Mobile Audience, Social Media, and Action Research: An Examination of Non-Profits and Mobile Engagement

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Non-profit organizations in the United States are becoming more dependent on the use of social media accounts, to market to their mobile audiences, because they are free to use. With the constant advancements in technology, True Friends marketing department struggles to keep up with the lack of staff and necessary resources. The researchers chose to investigate how True Friends Organization could improve the quality of their mobile engagement through the analysis of their social media and Google analytics accounts. Specifically, the researchers implemented action research to evaluate if the increased use of Instagram expands True Friends mobile audience. The researchers evaluated how technology helps to create unique cultures amongst mobile audiences, as well as why social media as a medium is so important. Participants of this study included True Friends mobile audiences on Google Analytics, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram. Their mobile audience consists of participants from California, England, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, New York, and Wisconsin. The study meticulously focused on social media as a medium for True Friends to communicate with their mobile audience, and how each of their accounts helps to create a distinct culture.

INTRODUCTION

The use of mobile marketing is rapidly becoming an essential tool for the modern marketer. The constant development of technology and social media has significantly increased, which makes it much easier for companies and marketers to target their audiences through mobile devices. However, because the technology that makes all of this possible is still relatively new, there remains much to be discovered about how marketers can utilize these platforms to their fullest potential. Therefore, it is becoming more crucial for companies to increase their mobile engagement as more people grow to rely on their mobile devices.

This study focused on how the organization *True Friends* can increase their mobile engagement. True Friends is a non-profit organization that focuses on serving people with cognitive, physical, and developmental disabilities. The marketing department at True Friends is two years old and is run by two people, so the lack of resources and staff make it difficult to maintain and manage different social media accounts that could potentially help increase their mobile engagement. With these limitations in mind, this study explored different aspects of mobile marketing and looked at how the creation of a mobile application could help increase True Friends' mobile engagement. There are many aspects that can be explored in the realm of mobile marketing and mobile engagement. However, the researchers chose to focus on how True Friends can improve the quality of their mobile engagement. This study will look to address this question.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Mobile marketing and social media are becoming increasingly prevalent with the advancements of technology in the twenty-first century. Mobile marketing allows people to interact with businesses and organizations mobile platforms, which benefits both the audience and the organizations, because mobile platforms allow interactions between the two. Mobile marketing has a large potential in the future because it allows for personalization and customization of mobile interactions and engagement. Social media is becoming a great way for non-profit organizations to develop their mobile marketing strategy towards a targeted audience.

Non-profit organizations are utilizing social media to build their clientele base, fundraise, and demonstrate their social responsibilities. Although there are many diverse components of the use of mobile marketing, this study concentrates on how mobile marketing affects mobile

engagement within an organization, and how the implementation of increased social media use can significantly affect the expansion of their clientele base.

Mobile Marketing and How People Interact With Mobile Platforms

Mobile marketing can be defined as a way of connecting and engaging with customers through and with the use of a mobile device (Mcordis, 2013). Some examples of mobile devices are cell phones, smartphones, personal digital assistant (PDA), mobile digital assistant (MDA), and tablets. Marketing to individuals via the use of a mobile platform differs drastically from a more traditional desktop computer platform. In order to under fully understand mobile marketing a marketer must be able to identify some of the key differences within a mobile environment. Some immediate differences that are unique to a mobile platform are the operating system, level of interactivity, size of content, and the data that can be extracted from a user (Akerson, 2013).

The operating system that runs the mobile device is the first thing that makes this platform unique. There are two main operating systems that hold most of the market share today. These two are known as Apples IOS platform and Googles Android platform (Netmarketshare, 2015). According to market data the Android operating system controls 47.45% of the market and Apples IOS controls 42.59% of the market (Netmarketshare, 2015). Both of these platforms come with their own unique advantages and disadvantages that each mobile marketer needs to take into consideration based on their own individual needs.

Studies have shown that as of January 2014 around 90% of adults living in the United States own some sort of cellular device. Around 58% of these cell phone users have a smartphone device that has internet capabilities. 67% of cell phone users admitted to checking their devices for messages or alerts even if they did not get a sound or phantom vibration

syndrome (Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, 2014). Mobile marketers could potentially use this compulsion for their marketing desires.

For mobile marketers to use this medium they could potentially look into understanding how people interact with these devices on a daily basis. Studies indicate that user interaction with mobile devices are drastically different from traditional desktop computer use. One study even states that users perceive interaction with this technology to be free of mental effort (Izquierdo-Yusta, Olarte-Pascual, & Reinares-Lara, 2014).

Another uniquely different way in which individuals interact with mobile devices is through haptic communication. Haptic communication refers to the way in which an individual interacts and communicates via their sense of touch, as well as how surfaces and textures convey information (Immersion Corporation, 2015). The most common form of haptic communication is the vibration feature, this feature has been used on mobile devices since January 3, 1996 when Motorola released their "Motorola StarTAC" mobile phone. In recent years the use of haptic communication has changed due to the introduction of touchscreen smartphones. Studies show that currently in the United States over 182 million individuals possess smartphones with touchscreen capabilities, and this number is expected to reach 220 million by 2018 (Statista, 2015).

Mobile devices also have the ability to send and receive Short Message Service (SMS). SMS service allows for short messages to be sent to an individual who possesses a mobile device. Various businesses have used short message service (SMS) to send customers coupons, trivia programs, charitable donations, voting services, and billing medium (Akerson, 2013).

Rise in Mobile Marketing

As previously stated, 90% of adults living in the United States own some sort of cellular device, and 58% of these cell phone users have a smartphone device that has internet capabilities (Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, 2014). Other studies show that mobile phones have a worldwide penetration rate between 90% and 100% (Hovancakova, 2011). Over the past few years retailers have begun to channel their efforts to mobile platforms based on an increase in traffic from mobile devices. Over half of US mobile device shoppers, around 10% are considered heavy shoppers and 40% are light shoppers (Ström, R., Vendel, M., & Bredican, J., 2013).

The research behind these mobile shopping statistics also states that marketers should channel their efforts towards the shoppers in the light category (Farb, 2011). The logic that the literature assigns to this reasoning is marketers should look for ways to explain to the user the advantages that come with mobile shopping (Garris, 2011). It was also observed that for the light shopping group, they mainly used mobile devices during their shopping experience to check store hours, addresses, and locations (Garris, 2011).

There has also been an increase in location-based service (LBS) applications. LBS phone applications detect the specific area that the user is connecting from and then that information is sent to the business or marketer that is in control of gathering that data (Searchmobilecomputing, 2009). The percentage of individuals who use location-based service LBS) applications has risen substantially in recent years. It has also been observed that over 58% of mobile device users takes advantage of applications that use LBS (ISACA, 2012).

Another claim that supports the rise in mobile marketing is by Volvo. In their European mobile ad campaign the company sent out a video teaser of their new S40 car specifically to

European customers mobile devices. After the mobile user watched the video they were then invited to watch the remainder of the video on their website via email. At the end of this campaign Volvo discovered that around one-third of mobile viewers downloaded the teaser video onto their phone and half of those viewers continued onto their website to view the entire video (Fareena Sultan, 2005).

It is predicted that in 2015 US marketers will spend around $18.6 billion on mobile ad spending alone. This mobile ad spending is divided into search engine marketing, display marketing (banners, pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns on social media, and promoted status updates on social media), SMS, lead generation, and email (Mobile Marketing Association, 2014). The study also predicts that the amount that marketers spend on mobile will increase to $31.1 billion by 2017.

Future of Mobile Marketing

There have been many predictions revolving around the future of mobile marketing and what it could bring to the marketing world. One thing that has been a trend in the global market place is the idea of customization and personalization of experiences. Mobile devices have become an intimate item for many consumers and for this reason personalization of features could be looked into by mobile marketers. One piece of literature suggests that since individuals have the ability to save personal information on their mobile device such as contacts, important dates, emails, and application data that this has led to the need for personalized marketing messages (Bauer, Barnes, Reichardt, & Neumann, 2005).

The same study also continues to state that due to the advancement of LBS applications it is predicted that these applications could play a critical role in mobile commerce (Bauer, et. al, 2005). If a mobile marketer chooses to take advantage of LBS, it could potentially allow users to

bypass certain steps while using the service which in turn could increase the ease of usability for the end user.

One common theme among mobile marketing predictions is the use and collection of user data. According to one source the mode of collecting of this user data includes cameras, scanners, and global positioning system (GPS) (Ström, et. al, 2013). All of these data collection features come standard on modern consumer mobile devices. Ultimately it is up to the marketer to decide how they want to implement them.

A recent patent that was published on February 5, 2015 might hint to a revolution in mobile marketing. The patent proposes a method for making a targeted offer at an audience using a telecommunications company (U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, 2015). Through various exchanges a telecommunications company and a credit card processing company would exchange billing and payment information so that the credit card processor could create a predictive behavioral model based on each individuals past transactions, this model shows the likelihood of a potential purchaser to exhibit a certain behavior.

After the credit card processor creates their model they immediately send it back to the telecommunications company. After that phase the telecommunication company contacts a merchant and the merchant provides the names and addresses of their customers to them. At that point the merchant receives a predictive behavioral model for all of their customers. Finally, the telecommunication company executes promotions on behalf of the merchant to their target customers. These promotions can then be distributed via mobile device and or email.

A key factor that could dictate the future of mobile marketing is its acceptance among consumers. Various studies have been done that document consumer acceptance for mobile marketing. Because mobile marketing is still in an embryonic stage of commercial development,

most consumers have not yet had the chance to adopt and use it as an innovation (Bauer, et. al, 2005) and for this reason marketers might consider monitoring their efforts closely.

Why are some people against mobile marketing?

Scholar Ian Grant quotes in his study "The adoption of mobile phones has been 'one of the most conspicuous social changes to happen over the last ten years'" (Grant, 2007). The increase in mobile phone use has helped lead the way for mobile marketers to easily target audiences wherever they may be at any time during the day. However, although mobile phones make it easier to text, search the internet, use social media platforms, and more, some consumers feel their privacy is being compromised (Grant, 2007). There are a couple of reasons consumers may be against mobile marketing, which include age, comprising consumer privacy, and spam messages.

According to *Mobile Age Provides for Marketing Bonanza* (2013), the increase in the use of mobile phones has lead the way for mobile marketers to target consumers at all times. One of the main questions this article addresses is how consumers will respond to the idea of mobile marketing. Age seems to be a common factor in how consumers respond to being targeted through mobile marketing. The study found that younger consumers used their mobile devices mostly for entertainment and social purposes, whereas older consumers used them for more business, news, and financial purposes (Mobile Age Provides for Marketing Bonanza, 2013). Because of these findings, it helps to show patterns in the age differences and how that could potentially affect their attitudes on being targeted through mobile marketing.

Younger consumers seemed to find mobile marketing annoying and an intrusion of their personal life and their privacy (Grant, 2007). On the other side of the spectrum, adult consumers seem to enjoy mobile marketing because it was more of a convenience factor that helped them

save time in searching for products and services. The age factor, especially with younger consumers plays into the other factor of compromising consumer privacy. If a consumer feels their privacy is at risk, they will be less likely to invest time or be interested in what the mobile marketer is offering.

Finally, the approach mobile marketers take when targeting their audiences must be ethical and polite. "Marketers who do not understand the etiquette of mobile devices will 'perpetuate this idea of spam'" (Mobile Age Provides for Marketing Bonanza, 2013, p. 31). The idea of etiquette and spam messages in mobile marketing directly affects how their consumers receive the messages. *Mobile Age Provides for Marketing Bonanza* looks at the relationship between mobile marketers and consumers as a two-way street. If the mobile marketers approach their consumers in an ethical and courteous way, consumers will "be happy to supply the data which will enable them to receive marketing that is both better and more accurately targeted" (2013, p. 31).

Non-profits use of social media and mobile marketing

The use of social media and mobile marketing in non-profit organizations are becoming more increasingly popular in recent years due to the increase in mobile platforms. According to Kristen Lovejoy and Gregory Saxton "The spread of new media has also significantly increased non-profits' ability to communicate with clients as well as regulators, volunteers, the media, and the general public" (Lovejoy and Saxton, 2102, p. 338). There are many different aspects in how non-profits use social media and mobile marketing, such the use of social media platforms and how non-profits use social media to increase donations.

Twitter and Facebook are becoming more prevalent because they are free and interactive (Lovejoy & Saxton 2012). Twitter allows for a user to spread information, post what is on their

mind, or share visuals with a 140-character limit. According to the literature, microblogging has three key functions: information, community, and action (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Through the use of Twitter, non-profit organizations are able to execute all three functions. Twitter allows for information sharing and relationship building, which helps serve as a communication pathway for an organization and their audience (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

Facebook allows non-profits to create separate pages for their community or cause, allows for different select groups, and allows for easy usage of posts and messaging for the general public. Because of its ease and efficiency, Facebook is a great platform for non-profits to promote themselves. Through the use of social media, non-profit organizations are able to increase their communication with future clientele, volunteers, other media platforms, and even the public (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

Non-profit organizations receive millions of dollars in donations every single year (Lichtenstein et. al, 2004) Therefore, non-profits rely heavily on donations to help keep them financially stable, because non-profits often lack the proper funding, and would suffer significantly without the contribution of donations from outside parties.

It is highly recommended that non-profit organizations participate in corporate social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility is "the obligations of the firm to the society" (Lichtenstein, et. al, 2004). Non-profit organizations often need to show themselves and their values to the public and the community to inquire donations and other help such as volunteers. Non-profits receive voluminous amounts of donations from "CSR initiatives," which are their involvements in different causes that help to represent who they are as a company (Lichtenstein et. al, 2004, p. 16).

Non-profits need to contribute to their social responsibility based upon the field they work in because it significantly impacts the amount of donations they receive from the outside community. Lichtenstein et. al state that "It is important not only that nonprofits benefit from CSR initiatives but also that the extent to which firms make effective use of such relationships is ultimately influenced by the benefits to the nonprofits" (2004, p. 17). Incorporating the use of social media in their social responsibility would considerably affect their social media and mobile audiences.

The incorporation of social media and mobile marketing for True Friends Organization

True Friends Organization developed their marketing team only a few short years ago in 2011. Since then, they have implemented not only print advertising, but have also become moderately active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. There are many strategies that could be executed for True Friends to increase their mobile audience through social media and mobile marketing. Since mobile phones can be used wherever there is service or signal which allows for constant updating, True Friends could take advantage of the popularity of mobile phones by implementing opinion polls, contests, catalogues, gifts, feedback surveys, and advertising methods (Hovancakova, 2011).

However, execution of such practices may be easier said than done. Most non-profit organizations, especially True Friends, lack substantial funding that would allow them to expand their usage of social media and mobile marketing (Waters et. al, 2009). True Friends organization's marketing department consists of two people, which does not allow them extra time to effectively manage their social media accounts or begin to implement new social media accounts such as Snapchat or a successful blog on Tumblr or WordPress.

The employment of interns or volunteers is a common way non-profit organizations have a more active role on social media (Waters et. al, 2009). Volunteers allow organizations to use their services at no cost, which is crucial for non-profit organizations who lack the funding to employ numerous part-time or full-time employees. When non-profit organizations use the services of volunteers, it helps with interaction patterns between staff and other volunteers (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002). Because volunteers help with interaction and communication patterns, True Friends greatly benefits from the role volunteers play in their organization. True Friends inquires over 1,450 volunteers and 40,000 volunteer hours every year (True Friends Volunteer, 2015). Without the effort and services of volunteers, True Friends organization would not be as successful as they are.

Because of the incredible statistics involving volunteers in True Friends organization, True Friends could begin to use volunteers to help with social media accounts and mobile marketing. Some examples of projects they could execute would be:

- Using Instagram to create a summer camp portfolio, using the hashtag *#12weeksofsummercamp*.

- Using Snapchat to allow other users to send their favorite pictures of camp or True Friends and create a file and use the pictures for future reference.

- Starting a blog on WordPress or Tumblr that documents all the aspects of what True Friends offers and what they are doing in the community.

These are just a few examples of how True Friends could use the help of volunteers to become more active on social media which would help build and expand their audience.

Conclusion

To conclude, the utilization of mobile marketing is becoming increasingly crucial for non-profit organizations to maintain and manage their clientele-base. Since 90% of adults in the United States own some sort of cellular device (Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, 2014), executing an effective mobile marketing strategy can help their audience customize their own experiences. Although some people are against mobile marketing for privacy reasons, it has become a key component for non-profit organizations because it allows them to fundraise and accept donations online. Through this research, mobile marketers can learn how to successfully target their clientele and improve the quality of their mobile engagement.

RESEARCH QUESTION/HYPOTHESIS & JUSTIFICATION

Mobile marketing has become an invaluable resource for marketers and consumers. As of 2012, there were approximately 326 million subscribers in the United States alone (CRM Trends, 2012). 89% of those mobile users are capable of accessing the internet (CRM Trends, 2012). This is important because it shows a trend in how people interact with technology on a daily basis. To further emphasize this point, as of 2014, there are 890 million active users who visit Facebook daily, 745 million of which access it through mobile devices (Statista, 2014).

True Friends could look into the use of mobile marketing for future marketing strategies. Currently, 30.25% of True Friends traffic comes from mobile and 69.75% comes from desktop platforms. This shows that mobile could potentially lead to new growth for the organization. To support this, 69.92% of True Friends mobile traffic comes from new users, meaning these users have not interacted with True Friends before. And of desktop users, 66.34% are new users, showing that an increase in mobile engagement could be potentially beneficial for True Friends.

RQ1: How can True Friends improve the quality of their mobile engagement with clientele?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Mobile engagement participants will be tracked through True Friends Google Analytics. A person was counted as a participant when they chose to visit True Friend's website and engage in their site for more than twenty seconds. Engagement will be tracked through people that visit more than one page through True Friend's site, and spend more than twenty seconds per page. Participants were also tracked through their social media accounts: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram. Engagement was tracked through reach, likes, views, mentions, re-tweets, and impressions.

Research Design

The research design that was used is a cross-sectional design that is field dependent, because it all depended on mobile engagement of clientele through True Friends accounts. The researchers observed the clientele of True Friends by tracking their mobile engagement through True Friends Google Analytics, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram. The researchers will also implement action research December 26-January 8, by posting to True Friends Instagram and evaluating if it increased their mobile engagement.

Action Research

In any successful company or organization, the main component they all have in common is a good marketing strategy. This strategy is a way for everyone to know that their product or services are available to their clientele. True Friends organization is looking for a way to expand their mobile audience by improving the quality of their mobile engagement. Therefore, True

Friends is constantly looking for opportunities to improve communication with their consumers, and the implementation of social media could be a positive prospective avenue for them.

Before we can understand how to incorporate action research in this study we first have to understand what action research is. Action research focuses on improving the quality of an organization and its performance (Dickens & Watkins, 1999). The study of action research was intended to have cross-functional teams who addressed organizational issues through recurring cycles of action and reflection (Dickens & Watkins, 1999). This is an area where True Friends can strive for success and prosper from it. By targeting mobile audiences, they can create and act upon new ideas of how to reach out to parents who are seeking help.

Action research has always revolved around one question for organizations: how can I target people and improve my growth? (Smith, 2007). Organizations need to be in line in order to plan their marketing strategy accordingly. The steps start with identifying a general idea, fact finding, planning, evaluating, and amending the plan (Ley & Gannon, 2012). These steps are key factors in being able to reach an audience by action research. True Friends is in a place where they are still in new to utilizing social media to promote their services. As a non-profit organization, they do not have the proper resources to be as effective in their social media accounts as they would like. By implementing action research, True Friends could potentially reach a larger mobile audience and increase their mobile engagement.

The researchers utilized True Friends Instagram account during winter camp of 2015-2016. The researchers posted to True Friends Instagram account 6 times over the course of 10 days, as well as replied to comments and mentions. Once winter camp was over, the researchers analyzed the data from winter camp, and identified if the application of posting to Instagram consistently was beneficial for True Friends mobile engagement and their marketing department.

RESULTS

True Friends has a small number of social media accounts, which includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. These accounts were tracked and analyzed through June 2015-September 2015. True Friends Google Analytics account was also tracked. Their account is solely based upon their main website, www.truefriends.org.

True Friends Marketing Department created their Instagram account during the last week of June, so the reach of their Instagram account is very small. Therefore, the researchers will implement action research during winter camp at True Friends, which occurs December 27th-January 8th. They will increase the postings on True Friends Instagram account, and then analyze the results at the end of winter camp to see if their reach increased.

Facebook

True Friends Facebook account can be found at *True Friends Can*. Their page has a total of 3,807 page likes as of November 17th, 2015. From June 1st to September 30th, their page likes increased from 3,515 to 3,744 (see figure 1.1). True Friends Facebook page has a very diverse online population. Women make up 75% of their online audience, whereas men account for 24% and 1% is unspecified (see figure 1.2). There are 28 countries that represent their population, but in order to be efficient, the top five are as follows: United States N=2,574, India N=305, United Kingdom N=288, Philippines N=154, and Pakistan N=35 (see figure 1.3).

True Friends online population has high numbers, but the number of people actually engaged in their site is much lower. Women account for 87% of engaged users, while men account for 12% and 1% is unspecified (see figure 1.4). There are 23 countries that characterize True Friends engaged online population. An engaged online population is when the mobile audience is interacting with the page, through likes, comments, shares, or page clicks. The

United States (N = 344) and the United Kingdom (N = 88), make up 92% of the total engaged online population (see figure 1.5).

Twitter

True Friends Twitter account can be followed @truefriendscan. Their current following is 278, which has increased by 25 in the last 90 days. The data that was collected from their Twitter account includes tweets, profile visits, new followers, tweet impressions, mentions, gender, and region.

The gender of True Friends Twitter followers is 69% female and 31% male (see Figure 2.1). The regions of True Friends followers includes 46% Minnesota, 15% England, 4% North West England, 4% Wisconsin, 3% Iowa, 3% New York, 3% Greater London, 3% South East England, 2% California, 2% Illinois (see figure 2.2). True Friends has such a large following because many of their summer and winter camp counselors come through international programs that arrange for them to work in the United States.

True Friends tweeted 21 times in June, 75 times in July, 44 times in August, and 20 times in September (see Figure 2.3). They had 534 profile visits in June, 1,744 in July, 1,901 in August, and 360 in September (see Figure 2.4). They accumulated 14 new followers in June, 14 in July, 9 in August, and 4 in September (see Figure 2.5).

According to Twitter Support (2015), an impression is "times a user is served a Tweet in timeline or search results." True Friends had 5,611 tweet impressions in June, 13,900 in July, 14,300 in August, and 6,544 in September (see Figure 2.6). They also had 7 mentions in June, 1 in July, 11 in August, and 9 in September (see Figure 2.7). Twitter Support (2015) says a mention is "a Tweet that contains another user's @username anywhere in the body of the Tweet."

Pinterest

True Friends Pinterest username is "truefriendscan." They have 57 total followers. They chose to not promote any pins. They have 8 total boards, which include *True Friends*, *Camp Life*, *Volunteer Opportunities*, *Volunteers*, *In the News*, *Inspiration*, *What a good IDEA!*, and *disability Awareness*.

The data collected from True Friends Pinterest account included average impression per month and average reach per month. Average impressions are as follows: June 30.9, July 69.3, August 50.39, and September 58.6 (see figure 3.1). Average reach is as follows: June 18.83, July 21.1, August 22.61, and September 34.83 (see figure 3.2).

Instagram

True Friends Marketing Department created their Instagram account during the last week in June. They have posted to Instagram 27 times from the last week in June until September 30th, 2015. The posts ranged from as low as 16 likes, to up to 46 likes. Between June and September, the number of Instagram posts they had ranged from 1-13. The average likes of each posted ranged from 17.5-46.

During winter camp, True Friends uploaded a total of 6 posts during the period of 12/27/20150-01/06/2016. During this period, these 6 posts received a total of 244 likes. The average number of likes on these posts were 40.66 and the highest number of likes was 54. The post that received 54 likes was a video of a dog sledding around the campground. The lowest preforming post received a total of 32 likes and this post was of a camper with the dog from the sledding post.

Google Analytics

True Friends Google Analytics account tracks the usage of their main website, www.truefriends.org. The website has 66.7% new visitors and 33.3% returning visitors (see Figure 4). The website has 67,991 sessions in total, as well as obtains 66.62% new sessions. There are 46,631 users. Those users account for 243,198 page views. The website averages 3.58 seconds per page/session. The average session is 2 minutes and 17 seconds.

According to the Google Analytics data, True Friends receives the most website traffic during the period of June 1st through September 30th. The three pages that get the most traffic on the True Friends website are their home page, camp information page, and volunteer signup page. During this time period the True Friends home page received 51,184 views. Out of these views, 25.82% of these viewers left the website right away. This is a good indicator that True Friends is accurately targeting their desired market. During this time period the camp information page received 8,145 views. Out of these views 41.80% of these viewers left immediately without interacting with the website in any fashion. Visitor acquisition and retention may need to be assessed in the future in order to lower this percentage.

The third most visited page on the True Friends website during this period was the volunteer signup page. The total number of visitors during this time period was 4,472. Out of these views 0.18% of the viewers left immediately without interacting with the website in any fashion.

<div align="center">**DISCUSSION**</div>

Media Ecology Theory

Developed in the 1960s by Marshall McLuhan, Media Ecology Theory looks at "media as media," and how one receives and interprets messages from the media (Strate, 2008, p. 130).

McLuhan (1964) states, "The medium is the message." McLuhan focused on how one sees the media, and not just the content of the media, because he claims people tend to ignore the medium altogether. Media Ecology Theory also concentrates on the fact that the medium has the largest impact on humans' use of media, not the messages that are in them. Strate states, "It is the technology that matters the most, its nature and its structure" (2008, p. 130). The way humans use media and technology is more important than the content that they put in their messages.

People often do not realize the impact the medium has on them, because they choose to focus more on the content. However, Strate states, "Content cannot exist without the medium" (2008, p. 131). The medium can be anything from social media accounts, website, and humans themselves can act as a medium. However, McLuhan has been accused by his critics of technological determinism, which is the idea that technology within a society helps to shape the culture and social structure of that society (Smith & Marx, 2011). Despite his critics, McLuhan shows that each media environment can be unique. He states, "There is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening" (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, p. 25).

Technology continues to grow in this day and age, therefore affecting communication between organizations and clients. Strate (2008) states, "It is more common to think of media in terms of a pipeline or transportation, something that links or bridges two points" (p. 134). True Friends uses social media to bring instant information to their followers. This is an exceptional way to allow followers to see constant updates that are happening with the organization. McLuhan asserts that the medium is essentially a staple, just like natural resources such as coal or oil (1994). When there is a lack of natural resources, many people may suffer. If there is a lack in a type of medium, many societies may be affected as well. Because social media accounts are

a large medium for True Friends, it is essentially a staple for them: without it, their mobile engagement may become nonexistent.

Adidas International's Global Media Manager stated, "Mobile marketing is the most personal medium available. People run their lives off of mobile. It's business, it's personal, it's information gathering. It's on 24/7" (Sultan & Rohm, 2005, p. 83). This statement shows the importance of mobile devices as a medium for organizations to market to their mobile audiences. Many people use their mobile devices every day (Sultan & Rohm, 2005). Mobile devices are becoming increasingly advanced, which will only continue to help organizations and mobile marketers. McLuhan declared, "The electric media will create a world of dropouts from the old fragmented society, with its neatly compartmentalized analytic functions, and cause people to drop *in* to the new integrated global-village community" (McLuhan, 1995, p. 263). With the continuous development of mobile devices, it will force people to constantly upgrade and keep up-to-date with the newest devices, therefore causing them to integrate into the global-village community. The usage of mobile devices to view and interact with electric media allows social media to become a useful medium for many organizations to help create an interactive community with their clientele.

True Friends social media accounts provide a significant medium for True Friends mobile audience and the organization. Boonchai Hongcharu (2009) states "More interactivity and frequency of contacts are expected to dominate the ways we reach our target audience in the near future." By increasing their activity and postings on social media sites, True Friends would create an environment for their potential clientele to connect with them to ask questions, learn more about the organization, and conceivably converse with current clientele.

Facebook

True Friends Facebook account has 3,807 total page likes as of November 2015. Throughout the months of June-September 2015, their page likes increased from 3,515 to 3,744. These are crucial months for True Friends because June through August are their busiest months of the year. Their page likes have also steadily increased since camp ended in August. During summer camp, there were many interactive posts that were on their page, such as photos, videos, and questions to increase their mobile engagement. These posts impacted their page likes, because many of their posts were shared, which helps expand their mobile audience to their original audience's Facebook friends. True Friends effectively uses Facebook as a medium, and the interactive posts allow their audience to create the content on their page.

According to Wright (2010), Facebook campaigns are a great way to show your mobile audience that you are willing to put time and effort into social media. The marketing department started a paid campaign through True Friends Facebook account. This is a great way for them to market online and to increase their reach and engagement through their page. Using a paid campaign as a medium is a great way for True Friends to reach a mobile audience they might not have reached through their normal page. Through the campaign, they are able to cater to different demographics, which helps reach a whole new mobile audience. However, at the request of the marketing department, the data from the campaign cannot be used because the campaign is not over.

Out of all True Friends social media accounts, Facebook is their primary medium. Although Facebook gets the most traffic and has the largest mobile audience, it might not be beneficial for True Friends. According to Sultan and Rohm (2005), "Companies should not treat the mobile platforms as a stand-alone medium but rather as one component in an overall

marketing strategy that must be integrated with others" (p. 88). True Friends use of Facebook as their primary medium leaves their other accounts, such as their website, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram to be much smaller parts of their mobile marketing strategy. By utilizing all accounts equally, it shows an organization's mobile audience that they have an effective and professional marketing strategy, and are trying to market to all types of mobile audiences. However, there are many positive aspects that True Friends has within their Facebook account.

Within True Friends Facebook account, they have several different groups: True Friends Can, True Strides Therapy, Team Quest, and Camp Courage and Camp Courage North. According to Neil Postman (2000), "Cultures are formed *within* the media, rather than media simply being produced by cultures" (p. 135). Each group on True Friends Facebook has its own unique culture that has formed because of the category of the group, which acts as a medium. The mobile audiences created their own culture by the conversations and interactions they have within each different Facebook group.

True Friends Facebook also acts as a pipeline (Strate, 2008), for their mobile audiences. The marketing department posts items such as open camp counselor and volunteer positions, different events happening at camp, photos and videos, and extraordinary stories of people with disabilities doing great things. These posts allow their mobile audience to have a wide range of information being "transported" to them through the pipeline (Facebook). These diverse posts also allow True Friends to market to several different mobile audiences, which helps to increase their overall mobile engagement.

Twitter

True Friends Twitter account receives the most traffic June through August; when summer camp takes place. The marketing department tweets the most during those months, as

shown in the data in the results section. The largest average impressions happened in July and

August, which are the busiest months of summer camp. The data from True Friends Twitter

account validates that social media is highly trafficked during summer months because of camp.

Twitter is a great tool for organizations to use because it has an exceptionally large reach

(Asur, Huberman, Szabo, & Wang, 2011). True Friends Twitter account also has a very large

following. Their reach ranges from multiple states in the United States, to overseas in England.

There is a large following in England because many of the camp counselors come from there to

work at True Friends camp.

Since True Friends has a large reach, it is important that they maintain and manage this

account as a strong medium between them and their mobile audience. According to Asur and

Huberman (2010), "Twitter has attracted lots of attention from corporations for the immense

potential it provides for viral marketing" (p. 493). Although True Friends tweets do not go viral,

their large following makes it easier for their tweets and mentions to be seen by many people.

Along with the large reach Twitter allows organizations, the tweets themselves are a very

important aspect. According to Sultan and Rohm (2005), "Mobile marketing enables frequent

consumer involvement and interaction" (p. 86). The interaction and involvement from a mobile

audience is a great way to improve the quality of an organization's mobile engagement.

According to McLuhan (1995), "Because all media, from the phonetic alphabet to the computer,

are extensions of man that cause deep and lasting changes in him and transform his

environment" (p. 236).

Twitter as a medium allows users to create their own content and direct conversations.

This directly follows McLuhan's Media Ecology Theory where a medium is the main source of

the message, and users help to create the content within the media (1964). Twitter has become an

essential tool for True Friends because their reach is so large, and the constant flow of tweets and information they post allows them to reach their mobile audience at a faster rate.

Pinterest

The average impression and reach on Pinterest did not indicate any outstanding trends amongst True Friends account. The average reach of the audience ranged from ages 18-34, which does not show much of a trend amongst True Friends following. However, the average impression ranged from 30-69, which showed a fairly large jump from June (30.9) to July (69.3). By July, camp is in full swing, and people might have a peaked interest because they have seen how fun it is to volunteer at camp through other social media sites, or they see activities on a Pinterest board and want to try them at camp.

The increase in average impression could have been caused by multiple boards that the account has, such as *Volunteer Opportunities* or *What a good IDEA!* These boards have the ability to create interest amongst followers because they are interactive, and followers may be thinking "what's in it for me?" which is a term used in social media marketing. "What's in it for me" (WIIFM), is the idea that people are always looking out for themselves and what they can attain through social media (Diamond, 2013). Pinterest is a place where users can be "selfish," because it allows them to customize what they post, view, or follow.

True Friends has 8 different boards that their mobile audience can view. These boards are each unique because they each focus on a different topic. According to Strate (2008), media ecology scholars have discovered that any society is capable of creating its own unique environment. Each board on Pinterest has the capability of being its own unique environment, based on the topic. Therefore, each board can act as a medium to the audiences who view them.

As previously stated in the Facebook subsection, Neil Postman (2000) said, "Cultures are formed within media, rather than media simply being produced by cultures" (p. 135). Pinterest has allowed True Friends to create many unique cultures within one medium, which allows them to maintain and manage their mobile engagement. Throughout June-September 2015, the impressions and reach on True Friends Pinterest has either stayed the same or increased, which shows Pinterest has been a good medium for True Friends to use and continue using in the future.

Instagram

True Friends created their Instagram account during the last week in June 2015. Once the account was created, there was at least one post per week, if not more. When camp ended, there were 5 weeks without any posts, then the posts picked back up again consistently every week. Since the account is fairly new, there is not a sufficient amount of data to be able to make any substantial interpretations.

The posts on the Instagram that had the most likes were pictures of the scenery at camp, as well as pictures of the activities that were happening at camp that week. These 27 posts more than likely created more interest because the audience can see how fun camp is or how beautiful the scenery is. However, because True Friends is a non-profit, they do not have the necessary resources to be able to consistently post to Instagram. Sultan and Rohm state, "Taking advantage of mobile marketing's unique capabilities can require substantial resources" (2005, p. 87). Since mobile marketing may require substantial resources, it could turn away a potential audience or the current audience.

True Friends lack of social media presence on their Instagram account goes against Media Ecology Theory, because they are not utilizing Instagram as a medium between them and

their clientele. According to Media Ecology Theory, an organization's presence on social media is more important than the content that they post. However, the lack of presence on their Instagram account shows their mobile audience this "pipeline" (Strate, 2008, p. 134) is broken.

Based upon the action research conducted during True Friends winter camp of 2015-2016, the data was slightly higher than the previous data (June-September). True Friends posted consistently during winter camp, which shows they are following Media Ecology Theory, because they used their Instagram account to act as a medium between them and their followers (Strate, 2008, p. 134). The pictures that were shared during winter camp showed parents/guardians of True Friends clientele the activities the campers were involved in, and that they were receiving good care. By showing True Friends Instagram these pictures, it shows that True Friends marketing department is trying to increase mobile interaction with their audience Sultan & Rohm, 2005, p. 86). The slight increase in Instagram likes shows that they were successful.

Google Analytics

The use of Google Analytics plays a huge role in assessing the organizations online success. Not only does Google Analytics provide True Friends with valuable data about where their website traffic is coming from, but it also provides the organization with detailed data on each individual user. This individual user data is extremely beneficial for an organization like True Friends, because their camp sessions are restricted to the summer months.

Out of the top three most popular pages on the True Friends website their volunteer signup page may be beneficial for the organization. The data from this page shows that there is enough public interest in the organization that people are willing to donate their time in order to

help. This is extremely valuable for a nonprofit because this level of awareness amongst the community could potentially help the organization in spreading their brand image.

Limitations

A limitation that this study encountered was the lack of sufficient data in order to fully conduct action research. Because True Friends only recently started their Instagram account, it was not effectively used to its fullest potential. True Friends has two sessions of camp during the year, 12 weeks of summer camp and 2 weeks of winter camp. Because camp is only 14 weeks out of the year, when camp is not in session, social media account traffic slows down significantly, therefore directly affecting their mobile engagement and skewing the overall data.

Suggestions for True Friends Organization

True Friends Instagram account is still a work in progress, because the marketing department does not have the manpower to post frequently on their site, let alone post to all 4 social media sites that they manage. During winter camp of 2015-2016, True Friends maintained and exceeded the number of likes they usually receive. This showed that posting to their Instagram account during a camp session is beneficial for them. In order to maintain a consistent amount of likes on their Instagram page, True Friends should continue posting pictures that show camper/counselor interactions, scenery, and activities at camp.

Suggestions for Future Research

The data and analysis of True Friends social media accounts has led to a wide-spread interpretation of how social media accounts affect their clientele base. True Friends utilizes three social media accounts efficiently, and the action research added Instagram to that list. While the researchers were able to analyze the data from Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest, increasing the amount of posts on all sites would benefit the organization as a whole.

Future research could also investigate the implementation of Snapchat throughout True Friends organization. Snapchat is one of the fastest growing means of communication through new technology. Through the use of Snapchat, True Friends would be able to live snap pictures and videos of activities and people at camp. By doing this, parents/guardians and friends would be able to see what their child is doing at camp that week, which would increase the reach of True Friends clientele.

Another thing that True Friends can look into is what time of day that their website gets the most traffic. By assessing this data True Friends could potentially pinpoint the best times to make posts or updates to their website. For example True Friends could potentially time job posting updates during a time when they feel that it might be seen by the highest number of people. This could potentially help the organization with volunteer or customer retention due to the fact that people could feel that they are obtaining information that is of value to them.

Conclusion

In summary, this study explored how mobile marketing directly affects an organization's mobile engagement. The researchers found that since True Friends is a non-profit organization, they lack the necessary resources to fully capitalize on the advantages that the use of social media can bring to an organization. However, True Friends organization does have a great deal of potential if they continue to post on Instagram more frequently. Furthermore, with the constant progression of technology, there will always be new ways to improve the quality of mobile marketing and mobile engagement within True Friends organization.

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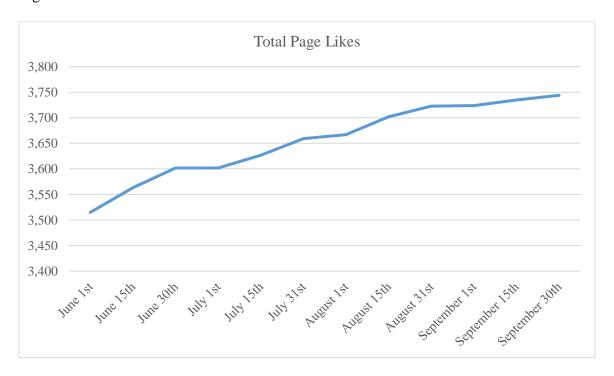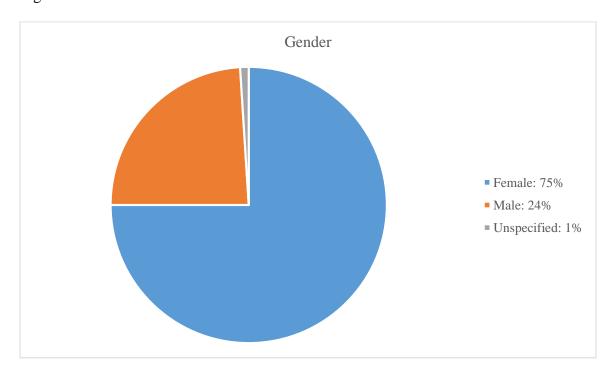
APPENDIX

Figure 1.1:
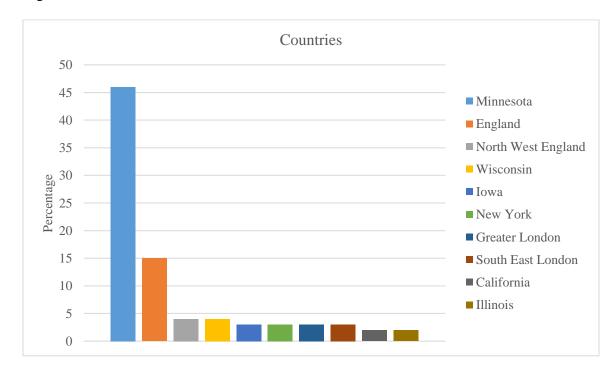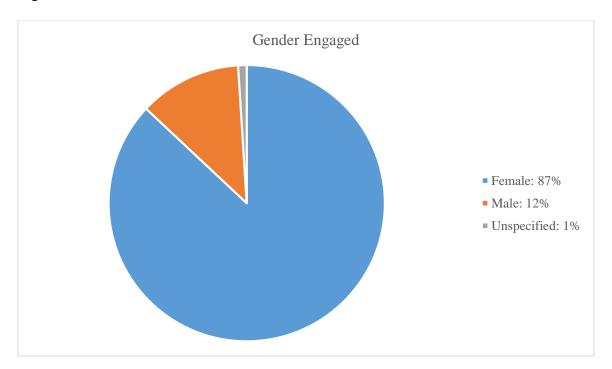

Total Page Likes

Figure 1.2:

Gender

- Female: 75%
- Male: 24%
- Unspecified: 1%

Figure 1.3:

Figure 1.4:

Figure 1.5:

Countries Engaged Online

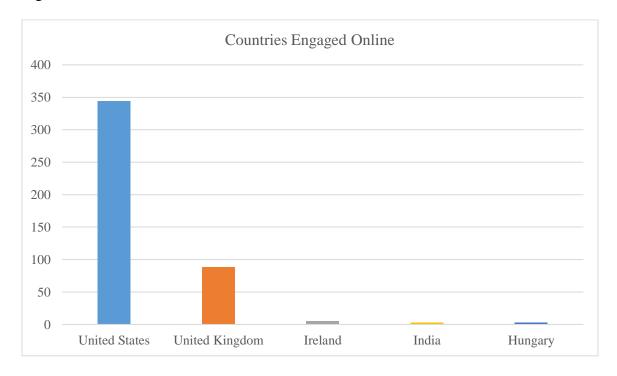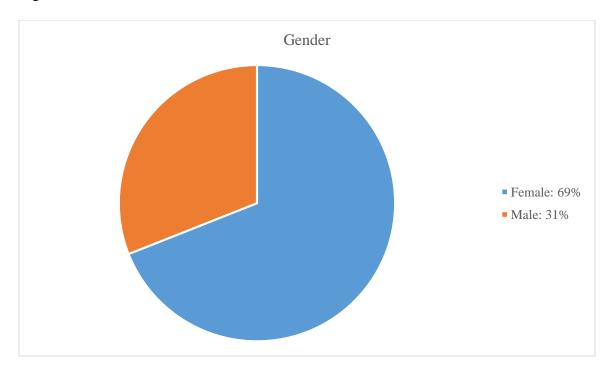| Country	Value
United States	~345
United Kingdom	~88
Ireland	~5
India	~3
Hungary	~3

Figure 2.1:

Gender

- Female: 69%
- Male: 31%

Figure 2.2:

Figure 2.3:

Figure 2.4:

Profile Visits

	June	July	August	September

Figure 2.5:

New Followers

	June	July	August	September

Figure 2.6:

Tweet Impressions

Figure 2.7:

Mentions

Figure 3.1:

Average Impression

Figure 3.2:

Average Reach

Figure 4:

Google Analytics Visitors

■ New Visitor: 66.7%   ■ Returning Visitor: 33.3%