

Investigating the Social Media Competency Development of Scottish Small Businesses

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Abstract

Many Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), and especially small businesses, struggle with social media marketing. However, social media offers many benefits for businesses. This includes practical benefits, for example customer relationship management and promotion on a limited financial budget. Other benefits include widening audience reach and increased social recognition to charge premium prices. Support can be offered to small businesses to facilitate effective use of social media marketing. However, it is essential to first understand how small businesses build their social media competency to develop appropriate service support. Therefore, this study investigates how small businesses develop their social media competency. This study is set in the central belt of Scotland, which has the highest population density and business density in Scotland. Small businesses account for 98.2% of Scottish businesses. Consequently, the success and survival of such businesses are important for the Scottish economy. In depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 small business owners operating in various sectors, ranging from fitness, tourism, food and drinks, and consultancy. The study found four ways in which small businesses develop their social media competency and established service support needs. This contributes to our understanding of how small businesses develop media competency, particularly in the context of a regional economy such as central Scotland. Moreover, this study contributes to our general understanding of SME marketing practices and the development of competency, specifically digital competency.

Keywords: customer relationship management, digital competency; marketing management, online marketing, small business learning