Gordon Institute
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Using stakeholder theory to understanding B2B social media usage in South Africa

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand social media usage in business-to-business (B2B) organisations. The study aims to explore social media elements including social media stakeholders, content, platforms and social media usage itself.

A two-case study approach is used to compare two multinational organisations and their social media practices. Interviews were conducted with key managers across organisational functions. In addition, observations and analysis of the organisations' websites and social media platforms were conducted.

The findings results in a conceptual model, illustrating the different social media marketing elements. This study shows that social media is used in B2B organisations to achieve marketing, human resources and sales goals such as advertising, brand awareness, communication, client relationship management, recruitment and sales.

The select methodology may limit generalisability, further research is encouraged across different types of industries.

The implication for B2B organisational social media use is that social media usage spans across different departments within the organisation. A such a multipurpose, multiplatform strategy should be adopted to achieve outcomes across organisational functions.

This research hopefully extends the existing knowledge of social media use in B2B organisations by determining that social media offers B2B organisations a cost-effective , multi-use tool that contributes towards creating a competitive advantage.

Keywords

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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List of Abbreviations

B2B   -   Business-to-business

B2C   -   Business-to-consumer

SMM   -   Social media marketing

1 Chapter One: Introduction to Research Problem

1.1 Background

The evolution of technology and related applications including social media has significantly influenced business communication towards becoming more collaborative (Buratti, Parola, & Satta, 2018). Digital transformation has shifted communication from passive, one-way conversations to two-way or multi-dimensional interactions (Lacka & Chong, 2016), where consumers are active participants.

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) define social media as a collective term for internet-based applications where users publicly create and collaborate on content. According to Bianchi & Andrews (2015), "social media encompasses interactive digital communication technology, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and country specific social media popular with local consumers" (p. 2553).

As a result of their prevalence, social media has spurred pervasive change in how organisations communicate and interact with customers (de Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2017; Swani, Milne, Brown, Assaf, & Donthu, 2017). In consequence, organisations are increasingly viewing social media channels as a platform for marketing activities (Cawsey & Rowley, 2016; Kumar, Bezawada, Rishika, Janakiraman, & Kannan, 2016).

There is ubiquitous literature in contemporary business-to-consumer (B2C) social media usage with research conducted on brand management (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, & Wiertz, 2013), brand equity and awareness (Barreda, Bilgihan, Nusair, & Okumus, 2015; Godey et al., 2016), cultivating customer awareness (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011), customer loyalty (Nisar & Whitehead, 2016), product development (Aichner & Jacob, 2015), customer relationship management (Malthouse, Haenlein, Skiera, Wege, & Zhang, 2013), international advertising practices (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013) and customer purchase behaviours (Kumar et al., 2016).

By comparison, business-to-business (B2B) literature pertaining to social media usage is still relatively in its infancy (Iankova, Davies, Archer-Brown, Marder, & Yau, 2018; Lashgari, Sutton-Brady, Solberg Søilen, & Ulfvengren, 2018). Research in the B2B social media domain has nonetheless encompassed the adoption of social media tools (Brennan & Croft, 2012), ideal business goals (Järvinen, Tollinen, Karjaluoto, & Jayawardhena, 2012), barriers of utilisation (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011), and B2B marketing characteristics (Habibi, Hamilton, Valos, & Callaghan, 2015). However, more

recently, research has emerged to explore critical elements of social media marketing (SMM) strategies (Lashgari et al., 2018), and utilisation by B2B organisations of social media (Andersson & Wikström, 2017).

Andersson & Wikström (2017) comment that despite "obvious uses of social media in B2B" (p. 1099), adoption and skilled usage by B2B practitioners compared to B2C are underdeveloped. Research indicates that this is due to perceived irrelevance of social media channels in organisational purchasing decision-making (Bernard, 2016; Järvinen et al., 2012), inability to control content (Bernard, 2016), poorly perceived benefits (Michaelidou et al., 2011) and lack of utilisation understanding (Bernard, 2016; Huotari, Ulkuniemi, Saraniemi, & Mäläskä, 2015).

Despite the aforementioned challenges in embracing social media in B2B environments, recent literature explores the advantages of using social media in a particular context such as driving sales (Guesalaga, 2016), influencing customer satisfaction (Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu, & Krush, 2016), and strengthening customer-firm relationships (Chuang, 2019). Authors Lashgari et al. (2018) demonstrate that social media contribute towards growth by providing a cost-effective platform that facilitates communication with a larger audience as well as enabling data intelligence-gathering for product innovation. With the burgeoning benefits of adopting social media, this research seeks to contribute towards the B2B literature by assessing which social media channels are relevant for B2B organisations, exploring how these channels are being used and why in the context of South Africa.

Due to the connectedness of social media, predicated by different uses, observing the different social media stakeholders is applicable in understanding channel usage. A broader view of usage beyond shareholders incorporates both internal and external stakeholders (Ferrell, Gonzalez-Padron, Hult, & Maignan, 2010; Huotari et al., 2015). Therefore, stakeholder theory may provide a valuable theoretical lens through which to analyse social media usage by B2B organisations.

1.2   Problem selection and purpose

Literature and trade media describe social media usage as steadily increasing (Aichner & Jacob, 2015; Bernard, 2016; Cawsey & Rowley, 2016; We Are Social, 2019). 'Digital 2019: Global Internet Use Accelerates', a report by We Are Social estimates that there are over three billion active social media users globally, which has grown 9% over the last year (We Are Social, 2019). In South Africa, there are 23 million active social media users,

which has grown by 28% over the last year (Datareportal, 2019). Bernard (2016) comments that "social media are here to stay and have the potential to give a competitive advantage to companies that embrace them" (p. 960).

As mentioned above, research has indicated that social media provide advantages in building relationships, increasing brand awareness, impacting customer satisfaction (Agnihotri et al., 2016), recruitment (Henderson, 2018; Koch, Gerber, & De Klerk, 2018) and acquiring market intelligence (Pitt, Botha, Ferreira, & Kietzmann, 2018). In an industrial marketing context, adoption and skilled usage of SMM may be underdeveloped; however, B2B organisations are utilising social media to target different stakeholder groups for recruitment, to build relationships and gather data intelligence (Andersson & Wikström, 2017).

Therefore, using existing research conducted by authors Andersson & Wikström (2017) as a foundation, this study seeks to understand social media usage in B2B organisations across different stakeholder groups in the context of South Africa. The aim is to contribute to existing literature on B2B social media usage and which channels are effective with different stakeholders in South Africa. With regard to theory, the research aims to add to existing literature on how stakeholder theory is applicable in the field of marketing.

1.3 Research scope

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) introduced six social media categories, which comprise collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds. Subsequently, Aichner & Jacob (2015) defined thirteen social media types including blogs, business networks, collaborative projects, enterprise social networks, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, products/services review, social bookmarking, social gaming, social networks, video sharing and virtual worlds. However, not all of these social media typologies are suitable for organisational use (Aichner & Jacob, 2015).

Globally there is an abundance of social media platforms, with the most prolific being social networking sites (refer to **Figure 1**), which Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) describe as applications to connect users who create and share different types of information, including written, image, video and audio.
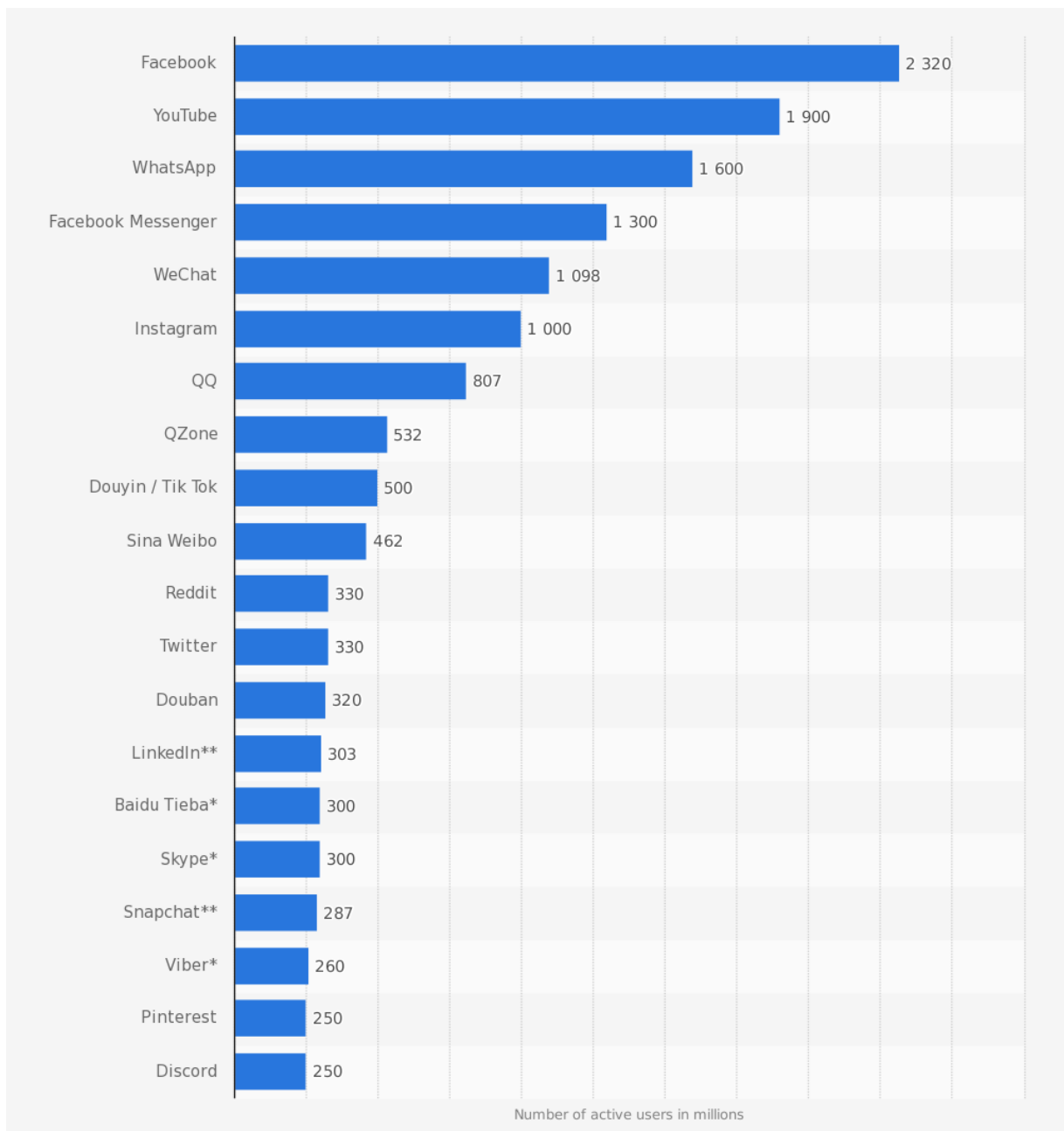
Figure 1: Global social networks ranked by number of active users (in millions) 2019 ('Global social media ranking 2019 | Statistic', 2019)

To narrow the scope, research will be conducted across the top five leading social media platforms ranked according to activity usage in South Africa (refer to Figure 2). However, literature advises that social media use within organisations also predominantly includes blogs and to some extent, enterprise social networks (Aichner & Jacob, 2015; Andersson & Wikström, 2017). Therefore, the social media platforms that will be the focus of this

research include YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs and Enterprise Social Networks.
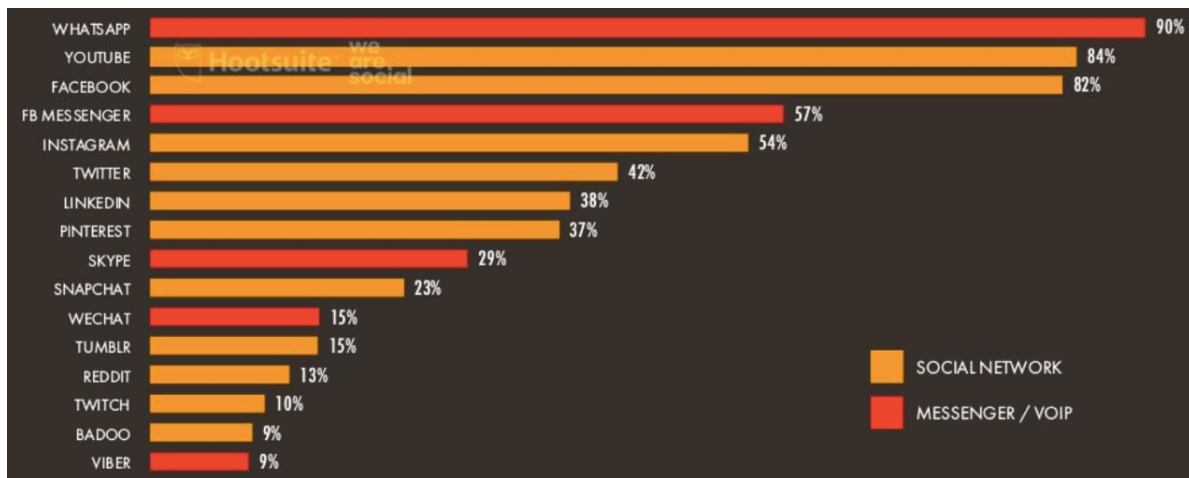
Figure 2: Most active social media platforms (Datareportal, 2019)

The purpose of the research is to explore the following sub-sections: social media stakeholders that use social media and consume social media, social media content, which channels are most appropriate for B2B organisations, and social media usage. This is in order to understand B2B social media behaviour in an attempt to reinforce the value of social media for B2B organisations operating in an emerging market. Moreover, this research endeavours to build on existing literature by assessing and confirming which channels are being used in practice, and why.

To gain useful insights, established B2B organisations were selected that utilise social media as a part of their SMM strategy. Further, organisations with varying levels of social media experience and adoption were selected in order to potentially highlight differences in social media usage. Therefore, the aim is as follows:

RQ1:   Which stakeholders are B2B organisations using, targeting and why?

RQ 2: Why are organisations using different types of content?

RQ 3: Which social media platforms are B2B organisations using and how are they being used?

RQ 4: Why are B2B organisations using social media?

1.4 Significance of the study

Comparatively limited research has been conducted regarding the use of social media in industrial marketing. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the dearth of industrial marketing literature by identifying social media stakeholders; the content used to engage with targeted stakeholders; which social media platforms are effective for the different stakeholders; and why are social media used.

By conducting this study, the research will offer the following contributions. The research will shed light on which social media platforms out of the selected channels for this study are most prevalently adopted by B2B organisations; which activities are conducted on these channels; and what the expected outcomes are. In so doing, the study will provide insights into social media usage, including what they are used for and what they are not. With an increased understanding of the underlying reasons behind the utilisation of social media channels and which platforms are pervasive, the research will provide guidance for marketing managers on how to improve existing or develop multi-tiered and relevant SMM strategies in a B2B context. Businesses that are seeking to gain cost-effective competitive advantage can benefit by adopting and successfully implementing SMM strategies (Bernard, 2016).

1.5 Structure of this report

Chapter one introduced the research problem and explained the motivation for the study. Chapter two proceeds with discussions of key concepts, relevant focus areas and the appropriate theoretical lens with which to conduct the study. Firstly, a review of the academic literature providing the context of social media usage in B2C compared to B2B is conducted. A more detailed discussion follows regarding social media use by organisations, including the key elements that enable social media usage. This evaluation of social media elements, which include social media stakeholders, content, platforms and usage itself, provides a deeper understanding of the main themes that were indicated as the purpose for this study. Chapter three details the research questions, which were derived from the research problem and corroborated by the literature. Chapter four describes the chosen methodology including the research approach. Chapter five presents the results of the data. Chapter six provides a discussion of the results in alignment with literature to ascertain key findings. Chapter seven is the concluding chapter

which details the implications of the findings for management, contribution to theory, limitations, and recommendations for future areas of study.

2 Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

To comprehend social media use in B2B organisations, there are several aspects of social media usage to be considered which this study seeks to investigate. These elements include understanding social media stakeholders, content, platforms, and social media use.

The following section is organised into five sub-sections. The first sub-section offers a general overview of social media, providing a comparative context between B2C and B2B. The second sub-section describes social media usage by organisations operating in both B2C and B2B environments. The purpose here is to define social media, provide clarity around social media types, and detail social media use. The third sub-section narrows the discussion to a B2B context and seeks to explore the following three themes: social media stakeholders through the lens of stakeholder theory, content, platforms, and usage. The final sub-section concludes with a summary.

2.2 Social media background

The proliferation of social media platforms has dramatically evolved marketing activities for organisations, spurred by the ability to significantly increase customer reach (Iankova et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2016). Academic conceptualisation of SMM was originally articulated in the B2C context; however, research in the B2B domain is burgeoning (Iankova et al., 2018).

Extant literature has extensively focused on social media and its usage from a B2C perspective (Andersson & Wikström, 2017; Iankova et al., 2018; Ngai, Tao, & Moon, 2015; Siamagka, Christodoulides, Michaelidou, & Valvi, 2015). Literature describes B2C social media usage as a strategic tool to achieve a wide variety of objectives such as advertising, branding, customer relationship management, marketing communication objectives, recruitment, and sales (Aggerholm & Andersen, 2018; Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Carrillat, d'Astous, & Grégoire, 2014; Kumar et al., 2016; Lee, Hosanagar, & Nair, 2018; Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2014; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). In achieving these aforementioned objectives, social media have provided several benefits such as cost-

effective communication channels, real-time stakeholder engagement and access to a prospectively expansive professional network.

Comparatively, in the industrial marketing domain, the last decade has witnessed influential social media research across seven thematic categories as depicted by Salo (2017). These include advertising, buyer-seller relationships, business network domains, computers in business marketing, decision support and management science, public relations, marketing communications, and sales (Agnihotri et al., 2016; Brennan & Croft, 2012; Guesalaga, 2016; Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Karjaluoto, Mustonen, & Ulkuniemi, 2015; Lacoste, 2016; Michaelidou et al., 2011; Salo, 2017; Swani et al., 2017). While evidence suggests that research has been conducted to explore the use of social media in B2B organisations, it still remains limited relative to B2C (Iankova et al., 2018; Salo, 2017).

Furthermore, literature that motivates that the adoption and integration of social media as a part of the B2C marketing strategy to achieve SMM objectives has been quicker to observe this potential than B2B research (Iankova et al., 2018; Quinton & Wilson, 2016).

Different authors have postulated a variety of factors that impede social media adoption in B2B markets, including lack of expertise (Järvinen et al., 2012), concerns around control (Andersson & Wikström, 2017), prioritisation of other projects, and uncertainty around the benefits (Jussila, Kärkkäinen, & Aramo-Immonen, 2014; Siamagka et al., 2015).

Iankova et al. (2018) argues that B2B organisations appear to assume a narrower consideration of social media use that focuses on relationship development paradigms such as sales processes (Agnihotri et al., 2016; Guesalaga, 2016; Itani, Agnihotri, & Dingus, 2017) or key account management (Lacoste, 2016), instead of many-to-many communications. Through adopting a narrower view, research considering the broader role that social media plays in within marketing, its uses, and users remains underexplored.

More recently, an overall study was conducted by Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch (2017) that adopts a holistic view of SMM as "an interdisciplinary and cross-functional concept that uses social media (often in combination with other communications channels) to achieve organisational goals by creating value for stakeholders" (p. 123). Through this lens, social media could be exploited across multiple internal and external stakeholders to

create value. This stakeholder view is applicable in the context of this study, as it will offer insights into how B2B organisations use social media, to what extent, and why.

2.3 An overview of social media use by organisations

Over a period of ten years, social media have attracted the attention of researchers and practitioners as it has created opportunities for organisations to communicate, connect, engage and collaborate (Felix et al., 2017; Nisar & Whitehead, 2016; Swani, Milne, & Miller, 2019; Tafesse & Wien, 2018).

Authors define social media collectively as an interactive mobile and web-based platform that allows users to create, share, engage and exchange user-generated content with varying degrees of interactivity (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011; Peters, Chen, Kaplan, Ognibeni, & Pauwels, 2013). Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) define social media 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" (p. 61). Web 2.0 is an online collection of open-source applications that emphasises user participation and collaboration through tools such as social media; this pivots the practitioner focus from the organisation to being customer-centric (Singh, Veron-Jackson, & Cullinane, 2008). Kietzmann et al. (2011) refers to it as the "democratisation of corporate communication" (p. 242).

Kietzmann et al. (2011) extends the definition to incorporate both individuals and communities as users that "share, co-create, discuss and modify user-generated content" (p.241). Authors Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro (2012) argue that "social media comprise the conduits and the content disseminated through interactions between individuals and organisations" (p. 263). This has created a multimodal paradigm shift from the traditional one-way "push" communication between individuals and organisations (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015).

Taking these perspectives into account, social media are viewed by the researcher for the purposes of this study as a content, communication and engagement platform for multiple stakeholders seeking to address a variety of purposes.

This is because social media has transcended personal use as a mainstream communication channel and is increasingly being embraced by organisations to achieve business outcomes as evidenced by the use of social media by a significant portion of the Fortune Global 500 organisations (Schlagwein & Hu, 2017).

2.3.1 Social media use in a business-to-consumer context

The variety of social media platforms, which display different characteristics and are designed for different purposes, creates layers around understanding social media use. In organisations, social media are used to achieve business objectives whether they are internal, external or a combination. The discussion below highlights some of the complexities around defining social media use, how social media are used for internal and external purposes and what the goals are.

The study of organisational social media use can be challenging for the following reasons. Firstly, due to their dynamic nature, social media perpetually evolve and as such are considered ontologically unstable (Schlagwein & Hu, 2017). Secondly, social media platforms provide a multitude of dimensions and textures across location and content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Thirdly, the same social media platform may be adopted to achieved different outcomes, suggesting multipurpose use (Schlagwein & Hu, 2017). Such complexities may explain the difficulties in determining the relevance of organisational social media use, especially if social media elements, platforms and outcomes are viewed in isolation and not holistically. Understanding social media use from the perspective of the business objectives of an organisation is necessarily multifaceted due to different participants operating across different channels, divergent personalities, underlying behavioural constructs, cultural norms, motivations, technologies, and service requirements. Therefore, the dynamism of social media may help explain why social media usage and user behaviour evolves (Andersson & Wikström, 2017).

In the context of B2C, literature supports the view that organisations utilise both internal and external social media across the different organisation functions to achieve a variety of goals because of the versatility of social media (Go & You, 2016; Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield, 2013).

Leonardi et al. (2013) defined internal social media use as an integration of social media types (such as social networking and microblogging) into one platform known as enterprise social media that visibly and persistently enables and fosters internal communication and is only accessible by members of the organisation. Examples of enterprise social media are Workplace by Facebook or Confluence by Atlassian. Leonardi et al. (2013) describe how enterprise social media use has positively influenced communication within organisations such as "interaction with new hires, knowledge

sharing and management, and employees' abilities to form relationships and build social capital" (p. 16).

External social media use, which according to Leonardi et al. (2013), is more frequently researched than internal social media use, comprises a multifaceted, omnichannel strategy to communicate with external stakeholders (non-members of the organisation). Examples of external social media are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Research by Go & You (2016) into organisations' external social media platform usage patterns identified six groups of organisations according to their predominant social media usage:

- blog preferred group (one-way communication channel to achieve public relations and marketing outcomes),
- social networking site preferred group (focus on direct communication),
- content aggregations strategy group (most notably via widgets adopted to gather consumer insights),
- visual content group (makes use of multiple channels such as YouTube, Flicker, Facebook and blogs to communicate interactively),
- virtual strategy group (utilise multiple channels including virtual worlds, Twitter, YouTube and widgets for public relations efforts), and
- collaborative strategy group (in addition to using crowdsourcing services, these organisations indicated a preference for blogging, and social networking site services such as Twitter).

Overall, blog use is prevalent across organisation groups (over and above social networking sites) which suggests a preference for controlled communication (Go & You, 2016). However, this use often is combined with social media applications that facilitate two-way communication (Go & You, 2016). The degree of social media multi-use is influenced by factors such as the organisational structure, availability of resources and product characteristics (Go & You, 2016).

This has demonstrated that organisations have a myriad of internal and external social media applications to utilise and that each platform should be selected appropriately according to function and outcome implications. Within the subsequent section, the discussion formalises which internal and external platforms and social media uses are applicable in a B2B context and how it is relevant to this study.

Research on the organisational impact of external social media use has predominantly focused on one particular element at a time, such as increased engagement (Lee et al., 2018), cost-effective brand building and marketing (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Parveen, Jaafar, & Ainin, 2015), improved customer relationship capabilities (Trainor et al., 2014), employee selection and recruitment (Aggerholm & Andersen, 2018; Carrillat et al., 2014), customer purchase behaviour (Kumar et al., 2016), building relationships and increased sales (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014), and gathering market intelligence (Aichner & Jacob, 2015; Andersson & Wikström, 2017). In addition, Tajudeen, Jaafar, & Ainin (2018) confirmed that social media positively impacts the performance of an organisation as a cost-effective marketing tool that supports customer relationship management and enhances access to information.

B2C organisations have demonstrably used social media to achieve internal as well as external outcomes. The researcher believes that this warrants investigating if B2B organisations use social media to realise the same internal or external results. Secondly, these studies have been conducted from the perspective of singular outcomes, therefore this research adopted a broader view that encompasses a range of uses.

2.3.2 Social media use in a B2B context

Literature confirms that there has been a large impetus to understand B2C social media practices and use (Andersson & Wikström, 2017; Huotari et al., 2015; Iankova et al., 2018; Salo, 2017). Huotari et al. (2015) observe that despite powerful uses of social media, there is inadequate understanding in the B2B environment. Salo (2017) adds that B2B research on social media practices and use is only nascent. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to industrial marketing literature by investigating how and why social media are being used.

Industrial marketing literature suggests that B2B organisations' social media usage is different to that of their B2C counterparts. (Brennan & Croft, 2012; Guesalaga, 2016; Iankova et al., 2018; Quinton & Wilson, 2016). Iankova et al. (2018) frames the differences between the two contexts according to channel preference, channel importance, usage, and perceived effectiveness.

Within a B2B context, Bernard (2016) highlights the importance of understanding B2B social media audience, platforms, required channel-related content and usage. Similarly, Lashgari et al. (2018) suggest the type of stakeholders as well as various other participant

roles, type of social media platform, type of content that should be considered in order to understand SMM adoption.

Given these previous views, the author considers social media stakeholders, platforms, applicable content and outcomes as relevant constructs in addressing the research problem, which is to comprehensively understand social media usage by B2B organisations.

2.4 Social media usage elements

2.4.1 Social media stakeholders through the lens of stakeholder theory

There is widespread usage of the term stakeholder, followed by a plethora of broad and narrow definitions with differing emphases. Despite this prolific attention, a generally accepted understanding of the stakeholder concept remains elusive. Stakeholder theory and its concepts have been interrogated, debated and critiqued by multiple authors with diverse perspectives and narratives grounded in normative assumptions (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Jones & Wicks, 1999; Phillips, Freeman, & Wicks, 2003). As a result of the profuse definitions of stakeholders, multiple applications have arisen across different fields including business ethics, corporate social responsibility, corporate governance, marketing, strategic management and competitive advantage (Clarkson, 1995; Harrison & Wicks, 2013; Jones, Harrison, & Felps, 2018; Miles, 2017; Mainardes, Alves, & Raposo, 2011).

Emanating from effective strategy and policy development, Freeman's (2010) seminal stakeholder framework developed in response to a turbulent environment, characterised by accelerated change and increased competition. Freeman (2010) defined stakeholders as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives" (p. 25). Freeman (2010) advocated for a shift towards active management of processes and relationships that satisfied all stakeholder interests to ensure long-term success. The stakeholder framework was intended to provide a strategic management process that provides the flexibility for managers to adapt to environmental shifts (Freeman & Mcvea, 2001).

Authors Donaldson & Preston (1995) offer an alternative description of stakeholder theory where they combine three interrelated aspects of theory. Their (1995) typology defines stakeholder theory into descriptive, instrumental and normative parts, where the normative base is central. Descriptive theory describes how characteristics and behaviours are, the

instrumental component identifies links and connections (or lack thereof) and the normative component prescribes how the world ought to behave (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1999). The concept of stakeholder management through this lens proposes that organisations need to recognise stakeholders, analyse and interpret behaviours and respond through constructing relationships that are structured around the organisation's goals.

According to Clarkson (1995), stakeholders are individuals or groups that have rights or vested interests in an organisation and its activities which translate into different kinds of dealings. Clarkson (1995) further defined stakeholders as belonging to two distinct groups; primary and secondary. Primary stakeholders comprise individuals or groups that the organisation could not survive without (i.e. employees, shareholders, suppliers and customers, government agencies, among others). Secondary stakeholders effect or are effected by the organisation but do not directly transact with the organisation, for example the news media (known as media), special interest groups (SIG), local communities and government authorities (Clarkson, 1995; Mainardes et al., 2011).

Mitchell, Agle, & Wood (1997) argue that power, urgency and legitimacy must be considered when identifying stakeholders. These variables prescribe which stakeholders' managers should prioritise.

Although researchers define the concept differently, there is a golden thread that organisations should consider regarding the interests of individuals or groups that influence or are influenced by organisations activities (Mainardes et al., 2011).

In the context of understanding social media stakeholders in B2B organisations, a combination of the Freeman (2010) definition and Clarkson (1995) segmentation into primary and secondary groups is most suitable.

The rationale for adopting Freeman's (2010) definition is that this study is predicated on social media, which are considered to be continuously evolving and have transformed traditional engagements across stakeholders, resulting in different kinds of transactions from information gathering through to lead generation. The characteristics of social media emulate the ecosystem predicated by accelerated change which Freeman (2010) describes. Secondly, by adopting Clarkson's (1995) grouping of stakeholders (into primary and secondary), it will provide structure around prioritising stakeholders.

Social media stakeholders are described by various authors in marketing literature from the point of view of social media consumption (Li & Bernoff, 2011), their relationship with the organisation (whether they are internal or external) (Brennan & Croft, 2012), or content generation (Huotari et al., 2015).

From a consumer perspective, authors Li & Bernoff (2011) organize users into six groups based on the level social media participation: creators, critics, collectors, joiners, spectators and inactives. The groups portray a sliding scale according to activity on social media where on the extremes there are users who actively generate content while inactives do not participate in social media consumption (Li & Bernoff, 2011).

Brennan & Croft (2012) describe a range social media stakeholders who are classified as either internal or external to the organisation. Similarly to Huotari et al. (2015), the internal audience comprised existing and prospective employees. The external audience, in addition to customers, were considered to be investors, and media (Brennan & Croft, 2012).

Huotari et al. (2015) offered a more structured approach by defining social media users into two categories based on content generation: internal and external. Huotari et al. (2015) explains that although preceding literature has classified social media users according to their level of participation in a consumer context, the same classification is applicable in B2B markets.

The internal social media users traditionally employed by an organisation consist of two sub-groups; corporate (professional use) and employees (personal use) (Huotari et al., 2015). The distinction between the two groups is relevant because the corporate users utilise social media as a proxy for the organisation, whereas the employee users could use social media both on behalf of the organisation as advocates as well as for personal motives (Huotari et al., 2015). To illustrate, social media use in a corporate context is where the organisation is communicating through blogs or other social channels to achieve specific goals such as communication. Conversely, employee use could be bifocal. Firstly, employee use could be structured in a professional context where employees are encouraged to engage with the organisation's content. Alternatively, employees could use social media for personal incentives such as seeking employment or content consumption.

Huotari et al. (2015) defines external users as the universe of social media users excluding internal users. External users are categorised into four sub-groups which comprise corporate, customer, professional and civilian (Huotari et al., 2015), where:

- corporate users are considered as other organisations (i.e. media, competitors, local communities, government agencies and special interest groups),

- customer users are employees of other organisations who are existing or prospective customers,

- professional users include stakeholders that have an existing or potential commercial relationship with the organisation that are not existing or potential customers (.e.g. shareholders), and

- civilian users are individuals that are professionally disconnected from the organisation but have an interest.

As the practices of the social media participants evolve, levels of interactions across different user categories emerge. Achiner & Jacob (2015) demonstrate the importance of social media for different internal stakeholders across different organisational functions such as research and development, customer service, sales and human resources to engage with audiences. From a marketing communication tool perspective within the construct of SMM, Andersson & Wikström (2017) discuss how social media facilitate different stakeholders' creating and sharing content in a multitude of ways; whether it be internal engagement between employees, internal to external engagement, or between external parties outside the organisation. The observance of multiple interactions across different stakeholders may contribute towards understanding the overall usage and advantages of adopting social media as opposed to a focused perspective, where only one subset of stakeholders is considered (for example internal to external).

For the purposes of this study, an adaptation of the comprehensive analysis of the different types of social media users by Huotari et al. (2015) will be overlaid on Clarkson's (1995) definition as it encompasses the necessary breadth required to understand which stakeholders are being engaged with across the multiple social media applications, as depicted by Aichner & Jacob's (2015) selected typology. Refer to **Figure 3** (below) which illustrates the different types of stakeholders that will be assessed in this study.
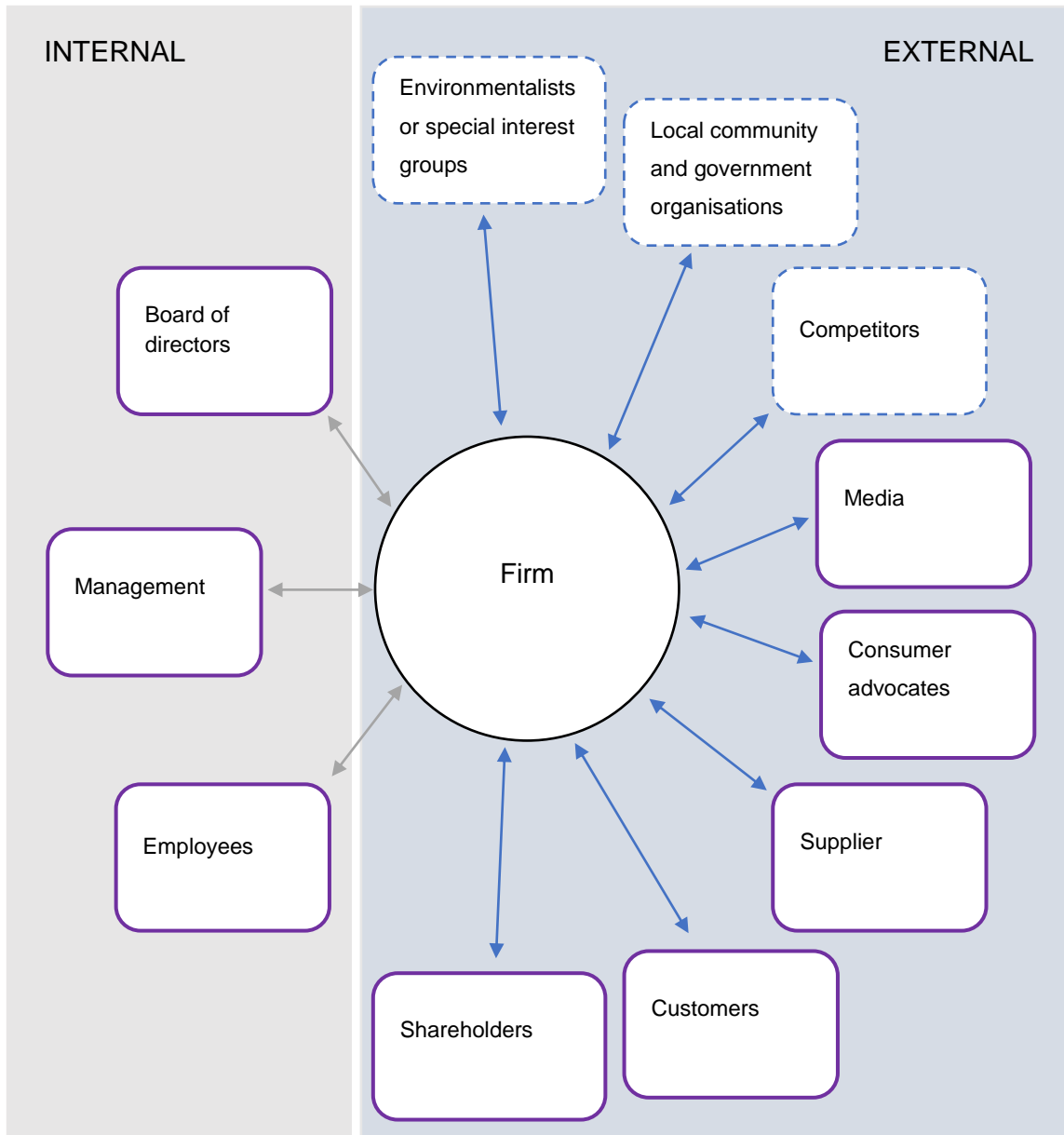
Figure 3: A map of social media stakeholders (Clarkson, 1995; Freeman, 2010; Huotari et al., 2015)

As Huotari et al. (2015) has defined social media users centred on content generation, it is necessary to examine what kind of content B2B organisations are creating to engage with internal and external stakeholders.

2.4.2 Social media content

SMM and content marketing are related concepts largely because of the alignment across objectives and the focus on creating narratives (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). Järvinen & Taiminen (2016) further elaborate that content marketing is often utilised across social media platforms.

Business-to business digital content marketing is defined by Holliman & Rowley (2014) in the context of inbound marketing as follows:

> B2B digital content marketing involves creating, distributing and sharing relevant, compelling and timely content to engage customers at the appropriate point in their buying consideration processes, such that it encourages them to convert to a business building outcome (p. 285).

Inbound marketing (known as pull marketing) utilises firm-generated content to attract prospective customers, promote engagement and build customer relationships (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019).

In Holliman & Rowley's (2014) study, the business outcomes included brand awareness, brand building, lead generation, thought leadership, trust and product-related information. A later study conducted by Järvinen & Taiminen (2016) focused on the role of digital content marketing in supporting the customer journey through the sales funnel using automation techniques. Content creation should address customer needs, and content delivery should be timely to ensure content is correctly targeted in alignment with the relevant stage (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). Authors Wang, Malthouse, Calder, & Uzunoglu (2019) confirmed that using digital content is effective in supporting business outcomes such as sales conversions.

Authors Lee et al. (2018) advise that the role of content is an important construct in SMM as it is used to facilitate engagement with users and to drive goals. Lee at al. (2018) further suggest that "content engineering in social media can impact on user engagement" (p. 5128). Their results indicated that a combination of brand personality and directly informative content is necessary to balance engagement and reach (Lee et al., 2018). Andersson & Wikström (2017) further add that differentiated content developed for an array of stakeholders is indicative of social media maturity.

Hollebeek & Macky (2019) have recently confirmed that digital content marketing is a useful tool in supporting inbound marketing strategies (such as content marketing,

blogging, search engine optimisation to name a few). Järvinen & Taiminen (2016) emphasise that an area for future research lies in exploring the "the role of digital marketing tactics in B2B customer purchasing processes. Such findings would help identify the tactics that work most effectively at various phases of the marketing and sales process" (p. 43). Similarly, authors Hollebeek & Macky (2019) identify the need for further academic research in digital content marketing.

Investigations across different social media platforms reveals differences in content suitability across markets as well as platform audiences (Andersson & Wikström, 2017; Swani, Brown, & Milne, 2014).

Focusing on B2B markets, blogs are typically structured as a one-directional source of information, therefore content should encompass in-depth organisation or product information (Andersson & Wikström, 2017). LinkedIn is associated with creating networks and recruitment (Andersson & Wikström, 2017), therefore the suggested content style should include both functional (for example informative and educational) as well as influential (for example to promote thought leadership). Swani et al. (2014) reinforces that incorporating emotional cues in Twitter content helps build stronger "brand relationships" (p. 879). Lashgari et al. (2018) argue that Facebook and Twitter are used to convey less technical information to a wider audience.

Another implication of social media is interactivity and co-creation, which relates to the exchange of information either directly, or in this case through a technology platform. As such this dialogue contributes towards content creation and generation. Social media becomes a powerful channel when the content is actively disseminated, engaged with and its intended purpose is achieved. To elicit anticipated behaviours such as interaction and amplified sharing across networks from social media users, content becomes an integral part of this. Chang, Yu, & Lu (2015) suggests that persuasive messaging entails having relevant high-quality arguments within the content, popularity of the post as well as perceived appeal in order to influence and induce desired behaviour such as liking and sharing.

Another important consideration is that not all content can be controlled (Andersson & Wikström, 2017). While certain social media characteristics limit interaction with content consumers such as blogs, where the content flow is more one-directional, the majority are characterised by uncontrollable content messaging. Authors, Huotari et al. (2015) and Andersson & Wikström (2017) discuss how social media content can be influenced by a

spectrum of internal and external stakeholders. Therefore, it is essential that organisations consider the users as well as the audience of each social media platform when creating content strategies to drive business outcomes.

Although digital content marketing is interrelated with SMM and there is substantial commercial and practitioner interest, authors indicate that this domain remains relatively underexplored academically (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016).

As literature has demonstrated that the users of each social media platform may be at different stages along the engagement cycle (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016), for the purposes of this study it is necessary to examine if distinctive content should be created to target identified user segments along the engagement journey. In addition, it is necessary to examine whether content should be created to suit different platforms, as well as the user. Therefore, the next section focuses on what kind of social media platforms are relevant in B2B organisations in reaching their audiences.

2.4.3   Social media platforms

Social media target groups such as existing and potential customers and content type determines the appropriate platform (Lashgari et al., 2018); however there are multiple social media typologies that have been hypothesised. To create structure in order to understand social media, authors Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) categorised social media into six types based on origins, technical features, user-generated content and theory (media research and social process). The authors' classification of social media considers the degree of social presence, media richness, self-presentation and self-disclosure (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Combining these dimensions Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) organise social media into blogs, collaborative projects, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). For example, blogs and collaborative projects display low levels of social presence and media richness because the format is text-based. This translates into a linear form of exchange as the structure of a blog facilitates controlled (opposed to co-created) information sharing, whereas social networking sites and video sharing platforms offer multiple forms of content sharing over and above text as well as more interactivity (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As the levels of social presence and media richness progress, the exchange becomes more multifaceted.

Aichner & Jacob (2015) elaborated on Kaplan & Haenlein's (2010) description by introducing additional types which include business networks (such as LinkedIn), enterprise social networks (such as Workplace by Facebook), forums (such as IGN Boards), microblogs (such as Twitter), photo sharing (such as Flickr), products and services review (such as Amazon), social bookmarking (such as Pinterest), and video sharing (such as YouTube).

Of the thirteen types of social media platforms described by Aichner & Jacob (2015), not all social media platforms are applicable for organisational use. To demonstrate, business networks, collaborative projects, enterprise social networks, forums, microblogs, photo sharing and products / services review may be perceived as more suitable comparatively to social gaming and virtual worlds (Aichner & Jacob, 2015). Andersson & Wikström (2017) study cited that Instagram has not been suitable because content on Instagram has been challenging to control which transpired in brand damage.

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Blogging and YouTube were identified as the most frequently used platforms within B2B markets (Bernard, 2016; Leek, Canning, & Houghton, 2016). Out of all the platforms, LinkedIn possesses the largest number of B2B organisation users (Iankova et al., 2018).

The author considers Aichner & Jacob's (2015) social media typology (as described above) as a suitable structure in which to understand social media channel usage in B2B organisations. However, to narrow the focus, the study is limited to the following types, as these are applicable to the nature of the participating organisations as well as prevalence in South Africa: blogs, business networks, enterprise social networks, microblogs, photo sharing, social networks and video sharing. The selected range of social media types with examples are defined in **Table 1** (below).

Table 1: Selected social media types, examples and definitions

Type of social media	Example	Definition
Blogs	Organisation blog posts	From an organisation perspective, blogs (truncation of weblog) create relevancy, provide a platform to share thought leadership, amplify reach as they are not geographically restricted and build relationships with customers (Andersson & Wikström, 2017).
Business networks	LinkedIn	Professional networking sites' (PNS) or business networks' primary purpose is to enable professional connectivity. User profiles reflect fields that are associated with professional information such as experience, education, skills sets (Aichner & Jacob, 2015; Papacharissi, 2009; Utz, 2016). Literature demonstrates a variety of uses for which LinkedIn is used. These include information gathering, recruitment, market intelligence, public relations, communication, sales and customer relationship management (Agnihotri et al., 2016; Aichner & Jacob, 2015; Andersson & Wikström, 2017; Bernard, 2016; Buratti et al., 2018).
Enterprise social networking site	Confluence	Enterprise social networks (ENS) share similar features to social networking sites (SNS). ENS is an online application that allows users to connect, share, communicate and engage (Papacharissi, 2009). The significant difference between ENS and SNS, is that enterprise social networks are ringfenced to members of a group or organisation only (Aichner & Jacob, 2015). The purpose is to provide information, enable collaboration, stimulate relationship building and knowledge sharing within the group or organisation (Aichner & Jacob, 2015).
Microblogs	Twitter	Microblogging differs from other social media in that it is a short messaging service (there is a limited number of characters) that encourages frequent real-time posts that are available across a variety of channels (Aichner & Jacob, 2015; Liu, Cheung, & Lee, 2016). These include desktop applications, mobile and websites (Liu et al., 2016). The posts themselves include messaging, imagery and embedded content (cues and links) (Leek et al., 2016). Microblogs are useful for information broadcasting where organisations could use them for promotional purposes (Liu et al., 2016).
Photo sharing	Instagram	Photo sharing websites offer an online platform for users who upload their imagery, organise it, store it, share and engage with their communities and networks (Aichner & Jacob, 2015).
Social networking sites (SNS)	Facebook	Social network sites (SNS) are internet-based communication platforms where users create profiles, connect and interact with other users either passively by browsing the different forms of content such images or videos, or actively engaging through uploading, sharing, liking and commenting (Aichner & Jacob, 2015; Ellison, Vitak, Gray, & Lampe, 2014; Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017).

		Video hosting service provides an online video platform that enables users (or subscribers) to upload (through multiple methods including website, mobile or application program interface (referred to as API), store, categorise and share video content (Aichner & Jacob, 2015). Consumption of the video content is available across website or mobile applications. Organisations utilise video sharing platforms for marketing purposes such as communication, advocacy, branding, promotional advertising, and sales support (through educational content) (Aichner & Jacob, 2015).
Video sharing	YouTube	

The three previously discussed elements, namely social media stakeholders, content and platform type, support the organisation in achieving business outcomes. The next section examines the literature on why social media are being used in B2B organisations.

2.4.4 Social media usage

Kietzmann et al. (2011) classifies social media through seven functional constructs and the associated implications for the organisation. The seven traits comprise identity (the degree to which user identify is revealed), conversations (scope of communication between users), sharing (magnitude of interaction), presence (known availability of others), relationships (level of association), reputation (degree of trust and credibility) and groups (ability to create communities) (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Following the classification of social media functionality, Kietzmann et al. (2011) categorises each social media application according to functionality fit across the seven functions. The three examples that follow highlight the social media application and their most applicable function. LinkedIn was principally associated with identity where users portray themselves by disclosing various types of information, whereas YouTube was predominantly associated with sharing. Facebook, on the other hand, was considered primarily relationship-oriented as the emphasis is on social connectivity.

In contrast, Schlagwein & Hu (2017) diverge from the structural types of social media and argue that use type classification is more suitable for organisations as it explains business objectives, which ultimately translates to performance outcomes. Through the lens of absorptive capacity, Schlagwein & Hu (2017) investigated five social media use types for internal and external purposes. These consisted of broadcasting, dialogue, knowledge management, collaboration and sociability. The authors findings confirmed that four of the social media use types impact performance, which include internal broadcasting,

multidirectional dialogue, internal knowledge management and internal collaboration (Schlagwein & Hu, 2017).

While these aforesaid channels may offer similar functions such as content distribution and consumer engagement, different social media platforms have their own unique characteristics (Swani et al., 2014) and are considered to have different purposes (Iankova et al., 2018; Ngai et al., 2015). This echoes the view of Go & You (2016) that different social media are applicable in achieving different goals. To illustrate, LinkedIn (business network) is considered relevant in initiating and developing professional relationships intra- and interorganisationally, considerably expanding reach across geographies (Quinton & Wilson, 2016). Twitter (microblog) is suited to connecting, sharing information and communicating with consumers (Swani et al., 2014) and is considered more effective when posts include embedded content (cues and links) to drive further information searching (Leek et al., 2016). Instagram (photo sharing platform) enables image and video sharing where users can connect through following, tagging and hashtags (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Facebook (social networking site) is used for information searching, corporate brand promotion and to foster relationships with customers (Popp, Wilson, Horbel, & Woratschek, 2016; Swani et al., 2017) and YouTube (video sharing platform) is a content community known for videos (Smith, Fischer, & Yongjian, 2012).

Iankova et al. (2018) offers an alternative view by categorising organisation social media usage through the lens of customer engagement lifecycle. The authors identify two categories of usage which are acquisition orientation and relationship orientation. acquisition orientation includes top of the funnel activities that encourages initial interaction with the consumer in order to increase brand awareness. On the other hand, relationship orientation focuses middle to bottom of the funnel activities to develop and deepen the relationship between the organisation and consumer through connection, advocacy, and engagement (Iankova et al., 2018). In the context of social media in B2B markets Iankova et al. (2018) confirm that, "all types of businesses ascribe similar importance to social media for acquisition related activities" (p. 7). With regard to relationship related activities, B2B organisations have ascribed less importance to this compared to other business models.

Literature corroborates that B2B organisations have adopted social media across mainstream channels to advertise (Brennan & Croft, 2012; Holliman & Rowley, 2014;

Michaelidou et al., 2011), and to achieve marketing communication objectives such as to create brand awareness, support sales and enrich customer relationships (Karjaluoto et al., 2015), provide rich sources of information (Swani et al., 2017) and improve sales and account management performance (Agnihotri et al., 2016; Guesalaga, 2016; Lacoste, 2016). This suggests that multi-use strategies across different platforms are being adopted. Pozza (2014) supports the view that social multichannel usage is more beneficial in driving a "better customer experience" (p. 1276).

Conversely, Gruner & Power (2018) contend that multiplatform social media presence may serve to impede effective communication efforts in building inter-organisational relationships instead of being complementary. This could be due to internal resources and capability constraints which prevents the organisation realising the benefits of an integrated digital marketing communication in addressing different audiences (Gruner & Power, 2018). Gruner & Power's (2018) research implies that it is more beneficial for organisations to strategically focus on either a single or selected social media platforms.

Social media are not only used in a marketing context but also across other organisational functions such as human resources and business development.

From a human resources perspective, Madia (2011) advises that "organisations must consider adding social media to their overall recruitment strategy to meet the goals of being cost-effective, targeted, and strategic; remaining competitive; and sourcing top talent" (p. 19). In addition, Sivertzen, Nilsen, & Olafsen (2013) and Girard, Fallery, & Rodhain, (2014) argue that social media are useful as a recruitment tool for human resources and is also provides an opportunity to build the employer brand. A more recent study conducted by Koch, Gerber, & De Klerk (2018) highlights that social media are considered an effective tool for talent sourcing.

Literature further notes that social media are used in sales for job-related tasks across the buying process such as gathering market intelligence, building networks, prospecting and customer satisfaction (Agnihotri et al., 2016; Agnihotri, Kothandaraman, Kashyap, & Singh, 2012; Andersson & Wikström, 2017; Itani et al., 2017)). However, Guesalaga (2016) further adds that in order to use social media effectively, employees with social media experience or building organisational competence in social media is necessary.

Given the proliferation of social media types that are serving different audiences, to remain connected, it is necessary for organisations to devise suitable social media multi-use strategies.

2.5 Conclusion

The discussion in this literature review has identified the prevalence of social media, how this has translated into organisational usage, the differences between B2C and B2B markets, as well as the challenges faced by social media adoption in a B2B context.

Reference was made to various studies that that provided typologies and frameworks to better understand the different social media stakeholders, the role of content, social media platforms and usage.

This discussion shows that a large number of stakeholders are defined as social media users. In order to derive the benefits of social media, targeted activities can be utilised to reach different stakeholder groups. Therefore, this view should provide insight into the relevance of organisational use in B2B markets.

While there have been studies conducted on the different uses of social media, there has been limited literature that focuses on a holistic view of SMM in B2B organisations that encompass three elements (stakeholders, content, and platforms) in achieving business outcomes.

B2B organisations that understand the distinct role of social media for different audiences to serve different purposes (Iankova et al., 2018) are able to develop effective SMM strategies, expend resources appropriately, and improve capabilities within those arenas. Therefore, this study aims to identify which elements within SMM including stakeholders, content, social media platforms, are relevant in B2B organisations in achieving business objectives.

3 Chapter Three: Research Questions

Social media has become significant enough that organisations are utilising it within their integrated marketing strategies (Lashgari et al., 2018), to the point that SMM strategies are being developed. Despite being well received and adopted in B2C organisations, B2B organisations have reservations regarding social media usage and their effectiveness (Ngai et al., 2015). Therefore this study seeks to uncover how social media are being used within B2B organisations in an attempt to address concerns regarding its usefulness in achieving business outcomes.

Based on the discussion in chapter two, key themes emerged pertaining to social media usage that underpin the research questions. This chapter formulates the research questions that will be explored to understand the universe of social media stakeholders, what types of content activities are being developed to engage with social media stakeholders, which platforms are suitable to convey the relevant messages and influence outcomes, and what are these outcomes.

3.1 Research question 1

Which stakeholders are B2B organisations targeting, and why?

3.2 Research question 2

Why are organisations using different types of content?

3.3 Research question 3

Which social media platforms are B2B organisations using and how are they being used?

3.4 Research question 4

Why are B2B organisations using social media?

4 Chapter Four: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

To answer the research questions, using the lens of stakeholder theory, the research proposes to understand social media stakeholders, social media content, and platform selection to achieve business outcomes within B2B organisations. This study is underpinned by an interpretivist philosophy lending itself to a qualitative design, which is exploratory in nature.

Creswell (2014) postulates that the researcher's philosophical view, research design, methodology and nature of the research problem inform the selected research approach. Saunders & Lewis (2018) describe the research process as having multiple levels which include philosophy, approach to theory development, methodological choice, strategies, time horizon and techniques (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). This chapter seeks to address research design, research method (data collection, coding and analysis) as well as quality control and ethical considerations.

4.2 Research design: procedures of inquiry

The **research philosophy** encompasses the researcher's assumptions and values which influence the selected research process as well as understanding what is being researched (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Where there are complex, unique situations that are subjective in nature, an interprevist philosophy is suggested (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Interpretivism seeks to understand the meaning of behaviour (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Compared to B2C marketing, social media and SMM are still relatively unexplored within B2B organisations. In this context, reality was subjective, and the researcher sought to gain deeper insights into social media usage behaviour. Accordingly, an interprevist stance was adopted.

The second layer in the research process entailed the **research approach**, which is concerned with how theory is used within the research (Saunders et al., 2019). Initially stakeholder theory underpinned the research; the researcher sought to test this theory in the application of industrial SMM practices. Here a deductive approach was adopted where theory was developed from literature and the research strategy was pursued to test it (Saunders et al., 2019). However, through better understanding of the select social media stakeholders, content and channel usage, the purpose subsequently was to make sense of the data collected, which describes an inductive process. Based on the nascent

existing literature of industrial social media use through the lens of stakeholder theory, data was collected to explore this, and themes and patterns were identified to augment existing theory. As such, an abductive approach was utilised, which combines deductive and inductive approaches (Saunders et al., 2019).

The **research design** pertains to how the different parts of the study form a cohesive strategy to clearly address the research questions. This demonstrates the feasibility of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The research design considers three choices which constitute qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method research (Creswell, 2014). Within each of these choices, strategies are available and should be appropriately selected to meet the research objectives (Creswell, 2014; Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The overarching design of this study is qualitative in nature.

According to Marshall & Rossman (2016), qualitative research "is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena" (p. 3); where qualitative research is "pragmatic, interpretive and grounded in the lived experiences of people" (p. 2). Creswell (2014) further highlights that qualitative research is appropriate for "exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 32).

The motivation behind electing a qualitative design is that the context matters, literature concerning the subject is embryonic, and the subject matter requires exploration and understanding of social media usage within organisations. While research into industrial marketing through the use of social media is burgeoning, limited studies have been conducted on understanding B2B social media preferences, the drivers and stakeholders of social media usage. The purpose of this research is two-fold: to detail what is happening, as well as to gain insights into why different stakeholders are targeted, who are the different stakeholders, what content is generated and why, which platforms are preferred and why social media are being used.

4.2.1 Research strategy

Qualitative methodology is organised into research genres in order to situate a study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The appropriate strategy selection is governed by the research philosophy, approach, research questions and available resources (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Literature has highlighted three distinct genres which include individual lived experience, society and culture, and language and communication (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The distinction and appropriate strategy selection is based on the complexity and degree of interaction (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Examples

of qualitative research strategies include ethnographic, phenomenological, grounded theory, and case study approaches. For this study, an embedded two-case study research design was chosen.

A case study approach facilitates deeper understanding of the context and what is happening within that context (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). According to Yin (2018), a case study method is relevant when three conditions are met. These include research questions that favour how and why questions; the researcher has little control over behavioural events; and the events examined are contemporary in nature (Yin, 2018).

Primarily the research was predicated on discovering why social media are used, who is targeted and for what outcomes. The prevalence of why, what and how indicates that the case study strategy is appropriate (Saunders & Lewis, 2018; Yin, 2018). Secondly, the research does not require behaviour manipulation such as a control variable. Thirdly, the context is significant in understanding contemporary social phenomena (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). This feature is evident as the nature of implemented social media strategies is tied to the respective organisation's current marketing strategy and objectives. As the three conditions have been addressed, a case study approach was deemed suitable for this study.

The case study was situated at an organisational level; however, data was collected from employees (marketing specialists and other organisational functions) as well as from secondary data sources. As such, an embedded design occurs when there are multiple units of analysis (Yin, 2018).

The rationale for selecting a multiple-case design is twofold. This is attributed to context and rigour. Firstly, multiple-case design assumes replication logic, which according to Yin (2018) means that each case may either replicate similarities (called literal replication) or alternatively, produce divergent results (called theoretical replication). Based on limited accessibility to organisations, a two-case study was elected. In order to extrapolate similarities or differences between the cases, the two B2B organisations should be selected carefully (Yin, 2018).

Considering that there are only two cases, a comparative study will be sought where either replication logic may apply. With regard to literal replication, this will highlight how SMM strategies can be applied across B2B organisations to achieve marketing objectives such as increased brand awareness or employer branding. Conversely, theoretical replication may imply that different strategies are applicable for different B2B organisations

depending on contextual variables such as SMM capabilities or marketing objectives. Further, single case study design has faced criticisms regarding its robustness, therefore a two-case study design is an attempt to mitigate this concern (Yin, 2018).

Due to time constraints a mono-method, cross-sectional study (type of observational study) was implemented where data was collected at a particular period in time (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

4.2.2 Population

Saunders & Lewis (2018) defines a population as a complete set that may include individuals, organisations or places. The population in the case study was identified as B2B, technology-intensive, multinational organisations that have an established social media presence operating in South Africa.

The sample, which is a sub-group of the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2018), consisted of two identified organisations that were considered relevant in unlocking pertinent rich information to explain social media use and why. Sampling method will be discussed in more detail in section 4.3 below.

4.2.3 Sampling method and size

In case study research there are multiple sampling strategies available (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010; Patton, 2014). Patton (2014), for example, offers 40 different purposeful case selection sampling strategies which were categorised into eight clusters. Sample selection effects the quality of the evidence collected; therefore, it is critical to align the case selection with what the research is trying to achieve (Mills et al., 2010; Patton, 2014). Both Yin (2011) and Patton (2014) suggest that purposeful sampling is recommended in order to derive useful insights that are related to the research questions (Patton, 2014; Yin, 2011). Yin (2011) describes purposeful sampling as "The selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study, based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study's research questions" (p. 311). According to Mills et al. (2010), in multiple-case studies, case sample selection is usually "made on conceptual grounds, not on representative grounds" (p 34). Gentles et al. (2015) emphasises that theoretical sampling is "intended specifically for developing or integrating conceptual categories within a study, rather than simply to follow leads in the data to select the next data source" (p. 1780).

Therefore prior to data collection, the initial sampling for cases was purposeful. Through the researcher's personal and professional network, the cases were identified based on relevant criteria that were suitable to investigating social media use. The criteria included having an established social media presence across multiple channels that demonstrated a variety of content types. Following which, during data collection, theoretical sampling decisions were applied in order to collect pertinent data to evolve the categories (Charmaz, 2014).

Various authors propose different minimum applicable sampling sizes to determine saturation, which is dependent on research design (Boddy, 2016; Creswell, 2014; Gentles et al., 2015; Yin, 2011). Qualitative research may have smaller sample sizes than quantitative research as the purpose is often to uncover depth of understanding as opposed to representing populations (Gentles et al., 2015). Boddy (2016) argues that there is value in a sample size of one. Boddy (2016) further contends that the context, scope, nature, and sampling criteria should be considered when justifying an appropriate sample size. Therefore, the researcher applied discretionary judgement based on what was obtainable within the restricted timeframes to determine a sufficient sample size (Yin, 2018). In the context of theoretical saturation, Charmaz (2014) comments that saturation is reached once sampling reflects no new properties. Through the interview process, no new information was yielded which suggested that data saturation was approached (refer to **Figure 4** below).

Number of new codes
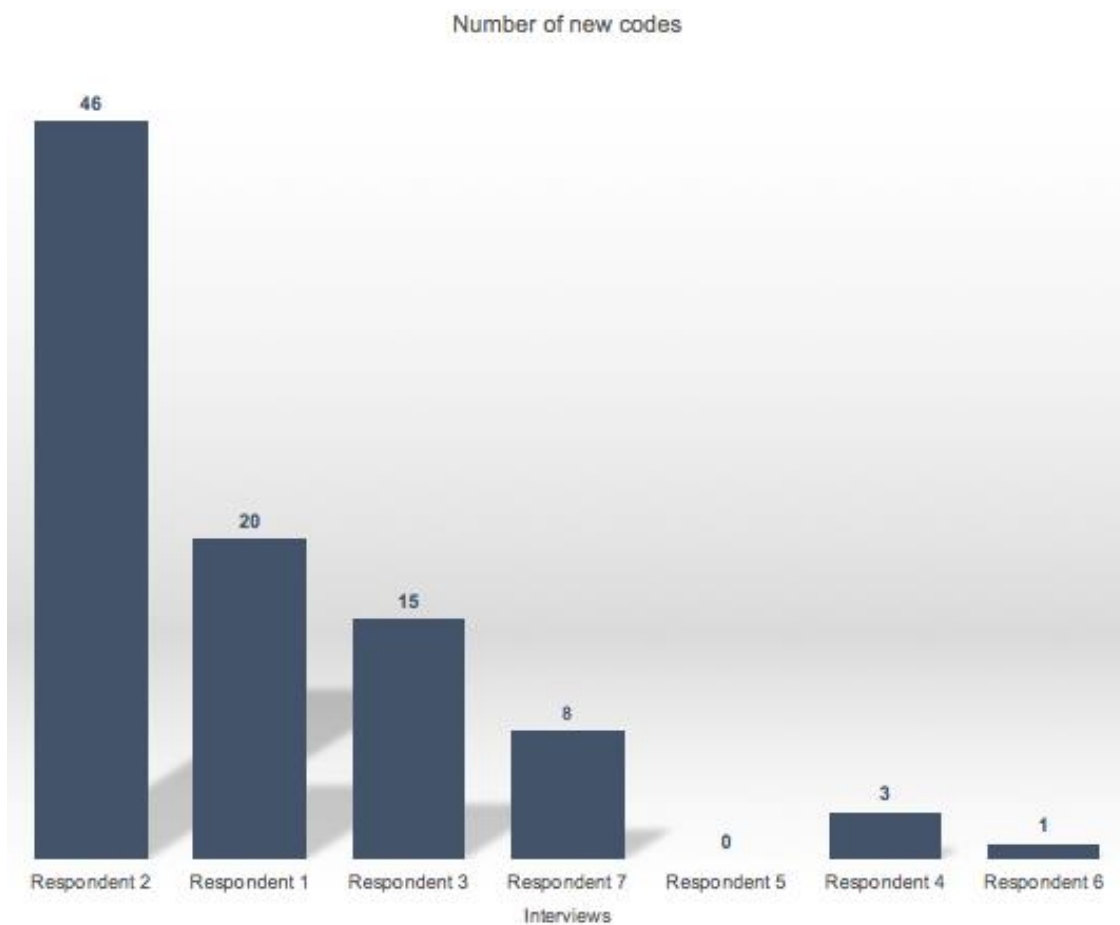
Figure 4: Saturation graph (author's own)

4.2.4 Unit of analysis

Authors Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon (2015) provide a broad definition of qualitative research sampling that follows "the selection of specific data sources from which data are collected to address the research objectives" (p. 1776). In reference to case study research, Gentles et al. (2015) support Stake's (2005) approach to case study sampling which suggests that case study sampling occurs across both the case and the data sources contained within the case (Gentles et al., 2015), therefore the units of analysis are the case and the data sources. In contrast, Yin (2018) argues that distortion occurs when confusion prevails between design and data collection units of analysis. Yin (2018) reasons that the case study unit of analysis (the "case") may be different to the unit of data collection (data sources which may include interviews with individuals or other sources of evidence). Therefore, embracing Yin's (2018) line of reasoning, as the design in this study pertained to the organisation, the unit of analysis was the organisation.

4.2.5 Case study setting

Cases were selected purposively based on visible evidence that each organisation had established social media presence across multiple platforms. Each platform had to exhibit multiple forms of content.

Two cases that were identified operate in the same industry, software. Both organisations are technology-intensive, multinational organisations operating in Johannesburg, South Africa. The researcher is currently employed in one of the organisations.

Details of each case are outlined below, including a business context as well as a summary of the respondents and the case characteristics.

Company A

Company A is a large, multinational, technology B2B organisation delivering software solutions to the financial services sector (banking, investments, insurance, tax and accounting). The customer profile varies according to size from entrepreneurs to large organisations based on employee count as well as revenue. Although this organisation is a multinational, this study was concerned with the social media practices in the South African region.

Five interviews were conducted across different departments including different areas of specialisation and levels of experience. Although SMM is centralised, each respondent utilises social media for the organisation. **Table 2** (below) outlines the details of the interviewed respondents for Company A.

Table 2: Details of the respondents interviewed at Company A

Case	Respondent	Role	Management level
Company A	Respondent 1	Marketing Business Partner	Middle management
Company A	Respondent 2	Senior Content and Communications Manager	Senior management
Company A	Respondent 4	Head of Sales and Account Management	Senior management
Company A	Respondent 5	Marketing Manager	Middle management
Company A	Respondent 6	Talent Acquisition Business Partner	Middle management

Company B

Company B is a large, multinational, technology B2B organisation delivering software as a service (SaaS) solutions across industries. Although the organisation competes globally, the focus of this study was on its South African social media activities.

Social media responsibility is part of the marketing team's remit, where there is separation of roles into organic and paid, among others. Due to availability, only two interviews were conducted within the marketing team, at senior and middle management levels. The experience of these respondents included executive and organic social media management. **Table 3** (below) outlines the details of the interviewed respondents for Company B.

Table 3: Details of the respondents interviewed at Company B

Company	Respondent	Role	Management level
Company B	Respondent 3	Marketing Director	Executive management
Company B	Respondent 7	Regional Social Media Manager	Middle management

Summary of the cases

The selected case profiles are similar, which may deliver substantial insights into social media usage within this context. The cases consisted of large businesses serving other businesses of varying sizes. The SMM experience levels varied between the two cases, ranging from low to high. **Table 4** (below) summarises the case characteristics.

Table 4: Summary of the case characteristics

	Company A	Company B
Jurisdiction	Global	Global
Industry	Technology	Technology
Size of business (based on number of employees)	Large	Large
Customer type	Business	Business
Marketing roles of respondents	Generalists	Generalists, specialists
Seniority level of respondents	Senior, Middle	Senior, Middle
Level of social media experience of respondents	Low to Medium	High

4.3 Research method: data collection procedures

The characteristics of qualitative research helps inform the data collection procedures. Qualitative research characteristics are explained by Gentles et al. (2015) as occurring in the natural world, utilising multiple data sources, context-driven, having an emergent design, and interpretive.

In conducting the systematic exploration, the strategy encompassed multiple methods which included both primary and secondary data analysis. Two sources of secondary data were collected by the researcher through examining documents as well as audio-visual data, followed by semi-structured, in-depth interviews that were conducted (Creswell, 2014). These will be discussed in detail below.

4.3.1 Sources of evidence

According to case study research literature, there are extensive sources of evidence available (Creswell, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) illustrates six complementary sources which include documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artefacts. In addition, Creswell, (2014) also includes audio-visual material as an additional source.

To collect case study evidence, the researcher made use of three methods of data gathering due to limited time and applicability in answering the research questions.

Primary data collection: semi-structured interviews

While no single data source has been identified as having a greater advantage, interviews are a significant source of case study evidence because it provides possible rationales for the how and why in addition to revealing participants' perspectives (Yin, 2018).

To understand B2B social media stakeholder targeting, content, preferred social media platforms and usage, 60 minute face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted. Where a participant was unable to participate face-to-face, video conferencing through Zoom (Zoom, n.d.) was utilised. With permission, the semi-structured, in-depth interviews were recorded using Zoom functionality, and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes each.

In preparation for conducting primary data collection, a pilot interview was conducted to ensure questions were valid, understandable, provided the relevant insights needed (Saunders & Lewis, 2018) and provided an opportunity for the researcher to practice

(McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The pilot interview was conducted at the organisation by which the researcher was currently employed.

Once ethical clearance was received, the identified participants were invited to participate in the interview through an email invitation. An introduction and brief synopsis of the research being conducted was provided, providing clear details of what was required, including timeframes.

At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer provided context of the study to the participants, followed by open-ended, non-leading and unambiguous questions. To support the exploratory nature of the research, participants were invited to answer as openly and candidly as possible (Pearson & Sutherland, 2017).

Secondary data collection: documentary and audio-visual data collection

To substantiate and complement the social media usage insights gained through the semi-structured interviews, the researcher gathered and analysed documentary and audio-visual evidence. This included assessing both publicly available and proprietary documentation.

The publicly available secondary data comprised evaluations of the relevant external social media platforms used by the organisations. The assessment included reviewing type of followers, social media channel presence and social media content (including messaging) that was publicly available. The content examination incorporated different forms of documentation which consisted of messaging, blogging, micro-blogging, imagery, and video content produced by the organisations under research.

Due to the sensitive nature of the proprietary documentation, this presented confidentiality challenges. The researcher was therefore unable to obtain strategic documentation for Company B. In addition, the reporting of this information was restricted. This will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections. Despite this restriction, the quality of insights was not obstructed. **Table 5** (below) summarises the documents and audio-visual evidence collected for each case.

Table 5: Summary of documents and audio-visual evidence

Documents and audio-visual evidence	Company A	Company B
Social media strategy	x	
Social media measurements	x	
Website content: blogs, messaging	x	x
LinkedIn: posts, links, imagery, messaging	x	x
Twitter: posts, links, imagery, messaging	x	x
Instagram: imagery, links, messaging	x	x
Facebook: posts, links, imagery, messaging		x
Video sharing: video content	x	x

4.3.2 Measurement instrument

Semi-structured interviews are appropriate to exploring perceptions and provide the researcher opportunities to ask probing questions for additional information or to seek clarity (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). However, in designing the semi-structured interview, McIntosh & Morse (2015) detail considerations such as applicability, relevancy and delimited content, careful language use to ensure accurate meaning is conveyed, single issue per question, standardisation and sequencing, and eliciting of participation. McIntosh & Morse (2015) describe three guiding principles as the basis of question design which include specification, division and tacit assumption. Specification relates to ascertaining what the question means; division refers to wording and sequencing; and tacit assumption is ensuring that the intended, true meaning is determined (Barriball & While, 1994; McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

Moreover, it is critical to design questions in order to provide enough data to answer the research questions (content validity) and the extent to which the data collected measures the intended measurements (construct validity) (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The criteria for judging the research design quality will be explored in more detail in section 4.5.1.

The structure of the interview questions was developed from the research questions, literature review (Pearson & Sutherland, 2017), and case study setting. A proposed interview schedule was drafted and adapted from Andersson & Wikström's (2017) study (refer to **Appendix A).**

The undertaking of the interview was to reveal the participants' perspectives on predetermined themes; therefore, the researcher encouraged open conversational

dialogue with the flexibility to vary slightly to elicit deeper understanding or to seek clarity (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

4.3.3 Principles of data collection

Yin (2018) proposes four principles of data collection that are applicable to establishing validity and reliability across all sources of evidence. The first principle is using multiple sources of evidence in order to triangulate the data. Data triangulation is discussed more in depth in the quality control section (4.5.1).

The second principle is to organise and document the data collected in such a manner as to separate the raw data from the researcher's narrative (Yin, 2018). This prevents contamination between the facts and researcher's interpretation of the data (Yin, 2018). A word-processing tool (Word) was utilised as a case study database to capture the narrative. The components of the database include typed notes taken from interviews and document analysis.

Principle three is to maintain a chain of evidence which provides a basis for the research findings (Yin, 2018). Providing evidence should contribute towards addressing potential construct validity concerns that may emerge.

The last principle is significantly relevant in this study as it warns to exercise care when using data from social media sources (Yin, 2018). The premise of this research was predicated on social media; accordingly, the following tactics were applied to ensure limits were observed and data accuracy was observed. Firstly, due to the breadth of available social media information, limits were set to the scope of research, which included the seven identified social media platforms. The content and nature of the online material might lend itself to biased information, therefore the researcher verified the intention, accuracy and source of the data. This was achieved by cross-referencing the online content against media channels.

4.4 Research method: data analysis procedures

Yin (2018) describes data analysis as "examining, categorising, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining (narrative and numeric) evidence" (p. 164). In analysing case study evidence, Yin (2018) outlines the need for an analytic strategy. In deriving an analytic strategy, preliminary tactics can be used to expose patterns or insights (Yin, 2018). Four general analytic strategies include (1) relying on theoretical propositions, (2) working our

data from the ground up, (3) developing a case description, and (4) examining plausible rival explanations which can be used in the five analytic techniques. (Yin, 2018). The following chapter will discuss which methods will be used to analyse the cases data.

The interview data was transcribed from audio to text. To maintain confidentiality, a confidentiality agreement was signed. The text data was imported into electronic analysis software called ATLAS.ti to facilitate data management such as coding and categorising (McIntosh & Morse, 2015; Saldaña, 2013; Yin, 2018). Although ATLAS.ti allows for multiple data types including audio-visual sources to be imported, the documentation and audio-visual secondary data collected was organised, coded and analysed manually.

4.4.1   Data coding process

Hsieh & Shannon (2005) describe three content analysis approaches that are dependent on research purpose and design. The three techniques are conventional, directed and summative (Hseih & Shannon, 2005). In conventional content analysis, data informs the categories (Hseih & Shannon, 2005). For directed content analysis, previous research or theory informs the coding scheme (Hseih & Shannon, 2005). The summative approach particular words are identified and explored within the text to identify if any relation appears. This research employed the directed content analysis approach because the coding structure was informed by the research questions and themes that emerged from the literature review. As a result, pre-determined code groups were developed.

The data coding process started with the researcher reading each transcript to familiarise the author with the data. Using ATLAS.ti, initial codes were assigned to passages of text that related to the predetermined code groups. Codes were collated into the predetermined code groups which included social media strategies, social media stakeholders, content, platform, platform purpose, usage, and benefits. Where data was identified that did not relate to one of the predetermined code groups, a new code group was created and revised during the data review process. A review process was conducted to remove any duplications and refine the codes (refer to **Appendix B** for the list of codes).

4.4.2   Data analysis process

Yin (2018) describes five analytic techniques that are relevant for case study research data analysis. These comprise pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logical modelling and cross-case synthesising (Yin, 2018). This study applied a case-based approach to cross-case synthesis, of which Yin (2018) explains that "the goal

is to retain the integrity of the entire case and then to compare or synthesise any within-case patterns across cases" (p. 196). This entails grouping the data according to case in order to facilitate an initial observation of themes and sub-themes within-and across-case analysis (Mills et al., 2014).

According to Mills et al. (2010), cross-case comparison may not reveal the how and why. Therefore, beginning with a within-in case analysis enabled the researcher to derive whether or not the patterns or processes evident in the case that emerged either support or refute the selected theory or literature (Mills et al., 2010; Yin, 2018). The aim of within-case analysis is to delve deeply into understanding how and why the organisation uses social media to achieve marketing objectives. Only once tentative within-case patterns have been established do cross-case comparison ensue to identify if any literal or theoretical replications emerge (Yin, 2018). Therefore, within each case, social media strategies and usage behaviour were examined across the multiple data sources, followed by an analysis concerning whether or not these social media strategies and behaviours were replicable across both cases.

In addition to data type triangulation which involves utilising more than one data source, Mills et al. (2010) recommend that researchers should employ different analytic techniques (called analysis triangulation). This not only provides validation, but it enriches the scope of what is visible in the data. Mills et al. (2010) postulate that the ultimate purpose of triangulation is "(1) the construction of (more) valid interpretations by convergence of evidence and (2) the achievement of a deeper insight by combining methods, data and analysis techniques" (p. 3). The analysis techniques that were used in this study included:

- Themes or categories were explored that emerged out of the deliberate sample design that was constructed to expose either similarities or differences in social media strategies adopted by organisations that are operating in similar contexts.

- Separate analysis of the data generated by the different sources such as interview documents, website and social media content as these may contribute unique insights.

4.5 Quality control and Ethics

4.5.1 Quality control

Qualitative research design is scrutinised because of its subjectivity; literature therefore argues the significance of rigour in qualitative inquiry (Morse, 2015; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Yin, 2018). To achieve this Morse et al. (2002) contend that implementing verification strategies such as methodological coherence, appropriate sample selection (that is knowledgeable), collecting and analysing concurrently (to understand what is known and what is unknown), thinking theoretically (constantly checking and rechecking) is necessary to obtain reliability and validity. Morse (2015) states that to ensure trustworthiness the following five criteria need to be considered: credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability) and confirmability (objectivity). Similarly, Yin (2018) describes four criteria that are commonly adopted in establishing research quality in case study research. These include construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability (Yin, 2018).

The tactics this study pursued towards establishing quality will be described in detail below.

Construct validity

The rationale of using three sources of data evidence (documents, audio-visual and in-depth interviews) is the principle of data triangulation (Yin, 2018). Through collecting information from multiple sources, the researcher attempted to verify findings in order to strengthen construct validity.

Internal validity

The broader issue of making inferences based on documentary and interview evidence threatens the validity of this study (Yin, 2018). Through the adoption of data and analysis triangulation the researcher attempted to reduce this risk.

External validity

According to Yin (2018), external validity can be achieved through using replication logic to determine generalisability. To strive for external validity the research questions have been designed to elicit how and why questions in attempt to empirically discover insights. In addition, the design was carefully structured as a two-case study that that afforded the possibility of similar or analogous results.

In addition, the use of stakeholder theory as a theoretical underpinning sought to enhance the external validity.

Reliability

The objective of the reliability test is to demonstrate that the study can be repeated by another researcher to arrive at the same outcomes (Yin, 2018). According to Yin (2018) "the goal of reliability is to minimise the errors and biases in a study,' (p 46). This study aims to use standardised data collection methods, whereby the processes were electronically documented.

Reliability and validity may also be helped through the interview process whereby the interviews were conducted at the participants' convenience, the interviewer was approachable, and was aware and responsive to verbal and non-verbal cues (Barriball & While, 1994).

In summary, the strategies this study pursued to achieve in effect trustworthiness included member checks (credibility), the use of purposive sampling (transferability), and triangulation (dependability and confirmability). In addition to enhance the reliability, data collection techniques and protocols were standardised.

4.5.2 Ethics

Researchers may be presented with ethical concerns across the different phases of the research from design, data collection to analysis and reporting (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). To clarify, Saunders & Lewis (2018) define ethics as "standards or behaviour that guide the moral choices we make which govern our behaviour and our relationships with others" (p. 76). As this study incorporated interaction with others, conducting ethical research was paramount. The following main themes were applicable in the context of this study's research design, data collection and analysis and reporting. Within the context of primary data ethics, these included obtaining consent, protection of privacy and confidentiality, and maintaining honesty.

To overcome the challenges of conducting research within an organisation, the researcher approached existing contacts based on the researcher's personal and professional network to gain access. Principal contacts at the researcher's workplace organisation as well as an external organisation were identified on the basis of subject matter expertise. The research request was conducted using a combined telephonic and email approach.

Permission to carry out the research from each organisation was requested. Both organisations provided written permission to conduct this research.

Upon obtaining ethical clearance, the primary contact at one of the organisations provided permission to contact relevant individuals within the organisation. A video conference meeting was conducted with the primary contact of the alternative organisation to agree which potential individuals within the case organisation would be included in the study. The potential individuals identified within the organisations are part of the researcher's professional network. Moreover, it was anticipated and confirmed that the individuals participating in the study are subject matter experts in their field. Upon consent from the proposed individuals (refer to **Appendix C),** the researcher scheduled interviews telephonically and via email.

In addition to obtaining organisational consent, individual participation was solicited on a voluntary basis, where the individuals had the right to withdraw at any given time.

As mentioned above, while conducting interviews with the participants, the use of Zoom was adopted, which enabled the researcher to record the interview more efficiently. Although recording the interview would provide accuracy (Saunders & Lewis, 2018), consent was requested including an option to decline should the participant(s) not wish to be recorded.

Although it is unlikely that the research topic will be considered sensitive, and non-competing organisations were selected to participate, protecting SMM processes and stakeholder engagement was necessary in order not to disclose proprietary information. One of the organisations required additional confidentiality measures, including confirmation that the information would be utilised for academic purposes only; the researcher therefore signed a non-disclosure agreement (NDA).

To ensure confidentiality during the analysis phase, the research used pseudonyms to preserve both the case organisation as well as the individual respondents' identities. The case organisations were named Company A and Company B. Where an individual respondent was quoted, pseudonyms were adopted such as Respondent 1.

Analysis of the publicly available data did not require prior agreement with the principal contacts as these sources did not contain sensitive information. However, the documentation for one of the organisations included proprietary information, and therefore consent was gained to access this information.

During the reporting stage confidentiality was also a critical component. Ethical consideration and care was taken to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants through ensuring, and assuring them, that there would be no information disclosing that might identify personal details.

4.6 Limitations

Qualitative research is subjective in nature, lending itself to results that may not be easily replicable or generalisable (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). More specifically, case study research itself has attracted concerns relating to research methodological rigour, and applicability to generalisation (Yin, 2018). Therefore, case study design and systematic processes are critical. This current research is no exception, therefore the limitations detailed below.

- This exploratory case study research is subjective in nature, as a result may reflect researcher biases.

- Due to time and resource limitations, only two cases were investigated, which may have an impact on the generalisability of the outcomes as the case study may be unrepresentative of the population. This weakness is further exacerbated by the selected sampling method, which constrains the number of interviewees.

- Inherent challenges with conducting interviews is the risk of interviewer and participant biases (Creswell, 2014). Participants might not respond truthfully due to the desire to be perceived positively. The interviewer might not accurately interpret the intended meaning of the participants' responses.

5 Chapter Five: Results

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five presents the results obtained from the primary and secondary data sources collected through interviews with marketing specialists (covering a range of experience and expertise across both cases). Interviews were also conducted across organisational functions including human resources and sales; however, due to availability, interviews with human resources and sales were only conducted within Company A. Therefore, these will be used as supporting evidence.

The discussion of results begins with an overview of the cases, followed by a detailed cross-case analysis discussion, according to social media stakeholders, content, platforms, and use.

5.2 Case overviews

Although the two cases provide software in a B2B environment, audience profiles, product offering, marketing team structure and experience are dissimilar.

The target market profiles differ in product consumption and preferred communication platforms as indicated by product offering and selected platform preference. Company A provides software that facilitates financial advice, trading and investment management, whereas Company B focuses on software the enables business processes management. As a result, the software solutions solve different problems for organisations. Therefore, the target market profiles differ according to persona (role in the organisation), outputs they are trying to achieve and preferred platforms where they seek information and build communities.

While the industry in which both cases operate is the same (software), the product characteristics and problems that the solutions are solving for are distinctive. Company A and Company B utilise different configuration and customisation protocols and processes. In addition, both cases offer a diverse product variety ranging in complexity, where Company B offers a wider range of solutions that are off-the-shelf and do not require bespoke configuration or installation intervention.

Company A has a small centralised social media and content team which is supported by business marketing teams in different regions. Within South Africa, the business marketing team is small, comprising only two people. Within the business marketing team,

the majority of the talent profiles display a generalist skill set. Comparatively, Company B separates organic and paid media management roles, who work alongside other specialists such content developers and public relations. As a result of the differing contexts, product characteristics and differing internal structures, there are different nuances in the social media, platform preference, usage, and stakeholders. To illustrate, Company A SMM is geared towards building a strong brand personality emphasized through brand awareness tactics, whereas Company B is more focused on driving the customer through the sales funnel into conversions supported by a powerful content plan.

However, commonalities between the two cases exist in the form of platform selections that are aligned with audience preferences, variety of content and type of content delivery. A consistent theme emerged that content and social media go hand in hand as Respondent 3, Marketing Director from Company B explains: "…we've actually started to look at social and content collectively. So, what is our content strategy and how does that overlay into what we do from a social media perspective" (p. 2).

The stakeholder approach between the cases reflect variances as Company A considers a broader perspective, while Company B is predominantly focused on three prioritised stakeholder groups.

5.3 Social media background

5.3.1 Social media background for Company A

Previously, the social media strategy at Company A was unstructured, where there were multiple social media profiles across regions that were being maintained inconsistently within each region across imagery and content; social activities were not necessarily targeted to audiences; and platforms and engagement were inconstant. Respondent 5, Marketing Manager from Company A explained that "We had a multiple of different accounts, so I think I consolidated four or five accounts down into one, because we had some accounts with 23 people, some with 13 people, some with like 40 people" (p. 8).

Despite the lack of formalised strategy, there was tactical management, which resulted in a recognisable social media presence across the organisation's chosen channels. In addition, social profile analytics demonstrated that the social profiles had good quality followers, determined by demographics such as industry, company size, seniority and level of influence.

To align social media practices globally and to support business objectives, a structured social media strategy was implemented. In the last three years, superfluous profiles were consolidated, and consistency was created through a centralised content model which sought to engage and interact with audiences, build brand personality, influence decision-making, create information sources, attract and retain employees, drive traffic to owned media and improve search engine optimisation (SEO). A strong emphasis was placed on effort versus impact through a channel approach combined with audience first which was defined as posting relevant content for the right audience and channel. The introduction of a centralised social media strategy with dedicated resources suggests an improvement in social media maturity where different components of organisational social media use is considered. These components include stakeholders, platform preference and purpose, usage, and content. Each of these constituents will be described in the sections below.

5.3.2   Social media background for Company B

Company B has a formalised and mature social media strategy that comprises two focal areas, organic and paid. Over the course of the last 18 months, the social media strategy has evolved to encompass changes in consumer behaviour. Respondent 3 from Company B explains:

> So, the way that we've used social has very much adapted over the last 18 months, and that is probably because consumers are changing, and personalisation is becoming so critical to the content that they absorb. And we look at social from two perspectives. So, one from a pay and one from an organic [perspective] (p. 2).

Documentation and audio-visual evidence suggest that in addition to the three pivotal types of content, Company B employs additional content types to advertise, build brand awareness, educate and influence. Examples of this include software advertisements, regular social media updates, educational resources that encompass training videos, customer stories and endorsement by market influencers through video content.

5.4   Social media stakeholders

In line with categorisation of social media users by Huotari et al. (2015), in each of the cases, social media stakeholders comprise internal and external contributors and consumers of social media. This section will describe social media users and consumers from an internal and external perspective.

Huotari et al. (2015) categorise internal social media users by corporate (professional use) and employees (personal use). Both cases demonstrated internal professional use; where the corporate contributors are publishing content on behalf of the organisation, aimed at both internal and external stakeholder consumption.

From an internal, personal use perspective, substantial programs have been created for the employees (including management) of both organisations to share content with their personal and professional networks through social channels to amplify reach. Reach refers to the number of viewers that see the shared content. Respondent 7, Regional Social Media Manager from Company B, describes their employee advocacy program:

> We first get it [social media] to empower our colleagues, because we've realised that it's such a fragmented landscape where it's so difficult to gain reach now, organic reach, so we've decided, and I see a lot of organisations going that way, where we're using our colleagues as our main advocates. So, in empowering them with the content, empowering them with I think our narrative and story so that they also empower their personal brand through social media. So, it really is that win-win situation (p. 2).

So much emphasis is placed on this in both cases is because this kind of engagement is considered by recipients as more genuine and trustworthy. Respondent 3 from Company B highlights why employee advocacy builds authenticity:

> The first thing is that social network algorithms favour personal connection, so therefore your content is seen more [if shared by someone in your network], and you get more reach, and person-to-person connections end up warranting more trust. So, in that way it also gives you more authenticity in terms of the content that is being shared (p. 4).

With regards to internal social media consumption where employees are targeted, both organisations achieve this through an internal enterprise networking site. However, the aim of each respective case's enterprise networking site is different. For Company A the purpose is to drive collaboration and communication, whereas Company B uses it to enable its employees to share content.

The external stakeholder community as described by Huotari et al. (2015) comprises four categories that produce an expansive list including:

- **Corporate users** are acknowledged as other enterprises such as other businesses, competitors, suppliers, and government agencies, amongst others.

- **Customer users** are considered the most attractive category and include existing or potential customers as well as industry experts and customer advocates.

- **Professional users** are identified as having had professional connections to the organisation, such as shareholders.

- **Civilian users** are not connected to the organisation and as such are considered part of the wider community. These stakeholders include local community organisations, and special interest groups.

Clarkson (1995) further defines stakeholders as primary or secondary groups, depending on the level of dependency on the organisation's existence.

In each of the cases, existing and potential customers are considered significant stakeholders and as such are prioritised. Company B primarily focuses on this subset, as explained by Respondent 3 from Company B:

> So, the end game for us is absolutely customers. How we reach them is through our own brand platforms, through our colleagues sharing content that we are curating, or they are creating, and of course if we start to drive an influencer program very strongly (p. 4).

Whereas Company A also prioritises existing and potential employees through their employer branding initiatives, as noted by Respondent 5, Marketing Manager from Company A: "We are communicating with employees, so employee brand, so stuff within our own business…so it's going to be employee brand, prospective employees of Company A, or existing employees of Company A" (p. 5).

Another user group that both organisations consider as primary stakeholders are influencer and customer advocates who endorse the organisation, as detailed by Respondent 5 from Company A:

> Another audience would be influencers, so through the content we want to obviously go for the prospects and the clients, but we also want those content pieces going out to influencers. So, stakeholders that are mainly talking to our prospects and clients and have influence over their decision-making process (p.5).

Other secondary stakeholders that both organisations target include other businesses and media, as explained by Respondent 7 from Company B: "I engage a lot with the media that have shared our stuff" (p. 6). Additional secondary stakeholder groups that Company A engages with, in addition to other businesses, include tertiary institutions. Respondent 5 from Company A details the engagement with universities:

> We will post social media out just showing our connection with the universities and our partnerships with the universities, showing I guess the association on where their career path can go (p. 10).

What is evident is that both cases are targeting multiple stakeholder groups for different purposes. Refer to **Table 6** (below) that summarises the different social media users and priorities from the perspective of the two cases.

Table 6: Summary of social media stakeholders for both cases

Users	Example	Company A		Company B	
		Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Internal					
Corporate user	Creators of content for the organisation	x		x	
Employee user	Existing and potential employees, employee advocates	x		x	
External					
Corporate user	Businesses, competitors, media, suppliers, government agencies		x		x
Customer user	Existing and potential customers, customer advocates	x		x	
Professional user	Shareholders	-	-	-	-
Civilian user	Local community organisations, special interest groups	-	-	-	-

5.5 Social media content

A strong emphasis was placed on the importance of the relationship between social media and content. Social media platforms are considered the conduit, whereas the content is what drives the desired outcomes. Both cases emphatically proclaimed this. Respondent

5 from Company A explains that "…social is a channel, but your content is king. And that's going to be your driver for engagement" (p. 14).

Due to the volume and nature of the markets being served in a B2B context, the focus should be on quality and not quantity. Respondent 7 from Company B notes that "in this environment you really want to concentrate more on quality versus quantity of content. So, you really want to start investing in good pieces" (p. 11).

The following themes arose within both cases regarding factors that influence content differentiation: 1) customer segmentation, 2) platform suitability, and 3) regional nuances.

5.5.1 Customer segmentation

Firstly, customer segmentation is a prominent theme that prevailed throughout the dialogue with both cases. This entails a structured way of profiling consumers to ensure that content is optimised for each segment. Respondent 3 from Company B reinforces how necessary segmentation is in the success of a go-to-market strategy:

> We also are very clear around making sure that we don't take a vanilla approach to how we go about this. So, segmentation is critical to the success of how we go to market (p. 6).

Five types of content segmentation approaches were demonstrated in both the cases, including by product or service category, by persona, by vertical segmentation, by customer journey and by pain points.

Content that is based on software (product) or solutions (service) is incorporated as evidenced by the software-specific video content on YouTube as well as software-based articles shared on LinkedIn by both cases.

Persona based content segmentation allows for a richer understanding of the customer, based on attitudes or behaviours that may influence engagement with the brand. Within each case, reference was made to content that addresses different customer roles. Respondent 5 from Company A describes how persona segmentation is used to tailor the content in order to improve the appeal:

> We're talking about prospective buyers, but there's actually six or seven different personas for that prospective client. So, in reality you should be creating seven different pieces of content to help each of those decision makers through, like

providing them with commercial insights and reasons why they should consider you (p. 13).

Vertical segmentation refers to content that is specific to the industry. This segmentation approach is visible throughout the layout of the blog filters as well as on video content on YouTube. Respondent 2, Senior Content Marketing Executive from Company A, elucidates how content also differs according to sectors to appeal to the diverse range of audiences that are being communicated with:

We definitely try and produce different types of content for different audiences. We definitely try and produce different content for different sectors, because we have to... it's a case of really thinking about what they [the audience] want to know, what's going to interest them, and … to make sure that we are reaching all of those different audiences with different types of content in the communication that we can use on the social (p. 8).

Customer journey refers to the three different stages in the sales funnel which include awareness, evaluation, and conversion. Respondents from both cases describe that it is necessary to map and align content to the engagement journey so as to meet consumers' information needs and encourage desired behaviour throughout the different stages. Respondents from both cases highlighted the long sales cycles and indicated the need for nurture content. Respondent 7 explained how Company B invests heavily in content marketing as nurture campaigns are necessary in the long sales cycle: "in B2B the sales cycle is quite long and there's a lot of nurture that's involved. So, we've invested quite heavily in content marketing" (p. 2). As a result, multiple types of content are developed, aimed at provoking different outcomes, as Respondent 3 from Company B highlights:

When we look at tofu, mofu, bofu, so I don't know if you've heard that acronym that we've grown to love, the top of funnel, middle of funnel and bottom of funnel content? We create content that we serve across all of those platforms to support engagement within that funnel journey, and that is just based on how people are engaging (p. 9).

As a result of the length of time it takes to build relationships with social media audiences, Respondent 1, Marketing Business Partner from Company A advises that this affords Company A the use of analytics to review which content works and which does not:

It's taken a long time for us to build a relationship with the people that we are sharing social media with and kind of getting a feel for what works and what doesn't, and how to attract more clientele. And we've done this largely through analysis, using social media metrics to understand how people interact with our content (p. 4).

However, within the documented evidence, the content segmentation strategy for Company A suggested that for applicable markets, content could be more developed in addressing the customer journey as a whole (across each stage).

Pain points refer to content that addresses solutions to identified problem areas, which both cases identified as one of the customer content segmentation strategies. This is helpful in identifying customer trends which shapes content, as Respondent 3 from Company B conveys:

By understanding what people's pain points are then you can start to explore, from a market perspective, what shifts, and trends are we starting to see... And from there you kind of start to build out a very holistic approach to what it is that you want to talk to through content, and across our varying content forms (p. 6).

Although five content segmentation approaches were identified, Respondent 3 from Company B indicated that often content segmentation is required in combination to effectively engage with certain target markets:

So when we look at larger organisations, those guys have a very different perspective of the type of content that they are looking to use because they want it to be very specific to the industry that they are in, as well as the persona or role that they play within an organisation in that specific industry vertical (p. 3).

Company A has recognised that social media content has to evolve to incorporate content that serves audience's interests over and above organisation-related content only. As a result, Company A creates a hybrid of content for the different social media platforms and audiences. These encompass company, product and service information, educational and best practices material, influential, as well as emotional content aligned to CSR, employee life and brand personality.

While content marketing is evident in each of the cases, Company B displays a more advanced application of this as their content plan incorporates integrated strategies across different customer segments. Respondent 3 from Company B explains:

So, the journey is a little bit more seamless for a small customer because they come onto a free trial and we have a very clear programmatic welcome cycle for where they are within that free trial, or have converted in that free trial, or have bought from that free trial. However, in the medium side things, and to the large side of things... So, someone [potential customer] engages with content, we serve them more content that they further engage, they download, preferably something that is gated so that we can capture their details (p. 8).

5.5.2 Platform suitability

Secondly, before serving multiple types of content, it is essential to understand platform purpose as this shape the type of content as well as what the audience interest is. Respondent 1 from Company A shares:

If you use hiking pics on Instagram and you use hiking pics on LinkedIn, there's going to be a huge difference in what the thought process is from the person who is reading or receiving the content… So, I think it's very important to kind of understand what the social medium attracts, who is looking at it and for what reason. And then decide what your content is going to be (p. 7).

While Company A differentiates content to suit different platforms and audiences, and where appropriate, tries to repurpose content to get as much engagement as possible. Respondent 1 from Company A outlines this:

Obviously from a marketing team perspective we try and repurpose as much content as possible to be able to reuse it again and again, but that being said, it really depends on what your outcome…is going to be. You can't use a certain piece of content on all channels because the result is not going to be the same…So, in a nutshell, it's going to be different content for different platforms (p. 7).

Company B enlists three core types of content, which include community driven pieces, company and product related information and event promotions. All content is shared across the three prioritised channels which include LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. However, nuances apply according to platform relevancy. Respondent 3 provides details:

On Facebook we have more of a community driven type way of posting, and we share a large portion of what we call our foundation... as well as sharing what we do from a PR and communication standpoint. However, that goes across all three platforms, from a LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook perspective.

The other thing that we prioritise is events, which forms a large portion of our strategy and through Facebook and Twitter you can create very nice engagement at events from both the prospect and customer event to the colleague event on those platforms (p. 9).

As detailed by both cases, different content is applicable for different social media platforms. Refer to **Table 7** (below) which presents a summary of social media content types across the selected social media platforms by organisation.

Table 7: Summary of social media content types across social media platforms

Social media platforms	Type of content	Company A	Company B
Website	Blogs	x	x
	Reports	x	x
	Resources	x	x
	Whitepapers	x	x
Lithium	Best practices	x	
	Education and training	x	
	Thought leadership	x	
	Product-related information	x	
	Webinars	x	
LinkedIn	Blogs	x	x
	Case studies	x	x
	Corporate social responsibility content	x	x
	Company updates	x	x
	Customer advocacy content	x	x
	E-books promotion		
	Employee advocacy content	x	x
	Event updates		
	Industry news and research		x
	In depth how to	x	x
	Images or infographics with stats		
	Media releases		
	Product launches and features	x	x
	Third party content		
	Thought leadership	x	x
	Video content		
Twitter	Company news	x	x
	Events promotion	x	x
	Embedded links to short form content (media release, blog posts)	x	x
	Embedded long form content (whitepaper, ebooks, original research)		x
	Third party content	x	

5.5.3 Regional nuances

Thirdly, legislative requirements and product functionality drives content differentiation across different regions. Respondent 5 describes the differences between global and local content and what the differentiating factors are:

> So, there's some content that will be applicable globally, however each market has its own nuances. For us legislation drives a lot of regional adaptation, also the functionality within our software, if we bring out a press release on something we're launching, that functionality may not be available somewhere else around the world. So definitely content, it can be global, but there's a lot of regional content (p. 7).

Additional content considerations that were revealed by Company A included message appeal and control. These aspects were not expressly disclosed by Company B.

Message appeal is another consideration in shaping the type of content to influence desired behaviours such as engagement, which too is dependent on the type of social media platform. According to Respondent 1, "…depending on which social media medium you use we are either going to be targeting an intellectual part of their [audience] life or an aspirational part of their life…" (p. 2). In this case Twitter and LinkedIn serve intellectual and Instagram is more aligned to aspirational content.

Company A uses social media channels to facilitate a combination of one-directional information as well as two-way conversations. In this context, the perception is that the messages are controlled by the organisation. As Respondent 2 states,

> The whole idea of content is that we can self-serve and we can build the messages that we want to build about a particular thing, and we've got complete control over that message, to a certain degree, of course (p. 12).

As demonstrated, content is not necessarily applicable across every platform. As is the case that not every platform is suitable for B2B organisations and their audiences. The next section discusses the suitable social media platforms in each case.

5.6   Social media platforms

In line with Aichner & Jacob's (2015) social media typology, both cases have adopted multiple types of social media platforms to achieve business outcomes across different departments.

The seven social media typologies (as detailed in section 2.4.3) that are being utilised to advertise, build brand awareness, enhance client relationships, recruit and drive sales include blogs, business networks, enterprise social networks, microblogs, photo sharing, social networking site and video sharing. **Table 8** (below) summarises the social media platforms that are being used by both cases.

Table 8: A summary of the social media platforms being used by both cases

Social media platform	Example	Company A	Company B
Blog	Website blog	x	x
Enterprise social networking site	Confluence	x	x
Business network	LinkedIn	x	x
Microblog	Twitter	x	x
Photo sharing platform	Instagram	x	x
Social networking site	Facebook		x
Video sharing platform	YouTube	x	x

Out of the seven platforms, six have been adopted by both cases and all seven have been adopted by Company B. The platform selection was informed in both cases by locations of the respective audience and if they (the organisations) can be relevant in their engagement with their audience. As Respondent 7 from Company B states: "So, it's exactly where can we find the most reach, where can we find the most qualified addressable audience for us. So, that's how we choose the different platforms" (p. 3). This point was also highlighted by Respondent 3:

> You serve content based on where people are engaging, and if people are engaging on those platforms, be present on those platforms, but be relevant. Because if you are relevant and present it will drive your business objectives 10-fold, because it's not worthwhile just being present. So, we play where we can be relevant when it comes to social (p. 10).

From an owned media perspective, part of the social media platform function is to drive traffic to the core publishing platform which comprises the organisations' website. Both cases strongly emphasise the necessity of blogs for knowledge sharing, information seeking and thought leadership. Respondent 3 explains how:

> Blogs are critical to part of my strategy and a huge portion of our KPI's linked to social is the volume of traffic that we actually drive through to our blogs. Because

by driving people through to our blogs we can start to create almost communities and position our organisation as a thought leader and a place where people go to gather information (p. 2).

Both cases have indicated that there is a preference for LinkedIn as a principal social media platform for communicating and engaging with different stakeholder groups across organisational functions. Respondent 2 from Company A considers LinkedIn an essential B2B platform that is used across departments to achieve recruitment, branding and communication, and lead generation:

We use LinkedIn again to show well a breadth of things really. So again, for our talent acquisition team we use it to show life and more of our policy… Our business marketing teams use it as a way to reach potential, to make leads sometimes or to talk about what is going on within the products…So it's used by the team as well, very, very strongly... LinkedIn's remit is quite huge really when you think about it (p. 4).

In addition to social media usage for marketing functions, human resources use social media for recruitment. To confirm LinkedIn's role within the human resources function, Respondent 6, Talent Acquisition Business Partner from Company A shared that LinkedIn is critical in vacancy posting and talent sourcing: "so with LinkedIn we use it to advertise our positions, we also use LinkedIn to head-hunt" (p. 6). Documented evidence from Company B, such as vacancy listings, suggests that LinkedIn is also utilised by human resources for recruitment.

From a sales perspective, Respondent 4, Head of Sales and Account Management from Company A also confirms that LinkedIn is used for multiple purposes which include networking, lead generation and talent sourcing:

The first one [the way that LinkedIn is used] is I try to connect to senior business leaders from other organisations where I think that we will have an opportunity to actually market our products. So, I do reach out to some people in my network just to spec out what they are using... I do scope out for business via social media. I also use it to try and connect with individuals that might want to work at our company as well… (p. 2)

Respondent 3 from Company B indicates that the business development team utilises a specific feature of LinkedIn to support their sales and customer relationship building endeavours:

> And the content tool that we utilise for colleagues also supports our LinkedIn sales navigator strategy for our sales team who are selling our larger product stack. Because then it enables them to drive their sales objectives through that as well (p. 14).

While both cases have indicated the relevance and necessity of creating communities, how this is achieved differs. Company A has recently implemented an external enterprise networking site to facilitate this, whereas Company B's preferred platform to do this is Facebook and their blog.

This year, Company A piloted Lithium Communities globally with a customer segment to create an external user community for communication, support and feedback. Marketing predominantly uses this as an information repository for customers, and as a content channel. Respondent 2 explains:

> …we have recently launched our user community, so while to all intents and purposes they use that as a social media platform, it's where they [customers] go to ask questions, it's where they [customers] go to post content… it's a way that we can directly engage with them, …we can give them information that they need, and they feel more comfortable perhaps to ask questions or very specific questions within that, as opposed to going perhaps on a more public channel…(p. 6).

However, it is also used to facilitate collaboration between customers and in so doing creating a community that shares knowledges.

Twitter, on the other hand is characterised by its limited number of characters within which to share content. As such, this platform has been used by both cases with similar content approaches such as using embedded thought leadership content to drive traffic to their website, share company updates and promote events. Respondent 5 from Company A elaborates:

> Both LinkedIn and Twitter, those channels are predominantly used to push out company employer brand messages. We would really use it for media interviews and content blogs to put out that type of information. Maybe some promotional events posts as well (p. 4).

Respondent 1 from Company A provides details on the type of content and frequency that is applicable in this platform:

> "It's quick news, it's in the palm of your hand all the time, and people don't really read, so to be able to have information in short, bite-size chunks and then be able to be redirected (p. 2)…it's really more about being newsworthy, because the number of tweets that come through, they just fly by…it's about having information that is relevant and that is updated several times a day (p. 5).

Instagram is considered as a platform for humanising the brand by showcasing brand personality content for both cases. Company A's Instagram content displays the culture of the organisation with reposted employee posts, corporate social responsibility initiatives, and participation in internal and external events. Respondent 2 from Company A explains: "Instagram we tend to use more to show the culture and what life's like at Company A" (p. 2).

In contrast, Company B's content solely focusses on global customer advocacy stories with minimal exposure to organisation life and employee-based stories.

Company B has indicated that Facebook is a significant channel in reaching a specific segment of their target market; whereas Company A considers this an irrelevant platform in reaching their entire market which is evident by their inactive status. Respondent 5 from Company A explains that: "The company made an actual decision not to go down the Facebook route" (p. 2).

YouTube is considered as a video platform for hosting and sharing video content. Company A uses YouTube for multiple purposes which includes company, product and service information, educational and training content, corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities and promotional video content. Respondent 5 clarifies:

> On that channel we will host a range of videos ranging from software categories, demo videos, how-to guides, training guides. We may do promotional videos that will show at events, so there's quite a broad range of assets that would be contained on that (p. 4).

Respondent 2 adds that YouTube should be utilised more within Company A as it is growing in importance and should become a more strategic channel in communicating with future audiences:

We need to be doing more video and that is part of our longer-term strategy is to build that channel and to build the use of YouTube. Because…it's definitely a medium that the younger generation coming through is more than comfortable using, that is their go-to kind of media of choice. So, we need to think about what we are doing there to capture a whole range of audiences and people that are coming up through the businesses now (p. 5).

In contrast Company B views local content production for this channel to be comparatively expensive. As a result, it does not consider this channel as key platform within the SMM strategy for South Africa. Respondent 3 from Company B explains: "We're not ready for that yet. The content is exponential, from a cost perspective, to create" (p. 13).

Audio-visual evidence reflects that both cases have a global profile; however, Company A incorporates content that expands across all the regions in which the organisation is based.

An additional channel that is utilised by Company A includes Medium, which is an external online publishing platform that hosts blog content. Medium is used for repurposing existing content as well as employee-generated blog content to reach a particular kind of audience for recruitment purposes. Respondent 2 from Company A describes how:

Our CTO uses Medium as a way to communicate and talk about tech and the more kind of gritty technology style pieces that might interest that particular, like software developer audience and that kind of thing (p. 2).

5.7   Social media usage

In the context of the two cases social media are used to predominantly propel marketing communication objectives across multiple platforms. The objectives include advertising, increasing brand awareness, shifting brand perception, influencing purchase decision-making that translates into sales. From a human resources perspective, specific social media platforms (such as LinkedIn) are fundamental for talent sourcing and recruitment. Further, business development considers network-based social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn as a component within their lead generation, network and relationship building arsenal.

5.7.1   Social media usage for marketing

Overall, social media are considered a critical channel across both cases to communicate and connect with their audiences. Respondent 2 from Company A provides an overview:

…it's about being in touch with our audiences a lot more closely…It's a lot more personal and I think it gives the opportunity for your users, your clients, for the wider communities if you like, to engage with you and to see what you are up to and to… it's the way that businesses are now communicating with their audiences, so that's kind of the main part of why we do it, to make more impressions, to get our content seen by more of the right people and to get our messages out there in a softer way that you can than with a media release or a media story (p. 3).

In addition, social media are used to achieve marketing communication objectives, Respondent 3 from Company B motivates how social media are used to achieve this:

The reason why we use social is because it's for two reasons. The one is that … it's still where our customers are. It's where people are engaging, it's where people are looking to either build communities themselves and networks, or where they look to source information, depending on the type of platforms that you are looking at…social just becomes a channel which supports us in driving consumption of the content and eliciting the types of responses we are aiming to gain (p. 4).

With regards to providing information, Respondent 2 from Company highlights how social media are used to provide richer sources of educational information:

So we might be communicating with them through a certain piece which could be around training or the tips or hints, or how they can use for example Product A in their day-to-day roles that will make the life easier for them…So we might do that through a particular piece with our training manager….

To discuss the results of social media usage from a marketing communication perspective in more detail, the customer engagement lens provided by Iankova et al. (2018) will be adopted. This view categorises organisation social media use into acquisition orientation and relationship orientation. Acquisition orientation activities seek to attract the attention of customers and to engage, which is considered the top of the sales funnel. Relationship Orientation activities seek to drive evaluation and conversion.

Acquisition orientation activities

Acquisition orientation social media activities that both organisations have implemented include advertising (paid media), and industry expert endorsement. The goal is to increase corporate and product brand awareness and promote the brand as a means of attracting new customers.

Paid for advertising is an underdeveloped and relatively small component of Company A's SMM strategy and is utilised when required to achieve a particular objective within a timeframe, explains Respondent 2 from Company A:

> We are able to perhaps run a campaign where we have paid for to get whatever it is that we are trying to talk about in that particular time. Or whatever our focus is, we can have that as paid for and then off the back of that we can do softer pieces around that particular product, around that particular initiative, around that particular launch (p. 12).

In contrast, paid for advertising is an established component of Company B's SMM strategy built around their key audiences, as elucidated by Respondent 3 from Company B:

> Our entire paid media strategy is built on an audience first approach. So, what that means is we've become very clear as to defining who those audiences are and we have started to create pools of audiences that we now serve media to. And how we have created those pools are utilising our owned platforms as well as standardised audiences that you gain from double click and how we overlay those two data bases for targeting (p. 5).

Furthermore, Company B carefully considers where their audience is within their engagement journey as this impacts the paid media strategy, explains Respondent 3 from Company B:

> And more and more we are starting to see that – so pay per click (PPC) paid media, that used to be your top conversion point. However, now that you can start to track attribution you can see where people are coming into your journey. And often social is the attribution of where leads are coming from as opposed to not necessarily where they're closing. So, one needs to be very careful on how they are developing their paid media strategies, not to just invest on where individuals

are converting, but more where they are entering the journey and how they are being driven through the journey in those platforms (p. 7).

During the interviews, industry expert endorsement was not explicitly referred to; however, in the documentation and audio-visual sources there was verification that during specific campaigns, industry experts were used to promote partnerships with Company A as well as supported product endorsement. Recently Company B has executed a "business experience program" according to Respondent 3 from Company B, with "people who are respected within the business and technology world, that are engaging and sharing with our values and brand content " (p. 4). The focus of the influencer-led advocacy program is to promote brand positioning, referrals, click-throughs and conversions.

Brand awareness is a key driver in attracting both prospective customers as well as retaining existing customers in attempt to improve market share. As such, both cases utilise paid for advertising (such as sponsored content on LinkedIn) to entice interest. Company B, however, has a more established process that separates paid for and organic social media strategies, where paid media supports the organic content strategy. In addition to brand awareness, shifting overall perceptions about the brand is an important outcome Company A seeks to accomplish, where LinkedIn is the chosen platform to realise this.

Relationship orientation activities

All the suggested Relationship Orientation social media activities described by Iankova at al. (2018) were indicated in the results by both cases. The activities included 1) direct messaging, 2) retention strategies, 3) interaction, 4) advocacy, and 5) engagement to drive more meaningful relationships with the brand.

Firstly, direct messaging was most commonly cited in both cases as a means of resolution and service delivery. Respondent 7 from Company B elaborates: "I mean we are a country of complainers, so actually I find a lot [more] of customer care stuff coming through from the South African market than the other markets" (p. 10).

Secondly, Company A's retention tactics (which encourages repeat visits by customers to Company A's online platforms) are nascent, with documentation indicating a recently planned re-marketing techniques (using Google Ads). Company B's retention activities are established through the use of cookies. Respondent 3 outlines the use of re-marketing techniques:

So, by using tools like double click you can see where people are in their journey and we can start to re-target them and be very clear on what that nurture program looks like... So social media for us can be used to drive top of funnel, middle of funnel and bottom of funnel content depending on where the user is in their journey and how close they are to converting (p. 6).

Thirdly, as previously identified in the results, meaningful value-add content is a significant focus of both cases.

Fourthly, both cases exhibit an established referral program where customers share their success stories, or actively recommend software to facilitate conversions. Respondent 3 from Company B explains: "So, advocacy and influences really drive performance from an impressions, referrals and click-through. So again, talking to what we look at from attract, engage and convert perspective" (p. 10).

Lastly, it is clear that both cases promoted engagement activities as there are multiple provisions for stakeholders to interact with members from both organisations. In addition, the social media content in both cases has utilised imagery, gifs and where applicable has been topical. This is evident through their established social media profiles across LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube, as well as Company A's consumer community.

Analysis of the engagement year on year across these channels for Company A has indicated that there has been a steady improvement, for example LinkedIn followers have reflected an increase of 12% year on year.

5.7.2 Social media usage for human resources

Outside of the marketing remit, human resources utilise specific social media platforms for recruitment purposes, information seeking and networking.

In addition to information seeking, documentation suggests that both organisations use social media in talent acquisition. Respondent 6 from Company A highlights specifically how social media plays a role in facilitating recruitment:

So with LinkedIn, for example, if we have a communications manager post that's open, I can literally advertise it for 24 hours, and as I advertise it, the minute I put it up, it also suggests 50 candidates that meet all my requirements…So it head-hunts for me (p. 6).

Another use of social media in the human resources domain is to connect, build and expand networks as part of the recruitment process. Respondent 6 from Company A comments on this:

> And I connect with a lot of them [prospective employees] on social media, not because maybe sometimes it's who I'm looking for currently, but you never know, it's important that we build our network as Company A... So, I think social media assists us in terms of stretching our networks" (p. 12).

5.7.3 Social media usage for sales

Specified social media platforms provide access to information in an effortless way as described by Respondent 4 from Company A:

> Instantaneously you have got access to so many people, and so much diversity. So, it's really great that you can just, you can search for anything, you could find anything, you can read about anything, you can almost make contact with absolutely anybody, and you get instantly updated of what's going on... So, it's a very fast-paced, very quick decision-making kind of platform with information at your fingertips (p. 7).

Similarly, to human resources use of social media, business development makes use of social media platforms to build networks and generate leads. Respondent 4 from Company A explains the role of social media in this context:

> I try to connect to senior business leaders from other organisations where I think that we will have an opportunity to actually market our products. So, I do reach out to some people in my network just to spec out what they are using, whether or not I can come and meet with them, just do a bit of introductory (p. 2).

5.8 Summary

A combination of internal and external stakeholder groups is used to create, share, promote and amplify SMM activities, where existing and potential customers are the predominant stakeholder holder group being targeted.

Key to the success of the SMM strategy is a well-defined content marketing strategy that executes segmented, personalised content addressing audience interests, aligned with the customer engagement journey and delivered on the relevant channel.

There are multiple social media channels; however, consideration for target market profile, relevancy and outcome is required to support intended outcomes.

From a marketing perspective, social media are used to achieve marketing communication objectives including advertising, increasing brand awareness, providing a rich source of information (including corporate brand, product information, educational and training resources) and as a support function to sales (lead generation and nurture) and human resources (recruitment).

Human resources adopt a narrower use of social media through a targeted channel approach for talent acquisition purposes.

Similarly, to human resources, business development has a narrow focus by utilising social media primarily to achieve sales driven goals such as lead generation and networking.

The social media strategy in both organisations incorporate a multi-channel, multipurpose directive to support achieving the numerous objectives across organisational functions.

The results suggested that SMM consists of linked components such as understanding stakeholders, designing the content accordingly which in turn informs the platform selection to achieve desired outcomes. **Table 9** (below) provides a summary of the SMM components including stakeholders, content, platform selection and usage.

Table 9: Overview of external social media stakeholders, channels, content and usage

Social media platforms	Blog	Enterprise social network	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	Twitter	YouTube
Company A							
Profile description	Active and frequent blog posts available on the organisation website.	External enterprise social network called Lithium is utilised.	Inactive since 2018.	Global profile with over 500 followers, 280 posts and following 33 profiles.	Global profile, with over 25, 000 followers	Regional profiles. The South African profile has over 1200 followers and is following 499 profiles.	Global profile with over 340 subscribers. No featured channels.
Stakeholders	Broad internal and external target groups.	Existing customers and employees		Broad internal and external target groups.	Broad internal and external target groups.	Broad internal and external target groups.	Potential and existing customers
Content	The blog content includes ungated material such as trends, thought leadership, company information and reports.	Information and educational resources		Photo sharing platform including imagery of existing employees, events, and corporate social responsibility	Multimedia content including client advocacy, corporate social responsibility, employee advocacy, event promotion, recruitment, thought leadership, and vacancy listings	Multimedia content covering event promotion, market information, product information, thought leadership and recruitment.	Video content on company news, corporate social responsibility, customer advocacy case studies and testimonials, and product related information.
Usage	Build awareness	Enable collaboration, stimulate knowledge sharing, and building communities		To share brand personality, humanise the brand and employer brand promotion.	Used for recruitment, company and product information sharing, branding and lead generation.	Information sharing and driving traffic to owned media (such as the website).	Predominantly solution and product-based information sharing, and customer stories

Social media platforms	Blog	Enterprise social network	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	Twitter	YouTube
Company B							
Profile description	Active and frequent blog posts available on the organisation website.	Not available.	Local profile with over 830, 199 followers.	Global profile with over 6, 000 followers, 411 posts and following over 2300 profiles.	Global profile, with over 25, 000 followers.	Global and regional profiles. The South African profile has over 14, 000 followers and is following 500 profiles.	Global profile, with over 6 thousand subscribers. Featured channels include regional pages and functional pages such as customer support.
Stakeholders	Broad internal and external target groups.		Broad internal and external target groups.	Potential and existing customers.	Broad internal and external target groups.	Broad internal and external target groups.	Potential and existing customers.
Content	The blog content includes a combination of gated and ungated material. Gated includes white papers and research. The ungated content comprises trends, thought leadership and company information.	Not available.	Multimedia content primarily focused on education, event promotion and thought leadership.	Photo sharing platform including imagery of existing clients sharing their stories.	Multimedia regional content including client advocacy (case studies and testimonials), corporate social responsibility, employee advocacy, event promotion, recruitment, thought leadership, and vacancy listings	Multimedia content covering event promotion, thought leadership and trends and insights.	Predominantly UK focussed video content on the global profile includes company news, corporate social responsibility, insights and trends, customer advocacy case studies and testimonials, and thought leadership.
Usage	Build awareness, facilitate evaluation and conversion		Company information, brand awareness, drive traffic.	Sharing testimonials.	Lead generation and information sharing.	Information sharing, employer brand, event promotion.	Company information, educational resources, customer stories

6 Chapter Six: Discussion of Results

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Five presented the details of the research conducted across two cases with the aim of understanding social media usage in B2B organisations through the lens of stakeholder theory.

The findings of this study have been considered through the lens of stakeholder theory as research has indicated that there are multiple users of social media (Andersson & Wikström, 2017; Huotari et al., 2015; Lashgari et al., 2018), which could enhance the understanding of social media use in B2B organisations across organisation functions.

This chapter returns to the literature in Chapter Two, to relate the findings reported above to past studies. The sections described below relate to the four research questions posed that seek to understand social media stakeholders; the nature of social media content; applicable social media platforms; and the purpose of social media in achieving business outcomes.

6.2 Research question one

Which stakeholders are B2B organisations using and targeting and why?

This question was posed in order to understand the variety of stakeholders required to generate social media content, amplify the content reach and are targeted by B2B organisations to achieve business outcomes.

Internal and external stakeholder categories were recognised in the results as both contributors and consumers of social media and its content. With regards to internal users, both cases highlighted that social media are used by corporate stakeholders (across different departments) on behalf of the organisation and employees for personal use. A significant emphasis was placed on employees (across all levels, including management) as advocates in driving reach across their networks. As such, employees were identified essential social media stakeholders in assisting the organisation achieve its business outcomes.

Furthermore, the results displayed that different organisation functions (marketing, human resources and sales) engage with social media for internal and external purposes such as brand awareness, recruitment and sales. These will be expanded

on in subsequent sections. This suggested that multiple interactions were being conducted across different stakeholder categories.

External stakeholders encompassed an array of users defined by the cases as existing and potential customers, existing and potential employees, other business and media. These were further categorised into primary and secondary users. Both cases demonstrated that a range of external stakeholders was being used as well as targeted.

Literature defined social media users into two categories based on content generation, which were internal and external (Huotari et al., 2015). The results support the classification of internal users, which were corporate and employees. With regard to the classification of external users by Huotari et al. (2015), the results supported this definition which considered four external categories: corporate user (i.e. other organisations), customer user (i.e. existing and potential), professional users (media, and civilian users (wider community). Therefore, the results indicated that organisations utilise both internal and external stakeholders to facilitate desired business outcomes, which is aligned with existing literature (Andersson & Wikström, 2017).

Primary external stakeholders were denoted by both organisations as existing and potential customers, followed by consumer advocates; these users were considered critical to the organisation. Another significant external stakeholder raised by both cases included industry experts. Company A, however, also considered potential employees as a primary stakeholder that social media are used to target.

Both cases identified other businesses and media as secondary stakeholders, although Company A introduced tertiary institutions (private and public) as an additional user group.

Stakeholders were further categorised based on level of transactions with and dependency with the organisation (Clarkson, 1995). Clarkson (1995) posited that primary stakeholders (such as employees, customers, suppliers and government agencies) are indispensable to the going concern of the organisation. Secondary stakeholders (such as media and special interest groups), on the other hand, are not considered essential to the survival of the organisation. In the context of this study, the cases partially support the literature because internal and external stakeholders are prioritised according to their relevance in assisting the organisation in achieving

business outcomes. Both cases identified employees, existing and potential customers, followed by customer advocates and industry experts as priority stakeholders. Whereas the literature considers shareholders, investors, suppliers and government agencies as additional primary stakeholders. This suggests that stakeholder prioritisation in the context of social media is based on communication objectives, revenue drivers, and access to networks which these aforementioned stakeholders provide.

Overall, the findings indicate that SMM strategies in B2B context has adopted a broad view concerning the use of different stakeholders across business functions. The role of the stakeholder is important, as this provides insight into the level of influence that the user has, which in turn informed stakeholder prioritisation. With an audience-first approach, where the organisation had an understanding of their stakeholders, they were able to determine the relevant content type and subsequently suitable platforms.

6.3   Research question two

Why are organisations using different types of content?

In the SMM landscape where organisations are interacting with multiple stakeholders, digital content is the vehicle which fosters brand awareness, supports customer relationship management, facilitates engagement, promotes sales leads, and builds trust and loyalty (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019; Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Lee et al., 2018). Therefore, this question was posed in order to understand social media content in a B2B environment, content diversity which includes the range of content developed, the platform driven nuances, and for what purpose.

Content was considered by both cases as an integral component of SMM, where social media and content marketing are looked at collectively.

A key theme that emerged from both cases was the necessity for different types of content because the content consumer is not homogenous, social media platforms have different characteristics and there are regional distinctions. As such the following three constructs were identified as influential in content differentiation: 1) customer segmentation, 2) platform applicability and 3) regional nuances.

6.3.1 Customer segmentation

Firstly, the five types of segmentation that were identified within the cases included product or service, persona, vertical, customer journey and pain points.

The findings suggested that in a B2B context where an array of products or services are offered, existing and potential consumers considered the solutions as complex irrespective of the lived experience. As a result, a greater need for education and technical information was identified. Therefore, product or service segmentation concentrated on providing content that facilitated deeper product understanding where the software solutions involved these aforementioned complexities. In addition, product and service segmentation ensured that there was sufficient one-directional content being provided to satisfy information seeking purposes on features, functionality and specifications.

Content segmentation based on persona was referred to as content that addressed attitudes and behaviours within a customer role. The reason for this type of segmentation is the characteristics of B2B decision-making cycle that often encompasses multiple decision makers (across different roles) in the decision-making process. Both cases adopt this segmentation tactic as part of their content differentiation strategy.

Within both cases, the organisations are serving multiple market segments within the industry that they operate in. As a result, vertical segmentation is required, where the content is specific in addressing the identified market segment needs. The findings suggested that this was to improve resonance and credibility of the content because it communicated signals such as industry knowledge, market leadership, and addressed specific use cases. Vertical content segmentation was considered lightly by Company B as the starting point of account-based marketing, which delivers personalised content at the conversion stage of the customer journey.

The results indicated that both cases have adopted customer journey content segmentation, although the degree to which the content is developed to address the different stages within the purchasing cycle is different. Both cases have developed top of the funnel content that promotes awareness in order to drive traffic. The type of content developed included blogs, thought leadership, best practices, insights and educational content. Content B demonstrated additional content types included pay per click, how-to articles as well as free resources (such as webinars). To address

the middle of the funnel aimed at lead generation, both cases exhibited customer and influencer success stories, case studies, and product content including features and specifications and video content. In addition, Company B developed whitepapers (which are in-depth problem-solving guides). The bottom of the funnel content is geared to nurture leads into conversion. Company B has automated trial access for prospects, whereas Company A lead nurture requires direct engagement.

Company A has only recently implemented a global content campaign, where content was created to address all stages of the customer journey including remarketing techniques. In South Africa, Company A's segmentation strategy remained underdeveloped as content in this region does not engage with customers throughout the entire journey, nor is sales and marketing processes holistically aligned. Secondly, analysis of where content consumers are disengaging was not visible across the sources of evidence.

Content designed around addressing identified customer pain points informed both cases' content differentiation as part of the positioning strategy. The results indicated that this in part informed product development in addition to content marketing.

Based on the results, a combination of all five segmentation categories were adopted in an attempt to engage with different stakeholder profiles and often in a specific sequence. The order constituted firstly segmenting by persona, followed by pain points and then either product / service or vertical. Once the content was developed in alignment with the aforementioned classifications, content would be served depending on where the content consumer was in the customer journey.

Literature indicated that content is an integral component of social media as the conduit for engagement and as a support mechanism in achieving business outcomes (Holliman & Rowley, 2014, 2014; Lee et al., 2018). More specifically, Holliman & Rowley (2014) noted the relationship between content and buying process. Järvinen & Taiminen (2016) related the role of digital content marketing in supporting the customer journey through the B2B sales cycle. Therefore, the results of this study pertaining to the role that content marketing plays in SMM is aligned to existing research. Furthermore, the findings have demonstrated that content segmentation is valuable in creating personalised content in the effort to increase engagement and improve performance. This finding aligns with Hollebeek & Macky's (2019) research that identified content marketing as a useful tool for supporting

inbound marketing tactics. Both cases have strongly identified that content differentiation is critical in driving increased engagement; however, an aspect that emerged in this study that has not received much attention in digital content marketing literature is the relevant types of content that are applicable within each stage of the sales funnel (top, middle and bottom). Järvinen & Taiminen (2016), recommended this area of focus in their study on B2B content marketing. In Company B, content marketing is closely aligned to the sales funnel and as a result content has been developed accordingly. In contrast, aspects of Company A's content marketing strategy is still in its infancy. These findings potentially suggest that alignment of sales and marketing objectives is necessary in order to produce the relevant content.

Although there is recognition by authors Hollebeek & Macky (2019) of the important role digital content marketing plays in fostering engagement, overall limited research has been conducted in the digital content marketing domain.

The type and nature of the content to be shared with specified stakeholders is referred to by Lashgari et al. (2018) as content diversity. In their study, content diversity was projected as a key factor that influenced platform selection. The results from both organisations indicated that different content is used to address distinct needs which results in different social media channels.

6.3.2 Platform suitability

Platform suitability in the context of social media content differentiation is described by the cases as understanding the purpose of the platform to ensure that the content delivered on the platform resonates with the associated audience. For example, thought leadership content is associated with LinkedIn, whereas Twitter is best suited for status updates, company news and media sharing.

The results from both cases suggest that content is selected based on platform suitability, although Company A also indicated that to try gain as much engagement as possible, content is often repackaged and repurposed across channels. Where there are definite boundaries, where certain content types would not resonate, these are observed.

The findings of this study concur with the literature concerning content differentiation according to platform suitability, as illustrated by Andersson & Wikström (2017) and Swani, Brown, & Milne (2014) in their descriptions of the different forms of content applicable across social media platforms.

6.3.3   Regional nuances

Both cases indicated that the universal macro message would be shared across all the regions of operation, although each case identified separate factors that shaped region-specific content or localisation. Company A indicated that legislative requirements, product features and functionality were factors that influenced localisation of content. Company B on the other hand commented that region specific events (such as tax increases) influenced content localisation. There appears to be limited literature that has explored this.

Two additional social media content considerations were raised by Company A which included control and message appeal.

Message appeal was demonstrated by Company A as another influencing factor in differentiating content between social media platforms. This was supported by Chang, Yu, & Lu (2015) who suggested that persuasive message directly impacts engagement.

The results determined that there is a certain degree of control over the content that is served across platforms. Literature confirms that where there is one-directional flow, more control is exercised by the organisation; however, where there are two-way conversations, the content messaging is uncontrollable. In addition, authors, Huotari et al. (2015) and Andersson & Wikström (2017) observed that social media users may have a degree of influence over the content and how this is perceived. Therefore, organisations should consider all stakeholders when designing content marketing strategies.

Overall, the findings highlighted that content marketing and SMM were interconnected, where content is what drove engagement. To increase engagement, content was personalised through a content differentiation process. This entailed a combination of five different customer segmentation techniques, with a strong emphasis on aligning content to the sales funnel. Differences were observed between the cases in their content marketing practices. Andersson & Wikström (2017) explained that where differentiated content is developed and targeted it is an indicator of social media maturity. Therefore, this suggested that both cases have a level of social media experience. However, Company B's social media maturity level appeared more advanced as indicated by the automation of the bottom of the funnel content as well as their alignment to sales. The observed differences in content

marketing strategy maturity could potentially be explained by the different marketing team structure that separates specialist roles with the right capabilities.

Moreover, platform suitability and regional nuances were indicated by both cases as factors that contributed towards content differentiation. Where the two cases did not align was centred around message appeal and control. Literature supported these properties of content marketing (Andersson & Wikström, 2017; Chang, Yu & Lu, 2015).

Organisations are using differentiated content to target different stakeholders in effort to optimise engagement and amplify reach.

6.4 Research question three

Which social media platforms are B2B organisations using and how are they being used?

Extant literature has demonstrated that factors such as target audience, content type and nature contribute towards determining the appropriate social media platform selection (Lashgari et al., 2018). Therefore, the purpose of this research question was to identify which social media platforms were chosen and for what purpose.

The classification of social media platforms based on presence / media richness and self-preservation / self-disclosure dimensions delineated six types of platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Since then, social media typology has evolved to thirteen platforms (Aichner & Jacob, 2015). To limit the scope of this study, seven social media platforms were selected based on two criteria: number of active users and relevancy in South Africa.

In line with the view of Aichner & Jacob (2015) regarding social media typology, the seven social media platforms that this study was predicated on included website blog, Lithium Communities, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.

The selection of applicable social media platforms was informed by stakeholders, content type and the ability to drive business goals. The results demonstrated an overlap in six out of the seven social media platforms. These were identified as blogs, business networks (LinkedIn), enterprise business networks (Lithium), microblogs (Twitter), photo sharing (Instagram) and video sharing (YouTube) channels. Social networking site (Facebook) was only adopted by Company B because their target

market is present on that particular platform. This finding illustrated that social media selection is in part based on where the target stakeholder resides.

The results align with literature regarding the use of blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube (Bernard, 2016; Leek, Canning, & Houghton, 2016). More specifically that LinkedIn is a preferred platform as identified by Iankova et al. (2018). The results regarding the use of Instagram do not wholly correlate with the view of Andersson & Wikström (2017), which identified Instagram as an unsuitable platform due to the risk of posting potentially misleading content. This potentially suggests that the organisations' have the relevant content skill set within their social media and marketing team.

The findings revealed that part of the social media platform function is to drive traffic to owned media which comprise blog posts and other long form content housed on the organisations' websites such as how-to guides and white papers. Platforms such as LinkedIn, and Twitter were both highlighted as channels to embed content that promotes traffic to owned media channels. Literature supports the finding that content is embedded in Twitter because of its restricted nature (Leek et al., 2016). However, there appears to be limited research that identifies LinkedIn as a platform that is actively used to promote content consumers to owned media. This potentially indicates that the organisations are using multiple social media channels to drive the content consumer through a content journey that emanates from the organisations' website.

LinkedIn offers an extensive remit across marketing, human resources and sales. The results demonstrated that this platform supported multiple forms of content in addition to offering other technology-enabled tools that optimised content strategies, facilitated prospecting and enabled recruitment. As a result, this platform is deemed a primary platform for both cases.

The results recognised that different platforms exhibited distinctive characteristics, as such each platform supported specific content forms. As a result, each audience has an expectation of the type of content that will be shared on the platform. Therefore, it is necessary to adhere to the platform personality to remain relevant and improve engagement performance. Company A illustrated how Instagram content includes images, photos and stories, which would not necessarily resonate on LinkedIn, which is primarily professionally focussed content.

Despite the recognition that each social platform had its own distinctive characteristics and purpose, both cases shared existing content across multiple channels in attempt to get as much engagement as possible. What was evident, however, is that the content was not cross-posted simultaneously but it was repurposed to suit the platform. This suggests that multiple platforms are used to deliver content in attempt to increase reach and engagement.

6.5   Research question four

Why are B2B organisations using social media?

The results from both cases indicated that social media are used to propel marketing communication, human resources and sales objectives. The marketing communication objectives included advertising, increasing brand awareness, shifting brand perception, influencing purchase decision-making that translates into sales. From a human resources perspective, specific social media platforms (such as LinkedIn) were recognised for talent sourcing and recruitment. Further, business development considered network-based social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn as a component within their lead generation, network and relationship building arsenal.

6.5.1   Social media usage for marketing

Social media usage results for marketing communication objectives were discussed through a customer engagement lens theorised by Iankova et al. (2018) which categorised social media use into acquisition orientation activities and relationship orientation activities.

Acquisition Orientation

Iankova et al. (2018) refers to acquisition orientation as "the activities engaged in by firms to identify and interact with prospective customers, and, specifically, where the aim is to engage them in their first transactions with the firm" (p. 3). Tactics such as paid advertising, influencer programs and viral content creation are utilised to achieve this (Iankova et al., 2018). In alignment with literature, the results showed that both paid for advertising (for example through Google Adwords or Double Click) and expert endorsement were adopted as methods of increasing corporate and product brand awareness, and importantly customer acquisition.

An interesting result emanated from Company B that contradicted literature, which highlighted that paid media is a method used to stimulate interest and interaction with prospective customers during the acquisition orientation stage (Iankova et al., 2018). The result determined that paid media could be utilised during both acquisition orientation and relationship orientation stages to promote brand awareness, evaluation, conversion and post purchase. This potentially suggests that B2B organisations focuses on both acquiring prospects as well as retaining existing customers.

Relationship Orientation

Relationship orientation was described by Iankova et al. (2018) as "where we consider any activity designed to stimulate the initial transaction between buyer and seller 'Acquisition Orientated'; any interaction beyond this we categorised as 'Relationship Oriented'" (p. 4). The results from both cases supported the literature (Iankova et al., 2018) which detailed the following activities: 1) direct messaging, remarketing techniques, meaningful content that encourages connection, active advocacy promotion and engagement activities across platforms. These findings of this study potentially suggest that B2B social media is usage is focused on customer relationship management, which is aligned to research conducted by Guesalaga (2016) and Lacoste (2016). However, the results contradicted Iankova et al. (2018) as their study indicated that less importance was ascribed to relationship management measures.

The findings indicated a diverse range of uses where social media enables, facilitates and supports marketing functions across a wide range of different stakeholders. acquisition orientation and relationship orientation is focused mainly on prospects, whereas the findings of the current study also indicated that social media are used to interact with other primary stakeholders such as existing customers and existing and potential employees.

Across both cases the findings highlighted how social media are used to provide a rich source of information across products, services, and solutions for existing customers. Most notable was the use of blogs, white papers and video content to provide either deeper information or educational content, which is aligned to previous research (Andersson & Wikström, 2017). In the case of Company A, social media was also used to influence perceptions.

6.5.2   Social media usage for human resources

The results have identified that both cases used social media for talent acquisition including building networks, information seeking and talent sourcing, which is in line with the findings of Andersson & Wikström (2017).

It was observed how LinkedIn was the main platform used to search across professional networks and relationships, whereas personal contacts were used on Facebook. Company A indicated that LinkedIn provided targeting features according to different criteria, which accelerated the head-hunting process. These findings concur with research that social media are used in the recruitment process (Sivertzen et al., 2013; Girard et al., 2014; Koch et al., 2018).

6.5.3   Social media usage for business development

Through the cases, the author found that from a business development perspective, social media are used as a tool for information seeking, building and expanding networks, and prospecting. In particular. LinkedIn and Facebook were identified as the social media platforms to achieve this. These results concurred with previous research where social media supported business development in job-related tasks (Agnihotri et al., 2016; Agnihotri et al., 2012; Andersson & Wikström, 2017; Itani et al., 2017).

Compared to Company A, results for Company B suggested more advanced social media use within their sales process as evidenced by their use of Sales Navigator. These findings potentially indicated a more developed organisational social media competence, coupled with a less complicated buying process as this organisation displayed a greater ranger of off-the-shelf products.

The main findings in this section showed that organisations use social media to facilitate or achieve a broad spectrum of objectives across a range of stakeholders, for marketing, human resources and business development organisation functions. This possibly reinforces the value that social media provides as a low cost, accessible channel to multiple stakeholders.

6.6   Summary of discussion

The findings of this research suggest that SMM in B2B organisations required several elements in order to achieve the intended organisational outcomes.

The process followed is that firstly internal as well as external stakeholders are required to be identified and targeted, as this is a critical component in shaping the content.

Once the social media audience is identified, the second step incorporates content differentiation based on selected segmentation approaches to optimise the interaction with the targeted audience. Additional segmentation strategies that should be considered when developing content included platform characteristics (suitability) and regional nuances. Given the level of importance placed on social media content as a critical component in driving engagement and influencing outcomes, sufficiently experienced resources should be employed to establish and execute a sophisticated content marketing strategy.

Thirdly, both social media stakeholders and content informed the relevant social media platform selection as each platform exhibited distinguishing characteristics. Despite the distinctive platform characteristics, content was repurposed to encourage maximum reach.

Lastly, the alignment of stakeholder, content and platform was deemed essential in optimising multiple outcomes. The outcomes were recognised as advertising, brand awareness, communication, customer relationship management, recruitment, and sales.

Overall, it is evident that a multipurpose, multiplatform strategy was adopted within both cases to achieve outcomes across organisational functions.
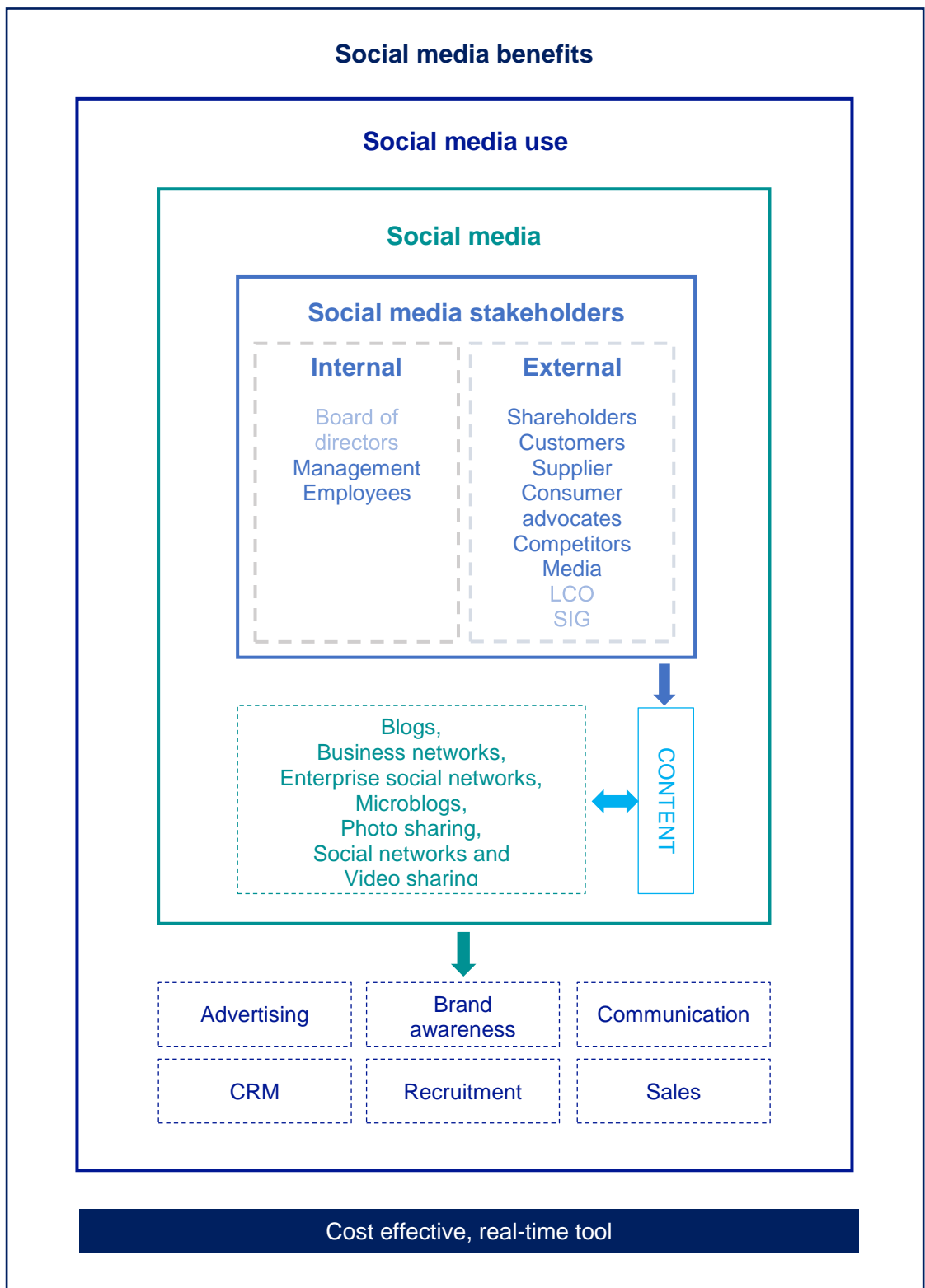
7 Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Review of research

As social media become increasingly prevalent with widespread adoption within B2C organisations, there has been an increase in social media interest within a B2B context. However, barriers to social media adoption within B2B organisations despite the value that social media provide. Therefore, this research is useful in terms of providing understanding of social media usage behaviour, the content and platform selection across social media stakeholders, in an attempt to reinforce the value that social media provide specifically with regards to achieving business outcomes.

7.2 Managerial implications

This research provided insights into how B2B organisations target different social media stakeholders, devise distinctive content for the different audiences, and serve the content across suitable channels in order to achieve business outcomes. These elements also contributed towards understanding how and why social media are used within B2B organisations.

Upon consideration of the research conducted and the results from the respondents, the researcher proposes that social media practitioners seeking to implement social media marketing strategies within B2B organisations should consider key elements as depicted in the conceptual model below (refer to **Figure 5**). The conceptual model will be explained in detail below.

Social media benefits

Social media use

Social media

Social media stakeholders

Internal

Board of directors
Management
Employees

External

Shareholders
Customers
Supplier
Consumer advocates
Competitors
Media
LCO
SIG

Blogs,
Business networks,
Enterprise social networks,
Microblogs,
Photo sharing,
Social networks and
Video sharing

CONTENT

Advertising

Brand awareness

Communication

CRM

Recruitment

Sales

Cost effective, real-time tool

Figure 5: Conceptual model of SMM

7.2.1 Social media stakeholders

The role of stakeholder is important within the social media domain as research has demonstrated that multiple stakeholders are targeted and engaged across organisational departments (Aichner & Jacob, 2015; Andersson & Wikström, 2017).

Adopting a broad view of social media stakeholders encompassed both an internal and external categorisation, where interactions transpire between these different categories either as creators or as consumers of social media content (Huotari, Ulkuniemi, Saraniemi, & Mäläskä, 2015). Huotari et al. (2015) further classifies internal and external social media users into sub-groups. Internal users comprise corporate and employee users (Huotari et al., 2015). External users comprise corporate, customer, professional and civilian users (Huotari et al., 2015). This form of segmentation enables organisations to classify which stakeholders to prioritise, as advocated by Clarkson (1995), for optimisation purposes.

The key findings of this study indicated that within B2B organisations primary social media stakeholders include existing and potential customers, existing and potential employees, as well as industry experts. The implication of this is twofold.

Firstly, B2B organisations seeking to build a social media strategy should consider identifying who their primary stakeholders are in order to align content appropriately. The findings emphasize that social media are not only used to target customers but are also used for employees.

Secondly, identifying the relevant stakeholders informs the content to ensure that it resonates with the content consumer. Social media content is a significant element in social media marketing as it is what influences and drives the intended outcomes (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016; Wang, Malthouse, Calder, & Uzunoglu, 2019).

7.2.2 Social media content

Content marketing is a critical component of social media marketing largely because it is considered as the driving force behind achieving social media marketing outcomes (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). Järvinen & Taiminen (2016) further identified the need to segment content according to different customer segments in order for the content to resonate and be more influential in

achieving its intended outcome. This argument is supported by authors Lee, Hosanagar, & Nair (2018), who additionally highlighted the use of message appeal.

One of the main findings of this study is that content marketing is utilised across social media platforms and that content differentiation is critical to promote engagement and encourage outcomes. There are multiple content differentiation approaches; however the five that were highlighted in this research include product or service, persona, vertical, customer journey and pain points. Furthermore, often multiple segmentation approaches are utilised simultaneously to ensure that the content is effectively personalised to a specific audience. The integration of content was mostly emphasised within the sales funnel. Content was the key instrument that addressed a primary stakeholder segment (customers) throughout the customer journey (to increase brand awareness, assist with evaluation and influence conversion).

This is relevant for social media practitioners operating in a B2B environment as it highlights the necessity of embedding differentiated content within the social media marketing strategy across top, middle and bottom of the funnel.

In addition, the results revealed two other sources of content differentiation, which included platform suitability and regional nuances. Platform suitability refers to the process of developing content that is aligned to the social media platform to drive engagement. Regional nuances arise from the fact that content is differentiated according to legislative and product differences across regions.

The practical implication is that content should be created with the social media platform characteristics in mind, as well as applicability within the market that is being addressed.

7.2.3   Social media platforms

Many types of social media platforms have emerged, each presenting distinctive characteristics with specific purposes. These different platforms form the distribution channel to serve content to different stakeholders. There have been many classifications describing the types of social media based on different factors. Aichner & Jacob (2015) detailed thirteen types, of which not all are relevant for B2B organisations. Literature indicated that the most frequently utilised platforms included

Blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube (Bernard, 2016; Leek, Canning, & Houghton, 2016).

The results of this study, however, indicate that the following platforms are being used by B2B organisations, including blogs, LinkedIn, Lithium, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. The results shows how blogs form the central platform that content is driven through. LinkedIn can be used by organisations across several departments to achieve multiple outcomes including advertising, communication, recruitment and sales. In particular LinkedIn is applicable in developing relationships through professional networks to drive the corporate brand. LinkedIn is also a suitable platform to share relevant content (such as thought leadership articles) to position an organisation as an authority within its industry, in an effort to influence decision-making. From a human resources perspective LinkedIn is relevant in talent sourcing and recruiting. Lastly, from a sales perspective, LinkedIn enables sales leads generation and prospecting. Due to its multiple features and applicability across departments, LinkedIn was identified as the preferred social media platform. Lithium uses content to create communities, and facilitate knowledge sharing. Twitter is useful to drive information-seeking through embedding content, promoting events and providing status updates. Instagram is used to connect with the brand personality (including culture of the organisation) and create connection through sharing customer success stories. Facebook is utilised to communicate events, share community-based content, and as an informal relationship building platform. Although YouTube is viewed as a video repository, it offers multiple sources of knowledge from product or service related information, educational and employer brand content.

The implications for social media managers is that each platform has a specific role to play within the social media strategy. As a result, multi-use strategies across multiple platforms should be implemented.

7.2.4 Social media usage

Go & You (2016) advise that different social media are useful in achieving different outcomes. The different purposes that social media are used encompass advertising, build brand awareness, communication, customer relationship management, recruitment and assisting sales (Brennan & Croft, 2012; Holliman & Rowley, 2014;

Michaelidou et al., 2011; Karjaluoto et al., 2015; Swani et al., 2017; Agnihotri et al., 2016; Guesalaga, 2016; Lacoste, 2016; Andersson & Wikström, 2017).

The findings of the current study recognised that social media are used across three organisational functions (marketing, human resources and sales) that address three primary stakeholder segments (customers, employees and advocates).

More specifically, the findings for marketing communication objectives targeted at customers encompass two categories: acquisition and relational.

Acquisition activities included advertising (paid media), increasing brand awareness, shifting brand perception, and influencing purchase decision-making that translates into sales. The results showed that this is achieved through the following content tactics:

1. Increase brand awareness through advertising, blogs, industry expert endorsement (influencer advocacy), white papers, and educational videos;
2. Facilitate evaluation through case studies, product features and specifications, educational resources, and targeted email campaigns;
3. Prompt conversion through product demonstrations (video content), and case studies.

Relationship management on social media is concerned with post purchase content activities such as responsive customer service support, remarketing tools to encourage return visits, relationship reminder content, sharing customer success stories as a source of recommendation, and using employees to interact with stakeholders.

The implication for social media managers is that both acquisition and relationship-based activities are equally important in engaging, influencing and retaining customers.

From a human resources perspective, findings and literature were aligned in that specific social media platforms (such as LinkedIn) were recognised for talent sourcing and recruitment (Madia, 2011; Sivertzen, et al., 2013; Koch et al., 2018).

With regards to business development, literature and the findings of this study showed that social media (such as LinkedIn and Facebook) support lead generation,

and network and relationship building (Agnihotri et al., 2016; Agnihotri, et al., 2012; Andersson & Wikström, 2017; Itani et al., 2017)

The implication for B2B organisational social media use is that social media usage spans different departments within the organisation. As such, a multipurpose, multiplatform strategy should be adopted to achieve outcomes across organisational functions.

7.2.5 Recommendations

1. A broad view of social media stakeholders should be adopted to optimise the value of social media.
2. To create a cohesive social media strategy that is aligned with content marketing social media managers should cross-post across platforms to increase engagement. In order to do this successfully, the content should be repurposed in alignment with the characteristics of the specific social media platforms.
3. To be relevant and resonate, social media platform selection should be informed by audience and content.
4. B2B organisations should identify where social media can support different departments in achieving their business outcomes.

7.3 Research limitations

Qualitative research is subjective in nature, where a number of biases may affect the study outcomes (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). As a result of the nature of this study, results may not be generalisable in other contexts (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). More specifically, case study research itself has attracted concerns relating to research methodological rigour, and applicability to generalise (Yin, 2018). Therefore, methodological factors and biases (respondent and researcher) may have restricted the study, as detailed below:

- Due to time and resource limitations, only two cases were investigated; which may have an impact on the ability to generalise the outcomes as the case study may be unrepresentative. This weakness is further exacerbated by the limited number of interviews conducted.

- The researcher was inexperienced in conducting qualitative interviews, which may have affected the responses.

- Inherent challenges with conducting interviews is the risk of respondent as well as researcher biases (Creswell, 2014).

  Participants might not respond truthfully due to wanting to be perceived positively. The interviewer might not accurately interpret the intended meaning of the participants responses.

  The researcher was employed at one of the organisations (Company A) at the time of the interviews. As such the relationship between the researcher and some of the respondents may have resulted in bias in the research findings. To mitigate this potential concern, the researcher assured anonymity during the interview as well as through the research consent form.

7.4   Areas of future research

This research has endeavoured to contribute towards the B2B social media marketing domain, particularly around social media usage through the lens of different stakeholders. Clear recommendations have been identified for social media practitioners in the B2B environment towards achieving business outcomes through the use of social media elements. However, this research is not exhaustive, as such certain areas of further research remain. The recommendations for future research are detailed below.

The current research was a qualitative study conducted across two cases that operated in similar contexts as technology multinationals. It would therefore be useful to conduct research on social media usage across B2B organisations that operate in different industries to illuminate if there are any differences in social media usage. Secondly, given the nature of this study, a quantitative study to investigate social media usage would be beneficial to validate the advantages of adopting social media.

Within the findings a strong emphasis was placed on the relevance and necessity of digital content marketing, more specifically pertaining to the different types of content that are shared throughout the sales funnel to influence purchasing decisions. In alignment with the identified gap in literature (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019; Järvinen &

Taiminen, 2016), the content activities across each level of engagement within the sales funnel should be researched.

Lastly, the findings observed differences in content marketing strategy maturity which could potentially be explained by the different marketing team structure that separates specialist roles with the right capabilities. As this study did not consider how marketing team structures and capabilities could influence social media usage, future studies could build on this.

7.5   Concluding remarks

The literature shows that B2B organisations use of social media is not as prevalent as their B2C counterparts due to adoption barriers, most notably the lack of perceived advantages. However, in more recent years research has identified that the social media use of B2B organisations has many advantages, despite being used differently compared to B2C organisations.

This research aimed to contribute to the dearth of industrial marketing literature by identifying social media stakeholders, the content used to engage with targeted stakeholders, which social media platforms are effective for the different stakeholders, and why social media are used.

The results that emerged have culminated in a conceptual model of key social media marketing elements. This conceptual model assists social media practitioners in understanding how to develop a multipurpose, multiplatform and relevant social media marketing strategy in a B2B environment. This research found that there are multiple stakeholders comprising internal and external, primary and secondary social media users, and content consumers. This in turn should inform the relevant content marketing strategies to embed within the social media marketing strategy. The identification of relevant stakeholders and appropriate content should determine which platforms are suitable as distribution channels and the associated expected outcomes are. These three elements assist in optimising the intended business outcomes.

Following this, social media are used in B2B organisations to achieve marketing, human resources and sales goals such as advertising, brand awareness, communication, client relationship management, recruitment and sales.

This research hopefully extends the existing knowledge of social media use in B2B organisations by determining that social media offer B2B organisations a cost-effective, multi-use tool that contributes towards creating a competitive advantage.

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APPENDIX A: Interview schedule

Duration: 60 minutes

The purpose of this research is to understand how established B2B organisations use social media, which channels are adopted and why. The research seeks to understand if different channels are utilised for different stakeholders and if so, why. Furthermore, the research attempts to uncover what the benefits of these different social media channels are in relation to stakeholder theory.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for the purposes of this case-study research. Over the course of the next 60 minutes the interviewer will ask predetermined questions in sequence. The respondents are encouraged to share their insights and experiences from their own perspectives.

#	Category	Question
1	Personal and company question	a. Could you briefly describe your job position? b. Could you briefly tell us about your company?
2	Social media	a. How are you using social media? b. Why are you utilising social media?
3	Social media channels	a. Which different social media channels are you using? b. How are you using the different social media channels? c. Why are you using different social media channels?
4	Social media audience	a. Who are you communicating with on social media and why?
7.	Benefits of social media	a. How have social media benefited your organisation?

Source: Adapted from Andersson & Wikström (2017)

APPENDIX B: List of codes

1. **Social media stakeholders**

   Communities

   Corporate entities

   Executives using social media

   Existing customers

   Existing employees

   Influencers

   Interest groups

   Media

   Multiple stakeholder engagement

   Potential customers

   Potential employees

2. **Social media content**

   Align to audience interest

   Content differentiation

   Content differentiation drivers

   Content marketing

   Content personalisation

   Content similarity

   Control

   Corporate generated content

   Corporate social responsibility

   Customer journey

   Customer segments

   Data analysis

   Educational content

   Message appeal

   More video content

   Multimedia

   Nurture content

   Organic content

   Paid media

Platform content

Quality not quantity

Region content differs

Thought leadership

3. **Social media platforms**

Channel approach

Channel preference

Multiple channel usage

Personal network

Platform selection

Professional network

Primary platform

Unsuitable platform

Use Blogs

Use LinkedIn

Use Enterprise social networks

Use Twitter

Use Instagram

Use Facebook

Use YouTube

4. **Social media platform purpose**

Frequency

Outcomes

Platform content

Platform purpose

Drives traffic

5. **Social media usage**

   Advertising

   Brand awareness

   Build brand personality

   Communication

   Connection

   Corporate branding

   Customer advocacy

   Customer engagement

   Customer service

   Employee advocacy tool

   Employee engagement

   Employer brand

   Enables job execution

   ESN usage

   Information seeking

   Lead generation

   Multiple purposes

   Networking

   Product information

   Promote events

   Talent acquisition

6. **Social media use**

   Platform use

   Social media maturity

   Usage adaptability

7. **Social media benefits**

   Brand growth

   Breaks geographical barriers

   Cost-effective marketing

   Cost-effect recruitment

   Effective reach

Emotional connections

Engaged employees

Improve perceptions

Instant access

8. **Social media relevancy**

Business objectives

Channel reach to customers

Performance marketing

Social media measurement

9. **Social media strategies**

Account based marketing

Counter based marketing

APPENDIX C: Interview consent form

Interview consent form

Title: Using stakeholder theory to understand business-to-business social media marketing usage in South Africa

Researcher: Klee Barris, GIBS MBA candidate

I am conducting research on business-to-business (B2B) social media marketing usage in South Africa. I am trying to understand in detail how B2B organisations use social media channels, which stakeholders are targeted and why.

Our interview is expected to last about an hour (60 minutes) and will help us uncover insights into B2B social media behaviour.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. The interview will be recorded using software called Otter Voice Notes for research purposes only, however you may elect not to be recorded at any time.

To preserve confidentiality all data will be analysed reported without identifiers through the use of pseudonyms, as such the organisation and individual information will be anonymous.

Should you have any concerns, please contact either my supervisor or myself. Our details are provided below.

Researcher: Klee Barris	**Supervisor**: Jacqueline Carnelley
Email: 18378243@mygibs.co.za	**Email**: jcarnelley@gmail.com
Mobile: 072 176 9085	**Mobile**: 072 240 9840

Participant's name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____