

# Social Network Marketing: Attitudes & Trends

Authored by  
**mohammed looti**

November 28, 2025

## RECOMMENDED CITATION

mohammed looti (2025). *Social Network Marketing: Attitudes & Trends*. Psychepedia.  
Retrieved from <https://psychepedia.arabpsychology.com/?p=26574>

## Introduction to Social Network Marketing Attitudes

The rapid proliferation of social networking platforms has fundamentally altered the landscape of consumer communication and commercial engagement, giving rise to the pervasive phenomenon known as **Social Network Marketing (SNM)**. Understanding consumer attitudes toward SNM is paramount for marketers, as these psychological predispositions dictate the effectiveness of advertising campaigns and the likelihood of consumer interaction or purchase. Attitude, in this context, is defined as a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies toward a specific object, which, in this case, is the use of social media platforms by brands for promotional purposes. These attitudes are complex, shaped by the inherent duality of social media--a space primarily designed for social interaction that has been increasingly commercialized. Consequently, consumers often exhibit nuanced responses, balancing the perceived benefits of information and entertainment against the intrusive nature of targeted advertising, making the study of this intersection a critical area of consumer psychology.

The academic investigation into SNM attitudes draws heavily from established consumer behavior theories, seeking to delineate the specific psychological mechanisms activated when users encounter commercial content within their personal social feeds. Unlike traditional media, SNM operates within a highly personalized and often intimate environment, meaning that negative attitudes stemming from perceived privacy violations or excessive advertising density can lead to rapid disengagement and platform avoidance. Furthermore, SNM attitudes are highly context-dependent; a user might accept promotional content from an influencer they trust, yet vehemently reject similar content directly posted by an unknown corporation. This variability necessitates a deep dive into the factors that modulate acceptance, including user demographics, platform characteristics, and the specific execution of the marketing message itself, establishing the foundation for successful digital engagement strategies that minimize disruption and maximize perceived value.

Analyzing consumer attitudes provides critical predictive power regarding consumer behavior. A favorable attitude toward SNM generally correlates positively with engagement metrics, such as clicking on advertisements, sharing branded content, and ultimately, making a purchase. Conversely, negative attitudes manifest as ad avoidance, brand blocking, and the spread of negative **word-of-mouth (WOM)**, which can severely damage a brand's reputation in the highly interconnected digital sphere. Therefore, the core objective of studying SNM attitudes is to identify the psychological levers that drive positive consumer reception, enabling marketers to craft campaigns that seamlessly integrate commercial messaging into the social environment without disrupting the user's primary motivation for being on the platform--social connection and personal fulfillment.

## Theoretical Foundations of Attitude Formation in SNM

Several established psychological and marketing frameworks are employed to model the formation and structure of attitudes toward Social Network Marketing. The **Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)** and its extension, the **Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)**, provide foundational structures, suggesting that SNM attitudes are shaped by beliefs about the outcomes of engaging with the marketing content (e.g., finding useful information or saving money) and the subjective norms surrounding that engagement (e.g., whether one's peers approve of interacting with brand content). Applied to the SNM context, this means that a user's intention to click an ad is heavily influenced by their overall evaluation of that specific marketing activity and the perceived social pressure to conform to or reject commercial intrusions, particularly within communities where authenticity is highly valued.

Another critical theoretical lens is the **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)**, which posits that the acceptance of any technology is determined by two main factors: **Perceived Usefulness (PU)** and **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)**. When applied to SNM, PU relates to the degree to which a user believes that SNM activities, such as targeted ads or branded content, help them achieve their goals, perhaps by providing relevant product information, access to exclusive deals, or facilitating customer service interactions. PEOU, however, concerns how simple and intuitive it is to interact with the marketing content, such as navigating a landing page, participating in a contest, or executing a seamless in-app purchase. High scores in both PU and PEOU generally lead to more favorable attitudes and greater likelihood of continued engagement with the marketing efforts displayed on the social network.

Furthermore, the **Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)** is essential for understanding how the content itself impacts attitude formation. ELM proposes that attitudes can be formed or changed through two distinct routes: the central route (high elaboration) and the peripheral route (low elaboration). In SNM, the central route is engaged when consumers are highly motivated and able to process detailed, persuasive information, such as technical specifications or detailed comparison charts, leading to strong, enduring attitudes. Conversely, the peripheral route is more common due to the rapid, distracting nature of social media feeds; here, attitudes are influenced by superficial cues like the attractiveness of the imagery, the endorsement by a celebrity, or the number of 'likes' or comments, resulting in attitudes that are often weaker and more temporary. Effective SNM campaigns must strategically balance content that appeals to both high and low elaboration processing depending on the platform, the product category, and the target audience's psychological state during consumption.

## Key Determinants Influencing SNM Attitudes

Consumer attitudes toward Social Network Marketing are not monolithic; they are shaped by a

confluence of individual, organizational, and technical factors. One primary determinant is the user's perception of **Personalized Relevance**. Highly relevant advertisements, which appear to fulfill an immediate need or align with stated interests, are far more likely to generate positive attitudes because they enhance the user experience rather than disrupt it. The psychological mechanism here involves reduced cognitive load and increased efficiency in information search. Conversely, poorly targeted, excessive, or repetitive ads are perceived as intrusive and manipulative, rapidly deteriorating the user's overall disposition toward the platform's commercial activities. This sensitivity underscores the ethical imperative for marketers to utilize data responsibly to ensure relevance without crossing boundaries into surveillance or undue influence, which triggers psychological reactance.

Another significant factor is the perceived **Credibility and Trustworthiness** of the source disseminating the marketing message. In SNM, the source can be the brand itself, an influencer, or a peer recommendation. Messages originating from trusted sources, particularly those exhibiting expertise and objectivity, foster higher levels of acceptance and lower levels of skepticism. This is why influencer marketing has become so potent; the perceived authenticity and **parasocial relationship** between the follower and the influencer mitigate the inherent skepticism consumers harbor toward traditional corporate advertising, leading to greater message internalization. However, the rise of undisclosed paid endorsements and the use of deepfakes have begun to erode this trust, leading to increased consumer cynicism and negatively impacting general attitudes toward SNM transparency and honesty.

Platform characteristics also exert considerable influence. Factors such as the **Advertising Load**--the frequency and density of commercial content--and the **Interactivity Features** available (e.g., polls, quick reactions, direct messaging capabilities) shape the user experience. Platforms that aggressively prioritize monetization by flooding feeds with ads often provoke negative affect and ad avoidance behaviors, leading to perceptual defense mechanisms. Conversely, platforms that seamlessly integrate interactive and non-disruptive marketing tools, allowing users to engage on their own terms and feel a sense of control, tend to foster more favorable attitudes by making the commercial experience feel like a choice rather than an imposition. Furthermore, the aesthetic quality, navigational smoothness, and mobile optimization of the marketing content itself contribute significantly to the overall affective evaluation.

## The Role of Perceived Value and Utility

A core psychological mechanism driving positive attitudes toward SNM is the consumer's assessment of **Perceived Value**. Consumers engage with commercial content only when they believe the transaction yields sufficient utility to offset the costs, which include not only monetary outlay but also the cost of time, attention, exposure to potential privacy risks, and the cognitive effort required for processing. This utility typically manifests in three major forms: informational

value, entertainment value, and social value. Informational value is derived when the marketing content provides useful details about products, services, or deals that the consumer was actively seeking or might find beneficial for future decisions, effectively serving as a curated search tool.

The **Entertainment Value** component is arguably more critical in the social media environment, where users primarily seek leisure and diversion. Marketing content that is humorous, engaging, aesthetically pleasing, or tells a compelling story is viewed less as an interruption and more as a welcome form of entertainment. Brands that master the art of "edutainment" or "infotainment" are highly successful at generating favorable attitudes because they align their commercial goals with the user's intrinsic motivation for platform usage. This perceived entertainment acts as a psychological reward, reinforcing positive associations with the brand and the marketing method itself, often leading to content being intentionally sought out rather than merely tolerated.

Finally, **Social Value** relates to the ability of the marketing content to facilitate social interaction or enhance the user's social standing. This includes marketing campaigns that encourage user-generated content, participation in community challenges, or sharing branded material that reflects positively on the user's identity or affiliations. When SNM activities enable users to connect with like-minded individuals, express their self-concept through consumption choices, or gain social currency by being the first to share exclusive information, the attitude toward the marketing effort is significantly elevated. This synergistic relationship between commercial content and social utility is a defining feature that differentiates SNM from traditional advertising channels, transforming the commercial message into a tool for social bonding.

## Affective and Cognitive Components of SNM Attitudes

Attitudes are traditionally understood as tripartite, consisting of cognitive, affective, and conative (behavioral) components. In the context of SNM, the **Cognitive Component** involves the beliefs and knowledge a consumer holds about the marketing practices. These beliefs might include evaluations of the product quality advertised, the perceived truthfulness of the claims made, the efficiency of the platform's targeting algorithms, and the ethical implications of data usage. Strong, well-articulated cognitive beliefs, whether positive (e.g., "SNM is the easiest way to find new products and deals") or negative (e.g., "SNM ads are manipulative and invade my privacy"), form the rational basis upon which the overall attitude is built, often involving careful information processing and comparison with existing schemata.

The **Affective Component** refers to the feelings or emotions evoked by the exposure to SNM content. This can range from positive emotions like excitement, joy, or satisfaction derived from discovering a desired product, to negative emotions such as annoyance, frustration, anger at perceived intrusion, or anxiety regarding privacy. These immediate, visceral emotional responses often bypass deep cognitive processing, especially in the fast-paced social media environment,

making the affective reaction a powerful, immediate predictor of ad avoidance or acceptance. Marketers must therefore meticulously manage the emotional tone of their content to elicit positive affect and minimize feelings of resentment or spam fatigue, recognizing that negative affect spreads rapidly through social sharing mechanisms.

The interplay between these two components is crucial for long-term attitude stability. For instance, a user might hold the cognitive belief that targeted advertising is useful (high cognitive relevance), but if the execution of a specific campaign is overly aggressive or repetitive, it generates negative affect (low affective acceptance), leading to an overall negative attitude. Conversely, highly entertaining content (high affect) might override minor cognitive reservations about the commercial intent, a phenomenon often observed in viral campaigns. Successfully managing attitudes requires aligning the rational benefits (cognition) with a positive emotional experience (affect), leading to a holistic and resilient favorable disposition toward the brand's presence on social networks that is less susceptible to counter-persuasion.

## Behavioral Consequences and Purchase Intentions

The ultimate goal of studying consumer attitudes toward Social Network Marketing is to predict and influence subsequent behavior, primarily **Purchase Intention** and actual transaction completion. A positive attitude serves as a necessary, though not always sufficient, precursor to behavioral engagement. When consumers hold favorable attitudes toward SNM, they are more likely to exhibit proactive behaviors such as seeking out the brand's social media profile, participating in interactive campaigns, clicking on embedded links, and recommending the brand to peers through digital word-of-mouth (eWOM). This conversion from attitude to action is facilitated when the consumer perceives high **behavioral control**--that is, they feel they have the resources and opportunity to act upon their intention, such as easy checkout processes or readily available product information.

Beyond direct purchasing, SNM attitudes influence a range of valuable **Non-Transaction Behaviors**. These include loyalty behaviors, such as following a brand's page consistently, defending the brand against negative comments in public forums, and generating user content that promotes the brand organically. These forms of digital advocacy are highly valuable as they lend authenticity and social proof to the marketing message, often proving more persuasive than direct corporate communications due to the perceived objectivity of peer endorsement. Negative attitudes, conversely, translate into avoidance behaviors (e.g., unfollowing, muting, hiding ads, using ad-blockers) and, critically, the dissemination of negative eWOM, which can swiftly erode brand equity through viral negative feedback loops.

Research consistently demonstrates that the strength and accessibility of the attitude are key moderators of the attitude-behavior link. Strongly held, easily recalled positive attitudes toward a brand's SNM efforts are highly predictive of purchasing behavior, especially for low-involvement

products where decisions are made quickly. For high-involvement products, however, while attitude remains important, it interacts with factors such as perceived risk, product complexity, and the need for external validation from non-commercial sources. Therefore, marketers must focus not just on generating temporary positive feelings, but on cultivating deep, internalized attitudes that are resistant to counter-persuasion and readily translate into sustained engagement and commercial activity across the digital ecosystem.

## Challenges in Measuring and Managing SNM Attitudes

Measuring attitudes toward Social Network Marketing presents unique methodological challenges due to the dynamic, multimodal, and highly private nature of social media consumption. Traditional survey methods, while foundational, often suffer from **social desirability bias**, where users report more favorable attitudes than they genuinely hold to conform to perceived expectations or avoid admitting to engaging with commercial content. Furthermore, the complexity of the SNM environment necessitates multi-dimensional scales that accurately capture cognitive beliefs (e.g., usefulness), affective reactions (e.g., frustration), and conative intentions (e.g., sharing propensity) simultaneously, moving beyond simplistic overall evaluations to capture the full psychological profile.

A significant challenge lies in differentiating general attitudes toward the social network platform itself from specific attitudes toward the marketing activities occurring within it. A user might love Instagram (platform attitude) but intensely dislike the frequency of sponsored posts (SNM attitude). Researchers increasingly rely on **Passive Data Collection** and **Sentiment Analysis** of user comments and interactions to gain a more authentic, real-time understanding of emotional responses and cognitive evaluations. However, interpreting this unstructured data requires sophisticated natural language processing tools and careful contextual analysis to ensure accurate psychological profiling, especially when dealing with sarcasm or culturally specific slang.

Managing SNM attitudes requires adaptive strategies that prioritize transparency and value exchange. Brands must continuously monitor feedback and rapidly adjust their content strategy to address negative sentiment, especially concerning privacy and data usage, demonstrating responsiveness to consumer concerns. The rise of "ad fatigue" demands that marketers constantly refresh creative content and diversify formats to maintain novelty and prevent the affective component of the attitude from deteriorating. Ultimately, successful management rests on the ethical principle that marketing should serve the user by providing relevant value and enhancing the social experience, rather than simply maximizing commercial intrusion, thereby fostering a sustainable, positive psychological contract between the consumer and the brand in the social space.

## Future Directions and Ethical Considerations

The future study of attitudes toward Social Network Marketing will be profoundly influenced by emerging technologies, particularly the integration of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Virtual Reality (VR)** into social platforms. AI-driven personalization promises hyper-relevant content, which theoretically should enhance positive attitudes due to increased perceived usefulness. However, it simultaneously heightens concerns regarding algorithmic opacity and manipulation, potentially leading to a backlash against perceived "creepy" or overly invasive targeting, thus negatively impacting the affective component of attitude formation. Researchers must investigate the psychological thresholds for personalization acceptance and develop models that account for the cognitive dissonance created by seemingly prescient advertising techniques.

The development of immersive environments, such as the metaverse, introduces new dimensions to SNM attitudes. Marketing within VR social spaces will be highly experiential and sensory, moving beyond simple visual and textual cues to incorporate spatial and haptic feedback. Attitudes in these environments will likely be shaped by factors such as the realism of the virtual brand presence, the perceived freedom of interaction, and the degree of presence felt during the commercial encounter. Ethical considerations surrounding data ownership, virtual identity manipulation, and the blurring of commercial and personal boundaries will become paramount, necessitating the development of robust ethical frameworks to guide acceptable marketing practices and prevent consumer exploitation within these highly realistic digital realms.

Finally, future research needs to focus on the longitudinal stability and cross-cultural variance of SNM attitudes. As global platforms standardize their marketing tools, local cultural norms regarding privacy, individualism, and corporate trust continue to modulate how commercial messages are received. Understanding these differences is crucial for multinational corporations aiming for global campaign consistency. Moreover, longitudinal studies are needed to track how repeated exposure, changing platform policies (e.g., privacy updates), and major societal events influence attitudes over time, particularly in relation to younger generations who are digital natives and whose expectations for digital interaction are constantly evolving. The sustained success of SNM depends on maintaining consumer trust, which requires continuous ethical vigilance and a deep psychological understanding of how commercial activity is perceived within these rapidly evolving social ecosystems.