Understanding the Power of Word-of-Mouth

O CONSUMIDOR E O PODER
DA COMUNICAÇÃO BOCA-A-BOCA

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ABSTRACT

Word-of-mouth has been considered one of the most powerful forms of communication in the market today. Understanding what makes word-of-mouth such a persuasive and powerful communication tool is important to organizations that intend to build strong relationships with consumers. For this reason, organizations are concerned about promoting positive word-of-mouth and retarding negative word-of-mouth, which can be harmful to the image of the company or a brand.

This work focuses on the major aspects involving word-of-mouth communication. Recommendations to generate positive word-of-mouth and retard negative word-of-mouth are also highlighted.

KEYWORDS

Word-of-mouth communication; Advertising; Internet.

RESUMO

Atualmente o boca-a-boca é considerado uma das formas mais poderosas de comunicação no mercado. Compreender quais são os motivos que levam o boca-a-boca a ser um instrumento de comunicação tão persuasivo e poderoso é importante para organizações que visam a construir fortes relacionamentos com os consumidores. Conseqüentemente, existe grande preocupação em promover o boca-a-boca positivo e retardar o negativo, que pode ser prejudicial à imagem de uma empresa ou até mesmo de uma marca específica.

Este artigo concentra-se nos principais aspectos que envolvem a comunicação boca-a-boca. Recomendações de como gerar o boca-a-boca positivo e retardar o negativo também foram destacadas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Comunicação boca-a-boca; Propaganda; Internet.

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1   INTRODUCTION

How many of us have already visited a restaurant recommended by a friend? How many of us have already taken a car to the repair shop with a reputation for honesty and speed among friends or family members? How many of us have watched a movie because "your brother told you it was great"?

Those kinds of questions focus on a force that drives people to do or buy what they are recommended to do by other people. This persuasive and influential process has a more specific name, known by marketers as word-of-mouth (WOM) communication.

It is commonly known that when consumers want to purchase a new product or service, they tend to seek information from family members, friends, and others, as favored sources of information. Therefore, for many consumers, information that is received from others, or word-of-mouth communication is an important source of product, brand, and retailer information. Word-of-mouth can be defined as a form of communication among consumers based on their personal experiences and impressions of a product or service. This process can be the most powerful information source since it involves friends and family members, typically viewed as trustable people.

Companies are still relying mostly on advertising to promote their products and businesses, but now they are starting to realize that advertising is not the only method that can help them effectively sell their products and that word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful forms of communication in the market today if controlled and managed correctly. For that reason, marketers and organizations are interested in promoting and stimulating positive word-of-mouth and avoiding negative word-of-mouth, which can be extremely dangerous to the image of a corporation or a brand.

2   INFORMATIONAL AGE

Nowadays we are in an Informational Age, meaning that individuals are surrounded with overwhelming quantities of information. People are so busy that they do not have time even to explore and investigate all information available.

These are some reasons for the increased importance of word-of-mouth: noise, skepticism, and connectivity (ROSEN, 2000).

As stated earlier, customers are having trouble "hearing". There is too much noise and too much information. In his book *Information anxiety*, Wurman says "a weekday edition of the *New York Times* contains more information than the average person was likely to come across in a lifetime in seventeenth-century

England" (apud ROSEN, 2000). In addition, advertising experts estimate that each customer is exposed to more than fifteen hundred ads every day. Basically, consumers filter the messages they show interest in. It is definitely easier to listen to their friends (ROSEN, 2000).

Customers are skeptical. They do not believe anymore in what they see or hear. Research shows that most customers share a similar sense of skepticism and they attribute this to either misleading or disappointing situations they have experienced.

According to a survey by the firm Porter Novelli, only thirty seven percent of the public considers information from a software or computer company somewhat believable. When the information comes from a pharmaceutical company, this percentage decreases to twenty eight percent while insurance companies rate only sixteen percent (ROSEN, 2000).

The third reason for the rise in the importance of word-of-mouth is that customers are more connected to each other; they have found new tools for sharing information. Consumers always talked to each other, but now, with the advance of the Internet, giving and asking for advice is just easier.

What it is interesting is that the new tools provided by the Internet allow customers to communicate not only with people they know but also with total strangers. Individuals are now able to spread the word to the rest of the world.

So, as we can see, word-of-mouth is a necessary time saver. It is easier for consumers to let other people cut through the information, process and refine it, filter it, and then give to them the benefit of their experience.

As a result of this situation, Silverman (2001) believes that consumers will become more dependent on the power of word-of-mouth to cut through the clutter, to tell what is the most important, or what to pay attention to, in order to benefit from others' experiences and then filter the information. E-mail exchanges, chat rooms, Web sites and other forms of Internet communications will be responsible for bringing word-of-mouth information that can save consumers time.

3   ENGAGING IN WORD-OF-MOUTH

What motivates people to talk to others about a product or a service?

In a study of product talking behavior, it is possible to categorize four main reasons why opinion leaders engage in word-of-mouth communication about products and services (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994).

The first reason is product involvement. When consumers make use of a product or service, tension can be originated, and as a way to reduce this tension people have a tendency to talk about pleasurable or unpleasurable things. Talk

can serve to relive the pleasure the speaker has obtained and spread the excitement related to the use of a product. For example, consumers are usually impressed and fascinated by new items and feel they should tell someone about how good the product they found is (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994). Besides, especially with the purchase of expensive products, consumers may feel discomfort after making the purchase, a phenomenon known as cognitive dissonance. In order to reduce the dissonance, consumers will talk to others to justify their decision. A person who bought a new car is likely to tell others about the advantages of this particular brand and comment about information from reliable sources that supported this decision (ROSEN, 2000).

The second reason to engage in word-of-mouth is self-involvement. The influencer seeks confirmation of his decision and can gratify certain emotional needs (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994). Basically, product talk can achieve goals such as: gaining attention; showing connoisseurship; enhancing feelings of being a pioneer; having more information about the product than the listener; suggesting status; converting the listener to use the product; seeking confirmation of decisions; and, asserting superiority (BATRA et al., 1995).

The third reason is "other involvement" in which the major motivation is that opinion leaders want to help the listeners. They want to give something to the listener, or to express care, love or friendship, or enjoy the benefits of the product (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994).

Also the fourth motivation is message involvement. Message involvement derives from the nature of advertising itself. Advertising can stimulate word-of-mouth communication. For example, advertising that is considered original and entertaining may be the topic of a conversation, especially since some individuals believe they are experts on effective advertising and so can speak as critics (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994).

Rosen (2000) suggests that other motivations are behind word-of-mouth. For him, the most fundamental reason that people talk is because they are programmed to talk. It is usual for individuals to share their experiences and to rely on others as sources of information. Research shows that in certain situations, like hunting for a job, people tend to count on tips from others. Actually, studies show that most people find out about their jobs through other individuals. Sharing information is vital for human beings.

Another explanation for talking, according to Rosen (2000), is the necessity that individuals have to connect with others. This need can be linked to the necessity that people have to create impressions on other individuals, like for example, convincing other people of their own views and thoughts. For this reason, when books are given as gifts, for many it is considered a vehicle for connection, where both gift giver and recipient share values and taste.

4 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE WORD-OF-MOUTH

At the same time that positive word-of-mouth is a powerful tool for companies to promote their business; negative word-of-mouth can have a disastrous impact on a company's image.

One of the things that it is shown in research about word-of-mouth is the fact that dissatisfied customers tend to spread their negative experiences to more people than they do when they have positive experiences (ROSEN, 2000). Research shows that when an individual has a positive experience, he tells three people about it, and when he has a negative; he shares it with seven other people.

The emotional involvement that a consumer has with a product can be a good predictor of how many people he will tell about an experience (ROSEN, 2000). It is believed that the more involvement individuals have with a product the more people they will share their experience with it. For example, many people have strong feelings about their cars, so they may share car related information with a higher number of friends. On the other hand, when individuals purchase groceries products, even if they face terrible service, they may not talk to as many people about it, because it is not exciting (ROSEN, 2000).

Basically, positive experiences are expected and soon forgotten, but the unresolved negative ones make people angry and frustrated, energizing negative word-of-mouth (SILVERMAN, 2001). Studies have shown that people talk about the extraordinary, unexpected, amazing, and incredible. People do not tend to talk about the ordinary, because they think it is boring. This means that if the service or product is satisfactory, there are chances that individuals will not talk about it. For them to talk, it should be unusually poor or unusually good (SILVERMAN, 2001).

Another important predictor in generating word-of-mouth is the level of expectation that an individual has. Most positive word-of-mouth arises when a customer's expectations are exceeded, and most negative comments come when a customer is disappointed by something that occurs (ROSEN, 2000).

Privacy is also considered another issue affecting the number of people with whom customers share their experiences. People may tell fewer of their friends about their experience with financial services and health care (ROSEN, 2000).

Employee behavior can also generate word-of-mouth. When consumers perceive that employees are helpful, responsive, and friendly they engage in positive word-of-mouth. On the other hand, consumers tend to engage in negative word-of-mouth when they think employees are rude, do not have product or service knowledge, and are discourteous (SUNDARAM and MITRA, 1998).

People love to trade rumors. The rumor a few years ago about worms added to hamburger meat can be attributed in part to the growing uncertainty and anxiety in our society about additives and other health risks contained in food (HAYWOOD, 1989):

> "Rumors resulting from a combination of uncertainty and anxiety will persist until wants and expectations that give rise to the uncertainty are fulfilled or until anxiety abates".

Global marketers have also learned that word-of-mouth is a powerful information source in developing countries. Rumors that result in negative word-of-mouth are particularly common. In Indonesia for example, several food products were rumored to contain pork, which is prohibited for Muslim consumers (BERKOWITZ, KERIN and HARTLEY, 2000). In Russia, the Mars Corporation had to counteract the rumor that children in Moscow acquired diabetes from Snickers candy bars (BERKOWITZ, KERIN and HARTLEY, 2000).

Negative word-of-mouth reduces the credibility of a company's image and consumer intentions to buy products. Due to the importance of this topic, recommendations for generating positive word-of-mouth and retarding negative word-of-mouth are discussed later.

5 THE POWER OF WORD-OF-MOUTH

The average person is exposed to about two hundred to one thousand sales communications a day (SILVERMAN, 2001). Every day, individuals are exposed to television commercials, print ads, radio ads, billboards on buses, roads, and buildings, telemarketers, direct mail, salespeople, Internet brochures, and other commercial messages. If individuals read only a couple of newspapers or magazines, they will be exposed to many ads.

Now, suppose that a friend recommends a movie, or a CD to you. Probably, you are more likely to act on a recommendation of a friend or family member than to a commercial communication. "Word-of-mouth is thousands of times as powerful as conventional marketing" (SILVERMAN, 2001).

According to Rosen (2000), word-of-mouth plays an important role in the purchase process of many products:

* Friends and relatives are the number-one source of information about places to visit or about flights, hotels or rental cars, according to the Travel Industry Association. Of people they surveyed, forty three percent cited friends and family as a source for information.

- Movies are driven by word-of-mouth. Fifty three percent of moviegoers rely to some extent on a recommendation from someone they know, according to a study by Maritz Marketing Research. Independently of the money spent with advertising, individuals consult with each other about what movie to see.
- Seventy percent of Americans rely on the advice of others when going to a new doctor.

In order to understand why word-of-mouth is considered to be such a persuasive and powerful communication tool, the main characteristics of word-of-mouth are presented below.

Credibility is the first characteristic that makes word-of-mouth a powerful force in the market. It is known that consumers engage in a search for information by the time they want to purchase a product or a service, thus consumers tend to ask people who have already experienced or tried the product. Research indicates that the credibility of personal sources encourages people to use the product or service in question because the sources are perceived as being credible or knowledgeable on a specific topic (HAYWOOD, 1989).

Word-of-mouth is considered communication about products and services between people who are perceived to be independent of the company providing information about a product or service, within a medium perceived to be independent of the company (SILVERMAN, 2001).

The major point in this discussion is that these communications are originated from individuals who do not have commercial interest in persuading someone else to use or buy a product and therefore they have no particular interest in distorting the truth in favor of a specific product or service. Word-of-mouth is originated by a third party and transmitted spontaneously in a way that is independent of the product or seller.

On the other hand, advertising is based on a message that is chosen, designed, and constructed by the seller of the service or product, and this message runs in a medium that is owned or paid (OGDEN, 2001). Besides, most consumers feel that ads are not a trustable source of information anymore. Consumers are bombarded with messages and they don't usually know who to trust. Actually, studies show that 90 percent of all advertising is not credible, yet 90 percent of word-of-mouth is (OGDEN, 2001).

Word-of-mouth is also more credible than a salesperson. Imagine when a consumer wants to buy a car and he goes directly to a dealer. How many of us had that weird sensation that the salesman is not telling you the truth? Now, imagine if your father recommended you to go to a specific dealer and to talk to a specific sales person. Would you be more secure? Probably yes. You know that your father, a person who is credible for you, recommended that place.

According to Silverman (2001), experience delivery is the second reason why word-of-mouth is so powerful. He believes than when an individual is making his mind up about purchasing a product, there is a point where he wants to try the product, and he wants to get low-risk and real world experience when using it.

There are two ways to get experience: directly or indirectly. Direct experience is actually trying the product, which can be more costly in time, money, risk of failure and frustration than the indirect experience.

In the indirect experience individuals talk with other people about their experiences, hear about other people's experiences, and help others. Doing those types of things, people are sharing risks and concerns.

> "To summarize, what gives word-of-mouth most of its power is the fact that it is an experience delivery mechanism [and that] the faster you deliver that experience, the faster people will feel comfortable enough to go to full adoption of the product" (SILVERMAN, 2001).

Based on what Silverman said, word-of-mouth can determine the speed of product adoption because the quicker consumers can get experience, the quicker they will be able to adopt a product or service.

The third reason why word-of-mouth is so powerful is because it is the most customer driven of all communication forms (SILVERMAN, 2001). The consumer defines to whom he will talk, and what he will ask. Besides, word-of-mouth is a live communication. If a friend tells you about a movie or other product that he thinks you might enjoy, he would tell you because he thinks that you would like to know. Basically, he would not tell you about it if he thought you were not interested in it.

The major point is that when a friend makes a recommendation, he is basically responding to questions and therefore, people pay more attention to it because it is perceived as more relevant and a more complete form of communication.

The other attribute of word-of-mouth is that it can save consumers time and money (SILVERMAN, 2001). Suppose that an individual wants to buy a product that he does not have too much information about. The best way is to find someone who has already investigated or experimented with the product, and to learn from him what he or she has already found out. Naturally, it is necessary to find the right person or the perfect advisor, or word-of-mouth will not be efficient.

Companies spend millions of dollars to promote their products and services and rely heavily on advertisements. However, word-of-mouth (WOM) can be more effective and more reasonable for organizations. It only requires making the right people talk about your product and service.

6   GENERATING WOM

Recommendations in generating word-of-mouth are highlighted below:

• **Targeting Opinion Leaders through Advertising.** Advertising plays an important role in reaching opinion leaders. There are many ways in which advertising can be designed in order to appeal to opinion leaders and enhance word-of-mouth. Since locating opinion leaders who are influential is complicated, advertising is a tool used to simulate opinion leadership (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994).

The advertiser simulates personal influence by using customer testimonials where the user shares a favorable experience or opinion about a product or service within ads (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994). The most effective testimonials are given by people who others can relate to or would aspire to be. So, if your customers are people who love to cook, getting a testimonial from the chef of the most expensive restaurant in town may not be the best one because people can have the impression that your company is selling only for chefs and not for ordinary cooks. On the other hand sincere comments from people with culinary training who have skills in a kitchen might be right, particularly if the person looks like someone your audience would like to be (FRANCESE, 2001).

Celebrities testimonials, featured by famous actors and athletes, is another form of simulating personal influence. Marketers who use celebrities in their campaigns must be aware that the Federal Trade Commission requires that "celebrities must actually use the product if the ad says they do and they have to present their honest view of the product" (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994).

Another way of simulating opinion leadership is to use a company's chief executive (or personal endorsement). While many businesses choose celebrities to talk about their products, Marriott Corporation chooses to be endorsed by its president, Bill Marriott Junior. His presence in the ads shows that he is personally "interested in any problems that guests may have" (HAYWOOD, 1989).

The success of the testimonial approach depends on some things. First, consumers have to believe that speakers are talking "spontaneously" and are not being paid to talk about a product. Second, the speaker needs a "believable" relationship to the product. Third, the language used should sound "authentic" (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994).

Advertising can also be used to stimulate opinion leadership. Some companies develop entertaining and emotional campaigns in order to make consumers engage in discussion about the product and the advertising.

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Others encourage consumers to talk about their products, like for example, Firestone's ads that say "Ask a friend about Firestone" (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994). The main objective in this type of ad is to have users disseminating product information and potential users requesting product information.

- **Using Other Promotional Tools.** A wide variety of other promotional tools can be used to stimulate word-of-mouth. Block parties are often used to promote china and silverware sales. Samples give consumers the opportunity to use the product without having to buy it (BATRA et al., 1995). Store demonstrations and displays provide visibility of the product. Sweepstakes and contests are another way to build visibility and to get consumers talking about products and services. Direct mail is a strong tool for sending special incentives for the most enthusiastic consumers and asking them for referrals (SILVERMAN, 2001). Salespeople should be prepared to offer a great service for consumers and be trained to treat customers with respect. Customers never forget when they face a great service.
- **Deliver Excellent Customer Service.** Organizations should stop treating customers and prospects, as if they do not count for anything. The delivery of excellent customer service is the foundation for a long-term customer relationship. Southwest Airline earns the highest honors for customer service. "The airline's customer service approach is in stark contrast to that of its competition. It is the Southwest culture, and passengers are loyal to it" (OGDEN, 2001).
- **Provide Quality Service.** If companies intend to gain consumers' respect they should offer quality products and services. The better the quality, the more individuals will engage in positive word-of-mouth. Therefore companies should have in mind that they have to make their products the best they can and realize that there is always room for improvement and be willing to make such improvements when possible (FOLEY, 2002).
- **Give Consumers Something Great to Talk About.** Organizations have to be prepared to make extraordinary and outstanding things in order to have people talking about their business. They have to be different. RGE, a woman's boutique in Warwick, became famous for sponsoring pajama parties for the customers and for sending gifts and promotions to the husbands of the customers (WEISS, 2001).

Other businesses, like beauty salons, are hosting open houses with music, food and beverages and encourage their customers to bring their friends (WEISS, 2001).

As Foley (2002) says: "Do not just try to meet your customer's expectations. Exceed them. Under-promise and over-deliver".

- **Deliver on Promises.** Whenever a company advertises, it makes promises. For word-of-mouth to be effective, staff must be aware and prepared to deliver exactly what consumers expect (HAYWOOD, 1989). If individuals create expectations based on things that cannot realistically be achieved, like weather and other features that are beyond control, then dissatisfaction and negative word-of-mouth can be generated (HAYWOOD, 1989).

7 RETARDING WOM

Generally negative word-of-mouth may be the result of poor service, poor quality products, or unsafe conditions, or misunderstandings among consumers. Loudon and Bitta (1994) says:

> "When consumers spread negative word-of-mouth communication over dissatisfaction with a product or over a question or complaint that is ignored or unsatisfactorily resolved by the marketer, the effect may be quite damaging".

Word-of-mouth should be retarded when a damaging rumor "surfaces" about the company or its product. As stated prior, people love to trade rumors. Besides, Harris (1995) believe that no business can fully avoid negative comments but all businesses can minimize the potential damage through responses to the problems exposed.

Marketers must be prepared to take immediate action to stop negative word-of-mouth communication and start to build a positive image. Information processing knowledge has been used as a strategy that attempts to influence the way consumers store and retrieve a rumor in their minds (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994).

Marketers should also be ready to formulate promotional and public relations responses to negative word-of-mouth. Intel, for example, had already shipped millions of its Pentium microprocessor chips when it was discovered that that the chip was causing mathematical errors. The company initially denied the problem, creating a much more complicated situation for the company. Differently from Intel, Pepsi in 1993 was receiving rumors from all over the US that some of its cans had syringes inside them. Instead of ignoring the complaints, Pepsi assembled a management team that was assigned to handle the crisis, and its president went on national television to explain the situation. The company made a national recall of all Pepsi products (O'GUINN, ALLEN and SEMENIK, 2000).

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Consumer misunderstandings can also lead to poor word-of-mouth communication if not corrected. If, for example, consumers operate the product incorrectly, leading to malfunctions, the company should either redesign the product or rewrite its instruction manuals to make them clearer to consumers (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994). Another important issue to avoid misunderstandings is to provide demonstrations and more instructional commercials by the time a company launches a new product that is very innovative in the market (LOUDON and BITTA, 1994).

According to Harris (1998), the simple cure to stop negative word-of-mouth is to ask the right questions, before negative comments can cause any damage to the company. He also believes that rewarding customers with generous gifts can also be effective. In restaurants and hotel chains this is a very common situation.

Silverman (2001) recommends companies to have special systems that can identify actual and potential negative word-of-mouth. He thinks that retailers should adopt "mystery shoppers" so they can report their experiences when shopping at the stores. He also suggests that companies should have services to check how phone calls and other interactions are handled in their business. Finally, he believes that one of the top executives of the organization should be the one to return complaint calls so he can solve simultaneously consumer and company problems.

8   MONITORING WOM

It is also important to monitor word-of-mouth and to find out what people are saying about a product or a company. Why is it important? Because by overhearing consumers, marketers will have valuable information on which to base their marketing decisions. For example, for new products, monitoring word-of-mouth may be important in discovering what product attributes are highlighted, what product uses are emphasized, what disadvantages or problems are discussed, and what the attitude toward the product is (ROBERTSON, 1971).

Advertising, for example, can be used to emphasize positive aspects in order to reinforce and encourage word-of-mouth, or to combat word-of-mouth if unpleasant things are being said about the product. Some adjustments in advertising appeals may be appropriate, for example, if consumers talk about the quietness of a vacuum cleaner while current advertisements stress its design (ROBERTSON, 1971). The feature emphasized in advertising should be perceived by consumers as the most important characteristic of that product or service.

On the Internet for example, there are countless chat rooms and Usenet groups for different subjects, and in order to avoid negative word-of-mouth, organizations are hiring people to monitor their online conversations. In this

way they can overhear what consumers are saying and pass the useful information to their company in order to make necessary changes.

In shopping malls for example, some stores are also hiring people to overhear what consumers are saying when doing their shopping. For example, if a client touches the fabric of a skirt and comments with another friend "this fabric is terrible!". Stores can have the chance to hear consumers' opinions and be capable of taking action by either improving product quality or approaching the consumer and offering some more support from the business.

Even though it is important to know what consumers say about products, monitoring word-of-mouth is a very difficult task. Since exchanging information through word-of-mouth is unpredictable and natural, there is not a way to monitor what individuals are saying one hundred percent of the time. It is impossible to control what people talk about over the phone or face to face.

Besides, monitoring conversations can be dangerous to a business. Individuals can feel that their privacy is not being protected because there is someone overhearing what they are saying. They can feel intimidated and not being natural when talking to someone else.

9 CONCLUSIONS

The main ideas of this paper were to understand the major characteristics that make word-of-mouth such a powerful and persuasive communication tool; to understand what are the steps that organizations can take to promote positive word-of-mouth and retard negative word-of-mouth; and to understand what are the possibilities to monitor its effectiveness.

Based on all the facts presented in this work, those are the main thoughts about the topic:

- **Word-of-Mouth as a New Medium.** Disseminating information through word-of-mouth communication is considered the most effective "medium" nowadays. For many years word-of-mouth was ignored by companies and retailers (SILVERMAN, 2001), but recently, many companies have found its effectiveness and as its effectiveness becomes more clearly understood, word-of-mouth will affect each time more people and more organizations.

- **Informational Age.** In the Informational Age, where individuals are surrounded with overwhelming quantities of information, individuals are relying more on word-of-mouth. For them, word-of-mouth will be used as a "time-saver" tool, and for this reason the more time they save, the better it is.

- **Internet.** The world is getting more connected, and thanks to the Internet and to wireless technologies, it is much easier for consumers to get information and advice from other people online. The proliferation of chat rooms,

newsgroups, discussion forums, e-mails, and interactive Web sites are tools
that allow individuals to exchange and obtain information faster and easier.

- **Warning.** Organizations that intend to build strong relationships with their
customers will have to be able to understand and manage the characteristics
that make word-of-mouth such a powerful communication tool, in order to
promote positive word-of-mouth, and retard negative word-of-mouth.

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