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Evaluation of corporate social responsibility and social media as key source of strategic communication

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Abstract

Given that the success of any corporation depends on improving positive relationships with customers, corporations need to have strategic mindset leading to long-term engagement. When customers are at the center of corporation strategies, it is likely to gain acceptance by customers with the help of some communication-oriented activities. This conceptual study searches for how corporation social responsibility and social media usage could become significant components considering strategic communication management by in-depth literature review. Accordingly, in the proposed model, major constructs of strategic communication management were investigated and these constructs are linked to the strategic communication management. As the antecedents of strategic communication management, corporation social responsibility and social media usage are considered. Corporation social responsibility indicators are considered as environmental responsibility, employee talent development program, stakeholder dialogue process and socially responsible supply chain management. Social media usage indicators are considered as providing online communities, timely updates, personalized communication and tracking large scale of data.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays' businesses have to pay attention to strategic mindset so that they may survive in the marketplace. (Bat, 2011). Enterprises desire to accomplish strategic goals in short or long term. An activity that is tailored very well but conflicts with corporate strategies is going to fail within the scope of strategic management (Köker, 2012). Accordingly, communication perspective for businesses stands for an essential tool with respect to all target markets (Arcos, 2015) .

Disciplines such as marketing, advertising and public relations aim to help businesses in strategic communication. It deals with specific communication efforts (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič and Sriramesh, 2007). Public relations have an important role as one of the main disciplines of communication in order to build organizational culture based on its aspects strategically (Frandsen and Johansen, 2013). As an element of strategic communication along with public relations, businesses benefit from corporate social responsibility by offering social value to target market and presenting uniqueness via activities (Holme, 2010). Corporate social responsibility is beyond philanthropic activity, it is a source of opportunity as well as competitive advantage (Porter and Kramer, 2006).

Due to its substantial effect on communication strategies, social media is another element which is capable of organizing relationship between businesses and people readily (Colleoni, 2013). Social media is not regarded as a communication trend rather it enables strategic management approach regarding businesses (Sonja Dreher, 2014). When it is considered that social media has a great community and viral feature, businesses take into account this channel in conjunction with their strategies (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). The usage of social media allows businesses to develop better organizational strategies in customer base (M. Schroeder, 2014).

The purpose of this study is to investigate and assert how social responsibility and social media might become important elements in terms of business' communication strategies. Based on the public relations literature, this study discusses the importance of these dimensions in conceptual perspective. Basically, the study is going to try to reveal relationship between communication social responsibility, social media and strategy. Successful corporate social responsibility and social media implementations will be seen as the antecedents of leading communication strategies.

2. Literature Review

Global competition compels corporations to keep up with challenges in the commercial environment. Thus, corporations need to rely on developing strong strategies to handle the difficulties such as creating long-term customer engagement and increasing income. The conceptual proposed model in this paper evaluates corporation social responsibility activities and social media activities as fundamental components composing strategic communication management as can be seen in figure 1.

2.1. Corporate Social Responsibility

Both practitioners and theoreticians' general acceptance is that corporate social responsibility concept points out next generation competitiveness. To the extent that businesses pay attention to social responsibility as a part of their corporate strategy, they might be widely acclaimed by all target markets and enhance their existing status in the market (Galbreath, 2009). Holme (2010) stressed on survey evidence regarding professional investors' decisions. According to the survey, 81 percent of the respondents who are in director positions declared that they have taken corporate social responsibility into consideration before making investments.

Sachs, Maurer, Rühli and Hoffmann (2006) conducted a research focusing on analyzing corporate social responsibility approach of a mobile communications provider. They observed that the provider had launched a talent development program and stakeholder dialogue process in accordance with corporate social responsibility. The results of the study indicated that the provider created a long-term cooperation and success in the market by the help of corporate social responsibility projects. As another example derived from a different sector, Smith (2008) searched for two multi-national pharmaceutical corporations based on implementation of corporate social responsibility strategically. It was clearly understood for these corporations that they relied on corporate social responsibility as a

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