

ROLE OF ONLINE BRAND COMMUNITY IN MARKETING STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

The online brand communities are a useful tool available to companies to obtain benefits in terms of brand loyalty and brand trust and gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. This work aims to extend the knowledge of online brand communities by replicating in the Italian context a research model developed by Sankaranarayanan (2011) that combine three different and important studies on online brand communities, in order to analyze and understand exactly how these can be used to increase consumer brand loyalty and brand trust. The survey was administered to 469 subjects belonging to significant Italian online brand communities. The results show that strengthening the relationships between the consumer and the other actors in online brand communities can actually help increase consumers loyalty and trust in the brand. However, the research model has not been replicated in its entirety. So, given the growing importance of online brand communities in the current and future context, this work provides some useful managerial implications and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: *Online Brand Community, Marketing, Brand trust, Brand loyalty*