

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR FASHION MARKETING: SUCCESS OF MAVI JEANS*

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ABSTRACT

Social media marketing is a new and rapidly growing way to reach out to potential customers. Using social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and hundreds more is becoming an effective tool for promoting the company and its products. The fashion industry is definitely becoming more accessible to the general public. The use of social media is also a chance to study and anticipate fashion behaviors, and also makes it easy to get a reaction toward new trends. In this paper, the Turkish textile company Mavi Jeans, which is one of the top 25 companies using social media successfully according to CNBC-e Business Magazine, was examined as a case study. Mavi Jeans' business success is extended by using Facebook and Twitter. Their outstanding efforts and success is quite remarkable. The findings have shown that social media supports their marketing strategy by letting them managing trends and learning the customer interest instantly. Therefore, their campaigns and other social media efforts made were presented in this study to provide guidance to other textile companies. Finally, it is suggested that fashion and textile companies should take their place in this new medium effectively in order to increase their competitiveness in the market.

Keywords: Social Media, Fashion, Marketing, Mavi.

MODA PAZARLAMASINDA BİR ARAÇ OLARAK SOSYAL MEDYA: MAVI JEANS'İN BAŞARISI

ÖZET

Sosyal medya pazarlama, potansiyel müşteriye ulaşmak için yeni ve hızla gelişen bir yoldur. Facebook, Twitter, Youtube ve daha yüzlerce gibi sosyal medya kanalları şirketleri ve ürünlerini tanıtmada etkili bir araç haline gelmektedir. Moda endüstrisi de halka daha ulaşılabilir hale geldiği kesindir. Markalar ve perakendeciler sosyal medyayı sadece müşteriler ile iletişim aracı olarak kullanmakla kalmayıp aynı zaman da onları dinleyebileceği bir ortam olarak kullanmaktadır. Sosyal medya moda dağcıların ve butiklerin daha iyi tanınmasına global çapta uygun maliyetlerde yapılmasına olanak sağlamaktadır. Sosyal medya kullanımı moda davranışlarını tahmin etmede ve yeni eğilimlere ulaşmada kolaylık sağlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, CNBC-e Business Magazine'e göre sosyal medyayı en iyi kullanan 25 şirketten biri olan Türk tekstil firması Mavi Jeans örnek olay olarak ele alınmıştır. Mavi Jeans'in ticari başarısı Facebook ve Twitter kullanımı ile genişlemiştir. Sosyal medyadaki sıra dışı çabaları ve başarıları oldukça ilgi çekicidir. Bulgulara göre, eğilimleri belirleyebilmek ve müşterilerin ilgilerini anında öğrenmek suretiyle, sosyal medya Mavi Jeans'in pazarlama stratejilerini desteklemiştir. Bu nedenle, diğer firmalara örnek olmasını sağlamak amacıyla Mavi Jeans'in sosyal medya kampanyaları ve sosyal medyayı kullandığı başarıları bu çalışmada sunulmuştur. Sonuç olarak moda ve tekstil firmalarına, pazardaki rekabet gücünü arttırabilmeleri, marka ve ürünlerini daha iyi tanıtmak için sosyal medya dünyasında etkili bir şekilde yer almaları önerilmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sosyal Medya, Moda, Pazarlama, Mavi.

Introduction: Through the vast advancement of technology, people nowadays depend highly in the technology. We are able to accomplish things fast and efficient through the high tech and connect with different people in diverse culture and race through different social media marketing. Businesses are one of the great benefactors of social media marketing. Social Media optimization is one of the popular way of promoting the product online. It is cost effective and as long as it is published online, higher the chance that people unravel the business (1). According to Forrester Research, 75% of Internet surfers used "Social Media" in the second quarter of 2008 by joining social networks, reading blogs, or contributing reviews to shopping sites; this represents a significant rise from 56% in 2007. The growth is not limited to teenagers, either; members of Generation X, now 35-44 years old, increasingly populate the ranks of joiners, spectators, and critics. It is therefore reasonable to say that Social Media represent a revolutionary new trend that should be of interest to companies operating in online space—or any space (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010: 59-68). Thus, social media have become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behavior including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behavior, and post-purchase communication and evaluation (Mangold and Faulds, 2009: 357-365). Social media applications provide users with the technology to both produce and distribute information. These technologies allow for collaborative writing (e.g., wikis), content sharing (e.g., text, video, and images), social networking (e.g., Facebook), social bookmarking (e.g., ratings, tagging), and syndication (e.g., RSS feeds) (Malita and Martin, 2010: 300-306).

Power of Social Media for Marketing: Web-based communication offers a potential to speak directly to customers and buyers, establishing a personal link. It is possible to reach niche buyers with targeted messages and get the right message to the right people at the right time (Scott, 2007: 320). With the social media marketing, promoting the business in the best possible way, create an intact supporters as well as followers. There is higher chance of dragging the prospect buyers and also higher

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chance to build followers and loyal visitors (2). Blog, one of the important platforms of Social media, provides to communicate to the existing customers. Blog communication takes place all year long. Customers talk to each other and often to prospective customers. In addition, blog can also build brand awareness, brand loyalty, reach to new customers, and credibility in your market segments (Borges 2009:177). Social media marketing is also cost-related. The advantage of reaching your targeted market for little or no cash investment is substantial, and the audience wanting your information voluntarily joins or follows. The viral nature of social media means that each person who reads your posts has the capability to spread the news farther within his own network, so information can reach a large number of people in a short time. Updating the social media accounts takes time and effort and needs a senior person with knowledge about the company and products. It is ongoing work to find new angles about the products continually and to post and re-post information. The information is only visible for a short time before newer posts replace it. In addition, publishing obvious advertising copy is unacceptable in the social media world (3). The biggest risk in social media marketing, and one of the most common mistakes companies make, is diving into social media without a strategy. A social media plan must begin with an objective, followed by a strategy and a list of tactics, as well as a definition of the resources, the budget, the tolerance for failure, a time-line, and measurement strategies (Borges 2009:114). Tons of Twitter represents a future where media access is unbridled and consumer attention is highly fragmented. Consumers frequently access information and entertainment, communicate with others and express themselves, and they do this across a wide range of sources and applications seamlessly from multiple locations. Consumers' interaction with media begins when eyes open and ends when eyes close. A large share of consumer time is spent creating, receiving, searching for, and sharing information and entertainment for both work and leisure (4).

The Success of Mavi Jeans in Social Media: Mavi Jeans, as a Turkish brand was born in Turkey and then it became one of the players in the jeans category as a global brand. Founded in 1984 as a textile company Erak Giyim Sanayi A.S concentrated initially in blue jeans produced for Lee, Mustang and Calvin Klein. Its brand Mavi Jeans, founded in 1991, is a full collection of jeans wear for young women and men. In 1993 they have done launch of the brand in Turkey (Mavi Jeans). It entered the USA market in 1996 and founded the Mavi America in New York. In 50 countries, it has 4,000 specialty stores. Its philosophy is perfect fitting jeans and Mediterranean feeling: Maviterranean. In 2006, Time Magazine showed Mavi among the best 16 jeans brands of the world. In 2004, American Cosmo Girl magazine readers voted Mavi as 'the sexist jeans' Istanbul T-shirt Project has been awarded as number 1 in the marketing communication category of Turkish Public Relations Association's 'Golden Compass Public Relations Awards in 2006. In 2007, Mavi Jeans held the first place in ready wear sector in the Capital magazine's annual 'The Most Admired Companies of Turkey' survey (Mavi Jeans). These are only some of the achievements of Mavi Jeans nationwide and globally (5, 6).

Mavi jeans opened its company web page in 1998 and it was the first step for Mavi jeans in the interactive world. The page, which is offering online shopping, was attracted in a short time with ease of use and functionality. In addition, the visitors of the webpage shared the items they enjoyed through Facebook, Friendfeed and Twitter. So, the sharing of the visitors helped to reach their friends. Mavi Jeans refers interactive projects in order to take attention of the young people. In recent years, with the creative projects, Mavi Jeans has managed to increase the number of Facebook fans 78 % and Twitter followers 217 % (7). Mavi Jeans is an attractive brand. The main reason for that is being first and applying creative projects in Facebook. Therefore, Mavi launched new projects in the first five months of 2011 and won 175 thousand more fans (8). The rate of the increase in fan number is growing everyday. Its marketing strategy with the "perfect fit" concept, not only physically but also culturally, is the biggest factor, in moving Mavi away from being simply a make of jeans to a much larger global fashion brand. Apart from creating a lifestyle for its customers, Mavi has become a part of their lives, making them also a part of Mavi. Their philosophy is to create a new Mediterranean fashion brand around jeans, which have a perfect fit, and around blue jean culture (9). Mavi started the first online sale of blue jeans. Today, various products are available at m@vistore, which one can access through www.mavi.com (Utkun and Atilgan, 2010: 26-31).

Method: In this study, a case study methodology was used to present Mavi Jeans' social media campaigns as a part of their integrated communication strategy. The study investigated their social media campaigns, their goals in using social media, the benefits to the company, and the experience gained. The findings show that social media is very useful to their marketing strategy because it allows them to set trends and immediately assess customer interest. In the process, Mavi has gained valuable skills in interactive communication, in taking the market pulse, using media for marketing and in managing trends. In addition, the findings show that Mavi is concerned with originality, novelty, sincerity and innovativeness in social media. As a result, Mavi Jeans has become aware that social media is a powerful and an undeniable tool for new generation marketing. Therefore, Mavi Jeans uses that powerful tool effectively and has become a model for the other textile companies in Turkey.

Mavi Jeans's Campaigns in Social Media: Mavi Jeans uses Instagram actively, as well as Facebook, Twitter, FriendFeed, Youtube, Flickr, and Foursquare. This intensive use of media and its successful campaigns make Mavi Jeans a brand that stands out and which has a different vision. Therefore, Mavi Jeans is a very good example of a brand that uses social media effectively in each platform. According to the social media report of the American Stylophane company, when the number of fans were taken in consideration, Mavi ranked 8th in the Platinum category of all the jean brands in the world, and ranked 1st regarding their interaction with customers. Mavi as a brand understands the young generation very well, and tries to spend more time on them in different areas, and in social media, also. Mavi Jeans is not only present in digital media, but is also being active 7/24. Mavi Jeans accepts online communication as a very powerful channel and a complementary tool for the other media. Thus, they develop new projects and ideas for social media. They also use social media as a platform for customer relationships (10, 11). Mavi Jeans is in communication and interaction everyday with its Facebook followers with a mass following

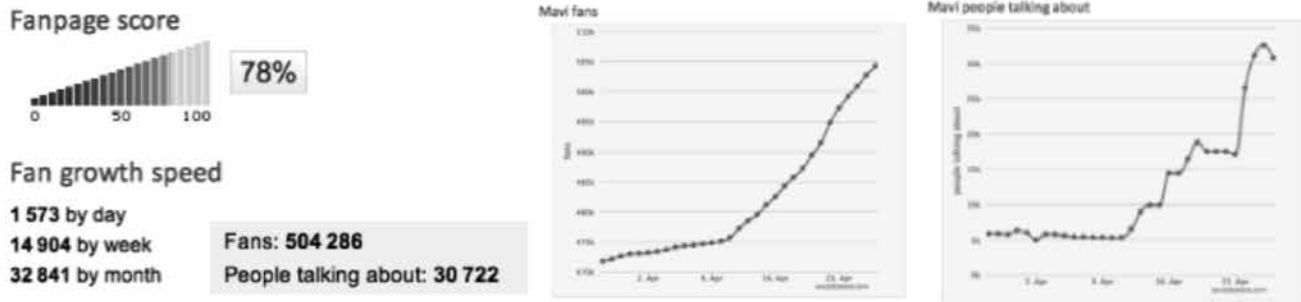


Figure 1: Mavi Jeans social media statistics (12).

If Mavi Jeans had only been using the corporate web site for the promotion of the company, participation in media and diffusion of the campaigns would not have been as effective as it has been. From that point of view, social media channels, particularly Facebook, can provide fast and effective communication instantaneously. Mavi Jeans manages to attract attention to itself by employing campaigns, contests, ads and so on. These active campaigns result in more followers everyday and succeed in gaining their ongoing interest. In addition, Mavi Jeans has strongly bonded with its followers. There are links for www.mavi.com and twitter.com/mavitr on Mavi Jeans Facebook. If the followers would like to buy anything from the collection they can easily click and access Mavi Jean's online shopping page. All these interactions help to create friendliness and trust with the brand. In addition, all those shares and comments are on other peoples' profile and provide brand awareness (13). The social media campaign seen in Figure 2 "Which One is Kivanc's Mavi", (Kivanc Tatlitug; a famous actor and model) the first of which was presented in 2010, was designed as an application that would last for four weeks in 2011. Users were asked to guess the outfits that Kivanc would wear every week from a selection of shirts and jeans displayed in the catalogue in the application. The user who guessed the combination first was awarded the combination that Kivanc wore that week or a 150 TL valued gift card. In addition, every 10th gift card owner who guessed the combination correctly won 10 Kartus (gift card) points, and every 5th person won an Istanbul t-shirt. At the end of the campaign, members of the Mavi Jeans Facebook Page increased by 47,000 people, and a total of 20,745 combination selections were entered (14).



Fig. 2: Mavi Jeans's "Which One is Kivanc's Mavi" Facebook campaign (14). Fig. 3: "Delidolu" on Facebook (15).

Fig. 4: a. Tweetwall commercial on Facebook (21), b. Mavi Beyoglu store, 2011 (22)

Mavi Jeans runs some competitions between its fans on Facebook. The competition called "Mavi'yle Kivanc'in Çekimindeyim" offered to fans the chance to meet and watch Kivanc Tatlitug (a famous Turkish actor/model) during the commercial shooting of the 2011 Spring/Summer Collection. The number of Mavi fans increased by 44% with that campaign. Mavi Jeans pursued these campaigns and the other competition campaigns most entertainingly. Mavi Jeans uses social media both to advertise its products and to ascertain the perception of buyers. Mavi Jeans applied that approach for its new product called "Delidolu". Before starting to sell it in their stores, it had been advertised on Facebook and the reaction of the followers to the product was examined. Due to a large number of "like" responses for the product on Facebook, the inventory of that product was revised before selling it in stores. As soon as it went on sale in stores, 1,000 "Delidolu" products were sold within 4 days. Figure 3 depicts "Delidolu" photo on Facebook. The campaign called "Modada jean rüzgarı, çok mu çok esiyoruz" with Kivanc Tatlitug, published in April 2011, was watched by 30 thousand people within an hour after its release on the internet, and watched by 10 million people a week later. Mavi Jeans is also the first brand in Turkey that chose the actors for its commercial film from Facebook followers (8). Istanbul T-shirts are another example of creative marketing by Mavi Jeans. Mavi was the first brand to notice that there was no T-shirt for Istanbul. After capturing record unit sales, adding new designs to the Istanbul T-shirt collection was inevitable for Mavi Jeans (16). The collection became a huge one during the summer season of 2010 with an additional 42 designs prepared by 23 different designers (17). In order to add a new product to the collection the "Istanbul Design" contest (<http://istanbulatasarla.mavi.com/>) was held in 2011 (7). The contest began with a record participation of 500 people in the first three days and reached to 1500 people in two weeks (13). In addition to all of these successful social media activities, Mavi Jeans organized a gala on Facebook for the first time in Turkey in 2011. In two weeks, 364,000 people clicked the "like" button for the commercial in the digital environment and the rating number of the commercial reached to 10 million people through the viral effect (13).

As Mavi Jeans was satisfied with so much interest in the advertising campaigns, a similar advertising campaign is also on Facebook this year with the well-known model Adriana Lima. The “Adriana Lima loves Mavi Jeans” commercial was first published on Facebook on the 13th of April. The other successful contest on Mavi Jeans’ Facebook was called “Mavi’ni bul” (Find your Mavi). The winner of that contest won presents from Mavi Jeans. As an extension of this campaign, an innovative application has emerged which gives a different dimension to the customer experience at stores. This innovation allows customers to get to know the most appropriate model of jeans for themselves by means of following the instructions on a touch screen at a “Find your Mavi” stand at the stores. That interactive stand helps to attract the attention of the customers to Mavi products (18).

Mavi Jeans social media activities continue on different platforms. Twitter is one of them. Mavi Jeans has almost 8,000 followers on Twitter and it continues to implement the same strategy here as it does on Facebook. For example, “Mavi Tweetwall” which was a special project that the new year messages of Mavi followers were featured online on store windows. The other Twitter project came out from one of Mavi Jeans’ commercial. In that commercial, “Kıvanç Tatlıtuğ” coined the catchword “cok sev” (love much) by saying it instead of “cok yasa” (bless you) when his girl friend sneezed. That catchword was loved very much by the audience and created a new trend. Thus Mavi Jeans found a way to use it for its own sake and asked its followers to write tweets with “cok sev” hashtags and published those tweets on store windows in Beyoğlu and İstinyepark. The owner of the best tweets of the day then won a New Year’s present. During the campaign, Mavi received 6,200 different tweets and increased its followers by 20 % (19, 20). Figure 4 shows the tweetwall commercial on Mavi Jeans’ Facebook and the window of Mavi Beyoğlu store.

Conclusion: Nowadays, social media has become one of the most effective, easiest, and most economical way-to directly and interactively communicate with the buyers. Successful positioning of a brand in social media improves the brand’s social value and also increases consumer loyalty. Accordingly, the sales potential rises. 60% of Facebook and Twitter users recommend the brands that they follow to others. The importance of these media is obvious as the most significant decision-making factor behind purchasing for 50% of the users is “word of mouth marketing” (23). Therefore, an important lesson is that companies should create unique and distinctive content to differentiate themselves from other. While the power of social media on brands is increasing every day, the success of the Turkish brand Mavi Jeans’ in social platforms has been among the world’s top 10. The number of Mavi Jeans’ followers on their Facebook page is more than 500,000. With this number, Mavi Jeans ranks 8th of all jeans brands, and it has achieved a global success. According to the social media report of Stylophane Company, for the last months, Mavi Jeans has become number one among the brands. As a result, of their experience, Mavi Jeans is aware that social media is a powerful and an undeniable tool for new generation marketing. Therefore, Mavi Jeans uses that powerful tool effectively and serves as a model for the other textile companies in Turkey. The other companies, which intend to become a brand or to strengthen their brands, should endeavor to produce more innovative and interactive content on their media, as Mavi Jeans does. When it is perceived from the perspective of the consumer, social media is an important source for receiving detailed information about the company, its products and also its campaigns. If social media is well utilized, interaction, sharing and the ability to measure immediate response are advantages that could be a great opportunity for the companies. Mavi Jeans’ success in using social media is highly recommended to other companies.

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