

Chapter 56

Personal Brand Benefits of Social Media Use for Researchers: A Case Study

Alberto Prado Román

Rey Juan Carlos University, Spain

Iria Paz-Gil

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3696-5253>

Rey Juan Carlos University, Spain

Miguel Prado Román

Rey Juan Carlos University, Spain

ABSTRACT

Social networks are a very relevant tool for businesses to connect efficiently with many users at the same time. It means that in the second decade of the 21st century, companies have strengthened their strategies to expand their influence. In the higher education context, social media can help develop teaching strategies. Nevertheless, are they also relevant to expanding the professional capacity of researchers? Given this, this research aims to determine whether they are relevant within the research field and how they use them according to the researchers' position and the professional objectives set.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

In a volatile market like the current one, understanding users is fundamental to determining their preferences to adjust brands' services and products (Nieto, 2015). However, users' behavior is affected by objective, psychological (Gómez & Prado, 2014), or subjective factors, as the impact of the publication of a news item on users (Fisher & Statman, 2000). Furthermore, this increases with the emergence of

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social networks in the 21st Century, which has had significant relevance in consumers' behavior (Owyand & Toll, 2007; O'Connor et al., 2008; De Moya & Jain, 2013; Pérez, 2017).

The constant evolution of the market has caused traditional communication channels to manage the well-known web 2.0 (Martínez & Sánchez, 2015). The relevance and evolution of digital networks are undisputed. They are considered meta-media both for their digital characteristics (navigation, search, reading, interaction) and presenting different multimedia content (Jensen, 2013; Campos Freire, 2015a).

Digital development allows meta-media to keep its basis on traditional markets' main characteristics but making continuous evolutions implementing simple innovations for users (Manovich, 2005). Among them, social networks have a relevant impact on the communication market (Manovich, 2008).

Social networks (arising from Web 2.0) are now powerful communication platforms: allow interaction between millions of users, thus becoming relevant media ecosystems (Beer, 2008; Stenger 2009; Campos Freire, 2015b). However, it is necessary to point out that social networks' germane impact on the communication sector relies on both tangible and intangible society's dynamic exchanges (Allee, 2009).

Therefore, traditional media and meta-media have become a fundamental part of companies' communication strategies (Carpentier, 2016).

Due to it, organizations expand their interest in social networks regarding the evolution of their role in communication channels (Barthel et al., 2015). Companies increasingly rely on mobile communication strategies to significantly impact users through social networks (Mitchell & Page, 2015). So much so communication managers have increased since 2010 their strategies to improve their impact within social networks (Lasorsa et al., 2011; Paulussen & Harder, 2014).

On the one hand, social networks have outstanding benefits to improve communication and interaction within a vast number of users simultaneously. On the other, they also present significant challenges requiring companies to make critical adjustments in their communication strategies (García, 2013). For this reason, their efforts have to focus on presenting content that allows them to capture and maintain their audience's loyalty (Lee, 2015).

Besides, social networks have been used from the educational framework's perspective, demonstrating that their use in teaching improves students' perception (Alonso & Muñoz de Luna, 2010). Therefore, students can assimilate the technological and communicative skills for dynamic markets (De la Torre, 2009). Also, the networks favor students' interaction, allowing the real-time sharing of information, which facilitates teamwork (Gómez et al., 2012) and a more dynamic work environment (Imbernón et al., 2011).

Despite the research on using social networks in the communication sector, there is no evidence about how they can help researchers generate professional agreements. It is in this scenario that the relevance of this research lies. Accordingly to Saura (2021), some of the researchers' challenges have to do with extracting knowledge from the digital environment. Furthermore, knowing how to use social media for boosting a professional career in the higher education field is still misunderstood. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to determine the use and implications of social networks within the universities' teaching and research staff. For it, the authors designed and applied a survey to identify the most used social networks. Moreover, the respondents' social media use, including achievements' promotion and professional management, like creating agreements, contracts, publications, or others.

This case study explores how does Spanish faculty use social media for a professional purpose. For that, the structure of this chapter follows a case study one. In the first place, the organizational background sets the scope of the research, that is, to know if the researchers benefit from using social media in the professional field. The next part frames the case in the previous literature. Following that, the case description provides information about how the methodology is developed, containing a subpart

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