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Building relationships through integrated online media platforms: Analysis of top 100 global brands

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Citation

Building Relationships Through Integrated Online Media:

Global Organizations' Use of Brand Web sites, Facebook, and Twitter

Abstract

Many studies have examined organizations' use of specific types of online media, but few studies have examined how organizations generate dialogues and develop relationships by using multiple online communication platforms. This study takes an integrated approach by examining how top global organizations incorporate brand Web sites, Facebook, and Twitter to cultivate relationships with stakeholders. Its findings suggest that those particular online media are used similarly: more for information dissemination than user engagement and more for one-way than two-way communication. The findings also suggest that the types of products promoted can affect the way that organizations use different online media to develop relationships.

Keywords

With the Internet population continuing to grow at exponential rates (*Internet World Stats,* 2012), organizations are using various online communication platforms to reach stakeholders, achieve communication objectives, and build relationships (Argenti, 2006; Pollach, 2005; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). These tools enable an organization to hear directly from its stakeholders and engage in conversations with them (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009). By providing stakeholders with detailed information about what it represents, an organization can encourage openness and transparency (Ki & Hon, 2009; Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009) and cultivate relationships (Men & Tsai, 2011; Waters et al., 2009).

In response to the increasingly fragmented marketplace and media environment, organizations today tend to adopt and coordinate multiple communication and contact points to achieve optimal coverage (Grove, Carlson, & Dorsch, 2007). But previous studies examining organizations' use of online media to build relationships have explored organizations' use of a single, specific online medium (e.g., Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012; Park & Reber, 2008; Waters et al., 2009). The following study takes an integrated approach by examining how top global organizations use different types of online media —brand Web sites, Facebook, and Twitter— to generate dialogues and cultivate relationships with stakeholders.

This study addresses the call to study how for-profit organizations use online media by examining top global organizations' online communication practices. While the use of online media remains an important way for organizations to disseminate information, an equally important use of such media is for building relationships with stakeholders by engaging them in conversations (Waters & Lemanski, 2011; Waters et al., 2009).

Using Online Media to Build Relationships

Since Ferguson (1984) declared that "relationships" should be the units of analysis in public

relations research, the concept of an organization–public relationship (OPR) has been widely

studied by public relations researchers (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000). Broom, Casey, and

Ritchey (1997) defined OPRs as "properties of exchange, transactions, communications, and

other interconnected activities" (p. 94). Following Broom et al.'s (1997) initial model of the OPR,

Grunig and Huang (2000) proposed a model that consists of three components: relationship

antecedents, relationship-cultivation strategies, and outcomes of the strategies. Here relationship-

cultivation strategies refer to the organization's communication efforts to cultivate and maintain

a quality relationship with its public. According to Grunig and Huang (2000), relationship-

cultivation strategies determine relationship-quality outcomes. Hon and Grunig (1999) suggested

a series of relationship-cultivation strategies with outcomes such as satisfaction, commitment,

trust, and control mutuality. Further studies identified strategies including access, openness,

positivity, networking, task sharing, and assurances.

Access refers to the extent to which an organization offers its public communication

channels to directly reach it. *Openness*, often referred to as disclosure, refers to the extent to

which an organization discloses information about the organization to its public. *Positivity* refers

to the strategy that an organization uses to make the relationship more enjoyable for its public.

Networking refers to an organization's effort to build networks with the groups to which its

public belongs, such as unions and community groups. *Task sharing* refers to the extent to which

an organization and its public work together for mutual benefit. Finally, *assurances* refer to the

extent to which an organization assures its public that the public's concerns are legitimate and

the organization is committed to maintaining the relationship (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002; Ki & Hon, 2009).

Ki and Hon (2006) analyzed corporate Web sites drawn from the Fortune 500 list and found that these sites most frequently used openness (disclosure) and access strategies. The openness strategy was also rated as producing the highest quality outcomes compared to other relationship-cultivation strategies. Similarly, Hong's (2006) study of Forbes magazine's list of the 200 best small-business Web sites found that the openness strategy was used most frequently whereas positivity was used least frequently. But Zhu's (2011) study of the Web sites of state tourism boards and online travel agencies in the United States found that the access strategy produced the highest quality outcomes. Finally, Waters, Friedman, Mills, and Zeng (2011) analyzed U.S. church Web sites and found that openness and positivity were the most frequently used strategies whereas networking and assurances were the least frequently used ones.

What these studies demonstrate is that openness and access are generally the strategies that organizations use most frequently to cultivate relationship with stakeholders through their Web sites. What remains lacking is research focusing on newer forms of online media (e.g., social media) and how various online media platforms are used to encourage dialogic communication with stakeholders.

Using Online Media to Encourage Dialogic Communication

Increasingly, the practice of public relations is seen as building relationships. Wilcox and Cameron (2009) argued that the practice of dialogic communication is an extension of this practice of building relationships. De Bussy (2010) argued that for an organization to practice dialogic communication, it must (a) listen to stakeholders, (b) have a positive regard for stakeholders, and (c) be willing to change.

Research suggests that dialogic communication is associated with a number of positive public relations outcomes. Seltzer and Zhang (2011) found that political parties' dialogic communication was significantly associated with voters' perceptions of an OPR, and their OPR perceptions had a positive impact on their attitudinal (i.e., attitude toward the political parties) and behavioral (i.e., party affiliation and voting) outcomes. Yang, Kang, and Johnson (2010) found that organizational blog posts implementing dialogic communication principles (i.e., frequently responding to followers' comments) led to more favorable public attitudes toward the organization.

Researchers argued that online media such as the Internet are critical platforms not just for organizations to disseminate information but also for organizations to interact with stakeholders through feedback or dialogic loops (Kent & Taylor, 1998; Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2014). An increasing number of stakeholders expect organizations to listen and respond (Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2014), and such communication between organizations and the public in social media is considered "conversation" (Spinuzzi, 2009, p. 257). In fact, the interactivity of online media, which allows organization–public interactions, conversations, and user engagement, has been found to be associated with various positive outcomes, including consumers' increased trust in e-vendors, enhanced product knowledge, and more positive attitude toward online advertising and purchasing, as well as organizations' increased profits (Melton & Hicks, 2011; Sundar, Xu, & Dou, 2012; Wu, Hu, & Wu, 2010). Thus, online media, whose effectiveness was initially viewed with skepticism, quickly gained a competitive edge and were viewed as "status symbols" (White & Raman, 2000, p. 414). What was once considered "B-list" task (Hill & White, 2000, p. 38)— listening to and engaging stakeholders— is arguably

now an A-list task (DiStaso, McCorkindale, & Wright, 2011), with practitioners elevating their

expertise by doing so (Diga & Kelleher, 2009).

Dialogic Communication on Different Online Media Platforms

Web sites were the first electronic frontier for engaging in dialogic communication (Kent &

Taylor, 1998). Over time, other new tools such as Facebook and Twitter have become

increasingly accessible and incorporated into corporate communication strategies to enhance

dialogic communication online.

Web sites: Web sites have been used for a number of dialogic-communication and

relationship-cultivation functions, including organization disclosure, information dissemination,

relationship management, and communication with various stakeholders (Chiou, Lin, & Perng,

2010; Park & Reber, 2008; Pollach, 2005). While Seo, Kim, and Yang (2009) argued that Web

sites were the major tools for generating dialogues, Waters and Lemanski (2011) found that

many organizations approached Web sites as one-way communication tools. Taking the

perspective of Grunig's excellence theory (Grunig & Grunig, 1992), Waters and Lemanski (2011)

found that most organizations had two approaches for using Web sites: the press-agentry

approach (i.e., to make their ethos and products known) and the public-information approach (i.e.,

to provide information in a journalistic form). To a lesser extent organizations used the two-way

asymmetric approach to using Web sites in which they use interactive tools such as surveys and

polls to persuade stakeholders to accept their points of view. Park and Reber (2008) argued that

beyond telling what they want stakeholders to know about them, organizations can go further to

promote mutuality, trust, satisfaction, openness, and intimacy with stakeholders by introducing

to their Web sites dialogic features that facilitate ease of interface and the conservation of

visitors. And Pollach (2011) argued that organizations should prioritize building relationships with stakeholders through their Web sites.

Facebook: Facebook is the most popular social media in the world, with more than 150 million unique U.S. visitors in March 2012 alone (Nielsen, 2012). Numerous organizations are present on Facebook, having their brand or company profile on their Facebook page—the official profile page maintained by organizations, businesses, and individuals (Chu, 2011). Users can connect with a brand or company by "liking" its Facebook page, and those "fans" will then receive news feeds from the organization. Fans can respond to the news feeds by clicking like or posting comments, and these user comments are shared with other fans and with the organization. These Facebook features enable organizations to share stories, engage in conversations, and consequently, build relationships with various stakeholders (Chu, 2011; Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2014; Men & Tsai, 2011).

Dialogic communication in this social media platform can be examined through features such as ease of interface, usefulness of information, links to the organization's home page, and others (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009). Even though such interactive spaces exist, Bortree and Seltzer (2009) argued, more could be done to "effectively utilize the full gambit of dialogic strategies" (p. 318) available in this social media platform. Similarly, Waters et al. (2009) argued that having a Facebook profile will not automatically generate stakeholders' awareness or trigger their participation. They found that nonprofit organizations did not take full advantage of Facebook applications to enhance their social networking presence and that they were negligent in performing basic tasks such as posting news about their work or campaigns.

Twitter: Twitter is another popular social media platform with 500 million users worldwide (Dugan, 2012). A microblogging social networking service, Twitter allows users to

broadcast short, text-based status updates (up to 140 characters), called "tweets." A user can choose to subscribe to other users' tweets by "following" them. Twitter also allows users to repost a tweet from another user ("retweet") in order to share information or highlight their interest in and agreement with the issue presented in the tweet (Twitter.com, n.d.). Tweets can be indexed, shared, and spread, using such features as hashtags and hyperlinks (Strachan, 2009), fostering interaction between users at an extremely rapid pace (Jones, 2013; Potts & Jones, 2011).

Using Twitter, organizations can disseminate useful information to their followers and directly respond to individual followers' comments and inquiries. Like Facebook, Twitter is considered an excellent communication platform that enables organizations to engage in dialogic communication and cultivate relationships with stakeholders (Kwon & Sung, 2011; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). But Rybalko and Selzer (2010) found that only 30% of Fortune 500 companies attempted to stimulate discussions with the public by asking unprompted questions on Twitter. Similarly, Lovejoy et al. (2012) found that most of the nonprofit organizations they studied used Twitter just to disseminate information. They found "only minimal evidence of interactivity and relationship-building" (p. 316) on these organizations' Twitter sites.

Overall, the literature suggests that online media provide a great opportunity for organizations to generate two-way, dialogic communication and build relationships with the public (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Park & Reber, 2008; Waters et al., 2009). Studies also suggest that such enhanced user engagement and interactivity in online media can lead to positive OPR outcomes, such as the public's positive attitude toward organizations (Yang et al., 2010), trust in online marketers (Wu et al., 2010), and enhanced knowledge of promoted products (Sundar et al., 2012). While little research has assessed the

effects of dialogic communication in online media contexts (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2010), Saffer, Sommerfeldt, and Taylor (2013) have demonstrated that organizations' two-way, interactive dialogic communication via Twitter positively affected followers' perceived OPR. The authors argued that more interactive online communication strategies would help an organization to demonstrate its commitment to a relationship.

But the literature also suggests that Web sites tend to be used more for information dissemination (one-way communication) than user engagement (two-way communication) (e.g., Ki & Hon, 2006; Park & Reber, 2008; Waters & Lemanski, 2011). While similar insights have been discovered about how organizations use social media to engage stakeholders (e.g., Lovejoy et al., 2012; Rybalko & Selzer, 2010; Waters et al., 2009), the body of literature on social media remains small, so the role of social media in organizations' efforts to encourage dialogic communication and cultivate relationships with stakeholders is still inconclusive.

Four Dimensions of Relationship Cultivation and Dialogic Communication

This study examines four dimensions of organizational relationship cultivation and dialogic communication: disclosure, access, information dissemination, and engagement. *Disclosure*, often called openness, refers to the extent to which an organization discloses information about the nature of the organization. *Access* refers to an organization's availability to public. *Information dissemination*, which is similar to the usefulness-of-information and generation-of-return-visits dimensions that are examined in dialogic communication research (Rybalko & Selzer, 2010; Taylor, Kent, & White, 2001), refers in this study to the extent to which an organization provides useful information to its public regarding what it offers. Finally, *engagement* refers to the extent to which an organization actively engages in conversations with

its public and embraces the public's input. Although engagement is an important aspect to explore in online communication, the research has not fully discussed or properly conceptualized it. Thus, we suggest a new definition of this dimension that integrates the concepts of involvement, interactivity, dialogic loop, and networking that have been examined in studies on dialogic communication, relationship cultivation, and interactive media (Ki & Hon, 2009; Men & Tsai, 2011; Park, Rodgers, & Stemmle, 2011; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010).

This study views disclosure, information dissemination, and access as dimensions of one-way, directional communication and engagement as a dimension of two-way, dialogic communication. Disclosure and information dissemination reflect an organization's efforts to provide information on what it is about and what it offers. The two dimensions are considered one-way communication because information flows from the organization to its public.

Access allows individuals to directly contact an organization and have one-on-one conversations with its members. Thus, access is more dialogic than are disclosure and information dissemination. But just because an organization includes a phone number or e-mail address on its Web site does not necessarily mean that the organization actively engages in two-way conversations with its public. Thus, compared to the engagement dimension, which represents an organization's purposeful efforts to stimulate conversations with the public, access is less participatory and less conversation stimulating— that is, less interactive and more one directional.

Our literature review suggests that organizations are more likely to use Web sites for information dissemination than organization-stakeholder conversation and to generate dialogue and culture relationships that are more likely to be one-way than two-way. Thus, we pose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Disclosure and information-dissemination features will be more prevalent than engagement features on their Web sites.

Hypothesis 2. Access features will be more prevalent than engagement features on their Web sites.

Compared to studies focusing on Web sites, studies on social media have been scant. Because online media are essential components of public relations and the importance of social media is ever increasing, we need to enhance our knowledge and understanding of organizations' online communication practices across different media platforms. Thus, our study of top global organizations' use of Facebook and Twitter examines the following research questions:

Research Question 1. How do these organizations use Facebook and Twitter to generate dialogue in order to cultivate relationships with stakeholders?

Research Question 2. What are the similarities and differences in the ways that these organizations use Facebook and Twitter?

This study also examines how organizations that are promoting different types of products (nondurable, durable, and service) implement relationship-cultivation and dialogic-communication principles into different online media platforms. Research has suggested that product type is one of the key factors affecting organizations' communication strategies. For example, Grove and colleagues (2007) demonstrated that print ads for services are more likely to integrate various promotion and communication tools (e.g., brand advertising, public relations,

and sales promotion) than are print ads for physical goods. The authors suggested that because services are intangible, ads for services might require more integrated efforts to enhance their tangibility and deliverability. In the online communication context, Shin and Huh (2009) and Okazaki (2005) analyzed multinational corporate Web sites targeting different markets and found that corporate Web sites for durable goods tended to be standardized across target markets whereas Web sites for nondurable goods were more localized. Shin and Huh reasoned that nondurable goods tend to appeal to cultures, tastes, and habits that are unique in different countries, thereby requiring marketing communication strategies that are more localized.

Focusing on relationship cultivation and dialogic communication, Voorveld, Neijens and Smit (2010) conducted a content analysis of 100 global brands' Web sites and found that Web sites for durable goods tended to have a higher number of active-control (e.g., dealer locators, search options, software downloads, customizing options) and reciprocal-communication features (e.g., online job placements, online problem diagnostics, product registrations, online order facilitations, multiple contact modes). But the authors did not explain their findings, leaving room for further exploration.

Overall, the literature suggests that an organization's communication efforts and strategies vary according to the nature of the product that it is promoting. Online media communication for services would need to provide more specific information due to their intangibility. And the promotion of durable products, compared to nondurable products, might require more interactions with stakeholders because nondurable products are more closely associated with the culture and lifestyle of local markets (Shin & Huh, 2009). But whether and how the types of products that organizations promote affect the way organizations generate

dialogue and cultivate relationships online has not been fully examined. Thus, we examine the following research question:

Research Question 3. How do organizations promoting different product types (nondurable, durable, and service) implement four relationship-cultivation and dialogic-communication principles (disclosure, access, information dissemination, and engagement) on three different online communication platforms (Web sites, Facebook, and Twitter)?

Methodology

To examine the hypotheses and research questions, we conducted a content analysis of the brand Web sites, Facebook pages, and Twitter accounts maintained by top global organizations drawn from the Interbrand's Best Global Brands list. The list consists of 100 brands that are "truly global" (2012, p. 138). Each of these brands satisfies the following inclusion criteria:

1. It has a presence in at least three major continents and a broad geographic coverage in emerging markets.

2. It derives at least 30% of its revenue from outside the brand's home country.

3. Sufficient information on its financial performance is publicly available.

4. Its economic profit is expected to be positive over the long term.

We drew our sample from the Best Global Brands list rather than from other well-known lists such as the Fortune 500 (i.e., listing America's top corporations) because we wanted to explore how global leaders with a substantial global presence use online media, which is likely to affect how other organizations do business.

The list provides the name of each brand, the organization it represents, and its country of origin, sector (beverage, electronics, automotive, etc.), and net worth. Following Okazaki's (2005) industry classification, we categorized the 100 brands into three product groups based on their sectors: nondurable ($n = 35$), durable ($n = 32$), and service ($n = 33$).

As most brands in the sample maintain multiple brand Web sites, Facebook pages, and Twitter accounts to target different markets and promote different subbrands, we used a set of criteria to select only one Web site, one Facebook page, and one Twitter account for each brand. To identify the official brand Web sites, we used popular search engines by typing "www.[brand name].com" (e.g., www.dell.com) into the Internet browser. If an identified Web site covered more than one sector, we searched for an alternative Web site that better corresponded to the sector named in the Best Global Brands list. If a brand had multiple local Web sites rather than one official, global Web site, we used its U.S. Web site. We used the same rules to identify a Facebook page and a Twitter account for each brand. If a brand had multiple Facebook pages or Twitter accounts, we selected the one that was clearly identified as the official Facebook page or Twitter account. If a brand had multiple official Facebook pages or Twitter accounts for various subbrands and local markets (e.g., Samsung for electronics, for mobiles, for life insurance, for UK, Korea, Australia, etc.), we selected the account best corresponding to the sector named in the Best Global Brands list and targeting the United States (e.g., www.Facebook.com/SamsungUSA for Samsung electronics).

This procedure yielded 99 active brand Web sites, 89 active Facebook pages, and 84 active Twitter accounts.

Coding Procedure

We had five units of analysis: (a) the entire brand Web site ($n = 99$), (b) the Facebook profile (i.e., the space where general information about the organization is provided) on each Facebook page ($n = 89$), (c) a systematic random sample of wall posts (i.e., news feeds posted by an organization) on each Facebook page ($n = 1,777$), (d) the Twitter profile (i.e., the space where general information about the organization is provided) on each Twitter account ($n = 84$), and (e) a systematic random sample of tweets (i.e., news feeds posted by the organization) on each Twitter account ($n = 1,680$).

We developed a codebook and coding rules based on the literature. The coding was done in June and July 2012 by two coders who were trained based on coding guidelines. First they coded a small number of brand Web sites, Facebook pages, and Twitter accounts that were not included in the sample in order to detect and resolve any potential problems in the coding scheme and improve intercoder agreement. Then, to test intercoder reliability, the coders coded 30 randomly selected Web sites in the sample (30% of the Web site sample). Because constant changes and updates in Web sites are one of the major challenges in Web-site content analysis (Shin & Huh, 2009), the coders analyzed the same Web sites on the same day using the same browser settings and the same type of computers. The Web site coding took place between June 13 and June 22, 2012.

Next, the coders analyzed Facebook pages and Twitter accounts, coding both profiles and wall posts (Facebook) or tweets (Twitter). The population of all possible sampling units of wall posts or tweets (i.e., the number of wall posts or tweets in each Facebook page or Twitter account respectively) is not known because companies can post or delete their news feeds anytime so the numbers keep changing. Therefore, we used a systematic random sampling (i.e., coding every nth unit for inclusion in the sample) to select wall posts or tweets rather than a

census (i.e., coding all posts or tweets) or a simple random sampling method (i.e., selecting cases using a random number generator) (Krippendorff, 2013).

For each Facebook page and Twitter account, the coders read and coded every other corporate wall post or tweet, starting from the most recent post or tweet on June 22, 2012 until they had coded 20 posts or tweets. Considering that almost all Facebook pages and Twitter accounts in this study had at least 40 posts or tweets, with one exception (i.e., Facebook page that contained only 34 posts), we determined the sampling interval (every 2nd post or tweet) and number (20) to be the optimal to capture the latest posting or tweeting trends for most of these Facebook pages and Twitter accounts.

To assess intercoder reliability, the coders coded 24 randomly selected Facebook profiles and 480 wall posts (27% of the total sample of wall posts) and 24 randomly selected Twitter profiles and 480 tweets (29% of the total sample of tweets). To ensure that the coders viewed the same wall posts and tweets, we printed and provided coders with the posts and tweets that they analyzed for this intercoder reliability test. The coders viewed both the printed and online versions of the wall posts and tweets during the same time period using the same type of computers and browsers. The Facebook and Twitter coding took place between June 27 and July 23, 2012.

Measures

We measured the Web sites, Facebook pages, and Twitter accounts for the four dimensions derived from the relationship cultivation and dialogic communication literature: disclosure, access, information dissemination, and engagement (see Table 1).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

We measured disclosure with items that assessed an organization's efforts to be open with stakeholders. We adopted these items from the literature on relationship cultivation and dialogic communication (Kent & Taylor, 1998; Men & Tsai, 2011; Waters et al., 2009). The coders recorded whether each disclosure item was present or absent on the Web site, Facebook profile, and Twitter profile of each brand.

We measured access with items that assessed the degree to which an organization provides consumers with ways to contact the organization. The coders indicated whether each access item was present or absent on the Web site, Facebook profile, and Twitter profile of each brand. In this study, we used different access items for different online communication platforms because some of the commonly found access items in one platform are not common in other platforms. We selected access items based on the literature on relationship cultivation, dialogic communication, and new media (Ki & Hon, 2009; Kwon & Sung, 2011; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010; Waters et al., 2011).

We derived our items for measuring information dissemination from the usefulness-of-information-for-consumers and generation-of-return-visits dimensions in dialogic communication research (Kwon & Sung, 2011; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). For Web sites, the coders recorded whether each information-dissemination item was present or absent in the entire Web site. On Facebook and Twitter, however, information dissemination items are commonly found in wall posts and tweets, not on profiles. Thus, the coders analyzed the wall posts and tweets to measure information dissemination. They were trained to choose only one information dissemination item per post or tweet. If a post or tweet contained more than one type of information (e.g., news about the industry and news about new offerings), the coders selected the most prominent information presented.

Like information dissemination features, engagement features are commonly found in wall posts or tweets, not on profiles. Therefore, we measured this dimension in the same way that we did information dissemination: For Web sites, we examined the entire Web site. For Facebook and Twitter, we examined each wall post or tweet. In all three online communication platforms, we used nine common engagement items to measure whether an organization had features facilitating consumers' participation in and interactions with a brand. Twitter was coded with three additional items (reply to consumers (@), retweet consumer comments (RT), and encourage consumers to retweet) that are unique to Twitter. We derived these items from the involvement, dialogic loop, and networking principles in the literature on dialogic communication and relationship cultivation (Men & Tsai, 2011; Park & Reber, 2008; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010; Taylor et al., 2001). We also assessed engagement by measuring whether each organization's Facebook page and Twitter account tended to respond to customer comments.

Intercoder Reliability

As we mentioned, about 30% of the total sample was subject to intercoder reliability assessment (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991). We randomly selected the units of this intercoder reliability assessment to represent the total sample (Krippendorff, 2013). We used three of the most popular reliability coefficients in business and social science (percentage agreement, Scott's *pi*, and Cohen's *kappa*) for this assessment (Neuendorf, 2002).

For the Web site sample, the percentage-agreement indexes ranged from .87 to 1.0, and Scott's *pi* and Cohen's *kappa* ranged from .61 to 1.0. For the Facebook page sample, the percentage agreement indexes ranged from .96 to 1.0, and Scott's *pi* and Cohen's *kappa* ranged .64 to 1.0. For the Twitter account sample, the percentage agreement indexes ranged

from .96 to 1.0, and Scott's *pi* and Cohen's *kappa* ranged from .94 to 1.0. All the variables in this study met the acceptable reliability levels stipulated in Neuendorf (2002).

Results

Strategies for Relationship Cultivation and Dialogic Communication on Web Sites

This study examined how organizations implemented four strategies for relationship cultivation and dialogic communication (disclosure, access, information dissemination, and engagement) on three types of online communication platforms (Web sites, Facebook pages, and Twitter accounts). We predicted that organizations would more likely use their Web sites for one-way communication than for two-way communication. Specifically, we proposed that disclosure and information-dissemination features (H1) as well as access features (H2) would be more prevalent than engagement features on brand Web sites. Table 2 summarizes our results.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Our results showed that disclosure and information dissemination features were more prevalent than engagement features on brand Web sites, supporting H1. The majority of the organizations shared information about themselves with organization descriptions, histories, and mission statements. All displayed organization logos or symbols on their Web sites, and more than half of the Web sites provided information on key management and links to social media channels on their homepage (i.e., the first page of a Web site).

The Web sites were also used as important platforms for information dissemination. Almost all provided product and service information and news or announcements about the organization, events, promotions, and new offerings. Other types of information that is useful for the public, such as employment opportunities and links to frequently asked questions and

answers, were also disseminated. Information items that might be less useful to the public (ads for the organization or its products or services) and less directly related to the organization's offerings (news about the industry) were less common, appearing on 35.4% and 30.3% on the Web sites, respectively.

Compared to disclosure and information-dissemination features, engagement features were used less frequently. The most frequently used engagement feature was registration or sign-up (86.9% of the Web sites). The second most frequently used feature was the survey, but it occurred on only 26.3% of the Web sites. Overall, organizations seem to use Web sites mainly to disclose who they are and to provide information about what they do.

Access features were also more prevalent than engagement features on Web sites, supporting H2. The most common access features were phone number for customer contact, geographic address for customer contact, and online form for inquiries or comments directly submitted to the organization. More interactive access features that could potentially stimulate quality conversations between organizations and their stakeholders were relatively rare. Specifically, only 33.3% featured a message board where customers can leave comments or inquiries and organizations can respond to these comments. In addition, only 2 out of 10 Web sites provided a live chat feature that enables customers to have one-on-one, personal conversations with a company representative.

Use of Social Media Tools to Cultivate Relationships and Generate Dialogue
This study also examined how leading global organizations implemented relationship-cultivation and dialogic-communication principles into two popular social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter. RQ1 asked how these organizations used Facebook and Twitter to cultivate relationships

and generate dialogue. Also, since the two social media platforms have features and characteristics that are different from each other, they can be used for different communication objectives. Thus, RQ2 examined the similarities and differences in the ways that organizations used Facebook and Twitter. Table 3 shows the breakdown of the relationship-cultivation and dialogic-communication features that we found on these Facebook pages and Twitter accounts.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Overall, both Facebook and Twitter were used more for information dissemination than for user engagement and more for one-way communication than for two-way communication. As Table 3 shows, more than 60% of the Facebook wall posts and Twitter tweets did not contain any engagement features whereas about 80% of the wall posts and tweets contained at least one type of information. The most often used information-dissemination strategies were to convey news or an announcement and to deliver product or service information.

Regarding disclosure, company logos or symbols and links to the corporate or brand Web sites were the most common features in both Facebook and Twitter. But unlike these organizations' Web sites, none of their Facebook and Twitter profiles provided information on people (i.e., key management).

As for access, not many Facebook pages and Twitter accounts listed traditional modes of customer contact, such as phone numbers and geographic addresses, as did the vast majority of the Web sites. Social media, then, appear to not be the major and immediate access points for such contact, especially if customers or stakeholders wish to physically talk to or meet with people at an organization. Nonetheless, social media allow users to post messages to the organizations, providing virtual access points. These access points, however, were not actively used as tools to stimulate conversations with stakeholders; more than 60% of the organizations

rarely or never responded to customer wall posts on Facebook pages. Although more than half of the organizations responded to customer comments or inquiries on Twitter, the degree of personal interactions was low. Only 21.2% of the tweets were replies to consumer comments.

To examine RQ2, we conducted a series of two-proportion z-tests to compare the occurrences of relationship-cultivation and dialogic-communication features in our Facebook and Twitter samples. Our analysis, illustrated in Table 3 with z-values, indicates that the organizations used Facebook and Twitter differently, focusing on different aspects of relationship cultivation and dialogic communication.

First, disclosure and access features were more prevalent on Facebook profiles than on Twitter profiles. Except for the company logo or symbol disclosure feature, Facebook exceeded Twitter in all disclosure and access items ($p < .05$). Second, Facebook wall posts were more likely than Twitter tweets to contain information that is useful to customers. Compared to Twitter, Facebook posts were more apt to disseminate information about products or services. Finally, although Facebook and Twitter were similar in that more than 60% of the posts in either platform contained no user-engagement features, the organizations used the two platforms differently to engage with stakeholders. Facebook was used more for engaging customers' online participation, exceeding Twitter in such engagement themes as idea solicitation, open-ended questions or sentences to stimulate dialogue, and polling or voting. On the other hand, Twitter was used more for responding directly to individual customers. The most frequently occurring engagement feature in Twitter was reply to consumers (21.2%). Twitter was also significantly more responsive to customer comments (56.0%) than Facebook was (37.5%) (p <.05).

Use of Three Online Communication Platforms to Promote Different Product Categories

To examine RQ3, we computed the variables for the four dimensions— disclosure, access, information disclosure, and engagement— to determine how the organizations promoted different product types on the three online communication platforms. To determine the disclosure and access variables, we counted the number of corresponding items present on the entire Web site, the Facebook profile, and the Twitter profile for each brand. To determine the information dissemination and engagement variables on Web sites, we used the same procedure that we used for determining the disclosure and access variables (i.e., counting the number of corresponding items present in the entire Web site). For Facebook and Twitter, however, we determined the information dissemination and engagement variables by counting the number of Facebook wall posts and Twitter tweets that contained these respective items.

Then, we conducted a series of one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests to compare the use of these four dimensions of relationship cultivation and dialogic communication (disclosure, access, information dissemination, and engagement) across three different product types (nondurable, durable, and service) in the three different online communication platforms (Web site, Facebook, and Twitter). The results are presented in Table 4.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

As Table 4 shows, we found a significant difference between two of the three product types in the use of disclosure features on Twitter. The results of our posthoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that organizations promoting nondurable goods used more disclosure features on their Twitter profiles than did organizations promoting durable goods. We found no significant differences across the three product groups in the use of disclosure features on Web sites and Facebook.

As for the use of access features, we found significant differences between the product types in both Web sites and Twitter. Our posthoc comparisons indicated that organizations promoting durable goods used more access features on their Web sites and Twitter profiles than did organizations promoting nondurable goods. We found no significant difference across the three product groups in the use of access features in Facebook.

As for the use of information-dissemination features, the results revealed significant differences between the product groups in all three online communication platforms. Our posthoc comparisons indicated that organizations promoting services most actively implemented information-dissemination features across all three communication platforms, especially compared to organizations promoting nondurable goods.

Finally, we found a significant difference between the product groups in the use of engagement features in Twitter. Our posthoc comparisons indicated that organizations promoting nondurable goods and durable goods used more engagement features in their tweets than did organizations promoting services. We found no significant differences between the three product groups in either the Web sites or Facebook.

Overall, the results suggest that product types affect the way organizations generate dialogues and build relationships on different online communication platforms. Compared to organizations promoting durable goods and services, organizations promoting nondurable goods were more likely to use Twitter for disclosure and engagement purposes but less likely to use Twitter for access and information-dissemination purposes. Organizations promoting durable goods were more likely than were those promoting nondurable goods to use Web sites and Twitter to provide access modes. Organizations promoting services tended to more actively use

all three online platforms to disseminate information, especially compared to organizations promoting nondurable goods.

Discussion

Despite the growing anticipation about online media's potential as tools for organization–stakeholder interactions and two-way communication, our findings suggest that top global organizations are not fully exploiting that potential.

Integrated Use That Is Largely One-Directional

When Web sites were first conceived to be potential tools for building relationships, the community of global organizations eagerly awaited the new technology that would build on this momentum. Based on the results of this study, nothing much seems to have changed since the Web site was first conceived. We found disclosure and information-dissemination features to be more prevalent than engagement features on the Web sites that we studied. The access features that we found seemed to lack the interactivity that could potentially stimulate quality conversations between members of the organization and its stakeholders. Overall, Web sites appeared to be useful sources for stakeholders to obtain information about an organization but not appear to be useful sources through which stakeholders could engage and interact with its representatives. This finding is consistent with what previous studies have demonstrated (see Park & Reber, 2008; Taylor et al., 2001; Waters et al., 2011).

Facebook and Twitter appeared to be used in similar ways: More for information dissemination than for user engagement and more for one-way communication to convey news or an announcement about the organization than for two-way communication with stakeholders.

While 8 out of 10 Facebook posts and Twitter tweets conveyed information about the organization, products, and the industry, only 4 in 10 posts and tweets attempted to facilitate stakeholder–organization interactions. Additionally, neither Facebook nor Twitter appeared to be useful sources for stakeholders who wished to access (i.e., physically talk to or meet with) people at an organization. Although users could post or tweet to the organizations, these organizations did not actively use these platforms as tools to stimulate conversations with stakeholders. But the two social media, Facebook and Twitter, were used a bit differently: Facebook was used more to disseminate information and provide access to stakeholders whereas Twitter was used more for directly responding to customer comments.

There has been little research on the effects and effectiveness of online dialogic communication, so we are uncertain whether we should be concerned or disappointed by the fact that online media are used more for one-way than for two-way communication. Nonetheless, a few studies (e.g., Sundar et al., 2012; Wu et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2010) suggest that interactivity and user engagement in online media can lead to positive OPR outcomes. Moreover, global brands such as JetBlue and Starbucks have demonstrated how organizations can successfully take advantage of online media to build relationships. JetBlue is well known for using Twitter as a two-way communication and conversation tool (Gangadharbatla, 2012), and it has now a big fan base, with more than 1.7 million followers. And inviting consumers to provide menu or service ideas on My Starbucks Idea (mystarbucksidea.com) and to follow it on Twitter, Starbucks actively interacts with consumers and encourages consumer engagement. Such crowdsourcing strategies based on user engagement have been adopted by numerous brands because they are known to create buzz about the brands and enhance brand loyalty (Semenik, Allen, O'Guinn, & Kaufmann, 2012).

Considering that online media now provide organizations with a wide range of features and tools for reciprocal communication and that user engagement can result in positive outcomes, we encourage organizations to actively exploit the potential of various online communication platforms for relationship cultivation. Research examining how specific types of engagement tools are associated with different OPR outcomes would be especially useful.

Different Products Require Different Online Communication Strategies

Grove et al. (2007) argued that the different nature of products necessitates different marketing communication strategies, and this argument also seems to apply to the online communication context. Our study found that organizations promoting nondurable goods were more likely to use Twitter for disclosure and engagement purposes. Because nondurable goods are more closely related to local culture and lifestyles (Shin & Huh, 2009), the promotion of such products might be better suited for open-communication (disclosure) and user-engagement strategies. But that tendency did not occur in Facebook and Web sites.

Organizations promoting durable products were more likely to use Web sites and Twitter to provide access modes, especially compared to organizations promoting nondurable products. Unlike nondurable products that can be purchased in various retail and general stores, durable products, such as cars and electronics, tend to be sold at specific specialty shops, so providing access information could be more essential for promoting such products.

Organizations promoting services tended to more actively use all three online platforms to disseminate information. As Grove et al. (2007) suggested, this tendency could be due to the intangible nature of services. Because services cannot be seen or touched, more information may be required to make them more tangible and deliverable.

Overall, the organizations seemed to choose different methods of communication based on the type of product that they were promoting. What less clear, however, is how organizations promoting different product categories choose between the three types of online media to achieve different relationship-cultivation goals. Thus, the question remains whether industrial organizations can be innovative in building relationships by harnessing the use of these tools. For instance, can organizations promoting nondurable goods use Facebook and Web sites to disclose information and engage? Or, can organizations promoting durable goods build a community in Facebook? Becoming familiar with the different tools available and staying current with developments remain challenging for organizations (DiStaso et al., 2011; Lovejoy et al., 2012).

We encourage further research that examines how the nature of products promoted by organizations affects online communication strategies, such as it has been examined in advertising and marketing contexts (e.g., Grove et al., 2007; Okazaki, 2005; Shin & Huh, 2009).

Challenges in the Use of Online Media

Consistently, studies have shown that even though online communication tools are changing the practice of public relations (DiStaso et al., 2011), organizations are still not committed to using these new communication tools. They have expressed common concerns regarding:

- Controlling messages (DiStaso et al., 2011; Seo et al., 2009)
- Determining the scope of online audiences (Seo et al., 2009)
- Connecting effectively with stakeholders (DiStaso et al., 2011; Lovejoy et al., 2012)
- Finding the most effective mix of tools and traditional media (DiStaso et al., 2011; Elling, Lentze, & de Jong, 2012).

So the question remains: How can practitioners incorporate their use of online media strategically? The answer must go beyond the one-size-fits-all, different tools but same approach. Booth and Matic (2011) argued that organizations establish online presence "without (the) due diligence required to make the effort worthwhile" (p. 185). The answer lies in understanding the distinctive features of each tool and exploiting them advantageously.

Success in such online media initiatives must begin with the objective of building relationships and enabling conversations with stakeholders (Booth & Matic, 2011; Waters et al., 2009) and of "grow(ing) virtual communities with stakeholders" (Lovejoy et al., 2012, p. 316). Once this motivation is entrenched in the organizational psyche, the activation and use of the tools will follow. So how can specific tools be used to promote engagement and conversation? We proffer the following suggestions:

Web sites: Current practices seem to center on offering general information, with the moderate use of discussion forums. Organizations can enhance dialogic communication by offering "customer-oriented" information and promoting a greater understanding of the organization's "products, services and underlying philosophies." The thrust of the strategy should be to build communal relationships, promote mutuality and intimacy, and enhance "trust, satisfaction and openness" (Park & Reber, 2008, p. 410).

For example, Sony promotes a wide range of products and services to the global market, and its Web site (http://www.sony.com/) contains a multitude of detailed information about what it offers. At the same time, the Web site features various user-engagement components. It shares links to various social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. It also features an icon marked by a conversation balloon that takes users to its community Web site, where customers can participate in two-way dialogic communication via forums and blogs (see Figure

1). The Web site and its linked community site enable users not only to search detailed information about Sony's products but also to express themselves, fulfilling both their informational and their engagement needs.

<p style="text-align:center">INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE</p>

Facebook: Current practices focus on providing product and company information. Organizations can enhance their dialogic communication by posting more user-engagement features such as idea solicitation and open-ended questions or sentences that are conversation starters. To ensure that this strategy is optimized, organizations can designate spokespersons to follow through and respond (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009). Coca Cola's Facebook page provides a good example of the effective use of this social media platform.

Coca Cola's official Facebook page was originally created by two fans of the brand. The organization embraced the fans' efforts, making the page they had created its official brand Facebook page and rewarding the fans by giving them active roles in management (Klaassen, 2009). The Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/cocacola) is used for both information-dissemination and user-engagement purposes. Most of its wall posts deliver brand messages and news on the brand-sponsored activities. It also promotes activities that involve consumer interactions and allows consumers to share comments and photos related to the brand (see Figure 2). The history of this Facebook page and the page's current communication practices clearly demonstrate the company's emphasis on dialogic communication and engagement with its consumers. Currently, the page has over 70 million fans.

<p style="text-align:center">INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE</p>

Twitter: Current practices tend to focus on one-way information dissemination. Even though organizations are restricted to 140-characters in this medium, they could explore such

tools as hyperlinks and hashtags and encourage conversations by retweeting useful information or responding to visitors' tweets in a timely manner. For example, a recent advertising campaign for Gap features a Sikh model, and its outdoor advertisements featuring the model have been vandalized in several places in the United States with racist slurs aimed at the model. A Twitter user alerted Gap to this incidence, and Gap quickly responded (see upper post in Figure 3) by placing the Sikh model as a cover image on its Twitter and Facebook sites (Kuruvilla, 2013). Thus, Gap effectively got involved in two-way communication with Twitter users and reacted to a serious issue in a timely manner, and these actions have been acknowledged and lauded by consumers (See lower post in Figure 3).

INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Conclusion

This study has examined how top global organizations use three different online communication platforms to generate dialogue and cultivate relationships with stakeholders. While previous studies have examined organizations using a singular, specific type of online media to build relationships, this study takes an integrated approach by examining the use of online media tools and exploring the impact of product types on organizations' strategies for online relationship building and dialogic communication. This study, arguably the first of its kind, provides meaningful insights into how leading global brands promote different types of products using different online communication platforms to achieve communication and relationship-building objectives.

But this study has several limitations. First, because of the nature of our content-analysis method, the types of questions this study can address concern whether and how relationship

cultivation and dialogic communication principles are implemented into online communication platforms rather than why and with what effects they are implemented. Future experimental studies could examine stakeholder interactions with and responses to Web sites and social networking sites by employing different levels and types of relationship-cultivation and dialogic-communication components. Also, surveys or in-depth interviews with corporate communication decision makers could be conducted to further examine whether the feature differences across different online communication platforms that we found reflect conscious strategic decision making.

Second, due to the different nature of different online media platforms, we measured information dissemination and engagement differently in Web sites and two social media platforms. For Web sites, we assessed the presence and absence of each information dissemination and engagement item in the entire Web site. For Facebook and Twitter, however, we assessed these two dimensions by looking at individual wall posts and tweets and determining which one of the information-dissemination features and one of the engagement features was most evident in each posting, instead of whether each information dissemination or engagement feature was present in each wall post or tweet. We did so because (a) most wall posts and tweets were short and single-minded, with each posting containing only one information dissemination feature and one engagement feature, and (b) measuring whether each wall post or tweet contains each of the six information dissemination items and nine or more engagement items would be an overwhelming task, considering that this study analyzed more than 3,000 wall posts and tweets. These differences in coding schemes should be considered when interpreting the data and making comparisons across different platforms. To further test and verify the findings of this study, we suggest that future research should develop more

comparable and sophisticated measures for each of the relationship-cultivation and dialogic-communication dimensions.

Third, our study examined online communication platforms maintained by organizations. But much consumer-to-consumer communication and interactions may occur via noncompany blogs or social media such as consumer-generated content, Facebook fan pages, and third-party review or discussion-forum sites. These forms of communication may have a greater impact on consumers' perceptions and decision making (Mackiewicz, 2010). Future research could explore whether and to what extent noncompany online media afford opportunities for engagement and interactions between consumers and how these media affect organizations' online communication practices.

Finally, future research could also examine if specific tools, by virtue of their features, encourage more stakeholder feedback, such as customer complaints, and how organizations manage specific interactions. In assessing the effects and effectiveness of feedback-inducing features, researchers should also consider users' demographic characteristics and cultural background because such user factors could affect the way stakeholders respond to online and computer-mediated communication (Elling et al., 2012; St. Amant, 2002).

In conclusion, we hope that this study contributes to our understanding of how to harness the unique features of online media and to equip practitioners with the tools to "advance the organization, one stakeholder at a time" (Briones et al., 2011, p. 42).

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Table 1. Summary of Items Measuring the Four Dimensions of Organizational Relationship Cultivation and Dialogic Communication

Measurement	Brand Web site	Facebook	Twitter
Disclosure	• Company description • Company history/foundation date • Mission statement • Company logo/symbol • People (key management) • Links to SNS	• Company description • Company history/foundation date • Mission statement • Company logo/symbol • People (key management) • Links to SNS • Link to the corporate/brand Web site	• Company description • Company history/foundation date • Mission statement • Company logo/symbol • People (key management) • Links to SNS • Link to the corporate/brand Web site
Access	• Phone number for customer contact • Geographic address for customer contact • E-mail address for customer contact • Online form for inquiries/comments directly submitted to the company • Online/live chat with an expert or customer sales representative • A message board where consumers can leave comments/inquiries	• Phone number for customer contact • Geographic address for customer contact • E-mail address for customer contact • Message button	• Phone number for customer contact • Geographic address for customer contact • E-mail address for customer contact • A separate link for a Twitter account/URL for customer support
Information dissemination	• Product/service information • News/announcement about the company, events, promotions, new offerings • News about the industry • Employment opportunities • Link to FAQ/Q&A • Ads for the company or its products/services/events	• Product/service information • News/announcement about the company, events, promotions, new offerings • News about the industry • Employment opportunities • Link to FAQ/Q&A • Ads for the company or its products/services/events	• Product/service information • News/announcement about the company, events, promotions, new offerings • News about the industry • Employment opportunities • Link to FAQ/Q&A • Ads for the company or its products/services/events
Engagement	• Polling/voting • Open-ended question or sentence to stimulate dialogue • Survey • Idea solicitation • Contest/competition • Sweepstake • Coupon, bar code, QR code • Game • Registration/sign-up	• Polling/voting • Open-ended question or sentence to stimulate dialogue • Survey • Idea solicitation • Contest/competition • Sweepstake • Coupon, bar code, QR code • Game • Registration/sign-up	• Polling/voting • Open-ended question or sentence to stimulate dialogue • Survey • Idea solicitation • Contest/competition • Sweepstake • Coupon, bar code, QR code • Game • Registration/sign-up • Reply to consumers(@) • Retweet consumer comments • Encourage consumers to retweet

Note. SNS = Social networking site, FAQ = frequently asked questions, Q+A = questions and answers, QR = Quick response

Table 2. Occurrences of Relationship-Cultivation and Dialogic-Communication Features on
Brand Web Sites (n = 99).

Category	% of Web sites
Disclosure	
Company description	89.9
Company history/foundation date	86.9
Mission statement	88.9
Company logo/symbol	100.0
People (key management)	64.6
Links to SNS	67.7
Access	
Phone number for customer contact	91.9
Geographic address for customer contact	86.9
E-mail address for customer contact	37.4
Online form for inquiries/comments directly submitted to the company	76.8
Online/live chat with an expert or customer sales representative	21.2
A message board where consumers can leave comments/inquiries	33.3
Information dissemination	
Product/service information	99.9
News/announcement about the company, events, promotions, new offerings	100.0
News about the industry	30.3
Employment opportunities	83.8
Link to FAQ/Q&A	78.8
Ads for the company or its products/services/events	35.4
Engagement	
Polling/voting	10.1
Open-ended question or sentence to stimulate dialogue	1.0
Survey	26.3
Idea solicitation	13.1
Contest/competition	12.1
Sweepstake	13.1
Coupon, bar code, QR code	13.1
Game	6.1
Registration/sign-up	86.9

Table 3. Occurrences of Relationship- Cultivation and Dialogic-Communication Features on
   Facebook (F) Pages and Twitter (T) Accounts

Category	F (%)	T (%)	z
Disclosure (F profiles: $n = 89$; T profiles: $n = 84$)			
Company description	88.8	17.9	13.16 **
Company history/foundation date	96.6	6.0	27.92 **
Mission statement	64.0	7.1	9.74 **
Company logo/symbol	97.8	97.6	.09
People (key management)	.0	.0	.0
Link to the corporate/brand Web site	95.5	85.7	2.21 *
Links to SNS	50.6	13.1	5.78 **
Access (F profiles: $n = 89$; T profiles: $n = 84$)			
Phone number for customer contact	13.5	.0	3.71 **
Geographic address for customer contact	14.6	.0	3.88 **
E-mail address for customer contact	7.9	1.2	2.15 *
Message button (F only)	65.2	-	-
A separate link for a Twitter account/URL for customer support (T only)	-	17.9	-
Information dissemination (F wall posts: $n = 1,777$; T tweets: $n= 1,680$)			
No information	14.4	21.8	5.66 **
Product/service information	34.7	28.3	4.06 **
News/announcement about the company, events, promotions, new offerings	43.8	41.8	1.19
News about the industry	4.1	6.4	3.02 **
Employment opportunities	.3	.8	1.97 *
Link to FAQ/Q&A	.2	.1	.76
Ads for the company or its products/services/events	2.0	.7	3.34 **
Other	.6	.1	2.51 *
Unable to determine	.0	.1	1.30
Engagement (F wall posts: $n = 1,777$; T tweets: $n= 1,680$)			
No user engagement	63.3	60.2	1.87
Polling/voting	2.4	.4	5.07 **
Open-ended question or sentence to stimulate dialogue	7.8	1.5	8.97 **
(Link to) survey	.1	.0	1.33
Idea solicitation	15.9	3.0	13.40 **
Contest/competition	1.7	1.3	.97
Sweepstake	.4	.3	.50
Coupon, bar code, QR code	.6	.4	.84
(Link to) game	.5	.2	1.50
Enticing registration/sign-up	1.2	1.0	.56
Reply to consumers(@) (T only)	-	21.2	-
Retweet consumer comments (T only)	-	8.5	-
Encourage consumers to retweet (T only)	-	1.0	-
Other	6.2	.7	9.06 **
Unable to determine	.1	.7	2.77 **
Responding to customer comments (F profiles: $n = 89$, T profiles: $n = 84$)	37.5	56.0	2.47 *

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 4. Differences in the Use of Relationship-Ccultivation and Dialogic-Communication
   Features Between the Three Online Communication Platforms Across Product
   Categories

	Nondurable (1)	Durable (2)	Service (3)	df	F	p	Posthoc Comparison
Disclosure							
Web sites	4.62	5.09	5.24	2, 96	2.89	.06	
Facebook	4.74	5.23	4.81	2, 86	1.92	.15	
Twitter	2.64	2.00	2.23	2, 81	6.82	.00	$1 > 2$*
Access							
Web sites	3.09	3.78	3.58	2, 96	3.42	.04	$1 < 2$*
Facebook	.97	1.03	1.04	2, 86	.06	.94	
Twitter	.04	.31	.20	2, 81	3.34	.04	$1 < 2$*
Information dissemination							
Web sites	3.53	3.88	4.37	2, 96	12.36	.00	$1, 2 < 3$*
Facebook	15.84	17.68	17.89	2, 86	3.94	.02	$1 < 3$*
Twitter	12.80	15.41	18.20	2, 81	8.31	.00	$1 < 3$*
Engagement							
Web sites	1.79	1.94	1.73	2, 96	.25	.78	
Facebook	7.19	7.84	6.63	2, 87	.42	.66	
Twitter	11.04	8.55	4.43	2, 81	8.87	.00	$1, 2 > 3$*

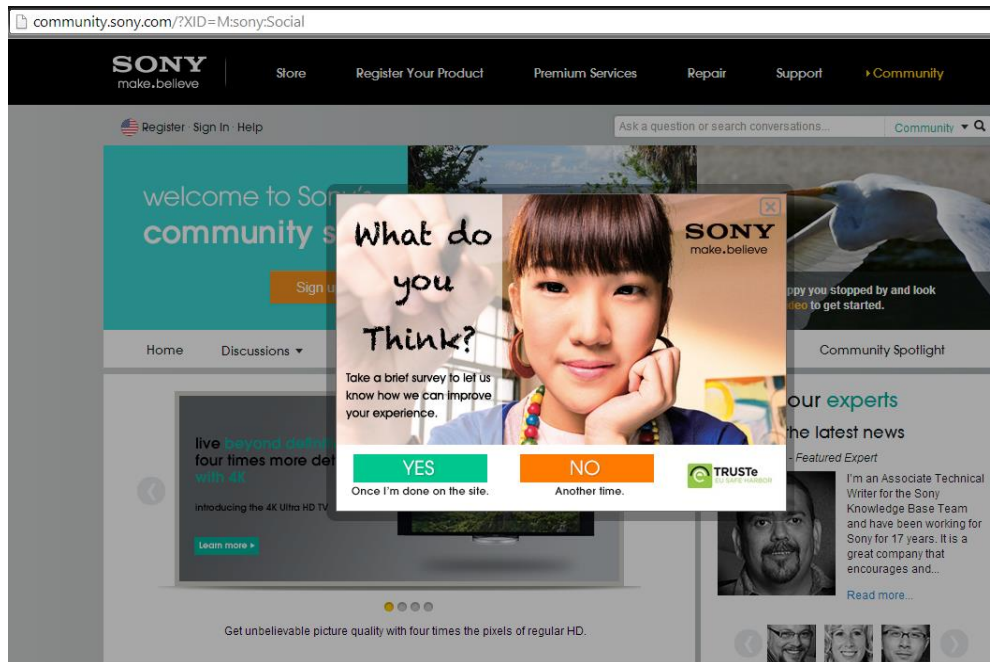* The mean difference is significant at $p < .05$.

Figure 1. Linked to the corporate Web site, Sony's community Web site provides consumers with various two-way communication platforms to fulfill both their informational and their engagement needs. It offers information on the organization and the products it offers (informational needs) and has a window to solicit customer feedback (engagement needs).

Figure 2. Coca Cola tries to engage in dialogic communication via Facebook by encouraging consumers to participate in brand activities. This picture was shared by a fan who was enjoying Coca-Cola and great company on a beautiful day in the great outdoors, an activity that could resonate with many others and encourage them to share their fan photos.
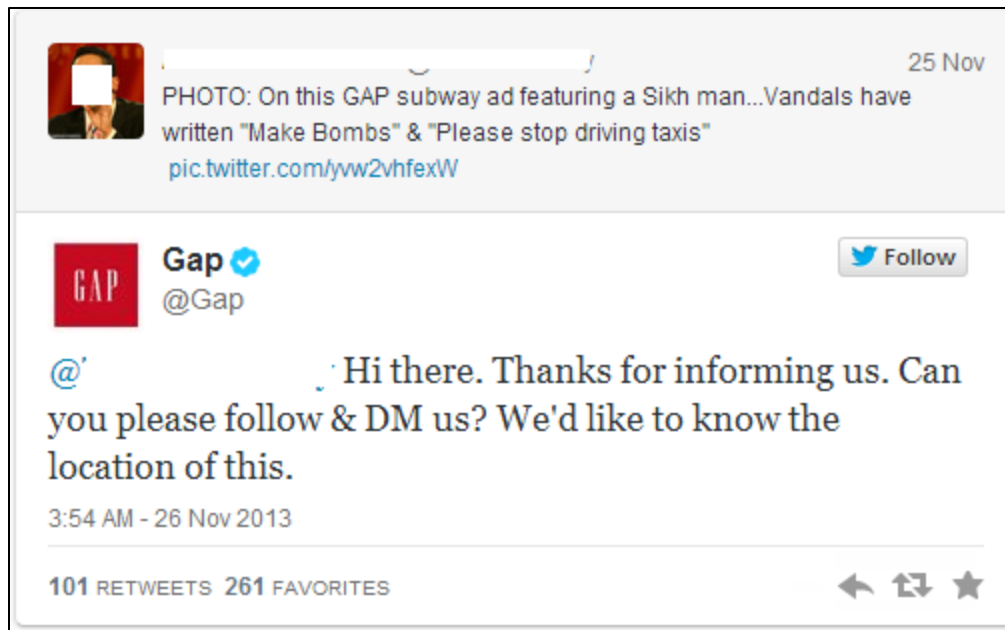
Figure 3. By responding to a serious issue in a timely manner, Gap protected its corporate image and induced positive responses from the public. This tweet engages the customer by acknowledging the customer's concerns and seeking more information so that the organization can address the problem. By responding this way, the organization shows customers that it takes their feedback seriously and encourages other customers to engage the organization.

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