

Malaysian Banks Should Be Social Media Friendly

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KUALA LUMPUR, April 9 (Bernama) -- Local banking institutions should device strategies to innovate their approach towards customers via the Internet as well as tap the rising importance of the social media among Malaysians, says David Levi, Partner Financial Services APAC, Accenture's Management Consulting.

He said banks in Malaysia should be innovative in respect of the social networking sites, from the current "tweets" sent by them on products and services, which he added, is more one-sided communication.

"Banks must look at ways to sell their products through the Internet, especially the social media, rather than merely inform and persuade consumers to make physical visits to branches.

"This includes the strategy on having constructive two-way communication which can result in business transactions. It should be introduced to the social media and Internet at large.

"If the strategy is right and proven to be successful, banks can later extend the approach to enable consumers to open an account or partake of a service through the social media, without the need to come in-person," he told Bernama in a interview.

Levi said a recent global survey conducted by Accenture on 4,586 respondents, including 314 Malaysians across all spectrums, clearly showed that family and peers are more influential than advertising, direct marketing, and the consumers' own research when it came to banks.

"That influence is playing out more and more on social media networks. Malaysian consumers are more likely to trust comments about companies and products made by family and friends through the social media rather than anyone else.

"Those comments, particularly positive ones, have a significant influence on buyer consideration," he added.

According to the survey, 61 per cent of Malaysians polled said that they felt loyalty towards their banks, thus claiming the highest loyalty percentage points, than other regions surveyed.

However, it also revealed that 72 per cent of the consumers did not rule out shopping around for better banking deals.

"This is why Malaysian banks should not stop at their current stage of accessibility, products, services and most importantly, innovation, in their approach.

"This will help reduce the number of customers who want to cross over for a better bank or

service.

"The current loyalty programmes offered by banks are very attractive and impactful, but how long can they run on the same platform.

"The institutions must expand loyalty programmes to rewarding customers beyond financial considerations," Levi said.

He said 69 per cent of Malaysians are influenced by comments about companies on the social media.

Other than that, 67 per cent of locals trust comments on the social media about companies, from people they know such as family, friends and co-workers while 69 per cent are affected by positive comments and 67 per cent by those that are negative.

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