The Multicultural World of Social Media Marketing:
How to Use Social Media to Target Multicultural Audiences

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ABSTRACT

By examining current literature, articles and research, a framework for targeting specific multicultural audiences is proposed. Drawing on consumer behavior theories, definitions of multiculturalism, marketing techniques for reaching multicultural audiences and exploration of recent Internet research cases, the outline supports adding to the process of the new business and communication of marketing. Determining a relevant understanding of the target audience and consumer is necessary for marketers to be successful, this analysis and process is suggested and recommended. The capstone aids marketers to understand the impact of culture on the web, and the endless opportunities provided by marketing to multicultural populations via social media.
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INTRODUCTION

Although marketing campaigns and plans have targeted and celebrated certain groups for some time, an emerging and expanding opportunity is occurring within the social media market. ‘Flipping the script, breaking the barrier and changing the program’ are all common cliché phrases that can be applied to the concept of multicultural marketing within social media. In 2009, photography and imaging giant, Kodak Corporation teamed with Yahoo! En Espanol to launch a new and innovative marketing campaign targeted toward their Hispanic consumers. Through this partnership, “Muestra Tu Herencia” (Show Your Heritage) was formed in order to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and to strengthen their relationship with the Hispanic community. Although campaigns and plans had been created before to target and celebrate certain groups, what made this campaign so distinct was that is was unveiled as an all digital effort. Encouraging their Hispanic consumers to share photos online that display their heritage, Kodak created an online mosaic of the images and for each one uploaded; a $2 donation was contributed to the Hispanic College Fund. By encouraging Hispanic consumers, the campaign was primarily promoted through KodakGallery.com and it’s “A Thousand Words” blog, as well as Twitter and Facebook social networking sites (Maul, 2009). The effort raised $20,000 for the Hispanic College Fund, signifying over 10,000 uploads for the month long campaign.

With technology advancing daily, many companies are beginning to develop multicultural marketing initiatives like Kodak’s, “Muestra Tu Herencia”. Focusing on an all digital and technology driven effort has become a significant and successful marketing technique and strategy for many companies and organizations. Social media and networking is a specific portion of that digital media movement that has revolutionized the way people interact and communicate. The word social is defined as “seeking or enjoying the companionship of others; friendly; of, pertaining to, connected with, or suited to polite or fashionable society” (www.dictionary.com). Combining this definition with the advancing media has created a brand new meaning for technology and communication.
According to new media author and blogger, Brian Solis social media is “the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism, one-to-many, to a many-to-many model, rooted in conversations between authors, people, and peers”. The common theme among all social media websites is the ability to interact with the actual website as well as the users of the websites. Social media websites come in various forms including social bookmarking sites such as Blinklist, social news sites like Reddit, social video and photo sharing as seen on YouTube and the most popular are social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Therefore if the main result of social media is to connect, interact and share information with others online, then organizations and companies must see it beneficial to use it for their personal gain and profit, right? According to Halligan and Shah (Halligan & Shah, 2010), professionals should make social media a priority in their marketing efforts. “Why should you care about social media? The answer is the same as why you should care about Google—because it provides a great way to reach and engage potential customers. As is the case with Google, more of your potential customers hang out at the social media watering holes, so this is where you need to hang out, too, if you want to engage with them”. Usage of blogs, social networks and video sharing sites is increasing rapidly and millions of people now look to social media websites as their primary source of news, opinion, and entertainment. With the vivid shift from traditional media to now social technology media, it is important to examine and resource who is driving this change, what are the cultural factors behind it, and what are the implications for marketers seeking to reach specific ethnic/cultural groups via social media (Korzenny & Vann, 2009).

Marketing is a business essential by which organizations and companies strive to generate activity around their personal products and services in order for their specific audience to buy into them. Creating strategies and discovering channels to reach consumers are the main objectives for marketing and advertising professionals. It should be noted that for this paper the terms ‘marketing’ and ‘advertising’ will be used interchangeably. Multi-cultural marketing widens that audience with
numerous ethnic and racial groups. Cross-cultural marketing broadens the ethnic scope across the globe and opens the doors for many more groups and markets.

When trying to connect with ethnic consumers through advertisement or campaigns, marketers must take into deliberation factors of their behavior. Product characteristics, advertisement characteristics, and consumer characteristics all interact with one another and play a role in the marketer's decision to create a culturally embedded advertisement. Product characteristics refer to whether the product is intended exclusively for a minority audience, which naturally determines a targeting approach. The consumption context of a product also affects a targeting approach, as do consumers' attitudes toward a product. Advertisement characteristics include the setting and delivery method of an ad, both of which can affect how audiences will perceive the ad and therefore the product. Consumer characteristics of both the targeted audience and the mainstream audience must be considered as well. These include knowledge of the targeted subculture and strength of ethnic identification and situational ethnicity moderated by identification and distinctiveness, also affect consumers' reactions to ads. An examination of product, advertisement, and consumer characteristics can aid an advertiser in determining the appropriate level of embeddedness (Florenz, 2010). Most marketing professionals use a combination of techniques in their campaigns including direct mail, TV, radio, print advertising, and telemarketing. With the increase of social media, many marketers have transferred their outbound techniques to incorporate or solely use social media to target their specific audiences. The transfer in technique bears to ask the question of how social media influences marketing specifically to multicultural markets.

The capstone begins by providing an extensive literature review on multiculturalism in American society, reason and theory behind target marketing and also how social media adoption has dominated culture. The literature review presents a platform for understanding and discussing the details of the sample campaigns made available within the capstone. Also, dissecting and analyzing formal research reports done on the subject of targeting multicultural consumers through social media makes for a formal
transition to the strategies and suggested process that should be used for marketers in order to target multicultural consumers. In the end, recommendations for further research will be introduced in order to extend the discussion on how this subject should continue.

This capstone is timely in that the findings from the latest United States Census report reveal that there is a new ethnic majority population among the American society. Generating campaigns and ways to reach this new majority will only help and benefit companies that have or seek to have consumers within this population. Targeting them through social media only fulfills the latest popularity in the emerging technology channel. To satisfy the recent interest in this area, this capstone focused specifically on providing examples of campaigns that focused on targeting multicultural audiences through social media efforts. Through relevant analysis of secondary research and theory, a proper progression of how to solicit, market and advertise effectively to the multicultural audience will be discussed. This capstone will ultimately aid marketers and advertising professionals on how to better understand and target multicultural audiences through social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Multiculturalism

Defining the concept of multiculturalism has been a complex and strenuous task by many researchers and marketers. The idea of multiculturalism can be compared to other complex notions like racism or sexism because it goes beyond beliefs, thoughts, opinions and ideas. Concepts like multiculturalism step into the realm of the cliché phrase of “seeing is believing” or feeling is truly understanding. Many researchers have provided and added to that understanding of multiculturalism with their very own definitions.

At its most basic essence, multiculturalism is defined as the “harmonious co-existence of differing groups in a pluralist society” (Cashmore, 1996). Although there has been much discussion of the concept since the 1960’s it is not new: multiculturalism has been a feature of the social sciences, from which the
marketing discipline emerged, as far back as the eighteenth century (Robinson, 1994). With the influx of ethnic groups to the United States, the multicultural market expanded—providing the co-existence of differing racial or ethnic groups.

Idealistically, multiculturalism would be defined as “tolerance and understanding, if not acceptance, of other ideas and beliefs in different cultures. It means celebrating what is common in our cultural heritage and gaining genuine knowledge of what is different. It means banishing stereotypes yet working with diverse strengths” (Kali, 2006). This definition would transition the common tactic of merely including racial and ethnic groups when in terms of culture. Culture in today’s American society has many faces including the gay and lesbian groups, youth populations and even those with disabilities. But with the rise of racial groups in American society, the interest in these specific groups has tremendously taken off.

With almost one third of the United States population being represented by Hispanics, Asian Americans and African Americans, these populations and groups are expected to expand and within time become the new face of present day America (Quick Facts Census Data). Appadurai (Appadurai, 1990) suggests that the scope of existing and emergent ‘ethnoscapes’ (a transnational distribution of correlated people) are complex and shifting including tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers. The complexity of ethnoscapes makes the link between culture and nation difficult to justify in some instances, especially in connection with consumer culture.

Marketers in particular have the responsibility of providing insight to consumer culture and knowing what in particular makes ethnic groups so different. Their understanding and interest will not only help their curiosity but better explain how they find ways to relate to these groups in order to sell companies products and services. Defining multiculturalism will not only make it easier for marketers to know their audience but to “facilitate a greater appreciation if the historical, geographical, political and cultural context in which multiculturalism emerged as a distinctive movement in the latter part of the twentieth century (Burton, 2005).
Complexity within multiculturalism is an aspect that marketing professionals could and should embrace. “It is also important to acknowledge that multiculturalism is not a monolithic concept. Many forms of multiculturalism can, and do, exist and could have highly varied marketing implications” (Burton, 2005). Castles and Davidson (Castles & Davidson, 2000) examine in their book Citizenship and Migration, features of present migration models that are deepening the levels of multiculturalism. One theory they explore attaches the diverse and various characteristics of immigrants that are coming to the American country from all parts of the world, specifically not just the actual distance in miles but the cultural terms. This includes various ethnic groups as it pertains to the United States such as Filipinos, Koreans, Mexicans, West Indians and many others. “Assessing the shifting nature of ethnic populations will go some way to demonstrating that the multicultural marketplace is highly dynamic and becoming increasingly complex. The market has a rich heritage that must be understood prior to developing marketing strategies to meet the needs of different groups of consumers” (Burton, 2005).

Within the business sector, the concept of multicultural marketing is open to different interpretations. Michael Bush, a writer from Advertising Age adds “one of the latest buzz words to enter the marketing lexicon is ‘cross-cultural’. It paints an idealistic picture of a color-blind society, one in which consumers’ similarities outweighs their differences regardless of ethnic groups. Whereas multicultural means multiple executions—wouldn’t it be simpler to find one truth that reaches across culture?” (Bush, 2011). Although the discussion on multiculturalism and marketing can extend beyond race and color it is still the dominating force. In most of the research found for on multiculturalism in business and marketing for this paper, three ethnic groups predominantly segmented the market: African-Americans, Hispanics and Asian-Americans. For this capstone, examination of these populations as it pertains to marketing and social media will be explored.
Target Audience Characteristics & Marketing

As explained in defining multiculturalism, it is vital and essential to understand and interpret a culture of a certain population or group in order to communicate and effectively connect. Within American society, there are various cultures and populations that can be solicited to marketing. But before marketing professionals can create their next storyboard for the newest product, they must understand the theories of how cultures and populations identify themselves within society.

The social identity theory reveals that the characteristics by which a person identifies himself are the result not only of the comparison to the same characteristics’ prevalence in society, but also of a number of social factors. That is, factors other than distinctiveness can affect the salience of a given trait to a person (McGuire & Padawer-Singer, 1979, cited by Grier & Brumbaugh, 2004). Social stigma connected to a trait, perceived exclusion by other groups, and preference for similar others can all affect the likelihood that a person will congregate with similar others, and also the extent to which he perceives a trait as important (Florenz, 2010).

Marketers can benefit greatly by recognizing and taking advantage of identification and distinctiveness theories. Studies on advertising and distinctiveness reveal that ethnicity is a sufficiently salient trait to consumers to warrant the targeting of ads to minority communities (Appiah, 2004, Grier and Brumbaugh, 1999, Lee and Joo, 2005, Wang and Arpan, 2008). By using ethnically targeted advertisements, companies can communicate to members of the targeted subculture that the advertised product is intended for them. Ethnic minorities also have high brand loyalty and are likely to buy and recommend products based on corporate sponsorship of their own groups (Wyatt, Gelb & Geiger-Oneto, 2008).

Ethnic or multicultural marketing became the marketing mantra of the 1980’s in the USA. This new marketing paradigm viewed the market as divided into segments and aims at gathering information regarding the customs, traditions, rituals, relationships and identities of these segments of potential consumers. The three predominant segments are ‘blacks’, Hispanics, and the ‘general market’ (Lamont &
Molnar, 2001). Since the 1980’s many corporations and companies have designed and implemented departments specifically to the needs of ethnic consumers. Employment titles of directors of multicultural affairs or vice presidents of urban marketing are just some of the positions that have opened within many advertising companies as well as big corporations. Companies have attempted to reach ethnic consumers more effectively by using differentiated marketing strategies including new product lines, focused advertising, and customized promotion programs (Cui, 2001). Kraft General Foods, Pepsi, AT&T, Coca-Cola, Nabisco, and Sears are some of the organizations that have set up multicultural marketing departments to specifically target the ethnic market (Clegg, 1998).

Organizations and companies that are choosing to incorporate multicultural divisions and departments must be “well-versed” on their ‘subjects’. That includes knowing majority behavior and attitude behaviors and motivation behind supporting or purchasing products. “In many instances the lack of sophisticated market research aimed at assessing ethnic minority preferences is lacking, and there is little awareness of whether or not minority consumers do in fact require the same goods and services as the indigenous population. In the absence of good market intelligence, myths and stereotypes that the indigenous population have about minority cultures can act as a barrier” (Burton, Multicultural Marketing , 2003). In Dawn Burton’s article on incorporating multicultural marketing in academia, she explains that multicultural marketing research has a relatively low profile in marketing journals, and much of what does exist has a cultural bias towards U.S. ethnic groups and markets (Burton, Towards a Critical Multicultural Marketing Theory, 2002).

When targeting the three dominant ethnic groups, African-Americans, Hispanics and Asian-Americans; marketers have a challenge of trying to understand and incorporate relatable cultural customs. These groups will indeed have more control over the nation’s monies as time progresses. Ways and strategies of how to successfully and accurately reach these target audiences will be the primary role of marketers trying to increase their multicultural consumer population.
African-Americans

The marketing efforts toward African-Americans are tremendous and substantial. In the article “How Blacks Use Consumption to Shape their Collective Identity” by Lamont and Molnar, in-depth interviews were taken by marketing executives from multi-cultural advertising agencies on how they market to the African-American community. Majority of the marketers came to a resounding conclusion on how to “tap” into African-Americans spending. “Marketers interpret the buying habits of blacks as strongly guided by a desire to be recognized as equal and full participating members of society and to disprove the stereotype of blacks as belonging to an underclass deprived of buying power. This desire is manifested in distinct consumption patterns: in comparison to whites, blacks spend disproportionately more on items that the views as affirming their equal standing” (Lamont & Molnar, 2001). Buying and spending power is a subject that cannot be disputed in terms of African-American consumers—$913 billion in consumer spending to be exact, according to 2008 data from the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia. In addition to viewing the spending power of African-Americans and the love of products and services, in order to increase the spending, advertising messages must segment specifics with the African-American market. Carol Sagers, director of marketing at McDonald’s USA, worked on many campaigns to elevate the McDonald’s corporation as a leader in successfully targeting African-Americans. “African-Americans have nuances in lifestyle and nuances in language and culture that should be used to leverage communication,” she said. “McDonald’s believes in speaking to all our customers, and speaking to them directly.” In her article “Don’t Bypass African Americans”, Marissa Miley expresses “by speaking to African-Americans, marketers can enhance their positioning in the general market as well—especially considering how much of mainstream pop-culture gets its start in the African-American community”. Also included in the article is the notion that companies that incorporate the facets of the majority
African-American experience or culture were the ones that lead. For example, Miley notes McDonald’s “I’m Lovin It” campaign “was rooted in hip-hop culture, but had messaging that transcended race and ethnicity and gained popularity around the world. It’s worth leading with African-American insights”. Pepper Miller, president of Hunter-Miller Group, an African-American market research and consulting firm; further added “When companies use these insights to develop their marketing strategies, communication strategies [and] media plans, they have the most effective strategies not only reaching African-Americans, but the general market as well” (Miley, 2009).

Hispanics

Although the primary objective in her article “Don’t Bypass African Americans” was to showcase why marketers should propose targeting the African-American population, author Miley could not withhold that there was a new, bigger and trending population that has taken a lot of advertising business: the Hispanic market. “African-Americans and the African-American market were surpassed in the past five years by the growing Hispanic sector, leading many marketers and the media to focus intently on the ’next big thing’ in the minority sector. According to Nielsen, total spending in Spanish-language media in the first three quarters of 2008 was $4.3 billion, up 2.7% from the year before. Total spending on African-American media in that time period was $1.8 billion, down 5.3% from the same period in 2007” (Miley, 2009).

According to Albonetti and Dominguez (Albonetti & Dominguez, 1984) many marketers use Spanish language advertising based on intuitive feelings rather than systematic information analysis. Marketing initiatives to Hispanics are often product-driven rather than based on the understanding of the needs of this market (Korgaonkar, Karson, & Lund, 2000).
“In the Hispanic market, there are execution challenges, often results are inconsistent, ROI (return on investment) is difficult to measure, and that leads to barriers to ongoing commitment,” says David Wellisch, founder of Latinum—a new peer-to-peer business network to bring together Hispanic marketers. “It’s the ability to network with other companies trying to find out the same answers we are, and collaborate, and work with Latinum to look beyond language,” said Cristina Vilella, McDonald’s marketing director for U.S. Hispanic. “We don’t just target Hispanics in Spanish any more as a company. How do we look at the consumer who lives in both worlds?” (Wentz, 2010)

One major challenge for marketers and advertisers when targeting the U.S. Hispanic market is the diversity within: population includes residents from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, El Salvador, Dominican Republic and other Central and South American nations. Each one of these Hispanic groups may have its own sub-culture and idioms. “While it’s important to recognize these differences, you can use strategies that touch Hispanics as a group,” said Roberto Orci, President of Acento, a Hispanic focused advertising agency. “I remember watching an English-language TV spot for a beer. The hero was a Hispanic who had just gotten a promotion at work. In this commercial, he went home and celebrated with his family, rather than going out with his buddies to a bar. The beer company understood how to touch a core value for the Hispanic audience.” (Westlund, 2009).

Orci acknowledges another issue for advertisers soliciting Hispanic attention and that is “reaching the differing levels of acculturation. A multigenerational Hispanic household might include some members who speak only Spanish, others who are comfortable in both languages and some who are English-dominant. “It’s a misconception to say that Hispanics become more assimilated over time and therefore
can be considered part of the general market,” Orci said. “You may be able to reach them in English, but you still need to motivate and engage them to have an impact.” To achieve that goal, it’s helpful for brands to have an “insider’s” view of the Hispanic market, rather than looking from the outside in. (Westlund, 2009)

**Asian-Americans**

The Asian-Americans have been the target of many recent advertising campaigns of large corporations such as State Farm Insurance and McDonald’s. Although having the solicitation of major money giants, the Asian American market has traditionally lagged behind the Hispanic and African-American groups in multicultural marketing. Bill Imada, President of Asian American Advertising Federation (3AF) Chairman/CEO IW Group is trying to convince corporations to change their minds on to Asian American marketing. “When corporations consider targeting Asian-American consumers, they will find a market that is the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population. Today, according to the U.S. Census, there are more than 13.5 million Asian Americans with an enviable level of spending clout exceeding $363.2 billion per year” (Imada, 2009).

Like Hispanics, targeting Asian-Americans presents the challenge of differing levels of acculturation. According to Imada, the best approach to reaching Asian-American consumers is to have full integration of marketing, advertising and public relations. With the rapid acculturation of Asian-American consumers, it is essential to have messages that resonate well with English speakers as well as consumers who prefer other languages or dialects. And, since many Asian-American consumers select products and services as a group, corporate marketers would increase their chances of reaching Asian Americans if they use a myriad of tactics that incorporate Asian-language and English-language initiatives”

In the article, “How Brands Must Adapt to the ‘New Majority Marketplace”, author Ola Mobolade provides insight to how a vast majority of advertising agencies view targeting the multi-cultural audience. She shares their general perspectives as:
- ‘Our ethnic agency says that America is still racially divided and always will be. We work with them because they have a long track record of creating culturally targeted advertising. Besides, they are the target, so they have firsthand experience with what resonates.’
- ‘We have a multicultural person in marketing, who acts as an internal consultant to the brand teams when there’s a multicultural component.’
- ‘We know the paradigm is broken, but we’re working with agencies that are the most progressive in this space. They use words like ‘cross-cultural’ in their decks and the creative director wears a baseball cap over his dreadlocks.’
- ‘Our general-market agency consults with their multicultural agency partner on relevant assignments, so we’re covered.’ (Mobalade, 2011)

For those agencies that do indeed possess these ways of thinking, strategies and recommendations will be provided at the end of this capstone.

**Social Influence Model of Technology Adoption & the Dominance of Social Media**

With new applications and downloads arriving for consumers daily, it is important for computer and technology developers to find software that users will easily adopt and perform. Something has to resonate within the consumer in order to fully accept the advancing technology in their lifestyles. It has been suggested however, that a new perspective on adoption may be necessary to fully capture the nature of technology acceptance in social computing situations (Parameswaran and Whinston, 2007), where the technology is embraced rather than simply accepted by the user, and where the action made possible by technology is seen as a behavior embedded in society (Baron and Harris, 2006).

In social influence, group membership legitimizes actions and the individual is guided by the group’s rules of practice. Social influence leads to technology adoption. Technology adoption incorporates two essential elements, the embracement of the technology by individuals and its embedment in society (Baron and Harris, 2006).
Figure 1 shows the cycle of influence between technology and society and how society usually pushes or forces influence on technology like with the adoption of text messaging.

Figure 3 showcases the social influence model of technology adoption and in short it presents an “illustration of the overlapping of various aspects of social computing, such as authority, consensus and action. The combination of all these factors is identified as resulting in social influence, which in turn drives the development of technology design” (Vannoy and Palvia, 2010)

The Uses and Gratification Theory further explains the correlation between the media and audiences, which also helps to understand new media like the use of the Internet and social networking sites. As defined by Katz, Blulmer and Gurevitch, uses and gratifications theory detects the diverse gratifications (satisfactions or fulfillments) that attract people on the media, which the connections between these gratifications had not been addressed in previous research work (Katz et al., 1974a). They suggested that uses and gratifications research concern with following aspects:

“(1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps unintended ones.”

1 (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 2)
With these aspects for reasoning, a model was formed by the researchers provided theory combined with the previous findings. These five theoretical elements are present in the model helped to form the direction connection between media and the audience. In the model it says:

“1. Media exposure is directed and consumed by what the media offers the audience member.
2. Individuals select communication vehicles to satisfy his or her needs and/or desires.
3. Media competes with other sources of need satisfaction whether they are social or psychological.
4. Individuals can recognize and report their interests and motives in specific cases.
5. Individuals can be more influential than the media in some instances.”

Gratifications can be obtained from three sources, media content, and exposure to the media and the social framework that characterizes the situation of exposure. Knowing the diversity of gratifications, the model of the connection between media and audience and the source of fulfillment, will ultimately help in showing marketers and advertisers how important the role of the media plays with consumers and presently with social and online media.

The inception of social media has tremendously changed how human beings interact and communicate. The advancement of technology in reference to social media use increases these interaction patterns and socials connections. There are many definitions of what exactly social media is but David Scott’s explanation of “social media is the super-set and is how we refer to the various media that people use to communicate online in a social way. Social media provides the way people share ideas, content, thoughts, and relationships online. Social media differ from so-called “mainstream media” in that anyone can create, comment on, and add to social media content. Social media can take the form of text, audio, video, images and communities” (Scott, 38).

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2 (Katz et al., 1974, pp. 2-3)
3 (Katz et al., 1974, p. 6)
The main sub-set of social media is the social networking sites where people and organizations create individual profiles and connect with others as a viral community. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have dominated the social media “movement” and are responsible for a big portion of Internet activity. Like all “new” communication technologies, social network sites replicate features found in earlier communication tools. A site profile resembles a personal webpage, and the sites often incorporate established communication features like messaging and photo sharing. In addition to allowing users to engage in online self-presentation, social network sites allow users to explicitly articulate connections and to view their own social networks of others (Boyd, 2007). With minimal effort and the thinnest of information, a profile can be located and a connection created. Social network sites facilitate interaction, both at that moment and in the future. The latent connection can be digitally reconstituted at any time, should the need or desire arise (Ellison, Lampe and Steinfield, 2009).

Organizations, political figures, advocacy groups, regional associations, and other types of groups have various ways of using such sites: through their own profiles, site groups or standalone networks. While a certain critical mass of users is needed for a network to have value its clear there is room for a diverse ecology of sites (Ellison, Lampe and Steinfeld, 2009). Promotion and field advertising have become things of the past with the incorporation of social media. As now President of the United States, Barack Obama chose to facilitate his political campaign to win younger votes, through various social media promotions, e-mail alerts and text messages; transforming to the audiences helped to make a winning crusade. Self promotion has become an easier task for the new entrepreneur or person simply wanting to advertise their message. Musicians can simply send out a “tweet” or update their status to remind fans when their new album is coming out. Companies as well can strategically place advertisements where their targeted online audience will see them. According to the advertising section of the Facebook site, any advertiser can reach their targeted audience. Through user’s personal Facebook profiles, advertisers can gather detailed information on age, gender, education and interests of.
prospective consumers. In their advertising section Facebook explains how advertisements work to target specific audiences:

*Ads on Facebook are seamlessly integrated into the Facebook experience. When users are browsing Facebook and interacting with their friends’ profiles, looking at pictures, Groups, Events or Pages, they see ads targeted according to their demographic information, interests and connections. These ads appear in the right-hand column of each page.*

As Judith Donath and Danah Boyd predicted in 2004, “…technologies that expand one’s social network will primarily result in an increase in available information and opportunities—the benefits of a large, heterogeneous network” (Ellison, Lampe, Steinfield, 2009)

**OVERALL FINDINGS - ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH REPORT AND CAMPAIGN SAMPLES**

*Florida State University Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication*

In 2009, the Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication at Florida State University released a leading and trending report entitled “The Multicultural World of Social Media Marketing”. In this report, researchers conducted an analysis of collected information and data to review the patterns of social media behaviors of different racial/ethnic groups in the American nation. With the support and guidance of the DMS Research firm, the Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication created a “national online sample of nearly 2,500 people with approximately 500 cases in each of the following cultural groups: Hispanics who prefer English, Hispanics who prefer Spanish, Non-Hispanic Whites, African Americans, and Asians in the United States” (Korzenny and Vann, 2009).

*The authors present findings from a survey of social media usage among ethnic groups and argue that as these outlets become more and more a part of multicultural consumers’ lives, companies that incorporate them into their marketing plans will earn the loyalty of these segments (Korzenny and Vann, 2009).*
Figure 1 illustrates which of the ethnic groups are more likely to visit social networking sites. English preferring Hispanics take the lead in their social networking with 36% of the overall respondents visiting at least 2 or 3 times a month. Non-Hispanic Whites had the least activity on social networking sites with just 18% of the overall response. OVERALL: Those of ethnic groups-English preferring Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Spanish preferring Hispanics and African-Americans visit social networking sites more frequently than those non-Hispanic Whites. This helps in determining the efforts of marketers of whether to use social media networking sites as an avenue for advertising and targeting.

Figure 2 shows the break out for the use of leading social networking sites—MySpace and Facebook. Just as shown in Figure 1, ethnic groups are leading the way for social networking activity on MySpace and Facebook. OVERALL: Social influence has had a major shift with the rise and steady growth of members of ethnic groups increasing their activity on leading and powerful social networks like MySpace and Facebook. With their activity, it could also be possible to conclude that activity on other popular site such as Twitter, LinkedIn and FourSquare could have the same results-making this a tremendous market for advertisers and agencies.
The more specifics on the group the better equipped the marketing campaigns can be when trying to reach particular demographics. For example, if an advertiser is looking to solicit a 21 year old African American male, there would be a need for proper research of if social networking should be used, of course it should. Figure 3 helps to showcase the demographics of respondents 35 and younger who visit social networking sites more than 2 or 3 times a month. Figure 3 provides that “people 35 and younger of all cultural backgrounds are more likely to use social media, with Hispanics who prefer to communicate in Spanish and African-Americans lagging behind. Young Spanish preferring Hispanics may lag because they are likely to be newer to the Internet, also because their friends and relatives are less likely to be online due to economic and access factors” (Korzenny and Vann, 2009) OVERALL: The chart shows again that ethnic Americans that are younger are a part of the social networking market but surprisingly in the specific African-American and Spanish preferring Hispanics are behind in their activity. Although the results show time and time again that Hispanics are building their online presence, the acculturation within the Hispanic culture can and does seem to play a role in how important its placement in the differing subcultures. As mentioned in the literature review, acculturation is a major challenge for advertisers and marketers in order to achieve a successful and impactful campaign. Advertising on social networking sites would demonstrate that challenge for trying to reach each one of those subcultures.

Figure 4 looks at the older demographic of the specific cultural groups and provides insight that those 36 and older have close range in usage across the groups. With this exploration, age seems to be partial to the explanation of how certain ethnic groups use social networking sites. The overall viewpoint from the
findings of this study seems to present that ethnic minorities are helping to push the social media activity and targeting through this avenue would be a great alternative than using typical marketing strategies like radio and television campaigns.

American Airlines-BlackAtlas.com

In October 2009, American Airlines launched their new advertising campaign, BlackAtlas.com with the primary objective of persuading African-American travelers that no other airline understands and recognizes their needs and concerns like them. With the help of African-American advertising agency, Burrell Communications, advertising executives expressed to the airline that African-Americans have unique needs and concerns when traveling, “such as where to go to get their hair cut and styled; where to find places of worship and historical sites to visit; and locations of African-American art galleries”(Wentz, Agency Hits, 2010) BlackAtlas was created, “an interactive African American travel community that highlights “must-visit” places in major cities and delivers content relating to food, music and services” (www.adweekmedia.com)When the campaign launched it expressed the slogan of “Your passport to the black experience worldwide” with traditional print and radio advertisements but also through Twitter and Facebook profiles and presence.

Current Online Presence on Social Media Sites:
Twitter 5,055 followers; Facebook 4,501 Likes and YouTube 5,588 views 4/28/2011
ANALYSIS: The creation of BlackAtlas.com as a “one-stop shop for black travelers” was a very creative strategy to meet the needs of the African-American traveler. Using an interactive website where members can upload pictures and share experiences creates yet another network of black cultural travelers and looks great for American Airlines business. Having an online travel agent that can create a buzz about online giveaways, contests and the newest places for travel, helps with black consumers identifying with American Airlines. Using the social media websites provides for the campaign to directly talk and reach their target consumer instantaneously. Linking with Burrell Communications as an African-American advertising agency, gave voice to not only African Americans thoughts but also concerns when traveling. Many of the companies choose to not speak directly to the culture of their target market. As explained by Stacey F. Frantz, Director of Corporate Communications for American Airlines, “At American, we market not only to business passengers, frequent travelers, [and] leisure travelers, but also to what we call diverse segments, which have unique cultural or group dynamics. This DSM [diverse segment marketing] approach includes the African-American, U.S. Hispanic, LGBT and women segments. BlackAtlas was a bold play into the African-American segment, and one we’re really pleased to have made based on customer feedback.” The BlackAtlas.com campaign helped to promote American Airlines as a company that is in tune with its consumers and their needs and wants for traveling.

Ford-Ready Pa’ Tu Mundo (Ready for Your World)

Ford Motor Company chose to take advantage of the fact that African-Americans and Hispanics are the largest consumer groups in the small-car segment and also big consumers of social media like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. In 2010, Ford launched the “Ready Pa’ Tu Mundo” (Ready For Your World) campaign, “a social media, digital and web platform for the 2011 Ford Fiesta that focuses on young, bilingual Hispanics between ages 18 and 34. Visitors to readypatumundo.com are so much in charge that a patented slider lets them control how words appear, ranging widely from Spanish-based, English-
based, Spanglish and everything in between. Once there, users interact with three young artists who take them to a world of music, filmmaking and visual arts in their preferred mix of language” (Martinez, 2010 www.adage.com)

ANALYSIS: The “Ready Pa’ Tu Mundo” is a clear example of using research in order to target a certain demographic or cultural group. Using the research in order to better market a specific product or service will only be successful in creating a buzz. Although on the interactive website, a user may forget that they are there for the promotion of a car and not all of the cool and interactive features the website has to offer. Noticing also the acculturation in the Hispanic community by providing different languages for the website visitors, looked as though it helped targeted consumers become familiar with the car in their own comfort zones.
KEY STRATEGIES FOR TARGETING MULTICULTURAL AUDIENCES USING SOCIAL MEDIA

For organizations and companies that are seeking ways to engage and connect with multicultural consumers and buyers, using social media is a proven successful strategy and tool. Using social media as a tool also requires a specific strategic process in order to implement the right tactics for engaging the targeted audience. “Marketers seeing to reach ethnic minorities through social media must reinforce and connect with the culture of their target audience if they seek to strengthen their clients’ brands on social networks” . Using the overall findings and examples from this capstone, the specific strategic process should include the following components:

Identify Social Media Marketing Goals and Objectives

The use of social media networks can help to with various tasks and goals. For a business or organization those objectives can mean more avenues to reach consumers and clients as well as offer a platform for specific targeted audiences. It is important to establish those business goals and objectives before promotion and advertising especially for targeting the multicultural audience. Outlining the proper marketing goals and objectives for targeting multicultural audiences will make for a more effective campaign. For example, marketers preparing a social media campaign may consider the following questions: “Do you want to advertise a new product? Gather research? Provide customer service and build goodwill? Knowing what you’re looking for will make it much easier to find” (Korzenny & Vann, 2009).

Understand the Cultural Landscape

After deciding to target multicultural audiences and then defining marketing goals and objectives, it is important to develop an understanding of the targeted cultures beyond the obvious areas like music, language and food. Using proper research as to the online habits of the targeted group and what social media sites are most popular for specific reasons is vital in understanding the full cultural landscape. It is important for organizations and companies to know that some consumers may teeter between different cultures, which may bring an additional need for more research and strategic thinking. As Lynne d
Johnson, Senior Vice President of Social Media at The Advertising Research Foundation observed, “Today’s multicultural consumer code- and culture-switches, and brands need to understand that. You can’t speak with consumers in just one voice, or expect to reach groups at various life stages with the same messages,” said Johnson, also noting that generational differences impact how marketing messages are received. (Carter, Mashable, 2010) This component speaks to the acculturation challenge within the Hispanic and Asian-American markets as discussed in the literature review. It is important to know the cultures within the market.

**Forgo Stereotyping and Concentrate on Making a Connection**

When gathering research and information on the targeted audience for the social media marketing campaign, it should be a known practice to not use stereotypes when there are “blanks or holes” in understanding the culture subject. Rellying on stereotypes and assumptions is a common practice for many marketing and advertising firms which can often backfire or become disastrous. Christine Huang, Head of Cultural Trends at GlobalHue, a top multicultural advertising agency knows that avoiding stereotypes can be hard for advertising agencies but knows it will help furthering her clients brands. “Online as well as off, all brands speaking to diverse audiences face the challenge of developing culture-based strategies that aren’t rooted in stereotypes or staid notions of ‘general’ vs ‘multicultural marketing’. They are charged with the none-too-easy task of creating messaging that is relevant to their disparate and evolving audiences—which requires more than a cursory understanding of their generalized heritages and identities” (Carter, Mashable, 2010). It is imperative to base the campaign on knowledge gained from research reports, primary research such as focus groups and marketing connections and networks. Conducting research and then testing the findings through focus groups or surveys will not increase consumer appreciation but could also increase the level of trust in the organization from the consumer targeted.

A successful social media strategy requires a clear definition of objectives, understanding of your audience and a strategy for engaging them. Consider the cultural motivations that are driving your target audience
to social media. Are they there to talk about music? Are they keeping in touch with relatives overseas? Are they there to connect and share their collective culture? What language are they using? They may be doing all of these things and more, but if you can determine what’s drawing your audience to social media in the first place, you’ll have a better chance of engaging them when you join their conversations.

Building and maintaining conversations with a target audience requires research, careful planning and a strategic approach.

**Use The Networks to Engage With Relevant Content**

In addition to understanding the cultural landscape and complete the necessary research, it is important to find out the relevant and timely issues, interests and concerns that the multicultural audience is engaging in. As concluded from the research in the capstone, ethnic groups are the primary users of social media websites and networks’, so knowing that information opens a channel to joining their conversations. Visiting social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, microsites, or even blogs that target multicultural ethnic groups, is a great way to see what is popular and significant to them.

Engaging in meaningful conversations is the goal of social media marketing and doing so requires a deep understanding of needs, openness to negative commentary and dedicated resources. A social media presence is worthless if it lays dormant (Korzenny & Vann, 2009).
EXAMPLES OF MULTICULTURAL MARKETING USING SOCIAL MEDIA

State Farm Insurance has consistently been an advocate for targeting multicultural markets for their advertising efforts and campaigns. Recently, the major corporation took the focus towards utilizing social media for their multicultural campaigns. State Farm worked with InterTrend Communications on Asian-American outreach, including online video contests through social media. To reach Hispanics, the insurance company partnered with Univision on Web Novelas that feature its messaging of being there for family and friends. For the African-American community, State Farm has “The 50 Million Pound Challenge,” with fitness expert Dr. Ian Smith. For this, the company uses a website and blogs to build a community online (Maul, 2009).
Wal-Mart's celebration of Black History Month that led to the company incorporating America I Am as a permanent brand initiative. Seen here is the mini-site the company designated to the initiative.

Proctor and Gamble's “My Black is Beautiful” Facebook page. With over 87,000 people “liking” the page, the company uses it to broadcast new products and a new television show on BET.

Kodak’s YouTube channel displaying its new Kodak “easyshare digital” camera with commercials featuring single-handedly hip-hop artists Rhianna, Trey Songz, Drake and Pitbull.

Bergdorf Goodman and Target advertising on a predominately African-American gossip blog-The Young, Black and Fabulous (theybf.com)
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

Targeting multicultural audiences through social media is beginning to be more than just a trend. The use of social media for targeted marketing and advertising campaigns creates an opportunity for companies and ethnic consumers to unite through thoughts, services and products. Realizing that those ethnic groups that make up the multicultural market: African-Americans, Hispanics and Asian-Americans, are the primary clients and trendsetters for social media usage, pushes the focus for many marketers and advertisers. Identifying that the social media networks is a common marketplace for these groups, it is imperative that marketers realize the techniques and messages that should be sent to them through these networks. As shared in this capstone, many companies are beginning to realize the success in targeting these audiences through social media. As Christine Huang, head of Cultural Trends for GlobalHue notes: “Companies who have the capacity to truly understand the cultural nuances of their audience and use that insight to seed their messages in the right places to effectively speak with — not just to — them, are the ones that are using social media the way it is meant to be used; as a tool for organic conversation, not scattershot blasting” (Carter, Mashable, 2010).

And even though many companies and organizations are having success with this new channel of marketing, there are still companies that are hesitant to dip into the trending pool. A first mover advantage is available for those that devote the time and resources to engage these critical audiences in ways that they find meaningful. The fact is that we now have an unprecedented ability to reach and interact with ethnic minorities; and companies that deliver value to this segment today will be rewarded with the long term loyalty of this market (Korzenny & Vann, 2009). It is even present in the statistics that advertising companies are hesitant with focusing on social media. Though marketers allocated an average of 6.6% of their 2010 multicultural
media budgets to new media, many are still spending almost nothing. Twenty-five percent of respondents said they are dedicating less than 1% of their multicultural budgets to new media this year, and 32% are spending 5% or less (Wentz, 2010).

Using a strategic approach to target these multicultural audience enhances and better defines any campaign. As explained in the Key Strategies section of this capstone, choosing a tactical process will guide marketers to choosing the correct methods to reach these consumers. Completing the necessary research, testing the assumptions and findings, avoiding using stereotypes and engaging the targeted consumers with relevant and timely information that pertains to them will not only enhance the marketing efforts but could and has proven to targeted consumer loyalty. These strategies that were outlined in this section not only help to promote targeted ethnic multicultural markets but as the social media and technology evolves so does the culture within. As mentioned in the Defining Multiculturalism section of the literature review, today’s society could define multiculturalism beyond racial and ethnic lines, meaning and including the youth segment, those of differing sexual orientations, or even disabled persons. The strategies and tactics taken to engage those of ethnic groups through social media are the same tactics that should and can be taken to those of “other” multicultural groups. It is about doing the research and find out as much information about each segmented group.

As social media and technology develops and changes, it is important for marketers and advertising agencies to develop along side it. Advertising agencies and specifically those multicultural agencies must provide services that include engaging targeted consumers digitally. For instance, it has been reported that JetBlue is switching agencies. As a company that spends the majority of its marketing expenditures on digital advertising, it is natural to think that if
JetBlue wanted to hire a multicultural agency, it would need to be a digital shop. But, if JetBlue looked at multicultural agencies right now, it would have a hard time finding one that could claim leadership in digital advertising. (Villa, 2010)

With the advancement of technology, it is also necessary to determine a hierarchy of how consumers are using social media. Consumers can now have “mini-computers” on their phones, but can also access social network sites through their cameras, IPads, IPods as well as computers. Determining what is best used for specific audiences could help with advertisers and marketers as well. Through primarily secondary research, the data and information was found for this capstone. Since this is a new and trending subject, the limitation for credible sources on for this capstone contributed to the challenges. There are a various blogs, websites and everyone has the right to “publish” opinions or advice for what should be done with multicultural consumers through social media. It was through studying successful campaigns and comparing the common themes and strategies used that made it an essential contribution to multicultural marketing. A recommendation for further research on this topic would be more substantial research reports on multi-dimensional multicultural individuals on social media should be tackled. For example, a gay African –American ‘baby boomer’ that uses Facebook to connect with old college buddies would not be interested in the same services or products as a teen African-American boy from the inner city. Researching all of the dimensions of multi-cultural groups could be a difficult task but for advertisers it looks to be a worthy one. Through in-depth interviews and focus groups with potential consumers, this could be determined and shared with others. The significance and imprint of this research can truly effect the world of marketing and advertising as the face and culture of this nation changes.
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