

Overview

The purpose of this assignment is to record and reflect on your participation in word-of-mouth communication episodes throughout the term. For three (3) of these WOM episodes you will record information about the episode in an online survey (see Blackboard for link). Completing the survey is a way to map the “conversational geography” of your own WOM episodes. Finally, you will compose a short essay (approximately 500 words) highlighting the three most important things you learned from this experience (see syllabus for due date).

Phase I: Raising Awareness of WOM Episodes & Completing Online Survey

During the course of the term you should be aware of any conversations you have that include evaluative talk about an organization, brand, product, or service. The talk can be positive or negative and may or may not include a recommendation. The conversation can take place face-to-face, over the phone, or online (e-mail, instant messaging, chat room, etc.).

For three (3) of the WOM-episodes, you will complete a detailed web-based survey. The survey will ask you such questions as how long the interaction was, where it took place, what topics were discussed, what was the communication quality of the interaction, was the talk positive, negative or neutral, did it include a recommendation or referral, if it led you to take any specific actions (or made you more likely to do so), etc. It should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey for each episode. The link for the web-based survey is available via Blackboard (Assignments section).

Phase II: Write Reflection Essay

After you have recorded your three episodes you will write an essay (approximately 500 words) reflecting upon your WOM communication practices highlighting the three most important things you learned. Consider the following questions for your essay (you will not be able to answer all of these questions in the short essay, but consider each one as possible issues to write about and discuss in class):

- Based on your reflections while recording your episodes did anything surprise you?
- With which relationship types did you have the most number of WOM-episodes?
- Were most of your interactions and WOM-episodes face-to-face, on the phone, or online?
- Were most of your WOM-episodes with one other person or multiple people?
- What types of organizations or brands did you discuss? What topics of talk surrounded the brand-related talk?
- Where did most of your WOM-episodes take place?
- Approximately what percentage of your WOM-episodes included a recommendation or referral? Were you more likely to give or receive a recommendation?
- As a result of the WOM-episodes, were you more likely to buy or use a product or service? Inquire further about it? Pass-along information to others?
- What other patterns did you notice?

The instructor will select the top three essays and post these on the class blog.

Evaluation

Your WOMES survey responses will be evaluated based on their thoroughness and detail. Your essay will be evaluated on thoroughness, detail, and demonstrated insight in reflecting on your own communication practices.