

Recruitment, fundraising and interactivity through social media

Abstract

Recruitment, fundraising and interactivity through social media This paper will interrogate these areas and look at the existing literature & comments in relation to how the concept of politicians as brands may require a re-think. I hope to achieve this by applying current digital marketing concepts to Obama's use of digital media (in particular WEB 2.0). This includes word of mouth, permission marketing, and online advocacy.

Before we start ...

'It is, therefore, quite possible that there is a core of political reality and even health in the wildly proliferating forms of American advertising. The hyper-aesthesia¹ of the Ad-men's rhetoric has knocked the public into a groggy, slap-happy condition in which perhaps are cushioned a good many of the brutal shocks felt more keenly by the realistic European'.²

'I wish to make a simple claim: twentieth-century advertising is the most powerful and sustained system of propaganda in human history, and its cumulative culture effects, unless quickly checked will be responsible for destroying the world as we know it.'³

'What knowledge there is will be available to all. So, in that sense, everybody will be nobody. ... The more information one has to evaluate, the less one knows. Specialism cannot exist at the speed of light'⁴

'The continuous pressure is to create ads more and more in the image of audience motives and desires. The product matters less as the audience participation increases'⁵

Online we can and do act as brand ambassadors – a key aspect of Web 2.0 or social media is the process whereby the exchange of data creates networks of trust. Online we ask, question and receive data; depending on its use value this is then converted into information by us as consumers. Online advertising and PR have morphed into conversations and narratives about products, services, experiences and customer service. Brands are dead ... long live brands:

¹ Aesthesia -- The ability to feel sensations

² Marshall McLuhan, 'American Advertising', (1947)

³ Jhally, S., (2000), 'Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse'.

⁴ McLuhan, M., (1989), The Global Village, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

⁵ McLuhan, M., (1964), Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, MIT Press, London

... the whole world is now changing so fast that we all have a tendency to see it in terms that have been left behind by events and are therefore outmoded, and that one of the ways in which this shows itself is in our use of an exhausted vocabulary, a vocabulary whose key terms were coined many generations ago in a society quite different from the one in which we live today.⁶

If the changes to society are as significant as some authors believe; then even the theory or the models & frameworks that we use to explain and make sense of the world are themselves changing. This may sound like a daunting (if not fruitless) task – -- another author making a similar claim is Mark Poster in two key texts: **Information Please** and **The Second Media Age**. A few ideas from Poster that are important:

First; new relations between humans and information machines. It's increasingly difficult to regard the machine as a simple tool that does what you want it to because it's so complicated and has its own dynamics that are so powerful and interesting.

That's one major direction. The other is in relation to globalization. The Internet is not a nation state kind of thing but it is a global network. As international capitalism creates this push toward globalization at the communication level - at the level of culture - the Internet provides a way of exploring possibilities of globalization that do not necessarily go along with economic tendencies of globalization.⁷

⁶ O'Sullivan (2000). Political Theory in Transition p. 1.

⁷ <http://neuf.cprost.sfu.ca/digest/digests/digest-17/digest-interviews-mark-poster>