Social media: Challenges and Opportunities

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What is food choice

- Food choice is a consumer’s decision based on their knowledge, experience, habits, tradition, culture, socioeconomics and various determinants.
- It’s an extremely complicated and challenging issue.

How we make choices

- Decision is a fuzzy assessment process, it’s like a jigsaw puzzle game.
- The consumers need to find the missing pieces to reach an informed decision—healthy diet.

Food communication plays a role

- Food communication is to identify and provide those missing pieces, instead of a simple advice, recommendation or education.
- Successful communications will encourage the consumers to make a decision just as you expected.
Several ethic arguments

- Free will and administrative intervention
- Persuasion and manipulation

Why conventional media was wrong

How information was produced

How we consume the information
Join in the game

YOU ARE HEERE!!!

Rumors
- UGC model without editor
- 60% of the rumors were created from Weibo, much of them were related to food, nutrition and drugs.
- Wechat blocks Over 4 million rumors everyday, but there are still plenty of them.

Spread like virus
- Social media spread like virus, and you only have a very small time window to put out the fire.
- Crisis often involves different ministers, it’s very hard to speak in one voice in such a short time.

Unstoppable fire
- If the whole forest is on fire, you have to wait until it’s burned down, unless there is gossip news, political scandal or something even worse.
- Hopefully it’s not about you.
Destructive power

- Agriculture products are more vulnerable because of their short shelf life.
- The “banana cancer” rumor caused over 1 billion RMB damage in several weeks.

Rapid response is the key

- Social media monitoring is necessary.
- Reasonable inaccuracy is tolerable and beneficial.
- Sometimes, you need an ally to speak for you, e.g. doctor, dietitian, scientist.
A “bad news agency” is really bad

- Consumers will be more anxious if you always talk about risks, and that makes the politicians pissed off.
- They can't afford to lose the voters, and you are the best scapegoat to be blamed.

What you should do at peace time

- The controls that are in place, and your capabilities
- The efforts of the government and industries have introduced to improve things
- The severe sanctions that are in place for industries
- Healthy lifestyle to avoid diet related disease
- How to prepare food safely
- Correct misperception people have about food

Information overload

- Information was produced in huge quantity, far more than we can swallow.
- The audience lose their patience, and you have to catch their attention in several seconds.

Fragmentation

- Make everything short, story, sentence, sound bite, video.
- Tailored to adapt different audiences.
- Stay active, stay alive.
Make the information sexy

Interactions is important

Your advice should be practical
Action speaks louder

What can we achieve

Can we influence the consumers?

What can we achieve