INTERACT!

An Explorative Study of Social Media's Impact on Brand Management

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Executive summary

In this thesis, the effect of engaging consumer content on social media is explored in relation to brand management as a discipline. The consequences of this effect on brands are discussed and the causal coherence between organizations’ actions in this arena and the end effect in the minds of those affected by these actions is determined. To do so, the thesis answers an overall research question: *How do interactions on Social Media affect brand management?*

Through research it is rendered probable that interaction and subsequent attachment of brand value takes place with or without the interference of an organization. It is, however, possible for the organization to engage in interaction with the consumers, thereby gaining a voice and potentially affecting the value creation process. Four assumptions that represent the foundation for conceptualizing strategies for brand management on social media are presented: “*The brand is a cognitive construal created in the minds of the consumers*”, “*the characteristics of the individual social media platform (arena) determine the interactional possibilities and how content can be dispersed*”, “*brand value exists and is created in the interaction between social systems and the brand*” and finally; “*the brand has personality traits resulting in emotional bonding between the consumer and the brand, and these are affected by the engagement approach by the brand-representative*”.

The thesis concludes that interactions on social media affect brand management, as they provide consumers with the means to reach a massive audience, under the right circumstances, and thereby influence others with their view on the brand in question. Ultimately this affects brand value and can potentially alter consumer purchasing behavior. Organizations should therefore choose their engagement strategy carefully and make sure it suits the situation at hand. On the basis of this, we present five operational propositions for organizations engaging brand management on social media:

- Know your battlefield
- Play by their rules
- Choose your battles carefully
- Be aware of your own history
- Your strategy should be made-to-order
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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The emergence of social media has resulted in unprecedented possibilities for everyone and anyone to be heard, seen and reach mass audiences around the world without having to deal with the gatekeepers of traditional media. This socialization of media has resulted in a change in the way information is created, distributed and processed – and in the way it is controlled. Whereas individuals and organizations in the past have had some degree of codetermination in deciding whether to release information or not, the development of social media to some extent makes it possible for streams of information to flow regardless of involvement from the parties that the information is about. In this sense, conversations regarding, and critique of, brands occur constantly whether the brand-owners like it or not.

When combined with the notion that brands exist in the mind of the consumer, brand managers are confronted with a whole new set of challenges when (highly shareable) conversations about their brands take place in very public arenas. As with any type of communication, the actual effect depends on the amount of attention the conversations receive. Recently, social media has resulted in vast amounts of information being created, dispersed and made accessible to an ever-growing user base. Therefore, the threat of potentially damaging content spreading through and amongst social networks and search engines rapidly is greater than ever. However, the sheer amount of information and content available alone makes something as simple as the method for locating it vital. Facebook for instance sees the creation of some 1,851,000 status updates and 1,000,000 links shared every 20 minutes\(^1\). In the same amount of time, YouTube receives 700 hours of video uploads\(^2\) and in one week, 1 billion Twitter-posts are created\(^3\).

The process of diffusing all of this information must necessarily hold some significance in the way it is perceived, and if and how it is shared. Search engines such as Google play a critical role in the dispersion, as the algorithm they are built around decides what sites should appear in what order, making these algorithms the subject of immense interest. Put simply, Google has a set of factors incorporated in

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\(^1\) Web 1
\(^2\) Web 2
\(^3\) Web 3
the engine, and if these factors are met sufficiently, the page will be showed on top of a search. Thusly, the criterion for user-generated content and social media-conversations being ranked highly is not truth or even necessarily relevance. Undesirable and, in some cases, false information can potentially be spread just as easily as any other content.

The choice for organizations then, is no longer whether or not to release any given piece of information, but whether or not they wish to participate in the debate. Where, how and to what effect organizations can participate to protect and manage their brands is the subject of this thesis. As Brian Solis (2008) says: “The tools people use to share content online are the same tools we can use to reach them” (Solis et al. 2008: 31). However, the brand manager’s task is not only to reach people, but also to create meaningful interactions and subsequently affect the consumer’s perception of the brand.

To be able to do so then require a whole new approach to strategy and one that differs quite a bit from traditional strategies used to deal with traditional media. In the words of Brian Solis:

“The most important lesson in Social Media is that, before engaging anyone, you must first observe and understand the cultures, behavior, and immersion necessary to genuinely participate” (Solis et al. 2008, p.155).

1.1 Problem Area
When it comes to brand management in the arena of social media, not much academic research has been conducted yet, most likely due to the relative novelty of the phenomenon. However, the need for knowledge regarding how to act in the arena grows with the ever increasing amount of people who participate in, and subsequently are influenced by, social media of all types. A number of organizations are already present in one way or the other in the social arena, and many more are surely contemplating how to benefit from involvement. It is our belief that, whichever category an organization belongs to, a strategy for engaging people through social media is vital if the organization is to engage successfully. How to create such a strategy that arguably needs to take into account both the specific goal of an engagement effort, in order to measure its success, the most favorable tools to utilize, as well as how to engage, is the questions managers need to ask themselves.
Brand management as a paradigm has developed continuously over the last decades, but with this new and largely unknown source of creating and sharing content of interest to consumers, the question is if the existing literature provides an adequate knowledge base for creating a viable strategy for managing a brand. Since information flows freely on the internet and particularly through social networks and other user controlled media, organizations has to a large extent lost control over information once it is online. The interaction, as well as the diffusion of content is out of their hands, and so one might say that influencers and consumers to a degree hold power over the communication process and that the ordinary consumer has great influence when it comes to corporate brands and the diffusion of information regarding a brand (Weber, 2009).

This presents both possibilities and threats, but we believe that most of all it presents a change in the way organizations need to perceive the field of brand management. The amount of sites, networks and applications available presumably make it an overwhelming task to create an overview of the various possible approaches – not to mention the sheer amount of actual content being produced. The massive exposure a lot of content is given on some of the more mainstream social media both represent in itself a unique possibility in terms of branding, as well as a daunting challenge when it comes to dealing with unwanted exposure. When it comes to conversations, about brands for instance, people now more than ever have the ability to start them, forcing organizations to respond (Solis et al. 2008). From the opposite perspective, the people who are increasingly spending time online are getting used to being able to express opinions and having full access to information. Because of this shift in power, it becomes interesting to look into how an organization can become more proactive in shaping the tone of these conversations. After all, these conversations are going to take place whether organizations are participating in them or not (ibid).

The shear amount of people who are engaged in social media in one way or the other should be enough incentive for any organization to gain knowledge on how to address the sociological development that lies within the continued progression of social media.
1.2 Problem Statement

In this thesis we explore social media as a phenomenon, in an effort to create a foundation for conceptualizing strategies for brand management in social media. To do this we will discuss the effect of the phenomenon that is social media, in order for us to be able to establish what the potential outcomes of such a strategy might be. Also, we seek to identify the consequence of this effect on brands, as this will be essential when it comes to determining a desirable approach. Finally, we attempt to determine the causal coherence between the result of the actions of the organization in this arena and the end effect in the minds of the target of these actions. The goal is to produce a range of guidelines for the brand manager to benefit from, when creating a social brand management strategy.

This leads us to the research question that will guide this thesis:

**How do interactions on Social Media affect brand management?**

Existing approaches to brand management, as described by Heding et al. (2009), do not in our view completely capture the unique nature of social media in dealing with the management of brands. As a variety of different types of social media exists, we wish to establish how to consider these arenas and in what way a brand manager can successfully maneuver on these treacherous waters, shaping the conversations existing on them in a desired manner.

To explore our research question we have formulate the following sub questions:

- **How can the characteristics of Social Media affect the engagement process?**
- **What does the communicative engagement approach mean for the process of affecting consumers' view on the brand?**
- **In what way do the answers to the above two questions affect brand value and the brand manager's approach to branding?**

These questions are used as a guideline for the individual chapters in the analysis, in which we explore these areas in-depth, in order for us to reach a conclusion that gives a fulfilling answer to our problem statement.
Chapter 2 - Methodology and Theoretical Anchors

The following section motivates the specific choices of theories and the implications these choices have on the final thesis, as well as the approach we have to gathering empirical data to support our thesis.

2.1 Scientific Paradigm

Since the main objective of this thesis is to make an attempt at formulating guidelines for a contemporary approach to brand management, we naturally have to take a few things into account first. For instance what is the definition of the social media arena? How does information disperse in this arena? Can consumers be affected by being engaged by brands? These questions will be sought answered in the coming chapters, but before these answers can be given we will first discuss how we approach the concept of knowledge. More specifically in which scientific paradigm we anchor our assumptions before immerging ourselves in empirical research.

Since a large part of this thesis revolves around a social aspect of media usage it seems relatively straight forward to take heed of this in the way we perceive knowledge. We believe that we, as researchers, are not able to study the phenomena completely separated from the social world in which we are part of. The concept of Grounded Theory “comprises a systematic, inductive, and comparative approach for conducting inquiry for the purpose of constructing theory” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:1) and since this an objective for us, we will use this method throughout the empirical analysis that comprise the basis for our final recommendations. More specifically we will adhere to the approach posed by Strauss & Corbin (1990) in which the context of the empirical observations also holds significance. This practically means that we will take into account “each likely incident that could relate to the data, whether it emerges from the data or not” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:77).

We share the notion posed by Strauss & Corbin (1990) that we do not venture out into “reality” as proverbial blank slates, but possess a certain amount of insight and knowledge prior to the research being conducted, and that this can potentially prove to be an advantage in the process. Naturally it can also prove disadvantageous, if we venture down one path determined by our prerogatives and thus neglecting another. Though we are not able to avoid this, it is something we are aware of and will attempt
to avoid or circumvent as much as possible. The researcher necessarily has to have a perspective from which to identify relevant data and meaningful categories from the interpretation of data. This specific type of predetermination Strauss & Corbin (1990) calls Theoretical Sensitivity and it enables the researcher to determine what is important in the data and put it in a context of meaning (ibid). In praxis this can come from reading relevant literature in various forms, to provide us with proper background knowledge, enabling us to construct a usable and meaningful framework for analysis.

All together this means that we work from a constructivist epistemological starting point, and as our main epistemological vantage point we utilize Niklas Luhmann’s constructivist theory on social systems. This choice is naturally based on the theoretical choices we have made and due to the fact that this view allows us to focus on communication and the interaction between systems, something that is the central aspect of Luhmann’s systemic paradigm (Fuglsang et al. 2005: 131). As any usage of Luhmann’s perspective necessarily focuses on the process of observation, a theory inspired by the British mathematician Spencer Brown, we recognize the notion that an observation is defined as “an indication within the framework of a difference” (Åkerstrøm 2001: 43) which basically refers to the idea that we as observers have an inherent “blind spot” as we are not able to observe from where we are observing (ibid: 44), which correlates to the above mentioned notion of Theoretical Sensitivity, only in reverse so to speak.

This all affects how we perceive knowledge, brands and the social systems in which we operate, and we will further elaborate this in chapter 3 and when using it throughout the thesis. The critique of such an approach to theoretical science is related to the highly theoretical nature of Luhmann’s systemic paradigm, which is first and foremost focused towards developing the theoretical sphere (Fuglsang et al, 2005). However, the framework of the theoretical approach, in regards to the ontological notion that communication is the basic unit of the social system (ibid), is usable for our own theoretical discussions and whereas it could be seen as a hindrance given our relatively normative problem statement, we choose to view it as a way in which the possibility of analysis is present within the theoretical approach without us being subjected to a stringent solution oriented framework.
2.2 Empirical Approach and Research Design

As our goal is to be able to provide a contemporary approach to branding in the social media age, there is a natural need for an empirical foundation in order for us to back up our assumptions regarding an evolution in brand management that takes social media into account.

In line with Järvinen & Mik-Meyer (2005), we believe that media texts and websites are in essence documents and therefore they possess an inherent ‘potential for action’ (ibid: 20). This potential for action can be related to both the particular discourse that is activated by the document as well as which networks the document is part of (ibid). Since a significant part of our research area is focused on online media, and subsequently social networks, a lot of the available data is of course in the form of written texts. And since we in essence are seeking to develop brand management strategy within the arena of social media, and thusly also largely in written form, it does not pose a significant problem with our research design. Our primary empirical data will come from interviews with users and quantitative surveys. The interviews we will however not be conducted in a traditional face to face interaction, as we attempt to follow the nature of the field of research in which we are acting. Therefore we will be conducting written, live, interviews, as written output is somewhat of an operative for most content-creation on the internet.

2.3 Empirical Data and Basis for Interviews

The empirical data will consist both of media texts, qualitative data from interviews and quantitative data from questionnaires.

The variety of data and methods has been selected to adhere to the principals of both data and methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1989). The different types of primary empirical data are furthermore chosen in order for us to reach all the different groups of users of social technologies. To categorize the different users, we adhere to the Social Technograph as presented by Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff in the book, Groundswell - Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies (2009). The authors, based on further research have decided to add another group to the Social Technograph - the conversationalist. This group have been integrated into our analysis since it provides a valuable distinction not present when the two closest groups where critics and creators. This new group allows us to distinguish between the casual social media status updater and the more engaged creator of for instance blogs and other longer pieces of content.
Social Technograph divides users into 7 groups depending on their level of interaction on social media. The groups are: Inactives, spectators, joiners, collectors, critics, conversationalists and creators.

![Social Technograph Diagram]

**Figure 1: The Social Technograph (Li et al., 2008)**

It is important to keep in mind that the Social Technograph is a way of classifying people based solely on how they use social technologies. Also, the Social Technograph is presented as a ladder indicating that people belonging to one group are actually also participating in behaviors that characterize a lower group. In practical terms, this means that depending on a user’s behavior in any given moment or in any given context, he/she can be classified as being in a group corresponding to the current behavior and not their former or future behavior or behavior in other contexts.

We have decided to further divide the users above into two main categories in order to further the understanding and readability of the thesis. The two main categories
are Content Producers and Content Consumers. The content producers are those who are actively producing content (reviews, status updates, blog posts, etc.). This category covers the creators, conversationalists and critics of the social Technograph. The content consumers are those who read and react to the content, but do not actively produce content. This category covers the spectators, joiners and collectors in the social Technograph. Once again, the categories are not meant to be absolute, so a person will be categorized according to the behavior in the situation at hand and not in relation to previous and future behavior. We will elaborate on the categorizations when applied in the analysis-portion of the thesis.

The first part of our empirical data consists of blog-posts, status updates on social media (for instance Facebook), posts on review sites, etc. These media texts are the basis for all our other data since it is in the analysis of these media texts that we are able to select subjects for interviews. Also, the analysis of the media texts provides the basis for further analysis since the texts' intrinsic potential for action (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2005; 20) is the reason they are relevant in the first place. The intrinsic potential for action is not to be understood as being absolute, but instead highly dependent on the context in which it is situated.

The second part of the empirical data will come from digital interviews with users of social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, forums and review sites that can be characterized as producers (creators, conversationalists and critics). These interviews are intended to uncover why they choose to create content. Furthermore, they are intended to extract to what extent they expect to gain from this content-creation. The basis for the understanding of this is Scott Cook's analysis of the Contribution Revolution (2008) in which he defines six reasons why people contribute; as a by-product (the data collected from purchasing behavior for instance), practical solutions, social reward, reputation, self expression and altruism. Among the areas covered are what sort of experience that inspires them to contribute (negative/positive experience), if they expect a reaction from the brand owner and if the brand owner lives up to this expectation. How do they react when their contribution produces a reaction from the brand owner and so forth.

The third part of our empirical data consists of questionnaires distributed both among content consumers (spectators, joiners and collectors) and content producers. The
questionnaire form has been selected on the basis of method triangulation as well the assumption that the behavior of content consumers suggests a lesser level of commitment/engagement than their producer counterparts. A smaller amount of time and attention is also required by the respondents than would be if we were to utilize qualitative methods. We believe that, by designing the method to suit the behavior of the group studied, will be able to gather a more extensive and thereby a more representative dataset. The questionnaire is designed to gather information about reactions and attitudes towards content produced by Content Producers as well as the respondents’ reactions on interaction by brand owners.

2.4 Methodological Exemptions and Critique

Our general view on the concept of knowledge represents the idea that coherence between cause and effect can be claimed but never truly proven qua the principle of falsification as stated by Popper (Brier, 2005: 145-166). In this sense, empirical data only posses the ability to disprove a theory or hypothesis, not indisputably confirm its validity. A theory or hypothesis holds scientific value if it is possible to logically deduce statements from it that are testable through observations and experiments. This criterion will be applicable to the statements and hypotheses we develop constantly throughout the thesis and to our final conclusion. We furthermore seek to adhere to this principle throughout the thesis when drawing conclusions and discussing theoretical and empirical findings. The end result is to be usable in regards to evaluating the course of our research and analysis process, in order for us to pinpoint potential improvements that can aid in any future courses of analysis.

When it comes to the empirical approach we have chosen for this thesis, the degree to which the data can be considered representative is somewhat debatable. Since we are not able to secure a cross section of the users of online media that is significant enough, our data will merely be a suggestion towards a possible meaning rather than a definitive, representative (and positivistic) truth. As we distribute the survey predominantly through our own social networks and not among a representative selection of respondents, and since we do not compare the results to a control group, we delimit the research from being demographically valid. We will discuss the significance of this further in chapter 3. Through our scientific approach we also have to delimit ourselves from speculating on the backgrounds of the respondents and interpretations of meaning – we are mostly focusing on the communication processes
as they present themselves through the various media through the constructivist view of Niklas Luhmann, which we will elaborate further upon when applicable.

2.5 Strategy for Interviews and Survey
The subject we are dealing with revolves around mostly written sentiments in one form or another as mentioned in section 2.2, and therefore we will be conducting a part of our research through written interviews. In order for us to uncover how certain situations are perceived by the viewers and participators, when exposed to for instance negative critique of a brand, we will certainly benefit from interviewing a variety of subjects. We have chosen to use the approaches posed by Ib Andersen (2003) and Steinar Kvale (1994 & 1995) as our basis for creating a viable interview strategy and research design.

We have preferred to conduct interviews with a selected amount of users of certain social sites, and consider them as representing a sample of consumers that are presumably affected by the exposure to specific content. In order for us to maintain a proper degree of validity, we believe that it is necessary to determine the practice within the field we are studying. As Kvale (1995) says, (...) the understanding of knowledge as a map of an objective reality, and validity as the correspondence of the map with the reality mapped, is replaced by the social and linguistic construction of a perspectival reality where knowledge is validated through practice (Kvale 1995). Based on this notion we will attempt to ensure validity by acknowledging both the context in which we are interacting with the subjects, the topic of the interviews and the basis from which we are asking. It is our problem statement and the intended object of investigation that acts as the basis for our method, and this will determine whether our findings are valid or not, as validity – in the postmodern sense of the word – is adhered to whether or not a specific method investigates what it is intended to investigate (ibid) to "the extent to which our observations indeed reflect the phenomena or variables of interest to us" (Pervin, 1984, p. 48 in Kvale, 1995).

Since we seek to explore the effect of social media engagement for organizations, and since we operate from the idea that brand perception is something that can be influenced\(^5\), validity in this context is found by uncovering the alterations created in

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\(^5\) For definitions see the relevant sections about our theoretical vantage points
the mindset of whoever is exposed to the content created and shared through Social Media. A few things are important in this context; the method for uncovering these alterations, what lies in the word ‘uncovering’ and what exactly constitutes alterations. As for the method we refer to section 2.1 through 2.4, as for the uncovering we define it as determining that there is in fact an effect of the exposure to information, and lastly, an alteration is defined as a change in perception from a previous determined state – the last two are somewhat subject to the construct in the view of the subjects we are questioning, as it is their perception that constitute reality in the scientific paradigm from which we are observing.

As we concur with the post-modernist assumption that various ways of knowing and various truths exist (Kvale, 1995), and as our interview subjects likely have individual perspectives as to what they regard as their reality, we consider each interview to be with a representative from a social system that is autopoietic in the sense of its own perception of reality. And since we also, as described in section 2.4, consider knowledge to be an entity that can never truly be proven, we see a deductive approach as a method of reaching into certain systems. This is meant in the context that it will provide us with an overview of key elements in the field we are exploring and enables us to establish the parameters of which we can measure the impact of social media engagement in the end. The method of selection we use is called clustering and is basically a term that signifies that we group the subjects together in separate clusters (or systems) and thereafter select a representative from each system (Andersen, 2003; 146-152). Our goal with these interviews is not to secure representative data; we are aware of the fact that the sheer amount of knowledge we seek to uncover makes the task of securing a representative result daunting to say the least, and therefore we choose to conduct a more case related study – the case being individual to each interview. Such a study is determined by few units of observation and a lot of variables and the reason why this exact method of research is relevant lies in the fact that this type of study is particularly common when it comes to exploring social subsystems and organizations (ibid). The case study is characterized by the fact that it is an empirical study that highlights a contemporary phenomenon within the realm of real life, where the boarders, between the phenomenon and the context in which it is part, are not obvious and where the possibility of utilizing multiple sources of information to illuminate the phenomenon
exists (ibid). This means that in this thesis we are able to segment the subjects of interest in such a manner that we be able to illuminate the subject of brand management in Social Media through different cases, and through different sources of information i.e. interview subjects.

We are focusing on a subject that revolves around affecting all people that can possibly come into contact with the content created in the social arena, and therefore we are interested in reaching all the various types of systems represented – or more specifically, the different types of people that are able to reach the conversations taking place there. We utilize the taxonomy described in the Social Technograph (Li et al., 2008) to identify the systems of users and interview subjects are selected from each of the systems, acting as representatives. These subjects are then subjected to written interviews as described earlier and the findings act as the basis for the preliminary analysis. Content producers and content consumers act as different systems in our approach and they might have different a different perception of the same situation. Therefore we need to reach them both in order to identify what specific key points are important to adhere to when strategizing about engaging the various groups. As researchers we are assuming an external viewpoint, we believe we will benefit from conducting qualitative research like this to determine how brand perception is shaped in these systems. In an interview the focus is on how the subject acts based on the social context the subject is situated in (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2005: 16). This is something we reflect on and seek to protrude in the analysis of these interviews. The possibility of us uncovering something with which we were not familiar with prior to the interviews is an added bonus.

Our entire research design is a three part process: Case observations, interviews and quantitative surveys.

2.5.1 Observations

We have during research for this thesis located a series of cases that are relevant to our field of interest. These cases we have then put into a theoretical context and discussed them accordingly to form a basis for constructing hypotheses for further conclusions towards the end of the thesis. As described earlier, each case is representing an individual social system, and is as such considered unique in the sense that while the topic of the case might diffuse into other systems and change,
we take a synchronous view of it in the context it is situated. We will elaborate the specific usage when needed, in order for the reader to maintain a better overview of the subjects.

2.5.2 Interviews

In order for the subjects to respond without prejudice, since we are interested in the purest form of reaction to the conversation as possible, we choose not to disclose the questions to the subjects beforehand. Since our interest in the subjects is solely regarding their cognitive reaction to the conversation, and their subsequent rationalization of the value of the sender’s brand, we attempt to seclude them from any information that might give them a chance to alter their rationale to suit any agenda. We are aware of the fact that this might still be the case in some situations, but this is – in our opinion – rather impossible to avoid completely. Also we are aware of an issue with comprehensiveness when it comes to written interviews. In order for our written live-interviews to not be too long as we might risk the respondent losing interest or concentration, we have to acknowledge a strong possibility that we might end up with a rather small amount of data per interview. Since oral interviews most of the times contain more words per minute than it is possible for the average person to write, an hour-long interview will necessarily contain more data than a one-hour written interview. To compensate for this our total number of interviews exceed the number we would have if we had utilized an oral approach. This gives us a broader knowledge base, but perhaps less in-depth information.

As our interview subjects are solely recruited through cases from Danish websites we are conducting the interviews in Danish to secure data that is not limited by potential language barriers.

2.5.3 Quantitative Survey

This is targeted at both Content Producers and Content Consumers, which means that the survey consists of two different threads specifically for each group. We are interested in discovering if our thesis is scalable to a larger group and if they are cognitively acknowledging an effect of interacting with organizations. In addition it will provide us with the possibility to segment the respondents in various ways, which will enable us to categorize them in such a way as to indicate the effect of an engagement strategy more accurately. We also seek to uncover what drives the
conversation from the consumer perspective in specific cases, in order for us to
determine how such a strategy should in fact be formulated to secure the desired
type of engagement.

2.6 Theoretical Anchors
The following section will briefly account for the specifics of the theoretical material
used in this thesis and also attempt to provide a brief definition of certain key words
and areas, which will be mentioned throughout the thesis.

2.6.1 Social Media
The task of defining what constitutes social media is something of an interesting one.
There are various methods of approaching the subject, and it is a subject of great
debate. For instance short versions such as: “Any tool or service that uses the
internet to facilitate conversations” and longer, more explanatory ones such as: “a
group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological
foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated
content” exist. Both terms are in our opinion somewhat inadequate. The internet,
regardless of its massive contribution and importance, is not necessarily a
determining factor in defining social media. After all, the distinctive difference
between social media and just “media”, is social – meaning that the media itself is, in
our eyes at least, merely a vehicle and therefore not necessarily an integral part of
the paradigm. The internet can be used as a medium without “social” being a factor
at all, and one can surely be social without the utilization of the internet. For example
the simple act of a conference call is a social interaction, a conversation that utilizes
a technical medium in order for it to happen. Is that then a social medium? We would
say no. Also, the second definition claims internet-based applications which allow the
creation of content as a pivotal point, but one could argue that creation of content can
happen entirely offline and merely be shared later on. Is a video that is made by
digital camera, edited in an offline application and then posted on YouTube not
content that is on a social medium? We would say yes.

An interesting thought though, when looking at the two sentences, is that both
definitions focus on the frame of a tool or application, an arena, in which the

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6 Web 4
interaction takes place as an operative part of the definition – i.e. the internet. Whereas this limitation seems somewhat justified currently, there is no saying that this will remain relevant forever. We believe that media that rely on social interaction in order for them to function is an important part of the definition, but what specific kind of media that constitute the frame is not operative and cannot stand alone.

If the frame then is important, but is not able to stand alone – after all a tool is useless without someone to wield it – the acts of the participants must necessarily become the other part of the equation. We therefore agree with the social media monitoring company radian6 in that: “Social media is defined by the act of sharing content in and between social networks regardless of the content type”\(^7\), but this does not constitute a definition but more a prerequisite for something being social. Taking into account the already mentioned framing dilemma, we end up with the following definition of social media (for this thesis at least):

\[ \text{Any platform that allows for sharing of user generated content and interaction among users.} \]

This definition takes into account the versatility in both content and media itself, and we do not delimit ourselves to neither specific types of conversations or arenas; we focus on the act of sharing content – whether it be words or videos, mashes or memes. We recognize that “To truly leverage the impact of Social Media, the conversation must be two-way” (Solis et al. 2008, p.146) and therefore conversations in one form or another is a key aspect of the definition of social media. In the process of gathering information as well as analyzing the empirical data obtained, we will acknowledge the perspective of two-way communication when we talk of social media as crucial. However, as this thesis considers social media as a vehicle for a brand management process, we will not attempt to take a normative approach to social media as an entity – it will serve only as the arena in which our ideas will be tested.

### 2.6.2 Systemic Theory

Our analytical approach to social media arenas as well as our view on theoretical science is inspired by Niklas Luhmann’s theory on social systems as described in

\(^7\) Web 5
Kneer et al. (1997) and Fuglsang et al. (2005). The reason for this lies in our view of social media as something that exists on the basis of interaction among the users, meaning that communication in this view can be considered to be an operative part of this perspective. The same is the case with Luhmann’s paradigm and our choice of this paradigm is naturally related to our theoretical approach as well. Since we initially consider brands as a cognitive construal that exists in the mind of the consumer, as well as in the interaction between consumers and the brand itself (more on this in section 2.6.4 and chapter 6), as well as we take a communicative approach to affecting brands (see chapter 4), it aligns well with Luhmann’s theoretical view of communication being the key element.

This systemic approach will have a series of effects on this thesis, both on our choice of empirical research as described previously, as well as our view on social media as a whole and the approach to interacting with Content Producers. We will further elaborate and put these effects into context in chapter 3: The Social Media Arena and when otherwise applicable.

2.6.3 Crisis Communications and Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Taking into account that content is able to reach large audiences and remain available for extensive periods of time, we consider content (predominantly negative) to be a potential crisis. Our approach to engaging the stakeholders is thusly founded on the principles of crisis communications as formulated by Frandsen & Johansen (2010). The definition of crises as episodes in the continued relationship between the organization and its stakeholders (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010) is used as the benchmark in this context. This is seen both in the light of our own observations, during which we noticed somewhat of a pattern in the way brands approach Content Producers, as well as the idea of certain content having a real impact on the perception of the brand in the minds of those exposed to the content, which combined with the threat of mass dispersion we consider to be a potential crisis.

We utilize parts of the theoretical approach offered by Timothy Coombs as presented in Frandsen & Johansen (2010) to discuss how to handle a crisis communicatively, and also how the relationship between the stakeholder and the organization or brand

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8 For further elaboration, see chapter 6
has an impact on how negative content is perceived. The specifics of how this is employed will be addressed when used through the thesis, mainly in chapter 5. In addition, we pair the concept of crisis communications with that of eWOM as formulated by Henning-Thurau et al., 2004 & 2010 as well as by Doh et al., 2009 in order for us to substantiate the way in which the information adoption process influences brands.

Traditional (offline) word-of-mouth (WOM) has been shown to play a major role for customers’ buying decisions (Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1988). The way in which interactional media multiplies the significance of this concept is discussed in chapter 4 where further definitions and implications of eWOM is also explained.

2.6.4 Branding Theory
As the pivotal focal point of this entire thesis, brands and the process of managing them, valuating them and defining them is discussed thoroughly through a variety of different approaches to the subject as described by Heding et al. (2009) in their book; “Brand Management - Research Theory and Practice”. Where ever we refer to the term “brand” we define it not only as “A name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them which is intended to identify the goods or services or one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Heding et al 2009: 9) as it was described by the American Marketing Association in 1960, but as a cognitive construal that resides in the mind of the consumer. This notion is derived from the consumer-based approach to brand management (see Heding et al. 2009) and this basic assumption is the foundation for the way we conduct our research. When we recognize the brand as a construal, it also relates to the systemic approach we mentioned earlier, in which communication is the most basic element of analysis. This affects how we conduct research as well as our discussion of how interactions affect the brand (since it resides with an external social system other than the organization behind the brand).

We pair this assumption with two additional views on brand management, the community approach and the personality approach, as they both entail variations on how to perceive brand equity and what affects brand value. Where both the personality and the consumer-based approach in comparison deals with the exchange of communication between one marketer and one consumer, the
community approach takes a social aspect into consideration in which the brand - and the value associated with it - is constructed within interaction among consumers (Heding et al. 2009). This aligns with how we view social media as an arena and the systemic epistemology in which communication is the object of observation.

A further review of each approach and the consequences they have on viewing the way brands are affected through interactions and content-creation on social media is presented in chapter 6 where we will also further develop the way we view brand management in light of our empirical analysis and other theoretical discussions.

2.7 Guide to Reading This Thesis
In the following, we present a guide to how this thesis is structured and a description of what each chapter contains.

2.7.1 Step One
This section accounts for the definition of the particular arenas in which the brand manager can operate, and we seek to identify the characteristics of particular arenas that the brand manager should be aware of when creating a viable engagement strategy. In order for us to define the arenas, we discuss both definitions of social media as well as the systemic characteristics of these types of platforms through not only literature but also empirical observations. The implications of our systemic epistemology towards media are discussed, and lastly the chapter contains a discussion regarding the level of participation by various actors and their inclination towards engaging in interaction with one another.

2.7.2 Step Two
As discussed earlier we adhere to the assumption that every creation of content related to the brand has the potential to develop into a form of crisis. This can take place through social networks and sites indexed by search engines and we will attempt to identify what effect the specific approach to engagement and interaction in the arena has to those creating the content as well as those exposed to it. The focal point is the approach to interaction itself and the theories behind the handling of a potential crisis from a communicative point of view. Furthermore a discussion of the concept of eWOM is presented, where the legitimacy of the sender may or may not be part of the equation when it comes to the information in consumer-created content being adopted by Content Consumers.
2.7.3 Step Three
This chapter revolves around our empirical research and the findings we have deducted from it. Throughout the previous two chapters we have formulated statements for empirical testing and these statements are summed up and addressed through empirical verification in three categories. These categories are Consumer Engagement in eWOM, The Changed Media Arena and The Effect of eWOM and Organizational Engagement in Consumer Interaction. The purpose is to provide the basis for discussing how all of this affects brand management as a discipline. This is done in the last chapter of analysis.

2.7.4 Step Four
After having defined where to act, and what to expect when acting in a certain way, this section will focus on how to engage properly in order for the outcome to be successful. Discussing three existing approaches to brand management, and the relation these approaches have to our field of interest, we attempt to identify a series of propositions for strategy formulation. The object of analysis is the underlying structures behind how the process of engagement affects the creation, and alteration, of brands in the arenas. We seek to discuss the range of possible causes and effects of various methods of interaction as identified in step two, and through these construct the foundation for a new strategic approach to brand management. Lastly, a definition of brand value, and a discussion of what possibilities our approach provides for the brand manager, wraps up our analysis.

The model displayed below illustrates how the different chapters in our thesis relate to each other:
Chapter 3 - The Social Media Arena

In the following section we account for the particular area of interest in which we are conducting our research. Considering the different arenas as systems based on the thoughts of Niklas Luhmann (Luhmann 2000 [1996], Kneer et al. 1997 & Fuglsang et al. 2005), we define and identify the arenas and their specific characteristics in order for us to construct the boundaries acting as the frame of reference for further study. We also take an in-depth look at the users of the various arenas, which we consider to be underlying subsystems in this context. Apart from the overall theory on social systems, we also refer to material from Scoble et al. (2006) and Solis et al. (2008), the Social Technograph formulated by Li and Bernoff (2008) and our own empirical research.

3.1 The Definitions

In the initial parts of this thesis, we offered a definition of the term social media for the sake of clarifying the meaning whenever the term is mentioned. It is: "Any platform that allows for sharing of user generated content and interaction among users", and thusly the act and the medium are the operative parts of the definition. This, however, is a relatively broad definition of the term itself and for the purpose of being able to discuss specific cases, and conduct exploratory research, we establish a more narrow definition of the arenas – and these arenas are the object of discussion in the following paragraphs.

Following Niklas Luhmann’s theory on social systems, we have to clarify how we define social media in a context that adheres to this paradigm. As he has addressed media in the more classical sense and structured what drives media as a function system, we are curious to see whether these thoughts can be transferred to social media. The epistemological starting point of Luhmann’s theory on systems is a constructivist one, and the theory is as mentioned earlier first and foremost about developing the theoretical sphere (Fuglsang et al. 2005). However, the framework of the theoretical approach, in regards to the ontological notion that communication is the basic unit of the social system (ibid), enables us to further hypothesize about which types of communication, with the communication of the systems, have an effect when it comes to altering the autopoietic, self referencing nature of each particular system. As complex as that might sound, complexity is a part of Luhmann’s
approach to systemic theory (ibid) and is therefore difficult to avoid entirely. We do, however, whenever possible seek to clarify particularly complex points with examples, in an attempt to not lose sight of the practical objective of this thesis.

Luhmann’s idea that systems are not necessarily a product of reality and thereby observable, but instead a theoretical construction (ibid), gives us a frame of reference when it comes to classifying the social arenas for the sake of discussing their characteristics. This means that we are not claiming that the systems we are discussing are a construct of reality, as tangible and observable entities, but rather that our classification of certain social structures aids us in the analytical process as a frame of reference. This is necessary since the world, as Luhmann puts it, is hyper complex. We are in a sense subject of our own analytical framework, since we, as a social entity, cannot perceive other systems or the world for that matter without self-reference (Fuglsang et al, 2005). In other words, our ability to determine each system and its inherent function and codes makes the creation of an interaction strategy a more palatable task. We agree with Fuglsang et al. (2005) on the notion that systemic theory is not predominately an empirically oriented theory (ibid), but we can, however, draw parallels between the framework and conception of social systems as different entities that communicate in codes, and the nature of social media that – as par our definition from earlier – only exist on the basis of interaction, or communication, as Luhmann would put it.

Adhering to this point of view, we base parts of our own empirical study on the premises described below, which corresponds to the notion of social media arenas as social systems. Also, we believe our interview subjects in the exploratory part of our empirical research can be said to be part of specific social systems, and therefore we consider their communicated statements as representative of the system in which they are a part. Since Luhmann does not recognize individuals (as explained later in this chapter), we delimit ourselves from the notion that all members of a system need to be subject to empirical testing as the internal complexity of the system is necessarily a determinant for how the representatives view the system. As we focus on communication as the most basic element, it is the understanding of communicative structures that is the key point of analysis. Luhmann consider communication to be a combination of three components: information, utterance and
understanding and each of these components in turn represent a selection of opportunities (Seidl 2004).

As Seidl (2004) notes, every piece of communication is a selection of what information exactly is being communicated, as opposed to everything that could have been communicated. Every utterance – or form of and reason for communicating – is a selection of a specific reason and form among all existing reasons and forms possible, and every understanding can be conceptualized as a selection of a particular distinction between the information communicated and the understanding of this information (ibid: 7). Since the information has to be distinguished from how it is communicated, the receiver’s preconception necessarily determines how this distinction takes place and the communication is then deciphered accordingly. As the intentions behind the communication are irrelevant to the receiver’s perception and understanding of the communicated, our qualitative analysis is centered on an observation of the communicated within certain social arenas and how the subjects understand it. We realize that through our observation of the communication with the subjects, we ourselves are subject to going through such a process of selection and understanding. As such we are aware of the fact that we can never have access to the information-portion of the equation, and are only able to analyze the utterance and our own understanding (Kneer & Nassehi 1997: 84-99). This point is also an important one to organizations considering how to engage users in social media arenas, since it means that the users acting within them are able to construct meaning from the communication taking place. This means, for instance, that if the piece of communication, i.e. a consumer-produced comment or blog post, can be affected to make the total picture of the message the reader is subjected to, an alternate one, the understanding can then theoretically be controlled in a desired direction. This premise will be discussed in detail during the next chapter.

Luhmann also addresses his views on media in his book; “The Reality of the Mass Media (2000)” in which he discusses media in general and the oddity that we; “(...) know so much about the mass media that we are not able to trust these sources” (Luhmann 2000 [1996]: 1) even though he admits that what we know of society, we do so through mass media (ibid). It is interesting to note that Luhmann defines the term mass media as something that includes “all those institutions of society which make use of copying technologies to disseminate communication” (Luhmann 2000
[1996]: 2) and, as something of a crucial point, that “no interaction among those co-present can take place between sender and receivers” (ibid). There is here a noticeable difference between this definition of mass media and social media, as defined by ourselves earlier, and whereas one might argue that this disqualifies his views on mass media from being adhered to when discussing social media, we believe that there are sufficient similarities, which make his theory relevant when analyzing these particular types of media.

3.1.1 Luhmann’s Selectors of News

When it comes to news as an entity, we argue that content produced on and dispersed through social media in some way or the other has to live up to a similar series of criteria for it to be interesting to its readers, just like regular mass media. Mass media has to appeal to a broad audience and, as a result, must create content with a relatively broad appeal (Luhmann states that mass media intensifies the selectors used to determine if information is newsworthy, and that more attention must be given to making the information readily understandably for the broadest possible circle of receivers (Luhmann 2000 [1996]: 27)) which is not necessarily the case for social media. Due to the fact that such a large amount of people have access to internet\(^9\) and thusly access to social media\(^10\), even niche topics can reach a significant audience (Anderson, 2004) through what can be called pull-demand\(^11\). One could argue that the concept of niche in a world of social media has changed, since the audience for just about any statement is bound to exist per the vastness of the internet, particularly when one considers the indexation of information by search engines, making information location a task practically everyone is able to perform without major difficulties.

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\(^9\) At the moment approximately close to 2 billion people have internet access worldwide according to Web 19
\(^10\) This sentiment is stated with some reservation, as certain parts of the world do not have unhindered access to all parts of the internet, i.e. for example what is known as “the great firewall of China” that is created by the government, blocking direct access to certain websites to internet users located in China. See for instance Web 20
\(^11\) Pull being what we call content that is not distributed as such by an organization, but is instead reachable by actions taken by users, such as for instance Facebook pages. As opposed to push that characterizes content that reaches its audience, rather than the audience coming to it, such as for example newspapers.
Luhmann formulates a series of factors, acting as the criteria for the selection of information for dissemination as news\textsuperscript{12} that can typically be found (Luhmann 2000 [1996]: 27). These criteria are: Surprise, Conflicts, Quantities, Local Relevance, Norm Violations, Morality, Actors, Topicality & Recursivity and Opinions, and they are all complemented and reinforced by the organization that deals with the selection (Luhmann 2000 [1996]: 28-34).

*Surprise* signifies that the information has to be new, breaking existing expectations or determining a space of limited possibilities like it is the case with for example sporting events. *Conflicts* have the benefit of suggesting a self-induced uncertainty. *Quantities* act as an effective attention-grabber, as the context, which numbers are put in, can increase the information value. *Local relevance* indicates that distance must be compensated for by the degree of gravity or novelty of the information. *Norm violations* of law, and particularly of moral code and political correctness, are also a key selector, signified by a deviance from ‘normality’. *Morality* in the shape of judgment bestowed upon the information in the form of either respect or disdain supports norm violations as a selector. *Actors* or the media’s portraying (or construct) of such, play an important role in making norm violations recognizable and aiding the audience in forming an opinion. *Topicality* refers to the requirement that news items concentrate on individual cases that have already happened and *Recursivity* refers to the requirement that these events be referred to in subsequent news items, meaning for example that incidents that are reported create an opportunity to report similar events or even a series of events. Expressions of *Opinions* can be disseminated as news and can be recursive in the way that media might provoke commentary that contain criticism, which in turn then can be commented on and the mass media can adapt to changes in public opinion that they themselves have created (ibid).

These criteria are formulated in relation to what makes something newsworthy. Since it is formulated in accordance to what the audience would deem as newsworthy, we argue that they are equally relevant when evaluating content on the internet. Whether or not Content Producers take these into account, either cognitively or subconsciously, is less relevant. What is relevant is what has the potential to capture

\textsuperscript{12} Since not all information is newsworthy, a dissemination process determines just what information actually is.
the attention of the consumer. We therefore derive the following theoretical deduction about organizational engagement in social media:

Theoretical deduction A: The more newsworthy online content is, the more relevant it is for organizations to engage in interaction with the Content Producers.

The difference between mass media and social media must necessarily lie in the editorial process/gatekeeping role. Since popularity determines what content gets dispersed the most, the editorial process has in a sense been crowdsourced\(^\text{13}\) (Li et al., 2008) on the social web. Or as Luhmann writes: “The individual who participates in communication is, in one way or another, simultaneously individualized and de-individualized (...) such that communication can continue to make reference to individuals without being able to include the operations which cause each individual for itself to come into being as a unique, operationally closed system” (Luhmann 2000 [1996]: 74).

On the basis of our discussion of what makes consumer content newsworthy along with the discussion of social media in a systemic view we produce the following statement for later empirical testing:

Statement for empirical testing #1: The role of the gatekeeper as well as the editorial process has shifted towards consumer control, making complete control over content impossible for organizations.

3.2 The Arenas

With this theoretical approach in mind we shall identify the arenas of interest for this thesis. As the definition of social media, like we mentioned earlier, is quite broad, we focus on certain types of arenas for the sake of being able to narrow down our discussion on a more practical level. Bearing in mind that this thesis aims at providing the basis for formulating brand management strategy in the social arena, the discussion will benefit from identifying where said strategy should be focused. The nature of social media as something that exists in the realm of interaction between users indicates that the characteristics of each different medium are to a

\(^\text{13}\) Crowdsourcing is the act of outsourcing tasks, traditionally performed by an employee or contractor, to an undefined, large group of people or community (a “crowd”), through an open call (Web 6)
large extent determined by the users and their interaction among each other. To further warrant this argument we refer to social presence theory (Short et al. 1976 in Kaplan et al. 2010) as it states that: “(...) The higher the social presence, the larger the social influence (...) the communication partners have on each other’s behavior” (ibid: 61).

In this view, a large part of the determinant for influencing other users in any social arena is social presence, defined as the contact between the partners, be it physical, visual or acoustic (ibid). This means that we can categorize the different types of media according to their degree of allowance for contact. However this categorization would be somewhat shallow since the premises for such a contact is missing. Any contact can be presumed to be predicated on the presentation of the participants, since for instance the technical premise for visual contact can play a large part in how it takes place, because of how the technological foundation is constructed. Compare for instance how the technological premise behind chatroulette.com\textsuperscript{14} and something like myYearbook.com affect the usage of these two applications. Whereas you most likely would be hard pressed to not unintended see a set of male genitalia during a half hour stint on Chatroulette – there was at the highest an estimated “nudity-rate” of 1 in every 10 videos on the site (Web 7) - the same is not the case if you use myYearbook, that has a “nudity-rate” of 1 in every 1,000 videos (ibid). This is partly due to the fact that Chatroulette rapidly gained a reputation for this particular phenomenon, which most likely resulted in a snowball effect occurring, something that is not the case with myYearbook. But a technical premise is also a large part of the reason, as myYearbook CEO Geoff Cook explains:

“One early finding was that images with faces are 5 times less likely to contain nudity than images without faces. If you’ve ever used Chatroulette, this will make sense as the most common pornography encountered there contains a body part other than, ahem, the face. This is useful information because open-source facial recognition is relatively advanced while other-

\textsuperscript{14} For a further explanation of the premise behind the concept, please see Web 21
body-part detection is much less so. As a result, it is possible to use the presence of a face to limit some of the human review problem.” (ibid)\textsuperscript{15}

So, in short, the site utilizes a technological approach to limit nudity to a minimum through software performing facial recognition, and additionally using human review to scan the remaining videos. Also the fact that the site requires a login aids in reducing unwanted obscenity, as Geoff Cook indicates that the mere presence of such a barrier is enough to reduce unwanted traffic, since users can be blocked if they do not comply with the guidelines of the site (ibid).

Since, as Erving Goffman (1959) puts it; "in any type of social interaction people have the desire to control the impressions other people form of them" (Goffman, 1959) it can be argued that the degree of control as to how this impression is portrayed highly affects the presentation, meaning that “the degree of self-disclosure [the medium] requires and the type of self-presentation it allows” (Kaplan et al. 2010: 62 – our own highlighting) is used as the second dimension, combined with social presence, to classify social media types. According to Kaplan et al. (2010), the objective for having the desire to control the impressions one gives to others is partially related to being able to influence them for the purpose of gaining certain rewards (for instance making a positive impression on a potential future employer at a career fair); and partially driven by one having a hope of creating the sort of image that can be seen as one that is corresponding to one’s personal identity (for instance writing certain value driven statements in status updates on Facebook in order to be seen as someone that is of the right political persuasion) (ibid), and we therefore consider the availability of an opportunity to do so a viable parameter in categorizing specific types of social media.

For the sake of keeping the discussion of social media to a manageable level, we choose to focus on a selection of some of the most relevant within their particular class of media. These different classes of media are largely based on those presented by Kaplan et al. (2010) and they are categorized according to the above mentioned combination of social presence and the degree of self-disclosure and self-

\textsuperscript{15} Interestingly, Chatroulette have themselves recently adopted a strategy much like this to rid them of unwanted nudity: Web 8
presentation. Kaplan et al. (2010)’s classes can be seen in the below table and our interpretation of it will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Social presence/ Media richness Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)</td>
<td>Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)</td>
<td>Content communities (e.g., YouTube)</td>
<td>Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Categorization of different types of media (Kaplan et al. 2010; 62)

A few comments in relation to the model: The attentive reader will have noticed the term “media richness” in the top row. This dimension of the framework’s classification of media types is related to “the amount of information they allow to be transmitted in a given time interval” (ibid: 61) and as such is in our application of the principles included in the social presence.

When it comes to this dimension then, applications that are related to such things as collaborative projects and blogs are rated lowest due to the fact that they are predominately based on text and therefore merely permit an exchange that is somewhat simple. In the next column we find content communities and social networks, the latter we in this thesis contrary to Kaplan et al. (2010) do not confine to the site itself. This is due to the fact that we recognize that such networks also function on for instance mobile platforms such as native applications developed for smart phones etc. Also in addition to merely text-based forms of communication, social networks enables the users to interact through the sharing of videos, pictures and other media forms such as for instance games. The third and last level includes the likes of virtual games and social worlds, such as Second Life. Even though the latter has arguably lost some of its luster, similar media may over time become popular and relevant, which means we cannot completely rule this class of social medium out entirely. These two entities emulate face-to-face interactions in a virtually constructed environment.

16 Programs installed on the phone
17 Web 9
When it comes to self-disclosure and self-presentation, blogs are in most cases ranked higher than collaborative projects due to the fact that the latter “tend to be focused on specific content domains” (Kaplan et al. 2010: 62). Also, most social networks generally allow a higher degree of self-disclosure than content communities such as for instance YouTube (ibid), which places them higher in the table. Lastly virtual games do not require the same amount of self-disclosure as social worlds due to the fact that users of such games are subjected to a strict set of rules and guidelines that force them to behave or act in a certain way – which is for instance the case with settlers in an imaginary, ancient Greek fantasy world\(^{18}\) (ibid). So when we account for the differences that exist among these variations of social media arenas, we assume that these differences have an effect on the communication processes among the members of these social systems. Since content communities such as YouTube are centered around content, or in this particular case, videos, most actual interaction between the users can be assumed to take place in the comment sections beneath each video, and therefore a distinctive difference arguably exists compared to for instance virtual games such as Ikariam, in which interaction, aside from messages between two players and group messages among members of the same alliance, also take the form of actions such as engaging in a battle or transporting goods between players (Web 10). However as a lot of YouTube videos are being shared through other channels, such as blogs and social networks, discussions regarding the videos are not confined to YouTube’s site by any means.

These differences in characteristics mean that any organizations strategy for engaging consumers should vary according to the platform. The next section will address how certain characteristics of the platform affect engagement possibilities.

3.3 The Characteristics & Boundaries

In order for us to analyze the effect of engaging in discussions on social media in-depth, we need to be aware of which particular characteristics should be taken into account when deciding whether to engage in specific arenas. The purpose of this section is therefore to utilize our empirical research combined with the framework described in the previous section as the basis for identifying a set of characteristics in

\(^{18}\) This example is based on the game Ikariam, in which a virtual world created loosely on the basis of ancient Greece provides the users the ability to build an empire and wage war with other gamers in real time. (Web 10)
the chosen arenas for further study. Also we seek to determine the boundaries of the social systems in order for us to account for the autopoietic nature of social media and construct the notion of a (relatively) closed system, thus opening room for a discussion of how a strategy of engagement in such a system might result in the system redefining its internal complexity towards a positive result.

Given the above framework for categorizing types of social media (blogs, collaborative projects, social networks, content communities and virtual social and gaming worlds), and the subsequent discussion of how they differ from one another, we must determine how this affects the organization that wishes to engage the users of the media. If we focus on the platform characteristics for instance and disregard the reaction users generally have on internet advertising today (Scoble et al. 2006 point out the pitfalls of what they call “corpspeak” on blogs, since the users see through it and consider it to be entirely unwanted, they presumably disregard the message), we can briefly discuss some possibilities for engagement in each class of social media, in order for us to not only determine where it is at all possible to do so, but also to set the scene for a discussion of the potential that is related to engaging users on their own turf, so to speak.

When it comes to Blogs, the exchange is as mentioned relatively confined to text. It is obviously possible for the Content Producer to embed video and post pictures in the initial blog post (Web 11). However the users commenting on a post will most often not have the possibility to add rich media to the conversation, unless they are also the owner of for instance their own blog and decide to post a reply and use trackback19 to link to the original post (although for the particular social system of the blog posting the original content can be seen as external communication from another system). Since this means that readers of the original post are not necessarily aware of the reply, unless the external system links to the new post in the comments and thus making it part of the original conversation, a resulting information gap can signify a loss of fluency in the information flow. New readers might also start a conversation based solely on the reply on the new blog, making an entirely new structural coupling. Therefore, any organization that wishes to affect the process

19 A method for web-authors to be notified when someone links to their content (Web 12)
should be aware that C2C interaction by no means are restricted to the platform on which it was originally created, and the organization can as such not expect that effect on one platform or in one structural coupling will spill over to others.

**Collaborative projects** can hardly be viewed as something that is mainly an arena for conversations. If we use Wikipedia as an example, there is a “Discussion”-tab on every article and these discussions are part of the maintenance mechanism for all articles, but the content of these discussions is not ranked highly on Google for instance and this, combined with the relatively inactive conversations, we assume that the vast majority of people who use Wikipedia either do not know of this function or simply do not use it.

When it comes to **social networking sites** such as Facebook for example, a variety of interaction methods exist. Due to the technical specifications of for instance Facebook, interaction can take place privately among two or more users (messages), publically as a status update with the possibility of commenting (depending on the privacy settings), publically as discussions on groups and pages and through expressions of support in the form of “likes”. The issue of privacy settings is an interesting one, as interactions taking place on user profiles that are not public will, initially at least, confine the conversation to a relatively closed environment. One also has to keep in mind that on Facebook at least, one currently has to befriend the poster of the content in order to join the conversation. However as we will discuss in the next chapter, content can spread through other channels even from closed systems since members of these systems are also members of other systems. On micro-blogging social networks like Twitter, diffusion of content is perhaps even more of a possibility due to the characteristics of the arena. When it comes to locating conversations that can be targeted for participation by an organization, it is not advisable at this point to devote energy on closed systems like the before

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20 See for example the upper left hand corner on (Web 13)
21 We tried copying a random line from a discussion and searching for the sentence on Google.com, and no reference to the site where the sentence was written appeared in the search results.
22 “Liking” something has a multitude of meanings dependant on the context, the content, timing and the perception of the expression
23 Web 14
mentioned status updates due to the inability to participate without befriending the author. On indexable, and subsequently searchable, content it is however.

**Content communities** like YouTube are characterized by a large degree of focus on the content itself, and since – for now at least – comments etc. are not indexable, there is arguably a smaller risk of written content being dispersed through this channel through keyword searches. Although searches for keywords related to the actual video content makes locating opportunities for involvement possible, it is perhaps to some extent a quite random and arduous task.

**Virtual social worlds** as well as **virtual game worlds** are hard to generalize about, since the architecture of the sites is so different from each arena to the next. However, for the purpose of this thesis, we assume that locating conversations to participate in is a close to impossible task in most virtual gaming worlds, as the information on these sites is indexed by search engines. In virtual social worlds, the case is close to the same.

In essence we can divide the possibilities of participation in conversations into two overall categories: One where the audience comes to the organization, such as Facebook pages, locations on Second Life, a Twitter account etc, and one where the organization has to locate the content such as blogs, discussion forums, consumer review sites etc. This division then indicates a need for difference of the approach for communicating according to the platform and we therefore formulate the following statement for further discussion:

*Statement for empirical testing #2: The characteristics and boundaries the different platforms (arenas) will have a significant impact on the dispersion process of content and the possible information adoption by the consumers.*

Furthermore it is worth noting, like we mentioned earlier, that since discussions are not restricted to particular social systems, a certain topic can disperse onto other platforms further expanding the area of interest for the organization wishing to participate. If this holds true, then organizations engaging in interaction on social media should do so with the characteristics and boundaries of that particular platform in mind.
3.4 The Users

In this section we aim to briefly discuss the element of users in the social media arenas. Even though Luhmann does not recognize individuals in his theoretical paradigm as such and instead refers to psychic systems, we do need to take the users into account when dealing with social media. Since our definition of social media focus on the act of sharing, and since everyone in theory is able to do so, we need to consider the user-side of the equation. As we in Luhmann’s terminology consider users to be separate systems, which, in turn act or communicate separately, we consider them to be subsystems in the systems that are the social media arenas, and we use the Social Technograph in this section to segment these subsystems by their behavior.

There are many ways in which these subsystems could be categorized, and even though one could argue that any homogenous segmentation, and the subsequent generalization, which must necessarily take place as a prerequisite of such, is somewhat futile, we need to be able to do so in order for any discussion of general tendencies to be at all possible.

As we have described briefly in the initial sections of this thesis, we have, prior to conducting empirical research, categorized the different groups of users of social technologies according to their usage of these into two main categories: Content Producers and Content Consumers. These two groups consist of a series of subcategories as stated by Li et al. (2009) such as, Creators, Critics, Collectors, Joiners, Spectators and Inactives. As we also mentioned in section 2.3, a new subcategory has been identified by one of the authors of Groundswell (2009) namely Conversationalists (Web 15). This specific subcategory is interesting to our field of research, as our hypothesis regarding the effecting of brand perception in the minds of consumers through online conversations relies on the degree of which these conversations have an impact on those participating in them. Conversationalists fit into our main categories as being Content Producers, since they are identified by creating status updates on social networking sites such as Facebook or LinkedIn and microblogging on i.e. Twitter at least once a week with the intention to converse with others (Web 15). However this subcategory, while indeed interesting, still holds some challenges for the organization wishing to engage them and affect the conversation. As status updates on i.e. Facebook are not completely indexable on search engines
at present, and as the content in them as a result is relatively confined to the Conversationalist’s particular social network, actually participating in the conversation is from an external viewpoint rather challenging to say the least. On the other hand, we need to distinguish between private status updates (posting content on a profile that belongs oneself) and for instance posting on the wall of a page belonging to the brand (a profile created in regards to a specific brand). In this case, the users enter the subcategory called Critics, that are defined as someone who posts ratings/reviews of products or services, comments on someone else’s blog, contributes to online forums or contribute to/edits articles in a Wiki (Li et al. 2009).

The subcategories of the Social Technograph merely function as a categorization according to the activity in which the users are engaging at any given time, meaning that they do not necessarily fit into only one category. In some cases, one person might be inclined to be a Critic and in others the same person will be a Spectator – it depends on a series of factors related to the reason for contributing in a certain way.

In the view of systemic theory, the users can be deemed to be autonomous subsystems that act and communicate based on when their internal complexity is adequately irritated\textsuperscript{24}, as per the concept of irritation as described by Luhmann (Kneer & Nassehi 1997). Irritation is what causes the system to reflect about its “self”, and makes changes possible when this self-understanding is challenged through irritation created by the system’s environment (ibid).

As the degree of irritation determines the way the system's self-referentiality recursively defines the continuous self-preservation of the system, meaning that each user of a social medium naturally has an individual pattern of action, the question then – in this context - is; what drives content-creation? If the environment of the users provide an adequate amount of irritation, for instance in the shape of a negative experience when dealing with a firm, they can be presumed to alter their view of that firm and then accordingly the constructed view of the brand, which in turn might encourage them to create some sort of content in relation to this experience on a social medium. The risk of this is addressed in the next chapter and a discussion regarding how the brand is affected can be found in the last part of our analysis in

\textsuperscript{24} Irritation is here meant in the view of Luhmann, where it is described as something that affects the system and not necessarily as something that is an annoyance.
chapter 6. We will also discuss this further in the next part of the analysis-portion of this thesis regarding the communicative effect of engaging in online conversations based on the following statement:

Statement for empirical testing #3: The approach to engagement by organizations has a large impact on whether or not the organizations’ engagement will have an effect, and on what such an effect might be.

Based on these statements, we will in the next chapter further discuss theories regarding interaction as well as the approach to such interaction based on conflict or crisis.
Chapter 4 - The Interational Aspect

In the previous section we discussed how social media have affected the arena and to some degree the users of these arenas as well as how to characterize the individual arenas based on their attributes. In this section we analyze and discuss consumer interaction on social media and the theory of eWOM and argue how and why any content posted by a consumer regarding a brand should be treated as a potential crisis. Furthermore we discuss how crisis communication theory can be used to engage content.

The chapter is structured as follows: In the next part we discuss consumer behavior and Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C) interaction. This is in order to discuss how the control over information flow has shifted towards the consumers. Next we discuss crisis communication as a tool for handling potential crises that may arise as a product of the characteristics of social media. Finally we discuss how social media give rise to two kinds of crises and what sets them apart.

But first, we present a case that function as an example of how C2C interaction can have a significant impact on an organization.

In April 2010 a group of friends visited a café in the metropolitan area of Copenhagen. At some point during their stay at the café, a person that was part of the group mainly consisting of young women had forgotten to pay for a drink when he left earlier than the rest of the party. Danish law states that the group is liable for the bill and the rest of the group was asked to pay for this item when presented with the bill. The group refused to pay and the situation escalated until a third party chose to intervene in a more physical manner. This third party had nothing to do with the café, but two of the women from the group chose to publish this story on their blog in a way that made the physical intervention look like it was done by the employees at the café. This particular blog is a rather popular fashion blog and the story quickly spread across the internet. The comments, re-posts and traffic to the blog resulted in the blog post ending up with a high ranking and subsequently a prominent place in Google's search results. When making a search on Google for the name of the café, the result was a bad story about the café being on the first page of the results in the
search ranking right beneath the café’s own website. With the title of the blog-post being: “at Café Stella they beat up their customers” it could arguably be said to not be the most flattering sentiment to be associated with. The owner of the café, when contacted by the bloggers, attempted to argue the fact that the offender was not associated with the establishment, and this was presented as an addendum to the blog post to no avail, since the bloggers naturally presented their side of the exchange of meaning. (For an overview of the story as well as the search results, see appendix 1 and 2).

What constitutes the truth in the matter could be seen as something secondary, as the story is only told from the point of view of the offended women. This means that people unfamiliar with the actual course of events are only able to see the communication that is available, namely the negative story charged with pathos. The café did after a while reach out to the women, however this account is also delivered by the blog and the café remains unable to gain access to a platform where it is able to portrait its side of the story.

The case above illustrates a worst case scenario. The scenario where consumer-created content adhere to the right news criteria (see Chapter 3 for discussion of selectors of news in Luhmann’s perspective), making it highly newsworthy (Luhmann 2000 [1996]) and interesting enough for people to share the content across different social systems such as other blogs, discussion groups and social networks. The story had relevance, conflict, breach of norms, scandal and an opinion making it highly newsworthy, and what's even more relevant, it had a local flavor. Take for instance the example of searching on Google for a café or restaurant in order to find the opening hours. In this case where a potential customer may have already decided to visit the particular café or restaurant, the information made available might make the person change his or her mind.

This case is just one of many where it is clear that the control over information flow lies with the consumer. Next we will discuss how content like this when available and exposed to consumers can affect the purchasing process and subsequently the bottom line.

4.1 Consumer Behavior and Customer to Customer Interaction
The purchasing process of a consumer is a process involving several steps. Even though these steps are not necessarily apparent to the average consumer, it is useful on a theoretical level to break them down into their smaller parts. It is not our intention to account for how social media has changed the decision making process. Our intention is rather to discuss how social media has an impact on how information is available at the individual steps.

A basic model of the consumer decision making process known as the EKB model of consumer decision making was formulated by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (EKB) in 1968. The process involves 5 steps; Recognizing a need, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, purchasing and finally evaluation the purchase.

![Figure 3: The EKB model of the consumer decision making process (Engel et al. 1968)](image)

Social media has a profound impact on several of these steps. Of relevance to this thesis is first of all, the notion that social media has made the search for information an entirely different process than when only professionals (journalists, professional reviewers and companies) had control over content. This in effect has a great impact on the alternatives evaluated and on what grounds they can be evaluated. Lastly, social media greatly improves the consumers possibility of sharing the post-purchase evaluation and not only changing their own behavior, but effecting other peoples information search and evaluation of alternatives, thereby possibly also changing their behavior. Breaking down the process of consumer decision making (even though it’s strictly on a theoretical level) allows us to better evaluate and discuss the individual parts of the process according to our research and other relevant theories.

The impact of social media can be illustrated as follows:
Taking our definition of social media into consideration, it allows for the extension of traditional WOM to users not necessarily in your own immediate personal network that in essence could be total strangers. These would most likely not be reached without the amplification allowed through social media. Also, the general notion of content becoming instantly searchable in search engines such as Google and shareable through social media expands the premise of WOM considerably. This sort of C2C-interaction has arguably always taken place, but social media transforms this phenomenon into an interaction with a much wider reach and with infinite memory and availability, courtesy of the contemporary internet (Deighton and Kornfeld, 2009).

4.1.1 Empowering the Consumer – Electronic Word of Mouth

The idea of eWOM is born by the extension of reach enabled by the internet. In our thesis we extend this notion to pertain social media, but first we will discuss the concept of eWOM as it is formulated in current theory in the following section.

As discussed earlier, the internet has empowered consumers to an extent where much of the available content regarding an organization and a brand is created by consumers. eWOM is in a sense the encompassing concept that summarizes how and why consumers create content about organizations and their brands. Fig. 4 shows how eWOM affects the classical model of consumer decision-making, illustrating how eWOM has become an important influence on consumer's opinion about a brand (Doh et al., 2009; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004 & 2010). Where mass media is characterized by a relative passiveness on the part of the consumer, social media enables an empowerment of the consumers where the C2C communication
taking place create a barrier towards traditional marketing (Deighton and Kornfeld 2009; Solis et al. 2008).

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) offers a definition of eWOM communication:

“any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or an organization, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet.” (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; 39)

The definition has a couple of implications that we would like to discuss before stating the definition that we use, in order to facilitate our research. First of all, the definition restricts itself to either negative or positive statements. As we discuss below, this notion has some empirical support in the research of Anderson, (1998), but we would argue that in order to fully understand the concept and implications of this concept, one has to perceive it as a spectrum where the statements are charged with a sentiment that is in-between or neutral in some cases can be just as relevant. This could for instance be the case when the consumer makes up his mind based on a critical mass of comments or votes, or if the neutral statement serves to level out the statements in the extreme ends of the spectrum. Also, since we do not operate in a positivistic paradigm, the nature of the statement and the sentiment will not be perceived in the same way by all users. This means that our research on this concept has to accept that when we evaluate a statement to be either positive or negative, it will be on the basis of our perceived notions and not according to an absolute truth.

Secondly, Hennig-Thurau et al. only consider a statement to be eWOM if it is made by a “potential, actual or former customer” (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Since, as we will discuss in the section on content quality, verifying authenticity of a statement and the credibility of a user on the internet can be a difficult if not impossible task (Cheung et al., 2008). Therefore, we have to accept the fact that statements made by people with no connection to the organization and no former experience with the product, can have just as big an influence on consumer behavior as statements by actual customers. One could argue that we instead of a customer view should adopt a stakeholder view. But since our view of stakeholders then had to be infinitely wide, and since we are more focused on the fact that a statement has been made and that it exists, we choose to disregard the origin completely in our definition. Thirdly, since
the internet is technology and could possibly be substituted in the future by another technology with different features and a different name, we instead choose to embrace the concept of social media as defined earlier, as being the vessel of this concept. This is because social media is not necessarily restricted to a single technology. Fourthly, although the word statement can be made to incorporate the act of sharing, we prefer to have it incorporated in the definition explicitly. Lastly, traditional WOM describes an act of directly articulating the statement in the presence of others in order for it to be WOM. Due to the infinite memory of the internet and possibly other technologies in the future, and due to the process of “pulling” information online as opposed to the “push of information” in traditional WOM and in mass media, we agree that the fact that it is made available is enough to make it eWOM. Our definition of eWOM communication thus becomes:

Any statement made or shared about a product or an organization, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via social media.

As stated earlier, we have divided users into two categories, Content Producers and Content Consumers. As the definition of eWOM above states, sharing a statement about an organization or product does not necessarily entail a former transaction with the organization or a former purchase of the product. The articulation of a statement can simply be the act of either sharing other Content Producer’s opinions or a product of an opinion being formed on the basis of available information and not a firsthand experience. Therefore it is important to clarify that even though the EKB model of the consumer decision-making process is based on a purchase being made, we would argue that according to our theoretical discussion, the ability to affect behavior of other consumers (by providing content for their information search process and the process of evaluation of alternatives) does not require that you have in fact had a transaction with the organization. Therefore we do not distinguish between eWOM articulated by former customers and non-customers of a specific organization. Instead we accept that since the control of content has shifted towards the consumers it will not always be possible to distinguish between these which is why they are of equal importance in these cases.
4.1.2 Content Creation – the Act of Sharing

If we start with the final part of the consumer decision making process, social media has changed how a consumer is able to share content regarding his or her post-purchase evaluation and thereby not only changing his or her own behavior, but possibly also affecting the behavior of others to a far larger extent.

As discussed above, eWOM derives from research on traditional WOM. Research on WOM has not been formulated with social media in mind, but since theory on WOM has to do with human psychology and not necessarily the media being used, they are very closely related, making the traditional research equally relevant.

4.1.2.1 Research on traditional WOM

Research on the motivations for engaging in WOM Communication has undergone extensive development. In 1966 Dichter formulated four motives for engaging in traditional WOM regarding a positive experience; product-involvement, self-involvement, other-involvement, and message-involvement (Dichter, 1966). His research only studied the instances of positive WOM, and all signified a wish for involvement from the consumer. Later, Dichter’s list has been modified by Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1993). They renamed the categories but pertaining the meaning. What distinguishes it from Dichter’s research is that they added a fifth category, dissonance reduction. This last motive is according to their research what accounts only for negative WOM (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

Later studies agree that there is a difference between motives for negative and positive WOM. An extensive study carried out by Sundaram, Mitra, & Webster (1998) showed a clear difference in the motives for engaging in either. Their research showed that engagement in negative WOM were motivated by altruism, reduction of anxiety, vengeance and advice seeking, while engagement in positive WOM were motivated by altruism, product-involvement, self enhancement and to a lesser degree helping the organization (Sundaram et al., 1998).

Although these studies do a good job arguing why, and for which reasons, consumers engage in WOM, none of them provide any extensive evidence as to whether negative or positive experiences engage the most. Some of them postulate that negative experiences to a larger degree engage consumers in WOM. Anderson (1998) addresses this issue and provides extensive research on the matter. He
concludes that findings are contradictory, but points towards highly dissatisfied customers being more likely to engage in WOM than highly satisfied customers. What he then argues is that engagement in WOM in regards to customer dissatisfaction and satisfaction should be viewed in a utility based view, as the function of a basic U-shape where engagement in WOM is more likely to occur, the more satisfied or dissatisfied a consumer becomes (Anderson, 1998). This notion points towards engagement in WOM having to do with expectations being either broken or superseded. This correlates to our earlier discussion on irritation and the irritation of self. According to this, whether or not a consumer decides to engage in WOM depends on the level of irritation of the self the consumer experiences.

Anderson's research and Luhmann's theory on social systems enables us to formulate the following statement:

*Statement for empirical testing #4: Whether or not a consumer decides to engage in eWOM is determined by the degree to which his or her expectations has been either broken or superseded.*

If this statement is correct, it has several implications for organizations that wish to manage their brand in the online domain. First off all, if the organization wishes to influence the online dialogue to match consumer expectations with what the organization can offer, a great deal of time and energy should be devoted to analyzing consumer expectations. Also, organizations should presumably participate in dialogue, where the consumer's expectations have been broken, to a higher degree. In regards to positive WOM, the organization has a better chance of engaging the consumers in WOM if they acknowledge consumer expectations and try to supersede them. In both cases, energy devoted to analyzing consumer expectations can become a powerful tool in the effort to manage the brand.

### 4.1.2.2 Contemporary eWOM and Consumer Motivation for eWOM

Hennig-Thurau et al. builds upon the traditional WOM theory when they formulate their theory about motivation for engaging in eWOM. They gather the motivational

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25 Anderson’s (1998) research addresses whether satisfied or dissatisfied consumers engage in WOM the most. Although he makes no specific reference to negative or positive WOM, we assume that in nearly all cases, negative WOM will be articulated by dissatisfied customers and positive WOM by satisfied customers.
factors found in traditional WOM research and sums them up in the following motivational factors; platform assistance, venting negative feelings, concern for other consumers, extraversion/positive self-enhancement, social benefits, economic incentives, helping the organization and advice seeking (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

In keeping with our social Technograph as explained in the beginning as a way of grouping users on social media, Li et al. (2008) also states several reasons why people contribute. Some of them are more aligned to reasons for participating in social media, and not necessarily participation regarding an organization or product. Therefore not all of them are relevant. The ones that are relevant are; paying it forward, the altruistic impulse, the validation impulse and the affinity impulse. It is apparent that these bear close resemblance to some of the ones stated by Hennig-Thurau et al (2004). But since the ones stated by Hennig-Thurau et al (2004) are directly related to eWOM, we choose to stick with this categorization.

Hennig-Thurau et al.’s identification of motives for engaging in eWOM are based on communication via web-based consumer opinion platforms. Since we regard all platforms within social media as possible outlets for consumer opinion, we see no dilemma in viewing their motivational factors as valid within all social media platforms when it comes to discussing brand management.

In order for us to state that the eWOM motives conceptualized by Hennig-Thurau et al. apply to consumers across all of social media, we will test whether their results on the importance of the different utilities are applicable across all social media or if their conclusions only hold true on communication via web-based consumer opinion platforms. To this regard, we therefore state the following:

Statement for empirical testing #5: All social media platforms are possible outlets for consumer opinions, and motives for engaging in eWOM will be largely similar across different types of platforms.

A final thing worth mentioning is that Content Producers by no means can be seen as a homogeneous group. Several motive segments are present, each of which will require different strategies in order for an organization to address (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), but since our approach does not allow us to speculate on the underlying inherent reasons why Content Producers are contributing, our research does not focus specifically on this matter. In the above section it is discussed how and why
consumers create content, in the next section, we turn to how content is consumed and what effect eWOM has.

4.1.3 Content Consumption – The Effect of eWOM
eWOM has a recursive effect between the process of information search and evaluation of alternatives in the EKB model. Obviously, there is no such thing as direct transference of information and behavior modification. In accordance with our theoretical framework of social systems, information cannot be adopted before the consumer relates to it according to his or her own understanding. Information adoption is a process in which people purposefully engage in using information. It is the internalization phase of knowledge transfer (Cheung et al., 2008). Luhmann would describe this phase as the system being irritated to a degree where the internal complexity would have to become more complex in order for it to cope with external increase in complexity (Kneer & Nassehi 1997). Information adoption behavior is one of the principal activities that users seek to conduct in virtual communities. An example would be users scanning the opinions and comments posted by others before they make a buying decision (Pitta and Fowler, 2005 in Cheung et al., 2008). A basic framework we can apply for understanding how consumers evaluate information before adopting it is the model of information adoption.

![Diagram of information adoption model](Sussman and Siegal, 2003)

The process occurs between the post-purchase evaluation and information seeking in our model of consumer decision making. We have labeled it C2C interaction, but in our view the information can just as easily originate from an organization. The model exemplifies that in order for any information adoption (and possibly behavioral alteration) to occur; the information has to be of use for the consumer evaluating it. When the information is deemed useful, two factors are relevant; argument quality and source credibility (Sussman and Siegal, 2003). Cheung et al. (2008) argues for an extension of these, which we will discuss below.
So to know whether an adoption of information and possible alteration of behavior will occur, two areas are relevant to address. For one the relevance and usefulness of the information provided in regards to the product or organization during the information search phase. Secondly the quality of the information provided (argument quality and source credibility).

4.1.3.1 The Relevance and the Usefulness of the Information

Information Usefulness is based entirely on the perceived usefulness. Clearly the consumer will be more likely to adopt information if that information is deemed useful (Cheung et al., 2008). In order for this to happen, the external complexity has to match the internal complexity in the social system, to a degree where the systems beliefs are not challenged excessively (Kneer & Nassehi, 1997).

But usefulness then becomes entirely dependent on the consumers’ purpose for seeking out information, or whether the consumers are in the midst of a potential interaction with the organization or could be so in the future, when the content is presented to them. For organizations it means that the mere fact that the content is about their brand deems it potentially relevant to someone, and therefore usefulness should not necessarily be a factor when deciding whether or not to engage in interaction.

4.1.3.2 Content Quality

Content quality is a product of the argument quality and source credibility. Since this is the area where organizations have access, this area is of the most relevance to our thesis. According to our system theory framework, this is also the only part worth analyzing since we as researchers only have access to the communication itself and not the underlying structure of the systems (Kneer & Nassehi 1997). But then again since the quality of content is not of an objective nature, the only area that we can address is the perceived quality from our point of view. This is also why our empirical data has been gathered in a way that reflect what was perceived and not what could be constituted as the truth in a positivistic sense.

The model of information adoption is based in an offline setting where interaction often exist face to face or via a platform that allows for easy confirmation of the person behind the argument and thereby allowing for an assessment of trustworthiness. Since this confirmation can generally be a problem on some social
media, an assessment of which extent this model is of value in relation to social media.

Cheung et al. expands the model in the 2008 article “impact of electronic word of mouth” where they expand argument quality to incorporate the commonly used dimensions of information quality; relevance, timeliness, accuracy and comprehensiveness. Likewise, they extend the notion of source credibility to incorporate the dimensions of source expertise and source trustworthiness (Cheung et al., 2008). According to their research among the users of the consumer forum openrice.com, relevance and comprehensiveness are the two key elements when it comes to creating an impact on information usefulness in a forum that does not provide any distinction between the contributors (ibid: 242). Also whether or not the sentiment stated in a post in the forum is in any way accurate has less of an impact on the perceived quality of the information in the posts interestingly enough, as long as “(...) part of the comment matched what the user already knew to be factual, they would be more inclined to deem the rest of the comment as accurate” (ibid). If this behavior can be transferred to other social media, it indicates that those exposed to content are generally likely to adopt the information in it based on the content itself, and not necessarily on the basis of the producer’s credibility if there has been no previous connection between the Content Consumer and the producer. However this might be different if there is some sort of indicators of credibility (or the opposite) associated with the producer. As Cheung et al. (2008) states: “Source credibility may prove to be more helpful in determining information usefulness when there is more indication of who the poster is and who they represent” (ibid) which can be said for such cases where a user of a forum, well-known in the community, posts something. If this user is known for providing relevant and truthful content, this might give him or her a degree of credibility that influences other users of the forum, that are aware of this fact, in the same direction as her. New users and people accessing the forum through a search will however not be likely to obtain this knowledge and therefore Cheung et al. (2008)’s notion that “Source credibility did not play a significant role in influencing information usefulness” throughout their research seems valid in this particular scenario (ibid). Since credibility is not always possible to identify due to for instance anonymity online, neither will it be possible to verify whether or not a Content Producer has in fact engaged in an interaction with a organization before
creating content. Non-customers can consequently have an equally large impact on other customers’ behavior, as customers with actual experience of the organization. We arrive at the following theoretical deduction:

Theoretical deduction B: Consumers’ behavior is affected both by content created by Content Producers who have had actual experience with the organization and Content Producers who have not had experience with the organization but creates content about it anyway.

When we then distinguish between interactions taking place among users that are deeply involved in the particular platform and interactions involving peripheral users, determining the risk of each segment in order to focus attention on the cases with the most potential for value creation is instrumental. Since “Value creation [in consumer-to-consumer interaction] is based primarily on having access to instrumental resources such as knowledge and information” (Wasko and Faraj (2005) in Libai et al, 2010: 272), we have to acknowledge the fact that newcomers in the social systems rarely possess the ability to influence the other users as much as representatives from the social core. This is both in relation to their contributions not necessarily having the same impact, but also since their initial level of engagement when it comes to interactions is relatively low (Libai et al, 2010). This type of social capital that is gained from the gradual process of socialization leads into the core of the community. Participating and gaining credibility acts both as a mechanism for ensuring quality as well as reliability among the members (Dellarocas 2003; Moon and Sproull 2008 in Libai et al, 2010). Therefore we state the following:

Statement for empirical testing #6: Source credibility is only relevant when the Content Producer is already known to the Content Consumer through the social media platform in use, and /or if other clues about the credibility is readily available.

So if this is the case, an organization that finds itself as the subject of a conversation to some extent can be said to encounter two scenarios; one where the credibility of the Content Producer is an issue and one where it is not. In either case, the relevance and comprehensiveness of the content plays an important part and one could speculate that this fact makes these two factors viable indicators for determining whether the information included in the content has the potential to affect
other readers or participants. This then tells us what to look for in content in regards to it requiring attention by the person or persons responsible for managing the organization’s brand.

As Cheung et al (2008) also illustrates, given that adoption of information is mostly reliant on relevance and comprehensiveness, the dispersion of information must then necessarily rely on whether the user behavior of those that are exposed to this information reflects that of the creator of the content; meaning that the interesting part is whether they choose to remain spectators or further spread the information, becoming in a sense producers (even though they are really just forwarding content created by others, they still need to make an active decision to do so and either link to the original content – creating that link – or quote the information on another site or network, effectively recreating this content in another setting). We turn to the selectors of news for an answer to this question. As we have argued in chapter 3, what makes something newsworthy and in this case sharable, is the product of the content adhering to certain selectors of news. The criteria formulated by Luhmann are: Surprise, Conflicts, Quantities, Local Relevance, Norm Violations, Morality, Actors, Topicality & Recursivity and Opinions. On the basis of this, we arrive at the following theoretical deduction:

Theoretical deduction C: Whether or not content is shared is a product of how newsworthy it is and can be evaluated on the basis of the news criteria stated by Luhmann.

Evaluation of what is newsworthy, even if done on the basis of the selectors of news, will always be subjective though. But, given the complexity that binds all the social systems together, some perceptions will to some degree be commonly shared. So the task for managers is, taking into account the commonly shared perception, the media platform and whatever clues the user supply, to try and evaluate what makes something newsworthy for their stakeholders.

As we have discussed, consumers engage in eWOM for a variety of reasons. What is relevant is the influence that this eWOM content has on the consumer decision making process. Organizations being discussed in C2C interaction can therefore either choose to engage in the interactions or not. Later we will discuss the
possibilities and pitfalls, but first we will argue for the use of crisis communication theory as a framework for considering which content to engage in and how to do it.

4.2 Crisis Communication
In the sections above, we have discussed how the consumers interact on social media, what makes them interact and how consumers may change behavior according to the interaction they engage in on social media. As argued, content can be of either a negative, neutral or positive nature. Even though some of our conclusions will be applicable to both neutral and positive statements, we will throughout this section maintain a focus on the statements carrying a negative sentiment.

What we will argue is that in order for organizations to best engage in discussions on social media where there is a negative sentiment, the organization should adopt crisis communication theory as a framework for handling this potential crisis. As we consider any disgruntled comment as a potential crisis, we are able to apply the theories regarding Crisis Communications as formulated by Frandsen & Johansen (2010) to determine the effect of the interaction approach used by organizations.

4.2.1 Relationship Management
Crisis communication has historically focused on how to react when a certain situation arises, a sort of damage control if you will (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010). This line of thinking has paved the way for a multitude of "how-to" books with obvious statements like "communicate in a timely fashion", "be honest", etc. This rather narrow view on crisis communication is characterized by a sender based view of communication and focuses solely on the post-crisis period (Frandsen & Johansen 2010). We instead adhere to a wider view where the situational restrictions has been replaced by a process based view. A crisis hereby is not to be seen as an isolated incident, but rather as part of a larger series of events that ultimately all affect how the organization is perceived. In this view, crisis communication is viewed more in a stakeholder management view, and crisis communication hereby becomes about affecting the public opinion to a degree which results in public opinion remaining the same or even becoming better, post-crisis (Sturges, 1994).

Timothy Coombs (2000) takes the notion one step further and views crisis as episodes in the continued relationship between the organization and its stakeholders
(Frandsen & Johansen 2010). This view is based on the neo-institutional mindset where people are considered as being limited rational. In this view, the organization needs to have organizational legitimacy in order to exist. This legitimacy stems from normative requirements in the society around the organization (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Crises should therefore be viewed as episodes in the ongoing relation between an organization and its stakeholders, and a crisis can therefore cause relational damage, resulting in the loss of legitimacy. The figure below shows the model of relational damage:

![Model of Relational Damage](image)

Figure 6: Crisis as relational damage (Johansen and Frandsen, 2010)

Coombs et al. (2001: 321 in Frandsen & Johansen, 2010: 229) approaches crisis communications symbolically and in doing so recognizes that it; “goes beyond the basic list of crisis response strategies” to a study of how the critical situation itself can act as the influencer on what strategy to select in order to respond to a crisis and the effectiveness of said strategy (ibid). In this approach, public relations as relationship management is one of the elements introduced by Coombs (2000) as part of the contextualization mentioned above. This element consists of both a structural and a chronological dimension where the first concept defines a relation as a sort of interdependence, or mutual dependence between parties and the second relates to what Coombs (2000) calls relational history, in which the events or situations – be they expected or unexpected – that the organization is involved in, planned or not, is not considered isolated or detached phenomena, but a part of an overall relation over time (Frandsen & Johansen 2010: 230). These two dimensions form the contextualization of public relations as a form of relationship management and even
though Coombs (1999) does not relate his thoughts on this directly with the crisis situation itself (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010: 229), when we deal with such complex arenas as social media, the possibility of relationships between consumers and organizations becoming ever tighter and as such need to be nurtured and protected, we argue that in this arena considering the relationship is central to acting and therefore is indeed a part of handling the crisis situation. In the light of this we arrive at the following theoretical deduction regarding organizations’ handling of C2C interaction in the form of eWOM:

*Theoretical deduction D: The sentiment of any given piece of consumer content is affected by the consumers’ previous experience with the organization, making consumer–company history equally as relevant as the actual situation.*

Given this theoretical deduction, organizations should evaluate content in regards to their history for the given type of experience connected to the content.

### 4.2.2 Stakeholders

As a crisis can be considered to be “*episodes in the ongoing relation between an organization and its stakeholders*” (Coombs 2000: 73 in Frandsen & Johansen 2010: 229) like we mentioned in the previous section, it becomes necessary for the organization to first determine what constitutes a stakeholder and then how the relationship with the stakeholder can be viewed over time in order for the relationship between consumer and organization to be maintained in spite of the crisis. Using the same definition as Coombs himself uses, we will consider a stakeholder to be “*any person or group that has an interest, right, claim or ownership in an organization*” (Coombs 2000: 75) and then subsequently divide them into the two subcategories *primary* stakeholders and *secondary* stakeholders. Primary stakeholders include the stakeholders that can potentially be harmful or useful to the organization, such as employees, investors, customers etc., and secondary stakeholders are those who can affect, or be affected by, the organization such as media, competitors, activists etc. (Frandsen & Johansen 2010: 230). When we compare these categories with the Social Technograph and the case of the café mentioned earlier, we find that when it

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26 It is important here to note that Coombs’ use of the word “media” signifies traditional media.
comes to the social arena, those of the primary stakeholders that are customers can be divided into both actual and potential customers, when it comes to dispersing – and subsequently hurting the organization through – negative or positive content. Potential customers can just as easily share information through social media as actual customers and thereby hurt the organization, if not directly then through affecting others. This means that it is arguably less relevant to focus on customers as a separate entity, when it comes to targeting points of interest in the handling of a social media crisis. Also as the research of M. W. Allen & R, Caillouet (1994 in Frandsen & Johansen 2010: 233) points out, in relation to impression management,\textsuperscript{27} it is necessary to identify and target the key stakeholders as; “the stakeholders that has the most influence on the legitimacy of the organization, will be the target group for most impression management strategies; not all stakeholders are equally attractive or posses the same status and power” (Allen & Caillouet 1994 in Frandsen & Johansen 2010: 233). We will therefore test the following statement:

\textit{Statement for empirical testing \#7: All stakeholders are not equally important for an organization to engage in conversations with.}

Since as we argued earlier, trustworthiness and identity can be difficult to establish on all social arenas, meaning that an actual purchase is not a prerequisite for creating content about an organization, be it negative, positive or neutral.

\subsection*{4.2.3 Response Types}

Timothy Coombs (1999) presents a range of principles in his book: “\textit{Ongoing Crisis Communication; Planning, Managing and Responding}” that should be employed, when dealing with the subject of a crisis. However he places a lot of emphasis on the organization having to prepare for a potential crisis in its daily management (Coombs, 1999: 4), something small or medium-sized businesses might not have the resources to do adequately. What he on the other hand does focus on that could benefit the smaller organization is the importance of contextualizing strategies for response, meaning that the strategy should be put into a series of sociological and/or social psychological contexts (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010: 229). This means that

\textsuperscript{27} Impression management is here used as a description of the theoretical area, used by Allen & Caillouet, that concentrates on managing strategies for self representation.
organizations should recognize that every case is different and requires a different approach.

Instead of categorizing response strategies according to what type of crisis they match, he describes them according to their placement on a spectrum between defensive strategies and forthcoming strategies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuum</th>
<th>Response Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defensive strategies</td>
<td>Attack the accuser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explain away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ingratiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forthcoming strategies</td>
<td>Apology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7: List of crisis response types (Our own depiction based on Coombs (1999 & 2000) in Johansen and Frandsen, 2010)**

So depending on the situation, the organization has to choose the response type that is the most suitable. How the organization chooses to react should adhere to the degree of responsibility, conferred to the organization by the stakeholders. The higher the responsibility conferred to the organization, the more forthcoming the strategy should be (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010: 229). What is important is the fact that the allocation of responsibility rests on the stakeholders (in our view of social media, the Content Producer), and as such, what the organization considers truth is not important. This was also evident in the case of café Stella described in the beginning of this chapter.

As explained above, we argue that when engaging in C2C dialogue on social media, the situation is best handled if adhering to the principles of crisis communication. The more responsibility the consumer confers to the organization, the more forthcoming
the response type should be in order to have a positive effect on the consumers’ perception of the situation. We therefore state the following theoretical deduction:

*Theoretical deduction E*: The more responsibility the Content Producers and Content Consumers confer to the organization in any given situation, the more forthcoming the organizations’ response type has to be in order to have the highest probability of having a positive effect on the consumer perception of the situation.

### 4.3 Negative Online Content - Two Types of Crises

Although both negative and positive content regarding an organization can have a profound impact on consumer behavior, in most cases it will only be the negative content that constitutes a risk. Of course, if we look at positive content provided by consumers regarded as either untrustworthy or constituting a negative ideal by the Content Consumer, positive content can also be regarded as a risk. In regards to social media, we overall believe that crises fall into two categories depending on the nature of the possible dispersion: *push*-crises and *pull*-crises.

#### 4.3.1 Push Crisis - When Content Goes Viral

What constitutes a push-crisis in our view is the risk of the content having such a high newsworthiness, that the content is spread at a rapid pace on different platforms of social media. The risk of being hung out to dry as a social pariah on a digital medium and seeing this message spread with lightning speed through many different platforms, networks and nations is arguably not pleasant. In a marketing perspective, it is referred to as viral marketing when the diffusion of the campaign message is left entirely up to the consumers and whether they find the content to be of enough value to share. In much the same way, a push-crisis is in our view where the content is newsworthy enough so that other consumers become Content Producers and spread the content further. It is also safe to say that the connectivity of the internet, and the general presence of customers and organizations on it, is not likely to decrease as more and more people worldwide adapt to the modern internet-age, the risk is hardly becoming smaller.

This type of crisis on social media is the one that bears the most resemblance to a crisis in the traditional theoretical perspective. Here, the content constitutes an immediate risk to the organizational image and the organization therefore needs to
react to the crisis. The reaction in this sense takes on a nature of being a sort of
damage control.

4.3.2 Pull Crisis - Information on Demand
The pull-crisis is a product of the "indexational" nature of content due to for instance
search engines like Google. As discussed earlier, and as our research shows,
consumer-created content is an important factor in a consumer’s perception of an

What constitutes a pull-crisis then is content about the organization available for
future consumption by consumers. So when a consumer researches a specific
product or organization, former situations where other consumers’ expectations have
been broken, will have an influence on the developed perception of the organization.
And as we have argued, in the worst case it can have an impact on the consumer
behavior in regards to that specific organization or product.

4.3.3 Summary
To sum up, organizations must determine how to perceive certain stakeholders when
contemplating engaging them on social media. As certain content can potentially
damage the organization’s brand, the need for an approach to engagement taking
into account the potential crisis of this becomes apparent. Crises can be described in
two ways; a push-crisis is when content has such great immediate news value that
the content is dispersed automatically to consumers of social media. A pull-crisis is
when consumer-created content that is available, and searchable, on social media
has an impact on consumers researching the organization or product the content is
about.

We therefore argue that since content is available no matter what; the decision the
organization has to make is whether or not to engage in interactions based on the
content. In the next section we look to our empirical research for an understanding of
the particular impact consumer-created content has, in both cases where the content
is left unanswered, as well as those where the organization has engaged in
interaction with the consumers.
Chapter 5 - The Results of Our Empirical Research

In the following chapter we account for the results of our research and test our statements. The structure is as follows:

First we provide an overview of the demographic data from our respondents and discuss possible limitations due to these. Then we list our statements for empirical testing and finally we account for the results of our research and discuss them in relation to the statements. This is done over three sections divided according to topic, which are: Consumer engagement in eWOM, the changed media arena, and finally the effect of eWOM and organizational engagement in consumer interaction.

5.1 Demographics

In this section we discuss the demographics in our research in relation to the results, including how it might limit the validity of our conclusions.

Our survey was completed by 234 respondents. 53% of these male and 47 female, with an average age of 24.5 years.

58% of our respondents are students, and the general educational level of our respondents is high, with 81% having either a bachelor’s or a master’s degree. Our respondents are furthermore very frequent users of the internet, with 95% of them using the internet several times a day.

This demographic distribution will of course have an impact on what our study can conclude. Since most of our respondents are very frequent users of the internet, this demographic cross section may not be a perfect representation of the entire
population. But since it will most likely not be all of the population that is affected by organizational engagement in real life, we do not perceive this solely as a weakness. Reports have shown that the younger segments spend more time on social sites (FDIM 2010), and therefore our dataset can be seen as weighted more towards the actual target group of our thesis, even if it was not entirely intentional. Like we mentioned in section 2.4, we acknowledge that our results are not completely representative due to the statistically narrow demographic dataset, however, since we are primarily interested in users who are highly familiar with the dynamics of the internet as well as comfortable with maneuvering social media, our data can be said to be somewhat satisfactory. Our target group can also to some extent be said to be an indicator towards how the majority of internet-users will behave in the near future\textsuperscript{28}, and as such we consider our data to be consisting of mainly early adaptors when it comes to social web-users. In short; we acknowledge that we are not able to generalize on the behavior of the entire population, but argue that since this target demographic is the most active one on the internet, our results represent the most desirable cluster of respondents available to us.

5.2 Statements for Empirical Testing

The statements for empirical testing below are the ones that we have formulated based on our analysis and theoretical discussions in the previous chapters.

- **Statement #1**: The role of the gatekeeper as well as the editorial process has shifted towards consumer control, making complete control over content impossible for organizations.

- **Statement #2**: The characteristics and boundaries of the different platforms (arenas) will have a significant impact on the dispersion process of content and the possible information adoption by the consumers.

- **Statement #3**: The approach to engagement by organizations has a large impact on whether or not the organizations’ engagement will have an effect, and on what such an effect might be.

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\textsuperscript{28} This is also one of the conclusions presented in the annual report about the Danish peoples internet behavior from The Association of Danish Interactive Media (FDIM) in 2010 – see (FDIM 2010: 25)
• **Statement #4**: Whether or not a consumer decides to engage in eWOM is determined by the degree to which his or hers expectations has been either broken or superseded.

• **Statement #5**: All social media platforms are possible outlets for consumer opinions, and motives for engaging in eWOM will be largely similar across different types of platforms.

• **Statement #6**: Source credibility is only relevant when the Content Producer is already known to the Content Consumer through the social media platform in use, and /or if other clues about the credibility is readily available.

• **Statement #7**: All stakeholders are not equally important for an organization to engage in conversations with.

In the next sections each statement is held against our empirical research and we attempt to determine if they are in any way valid.

### 5.3 Consumer Engagement in eWOM

In our study we have tried to map out the consumer engagement in eWOM. With our respondents we have found that 44% of them are Content Producers\(^2^9\) and 56% do not use social media to write about their experience with organizations. Our male respondents are most likely to create content, especially men over the age of 30 (88%), whereas women over the age of 30 (13%) are least likely to write on social media about their experiences with organizations. Education was also a factor indicating that the longer the education, the more likely it is that the respondent will create content.

We found that 86% of our respondents use social networks for publishing content regarding an experience with an organization, making it the most used social medium by far. Price comparison sites are used the least, with only 20% of our respondents using these for this purpose.

\(^2^9\) The Social Technograph that we have used in our study to segment the uses is structured as a ladder. This means that content creators are in the top of the ladder with the possibility of in some cases to step down and be a content consumer. Whereas the respondents that are considered content consumers have never moved up the ladder to become content creators
5.3.1 Motives for Consumer Engagement in eWOM

Our study showed no significant difference in what type of experience - negative or positive - that instigated the content creation. 89% of the Content Producers in our survey would write about negative experiences and 81% about positive experiences. We found that the Content Producers’ main motive for engaging in eWOM was concern for other consumers (57%). Venting negative feelings also ranked highly on the list with 17%. We could not determine whether or not the platform used was reflected in the motives for engaging in eWOM.
The same tendency is reflected in our interviews, although a few respondents answered that the main reason was to award the organization for doing good. As argued earlier, we only have access to the communicated motive and not the actual subconscious motives.

So, according to our survey we can to some extent confirm the statement below:

Statement for empirical testing #5: All social media platforms are possible outlets for consumer opinions, and motives for engaging in eWOM will be largely similar across different types of platforms.

Although all social media platforms are possible outlets, there will, due to the architecture and norms of the different platforms, be a difference in how the opinions are expressed and how the opinions are dispersed further. Take for instance Twitter: content on Twitter is created at a tremendous pace, and the 140 characters allowed provide little space for deeper argumentation. The short, fast paced form is what content consumers on such platforms expect, whereas it would be hard to imagine a blog post with only 140 characters. Consumers looking to blogs for content therefore also expect a much different form than that on Twitter. Content on forums, on the other hand, will unavoidably take form of a debate, usually with someone either asking a question or uttering a statement, and other users replying with for instance an answer or a counter argument. In turn, consumers looking to forums for content have different expectations than when looking to blogs for content. So even though all platforms are possible outlets, the form of the content and the expectations from the Content Consumers we assumed is very different from platform to platform.

As argued in the previous chapter, the degree to which the consumers’ expectation have been broken or superseded is the determinant for whether or not consumers engage in eWOM. To confirm whether or not this is the case, we asked an open question about what inspires the respondents to write about their experience with an organization and/or product. 67% of our Content Producers gave an answer to this question. Below are listed some of them:

- "Extremes – both good and bad"
- "If you get really pissed about an experience"
- "Either a very positive or negative experience"
• "If the experience has been exceptional good or bad accordingly, I write about it. To either recommend or warn"
• "If the experience has been really good or really bad."
• "In case of really bad/good service. If it is just 'ordinary' satisfactory service, which I expect as a minimum (dispatch within reasonable time/price/quick response to inquiries), I don't"
• "I only do that when I are surprised - either positively or negatively"
• "Only the VERY VERY negative and positive. If the experience has been "Normal" I do nothing..."
• "Great dissatisfaction and great satisfaction."
• "Particularly positive or negative experiences"

As is evident, the extremes are what spark the desire to engage in eWOM. The following statement therefore appears to be true:

Statement for empirical testing #4: Whether or not a consumer decides to engage in eWOM is determined by the degree to which his or hers expectations has been either broken or superseded.

The fact that our survey showed no difference in engagement between positive or negative experiences, and since we could find no difference in motives for engaging between the different social media platforms, advocates the validity of this statement. However, whether or not their answers are reflected on their actual behavior we cannot say.

For obvious reasons, our study limits itself to what the Content Producers themselves indicate as their motive for producing content. Motives such as self-enhancement or economic incentives we assume are not necessarily recognized by the Content Producers themselves, and therefore the data might reflect that.

5.4 The Changed Media Arena
As argued in Chapter 3, social media have had a profound impact on how information is made available, how consumers access information, and especially the amount of information available to consumers. There can be no doubt that it subsequently also has a profound impact on how organizations need to act in order
to manage their reputation and brand and it is this premise that we will further discuss in this section.

As discussed earlier, there is a difference in whether or not consumer-created content develops into a full blown crisis and goes viral, in what we have referred to as a push-crisis, or just adds to a possible bad reputation by being available to the consumers on demand in a pull-crisis. In both scenarios, the role of the gatekeeper and the editorial process cannot be controlled by the affected organizations.

To illustrate this, we turn to an account of a relatively recent event that unfolded through social media:

> The blogger going by the screen name “Dooce”, or Heather B. Armstrong as her real name is, posted an account of her experience with purchasing a new Maytag washing machine on her blog in August 2009, following a strenuous series of events that led to her posting a few very angry ‘tweets’ on the social micro-blogging network Twitter. Prior to the purchase, she and her husband did some online research into the matter; “Because I wanted to buy a washing machine that I didn’t have to worry about, a machine I didn’t have to think about, because I knew that having an infant meant that we’d be living underneath a mountain of laundry. Jon spent many nights reading reviews and forums and consumer sites, and we eventually settled on a Maytag (…) that retails for $1,599. Our local Dan’s Maytag store was running a sale, so we got ours for $1,300 and then splurged on the 10-yr warranty” (Web 16).

> The machine broke within one week of the purchase and a repairman was called to handle the problem, however on the first visit the repair man did not have the needed parts and had to order parts and come back. The second time the scenario repeated and not until the third visit did he attempt to repair the machine, but to no avail.

> Heather called both the store where the machine was purchased and the service department, who informs her that Maytag has a policy that they will not replace a new machine until they have attempted to repair it three times that the law permits them, and since the repairman has only tried to
actually repair the machine one time, they inform Heather that there is nothing they can do. She then calls Maytag themselves and has a conversation with a customer service representative. They offer her no help whatsoever and finally she resorts to explaining the following:

“do you know what Twitter is? Because I have over a million followers on Twitter\(^{30}\). If I say something about my terrible experience on Twitter do you think someone will help me? And she says in the most condescending tone and hiss ever uttered, "Yes, I know what Twitter is. And no, that will not matter." That is what she said to me.” (ibid)

Subsequently Heather posted 5 consecutive tweets berating Maytag in an attempt to reach the company and work with Maytag directly. And she accounts: “Within hours I am contacted by several big name appliance stores on Twitter offering their services (…) And then a few hours after that I get a message from @WhirlpoolCorp who I guess own Maytag, and I send them my phone number (…) And then the following morning I get a phone call from Jeff Piraino, manager of the executive offices of Whirlpool Corporation in Michigan.”(ibid)

The manager from Whirlpool then takes affair and has the machine fixed the next day. However she is also contacted by a representative from Bosch, a competitor, who offers her a free washing machine. She convinces him to donate it to a shelter instead, and makes sure to mention the gesture on her blog (see Web 16 for a full account of the case).

This case has several interesting points. First of all, the case makes it apparent that if there ever where any company-control of information flows, it is now most definitely a thing of the past. As argued earlier, WOM is by no means a new concept, but the new development is the potential reach of this WOM in the transition to eWOM. In a time of mass media being dominant, influence was easier to obtain due to the relatively few mass media contact points. This has gradually become a more complex task, and now with social media it is even more complex with an infinitely

\(^{30}\) It should be mentioned that Heather B. Armstrong was featured by Forbes magazine in the top 30 on its list of “The Most Influential Women In Media” for 2009 (Web 17) - she currently has more than 1.5 million followers on Twitter (Web 18)
large amount of stakeholders, all of them having the potential to reach most of the developed world. So:

Statement for empirical testing #1: The role of the gatekeeper as well as the editorial process has shifted towards consumer control, making complete control over content impossible for organizations.

The fact that 63% of our Content Producer-respondents have published, or would publish, content with the specific goal of engaging the organization indicates that the creation of content is often done to provoke a reaction. This means that a lot of content about brands is or will be created with the specific intention of engaging the organization behind that brand, indicating further that the consumers are in relatively complete control over a large portion of content related to organizations that they themselves have little control of. Of course, in cases where the Content Producer breaks laws or infringes copyright with the creation of content, the organization must be expected to have some sort of measures of controlling it legally – for instance, when Producers upload music videos to YouTube that are protected under copyright law, the copyright-owner can petition the YouTube-organization to have it removed. Some gatekeeping is possible then, which in essence means that our statement has been disproven. However, the tendencies towards a validation of our statement are there.

5.4.1 The Importance of Different Stakeholders

Furthermore, the above case clearly shows that even though everybody has a potentially massive reach, not all are able to trigger this potential. But those who do have this potential are of great importance to organizations in managing their reputation. Dooce’s 1 million+ followers on Twitter imbue her with a massive reach, making her very important for the organization’s impression management. This to some extent supports the notion that:

Statement for empirical testing #7: All stakeholders are not equally important for an organization to engage in conversations with.

But in our empirical research we have not been able to provide sufficient evidence as to either support or reject this statement. In our survey, only 27% of the Content Producers replied that they have experienced being contacted by an organization
that they have published content about and 82% of them where contacted on the basis of content carrying a negative sentiment. This clearly shows that organizations tend to focus on engaging in negative content, but does not show whether or not the content they have engaged in was the content constituting the highest risk or highest potential. Using common sense, one could argue that naturally not all stakeholders nor all content can be of exactly equal importance, but without empirical evidence, we do not wish to speculate further on the matter.

As argued earlier we view the concept of eWOM crises in light of two understandings. There is the push-crisis, which the case above has the potential to become. This was quickly recognized by the Maytag organization, engaging in a public dialogue with Dooce. The type of crisis, we identified in the Café Stella case in the previous chapter, can be categorized as a pull-crisis. What the Content Producers in our survey have published is all potentially the subject of a pull crisis, since information seeking online could potentially lead potential customers to this content, and in the worst case affect the behavior of these in a negative way. The task for organizations then, is to evaluate what content is the most important to engage in.

5.4.2 Platform Characteristics and Boundaries
This extends into our notion of characteristics and boundaries of different platforms. As argued earlier, the ease of which content can be dispersed means that organizations wishing to engage in a particular discussion cannot expect the discussion to restrict itself to just one media platform or platform type. For instance, the case about Café Stella resulted in the original blog post being shared on other blogs, and reposted on review sites. And even though the bloggers ended up blogging about how the matter to some extent was resolved, this blog-post has nowhere near the news value or share value as the original post. As a result, a simple search for the café name still leads potential customers to content that is unflattering, to say the least. The above case with the blogger Dooce represents a different situation. Since Twitter is more of a social network than a traditional blog, her experience was instantly shared with her 1 million+ followers. With re-sharing on Twitter being as easy as the push of a button, the potential reach is enormous. Considering that her "tweets" could also be shared on other social media further underlines the reach of this potential crisis.
Our interviews with users of the review site Trustpilot represent a different situation. The review sites, one could argue, are the accumulated voice of many. Since bloggers like Dooce have a huge reach due to their popularity, most other consumers will have a more limited reach. Therefore, review sites work for them as an accumulated voice and an accumulated reach. This type of content creation is more relevant to the potential pull crisis, since the dispersion process of content from this type of media although easy, is not as easy as with the case of Twitter. We therefore argue that:

Statement for empirical testing #2: The characteristics and boundaries of the different platforms (arenas) will have a significant impact on the dispersion process of content and the possible information adoption by the consumers.

Like our discussion regarding the nature of content on different platforms, naturally the processes of dispersion and information adoption are also different. For instance, Twitter has a "re-tweet" function that with the push of a button replicates the content and shares it with your network. So, not only is the consumption of this type of content easy, sharing it with others is very easy. This is in great contrast to some discussion forums, where so-called deep-linking\(^{31}\) is not allowed generally, due to restrictions related to users having to register a profile on the site.

5.5 The Effect of eWOM and the Effect of Engagement in Consumer Interaction

In our research we found that eWOM is a large factor in consumer behavior. This fact, but also our research on the effect of organizational engagement, shows that there is indeed a reason for organizations to engage in the C2C interaction in the form of eWOM.

5.5.1 Use of Social Media Post Purchase

84% of our respondents replied that they use social media to read about a company and/or brand before deciding whether or not to make a transaction. It is especially the

\(^{31}\) Deep linking is making a hyperlink that points to a specific page or image on a website, instead of that website's main or home page for instance.
case when trying to reach the male consumers, since 95% of our male respondents replied that they use social media before making a purchase.

One thing is whether or not consumers look to social media for information, another more important thing is whether or not their behavior is affected by it. Our research shows that eWOM has an above medium to high influence. We asked our respondents to rate to which extent content on social media about an organization influenced their own behavior on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being no influence and 5 being high influence. The mean among our respondents is 3.84, with no significant divergence among any specific demographic segment. There is no doubt then, that C2C interaction in the form of eWOM has a significant impact on consumer behavior.

![Content Influence on Consumer Behavior](image)

**Figure 11: Influence of user generated content on content consumers**

An uncertainty in our study regarding this significance of consumer content is that it is self perceived influence, and our study does not allow us to test the actual behavioral change, but only what effect the respondents think it has on their purchase behavior.

### 5.5.2 Do Content Producers Appreciate Organizational Engagement?

50% of Content Producers indicate that a company response to their content is regarded as good customer service, and 15% literally expected the organization to respond when creating content. Only 15% indicated that they do not like being contacted. Our interviews show the same result, and as Stefan Mckinnon Høj-Edwards, one of our respondents, indicates, the only time that he does not appreciate that a organization has contacted him is “If a negative comment were answered arrogant, indifferent or downright condescending/threatening” (Appendix 3).
Furthermore, we found that not only does a large percentage of our respondents value or even expect the organization to engage, 63% of our respondents indicate that they have already, or would in the future, publish content with the specific purpose of making the organization engage in the interaction. Only 24% answered that they would not publish content with this purpose in mind. Our research on this matter further shows that whether or not our respondents will do this depends on what type of social media they use.

![The correlation between the use of various social media and publishing of content with the purpose of company interaction](image)

**Figure 12: Correlation between use of media type and publication of content**

Although most of the users of all types of social media answer that they would create content with the specific purpose of engaging the organization, there are some differences in what the results are. For instance 79% of Content Producers, who use social media, will write with this purpose, while 53% of users of e-commerce websites will not.

Even though there are differences in regards to different types of social media, they are all pointing in the same direction in regards to whether a specific medium would be used with the specific purpose to engage the organization.

In regards to whether or not Content Producers like to be contacted, our data from the survey shows a clear gap between the amount that would like to be contacted, and how many have actually experienced it. As stated above, 50% regard it as good customer service and 15% do in fact expect the organization to do so. But only 27%
of them have actually experienced being contacted in regards to content that they have published. This indicates a massive potential for organizations to engage in impression management in order to better the relation between the organization and the consumer. As our discussion of crisis communication as a tool to handle eWOM engagement shows, and as we have stated earlier, the sentiment of the content created by a consumer is highly affected by previous experience with the organization, making this company-to-consumer relation highly valuable

5.5.3 Effectiveness of Response Types

In our research we asked what type of reply Content Producers and the Content Consumers have experienced. As we argued, the idea of crisis communication should be applied when organizations engage in interaction with consumers, and we have therefore structured the reply possibilities according to this. We summarize the response types of Coombs (1999) into three reply options, not only to limit the complexity for the respondents, but also because, in our research, we are not interested in the specific response type, but rather in where, in the continuum between defensive strategies and forthcoming strategies, the organization chooses to reply and to what effect. The reply options are:

- The organization tried to explain away or justify the incident (justification and explain away)
- The organization tried to rectify the incident and/or gave me an apology (compensation and apology)
- The organization tried to discredit me or explain why my perception of the incident was wrong (attack the accuser and denial)

5.5.3.1 Content Producers

When we asked the Content Producers, who had written a negative statement, whether or not the organizations’ response changed their perception of the situation, we found that overall it has an impact when organizations engage in these discussions. 50% of the Content Producers among our respondents replied that their perception has changed after organizational engagement in regards to their content. This, however, does not say anything about whether or not the change in perception was for the better, and per our crisis communication approach, the response type
should be suited to the situation in order for it to have a positive effect (Johansen and Frandsen, 2010).

We have therefore sorted our data in order to get some results regarding the effectiveness of the different response types. Our research showed that the most common response types that Content Producers have experienced as a reply to their content where “compensation and apology” (56%) followed by the two other response-types with 22% each. When we look at Content Producers that have written negative content about an organization, the response type “compensation and apology” climbs to 65% indicating that the most common practice by organizations is to apologize and ask for forgiveness.

We also found that when companies choose to either apologize and/or compensate, 73% of the Content Producers indicate that it changed their perception, whereas it is only the case with 33% of the Content Producers when the organization tries to explain away or justify the incident.

Our interviews show the same result. When for instance we asked Käte Alis what type of reaction would have made a difference for her, when she wrote a complaint on trustpilot.dk about a bouquet of flowers that did not arrive on time, she answered that “they should send a bouquet to my friend with an apology that they had forgotten to send” (Appendix 4). Christian Høst also ordered flowers with Interflora that did not arrive on time. Interflora answered him using the response type “justify/explain away” and Christian Høst's reaction to the response was:

“I think it was such a joke that I simply didn’t bother spending more time on such a bunch of idiots. It has just meant that I avoid using their site.” (Appendix 5).

He later on states that the response that would have made a difference to him was an “apology and compensation” since as he states; “everybody can make mistakes; the least that they can do is to admit it” (Appendix 5).

5.5.3.2 Content Consumers
The Content Consumers have experienced a different distribution in response types indicating that certain response types have a greater effect on Content Producers than on Content Consumers. With the Content Consumers, “compensation and
apology” is the most common response type as well. The change lies in how many have experienced the last two response types. Only 8% have experienced an attack on the Content Producer or denial and 39% “explain away and justify”.

In regards to whether the organizations’ chosen response type alters the Content Consumers’ perception of the situation when reading negative content, “apology and compensation” is still the most effective with 58% indicating that it can change their perception and only 22% indicating that it cannot. “Explain away and justify” have a more positive impact on Content Consumers than on Content Producers, as 43% of these answered that this response type can change their perception of the situation.

The somewhat significant difference in the effectiveness of the various response types, in correlation with the replies by our interviewees, further strengthens the notion posed in statement #3 that:

*The approach to engagement by organizations has a large impact on whether or not the organizations’ engagement will have an effect, and on what such an effect might be.*

This being a rather open statement, common sense would say that of course the approach taken by an organization towards engaging the consumer determines the effect – if the organization, bluntly speaking, calls the consumer a liar, it must be assumed it has a different effect than apologizing. However, we argue that whether the desired effect is reached depends on the organizations ability to choose the appropriate approach to engaging.

What is also interesting is the difference between how many of the Content Producers have experienced a certain type of response, and how many of the Content Consumers have experienced the same response type. Since there is the same access to the consumer content and organization’s responses, one could argue that both Content Consumers and Producers should have experienced the same percentage of each response type. But according to our research, Content Consumers and Producers either pay different amounts of attention to certain response types, or perceive the same response to be of a different sentiment. It is a subjective standard.
Another interesting finding among the Content Consumers is that men are more prone to be affected by organizational responses than women, that people above the age of thirty are more affected by organizational response, and that the longer your education is, the more likely it is that the organizational response will have an effect on how you perceive the situation.

We also found a gap between the amount of Content Consumers, who have seen an organization respond to content, and the amount of Content Producers who have experienced getting a reply. As stated earlier, only 27% of the Content Producers have experienced that organizations have contacted them regarding their content. What is interesting is that 52% of Content Consumers have seen organizations responding to Content Producers. This indicates that when organizations do give a response to Content Producers, they have a large chance of influencing the information adoption process done by consumers as well as their perception of the situation. Our research on this also showed that men are more likely to detect organizational responses, and that people with a high educational level have the same tendency.

Furthermore, it is mostly negative content that Content Consumers detect a response to. 89% of the Content Consumers have experienced an organization respond to negative content. This could indicate that negative content is apparently deemed more important to respond to by organizations, since more consumers have noticed such a response.

5.5.4 Source Credibility

We did find source credibility to be somewhat relevant. Our respondents replied that WOM even among strangers have a higher credibility than messages from organizations. Another respondent replied that:

\[
\text{It's always nicer to get consumers' point of view than having to "rely" on what a company writes on its website. (Appendix 9)}
\]

So credibility is relevant, but it seems that credibility is more relevant to how the consumers evaluate credibility, than actual credibility – so to speak. We are therefore not able to give a conclusive response to the statement below:
Statement for empirical testing #6: Source credibility is only relevant when the Content Producer is already known to the Content Consumer through the social media platform in use, and/or if other clues about the credibility is readily available.

Credibility can be relevant, no doubt about it, but not so much in the sense that Content Producers’ credibility is decisive (perhaps unless they are known to be distinctly untrustworthy), but more in the sense that eWOM is perceived as more credible than company communication. Our exploratory interviews, exemplified by the above statement, indicated that consumers are more prone to be skeptical towards communication from organizations than they are towards eWOM, meaning source credibility plays a role, but since Cheung et al. (2008), as mentioned, found in their study that content comprehensiveness and relevance are more important elements than source credibility, when it comes to information adoption, we must declare this issue relatively open as the data is inconclusive.
Chapter 6 - The Managing of Brands on Social Media

This final part of the analysis-portion of this thesis discusses brand management as a field of study and relates it to our subject. On the basis of this discussion, combined with our previous analysis and results, we formulate a series of assumptions and propositions that managers should take into account when engaging in interaction on social media. The goal in the end is not to provide a generic step by step manual on “how to make a strategy”, but rather to substantiate a range of considerations to be adhered, when formulating a viable brand management strategy while taking the nature of social media into consideration. Finally the risks and possibilities of information dispersion through social media, as originally presented earlier, are discussed in relation to brand management.

The object of analysis is the underlying structures behind how the process of engagement affects the creation, and alteration, of brands in the arenas discussed earlier. Selected theoretical viewpoints from the brand management perspective are discussed and the cause and effect of the communicative approach to engaging consumers in the social arena is held against three different approaches.

The chapter is structured as follows: First, we provide a summary of the theoretical deductions developed in chapter 3 and 4. Next, some of our findings from the previous chapters are presented and analyzed in a brand management context, using literature from different views on brand management. Then, we identify some key elements of the current brand management approaches, and relate them to social media engagement and finally we present our assumptions and propositions, argue why our findings have led to these propositions, and discuss what the implications are for managers trying to manage their brand on social media.

6.1 Summary of Theoretical Deductions

Through chapter 3 and 4 we have reached the following theoretical deductions.

Theoretical deduction A: The more newsworthy online content is, the more relevant it is for organizations to engage in interaction with the content producers.

Theoretical deduction B: Consumer behavior is affected both by content created by content producers who have had actual experience with the organization, and
content producers who have not had any experience with the organization, but who creates content about the organization anyway.

**Theoretical deduction C:** Whether or not content is shared is a product of how newsworthy it is and can be evaluated on the basis of the selectors of news stated by Luhmann (2000) [1996].

**Theoretical deduction D:** The sentiment of any given piece of consumer-created content is affected by the consumers’ previous experience with the organization, making consumer – organization history equally as relevant as the actual situation.

**Theoretical deduction E:** The more responsibility the content creators and content consumers confer to the organization in any given situation, the more forthcoming the organization’s response type has to be, to ensure the highest probability of having a positive effect on their perception of the situation.

### 6.2 The Findings
This section sums up the findings from the previous three chapters, and lays the foundation for a discussion on the implications of these for the strategist developing an engagement strategy.

In the previous chapters we have accounted for the systemic characteristics of a range of social media arenas, the interaction strategy behind crisis communication in the field and presented our empirical results. We aim to isolate some of the findings from the previous discussions and structuralize them, in order for us to discuss how they affect brand management as a theoretical discipline in the following section.

#### 6.2.1 The Social Media Arena
As we have shown, the theoretical view of Niklas Luhmann, in coherence with our definition of social media, constructs an interesting take on the possibilities of engaging the users of social systems. The users, particularly Content Producers, are for the most part assumed to be reliant on the same selectors of news as traditional mass media when creating and dispersing content, which makes the communicative structures behind the premise of crisis communications viable in regards to applying such a strategic approach to engaging the users. In order for the content to cause sufficient irritation of the users’ psychic systems, causing them to reevaluate their internal complexity, it has to adhere to one or more of the selectors described earlier.
We have argued that different platforms contain different characteristics and boundaries which shape both content, discussion and dispersion, but we have also argued that since these platforms are not hermetically closed, any given piece of content is not confined to the arena in which the content is produced or initially published. The key is to affect the conversations at the right time and steer them in the desired direction, before dispersion through other platforms makes the task of doing so increasingly difficult. Also, the characteristics of the arenas and the possibilities they have of providing social presence and media richness, compared to the degree to which they allow self presentation, play a role when it comes to determining the dispersion of information and the way the users act - and interact - in the arena.

We have also discussed the users themselves along with their pattern of behavior and in doing so categorized them into the two overall groups; Content Producers and Content Consumers. Seeing as we generally consider the creation, dispersion and influence of information to be the operative part of this thesis, we believe that management of the users is the means to a desired end. We hypothesized that the consumers’ decision to create content depends on the level of irritation of their psychic systems and that the determinant for any engagement from organizations having an effect, is the approach itself. The actual effect itself is also determined by the approach. In order to validate these premises we have conducted research exploring the consumer-side of the equation. As we delimit ourselves to analyzing a communication aspect due to the epistemological vantage point made possible by the systemic paradigm, we are in a sense also delimiting ourselves from discussing the reasons or events leading up to the content being created. We focus solely on discussing what is communicated – and what can be found – and subsequently what can be engaged.

6.2.2 The Interactional Aspect
When it comes to the second part of our analysis, we developed several interesting hypotheses regarding the interactional dimension of social media. The eWOM-perspective, in combination with our discussion regarding indexation and searchability, substantiates the fact that a not entirely insignificant amount of weight is put on sentiments dispersed through both WOM and social media by consumers. Therefore, adoption of information must necessarily be a factor worth exploring when
it comes to determining the risks (and possibilities) of such a dispers through social media. As we discussed earlier, there are some differences in the opinions on the subject, of whether the sender of the information plays an integral part in this process. Where there to some extent is evidence that the substance in the content is the most important part in information adoption (Cheung et al 2008), indications on the view that the characteristics of the Content Producer himself plays a role in some situations du exist (Dellarocas 2003; Moon and Sproull 2008 in Libai et al, 2010).

Our hypothesis is that this is dependent on the platform used, as some arenas necessarily allow for much more self-representation among the users, making the process of determining the credibility behind the Content Producer a much more palatable one. The opposite is the case in other arenas and in this context, the operative is the relevance and comprehensiveness of the content to the Content Consumer. Exactly what constitutes relevance is a largely subjective measurement that is dependant of each individual Content Consumer. This is also an issue when it comes to further dispersion i.e. what factors make people who consume content share it with others. Something, that is associated with some risk to brands, if this content is negative.

6.2.3 The Results
Our research shows that a large amount of respondents are prone to becoming affected by negative eWOM and at the very least this influences their view of the brand in question. In the worst case scenario, they will further aid in the dispersion of the negative information. Therefore we consider every negative eWOM-statement to be a potential crisis of either a push or a pull nature, and subsequently argue that the principles related to crises should be adhered when communicating with the stakeholders.

In the sense that we consider different types of stakeholders to have different levels of potential when it comes to damaging the brand of the organization, different approaches are appropriate when interacting with them on social media. Since the reasons for posting content regarding a brand on social media vary, the response must necessarily reflect the reasons in order for it to satisfy the Content Producer. But since the Content Producer is in most cases a single person, the focal point is
not confined to merely catering to this person but more so to acknowledge the multitude of people possibly affected by the content and who subsequently alter their opinion on the brand, with the risk of also changing their behavior towards it. The method for interacting in the view of crisis communication theory, as described earlier, relies on an analysis of the case at hand and a classification of the case on a scale of culpability by the organization. However, our research indicates that organizations trying to argue their side of the case more often than not risk inducing the opposite reaction than they most likely intended. This could be due to the specific case in question or a number of other unknown factors, either way it is interesting to note that both Content Consumers and Content Producers seem to respond more positively to interactions that are more apologetic and forthcoming.

When it comes to practical and strategic brand management, the various theoretical approaches diverge in the way they classify and categorize certain aspects of interaction with consumers. In the next section we will discuss these divergences and how this might affect brand management in the context of social media and interaction with stakeholders through the same.

We hypothesize that the overall communications process between brand and consumer has, due to the distinct nature of the social media arena, changed when it comes to affecting specific conversations regarding a brand. This in turn signifies that a change in the way brand management is perceived must also be considered plausible. Such a change in brand management is necessary, due to the nature of social media arenas affecting how the basic assumptions behind current brand management theories might also change. In the following we will discuss these altered assumptions and towards the end of this chapter, we deduce a few focal points to take into account when strategizing for social media.

6.3 The Theoretical Foundation of Brand Management

In order for the organization to establish a viable theoretical basis for formulating an engagement strategy, we address the consumer-based approach to brand management, the personality approach as well as the community approach all presented by Heding et al. (2009) to combine the best of all paradigms towards a suitable alternative. As this is not intended to be merely a discussion of the differences between the different approaches to brand management, we limit
ourselves to discussing the aspects of the approaches that we deem relevant to our subject. This does not mean that there are presumably some parts of the paradigms that could not be considered significant to a different type of discussion regarding the same subject, but this demarcation is necessary to avoid losing focus of the subject.

Considering the change that has occurred through the last decades in regards to perceiving brand management, it is safe to say that the area has not exactly grown less complex. What has not changed however is the notion that brands are valuable, and that good brands are very valuable. But how exactly brand value is perceived is another story. Moving from a classic, economic rationale towards a more intangible set of values holds vast significance when dealing with not only theory regarding what constitutes brands, but also the way in which brand management is performed. Based on the historical development in strategic management in general, we believe that brand equity can often be transformed into a superior market performance and that; “Brand management constitutes a central organizational competence that must be understood, nurtured and developed” (Louro & Cunha, 2001; 2). This is an essential part when organizations allocate resources for generating competitive advantage.

The nascent nature of branding as a consistent research stream within the marketing discipline, associated with its differential adoption by organizations, results in an umbrella of simultaneously competing and overlapping approaches to brand management (Louro & Cunha, 2004). “This diversity [in brand management literature] significantly magnifies the field’s complexity. Managers and researchers confront the challenge of coherently describing and managing brands among a multitude of discourses, concepts and methods. Both face the paradox of balancing the richness of diverse perspectives with the congruence of action.” (Ibid: 2). Therefore most theoretically and empirically researched brand approaches can be considered useful at present, as long as the underlying assumptions behind them are taken into account, and as long as the approach fits the market and organizational characteristics. However it will not make sense for us to focus on the entire multi faceted umbrella of historical brand approaches in this thesis, and therefore we have chosen to discuss a few of them possessing characteristics that adhere to the principles we have discussed in the previous chapters.
6.3.1 The Consumer-Based Approach
Initially we will discuss the premise of the consumer-based approach to branding, as named by Heding et al. (2009), in the view of Keller (1993) who is credited with conceptualizing the paradigm in his article; “Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity” from 1993 (Heding et al. 2009: 84). In this article, Keller presented the premise of brands being a cognitive construal that resides in the mind of the consumer and with this notion acting as the primary assumption, he presents a model of brand equity from the perspective of the customer (Heding et al. 2009, Keller 1993). Several perspectives has been spawned due to this article and while they present some interesting takes on the concept of brands as a cognitive construal, and we will discuss some of these concepts later in this chapter, we will initially rely on the concept as originally formulated by Keller. Brand value creation in this perspective is something that takes place by shaping the brand associations held in minds of the consumers (Heding et al. 2009) and as such we can, in the systemic terms that are the basis for this thesis, consider this process to be the result of sufficient irritation to the psychic systems of the individual consumers that then causes the consumer to redefine his or hers internal complexity to match the external complexity of whatever is the cause of the irritation. As we mentioned earlier in our results, our respondents, especially Content Consumers, are significantly affected by reading consumer-created content online, which makes engagement by an organization all the more important.

When considering Content Producers, who for the most part have had an experience with a brand that has prompted the creation of content and therefore presumably have formed an opinion of the brand on the basis of this, a large portion of the respondents indicated that a successful interaction with a brand-representative had altered their view of the situation. 50% of the Content Producers responded that their perception had changed due to organizational engagement. Furthermore, 73% replied that they changed their perception in instances where the response was attuned to the Content Producers’ expectations.

The point where the consumer-based approach diverges a bit from what we have learned about social media interaction so far, is the idea that the marketer is assumed to be “very much in control with brand communication” (Heding et al. 2009: 85). As we have argued in chapter 3, social media has resulted in the control of
content shifting towards consumer control. This is diametrically opposite to the marketer being in control of communication about the brand. We do not argue that the marketer has no control at all; in fact we infer that the exact opposite is the case – even with communication that is not initiated by the organization itself. The difference lies in the assumption regarding what constitutes control. Whereas the consumer-based approach according to Heding et al. (2009) is build on the basis of cognitive psychology, in which repeated exposure to a commercial message is considered very important (ibid: 91), our research has indicated that exposure to even a single negative sentiment can alter the brand perception in the mind of the consumer. It can be argued however that the two statements do not necessarily exclude one another, since the construct of the brand might be based on repeated exposure to a commercial message (along with other factors) it can still be altered by a negative sentiment on a social platform. As damage to the brand perception can be made in such a way, a communicative effort is required to either counteract this, or to ensure that the organization has a voice when the content is diffused to Content Consumers at a later stage, for instance through a search on i.e. Google in what we refer to as a pull-crisis.

Part of the consumer-based approach relates to brand awareness as something that has to exist in the minds of consumers – i.e. the brand has to be recalled and recognized (ibid: 98) – meaning that if the consumers are not aware of the brand, there is no construal of it in their mind. In that case it must be facilitated in order for it to result in a brand image that consists of consumer-associations, depicting aspects of the brand that are tangible as well as intangible, attributes, benefits and attitudes (ibid). These factors can be held against a competitor to measure how the brands compare to each other. If we transfer this notion to our view on brand management in social media, it could be said that due to the infinite memory of the internet, affecting the sentiments that are published through social media (or other types of content for that matter, be it images, videos or any other format) is vital in order for the organization to maintain some control of how the brand is portrayed and subsequently perceived by consumers. Heding et al. (2009) recognizes the need for the manager to be close to the consumer as they state: “The marketer’s budget should prioritize constant market monitoring in order to be at the leading edge of
consumers’ development. (…) the consumer-based marketers must possess superior outside-in capabilities in order to succeed” (ibid: 103).

6.3.2 Emerging Brand Management Approaches
A number of new approaches are emerging concurrently with the evolution of an innovation economy. These approaches include the personality approach, the relational approach, a culture approach and a community approach to branding, which all are based on the facilitation of consumer knowledge and creation of brand equity through interaction and emersion (Heding et al. 2009). The two emerging approaches that we deem most relevant to our thesis are the personality approach and the community approach. Why these are relevant and how they contribute to our study is discussed in the next sections.

6.3.2.1 The Personality Approach
Since interaction with, rather than communication to, stakeholders is an integral part of approaching brand management on social media as discussed earlier, it can be argued that through this interaction, the stakeholder comes into contact with the brand in a way that facilitates the ascription of a personality to the brand. We therefore initially explore the personality approach to further discuss this aspect.

“Consumer perceptions of a brand personality are formed and influenced by all the direct and indirect contacts the consumer has with the brand or other users of the brand” (ibid: 140). In this perspective it can be assumed that dependant on the nature and method of interaction described in the previous chapter, the brand manager has a direct influence on how the brand personality is shaped in the minds of the stakeholders exposed to content created about the brand. Specifically the direct sources of the brand personality can be described as a mixture of the human characteristics that are associated with a “typical user” of the brand, the people employed by the organization behind the brand including the CEO and those who endorse the brand, be it through marketing messages and what can be called “brand evangelists”(ibid). The last group is particularly important in this approach, as early adopters of a brand play an important role in aligning the brand personality, since they represent the group of consumers that others will later identify with and utilize as

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32 Brand evangelists are consumers that take it upon themselves to promote a particular brand for various reasons
the benchmark for authenticity of the brand personality (Heding et al. 2009: 143). In regards to our own discussions about whether or not the person behind the content plays a role in the process of information adoption, we hypothesize that the direct influence of "brand evangelists" is not necessarily the norm, given that in some cases the Content Producer is largely unknown to the Content Consumer exposed to the content. In our research we found no indication of a correlation between the Content Producer and the rate of which the Content Consumers consider their view on the brand to be altered.

While this could be interpreted as being directly opposite to the personality brand approach, it can also be seen as constructive critique towards broadening the scope of the guidelines presented by Heding et al. (2009). We do not claim that early adopters of a brand do not hold any significance in the social media arena, but the characteristics of the individual arena determine to which degree it has relevance. Referring to our discussion in chapter 3, there is both a technical as well as a behavioral aspect of the possibilities of engaging consumers (as well as potential customers) that differ from platform to platform. Due to the characteristics of social media and the possibility of a “long tail\(^{33}\) of possible adopters being exposed to the content later, through for instance indexed search items, early adopters of a multitude of social systems may exist and therefore, as in the case of Café Stella, the need to consider for instance negative statements regarding the brand as a potential crisis in this view is eminent.

Whether or not the identity of brand evangelists in the form of early adopters is known, the need for engaging early is apparent. As Heding et al. (2009: 147) states: “The primary focus for the brand manager in the personality approach is to build an attractive and relevant brand personality that can serve as a strategic tool to ensure a deep and long-lasting connection with consumers”, thusly implying that the risk of the opposite happening is inherent, if the consumers are subjected to cases where the brand personality is compromised. It is also worth noting a natural delimitation of this

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\(^{33}\) The term is coined by Chris Anderson in an article for “Wired” magazine and explored further in his book; “The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More” from 2006 and refers to the concept of small volumes reaching a large audience. The term was created to explain how the internet has resulted in products with a very narrow consumer segment finding its audience due to the vastness of the internet. In this thesis we use it as a term to explain how almost every subject, and subsequently content about that subject, will find an audience.
perspective, as not all brands are necessarily able to create such a personality, since “a brand personality is created through a cyclical interaction between the brand and the consumer” (ibid: 139) – something which presumably not all organizations are able or willing to do.

Aside from these rather obvious direct sources, a range of indirect sources that act as a part of developing the brand personality also exist. These include such tangible entities as price, shape, distribution and promotion and they give the consumer hints about the brand personality. They are considered indirect due to the fact that a vehicle of communication is used, rather than messages distributed through a medium (ibid: 142). What this means is that for instance what types of events the brand engages in, what the website (or Facebook-pages and YouTube channels) look like and how it advertises, all play a part in how the brand personality is constructed, acting as an element in the mix of perceptual reality that is perceived by consumers (Heding et al. 2009). Alignment is the pivotal point of this perspective, as the brand has to follow a stringent set of traits in order for the personality to be clear and concise, meaning that when engaging consumers through social media the representative of the brand obviously has to make sure that the engagement is consistent with other communication from the organization and the general brand image perceived by the consumers that are engaged. In order for this to be at all possible, the organization has to analyze the personality dimensions and traits that should be adhered to the brand and make sure that this ‘behavior’ is built in to the brand, particularly when actually engaging consumers “as the brand” (ibid). An important notion in regards to this is that this approach assumes that consumers have an inherent need for identity and expression of self, and that this is the key driver for consumption of brands. The brand personality will therefore have a close connection to the consumers’ perception of self, resulting in a possible extreme reaction when this personality is affected (ibid.).

What the approach does not do, however, is provide much insight into how the brand manager should handle cases where the desired brand personality is compromised by for instance a consumer experiencing a negative incident in relation to the brand. The risk of this happening is assumedly always present, as consumers might perceive certain situations differently than the organization, and as a direct result develop negative associations with the brand. The consumers’ perception of the
brand is key as the management of the relation with those consumers through engagement in the same channels is needed to ensure a continuous stringency in the brand personality.

6.3.3 The Role of the Brand Manager
Other brand management scholars have argued for the necessity of involvement from the brand manager. Low & Fullerton (1994) for instance acknowledges the need for brand managers to be able to engage in relational activities in order for them to optimally perform their job. In their paper, they dissect the development of the “brand manager system” as something that “refers to the type of organizational structure in which brands or products are assigned to managers who are responsible for their performance” (Low & Fullerton 1994: 173) and even though they mainly focus on manufacturer-branded products, we consider their theoretical structure to be usable in a broader context also. We will not go into much detail when it comes to discussing the historical aspect of the role of brand managers; we are not attempting to provide any argumentation towards the necessity of such a dedicated role. However due to our findings through research and the above discussion regarding which structures control information-flow through social media, we argue that there is at least a potential benefit attached to managing the conversations regarding one’s brand – whether or not this management is performed by a dedicated brand manager or someone else internally or externally in the organization is not as important. What is important though, as our case about Maytag showed, is the need of the person or persons handling this interaction to be able to resolve the issue that lead to the creation of the content in the first place. This aligns with Low & Fullerton (1994)’s notion that “top management should encourage brand managers to function as entrepreneurs by removing the hierarchical layers that surround them and giving brand managers both more responsibility and the authority to pull together resources to further brand development” (ibid: 187). Directly translated to the current situation with the new interactional situation created with the emergence and arguably rising importance of social media, the person (or persons) in charge of managing the reputation of the brand needs to be able to support engagement with action. If this is adhered, according to Low & Fullerton (1994: 187), “Brand managers would focus less on advertising and internal log-rolling and more on retail customers and end consumers.” – something that is a direct affect of a change in mindset strategically,
since simple marketing and the moving of products are not the sole objective of firms, and the value derived from such an entrepreneurial brand manager is greater than merely improving the turnover.

The consumer based approach and the personality approach discussed above have in common that they both generally consider brand equity as something that is created between the marketer and the consumers. Not much value is adhered to the interaction that inevitably takes place among stakeholders outside of the immediate influence of the brand. This takes us to the next perspective; the community approach.

6.3.3.1 The Community Approach

Where both the personality and the consumer-based approach in comparison deals with the exchange of communication between one marketer and one consumer, the community approach takes a social aspect into consideration in which the brand - and the value adhered to it - is constructed within interaction among consumers (Heding et al. 2009). The approach is built on the supporting themes of community theory and subcultures of consumption. Within our field of interest, the definition of a subculture of consumption is central: A distinctive subgroup of society that self-selects in the basis of a shared commitment to a particular product class, brand, or consumption activity (Shouten et al. 1995 in Heding et al 2009 p. 190). These sorts of communities have a hierarchical social structure, where the consumption of certain products can lead to a higher social status. They are often informal and require a great deal of participation and open-mindedness from the organization in order to interact credibly with the community (ibid). By engaging in community activities, an organization is able to facilitate the most influential and passionate consumers in translating the brands' message to a broader audience. Thus the community approach is an approach to consumer interaction that is fundamentally different to the classical brand approaches, in a way that relates more closely to the systemic nature of interactional media. Whereas both the consumer-based approach, as well as the personality approach, consider brand equity as something that is not created solely within the grasp of the marketer but in a dyadic brand relationship, the community approach goes one step further and states that brand value is created in the interaction taking place among consumers of the brand in a triadic brand relationship (Heding et al. 2009).
In this approach, value is something that is created not only in the co-creational view of the marketer/consumer relationship, but in the meaning found in the interaction that takes place among at least two consumers of the brand and the brand itself (the term “triadic” thusly referring to at least two consumers plus the brand). The key is therefore the interaction between consumers and the image of the brand, which then is under constant negotiation (Heding et al., 2009). It is important to note that while the approach is mostly directed at dedicated brand communities, some of the assumptions and the framework that the approach is built upon can also be transferred to a broader systemic area of analysis.

For example, as Heding et al. (2009: 183) states; “In the continuous brand-consumer dialogue shaping the brand, the marketer no longer finds himself having a dialogue with only one consumer, but with potentially millions of consumers”. This notion we have experienced to be somewhat valid qua our quantitative research, as a large amount of what we consider to be Content Consumers, specifically people who have merely been exposed to content regarding brands in which the brand itself has participated, indicate that they have formed an opinion about the brand afterwards – something that might result in them dispersing this opinion through eWOM, making them Content Producers themselves. This premise of brand communication becoming autonomous and dispersing we have discussed earlier, and is further supported by what Heding et al. (2009: 183) calls “new rules of the game”, that apply to the actual management of a brand that occurs when countless consumers are able to share experiences, be they good or bad, through online social platforms or simply
face-to-face (ibid). Where the approach – like mentioned – is mostly focused on brand specific communities, we believe it to be equally relevant to other communities or social platforms such as review sites (e. g. trustpilot.dk), where consumers discuss brands and rate the organizations behind them. Even though these communities are not focused around a single brand, the technical boarders allow for the members to localize their content-creation to specific brands and focusing the discussions in this fashion. This means that if we consider these to be brand communities (even though they are not necessarily created out of interest for the individual brands) there is, in this approach to brand management, a great deal of value to be uncovered for the brand manager in the interactions between the members.

The reason why we mentioned the brand manager earlier and his or her ability to engage in social interaction is related to this, as we based on the previous paragraphs hypothesize on the role of the brand manager as the facilitator between the firms brand strategy and the consumers. When operating within the community approach and acknowledging the socio-cultural consequences of this way of perceiving brand management, we also recognize involvement of groups of consumers in the creation of brand value (Heding et al. 2009). Firm performance as something that is mainly determined by consumer responses (Louro & Cunha 2001) is then something that the organization can manage and effect through actual intervention of consumer responses that are directed not necessarily towards the organization, but dispersed through interactional platforms like social media. In addition, the users of the platforms can in some regards be “managed” if the brand manager interacts with them appropriately in regards to the topic at hand, a notion backed by our research. For instance, 73% of the Content Producers responded that their perception of a negative situation changed due to a response from the organization and even more important, 58% of the Content Consumers had changed their perception due to proper organizational engagement in online content (Appendix 9).

6.4 Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

Summing up the discussions about the consumer-based, personality and community approaches to brand management, it becomes apparent that each of the perspectives with their different vantage points posses some characteristics that can be deemed usable when contemplating a viable strategy for handling brand
management on social media. However, all of the approaches have some decisive limitations when it comes to developing a strategy that encompasses all of the aspects of engaging consumers through the social media arenas, as described in the previous three chapters. We therefore necessarily come to the conclusion that the approaches need to be evolved to a more contemporary and specific set of guidelines in order for it to be comprehensive enough to fully embrace social media brand management. The underlying assumptions behind each of the three approaches are different, and it can be assumed that not all brands “fit” in the analytical frameworks. For instance, it is debatable whether the personality approach’s consideration of brands as having inherent personality traits can be transferred to all brands. In addition, the community approach’s focus is on brand communities and subcultures of consumption being rather specialized towards brands that are able to create followers that are willing and enthusiastic enough to gather in communities (be they self-sufficient or brand-supported), which is also arguably not a possibility for all brands.

Therefore, in order for us to viably suggest some general guidelines for brand managers wishing to engage in interactions with consumers on social media, we will attempt to combine some of the usable features of each of the approaches with our findings to establish a somewhat general set of propositions for the brand manager to adhere to in order to benefit most from his or her efforts when venturing into consumer engagement on social media. We stress the fact that we are not discarding the usability of the three approaches at all, nor do we delude ourselves into thinking that we are in any way creating a complete theory regarding social brand management. Instead we are merely attempting to provide a nuanced view on brand management in a way that takes the particularities of social media into account to a higher degree, than what we have come across while researching brand management literature. Subsequently, we provide the reader with our own thoughts on what should be taken into account when deciding how to engage consumers on what can still be expressed as foreign territory to most organizations.

For comparative reasons, and in order for the reader to understand where we draw our inspiration from, we review the set of assumptions that are the foundation of the approaches to brand management we have discussed so far. The consumer-based approach is created around the assumptions that the brand is a cognitively
constructed entity existing in the mind of the consumer, and that while the brand itself resides in the mind of the consumer, the brand manager is still able to control brand value creation through for instance communicating to consumers (Heding et al. 2009: 83). The personality approach is largely based on the assumption that personality traits act as important drivers of emotional bonding between brand and consumer (Heding et al. 2009: 116), and the community approach assumes that the triadic brand relationship is where the brand value is created (Heding et al. 2009: 181). We will briefly discuss how value is created according to our study.

6.4.1 Brand Value
Since our field of study is social media, in which interaction and networks are the key elements, we deem it appropriate to derive our understanding of how brand value is created on social media from the community approach. As shown above, the community based approach views brand value as created in the interaction between consumers and the brand.

Our field of study revolves around the C2C-interaction taking place on social media. What we have argued is that the interactions are going to take place no matter what, so what managers can do is to engage in these discussions on social media in order to influence them. Our findings also show that when organizations do engage, it does indeed have an effect, not only on the Producer, but also on the Content Consumer exposed to the content. We therefore present an altered triadic brand relationship model to incorporate these findings:

![Figure 14: Altered triadic brand relationship (our own production, based on the triadic brand relationship (Heding et al. 2009)](image-url)
As is evident in the model, the brand value is still created in the interaction, but engaging in the interaction on social media allows for the organizations to have a voice, thereby influencing the interaction and possibly the perceived brand image and value with the consumers. Conversations/interactions on social media will, as we stated, take place whether or not the organization decides to engage. The difference lies in whether or not the organization has a voice.

The effect is highly dependent on how the organizational engagement is handled, as our results have shown, and we have argued that managers should adopt a crisis communication framework for engaging in these interactions. This can help them choose the right response strategy, in order to have the desired effect on the perceived brand image and subsequently value. We are not arguing that organizations should seek to influence all content, since this would be an impossible task, due to the vastness of the internet, but also due to the closed platforms that do not allow for access and engagement from the organization. What we are arguing is that where possible – and desirable - organizations could have a genuine influence if the engagement is handled properly.

As we have identified somewhat narrowly how value is created in this approach, we can subsequently determine how this value can be influenced and just what implications this has for the organizations engaging in social media.

We have chosen not to focus particularly on the exact measurement of brand value. What we instead have an interest in, is in which direction the value is affected due to organizational engagement (or lack of) in C2C-interaction on social media. Brand value and equity can be measured if applying a framework similar to that conceptualized by Kevin Lane Keller (1993), which focuses on brand equity as something perceived from a customer point of view. The reason for discussing it would mostly be in order for the brand manager to be able to evaluate the marketing efforts so as to improve marketing productivity or determine an approximate return on investment (ROI) for accounting and internal purposes within the organization. However, as our approach also takes non-customers into account, as they are equally able to share and create content that might influence the brand and subsequently the brand equity, as for example the case was with Café Stella, which we described in chapter 4, a new method for estimating brand equity is needed. That,
however, is not the aim of this thesis, as we estimate it requires a dedicated study entirely.

6.4.2 Brand Management on Social Media - Four Basic Assumptions
Just as the three approaches, we have discussed in the previous sections, are based on a set of basic assumptions, we here offer what we argue are the basic assumptions applicable to brand management on social media. The assumptions are based on our discussions, results and analysis, and, as we have stated earlier, we do not seek to develop a complete theoretical framework, but rather to outline a series of measurements that should be taken into account when engaging in the social media arena. Following these assumptions we present a series of propositions for managers that should be considered when engaging in interaction with consumers on social media, and when managers seek to develop a brand management engagement strategy.

The assumptions applicable to brand management on social media are as follows:

1. The brand is a cognitive construal created in the minds of the consumers.
2. The characteristics of the individual social media platform (arena) determine the interactional possibilities and how content can be dispersed.
3. Brand value exists and is created in the interaction between social systems and the brand.
4. The brand has personality traits resulting in emotional bonding between the consumer and brand, and these are affected by the engagement approach by the brand-representative.

These four assumptions are elaborated and explained below.

1. The brand is a cognitive construal created in the minds of the consumers.

This assumption derives initially from the consumer-based approach to brand management as described earlier, which aligns with Luhmann’s theory on social systems. Through our empirical research we have used this as a basic assumption that has determined how we have asked the respondents and how we have interpreted their answers. Since we have thoroughly discussed the concept of the brand as a cognitive construal earlier in this thesis, we will not go into further detail
with it here. We merely recognize that brand image exists in the minds of the consumers.

2. The characteristics of the individual social media platform (arena) determine the interactional possibilities and how content can be dispersed.

This assumption is related to the discussion of content dispersion in the previous chapters. Our definition of social media revolves around the possibility of sharing content and not specific platform characteristics. The concept of social media therefore entails a large variety of platforms with different characteristics in regards to how users can interact. We have therefore explored the idea of these characteristics playing a part in how content is dispersed. As statement #2 showed: “The characteristics and boundaries of the different platforms (arenas) will have a significant impact on the dispersion process of content and the possible information adoption by the consumers”, which is further testament to this notion. Our discussions in chapter 3 have been centered on this premise, and there is no doubt that while content on social media may be subjected to some of the same selectors when it comes to attracting an audience, the differences in the process of publishing content is obvious. Seeing as traditional media with its structure of acting as a gatekeeper between content and consumer are testament to this, we have through our discussions validated the statement revolving around the notion that the role of the gatekeeper as well as the entire editorial process has shifted towards consumer control, making complete control over content impossible for organizations (statement #1).

All social media platforms are possible outlets for consumer opinions and, as our discussions have rendered probable, motives for engaging in eWOM are largely similar across different types of platforms (statement #5). This means that the possibility of content related to the brand being dispersed onto other platforms or across other social systems is present, which makes the brand managers’ task of locating “engageable” content early on even more apparent. This is put into perspective by statement #7 that includes the notion that all stakeholders are not equally important for a brand to engage in conversations with, since some stakeholders have a more dominant platform, which increases the risk. It can be described as an economical calculation of whether the stakeholder is capable of
producing content that meets the selectors of news sufficiently to irritate other consumers enough for them to alter their internal complexity towards a more negative view of the brand, combined with the ability to reach a large enough audience – for instance in the case of Dooce the blogger (see the previous chapter). Also, as our theoretical deduction “A” stated, the more newsworthy online content is, the more relevant it is for organizations to engage in interaction with the Content Producers, since the content cannot play a part in changing the perception of the brand in the minds of the consumers, if it does not capture anyone’s attention.

All of these statements underline the validity of our assumption. In regards to organizations, the characteristics of the individual arena - the interactional possibilities and how content is dispersed - determine what possibilities and threats, specific content represents on each platform.

3. Brand value exists and is created in the interaction between social systems and the brand.

The third assumption is based on the assumption behind the community approach to brand management, which has been adapted to our findings based on the statements for empirical testing that we developed in the previous chapters. As our research results have shown, interactions on social media have a significant impact on how the brand is perceived, which makes the idea of brand value being directly affected plausible. As brand perception can be affected by the organization engaging in the conversations, which our results have also shown, we find this proposition to be valid. However, only in the sense that if the right approach to engagement is applied, the way in which consumers take part in the given interaction (as either producers or consumers of content) and subsequently perceive the brand image, will to a higher degree be affected in a positive direction, compared to consumers taking part in an interaction without organizational engagement. This suggests that organizational engagement is a determinant for the creation of brand value. Statement #3 presents the notion that “The approach to engagement by organizations has a large impact on whether or not the organizations’ engagement will have an effect, and on what such an effect might be”, which further supports the idea that the brand itself, as represented by the organization when interacting, is a key part in the conversations taking place in the social systems, attaching value to
the brand. Further supporting our proposition is our theoretical deduction “B”’s premise that consumers’ behavior is affected both by content created by Content Producers, who have had actual experience with the organization, and Content Producers, who have not had any experience with the organization, but who create content about the brand anyway. Since the basic unit of analysis in these arenas is communication (as we elaborated in chapter 3, it is assumedly the communication, which the Content Consumers are exposed to that can affect their view of the brand value, regardless of the underlying structures.

4. The brand has personality traits resulting in emotional bonding between the consumer and brand, and these are affected by the engagement approach by the brand-representative.

This assumption implies a consumer-brand connection that can be expected in some cases to be of a highly emotional nature. Changes in the personality traits of the brand can therefore spark an extreme reaction with consumers. This highlights the necessity for brand-representatives to engage in a manner that does not change the brand personality traits to a degree that clashes with the consumer’s perception. As our research shows: Whether or not a consumer decides to engage in eWOM is determined by the degree to which his or her expectations has been either broken or superseded (statement #4). Our discussions of how the approach to engaging consumers in conversation with Content Consumers and Producers validate this assumption’s justification.

As mentioned, early adopters of a brand also play an important role in aligning the brand personality, as they act as the benchmark for authenticity of the brand personality. As a product of the characteristics of different social media platforms, it is enviable that, in some situations, the Content Producer’s identity is not known to the Content Consumer. This means that the content and how it is created become prominent in defining the brand personality, not the credibility of the Content Producer. As we mentioned in statement #6: Source credibility is only relevant when the Content Producer is already known to the Content Consumer through the social media platform in use, and/or if other clues about the credibility are readily available, implying that the content is the determining factor in regards to whether or not the information in it is adopted by those exposed to it.
The task of the brand-representative is then to identify what type of content meets the requirements for engagement, while still keeping in mind that the sentiment of any given piece of consumer content is affected by the consumer’s previous experience with the company, making consumer–company history just as relevant as the actual situation (Theoretical deduction D). This adheres to the personality approach, in which “a brand personality is created through a cyclical interaction between the brand and the consumer” (Heding et al 2009: 139) meaning that it is a constantly evolving relationship. As we also stated in theoretical deduction E; the more responsibility the Content Producers and Content Consumers confer to the organization in any given situation, the more forthcoming the organization’s response type has to be in order to have the highest probability of having a positive effect on the consumer perception of the situation, which also matches what we discussed when presenting the personality approach in the above sections. Given that the consumer’s relationship with the brand is highly affected by negative experiences, the way the brand-representative engages, and what engagement strategy is chosen, is vital to repairing the possible damage done to the relationship.

6.4.3 Propositions for Organizations
On the basis of the assumptions we have discussed in the above section, the statements that we have tested empirically and our theoretical deductions, we formulate the following propositions for organization wishing to engage in interactions on social media and build a brand management engagement strategy. We will not undertake an extensive discussion of the background for these, since they are based on our research which has already been discussed extensively. Instead we will highlight the relevant results from our thesis that serves as the basis for each particular proposition, and refer the reader to the relevant chapters of the thesis for a more detailed discussion on the individual results. The propositions for managers are:

- Know your battlefield
- Play by their rules
- Choose your battles carefully
- Be aware of your own history
- Your strategy should be made-to-order
Each of these is elaborated in the following section, with regards to what they are based upon.

**Know your battlefield**

As we have shown in statement #5, all social media platforms are possible outlets for consumer opinion about our brand. This means that any crisis, be it a pull- or push-crisis, can arise and disperse on all platforms, but individual platforms exhibit different traits that need to be taken into consideration before engaging. As made evident by our statement #2 that we have tested empirically "the characteristics and boundaries of the different platforms (arenas) will have a significant impact on the dispersion process of content and the possible information adoption by the consumers" and which is summarized in our 2\(^{nd}\) assumption. The differences lay in a multitude of characteristics, like for instance to how large a degree the consumer perceives the platform as a personal space where uninvited engagement is not desired, or whether a forum is particularly hostile towards organizational entities. These are just some of the possible differences in characteristics, and there are of course also characteristics that hold possibilities and not threats. So to sum up:

Organizations engaging on a social media platform need to take the specific characteristics of the platforms that they are engaging on into consideration - when engaging, you need to know your battlefield.

**Play by their rules**

Organizations must accept that the consumers are in control. As we have shown in statement #1 "The role of the gatekeeper as well as the editorial process has shifted towards consumer control, making complete control over content impossible for organizations ". We stress the fact that the brand is a cognitive construal created in the minds of the consumer, meaning that the organization alone does not create the identity of the brand. Since in this view, "the brand have personality traits resulting in emotional bonding between the consumer and brand, and these are affected by the engagement approach by the brand-representative." The brand value therefore exists and is created in the interaction between social systems - meaning systems of consumers and systems of organizations - and the brand. And as we have shown in statement #4, the consumer only engages if their expectations have been either
broken or superseded to a high enough degree, implying that organizations should indeed take the consumers' content-creation seriously.

We therefore urge organizations to realize that since it is connected to the brand, their actions and response type can muster highly emotional reactions with consumers having a strong affiliation with the brand. As argued earlier, the consumer has an inherent need for identity and expression of self, which makes an action by the organization that does not match the consumers' perception of the brand identity, an attack on the consumers self. To summarize:

Organizations need to accept that on social media, editorial control is in the hands of the consumers, and play along with the rules coupled to the platform - When engaging; you need to play by their rules.

Choose your battles carefully

"All stakeholders are not equally important for an organization to engage in conversations with" - statement #7. As we have shown with this statement, there is a clear difference of how important a particular stakeholder is to engage with. Evaluation of who to engage thereby becomes the important task. As it is evident in for instance the case of the blogger, Dooce, not all consumers are able to trigger the potential reach. Those that are, however, have a massive audience and it is important to recognize that, when evaluating who to engage. The credibility of the Content Producer is not always the determining factor in whether or not the content has an influence on others. As we showed in statement #6: "Source credibility is only relevant when the Content Producer is already known to the Content Consumer through the social media platform in use, and/or if other clues about the credibility is readily available.

Instead of determining credibility, the organization should focus on the task of determining newsworthiness of the content. Newsworthiness is determined by whether or not the content adheres to news selectors stated by Luhmann (see chapter 3 for a discussion of these). As we have deduced theoretically, whether or not the content is shared and whether or not the Content Producer is relevant to engage with, is a product of how newsworthy the content is (deduction A & C).
As our assumption also states, brand value is created through interaction, and exactly who it is that interacts is naturally a big part of the interaction itself. In summary:

Organizations should carefully evaluate which interactions to engage in, but be aware that when evaluating, recognize what would be of interest to other consumers - you should choose your battles carefully.

Know your own history

"Brand value exists and is created in the interaction between social systems and the brand", this assumption not only signifies that how interaction unfolds in the future is of importance, but also that the interaction that have taken place so far have a great deal to say in how the brand is perceived by the consumer. As we concluded in our theoretical deduction D: "The sentiment of any given piece of consumer content is affected by the consumers’ previous experience with the organization, making consumer – organization history equally as relevant as the actual situation".

As we have also shown with our crisis communication theory approach to consumer engagement, any given situation should be regarded as an episode on the continuous relationship and that any "crisis" then results in relational damage. An organization therefore needs to be aware of their history with any given type of situation that they plan on engaging in, and on the basis of this, choose the right engagement strategy. In summary:

Organizations should take heed of the historic relationship with the consumer, when it comes to the situation that sparked the content-creation in the first place.

Your strategy should be made-to-order

As our research shows, "The approach to engagement by organizations has a large impact on whether or not the organizations engagement will have an effect and what such an effect might be". Given the array of differences in the characteristics of the different platforms, the large amount of different situations that can arise and the diversity of consumers, the notion that a strategy should be tailor-made seems obvious. Several of our respondents and interviewees have even indicated that when offered what they perceived to be a standard response, the effect of the response
was negative regardless of the response type chosen by the organization. And once again, since consumers can have a highly emotional bond with a brand, offering a response that does not recognize the importance of the brand to the consumers' identity, can easily have a negative impact on the consumers perceived image of the brand and thereby the brand value.

As we have made clear throughout our analysis, it is imperative that organizations recognize that when engaging in interaction on social media, you are not just interacting with the Content Producers, Content Consumers are very much listening in. Our research has shown that consumer-created content has a very high impact on other consumers’ perception of a brand. Therefore, both the Content Producers and the Content Consumers of any given interaction needs to be top of mind when an organization engages.

A final notion in regards to a tailor-made strategy is the attribution of responsibility. Before engaging, the organizations should evaluate to which extent the consumers attribute responsibility to the organization and engage accordingly. As we have shown in theoretical deduction “E”, the more responsibility the consumer attributes to your doing, the more forthcoming the response should be if the organization wishes to have a positive impact on the consumer. To summarize:

Organizations should choose their engagement strategy carefully and make sure it suits the current situation - your strategy should be made-to-order.

### 6.5 Implications, Limitations and Possibilities

In this last section, we discuss some implications, limitations and possibilities associated with our findings.

The framework posed by Heding et al (2009) does not suggest that organizations only follow one approach stringently, and it is not our intention to pass judgment on other theories, nor do we delude ourselves into thinking that we are inventing the end-all approach to branding. Instead, our results act more as a set of basic assumptions and propositions that should be taken into consideration when managing the brand on social media.
Since the consumer-based approach advocates that brand value creation occurs when manipulating the associations made in the mind of the consumer (Heding et al, 2009, p. 85), we can assume that the value created is something relatively intangible and thus hard to quantify. To cope with this intangible nature, the consumer based approach introduces the idea of brand equity. Brand equity is the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand (Heding et al. 2009). One could argue that the existence of "brand equity" as a concept is a sign of value adding getting so intangible that a new framework for value creation is necessary. So, the consumer-based approach is at present still relevant, as long as one takes the underlying assumptions into account.

Diffusion of innovations, be it technical or what you can refer to as information innovations, among a social community is in Rogers’ and Moore’s (2002) perspective dependant on winning the trust of the innovators. They will then in turn facilitate the transition among other members of the community, as they are seen as progressive front runners. But the facilitation can have both a negative and a positive effect, meaning that if they publically discard the brand as something undesirable, it will presumably have a negative effect on others. The difference between this notion and our analytical outcome, as based on the principle of Cheung et al. (2008), is that since Content Consumers are not always able to distinguish the credibility and identity of the Content Producer, they have no way of knowing if the Producer is in fact an innovator. We will, however, argue, in line with Luhmann’s constructivist views, that even a relatively anonymous Content Producer can be viewed as an innovator by a Content Consumer that is just learning of the “innovation”.

Furthermore we believe, in line with Carroll et al. (2006), that “Satisfied consumers who also love the brand are expected to be more committed to repurchase and more eager to spread “the good word” to others” (Caroll et al. 2006: 82). A focus on post-consumption behavior that leads to positive WOM, be it electronic or otherwise, and brand loyalty, is something that our research has shown to be not only relevant and advisable, but also possible and desirable. The actual application of this sort of focus can also be assumed to be related to and dependant of the specific brand, since certain brands presumably are more prone to possess a self-expressive nature that influences both negative and positive WOM from consumers. Referring to the notion that, “Talking about a brand with other people is an important part of the process by
which consumers use brands to help construct their identity” (Holt, 1997, 1998 in Carroll et al. 2006: 82), consumers are therefore expected to be more likely to engage in positive eWOM, depending on the degree of self-expression by the brand (ibid.).

However, self-expression by the brand is not sufficient. As we have shown earlier, the specific method of interaction also determines the way in which the consumers perceive the situation. Adhering to the consumer-based approach’s principle of brand as a construct, and on the basis of our exploratory research, we assume that brand equity among content consumers is directly affected by eWOM in both directions depending on if and how the brand engages in the conversation.

Our empirical observations in regards to social media are testament to the fact that the current perspectives on brand management lack a broader scope on the mechanisms involved in the branding process, when one takes into account the unique possibilities and characteristics of social media. In order for the perspective to be developed further, more research is needed to validate the premise posed by us.
Chapter 7 - Conclusion

Given the development in the media landscape with the introduction and diffusion of social media, the need for organizations to adapt to this changed reality is apparent. Through this thesis we have sought to figure out how interactions on social media have affected brand management, with the objective being developing a series of propositions for brand managers to take into account when strategizing in social arenas. To guide our thesis we have used the following research question:

*How do interactions on Social Media affect brand management?*

Our research is founded in the scientific paradigm of constructivism and the notion that brands reside in the mind of the consumer as a cognitive construal functions as an operative throughout our thesis. The focal points of our analysis have been to explore the following areas: 1. How social media has changed the arenas that consumers and organizations interact in, 2. How social media affects information dispersion and adoption among consumers, 3. How organizations can engage consumers on social media and to what effect and 4. How all of this affects brand management.

In the process of exploring these areas, we have arrived at a series of theoretical deductions and formulated several statements for empirical testing. These serve as the basis for our empirical research and the foundation for exploring how social media interactions affect the way organizations can manage their brand.

1. **How social media has changed the arenas that consumers and organizations interact in.**

Initially we have discussed how the characteristics of social media might affect the process of organizational engagement in interaction with consumers. Using constructivist systemic theory as presented by Niklas Luhmann as the overall theoretical vantage point, we rely on the notion of communication as the most basic element. This makes the understanding of communicative structures the key point of analysis. Subsequently we have discussed Luhmann’s selectors of news as an

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34 Look to chapter 6.1 for a summary of these.
35 Look to chapter 5 a summary of these, and for our empirical tests.
indicator of what makes content appealing and newsworthy and what sparks content-creation in the social media arena.

We hypothesize that the role of the gatekeeper as well as the editorial process has shifted towards consumer control, thus making the idea of complete organizational control over content impossible. Furthermore, we have discussed how the individual technological characteristics of each social media platform (arena) can be categorized in accordance with the amount of social presence and media richness possible, and the degree to which it allows for self-presentation. This has been done in order to determine how these characteristics affect the communication processes and, accordingly, the engagement possibilities of organizations. We conclude that the possibility of organizational participation fall into two categories: One where the consumers actively seeks out platforms where the organization is present (such as a Facebook page, Twitter account, etc. controlled by the organization), and one where the organization themselves have to seek out the content (consumer blogs, discussion forums, review sites, etc.). We have also found that these specific characteristics have a large influence on the dispersion and information adoption processes among consumers, which makes the identification of the specific characteristics before organizational engagement highly necessary.


We further found that dispersion of content on social media is not restricted to the initial platform or any particular platform type. Organizations should therefore be aware of the fact that as C2C-interaction is not confined, meaning that even if the organization were to engage content in one platform, dependant on the timing the content may have spilled over to other platforms.

We have also discussed users and divided them into two categories based on the Social Technograph presented by Li et al. (2008). These categories are not definitive in the sense that in some cases, a user can be considered a Content Producer, while in other instances the opposite is the case. We have determined that the motive for users to become Content Producers, is related to irritation of self, in the sense that if their expectations in regards to an organization or product are either surpassed
sufficiently or broken to a high enough degree, the likelihood of them expressing their perception of that situation through social media rises.

Through our discussion of the concept of eWOM, we argue that social media extends the premise of WOM considerably, empowering the consumer in relation to brand messages. As we have shown, the consumer producing and dispersing content does not necessarily have to be an actual customer to be able to affect others. This is due to the relative difficulties in determining identity and credibility that characterizes certain types of social media platforms. The decisive factor in whether content can affect others is instead the degree of relevance and comprehensiveness as perceived by the Content Consumers.

This possible adaptation of information is therefore dependent on content quality and we argue that organizations wishing to engage consumers have to evaluate where to do so on the basis of this factor. In doing so, the organizations should keep in mind that brand perception is highly subjective and related to the image of the brand that each consumer has in his or her mind. When it comes to influencing consumers’ brand perception, the approach chosen by the organization when engaging in consumer interaction plays an important part in the process and is a decisive determinant of the chances for success.

3. How organizations can engage consumers on social media and to what effect.

The method for engagement relates to the above mentioned notion that any content that lives up to the criteria described to some extent can be considered a crisis, especially when it comes to the relationship between consumer and brand. The principles of crisis communication, as presented by Coombs in his relationship management perspective, serve as the platform for choosing the right engagement strategy.

Any situation that can possibly affect the organization and brand image in a negative way constitutes a crisis in our view. We therefore argue that there are two types of crises: The push-crisis, where the content has sufficient news value to spread virally at a rapid pace and is the one closest related to what constitutes a crisis in traditional crisis communication theory, and the pull-crisis, where consumers searching for
information about a specific organization or product through for instance a search engine are exposed to content carrying a negative sentiment.

Our empirical research shows that consumers very much so are susceptible to changes in their perception of any given situation, as a result of organizational engagement. 50% of the Content Producers in our survey replied that their perception can change after organizational interaction on the basis of their content, and 53% of the Content Consumers replied that their perception of a situation can change due to organizational engagement.

Our research, however, also shows that there is a close connection between the response type chosen and the success rate of organizational engagement. We have found that apology and rectification have by far the highest success rate. Our exploratory interviews also show that sincerity is crucial and automated types of responses have the opposite effect.

4. How all of this affects brand management.

Comparing three different approaches to brand management and discussing their relation to our field of interest has resulted in an altered view on how brand value is created, and on what assumptions the basis for strategizing about managing brands on social media should be created. Brand value in our view is created in a triadic relationship between the brand manager, systems of consumers and the brand itself through interaction and brand perception. As our research shows, interaction and assigning of value takes place with or without the interference of an organization, but it is possible for the organization to engage in interaction with the consumers, thereby gaining a voice and possibly affecting the process.

We present four assumptions that we argue represent the foundation for brand management on social media based on existing theory, as well as our own findings:

- The brand is a cognitive construal created in the minds of the consumers.
- The characteristics of the individual social media platform (arena) determine the interactional possibilities and how content can be dispersed.
- Brand value exists and is created in the interaction between social systems and the brand.
• The brand has personality traits resulting in emotional bonding between the consumer and the brand, and these are affected by the engagement approach by the brand-representative.

On the basis of these and our theoretical deductions, statements and empirical findings, we present a series of operational propositions for organizations engaging brand management, in the form of consumer interaction, on social media. They are:

• **Know your battlefield** - organizations engaging on a social media platform should take the specific characteristics of the platforms that they are engaging on into consideration

• **Play by their rules** - organizations should accept that on social media, editorial control is in the hands of the consumers, and play along with the rules coupled to the platform

• **Choose your battles carefully** - organizations should carefully evaluate which interactions to engage in, but make sure to recognize what would be of interest to other consumers when doing so

• **Be aware of your own history** – organizations should take heed of the historic relationship with the consumer when it comes to the situation that sparked the content-creation in the first place

• **Your strategy should be made-to-order** - Before engaging, the organization should evaluate to which extent the consumers attribute responsibility to the organization and engage accordingly. The more responsibility the consumer attributes to the organization, the more forthcoming the response should be if the organization wishes to have a positive impact on the consumer.

In summary: Organizations should choose their engagement strategy carefully and make sure it suits the situation at hand. This thesis has identified and thoroughly discussed several areas of interest to the brand manager and, constructed like elements towards one consistent argument, the parts of our analysis lead us to conclude the following:

Interactions on social media affects brand management, dependant on (but not limited by) the definition of “affect” and “brand”, by providing consumers with the means to, under the right circumstances, reach a massive audience, influencing their
view on the brand in question as rendered probable by our research, ultimately affecting brand value and potentially consumer purchasing behavior and the bottom line

By:
Mads Crone Nielsen

&

Steven Kjeld Christensen
Chapter 8 - References

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Chapter 9 - Resumé


Brugere defineres som Content Producers og Content Consumers, og på baggrund af teori omkring begrebet electronic Word Of Mouth (eWOM) diskuteres hvordan brugerskabt indhold påvirker forbrugere indbyrdes. VIA både kvalitativ samt kvantitativ research undersøges desuden begge gruppers tilgang til interaktion med organisationer på baggrund af brugerskabt indhold. Resultaterne viser, at forbrugere i høj grad er modtagelige over for interaktion med organisationer, såfremt tilgangen er den rigtige. Afhandlingen argumenterer for, at begreber relateret til krisekommunikation kan anvendes som udgangspunkt for organisationer, der ønsker at deltage i samtaler omkring disses brands på sociale medier. På baggrund af resultaterne af de empiriske undersøgelser, kombineret med en diskussion der tager udgangspunkt i eksisterende tilgange til brand management, udvikles de 5 følgende operationelle råd til brand manageren, der ønsker at udvikle en interaktionsstrategi med fokus på sociale medier:

- Identificer slagmarken
- Skik følge, eller land fly
- Kæmp kun slag der kan vindes
- Tag højde for fortiden
- Tilpas strategien til situationen
Disser er baseret på såvel teoretiske diskussioner med udgangspunkt i brand managementlitteraturen, en række kvalitative interviews med udvalgte repræsentanter fra forskellige systemer samt et validerende kvantitativt studie.
Chapter 10 - Appendices

Appendix 1 - Café Stella Case

På Café Stella banker de deres kunder

Posted on 16/04/2010 | 29 Comments

Nu vil **SUS** jo nødigt være et par bitter-fjamser, og bloggen skal absolut ikke være en platform, hvor vi deler svinere ud til højre og venstre.

MEN i går aften, var vi ude for det mest vanvittige på Café Stella på Strædet.
Vi var 7 venner derinde for at drikke en billig sjus, og da vi går, sker der det uheldige, at én af vores venner har glemt af betale for sin drink (og han er vel og mærket gået). Så vi bliver selvfølgelig stoppet på vejen ud, og får forklaret, at der mangler betaling for den resterende drink. Vi forklarer så tjeneren, at det er uheldigt, men at de jo ikke kan bonne os for en anden parts manglende betaling.
Det blev selvfølgelig ikke taget så godt imod af et selskab udelukkende bestående af semi-feministiske kvinder, så vi drejer om på hælen og fortæller ham, at han godt kan glemme de skide 40 kroner, som mangler. Det skulle vi så ikke have gjort, for så bliver vi decideret man-handled og truet med vold.
Han griber først den ene og så den anden hårdt...
i armen, og lover os tæsk, smadder og skaller,
hvis vi ikke hoster op med de 40 kroner.
Katarzyna har et massivt blåt mærke på højre
arm, som kan bevidne om overgrebet.

Det endte med at vores ven kom tilbage og
betalte, men først skulle kæmpebrødet lige
kalde ham en svans, en taber og en bøsse.
Under hele scenariet gør personalet NOTHING!

Det hele endte med at udvikle sig til en meget
ubehægelig og unødvendig situation.

Café Stella; synes umiddelbart man skal lade
være med at banke sine kunder, og man skulle
måske stramme lidt op sådan generelt.

// Update:
Tak til Modebevægelsen for at være seje, og yde
lidt moralsk støtte til voldramte bloggere 😊

Edit:

Kære læsere.

Som mange nok har læst, har vi haft en ubehagelig oplevelse på Café Stella, som vi har fortalt om her på SUS. Vi er nu endelig kommet i kontakt med caféen, og vi mener derfor, at vi har et ansvar for at runde episoden og diskussionen af.

I en mail fra ledelsen, beklager caféen optrinnet, og tager afstand fra hændelsen. De mener dog ikke, at Stella kan kobles sammen med episoden, da det ifølge dem, er en udefrankommende person uden tilhørsforhold til stedet, som har blandet sig.

Vi har dog en anden opfattelse af, hvad der skete, da vi mener, at det var personalet, som involverede vedkommende. Vi erkender dog, at vi aldrig når til enighed, og vælger derfor at lukke diskussionen her.

Vi er glade for at have været i kontakt med Stella, og høre deres side af historien, og håber ikke at lignende episoder, vil gentage sig i fremtiden.

Vi vil kopiere denne post og sætte det ind i vores oprindelige indlæg, så folk, der har
12-10-2010

På Café Stella banker de deres kunder...

fandt linket andre steder på nettet, får mulighed for at læse begge sider af sagen.

Vi har valgt at slå kommentarfunktionen fra disse indlæg, da vi nu ønsker at lukke diskussionen.

Like

Be the first of your friends to like this.

This entry was posted in Line Love, The Life Of S.U.S. Bookmark the permalink.

29 RESPONSES TO PÅ CAFÉ STELLA BANKER DE DERES KUNDER

Mille | 16/04/2010 at 21:20 |

What?! Bastards... Det kan man sku da ikke gøre! Er virkelig chokeret! Det er jo overfald og trusler og whatnot... Har I gjort noget "officielt" ved det?

Mille
MySplashOfColour.blogspot.com

Maria | 16/04/2010 at 21:26 |

Har i ikke anmeldt det??????

Nick | 16/04/2010 at 21:53 |

Gud det kan jeg da godt huske at i foraltle mig i går! Var nok for stiv til at fatte hvor vildt det egentligt er/var. I skal da så meget anmeldte det! Ellers tropper vi op på Stella og snakker med ejeren og beder denne om en undskyldning til jer og et free meal – ellers melder i det... I heart blackmail.

Anonymous | 16/04/2010 at 21:54 |

I skal da anmeldte det!
Det kan da simpelthen ikke være rigtigt noget af det!
12-10-2010

På Café Stella banker de deres kunder...

Jeg havde satme været arrig, og givet det kæmpefjols hvad han fortjener – et visit af lovens lange arm!

Jeg raser helt af at læse jeres indlog 😊

- AT

Anonymous | 16/04/2010 at 21:59 |

... hvis man læser deres anmeldelser på aok, som I linker til, så tyder det på at I bestemt ikke er de eneste der har haft en mindre behagelig oplevelse derinde...

Puha, jeg raser stadig over historien 😊

Over and out – AT.

Sara | 16/04/2010 at 22:01 |

Jeg tilslutter mig: "Anmeld det!", ellers tror jeg at jeg ville blive lidt skuffet over jer.
Stakler! Sådan noget er slet ikke OK.

2300 Happiiness | 16/04/2010 at 22:55 |

Hold da op en historie. Jeg synes virkelig også I skal anmeldte det, sådan noget skal de da ikke have lov til derinde.

ginajaqueline.com | 17/04/2010 at 06:10 |

BOYCUT STELLA!

Deres mad er klam. Udover enkelte ting på menu-kortet. Deres burgere må indeholde næsten 2000 kcal'er for måltidet med kedelige ovnkartofler, alt er fylkt med olie (ikke engang smør, nej rigtig meget, dårlig olie) og deres pastaretter er forfærdelige (rejer, laks og safran smager som kogt mel med fløde og fløde + 3 nips dæselaks)
Deres stegte laks er god, men igen fylkt med bizar mængde olie.

Hvorfor jeg er blevet ved med at komme der? Boede i
På Café Stella banker de deres kunder...

baggården på et tidspunkt, og har også haft gode oplevelser på stella, og deres nechos, gedeost sandwich og (billige)smoothies + (nogle) cocktails er gode.

Dog også dårlig service. Meget dårlig service. Der er teenngere (helt ned til 14-15år) i flæng til deres torsdagsbar. og meget mere..

GOD BEDRING MED ARMEN! MONSTER!!!

kh😊

Ms Confashion | 17/04/2010 at 00:26 |

OMGOSH!!!!
Dét var da helt grotesk – de sku’ da sparkes langt ind i h......!!!!
fyfojda!
Anmeld og klag til stedets ejer!
Møgfisse hende Stella altså!

SUS | 17/04/2010 at 08:53 |

Ej men det er jo VANVITTTIGT! Interessant måde at føre forretning på.

Jeg har ringet derind to gange uden held, for at fortælle bare én eller anden hvad der skete, men ved ikke rigtigt hvad vi gerne vil opnå med det. Synes ikke rigtig en undskyldning fra 'sådan nogle typer' betyder et flojt, når det igesom er tonen, de har lagt før dagen.

Skanks! Skanks! Skanks!

// Line Love

Katrine | 17/04/2010 at 09:39 |

Ad, hvor er det klamt! Hvad fanden sker der, det er en café sågu da ikke en pusher, og man slår i hvert fald sket ikke på piger :S
Min veninde og jeg var ellers glade for at være der,
På Café Stella banker de deres kunder...
pånær betjeningen, der haltede lidt. Men nu hater jeg Stella, det er simpelt hen for sindssygt!

SUS | 17/04/2010 at 12:22 |

Nej det er slet ikke i orden!!! Jeg har nu sendt en mail til dem, så de bliver opmærksomme på situationen.
Her har I den:

Kære ejere af Café Stella

Jeg skriver denne mail for at gøre jer opmærksom på en yderst ubehagelig oplevelse, som mine veninder og jeg desværre var ude for på jeres café. Jeg skriver, fordi jeg er frustreret og mållos, og fordi jeg mener, at den måde vi blev behandlet på ikke hører sig hjemme i et moderne samfund. Det er ikke i orden at kalde unge piger for "klamme kællinger" og drenge for "bøsser" (et ord, der ikke i øvrigt ikke skal bruges som skældord).

Torsdag d. 15.04 2010 sad vi syv mennesker og nöd en cocktail på Stella. Vores oplevelse af cafeen startede rigtig fint. Jeg spildte blandt andet noget af min helt nykøbte cocktail og fik en lille refill af det sade personale. Desværre blev dette gode indtryk af jeres café brat ændret, da vi skulle gå. I stedet for at skrive om oplevelsen her, vil jeg linke til min blog, som jeg deler med en veninde, som også var med denne aften. Vi skrev igår et indlæg med titlen "På Café Stella banker de deres kunder". Her vil I også se et billede af de fysiske konsekvenser vores besøg på Stella resulterede i.

http://www.sos-su.blogspot.com

Vores blog blev i går køst af næsten 500 mennesker, og vi synes derfor, at det blot er fair over for jer, at I som ledelse bliver klar over de uheldige signaler jeres personale sender. Derudover kommer vores indlæg frem, som et af de første hits, når man googler café Stella. Vi regner ikke med at få noget yderligere ud af denne mail, men vi håber, at I vil tage en seriøs snak
På Café Stella banker de deres kunder...
med jeres personale. Det kan ikke være rigtigt, at unge piger skal trues med tøsk og udsettes for vold i dagens Danmark.

Venlig Hilsen
Katharina Andersen

Nu må vi se, hvad de svarer, og om de svarer!

//Katarzyna

Glitter Amalie | 17/04/2010 at 12:45 |
Det er godt nok det mest sindssyge jeg længe har hørt!!

Christiane Falke | 17/04/2010 at 14:18 |
I indlægget linkes der til Café Stellas side på AOK - opfordrer hermed alle til at gå derind og skrive!

Maria | 17/04/2010 at 16:58 |
Men i har ikke anmeldt det til politiet? Det synes jeg virkelig i skal gøre.... Det er jo decideret vold...! Det synes jeg altså i skal gøre.. Det vil jo få større konsekvenser for Stella end at i skriver en mail til dem..

SUS | 17/04/2010 at 19:21 |
Ja vi har også diskuteret muligheden for at melde det til politiet, men jeg tror vi kom frem til, at lade være.

I det store sammenhæng er det her jo ‘bare’ en lille episode, hvor en diskussion har udviklet sig til noget skubberi og verbale tøsk, og jeg ved ærlig talt ikke hvor seriøst politiet ville tage det.....og så er jeg jo også den sygede jyde, som er panisk anget for at spille ordensmagtens tid.

Men en million gange tak for støtten! Vi var lidt nervøse ved hvordan I ville tage imod det, men det er så rart at høre, at det ikke bare er os, som er pylrede.
// Line Love

**Anonymous** | 17/04/2010 at 20:31 |

BOYCUT DEM! Og anmeld det! Fuck nogle idioter.

**SidneyLise** | 18/04/2010 at 02:58 |

Hej skønne piger,
Vi håber det er okay, at vi har skrevet om episoden på SL. Vi sender jer en masse tanker!

- Isabel

**SUS** | 18/04/2010 at 13:11 |

SL: Mere end i orden, det er LEX!

Tusind tak, piger 😊

// Line Lkve

**Ms Confashion** | 18/04/2010 at 17:46 |

SÅDAN piger! Super med at sende den mail...! Håber, de grænmer sig inde i Strædet, puuh, hvor dør må lugte af skank!!!

**Kamilla** | 18/04/2010 at 19:37 |

Jeg siddes og bliver helt været over at læse jeres indlæg, men thumbs up fordi I tør offentliggøre det og endda informere selve ledelsen om det. Må da ha' været noget af en klapot, som har lavet det nummer mod jer?

- boycut det sted 😊

Kamilla
// kamillaJaeger.blogspot.com

**Anonymous** | 19/04/2010 at 09:43 |

"Så vi bliver selvfølgelig stoppet på vejen ud, og får forklaret, at der mangler betaling for den resterende
drøm. Vi forklarer så tjeneren, at det er uheldigt, men at de jo ikke kan bonde os for en anden parts manglende betaling."

Rimelig årstil af jer ikke en gang at gide løfte en finger for at hjælpe værhusejeren med at indkræve betalingen, når nu han har været så servicemindet over for jer at genopfyldte spilte drinks og lade enkelte gæster forlade selskabet uden at foretage omgående afregning.

Det berettiger selvfølgelig ikke til fysisk vold, men verbale overfusninger er i mine øjne helt i orden som reaktion på jeres selvfede og smålige attitude.

**SUS** | 19/04/2010 at 19:34 |

Anonym: Du har ret, at vi skulle have været mere fleksible da konflikten opstod, og vi tager også afstand fra at skride fra regningen. Men alle i det oprindelige selskab havde betalt, og den sidstnævnte var en meget fjern bekendt, som vi så ikke ville stilles til ansvar for.

Uanset hvor søde og forstående eller hvor provokerende og urimelige vi havde været (hvilket vi ikke kunne dromme om) er vi **SKRÅT** uenige i, at det **NOGENSIND** er i orden at håndtere situationen med fysisk vold, verbale overgreb og trusler om vold. Sådan en behandling vil vi aldrig, aldrig finde os i.

Så vi kan godt se din pointe med, at vi ikke er skyldfri i konflikten, men Café Stellas reaktion er helt utilgængelig, og det står vi urokkeligt fast på.

// Katarzyna og Line Love

**Tobias** | 19/04/2010 at 21:56 |

Ikke for at retsfordigøre, at de satte en dørmånd på, der brugte vold imod jer.

Men hvorfor synes i det er i orden, at i ikke skal betale de 40 kr., som jeres ven ikke betalte? Som i selv nævner er 40 kr. Ingen penge, og tænk på at episoden
På Cafe Stella banker de deres kunder...

slet ikke var opstået..

**Michael** | 19/04/2010 at 22:14 |

Jeg er i den grad enig med Tobias.

I kommer ind i en samlet flock, I bestiller en masse drinks som I naturligvis har tenkt Jer at betale.

Der mangler penge og I undskylder med at det ikke er Jer der har bestilt drinken – derimod Jeres ven.

Jeg synes det er ualmindelig dårlig og forkælel stim. Forretningen kan jo med god vilje betragte det som tyveri, såfremt I ikke betalte.

At dømmende har taget lidt hårdt i én af Jeres arme er uheldigt. I andre steder i verden havde I ganske givet fået en tur ude bag ved..

I tillader Jer tilmed at genere stedet på baggrund af, at I har gjort noget forkert, som dernæst har resulteret i en reaktion..

Hav en god nften tøser, de blå mærker er snart væk igen 😆

**SorenT** | 19/04/2010 at 23:17 |

Der er ingen grund til at anmelde dem – straffen online skader deres renomé MANGE gange hårdere end en politi anmeldelse.

Mit råd: fortæl historien videre og anmeld stedet. Jeg har lige gjort det på AOK og MitKBH

[http://mitkbh.dk/cafe-stella/](http://mitkbh.dk/cafe-stella/)

[http://www.aok.dk/restauranter-cafeer/cafe-stella](http://www.aok.dk/restauranter-cafeer/cafe-stella)

Alt godt 😊

twitter.com/sorenrt
På Café Stella banker de deres kunder ...

**Thomas** | 19.04.2010 kl. 23:34 |
Selvfølgelig skulle pigerne have betalt de 40 kr – det gør man bare – også for en bekendt.

Men at sige at pigerne så selv er uden om at blive taget hårdt ved og at de skal være glade for at det ikke gik værre er sku for dumt.

Du mener altså at det er ok for en beværtning at lægge hånd på gæster for 40 kr... come on...

Det er aldrig ok!

**SUS** | 19.04.2010 kl. 23:43 |
Tak for de gode perspektiver drengen(t!) Fedt med nogle mænd på bloggen!

Kan sagtens sætte mig ind i jeres forskellige pointer, synes helt sikkert også vi skulle have betalt de rådne 40 kroner, for selvfølgelig skal man betale for den beværtning man nu får. Men kender I det, når man står i en situation, hvor der sker nogle ting, og bliver sagt nogle ting, som gør, at det lige pludseligt bliver en principsag? Tror lidt det var, der skete.

Men står nu stadig fast ved, at uanset hvor galt på den vi var, så er det aldrig i orden at lægge hånd på kunderne.

// Line Love

**Michael** | 20.04.2010 kl. 06:09 |
@Thomas,..

Nej nej Thomas, det er slet slet ikke det jeg siger! Man må hverken slå eller tage hårdt fat, vi bor heldigvis i Danmark – og vi skal gerne kunne komme ud af det med kommunikation. Jeg referede blot til en tur jeg havde i Soho London, hvor en bartender syntes at en drink på en unævnt bar skulle koste ikke mindre en
12-10-2010

På Café Stella banker de deres kunder...


@Line Jeg forstår så udemærket at der skal være opstået en situation hvor I ikke ville give Jer 😒
Appendix 2 - Google Search for Café Stela

12-10-2010 cafe stella - Google-segning

Alle Kort Mere

Nettet Billeder Kart Overvåg Bags Ordner/c news Gmail mere tyveken.kjeld.christensen@gmail.com | Vetenskabsl | Indstilling | Log ud

1. Cafe Stella - Cafe Stella i København
Vokalom til Cafe Stella på nettet, her kan i findt vores menusart, og se billeder. Kom indenfor hos Cafe Stella som har ligget på Strædet siden 2004.
www.cafestella.dk / Cached / Lignende

2. Cafe Stella - Alt om København - AOK
Cafe Stella afgir på højmen af Kompagnistienet og Knabrosstædet og er en cafe i to etager med notabelt i weekenden.
www.aok.dk/restauranter-cafeteria-cafe-stella - Cached / Lignende

3. Cafe Stella - Alt om København - AOK
www.aok.dk/restauranter-cafeteria-cafe-stella - Cached

4. Cafe Stella banker kunderne
17. apr 2010 SUX-cwevet har været på Cafe Stella og har stillet bekendtskab med en stor kæmpet, der satte hånd mod brødet, da en af selskabets gæster...

5. S.U.S. På Cafe Stella banker de deres kunder
16. apr 2010 Som mange nok har læst, har vi haft en ubehagelig opgave på Cafe Stella, som vi har forløbet om her på S.U.S. ...

6. MikkelB Cafe Stella - Venlig betjening, Burger, Stei, Strædet
Cafe Stella Jeg kan kun tilslutne mig, at Stellas bænkebluff er et kærme bil. Jeg ønsker spørgsmål der stort udvalg i buffet, dog kunne der godt være ....

7. Cafe Stella offer for onsdagstid heller i Jonas Juul Hansen
19. apr 2010 Der er i øjeblikket en onsdagset heller i gård med Cafe Stella med overskifter som Cafe Stella banker kunderne. Det har absolut intet på sig ...

8. Sidney's Cafe Cafe Stella banker deres kunder
18. apr 2010 Cafe Stella banker deres kunder. I dag vil vi ikke skrive et normalt Sidney's描ndtag. Vi vil derimod sende jer videre til vores skanne ....

www.google.dk/search?sourceid=chrome_...
12-10-2010

cafe stella - Google-søgning

Søgninger relateret til cafe stella
alt cafe stella cafe stella burger
cafe stella mad cafe stella strikset
cafe stella brunch cafe stella på strikset

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Næste

cafe stella

Vis tilpasninger Søgtyp Søg inden for resultater Giv os feedback

Google startside Annoncer med Google Foranstaltningsslusninger Fortrolighed Alt om Google

www.google.dk/search?sourceid=chrome...
Interview med Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards

Dato: 22.03.2011
Interview subjekt: Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards
(https://www.trustpilot.dk/Users/3590)
Platform: Trustpilot
Case: Pixum.dk
Interaktion med brand ejer: Nej, der har ikke været svar fra Pixum.dk

Pixum
4 ud af 5 stjerner
24. februar 2011

Hurtig bestilling, hurtig levering
Vi har fået fremkaldt 250+ billeder og alle er af fineaste kvalitet. På bagsiden bliver der trykt filnavnet (delvis) samt billedets dato (hvis dataene er tilstede), så de kan let sættes i korrekt rækkefølge og sorteres.


Leveringen var hurtigt, og vi var overrasket over, at få billederne så hurtigt!

Eneste negative ting er udvalget af kvaliteter. Vi kunne godt ønske os muligheden for at få fremkaldt billederne på f.eks. halv-mat og hel-mat fotopapir.

Mads Crone Nielsen:
Hej Stefan

Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:
Hej Mads
Mads:
Vi er meget glade for, at du har sagt ja til at hjælpe os med vores speciale og deltage i dette interview. Steven er optaget andetsteds, så det er mig (Mads) der står for det i dag.

Først vil jeg bede dig om at svare på nogle demografiske spørgsmål:

Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:
Navn: Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards
Alder: 27
Postnummer: 8600

Mads:
Hvor ofte bruger du nettet? (flere gange dagligt, dagligt, 3-6 dage om ugen, 1-3 dage om ugen, sjældnere)

Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:
Flere gange dagligt.

Mads:
Bruger du mest computer, eller benytter du også smartphone f.eks.?

Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:
Mest computer men har også en mobil med browser.

Mads:
Ok, perfekt. I de følgende spørgsmål kommer ordet ”brand” til at indgå ofte. I denne sammenhæng er det ment som et udtryk for en organisations, virksomheds, service eller produkts identitet. altså din holdning til brandet.

Mads:
Hvilke sociale netværk tager du del i? (Facebook, Twitter, blog, review sites, forums, andre?)

Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:
Facebook og fora

Mads:
Indgår holdninger til virksomheders brand i din normale interaktion på disse?

Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:
Nej.

Mads:
Okay. Hvad var årsagen til, at du valgte at skrive indlægget om Pixum på trustpilot i sin tid?
**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Jeg syntes at jeg skulle bidrage med noget input. Man risikerer let at sådanne steder som Trustpilot bliver domineret af de negative tilmeldinger, så det er vigtigt at de positive også kommer med.

**Mads:**
Interessant, oftest lader det jo til at det er det negative får mest opmærksomhed - som du ganske rigtigt siger - forventer du nogensinde, at ejerne af det brand du omtaler reagerer på indlæg – altså deltager i debatten? Eller forventer du en reaktion andetsteds?

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Jeg har flere gange set at en repræsentant for virksomheden besvarer nogle af indlæggene. Typisk er det høfligt og tilbyder at de genoptager kontakten og får en modydelse, men det sker også, at man får set virksomhedens synspunkt for sagen, hvilket er godt, da indlægget godt være en sur bruger som har gjort alle de forkerte ting.

Så jeg syntes det er godt at man kan se, at brandet kigger på de bedømmelser der kommer og indgår lidt dialog.

**Mads:**
Super. Hvis det generelt blev kotume at virksomheder kontaktede folk når de havde skrevet et indlæg, ville det så have indflydelse på din videre interaktion på sådanne sites, eller på hvordan du formulerede dig? Jeg tænker hvis man ved at man bliver - lad os kalde det overvåget - om det så ville begrænse hvad du ville vælge at skrive om en organisation? Nu sagde du jo du skrev noget positivt for at balancere debatten, men ville du holde dig tilbage med en oplevelse hvis du vidste, at alt blev læst?

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Nu forsøger jeg at skrive så objektivt som muligt, dvs. uden at svine brandet til igennem hele indlægget, så jeg kan godt så stå ved det jeg skriver. Derfor syntes jeg ikke umiddelbart at det er et problem at brandet svarer på indlægget.

**Mads:**
Okay. Hvad ville kunne få dig til at skrive et indlæg, eller udtrykke din holdning, om et brand på et socialt medie tror du?

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Hvis jeg havde modtaget en meget god eller meget dårlig service.

**Mads:**
Kunne du finde på selv at kommentere på andres (lignende) indlæg? (og hvorfor?)
Andres indlæg på sociale medier eller på f.eks. Trustpilot?

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Begge dele
Tror kun jeg ville besvare et positivt indlæg hvis jeg havde nogle negative erfaringer eller havde spørgsmål til produktet. Et negativt indlæg - ville jeg ikke kigge så meget på, da min erfaring er, at de er skrevet i vrede og ikke særligt rare at læse.

**Mads:**
Okay, hvad ville du sige hovedsageligt er formålet med, at du vælger at udtrykke dine holdninger (når du gør)? At hjælpe andre, få hjælp, advare andre, ”ramme” virksomheden, nuancere debatten, bare for at komme ”ud med det” eller lign?

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
At give et så repræsentativt billede af virksomheden, så andre har bedst mulige vilkår for at afgøre om de vil handle der, samt give virksomheden muligheden for at rette op på fejl.

**Mads:**
Så det handler mest om at du måske mener, at du gerne vil støtte en virksomhed du anser som fejlagtigt anklaget - eller vil gøre opmærksom på, at den måske ikke er så god som andre siger?

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Ja.

**Mads:**
Ok. Er du nogensinde blevet kontaktet af ejerne af det brand du udtrykker dig om?

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Kun én gang - på Facebook havde jeg tilmeldt mig brandets gruppe. Herinde gjorde jeg opmærksom på en fejl på deres hjemmeside (på noget tilsendt dansk materiale henviste de til en side med yderligere materiale, liggende på .dk domænet, men siden åbnede en tysk side). De svarede med et pænt tak og et gavekort til køb på deres hjemmeside.

**Mads:**
Hvordan oplevede du at blive kontaktet på den måde? (og hvordan gjorde de? privat besked, mail, svar på indlæg?)

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
De lavede en åbent svar på indlægget med et hurtigt tak og at de ville rette det, og sendte en privat besked med koden til gavekortet. De fulgte tilmed op på beskeden og spurgte ved senere lejlighed om jeg nu havde modtaget beskeden. Det syntes jeg er meget positivt, at de lytter.
**Mads:**
Så generelt, hvordan vil du sige du syntes om at blive kontaktet af en virksomhed på baggrund af en ytring via et socialt medie?

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Det skal være med samme åbenhed som man ytrede sig, så er det i orden. Dvs. et åbent indlæg besvares direkte så alle kan se svaret. Det burde sikre en sober tone.

**Mads:**
Okay, Kunne du forestille dig, at der var visse situationer hvor du f.eks. ikke ville bryde dig om at en virksomhed tog kontakt på baggrund af noget du har ytret på nettet?

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Hvis en negativ kommentar blev besvaret arrogant, ligegyldig eller ligefrem nedladende/truende.

**Mads:**
Okay, men ikke sådan specifikke områder som hvis man forestillede sig, at man havde diskuteret noget sensitivt?

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Det kan jeg ikke sige.

**Mads:**
Fair nok. Er der nogle medier som du **ikke** ville bryde dig om at blive kontaktet igennem? (mobil, mail, FB kommentar/besked, SMS etc.)

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Hvis det er positivt, kan det både være mundtligt og på skrift, men hvis det er negativt, ville jeg foretrække det på skrift.

**Mads:**
Forståeligt nok. Kunne du finde på, at lave et indlæg eller en statusopdatering el. lign. for specifikt at få en reaktion fra et brand?

**Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:**
Ikke ved at overdrive eller lyve. Men jeg håber på en form for bekræftelse på, at jeg er blevet hørt.

**Mads:**
Okay, super. Jamen jeg tror jeg er nogenlunde ved vejs ende. Er der noget du har lyst til at få med hér til slut, eller har du spørgsmål af nogen art?
Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:
Nej, det tror jeg ikke.

Mads:
Okay. Ihvertfald: Tusind tak Stefan, vi sætter virkelig meget pris på du ville være med - og beklager det gik “lidt” over tid, sådan går det jo når det er spændende ind imellem hehe.. Du har bidraget med en masse!

Stefan McKinnon Høj-Edwards:
Det var så lidt.

Mads:
Det var en stor hjælp :) Du må have en fortsat dejlig dag
Interview med Käte Alis

**Dato:** 15.03.2011
**Interview subjekt:** KP (Käte Alis) ([http://www.trustpilot.dk/Users/211735](http://www.trustpilot.dk/Users/211735))
**Platform:** Trustpilot
**Case:** Interflora
**Interaktion med brand ejer:** Ja

---

**ov ov**

Det er en kedelig oplevelse når man bestille en buket om mandagen til lev. den efterfølgende lardag så at opleve at den først bliver leveret om mandagen !!! så passer det med følgende kort jo ikke når der står tillykke med i morgen ov ov ov

Find nyttig Rapportér til kundeservice

---

**Besvarelse fra Interflora**

22. februar 2011

Hej Käte

Tak for din henvendelse.

Vi kan se at du har lavet din bestilling mandag d. 14.02 til levering d. 21.02.2011.

Blomsterbutikken bekræfter at din bestilling er leveret på den ønskede leveringsdato i bestilling d. 21.02.2011.

Du er meget velkommen til at kontakte Interflora kundeservice på 4343 4747 hvis du har yderligere spørgsmål til din bestilling.

Med venlig hilsen

Steven Kjeld Christensen

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**Steven Kjeld Christensen:**

Hej Käte,

bare for at få afklaret, er ovensående din anmeldelse?

**Käte Alis:**

Ja det er det

**Steven:**

Dejligt. Her er lidt data jeg vil bede dig om at udfylde

**Først vil jeg bede dig udfylde dette:**
Käte Alis:

Navn: Käte Alis
Alder: 50
Postkode: 2650

Steven:
Hvor meget bruger du nettet? (flere gange dagligt, dagligt, 3-6 dage om ugen, 1-3 dage om ugen, sjældnere)

flere gange dagligt

Steven:
Sådan. Det kommer til at foregå sådan at jeg stiller nogle spørgsmål og emner, som vi så kan diskutere.

ok

Steven:
Hvilke sociale netværk tager du del i? (Facebook, Twitter, blog, review sites, andre?)

Käte Alis:
Facebook

Steven:
Og trustpilot går jeg ud fra?

Käte Alis:
ja engang imellem

Steven:
Når du bruger FB og trustpilot er det så normalt at du gør det for at interagere med virksomheder? eller er det kun på Trustpilot du har gjort det?

Käte Alis:
FB er privat brug for det meste og trustpilot mere ang. virksomhedder

Steven:
Når du har skrevet en anmeldelse på Trustpilot. hvilke årsager har fået dig til det? (her tænker jeg negative/positive oplevelser, eller eventuelt muligheden for at interagere med andre omkring din holdning)

Käte Alis:
jeg blev bare s gal da bukten ikke kom til tiden !! men jag har også anmeldt udfra de positive oplevelser jeg har haft

Steven:
Da Interflora kontaktede dig, var det første gang at du er blevet kontaktet af en virksomhed du har anmeldt på Trustpilot?
Käte Alis:
nej

Steven:
De/den andre gange du er blevet kontaktet har det så også været fordi du har givet en dårlig anmeldelse, eller er du blevet kontaktet også når du har givet en positiv anmeldelse?

Käte Alis:
også når jeg har skrevet de positive ting men mest når jeg er negativ

Steven:
Hvad syntes du om at blive kontaktet på baggrund af en anmeldelse?

Käte Alis:
det er ok

Steven:
Er det noget der er med til at ændre din opfattelse af den oplevelse du har haft?

Käte Alis:
nej

Steven:
Hvad skulle de gøre for at ændre din opfattelse af oplevelsen?

Käte Alis:
de skulle måske prøve at være positive og give kunderne ret !!!!!

Steven:
Så når du er blevet kontakter har det virket som om de har forsvaret sig selv eller som om de har villet hjælpe?

Käte Alis:
ja lidt forsvar er de i da jeg køber rigtige mange blomster igemmen interflore skal de ikke fortælle mig at jeg har angivet en forkert dato for min bedste veninde’s fødselsdag

Steven:
Kunne du finde på at skrive en anmeldelse på Trustpilot specifikt for at få en reaktion fra virksomheden (interflora)?

Käte Alis:
ja

Steven:
Hvad forventer du at den reaktion? altså forventer du reel hjælp, rabat, etc?

Käte Alis:
de skulle sende en buket til min veninde med en undskyldning at de havde glemt at sende

**Steven:**
Så i højere grad en tilkendegivelse af deres fejl?

**Käte Alis:**
ja det ville være en flot kundeservice fra deres side

**Steven:**
Nu siger du at du bestiller blomster ofte fra interflora. er det sket flere gange at de har skuffet med hendhold til produkt og service?

**Käte Alis:**
ikke ofte men det hænder at buketten ikke bliver leveret som jeg havde ønsket og når jeg har klaget så får jeg en lang smører med deres betingelser !!!

**Steven:**
Af hvilken årsag bruger du dem så stadig?

**Käte Alis:**
ja nu skal i høre jeg har en super duper blomsterhandler her i Hvidovrer hun tager sig af alle de lokale udsending og så har en en kanon blomsterhandler på Roskildevej han sender lidt mere ud i andre byer men men de skal jo holde ferie mm så må jeg ty til interflora bla. til fyn og jylland

**Steven:**
Så det er simpelthen primært fordi der ikke er andre muligheder?

**Käte Alis:**
ja

**Steven:**
De svar og den interaktion du har haft med interflora har altså ikke ændret din opfattelse eller hvorledes du ønsker at handle med dem igen?

**Käte Alis:**
nej men jeg ville helst være fri :-)

**Steven:**
Den kan jeg da godt forstå (:)

et sidste spørgsmål.

Den interaktion/kontakt som du har fået med virksomheden, hvordan ville du have det hvis den kom på Facebook i stedet (altså i form af det du sagde med at Facebook var til privat brug)?

**Käte Alis:**
det ville være ok med mig jeg skal bare vide at det kan lade sig gøre :-)
Steven:
(:
men hvor på facebook måtte de så kontakte dig (der er jo enten de virksomhedssider som de selv har oprettet, ellers er der din væg eller via beskeder)?

Käte Alis:
øh....ja på min væg og via besked

Steven:
Nu spørger jeg måske lidt ledende, men du ville altså ikke opfatte det som om de invaderede noget privat?

Käte Alis:
nej

Steven:
OK. Lad mig lige tjkke hurtigt om der er noget jeg har glemt.

Käte Alis:
ok

Jeg tror jeg har været igennem det hele. Du skal have rigtig mange tak for din tid og interesse. Vores speciale forventer vi at være færdig med i Maj. Hvis det har din interesse vil vi selvfølgelig meget gerne sende dig det på mail?

Käte Alis:
ja tak det vil jeg meget gerne modtage tak skal i have i vender bare tilbage hvis jeg kan hjælpe jer :-)) held og lykke med jer :-))

Steven:
(: mange tak, og endnu engang tak for din tid.

Hav en fantastisk aften.

Käte Alis:
Tak hej med jer  Käte
Interview med Christian Høst

Dato: 22.03.2011

Interview subjekt: Christian Høst
(http://www.trustpilot.dk/Users/153594)

Platform: Trustpilot

Case: Interflora

Interaktion med brand ejer: Ja

Interflora

1 ud af 5 stjerner - 14. februar 2011

Interflora.dk/Frøken Flora blomsterbutik leverer elendig service!

Jeg har ikke noget til overs for butikken Frøken Flora.

Jeg bestilte blomster + chokolade til min kæreste som skulle leveres d.14/2/valentins dag. Jeg bestilte det i torsdags.


Jeg ringede flere gange til butikken som bare sagde at "de havde ikke regnet med at valentins dag var så populær" WTF ??? Jeg er rystet over at man som virksomhed i den branche kan komme med den umelding ! Jeg ringer så ved 18 tiden for at høre hvad deres plan er og ja den skulle da nok blive leveret i løbet af dagen men hvornår vidste hun ikke. Mit problem var så bare at min kærestes arbejdspælads lukkede ned kl. 17:30 så jeg måtte snakke med rigtige store bogstaver for at få dem til at levere dem til vores hjemmeadresse i stedet for og ja her for små 20 min., dvs. efter kl. 22, ringede det på døren med bestillingen.

Jeg synes simpelthen det er til grin at en blomsterforhandler ikke er ordentlig forberedt på en af de største "blomsterdage" i løbet af året!

Der bliver ringet til Interflora som det første imorgen med en gigantisk klage. Det er sidste gang jeg benytter interflora.dk/Frøken Flora blomsterbutik.
Besvarelse fra Interflora
16. februar 2011

Hej Christian,

Vi må på blomsterbutikkens vegne undskyldte mange gange at de ikke har været bedre forberedt på Valentins dag i år. Men vi må også erkende at det er kommet bag på de fleste at dagen i år har været en så stor succes.

Med venlig hilsen
Interflora Danmark A/S

**Mads Crone Nielsen:**

Hej Christian, velkommen til!

Vi er meget glade for, at du har sagt ja til at hjælpe os med vores speciale og deltage i dette interview. Steven er optaget andetsteds, så det er mig (Mads) der står for det i dag

**Christian Høst:**

Jamen det var så lidt

**Mads:**

Til at starte med, vil jeg lige stille dig lidt demografiske spørgsmål:

**Christian Høst:**

ok
Navn Christian
Alder 27
Postkode 2100

**Mads:**

Hvor meget bruger du nettet?

**Christian Høst:**

Mangler der ordet ”tid”? hvis ja så bruger jeg nettet flere gange dagligt
Mads:
Der skulle måske have stået “hvor ofte” i virkeligheden, det er et spørgsmål om frekvens mest.

Christian Høst:
Jamen jeg bruger nettet hver eneste dag, flere/mange gange om dagen.

Mads:
Ok. Bruger du mest computeren, eller bruger du f.eks. en smartphone også?

Christian Høst:
I de 8 timer jeg er på job der er smartphonen gemt væk så der er det computeren, men lige så snart jeg har fri så er det nemmest bare at bruge smartphonen.

Mads:
Cool. I de følgende spørgsmål kommer ordet “brand” til at indgå ofte. I denne sammenhæng er det ment som et udtryk for en organisation, virksomheds, service eller produkts identitet. altså din holdning til brandet.

Christian Høst:
OK.

Mads:
Hvilke sociale netværk tager du del i? (Facebook, Twitter, blog, review sites, andre?)

Christian Høst:
Alle har vel en facebookprofil så den kommer jeg ikke udenom. Jeg har oprettet en twitter men bruger den aldrig. blogs osv bruger jeg slet ikke.

Mads:
Hvad med ting som forums og den slags?

Christian Høst:
Jamen hvis jeg sidder og skal undersøge et emne/produkt etc så kan jeg godt finde på at benytte forums. Ikke for selv at deltagere men for at finde frem til andres syn på tingene.

Mads:
Så du deltager ikke normalt specielt meget på den slags sider? Du fokuserer mest på at indhente information, frem for at ytre dig f.eks.?

**Christian Høst:**

Ja det kan man i og for sig godt sige. Er der noget jeg mangler svar på eller undrer mig over så vil jeg selvfølgelig deltage i debatten, men såfremt mine behov bliver dækket af det der i forvejen står skrevet så har jeg ikke brug for at deltage i debatcirkusset.

**Mads:**

Hehe fair nok. Det kan også godt være temmelig indespist de fleste steder, vil du sige at holdninger til brands ikke indgår i din normale interaktion på disse sider så?

**Christian Høst:**

Både og... hvis jeg har haft en super positiv/negativ oplevelse så kan jeg godt finde på at luft min mening lidt ligesom med interflorasagen hvor jeg var en smule småbitter, men har også lavet anmeldelse af collshop som var rigtig positiv. Men for det meste så behøver jeg ikke luft min mening omkring diverse brands for jeg har den holdning jeg nu engang har og det kan et så indespist ”publikum” sgu ikke gøre så meget ved. + det kommer heller ikke altid lige dem ved.

**Mads:**

Ok. hvad ville du sige hovedsageligt er årsag til, at du vælger at udtrykke dine holdninger (når du gjør)? At hjælpe andre, få hjælp, advare andre, ”ramme” virksomheden, bare for at komme ”ud med det” eller lign?

**Christian Høst:**

For det meste er det for at hjælpe andre i og med at jeg selv finder det utrolig hjælpesome at kunne læse den slags og dermed få et indblik i hvordan den reelle situation er. MEEEN det er på en måde også lidt for at ramme virksomheden for at få en reaktion fra deres side af. Er man nu blevet behandlet uretfærdigt så forventer man en reaktion fra virksomheden, som måske kommer med en løsning på problemet.

Har intet behov for ”bare” at komme ud med det, det går uover kæresten eller vennerne istedet for at skrive det på nettet.

**Mads:**

Haha interessant :) forventer du nogensinde, at ejerne af det brand du omtaler reagerer på indlæg – altså deltager i debatten? Eller forventer du en reaktion andetsteds?

**Christian Høst:**
Forventer helt klart at virksomheden svarer på mit indlæg, men ja erfaring fortæller mig dog at det ikke altid er sådan. Men som sagt så ønsker man jo at ramme dem så andre kan se at de har lavet en fejl og på den måde kan man få afhjulpet sin egen situation ved at sætte virksomheden i dårligt lys.

Er det en positiv anmeldelse så er det ikke altid et svar man søger men blot muligheden for at fortælle andre om hvor god en oplevelse man har haft.

**Mads:**

Fair nok, har du oplevet at en virksomhed svarer på dit indlæg? (positivt eller negativt indlæg)

**Christian Høst:**

Ja altså sagen med Interflora... De svarede på mit indlæg. Det tyndeste svar nogensinde men de svarede. Jeg synes det var så meget til grin at jeg simpelthen ikke gad bruge mere tid på sådan en flok tosser. Det har så bare resulteret i at jeg undgår at bruge deres site.

Har så lavet et par andre positive indlæg men der har jeg ikke modtaget noget svar. Det kunne måske være en ide at virksomheden lige skrev tak i det mindste.

**Mads:**

Så det har i virkeligheden nærmere skadet Interfloras sag, at de svarede på indlægget i første omgang?

**Christian Høst:**

Absolut...! De har erkendt at de har lavet en fejl, men at de så i samme indlæg kommer med et hav af undskyldninger, det er sgu lidt sløjt! Indrøm dog at i har lavet en kæmpe fejl, giv noget kompensation eller i det mindste en oprigtig undskyldning. Kundepleje !

**Mads:**

Så hvis de nu havde håndteret sagen bedre, og f.eks. givet en stor undskyldning og en kompensation osv., så ville du overveje at handle der en anden gang?

**Christian Høst:**

Uden tvivl... Alle kan da lave fejl men hvis man ikke rigtig vil stå ved dem ja så har man et problem. Men havde de nu bare være lidt mere kundeminded så ville jeg måske bare trække på skuldrene og sige Fair nok, det kan ske. Men det meres dårlige undskyldninger det tricker mig så meget at man bliver rasende.!
Mads:


Christian Høst:

Nej det ville ikke begrænse det. Jeg synes det er perfekt at der findes steder som truspilot hvor man kan komme med sin ærlige mening om den enkelte virksomhed. Hvorimod på virksomhedens hjemmeside står der kun historier om tilfredse kunder (selv på min egen arbejdsplads), så det begrænser det på ingen måde.

Mht til statusopdateringer på Facebook så vil jeg ikke sige at jeg forventer en reaktion. Det er fedt når der kommer en reaktion og man nærmest kan starte en lille debat eller hvad man nu skal kalde det, men forventer det skam ikke. Nogen gange skal der bare lukkes lort ud jo.

Mads:

Opsøger du selv virksomheders sider på facebook for at skrive noget/diskutere direkte med virksomheden?

Christian Høst:

Jeg har faktisk ikke benyttet mig af den slags på facebook. I starten virkede det sgu lidt utroværdigt for mig eftersom jeg så facebook som noget for forholdsvis unge mennesker men ja det er jo nærmest blevet hele familien der er med på FB så måske kunne det blive en mulighed i fremtiden.

Mads:

Man kan vel sige, at det er en mulighed for at gå direkte til ”kilden” hvis man vil være sikker på en reaktion - men det kommer sikkert an på éns adfærd på facebook, det er jo forskelligt fra bruger til bruger antager jeg :)

Christian Høst:

Ja ja helt enig. ingen tvivl der. Men det kunne være fedt at kunne stille spørgsmål, komme med sure opstød, positive indlæg osv, men at virksomheden måske så havde en ansat der så kunne sidde og kommentere/løse de forskellige ting uden alt for lang svarfrist. Jeg har
mange gange svært ved at få ringet til diverse ting og sager i løbet af sådan en arbejdsdag og så kunne det da være fedt at man bare lige kunne skrives det på FB og få svar i løbet af dagen.

**Mads:**

Er der nogle medier som du decideret ikke ville bryde dig om at blive kontaktet igennem? (mobil, mail, FB kommentar/besked, etc.) - hvis du nu skriver noget på - lad os sige trustpilot - og virksomheden finder dine kundedata, og ringer til dig/skriver dig en mail eller sms el.lign.?

**Christian Høst:**

Jeg synes ikke sms holder i denne sammenhæng. Det bliver sgu for upersonligt. En mail ville til sin del gå nogenlunde. og telefonen ville nok være det mest optimale. Jeg prøvede faktisk en lignende situation med Onfone hvor det sejlede fuldstændig i opstartsfasen, hvor de så sendte mig en mail hvor jeg skulle sige hvordan jeg mente starten havde været. De ringede op 1-2 dage efter og vi fik en snak og samtidig blev mit abm 100 kr billigere. så det med at man får en personlig kontakt som man kan “tage og føle på” det gør det hele lidt mere troværdigt.

**Mads:**

Personlig note: Det er sgu da egentlig en meget fed måde at gøre sådan noget på? Det viser da de om ikke andet så lytter til hvad du har at sige, og samtidigt viser dig at de bekymrer sig om dig som kunde.

**Christian Høst:**

Det har så også gjort at jeg har valgt at bibeholde abm.

**Mads:**

Værld at tage med, hvis man som virksomhed oplever problemer :) Jeg tror jeg er nogenlunde ved vejs ende. Er der noget du har lyst til at få med hér til slut, eller har du spørgsmål af nogen art?

**Christian Høst:**

Hvad er det helt konkret for en opgave i skal lave og på hvilket niveau ?

**Mads:**

Jamen det er vores speciale vi skriver. Vi læser hhv. cand.merc.KOM og cand.merc. med speciale i Strategic Market Creation, så det er sidste etape inden virkeligheden banker på :)

**Christian Høst:**
Argh okey... synes det er super interessant enme. Sidder selv og knokler med min eksamensopgave i kommunikation og formidling og er inde på lidt af det samme.

Men jeg har ikke rigtig mere på hjertet. Håber i kan få lidt ud af dette interview ellers må i lige sige til så hjælper jeg gerne igen.

**Mads:**

Tusind tak Christian, vi sætter virkelig meget pris på du ville være med - og beklager det gik “lidt” over tid, sådan går det jo når det er spændende ind imellem hehe.. Du har bidraget med en masse!

**Christian Høst:**


**Mads:**

Mange tak og i lige måde,

tak
Interview med Kristian Just Iversen

Dato: 22.03.2011
Interview subjekt: Kristian Just Iversen
(hte://www.trustpilot.dk/Users/91268)
Platform: Trustpilot
Case: Bærbar.dk
Interaktion med brand ejer: Nej, der har ikke været svar fra Pixum.dk

Professionel behandling - også ved returnering
Jeg bestilte et batteri, som viste sig, at være det forkerte (fordi jeg ikke er mester i at aflæse modelnumre åbenbart).

Med hjælp fra supporten fik jeg tilsendt alle e-mails igen som jeg skulle bruge.

Selvom jeg derefter formåede at fucke returneringsprocessen så grundigt op som man kunne, så fik jeg en utrolig professionel og hurtig behandling. Bedre end den behandling man generelt oplever i en fysisk butik, endda.

Jeg bestilte herefter det rigtige batteri efter yderligere købsvejledning fra bærbar.com over telefonen.

Hurtig levering, god betjening, hurtig refundering og hurtig levering ved bestilling nr. 2 giver topkarakter.

1. Indledning og demografi

Steven Kjeld Christensen:
Hej Kristian

Vi er meget glade for, at du har sagt ja til at hjælpe os med vores speciale og deltage i dette interview. Mads er optaget andetsted i dag, så det er mig (Steven) der står for det i dag =)

Lige for at være sikker; er ovenstående indlæg på trustpilot.dk det du har skrevet?
Kristian Just Iversen:

Steven:
det er intet problem. Det er vel dig der gør os en tjeneste (:)

Nedenfor dit indlæg er der nogle demografiske spørgsmål. kan jeg lokke dig til at svare på dem?

Kristian Just Iversen:
Yes.

Navn: Kristian Just Iversen
Alder: 21 år
Postnummer: 5000

2. Brug af sociale medier

Steven:
Hvor ofte bruger du nettet? (flere gange dagligt, dagligt, 3-6 dage om ugen, 1-3 dage om ugen, sjældnere)

Kristian Just Iversen:
Flere gange dagligt.

Steven:
Hvilke sociale netværk tager du del i? (Facebook, Twitter, blog, review sites, andre?)

Kristian Just Iversen:
Facebook, (trustpilot), (newz.dk - hvis det kan kaldes socialt netværk, tvivler jeg lidt på)

Steven:
Vi kan omformulere til sociale medier.

Kristian Just Iversen:
Ok, så det er altså også fora?

Steven:
Jep

Kristian Just Iversen:
Så ryger amino.dk også lige med på listen. Det må være dem jeg følger med i og deltager i i ny og næ.
Steven:
I de følgende spørgsmål kommer ordet “brand” til at indgå ofte. I denne
sammenhæng er det ment som et udtryk for en organisations, virksomheds, service
eller produkts identitet. altså din holdning til brandet. OK

Indgår holdninger til virksomheders brand i din normale interaktion på disse sociale
medier?
(hvilke gør det og hvilke ikke)

Kristian Just Iversen:
Kan du uddybe? Jeg er ikke helt med.

Steven:
Som du foreksempel har gjort på trustpilot. Der har du givet udtryk for din holdning til
den service du fik. er det noget som du gør andre steder end trustpilot?

Kristian Just Iversen:
Nej, jeg skriver ikke om brands på facebook, amino eller newz. Kun trustpilot.

3. Årsag til at bidrage med indhold

Steven:
OK. På trustpilot hvad får dig til at udtrykke din holdning til et brand via et indlæg?
(negative, positive oplevelser, andre)

Kristian Just Iversen:
Jeg udtrykker mine holdninger til brands på trustpilot for at hjælpe andre forbrugere
med at beslutte sig for, om de skal gøre brug af en virksomhed.

Steven:
Men er det så udelukkende når du har haft en positiv oplevelse eller også når du har
haft en dårlig? (der er også brugere så som “chefen”. med ham virker det som om at
han skriver et review uandset hvilken oplevelse han har haft.)

Kristian Just Iversen:
Jeg tror ikke, at jeg har købt noget over Internet, hvor jeg har været udsat for dårlig
service, så det har jeg lidt svært ved at svare på. Jeg må sige, at jeg overvejende
anmelder virksomheder, hvis det gik godt, men hvis en virksomhed behandler mig
dårligt, så vil jeg ikke afvise, at jeg kunne finde på at skrive en (negativ) anmeldelse.

Steven:
ok (: Hvis du skal tænke tilbage, har dine anmeldelser så være inde for en bestemt
type af virksomheder/services/produkter? altså er det mest kunde service du har
anmeldt eller er det også kvaliteten af fx en sko eller et tv?

Kristian Just Iversen:
Jeg anmelder virksomheder på baggrund af det de laver - dvs. hvis det bare er en
handelsvirksomhed som videresælger andre producenters produkter, så anmelder
jeg ikke produktet. Jeg har lige set hvilke anmeldelser jeg har lavet, og her har det
været blandet - jeg har både anmeldt kundeservice/leveringsservice, men jeg har også anmeldt et produkt (fra unoeuro).

4. Reaktion hos andre brugere og virksomheder

**Steven:**
Når du så har skrevet en andmeldelse, oplever du så at der kommer kontakt eller reaktioner fra andre brugere?

**Kristian Just Iversen:**
Nej, det mener jeg ikke, at jeg har oplevet.

**Steven:**
Hvad med fra virksomhederne som du har anmeldt?

**Kristian Just Iversen:**
Nej, det har jeg heller ikke oplevet. (Virksomheder besvarer oftest, hvis de har fået en dårlig anmeldelse, og jeg har som sagt mest anmeldt positivt)

**Steven:**
Du skriver lidt længere oppe at du skriver anmeldelser for at hjælpe andre med at træffe beslutninger om hvilke virksomheder de skal handle med. Kan du komme i tanke om andre årsager til at du skriver anmeldelser?

**Kristian Just Iversen:**
Ja, for at rose virksomheden - hvis de har opført sig pænt, så er det “en belønning” at give dem en god anmeldelse og vice/versa. Jeg kommer ikke umiddelbart i tanke om andre grunde.

5. Foretastede reaktion ved kontakt fra virksomhed

**Steven:**
Det giver jo også meget god mening (:)

Nu er du godt nok ikke blevet kontaktet, men hvordan ville du have det med at blive kontaktet af de virksomheder du anmelder?

**Kristian Just Iversen:**
Det ville jeg have det fint med. Hvis det skyldes, at jeg har lavet en dårlig anmeldelse, så har de naturligvis ret til at forklare deres side af sagen til de mennesker der kan læse på fx trustpilot.dk.
Hvis jeg bliver kontaktet udenom fx trustpilot, altså fx direkte på mail, så er det også ok (især hvis de vil rette op på noget dårligt de har gjort).

**Steven:**
Du svarer jo næste selv på alle mine næste spørgsmål (:)

**Kristian Just Iversen:**
hehe super :-}
Steven:
Men, det du siger det er at de godt må kontakte dig på en anden platform end den du har anmeldt dem på, så længe at det er for at hjælpe?

Kristian Just Iversen:
Nej, de må også gerne kontakte mig på en anden platform, hvis de bare føler ret til at forsøge sig selv (ikke nødvendigvis for at hjælpe).

Steven:
Ok, så du opfatter det som en dialog hvor også virksomhederne må deltagne på lige fod?

jeg spørger fordi der er andre der har udtrykt at de mener at virksomhederne skal give deres kunder ret.

Kristian Just Iversen:
Ja, jeg opfatter det som en dialog. Jeg synes ikke altid, at kunden har ret.

Steven:
Syntes du at der gælder de samme regler for hvordan hendholdsvis brugerne og virksomhederne må udtrykke sig? (eller må brugerne godt "svine" virksomheden til og så forvente et sobert svar)

Kristian Just Iversen:
Det ville ikke klæde virksomheder at svine kunder til, men omvendt så klæder det heller ikke de brugere som sviner virksomhederne til. Jeg synes, at der skal gælde ens “regler”, selvom det langt fra er tilfældet p.t.

Steven:
Ville du se negativt på en virksomhed der svare “ikke sobert” på en ikke sober anmeldelse?

Kristian Just Iversen:
Ja. Og jeg har også “set negativt” på virksomheder i sådan nogle situtationer, hvor jeg er kommet forbi dem. Bl.a. engang jeg med min kæreste læste nogle kommentarer på trendsales.dk fra en virksomhed, som ikke forstod hvordan man skulle snakke.

Steven:
Så selvom der givet vis “bør” gælde de samme regler, så mister virksomheden noget hvis de ikke opfører sig pænt uandset situationen?

Kristian Just Iversen:
Helt sikkert.

6. Afslutning

Steven:
Det var alt hvad jeg havde af spørgsmål.

Mange tak for hjælpen.
Har du nogen spørgsmål eller kommentarer?

Kristian Just Iversen:
Det var så lidt. Nej, jeg har ikke nogle spørgsmål :-) Håber I kan bruge det.

Steven:
Det er meget brugbart. Du skal have rigtig mange tak for din hjælp.

Kristian Just Iversen:
Velbekomme. Du må ha’ det.

Steven:
Og i lige måde
Interview med Rasmus Malver

Dato: 16.03.2011
Platform: Facebook
Case: Danske Bank
Interaktion med brand ejer: Nej, men svar fra andre brugere af samme page

Facebook.com/danskebank
Rasmus Malver – 21. feb 20:59 (intet svar)
Jeg vil hellere have fuld understøttelse af netbanken i en browser på OSX. Før NemID var det kun Chrome som netbanken ikke havde fundamentale issues med. Efter NemID duer alle browsere kun halvt. Hvis jeg vil have informationer er Chrome valget. Vil jeg overføre penge skal jeg bruge Firefox. Supporterne ved det, men siger at de ikke ved hvad udviklerne laver.

Peter Møller Jensen
Hej Rasmus. Firefox fungerer upåklageligt hos mig.
22 February at 09:02

Rasmus Malver
Cool. Kan du bruge frem & tilbage-knapperne hhv. på siderne og i browseren?
22 February at 09:09

Peter Møller Jensen
I min lyntest af netbanken, med fokus på frem & tilbage-knapper oplevede jeg ingen problemer i Firefox.
22 February at 10:56

Rasmus Malver

Så mangler kun -webkit.
22 February at 11:27

Mads Crone Nielsen
Hej Rasmus,
Vi er to studerende der er ved at skrive et speciale omkring virksomheders interaktion med brugere på nettet. Vi har set dit meget interessante indlæg ovenfor, og vil høre om du kunne lokkes til et kort interview på skrift over nettet?

Det kommer til at tage ca. 10 minutter, foregår som en slags chat og vil handle om din brug af medier som facebook og din oplevelse af virksomheders brug af det samme (dvs. det er ikke specifikt i forhold til din oplevelse)

Alt er selvfølgelig fortroligt og vi har intet samarbejde med Danske Bank. Hvis du har lyst, kan du enten svare på dette indlæg, sende mig en besked eller sende os en mail på BrandingThesis@gmail.com. Interviewet kommer til at foregå når du har tid.

MVH
Mads og Steven

1. Indledning og demografiske spørgsmål

Steven Kjeld Christensen:
Hej Rasmus,
Vi er meget glade for at du vil hjælpe os med vores speciale og deltage i dette interview. Mads er på arbejde, så det er mig (Steven) der interviewer dig.

Lige for at få det på det rene, er ovenstående indlæg på Danske Banks Facebook Page, det du har skrevet/startet?

Rasmus Malver:
Ja, det er mit indlæg.

Steven:
Dejlig. neden for er der nogle hurtige spørgsmål.

Først vil jeg bede dig svare på nogle demografiske spørgsmål.

Rasmus Malver:
Navn: Rasmus Malver
Alder: 26
Postkode: 2200

Steven:
Hvor ofte bruger du nettet? (flere gange dagligt, dagligt, 3-6 dage om ugen, 1-3 dage om ugen, sjældnere)
Rasmus Malver:
Konstant. Flere gange i timen. Kun afbrudt af søvn og bad. Faktisk ville jeg også bruge det, mens jeg var i bad, hvis jeg havde et badekar :-)

Steven:
Sådan. så meget aktiv bruger (: plastik pose om iphone...

Rasmus:
Mja, Android, og den bør kunne tåle det ;-)

Steven:
Jeg er lykkelig for du bruger Android. mental high five : -D

I de følgende spørgsmål kommer ordet “brand” til at indgå ofte. I dennesammenhæng er det ment som et udtryk for en organisations, virksomheds, service eller produkts identitet. altså din holdning til brandet.

Lad os komme igang.

2. Brug af blogging, microblogging og review sites

Steven:
Hvilke sociale netværk tager du del i? (Facebook, Twitter, blog, review sites, andre?)

Rasmus:

Steven:
Alle medier hvor der ingår social interaktion med andre brugere kan på sin vis karakteriseres som social media, men bare dem du bruger mest.

Steven:
Indgår holdninger til brands i din normale interaktion på disse?

Rasmus:
Ja. Jeg har altid haft den holdning, at man hellere skal sige det højt, hvis man er utilfreds eller tilfreds med en service eller et produkt. Da jeg var 12 år skulle der skæres ned i mit fritidshjem, så jeg gik ned på rådhuset, og bankede på borgmesterens dør. Vi tog en halv times snak, og det endte med at nedskæringen blev droppet. Siden har internettet gjort det endnu lettere at gå i dialog med folk om den slags.
3. Årsagen til at bidrage med indhold

**Steven:**
Det er en fantastisk holdning at have. hvad får dig til at udtrykke din holdning til et brand? tænker negative, positive, overraskende oplevelser?

**Rasmus:**
Tak. Det stammer til dels fra “gør mod andre som du vil have at de osv.”-konceptet. Hvis mine kolleger, min chef, mine venner eller andre er pissetrætte af at jeg altid gør et eller andet, eller hvis de elsker når jeg gør noget, så vil jeg gerne vide det, så jeg kan gøre det mere eller mindre. På samme måde prøver jeg at forbedre produkter / virksomheder / verden ved at fortælle den hvad jeg synes om den.

**Steven:**
Så det er ikke kun når der er en ydellse du har betalt for at du udtrykker dig (omend det er med opmærksomhed eller penge), men også hvis det er en bestemt situation eller oplevelse?

**Rasmus:**

Men prøv at tænke over det. Jeg kan umuligt have været den første som oplevede den slags. Alligevel kom min mail som en overraskelse for cheferne. Folk skal være bedre til at komme med feedback.

**Steven:**
Jeg tror så absolut ikke det er alle der har overskud til det, eller overhoved har den tro at de kan gøre en forskel.

**Rasmus:**
Det har du ret i. Folk tror ikke på den med forskellen.

4+5. Forventede reaktion hos andre brugere og ejerne af brandet

**Steven:**
Du har allerede fortalt at du udtrykker dig for at “ændre verden”, men er der andre årsager? jeg tænker iform af opmærksomhed fra andre
brugere, eller fællesskabet i at stå sammen om eller mod et brand eller oplevelse? Abstrakt spørgsmål, jeg ved det godt.

Rasmus:
Godt spørgsmål. Jeg tænker. Altså, det er jo ikke for få opmærksomhed, eller så meget for min egen skyld. Men mennesket er et flokdyr. LGBT-sagen er et godt eksempel. Jeg var 22 før jeg sprang ud, og i min barndom havde jeg svært ved at finde andre med den slags overvejelser. I dag er det meget normalt at springe ud som 13-14-årig, fordi der nu findes communities som boyfriend.dk og facebook, hvor man let kan komme i kontakt med andre. Også selvom de bor i en anden del af verden. På samme måde kan man finde andre som har haft en dårlig oplevelse med DSB, fortælle politikere at NemID er oldnordisk, støtte op om kampen mod racisme, følge med i næste afsnit af Glee (halvandet år før det er tilgængeligt på lovlig vis i Danmark :-S) osv..

Så ja. Fællesskabet er en vigtig grund. Men jeg gør det lige så meget for andres skyld, som for min egen. Jeg har altid råbt højt (både i overført betydning og bogstaveligt), og har til gengæld også taget mine slag. Det er ikke alle som som tør / gider det, så de finder hjælp i at ”slutte sig til” typer som mig på online fællesskaber. Det er nok en meget god parring.

Steven:
Så, som du så fint skrev i starten ”do onto others...”.

Rasmus:
Jep. Jeg har haft god opbakning, eks. da jeg blev diagnosticeret med kræft, og har til gengæld givet opbakning til bl.a. andengenerationsindvandrere som har det svært i den danske debat.

Steven:
Når du udtrykker dig er det som normalt at du får en eller anden reaktion fra andre brugere, eller har du oplevet indlæg hvor der ingen reaktion var overhovedet?

Rasmus:
Ork, der findes masser af indlæg, hvor der ikke kommer respons. Men bare fordi der ikke bliver svaret, betyder det ikke, at det ikke er blevet læst. Nogle gange kan det bare være svært for folk at finde den rigtige reaktion. For nyligt var der mange af de tilfælde, da Tøger Seidenfaden døde. Mange (inkl. mig selv) skrev korte mindeord som statusopdateringer. Men kan man ”synes godt om” en nekrolog? Jeg gjorde det hos en veninde, som reagerede kraftigt, fordi hun kunne misforstå det som glæde over hans dødsfald, snarere end ”jeg er enig” i hendes mindeord.

Steven:
RIP, den gode Tøger. Gør det forskel om der er en reaktion eller ej, i forhold til om du udtrykker dig om emnet eller på samme fora igen?

**Rasmus:**

**Steven:**
Så muligheden for direkte svar, eller kundeservice er også noget du har brugt sociale medier til?

**Rasmus:**
Mja, jeg vil hellere kalde det “muligheden for at råbe de rigtige mennesker op”. For når jeg har delt problemet med Danske Banks netbank med deres stakkels kundeservicelinje, så har de jo ingen forståelse for problemet. Der er en gammel internet-joke om at spørge en kundeservicekonsulent om de kan se en anden konsulent i lokalet, som har en stof-pingvin på sit bord, og hvis de kan, om man må tale med ham i stedet. (i betydningen linux = pingvin)

**Steven:**
HEHE, i get it (: 

Så når du udtrykker dig på fx FB, så er det for at de på den måde ikke kan løbe fra deres ansvar?

**Rasmus:**
Eller, nej, overhovedet ikke. Det er bare et mere nørd-venligt miljø end en hotline. Jeg kunne også have fundet på at få fat på det direkte nummer til en af udviklerne, bare for at tage den med ham. Når min avis ikke kommer, taler jeg med Politikens abonnements-direktør. Det der med at spise kunderne af med en stakkels student med et service-manuskript har jeg aldrig været så meget til :-) Jeg er the customer from hell.

**Steven:**
hehe. Har det så bedre oplevelser med at udtrykke dig om problemmer online end direkte med kundeservice / kundeservice chef etc.?

**Rasmus:**
Alle oplevelser er bedre end kontakt med kundeservice. Hvis vi tager chef-niveaulet ind i spillet, så er det cirka det samme. Det andet fedue ved at gøre det på en skriftligt, social platform er, at kundeservicefolket kan finde en kollega som kender svaret / problemet, og at andre kunder / brugere / borgere kan fortælle om deres erfaringer med det samme. I det konkrete tilfælde var Danske Bank slet ikke inde over svaret. Det var bare en anden kunde som fortalte, at de havde fået fixet Firefox.
Steven:
Der er gode muligheder i det i hvert fald. et todelt spørgsmål. når du udtrykker dig online. Oplever du mest at det er negative eller positive indlæg der resulterer i en reaktion fra andre brugere?

og det samme spørgsmål i forhold til ejerne af brandet istedet for brugere?

Du må gerne kalde det feedback, spørgsmålsende er mest lavet for at alle kan være med (:)

Rasmus:
Jeg har ikke kunnet udlede nogen øget tendens til reaktioner, ift. positive / negative ting. Ift. brand- ejere, så er de danske virksomheder og politikerer håbløst bagefter. Så det sker sjældent at der overhovedet kommer noget. Case in point: som nævnt gad / opdagede Danske Bank ikke min anke over den manglende understøttelse af -webkit (safari og chrome).

Steven:
Hvad hvis du overvejer en ting som grundigheden / dybden af et indlæg? altså oplever du at du får bedre respons på et langt grundigt indlæg end på et kort hurtigt?

Rasmus:
Ja, men snarere omvendt. Der er næsten altid mere respons på korte indlæg end på lange. Slf. afhængigt af målgruppen, men som udgangspunkt er folk på min alder (og yngre) for dovne til at læse mere end 2-3 sætninger. Mig selv inklusiv.

Steven:
go og gør dette sig gældende på alle medier/platforme eller snakker vi FB?

Rasmus:

Steven:
heheh, Kforum - bedre kendt som kaffeklubben

Rasmus:
Ja, de er gamle af sind. Meget radikale, fsva. ”på den ene side, på den anden side, men hvis vi kigger på den ene side igen, så …”

Steven:
Har lige et par spørgsmål mere og så er vi der.
Når du udtrykker din holdning til et brand/service etc. har du så på forhånd gjort dig klart hvilken reaktion du forventer eller kunne tænke dig fra hendholdsvis andre brugere og ejerne af brandet?

**Rasmus:**


**Steven:**
Hvad vi vi tager provokation ud af ligningen og istedet snakker reaktioner så som at andre brugere har samme holdning og giver dig ret, eller har oplevet det samme som du?

**Rasmus:**
Hmm.. Stadig nej, for jeg er jo lidt spændt på, om andre har det samme problem / oplevelse. Jeg er også positiv engang imellem, så en konkret historie er driveon.net. De har et godt produkt som hedder fyraftensbil, hvor man lejer en bil fra 16.00 - 9.00 med 75 km, som man kan hente på Nyropsgade. Skide fedt koncept til folk der bor i byen, så sidst jeg havde brugt det, skrev jeg en statusopdatering om det. Jeg ville tagge firmaet, men fandme om de havde en facebook page?! Jeg overvejede at kommissionere en stenhugger til at riste runer til dem i stedet.

I det tilfælde forventede jeg ingen reaktion fra hverken brugere eller firmaet, men ville bare lige minde firmaet om at de gør det godt, og fortælle venner og bekendte at jeg kan anbefale produktet. Hvis der var kommet reaktioner, havde det nok bare været “likes”.

6+7. Reaktion ved kontakt fra ejerne af brandet og fremtidig mulig kontakt

**Steven:**
OK, et sidste spørgsmål, hvor går din grænse for hvordan ejere af brands må kontakte dig? her tænker jeg, skal det være samme
platform/medie/funktion, eller må de godt skrive en mail til dig om nået du har skrevet på FB - andre muligheder også selvfølgelig.

**Rasmus:**
De må ikke banke på min dør kl. 10 om søndagen med et kamerahold. Ellers er der ikke så mange grænser. Egentlig må de generelt ikke banke på min dør med et kamerahold. Men især ikke om morgenen. Jeg synes at man selv sætter sine grænser, så I couldn’t care less om jeg ringer til folk kl. 3, 4 eller 5 om natten, for de kunne for helvede bare have slukket telefonen.

Har stadig en bøf med Politikens kriminalredaktør, fordi jeg engang vækkede ham 3.30, da han lige havde fået en skrigende møgunge. Fortryder det stadig ikke, for det var kl. 3.30 hans avis var klar fra trykken.

8. Afslutning

**Steven:**
Sådan (:

**Rasmus:**
Cool. Håber at I kan bruge det.

**Steven:**
Mange tak for hjælpen. har du nogen kommentarer eller spørgsmål?

**Rasmus:**
Bliver resultatet offentligt tilgængeligt, så jeg kan se det? Altså af hele projektet. Jeg er ikke så interesseret i mit eget interview :) Var her jo selv.

**Steven:**
(: Det er da planen i hvert fald. Hvis du har interesse i at se vores afhandling bagefter, så skal du være mere end velkommen.

**Rasmus:**
Cool! Send et link ;-

**Steven:**
Jeg sender et link eller dokumentet på mail når det er færdigt.

vi forventer at være færdige i løbbet af maj og gå til eksamen i juni.

**Rasmus:**
God fornøjelse! Jeg smutter igen.

**Steven:**
Mange tak for hjælpen og tak for støtten. hav en fantastisk dag.

**Rasmus:**
ILM
Interview med Tine X

**Dato:** 19.03.2011  
**Interview subjekt:** Tine X ([http://www.trustpilot.dk/Users/317041](http://www.trustpilot.dk/Users/317041))  
**Platform:** Trustpilot  
**Case:** Pixum.dk  
**Interaktion med brand ejer:** Nej, der har ikke været svar fra Pixum.dk

### Julegaver til nytårsaften?


Dertil kommer, at Pixum tilbyder som "en ekstra service" at tage varen retur og betale tilbage... Det manglede da bare! Men så står jeg jo lige fedt.

Den eneste grund til, jeg har givet dem 2 og ikke 1 stjerner, er at kvaliteten af varen er udmærket og jeg tidligere har modtaget mine bestillinger uden ventetid - men nu er julegaver en del vigtigere end personlige bestillinger i mine øjne, og jeg har besluttet at jeg fremover vil bestille hos andre firmaer end Pixum.

For at samle op: Rigtig dårlig oplevelse, endte med at stå uden julegaver overhovedet, jeg skulle selv kontakte Pixum for at finde ud af gaverne ikke ville komme som lovet, hvilket resulterede i, at jeg ikke kunne nå at finde erstatnings-gaver. Nu går der mindst en måned før jeg ser min familie igen, og så er det bare akąvet at komme: "her er jeres julegaver". God jul!

Så køb ikke hos pixum hvis du har en tids-deadline du gerne vil overholde.

1. Indledning og demografiske spørgsmål

**Mads Crone Nielsen:**  
Hej Tine
Vi er meget glade for, at du har sagt ja til at hjælpe os med vores speciale og deltage i dette interview. Steven er optaget andetsted i dag, så det er mig (Mads) der står for det i dag =)

Lige for at være sikker; er ovenstående indlæg på trustpilot.dk det du har skrevet?

Tine X:
Det er mig :)

Mads:
Perfekt :)
Først vil jeg bede dig om at svare på nogle demografiske spørgsmål:

Tine X:
Navn: Tine Kristensen
Alder: 18
Postnummer: 8300

Mads:
Super. Hvor ofte bruger du nettet? (flere gange dagligt, dagligt, 3-6 dage om ugen, 1-3 dage om ugen, sjældnere)

Tine X:
Hele tiden .. Så den første - flere gange dagligt

Mads:
Hehe aktiv bruger, perfekt :)

Bruger du mest computeren, eller bruger du f.eks. en smartphone også?

Tine X:
Computeren. Har ikke selv smartphone, men det hænder at jeg bruger venners telefoner, hvis ikke der er computer til rådighed.

2. Brug af blogging, microblogging og review sites

Mads:
Ok. I de følgende spørgsmål kommer ordet “brand” til at indgå ofte. I denne sammenhæng er det ment som et udtryk for en organisations, virksomheds, service eller produktets identitet. altså din holdning til brandet.

Lad os komme igang med hoveddelen:

Hvilke sociale netværk tager du del i? (Facebook, Twitter, blog, review sites, andre?)
Tine X:
Facebook, hundegalleri, diverse chat-sites.. Det var vist det.

Mads:
Ok. Indgår holdninger til brands i din normale interaktion på disse? Hér tænker jeg f.eks. på ytringer omkring firmaer, holdninger til forskellige produkter osv.

Tine X:
Ja, oftest diskuterer jeg frem og tilbage på de forskellige sider. Eks. hvis jeg har købt nye ting til min hund fra forskellige steder, deler jeg erfaringer og kvalitetsholdninger med dem. Eller hvis jeg har haft en dårlig oplevelse deler jeg det med dem jeg kender. Eller hvis jeg har tvivlsspørgsmål til hvor jeg skal købe hvad.

3. Årsagen til at bidrage med indhold

Mads:
Så hvad ville du sige hovedsageligt er årsag til, at du vælger at udtrykke dine holdninger? At hjælpe andre, få hjælp, bare for at komme “ud med det” eller lign?

Tine X:

Mads:
Super. Får du nogen gange kommentarer til det du skriver af andre brugere?

Tine X:

Mads:
Det er jo ikke dårligt, at man kan få en masse hjælp og respons via den slags netværk :) Oplever du mest at det er negative eller positive indlæg der resulterer i en reaktion fra andre brugere?

Tine X:
Nej, det er fantastisk. Nogle gange spekulerer jeg på, hvad man gjorde før internettets tid ;) .. Det er helt klart de negative indlæg. Det er også dem jeg selv lægger mærke til fx “Nå, fra det firma skal jeg altså ikke købe ting”.. :)

Mads:
Interessant! Kommenterer du selv på andres indlæg vedrørende brands?

**Tine X:**
Kun hvis jeg har noget relevant at sige, eller er uenig med dem.

**Mads:**
Men i sådan et tilfælde vil du altså være tilbøjelig til at interagere?

**Tine X:**
Ja, helt sikkert. Der er så mange forskellige indlæg fra mange mennesker, så man kan let blive vildledt. Jeg prøver altid at klargøre hvad jeg kan.

4. Forventede reaktion hos andre brugere

**Mads:**
Ok. Når du skriver et indlæg vedrørende et brand, har du så en ide om hvilken reaktion du kunne tænke dig eller forventer hos andre brugere? (samtykke, diskussion, stiltiende ændring af adfærd etc.) Og skriver du nogen gange et indlæg mest for at få en reaktion?

**Tine X:**
Hmm det er svært at sige. Alle har vel en forventning om at få en reaktion. Men oftest er det for diskussionens skyld, eller den “stiltiende” adfærd. Eksempelvis vedr. ovenstående indlæg fra Trustpilot. Der håbede jeg, at Pixum ville se indlægget fra mig og de andre brugere, således de ville tage sig selv lidt i nakken for eftertiden. Jeg tror mange firmaer kigger på forbrugernes kommentarer på internettet. (forhåbentligt)

5. Forventede reaktion hos ejerne af brandet

**Mads:**
Hehe det gør de formodentlig klogt i :) forventer du nogensinde, at ejerne af det brand du omtaler reagerer på indlæg

**Tine X:**
alså deltager i debatten? - Ja, jeg håber i hvertfald. Og jeg har også set det et par gange. Hvis der har været et forklaringsspørgsmål, som kan mildne en vred forbruger ;) . Men som oftest er det nu andre private mennesker der reagerer.

**Mads:**
Okay, jeg har selv set at nogle firmaer ind imellem deltager i diskussioner på f.eks. trustpilot. Kunne du forestille dig, at skrive et indlæg specifikt for at få en reaktion fra en brandejer?

**Tine X:**

6. Reaktion ved kontakt fra ejerne af brandet

Mads:
Jo tak, ganske fint :) Men så har du altså ikke selv prøvet, at et firma kontakter dig eller svarer på et indlæg du har skrevet?

Tine X:
Nej, jeg har næsten altid været i kommunikation med firmaet først (via mail, tlf osv.) og skriver også deres respons med i indlægget. Jeg har dog deltaget i en del indlæg på furums hvor firmaet har deltaget. Hvis fx det er en generel tendens, flere pakker der ikke er leveret osv. Så jeg har ikke startet et indlæg hvor de har deltager, men deltaget i nogle hvor de også har været med.

Mads:
Ville du selv syntes om at blive kontaktet vedrørende et indlæg du havde lavet? Eller måske en statusopdatering el. lign?

Tine X:
Ja, det ville være skønt. Så man ikke føler man taler for døve øren. Færdig ;)

Mads:
Hehe tak :) Hvordan ville du helst kontaktes? (altså hvilket medie; e-mail, privat besked, som svar på indlægget etc?)

Tine X:
Helt klart som svar på indlægget, så andre kan se det også. Eller det kommer jo an på situationen, men i de fleste tilfælde, så ja, i indlægget.

Mads:
Man kunne jo forestille sig, at der var visse situationer/produkter man ikke havde den store lyst til at få debatteret i et kommentarspor :) Men Er der nogle medier som du decideret ikke ville bryde dig om at blive kontaktet igennem? (mobil, mail, FB kommentar/besked, etc.)

Tine X:
Ja, nemlig. Men hvis man ikke vil have det debatteret, har man vel fra starten ikke lagt det ud i offentligheden til debat? .. Jeg tror ikke der er nogle medier, jeg ikke ville bryde mig om. Men jeg ville nok have en forventning om, at de kontaktede mig gennem den side, jeg havde skrevet på til start. Men det ville intet gøre mig, hvor de kontaktede mig.
7. Forventede reaktion ved en mulig fremtidig kontakt

**Mads:**
Ok. Hvis det generelt blev kotume at virksomheder kontaktede folk når de havde skrevet et indlæg, ville det så have indflydelse på din videre interaktion på sådanne sites, eller på hvordan du formulerede dig? Jeg tænker hvis man ved at man bliver - lad os kalde det overvåget - om det så ville begrænse hvad du ville vælge at skrive om en organisation?

**Tine X:**
Nej, jeg synes altid man skal skrive i en passende tone, og det er i min egen (som forbrugers) interesse, at de følger med i debatter om dem selv. Når man vælger at bruge internettet, vælger man også at skrive i et relativt offentligt rum, hvor alle har lov at følge med. Så om det er firmaet eller andre privatpersoner, det er for mit vedkommende ligevidt.

8. Afslutning

**Mads:**
Okay, super. Jeg tror jeg er nogenlunde ved vejs ende :) Er der noget du har lyst til at få med hér til slut, eller har du spørgsmål af nogen art? :)

**Tine X:**
Jeg tror ikke jeg har mere at tilføje. Andet end lige et nysgerrighedsspørgsmål - Hvilket speciale er det i skriver? Hvilken uddannelse, tænker jeg?

**Mads:**
Forståeligt nok :) Jamen vi skriver et speciale der fokuserer på virksomheder og organisationers interaktion med brugere af sociale medier og platforme, med det udgangspunkt at der er en række mulige fordele at afdække samt faldgruber man skal have for øje - vi læser begge to på Copenhagen Business School, Steven studerer cand.merc.kom og jeg selv er cand.merc. med speciale i Strategic Market Creation (ordentlig smøre, I know) =)

**Tine X:**
Dejligt. Blev simpelthen lige så nysgerrig. Jeg håber i får nogle gode svar, og får lavet et super speciale :)

**Mads:**
Tusind tak! Og mange tak for hjælpen, det var rigtigt fedt du gad deltage :) - Jamen selvfølgelig, skulle det være en anden gang :) Og hils Steven ;)

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Mads:
Tak tak, will do :) God weekend til dig

Tine X:
Lige over
Appendix 9 - Overview of Survey and Survey Results

13-05-2011

Rediger formular – [Forbrugerer inter...

242 svar

Oversigt af formulære svar

![Pie chart showing language preferences: Danish (99%) and English (1%)](image)

Dit brug af Internettet

![Bar chart showing internet usage frequency: 0-1 times daily, 2-4 times weekly, 1-3 times per week](image)

Dit brug af Internettet - fortsat

![Pie chart showing if respondents would tolerate ads on any social networks: Yes (57%), No (44%)](image)

https://spreadsheets.google.com/...
Bidrag til indhold i nettet

13-05-2011

Rediger formular – Forbugeres interessener

På hvilke typer af online medier skriver du om dine oplevelser (positive, negative, etc.) med en virksomhed og/eller dennes produkter?

- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- Forum (Lurk eller combat, sortikkel forum, mobil forum, etc.)
- Anmeldelser af virksomheder (hjemmesider, anmeldelser, etc.)
- Medier, der skriver om virksomheder (tidsskrifter, væsketidsskrifter, etc.)
- Pressemeldinger til en virksomhed, der er konkurrent
- E-lastavis (Morgenavisen, Ekstra, børsen, etc.)
- Andet

Den kan vekse fra mindre end 1% til mere end 100%.

Hvordan er der tilføjeligt tilbage i forbindelse med en virksomhed og/eller dennes produkter på at skrive?

- Negative oplevelser
- Positive oplevelser
- Other

Den kan vekse fra mindre end 1% til mere end 100%.

Hvor du skriver, eller kan du finde på at skrive om dine oplevelser (positive, negative, etc.) med en virksomhed og/eller dennes produkter, med det spredede forumet af de virksomheder?

- Ja
- Nej

Ved hvem?

- Ja
- Nej

Har du erfaret kontakt af en virksomhed, på baggrund af et indlæg du har skrevet om en virksomhed du har haft med virksomheden?

- Ja
- Nej

Ved hvem?

- Ja
- Nej

Kontakt fra virksomheden

I det følgende spørgsmål tilsetning af tilfældet, at du har haft kontakt med en virksomhed, som har haft skift i form af visse spørgsmål.

Hvordan er det tilføjeligt tilbage i forbindelse med at skrive om en virksomhed, du har haft med virksomheden?

- Negative oplevelser
- Positive oplevelser
- Other

- Ja
- Nej

Ved hvem?

- Ja
- Nej

https://spreadsheets.google.com/..
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Rediger formular – [Forbrugere inter...

Hvordan har virkemidlerne reagere på de forskellige digt?

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<th>6</th>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

Værskifte har først sigt at forhindre allergi- og anfængelser?

Ja: 12

Nej: 2

Visste ikke: 0

Der kan vælges flere afhængighed skiver, så der kan tilføjes proportion på op til mere end 100 %.

Resultaterne af virkningsmetoden, hvor de af opvalgte med at vælge en tilfældig grupp med en virkemidlet?

Ja: 10

Nej: 2

Visste ikke: 0

Hvordan kan man at blive kontroller af en virkemidlet, så bedst at blive skrevet om en opkøbelse med en virkemidlet?

Jeg trykker mig af. (Ja) 2

Jeg afværger mig af mig selv (Nej) 6

Jeg ønsker at afværge mig af mig selv (Visste ikke) 0

Jeg ønsker at afværge mig af mig selv (Visste ikke) 0

Jeg har ingen tilfældige ægteskaber, så der kan tilføjes proportion på op til mere end 100%.

Din brug af andre forbrugerens indhold på internettet

Dit brug af andre forbrugerens indhold på internettet.

Hvordan benyttes der andres opkøbelse med en virkemidlet på et ordentligt niveau, hvor vi har udviklet her det på dit behov for at handle med en virkemidlet?

1 - Ingen betragtning 0

2 - Ingen betragtning 0

3 - Ingen betragtning 6

4 - Ingen betragtning 0

5 - Ingen betragtning 0

Hvordan benytter en virkemidlet har foreslået på et indtag, og forbruger har at vælge om at handle med en virkemidlet?

Ja: 90

Nej: 30

Visste ikke: 0

Visste ikke: 0

https://spreadsheets.google.com/gf...
Your Use of the Internet - Continued

Do you use online media, such as review sites, forums, blogs, social networks, etc., to write about your own experiences (positive, negative, etc.) with companies’/advertiser products?

- Yes: 11 (5%)
- No: 19 (4%)
- Don't know: 0 (0%)

Contributing with Content Online

What types of online media do you use to write about your experiences (positive, negative, etc.) with a company/ advertiser/product?

- Social networks: 10 (9%)
- Forums, blogs, etc.: 2 (18%)
- Review sites: 5 (45%)
- Company’s website: 1 (9%)
- Other: 4 (36%)

What type of experiences (positive, negative, etc.) with a company/ advertiser/product estimate you to write about it on online media?

- Negative experiences: 9 (82%)
- Positive experiences: 9 (82%)
- Other: 0 (0%)

What is the primary reason for you to write about your experiences with a company/ advertiser/product on online media?

- To tell friends about a positive experience: 10 (9%)
- To tell other people about my positive/negative experience: 9 (82%)
- To get help or advice (in decision making (to buy, rent, etc.)): 0 (0%)
- To improve the company’s/ advertiser’s products or services: 0 (0%)
- To get a reply/acknowledgment from the company: 0 (0%)
- To tell other people about my positive/negative experience: 0 (0%)

How would you write, or would you consider writing, about your experience with a company/ advertiser/product on online media with the specific purpose of getting a reaction from the company?

- Yes: 10 (4%)
- No: 0 (0%)
- Don’t know: 0 (0%)

How have you been contacted by a company to write about an experience you’ve had with the company and a product?

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Contact with the Company

In the following questions, please think of an occurrence where you were contacted by the company that you first wrote about.

What type of experience did you write about, when the company contacted you?

- Adverse experience: 2 (1%)
- Positive experience: 8 (0%)
- Other: 398 (98%)

How was the company's response when they contacted you?

- The company responded and satisfied the incident: 2 (9%)
- The company contacted me with a policy: 3 (1%)
- The company did not respond in anyway and I proceeded with legal action: 4 (2%)
- Other: 0 (0%)

Did this contact result in a change of the way you perceived the company or your product?

- Yes: 2 (1%)
- No: 1 (0%)
- Don't know: 1 (0%)

What do you think of being contacted by the company based on a written review by you or a credible source?

- I do not like it: 1 (0%)
- I expect the company to contact me: 2 (10%)
- I consider it to be good customer service that the company contacts me: 3 (75%)
- I have no opinion on the matter: 0 (0%)

Your Use of the Contribution of Others Online

The following questions should ask about your use of third-party websites, such as review sites, forums, blogs, social media, etc., for making judgments about the company's experience with the product and its features.

When you read reviews on websites, do you consider the websites you review or compare a product or service to those you read or hear about?

- Yes: 0 (0%)
- No: 0 (0%)

https://spreadsheets.google.com/gfor...
13-05-2011

Rediger formlær – [Førbrugerinter..]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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How have you observed a company to respond to something another consumer has written about the company or its product?

- Yes: 13
- No: 14
- Don't know: 2

What type of experience had the consumer written about?

- A negative experience: 2
- A positive experience: 1
- Other: 221

How was the company’s response when they contacted the consumer?

- The company tried to explain or justify the incident: 2
- The company tried to rectify the incident: 1
- The company tried to close out the consumer in a way that the consumer felt was not satisfactory: 0
- Other: 221

Did the company’s response to the consumer affect how you perceived the episode the consumer had with the company or its product?

- Yes: 2
- No: 1
- Don't know: 2

Demographic

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<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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