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INVESTIGATING SOCIAL MEDIA CONVERSATIONS: TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING AN ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR NPOs

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the research reported in this article was to investigate whether a proposed online reputation management framework can be implemented for an NPO to effect stakeholder engagement in social media content and conversations. The research further assessed whether an NPO can afford greater control of the social web by tracking critical comments and negative publicity and by utilising this information to manage its reputation. The latter was achieved by exploring the Facebook page of a South African trade union, Solidarity, to determine the impact of online conversations on the reputation of the NPO, regardless of the content. A case study methodology was used for the research. The research, which departed from an interpretivist tradition, aimed at analysing the online interactions of stakeholders and their impact on the reputation of the organisation. Data was elicited through interviews with administrators and the content of conversations on Facebook. The latter was analysed through content analysis. The outcomes of the research and the ideas presented in this article might assist NPOs with reputation management by implementing the online reputation management framework as a tool to manage and direct their online content and conversations for improved reputation.

Keywords: online reputation management; online conversations; content; social media; stakeholder engagement; reputation; non-profit organisation

INTRODUCTION

Stakeholders and organisations are constantly interacting within and between local communities and communities worldwide. People, groups and organisations compete for the attention of their target audiences. In information-overloaded environments, attention has become a commodity in deficit. All roleplayers make decisions, execute actions and produce communication content that are sought after, processed or ignored on digital platforms (Carroll 2013).

According to Van Riel and Fombrun (2007), all communication, however, to some extent influences the perceptions of stakeholders about a particular organisation and its activities, and therefore affect the organisation's identity, image, brand and reputation. Corporate reputation arises from the perceptions of the stakeholders, irrespective of whether they like, admire or trust the organisation. These perceptions are based on their experiences and the corporate messages and conversations taking place on platforms like social media. Online reputation monitoring is increasingly regarded as an essential management practice for marketers and public relations practitioners (Jones *et al*. 2009). The new rules of engagement on the social web are explored in relation to how they contribute to, damage or improve corporate reputation and brand image.

How an organisation is perceived and the image the stakeholders have are not only shaped by the organisation's communication efforts; it is rather a product of conversations taking place online (Jones *et al*. 2009). It is evidently important to monitor social media platforms to manage corporate reputation. Stakeholders engaging online can damage or build the reputation of the organisation and through this engagement, they can either help to recruit new stakeholders, or scare them off.

While current research indicates how social media content and conversations can be used efficiently in organisations, little is known about the influence these have on keeping stakeholders engaged. There is also ample research on corporate reputation and reputation management (Bromley 1993; Doorley & Garcia 2015; Fombrun *et al*. 2004), but not much about unpacking how online stakeholder engagement via social media affects corporate reputation.

This article focuses on the implementation of an online reputation management framework to determine whether and to what extent social media content and conversations contribute to online stakeholder engagement and their effects, whether positive or negative, on online reputation management.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study was to determine the impact that online content and social media conversations had on stakeholder engagement and reputation by implementing the online reputation management framework.

The research further undertook to:

♦ determine whether online content has an impact on online reputation and contributes to Solidarity's brand and identity;

♦ find out if online content has an impact on stakeholder engagement;

♦ determine whether online conversations have an influence on continuing stakeholder engagement and online reputation;

♦ investigate whether monitoring of, listening to, and engaging with stakeholders can assist in addressing or suppressing risks for reputation management; and

♦ whether the online reputation management framework can be implemented and operates in corporate communication.

AN ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The proposed online reputation management framework departed from work by Shannon and Weaver (1948), Berlo (1960), Schramm (1954) and Barnlund (1962), Skinner *et al*. (2009) and James Grünig and colleagues (1984). According to Skinner *et al*. (2009), the most basic communication process comprises a triad: a communicator, a message and a recipient. These three aspects go hand-in-hand with closely related factors, such as code, medium, context, feedback and interference. Reputation management models include concepts like listening and engaging (Aula & Mantere 2008). Thus, the online reputation management framework that is proposed is a combination of traditional communication models and contemporary online reputation models.

The online reputation management framework is contextually defined as follows: An online framework that organisations can implement and use to create and communicate specific images of themselves to their internal and external stakeholders, so that perceptions about the organisation can be managed. It is a framework that allows organisations to say something about themselves, allows the media to say something about them, indicates the organisation's actions to these conversations, as well as how organisations "listen" to what stakeholders say about the organisation on online platforms.

Any organisation has a certain reputation and the organisation must manage, protect and maintain this reputation. The process begins with the organisation's daily activities – what it says, writes, does and produces, the way it packages itself, and how it interacts with stakeholders. The proposed online framework above attempts to assist organisations to monitor, manage, protect and maintain their online reputation step-by-step.
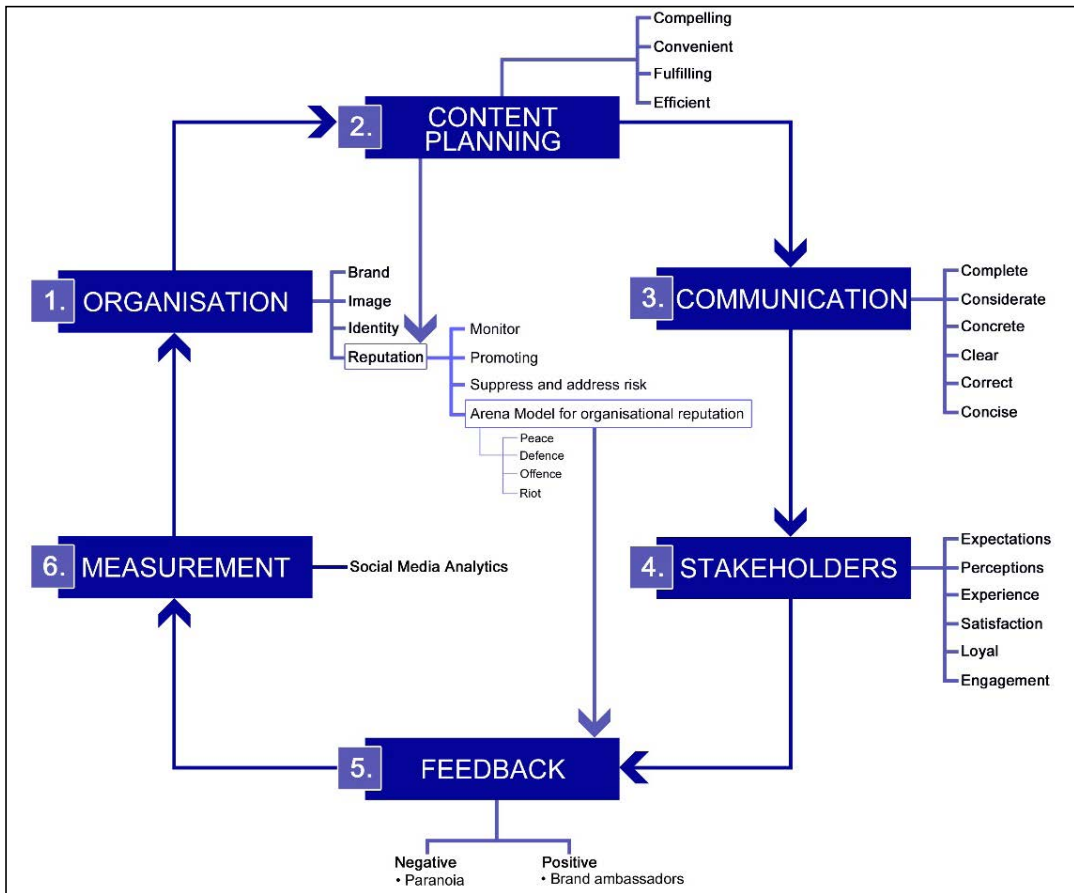
FIGURE 1: THE ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK
(ADAPTED FROM VAN DEN HEEVER 2014)

UNPACKING REPUTATION AND ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

According to Larkin (2003) and Dowling (2006), reputation is built on trust and belief and on the experiences and opinions of the public (Aula & Mantere 2008; Portmann *et al*. 2014). In the commercial world, reputation appears to have become a "Cinderella" asset. It is easily overlooked, but with immense potential, and a key issue in corporate success (Coenen *et al*. 2009) – success here being the return of customers who bring friends with them. The reputation of any organisation can be affected by deliberate and non-deliberate actions and events, caused by any stakeholder in or outside the organisation. The online world has radically altered the dynamics of corporate reputation formation and management, and in today's global markets, organisations compete daily for visibility, investments and brand positioning (Bunting & Lipski 2000; Romenti *et al*. 2015). In the growing hubbub of consumer, media and activist dissection of corporate behaviour, organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to make their voices heard. By creating newly accessible channels of communication, the internet

has shifted the balance of power of "voice" with the result that corporate reputations are increasingly defined not by what organisations do or say, but by how others perceive and respond to their words and actions (Bunting & Lipski 2000). Online reputation is a perceptual identity formed through the collective perceptions of others; it also represents an organisation's past actions and prospects, which are all visible online.

Aula and Mantere (2008) identified the tension between two competing discourses on organisational reputation, namely the financial value-driven capital discourse and the meaning-driven interpretive discourse. This means the difference between the "show me the money" concept and the idea that reputation has power beyond the monetary. For an organisation to become excellent, it must pay attention to both aspects of reputation. Bennett (2013) states that reputation exists in the communicative interaction between the organisation and its stakeholders, and is built on the organisation's past actions, current state, and its prospects.

The strategic management of reputation requires an understanding of an organisation's internal and external environment. Aula and Mantere (2008) use the communicative metaphor of an arena to describe the environment in a market of meaning. Organisations interact with their stakeholders in different types of arenas where interactions create mental impressions. Corporate communication occurs everywhere. Different reputational arenas are formed based on the kind of communication practised by the organisation and that of its stakeholders. Aula and Mantere (2008) differentiate between four arenas in which the organisation may find itself, namely peace, defence, attack and riot. This model is based on two elementary acts, namely integrating current meaning, and dissipating it. There are also two sets of actors, namely the organisation and its stakeholders.
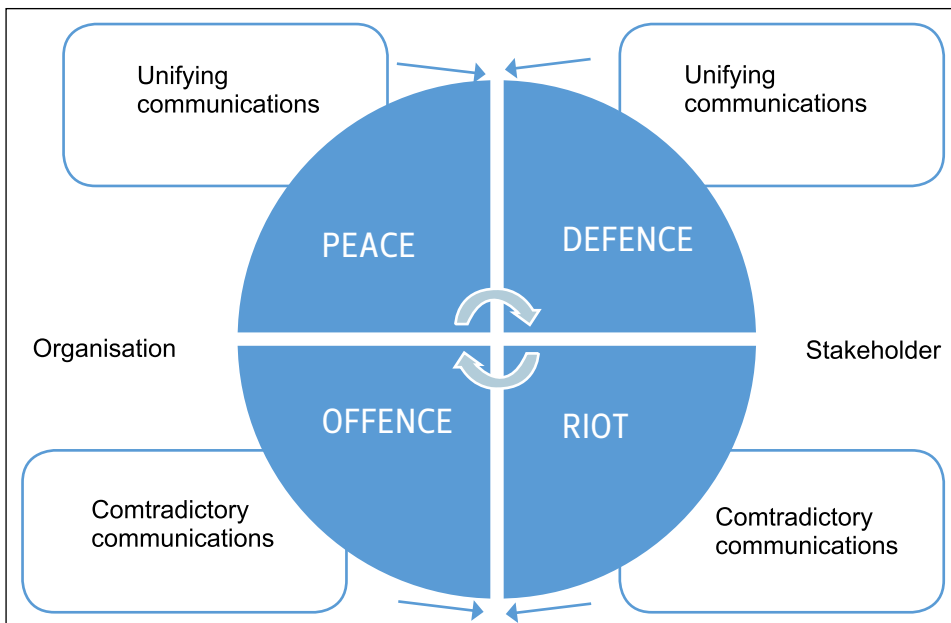

FIGURE 2: THE ARENA MODEL OF ORGANISATIONAL REPUTATION (ADAPTED FROM AULA AND MANTERE 2008)

Agenda-setting and agenda-building theory

Inspired by Lipmann's (1922) notion of the media influencing the "pictures in our heads" of "the world outside", scholars have spent decades exploring the agenda-setting function of the news media and its role in shaping public opinion. McCombs *et al*. (1997) regard agenda-setting as one variant of priming and framing. According to these authors (1997), agenda-setting looks to story selection as a determinant of public perceptions, issue importance, and indirectly through priming and evaluations.

Cohen's classic dictum in 1963 (in Carroll 2013), "The media may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling stakeholders what to think about", clarifies what contemporary agenda-setting researchers have termed first and second level agenda-setting effects. According to Maxwell *et al*. (1972), the first level is concerned with how the salience of objects in media messages influence "what we think about", while the second level is concerned with how the salience of attributes used in media messages to describe these objects shapes "how we think about" them.

Although agenda-setting focuses on what is said in media, a new type of media entered the scene and social media became more relevant. In this instance, the organisations themselves, especially non-profit organisations (NPOs), are becoming authors and generate the content that the stakeholders see. An agenda is set, and people are influenced. Stakeholders in this case also have a say and could influence other stakeholders, which may further determine the agenda and influence reputation.

According to Resnick (2004), an organisation's most important intangible asset, its reputation, will be at risk unless executives actively manage the perceptions of their organisation with as much rigour as they apply to managing financial, operational or technological risks. Greyser (in Resnick 2004) states that corporate reputation is a window to the fundamental character of an organisation and its leaders, and as such is relevant to all stakeholders.

Organisations need to put procedures and practices in place to manage their reputation and the risks involved as they set out to engage with the wider community on the social web (Jones *et al*. 2015; Resnick 2004). Practices may include a variety of aspects, but for this study these practices, as part of the research objectives, covered the following aspects (Portmann *et al*. 2014), focusing particularly on online conversations:

- Monitoring and listening to stakeholders who have their own perceptions and by listening to them, help create loyalty so that relationships might develop.

- Promoting the organisation's brand through online actions.

- Suppress or address general risks and reputation risk.

ONLINE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

According to Adams and Frost (2006), stakeholder engagement has become increasingly important in recent years. For Foster and Jonker (2005) and Loi (2016), the effect of stakeholder relationships on the success of organisations cannot be ignored. Every organisation must therefore gear itself to engage with its stakeholders in some way, as there is pressure on organisations to manage performance and stakeholder perceptions of performance through external reporting (Adams & Frost 2006). In the online environment, there is little space for monologue. According to Jones *et al*. (2015) and Foster and Jonker (2015), organisations can no longer simply devise a message and communicate it to their audiences, neither can they simply put across their own agenda; this would be a monologue and not a dialogue (Adams & Frost 2006).

With the available social networks, organisations are no longer solely in the hands of their management teams. In the online world, corporate reputation might easily be enhanced or permanently damaged. Therefore, Jones *et al*. (2015) state that reputation on the social web is built on online stakeholder engagement. Organisations seek to create active online communities around their brands (*ibid*.). The social web allows the organisation's stakeholders to co-create its brand image and reputation. The stakeholders can thus play a role in the improvement or deterioration of the reputation of the organisation.

Freeman's stakeholder theory

According to Rhodes *et al*. (2014) and Andriof and Waddock (2002), stakeholder theory addresses the elements in an organisation's relationships with stakeholders. The theory has evolved in recent years and the attention here should be focused on the importance of the relationships that an organisation has with it stakeholders. The long-term value is determined by its relationships with critical stakeholders. In the case of the research reported on in this article, it is the online relationship that the NPO, Solidarity, has with its Facebook followers.

Freeman (1984) suggests that the purpose of a business is to create as much value as possible for stakeholders. To succeed and be sustainable over time, executives must keep the interests of all stakeholders aligned (Freeman 1999; Donaldson 1995). The challenge is to identify and recognise the mutual interests among the organisation and its stakeholders (Rhodes *et al*. 2014).

Freeman (1984) further states that every business creates, and sometimes destroys, value for its stakeholders. The 21st century is the time for companies and organisations to "manage stakeholders". Managing stakeholders refers to activities such as identifying and prioritising key stakeholders, assessing their needs, collecting ideas from them, and interpreting this knowledge into strategic management processes (Rhodes *et al*. 2014). The task of executives is to create as much value as possible for stakeholders without resorting to trade-offs. Good companies endure because they manage to get stakeholder interests aligned in the same direction.

SOCIAL MEDIA

According to Carroll (2013), an organisation's online reputation today is its reputation. Organisations can engage and inform stakeholders (Floreddu *et al*. 2014), who can create and share content online almost instantaneously through the use of social media (Carroll 2013). Foster and Jonker (2005) and Thomas and Barlow (2011) confirm that the essential building block of stakeholder relationships is communication. Thomas and Barlow (2011) further state that social media does not change the fundamentals of the relationship between the organisation and the stakeholders; it rather provides a channel to extend those relationships far beyond what is possible in the physical realm. Ponte *et al*. (2015) indicate that social media is changing the communication strategies of organisations because it facilitates a more dynamic and interactive way to communicate, which might lead to improved stakeholder engagement. Aula (2010) argues that social media is characterised by interactivity – participants freely send, receive and process content for use by others. For Jones (2015) the power and effect of social networking sites create opportunities as well as threats, depending on the approach, and here a social media manager's task will be to determine the type of communication strategy. The outcome will be determined by how well the organisation engages with stakeholders through conversations.

According to Ponte *et al*. (2015), social media comprises Web 2.0 tools, which organisations can use to interact with their stakeholders for engagement and relationship building. Social media allows for real-time, multimedia, efficient communication at low cost through a variety of global platforms, such as Facebook. All these practical applications facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centred design and collaboration online.

Social media content

Content is the origin of communication, and it can be considered a major source of development within an information society. According to McLuhan (1962), the content of any medium is always another medium. For Hanafizadeh and Yarmohammadi (2015), in the information economy era, a progressive society experiences steady growth, not only in expenditure for technology, but also in production of high quality content. They (2015) further state that content is a general term, which is used differently depending on prevailing contexts. Individuals communicate with each other through their speech, writing and other intellectual productions, which can all be considered as types of content (*ibid*.). Mutula and Brakel (2010) consider content as a cerebral or an intellectual process. Beasly (2013) describes content as a purposeful, accessible and understandable artefact. There is also an approach that views content as a means for value creation. Such a view considers content as producing value for target audiences. Ballentyne (2002) approaches content as a type of product and process (procedure).

To persuade through content, a relationship with stakeholders should first be established. According to Cairncross (2002), organisations learn to fit the internet into their relationships with their members or followers and realise that easy interactivity and information dissemination allow them to provide an appearance

of personal touch. This then may lead to persuasion by using technology and communication content optimally. Berkovsky (2012) states that persuasive technologies attempt to shape, reinforce or change behaviours, feelings or thoughts about an issue, object or action. Software updates help to achieve these goals regarding computer-human dialogue and thus enhances personalisation. One development in the last five years has been technology-augmented social persuasion, leveraged by the wide acceptance of social networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

Merilainen (2011) observed that nowadays, agenda-setting may be regarded as a precondition to be heard in society. Social media is used to encourage or persuade people to learn more. The communal nature of social media allows organisations to create and engage in their content building. Through this sharing and engagement, organisations and their stakeholders can also co-create corporate reputation.

Social media conversations

Koudenburg *et al*. (2016) postulate that a good conversation comprises more than the exchange of information. According to Lipinski-Harten and Tafarodi (2012), popular instant messaging such as Windows Live Messenger (formerly MSN Messenger) and Blackberry Messenger have made text messaging and online chat a daily practice for millions of worldwide users. Floreddu (2014) indicates that social media has ushered in many ways in which an organisation can communicate with its stakeholders. Conversations are a form of dialogue characterised by the exploration, examination, and reconsideration of individuals' reasoning, assumptions and perspectives. When done effectively, such conversations allow participants to construct meaning, transform knowledge, and create collective wisdom on the challenges they face (Hartung & Wilson 2016).

Bolton (1998) articulates that the key to achieving engagement from stakeholders is to manage and follow a sequence of conversational steps of which the first step is to learn to "listen". Listening should take place to find possibilities, to listen without judging, and to discover ideas, commonalities, emotions, beliefs, causes and direction.

METHODOLOGY

This study departed from an interpretivist-phenomenologist tradition with the aim of discovering the interactions of stakeholders on social media networks, to make sense of their conversations, and to determine whether their interactions have or had any influence on the reputation of Solidarity.

A case study approach included the content and conversations on social media during a four-month Solidarity campaign. The four-month campaign, the #OnsBou (#LetsBuild) campaign was aligned to Solidarity's agenda, which is the supporting foundation of all its activities and focused on key issues that depict its core values. This campaign was in direct contrast to the countywide #FeesMustFall campaign. According to *Mail & Guardian* (2016), news24 (2016), EWN (2016) and the website of the Department of Justice, the latter campaign involved students from both historically advantaged

and historically disadvantaged universities and the uprising of #FeesMustFall was the culmination of years of unkept government promises. Free education had been a major commitment made by the ANC (the ruling party) in the first democratic elections in South Africa. The failure to keep that promise – while presiding over an explosion in student fees – had sown the seeds of discontent.

An analysis of Facebook posts and comments were executed to investigate stakeholder conversations on the campaign content. Details about the context surrounding the campaign, such as the physical environment and the historical, economic, political and social factors were recorded in the analysis. The units of analysis included:

♦   individuals (the five social media administrators of Solidarity) and groups (the population on the NPO's Facebook page) – these comments and responses were analysed through content and conversation analysis;

♦   social artefacts (the NPO's content on its web page was analysed through content analysis to determine whether the content contributed to the reputation of Solidarity, and to investigate how its Facebook followers reacted to the content);

♦   social actions (the focus here was on the actions in social media – the patterned social action in which individuals act in an unconscious/conscious collaboration with others). These were recorded through observations.

Sample

A simple random sample was drawn due to the homogenous population – stakeholders engaging online in activities in Afrikaans on Solidarity's Facebook platform during the four-month #OnsBou-campaign between May 2019 and August 2019. The sample comprised of 122 000 men and women between the ages of 25 and 45. They all communicated in Afrikaans, were mostly from the Afrikaner culture, and engaged on Solidarity's Facebook page. The group commented on and took part in conversations on the Facebook page during the campaign. The main objective was to determine whether these stakeholders' engagement and conversations on Solidarity's Facebook page constructed an online reputation for the organisation during the campaign.

Analysis of online content and conversations

The content of articles on Solidarity's website and of online conversations was analysed. The artefacts included written content on the website of Solidarity and comments on its Facebook page. The articles and conversations indicated who had said what to whom and the effect it had on the reputation of Solidarity. As the research attempted to determine the impact of this content and conversations on reputation, the content needed to be thoroughly analysed to identify factual information, themes and sentiments.

During this analysis, the following were analysed:

♦ articles published on the website to achieve a certain objective during the campaign;

♦ media content published during the campaign;

♦ stakeholder responses (conversations and engagement on Facebook); and

♦ the measurement of the entire process, through analytics, to determine how it contributed to the overall reputation of Solidarity.

Online software tools including Sproutsocial, Hootsuite, SumAll, Ornico, Meltwater and WorditOut were used to collect and analyse the content and conversations.

Interviews

Five social media administrators who were working on this specific campaign were interviewed. Risks in terms of generalisation existed and not all media administrators experienced "reputation" and "reputation management" similarly. The administrators indicated to what extent the content addressed the promotion of the existing reputation of Solidarity and, as they interacted directly with the conversations on Facebook, they gave additional information to the content and outcomes of the conversations. There were 29 articles posted on Facebook and 172 stakeholders commented in their conversations on these articles.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

This online reputation management framework was implemented from the beginning of this campaign and during the analysis process. All the content that was produced was written with Solidarity's existing established reputation in mind. The team followed the steps of the framework from the beginning of the campaign through to the end. The phases included the existing reputation of the organisation, content planning, communication, stakeholders, feedback and the measurement thereof.

The organisation

The process started with the organisation, Solidarity, as it has a certain image, identity and brand to protect, and these form part of its reputation. Solidarity has a full-time reputation team working to assist in managing its reputation through content and online conversations.

Although Solidarity relies on its own content to communicate its views, it cannot discard the voices of the stakeholders conversing online because they are the people who can build or break its reputation. Solidarity communicates through its content to the media and conveys certain core values and beliefs on its social networking sites – particularly during the four-month #OnsBou (#LetsBuild) campaign.

Content planning

Content is a means of value creation and, during this stage, content was generated that represented a certain issue in the campaign. During the content analysis, the content surrounding the campaign was scrutinised to glean whether the content was compelling, convenient, fulfilling and efficient. Each time a cross reference was made to the arena model of Aula and Mantere (2008). The content was placed in word maps using WorditOut software, which indicated the levels of importance of the content that was communicated.

The content can detect whether Solidarity is either prepared, informed, certain, credible or ambitious. This was decided through interviews with the different social media administrators. The content surrounding the campaign was generated by various authors within Solidarity. The administrators were requested to indicate how the NPO is perceived when posting the content. The administrators were also requested to indicate which features of the campaign aligned with the content in each article that was posted on Facebook. The lead researcher could then determine in which arena Solidarity fell with its stakeholders before its actual communication on Facebook.

The administrators can normally ascertain in advance how stakeholders will respond to certain content, as they work with it daily. The administrators can also be proven wrong as soon as stakeholders begin to respond and engage on Facebook on the content of the articles.

Communication process

After the content creation stage and during the communication stage, the content was communicated via social media as well as traditional media. The brand and media intelligence company, Ornico, drafted a feedback report regarding social media and traditional media during the #OnsBou campaign. Traditional media always plays an important role in the reputation of the organisation and should be considered. After the communication process, which involved posts on Facebook and Twitter, and newsletters and media releases, the interviews with the administrators were conducted to determine whether they thought the content complied with the 7Cs of communication (Raina *et al*. 2010) – complete, considerate, clear, correct, concrete, courteous and concise.

Engagement and reputation

After the content was shared on social media, the process of stakeholder engagement followed. It is important to keep in mind that stakeholders have certain experiences and expectations. If stakeholders are satisfied, they might become loyal to Solidarity. The likes and shares were monitored to determine the level of engagement. If stakeholders shared content with friends, more stakeholders could become involved. A Facebook analytics product called SumAll was used. With this instrument, the lead researcher could calculate all the likes of the posts as it provided a count of engagements – how many people engaged, how many commented, liked, or shared the posts. The conversations were also monitored to determine the perceptions of the stakeholders. A wordcloud programme (WorditOut) was used to establish which sentiment stood out the strongest in the conversations. All the comments on a certain post were fed

into the software. It provided a wordcloud, where the words that were used the most appeared larger and the words used less, smaller. At this point, the lead research aimed to discover whether the stakeholders reacted positively or negatively and what influence these reactions had on the rest of the stakeholders' engagement before the administrators became involved.

Facebook analytics also determined whether people unfollowed the organisation, started following the organisation, defended the organisation, or attacked the organisation. This would then determine in which arena the organisation found itself with its stakeholders. For example, administrators may post an article on private higher education and foresee that people will like it, share it, and start following the organisation's Facebook page. Stakeholders' comments might be negative because of a lack of information provided or administrators would find that people leave the page and provide negative comments.

Conversations and reputation (response and feedback)

Conversations are a form of dialogue characterised by the exploration, examination and reconsideration of individual reasoning, assumptions and perspectives. The next step was to determine whether the administrators could rectify the reputation (if it was jeopardised) and whether they could boost it by adding more content. At this stage, depending on where in the arena the roleplayers found themselves, the need for crisis communication management arose (when the arena became a riot and the comments were very negative). The thought leaders, which include strategists and the executive management of Solidarity, would then be consulted to decide on the next step. At times, brand ambassadors can act on behalf of the organisation and respond to the negative comments on Facebook. These ambassadors are usually high-profile people like artists, socialites or politicians. This can also be the case when ordinary members of the public assist Solidarity by providing factual content. Following these actions by the brand ambassadors and administrators, it was determined whether the arena had moved, for example, from a riot to peace.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings established that the content on Solidarity's website is tightly aligned with its core brand values and identity. Thirty-six articles were generated by a team of internal writers. There were also media releases provided to monitor media reporting. The content of all the articles was analysed using WorditOut to identify the words that were used the most. The articles were all written in line with the existing core values in the reputation of Solidarity, as featured on the website.

According to the social media administrators who were interviewed, the content was compelling, interesting, gripped the stakeholders' attention, and inspired them to join the cause of the campaign. The administrators indicated that most content was efficient and convenient, and addressed real problems and needs in South Africa and society in general. The administrators could foresee – during the scheduling of content – whether there would be a riot or peace among the stakeholders. It was found that

Solidarity seemed prepared and informed of its core business and that it appeared ambitious and credible.

Although the #FeesMustFall campaign dominated the media at that stage, traditional media also reported on the #OnsBou campaign. Mostly Afrikaans media reported on the campaign and it did well on online media platforms. It was established that Solidarity stayed true to its target audiences and communicated to them what they wanted to hear at the time. Although the total media coverage was valued over R5 million, it was indicated that there was a 51% positive and 49% neutral sentiment in the media towards Solidarity and its campaign. There were no negative articles reported.

Different content attracted different stakeholders, whether the content was economic, political, organisational or humorous. Organisations shoud align their core values with their content and should primarily focus on what their stakeholders want to hear and the information they need to receive on issues. It remains important to be mindful that stakeholder sentiment is as valuable as rand value in media coverage. A shared sentiment among Solidarity's online stakeholders was evident. At the time, Solidarity's Facebook page had 112 000 followers. Solidarity grew its Facebook followers by another 24 000 stakeholders during the four-month campaign. Engagement was acceptable, as the overall engagement rate on all the content totalled 695 638 people. It was clear that stakeholders reacted to content where they could find alternative answers during insecure times when universities were disrupted. The bigger picture of building other institutions did not receive that much attention.

Organisations should be prepared for online "outbursts" or disruptions from stakeholders during the stage of content creation and try to determine beforehand what might happen with specific content. Credibility begins with content. Solidarity focused its campaign and strove towards content simplicity. Stakeholders wanted factual information and clear and concise content. Facebook is currently the most appropriate platform to share content because it allows stakeholders to take part in conversations and engage with organisations and other stakeholders.

Apart from content, the conversations played a pivotal role during the campaign. The conversations were analysed using WorditOut. The words that stood out aligned with the words that stood out in the content. This implies that stakeholders reacted according to the content. By analysing the conversations stakeholders had on Facebook, a clearer indication arose of what Solidarity stood for and meant to them. If the stakeholders did not relate to the content at all, they would mention it on Facebook, and it would carry a reputational risk. The conversations on Facebook reflected the reputation of Solidarity. What the stakeholders said about the NPO impacted on the communication and online reputation management process.

Managing the organisation's social media platforms implies that the online reputation will also be managed. Stakeholder conversations recruit more stakeholders to become part of the stakeholder community of Solidarity. Negative conversations between different stakeholders may scare away potential stakeholders. Negativity spreads quickly online, particularly in an environment that is open 24/7.

In the current environment it is important to take notice of the online presence of stakeholders: they are there, and they listen to each other. They form opinions on an organisation despite the content that it publishes. All content should be sense-making and aligned.

An organisation should actively engage online by answering questions and assisting stakeholders who are unsure of facts surrounding issues. As soon as the administrators detected a possible crisis during the Solidarity campaign, they started engaging with stakeholders, providing them with more information or detailed content. These administrators assisted insecure stakeholders by providing them with answers and more facts through online content. They communicated this in a civil and diplomatic manner, without blame. Well-informed and trained public relations professionals should ideally form part of social media teams in oganisations. They should be the first to receive information and should be the first to respond.

The online reputation management framework provided the Solidarity team with a model to work from during the research process. They knew how important the reputation was and they understood that the content should be created accordingly and be communicated thoroughly. The framework further provided them with the different stages to follow, and to react as soon as a problem occurred. The online conversations formed the most important part of the suggested framework.

It was proposed and established through the research that the online reputation management framework might assist other NPOs to manage their online content and conversations to engage stakeholders and to manage their online reputation. The framework allows organisations to craft strategies that shape or influence the public perception of an organisation. It is suggested that organisations need to direct negative and positive feedback on social media platforms to manage their reputation. This means that social media administrators should monitor and listen as stakeholders engage, form their own perceptions, and attempt to cement stakeholder loyalty.

Every part of the online reputation management framework is important. Compelling, convenient, fulfilling and efficient content should be created, and it should be communicated correctly, considerately, concretely and concisely. The process can be controlled by the social media administrators of an organisation. Satisfied stakeholders with certain expectations and perceptions might become engaged and loyal over time.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are many misconceptions about online reputation management. At times it is seen as social media monitoring, while at other times it implies public relations. This study identified the need to implement an online reputation management framework to manage the reputation of any NPO by managing the online content, stakeholder engagement and conversations. Today, the online world and the websites of organisations are no longer static brochures. User-generated content is a must, and regular interactions with stakeholders on social networks are vital to any organisational success.

In this study an online reputation management framework was implemented and tested. It could contribute towards practical implementation as it guides NPOs during their reputation management process. The research indicated that online reputation monitoring is increasingly regarded as an essential management practice for marketers and public relations professionals and that an online reputation management framework can be implemented for NPOs to determine how content and conversations on social media influence stakeholder engagement and reputation. The research also proposes that an NPO can afford greater control of the social web by tracking critical comments and negative publicity and using this towards managing the reputation of the organisation.

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