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## Corporate use of social media

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# CORPORATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Manship School of Mass Communication  
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requirements for the degree of  
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in

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by  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Despite significant and constantly increasing volume of social media use by both individuals and corporate entities, scarce scholastic attention has been paid to practices undertaken by companies and organizations in creating presence on social media, managing social media accounts and communicating with constituents on social media. New social media platforms appear regularly, attracting millions of daily visitors, however, this new type of communication media still lacks in-depth analysis, which would provide guidelines to be used by corporate entities to make their presence on social media most effective.

This study makes the first step to analyze possible relationships between companies' practices on social media and their size. It examines differences in companies' social media adoption and activity on social media, marketing information provided on various types of social media, as well as communication strategies used, based on company size.

This study finds significant differences in practices companies undertake on social media, based on company size, including social media adoption rates, activity on social media, as well as marketing information provided on the social media platforms. Overall, this study provides updated information about social media adoption by corporate entities, new insight into companies' activity on various social media platforms, as well as overall picture of communication strategies used. This study also makes suggestions for improving companies' representation on most popular social media platforms, making it easier for the general audience to find company social media pages, and increasing authenticity and consistency online.

## INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in the early 2000s, the use of social media has increased exponentially. People use social media to create and/or maintain relationships with other people by posting and sharing relevant information. In addition to this communication need, social media also serve users' other needs, such as the needs for excitement, pastime, fighting loneliness, and self-expression (Kuehn, 1994). As of August, 2011, around 70 percent of all internet users had social media profiles (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

The general public is not the only segment benefiting from what social media have to offer. The corporate world also widely uses them to reach and communicate with key target audiences. By creating a presence on social media platforms, companies attract current and potential customers to gain deeper insight into their wants and needs, to conduct market research and implement promotions. Additionally, the presence on social media platforms is also used for PR and marketing campaigns, for advertising, sales, as well as for timely crisis management. Seventy nine percent of companies report being present on at least one social media website (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

Social media popularity and proliferation have naturally attracted scholastic attention to such related areas as classification of social media types (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann, Hermkens; Li & Bernoff, 2008; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011), reasons and motivations for use (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Schembri, Merilees, & Kristiansen, 2010; Tardini & Cantoni, 2005), moral and privacy concerns (Barnes, 2006; Correa, Hinsley & Zuniga, 2010; Narayanan & Shmatikov, 2009; Zheleva & Getoor, 2009), as well as legal and copyright issues (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). The vast majority of social media research, however, has focused on personal use. Therefore, despite extensive application in a corporate setting, only a handful of

descriptive studies have been conducted on the utilization of social media by business entities (Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga, 2010; Men & Tsai, 2011). As a result, there is a lack of empirical insight into important issues with the potential for practical implications such as how social media are used by corporate entities, what functions social media profiles serve, what communication strategies companies use on their social media pages, as well as what tools of communication are available for the general public.

This study attempts to fill in some of these gaps. The primary purposes of this study are to provide a better practical understanding of social media application by business entities for advertising and marketing purposes, the communication strategies used, if any, as well as to suggest better business strategies for social media use.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The first platform with features similar to current social media, SixDegrees.com, was launched in 1997 (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). The website allowed users to create profiles, connect with friends and surf the lists of friends. Due to the scarce number of people online at the time, however, this social media platform did not have sufficient resources to maintain connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). An upsurge in social media websites occurred in the early 2000s, when some of the first full-fledged social media platforms started to emerge, including LinkedIn, LastFM, MySpace, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as a group of Internet-based applications built on Web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. There is one main difference between a traditional Internet website based on Web 1.0 and social media based on Web 2.0 platform. Social media websites allow for user-generated content. Traditional website maintenance, on the other hand, is implemented by a number of individuals in charge that limits the general public to the role of content users but not creators (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008).

According to Cormode and Krishnamurthy (2008), social media have two characteristic features that can distinguish them from general websites. First, social media carry people's profiles, which include demographic information, such as sex, age, and location. They also accommodate users' comments and offer networking opportunities. Another important feature is users' ability to create and post relevant personal information and pictures, the ability to tag and share content, as well as fully or partially control the privacy settings (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008).



Social media have been classified in numerous ways. It is essential to refer to classification of social media according to types, since it is one of the main variables examined in this study.

First, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) developed a scheme for social media classification based on social processes of self-presentation/self-disclosure and social presence/media richness. Goffman (1959) theorized that self-presentation was a conscious component of one's identity-building, where a person makes a conscious decision concerning the impression he/she desires to make on other people via self-presentation. Self-presentation is realized through self-disclosure, which is based on a conscious decision as of the level of information the person is willing to disclose about himself (Kaplan & Haenlen, 2010). According to social presence/media richness theory, which represents the second dimension of social media classification by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), all types of communication media, including face-to-face, telephone, television, radio, and newspapers, are classified based on the degree of involvement of the audience, as well as the ability to provide instant feedback (William & Christie, 1976). Having combined these two dimensions (self-presentation/self-disclosure and social presence/media richness theory), Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) came up with a scheme for assessing social media. According to this classification, blogs represent platforms with high self-presentation and low social presence, while collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia) have both low self-presentation and low social presence. Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook) provide for medium social presence and high self-presentation, while in content communities there is medium social presence and low self-presentation. Virtual game environments (e.g., World of Warcraft) provide the highest social presence, but low self-presentation. Virtual social worlds, which are different from virtual game

environments, provide for both high self-presentation and high social presence (Kaplan & Haenlen, 2010).

The next mode of classification is currently the most widely used one and the one used for the purposes of the current study, which is to classify social media into seven categories based on the main function of the website (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). They are social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn), where the main function of the platform is to provide people tools for networking; media sharing sites (e.g., YouTube, Flickr, Instagram), where sharing content is the main function on the platform; microblogging (e.g., Twitter), where communicating short pieces of information is the main function of the website; blogging platforms (e.g., WordPress), providing space for posting unique user-generated content; wikis (e.g., Wikipedia), which represent platforms for collaborative creation of content; social review sites (e.g., RottenTomatoes), the main function of which is to provide tools for exchanging product/service reviews among users; and social bookmarking sites (e.g., Digg), the main function of which is to provide tools for tagging or bookmarking contents based on their importance (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

According to Baird and Parasnis (2011), users are most active on social networking sites (SNS) (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn). For instance, 89% of Generation Y (people born between 1975-1992) have a profile on at least one social network, 79% of Generation X (people born between 1965-1974) have a presence on at least one social networking site, while Baby Boomers (people born before 1964) are the fastest growing segment of the population in terms of the presence on social networking sites with 72% of the surveyed population having a profile on at least one SNS.

Media sharing platforms (YouTube) come second in terms of popularity with 57% of generation Y having a profile, 42% of Generation X, and 33% of Baby Boomers. The third most popular type of social media platforms is microblogging websites (Twitter), where 42% of Generation Y representatives have a profile, followed by 37% of Generation X representatives and 24% of Baby Boomers. Blogs, wikis, social review sites and social bookmarking platforms have relatively lower degrees of adoption. Five percent of Generation Y representatives reported not having a profile on any social media platform, while for Generation X and Baby Boomers the figures made 13% and 20% respectively (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

## **PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

The instantly increasing interest for social media has also attracted scholars. Social media research has been largely divided into two main areas: individual use and corporate use of social media.

### **Individual Use of Social Media**

Early research attempted to understand social media from the user perspective. This portion of social media research can be divided into two areas: phenomenon of social media and its development, and the needs and motivations for use. The first line of research in this area attempted to gain a better understanding of social media platforms since they were new to society. Research in this line mainly focused on examining social media as a phenomenon through studying social media development, their viability in the future (Boyd & Ellison, 2008), and the digital divide caused or solved by social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). These studies mostly provided a historic overview of the Web 1.0 to 2.0 shift and made predictions as to future development of social media and its implication for personal connections. For instance, Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) suggested that social media is a continuation of the existing offline networks and connections, thus providing it with the power to maintain itself. Some social media platforms that developed in the course of time were defined as either interest-driven or open to everyone. For instance, Boyd (2008) mentions Dogster and Catster social media as being created for a group of people with mutual interests, while other social media platforms, such as Facebook, do not require belonging to a particular group.

The second area attempted to examine the needs and motivations for using social media. Researchers in this area mainly focused on psychological factors on the grounds of uses and gratifications theory to explain personal use of social media (Gangadharbhatla, 2008; Grayson &

Martinec, 2004; Schembri, Merilees, & Kristiansen, 2010; Tardini & Cantoni, 2005). For instance, Baird and Parasnis (2011) found that the main need for using social media is communication with family and friends (70%). Over 35 percent of individuals mentioned accessing news, entertainment, sharing opinions, reviews and meeting people as some of the other reasons (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). In their research on why youth uses new media, Ito et al. (2008) identified three main modes of new media usage as hanging out, messing around, and geeking out. In the hanging out communication mode, the main motivations or activities on the new media included flirting and dating, tinkering and exploration, learning about peers' social and romantic status, as well as exploring extended friend networks without the necessity to engage in direct communication. Messing around included a more media- and information-centric presence, including motivations to look around, search for information online, experiment and play with gaming and digital media production. For geeking out, however, the motivation is even more focused on information and learning. It is peer-driven and is focused on gaining deep knowledge and expertise in areas of interest (Ito et al, 2008).

Researchers also focused on moral and legal issues in using social media. Issues in this area include anonymity and use of fake accounts in social media, and copyright concerns. Scholarship in this area is still ongoing with concerns of how personal information is saved and used in cyber space with the new threats to human privacy (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Barnes, 2006; Zheleva & Getoor, 2009; Correa, Hinsley & Zuniga, 2010; Narayanan & Shmatikov, 2009). Gross and Acquisti (2005) found in their early research on social media privacy that people generously provided personal information and hardly changed the default settings on social media, thus allowing maximum visibility for hundreds of people they were connected to directly and thousands of people they had indirect connections with. Zheleva and Getoor (2009)

concluded that privacy on social media should still be an issue of concern, since the findings of the research showed that it was technically possible to retrieve personal information about people through social media (Zheleva & Getoor, 2009).

### **Corporate Use of Social Media**

Corporate entities widely use social media in order to engage with their stakeholders: employees, customers, shareholders and partners. Some statistics on adoption of social media platforms by large companies worldwide are available from recent research. Culnan, McHugh and Zubillaga (2010), summing up the results of their research on social media adoption by Fortune 500 companies, concluded that 36% of the companies had not adopted any of the four social media examined by the scholars (Twitter, Facebook, blogs and client-hosted forums). On average, companies that had adopted social media usually utilized one or two, with the exception of the companies representing the IT sphere, which had utilized nearly three social media applications (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010). In terms of adoption, Twitter enjoyed the most popularity (53%), followed by Facebook (46%), blogs (20%) and client-hosted forums (11%) (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010).

After companies and corporate entities realized the volumes and the scales of social media adoption and use by individuals, they understood that a big portion of their stakeholders, including employees, customers, potential business partners, influential decision-makers, as well as shareholders use social media (Li & Bernoff, 2008). Companies faced the decision of whether they needed to be represented on social media, and if yes, what rules they needed to follow to succeed (Jenkins, 2006; Paine, 2011).

Studies on corporate use of social media can be divided into two main areas: motivations and benefits of use and information provided by companies on social media profiles. The first

area of research in corporate use of social media mainly identified companies' motivations for using social media platforms. Research found that companies use social media to engage with customers, develop relationships, carry out inexpensive market research, as well as receive feedback (Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga, 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Li & Bernoff, 2008; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Research on motivation for use of social media by corporate entities also studied the concerns of companies related to return on investment and benefits in return for the time and human resources companies spend on maintaining social media presence (Fisher, 2009; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). For instance, Hoffman and Fodor (2010) provide the example Kellogg social media campaign, which resulted in twice the volume of TV advertisement ROI, thus coming to a conclusion that well-managed social media efforts by companies can provide tangible benefits for the company (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010).

For the sake of understanding representation of companies in media, Culnan, McHugh, and Zubillaga (2010) suggest looking at company pages on social media (such as Facebook) as a type of a brand community, which welcomes presence and participation of fans and followers.

McAlexander (2002) defines a community as being made up of community entities and the relationships those entities have among each other, that is in terms of participants and processes taking place within the community, and these communities are about creation and negotiation of meaning. This is one of the main characteristics of social media in our definition - sharing of user-generated content.

In this model of a brand community, participants constantly create content, share it, assess it, as well as interact among each other. These repeated interactions therefore lead to developing trust (Holmes, 1991), which is considered one of the most important aspects in maintaining relationships and brand loyalty.

These communities are also called Virtual Customer Environments (VCEs), which are said to be able to support and can create value in branding, sales, customer service, product development (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010). Social networking sites, being initially created for people and usually for small groups, provide one of the most important advantages, as compared to other types of company presence online (website). They humanize organizations (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010). Liking and friending companies or brands on social media provide the personal touch (Kent & Taylor, 1998), which can lead to a higher level of trust and loyalty.

When addressing motivations for social media use by companies, it is essential to note the differences in the perceptions of companies and their customers of the reasons why they communicate with each other on social media pages of corporate entities. Companies believe that people follow or like their page to learn more about the products and access general information about the company, as well as express their opinions. In terms of reasons what individuals expect from companies on social media, 61% of individuals mentioned discounts, 55% mentioned purchase options and 53% mentioned reviews and product rankings by other individuals just like them (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

The majority of individuals do engage with brands or companies, especially if the customer has had previous positive or negative experience with that company or brand. Over 60% of individuals believed that previous experience is what draws people to social media platforms in search of companies' presence there. In addition, nearly half of the individuals believed that their engagement with companies on social media would influence their future purchase decisions (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).



The second area of research examines the functions of social media use by corporate entities, including information they provide on those platforms to interact with customers. This area of research is closely related to the concept of dialogic/non-dialogic communication. In their seminal “Managing Public Relations” (1984), Grunig and Hunt mention the direction of communication as one of the determining aspects of public relations, where one-way communication is used only for dissemination of information (monologue) and two-way communication provides for an exchange of information (dialogue) (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Research in this area is scarce (Men & Tsai, 2011). The majority of studies on dialogic communication focus on computer-mediated communication in general, not social media in particular (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

For instance, in their cross-cultural analysis of company social media presence and interactivity and involvement, Men and Tsai (2011) reported that only 6% of examined U.S. companies had contact information on Facebook. Action features, such as online games and polls that engaged publics through online participation, were provided on 90 percent on U.S. company profiles on Facebook. Responses to user posts were present on 52 percent of U.S. Facebook company profiles. Fifty eight percent of analyzed U.S. companies on Facebook had a description of the company on their profile. A mission statement was present on 50 percent of U.S. companies on Facebook. The URL to the company website was present on 98 percent of U.S. companies’ profiles on Facebook. Logo/visual cues were present on 94 percent of Facebook profiles (Men & Tsai, 2011). This study, however, did not analyze the strategy of communication/types of posts by companies on Facebook, only focusing on general content information.

When asked about functions or activities companies undertake on social media platforms, companies mentioned communication with customers (74%), responding to customer questions (65%), promotion of events (60%), generation of sales leads (52%) and sale of products/services (50%) as their main activities (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). For this research, Baird and Parasnis (2011) used self-reports by company executives, however, not actual content analysis.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Uses and Gratifications Theory**

Uses and gratifications theory has been widely used in explaining social media use, especially by individuals. The uses and gratifications approach was first mentioned by Katz (1959). According to this theory, in order for participants to use a particular medium, it should provide for certain gains, or gratifications. Previously explored gratifications include desire to be socially connected, be a part of a group, and fulfill the need to belong in a group (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Sarason, 1974).

Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973) categorized social and psychological needs for individual use of mass media into five categories: cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, as well as tension release needs. The first category is related to people's desire to satisfy their cognitive needs, acquire information, knowledge or understanding of anything that is of interest to them. Satisfaction of affective needs implies emotional, pleasurable or aesthetic experiences that people have a need for. Personal integrative needs are satisfied, when a person uses a mass medium to strengthen his credibility in the eyes of other people, boost his confidence, and acquire status or stability. In terms of social media, this category is closely related to the processes of self-presentation and self-disclosure. The fourth category is related to being socially integrated, that is being a part of a social group, a carrier of certain knowledge or experiences common to all the members of a particular social group. The fifth category mentioned by Katz, et al. (1973) is the tension release, which includes escape and diversion.

For communication on the Internet, Kuehn (1994) put forward his own gratification categories specifically designed to explain the use of computer-mediated communication. Those

categories of needs included convenience, diversion, relationship development, and intellectual appeal. The main gratification mentioned, however, related to the interactive capability of the Internet, providing for social interaction, while in using traditional media, ordinary users are mainly passive receivers of information (Kuehn, 1994).

While internet in general exponentially differs from social media, uses and gratifications theory has been applied to social media as well in order to understand the motivations for personal use. In addition to previously mentioned needs of gaining information, excitement, relaxation and entertainment, social media provides for social connectedness, social interaction, or social identification. Taking up roles and gaining authority within social media networks are differentiating characteristics of gratifications gained from use of social media (Gangadharbhatla, 2008; Ginossar, 2008). For instance, Joinson (2008) found the more gratifications the social media platform provided the users, the more time they spent on that platform. The results of this study indicated that the main gratifications gained from Facebook were surveillance, self-presentation, social capital building, virtual people watching and social investigation (Joinson, 2008).

### **Media Richness Theory**

According to Daft and Lengel (1986), media vary in richness. Richness of a medium represents its ability to provide for cues that would make it possible to send out information to change the understanding of the receivers of that information. In order to compare media with various degrees of richness, Daft and Lengel (1986) compared face-to-face communication with other types of media. This particular type of communication is considered the richest medium of communication due to its unique ability to lower possible misinterpretations of exchanged information based on the ability to request and receive immediate feedback.

According to Daft and Lengel (1986), four main factors influence the richness of a medium: its ability to transmit multiple cues, immediacy of feedback, language variety, and the personal focus of the medium. Immediacy of feedback is the ability of the message receiver to provide immediate feedback to sender. The multiplicity of information cues implies the variety of the number of verbal and non-verbal, as well as textual cues available to the receiver of the information in order to be able to provide immediate feedback (Daft & Lengel, 1986).

Although some scholars have found that multiplicity of cues decreases for media requiring typing (Siegel et al., 1983; Williams, 1977), Baym (2010) mentions the emergence of various emoticons, acronyms and other means of expressing emotions and feedback through text in order to avoid confusion between the interlocutors that have been developed since the arrival of computer-mediated communication. The online community has created its own symbols to convey all possible emotions, making those symbols universally accepted (Baym, 2010).

Addressing the feedback component, Mangold and Faulds (2009) argue that social media platforms are one of the most inexpensive and efficient ways for companies to receive fast feedback from customers. Cunha and colleagues (2011) found that there are generally accepted language trends in social media in general and on Twitter in particular, such as various hashtags, acronyms abbreviations, etc. They have a common meaning for all participants of the communication. Addressing the personal focus of the medium, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that profiles on social media are equivalent to personal web pages, given the numerous levers individuals as well as companies are provided to control the content.

### **Channel Expansion Theory**

Carlson and Zmud (1999) proposed channel expansion theory as an amendment to the media richness theory to add and explain the media familiarity component or the user's

experience with the particular medium, missing in the media richness theory. While a few decades ago newspapers might have been one of the most efficient ways to reach customers, currently, the overwhelming majority of customers are on social media. They have experience using them and, consequently, find it easier to communicate there (Carlson & Zmud, 1999). Channel expansion theory explains that a central variable in the effectiveness of communication is individuals' relevant experiences of using that particular medium. Thus, scholars who support channel expansion theory argue that in addition to the four chief factors covered by media richness theory, there are others that also influence the effectiveness of a medium in communicating information, such as familiarity with the topic of the communication, familiarity with communication partners, as well as familiarity with the communication medium (Carlson & Zmud, 1999). Familiarity with the topic of communication and the communication partners, in this case, the brand and the company representatives, can be explained by the fact that users seek out particular company pages on social media when they already have some experience with the company or the brand (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Familiarity with the communication medium is determined by the high rates of social media use by individuals (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

According to D'Urso and Rains (2008), the richness of a medium might change over time with the arrival of new media and with users shifting to those new media over time. For instance, faxing might not be as rich as emailing despite serving the same function because of the fact that current users are more familiar with emailing than faxing. Similarly, while newspapers were considered the richest medium before the advent of other types of media, receiving information from the Internet (e.g., social media) might be considered more effective because people are currently more familiar online format than text-heavy print media (e.g., newspapers).

D'Urso and Rains (2008) argued that as one's experience increases, the perceptions of medium's richness should increase as well. Therefore, experience with a channel is important since it provides for common knowledge among individuals that facilitates encoding and decoding messages transmitted via particular medium (Carlson & Zmud, 1999).

Additionally, Carlson and Zmud (1999) argued that familiarity with a communication partner, in this case the brand/company, is another factor for more effective two-way communication. Thus, it can be argued that in online communities and social media, personal networks make this component significant by providing various levels of familiarity between the sender of the information and the individual receiving this information.

Familiarity of the person with a company/brand and his/her connection on a social media page (in the form of liking, following, friending, or subscription) makes the communication significantly more efficient than via other forms of media. Company profiles represent brand communities, where all members (fans, followers, subscribers) share a certain amount of common knowledge about the general topic of communication that takes place within given brand community. According to channel expansion theory, this fact makes the process of receiving and understanding a message, as well as providing feedback, significantly smoother, as compared to other communication channels. Additionally, participants in these communities are not only familiar with the topic and share common meaning, they also create meaning and content in a community, thus providing immediate feedback (Jenkins, 2006).

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In order to better understand the current trends of social media use by companies, this study investigates the social media adoption by businesses, presence of specific marketing information on social media platforms, and company adoption of particular types of social media. Another area this study attempts to investigate is the general communication strategies adopted by companies on social media.

First, the study attempts to give a general overview of adoption rates of various types of social media companies of various sizes. Additionally, it looks at the activity level of the company on particular social media platforms.

RQ1. Is there is a difference in the use of social media in general and within each particular platform based on company size?

The current study analyzes the presence or absence of general company information provided on various social media platforms for marketing. This information helps understand how four different social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube), which fall into three social media types (social networking, microblogging and media sharing) are used to present general marketing information.

RQ2. Is there a difference in marketing content/information companies provide on their social media profiles based on company size?

Third, the study looks at the posts of Fortune 500 companies on their Facebook profiles to determine the dialogic/non-dialogic nature of communication, or the communication strategies the companies have adopted. This content analysis also provides a general overview of types of communication pieces (advertising, promotion, opinion requests, response to user question,



educational materials, etc.) mostly used by Fortune 500 companies in managing their social media communication.

RQ3. Is there a difference in communication strategy companies adopted on Facebook based on company size?

## **METHODS**

### **Sample**

In order to determine the corporate use of social media, this study used the 2012 list of Fortune 500 companies. Fortune 500 is an annual list of U.S. top ranking companies based on their gross revenue, compiled and published by *Fortune Magazine (CNN)*. Although this list has an intrinsic problem of containing only large companies and corporations, because of its convenience and broad data, the Fortune 500 list is widely used to examine similar topics, such as companies' website, blogging, tweeting and other practices of online engagement by companies in previous research (Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga, 2010; Park & Reber, 2008; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010).

This study used a systematic sampling method with a sampling interval of three. As a result, 166 companies were selected from the Fortune 500 list. This systematic sampling method was assumed to ensure that the sample would represent both rank and revenues of Fortune 500 population.

### **Independent Variables**

This study has two independent variables: company size and the type of social media. First, company size was assessed by the revenue of the company, which was used as a key determinant in ranking. In order to determine corporate use of social media based on size, this study divided samples of Fortune 500 companies into three groups: 3rd Tier, 2nd Tier, and 1st Tier companies. As displayed in Table 1, 55, 55 and 56 companies respectively represented 3rd Tier, 2nd Tier and 1st Tier companies, with mean revenues making \$6,041.68 million for 3rd Tier companies, \$11,169.56 million for 2nd Tier companies and \$50,818.46 for 1st Tier companies.

**Table 1**

Descriptive statistics for company size (means representing revenues)

<b>Company Size</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
<b>3rd Tier</b>	55	6041.68	865.08	3064.10	16,144.00	.446	-.81
<b>2nd Tier</b>	55	11169.56	2426.81	7924.90	7,895.00	.381	-1.12
<b>1st Tier</b>	56	50818.46	42388.16	229477.00	4,807.20	2.42	7.71

Note: Revenue based on millions of dollars.

The second independent variable is the type of social media. This study utilized Baird and Parasnis' classification (2011), which categorizes social media into six types based on its primary function. Out of the six types of social media platforms, this study selected three types that are most popularly utilized by both individual users and companies: social networking, media sharing and microblogging social media. For social networking social media, this study included Facebook and LinkedIn for their popular use in general and in business setting. For a media sharing social media, YouTube was selected both for its popularity and the tools for sharing unique visual content. Twitter was chosen for its popularity among the general population and corporate entities.

### **Dependent Variables**

This study looks at four dependent variables. The first dependent variable is the use of social media, and this variable was measured by the number of social media used and the activity frequency on those platforms. For the former variable, this study examined the type and number of social media used by corporations. For the latter variable, this study assessed the activity frequency by counting the posts on company's Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn profiles within January, 2013, in order to determine the full picture of activity on company social media pages. This one month timeframe is expected to provide sufficient information to

determine the general tendencies, as well as a great deal of data for analysis (Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009).

General marketing information on social media profiles is another dependent variable. For this variable, this study included specific indicators of marketing functions, such as company description (Waters et al, 2009), history (Waters et al, 2009), logo (Waters et al, 2009), description of services (Waters et al, 2009), address and contact information (Liu, Arnett, Capella & Beatty, 1997), availability of a discussion wall (Waters et al, 2009) as well as links to the website and other social media profile pages (Liu, Arnett, Capella, & Beatty, 1997).

The third dependent variable is the communication strategy used by companies on their social media profiles. Using the approach of Grunig and Hunt (1984), communication/posts were divided into two categories: one-way and two-way communication. First, all posts on the company Facebook profile were assigned to one of the following 11 categories: sweepstakes/discounts, advertisements/commercials, promotional/PR materials, industry general information, company general information, opinion request/initiation of conversation, user post/repost, answer to a user question, contest, educational materials/how-tos, and other. Then, using Grunig and Hunt's classification (1984), posts containing sweepstakes, discounts, advertising, promotional materials, or general company information were classified into non-dialogic communication, while posts that posed a question for the followers, initiate a discussion or repost inquiries by company fans, answered the questions, announced a contest, provided educational materials or how-tos were classified into dialogic communication. Any post that did not fall under any of these categories was coded as other.

After classifying the posts, in order to determine overall communication strategy, this study divided strategies into three groups: non-dialogic (one-way) communication strategy,

balanced, and dialogic (two-way) communication strategy. More specifically, companies with 30% or less dialogic posts were considered as adhering to mostly non-dialogic or one-way communication strategy. Companies with 31%-60% of dialogic posts were considered as adhering to balanced communication strategy, while companies with 61% or more dialogic posts were considered as adhering to mostly dialogic or two-way communication strategy.

### **Content analysis procedure**

This study content analyzed the thirty most recent updates in January 2013 on company profiles of the selected Fortune 500 companies. Two independent coders participated in coding procedures. Prior to conducting actual coding, this study performed training sessions and pilot coding with two companies that were not included in the analysis to detect and prevent possible errors. Then, to determine the intercoder reliability of coding agreement, 10% of the sample (17 companies) was shared by two coders. The pre-established target of 80% inter-coder reliability using the Holsti formula (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998) was achieved (87%). Any disagreement on coding individual items was discussed and agreement was reached.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics

Overall, LinkedIn enjoyed 100% adoption among Fortune 500 companies, followed by Twitter (82%), Facebook (78%) and YouTube (70%). As displayed in Table 2, 1st Tier companies demonstrated higher adoption of Twitter (92.6%), as compared to adoption of Facebook (83.3%) and YouTube (81.5%). 2nd Tier companies had higher adoption of Twitter as well (76.4%) than Facebook (70.9%) or YouTube (70.9%). 3rd Tier companies demonstrated higher adoption of Facebook (80.7%) than Twitter (77.2%) or YouTube (59.6%). LinkedIn adoption was 100% for companies of all sizes.

**Table 2**  
Presence on social media by company size

Company Size	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	LinkedIn
3rd Tier	46 (80.7%)	44 (77.2%)	34 (59.6%)	56 (100%)
2nd Tier	39 (70.9%)	42 (76.4%)	39 (70.9%)	55 (100%)
1st Tier	45 (83.3%)	50 (92.6%)	44 (81.5%)	55 (100%)

### Corporate Use of Social Media: Adoption and Posting Activity

Corporate use of social media included presence of Fortune 500 companies on various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn). Analysis was conducted to determine the difference of the use of social media (the adoption rate) based on business size.

One-way ANOVA test was conducted to determine any possible differences in the adoption rates across the four social media platforms, based on company size. The test revealed significant difference among three company groups in terms of Twitter use  $F(2, .60) = 4.3, p = .02$ . 1st Tier companies ( $M = .94, SD = .23$ ) had significantly higher rates of Twitter presence, as compared to medium ( $M = .75, SD = .44$ ) and 3rd Tier companies ( $M = .79, SD = .41$ ). YouTube

adoption rate also demonstrated significant difference among the three categories based on company size  $F(2, 163) = 3.6, p = .03$ . 1st Tier companies ( $M = .82, SD = .39$ ) demonstrated significantly higher rates of YouTube adoption than 3rd Tier companies ( $M = .59, SD = .50$ ). Non-significant associations were revealed for Facebook or LinkedIn (See Table 3).

**Table 3**

Differences in social media adoption rates for four platforms based on company size

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>1st Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>2nd Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>3rd Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	.84 (.37) <sub>a</sub>	.71 (.46) <sub>a</sub>	.80 (.40) <sub>a</sub>	.24	1.41
<b>Twitter</b>	.94 (.23) <sub>b</sub>	.75 (.44) <sub>a</sub>	.70 (.41) <sub>a</sub>	.60	4.29**
<b>YouTube</b>	.82 (.39) <sub>b</sub>	.71 (.46) <sub>ab</sub>	.59 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.72	3.58*
<b>LinkedIn</b>	.1.0 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.1.0 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	1.0 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.00	-

Note. A. Subscripts placing next to the mean (standard deviation) indicate significant difference among three company sizes in one-way ANOVA at a .05 significance level (<sub>a</sub> < <sub>b</sub>).

B. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

The study conducted tests to examine any possible differences in company activity levels on social media platforms based on company size. In order to do that, all the posts by the companies for January, 2013, were counted on each social media platform. Size of the company demonstrated non-significant association with the posting activity on Facebook,  $F(2, 127) = .18, p = .83$  or Twitter  $F(2, 133) = .33, p = .72$ . However, significant differences were revealed both for YouTube  $F(2, 113) = 4.86, p = .01$  and LinkedIn  $F(2, 163) = 4.35, p = .01$ .

For YouTube, 1st Tier ( $M = 7.73, SD = 13.96$ ) companies had significantly higher posting activity than both medium ( $M = 2.13, SD = 4.28$ ) and 3rd Tier ( $M = 2.39, SD = 3.74$ ) companies. For LinkedIn, 1st Tier ( $M = 17.58, SD = 7.88$ ) companies had significantly higher posting activity rates than 3rd Tier ( $M = 12.75, SD = 9.18$ ) companies (See Table 4).

**Table 4**

Differences in companies' posting activity on four social media platforms based on company size

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>1st Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>2nd M (SD)</b>	<b>3rd Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	23.83 (22.94) <sub>a</sub>	26.85 (25.60) <sub>a</sub>	26.62 (30.00) <sub>a</sub>	125.51	.18
<b>Twitter</b>	.94 (.23) <sub>a</sub>	66.02 (97.60) <sub>a</sub>	50.70 (94.90) <sub>a</sub>	2515.81	.33
<b>YouTube</b>	7.73 (13.96) <sub>b</sub>	2.13 (4.28) <sub>a</sub>	2.39 (3.74) <sub>a</sub>	410.29	4.86**
<b>LinkedIn</b>	17.58 (7.88) <sub>b</sub>	14.55 (9.00) <sub>ab</sub>	12.75 (9.18) <sub>a</sub>	330.50	4.35*

Note. A. Subscripts placing next to the mean (standard deviation) indicate significant difference among three company sizes in one-way ANOVA at a .05 significance level (<sub>a</sub> < <sub>b</sub>).

B. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

### Marketing Information on Social Media

Size of the company also demonstrated significant differences as to the types of marketing information posted on Facebook, such as description of services  $F(2, 127) = 3.13, p = .05$ , and presence of a link to YouTube account  $F(2, 127) = 3.71, p = .03$ . For description of services, 2nd Tier companies ( $M = 1.00, SD = .00$ ) had significantly higher means than 1st Tier companies ( $M = .85, SD = .36$ ). For the presence of a link to company's YouTube account, 2nd Tier ( $M = .31, SD = .47$ ) companies again had significantly higher means than 3rd Tier ( $M = .09, SD = .29$ ) (See Table 5).

On LinkedIn social media platform, significant differences in marketing information based on company size were revealed only for the presence of a link to company Twitter account  $F(2, 162) = 3.27, p = .04$ , where 1st Tier companies ( $M = .11, SD = .31$ ) were significantly more likely to provide a link to their Twitter account on LinkedIn than 3rd Tier companies ( $M = .00, SD = .00$ ) (See Table 6).



**Table 5**

Differences in marketing information on Facebook profiles, based on company size

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>1st Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>2nd Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>3rd Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Company Description</b>	.91 (.28) <sub>a</sub>	.95 (.22) <sub>a</sub>	.91 (.36) <sub>a</sub>	.02	.21
<b>History</b>	.70 (.46) <sub>a</sub>	.46 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.49 (.51) <sub>a</sub>	.72	3.0
<b>Logo</b>	.98 (.15) <sub>a</sub>	1.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	1.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.01	.91
<b>Mission Statement</b>	.59 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.59 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.58 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.00	.01
<b>Description of Services</b>	.85 (.36) <sub>a</sub>	1.00 (.00) <sub>b</sub>	.89 (.32) <sub>ab</sub>	.26	3.13*
<b>Address</b>	.61 (.49) <sub>a</sub>	.49 (.51) <sub>a</sub>	.64 (.48) <sub>a</sub>	.28	1.14
<b>Contact Information</b>	.33 (.47) <sub>a</sub>	.44 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.47 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.25	1.01
<b>Link to Official Website</b>	1.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	1.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.93 (.25) <sub>a</sub>	.06	3.00
<b>Link to Twitter</b>	.30 (.46) <sub>a</sub>	.49 (.51) <sub>a</sub>	.33 (.48) <sub>a</sub>	.40	1.71
<b>Link to YouTube</b>	.15 (.36) <sub>ab</sub>	.31 (.47) <sub>b</sub>	.09 (.29) <sub>a</sub>	.52	3.71*
<b>Link to LinkedIn</b>	.07 (.25) <sub>a</sub>	.05 (.22) <sub>a</sub>	.04 (.21) <sub>a</sub>	.01	.10
<b>Discussion Wall</b>	.98 (.15) <sub>a</sub>	1.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.98 (.15) <sub>a</sub>	.01	.43

Note. A. Subscripts placing next to the mean (standard deviation) indicate significant difference among three company sizes in one-way ANOVA at a .05 significance level (<sub>a</sub> < <sub>b</sub>).

B. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

**Table 6**

Differences in marketing information on companies' LinkedIn profiles, based on company size

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>1st Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>2nd Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>3rd Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Company Description</b>	.96 (.19) <sub>a</sub>	.96 (.19) <sub>a</sub>	.98 (.13) <sub>a</sub>	.01	.21
<b>History</b>	.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.02 (.13) <sub>a</sub>	.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.01	1.01
<b>Logo</b>	.96 (.19) <sub>a</sub>	.96 (.19) <sub>a</sub>	.98 (.13) <sub>a</sub>	.01	.21
<b>Mission Statement</b>	.31 (.47) <sub>a</sub>	.29 (.46) <sub>a</sub>	.29 (.46) <sub>a</sub>	.01	.04
<b>Description of Services</b>	.98 (.13) <sub>a</sub>	.98 (.13) <sub>a</sub>	.98 (.13) <sub>a</sub>	.00	.00
<b>Address</b>	.85 (.36) <sub>a</sub>	.75 (.44) <sub>a</sub>	.77 (.42) <sub>a</sub>	.18	1.09
<b>Contact Information</b>	.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.00	-
<b>Employment posts</b>	.91 (.29) <sub>a</sub>	.87 (.34) <sub>a</sub>	.82 (.39) <sub>a</sub>	.11	.93
<b>Discussion Wall</b>	.91 (.29) <sub>a</sub>	.91 (.29) <sub>a</sub>	.89 (.31) <sub>a</sub>	.00	.05
<b>Link to Official Website</b>	.95 (.23) <sub>a</sub>	.96 (.19) <sub>a</sub>	.98 (.13) <sub>a</sub>	.02	.53
<b>Link to Facebook</b>	.05 (.23) <sub>a</sub>	.05 (.23) <sub>a</sub>	.02 (.13) <sub>a</sub>	.02	.61
<b>Link to Twitter</b>	.11 (.31) <sub>b</sub>	.06 (.23) <sub>ab</sub>	.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.16	3.27*
<b>Link to YouTube</b>	.02 (.13) <sub>a</sub>	.04 (.19) <sub>a</sub>	.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.02	1.03

Note. A. Subscripts placing next to the mean (standard deviation) indicate significant difference among three company sizes in one-way ANOVA at a .05 significance level (<sub>a</sub> < <sub>b</sub>).

B. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

For Twitter microblogging social media platform, size of the company showed non-significant association for this social media platform (See Table 7). Similarly, non-significant association was revealed for marketing information and size on YouTube (See Table 8).

**Table 7**

Differences in marketing information on companies' Twitter profiles, based on company size

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Company Description</b>	.53 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.61 (.49) <sub>a</sub>	.68 (.47) <sub>a</sub>	.28	1.15
<b>Twitter Page Description</b>	.47 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.39 (.49) <sub>a</sub>	.39 (.49) <sub>a</sub>	.11	.44
<b>Logo</b>	.98 (.14) <sub>a</sub>	1.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.98 (.15) <sub>a</sub>	.01	.44
<b>Address</b>	.69 (.47) <sub>a</sub>	.73 (.45) <sub>a</sub>	.80 (.41) <sub>a</sub>	.14	.72
<b>Contact Information</b>	.04 (.20) <sub>a</sub>	.17 (.38) <sub>a</sub>	.09 (.29) <sub>a</sub>	.20	2.31
<b>Link to Official Website</b>	.96 (.20) <sub>a</sub>	.95 (.22) <sub>a</sub>	.95 (.21) <sub>a</sub>	.00	.02
<b>Link to Facebook</b>	.12 (.32) <sub>a</sub>	.12 (.33) <sub>a</sub>	.18 (.39) <sub>a</sub>	.06	.47
<b>Link to YouTube</b>	.06 (.24) <sub>a</sub>	.15 (.36) <sub>a</sub>	.02 (.15) <sub>a</sub>	.17	2.55
<b>Link to LinkedIn</b>	.00 (.00) <sub>a</sub>	.02 (.16) <sub>a</sub>	.02 (.15) <sub>a</sub>	.01	.60
<b>Link to Other Twitter Accounts</b>	.14 (.35) <sub>a</sub>	.07 (.26) <sub>a</sub>	.05 (.21) <sub>a</sub>	.11	1.32

Note. A. Subscripts placing next to the mean (standard deviation) indicate significant difference among three company sizes in one-way ANOVA at a .05 significance level (<sub>a</sub> < <sub>b</sub>).

B. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

**Table 8**

Differences in marketing information on companies' YouTube profiles, based on company size

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Company Description</b>	.61 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.59 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.59 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.00	.01
<b>Description of Services</b>	.58 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.59 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.36 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.66	2.70
<b>Link to Official Website</b>	.94 (.24) <sub>a</sub>	.87 (.34) <sub>a</sub>	.80 (.41) <sub>a</sub>	.20	1.67
<b>Link to Facebook</b>	.45 (.51) <sub>a</sub>	.36 (.49) <sub>a</sub>	.50 (.51) <sub>a</sub>	.21	.85
<b>Link to Twitter</b>	.52 (.51) <sub>a</sub>	.41 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.55 (.50) <sub>a</sub>	.20	.80
<b>Link to LinkedIn</b>	.09 (.29) <sub>a</sub>	.15 (.37) <sub>a</sub>	.16 (.37) <sub>a</sub>	.12	.42

Note. A. Subscripts placing next to the mean (standard deviation) indicate significant difference among three company sizes in one-way ANOVA at a .05 significance level (<sub>a</sub> < <sub>b</sub>).

B. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

### Company Communication Strategy on Social Media (Facebook)

Overall, 49% of companies mainly use non-dialogic strategy of communication, with up to 70% of all posts on their discussion walls representing one-way communication messages, while 24% of companies adhered to balanced strategy, having relatively equal number of one-way and two-way communication messages on their Facebook discussion walls. Only 27% had mostly dialogic strategy of communication with over 60% of posts on discussion walls representing two-way communication messages.

One-way ANOVA was conducted to examine possible differences in the communication strategy the company adheres to in communicating with constituents on Facebook, based on company size. The results revealed that difference among three company sizes was not significant  $F(2, 120) = .23, p = .79$  (See Table 9).

**Table 9**

Differences in company's communication strategy on Facebook based on company size

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>1st Tier M(SD)</b>	<b>2nd Tier M (SD)</b>	<b>3rd Tier M(SD)</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Communication Strategy</b>	1.79 (.80) <sub>a</sub>	1.84 (.89) <sub>a</sub>	1.71 (.86) <sub>a</sub>	.17	.23

Note. A. Subscripts placing next to the mean (standard deviation) indicate significant difference among three company sizes in one-way ANOVA at a .05 significance level (<sub>a</sub> < <sub>b</sub>).

B. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Corporate Use of Social Media**

The first research question looked into possible differences in the use of social media. The findings indicated that differences were observed for YouTube and Twitter social media platforms in terms of social media adoption. Particularly, 1<sup>st</sup> tier companies had significantly higher levels of Twitter adoption than 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier companies. Additionally, the size of the company was a significant factor in YouTube adoption, where 1<sup>st</sup> tier companies demonstrated significantly higher adoption rates, as compared to 3<sup>rd</sup> tier companies. Interestingly, the study failed to find association between the size of the company and the use of social networking sites (e.g. Facebook and LinkedIn).

It is worth mentioning that, based on Barid and Parasnis' classification of social media (2011), differences in social media usage were detected on microblogging (Twitter) and media sharing (YouTube) platforms. This finding can be explained by the differences in functional attributes among social media. For instance, while social networking sites (Facebook and LinkedIn) have high degree of self-presentation/self-disclosure (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) and the ability to transmit multiple cues in the form of textual, visual, and audio/video information, Twitter, which is a microblogging website, provides the opportunity to transmit only textual information of 140 characters, which limits the richness of this medium. Similarly, YouTube media sharing website has a low level of self-presentation/self-disclosure (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), only providing the opportunity to transmit video materials. According to media richness theory, one of the most important factors determining the richness of a medium is its ability to transmit multiple cues (Daft & Lengel, 1986). Thus, based on the functional differences among different social media types, social networking sites can be considered richer social media

platforms compared to microblogging and media sharing social media types. While social networking sites naturally enjoy high adoption by all companies irrespective of size, there are differences for media sharing and microblogging sites. Looking at the differences on social media that are not as rich may provide a better way to determine differences among companies of different sizes as to the importance they attach to social media use in the business setting.

Another explanation is that the use of certain types of social media may not be highly influenced by the size of the company. Instead, the adoption of social media can be more considerably influenced by other characteristics of the company, such as the industry the company represents, the general communication and marketing practices the company implements, and the type of information the company needs to communicate on social media.

For instance, Walt Disney represents a 1<sup>st</sup> tier company and is active on YouTube, however this may be more related to the fact that it is an entertainment company that produces cartoons and movies than the fact that it is a 1<sup>st</sup> tier company. Naturally, it would be expected for Walt Disney to be active on YouTube, since this is the medium focusing on transmitting video information. Future research should determine this.

In terms of activity on social media, different patterns emerged. Differences were detected on LinkedIn and YouTube, while statistically non-significant differences were revealed on Facebook and Twitter. The first tier companies' posting activities were significantly higher than the posting activities of both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier companies on YouTube. This can be explained by the fact that 1<sup>st</sup> tier companies are more likely to have larger organizations, more departments and more employees that are likely to post on social media than their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier counterparts. Another explanation is that differences may not be caused by the size of the

company. Instead, differences may be caused by industry of the company, specificities of the products, or the specific need to transmit either textual or visual information cues.

For activity on LinkedIn, 1<sup>st</sup> tier companies were significantly more active, as compared to 3<sup>rd</sup> tier companies. Interestingly, although 100% of the companies have adopted this social media platform, the results show that companies use this channel differently, based on company size. This finding seems to be commonsense, since 1<sup>st</sup> tier companies tend to have larger organizations, more departments and more employees. Consequently, these companies hire more people and have more vacancies to post on LinkedIn. Additionally, the differences in use of this social media also indicate that in some cases even with richer media 1<sup>st</sup> tier companies demonstrate higher recognition of the importance of social media use in general than 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier companies.

### **Marketing Information on Social Media**

The second research question examined possible differences in marketing information that companies provide on their social media profiles. General findings indicate that there were statistically non-significant differences among three levels of company sizes regarding marketing information provided across four social media platforms, except for description of services and a link to YouTube on Facebook and a link to Twitter on LinkedIn. Besides these measures, size of the company was not determined to be a significant factor for overall marketing information on the social media platforms analyzed.

The findings of this study also suggest that there has been an improvement in provision of marketing information on social media platforms. According to Men and Tsai (2011), 6% of the companies provided contact information on Facebook. This study, however, revealed much higher percentages with 41% of the companies providing contact information on Facebook.

Additionally, 92% of companies provided a company description on Facebook, as compared to 58% mentioned by Men and Tsai (2011). While a mission statement was present on 50% of companies analyzed by previous research (Men & Tsai, 2011), this study revealed an increase as well with 59% of companies providing a mission statement on Facebook. Also, similar results were revealed for the URL to the company website in this study (97%), as compared to Men and Tsai's (2011) results (98%).

This might lead to the conclusion that within the past two years the consciousness of companies has increased in terms of using social media to represent the company and provide marketing information. Thus, inclusion of marketing information is now more common and pervasively used by most companies irrespective of size.

Looking at the presence of indicators of marketing information on individual platforms, interesting patterns were revealed as well. For instance, on Facebook the indicators of marketing information were company description, history, logo, mission statement, description of services, address, contact information, and links to the official website and the other three social media platforms. Indicators that demonstrated high inclusion were the logo (100%), company description (92%), description of services (91%), and a link to the official website of the company (98%). They were highly used by 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier companies. Meanwhile, links to YouTube (18%) and LinkedIn (5%) were the least provided indicators of marketing information by companies of all tiers, although 2<sup>nd</sup> tier companies provided a link to YouTube significantly more often than 3<sup>rd</sup> tier companies. Thus, while companies provided general information about the company and its services, they underrated linkages. Only approximately half of the companies provided contact information, address or company history on Facebook.

On the LinkedIn social networking site, marketing information indicators included company description, history, logo, mission statement, description of services, address, contact information, employment posts, and links to official website and to the other three social media platforms. Indicators that enjoyed high inclusion were company description (97%), logo (97%), description of services (98%) and the link to the official website (96%). Address was another marketing indicator with high presence on LinkedIn (79%). Contact information (0%), history (1%), links to Facebook (4%), Twitter (6%) and YouTube (2%) were the marketing indicators with lowest representation on LinkedIn.

On the Twitter microblogging platform, marketing indicators included company description, Twitter page description, logo, address, contact information, and links to the official website and to the other three social media platforms. Findings show high provision of logo (99%) and a link to the official website (95%). Meanwhile, contact information (10%), links to Facebook (14%), YouTube (8%) and LinkedIn (1%) were provided rarely on Twitter. On Twitter, it seems, companies try to substitute contact information and links to other social media platforms by the link to the official website, where the users can possibly find all that information. Additionally, Twitter did not provide a designated space for history, mission statement or description of services.

YouTube provided a limited space for marketing information in general. Marketing information indicators provided on YouTube were company description, description of services and links to official website and to other social media platforms. No other information was present on this media sharing platform. The only marketing indicator with high level of inclusion on YouTube was the link to the official website (87%). Provision of links to other social media platforms were higher on YouTube than on other platforms with 44% of the companies



providing a link to Facebook, 49% of the companies providing a link to Twitter and 13% providing a link to LinkedIn, however still less than half of the companies included them on YouTube. An explanation for higher inclusion of links on YouTube than on other social media platforms might be that companies having accounts on YouTube (70% of the sample) might be the more tech-savvy companies, which would explain this finding.

This might be explained by possible assumption that users can navigate and find this information on the official website via the link. However, going back to the channel expansion theory and the preference of the users to communicate via the medium they have an experience using (Carlson & Zmud, 1999), companies did not provide all the basic information this channel allows them to provide. Instead, they sent users to another channel to seek for that information.

### **Company Communication Strategy on Social Media (Facebook)**

The third research question examined possible differences in the communication strategy on Facebook. Using Grunig and Hunt's (1984) definition of communication strategy, this study identified that almost half (49%) of Fortune 500 companies mainly use non-dialogic strategy of communication, with up to 70% of all posts on their discussion walls representing one-way communication. Twenty four percent of companies adhered to balanced strategy, having relatively equal number of one-way and two-way communication messages on their Facebook discussion walls. Only 27% of the Fortune 500 companies had mostly dialogic strategy of communication with over 61% of posts on discussion walls representing two-way communication.

In order to determine differences, the study looked at the communication strategy based on size, however, failed to find differences in communication strategy. This finding can have two possible explanations. First, while size of the company was not a significant factor in the

communication strategy the company adheres to, there might be other significant factors determining the companies' communication strategy, including other company characteristics, such as the overall company communication strategy or the industry the company represents. Second possible explanation is that the communication platform might play a role in differences in the communication strategy based on company size. While this study examined companies' communication strategy only on Facebook, companies might demonstrate different strategies on Twitter, YouTube or LinkedIn. Additionally, size of the company might be a significant factor for other types of social media, such as media sharing or microblogging platforms, however it is up to the future research to determine possible associations.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

The implications of this study are threefold. First, this study contributes to a better understanding of social media, particularly in a business setting, by determining corporate use of social media. For instance, while the majority of previous research has focused on a limited number of social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Twitter, as the main social media platforms, this study examines other types of social media such as media sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube) and business networking social media platform (e.g., LinkedIn). Furthermore, in addition to providing descriptive statistics, which has been the case with the majority of previous studies, this study also examines possible relationships and associations between the company size and its activities on social media. The study also makes attempts to shed light on new aspects of social media, including companies' activity level across the four social media platforms, as well as the communication strategies companies use on Facebook, all examined through the prism of company size. Thus, this study contributes to a more composite understanding of corporate use of social media.

The second implication of this study can be found in its methodological contribution. This study provides a method for classification of the communication strategies that the companies use on social media. While Grunig and Hunt (1984) provided an understanding of dialogic communication, this approach had not been used for studying communication strategy on social media. Thus, the classification is new and while improvements can be made, this study provides a good starting point for future research.

Finally, the main contribution of this study is in the practical realm of social media use by corporate entities. In terms of use of social media by corporate entities, while adoption of the four social media platforms analyzed was generally high across all platforms, 1<sup>st</sup> tier companies

revealed higher adoption and higher activity on YouTube than 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier companies.

Although size showed significant differences, this might be more related to the fact that 1<sup>st</sup> tier companies have higher recognition of the importance of using social media in general, in addition to the richest and most popular ones, such as Facebook and Twitter. Thus, while most of the companies are present on social networking sites, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier companies might want to look at expanding their presence on other types of social media platforms, such as media sharing sites (e.g., YouTube), to be able to communicate with customers, who are more comfortable using this particular medium or might be preferring visual communication more than textual or other forms of communication, based on channel expansion theory (Carlson & Zmud, 1999).

Another practical implication is for provision of marketing indicators on social media platforms. Referring to media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986), some of the social media platforms in this study provide more tools and space for marketing information and other cues, while others provide fewer tools and cues. However, even on the richer channels, companies focus on providing certain pieces of marketing information, such as company description, link to the official website, description of services, and visual cues, such as company logo, and most of the time leave out other pieces, such as history, address or contact information. Instead, they refer customers to another platform in search of this information. While this might be explained by lack of designated space for certain types of media, such as microblogging platforms (e.g., Twitter) and media sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube), this cannot be an explanation for social networking sites, which provide the above-mentioned tools. Thus, even on the richer media, companies do not take advantage of all the tools provided to them.

Lastly, while size of the company was not a significant factor in determining the communication strategy the company adheres to on Facebook, about half of the companies

practiced a non-dialogic communication strategy. These findings come as surprise against the background of previous research on motivations for corporate use of social media, where communication with customers was mentioned by the majority of companies (74%) as the most important motivation for presence on a social media platform (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). While communication strategy might be related to other company characteristics, such as industry and general communication practices, the implications of the findings are that in order to better communicate with customers on social media platforms, companies might want to look into making certain adjustments to their communication strategies.

Thus, although social networking sites (Facebook and LinkedIn) prove to be richer communication media than microblogging sites (Twitter), providing more tools and cues for communicating numerous types of information, including visual, textual and audio/video, 1<sup>st</sup> tier companies are more likely to recognize the importance of being present on various media than 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier companies. No differences on the most popular social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) based on size might be a result of a trend and not a conscious choice to make a heavy use of social media. Differences in less popular social media platforms reveal higher understanding of social media importance among 1<sup>st</sup> tier companies, while other companies still need to expand their presence to communicate with customers on the platforms the latter prefer to use.

## **LIMITATIONS**

This study contains some limitations. Because this study used the Fortune 500 company list as a sampling frame, the sample included in this study represents large companies and thus the results might be limited to large companies and might have revealed different patterns if 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> tier enterprises, which might rely more heavily on social media as one of the more inexpensive methods of communication and consumer relationship management currently, were included.

This study also leaves out other popular social media platforms established relatively recently, such as Pinterest, Instagram, and Google+. These social media platforms may show different patterns from those included in this study in a business setting in terms of company size.

Another limitation is the classification of communication strategies. This classification was the first such attempt for social media and it would be advised to improve this classification before further use in future research. Additionally, another limitation is the conclusions on communication strategies used by Fortune 500 companies. Since the content analysis was carried out only for Facebook social networking site, the communication strategy cannot be generalized to the company's strategy on all social media. For such a conclusion, content analysis on all types of social media platforms would be required.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study is one of the first steps to gain a deeper insight into communication practices and patterns for corporate entities on social media platforms. While the more traditional and established social media platforms were analyzed in this study, future research might want to look into other social media platforms. For instance, this study included three types of social media (social networking, microblogging, and media-sharing) from Baird and Parasnis' classification (2011) of social media. Thus, research using the remaining four types of social media that were not included in this study will contribute to a better understanding of social media use in the business world. In addition, while company size is an important indicator to understand adoption and activities on social media, research on social media use based on industry type are also expected to generate useful marketing implications. This assumption is backed by findings of previous research (Men & Tsai, 2011), indicating that companies from certain industries have higher adoption rates for social media, as compared to companies from other industries. Thus, future research would benefit from examining social media adoption, and most importantly company and user activity on social media platforms, based on company industry.

Furthermore, in this study, the content analysis was conducted only on Facebook to determine communication strategy. Future research may want to expand this area by determining corporate communication strategies on other social media platforms, as well as examine user communication themes by conducting a content analysis of user posts, tweets, and comments. Similarly, research on communication strategies on various types of social media and its possible relationship with consumer activity with companies on social media will also be expected to

provide a more composite understanding of the use of social media by corporate entities and generate useful marketing implications.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

Company rank, name, tier, revenues and industry.

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Revenues (\$ million)</b>	<b>Company Industry</b>
Tier 1	3	Chevron	245,621.00	Petroleum Refining
	6	General Electric	147,616.00	Diversified Financials
	9	Ford Motor	136,264.00	Motor Vehicles and Parts
	12	Valero Energy	125,095.00	Petroleum Refining
	15	Verizon Communications	110,875.00	Telecommunications
	18	CVS Caremark	107,750.00	Food and Drug Stores
	21	Cardinal Health	102,644.20	Wholesalers: Health Care
	24	Costco Wholesale	88,915.00	Specialty Retailers: Other
	27	Procter & Gamble	82,559.00	Household and Personal Products
	30	INTL FCStone	75,497.60	Diversified Financials
	33	American International Group	71,730.00	Insurance: Property and Casualty (stock)
	36	Medco Health Solutions	70,063.30	Health Care: Pharmacy and Other Services
	39	Boeing	68,735.00	Aerospace and Defense
	42	Johnson & Johnson	65,030.00	Pharmaceuticals
	45	WellPoint	60,710.70	Health Care: Insurance and Managed Care
	48	United Technologies	58,190.00	Aerospace and Defense
	51	Intel	53,999.00	Semiconductors and Other Electronic Components
	54	Lowe's	50,208.00	Specialty Retailers: Other
	57	Merck	48,047.00	Pharmaceuticals
	60	Express Scripts Holding	46,128.30	Health Care: Pharmacy and Other Services
	63	Safeway	43,630.20	Food and Drug Stores
	66	Walt Disney	40,893.00	Entertainment
	69	Sysco	39,323.50	Wholesalers: Food and Grocery
	72	DuPont	38,719.00	Chemicals
	75	Supervalu	37,534.00	Food and Drug Stores
	78	CHS	36,915.80	Wholesalers: Food and Grocery

Tier 1	81	Ingram Micro	36,328.70	Wholesalers: Electronics and Office Equipment
	84	Liberty Mutual Insurance Group	34,671.00	Insurance: Property and Casualty (stock)
	87	Plains All American Pipeline	34,275.00	Pipelines
	90	Sprint Nextel	33,679.00	Telecommunications
	93	Allstate	32,654.00	Insurance: Property and Casualty (stock)
	96	Tyson Foods	32,266.00	Food Production
	99	Philip Morris International	31,097.00	Tobacco
	102	3M	29,611.00	Miscellaneous
	105	DirecTV	27,226.00	Telecommunications
	108	Avnet	26,534.40	Wholesalers: Electronics and Office Equipment
	111	International Paper	26,034.00	Forest and Paper Products
	114	Staples	25,022.20	Specialty Retailers: Other
	117	Raytheon	24,857.00	Aerospace and Defense
	120	Emerson Electric	24,234.00	Electronics, Electrical Equipment
	123	AMR	23,979.00	Airlines
	126	Goodyear Tire & Rubber	22,767.00	Motor Vehicles and Parts
	129	Manpower	22,006.00	Temporary Help
	132	U.S. Bancorp	21,399.00	Commercial Banks
	135	Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold	20,880.00	Mining, Crude-Oil Production
	138	Nucor	20,023.60	Metals
	141	Baker Hughes	19,831.00	Oil and Gas Equipment, Services
	144	United Services Automobile Assn.	19,036.10	Insurance: Property and Casualty (stock)
	147	Whirlpool	18,666.00	Electronics, Electrical Equipment
	150	Cummins	18,048.00	Construction and Farm Machinery
	153	J.C. Penney	17,260.00	General Merchandisers
	156	Altria Group	16,619.00	Tobacco
	159	Paccar	16,355.20	Motor Vehicles and Parts
	162	Computer Sciences	16,144.00	Information Technology Services
Tier 2	165	PNC Financial	15,820.00	Commercial Banks

Tier 2		Services Group		
	168	Amgen	15,582.00	Pharmaceuticals
	171	CenturyLink	15,351.00	Telecommunications
	174	L-3 Communications	15,169.00	Aerospace and Defense
	177	Viacom	14,963.00	Entertainment
	180	PPG Industries	14,885.00	Chemicals
	183	Dollar General	14,807.20	General Merchandisers
	186	Duke Energy	14,529.00	Utilities: Gas and Electric
	189	Lear	14,156.50	Motor Vehicles and Parts
	192	Anadarko Petroleum	13,967.00	Mining, Crude-Oil Production
	195	Baxter International	13,893.00	Medical Products and Equipment
	198	Community Health Systems	13,817.00	Health Care: Medical Facilities
	201	Ally Financial	13,642.00	Commercial Banks
	204	Aramark	13,244.70	Diversified Outsourcing Services
	207	Dean Foods	13,055.50	Food Consumer Products
	210	Land O'Lakes	12,849.30	Food Consumer Products
	213	Yum Brands	12,626.00	Food Services
	216	Parker Hannifin	12,345.90	Industrial Machinery
	219	Coventry Health Care	12,186.70	Health Care: Insurance and Managed Care
	222	Penske Automotive Group	11,869.50	Automotive Retailing, Services
	225	Thermo Fisher Scientific	11,780.20	Scientific, Photographic, and Control Equipment
	228	eBay	11,651.70	Internet Services and Retailing
	231	Marsh & McLennan	11,526.00	Diversified Financials
	234	Avon Products	11,291.60	Household and Personal Products
	237	Huntsman	11,259.00	Chemicals
	240	Public Service Enterprise Group	11,191.00	Utilities: Gas and Electric
	243	First Data	10,713.60	Financial Data Services
	246	Xcel Energy	10,654.80	Utilities: Gas and Electric
	249	R.R. Donnelley & Sons	10,611.00	Publishing, Printing
	252	Stanley Black &	10,437.60	Home Equipment,

Tier 2		Decker		Furnishings
	255	Peter Kiewit Sons'	10,381.00	Engineering, Construction
	258	Genworth Financial	10,344.00	Insurance: Life, Health (stock)
	261	Liberty Global	10,246.50	Telecommunications
	264	Whole Foods Market	10,107.80	Food and Drug Stores
	267	BB&T Corp.	9,998.00	Commercial Banks
	270	CDW	9,602.40	Information Technology Services
	273	GameStop	9,550.50	Specialty Retailers: Other
	276	Western Digital	9,526.00	Computer Peripherals
	279	CarMax	9,402.20	Automotive Retailing, Services
	282	Enbridge Energy Partners	9,109.80	Pipelines
	285	Western Refining	9,071.00	Petroleum Refining
	288	Caesars Entertainment	8,834.50	Hotels, Casinos, Resorts
	291	Micron Technology	8,788.00	Semiconductors and Other Electronic Components
	294	Bed Bath & Beyond	8,758.50	Specialty Retailers: Other
	297	Ball	8,630.90	Packaging, Containers
	300	Discover Financial Services	8,550.30	Commercial Banks
	303	Henry Schein	8,530.20	Wholesalers: Health Care
	306	Gilead Sciences	8,385.40	Pharmaceuticals
	309	Hertz Global Holdings	8,298.40	Automotive Retailing, Services
	312	Energy Transfer Equity	8,240.70	Pipelines
	315	Reliance Steel & Aluminum	8,134.70	Metals
	318	W.W. Grainger	8,078.20	Wholesalers: Diversified
	321	Visteon	8,047.00	Motor Vehicles and Parts
	324	Coca-Cola Enterprises	7,939.00	Beverages
	327	Hormel Foods	7,895.10	Food Consumer Products
Tier 3	330	Sonic Automotive	7,871.30	Automotive Retailing, Services
	333	Becton Dickinson	7,832.10	Medical Products and Equipment
	336	Dana Holding	7,592.00	Motor Vehicles and Parts



Tier 3	339	Universal Health Services	7,534.10	Health Care: Medical Facilities
	342	Darden Restaurants	7,500.20	Food Services
	345	Owens-Illinois	7,358.00	Packaging, Containers
	348	Cablevision Systems	7,252.30	Telecommunications
	351	Charter Communications	7,204.00	Telecommunications
	354	OfficeMax	7,121.20	Specialty Retailers: Other
	357	Energy Future Holdings	7,040.00	Energy
	360	Barnes & Noble	6,998.60	Specialty Retailers: Other
	363	Winn-Dixie Stores	6,929.90	Food and Drug Stores
	366	Cliffs Natural Resources	6,794.30	Mining, Crude-Oil Production
	369	NII Holdings	6,719.30	Telecommunications
	372	Fifth Third Bancorp	6,673.00	Commercial Banks
	375	Agilent Technologies	6,615.00	Scientific, Photographic, and Control Equipment
	378	Advanced Micro Devices	6,568.00	Semiconductors and Other Electronic Components
	381	AK Steel Holding	6,468.00	Metals
	384	McGraw-Hill	6,336.00	Publishing, Printing
	387	Precision Castparts	6,267.20	Aerospace and Defense
	390	Corn Products International	6,219.40	Food Production
	393	Core-Mark Holding	6,163.40	Wholesalers: Food and Grocery
	396	Mylan	6,129.80	Pharmaceuticals
	399	Consol Energy	6,117.20	Mining, Crude-Oil Production
	402	CF Industries Holdings	6,097.90	Chemicals
	405	Group 1 Automotive	6,079.80	Automotive Retailing, Services
	408	Eastman Kodak	6,022.00	Scientific, Photographic, and Control Equipment
	411	Mutual of Omaha Insurance	5,974.10	Insurance: Life, Health (stock)
	414	Newell Rubbermaid	5,923.40	Home Equipment, Furnishings
	417	Dr Pepper Snapple Group	5,903.00	Beverages
	420	Pacific Life	5,879.00	Insurance: Life, Health (stock)

Tier 3	423	Health Management Associates	5,822.10	Health Care: Medical Facilities
	426	SLM	5,756.00	Diversified Financials
	429	Auto-Owners Insurance	5,709.50	Insurance: Property and Casualty (mutual)
	432	Mohawk Industries	5,642.30	Miscellaneous
	435	Foot Locker	5,623.00	Specialty Retailers: Apparel
	438	Spectra Energy	5,602.00	Pipelines
	441	Kelly Services	5,551.00	Temporary Help
	444	Kindred Healthcare	5,523.30	Health Care: Medical Facilities
	447	NCR	5,443.00	Computers, Office Equipment
	450	Live Nation Entertainment	5,384.00	Entertainment
	453	Centene	5,340.60	Health Care: Insurance and Managed Care
	456	Clorox	5,326.00	Household and Personal Products
	459	Con-way	5,290.00	Transportation and Logistics
	462	Wynn Resorts	5,269.80	Hotels, Casinos, Resorts
	465	Gannett	5,240.00	Publishing, Printing
	468	Allegheny Technologies	5,183.00	Metals
	471	W.R. Berkley	5,156.00	Insurance: Property and Casualty (stock)
	474	NetApp	5,122.60	Computer Peripherals
	477	CVR Energy	5,029.10	Petroleum Refining
	480	SunGard Data Systems	4,991.00	Financial Data Services
	483	Yahoo	4,984.20	Internet Services and Retailing
	486	Susser Holdings	4,873.80	Specialty Retailers: Other
	489	CIT Group	4,855.30	Commercial Banks
	492	Celgene	4,842.10	Pharmaceuticals
	495	J.M. Smucker	4,825.70	Food Consumer Products
	498	Nash-Finch	4,807.20	Wholesalers: Food and Grocery

## Appendix 2

### List of Industries

Industry type (Number of companies)	Fortune 500 Classification (Number of companies)
Financial/Insurance (22)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Diversified Financials (4)</li> <li>2. Insurance: Property and Casualty (6)</li> <li>3. Commercial Banks (7)</li> <li>4. Financial Data Services (2)</li> <li>5. Insurance: Life, Health (3)</li> </ol>
Healthcare (17)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pharmaceuticals (6)</li> <li>2. Healthcare: Insurance and Managed Care (3)</li> <li>3. Healthcare: Medical Facilities (4)</li> <li>4. Medical Products and Equipment (2)</li> <li>5. Healthcare: Pharmacy &amp; Other Services (2)</li> </ol>
Automotive (12)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Motor Vehicles and Parts (6)</li> <li>2. Automotive Retailing, Services (5)</li> <li>3. Transportation &amp; Logistics (1)</li> </ol>
Telecommunication/Internet /IT (15)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Internet Services and Retailing (2)</li> <li>2. Semiconductors &amp; Other Electronic Components (3)</li> <li>3. Telecommunications (8)</li> <li>4. Information Technology Services (2)</li> </ol>
Food & Beverage Production/Services (10)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Food Production (2)</li> <li>2. Food Consumer Products (4)</li> <li>3. Beverages (2)</li> <li>4. Food Services (2)</li> </ol>
Computers/Electronics/Office Equipment (7)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scientific, Photographic and Control Equipment (3)</li> <li>2. Computer Peripherals (2)</li> <li>3. Computers, Office Equipment (1)</li> <li>4. Electronics, Electrical Equipment (1)</li> </ol>
Energy & Natural Resources Production/Services (25)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Petroleum Refining (4)</li> <li>2. Chemicals (4)</li> <li>3. Pipelines (4)</li> <li>4. Mining, Crude-Oil Production (4)</li> <li>5. Metals (4)</li> <li>6. Oil and Gas Equipment/Services (1)</li> <li>7. Utilities: Gas &amp; Electric (3)</li> <li>8. Energy (1)</li> </ol>
Wholesale & Retail Services (24)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wholesalers: Food &amp; Grocery (4)</li> <li>2. Specialty Retailers: Other (8)</li> <li>3. Specialty retailers: Apparel (1)</li> <li>4. Food and Drug Stores (5)</li> <li>5. Wholesalers: Diversified (1)</li> <li>6. Wholesalers: Healthcare (2)</li> <li>7. General Merchandizers (1)</li> <li>8. Wholesalers: Electronic &amp; Office Equipment (2)</li> </ol>

Aerospace (6)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aerospace &amp; Defense (5)</li> <li>2. Airlines (1)</li> </ol>
Entertainment (5)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Entertainment (3)</li> <li>2. Hotels, Casinos, Resorts (2)</li> </ol>
Other (20)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Household and Personal Products (3)</li> <li>2. Tobacco (2)</li> <li>3. Miscellaneous (2)</li> <li>4. Forest &amp; Paper products (1)</li> <li>5. Temporary Help (2)</li> <li>6. Construction &amp; Farm Machinery (1)</li> <li>7. Industrial Machinery (1)</li> <li>8. Publishing, Printing (3)</li> <li>9. Home Equipment, Furnishings (2)</li> <li>10. Engineering, Construction (1)</li> <li>11. Packaging, Containers (2)</li> </ol>

### **Appendix 3**

Coding Sheet

- Name of Company

Q1 Fortune 500 Rank

Q2 Company Revenue

Q3 Company Profit

Q4 Does the Company have a Facebook Page?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q5 When was the Facebook account created?

- (1) 2013
- (2) 2012
- (3) 2011
- (4) 2010
- (5) 2009
- (6) 2008
- (7) 2007
- (8) 2006

Q6 Does the profile have a company description on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q7 History on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q8 Logo on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q9 Mission Statement on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q10 Description of Services on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q11 Address on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q12 Contact Information on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q13 Link to Official Website on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q14 Link to Twitter account on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q15 Link to YouTube account on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q16 Link to LinkedIn account on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q17 Discussion Wall on Facebook?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q19 Total number of posts on Facebook wall in January, 2013

Q20 Number of posts on Facebook wall by the Company in January, 2013

Q21 Number of posts on Facebook wall by users in January, 2013

Q22 Type of Post 1 on Facebook?

- (1) Sweepstakes/discounts
- (2) Advertisement/Commercials
- (3) Promotional Materials/PR materials

- (4) Industry General Information
- (5) Company General information
- (6) Initiation of Conversation/Opinion request
- (7) User Post/Repost
- (8) Answer to a User Question
- (9) Contest
- (10) Educational Materials/How-tos
- (11) Other

Q23 Total number of page likes on Facebook?

Q24 Total number of talking about this on Facebook?

Q25 Total number of "were here" on Facebook

Q26 Does the page show user posts?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q27 Does the Company have a Twitter account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q28 When was the Twitter account created?

Q29 Does the Company have a Company description on Twitter account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q30 Does the Company have a page description on Twitter account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q31 Does the Company have a logo on Twitter account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q32 Does the company mention location on Twitter account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q33 Does the Company mention contact information on Twitter account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q34 Does the company have a link to its official website on its Twitter account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q35 Does the company have a link to its Facebook on its Twitter account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q36 Does the company have a link to its YouTube on its Twitter account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q37 Does the company have a link to its LinkedIn on its Twitter account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q38 Does the company have a link to other Twitter accounts on its main Twitter account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q39 Total number of posts (only by the company, not reposts) over the past month on company Twitter account

Q40 Total number of followers on Twitter

Q41 Does the Company have a YouTube account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q42 Date account was created

- (1) 2013
- (2) 2012
- (3) 2011
- (4) 2010
- (5) 2009
- (6) 2008
- (7) 2007
- (8) 2006



- (9) 2005

Q43 Does the company have an "about company" on its YouTube account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q44 Does the company have a description of services on its YouTube account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q45 Does the company have a link to its official website on its YouTube account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q46 Does the company have a link to its Facebook on its YouTube account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q47 Does the company have a link to its Twitter on its YouTube account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q48 Does the company have a link to its LinkedIn on its YouTube account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q49 Number of videos posted in January, 2013

Q50 Number channel views

Q51 Number of channel subscribers

Q52 Does the company have a LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q53 Does the company have a company description on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q54 Does the company have a company history on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q55 Does the company have a company logo on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q56 Does the company have a company mission statement on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q57 Does the company have a company description of services on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q58 Does the company have a company address on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q59 Does the company have a company contacts on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q60 Does the company have employment posts (hiring) on its LinkedIn Account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q61 Does the company have a discussion wall on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q62 Does the company have a link to its official website on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q63 Does the company have a link to its Facebook on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q64 Does the company have a link to its Twitter on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q65 Does the company have a link to its YouTube on its LinkedIn account?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q66 Total number of posts on the wall on LinkedIn account

Q67 Total number of LinkedIn page subscribers

Q68 Total number of employees on LinkedIn

## **VITA**

Viktorya Mirzoyan pursued master's degree in Mass Communication from Louisiana State University as a recipient of MUSKIE governmental fellowship from the U.S. Department of State. Viktorya already had a master's degree in English Language and International Journalism from Yerevan State Linguistic University in her home country, Armenia. Viktorya plans to continue research on social media in the future, however is willing to spend some time practicing social media marketing and public relations after receiving her degree.