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Koller, Hans; Dennstedt, Bianca

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Article

Reinvention of Publishers' Revenue Model—Expectations of Advertisers towards Publishers' Products

Bianca Dennstedt * and Hans Koller

Institute of Technology and Innovation Management, Helmut-Schmidt University, 22043 Hamburg, Germany; E-Mails: dennstedt@hsu-hh.de (B.D.), koller@hsu-hh.de (H.K.)

* Corresponding author

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Abstract

Publishers have to reconsider their revenue model. Facing a massive decline in the circulation of newspapers and magazines over the past years, publishers have lost not only readers but also many advertisers. Thus, publishers are faced with both changed customer expectations as well as difficulty in generating profit. Users are increasingly less willing to pay for digital products and their expectations of digital content have changed: They would like to contribute their own content as well as to comment or share with others. Furthermore, advertisers can choose from a greater variety of options for placing adverts, particularly on social media and other online platforms. Therefore, many publishers struggle with the questions: How to earn money? What is the revenue model of the new business model? In order to determine the implications for publishers' revenue models, we assume that advertising companies are going to play a prominent role in the new business model. Hence, this paper focuses on publishers' services for advertising companies and therefore the expectations of advertisers towards publishers' services. In particular, this preliminary qualitative study explores advertisers' marketing interests in communities of readers who simultaneously contribute to discussions. Therefore, (1) a pre-study was conducted followed by (2) qualitative interviews with managers from advertising companies in Germany. Our initial findings confirm that advertisers could play an important role in the revenue model of publishers if they meet the expectations of advertisers who expressed their interest in both, using communities for customer research as well as interacting with users directly. The results also identify other possible services that publishers could offer advertisers in conjunction with addressing communities of contributing readers.

Keywords

advertisers; business model; digitalization; innovation; publishers

Issue

This article is part of a multidisciplinary issue of *Media and Communication*, edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) and Raul Reis (Emerson College, USA).

1. Introduction

Formerly publishers operated in two markets: (1) Selling exclusive content to users; and (2) selling advertising space and access to target groups to advertisers (Kilman, 2015). With a massive decline in the circulation of newspapers and magazines over the past years, publishers have not only lost readers, they have also lost many advertisers as customers (Chyi, 2012; Ihlström & Kalling, 2007; Tennant, 2014). Due to increasing competition in the online sector, former print advertisers can now reach their target groups more easily and cheaply via new forms of online advertising such as digital platforms, news aggregators, social media, or marketplaces (Dennstedt & Koller, 2016).

Hence, publishers struggle with their revenue model. Since there is less willingness to pay for digital news, some publishers have created paywalls, freemium models or personalized content for their digital products. Nonetheless, digital revenue cannot yet compensate for the losses from the print sector. Therefore, the creation of value added services for both—users and advertisers—could deliver a new revenue stream for publishers (Zeng, Dennstedt, & Koller, 2016). In this paper, we would like to focus on advertisers as a source of revenue, particularly on their expectations for an advertisement if it is placed on a platform where publishers, and users alike, are discussing it. A simple digitalization of advertisements is not enough: "In the digital world, annoying customers with ads doesn't work anymore. Each content—either cat videos or snapshots from dinner—takes part in the battle for customers' attention" (Ralf Heul, CEO Grabarz & Partner, in 2016). Also, advertising agencies have realized the need for new advertising approaches. Within digital content, users can easily choose whether they are interested in a certain form of advertising; if they do not like the ad, they simply close it.

Furthermore, there are areas where readers may have greater knowledge or experience than journalists. These areas would be suitable for a digital community where readers and journalists of special interest magazines interact and share information. For instance, a person who loves golf will be very passionate about this topic. By being involved with a magazine about golf, he could provide information about his own experience, e.g., about learning how to golf or about the greatest golf courses. Furthermore, whenever he is playing golf he could share his impressions or pictures with other readers. Referring to the widespread term "User Generated Content" as well as to Eric v. Hippel's concept of users with specific application knowledge in their field of expertise, those contributing readers are also named as "users" in our study. In our research, we focus on the integration of communities into the product line of magazines only.

Exclusive access to such user communities can be of interest to advertisers since they can directly address their target group. Therefore, we are particularly interested in the expectations of advertisers with respect to the fact that users are not only reading articles but are also creating content or getting into intensive discussions with one another or with the authors of such articles. Does this affect the expectations of advertisers? And are there any supplementary services a publisher could offer to the advertising companies? Both questions are relevant for the possibilities for publishers to be able to generate revenue and to complement their business model and allow them to survive. This resulted in the following research question: "What are advertisers' expectations towards publishers' products?".

In order to answer the research question, a qualitative study amongst advertisers in Germany was conducted. Our explorative study may illustrate implications for the future revenue model of publishers. The remainder of the paper has the following structure: Starting with the development of our conceptual framework, we describe our research design and method. Subsequently, we present and discuss our findings and derive managerial implications for publishers' revenue models, the crucial element of their new business model. Finally, we close with some limitations which open up new questions in need of further investigation.

This paper is a preliminary study that provides a better understanding of the expectations of advertising companies regarding their access to topic-related singular users or even topic-related communities. Nevertheless, the results should be interpreted cautiously. Since only 15 German advertisers were questioned, we are far from being able to present representative results.

2. Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Background

2.1. Business Model Innovation

The topic of business model innovation has become very important in the course of increasing digitalization. New competitors, evolving user expectations, and new revenue models require existing business models to change in order to improve the satisfaction of users' needs. Existing literature regarding the business model and business model innovation (Amit & Zott, 2001; Chesbrough, 2003; Christensen, 2008; Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) define the business model with various numbers of components. Amongst the various definitions, three to four cornerstones are consistently mentioned as being core elements: value proposition, revenue stream, key resources as well as key processes. This is why we base our research on the model of Johnson, Christensen and Kagermann (2008). It represents those four core elements and it is easy to use as a framework for the publishing industry. According to Johnson et al., a business model consists of four characteristics: it creates a customer value proposition by applying key resources and key processes and allows revenues by a profit formula (Johnson et al., 2008). In this study, we particularly focus on publishers' revenue model.

2.2. Publishers' Revenue Models

There are several definitions of the term revenue model. According to Johnson et al. (2008) the revenue model (resp. the "profit formula") "is the blueprint that defines how the company creates value for itself while providing value to the customer". Furthermore, "it also answers the fundamental questions every manager must ask: How do we make money in this business? What is the underlying economic logic that explains how we can deliver value to the customers at an appropriate cost?" (Magretta, 2002). According to Zott, Amit and Massa (2011) "revenue model innovation represents innovation in the way revenues are generated, for example through re-configuration of the product-service value mix or new pricing models" (Zott et al., 2011).

For decades, publishers operated in a steady market and generated revenue from two streams: Selling content to users and selling advertising space to advertisers. Recently, however, advertising revenues have been falling since advertising companies can choose between growing numbers of possibilities to contact their relevant audience (Tennant, 2014). At the same time, circulation revenues are decreasing since willingness to pay for digital content is low (Åkesson, 2009; Kilman, 2015).

Literature on innovation of publishers' revenue models, in particular advertisers' expectations towards publishers' products, is scarce. However, previous studies have found that readers expect printed products to be enhanced by digital, with digital offering features including user generated content and platforms for discussion (Dennstedt & Koller, 2016). Furthermore, new demands and features, as well as the possibility of interaction between users and advertisers, have become increasingly important to both (Dennstedt & Koller, 2016; Zeng et al., 2016). However, little is known about how publishers, as well as advertisers, have reacted to these new demands in terms of a new publishers' revenue model in order to be profitable in the digital age.

2.3. Expectations of Advertisers' in a Digital World

Due to digitalisation and changed media consumption (e.g., ad-blockers), the expectations of advertisers towards new advertising approaches has also changed (Åkesson, 2009; Amit & Zott, 2001; Chyi, 2012; Kanuri, Thorson, & Mantrala, 2014). Features such as location-based advertising are on the rise and advertisers have started adapting their ads to the digital users' behaviour (Xu, Oh, & Teo, 2009). Research regarding the various options for addressing users directly and via personalized approaches (Barnes & Hair, 2009) has paved the way for new advertising approaches. Furthermore, new features regarding new forms of advertising on the Internet (Pan & Zinkhan, 2004) support our assumption regarding the potential of advertising within communities. Recent studies have also focused on advertisers' demands of advertising agency services and different categories of expectations (Turnbull & Wheeler, 2014). Nonetheless, advertisers' expectations of the digital advertising space have yet to be fully investigated, particularly those offered by publishers.

3. Method and Data

In contrast to a quantitatively oriented study conducted through a standardized questionnaire, our data collection aimed at gathering new information by posing open questions. Qualitative guided interviews were used in this process. Parts of the interview were previously tested during a pre-study. The pre-study helped us implement additions as well as receive indications regarding specific questions in order to prevent misunderstandings. Furthermore, it enabled us to gauge the possible duration of future interviews more precisely and to collect further relevant background information.

3.1. Sample and Data Collection Procedure—Pre-Study

For our pre-study, 15 advertisers and intermediaries from various industries were surveyed qualitatively in face-to-face interviews in order to learn more about advertisers' expectations towards digital advertising. Since we assumed that there are different expectations and needs, depending on the advertiser's industry as well as the product, we categorized the advertising companies into the following five categories: (1) Retail (two interviews), (2) B2B & Services (three interviews), (3) Banking & Finance (one interview), (4) FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) (three interviews) and (5) Internet (software and technology) (three interviews). Additionally, intermediaries (agencies), working in these various markets, were questioned (three interviews).

The purpose of the study was presented to each interviewee. The interviewer used the predetermined questions for orientation purposes while still being able to answer comprehension questions using additional information. Furthermore, the interviewer was allowed to ask suitable follow-up questions. The interviews were fully recorded in order to ensure effective evaluation.

As a result of the pre-study, we clustered the expectations depending on the industries and target groups and derived questions for the second step of the empirical study. As far as possible, the final interview questionnaire was based on items found in the aforementioned literature. These items were changed slightly to fit the context of publishers and advertisers.

3.2. Second Step of Empirical Study—Guided Interviews

Based on these results guided interviews were conducted. Fifteen marketing managers from various industries, as well as intermediaries, were questioned in order to generate data on their expectations and solutions for possible future collaborations between advertisers and publishers. As with the pre-study, we covered the five industries: Retail, B2B & Services, Banking & Finance, FMCG and Internet (software/technology). The items that were included in the questionnaire were based on previous studies (Dennstedt & Koller, 2016; Zeng et al., 2016) as well as the pre-study. They were asked about their current advertising strategy, their expectations towards using communities or topic platforms as an advertising channel as well as their general expectations of publishers. Again, the interviews were fully recorded and transcribed in order to ensure effective evaluation.

3.3. Evaluation and Category Formation

In addition to the interview transcripts, data from the preliminary studies regarding the customer value proposition of publishers (Zeng et al., 2016) as well as the key resources and key processes of publishers (Dennstedt & Koller, 2014) were available for evaluation. While reading the 15 interview transcripts, all relevant and noticeable aspects were noted. Having gained an overview of all the data, we decided to proceed with a category-based evaluation of the interviews. We created five categories in order to have an adequate system for our data. Our category nominations were established based on evaluation goals, interviews, and the pre-study. The five categories being: added value, composition, quality, interaction, and additional services.

Results from the pre-study and previous research (Zeng et al., 2016) showed that *quality* of a community and target group is vital to many advertisers. For advertisers, we assume, the low quality (e.g., reach and precise target groups) of most existing communities is the main reason for not interacting with communities so far. Thus, we consider quality as one essential expectation of advertising towards communities. Additionally, the *composition* of a community is important in terms of its size (number of community members) and affinity towards a specific topic. Furthermore, the *interaction* between advertisers and users seems to be key. In order to discover the desired extent of interaction, we formed a category focusing on interaction. A further item reflecting the question of expectations of advertisers is the *added value* that publishers can deliver. As we discovered from previous studies (Dennstedt & Koller, 2016) and the pre-study, advertisers would use topic-related communities in order to increase their brand awareness, conduct market research due to customer feedback and interact with lead users. Since we assume that advertisers wish for further services provided by publishers (e.g., a community manager) we formed a fifth category focusing on publishers' additional services.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results from the Pre-Study

In the course of the pre-study, selected companies were interviewed about their previous marketing strategy. Most of those companies are already advertising in printed and online media as well as on TV. The main reasons named for print media and TV advertising was to reach and access target groups. Low costs and favourable access to target groups were stated as the principal reasons for online advertising. Most companies mentioned that a digital marketing strategy is crucial since their users were likely to increase their digital activities: "We use digital communities and digital marketing a lot in order to be close to the users. We would like to give them the chance to provide feedback as well as to get in touch with us. By doing this we build up a good brand loyalty" (Internet/Service company respondent). The marketing manager of a banking and finance company stated: "Communities become more and more relevant. Users inform themselves online and rely on their friends' opinions. Never underestimate the power of lead users".

The function of the pre-study was to gain an overview of the expectations of advertisers towards print media as a foundation for the main qualitative study. Core to the pre-study was the fact that it dealt with the same questions as the main interviews. The final items of the main study were derived partly from the literature review and previous papers as well as the pre-study.

The pre-study focused on the following topics: (1) Advertisers' current advertising strategy, (2) expectations towards print media as an advertising channel (including its advantages and disadvantages), and (3) existing marketing strategies of advertising within communities. Findings from the pre-study helped us identify questions for the guided interviews.

For the interviewees, reaching their target groups and measurability of ads were the main advantages of advertising on publishers' digital platforms. In addition, the cross-media linkage, meaning the interconnection between multiple types of advertisements and redirection to a website was also rated very highly. Some companies also emphasized the specific advertisement of certain categories.

Lack of social interaction was named as being a disadvantage of advertising within publishers' digital platforms. While social networks such as Facebook have access to demographic data and can address users individually, publishers are yet to have this capacity. Currently, only a few interviewees already used communities as a target group for marketing. Those companies used communities in social networks such as Facebook for product development, customer communication (FMCG company respondent) and service optimization (banking sector respondent). For advertisers, however, the low quality of most of the existing communities is a disadvantage. They rarely have a moderator and the users are not sufficiently transparent to be able to categorize them into target groups. Furthermore, the marketing managers stated that talking "around the product" rather than "about the product" was also an advantage of advertising within communities.

In total, all interviewees found advertising in communities interesting, serving both as opinion forming as well as a feedback channel for users. Some companies would like to position themselves as experts regarding specific topics within the communities.

Essentially, some companies only want to join communities passively and refrain from actively adding content because they are reluctant to put in the necessary effort. If they actively contribute to the community they want the content to stay authentic and maintain a high quality within the community.

Adjustable billing models and audience-specific targeting are additional services that companies expect from publishers. Furthermore, advertorial packages and the establishment of communities and theme platforms are attractive for many companies. While those companies which are already working with communities are interested in a pay-per-post interaction model, others tend to prefer flat rates: "The billing model depends on the company's marketing goals. There can be advertorials, where companies sponsor a series about a certain topic. Therefore, publishers could offer a fixed price. Furthermore, publishers could sell user insights to advertisers that are interested in market research about a certain topic or community. There could be also flat rates for the exclusive access to communities, as well as traditional banner ads within the community" (Agency respondent).

4.2. Results from the Guided Interviews

According to our assumptions and to the results of the pre-study, we formed the following five groups (see Figure 1) of questions: (1) Added value of advertising within communities or topic-related platforms, (2) interaction between the advertiser and the community, (3) composition of the community, (4) quality of the community, and (5) demand for additional services offered by publishers.

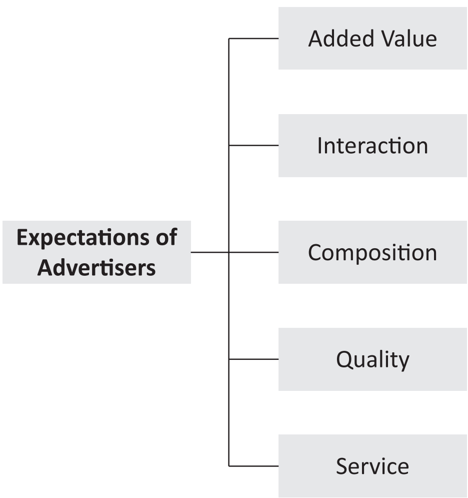

Figure 1. Advertisers' expectations towards publishers' products.

4.3. Added Value of Advertising within Communities/Topic Related Platforms

Advertisers have a variety of expectations regarding the added value of advertising within communities (see Figure 2). The question of whether companies regard topic-based communities as a relevant target group in marketing has been confirmed by every interviewee. One reason for this is the interviewees' opinion that "users now tend to trust their friends' tips more than any glossy advertisement" (FMCG sector respondent). A good fit with the target group and customer retention are often named as being major advantages of advertising within communities. This applies to marketing objective market research as well as to branding. Furthermore, the possibility of providing users with product features and additional information is highly valued by every interviewee: "People are not online to see advertisements but to gather information about specific topics and to communicate. Because of that, communities are a great way to reach customers" (Agency respondent).

Furthermore, the advantage of personalized advertisements was often named and highlighted as a relevant trait of a community or topic platform: "Users are not looking for traditional advertisements anymore but instead wish to receive personalized solutions and suggestions based on their user behaviour and preferences. In communities, there is personal communication which is often accompanied by emotions; those are the best moments to offer or present products to users" (FMCG Beauty sector respondent).

Especially "when a product needs further explanation (e.g. is sold at a much higher price than its competitors), topic communities are meaningful and ideal to explain our product or the price to users in the relevant target group in order to provide more transparency" (FMCG Beauty sector respondent).

Essentially, the added value is regarded as very high across the industries and there are no substantial differences between the individual domains concerning the assessment of this surplus value. In summary, the most important asset of the added value of advertising with the community is the possibility of personalized communication towards specific interest groups.

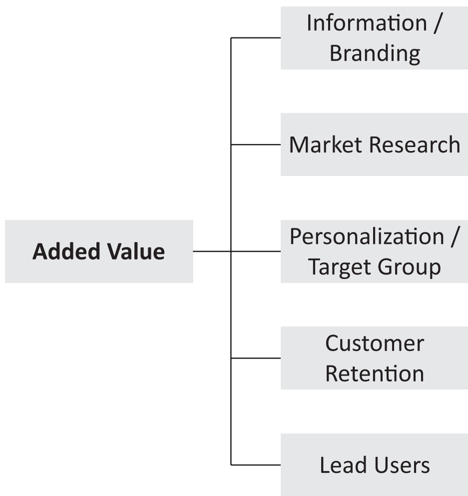

Figure 2. Advertisers' expectations towards the added value of marketing within communities.

4.4. Composition of a Community

Advertisers' have broad expectations towards the composition a community (see Figure 3). Most interviewees named the user affinity of a community as an important characteristic in terms of the composition of a community. Furthermore, the nature of communication (content), as well as the number of users (high reach for advertisers), is essential to many advertisers. Affinity is defined as the intensity of the interaction between users who have a high interest towards the community's topic. Advertisers stated that the more interaction takes place between users, the more interested the users seem to be into a specific topic—which leads to a greater advertising potential. Additionally, the possibility to collect information about users (e.g., demographics) is vital to many interviewees: "It's exciting to know if a user is male or female and how active he or she is. Facebook, for instance, offers a service that lets you select based on age, gender, and interest. Those parameters are specifically important to have little loss from divergence and to precisely address the user. Moreover, it would be fantastic if one could see which terms (topics) are used the most and by which user. Subsequently, you could offer a station wagon instead of a sports car to someone who has kids and is interested in a lot of space" (Agency respondent). Furthermore, the marketing manager of a retail company mentioned: "Based on the user behaviour one could improve the community's infrastructure or personalize the content. At the same time, it could be also interesting to gain further information about the user journey (e.g. click from the community to the company website). Using these insights we could also improve our own online-shop".

In addition, interviewees mentioned that the community should be easily accessible to anyone and that the respective company should have the possibility to place content such as videos, links, or pictures. A community manager is rated as a helpful neutral authority who can both control and moderate. To sum up, the most important aspects of the composition of a community was stated as being both, insights about users (e.g., affinities, age etc.) as well as the affinity of users towards this specific topic.

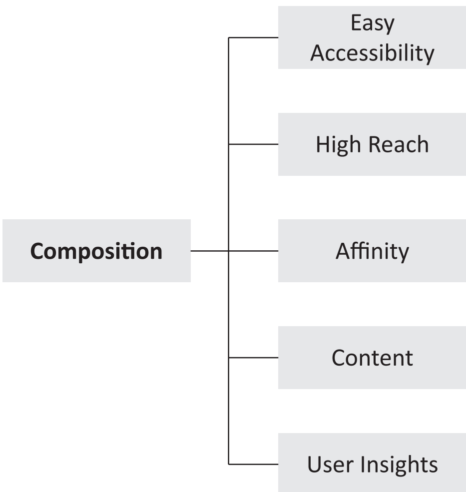

Figure 3. Advertisers' expectations towards the composition a community.

4.5. Interaction between the Advertiser and the Community

Advertisers' expectations of the interaction within a community can be categorized into five pillars (see Figure 4). Amongst the interviewees, the demand for interaction has shown some differences which seems to depend on their marketing goals. When a company simply wants to conduct market research, they prefer a rather passive use of the community. On the other hand, if a company wants to raise brand awareness or sell products, an active interaction including content posts becomes relevant: "We offer a large variety of products and most customers don't even know what our products can do. Communities can help us inform our customers" (Internet Software company respondent). Furthermore, innovative ideas from users about new products or features were also stated as a useful value of marketing within communities "User-generated-content, that can be used again on our own website is very interesting, because it's for free. This could be product reviews or self-designed outfits of users. Furthermore, new ideas regarding our fashion lines are very relevant as well" (Retail company respondent).

In this case "the communication does not necessarily have to happen about product-related questions but can also deal with general tendencies and developments in the respective domain" (B2B Retail sector respondent). This can help a company enter into dialogue and gather information about user needs and opinions. Furthermore, several marketing managers stated an interest in discussions and feedback about their products or services.

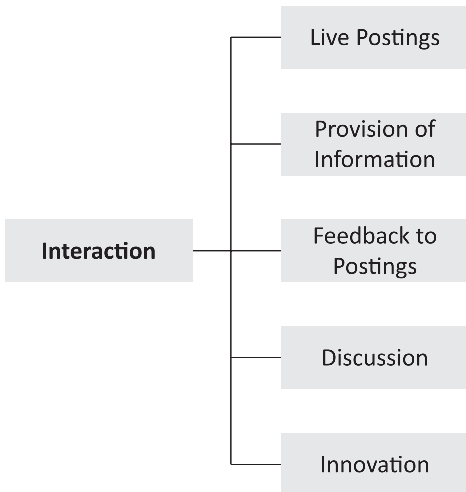

Figure 4. Advertisers' expectations towards the interaction within a community.

An additional approach comes from an Internet-based company. The interviewee suggested offering an added value and information in real time, something they could only receive at a much later time in the case of traditional media: "Furthermore, live moments such as Twitter's concept are interesting. Users actively discuss a topic and companies can offer their product at that particular moment while picking up a specific topic. One example: Users are reporting live from IAA while Audi is sponsoring the page and offering further exhibition fair insights"(Internet Software company respondent). Thus, the two most named factors of the level of interaction within a community are passive monitoring for companies who would like to conduct market research and active provision of information and receipt of feedback for companies who would like to increase their company's brand awareness.

4.6. Quality of a Community

To all interviewees, a high quality community or topic platform equates with high reach (high number of users) and up-to-date content (see Figure 5). Moreover, all interviewees value transparency regarding users very highly (e.g., demographic information) as well as competent users who are interested in the specific topic. In this way, advertisers can rely on the fact that the users they address within the community fit their own brand. "The more interaction that takes place within such a community, the more relevant it becomes for us as a target group. We would like to get in touch with the user in order to receive feedback. Therefore, the competency of the users is important. Furthermore, the community's size is essential, in order to gain high reach" (FMCG Beauty sector respondent). Furthermore, the marketing manager from the Banking & Finance sector stated: "The quality of a community is given, when users question certain topics and when they get involved with the content and discussions".

In addition, a community manager featuring as a "supervisor" was regarded as important to many of the interviewees to ensure high quality: "Spending capacity and brand loyalty are essential. Companies can offer additional and high-priced products to users who show a high brand affinity and who are heavy users" (Agency respondent).

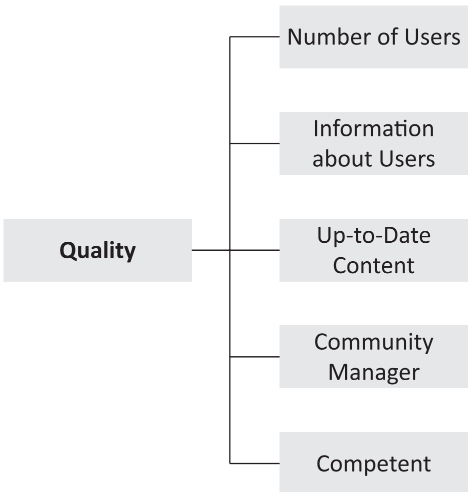

Figure 5. Advertisers' expectations towards the quality of a community.

4.7. Service and Payment Model

Advertisers' have numerous expectations regarding further services of publishers (see Figure 6). When asked about the additional services companies expect from publishers, many interviewees mentioned the access to target groups: "The biggest competence of publishers is content. The content they offer. Most users are not looking for advertisements but content and information. Should publishers succeed in creating topic-related communities where a relevant interest group is active, an environment where advertisers want to be present—in whichever way—could emerge" (Agency respondent).

Education about marketing possibilities within communities as well as best practice examples of dealing with communities was also frequently mentioned. Many interviewees want publishers to provide a neutral authority by having community managers who forward content and user contributions to the company in a bundled form and answer user comments and questions. Firstly, publishers need to provide the infrastructure to enable a direct dialogue between companies and users.

Several possibilities were mentioned when interviewees were asked about a fitting payment model for the aforementioned cooperation. Monthly flat rates, exclusive access to communities and billing models based on size/reach of a community were all named in this process. A payment based on user interaction (posts) was also mentioned.

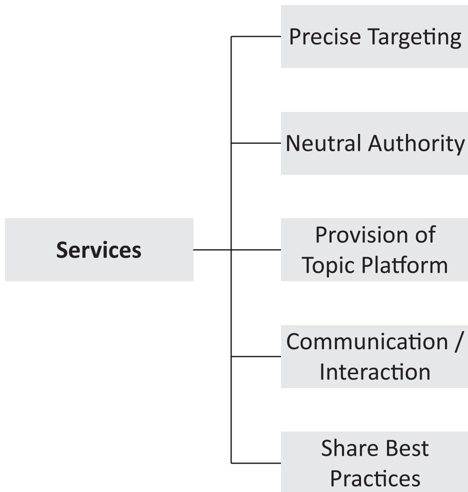

Figure 6. Advertisers' expectations towards further services of publishers.

"It would be interesting if publishers could offer companies to sponsor particular theme communities or articles. The German magazine "Autobild" could create a community regarding electric cars by cooperating with Audi, provide users with relevant information about this specific topic and furthermore inquire about user interest. Such an example would have a much more reputable impression on users than if Audi created such a community. The relevant target group would already exist and would not need to be discovered by "Autobild" in the first step (FMCG Beauty sector respondent). Consequently, the provision of such a topic-related community and access to specific target groups was currently considered as being publishers' biggest asset.

5. Managerial Implications for Publishers' Revenue models

The most important findings of advertisers' expectations are summarized in the following managerial implications. Thus, the most important factors regarding the five pillars are the following:

- The most important asset of advertising within communities is the possibility of personalized communication towards specific interest groups;
- Key aspects of the composition of a community are (1) insights about users (e.g., affinities, age, etc.) and (2) affinity of users towards this specific topic;
- The two most frequently named factors regarding the level of interaction within a community are (1) passive monitoring for companies who would like to conduct market research only, and (2) active provision of information and receiving feedback for companies who would like to increase their company's brand awareness;
- A high quality of a community or topic platform equates with a high reach (high number of users) and up-to-date content;
- Consequently, the provision of such a topic-related community and access to specific target groups currently seems to be publishers' biggest asset.

This qualitative study aims to uncover the expectations of advertisers towards publishers of digital newspapers and magazines. In the future, publishers can no longer solely focus on selling advertising space. They probably have to create an infrastructure for selling access to certain target groups to advertisers. They can thus become the marketplace behind the content and the advertisements as well.

Our research shows that publishers can offer a distinct advantage over advertisers: They can have direct access to specific target groups regarding certain topics. Furthermore, they are trusted by and are reliable for their users, which is also an asset for advertisers. Therefore, managers from publishing houses could establish a community network or topic-related platform in order to foster interaction between users, following which they could offer access to advertisers. Since publishers have decades of experience in dealing with users and interest groups, they could also support advertisers to address these target groups directly.

Another example would be a parenting magazine which provides a community where mothers discuss characteristics of their pregnancy or talk about attributes of their babies. This specific and baby-affine target group now becomes relevant for advertisers. A baby nutrition supplier could now sponsor or join this digital community in order to interact directly with the users, promote products or to conduct market research. Furthermore, the publishers could provide a community manager to share useful insights with the advertiser and to reply to users' questions.

Regarding the composition of such a community, our results show that advertisers have certain expectations. Within communities, advertisers want to offer personalized information about products or services and address the users' needs individually. Therefore, managers from publishing houses should start gathering useful user data about the various users in order to address them personally. Furthermore, within such a community each user could have their own profile with their own preferences. As a result, publishers could cluster the users into topic-related groups. For instance, they could cluster the women in the parenting community into "mother" or "mother-to-be". As a result, advertisers could then address users individually, based on their needs and interests at that time.

Our results show that quality is an important factor for advertisers' consideration of advertising within communities. Therefore, managers from publishing houses could implement dedicated journalists to, not only take care of their specific articles but also to be responsible for a related topic community.

Since the interaction of advertisers with users in a community seems to depend on advertisers' strategy, managers from publishing houses could offer various packages of access to communities and target groups. There could be "read only" access for advertisers who are interested in market and customer research as well as access with interaction for, e.g., advertisers who are interested in selling products. Furthermore, such interaction and cooperation between publishers and advertisers could, for instance, be personalized advertisements to single users or certain groups of interests, using user data in order to address interested users for suitable products and services, and access to special interest communities (e.g., sailors, automotive enthusiasts) in order to participate in their chat, or even using publishers' platforms for direct sales activities.

To meet advertisers' expectations regarding publishers' services, they could offer workshops about working within communities. Furthermore, they could offer innovative pricing models such as cost per interaction (between advertiser and community) or different pricing models depending on the topic (e.g., broad target group or niche market).

This short investigation is only able to present initial results about the expectations of advertising companies regarding the contact to users and to supplementing services from publishers. However, two implications seem to be obvious: Firstly, this topic is worth further, more detailed investigation because (secondly) these expectations of advertising companies are becoming a really important element for the revenue model and, together, for the business model of publishing houses. If the users' willingness to pay for content continues to decrease, access to publishers' products will be mostly free—the main part of publishers' revenue might come from new advertising services.

Furthermore, our findings contribute to the literature regarding business model innovation in the publishing industry. Discussions about advertising solutions (e.g., communities or topic platforms) are essential as publishers are realizing that advertisers have a strong interest in communities, personalized advertisements and even direct interaction with users.

Managers of publishing houses will need to rethink their business models and their services for advertisers. They will have to address several critical challenges: pricing policies for these new advertising approaches, a new infrastructure for these redefined distribution networks that preserve format diversity, and the reallocation of value among industry participants.

At this point, it is noteworthy that the involvement of advertisers in communities and publisher content can also be a substantial threat. Publishers act as opinion-forming media and therefore carry a responsibility to provide their users with objective and thoroughly researched information. As a consequence, publishers must be careful that their readers do not feel disillusioned once they notice that advertisers have been integrated into both content and communities. Therefore, content must be made obvious and sponsored communities have to be presented as such. In addition, publishers need to make sure that personal user data is not passed on to advertisers and that the latter are only given access to target groups and specific topics. Publishers must ensure that advertisers do not influence content too extensively and must regulate the power of advertisers within the multiple types of co-operation.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This preliminary qualitative study provides a better understanding of the expectations of advertising companies regarding their access to topic-related singular users or even topic-related communities. This understanding is essential for the survival of publishing houses since business with advertising companies might turn into "the" cornerstone of the revenue model within publishers' business models. Our study has an explorative character and, as such, some limitations which provide opportunities for future research.

Firstly, due to self-selection, the sample is biased. Therefore, results should be interpreted cautiously. Since only 15 advertisers were questioned, we are far from presenting a scalable majority opinion. Furthermore, there we found no significant difference regarding the expectations of advertisers from different industries. Future studies could try to interview even more advertisers from more industries in order to discover if there are differences. Secondly, the need and suitability of integrating communities into their advertising strategy also depends on the advertisers' marketing strategy. There might be businesses (e.g., B2B or small local businesses) that do not fit into this approach.

It would be highly valuable to see a quantitative study proving the results quantitatively. Hopefully, some of the aforementioned categories might be helpful for operationalizing the constructs of that research model.

Finally, future studies could also focus on international markets, rather than just German markets, in order to see if the interest in such an approach is scalable.

As the previous section stated, a mutually compatible co-operation between advertisers and publishers is crucial. The future scale of advertiser access to communities and legal restrictions has yet to be analysed.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Bianca Dennstedt holds a BA in Media Economics as well as an MBA in Media Management. Based on her university education, Bianca has several years of work experience in the media industry and gained deep knowledge of digital media development, especially in the publishing industry. Having worked in project management for the international publisher Axel Springer SE, she currently works as a Senior Business Development Consultant at Google Germany.

Hans Koller is Professor for Technology and Innovation Management at the Helmut-Schmidt-University (HSU), Hamburg, and Dean of Curriculum for Management at HSU. He received his PhD and his Habilitation from the Technical University of Munich. He is also a member of the Scientific Committee of the Innovation and Product Development Management Conference. His research interests include traditional topics such as R&D Management, patent management and management of innovation networks, but also topics like open and user innovation, business model innovations and technology foresight. Most of his research is carried out as case studies in close cooperation with companies.