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BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY COMMUNICATION

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*“Il futuro appartiene a coloro che credono
nella bellezza dei propri sogni”*
Eleanor Roosevelt

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION

*“Social tools are not just about giving people a voice,
but giving them a way to collaborate, contribute and connect”*

John Stepper

ABSTRACT

The dissertation seeks to address research questions regarding the connection between two research streams, Social Media Marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Communication.

The literature about Social Media Marketing is young and ongoing, even if, as we will see, its roots trace back in Traditional and Relationship Marketing. On the other hand, the literature about the Corporate Social Responsibility Communication is still scant if compared to the overall CSR literature. To the best of our knowledge, there are still a lot of research gaps which deserve further investigation.

In this dissertation, after having defined Social Media Marketing and understood its roots, we will investigate the figure who is using Social Media in order to communicate to stakeholders, the so called Social Media Manager. Then we will try to bridge the gap between Social Media Marketing and CSR Communication by analyzing, from a sensemaking perspective, the benefits and the challenges Social Media Managers face in making sense of CSR Communication. We will provide evidence through a case study and through the analysis of the communication strategies of the top 100 Europe FT firms on Twitter, one of the most used Social Media by firms.

The five studies in this dissertation span different research contexts, methodologies, and theoretical angles. Yet, they collectively contribute to a better understanding in order to bridge the gap between two research streams which, from a first sight, seem to be different but present some common points which deserve further explanation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Communication has grown significantly along the years even if, in comparison to the vast literature about CSR, it is still underdeveloped (Ihlen & May, 2011). Morsing defines CSR Communication as “a communication that is designed and distributed by the company itself about its CSR efforts” (2006, 171). CSR Communication represents an important but, at the same time, challenging

topic because, as highlighted by the literature, it may breed skepticism rather than achieving goodwill about organization (Ihlen et al. 2011, Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010). On the other hand, communication can provide also the potential to help constitute stakeholder participation (Du et al. 2010, Korschun & Du 2013). As a consequence, firms should have the capacity to communicate their CSR efforts by establishing congruence between social expectation and CSR agenda (Colleoni, 2013).

“The challenge is for companies to be perceived as socially responsible across stakeholders. The difficult is in how to make it known, and acknowledged by stakeholders, that the company is dedicated to a path of social responsibility and further, to what extent and how the company deliberately should communicate it” (Morsing, Schultz, & Nielsen, 2008, p. 98). In this context, Social Media represent for firms an important opportunity to improve relationships with internal and external stakeholders and to strengthen their engagement (Cherubini and Pattuglia 2012, Finotto & Micelli 2010, Freeman 1984, Korschun & Du, 2013), an aspect which represents a fundamental milestone in CSR literature. Social Media can change the way organizations communicate and engage in relationships, facilitating the bidirectional and symmetrical communication among organizations and stakeholders (Capriotti, 2011, Lee et al. 2013). For this reason it is even more important for firms to have a clear CSR Communication strategy and to develop a strategic plan in order to communicate CSR efforts and to create two-way dialogue with stakeholders by fostering engagement and awareness about CSR efforts carried out by the firm. For organizations, “it is no longer sufficient to merely communicate CSR activities, they have to incorporate stakeholders into the CSR process and engage in dialogue” (Bartlett and Devin, 2011, 54).

Nevertheless, relatively little attention has been paid in the literature to the use of Social Media as an effective marketing tool to communicate CSR efforts and to create value for firms. Two recent calls on the topic have been developed: Capriotti (2011) said that it would be interesting to explore how Internet and Social Media can contribute to establishing, maintaining and expanding the advantages of partnerships between the organizations and their stakeholders in CSR management. Also Korschun and Du (2013) confirm that it is important to explore the characteristics that may impact the ability of virtual CSR dialogs to generate value.

Following these calls, the dissertation seeks to fill that void, if only partially, in order to investigate the role of the Social Media Manager and how he/she make and give sense to stakeholder pressures by developing the CSR Communication strategy on Social Media.

2. CONTRIBUTIONS

The dissertation is organized as a collection of 5 research papers which are strongly interconnected in that they complement each other by investigating from different angles the phenomenon of interest - i.e. the analysis of CSR Communication on Social Media.

The papers use different methodologies and data (see Table 1).

TABLE 1 – Type of Paper

Theoretical papers	Empirical Papers
Relationship Marketing and Social Media Marketing: revolution or evolution? A first step analysis.	The managerial work of the Social Media Manager: an empirical investigation in italian companies, communication agencies and freelances.
Questioning the role of the Social Media Manager on the border line between communicator and open-strategy actor: the case of CSR.	Exploring CSR Communication and Social Media Management in illycaffè: an analysis of organizational and managerial issues.
	Changing Communication strategies on Twitter: an empirical investigation on the Twitter accounts of the top 100 Europe FT firms.

In total, one paper has been published in Sinergie Journal (n. 93/2014), one paper has been submitted to Journal of Business Ethics and has been improved after some useful reviewers' comments, three papers are going to be submitted to international Journals. Two out of the five papers have been presented (have been accepted for presentation) at the Sinergie Conference and at the X International Conference on Corporate and Marketing Communications (see Table 2).

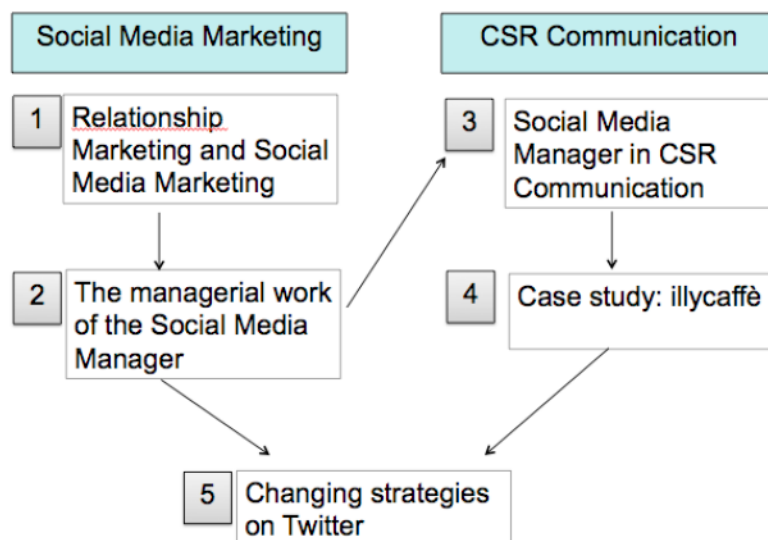
TABLE 2 - Collection of papers

	Paper	Presented	Submitted/Published
1	Moretti A., Tuan A. Relationship Marketing and Social Media Marketing: revolution or evolution? A first step analysis.	Sinergie Conference October 24, 2013	Published in Sinergie Journal n. 93/2014 as selected paper
2	Tuan A., Moretti A. The managerial work of the Social Media Manager: an empirical investigation in italian companies, communication agencies and freelances	-	To be submitted to European Journal of Marketing

3	Tuan A. Questioning the role of the Social Media Manager on the border line between communicator and innovator: the case of CSR	First draft - International Conference on Corporate and Marketing Communications April 3, 2014	Submitted to Business Horizons → desk rejected After having improved the paper, we have submitted to Journal of Business Ethics 8/12/2014 Under review 27/02/2015 Answers from reviewers We have used the insightful comments from reviewers to improve the paper which is presented in this thesis.
4	Tuan A. Exploring CSR Communication and Social Media Management in illycaffè: an analysis of organizational and managerial issues	-	Submitted to EUROMED Academy of Business Conference Verona, 16-18 September 2015
5	Blaschke S., Tuan A. Changing communication strategies on Twitter: an empirical investigation on the Twitter accounts of the top 100 Europe firms		To be submitted to Marketing Letters

The relationship between the essays in the dissertation is illustrated in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 – Structure of the dissertation



The next paragraph introduces to each research paper by providing a short summary.

- *Paper n. 1: Social media marketing and relationship marketing: revolution or evolution? A first step analysis*

The aim of the paper is to analyze if the introduction of Social Media may be considered as an evolution or as a revolution of Relationship Marketing. By comparing Traditional Marketing, Relationship Marketing and Social Media Marketing we provide an identification of specific operational relationships between Social Media Marketing and Relationship Marketing.

- *Paper n. 2: The managerial work of the Social Media Manager: an empirical investigation in italian companies, communication agencies and freelances*

After having identified a research gap related to the figure of the Social Media Manager, the purpose of this paper is to gain insights about the role of the Social Media Manager in Italy both inside and outside firms. We have collected data through an online survey from 353 italian companies, 47 freelances and 32 communication agencies in order to provide an overall picture. We have found that the type of SMMr influence the results gained by the firm.

- *Paper n. 3: Questioning the role of the Social Media Manager on the borderline between communicators and open-strategy actors: the case of CSR*

The aim of this conceptual paper is to define the roles of the Social Media Manager, or who deals with Social Media on behalf of the company. We will depict how they make sense of internal and external pressures by developing the CSR Communication strategies on Social Media and, at the same time, how they give sense about firms CSR efforts to stakeholders by using Social Media. In order to answer to the research questions we have provided a classification of the roles of the Social Media Manager when they are dealing with CSR and we have provided some propositions related to the theoretical framework.

- *Paper n. 4: Exploring CSR Communication and Social Media Management in illycaffè: an analysis of organizational and managerial issues*

Related to the previous paper, the aim of this paper is to provide empirical evidence about how firms are trying to engage stakeholders in

the CSR strategy definition. We have used a case study design in order to test the theoretical framework previously suggested and to provide evidence about the specific role of the Social Media Manager in a CSR oriented firm.

- *Paper n. 5: Changing communication strategies on Twitter: an empirical investigation on the Twitter accounts of the top 100 Europe FT firms*

The aim of the paper is to understand which kind of communication strategies firms are carrying on on Twitter and how they change over time. By using a mixed method approach, both quantitative and qualitative, we provide evidence about the communication strategies used on Twitter by the first 100 Europe FT firms.

3. CONCLUSION

This dissertation is relevant from a theoretical and managerial point of view.

From a theoretical perspective we contribute to the Social Media literature and to the CSR Communication literature in different ways. First of all, by positioning Social Media Marketing in a broader perspective and in a more established literature. Then, we try to fill the gap regarding the figure of the Social Media Manager by providing an overview about the situation in Italy and then by providing a new classification which could help scholars to better classify the figure of the SMMr inside organization when they are dealing with CSR.

Finally, the last paper contributes, by using a mixed method approach, to give evidence about the changing strategies of firms used on Twitter and provide a new classification of Twitter communication strategies.

This research opens up different future research avenues which will be presented at the end of each paper. Among them there are also some lines which have been already taken into account by the author in order to develop other papers.

From a managerial perspective, the thesis contributes by suggesting to managers the growing importance of Social Media which have to be used in a strategic and not in a tactical way.

In addition, we highlight the importance of a Social CRM in order to manage the complexity related to these tools and a presence of a Social Media Manager, inside or outside the company, who can manage the online communication strategy on behalf of the firm in order to engage stakeholder and avoid reputational risks. Finally, we focus our attention on the importance related to the CSR Communication and the risks which have to be taken into account when firms are dealing with these kind of topics online.

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PART TWO

COLLECTION OF PAPERS

Social media marketing and relationship marketing: revolution or evolution? A first step analysis*

ANDREA MORETTI** ANNAMARIA TUAN****

Abstract

Purpose of the paper: By relying on the value creation perspective from a knowledge economy viewpoint, the aim of the paper is to verify if the introduction of Social Media may be considered as an evolution or as a revolution of Relationship Marketing.

Methodology: A wide range of online databases were searched by means of keywords in order to analyze both academic and professional literature. Afterwards we used the snowball method in order to identify related references.

Results: Identification and description, according to an economic-managerial perspective, of the constitutive elements of a theoretical framework which allows us to analyze the relationship between RM and Social Media Marketing

Practical implications: Definition of the operational elements concerning the distinction between RM and Social Media Marketing so that the decision maker of firms may identify the innovative elements of Social Media within marketing strategies and policies, in particular with regard to operational tools (ICT and managerial).

Limits of the research: Since this is the first phase of a larger research, the study mainly deals with the analysis of RM literature by highlighting only the main contributions in the field of Public Relations.

Originality of the paper: Identification of specific operational relationships between Social Media Marketing and RM by relying on the knowledge economy perspective of Italian strategic-managerial matrix. Identification of specific research questions which economic-managerial research has to answer in order to "solve" the relation between RM and PR in the context of Social Media.

Key words: Relationship Marketing; Social Media Marketing; CRM; Social CRM

* Pur essendo il lavoro frutto di riflessioni comuni, sono da attribuire ad Andrea Moretti i parr. 1 e 5.2 e ad Annamaria Tuan i paragrafi 3, 4 e 5.1 mentre è da attribuire ad entrambi il par. 2.

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1. Introduction

Social Media¹, defined as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; p. 61), have enhanced the potentialities of the Web by leading to a transformation in the way in which relationships with customers are managed (Cherubini and Pattuglia, 2012; Finotto and Micelli, 2010; Hanna *et al.*, 2011; Lewis and Nichols, 2012; Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011). With the rise of Social Media, power seems to have shifted from marketing managers to individuals and communities (Finotto and Micelli, 2010; Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011; Mangold and Faulds, 2009; Mortara and Sinisi, 2012; O’Reilly, 2005; Pastore, 2009; Vernuccio *et al.*, 2012).

Nevertheless, despite the increasing growth of Social Media, managers are still uncertain about how Social Media can be used in marketing strategies (Ang, 2011; Finotto and Micelli, 2010; Nadeem, 2012) and, as suggested by Macnamara and Zerfass (2012), around two-thirds of organizations do not have specific policies or guidelines in relation to Social Media.

Academic literature has not focused, until now, on the potentialities of Social Media for firms’ value creation (Rullani, 1997; Normann and Ramirez, 1993). As suggested by Kornum and Mühlbacher (2013), there is a need “to study the new role of marketing from the perspective of an interactive online world in which participants with different interests, resources and power co-create value” (p. 1461).

As a consequence, we suggest the use of the following schema (Fig.1)² in order to understand the aim of our paper. The origins of Relationship Marketing (RM) can

¹ The array of Social Media expands daily but we can mention the following list based on Woodcock *et al.*, (2011, p.64):

- Blogs;
- Social Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter,...);
- YouTube;
- Photosharing (e.g. Flickr);
- Interest sharing (e.g. Pinterest);
- Interactive applications;
- Location based networks (e.g. Foursquare);
- Aggregating channels (e.g. comparison sites);
- Discussion groups/user forums.

We have excluded “virtual communities” from the list provided by Woodcock *et al.*, 2011 because we consider them as a managerial concept (Micelli, 2010) not as a Social Media in this paper.

In our analysis we don’t consider Business Social Networks as Social Media, as suggested by Galano and Marchigiani (2013).

² The authors are aware of the fact that a wide range of interpretative perspective could be associated with this topic, among which it is worthwhile to mention the perspective of Public Relations. Several studies, indeed, have explored the use of Social Media in Public Relations (Cherubini and Pattuglia, 2012; Curtis *et al.*, 2010; Di Staso *et al.*, 2011; Invernizzi and Romenti, 2013; Macnamara, 2010; Porter *et al.*, 2009; Verhoeven *et al.*,

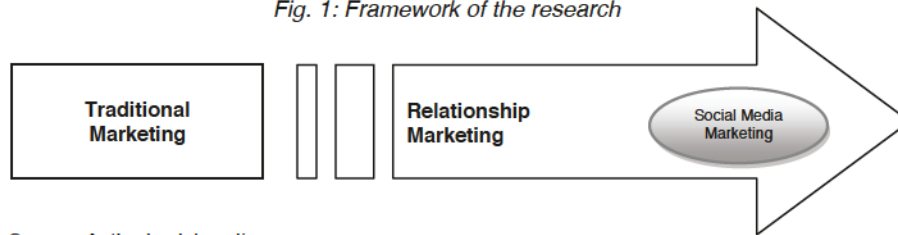
be traced back to Transactional Marketing and the difference between the two lies in the different economic perspective of value production they are based on. In the literature we can identify three main approaches to Relationship Marketing: the Nordic School, the IMP Group and the Anglo Australian approach. The Nordic School is a recognized approach to services marketing research and it focuses on the interaction between consumers and companies (B2C) (e.g. Berry and Parasuraman, 1993; Grönroos, 1990, 1994). IMP Perspective was initially centred on the understanding of the two-way interaction at the organizational level between companies (eg. Ford, 1980; Håkansson, 1982), while later work advanced towards a more integrated and wide-reaching network approach (eg. Håkansson and Shenota 1995). The Anglo Australian approach is based on the work of Christopher *et al.*, (1991, 2002) and emphasizes the integration of quality management, services marketing concepts and customer relationships economics. In this paper, in order to investigate how SMM is related to RM, we will adopt the Nordic School of thought in particular, first of all because Social Media are tools which are mostly used in B2C rather than in B2B; in addition this school has made important contributions regarding customer loyalty and customer satisfaction which are also important concepts in the Social Media literature. Nevertheless, thanks to the literature review, in order to compare SMM and RM we will also consider some concepts taken from the other approaches.

Our contribution is motivated by the idea according to which we consider Social Media Marketing (SMM) as part of Relationship Marketing and, specifically speaking, as an evolutionary factor of Relationship Marketing. As a matter of fact, researchers argue that RM represents a “paradigm shift in marketing” from its previous focus on “transactions,” in which firms use the “4P model” to manage marketing-mix variables (Grönroos, 1994; Henning-Thurau and Hansen, 2012; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2000). The focus of RM is to identify and retain long-term customers because it is more profitable to keep and satisfy existing customers than to constantly renew a strong customer base (Reinartz and Kumar, 2003). It is often argued that the rapid progress of information and communication technology has accelerated the popularity and acceptance of relationship marketing: nevertheless, the integration of these technologies into the relational concept is only rarely discussed in the relationship marketing literature (Henning-Thurau and Hansen, 2000), as for what concerns the Social Media landscape.

In this context, how can we consider Social Media Marketing? Is it a subset of Relationship Marketing or may it be considered just another tool of Public Relation practitioners which may be useful to strengthen relationships with stakeholders?

2012, Wright and Hinson, 2009). The main objective of PR is to create a positive image of the company for the public and enhance reputation via different channels (Siano, 2012). In this context Social Media have gradually changed the practice of public relations (DiStaso *et al.*, 2011; Macnamara, 2010; Wright and Hinson, 2009) and they “offer numerous opportunities for public relation practitioners to interact with a wide range of stakeholders” (Di Staso *et al.*, 2011, p. 325).

Fig. 1: Framework of the research



Source: Author's elaboration

In the following paragraphs, on the basis of the economic-managerial literature of value creation in networks (Rullani, 1997) or value constellation (Normann and Ramirez, 1993), after taking a look at the definitions of Relationship Marketing and Social Media Marketing and by relying on the literature review, we attempt to answer to the following research questions:

RQ1: Is Social Media Marketing a subset of tools within the relational perspective of marketing?

RQ2: Can Social Media Marketing be identified as an organizational process which enables the enhancement of value co-creation between firms and customers and in general with overall stakeholders?

2. Methodology

In order to be able to define the streams and themes related to Relationship Marketing and Social Media Marketing research, a conventional keyword-based search strategy on the online database Scopus Science Direct was adopted. The first literature search was based on the following descriptors: Social Media Marketing, Relationship Marketing, Social Customer Relationship Marketing, Customer Relationship Marketing.

The process identified 10.267 articles³ but most of them were excluded because the focus was beyond the scope of our study. We have excluded papers related to Public Relations because the relationships between Social Media Marketing and Public Relations will be analyzed in a second step of the research. We have also excluded papers related to Tourism Management and Healthcare. The main problem related to the search for the papers was the following: by searching for the term "social media" we obtained many results related only to the topic "social" which is not relevant for the aim of our study. As a consequence, by analyzing titles and abstracts, the process identified 343 articles of relevance, which were further analyzed.

³ On Scopus we have limited our research to the subject area "Business and Management"

We have taken into consideration mostly marketing and management journals strictly correlated with the aim of the paper (*Business Horizons; European Journal of Marketing; Journal of Marketing; Journal of Marketing Management; Journal of Interactive Marketing; Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness; Long Range Planning; Management Decision; Mercati & Competitività; Micro & Macro Marketing; Sinergie*). It is interesting to see that a scant literature in top journals is dedicated to these arguments.

After this first selection we have used the snowball method in order to identify related bibliographic references. We have analyzed a total of 500 papers.

The following table summarizes the selection process of the articles:

Tab. 1: Selection process of the articles

Keyword	n° of results	Final n° of results
Social Media Marketing	672	150
Relationship Marketing	6712	100
Social CRM	291	50
CRM	2592	43
Total	10.267	343
Snowball method		
Total		500

Source: Author's elaboration

3. Research context

3.1 Knowledge economy and value production

In order to answer the research questions, we will analyze two important streams. Here we will consider knowledge economy and the value production perspective, while the relationship marketing approach will be analyzed in the following paragraph.

ICT have changed the way we traditionally considered the process of value creation for firms (Micelli, 2010; Rullani, 1989). The concept of *network* provided by Rullani (1997) or that of *value constellation* (Normann and Ramirez, 1993; Normann, 2001) assume that value is created in a network of relationships of stakeholders and not only by the supplier, as stated by the logic dominating Porter's well-known value chain. Networks reduce communication costs and allow firms to activate virtuous dynamics among economic subjects which can share important knowledge that is useful for innovation purposes (Rullani, 1997). The strategic task for firms is the reconfiguration of roles and relationships among the constellation of available actors in order to mobilize the creation of value in new forms and by new players (Normann and Ramirez, 1993; Duncan and Moriarty, 1998; Payne and Holt, 2001).

The Web is considered a potential ideal space for the development of interactive relationships because it allows the strengthening of the relations between firms and

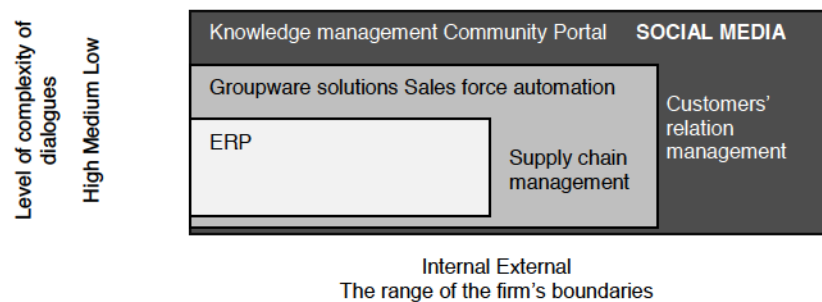
clients based on knowledge sharing, which the innovation process and firm growth relies on (Grandinetti, 1993; Micelli, 2010; Rullani, 2010). ICT enable interactive communication by facilitating the active participation of consumers, reducing the time-to-market of products, and allowing firms to reach big targets with a high level of personalization (Micelli, 2010; Pastore, 2009; Rullani, 2010). The concepts of co-production and co-creation of value are not totally new in managerial literature (e.g. Toffler, 1980) but they assume an important role in the literature on *consumer virtual communities*, which has produced a large body of evidence highlighting its increasing importance in marketing and innovation (e.g. Micelli, 2010; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).

Given that the firm is a cognitive system that can transform information and knowledge into economic value (Rullani, 1997; 2004a; 2004b), in order to understand the impact of technologies on firms, it is necessary to check how these technologies transform and impact the way in which firms are using and sharing information and knowledge.

Micelli (2010) provides a useful map to analyze the impact of new technologies in the evolution of organizational forms. The model is based on two variables:

- the range of the firm's boundaries: thanks to ICT and Web 2.0 actors that are located outside the firm are involved in the process of value creation;
- the level of complexity of dialogues.

Fig. 2: Map of firms dialogues



Source: adapted from Micelli (2010), p. 83

New technologies involve actors which were traditionally excluded from the process of innovation management in order to share knowledge and information about products and process improvement. Thanks to virtual communities users can have access to information and relationships at low cost and firms can find important information about goods, services and market knowledge within these spaces (Micelli, 2010).

Given that Social Media have empowered users to connect, share and collaborate by creating spheres of influence that have fundamentally altered the way in which marketers engage in influencing activities (Hanna *et al.*, 2011; Finotto and Micelli,

2010; Singh, 2005), we can place Social Media at the top right of the image. Social Media are characterized by a low level of complexity of dialogues and a high range of firm boundaries. Users are, indeed, no longer passive participants but they play an active role in the media process since they have become an important and productive source of content on the Web (Cherubini and Pattuglia, 2012; Cosenza, 2012; Pastore, 2009; Solima, 2010). By focusing on customers, Social Media provide them with more effective and affordable communication tools that enable them to participate in value adding and marketing mix decisions by connecting and interacting not only with sellers but also with other stakeholders (Pastore, 2009; Sashi, 2012). The interactive nature of Social Media is likely to lead to the blurring of the role integrity of sellers and customers by expanding the role of customers and including them in the creation of value, thus leading them to become co-creators and co-producers (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012; Micelli, 2010; Pastore, 2009; Toffler, 1980; Sashi, 2012; Vargo and Lush, 2004). As Rullani (2004a, 2004b, 2001) emphasizes, we are in a postindustrial era that can be called new/net/knowledge economy. The Web is not only the space where technologies are developing (new economy) or where users can share information and experiences (net economy) but thanks to the Web, users can develop knowledge sharing (knowledge economy). Given that knowledge has null reproduction costs, it is clearly an increasing resource (Rullani, 2001).

With the rise in Social Media, power has been shifted even further from marketing managers towards individuals and communities (O'Reilly, 2005; Mangold and Faulds, 2009; Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011; Pastore, 2009; Finotto and Micelli, 2010; Venuccio *et al.*, 2012; Mortara and Sinisi, 2012) because firms now also take into account actors that had not been involved before for the production of value. Firms are currently using Social Media to engage in important conversations and to enhance their understanding of markets by listening to the opinions and needs of customers and overall stakeholders (Cova and Dall'i, 2009; Berthon *et al.*, 2007; Mortara and Sinisi, 2012; DiStaso *et al.*, 2011). The traditional communication paradigm, which relied on the classic promotional mix - advertising, personal selling, public relations and publicity, direct marketing and sales promotion - should be integrated with all forms of Social Media since they are potential tools which need to be taken into consideration when designing and implementing integrated marketing communication strategies (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Mangold and Faulds, (2009), as a matter of fact, referred to Social Media as "*the new hybrid element of the promotion mix*" (p. 357) because they combine the characteristics of traditional integrated marketing communications tools with highly magnified forms of word-of-mouth, whereby marketing managers cannot control the content and frequency of such information.

Social Media allow firms to engage in timely and direct-end-consumer contact at relatively low costs and higher levels of efficiency than those achieved through more traditional communication tools because consumers are disseminating information on goods and services (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

3.2 Relationship Marketing: CRM and Social CRM

Since the aim of the first research question (RQ1) is to understand the connections between Social Media Marketing and the relational perspective of marketing, in this paragraph we highlight the development of Relationship Marketing with particular focus on CRM and Social CRM.

Since the 1990s we have assisted to a major shift in marketing theory and practice, with a much greater emphasis on a more relational-based approach rather than on a transaction-based selling platform (Nguyen and Mutum, 2012; Grönroos, 1994; Hibbard *et al.*, 2001; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). By summarizing the wide variety of Relationship Marketing definitions that can be found in the literature (Aijo, 1996; Grönroos, 1989, 1994; Gummesson, 1994, 1996; Morgan and Hunt, 1994) it may be stated that “*Relationship Marketing is to identify and establish, maintain and enhance, and when necessary, also terminate relationships with customers and other stakeholders, at a profit, so that the objectives of all parties are met, and this is done by a mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises*” (Grönroos, 1990).

Even if the definitions of the term Relationship Marketing (RM) are numerous, they all contain the same or similar elements. These elements are given by the connection between the company and the customer (one-to-one marketing), who is considered the most important resource of the company, and the long-term relationship of a company with its customer (Gummesson, 2002). Indeed, the focus of RM is to identify and retain long-term customers because it is more profitable to keep and satisfy existing customers than to constantly renew a strong customer base (Reinartz and Kumar, 2003).

Many scholars have highlighted the reasons for the evolution from traditional marketing to relationship marketing: the environmental conditions of the pre-industrial and industrial era (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995), the economics of customer retention (Rosenberg and Czepiel, 1984; Reicheld and Sasser, 1990) and the ineffectiveness of mass media when assisting customers’ decision making processes and creating useful dialogues (Shani and Chalasani, 1992).

According to Sheth and Parvatiyar, (1995) the development of relationship marketing points to a significant shift in the axioms of marketing: from competition and conflict we move to mutual cooperation leading to value creation, and from choice independence to mutual interdependence for the creation and distribution of marketing value.

The literature on the key variables of relationship success has reached an advanced state. Trust and commitment are considered central for successful relationships because they directly lead to cooperative behaviors that are conducive to relationship marketing success (Morgan and Hunt 1994): trust exists if a customer believes a service provider to be reliable and to have a high degree of integrity; commitment is the customer’s orientation towards a long-term business relationship based on emotional bonds.

For customers, RM provides closer and longer-term relationships that yield three types of benefits: 1) social (familiarity, friendship and information-sharing), 2) economic (discounts or other money-saving benefits) and 3) customization (tailor made services/products), as noted by Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995), Berry (1995), Gwinner *et al.*, (1998) and Peterson (1995).

If relationship marketing is to be successful, an integration of all marketing communication messages is needed to support the establishment, conservation and enhancement of relationships with customers and other stakeholders (Grönroos, 2004). In RM communication undoubtedly plays a central role in providing an understanding of exchange partners' intentions and capabilities (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998; Donaldson and O'Toole, 2007). Duncan and Moriarty (1998) have developed a communication-based model for managing relationships which pays special attention to two aspects: the need for integrated marketing communication and the demand for interactive communication.

Customer Relationship Management can be considered as a tool of RM which allows the creation of "*an understanding of the market and customer behavior and aims to improve the customers' lifetime value through customer interaction*" (Faase *et al.*, 2011, p. 9). As noted by Micelli (2010) CRM is characterized by a low dialogue implementation and an extension of actors which is basically directed outside the firm. As previously suggested, we must not forget the impact that technologies have on the management of firms in the creation of value and of competitive advantage. In fact the main objective of CRM is to manage customer relationships so as to maximize their life-time value for the organization (Ang, 2011; Siano *et al.*, 2005). Payne and Frow (2005) suggest that CRM can be defined from at least three perspectives which can be portrayed as a continuum: narrowly and tactically as a particular technology solution, wide-ranging technology and customer centric. The latter reflects a more strategic and holistic approach to CRM that emphasizes the selective management of customer relationships in order to create shareholder value (Payne and Frow, 2005).

Starting from 2007 CRM, fuelled by the advent of Social Media, began a transformation from its traditional focus on optimizing customer-facing transaction processes in order to include strategies and technologies processes that develop collaborative and social connections with customers, suppliers and even competitors (Band and Petouhoff, 2010; Greenberg, 2010; Nguyen and Mutum, 2012). Scholars began to analyze an extension of CRM, the so-called Social CRM.

Social CRM is a CRM firm policy which uses Web 2.0 services to create engagement between customers and the firm in order to improve relationships thanks to more meaningful interactions (Faase *et al.*, 2011; Wang and Owyang, 2010). Indeed, following Faase *et al.*, (2011) the top of the pyramid which highlights the Social CRM model is given by "customer retention and involvement": customer retention is CRM-related because CRM is traditionally about retaining the customer, while customer involvement is Web 2.0 related because Web 2.0 is about interactivity.

Nguyen and Mutum (2012), in fact, state that advances in CRM must consider Social Media because thanks to these media relationship building is taken to a new level, which is more personal and intimate; therefore a stronger emphasis must be placed on fairness. Social CRM provides the strategies and the tools for new levels of customer insight, which allow customers to personalize their interactions and experiences with companies that can profit from those experiences (Greenberg 2010, Pine and Gilmore, 2000).

A stream of research considers SCRM a misleading term because online community members are not necessarily also the customers of one's organization. For this reason scholars, such as Ang (2011), introduced the term Community Relationship Management (CoRM) because it more accurately reflects what people do in online communities - connect, converse, create and collaborate (Nadeem, 2012, Micelli, 2010).

Social CRM does not replace existing CRM efforts; rather it adds more value by augmenting traditional systems (Greenberg 2010, Woodcock *et al.*, 2011). What it adds are social features, functions, processes addressing the interactions between customers and their peers and between the customer and the company with its suppliers and partners (Greenberg, 2010; Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

Baird and Parasnis (2011) reported that CRM strategy is designed to manage customer relationship as a means to extract the greatest value from customers over the lifetime of the relationship. However, with SM companies no longer have control over the relationship (Baird and Parasnis, 2011; Nadeem 2012). The company and consumers co-create knowledge and customers have the power to influence others in their network (Baird and Parasnis, 2010; Greenberg, 2010; Rullani, 2001).

In the net/new/knowledge economy, marketers have to involve customers in value creation by gaining information from virtual communities and from SCRM in order to be able to respond to customer needs faster and maybe even to anticipate such needs by listening to their conversations and taking actions accordingly (Woodcock *et al.*, 2011).

4. Discussion

Using SM is not an easy task and may require a cultural and organizational shift and more of a listening and sharing culture than a selling culture (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Smith and Zook, 2011). Giving a definition of Social Media Marketing is quite a hard task. By summarizing some reports found online we can suggest that Social Media Marketing refers to the process that empowers individuals to promote their websites by gaining attention through Social Media sites and by tapping into a larger community that may not have been available via traditional communication channels. Social Media Marketing programs are usually centered on efforts aimed at creating content to attract attention and encourage readers to share it by means of their social networks. A corporate message spreads more easily from

user to user if it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the brand or company itself. Hence, this form of marketing is driven by word-of-mouth, meaning it results in earned media rather than paid media⁴. “*The most popular brands in SM tend to post less about products (...) and more about things that help their customers get to know the people and the personality of a company*” (Gordhamer, 2009).

Bernoff and Li (2008), as cited also by Finotto and Micelli (2010), provide guidelines to allow firms to adopt efficient Social Media strategies:

- listening: appraise users’ feedbacks and comments because they can be useful for product development and market strategy;
- talking: listening to customers’ needs to try to create a relationship with them;
- energizing: the engagement of customers in brand promotion by means of word of mouth and viral marketing
- supporting customers in post-sales also by means of peer-customers’ interactions

Social Media allow firms to engage in timely and direct end-consumer contacts at relatively low costs and higher levels of efficiency than what can be achieved by means of more traditional communication tools (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

It is necessary to carefully consider the ways in which firms can create a SM experience that is unique to their brand, offer customer value and exploit the power of social communities. To successfully exploit the potential of Social Media, companies need to design experiences that deliver tangible value in exchange for customers’ time, attention, endorsement and data (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). Companies need to embrace a new strategy which recognizes these aspects. Instead of managing customers, the role of the business is to facilitate collaborative experiences and dialogues valued by customers (Pine and Gilmore, 2000; Baird and Parasnis, 2011). As a consequence, firms have to develop a new corporate mind-set, involving media that do not simply replace traditional ones, but instead expand media choices so as to gain reach, intimacy and engagement (Hanna *et al.*, 2011). They have to understand that by being much more transparent in their dealings with consumers and by creating an ongoing conversation with customers they can build a better, long-lasting and more valuable relationship with them (Acker *et al.*, 2010).

Indeed, consumers are shifting their trust away from corporate marketers and brands; instead they are talking and listening to their fellow consumers, giving opinions and sharing feelings and thoughts over Web 2.0 tools (Woodcock *et al.*, 2011; Bruhn *et al.*, 2012).

Coming back to our research questions, in order to understand if Social Media Marketing is a subset of instruments within the relational perspective of marketing

⁴ Corcoran (2009) divides the ecosystem into three media types: owned media (controlled by the marketer), paid media (bought by the marketer) and earned media (neither controlled nor bought by the marketer, e.g. word of mouth, viral). Earned media are as important as the others because they represent the space where consumers make their voice heard and the space where firms can strengthen relationships with users in a more interactive way, thus increasing customer engagement.

(RQ1) we compare the key differences between Traditional Marketing, Relationship Marketing and Social Media Marketing by trying to identify what they have in common and what not (Table 1).

By relying on the literature review previously analyzed, we argue that most of the criterions of Relationship Marketing are also confirmed for Social Media Marketing. In traditional marketing the focus is on the single transaction which has short duration, the primary object for RM instead is given by relationships (Grandinetti, 2002, Morgan and Hunt 1994). We suggest that also for SMM the main object is to enhance relationships. Nevertheless, we have to distinguish between the meaning of relationship in RM and in SMM. Moreover, in RM the relationship between the firm and the customer is dyadic. "Relationship marketing addresses each customer as an individual, which is distinctly epitomized in the expression one-to-one-marketing" (Peppers *et al.*, 1998, Newall, 2000). As suggested by Fiocca and Maggioni (2014), the main features of a relationship in RM are: mutual engagement between partners, sharing of information, willingness to mutual adjustment and mutual trust⁵. Do these features still work in Social Media Marketing? We state that in the case of SMM, the meaning of relationship is quite different. The primary objective of SMM is to speed up communication and to increase direct interaction, dialog and participation across organizations and various stakeholders (Colleoni, 2013; Schultz and Wehmeier, 2010), first of all the customers. As pointed out by Fieseler *et al.*, (2010), there is still a lack of a dialogical use of Social Media by corporations. As a consequence we assume that SMM doesn't display the typical features of relationships - mutual trust, mutual commitment and mutual engagement - like in RM. We state that only the sharing of information could be considered as a feature of relationships both in RM and in SMM.

As regards the trust in SMM, we can suggest an interesting case study about Burger King Norway's Facebook page, which had 38.000 fans but low engagement. They decided to close the page and create a new one for real fans, who had to pass a test. They were given one of two options: Like the new Burger King page as a "true fan" or become a "sell-out" and get a free Big Mac from Burger King's biggest rival McDonald's. If a fan picked the free Big Mac they were banned for life from the new Burger King page. Burger King Norway even sent the sell-out a letter reminding them they were banned for "eternity." The results: Burger King Norway lost 30.000 fans, despite only giving away a maximum of 1,000 Big Macs; on the other hand, engagement on the new page increased 5X.

Future research will analyze in more detail, through empirical investigation, which are the features of the relationships in SMM and how they are related to those in RM.

⁵ Morgan and Hunt (1994) also emphasize that relationship commitment and trust are key variables that mediate successful RM. It is worth noting the importance of trust in RM, defined as "a willingness to rely on exchange partners in whom one has confidence" (Moorman *et al.*, 1993, p.3) and underlined also by Busacca (1994) and Castaldo (2002).

The basic element of long term relations with customers is represented by communication between the company and its customers which generally takes a long-term perspective both on and off line. In order to enhance trust and commitment, firms have to frequently interact with users and manage the customer base by means of a direct approach and with high intensity of contacts. Organizations that are not taking the possibility of listening to online conversations about their brand into consideration are missing a major opportunity because by ignoring these conversations an organization will soon be replaced by another which desires to be part of the conversation (Smith and Zook, 2011).

The fundamental strategy is another interesting criterion which deserves further analysis. For transactional marketing the main strategy is the acquisition of new customers, for RM it is important to maintain the existing relationships, as analyzed before (see paragraph 3.2). As regards Social Media Marketing, a strategy “should include overall objectives, Key Performance Indicators, an outline of measurement methods and explain how social media communication is integrated with other corporate and organizational communication” (Macnamara and Zerfass, 2012, p. 298). But only 31% of European organizations have specific Social Media Marketing policies and guidelines, as highlighted by Macnamara and Zerfass (2012). Nevertheless, relying on the literature review, we can state that the fundamental strategy for SMM is to engage stakeholders in order to maintain existing relationships but also to gain more followers/fans, which can transform into customers, in order to create a network of relationships.

“Engagement on the Social Web means customers or stakeholders become participants rather than viewers. [...] Engagement, in a social business sense, means your customers are willing to take their time and energy and talk to you - as well as about you - in conversation and through processes that impact your business.” (Evans, 2010, p. 11). The four foundational blocks in the process of building strong customer engagement are:

1. consumption, as used in the context of social media, which means downloading, reading, watching, or listening to digital content;
2. curation is the act of sorting and filtering, rating, reviewing, commenting on, tagging, or otherwise describing content;
3. content creation;
4. collaboration is a key inflection point in the realization of a community. Thanks to Social Media the audience is more inclined to engage in collaborative activities by sharing thoughts, ideas, concerns.

Finally the production focus for RM and SMM is given by mass customization and not mass production. Thanks to Social Media firms can customize their communication messages, creating specific marketing campaigns, thus creating a direct contact with clients or “followers”⁶.

⁶ Followers are users who follow a brand or an online community because they have agreed to receive your Tweets through Twitter. If you add someone else to the list of people you read, you “follow” them. Popularity on Twitter is often measured by the number of

However, we can highlight a major difference in the focus of decision processes: with regards to Social Media Marketing the decision process also focuses on pre-sales activities as well as post-sales because the aim of Social Media is to establish a connection not only with customers but also with users in general.

In the table below we have introduced a criterion that was not present in the original one - "type of clients' network" - because it is useful for the aim of our paper. As suggested by the literature (e.g. Grönroos, 1994) the main aim of Relationship Marketing is to keep long-lasting relationships with clients by enhancing commitment and trust. The type of clients' network is therefore "co-producer/engaged". We state that these assumptions could also be useful for Social Media Marketing because customers, thanks to these tools, become co-producers and co-creators of the value of the firm. Firms are indeed using Social Media not only to communicate but also to scan external environment, to develop strategic plans thanks to the information they can gain from the Web and to find new ideas in order to co-create new products with their clients (Cherubini and Pattuglia, 2012). As a consequence, they could be considered not only as communication tools but as strategic tools which could be useful for the general management of the firm (Cherubini and Pattuglia, 2012).

Tab. 2: Key differences between the concepts of relationship marketing and transactional marketing

Criterion	Transactional marketing	Relationship marketing	Social Media Marketing
Primary object	Single transaction	Relationship	Relationship
General approach	Action-related	Interaction-related	Interaction-related
Perspective	Static	Evolutionary-dynamic	Evolutionary-dynamic
Basic orientation	Decision-oriented	Implementation-oriented	Implementation-oriented
Long-term vs short-term	Generally takes a short-term perspective	Generally takes a long-term perspective	Generally takes a long-term perspective
Fundamental strategy	Acquisition of new customers	Maintenance of existing relationships	Engagement process
Focus in decision process	Pre-sales activities	All phases focus on post-sales decisions and actions	All phases focus on pre and post-sales decisions and actions
Intensity of contact	Low	High	High
Type of contact network	CUSTOMER /CLIENT	CO-PRODUCER /ENGAGED	CUSTOMER/CLIENT CO-PRODUCER
Degree of mutual dependence	Generally low	Generally high	Generally high
Measurement of customer satisfaction	Monitoring market share (indirect approach)	Managing the customer base (direct approach)	Managing the customer base (direct approach)
Dominant quality dimension	Quality of output	Quality of interaction	Quality of interaction
Production of quality	Primary concern of production	The concern of all	The concern of all
Role of internal marketing	No or limited importance	Substantial strategic importance	Substantial strategic importance
Importance of employees for business success	Low	High	High
Production focus	Mass production	Mass customization	Mass customization

Source: adapted from Henning - Thureau and Hansen (2000)

followers a person has. (Grauschopf S., 2013, retrieved from <http://contests.about.com/od/f/g/followersdefinition.htm>)

Therefore we can argue that Social Media Marketing is a subset of instruments within the relational perspective of marketing. Social Media Marketing and Relationship Marketing have the strategic perspective of co-creation of value in common thanks to the interaction of clients who become co-producers of the value of the firm.

From a marketing point of view, new media require a shift in marketing thinking (Henning-Thurau *et al.*, 2010). As a CEO of a startup software company said, *“the most important job for a CEO today is to hear what people are saying about the company’s product across media channels and to respond them directly. To engage with customers, it is no longer enough to have an email address and a customer service number on one’s website. Today people want to interact with and engage businesses via their chosen means of communication”* (Gordhamer, 2009). Firms need to learn that consumers have become highly active partners and that they are strongly connected with the networks of other consumers (Micelli, 2010; Rullani, 2010).

5. Conclusion

5.1 Directions for further research

In this paper, after having analyzed the Relationship Marketing literature from a knowledge economy and value production framework, we have gained insights about how Social Media Marketing could be identified as a process that enables the enhancement of value co-creation between firms and stakeholders. We have suggested that most of the criterions of RM are also confirmed for SMM apart from the decision process and the type of contact network.

The analysis on Social Media Marketing and Relationship Marketing which has been developed in the previous sections, allows us to highlight the fact that SMM may be integrated in a RM perspective, considering in particular the expanding role of customers in value creation (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012; Micelli, 2010; Pastore, 2009; Rullani, 2010; Vargo and Lush, 2004; Sashi, 2012).

Future research will need to focus on various perspectives:

1. An interesting stream of research may concern a deep analysis of the management of Social Media Strategy. As suggested by Macnamara and Zerfass (2012) the lack of policies or guidelines for Social Media Strategy expose organizations to significant risks, such as the release of confidential information, reputation damage, legal actions for defamation or damages. In order to be fully developed, Social Media require a clear strategy and guidelines even though many executives are reluctant or unable to develop strategies and allocate resources to engage effectively with Social Media (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011). Macnamara and Zerass’s study (2012) claims that around two-thirds of organizations do not have specific policies or guidelines in relation to Social Media and a very limited amount of research has been conducted into Social

Media governance, defined as “the formal or informal frameworks which regulate the actions of the members of an organization within the social web” (Zerfass *et al.*, 2011 as stated in Macnamara, Zerfass, 2012). In order to provide some insights about this topic we could use a multiple case study technique by analyzing firms which are using Social Media in their marketing strategy.

2. The professional profile of the Social Media Manager (SMMr) is related to the previous topic. Further research will gain more insights on the training process of the Social Media Manager. A first list of elements may be the following: mono or plural dependency relations from firms; single or multiple industrial experience and operations; contemporary presence of plural projects in different stages of Social Media development.

For example, it is interesting to understand if a value added element is given by the fact that a SMMr is a freelance working with more than one firm or if such multi-dependency generates bad results in terms of community management or users’ engagement. Another aspect to be taken into careful consideration, when dealing with training, is given by the variety of industrial/territorial/genre settings in which a manager is involved. Does a SMMr need to operate in different industries to be legitimated in terms of his or her role, or on the contrary is it more important to have a multiple presence in the same industry to be legitimated?

Does a SMMr improve his or her performance if he or she is involved in projects characterized by different evolutionary steps or is it more effective to work on similar projects (e.g. all start-up community sites)?

These kinds of questions could be better investigated through clinical interviews with those who identify themselves as Social Media Managers. A second step, in order to gain more insights, could be to administer a questionnaire to the community of Social Media Managers.

3. In addition to the previous point, we consider it important to investigate the organizational role and the organizational position of the SMMr. Are they involved in marketing, in the PR Department or do they have a specific function? What are their competences? What is their hierarchical dependency?

A proposal of five organizational configurations for the management of Social Media has been provided by Owyang (2010) even if it better suits big firms. By means of clinical interviews and a case study analysis we will design a comprehensive role inventory for SMMrs and we will also gain insights about their organizational position, in SMEs.

4. A fourth stream of research may be a comparison with Public Relations by using a review of the literature. When considering Social Media as tools, a space of “confusion” with PR will certainly be opened up. It could be interesting to make a comparative analysis concerning the differences and similarities between SMM in RM and SMM in PR.
5. Further research also needs to shed more light on the differences between SMM and RM in order to explore how organizations could gain value from the

adoption of Social Media to gain competitive advantage compared to the value gained thanks to a RM strategy.

6. From a methodological point of view, it will be interesting to adopt the semantic analysis approach in order to review the literature and investigate if there are other connections between the terms “Social Media Marketing” and “Relationship Marketing”. In particular, thanks to Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI) it is possible to uncover nearby relationships between words and to highlight more distant relationships that may generate new discovery hypotheses.

5.2 Managerial implications

This paper presents implications for managers who are considering entry into SMM and managers who wish to generate more value from existing endeavors.

Social Media are indeed characterized by a certain amount of benefits but they also lead to some risks if they are not well managed. In an era in which the amount of information and data is increasingly larger than ever, firms have to adopt measures and tools in order to manage it. In this context the main challenges for firms are given by the time of reaction and the capacity to translate big data⁷ in information that could be useful for a firm's strategy. As we mentioned previously, Social Media are becoming an important channel through which companies can engage in virtual dialogues with stakeholders, and users of Social Media are not a mere passive audience; instead they are active co-creators of value.

Another aspect to take in account is the performance measurement of the Social Media Strategy adopted by a firm. The lack of commonly accepted measures represents an obstacle for the development of marketing strategy (Gillin, 2009 as stated in Cosenza, 2012). *Social media analytics* or *social marketing analytics* is becoming even more important to help firms to measure and value the effects of social marketing initiatives in a meaningful way (Lovett and Owyang, 2010).

As a consequence, a firm has to decide whether to rely on even more sophisticated business intelligence systems or on figures, such as Social Media Managers, in order to manage the complexity of information and create a direct and two-way dialogue with clients. Another important choice for firms is the one related to the organizational position of the Social Media Manager. We can have Social Media Managers inside a firm, inside a consultancy agency, inside an ICT company, or they could be freelancers working for more than one company. If we do not know their organizational role, hierarchical dependency, or contractual performance management, we could have problems in terms of their management. The possibility of incongruity between the aim of Social Media strategy and the organizational position of the Social Media Manager may negatively affect the SM strategy.

⁷ “Big data refers to datasets whose size is beyond the ability of typical database software tools to capture, store, manage and analyze. As technology advances over time, the size of datasets that qualify as big data will also increase (Maniyka *et al.*, 2011, p. 11).

It is also possible to highlight how a clear understanding of the characteristics of the role (internal, external agencies and/or other) can be achieved through a good integration with the definition of the specific duties and responsibilities of this kind of condition. For example, how can the contribution to the achievement of the results of a Social Media strategy given by a Social Media Manager working in a communication agency be measured? Which are the levers which a Social Media Manager can deploy when he/she is internal or external to the company? What are the specific timing relationships between Social Media Managers and the business? For example, if a Social Media Manager working for a communication agency goes free lance, do the clients who are loyal to him/her become a "personal asset" of the manager or, on the contrary, is the Social Media Manager simply replaced?

These are just some of the questions related to the topic which is gaining more and more importance in academic and practitioner literature and in the business world.

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**THE MANAGERIAL WORK OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER:
AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION IN ITALIAN COMPANIES,
COMMUNICATION AGENCIES AND FREELANCES**

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to gain insights about the work of the Social Media Manager. Firms have begun to use Social Media in order to communicate and engage both internal and external stakeholders. But fostering and sustaining engagement among stakeholders online takes considerable resources, efforts and time. As a consequence the role of the Social Media Manager, or who deals with Social Media on behalf of the firm, is becoming even more important to define.

Methodology: empirical data were collected through an online survey from 353 Italian companies, 47 freelancers and 32 communication agencies. Data analysis was conducted through SPSS.

Findings: we have provided a snapshot about the role of the Social Media Manager both inside and outside firms and the main issues related to the Social Media Management. We have found that the type of SMMr influence the results gained by the firm.

Research limitations: given that the analysis is based only on Italian data, the results cannot be generalizable. More insights could be gained by replicating the study in other countries in order to compare results and provide a broader picture about the phenomenon.

Originality: to the best of our knowledge, this is the first paper which investigates, through empirical evidence, the role of the Social Media Manager and provides an overall picture about how firms, communication agencies and freelancers manage Social Media.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, Marketing Communication, Social Media Manager*

1. Introduction

Thanks to the introduction of Social Media, the power of consumer-driven communication is transforming the way in which businesses communicate, thus leading to a “revolution” in corporate communication which is not a one-way communication anymore, where a message is controlled by a business and delivered to its audience, but an interactive, two-way communication (Cornelissen 2014, Cosenza 2012). As a result, Social Media have to be taken

into careful consideration to exploit new business potentialities (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, Romenti et al. 2014) because they allow firms to engage in timely and direct-end-consumer contact at relatively low costs and higher levels of efficiency than those achieved through more traditional communication tools (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, Mangold and Faulds 2009). Most managers consider Social Media as a highly efficient communication and distribution channel (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), as powerful means of influencing customer perceptions and behavior (Laroche et al. 2013, Williams and Cothrell 2000) and as a critical part in driving purchase intent as well as delivering brand engagement (Meadows-Klue 2008; Vernuccio 2014)

On the other hand Social Media are different from the traditional media (e.g. television, radio, press releases) (Bruhn et al. 2012) and they require a distinct approach to measurement, analysis and management (Peters et al. 2013). “From a management perspective, understanding social media is a prerequisite for properly managing these channels” (Peters et al., 2013, p. 283). They require indeed an ongoing feeding to survive and, in order to be fully developed, Social Media need a clear strategy and guidelines although, as suggested by Kietzmann et al. (2011) and Macnamara and Zerfass (2012), many executives are reluctant or unable to develop strategies and allocate resources to engage effectively with Social Media. The lack of policies or guidelines for Social Media strategy expose organizations to significant risks such as the release of confidential information, legal actions for defamation or damages and reputation damage. One of the main risks related to Social Media is that they expand the spectrum of reputation risks because they fuel new expectations or beliefs about organizations, to which organizations should respond (Aula 2010).

Although Social Media have been investigated by academic literature in recent years and they have become an important communication platform in many organizations (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Mount & Martinez, 2014; Peters et al. 2013; Verhoeven et al. 2012; Vernuccio, 2014) and the center of many marketing strategies (Gambetti et al. 2012, Kietzmann et al. 2011, Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Michaelidou et al. 2011, Pastore 2009), it still lacks a general agreement about the definition of the role, the organizational position and the skills of who is managing these tools, the Social Media Manager.

This paper evaluates how Social Media Managers working in firms, communication agencies or as freelance differ with respect to the attributes, skills and experiences they associate with successful management performance.

This study aims to contribute to defining, in particular, the work and the role of the Social Media Manager inside firms but, in order to understand the influence of the type of SMMr

(inside or outside company) on the social media results, we will analyze also the work of Social Media consultants working in communication agencies or as freelance.

The research is based on a survey conducted in Italy on a sample of companies, communication agencies and freelances. On the basis of results we discuss implications for both research and practice.

We structure the remainder of this article as follows. First, we provide a literature review and the theoretical framework on which we rely. Second, we describe the methodology and third we present and discuss the results of our survey which investigates the social media management, and in particular the role of the Social Media Manager as an employee inside companies or inside consultant agencies or as a freelance. Finally, we identify our study's contributions and managerial implications, as well as some limitations, and suggest avenues for further research.

2. Literature review

2.1. Social Media Management

Social Media are an ongoing topic, they have been defined as “the new hybrid element of the promotion mix” (Mangold & Faulds, 2009, p. 357) but the most widely used definition of Social Media is the one provided by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010): “a group of internet-based application that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0”. Given the wide arrange of Social Media they classified them by relying on two dimensions: media richness and social presence; self-presentation and self-disclosure. By intersecting these features, we can find blogs, social networking sites, virtual social worlds, collaborative projects, content communities and virtual game worlds. Each of these tools has got specific features which have to be carefully analyzed before deciding which use and which do not use. In addition Kietzmann et al. (2011) propose the “honeycomb” model which is composed by seven functional building blocks having the goal to correlate the different aspects of social media user experience to the corresponding implications for firms in order to help managers to decide which tool to use. Nevertheless there are some benefits but also barriers related to Social Media.

Among the benefits related to the adoption of Social Media, previous literature has identified: generation of word-of-mouth (Trusov et al. 2009), revenue improvement (Enders et al. 2008), development of relationships with customers and stakeholders (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010), increasing awareness and attraction of new customers (Michaelidou et al. 2011). Social Media help managers also to integrate their CRM database with unstructured data captured through

multiple social sources “to implement a cross-functional network of integrated communities with customer-facing responsibilities, such as customer care and sales” (Baird & Parasnis 2011).

Previous literature has highlighted also the main barriers related to the adoption of social media, among which we can find the lack of managerial support, the lack of staff familiarity and skills or concerns about time and costs related to the social media management (Michaelidou et al. 2011).

Cosenza (2012) has suggested the social media adoption model. The first phase is the phase of experimentation which can be spontaneous or not: in the first case the initiators are some employees who have got a particular interest in social media and who decide to start using them. In this situation each individual acts independently, without any coordination with other people in the organization. In the second case the initiator is a manager who starts testing this typology of media through presence and monitoring. In both cases there is not a link between the activity on social media and the business objectives and, consequently, initiatives need shared rules and the involvement of other managers both to obtain resources to invest in social activities and to obtain authorizations to take action in response to users' comments. The second phase is the finalized adoption: showing the obtained results, the manager who has begun to use social platforms (from now “*social media manager*”) succeeds in persuading marketing and PR managers. In this phase social media manager earns a strong internal visibility and becomes a stimulus for collaboration among functions, required to better exploit the social applications.

Extended adoption is the phase in which the success of social media use in some functions pushes other ones to ask the social media manager support: in order to coordinate the work of each functional team, procedures, guidelines and internal communication tools begin to be implemented. Because of the increasing level of responsibility, a higher role is assigned to the social media manager. Alternatively, the coordinator's role is given to the marketing director or the PR director. Besides, new professional figures (e.g. digital PR manager, social analytics manager) are introduced in the team to support the manager. The last phase is integration. At this point of the adoption process, competencies linked to the exploitation of social media are spread across the entire organization. For this reason there is no longer a great need for coordination and the number of people in charge of managing the social media activities increases; they have the task not only to monitor these media but also to proactively listen to consumers in order to understand their needs and turn them into improvements in products, services, processes.

As Cosenza (2012) states, to get an accomplished adoption requires time and method and usually follows a well-defined trajectory. The same idea is suggested by Solomon & Tuten (2013), who assert that firms reach their social media maturity - which means to plan social media activities systematically in order to ensure their consistency with the marketing and marketing communications plans (and so the meeting of specific marketing objectives) - spending a lot of time and after a lot of experience.

Organizations should feed and nurture Social Media constantly in order to provide feedbacks to stakeholders and to foster and sustain engagement (Peters et al., 2013; Porter et al. 2011) because they are substantially different from the other media as they require a different approach to measurement, analysis and management (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010; Hoffman & Novak, 2012, Peters et al. 2013). "From a management perspective, understanding social media is a prerequisite for properly managing these channels" (Peters et al., 2013, p. 283). They require indeed an ongoing feeding to survive and, in order to be fully developed, Social Media need a clear strategy and guidelines although, as suggested by Kietzmann et al. (2011) and Macnamara and Zerfass (2012), many executives are reluctant or unable to develop strategies and allocate resources to engage effectively with Social Media. The lack of policies or guidelines for Social Media strategy expose organizations to significant risks such as the release of confidential information, legal actions for defamation or damages and reputation damage.

The person in charge of this role should be the figure of the Social Media Manager, the one who manages Social Media on behalf of the company.

The work of the Social Media Manager can be developed internally or outsourced to consultants, for example to communication agencies or freelance¹ [1]. As pointed out by Greer et al. (1999) "outsourcing occurs when a company contracts with a vendor to perform an activity previously performed by the company"(p. 85).

These three figures differ in relation to their position, their tasks and how they are related to the firm. For example the presence of a Social Media Manager inside a firm gives rise to organizational issues which will be analyzed in the next paragraphs, such as their organizational position, the activities that they carry out, the budget.

In this paper we would like to analyze if these roles have different impacts in terms of Social Media results in order to understand if for firm is better to rely on internal Social Media

¹ Freelance is a mix between an employee and an entrepreneur because they contract out her or his skills to various organizations (van den Born & Van Witteloostuijn 2013)

Managers or to outsource the activity. This research is an initial effort towards bridging the existing knowledge gap in the literature.

In order to answer to our research questions it is important to define who is the Social Media Manager and which kind of features characterize his/her work. In this regard there is still a lack of literature which is justified by the fact that Social Media was born around the beginning of the 2000 and the first academic definition has been provided by Kaplan and Haelein in 2010.

2.2. The Social Media Manager

2.2.1 The organizational role of the Social Media Manager inside firms

Inside firms, given the dearth of literature regarding the role of the Social Media Manager, we rely on Mintzberg's classification of manager work which have been widely used in previous academic research.

Mintzberg (1971) suggested that a manager's work could be described in terms of ten job roles divided in three interpersonal roles (figurehead, leader and liaison), three informational roles (monitor, disseminator, spokesman) and four decisional roles (entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator). These roles are common in all managerial jobs regardless of the functional or hierarchical level, "however differences do exist in the importance and effort dedicated to each managerial role based on job content, different skill levels and expertise." (Grover, et al. 1993, p. 110). Previous research has studied the importance of managerial roles of Marketing/Sales managers, accountants, production managers and Chief Information Officer (e.g. Gottschalk 2002). McCall & Segrist (1980) have operationalized the roles and they have found high correlation among some of them, so they suggest to not consider four roles (figurehead, disseminator, disturbance handler, negotiator).

In the following table we apply the managerial roles to the Social Media landscape.

Figure 1 - Managerial roles

	<i>Managerial Roles</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Tasks related to Social Media</i>
Interpersonal roles	Leader	Responsible for motivation of subordinates and for staffing and training.	Definition of objectives and strategy Motivate subordinates Hiring responsibilities Influence on strategic decisions
	Liaison	The manager establishes his network of contacts to bring information and favors to his organization.	Develop Communication activities toward external stakeholders Definition of content strategy

Informational roles	Monitor	Seeks and receives information to understand organization and environment.	Online monitoring activity in order to avoid reputational risks, be aware of new tools and technical changes Manage crises in real time
	Spokesman	Involves the communication of information or ideas.	He crosses traditional departmental boundaries in order to report to top management and other departments about issues emerged in Social Media
Decisional roles	Entrepreneur	Acts as initiator and designer of much of the controlled change in the organization.	He should identify business needs and develop solutions. The role as entrepreneur is not only to set objectives consistent with firm's objectives but also to influence strategic direction and opportunities of the firm.
	Resource allocator	Responsible for allocation of human, financial, material and other resources	Takes decisions related to which kind of social media to use, how to measure results, the budget to invest

Source: adapted from Grover et al.

Strictly related to these roles are the skills that are consider important to perform the activity of SMMr. Knowing what kind of skills they need would seem to constitute an important step for the selection and development of an effective social media manager. In the literature we haven't found insights about the required skills, as a consequence in this paper Katz's approach was used to study the skills of the SMMr. Katz, back in the '50, called attention to the problem of identifying those skills necessary for successful performance in managerial role and his seminal work continues to be influential (Peterson & Fleet 2004). Katz suggested three basic skills: human, conceptual and technical skills. Technical skills are defined as the understanding of, or proficiency in, specific activities that require the use of specialized tools, methods, processes, procedures, techniques, or knowledge. Human skills are defined as the ability to work cooperatively with others, to communicate effectively, to resolve conflict, and to be a team player. Human skills are primarily concerned with people. Finally, conceptual skills are defined as the ability to see the organization as a whole or to have a systemic viewpoint.

Among them we have selected the ones more related to the Social Media Manager profile by comparing the most cited skills in practitioner reports, web sites or job advertisements and then asked an opinion to practitioners during the pre-test phase of the survey. The skills investigated are:

- Human skills: Openness and Control of emotions.
- Technical skills: Knowledge of Social Media, Video and Photo editing, Programming html/java, English language, Web Writing, Social Mobile Optimization.

- Conceptual skill: communication skills, planning capacity, problem solving and team working.

2.2.2. The role of the Social Media Manager outside firms

As regard the external role of the Social Media Manager, we consider freelance or employees of communication agencies. These figures cannot be related to professions yet. Professions have been clearly defined by Burrage et al. (1990)² [2] with six features. Only one of them – “it attains self governance or autonomy” – can be related to the SMMr. As a consequence we cannot consider it a profession yet. Hence, in this paper, we assimilate freelance or communication agencies employees to business consultants. Kakabadse et al. (2006) have provided a literature review about the role of consultant and provided an overview about a list of functions and roles played by them. The widely recognised approach to grouping these roles is the one provided by Kubr (1996) who state that consultant have two basic roles:

- resource roles: the consultant helps the client by providing technical expertise;
- process roles: the consultant attempts to help the organization solve its own problems by making it aware of organizational processes.

The most used skills suggested to define a business consultants are:

- experience: it is considered more important than technical skills. Experience combined with a solid knowledge of an industry is what gives credibility to clients (p. 464).
- functional skills to adapt themselves to the client’s situation
- ability to listen
- objectivity
- self awareness: being able to self-question

3. Research questions

In this study we have tried to investigate three different profiles of the Social Media Manager, by considering if he/she is working inside the company or outside as a freelance or inside a

² The list of features provided by Burrage et al. (1990) are:

1. It is a full-time, liberal (non-manual) occupation;
2. It establishes a monopoly in the labour market for expert services;
3. It attains self-governance or autonomy, i.e. freedom from control by any outsiders, whether the state, clients, lay persons or others;
4. Training is specialized and yet also systematic and scholarly;
5. Examinations, diplomas and titles control entry to the occupation and also sanction the monopoly;
6. Member rewards, both material and symbolic, are tied not only to their occupational competence and workplace ethics but also to contemporaries’ belief that their expert services are ‘of special importance for society and the common weal’

communication agency, in order to answer to the following research questions which guide the research in hand:

***RQ1:** What are the individual characteristics and skills of the Social Media Managers in Italy?*

***RQ2:** How can we define the managerial role of the Social Media Manager inside firms?*

***RQ3:** Is the role of Social Media consultant more resource or process related?*

***RQ4:** Does the type of Social Media Manager (freelance, agency or firm) have a significant impact on the social media results?*

4. Research method

4.1. Data collection

To answer the Research Questions, an online survey was held to collect relevant data. The survey was delivered via email, together with a personal invitation to a sample of companies, freelance and communication consultant agencies.

As regard the companies, a sample was selected from the list “Mediobanca”, which included the first 1500 Italian companies in terms of turnover in 2012 (Mediobanca Ricerche e Studi S.p.A., 2013). Within the group there were companies belonging to 32 different industries. To improve the external validity of the study, a sample of 500 companies was randomly selected from the list. To increase internal validity, the sample was stratified by product category³ [3]. The questionnaire was pilot tested for content validity and instrument reliability and the revised questionnaire was mailed to Social Media Managers of the selected companies, who have been previously contacted by phone in order to have the direct email addresses. The survey indeed targets respondents with certain functional roles, who are better able to answer the questions as a result of their experience and knowledge about the topic.

All respondents were contacted via e-mail with an invitation to participate in the survey, to which they could respond online. We have therefore gained 353 e-mail addresses. The

³ we grouped them into 11 “macro” industries: advertising and entertainment (5 companies); building, which includes the building and building products sectors (80 companies); clothing and fashion, which includes the clothing, eyewear, jewellery, leather and textile sectors (115 companies); electronics and computer, which includes the computer, electronics and household appliances sectors (96 companies); energy and utilities, which includes the energy and utilities sectors (99 companies); food, which includes the beverage and food sectors (196 companies); furniture (29 companies); mechanical and metallurgical, which includes the engineering, mechanical and metallurgical sectors (384 companies); pharmaceutical and chemical, which includes the chemical, fibre, pharmaceutical and rubber sectors (222 companies); publishing, which includes the publishing and paper sectors (49 companies); tourism and transport, which includes catering, tourism and transport sectors (77 companies).

remaining firms of the sample, 135 admitted that they did not use Social Media and 12 were outsourcing the management of social media to communication agencies.

We examined the risk of nonresponse bias in different ways. We have checked the demographic breakdown of respondents (e.g., in terms of their age, education, and gender) in order to make sure that there were no visible biases differentiating those responding to the survey from the overall companies belonging to the list.

As regard the freelance, we have used the email addresses published on the website www.ferpi.net, the most important association of Public Relations professionals in Italy. We have collected more than 400 email addresses. Then we have also posted the link to the questionnaire in some LinkedIn groups (i.e. Social Media Marketing Italia, Social Media Marketing italiano) in order to develop a snowball approach. We have gained 47 complete questionnaires.

As regard the communication consultant agencies, we have collected email addresses from ASSICOM and ASSOREL websites, two communication agencies associations in Italy. We have send 240 emails and gained 31 complete questionnaires.

After a careful analysis of the responses, 120 surveys were identified as being properly filled out and appropriate for the analysis. Since there is no information available about the total number of Social Media Managers working in Italy, nor about their characteristics, we cannot claim representativeness with this survey.

Figure 2. Sample and response rate

	SAMPLE	ANSWERS	RESPONSE RATE
Firms	353	43	12,2%
Freelances	450	46	10,5%
Communication agencies	240	31	13,4%
Total	1.043	120	11,5%

Source: own elaboration

4.2 Survey instrument

The survey was an online questionnaire structured around five sections. Three versions of the questionnaire were designed for the three respondents groups – companies, communication agencies, freelance. As regard the companies' questionnaire we bound our study to a set of determinants related to the firm's organizational characteristics and individual characteristics. More precisely, among the individual variables we analyze age, education, experience, soft and technical skills, how long he/she is dealing with Social Media. As regard the

organizational characteristics we suggest the following variables: the presence of a team, the department in which the SMMr is involved, the adoption phase, the measurement, the strategy definition, the degree of internal/external usage, the challenges, the integration of Social Media in the organizational activities and the results gained.

In the first section, there were 15 questions that analyzed firms' demographic information and organizational structure (i.e. n. of employees, industry, revenue, B2B/B2C).

In the second part, we asked respondents to report about their education and previous experience. The third part of the survey, respondents indicate the extent to which their organization has adopted Social Media which have been the main problems and how they define the strategy. In the fourth part we have gained insights about the activity of the Social Media Manager and we asked also for details about measurement and benefits related to Social Media, as well as an evaluation of the required technical and soft skills. The last part focused on the profile of the respondent.

The freelance's and communication agencies's survey differ only in the first part and in some questions which were suitable only for companies.

Prior to the online launch of the research, the questionnaire was pretested by four experienced marketing professionals via face-to-face meetings (one Social Media Manager inside a firm, two freelance, one Social Media Manager inside a communication consultant agency). These respondents provide feedbacks and qualitative comments which were useful to the survey assessment.

The types of questions used are of the following:

- Structured questions: here the respondent has to choose between more defined answers. In this way the results, already standardized, permit us a better efficiency and effectiveness. In this category we can find:
 - Dichotomic questions: in this case the respondent can chose between two answers;
 - Multiple answers questions: structured questions that permit more answers.
- Likert scale: it permits to evaluate the degree of agreement of the respondent on a specific preposition. It is easy to create this kind of question but the respondent is led not to choose the first and the last option because they seem to be too extreme.
- Open questions: permit to the respondent to answer using his own words. We used this kind of questions only in two cases because the answer will not give us a bias in the result.

Data were collected between February and May 2014. To assess significant differences the data are analyzed using chi-square, one way ANOVA and t-test to compare means. We have also carried out linear regressions to answer to our research questions. We have used the statistical software SPSS.

5. Data analysis and results

By relying on the research questions, we have investigated the profile of the Social Media Manager and some issues related to the Social Media Management which help us to define better the role. The analysis was approached in two stages. In the first stage, descriptive statistics and cross tabulations were done to analyze how companies, communication agencies and freelances are dealing with Social Media. Then, we have carried out multiple regressions to answer to the research question R3.

RQ1: What are the individual characteristics and skills of the Social Media Managers in Italy?

Descriptive statistics, reported in Table 1, show that Social Media Managers in Italy are mainly woman, with a master degree and an average of one to three years of experience. The younger are working in agencies and the older are working as freelance (Table 2). One of the most important skills for consultant is indeed “experience” which is considered more important than technical skills. Results confirm this suggestions, freelance are indeed older than others because they need more experience.

The most common areas of degree specializations for SMMs working in firms are business economy, Law, PR and Communication Science. For freelance are Communication Science and Law, the SMMs working in agencies are graduated in Communication Science, Foreign Languages and Pr. By reading these results we can state that if a firm decides to hire an internal Social Media Manager, he/she will need a managerial background in order to not only provide technical expertise but also to help to define the strategy and the objectives which have to be in line with the overall firm’s strategy. The external consultant, on the other need, given the background, will provide more technical skills and will have a resource role, as previously defined (Kubr 1996).

Regarding previous experience, the majority of the respondents in firms was previously employed in marketing, commercial or PR. As regard freelance and SMMs in agencies, even if Kubr suggest that for a consultant it is important to have more experience in the same industry, our results show that respondents have a background both in the same industry or in

different industries. The result is justified by the fact that Social Media are quite young and, especially in Italian small and medium enterprises they are not so developed. As a consequence, given that the role is not institutionalized yet, it is normal that they are working for different firms in relation to their needs.

The chi-square test has been used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies of the following individual characteristics in the three groups: gender, age, education and number of years of experience (see Table 3).

Particularly interesting are the data showing how the professional figure is defined. The labels proposed in questionnaires are Social Media Manager, Corporate Social Strategist, Community Manager, Social Analyst, Web Content Specialist, Digital Strategic Planner, Reputation Manager, Digital PR Manager, Marketing Manager and Other. We have used these labels because they are most cited in practitioner and grey literature. Pre-test respondents were also agree on these labels. Respondents could select up to three options. For all the three types of SMMs, the most common label is that of Social Media Manager (23,18% of respondents of firms, 32,40% in agencies and the 28,30% of freelance).

As regard the skills, we asked respondents to give a score between 1 to 7 to each skills, where 1 means “no important” and 7 “very important”⁴ [4] (see Table 4). Among the human skills we have Openness and Control of emotions. Among conceptual skills we find Communication skills, Planning capacity, Problem Solving, Team Working. Respondents in firms argue that the most important soft skill for the role of SMM are Communication Skills and Openness. In agencies the most important is Openness, and Planning Capacity. Also for freelance, Openness was the most important skill and like SMMs in firms, they consider necessary to have an high Communication Skill. The skill that obtained the average lowest score is “Team Working”. This result is related to the one of the following question “If there is a team, how many people is it made of?”. 60,46% of the firms’ respondents and 48,38% of agencies’ respondents work alone. 25,6% of SMMs in firms and 41,9% of SMMs in agencies argue that the team is composed of only 2 or 3 persons.

Regarding technical skills, we have identified as important the following abilities: Knowledge of Social Media, Video and Photo editing, Programming html/java, English language, Web Writing, Social Mobile Optimization and Other. In this case all the three groups of respondents have given the same answers: the most important technical skills are

⁴ We have also compared the skills with the most cited in practitioner reports, web sites or job advertiments and then asked an opinion to practitioners during the pre-test phase.

Knowledge of Social Media and Web Writing. The competence considered as less important is "Programming html/java". One way ANOVA showed statistically significant differences among the three groups for the some of the skills (see Table 5).

RQ2: How can we define the managerial role of the Social Media Manager inside firms?

In order to answer to this question we use Mintzberg classification previously explained.

Interpersonal roles

As regard the interpersonal roles we can state that the SMMr has more a liaison role than a leader role because the results of our survey highlight that:

- 1) the majority of SMMs in firms, the 51.20%, argue to work inside Marketing department, 32,16% in PR/Corporate communication and 16,30% in Web/Digital function. These results are in line with Owjang et al. (2010) and in contrast with the findings of Verhoeven et al. (2012) who state that the majority of respondents say that the PR department controls the strategic aspects of communication with social media (60,4%) and marketing comes in second (30,1%). This means that in Italy activities carried out by SMM are seen primarily as marketing actions. Nevertheless this result suggest us also that Social Media are not institutionalized yet, it is not a standalone function yet. As suggested by Moretti & Tuan (2014), the Social Media Manager is a professional profile who has reached the phase of diffusion but not that of institutionalization as other functions in an organization (e.g. CFO, CCO). The strategy is primarily carried out with the marketing department (48,8%) or with the CEO (37,2%). In addition Chi-square test shows statistically significance between the variables "in which function is the SMMr working" and "definition of a Social Media Strategy" ($p=0,029$).
- 2) Social Media are mainly managed by only one person even if in the next three years respondents suppose that social media will be managed by a team (see Table 6). However this result confirms the hypothesis that the management of social media is a complex activity and that they constantly need to be feed. Users do not wait anymore for an answer, they are eager to receive an answer to their comments as soon as possible. As a consequence only one person cannot be aware 24/7 of what happens online. The fact that the SMMr is not a standalone function and that he/she is mainly working alone lead us to the question related to the adoption phase where we can find that Social Media are or in a phase of experimentation or finalized adoption, they have not reached the integration phase. As a consequence we cannot speak about a leader

role – as defined by Mintzberg – because the SMMr doesn't have to manage, to hire or to motivate people yet.

Informational roles

Mintzberg defines spokesman, manager who transmit his information to outsiders overcoming the boundaries of the department. On the other hand the monitor role has the task to keeping up with market changes and trends, technological developments, gathering information about customers and competitors.

In this case we state that the SMMr has more a monitoring than spokesman role because:

- 1) Monitoring is an essential activity for Social Media Managers because the risks of reputation damages are very high online (Aula 2010; Romenti et al. 2013). Indeed when we asked respondents to indicate if the activity "Monitoring and Analytics" was managed internally or externally. The majority answered that it was managed internally.

One of the main issues related to the monitoring is the measurement of social media because existing business metrics are based on a linear form of communication, instead social media are based on interactivity and engagement which is difficult to measure (Wilcox & Kim 2012; Peters et al. 2013; Michaelidou et al. 2011; Katona & Sarvary 2014). As suggested by the Social Media Manager of the largest container shipping company in the world, Maersk Line, "How can you quantify a value that isn't just about customers and sales, but about employee engagement, customer insights, innovation – we've gotten ideas from shipping experts and what's the value of that insight that will influence a management decision?" (Katona & Sarvary, 2014, p. 154). As highlighted in Table 7, the majority of respondents use typical tools of Platform to measure online initiatives. The second more used tool is Monitoring Software. Lower are the percentages of who use not specific tools and who don't measure. In particular, 5.54% don't carry out measuring activities, and 2.72% don't use specific tools. An average of 13,82% of interviewed use other measures to monitoring online initiatives. These measures include customer satisfaction, employees satisfaction. We have carried out a Chi-squared tests between the independent variables "gender" and "education" and the dependent variable "measurement" and we have found that the way in which SMMs in firms measure depends precisely on these factors. The result $\chi^2(8, N=43)=32,96, p=0.00$, means that the way on which they measure differ across the genders. For example, 93,3% of who use financial measures are women, and 66,7% of who use monitoring software are men. The way in which SMMs in firms

measure online activities differ also across their education level, $\chi^2 (24, N=43)=36,61$, $p=0,23$. It is interesting to note that 60% of those that don't measure hold a master. The majority of those measure without specific tools, with monitoring software and with specific tools of platforms are hold a old system degree, 50%, 66,7% and 33,3%, and the majority of those use financial measure hold a master.

- 2) Italian SMMr inside firms are using Social Media mostly for communication purposes, in particular to communicate information about products and services (43.12%) and to advertise events (24.49%). Data are confirmed also by the answers regarding the internal/external usage of Social Media in companies which showed that the usage of Social Media is purely external for 48,8% of the sample. In particular, when we asked for how Social Media are used to integrate or support activities, respondents answer that Social Media are used mainly for Communication, followed by sales, less for customer service and not at all for CRM integration, internal communication, recruiting and operations (see Table 8). Kane et al. (2014) have developed a framework in order to analyze how firms are using social media not only in marketing but also to improve innovation, leadership and operations. The spread and usage of Social Media in other functions, beyond marketing, is called social business. One of the most cited case studies is the one of Red Cross, which initially used social media in marketing and fundraising, then it started to integrate social into core operational activities such as mobilizing communities and managing the logistics of its trucks and supplies. In the Kane et al's survey, three-quarters of respondents agree that social business represents an opportunity for organization. Social Media can be used for different purposes, not only for communication purposes. For example Mount & Martinez (2014) has developed a framework which explains how Social Media can be used as a tool to facilitate open innovation and user collaboration at different stages of the innovation funnel. Joos (2008) provides an overview of how social media are currently being used by companies and job seekers in the recruiting and hiring processes.

Given their position and the activities they are carrying out, the spokesman role is not so developed yet. They don't overcome the boundaries of their departments in order to use Social Media also for other activities different from communication and marketing which will need the support of other functions.

In addition we have asked if they identify themselves more as a "facilitator" or more as a "communicator". By relying of the definition provided by Moreno et al. (2010), the

communicator is a SMMs primarily focused on content creation, managing of communities, managing of channels of communication, the facilitator is the one who takes care of the definition of strategy, the definition objectives at medium and long term. The average level of SMMs in firms is 5.81 between 1 and 10 which means that they are developing both tasks. If they would be spokesman, the sources related to facilitator should be higher.

Decisional roles

Decisional roles are related to managers who represents “key figures in the making and interrelating of all significant decisions in the organization, a process that can be referred to as strategy-making” (p. 105). In our survey we have seen that decisional roles are not so evident yet.

From Table n.9 we can see that the lack of managerial understanding about the social media potentialities is the first perceived challenge for Social Media Manager, followed by the lack of management support.

Katona & Sarvary (2014) highlight the importance of senior management support in developing a Social Media Strategy. If the potentialities of these tools are not well understood and management stick on traditional measures, the management of Social Media become a very risky activity. Our data confirm the theory.

In addition, also problems related to the lack of budget are considered very important. This means that Social Media Managers don’t have enough power to act as change initiators and allocate money for their activities.

By relying on the previous insights we can provide a ranking of the SMMr interpersonal, informational or decisional roles.

Figure 3 – Classification of Social Media Manager roles

1	INT	Liaison	He has a liaison role thanks to the communication activities with the external environment he has to accomplish. Results show indeed that the majority of SMMr use Social Media to communicate towards external stakeholders.
2	INF	Monitor	We have seen that SMMr have a specific role in continuously monitoring the environment and understand the needs of the stakeholders.
3	DEC	Resource allocator	He has to decide which kind of tools to use, how much budget to spend, where to allocate the resources.
4	DEC	Entrepreneur	Given that he is inside marketing or PR department he is involved in the board of directors so he can report to the top management the issues which come up from online discussions and envision new strategic guidelines.
5	INT	Leader	Social Media are mainly managed by only one person so we cannot speak about a leader role because there isn’t specialized personnel to be trained or motivated yet.

6	INF	Spokesman	In order to better understand how the SMMr relates to other departments and if he crosses traditional boundaries to become involved in affairs of production, distribution, marketing or finance, it would be better to do some interviews and case study analysis to better explain the phenomenon.
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Source: own elaboration

Future research will better explore the roles of the Social Media Manager by analyzing if they require decisional roles to a greater extent than the other roles thanks to a factor analysis. For example Mintzberg found that production managerial jobs require more decisional role than the other roles, instead sales managerial jobs require more interpersonal roles.

RQ3: Is the role of Social Media consultants more resource or process related?

The role of consultant is different from that of managers inside firms.

Survey's results highlight that the role of consultants, both freelance and communication agencies, is more resource than process related. By analyzing Table 10 we can see that the majority of consultants argue that the most frequent Social Media Marketing activities are Content Creation and Content Diffusion, which obtained respectively an average score of 5.73 and 5.79.

Our hypothesis is confirmed by showing the results related to the communicator/facilitator question. Also in this case we can see that they are around 5 (5,35 for agencies and 5,26 for freelance) so we can suppose that, given that some of the consultant skills are functional skills and the ability to listen, it is very important to know how to adapt themselves to client's situation and to listen to their needs. As a consequence, they will become more facilitators or more communicators in relation to client's needs.

Also consultants see that the lack of managerial understanding about the social media potentialities is one of the most important challenges followed by the lack of management support.

Given these limits, consultants help the firm more in providing tools or specific and limited actions. Indeed when we asked firms which kind of activities they were outsourcing, Social ADV obtained an higher average score (see Table 10).

RQ4: Does the type of Social Media Manager (freelance, agency or firm) have a significant impact on the social media results?

The aim of this research question was to analyze if the type of SMMr has an influence on the social media results. A standard multiple regression analysis was carried out using the results of the Social Media Strategy as the dependent variable and the type of Social Media Manager as the independent variable. For Social Media results we have considered four categories highlighted by previous literature: revenue improvement (Enders et al. 2008), increasing reputation and development of stakeholder relations (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010), conversion (Michaelidou et al. 2011). We are also interested to know if Social Media are used for CRM activities, as a consequence we have added another variable “usage of Social Media data for analysis”. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 11.

In order to analyze which is the best profile related to the management of Social we have compared B values in the regression model to understand the relative importance of the predictor variables in accounting for variance in the dependent variable. We have found that being a SMMr working in firm has a -1,93 ($p < 0.001$) effect on the revenue instead of not being a SMMr working in firms. Being a SMMr working in agency has a 0.17 ($p = 0.656$) effect on the revenue instead of not being a SMMr working in agency. So we can conclude that working as SMMr inside the company has a broader negative effect on the revenue than working outside the company. Table 12 summarizes the main results we have gained for the other results.

We can see that the impact of the SMMr inside the firm has a negative impact on the dependent variable (revenue, conversion, reputation, data analysis).

We have also carried out a paired sample t-test in order to analyze if there is significant evidence between the mean level in the results today and in three years. As regard the revenue for firms, the mean was 2.81 ($SD = .316$) now and 3.89 ($SD = .401$) in three year. We can find significant evidence $t(26) = 3.67$ $p = 0.001$. The correlation coefficient is .69.

6. Managerial implications

This paper contributes to management practice in different ways.

First of all, as regard the education of SMMr, it is important to notice that most of those working in firms have a management/business economics background, instead freelance and managers working in agencies have a communication science or PR background. As a consequence we can notice a strong coherence between the educational background and the activity they actually carry out. In particular, by looking at the results of the firms' survey, we find similar results if we compare the degree of respondents with the position they have inside firms. We have found that Social Media Manager with a management/business background

are mainly involved in Marketing functions, instead in the PR/Corporate Communication function or Web/Digital function we can find more people with a PR degree. This result can be useful for firms in the recruiting process and it is in line with Gök & Hacıoglu (2010) who explored the evolving marketing manager role. They have found that the role of the marketing manager is changing and communicational and relational (internal and external) role are the most frequently addressed of marketing managers' responsibilities. Social Media have indeed not created new profiles but they have only redefined marketing profiles by adding new skills and tasks.

They have also underlined that communication roles with new technologies frequently appear in the job announcements of Marketing Manager they have analyzed. These findings have managerial implication both for firms which already have a Social Media Manager and for firm which are going to hire one. The management of Social Media is becoming one of the skills related to the Marketing function.

Nevertheless as underlined also by the SMMr of illycaffè, the decision to have a SMMr inside a Marketing or PR function depends also on the strategic aim of the firm. *"In our case the main objective is to take care of the company's reputation. If the aim of Social Media Strategy were to just sell products it would be probably managed by the Marketing department"*. This assumption is very important in the ongoing debate on the relationship PR - Marketing in Social Media Management (Moretti & Tuan 2013).

Another issue which has an interesting managerial implication is the results regarding the management of Social Media. We have found that they are mainly managed by only one person but in the next three years SMMr suggest that they will be managed by a team.

This aspect has different implications for a firm's point of view. We can suppose that the management of social media is not easy for only one person because they need to be continuously feed. In addition the arrange of Social Media expands daily and in order to manage them and to create engagement with stakeholders it is very important to have more than one person monitoring the online web. As suggested by Eberle, Berens & Li (2013), "the use of interactive corporate communication has the potential to lead to a higher message credibility and feelings of identification towards the company" (p. 742). As a consequence the presence of a team can be helpful in order to continuously manage the tools and provide a two-way communication. From an organizational point of view, the presence of a team has significant implications in terms of costs and management. Firms should redefine the PR or Marketing departments to allow the presence of a team dedicated to Social Media.

The regression related to the type of Social Media Manager and the relating results has pointed out that working as a SMMr inside a company has a broader negative effect on the revenue than working outside the company. Even if our results are not generalizable, we can suppose that these results are due to the following reason: agencies and freelance, when they have to submit an offer for a Social Media campaign, but in general for every service, should define in advance clear objectives to be reached. On the other hand, given that the figure of Social Media Managers inside the firm is not institutionalized yet, they don't define in advance the objectives, they don't have a clear strategy and clear guidelines, as suggested also by Macnamara and Zerfass (2012). We can state that inside firms there is a low level of internal formalisation of results than for agencies and freelance. As a consequence we suggest that SMMr inside firms should adopt a more strategic approach and define in advance the strategy, the guidelines and the objectives, which should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time related (Drucker 1954). Most organizations consider communication largely as a tactical function and only very few organisations operate on a strategic level in this respect (White and Dozier 1992, Kitchen and Schultz 2000, Siano et al. 2013). “It has, therefore, been suggested that the management of communication needs to move from a tactical to a strategic perspective (Holm 2006)” (Siano et al. 2013, p. 152).

7. Conclusion and future research

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the profile of the Social Media Manager and the main features related to the social media management. As results showed, this research provides a snapshot of the social media management in Italy by comparing Social Media Manager working in firms, in communication agencies or as freelance. This paper contributes to the literature on Social Media Marketing in the following ways. First, it is theoretically proposed and empirically tested a model that explains if the different types of Social Media Manager and their individual features positively impacts the Social Media Marketing results. Given that the role of the Social Media Manager is quite new both in theory than in practice, our study has developed a first overview about the main issues related to the role, from the required skills to the operational and managerial activities carried out by the manager.

As we have seen, results show that SMMr are mainly woman, 26-35 years old and with a master degree, the most important skills required to work as a SMMr are communication skills, openness and knowledge of SM and web writing.

In Italy we are in an early stage of social media adoption yet. Most firm are using them without having a clear Social Media Strategy and only for communication purposes. There are

a lot of challenges related to the adoption which have to be overcome. First of all the lack of managerial understanding about the positive results which can be gained thanks to Social Media. This result is confirmed inside companies but it represents also one of the main issues for freelance and communication agencies consultants.

Nevertheless we have found that the type of Social Media Manager has a significant impact on the results which can be gained. On the other hand, age, experience, education and gender does not influence the results related to the Social Media Management.

We have also found that the majority of Marketing departments control the strategic aspects of social media communication.

As regard freelance and communication agencies, the process of institutionalization of the profession is just begun. For example, apart from practitioners report, there are already some academic papers dealing with how to develop a Social Media course (e.g. Faulds & Mangold, 2014) and also a lot of books are going to be published.

This research gives rise to several future research streams. First of all, this study could be carried out also in other countries in order to find differences and similarities regarding the profile of the Social Media Manager. Then, a deeper understanding related to the Social Media Manager skills could be gained by analyzing the job advertisements of marketing or PR managers in order to understand how the role is changing and which specific skills are required.

In addition, a longitudinal study to examine the perceived benefits of Social Media before its adoption and the achieved benefits afterward is suggested.

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Appendix

Table 1

		FIRMS	AGENCIES	FREELANCE
AGE	18-25	2,38%	3,20%	4,30%
	26-35	52,38%	71%	28,30%
	36-45	30,95%	25,80%	34,80%
	Over 45	14,28%	0	30,40%
GENDER	Male	38,09%	50%	42,20%
	Female	61,90%	50%	57,77%
EDUCATION	High school	9,52%	6,50%	17,8%
	Bachelor's degree	14,28%	22,60%	13%
	Specialist degree	11,90%	29%	15,55%
	Old System	28,57%	29%	28,90%
	Master	30,95%	12,90%	22,20%
	PhD	4,76%	0,00%	2,20%
3YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	< 6 months	2	0	3
	6 months – 1 year	6	0	16
	1 to 3 years	21	12	27
	> 3 years	14	19	0
DEGREE	Business Economics	9,3%	6,6%	13,04%
	Communication Science	4,7%	32,2%	21,73%
	PR	4,7%	9,7%	6,6%

Table 2 – Crosstabulation age/type of Social Media Manager

Crosstab						
			type			Total
			agency	freelance	firm	
age	18-25	Count	1	2	2	5
		% within age	20,0%	40,0%	40,0%	100,0%
		% within type	3,2%	4,4%	4,8%	4,2%
	26-35	Count	22	11	13	46
		% within age	47,8%	23,9%	28,3%	100,0%
		% within type	71,0%	24,4%	31,0%	39,0%
	35-45	Count	8	17	14	39
		% within age	20,5%	43,6%	35,9%	100,0%
		% within type	25,8%	37,8%	33,3%	33,1%
	4	Count	0	15	13	28
		% within age	0,0%	53,6%	46,4%	100,0%

	% within type	0,0%	33,3%	31,0%	23,7%
Total	Count	31	45	42	118
	% within age	26,3%	38,1%	35,6%	100,0%
	% within type	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22,203 ^a	6	,001
Likelihood Ratio	28,137	6	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	9,513	1	,002
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 3 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,31.

Table 3– Chi square test

	gender	age	education	Years of experience
Chi-Square	2,746 ^a	32,712 ^b	33,424 ^c	53,267 ^d
df	1	3	5	3
Asymp. Sig.	,098	,000	,000	,000

a. 0 cells (,0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 59,0.

b. 0 cells (,0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 29,5.

c. 0 cells (,0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 19,7.

d. 0 cells (,0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 30,0.

Table 4 – Skills of the Social Media Manager

		FIRMS	AGENCIES	FREELANCE
HUMAN	Openness	6,07	6,71	6,50
	Control of emotions	5,3	6,29	6,11
CONCEPTUAL	Communication skills	6,09	6,45	6,57
	Planning capacity	5,95	6,58	6,41
	Problem Solving	5,95	6,52	6,35
	Team Working	5,74	5,32	5,78
TECHNICAL	Knowledge of SM	5,84	6,65	6,37
	Video/photo editing	4,65	5,06	4,96
	Web Writing	5,65	6,42	6,11
	SMO	4,77	4	4,98

Likert scale from 1 to 7

Table 5 – ANOVA

Skills	p value < 0.05
Knowledge of Social Media	0.013
Web writing	0.018
Openess	0.043
Emotional control	0.036
Communication capabilities	0.006
Strategic planning	0.038

Table 6 – Social Media are managed by

	Now	In three years
Only me	22	9
A group of people in different functions	12	15
A dedicated team	9	19

As regard the management of Social Media today and in three years we have carried out a paired sample t-test and we have found a significant correlation. The mean is 1.74 today and 2.14 in three years, correlation coefficient is .36. $t(42)=2.87$ $p=0.006$.

Table 7 – Measurement tools

	No measures	No tools	Typical platform tools	Monitoring softwares	Financial measures	Other
FIRMS	7,81%	3,12%	53,12%	23,43%	4,68%	7,81%

Table 8 – Social Media activities in Firms

	Never	Not so much	On average	A lot
Communication	1	4	6	32
Market research	20	13	8	2
Sales	12	9	15	7
Customer service	6	15	11	11
CRM Data	22	15	4	2
Internal comm.	24	11	4	4
Recruiting	25	10	6	2
Innovation	18	10	10	5
Operations	28	8	5	2
CSR Activities	10	15	9	8

Table 9 – Challenges for Social Media Managers

	FIRMS	AGENCIES	FREELANCE
Lack of management comprehension	5,23	6,13	5,93
Lack of management support	4,65	5,58	5,45
Perceived reputational risks	4,31	5,52	5,32
Lack of resources	3,84	4,65	4,49
Lack of technical skills	3,74	5,26	4,87
Security concerns	3,16	4,37	3,93

Table 10 – Consultant activities

	AGENCIES	FREELANCE
Content creation	5,71	5,76
Content diffusion	5,71	5,67
Community development	4,26	4,74
SMO	2,55	3,30

Application development	2,35	2,17
Social ADV	5,13	3,59
Monitoring	5,25	4,98
Analytics	5,39	4,78

Likert scale from 1 to 7

Table 11 – Regression model results

	Revenue	Conversion	Reputation	Data analysis
R (R²)	0.46 (0.21)	0.51 (0.26)	0.54 (0.29)	0.40 (0.16)
SMMr in agency	0.17 (p=0.65)	.021 (p=0.95)	0.26 (p=0.35)	- 0.07 (p=0.85)
SMMr inside firms	- 1.93 (p=0.00)	- 1.87 (p=0.00)	- 1.52 (p=0.00)	- 1.67 (p=0.00)

p > 0,05

Table 12 – Correlations results

	Mean today	Mean in 3 years	Correlation coefficient	
Revenue	2.81	3.89	.69	t(26)=3.67 p=0.001
Conversion	3.81	5.03	.61	t(35)=4.37 p<0.001
Reputation	4.85	5.85	.58	t(40)=4.26 p<0.001
Statistical data	4.05	5.03	.61	t(36)=3.39 p=0.002

**QUESTIONING THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER ON THE
BORDERLINE BETWEEN COMMUNICATORS AND OPEN-STRATEGY ACTORS:
THE CASE OF CSR**

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QUESTIONING THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER ON THE BORDERLINE BETWEEN COMMUNICATORS AND INNOVATORS: THE CASE OF CSR

Abstract

The growing use of Social Media allows firms to open the dialogue with more stakeholders and to engage them in the definition of Corporate Social Responsibility activities. On the other hand, Social Media are risky tools that have to be carefully managed by firms in order to avoid reputational risks.

The aim of this conceptual paper is to define the roles of the Social Media Manager, or who deals with Social Media on behalf of the company. We will depict how they make sense of internal and external pressures by developing the CSR Communication strategies on Social Media and, at the same time, how they give sense about firms CSR efforts to stakeholders by using Social Media. We will provide a matrix with four roles of the Social Media Manager and we will see which is the role that fits best for the communication of CSR. In this way we respond to the call from some scholars to “get back inside organization” and focus on actors, actions, and their interpretations of institutional demands by using the sensemaking theory, which is considered a useful theory to investigate the relationship between Social Media and CSR.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Sensemaking Theory, Social Media Management, Strategic Communication*

1. Introduction

The article attempts to fill the gap in management literature by identifying as well analyzing the SMMr's role in CSR Communication. As suggested by Maon et al. (2009), CSR communication strategy is based on the identification of key stakeholders and their expectations, followed by a continuous dialogue with them. "Ongoing dialogue with stakeholders is crucial throughout the implementation of a CSR policy" (Golob & Podnar, 2014, p. 250).

With the advent of Social Media, the opportunity to enhance the ongoing dialogue with stakeholders is even more better (Castelló, Morsing, & Schultz, 2013; Whelan, Moon, & Grant, 2013). As highlighted by previous literature, Social Media are indeed changing the ways in which consumers can connect with firms and become aware of the CSR efforts. They enable more direct interaction, dialogue and participation between organizations and stakeholders (i.e. Castelló et al., 2013; Fieseler, Fleck, & Meckel, 2009; Fieseler & Fleck, 2013). Nevertheless empirical evidence suggest that Social Media have not been used by firms to interact with stakeholders online (e.g. Etter 2013; Kent et al. 2003).

Although the increasing and aborning attention towards the importance of Social Media in the CSR Communication (e.g. Castelló et al. 2013, Colleoni 2013; Fieseler and Fleck 2013; Whelan et al. 2013), there is a dearth of research regarding the role of the SMMr or who deals with Social Media on behalf of the company.

The issue arises because even if Social Media allow firms to improve stakeholder engagement (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), to increase profits (Enders, Hungenberg, Denker, & Mauch, 2008), to attract new customers (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011), on the other hand they are risky tools which have to be carefully and continuously managed in order to avoid reputational risks (Aula, 2010; Moretti & Tuan, 2014; Rokka, Karlsson, & Tienari, 2013).

In addition, the risks related to the communication of CSR activities online are even more higher. Stakeholders are very skeptical towards this kind of communication (Birth et al. 2008) and, therefore, the firm is more subject to critiques that are amplified through social media given their ability to spread information in a faster way (Hunter, Besiou, & Halderen, 2013).

As a consequence it is important to define who is going to manage them in order to improve effectiveness and efficiency of Social Media in CSR Communication and avoid the greenwashing effect (Delmas & Burbano, 2011).

The key contribution of this paper, therefore, lies in identifying four major types of Social Media Manager by relying on sensemaking and sensegiving theory. We rely on this

theoretical background because it helps us to focus on the micro-level processes and how organizational actors' make sense of actions. In addition, it has been widely used by other scholars in the CSR literature (Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Schultz & Wehmeier, 2010).

The four types of Social Media Managers are identified by intersecting sensemaking /sensegiving and tactical/strategic communication. After having analyzed them, we will focus our analysis on the case of CSR in order to depict how managers make sense of internal and external pressures by developing the CSR Communication strategies on Social Media and, at the same time, how they give sense about their CSR efforts to stakeholders by using Social Media.

The study responds also to the call from some scholars to "get back inside organization" (Suddaby et al. 2010, p. 1234) and focus on actors, actions, and their interpretations of institutional demands by using a sensemaking theory.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: first, we describe the theoretical background. Second, we outline the theoretical framework by relying on Gioia and Chittipeddi's model (1991) which has been adapted to define the process adopted by Social Media Managers. Then, we provide a matrix on the roles of the Social Media Manager. Fourth and finally, we discuss the study's theoretical and managerial contributions, along with possible avenues for further research.

2. The theoretical background

2.1 CSR Communication and Social Media

Morsing defines CSR¹ Communication as "a communication that is designed and distributed by the company itself about its CSR efforts" (2006, 171). In the literature we can find conflicting views about the communication of CSR efforts. While some researchers suggest that communication about CSR activities does not necessarily result in positive effects for companies (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010b), others find that firms communicating their social efforts are viewed more positively and credibly (Swaen and Vanhamme 2004). For example Birth et al. (2008) state that "CSR Communication aims to provide information that legitimizes an organization's behaviour by trying to influence stakeholders and society's image of the company" (p. 183). Communicating about CSR activities is designed to establish social legitimacy, enhance reputation, and accrue desired

¹ CSR has been defined by a lot of scholars and there isn't a general agreement on its definition (for an update review please see (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012)). We rely on the European Commission report which defines CSR as "efforts to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer issues into their business operations and core strategy" (European Commission 2011, p. 6).

benefits from stakeholders (Chattercji, Levine, & Toffel, 2008; Coombs & Holladay, 2013; Hildebrand, Sen, & Bhattacharya, 2011; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2008). Also Hildebrand et al. (2011) have analyzed that CSR Communication has positive effect on stakeholder attitudes and behaviours. Nevertheless, there are some factors which influence CSR credibility, such as the professed motives of a company to engage in CSR (Forehand and Grier 2003) and the degree to which CSR activities fits the company's core business Simmons & Becker-Olsen (2006).

On the other hand one of the main risks related to the CSR communication is the risk of greenwashing² and the risk of skepticism of stakeholders towards the firm, which is usually very high (Birth et al. 2008). A key challenge for managers, then, is to minimize stakeholder skepticism and communicate CSR achievements without being accused of greenwashing.

A stream of research related to CCO perspective (Communicative Constitution of Organization)³ emphasizes that decoupled CSR communication practices might have important further consequences. With their concept of "aspirational talk", Christensen et al. (2013) highlight that even if the public self-representation of an organization as a socially responsible corporate citizen is decoupled from actual business practices, this form of talk can nevertheless be a powerful driver of organizational change.

Also Schultz et al. (2013), by defining the communication view on CSR, pointed out the potential performativity of aspirational talk going ahead from the need for tight coupling between words and actions on CSR as suggested by previous research.

In this paper we follow Capriotti (2011) who highlights that the key challenge in order to not be perceived as greenwasher is to evolve from CSR Communication as a tactical tool for CSR management towards CSR Communication as a strategic part of CSR management. In order to properly manage stakeholder relationships and company reputation, a firm needs to integrate CSR in the overall strategy and to choose the most suitable marketing and

² Greewashing has been defined as "*selective disclosure of positive information about a company's environmental or social performance, while withholding negative information on these dimensions*" (Lyon and Montgomery 2013, p.5). According to Delmas and Burbano (2011) a greenwashing firm is a firm which has a bad environmental performance but a positive communication about its performance. On the opposite site, firms which have a good environmental performance and a positive communication about that performance are vocal green firms. Silent brown/green firms are firms that do not communicate and that have a bad /good environmental performance.

³ The three most prominent schools of CCO thinking have been listed by Brummans et al. (2013) and pointed out also by Schoeneborn and Trittin (2013): the structuration theory approach of McPhee and his colleagues, the approaches developed by the Montreal School of Organizational Communication and Luhmann's theory of social systems.

communication tools (Fieseler et al. 2009) which allow to carrying on a dialogue with stakeholders.

Du et al. (2010) have suggested that there is a tradeoff between controllability and credibility in communicating CSR and the more controllable the source of communication is, the less credible the message will be perceived to be. As a consequence some scholars suggest that the use of blogs and Social Media⁴ in order to create credible word of mouth about the organization's CSR among its stakeholder (Fieseler et al. 2009). To fulfill stakeholder expectations and gaining legitimacy represents an increasingly complex process and "Social Media have further accentuated the dynamics of communication and the complexity of maintaining legitimacy" (Schultz et al. 2013, p. 681).

A recent contribution by Lyon and Montgomery's framework (2013) emphasize the importance of Social Media to diminish corporate greenwash. In their framework they state that "the greener a firm, the more likely it is to communicate about its environmental performance, use Social Media to do so and use a stakeholder involvement strategy".

Also Korschun and Du (2013) suggest that employing Social Media in the CSR context can generate substantial value for companies and society and assert that virtual CSR dialogs lie in the intersection between Social Media and CSR. Virtual CSR dialogs are defined as "company's strategic utilization of Social Media technologies to proactively engage stakeholders in CSR activities" (Korschun and Du 2013, 1495).

Nevertheless, in order to use Social Media as involvement and engagement tools, we follow Castelló et al. (2013) who argue that firms have to overcome the original conception about stakeholders and viewing them not "as functional groups who might impact corporate activities through their agitation in a risky way" but "as potential innovative collaborators on environmental and social issues concerning the company" (p. 690) who can help managers in the sensemaking process (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991).

"The relationship between the company and the stakeholders can shift from one of confrontation and competition to one of consultation and cooperation." (Kaptein & Tulder, 2003). By incorporating dialogue, firms enhance public support, image and reputation and, on the other hand, stakeholder improve the firm's accountability and satisfaction (Kent et al., 2003).

⁴ Social Media have been defined by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (p. 61)

Also Eberle et al. (2013), by analyzing if allowing stakeholders to comment on CSR issues affects the credibility of messages and stakeholder's feeling of identification with the company, have found that if the message is perceived interactive, the credibility, the identification and the reputation of the firm increase. The use of interactive online media enhances also the effectiveness of CSR Communication, as previously highlighted by Du et al. (2010a). In addition, Korschun and Du (2013) state that "enabling stakeholders to co-create CSR activities can generate substantial value through stakeholder behaviour towards the company and the cause" (p. 1495).

In addition, Du et al. (2010) have highlighted both internal and external outcomes related to the CSR Communication. Among Internal Outcomes we can find Awareness, Attributions, Attitudes, Identification and Trust. External Outcomes deal with different stakeholders. As regards consumers, CSR communication has an impact on purchase, loyalty and advocacy; as regards employees we can find an higher productivity, loyalty, citizenship behavior and advocacy. Thanks to CSR Communication investors enhance the amount of invested capital and increase loyalty towards the firm.

In this context, in order to obtain positive results from the communication of CSR issues online, we suggest that it is important to better define the role of the Social Media Manager given that he/she is going to manage the virtual CSR dialogs and continuously feed the "living organism of social media" (Peters et al. 2013).

2.2 Sensemaking and sensegiving in CSR Communication

The theoretical framework of this article is primarily based on sensemaking theory.

Sensemaking was introduced in the organizational literature by Karl Weick (1993). As Weick argued "the basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs" (Weick 1993, p. 635).

It emphasizes the continuous flow of action and interaction that constitutes human life. "The problem for sensemaking is not to decide what to do, but to understand what we have just done" (Boland 2008, p. 57).

Institutional theory has focused primarily on extra-subjective macro-level structures, while sensemaking research has emphasized local and subjective micro-level processes (Weber and Glynn 2006, p. 1640). The two mainstreams, anyway, are not incompatible. As Weber and Glynn (2006) suggest, institutions are antecedent to and emergent from sensemaking which

involves three main moves - perceptions, interpretations and actions. They are part of an ongoing cycle of revision and have not to be considered as a linear sequence.

Weick (1993) has summarized his theory in seven properties of sensemaking among which “sensemaking is social”. “We make sense of things in organizations while in conversation with others, while reading communication from others, while exchanging ideas with others” (Nijhof and Jeurissen 2006, p. 318). Weick et al. (2005) suggest indeed that communication is a central component of sensemaking and organizing, it is “the primary site where meaning materialize that inform and constrain identity and action” (Weick et al 2005, p. 409).

But sensemaking is incomplete without sensegiving, they are two complementary and reciprocal processes (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Sensemaking refers to how “managers understand, interpret and create sense for themselves based on the information surrounding the strategic change. Sensegiving is concerned with their attempts to influence the outcome, to communicate their thoughts about the change to others, and to gain their support.” (Rouleau 2005, p. 1415).

As suggested by Nijhof and Jeurissen (2006), “approaching CSR from a sensemaking perspective models CSR as an evolutionary process where many different agents act and react upon each other” (p. 316). Sensemaking is increasingly becoming an important part of CSR (Golob & Podnar, 2011; Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

The key contribution of sensemaking theory regarding CSR Communication is the one developed by Morsing and Schultz (2006). They identified three communication strategies related to the process of sensemaking and sensegiving: the informative, the response and the involvement strategy.

In the informative and in the response strategy the role of the Communication department is to design appealing concept messages and to identify relevant stakeholders. On the other hand, in the involvement strategy firms will benefit by giving stakeholders the opportunity to respond to also by engaging them in the mutual construction of the communication. It is a two-way symmetric communication model and it assumes a dialogue between the firm and its stakeholders and it is characterized by a concurrent negotiation with the stakeholders which are involved in order to help the company to understand, to develop and, if it is necessary, to change CSR initiatives. Morsing and Schultz (2006) highlight that “communicating messages claiming to represent a true picture of corporate initiative such as CSR would benefit from a third-party endorsement, i.e. from external stakeholders becoming involved and expressing their support of corporate CSR initiatives in actual corporate messages by taking an active part in both sensegiving and sensemaking process” (p. 336).

By using these lenses, we will develop our theoretical framework in order to answer to the following research questions which guide our study:

RQ1: *Which is the role of the Social Media Manager in the communication of Corporate Social Responsibility activities?*

RQ1.1: *Is it possible to specify different roles of the Social Media Manager in the communication of Corporate Social Responsibility activities?*

RQ1.2: *Which of the Social Media Manager roles is going to better engage stakeholders in the definition of the CSR Strategy?*

3. The roles of the Social Media Manager from a sensemaking and sensegiving perspective

3.1 The Social Media Manager

The Social Media Manager is a figure which is not well defined in the academic literature⁵. For example, human resource management departments are now commonplace in organizations, so much so that we hardly question their existence (Dobbin and Kelley 2007), but in the '90, for example, human resource management were still confronted with problems in linking human resource management and corporate strategy (van Donk & Esser, 1992) because the role was not so clear.

⁵ There is some practitioner literature which tries to give insights about the role of the Social Media Manager (e.g. Owjang 2010, Brown et al. 2013) but it doesn't provide a theoretical framework on which to rely. Paper n. 3 of this thesis is related to this issue. Nevertheless, a comprehensive job description which summarizes the main tasks related to the SMMr is provided as follows: *"The Social Media Manager will implement the company's Social Media marketing. Administration includes content strategy, develop brand awareness, generate inbound traffic and cultivate leads and sales. The Social Media manager is a highly motivated individual with experience and a passion for designing and implementing the Company's content strategy, creating relevant content, blogging, community participation and leadership. The main tasks are: Manage Social Media marketing campaigns and day-to-day activities including: Curate relevant content to reach the company's ideal customers. Create, curate, and manage all published content (images, video and written). Monitor, listen and respond to users in a "Social" way while cultivating leads and sales. Conduct online advocacy and open stream for cross-promotions. Develop and expand community and/or blogger outreach efforts. Oversee design (ie: Facebook Timeline cover, profile pic, thumbnails, ads, landing pages, Twitter profile, and blog). Design, create and manage promotions and Social ad campaigns. Compile report for management showing results (ROI). Become an advocate for the Company in Social Media spaces, engaging in dialogues and answering questions where appropriate. Demonstrate ability to map out marketing strategy and then drive that strategy proven by testing and metrics. Develop a strategy and implement a proactive process for capturing customer online reviews. Monitor online ratings and respond accordingly. Monitor trends in Social Media tools, applications, channels, design and strategy. Identify threats and opportunities in user generated content surrounding the business. Report notable threats to appropriate management. Analyze campaigns and translate anecdotal or qualitative data into recommendations and plans for revising the Social Media campaigns. Monitor effective benchmarks (best practices) for measuring the impact of Social Media campaigns. Analyze, review, and report on effectiveness of campaigns in an effort to maximize results."*

(Source: <http://www.krusecontrolinc.com/social-media-manager-job-description-guide/>)

Social Media Managers have different roles from strategy definition to more operational issues (e.g. decision about tools, content creation). They have to manage the communication not only from the firm to the stakeholders but also viceversa. The traditional communication tools (e.g. television, radio, press) didn't allow this kind of interaction⁶. Given the rise of Social Media there is a growing number of external communicators of CSR (e.g. media, customers, monitoring groups, consumer forums/blogs) that cannot be entirely controlled by the company. "A company can control the content of CSR communication through its own corporate communication channels, but usually has little control over how its CSR record is communicated in the media" (Du et al. 2010, p.13).

In this case the role of the Social Media Manager is to try to continuously monitor what happen online and to previously define some guidelines in case of crisis (Veil, Sellnow, & Petrun, 2011).

As regard their position inside the organization, there are different views. According to the 2009 Digital Readiness Report, based on the survey responses of 278 public relations, marketing and human resources professionals with hiring responsibilities, "*public relations is leading the Social Media revolution inside organizations of all types and sizes*" (Schwartzmann et al. 2009). The public relations/corporate communication department⁷ has widely become the department which is responsible for organizing and maintaining a company's Social Media presence, followed by Marketing Department and IT Department. Both Owyang (2011) and Tuan & Moretti (2015), instead, claim that Social Media are primarily managed by Marketing Department followed by PR.

Given that we are interested to understand the main issues related to the adoption of Social Media in the CSR Communication from a strategic point of view, we would not take into account the operational role of who manages daily Social Media. Moretti & Tuan (2014), by relying on previous contributions, have developed a classification of the four main tasks of the SMMr: analysis, content creation, strategy development and community management. In most firms, given the lack of resources, the four roles are managed by only one person and not by a team. In this paper we will focus our analysis on the strategic role of the Social Media Manager, the one who should define the Social Media Strategy.

⁶ Interaction has been defined as "two-way communication between source and receiver" (McMillan 2006, p. 168)

⁷ Until the 1970s, practitioners have used the term "public relations" to describe communication with stakeholders, largely consisting in communication with the press. When also other stakeholders started to demand more information from the company we can see the roots of the corporate communication function. "Corporate Communication is a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favorable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent" (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 5)

Given the lack of literature, in order to define the role of the Social Media Manager, we can provide some empirical examples from case studies literature. Katona & Sarvary (2014) have provided an overall picture about the Social Media Manager of the firm Maersk line, the largest container shipping company in the world. He started using Social Media alone in 2011, then he recommended a dedicated cross-functional social media team with 1 Social Media lead, 1 Community manager, 1 Social Media Manager, 0,5 customer communication manager and 0.5 social collaboration agent. In his opinion, Social Media saved the company money in terms of customer service, because fans and followers were able to answer to customer need before the customer care team intervened, and, on the other hand, they had cultural effects on the company in terms of employee engagement.

Moretti and Tuan (2013) have interviewed two Social Media Managers of two Italian companies, one in the multiutility industry and one in B2C industry. Both were involved in the Communication and PR department. They are using Social Media in order to enhance reputation of the firm. It is interesting to analyze that they are using different Social Media platforms because of the industry in which they are involved.

Another example of a Social Media Manager is provided by Mount & Martinez (2014): by using three case studies they explain how Social Media are used as a tool for open innovation during ideation phase, research and development and commercialization.

By drawing on these examples, we can suggest to consider them as middle managers. Middle manager, indeed, are often closer to external stakeholders than are top managers (Dutton et al. 1997). They “perform a co-ordinating role where they mediate, negotiate and interpret connections between the organization’s institutional strategic and technical operational levels” (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1997). As highlighted by the literature review provided by Wooldridge et al. (2008), “what makes middle managers unique is their access to top management coupled with their knowledge of operations” and, as a consequence, they function as “mediators between the organization’s strategy and day to day activities” (p. 1192).

Floyd & Wooldridge (1997) articulated four strategic roles of middle managers: the traditional role springs from thinking that is consistent with existing strategy and from attempts to integrate subordinates’ activities around this strategy. They have also a role of synthesizers who interpret information and channel it to top management and of champions because they try to reshape upper management’s concept of strategy. As facilitators, “they encourage organizational actors below and around them to engage in idea generations and other experimental efforts” (Wooldridge et al. 2008, p. 1203).

Most research on sensemaking and sensegiving focus the attention on top managers. Only few scholars deal with how middle managers interpret and sell, through their daily activities, strategic change at the organizational interface (i.e. Nielsen 2009; Rouleau & Balogun 2011; Rouleau 2005). Nevertheless, a substantial amount of literature has identified a variety of ways in which middle managers contribute to strategy formation (e.g. Carney (2004), Dutton & Ashford 1993, Dutton et al. 1997, Hornsby et al. (2002)).

3.2. Classification of Social Media Managers' roles

The sensemaking and the sensegiving theory provide us the theoretical framework on which to develop our contribution.

In order to analyze how the process of sensemaking and sensegiving takes place, we will rely on the model provided by Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991) which analyzes the processes involved in the initiation of strategic change. This framework has been used in order to analyze the role of a top manager but, by relying on the previous assumption that Social Media Manager are considered middle manager, we suggest to adopt the framework in order to analyze the SMMr's path.

As highlighted also by Burgelman (1994) and Boyett and Currie (2004), middle manager can have a direct influence on strategic change. In addition, their role is increasing in importance in the marketing and communication functions becoming even more important in the definition of the strategy.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

The first phase is that of “**Envisioning**”: during this phase the SMMr makes sense of the situation and tries to understand how to communicate the firm's CSR strategy in order to gain legitimacy by stakeholders. In this first phase the focus is inside the firm. The phase is followed by the sensegiving stage “**Signaling**”, wherein the SMMr, by taking into account internal and external pressures, attempts to communicate to stakeholders the CSR Communication strategies by using Social Media. Stage three “**Re-visioning**” is a sensemaking effort by the stakeholders who try to figure out the meaning of the CSR Communication provided by the firm and revise their understanding. In this phase the risk of greenwashing is very high because stakeholders skepticism towards CSR activities is usually high (van de Ven 2008). By trying to overcome this risk, we will state that it is important for a firm to adopt an involvement strategy in order to create a dialogue between the firm and the

stakeholders. The SMMr will monitor the discussion and the comments provided by stakeholders online.

The final stage “**Energizing**” is a sensegiving effort by the stakeholders wherein they attempt to influence the SMMr’s strategy and perceptions. The loop arrow indicates that the stakeholders issues have an impact on the strategy definition. By providing comments, replies and posts, stakeholders can influence the CSR Communication Strategy of the firm.

Now we can provide a classification of the roles of the Social Media Manager by intersecting two dimensions: sensemaking/sensegiving and tactical/strategic communication.

As noted by Hallahan et al. (2007), strategic communication is “the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission” (p. 4). Also Siano et al. (2013) underline that, only in recent years, it has been suggested that “the management of communication needs to move from a tactical to a strategic perspective” (p. 152).

As previously highlighted, we rely on Capriotti (2011, 373) who distinguish between:

- Tactical CSR Communication is (...) the CSR management process oriented to disseminate corporate CSR commitments, policies, and activities and to inform stakeholders about the responsible behavior of the company and/or how the firm is working to improve it.
- Strategic CSR communication facilitate and promote the collaborative building of CSR by establishing dialogic communication channels among the organizations and its stakeholders to ask about the stakeholders’ needs and what the corporate responsible behaviour should be, and, at the same time, by stimulating participation and collaborative decision-making about CSR issues.

A typology of Social Media Managers is shown at Figure 2.

INSERT FIG. 2 HERE

The reflective SMMr: a manager who adopts Social Media in a tactical way in order to make sense of information surrounding him/her. He/she activates the phase of *envisioning* in the sensemaking process by trying to use Social Media to communicate the firm’s CSR strategy but whitout using a strategy. In this case the SMMr will deal with SM day-by-day in a tactical way to react to stakeholder needs.

The informer SMMr: a manager who adopts Social Media in a tactical way in order to give sense to stakeholders about the firm’s strategy. In this case the SMMr uses a *stakeholder*

information strategy (Morsing & Schultz, 2006), defined also by Etter (2013) as *broadcasting strategy* on Twitter, characterized by a one- way communication from the organization to its stakeholders. In this case the aim of the firm is to create stakeholder awareness about its CSR efforts and its CSR activities in a coherent way but without creating a dialogue or interactions between them. The aim of this strategy is to disseminate information about the organization in order to give sense to stakeholders about the firm's activities. The SMMr uses Social Media to spread information about the company through tweets, posts, pictures, videos and so on but without replying to comments or questions. They don't involve followers through Social Media, the only aim is to communicate the CSR Strategy.

The respondent SMMr: a manager who adopts Social Media in a strategic way in order to make sense of information surrounding him/her. Even if the respondent SMMr decides to use SM in a strategic way in order to involve better stakeholder and create a two way communication, the process is asymmetric and imbalanced in favor of the company like the *stakeholder response strategy*: it is "a predominantly one-sided approach, as the company has the sole intention of convincing its stakeholders of its attractiveness" (Morsing & Schultz 2006, p. 327). As regard Twitter, Etter (2013) has called this strategy "reactive strategy" because it is characterized by high responsiveness, but entails a low proactive communicative behavior. In this case SM are used only to convince the stakeholders of the firm's attractiveness and are mostly used as a CRM tool in order to answer to customer's requests. Morsing and Schultz consider this strategy as a method of supporting and reinforcing corporate actions and identity in order to achieve endorsement from external stakeholders. This strategy could be defined as a "re-active strategy rather than pro-active engagement in the communication processes" (Morsing & Schultz, 2006a).

The respondent SMMr, even if he/she uses SM in a strategic way it doesn't allow a real stakeholder engagement (Freeman, 1984). He/she develops only the phase of envisioning in the sensemaking process without looking for a dialogue with stakeholders (Korschun & Du, 2013). As a consequence, the respondent SMMr cannot develop a stakeholder involvement strategy because he/she focuses the attention more on the firm side without considering stakeholders as potential innovators.

The caring SMMr: a manager who adopts Social Media in a strategic way with the aim to give sense to stakeholders about firm's strategy. This category is represented by managers who take care of stakeholder dialogues and who wish to pro-actively involve stakeholders in order to create a dialogue with them. In this case the firm has a clear SM strategy which is integrated with the firms's communication strategy. Thanks to Social Media they adopt a

stakeholder involvement strategy (Morsing & Schultz 2006) by continuously create new content, reply to comments and questions. The caring SMMr makes best use of Social Media's potential because he/she enables a symmetric two-way interaction. As suggested by Etter (2013), through this strategy – called engagement strategy – “companies can enhance aspects of relationships such as trust or commitment, which lead to beneficial outcomes for both, the organization and the public”.

The caring SMMr will take care of the stakeholder dialogues online and also of the firm's CSR strategy. He/she will become the figure in charge to engage stakeholders, to create trust and to improve stakeholder awareness about CSR activities carried on by the firm. Thanks to comments and tweets provided by stakeholders online, he/she will monitor the reputation of the firm and also provide inputs to the CEO in order to maintain or to change the CSR Strategy.

4. Investigating the roles of the Social Media Manager in CSR Communication

By analyzing the four roles of the Social Media Manager we can state that we move from a communicator role (the informer SMMr) to a open-strategy role (the caring SMMr). The first one is the person in charge only of the communication whose aim is to spread information about the organization online without developing an interactive dialogue with stakeholders. On the other hand, the caring SMMr has an open-strategy role (Chesbrough & Appleyard 2007) because he/she activates mechanisms for stakeholder integration (Driessen et al. 2013) for the definition of the strategy. “Open strategy builds on the notion of open innovation, the process by which corporations increasingly innovate the pooling knowledge and ideas with communities of external agents, e.g. users, business partners and universities”(Whittington et al., 2011, p. 534). In this way, SMMr encourage stakeholders to co-create value (Vargo & Lush, 2004,) and he/she can also innovate the CSR strategy by gaining ideas and suggestions from stakeholders because they “can contribute to the design of CSR programs in ways such as determining which social or environmental issues to address, how to allocate funds among alternative recipients, which non-profit organizations the company should partner with, and so on.” (Korschun & Du, 2013, p. 1496). For example Orange, the telecommunication company in France, has developed a website in which users vote for the three best CSR activities they like most. Therefore the company gains ideas and feelings from stakeholders before implementing the CSR program. In addition, as suggested by Korschun and Du (2013), companies can ask stakeholder also to contribute to the implementation of CSR activities by using Social Media. For example Philips developed The Philips Livable Cities #pinyourcity

contest which searched for the most creative Pinterest boards that illustrate why a city is both livable and lovable through a series of images.

By relying on these assumptions we can state the following research propositions:

Proposition 1: The Reflectives SMMr and the Informers SMMr are less likely to achieve positive results⁸ in the CSR Communication because they adopt Social Media in a tactical way.

Proposition 2: The Caring SMMr is more likely to achieve positive results in the CSR Communication because he/she uses Social Media in a strategic way in order to engage stakeholders.

Open strategy is a developing field of study that implies a more open approach towards managing the strategy and policy processes. Whittington et al. (2011) summarized the trend to greater strategy openness by distinguishing two dimensions: greater internal and external transparency with regards to processes and outcomes; greater inclusiveness of various actors in strategy-making, internal and external. By taking into account only the “external side” of the matrix provided by Whittington et al. (2011)⁹ we can find some similarities.

“Transparency refers to the visibility of information about an organization’s strategy, potentially during the formulation process but particularly with regard to the strategy finally produced. [...] Inclusion refers to participation in an organization’s strategic conversation, the exchanges of information, views and proposals intended to shape the continued evolution of an organization’s strategy” (Whittington et al., 2011, p. 536). In our case, transparency can be related to the left side of our matrix (reflective and respondent SMMr), because in this case they are using Social Media to spread information in order to be transparent but they didn’t engage stakeholders in the strategy definition. Inclusion can be related to the right side of the matrix (informer and caring SMMr) where the SMMr not only make sense but also give sense to stakeholders voice about CSR issues by activating a continuous stakeholder dialogue and by engaging them.

As we have already pointed out, Eberle et al. (2013) have found that stakeholders appreciate interactivity and the possibility to speak with the company about CSR issues. It raises stakeholder awareness and reputation of the firm. In addition Korschun and Du (2013)

⁸ For positive results we mean the impact of CSR Communication on consumers in terms of purchase, loyalty and advocacy, as previously highlighted by Du et al. (2010a).

⁹ In this paper we consider Social Media as communication tools towards external stakeholders not internal one (e.g. enterprise social software, Yammer (Bell, 2012)).

suggest that CSR-based communities are more enduring than product-related activities communities because they enhance community identification.

Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that, as suggested by Maignan et al. (2005), the CSR communication is only the last step of their model which outlines the steps to be adopted to properly implement CSR from a marketing perspective. Before starting communicate CSR efforts, a CSR program must align with the values, norms, and mission of the organization, then the firm should identify stakeholder and their needs and after that define the CSR strategy to be implemented. Hence, the communication is only the last part of the process.

As suggested by Holm (2006), the management of communication needs to move from a tactical to a strategic perspective even if, as highlighted by Kitchen & Schultz (2000), most firms are still operating on a tactical level.

Nevertheless the company has to decide what type of SMMr is needed, before starting the process of sensemaking and sensegiving, by taking into account both internal and external pressures. By relying on the literature review, we will suggest a list of internal and external predictors that have an impact both on the decision about the role of the SMMr and on the sensemaking process of the Social Media Manager in the CSR Communication.

Among internal predictors there are firm dimension and business culture.

As suggested by Ziek (2009) and Nielsen & Thomsen (2009), the form and the content of CSR Communication depend on the size of the firm. Nielsen & Thomsen (2009) found that SMEs tended to adopt an overall implicit strategy of silence and not to communicate externally about their CSR activities. In large firms, on the other hand, CSR is better codified and formalized because some tools require the investment of time, financial resources and competencies that SMEs cannot provide (Moretti & Tuan, 2013; Russo & Tencati, 2009). In addition, SMEs consider CSR not as an add-on but rather as part of overall day-to-day management, as a consequence they do not consider essential the communication of their CSR efforts (Coppa & Sriramesh 2013, Russo & Tencati 2009). Baumann-Pauly et al. (2013) have also pointed out that SMEs are characterized by a communication gap, instead MNCs by an implementation gap. MCNs are particularly advanced in promoting external communication and reporting about CSR. In contrast, SMEs are particularly advanced at implementing CSR-related practices in organizational processes and procedures, including engaging employees but constrain external communication and reporting about CSR. In general, indeed, several scholars have highlighted the influence of the company's size on the adoption of innovations (e.g. Ko et al. 2008; Swanson, 1994).

For business culture we mean the firm's cultural approach and the manager personal values, which can have an impact on the CSR Communication. Many scholars have highlighted the importance of a "stakeholder oriented culture" in order to implement CSR Communication. "Stakeholder culture is the extent to which an organizational culture adopts self-interest or rejects them in favour of other-regarding sentiments" (Maon et al. 2010, p.25). Jones et al. (2007) built a typology of five corporate stakeholder culture which comprises a continuum of concerns for others, ranging from self- to other-regarding: agency culture, corporate egoist culture, instrumentalist culture, moralist culture and altruist culture. As Maon et al. (2010) suggest, "there are contingent relationships between the dominant stakeholder culture of an organizations and its propensity and ability to respond to social expectations" (26). As a consequence we can assume that the type of stakeholder culture has an influence on the CSR Communication.

Furthermore, the first step of the Maignan et al. (2005)'s framework - which provides a step-by-step approach for implementing CSR from a marketing perspective - is the identification of "the organizational values and norms that are likely to have implications for CSR" (965). Then, as suggested also by Etter et al. (2011), CSR Communication is restricted by managerial skepticism and internal guidelines and culture.

Driessen et al. (2013) focuses on research propositions regarding four organizational structures - hierarchical coordination, mutual adjustment, team based coordination, integrated team structure - to enable the coordination of virtual stakeholder dialogues. Organizations, indeed, should prepare also internally to adopt virtual stakeholder dialogues.

The external predictors are: industry, normative issues/cultural context and stakeholder pressure.

As regard industry, O'Connor and Shumate (2010) suggest that "firms in the same economic industry may be more likely to engage in similar CSR communication" (533). Wanderley et al. (2008) find that country of origin and industry sector have a significant influence on CSR information disclosure, in particular on the web. Also Eisenegger and Schranz (2011), as highlighted in Schultz et al. (2013), suggest that "the ability to obtain reputation gains via CSR activities appears to depend strongly on the industry to which a company belongs" (134).

The cultural context is another important aspect. Matten and Moon (2008) developed the concept of implicit and explicit CSR. They found that organization in Europe tend not to directly communicate CSR initiatives by adopting a more implicit approach. On the other hand in the United States CSR is more explicit and well communicated.

As regard stakeholder pressure, this is an important topic in the CSR literature. Stakeholders are individuals and groups which can affect the company's performance or who are affected by a firm's actions (Freeman, 1984). Clarkson (1995) distinguishes between primary stakeholders, those which are essential for the survival of the organization (e.g. customers, suppliers, governments), and secondary stakeholders, which influence and are affected by the organization but are not engaged in transactions with it (e.g. media, non-governmental organizations). Stakeholders demand integrity, respect, standards, transparency and accountability (Waddock et al. 2002), as a consequence the stakeholder demands have a direct impact on the CSR Communication and on the decisions about the communication tools to adopt.

We argue that these predictors, both internal and external, have an influence first of all on the decision about which kind of Social Media Manager to hire and then on the sensemaking process of the Social Media Manager. Stated as a proposition:

Proposition 3: Firm dimension and business culture have an influence on the Social Media Manager's sensemaking and sensegiving process.

Proposition 4: Industry, stakeholder pressure and normative issues have an influence on the Social Media Manager's sensemaking and sensegiving process.

Social Media can be used by firm also beyond CSR or marketing purposes (Kane et al. 2014). Even more firms are using them also for operational activities (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011), from logistics to innovation (Mount & Martinez, 2014) to recruitment processes (Joos, 2008). Each purpose targets a specific pool of stakeholders and may require different tools. For example, when the SMMr is dealing with information about goods or services, the main target are the customers. In the case of CSR, SMMr has to deal with "a wider array of stakeholder segments (e.g. customers, employees, investors, local community, social issue activists)." (Korschun & Du 2013). As a consequence, we can suggest that in order to communicate the CSR strategy and obtain positive results in terms of reputation and stakeholder identification, the caring SMMr is the recommended role because he/she will develop a sensegiving process and allowing an inclusive open-strategy. It would be interesting to analyze if each function needs a different role of Social Media Manager or if the caring SMMr is the best role for every purpose.

5. Managerial implications

The paper gives rise to different managerial implications:

- **organizational structure and relationship with other departments:** the decision about the role of the SMMr inside the organization will influence the organizational structure of the firm. For example a recent contribution of Driessen et al. (2013) describes organizational structures and systems to coordinate issues emerging from virtual stakeholder dialogues. As previously highlighted, most firms don't have a specific social media department but the SMMr is inside PR or marketing department. The decision about which kind of SMMr to have (Fig. 2) has an impact on the organizational structure. For example, the caring SMMr will continuously manage social media and create a dialogue with other departments in order to share ideas and to reporting stakeholder needs which arise online. In addition, as regard the CSR strategy, the link between the SMMr and the CSR department will be very close. As a consequence it is interesting to analyze which are the connections between those departments and the CSR department inside the firm. For example the Social Media Manager of illycaffè, said that when they speak about CSR issues on Social Media, they always rely on data published in the Sustainability report (Moretti & Tuan, 2013). The CSR Department and the Social Media Department (or PR/Marketing which usually deal with Social Media) should be very interconnected because SMMr needs inputs from the CSR Department in order to communicate the CSR activities and, on the other hand, he/she can give feedbacks to CSR managers thanks to comments/opinions of online stakeholders. Also other scholars have highlighted the importance of a cross-departmental culture within organization to execute a CSR program successfully (Lindgreen, Swaen, & Johnston, 2009; Maon et al., 2010).
- **budget:** if the firm decides to hire a caring SMMr, it should be aware that this kind of strategy requires an adequate budget related to communication. A caring SMMr indeed should be continuously related only to Social Media management because he/she should continuously monitor what happens online, answer to stakeholder needs and comments and react to crises in real time. On the other hand the informer SMMr can be involved also in other department, i.e. marketing or PR, and should manage social media only sometime during the daily work. As a consequence there are budget issues which have to be taken into account.

Another point which deserves further attention is the budget allocation related to Social Media when it deals with CSR. Given that the two areas could be overlapped, managers should well define the budget allocation in advance.

- **metrics and KPIs:** depending from the type of SMMr role there are also different metrics and KPIs which can be used. We can indeed hypothesize that a caring SMMr would use different metrics from an informer SMMr. The first one will be more oriented to the result in terms of conversion and revenue improvement and he/she will use more analytics data. The caring SMMr will be more interested into the value generate from the engagement of stakeholders, the community development and the enhancement of interactions. As suggested by Korschun and Du (2013), dialogue generate value for the company and for the cause by fostering identification with the community of virtual CSR dialog participants and altering a stakeholder's expectations of the company's social responsibility and diminishing skepticism of stakeholders. By the way, measuring the value created through social media is not an easy task. For example the SMMr of the firm Maerks said: "How can you quantify a value that isn't just about customers and sales, but about employee engagement, customer insights, innovation—we've gotten ideas from shipping experts and what's the value of that insight that will influence a management decision?" (Katona & Sarvary, 2014, p. 154). Peters et al. (2013) indeed state that "every organization need to choose the appropriate metrics for its specific dashboard tied to its organizational goals, structure, social media selection, etc." (p. 289). Further research could fill this gap.

6. Concluding thoughts

This paper represents a first attempt to define the roles of the Social Media Manager in the CSR Communication. We have designed the four roles of the Social Media Manager by intersecting tactical/strategic communication and sensemaking/sensegiving process. Then we have defined the risks and benefits related to each figure in relation to CSR Communication. At the end we have analyzed which are the organizational and managerial issues related to the implementation of a Social Media Strategy. The paper gives rise to several future lines of research.

First of all, the framework provided in Figure 1 should be analyzed through empirical qualitative research by using an ethnographic approach with semi-participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis in order to track the process of adoption

and management of Social Media in the CSR Communication and understand how SMMr interact with stakeholder and top management. As suggested by Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991), “research approaches designed to investigate such processes must be not-intrusive, longitudinal, and capable of tracing the unfolding changes” (p. 435). In order to gain more information and take an overall picture of the phenomenon, it would be interesting to triangulate data by content analyze the communication on Social Media developed by the Social Media Manager in order to track the developments and the changing strategies.

As regard the roles of the SMMr, further research could conduct a questionnaire to the SMMr in one or different countries in order to analyze which are the skills, the best career path and education background required for each role. A quantitative analysis could be useful in order to better define the profile, the organizational role, the skills and the tasks in which he/she is involved. It would be interesting as well to define what is influencing the role of the SMMr, such as internal features (i.e. age, skills, experience, background) or firm’s features (i.e. firm dimension, CSR oriented or not). Additional research should try to better grasp the differences and similarities between SMMr inside the companies and as freelance or consultant agencies’ employees.

Finally, given that this paper has developed in particular the case of CSR, another line of research could investigate other phenomena, such as the role of the SMMr in the innovation processes or in the recruiting and human resource management in order to understand if the role of the SMMr differ in base of the purposes of Social Media.

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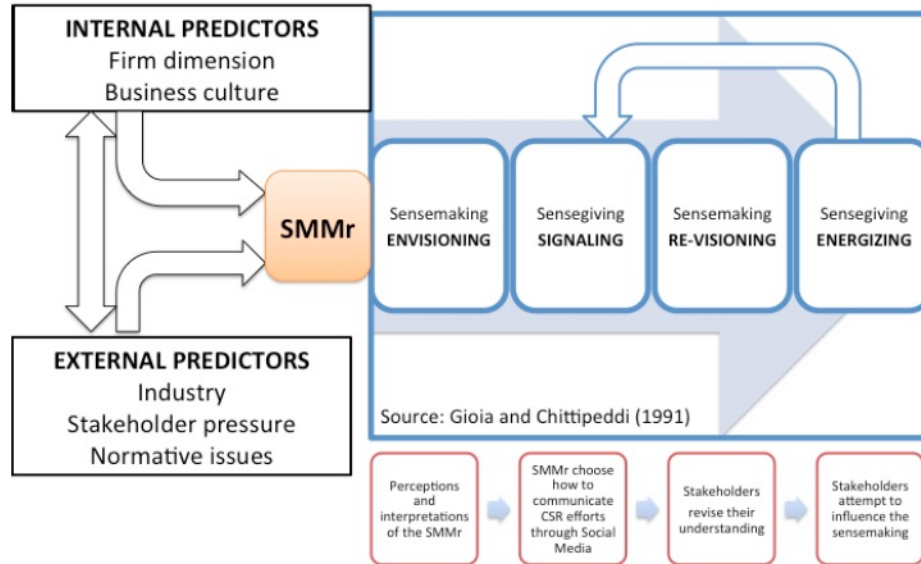
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Fig. 1 Theoretical framework



Source: own elaboration

Fig. 2: The roles of the Social Media Manager

	<i>Sensemaking</i>	<i>Sensegiving</i>
<i>Tactic</i>	REFLECTIVE SMMr	INFORMER SMMr
<i>Strategic</i>	RESPONDENT SMMr	CARING SMMr

Source: own elaboration

**EXPLORING CSR COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL
MEDIA MANAGEMENT IN ILLYCAFFE':
AN ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGERIAL ISSUES**

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**EXPLORING CSR COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL
MEDIA MANAGEMENT IN ILLYCAFFE':
AN ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGERIAL ISSUES**

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to show how CSR Communication on Social Media is actually implemented and managed in business practice by a coffee company in Italy with a proved track record in CSR related activities. The paper aims to analyze whether this implementation in the firm is consistent or not to the path derived from the sensemaking and sensegiving framework as it has been proposed by Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) and adapted by Tuan (2015) in the social media landscape.

Methodology: Consistent with the explorative aim of the study, this paper employs a case study approach.

Findings: From a theoretical perspective, the paper highlights that the sensemaking framework is a suitable tool to assess a firm's practical effort in the area of CSR Communication. From a practitioner perspective, the application of the sensemaking and sensegiving framework may help in the identification of the main challenges and benefits related to CSR Communication.

Originality: The paper ends by suggesting several recommendation for the further CSR Communication implementation of the company analyzed and for business practice in general.

Keywords: *CSR Communication, Social Media, Case Study, Sensemaking*

1. Introduction

Companies are increasingly being held accountable for the social and environmental consequences of their activities (Porter & Kramer, 2006). However, implementing CSR strategies and, moreover, communicating CSR to stakeholders can be a challenge for organizations (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010).

In particular, regarding CSR Communication, researchers have proposed that, in order to achieve good results, CSR Communication strategy should allow a two way dialogue to engage stakeholders (Castelló, Morsing, & Schultz, 2013; Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010). Social Media have created a host of opportunity to interact and to have a dialogue with and

among a great number of stakeholders. But, as noticed also by some scholars (e.g. Etter, Morsing, & Castello, 2011; Moreno & Capriotti, 2009) firms are mainly using Social Media to communicate information about products and services and not to communicate CSR issues. This study adopts a sensemaking and sensegiving framework in order to analyze how the company develops and communicates its CSR strategy on Social Media and how it engages stakeholders in the conversation. We use as our case study illycaffè Spa, a leading coffee company in Italy which enables stakeholder engagement in different ways.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows: first, we briefly review CSR Communication and Social Media literature. Second we introduce the basics of the sensemaking framework as it has been proposed by Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) and then adapted by Tuan (2015). Third we outline the methodology and provide details about the case developed for this study. Then, we present the study's findings by examining how the CSR Communication implementation process of illy does match the sensemaking framework. Finally, we discuss the study's theoretical and managerial contributions, along with possible avenues for further research.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 CSR Communication and Social Media Marketing

The topic of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Communication has grown significantly along the years even if, in comparison to the vast literature about CSR, it is still underdeveloped (Ihlen & May, 2011). Morsing & Beckmann define CSR Communication as “a communication that is designed and distributed by the company itself about its CSR efforts” (2006, 171). CSR Communication represents an important but, at the same time, challenging topic because it may breed skepticism rather than achieving goodwill about organization (Lindgreen, Swaen, & Johnston, 2009, Ihlen et al. 2011). On the other hand, communication can provide also the potential to help constitute stakeholder participation (Ihlen et al. 2011). As a consequence, firms should have the capacity to communicate their CSR efforts by establishing congruence between social expectation and CSR agenda (Colleoni, 2013).

“The challenge is for companies to be perceived as socially responsible across stakeholders. The difficult is in how to make it known and acknowledged by stakeholders, that the company is dedicated to a path of social responsibility and further, to what extent and how the company deliberately should communicate it” (Morsing, Schultz, & Nielsen, 2008, p. 98).

Given that CSR communication is directed to many potential audiences, ranging from

investors to customers and employees, a company should tailor its CSR communication to the specific need of stakeholder groups (Du et al. 2010, Morsing et al. 2008). In particular, Morsing et al. (2008) have developed a CSR Communication model with two CSR Communication processes: the expert one and the endorsed one. The first one is directed towards an exclusive group of respected opinion makers (politicians, organizational members, NGOs, journalists, local authorities), instead the endorsed one refers to the general public and customers. In addition, they suggest an inside-out approach (start by involving and committing employees on all issues of corporate CSR policies) in order to implement a trustworthy CSR communication.

As regard the communication tools used by firms to communicate their CSR activities, Du et al. (2010) have provided a list of possible CSR message channels through which information about a company's CSR activities can spread: corporate and independent channels. The corporate one are directly controlled by the company: CSR Reports, Corporate websites, PR, Advertising, Point of Purchase. The independent one are those which cannot be entirely controlled by the company such as Media coverage and word of mouth.

According to Jahdi & Acikdilli (2009), "any and ever marketing communication tool is capable of conveying a company's CSR message and contributing to its corporate image and equity" (106).

Du et al. (2010) refer to a tradeoff between controllability and credibility in communicating CSR and argue that the more controllable the source of communication is, the less credible the message will be perceived to be. As a consequence they suggest the use of blogs and Social Media in order to create credible word of mouth about the organization's CSR among its stakeholder (Fieseler et al. 2009).

Also Korschun and Du (2013) suggest that Social Media represent for firms an important opportunity to improve relationships with internal and external stakeholders and to strengthen their engagement, an aspect which represents a fundamental milestone in CSR literature. Employing Social Media in the CSR context can generate substantial value for companies and society and assert that virtual CSR dialogs lie in the intersection between Social Media and CSR. Virtual CSR dialogs are defined as "company's strategic utilization of social media technologies to proactively engage stakeholders in CSR activities" (Korschun and Du 2013, 1495). As a consequence, we will suggest that Social Media lie in between Corporate channels and independent channels because they are tools managed by the firms but influenced also by stakeholders. Social Media are indeed changing the ways in which

consumers can connect with firms and become aware of the CSR efforts. Social Media have empowered consumers to connect, share and collaborate, creating spheres of influence that have fundamentally altered the way marketers engage in influencing activities (Driessen et al. 2013). The interactive nature of Social Media is likely to blur the role integrity of sellers and customers by expanding the role of customers and including them in the creation of value becoming co-creators and co-producers (Fieseler et al., 2009; Vargo & Lush, 2004). With the rise in Social Media, the power is even more shifted from the marketing managers to individuals and communities (Kietzmann et al. 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

There is an increasing and aborning attention in the literature towards the importance of Social Media in the CSR Communication (e.g. Colleoni 2013, Fieseler and Fleck 2013).

This phenomenon could be considered as a consequence of the increasing attention of firms towards Social Media (Nielsen 2012) which is demonstrated also by the growing number of paper related to Social Media in the marketing literature, as pointed out by Pomirleanu (2013).

Social Media can change the way organizations communicate and engage in relationships, facilitating the bidirectional and symmetrical communication among organizations and stakeholders (Capriotti, 2011). For this reason it is even more important for firms to have a clear CSR Communication strategy and to develop a strategic plan in order to communicate CSR efforts and to create two-way dialogue with stakeholders by fostering engagement and awareness about CSR efforts carried out by the firm. For organizations, “it is no longer sufficient to merely communicate CSR activities, they have to incorporate stakeholders into the CSR process and engage in dialogue” (Bartlett and Devin, 2011, p. 54). In the CSR communication process the risk of greenwashing and skepticism of stakeholders is indeed very high (Birth, Illia, Lurati, & Zamparini, 2008). In order to avoid them, Capriotti (2011) suggest to evolve from CSR Communication as a tactical tool for CSR management towards CSR Communication as a strategic part of CSR management.

Nevertheless, in order to properly manage stakeholder relationships and company reputation, a firm should integrate CSR in the overall strategy and to choose the most suitable marketing and communication tools (Fieseler, Fleck, & Meckel, 2009).

2.2 Sensemaking and sensegiving in CSR Communication

Sensemaking is considered a fruitful method to investigate the links between CSR Communication and Social Media (Nijhof & Jeurissen, 2006; Schultz, Castelló, & Morsing, 2013).

Morsing & Schultz (2006) have developed three strategies related to the CSR Communication with an increasing level of sensemaking and sensegiving: informative, response and involvement strategy.

The most used framework used by scholars to analyze a phenomenon through sensemaking theory is the one provided by Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) which has been adapted by Tuan (2015, forthcoming) in the Social Media landscape.

As we can see in Figure 1, the framework is developed in four steps which progressed from an envisioning to a energizing phase. In the original model of Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991), authors used this framework to analyze the processes involved in the initiation of strategic change. In that case, the actor was the CEO, instead in the adapted framework provided by Tuan (2015) there is the figure of the SMMr, considered as middle managers, who starts the process of sensemaking and sensegiving by adapting to stakeholder needs and taking into account both internal (firm dimension and business culture) and external (industry, stakeholder pressure, normative issues) predictors.

INSERT FIGURE 1

During “**Envisioning**”, the SMMr makes sense of the situation and tries to understand how to communicate the firm’s CSR strategy in order to gain legitimacy by stakeholders. It is followed by the sensegiving stage “**Signaling**”, wherein the SMMr, by taking into account internal and external pressures, attempts to communicate to stakeholders the CSR Communication strategies by using Social Media. “**Re-visioning**” is a sensemaking effort by the stakeholders who try to figure out the meaning of the CSR Communication provided by the firm and revise their understanding. The final stage “**Energizing**” is a sensegiving effort by the stakeholders wherein they attempt to influence the SMMr’s strategy and perceptions. The loop arrow indicates that the stakeholders issues have an impact on the strategy definition. Thanks to comments, replies and posts, stakeholders can influence the CSR Communication Strategy of the firm.

The phase of envisioning and revisioning are related to “cognition” and understanding, the other two are influencing and action related.

This framework will be used in order to analyze the case study of illycaffè Spa and to follow the path of the SMMr in developing the CSR Communication strategy.

3. Methodology

For this study we used a qualitative methodology to address the research questions. Qualitative techniques are common in the study of sensemaking in organizational research (Craig-Lees, 2001) and it is particularly useful when concepts and contexts are ill defined as in the case of CSR (Maon, Lindgreen, & Swaen, 2009).

Consistent with the explorative aim of this work, this paper employs a case study approach “that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context” (Yin, 1989). Thus, our research is inductive given that we seek to augment our preliminary framework with in-depth understanding that will enable us to provide empirical evidence about the framework.

In order to improve methodological rigor and understanding, we obtain secondary data and conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews with three managers in an Italian coffee company, illycaffè. In particular we interviewed in July 2013 and November 2014 three key informants, the Global PR Director and Chief Sustainability Officer, the Social Media & Web PR Manager Global PR Dept and the Social Media Manager Junior Global PR Dept.

Then, for triangulation purposes, we cross-check other data sources to reduce selectivity and reporting bias. We review company-issued internal documents, personal research notes, Balance Sheets, the 2012 and 2013 Sustainability Value Reports, the company’s website, social media posts, press releases and information on external website.

As regard Social Media, through the software Nvivo, we have downloaded all the tweets and Facebook posts from 2009 until November 2014. We have chosen only these two Social Media because they contain both text and images and they are the most used by the Social Media Managers. The website has been checked from April 2013 to November 2014 every two months in order to analyze the developments.

This firm has been chosen as typical Italian firm, family owner, with a proven track record in CSR related activities as it has been recognized by independent arbiters like DNV (Det Norske Veritas) which in 2011 conferred its first-ever global Responsible Supply Chain Process Certification to illycaffè in recognition of its sustainability efforts.

The case study approach allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 1989). In addition, the strength of a case study approach is that it provides opportunities to study a phenomenon in depth and it potentially gives a context rich analysis (Yin, 2003). Interviews were analysed by drawing out a number of key CSR Communication themes and comparing the interviewee responses. Quotes are used to illustrate key research findings.

In conducting our case study we undertake extensive research to understand the contextual issues that surround the organization. The aim of our data collection process was to develop rich, in-depth case history of the CSR Communication process.

4. Case study analysis

4.1. The company profile

Illycaffè Spa is a company in Trieste (Italy) founded in 1933 when the company founder Francesco Illy developed the modern espresso machine. The illy family remains deeply involved in company leadership. Joining CEO Andrea Illy are his brother Riccardo Illy, vice president, and sister Anna Illy, who continues the pioneering work with coffee growers on four continents of their father, the late Dr. Ernesto Illy, who passed away in 2008 and was the son of Francesco.

It is a worldwide brand, the illy blend is now sold in over 140 countries, across 5 continents.

At the end of 2013 the employees were 1056 and the revenue € 373,9 millions.

The attention of the company towards CSR issues is embedded inside the company from its origin. It is highly visible by reading the mission, the vision and the values stated by the company and by checking the amount of CSR initiatives carried out by the company (see Figure 2).

INSERT FIGURE 2

The CSR Strategy of illy is really integrated in the firm's overall strategy becoming part of it and it is not adopted for ceremonial reasons. It is institutionalized into the organization and considered part of the culture because they have been adopted as the long-term strategy and decision-making guide. As suggested by Kostova & Roth (2002), managerial practices that are only adopted for ceremonial reasons have low effectiveness. "In order to be sustainable, activities must be institutionalized into the organization and considered part of the culture, because they have been adopted as the long term strategy and decision making guide" (Maon et al., 2009, p. 83).

As pointed out by Elkington (1997) Sustainability has three-fold areas which have been also translated by illycaffè: economic, social and environmental.

"Economic sustainability is pursued through the creation of value for all stakeholders, from farmers who earn above market prices in exchange for meeting quality standards, to the consumer, who enjoys a better coffee experience thanks to this quality.

Social sustainability is based on the concept of individual growth and self-fulfillment, starting from coffee-growing communities enjoying improved living conditions due to rising incomes.

Environmental sustainability is achieved through respect for the planet through, for example low-impact growing practices and recyclable packaging.”

(illycaffè website - accessed 20/11/2014)

The attention towards stakeholder engagement is clear when illy defines itself a **stakeholder company** because it considers respect for the environment and people that nurture coffee a fundamental part of doing business and pursues the improvement of life through economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The engagement process is being built according to the principle of the continuous improvement and includes four logical steps:

- Stakeholder analysis: identification of the key stakeholder, definition of the key themes and issues, analysis of the company commitment in relation to the themes identified.
- Adoption of an engagement strategy: definition of the deepening grade (themes and actors); definition of the operational planning.
- Engagement implementation: how to involve the actors; engagement technics and methods verification.
- Strategy verification. Results evaluation, improvement actions.

This path follows the step-by-step framework provided by Maignan, Ferrell, & Ferrell (2005)¹ which highlight the importance of two feedbacks loops to gain stakeholder feedbacks, as input for the next audit and an input to reassess the first three steps of the CSR management process in the long run.

“In the hierarchy of stakeholders, consumers are at the top, followed by customers; next are the employees, followed by the suppliers who ensure the production of an excellent product; then there are communities with which illycaffè enters into relationships; and, finally, the shareholders, who own the company.” (Sustainability Value Report 2012, p. 11).

¹ The framework provides eight steps to implement CSR from a marketing perspective: 1. discovering organizational values and norms; 2. identifying stakeholders and their respective salience; 3. identifying the main issues of concern to the identified key stakeholders; 4. assessing a meaning of CSR that fits the organization of interest; 5. auditing current practices; 6. prioritizing and implementing CSR changes and initiatives; 7. promoting CSR by creating awareness and getting stakeholders involved; 8. gaining stakeholders' feedback.

The aim to engage stakeholders is accomplished in different ways. During the interview the Sustainability Chief Officer explained them for each stakeholders:

- **Consumers:** *we speak with them every day in an indirect way through media (press releases, ...) and in a direct way through social media. We have been evaluated by ICRT (the independent international organisation for consumer research and testing) as the most worldwide sustainable company in the coffee industry.*
- **Customers:** *our sales people are the spokesperson to our clients. They should speak with them, listen to them and explain sustainability issues. Outside Italy there is a growing attention towards these issues so our employees have to be aware about.*
- **Suppliers:** *“we have an internal structure of agronomists that run constantly in the countries and meet farmers and collaborators. We have 24 Universities of coffee around the world where farmers can learn how to manage their plantations also from an economic point of view in order to obtain the maximum profit. In this way we know each farmer and also for this reason we are the first company in the world to have a Responsible Supply Chain process Certification.”*

In March 2011, indeed, illy became the world's first company to earn the Responsible Supply Chain Process certification from DNV (*Det Norske Veritas*), one of the world's foremost, independent industrial process arbiters. The certification attests to the sustainable practices of illy's supply chain, and in particular, to the quality of illy's relationships with its suppliers: the world's highest coffee growers. In 2013 the Group confirmed its support to additional programs and specific initiatives to implement the sustainability strategies and to improve its impact, including adhesion to the Global Compact, a voluntary agreement with the Italian Ministry of the Environment and Protection of Land and Sea for the analysis, education, and neutralization of the coffee sector's impact on climate, and participation in major international conferences on sustainable development.

“We guarantee what happens in the plantations and, as a consequence, we can tell our attention towards CSR without having risks of greenwashing.” – Chief Sustainability Officer

4.2. The management of Sustainability

In illycaffè the PR Department is managing CSR issues because, as the SMMr says, *“the main aim is to create connections with all the stakeholders because it is very important to have continuous interaction with them.”*

The presence of CSR function inside PR Department is the most common situation also in Swiss companies, as highlighted by Birth et al. (2008).

Moreover as sustainability is an integral part of the corporate vision and business strategy, illycaffè strengthened the governance and control mechanisms by establishing in 2010 a **Sustainability Committee** chaired by the Global PR and Chief Sustainability Officer (see Figure 3).

INSERT FIGURE 3

They meet three/four times a year. Members of the Committee are also two members of the illy family and other managers which have a direct contact with stakeholders (marketing manager, human resource manager, purchasing manager, quality manager).

As reported in Figure 3 the Strategic Committee monitors the communication and strategic reporting activities. The Sustainability committee is dealing with:

- the elaboration of corporate plans and assesment of sustainability in processes and objectives
- periodic monitoring of planned actions
- coordination of chain certification process
- proposal to the strategic committee
- define goals to improve sustainability

The Global PR and Chief Sustainability Officer serves as illycaffè's corporate spokesperson for sustainability issues on a global scale, supervises sustainability related communication programs and issues management, and facilitates and coordinates relations with corporate stakeholders. She is also a member of the Strategic Committee and reports to the latter on the activities, tools and management systems developed for the practice of responsible management.

The illycaffè Strategic Plan also includes special sections dedicated to sustainability projects. The Strategic Committee analyzes and updates the plan periodically to reflect current sustainability issues, and to set objectives and targets.

Driessen et al. (2013) have developed four organizational structures to enable the coordination of virtual stakeholder issues.

In the Sustainability Committee of illy we can find some similarities with the **team based coordination**. It “refers to a structure with a cross-functional team in command of virtual communication with stakeholders and coordinating their issues, similar to a project team

structure. [...] more people have a say in decision-making if various functional disciplines are involved. Communication is multilateral across functions, providing more opportunity for frequent and diverse information exchange”

As regard the measurement of CSR objectives, *“we are working on KPI internally and externally even if the certification identifies some specific KPI to follow. The Sustainability Committee has recently developed a road map in order to analyze the sustainability priorities and identify the most important ones. The next step will be to identify the parameters to measure the priorities to develop.”*

This quotation clearly demonstrates that the measurement of the effect of CSR is not an instrument that is integrated into the overall strategy of the company yet.

4.3 CSR Communication tools

In order to communicate CSR, illycaffè is adopting an informative strategy.

As suggested by Morsing and Schultz (2006) there are three strategies to communicate CSR: informative, response and involvement strategy with higher degree of sensemaking and sensegiving. Even if illy is doing a lot of efforts to communicate correctly CSR issues, through various channels, it hasn't developed an involvement strategy.

To share its business strategy with its stakeholders, in 2010 illycaffè established a Sustainability Manifesto, which, with the Code of Ethics, represents illycaffè's commitment to responsible business management in economic, social, and environmental terms.

In 2011, illy published the first release of the Sustainability Value Report, which describes the strategies and actions illycaffè uses to implement sustainability in its various forms: economic, social and environmental. The aim of the report, drafted in accordance with the rigorous GRI-G3.1 sustainability reporting guidelines and verified by an independent third party, is to illustrate how the company's values translate into performance thanks to its global approach to responsible management. After the first release, each year illycaffè publishes the Report online (only few copies have been printed) and, throughout the years, it tries to integrate it with Social Media in order to engage better stakeholders. Nevertheless the Value Report is more static than dynamic and the communication on Social Media about CSR issues don't show an engagement strategy yet.

In occasion of the third Sustainable Value Report, illy has developed in Italy two specific engagement initiatives, an internal and an external one. Thanks to a questionnaire, they have collected the opinion of about 50 of employees's from the different departments: production, bookkeeping, research, communication, marketing, supply chain etc., about the Sustainable

Value Report.

In addition, they have developed a multi-stakeholder workshop during which comments, ideas, suggestions have been collected from our main representatives' contacts and from experts with recognised credits such as the Ministry of the Environment, Italy Global Compact Network, The Active Citizens Foundation, Confindustria Trieste, the Trieste University, Suppliers and Sales Representatives.

The website has been integrated with a specific area dedicated to Sustainability from 2005. In particular, in 2005 it was under the category “firm”, then it has assumed more relevance in the website.

Another way used to communicate Sustainability is through events like *“the vernissage organized around the world with the pictures of Sebastiao Salgado, the renowned social photographer. The collaboration with Salgado brings into sharp focus illy’s enduring commitment to sustainable development, its respect for local cultures and its love for the lands that nurture coffee.”*

In addition to traditional media, from 2009 illycaffè started using Social Media like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, when the PR Department acknowledged the necessity to open the firm to virtual dialogues with stakeholders. It was a bottom-up process which from informality became even more important and institutionalized.

“Social Media are managed by the PR Department because the main aim is to create reputation.”

As highlighted by some scholars, “the aim of corporate communication and public relations should concentrate on strengthening corporate reputation instead of building image” (Romenti, 2010, p. 307).

If we think about the adoption phases of Cosenza (2012) we can see that it was a phase of experimentation where the initiators are some employees who have an interest towards social media and started use them. After some years, we can see that the firm is moving from a phase of experimentation to extended adoption in which Social Media have become institutionalized inside the organization and have gained more credibility and visibility. This issue has been confirmed also during the interview. Another person has been indeed hired in June 2011 in the PR Department and in 2012 she started to work on Social Media together with the other Social Media Manager.

“The decision to adopt Social Media raise from the PR department not from the Strategic Committee. We have noticed that our competitors and our clients were on Social Media so it was becoming indispensable to have a Social Media presence.”

As suggested by Vernuccio (2014) there are three principal ways (not alternative) to capitalize on the strengths of social media for brand building purposes:

- using existing social media in public relations programs to reach new online opinion leaders;
- using social media to listen to the voices of the stakeholders in discussions focused on topics relevant to the firm;
- initiating direct interactive platforms feeding them with input from employees and managers and using these one to one and many to many forms of communication to establish, maintain and reinforce the brand's connections, image and reputation.

il.ly has developed the first two points and it is working on the third one.

Nevertheless, even if illycaffè has adopted both traditional and new media in order to communicate to stakeholders, it still lacks a really engagement process with them in the communication.

5. Application of the sensemaking framework on illycaffè

5.1 CSR Communication of illycaffè from a sensemaking and sensegiving perspective

In this section we evaluate the fit between the introduced sensemaking framework and illy's CSR Communication implementation.

In illycaffè, as regard the communication of CSR, the SMMr started the phase of **Envisioning** around 2009. As we have previously seen, during this phase the SMMr makes sense of the situation and became aware of the need to start using SM in order to communicate to stakeholders and tries to understand how to communicate the firm's CSR Strategy. The decision to create a Sustainability Committee chaired by the Global PR Director & Chief Sustainability Officer is another signal related to the attention of illycaffè to develop a specific CSR Communication strategy.

During the phase of **Signaling**, the SMMr attempts to communicate to stakeholders the CSR Communication strategies by using Social Media. At the beginning, they decide to rely always on the Sustainability Value Report themes because they are certified but they have noticed that when they talk about CSR issues they don't receive any feedback from stakeholders. *"It is difficult to create engagement and interaction around CSR posts."* says the Social Media Manager.

As shown in Figure 4, we can see an example of a CSR and product related tweet. The first one has only 2 retweets and 1 star, the last one has more retweets and stars.

INSERT FIGURE 4

Hence it starts a phase of **Re-visioning** by stakeholders which react to the CSR firm's strategy. During this phase the Social Media Manager said that *"we have noticed that the interaction on Social Media about CSR issues is not so high. The Value Report is more for experts, we have to find easier ways to communicate CSR topics."*

It leads to the phase of **Energizing** which tries to modify the second phase of Signaling. By analyzing how the stakeholders react to the CSR Communication strategy the firm is starting to change strategy and they are developing the project Planet 20 in order to communicate in a friendly way.

"Until now we have focused on the corporate communication but we are trying to find more friendly ways in order to communicate CSR issues to stakeholders. The aim is to develop a closer connection with stakeholder about sustainability issues, the Value Report is still too hard to read for a customer. If they want to focus on specific issues they can read it otherwise it is important to find easier tools. For this reason we are starting to work on the project "Planet 20" which thanks to a friendly website, infographics and drawings help the customer to understand the environmental attention of illy products."

Planet 20 is an ongoing project based on the idea to create a planet that in 2020 will be greener, cleaner and happier. In order to achieve this, illy is following 4 essential rules in the effort to make every stage in the production of the coffee more sustainable:

- Respect the environment and other people.
- Do not pollute.
- Do not waste precious energy.
- Use renewable resources as much as possible

At the end of 2014 they have created a webpage inside the main website related to the project but in 2015 it will be more implemented.

Thanks to friendly images and easy language, they communicate the sustainability efforts of the firm and they also try to teach how to be sustainable in our daily activities.

Planet 20 will be the basis to develop the communication strategy of illycaffè.

As we have previously seen, the steps of the framework have been taken by the Social Media Manager who develops the online communication strategy. By analyzing the role of the SMMr in illycaffè we drawn on the matrix provided by Tuan (2015).

The SMMr of illycaffè is still using Social Media in a tactical way, without defining in advance a clear strategy and guidelines.

Until now they used automatic systems in order to inform colleagues from other departments, when they receive suggestion on Social Media. For example, *“we receive a lot of inputs from clients, for example the idea of refilly - a new ground coffee soft refill-pack, which uses less material than the traditional 250 gram and support the carbon footprint project - is born from our clients’ idea about how to reuse the packs.”*

But in few months they are going to have a Social CRM in order to continuously monitor our customer base and add information from Social Media.

As pointed out by Baird & Parasnis (2011) firms should move from Social Media projects to Social CRM: “Social CRM approach takes social media programs a step further, moving beyond the domain of a single function, to implement a cross-functional network of integrated communities with customer-facing responsibilities, such as customer care and sales. This integrated approach treats the customer holistically and facilitates sharing customer insights derived from unstructured data captured through multiple social touch points, as well as structured data from traditional channels.” (p. 31).

As regard the Social Media Metrics, *“the main problem is that social network are very complicated. They follow rules and algorithms that change every weeeek so it is very difficult to define the KPI.*

We use some KPI related to the growing of the fan base but we know that it is not enough. It would be better to focus on quality than quantity. It would be better to analyze the KPIs related to engagement, participation than the number of followers.”

Literature highlights that it is important to have supporters of social media in senior management, as suggested by Katona & Sarvary (2014), also the SMMr of illycaffè said that *“for the PR Department the number of followers (500.000) is important as a signal to give to the board and to the firm.”*

“In a year we grown up from 180.000 to 500.000 thanks to advertising investments. Now things are changed. Last year the cost for acquisition was 0.009 cent now is 0.20 cent, so it requires a lot of investment.”

Peters et al. (2013) indeed have developed some guidelines in order to understand which metrics to use. “Developing and employing adequate metrics to measure engagement levels of consumers — as well as their evolution and heterogeneity—will drive brand managers to more sincere and sustained modes of interaction, i.e., higher quality contacts. Such highly engaged fans, and not necessarily high numbers of them, are crucial in building sustained and

authentic reach in social media. [...] Appropriate quality-based metrics should be preferred over sheer volume numbers when constructing social media dashboard metric” (p. 292).

The challenges explained by the Social Media Manager and the future objectives related to the adoption of a Social CRM and a change in the language in order to engage better stakeholders suggest us that the role of the SMMr in illycaffè is moving from an informer to a caring role.

INSERT FIGURE 5

The informer SMMr is indeed “a manager who adopts Social Media in a tactical way in order to give sense to stakeholders about the firm’s strategy” (Tuan, 2015). In this case the SMMr uses a *stakeholder information strategy* (Morsing & Schultz, 2006) in order to disseminate information about the organization and give sense to stakeholders about the firm’s activities.

On the other hand the caring SMMr is “a manager who adopts Social Media in a strategic way with the aim to give sense to stakeholders about firm’s strategy. This category is represented by managers who take care of stakeholder dialogues and who wish to pro-actively involve stakeholders in order to create a dialogue with them.”

Thanks to Pianeta 20, the new project they are going to launch, the communication will be more friendly and as a consequence there is a possibility to create a direct connection with stakeholders in order to develop more interaction.

5.2. Discussion

Our investigation offers some contributions related to the field of CSR Communication literature.

First of all we have tested the theoretical framework and understood that it could be used by firms in order to investigate in which phase they are and how they can improve their performance. Firms should adopt a sensemaking and sensegiving process in order to understand stakeholders’ needs and to adapt to them. As suggested by Metcalf & Benn (2012), indeed, the new key responsibility for leaders is sensemaking of the external environment as leaders must help the organization stay aware of and adapt to the rapid changes in its industry and new stakeholder demands.

A second set of theoretical implications is related to the adoption of Social Media to communicate CSR. Even if literature underlines the idea to use Social Media in an interactive

way in order to create Virtual CSR dialogs, in practice it is not an easy task at least for the company analyzed.

A structured organization with people dealing with the social media management but also tools, like the Social CRM, can help the firm to create engagement with followers and develop an interaction. We have seen that Social Media need a continuous feeding (Peters et al. 2013) but the big data created in the online environment need to be stored in order to create a sharing knowledge inside the organization and to transmit information among departments. As suggested by Driessen, Kok, & Hillebrand (2013), organizations without proper internal coordination risk to act incoherently on the issues raised by stakeholders. A firm should be prepared internally to manage virtual stakeholder dialogues in order to avoid bad performance and have negative effects on reputation.

Another issue which deserves attention is the type of language used on Social Media. From the case study we have learned that the CSR Communication on Social Media cannot be the same as in the website or in traditional media. Social Media are characterized by a fresh and dynamic content, so it is important to tailor the communication in a friendlier way also regarding issues related to the company's management. As highlighted by Lin & Lu (2011) "enjoyment is the most important factor affecting the behavior of social media users. By enhancing users' posting photos, films, and weblogs, and sharing links on their profiles, social networking sites service providers will be able to make users and their friends feel interested and have fun" (p. 1159). This result is confirmed also by de Vries et al. (2012) who suggest to use vivid brand post in order to engage fans and to increase the number of likes. Vividness can be achieved by the inclusion of dynamic animations, colors and pictures. A video for example is more vivid than a picture because it stimulates more senses. This issue has been highlighted also by the Social Media Manager of illycaffè who has noticed an increasing attention of fans when they post a video on Facebook: "*Videos on YouTube and embedded in Facebook are working very well*".

Even if the case study design doesn't allow for generalization, it contributes to the overall literature about CSR Communication and Social Media by providing an empirical evidence related to the role of the Social Media Manager and the benefits and challenges related to it.

Concerning implications to business practice in general, we think that the framework bears some interesting insights. First, it enables that business can attribute a clear role to the Social Media Manager. Then, it underlines the importance of a Social CRM and specific guidelines in order to manage the complexity related to the adoption of Social Media.

As highlighted also by previous literature, when a firm decides to go online, it should clearly define the objectives and the budget to be dedicated.

6. Conclusion and future research agenda

We conclude that the application of the sensemaking/sensegiving framework yields interesting insights into how CSR Communication is managed and helps to discover the challenges related to the adoption of Social Media for CSR purposes. Additionally, it is very interesting to see that illycaffè is, although CSR oriented from its origin, in a process to a more stakeholder oriented management of their CSR activities. Even if research suggests to use Social Media in order to create engagement with stakeholders and to create value both for the company and for the cause there are some managerial and operational issues which have to be taken into account.

This case study gives rise to different research lines which deserves further analysis. First of all, it would be interesting to analyze, how the Social CRM will be implemented and used by the Social Media Manager and how the information flow will develop.

Then, a multiple case study is suggested in order to test the model and compare different companies from different industries.

Further research is needed in order to analyze social media metrics which represent a very challenging topic for firms. Academic research still lacks empirical evidence about right social media measures to be used in order to understand how Social Media impact on the firm's results.

APPENDIX

Figure 1 – Theoretical framework

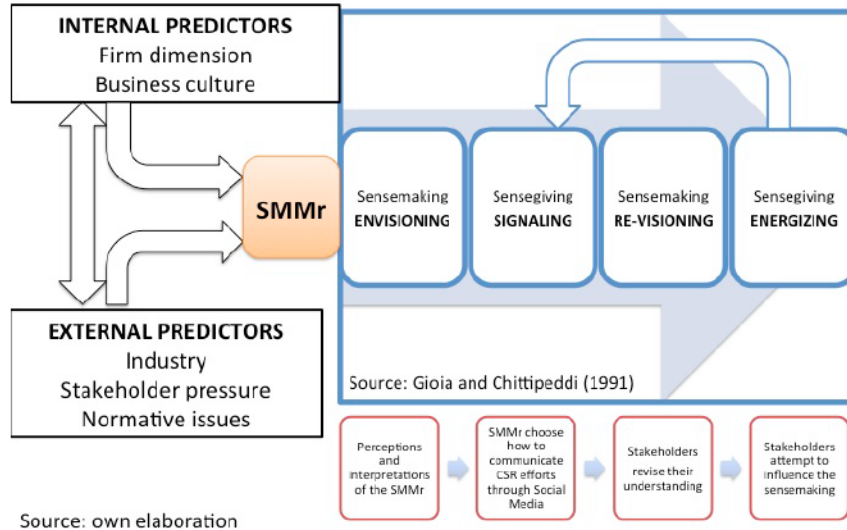


Fig. 2 – Events related to CSR and Social Media

<i>When</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Why</i>
1933		illycaffè was established in Trieste	
1980		Riccardo Illy brings an innovative approach to marketing, distribution and opening up new markets.	
1988	CSR	Becomes the world's first major coffee company to purchase coffee directly from its growers, promoting quality by offering guaranteed margin and profit for achieving company standards.	The attention towards farmers is the value added of the company and of the product
1991	CSR	Premio Ernesto illy para Qualidade do Café Para Espresso	
1996	CSR	Becomes the world's first coffee company to gain the ISO 9001 certification.	Certifications of CSR acknowledge the CSR efforts of the firm
2003	CSR	ISO 14001 Certification	
2004	CSR	EMAS Certification for rigorous environmental standards	
2005	CSR	EMAS Award for continually improving environmental standards	
2005	CSR	British Retail Consortium Certification	
2007	CSR	illy SustainArt to give evidence to emerging countries artists	
2007	CSR	Certification International featured standards for food security	
2008	CSR	Award for Sustainable Conduct in Brasil	
2009	SM	Facebook	Global PR Dpt understood

2009	SM	Twitter	the importance to communicate through Social Media in order to engage stakeholders
2009	SM	YouTube	
2009	SM	Flickr	
March 2011	CSR	DNV Responsible Supply Chain Process Certification, the first company in the world	Attention towards Sustainability issues
2010	CSR	Sustainability Manifesto	Attention towards Sustainability issues
2010	CSR	Sustainability Committee chaired by the Global PR and Responsibility Director	Attention towards Sustainability issues
2010	SM	Blog illywords	To create a dialogue with stakeholders online
June 2012	CSR	Adhesion to the Global Compact, voluntary agreement with the Ministry of the Environment and Protection of Land and Sea	Attention towards Sustainability issues
June 2012	CSR	1° Sustainability Value Report published on the website valuereport.illy.com	Development of CSR Communication
2012	SM	GooglePlus	
2012	SM	Instagram	
2013	CSR+SM	2° Sustainability Value Report, more integrated with social media	Development of CSR Communication
2014	CSR	World's Most Ethical Companies (the only one in Italy)	
June 2014	CSR+SM	3° Sustainability Value Report, more attention to stakeholder engagement in the development of the Report	Development of CSR Communication
October 2014	CSR+SM	Refilly	The idea came from costumers → innovation
November 2014	CSR	International Consumer Research & Testing evaluates illycaffè as the most worldwide sustainable company in the coffee industry	Attention towards Sustainability issues
2015	SM	Social CRM	In order to manage data related to stakeholders online and answer to their needs
2015	CSR+SM	Planet 20	In order to create a fresh and direct dialogue with stakeholders and allow them to become aware of sustainability issues

Figure 3 – Sustainability Management



Source: Sustainability Value Report 2013

Figure 4 – example of a CSR and product related Tweet



Figure 5 – Social Media Manager matrix

	Sensemaking	Sensegiving
Tactic	REFLECTIVE SMMr	INFORMER SMMr
Strategic	RESPONDENT SMMr	CARING SMMr

Source: own elaboration

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**CHANGING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON TWITTER:
AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION ON THE TWITTER ACCOUNTS
OF THE TOP 100 EUROPE FT FIRMS**

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**CHANGING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON TWITTER:
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Abstract

Purpose of the paper: The purpose of this paper is to investigate the communication strategies on Twitter used by the first 100 FT Europe firms and the motivations related to the changing communication strategies. Despite the increasing attention of firms towards social media and towards stakeholder engagement, academic literature lacks empirical evidence about the usage of Social Media to engage stakeholders.

Methodology: We scrape tweets from the Twitter accounts of the top 100 European firms ranging from January 2010 until May 2014. We compute confidence intervals based on monthly polynomial regressions. Outliers enable us to determine extraordinary communication activity, which we then code based on grounded theory (open, axial, selective coding) in order to understand the topics they were dealing with. After that, we have carried on a qualitative analysis in order to investigate the motivations behind the changing strategies over time.

Main findings: After having provided a new typology of communication strategies on Twitter, our results show that most firms are using a one-way communication towards stakeholders. When they are changing strategies, the majority of firms are moving from a one-way asymmetric communication strategy to a one-way symmetric strategy by increasing the number of Retweets but not replies. Results present also a high attention of firms towards topics related to CSR and Sustainability issues.

Managerial implications: Twitter may be used in different ways to engage stakeholders depending on firm resources, openness to change, and strategic intent.

Research limitations: Our research is limited in two ways. First, we rely on public data on Twitter, whereas firms frequently employ other media outlets, too (e.g., Facebook). Second, we illustrate our approach with data on the top 100 European firms, though smaller firms and firms in other regions of the world may show different communication strategies.

Originality of the paper: We present a first multi-level approach to communication strategies on Twitter.

Keywords: *Twitter, communication strategies, social media, content analysis, mixed method*

INTRODUCTION

Firms of all sizes and all over the world employ Facebook, Twitter¹, and other social media to communicate with a variety of stakeholders on a daily basis. In contrast to ‘old’ media (print, radio, and television), ‘new’ or ‘social’ media offers the opportunity of a two-way dialogue between firms and stakeholders on the internet (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al. 2011). However, many firms are still clinging to the one-way communication that dominated public relations management in the pre-internet era (Capriotti, 2011; Burton & Soboleva, 2011; Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012; Waters & Jamal, 2011). They are using Facebook or Twitter as merely another medium to spread information to an anonymous audience instead of engaging with their stakeholders in a productive dialogue.

Dialogue on social media is particularly useful to facilitate a shift in the relationship between a firm and its stakeholders from confrontation and competition to consultation and cooperation (Kaptein & Tulder, 2003). For example, firms may offer first-hand information to the public and answer customer questions in the wake of a product recall in order to prevent unwarranted speculation or otherwise reputational damage. Other examples are virtual dialogues on corporate social responsibility (Korschun & Du, 2013) or social media as a platform for open innovation (Mount & Martinez, 2014). On the one hand, dialogue enhances firms’ public support, image and, reputation; on the other hand, it raises firms’ accountability (Kent et al. 2003).

Of course, engaging stakeholder in dialogue requires considerable resources, from training personnel to maintaining a 24/7 attention schedule in times of crisis. Therefore, firms may not always opt to follow a single social media strategy but switch from informative, one-way communication to engaged, two-way communication when needed.

Unfortunately, the circumstances under which such changes in corporate communication happen are neither subject to theoretical scrutiny, nor are they illustrated by empirical evidence. In order to fill this void, we first discuss communication strategies apparent in the literature. We then introduce contingencies for a switch between any one of these strategies. A large-scale quantitative analysis of the communication activity on the Twitter accounts of the top 100 European firms then provides first empirical evidence for our theoretical reasoning. In addition, we conduct a content analysis of select Twitter accounts to elaborate on the motivation related to the changes in communication strategies over time by comparing both quantitative and qualitative results. A summarizing discussion of our findings and respective implications for practice conclude our study.

¹ Twitter is one of the most widely used social media sites among Fortune 500 companies, 73% of them are using it to communicate with followers (Swani et al., 2013).

1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.1 Public Relations Management and Stakeholder Dialogue

The use of social media and stakeholder dialogue are part of corporate relations with public audiences. Already in 1984, Grunig and Hunt outline four strategies for public relations management: (1) press agency or publicity, (2) public information, (3) two-way asymmetric communication, and (4) two-way symmetric communication. These four strategies remain largely unchallenged in public relations research (see, for example, Grunig & Dozier, 1992; Ledingham & Bruning, 2000; Rice & Atkin, 2000; Heath & Vasquez, 2001). *Press agency or publicity* defines any one-way communication that aims to achieve favorable media attention. Bluntly speaking, we may call this the propaganda strategy. *Public information* is also a one-way form of communication, but its aim is to distribute objective information to the public. *Two-way asymmetric communication* provides information to the public and, at the same time, allows for feedback from the public. In contrast, *two-way symmetric communication* advocates a free and equal information flow between an organization and the public, which ideally leads to mutual understanding and responsiveness. The latter strategy of two-way symmetric communication is otherwise known as *stakeholder dialogue* and “a co-creation of shared understanding by the company and its stakeholders” (Golob & Podnar, 2011, p. 232). In dialogue, companies learn what issues are important, how to attach meaning to them, and how to integrate them successfully into corporate strategy.

Morsing and Schultz (2006) distill three strategies for the communication of corporate social responsibility (CSR) from the basic notion of public relations management put forth by Grunig and Hunt (1984): (1) information, (2) response, and (3) involvement. The three strategies build on the idea of an increasing degree of interaction between firms and their stakeholders in relation to processes of sensemaking and sensegiving (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Weber & Glynn, 2006).

First, and similar to public information, the *stakeholder information strategy* is characterized by one-way communication in order to create stakeholder awareness about firms’ CSR efforts. Communication is simply a means to an end by which firms disseminate information about their CSR activities to their stakeholders. Typical examples are sustainability reports or leaflets related to CSR activities. Second, the *stakeholder response strategy* makes use of two-way asymmetric communication. Nonetheless, it is “a predominantly one-sided approach, as the company has the sole intention of convincing its stakeholders of its attractiveness” (Morsing & Schultz, 2006, p. 327). Communication is re-active rather than pro-active, though balanced in favor of the firm. It supports and reinforces CSR activities and aims at the endorsement of stakeholders. For example, some firms use non-financial reports on stakeholder relations to demonstrate engagement, though

Morsing and Schultz (2006, p. 334) note that “it is most often done through a simple listing of partners with whom the company interacts.” Third, the *stakeholder involvement strategy* employs two-way symmetric communication. It builds on conversations between firms and their stakeholders beyond simple responses. Firms and their stakeholders enter negotiations about CSR activities which, in turn, are mutually understood, developed, and - if necessary - changed. A vivid example is *Natura Conecta*, a Brazilian cosmetics manufacturer, that uses a wiki to co-create its CSR reports jointly with its stakeholders (Capriotti, 2011). Another example could be the Virtual CSR dialogs cited by Korschun & Du (2013) and defined as “company’s strategic utilization of Social Media technologies to proactively engage stakeholders in CSR activities” (p. 1495).

1.2 Stakeholder Dialogue on Social Media

Neither Grunig and Hunt (1984) nor Morsing and Schultz (2006) envision the changing landscape of stakeholder dialogue in times of ubiquitous use of social media in corporate communication. After all, Facebook only launched its business pages in May 2009 and Twitter was not publicly available until July 2006. Social Media have changed the way firms are communicating with stakeholders. Thanks to them firms create a more direct dialogue with stakeholders. The rise of social media allow firms to increase the public awareness (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), build community, encourage content sharing (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011), increase brand awareness, and create brand loyalty (Rapp, Beitelspacher, Grewal, & Hughes, 2013).

Stakeholders are more satisfied when organizations are responsive to the issues they rise, in particular on Social Media, which results also in more identification (Du et al. 2010; Driessen, Kok, & Hillebrand, 2013) and enhancement of brand equity.

Schultz, Castelló, and Morsing (2013, p. 689) point out that “Corporations – indeed - need to use social media to reflect on how to go beyond their traditional definition of stakeholders as “functional groups” (e.g., consumers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, NGOs) who might impact corporate activities through their agitation in a risky way to seeing them as potential innovative collaborators on environmental issues concerning the company as well as concerning society.” Moreover, Eberle et al. (2013) find that allowing for stakeholder comments on CSR issues affects the credibility of messages and stakeholders' feeling of identification with the company,. Practitioners and scholars, indeed, are seeking to better understand the extent to which social media can and should play a role in customer engagement (Rohm et al. 2013; Schultz, 2013).

Stakeholder dialogue on social media and on Twitter, in particular, has received increasing interest from scholars who readily adopt the communication strategies put forth by earlier research. Etter (2013) translates Morsing and Schultz’ three strategies to the communication of CSR issues on

Twitter. Firms use a *broadcasting strategy* when they disseminate CSR information through tweets. They employ a *reactive strategy* in replying to questions, but otherwise they show a low level of proactive communication. Or they follow an engagement strategy when they reply to questions and also actively address their stakeholders. Colleoni (2013), too, puts forth three communication strategies to deal with broader issues of corporate legitimacy. The *self-centered strategy* defines firms' CSR agenda internally; thus, the communication on Twitter is characterized by the absence of retweets or replies. The *mediated strategy* shows in dialogue between firms and their stakeholders curated by CSR experts. The *dialogical strategy* puts firms and their stakeholders in direct communication and equal positions of power. Burton & Soboleva (2011) match another three communication strategies to the degree of interactivity on Twitter. A low-interactive strategy utilizes Twitter in order to reply to stakeholders. Communication is said to be medium interactive when a tweet contains mentions or retweets. Last, a high-interactive strategy shows in tweets that contain one or more hashtags. ("A Twitter hashtag is a string of characters preceded by the hash (#) character and they are adopted by other users that contribute similar content or express a related idea" (Tsur & Rappoport, 2012).)

Table 1 summarizes communication strategies in stakeholder dialogue with respect to the use of social media.

Figure 1: Communication Strategies in Stakeholder Dialogue

Authors	Grunig and Hunt (1984)	Morsing and Schultz 2006	Etter, 2013	Colleoni, 2013	Burton & Soboleva, 2011
Focus	PR	CSR	Twitter/ CSR	Twitter/ CSR	Twitter
Communication Strategies	press agency/publicist	-	-	-	
	public information	Informative	Broadcasting: dissemination of CSR information	Self-centered: no retweets, no reciprocate social connections	low interactive: just a reply to other tweets
	two-way asymmetric	Response	Reactive: reply to questions but not pro-actively	Mediated: it is mediated by CSR experts	medium interactive: contain retweets or mentions
	two-way symmetric	Involvement	Engagement: reply and react to questions and remarks	Dialogical: mutual connections	high interactive: contain an hashtag

Source: Authors' elaboration

While the three adaptations and translations of Grunig and Hunt (1984) as well as Morsing and Schultz (2006) convincingly show the need to (re)consider corporate communication in general and the communication of CSR issues in particular, the ways scholars identify strategies in an empirical

context are far from credible accounts of practice. This is especially true for shifts in strategy, for example, when firms employ one-way communication to regularly inform their stakeholders about products and switch to two-way communication to discuss serious issues in times of crisis.

While Etter's (2013) classification is the most adherent to Morsing and Schultz's model, he employs a simple increase from tweets to replies to designate communication strategies on Twitter. Colleoni (2013)'s mediated strategy is hard to observe in Twitter to begin with. Tweets that are directed to or posted by expert stakeholders are read by all followers who, in turn, comment on them whether they themselves are experts or not. Her dialogue strategy rests with mutual connections (a.k.a. mutual follows), which do not need to account for tweets at all. Last, consider Burton and Soboleva (2011) who associate high interactivity with the presence of hashtags. While a hashtag signals that a tweet may be associated with a particular topic, it certainly does not yield interactivity or dialogue with stakeholders. Firms may use any number of hashtags without replying to a single tweet, let alone build an ongoing dialogue with their stakeholders.

The shortcomings in operationalizing communication strategies on social media are apparent. Although we do realize the contributions of scholars working from the three strategies introduced by Morsing and Schultz (2006), we reach back to Grunig and Hunt (1984) to introduce our own operationalization of communication strategies on social media and on Twitter, in particular.

1.3 A Framework for the Analysis of Communication Strategies on Social Media

First, we need to mention the basic rules of Twitter. The micro-blogging service allows users to send texts with a maximum of 140 characters (known as *tweets*) to a list of followers. Followers, in turn, can reply to, forward (known as *retweet*), or favor a tweet (Swani, Milne, & Brown, 2013). In turn, these interactions are visible to their followers.

Since replies and retweets are tweets in themselves, we suggest to take the ratio of replies to tweets to identify one-way or two-way communication and the ratio of retweets to tweets to see the difference between symmetric and asymmetric communication strategies. A low ratio of replies to tweets indicates that firms predominantly broadcast information, whereas a high ratio of replies to tweets means that firms are taking stance on the issues raised by stakeholders. A low ratio of retweets to tweets favors tweets coming from firms, whereas a high ratio of retweets to tweets balanced out information coming from firms and their stakeholders. Table 2 displays the cross tabulation of low and high ratios along the lines of Grunig and Hunt (1984).

Figure 2: Communication Strategies on Twitter

	<i>low ratio of replies to tweets</i>	<i>high ratio of replies to tweets</i>
<i>low ratio of retweets to tweets</i>	one-way, asymmetric communication	two-way, asymmetric communication
<i>high ratio of retweets to tweets</i>	one-way, symmetric communication	two-way, symmetric communication

Source: Authors' elaboration

Firms may employ any one communication strategy at a time on Twitter, but they may always change from one to the other. Our below empirical analysis provides first evidence of the contingencies of such changes in communication strategies. Therefore, the Research Questions which guide our study are:

RQ1: *Which are the main topics firms are communicating through Twitter during an outlier period (i.e. high number of tweets/retweets)?*

RQ2: *Which are the motivations behind the decision of the firm to change strategy on Twitter?*

2. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

Quantitative analysis

We employ a mixed-methods approach to illustrate changes in firms' communication strategies for the use of social media. We begin with the Financial Times' (FT) list of the top European firms, which represents not only the most important firms in Europe but also allows us to include different industries in our analysis. Twenty out of the first 140 firms do not have a Twitter account. Another six firms hold an account, but they do not (yet) use it. Our final sample thus comprises of 114 firms with active Twitter accounts. Some firms use more than one account (e.g., one for media relations, another one for customer relationship management), in which cases we chose the official account listed on the respective websites.

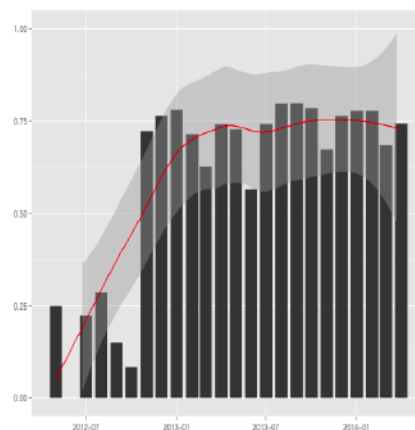
Twitter provides access to a maximum of 3,200 tweets per account on its application programming interface (API). In April 2014, we scrape altogether 197,807 tweets from the 114 Twitter accounts to analyze changes in the communication strategies over time. On average, firms tweet 91,23 times a month with a standard deviation of 69,72. We observe a minimum of one tweet up to a maximum

of 1,064 tweets a month. Our sample then includes firms' use of Twitter ranging from several month to several years depending on the frequency of tweets.

For each account, we compute a number of monthly scores to assess the firms' communication: (1) The number of tweets, (2) the ratio of the number of tweets to replies, (3) the ratio of the number of outgoing retweets to tweets, and (4) the ratio of the number of incoming retweets to tweets. While none of these scores directly represents any one particular communication strategy, shifts in their values over time allow us to pinpoint changes in the ways that firms use social media in stakeholder dialogue. For example, a sudden spike in the ratio of the number of tweets to replies pinpoints a change from a one-way, informative strategy to a two-way, symmetric or asymmetric stakeholder dialogue.

The quantitative analysis of change in communication narrows the window for a subsequent qualitative analysis of communication strategies in use and the change from one to another. First and foremost, our quantitative analysis a first step to break down the sheer amount tweets in order to be able to apply a qualitative analysis of communication strategies without necessarily limiting ourselves to a small amount of data to begin with. Bluntly speaking, it allows us to look in the right places for changes that we may not otherwise see in big data or even get in selections of small data. We determine the changes in any one of the four scores by scores outside the corridor of 99% confidence intervals of polynomial regression analysis (Cleveland, Grosse, & Shyu, 1992). Consider, for example, Figure 1 showing the monthly ratio of the number of replies to tweets from over the course of two years. The ratio breaks out of the confidence interval (grey corridor) in November 2012, which allows us to specifically target 210 tweets in the three month from October to December 2012 (as opposed to 2,741 tweets in all of the two years) for a further qualitative analysis of the communication strategies and the change from one to another.

Figure 3: Ratio of Replies to Tweets for Volvo



Changes, of course, also occur within the confidence interval. But they may be too subtle or indistinct to learn anything about the case why a firm suddenly does something out of the ordinary. Therefore, we limit our analysis to the extremes of major changes.

As a consequence, after having obtained, for each firm, the graphs of tweets, retweets to tweets and replies to tweets, we have compute the strategies by coding them with numbers from 1 to 4 according to the matrix shown in Table 2

1: One-way, asymmetric

2: Two-way, asymmetric

3: One-way, symmetric

4: Two-way, symmetric

We have defined strategies according to high/low ratios of replies and retweets against the sample averages. We have chosen to compare against the sample averages for two reasons:

- comparing against one's own average necessarily yields a change in strategy, because some ratios are necessarily above the average, and vice versa.
- comparing against the entire sample, however, may show a steady strategy, but, by definition, strategy are long term and as a consequence difficult to change.

In the Appendix we can find the histograms of each firm where it is possible to see which kind of strategy they are using overtime and if they are changing strategies. Then, the qualitative analysis will analyze in detail the motivations behind the changing strategies.

Qualitative Analysis

As suggested by Etter (2013), there is a need to analyze Twitter messages on a qualitative level in order to grasp their meaning. As regard the qualitative part of the study, from the sample we have excluded the firms which tweet in languages different from English (53 firms) and we have considered only the outliers period highlighted by the quantitative analysis.

7.636 Tweets of 61 firms were analyzed according to the procedure of Grounded Theory content analysis (open, axial, selective coding). Our unit of analysis were the tweets. Content analysis literature provide insights about the unit of analysis which could be the words, the sentence or the page. Given that a tweet could be assimilated to a sentence, we decided to use this unit of analysis. The identification of codable units is of great importance in content analysis (Neuenforf 2002). There is debate about the “unit” that should be used in content analysis. According previous literature the sentence is far more reliable than any other unit of analysis because meanings and contextualization of disclosures can be conveyed by sentences (Unerman 2000; Raar 2002; Bouten et al., 2011). Moreover, a sentence is easily identified and is less subject to inter-coder variation

than other measures, such as phrases, clauses or themes (Ingram and Frazier 1980). Using words as the unit of analysis could cause serious disagreement between different coders to decide which individual words are counted as a disclosure and which are not. As a measurement unit, sentences can be quantified with less judgement and thus less measurement error than measuring by proportions of a page (Unerman 2000). Therefore, using the sentence as the unit for analysis allows more specific analysis of specific issues and themes (Deegan et al., 2002).

Content analysis can be defined as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” with a purpose “to provide knowledge, new insights, a representation of ‘facts’ and a practical guide to action” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 21).

For the purposes of this study an “empirically ‘grounded’ approach” for coding was used (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 57). The idea was to avoid precoding of the data prior to getting acquainted with them. As a result, codes were generated on the basis of the research material and were unique as opposed to the “generic-code-for-many-uses” approach when the “start-list” of codes is created prior to the examination of the research material (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 57). Following Weber (1990), we have chosen mutual exclusive categories. Content analysis is indeed best suited when the researcher’s end goal is a generalizable description of communication content (Kassarjian, 1977). In addition Kolbe & Burnett (1991) suggest that content analysis is appropriate when a researcher wishes to conduct an appraisal of marketing messages.

The Grounded Theory content analysis requires three sequential phases of coding: a first analysis step, ‘**open coding**’, implies a preliminary identification of concepts that fit with data; a second analysis step, named ‘**axial coding**’, that consists of the progressive aggregation and condensation of codes into broader categories; a final analysis step – ‘**selective coding**’ – consisting of the abstraction from data and the interpretive detection of connections among categories in order to find the ‘core category’ (i.e. the pivotal concept that articulates the whole process under investigation). In the Table 3 we provide some examples of the coding procedure.

Figure 4 – Examples of the coding procedures

Tweet	OPEN CODING	AXIAL CODING	SELECTIVE CODING
<i>“In about 30 minutes our online dialogue on sustainability, the #SustLiving Lab, will start!”</i>	Sustainable living	Social engagement	CSR Issues
<i>“We have become aware of recruitment scams regarding our company. Visit our website for advice on how to stay safe: http://t.co/qZu4QoA8kd”</i>	Recruitments scams	Jobs	Company issues
Our sustainability report on how we engage on regulation, market our products and fight #tobaccotrafficking launches next week	Sustainability Report	CSR Reporting	CSR Issues

The #allianzjuniorfootballcamp was established 2009. More than 60,000 teenagers applied to participate this year! 63 of them are here now	Allianz Football Camp	Social Engagement	CSR Issues
@ndhh23 we are listening to you. Thanks for your support!	Thanks message	Customer service	Promotional activities

The analysis was supported by the software Nvivo 10, which allowed the systematic treatment of the corpus of data and helped us in taking explicit track of the coding procedure and moving back and forth from data to textual elaboration and vice versa. The coding process was conducted in parallel by the authors and discussed in some meetings in order to fine-tune the coding system used and to guarantee the rigour of the analytical process (Morse et al. 2002).

3. FINDINGS

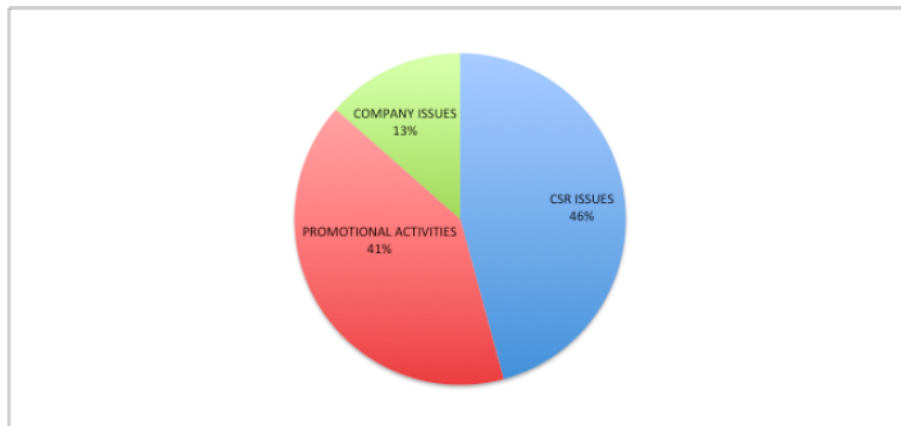
In order to answer to the first Research Question we have carried on the content analysis, as previously explained. The coding sheet² captured three main categories of tweets (selective coding) which have sub-categories and other topics related to each one. The first dimension is Company issues. This category has been created because some tweets were dealing with topics like “jobs” “financial results”. The open coding highlighted these dimensions which were then summarized in more broader categories. The second dimension was focused on CSR issues. Corporate Social Responsibility is a broad topic which has been not well defined by the literature yet because it encompasses various activities of the firm. In this category we have considered all the tweets dealing with social and environmental issues and issues related to CSR reporting. Economic, social and environmental dimensions are indeed the dimensions provided by the literature in order to define CSR (Elkington, 1997).

The third dimension emerged from data is Promotion, such as communication of events, awards, competitions, thanks messages to followers and so on.

Our evidence suggests that the majority of firms are dealing with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) issues during the outliers periods analyzed. Promotional activities come after and at the end company issues. Figure 5 shows the frequency rate by each category.

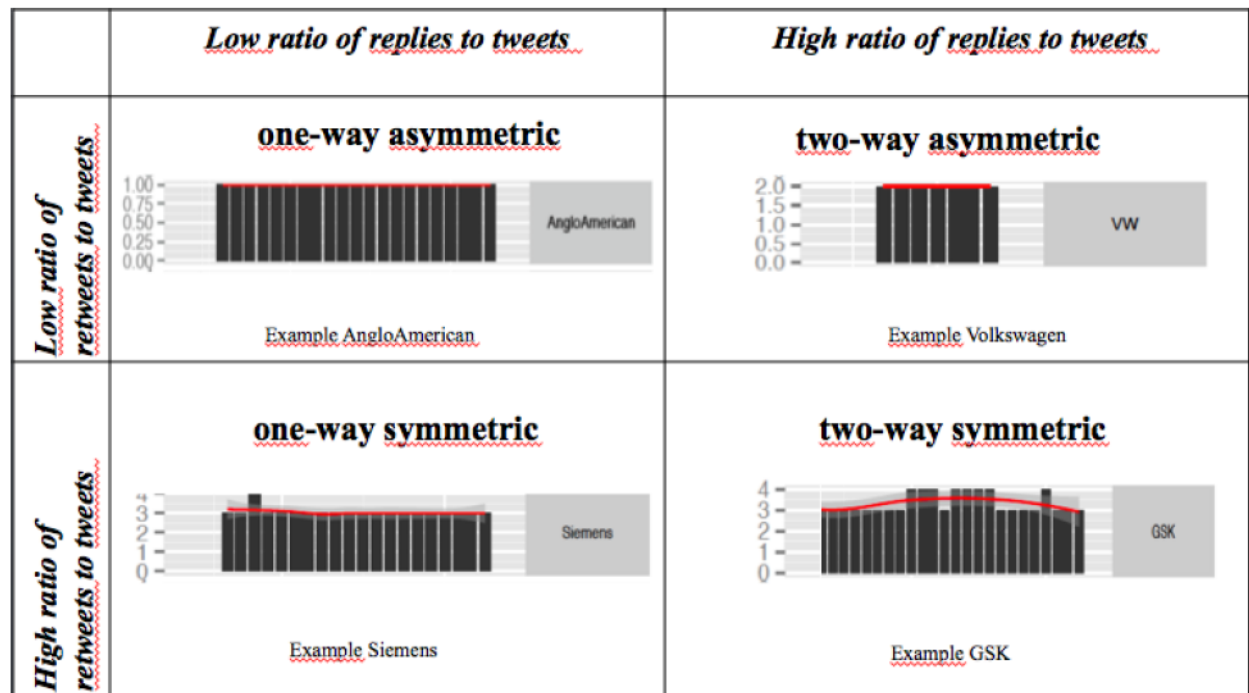
² In the Appendix you can find all the codes used by the authors to code the tweets.

Figure 5 – Frequency rate



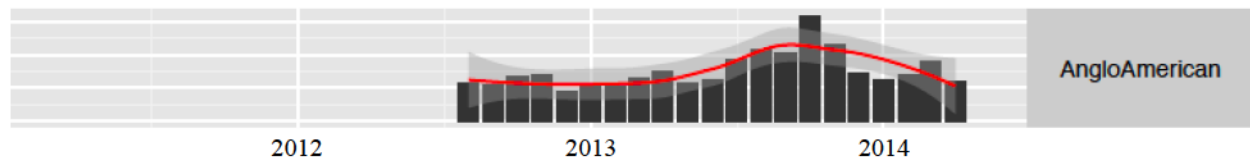
After this first explorative step of the analysis we have answered to our second research question in order to understand why firms are changing strategies overtime by analyzing the Tweets trend. In order to do it we rely on the histograms presented in the Appendix (table 2). We focus only on major changing strategies because frequent shifts are inherent to a communication strategy online, as we have previously stated. Before focusing on the changing strategies we provide some examples of some steady strategies according to our matrix presented before.

Figure 6 - examples of steady strategies



AngloAmerican is one of the world's largest mining companies. As we can see from the figure they are using a one-way asymmetric strategy (coded as 1), with a low number of retweets and replies. They are using Twitter only to broadcast information to followers without trying to engage them.

By looking only at the tweets trends, we can see that there is an higher number of tweets around October 2013.



The first tweet of October 2013 is the following one:

"We have become aware of recruitment scams regarding our company. Visit our website for advice on how to stay safe: <http://t.co/qZu4QoA8kd>"

After this tweet we can read an increasing number of tweets which were mainly related to the following topics:

#AskGareth: they have developed a chat with Gareth Williams, the head of safety.

"Our Head of Safety wants to hear from you! Gareth Williams will be on twitter today @ 2:30-3:30pm GMT to answer your Qs on safety"

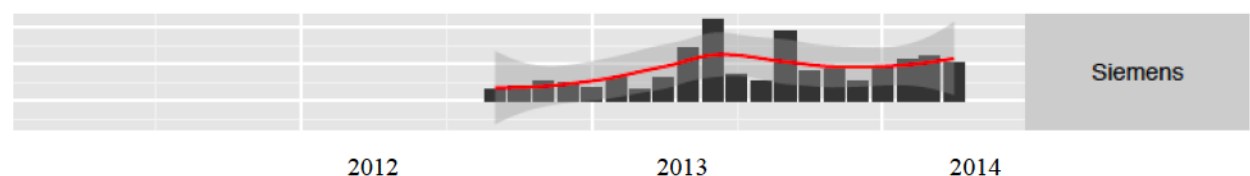
#zeroharm: safety health issues for employees

Enterprise Development Conference 2013 (#EDC2013) in which they were sponsor of Africa's premier showcase of sustainability enterprise development.

We can suppose that they have focused their attention towards employees safety because of attacks related to recruitment scams. Nevertheless we cannot state that they are changing strategies due to this event, indeed, also in this case they are only using a broadcasting strategy and they are not using retweets or replies to engage stakeholders.

Siemens, on the other hand, is on average using a one-way symmetric communication, with a low number of replies and high number of retweets.

By looking at the tweets histograms, we can see that outliers are related to sustainability events organized by Siemens such as the Future of Energy event or the Sustainability cities initiative DLD Digital Life Design Conference Future of Energy, but we cannot provide evidence of a changing strategy.



Starting now: Press Conference on the key challenges and opportunities of the Energy Transition w/ #Siemens CEO Lascher #FutureOfEnergy

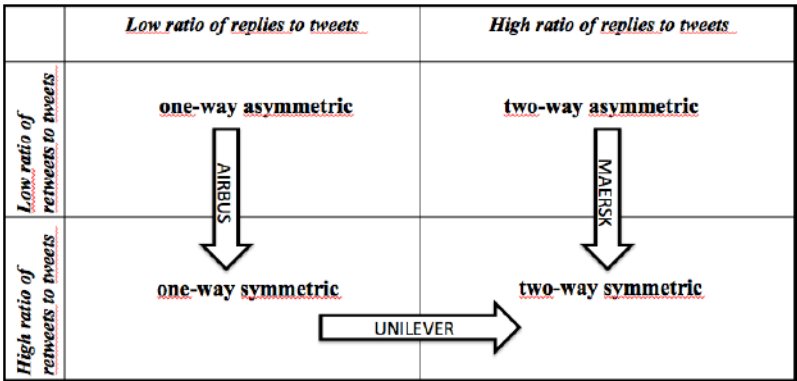
Read more about the finalists for the City Climate Leadership Awards: <http://t.co/NOzTijweAQ> #C40SiemensAwards

Volkswagen is an example of a two-way asymmetric strategy with an high ratio of replies to tweets and low ratio of retweets to tweets. In our sample, this is the only company with a steady strategy of this kind.

The last example, two-way symmetric strategy, is difficult to found. In our sample there isn't a firm which is continuously using a two-way symmetric strategy. We can suggest the case of GSK which, on average is using an high number of retweets and replies but sometimes is moving to a two-way asymmetric strategy.

After having defined the strategies, we can now try to analyze the changing strategies. As we can see in the histograms presented in the Appendix, a lot of firms are moving back and forward from one strategy to another. In the following section we will focus only on some examples to provide evidence regarding how firms are changing strategy over time, in the discussion part we will develop some comments related to the major trends we have analyzed in our sample.

Figure 7 – Examples of changing strategies



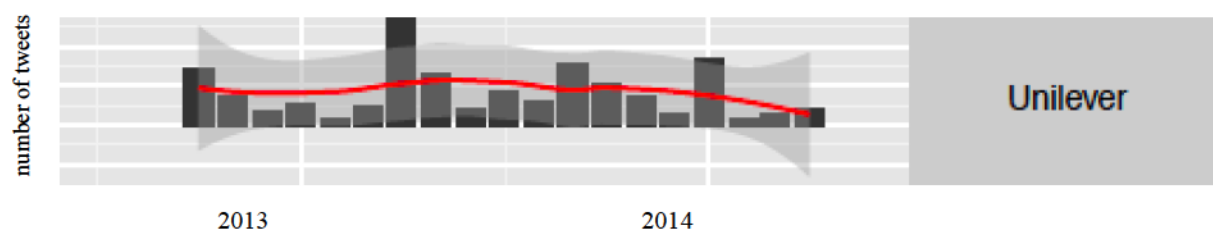
Case n. 1 – From one-way symmetric to two-way symmetric (UNILEVER)

By looking at the histograms of Unilever (see Appendix) we can see that they are mainly using is a one-way symmetric strategy (coded as 3).

We can also see a spike in April 2013 which suggest us that Unilever, in that period, is using a two-way symmetric strategy. The result is confirmed also by reading the histograms related to the number of tweets, which highlight an higher number of tweets in that period. By reading them we can see that in that case Unilever is speaking mainly about the Sustainability Living Lab, a global online dialogue in a bid to co-create solutions to some of the world's most pressing sustainability challenges.

"In about 30 minutes our online dialogue on sustainability, the #SustLiving Lab, will start!"
"Good to see you in the #SustLiving lab Eric.@ericlowitt"
"Interesting comment #SustLiving Lab: give up eating beef for a couple of days; give yourself a 20 minute shower. 1Kg beef = 15,000L water"

As a consequence, in this case, they are increasing the number of replies to tweets in order to better engage stakeholders (i.e. followers). The online dialogue about Sustainability is one clear example of involvement strategy because the company gives the possibility to stakeholders to speak about topics related to CSR, so they moved from a one way asymmetric (coded as 3) to a two way symmetric strategy (coded as 4) and back. If we consider for example the months before and after April 2013 we can see that, even if they are talking about Sustainability, they are not creating engagement with stakeholders, they are using Twitter mainly to give information about Sustainability strategy carried out by the company.



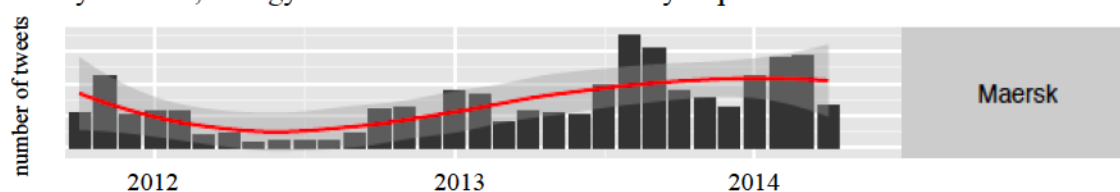
Case n. 2 – From Two-way asymmetric to two-way symmetric strategy (MAERSK)

In the case of Maersk, the firm is using on average a two way asymmetric strategy (see histograms in the Appendix) even if, sometimes, there are some spikes in the trend which highlight that it is moving to a symmetric strategy. For example around October 2012, Maersk is trying to use an engagement strategy with stakeholders by improving the number of retweets and replies (two-way symmetric strategy). By reading the tweets, indeed, Maersk is increasing the number of RT because they have launched a serial story on Twitter called “Rescue at Sea” which has been appreciated by followers. In this way, every day they are publishing a part of the story creating enthusiasm and expectations among followers.

“Into deep water: read the second part of the rescue at sea. Get the details on what happened in the deep blue ocean <http://t.co/LnEIX65r>”

“RT @rosegeroge3: when I say that the shipping industry is still bad at openness, I don’t include @maersk I like Maersk stories a lot!”

During the same month, another huge amount of RT is related to the Containers Award which have been won by Maersk. After having announced the win, they have retweeted the account which were dealing with the same topic in order to increase awareness. Also, around mid 2013 we can notice an increasing number of tweets. By reading them, we have found that the main topic they are dealing with is the Triple E, which is the name of the ship derived from the class’s three design principles: Economy of scale, Energy efficient and Environmentally improved.



"RT @MaerskLine: Photo of the day: #MaerskMcK inneyMoller, our first #TripleE, arrives at Port of Rotterdam. By Roger van der Kraan."

"@EJHerm We wanted to say thanks for spreading the news about our #TripleE so we named one in your honour. <http://t.co/cwuvOxq4xN>"

They have created a picture with the name of the follower who has tweeted about the TripleE.

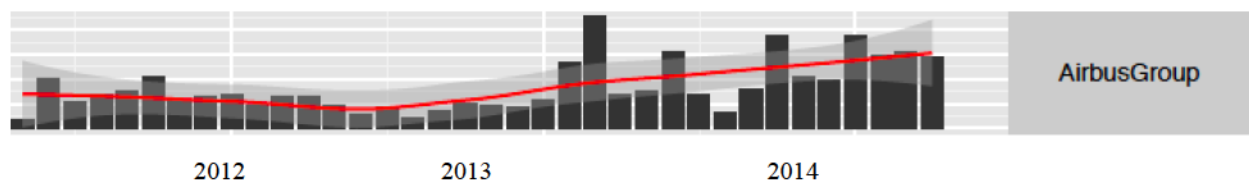
This is definitely a way to create engagement with followers and also to "humanize" the company.

Our idea is confirmed by the words of the Social Media Manager of Maersk: "Initially, MaerskLine's Twitter use was for more corporate messages, but after "rediscovering" Google+ and LinkedIn for the most corporate messages, the team planned to have a "more human approach on Twitter, where we share a variety of content, from hard core shipping news to photos of sea lions resting on the bulbous bow" (Katona & Sarvary, 2014, p. 150).

Case n. 3 – From one-way asymmetric to one-way symmetric (AIRBUS and SCHNEIDER)

In the case of Airbus, at the beginning of 2014, we can notice an higher level of tweets in comparison to the previous months. The underlying motivation is that the company changed name from EADS European Aeronautic Defence & Space Co. to AIRBUS and they have launched the new company with a ceremony on January 14, 2014, as we can see thanks to the Twitter stream.

We can notice that also after January 2014 there is a high number of tweets in comparison to previous months so we can suppose that, with the rebranding, they have hired an internal or external Social Media Manager.



Dear followers, we are now @AirbusGroup, discover how #WeMakeItFly – <http://t.co/kCeyEnCa6x> | <http://t.co/8bDxCzqGM1>

The ground-breaking ceremony for the future @AirbusGroup HQ is starting as our CEO appears on stage!

Can't find relevant information about @AirbusGroup? Visit our Press Kit dedicated to the rebranding - <http://t.co/vMR84My9eH> cc @AirbusDS

As regard the changing strategy in this case we can see some differences along the years (see Appendix). For example, it is interesting to see that around the end of 2013, they are using only an informative strategy which then jumps to a one-way symmetric communication. There is indeed an higher number of replies to tweets maybe due to the explained rebranding.

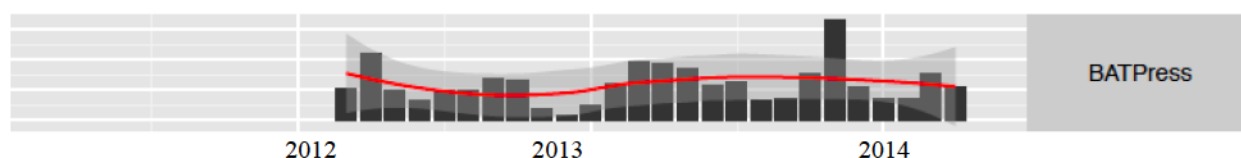
Another insightful example related to this shift in strategy is Schneider, which moves from a one-way asymmetric to a one-way symmetric when it is tweeting about the #ParisMarathon around February and March 2014. We can see indeed that they are increasing a lot the number of RT because they are going to RT all the messages regarding this event they are sponsoring.

RT @parismarathon: Let's have a look at the timelapse of 38th @SchneiderElec #ParisMarathon start on Champs-Élysées! <http://t.co/L5luyN2Nli>

RT @martayao: Blue sky in #parismarathon @SchneiderElec excited to see first runners arriving... <http://t.co/SCKf49hnlg>

RT @bobfraples: Can't beat breakfast with this beauty. @SchneiderElec #ParisMarathon #Breakfastrun #XperienceSE <http://t.co/caiwlkWOJL>

On the opposite side, as regard BATPress British American Tobacco, we can notice a higher peak in November 2013. By reading tweets we can find that they have launched the Sustainability Report and they speak about it a lot in comparison to the normal trend of tweets. This strategy can be assimilated to the Response strategy because they are trying to create awareness about the Sustainability strategy.



"Find out why #harmreduction matters to us. We publish our report, "A Focus on Harm Reduction" next Wednesday #sustainability #focusreport"

"Our issues-based Focus Reports are part of our commitment to open and transparent communications on key issues affecting our business"

"Our sustainability report on how we engage on regulation, market our products and fight #tobaccotrafficking launches next week"

For this kind of communication they are using a two-way symmetric communication strategy in order to achieve better results in terms of reputation and to gain legitimacy. After that peak they are coming back to the previous informative strategy.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the growing literature on Social Media communication. In particular our findings contribute to research by providing a new matrix of communication strategies and by giving evidence of them through some examples. In addition we provide an overall picture about the topics firms are communicating mostly throughout the years in the outliers period and we demonstrate that firms are changing strategies overtime on Twitter due to different issues (i.e. promotional, CSR and company related issues).

As we have seen, the majority of firms tweet more when they are speaking about CSR related topics, for example when they publish a new Sustainability Report or when they provide evidence about some CSR activities (i.e. donations, cause-related marketing).

This result confirm that, as suggested by recent research, “CSR has become increasingly prominent on the corporate agenda with significant resources dedicated to both the implementation of CSR activities and the associated marketing communication efforts intended to make stakeholders aware of these activities” (Green & Peloza, 2014).

But, by looking at the strategies on Twitter, we have seen that in our sample the majority of them are using on average a one-way asymmetric strategy on Twitter rather than an engagement strategy. By looking at the histograms in the Appendix we can see that a lot of firms are using a one-way asymmetric strategy, coded as 1. In this cases, firms are using Twitter only to spread information without creating engagement.

In addition, we have noticed that, when they are going to change strategies the majority of them are moving from a one-way asymmetric to a one-way symmetric strategy, by only increasing the number of retweets and not replies. Moving from a one-way asymmetric to a one-way symmetric is easier than moving to a two-way asymmetric/symmetric because they imply not only to retweet but also to reply to tweets. Unlike retweets, replies are a more time consuming task and, in addition, they require the involvement of other people inside the organization in order to provide the right answer to a request.

This result can be justified by the fact that firms decides which kind of strategy to adopt in relation to both external and internal factors. Internal factors can be related to:

1. time and staff limitations
2. presence of a Social Media Manager or a Social Media team
3. lack of managerial support
4. adoption of a Social CRM (Ang, 2011) to strategically use and store information on Social Media.

These issues generally prevent the adoption of stakeholder engagement practices online (Briones et al. 2011). For example, in order to develop a two-way symmetric strategy it is important to have a social media manager who can provide continuous feeding to social media sites (Peters, Chen, Kaplan, Ognibeni, & Pauwels, 2013) and tools which allow to storage and use information of customers and followers.

The type of strategy can be related also to the main usage of Social Media. They can be used for different purposes: from communication activities to marketing and promotion of products and

services, or to communicate CSR activities and spread information about environmental and social impact of the company in order to engage stakeholders.

On the other hand, external factors which influence the communication strategy of a firm are related to :

1. stakeholder pressures (e.g. Wassenhove, Besiou, & Hunter, 2010)
2. crises situations to which the firm should immediately react (Romenti, Murtarelli, & Valentini, 2013; Veil, Sellnow, & Petrun, 2011)

Social Media, indeed, empower customers and stakeholders in general who have the chance to speak to the company, appreciate or criticize their product and services and react to their behaviour towards environment or social issues.

Nevertheless, as highlighted by Lee et al. (2013)'s study, social media favor the firms with high CSR credentials (i.e. CSR ratings) because this feature enables them to absorb the risk associated with the use of social media, such as reputation risks and, in addition, the messages from a social responsible company are more likely to go viral than others.

Future research will compare the qualitative analysis of tweets with the information provided directly from firms in order to gain more insight about the phenomenon.

Thanks to the qualitative analysis we have created also a dictionary of keywords which can be used also in future research in order to carry on an automatic content analysis.

The paper adds to methodological contribution to the pool of literature because we have used both quantitative and qualitative methodology in order to analyze the communication on Twitter, which have not been used until yet, to the best of our knowledge, in order to analyze Twitter communication.

As regard managerial implications, the findings suggest that managers should be prepared to increase the usage of Twitter not only to broadcast information but to engage stakeholders, not only by increasing the number of Retweets but also to reply to tweets send by followers. This consideration implies an effort for the firm in terms of resources and management.

As regards CSR issues, Twitter may be used in different ways to engage stakeholder in the debate on CSR depending on firm resources, openness to change and strategic intent.

In spite of these contributions, the present study is not without limitations: first of all we don't have considered the totality of tweets of each firm in order to understand the topics they were dealing with throughout the years and how they changed overtime.

Another limitation of our study is that we measure only firms tweeting in English. In addition we have considered only big firms in Europe, though smaller firms and firms in other regions of the world may show different communication strategies.

Overall, our findings suggest that firms are still not fully exploiting the potentialities of Social Media like Twitter. The majority of them are still using Twitter in order to broadcast information to followers. Nevertheless it is interesting to see that topics related to Corporate Social Responsibility issues are becoming even more important also on Social Media and, given the paucity of research related to CSR Communication, we believe that the findings provided here will serve as a good reference point for future research.

This study, thanks to the multi-level approach both quantitative than qualitative opens different research avenues.

An important direction for further research would be to conduct a more detailed analysis over a longer time period in order to gain insights about what happened before and after the outliers. As regard this point, it could be interesting to replicate the study by using an automatic content analysis which could help us to analyze a large amount of data. In order to carry on an automatic content analysis, it would be possible to use and implement the dictionary created in advance thanks to this study.

Future research could analyze the changing strategy through an ethnographic approach with semi-participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis in order to track the process of adoption and management of Social Media in the CSR Communication and have the possibility to compare with content analysis of Tweets. Related to this issue is the analysis of the number of followers which could increase or decrease after some communication of the firm. Content analysis could be related to this kind of statistics in order to understand if a changing strategy has led to an increase in the number of followers or not.

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APPENDIX

TABLE N.1 – DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS TWITTER

[in red firms which have not been considered for the qualitative analysis because they tweet in languages different from english]

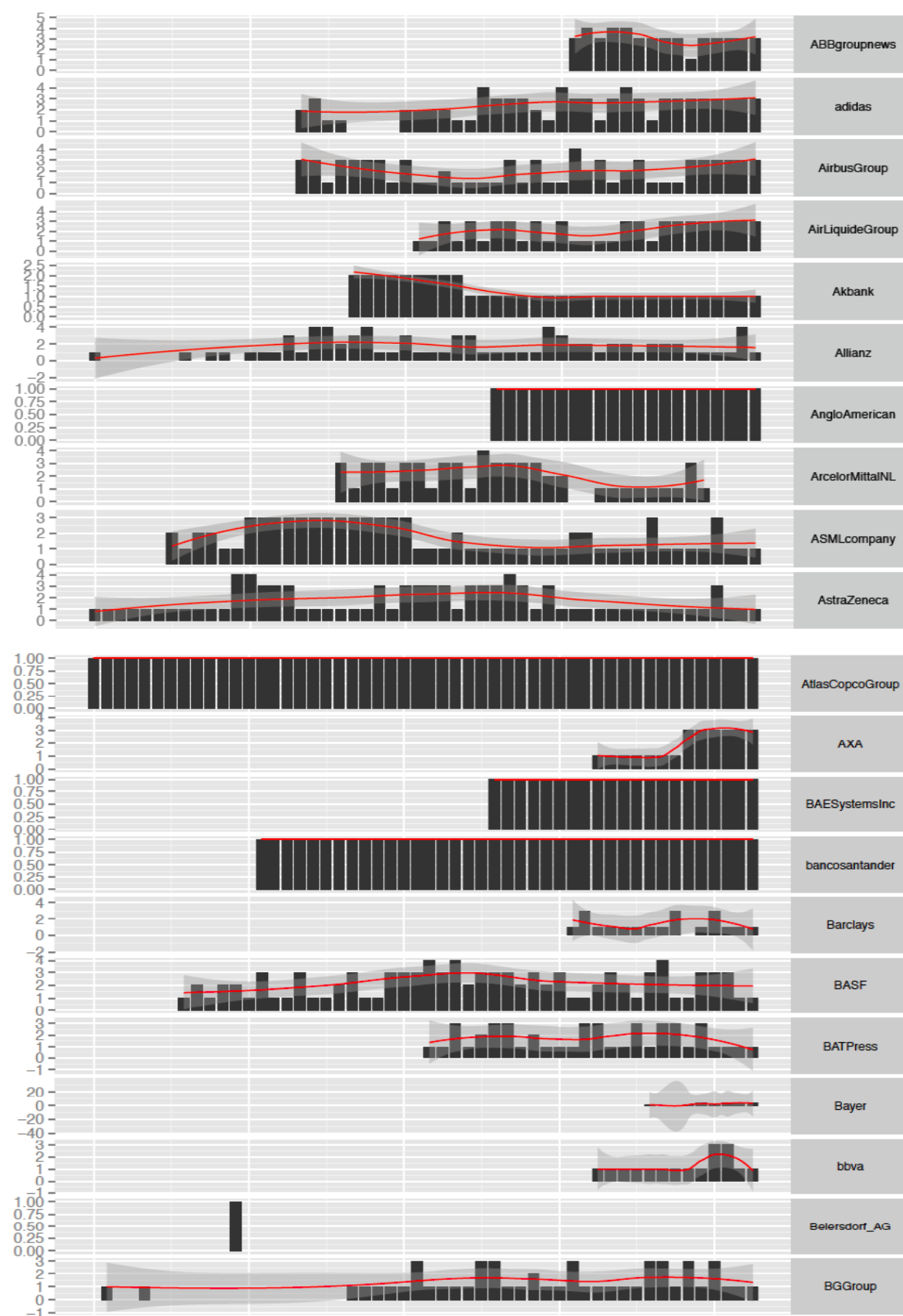
	screenName	frequency. mean	frequency. sd	n.tweet	n.reply	n.retweet. in	n.retweet. out	n.tweets. overall	n.followers	created	depth. mean	depth. sd
1	ABBgroupnews	8,4774 53581	5,9791 4335	3196	342	27213	1156	5402	97468	28/06/09 18:33	1,3546 09929	1,0878 478
2	adidas	2,0252 42718	1,6764 9802	1043	192	165008	330	1045	934618	17/05/11 06:57	1,1010 6383	0,3662 19209
3	AirbusGroup	3,8697 31801	4,9705 92888	3030	285	36482	474	3027	32704	30/09/09 14:50	1,4570 13575	1,1615 85181
4	AirLiquideGroup	5,2455 24297	5,7029 97338	2051	53	73288	379	2051	3861	13/01/10 13:27	1,6274 5098	3,2246 59885
5	Akbank	4,0012 56281	4,1592 51073	3185	1444	3594	56	4513	42663	31/08/10 16:44	1,5015 19757	1,1782 11472
6	Allianz	2,5858 3691	3,1298 30984	1205	189	2675	127	1207	7289	02/09/09 08:29	1,4183 00654	0,9501 68815
7	AngloAmerican	7,2727 27273	4,3116 81629	3200	234	7385	173	3727	31230	14/09/11 19:17	1,2857 14286	0,8360 13523
8	ArcelorMittalNL	1,8370 37037	1,4205 70662	248	13	126	30	249	515	09/08/11 08:14	1	0
9	ASMLcompany	2,1160 22099	1,7028 79376	1149	57	5036	213	1152	4785	07/10/09 06:49	1,6515 15152	4,7990 14079
10	AstraZeneca	2,4562 6072	2,2100 34383	1432	47	5164	186	1433	46470	03/08/09 07:53	1,2711 86441	0,9064 99681
11	AtlasCopcoGroup	1,6372 95082	1,1088 60367	799	0	946	0	800	6767	25/06/09 08:33	NA	NA
12	AXA	4,1594 2029	3,5552 08903	861	37	2467	207	845	7197	10/05/10 13:54	1,3888 88889	0,7281 19997
13	BAESystemsInc	5,3244 59235	2,9313 62155	3200	160	6842	2	9283	38734	24/06/09 21:26	1,5761 5894	1,8346 19256
14	bancosantander	3,7196 60194	9,6642 44425	3065	1	4617	5	3065	18642	02/02/11 10:12	1	0
15	Barclays	1,2666 66667	0,7198 48469	57	0	552	7	57	20862	17/09/10 10:12	NA	NA
16	BASF	2,8427 26081	3,3318 48842	2169	205	6612	291	2169	21144	09/07/10 11:10	1,2802 1978	0,7156 83775
17	BATPress	1,9680 51118	1,5542 33787	616	8	1195	67	616	3056	27/02/12 21:36	1,2608 69565	0,6887 00443
18	Bayer	4,1805 55556	6,5072 87768	602	194	4023	120	602	37863	26/04/10 12:35	1,3605 44218	1,1875 24063
19	bbva	8,7193 46049	4,3882 89385	3200	36	9097	350	6975	17624	24/12/10 10:24	1,7619 04762	2,1277 43839
20	Beiersdorf_AG	2	NA	2	0	8	0	2	1537	19/03/09 13:05	NA	NA
21	BGGroup	1,9256 19835	1,8229 59569	699	29	1589	92	700	13202	08/08/08 07:37	2,5	7,2860 28198
22	bmw	3,9626 16822	3,0609 61933	848	454	43122	57	847	338180	25/06/13 15:20	1,2198 39142	0,7032 43618
23	BNPParibas_com	7,1968 32579	5,7320 9043	3181	743	11533	1480	6949	25551	31/03/09 20:33	1,3552 85962	1,3071 42756
24	BP_plc	3,1074 38017	4,1468 89704	376	54	3167	198	376	1501	05/08/13 15:15	1,2222 22222	0,4714 04521
25	BSkyBPress	2,2039 31204	2,0559 14039	897	1	16300	180	901	5924	06/04/11 11:09	1,4705 88235	1,0675 70083
26	bt_uk	14,943 92523	15,424 71146	3198	2042	7087	74	18914	20323	01/03/10 16:56	1,2047 74536	0,5628 99789
27	centricapl	2,6867 46988	2,7313 47361	2230	164	1444	66	2230	6764	24/02/09 11:28	1,4318 18182	1,7257 40948
28	compassgroupuk	4,3057 06522	4,4852 31401	3169	221	14957	1727	3365	5429	01/09/10 12:20	1,5606 93642	1,1827 55741
29	CreditAgricole	14,607	7,5383	3199	838	35708	387	10686	19671	17/08/0	1,5732	1,0984

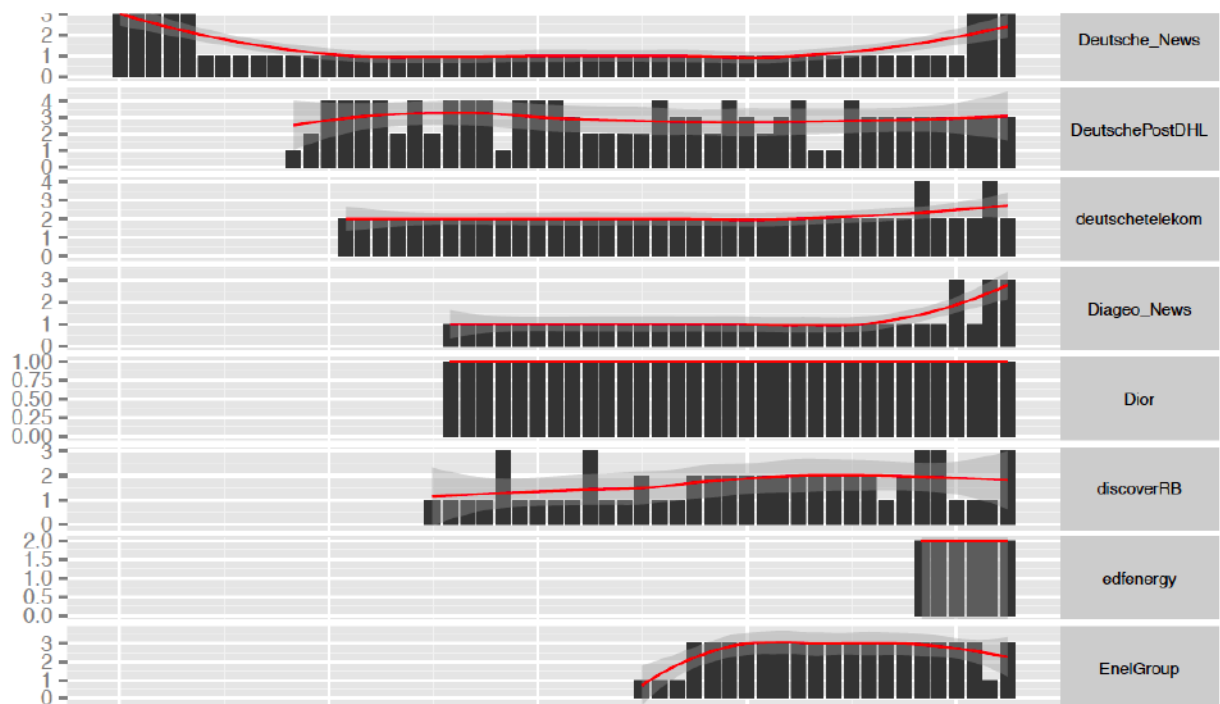
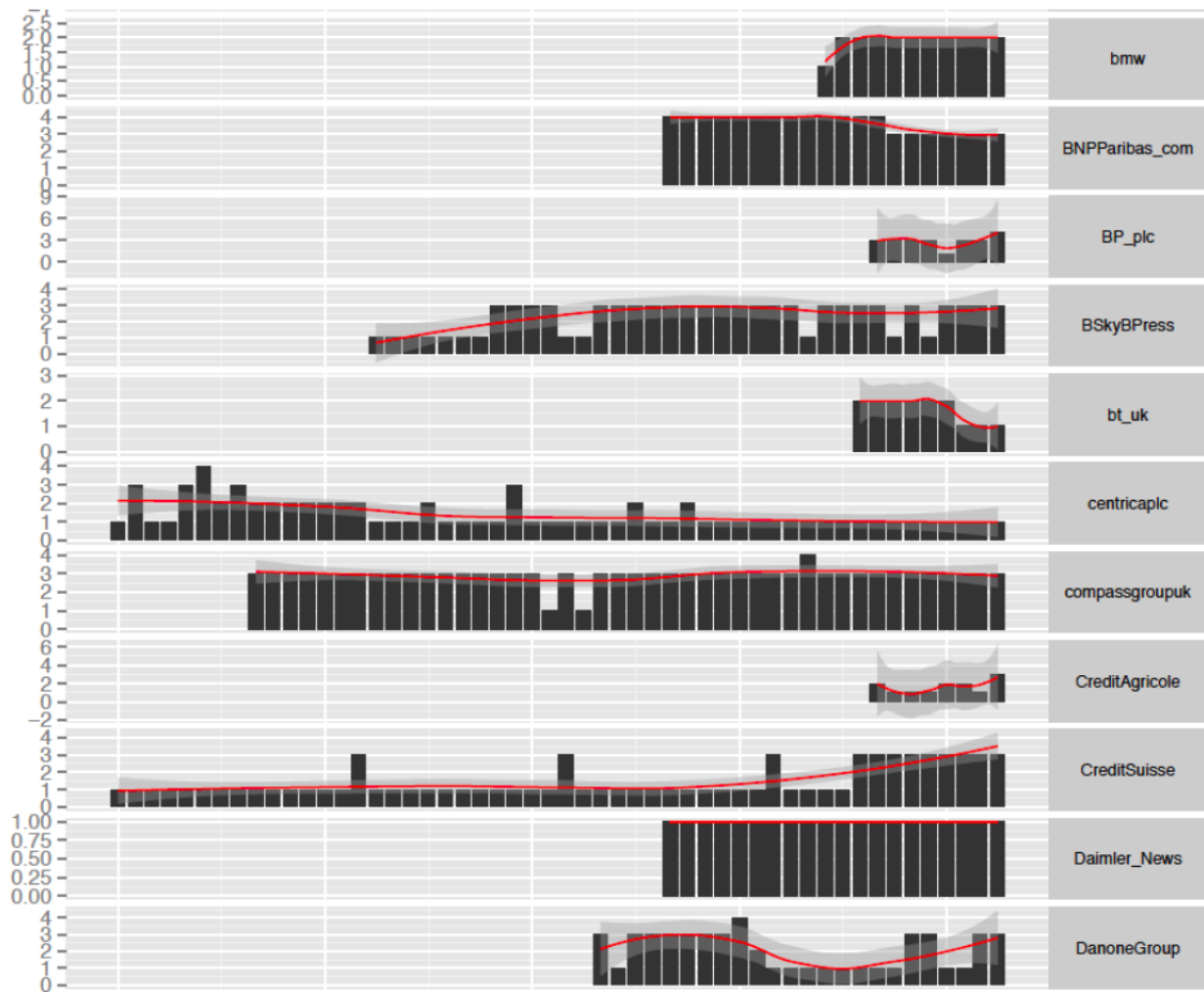
		30594	50971							9 12:41	60073	30571
30	CreditSuisse	3,0697 67442	3,3397 10121	2772	107	8119	351	2771	56320	22/10/0 9 09:05	1,3132 53012	0,7313 15401
31	Daimler_News	6,7184 87395	3,7236 87281	3198	0	2474	181	9018	8712	25/06/0 8 08:38	NA	NA
32	DanoneGroup	2,8678 30424	3,5234 90816	1150	60	2836	207	1152	4423	04/05/1 2 10:28	1,2698 4127	0,7230 39043
33	Deutsche_News	2,4820 56256	1,9367 21793	2559	17	5654	179	2568	33035	20/05/0 9 10:08	1,2222 22222	0,6405 12615
34	DeutschePostDHL	4,0395 77836	4,6138 62958	3062	549	5866	663	3068	7800	01/10/1 0 08:10	1,2345 92445	0,6947 70006
35	deutschetelekom	4,2895 44236	4,1104 64375	3200	1773	7849	115	4736	44131	24/11/0 9 07:57	1,2601 68303	0,8478 98355
36	Diageo_News	1,2038 83495	0,4603 12159	248	0	1975	6	248	16215	04/01/1 1 09:06	1,2	0,4472 13595
37	Dior	1,8669 20152	5,1869 22091	982	0	186185	0	982	477158 4	04/08/1 1 10:04	1	NA
38	discoverRB	4,5577 74608	4,7792 57284	3195	418	6349	205	7087	10922	06/05/0 9 14:20	1,2010 17812	0,5512 49955
39	dnbnor_hjelp	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	21	02/02/1 1 21:36	NA	NA
40	edfenergy	20,915 03268	14,310 90296	3200	3050	2150	79	13709	14833	14/03/1 0 21:48	1,6351 56665	1,0391 7747
41	EnelGroup	3,6287 62542	5,1721 35151	1085	22	1334	362	1084	4693	30/08/1 1 10:08	1,0357 14286	0,1889 82237
42	eni	2,7575 25084	6,2627 88075	1649	35	3631	195	1650	10793	04/12/0 9 17:35	1,0833 33333	0,3472 28132
43	eonenergyuk	4,7645 30551	4,2219 74467	3197	640	2932	142	3508	12457	11/05/1 0 09:06	1,5060 97561	1,8091 08943
44	ericsson	9,8430 76923	8,3734 21525	3199	284	24723	1001	5593	15879	15/01/0 9 10:12	1,1953 125	0,5747 44189
45	Essilor	2,4887 45981	2,6394 71239	774	23	1557	47	775	7270	28/04/0 9 19:47	1,7142 85714	2,3996 33672
46	FMC_com	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	239	17/09/0 9 12:55	NA	NA
47	GazpromNewsEn	1,4397 90576	0,8493 26642	275	4	121	0	275	708	04/10/1 2 16:00	1	0
48	gdfsuez	3,2351 09718	2,9773 43422	2064	55	7098	560	2066	9653	09/11/0 9 16:14	1,3333 33333	1,4142 13562
49	GroupeCarrefour	2,55	2,2364 42184	612	67	1545	108	612	1288	18/09/1 2 17:18	1,5227 27273	0,7309 96019
50	GSK	3,1850 22026	3,1456 52281	2169	201	22344	667	2169	47017	21/04/0 7 18:19	1,2209 94475	0,6198 57605
51	Heineken	33,333 33333	86,382 46248	3200	2495	20107	66	7817	85908	06/04/0 9 12:35	1,5588 95706	1,8659 57181
52	Henkel	1,7596 33028	4,2147 13358	959	5	734	6	959	8486	26/01/0 9 18:26	1,3333 33333	0,6513 38947
53	hm	5,7222 22222	5,6051 95148	3193	2182	102081	94	8034	338778 5	15/04/0 8 18:34	1,0620 82139	0,3167 02825
54	HolcimLtd	1,125	0,3378 31962	27	0	62	2	26	2420	14/08/0 9 09:25	1	NA
55	HSBCUKBusiness	3,6391 43731	5,7390 65079	1190	49	4200	451	1194	7318	24/05/1 1 14:18	1,2950 81967	1,3082 33698
56	iberdrola	9,2219 02017	7,8412 5623	3200	220	4752	217	12252	15999	13/04/1 1 10:53	1,6313 99317	6,5229 28771
57	ImperialTobacco	1,4487 17949	0,8746 97159	226	39	361	10	225	1715	24/02/0 9 11:37	1,1025 64103	0,3073 54741
58	INDITEXnews	3,1725 71429	2,7527 68882	2776	0	3084	0	2774	5802	18/04/0 9 12:09	NA	NA
59	ING_news	1,8938 54749	3,5353 22552	678	256	8281	10	678	11313	05/02/1 0 18:25	1,2418 60465	1,0839 16522
60	KeringForWomen	2,0621 46893	1,4968 07937	365	29	5720	111	365	2058	31/10/1 2 14:42	1,2727 27273	0,6261 35332
61	kosuk	1	NA	1	1	0	0	NA	NA	NA	1	NA
62	Loreal	11,207 01754	14,680 01252	3194	392	10827	1188	9264	46961	05/05/0 9 09:23	1,3070 42254	0,7507 66829

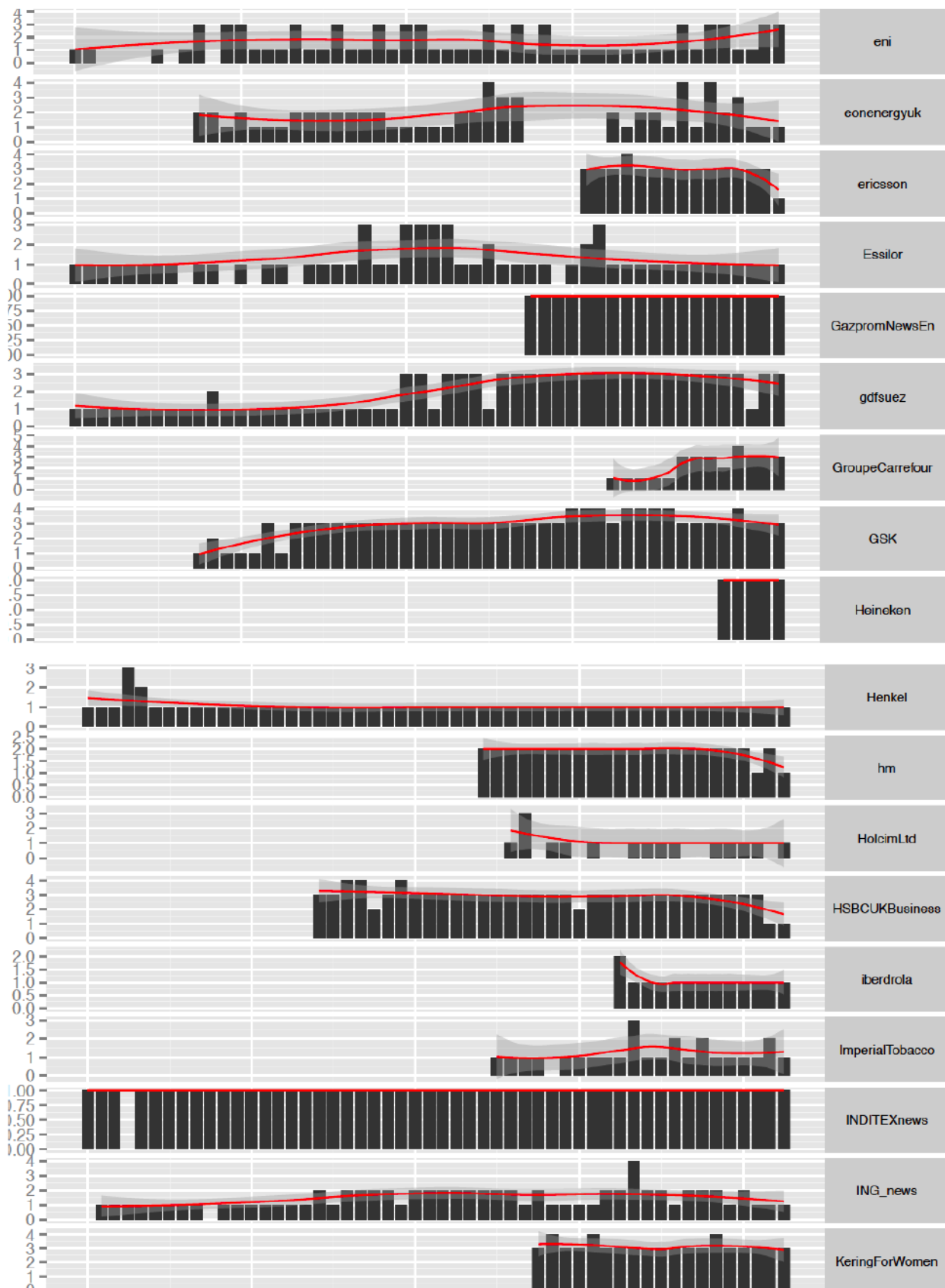
63	lukoil	1,6857 14286	0,8667 52851	59	0	49	0	59	2451	17/04/0 9 08:56	NA	NA
64	Luxottica	2,2862 90323	2,4926 39681	567	133	4088	135	567	22768	26/04/1 0 16:19	1,4380 95238	0,9699 70356
65	LVMH	3,9743 58974	4,3395 80365	930	20	36970	348	930	15321	20/04/1 2 12:48	1,2380 95238	0,4364 3578
66	Maersk	3,4123 37662	3,0441 91119	2102	698	6821	155	2106	18847	27/09/1 1 07:53	1,6142 55765	2,0297 28146
67	MunichRe	6,9978 11816	7,4051 01047	3198	77	12162	682	3619	6772	10/01/1 1 08:23	1,9772 72727	4,6780 90957
68	nationalgriduk	4,4666 66667	5,1940 19858	3082	1432	5660	422	3084	9467	29/01/1 0 10:18	1,5527 83109	1,2177 03595
69	Nordea_DK	1,9680 85106	1,5018 85643	370	150	141	55	370	1186	08/06/0 9 13:43	1,9610 38961	2,6971 79611
70	Novartis	6,1895 55126	5,4302 1685	3200	16	9926	24	5087	77217	07/11/0 8 04:52	1,16	0,4725 81563
71	novonordisk	2,0905 66038	2,4307 26926	554	53	3795	211	556	4298	23/09/1 0 08:21	1,2142 85714	0,7061 87864
72	orange	17,582 41758	8,2837 33557	3200	99	14298	314	13740	69776	11/05/1 1 13:26	1,23	1,0548 28572
73	Philips	7,7395 83333	4,4995 51558	1486	174	11499	93	1485	195155	07/03/0 7 22:22	1,2532 46753	0,6423 16969
74	RBSGroup	4,3411 01695	4,6114 60529	2049	579	98531	440	2050	14770	06/12/1 1 09:25	1,1295 62044	0,5405 00639
75	ReedElsevierHQ	2,1431 71806	1,8483 89211	973	19	2403	448	979	2549	24/02/1 0 14:26	1,1363 63636	0,3512 50087
76	RioTinto	1,7544 64286	1,9117 98261	1179	31	4657	76	1180	23639	22/04/0 8 10:28	1,0980 39216	0,4584 71459
77	Roche	2,9465 43779	3,7712 37469	3197	421	9952	156	3215	62178	13/02/0 9 22:52	1,3913 04348	1,3577 66113
78	rollsroyce	2,4166 66667	1,3342 19564	116	3	2573	18	115	3504	12/12/1 3 10:47	1	0
79	RWE_AG	3,5722 62774	6,3034 4668	2447	239	1786	363	2451	3263	22/06/1 0 12:01	1,6518 98734	1,0880 19384
80	SABMiller	2,3345 25939	2,8043 8841	1305	63	3573	287	1313	9508	17/12/0 8 22:07	1,3235 29412	1,2677 39586
81	SaintGobainNews	2,0034 48276	1,8254 22691	581	8	3933	244	578	4290	20/11/0 9 16:34	1,2777 77778	0,5745 1315
82	Sampo_plc	2,2824 07407	0,8062 92544	493	0	19	0	492	98	05/06/1 3 07:54	NA	NA
83	SandvikGroup	5,9341 69279	8,5011 31548	1893	317	1392	341	1892	1417	21/01/1 3 19:57	1,7292 92929	3,4936 97406
84	sanofi	2,6268 65672	2,3205 76357	528	10	1929	40	528	40219	27/04/0 9 20:14	2,1764 70588	4,0962 68029
85	SAP	10,309 67742	5,4190 93348	3196	27	17442	294	9365	112169	21/09/0 9 19:31	1,1041 66667	0,3087 09278
86	sberbank	15,311 00478	13,520 06783	3200	2866	8715	8	9828	180390	04/08/1 1 06:18	2,0382 43626	1,6654 9483
87	SchneiderElec	3,4367 08861	3,4653 52244	2172	85	6831	116	2172	9934	19/10/1 1 01:17	1,2471 91011	0,6266 95861
88	Shell	2,1633 66337	2,8710 08327	1311	48	20900	145	1311	230129	12/02/0 9 09:09	1,1698 11321	0,6119 27882
89	Siemens	4,5147 45308	8,0112 77149	1684	139	9686	751	1684	42542	06/05/1 1 15:23	1,3909 09091	0,7792 66352
90	SocieteGenerale	4,6613 13869	5,0854 43165	3193	503	10624	1010	3474	15866	09/09/1 0 20:48	1,4892 47312	1,0524 73648
91	SSE	3,3791 28137	3,0351 09855	2558	385	8114	317	2560	10220	20/08/0 9 15:30	1,3547 2973	0,8145 98536
92	StanChart	4,3324 28765	3,6500 36285	3193	1595	42775	460	3308	25420	20/07/0 9 01:47	1,648	1,3265 95589
93	statoilasa	2,8217 63602	2,7963 68329	1504	15	3739	241	1507	25938	04/06/0 9 10:28	1	0
94	Swedbank	1,7478 9916	2,5184 69024	208	4	444	15	208	2708	18/08/0 9 07:09	1	0
95	Swisscom	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	48	130	05/01/1 0 14:53	NA	NA

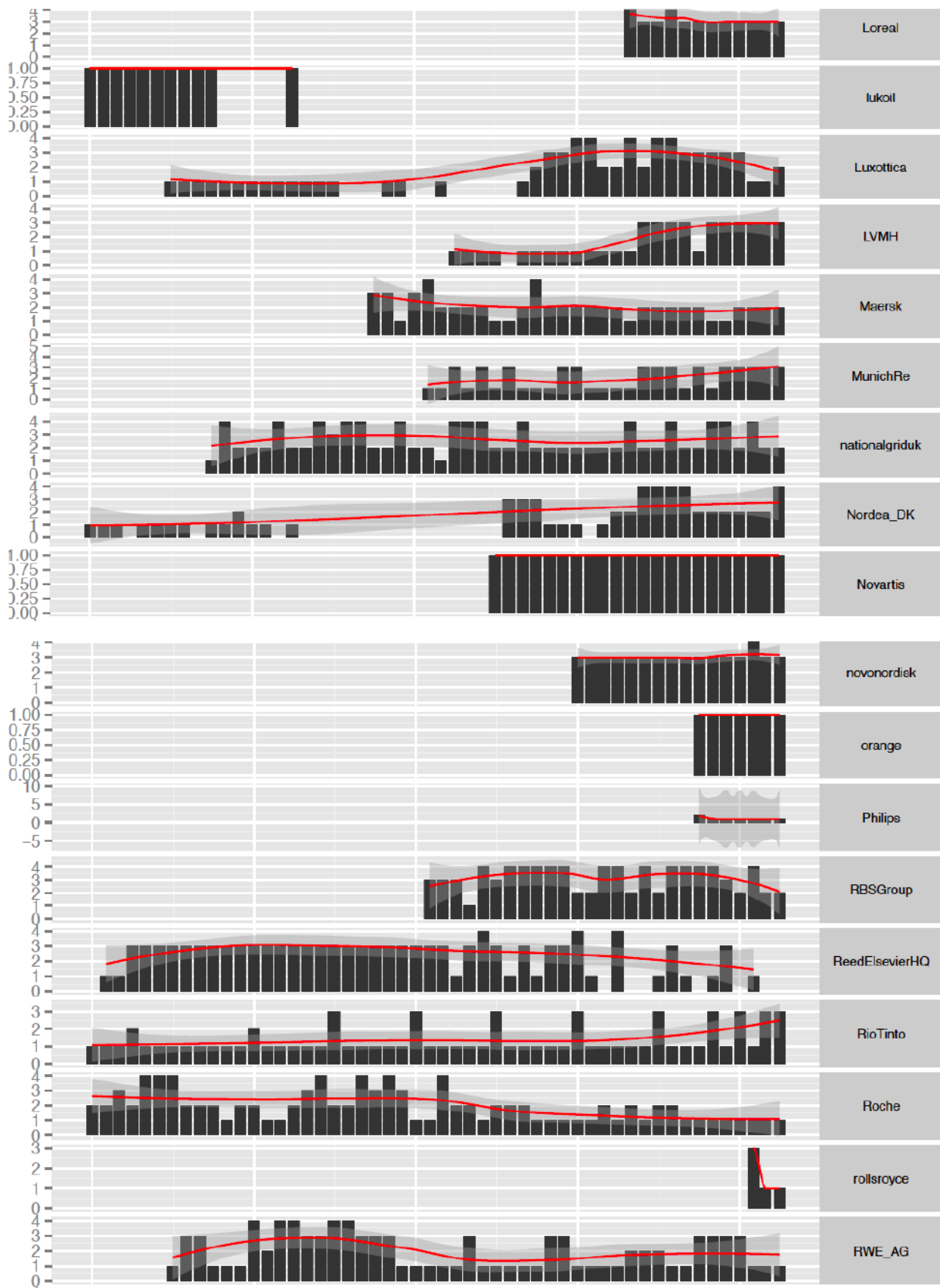
96	SwissRe	8,6189 18919	9,5621 29964	3189	353	9975	1265	4512	10226	20/10/0 8 13:23	1,5265 15152	1,2174 49797
97	Syngenta	5,8913 44383	7,9403 43682	3199	382	15620	692	3420	22846	19/11/0 8 15:59	1,5983 93574	1,7572 88231
98	TelenorGroup	2,0333 33333	1,4287 06643	915	3	3687	139	915	4108	23/09/0 9 07:52	1,5	0,9636 24112
99	TenarisDalmine	1,5777 77778	1,8699 49229	284	14	82	9	284	250	27/02/1 3 17:48	2	2,0701 96678
100	Tesco	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	529479	169703	25/03/1 1 15:46	NA	NA
101	The_Linde_Group	1,9962 40602	1,8594 65772	1062	71	1182	139	1061	4781	06/04/0 9 09:51	1,4137 93103	1,0927 91095
102	TLSN_Media	1,5183 24607	1,3873 2204	290	2	526	16	291	990	12/01/1 2 15:02	1,3333 33333	0,5773 50269
103	Total	6,4	9,0227 94558	3200	114	3616	55	6943	31665	05/10/0 9 08:14	1,1775 70093	0,4516 86235
104	UBS	2,0795 45455	2,2613 35084	366	1	2117	99	365	40567	06/05/0 9 18:04	1	0
105	UniCredit_PR	8,57	15,519 92246	2571	391	3271	234	2564	2471	23/03/1 1 16:37	4,0173 4104	19,271 76329
106	Unilever	8,2831 16883	15,316 12544	3189	290	30217	1442	6196	54239	28/01/1 0 10:44	1,2701 86335	0,7843 75833
107	Uralkali_Russia	1,9808 30671	1,7703 80395	620	5	658	47	620	2512	20/12/1 1 12:39	1,2	0,4472 13595
108	VINCI_fr	1,3627 45098	1,8920 84689	139	0	521	9	139	514	14/12/1 1 13:50	NA	NA
109	Vivendi_News	6,0450 16077	8,9959 4349	1880	68	61730	805	1883	1442	15/05/1 2 15:18	1,8333 33333	1,3232 84645
110	VodafoneGroup	2,2578 61635	2,9579 62514	359	1	11076	132	360	3903	17/01/1 2 09:16	1	0
111	volvocarsglobal	4,7329 0938	4,5095 66755	2977	1988	13846	44	2974	47628	26/07/1 1 15:18	1,6515 27663	1,2717 34897
112	Volkswagen	17,966 29213	14,646 06882	3198	2403	66810	111	14801	253970	01/04/0 9 18:49	1,3437 34015	0,7924 31813
113	WPP	3,2653 06122	2,1565 44641	3200	24	16350	418	3517	63864	19/01/0 9 15:27	1,9589 0411	2,8059 37931
114	Zurich	3,5699 58848	3,7009 67107	1735	311	3503	292	1745	13829	04/01/1 0 14:41	1,6834 17085	2,3709 6843

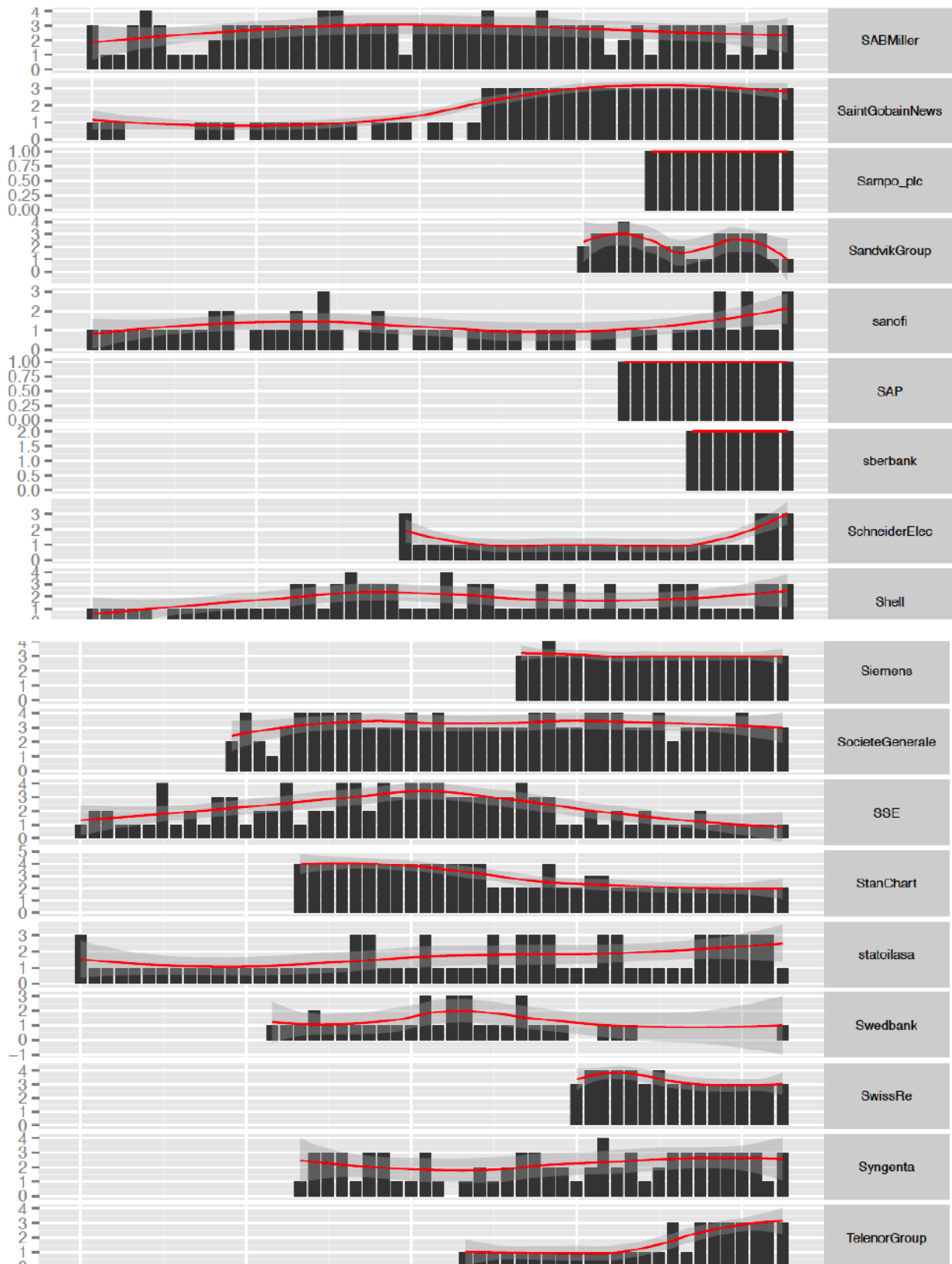
TABLE 2 – EXAMPLES OF CHANGING STRATEGIES ON TWITTER ACCORDING TO THE MATRIX











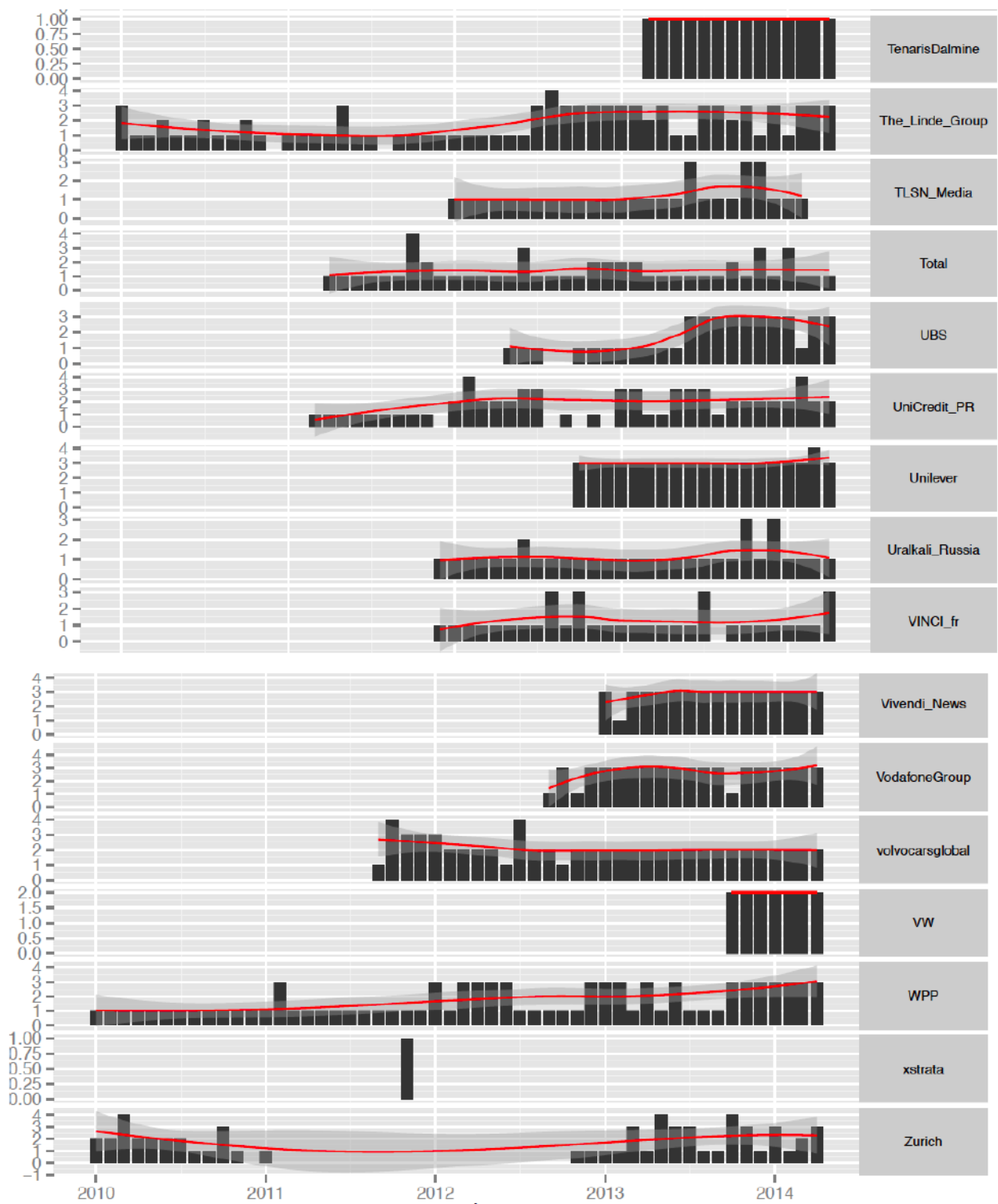


Table n. 3 – CODING SHEET FROM THE CONTENT ANALYSIS

CODING	Name	References	Sources
SELECTIVE	CSR ISSUES	200	26
AXIAL	SOCIAL	132	24
OPEN	Ask Gareth	22	1
	World Economic Forum Davos	17	4
	Sustliving	9	1
	campaign for woman	9	1
	mobileforgood	8	1
	allianz football camp	6	1
	through your eyes	5	1
	Support young people	5	2
	employee engagement	5	3
	paraolympic	4	1
	Sustainability values	4	3
	Development in Africa	4	1
	Sebenza fund	3	1
	responsible investing	3	2
	Hurricane Sandy relief effort from the firm	3	2
	Sponsorship	3	1
	illegaltobacco	2	1
	Enel foundation	2	1
	nutrition report	1	1
	frontline health workers in developing world	1	1
	wealth management	1	1
	HIV AIDS in Uganda	1	1
	Diversity week	1	1
	young generation attention	1	1
	Young entrepreneurs	1	1
	Social Housing in Mexicali	1	1
	equitable access to vaccines	1	1
	Commitment of employees and families	1	1
	charity	1	1
	Donations _philatropy	1	1
	employee volunteering programme	1	1
	Supporting education programmes	1	1
	Tech4good	1	1
	Education responsible drinking	1	1
	indigenous philanthropy	1	1
	supply chain	1	1
AXIAL	ENVIRONMENTAL	47	6
OPEN	TripleE	16	1
	solar energy	5	1
	cleantech	4	1
	grid system	3	1

	Electric buses	2	1
	reducing fuel consumption	2	1
	smart building	1	1
	Oil and gas	1	1
	plant biotechnology research in Ghent	1	1
	commitment to renewables	1	1
	photovoltaic	1	1
	new resin plant in Shanghai	1	1
	environmental attention	1	1
	Carbon neutral	1	1
	new turbines	1	1
	carbon footprint	1	1
	offshore	1	1
	natural gas	1	1
	green chemistry work	1	1
	center for competence and gas turbines	1	1
	E-houses in Sierra Gorda	1	1
AXIAL	ECONOMIC	21	7
OPEN	Sustainability Report	18	6
	Dow Jones Sustainability Index	2	2
	CSR index	1	1
SELECTIVE	PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES	178	39
AXIAL	EVENTS	84	28
OPEN	Presentations	40	12
	AUSA2012	9	1
	MWC14	4	1
	WSJ Conference	4	1
	HM Isabel Marant	3	1
	EDC 2013	3	1
	Home of the future	2	1
	m2m symposium	1	1
	Futureofenergy	1	1
	ECC 2013_pharma	1	1
	CCOTY 2013	1	1
	World Diabetes day	1	1
	WDC 2013	1	1
	CML DAY	1	1
	HSBC franchisor award	1	1
	american energy	1	1
	Rare disease day	1	1
	RNM2013	1	1
	SAP HIRE NOW	1	1
	Global Marketer Week	1	1
	World Cancer Day	1	1
AXIAL	CUSTOMER SERVICE	25	7
OPEN	Thanks messages	9	4

	Customer Relationship Management	1	1
AXIAL	PROMOTION	21	7
OPEN	ebenezersnoop	9	1
	advertising	4	1
	Blog	2	1
	giveaways	2	1
	web chat	1	1
	Video about future sustainability	1	1
	Deutsche bank Quiz	1	1
	social media	1	1
AXIAL	AWARDS	21	8
OPEN	C40SiemensAward	7	1
	Best companies to work	1	1
	Future Energy Prize	1	1
	Golden Index	1	1
	IDG AWARDS for ethical responsibility	1	1
AXIAL	PRODUCT	14	4
OPEN	new collection_new product	9	2
	energy boost running shoes	2	1
	New Packaging	1	1
	new tv programmes	1	1
	Fall Winter presentation event	1	1
AXIAL	CONTEST	13	2
OPEN	packaging design contest	7	1
	Know our CEO Contest	5	1
	Rb Contet values	1	1
SELECTIVE	COMPANY ISSUES	59	21
AXIAL	DISCLOSURE	47	16
OPEN	Company issues	20	7
	Financial results	18	5
	Annual Report	5	4
	Results	4	3
AXIAL	Jobs	12	10
OPEN	recruitment scams	1	1

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