Exploring Adoption of Social Media in Large Enterprises in Poland

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Abstract

Social media have been of interest to many enterprises for several years, it is therefore important to understand how they can be adopted in a business context. The purpose of this study was to get to know the motives, determinants, goals and ways of adopting social media by large enterprises. Qualitative research based on the case study method in enterprises operating in Poland was conducted. An unanticipated finding seems to be the fact that half of the surveyed large enterprises do not have a developed strategy of social media activities. The contribution of the conducted research is twofold. First, the study enriches and broadens the existing knowledge about the adoption of social media to business activities by identifying the different experiences of 10 enterprises, along with recognizing perceived determinants, barriers and problems in the process. Second, during conversations, many managers touched spontaneously on many aspects, without the researcher's suggestion. These aspects should be considered as important from their point of view. This opens up the field of exploration for further research deepening knowledge in this field.

Introduction

The way of conducting business activity is subject to continuous transformations due to changes in the business environment. Undoubtedly, in the 21st century, economic and social activities change substantially due to the ubiquitous information and communication technology (ICT), which create increasing value for both individuals and organizations (Agarwal et al., 2008; Richard and Guppy, 2014).

Social media based on Web 2.0 technology enable content creation, community building, and decision support, through engagement and exchange of knowledge between users (Chui et al., 2009). Most academic studies consider social media as a new marketing tool (e.g. Berinato, 2010), which improves marketing communication effectiveness (e.g. Dholakia and Durham, 2010, Kozinets et al., 2010; Trusow et al., 2009), or they analyze the influence of corporate social media on consumer responses (Briones et al., 2011). The literature provides research findings on the impact of social media on consumer purchasing behavior (Kim and Ko, 2011), satisfaction, customer loyalty and purchase intentions (Castronovo, 2012), attracting new customers (Michaelidou et al., 2011). Various authors explored the possibilities of using the potential of social media in marketing (Kim, Jeong, and Lee, 2010; Harris and Rae, 2008), customer relationship management (Baird and Parasnis, 2011), acquiring knowledge from the outside of the organization (Zembik, 2014), sales (Curtis and Giamanco, 2010; Chase and Knebl, 2011), building business networks (Kim, Jeong, and Lee, 2010) or recruitment (Melanthiou, Pavlou, and Constantinou, 2015). There are available results of the studies focusing on incentives of using social media in business (Odoom, Anning-Dorson, and Acheampong, 2017), benefits of adopting new technology (Michaelidou et al., 2011), and measuring the effectiveness of social media activities (McCann and Barlow, 2015). However, there are no comprehensive studies that simultaneously take into account incentives, determinants, perceived barriers and expected benefits as well as the strategy of enterprises in the social media environment.

The experiences of 10 large enterprises presented in the paper allow us to learn thoroughly about the reasons for the interest in social media, perceived key resources in the process of social media adoption to business operations, determinants and barriers, as well as goals and ways of using social media. The research presented in the paper is part of a research project whose aim is to develop a model for the adoption of social media by enterprises operating in Poland, thanks to which it will be possible to better recognize the effective implementation of social media for the operation of enterprises of all sizes. As suggested by Frambach and Schillewaert (2002), the decision to adopt new technologies to business operations is determined by the size of the enterprise, which is why large enterprises were selected as one of the research actors in the project.

The structure of the paper is as follows. The theoretical basics of social media in the organizational context are discussed at the outset. Secondly, the research methodology is analyzed. Thirdly, the results from the case study are presented. Finally, the conclusions and implications for marketing practice are discussed. It should be pointed out that the presented research has certain limitations resulting from the relatively small sample of enterprises that were included in the study, as well as the fact that the study is confined to the area of Poland.

Theoretical Background

Social Media – Motivations and Benefits of Their Adoption in the Enterprise

Social media have become an integral part of everyday human communication. The dynamic development of social media have shaped social interactions, previously unheard of in such a form and reach that occur through a variety of social media platforms. Mangold and Faulds (2009, p. 358) distinguish among them: "[…] a wide range of online, word-of-mouth forums including blogs, company-sponsored discussion boards and chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer email, consumer product or service ratings websites and forums, Internet discussion boards and forums, moblogs (sites containing digital audio, images, movies, or photographs), and social networking websites [...]". These platforms have different applications and goals, but the common feature is to facilitate contact, and to create, share, exchange different types of content (Toivonen, 2007). Social media have introduced revolutionary ways of interacting, cooperating and engaging with social networks users, both individually and in business. They have changed the communication model from the traditional "one-to-many" approach to "many-to-many" (McCann and Barlow, 2015).

Research indicates a high level of adoption of Web 2.0 technologies, including the adoption of social media by enterprises (McKinsey, 2007). In the studies carried out by Sinclaire and Vogus (2011) the managers of global corporations stated that they are forced to adopt social media because their customers, competitors and suppliers use them. In addition, they use social media to gain access to younger consumers who are very active on social networking sites. Those managers also notice the possibility of taking advantage of insight information from users involved in social media in order to modify and improve the product itself and its promotion.

Increasing interest of enterprises in social media is due to the following factors:

– the development of information technology leading to an increase in the population of online tools users (Gillin, 2007; Chan and Fang, 2007, Parent, Plangger and Bal, 2011),
– demographic changes. The young generation uses mainly (and some exclusively) the Internet, which results in a decline in the use of traditional media (Gillin, 2007; Chan and Fang, 2007; Bolton et al., 2013),
– changes in consumer preferences. Trusting the opinions presented by other consumers on the Internet is much greater than trusting information provided by enterprises (Gallin, 2007, Kucia, 2016, Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014),
– lower campaign costs. Viral campaigns can deliver much better results at lower costs than TV campaigns (Gillin, 2007; Okazaki, 2008; Kalpaklioglu and Toros, 2011; Castronovo and Huang, 2012)
– declining effectiveness of traditional internet marketing (like email advertising or banners) (Gillin, 2007).

Adoption of social media in business supports numerous processes and facilitates organizational activities (Ngai et al., 2015), it can also contribute to the creation of knowledge in the enterprise, which translates into the innovative potential of the enterprise (Vuori, 2012; Kiron et al., 2012; Qualman, 2010). From a perspective of

large enterprises, social media can be used for content creation, community building and as a source of information (Vuori, 2012). They can be used in relationships with employees and contractors as well as customers, partners and suppliers (Chui et al., 2009). The goals of using social media by large enterprises can be summarized as follows (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014):

- developing and strengthening relationships with customers (Bartlett, 2010, Hackworth and Kunz, 2010, Monseau, 2009, Selina and Milz, 2009). Social media not only intensify existing relationships between enterprises and customers but also create new opportunities for interaction, such as the ability to engage enterprises in a dialogue between customers (such tools as Web content monitoring, e.g. Brand24, may be helpful).
- conveying the message to previously unattainable people (Dong-Hun, 2010; Newman, 2003). Content in social media is easy to distribute among a large number of diverse people because the social network is created by voluntary links which shorten the way information is transmitted online. Branding in social media is enhanced by the word-of-mouth effect.
- increasing brand awareness. Social media are used by millions of users, consequently the presence of a brand in social media can help convey information about the enterprise/product by building brand awareness (O'Flynn, 2010).
- increasing sales (O'Flynn, 2010). This goal is achieved indirectly. Visiting a brand page in social media can result in redirecting to a website or online store, thereby increasing online sales,
- acquiring knowledge outside the organization (Zembik, 2014). Social media are a source of a diverse knowledge for enterprises, in particular they make it possible to get to know what consumers think about products and the enterprise, what ideas they have for their improvement, what they think about competing products, how they evaluate suppliers, what market trends they expect (Khodakarami and Chan, 2014; Salomann et al., 2005). By incorporating this knowledge into assets, the enterprise can create innovation, improve products and services, and deliver added value to its customers.

However, it must be borne in mind that the presence of the enterprise in social media, in addition to benefits, also presents some risks. They are mainly related to the negative opinions and comments that consumers may have on brand websites in social media (Dekay, 2012). In situations where the enterprise does not have a strategy to respond to such comments, they may adversely affect its image and thus sales (Corstjens and Umblijs, 2012).

Determinants and Ways of Using Social Media in Enterprises

Awareness of the factors determining the scope and ways of adopting social media to business operations by enterprises seems to be extremely important for the effectiveness of this process. According to some researchers, many factors determining the use of social media in enterprises are quite similar to those identified in earlier studies on the adoption of e-commerce in enterprises. Ihlström et al. (2002) pointed to lack of knowledge or awareness in the organization and inherent resource limitations. In turn, Farhoomand et al. (2000) identified internal challenges related to the adoption of e-commerce as technical issues (such as lack of adequate infrastructure), organizational issues (such as resilience to changes, negative attitudes,

lack of knowledge and lack of management commitment) and economic issues (such as justification of costs). Fuchs-Kittowski et al. (2009) point to a number of internal barriers in the use of Web 2.0 technologies in organizations, stating that the most important one is the fact that the cost-benefit analysis gives inconclusive results. In addition, they believe that the use of Web 2.0 is rarely given priority by top management, and can even be perceived as a potential source of employees' distraction during work. Fuchs-Kittowski et al. (2009) and Li (2010) also note that the Web 2.0 mentality is rarely seen as compatible with the enterprise's dominant organizational culture.

Social challenges related to the image of the company, brand and external relations also have an impact on the adoption of social media to business operations (Kuikka and Äkkinen, 2011). The most important challenge is the perceived lack of control over the content in social media, which may have a negative impact on the brand/company image. Moreover, the research carried out by Papworth (2009) confirmed that the main external challenge related to the adoption and use of social media in organizations is corporate reputation management. The classification of external determinants of social media adoption can also be drawn from the challenges of e-commerce by distinguishing factors: political (limited access to social media in some regions of the world), cultural (tendency to use social media by some age groups of consumers) and legal (e.g. with privacy protection) (Kuikka and Äkkinen, 2011).

The literature provides examples of studies on the adoption of social media to the organization, but the majority of them focus on individual adoption cases, e.g. in the Taiwanese high-tech sector (Cheng, 2010), nonprofit organizations (Curtis et al., 2010), universities (Voss and Kumar, 2013), in the public sector (Mergel, 2013). Research devoted to the determinants of social media adoption at the company level are individual and also fragmentary. Michalidou et al. (2011) focused their attention on the British small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the B2B model. This study aimed to determine whether these enterprises use social network sites (SNS) and what are the main barriers that affect the process of SNS adoption and its effectiveness. The quantitative research carried out by Trainor et al. (2014) was aimed at determining whether the use of social media in the activities of companies can increase their customer relationship management capability. In turn, the study by Sinclaire & Vogus (2011), conducted on a group of global organizations, explains why companies use social media, which SNS are used and how. Although this study also provides knowledge about the determinants of the use of social media in large enterprises, the researchers focused mainly on the impact of the industry on the adoption of social media to the operation of enterprises.

The literature review shows that there are several types of determinants related to the adoption and use of social media in organizations, but they have not been fully recognized in empirical research.

Methodology

This study is of a qualitative nature and serves to better understand the complex phenomenon of adoption of social media to business activities. The purpose is not to formulate generalizations, but to provide rich descriptions of the adoption of social media in business through case studies. A case study was chosen as a research strategy for the possibilities given by this method to reveal a unique and profound insight into the phenomenon under consideration in the context of observable phenomena (Dyer and Wilkins, 1991; Zembik, 2016). Data was collected using a semi-structured direct interview conducted with key informants in enterprises. The partially structured interview allows gathering internally consistent information from different enterprises, but it remains flexible enough to make it possible to reveal new, unexpected and interesting threads during the interview. In order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon in question and thus to increase the credibility of the study, the data sources were triangulated by supplementing interviews with the observation of the social channels adopted by the surveyed enterprises.

Cases for the study were chosen based on two criteria: size of the enterprise (250 and more employees) (Eurostat) and, in any respect, of social media use in business activity. An attempt was also taken to differentiate the cases in terms of the industry. In this way, 10 large enterprises operating in Poland representing the following sectors were analyzed: aviation, furniture, brewing, insulation solutions (manufacturer of building materials), clothing, construction (design and construction), meat (manufacturer of meat packaging) and food (three leading manufacturers of FMCG products).

The case studies within the descriptive structure were adopted to pursue the analytical strategy (Yin, 2015). The interview scenario had a compositional system that defined the descriptive framework of each case. Such a procedure allowed the researcher to obtain primary data on each topic. After transcribing the interviews, the collected material was subjected to content analysis. In the analytical phase, the methods underlying the grounded theory were also used. As early as in the process of collecting empirical material, notes were made with tips, suggestions and ideas that were then used to interpret the data, thus making their initial conceptualization. In addition, information from various interviews was compiled to extract some data sets, other than those adopted in the frame structure. Developing such a general analytical strategy allowed the data to be "sorted" into the relevant sections, which greatly facilitated the analysis (Yin, 2015).

Findings

Scope of Social Media Adoption

Facebook is the most important and main communication channel for all the surveyed enterprises. In addition, 8 enterprises run a YouTube channel, 7 have a profile on Instagram. The enterprises also adopt Twitter (3 enterprises), Pinterest (2), Snapchat (2), Tumblr (1) and LinkedIn and GoldenLine (7 enterprises). The managers justify the choice of these social networking platforms on the grounds that:

(1) Facebook is a natural and obvious choice because of its popularity. It was emphasized that "everyone is on Facebook", which means that the absence of the brand on this website is more noticeable than its presence.
(2) They suit the target group. Most of the surveyed enterprises based the decision on the adoption of next social networking platforms on the fit analysis of their users to the target audience.
(3) They provide the expected reach. Among the available platforms are selected those that are effective in Poland, and the cost of conveying a message to a single person is low thanks to the wide reach.

As stated in the interviews, some enterprises are present in social media in two ways. Some of the social media sites are used regularly, and some only occasionally for the conducted campaigns. This is characteristic for FMCG and clothing brands. In particular, Instagram and Snapchat are referred to as campaign media, as is collaboration with bloggers and influencers. Influencers, that is opinion leaders, influential people in social media (Lim et al., 2017), are involved in promotional activities of several brands. Interestingly, only three surveyed enterprises (from furniture, construction and aviation sectors) keep track of the content on the Internet. Conversely, only one interlocutor has devoted a lot of attention to this issue while describing how to react to every relevant social media branding entry. An e-brand spokesman rectifies information, if the situation requires so or advises customers.

Factors Influencing Social Media Adoption by Brands

The managers explained the factors that led them to make the decision on engaging in social media. The most commonly mentioned are:

(1) Growing popularity of social media. All respondents stated that social media are the fastest growing medium.
(2) Responding to customer needs. The adoption of social media to business activities was the response to the needs of customers who directed more and more inquiries this way, they "checked in" in the brand retail outlets, placed the hashtags with the brand name.
(3) The presence of the target group in social media. In addition, each social platform enables targeting messages to specific audience groups, while it also provides measurements for reaching out with a message, unmatched by any other communications channel.
(4) Change in the form of communication. As one respondent observes, social media have caused far-reaching changes in the way relationships are built. This is a change that "permeates culture and society", so it's hard to imagine that the business was detached from it. Social media create another way of communicating with people which must be incorporated by brands into their strategy. In addition, consumers are no longer sensitive to the current forms of communication. Content marketing and storytelling have gained in importance.
(5) Using social media on mobile devices. The smartphone and tablet Facebook users account for 87% of all users (Digital in 2017). Dozens of times a day these people keep checking on social media, which creates ideal opportunities

to reach them with the message around the clock. No other medium does provide such opportunities.

It was emphasized that for a marketer it is particularly important to measure the effects of actions, and this is a unique feature of social media. Social media platforms provide detailed statistics on reaching the audiences and, importantly, the information is available almost instantly. In case of a television or out-door campaign, feedback on the effectiveness of the campaign is received with a considerable delay. On this basis, the interviewees are convinced of the effectiveness of social media. Only in one case, an adoption of social media was the result of adjusting to the communication strategy of enterprise's foreign headquarters.

Essential Resources and Competences

When asked about the resources and competences needed to adopt social media to business activity, the managers agreed that the most important are intangible resources, among which a key place is occupied by knowledge and skills of employees. In the enterprise, there must be a wealth of knowledge to understand how social media work, what opportunities are available, what content is consumed there. It is necessary to know the target audience, because without this knowledge the enterprise is not able to create qualitatively appropriate content that will interest and engage the audience. The person responsible for communication in social media should have a number of personality traits, such as: creativity, openness to the other person and his or her needs, empathy, positive attitude and motivation to work. The staff responsible for communication in social media have to monitor corporate profiles almost around the clock, responding to community inquiries. They often are confronted with negative or even offensive remarks. Experience in managing communication in social media is therefore an additional advantage.

It should be noted as one of the respondents observed that while considering the adoption of social media to the business activity it is necessary to:

- understand who is a customer of the enterprise, to what extent he is interested in communication with the brand via social media, and think about what the brand will be able to tell him;
- acquire know-how on optimizing a media plan, in particular: how many posts and of what frequency to publish, what should be their reach, who should be targeted, to what value boost post. Secondly, on the creative side: what is to be found in the posts, which formats are the most popular and attract the most customers.

As she stated:

> *"If a decision is made that we want to enter social media, it is better not to do it before we gain the know-how of it. However, the key aspect to take this decision is to understand who is our key customer and how much this consumer will be interested in communicating with the brand through the social media, and what this brand will be able to tell him. And if the brand has nothing to say, the kind of medium is of no*

> *relevance. It is most visible in social media when someone has nothing to say".*

It has also been emphasized that the choice of a creative agency is important, which will prepare the strategy and guide communication in social media. However, there are also voices that running an agency's brand profile is less effective than delegating it to an enterprise employee. The reason for this opinion was the conviction that the agency, in spite of training, would never have such knowledge about the brand and its strategy as an enterprise employee. Nevertheless, in order for an employee to function effectively, his duties must include only the area of social media communication and not be dispersed into broadly understood marketing. In addition, one of the respondents noted that her brand did not achieve such responsiveness in the social media as they can offer. In her opinion, inadequate flexibility may have a basis in maintaining the profiles by the agency. In her view, the solution would be either to significantly increase the budget for agency activities or to entrust profile service to 2-3 people inside the organization. It is interesting to note that respondents in general did not take up the issue of social media costs in their comments. When enquired, they pointed to Facebook's policy of forcing paid posts to get a proper reach. At the same time, significant budgets for this purpose are only allocated in 5 surveyed enterprises (food, beer and clothing sectors). However, on this occasion again it was emphasized that the measurability of the results is important as, in the opinion of respondents, every zloty spent is clearly reflected in the effects.

Perceived Entry Barriers to Social Media

The perceived entry barriers of clear brand communication in social media were also examined. The issue of availability of the target group on a given social platform was most often indicated, which defines purposefulness and influences the effectiveness of activities undertaken there. Barriers were also seen in the human resources that were previously identified as a key resource for social media adoption. First and foremost, in the opinion of the respondents, the limitation may be: the time that the person responsible for implementing communication strategies in social media can devote to these responsibilities, specialist knowledge (basic knowledge is easily accessible in the view of the respondents) enabling a brand to function in social media at a high level and creativity which is necessary to develop an idea for a brand presence in social media and the creation of interesting content. In one case, the issue of lack of understanding the phenomenon of social media among decision-makers was highlighted. Those people, who generally represent the older generation, do not understand the specificity of social media communication, often fail to see the long-term impact of social media on business activities. On the basis of this, they limit the degree of involvement of the enterprise in this environment or do not give permission for the courageous messages that build engagement and reach, and thus have a chance to become a promotional viral. The manager stated:

> *"The management is not aware at all that Facebook can reach up to 100,000 specifically selected people, measure it to every single one of them. They are not aware of the possibilities related to the measurability of the effects of advertising on Facebook. (...) And these people have a big problem with the concept of what opportunities social media give us*

and what long-term impact they can have on the perception of our brand".

One of the interviewees identified the issue of customer knowledge adoption offered by social media for sales activities. According to one of the marketing specialists, his company faces the problem of inducing traders to make a contact with the customer who is known to watch a promotional video on YouTube featuring a new product, or read a product article on enterprise's blog. This information is made available to traders on a regular basis, but does not result in specific actions. In case of the enterprise with headquarters abroad, the barrier to social media marketing was to overcome the fear that had arisen as a result of the bad experiences of foreign colleagues, and which resulted from the lack of an idea on how to conduct communication in social media. One of the analyzed enterprises is limited by laws that prohibit branding in some social media (e.g. YouTube and Snapchat).

Communication Strategy in Social Media

Starting communication in social media, only five of the surveyed enterprises have developed a strategy for these actions, and only four have it in a form of a very detailed document, consistent with the overall strategy of brand communication. It should be emphasized that these are the same enterprises that allocate the highest budgets for activities in social media.

The following quotes show two polarized approaches to strategic planning of companies' activities in social media. One of the managers stated that:

> "A*ll our activities, whether in social media or in traditional ones, but also communication through the brick and mortar stores as well as the online one make up one strategy of the entire brand. These are the fundamentals of deep reflection and overall strategy".*

And a representative of another surveyed company said:

> *"We carry out a preliminary analysis of what it looks like in the industry, we have "liked" all suppliers and contractors, we follow them on a regular basis. But it does not affect our activities too much. We do not have a plan, because it's hard to create a schedule in advance, it would be artificial".*

Areas of social media adoption

It should be distinguished between two types of communication carried out by the surveyed enterprises in social media. On the one hand, it is the branding communication that most of my interlocutors deal with, as well as corporate communication at higher levels of organizational structures. In most cases, social media accounts are run separately for each type of communication. The precise areas of social media adoption within the identified types of communication are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Areas of Business Activities Supported by Social Media

Brand communication	Building brand image
	Building customer relations
	Advertising (product presentations, information about promotions)
	Creating needs
	Customer support
	Market research
	Sales
Corporate communication	Building corporate image
	Employer branding
	Recruitment

Source: own elaboration.

Social media are primarily used as a channel to build an image. On the one hand, they build brand awareness, which allows enterprises to penetrate the market and attract new customers, on the other, to build loyalty among current, more engaged customers. Communication in social media allows enterprises to build relationships with customers, contractors, and the local community. Social media are very effective as channels of customer service and direct contact with customers, and of responding to customers' needs, inquiries. The manager of the clothing sector claims that social media, and especially Facebook, prove well as a tool for creating needs. Some of the surveyed enterprises also adopt social media in the field of market research, organizing probes through the Facebook, and all conduct in-depth analyzes of the brand community. Social media are also used as an advertising channel for a product presentation. All respondents agreed that a statement that social media sell the product is an abuse, but there are indications to associate the sales with enterprise's activity in social media. One of the respondents gave the example of a competition organized on the fanpage, following which the winning product was offered in brick and mortar stores with 15% discount. The sales results of this product differed significantly from other offers in the store. Another respondent pointed to the Local Awareness feature offered by Facebook, which allows for a very precise targeting of the message around a certain place, in which the enterprise sees the opportunity to redirect the Facebook user to promotion in a particular store. One of the brands for which there are dozens of SKUs (stock keeping unit), through the presentation of products in social media counts on increasing consumer interest, which in turn will facilitate the introduction of these products for sale in retail outlets.

In the corporate dimension, building a corporate image is based primarily on communicating CSR activities, supporting local communities, showing people who form organizations, presenting their passions. While social media may well also serve as a place for the presentation of technological facilities of the enterprise. In one of the enterprises, a video showing the factory on YouTube during meetings with contractors worldwide replaces the actual visit of business partners in the factory. Several enterprises run the employer branding activities in social media, and HR departments distribute job ads through these channels.

Goals of Communication in Social Media

The objectives of the enterprises' presence in social media were described by the respondents as:

1) Building brand image,
2) Building customers' relations,
3) Building customer loyalty,
4) Reaching the target audience and building a reach there,
5) Deepening and complementing communication from traditional media,
6) Sales support.

As the managers have said, it's about "pulling a user into the brand world," "taming a customer with a brand," and "through building pleasant associations with the brand striving to be 'top of mind'". Several respondents mentioned the assumed quantitative targets, such as the number of likes, shares, views, and in one case, only the popularity of the fanpage was the goal of the undertaken actions.

Form of Communication and Process of Content Creation

As for the form of communication, three managers responded that they adopt all the available formats, test them, play with the form, evaluate the efficiency, and consequently focus on the most effective one. The enterprises use short films and other movable forms as they draw users' attention while scrolling the board on social networking sites. Commitment of the community around brands is mainly built through competitions. These are primarily competitions involving consumers in the webspace, but more and more desirable are those that create specific market behavior, such as shop visits and product purchase. Case studies have included individual examples of such consumer involvement. The brand supporters are often activated as part of a social action (such as planting trees) or they participate in music festivals sponsored by the brand.

Based on the statements of the managers it was noted that, in the food sector, many actors are involved in the creation of communication in social media. Each of these enterprises uses the services of a creative agency that develops a communication strategy with a brand manager. In addition, there are two digital divisions that work to optimize the campaign, in one case it is a task of a media house, and the digital manager is the person who gives opinions, advises and increases the knowledge on social media in the enterprise.

These enterprises are similar in terms of the process of preparing content for social media. In all enterprises that cooperate with an agency, the strategy is developed annually in the agency based on the enterprise's overall guidelines. Once a strategy that sets the mindset and style of communication is adopted, content is planned in monthly intervals. In contrast, in current communication with the users (response to queries, comments) agencies have guidelines or even a list of ready responses. In the event of a more complex question or problematic comment, the agencies consult with the enterprise the way of responding each time.

Impact of Communication in Social Media on Business Activities

The managers were asked to assess the impact of social media activity on their business. A number of respondents rated this impact through the benefits of social media presence, claiming that it gives them the opportunity to interact with consumers, build relationships, and keep them connected, so that the brand is consistently present in the consumer world. These actions also affect brand recognition, and in communication targeted to younger age groups, this impact is very important, it allows enterprises to build a brand image, which ultimately translates into sales. However, my interlocutors also stated that:

> *"Impact is important, but it is one of many communication channels".*
> *"At the moment the impact is weak. I see the potential of social media, but the impact is not that what I would have wished".*
> *"Nothing would happen if we were not present in social media".*

The last statement was made by a manager of an enterprise which takes action in 6 social channels. Although he believes that such a wide-ranging action is his fad, on the other hand adds:

> *"The less we are on the Internet, the less influence we have on the information about us that appears there."*

In one enterprise (furniture sector) social media have significantly changed the standards of customer service. Since the beginning of the enterprise's operation in social media, it has been hit by negative feedback on after-sales service, such as product complaints or delays in order fulfillment. This situation has forced the change of customer service standards, a helpline was launched, and a special contact form was created, to which customers with negative emotions are directed. Thanks to these efforts, the response time has been shortened, which in consequence allows potential crisis situations to be solved in the bud. Five surveyed enterprises divert inquiries and remarks via social media to relevant departments. In one of the enterprises from food sector, the consumer interest in new flavors is used as one of the prerequisites for creating new beverages. And in the brewing industry, it happens that the community is reporting some ideas that are always considered by decision makers. In one of the interviews, the respondent said that the Facebook presence allows the enterprise to "feel the pulse of the market," and brand enthusiasts show what they are interested in, making it easier to tailor messages to the audience. In the four surveyed enterprises, the information obtained in social media is not used to modify or develop products and processes. However, as one of the managers stated the enterprise "gives ear" and treats Facebook as a potential source of information.

Preparation in Case of Image Crisis

The openness of communication provided by social media can lead to image crises by posting negative feedback and comments from consumers on brand profiles. As stated in the interviews, the procedure for dealing with an image crisis in social media is developed exclusively by food and clothing enterprises. This is a formal document that outlines the principles of a social media communication in a crisis situation for the agency. One of the respondents said that the formal document in his company did

not exist, because "every crisis situation is different and it is impossible to act in a schematic way." The manager of the construction sector draws on knowledge from experts on how to react to negative comments. Other enterprises are not particularly prepared for this situation, and even one of my interlocutors does not imagine a crisis that could threaten his business.

Studying Effectiveness of Activities in Social Media

Many times the managers have emphasized that social media provide the best measure of the effects of the undertaken communication activities. In the interviews it was found that enterprises collaborating with an agency or media house receive their analytical reports, generally for a period of one month, which are then verified. The exception is the enterprise in the construction sector, which, although cooperates with the agency, does not receive reports, and only monitors the available Facebook statistics. One enterprise thoroughly analyzes the costs of reaching a single consumer through various channels of communication. As it is established, the enterprise monitors the Internet for mentions on the brand, especially analyzes their sentiment (positive, negative, neutral comments), paying attention to which of them prevailed in a given month. The manager of the international corporation noted that in a such large enterprise as they are, they have access to research conducted by Facebook on a global level.

Conclusions

The decision to adopt social media to business activity is primarily a consequence of the growing popularity of these media. The growing popularity of social media means the increase in the number of consumers available in these channels, while the diversity of social media sites ensures diversification of target groups (e.g. Instagram as a more feminine medium, Snapchat and YouTube for younger age groups). Additionally, social media provide an unprecedented precision of getting the message through multifactorial media targeting capabilities. Using social media is an important part of the daily activity of most consumers, especially younger age groups, who often expect the opportunity to communicate with brands in these channels. Hence they are open to brand messages, but other than in traditional media. They expect to be provided with certain values, not necessarily material, such as discount shopping, or the opportunity to win the product. It is often about entertainment, fun, the ability to create interesting content based on understanding, close relationships and friendship.
The decision to adopt social media should be preceded by an analysis of the availability of the target audience in each channel, reach and manner of communication. In Poland, Twitter or Tumblr in brand communication are not efficient because of their limited reach. Photos typical of Instagram and short ephemeral content on Snapchat are not a good way to communicate the branding strategy of every brand. They can, however, be a good channel to complement communication in specific campaigns. A goal is also important – brands aiming at exposing products are willing to choose YouTube, those building relationships through daily communication will choose Facebook, and those focusing on instant, immediate communication benefit from Twitter.

Business adoption of Facebook is a natural step in the dynamic development of social media. It is analogous to setting up websites with the spread of the Internet. Based on

the statements of the respondents, it seems that each enterprise can benefit from actions taken on Facebook, but it is necessary to have the idea for this communication, so as to provide value for consumers. This is the only way to build up the reach and commitment, which in turn increases brand awareness and consumer loyalty. Multiplication of the adopted social channels should, however, relate primarily to those enterprises that offer products for which consumers most often seek information online. The second group includes products for which the purchasing decision is taken at the store shelf. For example, a manufacturer of beverages through a permanent presence in many social channels transmits several types of messages to consumers: entertains, engages in social activities, collaborates with their idols, provides product information. All of these incentives shape positive consumer associations with the consumer's brand when making a purchase decision at a point of sale. The customer chooses the brand with the best connotations.

The experiences of the analyzed enterprises show that in order to fully use the potential of social media, all the people of responsibility in the enterprise must be convinced of the rightfulness of their decision. Full acceptance of this decision allows the enterprise to operate in a flexible, brave, unconventional manner. In many surveyed enterprises there is the problem of entrusting the duties related to communication in social media as additional tasks to the staff of the marketing department. They become one of many tasks to be done, which makes it impossible to devote sufficient time to them, and social media are very demanding in this respect. This entails insufficient brand responsiveness, resulting in lower engagement of users than expected by decision-makers. And it becomes a vicious circle. In addition, there is the need for awareness and readiness among decision-makers that while entering the social media a part of the enterprise is entrusted into the hands of consumers. Therefore, there must be consent to the fact that they have a real impact on the business. Under the influence of their opinions, suggestions, or negative experiences it may be necessary to modify existing procedures (e.g. a customer service, handling complaints, modifying products, etc.). The above-identified factors are thought to be the sources of competitive advantage.

Implications for Business Marketing Practice

As noted by one of the respondents, the absence of a brand in social media is more noticeable than its presence. Another added that it is most visible in social media that the brand has nothing to say. The anticipated direction of Facebook's development is that it will increasingly be a medium of typical advertising, or even a "brand post." Communication in social media is becoming more and more challenging for brands. To stand out from the competition, managers should make some key decisions.

The first is the choice of people who carry out communication in social media. As mentioned above, these persons must have adequate knowledge and competence. However, it is equally important that their duties exclusively comprise of the communication in social media. Otherwise time constraints can negatively affect communication quality, for example by preventing real-time feedback from current events. If the agency runs the communication, it should be ensured that it is properly trained in brand value and communication style, so that the brand in social media is authentic and credible. The agency should also undertake real-time marketing activities. A feature of social media, which causes that the consumers who flee from

the advertising in traditional media, and here are willing to consume content created by brands, is the possibility of two-way communication, dialogue. For many enterprises this is a new form of contact with the customer, requiring a change in organizational culture and numerous organizational processes. It is necessary to ensure flexibility of action, quick decision-making and real-time response to consumer needs.

It should be borne in mind that the consumer wants to be treated individually, wants to be communicated with, not with everyone, because not all customers have the same needs, likes, tastes. Any opinion, comment, suggestion, idea raised by the consumer should be considered with due attention. Moreover, the community should be encouraged to prosumption activities. All this to provide unique personal experience with the brand.

Social media by nature are primarily used for entertainment, fun, leisure time and communication. The presented content should provide consumers with the value they expect. This action is profitable for brands, because reaching the consumer with the brand information in a contextualized way contributes to the creditability of the message, it becomes more a recommendation than a classic advertising.

Content published in social media should be visually attractive, graphically and linguistically refined (according to target audience). The way of preparing material for social media requires taking measures like ATL communication (professional photo sessions, recording studio, etc.). Graphic forms, in particular films, are most closely related to consumers and are the most popular content format in social media.

Finally, managers should continually monitor the social media market. It is necessary to keep track of user migration between sites, discover new social channels and trends (like Musical.ly) in time.

Making the above decisions will increase added value for consumers as well as meet and even exceed expected benefits. This is the key to the transformation of sympathy for the brand into love for the brand.

A common feature of all types of social media is to facilitate users' communication and exchange of content. This feature, along with the global coverage of social media, makes the presented descriptions of social media adoption by Polish enterprises and the conclusions based on the case studies universal. They can be related to popular websites in Asia, for example WeChat. In addition, the experiences of Polish enterprises can be a source of knowledge and inspiration for managers of Asian companies, particularly in developing markets, where the conditions of doing business can be close to the Polish market terms. The paper is also a valuable source of information for Asian companies planning to expand into Eastern European markets.

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