

Successful Brand Strategy Execution on Social Media



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Executive Summary

As traditional media falls out of favour, social media has risen to replace it. In order to protect existing investment in brand image and maintain relevancy, it is necessary to engage with the audience in the medium they are using. Social media focuses on the individual and his world. In order to enter this circle it is necessary for company's brand to insert itself into consumer's circle of trust.

When brands engage customers in social media, there is an opportunity for dialogue. Dialogue creates trust between the brand and the consumer as long as it is not used for deception. The other benefit of engaging in dialogue with consumers is that the company has opportunity to gain feedback on its activities and products, gain more detailed knowledge and insight about the consumer groups that are attracted to the brand and products, this knowledge can be used effectively in other contexts.

The shift from mass media to social media has brought about a fundamental shift in the balance of power between the company and the consumer. Consumers now have the ability to create content and have it consumed by anyone on the planet via blogs, YouTube, twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms. When consumers relate their brand experiences, they shape the perception of the brand for other consumers. If the company is not active on social media and does not make its opinion and viewpoint available, then consumers will rely on third parties and award them more credibility. While the brand can no longer fully control the brand's perception and image among consumers, if it is not part of the dialogue then it cannot even influence it.

The findings indicate that it is possible for brands to assert a degree of control over their brand image by providing the infrastructure for communities of fans to establish themselves. These brand communities play an essential role in shaping the image of the brand among other consumers, since their opinions are respected by their peers. Providing high quality content, engaging with the community on its own terms enables the brand to influence these opinion leaders, and in this way promote them as brand champions in their respective communities

An effective social branding strategy and implementation is a challenging task, since this is a new space where both theories and the reality is changing, brands will have to learn as they go, while respecting simple principles of: building trust, honest and open communication, nurturing the brand communities, and learn from experience what approaches are successful with their particular audience in particular media.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“It is not the strongest of the species that survive not the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change”

Charles Darwin

Extensive use of Information Technology provides people with the ability to integrate and share information with a large part of the world's population in practice regardless of time and place. No one would deny that Information Technology has changed how people interact with each other. Various online platforms have been created to gather, host and facilitate human social activities in cyberspace. The popularity of these online communities became bigger with expansion of Internet coverage around the world, especially among young people, who are born with computers in their home and accepting digital communication as natural dogma.

Development of electronic communications enables access to and participation in information systems, not only in the metropolitan areas but also to habitants in remote districts as well. This access to global data feeds melts urban and rural viewpoints into the global stage and makes the world a much smaller place, where people are involved with many different communities, and become able to easily form all manner of connections, gather into groups around common interests, ideas and values. These groups form large and influential consumer groups which communicate their opinions, experiences and expectations taken from their everyday experiences on digital media.

For young people, information technology, social networking, free and instantaneous communication is simply a fact of life. Younger generations in developed nations have only this networked reality as a point of reference, and being native to this merging of virtual and analogue worlds, find it natural to simultaneously interact in the physical and the virtual, and consider them interchangeable.

Global use of social networking opens new opportunities for business to interact with their potential customers directly in real time. It opens new opportunities to experiment and to take advantage of what virtual communities can offer. With these advantages in mind, business started to enter in to the spaces where global consumers gather. Business started to use the same social media platforms as the individual consumer, using it to show their product, participate in dialogue with consumers, shape and direct consumer opinions, and build brand image.

2. MOTIVATION

There are a number of research (Na and Marshall (2005), (Page and Lepkowska-White 2002) stating the importance of strengthening brand equity online, because it has the same affect as offline. Rios R & Riquelme (2008) state that brand loyalty and brand value associations directly create brand equity. Increased competition, globalization, the move from a goods dominant logic to a service dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), and the increased cost of introducing a new product or a new brand in the market have made marketers reflect on the management of their brands and their branding strategies (Keller, 2008, p.35-36).

The Internet has opened new possibilities for small companies to enter the global market. Combined with easier access and lower cost, the competitive arena has become overcrowded, decreasing effects of promotional effort on traditional media, increasing the number of offers consumers are exposed to and creating advertising fatigue. (Tollin & Carù, 2008, Konrum) the importance in learning about brand communities becomes more important. With increasing use of social media platforms and a rise of various types and size of communities, companies have realised the potential to target those groups of people online. Therefore, marketers started entering digital space, in particular social networking sites in order to expand their branding communication channels. However due to the novelty there is a lack of academic research and studies on companies' behaviour on social media in a branding context. With new communication channels the behaviour of people has changed, and so marketing models which were used in the past on traditional media do not fit consumer behaviour anymore. These require marketers to react, find new ways of communicating with consumers, and create new models of consumer behaviour and to adapt their marketing strategies to changing and dynamic environment.

How companies introduce their brand to social networking sites is particular interesting, because it might provide theoretical perspective on branding concepts and practical implication for business on how to act or what to avoid when entering social media sites.

3. PROBLEM FORMULATION

Social media platforms have become an active and important part of our everyday lives. The increasing number of people connecting to the social networks on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and others, opens up new, unexplored opportunities for businesses.

In the past few years development and usage of social media exploded and it is still growing, attracting private users and business to connect to social network sites, whose values grows with the number of users and the connections between them. This process opens up new opportunities for businesses to leverage digital content delivery technologies through social media:

- ❖ **Transparency** - to get in touch with the customer directly and receive direct and honest feedback about the products or services
- ❖ **Customisation** - gather data from customers in order to target them better with more focus on consumers' needs and desires
- ❖ **Promotion** – social media is another communication channel that can be used to send the brand's message to a broader audience
- ❖ **Most loyal customers** - Companies can get in touch with community insiders and opinion leaders who are natural brand ambassadors
- ❖ **Brand loyalty** - Social media give an opportunity to strengthen brand loyalty and so gaining decisive and crucial competitive advantage

3.1 Research Question

Social media platforms are a relatively new development and have mostly been ignored by business until recently. The core issue to be investigated is whether, and how the way companies brand their products in offline media differs fundamentally from the approach required to conduct branding activities in online social media platforms. The departure point is that the old branding tools do not fit with the new social media reality.

However, there are limited sources of academic research and methodology regarding social media branding strategies. Using new tools of social media presents new challenges for companies seeking to present their brand to global audience, the most significant factors being the uncontrolled environment and having a limited knowledge in that area. Ways to control these factors will be investigated and the results presented.

How companies can create successful brand strategy online by using social media platform?

The sub questions:

- ❖ How do companies execute branding strategies on social media sites?

- ❖ How companies branding image could be described?
- ❖ What makes a branding campaign “successful”?
- ❖ What factors make a successful branding campaign in social media?
- ❖ What methods do companies use to interact with fans on different social media platforms?
- ❖ How companies create community around the brand?
- ❖ How community can influence / impact brand image? What impact does community have on the brand?
- ❖ Can user generated content and users' involvement in social media influence the company's brand?

An exploratory approach will be taken to investigate social media brand strategies and communities related to a specific brand. The purpose of this thesis is to explore and document how different companies achieve the goals of connecting directly with their consumer groups, bypassing traditional media channels which act as a middle man, shortening the communication lag, improving feedback on the actions taken to improve brand image and enable direct interaction with the core fan base.

The international brands were chosen as observation and research objects in order to gain knowledge of how these companies execute branding campaigns on social media and what can be learned of their best practices. To investigate brand strategy on social media the following brands were chosen:

- Benetton
- Burberry
- ECCO
- Georg Jensen
- Nescafe
- Nokia

3.2 The Aim of the Thesis

The aim of the research is to study branding campaigns in the social media sphere, in particular how companies are using social media channels, what is a current branding situation on social space and what factors determine successful branding campaign in social media, and to determine some best practises of social media branding today.

Furthermore, after analysing and evaluating different branding strategy's success factors in the social media context, we aim to determine the main characteristics of brand image construction in social media.

We believe the identified characteristics will provide a deeper and more detailed understanding of different strategies and those they could be used to build a branding paradigm on social media space.

3.3 Delimitation

There are hundreds of social networks today in the world. The number is so overwhelming that to follow all of them in order to find out what is been said about a particular brand will be too time consuming. Therefore, in this research paper the focus has been narrowed down, a limited number of social networks which have particular importance and impact for business that are looking to build brand on line due to their reach and breadth of audience have been selected from the many candidates.

The biggest and most mainstream players in social media are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Flickr, and Foursquare, these are the social media channels that will be investigated in this thesis.

The research will focus on a few companies and their behaviour online rather than the behaviour of the consumer communities.

In order to scope the thesis, it was decided that the selected media channels are so popular that a detailed description was not necessary, in section 6, Findings, they will be briefly described and their usage will be explained.

A further limitation is that it was decided to exclude a very significant social media, LinkedIn, due to its focus on professional networking and not social interaction from a consumer perspective.

Finally, Foursquare will also not be analysed in this thesis due to it's very limited content format, it is a mobile phone application that provides information regarding a company's location in order to make easier for customers to find them looking at a map on their phone.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The focal point of this thesis is to examine how companies are branding themselves on social media. Therefore, the purpose of this theoretical framework is to provide conceptual grounding on Social Marketing and Branding Theories.

In order to draw a deeper understanding about branding on social media, first of all we will provide an overview of relevant terms relating to social media, branding and online communities.

Afterwards relevant literature on social media best practices will be described in order to aid in clarifying what exactly are the important factors in social media, how companies should conduct themselves, and what actions can be taken and on what should they focus on in order to optimise their branding strategy on social media channels.

4.1 Brand Definitions

A brand is a set of mental associations, held by the consumer, which add the perceived value of the product or service” (Keller, 1997:87). A brand is defined, according to Keller (2008), as a —name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of a seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competition (p.2).

According to Aaker (1991), **Brand Equity** is — “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers" (p.15). He further states that brand equity consists of four components, namely (1) perceived quality, (2) brand loyalty, (3) brand awareness and (4) brand associations (Aaker, 1991).

Brands enable companies to differentiate their products from others, satisfying the same need thanks to both their tangible and intangibles assets. The former relates to the product performance of the brand, whereas the second relates to what the brand represents (Keller 2008).

Brand Awareness consists of recognition and recall where recognition relates to the level of exposure and recall refers to the consumers’ ability to link the brand to the right product category or purchase situation.

Brand Image consists of tangible and intangible brand associations. (Keller 2008). Creating a positive brand image requires marketing activities that succeed in linking strong, favourable, and unique associations to the brand in the consumer's memory (Keller 2008) Aaker (1991), for example, images create value in a variety of ways, helping consumers to process information, differentiating the brand, generating reasons to buy, giving positive feelings, and providing a basis for extensions.

Brand Associations are all the linkages that exist between a brand and the other nodes stored in consumer's memory. According to Aaker there are several types of associations: product attributes intangibles, customer benefits, relative price, use/application, customer, persona, life style personality, product class, competitors and geographical area. Among his measures of associations, Aaker (1996) considers trust as a characteristic of organisation associations as one among many others, thus de-emphasising its importance.

"Branding is much more than attaching a name to an offering. Branding is about making a certain promise to customers, about delivering a fulfilling experience and level of performance "(Kotler, 2005: ix)

When we look at the brand on social media, the most suitable definition would be that brands is "all that a consumer can possibly associate with a particular brand" Mitchell (1982: 46, as cited in Michael Korchia (1999).

4.2 Characteristics of Social Media

According to Alquist et al (2008) social media is formed from three elements: "Content, Communities/Networks and Tools (see Figure 1.)

"Social media refers to activities, practices, and behaviour among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversation media.

Conversation media are Web-based applications that make it possible to create and easily transmit content in the form of words, picture, videos and audio. "(Safko & Brake 2010, pg.6). Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of *user-generated* content." All these definitions are emphasising the social aspect, which represents a collective of individuals who have a need to connect and interact with each

other frequently. Social media enables social interaction between people as a super set beyond social communication (Kietzmann, Hermkens etc 2011).

The customers are co-creators of content on social media. It is however important to maintain the balance between professional and user-generated content. A marketer can provide information about the company and its products but also accept that the customers contribute to the content as well (Weber 2007, 38).

According to Brian Solis (2010) social media enables the democratization of information, transforming people from content consumers into content producers. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism, *one -to- many*, to *many- to- many* models, rooted in conversation between authors, people and peers.

First element in the model is **Content**. This is a very important aspect of social media, it is *user – centric*, and focuses on *user-generated content*. User generated content can be of different types such as text, pictures, video, audio etc., which can be experienced by many users and at the same time provoke reactions and discussions that take place in and across these social media platforms. The content in blogs is user generated and they use social networks and interactivity in sharing the content (Singh et al. 2008).

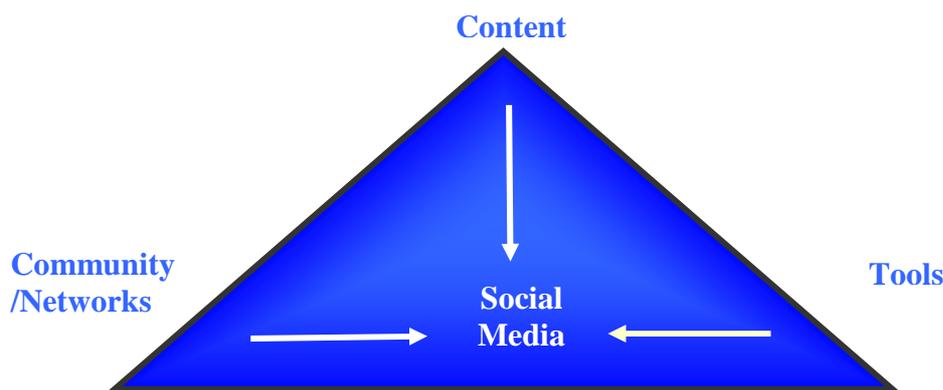


Figure 1. Social Media Triangle (adapted from Almqvist et al 2008)

A second element **Communities and Networks** refers to the social nature of media. People are gathering into communities around interests and are connected with both weaker and stronger ties. Granovetter (1973) suggested that the strength of a tie between two individuals is a function of the

amount of time spent together, the emotional intensity and degree of intimacy in the relationship, and the extent to which reciprocal services are provided by the dyad members. The more time and effort once spent into relationship, the stronger the tie is. A person has many fragmented interactions and different strength of connections with other people in real life as well as on online.

Third element is **Tools** such as Web platforms which enable to facilitate conversations online. Today the most popular social networking platforms gather people in the online communities to share content with friends through advanced digital technologies are: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Myspace and many others (List of Virtual Communities, Wikipedia).

4.3 Review of Literature on Social Media Branding

Social media is rather a new area within the field of marketing and media communication. Therefore academic and research literature is limited and taking different views on this subject. “All schools trying to understand the phenomenon of social media and all of them are still on learning process. It should be practised what we learned in order to gain proficiency. We need to make mistakes, experience triumphs, and observe when, why and how communities work” (Solis 2010). In the following sections several academic works will be collected, borrowed from Mintsioulis & Kristensen (2012) together with points of view from several business experts selected from different literature in the area of social media in order to describe Social Media Branding’s most essential interrelated characteristics. The assumption is that best practices literature can help to clarify how companies should act and tackle the social media space.

Bergsli (2010) presents a new view on social media branding perspective based on assumption that **Social Media is a Branding Tool**. Social Branding according to Bergsli (2010) is based on three central assumptions of social media: **Transparency**, **Social Aspect** and **Dialogue**. When “firms participate and facilitate open and social dialogue-based on conversations about their own brand, with the aim of creating a deep and trusting relationship between business and consumer, and between consumers of brand.” Furthermore, *consumer is an active co-producer of the company’s brand communication* and producer of its own brand communications. Conversation is an interactive feature on social media and interaction is the key element thus the marketers should not own the conversation, but instead participate into conversation (Bergsli 2010). Brand in his opinion is a pivot point in the interaction between business and consumer and between consumers.

Brian Solis (2010) argues that the **Brand has a certain Personality** which needs to move on to the social platform. This will be complicated because now **have to include a part of a human or several human personalities** on the social platforms. These human personalities from social media workers can now possibly either change or dilute the brand in every update or post (Solis, 2010). He warns about whether one personality or multiple should be a part of the brand personality and claims that there is no right or wrong answer to this. The most important is that **everything companies do online and off line must be symbiotic.**

Solis also introduces the concept of **Social Network Fatigue**. He points out that this is not a well documented phenomenon but it still presents some interesting topics we need to be aware of: *"It refers to the phenomenon of user exhaustion, caused by recreating social network profiles in every new, hot, or popular network that appears on the social radar screen"*; and "also stems from burnout associated with the emotional, intellectual, and time commitments required to stay connected to peers in one or many social networks concurrently" (ibid). This can be related to Qualman's (*"Socialnomics" 2009*) argument that you should not build your own "Field of Nightmares", and also as an argument for why it is important to select where you want to focus your energy (Solis, 2010).

Qualman suggests not trying to create your own social media service or network but rather **utilize existing platforms** on which your consumers already are, because it is less costly and less time consuming.

The author also touches upon the fact that people are more than happy to associate themselves with brands which they perceive as cool and to take ownership of these brands. Unlike Li and Bernoff (Understrømningen "Groundswell" 2008), who argue that you should accept the new brand perception, Qualman argues that **companies should be ready to give up control of their brand and trust consumers with it.** By releasing control and allowing customers to take ownership you also let them become advocates for your brand, thereby increasing the brands value for others (Qualman, 2009)

Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff, in this book argue that it is still **relations and the understanding of how these relations work on different social sites that are important.** According to the authors the way people communicate and the following relationships determine how the power is

divided (ibid). Another argument that the authors make is that people find strength in social media because it **enables them to communicate with each other** thereby feeling fearless and strong (ibid).

It is important to realize that the social media does not work like traditional media, thus specific marketing strategies to social media should be considered (Lowery 2009).

4.4 Social Branding Characteristics

None of the authors examined offer any perception or methodology on how execute social media branding. The authors simply state that engagement with audience is important and authors identify the following more or less identical goals: **Listen** in order to **Understand Consumers, Involve and Engage with Audience** in order to create and sustain a **Relationship between Brand and Consumers, Support or Build Relationships** by having a **Dialogue with Consumers, Build a Brand Persona**, send a **Coherent Message** and **Learn from Experience**.

To sum up, authors suggest having clear goals and a supporting strategy before stepping into social media space and to be able to experiment, listen and learn from mistakes.

After reading the various literatures both from a theoretical and an empirical nature, the main aspects of social media were chosen and joined with the main characteristics of branding on social media.

4.4.1 Dialogue

Digital communication channels have changed the traditional model of *one-way* communication from the brand to the audience. The One-way communication model, where companies would push their message or release news to mass consumer media without receiving direct feedback, has been completely changed on social media platforms (Ebbesen & Haug 2009), replaced with two-way interaction model where parties interact using social media as the medium. Dialogue based communication model allows users to interact with content and with many other users at the same time. Feedback becomes a natural part of the communication process on social media.

This means as well that the old communication *push-model* has been exchanged for the new *pull-model*, where roles, power and influence have been changed or switched around between the brand and consumers. Conversation around a brand on social media occurs among many different

users including the company, different consumers and consumer groups, each with their own motivation and agenda, the brand's communication efforts are no longer central to the discourse, rather they have become an equal or junior participant, depending on the level of trust and rapport between the brand and its stakeholders, this indicates that all of the partners can influence conversations about a brand. Consumers no longer need to passively receive the message, which sometimes has no relevance to their daily lives. *“Content is no longer something you push out. Content is an invitation to engage with your brand”* (Cammie Dunaway, chief marketing officer at Yahoo).

This new communication approach changed the way marketers used to brand their products in the markets by using mass media with one-way based communication model which allowed full control over brand messages sent to the audience. According to Weber (2009) branding has become a dialogue between the brand and consumer. Relationship between brand and consumers should be nurtured carefully, because the stronger the dialogue the stronger the brand (Weber 2009). Brian Solis (2010) argues that the way to succeed in social media is that engaging consumers in meaningful dialog is necessary today but at the same time he warns often about doing this blindly.

4.4.2 Engagement

Over the years marketers were overcoming a number of various barriers of infrastructure and procedures before reaching their customers. *“Social media facilitated customers’ direct engagement in the conversations that were previously taking place without their participation”* (Solis 2010). According social psychology, human beings are social by nature and gratified by receiving direct responses to their input. Social media channels allows immediate acknowledgement, where readers can instantly comment or participate in live content.

Furthermore, social media enables rapid interaction between marketers and customers, as well permit to collect information and receive feedback much faster than before and thus enhance corporate credibility and relationships (Kho 2008). Interaction on social media can be categorized as *user-to-user* and *user-to-content*. User-to-user interaction refers to people interacting with each other through e-mail, instant message, chat room, message boards and other digital venues. User-to-content occurs when people rate the content, save sites to their favourites, share with others and post comments (Shao 2009).

Social media encourage participation through contribution and feedback on the posted digital content and services are open for comments and sharing among the users. Users can engage in more informal conversations and settings (Shao 2009). On social media feedback is instant and constant, as social media platforms operates all over the world day and night non stop.

Engagement and participation is necessary to create successful dialogue. Direct engagement creates meaningful relationship and then loyalty for the brands. Social media tools enable more personalized and faster interaction with customers and thus enhance corporate credibility and relationships (Kho 2008).

4.4.3 Peering

On social media information flows very fast among costumers' communication networks, which makes easier to share peer recommendations in decision-making (Dahan & Hauser 2002). Moreover, with the very high amount and availability of information on the Internet it has become more complex and time consuming to make the right choice. Increasingly the use of social media has become a *peer-to-peer* communication medium where customers create the content using the applications and services of social media (Hearn et al. 2009). The more complex situation is the less choices consumer considering when making their decisions Therefore consumer relies on peer-to-peer recommendations such as friends and experts whose opinion are valued and trusted for recommendations. In customer-to-customer communication rapid interaction is easy and thus the peer recommendation plays a central role in decision-making (Dahan & Hauser 2002). Recommendations from people one knows and trusts are powerful influencers of business decisions (Shih 2009). Katz and Lazarsfeld already in 1995 found that people trust more personal recommendations than advertising or personal selling.

4.4.4 Word-of-Mouth

Viral marketing is word-of-mouth communication which takes place in digital environment. As viral marketing can be defined as communication and distribution channels that use customers to transmit information and products digitally to other potential customers in their social group and to motivate the contacts to transmit the product even further (Helm 2000). Social networks online enable people to connect and exchange information at the same time with more people by using stronger or weaker ties and connections. On digital space these weak ties are used easily and allow

for more potential input to a decision (Friedkin 1982). Due to use of both ties information distributed via the Internet should be more diverse than that which would be obtained via strong ties (Constatn, Sproull, and Kiesler 1997). Word of mouth online can enable consumers to obtain higher quality expertise on a topic (Constant et al. 1997). People are searching for recommendations from others to get information that may decrease decision time and effort or to get more satisfied decision outcome (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000). Therefore viral marketing is a powerful communication form.

The objective of viral marketing traditionally is to reach a maximum amount of potential customers. From the relationship development viewpoint the marketer should also aim to keep customers. Viral marketing as other marketing activities requires the establishment of long-term relationships with customers (Helm 2000).

4.4.5 Transparency

Social media tools increase the openness and transparency both internally in the organisation but also externally among customers and other stakeholders (Kangas, Toivonen & Bäck 2007, 58). Social media emphasizes the openness and forms of participation based on user generated content (Constantinides & Fountain 2008). Social media characteristics were described as dialogue based communication with an active participation from both sides. On social media companies have an equal opportunity to participate, interact with consumers and to build a deep and trustworthy relationship with their customers by being open and sincere. *“Evidence is building up that the paradigm of marketing is changing from the push strategies so well suited to the past 50 years of mass media to trust-based strategies that are essential in a time of information and empowerment”* (Ahonen & Moore 2005:166). As conversations in social media are not about selling, but to create and maintain trusted relationships, it is important that the company calls with consumers are open. Trust association with a brand, unexpectedly, does not have a direct effect on brand equity, but only an indirect one through loyalty (Rosa E. Rios).

4.5 Brand Community

4.5.1 The Three Core Components of Brand Community

The focal point of interaction in a brand community is the “brand”. According to Muniz and O’Guinn (2001 p. 412) *“a brand community is a specialized, non-geographically bound*

community based on a structures set of social relations among admirers of a brand". Brand community form around the social interaction between dedicated brand consumers and connects respectively *consumers- to- brands* and *consumers- to- consumers* (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001). Brand communities may appear for any brand but would most likely appear for brands with a strong image, a distinct history etc. (Muniz Jr. & O'Guinn 2001. "*In general it is harder to recruit people for a community involving a low involvement products or service than for higher involvement products*" (Diane Hessen, founder and CEO of Communicase Corp.)

In this research paper we have chosen six global brands have strong images world wide, though most of the products required moderate involvement level during purchase process: to buy coffee requires low involvement while to buy smart phone or luxury clothes required high involvement due to product price level. All in all investigated brands had no big advantages over each other in creating a strong brand community.

Three main characteristics are typical of brand communities:

1. **Share Consciousness.** Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) defined as strong connection to the brand and connection members feel towards each other as a shared way of thinking. If consumers are conscious of a shared knowledge of having a feeling of belonging to the community this is shown in loyalty to the particular brand.

2. **Shared rituals and traditions.** Rituals and traditions represent vital social processes around shared product experiences that create and represent the meaning of the community within and beyond the community (Muniz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 421). Sharing brand stories and experiences, giving recommendations about the brand are decisive for brand communities (Wiegandt, 2009). Rituals and traditions are based upon of the brand history and storytelling.

3. **Sense of moral responsibility for the group.** In a brand community there is an obligation towards the community and its members, which is commonly known as moral responsibility. It is defined as a felt sense of duty or obligation to the community as a whole, and to its individual members (Muniz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001). It can be described as one of the main forces for collective action and therefore contributes to group cohesion (Muniz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001). Sense of moral responsibility plays a role in retaining old members of a community and helps others to fix problems where specialized knowledge is required or information needs to be shared (Muniz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001).

I believe different social media platforms execute different levels of brand communities' characteristics. For instance Pinterests platforms are not so much encouraging customer –to-customer interaction, and people are more motivated to be in touch with brand rather than to build a relationship with other fans. While forums, blogs might execute stronger exposed sense of responsibility or having higher need to share experiences regarding a brand. “A shared sense of consciousness between fans and Facebook is to some extent detected but these respondents nevertheless still present a minority. Moreover characteristic of moral responsibility is almost nonexistent” (Holmelund 2011).

4.5.2 Organic and Inorganic Brand Communities

Community can arise from customer-initiated or company-initiated online brand community efforts (Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, & Kim, 2008). Communities built by consumers can be called organic communities emerged independently and reflect self-sustaining consumer generated brand building approaches; inorganic communities are created and influenced by marketers (Muniz & Schau, 2007). Company initiated brand communities, are by definition inorganic, however there is space for growing organic communities on top of inorganic infrastructure, for instance blogs or forums can be hosted by a fan, who is an opinion leader or by company itself. The differences arise between organic and inorganic communities are the degree of control over the content in relation to the meaning marketers want to give to their brands to the world, as well as control over the visual layout, structure and control over the time line.

“The company’s intervention may vary in intensity depending on the degree to which community is self-sustained. Certain types of firm influences may increase normative pressure and to new members this may lead to a negative outcome (Kornum 2007). The question is to what extend the firm should create and actively manage the community processes, or just support and facilitate”

This research will refer to those kinds of online brand communities as company initiated online brand communities

Also when brand communities arising in inorganic way, the members of community have their mentioned characteristics weaker, meaning that fans are less willing to share knowledge, do not have a strong attachment to the community and are less willing to share their experiences and so to participate into engagement with a brand than it would be in organic brand community, where really loyal and dedicated fans formed a group.

4.5.3 Motivation to be in a Community

Motivation for people to be in the group and so to gather into online communities could be found in social identity theory. According to social identity theory, social identification is defined as the perception of belonging to a group with the result that a person identifies with that group (Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995, p.47). People understand the world better when they categorize themselves and others into groups (Carlson, Suter, & Brown, 2008, p.286).

The theory assumes (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999) that social identity is constructed on: **Cognitive component** -a cognitive awareness of one's membership in a social group, a self-categorization. **An evaluative component**- a positive or negative value connotation attached to this group – self-esteem. **Emotional component** -a sense of emotional involvement with the group is an affective commitment.

The motivation for people to be within social communities and share information is rooted in the individual's behavior to receive affiliation from others and show own power. (Stryker, 1980 1986; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). By making active contribution to the group can help a person believe he/she has the impact on the group and support his/her own self-image as a successful person (Bandura, 1995). People are motivated to contribute valuable information to the group with the expectation that one will receive useful help or information and recognition in return. This kind of reciprocation is important to many online contributors.

People motivated to participate in the community are driven by a desire for information about the particular brand or product. Product involvement leads to information searching, because certain products or brands are related to an individual's ego or self-image (Bloch and Richins, 1983 as cited in Rong-An Shang, (2006). Brand communities influence member perceptions and actions (Muniz and Schau, 2005), and increase member knowledge (Brown, Kozinets and Sherry, 2003). Some freely contribute, because they get a sense of contribution and a feeling of having some influence over their environment.

4.5.4 Community Engagement

David Armano (2008) suggests applying 5Cs in order to engage with brand community on social media. This is more like a process of social media's engagement strategy.

Content: In order to build a community high quality content should be offered. This shows that the firm is serious and motivated; this content must be delivered to specific relevant platforms. When this is achieved, then relevant engagement will follow from the right people. If the right people viewing the content and consider it relevant and of high quality, then they are likely to engage with it, share it, and most importantly advocate it. So it means content should be focussed on targeting a certain group of people.

Context: Understanding how to meet people where they are, creating the right experience at the right time. In general understanding how community wishes to be engaged.

Connectivity: Designing experiences to support micro interactions among community members.

Continuity: To keep long lasting and sustainable community, to provide and ongoing, valuable, and consistent user experience.

Collaboration: The highest level of Community Involvement happens when members work together to achieve common goal and objectives.

All these processes are continuous and relate to the viral effect of social branding. This viral effect represents the notion that if the right people are seeing your material they will engage with it and advocate it, as result the networks of these brand champions will view and engage with the material as well.

4.5.5 Benefits from Brand Community

There are several commercial benefits from brand communities: brand community attracts and holds the most loyal and most involved consumers, the social process which occurs within brand communities strengthens and develops consumers' relationship with a brand, members of a brand community often act as a brand ambassadors, and participation in a brand community can displace a competitor's brand from the consumer's consideration (Antorini & Andersen 2005).

In addition, it has been put forward that brand communities easily attract engaged, innovative and creative consumers, which is important in terms of developing new and attractive product ideas based on their extensive knowledge of the product and its services (Muniz & O 'Guinn, 2001). Positive user generated content works as word of mouth. Brands now have the opportunity to empower influential voices and to leverage the "brand ambassadors" who are likely to give peer to peer positive recommendation.

Fan generated information provides to the company the values of life style, demographical data from the global fan base. This information latter on could be used to better segment and target consumer groups and achieve desired outcome. However, there is also threat from consumer communities which may threaten brand image (Maclaran and Catterall, 2002).

4.6 Brand Position in Community

“Brands are considered namely, not to be constructed of business, but that social entities experienced, shaped, and changed in communities” (Brown et al., 2003:31). Brand communities focus on meaning, brand identity is created in a socio-cultural context between active consumers in the specific brand community (Muniz & O 'Guinn, 2001).

Brand’s amounts of control and role have changed in social media. In the case of equal relationship, the communication is based on collaboration rooted in mutual and beneficial engagement and exchanges of information and listening between consumers and brands (Solis 2010). Consumers communicate about the product and influence each other through this interactive exchange process (Ahonen and Moore, 2005; McAlexander et al., 2002). Therefore on social media brands cannot push their “controlled” *one-to-many* broadcasted campaigns to the audience and expecting them passively to receive it. The structure of authority has changed in social media, brand’s position from being a message broadcaster switched to being a facilitator. This opinion is shared with David Armano (2008) illustrated below.

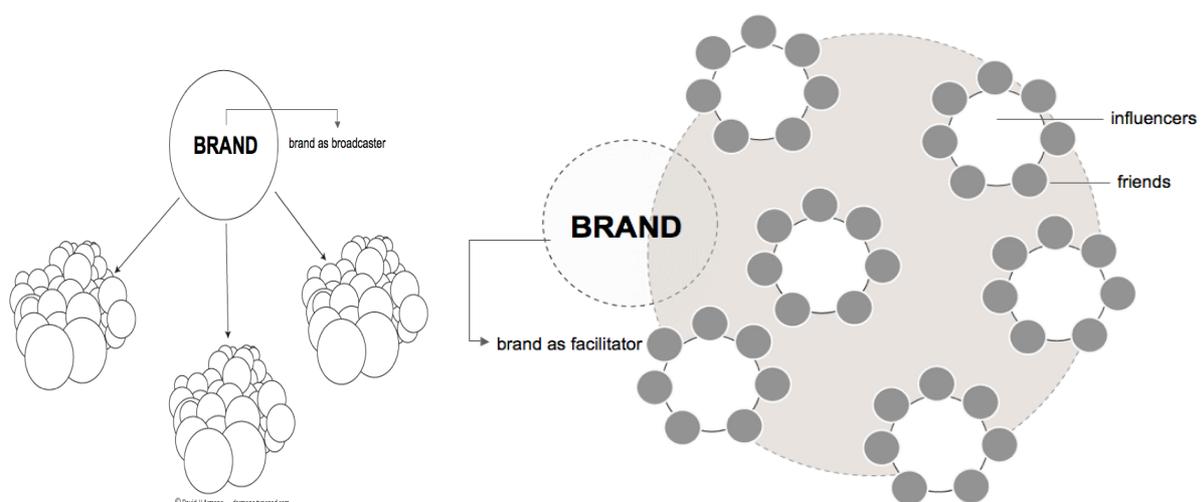


Figure 2. Brand as Broadcaster and Brand as Facilitator by David Armano

A modern consumer is empowered, able to search and evaluate information him/herself based on peer recommendations, expert advice and critical thinking. The brand can no longer act as “broadcaster”-pushing out the content, information or product advertisement to people without creating value for consumers. Armano postulates that brand acts as a Facilitator, as “any good facilitator, they get off centre stage, move over to the side and let others do the talking. Facilitators know how to actively listen, how to create environment, which stimulates productive conversations and interactions and most importantly they add incredible value even though they may come across as the least vocal in the group”.

Brand as a Broadcaster and brand as a Facilitator can be valued by consumers. If the brand’s content is valued, entertaining and consumed by audience, it can give the same or more effective results in terms of relationship and conversation engagement as traditional branding activities.

Interpreting Brand as Facilitator - has to be able to appreciate relationship with consumers and accept to be influenced as well as to be inspired by consumers’ individuality and creativity. Brand as Facilitator might be more open and flexible with its brand image and therefore able to observe the needs and feeling of community and be able to deliver relevant and valued content to their audience. “In the world in which brand create value by engaging in dialogue with their customers, rather than monologue, these communities are growing in importance and public finds traditional brand-controlled communication to be disruptive” (Ragas M. 2009)

As long as business adapts to consumers’ needs and are flexible to deliver values and utility in consumers' lives, brand as Broadcaster as well as brand as Facilitator can suit well on social media.

When it comes to brand meaning the content has to be broadcasted from the company’s side in order to create a strong and distinct image in consumers mind. Only the company itself knows the true and authentic story about their brand and is able to carry through the idea of Brand Persona. Telling the stories of the brand makes the brand relevant and accessible to the target market or audience. These can be stories about the company’s history, its people or products.

5. METHODOLOGY

The problem formulation and research topic focus on studying the interaction of social communities online directed the choice of methodology for this thesis. The online marketing research techniques should be used to study and answer to the question “how”, how companies build brand identity on social media.

Netnography is research methodology that applies Ethnographic discipline to the study of communities on the internet. Netnography was considered the appropriate methodology for this research, as it is a qualitative research methodology widely used when studying online communities.

5.1 Qualitative Research Methods

What is qualitative research methods- Qualitative researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. The qualitative method investigates the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, when (Qualitative Research Methods, Wikipedia).

5.1.1 Data Collection Methods

Two types of qualitative data collection methodologies were used during the research: Semi-structured interviews and Netnography. The interview was chosen as the primary data gathering method to collect direct information about companies’ current practises with social media and brand execution on social media channels.

Netnographic research design was chosen to explore companies’ activities online and to get a naturalistic view of brand meaning.

5.1.2 Netnography

Netnography is a relatively new research method pioneered by Kozinets in 1998 and fully described in his book “Netnography” in 2010. Netnography includes several methods to collect qualitative data on online communities. Some of these methods were chosen to gather the required data.

Netnography is adapted from ethnographic research method. “Netnography is ethnography adapted to the complexities of our contemporary, technologically mediated social world Kozinets (2010)”. Before the internet became widespread, researchers who studied communities had to

participate in the natural environment of the group if they wanted to observe and analyse behaviour of the community and conduct ethnographic studies. Today marketing researchers by using internet technologies can observe study and explore cultures and communities that exist via distance in a non interruptive, effective and efficient as well as much less costly manner (Giles Jim 2012).

Goulding (2003) stresses the need for a greater emphasis on rich and varied forms of data collection in consumer and marketing research in order to get a deeper understanding of consumer society. Elliot and Jankel-Elliot (2003, p.215) suggest ethnographic research methods that are able to develop a “thick description” of the lived experience. “A new qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to study the cultural and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications” Kozinets (2002).

According to Kozinets (2002) this method is suitable for effective online market research and points out its advantage over traditional approaches, such as in-depth interviews of focus groups. Netnography uses the information that is publicly available in online forums to identify and understand the needs and decision influence of relevant online consumer groups. This technique became more popular among a number of authors such as Muniz and Schau, 2005; Brown et al., 2003, Langer and Suzanne C.Beckam 2005.

With chosen research method the focus will be put on collecting data about selected brand topics, brand campaigns and content instead of analysing consumer’s behaviour. Kozinets (2010) suggests that Netnography provides realistic comprehension of online communication: categories, trends, symbols, images. As well give natural views of brand meaning: decoding authentic consumer language and terms, as well as visual and audiovisual analysis.

This method helps to get insight into marketing activities, to gain deep insight about how companies use branding strategies on social media and what values they communicate to an audience. The notion is that there is a high departure between what companies say they want to do in their vision statement, and what they actually do. “Netnography fits well in the front-end stages of innovation and in the discovery phases of marketing and brand management (2010)”.

“Anywhere there is online consumer activity and interaction; they are an interesting source of data for consumer and marketing researchers to use to reveal online communal consumer culture,

practices and meanings” Kozinets (2010). Author continues his belief in the importance of Netnography with the growth of Internet usage, Netnography techniques become even more relevant to general audience and contemporary understanding, and any changes made to adapt could be even more useful.

Netnography research methods are:

❖ **Natural and unobtrusive**

This method takes a natural approach to analyse brand in the natural environment. “Netnography is both naturalistic and unobtrusive – a unique combination not found in any other marketing research methods; it allows continuing access to informants in a particular online social situation” (Kozinets 2002). Netnography is a qualitative research method to unobtrusively study the nature and behaviour of online consumer group that is to gain “ground knowledge” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

❖ **Immersive**

The aim of the paper is to understand how companies are executing their branding campaigns on social media, to understand the expressed brand values, perceptions and communicated message of the brand. So the goal is not to change the way marketing campaigns are presented, but to examine how these values are communicated so that they can be improved upon in order to give consumers the experience they want.

❖ **Descriptive and unselected**

This method gives the live experience of brand communities, where relevant information could be selected from the whole picture.

❖ **Multi-methods**

Photography, videos can be used alongside with language to draw the complete and realistic portrait of studying object.

❖ **Obtained in timely manner**

“By leveraging the power of Netnography, marketers can make better business decisions, giving companies a unique competitive advantage Kozinets (2010).”

5.1.3 Semi-Structured Interview

Companies are working on social media strategies, experimenting and developing individual ways to communicate with audience. For this research six companies were chosen, each in different stages of development of their online presence. Each company is taking their own approach to

communicate brand values to audience according their business and product type. The social media activities are changing every day and learning process is ongoing. Information regarding each company's individual branding strategies is available only internally. For this research it is important to delve deeply into the topic of social media branding and to understand thoroughly the answers provided by the company experts, therefore the conversational style is most suitable to reveal detailed information.

Semi structured interview, which is flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up according to the answers interviewee provides, was chosen. This method allow for the exploration of emergent themes and ideas rather than relying only on concepts and questions prepared in advance.

This method is less intrusive to those being interviewed, because the semi-structured interview encourages to flow conversation and to open itself to reveal more information. Often the information obtained during semi-structured interview provides reasons as well as the answers, providing opportunities to learn more about the subject discussed.

5.1.4 Steps to Conduct Semi-Structured Interview

The managers of Branding, Marketing and Communication were contacted to set an interview with the main objectives to find out about current branding situation in social media, how they execute social media strategy and do companies communicate brand values on social media. Interview with the experts had the purpose of gathering background information and knowledge of each expert.

Standardised questions were created for participants in a way that would be able to obtain general information regarding the current social media activities existing in the company to a specific issue in particular how companies address their brand's fans.

In order better to explore the theme, an interview guide was prepared in advance with grouping questions that can be asked in different ways for participants. "Interview guides help researchers to focus an interview on the topics at hand without constraining them to a particular format. This freedom can help interviewers to tailor their questions to the interview context/situation, and to the people they are interviewing" (Semi structured interview, Wikipedia).

The questions were sent to participants via email so that they could get familiar with the questions in advance and would be able to provide information relevant to the topic.

The point of the interview was to ask questions in a similar order and format to each participant in order to be able to make it possible to compare as much as possible between different companies' answers. However, this is not an absolute necessity since each company is individual in their branding activities and therefore to obtain deeper understanding on the theme, spontaneous questions might emerge and should be followed where appropriate.

Usually the interviewer's role is engaged and encouraging but not personally involved. The interviewer facilitates the interviewees to talk about their views and experiences in depth, but with limited reciprocal engagement or disclosure (Hockey, Robinson et. 2002).

All interviews were recorded and documented to analyse the information at the end of day and, if necessary, to come back to respondent to probe or deepen one or another question.

5.2 Overall Research Plan

This thesis will follow the six overlapping methodological stages and procedures suggested by Kozinets(2010):

1. Research planning
2. Entrée
3. Data collection
4. Interpretation
5. Ensuring ethical standards
6. Research representation

5.2.1 Research Planning

Kozinets suggest researchers to think about a research focus and research question appropriate for Netnography. Creswell, John W. (2009, p. 129-30) suggests qualitative researchers to choose a research question, which is broad and that asks for “exploration of the central object or concept in chosen area of study”.

This work has been described under Problem Formulation section with the focus on research question, namely how companies are using social media channels for their branding campaigns.

After investigating what others academics done in the related field of social media branding and that is described more under the theoretical (Sections 4.3 and 4.4) preparation for setting a specific market research area on social media branding was done.

The next point in the planning stage is to investigate the previous written academic works in the chosen focal topics of interest. “By connecting the work with a large frame of reference of scholarly- and even not-so-scholarly-thoughts, you will not only be building bridges with related literature in this area, you will also be increasing the chances that your research will impact how other thinkers understand the world” Kozinets (2010). Investigation of what other academics have done in related fields of social media branding is described in more detail in sections 4.3 and 4.4 setting a specific focus on market research on social media branding.

Kozinets suggests investigating and becoming familiarized with particular online platforms that might help to get knowledge about research topics and answer problem formulation. The aim of this research is to explore companies’ behaviour online, therefore we chose social networking sites in which companies officially opened accounts and suggested to connect to. Social networking sites provide regular communication between brands and fans, these sites are interactive by offering opportunity to communicate the message in different formats such as photos, video or audio forms, which will give a rich material to work with.

During the initial stage of this research 12 different international trade companies within consumer goods were chosen: *Angulus, Nescafe, Nespresso, Benetton, Burberry, ECCO, Georg Jensen, Menu, Kenzo Flowertag, Nokia, Umi and Volvo*. The brief investigation for one week was conducted on the companies’ current situation on social media channels, what social media channels they use, how active they are how big audience they attracted around the brand and finally investigate how each company executes brand campaigns on line.

After investigation of these twelve brands’ activities the number was reduced to six brands for further analysis. The reason behind the reduction was to select the brands with the richest content, the largest number of fans, the brands which were most active in appearance on social media in a

sense of number of posts and number of replies from their fans. The selected companies represent different size companies around the globe:

Large size- *Burberry and Nokia*;

Medium size –*Nescafe and Benetton*;

Small size-*Georg Jensen and Ecco*

Further more the researcher has to consider whether to use computer assisted qualitative data analysis software to support qualitative analysis.

For this thesis some supporting quantitative data was collected using publicly available software data collection tools. The data collected included the raw number of content items posted by companies, aggregated number of interactions with the content, total number of registered individuals interested in the brand, and a calculated score measuring the level of interaction between the company and its fan-base. A more in-depth description of the companies will be presented in chapter 6. Findings.

5.2.2 Entrée

The next step according to Kozinets is entrée. In this stage he suggests to reach out, investigate the particular online channels where community is gathering in order to find information about research topic and data that might help to answer the problem formulation.

As was mentioned in the introduction, the aim of this paper is to follow the steps of companies and to collect information from the platforms where they are active. In this case it was decided to collect data from the social media channels officially listed by the companies. Most of the companies operate on the most popular social media channels: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Foursquare, Flickr, Google+ and Blogs.

A personal account was opened on these social media channels to get into the community as a fan of the chosen brands in order to get insights of the virtual world activities. Blogs usually do not have any barriers to accessing the content, free access exists to the article content, and to any commentary that users have regarding the content, registration is usually required to post comments and participate actively in the discussions.

5.2.3 Data Collection

“Data collection in Netnography means communicating with members of a culture of community” Kozinets (2010). On social media communication can take many forms other than textual, like visual, audio and all of these sources are considered relevant during the research process. Therefore, textual, visual and audio data was collected from each brand's social media platforms and screen-saved for detailed analysis.

5.2.4 Researcher’s Participation

Researcher’s extent of participation in an online community can vary from low or no involvement, to high involvement during the data collection period.

“There is spectrum of researcher participation in online communities that includes participating in interactions, practices, exchanges and information” (Kozinets 2006).

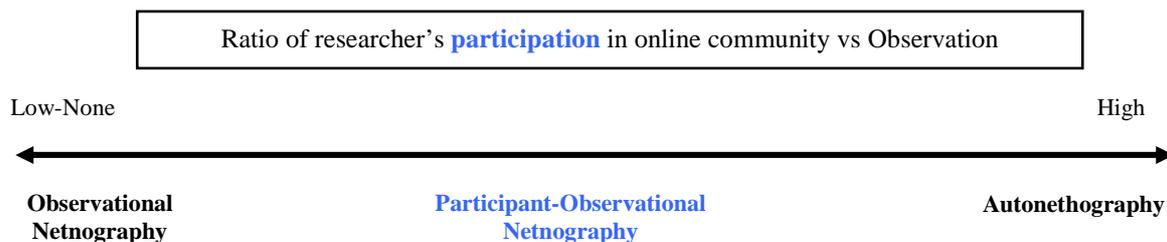


Figure 3. A Spectrum of Different Types of Netnography, Kozinets (2006)

For this research paper the middle-range participation position was chosen to mix participation and observation for the best results- *Participant-Observational type*. Opening a personal account for various social networking sites, gave an access to get closer to the observational objects to obtain more detailed and richer Netnographic data. However, while collecting the data this researcher kept as low profile as possible limiting to the liking, sharing or following activities, without revealing the reasons and keeping away from active involvement such as commenting and posting.

5.2.5 Data Capture

Data collection is divided into three different types of data capturing. “The first is data that the researcher directly copies from the computer-mediated communications of online community members. These data is required to be filtered several times and to look for the relevance (Kozinets 2006)”.

5.2.5.1 Documenting brand's activities on every day basis

For one month all six companies' activities on every day basis were followed and data was bookmarked, documented and captured in free style manner. By looking at their expressed and communicated type of brand personality message, meanings of visual and audio posts, text style of the post and communication style to their audience. All these online observations were recorded and documented in textual file and as visual image of the screen capture.

In non intrusive manner was following social media channels in the real time and observed the effects of communication on brand in natural online environment by:

- ❖ Documenting activities and frequency and popularity of the post on daily basis
- ❖ Understanding the brand personality
- ❖ Observing brands' communication style and manner with their audience
- ❖ Looking at the correlation between the brand image on home page
- ❖ Exploring archived content by brands
- ❖ Identifying attitudes and symbols of the brands
- ❖ Recognising branding campaigns

“Secondary data is that the researcher inscribes regarding observation of the community, its members, interactions and meanings and the researchers own participation” Kozinets.

After collecting the first data, observation data for each company was structured to describe different dimensions of their social branding strategy. The first dimension enumerated the social media channels the company has presence in. The second dimension consists of the stated values of each company, identified from each company's vision and mission statements. The third dimension collected refers to the different marketing activities the company has performed through these social media channels. The fourth and final dimension compares the fit between stated brand values and the values express through social media engagement.

5.2.5.2 Mind Maps

In order to create this table in visually understandable manner, the unstructured free flow data from different sources was aggregated into a Mind Map. A mind map is a structured diagram representing connections and flows between different concepts. In each mind map the overall connectivity and interrelation between the different activities around the brand was documented. Analysis performed during the creation of each mind map:

- ❖ Identifying communicated brand values from the company

- ❖ How, in what manner this message was communicated
- ❖ How company was building the community to communicate the brand image, what people a company was attracting and associating with.

5.2.5.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Finally, third data is suggested to obtain by approaching the observed individuals and interviewing them. For this final, stage the semi focused interviews to be conducted with companies were prepared. The common topic of discussion between different companies with different goals and methods, a common set of open ended discussion oriented questions was prepared. The more detailed description about methods could be found under the Semi –Structured Interview section.

5.2.6 Data Interpretation

How to apply consistent, interactively-adjusted, insightful analysis and interpretation to the data? Kozinets suggests deploying multiple methods, approaches and analytical techniques. These techniques include projective techniques, historical analysis, semiotic analysis, visual analysis, musical analysis, survey work, content analysis, kinesics and any of a world of specialities, as well as observational, participative and interview techniques.

In order to interpret data and to present the most objective view on best practices on social media branding, various methods were used to interpret the collected data. Methods used include Abstracting method, visual analysis, and coding analysis to categorize concepts steps which were used by companies in their branding processes. Furthermore, materials were sorted to generalise them and to find the conceptual construct of brand values, similarities and differences of branding campaigns on different social media channels, along with sequences in order to reveal brands' values communication patterns and processes. This was presented in an organised diagram - Mind Map.

Concerning confronting and generalization of theory the aim of the thesis was to build new knowledge not based on the old or known theories of social media branding, the new data was constructed on the basis of personal experience on the social media of the selected companies, cataloguing the findings of this experience, synthesis and analysis of the findings.

Furthermore, hermeneutic interpretation (presented in Nescafe case) was used in order to have a deeper understanding of the branding strategy used by the companies. “The meaning of a whole

text, which is determined from the individual elements of the text, while, at the same time, the individual element is understood by referring to the whole of which it is a part” (Arnold and Fisher 1994, p. 63).

All these different analytical methods – analytic, coding, and hermeneutic interpretation overlap in many interesting ways, each of them in its own way breaks down the text and then reassemble it in new interpretations.

5.3 Ensuring Ethical Standards

This section looks at ethical issues when conducting research on social media what ethical issues to address.

Before analysing the findings it is important to remember that Netnography raises ethical dilemmas for the researches (Maclaren and Catterall, 2002). Waskul and Douglas (1996) in discussing the ethical implications of online research conclude that on the one hand online publications are public, but they are also private. How to address the ethical implications of this research related uses of commercial websites have only rarely been considered (Kozinets 2010). Increase in academic interest and use of commercial Internet data sources have not gone without noticing from business side. “Academic research is not exempt from the legal arguments that have been success fully advanced” to limit and punish those who infringe on the content-related ownership right of commercial sites (Allen et al.2006) and restricting from republishing or transferring in other ways content from social media owned platforms. As this research paper is not for commercial use and social media owners have to deal with private person this rule are not applicable in this case.

However, the aim of this paper is to research companies’ behaviour on line rather than communities and since companies use of social media space for commercial purpose and users of online communities are aware that their publications posted on social networking space can be seen by everyone there were no privacy and confidentially issues. Research was conducted on collecting information from the companies own pages with holding partly anonymity from the companies. Anonymity was regarded as important for this study in order to obtain most accurate data without bringing disturbance to the natural flow of activities and behaviour on social media. Shoham et al (2004) cited by Wiedemann 2006) who view the public discourse on computer

mediated communication (CMC) as personal; however not as private since participants are aware that everyone in the world can read the messages posted in the public space of the internet.

The interviewees were informed about the objectives of the study and that the use and purpose of the data collected was only to provide better expression of the studied phenomenon. Accuracy is followed through the research process in order to increase the validity of the study.

5.4 Research Representation

Even though Netnographic research provides with very detailed, multidimensional meaning of brand in the natural context, this method is not very often practised within marketing disciplines. However, the most important and most interesting aspects of branding strategies are presented in the graphical manner and visual manner in section 6. Findings.

6. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section is divided into three main parts. In the first part we will present the result of the analysis of the mind maps, highlighting specifically interesting findings in an in-depth case study of the Benetton Social Media Strategy.

The second section will look at the outputs from various analytical tools, as well as the findings from the analysis of structured interviews with relevant people working in the area of social marketing in the examined companies. The main findings of this analysis will be showcased with most interesting examples.

The third section will evaluate brands' social media success factors based on selected criteria.

6.1 Mind Map Typography

In order to investigate how companies execute branding strategies on social media space the Netnographical research methods will be applied for six brands. A Mind Map was created after observing, researching and analysing each brand's online execution strategy, presence and overall fit between brand values and social media engagement during the data collection phase during approximately a one month period.

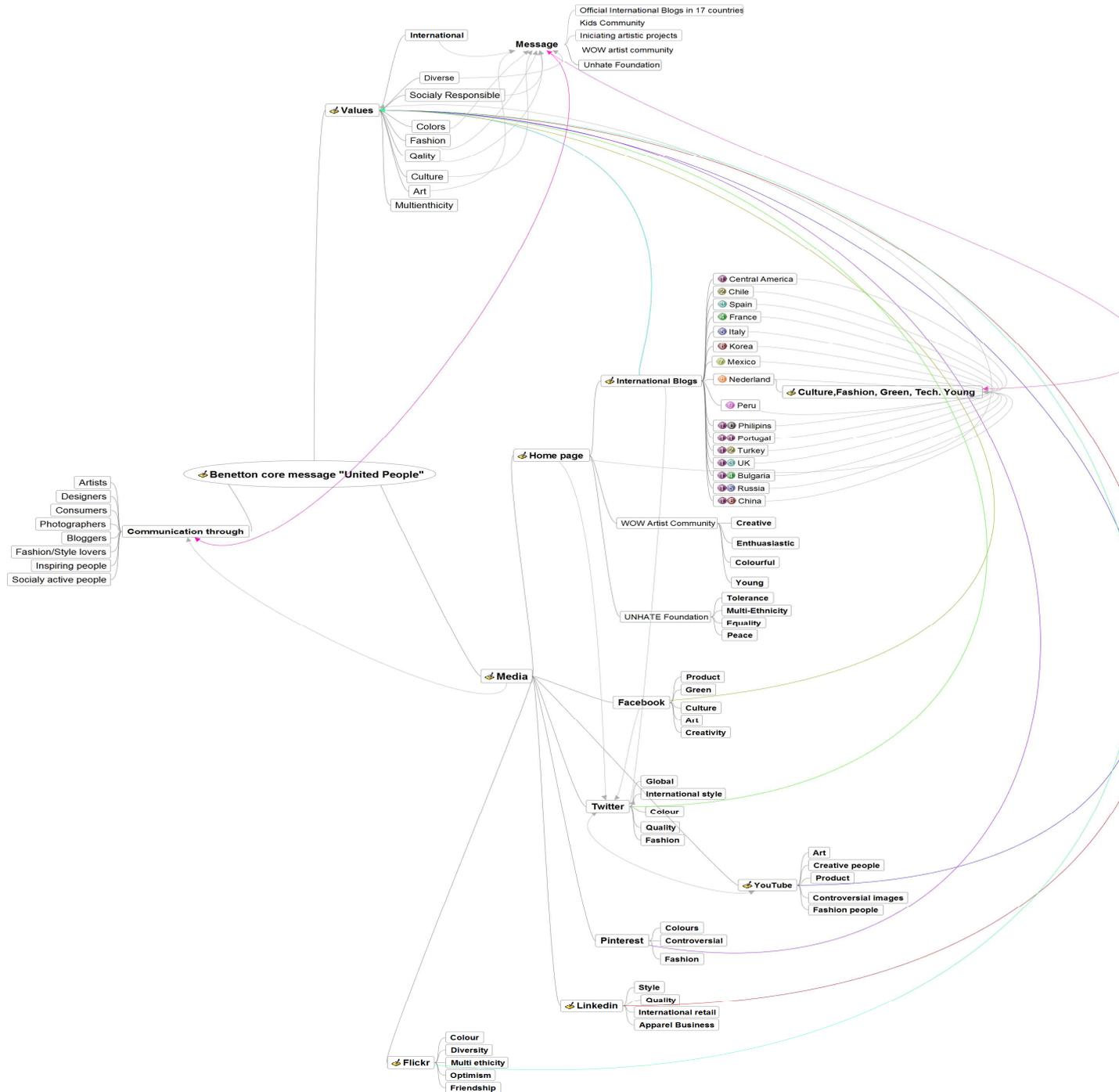
Generally concepts were grouped in channels, *contents, values, activities and other important objects* related to the central brand with interconnection between concepts. Mind Maps helped to assemble overall portfolio of the branding campaigns and to reveal different strategies companies used to brand themselves on social media as well helping to identify the expressed brand values, to understand how communities created around the brand and to see interconnection between different concepts.

6.1.1 Benetton – Detailed Case study

6.1.1.1 Benetton Mind Map

Benetton social marketing activities, which distinguish as a brand, were documented in a Mind Map diagram. Benetton's Home page is subdivided into several sub domains rather than separate content sections. This seems to have been done in order to have a control over the information presented from one central site and database as well as an effort to increase the traffic to the homepage. Benetton are hosting *WOW Artistic Project*; *“UNHATE” Charity Foundation* and *17 International Blogs* and other one time projects *“Hello World”*, *“Luna Sutra”* et.

Benetton's Mind Map



6.1.1.2 Benetton “WOW - Window of Wonder”

This is a Benetton project designed to gather young artists and designers from all over the planet to share their creative ideas, expressions, social messages, passions, dreams and fun. WOW is a technologically innovative transmedia experience in creative expressions and play.

Benetton gives a chance for young artist to publish their creative contribution on a wall and the most interesting works will be selected to be made visible on the “*Benetton Life Window*” network —the spectacular video wall shop windows of the Benetton Icon stores present in the key fashion capitals: Milan, London, Paris, Barcelona, and many more.

Values: **Creative, Colours, Fun, Young, Fashion and Friendship**
People: **Creative, Enthusiastic, Passionate, Artistic, International**

6.1.1.3 Benetton “UNHATE” Charity Foundation

Benetton is known for their controversial messages and images. This is Benetton who makes shocking ads to create buzz around their brand. It worked before with previous ads showing different races kids-good and evil (1991) another campaign priest kissing a nun (1991) in order to break barriers of differences.

The latest controversial campaign “Unhate” consists of a short film, images of political leaders in conflict like Barack Obama and Hu Jintao kissing each other, images of religious leaders such as the Pope kissing an Egyptian Imam to promote a peace and tolerance.



These images went on media, billboards. The campaign website provides “kiss wall” and “Unhate list” where participants can upload their own pictures and messages in connection with Facebook and Twitter. According to Alessandro Benetton, owner and CEO of Benetton the campaign was designed *"to give widespread visibility to an ideal notion of tolerance and invite the citizens of every country to reflect on how hatred arises particularly from fear of 'the other' and of what is unfamiliar to us."*

In this campaign Benetton showcases its principles as being controversial, multi-ethnic, valuing friendship, tolerance, optimism and international. With such a campaign Benetton pushes people to think and feel out of their comfort zone and of course, thanks to digital era, the brand message went viral very fast.

The images of campaign can be found on following social media platforms: YouTube, Pinterest, Flickr. For the broad audience Benetton communicates its values implicitly by showing only images of campaign on mentioned channels, because the company does not want to be confronted by the mass. The idea was to create buzz, re-connect with brand image being “controversial”.

Values: **Controversial, Tolerance, Multi-ethnicity, Friendship, Optimism and International.**
People: **Cultural Sphere, Economics, Charity and Charismatic Citizens, International**

6.1.1.4 Benetton Official Blogs

17 International blogs are hosted in Benetton’s web site under the name “United Blogs of Benetton”. The goal is to represent that Benetton is an international brand that unites people from different countries and cultures within the area of fashion, life style, art, music and culture. Incorporating blogs in website increases the time spent on Benetton’s Internet page, which might lead to an increase of preference and consideration of Benetton brand and get inspired to learn more about the brand, which will eventually lead to sales.

The company has hired the right people, who have experience in publishing fashion content, who have their own blog site with small communities. So Benetton adapted those bloggers and their communities to expand data base in those markets in order to have media to speak to and having someone advocating Benetton brand. Bloggers share personality traits of being young, enthusiastic, trend setters, communicable and social, having interests in fashion, style, design, art, music, photography fits with Benetton’s brand values and following universal form of communicating value of fun, creative artistic work, environmental ethics, colourful fashion etc. The content of blogs that glues the members together is created around the centric subjects of *Culture, Fashion, Green, Young and Tech* surrounded by *Colourful* context representing blogger’s country of origin.

Content wise bloggers have a certain framework with limited freedom guided by the company to work with. Part of the content comes from the company insights, supplied with interesting stories to tell about art (Benetton supports creative local projects, e.g. In Chile an ugly grey bridge was

painted by local artists into a colourful display of colours, and the local residents unofficially renamed this bridge to Benetton Bridge), music, marketing campaigns as well as user's generated content that represents bloggers personal taste, life style and the culture she/ he comes from. The content seems distributed so that the company's supported content covers 20-30% and others 70 % are publishers generated content. This looks like very well distributed content between the product and general subjects.

Seems that Benetton having a good strategy to guide and control bloggers agendas. Bloggers communicate their content fitting with Benetton's values, maintaining the quality of content and blogging regularly.

Blogs contain in-depth versions of the content on Facebook and Twitter and provides those channels with a deeper product content, beyond that which Benetton would produce on it's own.

Values: **Ethnicity, Art, Design, Fashion, Young, Colours, Environmental**

People: **Creative, Artists, Fashion/style lovers, Open minded people, Fun loving, Young**

6.1.1.5 Benetton Facebook

Benetton exposes itself to global fans on Facebook by engaging into conversations with them and receiving feedback straight away. They do not try to be controversial or provocative in their posts. Most of the time posts are about product images; add campaigns and creative artistic works taken from WOW projects, content taken from one of the international blogs. The overall content creates positive, optimistic, friendship, international style full of colours and joyful environment.

Values: **Fashion, Green, Colours, Cultures, Art, Creativity, International and Quality**

People: **International community**

Content: **Content taken from 17 International blogs, WOW Community content and Product Campaigns**

6.1.1.6 Benetton Twitter

On Twitter Benetton tweets are aligned with Facebook posts. Looking at what group of people Benetton follows on twitter, and then we can see that those people fall in several categories: Creative people such as designers, photographers, creative artists, interior designers etc. Another group of people are those who like and have interest in fashion and style.

Via Artist Community, WOW campaign and Twitter following, Benetton strives to attract creative young people community, designers, artists around the brand, who will help to create values of colour, fun, diversity and optimism and in this way engage their audience.

Values: **Global, International style, Colours, Quality, Fashion**

People: **Creative people, Fashion, Design lovers, Photographers, Interior designers etc.**

Channels: **Blogs, YouTube, Facebook, Homepage**

6.1.1.7 Benetton YouTube Channel

Benetton used many videos on YouTube made by external users. Benetton is sponsoring young artists, promoting creative talents by initiating different campaigns and projects such as “Hello world”, “Lana Sutra”, “WOW” project and giving the ability use Benetton’s platform to promote young artists to the world. By associating with talented, enthusiastic, relaxed personality with individual casual style and loving colourful world the company expose the same brand values as those people carrying.

Values: **Colours, Creativity, Fun, Enthusiastic, Product, Controversial, Iconic.**

People: **Global, Enthusiastic, Relaxed, Creative, Artists and Funny people**

Content: **Fashion events, Exhibitions, Artistic and Promotional Campaigns and Projects**

6.1.1.8 Benetton Pinterest

Flickr and Pinterest are pictures and images based networks mostly used for sharing and linking inspiring pictures with the costumers and stakeholders, which is used by Benetton as well to extant their brand image and create global community. Values: **Colours, Fashion, Controversial, Shocking**

6.1.1.9 Benetton Flickr

On Flickr Benetton invites fans to share photos, which were inspired by Benetton brand. Images will be selected to be shown on the Flickr website. In 2009 Benetton explicitly delivered their brand values on Flickr such as: colour, diversity, friendship, dynamics, multi-ethnicity, optimism and fashion. Some fans respond that for them Benetton are: fashion, culture sharing, and colour.

"Benetton celebrates colours that make magic and the difference in the world and that is essential to remind people that no matter what happen the hops still remains and nature."

Values: **Colour, Diversity, Multi ethnicity, Optimism, Friendship and Culture**

6.1.2 Benetton Values

Looking through all social media channels Benetton takes a part in, we could pull out some values that are communicated and group them to see how consistent the company is in expressing its values.

Benetton in the past was known for their combination of bright colours in clothes style and controversial images, combining non combined things, matching non matching concepts like nun is kissing priest or human races are mixed together.

To create brand image to express what the company stands for, Benetton leverage social media space. By analysing Benetton's content from different channels, we can conclude that today the company is more exposed to fans.

Also we can conclude that the company choose NOT to promote controversial messages such as multi-ethnicity or being controversial and shocking in open and direct way. Mostly Benetton promotes "light" brand values: Colourful, Fashion, Culture, Enthusiastic, Global, Open minded, Curious and Creative environment lovers. Benetton admits that they are controversial brand, but trying to change to more gentle approach (Interview).



Benetton slogan in the past "Uniting People" today can be seen expressed as uniting people gathered into communities organised by Benetton based on a common interest like art, creativity, love of multicolour, or work for social causes.

6.1.3 Benetton Message

Values communicated mostly through user generated content which is inspired from the company initiated projects like 17 International Blogs, one time artistic projects e.g Benetton Bridge in Chile, Hello World, Lana Sutra as well as WOW Artistic Community and Unhate Foundation.

Benetton admits that they communicate "*values which are part of Benetton DNR from the beginning to today and will stay in the future*"- Francesco Reffo (Interview). However, because Internet gives the direct feedback in the most efficient way what the companies have been

published, Benetton took precautions in being controversial with their branding message on certain social media sites like Facebook and Twitter where conversation are more direct and open than in YouTube and chose to communicate global values applicable cross countries and cultures.

6.1.4 Benetton Community

From observation it seems that Benetton tries to build a creative, young, energetic and artistic people community.

Benetton's strategy to build a brand community comes from various real life projects initiated by the company. Benetton organises various activities, micro projects and events with the purpose to gather people who are: Creative artists, Designers, Photographers, Trend setters, Bloggers in fashion and life style, socially engaged people, who can inspire and influence others to follow their ideas and opinions.

First the company organise the projects, for example WOW Artistic Project. The project is created to target young creative artists internationally. The project is linked to Benetton's own website as well the news is spread to other relevant social media sites. The part of online experience for this target group is going to be a community where people can share own created content that can be in the form of video. Therefore the videos are uploaded on Benetton's micro site-WOW project. Next YouTube channel is used to promote the exceptional works, following by Facebook and Twitter where art work is shown occasionally.

Next step, the company locates experts having interests in field on art, design, style, painting, photography on Twitter. On Twitter Benetton following influential people in the related area in order to promote and support young artists participating in the WOW project. Relating and attracting similar people Benetton recruits new community members, exchange information attracts more alike fans around the core values.

Along with WOW Project, Benetton recruited 17 bloggers in different geographical areas who on behalf of the company advocates several topics including arts. Bloggers are consumers, but as well as trend setters and influential people having a specific interests in art and culture "seeding the community with quality content that inspires people to talk up information" Weber (2009). When the moment comes to build a community for WOW project the relationship with those 17 bloggers along with other extended social networks are used to build a compelling content.

So to build brand community Benetton first of all builds several micro communities on different social media channels to attract young, energetic, influential people with similar interests, expertise and values within creativity, culture, art. These micro communities are built around the same content supported with the real life projects that inspires people to talk about, share and participate. This is non stop process to keep cycle in motion. The more projects are initiated, the more people it involves and the cycle keeps growing and circulating with each new project increasing a size of community.

6.1.5 Benetton's Branding Strategy Summary

- Benetton is consistent in communicating their brand message through all social media channels. In some of the channels their message is less controversial than in others.
- Communication strategy online is combined and aligned with marketing campaigns and practical projects.
- Benetton branding their values by supporting real life projects and communicating their message through the content and through the people with who brand is associating with.
- Core of the brand community is created out of the real creative life projects. Benetton provides a digital platform for community to gather around the brand online.
- Overall Benetton stresses artistic and creative people community and sending "light" values to the global customer on social media. They present themselves as being friendly, fun, fashionable, colourful and international brand.

6.2 Conceptual Elements

In the following sections the most important concepts taken from social media theory like content, two ways dialogue, engaging into conversation, building a strong brand persona, building a relationship will be chosen and analysed deploying multiple analytical techniques such as visual interpretation, content analysis, symbolic, communication style and illustrated with some of the most outstanding examples. The brand's success strategies will be compared against each other.

Different social media channels show strength of different content and form of communicated message. For instance, Facebook and Twitter are good to bring up dialogue between company and customer and enables to receive feedback in what the company has published in most efficient way with the ability to respond quickly back due to constructed conversational platform. Pinterest

and Flickr social networking sites are great to create photo story boards around the content as well as. These channels are used also to extend brand image online via visual inspiration by creating different boards with visual and audio content and gaining popularity by having followers who are interested in the posted content and if they do like then might re-pin to other social media networks and spread word of mouth.

Most of the companies were using Facebook channel on everyday basis to communicate with customers through different content or displaying new product range. Facebook and Twitter due to their built digital communication platform are the easiest to measure companies' engagement level with their customers and their transparency by being honest and open, how well they are building dialogue between a *customer-to-content* and a *company-to-customer* and visa versa. Furthermore, Facebook channel is suitable to analyse human side of the brand, language style and creating a rich social experience around the content, for example events organized both by fans and the brand, sharing of fan generated content and providing a forum for discussion of content and perception of the brand which can be more easily monitored by the brand.

Representation of Facebook's audience is shown in order to have idea the size of the audience each brands have to deal in comparison with each other.

The table indicates the relevant size of audience in Facebook for different brands. This chart displays number of Facebook fans in percentage for a given brand.

1. **Nokia** and **Burberry** are international well known mega brands with the highest number of fans.
2. **Nescafe** and **Benetton** represent the medium sized audience.
3. Both Danish based companies **Georg Jensen** and **ECCO** indicate that they are well known brands in Scandinavia, but are not so popular globally and have less than one percent share of the fans.

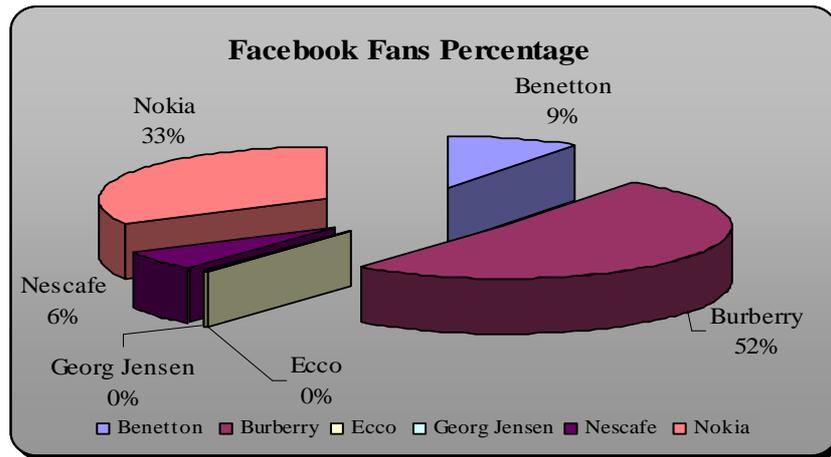


Table 1. Representation of Facebook Audience Counter

6.2.1 Engagement via Content

How successful brand is on social media can be judged on several variables like *content variety*, *content frequency*, *authenticity*, *story telling*, *transparency*, *value creation to the customers and coherence of brand personality*, *human side of the brand*, *ability to engage with consumers* to contribute to content, *engagement into dialogue* and *receptiveness*.

6.2.2.1 Content Quality

Companies engaging with their audience through the content by creating deliberate values, gathering community around the content. Through the content the brand communicates values and so defines the brand itself. Moreover, community is created around the content. Therefore it is important to create interactive content, which provide visitors with a chance to immerse themselves in the brand's values and messages. Topics which are appealing to audience, story telling and attention grabbing headlines invite people to interact with the brand and provide further opportunities to build a closer relationship.

Companies were using different strategies to communicate brand content.

Nescafe social media branding strategy does not focus on creating deep and powerful content instead it focuses on creating a friendly digital environment that is attractive and casual, encouraging interactive communication by sharing experience related with **Nescafe** coffee. On Facebook **Nescafe** takes an opportunity to develop brand association with “coffee” and emphasises on their emotional benefits such as “fun, joy and relaxation”, which helps to create a warm and friendly atmosphere. If fans are interested to know more about **Nescafe** heritage, values

and beliefs, the information can be found on Home page, which is more formal and less interactive than social media channels.

Along with creating interactive communication, other strong aspect of Nescafe's social media brand strategy is building consistent and distinguished brand identity through visual brand elements –deep red background colour with white script as their trademark. Red mug is a brand symbol that appears as a strong visual recognition aid that helps to differentiate the brand in consumers' minds.

Nescafe has generalised their brand identity images through all their social media channels.



Burberry used images and audio content documenting and telling authentic story about luxury brand with British heritage. Their message was coherent through all social media channels and clearly exposed purpose of the message to bringing experience to customers of luxury values in real time. Burberry content is immersive created with help of advanced digital technologies to show immersive 3D fashion shows in a real time, multi sensory experienced Events, and Fashion Campaigns.

Burberry took ownership not only over the brand values like heritage, luxury, craftsmanship, and iconic product attributes such as of tartan pattern, trench coat, and Prorsum horse, but included in their brand portfolio rain, England landscape, streets and parks together with young emerging British music bands, which play acoustic British pop rock. High quality professional videos focus on their brand image, paying attention to meaningful details that characterize their brand identity. In the introduction segment of different movies, for a couple of seconds Burberry logo appears or image of tailoring, or some place in London, or any other image related to working process depending on the video category. Videos are accosted with British music was shown in a certain context to strengthen the impression of the brand having a British attitude and fun. The music videos with toned down colours, or black and white colours were using filters to give a retro twist

to the images which were recorded in England's parks, seashore, streets even in musicians' courtyards to expose "Britishness".

Those two examples showed that companies use any opportunity to brand through the content by applying visual brand attributes.

Multinational brand **Nokia** chose different strategy to present content. Their content is deep and profound created around product enhancement and user experiences. Besides the marketing campaigns, individually content is created specially for Facebook and Twitter networks. Furthermore Nokia created content from its own social media sites such as blogs, or created movies, images and so on. **Nokia** created two official blogs: "*Nokia Conversation*" –targeting for **Nokia's** technology savvy consumers. Knowledge coming from **Nokia's** insights makes them to be open to audience in order to gain their trusts and willingness to share comments or ideas regarding the product. "*Nokia Conversation*" is more product marketing which has more focus on delivering news about product and creating knowledge about **Nokia's** technology.

Another blog "*Nokia Connects*" is dedicated to people who want to read latest news and reviews and to know what is happening across vertical concepts like creativity, art, innovation and technology. Behind the published content are standing people, who creative in different ways, which creates innovations, who have an interest in how technology works and showing it off to other people. News are very entertaining, with deep content, educational, showing about other people interests, activities, their invention, creativity and experiences make this blog very appealing.



Through the content **Nokia** communicates their distinct and independent identity and keeps conversations going on many levels. Nokia through the content shows what the company cares about from the social nature point of view. It is more content marketing dedicated to the broader

audience and has focus on people, who are active, excited about life, inspiring, innovative on all kind of spheres. Through the content Nokia shows not only that they have human personality, but they have a more intellectual depth than other brands, Nokia tries to educate, entertain and cultivate their audience.

6.2.2.2 Content Variety and Frequency

Community is online 24/7 and engaging non stop around the glob. Conversations taken place with or without the companies' participation. Therefore companies need to be online and be part of the conversations and to make sure that there is not a long gap in-between the conversation where the company is not present of one of the social media sites.

According to Facebook Analytics (Table 2.) the highest number of posts per months came from **Nokia** and **Benetton**. They post a large variety of content due to intense marketing activities going on in the physical world and probably because of the chosen communication strategy focusing on content quality. Therefore they have a large source to choose from to be entertaining, educational and authentic and were able to post these stories several times during one day for every day including weekends without being repetitive and boring.

6.2.2 Values

Through the content companies were not only marketing a product or trying to engage with the audience, they communicate brand values as well and sending impression, feelings.

Burberry's collaboration with young British musicians helped to connect with the young generation while celebrating heritage and culture. Associating with young musicians, Burberry established that music is a part of **Burberry's** culture and image.

It means when a brand created value within the context the message becomes fluid and adaptable by consumers. They can easily relate themselves with being adventurous and active, having fun and meeting relaxed people, and consumers can understand the value in the explained context better.

Burberry brand is build around the core values such as British elitism, Luxury, Iconic, Craftsmanship, Confident, Young, Confident, Relaxed life style. These values are shown in the context- rainy weather, England views, and London famous places.

Nokia as well as Burberry show what they stand for and care for through the images they post online. Nokia showing activities done by people, who are active, adventurous, having fun, relaxed and finding adventure anywhere and anyhow in every day life. Images are showing places where these people appear. Images of the funny moments, or hiking on Tibet Mountains taken with high quality phone camera do not promote directly the product, but shows how the product could be used and who is using the product and what values it brings to people's lives.

6.2.2.1 Context

If the company chooses to use their media channels and message as product catalogue or promotional add removing brand from the context like Georg Jensen they miss the opportunity to use social media's strength - the ability to create value in the updated reality. It means brands do not engage with their audience from a values perspective and generally fail to make a lasting impression on their audience.

Once again Nokia is a perfect example of exposing brand values through the content in the certain context where values can be seen and understood more clear by the consumers. Product seen in the context is more inspiring and benefits are easier understood by the consumers instead just having a plain product catalogue. E.g adventure recorded from Tibet.



6.2.2.2. Story Telling and Authenticity

Part of the social media strategy is to tell a story about the brand rather than talk about a product. How good brands were to tell a story, which is unique and authentic in order to rise an interest to the fans could see by looking at Facebook history chart, as well on every day posts' content.

Undoubtedly a company as heritage rich and innovative label as **Burberry** is has many stories to tell fans, some dating to it's founding in 1856, which it can tell to fans to catch and raise their interest. Stories about the brand history are told via images, which are placed on Facebook under the history section. Another way of telling brand story bringing craftsmanship to attention is through Fashion Collections, which are live streamed and short promotional movies.



The screenshot shows Arctic Pole explorers wearing **Burberry** coat, in 1910 Burberry developed weatherproofed coat for air pilots-the predecessor of the iconic trench coat and the last image taken from 70s movie “Kramer vs Kramer” with Meryl Streep wearing symbolic trench coat.

ECCO says that their post once a day on Facebook and posts are distributes at different times in different channels globally (Interview). Looking at their variety of the content, authenticity and entertainment level is very low compare with their potential. **ECCO** has many activities and projects going on in offline world based on their corporate values which are strongly emphasizes in their communication and they use this communication channels to relate their values to the activities. Especially relevant examples are their sponsorship of Walkathon, in which **ECCO** employees are encouraged to participate, as well as members of the public. This initiative enables **ECCO** to contribute to society on many levels. On one level they are bringing people with similar values and interests together in a physical event. On another level they are empowering people to contribute towards good causes. On a third level **ECCO** demonstrates their corporate values of sportiness and commitment to social responsible behaviour. However, they do miss opportunity to tell a story about those achievements and to talk more about it on social media instead of posting product related content and missing an opportunity to be unique and authentic as they actually are.

Benetton and Nescafe Conversations Example

Javier Lope'z ▶ UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON
5. maj

Donde puedo encontrar tiendas de ustedes en El Salvador?
Se oversættelse

Synes godt om · Tilføj kommentar

UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON Dear Javier Lope'z, check out our worldwide store network here: www.benetton.com/store-locator
mandag kl. 10:43 · Synes godt om

Skriv en kommentar...

Francesca Quattrocchi ▶ UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON
4. maj

CHE CAPI STUPENDI. LA MIA MARCA PREFERITA, DA SEMPRE. IN ASSOLUTO :)

Synes godt om · Tilføj kommentar

UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON Dear Erni Metalica, we suggest you contact the store closest to you. They will give you this info, check out here: www.benetton.com/store-locator
mandag kl. 10:43 · Synes godt om

Nescafe: Discussion about music

Ruvilyn Conat Micheal Bolton! " a love so beautiful!"
5. april kl. 10:47 · Synes godt om · 🍊 1

Ryan Kidrock like!
5. april kl. 10:50 · Synes godt om

Carlos Jacob Blur - Coffee & TV
5. april kl. 10:50 · Synes godt om · 🍊 3

Farhana Rahim big ten inch record - aerosmith
5. april kl. 10:51 · Synes godt om

Nescafé Ryan Happy you like it :P
5. april kl. 10:52 · Synes godt om · 🍊 1

Neetu Pareek AWESOME!!!
5. april kl. 10:58 · Synes godt om

İnci Karabulut Hi Nescafe, I love this page :) My favourite coffee -song Bob DYLAN One mor cup of coffee ... Greetings from Turkey :))
5. april kl. 11:00 · Synes godt om · 🍊 2

Alexander Imperial That's a lot of Coffee!
5. april kl. 11:02 · Synes godt om

Tsveta Georgieva <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGJNrmQeRgQ>
5. april kl. 11:04 · Synes godt om

Nescafé Alexander: Definitely!!!
5. april kl. 11:08 · Synes godt om

Nescafé Tsveta and İnci: same song, different artists ;-) Guess great minds think alike :~)
5. april kl. 11:08 · Synes godt om

Nescafe: "Any plans for a weekend?"

Sundus Hamidah yeah..studding -_-
20. april kl. 11:23 · Synes godt om · 🍊 1

Essam Ahmed Clasico soccer :D
20. april kl. 11:23 · Synes godt om · 🍊 1

Vivek Raut Kurmi shake shake baby...
for 20. april kl. 11:23 siden via mobil · Synes godt om

Nakul Bhardwaj DRINK :D
20. april kl. 11:23 · Synes godt om

Irin Adib studying :S mid term exams :((
20. april kl. 11:23 · Synes godt om · 🍊 2

David Whitaker Nescafe is part of my every morning ritual... therefore yes I'd have to say it is part of my weekend plan. =>
20. april kl. 11:23 · Synes godt om · 🍊 3

Jessy Kojababian sleep khhhhhh pshhhhhhhh!!
20. april kl. 11:23 · Synes godt om

Nescafé Essam Good luck!
20. april kl. 11:24 · Synes godt om · 🍊 3

Harun Dzinic 4:20 :D
20. april kl. 11:24 · Synes godt om

Vijay Jeba Prakash an small reunion of school mates with a NESCAFE time
20. april kl. 11:25 · Synes godt om · 🍊 2

Zeina Arab Where ever you go keep Nescafe' with u like me
20. april kl. 11:25 · Synes godt om · 🍊 1

Rajkumar Bedi yes, i will harvest my crops in my agriculture farm in two vocations.
20. april kl. 11:25 · Synes godt om

Nescafé David Nice! :D
20. april kl. 11:26 · Synes godt om · 🍊 1

6.2.3 Openness and Honesty

Burberry is luxury brand, who has decided to open themselves to the audience on social media without losing a sense of elitism and luxury, is a good example. One might think that their openness is expressed in direct conversations with community. They have chosen *consumer-to-content* communication way without engaging themselves in direct dialogue. **Burberry** communicates mostly through their multiple media content and content is taken from Home page where customers can experience luxury virtual shopping, explore virtual collections and engage with the brand through “*Art of Trench*”¹ platform. **Burberry** has on their Home Page live support service to solve problems and to talk with customers. Having messages sent out from the highest ranking person in organisation CEO Angela Ahrendts points to **Burberry’s** culture, values and way of doing business, it indicates openness and willingness to connect with consumer. This verbal communication and message sent on social media space to the world strengthens and promotes **Burberry’s** humanistic values.

Burberry and **Nokia** do not engage in direct dialogue with their fans. In order to keep an image of brand persona of luxury and exceptional they have to keep a distant and formal image. As well having a huge base of fans as **Nokia** and **Burberry** have would take time and resources to engage directly.

Benetton portrays itself as friendly, casual, fashionable and artistic brand. However they do not seem to be completely open and honest with their audience while having a conversation. There were many demands from fans side to open online shop, however **Benetton** did not provide with additional information regarding the subject except asking to keep checking for news on **Benetton** Home page. Such a standard and plain reply does not give an impression of being open and honest to the audience.

Interesting case is taken from **ECCO** social networking space. Generally **ECCO** seems open and honest in their conversations with audience. They do have strong corporate values integrated in all parts of business like being responsible manufacturer, retailer and producer. Further more, **ECCO** has many good causes projects going on offline, but these projects not always are communicated well on social media. One of the example is taken from Facebook, where what looks like a private person send a picture telling that **ECCO** children shoes were donated in Russia from Ecco-Ros.

¹ Refer to Appendix III

After making some research I have found that Ecco-Ros is the advertisement agency taking care of marketing activities for several brands in Russian markets. Without having this knowledge in mind posts and comments do not give a meaning. Neither the comment from a fan “*Thanks a lot for sharing*” if once not know that he is **ECCO’s** Social Media Manager- Interactive Marketing. This does not give credits for honesty and openness.



Nescafe is a good example how to tackle input coming from employee of the company. **Nescafe** very explicitly among of the other Facebook House Rules explained how to act if a fan is affiliate with Nestle. “**Introduce yourself:** *if you are affiliated with Nestlé (employee, agency, incentivized blogger/brand ambassador, etc.), be sure to let everyone know. Your posts should reflect this affiliation*”.

6.2.4 Human Side

There is a human behind the brand is shown through **Burberry's** employees, who speak on behalf of the brand, namely Christopher Bailey, Chief Creative Officer who speaks to fans about his inspiration to shows and event and what is going on around the brand at the moment. Furthermore association with sponsored British musicians contributes to show a human side of the luxury brand.

Francesco Reffo, **Benetton** Brand and Communication Director reveal “*the “owner” of Benetton blog has her/his personal blog, to show that behind the Benetton brand there is a human with feelings and emotions.* **Benetton** creates the brand persona online as being friendly, international, joyful, relaxed and creative. Looking at their conversational style with fans on Facebook, their brand persona does not fit with language style. **Benetton** always answers to questions posted by fans on a wall and takes in to a personal level, referring by name, but the text itself is very polite, formal and standard most of the time.

On Facebook **ECCO** tries to be more friendly and personal so that people will be able to see a person behind the screen, and because **ECCO** is from Scandinavia where communication style is very casual and informal, this communication style is easy to project online.

Nescafe has very lively and vibrant communication with their fans on Facebook. **Nescafe** takes to a personal level, refers by name and exposes emotion during conversation. It really feels talking with old friend around the cup of coffee. However, **Nescafe** engage with fans to talk only occasionally.

Nokia is another interesting example once again using a profound content, even a logo at Facebook to show that there is a human, like a trusted friend behind the brand. Their brand and product values were communicated through the people and activities people were doing. At the core centre of the content are people, who finding a joy in simple moments of the life, people who are honest in their emotions and feelings, people who have active life style and adventurous. **Nokia** camera exposed all these simple life moments and bringing utility in people's lives.



6.2.5 Community

Community is created via content by building dialogue, trust, honesty and empowerment of customers.

Good example of building a consistent and diverse community is **Nokia** and **Benetton**. Both of the brands are building their communities around their content. **Nokia** has diverse and large brand community from around the globe. They used to have dedicated fans for decades, however only recently lost their support, due to **Nokia's** wrong choice of smart phone software application, but not love and admiration. Fans were expressing their past loyalty and sadness for the brand in any related or non related topics to the phone technology posted on Facebook wall.

However, looking how **Nokia** builds a brand community online we can conclude that they do gather community around the content in the context. This content is consistent through all social

media channels. **Nokia** is sending a message to the world about providing high technology products without losing a human side of being funny, emotional, adventurous, excited in every life moments and ability to connect with people. Use of technology such as camera, or other applications makes life more interesting, exciting and funny. Those moments are shown through the images of people who express such values.

To support community of Non-conform, adventurous in every day situation people who likes innovation, creative ideas, technology **Nokia** formed two official blogs to have inspiration and grew community around these key subjects.

By focussing on associating with people of a certain personality companies attract more and more fans around the brand, this will help to increase value of the community and spread word of mouth through the community's extended network.

ECCO has very strong off line community centred on subject - golf players and sport people. This has been achieved by the long relationship with and sponsorship of Golf Player tournament and organising different sport events involving broad sports loving community. Sport community is dominating in **ECCO's** brand message and on purpose or not the sport is a dominant content in **ECCO's** message.

ECCO is not consistent in all social media platforms about their community building around the content. For instance, Twitter is used without having a clear objective and a strategy. The company mostly follows golf players as well as people with different interests like paediatricians, sport/ fitness/fashion lovers, professionals of Marketing and PR. Grimur Fjeldsted, Social Media Manager & Interactive Marketing at **ECCO** (Interview) admits: *“It happened in organic way that golf playing people were using Twitter as communication channel to connect and share information with each other.”*

The unfocused strategy does not bring a coherent and consistent message to the audience in order to attract more people to the community and to help them to identify themselves with a brand.

6.2.6 Facebook Analytical Tools

For this matter the IPM score (Interaction per mile) was used to see what share of each companies' news feeds reach fans and to see the overall performance of Facebook's EdgeRank for each company (Appendix VIII). This is an important indicator, showing fans' involvement and dedication to the company as an expression of status updates, comments, likes and shares. It measures the average interaction rate per 1000 fans on posts in the last month, in this case indicates May month 2012.

6.2.6.1 Brands Engagement with Facebook Fans

The data from the table is taken in 2012, June, July and August. From the table, which indicates average IPM score interaction per thousand fans seen that the highest IPM score is obtained by ECCO following Georg Jensen and Burberry brands. The lowest is scored by Nokia, Benetton and Nescafe. The content of the news feeds; interesting topics and activities do not affect the ability to be exposed on every day basis to the broader fan bases of the brand. So the frequency of the posts and size of fans do not influence IPM score and overall visibility of the feeds.

It seems that Georg Jensen and ECCO encourage fans to comment on their posts and therefore to achieve the highest ranking. Though their content variety, entertainment level and authenticity online are an average, but seem that it is well received by their fans.

Brand Names	Average IPM Score/Interaction per thousand			Posts			Like			Comment		
	June	July	August	June	July	August	June	July	August	June	July	August
Benetton	0.69	1.21	1.82	52	66	40	83036	198635	191583	1663	3422	3001
Burberry	1.27	1.4	3.11	21	22	16	342228	396273	655377	4037	5211	7868
Ecco	2.27	3.94	3.63	30	29	35	4608	8372	10133	548	721	834
Georg Jensen	1.76	3.84	7.84	29	17	25	1665	2187	6837	75	107	174
Nescafe	0.53	0.61	0.64	12	8	8	8227	6632	7587	1443	1000	591
Nokia	0.73	0.95	1.19	68	62	57	380465	467982	553950	31032	29054	30975

Table 2. IMP score measured

6.2.6.2 Brand audience vs IMP

It is interesting to look if the size of the audience on Facebook has an impact of the activity level as well. This table combines brands audience size in Facebook and IPM score. From the table we can see that even when the brand has a small audience, the audience engagement can be high. In this case according to the graph ECCO has the most engaged audience, following with Georg Jensen and Burberry, lowest scored by Nokia, Benetton and Nescafe. Most active on Facebook

were **Nokia** and **Benetton** by posting several messages on the social media platform during one day and least actives was **Nescafe**.

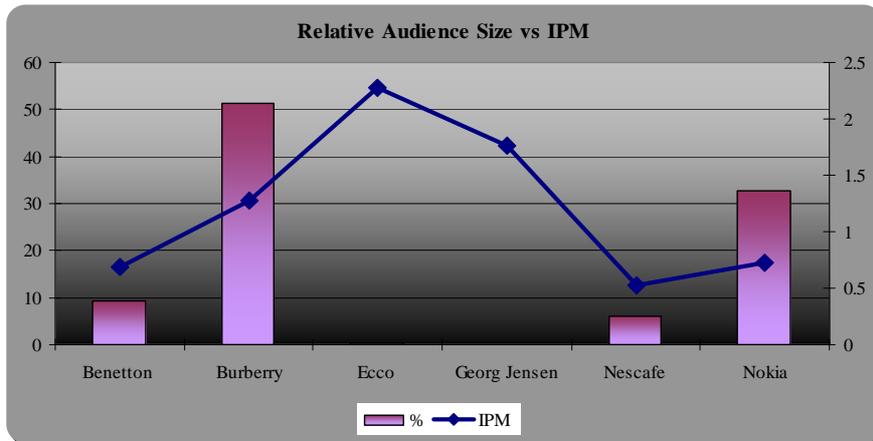


Table 3. Relative Audience size versus IPM Score (June, 2012)

It might be understood how close fans relationship to the brand is. When companies are in their starting stage of entrance into social media like **Georg Jensen** and **ECCO**, they do attract most loyal community followers. The relationship strength between the fan and the brand is close and high interactive. With the growth of the size of audience the distance between the brand and fans increases and so the engagement levels decrease proportionally to the number of fans.

If the company’s objectives are to grow in the size of audience, then it has to be aware that engagement level measured by IPM score will decrease, which means the news feed sent from the company will reach a limited audience even though the activities from the band side will increase. So companies have to understand how Facebook’s value system works and how this system could be manipulated to optimize EdgeRank to achieve the highest visibility among their fans, if they want to be seen by many of their fans. Large number of fans and followers may keep social media converts happy, but according to the 90-9-1 Rule only 1% of the community members will be an active contributors, followed by 9% and the rest 90% “lurkes” only who will consume content, but do not take actions with it (Nielsen J. 2006).

However, this rather simple Facebook analytics reveals that companies setting objective to increase audience size have to compromise with intention to keep the high engagement level. Therefore companies should know what is better, to have large audience size but not relatively active or smaller and more engaged community. From interviews **Georg Jensen** and **ECCO** revealed that their social media objective is to “create awareness, because *Georg Jensen* is very

big in Denmark, but very small outside-this is a major challenge for the company across the world. Goal is to make sure that people will hear about the company”. The purpose of social media according to ECCO is to create relationship with fans by engaging with fans, though growth of the number of fans is not the least concern.

6.3 Evaluation of the Brands' Strategy for Social Media

After researching brand activities on social media and analysing conceptual factors and interviewing companies, the most important key factors were used to evaluate each brands' success level on social media and presented on the Table 3.

Eight factors: *Engagement, Content Variety, Content Frequency, Values Consistency, One way Dialogue, Receptiveness, Brand Persona and Audience Diversity* were chosen to evaluate each brand with comparison against each other. Brands activities will be evaluates with a simple scale from 1 to 5. Score 1 would represent a very low or non activity, while 5 would score the most positive and most worth effort.

6.3.1 Content Engagement

Interactive content provides audience with a chance to immerse in site content. Nokia and Benetton created content that is powerful, interactive with many different stories to tell and providing news at the same time keeping brand's cultural values in tune within context. Their content was combined with companies/professional and user-generated content contributed by bloggers. It was a good balance of product and non product like travelling, art, environment culture content, which created environment easily could be educational, entertaining and encouraging to respond.

ECCO and Georg Jensen posts were about product without having depth in it. Description of the product it self does not offer sufficient benefits to the consumer, therefore less likely to be discussed and shared.

6.3.2 Content Variety

Evaluation is given by looking at content variety posted during one month on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and number of different boards on Pinterest or Flickr networks. Companies' own blogs and their content were evaluated. Nescafe had the least variable content on the social media

channels. Their topics were about coffee and related to the coffee. Therefore they received the lowest point 1. It was mentioned above in the analysis that **Benetton** and **Nokia** have the most entertaining, educational content covering several topics unrelated directly with the product. Therefore for content variety both of the brands have received the highest evaluation, namely 5.

6.3.3. Content Frequency

Content Frequency was measured according how often the companies publish their posts on Facebook, followed by Twitter every week with ending in total amount every month over three months (June, July, and August). The least posts have sent **Nescafe**, on average only one or two times per week in total 12 posts per month. Therefore they scored the lowest evaluation, following by **Burberry ECCO** and **Georg Jensen** respectively.

6.3.4 Values/Message Consistence

Brands were evaluated based on their approach to connect with the customer through creating values and focusing on giving experience instead of pushing their products to consumers. Language style, consistency of their message on line through all social media was evaluated as well.

Each company delivered their brand values in own ways. Some companies were better to project these values on social media space than others: **Nokia**, **Burberry** and **Nescafe** were quite consistent and clear to communicate their brand values within a context.

6.3.5 Authenticity

All six chosen brand have a deep and exceptional history, interesting people working in organisation, distinct products from which story telling could originate. To tell stories about brand that will be unique and authentic has not been successful for all the brands. **Georg Jensen**, **Nescafe** and **ECCO** mostly were projecting products without attaching a story to it. Though there is still a space for improvement for all the brands to reveal their unique heritage and stories.

6.3.6 Brand Persona

When evaluating each brand on “Brand Persona” the criteria examined were: if the brand persona is distinct, memorable consistent image wise, value wise and if the tone of voice matching then presented image. International brands have their brand persona more distinct, memorable with consistent image and tone of the content than Scandinavian brands. Scandinavian brands have in

their organisational culture casual and informal communication style, therefore to reflect this language style is easier for ECCO and Georg Jensen.

6.3.7 Receptiveness and Dialogue

Receptiveness- means that brand has to be not only broadcasting, but listening to consumers' concerns and able to respond to the audience. Brand such as Nokia, Burberry have a high popularity, but low receptiveness, it means are not willing to listen and be engaged directly in a dialogue with the fans on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter. Nokia have worked other way to interact with audience. Though the own blogs “*Conversations by Nokia*” and forums they do engage with audience directly discussing about product and technology.

Honesty and openness are soft values which are difficult to indicate. The overall impression and the small occasional details observed during the research period will be taken to evaluate companies' honesty level. Nescafe explicitly stated on their Facebook page for asking people who are related to the brand to be open about this matter.

ECCO was acting as ordinary fans on Facebook bring confusion and manipulation, which question the honesty and integrity of the company brand values online.

6.3.8 Community Diversity

To build a large and diverse community takes time and efforts. For most of the well known brands communities were already existed before digital era, therefore for them to gather people around were easier than for less recognised brands like Georg Jensen and ECCO, who aim to raise an brand awareness and engagement world with their brands.

6.4 Brands' Evaluation Model

After researching branding strategies the research showed that major goal for brands were to strengthen brand image as well to develop relationship with customers and to promote new product lines. None of the companies were using social media networks as service support channel or leveraging customers' knowledge or trying to involve customer in business decisions process.

From the Graph below it can be seen that brands follow a broad spectrum of social media strategies.

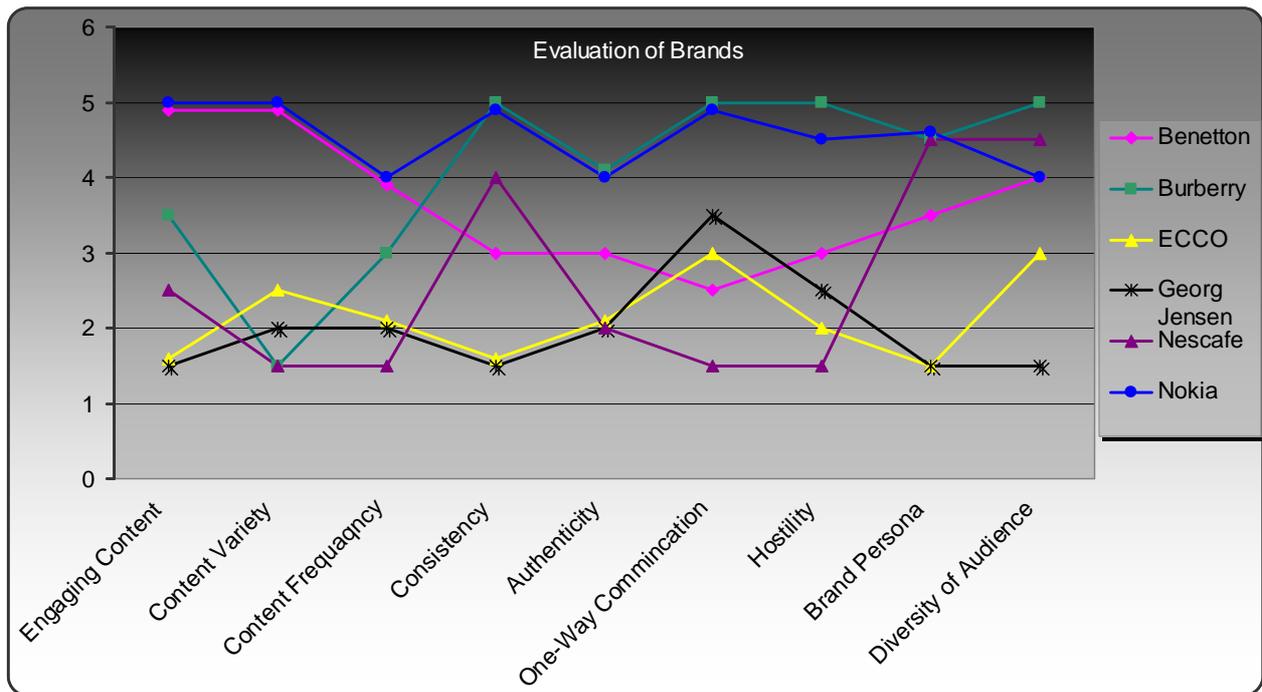


Table 3. Brands Evaluation

Graph indicates that **Nokia**, **Benetton** in their branding strategy focus on delivering frequently a high quality content exclusively, which defines the brand values and culture, promote products, builds associations with brands, and offers benefits to the audience. This focus seems to have helped them to build a diverse brand community.

Nokia and **Benetton** have focus on building a strong web page platform to create the community. Both brands were willing to participate in conversations and delivering company generated content from home page base. Though **Benetton** tries to engage with fans on other social media sites, the company still has to work on improving communication style to fit better with brand image.

Burberry have created also interactive, digitally advanced home page, where fans can immerse themselves in the brand through the content and engage with other community members, but Burberry still keeps distance from fans and does not enter into dialogue with audience as such.

Both **Nokia** and **Burberry** focused on building a strong and exclusive brand, they have managed to build a symbiotic brand image with authentic content which helped to build a distinct brand persona.

Nescafe following own social media strategy which is based on creating a consistent brand persona and engaging in conversations with their diverse audience. **Nescafe** contrary to the rest of the brands chose Facebook, Twitter as their main branding and communication platform. Therefore **Nescafe** created a friendly environment, easily starting casual conversations.

Georg Jensen and **ECCO** chosen brand strategy does not keep a focus on content such as educational, high entertaining and engaging with fans via content quality. Rather they have focus on creating dialogue between company and fans, fostering relationship that way, which works very well for their audience. However, building a community around the product does not create a memorable brand persona neither a strong and diverse online community.

ECCO and **Georg Jensen** are taking their first steps in social media space. For instance **ECCO** is working very hard to create strong community around sporty and active people based on various real world projects such as sponsoring sports events and charity events. **Georg Jensen** during interview revealed that they are working on creating a completely new strategy to support social media branding activities.

7. DISCUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The objective of this study is to explore the creation of and communication of brand value trough the execution of branding strategies of selected companies on social media. The research question that was used to find answers to the topic included one main research question and others sub questions. In this section discuss the implication of the findings.

7.1 Branding Cycle of Social Media

The main research question was: ***How companies can execute successful brand strategy online by using social media platform?***

This research topic is still new and novel in the academic field. The aim of this study was to contribute to the research of social media branding from the business viewpoint, as well as to be an example for future studies and improvement of branding strategies on social media. The social media characteristics model together with best practices reported by leading thinkers and practitioners from business who are working in the field of social media was used as a framework

for the structuring and evaluation of the best practices model. Six international companies were chosen to analyse, by applying the Netnographical research method to obtain “success” components from their execution of branding campaigns online. Findings indicated the most important components to build a strong brand on social media are **Meaningful Content, Engagement into Dialogue and Community building.**

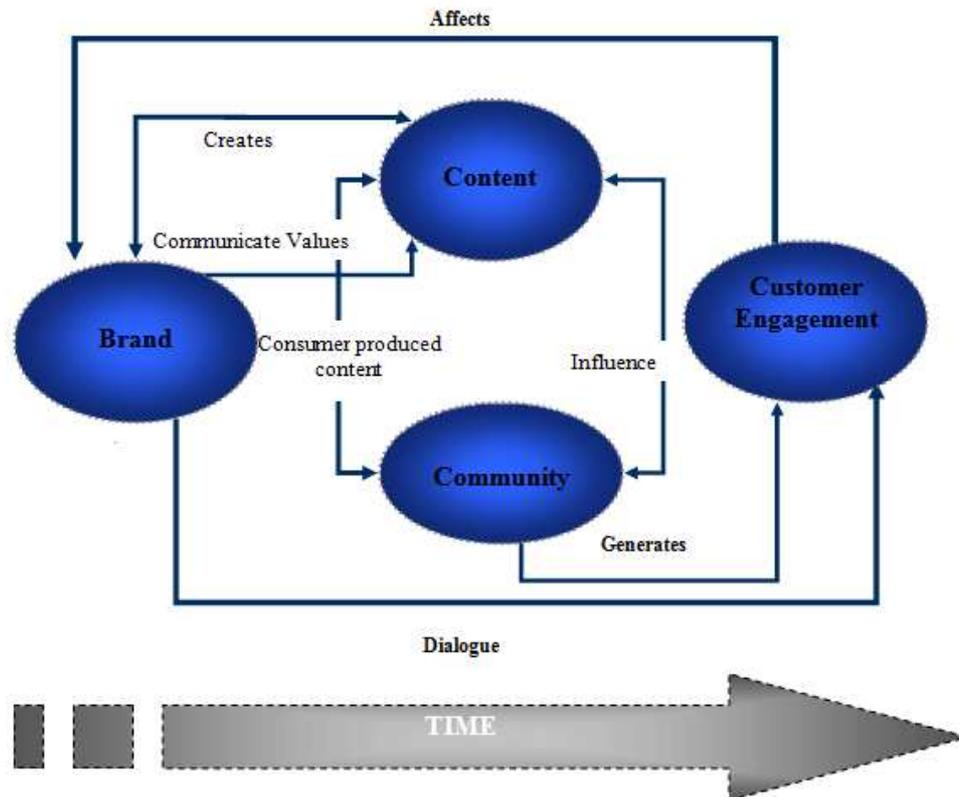


Figure 4. Branding Cycle on Social Media

With consumers’ empowerment and ability to be a co producer of the branding content, brand becomes a socially constructed object, affected and influenced by consumers’ generated content. Community gathers around content produced by both brand and consumer. The members of the community who are actively involved become contributors of the content and so influence the brand meaning.

Brands create content through which brand values are communicated. Community reacts to the content through engagement with a brand and so influences a brand perception with user-generated content.

This rejects the assumption that brand has a fixed identity and personality that can only be defined by the business. It shows that brand community affects brand equity, and is consistent with the

trend towards broadening relationship structures of the brand to include the role of consumers, including community (Cross and Smith 1995).

The external environment is uncontrollable; it is changing and developing over the time. This leaves for companies only the option to use social media as a branding tool to create, participate and monitor the conversations, content and brand meaning. This expands companies' ability to communicate in this new landscape, it allows changing and enriching the way brand is expressed and connected to customers.

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7.1.2 Meaningful Content

Companies who were putting a high focus on content in order to gather their community around the content as well as to create a strong Brand Persona were Nokia, Benetton and Burberry. How the content was created and communicated was different for each individual company's strategy.

7.1.2.1 Brand is a Social Constructed Object

When people accept a brand to their social networking cycle, it means they accept the brand into their personal sphere; the brand becomes a virtual "friend" on individuals' social networks space. Brand is no longer an outsider in someone's life. Brand is one of the community members with whom fans are connected with, in a stronger or weaker manner depending of the time and effort invested in the relationship. The micro interactions on social networks bring utility and value into people's everyday life. However, brands cannot assume that the bond is strong enough to sustain long term relationship without delivering value or content that benefits the brand alone. This one way relationship will not work online, because fans expect value exchange in return for their "friendship".

Value exchange creates loyalty and ensures continued engagement with the brand in the social sphere. In the sense of making brand advocates of your consumers, the value created by the exchange might even inspire them to share it with others, and thus increase brand value.

Social experience consists of relationships, connecting people, evoking feelings, sharing lived experiences, positive values created within context. The sum of those micro interactions is the key to build a brand relevance to consumers' lives. To understand what values to bring to audience, business has to take some steps back and simply look how relationships are built between people and to find important moments and meaning taken from everyday life. The opportunity for companies to connect with audience comes from understanding what a value is in a person's life. In the branding context it means that companies have to provide values to consumers instead of showing product features, artificial product lines. Branded content should come from situations where customers can relate with and give a meaning to it, the thought is shared with Helge Tennø as well. What a value depends on an individual's personality, or a whole group's personality.

7.1.2.2 Compromising Values

Festinger (1957) in his theory of cognitive dissonance states that individuals seek out information that supports their views and avoid information that conflicts with their views". Virtual brand communities consist of people from different nationalities with different beliefs, traditions and religions, which easily might bring in a conflict with a brand belief. As social media enables instant feedback and is an open and public forum for discussion, companies do not wish to attract negative discussion around their brand on the Internet, neither that these negative messages would go viral. Therefore companies, in order to avoid provoking fans, chose to compromise their true and unique values with more universally accepted values.

In the printed media era, Benetton was well known for being controversial, showing shocking images, and, unlike other brands, their marketing campaigns were not about products, but about social issues such as racism, poverty or AIDS e.g. Piers kiss Nun (1986), "Birth, Aids" (1991). This kind of advertisement worked for the company for more than ten years, people were talking about the brand more than about the good will behind the campaign.

Recently Benetton have tried to reconnect with their traditional values of tolerance, multi-ethnicity and race equality through the marketing campaign "Unhate" with shocking images of politicians' from conflicting countries kissing each other. This bold campaign definitely grabbed people's attention, disturbed them and helped the message to go viral. Although behind this promotional

campaign there is a real life humanitarian project², and Benetton has a history of making controversial images to support various good cause projects, the reaction from the audience was contradictory. In a digital era brand is more open to its heterogeneous global audience, where it can receive instant feedback, which might be negative and damage brand equity. Content based virality did not reflect the solid Benetton's message - truly to change lives. Values with which people can relate transports much better in every day life compared to attention. Nobody spreads content because they noticed it; they spread it because it's meaningful and adoptable. Attention is becoming less important than values, because in the new marketing brand is an integrated part of each person's every day life (Jenskis cited in Helge Tennø). This supports once again that content should be meaningful rather than disturbing in order to grab an attention.

This lesson was understood by Benetton. Therefore the company through all social media channels explicitly and implicitly expresses their universal values as "*Fashionable, International, Colours and Quality*" and forms traditional group of people around the general topics such as "*Art, Culture, Young, Fashion, and Environmental*" instead of pursuing openly their controversial campaign. For new consumer information, knowledge, shopping and entertainment aimed at short attention spans has become boring. Instead it is much more interesting and engaging to hear stories about people, to create conversations with people, to communicate and share experiences.

What this points to is that companies need to focus on creating value for fans, meaningful content directed at specific groups and communities that engages them on their own terms. This enables brands to insert themselves into fans' lives and profit from a close relationship, as well as the loyalty and trust of their fans. Therefore it is crucial factor in building a community is to have entertaining, informative, and educational content which would create value. If the businesses do not create any meaningful content and do not send a coherent message, which is based on true and honest values, business cannot expect a good interaction and strong connection with their audience.

7.1.2.3 Brand Persona Facilitates Conversations

It is much easier to accept relationship with the brand if the brand has human features, such as sharing similar values and interests as the consumer. Social media is about humanising the brand,

² Unhate Foundation" forming non-geographically bound community of specialized people in area of culture, economy, law and politics to help countries like Africa and South America

companies were building distinguished and memorable Brand Persona online through content with whom fans could associate and build meaningful relationship with.

Netnographical research showed that no matter the industry and the product type, the Brand Persona was built through general content taken from the field of art, music, fashion and nature, which is a common experience for the majority of people. Most of the companies were emphasising and communicating “soft” and universal brand values. In the branding context it means that brands become more alike and more mainstream, bringing less utility to consumers, however, these universal values enable the brand to gain fan's affiliation more easily, and associate faster with group members. Social identity theory explains human need to receive affiliation from others and having fulfilled self esteem connected within the group. Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence argues that people so strongly want to be part of a group, and seek to avoid isolation, that they will either adopt the views of the dominant group or they will be left behind.

Brand personality is defined by the way the brand speaks and behaves, as well as the associations it creates in consumer's minds. In order to achieve memorable and distinct brand personality, brands were assigning human personality characteristics to a brand which enables stronger and more emotional associations to the brand. Companies such as Burberry, Nokia or Nescafe went back to their core, unique and historic values to bring Brand's personality on line. For example Nescafe created a brand persona which is friendly, warm, down to earth, seemingly sincere and honest, someone with whom can have a nice chat while drinking coffee. Another personality dimension according to Aker which Nescafe applied is excitement, related to qualities such as friendly, youth and energy. Another personality dimension, which Nescafe applied, is excitement, related to qualities such as friendly, youth and energy. These have been achieved through the images of the posts, which send positive and cheerful vibe metaphors supporting with words having positive connotations:

“Hugs, smile, celebrate, better tomorrow, weekend, Mondays should be Fundays, place to enjoy, celebrate, Nescafe break, funny, Nescafe global break etc”

Nescafe's brand personality indicates emotional associations towards coffee. Coffee cheers up, brings good time, relaxation and company in people's lives. Nescafe is using “*lingua vulgaris*”, a language style targeting great masses of people. The casual and friendly conversations encourage fans to share personal moments or opinions, these experiences anchor the brand personality, which

in return generates its emotional character and associations in consumers' mind (Posts taken from Facebook, March/April 2012).

*“Did you make somebody **smile** today? What did you do”, “Do you have any plans for a **weekend**?”, “Come on - spend some time outside! Where is your **favourite** outdoor place to **enjoy** your NESCAFÉ?”*

In return for this more engaging style of communication from the brand, the consumer takes time to participate in a conversation, and shares their stories taken from their private life related to the brand. The brand means something to the individual customer. The meaning of the brand could be constructed by each of the users based on their personal experience and beliefs, which allows consumers to own brand by influencing brand identity and personality differently than it was defined by the business. Safko and Brake (2010) support this thought, that audience will determine what the brand means to them and what value it has in their lives.

For instance, Nescafe leverages the power of fan generated content and invites them to participate in conversation by facilitating with a question: *“What songs do you listen on your NESCAFÉ break?”*

For instants Nescafe understands the importance for people to have a sense of emotional involvement and need to support self esteem by contributing by responding with own content. When Nescafe leveraging a power of the fans generated content and invites them to participate into conversation by facilitating with a question: *“What songs do you listen on your NESCAFÉ break?”* fans might find out that there are people in the community with similar taste for music style or a song. Brand community theory supports that shared product experiences will lead to stronger social bonding among community members that enable the continued existence of the community. This was notices and motivated by Nescafe.



The connotation between the brand and music is created with the question. Each member creates own content and shares personal associations of music and stories related to the coffee. Answers about music brought many positive words from the fans:

“Soft music”, “I love the song, which can touch a girls heart”, “Loved to be loved by you”, “Soft classic”, “and Fado, Bossanova and Latin jazz ”, “ New radicals on the background while having my ice coffee blended with Nescafe classic”, “Song Of Nescafe Chocolate/creamy latte”, “Nescafe, with Norah Jones hmm...so relaxing”.

Positive words related to music and coffee strengthens associations of Nescafe and soft, *classic music and love songs.*

7.1.3 Community Building

7.1.3.1 Control over a Brand

On Social media space people are forming communities around the brand with or without companies’ interaction. Some authors argue that companies have to give up control over the brand and accept new brand meaning influenced by customers. As people are motivated to be in the community, because it increases self esteem and fulfils the need to show influence over the environment, for companies to try and maintain full control of the brand meaning is impossible.

Companies can facilitate conversations, to give opinions and their perception to their brand in a way they want others to see, however they have to learn to accept their audience influences since it is inevitable, and it is better to be a partner and keep influence in this way. Consumer participation, user generated content and motivation to be in the community is rooted in social media characteristics.

For instance Nokia has cultivated for decades their loyal fan communities. On Facebook no matter what topic Nokia would initiate, fans always will go back to the same topic- expressing their years of loyalty for Nokia until recently or suggesting how Nokia could improve to improve their competitiveness level. All these conversations affect the brand and contribute to a new meaning of the brand no matter if the company will try or not to control those conversations. Conversations are based on feelings and one way or another these conversations appear in physical as well as digital context. This new brand meaning in the community does not mean less enthusiasm and dedication for the brand. On other channels, which are not targeted to the general public, Nokia do participate in direct conversations with the fans and are able to control better the situation as well as influence a brand's meaning.

One good argument for businesses to enter the official media space is just simply to protect the brand's name. Brand name might attract fans and competitors which can claim the brand name as their own, and possibly destroy brand value, this happened to Georg Jensen brand on YouTube channel. "Georg Jensen" name was occupied by private person when the company decided to open an official YouTube channel. Consumers can even "hijack" the brand by giving it another meaning than that intended by marketers (Cova & Pace, 2006b).

7.1.3.2 Social Media Infrastructure

First of all to build an online brand community, companies have to provide a social network infrastructure for people to gather around the brand. All investigated companies opened accounts on the most popular social media networks to get access to the broader audience and expand size of community or to promote products, or brand it, or last but not least to protect brand image. However, companies have to be ready to pivot to other social networking channels when is necessary because the community have moved on from a specific platform.

Benetton, Nokia and Burberry initiated brand community to gather around the brand's Web page. These companies have build an appealing and interactive Web page platform with integrated forums, blogs and integration with various social media platforms in order to engage with customers directly, to allow sharing the user-generated content and to gather a community around the brand. For instance Burberry on Home page made the platform "*Art of Trench*" inviting fans around the globe to submit images of them wearing Burberry trench coat and to share/comment image to other mainstream social networking sites so that they can become the brand "advocates".

Though Qualman (2009) suggests utilizing existing social media platforms, these mentioned companies chose the more costly way. When the community is anchored around the company's web page it does not matter if the individual fans move between social networks and media, the core content and engagement can be supported and shaped by the company. To hold ownership of the created content as well as collected information about customers is important if companies do not want to give up control over their brands and let consumer's influence it alone. Furthermore, *blogs*, forums, shared platform are about expanding the time visit on the site and then increase the preference of consideration of the brand and to get inspired to learn more about brand, which eventually will lead from knowing the brand to tempting the buyer to buy.

7.1.3.3 Insider or Outsider Community Leader

In virtual space consumers talk about the brand and in doing so influence it by interpreting brand image according to their own values and experiences. Whether the company's goal is to create a loyal community, or to build brand image, or to provide knowledgeable content around its products depends on the industry, product type and the objectives of the social media strategy. Research revealed that investigated companies took different and mixed approaches to create and manage brand communities. For instance luxury brand Burberry have held on to their aloof image and are not willing to be completely open and approachable by their consumers, have nevertheless created a platform for community to gather around high quality visual and audio content that creates the desired associations between the brand and the values it stands for.

The degree to which companies want to hold power and control over the brand and content generated by the community depends on the community management strategy. If companies place a loyal or influential customer to be a community "leader" like Benetton did to administrate the community and to interact with members, the control over brand will be moderated, because there is a place for bloggers to generate their own content even though they are under the company's supervision.

If a company decided to allocate internal experts to host a community like Nokia did for their blog "*Conversations by Nokia*" the level control over the brand will be higher. When a subject of conversations is about the latest innovations of the mobile phone no one else than the company's employees has internal knowledge and expertise within this area of innovations to give a sufficient answer, and, using this knowledge to build the brand story that defines the culture and history of the brand. When the subject of conversation requires experts' knowledge in a certain field in order to keep the discussion alive and to influence community, an appointed internal community manager with authority might be a good decision.

The drawback to company initiated brand communities with appointed internal community leader is that it might not display unfavourable opinions about, for instance, product performances or brand experiences, as the company might exercise their power to remove or block this kind of content from the community (Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, & Kim, 2008). This issue is of course subject to a company's communication policy and the degree to which companies give consumers the power to own the brand. Just because a company might have the ability to remove or block content does not necessarily mean that it will make use of this practice.

7.1.3.4 Community based on Physical Projects

People are gathering into communities because of the need of belonging, need of self-esteem and need to receive affiliation and recognition from others. This means that these needs should be covered by members of the group or by company itself. When it comes to company initiated communities, the most likely is that the company itself will have to take a part in fulfilling those people's needs in order to motivate and engage the community.

Research has showed that thriving engaged and diverse communities were found around the brands which delivered meaningful content, by building up shared values and interests. Building on the shared interest of their members, i.e. the shared interest being the brand, online brand communities offer consumers the possibility of developing relationships with other individuals sharing the same passion for the brand.

Nokia, Burberry and Benetton have each communicated clear values and interests through their high quality content, which in return makes it easier for consumers to recognise values and identify with them. In order to have continuing and long lasting community companies should provide an ongoing, valuable and consistent user experience, which would build a stronger bond between the consumer -and-consumer and between a consumer –and-brand. To build a community based on product features alone like ECCO and Georg Jensen did, mostly showing product catalogues without context, without providing continuously valuable and consistent user experience, would not be able to create and sustain a vibrant, engaged and diverse community over time.

Within the community the bond between the brand and consumer depends on the interaction length and intensity on social networks. Therefore, for companies to strengthen these bonds by facilitating shared customer experiences is important. Consumers' online experience will leverage their bond to a community (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002). A good example is Benetton's consistent and deliberate building of a global creative, enthusiastic community of people based on real life projects not related to the product line directly. Working or collaborating towards a common goal, shared consumer experiences are created, which strengthen the community's connectivity and sustainability by creating a shared history both of personal interaction with the brand and with the fellow community members, which strengthens the ties to both.

Howard Rheingold (1993) was arguing for the birth of a new form of community, bringing people together online around shared values and interests. Furthermore, he was arguing ofrom his own experience that communities built online could develop into physical meetings, friendly parties and material support for members of their virtual worlds. I believe for ECCO brand that do have physical community which is regularly supported with various projects like “Walkathon” this effect works the other way around. They have to build an infrastructure and create quality content on digital space in order to bring their existing physical communities together online so that they can use them as a core of dedicated fans for their online community.

7.1.4 Customer Engagement

7.1.4.1 Relationship based on Transparency and Dialogue

One of the main social media characteristics is two -way dialogue based on customers’ participation in the conversation. The academic literature within the field of social media stresses the importance of dialogue: “In the era of the social web, branding is the dialogue you have with your customers and potential customers” Weber (2009). Academics continue stating that dialogue and direct engagement creates meaningful and loyal relationship and in doing so, the brand becomes stronger. This leads to the belief that social media pages were particularly good for companies to interact with their consumers in a new and different way in order to strengthen a brand position.

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Our study demonstrated that company’s weakest side on social media branding strategy was to enter into direct dialogue with their community. Brands like Nokia chose to assign community leaders and brand influencers and allow them to engage with community members. Nescafe was an exception and was willing to participate in direct dialogue with their fans, which created a vibrant and friendly environment. Burberry did not participate in dialogue with their community at all. Benetton, ECCO and Georg Jensen were trying to engage in direct conversation with their audience on Facebook, though communication style and manner were very similar to each other. According to the IMP score companies have scored differently independently of whether they have engaged in conversations or not. This might indicate that different brand communities’

members have different needs and expectations from the brand. Well-established and older communities can operate independently without direct brand participation. It might be enough that a brand provides meeting platform for people along with assigning some insight experts and influencers.

Observations revealed that global brands Nokia and Burberry were using content as communication form through which people could interact. Nokia have a large number of dedicated and loyal communities based on physical communities. These people are engaging in the digital space, having long and deep discussions about the brand and the products, giving various advice and feedback to the company without direct brand's participation in the dialogue. International brands were building their fan communities for years, therefore these conversations transferred from real life onto computer mediated environment do not required constant brand participation in all social media channels, I is possible to focus on one channel, Nokia has chosen to communicate directly via it's own blogs, and in this way engage in a form of dialogue with the community in order to sustain the longevity of brand community.

In order for businesses to be able to create a deep and trusting relationship with consumers using social media communication channels it is an essential condition that they renounce total control over their brand and instead actively participate in conversations with consumers (Bergsli M. 2010). Even though academics argue that the dialogue based communication is necessary in order to strengthen a brand position on social media, this depends of the companies understanding of the brand position and willingness to maintain control over the brand. Influential companies like Burberry and Nokia have large community bases, are using social media to brand the content and providing platform for people to meet on social space rather than giving a service support. Therefore if companies support the view that brand is influenced by individual personality and do not have a fixed identity, these companies might accept that consumers will take ownership over the brand to a certain extend. So they might not have such a need to engage into dialogue with consumers in order to build a relationship.

However, if community is a newly formed like ECCO's and Georg Jensen's in the branding context it means that along with providing branded content and creating unique brand persona, companies have to participate in the conversations and constantly interact with audience in order to control conversations and to shape brand image in consumer minds.

Besides having a direct dialogue with consumers, it is important to build a trusting and deep relationship in order to give to community members a feeling of belonging, as well as to preserve their affiliation. It is possible for brands to influence the strength of the community by, for example, designing experiences to bond community members together.

7.1.4.2 Trust and Honesty

In order to support the brand community, companies have to take different approach opposite and counter-intuitive to that used on press media. On social media peer to peer communication is based on what the brand has done instead of what the brand says. People trust friends and are looking for recommendations from inside their network cycle. As long as brand will be trusted, people will be accepting influence and authority coming from the brand. In branding context open conversations means increase in transparency among business and consumer. Therefore companies have to create and nurturing trusted and transparent relationships through open and active participation in the community. Without transparency and open interaction from both sides brands will not be able to build a loyal relationship with their audience, which lead to a weaker influence power over consumer decisions.

Academics advise brands to build honesty, trust and dialogue with audience on social media space, because it increases loyalty to the brand, which will give a competitive advantage and finally will lead to the consideration to buy a product.

After researching brands' strategies on social media we have found that for mass markets it is more important to build a strong brand by sending a consistent and coherent message with a created authentic brand persona based on real life projects than focusing on building honest and open conversations. Companies operating in small markets or wanting to build small and vibrant brand community like ECCO and Georg Jensen have to be more engaging and participate in conversation, be more honest and more receptive to community's needs in order to build trust and relationship with audience than brands that have a very large number of followers. It is assumed that trust is a crucial factor in building a strong relationship between community and the brand, but this can be done in many other ways than having a direct dialogue. For example it is necessary for the company to follow through on announced plans, explain when these have to be changed and advise when they are cancelled. Such basic management of consumer's expectations from the brand can build a sense of trust based on reliability and predictability

7.2 Implications

We have analysed six international brands as a case study for examples of the best practices on social media branding using Netnographical research methods.

According to the results obtained in this thesis, companies can create successful brand strategy online by establishing an infrastructure where the fan base can gather and discuss freely. Engage in dialogue with the fans, build trust and bond with the fan base as well as encourage them in spreading word of the brand. Keep the social branding efforts concentrated and build on the experiences, learn from mistakes and avoid over controlling the dialogue around the brand. Create high quality content and focus on delivering regular updates that are relevant to the target audience. Remember that placing a product catalogue on social media does engage consumers, focus on experiences and value based communication in long run.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Lessons Learned

On social media the position of the brand has changed. Brand does not have a fixed identity as is postulated in the traditional branding theories. Social media enables people to engage with the brand, interact with the company and other community members, to generate own content, share personal experiences about the brand and to give the brand meaning based on each individual's values.

Social identity theory says that people have a need to identify themselves within a brand community, by adopting the brand image, creating value for the brand, categorising themselves by associating with a certain brand personality traits in order to express their own personality. Consumers influence brand through these small interactions, and in doing so give new meanings to the brand. The brand meaning should be symbiotic and coherent. This is a challenge since it becomes individual for each person, coming from the company's branding efforts and from the brand community's efforts, together with the individual's own perception of these messages.

In traditional marketing the brand was the dominant and fundamental part of the communication strategy. When it comes to branding on social media, business is no longer in control of what is

said about their brand. People have power not only to respond to the content published by the companies, but also to create content themselves. In that way social media disrupt the hierarchy of authority and shift the balance of power from business to consumers and thereby influence brand meaning varies according to each individual's understanding and values. It is no longer a shared experience in the sense that each person has own unique history of and relationship with the brand, as opposed to a shared and brand controlled experience when using mass media.

Brand community through user generated content might give a different meaning to the brand. This meaning can work positively on the brand or negatively. So how much companies are willing to democratise the brand and to give control and power to the consumers depends on how open and engaged the brand wishes to be with its audience. It is very important to find the most loyal and engaged consumers who would be brand ambassadors and will influence and control brand image in the community in a positive fashion.

From the theoretical and practical research and analysis as a part of the thesis research we have developed the conceptual model of the branding cycle of best practices in building social media branding. Based on investigation the model states that branding on social media is dynamic and is ongoing process where engaged consumers within brand community affects brand generated content as well brand meaning by creating own content and having a dialogue about the brand. Brand meaning is affected by micro interactions from consumers' side as long as there is engagement with the brand.

A strong and sustainable community requires monitoring from a company's side. First of all, the communities which are build on physical projects or meetings have a stronger attachment to the brand and to other community members. Shared experiences, knowledge gives a stronger sense of responsibility for the community, builds shared traditions and gives a feeling of belongings in the group, which is fundamental for having a sustainable community.

Social media is forcing companies not find new ways to market their product, but to engage and connect with consumers, the point of contact between the brand and the consumer is content, which should transfer values from the brand, and place them into everyday language and situations that consumers can understand and relate to.

Communities which are built around quality content indirectly create various associations about the brand in consumers' minds. Consistency of the communicated values on line and offline strengthen the brand persona and helps more easily recognise these values, and to understand the benefits these values are bringing to consumers. This fashion the brand becomes easier to associate with it on a personal and emotional level.

Companies need to build a digital infrastructure for people to be able to gather around a brand and form a community. Also it is necessary to focus and limit themselves with regard to the number of social media networks that the brand will engage with in order to maintain cohesion and unity of purpose in branding strategy.

The small millstones and dynamic implementation of social media branding campaigns is more preferable than full scale development this approach builds on experience and slowly grows the number of community members who start out as a core of very loyal and engaged consumers which then spread the community's reach and influence to less committed consumers, and in doing so create a living thriving community.

The nature of social media is forcing companies not only to engage with customers via digital media, but encouraging them to think about various ways how they can influence customers to talk positively about their brand. Because the essence of community lies in the most dedicated and loyal fans base, who generated own content, fans need to get in touch not with the product features, but with the values associated with the product. These values are communicated through content generated by the brand, online as well as offline, and the associations the brand creates through these direct and indirect messages are interpreted by the fan base.

It is very important to build trust between the brand and the consumer rather than to have open dialogue. Trust leads to loyalty and brand affiliation. Social media is about engagement, participation but it is mostly about building a trusting relationship instead of just having a dialogue and constant conversations.

The most important factor to build brand communities is to connect interested consumers and to generate ongoing dialogue amongst consumers rather than between company and consumer. Self Identity Theory states that people want to be in a community and have a need of each other's affiliation, engaged consumers become brand advocates, these Peer to Peer recommendations are

valuable and influential factors when people make decisions or come to adopt a value as their own “the spread of ideas depends on the variety of people that hold them” (Giles Jim, 2012).

8.2 Assessment of Methodology and Social Media Branding

Netnographic research method was very helpful to study brand in its natural context in a detailed, unobtrusive way, not tied with any pre-conceptual boundaries and limits. This multi paradigm methodology allowed for the analysis and interpretation of data via abstraction, visualization and quantitative methods, which helped to reveal conceptual constructs of communicated brand values and their patterns taken from individual social media channels as well as the whole landscape of social branding activities brands engage in. The method helped to understand, structure, single out, de-construct, analyse and generalize the concepts and artefacts in the environment, both on different individual social media as well as to build an overall model of the different dimensions of branding such as brand image, persona, values and so on, and how they interact in the social media space with consumer's behaviour and expectations

A drawback of this methodology is that it places a heavy emphasis on the researcher's point of view, this free style interpretation might be influenced by researchers personality biases opinions and experiences, the researcher may not be taking impressions objectively. Furthermore, audiovisual impressions were one of the data forms which were most helpful in reveal the whole impression of the brand persona and brand environment on digital space. Senses such as feelings, audio and visual impressions are inherently difficult to describe using only textual manner. By becoming involved in the environment, the researcher influences the environment, calling observer effect (Observer effect-Wikipedia).

Social media is static and changing as we speak so knowledge produced during research might be inaccurate and out of date.

The drawback of social media branding is the difficulty of measuring the effect of branding activities on a profit/loss basis, as well as a lack of control over the results. Companies might have to invest a lot of time, resources and effort in creating content and managing communities without knowing how much value these activities have created and how many sales it have generated. As an example, Burberry has been building their business through digitally integrated platforms and

channels; it has taken them 5 years. For Burberry social micro sites secured 1,000,000 fans and a 10% increase in same-store sales (Barnraisers, 2010).

In general companies should avoid mistakes of building everything at once on social media and having big ambitious rather focusing on incremental strategies and extensive KPI tracking. This approach can enable the company to access the impact of any particular activity, as well as to be able to recognize when and in what way the situation is changing. Having measurable and reliable KPIs could allow companies to react to changing situation in a more responsive and fluid manner.

8.3 Concluding Remarks

We have created a Social Branding Evaluation Concept model in Section 6.3 “*Evaluation of the Brands' Strategy for Social Media*” and in Section 6.4 “*Brand Evaluation Model*”.

Moreover, we have created a conceptual model of the Brand Cycle on Social Media, focusing on the most influential concepts. This is described in Section 7.1 “*Branding Cycle of Social Media and its Players*”.

A summary of knowledge gained throughout the thesis is summarized in section 8.1 from the theoretical concepts validated and refuted by field research to the results and conclusions of the Analysis and Discussion of the findings.

Outputs of the research are presented again in Section 7.1 and under Section 8.1 “*Lessons Learned*”

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Appendix

Appendix I: Interview Summary

Date	Company	Person's name	Position	Interview form
11/06/2012	Georg Jensen A/S	Christophe Lephilibert	Global Marketing & PR Director	Semi structures personal interview
14/06/2012	ECCO Shoes	Grimur Fjelsdted	Social Media Manager-Interactive Marketing	Semi structured phone interview
12/06/2012	Benetton	Francesco Reffo	Brand and Communication Director	Semi structured phone interview
Email sent on: 6/4/2012	Burberry	Catherine Schelander	Head of Partner Communications	Written form
Email sent on: 07/04/2012	Nescafe	NA		
Email sent on: 12/04/2012	Nokia	NA		

Appendix II: Supportive Analysis-Social Media Analytics

Social media analytical tools were used to look deeper at different brands' Facebook pages. The amount of fans, volume of content and degree of engagement was examined from May, 2012

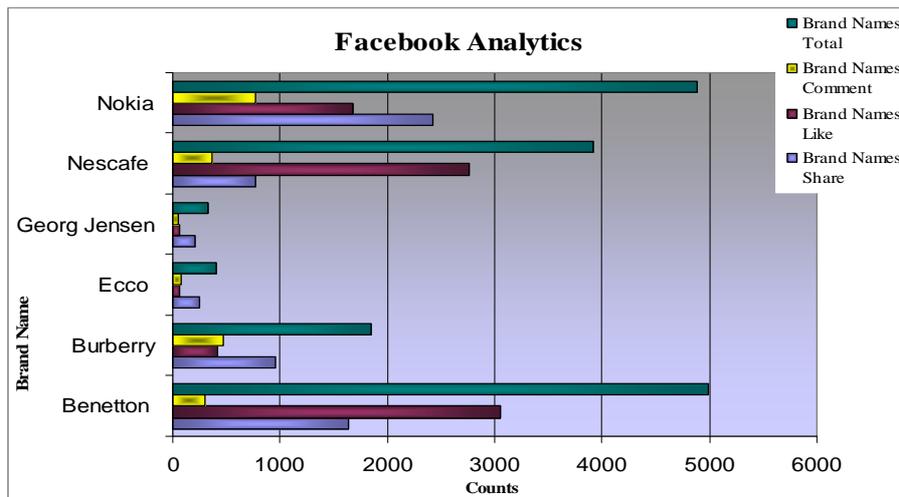


Table A. Facebook Likes Counter³

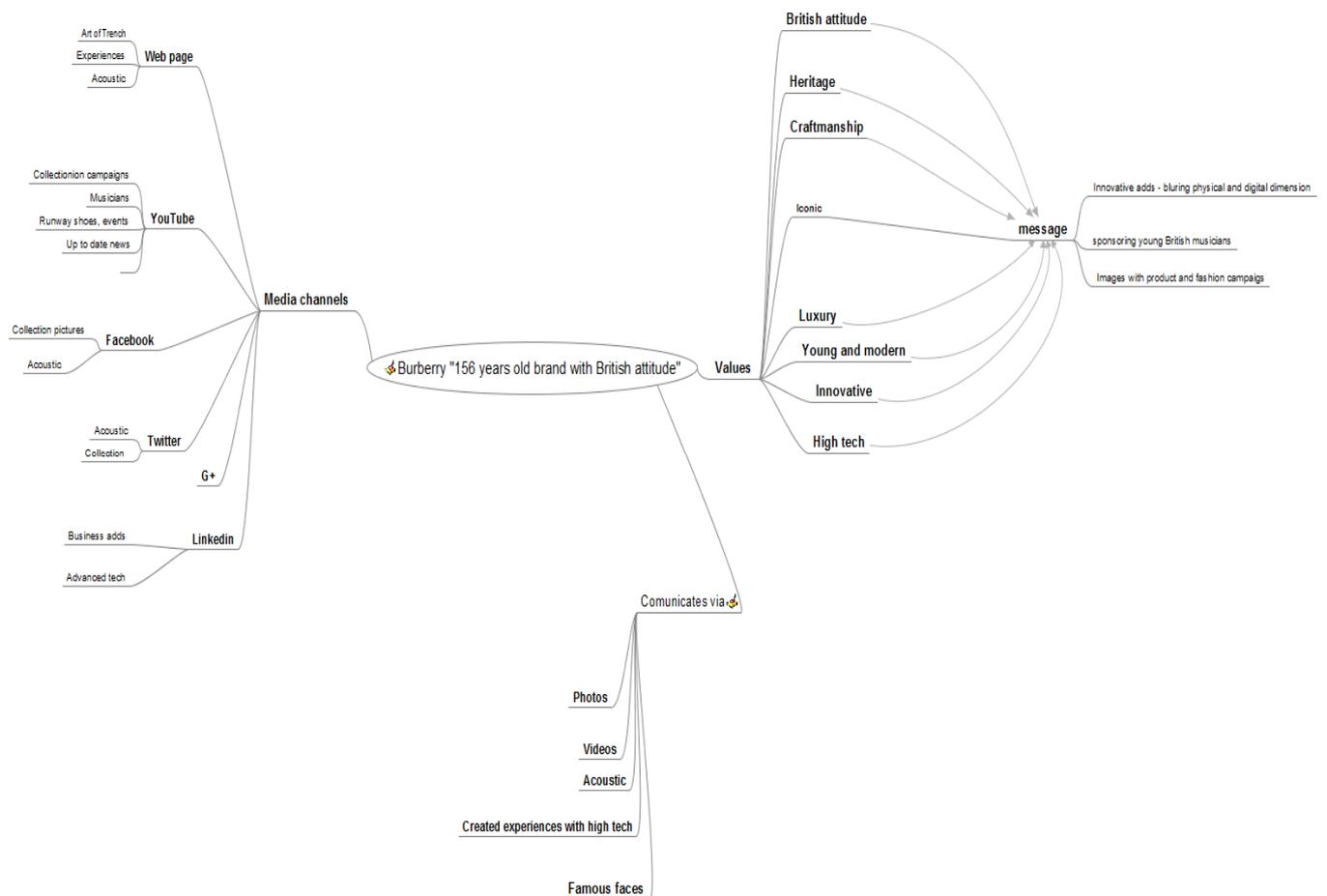
³ <http://labs.met.cz/#fbfanscounter>

Brand Names	1	2	3
Benetton	Likes	Share	Comments
Burberry	Share	Comments	Like
Ecco	Share	Comments	Like
Georg Jensen	Share	Comments	Likes
Nescafe	Likes	Share	Comments
Nokia	Share	Like	Comments

Table B.

This graph's charts specify fan's different activities for given brands on Facebook pages based on number of *comments, likes and shares*.

Appendix III: Burberry



Burberry is British luxury fashion brand manufacturing clothing, fragrance and fashion accessories. Brand is known for tartan pattern and for its iconic trench coat, which was invented by founder Thomas Burberry. The company was established at 1856 and have a profound heritage. Burberry's development of the trench coat at the turn of the last century rewrote the history of outerwear, when an article of clothing that was designed as practical military gear became an enduring icon of fashion and earned Burberry two Royal Warrants as weather proffers to both her Majesty of the Queen and the Prince of Wales.

Their iconic image- of tartan pattern, trench coat, and Prorsum horse logo⁴ is well recognized globally.

Brand is a symbol of both luxury and durability. In the past company's images lied as a classic, middle aged elegant and luxury brand. Today Burberry repositioned between a cutting edge fashion and classic with an emphasis on a British elitism combined with independent and relaxed confidence lifestyle.

Burberry started to incorporated technology and digital tools in their promotion strategy. SM channels are used for life streaming to reach the broad audience and to be able to connect consumers all over the world by sharing experience together with Burberry brand.

Extra ordinary, innovative digital advertising campaigns were made with a help of advanced technology:

- Global 3D broadcasting of the 2010 London Fashion week-gave a huge exposure globally
- For Fashion show in Beijing the immersive experience –hologram runway were appearing and creating impressive show. This multi sensory experience blurs the physical and digital dimensions together.
- For the flag shop opening event *Weather Arrives in Taipei* -a multi sensory experience was created with 360 degrees film together with life music performance and digitally rainy and cloudy weather imitation.

Interactive Home page

Digitalised Burberry's home page is known as Burberry World. Through dynamic audiovisuals content the Burberry brand, allowing customers globally for the first time to be entertained, engaged connected with all brand aspects, from heritage, to music and video, to the full product offers.

- **Product catalogue** and online promotional campaigns are 3D. An Online feature with a click of the mouse, customer can move models and product and changed angels in various positions to get closer with products.
- **Art of Trench**-mini social networking site focusing on the signature item –Trench coat.
- **Bespoke** allows customers to create own personalised trench coat
- **Burberry Acoustic** is videos from sponsored young British musicians

According to the company the brand is defined by:

Britishness, Authentic outerwear **heritage**, Historic icons: the **trench coat, trademark check and Prorsum knight logo, Democratic luxury** positioning, **Innovation and Intuition.**

On Burberry web page, their culture is distinguished by:

1. *Core values: to protect, explore and inspire*
2. *Democratic and meritocratic ethos*
3. *Collaboration and connectedness*
4. *Contribution to its communities, including through the Burberry Foundation*

⁴Wikipedia

Art of the Trench

*“This webpage is dedicated to celebrate the timeless success of the Burberry trench coat and establish a presence in the mobile time”*⁵. The page was created with an aim to drive internet sales by engaging technology savvy consumers.

The web page shows pictures collage people wearing Burberry clothes. The project is made with collaboration between Burberry and world’s leading image makers to invite fans around the globe to submit image of themselves or others wearing Burberry trench coat and to reflect personal style. Images could be sorted by giving selections: Popularity, Gender, Styling, Colour Weather, Collaboration with professionals or fans submits.

Web pages build a strong image and invites fans to be involved and experience the brand by posting images on the wall. In order to be able to upload pictures, fans have to sign via FB.

Acoustic music playing on web page supports image of “Britishness”.

Another component to create a stronger brand image, which would associate with Burberry trench coat, is weather. Trench coat is wear during rainy, windy days just like we would image British weather, therefore one of the selection choices are given weather (bright, cloudy, wet).

In all SM channels Burberry presents themselves explicitly as a brand with heritage and British attitude. Though under it there are more messages Burberry sends to customers: British, young, free, modern, craftsmanship and luxury.

Values: British, confidence, elite, modern, stylish

Exposure: Web page, but fans can share on FB, Twitter and Pinterest

Bespoken

Intro movie is shown before customer can press the button to begin customising her/his trench coat. Movie is very iconic, showing nature of Britain (Kent), tailoring trench coat with handcraft and attention. The movie captures logo and attributes of Burberry product.

Moreover, customers can experience a luxury shopping where can create and order a unique customised trench coat for him/her self on line.

Even though not everybody can afford to purchase the product, however to experience luxury online brand shopping can everyone. In this way Burberry became more accessible and more approachable to their audience without losing the sense of being a luxury brand and giving an exclusive experience.

Exposure: Fans can share on FB, Twitter their own customised trench coat.

Burberry Acoustic

The Burberry Acoustic Project is created to support emerging young British musicians. The music videos, which are very natural, with toned down colors are shot outside of the studio, in parks, seashore, some of the streets of England, even in musicians’ courtyards in away to expose Britain where Burberry brand comes from. With a London lifestyle image and relaxed confidence singers were performing British songs acoustically accompanied by guitar or piano.

Burberry collaborating with young British musicians helps to connect with the “Generation Y”⁶ while celebrating heritage and culture. Associating with young musicians, Burberry created that music is a part of Burberry’s culture and image.

Values: British culture, metropolitan lifestyle

Channels: YouTube, home page, Facebook, Twitter

Burberry uses technologic advanced tools to create a luxury brand image and opens itself to broad audience globally without “cheapening” a brand.

Facebook

On Facebook Burberry introduces very shortly: “*Burberry is 156 years old Brand with British attitude*” and the rest of brand image Burberry creates through images and music.

Burberry mostly uses Facebook for introducing new collections, products, fashion campaigns and sponsored British musicians videos and campaigns with them. Pictures and videos of British bands are black and white, which gives an impression classically stylish brand. It seems that company leaves a space for fans to interpreter and create the brand image themselves only without getting involved into conversations with Facebook fans.

Burberry’s focus is on product launch and promotions, showing innovations instead of conversations with fans in verbal way. Conversations go via images, music and ability to participate virtually. Burberry uses its Facebook page mostly to promote its products as luxury, iconic and British posting the videos, pictures and music. The Art of Trench website motivates fans to engage with Burberry by upload picture of them wearing Burberry products without involving into direct conversation. To do so, fans have to sign via FB. Burberry by investing so much in SM, high tech promotion and attracting young musicians as well in their promotional campaigns young famous British faces sends a strong messages that their are young, energetic and up to date.

Values: iconic, fashion, luxury, music, relaxed and classic

Exposure via: images and videos of products and music bands

Twitter

Twitter is used for product promotion; this is done by uploading pictures of famous people wearing Burberry clothes, introducing new collections, videos of sponsored British bands and advertising material.

Following: Burberry does not follow many people on Twitter, only 137 compare with a number of people, who follows them is over 1mill. The company follows British Celebrities and British Institutions like Economist and Financial Times, Harolds, following Fashion and Style magazines and fashion lovers

YouTube

On YouTube Burberry shows videos of: sponsored British bands, Fashion shows videos, Events, Fashion Campaigns and messages from Burberry employees, namely Christopher Bailey (chief creative Officer), who speaks about his inspiration to shows and event and what is going on around the brand at the moment. Angela Ahrendts (CEO), videos are her speaking about culture, values and their relationship to its business strategies.

This verbal communication and message send to the world strengthen and explains who Burberry is, promotes what do they do, and of course send a message that they are approachable on SM-speaking with audience.

High quality made videos content focus on their brand image, paying attention to meaningful details that characterize their brand. In the intro of movie, for a couple of seconds Burberry logo appears or image of tailoring, or some place in London, or any other image related to working process depends of the video category. Videos are accosted with British music to strengthen the impression of the brand having a British attitude and fun.

Exposure: of creative work on promotion and shows.

Values: Luxury life style, trend, exclusive, fun, young, craftsmanship British and iconic

Pinterest

Burberry has 10 boards on Pinterest with their pictures: campaign includes videos and pictures, Magazines' covers with Burberry products, Cosmetics, Celebrities wearing Burberry (actors and models), Acoustic contains British bands videos, Weather board included rainy and cloudy London images, and Burberry Trench board celebrates The Art of Trench images

G+

LinkedIn

Is used for attracting business professional by placing business related adds and for introducing news showing Burberry's achievement in usage of advanced technology.

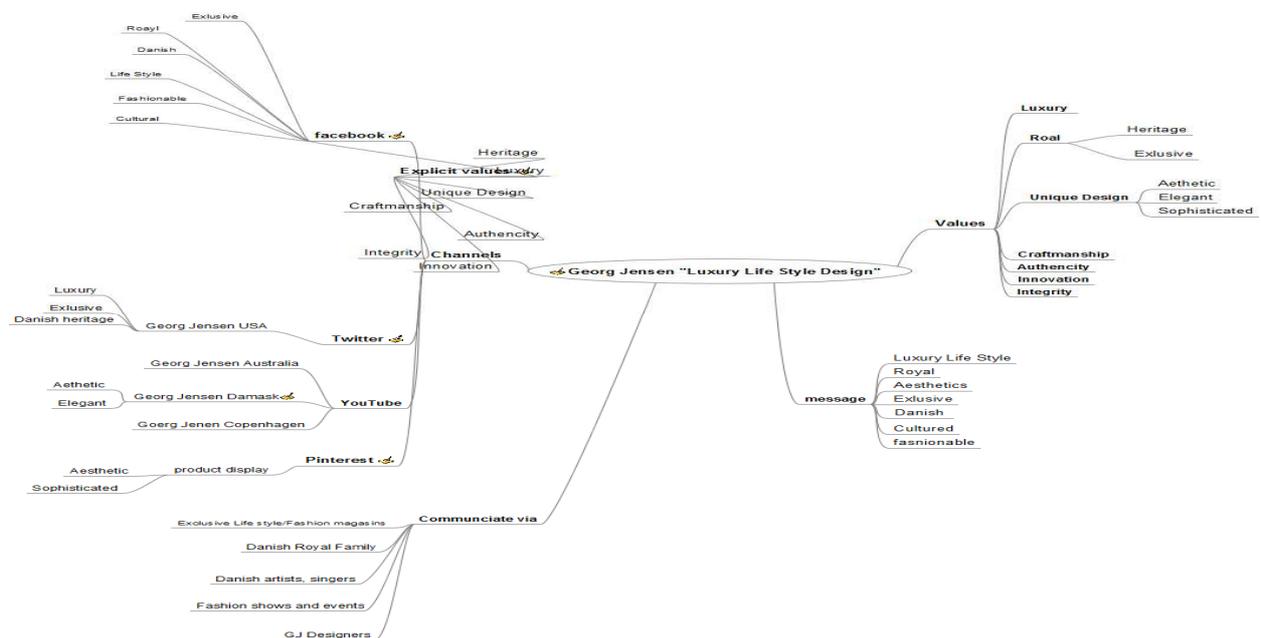
Values: building a repudiation as technology advanced luxury brand

Sum up

The classic Burberry brand went digitalised and re renewed the luxury experience by adapting to the needs of new target market, who wants to be connected and informed. By building interactive web page, extra ordinary fully immersed fashion shows and events when boundaries between technologies, music, fashion and emotions merged together, Burberry formed an extraordinary, holistic experience for a broad audience world wide. The associations to the Burberry brand is build around the core values such as **British elitism, Luxury, Iconic, Craftsmanship, Confident, Young , Confident, Relaxed life style** via **British musicians**, England's **rainy weather**, images of **London** and strong **iconic** brand identity.

Burberry use SM channels differently by leveraging each channel's strongest points to be able to get closer to the brand, be able to engage not only the current consumer base, but also those who aspire to buy the brands' products without being able to afford them. This help luxury brands to build tremendous prestige among the affluent set of consumers while creating great buzz among the inspirational set.

Appendix IV: Georg Jensen



Home Page

Georg Jensen was a Danish silversmith who invented a company more than 100 years ago. Georg Jensen brand represents quality craftsmanship and timeless aesthetic design, producing lifestyle products from hollowware to watches, jewellery and home products and are very popular and well known brand in Scandinavia.

Values are: Integrity, Authenticity and Danish design. “All resonating the Scandinavian values- the simplicity of life, the Nordic light, cleaned water and fresh air -and all capsulated in the Georg Jensen Vision, Mission and Values”⁷

Vision

“Georg Jensen’s vision is to offer the Scandinavian Luxury Lifestyle universe to the design conscious consumer and to claim the position as the world’s leading Scandinavian Luxury Lifestyle Brand.”

Mission

“It is our mission to *enthuse, surprise and inspire* the global, design conscious consumers through our unique, timeless designs and tradition for high quality and craftsmanship.”

The front web page works as online shopping catalogue with listed products without attaching a story or news about product. Web page is uninspiring, GJ do not use web page for experience.

Through many years quite a number famous Danish designers were working and still work at Georg Jensen-Arne Jacobsen. There is a section with listed designers, short summary about them and exhibition of their work created for GJ.

Facebook

On Facebook the company introduces itself as 108-year old Danish **luxury** lifestyle brand, with a **heritage of unique design & craftsmanship** rooted in silverware. GJ also talks about their vision, mission and values.

Content of the posts could be divided into several categories: product advertising, product placement and topics related to Denmark like Danish won the film award in Cannes,

Product advertising is done via people and via pressed media:

GJ uses famous and well known people from Denmark and other countries who in some way are in “touch” with GJ to endorse their brand. When actors, Members of Royal family, singers, politicians (Hilary Clinton) and TV personalities are invited to visit GJ shop in Copenhagen or New York to promote brand, GJ receives big attention from press media to influence consumers by famous people purchase habits.

GJ uses product placement strategy by showing products in movies, singers wearing jewellery during concerts or models and designers at fashion shows, decorating table with their silverware at events. These situations are spotted by the company and pointed out via SM channels.

GJ also showing off articles in Luxury life style magazines (Deco, Elle UK, US, Vogue, Cover, Bazaar, Mariage D'or HK, Brand TW, Prestige HK, Marie Clair TW, Harper's Bazaar AUS), where their products are featured and promoted. Then GJ points out these articles and shows to broader audience on SM channels such as Facebook or Twitter.

Prestigious fashion and life style magazines shine a light on GJ's items as being luxury, aesthetic and impressive items. GJ Jensen promotes their products via endorsements. People such as actors, designers, singers and members of Royal families by associating with GJ lend it reputation as exclusivity.

GJ's content on Facebook is not inspiring users to comment, because it is very one dimensional, standard, without values and uncontroversial.

Values: Luxury, Royalty, Exclusive, Style and Aesthetic

Exposure: product images, famous people and Luxury style magazines

Twitter

On Twitter, GJ introduces itself as **Scandinavian luxury lifestyle** brand. Exclusive Danish design including luxurious jewellery, silver watches and home décor. On Twitter GJ content wise is similar to Facebook. They following more people than are followed themselves. There are no favourites posted under that section. Generally GJ is not heavy user of Twitter.

Following: GJ following fashion, style and shopping lovers, style magazines and their editors around the world

YouTube/GJ Damask

GJ uses YouTube to place videos related to product and events happening around the product. So far there are 4 official videos with product promotion. The impression about product from the content is that it is sophisticated, aesthetic, and elegant.

GJ Copenhagen

There are two videos: one is posted two years ago regarding Red Cross Christmas campaign when famous Danish people packing Christmas present in GJ shop, Copenhagen. Another video is with unrecognised campaign posted three years ago, people queuing for hours to get in the shop.

Sum up

To sum up GJ mostly builds a brand, craft its messaging in the traditional way by using vertical mass media channels such as print, billboard, TV. Social media channels GJ expose their achievements from traditional media on SM. On Social Media the content of the posts mostly are related to their products: linking to product page, publishing marketing content, promoting their product.

They do not engage with their audience from a values perspective and generally fail to make a lasting impression on their audience. GJ are missing the opportunity to use social media's strengths in direct communication with fans consumers and other stakeholders to create a stronger brand image, communicate their values and engage their audience.

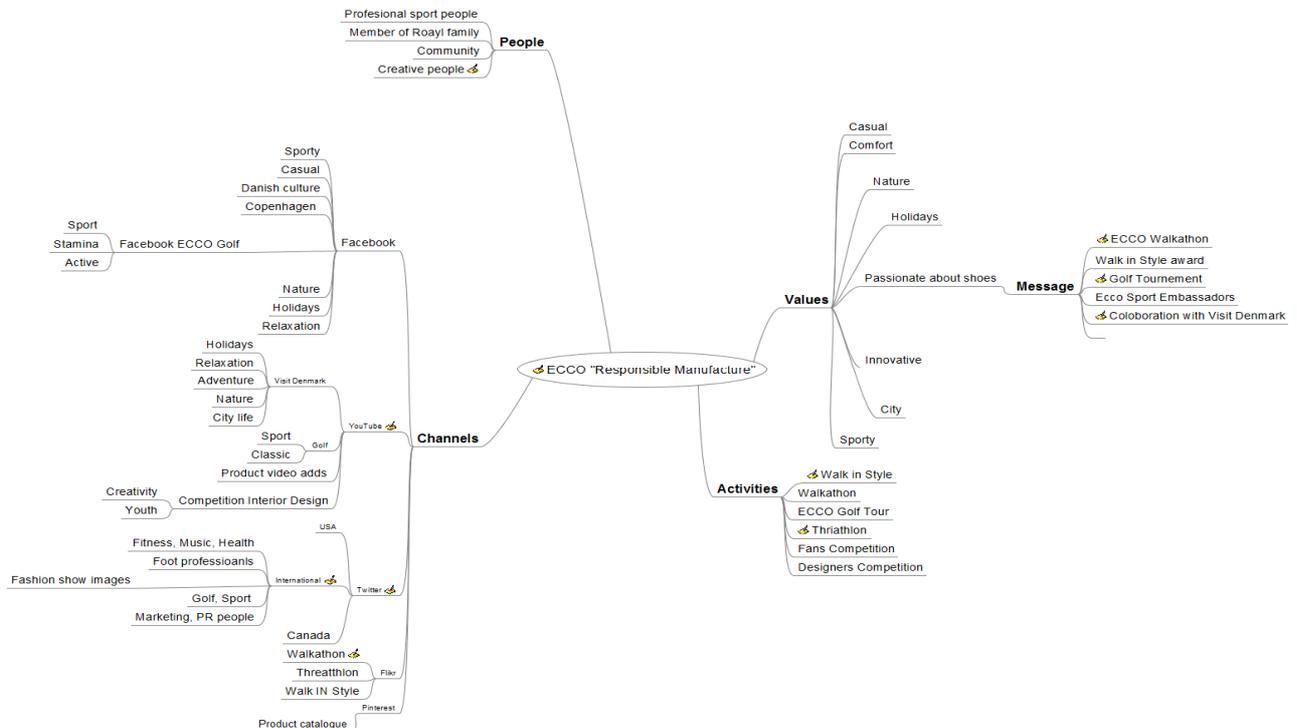
Relationships with: GJ communicates its values via: Exclusive Life style/Fashion magazines, having a good relationship with members of the Danish Royal Family, inviting famous Danish artists and singers to participate to various GJ campaigns and in return GJ acknowledging achievements of those artists. As well GJ participates at Fashion shows and events as a company as well, as promoting individual designers from their company.

Values listed from GJ: Heritage, Craftsmanship, Superior Quality, Integrity, Innovative, Luxury, Unique Design and Authentic.

Values seen in their message: Luxury, Aesthetic, Exclusive and Stylish, Unique Design

On SM channels, GJ values related to the product such as Luxury, Design, Exclusive, and Stylish was seen via post content. However, deeper values as Heritage, Craftsmanship, Integrity, Innovation, as well as GJ mentioned on Facebook that their mission to surprise and inspire was not communicated to their fans, admires and customers. Looking through the Georg Jensen campaigns on social media this comes as impression that the company is still in the experimentation phase and they still experiments, tries and simply has to develop better communication to manage their social media presence.

Appendix V: ECCO Shoes



Ecco shoes is Danish company was founded by innovative shoemaker Karl Toosbuy in yearly 1960s. ECCO, a world leading brand of shoes combining style and comfort, has built its success on

uncompromising quality, innovative technology and the design philosophy, “the shoe must follow the foot”. ECCO is the only major shoe manufacturer to own and manage every step of the shoemaking process, and its employees are the life force behind its products, designing, developing, producing, and taking responsibility for every detail.

ECCO products can be found in 4,000 branded sales locations in over 90 countries, a growth fuelled by ECCO’s consistent aim of making the best shoes in the world.

Ecco shoes from the beginning until today strives to make comfortable shoes and to be on **constant development by doing things better, faster and differently**. This point of view was evolved into the Ecco culture, an uncompromising determination and commitment to achieve goals and objectives.

Values

Ecco believes that their strength lays in **diversity**. Welcoming and encouraging diversity provides a deeper **understanding of the countries and cultures** in which they operate. The company developed strong **corporate responsibility** commitments through the number of stakeholders including how Ecco behaves towards their employees, communities, and the environment and business partners.

Ecco shoes values stands for **responsible, environment conscious** footwear manufacture, whose shoes are known for comfort, casual, craftsmanship and made of high quality materials and leathers. Ecco home page contains an amount of information about their company, their working standards and norms, about Ecco corporate responsibility and activities such as Walkathon, Walk in Awards, and sport ambassadors.

Sport Ambassadors

Golf Tournament

Ecco Company sponsors the Ecco Tour, which is a Professional Danish Satellite Golf tour.

Ladies Golf Tour

Sponsoring Athletes

Ecco has built a strong reputation as sport footwear maker in Denmark when sponsoring golf players, athletes and inviting them to collaborate with Ecco in creating a perfect fit of shoe. Athletes participate into the development of a running shoe tailored personally for them. Ecco produces an image about their product as innovative, durable and professional within a sport. The company associating with sport people sends a message to audience that they are sport wear manufacture and if the shoe fit for Olympians is definitely are suitable for non professionals.

Sport is so important value for Ecco to be recognized as Sport Wear Company that placed Golf news and adherents from athletes at the same column as the company’s corporate and product news.

Charity programs

Walkathon- Walk for money

This event occurs once a year in different cities in Denmark, Poland and other countries. Ecco invites all community to participate in a charity program in taking a social responsibility. For the each km a person walks, Ecco donates money to several chosen projects for various good causes. Ecco works towards strengthening their corporate responsibility values, not only within the company’s wall, but showing their responsibility to surrounding and working in the areas, where Ecco can make a difference, striving to make a *better place* for others. That is why Ecco activating their own employees to participate in Walkathon in organising the event and walking together with communities/ consumers.

This event, together with another Walk in Style event, is well received by Royal family, who compliments the initiative created by Ecco and attending as guests, highlighting the value of ECCO’s contribution to society and culture.

Excellency Alexandra Christina, Countless of Frederiksborg:

“Participating in Walkathon is great, you can supports so many good causes in one go: the fact that you can support so many charities at once with the money that’s donated with km you walk, the fact that you can be together with your family, the fact that you can teach your children about charity at the very young age and the fact that you can do on Sunday together with the family to see the city from different point of view.”⁸

Walk in Style

Ecco created a prize of certain amount of money to award remarkable women, who inspires by her example to help other women lead more comfortable lives. The winner donates the prize to charity of her choice. Walk in Style is another event where Ecco advance their corporate responsibility values.

This event occurs together with Copenhagen Fashion Week opening, where a lot of publicity from media occurs and the attention of fashion loving people is gathered.

Participating in Fashion show Ecco sends the message that they are not only sport and casual wear manufacture, but also Ecco shows to audience that they are a part of the fashion industry and interested in new trends. Honouring people, who give a heart to the charity causes, the company makes a positive impact on the communities they are a part of and show to audience, who are interested in new trends and fashion that Ecco take their corporate social responsibility pledges seriously and are deeply engaged with it.

Values: Good cause, corporate responsibility, “cool” and sporty

Channels: Facebook, YouTube, Flickr

Facebook

Ecco Shoes has several official Facebook pages in different countries operated by locals.

Taking a look at Ecco Shoes Facebook page following themes could be identified: Product display, Themes related to Danish culture, Ecco Sport Ambassadors, Topics taken from other Ecco official blogs, Fan posts and Other.

Ecco on Facebook mostly focuses on the product by displaying product, or campaign posters. Some interesting posts are related to Denmark, like music video, promotion of national philharmonic orchestra playing in Copenhagen metro, or the competition created in collaboration with Visit Denmark.

Ecco main Facebook page shares information from other official ECCO Facebook pages US, Slovakia, Poland. These pages have their own attitude and ideas what to post to local fans. From US Ecco takes an image as shoes are trendy, fashionable and cosmopolitan brand. From Poland and Slovakia Facebook page, topics are taken related to sport wear brand image. Otherwise content is not deep and Ecco do not use the full potential on their Facebook page.

Listing through the Ecco pictures, found the album Scandinavian Outdoor Academy where Ecco was host for the adventures trip hiking in Norway. Sponsoring this organization, which stands for adventure, freedom in the nature and exploration, Ecco supports their brand values as well relates their product line “Explore” with these people.

Values: good cause, sport, adventure, product campaign, Scandinavian seasons, outdoors wear.

Twitter

On this channel Ecco shoes introduces with their slogan: *“It all starts with the FOOT!”*

The content of messages is identical to Facebook.

⁸ Interview from Youtube

Following: This could be divided into categories: sport –golf, fitness, music, shoe retailers, Marketing, PR, SM people, foot specialists’ paediatricians, chiropracist and the smallest group is people interested in fashion.

On a Twitter Ecco posted under the “Recent Images” section, pictures from fashion shows and their new collection of bags. Under “Favourite” fans posted various phrases about or related to shoe “heels”. Shoes with heels are associates with elegancy, evening wear.

On Twitter Ecco on one hand focuses on their values through their twit content and following people, Ecco creates the impression that they are comfortable, sport footwear retailer. On the other hand Ecco gives the impression that they operate within fashion industry, this impression is created from images and favourite section.

Values: Fashionable, trendy footwear vs. fitness, sport foot wear and Golf

YouTube

From Ecco home page there is a link to YouTube page Ecco Sko and ECCO Marketing. Content, subscribers and video number wise both pages are similar. There are three main topics of video: Product commercials, Visit Denmark movies and Sports and Charity Events. Other topics include Bloggers content and competitions.

Product is advertised in the nature or the city within the frames of casual and relaxed concepts. Introduction about product, how is made, what technology is used and so on.

Visit Denmark: Short movies promoting Denmark as holiday destination.

Sport: In the posted movies Ecco claims, that sport for them means FREEDOM. There are quite a number of videos from Denmark’s Ultra runners sharing their experience in what they do, though it more looks like discipline, love for sport rather than freedom.

Charities: One interesting video regarding the event-Walk in Style. This video tells a story about the award statute- shoe made from glass by Danish artist.

Other: There are few videos Chief Designer and from Ecco inviting students of interior design to participate into competition “360 Degree Challenge”, 2010 in order to win an opportunity to define Ecco future in terms of store design. In their message they do talk more about importance of retailers and Ecco being commercial brand, however, there is no message about brand personality itself.

There is a web page dedicated to this competition, which ended January 2011. With this competition Ecco initiated a new relationship with young creative community in Denmark.

However, there are no updates about the progress and the winner of 360 degree challenge. The impression got that it was an attempt from Ecco side to attract new group of people-young and creative, which could extend/influence Ecco brands personality.

There are two videos with the name “bloggers”. Video shows girls preparing to catwalk and nothing else is explained. It might have been an attempt to create a relationship with bloggers and the company.

Values: running sport, relaxed, nature, holidays, Denmark, good cause and a lot of product features

Flickr

There are three albums at Flickr from Ecco: **Walkathon:** This illustrates people enjoying activity by walking together as large community; especially images are focused on children participating in the event. **Triathlon:** tough people, stamina, being in nature. **Walk in Style:** pictures from Copenhagen Fashion Week with stylish fashion show and the Walk in Style award ceremony, where the Crown Princess of Denmark presented the award. There are also pictures about the process of creating the

glass statue award. **Various:** One of the three set of pictures are from an adventurous trip done by Team Sherpa. This team consist of free spirit people doing boot camping, mountain climbing and hiking and later on sharing their experience, tips in their own blog. Looking from the marketing point of view this group has a potential to be Ecco “persona” with whom Ecco could associate and create a deeper and more meaningful content around the brand and to capture Ecco admires interest on Social Media.

This team is sponsored by Ecco and they have own blog. It’s again the concept related to Ecco “Explore” footwear category. However, this activity is quite old, from 2008.

Values: sport, joy, stamina, extreme adventure, freedom, fashion, innovative, good cause, community.

Pinterest

This social media channel is used to display product catalogue.

To sum up

Ecco has many activities, and they communicate this diversity in their online media presence. Corporate values are strongly emphasized in their communications, and they use this communication channels to relate their values to their activities.

Specially relevant examples are their sponsorship of Walkathon, in which Ecco employees are encouraged to participate, as well as members of the public. This initiative enables Ecco to contribute to society on many levels. On one level they are bringing people with similar values and interests together in a physical event. On another level they are empowering people to contribute towards good causes. On a third level Ecco demonstrates their corporate values of sportiness and commitment to social responsible behaviour.

Three main topics of focus from a marketing point of view are the Sport message, the Fashion message, and the Explorer message.

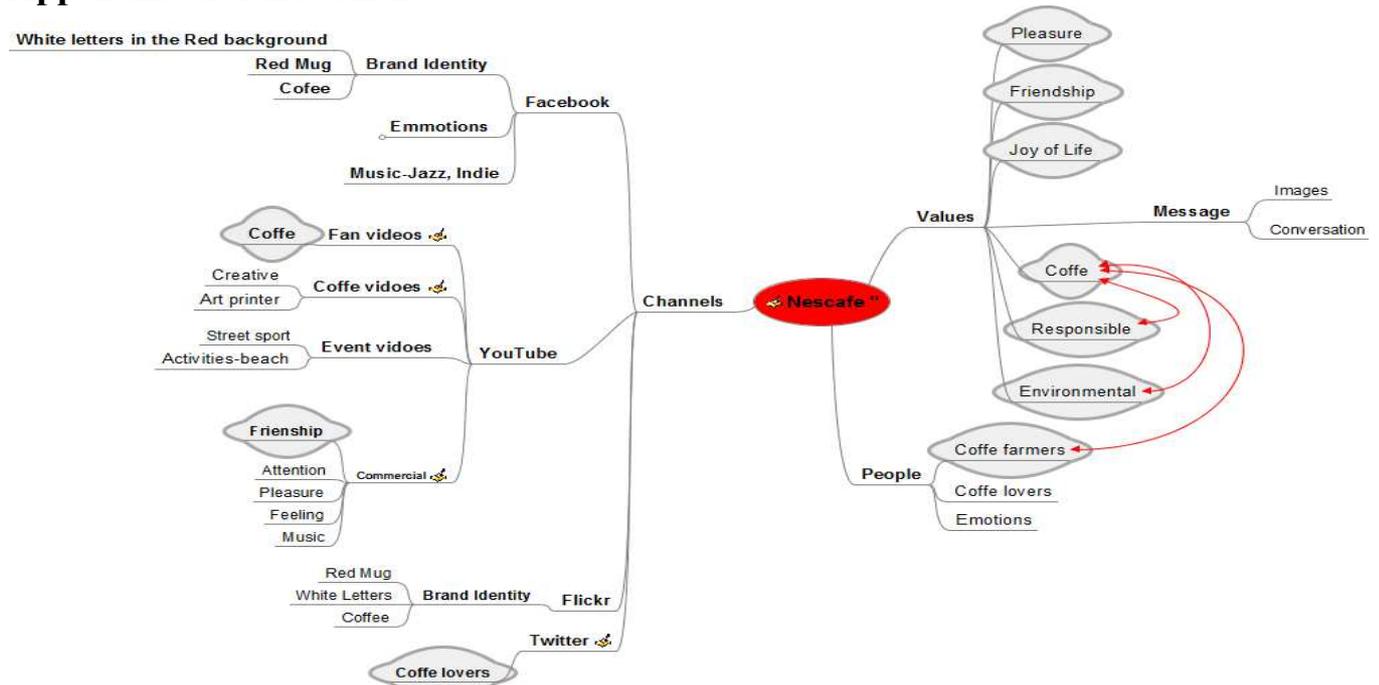
The first, Sport, focuses on communicating Eccos commitment to making quality sportswear, this is done by associating with Athletes in many sports disciplines such as running triathlon and golf. This is a focused and well delivered message that is consistent across channels and individual communications on the various media.

The second message is Fashion. Here Ecco associates with the Copenhagen Fashion Week, influential bloggers from the fashion industry, and promoting competitions in relation to their corporate style. This message is diluted in their content. There seems to be a lack of focus and a fragmented message. There should be a clearer message.

The third message is Explorer. This message associates Ecco with more adventurous lifestyle, for example, Exploration Expeditions, Mountain Climbing, and other extreme sports. This message is communicated trough sponsorship of expeditions, individual sports people and teams. However Ecco has not placed much content relating to this message, restricting themselves to a few entries on social media and a few photos. Much more could be done to push this message out to fans trough social media. More follow through is necessary in this area, however the focus seems to be accurate.

Some suggestions for improvement to be considered are creating multiple online personas, each focussing on one message. Taking advantage of Ecco’s vertical integration, strong values and position as a global player in the sportswear market to communicate these messages both physically and electronically by integrating their shop design and experience with their online presence, and meshing these with real people and events that customers can relate to.

Appendix VI: NESCAFE



Nescafe is internationally well known name of instant coffee, owned by Nestle Company, Switzerland. Nescafe has their markets worldwide

*“Here at NESCAFÉ we believe there is **something special** in our little **everyday moments**, from that first wonderful sip of hot, milky coffee in the morning to those ten stolen minutes of me-time with a latte in the afternoon.”⁹*

The background of the front page in deep red is very catchy and recognisable. In this red background, Nescafe places a picture with women having a cup of black coffee. The selling proposition in this picture tells that coffee offers calm relaxation and pleasurable moment.

On the left side of the page there is drawing in white two people drinking coffee. The visual drawing gives impression that coffee offers a nice time with the best friend while chatting and enjoying the moment.

The third object which Nescafe point out at the front page is their values to be responsible coffee producers from the farming, production towards responsible consumption.

Facebook

Nescafe introduces itself to fans as soluble coffee brand, which **brings together coffee lovers and fans** from around the world to discuss topics **relevant to the brand**.

Mission

*“We hope Facebook page will give you a **fun way to explore** and **express your love** of coffee.*

*We’ve also hand-picked some NESCAFÉ aficionados to help look after the page for you. So, do post your thoughts and **keep us entertained**. We look forward to being part of a very rich and diverse coffee loving community.”*

Nescafe expectations from Facebook fan is expressed in their Mission statement and further more explained in details under the “House Rules”.

So Nescafe strives to create clean dialogue and relevant to the brand, productive conversation and friendliness.

Coffee is associated with the fun, nice time chatting with people while enjoying cup of coffee. Conversation is a part of “coffee” experience and for Nescafe is important to have people talking and being nice to each other. Conversations can be positive or negative and from the Nescafe statements is clear, Nescafe Facebook page is created to have friendly chats related to the brand, to show respect to each other, to avoid defamatory, bullying and harassing posts.

Through Facebook page, Nescafe visualised their brand image via brand identity aspects such as Nescafe logo written in white letter to contrast the sharp red background. The sharp red mug with Nescafe logo is the symbol of company, is significant eye catcher and this mug is exposed very often in Nescafe posts.

As Nescafe promised in their mission statement the posts are funny, superficial and entertaining related to the coffee with expressed strong Nescafe brand attribute.

Values: coffee, fun, people having good time drinking coffee, strong logo recognition.

Exposure: overall page design, images with brand identity aspects.

YouTube

Nescafe delivers the same design as in the previous Social media pages-white letters in the red background.

There are five categories of videos on YouTube Nescafe’s Worldwide Channel:

Fan videos a play list a tribute from Nescafe to their fans, who took their time to create Nescafe videos. This group of people should be the real fans, who are creative, active and engaging with Nescafe brand.

Coffee videos: creative art made of coffee.

Event videos contain trailers and footage from different events around the world. The theme in this footage is about street sport, carting beach, people, fun ideas, friendship, and concert.

Commercials are collection of 70 commercials from past at present and from all over the world. People are in the centre of attention in the coffee commercials. The ads convey emotions, feeling of relaxation and calmness, affiliation and love.

Twitter

The world's leading soluble coffee brand, Nescafe is bringing together coffee lovers from around the world!

Following: coffee lovers, coffee magazines

Flickr

Images with Nescafe mug, Nescafe coffee, packed coffee.

Values: strong visual brand identity

Orkut

Is a very popular social media similar to Facebook and Myspace where users can share links, comment, upload pictures and so on, it is especially favoured in Brazil and India¹⁰. The content on this SM is identical to that of other SM channels.

To Sump Up

Nescafe’s Social Media strategy has clear objectives regarding what they are doing, what they are planning and what they expect from fans and admirers.

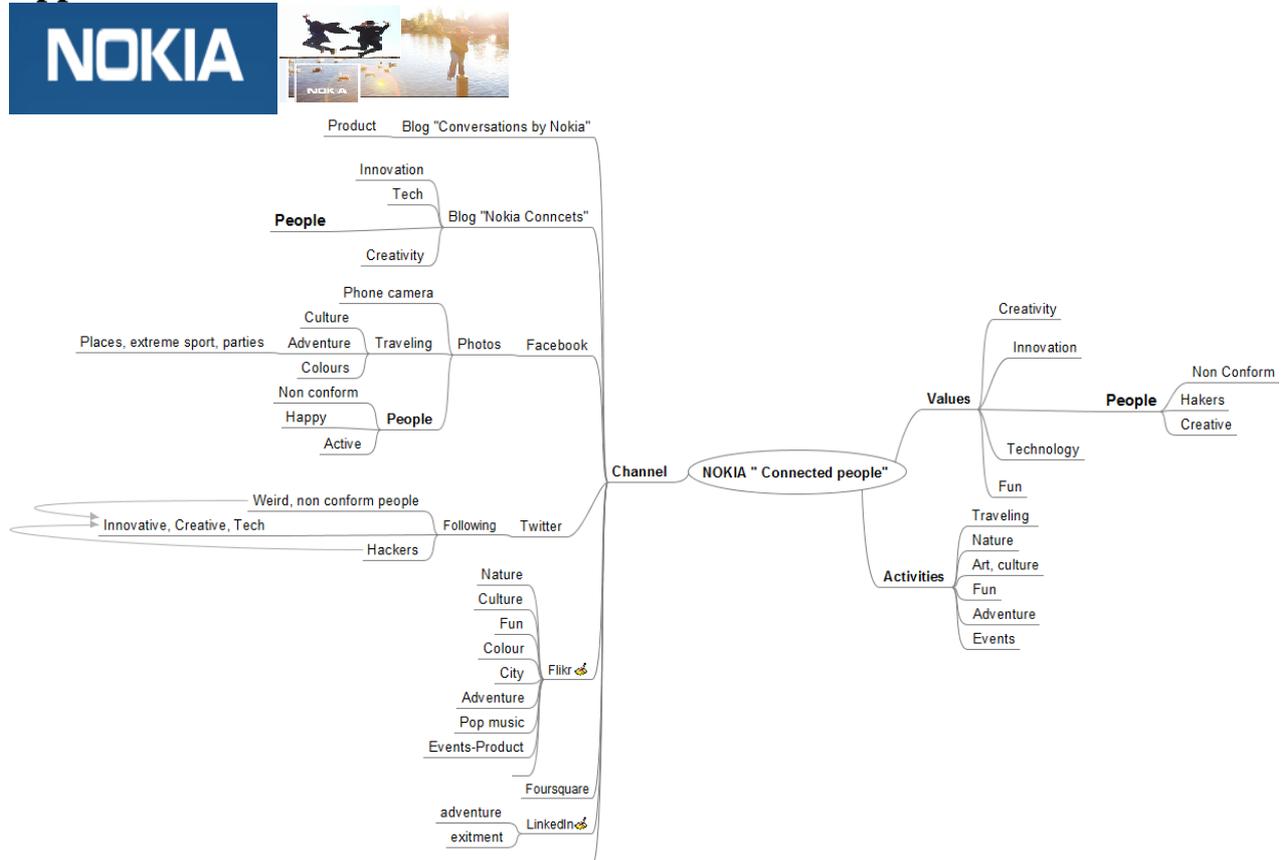
Nescafe have not created deep and profound content, on the contrary, they are straight forward with their message to increase number of fans, focusing on creating positive content about coffee, coffee,

¹⁰ <http://www.appappeal.com/the-most-popular-app-per-country/social-networking/>

coffee and nothing else. Fans can find information about the brand's history values and beliefs on the Nescafe home page.

Nescafe on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr has a standard design aligned with their home page and corporate branding and design. The brand communicates its values through the brand identity such as name, logo, sign, symbol etc. Their red background with white letters appears not only in each SM channels' design, but also in the content of the messages posted.

Appendix VII: NOKIA



Nokia is a multinational communication corporation with headquarters in Finland. They make a wide range of mobile devices with services and software that enable people to experience music, navigation, video, television, imaging, games, business mobility and more.

The largest mobile phone manufacture faces a big fiasco last year, 2011. Brand Ranking fell from 8th place to 14th.¹¹

Mission

*“Nokia is Connecting People. The goal is to build great mobile products that enable billions of people worldwide to enjoy more of what life has to offer. **Nokia is like a human, like a trusted friend**, what Nokia stand for in sense of brand personality.*

Nokia’s brand personality is trust, dependability, understanding and creative. ”¹²

Community and Networks Building Channels:

Blog “Nokia Conversation”

This is the official blog created by Nokia for Nokia’s technology savvy consumers. *This site tells compelling stories about the global **cultures**, **technology** and people sharing mobile **innovation**.* The blog invites people to have conversation, comment on the stories, and share it with other people

¹¹ <http://www.interbrand.com/en/best-global-brands/best-global-brands-2008/best-global-brands-2011.aspx>

¹² www.nokia.com

and tell to Nokia their ideas, opinions or complains. This community is Nokia fans, who have interest in their products to read, to know more and to take time to participate into conversations.

From the company point of view this blog enables Nokia to be open and honest to this community in order to gain their trusts and willingness to share comments or ideas regarding relevant topics.

Values: technology and innovation

Focus on: open, human, conversation with fans and technology

Shared on: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn

Blog “Nokia Connects”

This blog created by Nokia and it’s friends. Invites the global community to join and to read the latest news and reviews and very best of what is happening across vertical concepts like creativity, innovation and technology. Behind the published content are standing people, who creative in artistic way, which creates innovations, who have an interest in how technology works and showing it off to other people. News are very entertaining, with deep content, educational, showing about other people interests, activities, their invention, creativity and experiences make this blog very appealing.

Comparing this blog to the previously mentioned one, “Nokia Connects” is more dedicated to the broader audience and has more focus on people, activities, and innovations. While “Nokia Conversation” has more focus on delivering news and creating knowledge about technology itself.

Profound content of the blog, encouraging people to comment, express their opinion and engage into conversation.

The “Nokia Connect” blog can be followed on Twitter.

Shared on: Pinterest, Facebook, Tweet, G+

Facebook

On this page Nokia introduces itself with focus on the people, who wants to reach out for each other to be connected in order to talk, share, laugh, cry or gossip. From the introduction on it’s Facebook page, Nokia portrays itself as a human being with feelings, emotions and need to communicate and connect with other humans. *“Information is shared, greetings are exchanged, messages of love are sent – but regardless of the content, connecting with other people is one of the key things that make us what we are.”*

Nokia logo on Facebook is a picture showing a happy moment of the young person, who finds adventure anywhere and anyhow in every day life.

Nokia uses pictures high resolution, colourful pictures taken with their phones to communicate their values. Photos can be divided into several categories:

- ❖ Presenting the high quality of the **phone camera**. The quality of the camera is showed via high resolution pictures from different places in the world, showing cultures, showing extreme sport and adventures.
- ❖ **Travelling** around the world and recording cultures, adventures and colourful life.
- ❖ Showing **people** recorded in certain moments, who are nonconforming, adventurous, love extreme sport, dedicated and happy.

On Facebook Nokia’s persona is drawn, who experience **adventure** possible everywhere, living a **happy and excited life, nonconforming** with their attitude and style. The message is created mostly by pictures showing places, activities and moments. According to Nokia *an adventure shakes up the conventional so that people can lead more interesting, exciting and richer lives.*

Nokia do not send very often direct promotion on Facebook about their product. The conversation about phone is very well balanced and incorporated in the context of their communications.

LinkedIn

In this professional people networking site, Nokia is consistent in their social media message as being adventurous and happy.

YouTube

Nokia has a long playlist of 31 videos on YouTube. The videos are about:

Adventure around the world section meets people who tell about their everyday adventure in the particular city they live in.

Nokia Amazing Everyday looks at everyday situations, amazing things that happen around the world everyday.

Social Media Week focuses on social media and Nokia's engagement with the medium and the people that inhabit it.

Apps and services contain material about Nokia's applications and services and how they are being used in everyday situations.

Product Presentation several sections are dedicated to different products, such as Lumia 900, 800, 700 and so on.

Flickr

Nokia fills its album with high resolution pictures showing activities done by people and recorded to show what they see and what they do. The main subjects could be identified after going through pictures: **Nature, culture, fun, colours, city life, adventures, music and events** related to product launch.

Blogs

Fashion blogs with nonconforming people, fashion, style and attitude.

Twitter

On twitter Nokia uses logo different from their home page or Facebook. On Twitter their logo is identical to Nokia Lumia promotional campaign image- colourful squares in the black background.

Following: Nokia mostly follows weird; nonconforming people, hackers, bloggers who have interest in information technology, in **innovation, creativity and technology**. Nokia uses Twitter for fostering ideas and share information among their admirers.

G+Foursquare

To Sum Up

- ❖ Nokia has profound content
- ❖ Their two blogs focus on technology interesting people, attracting broader audience, who has interest in entertaining information, high tech, culture, sports, music, art, having fun and enjoying life.
- ❖ Nokia core centre of the brand is people. The message about Nokia's values is created via pictures and high quality content focussing on core values of people, fun and high tech.
- ❖ Nokia created their online persona in alignment with their brand image, as being adventurous, high tech, exciting, innovative, creative and fun.

Values: Innovation, Fun/Excitement, Energy, Adventure, Energy, Non conform people, Relaxed, Street style.

Nokia is consistent sending the message to the world on social media about providing high technology product without losing a human side of being funny, innovative and creative. Fun,

adventures, excited values are communicated via people's everyday use of technology to make life more interesting, exciting and funny.

They show off the high quality of phone and cameras. This is done via people and images. On all SM channels the message is sent that Nokia brand is creative, innovative, high technology and most important fun. Fun value is communicated via people, who are funny, loves adventures, active and creative. This is done by showing high quality, colourful images. Images are about a moment in people life, travelling, exploring places, doing extreme sports, and all of this is recorded by phone. The images about innovation, technology manifest values of being innovative, high tech company.

Appendix VIII-Glossary

Customer empowerment- refers to the growing power that customers have due to the existence of sharing tools and content creation (Safa & Mahdi 2012).

New Consumer or Generation Y

Prahalad and Ramaswamy describe communities consisting of connected, informed, empowered and active customers who challenged business oriented marketing.

It is a new segment group who seeks information from Internet and want to have answers instantly. This new consumer flow information automatically through all social media channels to their friends and trust friends' recommendations. And all this creates mega trend-a new customer.

Informed. Internet made information more accessible as before and customers receive more information about products as before.

Connected. Mobile phones, broad wireless internet coverage enabled people to connect and communicate with each other without place and time restriction.

Empowered. The combination of easier access to information as well as possibility to communicate and share knowledge with each other, and so influence other people, all this gave to consumer much stronger position to influence the conversation and meaning about brand and business.

Active. To add more, consumer became more and more active in the relation with brand and companies (Prahalad&Ramaswamy, 2004

Social Network-Social networking occurs when people create a personal profile and interact to become part of community of friends and like-minded people and to share information (D.Meerman Scoot).

L.Safko "A social network, trusted network, virtual community, e-community, or online community is a group of people who interact through newsletters blogs, comments, telephone, email and instant messages, and who use text, audio, photography and video for social, professional, and educational purpose".

EdgeRank

The EdgeRank of a Facebook page determines who and how many of your friends will see your news feeds. Pages with high EdgeRank Scores will be more likely to show up in the news feeds for friends than Pages with low EdgeRank Scores. Even though you might have many fans if your EdgeRank generally is low, then updates will be seen by few of Facebook friend send by you. Without optimisation a typical company will have a page rank, which corresponds to a ratio of 1 in 10 friends seeing your posts, optimised pages can achieve rates of 40% visibility.