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The Brand Axis: Strategic Impacts of Loyalty and Engagement within the Social Media Magnet Theory

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ABSTRACT

The Social Media Magnet is presented as a new pedagogy for organic, inbound marketing instruction. This methodology has now been deployed for the last four years across multiple universities combining a digital online delivery system with a new theory and a live online practicum to teach college students both strategic and tactical planning for inbound marketing campaigns. Using live website creation, social media planning tools, and email retention campaigns, students using this pedagogy learn the best practices for inbound marketing. This is not a simulation, but a live practicum that teaches students real-time inbound marketing principles. This paper recaps the Social Media Magnet Theory and Practicum but develops a deeper theoretical and applicable understanding of The Brand Axis, a strategic tool that is used to measure brand loyalty and engagement, providing a strategic prescription for how brands can keep their brand messaging centered on the four brand elements: Story, Promise, Belief, and Trust.

Data across one-hundred and fifteen students collected through multiple universities will be presented that demonstrates the working model in action. Results indicate that students who actively use both the acquisition and retention processes of the inbound campaign build increased brand awareness and completed goal funnel metrics at faster rates. This suggests that brands that learn to stay engaged with the four brand elements are less likely to become off-center of the Brand Axis. Misalignment causes confusion and a decrease in the harmony and serialization of content focused messages that drive awareness and consumers to move to action. The goal of the Social Media Magnet Theory is to teach individuals and companies how to continually align their message to their brand story driving organic results. The pedagogy provided also provides professors the tools, resources, assignments, and practicum needed to teach the organic, inbound strategies needed by businesses today. Our vision is that the Social Media Magnet will provide students with the foundation on how to create brand strategies using digital content, implement those content strategies, and learn to audit their organic campaigns with the current marketing analytics provided by current digital and social media platforms.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Kyle A. Huggins is an Associate Professor of Marketing at Belmont University in Nashville, TN, where he has taught Social Media Marketing for over the last five years. His doctoral degree is from the University of Arkansas, and he has numerous publications from reputable journals, including *the Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, *Journal of Marketing Channels*, *Journal of Business Research*, among others. He is a social media consultant and co-owner of The Social Media Magnet.

Elliott Cunningham holds a BBA in Marketing from Texas State University, and has worked in marketing for over 20 years. He is a strategist with a successful track record of developing, positioning, creating and marketing in a variety industries, most recently in a digital context. In 2014, Elliott was nominated by the Nashville Business Journal for the Chief Marketing Officer Award for his work with a local sock manufacturer. He is currently a strategic marketing consultant and co-owner of The Social Media Magnet.