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THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF CORPORATE BLOGGING: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY ON CORPORATIVE BLOGS IN THE ROMANIAN LANDSCAPE

Empirical study

Keywords

Relationship Cultivation Strategies,
Corporate Blogs,
Service-Dominant Logic,
Co-creation Process

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to identify the degree to which established corporate online communication strategies gravitate around the new Return on Investment (ROI) which is Return on Blog (ROB). Corporate blogs allow companies to connect and communicate online with both their customers and a much wider range of participants/publics. As blogging is about information, leverage, connections, conversations, discovery, and amplification, the paper focuses on specific communication strategies for cultivating and maintaining organizational-public relationship (OPR), such as openness and interactivity. Furthermore, the importance of company-customer communications has been highlighted in the Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) literature as a crucial precedent for both parties to co-create value. The conducted research is based on a content analysis of the corporate blogs of companies in the Romanian landscape, exploring the two cultivation and maintenance relationship strategies employed by communication practitioners when blogging and their potential influence on enhancing dialogue with publics.

INTRODUCTION

With companies attaching more and more importance to internet presence by adopting online communication, especially social networks as favorite form of social media (Giannakouris and Smihily, 2013), the influence and impact of these platforms, as organizational tools can be acknowledged up to a point. In term of purpose of use, top three most important reasons of using social media among European enterprises (see Figure 1. bellow) are: (1) develop the enterprise's image or market products; (2) obtain or respond to customer's opinions, reviews, questions and (3) involve customers in development for innovation of goods and services (Giannakouris and Smihily, 2013). Thus, fostering collaboration and enhancing customer and partner relationships could summarize all three purposes of use mentioned above (Figure 1).

The constantly growing impact of online communication upon communication practices is posing both opportunities and challenges to public relations practitioners. Thus, redirecting their offline efforts to online communication efforts is not a choice, but a necessity. In doing so, a new range of rules together with more demanding and talkative publics have to be met while communicating online. Hence, we find public relations practitioners achieving qualitative long-term relationships with publics by using various online communication platforms based on interactivity and engagement strategies with netizens (a term coined by Hauben, in 1997). In this respect, the principles of a service-centered view summarized by Vargo and Lusch (2006) and encompassed in three core concepts: (1) the centrality of operant resources; (2) the interactive nature of value generation; (3) the participative nature of value generation are well put in function when analyzing the corporate blogging as part of online corporate communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper extends the SDL debate, as founded by Vargo and Lusch (2004), by analyzing it through the lens of strategic orientations for cultivating and maintaining organizational-public relationship (OPR), in combination with a service-centered view which is inherently customer oriented and relational. In this context, this paper comes with one complex purpose attached: analyzing customer oriented and relational perspective characteristics in order to identify existing *common characteristics* between SDL and strategies for cultivating and maintaining organizational-public relationship.

Service-Dominant (S-D) Logic, viewed as a mindset for a unified understanding of the purpose of organizations, markets and society together, has easily turned into the subject of conceptual debate over the past years. Consequently, a large number of studies have analyzed the conceptual foundations of SDL (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2008; Madhavaram and Hunt, 2008). Despite significant international research seeking to contextualize marketing theories or specific cases in a service-centered view, research on the applicability and utility of SDL for blogging practice is almost negligible for Romanian organizational communication landscape.

Challenges and opportunities in communication practice for cultivating organizational-public relationship (OPR)

New media with its various forms and dimensions are actually providing new opportunities for organizations to create, build, develop and maintain relationships with strategic publics like customers, small or large communities, employees or other stakeholders. (Wright and Hinson 2011) Among new media, blogs are still one of the actual forms of online communication which have begun to be explored by public relations (PR) practitioners as a tool for corporate communications (Kent, 2008; Porter, Trammell, Chung and Kim, 2007; Smudde, 2005). Blogs have the potential to be a fast, effective and efficient corporate communication tool because of the unique characteristics facilitating both one- and two-way communication with the organisation's many audiences, and both mass- and interpersonal communication. (Marken, 2005)

Many researchers have suggested that relationship management strategies used between an organization and its publics are very similar to those between intimate persons (Grunig and Huang, 2000). Based on this notion, PR campaigns often adopt relationship management strategies used in interpersonal relationships, such as keeping in contact with each other, communicating openly, or showing commitments. Owing to the unique nature of blog communication – having characteristics of both interpersonal and mass communication – some view blogs as an ideal medium for PR campaigns (Marken, 2005; Smudde, 2005).

In this respect, corporate blogs represent a highly effective message reception and retention communications channel where the organization (1) can directly communicate with key publics in a highly personalized manner, (2) generate sustained two-way information flow and (3) simultaneously reach out to the mass audience in an intimate way that resembles interpersonal communication. (Kelleher and Miller, 2006)

Characteristics of blogs and corporate blogs

In Web 2.0 environment we get next to posting as a substitute for publishing. With technologies like

blogs, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn or Twitter, one's *private* thoughts are immediately manifest, immediately *publicly* available. Here, the word is flexible, and dialogical, uttered not simply within the context of other authorial words (as in print cultures), but in the lived context of an ever-changing interactive community. Given the importance of community in Web 2.0 environment, the locus of truth resides neither in the individual (as in oral cultures), nor in the fixed objectivity of the page (as in print cultures), but in the community. (O'Donnell, 1998:141) What might this mean for the future of organizational communication? Before addressing this question, I want to focus more closely on the way in which organizational-public relationship (OPR) is cultivated and maintained through corporate blogging.

Firstly, blogs have distinctive features which differentiate them from other forms of computer-mediated communication. These features include: (1) easy-to-use content management system; (2) archive-oriented structure; (3) latest-information-first order; (4) links to other blogs; and (5) ease of responding to previous blog postings (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus and Wright, 2004; Huffaker and Calvert, 2005). Secondly, because of the flexible and interconnected nature of blogs, people can use blogs for various purposes, including keeping a personal diary, interacting with other bloggers, building a virtual community, and disseminating messages to the mass audience (Herring et al, 2005; Lawson-Borders and Kirk, 2005). The boundaries between intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and mass communication seem to blur in the blogosphere.

In terms of blogs or microblogs and content-sharing websites popularity among EU enterprises (Giannakouris and Smihily, 2013), these types of social networks were less used, at 10% and 11% respectively (Figure 2).

Blogging as a Medium or as a Technology?

Blogging is not merely a medium, a channel through which information is communicated. It is fundamentally a practice, a technique, a work that cultivated particular ways of being and particular forms of human sociality. Blogs are an emerging online communications channel which has begun to be harnessed by public relations practitioners as another avenue for communicating with key publics. (Smudde, 2005)

What does it mean for corporate communication to be practiced under the conditions of this new technology? How might organizational discourse be changing within the environment of blogging? And what kind of communities will be formed through this practice? These are complex questions, and any answer will necessarily be impressionistic and provisional. But I want to stretch a number of observations and suggestions here, drawing primarily on an explanatory research on corporate blog in Romania, on a set of characteristics that this technology made available for organizations.

Using regularly the internet means speeding up our lives as in cyberspace things happen quickly. The immediacy of blogging brings in scene, a wider scope of organizational communication. Despite the necessary specific area of specialization, on blogging everything is open for organizational analysis (in terms of topics); everything becomes a possible occasion for thought, discussion, and experimentation. An event in the news, a concert, a new novel, etc. – the blog is a setting in which such things can be explored through the imaginative resources of the organizational tradition. Blogging is not only a new technology of writing and conversation, it is also a new way of reading. Blogging is nothing if not a kind of reading-together. It is the formation of a new kind of community of reading. The very act of reading organizational posts thus becomes a collective project.

Web 2.0 as a relationship-building medium

Public relations research about the Internet and the WWW falls into two broad categories: (1) attitudes and expectations about the Web as an organizational tool, and (2) Web site design characteristics for providing information to the public. (Kent, Taylor, White, 2003). The development of the World Wide Web provided an expanded opportunity for organizational communicators to turn it into a relationship-building medium. This perspective directs communicators to a new strategic dimension based on two-way and interactive communication, symmetrical or dialogical and socially responsible (Grunig, 2009). However, the creation of an online social space (e.g., corporate blog) does not guarantee that dialogue will actually take place. Thus, the two-way and interactive communication implies abandoning the illusion of *control* (in terms of flow of information in new media). This illusion of control is specifically relevant as online communication channels give voice to all its users who have become both consumers and producers of content. Hence, all online participants contribute dynamically to the flow of communication.

In this context, building, developing and maintaining relationships with publics on the Web 2.0 implies constant *dialogic process of communication* (Kent and Taylor, 1998; Kent and Taylor, 2002). Furthermore, creating such dialogic relationships could be based on several strategies that communication practitioners have the opportunity to access: (1) the *dialogic loop* (allowing publics to enquire about the organization, not limited to the information that the organization is willing to disseminate), (2) *usefulness of*

information (any kind of details about the organization and the products that it provides, such as: the way products are produced, how the services are delivered etc), (3) *interactivity* (in terms of updating information, interesting content, questions). In fact, each of the three strategies mentioned above represent an essential stepping stone in starting a relationship, as they (1) provide the possibility for publics to express their opinion and (2) open the subject of *engagement*. (Kent and Taylor, 1998: 328),

To further investigate the relationship between dialogue presence and the process of building a strong long-term organization-public relationship, transparency can be considered as a relational condition. Hence, if the organization-public relationship is positive, then transparency, trust, cooperation, and commitment will be present as well. Still, even though access and transparency mean permanent information availability, information does not equal communication or vice-versa. (Jahansoozi, 2006) Organisations should not limit their communication on just the process of disseminating information to its publics.

However, when considering *relationship cultivation and maintenance strategies*, three particular strategies seemed to be more relevant for this paper purpose: (1) disclosure, (2) openness and (3) transparency (Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas, 2009). Hence, they will be operationalized in this research paper.

S-D Logic perspective: creating consumer experiences and the importance of co-production

Post-modern forms of consumption relate to a changed economy based on experiences rather than just services and goods (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; 1999). Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) therefore argues that marketing landscape is a continuous social and economic process, mainly focusing on operant resources. S-D Logic (amongst other premises) views the *customer as an operant resource* capable of acting on other resources, therefore, a *collaborative partner* who co-creates value with the firm (Lusch and Vargo, 2009).

This so-called *collaborative partnership* turns customers into active participants in the work of an organisation.

Hence, such co-production process could be defined as *a constructive customer participation in the service creation and delivery process*, requiring meaningful contributions from customer side. (Auh, Bell, McLeod and Shih, 2007: 361). In fact, such a perspective is related to the key drivers of organisation competitiveness. Hence, this leads to a related theme in which the firm needs to consider *environments, customers and partners as operant resources* (Lusch and Vargo, 2009).

The *co-production process* is just one critical dimension of S-D Logic that plays an important role when discussing business blogging. Other key elements include engaging more effectively with employees and understanding them as operant resources. This, as Lafley and Charan (2008: 47) argue, embraces a business culture based on *curiosity, collaboration and connectedness*.

Thus, despite corporate blogs being touted as a suitable platform for companies to facilitate company-customer online interactions, this research combines the study of corporate blogs and its potential for value co-creation from an S-D Logic perspective.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Developing and cultivating relationship strategies on Web 2.0 brought many researches to life, researches that are important to knowledge in the field. Researches can be carried out in a number of ways (depending, amongst other reasons, on the methodology and the purpose of the paper). In this respect, blogs, with their specific features and functionalities, should be approached differently when conducting a research. Considering the potential of blogging in harnessing effective and positive relationships based on interactivity and engagement between organizations and their publics, this paper focuses on identifying how top Romanian corporate blogs 2013 are developing collaborative partnership with their publics and whether specific cultivation strategies (such as openness and interactivity) used on blog, are enhancing and building genuine relationships by creating consumer experiences.

Therefore, the research questions of this paper are:

R1: Do the sampled companies employ relational cultivation strategies such as *openness*, *interactivity* on their blogs? If so, to which degree are these strategies used in order to develop *co-production process*?

R2: Could the investigated relational cultivation strategies get different levels among different industry types?

METHODOLOGY

This research is based on a content analysis of top Romanian corporate blogs 2013 (17), as identified in first edition of the first top corporate blogs in Romania in 2013. The competition was initiated by well known online communication professionals and bloggers. The main aspects that were taken into account when evaluating the blogs were: design, update frequency, type of content, relevant content, and creativity. The sample of 15 blogs (one of the 17 top Romanian corporate blogs was suspended and the content cannot be accessed anymore and other was redirected to the online shop section of

the organisation) represents different industry types, hence making possible this explanatory research to investigate during the content analysis the differences that operates between them.

Given the social characteristics of blogs that created consumers the prosperous context to connect with other types of publics and exchange information, opinions and thoughts about products and brands (Chu and Kim, 2011), it is mandatory for organizations to pay attention to the constructed strategies in order to build and maintain relationships online. Furthermore, having in mind the S-D logic, memorable experiences are particularly associated with excellent design, marketing and service delivery and have two dimensions: (1) consumer participation which ranges from passive to active and, (2) the connection which links the customer to the experience event (Pine and Gilmore 1998). The creation of such experiences is of obvious significance in any industry types (maybe at different levels). The importance of co-production is due to the demand for customized experiences as the interactions of consumers with providers change. (Etgar 2008)

The units of analysis of this research paper were firstly the corporate blogs as a whole online presence and, then, the last 10 articles published on each corporate blog. As a total, we analysed a sample of 150 articles. The content analysis of social networking sites have been used before in studies looking to find how public relations practitioners communicate with their publics (Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas, 2009). As a result, the coding scheme was conducted based on previous studies of Waters Burnett, Lamm and Lucas (2009), Cho and Huh (2010) and Williams and Brunner (2009), with adapted categories.

Measurement and coding

The coding scheme was based on the literature review on existing research. However, few studies have been conducted on the specific relational strategies organizations are using to communicate with their publics on corporate blogs, so the scheme of categories was created in order to match the specific features of the researched platform: weblog (as it was named when invented by Jorn Barger in 1997). Thus, two cultivation and maintenance strategies were operationalized for the blogging context: *openness* and *interactivity*. The two categories were correlated with one of the premises of Service-Dominant Logic: *co-production process*. This last category has been inserted in order to identify whether the two cultivation and maintenance strategies lead to a constructive customer participation in user-generated-content about the organization and its services and/or products.

Openness is not to be taken for access, but to address the subject of details about the organizations` mission, objectives or overall activity, which can be filled in the *About us* section. Moreover, links to news, press releases, annual reports or any kind of campaigns driven by the organisation could be provided in blog posts on a regular basis.

After openness, *interactivity* comes. The three main areas of this concept are: (1) originality, (2) frequencies of posts (daily basis – high level of engagement, weekly basis – medium, monthly basis – low) and (3) immediacy of response (high immediately after comments were posted, medium – on a weekly basis, low – no response). Also, as interactivity can be translated in engagement, the engagement can be stimulated by both links to questionnaires or customer feedback application and adopting a human voice (by adding the name and contact details of the person (or persons) who are the writers).

In these research, engagement was operationally defined as: the user seeking memorable experiences (Pine and Gilmore 1998). Therefore, this research paper is rather exploring the levels and dimensions of engagement through *openness* and *interactivity* strategies. Given the field to be explored, the unit of analysis was the article/post and, based on that articles content, we looked at the numbers of comments, likes and shares each one received. The correlation between posts and social interaction reflects the level of stimulating the participation of the publics. The last 10 articles on each blog were coded in order to identify the level of engagement. Each relationship strategy was coded based on the level of implementation of the presented tactics to be implemented when blogging. The dimensions from the operationalizing of each strategy were scored using a 4 point scale, with ― "3" being the high level, ― "2" the medium level, ― "1" low level and ― "0" indicating no presence of the tactic used.

The degree to which the cultivation relationship strategies were being used on the sampled blogs (openness and interactivity) was identified by creating a main analysis of each variable. Furthermore, after identifying the degree to which organizations from specific sector of activities present in the sample use the relationship strategies, an analysis of responsiveness (*co-production process*) of a correspondent organization from each sector from the sample was conducted. The unit of analysis stayed the same. Thus, the sector of activity played an important role especially in answering the second question of this research. The sectors of activity present in the sample are: food/beverages, health and beauty, furniture provider, general ecommerce store (IT&C, electronics, gadgets, toys, books, music and movies), camera equipment provider, antivirus and

internet security software, jewelry, personalized gifts, real estate, mountain items online store, tourism portal, flight booking, sleep premium items manufacturer, auto service.

RESULTS

R1: Do the sampled companies employ relational cultivation strategies such as openness, interactivity on their blogs? If so, to which degree are these strategies used in order to develop co-production process?

The sampled organisations in this study included 1 company from the food and beverages sector of activity, 1 from health and beauty, 1 from antivirus and internet security software and 12 from services (such as: furniture, general ecommerce, camera equipment provider, jewelry, personalized gifts, real estate, mountain items online store, tourism portal, flight booking, sleep premium items manufacture, auto service). The analyzed sample has also a consolidated social media presence (especially on Facebook – the most used channel in Romanian organizational landscape). Given the fact that the sample is constituted by a large variety of sectors of activity, further research and a wider sample is necessary in order to investigate whether the sector of activity influences, directly, the strategies and the specific tactics put into action by organisations. The first research question sought to identify how organisations in Romania use relationship cultivation strategies on their corporate blogs. As shown in the literature review section, the investigated OPR cultivation strategies were openness, interactivity. Furthermore, the degree to which these strategies have to be used when blogging in order to develop co-production process and, as a consequence, make consumer partners in the user-generated world that we live in.

The first cultivation strategy, openness, was operationalized by considering two dimensions: organization overview and news, which included the degree to which specific elements were present (as described in Code book 1). The organization overview included elements such as the presence of the mission statement, overall activity, campaigns developed by the organization the map offering directions to the physical address, and, moreover, contact details of the people who administrate the blog posting. All 15 corporate blogs have strong link with organization identity, 11 of them even have the same www domain as the organization site, representing a section from the website. Hence, all these 11 blogs not only have provided details regarding their organization, but they also present all products/ services provided by the organization and even an online map with directions to the organization address. 4 corporate blogs had provided few details regarding their organizations, mostly just describing their overall

activity, with some contact details. However, 11 of the corporate blogs are describing high value information on their *About* section, including strong information about the organization what it can offer to the readers of the blog. As far as posting news, either links to own site, other sites, reports, press releases or campaign information, only 3 of the organisations used this tactic on a monthly basis, all the other organizations do not post news (the term "news" is to be understood as described in Code book 1) at all. Therefore, the openness relationship cultivation strategy is used at a high level when it comes about organization overview and at a low or non-existing level on news dimension.

The interactivity relationship cultivation strategy registered unexpected values. Two of the five dimensions (including: *originality* and *immediacy of response*) analyzed received high or medium degree for the whole sampled organizations list as it follows: *immediacy of response* – high level for all 15 sampled organizations (with the annotation that are few cases of a response to be offered); on *originality,* only 3 blogs had all analyzed posts and multimedia (image and-or video) content attached fully created by the organization, while 3 of them still prefer to use other sources as the subject of their posts. Another dimension discussed is *frequency,* only 4 blogs post on a daily basis. For those which do not have a daily activity, 6 post content once in two-three days, which still indicates a medium degree of intent for reaching their publics. The other 5 blogs post once a week.

Whereas dialogue stimulation can be a useful tactic for developing engagement between an organization and its publics, only 3 of the sampled organisations are using calls-to-responses (incentivizing users to answer the questions within blog posts). The presence of the human voice, instead of the organization identity, communicating with publics was completely 100% not available. None of the researched brands has a human presence to interact with publics. Overall, given the fact that the interactivity strategy developing relationships with publics was achieved at a low level by the majority of organizations, the co-production process is saddled.

Talking about co-production process through blogging we talk, at the same time, about measuring responsiveness (see Code Book 2 - Measuring Responsiveness). The first aspect to be taken into account is the type of post/article. From the ten type of posts listed (1 – News, 2 – Reports, 3 - Press Releases/Events, 4 – Campaigns, 5 - Polls/Questionnaires, 6 - Multimedia (taken from other sources), 7- Multimedia (original), 8- Links to website, 9 - Simple text article, 10 - Promotion/prizes) only 6 types of post could be found on the 125 analysed posts (15 per each blog). Those 6 types are the following: campaigns;

multimedia (taken from other sources); multimedia (original); links to website; simple text article and promotion/prizes. From these 6 types the ones used the most are: links to website; simple text article and promotion/prizes. The results indicated very low response rates for likes and comments for all types of content provided. Most simple text article (83 out of 92) posts seem to be receiving low numbers of likes from publics (with a maximum of 27 per one single article), with less interactivity through comments (less than 40 comments on all 102 analyzed articles) and shares of the articles (less than 30 on all 102 analyzed articles). The rest of posts (33) have multimedia content, mostly with unoriginal images and videos (21 posts) and original ones (12 posts). The unoriginal content seems to be receiving the highest number of likes (more than 70), but the blog shows low responses in terms of comments and shares (less than 20) for both original and unoriginal content (Figure 3).

R2: Could the investigated relational cultivation strategies get different level among different industry types?

The results show that there are few differences of degrees of openness between sectors of activities, showing a medium use of this OPR cultivation strategy in 4 sectors (the antivirus and internet security software, health and beauty, tourism portal and sleep premium items manufacture), while the other sectors of activity show high use of *openness* strategy. Special situations are represented by cases of the dimension *immediacy of response* and the *human voice* where there is no difference between sectors of activity as all analyzed list of blogs: while on first dimension all blogs show high degree of implementation, the latter was registered as Not available.

Relevant differences were observed in the frequency of posting, in all sectors where ecommerce was registered as high (on a daily basis). From the same comparison between industry types, it was revealed that mostly: furniture, general ecommerce store, camera equipment provider, jewelry, personalized gifts, real estate, mountain items online store, tourism portal appear are using on a high or medium level 4 of the relationship strategy dimensions: *organization overview*, *originality, frequency* and *immediacy of response*. However, a relevant sample must be analysed in order to obtain significant results.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This research can serve as a pilot study for investigating the ways organizations from Romanian landscape are using corporate blogs (external blogs) in order to develop relationship cultivation strategies with their customer and other larger publics. Other possible research topics could

include investigating the internal and external use of blogs by organization. In this respect, one of the main methodological limitations of this research is the sample size which is not large enough to ensure a representative a set of conclusive results.

Given the purpose of this paper: identifying whether strategies used preponderantly lead to co-production process suited for various sector of activities present in the sample, the measure used to collect the data could inhibited researcher's ability to conduct a thorough analysis of the results. In retrospect, a quantitative analysis researching a significant sample of corporate blog could be necessary have given new dimensions to the results of the study.

Furthermore, the implications of applying the same score scale (a 4 point scale, with — "3" being the high level, — "2" the medium level, — "1" low level and — "0") for all three dimensions, need to be addressed. As *shares* and *comments,* as specific features to measure *interactivity* imply a more active behavior than *likes,* these features should be analyzed differently.

DISCUSSIONS

In the recognition of the so-called emerging experience economy, the notion of a changed environment that demands adaptation from corporate actors is justification for targeted use of blogs by companies. In this respect, it is clear that blogging and the move towards social software, in general, are broader phenomena that organizations need to pay attention to, lest they lose touch with their publics.

Single exchange transactions are changing into relationships where value is created through the interaction process itself. (Etgar 2008) Thus, the increasing risk of *missing out* on target markets, stakeholders or other publics by not blogging plays an important role on the subject. Furthermore, the shift of power from companies to users (Bernoff, Li, 2008) implies engagement and loosened control.

This research paper offers a lead to whether different sectors of activities have a preference towards using specific strategies, by investigating, in parallel, the responsiveness blogs from each sector. The characteristics of products influence the unevenness of co-production processes across different business sectors. (Etgar,2008: 100) Engagement encapsulates co-production, with its emphasis on customers as an operant resource, and has become increasingly important in any sort of business sectors.

CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this study was to identify the degree to which established corporate online

communication strategies gravitate around the new Return on Investment (ROI) which is Return on Blog (ROB). As blogging is about information, leverage, connections, conversations, discovery, and amplification, the paper focuses on specific communication strategies for cultivating and maintaining organizational-public relationship (OPR), such as *openness* and *interactivity.* In this respect, this study was focused on identifying if specific relationship cultivation strategies were used by organisations on their corporate blogs. Although most organisations are *open*, exposing information about their organization, mission statements and overall activity, products/services, the blogs could be used for detailing information about campaigns, so as to get the public involved. However, news are either existent on a monthly basis or non-existent (most cases), so there is a possibility that specific types of industries use this tactic more than others. Further research is required.

Furthermore, the importance of company-customer communications (as has been highlighted in the Service-Dominant Logic literature), understood here as blogs and their potential influence on enhancing dialogue with publics, was put into the lights. Thus, despite corporate blogs being touted as a suitable platform for companies to facilitate company-customer interactions online, the results of this research showed that organizations did not create the necessary interaction context to encourage the co-creation process to happen.

Moreover, organizations barely use interactivity as a strategy for their relationship management strategies, despite using original content and keeping a high posting frequency (on a daily basis). As far as stimulating tactics are concerned, organisations barely incentivize the publics (turn into readers when discussing about blogging) to start a conversation.

Acknowledgement

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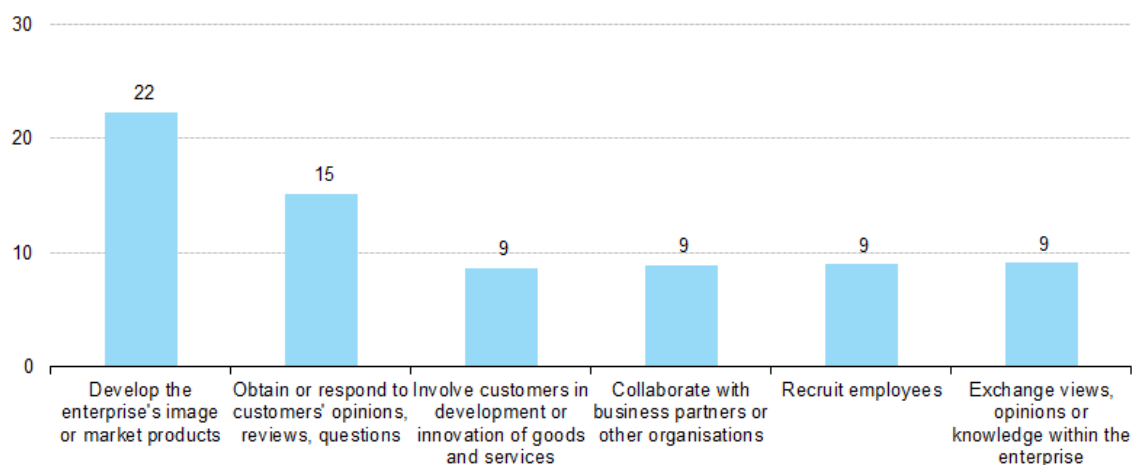
Figure 1. Enterprises using social media, by purpose of use, EU-28, 2013 (% of enterprises)
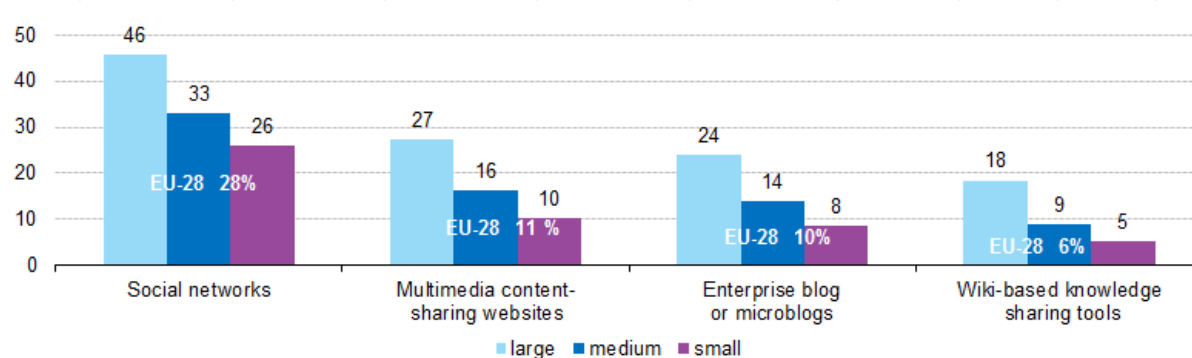*Source:* Eurostat (isoc_cismt)

Figure 2. Enterprises using social media, by type of social media and size class, EU-28, 2013 (% of enterprises)
Source: Eurostat (isoc_cismt)

Relationship Strategy on dimensions		Degree of implementation			
		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	NOT AVAILABLE
OPENESS	Organization overview	11	4	-	-
	News	-	-	3	11
	Originality	3	9	3	-
	Frequency	4	6	5	-
INTERACTIVITY	Immediacy of response	15	-	-	-
	Dialogue simulation	-	-	3	12
	Human voice	-	-	-	15

Figure 3. Overall results: Relationship cultivation strategies and degrees of implementation.