

Using the Honeycomb model to analyse engagement on social media – a case study of a Portuguese company

ABSTRACT

Internet consumption behaviour has changed and nowadays consumers are using social media platforms to co-create, share, modify and discuss content. Social networks sites (SNS) gained relevance in this new paradigm, namely as a communication tool. However, effective incorporation of such channels in the communication strategies seems to be more difficult to B2B firms than for B2C. Actually, B2B companies establish fewer relationships than B2C do; however, when established, these connections are normally more direct, strong and relying on trust (Silva et al. 2012; Lacka & Chong, 2016). The same tends to happen with other service companies that do not normally rely on this type of communication as a way to engage with their clients. Many executives of such companies mismanage or ignore the power of social networks simple because they do not recognize its importance and they seem not to know how to engage with it. The purpose of this paper is to provide a solution for a problem raised by Alento, which is a human resources and consulting company that wishes to understand how the company could improve public engagement with its official Facebook page.

To accomplish the proposed objective the company's presence on Facebook was analysed using as theoretical framework the honeycomb model for social media functionality by Kietzmann et al. (2011) to find out which of the functional blocks of social media were more relevant for Alento. The company's Facebook page engagement was assessed and guidance was then provided on how the company should expend its efforts to improve the relationship with its customers. Trying to analyse the effect of some demographic and social factors in the perception of the importance of the seven functional building blocks of Facebook engagement with fans a survey was conducted with 205 Alento's Facebook page followers. The findings showed that the most important functional building blocks for the company's Facebook fan page's engagement with fans are "presence", "identity" and "reputation". Furthermore, factors that influence the perception of the importance of each of the seven functional building blocks for Alento's Facebook fan page's engagement with fans were identified. In parallel, we analysed the results of some Facebook Marketing strategies developed during a period of 5 months. After extensive analysis of the data collected, and with the organisation's collaboration, we purposed structural changes in firm's Facebook marketing strategies on a short to medium term basis.

The most relevant contribution of the current study is the offer of some insights on the use of a simple tool such as the honeycomb model of Kietzmann et al. (2011) for the analysis of the social engagement from a firm's perspective, regardless of their nature. To the best of our knowledge, this is a new angle that has been neglected in previous studies, mostly focused on understanding the consumer/end-user perspective. It relies on firm's analysis of this innovative of communicating with their clients, irrespective of their nature.

Keywords: Social Media, Digital Social Networks, Honeycomb model

INTRODUCTION

Digitalisation has become part of our daily life. As a result, digitalisation, and particularly social media, have been claimed to transform consumer behaviour (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), with important consequences for companies, products and brands (Muntinga et al., 2010). Nowadays, consumers spend much of their time on the Internet. They are much more proactive in establishing channels with companies. On their hand, companies use these channels more and more to promote their brands and to engage customers, especially by sharing

informational brand content with links for information searches (Swani, Milne, Brown, Assaf, & Donthu, 2017). Social networks are used by people of different ages, education levels, genders, social statuses, people who speak different languages and who come from different cultures, all of whom participate and incorporate social networks into their daily lives (Mazman & Usluel, 2010). Previous studies have shown the differences between adolescents and older adults (over 60s) in the use of different SNS features and content (Pfeil et al., 2009). Muscanell & Guadagno (2012) found that young SNS users are much more active, have a larger number of Facebook friends, spend more time online, and participate in the different activities available on Facebook. However, in comparison, older users prefer to engage in family activities on Facebook (Dhir & Torsheim, 2016). Users can spend their time on Facebook, doing many different activities such as playing video games, joining groups, getting up-to-date information from friends and family, or having fun (Sánchez, 2014). Previous literature has observed gender differences in SNS use. Gender differences were observed in the use of different SNS features, e.g. females tend to comment on friends' posts (Yuan, 2011) and they also post more photos and videos (Hargittai, 2007; Madden et al., 2013 & Muscanell and Guadagno, 2012). In comparison, males tend to play games on SNS (Joiner et al., 2012; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012) and seek entertainment related to social networking activities (Joiner et al., 2012 & Weiser, 2000). The profile differences are relevant and this way it is important to understand well who the company's clients are, so that to better adapt the page contents to their preferences and chances of engagement. Even though this being severely eroded (Mangold and Faulds, 2009), marketing managers would still desire to control over the content, timing, and frequency of information provided within the page. "In the new communications paradigm, marketing managers should recognize the power and critical nature of the discussions being carried on by consumers using social media." (Mangold and Faulds, 2009, p. 360). Therefore, it is very important for firms to understand how to provide and organize the information they want their customers to consume through the SNS provided.

However, as this communication advent evolves, it is gradually becoming more and more difficult to build customer loyalty (Buhalis and Law, 2008), which means that having a marketing strategy for the effective use of social media is crucial for companies to stay competitive and grow (Parsons, 2013). Understanding social media users' habits is therefore crucial for marketers that need to discover how to attract customers and maintain customer relationships through social media platforms (Cheung & Leung, 2016). According to Erragcha & Romdhane (2014) there is no global definition of Digital Social Networks. However, in marketing literature, the most suitable definition is that they are web services that "allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a system, to maintain a list of users with whom they share a bond, to view and navigate their list of connections and those established by others within the system" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 2). Social networking sites allow for interaction between consumers and the community and facilitate the "asynchronous, immediate, interactive, low-cost communications" (Miller et al., 2009). "Social network sites can be seen as alternative communication tools which support existing relationships and activities in a fun and colorful way that can enrich the users' experiences" (Ofcom, 2008).

This paper aims to investigate the applicability of SNS in a service company, mostly working business-to-business (B2B). Our goal is to understand how digital marketing strategies can be used in order to improve firm's digital marketing plan. We will focus on Facebook, as it is the largest social networking website in the world, and as a consequence the most representative.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Marketing and Social Media

Digital marketing can be seen as a tool to promote the company more efficiently and should be understood effectively by companies for them to be better able to select efficient marketing tactics and strategies (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). Within digital marketing, we can isolate Social Media (SM) as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Social networking tools (e.g. Twitter and Facebook), professional networking sites (e.g. LinkedIn), media sharing sites (e.g. Instagram and YouTube), commerce communities (e.g. Amazon and eBay), blogs (e.g. Blogger and Bloglines) and discussion forums are examples of SM platforms. Social media has changed the way companies do business over the years (Ramsaran-Fowdar & Fowdar, 2013), and as a result, in recent years social media sites have become essential for users and companies (Maecker, Barrot & Becker, 2016). Nowadays, the use of SM has brought so many benefits and opportunities that it is becoming essential to consider it in marketing strategies (Barnes, 2010). These benefits include reaching a wide array of customers in vast geographical areas (Wright et al., 2010), enhancing service quality, facilitating timely and cost-effective research, building and enhancing databases, and reducing costs (Barnes, 2010). Nowadays consumers interact with companies in the same way that they do with their community. Social media has changed the way companies do business over the years (Ramsaran-Fowdar & Fowdar, 2013), and as a result, in recent years social media sites have become essential for users and companies (Maecker, Barrot & Becker, 2016). Social media has become an important tool in an organisation’s marketing strategy (Bruhn et al., 2012), as it is a significant tool for allowing companies to communicate with their customers (Murdough, 2009). Nowadays consumers interact with companies in the same way that they do with their community. Today’s consumers almost assume companies will have a SM presence, and companies need to find out how to get involved and establish their presence (Nair, 2011). Although the Internet has created huge new opportunities for companies over the years; it has also generated new challenges (Strand, 2011). Through social media platforms, customers can interact and participate with companies and brands so they can share their opinions with other users and help to influence a company’s reputation (Nair, 2011). Studies have shown that consumers consider SM as a more trustworthy source of information than the traditional marketing communications tools used by companies (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). Through the use of these platforms, companies can build relationships with pre-existing as well as potential audiences (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Therefore, social media seems to be a successful tool for a company’s growth and for building relationships with customers (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). Although the Internet has created huge new opportunities for companies over the years; it has also generated new challenges (Strand, 2011). However, there is a lack of understanding of how and why organisations are actually using these platforms (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

Social networking tools (e.g. Twitter and Facebook), professional networking sites (e.g. LinkedIn), media sharing sites (e.g. Instagram and YouTube), commerce communities (e.g. Amazon and eBay), blogs (e.g. Blogger and Bloglines) and discussion forums are examples of SM platforms. Currently, companies use social media platforms in order to achieve certain goals. Facebook, with more than 2.2 billion usersⁱⁱ, is the largest form of SM worldwide. It is important for companies to have a Facebook fan page, which must be well configured and customised (Valos et al., 2006). However, other advices must be considered for a company do effectively use the power of this communication tool (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

Facebook as a Digital Marketing tool

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services that “allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a system, to maintain a list of users with whom they share a bond, to view and navigate their list of connections and those established by others within the system” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 2). Social networking sites allow for interaction between consumers and the community and facilitate the “asynchronous, immediate, interactive, low-cost communications” (Miller et al., 2009). “Social network sites can be seen as alternative communication tools which support existing relationships and activities in a fun and colorful way that can enrich the users’ experiences” (Ofcom, 2008).

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) social media, and Facebook in particular, represent a vast area of opportunities for firms, and, even though we have been witnessing its failures with the recent scandal of Cambridge Analyticaⁱⁱⁱ, marketers still seem to be clearly obsessed with Facebook (Lapointe, 2012). Facebook can be seen as a crystal ball for understanding customers (Casteleyn, Mottart, & Rutten, 2009). User actions on Facebook appear in news-feed statuses, and every Facebook friend is able to see it (Shannon et al., 2008). However, as users can create their own profiles and write whatever they want on Facebook, it does not necessarily mean they are providing correct, accurate and real information about themselves (Doyle, 2007; Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009; Treadaway & Smith, 2010). Facebook has many types of pages and other ways that allow people to connect, but there are, according to Strand (2011), four main types of Facebook pages: personal pages, fan pages, official pages and community pages.

Facebook has become a significant tool in engaging with consumers and creating brand awareness (Malhotra et al., 2013). Approximately 2.2 billion people have currently a Facebook profile according to data from 2017. Keeping an updated number of profiles is difficult and the number of members change on an everyday basis. However, and according to a study conducted by Nielsen in 2012, around 53% of Facebook members follow brands at least once per month, learn more about brands (65%) or hear of others’ experiences with brands (70%) (The Nielsen Company, 2012). Consequently, companies invest a lot in social media platforms by creating brand fan pages on which companies publish brand posts that users can like, comment on, or share, and where the company can reply to comments (De Vries et al., 2012; Labrecque, 2014). Through Facebook, companies can connect with many more people, more than through phone calls, emails or meetings (Luke, 2009). The analysis of SM statistics offers important new ways of getting to know audiences, which is another irrefutable advantage of SM. Through Facebook, companies can understand how audiences communicate and behave, what they think and feel, and how they relate to one another (Moss et al., 2015). Moreover, costs of communication have fallen drastically with this SM, generating opportunities for companies to communicate quickly, directly and consistently with millions of customers (Mize, 2009; Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009). In short, there are uncountable advantages associated with this mean of communication that seem to be evident, especially for companies investing hard in strengthening the relationship between customers and their brands. the benefits of Facebook for organisations are: lower communication costs, personalised and directed advertising, immediate feedback from customers, positive word-of-mouth and influence on buyer behaviour (Ramsaran-Fowdar & Fowdar, 2013). As we previously said, there are uncountable advantages associated with this mean of communication that seem to be evident, especially for companies investing hard in strengthening the relationship between customers and their brands.

Social networks are used by people of different ages, education levels, genders, social statuses, people who speak different languages and who come from different cultures, all of whom participate and incorporate social networks into their daily lives (Mazman & Usluel, 2010). Previous studies have shown the differences between adolescents and older adults (over 60s) in

the use of different SNS features and content (Pfeil et al., 2009). Muscanell & Guadagno (2012) found that young SNS users are much more active, have a larger number of Facebook friends, spend more time online, and participate in the different activities available on Facebook. However, in comparison, older users prefer to engage in family activities on Facebook (Dhir & Torsheim, 2016). Users can spend their time on Facebook, doing many different activities such as playing video games, joining groups, getting up-to-date information from friends and family, or having fun (Sánchez, 2014). Previous literature has observed gender differences in SNS use. Gender differences were observed in the use of different SNS features, e.g. females tend to comment on friends' posts (Yuan, 2011) and they also post more photos and videos (Hargittai, 2007; Madden et al., 2013 & Muscanell and Guadagno, 2012). In comparison, males tend to play games on SNS (Joiner et al., 2012; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012) and seek entertainment related to social networking activities (Joiner et al., 2012 & Weiser, 2000). The profile differences are relevant and this way it is important to understand well who the company's clients are, so that to better adapt the page contents to their preferences and chances of engagement. Even though this being severely eroded (Mangold and Faulds, 2009), marketing managers would still desire to control over the content, timing, and frequency of information provided within the page. "In the new communications paradigm, marketing managers should recognize the power and critical nature of the discussions being carried on by consumers using social media." (Mangold and Faulds, 2009, p. 360). Therefore, it is very important for firms to understand how to provide and organize the information they want their customers to consume through the SNS provided.

The Seven functional blocks of social media

Kietzmann et al. (2011) developed a honeycomb framework Figure 1 that identifies seven functional building blocks of social media: identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups. According to them, each block allows us to "unpack and examine a specific facet of social media user experience" (p.243), and its consequences for companies. It is not necessary to include all of the building blocks in any given social media action. They are constructs that allow us to understand the different levels of SM functionality.

Identity

Kietzmann et al. (2011) stated "identity represents the extent to which users reveal their identities in a social media setting" (p. 243). On Facebook, users can define the information they share and with whom they share that information. For example information such as name, age, gender, profession, location, and also information that exposes Facebook users in certain ways. For instance, the authors explain that thoughts, feelings, likes, and dislikes of users can also be shared, both consciously and unconsciously. One major implication of "identity" is privacy. Users share their identities on social media sites, although this does not mean they do not care what happens to this information (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

According to Cheung & Leung (2016), "revealing own information to others" is related to the "identity" building block of social media. Moreover, Machado et al. (2015) state that on Facebook, trust in brands and in other users who like the same brand can influence consumers' decisions to engage online with brands. They also mention that according to Swani et al. (2013), positive Word Of Mouth (WOM) can be comparable to "liking". When a user likes certain content, it appears on their Facebook news feed as well as in their friends' newsfeeds.

Conversations

The "conversations" block of the framework represents a level of communication on a social media platform with other users that could be the number or regularity of postings (Kietzmann et al., 2011). According to Machado et al. (2015), on social media platforms consumers can

find out more about a certain company through the knowledge and know-how of other users. Through comments, consumers can also contribute to brand-related content (Shu & Chuang, 2011). One major implication of “conversations” block is “conversation velocity and the risks of starting and joining” (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 243)

Sharing

“Sharing” refers to the sending and receiving of content between users on the same SM platform, such as photos, comments and videos (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Machado et al. (2015) mention that as well as “likes” and “comments”, social media metrics should comprise the number of “shares” (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). By interacting with a brand on social media, consumers can feel an interpersonal social interaction (Hudson et al., 2016).

According to Kietzmann et al. (2011), the “sharing” block of the honeycomb has two implications for companies with ambition to engage in SM. Firstly, companies need to understand “what objects of sociality their users have in common, or to identify new objects that can mediate their shared interests”, secondly companies need to evaluate “the degree to which the object can or should be shared” (p.245).

Presence

Presence refers to the ability of one user to know if other users are available. This includes knowing where other social media users are in virtual and in real life. In the virtual world, we can control this “through status lines like available or hidden” (p. 245). For example, on Facebook users can click on a Chat button to indicate if they are online and available, or do not wish to connect with other users (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Kietzmann et al. (2011) referred that an implication of the framework building block “presence” is that “firms need to pay attention to the relative importance of user availability and user location. A firm might also want to investigate if users have a desire for selective presences, where one can be visible to some people while staying hidden to others” (p. 246). Another implication of “presence” is that it is related to other functional blocks in the honeycomb framework, such as “conversations” and “relationships”. For instance, companies should recognise that “social media presence is influenced by the intimacy and immediacy of the relationship medium, and that higher levels of social presence are likely to make conversations more influential” (p. 246).

Relationships

“Relationships” refer to how people are connected to each other on a social media platform. Machado et al. (2015) state that in social networking sites, consumers use brands in order to create a self-identity (Schau & Gilly, 2003), and when they “like” a brand via Facebook, they create an impression on others (Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012; Wallace et al., 2012) and increment their social involvement (Shu & Chuang, 2011). Facebook users can identify family members and make notes of mutual friends between users. When users are “relating” to each other on social media platforms, it means that they have a form of connection that leads them to “converse, share objects of sociality, meet up, or simply just list each other as a friend or fan”. When a certain social media site or company desires to engage with their fans, they should find out how they can maintain and/or build relationships (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 246).

According to Hudson et al. (2016), when a company interacts with its fans by replying to comments, solving problems, and inviting them to participate, fans feel a higher level of relationship quality and create a feeling of connection. Machado et al. (2015) state that in social networking sites, consumers use brands in order to create a self-identity (Schau & Gilly, 2003), and when they “like” a brand via Facebook, they create an impression on others (Hollenbeck &

Kaikati, 2012; Wallace et al., 2012) and increment their social involvement (Shu & Chuang, 2011).

Reputation

“Reputation” refers to the ability of users to identify the standing of others (including themselves) within a SM platform. For example, Facebook users can “like” certain content and comment on it. According to Kudeshia, Sikdar & Mittal (2015), online reputation is an important element for the success of a company. Online presence allows companies to understand their customer's feelings about the brand and it could also be an opportunity to avoid any negative thoughts.

Online reputation management is very important for online community marketers (Kietzmann et al, 2011). According to Baxi et al. (2016), one negative comment on company social media platforms can create a negative impact in the minds of other community members. In order to restrict the negative impact, quick responses to every negative comment are required. Negative word of mouth publicity has a higher impact than positive WOM publicity.

According to Kudeshia, Sikdar & Mittal (2015), online reputation is an important element for the success of a company. Online presence allows companies to understand their customer's feelings about the brand and it could also be an opportunity to avoid any negative thoughts.

Groups

“Groups” refer to the capacity of users to “form communities and sub-communities”. When social media users “like” the same brand, they are forming a community (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 247). On Facebook, users can also form communities by organising their friends into different groups (Parsons, 2013). According to Machado et al. (2015) & Daugherty et al. (2008) social interaction is very important for the creation of user-generated content, “as by creating content consumers are able to connect with others, experience a sense of community and feel important” (p. 171). Moreover, by interacting with a brand through social media platforms, consumers can feel an interpersonal interaction and an intimacy feeling (Hudson et al., 2016).

A fan page’s success on any social media depends on consumer engagement with the brand or company. In order to achieve this, it is important to have good planning in the networks and the web as a whole, carried out proficiently (Trainini & Torres, 2015).

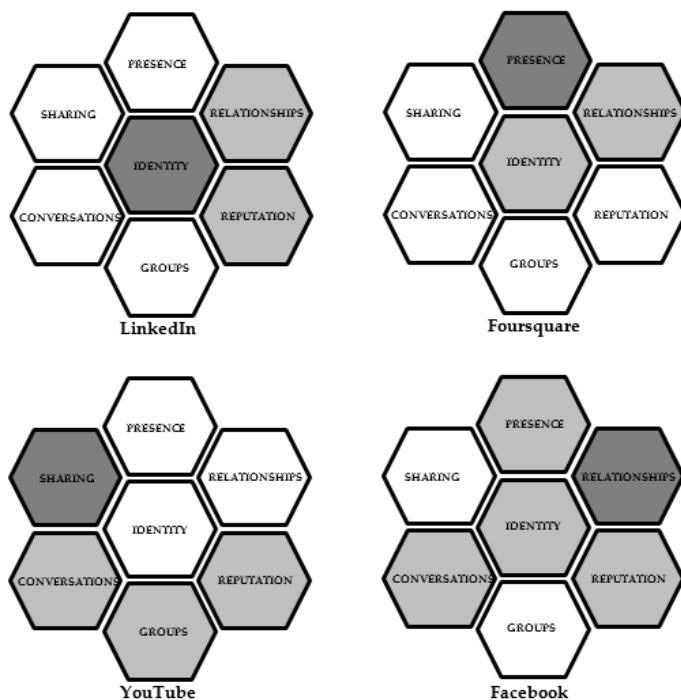


Figure 1 - Contrasting the functionalities of different sites. Source: Kietzmann et al., 2011

Differences matter: The 4 Cs

A fan page's success on any social media depends on consumer engagement with the brand or company. In order to achieve this, it is important to have good planning in the networks and the web as a whole, carried out proficiently (Trainini & Torres, 2015). According to Kietzmann et al. (2011), many social media sites have reached a careful equilibrium among the different blocks of the honeycomb framework. Some focus more on "relationships", some more on "identity", etc. Gene Smith (2007), one of the people who helped to develop this honeycomb framework, claims that social media sites tend to focus on three or four main blocks. Figure 1 illustrates this with some examples: LinkedIn, Foursquare, YouTube and Facebook. "The darker the colour of a block, the greater this social media functionality is within the site" (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249).

It is increasingly important to use tools like the honeycomb framework in order to understand and develop social media platforms. We are now going to present a guideline - the 4 Cs: cognise, congruity, curate, and chase - relating "how firms should develop strategies for monitoring, understanding, and responding to different social media activities" (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.249).

Cognise

A company should first identify and comprehend its social media landscape through use of the honeycomb framework in order to disclose the "social media functionality and engagement implications for understanding" its customers. "It is important to find out if and where conversations about a company are already being held, and how these are enabled by the different functionalities" in the honeycomb framework (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249).

Congruity

Afterwards, a company should develop strategies suitable for the different SM functionalities and the purposes of the company. This comprises "focusing on the core honeycomb blocks of

social media activity” that will help meet the needs of its business (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249).

Curate

A company should “act as a curator of social media interactions and content”. This includes understanding how often and when a company should interrupt or speak into conversations on a social media setting, and elect someone to carry out its online activity (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249).

Companies should elect employees that are able to listen and care about online chatter. They should also be able to create content that is interesting for the community (Hbr, 2009). Effective use of social media can be a challenge, and many companies probably will not be competent enough to succeed initially. Therefore, it is important to properly train consultants who are responsible for their online activity in order to guarantee that opportunities are maximised and risks minimised (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Chase

Companies should examine their environments in order to comprehend the conversations and other information that could imply its position in the market (McCarthy et al., 2010). The honeycomb framework is a tool that enables companies to evaluate the changing ecology of social media. If used constantly, a company can analyse the evolution of “community’s engagement needs”, understand the evolution of other SM platforms and evaluate its competitors. In conclusion, it is very important to “follow conversations and other interactions” on the social media platform of any particular company (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 250).

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS

Based on the seven building blocks of Facebook engagement with fans identified above in the literature review, we propose the following framework for the constructs to be considered by any company regardless of their offer and the target market served :

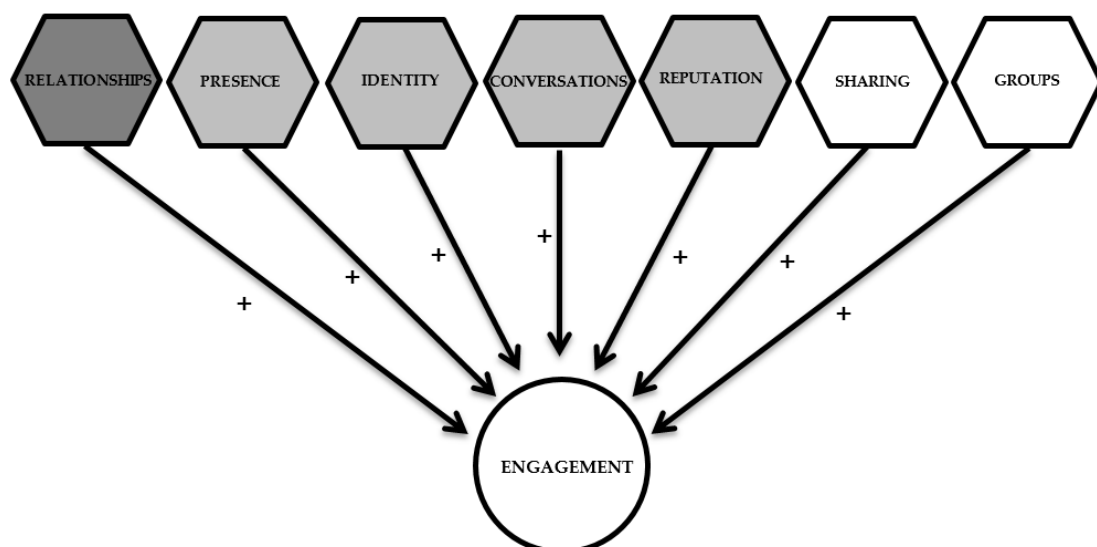


Figure 2 - Research model demonstrating the seven functional building blocks on Facebook engagement with fans by firms.

In this framework, we suggest the possible influence of the seven building blocks of social media (independent variables), previously described, of Facebook engagement with fans by companies (dependent variable).

The darker the colour of a block, the greater the SM functionality within the site. According Kietzmann et al. (2011) on Facebook, “relationships” is the most important building block. The second most important blocks are “presence”, “identity”, “conversations” and “reputation”, and the least important blocks are “sharing” and “groups”. Thus, in our research model we consider the colour pattern according to the authors. Based on this framework, we then formulated the following propositions that we intend to study:

Although variables such as “age groups”, “residence”, “time spent on Facebook per day” and “gender” were not included in the research model, we regard them as important concepts to study. Therefore, we intend to assess if there is an effect of these variables (control variables) on the perception of the importance of the seven different building blocks of Facebook fan page engagement (identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups), but opted not to formulate any specific propositions regarding this influence. To ascertain this influence it is necessary to determine if the importance of each of the seven functional building blocks of Alento’s Facebook fan page differ across this variables.

METHODOLOGY

~~Considering the aim of this study, we analyse the company’s presence on Facebook. We identified that Alento really needs to be committed to making the best use of its Facebook fan page. They do not have a defined strategy, people focus on it or exciting activities going on.~~

Therefore, we are going to create a survey (to be taken by Alento Facebook fans) in order to determine the extent to which a company should focus on some or all of the building blocks of Facebook engagement with fans previously described (identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups). We plan to explore Alento’s Facebook fans’ habits when using Facebook. Additionally, we are going to analyse some Facebook strategies developed during the period of 5 months (between September 2016 and January 2017). Lastly, considering the results obtained in the quantitative study and strategies developed during this period, we will propose some strategies that the company must implement on its Facebook page.

Variables and Measures

The seven independent constructs (identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups), the dependent variable (Facebook engagement) were all measured by multiple item scales using a five-point Likert scale with the endpoints being “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The control variables (age group, residence, time spent on Facebook per day and gender) were all measured by multiple choice.

To study the “identity” building block we adapted the scales used by Cheung & Leung (2016), and Machado et al. (2015) ~~in their study~~. Regarding the “conversations” building block, we adjusted the scales used by Machado et al. (2015). To study the “sharing” building block we adjusted the scales used by Machado et al. (2015) and Hudson et al. (2016) in their study. To analyse the “presence” building block we created a scale, based on the “presence” functional building block of social media of Kietzmann et al. (2011). To investigate the “relationships” building block we adapted the scales used by Machado et al. (2015) and Hudson et al. (2016). For the “reputation” building block we created a scale, based on “reputation” functional

building block of social media of Kietzmann et al. (2011). Finally, to study the “groups” building block we adapted the scales used by Machado et al. (2015) and Hudson et al. (2016) in their research.

Sample

A convenience sample of 205 useable questionnaires was collected. The population of the study comprised Portuguese Facebook users who like the Alento Facebook Fan Page. 119 of the respondents were female (58%) and 86 were male (42%). Characterising the respondents by age group, the majority of participants are concentrated in the age group “15 to 24 years old” (72.7%). The 25 to 34 age group also stood out, representing 17.1% of the respondents. Regarding residence, the majority of respondents were from Porto, Braga and Lisboa, representing 47.3%, 33.7% and 9.8% respectively. The majority of the respondents have a university degree (51.7%), 29.3% have a postgraduate or Master’s degree and 17.1% completed secondary education. Regarding the professions of the respondents, there is a predominance of students (57.1%), followed by managers/ businessman (8.8%) and marketing, communication and sales professionals (6.8%). Concerning the time spent on Facebook, 31.7% of the respondents spend between 1 a 2 hours per day on Facebook, 30.7% of them spend between 30 minutes and 1 hour, 22% spend more than 2 hours on it and only 15.6% use it for less than 30 minutes per day.

Statistical Procedures

One-way repeated measures ANOVA

We conducted this test in order to understand if there are any differences between the building blocks. The RM-ANOVA was conducted jointly with the multivariate test in the statistical software package SPSS ®.

One of the core underlying assumptions in the univariate RM-ANOVA procedure is that of sphericity. Sphericity, a special case of circularity assumptions, checks whether the variance/covariance matrix of the observed data follows a particular pattern.

In order to test sphericity we inspected Mauchly’s Test, which tests for the equivalence of the hypothesised and the observed variance/covariance patterns. The test was highly significant, $W = .278$, $\chi^2(20) = 258,22$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the observed matrix does not have approximately equal variances and equal covariances. So we must accept the hypothesis that the variances of the differences between levels were significantly different. In other words, the assumption of sphericity has been violated.

Several corrections have been proposed, most notably the Greenhouse-Geisser and Huynh-Feldt epsilon corrections. These do not affect the computed F-statistic, but instead raise the critical F value needed to reject the null hypothesis. For our data, these corresponding corrective coefficients were: Greenhouse-Geisser $\epsilon = .72$ and Huynh-Feldt $\epsilon = .74$. Because these values are less than .75 we should use the Greenhouse-Geisser corrected values.

The results show that the ratings of the seven functional building blocks differed significantly, $F(4,34, 885,64) = 159,50$, $p < .001$). The dimension of the functional building blocks that the subjects perceived to have greater degree of importance for the companies is “presence” and less important is “groups”.

Post hoc tests revealed a significant difference between “identity” and “conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, and groups”; between “block conversations” and “sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups”; between “sharing” and “presence, relationships, reputation and groups”; between “presence” and “relationships, reputation and groups”, between “relationships and “reputation and groups” and finally between “reputation” and “groups” (both $p < .001$). “Identity” was not rated significantly differently from “reputation” (both $p > .05$).

RESULTS

119 of the respondents were female (58%) and 86 were male (42%). Characterising the respondents by age group, the majority of participants are concentrated in the age group “15 to 24 years old” (72.7%). The 25 to 34 age group also stood out, representing 17.1% of the respondents. Regarding residence, the majority of respondents were from Porto, Braga and Lisboa, representing 47.3%, 33.7% and 9.8% respectively. The majority of the respondents have a university degree (51.7%), 29.3% have a postgraduate or Master’s degree and 17.1% completed secondary education. Regarding the professions of the respondents, there is a predominance of students (57.1%), followed by managers/ businessman (8.8%) and marketing, communication and sales professionals (6.8%). Concerning the time spent on Facebook, 31.7% of the respondents spend between 1 a 2 hours per day on Facebook, 30.7% of them spend between 30 minutes and 1 hour, 22% spend more than 2 hours on it and only 15.6% use it for less than 30 minutes per day.

The descriptive analysis of the sample is missing

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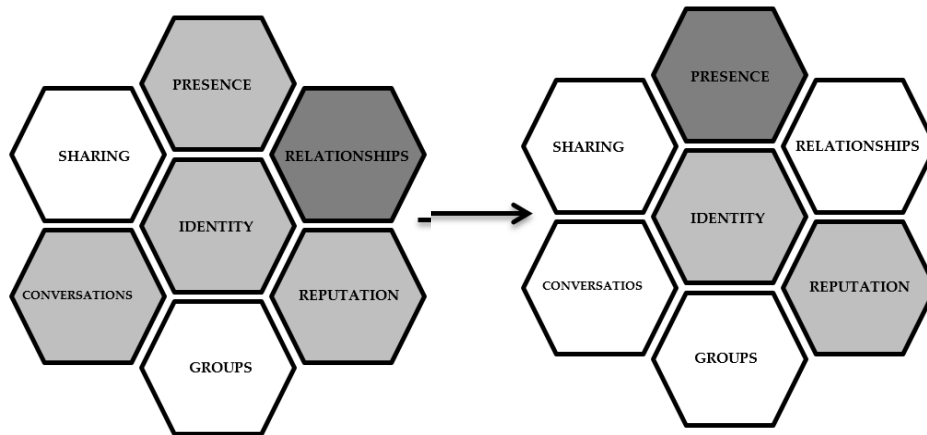


Figure 3 - Honeycomb of Facebook engagement results from theory. Source: Kietzmann et al., 2011

Figure 4 - Honeycomb of Alento's Facebook engagement results from data collection

Based on the seven functional blocks of Social Media engagement with fans by companies, previously described, and on the results obtained through our empirical work, we propose a honeycomb of Alento's Facebook fan page (**figure 3**). The darker the colour of a block, the greater its social media functionality within the site.

As we previously described, a company should first identify and comprehend its social media landscape, through the use of the honeycomb framework in order to disclosure the “social media functionality and engagement implications for understanding” is customers (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249). By analysing this honeycomb framework, we could now understand and develop Alento Facebook fan page strategies.

Afterwards, a company should develop strategies suitable to the different social media functionalities and the purposes of the company. This comprises “focusing on the core honeycomb blocks of a social media activity” that will help the needs of its business (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249). Based on seven functional blocks of Facebook engagement with fans identified in chapter 2 and on the results obtained through our empirical work, we concluded that the core honeycomb blocks of Alento’s Facebook activity are “presence”, “identity” and “reputation”.

Thus, this first action plan aims to define strategies that allow for correcting, improving and implementing other aspects that can help the organisation to fulfil the objectives of this study. In the table below, we can see the strategies that were implemented before and during the internship (between September and January), allocated to each building block.

| | BEFORE | NOW |
|----------------------|---|---|
| IDENTITY | Tabs for homepage, publications, videos, photos, information about Alento (where Alento is, general information, history), likes, online store, contact us. | Exclude online store tab, maintain the others and add tabs for events, careers and job offers. |
| | Few posts about product information, acknowledgements, events, information about changes to website, photos and videos. | Posts containing announcements about special offers, news, daily tips and fun facts. |
| CONVERSATIONS | | Tabs for discussions, quizzes and FAQs. |
| | | Promote calls for involvement, customer comments, polls/poll questions, and product reviews/tips/uses/recipes. |
| SHARING | | Tabs for discussions and reviews. |
| | | Posts about job offers, links, photos, product reviews/ tips/ uses/recipes, promotions, and Video/You Tube links. |
| PRESENCE | Tabs for “contact us”. | Create tabs for FAQs. |
| | | Dedication to posting frequently. |
| RELATIONSHIPS | | Tabs for discussions and reviews. |
| | | Post sharing Holiday greetings, polls/poll questions, and calls for involvement. |
| REPUTATION | | Tabs for photos, videos, events, information about Alento (where Alento is, general information, history). |
| GROUPS | | Analyse the number of likes. |

Table 1 - Strategies implemented before and during the period of our study

In order to analyse the impact of some of these actions, it is important to consider the "statistics" available on Facebook. In this section we can see an overview of the results of these actions and the company's impact on Facebook, through an analysis of certain metrics relevant to this type of action, such as the number of "followers", "interactions", "reach of publications" and "clicks on publications by type". However, there are some aspects that these metrics do not reveal, such as the impact of the creation of new tabs.

| Total Followers of Alento's Facebook Fan Page | |
|--|------|
| September | 3616 |
| October | 3630 |
| November | 3720 |
| December | 3728 |
| January | 3781 |

Table 2 - Number of followers between September 2016 and January 2017 (likes)

| Total number of Fans who interacted with Alento's Facebook Fan Page | |
|--|-----|
| September | 596 |
| October | 696 |
| November | 911 |
| December | 785 |
| January | 805 |

Table 3 - Number of fans who interacted (reactions, comments and shares) with Alento's Facebook Page between September 2016 and January 2017

| Total number of Fans who saw any of Alento's Facebook page's content | |
|---|-------|
| September | 21869 |
| October | 32959 |
| November | 44704 |
| December | 45714 |
| January | 48526 |

Table 4 - The number of people who saw any content associated with Alento's Facebook Page (reach)

| | Link clicks | Other clicks | Photo view | Video play |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| September | 138 | 195 | 167 | 2 |
| October | 285 | 199 | 125 | 5 |
| November | 263 | 271 | 205 | 1 |
| December | 313 | 201 | 133 | 4 |
| January | 340 | 196 | 89 | 1 |

Table 5 - The number of fans who clicked on Alento's Facebook page's content, by type

By analysing this data, Alento is increasing its number of followers, interactions, views and fans who clicked on Alento's Facebook page's content.

Taking into account the results of our empirical work and the metrics obtained in strategies developed during the period of our study, we proposed a greater incidence in strategies allocated to the "presence", "identity" and "reputation" building blocks to Alento. Therefore, it is recommended that a company dedicate its time to posting frequently, analysing the number of likes (to see if likes have increased or decreased) and the reviews of fans. It is also necessary to create posts containing announcements about special offers, product information, news, daily tips and fun facts.

Through our empirical study, we emphasise the importance of some demographic and social aspects. For example, regarding age groups, we concluded that participants aged 25-34 have a greater perception of the importance of the "conversations" block compared to participants aged 15-24, and in perceptions regarding the "sharing" block, participants who are 25-34 years old give more importance to this component compared to those who are 15-24 years old. Thus, when developing Facebook strategies, Alento must consider these age groups. Place of residence is another demographic factor that Alento should contemplate. Participants from Braga have a greater perception of the importance of the "relationships" block when compared to participants living in Lisboa. Also, participants from Porto have a higher perception of the importance of the "reputation" block compared to participants who live in Lisboa.

Furthermore, participants who spend more than two hours a day on Facebook have a higher perception of the importance of the "presence" block compared to those who spend less time per day on Facebook. Therefore, Alento should take this into consideration when managing its Facebook page. Finally, the company should also consider the gender of respondents when developing Facebook strategies for the "relationships" and "conversations" blocks.

Since our study ended in February, we could not analyse the effects of these actions, however, we will propose that Alento study these results in 6 months' time.

One-way ANOVA

We wished to discover if the age group of participants affected the seven different building blocks of social media (identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups). One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) can be used when there is a quantitative outcome with a categorical explanatory variable that has two or more levels. The statistical model for which one-way ANOVA is appropriate is that the (quantitative) outcomes for each group are normally distributed with a common variance (σ^2). The errors (deviations of individual outcomes from the population group means) are assumed to be independent.

For one-way ANOVA, the assumptions are normality, equal variance, and independence of errors. Correct assignment of individuals to groups is sometimes considered to be an implicit assumption. The overall null hypothesis for one-way ANOVA with k groups is $H_0: \mu_1 = \dots = \mu_k$. The alternative hypothesis is that "the population" means are not all equal. The exploratory data analysis (AED) revealed that the assumption of normality is guaranteed (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) as well as homogeneity (Levene Statistic).

In analysing the results, we verified that there is no statistically significant effect of the participants' age at the level of perception of importance of the "identity" block $F(4,200) = .614, p > .05$, there is a statistically significant effect of the participants' age for the "conversations" block $F(4,200) = 3.28, p < .05$, the block "sharing" $F(4, 200) = 3.17, p < .05$, and for the "presence" block $F(4, 200) = 3.75, p < .05$. However, there is no statistically significant effect of age on the "relationships" block $F(4,200) = .848, p > .05$, the "reputation" block $F(4, 200) = .469, p > .05$, or the "groups" block $F(4, 200) = .293, p > .05$.

The Bonferroni correction post hoc tests revealed that participants aged 25-34 have a higher perception of the importance of the “conversations” block compared to participants aged 15-24 ($p < .05$) and in perceptions regarding the “sharing” block. The participants aged 25-34 give more importance to this component compared to those who are 15-24 years old ($p < .05$).

We wished to analyse whether the place of residence of the participants has an effect on the seven different building blocks of social media (identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups). The exploratory data analysis (AED) revealed that the assumption of normality is guaranteed (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) as well as homogeneity (Levene Statistic). The results of Anova confirm that there is a statistically significant effect of the residence of participants in the perceptions of importance of the “relationships” block ($F(8,196) = 2.09, p < .05$) and of the “reputation” block ($F(8,196) = 3.11, p < .05$). However, there is no statistically significant effect for the “identity” ($F(8,196) = .40, p > .05$), “conversations” ($F(8,196) = 1.93, p > .05$), “sharing” ($F(8,196) = .68, p > .05$), “presence” ($F(8,196) = 1.22, p > .05$), and “groups” blocks ($F(8,196) = .97, p > .05$) (Table 13). Post hoc tests with Bonferroni correction reveal that participants from Braga have a greater perception of the importance of the “relationships” block compared to participants living in Lisboa, participants from Porto also have a higher perception of the importance of the “reputation” block compared to participants living in Lisboa.

We wished to analyse whether the time participants spent on Facebook per day had an effect on the seven different building blocks of social media (identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups). The exploratory data analysis (AED) revealed that the assumption of normality is guaranteed (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) as well as homogeneity (Levene Statistic). The Anova results confirm that there is a statistically significant effect of the time participants spend per day on Facebook in their perceptions of the importance of the “presence” block ($F(3,201) = 139.29, p < .05$). However, there is no statistically significant effect of the “identity” ($F(3,201) = 1.49, p > .05$), “conversations” ($F(3,201) = .76, p > .05$), “sharing” ($F(3,201) = 2.06, p > .05$), “relationships” ($F(3,201) = 2.49, p > .05$), “reputation” ($F(3,201) = 2.00, p > .05$) and “groups” blocks ($F(3,201) = 2.38, p > .05$). Post hoc tests with Bonferroni revealed that participants who spent more than two hours a day on Facebook have a greater perception of the importance of the “presence” block compared to those who spend between one hour and two hours and between thirty minutes and an hour.

We wished to analyse whether the participants’ gender has an effect on the seven different building blocks of social media (identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups). The exploratory data analysis (AED) revealed that the assumption of normality is guaranteed (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) as well as homogeneity (Levene Statistic). The Anova results indicate that there is a statistically significant effect of the gender of the participants on the level of perception for “conversations” ($F(1,203) = 5.64, p < .05$), and “relationships” ($F(1,203) = 7.87, p < .05$). However, there is no statistically significant effect on the “identity” ($F(1,203) = .04, p > .05$), “sharing” ($F(1,203) = 2.19, p > .05$), “presence” ($F(1,203) = .11, p > .05$), “reputation” ($F(1,203) = .12, p > .05$), “groups” blocks ($F(1,203) = 1.79, p > .05$). In the “conversations” block men have a higher average than women, as well as in the “relationships” block.

DISCUSSION

H1: The “relationships” block has a positive influence on how a company should effectively engage with its Facebook fan page

Contrary to what was expected, when examining the Alento Facebook fan page, “relationships” was not the most important block of the honeycomb. Surprisingly, it was one of the least important blocks of the honeycomb.

“Relationships” refer to how people are connected to each other on social media. “Firms seeking to engage with their users must understand how they can maintain or build relationships or both” (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 246). Nevertheless, respondents agreed that interacting with the brand does not help them to develop a relationship with others who use the same brand. In addition, their interaction with brands on Facebook does not allow them to increase their social involvement. However, this block had a positive influence on how companies should effectively engage with their Facebook fan page.

H2: The “presence” block has a positive influence on how a company should effectively engage with its Facebook fan page.

Based on our quantitative research, surprisingly “presence” was the most important block of the honeycomb, which makes us agree with this proposition. As Kietzmann et al. (2011) state, “presence refers to the ability of one user to know if other users are available” (p. 245). According to our results, Alento’s Facebook fan page users usually click on a Chat button to indicate that they are online and available to communicate with other users. As stated by the authors, “presence” implies that “firms need to pay attention to the relative importance of user availability and user location” (p. 245). Our results also indicated that most of respondents usually state where they are on Facebook. Therefore, we concluded that the “presence” block has a positive influence on how companies should effectively engage with their Facebook fan page.

Another direct implication of “presence” is that it is also linked to other functional blocks in the honeycomb framework, including “conversations” and “relationships”. However, we did not verify this information, as the tests performed were not statistically significant.

H3: The “identity” block has a positive influence on how a company should effectively engage with its Facebook fan page.

Considering our results, “identity” had a positive influence on Facebook engagement by companies and was one of the second most important blocks in Facebook engagement with fans by companies. The “identity” functional block represents “the extent to which users reveal their identities in a social media setting. This can include disclosing information such as name, age, gender, profession, location, and also information that portrays users in certain ways” (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 243). According to our results, the majority of Alento Facebook fan users were willing to share their real name, their age and their gender. However, they were not willing to share their address, their thoughts and feelings. One major implication of this building block is privacy, but most of the respondents had a neutral attitude towards the invasion of their privacy by companies.

H4: The “conversations” block has a positive influence on how a company should effectively engage with its Facebook fan page.

Kietzmann et al. (2011) state that the “conversations” block of the framework represents “the extent to which users communicate with other users in a social media setting” (p. 244). According to the authors, this is one of the second most important blocks, however, our results demonstrated that this is one of the least important blocks of Facebook engagement with fans by companies. Most respondents agreed that their interaction with brands on Facebook allowed them to better understand the brand. However, they had a neutral opinion about the sentences “I like to interact with brands on Facebook because it allows me to find out the opinions of other consumers about the brand” and “my interaction with brands on Facebook gives me

convenient access to information about brands, as the brand's posts appear directly on my news feed". Furthermore, they do not usually comment on the brand's posts. However, "conversations" had a positive influence on how companies should effectively engage with their Facebook fan page.

H5: The "reputation" block has a positive influence on how a company should effectively engage with its Facebook fan page.

According to Kietzmann et al. (2011) "reputation" refers to the ability of users to identify the standing of others within a social media network. "Reputation has significant implications on how companies should effectively engage with social media" (p. 247). According to the authors, this is one of the second most important blocks and we can verify that information. Most respondents were more likely to join a brand page on Facebook that has quality posts and a good rating, so we consider the "reputation" block as having a positive influence on how companies should effectively engage with their Facebook fan page.

H6: The "sharing" block has a positive influence on how a company should effectively engage with its Facebook fan page.

According to Kietzmann et al. (2011) "sharing" refers to the sending and receiving of content between users which could include photos, comments, videos, etc. Regarding this block, there are two implications that companies should evaluate: "what objects of sociality their users have in common, or identify new objects that can mediate their shared interests, and the degree to which the object can or should be shared" (p.245). Most of our respondents do not usually share brand posts. The authors considered this one of the least important blocks, and our results confirmed this. Therefore, we concluded that the "sharing" block has a positive influence on how companies should effectively engage with their Facebook fan page.

H7: The "groups" block has a positive influence on how a company should effectively engage with its Facebook fan page.

Kietzmann et al. (2011) state "groups" refer to "the ability of users to form communities and sub-communities. Facebook users who "like" a certain brand are identifying themselves as members of a community of users who "like" the same brand" (p. 247). According to the authors, this is one of the least important blocks of Facebook engagement with fans and our results indicated that by interacting with the brand on Facebook, the respondents do not feel they are part of a community. Moreover, they do not join a brand page on Facebook to fit in with a group of people. However, the authors consider this one of the least important blocks and our results confirmed this. The "groups" block had a positive influence on how companies should effectively engage with its Facebook fan page.

The importance of the seven functional building blocks of Alento's Facebook fan page differ across age groups, residence, time spent on Facebook per day and gender.

As we previously described, young users have more Facebook friends, spend more time online and participate in the different activities available on Facebook. In contrast, older users are most likely to engage in family activities in the online environment. For that reason, we tried to understand if the importance of the seven functional building blocks of Alento's Facebook fan page differs across age groups. Thus, we concluded that participants aged 25-34 have a greater perception of the importance of the "conversations" block compared to participants aged 15-24. Regarding the "sharing" block, participants who are 25-34 years old gave more importance to this component compared to those aged 15-24.

We also analysed if the city of residence of the participants affected the importance of the seven functional building blocks of Alento's Facebook fan page. Through the analysis of

our results, we found that participants from Lisboa had a greater perception of the importance of “relationships” when compared to participants living in Porto. Also, participants from Lisboa had a greater perception of the importance of “reputation” when compared to participants living in Porto.

Since users can spend their time on Facebook doing many different activities, we analysed the importance of the seven functional building blocks of Alento’s Facebook fan page to see if it differed across time spent on Facebook per day. However, our results indicated that only the “presence” building block differs across time spent on Facebook per day.

As we previously mentioned, there are gender differences in the use of SNS. Therefore, we wanted to study if the importance of the seven functional building blocks of Alento’s Facebook fan page differed across gender. However, our results indicated that only the “relationships” and “conversations” building blocks differ across gender.

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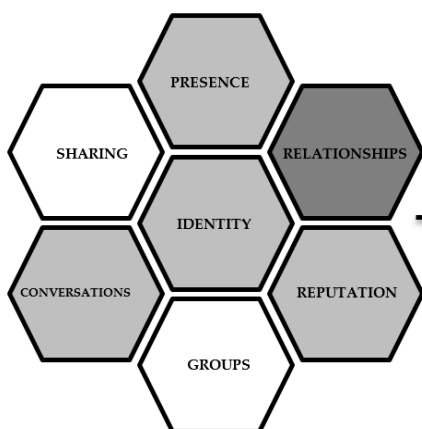


Figure 5 - Honeycomb of Facebook engagement results from theory. Source: Kietzmann et al., 2011

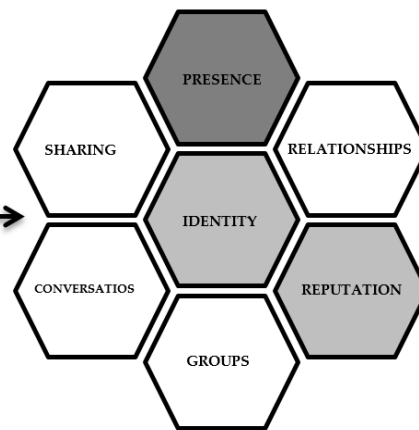


Figure 6 - Honeycomb of Alento’s Facebook engagement results from data collection

Based on the seven functional blocks of Social Media engagement with fans by companies, previously described, and on the results obtained through our empirical work, we propose a honeycomb of Alento’s Facebook fan page (**figure 3**). The darker the colour of a block, the greater its social media functionality within the site.

As we previously described, a company should first identify and comprehend its social media landscape, through the use of the honeycomb framework in order to disclosure the “social media functionality and engagement implications for understanding” is customers (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249). By analysing this honeycomb framework, we could now understand and develop Alento Facebook fan page strategies.

Afterwards, a company should develop strategies suitable to the different social media functionalities and the purposes of the company. This comprises “focusing on the core honeycomb blocks of a social media activity” that will help the needs of its business (Kietzmann

et al., 2011, p. 249). Based on seven functional blocks of Facebook engagement with fans identified in chapter 2 and on the results obtained through our empirical work, we concluded that the core honeycomb blocks of Alento’s Facebook activity are “presence”, “identity” and “reputation”.

Thus, this first action plan aims to define strategies that allow for correcting, improving and implementing other aspects that can help the organisation to fulfil the objectives of this study. In the table below, we can see the strategies that were implemented before and during the internship (between September and January), allocated to each building block.

| | BEFORE | NOW |
|----------------------|---|---|
| IDENTITY | Tabs for homepage, publications, videos, photos, information about Alento (where Alento is, general information, history), likes, online store, contact us. | Exclude online store tab, maintain the others and add tabs for events, careers and job offers. |
| | Few posts about product information, acknowledgements, events, information about changes to website, photos and videos. | Posts containing announcements about special offers, news, daily tips and fun facts. |
| CONVERSATIONS | | Tabs for discussions, quizzes and FAQs. |
| | | Promote calls for involvement, customer comments, polls/poll questions, and product reviews/tips/uses/recipes. |
| SHARING | | Tabs for discussions and reviews. |
| | | Posts about job offers, links, photos, product reviews/ tips/ uses/recipes, promotions, and Video/You Tube links. |
| PRESENCE | Tabs for “contact us”. | Create tabs for FAQs. |
| | | Dedication to posting frequently. |
| RELATIONSHIPS | | Tabs for discussions and reviews. |
| | | Post sharing Holiday greetings, polls/poll questions, and calls for involvement. |
| REPUTATION | | Tabs for photos, videos, events, information about Alento (where Alento is, general information, history). |
| GROUPS | | Analyse the number of likes. |

Table 6 - Strategies implemented before and during the period of our study

In order to analyse the impact of some of these actions, it is important to consider the "statistics" available on Facebook. In this section we can see an overview of the results of these actions and the company's impact on Facebook, through an analysis of certain metrics relevant to this type of action, such as the number of "followers", “interactions”, “reach of publications” and “clicks on publications by type”. However, there are some aspects that these metrics do not reveal, such as the impact of the creation of new tabs.

| Total Followers of Alento’s Facebook Fan Page | |
|--|------|
| September | 3616 |
| October | 3630 |
| November | 3720 |
| December | 3728 |
| January | 3781 |

Table 7 - Number of followers between September 2016 and January 2017 (likes)

| | Total number of Fans who interacted with Alento’s Facebook Fan Page |
|------------------|--|
| September | 596 |
| October | 696 |
| November | 911 |
| December | 785 |
| January | 805 |

Table 8 - Number of fans who interacted (reactions, comments and shares) with Alento’s Facebook Page between September 2016 and January 2017

| | Total number of Fans who saw any of Alento’s Facebook page’s content |
|------------------|---|
| September | 21869 |
| October | 32959 |
| November | 44704 |
| December | 45714 |
| January | 48526 |

Table 9 - The number of people who saw any content associated with Alento’s Facebook Page (reach)

| | Link clicks | Other clicks | Photo view | Video play |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| September | 138 | 195 | 167 | 2 |
| October | 285 | 199 | 125 | 5 |
| November | 263 | 271 | 205 | 1 |
| December | 313 | 201 | 133 | 4 |
| January | 340 | 196 | 89 | 1 |

Table 10 - The number of fans who clicked on Alento’s Facebook page’s content, by type

By analysing this data, Alento is increasing its number of followers, interactions, views and fans who clicked on Alento’s Facebook page’s content.

Taking into account the results of our empirical work and the metrics obtained in strategies developed during the period of our study, we proposed a greater incidence in strategies allocated to the “presence”, “identity” and “reputation” building blocks to Alento. Therefore, it is recommended that a company dedicate its time to posting frequently, analysing the number of likes (to see if likes have increased or decreased) and the reviews of fans. It is also necessary to create posts containing announcements about special offers, product information, news, daily tips and fun facts.

Through our empirical study, we emphasise the importance of some demographic and social aspects. For example, regarding age groups, we concluded that participants aged 25-34 have a greater perception of the importance of the “conversations” block compared to participants aged 15-24, and in perceptions regarding the “sharing” block, participants who are 25-34 years old give more importance to this component compared to those who are 15-24 years old. Thus, when developing Facebook strategies, Alento must consider these age groups. Place of residence is another demographic factor that Alento should contemplate. Participants

from Braga have a greater perception of the importance of the “relationships” block when compared to participants living in Lisboa. Also, participants from Porto have a higher perception of the importance of the “reputation” block compared to participants who live in Lisboa.

Furthermore, participants who spend more than two hours a day on Facebook have a higher perception of the importance of the "presence" block compared to those who spend less time per day on Facebook. Therefore, Alento should take this into consideration when managing its Facebook page. Finally, the company should also consider the gender of respondents when developing Facebook strategies for the “relationships” and “conversations” blocks.

Since our study ended in February, we could not analyse the effects of these actions, however, we will propose that Alento study these results in 6 months’ time.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this research was providing a solution for a problem raised by Alento, which was to understand how the company should engage with its official Facebook page.

This investigation explored the seven functional building blocks of social media engagement proposed by Kietzmann et al. (2011): identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups. We tried to find out which of the functional blocks of social media engagement were more important for Alento’s Facebook fan page in order to understand how the company should engage with it. Other variables were also studied, such as “age”, “groups”, “education level”, “profession”, “residence”, “time spent on Facebook per day” and “gender” of Alento Facebook fans, to understand their perception of the importance of “functional building blocks of Alento’s Facebook engagement”.

Consequently, we conducted a survey among 205 Alento Facebook fans, to explore Alento’s Facebook fans’ habits when using Facebook, with the intention of understanding the extent to which Alento should focus on some or all of the functional building blocks of Facebook engagement. Results indicated that, contrary to what was expected; the most important functional building blocks for Alento’s Facebook fan page’s engagement were “presence”, “identity” and “reputation”. Furthermore, there are some factors that Alento should consider when engaging with its Facebook page, such as the 25-34 age group when developing strategies to increase “conversations” and “sharing”. Regarding place of residence, Alento must consider participants from “Braga” and “Porto” when developing strategies for “relationships” and “reputation”, respectively. Concerning time spent on Facebook per day, participants who spent more than two hours a day on Facebook had a greater perception of the importance of the "presence" block compared to those who spent less time on Facebook. Finally, the company should also consider gender when developing strategies for the “relationships” and “conversations” functional building blocks of Alento’s Facebook engagement.

In parallel, we analysed some Alento Facebook strategies developed during the period of 5 months, through "statistics" available on Facebook. Our results indicated that Alento’s number of followers was increasing, as well as interactions, views and fans that clicked on Alento’s Facebook page’s content. Considering the results obtained in our empirical study, we concluded that Alento should focus on the “presence”, “identity” and “reputation” functional building blocks of Facebook engagement. Additionally, Alento must implement Facebook strategies developed between September and January that focused on these blocks, considering some demographic and social factors.

Since our study ended in January, we could not analyse the effects of these strategies, however, we suggested that Alento study these results in 6 months’ time.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The main limitation this study presents is that it cannot be generalised to other companies. This investigation was developed in an organisational context, so the results obtained were related to the case of the Alento Company. For future development, it is suggested that the survey based on the framework developed by Kietzmann et al. (2011) is given to on a large number of Portuguese people in order to find out which of the functional blocks of Facebook engagement are more important for Portuguese Facebook fan pages, in order to understand how Portuguese companies should engage with this social media.

There were also some limitations related to the sample, since we only obtained 205 responses. Therefore, the second suggestion for future investigations would be to conduct the survey on a larger number of people. Although variables such as “age groups”, “residence”, “time spent on Facebook per day” and “gender” were not included in the research model, we regard them as important concepts to study. Therefore, we intend to assess if there is an effect of these variables (control variables) on the perception of the importance of the seven different building blocks of Facebook fan page engagement (identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups), but opted not to formulate any specific propositions regarding this influence. To ascertain this influence it is necessary to determine if the importance of each of the seven functional building blocks of Alento’s Facebook fan page differ across this variables.

We also had some time restrictions, since our study ended in January. We could not analyse the effects of the strategies we proposed to the company, however, we suggested that Alento study the results in 6 months’ time.

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