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The Role of Social Media in Corporate Communication in South African Organisations

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

Johannesburg, 2013

ABSTRACT

This study is undertaken in the context of corporate communication strategies and the rise of social media as a communication tool. It is recognised that social media is gaining popularity amongst marketers and organisations, especially in light of an era of participative discourse between organisations and consumers.

The intent of this research was to determine the state of integration of social media into the communication strategy of South African organisations while also investigating if these same organisations are using the information gained from these interactions with consumers to drive and adjust their organisational objectives. Overall the objective of the research is to investigate the role of social media in corporate communications in these organisations.

The method employed in this research is one of in depth interviews conducted with various South African organisations and then followed by interpretive analysis of the responses. These responses were then aggregated in tables which allowed the identification of trends and patterns between the organisations.

There are three specific questions which the research sought to answer and the major findings were: that organisations firstly see corporate communications as fulfilling and articulating the objectives of the organisation, and secondly, the organisations revealed that there they are starting to integrate social media into their communications initiatives. This has enabled these organisations to realise some real benefits and enabled them to meet some of their consumer's needs. Thirdly the research revealed that these organisations are measuring their social media interactions however the level of analysis could be enhanced to substantially add value to the objectives of the organisation.

In conclusion it can be said that South African companies are in general successfully using social media in their communication strategies and these strategies do enable the realisation of corporate objectives. However this area of research requires far more investigation to pinpoint specific tools and strategies that yield the most benefit.

DECLARATION

I, Michael Turnbull, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Signed at ……

On the …….. Day of …… 2013

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of Harriet Turnbull, who at all times during my life encouraged and supported me to do better and to explore new opportunities. She was a person who was creative, analytical and who constantly pursued new knowledge and interests. Although she was aware of my intent to embark on this journey she was not there during it, but her memory was one of the factors that drove me to see this through to completion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the key people who provided support during this project. Firstly to my family who agreed to embark on this challenge with me and who were aware of the sacrifices that would need to be made. My wife, Debby, particularly, has spent many nights looking after the children and countless weekends on her own or with family in my absence, and I thank her for her patience. My friends, and other family members, have also provided encouragement during the most difficult times to push me to completion.

My supervisor, Douglas Taylor, has shown extreme patience in waiting for me to get the research done, and then committing the necessary time to meet and provide feedback on the research. His guidance and assistance has been invaluable as well as his relentless pushing to get me to finish the research. Numerous colleagues and professional acquaintances have assisted in getting the necessary research interviews, and without this assistance, many of the interviews would not have been possible.

In addition, I need to acknowledge the support and belief from key people in the Midas Group executive team, particularly Warren Espinoza and Stefan le Roux, who have made the possibility of completing an MBA a reality.

Finally the respondents and organisations need to be acknowledged and thanked for their participation and willingness to provide insight into their organisational activities. This research is intended to assist industry and academia to better understand this social media phenomenon and without their involvement, this research would have been impossible.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research project is to explore the role of social media within the corporate communication strategy of companies in South Africa, its integration into these strategies and understanding how the information from these interactions are being analysed and utilised by South African companies. The goal is to provide insight into the practices of the researched companies in using the social media mechanisms, the lessons they have learnt and to discover effective ways in which social media can practically be used by companies to connect and interact with consumers in a new, participative and collaborative way.

1.2 Context of the study

The rise of social media as a personal form of communicating, sharing information and building networks is not disputed, however, companies and marketers have been slow in fully leveraging this tool and realising all the benefits it is supposed to provide. For marketers, a vital aspect of any marketing campaign is market intelligence, to be able to connect with consumers, talk to them and find out what they want. Social media provides the tools to be able to do this through its immediacy, intimacy, self-disclosure, and by opening channels for two way communication. It has been very successful in allowing private individuals to share content and conversations with other users all over the world and has also spawned hundreds of social media sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Pinterest and Youtube. However, the challenge has been for companies to transcend traditional forms of communication and to fully understand how to interact with consumers at this level and in a conversational manner. Parise and Guinan (2008) cited in Constantinides, Romero and Boria (2008) state the main interest for marketers is understanding how to use Web 2.0 or social media and extract value from social media based tools by getting feedback on products, creating and nurturing communities around their brand, enabling customer

self-service, and getting customers to collaborate in the development of future products.

The activities of corporate communication have been fundamentally changed by the advent of social media, forcing organisations to engage in a two way conversation rather than just pushing one way communications from the organisation to the consumer. This is the challenge faced by South African companies not only in their marketing and communication planning, but also in their day to day interactions with consumers and competitors.

In a world where markets are becoming more fragmented, and the effectiveness of mass media is questioned, marketers are increasingly incorporating social media into their marketing communication strategies to connect with their consumers and learn more about them and how to satisfy their needs and wants. A key objective among marketers is to find new ways to reach consumers and to develop a sustainable competitive advantage to ensure the organisation's future success.

This study seeks to elucidate the state of integration of social media in the communication process in organisations in South Africa. In addition, it will attempt to understand whether the information gained from these interactions is being used to identify the consumer's specific needs, wants and preferences, and thereby to refine the communication strategy, adjust the product offering and enhance organisational performance.

1.3 Problem statement

1.3.1 *Main problem*

How are South African companies integrating social media into their communication strategies and using the information gained from interactions with consumers.

1.3.2 *Sub-problems*

The first sub-problem is to assess the state of corporate communication strategies in South African companies.

The second sub-problem is to evaluate how South African companies are integrating social media into their communication strategies.

The third sub-problem is to determine what they are doing with the information gained from the interactions with consumers.

1.4 Significance of the study

The study fills a gap in that there is currently very little research in South Africa which analyses the application of social media within a corporate organisation as part of the overall corporate communication strategy. The application of social media in organisations is relatively new and marketers are still learning about the unique opportunities and challenges that it represents.

The study will highlight the various ways, and to what extent, social media is being integrated into the corporate communication strategies of South African organisations. In addition, the study will seek to discover how the information gained from the interactions with consumers can be utilised to better understand the consumer, market trends and preferences, and to adjust the communication strategy accordingly.

This analysis of the social media tool will provide some practical understanding of its relevance and uses in marketing and communications in the corporate framework. The research is also intended to highlight some of the successes, failures and lessons from the researched companies that may guide marketing and communication practitioners in planning and executing social media initiatives in the South African corporate context.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

The study will only be applied to the way in which organisations within South Africa are integrating social media into their corporate communication strategies. The study will not extend to the design of the corporate communication strategies themselves however, it will try to determine how the communication strategy relates to the goals and objectives of the organisation. It will be focused on the social media component of the communication process and the role it plays in this context.

The study will also look at how the information gained from interactions with end consumers is analysed and used to feedback into the organisation and its objectives. The study will only focus on the interactions with end consumers within the context of social media and corporate communications, and not at interactions with other corporate stakeholders of the organisation. Further to this the study does acknowledge the existence of social media platforms that relate to the professional environment, such as Linkedin, however this platform is largely used by working professionals to build networks and is not always used by organisations as a form of mass communication to the end consumer. Social media platforms of this type are excluded from this study.

1.6 Definition of terms

- Social Media – Boyd and Ellison (2002:1) state that they are "web based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site."

- Communication Strategy – Steyn (2002:i) notes that "it makes the corporate communication function relevant in the strategic management process by providing the link between the organisational mission and communication plans."

- Social Marketing Analytics – Owyang and Lovett (2010:5) define social marketing analytics as "the discipline that helps companies measure, assess and explain the performance of social media initiatives in the context of specific business objectives."
- Above the Line (ATL) – this refers to a type of advertising that uses traditional mass media channels such as print, television, radio and the internet. It is used as a traditional form of advertising to target a mass audience where there is a low level of target market differentiation (Gaerig 2013).
- Below the Line (BTL) – can be referred to marketing promotions which are not traditional advertising and do not use mass media. It can also be called direct marketing and includes activities such as public relations events, sales promotions, events and point of sale promotions (Gaerig 2013).

1.7 Assumptions

- The sample will be able to provide information on the corporate communication strategy and social media integration due to their involvement in the marketing function within the organisation.

- The number of respondents will be sufficient to gain the data to run the relevant analyses.

- The information shared on social media and corporate communication within the organisations will be truthful. Data falsely supplied will have an extremely negative effect on the results of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The literature review will look at the key topics and concepts which need to be investigated and explained in order to set the platform for an effective study on this topic. The first concept is defining and explaining corporate communication strategies and the components that need to be present for them to be effective, in addition, identifying the objectives of applying these strategies. The second concept is how social media can be integrated into the communication strategy of the organisation, what its characteristics are, and how it relates to the marketing promotion mix. Finally, the third concept is to determine how the information gained from interactions with consumers through social media can be utilised by companies. The literature review will then conclude with a summary of the key concepts from this discussion.

2.2. Background discussion.

Communication has been a topic of study and discussion for a large part of human recorded history. In order to provide some context for this study, a brief look at the communication theory environment, and the models that have been used, is necessary. Shepherd (1992), cited in McCroskey and Richmond (1996), states that the study of communication can be divided into two areas; rhetorical and relational communication. The rhetorical approach is concerned with influence and persuasion to get a person to think and act in a certain way. In contrast the relational approach is focused on multiple people reaching a shared perspective that is agreeable to all concerned through a process of coordination of communication. But it must be noted that these two views are not opposites of each other but rather represent a different emphasis for each approach, while they are both still concerned with achieving objectives and ensuring good relationships through communication (McCroskey and Richmond, 1996). Also it is important to note that the rhetorical approach represents the western or individualistic orientation, while the relational approach represents the eastern or collectivistic orientation (McCroskey and Richmond, 1996).

In addition, it is important to consider the importance of relationships in communication theory and with reference to public relations, it is an increasing focus area. The Internet and its features represents the opportunity for unlimited message delivery and a paradigm shift in corporate communications because it enables true two way communication between an organisation and its publics (Wright, 2001 cited in Kelleher and Miller, 2006). Kelleher and Miller (2006) go on to say that marketers need to stop looking at online markets (communities) as targets in the traditional marketing sense but rather markets as conversations. This provides more flexibility and recognition that the 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate in the online space, particularly in the case of social media. This means that marketers and organisations need to develop collaborative relationships with their publics.

Communication strategy is critical in the business environment because of a need to be constantly communicating with the company's various stakeholder groups. Steyn (2002:21) states that "Corporate communication strategy is based on a definition of corporate communication as a management function: assisting the organisation to adapt to its environment by achieving a balance between commercial imperatives and socially acceptable behaviour; identifying and managing issues and stakeholder/publics; and building symbolic and behavioural relationships through communication with those on whom the organisation depends to meet its economic and socio-political goals". In terms of organisational communication theory and with particular reference to communication beyond organisational boundaries, Deetz (2001), cited in Jones, Watson, Gardner and Gallois (2004), suggests that more research is required from a stakeholder perspective - this is because stakeholders now exert more power to voice their own goals for organisations.

In light of the collaborative nature of social media, these points are important since they highlight the fact that organisational success is linked to the environment in which it operates, and the way it conducts itself in the market and in the eyes of the consumer and its publics.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:61) define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0,

and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content." Russo, Watkins, Kelly and Chan (2008:22) define social media "as those that facilitate online communication, networking and /or collaboration." Other terms, such as Web 2.0 and social networking describe platforms that allow similar levels of user interaction. This kind of interaction is not new, however social media is designed to be primarily a network communication tool, in contrast to email which is really a tool for one to one messaging (Russo et al, 2008). Social media clearly has a key role to play in the changing tactics of communication strategies and the demand from consumers for immediate access to information and communication.

The final part of this discussion is the mining of the information gained from the interactions with customers- can it be used and how? One of challenges faced by marketers and organisations is using customer feedback to refine their offering and marketing and communication strategies to match the needs and requirements of their customers.

2.3. Components and Objectives of Corporate Communication Strategies

The corporate communication strategy has for many years been seen as the domain of the public relations function, but in the changing environment in which organisations find themselves, this is changing. It is now seen as concerning the entire organisation and requires that the entire organisation and all stakeholders participate in the communication process (Steyn, 2002). The communication strategy is also intimately linked to the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation and needs to be representing the company with a unified voice that assists the company to reach its goals (Argenti, Howell and Beck, 2005).

2.3.1 The Role of Corporate Communication Strategies

Corporate communication strategies are intended to be used to realise and communicate the long term objectives of the organisation. However many organisations use it in a short term, tactical sense when communicating with

stakeholders, this is not only non-strategic, but can be a mismatch with the corporate strategy, or prevent it from being realised (Argenti et al, 2005).

In recent years there has been increased interest from scholars and public relations professionals in the role relationships play in building public relations theory (Kelleher and Miller, 2006). Measuring how consumers perceive corporate communications is important in understanding the importance of relationships in online corporate communications, and this an area which will likely require further research (Kelleher and Miller, 2006).

In the context of public relations, relationship can be defined as follows:

"the state which exists between an organisation and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political and / or cultural well-being of the other entity." (Broom, Casey and Ritchie, 1998:62, cited in Kelleher and Miller, 2006:396).

Corporate communication does not only focus on these external constituencies of the company, but is also utilised to communicate with internal stakeholders, especially in change management and crises management exercises. Steyn (2002) argues that corporate communication strategies are based on 'corporate community' theories whereby organisations are viewed as socio economic systems and the stakeholders collaborate as partners in the problem solving process. In addition, communication used correctly creates an alignment between different functions within the organisation to attain higher levels of operating efficiency.

For communication strategies to succeed they need to be owned and driven by the senior management including the CEO. It is no longer a function that is left to the communication department or public relations department. In the modern organisation, the CEO is increasingly the face and voice of the organisation and he needs to leverage the communications imperative across all the stakeholders and functions of the company (Argenti et al, 2005). In fact, Searls and Weinberger (2001), cited in Kelleher and Miller (2006), state that often the best public relations people in an organisation are not the public relations people, but rather the best

conversationalists in the organisation. Finally, the corporate communication strategy must be integrated across all functions of the organisation, this means that the messages from different departments must be consistent and unified, and reinforce the corporate strategy and objectives. As mentioned previously, it is critical that companies assume a long term perspective when developing a communication strategy and that this is tied to the organisation's long term corporate objectives. To achieve these goals, the communication strategy must be proactive and therefore actively seek to reinforce the corporate goals and brand position of the organisation.

2.3.2 Research Question 1

How do South African companies see the role of corporate communication strategies in relation to the organisational goals and strategy?

2.4. Integration of Social Media into Communication Strategies

The collaborative and participative nature of social media interaction as one paradigm and the rigid nature of traditional corporate communication theory seem to be a total mismatch, but this section will argue that integration of these two disciplines can add a valuable dimension to the organisational communication strategy. Hearn, Foth and Gray (2009) argue that new media can work together with the existing conventional communication methodologies, and in so doing will maintain and strengthen existing relationships and reach out and build new relationships with stakeholders previously considered unreachable.

2.4.1 Characteristics of the Social Media Tools

Social media is a popular topic of discussion among executives and managers, but in order to understand the potential of social media, the characteristics that define it first need to be explained.

A distinction needs to be made between social media, Web 2.0 and user generated content (UGC). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe Web 2.0 as a term that was used

to describe a way in which software developers and end users began using the World Wide Web as a platform where content was continually being updated and developed by all users in a collaborative and participatory way. With this platform in place, it enabled the concept of UGC to come to the fore as the product of all the efforts of users of social media. Constantinides et al (2008) argue that a fundamental element of Web 2.0 is customer generated content (CGC) which means that users derive and contribute value to Web 2.0 through creating, reviewing, editing and sharing content. This characteristic of sharing content and users being the drivers of new content is what fundamentally sets social media apart from the traditional flow of communications from a single company to many consumers. As these new social media applications develop, so corporate communications will need to go through some reinvention (Hearn, Foth and Gray, 2009).

To gain a proper understanding of the characteristics of social media, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) mentions a set of theories in the area of media research which includes concepts of social presence and media richness, and social process which encompasses self-disclosure and self-presentation. According to social presence theory, different media allow a varying level of social presence to emerge between communicating partners (Short, Williams and Christie, 1976 cited in Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). The social presence is influenced by the immediacy and intimacy of the communication. According to the theory, intimacy will be lower from a telephone call and higher in the case of a face to face conversation. The level of immediacy again has two poles, either low for an email, or higher for a live chat. The key concept here is that the higher the level of social presence, the greater the influence the interacting parties have on each other (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

The concept of media richness is based on the assumption that any communication seeks to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty (Daft and Lengel, 1986, cited in Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The degree to which a form of media contains media richness is related to its ability to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty. Social media allows for a very high level of media richness and is therefore effective in terms of this theory. It does this through creating a direct line of communication between the organisation and the consumer, whereby the organisation can communicate information about products,

processes and its brand, and at the same time the consumer can question, enquire and co-create new meanings and information with the organisation.

In terms of self-representation, social media provides an opportunity for the individual or organisation to present a certain consistent image of themselves in cyberspace. Research into the disclosure intimacy link has shown that disclosure of personal information to another person does foster a sense of closeness, connectedness and intimacy in a relationship, (Sternberg, 1988, cited in Jiang, Bazarova and Hancock, 2011). In computer mediated communication, this effect can be intensified through the sender selectively supplying information that presents the best image, but also through the receiver over-interpreting the limited information they are receiving, (Jiang, Bazarova and Hancock, 2011). One of the questions around the use of social media tools is the unpredictable nature of the mass participation of large communities. Russo et al (2008) state that an organisation's willingness or lack thereof, to participate in social media could already be defined by its internal organisational culture. Very closely tied to this is the concept of "radical trust". Fichter (2006),cited in Russo et al (2008:25),says "Radical trust is about trusting the community. We know that abuse can happen, but we trust (radically) that the community and participation will work. In the real world, we know that vandalism happens but we still put up art and sculpture in our parks. As an online community we come up with safeguards or mechanisms that help keep open contribution and participation working."

This concept is interesting because it alludes to the fact that trusting large participative communities is in itself radical, and that the organisation may start out with a distinct level of mistrust towards the community (Russo et al, 2008).

2.4.2 Social Media in the Promotion Mix

Mangold and Faulds (2009) state while companies cannot control the conversation between consumers, there is a recognition that they need to get involved and guide the discussions to achieve the goals and objectives of the organisation. Constantinides et al (2008) state that ongoing studies suggest that the interest of corporates in the

Web 2.0 phenomenon is growing and that many of the organisations are incorporating social media into their business processes.

According to Mangold and Faulds (2009), successful integrated marketing communications articulate and reflect the organisation's goals and objectives and to achieve these goals, the elements of the promotion mix must be carefully coordinated to ensure a consistency of the message transmitted to the marketplace regarding these goals and objectives. Mangold and Faulds (2009) continue by mentioning that social media has two elements, firstly, it can be used in the same way as traditional marketing communications to talk to consumers about the company and its brands and products. Secondly, it can be used to amplify the traditional word of mouth marketing by enabling one individual to simultaneously talk to hundreds or thousands of customers. Conversely this capability has a potential negative implication too, in that a dissatisfied customer can now tell thousands of people instantly. Mangold and Faulds (2009) argue that social media is a hybrid element of the promotion mix since it combines elements of the traditional communication methods and the ability to magnify word of mouth communication. In addition, its origination from multiple platforms and technologies reinforces the hybrid concept. In the past, marketing with traditional media such as newspapers, television and even websites, was about delivering a message to the consumer, however marketing with social media is now about having a conversation with the consumer and thereby building a relationship (Drury, 2008,cited in Constantinides et al, 2008), but it must be noted that a successful social media program must extend beyond the use of a few free software applications and a technically minded person applying and sustaining it in the organisation. It should be part of the organisation's strategic approach to communications that addresses changing communication models and seeks to engage communities and connect them to organisational content (Russo et al, 2008).

Therefore, a distinct paradigm shift needs to take place in companies when it comes to designing communication and marketing strategies, and the organisation should identify the strategic role of Web 2.0 and social media within the overall communication and marketing strategy and determine the requirements for successful deployment of these tools (Constantinides et al, 2008). This is because the control that

could be exercised in traditional communications has been eroded and managers now need to be able to shape conversations about their products rather than originate the communications (Mangold and Faulds 2009).

In research on the social capital of individuals in developed markets and countries conducted by Deuze (2008), he posits that there is a decline of trust in public institutions. He goes further to say that there is change in the way people form trust based relationships, where the emphasis was on place to place connectivity, it has now changed to person to person connectivity based on people using computer mediated communication and social networks. This change in the trust based relationship can be extrapolated to the organisation / consumer relationship and highlights the need for organisations to start developing a new kind of relationship with their consumers.

Constantinides et al (2008) propose that the consumer decision making process has been complicated by the advent of Web 2.0. Constantinides et al (2008) go on to state that previously the customer decision making process was influenced by controllable stimuli such as the traditional marketing mix, and uncontrollable stimuli such as the demographic, personal and sociological factors. With the introduction of the online space, this first changed by adding controllable marketing factors, for example, websites and the online marketing mix. The second factor was the rise of social media which is not controlled by the marketer. The influence of these new technologies has seen a decrease in the effectiveness of traditional media as consumers increasingly turn to peers and online networks before making any purchasing decisions. An additional issue is the increasing mistrust of consumers towards traditional mass media, and marketers will need to engage with consumers more and meet their needs to ensure they gain and retain customers (Constantinides et al, 2008).

In a research report conducted by Stelzner (2011), one of the key questions that interviewed marketers raised, was how to integrate and manage all the organisation's social media activities. This included the integration of social media into the rest of the marketing plan, determining how to best develop a social media strategy and empowering employees to make it successful and what the tools are to manage social media activity.

2.4.3 Research Question 2

Have South African organisations integrated social media into their communication strategies and marketing promotion mix? How have they achieved this and to what degree?

2.5. Using the Information from Social Media Interactions

The obvious potential of social media to provide insight and inform corporate decision making, strategy and tactics is extremely powerful for organisations. This information could be used in a multiplicity of scenarios from product development, improving customer service to corporate image and design.

2.5.1 Social Media as Market Research

With the rapid expansion of social media networks into every aspect of life and corner of the globe, one of the key questions that remains is what are organisations doing with the information they gather from these networks and has the measurement kept pace with the participation and engagement on these channels. Owyang and Lovett (2010) state that organisations that do not take seriously their involvement with social media, jeopardise their relationships with their consumer because the consumer does not view the organisation's interaction on social media as frivolous. Organisations must remember that consumers are making decisions and influencing decisions based on the information they gain from these interactions. In addition, these interactions leave lasting impressions on the organisation's brands and on the consumers (Owyang and Lovett, 2010).

Asur and Huberman (2010) conducted research to determine whether the information from social media could be used to predict box office revenue of new movie releases. This research further demonstrated that social media, specifically Twitter, could consistently outperform the information markets such as the Hollywood Stock Exchange. They also proposed that their method could be used to predict the rating of products or even election results, but maybe most importantly, their work

demonstrates that when the collective wisdom of social media is accurately analysed, it can become a powerful indicator of future results (Asur and Huberman, 2010).

Constantinides et al (2008) identify four companies that are using social media as a critical component of their business processes to assist with product development and innovation. They do this by outsourcing these functions to their customers and getting customers to review their peer's ideas. Apart from the obvious advantages in engaging customers in this way, Constantinides et al (2008) state that this helps to increase customer loyalty and improve the relationship between the organisation and the customer.

There are commercially available software programs that provide the organisation with feedback in terms of sentiment, tracking influencers and monitoring conversations online. However, although various available social media measurements are available, none of them can measure and provide insight into all of the social media activity of the organisation. As a result, organisations will need to aggregate and evaluate the results within a social media marketing framework (Owyang and Lovett, 2010).

Finally organisations need to change the way they see return on investment when it comes to social media. Organisations need to move away from the conventional marketing metrics applied to traditional forms of corporate communication as these metrics are too narrowly defined for social media activities, and lead to social media activities that maximize short term benefits for the brand. Social media metrics must rather be concerned with the customer motivations and long term goals of the organisation. Well-designed social media campaigns will satisfy the consumers' need to create, control, consume and connect on social networks, and if social media metrics successfully measure these activities, then organisations will be able to measure the bottom line effects of their activities. These kinds of metrics will also enable organisations to focus on strategies that take into account the goals and objectives of the organisation and the consumer (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010).

2.5.2 Research Question 3

What mechanisms are South African companies employing to gather information and how do they feed into the development and adjustment of company goals and objectives?

2.6. Conclusion of Literature Review

The literature review has revealed that the paradigm of corporate and marketing communication has changed and companies are now in an era of participation and collaboration with their consumers. The critical issue for organisations is how to leverage the competencies of social media and integrate them with the traditional communication methods. There is recognition that social media can complement the traditional channels and amplify the effectiveness of these channels. However this cannot be done in isolation, social media and communication strategies need to be involved in the corporate strategy of the organisation to effectively contribute to the success of the organisation. As proposed by Owyang (2011), companies need to prepare for social business success, and in order to do this they need to go through a realignment of roles, policy and processes to the point where the business becomes a social business.

2.6.1 Research Question 1:

How do South African companies see the role of corporate communication strategies in relation to the organisational goals and strategy?

2.6.2 Research Question 2:

Have South African organisations integrated social media into their communication strategies and marketing promotion mix? How have they achieved this and to what degree?

2.6.3 Research Question 3:

What mechanisms are South African companies employing to gather information and how do they feed into the development and adjustment of company goals and objectives?

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section will describe the methodology used to conduct the research. Firstly, a brief description will be given of the research paradigm and literature around qualitative research. Secondly, a description of the research instrument which will be used will follow, and some of the issues around data collection, analysis, validity and reliability will be discussed.

3.1 Research methodology /paradigm

The research will employ a qualitative methodology. The topic of social media and how it relates to communication strategies is new and relatively unresearched, and in the South African context specifically, there is practically no academic research on this question. Morse (1991), in Creswell (2003), states that a qualitative approach may be required where a topic is new or where the topic has never been applied to the sample in question. In this research, the goal is to understand how companies are using social media in South Africa, and this will require description of their practices and the strategies they use. In addition, this study delves into the area of social research and as such it will need to interpret some of the results to identify common themes in the South African context.

3.2 Research Design

The research will use interviews as the methodology to collect data. This will enable an interpretive study which has the ability to collect factual and descriptive information and to assess human behaviour in the social context. In addition, companies engaged in the social space may have employed very different tactics and strategies and it will be necessary to get a description of these nuances. This methodology also allows the researcher to guide the interview in order to elicit the required detail and disclose new discoveries.

However, a possible disadvantage is the influence that the researcher may have on the interview process and a potential variance in the interpretation of answers.

3.3 Population and sample

3.3.1 Population

The population for the research will be South African companies that are currently engaging in social media campaigns as part of their communication strategies. The companies will be selected across various industries to give an indication of what South African companies in general are doing rather than an industry focus.

3.3.2 Sample and sampling method

The sample comprised the marketing directors or marketing managers of the chosen companies. The marketing personnel were selected because the marketing department is usually the custodian of the organisation's social media initiative. In some large companies it may be part of the corporate communication function or public relations function. The sample therefore was adjusted once the organisations were identified, and it was understood where the social media initiative is housed.

It was intended to recruit between 20 and 25 respondents from different companies for interviews. The interviews were requested by telephone and email and if named individuals were unavailable, a suitable candidate was sought in the organisation.

3.4 The research instrument

The semi structured interview schedule in Appendix A was the instrument applied in this research. This enabled the researcher to follow a structure when conducting the interview, but the open ended nature of the questions allowed the exploration of interesting issues and topics highlighted during the interview. The questions were derived from the literature review and sought to elaborate on the issues identified in the review.

3.5 Procedure for data collection

The data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted at the business premises of the respondents. The interviews were conducted by the author of the research study and were pre-arranged.

The interview followed the interview schedule (Appendix A) to ensure consistency in the responses to the main issues highlighted in this research. However the researcher asked probing questions where appropriate and where clarification was required. This assisted in identifying additional points of interest.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

An interpretive framework was used to assess the results obtained from the interviews. This framework was particularly useful since the study dealt with the interaction in a social context and being a new field of research the criteria for interpretation and evaluation needed to be adjusted as the study progressed.

3.7 Limitations of the study

The study was dependent on various assumptions:

- That the selected respondents maintained their commitment to contribute.
- That there were sufficient companies who have implemented social media initiatives that were willing to participate.
- The respondents would be truthful in their answers and participation in the interviews.

3.8 Validity and reliability

3.8.1 External validity

Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008) define external validity as the ability to generalise the results to a larger population. The external validity of this study was limited in that it concentrated only on companies in the South African context. In addition, the realm of social media is rapidly evolving at varying rates around the world and as a result makes it difficult to transfer the results to other markets. A possible comparison in some instances with similar research in overseas markets may improve the external validity.

3.8.2 Internal validity

The internal validity was maximised by the researcher ensuring that the same interview process was followed through all the interviews.

3.8.3 Reliability

Reliability relates to the extent to which the research instrument elicits consistent results on repeated interviews. The research instrument was trialled on a test respondent to ensure that the questions elicited the required information from the respondents. Appropriate changes were made where necessary. The reliability was further enhanced by the consistent application of the research instrument by the researcher during the interviews, this was critical since Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008) point out that interviewer bias can also affect the results of face to face interviews.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results from the research interviews will be presented in turn for each research sub question. The questions used in the research instrument have been grouped according to their relevance to each of the sub research questions. In order to ensure a logical structure to this chapter, the answers to each of the interview questions will be listed in specific sections that relate to the research sub questions. The structure is detailed below:

1. **How do South African companies see the role of corporate communication strategies in relation to the organisational goals and strategy?**
    a. What is the current corporate communication strategy as it relates to consumers and how do you integrate all channels to present a consistent brand message?
    b. How does the communication strategy relate to the goals and objectives of the organisation?
2. **Have South African organisations integrated social media into their communication strategies and marketing promotion mix? How have they achieved this and to what degree?**
    a. What role does social media play in the organisation and how has it been integrated into the communication strategy? Has it influenced other elements of the promotion mix?
    b. Do your social media initiatives involve other functions of the organisation, if so how? And if not, why not?
    c. To what degree do you believe the social media initiatives are key to the communication strategy?
    d. How would you improve the communication strategy and social media initiatives in the future?

3. **What mechanisms are South African companies employing to gather information and how do they feed into the development and adjustment of company goals and objectives?**
    a. How is the organisation measuring interactions over social media channels?
    b. How are the data analysed and responded to in a way that works towards the organisational objectives?

These sections will then each be followed by a short description of the results highlighting a few of the details of the research findings. The listed responses will present a summary of the key issues or points from each interviewee in response to each question in the research tool. In this way it is possible to identify trends, similarities and differences between the different organisations' approach to the interrogated issues.

4.2 Demographic profile of respondents

The profile of the respondents is largely matched to what was intended. The people interviewed were indeed involved in the marketing function of the organisations, however not all of them were marketing directors or marketing managers. Some of the respondents were responsible for the public relations function, others were responsible for the communications of the organisation on multiple platforms and yet others were owners or general management in the companies. As a result of the variety of respondents, the point of view expressed by them varies from an operational perspective to one of a more strategic nature, adding yet another layer of on top of the research results.

4.3 Results pertaining to Research Question 1

How do South African companies see the role of corporate communication strategies in relation to the organisational goals and strategy?

Table1: Responses to Research Question 1

	What is the current corporate communication strategy as it relates to consumers and how do you integrate all channels to present a consistent brand message?	How does the communication strategy relate to the goals and objectives of the organisation?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**
Dis-chem	Dis-chem use broadsheets, their benefits magazine and digital channels including social media. They also have the foundation which is used as a platform by the company spokesperson to talk about CSI. All communication messages go through marketing before it is released into the public arena. The company also has a customer care line to assist consumers. The communication strategy is all about extending and elevating the brand, and identifying the USP which is trust. 'Pharmacists who Care', is the strapline, and it is lived through low pricing, high service levels, ancillary services and procurement program.	The strapline "Pharmacists who Care", living the concept that we care about your health, and at the same time ensuring the pricing is keen, competitive and that not just anything is offered.
AutoPedigree	Focus on traditional media; TV, radio, print and also digital channels. There is no social media strategy but they are aware it needs integration into the overall communication strategy. Message is highly integrated because one agency controls all communications. Whatever is communicated offline is repeated on the website and Facebook. Local advertising is also controlled centrally.	Organisational strategy is to increase coverage without increasing costs. The communication is about educating the consumer on this strategy and the new offering.
Castrol	There is no strategy in place and the social media communications have been very adhoc. We want to be able to form a relationship with the consumer and attract a younger audience. The brand health is good, but it drops off at the sales point.	Internally the communication strategy does relate to the brand values however externally this may not be as clear. We do try to ensure that the communications underpin the brands aspirations.
Kulula	The corporate communications are well integrated, and there is a replication of the ATL message on the BTL and digital channels.	The organisation is about bums in seats. The communication is about educating consumers about changes in systems and managing the relationships with consumers.

	What is the current corporate communication strategy as it relates to consumers and how do you integrate all channels to present a consistent brand message?	How does the communication strategy relate to the goals and objectives of the organisation?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**
Hyundai	They do both internal communications such as media relations and external communications such as social media. They are highly aware of Hyundai's objective and all messaging is consistent with this goal. The global head office also dictates what the message should be and how it must be delivered. Sub messages are also communicated which are relevant to the local market.	The message ranges from new model announcements to designing the philosophy to messaging regarding levels of quality and features.
AMKA	The starting point is the ATL, ensuring the in-store promotion matches the TV. Social media icons have been introduced on to the TV ad and the product packaging. The objective is to build brand equity and for consumers to find value in the brand. By ensuring the communication is through the line and consistent, they are hoping to achieve their objective.	Communication strategy depends on the size of the brand, budgets and profitability. Strategies can range from BTL to both ATL and BTL to sampling. Word of mouth through Facebook has also worked.
Europcar	The communications are integrated into the marketing strategy. Social media and the communication strategy are more focused on the leisure market. The pay off line is all about caring for the customer and their needs.	The goals of the organisation are market share, revenue, profit and new customers. The communication strategy is centred on creating differentiation through engagement with the customer.
Garmin	The communication strategy resides within the marketing strategy. They also use a monthly newsletter emailer as one of the communication tools. The social media channels are integrated into the newsletter. One of the strategies that has been used is creating a fictional character for people to friend and interact with.	Marketing is based on sales and sales are based on new product launches. The communication strategy ties in closely with the marketing strategy of what's the product, what's the message and then rolling it out. Our role as marketing has changed from brand awareness to proving ROI and sustainability of the business.
Getaway	Because the publisher Ramsay Media is not well known in the public space they will always lead with the magazine brand when dealing with the end consumer. There is a 360^0 approach incorporating digital, social, print and shows. The marketing manager ensures all communications across all platforms are consistent.	The organisation's aim is to enrich lives through travel. We use these filters to ensure we are delivering the right message.

	What is the current corporate communication strategy as it relates to consumers and how do you integrate all channels to present a consistent brand message?	How does the communication strategy relate to the goals and objectives of the organisation?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**
Gordon Institute of Business Science	The communication strategy has been about how to differentiate the business school, and this has been achieved through value adds. The individual's consumption of media has become more personalized and to meet this demand they have used the multi-channel approach. The digital strategy always reflects the brand integrity and values.	The organisation wants to be current, relevant, close to business and the target market, and communicating on the channels that suit their consumers.
Gold Reef Casino	The communication strategy includes electronic media, national print and magazines supported by direct communication through the social media channels. One on one communication is primary, and if consumers like the pages and events they believe they have crossed the threshold with the consumer.	When a communication matrix is created it must include the correct messaging to reach the target market and it must elicit a response.
Imperial Holdings	The communication message is about making a difference. The size of Imperial allows the company to make a difference and position itself as South Africa's transportation leader. The communication strategy includes truck branding, brochures, print media, conferences, sponsorships, events, mirror hangers, QR codes, licence discs and competitions.	In terms of I-Pledge the objectives are reputation management, a moral imperative and creating a positive feeling towards the Imperial brand.
Suncoast Casino	The communications through the paid mediums coincide with the peak seasons. On social media channels, the communications are sent out daily. A master document ensures consistency of the message.	The objective is increasing footfall and brand awareness, thereby increasing revenue.
KIA Motors	The communication strategy is included in a marketing strategy of raising brand awareness using any means available. The brand actively looks at closing off on the online and offline channels. The creative process ensures that the brand message is consistent across all platforms.	The objective is about selling cars, and with the communications are focused on the improvement in design and appeal, all the communication elements focus on how to depict the vehicle, showcasing the important aspects of the brand and thereby executing the main objective.

	What is the current corporate communication strategy as it relates to consumers and how do you integrate all channels to present a consistent brand message?	How does the communication strategy relate to the goals and objectives of the organisation?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**
Liquid capital	The communication strategy consists of TV, radio, print and web. The social media component is contained in web and used as a social CRM program. There is a content plan for the ATL for a year and this is tied up in the other channels. The main message is educating consumers on the products.	The objective of the organisation is to sell more products, and the communication strategy tries to enable this through education on the products and brand awareness, but there is no connection between the longterm objectives of the business and the corporate communication strategy.
Primedia Broadcasting	All communications have to answer; What's in it for the listener? And, How does it affect the sound of the station? All communications must be aligned with the brand values of the specific station. All of the communications are also overlaid with the LeadSA imperative.	The primary objective is building a relationship with the consumer. As a result, all communications must reflect this objective.
Surf4cars	All communications and marketing is focused on actively locating people looking to buy a car now. As an online lead generator everything is geared to ensure the lead is not lost for the dealer.	The objective is to ensure that the user experience is as good as it can be. Through the personal attention the intent is to differentiate from the other competitors.
World of Accessories	The current communication strategy includes social media, print, sms, online store, BBM and TV. The message is consistently about brand awareness and special offers. The same message is always included on all channels so consumers can find us.	The overriding objective is feet in the door. The choice of communication channel is not very important as long as it delivers on the objective.
uShaka	The message is all about communicating fun. The strategy ensures that every part of communication is used to reach the consumer at multiple touch points all year round.	The objectives are about attracting people to the city, profit, and conservation. The different elements of the business have their own communication strategies.

4.3.1 What is the current corporate communication strategy as it relates to consumers and how do you integrate all channels to present a consistent brand message?

4.3.1.1 Description of Responses

For many of the organisations interviewed, the above the line (ATL) mass media still plays a central role and is used as the primary communication tool to consumers. Many companies focus more on the paid media with the digital media included as a supporting function to the overall communication strategy. Some of the companies explained that the messaging is simply replicated across the offline and online channels, while other gave insight into the fact that the communication strategy resides within the marketing strategy of the organisation. The key themes that were repeated by a large proportion of the organisations was that their communications are attempting to build brand awareness and educate consumers on their products and offering.

4.3.2 How does the communication strategy relate to the goals and objectives of the organisation?

4.3.2.1 Description of Responses

The responses to this question were varied and based on the key objectives of the organisations at the time. Some of the companies needed to communicate changes in business processes and new products, while with other companies, the communications focused on reinforcing the business philosophy. In some of the organisations, the key objective is driving sales and proving return on investment and consequently the communications focused on the key messages that were required in order to realise this goal.

In a small proportion of the organisations the communications incorporated more of the unique features of social media in order to realise the organisational objectives. This included leveraging engagement, relevance, currency, reputation management, all

of which enabled the organisations to start differentiating themselves from the competition.

4.4 Results pertaining to Research Question 2

Have South African organisations integrated Social Media into their communication strategies and marketing promotion mix? How have they achieved this and to what degree?

Table 2: Responses to Research Question 2

	What role does social media play in the organisation and how has it been integrated into the communication strategy? Has it influenced other elements of the promotion mix?	Do your social media initiatives involve other functions of the organisation, if so how? And if not why?	To what degree do you believe the social media initiatives are key to the communication strategy ?	How would you improve the communication strategy and social media initiatives in the future?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**	**Comments**	**Comments**
Dis-chem	Social media has become a way of actually reaching our customers, testing new products and getting feedback on them. Social media is one of the communication legs, eg: CSI proposition. Twitter has become the complaints channel and is working well. Any message to be sent out has to be approved by marketing.	Social media is used to promote sponsorships, events and promotions. Social media has not influenced corporate strategy as it is still small, but it will grow and that is why a focus on technology is important.	It is imperative, and it can help us reach new markets and demographics that are active on these platforms, but people that are still learning about social media also need to be educated and that is what is being done now.	It starts within the organisation, getting staff on it and granting limited access. It is also about using mobi and these platforms to access the consumer and get them in store.
AutoPedigree	It has the potential to become a lead generator for our stores, but at this stage it is being used to position the organisation as a friend of the consumer. It has not influenced other elements of the promotion mix.	At the moment it is only a reactive approach, answering queries on Facebook. Once the content plan is defined, it will be possible to promote to consumers.	In the long run it will be key, and as it grows it will become a bigger part of the communication strategy.	The communication strategy will need to place more emphasis on the corporate strategy and social media can assist in achieving this by enhancing the message and duplicating it in the online space.
Castrol	Social media mirrors what happens on the ATL communications. The strategy has been to run lots of competitions to build the fan base, but this is changing because they need to attract the right customers. Social media is becoming more integrated with the communication strategy.	The intention is to bring other departments in through a technical expert or race driver.	The social media initiatives are very important, however if we took them away it would be difficult to measure what impact that would have. It's important because it enables the brand to have a conversation in a more informal environment and through two way communication, discover the needs of the consumer.	Getting the organisation and staff to buy into the channels and sharing information that can be put out there. Another is changing the mindset of the organisation and allowing access at work to get more interaction. Some guidance in implementing it would also be an advantage.

	What role does social media play in the organisation and how has it been integrated into the communication strategy? Has it influenced other elements of the promotion mix?	Do your social media initiatives involve other functions of the organisation, if so how? And if not why?	To what degree do you believe the social media initiatives are key to the communication strategy?	How would you improve the communication strategy and social media initiatives in the future?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**	**Comments**	**Comments**
Kulula	Social media has not influenced the promotion mix that much and ROI on these channels is difficult to quantify. Social media is used as a channel to drive our communications. The platforms have their differences, eg: Twitter is used to complain and Facebook is used to share and interact.	No, the objective is revenue so social media will assist with communicating a new product to increase revenue. The intention is to get crews to contribute content in realtime but there is a risk in opening it up to staff.	Absolutely key, social media is a living medium, much more than a newspaper advert.	More resources are what is required, time and people.
Hyundai	Social media is viewed as an important component of the communication strategy, and it is used to close the communication loop between organisation and consumer.	Yes it occurs on several levels. There is Mike the mechanic, customer service queries, technical questions and promotion of approved accessories.	It is an important part of the mix, and can be an effective way of reaching the customer base. New emerging channels also need to be watched to see if a change needs to be made.	Keeping up with trends and looking for new opportunities. Making sure that the correct and enough resources are in place.
AMKA	Social media has been integrated by including the social icons on promotional material. In terms of promotion, the message offline is replicated online to ensure consistency and coverage. Social media has not changed the strategy, but it has been adjusted so social media can be included.	No, however questions are asked in terms of prize appeal and customer preferences on products.	It is an important part of the mix, but it is difficult to gauge how much time to spend on it until critical mass is reached. A problem has been internet access for the target market, but this changing.	Including it more and more as it grows and more people are reached. Also improving the interaction on the pages through promotions and competitions.

	What role does social media play in the organisation and how has it been integrated into the communication strategy? Has it influenced other elements of the promotion mix?	Do your social media initiatives involve other functions of the organisation, if so how? And if not why?	To what degree do you believe the social media initiatives are key to the communication strategy?	How would you improve the communication strategy and social media initiatives in the future?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**	**Comments**	**Comments**
Europcar	Social media has been used to build a personality for the brand and engage with consumers to keep the organisation top of mind. Social media has changed the promotion mix, and as the strategy progresses it will be integrated more into the communication channels.	Yes, currently customer service is involved in getting the correct people to resolve any queries. The Operations Director is also involved. Comments are analysed and flaws detected in the business are corrected to improve the offering.	It is critical to be on social media and give the brand a personality, but the brand also has to be adding to the customer experience.	More resources could enhance the customer experience on social media and new platforms always need to be looked at. We are also investing in our own new application which will enhance the customer experience.
Garmin	Social media has not changed the promotion mix, and it is used as a supporting medium.	One person controls all interactions, other departments are contacted for information where necessary. All queries are taken offline for resolution and all communication is about personal one on one contact.	Social media is a supporting medium and enables immediate response to customer's queries and more reach than traditional media.	We would want to have a report when there is a full year of data to see what did and didn't work. A prize element added to the pages would also be a nice addition.
Getaway	Social media is used to market, build brand awareness and drive website traffic. It has influenced the way articles are written and helps develop the content strategy.	Yes the channels have three main functions; customer care, an advising travel agent and promoting events.	Social media is crucial, it has delivered a lot more interaction and attracted a whole new audience to the magazine. It has also influenced the content that is published and the focus of the magazine.	More staff focused on these platforms would enable us to be on more platforms.

	What role does social media play in the organisation and how has it been integrated into the communication strategy? Has it influenced other elements of the promotion mix?	Do your social media initiatives involve other functions of the organisation, if so how? And if not why?	To what degree do you believe the social media initiatives are key to the communication strategy ?	How would you improve the communication strategy and social media initiatives in the future?
Organisation	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments
Gordon Institute of Business Science	Social media has become part of the total communication mix, some of the campaigns are now completely online. The organisation goes where the consumers are.	The marketing department assists all other divisions in setting up and managing their communications over these channels	It is the communication strategy.	Getting more user generated content, but the organisation will need to go through a mindset change first.
Gold Reef	Social media assists with getting the message out to consumers, and is used with a CRM system to ensure the message is always relevant to the particular consumer group. It has influenced the other promotion elements in that the language used needs to be adjusted.	Social media does involve other functions, and head office has a centralised view of it to monitor conversations.	Social media doesn't change anything, but just adds to the communications. It does however enable instant notifications of events.	Measurement and analysis to ensure we keep it in focus and identify better ways of getting the communication out.
Imperial Holdings	Social media has enhanced the communication mix by enabling messaging across multiple platforms and obtaining feedback from consumers. New content is always broadcast on the social media channels first.	Social media is used to notify divisions of on-the-road behaviour of their drivers, and some of the divisions repost content from I-Pledge on their own channels to promote the initiative.	It is important to get the reach, and it enables some of the activities that are run.	The social sites are lacking in some sort of content, but at least we have stayed true to the mission of safety.

	What role does social media play in the organisation and how has it been integrated into the communication strategy? Has it influenced other elements of the promotion mix?	Do your social media initiatives involve other functions of the organisation, if so how? And if not why?	To what degree do you believe the social media initiatives are key to the communication strategy ?	How would you improve the communication strategy and social media initiatives in the future?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**	**Comments**	**Comments**
Suncoast Casino	Social media has influenced the promotion elements by refreshing it and synergies have been created between the different channels by communicating social media initiatives in these media. Each property has its own voice and all communications link back to the property's brand elements.	Other departments feed into the marketing department who get the creative part and messaging right and then push it out. The PR department is involved in resolving customer queries.	Social media is key, but it will never replace the other channels, they will always have their place.	Finding the channels that will be best for the brand and using the guidance of the head office to use these platforms more effectively.
KIA Motors	Social media plays an important role in the communication strategy. It has not influenced other elements of the promotion mix, but has added to them. The strategy on these channels is about adding value and having a conversation about the brand.	Social media is used to direct leads to the virtual showroom and the closest physical dealer. A CRM application has been developed for Facebook which enables the negative content to be taken offline for resolution. Marketing also centrally controls all communications going out on these platforms.	It is an integral part of the communication mix, and can help to build goodwill towards the brand through changing people's perceptions.	On social media the improvement is around content and mix of content and speed of response. The communications also need to be improved between dealer and head office, and dealer and consumer. A new CRM system is being deployed to achieve this.
Liquid Capital	Social media is used to educate consumers about the products and managing the CRM cycle. It has not influenced the promotion mix, but in future it could be the acid test of the brand and messaging.	Social media is used to improve service levels and respond via the customer service department.	It won't lead the communication strategy, but it does influence the mindset and direction of the organisation.	Using social media to test that products are meeting customers' needs. Also growing social media through the traditional media channels.

	What role does social media play in the organisation and how has it been integrated into the communication strategy? Has it influenced other elements of the promotion mix?	Do your social media initiatives involve other functions of the organisation, if so how? And if not why?	To what degree do you believe the social media initiatives are key to the communication strategy ?	How would you improve the communication strategy and social media initiatives in the future?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**	**Comments**	**Comments**
Primedia Broadcasting	Social media allows a more direct level of engagement for the listener and broadens the touch point with the DJ. It also plays a role in assisting the show producers to build up the show content.	The organisation is completely aligned with what goes out on broadcast and social media. HR have been using it to recruit staff.	It can't be ignored, it is a big channel.	At the moment it is about optimising and building relationships.
Surf4cars	Social media is used as a trade tool to congratulate top performing salesmen at the dealerships, promotions and marketing. It plays a very small part in marketing due to the expense compared to Google Adwords. It is updated two to three times a day to assist with the Google search rankings for the website.	Every employee can post on the social media channels, although only 3 can post as the company brand. Everyone is encouraged to post interesting content to ensure it is always active.	Social media will become more and more important, and as our usage increases, so will our understanding.	We are working with Google and making the website more social media based. Also we may be reaching the point where we can hire a dedicated social media manager.
World of Accessories	Social media is used for sales and to build the loyalty program, both have been very successful, with measureable returns.	All events are marketed through the social media channels, and these channels are used to resolve customer complaints.	It is very important, as it allows us to be with our customers all the time.	Building database and pushing social media through the other mass media channels. By having dedicated people and ensuring the communication is thought out.
uShaka	Social media is used to communicate the full integrated offering of the park and it has had an influence in that it enables us to easily promote individual functions.	Social media is used in promoting lots of partnerships with other organisations. In doing this it is always important to leverage these relationships and communicate that there is something for everyone at the park.	The social media initiatives are key, people need to see us everywhere and as result we are spending a lot of time on it.	We would like to get into other platforms such as Pinterest, and we are also starting to get into cluster marketing. We need to ensure the entire customer experience is what they expect.

4.4.1 What role does social media play in the organisation and how has it been integrated into the communication strategy? Has it influenced other elements of the promotion mix?

4.4.1.1 Description of Responses

The answers to this question indicate that social media as a channel plays a supporting role to the communication strategy of the organisation. The applications for social media in these organisations is diverse, some use social media to replicate the offline message on the online channels, while other companies use it to engage with consumers and get real world feedback from consumers. Other companies see the role of social media as potentially providing leads for future sales and as a tool to enhance the performance of the overall digital strategy.

Driving content has also been an area where social media has assisted some of the organisations to remain relevant to the consumers and enabled them to engage at a level not previously possible. This has also led to a change in the kind of language used by organisations to communicate on these channels and in some cases pushing out certain messaging exclusively on the social media platforms.

4.4.2 Do your social media initiatives involve other functions of the organisation, if so how? And if not, why not?

4.4.2.1 Description of Responses

Many of the organisations interviewed confirmed that they will get other departments or functions involved when they need to respond to consumers queries. However the custodian of the social media initiatives is typically the marketing department thus managing the social media channel through one point. The activities identified by the organisations where they use social media and other functions includes: sponsorships, events and promotions, customer relationship management, advising consumers and advising other company divisions on complaints related to drivers in the case of Imperial.

But for some of the companies there was very little initiative taken in using social media in bringing different organisational functions closer together. The only time that other departments were involved or contacted was when specialised knowledge was required to answer customer queries or complaints.

4.4.3 To what degree do you believe the social media initiatives are key to the communication strategy?

4.4.3.1 Description of Responses

Two trends emerged in response to this question - many respondents saw social media as the future of the communication strategy, while others saw it as adding to the current communication strategy.

There were various reasons identified by organizations for the importance of social media, these included inter alia: access a different demographic profile that is active on these channels, a living medium that provides so much more possibility than a print advert, and enabling a brand to be given a personality.

Other advantages of social media that were mentioned was delivering more interaction, attracting new audiences, driving content strategy, building goodwill to the brand, changing consumer's perceptions and to increase the touch points with the consumer.

On the other hand, some of the organizations do not view social media as a cornerstone of their communication strategy, but rather see it in a supporting role and as a tool to rapidly respond to customers and increase reach.

4.4.4 How would you improve the communication strategy and social media initiatives in the future?

4.4.4.1 Description of Responses

The responses to this question identified many areas where the interviewed organizations could improve their communications, one of these was getting staff involved on the social media channels and changing policy whereby staff would be able

to access social media during work hours. In addition, financial and human resources were seen a key limiting factor for the social media initiatives.

From a social media point of view there were many other ways in which these initiatives could be improved. Social media is seen as one of the tools to assist in achieving better alignment between the corporate objectives and the communication strategy, different activities like promotions and competitions were also seen as desirable in creating more interactions on the social pages. Other areas where social media could be improved was through the mix of content, getting more user generated content, selecting the right channels for the brands and using these for product testing and database building.

In terms of the communication strategy as a whole, the improvements were identified as more targeted campaigns and ensuring the messaging is carefully crafted to ensure it delivers on the intended objectives. Other important issues included the need to improve inter-departmental communications, improved analytics on the communications and identifying new vehicles for broadcasting the communications.

4.5. Results pertaining to Research Question 3

What mechanisms are South African companies employing to gather information and how do they feed into the development and adjustment of company goals and objectives?

Table3: Responses to Research Question 3

	How is the organisation measuring interactions over social media channels?	How is the data analysed and responded to in a way that works towards the organisational objectives?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**
Dis-chem	The metrics are the number of followers and what questions they are asking. There is a dashboard of the key metrics and it is supplemented with Google Analytics.	The company is changing from a selling to a marketing organisation, and the social media channels are starting to be used as a conduit for queries. The feedback through social media is not changing the strategic direction but is more on an operational and tactical level.
AutoPedigree	There is no measurement of social media, although there is a lead management system in place for the website.	The company is not there yet, but it makes sense that the information from these channels should be used to guide the business.
Castrol	Only with Facebook insights and feedback from the agency.	The information has not really been used because it is at a basic level. But a thorough analysis of the data and campaigns has also not been done.
Kulula	Using Facebook insights and Hootsuite. The metrics measured are followers, virality, reach and shares. The interactions with consumers also guide the communications.	There is no real statistical analysis currently, but in future an analysis of sentiment and a CRM system would be required.

	How is the organisation measuring interactions over social media channels?	How is the data analysed and responded to in a way that works towards the organisational objectives?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**
Hyundai	A report is received from the overseas Head office detailing information from overseas markets and local performance.	The data is analysed from a general overview. But demographics are important because they identify new potential markets.
AMKA	A monthly meeting is held with the agency and the metrics analysed include number of followers, interactions, interesting comments, likes and where they come from.	The likes and comments are important. In the rest of Africa social media is the only communication channel we have and it is being used to build the numbers and communicate about the products.
Europcar	Measurement of comment sentiment is collated into a customer service report. Any other measurement is done manually.	Social media is all responded to manually. The social media data is incorporated into the monthly customer service report and it gives an indication of the trends over the year.
Garmin	The metrics are numbers of friends and followers, and the comments are analysed to ensure delivery on service and business strategy.	The data is responded to manually by one person to ensure there is one consistent tone and voice, and that the one on one communication is maintained
Getaway	The tools are Facebook insights, Socialbro for Twitter and Google analytics for the website.	Consumers are asked for content when required, and this feedback can be included in editorial content when it is relevant.

	How is the organisation measuring interactions over social media channels?	How is the data analysed and responded to in a way that works towards the organisational objectives?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**
Gordon Institute of Business Science	Everything is measured, Google analytics, likes, tweets, Flickr views, followers	The data is analysed on all channels to ensure the content posted is what the consumer is interested in.
Gold Reef	Two areas are measured, new followers and likes, and the talkability that is being created.	By understanding why followers are retained or lost, and why followers are lost around certain conversations.
Imperial Holdings	A report is generated detailing the brand reputation management score, sentiment, and who is commenting about us. In addition strategic recommendations are made by the agency.	The agency supplies a report and if there are negative comments then they are resolved. The agency also helps to identify ambassadors to promote the initiative. The data is analysed from the point of view that I-Pledge is about taking the high road and doing what is right.
Suncoast Casino	The tool used is Meltwater and it measures the followers, comments and likes on content posted.	The social media channels make it difficult to determine if people on the page are actually coming to the resort, so the analysis focuses more on numbers of likes and followers. Sms campaigns are easier to determine ROI.
KIA Motors	In terms of CRM, metrics measured include fan growth, virality, reach, sentiment and talkability. In addition each post is analysed in terms of adding value to the business and the consumer.	The philosophy is that the brand must always act with integrity and honesty, and if it does so then the right kind of people will be attracted to the brand.

	How is the organisation measuring interactions over social media channels?	How is the data analysed and responded to in a way that works towards the organisational objectives?
Organisation	**Comments**	**Comments**
Liquid Capital	The process is manual with the focus on comments and resolving them through the customer services department.	Queries are taken offline to resolve them, however once a result is attained it is taken back online. This is done for two reasons, one to try and swing the customer into an advocate, and two to demonstrate transparency as a brand whether the issue is resolved or not.
Primedia Broadcasting	Currently the built in measurements on Facebook and Twitter are used as a high level health check.	Listener's comments are taken into consideration but strategy is never shifted based on comment, however the organisation does flex tactics based on this feedback.
Surf4cars	The 3 administrators looking after the page respond to comments directly on a daily basis.	The comments are dealt with immediately in the office as soon as they appear on the page.
World of Accessories	Measurement is made through sales from social media specific promotions. More emphasis is given to comments that guide the business in specific ways.	All comments are left on the page whether bad or good, this demonstrates the consumer will always have a good experience at the company. When negative comments are turned around into positives the levels of interaction do increase.
uShaka	Many metrics are measured, open rates, popular pages, countries where people are based, gender and stickiness.	Specific offers are made to targeted markets and the response is monitored to understand the market being targeted.

4.5.1 How is the organisation measuring interactions over social media channels?

4.5.1.1 Description of Responses

There were two areas where the interviewed companies provided information related to this question. Firstly they identified the different tools they were using to measure their social media activity, this is useful in understanding which tools are the most popular but what they were measuring is of much more interest to this study. The two dominant metrics being measured are followers and comments. The others that rank highly are likes, talkability, sentiment, and reach. Only one organisation, WOA, stated that they directly measures ROI from promotions and activities they post on the social platforms.

Secondly they stated that this information is in some cases collated into reports and then analysed to determine the overall reputation management score and the service levels currently being experienced by the consumer. The information is also sometimes used to ensure delivery on the business strategy and objectives, benchmarking the organisation against the industry, global trends, and for guiding future communications.

4.5.2 How is the data analysed and responded to in a way that works towards the organisational objectives?

4.5.2.1 Description of Responses

The answers to this question reflected to a large degree the objectives and goals that were important to the organisation at the time. For some, there was no comprehensive measurement that could yield results that could add value to corporate goals but in most cases organizations recognized on a theoretical level that this would be a valuable asset to have.

Some of the ways that data was analysed was closely linked to the prevailing strategy such as, identifying new markets through the demographic profile of the consumers, understanding why followers are retained or lost around certain conversations and

making targeted offers to better understand the return on investment of specific communications.

4.6. Summary of the results

The results of the conducted research have highlighted several key issues around the research questions and go someway in answering the questions. On average there does not seem to be a fully developed sense of how the communication strategy relates to the goals of the organisations. The responses seldom extend beyond the basic marketing messaging and do not really interrogate how the communications should be aligned to the strategy and goals of the organisation. The tactics employed in integrating social media into the rest of the communications function and other activities of the organisations seems to be relatively well developed and the people interviewed understand the value of achieving this, but the effective measurement of these interactions is less developed, with many of the companies only having superficial metrics and measurements in place. There were a few exceptions to this, and these companies were the organisations overall that had a well-entrenched social media and communications plan.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the explanation of the research results, building on what has been described in the previous chapter. Each of the research sub questions will be dealt with individually, thereby allowing an analysis of the key issues highlighted by each question. The analysis will firstly, describe the results of the research in detail and secondly, compare the results with the important points from the literature review and the theoretical models identified. In doing this comparison, the research will identify areas where the results reaffirm the literature, but also areas where there are differences and will attempt to explain these differences.

5.2 Demographic profile of respondents

As discussed in the previous chapter, the profile of the respondents is relatively close to the intended sample. As stated at the beginning of the document, the organisations analysed would not be from one specific industry, but rather be a cross section of many South African industries thus providing a general view of the corporate communications and social media landscape, and this has been achieved in this research. The fact that all the respondents interviewed are directly involved in the social media activities of the organisations has assured that there is a good grasp of the status quo on this subject in these organisations. However, not all the people are of a similar level of seniority in the organisations and as a result may discuss the social media initiatives from a slightly different point of view. This does impact on the results but also ensures that there is not just a one sided perspective.

5.3 Discussion pertaining to Research Question 1

South African companies seem to understand the role of corporate communication in different ways and consequently the implementation is equally varied. For many organisations the mass media is still highly relevant and is used as the main communication tool to consumers. Companies such as Dis-chem, AMKA, AutoPedigree,

Gold Reef, KIA Motors and LiquidCapital focus more on the paid ATL and BTL mediums, however the digital channels are included as a supporting function to the overall communication strategy. In addition some companies, through the use of the mass media channels, have clearly defined goals and messages they are trying to communicate to the end consumer. Dis-chem for example, in all their communications are extending and elevating the brand, and living the strap line “Pharmacists who Care”. But the strap line and communication message goes much further in terms of company philosophy, low prices, high service levels, ancillary services and an aggressive procurement programme. Hyundai, Getaway, Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), Imperial, KIA Motors, Primedia, World of Accessories (WOA) and uShaka are all following a similar strategy and have a keen understanding of what it is they are trying achieve.

For other companies, the communication strategy resides within the overall marketing strategy or function of the organisation. Examples of this are Europcar, GIBS, Getaway, Garmin and KIA Motors. These are the companies that stated that it resides in the marketing strategy.

Other companies have simply stated that there is a communication message that consists of ATL and BTL elements, and that there is a replication of the messaging on the offline and online channels. All the companies seemed to have at least a working understanding of their communication strategy and objectives, however, it did seem to be slightly fragmented between the traditional channels and the new social media channels.

The results from the interviews revealed that the degree to which the communication strategy related to the goals and objectives of the organisation were very closely related to the level of development, integration and execution of the communication strategy. Again, in the case of Dis-chem, the strap line drives the business philosophy and culture. In other organisations where there are changes in the operating systems, strategic direction and new product development, the communications are all about educating the consumer on these changes.

Some of the organisations, such as Garmin, Gold Reef, Suncoast, LiquidCapital, WOA and Kulula, the overriding objective is sales. This is done through various messages which can also include product education, differentiation, building relationships and brand awareness.

Some of the other companies have different objectives that align more closely with the social media component of the communication strategy. Europcar, for example, have centred their communication strategy around engagement with the consumer thereby differentiating themselves from the competition. In the case of Getaway, it is all about enriching the lives through travel, and this philosophy is used as the filter that guides and shapes all communications. Similarly for GIBS the imperative is to be current, relevant and close to business and communicating on the channels where the target market expects to find them. For Imperial I-Pledge the objective is entirely different, it is all about reputation management, a moral principle and creating a positive feeling towards the Imperial brand.

The research results have shown that organisations in South Africa see the role of corporate communication very differently, but the recurring themes were the intent to build brand awareness and to educate the consumer about the organisation and its products. Both of these are also key marketing objectives for an organisation and reflect the level of competition in the market place and the fight for a share of voice that will reach the consumer and ensure the organisation is noticed. As mentioned above, the level to which the communication strategy reflects the goals and objectives of the organisation is entirely dependent on the state of development of the communications. The companies with highly developed communications also had a very clear idea of what it was they wanted to say, whereas others may have engaged in the basic marketing and sales approach.

The literature review identified a few core themes and principles regarding corporate communication and its role in organisations and business. In this section each of these principles will be discussed further in light of the research results above to determine the similarities, differences and new findings.

Firstly, the literature review defines corporate communication as linking the success of the organisation to its ability to adapt to its environment, its ability to manage various stakeholder relationships and the way it conducts itself in the market and in relation to consumers. In the research, this is reinforced by some of the interviews. For example, Dis-chem state that all communications go through the marketing department and specifically the manager's office before they are released into the market. In addition, the objectives of the communication strategy have been clearly defined, elevating the brand and the identifying USP of trust. But the communication strategy has to be more than just a marketing message, and this is true in the case of Dis-chem where the strapline is reinforced by pricing strategies, service levels, ancillary services, the procurement program and living the concept that they care about the customers' health.

As Steyn (2002) states, corporate communication now concerns the entire organisation and all components of the organisation should be participating in the communication process. In addition the communication strategy should be the unified voice of the organisation and should be assisting the organisation to achieve its objectives. In the interviews it became clear that the communication strategy to consumers for most of the organisations was highly developed with a presence on the ATL and BTL channels. There is still a focus on the traditional media with other newer platforms supporting the paid media.

The components of the communication strategies employed by these companies reflect largely the components of the marketing communications because the research is only focused on communications to the end consumer. Therefore the components used by most organisations are TV, radio, print and digital. For some of the companies there are also events, vehicle branding and sponsorships which assist in getting the message in front of the consumer. The companies that leverage this kind of communication were Imperial and KIA Motors. For Imperial the need to use these media is unique because through their I-Pledge communications they are trying to modify behaviour in the consumer and not necessarily earn revenue from the consumer. Their primary objective is to enhance the brand positioning and the consumer's perception of the brand. The traditional media can be used to do this,

however using events, and sponsorships can seem less like corporate propaganda and can be aligned to social investment activities which have a more philanthropic imperative. The other reason for using activities such as sponsorships is to do with connecting with the consumer around a highly engaging topic, such as the Euro 2012 as in the case of KIA Motors. This allows the brand to connect with consumers in an engaging, highly aroused way and associate the brand with excitement and positivity.

For the majority of the companies, the communication strategy revolved around a content plan for the ATL, and all the other channels seek to replicate this message on the different platforms, including the digital space. The research did not elicit detail in terms of how the communication strategy was put together and the development process involved in creating the content plan. One of the companies, AutoPedigree, relies very heavily on their advertising agency to ensure there is alignment between the different channels and that the message going out on the various platforms is consistent and integrated.

The literature review also highlights the fact that the communication strategy should be linked to the goals and objectives of the organisation and should be representing the organisation in a way that enables it to achieve its objectives. The research in many cases supports this theory, for example Castrol know exactly what they want to achieve, to be able to form a relationship with the consumer and attract a younger audience, but even though they may not be doing this right now, they do recognise the business need and are formulating a communication strategy to suit. Hyundai also have a highly developed sense of what the organisational objectives are and the communication strategy talks directly to this, whether it is media relations or consumer communication, the message is consistent. This is in part assisted by the global head office dictating the marketing message, but also by the local conditions and the relevance of the sub messaging for each market.

For Europcar the communication strategy is incorporated into the greater marketing strategy of the organisation, focusing on the leisure market and communicating the strapline that the organisation cares about the consumer and their needs. Europcar is clearly focusing on this message as it tries to differentiate itself from the other car

rental companies in a highly competitive market where all the competitors have similar offerings. Similarly, for Getaway magazine the communication strategy is highly integrated across all the utilised channels and the message is always filtered by the organisation's objective of enriching lives through travel. This means that the organisation always speaks with a unified voice that works towards the organisation reaching its goals. This is in keeping with the concept proposed by Steyn (2002) in the literature review.

Another example that reinforces this concept is offered by Primedia Broadcasting. In this organisation, the primary objective is to build a relationship with the consumer, and in order to ensure this, two questions are asked; what is in it for the consumer? and, how does it affect the sound of the station? The key principle is that the communication, on any channel, must be aligned with the brand values of the specific station. The importance of this principle may be even more relevant because this is an organisation whose business model is communication, and therefore has a heightened awareness for the necessity of alignment between its different communication platforms. But it does at the same time demonstrate that this integrated, unified communication strategy is possible and not just a theoretical construct. This organisation may also have more of the skills required to achieve this synergy, where other organisations would need to import the skills needed.

Contrary to the literature review which proposes that the CEO of an organisation is increasingly becoming the voice of the organisation, and that the communication process is no longer the domain of a particular department, the research seems to indicate the opposite. In many of the companies interviewed, the communication strategy and process was controlled by the marketing department and in some cases a single person in the department. For example, in Dis-chem there is almost no interaction by the executive management with the social media platforms, which means that it requires the marketing department to drive and manage this. It was alluded to in the research that this lack of interaction is due to the generational gap that exists at the top of these organisations, where these people have not been adequately exposed to the new technology and communication trends.

While the companies have a very good idea of what they do and what they want to achieve, the communication of these concepts seems to be less effective. When asked how the communication strategy relates to the goals and objectives of the organisation the answers varied quite a lot, with the organisation objectives mainly being revenue and profit and the communication strategy being how to depict the products, educate the consumer and differentiate the organisation in a way that will achieve the organisational objective. For example, for Kulula, their overall objective is getting “bums in seats”, but the communication strategy focuses on a different message to enable this. The communications are about educating consumer on newly implemented systems to ensure the consumer experience is at the correct level and thus managing the relationship with consumers towards a positive result for both the organisation and the consumer. This is similar to the strategy adopted by AutoPedigree, where the communication messaging is about the changes that are coming about in the organisation in terms of the new offers and how to do business with the company.

Another example of using the communication strategy to achieve the organisation objectives is Europcar: here the communications are about creating differentiation for the brand through ongoing engagement with the customer. This is important for this organisation as they are in a highly competitive market where there is little difference between products but there can be a difference in the interaction with consumers. For this brand it is an attempt to build a value adding relationship between the brand and consumer that will result in increased loyalty and attract new customers. All of this activity is geared at realising the organisation objectives of increased market share, revenue and profit. Surf4cars is also concerned with creating differentiation by ensuring the customer experience is as good as it can be and that the clients receive personal attention.

For organisations like Hyundai and KIA Motors, the organisational objective is to sell more vehicles, thereby reaching the revenue and profit objectives. However these two companies are also an example of how the communication strategy is employed to communicate a different message and focus to enable the revenue and profit motive. For them the messaging is consistently about the design philosophy and quality and

features. The way that this is done is through the depiction of the product to ensure there is a focus on the design and appeal of the product. For these two companies this is an important focus area as they have moved to a higher level in the market relative to their competitors and they have a need to communicate to the consumer that their product is now comparable with their rivals.

Other examples of where the company is focused on profit and revenue and the communication strategy directly works to achieve this is in the cases of Garmin, Gold Reef, Suncoast and WOA. With all of these organisations, the communication strategy must communicate to the consumer what the product is and it must elicit a response, for example with Garmin the communication strategy must identify the product, effectively communicate the message and make the sale. For both Gold Reef and Suncoast, the communication message must increase footfall and reach the correct target market, and finally in the case of WOA, the communication strategy irrespective of the channel must get feet in store.

The last type of organisational goals that have been identified by the research are those that relate more to the brand association and image, and how it adds value to the consumer's life or experience. For example in the case of Getaway magazine, their organisational aim is to enrich lives through travel and this is used as the filter to ensure all communications are on point and consistent. For GIBS, the key objective is to be current and relative and close to business and their target market. These are also the drivers that guide the communication message and the channel selection to ensure they are where their target market expects them to be. In the case of Imperial Holdings the objective is entirely different - it is all about reputation management, a moral imperative and creating a positive association with the Imperial brand through the I-Pledge initiative.

In all these organisations the communication strategy is mainly concerned with positioning the brands in a different light so that the consumer will perceive them differently. This also has a revenue motive but could be argued to be a longer term strategy to give the organisation a significant and sustainable advantage over its competitors.

The results of the research have identified some core themes when it comes to the role of corporate communication strategies and the goals of the organisation. It is clear that in many cases the communication strategy resembles very closely the marketing communications sent out by the organisation. These companies also rely very heavily on the traditional media types with digital platforms playing a supporting role. In all cases, the communication messaging was very closely aligned with the specific objectives of the organisation at that specific moment in time. In this research it is possible to see that the method and message used to enable the organisational objectives vary a great deal and are closely tied to the complexity and type of organisational goals. The communications function is consistently tasked with ensuring the consumer understands changes the organisation has made and with positioning the brand in the mind of the consumer. Although the corporate communications are handled by the marketing departments with the minimum of involvement from executives, they seem to be doing a reasonable job in communicating the strategic objectives effectively. The area that is of concern in this study is with regard to new, digital media, and its inclusion in the rest of the communications function. As a consequence, the lack of involvement from executives in this area does affect the level of investment in social media and its utilisation, this is potentially a major hindrance to realising the full benefit that can gained from social media.

The research question asked and investigated here was how do South African companies see the role of corporate communication strategies in relation to the organisational goals and strategy? In conclusion, it is possible to say that South African organisations see corporate communications as fulfilling and articulating the corporate strategy of the organisation, whatever that may be. But it must be noted that there are substantial differences between the organisations and this conclusion must always be viewed in the current context of a particular organisation.

5.4 Discussion pertaining to Research Question 2

The results relating to the second sub question demonstrate that for almost all the companies interviewed, social media plays a supporting role to the communication

strategy of the organisation. The actual objectives and results realised from social media for the various companies is diverse. Two of the companies, Castrol and AMKA state that social media is used to replicate the offline message on the online channels, but no more detail is provided on this. For other companies the application is different, for Dis-chem it has enabled the company to reach out to consumers, test new products and get feedback from them. In terms of the overall communication strategy of the organisation, it also enables one of the communication pillars, which talks to the company's CSI initiatives. AutoPedigree and Surf4cars have contrasting views, AutoPedigree sees the social media platforms as potential lead generators in the future, whereas Surf4cars sees its role merely as a channel to communicate motor industry related news and as a necessity for improving Google search rankings.

In the case of Castrol, as with some of the other companies, they are just starting to understand the social media landscape. As a result they have initially used it to build a fan base through competitions and promotions, but this strategy has not necessarily attracted the right followers and so the social media strategy is changing to become more integrated with the overall communication strategy.

For a few of the companies, social media has influenced the promotion mix by way of changing the language used to something that will fit with the social space, but also driving the magazine's editorial content plan as in the case of Getaway. In the case of GIBS some of the communications are exclusively on the social channels because this is where the organisation believes their consumers to be.

Ultimately, the inclusion of social media in the communication strategy has enabled the organisations to connect with consumers on different levels and close the communication loop.

Throughout all the interviews, companies consistently identified the marketing function as controlling the social media channels. This is particularly relevant when the communications are being pushed out to the consumers, however marketing also has a view of all the feedback coming in from the social media channels. Many of the

companies will get the relevant department involved if there is a technical query for example, so that the organisation can reply to the consumer accurately and timeously.

Social media is also used to promote specific events that the organisation is involved in, for example Dis-chem uses it to promote sponsorships, events and promotions, and uShaka uses the channels to promote partnerships and specific events they are holding.

For some of the companies interviewed there is not a lot of proactive interaction between different functions within the organisation, it is more about a reactive approach, as in the case of AutoPedigree where they only respond to queries that come through the channels. This is also a function of there being no content strategy to drive their communications. Similarly, for AMKA the questions they put out relate only to the types of prizes customers would like and their product preferences.

In the case of Kulula, social media provides a supporting communication function and does not involve other parts of the business, although it is seen as desirable by the organisation. The main focus of the business is revenue and as such every part of the business is geared to this objective.

In the companies that have a high level of integration and involvement, the social media facet has taken on an important role. In Europcar, customer service and the Operations Director is involved in resolving queries and assessing the feedback gained through the social media channels. Any flaws that are detected through this process are corrected to improve the offering to consumers. For Getaway, social media has three functions it fulfils; customer care, an advising travel agent, and events promoter. It would only be able to offer these services if the level of involvement of other parts of the organisation and people was highly developed. Not surprisingly, Primedia Broadcasting is fully aligned with the messaging that goes out on broadcast and social media, and this is because communication is their business and they have to ensure consistency at all times. This was also the only company that mentioned using social media as a human resources recruitment tool.

Imperial use feedback from the social media channels to notify different Imperial divisions of their drivers' road behaviour. This feedback loop is crucial to the organisation's objective of reputation management and using its size to make a positive impact on road safety.

The reasons that the companies give for the importance of social media do vary and is probably linked to the current overall communication strategy. For example, Dischem sees the social media channels as enabling them to access a different demographic profile that is active on these channels. Kulula sees social media as absolutely key because it is a living medium that provides so much more possibility than a print advert. In the case of Europcar, social media is critical because it allows the brand to be given a personality, but at the same time the brand needs to be adding value to the customer experience.

For a publication like Getaway, social media has been crucial by delivering more interaction, attracting a new audience to the magazine, and guiding the content and focus of the magazine. Some of the other objectives where organizations see social media playing a key role are in building goodwill to the brand and changing consumer's perceptions, it allows the organisation to be with their consumers all the time and more importantly consumers choose to have it with them, and it enables companies to increase the touch points with the consumer.

For some of the other companies interviewed, there is a slightly less enthusiastic view, in that social media is seen as growing in stature in these companies as the communication strategy develops, as in the case of AutoPedigree, AMKA and Surf4cars. For LiquidCapital, Gold Reef and Garmin social media is seen firmly as a supporting medium which can be used to respond quickly to consumers and to get greater reach with consumers.

One of the most important comments to emerge was the need for more resources in terms of people and money. The people factor is particularly important as it allows the organisation to make more effective use of time and enables the exploitation of more

of the available social media platforms. The companies that identified this as one of the improvements are Kulula, Hyundai, Europcar, Getaway and Surf4cars.

Although this was seen as an important factor, it is not the only one. Companies also identified the need to get staff more involved and granting staff access during work hours as an important change that needs to take place at the corporate level. In addition, companies need to be making better use of the communication channels available to elicit a direct response and build a relationship with consumers to get them in store.

In some companies, for example, AutoPedigree, the improvement could come from the communication strategy having more emphasis on the corporate strategy, social media is seen as one of the tools to help achieve this. Some of the companies would also like to implement different activities like promotions and competitions to improve the interactions on the social pages, one of the organisations see the next step as getting more user generated content on their social pages, but this again requires a mindset change within the organisation. Other social media improvements revolved around the mix of content, selecting the right channels for the brands, using the channels for product testing and database building.

With regard to the overall communication strategy the potential improvements were identified as more targeted campaigns, such as cluster marketing, and ensuring the message going out is carefully thought out and delivers on the objectives. KIA identified one of the improvements in their organisation as the need to improve the communication between the different business entities and the consumer. For Gold Reef the improvement would come from measurement and analysis to make sure the communication message is always in focus and identifying better ways of getting the message out.

In the cases of Europcar and KIA Motors, the improvement in communication and customer experience is in the deployment of new systems to augment the overall communication strategy. In these two cases it is a specially developed application and a CRM system respectively.

For all the organisations interviewed, social media has had an influence on their communications. Where and how this influence has taken place varies a great deal, for some it has opened up the opportunity for two way communication for the organisation to refine it's offering, for others it has just provided another channel through which to send its marketing message. Social media cannot live in isolation within the organisation, and many of the organisations recognised this and tried to include other functions or departments of the organisation in responding to consumers. This is typically done under the control of the marketing department to ensure that the messaging is consistent with the brand and its personality.

An interesting finding was that there were a few areas identified for improvement by the respondents when asked how they would improve the communication and social media initiatives in the future, these ranged from additional resources, better alignment between communications and corporate goals, involvement of staff and more accurately targeted campaigns. It is clear from the variety of responses that there are multiple challenges and opportunities faced by these organisations and for each of them a different approach to addressing them.

The literature review in relation to the second research question outlines the characteristics of social media and how it differs from other communication channels, as well as the role it can play in the promotion mix of an organisation. The research questions asked also attempted to explore the ways in which social media has been integrated into the communication strategy with particular reference to the promotion mix. The literature highlights that the relationships between individuals in the online space have fundamentally changed and that the element of control, especially for businesses in this area has been greatly decreased. However this does not mean that organisations should not participate on these channels but rather that there needs to be active engagement with consumers to guide the online conversations towards achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation.

The question that was asked of the interviewees was; what role does social media play in the organisation and how has it been integrated into the communication strategy? Has it influenced other elements of the promotion mix? In response to the first

question, all of the organisations confirmed that to a greater or lesser extent social media has been integrated into the communication strategy. For some organisations it is used to interact with the consumer and receive feedback regarding their offering and products, examples of this are Dis-chem who test products, Getaway who uses these interactions to influence the way articles are written and to drive the content strategy and GIBS, who see social media as part of the communication strategy to such an extent that some campaigns are now entirely online.

Some of the organisations include social media as a supporting medium to the rest of the communication strategy with limited integration. This is typically because social media is being used as the tool to achieve a very specific goal or because the organisation is not ready to integrate it fully. AutoPedigree stated that it could become an important lead generator for their stores in the future, however at the moment it was being used to reposition the brand in relation to the consumer. For AMKA social media is being integrated by including the social icons on their product packaging and replicating the offline message in the online channels. In their case they stated that social media has not changed their communication strategy, but the communication strategy has been adjusted to accommodate the online messaging. For organisations like this, the level of integration could be directly related to the level of understanding of social media within the organisation, but also the level of interaction and interest taking place on their social channels.

In some of the organisations the role of social media in the communication strategy has been one of supporting the ATL elements and mirroring the messaging on the other communication channels. In the case of Kulula social media is seen as another channel to drive out communications to the consumer. Castrol is one of the company's that uses social media to mirror the ATL communications, and this is because they are mostly running competitions to build the fan base and create a following for the brand. But this strategy is changing to one where they are looking at more engagement and valuing quality over quantity.

From the interviews it is possible to see that the level of integration of social media into the overall communication strategy is directly related to the level of development

of the communication strategy and the understanding and ability to use social media within the organisation. Many of these organisations use external agencies to guide and run their social media campaigns, and their reliance on these agencies in some cases is substantial. This tends to pose a problem in that the agency does not understand the brand and the business as well as the internal people, and the agency relies on the company to brief them adequately to write an effective social media strategy. These problems arise due to the ineffective communication of ideas between the agency and the business, an unclear sense of what the business wants to achieve and an inability of the agency to understand the dynamics of the business.

In addition, while companies are getting to grips with the social media phenomenon, they are using it to primarily build relationships with consumers. Whether it be to get feedback from consumers or repositioning brands, organisations are trying to leverage the benefits of social presence, media richness and social process. As discussed in the literature review, these concepts and characteristics of social media, if used effectively, can create closer relationships. Critical to achieving this, is a consistent application of self-disclosure by the organisation to ensure credibility with the consumer. Jiang et al (2011) in the literature review, also identified that in computer mediated communication, this process is intensified by an over interpretation and selective disclosure of information. This means that organisations could present a very carefully constructed image of themselves to maximise this effect.

In terms of the second question and the issue of social media influencing other elements of the promotion mix, there are also varied answers from the interviewed companies. The organisations that are using social media well are realising valuable benefits and results, such as in Dis-chem where the social media channels are being used to test new products and get real feedback from consumers on these products thereby enabling some product development and improvement. In this company, social media is used as the communication channel that talks about the CSI initiatives of the company since it provides the necessary amplification of the message due to the nature of social media. Another way in which social media has been integrated into the processes of the company is by Twitter becoming the complaints channel of the company. Although this is not strictly part of the promotion mix it does have an

influence on the overall customer experience of the organisation and is an example of the involvement of other functions of the organisation in the communication and social media strategy.

In the case of Kulula, social media has not influenced the promotion mix and this is because it is difficult to quantify the ROI on these channels as opposed to the traditional communication channels.

At the time of the research, Europcar was going through a revision of its communication and marketing strategy, which included anew strapline for the brand. Social media plays an important part in the overall communication strategy by being used to build a personality for the brand. Europcar is trying to differentiate itself from its competitors by adding value to the consumer's life in ways other than by marketing its product. It is doing this by using the interactive nature of social media to engage with the consumer and remain top of mind. Europcar also believes that social media is unpredictable especially in terms of the lifespan of different platforms, and to this end they are developing their own application which will enable them to offer additional features, own the platform and ensure its sustainability. Another company that has a highly developed sense of how to use social media is Getaway magazine. In their case they are using it in multiple roles. Firstly, it is used to refine the magazine to ensure the product offering is aligned with the needs of their target market. This is done by using the feedback from the social media channels to develop the content strategy so that it meets as closely as possible the expectations of the audience. Secondly, social media is used to market the brand and the magazine, thereby increasing brand awareness and ensuring that the magazine is reaching anew audience and potential customers. Thirdly, social media is used to drive website traffic, this is also a marketing function, however it demonstrates integration across the organisation's digital platforms to enhance the experience of the consumer.

Other examples of companies that have used social media in the promotion mix are, Gold Reef, Imperial, Suncoast and Primedia Broadcasting. Each of these companies has used social media in the promotion mix differently Gold Reef for example uses it in conjunction with a CRM system to ensure the messaging going out is accurately tuned

to the targeted consumer group. Social media has also influenced the type of language used in the other promotion elements to ensure that there is consistency across all the communications. Imperial have found that social media has enhanced the communication mix by enabling messaging across multiple platforms and consumer feedback. In fact, in their communications process they post on the social media channels first before using any other media. The effect of social media on the other elements of the promotion mix at Suncoast is at a much more basic level. Although they say that social media has refreshed the other communication elements, the integration has been confined to exposure of the social media initiatives in the other media. Finally, Primedia Broadcasting has used social media as a tool to broaden the touch points between the public and the DJ and improve the level of direct engagement that can take place with the consumer. The stations also use some of these interactions to assist with building up the show content.

As stated in the literature review, the strategic role of social media needs to be identified within the marketing and promotion mix, and the necessary conditions for its effective use need to be put in place. From the research, it can be seen that some of the organisations understand this strategic requirement. However the majority of organisations are only using social media as an additional channel to replicate the marketing messaging. This is not strictly a strategic role but more of a tactical one. The use of the traditional channels still seems to be dominant in these companies, which is contrary to the trend identified by the literature. The literature talks about a decreasing trust of traditional media by consumers and increasing reliance on peer recommendations on social media channels. The literature states that organisations need to engage more with consumers and in the case of the research, some of the organisations are starting to do this for various reasons, such as to drive differentiation and using UGC / CGC to drive content plans.

Another important aspect of the integration of social media into the communication process is the involvement of other functions of the organisation. To answer this question the interviewees were asked whether their social media initiatives involve other functions of the organisation, how this was being done, and if not, why not. Some of the companies commented that they do involve other functions and this is

achieved in various ways, which is generally company specific. For example, in the case of Hyundai, they include the rest of the organisation through technical queries, customer service questions and promotion of approved Hyundai accessories. One of the mechanisms is using a character, Mike the Mechanic, to answer some of these questions. This is an easy way to include a department that typically would be difficult to include in the social space and at the same time it gives the department a human aspect which makes it more comfortable for the consumer to interact. Europcar also has a well-integrated involvement of other functions in the organisation, they ensure that customer services are actively involved so that the right people are resolving queries. The Operations director is also involved in the social media space to ensure that the organisation is achieving its performance goals. All of this information is analysed and any flaws detected from the comments are immediately corrected to improve the company's offering.

Getaway magazine also uses social media in a variety of ways that pulls in different expertise from the company to deliver a broader service to the consumer. For example, social media fulfils the roles of customer service, a travel agent service where it advises consumers and promotion of events. KIA Motors also involves customer service through a CRM function integrated into its Facebook page which allows the company to take the negative content offline for resolution. The business also uses social media to direct leads to the virtual showroom and the closest dealer in order not to lose the sale.

Primedia Broadcasting, being a communication company, has aligned the entire business to what goes out on broadcast and social media. This is important as any communication message needs to reflect the sound and image of that particular station. Within the company the HR department has used social media to find and recruit staff, this was the only organisation from the research that was using social media for this department.

For some of the other companies, though, the proactive involvement of the other functions is achieved to a much lower extent, or not at all. For example at AutoPedigree, the approach is purely reactive, answering only queries that come

through. There is no initiative from the company to promote the organisation on these channels. In the case of Kulula, the objective of the organisation is revenue, and as a result social media is involved to the extent to which it can assist in achieving this goal. There is no other involvement of the organisation in the social media initiatives. For AMKA, although they say there is no involvement, they do ask consumers about product preferences and this will become valuable as the social media initiatives increase in importance, and will develop into a larger part of the promotion mix.

The answers to this question did begin to identify some trends and ideas within these companies of how to use social media in the organisation and how other functional areas can benefit and leverage this platform to enhance the offering of the company. It is clear that with an adequate level of planning and understanding it is possible to realise some tangible benefits from the social media tool. In addition to this, the included functions can enhance the messaging content of the promotion mix and broaden the touch points with the organisation. This is hugely beneficial in the public relations space and possibly warrants further investigation of the possibilities that can be realised.

Finally the answers regarding the improvements that could be made to communication strategies and the social media initiatives provide some insight into the challenges faced by organisations in this space. The need for increased resources and closer alignment of goals and objectives indicates the necessity to take very seriously the social media initiatives and the results that they can deliver. The literature review also mentioned the concept of radical trust and, in this context it can include allowing the participation of staff in social media activities. The research confirmed that companies are still grappling with the issue of allowing staff to interact on the corporate social pages as representatives of the company. Finding a solution to this problem and getting the organisation to go through this paradigm shift still seems to be out of reach of most South African organisations.

The question posed to the interviewed companies here was, have South African organisations integrated social media into their communication strategies and marketing promotion mix? How have they achieved this and to what degree? The

answers indicated that to a greater or lesser extent these organisations are integrating social media into their communication strategies including the promotion mix. The organisations that are doing this well have realised significant benefits that has enabled them to more closely align their offering to the consumer's needs. However there are still some challenges which need to be met in this space and organisations will need to continue working on their internal processes to overcome some of these issues.

5.5 Discussion pertaining to Research Question 3

Two answers to this question came out of the interviews. Firstly, some of the companies identified the tools they use to monitor and measure the social media interactions, these included, Facebook Insights, Socialbro, Hootsuite, Google Analytics, Meltwater and Tweetdeck. These tools provide an overview of what is happening on the social platforms. This is often supplemented with a report and recommendations that are received from the agencies that run the social media platforms for these organizations.

Secondly, and of more interest, is the activity on the social platforms that the organizations are interested in, and measuring of this activity. The two dominant metrics being measured are followers and comments. The others that rank highly are likes, talkability, sentiment, and reach. Only one organisation, WOA, stated that they directly measures ROI from promotions and activities they post on the social platforms.

Probably the most important metric that is measured and that the companies identified, is the comments. This measurement is more than just an absolute number, it is rather the interpretation of the comments, the sentiment expressed in the comments and the opportunity provided to communicate with the customer to resolve their query and get valuable feedback.

Imperial and Europcar specifically collate the measurements into a report which gives an overall indication of the reputation management score and the customer service

levels. Kulula uses the feedback gained from customers to guide the communication strategy, whereas Hyundai benchmark themselves against global trends. In the case of Garmin, the comments are analysed to ensure that there is delivery on service levels and the business strategy.

For Primedia, the view is entirely different, only the built in metrics on Facebook and Twitter are used to give an indication of a high level health check.

The interviewed company's depth of analysis as it relates to organizational objectives and goals is to some extent determined by their level of interaction on the social media channels and their development of this communication channel. For AutoPedigree, Castrol and Kulula there is no current analysis of the data in any coherent form that can be used to guide company direction. However, there is recognition from these companies that this is an area which needs to be looked at more closely.

For Hyundai, GIBS, Gold Reef, Primedia and uShaka, the data is analysed in different ways, highlighting different elements that are important for the strategy of the organizations. Firstly, Hyundai is interested in the demographic profile of the consumers on the social media channels, since it can assist in identifying future markets that the company could be targeting. In addition, Hyundai is interested in maintaining a general overview of their social media activity. Secondly, GIBS analyses the data to ensure there is a consistent message and that the content being broadcast by them is what their consumers want to hear. Thirdly, Gold Reef analyzes the data to understand why followers are retained or lost around certain conversations. Fourthly, in the case of Primedia Broadcasting, the data is always taken into consideration, however dramatic changes are not made to strategy based on this data, the changes or flexibility of the organisation is experienced on a tactical level. Finally, uShaka makes targeted offers to specific markets and then measures the responses to better understand the target market. Some companies responded to this question in terms of the methodology employed in managing the social media channel. For companies such as AMKA and Suncoast, the number of followers and likes is important because it shows a growth in the number of people following the brand, and it is difficult to place

other measurements on social media to determine ROI. Europcar, Garmin, Liquid Capital, Surf4cars and WOA were interested in the act of responding to the consumer and ensuring this was done in a way that maintains consistency of message and tone. In addition, they ensure issues are resolved as soon as possible and in a transparent manner that reflects well on the brand. In the case of WOA, they have noticed that when a negative comment is resolved, there are increases in the level of interaction on their social platforms.

Dis-chem, for example, is undergoing a fundamental change from a selling organisation to a marketing organisation, and as a result social media is playing an increasingly important role. These channels are being used as a complaints conduit, and feedback is more focused on the operational and tactical level of the organisation rather than the strategic direction.

The research results indicated that companies are using a wide variety of measurement tools for their social media initiatives, but the more important metric is what is measured rather than how it is measured. This exposed the fact that companies are mostly interested in the comments that consumers post and the sentiment expressed in the comment. This makes sense from the point of view that it provides an opportunity for the company to engage with the consumer and gain valuable feedback.

As pointed out in the literature review, the feedback received from consumers through interactions on the social media channels can be extremely valuable and should be analysed by organisations, but putting this thinking into practice is much more difficult than initially anticipated. Some of the challenges and benefits were highlighted in the interview research. In addition, the literature review proposed that organisations could go beyond the mere monitoring of interactions, and should be feeding this information into the strategy and communication processes, as well as using the interactions with consumers to drive innovation and co-creation. By leveraging these possibilities, the organisation may be able to build lasting relationships with its customers.

The first question asked was for the companies to identify how they were measuring interactions over the social media channels, and what was highlighted was that again there was a wide variety of methods and tools being used. From the interviews, it is clear that there are only a few companies that do not have specific tools or a monitoring strategy in place to measure the social media interactions. For example, AutoPedigree stated that they had no measurement of social media in place, however they do have lead management systems in place for the website to ensure they do not lose any possible sales leads. If one looks at the low level of development of their social media and communication strategy, this non measurement is understandable. For Hyundai there is no measurement done locally by the organisation, but this is rather done from a Global Head Office point of view and the reports are sent to the local subsidiaries. Another company that does not seem to have a well-developed measurement plan is Liquid Capital. Their process is largely manual with the focus on resolving negative customer comments through the customer services department. The measurement and listening plan needs to go beyond these simple models, it should be concerned with the brand health, consumer sentiment towards the brand, interaction and excitement around the brand and conversations about the brand on other social platforms or forums where the brand is not present.

For many of the organisations interviewed, they do measure some of these key metrics and have a highly developed sense of what they want to measure and how these results relate to the goals of the organisation. Some of the key issues that they are conscious of include talkability, sentiment expressed in comments, questions being asked by consumers, shares, and where people are coming from. For Garmin, an important measurement is analysis of comments to ensure that they are delivering on service and business strategy. In the case of WOA, the measurement is directly related to sales and return on investment, and in their case this is possible because some of their promotions are promoted exclusively on the social media channels.

The second question asked in relation to this research question was how the data is analysed and responded to in a way that works towards the organisational goals and objectives. What has become clear is that the level of analysis is dependent on the metrics being measured by the organisation. Dis-chem is seeing the comments and

feedback being used on a tactical and operational level but this is not influencing the strategy of the organisation. In addition social media is also starting to be used as a conduit for queries from consumers. An important measurement for Hyundai is the demographics of the consumer because this can assist in identifying new potential customers and market segments. In a similar fashion, AMKA use social media as the sole tool to communicate with customers outside of South Africa, as a result the number of likes and the comments are important since the company's objective is to build consumer numbers in those markets and communicate about the products.

Europcar use the feedback they get to develop a monthly customer service report and determine the trends over the year to ensure that they are delivering on the corporate objectives. Other companies use the data in various ways which work towards a more interactive approach and influence on the organisation objectives or communication strategy. For example, Getaway often use the comments from consumers to guide the content plan of the magazine, and in much the same way, Primedia Broadcasting also use the comments to ensure they are meeting their listeners' needs. This does not mean that they will change strategic direction based on these comments, however the organisation can flex its tactics according to the feedback. This comment regarding strategic direction came up a few times in the research and indicates that the comments are not usually of sufficient quality to be taken into serious consideration when it comes to formulating strategy. The communication strategy is vital when considering what to do with this information, in some companies the philosophy is about ensuring the brand always acts with integrity and takes the high road, thus attracting the right kind of follower, or it can be to demonstrate transparency and its willingness to correct its mistakes to build loyalty and interaction. For other companies, it is about determining whether specific campaigns deliver financial return and why followers are won or lost around specific conversations.

Whatever the organisational objectives, it is clear that the depth of analysis is linked to the level of understanding within the organisation regarding social media and the measurement metrics available. In addition, the organisation needs to know clearly what it is trying to achieve strategically, and in terms of communication objectives, if it cannot answer this question, it is difficult to know how to drive the social media

interactions towards realising these goals. There also needs to be a very close alignment between the corporate goals and the communication strategy in order to ensure that the latter is enabling the former. All the organisations interviewed recognise the importance of their participation on the social media channels and the fact that they cannot ignore it, this is good to note especially in light of the view expressed by Owyang and Lovett (2010) on consumer's perception of organisations and social media interactions.

In addition, the multitude of social media measurement tools used by these organisations highlights the problem identified in the literature review that, in spite of there being many tools available, none of them provide a complete picture of the organisation's social media activities. As a result, there still needs to be a clear set of objectives and goals against which the organisation can measure its communications strategy and in particular, the social media initiatives.

The third research question investigated asked what mechanisms are South African companies employing to gather information and how do they feed into the development and adjustment of company goals and objectives? The interviewees offered some insight into this question and the conclusions can be summarised as follows.

Organisations are using a wide variety of metrics tools to measure their interactions however in many cases there is not an in depth analysis of the information. It is used more to identify trends such as follower growth and interaction. As a result of the lack of detailed analysis the value that can be offered to the organisation in terms of goals and objectives is limited. This area of analysis is one of great opportunity where companies can not only learn to use social media more effectively but also understand how to set social media objectives and align them with the organisational objectives. Finally it must be noted that this level of analysis and understanding may only be reached when organisations begin to aggregate the metrics from all their measurement tools into one report which gives a snapshot of the important aspects of all the communication strategies.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with each question posed to the interviewees in turn, and the answers to these questions have been aggregated in an effort to answer each of the sub problems. Corporate communications in South African organisations are relatively well developed and are aligned to the prevailing corporate strategy, however the implementation of these communication strategies does not always follow the academic theories as identified in the literature review, and this could be due to the fluid nature of business and operational issues. It does not mean that the theory is wrong but rather that the demands and challenges of the real world have a profound effect on the deployment and management of communications. In spite of these realities, the organisations interviewed have a clear vision of the role that corporate communications as a function has to play in relation to the organisational goals and objectives.

Social media has been brought into the communication strategy in these organisations in varying degrees. Generally, the trend seems to be to drive out messaging to consumers and to support the above the line components of the communication strategy. There are a few exceptions where the platform is being actively used by the organisation to engage with the consumer to elicit a response and to use that information to assist the organisation to sharpen its offering. With regard to the promotion mix some of the organisations interviewed stated that social media had not influenced the promotion mix but was rather used in a supporting role in marketing promotions. A large proportion though, confirmed that social media had changed the promotion mix in some way. This ranged from a change in the type of language used, to packaging redesign, product testing, brand positioning, and in building content strategies. These answers have started to shed some light on the diverse ways that it can be incorporated and leveraged to achieve the specific organisational goals. Each company used social media in some unique way and interestingly a relationship can be identified between the organisational understanding and development of social media as a tool and the effectiveness with which it is used. In seeking to answer this question of integration and how it has been achieved the question was asked about the extent to which other functions of the organisation are involved in the social media initiatives.

In almost all cases the organisations answered that there was inclusion of other departments in some way, however, it was generally done manually and related mostly to customer queries. They do however recognise the value of getting staff and other functions involved but the issue of consistency and trusting others to be responsible was still of concern. As a result of this unresolved problem the involvement of other functions was really at a minimum. In response to the second research question, South African organisations have integrated social media into their communication strategies and promotion mix. The degree to which it has been achieved is where the differences appear, and this can be attributed to the level of executive support, the level of maturity in terms of understanding and using social media and the prevailing organisational goals at the time.

The third research question enquired about the tools being used to measure their social media initiatives and what they were doing with the information gained from these interactions. The research revealed that they were all measuring their interactions based on a variety of metrics, and this was done using the usual mix of social media analytical tools. However the crucial question related to how the interviewees are able to use this information and the feedback in their own organisational processes. A few companies had identified ways in which this could be done successfully, but the majority were unable to indicate how this could be done. The overwhelming majority only related this to answering customer's queries from a customer relationship management point of view. A handful recognised that it can be used to analyse the demographics of their target market, or that the content is what customers want and are even trying to understand why followers are won or lost around certain conversations. As a result, the research has confirmed that organisations are using various metrics to measure their social media interactions, but at the same time, it has exposed that measurement has to be very closely aligned to corporate and communication objectives to ensure that the messaging is always on point and driving the organisation forward.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The research conducted in this document has uncovered a host of different views and practices in the area of social media and communication strategies, but at the same time, it has also identified trends and commonalities that all organisations face. This chapter will begin with stating the conclusions from the research as a basis from which to highlight the lessons and to pinpoint areas where marketing practitioners can benefit from the results. The chapter will be concluded with a section identifying areas for further research and investigation.

6.2 Conclusions of the study

At the beginning of this research, the stated intent was to determine the state of integration of social media into the communication process of South African organisations and also to assess the extent to which the information gleaned from these interactions is being analysed and used by organisations. The main interest for marketers in research of this nature is to understand how to extract value from the social media initiatives of their organisations. The research conducted has exposed several examples of companies and their specific social media programs. The research is not intended to give an in-depth analysis of each company and their entire social media and communication strategy but rather a snapshot of the current status quo and a general overview from which can be determined trends and practices being employed by these companies.

In the companies interviewed, social media was viewed as having an inescapable role to play in corporate communications. It has in a very short period of time become an essential part of the organisation's communication tool kit. The research has identified differences between the academic theory of communications and the practical experiences of organisations, one of these differences is ownership of the communication imperative, theory states that the CEO should be the voice of the

organisation and should be more involved in the communication processes. However, the immediacy of social media has changed the way communications are handled and, because of its very specific characteristics, is usually managed by an individual with a unique skill set. In addition its use of new technology also often transcends the skills and knowledge of executives resulting in marketing middle management driving the communications. There also does not seem to be a clear strategic objective which is applied consistently through all levels of the organisation when it comes to social media. In spite of these challenges, it is commendable that many of the organisations in this research are using these tools well and achieving impressive results. They are starting to find innovative ways in which social media can add real value to the organisation and provide insights which may lead to sustainable competitive advantage. The importance of understanding social media in the organisational context cannot be over-estimated since the skills needed to leverage it fully are so scarce and getting the formula right can provide an advantage which is hard for a competitor to replicate.

But to realise the full benefits, South African organisations need to measure, analyse and utilise the information gained from social media interactions much more effectively. Organisations seem to be largely focused on the customer relationship management aspect of interactions and on mitigating any negative comments and publicity, but the author would argue that focusing on this too much can result in missing the feedback, which can add value to an organisation by enabling it to adjust its product offering to better match the target market, or even identifying emerging trends and changes in its target market. This suggests that the measurements organisations currently have in place are inadequate and should include a more holistic approach that aggregates all the information available as suggested by Owyang and Lovett (2010).

6.3 Recommendations

The research has identified some ways in which social media can be used effectively in the corporate communication function. It has particular significance for marketing

practitioners since the research has identified these people as the key drivers of social media in organisations. In terms of planning communications and social media activities, it is vital that the organisation sets strategic objectives upfront that will become the drivers for any communications and against which the results will be measured and assessed. The organisation also needs to ensure that there is buy-in at all levels with regard to any social media activity and that executive management is involved in the crafting, management and assessment of these communications.

Crucially, marketing practitioners need to concentrate on the measurement and analysis of these activities as much as they do on the content plan. This is because this analysis and understanding will drive the communications to achieve even better results and ensure that they are always aligned with the strategic objectives. In fact in many cases taking ownership of the communications in such detail will require a strategic realignment of many functions in the organisation to the point where it may become a socially aligned organisation in the same way that many became marketing aligned organisations in the past. This realignment would make it easier for the feedback from social media interactions to be brought into the organisation for consideration. Finally, it may be useful for organisations to look at social media, not from the point of view of how to make it fit into the corporate communication strategy, but rather how the corporate communication strategy can be adjusted to fully benefit from the uniqueness of social media.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

As mentioned earlier, this research has provided a snapshot of the status quo as it relates to organisations, corporate communication strategy and social media, however this field requires far more research to fully understand the long term impact that social media will have on communication strategy and the relationships that organisations have with their consumers. This research requires some quantitative exploration to validate the lessons and conclusion gained here and also to answer further questions. Some of the questions that require investigation include determining whether social media is delivering quantifiable and meaningful results for

organisations and therefore whether it is really necessary for organisations to have a presence on social media. Also, an investigation what the effect would be if an organisation had to stop participating on social media platforms, and whether it would fundamentally damage the long term success of the organisation.

With all the investment that organisations make on the existing social media platforms, what an organisation needs to consider what would be the effect of a particular social media platform gradually becoming less popular with consumers and forcing an organisation to begin the process again on a new platform. At the same time, companies need to consider what risk does this reliance on the popularity of existing platforms pose for an organisation's reputation management and whether this risk influences an organisation's willingness to invest in social media. In relation to this question, does it make sense for organisations to rather invest in their own bespoke social media application that eliminates some of the risk of generic social media sites? It would also be interesting to investigate if this is actually happening and analyse the trends of such developments.

Finally the area of academic social media research is so new that it will constantly offer opportunities for research and may challenge some of the communication theories and models or at least expand on them.

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APPENDIX A



The Role of Social Media in Corporate Communication

Letter to Respondents

Dear Respondent

I am completing an MBA at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Wits).My MBA thesis is on the role of Social Media in Corporate Communication in South African companies.

Towards gathering data on these subjects, I would be grateful if I could arrange a 30 to 40 minute interview with you to understand the process of social media integration as part of the corporate communication strategy and the customer relationship management aspect of the social media initiatives in your company.

I understand you are extremely busy and your agreement to contribute to my research is greatly appreciated.

The interview will not involve questions on your detailed communication strategy plans for the future, but focus more on the integration of the different media channels in the company.

Confidentiality will be observed throughout the thesis process and the final report will be for academic purposes only.

I will be available to meet with you at a location and time of your convenience.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Turnbull (9306637e)

Actual Research Instrument

Interview Questions

1. What is the current corporate communication strategy of the organisation as it relates to consumers and how do you integrate all channels to present a consistent brand message?

2. How does the communication strategy relate to the goals and objectives of the organisation?

3. What role does Social Media play in the organisation and how has it been integrated in the communication strategy? And has it influenced other elements of the promotion mix?

4. Do your Social Media initiatives involve other functions of the organisation, if so how? And if not, why not?

5. How is the organisation measuring the interactions over Social Media channels?

6. How is this data analysed and responded to in a way that works towards the realisation of the organisational objectives?

7. To what degree do you believe that Social Media initiatives are key to the communication strategy?

8. How would you improve the communication strategy and Social Media initiatives in the future?

APPENDIX B

Consistency matrix

How are South African companies integrating social media into their communication strategies and using the information gained from interactions with consumers.					
Sub-problem	**Literature Review**	**Research questions**	**Source of data**	**Type of data**	**Analysis**
The first sub-problem is to assess how South African view the role of corporate communication strategies in relation to organisational goals and strategy	Steyn (2002) Argenti, Howell and Beck (2005) Kelleher and Miller (2006)	How do South African companies see the role of corporate communication strategies in relation to the organisational goals and strategy?	Respondents in semi structured interviews	Qualitative data	Interpretive Analysis

The second sub-problem is to evaluate how South African companies are integrating Social Media into their communication strategies and promotion mix	Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) Mangold and Faulds (2009) Constantinides, Romero and Boria (2008) Jiang, Bazarova and Hancock (2011) Russo, Watkins, Kelly and Chan (2008) Stelzner (2011) Hearn, Foth and Gray (2009) Deuze (2008)	Have South African organisations integrated social media into their communication strategies and marketing promotion mix? How have they achieved this and to what degree?	Respondents in semi structured interviews	Qualitative data	Interpretive Analysis
The third sub-problem is to determine what organisations are doing with the information gained from the interactions with customers	Owyang and Lovett (2010) Constantinides, Romero and Boria (2008) Asur and Huberman (2010) Hoffman and Fodor (2010)	What mechanisms are South African companies employing to gather information and how do they feed into the development and adjustment of company goals and objectives?	Respondents in semi structured interviews	Qualitative data	Interpretive Analysis

APPENDIX C

Organisational Descriptions

Dis-chem

Established in 1978, Dis-Chem started out as a small pharmacy in Mondeor, South of Johannesburg. Today the group is still privately owned and run by the original founders. Dis-Chem has been rated as the country's best pharmacy chain by Professional Management Review, and has also been voted as Best Pharmacy, Best Medical Supply Store and Best Health Store in both The Star Your Choice and Pretoria News Readers Survey, as well as in the Leisure Options Readers Choice Awards.

From http://www.dischem.co.za/content_view.asp?ArticleID=1293&MenuID=25

AutoPedigree

Auto Pedigree houses the largest second hand, quality used car vehicle stock pool in the country. All our *quality used cars* are late-model, low mileage quality used cars and offer clients peace of mind because most vehicles come with a complete service history. For extra peace of mind, Auto Pedigree offers an optional 24 month /40 000km mechanical warranty. Auto Pedigree was formed in 1981 and has since grown into the largest second hand car dealer network in the country. Our extensive knowledge and experience in the motor industry is your peace of mind. With 59 branches countrywide we are able to bring the quality *used car* you want to your doorstep. Through MFC, Auto Pedigree can offer customers tailor made packages and peace of mind with the financing of their vehicle. Auto Pedigree also has finance arrangements in place with all major banks. As part of striving for service excellence, Auto Pedigree has established their own insurance brokerage that negotiates with insurers in order to get the best comprehensive vehicle insurance cover at the lowest premiums for their clients.

From http://www.autopedigree.co.za/

Castrol

Castrol was established in South Africa in June 1929 and has served the local automotive and industrial markets for 75 years. Originally known as Wakefield Company after founder Charles Cheers Wakefield, the South African company opened with branches in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, and spread its activities to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1939. Product was imported pre-packed from the United Kingdom. During the Second World War, from 1939 to 1945, the first local blending plant was established. In 1945 a branch was opened in Port Elizabeth. By 1946, South Africa was the third largest of Castrol's overseas markets after Australia and India.

In 1960 the company changed its name to Castrol South Africa, and in 1966 Castrol was taken over by the Burmah Oil Company. Castrol SA celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1979. In 2000 Burmah Castrol was taken over by BP Amoco. Following the acquisition, Castrol became BP's leading lubricants brand, with its products made available through the group's retail sites and to BP's automotive, industrial and marine customers around the world. Today, BP and Castrol account for approximately 31 percent of the South African lubricants market.

From
http://www.castrol.com/castrol/genericarticle.do?categoryId=8288011&contentId=6004538

Kulula

We've been flying South Africans for just over 10 years, the first low-cost, privately owned airline. We love to fly and if we can make you smile while we're doing it all the better. We're honest and always try to bring the best value to our customers. Whether you're flying for leisure or business we will get you there safely and happy.

From http://www.kulula.com/brand

Hyundai

Associated Motor Holdings, a division of Imperial Holdings, announced during April 2000 that they had signed a distribution agreement with Hyundai Motor Company in Korea to import and distribute of Hyundai vehicles and parts for Southern Africa. Today, more than 9 years later, Hyundai Automotive SA is still committed to becoming the best automotive brand in South Africa.

Hyundai Automotive South Africa in partnership with Associated Motor Holdings will ensure that the needs of all our customers are met and that the highest level of service is provided. Hyundai SA will ensure that every aspect of the motor ownership experience is in place; from the purchase, to servicing and parts availability.

Many of the Dealerships in the Hyundai network have a long and well respected history in the motor trade and the dedication and expertise that have brought them to these positions will undoubtedly form the foundation for customer care in the future.

Since inception, Hyundai SA has established a network of over 80 dealerships in Southern Africa, including Namibia and Botswana. Hyundai has a wide range of products and have a particularly good name for maintaining high customer service standards.

From http://www.hyundai.co.za/about/

AMKA

Amka Products was established by the Kalla family as a small trading operation near Pretoria in the 1950's.From the outset Amka was focused on the unique needs and opportunities inherent to Africa's emerging markets. Today Amka is a major manufacturing and marketing enterprise, with specialised expertise in Africa.

- 1000 employees
- 4 manufacturing plants
- 400 products

- 20 leading brands
- Sold in 35 African countries
- Consistently rated as one of the top 10 empowerment companies in South Africa

Our brands are our most enduring assets, and must be nurtured and cherished accordingly. Focussed support levels must be provided in order to build mega brands that are known and respected in our target markets, and that command top-of-mind awareness. Our core brands can be grouped into three main areas:

- Haircare
- Personalcare
- Homecare

From http://amka.co.za/about

Europcar

Europcar has established itself as one of South Africa's leading global car rental companies; one which prides itself on delivering locally relevant, world-class service excellence with a dynamic and fresh attitude. Its payoff line of 'Moving Your Way' encompasses the company's global strategy to be a key player in shaping the future of mobility, together with its commitment to exceptional customer service.
The company, owned and managed by the Imperial Group, has operated exclusively as Europcar since 2009 having a rich 34-year history with its roots as Imperial Car Rental. Europcar offers a fleet peaking at 18,500 vehicles at over 120 locations throughout Southern Africa - and through the global Europcar network, offers car rental access to around 220,000 across 150 countries. Holding ISO9001 (2008) accreditation, Europcar holds a Level Two B-BBEE rating. It is a member of the South African Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (SAVRALA), and has partnerships with several important service providers in the travel industry.

From http://www.europcar.co.za/Content/about-us

Garmin

Garmin is the world's leading satellite navigation technology company and a global manufacturer of in-car GPS satellite navigation, portable navigation devices, handheld GPS units, and GPS products for the auto, mobile, marine, aviation, outdoor and fitness sectors.

Garmin Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd is a member of the Garmin Ltd group of companies (Nasdaq: GRMN) that designs, manufactures, and markets navigation and communications equipment for the automotive, outdoor, fitness, aviation, marine and consumer markets. Garmin's mission is to enrich the lives of customers, suppliers, distributors and associates by providing the very best products offering superior quality, safety and operational features at affordable prices.

Today, Garmin has a richly diverse product line for every lifestyle and distributors in virtually every part of the world. We have built and sold over 100 million GPS receivers across all our market sectors. While our immediate success has resulted from developing innovative products for a variety of markets, our long-term success is based on a strong commitment to support our customers after the sale. We strive to win over new customers by offering them quality products at tremendous value, and by delivering superior after-sales service. We have demonstrated our success by converting them into Garmin loyalists who will support us for many years to come, and recommend us to others.

From http://www.garmin.co.za/about.php

Getaway

After 23 years, *Getaway* is the largest English travel media in South Africa. A household name with an audience of more than 700 000, it has Superbrand status and commands oodles of public respect. *Getaway* offers advice on where and how to relax in a huge variety of destinations in Southern Africa and beyond. It has developed into a 360º multimedia platform that includes Getaway Magazine , *Getaway.co.za*, the *Getaway Show*, *Getaway Events*, *Getaway books*, *guides*, supplements, *TV*, *adventures* and

mobile.getaway.co.za. Our highly experienced photojournalists track down unusual holiday activities and off-the-beaten-track routes to bring you the best weekend getaways, exceptional photography, wildlife, conservation and great armchair reads.

From http://www.getaway.co.za/

Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS)

GIBS was established in 2000 to be a place where people with potential, healthy ambition and respect for best practice are willing to engage like-minded peers and colleagues. The campus and its facilities have been designed to create a learning environment in which we all stretch our thinking, challenge existing ideas and develop a personal and organisational sense of where we need to go next. South Africa is a country that will continue to be challenged by the tension between its history and its future. Business leaders thrive on this tension as they look for opportunities to add value and generate prosperity for themselves and others. It is our hope that GIBS be a business school for and from the business community. Positioned in Sandton, Johannesburg, we partner with leading companies and are fortunate to attract the type of person to this campus who wants to make a significant impact. GIBS should be a place of hard work, inspiration, insight and hope - all aimed at building your, and our country's, competitiveness.

From http://www.gibs.co.za/about-us/who-are-we.aspx

Gold Reef Casino

Just 8 kilometres from the centre of Johannesburg lies the world famous yet uniquely South African Gold Reef City. With its magnificent Theme Park offering the widest range of features and attractions in Africa and the exhilarating Casino complex, alive with the excitement, buzz and energy of Jozi, this is where Jozi comes to play, relax and more!

Visitors return time and time again to experience its world class facilities, from indulging in one of the many restaurants, taking in a show at our Theatres, the excitement of gaming, experiencing a 4D movie & the thrill of our rides

Gold Reef City Casino is "Pure Jozi, Pure Gold" and provides this experience under one roof. Living & breathing 24 hours a day, the property provides the best of everything. From A-list entertainment to award-winning restaurants to high-energy nightlife.

Gold Reef City prides itself on delivering an "Unforgettable Experience". There's combined excitement with escapism and an exceptional level of service so when people visit the complex they feel special in a way they won't feel anywhere else.

From http://www.goldreefcity.co.za/aboutus/Pages/default.aspx

Imperial Holdings

What started in 1947 as a motor dealership in downtown Johannesburg has grown to a company of over 47 000 people across South Africa, the rest of Africa, Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Australia. As the leader in mobility, everything IMPERIAL does is geared to moving people, products and businesses forward through innovation, inspiration and foresight. IMPERIAL's transport related services now include - new and used vehicle sales, automotive distribution, parts and service, financing, insurance, logistics, warehousing, car rental, truck and van rental, caravan sales, and tourism - to name only a few. IMPERIAL is always expanding, finding new ways to offer our customers mobility.

From http://www.imperial.co.za/

Suncoast Casino

With a total investment of R1.4 Billion, Suncoast represents the largest single investment on Durban's beachfront. Along with the International Convention Centre and uShaka Marine World, Suncoast forms part of the Golden Triangle, and is a key element in the rejuvenation of the Golden Mile. Suncoast is one of South Africa's prime tourist destinations, attracting on average 750 000 visitors per month - three

quarters of a million people can't be wrong! Join us for an experience like no other and capture the unique spirit of Africa in beautiful KwaZulu-Natal.

Opened in November 2002, Suncoast is a gambler's paradise. The casino is the largest in Durban, boasting 1 450 slot machines and 56 gaming tables, as well as an exclusive Salon Prive called 77 Ocean Drive for higher limit slots and tables. With 12 restaurants and fast food outlets, kid's entertainment, 8 cinemas, SUNdeck, Boardwalk and a dance bar. Suncoast offers something for everyone, and is a premier entertainment destination for the whole family.

The complex caters for the business-person as well, with world-class conference and hotel facilities with Suncoast Towers and SunSquare Suncoast.

From http://www.suncoastcasino.co.za/aboutus/Pages/default.aspx

KIA Motors

KIA Motors Corporation (www.kiamotors.com) - a maker of quality vehicles for the young-at-heart- was founded in 1944 and is Korea's oldest manufacturer of motor vehicles. Over 2,5 million KIA vehicles are produced a year. Driving cars is all about travelling and the KIA Motors journey has been an extraordinary one. KIA Motors is South Korea’s oldest car manufacturer and today the second largest automobile manufacturer in Asia, as well as being a major international manufacturer of motor vehicles around the world.
The name KIA is derived from the Sino-Korean words “ki”, to come out and “a”, which stands for Asia, jointly expressing “rising out of Asia”, a motoring name well recognised throughout Asia, America, Europe and Southern Africa. As part of the Hyundai-KIA Automotive Group, KIA Motors strives to become one of the world’s best and largest vehicle manufacturers, driving spirited competition in the motoring arena.

KIA South Africa offers confidence and assurance to South African customers, by presenting unsurpassed vehicle warranties on KIA models that the South African motorists have not ever received before. The 2010 JD Powers Owner Loyalty Survey

shows that KIA has the biggest increase in owner loyalty, improving 21% points to 58% in 2010. KIA is currently ranked 7th internationally on the JD Powers 2010 Customer Retention Study.

The ambitions of KIA Motors are sizable but within reach of achieving. Along with our sister company, Hyundai, KIA Motors is reported as being the fifth (5th) largest car manufacturer in the world, leading vehicle innovation and motoring satisfaction onto international showroom floors.

"The Power to Surprise" represents the company's global commitment to surprise the world by providing exciting & inspiring experiences that go beyond expectations.

From http://www.kia.co.za/#pages/about-kia

Liquid Capital

Started more than 12 years ago as Associated Motor Holdings (AMH) Financial Services, LiquidCover operated as a service provider to the AMH brands. Five years ago the name was changed to LiquidCapital. LiquidCapital is an Imperial Group Company. LiquidCapital is unique and different to any other financial Services business that operates in the South African motor arena because of its "one-stop-shop" philosophy. This includes the widest range of products and services on offer by any financial services provider in the motor industry. LiquidCapital also currently manages over 730,000 active car-product policies. These products are directly available to consumers via our call centres to all car and motorbike brands retailed in South Africa. LiquidCapital also provides accurate and reliable quotes on comprehensive Car Insurance.

From http://www.liquidcapital.co.za/about-us

Primedia Broadcasting

Primedia is a leading South African media group whose vision is to become a world class media company. It was established in 1994 and its listing on the JSE Securities Exchange was completed in April 1995. Primedia remained listed on the JSE until 1

October 2007 when its listing was terminated following a successful private equity transaction (scheme of arrangements).

Primedia's advertising businesses are located principally in South Africa. This broad base of assets, which includes radio broadcasting, outdoor advertising, commuter and other out of home media opportunities spans both the traditional and non-traditional media sectors. This mix strategically positions Primedia well as advertisers attempt to reach an increasingly fragmented and diverse audience. These businesses enjoy a high degree of exclusivity derived from regulated rights to various delivery platforms, which contributes to their attractive operating margins. Primedia's advertising businesses also have an unparalleled reach across the entire South African consumer spectrum.

The group's content businesses comprise filmed entertainment consisting of cinema exhibition, film distribution, home entertainment; and electronic games. The group is also engaged in new growing sectors of the digital industry through its recently formed Primedia Digital division which incorporates Primedia's internet, mobile and other content based businesses.

From http://www.primedia.co.za/about_us/

Surf4cars

Shoppers seeking used cars for sale are faced with many concepts similar to Surf4Cars - they all promise to offer the best service, present the widest range of second hand cars and provide helpful used car buying assistance. The difference is that Surf4Cars actually delivers on its promise, with no frills and no red tape. Our simple, sacred philosophy is to create a user-friendly environment where used car buyers and sellers connect. Whether using Surf4Cars to buy or sell a used car, the service is absolutely free to the consumer. In this fast-paced digital age, car hunting needn't be the time-consuming task it once was. With Surf4Cars, we've changed the way people buy cars. Simply browse around our digital showroom, where thousands of vehicles are just a mere mouse-click away. We don't like to limit our users in their search, and the joy of finding your dream car is made possible through our unique search portal. You can find specific models, transmissions and body styles - and it's all done through the

convenience of your internet browser. Purchasing a car should be an exciting, fun experience - it's a big decision after all. Not only do we foster this process through our service, we also like to give rewards to our customers and dealers: this is why we host exciting competitions for users to participate in, and win!

From http://www.surf4cars.co.za/

World of Accessories

In 1998 the original WOA shop opened on Hans Strijdom Drive. By 2006 it had new owners, a new logo and a new street name. Ten years from it's opening, WOA on Malibongwe Drive expanded its size to 1100m2.Since then WOA has expanded again with a new branch in Centurion that opened in October 2009 and a branch in Somerset West in 2011. The Centurion branch has doubled its size just one year from its opening. All three branches boast a workshop in store – free tyre fitment for every tyre purchased. World of Accessories has joined up with GasGas to bring you the most innovative bikes to hit the outdoors. WOA are selling the GasGas bikes, come and check out these fantastic machines.

From http://worldofaccessories.co.za/index.php/about-woa

uShaka Marine World

The world class uShaka Marine World, situated in Durban, South Africa, opened its turnstiles to the general public on April 30th 2004. Close to three years in the making, uShaka has fast positioned itself as a key attraction on Durban's Golden Mile, offering a world of entertainment, excitement, fun and uniqueness. uShaka has brought together cultures, like no other place in Africa – into a safe, secure and clean environment that resonates with the sound of fun, laughter and the spirit of togetherness. Entertainment is non-stop, extending from the day-time operations of Sea World, Wet 'n Wild, and uShaka Beach, to the night time festivities of the Village Walk.

From http://www.ushakamarineworld.co.za/about-us