

DEVELOPING A SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING COURSE

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This paper describes the process used and experiences gained in developing a social media and marketing course. As the first known paper on this topic appearing in the marketing education literature, the paper provides educators with a framework for developing similar courses. The course was developed using a sound instructional design model, the Kemp Instructional Model, and was continuously improved over a four-year cycle. The course concept entailed four distinguishing characteristics: an experiential-learning approach, a nontraditional class format, a practitioner orientation that focused on the use of social media in marketing, and the integration of a Learning Community (LC) that consisted of multiple participants with different professional perspectives and areas of expertise. Based on quantitative and qualitative evaluations collected over a four-year period from all members of the LC, the course was found to be highly successful in achieving all course objectives.

The Cluetrain Manifesto, published in 1999, marked a “major evolution in marketing practice” (Gillin 2009, p. 27). This landmark book describes how the communication phenomenon known as social media is permanently altering the marketing landscape. The highly connected nature of marketplace communication described in the book has resulted in what a number of scholars (Gupta, Armstrong, and Clayton 2010; Hoffman, Novak, and Schlosser 2000; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Li and Bernhoff 2008; Mangold and Faulds 2009; Qualman 2009; Vollmer and Precourt 2008) have described as a paradigm shift that presents marketing managers with many new challenges.

A recent study indicates that although many marketing professors use social media on a personal basis, only a small percentage employ social media in their classes (Tuten and Marks 2012). However, a growing stream of marketing education research is making important advances in the use of various social media venues, such as blogs, wikis, and Twitter, as pedagogical tools in different marketing courses (Cronin 2009; Lowe and Laffey 2011; Piontek and Conklin 2009; Richardson 2009; Rinaldo, Tapp, and Laverie 2011; Tinti-Kane, Seaman, and Levy 2010; Wankel, Marovich, and Stanaityte 2010). Marketing educators have the opportunity to contribute to this paradigm shift not only by using various social media venues as pedagogical tools, but also by

addressing the use of social media in marketing practice within the marketing curriculum.

The coverage of social media in marketing practice, while limited, is beginning to receive some attention in the classroom. For example, Granitz and Koernig (2011) present a variety of Web 2.0 tools and experiential marketing activities that use different social media venues to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities sought by employers of marketing majors. Many of the activities employ social media as pedagogical tools, and several also address the use of social media in marketing practice.

The above efforts represent valuable contributions to marketing education research and practice. A recent review of the leading marketing education journals conducted by the authors revealed that no articles on the development of a specific social media and marketing course have been published.¹ This is consistent with Wymbs, who reported in a 2011 issue of the *Journal of Marketing Education* that none of the top 10 undergraduate marketing programs in the nation currently offers a social media course within the marketing curriculum. Since Wymbs’s observation, one of these universities began offering a social media class for marketing students. However, this class is not offered within the marketing department itself but, rather, through another department outside the business college and can be counted as a marketing elective. In the remaining top 10 universities to which Wymbs referred, social media now receives a modest amount of coverage in courses that are intended to focus on related topics, such as interactive media marketing, integrated marketing communications, information- and technology-based marketing, digital marketing, marketing communications, Internet marketing, and interactive marketing.

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Our objective is to expand this research foundation by introducing and describing a social media and marketing course that employs social media pedagogically while examining its strategic role in marketing practice. We begin by discussing the rigorous process used to develop an initial course and improve it over a four-year period. The paper concludes with a detailed presentation of the course, with a focus on linking course learning objectives, activities, and assessments in a way that will facilitate the development of social media and marketing courses by marketing educators.

INITIAL COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Our development of a social media and marketing course was based on extensive preparatory work spanning several months. During the concept development stage, we discussed the need for and potential components of this type of course with academic colleagues at different universities. An Internet search of academic and trade publications provided us with a broad understanding of the social media and marketing literature. Finally, recorded interviews with social media experts—authors, consultants, and business executives—helped us identify the leading thinkers in the social media and marketing world.² This preparatory process convinced us of the need for a social media and marketing course, an opinion widely shared by marketing practitioners (Balwani 2009), and documented the types of skills students should develop in such a course.³ In addition, this process provided us with many ideas for the critical components of the course.

The next step was to identify an instructional model we could use as a framework for developing the initial course and improving it over time. We engaged four instructional technology specialists to help in identifying and selecting an appropriate model. Based on their input, we selected the Kemp Model, presented in Figure 1, because it could accommodate the rapidly changing world of social media through its focus on continuous improvement. At the macro level, this model delineates four phases of the course design process—planning, project management, support services, and revision—and also identifies four micro-level components: (1) student characteristics and instructional challenges, (2) development of course objectives, (3) development of course content and activities, and (4) development of evaluation and continuous improvement procedures. Each element of the model was used in the course design and implementation as well as in the evaluation and continuous improvement of the course.

Planning, Project Management, Support Services, and Revisions

The Kemp Model is similar to other popular design models in that, as indicated in Figure 1, it begins with the planning phase. Two components—project management and support services—were vital considerations in designing the course. The information collected during the concept development phase indicated that an experiential-based learning environment would be an important aspect of the course. This consideration required that the course include practitioner-oriented projects and other classroom activities that were deemed important to marketing managers. Multiple participants with different backgrounds, expertise, and interests would be involved in all stages of course delivery and formed the basis for a Learning Community (LC), which consisted of students, nationally recognized authors, social media consultants, marketing practitioners, and the instructor. Therefore, the success of the course hinged in great part on close attention being paid to project management from the perspective of all members of this LC.

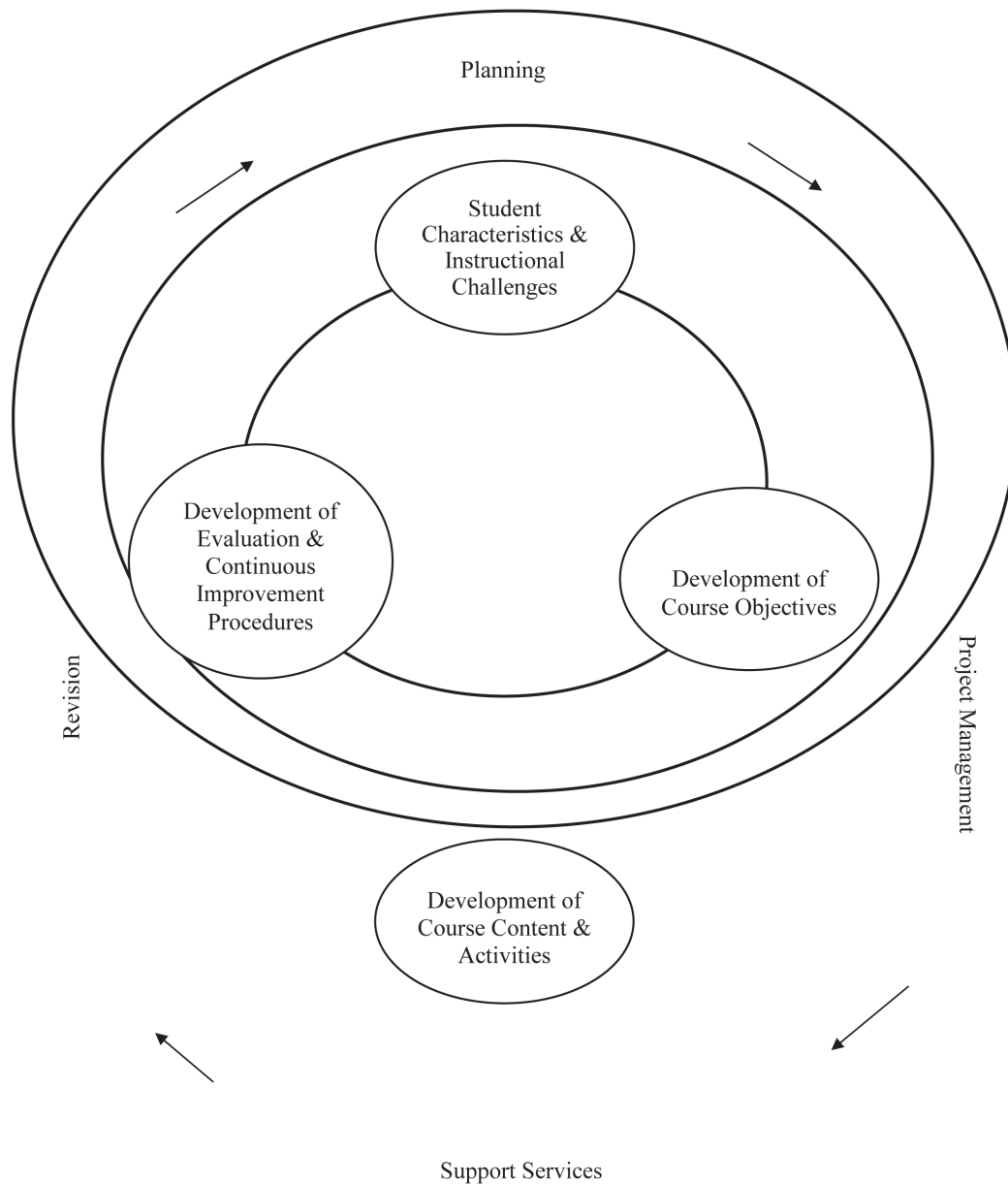
Our preparatory work indicated the need for an experiential-based learning environment with many different student projects. Support services, provided by university technical specialists, were available to assist with any technical challenges we might encounter. This was particularly important because the rapidly changing social media environment demanded that new venues (i.e., mobile marketing platforms such as Foursquare) be integrated into the course on a timely basis.

Finally, the oval depiction of the Kemp Model emphasizes the importance of constantly monitoring and revising the overall learning environment and experiences represented by the course. Input from students, the instructor, and other members of the LC was gathered and analyzed in a systematic fashion each semester to ensure continuous course improvement.

Student Characteristics and Instructional Challenges

The next step was to understand the important characteristics of the students taking the class and the educational challenges and opportunities faced in creating a social media and marketing course. Completion of a Principles of Marketing course and basic introductory courses in business administration were prerequisites. The majority of the participants would be marketing majors, with some students from other disciplines.

Figure 1
Kemp Instructional Design Model



Source: Adapted from Jerrold E. Kemp, Gary R. Morrison, and Steven M. Ross, *Design Effective Instruction* (New York: Macmillan, 1994).

As members of the Net generation, also referred to as Generation Y or the millennial generation, this cohort was born between the mid-1970s and the late 1990s (Howe and Strauss 2000). The Net generation is distinctly different from the baby boom generation, of which many current faculty members are a part. Skiba and Barton (2006) have described the following four characteristics of the Net generation: “digital literacy, experiential and engaging

learning, interactivity and collaboration, and immediacy and connectivity” (p. 3). Coates (2007) provides a number of suggestions for improving the learning environment and overcoming the instructional challenges presented by the characteristics of the Net generation. These suggestions include developing opportunities for experiential learning, incorporating learning communities in classroom activities, providing a high degree of structure and organization,

offering immediate feedback, integrating technology and strong visual components, and developing a creative, exciting, and enjoyable learning environment.

These Net generation students also present two unique instructional challenges. First, they are often deficient in traditional oral and written communication skills (Feiertag and Berge 2008; Friess 2003; Liu and Olson 2010; Lorenzo and Dziuban 2006; Oblinger and Oblinger 2005). As Carlson (2005) indicates, “Millennials might be whizzes on communication devices, but their communication skills—both in writing and in person—have a long way to go” (p. 6). Critical thinking represents a second major deficiency (Granitz and Hugstad 2004; Keen 2007; Liu and Olson 2010). Net generation students “often do not possess the critical analytical skills to assess the accuracy of information” (Liu and Olson 2010, p. 322) they access or retrieve from the Internet. The inability to critically evaluate the accuracy and quality of information, whether retrieved from the Internet or from nondigital sources, severely compromises the problem-solving process, which is imperative in marketing decision making.

Our social media and marketing course was designed to create the type of learning environment most effective for Net generation students and to address their unique challenges by focusing on improving the students’ communication and critical-thinking skills. We developed specific course objectives and course activities to address social media and marketing content and to build the desired skills in an engaging learning environment.

Course Objectives

A synthesis of the input from our preparatory process indicated that an effective social media and marketing course would provide students with opportunities to:

1. Understand the strategic and tactical roles of social media in marketing, the changing role of information technology in marketing practice, and the ethical issues related to the use of social media.
2. Develop skills in using specific social media tools and apply these skills in a team-based environment to complete tasks and solve problems related to the course and in the context of real-world marketing situations.
3. Improve written and oral communication, critical thinking, and teamwork skills.

The initial course was designed to achieve these objectives. However, as the course has been improved over

several iterations, we have translated these general course objectives into more specific learning objectives, which will be presented in the context of the most recent version of the course.

Course Content and Activities

The development of course content and the selection of course activities were intended to reflect the general spirit of the various definitions of experiential learning that have appeared in the literature (Joplin 1995; Kolb 1984; Warren, Sakofs, and Hunt 1995). Chapman, McPhee, and Proudman define experiential learning as a pedagogical process that “combines direct experience that is meaningful to the student with guided reflection and analysis. It is a challenging, active, student-centered process” (1995, p. 235). Frontczak contrasted the characteristics and qualities of experiential versus traditional learning environments and presented a paradigm “for the selection, use and development of experiential learning activities in marketing education” (1998, p. 27). This paradigm builds on Kolb’s Model (1984) of experiential learning and was used as a framework to guide the selection and use of learning activities in the course.

For our course, the experiential learning environment required that students “actively engage with the information being presented and link the theory to their own practice” (Payne et al. 2011, p. 206) and experiences with social media. The vehicle we used to accomplish this requirement was the weekly group discussions that occurred among the LC members on the class Facebook Group Page, described later in the paper. Experiential learning has been found to have many advantages in that it “facilitates critical thinking while improving oral and written communication, decision-making, listening, time management, and other soft skills” (M.D. Kaplan et al. 2010, p. 52). Other educators have observed that experiential learning also provides students with an opportunity to transform theory into practice, raise their motivational levels (Dabbour 1997; Garcia and Pintrich 1996; Karns 2005), improve class performance (Drea, Tripp, and Stuenkel 2005; Hamer 2000; Lawson 1995; Perry et al. 1996), and increase their overall enjoyment of learning (O’Hara and Shaffer 1995).

Given the experiential learning approach and the practitioner orientation of the course, the *content* was based on input from marketing practitioners and the instructors’ assessment of other important elements within the domain of social media and marketing. In the initial planning stages, it was discovered that no standard academic textbooks dealing with social media and marketing were available. The

Table 1
Social Media Lectures

Introduction: Marketing in the Era of Social Media
Social Media Marketing Principles
Social Media and the Consumer Adoption Process
Social Media and the Diffusion of Innovations
The Social Media Marketing Plan and the Social Media Policy Statement
Strategic and Tactical Applications of Social Media: Personal Selling, B2B Applications, and B2C Applications
Operational Issues and Social Media
Engaging Customers
Social Media and Customer Service
Social Media and the Net Promoter Score
Connecting with Consumers Using Social Media
Mobile Marketing
Social Media and the Long Tail Concept
Crowd Sourcing
Rules of Engagement for Social Media
Social Network Theory
Social Media and Marketing to Influentials: Hubs, Influencers, and Buzz
Customer Ratings and Reviews
Social Media Voice and the Promotional Mix
Monitoring Social Media: Where, When, and How to Listen
Measuring Social Media: Social Media ROI and Other Social Media Outcomes
Ethical and Legal Issues in Social Media

Notes: B2B = business-to-business; B2C = business-to-consumer; ROI = return on investment.

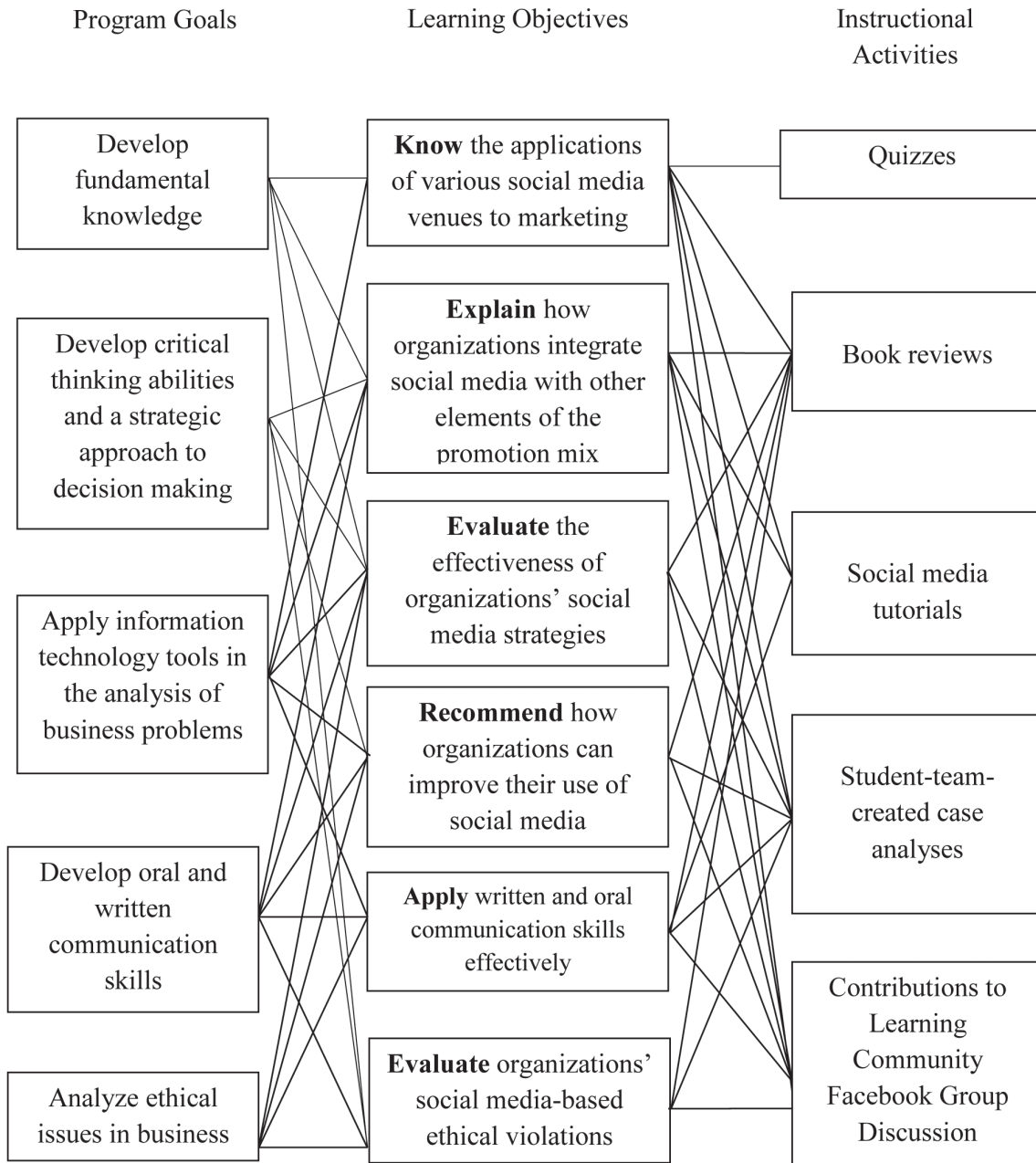
practitioner orientation of the course and the absence of academic texts required that trade books and the popular business press would instead serve as surrogate reading materials. These surrogate texts were selected based on the recommendations of practitioners and represented the state of the art in the social media and marketing literature. Cutting-edge materials from blogs published by social media and marketing experts were screened for use as class readings, along with articles drawn from the academic literature and popular business periodicals. These materials were synthesized and became the basis of a series of customized lectures developed by the instructors that focused on the fundamental and powerful core concepts that we identified as essential for student proficiency in social media and marketing. Table 1 presents a list of the social media and marketing topics the customized lectures covered.

We developed and analyzed a list of potential course *activities*, which were evaluated to ensure that they aligned closely with course objectives, addressed issues related to the Net Generation's unique learning styles as described by Coates (2007) and others, and enhanced the course's experiential learning environment (Frontczak 1998). The "reality-based" learning method described by Smith and Van Doren (2004) also influenced the selection and design of class activities. This approach evaluates potential course

activities based on four criteria: (1) the extent to which the activity provides a student-centric focus, (2) the degree of active student participation afforded by the activity in the learning process, (3) the extent to which the activity relates to other student experiences, and (4) opportunities for the maximization of transferability of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to other settings.

The class activities, which are described in more detail in the "Instructional Activities" section below, included individual as well as team-based assignments that provided multiple opportunities for meaningful student learning experiences and entailed "guided reflection and analysis" as described by Chapman, McPhee, and Proudman (1995). The incorporation of multiple experiential activities in a course has been found to lead to increased student learning when supplemented with lectures and an active learning environment (Hamer 2000; Holter 1994). The effectiveness of team activities has also been well documented in the literature and would become an important aspect of the course (Bobbitt et al. 2000; Razzouk, Seitz, and Rizkallah 2003). These activities included written reports covering the assigned texts, original case studies developed by the student team, and in-class team presentations. These activities have been shown to improve student communication skills. Finally, a series of custom-designed quizzes based

Figure 2
Program Goals, Learning Objectives, and Instructional Activities



on weekly course assignments was developed for assessing student involvement and understanding of the course content. The use of well-designed quizzes can be an effective tool that also contributes to improvements in student learning (Jacobs and Chase 1992; Nigol 2011; Roediger and Karpicke 2006).

Technologies such as wikis, discussion boards, and chat rooms would be used to complete course assign-

ments and provide a common communications link for the LC. Classroom discussions by social media experts, conversations among members of the LC, tutorials demonstrating marketing applications of various social media platforms, and student-created case analyses were planned for inclusion in the course to enhance its practitioner orientation. A number of educators have reported that these types of classroom activities contribute to a

robust experiential learning environment (Zorek, Katz, and Popovich 2011).

Course Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Each course offering was evaluated systematically to identify ways to continuously improve the course. Specific rubrics were designed to evaluate student performance on several course activities, such as the weekly discussions on the course Facebook Group Page, book reviews and case analyses created by student teams, and team presentations.⁴ Members of the LC also provided assessments of various aspects of the course. These evaluations led to changes in the course over a four-year period.

MODEL SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING COURSE FRAMEWORK

We reviewed our experiences with the social media and marketing class over the past four years and distilled them into the following course concept statement:

This course will adopt an experiential-learning approach delivered in a nontraditional format focusing on the strategic and tactical applications of social media in marketing. It will be centered on a LC consisting of students, nationally recognized authors, social media consultants, marketing practitioners, and the instructor. This learner-centric community will provide students the opportunity to solve problems and complete tasks related to the use of social media in marketing.

The course concept statement provides the basic perspective for all aspects of the planning and delivery of the course. The program goals, learning outcomes, and instructional activities presented in Figure 2 are central elements of our social media and marketing course.

Course Learning Objectives

We believe it is important to link the learning outcomes for a social media and marketing course directly to the program goals of the college (Burgess 2012). As shown in Figure 2, each of the learning objectives for our social media and marketing course contribute to the achievement of multiple program goals in the College of Business.

Instructional Activities

Multiple instructional activities were linked to address each course learning objective. Selecting the appropriate

resources to provide students with cutting-edge social media and marketing material is challenging given the rapidly changing technological environment and the ways marketers are employing social media. Because traditional textbooks often lag behind the more popular business press, we used a variety of trade books and changed them from semester to semester. The required books for the most recent course offering and those required in previous courses are presented in Table 2. Important changes in social media and marketing can be monitored through a variety of available online social media resources. The online resources for the most recent course offering are presented in Table 3.

Table 4 presents the instructional activities that build on or expand the course reading materials according to whether they were weekly or semester-long activities.

Weekly Activities

The following activities are conducted on a weekly basis to ensure continuity throughout the semester:

- *Learning Community Facebook Group Discussions.* This is a spirited, wide-ranging, weekly dialogue among the LC members focusing on topics covered in the class as well as current social media issues addressed in the popular press. The Facebook Group Page provides a forum for reflection and analysis, and fosters an atmosphere that encourages multiple viewpoints and alternative opinions.
- *Guest Speakers.* Members of the LC provide practitioner-oriented and cutting-edge presentations on social media and marketing topics throughout the semester. These presentations are given in person or delivered remotely via Skype. Reflection and analysis are a central component of the guest speaker presentations. Students engage other members of the LC in a continuing discussion of the topics presented by the speakers in the LC Facebook Group Discussions. Students also prepare a short synopsis of the content covered by each speaker and discuss the relevance of the topic to the use of social media in marketing.
- *Lectures.* The content of the weekly lectures is outlined in Table 1. They emphasize both powerful and fundamental concepts related to social media and marketing theories and principles. The presentation format includes PowerPoint slides and videos designed by the instructor, as well as blog posts, podcasts, YouTube videos, and other

Table 2
Books

Falls, Jason, and Erik Deckers (2012), *No Bullshit Social Media: The All-Business, No-Hype Guide to Social Media Marketing*, Indianapolis: Que.
 Gillin, Paul (2009), *Secrets of Social Media Marketing*, Fresno, CA: Quill Driver Books.
 Martin, Charles (2011), *The Third Screen: Marketing to Your Customers in a World Gone Mobile*, Boston: Nicholas Brealey.
 Rosen, Emanuel (2009), *The Anatomy of Buzz Revisited: Real-Life Lessons in Word-of-Mouth Marketing*, New York: Doubleday.
 Wolfe, Joann (2010), *Team Writing: A Guide to Working in Groups*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press.

Previously Required Books

Gillin, Paul (2007), *The New Influencers: A Marketer's Guide to the New Social Media*, Sanger, CA: Quill Driver Books.
 Li, Charlene, and Josh Bernoff (2008), *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies*, Boston: Harvard Business Press.
 Rosen, Emanuel (2000), *The Anatomy of Buzz: How to Create Word-of-Mouth Marketing*, New York: Doubleday.
 Salt, Simon (2011), *Social Location Marketing: Outshining Your Competitors on Foursquare, Gowalla, Yelp & Other Location-Sharing Sites*, Indianapolis: Que.
 Shankman, Paul (2011), *Customer Service: New Rules for a Social Media*, Indianapolis: Que.
 Vollmer, Christopher, and George Precourt (2008), *Always On: Advertising, Marketing, and Media in an Era of Consumer Control*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
 Zarella, Daniel (2010), *The Social Media Marketing Book*, Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.

Internet-based resources highlighting various social media topics. The sequence of topics is carefully coordinated with the scheduling of guest speakers and tutorials, thus providing abundant material for a continuing discussion among LC members on the Facebook Group Page.

- *Quizzes.* Quizzes are customized to assess students' understanding of the material covered in the class lectures, reading assignments, and guest speaker presentations, and are administered throughout the course.
- *Social Media Consultant Tutorials.* The hands-on tutorials are presented by social media consultants and focus on the most popular social media platforms and their applications to marketing. The tutorials include social media venues drawn from the following categories: social networking, blogging and micro-blogging, media sharing, mobile marketing, social news and bookmarking, and ratings and reviews. Students establish individual accounts on each platform and prepare a written essay on the marketing applications of each venue covered in the tutorial session.
- *Student Team Weekly Meetings.* Student teams are required to conduct out-of-class weekly team meetings to discuss, organize, and complete team assignments. Each team prepares and submits its Weekly Team Meeting Notes using the format presented in Wolfe (2010). This includes the date and subject matter of the meeting, a record of team members' presence or absence, a summary of each team member's contributions to the meeting, a

delineation of the decisions made, a list of tasks to be completed, and the date, time, and tentative agenda for the next meeting.

Semester Activities

The following represent student team activities spanning the entire semester:

- *Book Reviews.* Each student team prepares a book review for each of the assigned trade books. The book reviews address the strengths and weaknesses of the book, perspectives, and background of the author(s), the book's main points, an overall evaluation, and any other thoughts or observations about the book.
- *Student Team Social Media Tutorials.* Student teams present an in-class tutorial on an emerging social media venue (e.g., Chirp, Pinterest, Gentlemint, Pandora, FAB.Com, Spotify, Instagram). These presentations emphasize the working mechanics and marketing applications of the social media venue and highlight organizations that are currently using the social media tool in their marketing efforts.
- *Student Team-Created Case Analyses and Presentations.* Student teams complete a case analysis in two separate areas: Case 1, Ethical Issues and Social Media, and Case 2, Assessment and Evaluation of the Effective and Ineffective Uses of Social Media. In Case 1, students highlight organizations that have violated the Word-of-

Table 3
Online Social Media Resources

Social Media for Business—Powered by Dell—<https://www.facebook.com/dellsocialmedia/>
 The Word-of-Mouth Marketing Association—<http://womma.org/main/> (subscribe at <http://womma.org/word/>)
 Jay Baer's *Convince & Convert*—www.convinceandconvert.com
Social Media Examiner—www.socialmediaexaminer.com/ (subscribe at <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/subscribe/>)
Social Media Explorer—www.socialmediaexplorer.com
Social Media Today—<http://socialmediatoday.com/all?page=1/>
SocialMedia.org—www.socialmedia.org/. Recommended subscriptions:
 • SocialMedia.orgs Big List
 • Damn, I Wish I'd Thought of That!
 • Word-of-Mouth Marketing Lessons
SmartBrief on Social Media—<http://smartblogs.com/social-media/>
AAF SmartBrief—www.smartbrief.com/news/aaf/

Various publications provided through MediaPost. The publications can be found at www.mediapost.com/publications/ and students can subscribe to posts at <https://www.mediapost.com/account/subscriptions/>. The following MediaPost publications are particularly recommended:

- Online Media Daily
- Marketing Daily
- Social Media & Marketing Daily
- Mobile Marketing Daily
- Just an Online Minute
- Online Spin
- Around the Net in Online Marketing
- Mobile Insider
- Social Media Insider
- Notes from the Digital Frontier
- The Third Screen

Table 4
Weekly and Semester-Long Activities

Time Frame/Participants	Individual Student	Student Team
Weekly	1. LC Facebook Group Discussions 2. Guest Speaker Reports 3. Lectures 4. Quizzes 5. Social Media Consultant Tutorials	1. Team Meeting Notes (see Wolfe's Sample Meeting Minutes [Wolfe 2010, p. 128])
Semester	6. Student Assessment of Other Team Members' Performance (see Wolfe's Peer Evaluation Questionnaire [Wolfe 2010], p. 127)	2. Book Reviews 3. Student Team Social Media Tutorials 4. Student Team-Created Case Analysis and Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Analysis 1: Ethical Issues and Social Media • Case Analysis 2: Assessment and Evaluation of the Effective and Ineffective Uses of Social Media by Organizations

Note: LC = Learning Community.

Mouth Marketing Association's Code of Ethical Standards and discuss the specific violations and the steps taken to redress them. In Case 2, student teams select a specific organization and assess and evaluate the organization's effectiveness/ineffectiveness in using social media in its marketing efforts.

- *Student Assessment of Other Team Members' Performances.* Students are required to prepare and submit a Peer Evaluation Questionnaire for each team-based assignment using the format presented in Wolfe (2010). This includes responding to the following four open-ended directions: "(1) List *everything* that each member of the team (including yourself) contributed to the project. Be as specific as possible. (2) For each member of the team (including yourself), list the single most important contribution that he or she made to the project. (3) What advice would you give to each of your teammates to help them improve their teamwork skills? and (4) Would you want to work with these teammates again on a future project? Why or why not?" (p. 127). All responses are confidential.

Outcome Assessment

The course evolved over a four-year period of interactive design and test cycles, as postulated by the Kemp Instructional Model. These test cycles consisted of stages, with each stage comprising a one-semester course, which represented the results of a systematic process that focused on continuous improvement. This process of "closing the loop" consisted of evaluating, refining, and reevaluating the course on a semester-to-semester basis and resulted in the model course framework discussed here. Our outcome assessments focus on individual instructional activities and the overall impact of the course.

Assessing Instructional Activity Outcomes

During this process, we created and refined rubrics to evaluate the outcomes for most instructional activities used in the course offering. Each rubric consists of three to six evaluation categories and three to four levels of performance for an instructional activity. An example rubric for assessing the LC Facebook Group Discussion is presented in Table 5. The basic evaluation categories are the promptness and initiative of the student, quality of expression within the

post, relevance of the post, and overall contribution of the post to the LC.

Evaluating the Impact of the Course

Each semester, we examine the students' evaluations of the course to assess its overall impact. During the most recent semester, 85 percent of the students indicated that the course was either "extremely worthwhile" or "very worthwhile." Students' qualitative responses, summarized in Table 6, provide an overall assessment of the course, the course content and delivery, comments about the books and readings, social media knowledge and skills gained, communication-related aspects of the course, and course assignments. The student responses gleaned over the life cycle of the course are rank-ordered from most common to least common and are overwhelmingly positive. These responses are typical, and there has been virtually no variation in student responses since the course's inception.

Nonstudent members of the LC are also asked to provide informal evaluations of their experiences, with an emphasis on suggesting improvements for future course offerings. As Table 7 indicates, their responses can be categorized as overall assessment, course content and delivery, social media knowledge and skills, and assignments. The responses reflect the LC's high level of enthusiasm for the course.

As the first known publication describing the development of a stand-alone social media and marketing course, this paper fills an important gap in the marketing education literature by providing a framework for developing and continuously improving this type of course. Because the process described here is based on the authors' experiences in delivering the course, the article provides marketing educators with valuable insights that can significantly reduce the anxiety, effort, and time associated with new course development. The paper also provides new pedagogical strategies for delivering social media instructional content in marketing.

ISSUES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The development of the Social Media and Marketing course revealed the need for additional discussion and research. Should a social media course be offered as a separate course in the marketing curriculum in the same way that international marketing and ethics are often offered, or should it be integrated into other marketing courses such as introduction to marketing, marketing management, and marketing

Table 5
Example Rubric: Learning Community Facebook Group Discussion

Category	1	2	3	4
Promptness and initiative	Fails to respond to postings in a prompt manner; demonstrates little or no initiative	Sometimes responds to postings in a tardy manner; average initiative	Usually responds to postings in a prompt manner; good initiative	Consistently responds promptly to postings; demonstrates superb initiative
Expression within the post	Does not express opinions and ideas clearly; no connection to topic; poor spelling, grammar, and syntax in most posts	Opinions and ideas are sometimes not clearly stated; unclear connection to topic; errors in spelling, grammar, and syntax are commonly found	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to the topic; few spelling, grammar, and syntax errors are noted in posts	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly and concisely; obvious connection to topic; consistently uses correct spelling, grammar, and syntax
Relevance of post	Posts comments that do not relate to the discussion; makes short or irrelevant remarks	Posts are occasionally off topic; most posts are short in length and offer limited insight into the topic	Frequently posts comments that are related to discussion; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts comments related to discussion; cites additional references related to topic
Contribution to the Learning Community	Does not make effort to participate in the LC; seems indifferent	Occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely	Aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic

Source: Adapted from Strickland (2010).

Note: LC = Learning Community.

communications and promotions? The debate concerning a stand-alone course versus an integrative approach, while a very important subject, is beyond the scope of this manuscript. It will inevitably evolve over the next several years and will likely be influenced by the needs of external constituents (i.e., marketing practitioners), student needs, and departmental resource constraints.

In large part, our efforts to develop a stand-alone social media and marketing course were in direct response to the pressing needs expressed by the business community for such a course. This opinion was widely shared by all practitioners we interviewed. In fact, David Knox, digital brand manager for Procter & Gamble, stated to us that marketing students with specific training in social media were the only students that Procter & Gamble was actively recruiting. For those programs where the integrative approach is most appropriate, we have provided examples of social media topics that can be integrated into existing curricula in Table 8.

This course also raises a number of other issues that warrant further investigation by marketing educators. For example, this course seems to have supported Coates's (2007) observation that the integration of learning

communities into classroom instruction improves the learning outcomes for Net Generation students; however, given the potential rewards associated with Coates's suggestion, further research should be directed at this important concept. Another issue that warrants immediate attention is the use of books and other readings drawn from the popular business press versus traditional marketing textbooks. The experiences gained from this course indicated that the popular press offered students more up-to-date information, flexibility, affordability, and relevance than did the traditional texts used in their other marketing courses.

The effect on the student learning experience through the use of Skype and similar technologies for delivering remote presentations by authors and guest speakers also deserves greater study. In this course, the students and other members of the LC indicated that these presentations were of great value and accentuated the cutting-edge nature of the course content. Embedding relevant consultants and other practitioners into the course structure, which was an integral part of this social media and marketing course, has widespread applications in other course offerings and deserves further attention by educators.

Table 6
Student Evaluations of the Social Media and Marketing Course¹

What aspects of this course were most worthwhile to your College of Business learning experience?

Observation Category	Most Frequent Observations (rank-ordered with 1 = the most frequent)	Summary of Observation
Overall assessment	1	This class was always interesting and well worth my time. I would recommend this class to everyone in the College of Business.
	2	The content was extremely interesting and relevant.
	3	Almost everything was beneficial.
	4	We are studying a current topic . . . , cutting-edge phenomena . . . , very up-to-date . . . , very innovative course.
	5	The ability to dictate your own curriculum and the opportunity to learn about a new and rapidly evolving field.
	6	If you're a self-starter and enjoy a challenge, this class is for you.
	7	It was very flexible and allowed me to focus in on specific topics that were of interest to me.
	8	The freedom to learn and work at my own pace on my own schedule.
Course content and delivery	1	I thought the Skype presentations were an amazing opportunity. . . . to be able to meet, listen to, and interact with the leading experts in the country gave us insights we would never have gotten in other classes. ²
	2	The Skype presentations with the authors of the books we read provided a deeper understanding of the subject and stimulated me to read more on the applications of social media to marketing.
	3	That it was nontraditional and we were able to interact through the LC Facebook Group Page . . . and we set the pace of the class.
	4	I really liked the speakers and I felt that I learned a great deal from them and the course in general.
	5	The way the course was set up to encourage self-exploration of ideas and theories, and encouraged critical thinking.
Books/readings	1	The use of trade books instead of traditional textbooks.
Social media knowledge and skills	1	I learned a new skill in social media that will set me and my resume apart from other graduates.
	2	Learning about the different social venues.
	3	The knowledge about different social media tools for marketing, and how social media can affect organizations.
	4	Every aspect of this class was very important. I enjoyed learning the role of each social media.
Communication	1	I learned how to effectively communicate in a group in order to accomplish tasks on time.
	2	Having real conversations with other people about current issues and important topics on social media.
Assignments	1	The module assignments.
	2	I liked the topic and how there were few guidelines; it made the course more enjoyable and gave us the chance to research many different organizations . . . learning about the controversies, ethics, and how organizations actually can use social media was very helpful.
	3	No written tests. I liked researching and getting out of the class what I was willing to put into it. Also researching a complex and new discipline.

What elements of this course were not worthwhile to your College of Business learning experience?

Observation Category	Number of Mentions	Summary of Observation
Overall assessment	10	It was a great class and everything was worthwhile.
Course content and delivery	1	Having to look up so many articles.
	1	The LC Facebook Group Page.

Please give suggestions for improving the learning experience in this course.

Observation Category	Number of mentions	Summary of observation
Overall assessment	7	This course is set up very well.
Course content and delivery	4	More guest speakers.
	1	The only thing I do not care for are the book reports since we cover the books so well in class.

Notes: LC = Learning Community. 1. N = 130 students over 4 semesters. 2. Pertains to the most recent course offering.

Table 7
A Qualitative Summary of the Nonstudent Members of the Learning Community's Evaluations and Experiences

Observation Category	Summary of Observation
Overall assessment	The active, exciting, and stimulating environment created by the LC produced a high degree of involvement and engagement among all class participants not typically found in traditional lecture-based courses.
Course content and delivery	<p>Students embraced the use of nontraditional methods of discovery offered by the learner-centric paradigm to actively participate in the construction and dissemination of new knowledge.</p> <p>The weekly discussions on the class Facebook Group Page among members of the LC stimulated analysis and reflection on social media and marketing topics from multiple perspectives.</p> <p>Nontraditional texts such as popular books and contemporary articles taken from trade publications and the general business press strengthened the practitioner-oriented content of the course.</p> <p>In-person presentations from social media consultants and marketing managers reinforced the practitioner orientation of the course and enhanced the experiential learning environment.</p> <p>The use of wikis by student teams and other members of the LC to complete written team projects fostered deeper reflection and richer discussion among team members not typically found in traditional courses.</p> <p>The evaluations of the student team presentations by nonstudent LC members offered students valuable insights and suggestions from a practitioner-oriented perspective.</p> <p>The business community's enthusiastic participation on the advisory board and direct involvement in the course resulted in immediate employment opportunities for students enrolled in the class.</p> <p>The use of Wolfe's <i>Team Writing: A Guide to Working in Groups</i> (2010) in recent course offerings contributed to improving student team cohesiveness and performance on written assignments.</p> <p>The most recent course offering included remote presentations from authors of the assigned texts (and other authors) delivered via Skype, which enhanced the experiential learning environment and accentuated the cutting-edge nature of the course.</p>
Social media knowledge and skills	The use of information technologies as a fundamental component of the course allowed members of the LC to utilize their existing knowledge of IT venues and familiarized them with new and emerging social media platforms.
Assignments	The case assignments achieved their objectives by (1) providing students with experiential learning exercises that generated new knowledge and insights into the effective uses of social media, and (2) illustrated the ethical considerations related to the use of social media in marketing.

Note: LC = Learning Community.

Table 8
Examples of Social Media Topics That Can Be Integrated into Existing Curricula

Traditional Course	Social Media Topic
Principles of Marketing	Social Media and Customer Service Social Media Marketing Principles: (i) Social media marketing is about a conversation. (ii) Happy customers say good things about the product or service. (iii) If you want customers to say good things about your product or service, you have to give them something to talk about and the tools to make communication easy. (iv) Conversations often occur in communities. (v) Creating communities, engaging existing communities, participating in community-based conversations, and finding various ways to support communities are often keys to success. (vi) Honesty and transparency are keys to successful social media marketing efforts.
Consumer Behavior	Social Media and the Consumer Adoption Process Social Media and the Diffusion of Innovations Social Media and the Net Promoter Score Social Media and Marketing to Influentials Social Network Theory Customer Ratings and Reviews
Integrated Marketing Communications/Advertising and Promotion	Social Media and Crowdsourcing Social Media and the Net Promoter Score Engaging Customers Customer Ratings and Reviews Social Media Voice
Marketing Research	Customer Ratings and Reviews Social Media and the Net Promoter Score
Professional Selling and/or B2B Marketing	Social Media and Personal Selling Social Media and B2B
Marketing Strategy	Social Media and Customer Service Social Media and the Net Promoter Score Engaging Customers Social Media and the Consumer Adoption Process Social Media and the Diffusion of Innovations Social Media and the Net Promoter Score Social Media and Marketing to Influentials
Channels of Distribution or Logistics Management	Social Media and the Long Tail Concept Social Media and the Diffusion of Innovations Social Media and Customer Service
New Product Development	Social Media and Crowdsourcing Social Media and the Diffusion of Innovations

Note: B2B = business-to-business.

CONCLUSIONS

Falls and Deckers's recent observation that "no single subject has exploded into society and the business world the way social media and marketing has" (2012, p. 11) apparently has not yet been felt in the world of academic marketing education, given that Wymbys (2011) reported that among the top 10 marketing programs in the nation, none offers a social media course. This paper fills an important gap in the marketing education literature by describing the process used and experiences gained in developing a social media and marketing course over a four-year period. The development of the course followed a sound instructional design

model, the Kemp Model, and was continuously improved. The quantitative and qualitative evaluations gathered from all course participants over the four-year period indicated that the course was highly successful and achieved all its instructional objectives. Thus, this paper provides marketing educators with a time-tested approach for developing similar courses.

NOTES

1. In a recent survey conducted by Pearson Learning Solutions (Tinti-Kane, Seaman, and Levy 2009) that focused on the classroom applications of social media in higher education, less than 25 percent of the faculty respondents reported using

social media venues in classroom activities; however, 65 percent of the respondents believed that various social media venues such as videos, podcasts, blogs, and wikis could be valuable tools for teaching. Among business school faculty, only 30 percent reported using social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace), and online videos, podcasts, blogs, and wikis were found to be the most popular venues used in classroom instruction. Usage of social media varied across disciplines, with the humanities and social sciences reporting the highest level of activity (35 percent), followed by business and economics (30 percent). Mathematics and the sciences reported the lowest level of activity at 27 percent.

2. The following 17 individuals were interviewed: Debra Boyer, President, Boyer Communications; Patrick Coyle, President, Coyle Communications and Social Media Director of Indianapolis Colts; Shareen Dunn, Director of Digital Marketing Services, Power Creative; Jay Garmon, Marketing Director, Backupify; Jason Falls, Vice-President of Social Media, Doe-Anderson Advertising Agency; Nick Huhn, Director of Social Media, YUM! Brands; Brendan Jackson, Director of Digital Services, Creative Alliance Advertising Agency; David Knox, Digital Brand Manager, Procter & Gamble; Danielle Manley, Corporate Marketing Specialist, Louisville Public Media; James McDonnell, Director of Digital Marketing, Papa John's International, Inc.; Emanuel Rosen, Author, Anatomy of Buzz and Anatomy of Buzz Revisited; and David Washburn, Vice-President of Communications, FLW Outdoors.

3. The skills identified in the academic and popular business literature and in the practitioner interviews included superior communication abilities (both written and verbal), creativity, a collaborative disposition and the ability to work successfully with colleagues, time-management skills, an awareness of the ethical issues involved in the use of social media, and experience with social media technologies and their applications to the field of marketing. The skills sought by the practitioners interviewed closely parallel the twenty-first-century learning objectives identified by Kay (2011)—collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. The most recent review of the business literature indicates that the traits and skills sought by practitioners in hiring social media personnel have not changed significantly over the time period in which the course was developed and offered (see, e.g., Cook 2010; Elliott 2010; Evans 2010; and Morgan 2010).

4. The rubrics for each course assignment and the current syllabus are available from the authors on request.

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