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### Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix

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#### Abstract

The emergence of Internet-based social media has made it possible for one person to communicate with hundreds or even thousands of other people about products and the companies that provide them. Thus, the impact of consumer-to-consumer communications has been greatly magnified in the marketplace. This article argues that social media is a hybrid element of the promotion mix because in a traditional sense it enables companies to talk to their customers, while in a nontraditional sense it enables customers to talk directly to one another. The content, timing, and frequency of the social media-based conversations occurring between consumers are outside managers' direct control. This stands in contrast to the traditional integrated marketing communications paradigm whereby a high degree of control is present. Therefore, managers must learn to shape consumer discussions in a manner that is consistent with the organization's mission and performance goals. Methods by which this can be accomplished are delineated herein. They include providing consumers with networking platforms, and using blogs, social media tools, and promotional tools to

networking platforms, and using blogs, social media tools, and promotional tools to engage customers.



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## Keywords

Integrated marketing communications; Social media; Consumer-generated media; Promotion mix

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