

Appendix 1

SL No:

Date:

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Consider any recommendation that you received recently. Keeping that in mind, give apt responses on a scale of 1 to 5, wherein 1 implies Strong Disagreement and 5 implies Strong Agreement:

Product Name: _____ Industry type: _____

1. TIE STRENGTH:(Relationship shared with the referrer)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
a) I am familiar with the referrer					
b) I share a close relationship with the referrer					
c) I attach importance to this relationship					
d) I interact quite frequently with the referrer					
e) I interact for quite long durations with the referrer					
f) We can mutually confide in each other.					

2. HOMOPHILY: (Degree of similarity with the referrer)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
a) The referrer is like me only					
b) The referrer's thoughts match with mine					
c) The referrer displays same behaviour as me					
d) The referrer has the same social standing as me					
e) The referrer has a similar cultural background					
f) The referrer has a similar economic background					

3. MESSAGE DETAILS: (Nature of information being passed on to you)/ The message -

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
a) Was really persuasive in nature					
b) Was intense and very clearly stated					
c) Was applicable & useful for decision-making					
d) Contained complete up-to-date info about the product					
e) Contained information that can be considered as reliable					

4. SOURCE CREDIBILITY:(Referrer's trustworthiness) / According to my knowledge, the referrer-

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
a) Has proper knowledge about the product					
b) Is experienced in that particular product industry.					

c) Is well trained and is considered as an expert.					
d) Is a man of integrity and is hence, trustworthy.					
e) Is objective and unbiased in nature.					

5. **CONSUMER TRUST:**(My trust on such sources)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
a) I feel that people are generally reliable					
b) I can trust a source of external information					
c) I believe people are generally honest with me					
d) I believe that the referrer has my best interests in mind					
e) Relying on the referrals minimize the risk of me making a bad choice					

6. **OPINION SEEKING:**(Openness to such suggestions and reviews)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
a) When buying, I ask other people for advice because I have seen my peers seek out information successfully.					
b) I like to get others' opinions because the amount of efforts I have to make to find information is less.					
c) I feel more comfortable buying when I have got other people's opinions on it.					
d) When choosing a product, others' opinions are important to me as it reduces the chances of making a bad decision.					

7. **INFORMATIONAL INFLUENCE:**(Looking for information and direction from others)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
a) I often observe what others are buying and using.					
b) If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my friends about the product.					
c) I often consult others to help choose the best option available from a product class.					
d) I frequently gather information from friends/family about a product before I buy.					

8. **NORMATIVE INFLUENCE:** (What other people think of my purchase?)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
a) It is important that others like products/brands I buy.					
b) I generally buy those brands that I think others will approve.					
c) I like to know what brands make good impression on others.					

d) I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same products that others buy.					
e) If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy.					

9. **WOM INTENT:** The prime reason behind the sender’s recommendation is that:

Motive	Indicator	Tick
Helping others	He wanted to help others with his own positive experience	
Helping company	He wanted to help the company as he is loyal towards it.	
Extraversion	He feels good telling others about his good product choice.	
Concern for Others	He wanted to save others from having similar negative experience.	
Negative Feelings	He wanted to take vengeance upon the company.	
Venting frustration	He wanted to get anger off his chest.	
Public displeasure	He wanted to voice his displeasure by narrating his experience through online mediums, so as to humiliate the company.	

10. WoM Valence: Positive Negative Neutral

11. **Effectiveness Measure:** The impact of the recommendation on your buying behaviour was as under:

Give honest ratings on a scale of 1 to 5, whereby 1 implies strong disagreement and 5 implies strong agreement. If you have made an actual purchase or defected from a product/brand, allot a 5 point rating in the last statement.

Impact of recommendation:	1	2	3	4	5
Change in awareness level					
Change in product interest					
Change in preference level					
Propensity to make product enquiries					
Propensity to go for product trials					
Change in Overall reputation of firm					
Purchase Intention					
Actual Purchase/ Defection					

12. **SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS AND PSYCHOGRAPHICS:**

- a) **Gender** (Here, Male=1, Female=2, Transgender=3)
- b) **Age:** Years.
- c) **Relationship status** (Here, Single=1, Married=2, Divorced=3, Widow/widower=4)
- d) **Level of education completed:** High School HS Graduate PG
Professional Qualification/Degree like CS, CA, BE or MBBBS
- e) **Employment Status:**(Unemployed=1, Self-employed= 2 Part time= 3 and Full timer= 4)
- f) **Current occupation:** (Govt Job=1, Pvt. Employee=2, Business=3, Student/Housewife=4)
- g) **Financial situation** (Here, Comfortable=3, Sufficient=2, Difficult/ Problematic=1)

- h) **Monthly Income:** (1=5000-9999, 2=10,000-19,999, 3=20,000-49,999, 4= > 50,000)
- i) **Caste Category,** that the respondent belongs to: (General=1, SC=2, ST=3, OBC=4)
- j) **Religion:** (Hinduism=1, Islam=2, Sikhism=3, Christianity=4, and Buddhism=5)
- k) **How many other people** live in your **household** (together with you in the same house)? [Do not count yourself] Under 18 From 18 till 65 Over 65 yrs

Total number of people living in your household (*yourself included*)

- l) Following is a **list of values** that some people seek in life. Study the list carefully & then rate each thing on how important it is in your daily life (Here, 1= V/Unimportant& 7 = V/Important)

List of Values	Very Unimportant			Very Important		
Sense of belonging						
Excitement						
Warm relationships with others						
Self-fulfilment						
Being well respected						
Fun and enjoyment of life						
Security						
Self-respect						
A sense of accomplishment						

- m) **Socio-economic class:** Take a look at this list and tell me how many items you have at home. (Electricity, Ceiling Fan, LPG Stove, Two wheeler, Colour TV, Refrigerator, Washing Machine, Computer, Four Wheeler, Air Conditioner, Agricultural land) _____ items out of Standard 11.

Education of chief earner: (1=Illiterate, 2=Literate but no formal schooling, 3= High school, 4=SSC, 5= Diploma, 6= Grad/Post Grad (General), 7= Grad/Post Grad (Professional) _____

13. NETNO-GRAPHICS:

- n) **Internet connection** (1= Mobile data, 2=Low speed modem, 3=High speed Broadband/4G)
- o) **Type of device used for Internet Access** (1= Mobile/ Tablet, 2= Laptop/ PC, 3= Multiple devices)
- p) **Prior Experience:** (1= New user, 2= User since one year, 3= User since last three years)
- q) **Frequency of internet usage** (1=Bi-monthly, 2=Monthly, 3= Fortnightly, 4=Weekly, 5= Daily)
- r) **Time spent online:** (1= 0-1 hr, 2= 1-2 hrs, 3= 2-3 hrs and 4=3-4 hrs, 5= Never offline)
- s) **Primary usage Purpose:** (1= Information, 2= Shopping, 3=Socializing& 4=Entertainment)
- t) **Participation in online communities:** (Never=1,Rarely=2 and Regularly=3)
- u) **Readmarketing blogs before purchase:**(Never=1,Rarely=2 and Regularly=3)
- v) **Read product reviewsbefore purchase:** (Never=1,Rarely=2 and Regularly=3)
- w) **Trust on online mediums:** (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)
- x) **No of active email accounts** – Work/Office Private/Personal Total
- y) **Social Network Presence** – Facebook Twitter Quora MySpace
Instagram Reddit Google+ Multiple
- z) **Social Network Activity**– (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)

Appendix 2

A. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS AND PSYCHOGRAPHICS

1. **Gender** (Here, Male=1, Female=2) 2. **Age** = Years.
3. **Relationship status** (Here Single=1, Married=2, Separated/ Divorced=3, Widow/widower=4)
4. **Level of education completed:** (1=High School, 2=Higher Sec, 3=Graduate, 4=Postgraduate 5=Professional Qualification/Technical degree like B.Tech / MBBS / CA / CS / CWA / MBA)
5. **Employment Status** (Here, Unemployed=1, Part time employee=2& Full time employee=3)
6. **Occupational type** (Govt. Service=1, Private Employee=2, Business=3, Student=4)
7. **Financial situation** (Here, Comfortable=3, Sufficient=2, Difficult/ Problematic=1)
8. **Monthly income:** (5000-9999=1, 10,000-19,999=2, 20,000-49,999=3 and >50,000=4)
9. **How many other people** live in your **household?** [*Do not count yourself*]
10. Which **district** are you from? (Guwahati=1, Jorhat=2, Dibrugarh=3, Silchar=4& Tezpur=5)
11. Following is a **list of values** that some people seek in life. Rate their importance in your daily life:

List of Values	Very Unimportant		3	4	5	Very Important	
	1	2				6	7
Sense of belonging							
Excitement							
Warm relationships with others							
Self-fulfilment							
Being well respected							
Fun and enjoyment of life							
Security							
Self-respect							
A sense of accomplishment							

B. NETNO-GRAPHICS

12. **Internet connection** (1=Mobile data, 2=Low speed modem, 3=High speed Broadband/4G)
13. **Device used for Internet Access** (1= Mobile/ Tablet, 2= Laptop/ PC, 3= Multiple devices)
14. **Prior Experience:** (1= New user, 2= User since one year, 3= User since last three years)
15. **Frequency of usage** (1=Bi-monthly, 2=Monthly, 3=Fortnightly, 4=Weekly, 5=Daily)
16. **Time spent online:** (1= 0-1 hr, 2= 1-2 hrs, 3= 2-3 hrs and 4=3-4 hrs, 5= Never offline)
17. **Primary usage Purpose:** (1= Information, 2=Shopping, 3=Socializing & 4=Entertainment)
18. **Participation in online communities:** (Never=1,Rarely=2 and Regularly=3)
19. **Readmarketing blogs before purchase:**(Never=1,Rarely=2 and Regularly=3)
20. **Read product reviewsbefore purchase:** (Never=1,Rarely=2 and Regularly=3)
21. **Trust on online mediums:** (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)
22. **No of active email accounts** – Work/Office Private/Personal Total
23. **Social Network Presence** – Facebook Twitter Quora MySpace
Instagram Reddit Google+ Multiple
24. **Social Network Activity**– (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)

WoM CONVERSATION #1

WEEK #1

Date of the conversation:

Date of entry in the diary:

- 1. Product Mentioned: _____ 2. Industry Category: _____
- 3. Conversation Type: _____ 4. Conversation medium: (Online/Offline) _____
- 5. If online, mention the specific medium:(1=Email, 2=Marketing blog, 3=Online review, 4=Virtual communities, 5=Social networks, 6=Internet Forums, 7=Viral videos)
- 6. Relationship with referrer: (1=Weak Ties, 2= Moderate Ties, 3= Strong Ties)
- 7. Education of the referrer: 1=High School, 2=Graduate, 3=PG, 4=Professional Degree)
- 8. Trust on online medium: (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)
- 9. Trust on offline medium: (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)
- 10. Conversation Details: _____

- 11. Conversation Keywords: _____

WoM LEVEL OF IMPACT #1

Below is a list of statements that represent the level of impact this WoM conversation might have had on your purchase behaviour. Give honest ratings on a scale of 1 to 5, whereby 1 implies strong disagreement and 5 implies strong agreement. If you have made an actual purchase or defected from a product/brand, allot a 5 point rating in the last statement.

Impact of recommendation:	1	2	3	4	5
Change in Awareness level					
Change in product interest					
Change in Preference level					
Propensity to make enquiries					
Propensity to go for product trials					
Change in overall reputation of firm					
Purchase intention					
Actual purchase/ Customer Defection					
WoM Effectiveness Score					

WoM CONVERSATION #2**WEEK #2**Date of the conversation: Date of entry in the diary:

1. Product Mentioned: _____ 2. Industry Category: _____
3. Conversation Type: _____ 4. Conversation medium: (Online/Offline) _____
5. If online, mention the specific medium: (1=Email, 2=Marketing blog, 3=Online review, 4=Virtual communities, 5=Social networks, 6=Internet Forums, 7=Viral videos)
6. Relationship with referrer: (1=Weak Ties, 2= Moderate Ties, 3= Strong Ties)
7. Education of the referrer: 1=High School, 2=Graduate, 3=PG, 4=Professional Degree)
8. Trust on online medium: (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)
9. Trust on offline medium: (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)
10. Conversation Details: _____

11. Conversation Keywords: _____

WoM LEVEL OF IMPACT #2

Below is a list of statements that represent the level of impact this WoM conversation might have had on your purchase behaviour. Give honest ratings on a scale of 1 to 5, whereby 1 implies strong disagreement and 5 implies strong agreement. If you have made an actual purchase or defected from a product/brand, allot a 5 point rating in the last statement.

Impact of recommendation:	1	2	3	4	5
Change in Awareness level					
Change in product interest					
Change in Preference level					
Propensity to make enquiries					
Propensity to go for product trials					
Change in overall reputation of firm					
Purchase intention					
Actual purchase/ Customer Defection					
WoM Effectiveness Score					

WoM CONVERSATION #3

WEEK #3

Date of the conversation:

Date of entry in the diary:

- 1. Product Mentioned: _____ 2. Industry Category: _____
- 3. Conversation Type: _____ 4. Conversation medium: (Online/Offline) _____
- 5. If online, mention the specific medium: (1=Email, 2=Marketing blog, 3=Online review, 4=Virtual communities, 5=Social networks, 6=Internet Forums, 7=Viral videos)
- 6. Relationship with referrer: (1=Weak Ties, 2= Moderate Ties, 3= Strong Ties)
- 7. Education of the referrer: 1=High School, 2=Graduate, 3=PG, 4=Professional Degree)
- 8. Trust on online medium: (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)
- 9. Trust on offline medium: (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)
- 10. Conversation Details:

11. Conversation Keywords: _____

WoM LEVEL OF IMPACT #3

Below is a list of statements that represent the level of impact this WoM conversation might have had on your purchase behaviour. Give honest ratings on a scale of 1 to 5, whereby 1 implies strong disagreement and 5 implies strong agreement. If you have made an actual purchase or defected from a product/brand, allot a 5 point rating in the last statement.

Impact of recommendation:	1	2	3	4	5
Change in Awareness level					
Change in product interest					
Change in Preference level					
Propensity to make enquiries					
Propensity to go for product trials					
Change in overall reputation of firm					
Purchase intention					
Actual purchase/ Customer Defection					
WoM Effectiveness Score					

WoM CONVERSATION #4

WEEK #4

Date of the conversation:

Date of entry in the diary:

- 1. Product Mentioned: _____ 2. Industry Category: _____
- 3. Conversation Type: _____ 4. Conversation medium: (Online/Offline) _____
- 5. If online, mention the specific medium: (1=Email, 2=Marketing blog, 3=Online review, 4=Virtual communities, 5=Social networks, 6=Internet Forums, 7=Viral videos)
- 6. Relationship with referrer: (1=Weak Ties, 2= Moderate Ties, 3= Strong Ties)
- 7. Education of the referrer: 1=High School, 2=Graduate, 3=PG, 4=Professional Degree)
- 8. Trust on online medium: (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)
- 9. Trust on offline medium: (Very Low=1, Low=2, Medium=3, High=4, Very High=5)
- 10. Conversation Details: _____

11. Conversation Keywords: _____

WoM LEVEL OF IMPACT #4

Below is a list of statements that represent the level of impact this WoM conversation might have had on your purchase behaviour. Give honest ratings on a scale of 1 to 5, whereby 1 implies strong disagreement and 5 implies strong agreement. If you have made an actual purchase or defected from a product/brand, allot a 5 point rating in the last statement.

Impact of recommendation:	1	2	3	4	5
Change in Awareness level					
Change in product interest					
Change in Preference level					
Propensity to make enquiries					
Propensity to go for product trials					
Change in overall reputation of firm					
Purchase intention					
Actual purchase/ Customer Defection					
WoM Effectiveness Score					

Appendix 3

Focus group moderator's guide

Aim: To create a conducive environment so as to ensure that the selected participants can freely share their experiences with regard to product recommendations they have received in the recent past. Participants therefore will be required to talk about the nature of recommendations, their source and the impact thereof.

Sample: Each focus group will consist of 7 to 8 persons in order to sustain manageability and control. In total, five FGDs need to be conducted across the various urban centres, one each in Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Silchar and one in Tezpur.

Selection Participants will be recruited on the basis of the following set criteria:

- i) The participant must be an adult.
- ii) The participant must be a resident of the urban centre.
- iii) The participant must be a receiver of WoM recommendation.
- iv) No two members of the same family are selected to avoid duplication of data.
- v) The groups are split on the basis of age (18-24, *Young adulthood*; 25-34, *Settling down*; and 35-60, *Settled down*). This helps give a clear picture of generational differences and increases the comfort level of the respondents.
- vi) Socio Economic Classification system is also considered in the selection process to ensure adequate representation of all segments

The objective is to ensure that a wide range of responses are obtained from the participants and also to prevent acquaintances from influencing comments.

Equipment: Pens, paper, audio recorder, a phone to take pictures and consent form.

Time spent: The time spent in conducting a focus group discussion ranges from 30 to 45 minutes.

Conducting the focus group

I. Background work

The moderator will:

- ❖ Introduce himself and thank the participants for agreeing to come.
While introducing himself, the researcher will talk about his designation he is at and the institution he is affiliated to.

- ❖ Explain the audience that they can withdraw from the discussion at any time.
The discussion rests on the wilful contribution of the participants. At no time can you force the participant to continue.
- ❖ Get the consent form signed by the participants.
Each participant must sign the consent form, which states that they have willingly agreed to take part in the focus group discussion.
- ❖ Explain the guidelines to be followed during the FGD.
Keep in mind there are no right or wrong answers to the questions that will be asked. The group discussion is aimed at producing divergent opinions. In respect for each other, only one individual from the group speaks at a time.
- ❖ Address privacy related issues.
Announce beforehand that you will be taking notes of the conversation, for further use. Assure the participants, of complete confidentiality and that the information collected will be used solely for academic research.

II. Discussion topics

Topic guides are developed for all the focus groups, based on the research objectives and relevant literature. The discussions amongst the focus groups will centre on individual WoM that the respondents might have received in the recent past, the source of WoM, the nature of recommendation and the possible impact it had generated on their buying behaviour.

Before the discussion, the participants sign a consent form and enter particulars regarding their socio-demographic and netnographic behaviour. Then the introductions begin amongst the participants and they get to know about each other. .

Once that is taken care of, the following questions are asked to the respondents:

1. Tell me about a product recommendation that you received recently.
2. How did you receive information about the particular product?
3. Did you seek the information from someone or was it unsolicited in nature?
4. Do you know the referrer in person? Are you more likely to rely on information received from close ones or are you open to suggestions from all?
5. Do you try to ascertain the credibility of the source of information before relying on it? Do you rely easily on online sources?
6. Do you think that the message helped you in your purchase decision?

7. Are you generally dependent on others' advice while making a purchase? Do you always look out for opinions prior to making a purchase?
8. Are you bothered by what other people think of your purchase? Do you have the habit of purchasing products that others will approve of?
9. Does the referrer's attitude and background have any bearing on your purchase behaviour? Or is it only the information that you care about, not the messenger?
10. What was the impact of the recommendation that you received? Did you act on it?
11. If you were asked to list three key factors that affect your trust on a source of information, in order of their importance what would they be?
(Tie Strength, Homophily, Message, Source Credibility, Consumer Trust, Opinion Seeking, Normative Influence, Informative Influence and WOM Intent)
12. How often do you use the internet? What do you generally do online?
13. Are you in the habit of reading marketing blogs and/or product reviews posted in online forums? How reliant are these sites?
14. Have you ever purchased or refrain from purchasing a product just because you read a good/ bad review relating to it?

III. Closing

Offer an opportunity for any final comments that any of the participants would like to make. They can ask a question or two themselves. Finally, thank the respondents for their valuable inputs and wind up the discussion.

Make sure you have written down the issues discussed properly as your analysis will be based on it. Though not a necessity, it has been seen in case of certain studies that FGD participants are paid a nominal amount of money for their time and efforts. If it pleases the researcher, he may go ahead with it and make a small payment.

THANK YOU,

Sandeep Kumar Singh,
Doctoral Research Fellow,
Business Administration,
Tezpur University.

Appendix 4

Research Publications

1. Understanding the Interplay between Message Characteristics, Demographic Factors and Word of Mouth Effectiveness. *Journal of Marketing Vistas*. ISSN Number: 2249-9067.
2. Digital Word of Mouth Marketing: Perspectives, Challenges and Strategies. *Invertis Journal of Management*. ISSN Number: 0975-6310
3. Word of Mouth Indulgence, Incident and Influence: A Review. *Assam University Journal of Management*. ISSN Number: 2394-8345.