Social media and the world of work

A strategic approach to employees' participation in social media

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the risks and benefits of employees' social media use for an organization's reputation, and delivers suggestions for a strategic management approach.

Design/methodology/approach – The findings of this research paper are based on a comprehensive literature review and supported by a leading practice example.

Findings – Through social media, employees function as powerful brand ambassadors who shape reputation with everything they do and say online. This requires a strategic management approach to employees' social media use, including research, internet access at the workplace, a strong commitment from the C-suite, the establishment of social media teams, the implementation of guidelines and policies, training and education, integration, as well as goal setting and measurement. These eight key steps will help communications professionals to better prevent the risks and leverage the benefits of their employees' participation in the social web.
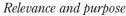
Originality/value – This research project is built upon significant deficits in the management approach to employees' social media use and provides eight strategic key steps to better handle employees' participation in social conversations.

Keywords Social media, Strategic management, Internal communications, Reputation management, Employees involvement, Employee social media use

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

As one of the most defining developments of our time, social media has fundamentally changed people's private and professional lives. It is no longer a trend or playground for first movers, but communications professionals' most important challenge in the twenty-first century.

Relevance and purpose

Literature, research and practitioners are aware of the importance of employees' social media use in the reputation management process. There are many suggestions on how organizations should manage the risks and benefits of their employees' participation in social media in order to protect their reputation, but they often focus on tactical measures, rather than on strategic management.

The thesis of this research paper claims that communications professionals need to manage employees' social conversations strategically by implementing eight key steps: research, unrestricted internet access at the workplace, a strong commitment from senior management (C-suite), the establishment of social media teams, the implementation of guidelines and policies, the training and education of employees, integration, as well as goal setting and measurement.

The purpose of the present research project is to investigate the benefits and risks of employees' social media use, and how organizations can better manage the challenges this brings to their business. The goal of this paper is to provide recommendations on how organizations can further develop their efforts in managing employees' social media use to become a well-founded strategic management approach.

Method
In order to investigate employees' social media use today, and to provide recommendations for a strategic management approach, the present research paper begins with a comprehensive literature review which explores the changes social media has brought to the workforce, as well as the importance and the risks of employees' social media use for organizations.

Provided with these insights, the second part of this research paper provides eight key steps for a strategic management approach to employees' participation in the social web. Therefore, the #domosocial project will be featured as a leading practice example. #domosocial was developed by the business intelligence start-up company Domo, and was analyzed during qualitative interviews with one of Domo's social media professionals.

The benefits of employees' social media use
Today, employees' participation in social media is more important than ever before as they embody an organization's corporate character and shape its reputation by functioning as powerful representatives of their organizations.

Employees' social media use is essential in leveraging the benefits social media brings to an organization as a whole (McKinsey Quarterly, 2009). One reason employees play such an important role in the social media era is their function as corporate advocates and brand ambassadors. They know their company's business and spirit well, which makes them credible and authentic representatives of their organization (Agresta and Bonin, 2011). Their participation in social media is inevitable and impossible to eliminate. As Grunig (2009) details, corporate communication practitioners have never truly been in control over their messages, but digital media make control of communication largely impossible, causing a company's culture to become increasingly transparent online as employees' social media activities make an organization's values, behaviors, beliefs, and overall organizational character visible to stakeholders. This makes their social media use a central contributor to an organization's reputation (Arthur W. Page Society, 2012; Brito, 2012). Thereby, social media amplifies their reach as external communicators by enabling them to form relationships with potential customers, friends, shareowners, vendors, business partners, public officials, and future talent, as well as nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations anywhere in the world (Accenture, 2010; Arthur W. Page Society, 2007; Fed Ex & Ketchum, 2012; Grunig, 2009). This is why the importance of employees as trusted organizational spokespersons and brand ambassadors has skyrocketed over the past few years (Edelman, 2010, p. 21, 2012, p. 40).

The majority of employers associate employees' function as brand ambassadors with business benefits (Manpower Inc, 2010). Thereby, an organization's reputation management can benefit the most as employees' social media activities can positively influence the perception of the organization among key target audiences, support thought leadership, and advocate for brands, products, and the organization as a whole. Furthermore, employees' participation in social media increases the

organization's visibility and reach, as they share their messages with significant networks online. Another benefit of employees' social media use is that they can build and foster valuable relationships with key target audiences such as customers, future talent, community members or investors. Thereby, they demonstrate transparency and authentically embody an organization's corporate character. Not least, social media allows employees to keep up with news from their industry and profession, which further develops their expertise and fosters innovation.

However, the power social media gives to employees' role as external communicators and brand ambassadors does not come without risks, as it also can backfire on an organization.

The risks of employees' social media use

It is inevitable that employees, intentionally or not, will participate in online conversations about the brands and companies they work for. This poses not only reputational and legal risks for organizations, but also risks for employees' careers.

Following Smith *et al.* (2010) there are three main problems that make social media difficult for organizations to address both externally and internally. First, social media requires organizations to give up control, since the use of social media cannot be fully regulated, monitored or controlled, nor its impact stopped or undone (Grunig, 2009, p. 5). Social media provides a public stage for employees to create and exchange content regardless of communications strategies, defined brand voices, or other regulations (Agresta and Bonin, 2011). This poses significant risks that can lead to costly and protracted consequences, including loss of employee productivity, message and brand voice inconsistency, workplace lawsuits, regulatory audits and fines, public relations and social media crises, loss of confidential data, mismanaged and misplaced business records, exposure of company secrets, and security breaches (Agresta and Bonin, 2011; DLA Piper, 2011; Flynn, 2012; Goodman and Hirsch, 2010; Manpower Inc, 2010). Second, organizations have to accept that social media is everywhere; transcending geographic, demographic, and economic boundaries while being amplified via viral effects (Smith *et al.*, 2010, p. 5). Hence, social media risks can have wide-reaching effects on the reputation of a company or an entire industry. Once something is said on social media, it may last forever and be accessible to everyone, including customers, journalists, regulators, and competitors (Agresta and Bonin, 2011). The scale of employees' influence through social media becomes clear considering the enormous reach of workforces which can cause serious social media crises (Agresta and Bonin, 2011; Hampton *et al.*, 2012).

Lastly, social media is highly emotional and functional (Smith *et al.*, 2010, p. 5). It is a space where employees express both happiness and frustration, and force organizations to make decisions much more quickly and with less precise information. It transforms the internet to a real-time communications medium that requires around-the-clock-monitoring and fast, yet high-quality responses.

With all these risks, employees' participation in social media can cause reputational damage, trigger lawsuits, cause humiliation, crush credibility, destroy careers, create electronic business records, and lead to productivity losses (Flynn, 2012, pp. 4-6).

Eight steps for a strategic management approach to employees' social media use

Although independent research in the field of employees' social media use is scarce, there are many best practice examples, guidelines and practical tips on how organizations

should address their employees' participation in social media (e.g. Altimeter, 2011; Brito, 2012; DLA piper, 2011; Flynn, 2012; SilkRoad, 2012, p. 5; Weber Shandwick and Forbes Insights, 2011). A closer look at these suggestions, however, reveals that they focus on a few tactical measures. The following sections merge these suggestions into eight key steps for a strategic management approach to employees' participation in social media.

All recommendations will be supported by literature and the leading practice example #domosocial, which was developed by the business intelligence start-up company Domo. The purpose of Domo's #domosocial project was to help its employees adopt social media at the workplace. The program was mandatory for every employee, and included a set of social media tasks that needed to be completed over the course of eight weeks, for example updating one's Facebook profile to include the timeline, using a QR code, downloading three apps from the iTunes store, completing one's LinkedIn profile, or creating three circles on Google +, to mention a few (Domo, 2012b).

Each completed task earned an employee a badge. Employees who had completed all badges were rewarded with one additional day off from work, as well as a $100 cash reward. In addition, Domo asked its employees to nominate and vote for 13 Individual Super Star Awards such as the Best Blogger Award, or the Coolest Follower On Twitter Award. Each of these awards included prize money of $500. Another $10,000 award was given to the employee with the most net followers (Domo, 2012b).

The #domosocial project is outstanding because it is a unique approach to strategically manage employees' social media use in order to prevent the inherent risks and leverage the potential benefits.

Research
The first step in managing employees' social media use is to conduct research in order to make informed, strategic decisions. Even though the importance of research for strategic communications programs generally is common knowledge, it is hardly addressed in the context of managing employees' participation in social media.

Flynn elaborates on the importance of social media policy audits in order to determine the risks and rules an organization's social media policy should address (2012, pp. 133-139). However, this is too short-sighted, since managing employees' social media use is not only about preventing risks through rules, but leveraging benefits through encouragement and motivation. This is why social media audits also should aim to gain insights into employees' attitudes toward social media, why, what for, and how they use it, as well as their knowledge gaps, interests and concerns. Furthermore, social media audits should assess how employees and executives see their company's corporate culture and character in order to identify and address inconsistencies.

Research was also an important part of the #domosocial project. Before it started, Domo conducted a baseline quiz to measure its employees' social IQ (Hawkins, personal communication, November 8, 2012). This gave Domo not only a reference point for future measurement, but also insights into its employees' knowledge about social media, and their level of comfort and familiarity with the social web. Companies should ask their employees also about their understanding of the company's corporate character, as well as their interests and concerns regarding social media in order to identify inconsistencies in how employees perceive their company, and to address potential weaknesses.

Access
While today most organizations offer technical access to social media at the workplace (Linke and Zerfass, 2012, p. 24), many still believe that blocking or restricting social

networking sites can help them protect their reputation (SilkRoad, 2012, p. 5). This is a fatal misconception, as banning social media at the workplace only shifts the problem, but does not provide a solution to the inherent risks. This is why Qualman compares banning social media to banning phones or paper and pens because employees could make a personal phone call or take a not work related note (2011, p. 251). Organizations also have to be aware of the fact that mobile devices allow employees to access social media regardless of workplace restrictions. If they cannot use social media via their work devices, they will use it through their own gadgets, bringing the social web in through the back door (Flynn, 2012, p. xvi). Consequently, blocking or restricting social media at work today is unrealistic, and will in no way help organizations prevent their employees from participating in social conversations (Altimeter, 2011; Brito, 2012; Flynn, 2012; SilkRoad, 2012).

Unrestricted access to social media was an important element of the #domosocial project, since employees were asked to complete their social media tasks during their work time using all kinds of channels and platforms. This shows that Domo understands that social media is an essential part of its employees' private and professional lives that cannot – and should not – be restricted. Instead of blocking social media, Domo launched the #domosocial project in order to actively prevent the risks and leverage the benefits. This helped Domo to become a part of their employees' social conversations and allowed the company to monitor, measure, and shape their employees' participation in social media.

Commitment

Experts from literature, research and practice agree that a strong commitment from an organization's executives and leaders is an essential requirement in handling employees' social media use, as the process of embracing social media at the workplace has to start at the core of an organization's culture.

Therefore, management representatives should serve as the public face of an organization's commitment to social media (Flynn, 2012, p. 124). Their credibility, trustworthiness and authority will help gain support for the changes social media brings to an organization (Brito, 2012, p. 20). It will signal to employees that the organization is truly committed to managing the risks of social media while ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory and organizational rules (Flynn, 2012, p. 124). If executives do not use the same social media vehicles as their employees, they will not be part of the social conversations and unable to manage them. While in theory, the importance of executives' commitment to social media is common knowledge, research showed that there is a huge deficit in this area (Ceo.com, 2012, p. 2; Linke and Zerfass, 2012, p. 24).

The strong commitment from Domo's CEO makes the #domosocial project an outstanding leading practice example. As the company's leader, James understands that his commitment to social media is an important motivational factor for Domo's employees. By embracing social media at the workplace himself, he was able to serve as the public face of #domosocial, and to gain employees' acceptance and support for the changes #domosocial brought to their everyday work. At the same time, his strong commitment also led to several interview opportunities which resulted in a number of media placements and blog posts[1].

However, making the participation in social media programs like #domosocial a condition of employment might not work in every company. Factors like the popularity of the CEO, company size, average age of the workforce, or employees'

general interest in and familiarity with new technologies influence the success of extensive social media projects enormously. Instead of fostering employee engagement online, the mandatory participation in such a project could lead to frustration and resistance which in turn would have counter-productive effects on employees' social media use and the company's reputation.

To avoid these risks, organizations should plan their social media program carefully, including options for employees who do not want to participate in the social web, as well as incentives and training for those employees who do want to embrace social media at the workplace. Nevertheless, social media policies, guidelines and basic social media training should be mandatory for all employees.

Social media team

An organization's social media team provides guidance and support for employees and executives, and is responsible for the establishment and execution of social media guidelines and policies, best practice examples and social media training, and reports into the marketing department (Altimeter, 2011; Brito, 2012; Fed Ex & Ketchum, 2012; Flynn, 2012). Therefore, the social media team has to be equipped with experience in social media technologies and management skills, as well as a profound understanding of the organization's corporate culture and character, its products and services, as well as its departments, structures and hierarchies.

This is why the ideal social media team is cross-functional and consists of – or at least collaborates with – representatives from different departments, including marketing, public relations, internal communications, sales, customer service, and senior management to ensure diverse expertise and reach.

The social media team formed by Domo was responsible for planning and implementing the #domosocial project from its inception to today. The #domosocial team was headed by the company's communications department, but worked cross-functionally and collaborated with a variety of different departments, including human resources, IT, and public relations. It provided employees with instructions, best practices and training to help them succeed in social media (Hawkins, personal communication, November 8, 2012). This makes #domosocial a good example of how a dedicated team can build the backbone of a company's social media program.

Guidelines and policies

The purpose of social media guidelines and policies is to communicate organizational, legal, and regulatory rules to employees and executives of all levels, to provide a clear understanding of appropriate and lawful social media use at the workplace, and to help organizations demonstrate to courts, regulators, and other stakeholder groups that they are truly committed to operating a civil, compliant and correct business environment (Altimeter, 2011, pp. 6-8; Flynn, 2012, pp. 170-175). Thereby, social media policies and guidelines help to avoid productivity losses, and protect an organization's reputation, intellectual property and other proprietary information (Manpower Inc., 2010).

Research delivers highly inconsistent information about the implementation of social media policies and guidelines in current practice. Figures range from a minimum as low as 20 percent (Manpower Inc., 2010, p. 3) to a maximum of 57 percent (PayScale, 2011, p. 19), with other studies delivering numbers in between these two ranges (Linke and Zerfass, 2012, p. 22; SilkRoad, 2012, p. 10; Weber Shandwick & Forbes Insights, 2011, p. 13; Zerfass *et al.*, 2011, p. 96). The general importance of social media policies and guidelines for business success, however, is beyond dispute.

Domo's (2012a) *Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices* are a good example for effective social media policies. They provide employees with general information about what the social media landscape looks like, where and to whom the policies apply, and who owns the company's social media accounts. They also explain employees' responsibilities in the social web, provide best practices, and identify social media do's and don'ts. They consist of concise bullet points and short, straightforward sentences, use conversational English, and give concrete examples wherever possible. This makes Domo's social media guidelines easy to understand, engaging and relevant.

Social media guidelines should also cover the risks employees' social media use poses for the company and its employees, as well as measures of disciplinary action in case of violation, which often is not sufficiently covered (Linke and Zerfass, 2012, p. 24). Domo commented that "violations will be looked at in context and we will respond in the way we think is the most appropriate manner. Thankfully we haven't had to deal with this yet" (Hawkins, personal communication, November 8, 2012).

Furthermore, social media guidelines should address the company's corporate character. The corporate character is the basis for all communications, and determines how the company acts, talks, and behaves on- and offline. To foster a consistent understanding of this character among employees, social media guidelines should elaborate on the company's values, shared beliefs, corporate identity, and brand voice.

Linke and Zerfass (2012, p. 23) point out that one of the biggest challenges is to balance the necessity for regulations with the flexibility needed for authentic social media communication. This is why the development of social media guidelines requires different phases, including careful planning, thorough implementation, and continuous revising. To ensure successful change management, employees should be involved in each of these stages.

Training and education

Social media guidelines and policies need to be reinforced by education (Altimeter, 2011, p. 16; Brito, 2012, p. 33; DLA piper, 2011, p. 23; SilkRoad, 2012, p. 15). Thereby, social media training should target employees and executives at all levels, use a variety of onsite, online and interactive methods, and incorporate a certification system (Flynn, 2012, pp. 201-210). The goal of every social media training should be to educate employees about their social media use at work, its risks, rules, policies, and procedures (Flynn, 2012, p. 201). Additionally, social media training should address the benefits and opportunities of employees' participation in the social web, and ensure that employees understand and embrace their organization's corporate character, its values, beliefs and mission. Not least, social media training should provide technical know-how about the function and purpose of different social media platforms, as well as best practice examples of appropriate social media communication. To reach these goals, social media training needs to be an ongoing education effort, rather than a one-time event (Altimeter, 2011, p. 10; Flynn, 2012, p. 205).

In current practice, organizations have a lot of catching-up to do, since most of them do not have proper training and certification processes in place (Linke and Zerfass, 2012, p. 24; SilkRoad, 2012, p. 10; Zerfass *et al.*, 2011). This is another aspect that makes Domo a leading practice example. Domo held two mandatory training sessions; one about the fundamentals of social media, and another one about the company's social media guidelines and recommended best practices. In addition to the training sessions, all materials and resources were available for employees online.

These training sessions were essential steps in starting off the #domosocial project. However, to keep a company's employees engaged and to reinforce its social media guidelines, an ongoing training approach needs to be put in place. Employees – especially technology savvy Millennials – are unlikely to pay attention to a lifeless set of guidelines, as social media use is an essential part of their personal and professional lives that is often taken for granted. Instead, employees need to be engaged and motivated through interactive training using different online and offline methods such as face-to-face meetings, intranet resources, or video content.

The social media tasks along with the badges and reward system Domo developed for the #domosocial project are an excellent way of taking social media training beyond the classroom. They provide intrinsic motivational factors such as recognition and appreciation, as well as extrinsic motivational factors such as financial rewards and additional vacation days. They create a competitive yet positive atmosphere and let employees see their success evolve gradually over a long period of time, which keeps them engaged and motivated. At the same time, Domo's task and badge system serves as a model for an effective certification system which every new employee has to go through. Another advantage is that Domo's badge and rewards system can be extended as needed. For example, Domo regularly introduces new badges to keep their employees active and to further develop their social media skills (Hawkins, personal communication, November 8).

Everything that goes beyond a basic social media certification process based on social media policies and trainings should be voluntary. In addition, training should always involve employees by asking them for suggestions and feedback. Today, employees are demanding participation in business decisions and organizational change, and expect that their opinions are being heard and appreciated. If senior managers ignore lower-level employees in their decision making process, they will feel alienated and might be unwilling to accept change (Argenti, 2009, p. 184). Therefore, a company's social media team should value employees' ideas and try to implement their suggestions. Therefore, managing employees' social media use has to be a process based on two-way communication.

Integration
The integration of employees' social media use into an organization's overall communication and marketing strategy helps to create seamless communications programs with consistent messages. By connecting all communications efforts with one another, communications professionals can maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of these measures by creating and leveraging valuable synergy effects. To achieve the integration of employees' social media use, the social media team has to work closely together with different departments, such as internal communications, marketing, research and development, public relations and human resources. For example, integrating employees' social media use into an organization's internal communications could be achieved through a Share Online button in employee newsletters or intranet articles. This share button would encourage employees to share strategic messages, stories or news with their social networks online. Appropriate topics include newly launched marketing campaigns, media placements, general company news; quotes form executives, open positions, new products, industry insights, trend forecasts, or executives' views on industry related events of the day. Confidential or unpublished information should be highlighted in the same way to prevent them from being spread online.

Domo ensured program integration through a close collaboration between the social media team and other departments. For example, #domosocial is closely intertwined with the company's human resources practice. Not only did the human resources team help to establish Domo's social media guidelines and best practice examples, but it also incorporated the #domosocial project into the hiring process by requiring every newly hired employee to go through the entire project in order to get certified (Hawkins, personal communication, November 8 and December 7 2012). Another example is the integration of the #domosocial experiment into the company's public relations efforts. The press coverage about #domosocial and Domo in general was shared with employees, who in turn shared the articles with their social networks. This synergy effect amplified the digital footprint of Domo's public relations efforts and increased its effectiveness.

Another area that requires careful integration and alignment is customer service. Employees of all levels can help provide this service as they connect and interact with customers on social media. To leverage the benefits of employees' social media use for customer service, social media programs should include guidelines on how its employees should engage with customers, what kind of problems they can help solve themselves, and what issues they should forward to a customer service member. In the same way, companies should provide department specific guidelines for all other practice areas. For example, public relations professionals should be equipped with information on how to build relationships with reporters, while members of the human resources department should be advised on how to engage with potential employees.

Goal setting and measurement
Defining specific, measurable, timely, and realistic goals is a key step in managing the risks and benefits of employees' participation in social media, just as in managing any other communications activity. Strategic goals help an organization's social media team to identify useful tactics that lead to the desired results, to measure the success of the developed tactics, and to adjust their strategy if needed. Measuring these goals is challenging, but imperative to determine the outcome and success of the implemented tactics. To ensure effectiveness and efficiency, the social media team has to identify meaningful metrics and measurement processes to pre- and post-evaluate all measures.

The #domosocial project had three goals. The first goal was an average 90 percent completion of all social media tasks. This goal was measured throughout the experiment and the results were updated daily on the Domo website. Domo's second goal was to double the company's collective audience, including all its Twitter followers, Facebook friends, LinkedIn connections, and Pinterest followers. This goal was also measured on a daily basis throughout the experiment. The third goal was to achieve a 50 percent company-wide retweet of company tweets, which was measured at the end of the project (Hawkins, personal communication, December 7, 2012).

This goal system is a good example for measurable, timely, and specific communications goals. It helped Domo to develop appropriate tactics, track their effectiveness, and measure the program's progress and success. By posting the measurement results publicly on the company's website, they also served as a motivator for employees, as they made the program transparent and allowed them to see the direct effects their social media activities had. Domo also measured the change in its employees' social media knowledge by repeating the social IQ quiz at the end of the program, which delivered a good indicator for the effectiveness of the project.

In addition, companies should also measure the long-term effects of their social media programs, as well as the quality of their employees' social media use, rather than just its quantity.

Conclusion

In today's social media era, communications professionals have to pay more attention to their workforce as the social web is an essential part of their lives, amplifying their power as brand ambassadors and external communicators. Managing the risks and leveraging the benefits of employees' social media use requires a thorough, strategic management approach.

The value of the present research paper lies in the generation of knowledge that helps communications professionals to understand the need for a strategic management approach of employees' participation in social media. Furthermore, the present research project recommends eight strategic key steps to better prevent the risks and leverage the benefits of employees' social media use.

This has implications not only for the management of employees' participation in social media, but for communications professionals' entire approach to internal communication and employee relations. They have to embrace the fact that employees' social media activities are going to shape their organization's reputation more and more in the future. Reputation will no longer be owned and managed by communications departments, but by an organization's entire workforce. With everyone having the possibility to participate in social conversations online, everyone becomes a contributor to the reputation of their organization. What communications professionals yet have to learn is how to embrace and facilitate these new challenges and opportunities. In this process, enhancing the strategic management of employees' social media use is not the only step, but one of the most important ones.

Limitations

As with any research, the present research project is subject to limitations. The most important limitation is the lack of independent research that meets the academic standards of transparency, reliability, validity, and objectivity. Most of the available studies were conducted by commercial enterprises such as advertising agencies or technology startups. These studies often give reason for concerns regarding the quality of their results, since many of them do not provide sufficient information about key aspects such as methodology, sample selection, or actual wordings of the questions used.

It is important to understand that the purpose of these studies is not the creation of new knowledge in the first place, but the promotion of their sponsor's strategic thought leadership programs. Consequently, these studies may be biased and influenced by the commercial interests of their sponsors. However, due to the scarcity of independent research in the field of employees' social media use and social media in general, these studies can be used to provide general guidance in navigating the endless waters full of advice from self-proclaimed social media experts.

Another limitation of this research project is the selection of the leading practice example. The absence of reliable and valid measurement standards for the management of employees' social media use makes the identification of leading practice examples extremely difficult. Also, leading practice examples are always limited by the quality of the available information. Domo was very open about the #domosocial project and provided valuable information both publicly online and during personal interviews,

but it is important to be aware that the disclosed information might be biased or incomplete.

Another limiting aspect is time. These research findings should be considered a snapshot in time picturing the current understanding of the topic. As social media and its effects on organizational communications changes rapidly, the core arguments of this thesis might need to be adjusted over time, as well.

Future research

Future academic research should continue to explore employees' social media use and its effects on organizations and their reputation, as many questions still remain unanswered. Are employees aware of their power as social brand ambassadors? What is their motivation when talking about their employer online? To answer these questions, research has to utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to further support the insights gained in this study.

Future research also should address the differences of employees' social media use in different types of organizations and industries. There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to managing the risks and benefits posed by employees' online activities.

Not least, there is a great need for repeat studies. Many of the existing results provide valuable snapshots of our time, but no basis for long-term comparisons.

Note

1. For example: forbes.com; www.forbes.com/sites/marketshare/2012/07/10/a-transparent-live-case-study-of-a-company-going-social/2/; thebuildnetwork.com; http://thebuildnetwork.com/leadership/domo-social-media-strategy/; techcrunch.com; http://techcrunch.com/2012/06/23/domo-social-josh-james/

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