

An Exploration of Incentives Motivating WeChat Uses in China

Eileen Qi Feng

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Abstract: Social media, the internet-based applications for people to express their ideas, exchange information and build relationship, is an efficient tool to facilitate marketing efforts for companies around the world. Through the social media platform, companies may communicate with their customers, customers can talk to companies and to other customers directly. Social media has changed people's lifestyle and has become an innovative marketing tool for companies. In particular, social media is very effective in a society, such as the Chinese society, where relationship is emphasized and word-of-mouth effect is valued by people. In China, large numbers of web-surfers are used to sharing their feelings on WeChat (or Weixin in Chinese). WeChat is a fast growing social media application developed and released by Tencent in 2011. It provides instant messaging communications and online community services. Meanwhile, it offers a platform for users to share customers' experiences to their friends and the general public. Its online community platform, WeChat Group Chat, is a function that encourages communications among friends and promotes word-of-mouth comments. Users may participate in various activities and perform different tasks upon requests of their friends in the group. The objective of the paper is to examine the incentives that motivate WeChat uses in China as well as Chinese users' participation in the WeChat Group Chat. Potential factors regarding social presence, information searching, networking, entertaining and reward are discussed. It is expected the current research will provide insights on how to use WeChat to enhance promotional efforts for companies.

Keywords: Incentives, WeChat, Social Media, Innovative Marketing