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Vijay Viswanathan, International Expert for Integrated Marketing Communications, Gave an Online Keynote at FH Wien der WKW

In his online keynote, Vijay Viswanathan presented concepts and strategies for consumer experience and engagement and referred to COVID-19.

Vienna, June 10, 2020 – On Wednesday, June 3, 2020, the Communication Management Study Programs at FH Wien der WKW organized an online keynote with Vijay Viswanathan, one of the leading international experts for Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). In addition to an overview of the development of IMC's concepts and strategies, Viswanathan gave an outlook on future developments in the area of customer experience and engagement and also addressed the special situation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Practitioner turns academic

Prof. Vijay Viswanathan, PhD, is Associate Dean and Associate Professor for Integrated Marketing Communications at the Medill School of Northwestern University in Chicago, USA. After an international marketing career, he turned to an academic career. His work targets the empirical modeling of consumer behavior and "data-driven" marketing. He passionately passes on his professional expertise to his students.

Consumers and technologies change marketing concepts

In his keynote, Viswanathan gave a compact explanation of the evolution of marketing concepts and strategies. He sees new technologies, such as the Internet and digital media, on the one hand, and – much more importantly – the emancipation of the consumer and the resulting power of co-determination in creating products and services, on the other hand, as a major driver. He underlines this with his credo: *"Future is where nature and nurture come together"*.

In the 1990's, marketing power was still driven by the brand. The 4 P's of the marketing mix (Product, Place, Price, Promotion) enabled the company to define the framework in advance and thus pushed the product onto the market (focus on "Share of Voice"). In the early 2000's, the circumstances changed noticeably towards consumer centrism. With increasing digitalization, more data was available to research customer needs, and social media gave consumers the opportunity to spread their opinions about products and services via their social networks and thus to influence the buying behavior of others (focus on "Share of Influence").

Today, consumers decide for themselves which channels they want to use and expect offers tailored to their needs. With the focus on personalization and individualization, the concept of Customer Lifetime Value was born, which focuses on customer experience and engagement at all touch points.

COVID-19 and the future of Integrated Marketing Communication in a digitalized world

With regard to the current situation, Vijay Viswanathan sees COVID-19 as a drastic experience, but he believes that the radically changed consumer behavior during the pandemic is a natural reaction to changed conditions. In terms of customer experience with a focus on customer centrism, companies therefore have the challenge to react to changing consumer wishes and to adapt their offer accordingly. Viswanathan points out that this is not only true in the times of COVID-19, but has to be understood as a perpetual process.

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The international expert is currently developing a new framework concept for Customer Experience. He exclusively presented excerpts from his current work to the online audience. In the spirit of "Consumers create their own journeys", the new concept is based on a dynamic process. Dynamic marketing should provide the customer with a personalized customer experience through careful data-based calibration, and this at the right time with the right message on the right channel.

The keynote was organized by the Competence Center for Marketing under the direction of David Dobrowsky for the Communication Management Study Programs at FH Wien der WKW.

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Images to download:

Keynote on Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) strategy by Vijay Viswanathan – introduction
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Vijay Viswanathan presented concepts and strategies regarding consumer experience and engagement

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