rowles (2014) as it has the capacity to spread information in numerous ways.

As well as Facebook, the researcher used the food review website Zomato. This website was important as it has the capacity to direct a considerable number of

referrals to the Wok Express website. Users primarily use Zomato to research restaurants they may be considering visiting. They are able to read reviews on the site from other users and then visit the website directly via a link on the restaurant's profile page. Tracking the <u>direct</u> referrals from Zomato to Wok Express would be significant to the research and it would be relevant to analyse the content of the reviews as direct accounts of customers' appraisal of their Wok Express experience.

A major part of the research question was how brand awareness within online communities was generated and sustained during the study period and how significant this was overall. There was an assumption made by the marketing agency that the re-brand would create a certain buzz online within certain online communities, particularly with people who prefer healthy food alternatives. By studying Facebook's unique set of metrics including likes, <u>shares</u> and <u>comments</u>, this study was able to shed some light on the actual customer-to-customer interactions. As an important part of measuring the Facebook data, the content and style of the highest performing posts was noted by the researcher. Content, or more importantly the style, topic and values behind it, is primarily what people engage with. Any social media strategy must pay careful attention to any content posted online as users associate this content with the brand and to a large extent form opinions about the brand based on this. Facebook was the main platform for the day-to-day implementation of the re-branding strategy, including all regular posted content. Zomato delivered insights from actual diners and in this way was much less controlled by the marketing company and the business. Studying Facebook and Zomato together provided a good way for the researcher to understand how effective the implementation of the new brand had been in generating new brand awareness around the values. This was the main objective for the brand managers

of Wok Express, particularly within the new target demographic of healthy fast food eaters.

Paid Facebook advertising is a sure fire way to target particular interest groups using segmentation developed by Facebook and available to advertisers. This was a major part of the new strategy as paid reach is guaranteed. Adverts are not only a large and necessary part of marketing on Facebook, they also introduce and help in understanding the concept of reach on Facebook. The researcher saw it as necessary to identify and understand the differences between impressions, reach and engagement and how these different measurements are used to define groups within Facebook. Facebook's group selection algorithm allows paid advertisers to remarket to these groups. The researcher saw this as essential to understand the case study holistically. All of these metrics are monitored as part of any social media strategy and a handy infographic explaining these terms is provided by John Loomer (Loomer, 2014) in the appendix to this case study.

The following diagram explains the model of customer engagement that was proposed by the marketing agency. The idea of using social media channels to generate website traffic and improve sales is explained in figure 1 below.
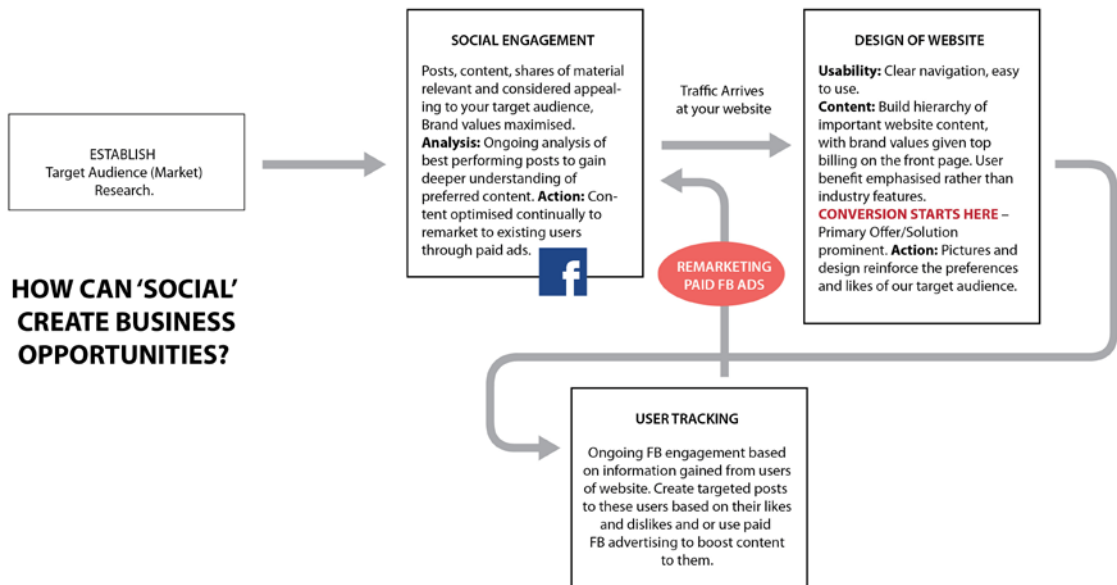
Figure 1. How can Facebook create business opportunities Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

As a potential, significant referral channel the content of the reviews on Zomato was considered highly relevant and all the reviews left by diners on Zomato during the study period were identified as a data type for the study. Included in this content, of particular relevance was the number of times descriptive words relating to the values of Wok Express were singled out as pertinent. In addition to this, a simple distinction between positive and negative reviews would be established and any correlation found between the positive online reviews and the brand values was also identified as relevant. Pantelidis' (2010) study of online restaurant reviews concluded that people enjoy commenting in detail on both the brand behind a restaurant and its food quality. As the reviews were a ready-made source of brand critique, the researcher determined that this rich source of opinion was a valuable dataset in order to identify public opinion and what inspired or not the reviewers most about the brand.

The branded Facebook page was established in late 2013, with the first six weeks focusing on building likes for the page through paid Facebook advertising. Following this, a timetable of marketing events was prepared that highlighted the same brand values from various angles. This program began in earnest after building up the Facebook likes to a point where the agency could begin an email campaign to the fledgling online community – after acquiring over 250 page likes. It was also at this stage that the agency connected the branded page to "Sprout Social Media", an online content creation and analysis application for observing and measuring Facebook activity including post content.

A typical six-week Facebook content plan looked like this:

1. Content written for Newsletter (e.g. the benefits of Turmeric and Ginger)

2. Simultaneous release of the article through email supported by links to read article on Facebook, and the website

3. Monitoring and response to any comments on Facebook

4. Remarketing on Facebook to likes database

5. Campaign of paid advertising promoting the article and posts to a chosen demographic inducing a huge REACH of this material to this demographic.

6. Continued remarketing on Facebook to the increasing likes database, including sponsored posts, new meal information, Meat Free Mondays etc.

As the strategy ran there was constant communication with the agency and the owner tweaking and or adding to the ongoing implementation of the strategy with new ideas like special meals, special days etc. The strategy was designed to be flexible and therefore able to accommodate a change in content or emphasis. The researcher monitored all Facebook activity using Sprout Social Media and each

month a report was generated by the researcher so that overall performance of the posts, engagement and referral status was observed and recorded.

Initial variables were established by the researcher to measure influence from paid advertising and organic posts on direct website activity. These variables were:

- impressions-to-reach,

- reach-to-engagement

- engagement-to-website visits.

In addition to this, in an effort to consolidate what was known about influence on indirect website activity, the top two best performing posts for each month were highlighted and the content of them noted for relevance to the <u>brand values</u>. This was considered important to the researcher, as it constituted an attempt to see whether these high performing posts were indeed around content that reflected the brand values and whether these values were generating significant approval and engagement.

At the end of the study period Google surveys were created and run by the researcher and the results graphed for analysis. In charting the responses to the questions as graphs, the researcher sought additional circumstantial evidence that the brand values had made a significant impression upon the respondents and how effective had Facebook been in getting their attention. It was also considered necessary to quantify the effect the Facebook marketing had on generating website visits and from there, orders. Also was there any evidence of brand communities working for the benefit of the brand? An invitation was prepared to invite people

who had left feedback on the Wok Express website about their food and the service they received. The survey itself consisted of eight questions.

Surveys are a useful and commonly used tool in case study research (Woodside, 2010; Simons, 2009) as it allows the researcher to get first hand views from actual customers and are an excellent way to establish motives and reasons for people's behaviour (Groves, 2004). Responses from real customers are considered vital as they can help justify any conclusions drawn from the quantitative data, in effect a triangulation.

The final piece of data collection was an interview conducted with Paul Brandwood, the owner of Wok Express. This happened as an informal discussion around his experience of the entire process, the things he considered weaknesses with the program, the things he would change and the areas he would expand upon. Was his investment worthwhile and what were the things he learnt during the exercise? The interview is considered a vital piece of time triangulation (Freeman, 1998; Brown, 2001) where it might reveal how the success or otherwise of the strategy had impacted upon the owner himself. It is considered important also, because like the customer surveys, it provides a valuable way of triangulating the quantitative data. Was Paul's experience as the owner, consistent with the results the quantitative data revealed? As the owner working in the restaurant and talking to customers, his views about social media and the impact of Facebook communities were considered an important source of qualitative data, particularly over time. Paul, as the major stakeholder in Wok Express was an enthusiastic and helpful member of the study. He was well positioned to share his valuable experience of the strategy and making it a useful contribution to the research.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Participants – The participants in the study include a sample of Wok Express customers who ordered food during the study period and sent feedback to the company via the website, thereby agreeing to be contacted by the company. These people were invited to participate in the survey. Indirectly participating, were individuals who had left reviews about Wok Express on the restaurant review website Zomato.

Finally Paul Brandwood, the owner of Wok Express participated in the study, agreeing to share his opinions on the changes that occurred to his business during the study period and what he thought of the role social media played during this time.

Sales Data – After giving consent to participate, the sales figures for all Wok Express outlets were provided by the owner to the researcher. The data was provided in a spreadsheet covering the period October 2013 to August 2015. Monthly totals were plotted onto a graph by the researcher, particularly for the study period and these figures were used when overlaying Facebook and website activity.

Website Referrals – Zomato is a website where customers can leave reviews about their experience eating out at any of the restaurants listed within the website. These reviews include a link to visit the website of the restaurant being reviewed. A visit to the Wok Express website directly attributed to these Zomato links are called referrals. In the case of Wok Express highlighting the number of visits per month to the website from Zomato, was identified as relevant. Additionally the researcher

wanted to analyse the content of the reviews for relevance to brand values. The reviews are publicly available to see on the Zomato website and the researcher was able to print out all the reviews during the study period. Google Analytics was the tool used to gain the figures for all referral activity. It should be noted that at the beginning of the study period the restaurant review site Zomato was called "Menumania" changing its name to "Zomato" in August 2014. A method to analyse the largest referrer, named in Google Analytics as organic search, was developed by the researcher.

Facebook Activity – During the study period Facebook was the only marketing channel used for all direct activity including paid advertising, (Zomato is considered an indirect or passive channel). All this activity, including the Wok Express Facebook page itself and sometimes the news-feeds of other users, was measured monthly during the study period using a web application called Sprout Social Media. Sprout creates an account for the Facebook pages to be monitored and a dashboard is created whereby all the relevant metrics are available. There are also useful summaries available of all activity metrics including measuring <u>reach</u>, <u>engagement</u>, <u>likes</u>, <u>shares</u>, regional differences, and gender. The researcher was able to select time periods or ranges and see all data pertinent to that time period. Information is available to see over a year, month or day and in this way a very accurate picture of all the Facebook activity could be accessed. As Sprout is foremost a social media management tool, post activity is carefully and thoroughly documented. For obtaining data relevant to individual posts, ascertaining how the content of these posts varied, including the levels of engagement each post attracted, this post-by-post breakdown was crucial for the researcher. Additionally Facebook itself provides a way to measure metrics. Facebook Insights is a brand page management

66

section for Administrators of brand pages and the researcher was also able to check

metrics and figures from time to time using this resource.

Customer Surveys – An approach was made to the agency by the researcher at the

conclusion of the study period, to conduct a survey to be used as part the research.

Using Google Docs Surveys the survey was drafted by the researcher and sent, as an

invitation to participate, to customers of Wok Express who had purchased food

during the study period and had sent feedback to Wok Express through the website

feedback system. The survey consisted of six yes or no questions and one question

where an opinion was asked for. The aim of the survey was to directly understand

customer's feelings about the Wok Express Facebook activity and the values the

brand stood for, whether the participants had interacted with the Facebook page

and what had inspired them to eat at Wok Express. At least two of the survey

questions directly enquired about the role Facebook played in their purchase

decision. Google Docs Surveys provides the results of the survey as answers to each

individual question on separate lines in a spreadsheet. The researcher retrieved the

responses by accessing Google Docs Surveys through a registered Google Account in

his name.

The Owner Interview – The interview with the owner was an informal discussion

that sought the owner's opinions and assessment of how the re-brand and

marketing strategy had performed. It was important to understand how the strategy

unfolded from his point of view. Did customers ever speak to him personally about

the restaurant or offer positive feedback? After dealing with customers over the

telephone, were there any observations that he had picked up? This interview was

established as a method to confirm several aspects about the public acceptance of

the re-brand and how important the commitment by the restaurant to the brand values actually was. The interview was conducted over 45 minutes in an office at AUT and based around four questions formulated by the researcher. The researcher recorded the interview manually as the interviewee spoke and later transcribed his notes into a document, which can be seen in the Appendix to this thesis.

Table 1 shows the different data types used in the research, how they were analysed and how they informed the research.

DATA TYPE	ANALYSIS METHOD	HOW IT INFORMS THE RESEARCH
Sales figures – Quantitative	% increase /decrease from month to month plotted on a graph	Charts the impact of the re-brand and marketing on sales over the study period.
Website Referrals + reviews – Quantitative	No of positive reviews and counting word use around brand values on Zomato displayed graphically in pie graphs.	Number of positive reviews. Did the reviews give evidence that people supported the brand values?
Customer Surveys Quantitative	Graphical displays of responses in pie graphs according to the questions to isolate patterns and themes.	No of responses per question. Consumer Insights into social media and identification with brand values.
Social media posts & data (FB) Quantitative	Comparison of reach to engagement to website visits. Collation of circumstantial evidence of indirect influence from Facebook.	Understanding the relationship between reach, engagement and action. Ability of FB to drive visits to the website.
Owner interview October 2015 Qualitative	Qualitative Interview analysis. Codes and categories established to derive themes and connect these to the research problem.	What insights can the owner reveal that support the research question and the findings from the other data analyses?

Table 1. Different types of data Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

3.4.1 Sales Figures

The sales figures were transcribed from the original spreadsheets into a separate month-by-month spreadsheet and a chart was prepared to graphically illustrate the progress over a 12-month period and the lesser six-month study period.

The researcher was looking for a numerical increase or decrease over the study period and if or how the re-brand and marketing strategy affected (or not) these figures. The 12-month figures provide an overall chart of sales since the inception of the re-brand, while the smaller six-month chart provides financial context for the study period when the Facebook and Zomato data were gathered. Effectively these overlays of activity from social media and website visits will inform how this activity related to the financial reality. Up and down trends will also be noted to investigate any links between high sales periods and particular marketing activity at that time. Seasonal factors will also be noted when analysing this financial data.

3.4.2 Website Referrals

Website referrals refer to incoming traffic (individual users) to the website from other digital sources like websites or email links.

At the start of the campaign the website was rebuilt from the ground up, incorporating all the aspects of the new brand plus traffic which was monitored thoroughly using Google Analytics. The researcher was granted administrator access to the Google Analytics account for Wok Express and was able to examine the metrics including the numbers of <u>direct</u> website referrals to Wok Express from Zomato and Facebook each month.

70

Google Analytics was also able to provide considerable circumstantial evidence of Facebook <u>indirectly</u> increasing website visits through the brand awareness it was generating. The researcher established a way of doing this using the Acquisition Tab in Google Analytics whereby the keywords used within the largest group of referral traffic, organic search were investigated. The method is described in the Facebook data section 3.4.3.

Additionally the content of each Zomato review was analysed by counting the frequency that certain descriptive words were being used, to determine how closely aligned to the brand values and marketing strategy they were. For instance, did the content of the reviews condone the values of the brand? The number of times words were used (density) in the review responses was recorded and graphed in the following way: –

Word Usage – including the number of times these words were used in the reviews: fresh, care, quality, healthy, vegetarian, best, quantity, tasty, would recommend, disappointed. These were the keyword groups the researcher identified to use as categories for grouping similar adjectives. The number of positive vs. negative reviews was also noted.

3.4.3 Social media (Facebook) Data

The interest in the social media data is centered around the ability of a dedicated social media campaign on Facebook to do two things, create brand awareness and drive actual customers to the website.

Measuring brand awareness in this research will be by association with engagement levels and other metrics from Facebook. These metrics were established using Sprout social media where comprehensive data was obtained and documented each month. The metrics included: <u>shares</u>, <u>likes</u>, <u>comments</u>, numbers of <u>new fans</u> and the percentage of people <u>engaged-per-post</u>. These engagement metrics have been transcribed into a table for each month of the study period. Website activity engagement levels and the number of actual visits to the website over the study period were recorded. By comparing <u>impressions to reach, reach to engagement</u> and <u>engagement to website visits</u> the number of people reached to one <u>direct</u> website visit was established for each month. More details about <u>impressions</u>, <u>reach</u> and <u>engagement</u> are given in the chapter titled Findings 4.0.

Levels of engagement with the campaign were important as they show that users were engaging with the pre-prepared and strategy based content. However, connecting this influence to sales data and website traffic, for conclusive proof, is difficult to do. There is currently no definitive way to measure how this <u>indirect</u> influence that Facebook is able to generate, has impacted upon sales and website traffic. It was incumbent upon the researcher to gather and argue, using the substantial circumstantial evidence available, that the influence was considerable. As mentioned previously this involved gathering data from Google Analytics (acquisitions) to note the keywords users were typing into Google.

The researcher used the following method to connect Facebook engagement to website activity and sales.

1. Establish the facts
    a. Sales were increasing

b. New first time visitors to the website were increasing

c. Facebook was the only marketing channel used and engagement was increasing

2. Using Google Analytics, note that the largest referrer to the website was classed as organic search that is, users searching in their browsers.

3. Using Google Web Master Tools, identify the keywords users were using to search and find Wok Express

4. Note the top ten keywords used.

5. Associate the results of this keyword investigation to brand awareness by noting how often the brand name Wok Express was used in the searches.

Using this method the researcher would be able to establish that sales, new first time visitors and Facebook engagement were up and also that these new users were in fact searching for Wok Express by name. The connection here is how did these first time visitors find out the actual brand name to use as a search term?

The researcher gathered Facebook data for each month of the study period by isolating time periods in Sprout social media and receiving the consequent report. Numbers of likes, fans, post engagement and post reach per individual post were noted and entered into a table. Post by post analysis was important, as posting represented the main direct activity by the agency on behalf of Wok Express. Individual posts that generated the most engagement were highly relevant and because of this, the content of the top two posts from each month, were analysed to find out if there was any way to connect these posts to the new values that the company had implemented. The researcher wanted to find any connection between the content people were engaging with and if it was the values that made particular posts popular. All Facebook activity was charted against website visits

and sales to note any connections between periods of high Facebook activity and sales. In other words the researcher wanted to establish a connection between visitor engagement on Facebook, the brand values and sales.

3.4.4 Customer Surveys

There were eight survey questions asked of the respondents. These were about user experience and satisfaction after purchasing Wok Express food during the study period. Participants must have ordered food via the Wok Express website and left feedback through the feedback form on the website. These people were invited to participate in the survey.

The survey consisted of seven multi choice questions to be answered and one open ended question:

1. How did you find out about Wok Express?

      a. Advertisement (yellow pages or other)

      b. Word of Mouth

      c. Google or Other

2. Are you male or female?

      a. Male

      b. Female

3. Have you ever seen the Wok Express Facebook page?

      a. Yes

      b. No

4. If you did engage with Wok Express on Facebook, how did you do it?

      a. Liked the Page

      b. Didn't see the FB page

      c. Share

5. What do you think of Wok Express' offer – Fresh, Homemade, No MSG?

      a. I have no opinion

      b. Great It's why I buy the food.

6. Do you buy from Wok because it cares about these things, and because it stands for these things?

      a. Yes, I don't just want ordinary takeaways

      b. Not really, I buy takeaways as long as they're cheap

7. Do you think it's a good idea companies like Wok Express are on Facebook?

      a. I don't mind as long as it's not too pushy

      b. Yes it's great, the Facebook page has offers and interesting articles

      c. No. I wish all businesses would get off Facebook

8. Anything else you'd like to add about businesses on Facebook?

Responses would be analysed according to themes, generally positive or negative and any unique points of view noted. All the questions were multiple choice apart from the last one and like the online reviews, the answers to each question were given a relevance to the brand and attitude to Facebook rating which were charted into a table with the following two categories.

The first category, <u>Attitude/Connection to Facebook</u>, was about customer attitudes to business marketing on Facebook and included Questions – 1, 3, 4, 7, 8. The questions in this category were about whether the user discovered the brand on Facebook and what did the user think about businesses using Facebook for marketing purposes.

The second category, <u>relevance to brand</u> included Questions 5 and 6. These questions were about what users thought of the brand in general and how important the brand values were to their own personal decision to use it.

Finally the survey responses were plotted into a pie graph with percentage scores for each of the available answers chosen. The chart used to establish the graph axis can be seen in the appendix to this document.

3.4.5 Owner Interview

The interview with Wok Express Proprietor Paul Brandwood was conducted 05.10.2015 recorded manually and transcribed the same day. Paul reviewed the content. The interview was informal and based around the following questions.

1. Now you've been through a branding exercise, how important do you think branding is to a business like yours Paul?

2. But how careful do you have to be with your brand do you think, in the day-to-day management of it?

3. In the light of this new attitude what weaknesses have you highlighted?

4. What do you think about the role of Facebook in all this?

The content of the interview informed the following themes.

- Importance of branding and the importance of brand values in that exercise.

- What's involved in the day-to-day management of a modern brand?

- What do you need to be careful about when you are doing this type of marketing exercise?

- How important is Facebook?

The interview was analysed for themes by using standard interview analysis procedures (Seidman, 1998). Codes were established to highlight important areas within the text that were relevant to the research question. See below.

Codes

Highlight = brand

Highlight = brand values

Highlight = brand management

Highlight = social media

Highlight = customers

Highlight – health food

Highlight = enthusiasm

Highlight = practical issues

Highlight = qualification

Highlight = contradiction

Following this, four main categories were established to situate these codes within.

The researcher then assigned these codes into the categories. The process is shown below.

77

Categories

1. Brand – brand, values, management, business

2. Marketing – awareness, social media, customers, people, enthusiasm, utility

3. Business Considerations – practical issues, running the business

4. Online Community – customers, people, sharing, health foodies

3.5 Summary

This chapter has outlined that case study was the preferred methodological tool to accurately capture the nuances of this research over time. It has detailed the research design and procedure and in the process describes why the decision was made to use a mixed method, single case study approach. Seeing a gap in the available literature of real world case studies of re-branding and marketing using exclusively social media channels, the research was considered a valuable academic addition to the literature. The core quantitative data was provided by analysis of social media channels and supplemented with customer surveys and an owner interview. The official six-month study period was designated, allowing for a collection of relevant quantitative data over time. Overall, the aim of using these different data types was to provide a holistic view of the process from as many angles as possible. This was to make it easier to understand how the research conclusions were reached and how these conclusions in turn, contributed to addressing the central research question and problem.

4.0 Findings

The re-brand of Wok Express and marketing campaign began in October 2013 and there were two outlets at this time, Kingsland and Parnell. A third outlet Ponsonby was added in early 2014. The actual study period when the data from Zomato (reviews), Facebook, the customer surveys and the interview were collected from is March to August 2014. For the sales figures however, it is pertinent to understand these in the context of the campaign's success or otherwise. Therefore the sales view is from October 2013 to October 2014.

4.1 Sales Figures
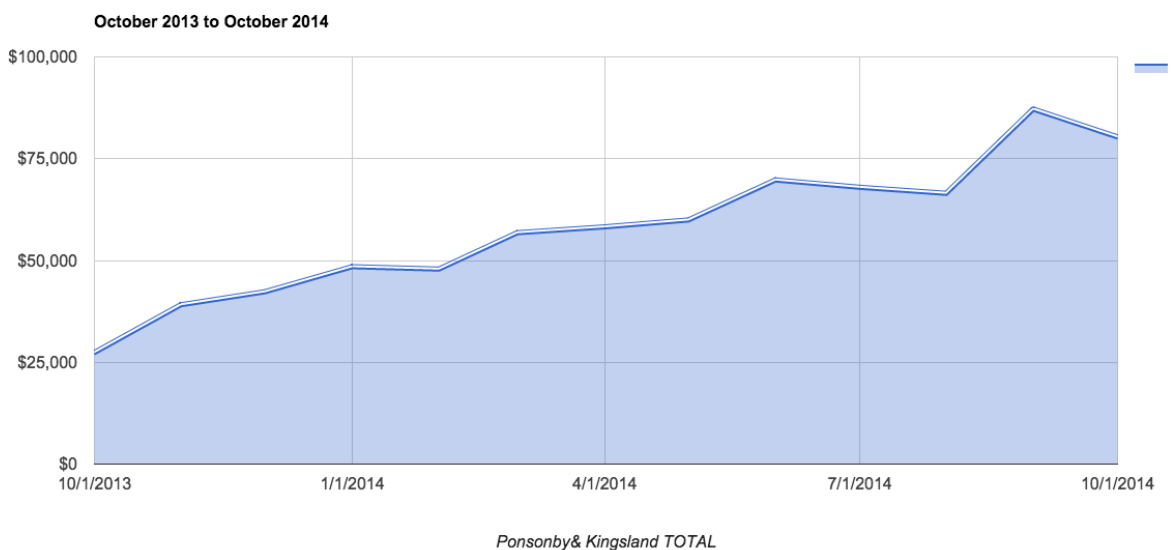
Figure 2. The progression of Wok Express sales from October 2013 till Oct 2014. Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

The sales figures shown are from the Ponsonby and Kingsland Shops combined, and apart from a slight dip from June to August 2014, there is a steady improvement in sales for the 12-month period with an average total of $57k per month. The official study period from March to August 2014 shows the dip from

June to August although there is still a net gain of around $10k per month during this six-month period.

The sales results confirm that since the re-brand and marketing campaign began, there has been a steady increase in sales of over 133%, which means, in terms of sales at least, the campaign was a great success. Facebook was the only channel used for consistent and recurring marketing activity. To consider this further it has to be assumed that the decision to use Facebook was the right one and that the channel more than fulfilled its job in spreading the Wok Express brand message to as many people as possible in a relatively short period of time. Logically in this case, Facebook marketing equalled increased sales.
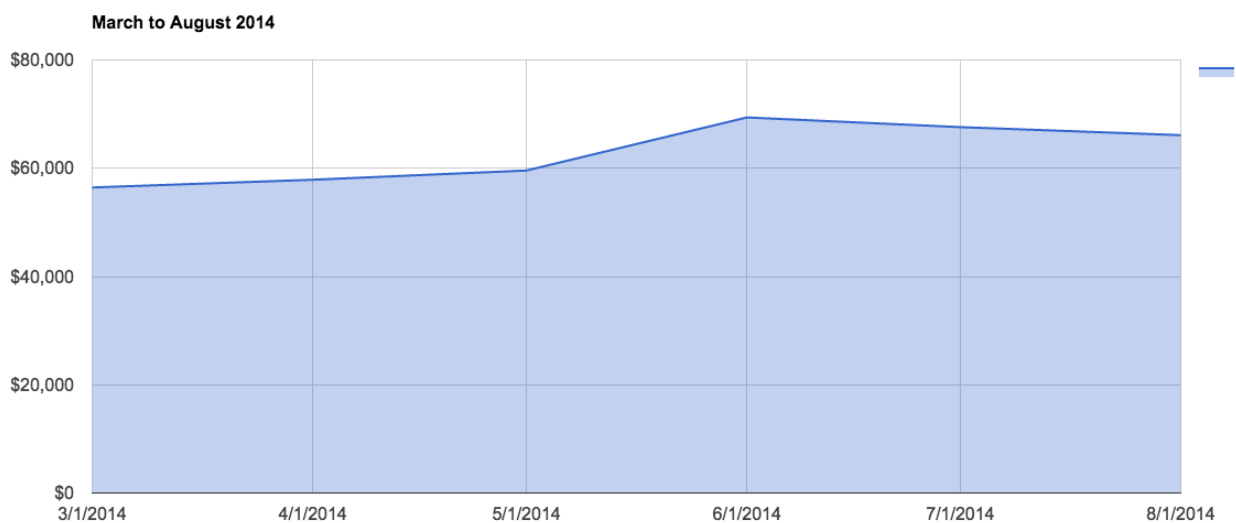
Figure 3. The progression of Wok Express sales during the study period. Copyright 2015 Nigel Grimshaw-Jones.

4.2 Website Referrals and Zomato Reviews

During the study period, users of Wok Express wrote reviews of their experiences and Zomato (zomato.com the review site in question) was consistently the highest referrer of direct leads to the website during the six-month period. Considering the

impact food review sites can have on public opinion (Koh, 2011), the researcher considered the content of the reviews as a valuable source of information about what customer's opinions were of Wok Express, what they liked about the restaurant and what inspired them to write their reviews.

There were 19 reviews about Wok Express left on the Zomato website after the re-brand, (15 during the study period) two negative and 17 positive for a total of 1225 words written. All the descriptive words used in the reviews, predominantly adjectives that were synonyms, were grouped together into keyword groups. There were 10 keyword groups isolated by the researcher that contained all the descriptive words used in all the reviews. The keyword groups and their associated adjectives and synonyms are listed in table 2 below.

Keyword Groups	Common adjectives used in the reviews within these groups. Synonyms.	Count
Fresh: –	fresh, crisp, fresh ingredients, fresh and flavourful, fresh chunky vegies, fresh vegetables, tasted so fresh, freshness, super fresh, crunchy, consistently fresh,	14
Care:–	great service, awesome service, winning excellent, brilliant, consistent,	14
Quality:–	rich, perfect, quality, quality of food, real quality	5
Healthy:–	healthy option, low carb, low fat, well chosen,	11
Vegetarian:–	vegetarian/vegan, vegetarian option	2
Best:–	excellent, stunning, winning, awesome, best, could never go wrong, been great, really enjoyed, just love, obvious care, far exceeds that of a take away, gone are the days of greasy Domino's, enjoy Chinese without negative reaction, free of MSG, free of Gluten, healthy takeaways, healthy, loads of vegies, authentic	13
Quantity:–	very generous, abundant, portion size really good, generous, very generous, humungous	6
Tasty:–	very tasty, full of coconut flavour, incredibly tasty, really tasty, full of flavour, nice and tasty, delicious, really delicious, taste was great, so yummy, flavours were fantastic, flavour, so delicious, big flavour,	15
Would Recommend:–	I recommend, I highly recommend, cannot rate highly enough,	5
Disappointed:–	really disappointed, disappointing, bit disappointed	3

Table 2. The keyword groups and their associated adjectives and synonyms found in the Zomato reviews about Wok Express. Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

A percentage was given to the number of times each keyword group appeared out of 1225 words written over 17 reviews and these percentages are displayed in the chart below.

Word Count
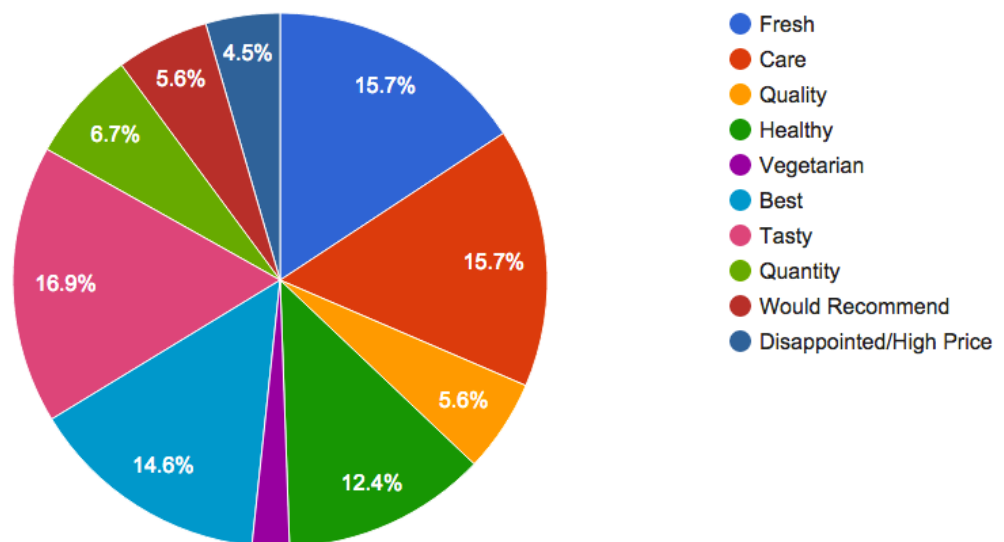
Figure 5. Graph showing keyword groups used by percentage Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

Keyword Groups directly related to the values of the brand include fresh 15.9%, care 15.9%, quality 5.7%, healthy 12.5%, vegetarian 1%, and best 14.8% for a total of 65.8% of words used in the positive reviews that directly associate with the brand values. The remainder of the words: tasty 17%, quantity 6.8%, would recommend 5.7% and disappointed 4.5%, are less specifically about the brand values and make up 34% of words used. From the two negative reviews the negative keyword group words included the words disappointed 4% and high price .5%, making a total of just 4.5% of the words used.

<u>What we learnt</u>

The decision to use a values based marketing campaign was taken specifically to highlight the "commitment to care" that the owner Paul has instilled in the company. Paul himself cares and really believes in the way his restaurants prepare their food and it was considered that people should know about this. The re-brand

83

and all communication materials heavily feature imagery and messaging that support these values.

The results of analysing the reviews confirm that this commitment to these particular values paid off very well. Over 65% of the words used in the reviews directly support or mention the brand values. Further, 34% of the keywords chosen were positive about the eating experience and generally about the brand itself, but not directly associated with the values of the brand. Only 4.5% of the keywords chosen were negative and from only 2 out of 19 reviews.

Important insights to take from this data is that Zomato was a significant <u>direct</u> referrer to the website (see figure 10) and that the content of the reviews indicates that the majority of reviewers were extremely positive about the brand values and the direction Wok Express had taken in pursuing those values.

<u>4.3 Google Analytics</u>

Wok Express takes the majority of its daily orders through the website, so one way of measuring success is to measure website visits. Observing the increase in website visits gives a good idea of the growth in business that happened since the re-brand and marketing activity began, noting a steady increase in traffic and importantly new users to the website.

The Google Analytics chart below shows a steady rise in website visits from October 2013 when the strategy officially started, to a full year later in October 2014.

84
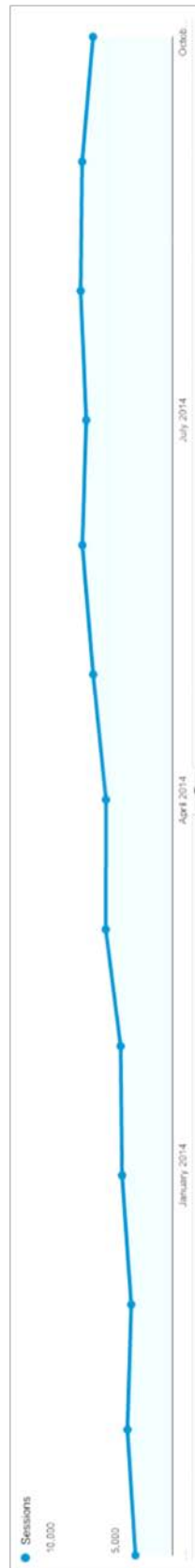
Figure 6. The increase in website visits. October 2013 to October 2014. Source: Google Analytics (2015)

85

The next analytics chart shows an overview of traffic during the same period with new sessions a very healthy 65%+ of all sessions.

New Visitor ■ Returning Visitor

65.6%

34.4%

Sessions
67,312

Users
44,800

Pageviews
148,376

Pages / Session
2.20

Avg. Session Duration
00:02:08

Bounce Rate
55.76%

% New Sessions
65.63%
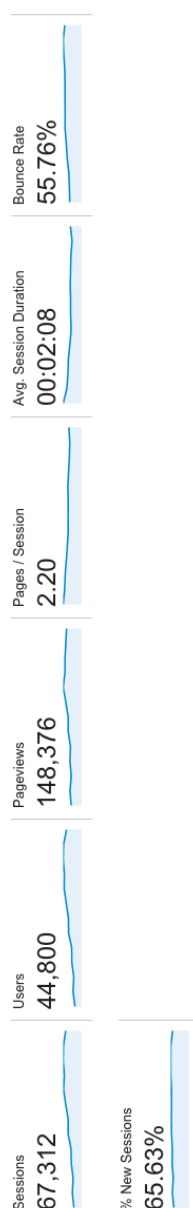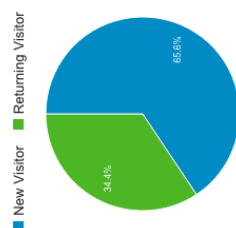
Figure 7. Overview of traffic showing new visits clearly up. October 2013 to October 2014. Source: Google Analytics (2015)

In terms of acquisition of visitors to the website, the following chart shows that during the period there were an additional 44k+ new visitors to the website. This makes sense when we see the growth in overall visitors. While it's true that not every single visitor to the website on a particular evening will order food, visits to the site and particularly new visits do confirm that people are finding out about the website one way or another. Being particularly interested in social media as a driver of new visits to the website and being the only active marketing channel, the steady rise in visits can at least partially be attributed to increased exposure on Facebook. As mentioned, direct referrals to the website from Facebook were modest but the analytics don't tell the true story about brand awareness, <u>reach</u> and <u>engagement</u>. Hence the researcher established the method of connecting the metric organic search to brand awareness mentioned in the Methodology chapter 3.4 Data Analysis Methods pp. 62 – 63. The key aspect is that the most searched keyword is the brand name Wok Express, meaning that users were searching for the brand by name. For new users this means they must have found out through word-of-mouth or probably through Facebook. Figure 9 shows the most popular keyword phrases used by visitors who arrived at the Wok Express website, proving that the top 10 keywords all contained the brand name "Wok Express".

Figure 8. Analytics chart that clearly shows Organic Search as the most popular referrer. Source: Google Analytics (2015)

Figure 9. Analytics chart that clearly shows the Organic Search keywords are predominantly the brand name. Source: Google Web Master Tools (2015)

4.4 Facebook Activity

Beginning in June 2013 Wok Express introduced Facebook marketing, using

strategies based around posts and competitions developed as part of the overall

88

strategy which was based around healthier fast food. Emphasising brand values ie fresh, homemade, natural ingredients, the new brand collateral and colours also reflected these. Wok Express use fresh vegetables, no MSG and use homemade sauces for all their food and letting everyone know about this on Facebook was the core strategy. The official re-brand period when all new brand livery was rolled out into all outlets, began in October 2013.

The first chart figure 10, shows direct referrals from Facebook and Zomato to the website. This means those people who have read a post on Facebook or a review on Zomato and then immediately clicked a link to travel to the website. Google is then able to register this as a direct referral. Zomato has by far the highest number of direct referrals to the website, peaking in June and tailing off in August. Facebook has considerably less but there are important reasons why this metric is not the best way to measure the impact of Facebook on the campaign as mentioned in the methodology chapter. There is a difference in measuring direct and indirect referrals from social media websites, mainly because measuring indirect referrals is not possible using existing analytics programs like Google Analytics.

Direct and indirect referrals to the website are discussed in different parts of this research paper, particularly in the methodology discussion chapters, but a word is necessary here about the differences between Zomato and Facebook as social platforms. Although both are considered social media channels, they operate in entirely different ways and it is not surprising to see differences in direct referral metrics.

89

Zomato is a dedicated restaurant review and recommendation website where customers can look up restaurants in their area. They can browse different eating places, read reviews about them and then decide to visit the website immediately by clicking a direct link. Particularly if the restaurant offers online ordering as Wok Express does, this happens frequently. It's no surprise this single proposition food only website generates considerably more direct referral traffic to the Wok Express website than Facebook does. Facebook does not have such singular purpose for its existence. It is a complex and truly social network in that diverse online communities are formed inadvertently by liking and sharing similar things. Posts about food are just one theme of many that may appear on a user's Facebook newsfeed after having been liked or shared. Further, users are not single mindedly looking to eat somewhere when they are looking at Facebook as they are engaging in reading and viewing all sorts of material. People use Facebook for entirely different reasons than they do Zomato and the direct referral results reflect this. The analysis period for the Facebook Data is from March to August 2014.
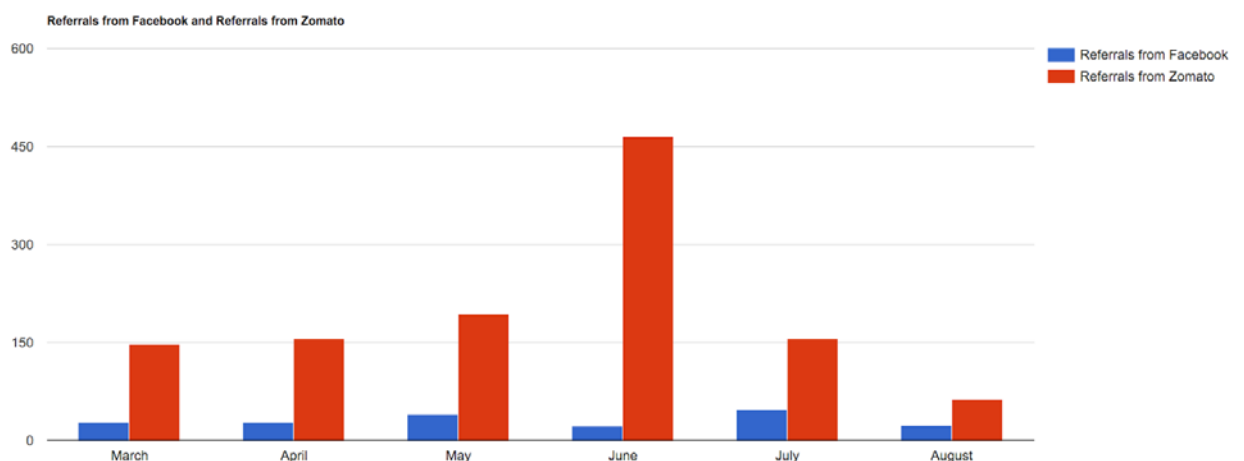
Figure 10. Referrals from Facebook and Zomato. March – August 2014 Source: Google Analytics (2015)

As indicated in the methodology chapter, analysis of the Facebook activity was broken down using numbers of impressions, numbers reached, new fans, numbers reached per post, numbers engaged and direct visits to the website from Facebook. The researcher also used a method described in the methodology, a process of deduction, to connect Facebook to increased brand awareness then to increased website visits and lastly to sales.

An example of the month-by-month Facebook data summarised by the <mark>researcher</mark> is given below. Tables for each month of the study period were created showing the numbers associated with these metrics. There is also a small paragraph at the end of each month about Google Analytics which confirms referral visits to the website directly from Facebook and Zomato. For the purpose of writing this section, the month of March is shown below as an example of how the data was prepared and presented.

Following this, the findings of the Facebook data from March to August (the study period) are discussed. The remainder of the charts can be found in the appendix to this document.

The charts of monthly activity were recorded in the following way.

Impressions	89.8k
Reached Every 2.65 impressions 1 person is reached	33.8k
New "fans"	235

Average number of people reached per post	995
No of people engaged (this could be talking, liking, sharing, or commenting on a post) Every 45 people reached 1 person engages	739
Visits to website directly from Facebook Every 27.3 people engaged on Facebook equals 1 visit to the website.	27
Highest referral source during March	**Zomato – 148**

Table 3. Method of recording monthly Facebook Data. Showing March 2014. Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

What have we learnt?

The ways Facebook works from a marketing perspective are varied and this is discussed in greater detail in the Discussion chapter. This Findings chapter will focus on how Facebook worked for Wok Express during the study period. All findings mentioned and jargon defined, refer to data relevant only to Wok Express during the study period.

Impressions – the first thing to understand is impressions. An impression refers to a post generated by the Wok Express Facebook page administrator that appears or is displayed in the newsfeed of anybody on Facebook. Importantly it might appear more than once on a person's newsfeed, which makes this figure the highest metric. Naturally the more impressions the better, but it is really about what happens after the impression is recorded.

Facebook (2015) explains the difference between impressions and reach

Impressions are the number of times a post from your Page is displayed, whether the post is clicked or not. People may see multiple impressions of the same post.

For example, someone might see a Page update in News Feed once, and then a second time if their friend shares it. Reach is the number of people who received impressions of a Page post. Reach might be less than impressions since one person can see multiple impressions.

During the study period the impressions figures were consistently high with the lowest monthly impressions being 12k to the highest being 1.1m. Impressions tell us that a post was visible on a newsfeed and from this point of view impressions were very good. The figures do need to be clarified between using paid advertising and not. Later in the discussion chapter, how this works is discussed in more detail, but for this chapter it's sufficient to understand that paying money to Facebook for advertisements greatly affects the number of impressions received, particularly from branded pages.

Reach – essentially reach refers to the number of individuals that receive a post within their timeline but not how many times they see it. The difference is that each person may see the post more than once (one impression) and although it is undoubtedly useful for a marketer to present information more than once to a prospect, the reach metric stands for the actual number of individual users you have reached.

Throughout the study period monthly reach for Wok Express ranged from 6.4k to 35k and reflected the variance in impressions during the time and also between paid and unpaid reach. The reach figures represent the numbers of individual people Wok Express was able to show a piece of marketing material to. By any marketer's yardstick these numbers are impressive. With the exception of Radio and TV it would be hard to find better metrics for placing branded material in front

of nearly 140k people in six-months. The next metric to consider is engagement and suddenly the figures drop considerably.

Engagement – engagement refers to how many people clicked or interacted with a Wok Express post. There are three ways to engage with content on Facebook, a share, comment or like. Additionally you can like an individual page and become a fan of a page.

For understanding the power of hidden communities on Facebook, in this case the "concerned about healthy takeaways community" the engagement metric is the most important. Users who engage with content care about it enough to like, share or comment upon it and in this case it roughly equates to people who care about the brand and value the information they receive from it. During the study period monthly engagement varied from about 400 to 1000 people per month for a total of over 4100 people engaging with the brand content over six months. Interestingly these figures often do not directly relate to numbers of impressions or reach, as the power of an individual post can spread widely, meaning the ability to reach even one person is important. Increasing the numbers of engaged people becomes an extremely important metric to track as it is by doing this that Facebook managers can track the quality of individual posts.

By definition engagement means you are connecting with people. The post has managed to attract and then hold attention and finally it has had enough appeal for that user to take some kind of action around that post. It therefore becomes pertinent to have a look at the top two posts for each month to see how people were engaging with Wok Express Facebook content. As per the methodology the

researcher was looking for evidence that people were effectively engaging with the values of the brand perhaps even more than the brand itself. Facebook <u>fans</u> however, directly support the brand itself, and this will be explained later in this section.

Most popular posts by number of engaged users – looking at the content from the top two posts each month by number of engaged users, clearly shows the majority of the content in them reflects the values of the brand. As these posts received the most engagement, it follows that the people engaging shared the same values. It would also be possible to say that this same group cared about similar things for example, making life easier without having to compromise on their values, being sympathetic to vegetarianism and animal welfare, learning to cook healthier food, eating at home more, and eating the healthiest takeaways that you can. These are the types of values represented during the study period within the most engaged posts, which users on Facebook were supporting. Having said that, this community was also not averse to the occasional Free or Value Add offer as the other high performing posts were represented by this style of content.

The post in March that engaged the most was on March 11th 2014 entitled: "This is what your fridge should look like at home."
There was a photo of a fridge full of healthy products and labeled clearly so that each one could be identified. This post reached 220 people. 34 people engaged with it, five people were talking about it and four people <u>liked</u> it, an engagement level of 15.45%.
This post's content was about healthy eating and being able to do so in a common everyday environment, ie making the most of planning and keeping your fridge

well stocked. It was a high engagment post and there was no free offer or giveaway.

The next most engaged post in March was on Mar 19th 2014 entitled: "Fun Tip!" This helpful tip about boiling eggs reached 168 people for a 20.2% engagement level. 34 people engaged with this post and 1 person was talking about it. 0 people shared it. One person <u>liked</u> it.

This post gave useful free cooking advice about doing an everyday task. It's high engagement level supports the contention that good Facebook content should be useful to people. Despite not being about Wok Express at all, it still came via Wok Express and appeared with their branding allowing the company to seem helpful and caring about things their community of supporters valued.

The Post that engaged the most by numbers or sheer reach was on March 12th 2014 entitled: "Click the link below and give us some feedback on our service and you will be in the draw to WIN $50 worth of Wok Express"

This Value Add giveaway reached 8.1k people and 165 people engaged with it. 65 people were talking about it, two people shared it and 60 people <u>liked</u> it. The engagement level was 2.54%.

This post illustrates a few things. Firstly there was a huge difference in numbers reached because the post was boosted by paid advertising. Doing this guarantees huge reach and it maybe a situation where the people who are engaging are not engaging with the brand values but the free giveaway. They are still members of the Wok Express community however as they would have eaten there in order to give the feedback, but with this post, they are not engaging on the basis of that. The

engagement is low by percentage and could be said to be low quality engagement because it lacks the values based appeal.

On average in March nearly 1000 people were reached per post with a total for the month of 739 people engaging with content. For direct visits to the website from Facebook this meant that for every 27 people engaged, one person would visit the website.

Throughout the study period the most successful posts by engagement were predominantly posts around the values of the brand although not necessarily about the brand itself, indicating that clearly users were identifying with the values the brand stood for rather than the actual brand. This is clearly significant and supports the basic premise this study represents. Brand values are the key drivers behind making better use of hidden values based communities on Facebook.

Fans and active brand supporters – Encouraging fans and active brand supporters has since the development of Facebook Brand Pages, been considered a worthwhile brand strategy. What is a Facebook Fan and does it help to have lots of fans? Additionally what is the value of a like, share or comment. There have been numerous attempts to put monetary value upon various Facebook metrics over the years as shown by Wood, (2014) in "The value of a Facebook Like". One area where Wok Express excelled and where there has also been considerable debate is the value of the Facebook fan. According to "What's a Facebook Fan Worth in 2014?" Tod Denis (2014) used three different models, Halo Value, Leads Value and Revenue, to calculate fan value for three different corporates and so putting different monetary values on each of them. Biscuit brand Oreo was USD5.90,

Hubspot was USD3.71 and for Audible it was USD10.00. Denis started with the cost of acquiring the fan and worked out the value against this. He stresses that in his opinion a Facebook fan is actually worth nothing until you realize its potential (Denis, 2014). Similarly Becki Wood explains that Facebook likes are virtually worthless until you nurture that connection, yet they are full of potential (Wood, 2014).

It's clear that these studies imply that the value of Facebook as a marketing channel is in how fans and users are nurtured and encouraged by a brand, before they become of benefit and it is currently not possible nor helpful to try and force return on investment onto Facebook (Heggestuen, 2014). Heggestuen (2014) says that return on engagement is a more worthwhile metric to use for Facebook, as it exists today. It may be that in the future, a more usable monetary metric can be applied to Facebook's fans and likes usage, but in its current form as primarily a social network and not an advertising network, Facebook is better understood in terms of engagement and community. Fans however, according to a study by Syncapse (2013) spend twice as much on a brand than non-fans and this simple, measurable metric makes fans valuable to a brand. The same study measured the value of fans vs. non-fans across a spectrum of metrics. These included corresponding product spending, brand loyalty, propensity to recommend, media value, cost of acquisition and brand affinity, to arrive at a figure of USD$174. The study argues that fans generally are better, more loyal customers and brand stakeholders than non-fans and this is aligned with the findings of the Wok Express study.

This study has found that plenty of engagement for a brand comes in the form of a community of people on Facebook who support the values of and around the brand i.e. for Wok Express the generally health conscious. Fans however represent true brand supporters and stakeholders who not only relate to the values of the brand but are also prepared to put their name next to the brand in support of it. This is a significantly bigger step than merely <u>liking</u> or <u>sharing</u> a Wok Express post. It is stating that I support these values and I also support Wok Express for supporting these values. During the study period, Wok Express experienced a significant steady gain of 1934 Facebook brand fans and the accrual of fans did mirror the number of people <u>reached</u> and <u>engaged</u> with during this time. New fans gained, ensured ongoing organic reach of posts, that is the sharing of posts between Facebook friends without paying money. This adds organic reach power to the value of the paid advertising. To clarify, posts <u>shared</u> by friends to friends have a far greater propensity to be viewed on a Facebook newsfeed. A company Facebook page must pay to ensure their post is placed on users' newsfeeds. This is discussed in greater detail in the Discussion chapter.

The data for Wok Express on Facebook showed that the engagement by Facebook users with Wok Express was primarily values based. This led to a significant numbers of new customers during the study period and this is supported by the Google Analytics new visitors metric. The corresponding large increase in overall website visits and sales during this time means that many of the new <u>indirect</u> visitors undoubtedly heard about the brand on Facebook as it was the only active marketing channel used. There was also a steady but modest supply of <u>direct</u> visitors to the website from Facebook, significantly the majority were also new users. It's clear that an existing, yet hidden community of people were interacting

and engaging with Wok Express posts. Primarily they were engaging with the brand values and were reached through paid advertising and organic sharing. Many of these people subsequently went further and <u>directly</u> connected with the brand itself by becoming fans. Increasing fans meant a visible Wok Express community was slowly being developed.

4.5 Customer Surveys

The charts below show the results from the customer surveys conducted at the end of the study period. The researcher wanted to find out how significant Facebook had been in the customer's journey to Wok Express and further how important the values of the brand were to these users.

There were 19 responses to the customer survey and the respondents were chosen because they had left feedback on the website. The questions, responses and graphs are shown as follows:

How did you find out about Wok Express?

In the same way the Google Analytics metrics showed that organic search was the greatest referrer of visitors to the website, the response to this question confirms that Google and word-of-mouth was the most successful channel used by customers to find out about Wok Express. Advertising is also significant as Facebook advertisements only were running during the study period making this metric further evidence of Facebook brand awareness efficacy. This chart is about brand awareness and the large proportion of word-of-mouth referrals indicates a healthy number of people prepared to vouch for the brand. Finding Wok Express through a Google search indicates that a percentage of these people would have a prior knowledge of the brand.
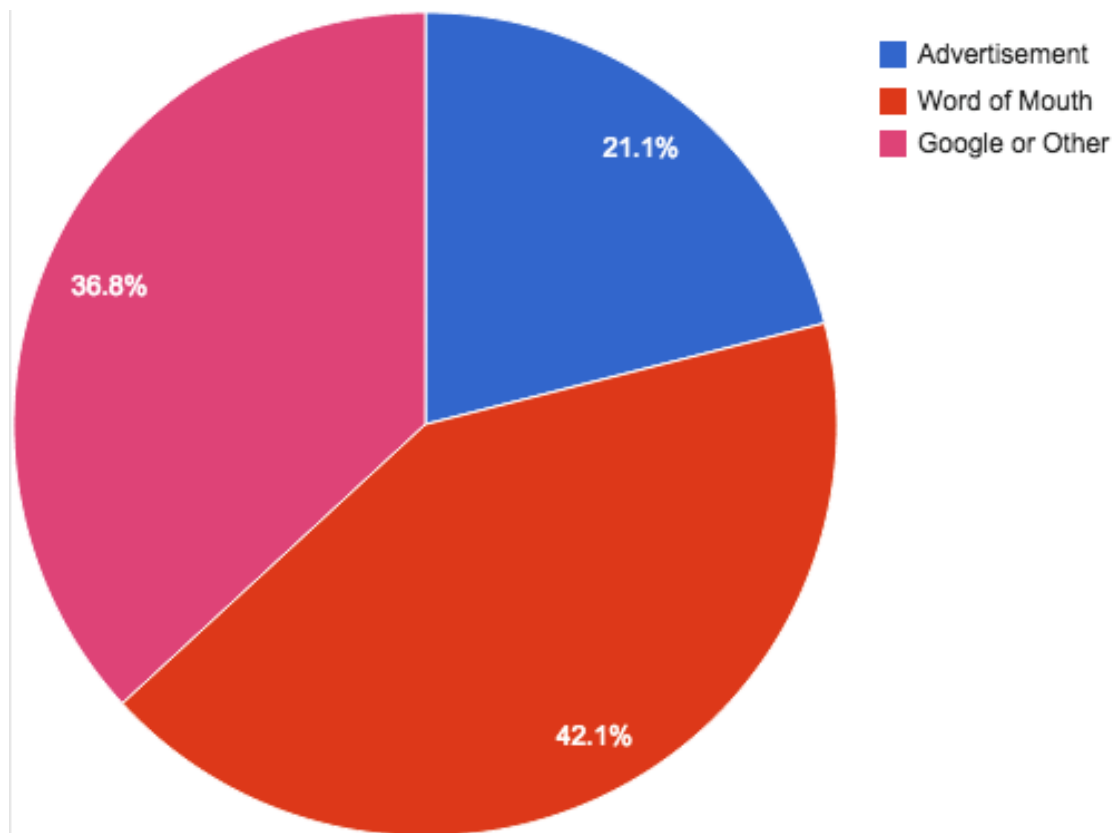
Figure 12. How did you find out about Wok Express? Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

Are you male or female?

This chart confirms Females as the larger number of Survey Respondents,

although overall Wok Express customers slightly favour males at 54%.
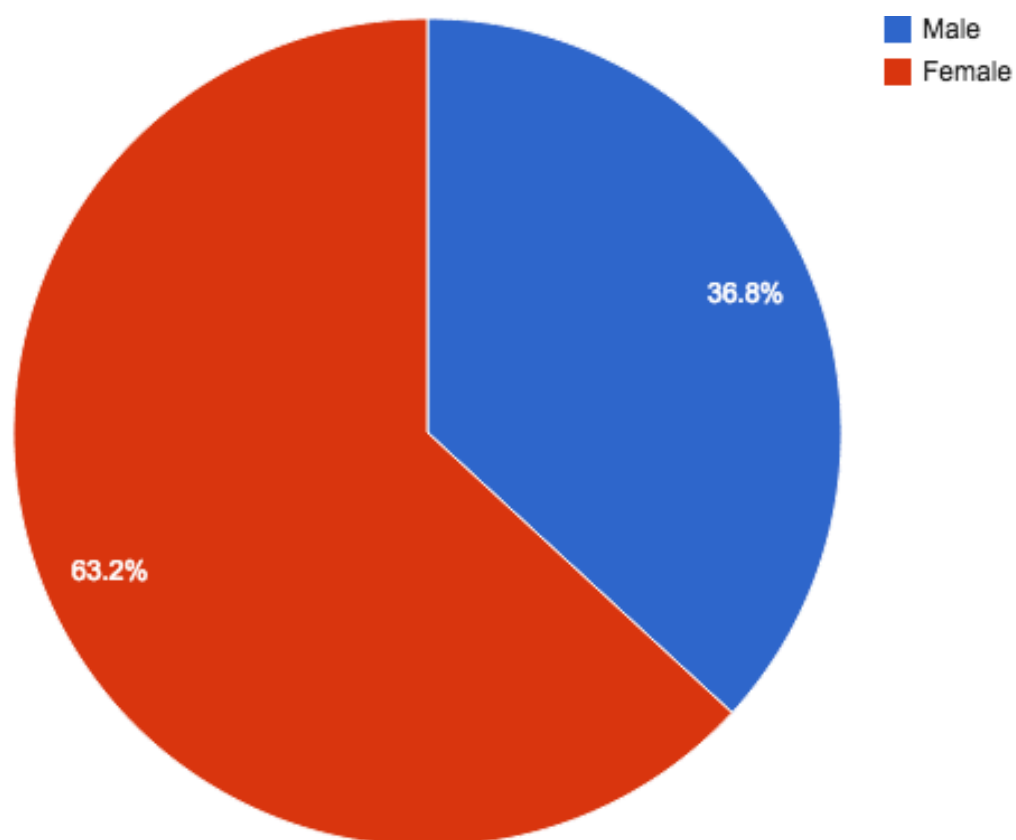
Figure 13. Are you Male or Female? Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

Have you ever seen the Wok Express Facebook page and how did you engage?

The first direct question about Facebook enquired whether users had ever seen the Facebook page. Out of 19 responses six people or one third had seen and engaged with the Facebook page, five had liked it, one had shared it with a friend. 13 people or about two thirds hadn't seen the Facebook page at all. Taking into account the inability to measure the exact number of Facebook referrals to the website and its contribution to overall sales, just over 30% seems a fair representation of Facebook's impact on overall sales.
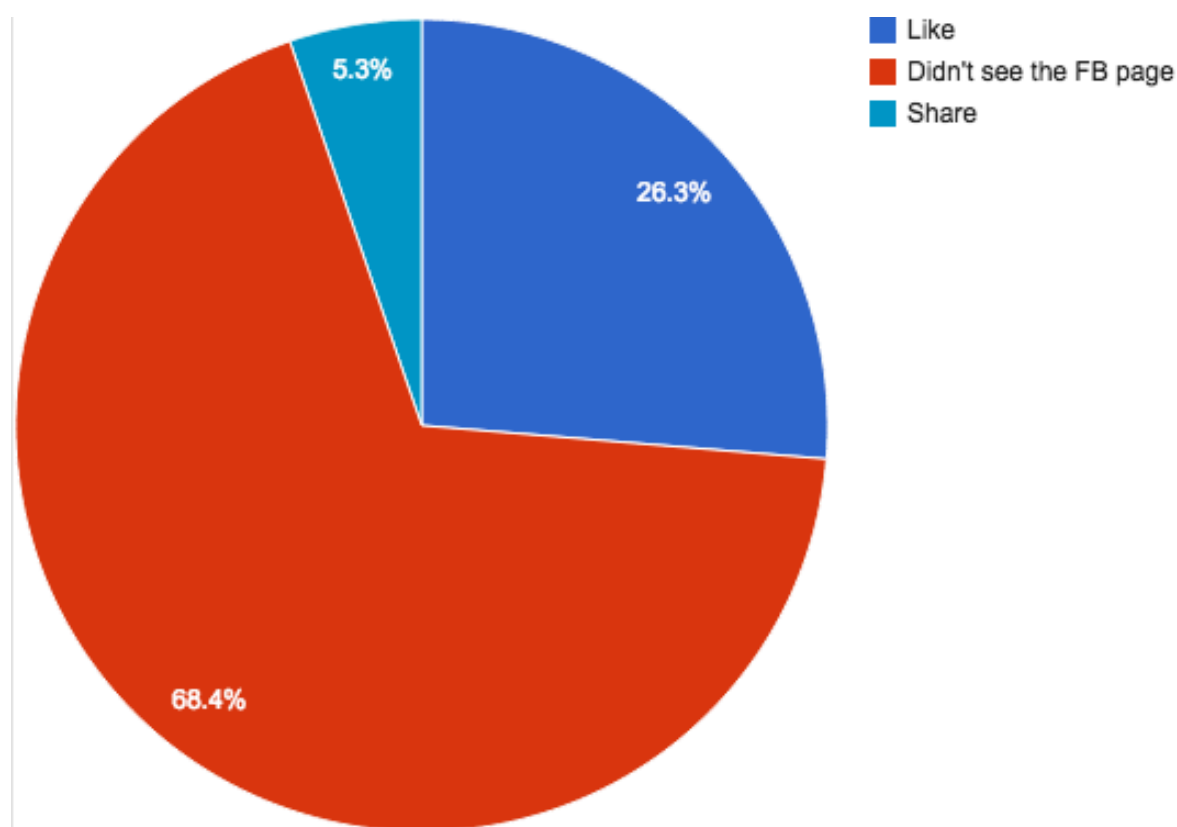
Figure 14. Have you seen the Wok Express Facebook page and if so, how did you engage with it? Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

What do you think of Wok Express' offer – Fresh, Homemade, No MSG?
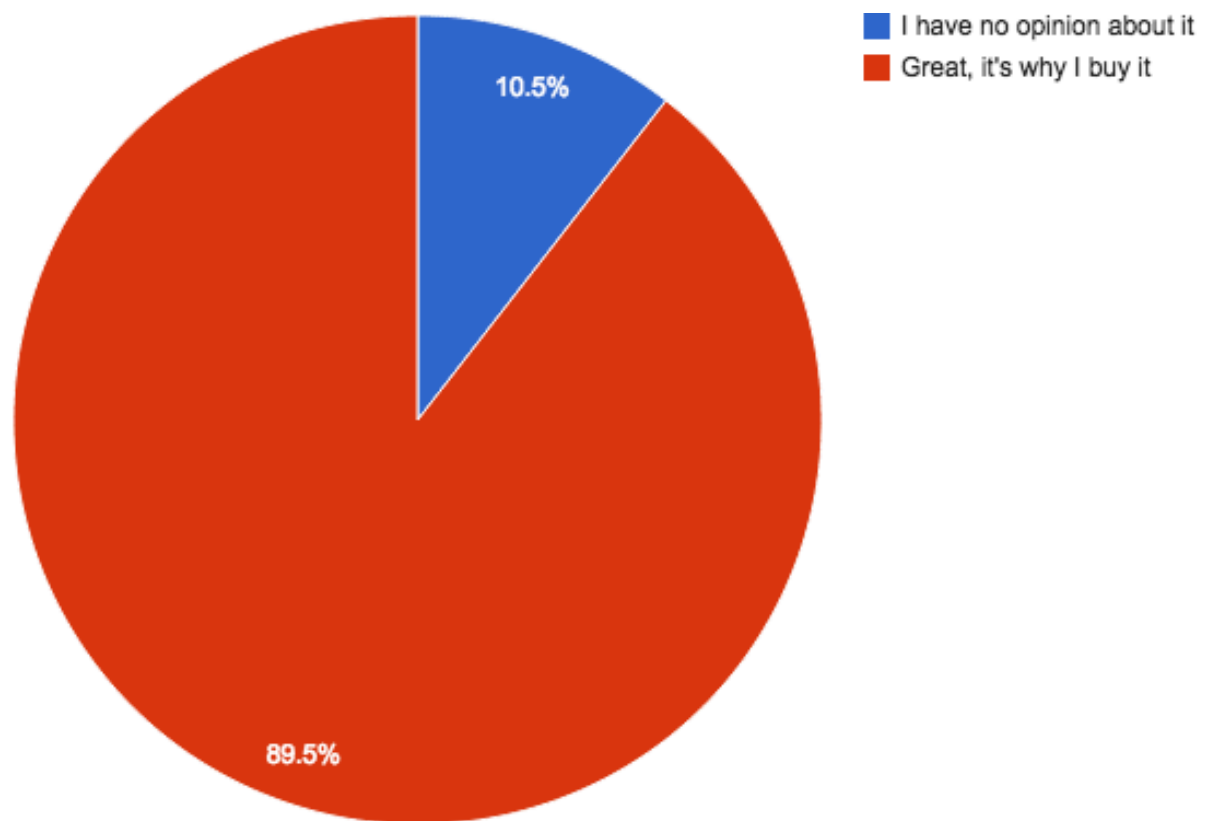
Figure 15. What do you think of the Wok Express offer, Fresh, Homemade, No MSG? Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

From the brand point of view, this chart overwhelmingly confirms that among the survey respondents, the brands' commitment to fresh, homemade, MSG free values is important to the extent that it is the main reason these people are customers.

Do you buy from Wok because it cares about these things, and because it stands for these things?
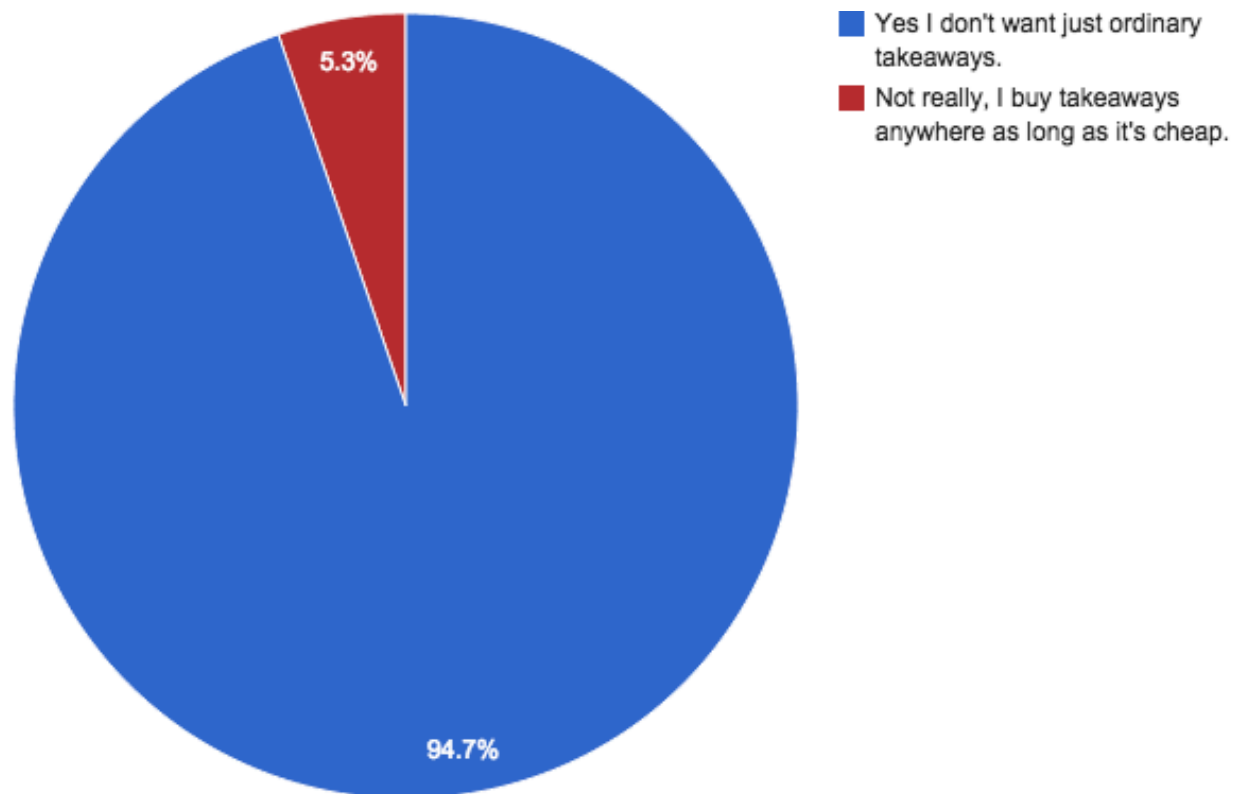
Figure 16. Do you buy from Wok Express because it cares about these things? Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

This chart confirms that the Wok Express commitment to their values is important to these customers. 18 out of 19 respondents were motivated in this way saying they "don't want ordinary takeaways". Clearly, price is not their primary motivation when buying takeaways and they chose to eat from Wok Express solely because of the values they stand for.

Do you think it's a good idea companies like Wok Express are on Facebook?
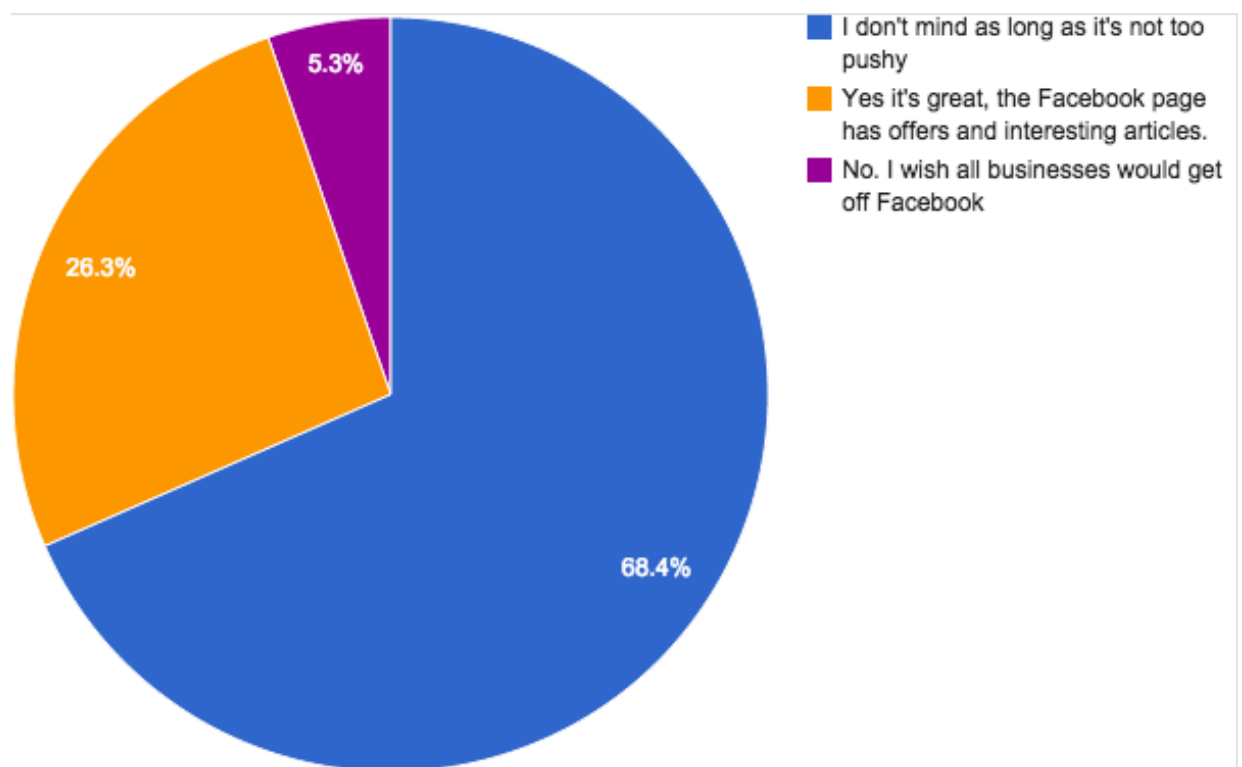
Figure 17. Do you think it's a good idea companies like Wok Express are on Facebook? Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

This chart is an attempt by the researcher to gauge how people view business intrusion on Facebook. Does it annoy them? The responses confirm that most respondents are comfortable with the company Facebook presence, as long as it's "not pushy". A significant number however were genuinely positive about seeing businesses on Facebook as they found it helpful particularly around learning from interesting articles and offers. Again there was one respondent, the same one who had answered negatively to the other questions, who said they didn't want businesses on Facebook. These responses are interesting for Facebook marketers and support the requirement Legorburu & McColl (2014) make that content should be interesting and helpful. It also supports Richardson (2013) as he

describes that being sincere, helpful and a proper member of the tribe rather than

merely pushing offers and products, is best practice.

Anything else you'd like to add about businesses on Facebook?

There were four responses to this last question where participants were invited to

add some comments of their own: –

I am a Facebook non-believer! one of very few people I think - but not even
gorgeous wok express can't convince me to sign up! Otherwise tech savvy though!

I have never & will never use Facebook - like many of my friends & colleagues. If
you limit your marketing to FB you'll be missing out on a lot of potential
customers.

Good for checking out current promotions and new dishes as well as useful
supplementary material. The Wok Express website is my first choice and source of
information, with the Facebook page an add-on or secondary to the website menu
and ordering page.

I think that FB is a good place to build a culture for a brand in some cases. Not so
sure that it applies to take away foods though. I would be more inclined to suggest
a monthly mail out with a voucher to remind people that you are there. Love the
website and the service. Keep it up. Cheers

Two of these responses are entirely negative about Facebook. What comes through

is that both these people feel their opinion is worth sharing, they are passionate

about not liking Facebook. The first response mentions "gorgeous Wok Express"

indicating that they are "a big fan", while the other curiously insists that

concentrating marketing on Facebook will mean Wok Express will miss out on a lot

of potential customers. The next two responses suggest that Facebook is good for

checking out new promotions and offers and supplementary information about the

brand. However they consider Facebook as a secondary port of call to the main

website. The final response to this question does consider Facebook as useful for

building a "culture" but isn't sure that it applies to take-away foods.

What is interesting about all these responses is that despite being only four in

number, they represent a reasonable range of public perception about the channel.

One of four mentioned "building a culture", which does indicate a reasonable

108

understanding of Facebook's ability to create and sustain communities. The response about marketing on Facebook as "missing out on a lot of potential customers" is considered ironic by the researcher, particularly after considering the data from this paper suggests otherwise.

4.6 Owner Interview

N.B. All quotes in this section from an Interview with Paul Brandwood. Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015) unless cited otherwise.

How important is branding to a business like yours? – In answering this first general question, Paul makes connections between, branding and community. He describes people who are enthusiastic about the brand as belonging to a community that he calls "the health foodies". He understands that the re-branding exercise and the marketing, was responsible for connecting with this target market and he was very enthusiastic about having done so. Further, he associates the integrity of the brand message, that is standing for values in a visible and committed way, as being integral to the success of the marketing. Also, Paul strongly connects branding with good business practice, indicating that it is essential when expanding a customer base, to appeal to a wider audience and generally, when trying to improve the quality and authority of your business. He describes the branding as having moved his business into the "big league".

During his answer, Paul describes a grass roots understanding of brand power, mentioning first hand experiences through customer interactions on the shop floor and over the telephone. He said people responded to him enthusiastically, showing great support for the brand values Wok Express stood for and also pleasure that Wok Express had embraced these values. When discussing the integrity of the

brand Paul mentioned that, in his opinion people "look out" for businesses that embrace similar values to their own and that it was really important to be seen "standing up" for those things. He emphasised this again and again, that it's important to his customers that they are able to see his commitment and enthusiasm for his brand's values. They want to "see it in the flesh" he said. He was pleased he had been able to "connect" with the "health foodies" in this way and went on to describe that, in his opinion, people are more "switched on these days", actively looking for and expecting more from brands. His reference to having a strong brand moving his business into the "big league" indicates that he considers his customers' value his business more under the new brand than they had previously.

"When managing a brand, how careful do you have to be?" When considering this second question, Paul makes connections between brand management with community management, as people "care strongly about the brand" and it becomes "very important to look after it". People want to see "clean and fresh" in a practical way. He goes on to link brand management with consistency as customers had ongoing expectations of the brand and that they "liked the look of a franchise".

In connecting the management of the brand to customer expectations, Paul suggested that people "like to feel comfortable about the brand" and even prefer the franchise experience. To manage this Paul describes looking after the brand as "everyday and ongoing" and it needs "ten out of ten" consideration and time. Further he mentioned that a great deal of thought needs to go into the development of new promotions and that they are centered around the brand values. He describes how the "De-Lite" promotion Wok Express ran, tasty food low

in carbs and calories, as being "the most successful promotion the company has ever done". He explained, with some exasperation that managing a brand properly means new and compelling initiatives are required all the time.

Furthermore Paul actively connected brand management with overall business success, creatively describing what happens when you get it right as "like a gust of wind filling the sails" and "gaining its own momentum" and that you can "ride this on Facebook and through your email campaigns". This is an active appreciation and understanding of the power of Facebook, tempering this with the words "doing it properly". He explained that sometimes it "works really well" and that customers also seem to get behind these initiatives, implying they enjoy it when you build this sort of momentum around a campaign.

"What weaknesses have been exposed considering your new understanding"? In considering this third question, Paul makes connections between brand management and practical day-to-day handling, that you have to make sure "simple parts of your business support your brand" and the way you sell it all the time. Also Paul connected brand awareness with practical day-to-day management by aligning how the brand is sold, always with your target demographic in mind. Ongoing brand development is also a day-to-day practical task highlighting being able to "educate customers to new things all the time".

Finally Paul makes a connection with ongoing brand development and strategy, intimating that brands should be refined all the time and strategies should be flexible to accommodate increasing brand reach and making it precisely targeted.

He also believes that strategic thinking from the very beginning of a brand's development is essential.

As he answered this question Paul shared somewhat regretfully the weaknesses that became apparent to him during the re-brand and marketing exercise. He made strong connections to day-to-day practical management of the brand, which means his outlets, his staff, his signage, and his customer service. Paul reiterated that running the restaurant business well means aligning his offer in many practical ways to his brand values. For instance, after seeing how his customers were reacting, he became aware that the menu he was offering was "too varied and too much like his restaurant was before the re-brand". He felt he was still trying to be all things to all people and constantly worried about his prices and portion sizes. But as the new branding progressed, he realised that the menu now needed to reflect his customers needs more closely. They were of a more discerning clientele and the menu needed to be more refined and niche to suit them, as that is what "they expected such a brand to be". It also occurred to him that if he were to start again with a new brand, he would most definitely "take these things into consideration right at the very beginning" of the strategy and he would develop the brand in this way. This would mean identifying the target market much more closely than just a guess or an assumption and developing the brand very tightly around that. In effect, he said it would be "even more niche" and targeted to his audience more carefully. Additionally he mentioned competing brands in Auckland that he was impressed with and somewhat envious of, as they had managed to do this. The local Ponsonby business "Bird on a Wire", located near to his Ponsonby store, was "always packed" he said and their "portions are nothing". He intimated that they had "got their marketing right" and were benefitting because of this.

What is the role of Facebook and where does it fit in? This final question created some genuine confusion in Paul and he unknowingly contradicted himself twice. For this question Paul made connections between Facebook and brand awareness as he saw how effectively Facebook helped him gain new customers and got the new brand out there. With some exasperation on his part however, Paul also saw Facebook as requiring considerable practical effort suggesting that "doing Facebook properly requires real work, thought and time". To create "worthy posts" on Facebook he said, takes a lot of time and consideration but importantly, "this is what customers want".

Paul saw the clear connection Facebook has with authenticity, highlighting that customers on Facebook enjoy seeing authentic shots of "real chefs cooking the food". Paul realised that Facebook needs resources, mentioning that businesses need to "make time and money available to manage Facebook properly". He suggested, "a dedicated marketing person is required."

Paul also connected Facebook heavily with brand image, and he mentioned the need for "good photography" and perhaps a real "face of the company". He went on to compare his business with another local business, "Wok 'n' Noodle" where the "business owner was always there, smiling and greeting people". On Facebook this person's presence was also prominent. Paul saw this as valid and a promising way to market, but then qualifying this by saying "it wasn't for everyone" and that a certain personality type was required to market in this way.

Paul then appeared to contradict himself by saying Facebook was redundant, suggesting that "an idea whose time has come, riding a wave of the trend of the moment" is the most important thing and that popularity on Facebook is irrelevant

in this. "Good reviews in mainstream media" plus word-of-mouth are more important he said.

As Paul answered this question he vacillated between great enthusiasm and contradiction. By admitting Facebook is great at brand awareness, getting the brand out there and gaining new customers, it was less important than good reviews in mainstream media and word-of-mouth. This was ambivalent and an inadvertent contradiction from Paul. There were no other mainstream media activities conducted during the ongoing campaign and Facebook was the only regular marketing channel used. Both Zomato and Facebook were responsible for considerable growth in brand awareness and ironically they were also responsible for a lot of the word-of-mouth referral that Paul insisted was so important. It has already been mentioned in the Findings chapter and is discussed at greater length in the Discussion chapter, how Facebook contributes greatly to word-of-mouth referral. Paul's discovery that Facebook required a lot more work than anticipated and required sincere and regular effort seemed to be a surprise to him, and perhaps it was this that put him off the channel, making him think it wasn't worth it. Although he was privy to the monthly Facebook metrics, and was aware of the great brand awareness it achieved, connecting sales primarily to Facebook was a step too far for him. Perhaps, like Tsimonis (2014) discovered, this suggests that Paul's view of Facebook is typical, betraying a lack of understanding about measuring return on engagement. Tsimonis (2014) suggests that this attitude is rife in business.

To summarise, Paul's interview does, in the researcher's opinion, corroborate many of the findings from this study. It also substantially supports the analysis of modern branding and marketing in the age of social media, offered by writers such

as Legorburu & McColl, (2014), Richardson (2014) and even Gram's (2012). These writers each in their own way all understand and impress upon their readers the importance of connecting with customers in many of the same ways that Paul suggests in this interview. Living your values, being seen to live your values, managing your brand to suit your brand community, allocating the proper amount of time and resources to do so and thinking strategically, all align Paul with the opinions of these authors. Furthermore, the data from the Wok Express study itself strongly supports most of the things Paul said, with the exception being Paul playing down the importance of Facebook and contradicting himself during the interview. The data suggests that the sheer reach Facebook was able to achieve and the relative ease with which the channel was able to promulgate and actively support and publish the Wok Express brand values, suggests that Facebook as a channel for marketing this type of business has been invaluable.

The diagram below is a graphic representation of Paul's interview, showing how Paul believes a brand and its marketing are glued together in the minds of customers. He also believes online presence and brand community are held together by the values of integrity, authenticity and the practical application of sustained effort and strategy.
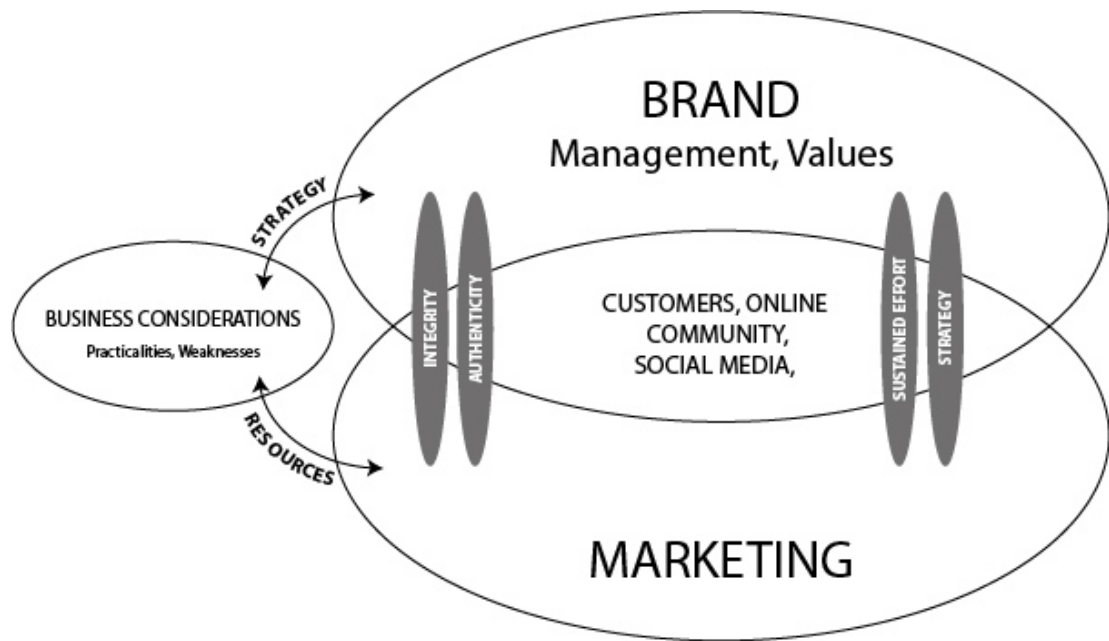
Figure 17. Graphical representation of Paul's interview Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

This chapter provides a discussion of the key research findings presented in chapter 4.0 with reference to the research question.

==“How might businesses benefit by creating a values based personality around their brand to take advantage of the humanising impact social media can have upon customer expectations”?==

This question investigates how social media may have changed customer expectations and why brands need to embrace the changes and develop strategies to closely align their business practice with the values of their brand. This will help brands to make their customers perception of the business as trustworthy and genuine helping to enforce ideas of co-operation and transparency thus encouraging sharing, and all important co-creation. This case study of Wok Express highlights four areas that have relevance to addressing this question.

1. Was the campaign successful with Facebook as the prime marketing channel?
2. How did Facebook, primarily a social media channel, change the approach to the branding of Wok Express?
3. What was the role of online communities and engagement with them through shared values?
4. Can the definition of branding be updated in the light of the findings?

This section concludes with an observation of how the extremely rich data sets now available to businesses, partially because of the ubiquity of social media itself,

have provided opportunities for marketers to target consumers in ways today that were unthinkable just five years ago.

5.1 Sales growth and website referrals. What does it all mean?

The Wok Express re-brand and social media marketing campaign was conceived primarily as a way of generating new business and increasing sales. The use of Facebook in particular was deliberately employed, for the perceived ability of the channel to create and sustain a community of enthusiastic supporters of the brand as well as reaching existing "health foodies" already using the channel. The idea was that these supporters would spread the message and values of the brand amongst themselves within Facebook, and build the brand organically in a many to many fashion. A new potential clientele was to be targeted based on healthy values rather than price only and Facebook was seen as a ready made way to reach this new consumer.

The practical method the agency employed during the campaign, was the creation and inclusion of researched articles around health and wellbeing onto the website blog and constant reminders of and public commitment to, these brand values through regular posting on the company Facebook page. The data from the study shows that this strategy was successful earning a significant and steady increase in sales from the beginning of the campaign till 12 months hence. There was healthy growth between November 2013 and November 2014 of 73%. The upward trend continued into 2015 and as of March 2015 there was an increase of 133% over the 17-month period from when the re-branding began.

These sales figures make good reading purely in terms of business success, but also provide compelling evidence that the re-brand and marketing strategy can necessarily be counted as successful. Considering further that the entire strategy involved just two social media channels, Facebook and Zomato, and that this in turn comprised 99% of all marketing activity, it would be fair to say that social media marketing had, in this instance, a very positive effect on sales.

A major part of the research was a month-by-month investigation of the two social channels themselves. The researcher was looking to understand the mechanisms by which these channels were able to make such an impression upon the sales figures and in what ways they could be measured. Wok Express takes the majority of its orders through its website and logically, keeping consistently high website traffic that turns into orders, is an essential part of the business model. Studying the website visits and acquisition data using Google Analytics revealed that a considerable number of referrals to the Wok Express website came directly from internet browser searches categorized as organic search while other referrals came directly from Facebook and Zomato. The data showed that Zomato consistently topped the charts as the highest <u>direct</u> social referrer with Facebook contributing far smaller <u>direct</u> numbers.

It became clear however that a literal interpretation of the Google Analytics acquisition metrics did not tell the full story. The impressive reach that Facebook was able to achieve did not appear to translate into great numbers of <u>direct</u> referrals. Therefore when attempting to measure the impact Facebook made upon website visits, a closer look at Google Analytics referrals and acquisition metrics was necessary.

119

At the time of writing and definitely during the research period, there was no way to measure, using Google Analytics data alone, the effect that Facebook brand awareness and true word-of-mouth had upon actual sales and metrics like website visits. Unfortunately there is no "referrals by Facebook engagement" or word-of-mouth metrics to study.

Herein lies a weakness in the ability of the Wok Express quantitative data alone to account for the impact that social media had on the increase in sales over the study period and the wider 12 month sales period. Being able to precisely measure the indirect impact Zomato and Facebook had upon the business, which in turn led to the increase in actual sales, turned out to be a delicate and imprecise business. The researcher developed a method, a "process of deduction" that is outlined in the methodology and based on four variables. He did this to acknowledge the significant amount of circumstantial evidence that was available that suggested that Facebook was contributing to sales through word-of-mouth and brand awareness. This method is further clarified below.

Direct referrals to the website are measured in the following way. Google Analytics will only mark a referral from Facebook to the Wok Express website if the user visits the website after clicking on a direct link from inside the Wok Express Facebook page. This is then counted within Google Analytics as a referral to the website from Facebook.

The question remained however, how to connect Facebook activity with word-of-mouth referrals of new visitors to the Wok Express website? These are called indirect referrals.

120

The answer lies in understanding the Google Analytics acquisition metric and this is how the researcher made the connection. This metric names organic search as a referrer type and organic search accounted for over 74k visits to the website during the study period. Organic search means individual people coming to the Wok Express website after searching online through their web browser, and this search in turn, being registered by Google Analytics as an organic search query. By examining the keywords people used to query their browsers during these searches; either directly into the URL bar or into the search engine itself, the researcher was able to determine the words that new visitors were using to find the restaurant. Using Google Webmaster Tools the researcher then established that the top ten search keywords used during these organic searches all contained the keyword "Wok Express". Importantly they were searching for the restaurant by name. This means that these users were already acquainted with the brand somehow and were searching for it in their browser by name, or they had been referred via word-of-mouth by a real person outside the internet or by a separate word-of-mouth mechanism like Facebook or Zomato. If the search keywords were generic for example "Asian food Auckland", "healthy takeaways Auckland" or "Chinese takeaways Auckland" (and they often are when people search for food) and they did not contain the actual brand name, this word-of-mouth connection could not be made.

Adding strength to this assertion that Facebook was providing significant word-of-mouth referrals to the website was that 64% of users each month were new first time customers. This means that these new customers were searching for Wok Express by name. How did these new users find out the brand name? It is understandable for an existing customer to search for a favourite restaurant by

121

name, as they are already acquainted with it, but for a first time new customer to do so infers these users must have found out the name somewhere. On the basis of this, the researcher suggests that the brand awareness generated by Facebook could account for at least some of the new customers searching in their browsers for Wok Express by brand name, which they had either found or heard about via Facebook. The findings showed that Facebook was reaching huge numbers of people during the study period and it is certainly possible that this great brand awareness was in turn creating word-of-mouth style referrals. The researcher infers that the keyword search data analysis described above certainly suggests that this is so.

It should also be remembered that sales were steadily increasing during this time and Facebook was the sole active marketing channel used. Consider the following scenario. After reading a Facebook post, a user left their computer and returned to it another time. This user may have also left Facebook but then returned to browsing hours or even days later. While deciding to order takeaways they remember the Wok Express name and are able to search the internet using this remembered brand name. The data suggests this scenario is plausible.

How the researcher connected Facebook into a word-of-mouth referral mechanism for Wok Express.

1. Facts: sales were increasing, 64% of monthly visits to the website were new users, Facebook is the sole active marketing channel. Zomato collects reviews in a passive way with no direct input from the client or agency.

2. Wok Express generates brand awareness on Facebook through their users, fans and friends of friends newsfeeds through posting.

3. A Facebook user who had not previously heard of Wok Express, sees a post perhaps more than once over a period of days, weeks or months and remembers the name "Wok Express". They may even see the logo or signage and read or interact with the post in some way.

4. Ultimately the new visitor searches for "Wok Express" by name using a search engine on their computer or mobile device and is registered as one of over 74k visitors who did this over the study period.

The Facebook activity and engagement was significant during the study period, with thousands of people liking and sharing the values based content. This method of connecting this engagement with an actual increase in sales, is currently the best method available to the researcher. It is also a method used by other digital marketers. Heggestuen (2014) suggests that businesses should start to use engagement levels on Facebook as metrics to define whether a campaign be deemed successful.

Writing in BI Intelligence, Heggestuen (2014), suggests that brands are moving away from trying to gauge the return on monetary investment (ROI) from a Facebook campaign. Heggestuen (2014) suggests that brands are increasingly aware that new metrics that evaluate social media strategies in terms of audience building and engagement, are needed. Heggestuen (2014) suggests that valuable social media metrics are reach, engagement and sentiment and points out that shares have also become a focus as these posts are seen by a higher percentage of users friends compared to brand posts. This generates coveted organic reach and why this is less available to company Facebook pages has already been touched on and will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

This study asserts that credibility must be given to levels of engagement and sentiments like authenticity and trust. Sentiment in this study refers to users of the brand relating and feeling comfortable with the values of the brand and what it stands for. It also suggests that establishing a connection between Facebook awareness, new visits, and Google search terms is both a credible and useful way to associate Facebook engagement and sentiment with actual sales.

The identification by new clients with the brand values of Wok Express was more exact during the analysis of the Zomato reviews. Each review revealed a strong connection with the brand values developed by Wok Express and their agency. This suggests that for people reviewing Wok Express favourably, these values were of particular importance. Highlighted were the values of <u>quality, freshness, healthy and additive free</u> and they were substantially represented in the word choices within the positive reviews. Similarly, a deeper investigation of the Facebook data tells a similar story, with the majority of the most popular posts per month, being centered around the brand values and the promotion of healthier lifestyles.

On both social channels, Zomato and Facebook, users overwhelmingly identified with the brand values and engaging with the brand in this way made these users members of a new hidden brand community on Facebook which was based around food preparation standards, methods and the commitment-to-care philosophy represented by Wok Express. The researcher defines these groups of people or communities as hidden, as it was not a conscious decision by the members to join it. It happened indirectly because of some kind of digital engagement, a <u>like</u> or <u>share</u> of a post they liked. These assorted groups of people who share common

124

likes and values on Facebook purely as part of their daily use of the medium, are part of Facebook's real power as a marketing tool.

5.2 A closer look at Facebook

Kosinski's (2012) study of how a person's Facebook engagement history defines them and inadvertently associates them into personality types is pertinent to understand what the researcher means and infers by using the words hidden communities. Kosinski (2012) found that a person's Facebook history, that is their actions on the website, has much in common with many other completely anonymous and disconnected people. Using an anonymous Facebook as an example, there are other people on Facebook that like and share similar content to them yet they are not their actual Facebook friends. The Facebook newsfeed shows things in their newsfeed it thinks will interest them based on their user history. In this way their engagement with the medium connects them with other people with similar tastes and it means they will see similar things as these people in their newsfeed.

The researcher defines these connections as hidden as they are part of how a user's daily Facebook activity defines what appears in their news feed and it also happens in the background. People with similar Facebook like histories will see similar content and these two users then inadvertently become connected and importantly targetable based on these shared likes. The researcher defines them as hidden because the two users are not actual Facebook friends and probably do not even know each other. Yet they are connected by their Facebook histories and engagement. In terms of the activity during this study, this engagement could have been writing a review, commenting on a review, sharing a Facebook post,

125

commenting on a Facebook post, liking a Facebook post or even merely viewing it. In fact any kind of mouse click or visual engagement with some sort of brand material would qualify a user as a member of this hidden and connected brand community. These connected individuals become part of a demographic and can be identified and targeted using paid Facebook advertising. Facebook groups individuals together precisely in this way, allowing marketers to send paid ads to people in "Auckland" who eat "takeaways" and "like healthy eating".

Both Google and Facebook note the type of content a user engages with on their respective channels and in this way, these connected communities will continue to see more material, not just from Wok Express but any similar content. The healthy lifestyles hidden community is a pertinent example to this study. Person A may share a Wok Express post on their newsfeed. Person B may like it or comment on it. Person C may be a friend of Person B but not person A, yet Person C will see still Person A's post and so on. In this way paid advertisers gain access to target groups of otherwise disconnected people by clicking checkboxes of different demographic data types. Age, region, high earners, people who like certain music types, art, sports teams etc are all selectable groups of people marketers can target using Facebook advertising.

It has been mentioned that Facebook, as a core part of the strategy, was very successful in terms of numbers of likes, shares, reach, fans and engagement. These metrics are the way a Facebook page manager can tell that their Facebook page is gaining traction and reaching and growing the intended audience. The researcher in this instance precisely tracked and measured all Facebook activity during the designated study period.

In the findings chapter the researcher presented the details of the month-by-month activity on Facebook. This part of the discussion will provide further detail and explanation around this activity and how the actual content impacted on the substantial levels of engagement which ensued. It has already been mentioned that measuring definitive successful outcomes in terms of <u>direct</u> referrals from Facebook is very difficult, but defining success within Facebook itself is relatively straightforward. Facebook has its own metrics that measure accurately how many and in what ways people are engaging with brand content and how many people have been <u>reached</u>, including how much it is costing to <u>reach</u> them.

The data conclusively shows, that by these metrics the Facebook activity was enormously successful with many thousands of people reached and otherwise engaging with Wok Express. Like Zomato, the data also shows that the majority of successful posts were about the values of the brand and these posts generated more likes by users. Many users became <u>fans</u> of the brand over the study period and many more still, <u>liked</u> the page. Facebook is effective at building communities of people around values, brand or otherwise. For businesses, these supporters can effectively become promoters, supporters and co-creators of a brand. The connections the researcher made between Facebook engagement and increased sales (via Google organic search) marks Facebook out as a word-of-mouth strategy.

5.3 Facebook as a builder of online communities

During the course of the study period the number of users liking the page and becoming <u>fans</u> of the brand increased month-by-month building a small and visible Facebook community by default. Facebook explains on its website that the content

you see in your newsfeed is determined by the posts you like and engage with. We

have previously seen that as a user engages with content they are inadvertently

connecting themselves to other users who engage with similar content and a users

newsfeed will begin to reflect this. Kosinski (2013), showed us how our digital

footprints make us part of communities of people with similar likes and tastes

merely by using digital technology. Facebook is particularly designed in this way,

The stories that show in your News Feed are influenced by your connections and
activity on Facebook. This helps you to see more stories that interest you from
friends you interact with the most. The number of comments and likes a post
receives and what kind of story it is (ex: photo, video, status update) can also make
it more likely to appear in your News Feed. (Facebook, "How the newsfeed works,"
2015, para 1)

The Wok Express data showed that as more and more people liked the content of

the posts, this content was shared and seen by more and more people

inadvertently joining these people into a community of people who care about

healthy eating. This connecting effect is compounded further by content from

people who are connected Facebook friends. For example, if user A likes content

on the Wok Express Facebook page, then all User A's friends are highly likely to see

it too, much more likely than people who are not direct friends of User A although

they may still see it. As the content of Wok Express posts was shared, liked and

engaged with over time, this hidden community grew to friends of friends and with

the help of paid advertising, it was able to spread the message of healthy takeaway

food to many thousands of potential customers organically. Facebook works to

periodically remind you about brands you have liked and does a good job of

keeping these brands in mind. Being part of any brand community means you will

periodically be reminded about it by a branded company post in your newsfeed.

Adding this to the effect paid advertising has in forcing a post into user's

128

newsfeeds, means that the brand community effect can be encouraged considerably.

With connectedness of this kind in mind, the type of content posted becomes very important. Through paid advertising, users are often force fed company posts and there is a danger of people being put off. This is when brand values and integrity can play such a meaningful role in sustaining a working Facebook community ensuring that content doesn't annoy its users. In the Wok Express survey a clear majority of people said they didn't mind businesses being on Facebook as long as they weren't pushy. It becomes incumbent on marketers to not abuse the channel and annoy users with overt advertising material. Proper content strategies and their relevance to the promotion of brand values will be discussed in more detail further down.

Online communities and the formation of them is at the core of the way social media websites operate Di Mauro (2015), and understanding this is key to developing successful brand awareness through proper content. Legorburu & McColl (2014) and Richardson (2013) both explain how conventional relationship marketing has evolved because of the increasingly active and experiential nature of consumer-to-consumer (many to many) relationships. Customers are talking to each other more than ever now and this has forced companies to rethink how they in turn, talk to their customers. Having an engaged and enthusiastic community of customers is now considered a priority (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015) but it is also a privilege that includes responsibilities. Whilst there is a lack of agreement among academics as to precisely what consumer engagement is and how it works (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015), this study's research

129

suggests that customers like to engage with brands in different ways, primarily based on feeling an affinity with the brand values. In other words, they enjoy feeling close to the brand because the brand shares and promotes values that are aligned with their own. It is up to businesses to understand how to talk to their customers on social media because customers can choose not to listen. Posts can easily be hidden and blocked. This shows therefore that values create connected Facebook communities.

5.4 Facebook reach as posts, likes and shares

The explanation that Facebook gives to explain about how information is shared throughout the network, see above, briefly explains that the platform is designed to present information in newsfeeds about topics that interest its users. It is pertinent to understand this mechanism a little more, as supplementary information toward a better understanding of the social media data presented in this study.

Facebook began as a social medium between friends and as marketers began to catch on and use the service to reach potential customers it created a massive buzz in marketing circles. An article in an online blog from 2009 "About Money" (Lake, 2009) encourages businesses to use Facebook to target new customers with pages and groups, two devices Facebook created for special interest groups including businesses. The article explains that as you post new material on your business page, the fans of that page will receive reminders about your business in the form of the actual post into their newsfeed. Similarly with likes and shares, this became the default way businesses used Facebook to reach thousands of people. Facebook defines this type of reach as organic similar to Google's own definition of organic

as it happens merely by using the tools Facebook provides. But all this changed dramatically around 2013 when merely posting material onto your Facebook page didn't guarantee, <u>reach</u> to your <u>fans</u>. This was a deliberate tactic by Facebook to encourage people to pay for <u>reach</u> using paid Facebook advertising and is how to understand the difference between paid and organic reach mentioned throughout this paper. Many commentators accused Facebook of deliberately engineering the change to make money but there is more to it than that. Facebook itself, said "content that is eligible to be shown in the news feed is increasing at a faster rate than people's ability to consume it," (Delo, 2013, para 9). Facebook had become so popular and businesses so involved in marketing with it, that a user's newsfeed was in danger of becoming full of ads rather than content a user wanted to see from their friends. Facebook intimated that if you want users to see your message you would have to pay. Organic reach, whilst still there, is now a limited resource for brands and companies. The immediate ramification of this to Facebook marketers is obvious in itself. Marketers now need to pay to <u>reach</u> users but the significance for branded communities is huge as it thrusts these communities into the marketing limelight as friends and friends of friends still have considerable organic reach between them. The aim for marketers is to create such meaningful content that the connected members of these communities get inspired by the content and share it amongst themselves ensuring as much organic reach as possible.

Legorburu & McColl (2014) argue, that brand control has become secondary as most communication around brand recommendations, sharing advice and providing reviews, now happens between customers themselves. Facebook business pages may have had their organic <u>reach</u> curtailed, but between users and

friends it remains the main mechanism for newsfeed content. Naturally this means the larger a hidden brand community is and the more individuals are talking about a brand on Facebook amongst their friends, the more true organic reach a brand will reap. Content in this context becomes hugely important and therefore brands will need to be sincere and genuine in their offers and communications, so that users will remain enthusiastic enough to share and recommend any branded content. Being mindful also that users can disapprove of branded material on Facebook by blocking any content they don't like or choosing not to see content from particular users. For most businesses, sincere and genuine content is easier said than done however. It is not a simple process, as most businesses are not geared up to do such quality organic marketing on social media. It is certainly much easier to pay a few dollars for some advertising to guarantee reach, rather than putting in the considerable time and effort required to create a compelling and sincere brand campaign that customers are genuinely excited about. The Wok Express data proved that it is possible to create such compelling brand content with sustained effort and consistency with the brand message. The data also shows that a Wok Express brand community was established on Facebook and engagement amongst friends and friends of friends, in the form of shares, likes and comments, definitely helped create significantly more treasured organic reach.

Organic engagement however can also combine very well with paid advertising as long as the brand community is initially strong. For instance a brand can pay to get a message out there using a paid advertisement then get people to engage with that paid information by engaging with it. This creates organic reach, which can boost the initial paid reach by 75% (Loomer, 2015). This illustrates the power of Facebook brand communities hidden or otherwise, as it really is a community of

132

enthusiastic individuals genuinely sharing brand material on Facebook, that brands should be aiming for as in the case of Wok Express.

The Wok Express month-by-month social data clearly revealed a connection between paid advertising for <u>reach</u> and organic engagement through <u>likes</u>, <u>shares</u> and <u>comments</u>. Paid advertising produced significant increases in <u>reach</u> as opposed to posts that were not paid or boosted with money. Yet it is the engagement statistics that told the real brand awareness story, in the form of new <u>fans</u>, <u>likes</u>, <u>comments</u> and <u>shares</u>. For instance in March, the first month when Facebook data was monitored, the top two posts revealed how this balance of paid and organic reach works. Bear in mind, content is king and remains the most important factor in building brand communities on Facebook, paid or organic. If content is poor, engagement will undoubtedly be poor.

For example, the March 2014 *Healthy Fridge* post was a "healthy" post, strongly reinforcing the brand values and the engagement level reflected this as it appealed to the fledgling Wok Express hidden brand community. Likewise the *Fun Tip!* post was a helpful tip about boiling eggs. Although it only reached 168 people, 34 people engaged with this post for an engagement level of 20%. As discussed in the Findings chapter about post content and engagement, the figures showed that <u>reach</u> was low for posts that were not boosted with money. Compared to paid advertising, engagement levels were modest, yet it was better quality organic engagement, where content was shared amongst enthusiastic people within the "health foodie" community. Shared content by friends to friends within a brand community in this way is responsible for significantly boosting your paid <u>reach</u> with organic reach, as Loomer (2015) explained.

133

To complete our understanding of organic vs. paid It's relevant to look at the post that <u>reached</u> the most people by sheer numbers. This was indeed a paid advertisement on March 12th 2014. It read, *Click the link below and give us some feedback on our service and you will be in the draw to WIN $50 worth of Wok Express.* This single post <u>reached</u> over 8.1k people. 165 people engaged with it and 65 people were talking about it. Two people shared it. 60 people liked it. The engagement level came in at 2.5%, as the <u>reach</u> numbers were so high. By percentage only 165 were engaged. Still 165 engaged people, could still be considered successful depending on how much organic reach was ultimately generated. It is also interesting to note that the strategy for this post involved a giveaway, rather than being about the values of the brand and it could be argued that people were engaging with this post purely because of the $50 giveaway rather than being enthusiastic about the brand values. This type of engagement through reward is still relevant however in some cases. Legorburu & McColl (2014) suggests that a mix of material should be incorporated into a successful strategy, including value ads and promotions. All people like giveaways and free things and this can also be a good look for a brand. If all the content was like this over a period of time however, the brand could lose authenticity and integrity, two important things for brand communities that will be discussed later.

5.5 Communities of brand values

The surveys of Wok Express customers revealed that the values of the brand were important for the majority of them, many indicating that these values and the restaurant's commitment to them were the reason they were patrons. People enthusiastic about the values of the brand were the majority of people who agreed

to do the survey, which in itself shows a desire to not only support these values, but to also stand up and be counted by them. The significance of this should not be underestimated and it reveals that consumers can become quite passionate about things that are important to them, in this case the quality and freshness of the food they choose to eat and share with their friends.

These insights further reveal the hidden brand communities that already exist online due to the internet's ability to group people according to likes, dislikes and digital footprint as described by Kosinski (2012). It is a consistent theme throughout this study that it is the brand values that held and continue to hold this hidden community of Wok Express together. The community remains hidden because although Wok Express has a website it is more an ordering platform and a portal to view the menu and periodic specials. There are no memberships or registrations. In this way it functions more like most online ordering platforms. As mentioned, it receives its traffic from Facebook and Zomato and blog articles powered by organic and paid search. Facebook content helps to keep the community active and loyal, as customers are reminded what the brand stands for and can also inform them about healthy food issues. One survey respondent, said in response to a question about businesses having a presence on Facebook,

> Good for checking out current promotions and new dishes as well as useful supplementary material. The Wok Express website is my first choice and source of information, with the Facebook page an add-on or secondary to the website menu and ordering page. Source: Wok Express customer survey Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

Note that it is mentioned here that the website is the user's first choice, indicating community membership by relying on both the Wok Express website in the first instance for information and Facebook as a place to quickly check on specials, new

135

dishes and promotions. The data consistently shows that the commitment by the brand to a set of values definitely paid off as it attracted new customers and improved sales month by month. This new customer base clearly shares these same values and thus a hidden community of users loosely bound together by these shared values was created. Wok Express or any other food brand for that matter, could exploit this hidden community further. By creating a more community oriented official website, hidden members of the brand could "come out" so to speak in a public community by registering with the website where they would be able to share healthy recipes and information that was important to them. These websites already exist of course but what this study reveals is the importance values can have as a way of holding these communities together, sustaining them as they move forward and attracting new members. Particularly in the food industry, people have special requirements, likes and dislikes and the possibility for catering to these is strong.

The point here is that businesses in industries where price is not the only marketing consideration should not neglect their values in favour of traditional and easier marketing approaches that are purely price based. Indeed this study began as Wok Express moved away from their original purely price based model. The difference, as the brand committed itself to a branded values approach, was a large increase in sales and an enthusiastic new customer base.

5.6 Values as a type of engagement in Brand Communities

On Facebook, users of the Wok Express community were often seen to identify more with the values of the brand than the brand itself and this is perhaps the most pertinent lesson that brand managers could take from this research. The data

136

indeed supports this contention. Certainly there is room for making more of hidden brand communities by making them visible and getting users to register and become members. There are plenty of examples of industries who have achieved huge followings using branded community websites. These include sephora.com and sony.com, yet it is clear there are various motivations people have for using these websites and for this reason to what degree they can then be called branded communities is open for debate. The difference in post engagement mentioned earlier on the Wok Express Facebook page illustrates this. The paid post offering a prize engaged far more because it reached far more than the post that engaged purely through its content. But is there anything that suggests one type of engagement is better?

Investigating the different types of consumer engagement (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015), show that there are many are different ways consumers engage with brands. Their article cites three in particular. Firstly it suggests that people interact as much within their community as they do with the brand, by sharing and offering advice with other members within the community, before possibly suggesting these things to the brand itself (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015). Relevant to the Wok Express study, this same article suggests that engagement by users with both the brand and the community is intertwined, meaning that each type of engagement sustains the other.

The categories of engagement defined in the article aforementioned are Affective (emotional), Cognitive (immersive) and Behavioural (motivational) and are used to define particular ways users engage with brands on social media. The Wok Express engagement type is broadly defined within the case study as values based,

where customers were seen to identify with the values of the brand. Engagement of this type could in effect, be a type of engagement that is a mixture of all these definitions.

In the Wok Express study, brand values have been established as the glue that enabled Wok Express to grow their sales and generate consumer engagement on social media. This indicates that, at least within the fast food industry, people will engage with a brand that commits to a positive set of values. This seems to be an affective or emotional style of engagement. However the data also indicated that price and promotions remain important to customers, which corresponds to behavioural or motivational engagement. The Wok Express study showed however, that whether the engagement was affective or behavioural, brand values remained common to both types. This was shown to be the case in both the surveys and website reviews.

There are examples on the internet today of companies using different kinds of brand values to attract, connect with and maintain customers.
Container Door, http://containerdoor.co.nz is a purely price driven, online retail business model and Harmoney http://harmony.co.nz is an online and offline finance business model. Despite having their customers engaging with them in different ways, it can be clearly and publicly seen on their respective websites that values remain a key component in the way their customers engage with them.

Firstly, Container Door is an ecommerce platform that offers extremely cheap prices for goods, which bought at retail prices, would often be up to 100% more expensive. The goods could be considered non-essential items and customers are

buying them purely because of this excellent value. However there are numerous references on the website that appeal to particular values. Container Door appeals to a sense of "fair play" by stressing that their prices are cheap because through their particular purchasing model called group buying, the owner of the company is able to save a lot of money by not using agents and middlemen. This results in his ability to make huge savings and importantly to pass these on to the customer. On the company's website containerdoor.co.nz, these savings are described as being fairer because they cut out the middleman. It is sold as a fairer way to shop and this is heavily stressed in all their communications. Fairness is the value that the company extols to its audience, just as freshness and health are extolled to the Wok Express audience. Although customers are buying the goods because of price on http://containerdoor.co.nz, the value of fairness is prominent and plays a great part in the offer.

Secondly Harmoney is a peer-to-peer money lending website where customers engage primarily because of their own financial need. Harmoney operates in a very competitive environment where financial lending companies are often not well liked in the wider community. Within the finance industry generally however, values are seen to play a big role and it's noted that in all its communications Harmoney stresses fair play, honesty, simplicity and straight shooting. They also maintain a strong presence on Facebook, as does Container Door and both companies use the channel to spread their values based messages.

These two examples both of extremely high performing websites, show that in the business world, particularly in customer facing industries like food, retail or banking, values based strategies used to attract customers are playing a stronger

139

and stronger role. In an apparent recognition of the power of social media and an awareness of the way customers talk amongst themselves, these companies are active in harnessing Facebooks word-of-mouth expertise.

5.7 Perceptions of social

The interview with the owner of Wok Express revealed some interesting insights into how Facebook is often perceived by managers and business owners. It also revealed that for business owners, the process of branded community marketing is complex and requires time and understanding to appreciate. Sales figures are generally a primary concern of business owners and Wok Express is no different in this regard. The owner was very pleased with the results the campaign achieved throughout. Connecting the intricacies of this increase to social media marketing and the growth of hidden brand communities however, requires a time consuming study of the data involved and many business owners don't have the time or inclination to do this.

Overall, Paul understood the power of the re-brand, particularly how the values that the brand represented to the public had really struck a chord with his customers. His mention of the "health foodies" indicates an awareness of how a brand is able to target existing offline communities and turn them into members of a similar community online. He showed similar levels of awareness around management of his brand and around perceived weaknesses in its offer. He appreciated gaining first hand evidence of his customers praising the brand when he was speaking to them. Since the campaign his thinking around the promotion of his brand has definitely became more strategic and when thinking of future

marketing possibilities he appears to have appreciated the importance of consistent online brand management.

However, his appreciation of the potential and real power of brand awareness and brand communities generally, as highlighted by this study, was perhaps not fully grasped. This is entirely understandable as it is not until data is systematically provided with sufficient detail, context and understanding that these types of connections can be made. Examples of how brand awareness on Facebook can translate into actual sales were given earlier in this section. Paul betrayed his doubts with his criticism of Facebook as he intimated that "Facebook was OK as a medium…" but required "a lot of work to make the content worthwhile" Grimshaw-Jones (2015). This is a fair comment as creating engaging content takes time and strategic thinking in order to make the most of organic <u>reach</u> through engagement, as previously mentioned. Paul was able to see the enormous <u>reach</u> and brand awareness that Facebook was able to generate as the brand community continued to grow and in this regard he was able to understand the power of creating a strong brand. He spoke first hand to clearly impressed customers and this highlighted to him the importance of strategic planning before launching a new brand or refreshing an old one. Nevertheless, appreciating the intimate connection social media has with creating and sustaining brand communities online, was not immediately obvious to him without detailed analysis and argument. The lack of a visible metric to test brand awareness as it relates to sales was absent and Paul remained unconvinced.

At this point it is useful to look at a study of managers and business owners perceptions of social media.

141

Tsimonis (2014) found that there was a poor understanding among business owners and managers of why they were actually using social media, with most managers assuming that social media is merely a new marketing tool that can increase the effectiveness of existing marketing strategies. It's clear from his study that full appreciation of the power of brand communities among business owners and managers, is rare. Strategists and marketers however, do appreciate the concept of branded communities online and often use the medium to create branded Facebook pages as a way to leverage more brand awareness and increase sales. But with Facebook clamping down hard on businesses' organic reach as mentioned earlier, seeing Facebook in this limited way reduces activity to merely churning out paid ads and material as marketers do with Radio and TV. What has become clear from the Wok Express study, is that while it is true that communities of like-minded people can move a brand forward immensely, the mechanism is subtle and businesses easily forget that considerable power is now in the hands of the consumer. Painstakingly building a brand community and Facebook page with paid advertising, time and effort, could still bear no return without an effort to really <u>reach</u> the hearts and minds of people and intimately connect with their own likes and dislikes. This type of effort is at the core of the concept of brand co-creation as espoused by Grams (2012).

The Wok Express data suggests that the growth in new customers and sales predominantly came from an entirely new demographic that Wok Express had previously been unable to connect with. By re-branding as "the healthy takeaways option" they were able to connect to this new audience using emotional and practical awareness around health and lifestyle, the "health-foodies" as Paul mentioned. It could be argued that this was an easy and obvious sell, health

142

conscious people are a big audience all around the world. Even large takeaway restaurants like McDonald's are attempting to gain a foothold in this market, heavily investing in new brand campaigns selling McDonalds as a healthy option. But what about other more traditional industries like manufacturing? Would it be possible to isolate brand communities and market to them using brand values in these traditional industries?

Being able to connect with customers on issues that really matter to them, the researcher would argue, is possible in nearly all industries. It has already been seen that brand communities exist online without people consciously being aware of it. For instance Wok Express has a branded Facebook page but the Wok Express brand community is not limited to the users who have liked the page. Through organic reach of friends, users can share and like similar content, which brings them well into the community "sphere of influence". The secret here, as Paul indicated in the interview, is quality content. To achieve the Holy Grail of organic reach through people's friends on Facebook, brands need to produce quality content that primarily appeals to the brand community. What's clear is that standard company posts with new products and offers will still have reach, but only by using paid advertising. The ability to create loyal and powerful brand communities requires more effort than spending money; it needs strategic thought and the use of values to reach customers on a deeper level and begin the co-creation process.

For instance, the massive growth of initiatives like Trade Aid around the world has proven that people are motivated by more than just price. Plenty of consumers look for more in a business than just price and the backlash against companies that

143

are caught falsifying information, cheating or exploiting people or markets for competitive advantage is significant. Large companies like BP, Nestle and Monsanto regularly appear in court defending their positions against populist agencies representing dissatisfied consumers and lay people who are annoyed by what is perceived as corporate greed.

Legorburu & McColl (2014) passionately advocate creating rich values based worlds for consumers, not mere advertisements and his book "Storyscaping" (Legorburu & McColl, 2014) hints at the potential opportunities social media and the highly connected world of digital consumers now offers. The researcher suggests that business owners and online and social media marketers now need to put themselves into the minds of the consumer, to think like the consumer and indeed become part of the brand community themselves as suggested by Leboff (2013), Legorburu & McColl, (2014) and Richardson (2013). As far back as 1964 John Udell, conducted a study that suggested that the perception of the product and the way the customer perceived the brand were of greater importance than pricing, competitive market structures and seeking monopolies (Udell, 1964). At that time he said that, relatively affluent consumers now sought things like style, differentiation, psychological satisfaction and utility from purchases. 1964 is a long time ago and social media has altered the playing field considerably since then. Consumers, as well as being affluent are now more discerning and able to discuss pre purchase decisions themselves, almost cutting brands out entirely. See the example of Container Door mentioned previously.

5.8 Consumers in control?

The data from this research has highlighted an instance of one brand's ability to reach out to like-minded people through social media by committing itself to a set of values that customers can connect and relate to. Using the power of organic and paid reach on Facebook and Zomato Wok Express was able to grow sales considerably over a 12-month period and do so using only these channels. But to what extent do consumers really own and control a brand as has been suggested by commentators such as Grams (2012)? This study's research has not been able to illustrate, demonstrate or verify so bold a statement as "consumers are now in control". But it has been able to demonstrate that a brand can take advantage of the reach social media channels like Facebook offer, to connect with its customers on a values based level to its considerable advantage. Commentators like Grams (2012) have suggested that brands are now built from the ground up by owners and customers, that customers are now stakeholders and the playing field has changed forever in the favour of the consumer. This research suggests that what has really changed is that consumers now have a "bigger voice" and using this, they can demand to be heard.

Savvy businesses should certainly be aware of this changing consumer dynamic but the researcher does not take the position that consumers actually control brands. Although they are able to exert considerably more influence on a brand and social media has also made it considerably harder for businesses to lie to their customers and make unsustainable claims, it is still not enough to say consumers now control brands. The reviews on Zomato had a huge influence upon Wok Express website views but the onus was on Wok Express to make sure their customers reviewed them highly. They did this by paying attention to their food

145

quality, creating attractive menus and ensuring good delivery times. The two poor reviews out of 17 during the study period highlighted how careful the restaurant had to be. Slow delivery times and soggy rice on arrival spurred two reviewers to give a very harsh single star. Consumers have the power to give poor reviews and influence a brand to keep them on their toes but it is a stretch to say they are now in control. The menu, specials, prices, control of the ingredients and importantly the brand values, are still firmly controlled by the business owner. It really becomes a question of messaging and engagement of customers who now have considerably more resources and expertise to keep a brand on its toes.

The ability for consumers to force businesses to listen is highlighted by Mitch Joel (2012) and he concedes that this has happened on a large scale with companies like Netflix, Dell and Gap listening to their customers like never before. He also concedes that social media has caused huge change within these companies and that many have struggled to cope with the change Joel (2012). Yet his position and the researcher concurs, is that listening and interacting means influence but not control.

The Wok Express case study clearly shows how a small business created a new brand from scratch in order to accumulate new customers from an on and offline community of people who cared about healthy takeaways. This was a deliberate choice the company made in order to grow the business. Yet the commitment to a set of values became like a promise to their customers, particularly the new ones and they had to keep firm control over quality and to publicly stand by their values for these customers to keep supporting them and continue to grow sales. The surveys revealed that the values of the brand were absolutely important with 90%

146

of people surveyed saying they were the reason they chose to eat there. Additionally, during the interview Paul the owner stressed that he felt this pressure to maintain the standards. It could be argued that this level of influence is a form of control over the brand and the Wok Express brand is intimately connected with the single proposition of healthy takeaways and very dependent upon maintaining this position. It was however, firmly their own business decision to pursue this path.

Messaging has been highlighted as key in the process of successfully negotiating the tricky waters of social media marketing and a business's ability to create good messaging and strong content is key in its ability to convince its customers. In this case study it was about convincing the customers that the business lived and breathed its healthy values. But customers are unlikely to be testing the food to see if it really is a homemade sauce or checking up on whether there are any additives in the food. The point is they could choose to do this and bad press on social media could kill the business. In this way businesses need to be careful about messaging to a high degree, avoiding false claims and ensuring any commitment to values is sincere.

This research has highlighted several important issues for businesses marketing on social media and although it's not definitive enough to be able to make statements like customers are now in control, it is enough to offer informed insights.

5.9 Lessons from the Wok Express study

The need for Integrity – While it remains a difficult thing for customers to police, it was most definitely important that customers at least perceived that Wok Express

147

lived by its values and was able to reinforce this visibly and regularly through social media. Measuring groups of keywords associated with the brand values in the Zomato reviews responsible for many new website visits during the study period, found over 65.8% of these directly supported the brand values. Customers used words synonymous with <u>freshness, quality, health and care</u> time and again, clearly valuing these things. Integrity in marketing is also appreciated by many commentators within the marketing industry. In a Writer's Access blog (Susette, 2013) Susette explains how integrity plays a huge part in building and retaining customer loyalty "No customer or client is going to stick with a company they know has lied to them… " (Susette, 2013, para 1) she explains and cites the example of being able to show proof of your marketing claims as essential. From a writer's perspective she insists that marketers check all marketing correspondence carefully to ensure claims are not blatant lies or even mildly misleading. The price you pay for being caught lying, particularly in the age of social media is too high. Yates (2015) suggests that integrity means quality content and knowing your stuff. This in turn builds trust in your brand. Today, buyers are smart and discerning. They have been exposed to Internet marketing in one form or another for many years, and will see through any attempt to mislead. You must earn their trust. (Yates, 2015).

He also insists that integrity is essential in the crucial pre-purchasing decision time when 57% of the sale actually happens and when customers talk amongst themselves. (Yates, 2015). He stresses that quality content and being an authority in your area is key to building this integrity which in marketing, should be seen as a competitive advantage as you build over time, a solid reputation for reliability and factual information. Clearly integrity and it is supported by this case study, is

148

an important component when considering a strategic social media marketing campaign and once the reputation has been established it contributes to the longevity of the success.

The need for Authenticity – A cornerstone of the Wok Express values based campaign was authenticity citing "homemade sauces" in its marketing material. Like integrity, authenticity is something today's customers expect from brands they support. As a word, authentic appeared many times throughout the 17 reviews on Zomato and was also a direct question in the customer survey. From 20 reviews 18 said that "homemade" was one of the key reasons they bought the product. There are interesting takes among commentators around authenticity in marketing circles with Abramovich (2013) stating that by definition marketing itself is *not* authentic. He explains that the dictionary definition of marketing is that it seeks to position brands in the best possible light, consciously omitting details that don't do this. Clarifying this she goes on to suggest that because of social media and customer empowerment there is a drive by marketers to seek more authenticity giving several examples from Industry. VP of media at Sony (Abramovich, 2013) suggests that authenticity is hard to come by in the real world with companies cynically employing tactics they think will endear them more to their customers but only so much as to be better than their competition. Rick Maynard senior manager of PR at KFC (Abramovich, 2013) says that to his company, being authentic is to be "real" and for their customers to perceive the company as real, explaining that the company prefers "man on the street" imagery to "staged food photoshoots" (Abramovich, 2013, para 5). Interestingly he describes being authentic as much easier than "trying to be something you're not". Brian Maynard of Jenn Air, Whirlpool (Abramovich, 2013) says authenticity

149

equates with being an authority in your industry. Explaining that many of their customers are "foodies" he says when any communication is used around food it needs to be correct "or else we will be called out" (Abramovich, 2013, para 6).

These three slightly different takes on authenticity, together show that authenticity is vital in today's market. With consumers talking to each other on social media channels, reading reviews and company statements, being "called out" is a very real possibility. Maynard (Abramovich, 2013) also alludes to "foodies" in the same way Paul did in his interview, showing that both are aware of the power of communities of people with similar likes and dislikes chatting and sharing amongst themselves.

Kissmetrics is a pre-eminent company in monitoring and cataloguing website metrics and helps thousands of companies track consumer behaviour through the world of e-commerce. Their software provides valuable and verifiable data to these companies with specific information about what their customers are doing online, why they come, why they leave and what they do when they get there. Here's their take on authenticity,

Simply put, being authentic means staying true to who you are, what you do and whom you serve. In an environment in which more human elements matter, it creates value and benefits for your followers as well as improving your business

(Noble, "Truth Will Out - Why Authenticity is the Key to Growing Your Business," 2013, para 7)

The article goes considerably further stressing that authenticity means great competitive advantage, it increases influence, it allows people to relate to you better, it helps people to understand how your product relates to them, it tells

people your offer is high quality, it marks you out as trustworthy and lastly and perhaps most pertinently to this study, it encourages engagement and turns your audience into brand advocates (Noble, 2013).

There are two things that stand out from these evaluations of why authenticity is such a vital piece of brand management in today's social oriented world. Firstly from the quote above, "...in an environment where more human elements matter..." (Noble, 2013, para 7) illustrates in one sentence what social media has done to business consumer relations. There are more human interactions than ever before; consumers respond, see, discuss, review, enquire, approve and disapprove, all very human interactions and all highly visible on social media. Secondly, that authenticity encourages engagement and brand advocacy and remembering how important sharing and liking is between friends as organic reach is curtailed for brand pages on Facebook, this ability, encouraged by authentic communications, is absolutely vital.

The need for allocation of time & commitment – Most commentators including business owner Paul from Wok Express, appreciate that social media marketing and in his case sustaining a values based campaign, took more than just a part time approach. Paul seemed exasperated and slightly deflated by this revelation and indeed most managers and business owners treat social media marketing with disdain suggesting that perhaps someone in the company could do the role part time (Tsimonis, 2014). They are unable to see it as worthwhile or even necessary and most don't really understand how social media works, the changes that it has inspired and why it is so important for business moving into the 21st Century.

151

Tsimonis (2014) found that many managers said they only developed social strategies because they were told to do so by their seniors. Obviously this attitude is nowhere near the reality of creating and sustaining a successful social based strategy, as this study and many commentators also conclude. In the interview, Paul touched on how, when things go right it feels like "a gust of wind filling your sails" (Grimshaw-Jones, 2015). This indicates that he could literally feel the business move ahead after positive reactions to great photos on Facebook such as the chefs working the food over the flame. Then in exasperation, concluding that creating quality content all the time took a lot of effort.

As a business owner, Paul concluded that the amount of time and effort required for efficient Facebook marketing just cost too much. This was ironic, as the data suggests it was quality Facebook posting that really built the awareness of his brand and sales from the inception of the campaign and for the next 12 months. It is clear that social media marketing involves dedication, time and commitment to slowly build a brand community and passionate on and offline advocates for your brand.

The need for authority and knowledge – Knowledge about your field would seem to be an obvious requirement but history is littered with pretenders. To be reliable and importantly, for your customers to take you seriously, your opinions and all communication needs to be authoritative. Noble (2013) says that by positioning yourself as an authority you can offer the benefits of your experience and share it freely with your customers. Doing this, strongly enhances a company's authenticity and makes people feel looked after and respected. Legorburu & McColl (2014) and Richardson (2013) remind us how important being knowledgeable is as it makes

152

you part of the "tribe" and builds immense trust among your brand community. They also stress that giving helpful information freely, hugely enhances your brand's reputation within the community and building trust and respect for it.

In the interview, Paul indicated there were numbers of people who spoke to him personally in the shop, congratulating him on his commitment to the brand as customers who were very pleased with the direction the company was taking (Grimshaw-Jones, 2015). Wok Express became like a champion for people who cared about fast food being healthy and an authority about healthy cooking along the way. Indeed many of the most popular Facebook posts during the study period were around healthy cooking including, tips for cooking healthily, tips about foods to avoid, tips about good foods to buy for nutrition etc, how to store food correctly. In the customer surveys one respondent even mentioned that the Facebook page was a "good place for finding information and tips" (Grimshaw-Jones, 2015).

The need for planning and strategy – Tsimonis (2014) found that strategy was not one of the things most managers considered when discussing social media marketing, yet strategy is imperative. Legorburu & McColl (2014), Richardson (2013), Rowles (2014), Leboff (2013), the list of writers and commentators who recognise this is long. The Wok Express study itself is an example of the type of strategy necessary and its successful results support this requirement.

There was considerable time spent by the agency establishing the strategy for the Wok Express initiative and the original idea could be summarised by the following diagram which illustrates that, despite the understanding that social marketing needs to be authentic, sincere and authoritative, it still requires business

intelligence, goals and timelines. Within the strategy, allowance is made at each step for deeper more personal connections, which are called *emotional connections.* These became a successful part of the strategy and their inclusion is borne out by the results.
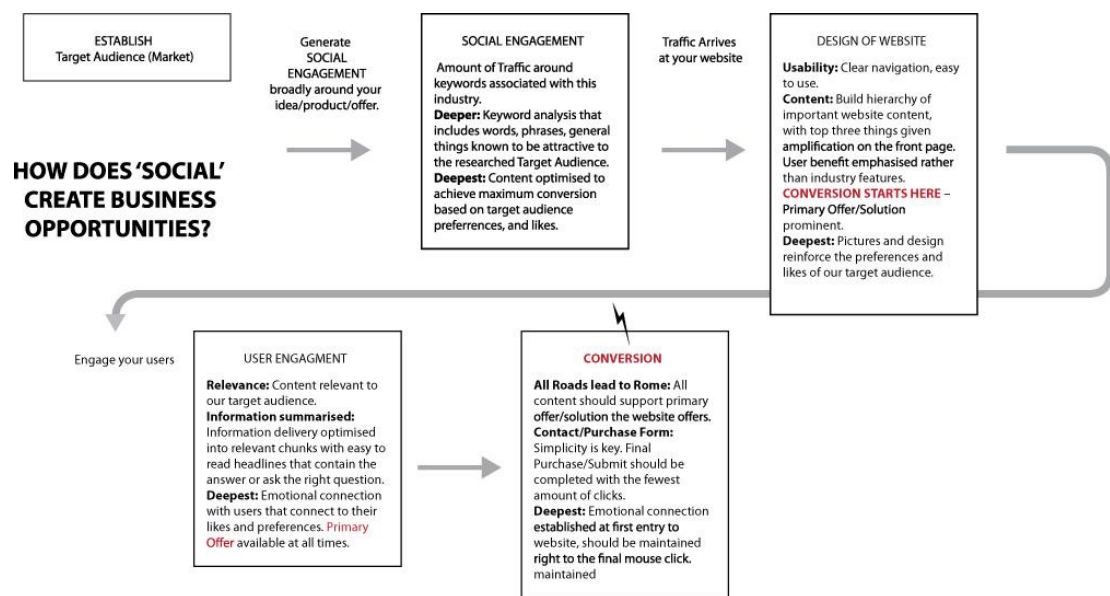
Figure 18. How does social create business opportunities? Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

Looking at this diagram clearly creates the impression that this strategy is not part-time and requires skill to implement. It is a bona fide and very particular understanding of a marketing channel that once grasped, could be used by any business. In fact strategy is hugely vital in a business world saturated in available and highly specific data sets. These days, data is king.

Less than a decade ago, data merely functioned as a way to track operations or forecast needs. However, today, we collect data to learn about every single interaction of our potential customers (Price, 2014

https://blog.Kissmetrics.com/social-data-strategy/)

154

With so much insightful data available once a user enters the digital world, be it by website, email or random interaction with online services, an effective strategy becomes so important that even the richest data set is useless without one.

It is ironic that the huge availability of consumer data, which allows companies to literally chase a consumer around the internet, is also tempered by significant ethical requirements because of the corresponding "people power" that social media has granted. This case study highlights the importance of authenticity, integrity, honesty, knowledge and strategy. These values have not always been essential components for marketing campaigns, despite marketers having more up to date information about consumers. These consumers move from day to day and minute to minute on the internet, and a customer's corresponding ability to vote with their feet, consult with their peers, and voice their opinions good and bad, seems to have made the business consumer playing field even. It's clear that considerable thought needs to be given to any social campaign to make allowance for the consumer power engendered by social media. It should be seen as an opportunity to make customers brand advocates and spread a brand message organically. Despite the wealth of data now available, marketing needs to be thought through, logical and strategically developed in this new landscape, for it to be successful.

5.10 The Double Edged Sword. Are Businesses in Control?

The way people exist online today, courtesy of the internet and social media, has made obtaining incredibly rich data about every aspect of people's commercial and private activities relatively straightforward. Whilst the online universe has increased consumer power, creating the ability to comment, respond, interact,

share, offer advice and like and dislike, there is a price for this ability. Every single mouse click, every share, like and opinion, every visit to any website, online store and all movements once there, are now capable of being tracked to an incredible degree. This is possible because of using the internet itself and the digital footprint it leaves. An analogy would be in the finance industry. Every transaction made electronically, including deposits in bank accounts, purchases and withdrawals are easily tracked and accountable by banks and financial institutions. Cash however is not. Being a physical commodity, it only exists in whosever hand it is in. It can't be tracked electronically and tax departments have to rely on people's honesty to declare cash funds. In the same way, digital communications have now made people's entire lives recordable.

Imagine a child born in 2015. On Facebook, the parents record the moment of birth through infancy to childhood to young adulthood. After 15 years this person's entire life has been captured on Facebook. Not only that, but every registration with any website, gaming platform or email account this same person has been tracked and recorded to within an inch of their lives. This has never happened so conclusively and extensively before in the history of the world.

Digital data capture is also big business (Noble, 2013). The situation exists now, where companies and marketers using the right tools available for a price, can tap into this huge universe of personal information. How many children you have, how much remains on your mortgage, how much you earn, what was your last purchase and how much was it, what schools your children attend. This type of information has been available for a few years now, but it goes much deeper. Facebook and other social media websites have really upped the ante with personal data.

156

Kosinski (2013) proved this in his remarkable study that shone a light onto just how potentially large and sensitive a person's digital footprint can be. The study showed that merely examining one facet of a person's Facebook history, their <u>like</u> history, can be used to accurately predict a range of highly sensitive personal behaviour and character traits. These include things like, sexual preference, religion, political views, degree of happiness, drug use etc. The likes were entered into a system of "dimensionality reduction" Kosinski (2013) and then "logistic linear regression" to a psychological profile. The results yielded accurate predictions for a range of traits with a 85% - 95% success rate (Kosinski, 2013).

Since 2013 the development of consumer tracking software such as Kissmetrics has made this level of monitoring available to any business prepared to pay. Data companies such as eGentic can provide incredibly rich data sets to companies for money and legally there are no obstacles, as much of the data has been freely given on social websites, online surveys and Google accounts.

Although customers do have considerably more options in pre purchase decisions, seeking advice, calling out deceptions, even taking affirmative action and these have been discussed at length in this research, the balance of power due to the ubiquity of online information being available to any business prepared to pay and invest the time, has more than balanced this out. There is no doubt that businesses need to take consumers' use of social media and the like seriously, they need to be authentic, sincere and honest in their dealings and promotions or they will be caught out and could suffer losses because of that. But it remains that a savvy business could easily cover that off by keeping themselves honest, standing by their product in a more public way and acting with the transparency and

engagement customers now expect. After doing all this, the wealth of data available and ways of managing it, has opened up business opportunities like never before.

5.11 Summary

To summarise, social media has forced businesses to be more authentic and honest and for customers this is a real win. Customers from now on can expect more from businesses and can punish those who refuse to change accordingly. Customers clearly relate to values as much as they relate to brands themselves as seen in the case study Wok Express and it is incumbent upon businesses to recognize this and adapt accordingly.

On the other hand, businesses can use this online information in the form of rich data sets that are increasingly available and there are few areas of people's lives that are not tracked and recorded in some way. Businesses that understand the huge change digital life has brought upon society, can use this data and adapt and profit accordingly.

The case study of Wok Express has attempted to answer the primary research question namely: – "How might businesses benefit by creating a values based personality around their brand to take advantage of the humanizing impact social media can have upon customer expectations"? The case under investigation, Wok Express embarked upon a complete re-brand of its business relying predominantly on social media, Facebook in particular, to lift sales and attract an entirely new type of customer.

Assumptions were made by the agency and the researcher that there were plenty of potential customers out there with a desire for a healthy option in their choice of Asian takeaways. By emphasising the core values of the brand that were based around freshness, additive free and authentic homemade, the agency considered that marketing around these values on Facebook would generate the required new visitors and hence sales. In doing so the brand would not only be able to increase sales but also be able to move away from the increasingly difficult and purely price based business model it had been labouring with.

In the introduction of this research paper four sub-questions were formulated by the researcher, the findings and discussion of which would help provide answers to the central question restated above. These were: –

1. Was the campaign successful with Facebook as the prime marketing channel?

2. How did Facebook, primarily a social media channel, change the approach to the branding of Wok Express?

3. What was the role of online communities and engagement with them through shared values?

4. Can the definition of branding be updated in the light of the findings?

The methodological approaches involved collecting data from a variety of sources including quantitative data from sales figures, website visits and referrals, social media posts and engagement data and customer surveys. The qualitative data came from an interview with Paul the proprietor. Analytics software "Google Analytics" for website data and "Sprout Social Media" for Facebook allowed the researcher to generate detailed monthly reports around these key metrics. Although the quantitative data showed a high level of engagement on Facebook itself, whether this translated into any new business was unclear. Therefore, a more specific approach developed by the researcher and outlined in detail in the methodology chapter, was used to show for evidence that Facebook was working in a word-of-mouth capacity. The interview with Paul Brandwood was analysed using typical interview analysis (Seidman, 1998) to extract the themes and relate the content to the rest of the analysis.

Using Quantitative and Qualitative data types, with mixed method analysis the researcher created the backbone of this single case study. From this vantage point and with the primary data collection methods in place, the researcher was able to observe the campaign as it unfolded. In the final month of the study period, all the data was analysed and the researcher was able to address the primary research question and the four sub-questions to reach his conclusions.

So, how should branding be approached? – James Noble (Noble, 2013), from Kissmetrics provides a memorable quote when discussing the benefits of

authenticity in business. "In an environment in which more human elements matter…" (Noble 2013, para 7).

The Wok Express case study confirmed many authors' opinions about branding in the age of social media. It also confirmed the assumptions held by the researcher and the agency about how effective a purely Facebook oriented campaign could be. But what stands out clearly is how very important these "human elements" mentioned above can be. (Noble, 2013). The research showed conclusively that it was integrity, authenticity, authority and honesty, these values based human elements, which the bulk of the engagement achieved by Wok Express was based upon. In fact the brand became almost incidental during the process, with customers far more enthusiastic about the values, without which Wok Express would have been just another Asian takeaway. The values connected the marketing agency to important online communities on Facebook, enabling treasured <u>organic reach,</u> which in turn enabled a high level of brand awareness and brand identification. When branding today these things should be borne in mind, as even if a business is not visible on Facebook there is still the chance that their mistakes will be. Branding today should emphasise brand values far more. Brand values have traditionally been a set of guidelines for a business to follow, something that sets the standard for employees and might be displayed in a frame on the wall along with the mission statement. Social media has now however forced these values out into the open and judging by the findings of this study, customers want businesses to not only have values, but to stand up and be counted by them. Businesses that can manage this could reap great rewards.

In answering the sub-questions discussed below, the research confirmed and discovered more detail to inform the central question.

<u>Success achieved</u> – Firstly the study conclusively showed that, overall the campaign was a resounding success. In terms of sales over the 12-month period, turnover nearly tripled. All the website metrics used for evaluating success, showed both website visits and new visitors, were up considerably. This was understandable as most Wok Express business is directed through the website, an increase in sales would generally mean an increase in website activity. However success could also be measured in terms of the company gaining a whole new client base. Paul complained in the interview about his traditional clientele being so focussed on price and complaints around quantity and having to pay for extra rice etc were commonplace. The new clients gained since the re-brand, Paul described as a more "discerning bunch". This meant they were more concerned that the food lived up to its billing as fresh, additive free and authentic than whether there was not enough rice in the container. The re-brand had positioned Wok Express into the "big league" in Pauls word's and had created a reputation for quality that he was very pleased with.

<u>Faith in Facebook vindicated</u> – From whichever angle you look at it and even without the Facebook statistics compared to sales, the activity on Facebook must be counted as successful because of engagement and brand awareness alone. Facebook was the primary channel used during the campaign and it fulfilled its intended purpose very well indeed. The levels of engagement throughout the six-month period were excellent with 1934 new <u>fans</u> and over 5000 new people <u>liking</u> the Facebook page. In six months over 136k people were <u>reached</u> by the Facebook page, each one a unique person introduced to the Wok Express brand. This number is distilled down to over 4k people who engaged with the brand over six-months.

162

Each month saw new records being <u>reached</u> and it mirrored the increase in sales during the same period, with a net gain of $10k per month during the period. Following the six month study period the figures are even more impressive as Facebook continued to perform.

It needs to be mentioned again about the difficulty in connecting this Facebook engagement with the increase in sales generally. It has to be said that sales were increasing when Facebook was the sole marketing channel being used, itself a compelling statistic. But also, the Wok Express customer survey showed that 6 out of 19 people, nearly a third, had seen and engaged with the Facebook page. Connect these two facts with the keyword investigation of the organic search category, the highest performing measured category on Google Analytics, which found that the brand name was mentioned in the top 10 search queries and the case for Facebook success becomes even stronger. Clearly this is not a definitive way to connect Facebook engagement to sales, yet at the time of writing it is the only way. There is currently no definitive way to connect brand awareness to sales. As mentioned in the discussion chapter, business owners need to start making these types of connections for Facebook engagement, measuring return on engagement rather than investment (Heggestuen, 2014). This study may be able to offer some reasons for them to do so.

The findings suggested as the study progressed, that the researcher needed to clarify the difference between getting <u>reach</u> through paid Facebook advertising or by using organic reach. In the methodology chapter it was explained that paid advertising creates huge <u>reach</u> but quality values based content creates the vital organic sharing among friends. This organic sharing is particularly useful for

163

generating higher engagement levels, especially among the brand communities the campaign was targeting. This is because as also mentioned in the Findings chapter, that organic reach has since 2013 been seriously curtailed for business Facebook pages. Facebook did this in order to stop business and advertising overrunning the social network and annoying its core users and primary purpose, which is being a social network.

Has social media informed a new approach to branding? – Branding, of course remains branding and the definition of how branding and brand awareness are defined for this study, is in the introduction. The process of branding a business remains a step-by-step multi dimensional process involving considerations like design, primary purpose and brand values. What the findings convincingly and consistently show however, is that it could now be argued that social media has given brand values a new lease of life.

The power of brand values – During the study customers on Facebook and in person, overwhelmingly connected with the brand values established by the agency during the initial re-brand of Wok Express. The reviews, surveys and Paul's interview all showed that the core values of freshness, additive free and authentic (homemade) were not only well received, but convincingly so. For instance 17 out of 19 survey respondents indicated that the particular offer encapsulated in the values message was the very reason they ate Wok Express.

The findings showed that the emphasis on brand values was one of the main factors in generating such substantial engagement on Facebook. Each month, analysis was made of the top two most popular Facebook posts by percentage of

164

engagement, to corroborate that brand values were indeed the glue responsible for the majority of the <u>reach</u> and <u>engagement</u>. Similarly the analysis of the reviews on Zomato, conducted to determine what diners particularly liked about Wok Express that led to a favourable review, revealed that values based words were 65% of descriptive words used.

Even more directly from the customer's point of view, the Google Survey, with seven simple questions again established the connection between typical Wok Express customers and what they liked about the brand. Overwhelmingly the results confirmed Wok Express customers cared very much about the values of freshness, additive free and authentic homemade. As shown by the results, 18 from 19 people confirmed that these were the things that mattered to them and that "they didn't want ordinary takeaways" and 17 from 19 further confirmed that the specific claims were the reason they bought Wok Express.

Finally the interview with Paul, the owner and active, "hands on" proprietor of Wok Express, confirmed "from the shop floor" insights on the campaign. He was able to see people connecting with the values in a very real way. Customers would encourage him face to face and congratulate him on how great Wok Express was. The values were a continual factor in these exchanges and Paul admitted it gave him a great feeling that the re-brand had lifted Wok Express into the "big league".

The highest engaging posts on Facebook were also heavily on the side of being connected to brand values. This was significant, as although Facebook was able to generate huge <u>reach</u> for each post using paid advertising, the content of the posts needed to be worthy to ensure that organic engagement with them was high. In

other words the content of the posts was continually slanted toward promoting

the brand values and this connected well with the fledgling Wok Express Facebook

community. In this way the campaign was also able to ensure the existing "health

foodie" brand community was stimulated and excited about the brand too, making

them more likely to act as brand advocates and so increase coveted organic word-

of-mouth referral on Facebook. In this way Wok Express was increasing <u>reach</u> to

the wider "health foodie" community and the data shows that the steady growth of

Wok Express Facebook fans and users who <u>liked</u> the Facebook page did so by

connecting with the values based content.

<u>How customers influence brands?</u> – Part of addressing the research question

around how social media may have informed the way branding should now be

approached, hinges around greater consumer influence upon businesses and their

marketing strategies. This influence has come about primarily because social

media websites like Facebook have become mainstream. Facebook's environment

of information sharing, gives users new abilities to discuss, share and respond

amongst themselves in their own time and at their own leisure, as evidenced in the

examination of the top engaging posts during this study. This hugely connected

and constant peer to peer communication "channel" has resulted in consumers,

being better able to practically put pressure on businesses to be more authentic

and sincere in their marketing claims. Consumers are far more purposeful, careful

and nuanced in their pre purchase decision-making, (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013)

and they share information, reviews and consider alternatives, far more than in the

pre Facebook world. This study also bears this out and it has now become

incumbent upon businesses to react accordingly.

The findings suggest that businesses can use this situation to their advantage instead of it being a problem. Tsimonis (2014) showed how typical business attitudes and responses are outdated, lazy and out of step yet the Wok Express case study goes someway to showing how beneficial it could be to change this attitude.

The study confirms the literature – By creating a sound connection between Facebook and performance the researcher was also able to confirm many existing writers recommendations about using social media for marketing. Legorburu & McColl (2014), Richardson (2014), Rowles (2012) and Grams (2012) all considered that connecting strongly and sincerely to customers using social media was the key to developing successful social strategies. All of the following strategies suggested by existing authors the researcher was able to demonstrate were favourably connected to having a strong set of brand values and to stand for these visibly on Facebook.

"storytelling" to enhance believability, authenticity and personal feelings of connection.

Creating "brand advocates" to powerfully support the brand and actively contribute and spread brand awareness.

Getting your "hands dirty" and becoming a hands-on and active, contributing member of the "tribes" that your brand needs to connect with on Facebook.

Online communities are a marketer's friend – Communities, including brand communities and hidden communities of users connected by similar likes, were also identified by the researcher as significant for Facebook based campaigns. Understanding these groups and the way they are connected by shared values, was

part of identifying the process of social media engagement. The target audience of "health foodies" in a general way or at least people sympathetic to healthier eating was identified and successfully targeted by the agency. Connecting authentically with these groups however became vital to secure their engagement. The relevance of the content to the audience was vital to connect and keep connecting. The Facebook data was able to confirm this. Becoming an authentic member of the "health foodie" community was extremely valuable. The research was able to show that it was important that Wok Express adopt and live the values intended for their audience. As well as credibility with their audience, making the values real and positioning themselves as an industry leader in healthy takeaways, created the "air filling the sales" phenomenon Paul discussed in his interview. The research revealed that customers, not only vocally supported the values based model for Wok Express but that they expected certain standards of the business itself. Paul is himself particular about his own food choices and his passion for all things fresh and homemade is very real. This supports various industry authors like Abramovich (2013) who insist that values doesn't just mean pretending.

Does branding need to be redefined? – The onus is on businesses to demonstrate that their business is able to sell values because it already lives them. Integrity and authenticity were highlighted by the study in the reviews and surveys as values people connected with but commentators agree they are equally important for the business itself. Abramovich (2013) insists that businesses now need to live by their values as social media means they can be so easily exposed. Quoting from senior management at both KFC and Sony, to prove his point he explains that social media has significantly lifted the authenticity requirement for businesses. Time,

168

commitment and knowledge of your industry are also highlighted as important business considerations.

According to Noble (2013), it's no longer considered acceptable for businesses to be insincere, citing that social media has created an environment where "human elements" matter more and more as users enthusiastically embrace their ability to critique businesses and share that with their peers. Tsimonis (2014), in his study of attitudes towards social media and current industry perceptions, revealed a poor understanding and also a lack of commitment to embrace these changes and adapt business practice accordingly. The findings from this study have shown how a more authentic transparent approach can reap dividends. The current inability to quantify the impact social media channels like Facebook can have on actual sales, may partially explain why businesses remain relatively unconvinced and lethargic about brand awareness in general. This study however has managed to show that there is value in businesses taking it more seriously.

Practically the Wok Express case study has showed how a day-to-day application of a strategic re-brand strategy can impact sales and create positive growth for a business such as Wok Express. Corroboration of the approach by authors within the industry reinforces this. This study suggests that it may be sensible for businesses to practically identify the values latent in their offers and even within the business structure itself. It further suggests that once identified, they could inform a strategy to ensure that these values become a prominent part of the sales process, bringing them to life on social media through "storytelling" and quality posting.

Greater detail around what's required for this type of business-wide change is not within the realms of this study, but the potential value of such an exercise is shown. Commentators like Noble (2013) consider business-wide change is sensible and achievable, citing several large companies like Apple and Amazon, investing heavily in structural changes within their business to ensure the values they sell to their customers are lived by the company. These companies say Noble (2013), additionally recognise responsiveness, accountability, consistency and reliability as values that need to run through businesses from the top down. It becomes much easier he says to sell values when you live by them, insisting that as a strategy it is far easier to "be yourself" than merely pretend Noble (2013). It is clear that the insights provided by this study around the power that values can have in attracting and sustaining customer engagement and sales, are not lost on these large companies.

<u>Other issues that arose during the research</u> – The research touches on how the generation of huge amounts of data, once considered private, but now freely given to social networks by users, has become marketing gold and available to those prepared to pay. Any study of social media marketing and this one is no different, deals with huge datasets from a myriad of sources. In the methodology section the researcher describes how "case study" was an appropriate container for this research, explaining how it was particularly useful as it made allowance for gaining data from multiple sources over a period of time Farquhar (2012). During even this small study it became apparent that the amount of data that was available to study is huge. Digital environments like company websites, themselves generate huge amounts of quantitative data, which can become more qualitative with the addition of feedback forms or forums.

Social media websites like Facebook however, don't merely generate data they become repositories of sensitive and personal user data over years. During the study the researcher was able to view comments, email addresses and lists of friends from many people who had interacted with Wok Express. Although this data is in the public domain and free to see, marketers and businesses can make much use of it if they are so inclined. The Wok Express agency did just this on a very basic level, yet managed to achieve good results using planning and systems that took advantage of the data available. Facebook advertising conducted by the agency was also dependent on these data sets.

The question arises, and one that was pertinent to the research, is around who is more in control now, the business or the consumer? Commentators like Mitch Joel (Joel, 2012), acknowledge the huge strides consumers have made in influencing brands, yet he is just as firm when he says that this influence does not mean consumers are now in control. As much as a consumer's ability to influence businesses and keep them honest has grown, so has the huge availability of detailed personal data enabled businesses to track, measure and anticipate consumer behaviour like never before.

Subsequent analysis of this case brought the data industry to life for the researcher. When a full and complete understanding of the data industry was considered and to reference the study by Kosinski (2012) about Facebook histories, it is clear that much personal insight can be gleaned merely by looking at them. Extremely rich personal data and the gathering of it for marketing purposes,

is the phenomenon of the social age and the question of who is in control, is in the opinion of the researcher a moot point.

What the study research highlighted to the researcher is that it is really the data itself that has been imposed upon the marketing industry and both the consumer and businesses alike are in thrall. In the researcher's opinion, common sense needs to prevail for consumers and it becomes incumbent upon them to be aware of how much personal data is collected merely by their use of the internet. For businesses, strategies to take advantage of the data need to be developed while at the same time being particularly careful with the considerable power using such data conveys. Being mindful in business of how easy it has become for consumers to see, locate and bring down pretenders through social media is crucial. The data industry has created a delicate balance between consumers and businesses where consumers have the power to ensure transparency and commitment to values while businesses have datasets that allow them to track, monitor and persuade consumers like never before.

Limits and future study – The limits of this study are many. It is a single case within a single industry, in a single city and single country. The segment of survey participants was small and the single interview could not be considered indicative of a broad range of business owners. However the findings undoubtedly showed that a re-brand strategy, which exclusively used Facebook for its marketing and a set of values rather than price as its main attraction, was very successful. Consider that 12 months out from the inception of the strategy, sales grew 133%. The research has made a case around how this success was created.

172

Future studies within this area could certainly be made for investigating more compelling ways to illustrate how brand awareness contributes to sales or return on monetary investment. In many ways businesses don't take social media seriously as a marketing channel, Tsimonis (2014) showed that this is true. Even Paul from Wok Express, after seeing his own business nearly triple its turnover exclusively using Facebook as a marketing channel, remained unconvinced of its value. Although the research showed that Facebook is capable of generating brand awareness on a large scale for a relatively small cost, as a metric brand awareness remains unquantifiable. It is not possible to add a 100% accurate brand awareness number into a spreadsheet. Being so "ethereal" brand awareness itself is susceptible to being used by smooth talking marketers to sell a business owner into an expensive but worthless strategy.

These are the real fears business owners exhibit when discussing using Facebook for strategies and Paul indicated this in the interview. In the researcher's opinion however, this study goes some way in helping to explain the enigma that brand awareness has traditionally been. It shows how in the light of social media this enigma is beginning to take more cohesive shape and emerge as a real bona fide sales tool. Future studies could test this further using brand awareness equals sales as the primary hypothesis to test.

References

Aaker, D. A. (2012). *Building strong brands*. New York: Free Press.

Abramovich, G. (2013, February 19). What is 'Authenticity' in Marketing? - Digiday. Retrieved November, 2015, from http://digiday.com/brands/what-is-authenticity-in-marketing/

Adams, P. (2010). *Social circles: How offline relationships influence online behavior and what it means for design and marketing*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

Adams, P. (2013). The Real Life Social Network v2. Retrieved from http://www.slideshare.net/padday/the-real-life-social-network-v2

Aral, S., & Walker, D. (2011). Creating Social Contagion Through Viral Product Design: A Randomized Trial of Peer Influence in Networks. *SSRN Electronic Journal SSRN Journal*. doi:10.2139/ssrn.1564856

Bakshy, E. (2012, January 18). Rethinking Information Diversity in Networks. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/notes/facebook-data-team/rethinking-information-diversity-in-networks/10150503499618859

Bakshy, E., N Marlow, C., Rosenn, I., & Adamic, L. (2012). The Role of Social Networks in Information Diffusion. Retrieved 2014.

Blumer, H. (1986). *Symbolic interactionism; perspective and method* (Paperback). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Business Insider. (2015). Retrieved May 10, 2015, from http://www.businessinsider.com.au/?s=social%2Bmedia

Close, A. (2012). *Online consumer behavior: Theory and research in social media, advertising, and e-tail*. New York: Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Cvijikj, I. P., & Michahelles, F. (2013). Online engagement factors on Facebook brand pages. *Soc. Netw. Anal. Min. Social Network Analysis and Mining, 3*(4), 843-861. doi:10.1007/s13278-013-0098-8

Debunking The Myth Of Social ROI. (2014, March 14). Retrieved from http://www.businessinsider.com.au/the-myth-of-social-roi-5-2014-3?utm_source=alerts&nr_email_referer=1

Delo, C. (2013). Facebook Admits Organic Reach Is Falling Short, Urges Marketers to Buy Ads. Retrieved 2015, from http://adage.com/article/digital/facebook-admits-organic-reach-brand-posts-dipping/245530/

Denis, T. (2014, October 13). What's a Facebook Fan Worth in 2014? Retrieved 2015, from http://augmo.com/audible-facebook-fan-is-worth-10-bucks/

Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C., & Morgan-Thomas, A. (2015). Consumer engagement in online brand communities: A social media perspective. *Journal of Product & Brand Management Jnl of Product & Brand Mgt, 24*(1), 28-42. doi:10.1108/jpbm-06-2014-0635

DiMauro, V. (2011, June 17). People Come For Content And Stay For Community Online. Retrieved 2015, from http://www.leadernetworks.com/2011/06/people-come-for-content-and-stay-for.html

DiMauro, V. (2015, February 25). Joining the Customer Journey Using Online Communities. Retrieved from http://www.leadernetworks.com/2015/02/joining-customer-journey-using-online-communities.html

Esch, F., Langner, T., Schmitt, B. H., & Geus, P. (2006). Are brands forever? How brand knowledge and relationships affect current and future purchases. *Journal of Product & Brand Management Jnl of Product & Brand Mgt, 15*(2), 98-105. doi:10.1108/10610420610658938

Facebook. (2015). How the newsfeed works. Retrieved 2015, from https://www.facebook.com/help/274400362581037

Farquhar, J. D. (2012). *Case study research for business*. London: SAGE.

Ferrara, O., & 2. (2015). The role of strong and weak ties in Facebook: A community structure perspective. *ResearchGate*. Retrieved from http://www.researchgate.net/publication/221668361_The_role_of_strong_and_weak_ties_in_Facebook_a_community_structureperspective

Fountain, E. C. (2008). Conceptual foundations and marketing issues. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice, 9*(3), 231-244.

Foxall, G. R. (2008). Consumer behaviour analysis – the case of brand choice.

Get satisfaction survey: Online customer communities becoming a higher priority for organizations. (2014). *Entertainmnet Close Up*. doi:Retrieved from http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/156192 8112?accountid=8440

Google. (2010). Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide. *Search Engine Optimization Starter GuideWelcome to Google's*. Retrieved 2015, from http://static.googleusercontent.com/media/www.google.com/en//webmasters/d ocs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf

Google. (2012). *Googleusercontent.com/Media/www.google.com/en//webmasters/docs/sea rch-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf* [Pdf]. Google.

Grams, C. (2012). *The ad-free brand: Secrets to building successful brands in a digital world*. Indianapolis, IN: Que Pub.

Granovetter, M. S. (1973). *The strength of weak ties* (6th ed., Vol. 78). American Journal of Sociology.

Groves, R. M. (2004). *Survey methodology*. Hoboken, NJ: J. Wiley.

Hamel, G. (2007). *The future of management*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, R. (2006). *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Heggestuen, J. (2014, March 15). Debunking the myth of Social ROI. Retrieved November 22, 2014, from http://www.businessinsider.com.au/the-myth-of-social-roi-5-2014-3?utm_source=alerts&nr_email_referer=1

How the newsfeed works? (2015). Retrieved November, 2015, from https://www.facebook.com/help/166738576721085

Jensen, K. B. (2010). *Media convergence: The three degrees of network, mass, and interpersonal communication*. London: Routledge.

Joel, M. (2012). Consumers Control The Brand (And Other New Media Myths). Retrieved 2015, from http://www.twistimage.com/blog/archives/consumers-control-the-brand-and-other-new-media-myths/

Jones, C., & Lyons, C. (2004). Case study: Design? Method? Or comprehensive strategy? *Nurse Researcher, 11*(3), 70-76. doi:10.7748/nr2004.04.11.3.70.c6206

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons, 53*(1), 59-68. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003

Katz, R. (2015, January 23). 2015 Will Be the Year of the Brand Community - Here's Why. Retrieved November 25, 2015, from http://www.clickz.com/clickz/column/2391666/2015-will-be-the-year-of-the-brand-community-here-s-why

Koh, N. S. (2011). *The valuation of user-generated content: A structural, stylistic and semantic analysis of online reviews* (Master's thesis, Singapore Management University, 2011). Ann Arbor: ProQuest.

Kosinski, M. (2013, February 12). Private traits and attributes are predictable from digital records of human behavior. Retrieved from http://www.pnas.org/content/110/15/5802.abstract

Kosinski, M., Stillwell, D., & Graepel, T. (2013). Private traits and attributes are predictable from digital records of human behavior. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 110*(15), 5802-5805. doi:10.1073/pnas.1218772110

Lake, L. (2009). The Basics of Facebook Marketing. Retrieved 2015, from http://marketing.about.com/od/internetmarketing/a/facebookmktg.htm

Leboff, G. (2014). *Stickier marketing: How to win customers in a digital age.* Kogan Page.

Legorburu, G., & McColl, D. (2014). *Storyscaping: Stop creating ads, start creating worlds.* Wiley.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2013). *The constructivist credo*. Left Coast Press.

Loomer, J. (2014, February 24). Ultimate Guide: Facebook Insights Glossary of Terms [Infographic]. Retrieved December 23, 2015, from http://www.jonloomer.com/2014/02/24/facebook-insights-glossary-infographic/

Loomer, J. (2015, March). Facebook Organic Reach is Changing: Should Brands Share More Links? Retrieved November, 2015, from http://www.jonloomer.com/2015/03/23/facebook-organic-reach-links/

Martinka, L. (2012). *How social media communities affect consumer behaviour.* (Master's thesis, Gonzaga University, 2012). Ann Arbor: ProQuest.

Mead - Boundless Open Textbook. (2015). Retrieved May 15, 2015, from https://www.boundless.com/sociology/textbooks/boundless-sociology-textbook/socialization-4/theories-of-socialization-44/mead-275-8666/

Mingers, J., & Brocklesby, J. (1997). Multimethodology: Towards a framework for mixing methodologies. *Omega, 25*(5), 489-509. doi:10.1016/s0305-0483(97)00018-2

Noble, J. (2013). Truth Will Out - Why Authenticity is the Key to Growing Your Business. Retrieved 2015, from https://blog.kissmetrics.com/truth-will-out/

Oestreicher-Singer, G. (2013). Content or Community. A Digital Business Strategy for Content Providers in the Digital Age. *MIS Quarterly, 37*(2), 591-616.

Pantelidis, I. S. (2010). Electronic Meal Experience: A Content Analysis of Online Restaurant Comments. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly, 51*(4), 483-491. doi:10.1177/1938965510378574

Price, S. (2014). A Love Affair: Social Data & Strategy. Retrieved 2015, from https://blog.kissmetrics.com/social-data-strategy/

Pulizzi, J. (2012). The Rise of "storytelling" as the New Marketing. *Publishing Research Quarterly Pub Res Q, 28*(2), 116-123. doi:10.1007/s12109-012-9264-5

Qualman, E. (2010). *Socialnomics*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Reed, W. M., Burton, J. K., & Liu, M. (1994). *Multimedia and megachange: New roles for educational computing*. New York: Haworth Press.

Regression to the Mean. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/regrmean.php

Reinard, J. C. (2006). *Communication research statistics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Reiss-Davis, Z. (2013, June 6). Facebook Recognizes Need For Social, Simplicity In Social Advertising. Retrieved December 11, 2015, from http://www.forbes.com/sites/forrester/2013/06/06/facebook-recognizes-need-for-social-simplicity-in-social-advertising/

Richardson, B. (2013). *Tribal marketing, tribal branding brand co-creation and the future of marketing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Riffe, D., Lacy, S., & Fico, F. (2014). *Analyzing media messages using quantitative content analysis in research*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Rowles, D. (2014). *Digital branding: A complete step-by-step guide to strategy, tactics and measurement*. London: Kogan Page.

Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Simons, H. (2009). *Case study research in practice*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Social Networking Fact Sheet. (2013, December 27). Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/

Solomon, M. R. (1983). The Role of Products as Social Stimuli: A Symbolic Interactionism Perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research, 10*(3), 319. doi:10.1086/208971

Susette, H. (2013). The Role of Integrity in Marketing. Retrieved 2015, from https://www.writeraccess.com/blog/the-role-of-integrity-in-marketing/

Syncapse. (2013). The value of a Facebook Fan. Retrieved 2015, from http://www.slideshare.net/Syncapse/syncapse-value-of-a-fan-2013-summary-of-findings

Three Questions You Need to Ask About Your Brand. (2002, September 01). Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2002/09/three-questions-you-need-to-ask-about-your-brand/ar/1

179

Trattner, C., & Kappe, F. (2013). Social stream marketing on Facebook: A case study. *IJSHC International Journal of Social and Humanistic Computing, 2*(1/2), 86. doi:10.1504/ijshc.2013.053268

Tsimonis, G. (2014). Marketing Intelligence & Planning. Brand strategies in social media. *Emerald Insight, 32*(3), 328-344.

Udell, J. G. (1964). How Important Is Pricing in Competitive Strategy? *Journal of Marketing, 28*(1), 44. doi:10.2307/1249225

Using+facebook+for+business - Google Search. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.google.co.nz/search?q=using%2Bfacebook%2Bfor%2Bbusiness&ie= utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=TmzeVJP9Oo6k8AWpoYKQBQ

Wasserman, T. (2014). A Facebook Fan Is Worth $174, Researcher Says. Retrieved 2015, from http://mashable.com/2013/04/17/facebook-fan-value-researcher/#3s31nZS_MmqO

White, M. D., & Marsh, E. E. (2006). Content Analysis: A Flexible Methodology. *Library Trends, 55*(1), 22-45. doi:10.1353/lib.2006.0053

Wood, B. (2014, May). The Value of a Facebook Like. Retrieved 201, from http://www.purplewifi.net/the-value-of-a-facebook-like/

Woodside, A. G. (2010). *Case study research: Theory, methods, practice*. Bingley: Emerald.

Yates, W. (2015, August). Content Marketing : Integrity Delivers Competitive Advantage. Retrieved November, 2015, from http://www.business2community.com/content-marketing/content-marketing-integrity-delivers-competitive-advantage-01295416#q7TlpFTfgLdIDeoT.97

Yim, C. K., Tse, D. K., & Chan, K. W. (2008). Strengthening Customer Loyalty Through Intimacy and Passion: Roles of Customer–Firm Affection and Customer–Staff Relationships in Services. *Journal of Marketing Research, 45*(6), 741-756. doi:10.1509/jmkr.45.6.741

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Zhang, Z., Ye, Q., Law, R., & Li, Y. (2010). The impact of e-word-of-mouth on the online popularity of restaurants: A comparison of consumer reviews and editor reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 29*(4), 694-700. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2010.02.002

Appendix

1. Facebook Data with Summaries. Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

March – Wok Express

Impressions	**89.8k**
Reached Every 2.65 impressions 1 person is reached	**33.8k**
New "fans"	**235**
Average number of people reached per post	**995**
No of people engaged (this could be talking, liking, sharing, or commenting on a post) Every 45 people reached 1 person engages	**739**
Visits to website directly from Facebook Every 27.3 people engaged on Facebook equals 1 visit to the website.	**27**
Highest referral source during March	**Zomato – 148**

Numbers Summary

3.6% of engaged people or 1 from every 27 people engaged on Facebook equalled 1 visit to the website.

Over 6k Viral impressions or impressions directly attributed to a story directly posted on the page, or post, like or otherwise.

485 users actively engaged on the page during this period with either a post, share, comment, mention or tag and created 547 stories.

235 people became "fans".

Active posting on behalf of the client saw an average of 967 people reached per post with an average engagement level per post of 11%.

182

There were 30 posts during this month with an average of 6 people talking about each post. An average reach of 967 people per post in total over the month. This indicates posts were shared with friends or talked about, liked, or had questions answered.

There is a 109% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and an 18% increase from February 2014.

Post that engaged the most: March 11th 2014 *This is what your fridge should look like at home.*

There was a photo of a fridge full of healthy products and labelled clearly so we could see what those things were. It reached 220 people. 34 people engaged with this post for an engagement level of 15.45%. 5 people were talking about it and 4 people liked it.

NB: This post content was about "healthy" eating (supporting the brand values). There was no offer.

Post that engaged the next most: Mar 19th 2014 *Fun Tip!*

Helpful tip about boiling eggs. It reached 168 people. 34 people engaged with this post and 1 person was talking about it. 0 people shared it. 1 person liked it.

NB: This post was free cooking advice about boiling eggs given to users.

Post that engaged the most by numbers (reach): Mar 12th 2014 *Click the link below and give us some feedback on our service and you will be in the draw to WIN $50 worth of Wok Express*

It reached 8.1k people. 165 people engaged with this post and 65 people were talking about it. 2 people shared it. 60 likes for an engagement level of 2.54% by %.

NB: There is a huge difference in reach by numbers because paid advertising generates huge reach. Engagement by % level is low however.

183

Corresponding Website Analytics

New visits to the website were 66% with a bounce rate of 57%. 27 sessions were directly attributable to Facebook activity with 20% of those as new sessions.

March Summary

Facebook and Menumania social Activity accounted for 160 visits to the website with 115 of them brand new users.

The paid advertising on Facebook worked very well to increase the Reach into the thousands and despite a low engagement percentage it was an effective Reach strategy.

Both most engaged by % posts featured helpful advice around cooking and purchasing with the top post particularly featuring BRAND VALUES.

A 76% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and an 18% increase from February 2014.

<u>April – Wok Express</u>

Impressions	**39.4k**
Reached Every 1.6 impressions 1 person is reached	**23k**
New "fans"	**73**
Average number of people reached per post	**562**
No of people engaged (this could be talking, liking, sharing, or commenting on a post) Every 43 people reached 1 person engages	**533**
Visits to website directly from Facebook Every 7.8 people engaged on social media equals 1 visit to the website. GOOD	**68**

Highest referral source during March	**Zomato – 156**

Numbers Summary

5% of engaged people or 1 from every 27 people engaged on Facebook equalled 1 visit to the website.

2.5 Viral impressions or impressions directly attributed to a story directly posted on the page, or post, like or otherwise.

263 users actively engaged on the page during this period with either a post, share, comment, mention or tag and created 321 stories.

73 people became "fans".

Active posting on behalf of the client saw an average of 563 people reached per post with an average engagement level per post of 6%.

Around half the engagement level of March.

There were 38 posts during this month with an average of 4 people talking about each post. An average reach of 563 people per post in total over the month. This indicates posts were shared with friends or talked about, liked, or had questions answered.

There is a 114% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and and 2.5% increase from March 2014.

Post that engaged the most: April 22nd 2014 *Top secret recipes to make stir fry*

It reached only 164 people yet engaged 29 with this post with 7 people were talking about it. 0 people shared it. 7 people liked it . 0 commented. Engagement level was 17.6%.

This was a photo of fresh ingredients, and special sauces in bottles.

Post that engaged the next most: Apr 20th 2014 Fresh and healthy Asian takeaways delivered right at your doorstep! You can also order from us online at

http://wokexpress.co.nz/

It reached 133 people. 20 people engaged with this post and 6 people were talking about it. 0 people shared it. 6 people liked it . 0 commented. Engagement level was 15.04%.

Post that engaged the most by numbers: April5th 2014 *Click the link below and give us some feedback on our service and you will be in the draw to WIN $50 worth of Wok Express*

It reached 6.7k people. 46 people engaged with this post and 9 people were talking about it. 0 people shared it. 9 likes. .68% engagement by %.

Similar huge difference in reach by numbers supporting the power of paid advertising. Note the engagement by % level is low. This post was about gaining feedback from customers and it offered a $50 giveaway.

Corresponding Website Analytics

New visits to the website were 66.9% with a bounce rate of 56.9%. 68 sessions were directly attributable to Facebook activity, with 65% of those as new sessions. Zomato review site was responsible for 51% of referrals.

April Summary

Facebook and Zomato social Activity accounted for 224 visits to the website with over 60% of them brand new users.

The paid advertising on Facebook worked very well to increase the Reach into the thousands and despite a low engagement percentage it was again an effective Reach strategy.

Both most engaged by % posts highlighted the BRAND VALUES and offered free advice to users.

There is a 114% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and and 2.5% increase from March 2014.

May – Wok Express

Impressions	**86.1k**
Reached Every 13 impressions 1 person is reached	**6.6k**
New "fans"	**681**
Average number of people reached per post	**140**
No of people engaged (this could be talking, liking, sharing, or commenting on a post) Every 13 people reached 1 person engages	**488**
Visits to website directly from Facebook Every 12.2 people engaged on social media equals 1 visit to the website.	**40**
Highest referral source	**Zomato – 194**

Numbers Summary

8.2% of engaged people or 1 from every 12.2 people engaged on Facebook equalled 1 visit to the website.

8.3k Viral impressions or impressions directly attributed to a story directly posted on the page, or post, like or otherwise.

807 users actively engaged on the page during this period with either a post, share, comment, mention or tag and created 894 stories.

681 people became "fans".

Active posting on behalf of the client saw an average of 140 people reached per post with an average engagement level per post of 8%. Smaller number of people reached but a higher engagement level than April.

There were 47 posts during this month with an average of 2 people talking about each post.

There is a 120.9% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and and 2.9% increase from April 2014.

Post that engaged the most: May 19nd 2014 *In need of some protein and healthy greens? Why not try our sesame ginger beef with Broccoli and bok choy? Bite into tender succulent beef, fresh broccoli and bok choy stir fried in yummy sesame oil :-)*

It reached only 6 people yet engaged 2 with this post with 1 people were talking about it. 0 people shared it. 1 people liked it . 0 commented. Engagement level was 33%.

This was a photo of the dish mentioned.

NB: This post associated health and taste together. (supportive of BRAND VALUES)

Post that engaged the next most: May 8th 2014 *Spaghetti Hot dog *Poke Through* boil #wokexpress*

It reached 7 people. 2 people engaged with this post and 0 people were talking about it. 0 people shared it. 0 people liked it . 0 commented. Engagement level was 28.57%.

NB: This post was humorous take on spring rolls. (not supportive of Brand values)

Post that engaged the most by numbers: May 14th 2014 *How many of these do you eat? Give us the number.*

It reached 185 people. 22 people engaged with this post and 3 people were talking about it. 0 people shared it. 1 likes. 11.89% engagement by %.

NB: Interesting that this month there was no paid advertising and this is reflected in the low levels of Reach for all posts. Despite this engagement was high and the month overall has record figures including visits to the website directly attributed to Facebook.

Corresponding Website Analytics

New visits to the website were 66.11% with a bounce rate of 57.2%. This is steady for the first three months. 40 sessions were directly attributable to Facebook activity, with approx 55% of those as new sessions. Zomato restaurant review site was responsible for 62% of referrals.

May Summary

Facebook and Zomato social Activity accounted for 234 visits to the website with over 60% of them brand new users.

Overall engagement on Facebook was excellent despite the lack of paid advertising. The brand awareness was a record with 681 new "fans", unusual in the face of such small Reach numbers. Visits to the website from Facebook were less than April but including Zomato there were 15 more.

1 most engaged by post highlighted the BRAND VALUES, the other was a humorous post.

There is a 120.9% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and and 2.9% increase from April 2014.

June – Wok Express

189

Impressions	**90.7k**
Reached Every 2 impressions 1 person is reached	**34k**
New "fans"	**401**
Average number of people reached per post	**694**
No of people engaged (this could be talking, liking, sharing, or commenting on a post) Every 34 people reached 1 person engages	**998**
Visits to website directly from Facebook Every 45 people engaged on social media equals 1 visit to the website.	**22**
Highest referral source	**Menumania – 465**

Numbers Summary

2.2% of engaged people or 1 from every 45 people engaged on Facebook equalled 1 visit to the website.

Impressions 90k, with 4.8k Viral approx twice the previous month, impressions or impressions directly attributed to a story directly posted on the page, or post, like or otherwise.

669 users actively engaged on the page during this period with either a post, share, comment, mention or tag and created 775 stories.

401 people became "fans".

Similar overall impressions to May.

Active posting on behalf of the client saw an average of 140 people reached per post with an average engagement level per post of 8%. Smaller number of people reached but a higher engagement level than April.

There were 48 posts during this month with an average of 6 people talking about each post.

There is a 157.32% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and and 16.4% increase from May 2014.

Post that engaged the most: June 17th 2014 *Why We're Nuts Over Cashews!*

Cashew nuts are actually seeds that adhere to the bottom of the cashew apple, the fruit of the cashew tree, which is native to the coastal areas of northeastern Brazil. It turns out, Cashews not only taste good! They also contain a lot of health benefits!

Read more about it at:

http://www.naturalfoodbenefits.com/display.asp?CAT=5&ID=93

http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=98

It reached only 99 people yet engaged 13 with this post with 3 people were talking about it. 0 people shared it. 3 people liked it . 0 commented. Engagement level was 13.13%.

This was a photo of cashews explaining the amazing qualities of the nut and the health benefits.

NB: This post emphasised the health of cashew nuts (supportive of BRAND VALUES) but also included an education and advice angle.

Post that engaged the next most: June 29th 2014 The Ice Diet Is a Thing—But Does It Actually Work?

The weirdest diet since the ice cream cleanse has just arrived: A gastroenterologist has created a weight-loss plan called "The Ice Diet" that, spoiler alert, involves eating ice—a ton of it.

Experts share what they think of this new weight-loss strategy.

Read more about it at: http://www.womenshealthmag.com/weight-loss/ice-diet

It reached 218 people. 27 people engaged with this post and 4 people were talking about it. 0 people shared it. 4 people liked it . 0 commented. Engagement level was 12.39%.

NB: This post was humorous but informative post about an unusual diet, still within the realms of food consciousness.

Post that engaged the most by numbers: June 3rd 2014 Hey guys we will be drawing the winner for our $50 dinner giveaway on the 11th of June (1 Week from now). If you haven't entered already just follow the link below

http://tinyurl.com/n2f7mgt

It reached 24.6k people. 320 people engaged with this post and 91 people were talking about it. 3 people shared it. 88 likes. 1.3% engagement by %.

NB: Great result for LIKES with this post and another good reason to use paid advertising to boost the Reach to over 20k. Engagement level is small but numbers are large and good brand awareness.

Corresponding Website Analytics

New visits to the website were 66.48% with a bounce rate of 57.56%. This is steady for the first four months now. 22 sessions were directly attributable to Facebook activity, with approx 75% of those as new sessions. Zomato restaurant review site was responsible for 81% of referrals.

June Summary

Facebook and Zomato social activity accounted for 487 direct visits to the website with over 75% of them brand new users.

Overall engagement on Facebook was good. The brand awareness was good with 411 new "fans". Visits to the website from Facebook were down compared to all months but including Zomato they were a record. *An excellent result for the combined social team and interesting to note whether the two social websites*

192

combine in other ways. Does good good brand awareness on Facebook mean good

results on Menumania, these figures suggest perhaps they do.

Both most engaged by post highlighted the BRAND VALUES, and again included humour.

Paid advertising once again proved its worth in brand awareness and sheer reach. Note the huge increase in Zomato referrals.

There is a 157.32% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and and 16.4% increase from May 2014.

July – Wok Express

Impressions	**1.1m**
Reached Every 32 impressions 1 person is reached	**34k**
New "fans"	**528**
Average number of people reached per post	**740**
No of people engaged (this could be talking, liking, sharing, or commenting on a post) Every 34 people reached 1 person engages	**972**
Visits to website directly from Facebook Every 20 people engaged on social media equals 1 visit to the website.	**47**

Highest referral source	Menumania – 365

Numbers Summary

4.84% of engaged people or 1 from every 20 people engaged on Facebook equalled 1 visit to the website.

The biggest month for Wok Express impressions at 1.1m, with 5.9k viral, about 1k more than June, impressions or impressions directly attributed to a story directly posted on the page, or post, like or otherwise.

710 users actively engaged on the page during this period with either a post, share, comment, mention or tag and created 850 stories.

528 people became "fans". *Interesting to note huge number of impressions yet only modest gains from June in new ""fans"", viral impressions, users and user stories.*

Active posting on behalf of the client saw an average of 725 people reached per post with an average engagement level per post of 9%. Smallish gains from June.

There were 46 posts during this month with an average of 5 people talking about each post.

There is a 150.69% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and and -2.58% decrease from June 2014. CONSISTENT RESULTS AS JUNE WAS A RECORD.

Post that engaged the most: July 7th 2014 *With its tuft of spiky, dusty green leaves and cross-hatched, golden orange skin, the pineapple has a distinctive appearance. A single pineapple is, in fact, a collection of multiple fruits; each one is the fruit of an individual blossom. Available year-round in local markets, pineapples have a vibrant tropical flavor that balances the tastes of sweet and tart.*

Try it in our Sweet and Sour Tofu dish today *wink emoticon*

Read more about it here:

194

It reached 89 people engaged 40 with 19 people were talking about it. 1 people shared it. 19 people liked it . 0 commented. Engagement level was 44.94%. This is a good post with high engagement and good likes.

This was a photo of pineapple explaining some fun facts of the fruit and the health benefits. A fun not too serious post but great results.

NB: This post emphasised EDUCATION first but supported the brand values in the body of the post.

Post that engaged the next most: July 22nd 2014 *Lighten up!* *wink emoticon*

Now you can opt for healthier and low-calorie choices for your food or snack cravings!

#health #diet #fitness #healthyeating

It reached 982 people. 161 people engaged with this post and 18 people were talking about it. 5 people shared it. 16 people liked it . 0 commented. Engagement level was 16.4%.

NB: This post was an infographic about eating healthy including dietary information around carbohydrates. An informative post well received and it was firmly around the brand values and tapped into people"s concerns.

Post that engaged the most by numbers: July 9th 2014 *Fancy yourself a food photographer? Snap your spicy dish and WIN a $50 Wok Express voucher*

It reached 18.4k people. 180 people engaged with this post and 36 people were talking about it. 0 people shared it. 36 likes. 0.98% engagement by %.

NB: Good result for LIKES with this PAID post and great brand awareness and big reach. Engagement level is small but numbers are large and good brand awareness.

Corresponding Website Analytics

New visits to the website were 68.9% with a bounce rate of 58.3%. This is steady for the first five months now. 47 sessions were directly attributable to Facebook activity, with approx 80% of those as new sessions. Zomato restaurant review site was responsible for 80% of referrals.

July Summary

Facebook and Zomato social activity accounted for 412 visits to the website with over 80% of them brand new users. A continued great result.

Overall engagement on Facebook was good. The brand awareness was good with 528 new "fans". Visits to the website from Facebook were up again compared to all months but including Menumania there were as good as the previous month. An excellent result for the combined social team.

Both most engaged by post highlighted the BRAND VALUES, and again included a lot of educational value.

Interesting feature of this month was the huge reach of over a million through paid ads, did NOT translate into larger numbers of engaged people or visits to the website.

It did however prove its worth in brand awareness and the number of combined social referrals was high.

There is a 150.69% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and and -2.58% decrease from June 2014.

CONSISTENT RESULTS AS JUNE WAS A RECORD and the results are only steady despite the massive overall reach of this month. Has it plateaued here?

August – Wok Express

Impressions	**11.7k**
Reached Every 1.8 impressions 1 person is reached	**6.4k**
New "fans"	**16**
Average number of people reached per post	**161**
No of people engaged (this could be talking, liking, sharing, or commenting on a post) Every 15 people reached 1 person engages	**412**
Visits to website directly from Facebook Every 17 people engaged on social media equals 1 visit to the website.	**23**
Highest referral source	**Zomato – 63**

Numbers Summary

5.58% of engaged people or 1 from every 17 people engaged on Facebook equalled 1 visit to the website.

A drop from July down to only 11.7k impressions from 1.1m. 2k viral still pretty good considering massive drop in overall, impressions or impressions directly attributed to a story directly posted on the page, or post, like or otherwise.

140 users actively engaged on the page during this period with either a post, share, comment, mention or tag and created 192 stories.

Only 16 people became "fans" a considerable drop from the previous month.

Active posting on behalf of the client saw an average of 158 people reached per post with an average engagement level per post of 8%. Smaller numbers reflects lower overall impressions. Engagement per post however same as last month.

There were 39 posts during this month with an average of 3 people talking about each post.

There is a 145.17% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and and -2.2% decrease from July 2014.

Post that engaged the most: August 7th 2014 *11 Reasons Why You're Not Losing Belly Fat*

Getting rid of your belly bulge is important for more than just vanity's sake. Excess abdominal fat—particularly visceral fat, the kind that surrounds your organs and puffs your stomach into a "beer gut"—is a predictor of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, insulin resistance, and some cancers. If diet and exercise haven't done much to reduce your pooch, then your hormones, your age, and other genetic factors may be the reason why.

Read on for 11 possible reasons why your belly fat won't budge.

http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20807507,00.html

It reached 105 people engaged 15 with 3 people were talking about it. 0 people shared it. 3 people liked it . 0 commented. Engagement level was 14.29%.

This was a photo of a slim torso with a tape measure and is not about food but weight loss.

NB: This post emphasised WEIGHT LOSS EDUCATION (supportive of brand values).

Post that engaged the next most: August 29th 2014 *Useful tip!*

It reached 296 people. 41 people engaged with this post and 4 people were talking about it. 1 people shared it. 4 people liked it . 0 commented. Engagement level was 13.85%.

Post that engaged the most by numbers: August 29th 2014 *Useful tip as above.*

Corresponding Website Analytics

New visits to the website were 69.3% with a bounce rate of 61%. This is amazingly consistent for 6 months in a row. 23 sessions were directly attributable to Facebook activity, now mostly repeat customers. Zomato restaurant review site was responsible for 40% of referrals.

August Summary

Facebook and Menumania social activity accounted for 86 visits to the website with over 50% of them brand new users. These figures show how decreased social activity particularly on Facebook greatly affected referral figures from the combined Review/Facebook social team.

Overall engagement on Facebook was as good as it had been. But brand awareness was low with only 16 new "fans". Visits to the website from Facebook were consistent with this lower awareness and it was reflected in lower referrals from Zomato as well.

Posts continued to reflect the BRAND VALUES, and again included a lot of educational value.

Interesting feature of this month was the huge difference in impressions consistent with no paid advertising and less posts overall and less investment by the owner. This did translate into fewer referrals to the website.

199

There is a 145.17% increase in sales from October 2013 the first month the social strategy was implemented to March 2014 and and -2.2% decrease from July 2014.

STILL CONSISTENT RESULTS FOR THE LAST THREE MONTHS YET SHOWING A SLIGHT DOWN TREND. NOTE THAT DESPITE THE GOOD RESULTS THE CLIENT STARTED TO PULL BACK HIS COMMITMENT TO THE STRATEGY.

The interesting thing to note here is the trend down in sales as the investment in the strategy was cut.

For Keyword Groups and full word counts please see the Findings chapter p. 75.

4 months ago

RATED

This is one of our common takeaway options for a variety of reasons. Reasonable prices, fresh ingredients, delivery as an option and awesome vegetarian/vegan choices including both tofu and fake chicken.

They do a variety of asian inspired dishes, including noddle stirfrys, japanese teriyaki, thai curry and more. Its not the most amazing, authentic dishes but the variety kind of accounts for this, and makes it a great option when there are people around as everyone can order something quite different.

Our favourites are the teriyaki tofu, full of flavour with heaps of crisp vegies (not at all overdone which is a pet hate of mine when it comes to stirfrys) and their panang curry which is rich and full of coconut flavour. They're drunken noodles are another popular option, and with all their noodle dishes the serving is very generous making it the perfect option to share or take for lunch the next day.

Delivery can take a while, usually around about an hour, so order well in advance!

8 months ago

RATED

Really tasty stir-fries with quality, fresh ingredients. A healthy option, especially the low-carb, low-fat Chicken De-lite. Not super cheap, but incredibly tasty and great service, food prepared quickly.

Jul 21, 2014

RATED

Wok Express' stir fried sesame beef, sesame honey chicken and sweet & sour battered chicken are the best stir fry dishes (and my favourites) which one could never go wrong when it comes to take away. I highly recommend their dumplings too. Definitely would call Wok Express my pick-me-up place to go

Jun 05, 2014

RATED

We have ordered the teryiaki chicken and the chicken with cashews. Both dishes were very tasty and the meat was not overcooked. We will be back again.

Mar 13, 2014

RATED

I come here atleast once per week, usually 2 or 3 times the food is always hot and fresh. Ready very quickly for pickup and delivered in a reasonable time.

Staff are friendly and helpful when im stuck on what to order.

Feb 21, 2014

RATED

Ordered a number of dishes here, delivery arrived on time. Some of the dishes were nice and tasty, but a big disappoint with the fried rice dish which seemed soggy and not to the fried rice dish standard?

Feb 10, 2014

RATED

Tried Wok Express for the first time yesterday and ordered some food for delivery. Their website is brilliant and makes ordering very simple. The food arrived in an hour and the delivery guy was friendly and efficient. The Kung Pao Pork tasted fresh and flavourful. The Shanghai Noodles were delicious but the noodles themselves were undercooked and therefore had a chalky texture. The mixed appetisers were a little disappointing - the pastry on the curry puff was soggy but I think that was a result of being transported. The spring rolls weren't greasy at all but the skins on them had a hard, chewy texture similar to that of baked spring rolls, not the Ideal light, crisp skin that shatters when you bite it.

I'd still definitely order from them again as the flavours and ingredients are fresh and abundant. The prices are good and I'm keen to try the other dishes on their menu.

Feb 07, 2014

RATED

Have eaten here a few times and has always been great. We ordered on a Friday night and we're told it would be an hour - fine. After an hour and a quarter we phoned to see where the food was and were told it hadn't been made and they

couldn't guarantee we would have it any time soon. With two young kids and bedtime approaching we cancelled. Really disappointed with the service.

Feb 11, 2014

RATED

If you like Fried rice like me then I recommend this place highly. There Fried rice is really delicious and I just love their fresh chunky veges. Thanks Wok Express I really enjoyed your Fried rice :)

Feb 03, 2014

RATED

I ordered the Dragon Noodles as a delivery . The price and the portion size was really good.
The staff is friendly and the delivery was very fast !!
Also the taste was great , you can feel that they use fresh vegetables and well chosen meat.
I will definitely order again..!

Jan 18, 2014

RATED

We cannot rate wok express highly enough. We have ordered twice from them now and both times have been very impressed by the quality of food and fantastic service. I highly recommend you Chicken Dragon Noodles and Combination Seafood Delight..! So Yummy!!

Nov 26, 2013

204

RATED

Ordered the Pad Thai. The flavours were fantastic and everything tasted so fresh! Loved the meal, very generous portion sizes and excellent value for money. Service was great and the staff super friendly. I will definitely be back to try the rest of the menu!

Nov 21, 2013

RATED

Just tried these guys on a whim after a long day and desperate, had very low expectations but boy was I wrong. Like so many of the reviews have already said, the freshness, the flavour and the obvious care put into the food far exceeds that of a takeaway and definitely the $13 I paid for the best Singapore noodles I've had (and I've had a few) is stunning value. I will be back and often, a rare find and well done to the owners for creating something of real quality. Keep it up guys, you rock!

Dec 07, 2013

RATED

We only just found out about Wok Express recently after they did a letter drop around the neighbourhood and now gone are the days of greasy Domino's pizza or hot supermarket chicken for last minute dinners! We have been ordering from Wok Express Ponsonby for about a month now, at least once every week and it is so delicious that we just keep on ordering (especially the Chicken and Cashew dish, and the Noodle works bowl). This is the first time I have been able to enjoy Chinese food without having a negative reaction as it is free of MSG and Gluten (on request) yet it still has big flavour. All I can say is YUM and I recommend locals in the area

who want healthy takeaways should turn to Wok Express. Their online ordering site is quite fancy too and is easy to use which makes the process a whole lot more efficient...and delivery is free with orders over $25 AND they have a mobile eftpos machine. Winning!

Dec 30, 2013

RATED

Ordered the Singapore noodles with BBQ pork and found it excellent. The spices were quite authentic and servings very generous. The vegetables they use are super fresh and crunchy unlike many other takeaways who resort to using cheap frozen ones. Their prices are a bit on the pricey side by takeaway standards which means I wouldn't go there as often as I'd like to although this is somewhat justified by the quality of food that they serve.

Sep 29, 2013

RATED

Awesome service, try the pad Thai! Not like a generic and - sometimes dodgy Asian food place, but a restaurant with fresh consistent food. A welcoming and friendly environment I would suggest to my uni mates and my mum. Give it a go.

Sep 03, 2013

RATED

Fresh and healthy food, loads of veges, loads of flavour. Humungous portions, you can fill yourself up and usually save a bit for the next day. Lots of excellent vegetarian options. Also mobile eftpos on delivery is AWESOME. Great customer service too - the one time an item was left off my order, it was not only replaced

asap, but a voucher was given for a free serving next time around. Keen to check

out what the Menumania special price is, if it's still valid.

3. Interview with Paul Brandwood. Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

CATEGORY/CODE LINKS

CODES

Highlight = Brand

Highlight = Brand Values

Highlight = Brand Management

Highlight = social media

Highlight = Customers

Highlight – Health Food

Highlight = Enthusiasm

Highlight = Practical Issues

Highlight = Qualification

Highlight = Contradiction

CATEGORIES

Brand – Brand, Values, Management, Business

Marketing – Awareness, social media, Customers, People, Enthusiasm, Utility

Business Considerations – Practical Issues, Running the business

Online Community – Customers, People, Sharing, Health Foodies, Franchise

Now you"ve been through a branding exercise, how important do you think branding is to a business like yours Paul?

I would say about 70% if I was doing it out of 100. Particularly for the Parnell and Ponsonby shops where people are more switched on to brands It's been the main thing in being able to expand our customer base, particularly with the "health foodies". I feel the whole brand thing has really moved us "up the ladder" into the big league. I definitely agree that you have to stand for something with your brand

these days, people look for what you stand for and they want to know that you're into it.

But how careful do you have to be with your brand do you think, in the day to day management of it?

That would be ten out of ten I think, I get plenty of people in the shop actually saying how much they like the brand, it seems to make them feel more comfortable, "it looks clean and fresh" they say. They"re very supportive of it, they like the feeling of a franchise I think where they know what to expect in terms of quality and service and things like that. People like the franchise thing.

I mean the "De-Lite" range we did which was directly related to the brand values was amazing. It was the most successful thing we have done and it showed me that to really do it properly you need new initiatives that support the brand like that all the time.

When you get it right It's like a "gust of wind" filling the sails, it seems to gain its own momentum and you can ride that on Facebook and in your email campaigns too. When you get it right it works really well and people get right behind it.

In the light of this new attitude what weaknesses have you highlighted?

Well, things I had pointed out to me at the start but now I really see in practice. The menu is too diverse, too many things on it. I was trying to be everything to everyone and you just can"t do that. Most people choose the same dishes again and again but they would try something new if it was highlighted properly, like the de-lite range. If I could I would "fine" the brand down even further and if I was doing a new brand this is the approach I would take, be even more niche. I would try to be

209

more strategic from the very start. Being careful about identifying the target audience more carefully and develop the brand on that basis.

What do you think about the role of Facebook in all this?

It's been great ongoing and it has helped us gain new customers and get the brand out there. *(qualification)* But I do think doing Facebook properly is a much bigger job than just posting. It takes a lot of thought and time to put stuff on FB that isn"t just filler. The posts we"ve had the most success with have been shots of actual chefs cooking real meals, watching the sauce pour into the plate, *(qualification)* people really like that sort of thing and honestly to do that all the time is really hard. It *(qualification)* needs to be thought about quite deeply so that you have material that is "worthy of posting" otherwise It's just filler. You need great photography for food too. *(qualification)* You need proper resources to do Facebook properly. I also think a face is really good too like the Wok"n"Noodle guy, his food"s not actually that great but he presents a really good image. I can see *(qualification)* the brand needs to be managed properly on Facebook. For larger companies a dedicated marketing person tasked with producing relevant Facebook content would make this a lot easier. *(qualification)* for small businesses like myself where the owner operator is trying to do everything there is just no time.

Contradiction Another point i would like to make is that if you get the branding right, have a good product that catches the trend of the moment whether you are popular on Facebook is almost irrelevant. Good reviews in mainstream media plus word-of-mouth will guarantee you a queue at the door regardless of whether you have a facebook or not.

The First Question – How important is branding?

Paul makes CONNECTIONS between:

Branding and Community – *people enthusiastic about the brand belonging to a community of like minded people – Health Foodies*

Branding with Integrity – *standing for something, visible commitment and enthusiasm*

Branding with Business – *expanding your customer base, appealing to a wider audience, improving the quality of your business and moving it into the "big league".*

Paul's response to the first question.

Answering the first question there are strong connections between Paul's experience of Brand values, management and awareness with social media and customers experiences.

In his answer to the first question Paul shows a strong positive reaction to the question of how important branding in general is to his business and makes connections with branding and communities of people like *health Foodies*. He highlights the importance of *standing for something,* as in his opinion people look for businesses that stand for something. He also connects using your brand to appeal to more people and to expand your customer base and he believes people are more switched on to brands these days. He emphasises this by saying that It's important to his customers that they are able to see Paul's commitment and enthusiasm to his brand values. He says customers like to see your commitment in the flesh. His reference to having a strong brand has moved his business into the "*big league*" indicates that he considers his customers value his business under the new brand more than they did previously.
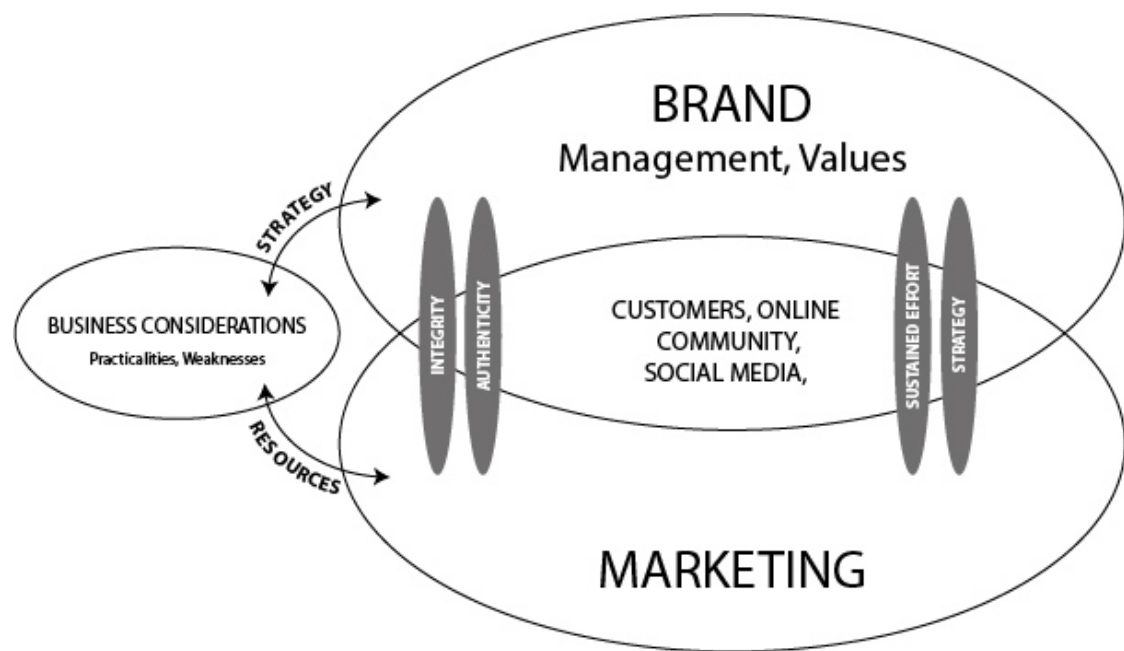
The Second Question – Managing a brand, how careful do you have to be?

Paul makes CONNECTIONS between:

Brand Management and Community with *people caring strongly about the brand therefore it becomes very important to look after it. People wanting to see "clean and fresh" in a practical way.*

Brand Management with Consistency with *customer expectations of the brand and liking the look of a franchise.*

Paul's response to the second question.

Answering the second question Paul makes connections to management of the brand and customers expectations, suggesting that people like to feel *comfortable* about the brand and even *prefer the franchise experience*. He describes looking after the brand as ongoing and it needs *"10 out of 10"* consideration. This consideration needs to be centered around the *values of the brand*, he says describing how the "De-Lite" promotion they did as being *the most successful promotion the company has ever done*. He also notes that managing a brand properly means *new and compelling initiatives* are required all the time.

Further Paul actively connects brand management with success for his business describing what happens when you get it right as "*like a gust of wind filling the sails*" and "*gaining its own momentum*" and "*riding this on Facebook and through your email campaigns*". He explains that it works really well and customers also seem to get behind these initiatives implying that customers enjoy it when you build this sort of momentum around a campaign.

The Third Question – What weaknesses have been exposed?

Paul makes CONNECTIONS between:

Brand Management and Practical Issues with *making sure simple parts of your business support your brand and the way you"re selling it.*

Brand Awareness with Practice with *aligning the practical selling of your brand with your target demographic.*

Brand Development with Practice highlighting *being able to educated customers to new things.*

Brand Development with Strategy highlighting *refining the brand further and making it really targeted.*

Brand Development with Strategy highlighting *the need to think strategically from the very beginning of the creation of a brand.*

Paul's response to the third question

Answering the third question around weaknesses that have become apparent to him during the re-brand and marketing exercise, Paul makes strong connections to the *day to day practical management of the brand*. In terms of his restaurant business this means aligning his offer in a practical way with the brand message. After seeing how his customers were reacting he became aware the menu he was offering was *too varied* and too much like his restaurant was before the re-brand,

that is trying to be *all things to all people*. He realised the menu now needs to reflect his brand more closely, that is *more refined and niche*, appealing more to his new health conscious clientele. Further to this it has occurred to him that if he were to start again the way he would take these things into consideration *right at the very beginning of the strategy* and develop the brand in this way, identifying the target market much more closely and developing the brand very tightly around this, *even more niche and identifying the target audience more carefully and developing the brand around this.*

The Fourth Question – What is the role of Facebook, where does it fit in?

Paul makes CONNECTIONS between:

Facebook and Brand Awareness with *gaining new customers and getting the new brand out there.*

Facebook with Practical Effort *by suggesting that doing Facebook properly requires real work, thought and time. Also that to create "worthy posts" on Facebook takes a lot of time but that is what customers want.*

Facebook with Authenticity highlighting *that customers on Facebook enjoy seeing authentic shots of real chefs cooking the food.*

Facebook with Resources highlighting *that businesses need to make time and money available to manage Facebook properly. A dedicated Marketing Person is required.*

Facebook with image highlighting *the need for good photography and perhaps a real "face of the company".*

Facebook as redundant suggesting *that an idea whose time has come riding a wave of the trend of the moment is the most important thing and that popularity on Facebook is irrelevant in this. Good reviews in mainstream media plus word-of-mouth are more important he says.* (Interesting contradiction here)

Paul's response to the Fourth Question

Answering the fourth question Paul contradicts himself in many ways suggesting that although Facebook is great at Brand Awareness and getting the brand out there and gaining new customers it is less important than Good Reviews in mainstream Media and word-of-mouth. This is interesting because there were no mainstream media activities conducted ongoing during the campaign with Facebook and Zomato, two online and social channels being the only regular marketing activities conducted. Both of these were responsible for considerable growth in brand awareness and ironically word-of-mouth. Paul's discovery that Facebook required a lot more work than anticipated and required sincere and regular effort seemed to be a surprise to him. Perhaps this suggests that his view of Facebook is more typical, betraying a lack of understanding that is rife in business.

Jon Loomer's

FACEBOOK INSIGHTS GLOSSARY OF TERMS

JON LOOMER

REACH AND IMPRESSIONS

TOTAL REACH	ORGANIC REACH	PAID REACH
The number of unique users who were served at least one impression of your content via News Feed, Ticker, Timeline or an ad.	The number of unique users who were served at least one impression of your content via News Feed, Ticker or Timeline without advertising.	The number of unique users who were served at least one impression of your content via News Feed, Ticker or Timeline with an ad.

What It Means

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS	ORGANIC IMPRESSIONS	PAID IMPRESSIONS
The number of times your content was shown on News Feed, Ticker, Timeline or an ad. One unique user can be shown multiple impressions.	The number of times your content was shown on News Feed, Ticker or Timeline without advertising.	The number of times your content was shown on News Feed, Ticker or Timeline with an ad.

What It Means

LOGGED-IN PAGE VIEWS	LOGGED-IN TAB VIEWS	FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION
The number of times your page was visited by a logged-in user.	The number of times a tab was visited by a logged-in user.	A breakdown of the number of unique users served an impression of your content by frequency (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-10, 11-20 or 21+ times).

What It Means

ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGED USERS

What It Means

The number of unique users who clicked anywhere on your content, whether it resulted in a story or not.

ENGAGEMENT RATE

The percentage of unique users who liked, commented on, shared or clicked on your post after having been served an impression.

Share

CONSUMERS

What It Means

The number of unique users who initiated clicks on your content that did not result in stories.

CONSUMPTIONS

The number of clicks on your content that did not result in stories. Types of Consumptions: Link Clicks, Photo Views, Video Plays and Other Clicks.

POST CLICKS

The number of clicks on your content, whether it resulted in a story or not.

TALKING ABOUT THIS

What It Means

The number of unique users who generated a story about your content.

STORIES

The number of times users interacted with your content in ways that were displayed to friends and followers. Examples: Page like, checkin, page mention, Event RSVP, Offer claim, post like, post comment or post share.

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

What It Means

Actions users can take to tell Facebook that they do not want to see your content. Examples: Hide post, hide all posts, report as spam, unlike page.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Actions users take that generate stories and spread your message to their friends. Examples: Question answer; Offer claim; post comment, like or share; Event RSVP.

217

FAN DATA

COUNT OF FANS ONLINE
The number of your fans online per hour, by day, to see any content from any source.

DAILY LIKE SOURCES
The exact location a user chose to like your page.

TOTAL LIKES
The number of likes accumulated by your page through a particular day.

DAILY LIKES
The number of likes accumulated on a particular day.

DAILY UNLIKES
The number of fans who unliked your page on a particular day.

FAN IMPRESSIONS
The number of times your content was shown to fans in News Feed, Ticker, Timeline or an ad. One unique fan can be shown multiple impressions.

FAN PAID IMPRESSIONS
The number of times your content was shown to fans on News Feed, Ticker or Timeline with an ad.

FAN REACH
The number of unique fans who were served at least one impression of your content via News Feed, Ticker, Timeline or an ad.

FAN PAID REACH
The number of unique fans who were served at least one impression of your content via News Feed, Ticker or Timeline with an ad.

ENGAGED FANS
The number of unique fans who clicked anywhere on your content, whether it resulted in a story or not.

218

5. Survey analysis. Source: Nigel Grimshaw-Jones (2015)

CODING SCHEME FOR ANALYSING WEBSITE REFERRALS

QUESTION	ANSWERS	ATTITUDE/CONNECTION TO FACEBOOK 1 = LOW : 10=HIGH	RELEVANCE TO BRAND 1 = LOW : 10=HIGH
How did you find out about Wok Express?	Word of Mouth	2	6
	Google or Other	2	6
	Facebook or other Social Media	8	8
	Advertisement (yellow pages or other)	0	2
Are you male or female?	Male	0	0
	Female	0	0
Have you ever seen the Wok Express Facebook page?	Yes	10	8
	No	2	2
If you did engage with Wok Express on Facebook, how did you do it?	Like	8	8
	Share	8	8
	Comment	8	8
	Become a Fan	10	10
	Didnt see the FB page	0	3
What do you think of Wok Express' offer – Fresh, Homemade, No MSG?	Great its why I buy it	2	10
	Pretty lame	2	2
	I have no opinion about it.	0	0
Do you buy from Wok because it cares about these things, and because it stands for these things?	Yes I don't want just ordinary takeaways.	2	8
	Not really, I buy takeaways anywhere as long as it's cheap.	2	2
Do you think it's a good idea companies like Wok Express are on Facebook?	Yes it's great, the Facebook page has offers and interesting articles.	7	6
	I don't mind as long as it's not too pushy	5	4
	No. I wish all businesses would get off Facebook	0	2
Anything else you'd like to add about businesses on Facebook?	**Thematic Analysis:** Brand, Positive, Negative	5	5

Data Collection Units