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InSites Consulting teams up with Maastricht PhD candidate to improve the use of online communities for market research

Reinforcing their reputation for solid scientific research, InSites Consulting has teamed up with Maastricht University PhD candidate Stephan Ludwig to investigate how companies and brands can use and stimulate user generated content in commercial and research communities.

Since 2008, Stephan has been collaborating with InSites Consulting's research and development team, ForwaR&D Lab.

Identifying success factors for research communities

Online platforms and communities are becoming a very popular way for brands to obtain and exchange knowledge and information with consumers, and InSites Consulting is constantly exploring ways how to use this information for market research.

"InSites Consulting and Maastricht University's Marketing Department have developed a sense of community, which is a solid basis for developing innovative, research-based ideas that add value for marketing research professionals.", says Ko de Ruyter, Professor of Interactive Marketing at Maastricht University.

Stephan is looking at methods to capture the impact of user generated content on brand and product performance. Furthermore he is investigating how to make research communities operational and identifying the pitfalls companies should avoid. He is exploring ways of measuring and predicting the "health" of a community, specifically focusing on how to increase member acquisition and retention rates, and how to stimulate their engagement on an ongoing basis.

"Stephan's research has helped InSites Consulting in a practical as well as methodological sense: we have learned how to determine the optimal number of participants, why people participate in communities and what the critical success factors are in running them. It has allowed us to make next steps in running communities more efficiently, but also to generate insights which are hard to get with other methods." says Niels Schillewaert, co-founder of InSites Consulting and Marketing Professor at the Vlerick Management School.

"We see a tremendous uptake in the number of clients hiring InSites Consulting for running research communities. In not even 1 year's time we were able to realize over 10% of our turnover via research communities and we expect the growth to continue. Achieving the quality levels we have now would not have been possible without the academic link." says Tom De Ruyck, Senior Manager ForwaR&D Lab.

In the months to come, Stephan will be describing what his research has revealed. InSites Consulting plans to publish these results on a frequent basis on the InSites Forward Feeds blog (<http://blog.insites.eu>)



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InSites Consulting

InSites Consulting is a fast-growing, global, online marketing research agency, delivering comprehensive solutions and advice to world leading brands in nearly all industries. Our mission is to challenge conventional marketing & research wisdom by putting conversations and storytelling at the heart of our thinking and acting. We stay ahead of the game via our ForwaR&D lab, co-creating state-of-the-art research solutions together with clients, suppliers, academics, consumers, and professional organizations. Over the last 3 years, we received no less than 11 awards from different internationally well-respected bodies such as AMA, ARF, ESOMAR, MRS, Media Marketing, MOA, SPSS, AMMA, and eConsultancy. We do not believe in 'one-size-fits-all' solutions, emphasizing the need for customization and consulting in formulating answers to marketing challenges. Being fully independent, we stand for flexibility and long-term focus. We are headquartered in Belgium, having offices in the UK, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. More information on our site www.insites.eu and our blog <http://blog.insites.be>.