Leveraging
SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

in Food & FMCG Industry
in Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Social media is not a fad anymore, and marketers don't have that as an excuse not to pursue knowledge and research to be able to leverage its power in marketing Food and FMCG brands in the   Saudi market.   The problem they faced was the lack of understanding why some brands succeed on social media while others fail. They lacked the knowledge to form insights on the Saudi social media scene, a clear structure for formulating strategies, and above all what made those strategies successful. While available literature provided some insights and knowledge, it was all dispersed across the web and not organized as a "big picture" that gives marketers clear direction. However, by surveying a sample of online Saudi population, observing brands' efforts on social networks and their outcomes, and interviewing professionals creating or supporting their brands' social media strategy strategies, a clear process was formed to create a strategy that ensures success on the long run. Through research and case studies, it was deducted that formulating a sound strategy is comprised of 5 cornerstones: Brand assessment, brand goals, target audience analysis, tactical strategy, and measurement and evaluation. Therefore, in summary, social media marketing and communications of the Food and FMCG industry in Saudi Arabia is not as elusive as marketers and brands believe it is. By following the process revealed in this research, social media can be successfully leveraged as a sustainable communication and marketing channel.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Social media have revolutionized the way business is conducted all over the world. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin and others have become a daily integral part of people's communications. Still, many businesses in Saudi Arabia have yet to learn how to leverage their power in an effective model to reach the local target audience online & communicate corporate and marketing messages to them to warrantee an appropriate action.

The Food and Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies in particular have had their fair share of successes and failures on social media, as they keep on testing and learning through trial and error. The focus on Food and FMCG industry comes from the fact that it is an interesting sector where the level of competition is high, and social media is fueling this competition by enabling small businesses to compete with large businesses.

Food brands include local and franchised fast food restaurants, cafes and confectionary stores; FMCG brands include companies selling low-cost items that consumers tend to buy frequently and habitually such as food products, drinks, household products (detergents, toothpaste, shampoo, etc.) and cosmetics, as well as low-cost clothing & electronics (such as those sold at Danube or HyperPanda).

In the Food and FMCG industry, consumers are faced with many choices where price differentiation is minimal and quality is often difficult to gauge among most brands. This leaves marketers with the difficult task of finding new ways to make their brands stand out. Social media is proving to be an effective and direct channel in connecting with the target audience and influencing their perception of brands, making this research essential for guiding them to best practices.

Background of the Study

As social media networks and tools emerge, evolve quickly and rise to popularity, driven by new technologies & need gaps, it becomes easier for businesses to sidetrack from their

strategies and dilute their efforts across the Web 2.0 in order to capture a share of the online market, which only results in their failure.

Moreover, the lack of sufficient knowledge in this field and the amount of agencies and experts *claiming* to have it –but failing when it comes to applying it– have deferred so many businesses from endeavoring to adopt social media as a corporate communication & marketing channel and left them doubtful of its return-on-investment (ROI).

The lack of knowledge and expertise worsens in Saudi Arabia as most local businesses struggle from adapting social media tools to local practices in a timely manner. Statistics of Internet users in Saudi Arabia are not widely available, nor are accurate statistics of social networks' users. Even with reliable statistics available, businesses lack the direction to analyze and translate them into successful strategies.

Nonetheless, there are businesses that have figured out and pioneered the "social game" and capitalized on it. This has motivated many others to start exploring social media communication and marketing initiatives to transcend middlemen and connect directly with their public.

Problem Statement

This research focuses on solving the main issue that most companies in Saudi Arabia face with social media: What leads some businesses/campaigns to succeed in delivering results on social networks in the Saudi market, and others to fail? Holding that market conditions are the same for all Food and FMCG companies, results on social media vary for them based on different factors. What can these companies base their success and failure factors on; as in, how can they gain the necessary insights to shape their social media strategies? These strategies are also affected by the particular attributes of companies, so how do the different attributes play a role in devising social media strategies? These 3 main questions constitute the research problems.

Objectives of the Study

Through this research, Food and FMCG companies will be equipped with the right knowledge and tools to formulate appropriate social media strategies and carry out successful models in their corporate communications and marketing initiatives. By pinpointing tactics that prove successful to the nature & size of their business, their targeted markets, & planned timeline, companies can then invest resources in social media proportional to the returns they can expect from that investment. This research aims to:

- Provide a framework for finding and gathering data, transforming it into usable knowledge to form insights of the social media scene in Saudi Arabia.

- Provide a structure for Food & FMCG companies for determining appropriate courses of actions to achieve social media objectives through sound strategy formulation that fits the Saudi market.

- Determine success and failure factors of Food and FMCG businesses and campaigns in social media in the Saudi market through case studies.

The three research objectives are closely tied and the examination and achievement of each will contribute to the achievement of the other.

Significance of the Study

Utilizing social media for corporate communications and marketing can result in better targeting, reduced costs, and far higher returns when done properly. However, when done poorly, companies can end up with a PR crisis on their hands, or negative impressions in their community that can devalue their brands. Perhaps the latter is what scares most companies from jumping into the social media wagon, which on the long run would cost them even more as the world is going social and if companies don't go to where their customers are, they'll lose touch with them sooner or later.

This study builds a base for Food and FMCG companies to launch their activities in social media on sound grounds by providing them with the necessary research data and aiding them in formulating effective strategies that lead to their success. The significance of this study isn't that it provides specific details of the social media scene in the Saudi market, but that it consequently provides a stable framework that companies can use to stay updated with the social media scene and that can be adapted to achieve positive results.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined as such:

1. Social Media: It includes web-based and mobile based technologies which are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among organizations, communities, and individuals, and defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. (Source: Wikipedia).

2. Social Networks: A social structure made of individuals or organizations that are connected through various familiarities ranging from casual acquaintance to close familial bonds. In the Internet, social networking refers to a category of applications that connect friends, business partners, or other individuals together using a variety of tools. Examples of social networking sites include: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Linkedin, etc. (Source: WGBH)

3. Corporate communications: Corporate communication is the communication issued by a corporate organization, body, or institute to all its public(s). "Publics" here can be both internal (employees, stakeholders, i.e. share and stock holders) and external (agencies, channel partners, media, government, industry bodies and institutes, educational institutes and general public). (Source: Wikipedia)

4. Web 2.0: Web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. A

Web 2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in asocial media dialogue as creators (prosumers) of user-generated content in a virtual community, in contrast to websites where users (consumers) are limited to the passive viewing of content that was created for them. Examples of Web 2.0 include social networking sites, blogs, wikis, video sharing sites, hosted services, web applications, mashups and folksonomies. (Source: Wikipedia)

5. Online and Offline: "Online" indicates a state of connectivity, while "offline" indicates a disconnected state. In the area of human interaction and conversation, offline can be used in contrast to the common usage of online. For example, discussions taking place during a business meeting are "online", while issues that do not concern all participants of the meeting should be "taken offline" — continued outside of the meeting (Source: Wikipedia). For the purpose of this research, online refers to marketing activities done on the internet, specifically social networks, while offline refers to marketing activities taken place in physical locations in direct contact with people.

6. Metric: a direct numerical measure that represents a piece of business data in the relationship of one or more dimensions.

7. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): A KPI is a metric that is tied to a target. Most often a KPI represents how far a metric is above or below a pre-determined target. KPI's usually are shown as a ratio of actual to target.

Limitations of the Study

As in every study, there were some challenges in reaching the objectives. As stated earlier, social media tools emerge and evolve quickly so by the time the research is done, some information might change and could affect the results, although to a minimum extent. Some information might have even became absolute, like Friendster, a social networking site, plunged from the top to bottom unexpectedly as other social networking sites, mainly Facebook, rose to popularity (Wauters, accessed on May 2, 2011)[1].

The research is also limited in terms of forecasting and planning for social or cultural crises that affect the online population and their availability or readability to receive and act upon corporate communications & marketing messages. For example, recent political uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and many other Middle East countries have been fueled & supported through social networks, which in turn increased the population's activity on these networks (Taylor, accessed on May 2, 2011)[2]; however, their interest and attention shifted from the norm and was focused on political content. This study can't present guidance to companies in facing such unexpected & uncontrollable situations, and thus the tactics given herein might be rendered ineffective.

In terms of target market (i.e. in sampling), the research includes some Food and FMCG companies that adopt the same strategies for the entire Middle East region, rather than specifically for Saudi Arabia, even though in practice, each country would require a certain level of customization, especially the Saudi market. It is a standard for some international brands to create unified online accounts for all of Middle East, depending on their strategies, and they will be taken into account in sampling according to their success/failure, which affects the outcome of the research to encompass some results that aren't specific to the Saudi market. However, that is not a concern because Saudi Arabia does share some contributes with neighboring countries where some strategies applied within Saudi can be adopted abroad, and vice versa, depending on the nature of the business.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media is a hot topic in business right now, and there are hundreds – if not thousands – of blogs with daily articles tutoring businesses on using social media & breaking its news to them firsthand.

As it would be difficult to review every post and article ever made about social media, different sources that provide insight on the above data would be reviewed instead.

Media Sites

One of the top sources for news in social and digital media, technology and web culture is *Mashable*. It is the most prolific news site reporting breaking web news, providing analysis of trends, reviewing new websites and services, and offering social media resources and guides. While Mashable covers relevant news from the Middle East, such as the aforementioned uprisings that were attributed to social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, it rarely features case studies or best practices for/from the Middle East, or Saudi Arabia in particular.

Mashable identifies its audience as early adopters, social media enthusiasts, entrepreneurs, influencers, brands and corporations, marketing, PR and advertising agencies, Web 2.0 aficionados and technology journalists. While it is a popular source of information and news in Saudi Arabia, it rarely addresses its audience, bearing in mind that its content is not always relevant or practical for its market due to the cultural and language differences.

A local and powerful media site in the region is MediaMe, a site aggregating news & resources, among others, from the Middle Eastern region. Its PR newswire sheds the light on the activities of brands in the media industry; however, it is by "submission" so it is limited to brands sharing their own news with the public. The Research and Reports section features useful reports on digital media from international and local resources, but it does not provide any insights beyond that.

Blogs

Blogs are a very popular source of knowledge in the social media field because they provide fast & reliable (depending on the credibility of the blog) coverage of the latest news, best practices, & knowledge transfer in this industry. One of the most popular blogs for social media articles is *Social Media Today.* It is an independent, online community for professionals in PR, marketing, advertising, or any other discipline where a thorough understanding of social media is mission-critical. It provides daily insight and host lively debate about the tools, platforms, companies and personalities that are revolutionizing the way we consume information. There's also Social Media Explorer, a leading platform for insights, opinion and learning around the world of social media marketing, online communications, conversational marketing, digital marketing, public relations, community building and branding. And most importantly, Social Media Examiner, a free online magazine designed to help businesses discover how to best use social media tools like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to find leads, increase sales and generate more brand awareness. Offering a unique single source of knowledge, the site contains comprehensive articles and videos on how to use the best social media tools, along with original case studies, reviews of the latest industry research and advice direct from the world's leading experts. While these blogs are powerful resources, they rarely cover the Middle East market or provide insights on personalizing strategies for a unique market such as Saudi Arabia.

There are some local resources that try to fill that gap, such as *Spot On Public Relations*, an integrated communications firm that helps organizations position, communicate and differentiate themselves to build leadership positions; and increase sales and marketing effectiveness in the Middle East's highly competitive environments, with coverage on Saudi Arabia considering it is the biggest market in the Gulf region. While Spot On PR is a great source of Internet and digital statistics and reports on the Middle East, it is not very active on covering social media breaking news or fresh updates from the field.

Experts

Another important source about social media are specialized experts such as Chris Brogan who has over 11 years experience in online community, social media, and related technologies and speaks professionally with Fortune 100 and 500 companies like PepsiCo, General Motors, Microsoft, and more, on the future of business communications, and social software technologies. Another expert is Brian Solis, author of the acclaimed new book on social media and business "Engage!", one of the most prominent thought leaders and published authors in new media. A digital analyst, sociologist, and futurist, Solis has studied and influenced the effects of emerging media on business, marketing, publishing, and culture.

Both experts are very influential and their work is highly regarded in the industry; however, as many social media experts in the West, they have no knowledge or background about the Middle East market.

As for experts from the Middle East, there are a few who provide adequate framework of the local social media scene and lead successful digital campaigns, for example: Khaled ElAhmad, Social Media Consultant at Convo2 in Jordan, Abbas Alidina Founder & Director at Logicks in UAE, Malik Shishtawi Digital Account Director at Tribal DDB World in Saudi Arabia, and some others who gained experience through practice within their organizations' digital departments or service agencies. Although these experts can provide insights on Social Media Marketing in the region & can be a good source of knowledge, they don't all have experience in handling Food & FMCG brands targeting Saudi Arabia.

Other local Arab sources that shares insights on the social media scene in the Saudi market are ArabCrunch, Arab Social Media Report, and Social Bakers among others. While these provide essential data and information for/from the region, they do not translate that data into recommendations and suggestions for businesses, in general or to Food and FMCG in particular, to benefit from in their practice.

Whitepapers

Every once in a while, some quality whitepapers & reports are produced with great insights and data on the region, including Saudi Arabia. A significant resource for reports is Dubai School of Government, which produced 3 reports in 2011, titled The Arab Social Media Report, the last of which shed a light on the Role of Social Media in Arab Women's Empowerment in November 2011. The reports featured statistics and data from each of the Arab countries on penetration rates, number of users on Facebook and Twitter, language preference, reasons for using social media, etc. Apart from the outdating of the penetration rates & number of users, the insights provided on national characteristics of social media users can offer some guidance in strategy formulation.

Another whitepaper worthy of mention is "Social Media in MENA: A Habit in The Making" by Omnicom Media Group in December 2011. The paper provides a comparison among the characteristics & habits of social media users in UAE and KSA, while giving guidelines & insights that provide directions to marketers.

The Online Project, a Jordanian-based agency, have also produced a useful whitepaper specifically for Facebook, titled "Facebook Marketing: Why Global Brands Need To Change Strategies in the Middle East". It provides insight on the differences between US and the Arab countries in terms of Facebook user profiles, and gives out recommendations on localizing strategies.

Social Networks' Guides

The major social networks, such as Facebook and Youtube, provide guides for using the features on their sites. One of the useful guides by Facebook are "Facebook Page Insights: Product Guide for Facebook Page Owners" which provides page owners with means to "understand the performance of their page; learn which content resonates with their audience; and optimize how they publish to their audience so that people will tell their friends about the page." Facebook adds another great resource to that by aiding page owners in what content to publish on their pages with the guide titled "Page Publishing Best Practices".

Youtube published a "Creator Playbook" featuring extensive details on properly utilizing the channel, and on leveraging it for success. Aside from the technical instructions, the playbook provides recommendations on engaging the community through social media.

However, these social networking giants do not offer localized insights on what would work in a very different market like Saudi Arabia as opposed to other markets with international direction.

In a nutshell, the existing resources might provide great insights and guidelines, but they are quite dispersed and barely show "the big picture"; Moreover, they rarely target the Saudi market or direct brands into customizing strategies to the local market . Therefore, this research aims to gather and transfer the knowledge from existing resources and adapt it to the Saudi market to communicate firsthand strategies under one umbrella. In addition, it studied the local practices of international and local brands to provide local insights that can fill some of the knowledge gap in the industry.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research of this level of significance, considering its impact on the course of actions taken by companies as they adopt social media, requires qualitative insights supported by quantitative data. Through qualitative research methodology, strategies and best practices were formulated, gathered and analyzed in-depth. With quantitative research methodology, strategies were tested, to be proven successful or not, through numbers & factual analytics.

Research Design

This study employed the following quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques to achieve its objectives:

- *Secondary data* from social network, blogs, past social media campaigns and Food and FMCG companies with published social media data were collected and analyzed to form hypotheses. Given the rapid changing nature of social media, some of the secondary data collected might change in significance after the research is finalized.

- *Interviews* were conducted to gather qualitative data from Food and FMCG companies, and service agencies managing the social media activities of those businesses in Saudi Arabia in form of in-depth one-on-one interviews. The limitation of the survey results falls only on the credibility of the sample surveyed in correctly answering the questionnaire.

- A *survey* was designed to collect quantitative data from Saudi population as the consumers of those brands, interacting with them through social media. The limitation of this survey is in including a sample that represents the general population that uses social media, where respondents properly answer the questionnaire.

- *Observation* of the public activities of Food and FMCG companies on social media also provided some insights and contributed to building case studies from

the market. The limitation to this was the inability to get in-deep details or background details from these activities and some insights will be based on the interpretation of the researcher.

Study Population

The research's study population included social media strategists, marketing and public relations experts, and digital marketing specialists at Food & FMCG companies in Saudi Arabia. They are professionals from the communications field who are engaged in social media and have an advanced understanding of it, and utilize it to manage a brand's profiles.

Included in the study population as well is the general public, from Saudi Arabia, who are active on social networks like Facebook and Twitter and who follow brands & businesses and engage with them on their profiles. That is to test hypotheses from the business side and the consumers' side.

Sampling Procedure

For the qualitative research, the judgment or purposive nonprobability sampling technique was employed. The sample was chosen based on their achievements in the social media field on an international or local level and eventually 5 professionals were selected and interviewed (Sample #1).

For the quantitative research, the convenience nonprobability sampling technique was used, as the survey was distributed through social networks. In this case, projecting data beyond the sample will not be inappropriate, as respondents will reflect the targeted study population of "general public who engage with Food and FMCG brands on social media" (Sample #2).

Instrumentation

For the qualitative research, in-depth one-on-one interviews were carried out with Sample #1. A list of open-ended questions was pre-prepared to gather data, while further

exploration urged new questions to be formulated on spot. The main questions that were asked are:

- What brand(s) do you manage on social media?

- Describe your role in managing those brands.

- What are your objectives/goals behind using social media for those brands?

- What strategy & tactics did you employ to reach those objectives? How did you develop the strategy?

- What was your most successful tactic? How did you measure its success?

- What challenges have you faced so far? Have you overcome any of them? How?

- How do you measure the effect of your social media marketing? What tools do you use?

- What content kept your followers & fans engaged the most?

- What recommendations would you give on managing social media successfully for Food & FMCG brands?

This qualitative research is supported by the quantitative data gathered from the sample.

As for the quantitative research with Sample #2, the survey included close-ended questions that were multiple-choice questions. To also help define the respondents' characteristics, there will be demographic questions as well. The questionnaire is attached as **Appendix A**.

Secondary data was digitally collected from brands' social media accounts, blogs, whitepapers, industry reports, including but not limited to:

- Social Media in MENA: A Habit in the Making, a whitepaper by Omnicom.

- Arab Social Media Report Vol. 1 No. 3, by Dubai School of Government.

- Arab Media Outlook 2011 – 2015 "Arab Media: Exposure and Transition" by Dubai Press Club.

- Facebook Marketing: Why Global Brands Need to Change Strategies in The Middle East, a report by The Online Project.

The secondary data collected pertain to statistics of the Saudi population usages of social networks & their online habits and behavior.

Scale Validity and Reliability

The proposed instruments have been proven to be reliable and valid for the purpose of these types of researches. There have been many studies conducted on leveraging social media in the Western market, and these studies often utilize interviews with thought leaders to reflect expert opinion and provide guidance, and support that guidance with surveys & questionnaires posed on the general public to measure the effect of social media strategies. These studies have been the basis for the success of many businesses in utilizing social media, & if the instruments hadn't been reliable and valid, the results wouldn't have been effective. Therefore, the same instruments were used to conduct the study in Saudi Arabia.

Data Collection Procedures

Through an initial search & utilizing the researcher's own network, the sample of 10 experts for the qualitative research will be contacted personally and directly. They will be asked to spare some time to answer the question in the method they prefer: face-to-face or online through chat. The answers will be gathered, and recorded: saved as text files from online chats or through voice recording then transcription from face-to-face interviews. As for the quantitative research, an online survey tool (such as Survey Monkey) will be utilized to create the questionnaire which will then be distributed online through email, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and various other social networks and will also be posted on the researcher's website. The tool will allow for automatic collection and categorization of the data.

Data Analysis

The qualitative research will be harder to analyze, as the researcher will use her own judgment to categorize and interpret the gathered data. After the data is gathered and recorded, the researcher will review it to find themes that emerge and provide ground for analytic induction and logical conclusions. The key themes will be explained and further detailed into a report that summarizes the collected data. The quantitative data will be easier to analyze, as it will be classified into tables, charts and graphs. Through tabulation, percentages and measures of central tendency will present the results of the survey. The figures will then be further analyzed and interpreted in a report that compares the results with the findings of the qualitative research, or more accurately form the basis to formulate and test hypotheses on the ground of which strategies are proven successful and that is the ultimate objective of this research.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

SAUDI POPULATION SURVEY

The survey was published on June 6th and closed for answers on June 20th, resulting in 145 answers, which is enough to provide some inside into the characteristics of the Saudi Population online and to support or defer the results of surveys done on a larger scope by other sources cited in the secondary data.

Demographic & Gender Breakdown

The respondents were majorly male, with the largest age group being 25 - 34 (who are dominantly males), followed by 18 - 24 (who are dominantly females), indicating a more mature population using social networks than ever before. This will play a major role in the strategy of Food & FMCG brands according, considering these 2 major age groups are responsible for making or influencing buying decisions.

Figure 4.1 Gender & Demographic Breakdown of Survey Respondents
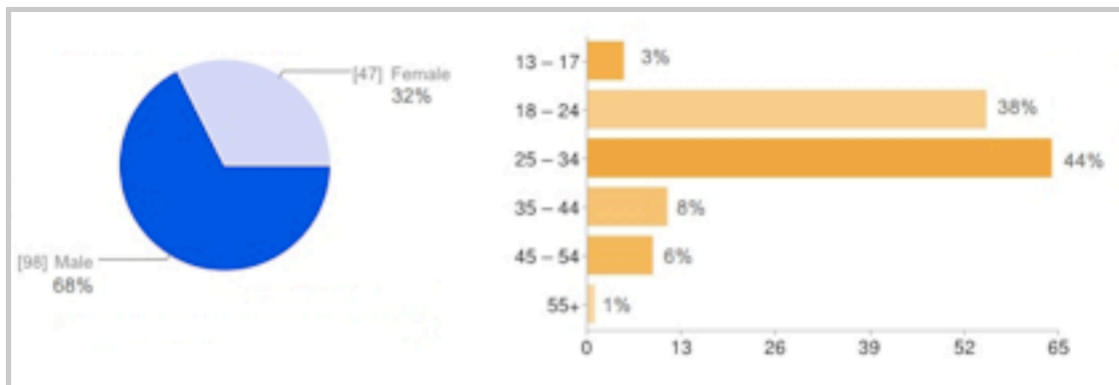
Social Networks Used

As expected, the social network being used most is Facebook, with 89% of survey respondents having an active personal profile, while a remaining 11% chooses not to use it & to depend mainly on other social networks. Even though statistics indicate that Facebook users account for 56.19% of Internet users in Saudi Arabia [3], these survey respondents are majorly active on Facebook, which served beneficial for the purpose of this research.

Figure 4.2 Social Networks Used by Survey Respondents
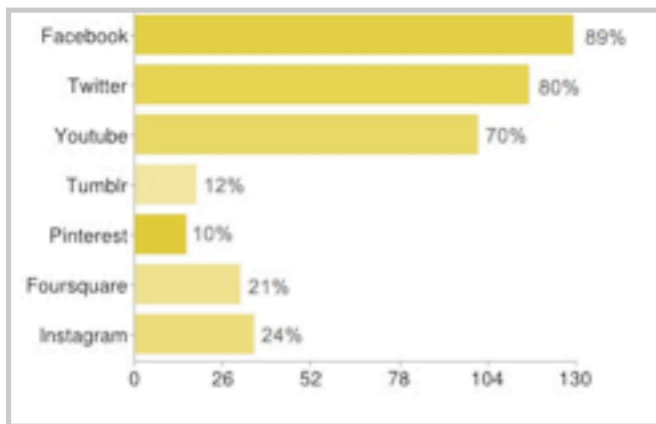
In this surveyed sample, 95% of females are using Facebook as compared to 85% of males; even though in general statistics, Facebook users in Saudi Arabia are 69% male & 31% female. So female participation in Saudi Arabia is still lower than the global average of roughly 50%, which the research concluded that it's due to societal and cultural limitations (family/society barriers or stereotypes placed on women)[4].

Coming as a close second to Facebook for the survey respondents is Twitter. Although Twitter penetration in Saudi Arabia is as low as 0.47%[5], its popularity is increasing daily, being the 6th most visited site in Saudi Arabia according to Alexa.com (Accessed on 22 June, 2012), and the surveyed sample indicate favorability of this social network with 82% of males & 74% of females being active twitter users.

Youtube is the number one social network in Saudi Arabia, and remarkably enough, the country ranks number one globally on Youtube in terms of views per internet user, with 90 million video views per day[6]. However, beyond uploading videos & commenting on videos & channels, the social network does not provide much room for socializing like the other networks do, which is presumably why it fell as a third used network in this survey at 70%, with 87% of female respondents using it as compared to 61% of male respondents.

Instagram, is a free photo sharing program launched in October 2010 that allows users to take a photo, apply a digital filter to it, and then share it on a variety of social networking services, including Instagram's own. It was included in the survey due to the potential usages it presents for brands, and with a 24% of respondents using it (29% of female respondents & 21% of male respondents), it is certainly worth being taken into account,

especially since Instagram launched support for Android phones in April 2012, after it was initially only supported on iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch[7].

Foursquare is a location-based social networking website for mobile devices where users check-in at venues by selecting from a list of venues the application locates nearby. Each check-in awards the user points and sometimes "badges"[8]. 21% of survey respondents use Foursquare (29% of female respondents vs. 17% of male respondents), presenting an opportunity for Food brands such as Restaurants and Cafes to utilize it in their social media marketing mix.

Tumblr is a microblogging platform and social networking website, owned and operated by Tumblr, Inc. The service allows users to post multimedia and other content to a short-form blog, named a "tumblelog". Users can follow other users' blogs, as well as make their blogs private.[9] Tumblr is the 33rd most visited website in Saudi Arabia according to Alexa.com (Accessed on 22 June, 2012), with only 12% of survey respondents using it with more females than males (14% and 11% respectively).

The least social network used by the sample is Pinterest, but it's still noteworthy given that it was launched 2 years ago but began to gain increasing popularity in the past few months, especially with females who make up 80% of the user base[10]. The survey results also indicate that more females use Pinterest than males (14% and 9% respectively), therefore matching the general global statistics for the social network.

Figure 4.3 Gender Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Social Network

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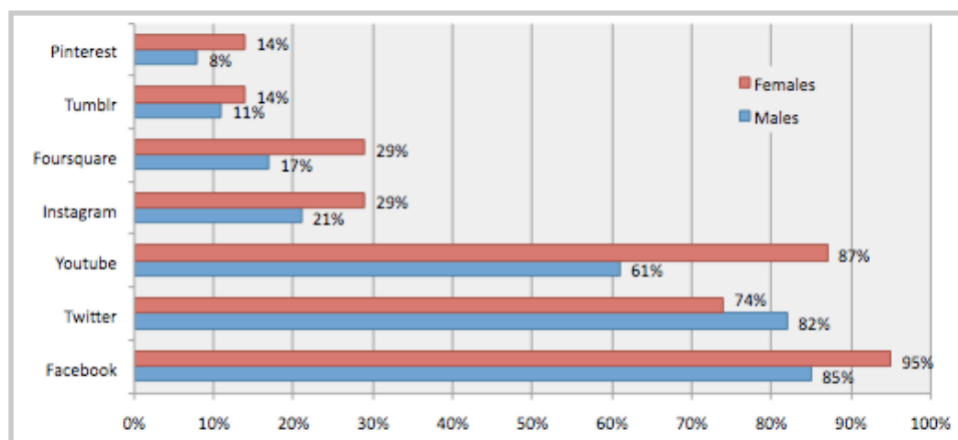
Figure 4.3 represents the gender breakdown of survey respondents by social networks from most popular to least popular (bottom to top). Although this sample does not reflect percentages of the overall Saudi population on social networks, proof being that official Facebook statistics indicate a higher percentage of males than females as opposed to the survey results, it does give some indication that mature females, who are active online & are social media savvy, would have profiles on more social networks than their males counterpart.

Time Spent on Social Networks

The majority of the surveyed sample spends 6 to 10 hours on social networks per week, so an average of one hour per day, with spending less than an hour per day coming as a close second.

Figure 4.4 Number of Hours Spent on Social Networks.
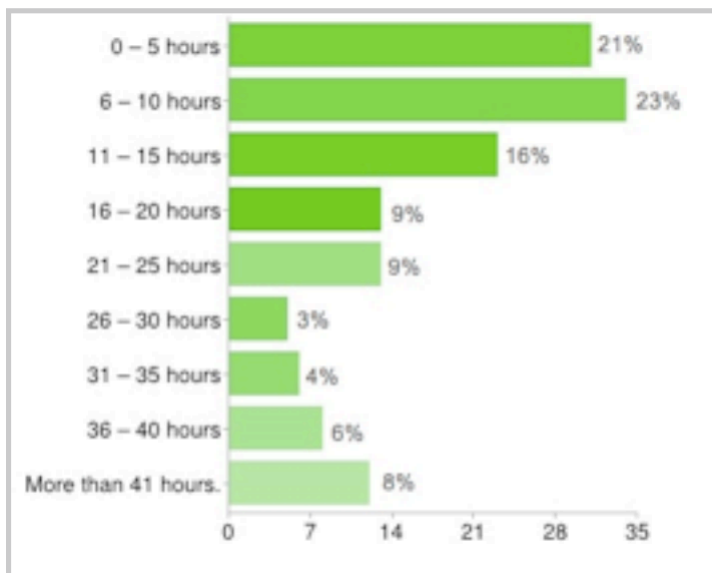
A closer inspection of the gender breakdown of time spent online indicates that females also tend to spend longer times online than males, with females spending an average of 20 hours per week on social networks as opposed to the 14 hours that the males spend.

Network Reach

Network reach is a measure of an individual's personal network of friends/followers on a social networking site. It indicates how "social" an individual is & how active he/she is in connecting with others on social networks & his/her potential to influence them.

Figure 4.5 Number of Friends on the Main Social Network.
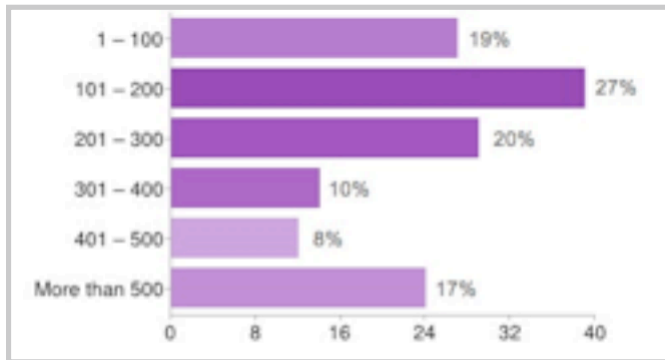
A majority of 27% of survey respondents stated that they had between 101 & 200 friends on the social network they use mainly which is Facebook mostly, as indicated earlier. According to the study done by The Online Project, the average number of Facebook friends in Saudi Arabia is 43 which is unrealistically low. The report states that the data on number of friends was collected through "Friends of Fans" feature, using Facebook Insights from a sample of pages from the Middle East containing a total of 368,141 users/fans[11]. The fallacy in this study could be that the pages taken into consideration did not include the typical Facebook users of Saudi Arabia, and that they would have included many fake profiles made to win competitions (a tactic often seen on Facebook pages) who were not connected to other facebook friends.

According to this research's sample, females have a larger network of friends than males with an average of 290 friends and 255 friends respectively. This reaffirms the general findings that woman are more social than men in the digital world, with female Facebook users having 8% more friends than males, and participating in 62% of the network's sharing[12].

Reasons for Using Social Media

When the sample was asked why they use social media, 92% of them typically use it to connect with family, friends & people in general for social purposes. The result was even between males and females. Sharing various media (photos, videos & music) is the second most popular reason for using social networks evenly between both genders as well. However, 18 - 24 adults are 80% more prone on sharing media as compared to 61% of 25 - 34 adults.

Figure 4.6 What Social Media is Used For.
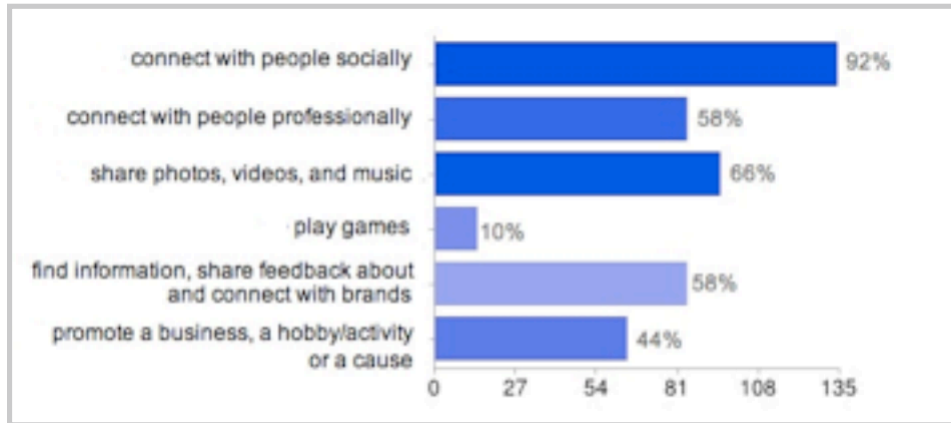
58% of total survey respondents use social networks to connect with people for professional purposes evenly across both major age groups (58% of 18 - 24 & 25 - 24), but typically more males do so than females (59% & 53% respectively).

At an even score of 58%, finding information, sharing feedback about and connecting is just as important for survey respondents. However, it is more important to males (at 32%) than it is for female (at 26.5%), and for old adults between 25 - 34 (at 43%) than it is for the young adults between 18 - 24 (at 20%).

44% of respondents use social media to promote a business, a hobby/activity or a cause with it being more popular with females (19%) than with males (12%). Lastly, playing games is expected to score low considering the respondents are majorly adults, with females being more interested in social gaming than males (12% and 8% respectively.)

On the survey conducted by Dubai School of Government after the popular political movements in the Arab countries, the main reason for Saudi population for using social media was to get news, information and advice on various issues, especially for females more than males (89% & 83% respectively). Coming as a close second was connecting with family/friends and like-minded individuals (81% of females & 78% of males). Fun and entertainment came at third place, which would be equivalent to sharing media and playing games in this research's survey, with females also topping the results with 76% as compared to males' 67%[13].

Connecting with Food & FMCG Brands on Social Networks

Although the survey respondents are majorly active on social networks, but they seem to not be keen on connecting with particularly Food & FMCG brands on social networks: 48% don't like any brands on Facebook, 61% don't follow any brands on Twitter, and 85% aren't subscribed to any brand channels on Youtube.

Figure 4.7 Connecting to Brands on Social Networks.
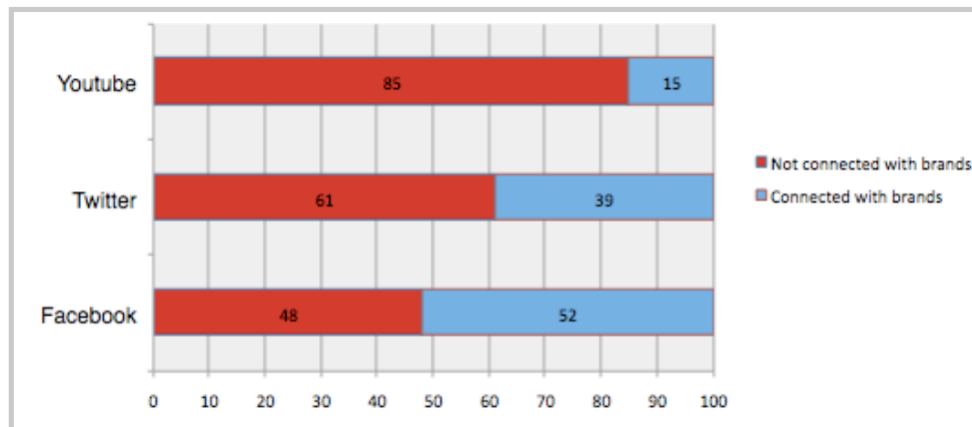
Facebook presents the biggest opportunity for Food & FMCG to target their audience, with 6% of respondents being fans to more than 20 pages. It is estimated that Arab Facebook users are connected to an average of 80 pages[14], but the majority of those pages are random pages made by users, celebrity pages or pages based on interests rather than commercial brands.

Twitter also presents a communication opportunity for Food & FMCG brands with 39% of respondents choosing to follow brands. However, the likelihood of Twitter users to follow a brand is minimal considering 33% of respondents follow only up to 5 Food & FMCG brands, most probably brands they feel great affinity for or brands who maintain a certain regular updating that necessitate a following.

Youtube is the least communication channel effective for targeting online audience according to the survey, where only 15% of respondents are subscribed to Food & FMCG brand channels, since the social network is mainly used for entertainment. However, not subscribing to a brand's Youtube channel isn't necessarily an indication of lack of interest in viewing a brand's videos without subscribing.

Effectiveness of Facebook Advertising and Competitions

Advertising on Facebook is perhaps one of the main vehicles used to draw target audiences to connect with a brand, especially during competitions & contests, even though some brands & marketers are skeptical of it.

Figure 4.8 Attitude Towards Ads on Social Networks.
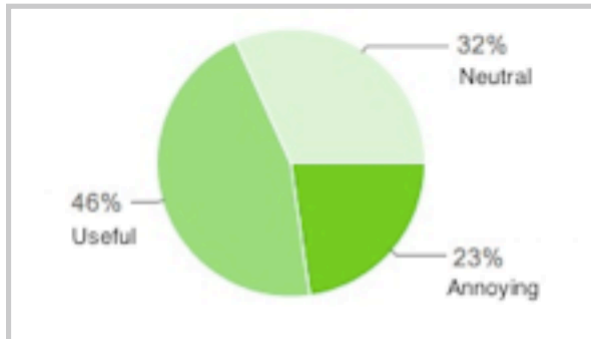
The majority of survey respondents (46%) stated they feel that ads on social networks are useful, and that they take action based on them (click on them), with even male to female ratio.

32% of respondents feel neutral about the ads, stating that they never really pay attention to them. This still presents an opportunity to grab their attention and convert them into taking an action. Only 23% felt negatively about them, considering them annoying and never clicking on them, which could indicate that they are often wrongly targeted or they just prefer keeping social networks strictly non-commercial.

Figure 4.9 Appeal of Contests by Type.
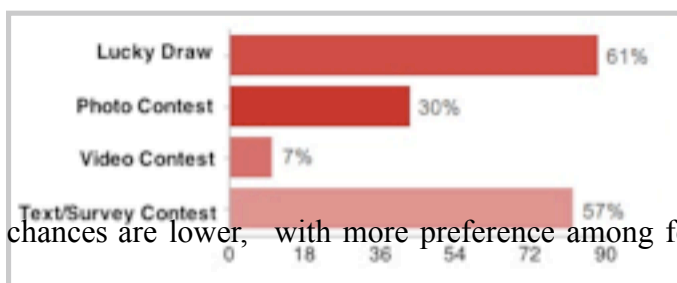
When it comes to competitions, survey respondents seems to prefer making the least effort possible with 61% being more likely to participate in a lucky raw, even though winning les (68% of females) than males (56% of males). 57% of respondents would also submit a text or answer a survey/ questions for a competition, with approximate ratios between males and females (55% & 57% respectively). Photo contests came third with 30% of respondents being willing to

chances are lower, with more preference among fe

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make an effort for a chance to win, adding room for creativity & higher engagement considering photo posts always tend to grab more attention than other types of posts according to Facebook statistics[15]. Photo contest participation is also more likely for females (at 36%) than for males (at 26.5%).

As expected, video contests scored the least with only 7% of respondents willing to shoot a video to participate. This coincides with Youtube being the least preferred communication channel with brands as stated earlier. It is also due to cultural limitations where Saudi population is reluctant to publicly share personal videos. Still, more females indicated their likelihood to enter a video contest than males (8.5% and 6% respectively).

Figure 4.10 Frequency of Participation in Social Media Competitions
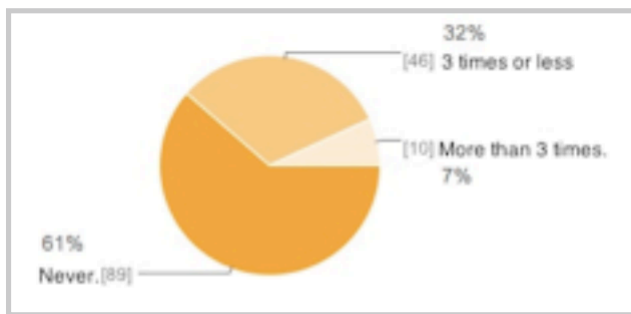
Although a majority of the respondents have indicated their likelihood/willingness of entering a competition in a social network, 61% have never before participated in any competition. However, 32% have participated in 3 competitions or less and 7 % have participate in more than 3 competitions; combined, they present an opportunity for repeating their experience of competing on social networks.

It is also worthy to note that young adult females have participated in competitions more often than males, with 46.8% and 35.7% respectively.

Figure 4.11 Frequency of Voting for a Friend in Social Media Competitions
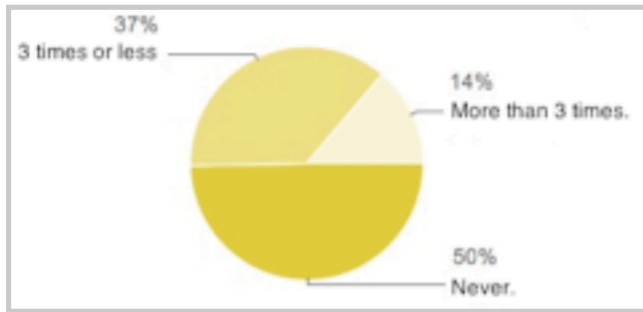
Inviting participants' friends to vote for them is also another tactic used to spread awareness about a competition and attract more fans/ followers. This tactic seems to be useful considering that, although 61% of respondents have never entered a competition, only 50% have never voted for a friend in a competition. So, although only 7% of respondents participated in more than 3 competitions, 14% have voted for friends in competition more than 3 times, presenting a good opportunity of engaging friends' of fans.

Potential of Interaction with Brands

Statistics from the survey so far indicate that respondents are actively engaged with brands, and interaction with a brand is a key factor in shaping consumers' perception of it & affecting their buying decision. 41% of the respondents indicated that their decision to buy a certain brand/product was affected by their interaction with that brand on social networks, which can go favorably or negatively for the brand based on that interaction.

Figure 4.12 Potential of Interacting with Brands on Social Networks
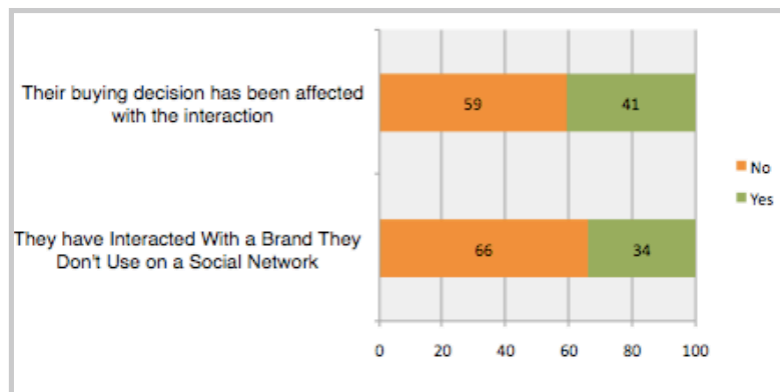
According to Omnicom's research (as cited in Social Media In MENA, 2011), active users in Saudi Arabia use the social subscription function (to "like" or to follow) to express an affinity (50%), a buying habit (21%) or purchase intentions (28%). Even

though their proportion of the total is small, but these active users show a much higher purchase intention than in other markets.

Therefore, the 34% of respondents who have interacted with brands they don't use present a potential for conversion considering the interaction has a 41% chance of affecting their buying decision.

Preferred Points of Interaction with Brands

As global trends indicates, consumers are going digital and they like their favorite brands to follow them as well.

Figure 4.13 Preferred Points of Interaction with Brands
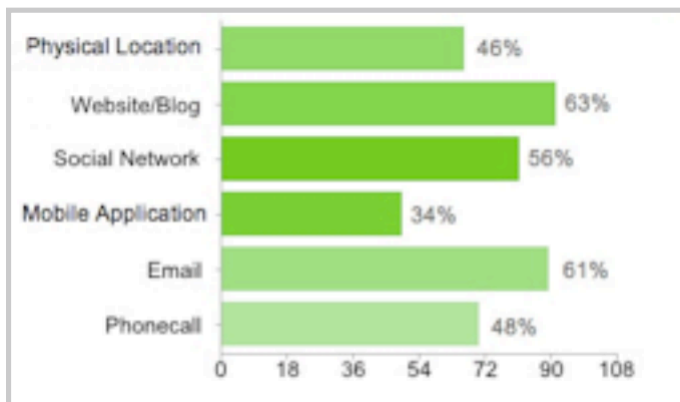
Of the survey respondents, the majority showed preference for interacting with brands over digital means than other tradition means such as physical location or phone-call. Surprisingly, 63% of them preferred interacting with a brand on its own website or blog as compared to 56% on a social network. Email comes at second place with 61%, even ahead of social networks at 56% as a preferred point of interaction. Using a mobile application to interact with a brand comes as a last resort for respondents, with only 34%, which is presumably due to the (imagined or realistic) lack of sociability of brands over an app. It is expected however, as Omnicom's research (as cited in Social Media In MENA, 2011) showed that Saudi users stated they would be unable to survive without social networking (Facebook) worse than with not being on a mobile phone (which 81% use mainly for making calls more than once a day, coinciding with this sample's preference for interacting with brands through phone-calls than mobile apps).

The Omnicom research also stated that social media is a source of insights on products/ brands, a statement that 54% of Saudi users agreed to, above all other possible values of social media.

BRANDS OBSERVATION

Many brands have jumped on the social media bandwagon years ago, and many keep jumping unto it day by day. Some have had great success all over the region, while others keep struggling, unable to figure what is wrong or how to move forward.

For the purpose of this research, 25 brands were tracked on the major social networking sites of Facebook, Twitter and Youtube, with their progress being recorded weekly starting May 23rd, 2012 and ending on 20th of June, 2012. The brands were chosen at random from the Food and FMCG industry and categorized in 4 sections of Restaurants/ Confectionary cafes, Food Products & Beverages, Cosmetics, and Household Products. The table below depicts the 25 chosen brands. A list of the brands' social networks URLs and data is attached to the research as "Appendices B, D & C".

Table 4.1 List of Observed Brands.

List of Observed Brands			
Restaurants/ Confectionary Cafes	Food Products & Beverages	Cosmetics	Household Products
KFC Arabia	Activia	Wella Professionals	Persil Abaya Shampoo
TGI Friday's	Al Marai	Mikyajy	Head & Shoulders
Domino's Pizza	Goody Kitchen	Kerastase	Sunsilk Arabia
Pizza Fusion	Toblerone	Lux Beauty	Garnier Arabia
Krispy Kreme	Nestle Desserts	Faces	AloeDent
Shawarmer	Tang Arabia	Maybelline	
McDonald's			
Munch Bakery			

Other brands also emerged during the research and were included to provide examples for certain aspects in the study, such as: Piatto Restaurant, Frico Cheese, AXE Middle East, 7UP, and others.

Performance Metrics

The performance of these brands was tracked according to the most basic metrics available publicly per each social network, and compared to each other as well as industry standards where available.

Table 4.2 Performance Metrics Per Social Network.

Performance Metrics Per Social Network		
Facebook	**Youtube**	**Twitter**
Fanbase Growth Rate	Views/Video Per Month Rate	Influence Measure
Engagement Rate	Subscribers Per Videos/Month Rate	

Brands' Performance on Facebook

Facebook is the main social network used by all brands, and is mostly the first (if not the only) social network that brands aim to focus their digital marketing in & succeed at.

Brands usually set their goal from using Facebook pages as "Reach X number of fans", but that is not a basis of measurement or comparison considering it is affected by many factors such as:

• How long has the Facebook page been active?

• What's the market share of the brand (is it an international brand, or a local small business)?

• Are the fans increasing organically or through paid advertising?

• Is the majority of fans the brand's target audience?

Therefore, instead of comparing brands according to number of fans, they will be compared according to *fanbase growth rate*, which is an indication of how well the brand is able to attract new fans, and according to *engagement rate*, which is a measure of how well the brand keeps those fans active on the page.

Fanbase Growth Rate

Research have shown that the average daily *organic* increase in fans for facebook pages is 0.19% (or 1.4% per week)[16]. An *organic* growth means without the support of paid Facebook advertising. 17 brands out of the 25 were using paid advertising to grow their fanbase, listed in Table 4.3, but they will still be compared to industry standard but more of against each other.

Table 4.3 Organic Vs. Paid Fanbase Growth

Organic Vs. Paid Fanbase Growth				
Organic		**Paid**		
KFC Arabia	Lux Beauty	Activia	Domino's Pizza	Persil Abaya Shampoo
Mikyajy	McDonald's	Al Marai	AloeDent	Faces
Pizza Fusion	Sunsilk Arabia	Goody Kitchen	Wella Professionals	TGI Friday's
Krispy Kreme	Head & Shoulders	Toblerone	Kerastase	Tang Arabia
Munch Bakery	Shawarmer	Nestle Desserts	Maybelline	Garnier Arabia

Over the period of 5 weeks between May and June, the number of fans for each brand was recorded (See: Appendix B), and weekly fan growth rate was calculated then averaged out (AWFG). The results can be seen in Figure 4.14.

Figure 4.14 Average Weekly Fan Growth of The Observed Brands' Facebook Pages.
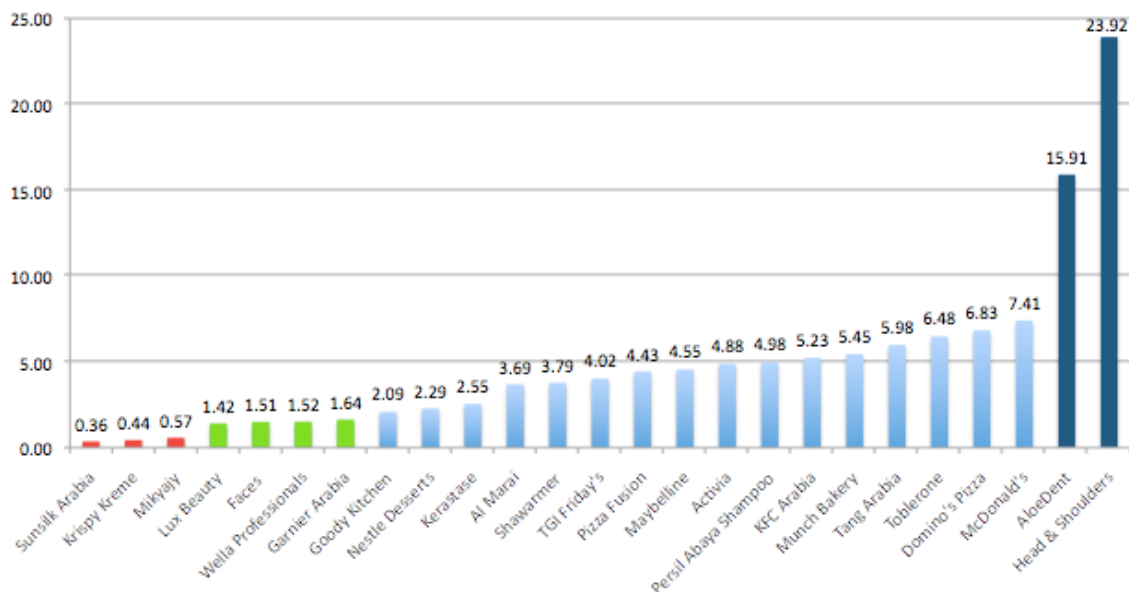
When the selected brands were compared against the industry standard, those with organic growth fell below average, except for 5 brands: Lux Beauty, Pizza Fusion, KFC Arabia, Munch Bakery, McDonald's, and Head & Shoulders. While these brands did not employ facebook advertising to grow their fanbase, they were reaping great results with other tactics to be discussed in Chapter Five.

Engagement Rate

The engagement rate on Facebook Pages is calculated by calculating the percentage of "People Talking About" (PTAT) a page from the total page fans (= 100 x People Talking About This/Total Number of Fans). The PTAT metric is measures fan engagement by counting 'stories' which are considered to be any type of direct interaction with a fan page such as: initial liking; liking specific content on a page, posting to a wall; commenting; sharing a post or other content from the page; answering a question; photo tagging; check-ins or RsVPing to an event. The PTAT number is publicly available on any brand page. It is the true measure of Facebook Page's success because it is not enough to pile up fans in a page if they are not talking to the brand & interacting with it.

The engagement rate is a measure of the effectiveness of a brand's content strategy, as it indicates how well the content posted on the page is attracting interaction from the fans (likes, comments, shares, clicks, etc.).

It is important to note that the engagement rate is highly affected by Facebook advertising because the "People Talking About This" also include the number of unique Facebook users who view an ad and click on it whether they convert to fans or not. A study done by Nelson-Field, K. and Taylor J. (Admap: May 2012) have found that there is a positive relationship between the average weekly fan growth and the PTAT proportion to total fans. The strong positive correlation ($r = 0.93$, $p < .001$) suggests that, in any given week, fan growth explains the largest amount of variation in the PTAT number. This suggests that the bulk of 'talking' is one-off 'joining' – a far cry from talking about, and engaging with, a brand. When we extract average weekly fan growth from the PTAT number it

reveals the degree of interaction (after becoming a fan) – which is the core of engagement (as cited in Facebook fans: A fan for life).

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the engagement rate (ER) will be calculated as:

ER = PTAT/Total Fans% - AWFG%.

For benchmarking purposes, average ER per product category type, presented in Table 4.4, were researched by Nelson-Field, K. and Taylor J. (Admap: May 2012)[17].

Table 4.4 Average Engagement Rate Per Product Category.

Industry	Av. ER
Confectionery	0.28
Other FMCG (washing powder, biscuits, personal care, etc.)	0.30
Cosmetics	0.41
Food services (restaurants)	0.50
Beverages/Soft Drinks	0.59

These averages were calculated from the top 200 Brand Pages on Facebook, that have an average fan base size of approximately 5 million. It is worth noting here that pages with larger fan bases have usually lower ERs as compared to pages with small fan bases because it is relatively easier to please smaller crowds by figuring out what would keep them engaged. Generally, the more "Likes" a page has, the harder it is to get high engagement, however, and within most industries there are clear exceptions to that rule, demonstrating that strong content can engage a community of any size[18].

Other average ERs have been reported as well, based on different studies & measurements, ranging from as low as 0.072% for FMCGs Brand Pages with an average size of 2'296'740 fans[19] as set by SocialBakers.com, to 1% as reported by Ad Age[20].

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the average *organic* ER will be set between 0.07% to 1% to accommodate all researches. When compared against the industry

average, 9 brands measure up even though 7 of them are using paid advertising, meaning their organic ER is usually even lower.

14 of the brands are above-average, with Wella Professionals topping the chart with a 7.10 ER, which indicates a successful strategy of combined advertising & content. Another factor is that Wella Professionals Page has also the lowest number of fans among these 25 brands (5,360 fans on June 20, with a big gap of 13'000 fans difference between it & the second page with the least number of fans, Activia). AloeDente also have a high ER considering it started with around 14'100 fans on May 23rd and through advertising, gained up to 25'300 by June 20th. So its small fanbase and aggressive advertising caused the surge in ER. Worthy of mention, among these 14 brands, 4 have organic ERs indicating a good content strategy that was highly engaging fans during this period, especially in the case of Munch Bakery with around 82'000 on June 20th. KFC Arabia, with over 1 million fans on June 20th, have also managed to achieve a good ER considering it has the largest fanbase among these brands.

Figure 4.15 Engagement Rate of The Observed Brands' Facebook Pages.
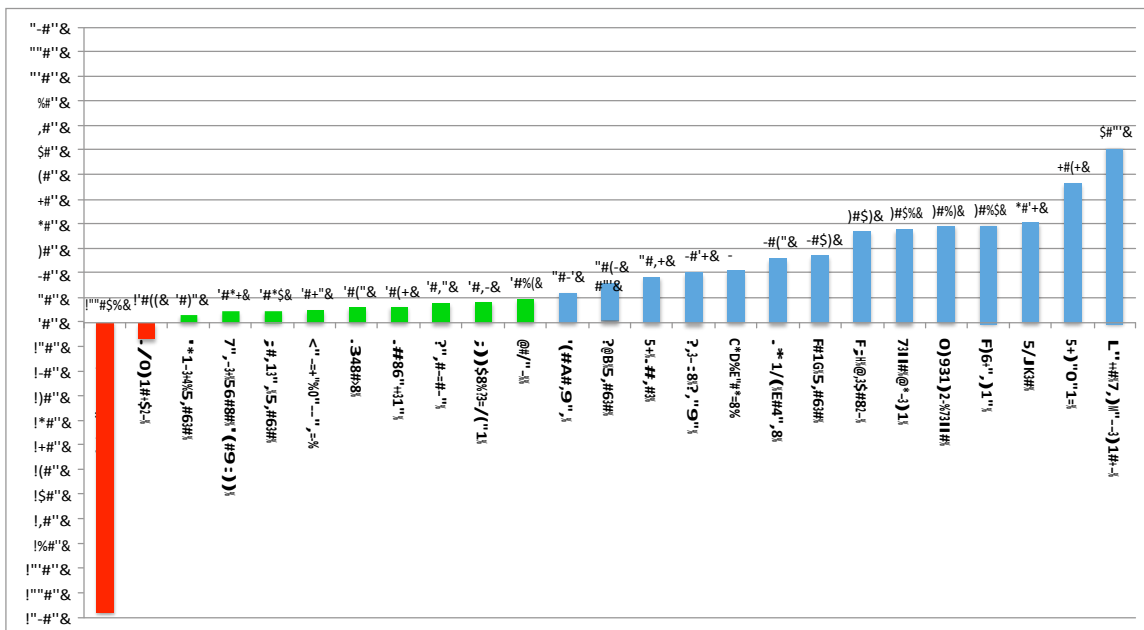
Head & Shoulders' success in attracting a huge number of fans clearly didn't translate into engagement, especially in the fifth week where there was a 75% increase in fans but

only a 26% increase in engagement. The negative engagement rate here is only an indication that the fan growth was too rapid & drastic that it didn't register yet into PTAT. It is important to note that Facebook releases PTAT on a weekly basis (a PTAT at a certain day reflects the total number of people talking about a brand in a week time ending with 2 days before the particular day the result is recorded), however, the number of fans is recorded in real-time. This means that a drastic increase in fans within 48 hours of June 20th (last day data was recorded) will not have yet been accounted for in the PTAT recorded on that day, which would have only been registered up to June 18th. This was also the case for McDonald's which was seeing a rapid and above-average growth in the number of fans. The reason AloeDente's ER didn't show a negative result in relation to its weekly fan growth can be due to the dropping rate, week by week (starting with 22.85% at week 1, and dropping to 10.68% by week 5). However, for the purpose of a fair comparison, when the ERs for Head & Shoulders and McDonald's Pages are calculated on an average week (with no abnormal fan growth), they respectively score 0.84 and 1, ranking them as the 13th & 15th most engaging pages in these 25 brands.

Brands' Performance on Youtube

With Youtube being the number one most visited social network in Saudi Arabia, it is evident that brands attempt to tap into that network to gain a share of the 90 million views per day. However, Youtube is considered to be a source of entertainment first and foremost, in accordance with the respondents' lack of interest in subscribing to brands' channels.

68% of the selected brands has a youtube channel they use to share video content. It is important to note as well that 24% of these brands opted for using Facebook videos instead of a stand-alone youtube channel but that will not be taken into considering since no public statistics can be obtained to analyze their effectiveness, and because the video content strategy would differ between Youtube and Facebook. Lastly, only 8% of the brands do not have any video channel.

Brands with Video Channels
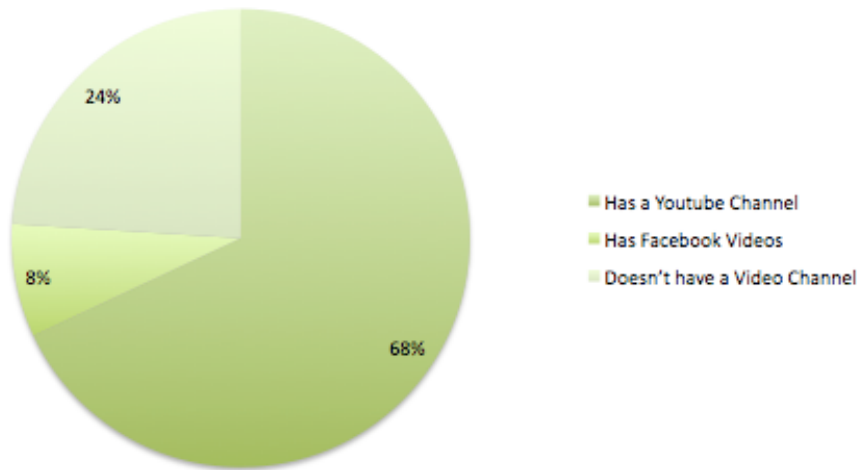
These stats indicate the importance of video content in brand's social media marketing mix, but video content can be very costly, and therefore, demands a higher Return on Investment (ROI). That can be measured with 2 key performance ratios: Views/Videos and Subscribers/Videos.

Views/Videos Per Month Rate

The first metric that is used to measure a youtube channel's success is its total video views, which is the number of times the channel's videos have been viewed. High numbers of views indicate a successful video content strategy. While there is no an industry average to how many views a channel should have, but a comparison between channels of a similar category can help create a benchmark.

Of course, the number of videos on a channel would *normally* affect the number of views. "Normally" is a keyword here because in many cases, a channel with one video that goes viral can have millions of views as compared to a channel with hundreds of videos and low/average number of views. Other than the number of videos, the date of launching the first video also plays a role in the number views because the longer a video has been a youtube, the better chances it has at getting more views. The number of videos that a channel uploaded also affects the number views to a good deal, because sharing new up-to-date content will attract more views for the latest video, and will also highlight the

channel's other older videos with "related videos", thus increasing chances of viewing for the older videos as well.

So the selected brands will be compared against each other based on views per video, but taken into consideration the ratios of videos per month, and views/videos per month. The data used for these calculation is attached in Appendix C.

Figure 4.17 Brands' Youtube Channel Views Per Video Rate.
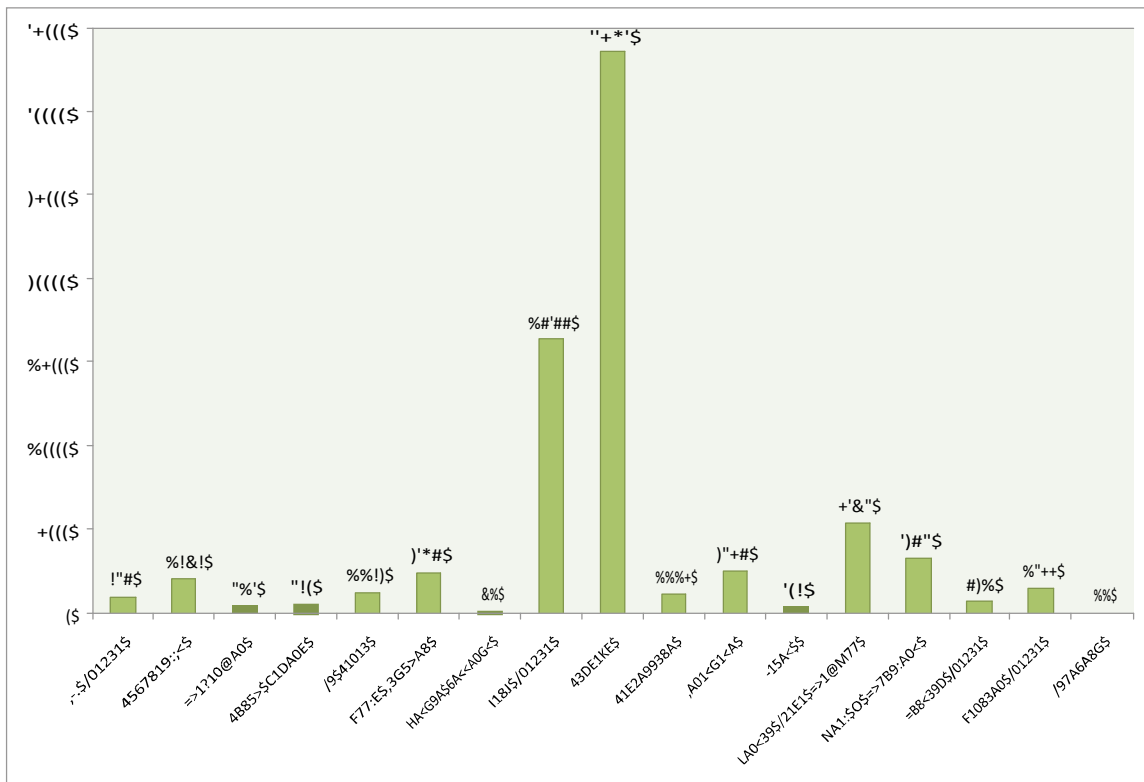
Mikyajy's youtube channel stands out remarkably among all the other channels with an average of 33'000 views per video, with double the views of the second highest rated channel, Tang Arabia. After that, the gap even goes bigger with views as low as 11 for AloeDent.

The views/video rate also varies greatly among the same product category: KFC Arabia being topped by McDonald's, Goody Kitchen immensely topping out Nestle Desserts and Al Marai, Mikyajy trumping Maybelline that is also topped out by Faces, and Head & Shoulders coming first to Garnier then Sunsilk.

Figure 4.18 Brands' Youtube Channel Views/Video Rate Per Month.
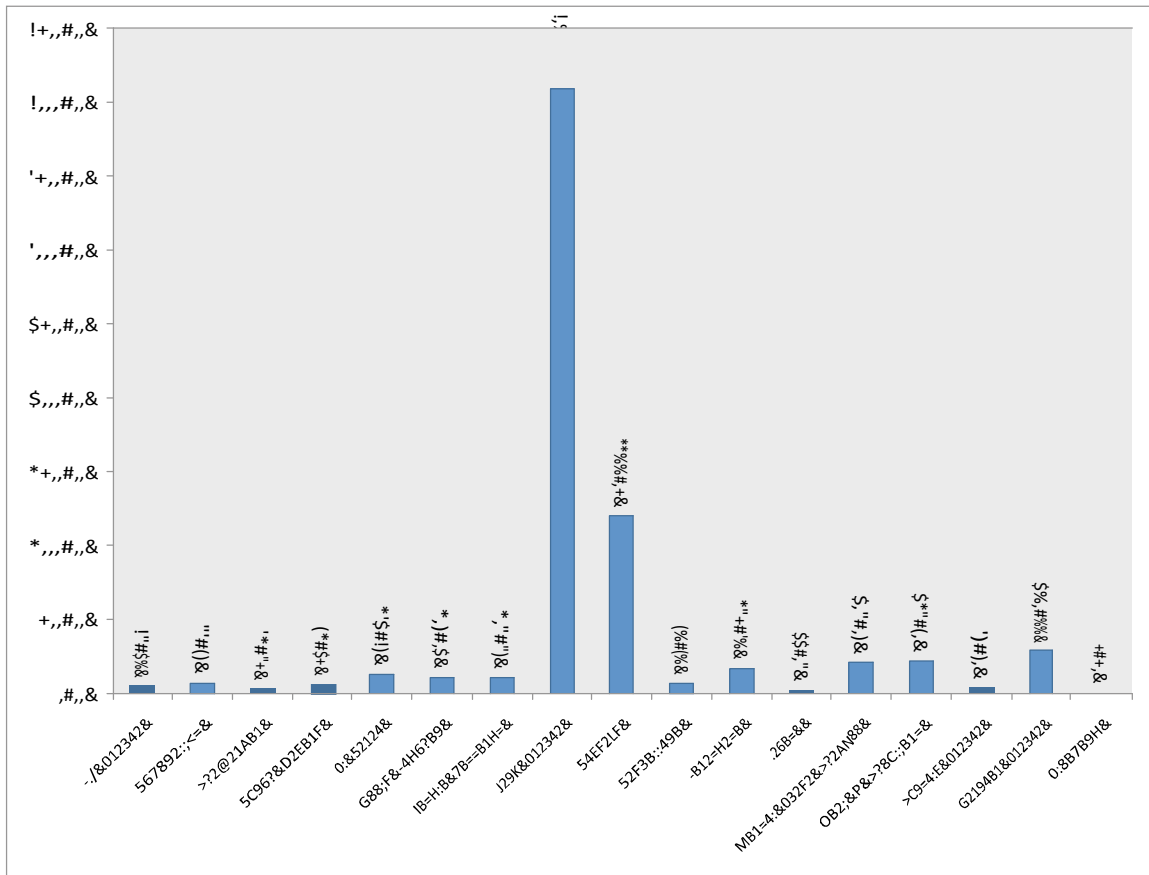
When the time factor is taken into consideration, some of the results flip showing how a few videos that have been launched from a short while can have higher viewership rate according to their content.

While Mikyajy had topped the chart in the number of views per video, it is taken down by a major gap by Tang Arabia that has a much younger channel and a much higher views/video rate per month. Another noticeable difference is that Al Marai, Goody Kitchen and Nestle Desserts show approximate results when the views per videos are averaged out by months. Garnier Arabia also tops Head & Shoulders but by not much of a difference.

Figure 4.19 Brands' Youtube Channel Videos Per Month
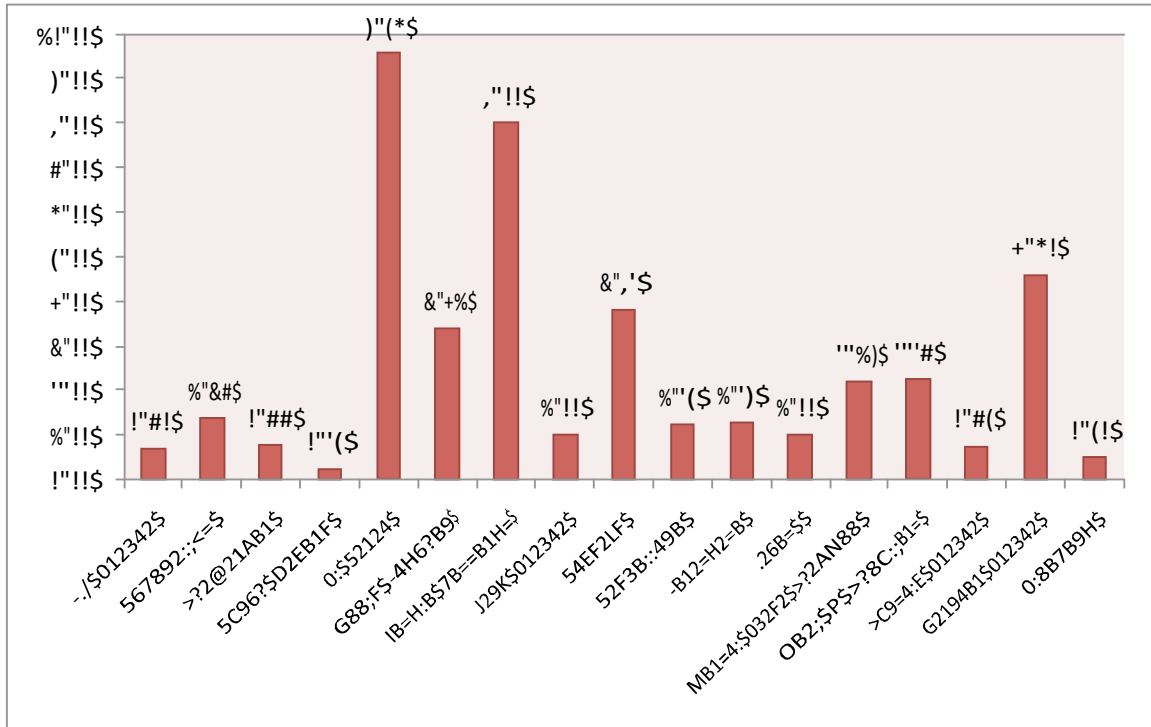
Another metric for comparing these brands is the videos per month rate as it measures how active a brand is in taking advantage of the network. A brand that has had a channel for a year with only one video is not as engaging as a brand that has only had a channel for a month & has produced more than one video, per se. Typically, uploading more videos would mean more views, but in the contrast between quality vs quantity, quality always triumphs, as one video that is truly engaging would have more views.

When compared by video/month rate, Al Marai tops the chart with more than 9 videos per month, which is much of a good difference from Goody Kitchen's 3.4 rate, so although Goody Kitchen has more views per video, it has been active much longer than Al Marai on Youtube and has produced lesser videos on average. This concludes that Goody Kitchen's video quality (attractiveness to audience) is higher than Al Marai's. Coming second is Nestle Desserts, that despite its young channel (3 weeks), it has produced an average of 8 videos per month, that are getting an average of 107 views each (Figure 4.17). Mikyajy, even though has a very high views/video rate, is producing an average of 3.8 videos per months that gets an average of almost 1200 views.

Subscribers Per Videos/Month Rate

Channels usually measure their success by their ability to convert viewers into subscribers, which ensures a constant connection to the channel & being informed whenever new content is uploaded. It also enables channels to send messages and make announcements to their subscribers. Youtube itself awards channels with most subscriptions.

From the observed brands, Mikyajy tops the chart by number of subscribers, with 2'832 subscribers, ahead all the other brands by far. Goody Kitchen comes second, ahead from its competitor Al Marai but not much difference. The rest of the brands' subscriptions are far from impressive in comparison, but it is not unexpected considering that 85% of the survey respondents do not to subscribe to commercial/brand channels.

Figure 4.20 Brands' Youtube Channel Rank by Number of Subscribers.
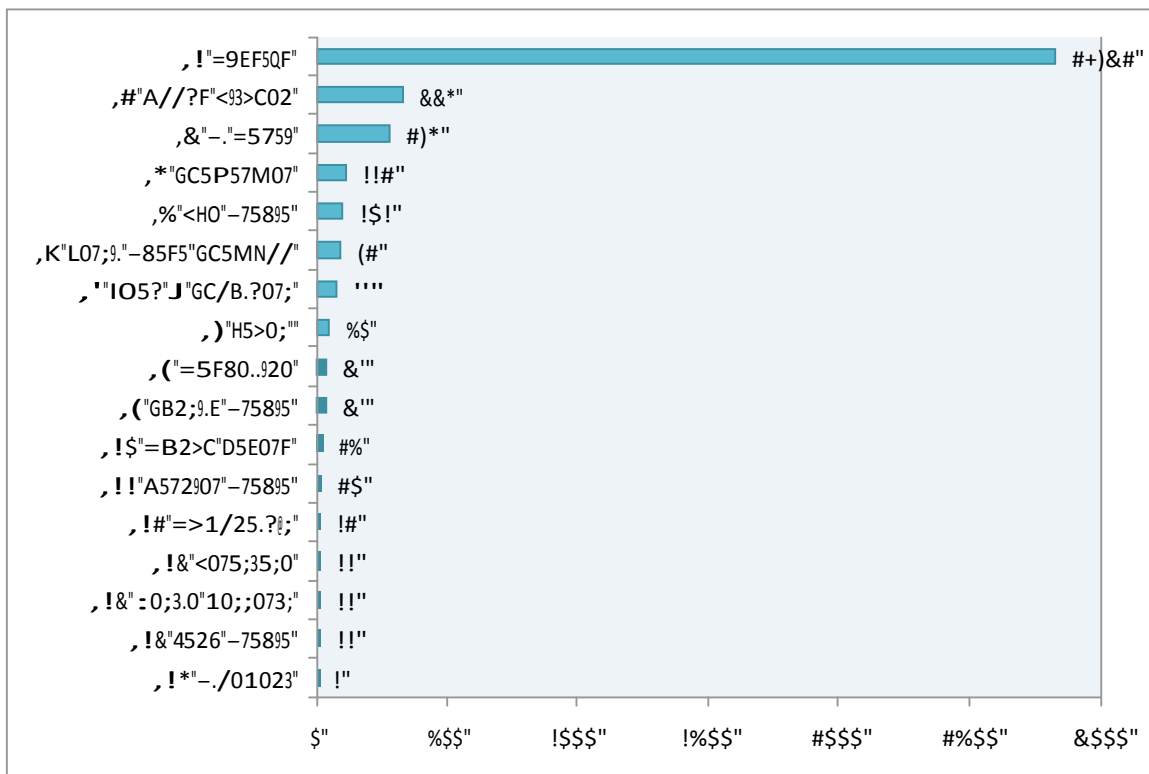
However, to evenly compare these brands, the Subscribers per Video/Month rate will be used to actually gauge how viewers' interest increases with each video enough to

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warrantee taking an action (to subscribe) while taking into account the time the brand has had online to produce videos that would warrantee an action. In normal cases, the longer a brand has been on youtube, the better chances it has at generating video content that viewers could judge as interesting or not and decide to subscribe to see the channel's upcoming videos. Another reason to account for videos/month is the tendency for viewers to take action based on how active the channel is (how many videos it has uploaded and when was the last one). Users will be less likely to subscribe to a channel if they deem it as inactive because they believe it is unlikely that it would upload any new content.

Figure 4.21 Brands' Youtube Channel Ranked by Subscribers Per Video/Month Rate.
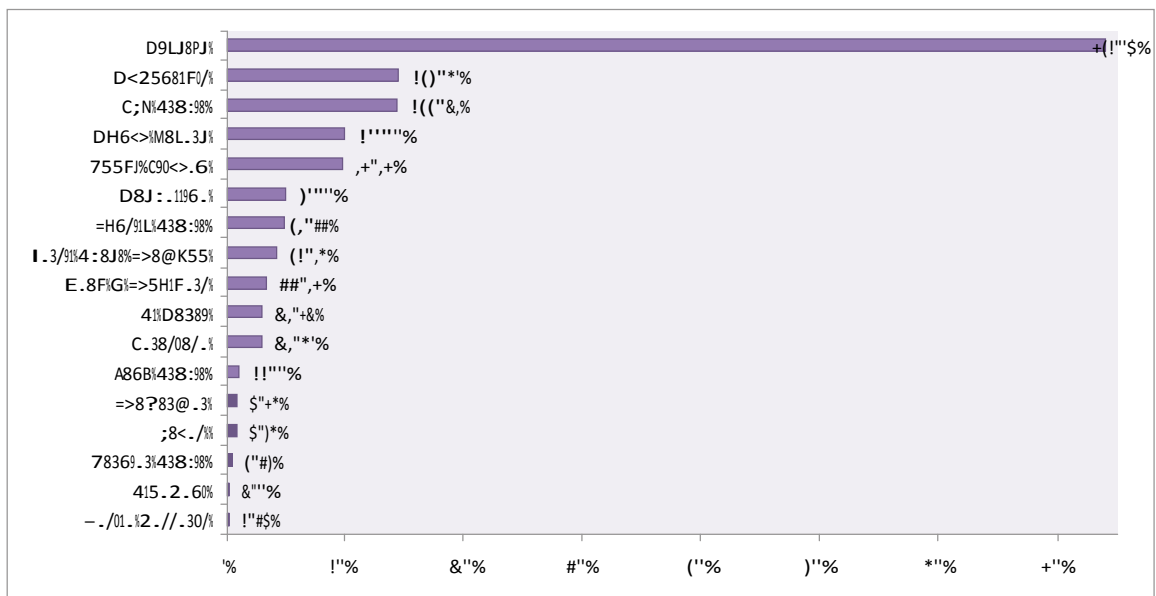
Mikyajy holds its ground as well with its viewers showing the highest level of interest in its video content by subscribing to stay updated with its uploads. However, the rest of the results fluctuates. McDonald's rise from #12, up to #2; a sign that the videos it uploaded during the age of its channel resulted in higher percentage of action in comparison to the other brands. Munch Bakery rises from #10 to #4, showing a good rate of interest from its viewers compared to the other brands with higher subscriptions.

Brands' Performance on Twitter

Twitter is usually the second social network that brands opt to maintain a presence in. Even though it is not as popular as Youtube, which requires original video content, but it is optimal as a microblogging tool that lets a user connect with other users in real-time, stay updated with emerging trends, or track conversations about any topic (even a brand's own reputation) through hashtags or keyword search.

However, Twitter can be more difficult for brands to manage since it is different in nature than Facebook and requires more timely commitment & understanding of its users' behavior. This is reflected in the percentage of the selected brands that have created accounts but are inactive (doesn't tweet or have not tweeted in months).

Figure 4.22 Observed Brands with Twitter Accounts.
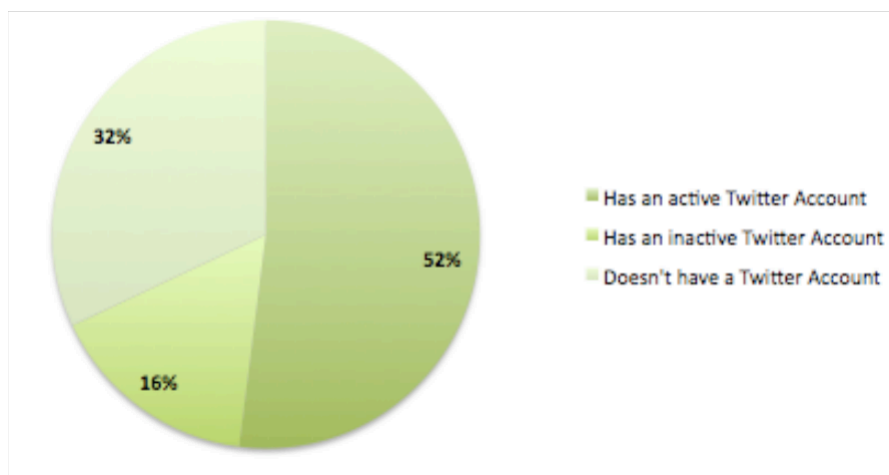
16% of them as well remain off-twitter, or might have unofficial accounts that aren't maintained under the name of their brands. Note that only local Twitter accounts linked to these brands were taken into consideration, same as Facebook pages, not internationally-maintained accounts. Still, the majority of these brands have active twitter accounts and managed to get quite a following, which is a sign of the importance of this social network in the social media marketing mix. However, being active & piling up followers aren't enough measures of success on this network.

Influence Measure

Influence on Twitter is a measure of a user's ability to drive action and how well he/she engages with others. Driving action on Twitter comprises of getting replies, mentions, retweets, and "favorites".

For the purpose of measuring the brands' performance on twitter, the standard measure of influence on social media, Klout, will be used. Klout is an online tool that gained prominence in social media circles, as it measures a user's influence on social networks and assigns it a score from 0 to 100[21]. The Klout Score uses data from social networks in order to measure:

- True Reach: How many people a user influences. This is the number of people that tend to respond or share the messages posted by the user.

- Amplification: How much a user influences people. This is the number of people who respond to a user's message or spread it further. If people often act upon a user's content, the Amplification score will be high.

- Network Impact: The influence of a user's network. This measure how often influencers share and respond to a user's content. Having a small network of highly influential users has usually more impact than a large network of people with no influence.

Although Klout scores users from a 100, but the average score is actually 20, indicating the minimum level of activity that needs to be maintained to have some influence. However, a score of 50 or higher is what marks a user as "influential".

It is important to note that Klout scores fluctuates weekly depending on the user's activity; therefore, the change in the brands' scores was recorded weekly for the period of observation, and the average of those changes will be considered for comparison instead of the latest Klout score for each brand. Another comparison metric taken into account is the Klout score growth per month, obtained by dividing the latest Klout score by the number of months since the twitter account has been created. The creation date of twitter

accounts plays a role here, since accounts that have been managed for a longer time has had a better chance at increasing their score over that period. It would be unsystematic to compare the influence of a twitter account that has been active for 1 year with that of an account that was created only 1 month ago, per se.

Figure 4.23 Observed Brands's Klout Scores Vs. Klout Scores Growth Per Month.
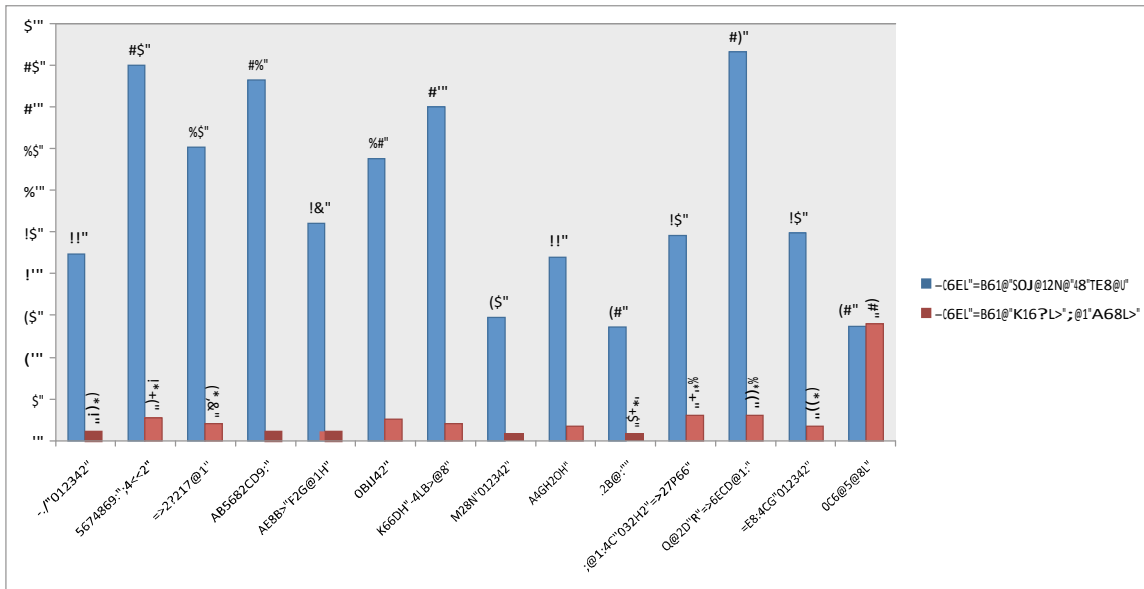
Four brands stand out as influential with a score of 40 and higher, the highest of which is Head & Shoulders with 47. The account also has a high score growth of 3.11 so it grew at a faster pace than all the other brands, aside from AloeDent that's only been active for one month. However, it's important to note that most accounts that start with minimum activity are given a score starting with 10; a 0 is only given if the account has not been active at all, or for months, causing its score to continue to drop to a 0. The scores of the other 3 influential brands aren't as impressive considering their slow growth rate, especially McDonald's that was launched 36 months, the oldest by far in the whole group.

The lowest performing brands on Twitter are Tang Arabia and Faces with both the lowest Klout scores and slowest growth rates considering they've been on twitter for 19 months and 16 months respectively, as compared to Shawarmer and Domino's Pizza that have been on the social network for just as long.

Ranking Brands By Overall Performance

Facebook, Youtube and Twitter form the triangle of social media success. Although social media extends way beyond these three social networks, for a Food & FMCG brand, and brands in other industries, these three are where the masses are and they are usually at the heart of every social media strategy.

Therefore, the observed brands' overall performance on social media will be judged by how well they perform on these three social networks. In Table 4.5, the brands are ranked based on the results obtained in each social network's performance metrics.

Ranking Rules:

The ranking by Engagement Rate was reordered to account for the size of each Facebook Page since the larger the fanbase the lower the ER. Brands were ranked from highest to lowest ER per highest number fans to lowest number of fans in 5 fanbase ranges: over 500'000 fans, [500'000 fans - 100'000 fans], [100'000 fans - 50'000 fans], [50'000 fans - 10'000 fans], and below 10,000 fans. The other change in ranking is Klout Score Growth Per Month where AloeDent was dropped to the bottom of the list because its high average is only due to its very young age which doesn't quite qualify it as "best practice"

The top brands are decided based on the frequency of their re-occurrence in the top 10 of at least one performance metrics of each social network, and a Klout Score over 20. This is to ensure that the resulting brands have a coherent overall strategy & a proper understanding of the full scope of social media, rather than just a random success in one of the social networks only.

Table 4.5 Brands Ranked By Performance on Facebook, Youtube and Twitter.

	Facebook				Youtube				Twitter			
	AWFGR		ER		Views/Video Per Month		Subscribers Per V/V Month		Klout Score		Klout Growth/Month	
1	Head & Shoulders	23.92	KFC Arabia	1.62	Tang Arabia	4091.38	Mikyajy	26.47	Head & Shoulders	47	Head & Shoulders	3.11
2	AloeDent	15.91	Al Marai	1.85	Mikyajy	1199.05	Munch Bakery	12.50	Domino's Pizza	45	Persil Abaya Shamp	3.08
3	McDonald's	7.41	Head & Shoulders	0.89	Garnier Arabia	290.99	McDonald's	11.20	McDonald's	43	Domino's Pizza	2.81
4	Domino's Pizza	6.83	Tang Arabia	2.73	Head & Shoulders	217.60	KFC Arabia	7.21	Goody Kitchen	40	Activia	2.60
5	Toblerone	6.48	Krispy Kreme	2.05	Persil Abaya Shampoo	207.08	Goody Kitchen	4.45	Shawarmer	35	Goody Kitchen	2.00
6	Tang Arabia	5.98	Toblerone	3.97	Faces	175.39	Maybelline	3.57	Activia	34	Shawarmer	1.96
7	Munch Bakery	5.45	TGI Friday's	3.73	Al Marai	132.48	Al Marai	3.30	Munch Bakery	26	Sunsilk Arabia	1.77
8	KFC Arabia	5.23	Munch Bakery	2.61	Goody Kitchen	108.02	Sunsilk Arabia	3.08	Sunsilk Arabia	25	Mikyajy	1.69
9	Persil Abaya Shampoo	4.98	Lux Beauty	2.10	Nestle Desserts	107.78	Tang Arabia	2.75	Persil Abaya Shampoo	25	McDonald's	1.20
10	Activia	4.88	Faces	0.96	Shawarmer	73.68	Head & Shoulders	2.26	KFC Arabia	22	KFC Arabia	1.12
11	Maybelline	4.55	Sunsilk Arabia	0.31	Kerastase	69.69	Kerastase	1.85	Mikyajy	22	Munch Bakery	1.08
12	Pizza Fusion	4.43	Goody Kitchen	0.82	Munch Bakery	61.25	Nestle Desserts	1.83	Tang Arabia	15	Faces	0.85
13	TGI Friday's	4.02	Maybelline	0.65	KFC Arabia	47.29	Persil Abaya Shampoo	1.61	AloeDent	14	Tang Arabia	0.78
14	Shawarmer	3.79	Garnier Arabia	0.47	Sunsilk Arabia	38.80	AloeDent	1.00	Faces	14	AloeDent	14.00
15	Al Marai	3.69	Kerastase	0.81	McDonald's	31.75	Garnier Arabia	0.87				
16	Kerastase	2.55	AloeDent	5.65	Maybelline	22.07	Faces	0.61				
17	Nestle Desserts	2.29	Activia	4.05	AloeDent	5.50	Shawarmer	0.32				
18	Goody Kitchen	2.09	Domino's Pizza	3.93								
19	Garnier Arabia	1.64	Pizza Fusion	3.79								
20	Wella Professionals	1.52	Shawarmer	1.20								
21	Faces	1.51	McDonald's	1.00								
22	Lux Beauty	1.42	Mikyajy	0.61								
23	Mikyajy	0.57	Nestle Desserts	0.51								
24	Krispy Kreme	0.44	Persil Abaya Shampoo	0.45								
25	Sunsilk Arabia	0.36	Wella Professionals	7.10								

As per Table 4.5 above, and the ranking rules, the top brands are: Head & Shoulders (5 times), KFC Arabia (5 times), McDonald's (4 times), Munch Bakery (4 times), and Persil Abaya Shampoo (4 times).

The components of the social media strategy for these top brands is to be discussed in Chapter Five as successful case studies where applicable. In addition, other brands who are performing above average on any of the three social networks will also be considered as case studies such as Tang Arabia, Mikyajy, Goody Kitchen, and Domino's Pizza and Shawarmer.

INTERVIEWS WITH PROFESSIONALS

When it comes to social media, the insights behind the data and the numbers are what's important. Those insights can't be quantified with a survey or generalized by mere observation. Therefore, it was essential to interview digital marketing professionals who can provide insights on the strategies, tactics & efforts that guide their brands on social media.

The interviews had two purposes:

• To provide individual perspectives to complement the theoretical basis behind this research.

• To investigate some basic similarities and differences in the social media marketing of a variety of Food & FMCG brands.

Having established that, the next step was to determine who to interview. In order to get different & quality opinions, professionals who were interviewed were chosen based on the following criteria:

• They are working or have worked in a Food, Beverages or FMCG company's digital marketing department / are serving or have served clients in the Food, Beverages or FMCG industry in their agencies on social media projects / are working or have worked as marketing strategists or consultants for Food, Beverages or FMCG brand, directing its in-house or agency's digital marketing team; targeting the Saudi market.

• They have an experience of at least one year in social media marketing.

• They have succeeded in achieving good results for the brands they handled, whether on a short-term (tactics) or long-term (strategies).

After researching a few brands & names from Saudi Arabia, and contacting potential interviewees, the researcher settled on 4 professionals for the different brands they handle: Ahmad Kammoun, Ashwaq Akbar, Baker Sartawi, and Nouf AlQethami.

Interview with Ahmad Kammoun

Ahmad Kammoun is the Creative Director at Saracen Advertising, responsible for idea creation and strategy of social media marketing for various brands, including AXE Middle East. Axe Middle East started its social media marketing with a Facebook page on June 27, 2011. Efforts were focused on the entire of Middle East, but earlier this February, they adopted a more specific approach for Saudi Arabia, lead by Ahmad.

Ahmad stated that Axe found more interactivity with its audience online, through social networks, since its clientele is highly mobile & cyber. Being a "fun" brand, it found a cost-effective way to humanize and personify the brand for its target audience.

Axe's goals from using social media for the Saudi market are:

• To increase brand awareness,

• To engage and interact with its target audience,

• To support its traditional marketing campaigns,

• To increase its sales by diversifying its clientele.

The brand defined its target audience as: Saudi men between the ages of 18 and 35, single and married, interested in learning about attracting women, tech savvy, and care more about having an attitude rather than just looks.

To achieve these goals, Ahmad kept focus on Facebook as its young adult male-dominated network makes it ideal. It is important to note, that the Facebook Page is managed by different admins for the various countries in the Middle East, but Facebook's feature of allowing Pages to target specific countries with each post makes it possible to keep content and fans' engagement separate for each market. His approach is to keep Facebook fans engaged with continuous campaigns that varies between traditional campaigns that drives traffic to Facebook or invites Facebook fans to take part, online campaigns that extend to offline activities, and sometimes separate online & traditional campaigns that don't have the same message. Ahmad believes that a mix between

traditional and Facebook campaigns works best for its audience to see the brand's "face", and get them to interact with it, giving 80% for online activities and taking 20% of it offline as to keep costs low while still keeping in touch with the audience.

Ahmad's content strategy for the brand is to create his own content, rather than depend on sharing third-party content. The approach is to focus on the fans' interests, such as college days, cars, football, etc.

Figure 4.24 Axe Middle East engages its fans with Questions.

For example, when Eurocup 2012 was running, the page's content focused on teams, games and scores, such as in Figure 4.24 on the left, where Axe Middle East asked its Saudi fans to vote for the football team they support in Eurocup. The question resulted in 150 votes.

Ahmad also tried to maintain the level of engagement by launching photo contests; however, it wasn't very successful so he rectified the tactic by "taking it offline" and inviting fans to visit Axe booths where they can have snapshots of themselves and get a free Axe deodorant in return, which salvaged the situation.

He also successfully used the fact that photo posts has higher engagement according to Facebook insights, and created mini-game posts such as "Spot the differences (between 2 photos)", and puzzle photos that increased the virality of the post by asking fans to "share" them if they find the answers. See Figure 4.24 as an example of a post that got 23 shares.

Figure 4.25 Axe Middle East Increases Virality with Photo Puzzles.
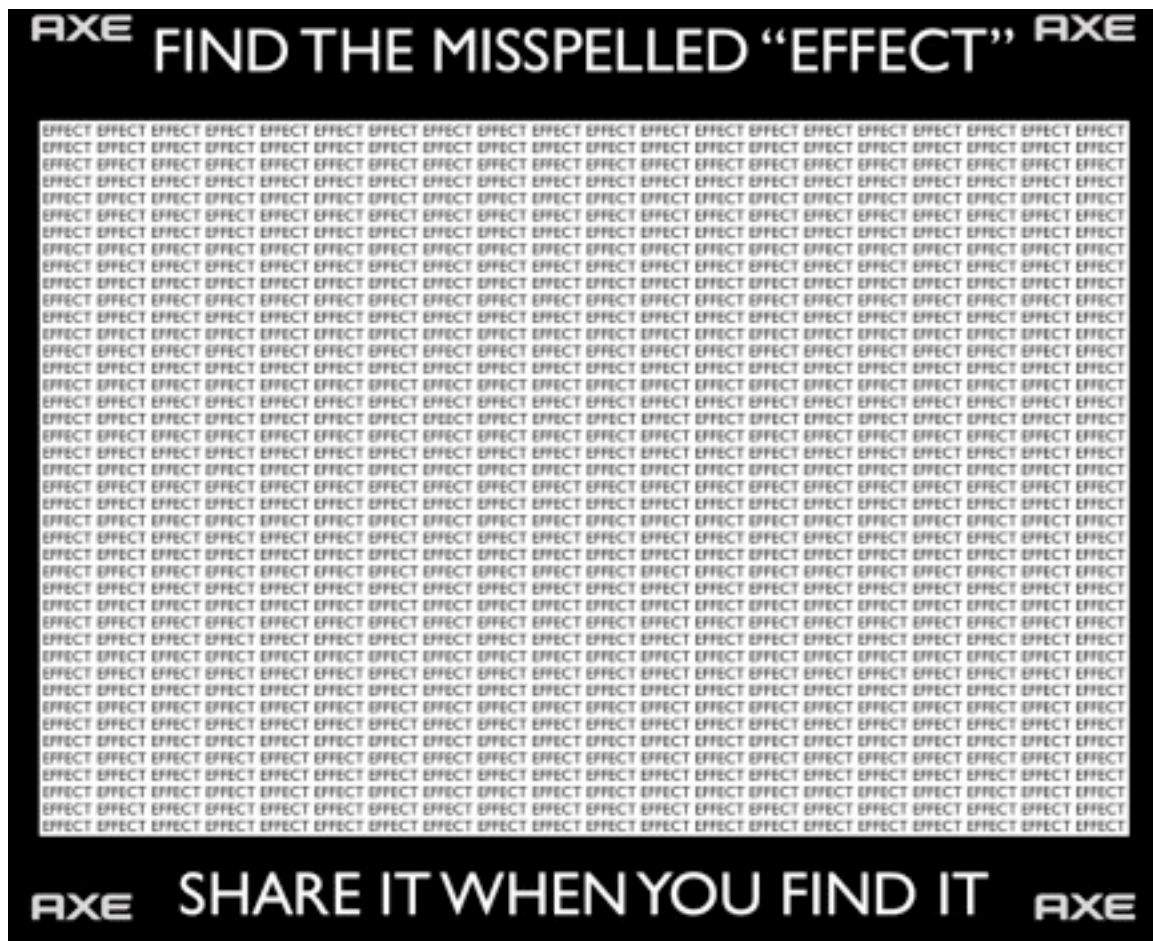
Another example of highly-engaging posts are challenge posts, where fans were challenged to post 20 comments without being interrupted by another comment, and it resulted in over 400 comments.

Nonetheless, Ahmad primarily believes that the best tactic to drive engagement is creating and using "apps". In the beginning of March, The Axometer App was launched, where fans can play online or join an Axe booth at malls to play, and measure their level of awesomeness and ability to attract women. Even without prizes, the campaign resulted in an organic increase of 19'000 fans in a month and a half. Therefore, he plans to have 6 apps per year, that are supported with offline campaigns.

He also included Twitter in the social media mix, starting June; however, it didn't get as much success even when he tried to convert Facebook fans to become Twitter followers

and offered incentives. He believes it did not work because Facebook users and Twitter users speak different "lingos" and therefore, the majority of those who prefer Facebook, do not understand Twitter. He realizes that mere experimentation and engagement does not work on Twitter, and that a separate customized strategy should be developed to succeed on this network.

The main challenge that Ahmad faced the social media marketing of the brand is the cultural limitation in Saudi Arabia. Globally, the brand's essence is "the mating game" that revolves around helping guys attract and hook up with hot women through using Axe deodorant. This called for re-adjusting the brand's essence to respect the local culture while still trying to maintain harmony with the global brand image.

Another challenge that Ahmad faced are the seasonal drops in engagement, for example, during exam times where the majority of the young fans spend less time on Facebook. Ahmad tried to overcome the drop by sharing content focused on aiding fans in the occasion such as studying tips.

Ahmad knew that the key to strategy success is continuous measurement. He used Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to set targets for 2 important Facebook metrics: Fans' growth rate, and engagement rate. He tracked those KPIs using Facebook Insights solely, with no aid of third-party measurement tools. The effectiveness of the apps was measured through analytics provided within the apps that measure what features were used most and what weren't, which provides guidelines for the future apps. Lastly,   consumer insights and reflect on sales were used to measure the success in increasing sales (brand goal) by having promoters at offline activities gather data from/about customers.

Interview with Ashwaq Akbar

Ashwaq Akbar is a digital marketing specialist who has worked on different brands such as Steak House restaurant, Piatto restaurant and Frico cheese when she was a Social Media Planner at Medialogy Group. She assisted[22]   in the strategy planning of these

brands, including creating & supporting online campaigns and devising promotional online apps.

She stated that the brands she managed had already acknowledged the power of social media marketing so they did not need any convincing. Their goals were mainly to create/ increase brand awareness, and engage with their fans to turn them into loyal customers who can then become brand ambassadors in their local networks.

To develop the strategy for each brand, she starts with an online research to listen to what the target audience is already saying about a brand and what they're sharing. Then, she defines the objectives and the metrics that need to be achieved. Basically, when brands know their own strengths and weaknesses, and the audience's behavior is defined, developing the strategy becomes an easier task. For example, when conducting the online research for Frico cheese, it was found that there were barely any mentions about the brand itself but the target audience was aware of Gouda and Edam cheese and they considered them as brands, rather than types of cheese. Further research showed that the target audience have preference for using cheese in local recipes rather than learning international recipes, and they do not like to eat gourmet cheese on its own like in Western markets. The strategy then was clear to increase awareness about Frico brand and its many types of cheeses through a series of local recipes or international recipes that matched the local taste.

The tactics that Ashwaq employed for each brand intended to always bridge the gap between the brand's message and the audience's interests in a way that benefits both, which always delivered great results. For example, to communicate key benefits of Frico Cheese, Facebook word game applications were devised by Ashwaq that were an online quiz, a crossword game, a word search game and an image puzzle, all centering around details of Frico cheeses. The game applications highly increased engagement, and number of fans (from 200 fans to around 3000 fans in 3 weeks) without the use of ads, making them the most successful tactic for this brand. Fans had to play a weekly game

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and maintain high scores where prizes were awarded to the 3 top fans with the highest scores after playing all 3 games.

As in most cases, Ashwaq faced some challenges with the brands and their audiences, mainly due to miscommunications and unfair play during contests. So far, there aren't proven ways to stop cheating during prize-driven contests, and the fans who play fairly get outraged and the situation becomes risky as it could tip to a PR crisis. Ashwaq handles such situations delicately, after discussions with the brands, to assure complete transparency and gain the fans' trust, and rectifying results when unfair play is proven.

With the many brands that Ashwaq handled, it was empirical that she uses tools to help her manage the time efficiently. Hootsuite Pro is one of her favorite social media management tools as she can maintain as many clients and networks as she needs, with useful features such as scheduling messages, and keyword search to monitor mentions. It was also very useful for measurement and building analysis reports for Facebook and Twitter. Another measurement tool she used was Klout to assess the results of its efforts on Twitter through reach, response and engagement metrics. Since her brand goals were about awareness and building relationships, she focused on the engagement rate and the fans/followers growth rate, as well as sentiment measurement where mentions were tracked and categorized as positive, negative and neutral, to show changes in sentiment periodically.

Interview with Baker Sartawi

Baker Sartawi is an ex-creative director who has worked for advertising agencies for 12 years, then in 2009, decided to quit advertising and start his own company "Brandwill" that specializes in digital and social media marketing. As the co-founder and digital strategist in Brandwill, he manages many clients such as Munch Bakery, Activia, Mollinex and recently Memories Biscuits, with the support of his team.

His approach in handling brands' digital marketing is very top-level, as his strategy is comprised of 3 axis: Web (a brand's own website) + Online (Third-party web portals and blogs) + Social (One-to-one communication channels).

He believes that having a social website is key in any social media strategy, because the website is the only platform that a brand can own in its social media mix, while any pages and accounts created on social networks, and the data of the fans/followers on them, can not be owned. Therefore, before he develops a brand's strategy, he conducts a digital brand assessment to verify if the brand has an existing website and then he tests its functionality, and analyze its sociability, SEO strategy, technicality and background data.

Then, he develops a social media strategy, that is comprised of a *technical strategy* and a *content strategy*, that has the goal of migrating fans/followers from social networks to the brand's website where he can build a database of loyal customers.

The technical strategy explores and determines what social networks and channels to use, how to integrate them, what posts goes where, and includes the communication policies and measurement parameters. A part of the technical strategy as well, he designs data centers for the brand to host content and store customer data in a centralized database which he believes is key in the technical success. For example, the application that is developed for Memories Biscuits' website is the same that will be deployed on its Facebook Page, allowing the app to redirect fans from Facebook to the website to gather insights in one database without duplication.

As for the content strategy, he believes that it is where creativity comes, where he studies if the brand is commercial or social by nature, and develops content that gives the target audience a good reason to "like" a brand's page. He studies the brand's products and services to find a common ground between the brand and its target audience that is not commercially-related, i.e. social, to fuel content that can drive them from social networks to the website (Social2web). He stated Munch Bakery as a successful example, saying that it is an emotional and colorful brand, that makes it easier to connect with its target audience using content that is visually appealing and engaging on a personal level;

however, they are still in the process of redesigning Munch's website to make it web 2.0 friendly. The essence of Munch Bakery's strategy that Baker aims to achieve is "The Munch Obsession", which communicates the message "We are cake bakers because we love it" through creative content and product display.

To reach Munch Bakery's goal, Baker employs various tactics, the most successful of which was the sponsorship of Esh Elly episode. Esh Elly is a very popular Youtube show in Saudi Arabia, whose episodes get millions of views within days of their release. In exchange of the sponsorship on Youtube, Munch Bakery also got the chance to have one sponsored post on Esh Elly's Facebook Page and one sponsored tweet on their twitter account. Baker decided to take advantage of that by making new creative content which was a video of the baking of a cake made for Badr Saleh on his birthday that was designed with his face on it. In 2 days of uploading the video on Facebook Videos, 1'500 fans were converted from Esh Elly's page organically, and the video had over 400 share, 300 likes and 500 comments on Facebook, and was retweeted about 80 times on Twitter. The video also went viral as an anonymous fan re-uploaded the video on youtube, which, alone, go over 120'000 views. However, Esh Elly's sponsorship, although highly successful, is very costly. He advises to use such sponsorships only to "test the waters" and increase awareness sharply to drive more people to a brand's pages where it can engage them using cost-effective content. A great example of that, he shared, is using the Questions feature on Facebook to ask Munch Bakery's fans on what flavor they would like them to bake for Ramadan. The question resulted in over 6'000 votes, but what's more valuable is that the brand gained really useful insights on new product ideas (what flavors their customers would buy), and it also made their customers feel valued because their opinions matter.

Figure 4.26 Munch Bakery uses Facebook Questions for consumer insights.

Baker measures the success of his strategy by setting Key Performance Indicators according to brand goals and using various analytics platforms such as Hootsuite Analytics, and Klout. He also uses Hootsuite for listening, moderation and community management. Although he measures audience growth rate and engagement rate, he feels that the best KPI of social media is "virality" as it is a good measure of how great the content is based on how many shared it to their own networks.

Interview with Nouf AlQethami

Nouf AlQethami was recruited as a Community Manager by Goody back in 2010, when that position was still very new & unfamiliar in the region. In 2 years, her job responsibilities grew with the rise of social media marketing, to become in charge of all of Goody's digital activities.

In her role, she focuses on achieving Goody's goals of building brand loyalty among existing customers, raising and increasing awareness about the company's large variety of products, and building a community that maintains a good level of engagement among its target audience which is Saudi females, between 20 and 45, single and married, who are cooking enthusiasts. Based on the brand's goals and target audience, she developed the social media strategy after brainstorming with the brand manager and marketing

department, researching competitors and studying the Saudi market. After thorough assessment, she concluded that Saudi females extensively search for recipes from expert chefs in the region and also from peers in their networks, which were mostly forums. The young females also thought of Goody as a "mommy" brand, something that moms used that is ancient and not modern. Therefore, there was a need for a local online community that can meet these females' requirements, and building a community using social networking sites would help the brand communicate with the young females and create a "trendier" image.

She realized that building a community will take a lot of time, effort and resources, and the company was willing to invest and commit to that. The first step in building the community was opening a Facebook Group, in March 2011, as a small-scale experiment, then in January 2012, a full-fledged Facebook Page was launched. A twitter account was also launched earlier in November 2010 but was only activated this past year. The brand's youtube channel was also created in September 2010, but only activated about a year ago. Nouf stated that, due to lack of knowledge in those times, it was important to just join these social networks, listen and experiment until she develops a clear content and communication strategy. She continues to experiment with social media as she adds relevant new and upcoming social networking sites into the mix, such as Instagram.

The brand had ready content since it was already maintaining an offline cooking magazine as well as a website filled with local recipes; the website was recently remodeled to be "social", and the content was used to build conversations and engage with the target audience around what recipes they like and use or like to learn, and drive them to the website's community. The brand focused then on creating valuable content that encourages the audience to engage with it and share it, rather than on pushing for product promotion in a direct and uninteresting way. The content strategy was also supported with a communication strategy that aimed to enable cooking enthusiasts, and support them by giving them space to showcase their cooking skills in The Goody Kitchen community, to turn them into brand evangelists. It's important to note that the

brand uses only the Arabic language in its content and to communicate with its target audience.

Nouf has utilized a mix of tactics to achieve the brand's goals, ranging from online to offline. She leveraged the Goody Cooking Academy, which offers cooking enthusiasts 5 free cooking courses, to fuel content as well as connect with its audience on a more personal level and reward it. She also maintains regular social media competitions on Goody Kitchen's Facebook Page, as well as third-party platforms such as Yahoo! Maktoob, with prizes ranging from electronic devices, to Goody products, or a feature/ shout-out in the brand's new magazine "The Goody Kitchen", which is a very good example of integration between traditional and digital media. Nouf believes that such integration is very important in the Saudi market because there is a big percentage of the brand's target audience, mostly the older ones, who do not use social networking sites or have preference for traditional mass media such as newspapers and magazines. She believes that having digital and traditional media support each other is a good way to convert the offline audience to online, and to give the online audience something tangible they can keep and value.

Nouf has also used some one-off tactics to increase fans/followers growth and engagement, such as product placement of Goody's fava beans in an episode of a popular Saudi youtube show called "Masameer", which targeted young males who are the main buyers of this product. This tactic did not only just achieve the best results in terms of views, likes and virality, seen in Figure 4.27, but it has also created a big buzz in the Saudi online population on the topic of product placement in Youtube show, i.e. the commercialization of social shows. After the success of this tactic, she was encouraged to also test it on Twitter by getting sponsored tweets from HawaaWorld, the largest community of Saudi females online, and WAM (Women Appreciation Month) that is organized by femi9, the fashion brand. These tactics are great in increasing reach; however, when it comes to increasing engagement, Goody Kitchen's own Youtube Videos with Chef Sumaya and featuring fans' own recipes are the most engaging.

Figure 4.27 Goody's Product Placement in an Episode of Masameer Youtube Show.

When it came to measuring the results, Nouf translated its brand goals into metrics: brand awareness meant *reach* and *fans/followers growth*, brand loyalty and community building meant *engagement*, and social2web conversion meant *traffic*. To measure these metrics, she used tools such as Facebook Pages Insights, Klout.com for Twitter, and Google Analytics, and used competitors such as Shahiya.com, YumYummy.com and SahawHana.com for benchmarking.

The interview with each of the professionals was concluded with recommendations they have based on their experience to guide the success of Food & FMCG bands on social media; these will be shared and discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

A couple of years back, when social media was "the new kid on the block" in Saudi Arabia, experimenting with it was mostly the only way Food & FMCG brands were learning to use it. McDonald's Arabia, for example, launched its Facebook page and Twitter account in December 2010, but only started being active on them early 2012, without a clear strategy, and it is only a month ago that they started aggressively and strategically building their presence. There was a time and place for tactics & experimentation before, but now social media is proven not to be a fad, especially with statistics showing its increasing importance in Saudi Arabia, so no brand should proceed any further without strategy. While small local companies and international companies new to the market can start by testing certain channels without a broad corporate wide commitment to being more social; without a strategy plan, their efforts often fail, waste time, money and detract from the brand experience. Whether the brand has already established social media presence or has never dabbled with it, it is never too late to develop a sound strategy, where efforts are guided by goals, smart analysis of audience, tools and a measurement methodology.

FORMULATING A SOUND SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Many brands find it very tempting to just jump on the social media bandwagon by making a Facebook Page or creating a Twitter account without necessary justification or direction. While some might succeed, after countless trials & wasted resources, many give up & are left to doubt the effectiveness of social media. No brand should dive into the social media scene without setting a clear strategy, so this chapter will discuss the major components of developing a social media strategy as well as shed the light on details that can make or break Food & FMCG brands on social media.

Conducting A Brand Assessment

Before adopting social media as a marketing channel, a brand needs to form insights about its situation and the market's situation to answer one first important question: Is the brand ready for social media? That is the primary purpose of the *brand assessment*. It

provides direction for social media engagement, indicates reasons to participate, and identifies where to do so online as well as offline. It is not enough to make assumptions anymore, and base a strategy on trial and error.

TopRank Online Marketing found that one of the most effective way to assess a company's awareness, capabilities and resources for social media marketing is to conduct an external audit and an internal survey.

The methodology used in this research can be a framework for marketeers and brands to conduct the external audit & gather insights on the social media scene in Saudi Arabia.

At this stage of social media adoption in the business world, there is no justification for not seeking out knowledge with the number of white-papers, reports, and websites that provide regular updated statistics & insights on the country. *Researching secondary sources* is essential to guide the next steps. Is the target audience spending time on social networks or accessing other social media tools? How much time is it spending & can it spare a share of that time to interact with a brand online? For example, if a brand is targeting a mass female audience of 40 and above, available statistics would indicate that they do not have a strong presence on Facebook but that they still spend many hours on women forums such as Hawaa World. The target audience might not even be using social media; however, that still doesn't mean that the brand ignores the medium but rather rethink a different strategy to reach its target audience through a secondary target audience, for example: Targeting old parents through their young adult children who are spending lots of time on different social networks. *Observing brands*, such as competitors and brands within the same industry or brands with the same target audience, that are already well established online can also provide insights for which social networks has a strong base of the target audience & how well they engaged with brands, and are a guide for successful and failing strategies.

The second step upon establishing if the target audience is using social media and how they are using it is creating a *listening* program. Listening to what the target audience is saying about a brand or a certain relevant topic, what they need, what they appreciate and

what they don't like, is a key initial step before a brand sets its social media strategy. It is an ongoing process that is necessary to keep a strategy fresh and competitive. It enables decision-makers to find and better understand opportunities and stakeholders[23]. Various listening tools are available such as Google Alerts, RSS readers[24], Google Insights, and Twitter Search, and many paid tools such as Radian6 Insights, Alterian and Netbase. However, there is a lack of tools that can read the Arabic language, so as an alternate or a support tool, conducting surveys among existing customers or the target audience can be a good tactic to gather intelligence specific for the brand and its market. Surveying a sample of the targeted audience through social networks can be very insightful if statistics from secondary resources aren't available in enough details, or if the brand is targeting a niche market. The listening program should be continuous, and set for daily or at least weekly results to be time-relevant, while surveys can be conducted prior & post major milestones.

Apart from scanning the external environment to know where a brand stands, an internal scan is just as important and can provide very useful insights. Employees who are in constant contact with a brand's customers can have much to contribute to its assessment & strategy. Employees' knowledge of & behavior on social media must also be tested to determine their readiness to support the brand's efforts, as a change of this magnitude requires the buy-in of a brand's overall workforce, not just the top management's. Shelly Kramer (2012) developed a sample of the most common questions to ask employees & gather insightful data. The questions revolve around their social media networking sites usages, frequency of usage, level of participation, and interest in participation. Employees' answers to such questions can help a brand formulate its own corporate social media policies and strategies, and can help it develop internal training programs and avoid relying on assumptions[25].

Figure 5.1 Brand Assessment Process
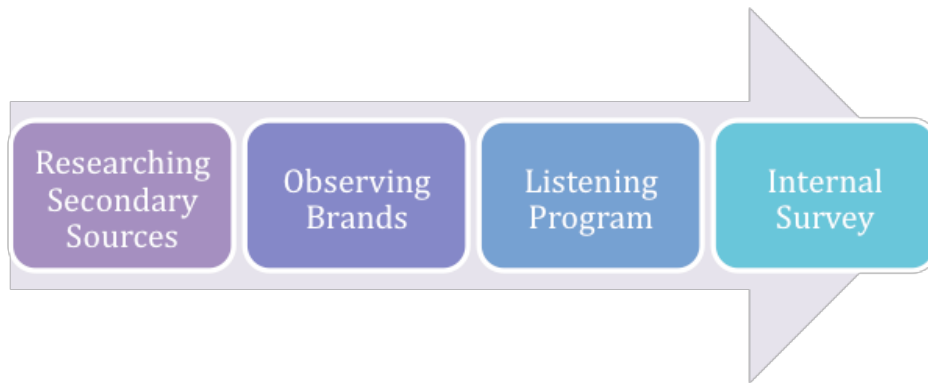
To sum up the evaluation process, Odden Lee (2010) lists 19 questions to determine corporate social media readiness that brands might ask themselves and answer as they embark on a social media marketing journey[26]:

1. What goals do you hope to achieve from a social media marketing effort?

2. What measures of success will be used to evaluate a social media marketing program?

3. What are your current social media channels and destination web sites/pages?:

4. Do you employ a full-time community manager?

5. If not, do multiple staff share the role of community manager?

6. Are you conducting a formal effort at monitoring social channels using a social media monitoring/analysis software application? (Ex: Techrigy SM2, ScoutLabs, Vocus, SocialRadar, Radian6)

7. Is there a particular business unit, division or product that can serve as a test case?

8. If active, how long has the company participated with social media sites and which? Blogging, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Wikis, Delicious, Digg, StumbleUpon, etc

9. Are current social media participation on different sites coordinated?

10. Is a dashboard and campaign management tool used for social media content promotion?

11. Have you noticed any particular preferences within the target audience in their social web participation?

12. Do they prefer particular sites? (Twitter vs Facebook – blogs vs forums)

13. Do they comment, do they contribute content, do they tend to observe, do they not participate at all?

14. Have you identified and engaged and/or networked with influentials in your target industry on social web sites?

15. What unique value do current social media efforts offer clients/prospective clients? What need do they satisfy better than the competition?

16. Are text content or media regularly shared on other social media sharing sites?

17. Is there a user generated content component of your web site? Profiles, comments, reviews, content sharing: text, image, video or audio?

18. What departments, business units, cost centers and approval entities would be involved with the Social Media program? Is there an internal social media council?

19. What internal human resources are available within the company for support and implementation of social media marketing initiatives? (Content creation, network development, promotion, monitoring & analytics, community engagement)

The more informed companies are about the social web, the more successful they will be at qualifying and managing their social media marketing engagements. Understanding the difference between how social they are and will need to become is essential for planning, training and most importantly strategy development, which is to be discussed next.

Setting Brand Goals

One of the key outcomes of the brand assessment is determining the current state of the brand on social media which enables it to define what its goal needs to be. Basically, a brand needs to know where it is right now to know where it wants to be in the future and then devise how to get there.

While the various Food & FMCG brands might have different needs and different market positions, their social media goals can be categorized in these six[27] :

1. Build meaningful relationships: No matter what size a brand is, social media makes it accessible and approachable to a mass audience. It gives the brand an opportunity to develop and exhibit a personality that draws people to interact with it & maintain a relationship with it on the long-terms.

2. Public relations and brand awareness: Social media provides brands with dynamic platforms to spread news and important information about their businesses, or products to a broad audience who are likely to share it to their own networks. There is no doubt to the effectiveness of social media when it comes to raising and spreading awareness as compared to the other traditional means.

3. Build customer loyalty: A brand can make its network feel valued by offering promotions, coupons, or information, thus giving them a reason to interact with it and gaining value back.

4. Establish Trust: A brand can showcase expertise and thought leadership in its field by sharing valuable information with its network, giving people motive to seek more information from it.

5. Manage Reputation: Social media tools provide a brand with the chance to hear what people are saying about it, and give it a chance to let them know that they're being heard.

6. Increase Search Visibility and Web Traffic: Social media plays a big part in the new generation of SEO. A brand's activity in social media can enhance its visibility in major search engines. And it has also been proven that social networks, especially Facebook, are major referral sources of traffic to a website, making them ideal to increase traffic to a brand's website.

All these social media goals will eventually reflect on the brand's business goal, whether directly or indirectly, which is often to increase sales & profits. It is important to understand that social media should not be considered as a quick solution to increasing sales & profits, while some tactics can be used to boost sales on the short-run & for a short period, they are far from being strategic solutions that can build a sustainable existence for a brand on social media with its audience.

Another important aspect to understand is the difference between social media *goals* and social media *objectives.* The former is the reason a brand exists on social media that it hopes to achieve on the long-term; the latter are short-term targets that a brand needs to realize so it can achieve its goal. Objectives are derived from goals, but they are specifically developed per a brand's situation and therefore can not be explored in details. They need to be set as S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time) targets, as examples:

- Increase website traffic by 15% by adding social media content starting posting by September 1, 2012.

- Increase email list sign ups through social media channels by 300 names by November 30, 2012.

- Increase online and print mentions by 10% by December 30, 2012

- Increase Facebook Fans by 20% by January 1, 2013.

- Increase Post Feedback on Facebook by 25% on average by February 1, 2013.

- Increase mentions by 20% on Twitter before, during, and after campaigns for 2013.

- Increase likes and comments with fans on Facebook to 3 comments per post by October 30, 2012.

- Increase views on YouTube Channel by 50% by January, 2013/

- Increase number of retweets and @replies on Twitter by 20% by September 30, 2012.

Many brands confuse between social media objectives and goals, and when asked to state their goal, they often answer with something like: "To obtain a certain number fans on Facebook within a month". While objectives are key necessary requirements, they do not answer why a brand wants to achieve them and what the benefit is behind them. To sum up, the answer to the question "why" is the goal; the objectives are articulated in more details of "what & how much by when".

Analyzing The Target Audience

Upon knowing the "why", brands then should determine the "who". While social media is great for targeting a mass audience, efforts will become diluted unless focused on a specific target audience that proves most rewarding to a brand. It is only rarely that a product interests all demographics, and it is no different in social media marketing. No brand should enter the world of social media without understanding who it is communicating with as it is the cornerstone of where and what to communicate.

The three demographics that a brand's audience can be segmented under are:

• Gender. Males & females in Saudi Arabia have definitely very distinctive online behaviors and preferences on social media. If a brand's target audience is gender specific, it is important to understand where they are communicating online, and where they spend most of their time. For example, Facebook is predominated with men in Saudi Arabia as noted earlier in Chapter 4, in Demographic & Gender Breakdown of the Saudi Population Survey.

• Age. Understanding where people of various ages are generally spending their time online is key to targeting them. Social networks are mostly overpopulated with adults below 30 which is not a surprise considering that 60% of the Saudi population is under 25. Therefore, a brand targeting 30+ year olds will never be as popular as a brand targeting 20 year olds.

• Interests. Social media sites are different and therefore attract different segments of the population. Sports enthusiasts, for example, will mostly be spending their online time on forums like Kooora, the 16th most visited website in Saudi Arabia.

Once a target audience is defined, it is practically easy to match its characteristics with the available statistics of the demographic breakdown in social media in Saudi Arabia. However, analyzing the target audience goes beyond just determining their basic demographics and finding where they "hang out" online. A brand can *know* its target audience by answering the following 7 questions, as suggest by Dave Wallinga[28]:

1. **How can your brand recognizes its target audience?** Explore not only who they are but where they hang out, who they hang with, what they do and what they are doing when they interact with your brand. In the book The Groundswell (from Foster Research and Harvard Business School) they identify 6 different types of users online: Creators, Critics, Collectors, Joiners, Spectators, and Inactives. It is important to understand what the type of the majority of your target audience is to know what they would be doing online and what tools they'd be using, as seen in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 Different Types of Users Online
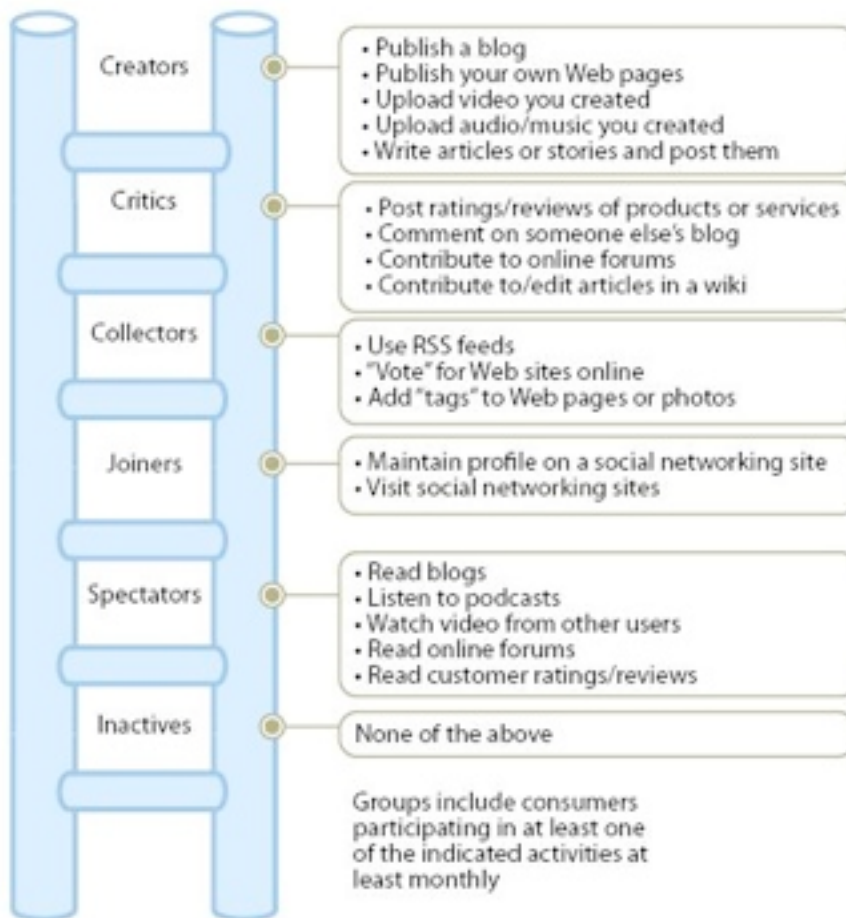
2. **Why are they interested in your brand?** What does your brand offer that's uniquely of value to them and how does it drive their decisions?

3. **How can your brand solve their problems?** This question translates benefits into more personal terms.

4. **What does your brand want them to do?** Buy your products or service? Support your cause? Or tell others or share your content?

5. **What are their alternatives?** Push to understand the reasons behind their choices, and what other alternatives they have or prefer.

6. **What will be their biggest objections?** Following up on the previous question, why wouldn't they choose your brand?

7. **How can you best reach them?** There is always more than one way to reach a target audience. The better a brand understands the target it's trying to reach, the better chances it has at figuring out the most effective ways. This last question is what leads to the tactics in the social media strategy.

Understanding The Saudi Social Media Users

The target audience usually differs between a brand and another; however, in the Food & FMCG industry in Saudi Arabia, it often overlaps where their major characteristics can be pre-established. There have been some studies & surveys that shed the light on the behavior of Saudi users online which can help a brand better understand them & effectively target them.

According to the Omnicom research (as cited in Social Media In MENA, 2011), there is a predominance of younger age groups using social media as compared to the general online population in Saudi Arabia. A quarter of them are employed, and in senior positions, as they're well educated with around 90% of them having at least completed their secondary education. What's worthy of noting is that it is the older generations in Saudi Arabia that are driving social media usage, of the 35% of the research survey respondents who reported daily visits to social media sites. 86% of respondents stated that the first thing they do online is check Facebook, while chatting on Yahoo! came as a second activity with 70%. Almost third of Saudi social media users access these sites during work hours, but the peak time is between 18:00 and 22:00, where consumption overlaps with other media such as TV.

What's highly significant for brands to know about the social media users in Saudi, other than their preference for mobile, is that looking for information on brands and products ranks first as the primary value they see in social media.

As for the level of engagement, while 90% of the Internet users in Saudi access social media sites, only half of them are actually active users who seek an interaction with brands and actively contribute to a conversation. The other half are "Spectators" and "Inactives", or passive users who navigate social media sites without clicking, liking, posting or sharing on brand pages. This deduction is also supported by the result of this research's survey where about half of respondents (or more) were not connected to any brands on the main social networks: Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

Active users tend to spend a long time online, with half of them spending over three hours on social networking sites, as compared to passive users who spend much less time online.

The last important insight on the Saudi social media users is that they use the subscription function (like/follow/subscribe) to express an affinity (50%), a buying habit (21%), or purchase intentions (28%) which is, although minimal, still much higher than in other markets. So to Saudi users, social media, including forums, are a way to inform their buying decisions.

Developing The Tactical Strategy

Once a brand sets where it is now in the perception of the target audience it is aiming to reach and where it wants to be in the future, the tactical strategy is developed as the bridge that directs it from point A to point B.

An intuitive method to set what a tactical strategy needs to include is to look into the term "social media" itself. "Social" symbolizes the aspect of people communicating & engaging, and "media" relates to the tools & platforms used in that communication. Thus, the tactical strategy is divided into 2 main components: Technical Strategy and Communication Strategy.

Technical Strategy

A technical strategy states what social networks and tools the brand should use in order to communicate with its target audience effectively to achieve its goals. Deciding what social networks depends on a brand's goal, strategy and target audience and therefore, it might vary between brands so it is discussed in details. However, social media tools are used for various purposes and can be adopted by any brand; there are hundreds of tools to choose from with varying features, but only the most common ones will be briefly discussed to provide some guidance.

Which Social Networks To Use

At this stage of the social media strategy development, the technical strategy is basically set as the insights drawn from analyzing the target audience will indicate what social media platforms needs to be used. The most popular principle of social media is to "be where customers are", or in more general term, where the target audience is.

The statistics available for each social network provides the brand with the necessary details to decide if it should be included in the social media mix. However, the decision needs to also take into consideration the most common resources, as in the case of any project: time, people, and money.

A successful technical strategy should establish a good balance in the social media mix. A brand might not be able to afford to be *everywhere* that its target audience is, for example, due to a lack of personnel who can manage the time to maintain all channels, whether because it can't find experienced & specialized personnel or because it can't afford them.

Therefore, a brand must focus on the most rewarding social media sites, instead of spreading its resources thin across the web 2.0. The most popular platforms in Saudi Arabia, as almost every brand knows, are: Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube. According to Alexa.com, statistics, and many studies, surveys and researches, they are the 3 most visited social networks in the country.

It is therefore unnecessary to elaborate on the significance of including them in the social media mix as it is already proven by the numbers. Still, many brands (as in the case of the brands observed in this research) tend to exclude Twitter and Youtube, and solely focus on Facebook.

Brands who exclude Twitter from their social media mix most probably do so when their target audience is not using it heavily. While a brand must be where its target audience is talking about it, Twitter is gaining popularity in Saudi Arabia on a daily basis, so even if the brand's target audience isn't using it heavily today, they might be populating it in the near future. So the brand can have an early start in the social network and take the time to shape and adjust its Twitter strategy as it gains more insights from engaging with whatever small number of target audience is already there, almost like in a focus group fashion.They usually also exclude it because they don't have the knowledge to manage it successfully, so they avoid it or set up an account then ignore it. If a brand can't afford to hire or train personnel to daily manage a twitter account, it should still include Twitter in the social media mix for the very important purpose of monitoring brand mentions by the target audience and learn more about them. Twitter gives a brand the ability to search, target and see users' updates, thus gaining tremendous insights, in a way that Facebook can never match due to its privacy laws. Using Facebook Pages, a brand needs to encourage its target audience to come to its page & talk about it to gather insights. On Twitter, the brand can go to its audience and hear what they're saying about it without needing their permission.

As for Youtube, it usually gets excluded from the social media mix by brands who don't already own video content, don't have a budget to produce video content, or they feel that video doesn't have much relevance to their products. International and large Food & FMCG brands might have to maintain a high quality image by producing high quality videos, but that doesn't mean that social average quality videos can't be as effective as long as they serve a smart purpose. As a successful example, Munch Bakery produced a video shot with a mobile phone camera, with creative content, that went viral & got over

140'000 views on youtube, though it was originally uploaded by the brand on Facebook. Video is a very popular content in Saudi Arabia, so it should never be excluded from a brand's strategy.

While these 3 social networks are generally top priority for any Food & FMCG brand targeting young adults in Saudi Arabia, there are many other networks that are on the rise and are worth at least experimenting with until best practices can be determined. One upcoming social network to be taken into consideration is *Pinterest*; which only recently started gaining popularity globally[29], mostly among females, and according to this research's survey. It has caught the attention of some Saudi online users, so it has the potential of going mainstream in certain demographics in the future. As a local Pinterest case study, Mikyajy is making good use of the social network considering its content is highly visual and targets young females.

Other social networks that are increasingly popular among Saudi users are Instagram and Foursquare. International Food and Beverages brands such as Redbull and Starbucks have had great success using those networks; for example, Starbucks peppers user's feeds with enticing pictures of their popular drinks and fun, energetic photos of life in Starbucks, from staff involved in community projects to photos of their live concerts for Gold Card holders. Starbucks carefully choose the best parts of their brand (the products, the perks and helpful staff) and broadcast it to their 675,000+ followers[30].

However, not many local brands have yet discovered their benefits or took advantage of them. Although these networks may not be as popular as Facebook or Youtube, the fact they are not too mainstream can give a brand the chance to stand out to a niche clientele and succeeding on them can also provide it with some free digital PR. They should also be monitored for brand mentions; especially Foursquare, that is key for any restaurant and cafe considering customers can leave tips for others on their experiences.

As a local example, Piatto restaurant keeps tabs on brand mentions on both networks and shares its customers' posts to its page as referrals, seen in Figure 5.3 below.

Figure 5.3 Piatto using Instagram and Foursquare for Customer Referrals.

McDonald's Arabia plays a more active role on Foursquare as well, as it has created a user account on the social network to list all of its locations and leave tips for users who check-in, as well as a brand page with over 2'800 likes.

Another noteworthy example is Goody Kitchen's successful use of Instagram to share recipes, as well as inside scoop into its activities, which gained them 1000+ followers. It may not be a remarkable number of following, but Instagram is not as populated as Facebook or Twitter, so gathering loads of followers should not be the goal, but rather showcasing the "trendiness" of the brand in adopting modern social networking sites and its desire to connect with its target audience wherever they love to be.

Figure 5.4 Goody Kitchen on Instagram.

Which Social Media Tools to Use

Social media tools are online utilities delivering social media functionality, allowing brands to be more interactive, communicate and exchange information with their target audience to achieve their goals in a more cost-effective and time-efficient way. Many brands and marketeers consider that social media refers to social networking sites only, and they are completely unaware of the existence of social media tools or their benefits in managing social media efforts. Figure 5.5 illustrates some of the tools that are quite essential in the social media marketing mix but that are often unused.

Figure 5.5 An Outline of Some Social Media Tools

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of social media tools available for use depending on a brand's goals and requirements. As it would be impossible to go through all of them, it is enough to understand the general uses of social media tools in social media marketing then research the best free or paid tools for each purpose.

Adam Vincenzini (2012) researched and listed 50 free and paid social media tools under 4 categories:

- Listening/Research: As discussed in Brand Assessment, listening and in-depth research are the foundations for any social media marketing activity, ranging from brand mentions, influencer identification to campaign planning. For example: SocialMention.com, FBsearch.us (Facebook), Monitter.com (location-based Twitter Search), and Klout.com (Influencer identification).

- Content Creation/Curation: This includes the tools and processes for discovering relevant content and arranging it online so it can be re-purposed / re-shared, such as: Bo.lt, Flipboard.com and Trap.it. Many RSS readers are also considered great Content Curation tools, such as Pulse.me, as they can be used to gather content from various resources based on relevant topics & areas of interest.

- Engagement: This includes engagement dashboards that are used for managing social networks' communications, the most popular of which are Hootsuite.com and SproutSocial.com.

- Analysis/Insights: Analytics tools are a must in any social media mix to measure the efforts invested. While most of the good ones are paid, there are some free ones that can offer great insights, such as Google Analytics (Web Analytics), TweetReach.com (Twitter campaigns), SocialBakers.com (Facebook Pages Insights) and Youtube Comments Search Tool to assess community sentiment post-upload.

A brand's geographic location does not matter when it comes to using social media tools, since they are merely a body that is used to hold the brand's content & networks. Therefore, it is enough to research global best practices and guidelines, and follow those with no concern for customization or localization.

Once a brand has researched a few of the available options and settled on the social media tools match its requirements and the social networks it is using, the technical strategy is then considered complete and it is time to start *engaging*.

Communication Strategy

The main purpose of using social media is to communicate with an audience in a 2-ways approach. While the social networks and tools used (technical strategy) matter, it is the content and conversations (communication strategy) that build a community that can be then guided to reach brand goals.

Content Strategy

People engage socially because they crave social content and updates relevant to their passions, friends, family, geography and professional network. Social media marketing would not succeed without interesting, informative or fun content. Before entering the social media space, a brand needs a plan to figure out how to deliver interesting content on a consistent basis so that it may attract and retain the attention of its target audience. That is the essence of the content strategy.

Geoffrey Colon (2012) believes that the new marketing is all about the content created, when it is released to the target audience and where it is released. He lists five steps for creating a successful content strategy in this stage of social media marketing[31] :

1. **Creating content based on the channel the audience will engage with it in and not simply the audience en masse**. Brands need to think about its audience as a niche microscope to interact with, not as a large mass. Good content in social should take into consideration the platform and not just the format. Videos, photos and games are preferred but people consume and share videos differently depending on the social network.

2. **Using data.** A brand shouldn't merely estimate what an audience wants. It must be nimble to be able to create content quickly that can be delivered to its audience in a manner in which they know that they are being heard. People don't like brands that push promotional things on them without opening the conversation to include their feedback.

3. **Investing in being social**. Too many brands think they are social, still they try to control the message. A brand must be a social business before it's start pushing on social media.

4. **Storytelling**. Ultimately, messaging that sticks is B2P (Business2People) and doesn't look like marketing. That is the content that people talk about. They don't want to be sold a product. They want an outside/in conversation. For a soda brand, for example, it's talking about what teen band is all the rage right now, not talking about its flavor. Brands must be better about talking and showcasing that they are thought leaders with higher level agendas and not simply like every other brand.

5. **Measuring and Maintaing**. Some brands produce an abundance of content, then launch a new campaign or product and leave that content on their website or social properties unmeasured and unmaintained. Brands should be responsible in demanding more from content. Companies now have more tools and incentive to create and maintain usable content. Content should ultimately drive conversion. Conversion comes via engagement. Engagement comes from good content.

One important issue when devising the content strategy for the Saudi market is language. However, it is suffice to say that 59.62% of Saudi users prefer the Arabic Interface of Facebook as compared to 38.04% who use English; 59% also tweet in Arabic while 36% tweet in English[32]. Therefore, a bilingual approach is always best, and in cases where only one must be adopted, then Arabic should have priority.

Types and Purposes of Consumable Social Content

When developing a content strategy, a brand must be aware of the different types and purposes of "consumable social content". This refers to content that is social by nature, that people can consume (read/view/use) through social media channels (blogs, social networks, etc.)

Figure 5.6 illustrates the types and purposes of the most common social content that is developed by brands and consumed by social media audience in Saudi Arabia.

Figure 5.6 Types and Purposes of Brands' Consumable Social Content
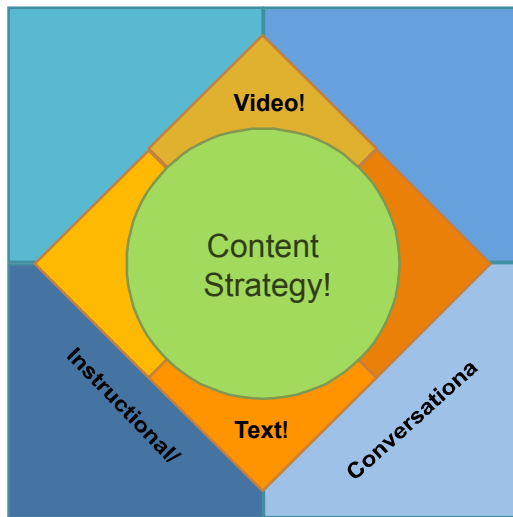
Types of content vary according to medium/ social network and, although they are many,

consumed- by brands' audiences on social networks:

- **Text:**

This includes status updates, tweets, blog posts, emails, discussions/comments, Q&A, etc. and any content in a written form. For the purpose of this research, links are also considered part of text, although generally they are separated as their own type of media. If a brand's content is mostly in text form, then it makes sense to microblog (use Twitter) where text is the most consumed media type. Another text media that Food and FMCG brands tend to ignore from the social media mix in Saudi Arabia is blogging; when in a survey conducted by HubSpot (2012), 73% of retail and wholesale companies succeed in acquiring customers through their blogs, as compared to 90% through Facebook and 70% through Twitter[33]. Moreover, in the results of this research's Saudi population survey, a brand's website or blog ranked as the first preferred point of interaction; email came second then social networks. This is clearly an indicator of the importance of adopting an all-round online approach combining blogging, email marketing and social networking.

- **Photo:**

  Photographs, images, designs, GIFs, visual arts, etc. are essential elements of any brand's content, especially for Food & FMCG brands that have visually appealing products such as Munch Bakery or products with visually appealing usages such as Mikyajy. Photos are undeniably the most popular content type on social networks, and are particularly effective in driving engagement on Facebook[34], and are the key elements in other increasingly popular social networks like Instagram and Pinterest. In fact, photo content is becoming so valuable that Facebook acquired Instagram, and integrated the photos that its users take and like on Instagram with their Facebook timelines[35].

- **Video:**

  Video content can refer to webinars, websiodes, webstreams, and some others, but the most popular remains undeniably Youtube videos, with a consumption of 90 million video views per day in Saudi Arabia. It is not surprising then that social video marketing is becoming an integral part of a brand's communications plan where it is designed to increase audience engagement through social activity around videos. Video content can range from creating ads and video campaigns costing millions of Riyals, to simply vlogging (video-blogging) using a phone or laptop camera such as the case of Munch Bakery's viral video. It can also extend to sponsoring third party video content such as Goody Kitchen sponsoring a Masameer Episode, or just simply sharing third party videos that are relevant to the brand.

- **Apps**:

  When talking about social apps, Facebook applications resonate the most, as they are great for increasing engagement, especially gaming applications. However, apps used by brands extend beyond just games, to include interactive forms, contest applications & voting apps, social widgets on websites, etc. and many other apps that create a more enjoyable or practical experience for users. Apps are very successful in increasing

audience's consumption of content because they "gamify" the experience. Gamification uses game design techniques, game thinking and game mechanics to enhance non-game contexts. It targets and satisfies some of the most fundamental human desires: recognition and reward, status, achievement, competition and collaboration, self-expression, and altruism.

While it is important to include all types of content in the brand's content strategy, it is critical to understand when to use each type by basing it upon the *purpose* of the content, which is in most cases derived from brand goals:

- **Informational:**

  Informational content is most commonly used to increase brand awareness about products or the brand itself. It is the equivalent of a company profile and catalogue in traditional media. Informational content is typically in the form of text; depending on the level of details, a brand can provide information about a certain product/topic in a 140 characters tweet or an elaborate blog post. When the information is complex or requires a high level of attention, visual content types are best employed such as photo -information graphics, or infographics, are a great example of visualizing data to increase consumption- or video. For example, Al Marai makes great use of its Youtube channel to create and share informational videos about detailed topics like its expansion, manufacturing processes, etc.

Figure 5.7 Al Marai Uses Video Content for Informational Purposes

- **Entertaining**

Entertaining content is indubitably the most engaging and viral on social networks, making it great for achieving engagement goals. Food and FMCG brands' content strategy can never forgo the entertainment factor from their content to add a "social" aspect to the communication and to keep the audience happy and amused. Entertaining content is not limited to a type as it may be consumed in the form of fun game applications, Youtube videos, funny photos, or witty tweets. What's important to note is that a brand's entertaining content can also be user-generated, as in, the brand can ask its own audience to share their own content for fun (or for a prize when it comes to competitions). Axe Middle East based their entire content strategy on the entertainment element as showcased in Chapter Four with Ahmad Kammoun's interview.

- **Instructional/Educational**

Content that is instructional or educational is highly valuable and is key to achieving brand goals of establishing trust and building customer loyalty. Instructional/ educational content is similar in nature to informational content with the types of content that can be employed; however, it focuses on adding value to the audience first and foremost by providing a solution to a problem, explaining a process, or giving

expert opinion and advice. The content can be in the form of text such as Q&A with experts, instructional videos, illustrative photos, or even "edutaining" apps when plausible. Mikyajy sets a great example of building customer loyalty by using instructional videos to show its audience step-by-step make-up tutorials using its products, which is the reason Mikyajy's youtube channel ranks high in terms of views and subscriptions. Goody Kitchen, on the other hand, uses a combination of articles, video, photos, and Q&As with expert chefs to teach its audience different recipes.

- **Conversational**

Conversational content refers to the purely social content that is aimed at building closer meaningful relationships with the audience and managing a brand's reputation with open 2-way dialogues that shape the audience's perception of the brand. Although conversations may not always contribute a direct value to the brand, but they are necessary to personalize it and maintain a "social" face for it, otherwise the brand would come off as too dry and corporate to its audience. In their simplest forms, conversations are carried out through post updates, comments and tweets (text); they are also often fueled by (or result from) other purposeful content, such as engaging in a conversation with the audience about an instructional video through comments. Content can also be tailored, or specifically created, to raise conversations, like adding a question to the audience at the end of a video or a blog post to encourage comments, or creating a video or sharing a photo specific for a topic of conversation, ranging from a social "Hello, how was your weekend?" to a debate about "What's better: X vs. Y?". Krispy Kreme adopts a conversational content strategy that is all about talking to the audience, rather than "talking at" it with promotional or product messages, while still using some conversations to gain insights about its reputation, an example of which is shown in Figure 5.8.

Figure 5.8 Krispy Kreme Gains Insights Through Conversations.

Regardless of the type of content or its purpose, one thing that holds true is that it has to be interesting to succeed. Boring content will never get a brand too far. This is an issue that is faced extensively by *boring* brands, those that aren't of much interest or fun for people in their daily life; for example, a toothpaste such as AloeDent is not nearly as interesting to people as Munch Bakery's cupcakes. Seth Godin, one of the most formidable marketing strategists in this era, once said: "If people aren't talking about you, they're not talking about you for a reason. And the reason isn't that they dislike you. They're not talking about you because you're boring."

A brand must provide its audience with interesting content for them to talk about it. Patricia Redsicker (2011) suggests 5 content strategies for boring brands that can get people to take interest in them[36]. She believes that the key is in distinctive presentation. Every brand has a unique story about its origin, its people and its experience. The solution is to find an authentic theme, apply creative imagination and tell stories in a way that will attract and retain people's attention. A boring brand, just like any other brand, can provide **problem-solving content** by sharing information that improves customers' lives or helps them do their job better. It can also create **customer-oriented content** that showcases the audience's lifestyles, interests and passions instead of focusing on the brand itself or its products if they don't generate excitement. Another strategy is to go for **surprising content** by providing something that is totally unexpected from the brand by

brainstorming a list of adjectives that describe its products and then research their opposites and build content around them. A brand can also play on its own strengths by creating **content types** that showcase those strengths; if a boring brand has a very fun work culture, for example, why not share that with its audience through a series of video blogs. One last strategy that a boring brand can adopt is to **borrow relevant content** to encourage its audience to talk about anything, even if not the product or the brand itself. By finding out what people are already talking about, the brand can then borrow the relevant topics and encourage conversations around them.

Figure 5.9 below illustrates how even a boring brand like AloeDent can create content that gets its audience's attention and gain their interest.

Figure 5.9 AloeDent's Customer-Oriented Content Strategy.

Case Studies

Head & Shoulders targets young adult guys who are very active, stylish, and "cool". This comes across all their marketing communications, such as TVCs and print ads, and it certainly comes across in their social media marketing. The brand is not focusing on increasing sales through promoting the product itself; the concept of shampoo for guys is

in any case far from interesting. Instead, the brand successfully builds its content around its target audience's interests: Sports and Style. In about a year of social media marketing, Head & Shoulders succeeded in creating and building a *community of freestylers* (as the brand calls its fans/followers) establishing the brand as a hub for sports enthusiasts, who not only just like to watch sports, but also likes to play sports... but with style. The brand started in November 2011 pushing for the "freestylers" concept by showcasing regional talented football freestylers and asking its fans to show them support. By June 2012, it started organizing its own Freestyle Football Championship, in cooperation with Freestyle Football Federation, where its fans can showcase their talents.

Figure 5.10 Head&Shoulders Arabia Creates a Community of Freestyles with its Content Strategy.

Its recent content strategy is built around the campaign "Arabs Got Confidence", which is driven from the brand's sponsorship of the regionally popular show "Arabs Got Talent", and its partnership with Raya as a H&S Brand Ambassador.

Figure 5.11 An "Arabs Got Confidence" Video from Head&Shoulders Arabia

The campaign successfully supported the Freestyler culture that the brand is building, and #ArabsGotConfidence is now used to tag the brand's content, thus creating consistency in the messaging. The video, in Figure 5.11, went viral and got thousands of likes and comments due to its creativity, thus proving that content quality is the biggest driver of social media success.

In another case study, KFC Arabia built its content strategy around its products which are very popular among its target audience, in addition, it focuses on creating an atmosphere around fun, friends and family. It was also a sponsor of Arab's Got Talent, where it gained major exposure for its Facebook page, and it fueled the page with content around the show, as well as hosted photo competitions based on its concept.

Figure 5.12 KFC Arabia's Content Strategy focuses on Products & Fun.

Its strategy is apparently successful as their Facebook page just recently reached a million fans, and it maintains an above-average engagement rate. However, its content strategy success didn't extend to Twitter but only due to failure in community management which will be discussed later.

The content strategy of McDonald's Arabia is not much different, focusing on its products and fun with family and friends; however, it strategically communicates a message with stronger and different content types. For example, to promote a new line burgers, McDonald's launched a campaign called "Tastes of The World", supported with

visuals of each burger, a humorous video and an app for fans to take pictures of themselves under the same theme, and even incorporated the "social" element in its business by dressing up its sales staff in the same theme, as seen in Figure 5.9.

Figure 5.13 McDonald's Arabia with an Extensive Content Strategy.

The Goody Kitchen's content strategy, discussed earlier in Chapter 4 with Nouf AlQethami, is also worth being taken into consideration as a good case study, due to its

success in building an active community of brand evangelists through its content, which should always be the aim of any brand's content strategy.

Community Management Strategy
It's in this stage of the strategy, and execution of it, that the actual engagement with the audience starts. After listening to them (assessment), determining what is needed from them (goals) and planning how to reach them (platforms, tools and content), it is time to start talking to them. And just like any other part of the social media strategy, talking to the audience should follow a set strategy; online conversations can't be controlled but they can be guided and they should be properly managed proactively, not just reactively.

A community management strategy is a must for a brand to put all the communication elements in order and maintain consistency with its goals. Figure 5.14 below illustrates the 6 community management elements that must be set through strategy.

Figure 5.14 Community Management Strategy Elements
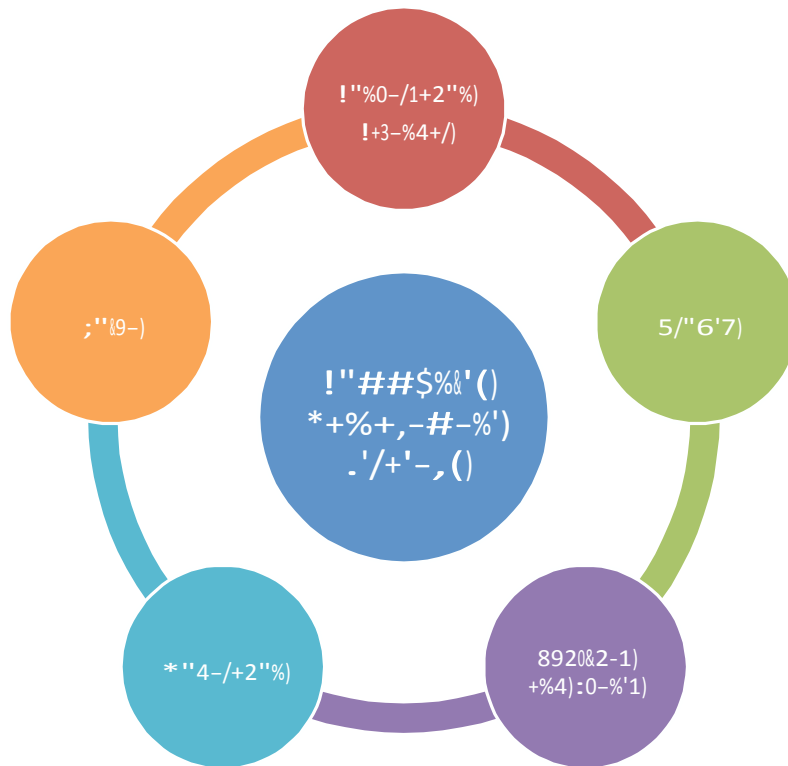
Voice

The voice of a brand is the starting point or the cornerstone of community management, as well as the essence of its content strategy. Basically, it is entrenched in a brand's communication strategy; i.e. the brand's voice is used to communicate messages to its audience, the right voice will make the audience more receptive of those messages and encourages to communicate back. For a brand to have the *right voice*, it needs to find and determine: "What is the voice of the brand? and "Who is the voice of a brand?".

What is the voice of the brand?

Stephanie Schwab (2011) gives a great guideline that helps brands find their voice and decide what they should sound like, seen in Figure 5.15.

Figure 5.15 Finding a Social Media Brand Voice.

The starting point for the development or furthering of a brand voice is the **character/ persona,** as in "who does the brand sound like?". After determining who its customers are, a brand can assume a persona that resonates with its primary target audience, or use multiple channels with different personas to target multiple audiences.

Tone is the underlying vibe that emanates from a brand's communications. It is where a brand establishes its credibility; and subtly alert fans and followers whether it is going to be quite casual and open or formal.

The next step is to establish the appropriate brand **language** that provides a foundation for the types of words, phrases and jargon to be used in social media communications. Does the brand want to sound exclusive or hip? Smart or fun? etc. This is especially faced when using the Arabic language, as the brand must decide if it should use formal/standard

Arabic, or informal/colloquial Arabic, and if informal then what Arabic dialect should it speak considering that in Saudi Arabia, dialects (Hejazi, Najdi, Qassimi, etc.) differ between areas.

Lastly, the **purpose** of communication plays a good role in determining the brand's voice. As discussed earlier in the content strategy, a brand must decide on the purpose behind its content, and that affects the voice to be used. A brand that aims to entertain with its content would adopt a more relaxed and friendlier voice than a brand that aims to provide information, for example.

Mikyajy sets a good example on developing the right brand voice that seems to be **loved** by its audience; it communicates to them as a fun friendly young lady called "M" that signs with hearts, hugs and kisses. Figure 5.16 depicts how Mikyajy "sounds like", and how intelligently it uses formal Arabic when addressing its geographically-dispersed audience (from across the different Arab countries), the Hejazi accent when addressing the locals in Jeddah of Saudi Arabia, and a Omani accent when addressing the locals in Oman.

Figure 5.16 Mikyajy's Brand Voice.

Once the four voice attributes have been brainstormed and set, a roadmap for the brand's voice should be developed which can be shared with those involved in writing, or speaking on behalf of the brand; those are usually the community managers, discussed next.

Who is the voice of the brand?

The voice of the brand also refers to the person behind the brand's communications, who is often labeled as the "Community Manager". Community managers are empathetic storytellers who are the brand's external voice, users' internal advocate, and find motivation in helping others, as Christina Cacioppo defines them[37]. They facilitate conversations and activities, help to moderate a community so that it is a productive and friendly place for all, and act as a link between the organization and the online community[38].

Community management is a role that hadn't existed before the rise of one-to-many (social) networks online. It's neither support nor marketing, although it has aspects of each. It's often difficult for brands to find good community managers who increasingly play an important role in building and maintaining networks. A great community manager can be the key to the growth of a brand's online community; similarly, bad community managers can be the cause of the community's failure and deterioration, such as the case of Nestlé's community management fail during the Greenpeace PR crisis in 2010[39].

Therefore, it is critical for a brand to know what makes a good community manager in order to hire, evaluate or train its community manager to be good, or even great. Table 5.1 lists the big distinction between a good community manager and a great one[40]:

Table 5.1: A Good Community Manager Vs. A Great Community Manager.

A Good Community Manager	A Great Community Manager
Maintains order in a community.	Continually pushes and develops their community.
Deep understanding of technology and social media.	Deep understanding of psychology, group theory and sociology.
Gets people to connect on the platform.	Gets people to connect in person.
Removes fights and bad posts.	Knows when to facilitate aggressive discussion and resolve the symptoms behind bad posts/fights.
Confident communicators and great with people.	Strategic visionaries who can forge a strong community spirit from a disparate group of people.
Manages communities.	Creates communities.
Writes solid content.	Gets community members to write solid content.
Encourages people to register for the community.	Converts people into highly active members of the community.
Persuades the brand to support their community.	Persuade the brand to prioritize and focus most communication efforts on the community.

As an example, Nouf AlQethami's great community management skills are what established, built and grew The Goody Kitchen community on the number of social networks that she manages.

Being a great community manager combines two elements: **knowledge** of the theories of psychology, motivation, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, persuasion and influence, group information, sense of community, and culture and group identity; and **skills** such as fantastic relationship-building, editorial skills, project management, branding, marketing and PR. So unlike what some brands believe as "qualified", having used Facebook, Twitter or Saudi forums for personal purposes with some success for

years doesn't make a great community manager; nor does a customer service or sales support employee who is repurposed to manage social networking communities. Moreover, it might take one great community manager, or a few good ones headed by a great one, depending on the size of the community and the number of social networks that require different sets of technical skills.

Ultimately, community managers are responsible shaping and reflecting the voice of the brand and for molding the ways in which people interact on the brand's online community, and they often solely handle and manage the other four elements of the community management strategy.

Conversation Calendar

After deciding on what type of content to use for what purpose (content strategy) and the brand voice, it is time to develop the content posts and share them with the audience to start engaging. While some brands tend to post content randomly and on-the-spur-of-the-moment, except during campaigns perhaps, proper planning is key for the success of the communication strategy. A brand must develop a detailed plan of social media posts known as conversation calendar, also often referred to as an editorial or content calendar. Developing a conversation calendar to control publication of content across social media channels can benefit the brand in numerous ways that James Cooper (2012) have identified as[41]:

1. Ensuring consistency in the timing and voice of communications, as having the contend laid out in one place facilitates the process of editing it to maintain a similar tone of voice and sending it out in optimal times and avoiding duplicate postings.

2. Facilitating cross-team community management (multiple community managers) and creating accountability within the team, by listing who is responsible for what and giving them access to see what each of them needs to work on.

3. Being proactive and staying ahead of the content curve, taking into account seasons and special occasions, and also avoiding getting stuck without ideas for content. Even

though it might be difficult to plan content for several months ahead, but it is best to try at least, while leaving room for flexibility and fresh content.

4. Identifying opportunities to repurpose existing content; planning ahead would give the brand an idea of what content can be tracked from different departments and areas to be used for social media channels, and to also search for third party content that can be relevant to share.

5. Facilitating tracking and reporting. Having the entire social media content in one place makes it easier to identify what content caused spikes in the analytics (fans growth, engagement, followers, etc.) and what didn't work, to enhance future content.

Ideally, the conversation calendar can be prepared per quarter with general themes/topics for each social media channel, with weekly content calendars (to be prepared a week before its publishing date to allow for enough time to research, revise and get approved) with the actual posts and times to publish for each channel. There are various ready-templates of conversation calendars available for a brand to customize and use, an example is seen in Figure 5.17[42]. Facebook also provides a sample of conversation calendars, in the very useful guide of "Building Your Business with Facebook Pages"[43]; the same template can be used for all social media channels using Excel, Word Doc, or even Google Calendar which could be used to make the calendar available for all parties involved and allow open collaboration.

Figure 5.17 A Sample of a Conversation Calendar Template.

A brand can also create its own template based on its needs with the basic elements: Post date, social channels, post content, post type, category/theme, and tracking link.

While creating the conversation calendar, two issues come at play: Post Creation (What to post where) and Timing (When to post it and how often).

Post Creation

Post creation is the actual process of writing the text that will be posted as/with the content. This would be, for example, a tweet or Facebook status to be posted as text content, or with a link directing the audience to a blog post or a video. A brand's community manager must always take account of the following in the process of post creation:

1. *Good Writing:* The posts should be interesting, attention-grabbing, and creative, all while having the brand's voice, and not to mention grammatically correct and typo-free. As Angela Maiers (2011) puts it: "Your words, are your power; the stories you tell and how you tell them will define your place and space in the digital world"[44]. Writing skills for social media can and should be improved through special courses/ webinars or simply by learning from others and successful case studies what makes good writing.

2. *Balancing the post types:* Following the brand's content strategy of what types of content to use, the community manager should create a balance between the types of posts for each day of the week. Some suggest to make a "type of the day" theme, for example by sharing video post on Saturdays, a question post on Sundays, a photo post on Mondays, etc. While there isn't exact research on what type of content is fit for which day, but this rule creates content consistency in front of the audience. Alternatively, it would be at least important to maintain a balance of content types throughout the plan to make sure that there is a variety of types to keep the audience engaged and to see which type works best for the brand. A good tip for the conversation calendar is to color-code posts according to content type to identify the balance in a glance.

3. *Customizing posts to channels:* This is a key element to the success of the content strategy as well as the communication strategy, but unfortunately, some community managers fail to do it. It is critical to unify the content message across all social media channels within a certain day, for example, Goody Kitchen set Saturdays as "Pasta Day" and talks about that topic on its blog, Facebook page, Twitter account, etc. However, the writing of the message should be specific for each channel depending on the type of medium and what attracts its audience. For example, tweets work quiet differently than Facebook Page statuses, so a different posting tactic is required. To start, tweets are limited to 140 characters and media (photos, links, and videos) isn't directly displayed for users to see, but rather they have to click on photos and videos to display them inside Twitter, and on links to external sites. In contrast, Facebook Page statuses have quite a high character limit[45] and automatically displays a snapshot of the content of the media attached with the post, allowing fans to preview the content and thus giving brands the chance to grab their attention with it, even without the use of details. Figure 5.18 below showcases how KFC Arabia fails to acknowledge the difference between the two networks and uses the same posting; while the Facebook post highly engaged its audience, the tweet got no responses considering it has no indication of what the topic is. KFC Arabia is doing a mistake that many other brands do, which is trying to save time and effort by connecting their Facebook Page Updates to their Twitter accounts or vice versa, but the result is most of the time a less-appealing (facebook or twitter) timeline that the audience might not even comprehend, and a failure to leverage that community.

Figure 5.18 KFC Arabia Fails to Customize Posts per Channel.
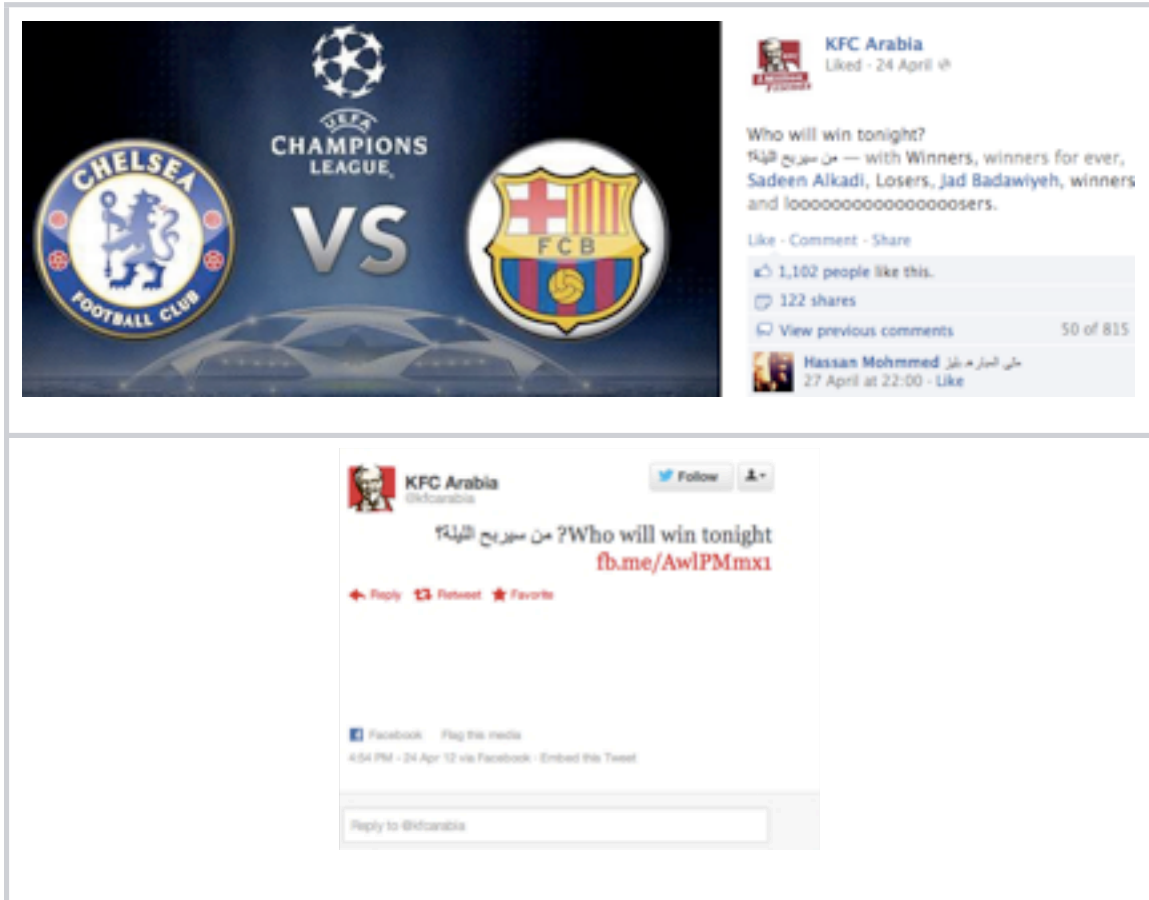
A good community manager will have an understanding of what posting system works on which networks and therefore customize the message and take advantage of each networks' features to the fullest (For example: Facebook's media display, and Twitter's hashtags).

4. *Planning for and accommodating emerging posts:* While most of the content posts can and should be pre-planned, a key aspect of social media is being on top of what's happening around local or global communities, online or offline. The community manager must actively monitor trending topics and news (through Twitter trends, news sites, Facebook friends, offline word-of-mouth etc.) and share emerging time-relevant content that can be used to create or participate in online conversations. For example,

when Crown Prince Nayef Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud passed away on June 16, 2012; many brands offered their condolences through updates on their social networks, such as Munch Bakery's post in Figure 5.19. Other emerging content can be user-generated content (e.g. posts from fans that trigger a brand post, retweeting others' tweets, etc.), interesting and relevant content that the community manager discovers/stumbles upon (e.g. new article, third-party announcements, etc.), and breaking news or announcements from/about the brand itself as well as spontaneous, social, spur-of-the-moment posts (e.g. sharing photos & updates during a live-event, photos or social videos of funny/entertaining/surprising incidents and anecdotes that "just happened", etc.). However, while it is important to be flexible to accommodate for emerging postings, they can not be properly weighed, revised or approved as acceptable or not in time, leaving a risk of making mistakes that can backfire on the brand. This issue can be avoided by using communication policies and posting guidelines that will be discussed in "Moderation".

Figure 5.19 Munch Bakery Participating in Emerging Online Conversations.

Timing

One of the most popular golden rules is "Timing is Everything", and that's true in social media particularly. Posting content when the target audience is mostly asleep/offline is as futile as being silent and disengaged when they are online and free to "chat". Posting content in a timely manner is key to engaging the target audience; therefore, community managers must plan it well and account for all its variables.

Ideal Time to Post

One of the Community managers must identify the ideal times when sharing their content can get higher visibility and engagement, and these are some various ways to figure that out:

1. *Target audience profiling*: By this stage, a community manager knows who his/her target audience is. Further analysis of the target audience's demographics, culture, habits, lifestyle, etc. can provide insights on when they would most likely be available online. For example, if a restaurant needs to post about its business lunch offer, an ideal time to post the message would be between 11 am and 12 pm where most business professionals would be online checking their emails, and surfing the internet, as they are thinking of where to go for their lunch break, thus making them more receptive of the message and ready to take action based on it. Posting the message at 5pm, while most of them have had their lunch and are getting offline and ready to leave work and would be less effective. Even if they see the message, it is too late to act upon it, and by next day's lunch, they would have already forgotten about it. Target audience profiling can be as simple as using common sense to draw a mindmap of when the audience is most available, or as extensive as conducting consumer research and surveys to pinpoint accurate results.

2. *Available third-party statistics and reports*: Researching for available statistics and reports on the best times to post on social networks will provide the community manager with general information on the varying behavior of each networks' user database. For example, Twitter users might generally be tweeting late night while Facebook users are mostly active in the afternoon. As for localized statistics on the time of consumption of social media (access to social networking sites), Omnicom (2012) reports that the peak time is between 6:00pm and 10:00pm when people are most likely at home, while third of the consumption occurs during office hours.

3. *Testing, analytics and insights*: Each brand's audience can be different and have different time preference. Therefore, the best method to determine when the target

audience is most active and engaged is to use testing by posting in various times for a month, per se, then seeing the results of each time slot to determine which ones had the most positive effect (likes, comments, shares, RTs, etc.), and what times were more relevant for the audience. Figure 5.20 provides an example of how Krispy Kreme's fans tend to generally be more active/engaged with the page in the morning (posted @ 9am) rather than the evening (posted @ 11:30pm).

Analytics tools are best used to provide such insights, like: Facebook Insights for Pages, Manny Rivas (2012) provides a great tutorial to gather such further insights from the page's reports; and so many twitter tools such as 14Blocks, Tweriod, etc. Christopher Möller (2011), a trend analyst, provides a very extensive and useful guide of different Twitter tools to assess which times are the best to tweet that can be used for any brand to analyze its own audience's preferences locally.

Figure 5.20 Krispy Kreme's Ideal Time to Engage Facebook Fans

Frequency and Scheduling

While the aforementioned methods can provide great insights into the ideal times to post content, it isn't a done matter yet, as most brands face the issue of how many times a day to post (frequency) and that is governed by various elements:

• *A Diverse Target Audience*: A brand might have a diverse audience with distinctively varying preferences for timing, which is mostly the case for the majority of Food and FMCG brands that have a range of products targeting the young and the adult, the housewives and the working women, men and women, etc. all at the time, using the same channels. This is also the case for international brands that manage one

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Facebook page and one Twitter account for the entire Middle Eastern regions with geographically-dispersed audience that has different online habits.

- *Working Hours:* The audience uses social networks for their own personal purposes so they spend as much time as they want online and at whatever they want and can. However, community managers are employees that work according to set hours and days, generally from 9 am to 5 pm, Saturday to Wednesday, in Saudi Arabia. What if a brand's audience is mostly available on social networks after working hours? As mentioned earlier, the majority of the time of consumption of social media happen after working hours. So brands who can only stick to working hours will be missing out on conversations and peak times where their audiences are ready to engage.

- *Audience's Expectations of a Brand:* Audiences have different affinity and image perceptions of brands which play a role in what is expected of their online presence. Omnicom (2012) reported, for example, that Saudi consumers expect automative, games and fashion brands to "live online". Case in point, although both are targeting young adult females in Saudi, Mikayjy is perceived by that audience as fun, trendy and young, while Activia is perceived by that audience as mature, educated and sophisticated, which are the personas that these two brands are aiming to portray through their voice and content. Therefore, Mikyajy's audience will be expecting it to be more active, posting lots of cool fun content at different times of the day and engaging them in conversations at any time because "fashionistas have lots of free time and can talk about fashion and make-up *forever*". However, Activia's audience will be expecting it to post relevant useful information a few times a day only, because "mature educated women are busy and aren't too chatty when there's no value provided".

- *The type of Social Network and its audience:* While active twitter users can general tweet a dozen times a day, average Facebook users may not update their status more than once or twice a day. Generally, the same rule applies (and is expected from) brands. For example, while Twitter followers would appreciate, or at least not mind, if

a brand tweets relevant/fun content up to 10 times a day at various intervals, the same content on the brand's Facebook Page might be considered spam by Facebook users, and they will most likely unlike the brand's page (Omnicom's research reports that around 40% Saudi users unlike a page because it is spammy, and around 15% unlike it because of its too many updates).

Upon analyzing the above in detail, a brand's community manager can then assess how many posts per day is too little and how many is too much. There is no real science or available accurate research for the ideal number of posts per each social networks, but the community manager can test its own audience by increasing the number of *quality* posts per day over a period of time, and keeping tabs on engagement vs. unlikes/unfollows, then determining an average number where there is a balance between engagement and unlikes/unfollows. Thus, the *ideal frequency* of posts = number of posts where engagement:unlikes/unfollows rate is the highest.

The analysis will also indicate if there are plenty of ideal times to post that are outside of working hours. Working in social media requires great time flexibility and unusual work hours, since community managers can work from anywhere as long as they have an internet-enabled device and because there is always some audience online 24/7 that require attention. Therefore, time management becomes a serious issue which can be solved, at least partly, by *scheduling* posts through tools such as Hootsuite.com. Scheduling posts with Hootsuite allows community managers to control when each post is to be published and on which social networks, with the ability to view and edit pending posts, which makes it possible for them to disperse content over a span of time and in the desired (ideal) times. Another time-saving tool is Twitterfeed, which is a service that allows community managers to set up RSS feeds from their brands' blogs or other favorite blogs, and whenever those blogs have a new post, it will be automatically posted to their brands' Twitter account or Facebook Page[46]. Even though publishing the posts can be pre-planned and automatic, community managers would still need to be present

around the time of publishing to monitor responses, drive positive engagement and resolve any backlash on the content.

Case Studies

Due to the difficulty of pulling and analyzing the times of Facebook Posts on Fan Pages, the case studies presented here will shed the light on the brand's Twitter communications only. The time factor is typically of most importance on Twitter where communications happen real-time, and are non-stop. Below in Table 5.2, a graphic representation of the times (The time presented in the table is GMT+0) that the top observed brands tweet exhibits the behavior of their target audience as well as the brands' behavior. For this study, the brands with high number of followers are considered, as opposed to only taking the Klout score into account, which also plays a role. Typically, the more followers a brand has, the more time it needs to engage them. That is clear in how Head & Shoulders, Domino's Pizza and Munch Bakery tweet mostly throughout the day with little rest, which means that a scheduling tool is used or a dedicated response team with long work hours is available. Apart from The Goody Kitchen, these brands use Twitter to answer customer inquiries and manage customer feedback which requires being present and available online longer hours. However, McDonald's choose to only tweet during typical office hours, from 7 am to 6 pm. Goody Kitchen focuses its tweets on early morning, where its target audience is mostly free and available online; however, it does not engage with them, and merely just posts links during those hours.

It is then evident from the charts in Table 5.2, that in order to maintain high engagement with followers on Twitter, a brand must be present throughout the day, with focus on early morning from 9 till 1 pm, and evening around 9 pm.

Table 5.2: Top Brands Tweeting Time.

Head & Shoulders	Followers: 5,136

Domino's Pizza	Followers: 3,303

McDonald's	Followers: 2,825

Goody Kitchen	Followers: 14,287

Munch Bakery	Followers: 3,784

With the post creation done and timing set and scheduled, community managers can then develop their conversation calendar. Best practice is to set up a master calendar for all content initiatives, and then a separate content calendar for each initiative. Traditionally, a brand can set up editorial calendars 12 months out and then constantly change them as the marketing plan is tweaked.

Growth

Establishing and growing the brand's community on social media channels has always been key objective, and often mistaken as a goal. But as explained before, growing the community is only part of the strategy developed to achieve the goal (what a brand wants to benefit from this community).

While community growth is important for achieving the brand's goals, the aim should never be to amass high numbers of fans and followers but rather to foster relationships between the brand and its community members through a common purpose.

Upon establishing the above, a community manager can then proceed to grow the brand's online community through four common approaches: Organic Growth, Cross-Channel Growth, Paid Growth and Viral Growth.

Organic Growth

Organic growth of online communities on social media channels refer to the "natural" and steady increase in the community members (fans, followers, subscribers, etc.). Growing an online community organically, on any social media channel, has two great advantages: it's inexpensive, and usually attracts people who are genuinely interested in a brand. It leads to a community full of brand advocates and customers who have engaged with the brand's social media at some point in their buying cycle, and to the formation of a positive online community that is a place for people to interact with the brand and each other[47].

The key drive of for a community's organic growth is *engagement*. The more a brand engages its existing audience with good content and community management, as discussed earlier, the more audience it reaches, attracts and retains. There are definitely

various techniques that a community manager can employ to enable engagement and get more traction, some are basic across all social media channels, while others are specific per social network. In simpler terms, growing a community organically happens with a good combination of between the *art* and *science* of communication. For example, Darren Rowse (2009) believes that community managers who are concerned with encouraging a healthy, positive atmosphere and with retaining members, and appreciate the contributions of those members, and express these in their communication, succeed in enhancing and growing an online community organically[48]. On the other hand, Dan Zarella (2012), conveniently nicknamed as The Social Media Scientist, believes in gathering and understanding relevant numbers and analytics to calculate a successful formula for growing an online community, as he did in a study of over 10,000 fan pages and put together an infographic to help brands to increase engagement by getting more likes, comments and share on their Facebook posts, which in turn leads in community growth[49].

While organic growth is very commendable, it has its shortcomings as, except for a few power brands, it is likely to be slower than a brand would like. This is seen in the low average-weekly-fan-growth rates of some of the observed brands that are depending solely on organic growth: Sunsilk Arabia, Krispy Kreme, and Mikyajy.

Cross-Channel Growth

A brand can give a good push to its community's growth by cross-promoting its social networks and media channels to drive audience from one channel to the other. There are various cross-promotion techniques depending on a brand's available/existing channels, for example:

- Offline2Online: This refers to directing the target audience online from existing offline (non-digital) channels such as TV ads, magazine/newspaper ads, on-package displays, in-mall activations, in-store activations, street promotions, or any other communication means that the brand is already using in its traditional marketing, by

simply publicizing the links to the brand's website and social media channels on those mediums.

- Email2Social: This refers to converting a brand's target audience from its existing email database (customer sales database, email subscriptions, etc.) by sending them email shots with links to the social media channels.

- Social2Social: This refers to leveraging the various social media channels that a brand is active on to cross-pollinate each community from members of the other community. This can be as simple as asking Facebook fans to follow the brand on twitter, or tweeting links of interesting content that is hosted on its Facebook page, Youtube channel, etc.

- Web2Social and Social2Web: This refers to directing web visitors to social networking profiles by displaying their icons with hyperlinks strategically on the website, or using social widgets like Facebook Page's Like Buttons/Boxes and Twitter's Follow button, and also directing audience from social networks to the brand's web community/blog by posting links that lead back to content hosted on it.

Cross-channel growth is very advantageous for brands, especially those who have just established their social networks and need to populate them, because it succeeds in attracting an audience that have already established an interest in the brand on another channel. It is also inexpensive (even cost-free) because it takes advantage of channels/activities that the brand is already running, so for example, if the brand is running a street promotion campaign using flyers, adding social media links to the flyer design adds no cost but it has high returns.

However, cross-channel growth has its own pitfalls. Audiences on different channels might have different characteristics and expectations, so converting them to other channels would make messaging more complex, or they might not even wish to convert if they don't see an added-value of going to another channel. So for example, if the brand pushes the same content on Facebook and Twitter, Facebook fans would be less likely to

follow the brand on Twitter since they are already getting the content on their preferred social network.

Paid Growth

As the title entails, paid growth is obtained through paid advertising and media. It is a very quick and effective method to target an audience online and direct them to the brands' social media channels. There are various paid advertising services that brands can use:

- *Social Media Advertising*[50]: When talking about social media advertising, Facebook resonates perhaps as the most talked-about advertising medium, because of its cost-effectiveness in reaching more people than traditional means[51]. Facebook allows effective targeting of its users with a set of options for brands to select the targeted demographics from its user-base, with further targeting based on interests, at a low cost of Click-Through-Rates; so a brand only pays for the users who have actually seen the ad and taken an action based on it (clicked on the ad's link). The effectiveness of Facebook advertising is showcased with this research's survey results where 46% of respondents showed a positive attitude towards it, stating that they find it useful and that they click on it sometimes.

   Twitter advertising is different from most of the online advertising options out there, with elements of cost-per-click, display, and social media ads all wrapped up in 140 characters or less. It is good for promotions, gaining exposure to potentially new audience, and growing the follower base cost-effectively (pay-per-follow)[52]. It offers brands three advertising options: Promoted Accounts, "Promoted Tweets" that on average could have a 22% response rate[53] and a 300% boost in customer engagement[54], and Promoted Trends that are still in beta.

   In general, OMG Digital Study (2011) have found that the Saudi users have primarily positive attitudes toward Social Media Advertising, as seen in Figure 5.21, thus proving it as an effective advertising medium for brands.

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Figure 5.21 Saudi Users' Attitude towards Advertising on Social Media

ADVERTISING ON SOCIAL MEDIA	SAUDI ARABIA
IS INFORMATIVE	90
IS ENTERTAINING	90
IS ANNOYING	11
INCREASES MY INTEREST IN THE ADVERTISED BRAND/PRODUCT	86
ENTICES ME TO RECOMMEND THE BRAND/PRODUCT TO A FRIEND	89
OMG DIGITAL STUDY 2011	

- Online Advertising: This includes any digital advertising, aside from social networking sites discussed above, such as Google ads, targeted web display ads and pop-up ads, email ads (it differs from organic cross-channel growth when a brand pays email marketing service providers to send email blasts to their opt-in audiences) and newsletter ads, and any other digital ad that a brand can use to target and direct an online audience from third-party sites and channels to its own social networking communities.

- Sponsorships: A sponsorship is a paid effort from an advertiser to tie its name to information, an event, or a venue that reinforces its brand in a positive, yet not overtly commercial manner; such as sponsoring online trade shows and conferences or the sponsorship of a relevant topical channel on a portal[55]. A brand can increase awareness about its social networking communities and gain more audience by sponsoring content on third party channels, instead of displaying ads, such as hosting a competition (or just sponsoring prizes) on a third-party website or social networking profiles, product/brand placement in third-party content, in exchange for including links to the brand's own website and social networking profiles which will direct audience from third-party channels to the brand's channels.

There is some debate over the effectiveness of online advertising and sponsorships and their return-on-investment. However, a brand can do its own assessment by testing out different ad types and determining which ones are most cost-effective. Moreover, there are studies that can help a brand in its assessment. For example, a study by Psychster

Inc. and AllRecipes.com (2010) found that, regardless of format, the most effective advertisements were those that were related to the content on the publisher's (third party) website (i.e. a soup brand advertising on a cooking website) and suggests that, for building engagement and thus growing the online community, sponsorship is the better option[56].

Paid growth can deliver great results in terms of attracting community members who are the brand's target audience, when targeting is done well, and is very quick and delivers a higher growth rate. However, that can have its downfalls, because communities that grow at a fast rate can become difficult to manage in a short time at the start. In addition, brands that depend solely on paid advertising to grow their communities, and and do not fuel that growth with a good content strategy, end up gabbing the audiences' attention but not retain them when they see that nothing interesting in those communities. Lastly, apart from Facebook advertising, online advertising can be very costly, and does not always provide good ROI, especially if a brand fails to use effective targeting[57].

Viral Growth

The idea behind the term viral growth dates back to 1976 with Richard Dawkins' publication of The Selfish Gene. The book proposes evolution as a cultural phenomenon, with the units composing that evolution being "memes". A meme is anything that can be passed on from person to person and whose rate of acceptance varies directly with its ability to entertain, help, or in some way be useful. Viral growth is when a meme spreads very fast, without the aid of paid advertising[58]. There are only two elements that can drive the growth of a community:

- *Viral content:* To "go viral" is the ultimate goal of most online content. That means it spreads like wildfire across the internet as people share it with each other[59]. Viral content refers to posts, blogs, videos, or campaigns that is considered "viral" when it gets passed around, linked to or viewed by an enormous number of users in a short period[60]. In essence, viral content relies on social networks for its reach, which makes it a great tool to attract audience to a brand's social networking community. Essentially

there are 2 types of viral content, user generated viral content and viral content from a brand standpoint, or "Biral content". From the standpoint of user generated content, "viral" simply means something that gets a lot of views, reads, clicks, etc. But from a brand standpoint, there needs to be a reason to get the views, clicks, reads, etc. The reason for this is usually to increase brand awareness, product sales, new users, etc.[61] Andy Wieldlin's panel in Social Media Week in San Francisco 2012 (as cited in Pierre Le Leannec, 2012) shared 7 common traits of viral content[62]:

- Is easy for the target audience to share and allows them to connect.

- Is timely and relevant.

- Reflects the target audience's personality/characteristics; makes people look clever and cool.

- Remixes existing content.

- Aims to influence the audience's culture, not to just gather numbers.

- Has a strong distribution strategy.

- Follows the methodology of understanding what people would care about, creating great/creative/shocking content and leverages the distribution channels.

A brand needs to have a good understanding of viral content marketing to leverage it in order to grow its community on social networks. Not every piece of content can go viral, but if a brand understands the basics behind what makes great content highly shareable, which are explained in a Voltier Digital (2011) infographic[63], it will have a better chance of getting better exposure for each piece of content it creates. In addition, learning from analytics what the brand's existing audience has been sharing can give an indication to what type of content has a high potential of going viral.

• *Brand advocates and Influencers:* Brand advocates, also referred to as brand ambassadors, and influencers can give a great push for brands online in growing their

communities. Although, these terms might be confused or used interchangeably, but there is a main difference between a "brand advocate" and an "influencer", and it is important for community managers to understand the difference to be able to leverage each of them properly:

- *Brand Advocates:* There are various definitions for what makes a brand advocate, but in summary, it is a person who genuinely loves a brand and actively promotes it to his/her own network through positive word-of-mouth[64]. Brand advocates can't be bought or gamed, but their social activity can booster a brand online and help it to find new customers (fans). While strong brand advocates sometimes pop up on their own, successful community management involves discovering, identifying, and nurturing brand advocates. A community manager should be able to identify existing brand advocates through their various characteristics:

  ‣ Brand advocates have genuine passion for the brand and are motivated by good experiences with it, not by money or promotions (during contests, for example). They're the ones who are in the brand's online community *frequently and actively* sharing its content, liking, commenting positively, RTing, and recommending it to friends. Their faces will be very frequent in a brand's facebook page/twitter account/etc., that a community manager should be able to easily keep track of them[65].

  ‣ *Power* brand advocates are highly active online as they recommend many brands to their friends frequently, and have very large social networks of 300 - 600 online contacts on average[66]. For example, 5% of this research's surveyed population can be considered as power brand advocates as they have liked more than 10 brands on Facebook, have over 300 friends in their network, and sharing feedback about brands is one of the reasons they use social networks.

Neil Patel (2012) suggests using tools such as TweetReach, ArgyleSocial, and Traackr to discover brand advocates, then gaining rapport with them by keeping them engaged, finding out what motivates them, making it easy for them to share

content, and giving them freedom[67]. In some cases, a brand may not need Facebook, or other external communities, to expand its own community because key people are already community members. 99% of a typical community's members are passive. The relatively tiny brand advocate segment represents a disproportionately powerful tool for community managers[68]. And in cases where a brand doesn't already have advocates, it needs to work on turning regular fans into brand advocates[69].

- **Influencers:** Influencers on social media are either passionate individuals who turn out to be specialists or professionals who use Web 2.0 tools as part of their work. They take advantage of their presence on social networks for personal gain or as representative (or ambassador) of a brand, company or organization. They produce and sharing relevant content, appealing to the interests of a community. This can result in regularly prompting discussions and interactions that might have influence on behaviors. Raymond Morin (2012) uses Klout to identify 5 types of social media influencers: The networker, the opinion leader, the discoverer, the sharer, and the user[70]. Leveraging influencers to drive traffic into a brand's community is part of "influencer marketing" that Eric Enge (2012) defines and gives an extensive process guide on conducting it successfully[71].

Viral growth is often the most desired among the 4 types of growth because it works as a faster mode of reaching a large mass of audience, and is cost-effective as it makes use of the same tools available but with better results (the cost of making a photo post is the same whether it goes viral or not). It is also possible to use effective-targeting through filtering means; for example, using Facebook Sponsored Stories to push a viral content to fans' friends or using an influencer whose opinion is highly regarded by the target audience[72].

However, although highly attractive, viral growth isn't without pitfalls. Continuous effort in viral marketing can cause the brand's message reaching out of target audience which will result in brand dilution by growth of non-targeted users in its community. Moreover,

viral growth slows and a brand has to worry about retaining existing community members rather than acquiring new ones. The faster the community is growing, the sooner a community manager has to care about retention and of accommodating the new community members, catering to their needs/expectations, and maintain their attention[73]. That's why, brands need to focus on creating good content with better ideas, rather than on coming up with a lot of fans/followers who they can not leverage, as Seth Godin refers to as *faux* followers[74].

All four types of growth will have to be leveraged by a brand in order to continuously to fuel its community with new members that it can benefit from. It is important however to align each type of growth with the strategy or tactic employed. For example, a brand might want to start with organic and cross-promotional growth in order to attract the true brand advocates and be able to recognize them, which is easier in a small debuting community. Once it has populated its community with some true enthusiasts and interesting content, it might proceed to supporting the community growth with paid means, until the community growth reaches a scale where its viral growth rate keeps multiplying to reach an optimum level.

Case Studies
The brands observed during the course of this research, the 25 tracked brands as well as others who weren't included in the study, showcased a variety of growth techniques and results respective to those techniques. Their activities represent good case studies of the success (and failure) of each growth type per different social networks and its effects.

Head&Shoulders is the leading brand, among those observed, in terms of growth across all social networks in the set timeframe. In the month of May, their Facebook Page growth was typical of organic, peaking and dropping around engaging activities, as the page was running an online gaming competition. The page's growth then skyrocketed after 8th of June; however, there were no posts or activities during that week. The growth was not due to H&S sponsorship of Arabs Got Talent, which was launched in 14th of March with not much effect in April or May. Therefore, the speed & rate of growth is

indicative of viral growth, which is most likely due to the video uploaded by H&S on 21st May that was virally shared for over a month, snowballing into more fans, likes, comments and shares. This growth was also reflected on its Youtube channel (+22% Subscribers & +34% Views) and Twitter account where growth is measured based on Klout's true reach which is the number of people that a user interacts with, after the filtering spam, bots, and inactive followers[75].

Figure 5.22 Head&Shoulders' Social Media Audience Growth

Total Likes **170,045** ● People Talking About This ● New Likes Per Week *May 16, 2012 12,394* Apr 29, 2012 May 28, 2012	
Total Likes **506,638** ● People Talking About This ● New Likes Per Week *6/15/12 – 6/21/12 170,121* Jun 12, 2012 Jul 11, 2012	
Youtube Channel Growth: 6 June to July 13	*Twitter's True Reach Growth: 14 June to July 13*
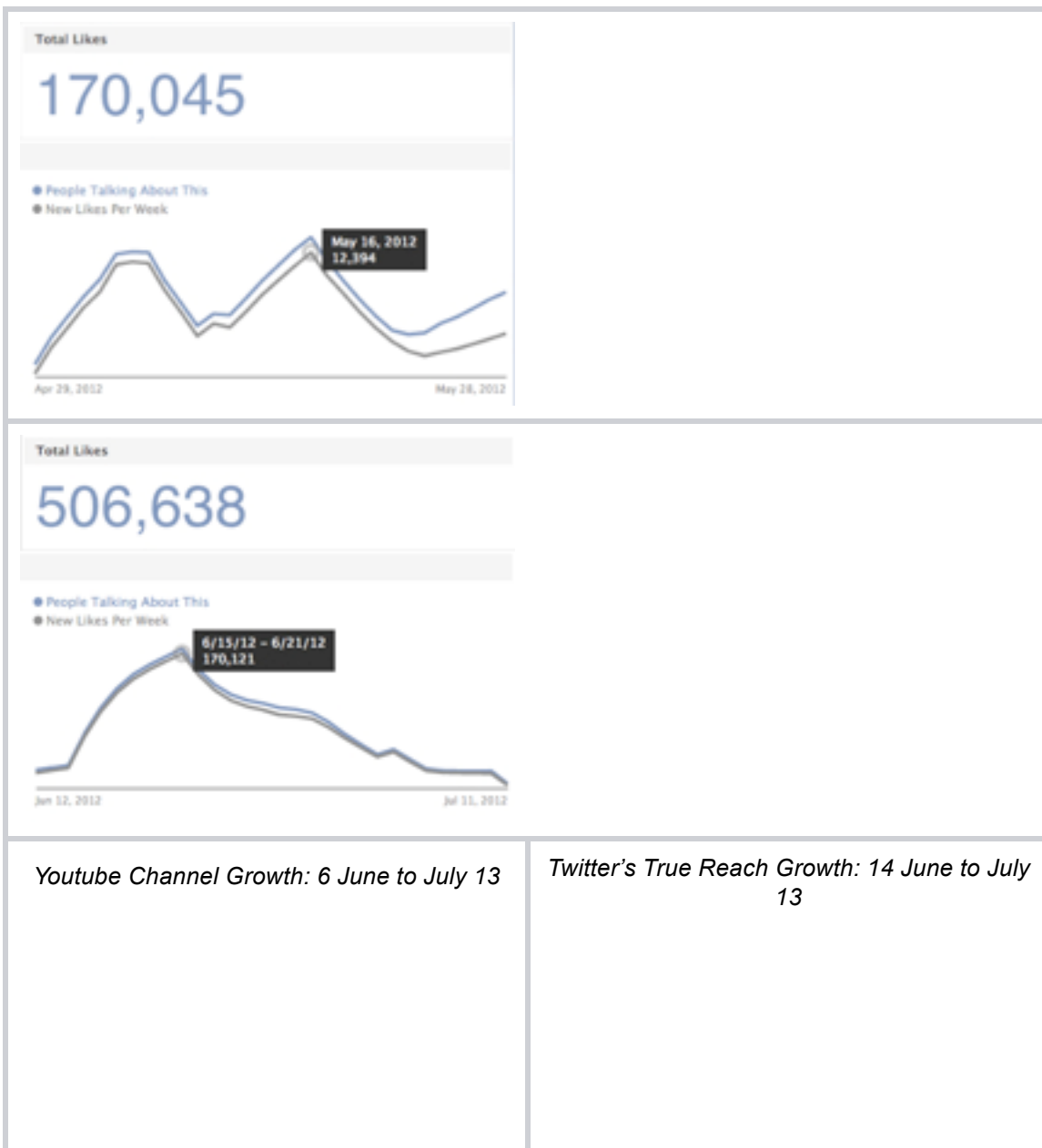
After Head&Shoulders, AloeDent had the highest average fan growth rate on Facebook. The page was launched late May, and was given a great boost through a different versions of Facebook ads, seen in Figure 5.23, which seems to have more success at attracting audience than using one ad version.

Figure 5.23 AloeDent's Facebook Page Fan Base Growth

However, AloeDente did not see such growth on its Youtube channel or Twitter account where it didn't use advertising, and is not using a content strategy, to attract an audience.

McDonalds, Figure 5.24, also presents a good case in terms of growth. Its Facebook page was launched in December 2010, and up until May their fan base growth was typical of organic growth with only content and some competitions, with 23,000 fans. However, in less than 2 months, their fan base grew over 100,000 fans with a combination of ads, and a game app with a minimal prize (McDonald's Championship Glasses). McDonald's also

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only recently publicized its Facebook Page and Twitter account links on all printed materials in their branches, which could have supported this jump in audience reach. This growth was also seen across its social media channels, with an 11% increase in subscribers and a 10% increase in views on its Youtube channel, and a 23% increase in Twitter followers in one month.

Figure 5.24 McDonalds Social Media Audience Growth

Youtube Channel Growth: 13 June to 18 July	*Twitter's Followers Growth: 18 June to 18 July*
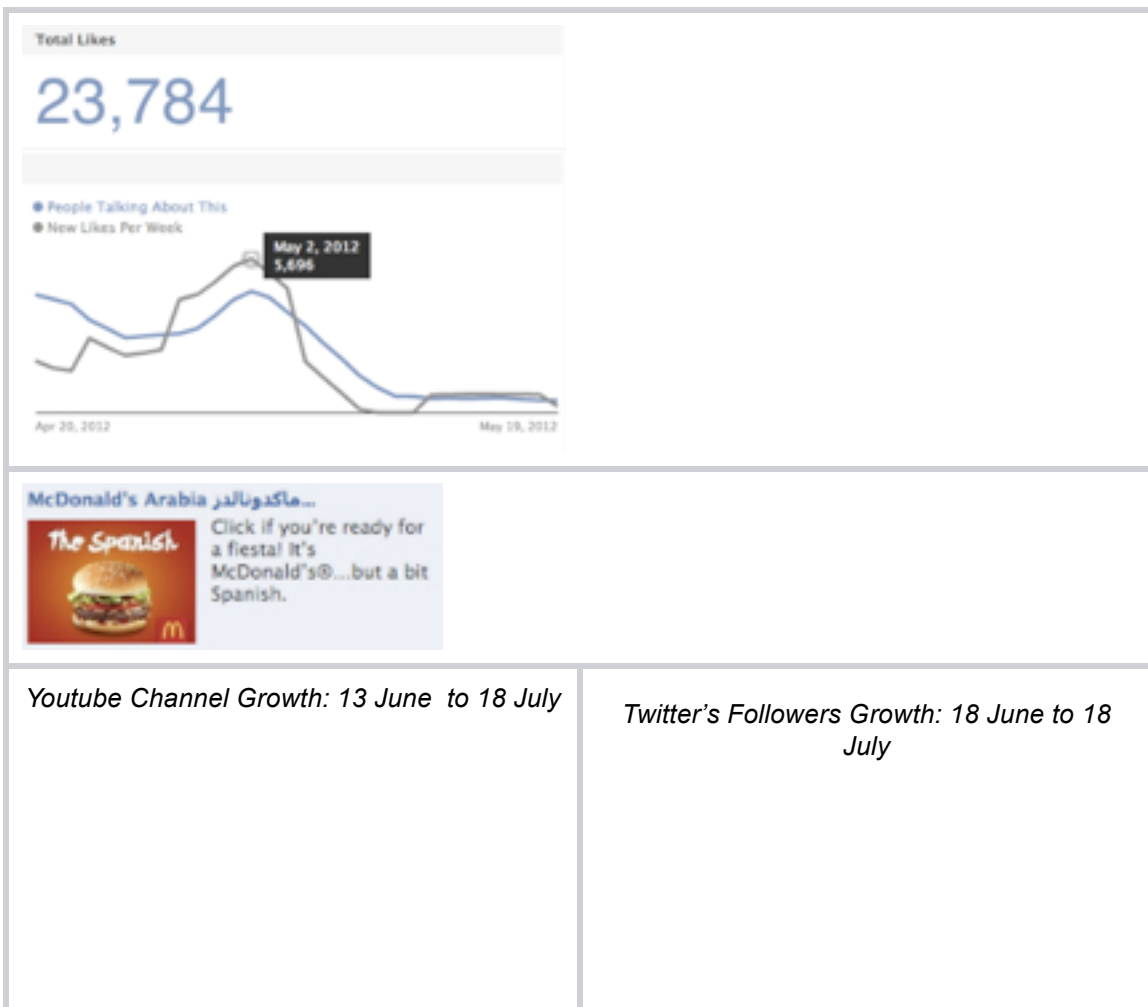
Domino's Pizza KSA has had a humble growth in fan numbers, and as seen in Figure 5.25, the growth peaks mostly when Facebook ads are used, as it does not share a variety of content or host competitions. Domino's uses ads to increase engagement, by promoting its posts, rather than to call for action on a certain promotion to increase number of fans. It has similar growth on Twitter, with a 6% increase in followers in one month.

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Figure 5.25 Domino's Pizza Social Media Audience Growth

This growth pattern is the same with the top 10 brands per average weekly fan growth on Facebook. Those who are not using ads, are not seeing as high a growth rate as those who are using Facebook ads to support their growth.

Aside from the observed brands, some brands stood up in terms of Fan growth on Facebook such as 7UP which acquired over 95'000 fans in one month with Facebook advertising, but more prominently through Influencer marketing (Viral Growth) as it is using Badr Saleh (from the popular Saudi Youtube Show: Esh Elly) as a brand ambassador.

Figure 5.26 7UP Facebook Fans Growth
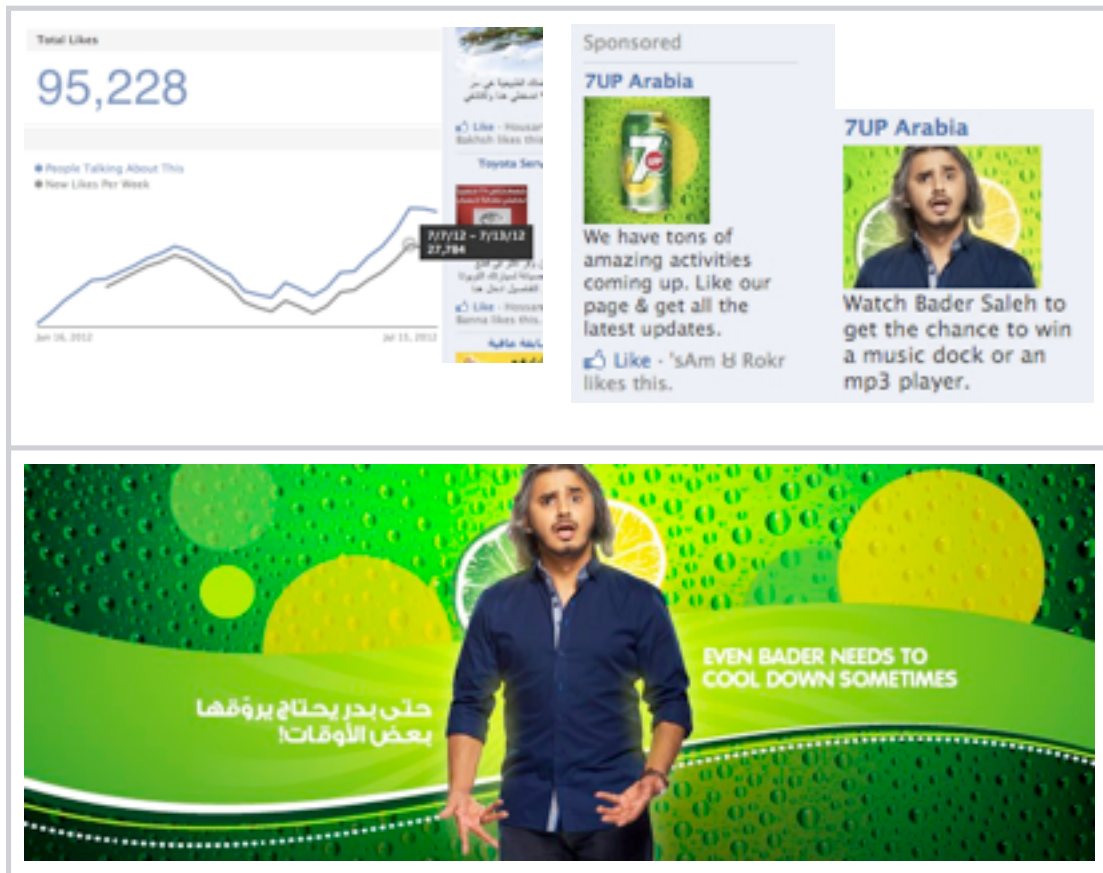
Growth on the Youtube channel follows less than an obvious pattern, because it primarily depends on content's viral quality, rather than quantity, or advertising. For example, it took Mikyajy 124 videos, primarily of make-up tutorials, to reach over 3'500'000 views and over 2'900 subscribers in a time span of 2 years, up to date. The Goody Kitchen also uses a similar strategy of cooking recipes (75 tutorials) in a span of one year to reach over 200'000 views and 400 subscribers. However, it took Tang Arabia only 4 months to reach 13 subscribers and over 67'000 views up to date, which were primarily for a 30 second TVC that gained over 61'000 views, and doesn't seem to have any outstanding differences than the other Tang videos. The pattern is similar with McDonald's Arabia as well with 125 subscribers in 9 months only and over 79'000 views for 38 videos. There is definitely a positive correlation between the number of videos and the number of subscribers, but that is not related to the number of videos produced or how frequently a brand produces videos.

As for Twitter, other than Goody Kitchen's getting a push from other popular brands on Twitter through sponsorship, all brands grow their follower base organically so those with the highest growth, are those who have effective content strategies and frequent reaching out to their target audience on Twitter through listening and discovery tools. Brands who barely tweet, and who have only Facebook updates streaming in their timelines, such as KFC Arabia, Mikyajy, and Faces, have lower influence and lower true reach (active followers).

Activities and Events
Many community managers agree that an online community needs regular activities and events which can create shared experiences for its members and increase participation, engagement and the sense of community amongst them[76]. A community manager can make use of different activities and events according to his/her assessment of what will happen in the community for the next few months, what activities/events the community needs/wants, what is most engaging, and what's coming up in the conversational calendar that could make for a great community-related event and when would be the ideal time to plan an activity or an event[77].

Campaigns and Competitions

Successful brands broaden their online advertising, and opt to run amazing social media campaigns, instead of simply using banner ads on sites, to take full advantage of the web's unique properties like interactivity, community-building, and the ability to specialize local offers[78]. Using social media campaigns, or competitions and contests, can therefore produce tremendous results for the brand by combining elements of paid and organic growth for maximum benefits. Community managers looking to increase traffic, reward their communities or drive traffic to an event or retail location, can easily accomplish these goals with competitions and giveaways. However, to ensure their success, competitions should be properly planned and should be aligned with the strategy goals. Before running a contest or sweepstakes, Ben Pickering (2011) urges community managers to consider what their marketing objectives are, what budget they have, and match the type of promotion with the level of engagement expected/desired as seen in Figure 5.27[79].

Figure 5.27 Types of Promotions and Engagement Levels

Although most social networks can be used to host competitions, but Facebook is generally seen as the main platform for competitions as a business has the opportunity to

customize their page, add images and applications, and allow fans to input extensive information[80], which makes all the following contest types possible:

- *Basic Form "Sweepstakes":* At the base of the pyramid is the traditional enter-to-win format, which is as simple as "Like our Facebook Page or Follow/RT us on Twitter to enter the draw". There are regular sweepstakes, where community managers randomly draws winners from the participant, and instant win sweepstakes, where participants are automatically eligible to prizes such as discount coupons and vouchers. This is a tried-and-true contest model and can be a great place to get started online, states Ben Pickering (2011), and is the most popular among social networks users, as approved by 61% of this research's survey respondents. Whether a brand has 100 or 100,000 Facebook fans or Twitter followers, running a sweepstakes is an easy way to boost community growth. They are good for expanding the audience for the brand's Facebook communications, and building a fan/follower base for future promotions because they require minimum effort from participants. However, in most cases they do not succeed in increasing *real* engagement; although more people seem to be "talking about" the brand but they aren't necessarily talking to it through likes, comments, posts or shares.

Figure 5.28 Piatto's Sweepstakes Contest

Figure 5.28, on the left, showcases an example of a local restaurant, Piatto, using a regular sweepstakes contest to lure in fans and followers when it first launched its social media channels[81].

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- *Text Submission:* These contests require participants to enter by submitting a text (recipe, essay, story, post, etc.), answering questions, or taking a quiz. They can be great to gain insights from fans/followers, test and increase their awareness about the brand and its products, and increase engagement in the community. Some text submission contests encourage participation by allowing contestants to express themselves and show their creativity, and win based on merits. These competitions are quite popular, with 57% of respondents willing to participate in them, because they require a minimum effort, thus reducing barriers for entry. They can also be very entertaining for participants to play if they are challenging, such as: "Test your knowledge" questions or "Be the first to answer correctly" contests. Text submission contexts are also great for increasing the number of followers and engaging them on Twitter where competitions can be slightly more difficult to run and manage. Toyota Saudi Arabia (@ToyotaALJ) ran such a competition on Twitter as seen in Figure 5.29, and in a month, it has reached over 12'000 followers, got 2.6K RTs, 5.6K mentions and a Klout score of 59[81]. Although Toyota is not a Food & FMCG brand, but it is a very successful example and the concept of the competition is a standard and can be used for almost any brand.

Figure 5.29 Toyota Saudi Arabia Text Submission Contest on Twitter.

- *Photo Contests:* Photo contests are higher up the pyramid as they require more effort from participants but they offer a deeper level of engagement and richer content, especially when used creatively. The level of participation is lower, as compared to sweepstakes and text submission contexts, with 30% of respondents only willing to

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enter a photo contest. Although the level of participation is lower, but engagement can be much higher since photo posts are the most engaging on Facebook. So, what few participations a competition can get, can urge more engagement from other non-participating members and help draw in more fans. This is most typical in competitions where winning is based on votes; as reported by this research's study population, 68% of them have never participated in a social media competition but 50% have voted for a friend in one.

- *Video Contests:* Video contests are the last type of contest, the one with the highest level of entry-barrier and engagement in terms of the level of effort and personal involvement required. Although video is the most popular medium in Saudi Arabia, with Youtube being the most visited network, but it still doesn't reflect on Saudi population's willingness to participate in contests requiring them to shoot and upload their own videos, with only 7% of surveyed sample willing to participate in video contests. However, even with such low participation rate, video contests are still attractive because they have higher potential for creativity. One possible and popular use of video contests is getting user-generated content (USG) for ad campaigns[82]. USG has a higher possibility of getting viral as opposed to commercial ads. Toyota Saudi Arabia launched a video contest in June 2012, asking Toyota owners to shoot and upload a video of their cars, and title it "Me & My Toyota" for a chance to win cash prizes[83]. The competition resulted in 25 entries with a total over 70'000 views[84]. There aren't many case studies of USG video contests in the Food & FMCG brands, considering the low level of participation that the brands expect, especially if their target audience is females, who are even less likely to participate due to cultural and privacy issues.

- *Mixed-Media Contests*: Although not included in the pyramid, in Figure 5.26, but a brand can opt-in for a mixed-media competition that combines all the above, and offer different prizes per type of entry, thus, increasing chances of participations from all community members based on their preference[85].

Although competitions are a good tactic to increase awareness and engagement, and attract new community members; however, they come at a high cost with low return if not planned and prepared well. There are many contest-obsessed people who trawl the Internet for contests, coupons and giveaways, and share them with others looking to get free stuff wherever they can. While they do drive traffic to a brand's contest, they are low-quality hits from people unlikely to interact with the brand over the long-term. They might not even be the brand's target audience to begin with, but they are merely prize-hunters[86]. Moreover, the terms and conditions must be clearly laid out; otherwise, a backlash is possible, especially when participants aren't satisfied with the results[87].

In addition, when running a competition on Facebook, a third-party app must be used to abide by the social networks' promotion guidelines, or the brand might risk getting its page shut down[88]. Finally, competitions can be very costly; between the cost of the prizes, applications, and advertising to attract participants, a brand must consider the likely results of the competition to assess its ROI. If the brand is only seeking a short spike in traffic, then any type of contest with a shiny prize would work. However, if the brand's goal is to gain a more meaningful interaction, then a contest that rolls out in phases and keeps people engaged throughout, or including user-generated content in the submission that can be shared with the entire audience, would be more ideal. But the latter requires a higher barrier to entry, so entrants must feel that the effort spent entering the contest will give them a high return. That doesn't necessarily mean that the prizes have to be costly: They can be something valuable to the participants, as intangible as getting recognition from the brand and its community members, which is only likely with power -elite- brands. It is important then to figure out what kind of prize to give away in a contest, perhaps by asking the community members what might inspire them and encourage them participate, through a poll question for example. A brand can also offer prizes from its own products, such as its highest selling merchandise, or a goody bag with samples/product collections, or free invitations in case of restaurants, etc[89]. The options are basically limitless, so it's important to find a balance between what the true target audience need/want, and what the brand can afford.

Online Events

Aside from elaborate social media campaigns, a brand can host online events, as in: activities revolving around a certain topic of discussion, hosted on the brand's social media channels. Online events work great for increasing engagement with the community members and attracting others who are interested in the topic being discussed. They can be hosted weekly, monthly, or yearly, depending on the brand's needs or occasions. The main difference between online events and campaigns, is the lack of "prizes", where rewards are intangible such as the knowledge shared, or the entertainment factor. Types of online events include, but are not limited to:

- *Live-Chats:* Chats are a great tool to "talk to" community members. They can be hosted on Facebook as "themed discussions" or on Twitter, known as "Tweetchats", or even hosted as webcasts (live video streaming). They are discussions arranged in advance and occur at a specific time. They may include a formal agenda with a specific speaker, such as an expert or a celebrity, or might involve a free flowing discussion between all participants[90]. Hosting a live chat is an effective way to promote the brand's social media presence, especially when hosted on Twitter through a hashtag where it's public because the followers of the chat participants will see the hashtag and check what's behind it. This means hundreds of new people learning about the brand each time. It also allows brands to get instant feedback because they present a great opportunity to listen to the community, and answer their questions immediately. Eventually, they enable a brand to create a true community where members tune in at the same time to interact with each other, follow each other, retweet each other, etc. It's one of the best ways to turn fans and followers into brand advocates[91].

- *Occasions:* A brand can create online events for community members to discuss and talk about around occasions that are relevant to them. For example, a brand targeting young Saudi guys can call for a fun online event on Saudi National Day where they can upload their celebration photos to share them with others. Ramadan is one of the most special occasions in Saudi Arabia, as well, so building online events that

revolved around concepts of charity, ethics, and good behavior can be a good example. It is important for the brand to study its target audience and learn what occasions and events are arising in their calendars so they can be used to create discussions and activities online. They can also be asked to share their stories, photos, or videos, for more engagement. The more important the occasion is to the community members, the less motivation they need to actually talk about it. It is enough to just pave the way for them to open the discussion, then let them express themselves.

- *Mini-Gaming Activities*: These are small/simple game experiences, whether facilitated by apps or simply with text/photos, that keep the community members engaged. People have fundamental needs and desires - for reward, status, achievement, self-expression, competition, and altruism among others. These needs are universal, and span generations, demographics, cultures and genders. Game mechanics help brands drive participation, engagement and loyalty in their community by tapping into and satisfying those needs. Examples of effective game mechanics include: Earning badges, trophies and achievements, tracking and rewarding online activity, competing for position on league tables, creating virtual identities for self-expression, collaborating as part of a team, spreading the word via Facebook and Twitter. By wrapping game elements around a brand's activities on its social media channels, it can provide compelling user experiences, engage members more deeply, and drive long-term loyalty[92].

Offline Events

Social media goes beyond Facebook or Twitter. It's about connecting with people and developing relationships. To a brand, these connections often include face-to-face transactions, especially in the case of restaurants and cafes, and FMCG brands that have their own outlets and stores. Although social media allows brands to make connections faster and over greater distances, but there is power in social media to bring together local community members, too. One of the ways to do that is with events and meet-ups at physical locations[93].

Conrad Hall (2010) states that offline events have various benefits such as community

building by brining people together around a common interest, to get to know each other, thus fostering brand advocacy, as well as credibility building, deepening relationships in person, personalizing and humanizing the brand, increasing brand visibility among the community members' friends, and gaining new testimonials, media exposure, lead generation and increased sales. Such benefits can't simply be obtained by solely using online means.

The most popular form of offline social media events is a "Tweet-up", which is an in-person meeting of Twitter users, but it has also grew to involve any in-person networking event organized using Facebook, or any other social media channels. Just like any traditional marketing event, tweetups can be used to announce and launch a new product, and get the community members to try it firsthand and give instant feedback about it as well as feel privileged to be part of the event, which reinforces brand advocacy. They can also be hosted to launch competitions or to announce and deliver prizes at the end of a competition as a celebratory ceremony. Similar to live-chats, they can also be hosted regularly to discuss certain topics that interest the brand's community members, or to have a featured speaker answer their questions in-person. For example, a local specialized restaurant can host a tweetup for females to get tips about cooking from the chef. Alternative, tweetups can be merely sponsored by the brand while they discuss a topic of interest that might not be related to the brand but is very relevant and popular to its target audience. For example, a cafe can host art tweetups for the art-enthusiasts in its community, where they can discuss art or showcase their hobbies, all while being catered by the cafe. A brand can also sponsor, and provide venue and/or catering for, local third-party tweetups, such as RiyadhTweetup, an informal gathering to meet Twitter users in Riyadh and discuss Twitter or social media in general[94]. Such tweetups are great for creating word-of-mouth marketing and drawing in potential customers and new community members.

Planning and organizing events and activities for a brand's community members is key to keep them engaged and giving them something entertaining or worthwhile to do in the

brand's online community. However, such activities require greater time and effort commitment from the community manager, and certainly require better moderation.

Case Studies

Although it is a year old, but the case of Mikyajy's use of Text submission contests, seen in Figure 5.30, is a good example on increasing engagement on a Facebook Page. The contest was called "The Game of Questions" and ran for 25 days with one question day, where the fan who answers correctly first wins. Fans were spending more time on the page to be able to catch the question just as it lands in random times. Moreover, on average, there were 310 daily comments and 200 daily likes on the posts which shows a high level of engagement, and an average of 41 wall posts, peaking at 182 wall posts on September 31st, the last day of the game.

Figure 5.30 Mikyajy's Text Submission Contest: Q&A.

Other than competitions, some of the observed brands have had success in increasing engagement with online events. Such as the case of Goody's Kitchen with its Mentor Chef online event, that lasted a week, where it invited its fans to chat live with different

chefs. The effect on engagement is clear in the "People Talking about This" chart line, where it picked up in the week during the event, as seen in Figure 5.31 below.

Figure 5.31 Goody Kitchen's Live Chat with Chefs.

Moderation

Moderation is often mistaken as the process in community management that solely involves removing provocative, negative, or inappropriate user-generated content on a brand's social media community.

However, moderation isn't removing the bad stuff, it's making clear decisions about what a brand want members to be doing in its community, and emphasizing those elements. When members visit a community, they copy what they see other members doing. Therefore, a brand's moderation strategy should shape what these members see

and, thus, influence what they do and what actions they take. It is to shape the online community entirely by being proactive, not reactive[95].

To moderate involves listening, escalating and responding to content on a brand's social media channel or activity, such as a website community forum, online live event, or Facebook page. Successful and proactive moderation of channels that are owned or controlled by the brand can spare it possible PR crisis, such as the very "infamous" Nestle vs Greenpeace case in 2010[96]. Therefore, the brand must develop moderation best practices, beforehand, for its community members to follow a number of guidelines and policies to involve (Buddy Media, 2011)[97]:

- Best practices for responding to customer feedback and complaints, and for answering requests for information, which is key when the brand's social media channel functions as a customer service tool; such as using Twitter for customer care.

- Spreading positivity about the brand via social media, essential when building customer loyalty and managing the brand's reputation.

- Best practices for giving advice and guidance.

- Tempering frustration from technology issues which can be common when using apps during competitions.

- Managing threads of conversation.

- Moderating posts and content to keep profanity, negativity and spam out, through a "Post and Commenting" Policy that should be made public to the community members, as an example by 7UP seen in Figure 5.32. To avoid content deletion or being banned from the community (in drastic situations), they are expected to abide by its rules, such as agreeing not to[98]:

  - Infringe on the rights of any third-party, including photos, intellectual property, private/confidential collateral or publicity rights.

- Post material that is unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, abusive, slanderous, hateful, or embarrassing to any other person or entity as determined by Northwestern Memorial in its sole discretion

- Impersonate another person

- Allow any other person or entity to use your identification for posting or viewing comments.

- Post the same note more than once or "spam"

- Post chain letters, pyramid schemes, advertisements or solicitations of business

- Post phone numbers or email addresses of yourself or any other individual or entity in the body of your comment

Figure 5.31 7UP Arabia Facebook Page House Rules

Buddy Media (2011) offers step-by-step guide on dealing with the above, with examples and pros & cons per each case, which is general and helpful to any brand to follow in building their own moderation strategy.

Robin Broitman (2010) also provided a "super-list" of social media policies with advice and resources, with examples from various industries and brands that can be used as templates and a starting point for any brand[99]. Other social media policies, with more legal grounding, are available, as referenced by the world's largest brands and agencies, for brands to empower their employees, community managers, and communities with accountability[100]. The community manager can revise existing social media policies, and customize them to fit the brand's persona and the community size: brands with a more relaxed and cool nature with a small local community are likely to have less strict policies with a few rules, as compared to brands that are formal and serious with a large community where members might spin out of control and require more rules with legal policies. Apart from moderating community members, a brand should set strategies to moderate its own community members, and the most important moderating strategies for community managers are the response strategies.

Response Strategies

One of the major portions of social media programs is monitoring and response. Moderation and monitoring are often used interchangeably; however, although social media monitoring is similar to moderation, it mostly relates to listening to public social media sites where content is not controlled, such as Facebook Page or public tweets. The underlying principals in social media management are listening first then deciding what to respond (according to moderation policies) and *when* to respond[101].

- *Response time and Response Rate:* Response time is the time it takes brands to respond to users' wall posts, comments or tweets; response rate is the percentage of user wall posts, comments and tweets that get responded by the brand. In a study by SocialBakers (2012), it was found that 70% of questions that brands receive on social media are not responded to, and the 30% that gets responses take an average response time of 26 hours. Jan Rezab, CEO & Co-Founder of SocialBakers, believes that a

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brand has to respond to as many as its fan questions as possible; at least 65% of all questions should be responded, while the industry benchmark to date is 30%, which is even lower in the FMCG industry at an average of 18.8%[102].

As for response time, it depends on the nature of the service/product. The current industry benchmark is over 1 day, but in real-life, a brand should be aiming at 10 - 30 minutes during office hours; especially if the brand is running a customer care site where not responding in time means that a message won't get to its fans in time for them to even notice. This is something that brands have to do in order to properly behave towards their customers[103].

Depending on the nature of the service, a brand might want to consider 24/7 support. Establishing a *Social Media Response Center* can aid a brand in shortening its response time, increasing its response rate, and providing support for longer hours; thus, creating a stronger presence on social networks. The Social Media Response Center's main functions will be to:

- Effectively and reliably collect posts made about the brand and at the brand— through a variety of social media networks.

- Respond to an increasing volume of posts quickly and cost effectively—with personal, AND accurate, quality responses.

- Engage with customers privately, when needed, to collect information required to answer a question, resolve an issue, or complete a sale.

- Effectively manage performance of both incoming and outgoing activity such as:

  ‣ Volume and types of incoming requests

  ‣ Response time and quality of outgoing responses

  ‣ Responder (agent) productivity

  ‣ Results and outcomes of interactions

Such functions can, effectively and efficiently, and should be supported and optimized with the use of tools such as SocialResponder[104].

Brands need to benchmark their moderation performance against that of competitors and industry standards to gauge their progress in responsiveness. Responsive social media communications can be a great tool to up-sell products and services and build positive customer relationships. Consequently, a lack of responsiveness can harm customer relationships, which makes a high socially devoted commitment even more crucial as consumers gravitate toward social media platforms as their primary communication mode.

Measuring and Evaluating

Most brands online do not purposefully measure their social media efforts, where nearly half the marketers from companies of all sizes, experience levels and positions share the same struggle in accurately measuring the ROI for social media marketing, as found in a study done by Awareness. Another research, conducted by Altimeter Group of big brands using social media, found that a vast majority of brands don't have a thoughtful social media measurement system in place[105]. However, without measuring social media efforts, a strategy is as good as void. Brands utilize different social media marketing channels and thus they need to determine which avenues obtain a better response in order to improve their audience's overall experience with the brand. That is the main benefit of social media; listening to consumers, improving their experience—and, therefore, achieving brand goals such as building brand affinity, loyalty and advocacy, when done successfully[106].

Accordingly, choosing the right platforms to interact with the target audience (e.g. customers), and tracking and measuring effectiveness will allow brands to develop and nurture beneficial relationships and determine their social media ROI. Therefore, in the process of building a complete social media strategy, a brand must set its measurement strategy in order to assess the benefits that it reaped from social media, and evaluate the success (or failure) of its strategy. Upon looking at multiple resources from brands'

experiences and experts' opinions and recommendation, it is established that an effective measurement and evaluation strategy includes:

- A *Scorecard* determining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) per Brand Goal and per Social Media Channel.

- A *Dashboard* measuring and tracking ongoing performance through Measurement and Analytics Tools.

- A *Report* detailing social media activities and analyzing results.

- Evaluating the Strategy.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Scorecard
Scorecards are at the highest, most strategic level of measurement and decision making spectrum. They are primarily used to help align operational execution with brand strategy. The goal of the scorecard in measurement is to keep the brand focused on its strategic plan by monitoring execution and mapping its results back to the overall strategy. The primary measurement used in a scorecard is the key performance indicator. (KPI). These key performance indicators are often a composite of several metrics or other KPIs that measure the brand's ability to execute its strategic objective (Tom Gonzales; n.d.)[107]. Metrics and KPIs allow a brand to track its reach and impact online, find new sales leads, develop existing customer relationships, improve its website, fine-tune its social media interactions, and thus evaluate its overall strategy. While determining metrics, a brand must examine them on two levels: Metrics per brand goals, and metrics per social media channel.

The brand goals discussed earlier in the chapter translates into 5 correlated metrics:

1. Reach: This is the measure of the audience that has interacted with the brand on any level. It's the basic raw number that is inclusive of all the numbers of other metrics. This metric is of most importance when the brand goal is to raise or increase

awareness. KPIs of this metric indicate the changes in the level of brand awareness of the target audience.

2. *Engagement:* This is the measure of the audience that "talk" to the brand; it is higher up the level of interaction where audience have committed more time and effort to interact with the brand. This metric is of most importance on all social media channels and to all goals as it is the real metric of an active audience presence, but it is most critical in building meaningful relationships with the target audience. Its KPIs indicate the level of interaction and its relevance to a brand's strategy.

3. *Influence:* This is the measure of the brand's ability to drive action from the audience it is reaching, and the influence of the audience itself. It is a measure of a strong brand presence online, which is most critical when building customer loyalty. Its KPIs indicate the size and influence of the audience and their affinity to the brand as opposed to its competitors.

4. *Position:* This is the measure of a brand's position in the perception of its audience, which is key when establishing trust. Its KPIs indicate the audience's sentiment towards the brand.

5. *Protection:* This is the measure of a brand's crisis management abilities when managing its reputation. Its KPIs gauges the brand's response strategy in crisis and negative situations.

6. *Traffic:* This is the measure of the audience on the brand's website, and is directly related to the brand goal of increasing search visibility and web traffic. Its KPIs indicate the number and length of visits as well as referral sources.

Table 5.3 below lists out the Key Performance Indicators per each brand goal, and categorizes them into quantitative KPIs which are extracted as numbers and figures, and qualitative KPIs that often require manual extraction and intelligent analysis, as recommended by Mike Schwede (2012)[108].

Table 5.3: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) per Brand Goal.

Goal	Quantitative KPI	Qualitative Reports/KPI
Reach	• Number of Audience (likes, followers, subscribers, etc.) • Active reach • Impressions • Viral Reach • Cost per Audience	• Brand mention drivers • Audience Growth drivers • Best Channels, Campaigns • Demographics
Engagement	• No of Posts, tweets, comments, etc. • Feedback (Engagement) Rate	• Topic Strategy Fit • Most Engaging Topics, Channels and Campaigns
Influence	• Competitor Share of Voice • Follower Authority Allocation • No. of Superfans (Brand Advocates)	• Influencer List
Position	• Overall Sentiment • Topic Share of Voice • Position Gap per Topic	• Buzzgraph / Word cloud • Key Conversations
Protection	• Number of Issues • Velocity / Crisis Lengths • Reaction Time • Sentiment Change / Solved	• Share of Crisis per Level
Traffic	• Website visits • POS Visits • Average time on Site • Referring sites	• Website Visits/ Visitor • POS Visits/ Visitors

Margaret Francis (2011) also recommends that a brand assembles the KPIs given per each social media channel, as listed in Table 5.4, and analyze them to assess the success and effectiveness of each channel.

Table 5.4: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) per Social Media Channel.

Measurement	Attention	Engagement	Authority	Influence	Sentiment
Facebook	• Unique Visits • Impressions • Page Views • Media Consumption	• Total interactions • fan photos/ videos • Post Quality	• External links to content & discussion	• Total likes • subscribed likes • audience profile as reflection of target	• On-Message • Positive/ Negative/ Neutral • Change Over time
Twitter	• Total followers	• Retweets • Direct Messages • @Replies • Shared Content	• Inbound links • External coverage	• extended network/ Influence of Followers • Follower Profile as Reflection of Target	• On-Message • Positive/ Negative/ Neutral • Change Over time
Youtube	• Views • Subscribers	• Likes/Dislikes • Comments • Favorites/ Replies	• Inbound links • External coverage	• Subscribers • Demographic Insights • Audience Profile	• On-Message • Positive/ Negative/ Neutral • Change Over time
Blog	• Share of Voice	• # of Comments Relative to Audience Size	• Inbound links • External coverage • Subscribers	• Audience Profile as Reflection of Target	• On-Message • Positive/ Negative/ Neutral • Change Over time
Foursquare	• # of Unique Visitors Check-ins	• # of Repeat Check-ins	• # of Check-ins broadcast to Twitter or Facebook	• Audience Profile as Reflection of Target	• Positive/ Negative/ Neutral Commentary/ Tips/Check-ins
Search (Website)	• Traffic to Site	• # Page Views (Overall) • # Page views/ user • Time spent on Site	• Inbound links	• Profile of Visitors as reflection of target	• Most Popular Search Terms
Overall	• Total Media Consumption	• Total Interactions	• Total Trackbacks & Coverage of activities	• Total ongoing Engaged Subscribers to Content/ Community Crossover	• Overall Sentiment • Total Shift in Sentiment

These are generally the metrics available for a brand to measure, but it isn't necessary to measure all of them continuously. Rather, a brand must focus on the metrics that mean to it much as they relate to its strategy goals. In summary, the metrics that a brand measures should go deeper than simple website hit counts and follower or fan numbers. The metrics that matter track who gets to the brand online, from where, using what device, how they found it, and what they do next. The brand should track deep metrics that show visitor flow on its site, engagement in social media, leads, competitive intelligence, sales funnel departure rates, capture points, keyword intelligence, device data, location, and more. Metrics that count how many Twitter followers or Facebook likes a brand has and other surface numbers don't matter. Instead, a brand should spend time gauging how people interact with and on behalf of it, and pay more attention to the numbers below the surface that give more detail[109].

Benchmarking

While the scorecard provides the metrics and KPIs that need to be measure, the numbers are meaningless if they are not compared against a relevant benchmark. In benchmarking, the brand compares its own performance metrics to industry bests or best practices from other industries.Whether the brand has just launched its social media efforts, or have been active for years, it should be able to recognize industry standards to compare its own results against them. A brand must research available studies that indicate industry averages as well as averages per metric that could be provided by social media channels or tools, such as:

• Average Engagement Rate in the FMCG industry is 0.072%, for an average Facebook Page Size of 2'296'740, while the AER in Beauty & Cosmetics is 0.108% for an average page size of 744'617 fans (SocialBakers, 2012).

• Clicks per Posts (with links) on Facebook Pages are an average of 3.103 per like, 14.678 per comment (making comments 4 times more *valuable* than likes), and 0.005 per impression; this means if a brand posted a link to its page, and it got 3 likes, the link would be clicked by 9 people on average[110].

- Influence Score on Klout is an average of 20, and a score higher than 50, puts the user in the 95th percentile. That is if a brand has a score higher than 50, it has more influence on Twitter (and any other social media channel it connected to Klout) that 95% of users[111].

When industry averages are not present, especially for the Saudi market, a brand must conduct its own studies to see how its local competitors are performing, so it is able to evaluate its own performance as "good" or "bad". For example, Tristan Handy (2012) states that the *clicks per follower/fan* (CPF) metric is the core measure of performance in social media marketing after giving it more weight by normalizing clicks by audience size. The audience size is the biggest and more reliable factor that affects engagement (CPF); it is found that the smaller the audience, the higher the engagement, and vice versa. That's why it is important for the brand to group its competitors according to audience size (fans and followers), and then set performance benchmarks based on CPF. According to how well the brand performed as compared to its peers (competitors with the same audience range), it can be deemed as above-average or below-average[112]. This method was used when ranking the observed brands by Engagement Rate in Chapter 4, as an example.

One last important benchmarking approach is to compare the brand's performance to its past performances as it advances in the social media marketing. As more effort and resources are pooled into its social media marketing, the brand should be seeing better results month by month. Gini Dietrich (2009) also suggests a few tools, such as Twitter Grader and HubSpot's Marketing Grader (formerly known as Website Grader), that can be used to *grade* a brand's social media presence, allowing it to compare its grade to that of competitors, and to track its grade's progress over any set of time[113]. Using grading sites and tools to determine a brand's benchmarks will help it create and revise its objectives for one month, two months, three months, six months, and 12 months. The *grades* can be checked back daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly. A brand must only

figure out what its objectives are and what it needs to measure (Scorecard) are and how often to measure, and set up its measurement dashboard, discussed next.

Measurement Dashboard

A measurement dashboard falls one level down in the measurement and decision making process from a scorecard; as it is less focused on strategic goals and more tied to specific operational objectives, such as quarterly plans and campaigns. An operational objective may directly contribute to one or more higher level strategic goals. Within a dashboard, execution of the operational objective itself becomes the focus, not the higher level strategy. The purpose of a measurement dashboard is to provide the brand with actionable information in a format that is both intuitive and insightful. Finally, measurement dashboards leverage operational data primarily in the form of metrics and KPIs (Tom Gonzales; n.d.).

In the social media sense, The "dashboard" is literally the front page of any analytics and measurement tool, equivalent to Facebook Pages' Insights, Google Analytics dashboard, Klout's Score Analytics, etc. It is the panel that contains a visual and numerical summary of the metrics and KPIs of a social media channel; Figure 5.33 illustrates a concept measurement tool's dashboard (The White Agency; 2008).

Figure 5.33 Concept Measurement Tool/Dashboard
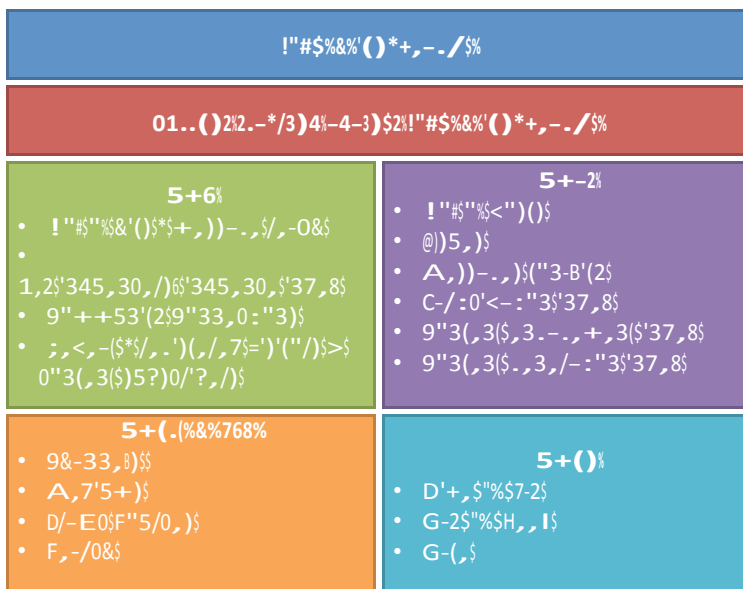
However, as discussed in the Scorecard, there are many metrics per channel that needs to be tracked that may not be provided by a typical measurement tool dashboard. The White Agency (2008) evaluated 15 measurement and monitoring tools, and determined that an ideal measurement tool dashboard[114]:

- needs to pull content from all social media channels that are owned, controlled or user-generated, such as: social networks, blogs, microblogs, forums, discussion board, comments on sites, image sharing sites, etc.

- needs to include data from Google Analytics, in case where a website is available in the social media mix.

- needs to comprise series of widgets and tools that can be customized to suit the brand's needs and activities.

- gives alternatives to viewing data, such as visual graphs and charts, summarized tables, detailed data.

- needs to show qualitative data such as interactions, level of influence, depth of conversation, trends, etc.

- needs to be keyword-based.

- should highlight issues that needs to be addressed immediately as part of a response strategy.

- can export charts and tables.

- need to be able to compare different factors.

- provides a summary and ability to drill down into all data.

- provides the ability to select dates to compare timeframes and analyze changes or milestones within a timeframe.

Measurement and Monitoring Tools

Once a brand sets what it needs to measure, and how an ideal measurement tool should be, it can test and try out different measurement tools until it finds one that meets its needs. Social media monitoring services are powerful – honing in, listening, comparing, monitoring, recording and tracking what a brand's target audience needs are – and they can yield powerful results. However, the brand needs to know exactly what it should be looking for in the best social media monitoring services.

Top Ten Reviews (2012) urges that the best social media monitoring service should **monitor & listen** to the public opinion about the brand and its products through various social media channels, and gauge the what vibes the audience is sending online - negative, positive or neutral. The **features** of the monitoring tool are also very essential, such as managing information, workflow, and reporting. Most importantly for brands in the Saudi market is to use a monitoring tool that has a translation feature that can pull any content and translate it from or to Arabic, considering its the main preferred language by the Saudi online users. Using measurement and monitoring tools that do not support Arabic would then not be effecting considering the majority of the conversations that are happening in Arabic are not taken into account. The best tool for a brand must also have **accurate sentiment measurement** that gauges the audience's mood towards the brand and its products. Moreover, the tool should be easy to set up and use, and for the community managers to read understand the raw data being extracted from it. Lastly, an added-value to a good measurement tool is providing the brand with **help & support** to have experts answer its questions and choose the optimal monitoring options. Based on these settings, as well as a few others, Top Ten Reviews have reviewed social media monitoring tools for 2012 and ranked the top 10 according to their scores. Of the top 10, only the following offer translation services for the content, making them a good fit for the Saudi market: Sysomos, Lithium, Alterian SM2, UberVU, Brandwatch, and Beevolve[115]. These tools are all paid tools -with most of them offering a free trial period- and although they are worth the investment to have accurate and thorough results, a brand such as a small local cafe/restaurant might find them off its budget. Therefore, a brand

can use a combination of free social media monitoring tools that provide different features and measures, such as Hootsuite, TwitterCounter, Klout, TweetReach, Google Alerts, and many others[116]. However, then the brand must make more effort to collect data from all the tools it's using and present them in one report to have an overall view of its performance.

Activity Report

The activity report is the most relevant performance indicator tool in the brand's measurement strategy. They are used when the brand needs to look at raw data in an easy to read format to assess and evaluate its progress.When combined with scorecards and dashboards, reports offer a tremendous way to allow brands to analyze the specific data underlying their metrics and key performance indicators.

Mike Schwede (2012) articulates that an ideal activity report should cover the following topics[117]:

- Overview: What was done in the current month and what are the most important figures saying?

- Reach: What is the status of the quantitative and qualitative reach?

- Engagement: What are the ERs and what is quality of the dialogue?

- Influence: How much influence does the brand have, for example with influencers and brand advocates?

- Position: What impact have the activities had on the brand position? With which topics is the brand brought in connection with?

- Protection: Which crises have the brand avoided or survived? What is the brand perception after the crisis?

- Sales: Which traffic, leads and revenue figures were influence by Facebook posts and Tabs?

- Support & Innovation: How good is the brand's customer service and how does it use the inputs of the audience?

- Campaign Analysis: Which impacts did a campaign have, in detail?

- Learnings & Activities Month After: What are the learnings from the current figures and analyses, and what does the brand want to enhance?

In summary, the activity report presents in a quantitative glimpse, as well as in qualitative details, what the current tracking of the brand is against its set KPIs & benchmarks, and provides explanation for the success or failure in meeting a KPI. The activity report can be put together as Presentation Slides or a Word Document with each topic in a chapter; depending on the goals, strategy and activities, the brand can then decide where to lay focus and what to leave out.

The report can be constructed manually by extracting the different numbers, graphs and content from each social media channel used. Alternatively, most of the measurement tools provide analytics reports as part of its package where a brand can choose from existing templates, or build their own template of what metrics it'd like to focus on, and then save the report as PDF or other. A great example of that is Hootsuite Social Analytics Reports that provide custom analytics for Facebook Insights, Google Analytics, Twitter Profile Stats, Click Stats, as well as Organization Analytics when social media management is handled by numerous team members[118].

Strategy Evaluation

Strategy evaluation is focused on the high (top) level of measurement, deliberating matters such as: how have the brand's networks grown or changed? are there new opportunities for partnerships or collaborations? are there new opportunities for empowering the community either in different roles within the social media/online space or in other areas of the organization? does the brand have stories of volunteers, staff, community members, or those it serves that could be sharing their stories in new or different ways to highlight its impact? etc.

The strategy evaluation is based on the performance of the brand that is being tracked and analyzed through activity reports, and is especially derived from the learnings section of each activity report over time. To support the evaluation process as well, a brand should include mechanisms for feedback and input throughout the strategy formulation process and throughout its social media channels. It needs to provide opportunities for its community, as well as its community managers, staff and any others participating on the "administrative" end of the operations to share ideas. The best way to approach this is to create feedback opportunities that are "evergreen" or always available, like a contact form or address, a public forum, or commenting; and opportunities that are "seasonal" or based specifically on an event, idea, opportunity, etc. (like a blog post about possible functionality that could be added to the site, asking for feedback and ideas or even voting on the options). The key is listen to how the audience reacted or what it thought of the elements of the brand's strategy in order to identify strength and weakness points in it, and then be willing and ready to leverage them by re-visiting the strategy and tweaking it[119].

Figure 5.34 Strategy Formulation Process
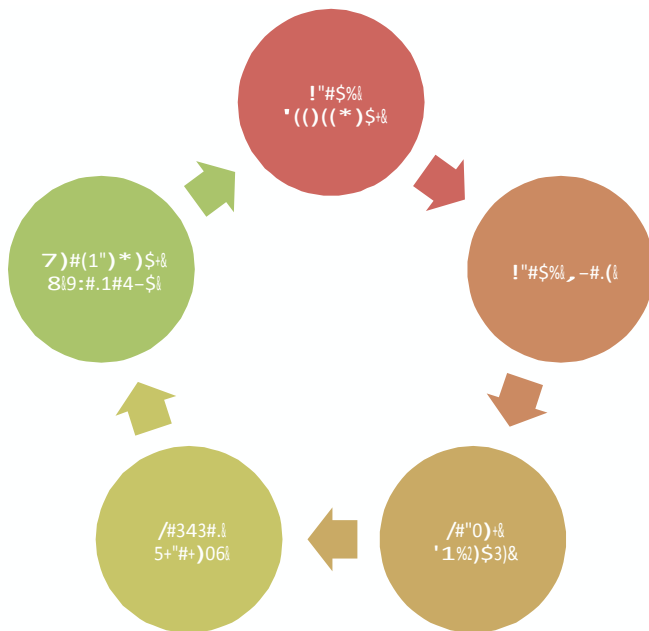
As the social media scene changes, and the brand's strategic efforts shift its position on the long-run, the strategy formulation process becomes an endless cycle where measurement and evaluation leads to direct input into the brand's (re-) assessment, thus repeating the whole process over again to accommodate for changes, as seen in Figure 5.34.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Social Media Marketing and Communications is not an elusive knowledge and practice anymore. The success of various brands with leveraging it globally, and in the Saudi market, is proof that having the capacity to gain an accurate and deep intuitive understanding of social media is possible. It's not only possible, but *expected* as the world goes digital at a rapid pace, where young and mature users in Saudi Arabia increase in number on social networks daily, and depend on social networking for social connectivity and sharing, information, news, and entertainment. This all pools into the Saudi population's purchase and consumption decision-making as their perception of brands becomes affected by their online social interactions. Moreover, Saudi consumers are increasingly preferring the conveniency of interacting with brands online in an open-dialogue over other traditional means; even when not directly interacting with brands, their impressions are still shaped by the experiences of their social networking friends with those brands.

International and local brands are realizing the power of social media in shaping the Saudi market's brand perception and affecting its purchase intentions and decisions. Brands have also seen the benefits of social media in building closer relationships with their customers, establishing trust and brand loyalty while gaining valuable consumer insights and feedback that help them customize and tailor their marketing programs based on customers' needs, thus being more cost-effective. In a vast market such as Saudi Arabia, social media marketing enables local brands such as Munch Bakery achieve more viable results in connecting and building engagement with its customers relatively to international brands such as Krispy Kreme Middle East. It also enables a big brand such as Goody be more than just products in the minds of its target audience, to become a community for those passionate about cooking to express themselves and learn from each other and from experts... A customer experience that once was very difficult and costly to create and widespread, especially in Saudi Arabia.

It is a no-brainer that social media marketing is more dynamic than traditional marketing. It is allowing customers to communicate their needs instantly to the brands, and those brands who actually listen to their customers are reaping the benefits with more tailored and profitable products and services. Had it not been for the voting on its Facebook Page, Munch Bakery would have not learnt (at virtually no extra cost) that a Vimto cupcake would be on high-demand from its customers, for example.

When tracking the different brands' performance on the three main social networks, and analyzing their efforts, it was evident that those who were working based on a clear direction were seeing better results and deriving more value from their presence, rather than just simply being there, wasting time and effort on "random acts of sociability". After researching what the successful brands have in common, and what industry best practice dictates, the roadmap for a brand to build its strategy (a direction) to use social media was crystalized. In simple steps, when devising a social media strategy, a brand must look into the 5 following main ingredients:

- Where it stands today in the minds of its target audience and in comparison to its competitors, by conducting research and most importantly listening to what is being said about it online before jumping into the conversation. If a brand does not have an full grasp about where it currently is, it can never measure the gap between its position and its desired position to be able to set the ideal direction.

- Where it would like to be in the future and how that goal can be assisted by social media. It is not enough justification to use social media marketing just because "everyone is doing it". While it is important to always match or be ahead of competition, if they're doing it, but the brand must set its own expectations of what it wants to and can achieve by leveraging social media. Then and only then can it gauge the effectiveness of its efforts.

- Market Data about the Saudi online population, to know where the brand's target audience is & how to properly target them, as well as study their online behavior: what they do online, how much time they spend doing what, what level of engagement they

prefer, what they like and don't like... basically, profiling online customers to analyze and understand them for a brand to know where and how to engage them through social media.

- Best practices and guidelines of social media communications, to know how each social network or tool can best be leveraged to drive engagement from the target audience through content, community management, growth techniques, and activities and events, and how to moderate them to stay on track of the direction.

- Setting metrics and key performance indicators, that are tied to brand goals, to measure the results of its social media efforts and how they compare to industry averages and to competitors. The measurement will answer the main important questions: "Did the brand reach to where it wanted to go? What helped it so it can be further leveraged, and where were the shortcomings and how can they be overcome?"; such questions are answered with measurement tools and analytics reports that advise the brand on what to do next.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

To guide a brand in its social media journey to achieving its goals, best practices and suggestions are drawn from case studies and experts, and summarized in 10 recommendations below.

1. Include a blog or a socially-integrated website in the social media mix. Having a blog or a socially-interactive website have proved to be quite an effective sales tool in global markets, but it is often forgotten from the social media mix in this region as brands tend to focus more on social networks. A website or a blog allows a brand to retain customers (who socially-connect, register or subscribe) in a brand-owned channel, rather than band-controlled social networks which can be here today, and gone tomorrow.

2. Support social media marketing with email marketing. Email comes as the second preference of interaction for respondents, and is quite effective in directing existing

customers to a brand's social media channels, or even send them snapshots of its social media activity in case they aren't the type who spend much time on social networks to engage with the brand.

3. Include new uprising social networks in your social media marketing mix and do not limit yourself to the popular social networks. When deciding what new social networks you can include in your mix, you must understand what each social network is meant for and have a grasp over its features to see how the brand's message can fit in it.

4. Combine intellectually interesting messaging, usable design, intelligently networked digital marketing elements and data-driven efficient media reach for a successful content marketing strategy. Focusing on one element only will never let a brand shine and prosper in social media.

5. Step out of the conformity of the brand. Formality and control will never drive engagement in social media. Instead, dress your communication with the personality of your brand, and be open for interaction and dialogue as a human, not a business.

6. Invest in content first and foremost; it is what communicates your brand's essence, drives engagement, directs you to your goal. Valuable content is what stays yours forever digitally and keeps your audience coming back for more.

7. Grow your community using a balanced combination of techniques at the same time. For example, Saudi Facebook users indicated that they are willing to participate in competitions when it suits them; and even if they do not, they would at least vote for their friends who are participating. They don't follow many brands, but they are prone to click on advertising when they find it interesting. Therefore, a mix of the right type of competition with viral (sharing or voting) aspect and targeted advertising always has the best outcome in attracting new audience and engaging them.

8. Run promotions as part of the overall social media strategy, not as a one-off event. Because promotions today are inherently social, take advantage of that to engage and gather consumer insights. Add a survey question to your entry form, encourage

conversation on your Facebook page, gather feedback and apply what you learn to future campaigns.

9. Treat your customers online as kings and queens; understanding them is key to enabling your community to flourish with brand advocates who can sustain its growth. Don't over-control them, give them the space to spring as brand evangelists. And don't always assume what they know or what they want, simple ask them and let them know they're being heard by actually listening to them and letting them direct your business strategy.

10. Consider good moderation by employing great community managers who can create and nourish conversations, and know how and when to use elements of surprise/shock to create momentum and increase engagement, capturing the audience's attention. Community managers are like the party hosts; they alone have the ability to keep the party going or kill it.

This strategy process and recommendations hold true to most B2C brands of different sizes, industries and markets, and they are perfectly scalable to changes in the social media scene; thus, they serve as a thorough guide to leveraging social media marketing for Food and FMCG brands in Saudi Arabia.

Appendix A: Survey of Saudi Online Population Interacting with Food & FMCG Brands on Social Media

This survey is intended for the use in an MBA research on leveraging social media marketing for Food and FMCG brands in Saudi Arabia. Please only take this survey if you are a resident of Saudi Arabia and are active with such brands on social networks. Food and FMCG brands include restaurants, cafes, drinks, chocolates, makeup and cosmetics, shampoo, toothpaste, detergents and many other products that you buy frequently.

1. Please specify your gender:

   - Male

   - Female

2. Please specify your age group:

   - 13 – 17

   - 18 – 24

   - 25 – 34

   - 35 – 44

   - 45 – 54

   - 55+

3. Please specify your city (or the nearest major city to you)

   - Riyadh

   - Jeddah

   - Khobar

   - Other.

4. Please select all social networks where you have created a personal profile and are active* (you log in at least once a week)

- ○ Facebook

- ○ Twitter

- ○ Youtube

- ○ Tumblr

- ○ Pinterest

- ○ Foursquare

5. How many hours do you spend on those social networks each week:

- 0 – 5 hours

- 6 – 10 hours

- 11 – 15 hours

- 16 – 20 hours

- 21 – 25 hours

- 26 – 30 hours

- 31 – 35 hours

- 36 – 40 hours

- More than 41 hours.

6. How many friends do you have on your primary social network?

- 1 – 100

- 101 – 200

- 201 – 300

- 301 – 400

- 401 – 500

- More than 500.

7. Why do you use social networks? Please select all that applies.

- To connect with people socially.

- To connect with people professionally

- To share photos, videos, and music.

- To play games.

- To find information, share feedback about and connect with brands.

- To promote a business or a cause.

8. How do you feel about advertising on social networks?

- Annoying, I never click on it

- Useful, I click on it sometimes.

- Neutral, I rarely pay attention to it.

9. Has your experience with a brand on social networks ever affected your decision to buy it?

- Yes

- No

10. Have you ever interacted with a brand on social networks even though you don't use it?

- Yes

- No

11. Are you a fan of any local Food or FMCG brands on Facebook?

- No
- Yes, up to 5 brands.
- Yes, up to 10 brands.
- Yes, up to 20 brands.
- Yes, more than 20 brands.

12. Do you follow any local Food or FMCG brands on Twitter?

- No

- Yes, up to 5 brands.

- Yes, up to 10 brands

- Yes, up to 20 brands.

- Yes, more than 20 brands.

1. Are you subscribed to any local Food or FMCG brands' channels on Youtube?

   - No

   - Yes, up to 5 brands.

   - Yes, up to 10 brands.

   - Yes, up to 20 brands.

   - Yes, more than 20 brands.

2. Have you ever participated in a brand's social media competition?

   - No.

   - Yes, less than 3 times.

   - Yes, more than 3 times.

3. What kind of competition are you most likely to participate in? Select all that applies.

   - Registering for a lucky draw.

   - Photo submission contest

   - Video Submission contest

   - Text/Survey submission contest

4. Have you ever voted for a friend in a brand's social media competition?

   - No.

   - Yes, less than 3 times.

   - Yes, more than 3 times.

5. Where do you prefer to interact with a brand? Select all that applies.

- Physical location

- Website/blog.

- Social network

- Mobile application

- Email

- Phonecall

Appendix B: Facebook Page Statistics of Observed Brands

Nu.	Brand	FB Page URL	Total Likes				
			23-May	30-May	7-Jun	13-Jun	20-Jun
1	KFC Arabia	www.facebook.com/kfcarabia	825,589	870,109	953,531	987,073	1,010,836
2	TGI Friday's	www.facebook.com/TGIFridaysKSA	48,977	51,640	56,915	57,067	57,167
3	Domino's Pizza	www.facebook.com/DominosKSA	22,666	22,749	24,573	27,814	29,408
4	Pizza Fusion	www.facebook.com/PizzaFusionArabia	20,812	21,011	21,566	22,795	24,718
5	Krispy Kreme	www.facebook.com/KrispyKremeME	124,820	125,661	126,272	126,613	127,042
6	Shawarmer	www.facebook.com/ShawarmerSA	26,174	27,461	27,564	28,550	30,342
7	McDonald's	www.facebook.com/mcdonaldsarabia	23,840	24,021	25,299	29,280	31,566
8	Munch Bakery	www.facebook.com/munchbakery	66,564	67,694	69,017	73,041	82,027
9	Activia	www.facebook.com/SaActivia	15,380	16,942	18,079	18,312	18,561
10	Al Marai	www.facebook.com/almarai	394,127	404,779	423,164	440,478	455,525
11	Goody Kitchen	www.facebook.com/goodykitchen	86,720	87,394	89,772	92,679	94,185
12	Toblerone	www.facebook.com/toblveronearabia	65,782	75,042	80,473	83,931	84,198
13	Nestle Desserts	www.facebook.com/NestleDessertsArabia	131,186	132,688	133,893	139,091	143,588
14	Tang Arabia	www.facebook.com/TangArabia	127,605	137,743	147,957	156,311	160,856
15	Wella Professionals	www.facebook.com/WellaProfessionalsKSA	5,052	5,305	5,333	5,336	5,361
16	Mikyajy	www.facebook.com/Mikyajy1	36,544	36,738	36,909	37,108	37,391
17	Kerastase	www.facebook.com/KerastaseME	35,677	36,389	37,504	38,399	39,458
18	Lux Beauty	www.facebook.com/LuxBeauty	75,915	77,818	78705	80,124	80,296
19	Faces	www.facebook.com/FacesME	60,453	62,078	63,346	63,674	64,167
20	Maybelline	www.facebook.com/maybellinenymea	63,291	64,080	69,331	72,992	75,540
21	Persil Abaya Shampoo	www.facebook.com/persilabayaworld	24,437	26,450	27,835	29,181	29,652
22	Head & Shoulders	www.facebook.com/hnsarabia	164,416	170,045	179,476	199,749	350,372
23	Sunsilk Arabia	www.facebook.com/SunsilkArabia	174,673	174,873	175,011	175,928	177,189
24	Garnier Arabia	www.facebook.com/GarnierArabia	49,510	50,538	51,463	52,183	52,832
25	AloeDent	www.facebook.com/AloeDent.Arabia	14,099	17,321	20,159	22,923	25,371

Nu.	Brand	FB Page URL	People Talking About This				
			23-May	30-May	7-Jun	13-Jun	20-Jun
1	KFC Arabia	www.facebook.com/kfcarabia	103,302	38,418	92,620	51,896	23,721
2	TGI Friday's	www.facebook.com/TGIFridaysKSA	6,516	4,526	5,739	2,508	1,258
3	Domino's Pizza	www.facebook.com/DominosKSA	1,860	1,630	2,002	4,244	4,405
4	Pizza Fusion	www.facebook.com/PizzaFusionArabia	2,169	608	1,337	2,402	2,739
5	Krispy Kreme	www.facebook.com/KrispyKremeME	5,775	3,709	2,149	1,986	2,079
6	Shawarmer	www.facebook.com/ShawarmerSA	1,833	1,438	694	803	2,239
7	McDonald's	www.facebook.com/mcdonaldsarabia	437	412	1,021	4,220	3,697
8	Munch Bakery	www.facebook.com/munchbakery	1,373	2,698	3,666	8,037	14,708
9	Activia	www.facebook.com/SaActivia	2,402	1,960	1,902	544	737
10	Al Marai	www.facebook.com/almarai	19,619	16,357	25,963	25,938	30,337
11	Goody Kitchen	www.facebook.com/goodykitchen	1,646	1,681	2,163	4,137	3,643
12	Toblerone	www.facebook.com/toblveronearabia	13,292	11,006	6,688	6,785	823
13	Nestle Desserts	www.facebook.com/NestleDessertsArabia	1,996	2,141	3,445	4,397	7,349
14	Tang Arabia	www.facebook.com/TangArabia	14,943	16,032	10,229	10,856	10,158
15	Wella Professionals	www.facebook.com/WellaProfessionalsKSA	1,167	608	180	55	221
16	Mikyajy	www.facebook.com/Mikyajy1	387	481	475	502	345
17	Kerastase	www.facebook.com/KerastaseME	831	1,048	1,441	1,295	1,720
18	Lux Beauty	www.facebook.com/LuxBeauty	4,359	2,901	2,180	2,785	1,514
19	Faces	www.facebook.com/FacesME	2,499	2,003	2,239	536	376
20	Maybelline	www.facebook.com/maybellinenymea	1,487	1,061	4,580	6,157	5,262
21	Persil Abaya Shampoo	www.facebook.com/persilabayaworld	386	2,510	1,664	1,828	1,143
22	Head & Shoulders	www.facebook.com/hnsarabia	7,014	8,877	9,052	20,071	126,299
23	Sunsilk Arabia	www.facebook.com/SunsilkArabia	1,371	695	534	1,403	1,856
24	Garnier Arabia	www.facebook.com/GarnierArabia	572	1,082	1,442	1,171	1,168
25	AloeDent	www.facebook.com/AloeDent.Arabia	3,672	4,051	4,242	4,371	4,629

Appendix C: Youtube Channel Statistics of Observed Brands

Nu.	Brand	URL	Subscribers			
	Restaurants		30-May	7-Jun	14-Jun	20-Jun
1	KFC Arabia	http://www.youtube.com/user/KFCArabia	94	96	98	101
2	TGI Friday's	N/A				
3	Domino's Pizza	N/A				
4	Pizza Fusion	N/A				
5	Krispy Kreme	N/A				
6	Shawarmer	http://www.youtube.com/user/ShawarmerTube	12	12	12	12
7	McDonald's	http://www.youtube.com/user/McDonaldsArabia	101	106	112	112
8	Munch Bakery	http://www.youtube.com/user/TheMunchWorld	25	25	25	25
9	Activia	https://www.facebook.com/SaActivia/videos				
10	Al Marai	http://www.youtube.com/user/almaraicom	247	269	281	284
11	Goody Kitchen	http://www.youtube.com/user/TheGoodyKitchen	294	307	314	334
12	Toblerone	N/A				
13	Nestle Desserts	http://www.youtube.com/user/nestledessertsarabia	0	8	10	11
14	Tang Arabia	http://www.youtube.com/user/TangArabia	9	11	11	11
15	Wella Professionals	N/A				
16	Mikyajy	http://www.youtube.com/mikyajy1	2,762	2,778	2,804	2,832
17	Kerastase	http://www.youtube.com/user/KerastaseME	32	33	35	37
18	Lux Beauty	https://www.facebook.com/LuxBeauty/videos				
19	Faces	http://www.youtube.com/user/FacesBeautyStores	11	11	11	11
20	Maybelline	http://www.youtube.com/user/MaybellineNYME	23	30	42	50
21	Persil Abaya Shampoo	http://www.youtube.com/user/persilabayaworld	80	87	89	92
22	Head & Shoulders	http://www.youtube.com/user/hnsarabia	71	71	72	77
23	Sunsilk Arabia	http://www.youtube.com/user/SunsilkArabia	36	36	36	37
24	Garnier Arabia	http://www.youtube.com/user/GarnierArabia	13	15	20	20
25	AloeDent	http://www.youtube.com/user/Aloedenta	1	1	1	1

Nu.	Brand	Video Views				Videos
	Restaurants	30-May	7-Jun	14-Jun	20-Jun	20-Jun
1	KFC Arabia	12,503	12729	12,982	13,242	14
2	TGI Friday's	N/A				N/A
3	Domino's Pizza	N/A				N/A
4	Pizza Fusion	N/A				N/A
5	Krispy Kreme	N/A				N/A
6	Shawarmer	4,043	4062	4,096	4,127	10
7	McDonald's	70,131	71324	72,164	73,611	37
8	Munch Bakery	921	942	963	980	2
9	Activia	N/A				N/A
10	Al Marai	64,133	77,919	101,187	102,543	86
11	Goody Kitchen	159,835	164,991	170,018	178,237	75
12	Toblerone	N/A				N/A
13	Nestle Desserts	33	293	401	485	6
14	Tang Arabia	64,673	64,985	65,253	65,462	4
15	Wella Professionals	N/A				N/A
16	Mikyajy	3,485,975	3,521,124	3,557,147	3,592,354	107
17	Kerastase	42,539	43,033	43,472	44,199	18
18	Lux Beauty	N/A				N/A
19	Faces	4,316	4,319	4,323	4,325	14
20	Maybelline	14,997	17,178	19,383	22,301	20
21	Persil Abaya Shampoo	280,742	290,295	299,232	306,893	57
22	Head & Shoulders	97,270	98,983	100,562	110,975	34
23	Sunsilk Arabia	6,929	7,091	7,268	7,450	12
24	Garnier Arabia	24,965	28,045	30,764	33,464	23
25	AloeDent	2	6	6	11	1

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Appendix D: Twitter Account Statistics of Observed Brands

Nu.	Brand	Twitter URL	Following				
			23-May	30-May	7-Jun	13-Jun	20-Jun
1	KFC Arabia	www.twitter.com/kfcarabia	1	1	1	1	1
2	TGI Friday's	N/A					
3	Domino's Pizza	www.twitter.com/DominosKSA	11	12	12	11	11
4	Pizza Fusion	www.twitter.com/PizzaFusionKSA	4				
5	Krispy Kreme	N/A					
6	Shawarmer	www.twitter.com/ShawarmerSA	469	470	476	475	473
7	McDonald's	www.twitter.com/mcdonaldsarabia	2,860	3099	3094	3405	3730
8	Munch Bakery	www.twitter.com/munchbakery	15	15	15	15	16
9	Activia	www.twitter.com/ActiviaSA	246	269	213	271	270
10	Al Marai	N/A					
11	Goody Kitchen	www.twitter.com/goodykitchen	1,376	1377	1379	1378	1379
12	Toblerone	www.twitter.com/TobleroneArabia	1,783	1,783	1781	1781	1781
13	Nestle Desserts	N/A					
14	Tang Arabia	www.twitter.com/TangArabia	1,869	1867	1867	1867	1862
15	Wella Professionals	N/A					
16	Mikyajy	www.twitter.com/Mikyajy1	200	202	201	202	201
17	Kerastase	N/A					
18	Lux Beauty	www.twitter.com/LuxBeautyGal	0				
19	Faces	www.twitter.com/Faces_Wojoh	0	0	0	0	0
20	Maybelline	N/A					
21	Persil Abaya Shampoo	www.twitter.com/AbayaWorld	323	340	359	367	382
22	Head & Shoulders	www.twitter.com/HnSArabia	6	6	6	6	6
23	Sunsilk Arabia	www.twitter.com/SunsilkArabia	202	206	206	206	207
24	Garnier Arabia	www.twitter.com/Garnier_Arabia	0				
25	AloeDent	www.twitter.com/AloeDentArabia	10	10	10	12	12

Nu.	Brand	Followers					Tweets				
	Restaurants	23-May	30-May	7-Jun	13-Jun	20-Jun	23-May	30-May	7-Jun	14-Jun	20-Jun
1	KFC Arabia	364	375	394	404	420	279	283	290	304	310
2	TGI Friday's	N/A									
3	Domino's Pizza	3,303	3,327	3379	3443	3547	3,046	3,056	3057	3061	3073
4	Pizza Fusion	Inactive									
5	Krispy Kreme	N/A									
6	Shawarmer	828	849	884	904	932	1,210	1217	1251	1247	1293
7	McDonald's	2,806	2962	3233	3205	3390	917	963	1044	1089	
8	Munch Bakery	3,784	3977	4202	4449	4634	78	96	103	107	
9	Activia	164	195	270	230	249	506	529	553	572	582
10	Al Marai	N/A									
11	Goody Kitchen	14,287	15371	16531	17635	18649	1,404	1446	1486	1531	1563
12	Toblerone	589	586	591	591	591	243	243	242	242	242
13	Nestle Desserts	N/A					N/A				
14	Tang Arabia	1,049	1043	1042	1042	1040	289	297	303	308	312
15	Wella Professionals	N/A									
16	Mikyajy	536	545	557	563	584	492	505	518	517	519
17	Kerastase	N/A									
18	Lux Beauty	Inactive									
19	Faces	161	164	167	172	186	241	257	257	258	266
20	Maybelline	N/A									
21	Persil Abaya Shampoo	170	184	205	216	221	267	289	331	336	339
22	Head & Shoulders	5,123	6934	7426	7423	7369	742	864	939	1027	1091
23	Sunsilk Arabia	84	85	101	107	115	91	126	165	183	191
24	Garnier Arabia	Inactive									
25	AloeDent	5	9	11	18	19	42	91	130	184	236

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