

FUNDAÇÃO GETULIO VARGAS
ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DE SÃO PAULO

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**EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:
BLOGS AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL TO ENHANCE COMPANY-
STAKEHOLDERS RELATIONSHIPS**

SÃO PAULO
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Dissertação apresentada à Escola de
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Fundação Getulio Vargas, como requisito para
obtenção do título de Mestre Profissional em
Gestão Internacional (MPGI)

Campo de conhecimento:
Responsabilidade Social Empresarial

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Edgard Elie Roger Barki

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*To my fantastic and beloved mother Sylvie,
to my wonderful brother Joseph,
and to you too of course, Gabriel
- the people to whom I owe everything that I am.*

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We can not solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them.

Albert Einstein

RESUMO

O conceito de responsabilidade social corporativa (RSE) evoluiu gradualmente do objetivo de satisfazer as expectativas dos acionistas para o cumprimento das expectativas das partes interessadas. Tornou-se um conceito amplamente aceitado e promovido como as empresas enfrentam maiores pressões de atores internos e externos para cumprir objetivos sociais maiores. Assim, elas cada vez mais comunicam sobre os esforços de responsabilidade social delas, a fim de fomentar a confiança e o envolvimento dos stakeholders. Mas o aumento da cidadania global e as novas tecnologias de informação e de comunicação – como as mídias sociais – está criando uma paisagem desafiador para a comunicação RSE, se traduzindo em escrutínio e ceticismo do público. No entanto, também está criando novas oportunidades para as empresas compartilhar e interagir com as partes interessadas. O estudo analisa especificamente como os blogs corporativos dedicados à comunicação RSE conseguem melhorar as relações entre as empresas e as partes interessadas. Esta pesquisa exploratória da estrutura e das mensagens de 9 blogs corporativos, é baseada em um quadro de análise sobre comunicação RSE em plataformas de mídias sociais desenvolvido por Gomez e Chalmers (2013). O quadro está melhorado e adaptado para blogs graças à literatura sobre comunicação RSE, mídias sociais e blogs corporativos. Os resultados demonstram que o uso de características de blogs como apresentação, conteúdo e interatividade, é diversificado e reflete estratégias diferentes de comunicação RSE. Blogs permitem às empresas aumentar a visibilidade da comunicação RSE, melhorar a credibilidade e a legitimidade dos esforços de responsabilidade social, e também trazer discussões com os stakeholders. No entanto, demonstramos que as características e recursos dos blogs raramente são totalmente desenvolvidos, sugerindo avenidas para a melhoria no campo da comunicação nas mídias sociais. Especificamente, o uso da interatividade para criar relações baseadas em diálogo entre empresas e stakeholders está até atrasado em relação à extensão das oportunidades oferecidas pelos blogs. Além disso, o grau de utilização das ferramentas de blogs determina a eficácia da comunicação de RSE 2.0 das empresas na criação de relações empresa-stakeholder.

Palavras-chave: Responsabilidade social empresarial, comunicação da responsabilidade social empresarial, gestão das partes interessadas, sustentabilidade, mídias sociais, blogs corporativos.

ABSTRACT

The corporate social responsibility (CSR) concept has gradually evolved from the objective of fulfilling shareholders' expectations to the one of fulfilling stakeholders' expectations. It has become a widely accepted and promoted concept as companies face increased constraints from external and internal actors to fulfill broader social goals. Hence, they increasingly communicate about their CSR efforts, in order to foster confidence and involvement of stakeholders. But the rise of global citizenship and new information and communication technologies such as social media is creating a challenging landscape for CSR communication as it translates into additional scrutiny and skepticism from the public. However, it also creates new opportunities for companies to further share and engage with stakeholders. This study analyzes specifically how corporate blogs dedicated to communication about CSR manage to enhance company-stakeholder relationships. This exploratory research of the structure and postings of 9 corporate blogs is based on a framework about CSR communication on social media platforms developed by Gomez and Chalmeta (2013), which is improved and adapted to CSR blogging on the basis of literature about CSR communication theories, social media, and the corporate blogging phenomenon. Results demonstrate that the usage of features such as presentation, content and interactivity is diverse and reflects different CSR communication strategies. Blogs allow companies to increase the visibility of their CSR communication, to improve the credibility and legitimacy of their CSR endeavors, and to bring about discussions with their stakeholders. However, we argue that features and resources of blogs are rarely fully developed, suggesting avenues for improvement in the field of social media communication. More specifically, the usage of interactivity as a means of creating dialogue-based relations is still lagging behind the extent of opportunities offered by blogs. Moreover, the degree of utilization of blog tools determines the effectiveness of companies' CSR 2.0 communication in the improvement of company-stakeholder relationships.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, Corporate social responsibility communication, stakeholder management, sustainability, social media, corporate blogs.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AJAX	Asynchronous JavaScript and XML
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSV	Creating shared value
CR	Corporate responsibility
FGV-EAESP	Fundação Getulio Vargas – Escola de Administração de empresas de São Paulo
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
ICT	Information and communication Technologies
IT	Information technology
KLD	Kinder, Lydenberg, Domini social performance index
PR	Public relations
SMI	Social media influence
XML	Extensible Markup Language

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1. INTRODUCTION

Can politics teach us something about social responsibility? We will not answer this long-lasting question here, but only underline how Barack Obama's 2012 Social Media campaign has been one of the most applauded initiatives for the energy of involvement it created. This revealed social media's capacity to spread the word, get people engaged, and shed light on the social issues the candidate had to address. This has some applications in the corporate social responsibility (CSR) field as companies are striving to become credible toward the public, and specifically their stakeholders. Up to nowadays, companies have been increasingly reporting on their CSR efforts thanks to indexes and reports diffused on traditional means of communication, such as booklets or corporate websites (Du et al., 2010). But the monopoly of such media is gradually being eroded as new media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, blogs – create boundaryless platforms for sharing information instantaneously to a multiplicity of actors (Fieseler et al., 2010). In a context where the emergence of global citizenship has brought on increased consciousness about companies' responsibilities toward society and the environment, this evolving communication landscape is leading to additional scrutiny, skepticism and criticisms toward firms' activities (Nwagbara and Reid, 2013). Companies should increase their corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitments and especially find adapted ways to communicate them effectively in order to foster confidence and involvement from stakeholders (Morsing and Schultz, 2006). In fact, some companies like Intel have started to increase their presence on social media during the past year by creating blogs for their internal and external stakeholders to express themselves. But still relatively few businesses have taken advantage of corporate blogs to address their CSR issues (SMI-Wizness, 2012). Hence, this study looks at social media, and more specifically the blogging phenomenon, as a disruptive innovation in the field of CSR communication.

1.1. Research objective and method

The purpose of this study is to answer the research question: *How do corporate blogs dedicated to communication about companies' corporate social responsibility manage to enhance company-stakeholder relationships.*

We will more specifically attempt to observe how do corporate blogs nowadays allow for an increased visibility of CSR communication strategies, how do they increase the legitimacy and credibility of CSR commitments, and finally how do they create stakeholder involvement. This study was conducted on the basis of an exploratory research methodology based on secondary data. The data was extracted from the CSR dedicated corporate blogs of 9 international consumer goods companies that have received particular attention from the CSR community for their innovative online CSR communication strategies.

1.2. Relevance for scholars and practitioners

This research can shed light on the incipient literature about the development of the CSR concept in a CSR communication perspective, by focusing on the social media phenomenon and its implication for CSR. We attempt to fill a void in business research insofar as it responds to the call of scholars for in-depth research and evidence about interactions between companies and their public in the field of responsible business and social media. Indeed, up to now, the impact of social media on CSR has been analyzed only recently and fragmentarily in different disciplines, such as communication studies (Mascarenhas, 2013; Moreno & Capriotti, 2009), management theory (Dellarocas, 2003; Lee et al., 2006) and business ethics (Fieseler et al., 2010; Smudde, 2005), and from contrasting and non-integrated perspectives, such as the social movement (Kolbitsch & Maurer, 2006) or the communication principles (Fleck et al., 2007). Overall, this study should contribute to multiple research fields, namely corporate responsibility, corporate communication, reputation management, public relations and stakeholder management. The conclusions and issues raised by this study will also be useful to practitioners in the field of corporate responsibility. By adjusting their practices to the requirements of modern business pressures occasioned by new media, companies will be positioning themselves to be competitive. Therefore communication managers or consulting specialists need to find out how to best use these innovative tools to communicate effectively, what works and does not work on the blogosphere, which characteristics of social media can improve CSR communication. Our results will also be of interest to public relation and stakeholder relationship managers as social media have an impact on these human interaction-based organizational activities.

1.3. Chapter outline

The structure of this study is the following. We present the theoretical background in the 2nd part of this paper in the form of a literature review of the CSR concept, CSR communication as well as social media, in order to define a framework of analysis of CSR communication on corporate blogs based on the prominent theories of the aforementioned three fields. After detailing our methodology in the 3rd part, we present in the 4th part the results of the analysis of 9 CSR corporate blogs that were selected for the purpose of this research. The 5th part is dedicated to the discussion of results. Finally, our conclusions as well as implications and limitations of the study are presented in the 6th part.

2. THEORETICAL ISSUES: CSR THEORIES, CSR COMMUNICATION AND THE SOCIAL MEDIA

2.1. The evolution of CSR theories

2.1.1. Context, definition and premise

Whereas Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was still a few decades ago no more than a vague and controversial idea in the academic and business worlds, most research papers and business experts outline nowadays how CSR has become a widely accepted and promoted concept. Indeed, as Boli and Hartsuiker (2001) have demonstrated, less than half of the Fortune 500 companies in 1977 had raised the issue of CSR in their annual report. By the end of the 1990-decade, almost 90% of the Fortune 500 companies were promoting CSR in their annual reports and had adopted the concept as a major component of their organizational strategy. By 2013, many companies publish a separate and detailed CSR report along their traditional annual report. The issuance of CSR reports, the increase in businesses' CSR investments as well as academics' in-depth exploration of the concept have set CSR as an emerging and significant topic in business management literature. Although these studies are still recent compared to most business-related topics, an enormous body of knowledge has been constituted in the fields of firm performance, corporate governance, stakeholder management, communication and reporting, among others (Malik, 2013).

While many specialists have detected the development of CSR research and practices, fewer have noticed how the concept has been changing in meaning (Lee, 2008). CSR is a complex phenomenon, first of all because it relates business to society. Since every society has a unique set of national, cultural, and societal contexts, conceptions of CSR often differ from one society to another (Midttun et al., 2006). Academics have also been confronted to the multidimensional character of CSR (Malik, 2013), such as no specific definition has yet been adopted (Clarkson, 1995). A study by Dahlsrud (2006) identified 37 definitions of CSR in business literature, and Kotler and Lee (2005) conclude that existent conceptualizations represent different facets of the same concept of businesses « doing good ». There are also overlapping concepts that appear in academic papers and can be incorporated into CSR, such as corporate citizenship (Matten & Crane, 2005), business ethics, stakeholder management and sustainability (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). The term « Corporate Social Performance » (CSP) can also be found but overall, the CSR is the dominant term. Finally, some experts

have reflected the evolution of the scope of CSR by distinguishing a CSR1 (Corporate Social Responsibility) from a CSR2 (Corporate Social Responsiveness) (Frederick, 2006).

CSR can be defined as « the firm's considerations of and response to issues beyond its narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements, to accomplish social and environmental benefits along with the traditional economic gains which it seeks » (Davis, 1973¹, apud Aguilera et al., 2007). An alternative but complementary definition is provided by Watts and Holme (1999): CSR generally represents a continuing commitment by an organization to behave ethically and contribute to economic development, while also improving the quality of life of its employees, the local community, and society at large.

Although the idea that corporations have social responsibilities beyond their wealth-generating function is contested by some academics and business specialists (Friedman, 1962; Henderson, 2001), most papers agree that there exist today increasing constraints from external and internal actors for companies to fulfill broader social goals. Corporations are urged by civil society at the national and international level to rapidly meet changing expectations about business and its social responsibilities and engage into CSR (Davies, 2003; Freeman et al., 2001; Logsdon & Wood, 2002; Aguilera et al., 2007). This is the major premise of research papers about CSR. Leading companies such as Nike, Nestlé, or BP have undergone these pressures, as they have had to face severe reputational crises because of their failure to ensure ethical, quality and other socially responsible standards. On the contrary, some companies such as Natura, The Body Shop or Ben and Jerry's have developed their business model specifically on the basis of ethical values (Pearce & Doh, 2005). CSR has evolved from ideology to reality, and stands for a critical feature of business activities nowadays. This part will describe this evolutionary path, as well as the main CSR models and CSR business benefits that are outlined in scholar works.

2.1.2. Historical evolution: from shareholder-caring to stakeholder-caring

Corporate activities within the social sphere and the debate about businesses' role toward society have existed for various centuries. Their origins can be tracked down to the 16th century and the first signs of modern capitalism. The prevalence of a strong religious morality

¹ Davis, K. (1973). The case for and against business assumption of social responsibilities. *Academy of Management Journal*, 16(2): 312-322.

within Western societies called for the development of industrial employers' obligations toward their employees. Early notions of social responsibility were born with the creation of the first corporations (Rampinelli & Guimarães, 2006). Until the second half of the 20th century, CSR was therefore mainly driven by religious and philanthropic views and implemented through paternalistic practices (Carroll, 1999), principally by industrialists and corporation leaders such as John D. Rockefeller, who would create foundations and made donations (Visser, 2010). But until the end of World War II, the society would on the whole consider the state as the sole responsible for handling society's necessities through public services and social programs, whereas businesses' role was to maximize benefits and create employment (Ashley, 2005). From the 1950s up to nowadays, the social responsibility concept has been gradually evolving in parallel with innovations and academic research (Carroll, 1999; Lee, 2008; Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Academics have little by little created bridges between CSR and corporate strategy theories, ultimately linking corporate social responsibility to corporate strategic objectives such as stakeholder and reputation management (Lee, 2008), as it is visible in Table 1. Scholar theories about corporate social responsibility roughly started with Milton Friedman's classical economic vision (1962) of a socially responsible company which role is to fulfill its *shareholders' expectations*. In the 2000s, the literature had converged toward a more global and sustainable view in which a socially responsible company's role is to answer its current and future *stakeholders' expectations*. These recent theories have been gaining momentum in the corporate and academic worlds as they better align with companies' strategies and societies' claims for more sustainability (Ashley, 2005).

Years	Dominant theme	Motivation
1950-1960	Social and ethical motivation of businesses	Corporate externality control
1970	Enlightened self-interest of businesses	Reconciling both opposite sides of CSR debate
1980	Corporate social performance model	Building a pragmatic and comprehensive model
Since 1990	Stakeholder approach and strategic management of CSR	Practicality (empirical testing and implementation) and competitive advantage

Table 1: Theoretical trends in CSR thinking as defined by Lee (2008) (author's compilation)

Therefore, the conceptual evolution of CSR during the past 60 years can be summarized as the result of two ongoing phenomenons: the rationalization of the CSR concept and the

increase of the extent of inclusion of various stakeholders into companies' corporate strategies (Lee, 2008). We will apply Lee's model presented in Table 1 to describe this evolution.

2.1.2.1. 1950-1960: Social Responsibilities of Businessmen

During the 1950-1960 period, academic studies about CSR especially focused on macro-social issues, with the objective of understanding and controlling businesses' externalities on society. In the international context of the Cold War, promoter of expanded theories of corporate responsibility like Dean Donald K. David, presented it as a way of aligning business interests with the defense of free-market capitalism against the danger of Communism (Spector, 2008). The link between society and business' obligations was for the first time theorized in Bowen's book « Social Responsibilities of the Businessman » (1953). The author acknowledges that incorporating social responsibility within companies' scope of activities is not necessarily the remedy for all societal problems, but that it has a transformative potential. Executives' highly influential positions along with the strong impact of their decisions are for Bowen the reasons why executives have *de facto* responsibilities toward their society that go beyond the scope of their company' balance sheet. As such, Bowen (1953) provided the first preliminary definition of CSR: « *It refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society* » (Bowen, 1953).

While the literature favorable to CSR was starting to grow following Bowen's publication, criticisms also started to develop, mainly with two important works by Levitt (1958) and Friedman (1962). In Levitt's view, preoccupations about society's well-being must remain the government's responsibility, whereas businesses should exclusively focus on the financial and material issues of their owners and shareholders. Levitt believes that concentrating on social issues could be detrimental to a company's main goal, the search for profits, thus compromising its economic viability (Lee, 2008). Criticisms toward CSR were further formulated by Friedman (1962), for whom CSR represented an unfair and costly burden for a company's shareholders. In Friedman's analysis, social problems must be resolved through the free-market system or tackled by politics and organizations from the civil society. Friedman adds upon Levitt's theory by defining business executives as *homo economicus*. Being self-interested in their company's financial well being, they are incapable of taking the best decisions for the society as a whole.

The CSR idea started to become more popular in the 1960s, thanks to a quickly changing social environment and pressures from external actors (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). When social movements started to grow in the United States (the civil rights, women's rights and consumers' rights movements) and directly challenge big corporations' power, these companies started to use CSR as a mean of self-defense and justification. As a result, a number of papers seeking to formalize the CSR concept and understand its implications for businesses were published during that decade (Lee, 2008). CSR was at that time a public relations tool (Burt, 1983) only driven by social motivations external to companies' core business, and without any economic benefit expected in return (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

2.1.2.2. 1970s: Enlightened Self-Interest

The misalignment between social and economic interests of companies that was prevalent in the literature up to the beginning of the 1970s had to be resolved in order to connect corporate social responsibility to corporations' traditional activities. Wallich and McGowan first resolved this misalignment in « A new Rationale for Corporate Social Policy » (Wallich & McGowan, 1970², apud Lee, 2008). For Wallich and McGowan (1970), because CSR has a strengthening impact on the society and environment in which companies evolve, social engagement is part of the long-term economical interest of corporations and their shareholders. Their assumption is that if society falls into crisis, a company's business would suffer from the weakening of its consumer market as well as from the deterioration of its surroundings (infrastructure for example) (Davis, 1973).

Along with the proliferation of formal definitions of CSR, an interesting distinction was made between companies that bear responsibility in the face of society and companies that actually engage proactively in activities and policies that are socially responsible. Frederick (1978) defines the first type of action as *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR1) while he calls the second *Corporate Social Responsiveness* (CSR2). The later concept goes further than the corporate social responsibility one as it implies that socially responsive companies anticipate social demands, in a way that there is an adequation between their corporate activities and the society's necessities. This idea found an important application within the marketing research field with the works of Kotler (1972) and his *Societal Marketing* concept. What Kotler

² Wallich, H.C. and McGowan, J.J. (1970). Stockholder interest and the corporation's role in social policy. In Baumol, W.J. (ed.), *A New Rationale for Corporate Social Policy*. New York: Committee for Economic Development.

describes as the highest evolution stage of marketing thought and practice represents an attempt to harmonize the company goals with the occasionally conflicting goals of consumers and society. Kotler (1972) demonstrates that consumer short-term desires might not support consumer long-term interests or be good for society welfare on the long run. Marketing strategies should thus deliver value to customers in a way that preserves or improves consumers' and society's well-being.

Finally, an emphasis started to be put during the mid-1970s on the concept of Corporate Social Performance (CSP) (Sethi, 1975), which was conceptualized later on by Carroll, as we will describe further down. Corporate social *responsibility*, *responsiveness* and *performance* became the center of more concrete discussions during this decade. A new direction way provided for future implementation, but a strong theoretical framework was still lacking. Social (social responsibility) and economic (financial performance) interests of businesses were still loosely coupled (Weick, 1977), and a clear understanding of the mechanisms connecting both ideas still had to be provided.

2.1.2.3. 1980s: The Corporate Social Performance (CSP) Model

Carroll created the Corporate Social Performance model in 1979, which combined both social and economic objectives within one structure. The purpose of the CSP concept was to reconcile the importance of CSR1 and CSR2 and to emphasize the outcomes of socially responsible initiatives (Carroll, 1979; Wartick and Cochran, 1985; Wood, 1991). It was a breakthrough as it integrated three dimensions that had separately emerged up to then: CSR, social issues and corporate social responsiveness (Lee, 2008). In this model, economic and social goals of businesses are integrated within a broader framework of social responsibility comprising ethical, discretionary, economic and legal categories, as we will explain later on. This model has remained one of the bases of CSR thinking up to now.

Besides the CSP model, another important contribution of the 1980s was the in-depth research made in order to establish a tighter coupling between CSR and corporate financial performance (CFP). Most attempts found a positive relationship between CSR and financial performance, but criticisms stressed the methodological problems of these studies (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). More objective measures of the impact of social responsibility as well as clearer theoretical mechanisms still had to be developed.

2.1.2.4. 1990 to nowadays: *The stakeholder management approach*

The management revolution initiated in the 1950s came to fruition during the 1990s (Drucker, 1993), as many academics studied strategic management and its impact on corporate performance. Management scholars who were dissatisfied by the low practicality of the previous CSR theories started to focus on the stakeholder dimension of strategic management, following Freeman's theory of stakeholder management. Freeman defines an organization's stakeholder as « *any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the achievement of an organization's objectives* » (Freeman, 1984). From a manager's perspective, responsibility toward customers or employees for example, is easier to picture than responsibility toward society as a whole (Lee, 2008). This facilitated measuring CSR actions by closely identifying the actors, their positions and functions in relation to the company and in relation to one another. The stakeholder framework does not distinguish the social from the economic goals of a company. Instead, its key element is the company's survival, which is affected by its shareholders but also by its stakeholders such as employees, public authorities, customers, suppliers, investors, and communities (see Figure 1). In other words, whereas the *shareholder* perspective assumed that the main responsibility of a company was to increase its profits for the benefit of its owners and shareholders, according to the *stakeholder* perspective the company is responsible not only toward its shareholders and owners, but also toward its internal and external stakeholders. Without the support of those groups, Freeman et al. (2010) explain that the business would cease to be viable. The main idea of this approach is that for stakeholders to support a company, they must be able to know what contributions corporate entities are making to society. By acknowledging the importance of non-shareholding stakeholders for the success of a company (Donaldson & Preston, 1995) this new approach created a breakthrough in CSR thinking that is still prevalent nowadays. This leads us to Lindgreen and Swaen's (2010) recent definition of CSR, which we will further build-upon for the purpose of this study: « *As a stakeholder-oriented concept, CSR holds that organizations exists within networks of stakeholders, face the potentially conflicting demands of these stakeholders, and translate the demands into CSR objectives and practices* » (Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010).

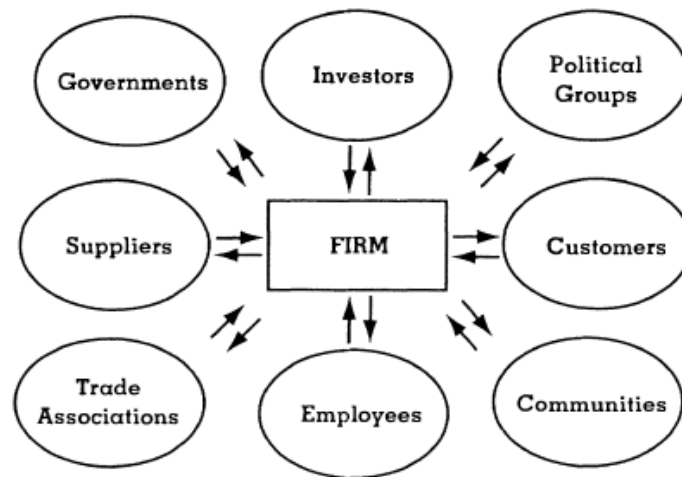


Figure 1: The Stakeholder model (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 69)

Moreover, the globalization movement and the development of information and communication technologies during the 1990s and the 2000s increased the competition between businesses. In parallel, the civil society started to increasingly pressure companies for them to carry more responsibilities regarding their impacts on the environment and on society, such as during the Enron scandals (Frederick, 2008). These pressures were reinforced with the emergence of environmental issues and sustainability on the international agenda at the beginning of the 2000s (Carroll, 2010). The *Corporate Citizenship* corpus of theories was introduced in the CSR discourse in parallel, mainly at the instigation of corporate actors (Matten & Crane, 2005). The search for the *business case* for CSR became a dominant subject from the 1990s, as the business community was seeking to rationalize its activities (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). As a result, CSR is now widely recognized as an essential element of strategic management. The idea that businesses should be responsible toward their stakeholders even if *doing good* requires sacrificing some profits on the short term (Bernstein, 2000) has become more and more accepted, as well as the idea that CSR can bring profits on the long-term. Facing the complex nature of today's environmental and social challenges, companies that manage to implement sustainable practices and new technologies within their production processes are better armed to face competition (Hart, 1995). Porter and Kramer (2006) have further developed the competitive advantage reasoning, as we will describe in this paper. CSR could even be used as a powerful marketing tool for companies (Kotler & Lee, 2005), as well as a strategic communication tool, which we will subsequently develop.

Since the 2000s, these companies are therefore increasingly engaging in giving large visibility to CSR rankings (100 Best Corporate Citizens), in integrating global standards of responsible

behavior into their management systems (ISO14001, the United Nations' Global Compact). They are also introducing accountability initiatives into their production processes and supply chains (SA8000 and AA1000) (Waddock et al., 2002). With respect to communication, companies choose specific frameworks to report on their CSR policies (the Kinder, Lydenberg, Domini (KLD) social performance index, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework), and increasingly use the Internet as a privileged mean of disclosure and promotion of their activities (Du et al., 2010). Based on the analysis of numerous corporate websites and internationally and academically reknown sources of corporate responsibility such as the GRI (2002), Moreno and Capriotti (2009) have established a list of 10 generic categories that form the DNA of corporate communication about CSR on the Internet (Table 2). These categories will allow us to define the subject of a company's discourse on the media.

Issue	Definition
Corporate profile	Declarations and actions that are related to the enterprise's values and strategy with regard to corporate responsibility and sustainability
Products and services	Declarations and actions that are related to the enterprise's commitment in relation to product responsibility, advertising and customer health and safety
Employment and human resources	Declarations and actions that are related to the enterprise's commitment in relation to labour practices and decent work as well as human rights
Economic action	Declarations and actions that are related to the economic impact of the company in its local, regional, national and supranational environments
Social action	Declarations and actions that are related to the enterprise's involvement in social issues
Environmental action	Declarations and actions that are related to the enterprise's involvement in environmental issues
Corporate governance	Declarations and explanations of its transparency commitments in the governance of the company. Explanation of the structure of power, remuneration, responsibilities, governance departments, etc.
Corporate ethics	Declarations and explanations of its ethical commitments in relation to its business and groups of the public
Relationships with stakeholders	Declarations and explanations of the interests and importance of groups of the public with regard to the company
External criteria	Declarations, explanations and links with national and international criteria on aspects of CSR, communication and sustainability

Table 2: 10 content categories of CSR discourse (Business Impact Review Group, 2003; Capron and Gray, 2000; ECC Kothes Klewes, 2003; European Commission, 2001; GRI, 2002; Ingenhoff, 2004; Maignan and Ralston, 2002; United Nations, 2000; cited in Moreno & Capriotti, 2009).

On the other hand, along with the increasing disclosure of CSR commitments since the 1980s, academics, practitioners and especially activists have warned that speeches have become nicer than the actual picture. The Greenwashing concept was developed in the 1980s and is

defined as « selective disclosure of positive information about a company's environmental or social performance, without full disclosure of negative information on these dimensions, so as to create an overly positive corporate image » (Lyon & Maxwell, 2011, p. 9). In other words, companies have been increasingly accused of misleading the public by telling the truth about their activities, but not the whole truth. Communication and advertising that is seen to be overly 'green' nourishes stakeholder skepticism, and affects CSR communication as a whole. Indeed, Peloza (2005) found that many managers hesitate to strongly promote their company's CSR efforts, by fear of it being accused of greenwashing and boycotted by consumers.

To sum up, researchers have moved from a macro-social analysis of CSR to an organizational-level analysis of CSR. They have also shifted from explicitly normative and ethics-oriented arguments to implicitly normative and performance-oriented managerial studies. In the business community, CSR has developed from relatively uncoordinated and voluntary practices in the 1950s, to more explicit commitments in reaction to stakeholder pressures (Lee, 2008). These commitments have come along with increased communication and disclosure about CSR efforts, although criticisms and skepticisms remain.

2.1.3. The multiple dimensions of CSR: main models

Along with the evolution of CSR thinking, a handful of models have consolidated the CSR concept. We will briefly present Carroll's, Porter and Kramer's, and Elkington's models in the following section as they have contributed the most to CSR theory and practice. We will focus on their added value as well as their limits.

2.1.3.1. Carroll's pyramid of CSR

Archie B. Carroll developed the first prominent CSR model in 1979, in which social responsibility encompasses the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary (redefined as philanthropic in 1991) expectations that society has of companies at a given moment (see Figure 2). These expectations are, individually and collectively, part of a company's social responsibility. While the economic and legal responsibilities are *required*, the ethical responsibilities are *expected*, and the philanthropic responsibilities are *desired*. Although the economic responsibility is the necessary basis of CSR, the model was built in order for all dimensions to be considered at the same time. Contrary to Friedman's view (1962) of the economic responsibility as the only desirable obligation for a company, Carroll demonstrates

that all four responsibilities exist and that the economic one is just a necessary component of the more global responsibility a company has toward society. According to the model, companies must do what is right, just and fair to their stakeholders, while contributing with financial and human resources to their society and improving the quality of life (Scharwtz & Carroll, 2003). The fact that Carroll uses the term stakeholders illustrates the shift from considering owners and shareholders as the vital groups of the firm, to the broader notion of stakeholders.

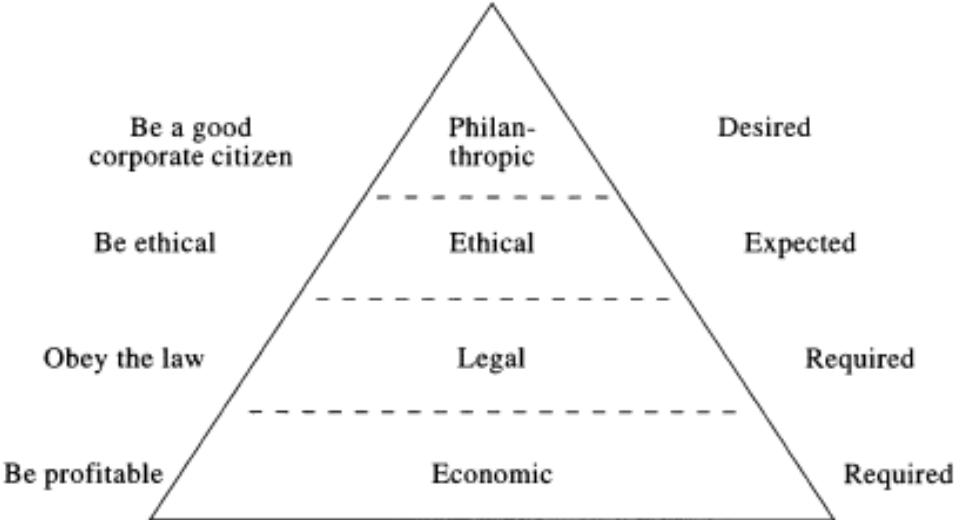


Figure 2: Carroll’s (1991) Pyramid of CSR (Schwartz & Carroll, 2003, p. 504)

Although there has been an enduring application of Carroll’s model CSR research (Carroll & Shabana, 2010), this model presents two limitations. First, its pyramidal form tends to erroneously create a hierarchy amongst the four responsibilities, the economic responsibility being the strongest and the philanthropic the weakest. Second, its layer-like shape can give the false impression that superimpositions of several layers are impossible. Therefore Schwartz and Carroll revisited this model (2003) (see Figure 3) to stress that all dimensions are equal and can be addressed altogether or in a separate fashion. These models are still widely used by scholars and practitioners as a conceptualization of CSR building blocks.

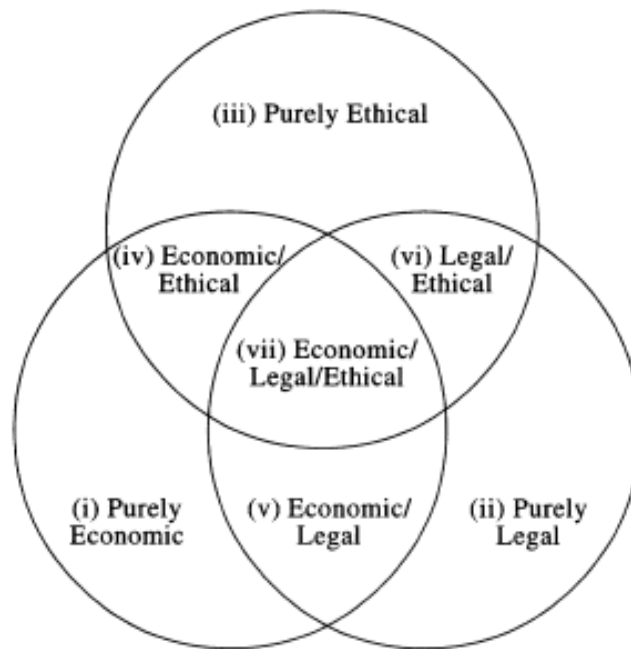


Figure 3: The Three-Domain Model of CSR (Schwartz & Carroll, 2003, p. 509)

2.1.3.2. Elkington's Triple Bottom-Line model

John Elkington developed the Triple Bottom-Line theory in 1994 (see Figure 4), when sustainability was becoming a serious issue, requiring harmonization between the sustainability agenda and businesses' financial bottom-line. Elkington's postulate is that a company should be evaluating its value regarding three different bottom-lines, the three Ps: the Profit, the People and the Planet. The first one, the traditional one, is the measure of the company's profit through the P&L account. The second is the measure of how socially responsible is the company throughout its activities. Finally the third is the measure of how environmentally responsible the company is. A sustainable company – a company that can prosper for an indefinitely long time – is one that maintains equilibrium between all three bottom-lines. The triple bottom-line breakthrough is to help businesses conceptualize and put into execution the abstract concept of CSR (Elkington, 1994). It has been widely adopted by companies since then.

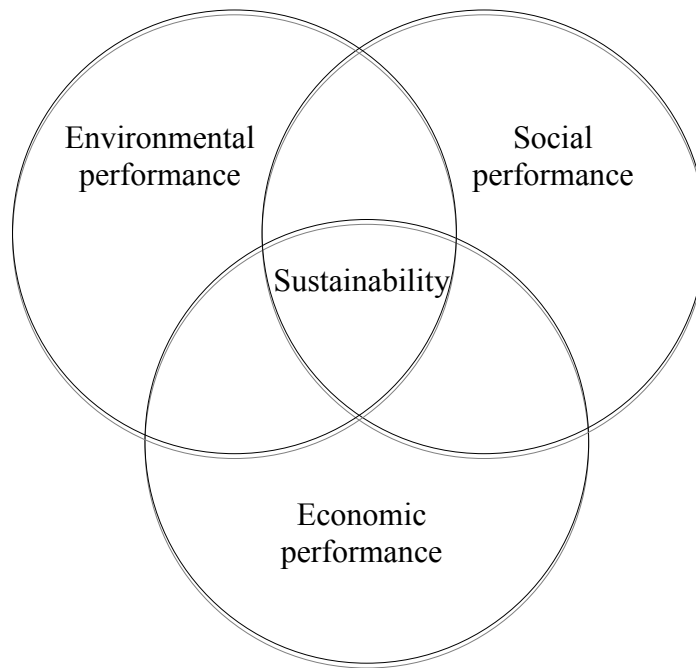


Figure 4: The Triple Bottom-Line (Elkington, 1994) (Author's compilation)

2.1.3.3. Porter and Kramer's strategic CSR model

In 2006, Porter and Kramer insisted on the necessity for companies to adopt an integrated and strategic approach to CSR. The central premise is that the competitiveness of a business and the well being of the society around it are interdependent. The authors argue that there are two forms of CSR: the first one, the *responsive CSR*, which involves « mitigating existing or anticipated adverse effects from business activities » (Porter & Kramer, 2006), is not proactive enough. The second form, the *strategic CSR*, can « make the most significant social impact and reap the greatest business benefits » (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Shared values between the company and society must therefore be identified and capitalized on, such that the firm will benefit from a successful community and the community will benefit from a successful firm. Porter and Kramer (2011) further developed their theory about a company's role in its communities through the Creating Shared Value (CSV) model, in which the firm integrates societal improvement into economic value creation itself.

Porter and Kramer's 2006 model offers a framework for companies to implement social policies and practices. This framework consists of three steps. First, the company must identify the intersections between its business and the society. These 'social issues' can be twofold: The inside-out linkages are activities of a business that affect society, while outside-in linkages, are activities in society that affect the operations of the company. Second, the company must choose which of these social issues (generic social issues, value chain social

impacts and social dimensions of competitive context) will have to be addressed. Finally, it creates a CSR strategy with effective CSR programs that will enable it to achieve both social and economical profits. These three steps allow the company to develop a tailored CSR strategy, leading to significant social impacts that will in turn be beneficial to its operations. Strategic CSR also creates a competitive context that gives the company an advantage because « *government regulation, exposure to criticism, and liability, and consumers' attention to social issues are all persistently increasing* ». (Porter & Kramer, 2006, p. 91)

These models illustrate how CSR evolved from being an answer to society's expectations to becoming a necessary part of corporate strategy. More than ever, companies are allocating substantial resources to a number of social initiatives, ranging from community outreach and environmental protection to socially responsible business practices (Du et al., 2010). These endeavors are not only driven by the belief that companies can foster social change, but also by the multi-faceted business returns that firms can potentially reap from their CSR efforts. By requiring a broad understanding of the interdependencies between the company, its economic bottom-line and its human and natural environments, CSR can therefore contribute to building-up enterprise sustainability.

2.1.4. Business benefits from CSR

Academics have been focusing on the rationale for enterprise sustainability – what are the benefits that companies can reap from CSR and how do they positively impact companies' survival. We present the main justifications in the following part, that is CSR's impact on financial performance, the business case for CSR and finally the broader benefits that companies can reap from improved company-stakeholder relations.

2.1.4.1. CSR and financial performance

Academics have been searching to establish a positive relationship between corporate social performance (CSP) and corporate financial performance (CFP) for the past 30 years (Wood, 1991), but the conclusions are still unclear (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). Margolis and Walsh (2003) presented a review of 127 empirical studies investigating the CSP-CFP relationship, in which they conclude that the compilation of the results suggest that there is a positive association, and little evidence of a negative association. However, criticisms underline the persistent inconsistencies of these studies, attributed to methodological differences, interpretation biases, as well as the presence of mediating variables and situational

contingencies that influence the CSP-CFP relationship (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Moreover, various empirical studies also argue that corporate responsibility increases the long-term shareholder value of a company, suggesting a positive responsibility–profitability relationship (McWilliams & Siegel, 2000).

2.1.4.2. The CSR business case

Along with the theoretical and empirical research for a responsibility-profitability relationship, academic research about CSR has been characterized by an ongoing quest for a CSR business case. Scholars wanted to know if a company can ‘do well by doing good’, in other words, if corporations can improve their financial bottom-line by addressing both their core business operations and their responsibilities toward the society (Kurucz et al., 2008). There has been a multitude of CSR business cases developed over the last 20 years, but one of the most developed rationalizations has been the one of Kurucz et al. (2008). They built upon the stakeholder management theory and set out four general types of business case for CSR: cost and risk reduction; gaining competitive advantage; developing reputation and legitimacy; and seeking win–win outcomes through synergistic value creation.

CSR can enable a company to reduce risk and alleviate costs because stakeholders’ expectations present potential threats to the company’s viability. In that sense, mitigating the threats through social and environmental performance will ultimately serve corporate economic interests. These stakeholder demands are seen as opportunities rather than constraints, and can foster competitiveness. Indeed, if businesses strategically manage their resources to satisfy these stakeholder expectations and capitalize on the associated opportunities for the benefit of the company, they may end up gaining competitive advantage compared to less advanced competitors, which is also what Porter and Kramer outline (2006). CSR can also enable a firm to improve its reputation and legitimacy, by demonstrating that its actions are appropriate with some socially constructed systems of norms, values, beliefs and definitions (Kurucz et al., 2008). This can borrow to Davis’s (1973) license to operate concept: the company must exercise responsible use of its power, otherwise it risks having it revoked and, as a result, losing control over its own decision making. Finally, through actions that reconcile stakeholder interests, therefore stimulate synergistic value creation for this multiplicity of stakeholders, CSR activities can create win-win outcomes (Kurucz et al., 2008).

2.1.4.3. Broader business benefits

Beyond the unproven financial benefits and the so-called CSR ‘business case’, many academic papers and empirical studies stress the broad organizational and reputational benefits that a company can reap thanks to an adapted CSR strategy, therefore, as we will see further down, thanks to adapted company-stakeholders relationships. Socially and economically responsible corporations can enjoy more resilient stakeholder relationships, which in turn lowers the likelihood of regulatory and governmental interventions, as well as the likelihood of conflicts with pressure groups (Guay et al., 2004). Evidence also suggests that a responsible and responsive company can increase the commitment and motivation of its employees. By generating pride and identification to the company values, CSR has a positive impact on employee recruitment and retention (Fombrun et al., 2000). By creating a more motivating environment, it can encourage employees to develop new skills and innovations (Boquet & Mothe, 2011). Furthermore, CSR activities can become effective instruments to generate public goodwill. The relationship between the company and the community in which it operates can become more trustworthy, insuring its « licence to operate » over the long term (Sethi, 1975). Finally, by improving its brand image and reputation among customers, a CSR can foster increased customer acquisition and customer loyalty, greater customer willingness to switch to the company’s brand or to purchase the company’s product, as well as greater readiness to pay higher prices for the same or equivalent products (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). On the other hand, CSR can help a company recover from a market crisis, and alleviate customer boycott risks (Becker-Olsen & Hill, 2006). To sum-up, creating a good reputation among stakeholders will contribute to attracting more resources, better enhancing performance, and building a stronger competitive advantage. The investment community would maybe add that these benefits altogether could lead to better stockmarket performances on the long-term, which is the argument for the creation of so many socially responsible investment funds nowadays (McWilliams & Siegel, 2000).

Despite such broad organizational and reputational benefits, several scholars point out that communication is the missing link in the practice of CSR (Fieseler et al., 2010). Although many companies are committed to CSR, they often fail to communicate actively enough with stakeholders (Lewis, 2003). Beyond communicating CSR commitments, companies face the issue of aligning CSR communication with stakeholders’ diverse concerns, which is essential for them to capitalize on the potential benefits of CSR (Dawkins, 2005).

2.2. CSR communication in the social media context

By engaging in CSR activities, companies can not only generate better support behaviours from stakeholders (purchasing for customers, seeking employment and retention for employees, investing in supply chain processes for suppliers, etc.) but also strengthen corporate image and reputation, and generate profits on the long term. Benefits from CSR are therefore contingent on stakeholders' awareness of a company's CSR activities (Dawkins, 2004). A Cone Communication/Echo Global CSR study (2013) conducted with more than 10,000 participants in 10 of the largest countries in the world by GDP, including the United States, Canada, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Russia, China, India and Japan, is particularly revealing in this sense. More than eight out of ten respondents consider CSR when deciding where to work (81%), what to buy or where to shop (87%) as well as which products and services to recommend to others (85%). For companies to win positive returns on their CSR endeavors, they need to effectively communicate about these CSR commitments. Interestingly, empirical studies focusing on external (suppliers for example) and internal stakeholders' (employees) awareness of CSR activities demonstrate that it is in general quite low (Sen et al., 2006). This suggests that there is space for improvement in business practices, using traditional and new communication channels. There is also space for improvement in academic research, as there has been up to now little research integrating CSR communication theories with stakeholder management theories (Morsing & Beckmann, 2006). Last but not least, the development of new media channels – that entails dissemination and sharing of information at a rapid speed and amongst all users – is occasioning new business pressures for companies. It is therefore essential to reinvent communication strategies that will help address stakeholders' concerns in the context of social media (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). The following part will provide the theoretical background about communication and stakeholder theories in the context of CSR and put them into perspective with the existent knowledge about social media communication, in order to demonstrate how social media can help achieving a sustainable communication of CSR efforts.

2.2.1. Communication theories: between transmission and engagement

Communication models have been evolving since the first theories were developed in the 1930s, when researchers started attempting to explain the complex processes of human communication. The same way CSR theories evolved as companies were increasingly confronted to external pressures from the civil society, communication theories progressed

following the path of disruptive technological innovations such as the telephone, the radio, or much later on, the Internet. In 1948, Lasswell was the first to define the act of communicating, through the famous formula Who Says What in Which Channel To Whom With What Effect. At the same moment, Shannon and Weaver (1948) described communication as the process of sending and receiving messages or transferring information from one part (sender) to another (receiver). The information source, the transmitter, the channel and the receiver were further on defined as the necessary elements of communication processes. At that point, information flows were seen to be essentially linear, to what Schramm (1955) opposed his bi-directional and culture-oriented model of communication. According to Schramm (1955), two people communicating might understand differently the information as a result of cultural bias. Although other models were developed during the same period such as Katz and Lazarsfeld's model (1955), all were intrinsically about transmitting *actively* a message on one side and receiving it *passively* on the other. From the 1970s on, communication practitioners and academics started to develop models that would become the landmarks of contemporary theories, such as Pearce and Cronen's (1980) Model of Coordinated Management of Meaning, Grunig and Hunt's Four Models of public relations practice (1984) or, more recently, Morsing and Schultz's (2006) Stakeholder Engagement model, which we will describe further down. Influenced by the technological innovations of the time such as the rise of the Internet, these new models increasingly emphasize the need for two-way, reciprocal, communication models based on an interactive dialogue, on feedback, and on mutual sensegiving and sensemaking (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). In these models, the recipient becomes an active contributor to the multidirectional information flows, while the sender engages its recipient(s) into the discussion.

Therefore communication models have evolved from a traditional one-way conception of information flows to a modern conception emphasizing the need for two-way communication. This has serious implications for communication strategies in the stakeholder-oriented perspective of CSR (Nwagbara & Reid, 2013). Indeed, the dominant CSR communication forms have been mostly unidirectional and linear up to now. Companies mostly promote their CSR commitments through advertising, dedicated website pages and standardized CSR annual reports displaying their values, guidelines and activities in a relatively standardized 'one size fits all' manner (Visser, 2010). The main focus of such type of communication is to manage risk and brand image and does not entail taking part in an ongoing dialogue with the public, except in the advent of isolated attacks such as lawsuits or mediatized criticisms

(greenwashing allegations for example). Visser (2010) associates this model to what he defined as *CSR 1.0* in reference to the Web 1.0, to which he opposed the need for *CSR 2.0*. Indeed, the advance of Web 2.0 technologies based on two-way communication models calls for the evolution of CSR communication toward an interactive form where the objective is to turn stakeholders into innovative partners: by informing them, listening to their concerns and accepting organizational change if needed (see Table 3).

Type of approach	Traditional	Modern
Communication model	One-way communication	Two-way communication
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linear <i>distribution</i> of information • Passive receiver • One-directional and unilateral flows • Transmitting content, sensegiving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive <i>exchange</i> of information • Active receiver • Multidirectional, inclusive, and reciprocal flows • Feedback, dialogue, mutual sensegiving and sensemaking
Consequences for CSR communication strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand management • Silos between companies and the stakeholders involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder involvement • Inform the public, explore stakeholders' concerns (i.e. get informed), accept change if needed

Table 3: CSR communication, from transmission to engagement (author's compilation)

2.2.2. The importance of CSR communication for stakeholder involvement

Recent studies have focused on the importance for companies to involve their stakeholders into value co-creation (Andriof & Waddock, 2002) thanks to long-term, frequent and mutual engagement, in order to generate profit but also increase transparency and accountability of the company. The company no longer *manages* stakeholders. Instead, the emphasis is put on the ongoing *interactions* between all parties (Andriof & Waddock, 2002). This introduces the ideas of participation, dialogue and involvement to the CSR concept. As we will see now, communication is the tool to reach agreement between the corporation and its stakeholders, and companies decide to create dialogue to a certain extent according to their stakeholder involvement strategy (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

2.2.2.1. The CSR communication challenge: generating awareness and favorable attributions

CSR communication can broadly be defined as the « *process of communicating the social and environmental effects of organizations' economic actions to particular interest groups within society and to society at large* » (Gray et al., 1996). Considering what has been discussed

previously about the business benefits of CSR, mainly building corporate reputation and creating value for stakeholders, a more specific definition can be introduced. CSR communication is the dissemination process of the transparent information about a company's integration of its business operations, its social and environmental concerns, and its interactions with stakeholders (Podnar, 2008). Because stakeholders are most often little or not aware of a company's activities (Sen et al., 2006), CSR communication must shed light on them. But many scholars acknowledge that companies face an arduous task when seeking to communicate their CSR values and activities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Although stakeholders such as customers like to hear the facts, they easily tend to be suspicious when companies aggressively promote their CSR efforts, and CSR communication therefore risks backfiring (Du et al., 2010). A key goal of effective CSR communication is to manage to communicate favorable corporate CSR motives in order to inhibit stakeholder skepticism and generate favorable attributions from stakeholders. Given the multiplicity of different stakeholders that the company must take into account, this is a real communication challenge.

In general, the public can attribute two kinds of CSR motives to a company: Extrinsic motives when the company is seen as solely attempting to increase its financial bottom-line, and intrinsic motives when stakeholders believe it has a genuine concern about the social issues it is tackling. Whereas strong intrinsic attributions lead stakeholders to react positively toward the company, the appreciation of predominant extrinsic motives lead to less favorable stakeholder behaviors (Du et al., 2010). More than extrinsic CSR motives, it is the perception of manipulative CSR communication strategies for tactical purposes that can stimulate negative reactions from stakeholders (Forehand & Grier, 2003). Forehand and Grier (2003) further argue that a CSR communication combining intrinsic motives – the company truly believes that the preservation of the Amazonian rainforest is a major issue – and extrinsic motives – adopting more sustainable production processes will alleviate the costs of avoided lawsuits – can inhibit stakeholder skepticism, because stakeholders increasingly believe nowadays that it is possible to serve both the needs of business and society (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). On the other hand, finding the appropriate balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motives is not enough. The causes that the company supports must be aligned with its core values, and its CSR messages must be aligned with its corporate behavior as a whole (Du et al., 2010).

Communication is fundamentally about the message and the channels used to disseminate the information. Companies must therefore find out which CSR message is best to communicate, and which communication tool is appropriate in order to meet stakeholders' expectations concerning CSR and satisfy their information needs (Podnar, 2008). This is a difficult exercise, because different stakeholder audiences have different expectations of businesses, as well as different information needs, and they respond in a different way to different communication mediums (Dawkins, 2004).

2.2.2.2. *CSR communication strategies*

Morsing and Schultz (2006) identified three ways for companies to communicate their CSR efforts to their shareholders (see Table 8). Their model is based on Grunig and Hunt's (1984) description of public relations models. Grunig and Hunt (1984) had argued that four models of communication characterized public relations from the firm to its stakeholders: one-way communication (public information) that builds on *sensegiving*, two-way asymmetric communication and two-way symmetric communication that build on *sensegiving* and *sensemaking*, and the agency/publicity one-way communication that is a propaganda model of communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Morsing and Schultz's model added-value is that it offers an insight into the objectives and respective tasks of a company's communication department from a CSR point of view, therefore helping us to start to build-up an evaluation framework of CSR communication.

Strategy	Stakeholder information strategy	Stakeholder response strategy	Stakeholder involvement strategy
Communication ideal (Grunig & Hunt, 1984)	Public information, one-way communication.	Two-way asymmetric communication.	Two-way symmetric communication.
Sensegiving & sensemaking	Sensegiving.	Sensemaking => Sensegiving.	Sensemaking <=> Sensegiving.
Stakeholders expectations	Request more information on corporate CSR efforts.	Must be reassured that the company is ethical and socially responsible.	Co-construct corporate CSR efforts.
Stakeholders role	Stakeholder influence: support or oppose.	Stakeholders respond to corporate actions.	Stakeholders are involved, participate and suggest corporate actions.
Identification of CSR focus	Decided by top management.	Decided by top management. Investigated in feedback via opinion polls, dialogue, networks and partnerships.	Negotiated concurrently in interaction with stakeholders.
Strategic communication task	Inform stakeholders about favorable corporate CSR decisions and actions.	Demonstrate to stakeholders how the company integrates their concerns.	Invite and establish frequent, systematic and pro-active dialogue with stakeholders, i.e. opinion makers, corporate critics, the media, etc.
Communication department task	Design appealing concept message.	Identify relevant stakeholders.	Build relationships.
Third-party endorsement of CSR initiatives	Unnecessary.	Integrated element of surveys, rankings and opinion polls.	Stakeholders are themselves involved in corporate CSR messages.

Table 4: Three CSR strategies (Morsing and Schultz, 2006, p.326)

Morsing and Schultz's *stakeholder information strategy* is a one-way communication model corresponding to the public information model. It is still the most implemented communication strategy, although the Web 2.0 created new opportunities for interaction between firms and the public. Following this strategy, the company develops press and public relation programs, provides information to the media, and creates brochures, numbers and facts for the general public, with the goal of informing stakeholders objectively and in a non-persuasive manner, about the company's values, policies, and activities. This model's assumption is that stakeholders can support the company or take a stand against it through their purchasing habits (Smith, 2003). Hence, the firm needs to ensure positive stakeholder support through effective communication about CSR actions. The corporate communications department focuses on the coherence, the attractiveness and the design of the message (Van

Riel, 1995). This model does not consider if stakeholders should approve or not the corporate CSR initiatives.

Morsing and Schultz second CSR communication strategy is the *stakeholder response strategy*. It is a 'two-way asymmetric' communication model because communication flows to and from stakeholders but there is an imbalance in favor of the firm as the dialogue is not mutually beneficial. The goal of this communication strategy is to convince a company's stakeholders of its attractiveness without giving them anything back in return. In other words, the company attempts to persuade the public to display a positive attitude and behavior toward its CSR actions, but does not consider the possibility that the organization needs to change as well. Therefore, the corporate communication department's role is to generate feedback about the public's reaction to CSR actions, for example thanks to opinion polls or market surveys. In this sense, responses to stakeholder expectations are given in a « sender oriented » manner. This strategy is more about focusing on stakeholder responsiveness than capitalizing on their pro-active engagement in communication processes. Considering the CSR communication goal that is to generate positive attributions from stakeholders (Du et al., 2010), which entails understanding in the first place stakeholders' expectations, a company applying such type of CSR communication strategy runs the risk of questioning it's public within a scheme that implies the answers it wants to here.

Assuming that informing and surveying are both non-sufficient, the authors develop the *stakeholder involvement strategy* as a better CSR communication strategy. It is a two-way symmetric model (Grunig and Hunt, 1984) in the sense that frequent dialogue is the centerpiece of the strategy. Persuasion can arise both from the company and from its organizational and external stakeholders, each side trying to push the other to change. Actually, businesses should try to influence the public, but also seek to be influenced by stakeholders. Here, the firm's task is to create the foundations, the mediums and the circumstances for an ongoing two-way dialogue to occur with the public. The stakeholder involvement strategy becomes a frame within which informing and responding act as critical strategies as well. Nowadays, empirical evidence suggests that such type of two-way CSR communication is still very little implemented in practice (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

In the context of the rise of new information and communication technologies (ICT), such as social media channels, that allow for two-way communication schemes, we argue that these

innovative tools represent an opportunity for companies to communicate their CSR efforts through a credible dialogue while actively involving their stakeholders. Because multi-faceted business returns derive from the ability of CSR to build and strengthen stakeholder relations (Morsing & Schultz, 2006), this will ultimately reinforce companies' CSR strategy, in a virtuous, sustainable, circle.

2.2.3. The social media era: opportunities and challenges for CSR communication

2.2.3.1. What are 'social media'?

In the early 2000s, Zadek and Raynard (2002) were already predicting that the Internet and social media would be a critical reporting and accountability mechanism of the new century, changing the relationships between companies and civil society. Indeed, while in 2008 only 10% of corporations had dedicated social media budgets, they were already almost 30% by 2010. This number will keep growing as companies are just beginning to realize the great potential of the social media in providing them with a competitive advantage (Kesavan et al., 2013). But what is 'social media'? As social media have begun to enter popular consciousness, some scholars have attempted to define social media as a distinct category of technologies. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined 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 ». The term 'social media' is actually often used as a synonym of Web 2.0. The IT consultant DiNucci (1999) was the first to coin the term Web 2.0, to summarize the recent social and technical developments of the Internet, while O'Reilly (2005) popularized it a few years later. Web 2.0 differentiates itself from the old « Web » as it is based on technologies such as AJAX and XML that allow sharing and linking content online (Fieseler et al., 2010). However, social media, or Web 2.0, is also a social phenomenon, which facets are 'social bookmarking', 'grassroots responsibility', and the rise of informed groups of citizens who use social networks and blogs for their campaigns (Fieseler et al., 2010). Sweetser (2010) attempted to integrate both aspects and defined social media as a series of online tools that encourage social interaction and participation. Hoegg et al. (2006) stress the social impact of the collective collaborative works that were made possible through the social media technological innovations. Finally, the default approach in most academic studies is to define social media by referring to the Web 2.0 platforms that people recognize implicitly as social media. These are social networking sites (Facebook, Google +), Internet forums, blogs, micro blogs (Twitter, Tumblr), wikis, pictures sharing (Instagram), content sharing (Pinterest) and video sharing websites

(YouTube, Vimeo), as well as rating (Tripadvisor) and social bookmarking sites (Foursquare) (Weber, 2009). These technological platforms facilitate the creation and sharing of knowledge, information, media, ideas, opinions and insights, and allows for people to actively participate in the media itself (Shabnam et al., 2013). Social networking sites and blogs are the social media that have experienced the most impressive growth. Studies demonstrate that social networking sites account nowadays for almost a fifth of total Internet time, and that this increased time spent on these platforms is done at the expense of traditional media (McGiboney, 2009).

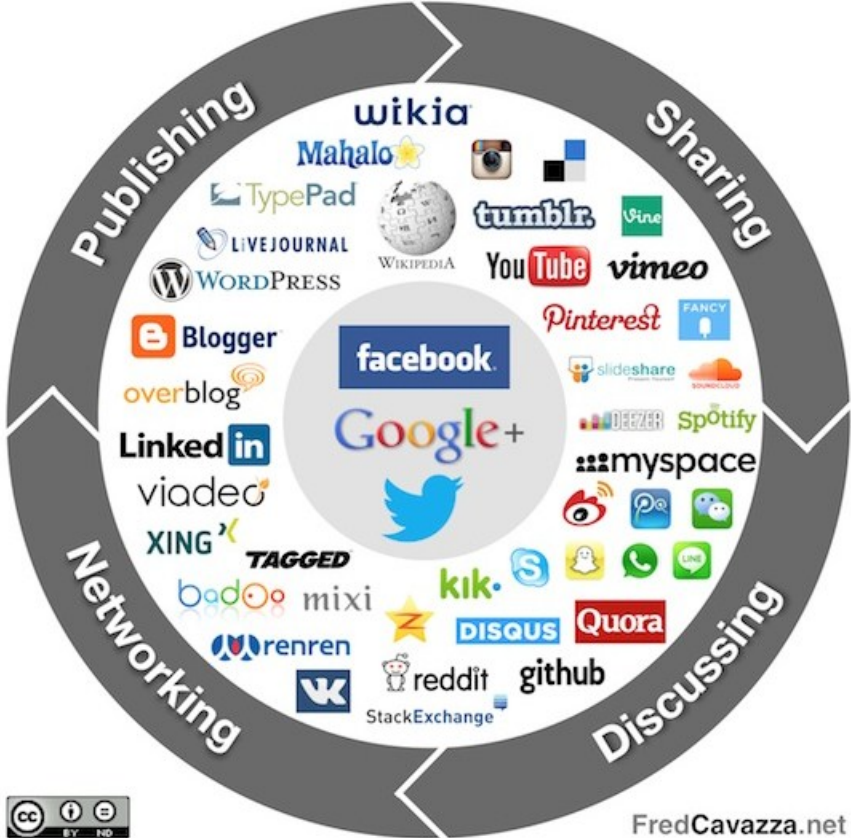


Figure 5: The social media landscape in 2013 (Cavazza, 2013, p. 1)

2.2.3.2. *The promising impacts of social media on CSR communication*

Social media are two-way communication platforms as they are based on reciprocal and interactive flows of communication between users. Although some scholars have underlined that they can be great tools to foster company-stakeholders dialogue (Du et al., 2010) and strengthen stakeholder involvement and engagement (Fieseler et al., 2010), relatively little attention has been paid to the role of social media in a CSR perspective up to now. Consequently there is still little theoretical as well as empirical research in this field (Moreno & Capriotti, 2009), and even in the corporate world, only a little number of businesses such as

General Electric have started to explore the use of social media to promote their organizational values. For instance, out of the 400 companies investigated by the Social Media Sustainability Index (SMI-Wizness, 2012), only 70 had a corporate blog tackling CSR issues. Besides, Kesavan et al. (2013) argue that the majority of companies exploring social media nowadays are only using these tools as part of promotional and marketing strategies.

Yet, social media is slowly but surely changing the relationship between corporations and the civil society. According to the literature and contrary to one-way communication media such as dedicated CSR website pages or CSR annual reports, the social media two-way communication platforms offer five advantages in terms of CSR communication. First, they are democratic tools, enabling low-cost and easy access to collaboration as anyone can publish or access information (Schneider et al., 2007; Nwagbara & Reid, 2013). Second, they create efficient interactions because they allow for real-time communication between the organization and stakeholders, in a direct, interactive and personalized manner (Pressley, 2006; Schneider et al., 2007). Some authors further argue that the usage of photos, videos and audio tools, which is very common on social media, reinforces a company's message (Rybalko et al., 2010; Water et al., 2009). Third, according to Clark (2000), social media can be used in a 'push' fashion (from the company to its public), but also in a 'pull' manner (from the civil society toward the company), which is not the case for traditional media. Kent (2008) further emphasize the social media offer to companies an opportunity to move from passive forms of self-presentation to more active forms of agenda-setting, by taking into account the ideas and feedback of stakeholders. Fourth, authors such as Pressley (2006) or Schneider et al. (2007) add that social media offer online archiving possibilities, thus easing information storage and retrieval. Finally, because social media allows for only limited gatekeeping processes filtering the information before publication, they are also increasingly perceived by consumers as being more transparent and trustworthier sources of information than traditional media such as advertising (Foux, 2006). Consequently, because they are interactive, democratic, personalized and request the feedback of stakeholders, social media are more inclusive toward stakeholders than traditional media tools.

On the other hand, because of its potential for creating a collective and transparent intelligence on a large scale, social media is increasing the civil society's knowledge about corporations and social and environmental-related issues, as well as the speed of information that is diffused and the amount of mobilization that is reached. Hence, in expressing CSR

commitments in the right way, social media can be transformative for a company and can be used as one of its most important brand pillars (Capriotti, 2011; Briones et al., 2011).

2.2.3.3. *The social media communication challenges*

Interactivity and increased access of stakeholders to information through social media is a great opportunity but also a challenging issue for businesses. Contrary to traditional media forms, the Web 2.0 requires companies to take part to the dialogue with stakeholders on an ongoing basis. Interacting and sharing information about CSR with social media users becomes critical to a successful CSR strategy as it enables to measure the public's opinion, influence it and detect criticism (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Furthermore, as a pull medium, social media has a great potential for audiences who actively research CSR content, but only if quality, accessibility and speed of information are insured by the company (Clark, 2000; Fernando, 2010; Baird & Parasnis, 2011). This also means that businesses cannot control anymore all information about their activities available on the Internet, since users have an influence on the media content and on the media themselves (Cohen, 2010; Kesavan et al., 2013). Therefore once a company has incorporated social media into its communication strategy, it must be committed to a constant stream of transparent communication and be willing to « accept the *vox populi* » (Kesavan et al., 2013, p.63).

To sum-up, social media has great social power in order to instantly diffuse messages to target audiences and receive feedback. The most successful CSR companies will be the ones that acknowledge this power and make clever use of it: « CSR can serve the teeming millions on an ongoing basis, and thereby, the organization will be served by the same millions in realizing its bottom-lines of global responsibility, profitability and sustainability » (Kesavan, et al., 2013, p. 65).

2.2.4. Toward a sustainable CSR 2.0 communication model

In the contemporary setting where global communication systems enabling instant sharing of information combine with the rise of global citizenship and increased scrutiny and criticisms from the public toward companies' CSR practices, businesses face a Catch-22 situation (Morsing et al., 2008). They must understand how to better engage in communication, without over-communicating their CSR efforts. For this reason, it seems evident that the traditional CSR communication strategies and channels are not good enough to overcome this challenge, otherwise this paradoxical situation would have already be solved. We argue that

the rise of new media has exacerbated this challenge, but that they can also offer ways to deal with it. If companies successfully rethink their CSR communication strategies in order to leverage the opportunities of social media, they can achieve strategic CSR, such as conceptualized by Porter and Kramer (2006). A strategic CSR communication will ultimately become a *sustainable* CSR communication as it will improve company-stakeholder engagement, thereby improve CSR commitments and CSR communication in a virtuous cycle (Nwagbara & Reid, 2013). We therefore discussed theoretically how CSR communication through social media can be an efficient tool to achieve harmonious company-stakeholder relationships (Nwagbara & Reid, 2013). Our exploratory study of CSR communication strategies on corporate blogs will offer a practical understanding of this theory.

First, social media are democratic and boundaryless platforms that offer an extended discursive space for shared communication (Nwagbara & Reid, 2013) between a company and its stakeholders. The company can listen to concerns and gather feedback from a large panel of stakeholders on an ongoing basis. On the one hand, by monitoring reactions, managers can understand what makes sense to some stakeholders and what makes sense to others. Decrypting these differing attributions provides material in order to adopt a focused shareholder view when reporting about CSR, rather than a wider view that will not satisfy everybody (Sweeney & Coughlan, 2008). Generating favorable attributions from stakeholders can actually enhance stakeholder advocacy behaviors, being employee word-of-mouth (Dawkins, 2004) or consumer word-of-mouth (Du et al., 2010). CSR commitments will also be able to be better tailored. On the other hand, monitoring stakeholders' expectation helps to integrate input from stakeholders into the CSR strategy in a value co-creation process (Porter & Kramer, 2006). The CSR strategy and communication will thus become better fitted to the company's triple bottom-line (Elkington, 1994), therefore more sustainable.

Second, and contrary to traditional media, because social media are interactive platform that empower participants to dialogue in a direct way with little or no presence of gatekeepers (Foux, 2006), they can be effective at reducing criticisms and skepticism in general from their public. Indeed, according to Andriof and Waddock (2002), informal dialogue can help building bridges with stakeholders. Morsing and Schultz (2006) add that integrating shared interests, views, and ideals of all stakeholders into CSR communication, is necessary for a company to achieve social responsibility credibility. By improving the legitimacy and credibility of its corporate responsibility, a firm will also improve its reputation (Kurucz et al., 2008), which will translate in multiple business benefits from CSR as we have seen further up

(Guay et al., 2004; Hoeffler & Keller, 2002; McWilliams & Siegel, 2000; Sethi, 1975), here again working in favor of company sustainability.

Finally, because they allow disseminating, sharing, storing and retrieving content (Schneider et al., 2007), social media make CSR communication more accessible and more visible; hence positively impact stakeholder awareness of CSR endeavors. Because individuals' awareness and knowledge of a social issue will often lead to greater support for that particular issue (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004), social media generate communication effectiveness (MacInnis et al., 1991).

Because organizations can reap the benefits from their CSR efforts by creating company-stakeholder engagement, they need to insure the credibility of both the channels and strategies they choose to communicate their CSR efforts (Ihlen, Bartlett & May, 2011). Social media are effective communication tools to address these issues as increase visibility of CSR communication and practices, they build confidence in stakeholders' minds, and make value co-creation possible between the company and stakeholders.

2.3. The CSR 2.0 communication framework

Thanks to the previous literature review about CSR, communication and social media as well as the channels through which social media impact CSR communication, we now build a conceptual framework for CSR communication through social media, and more specifically, through corporate blogs. We call this framework the CSR 2.0 communication framework firstly as a reference to the social media, which are typical platforms of the Web 2.0 (Visser, 2010) and secondly in order to differentiate it from traditional CSR communication models. In the following part we will first explain the relevance of focusing on corporate blogs, than map the concepts mentioned up to now into a framework of analysis of corporate blogs, in order to finally present a conceptual model of features, resources and objectives of CSR corporate blogs.

2.3.1. Focus on the corporate blogging phenomenon

In the past ten years, blogs have captured the interest of many companies as an alternative to the existing formal online communication channels (corporate websites, sustainability reports). A 'blog', which stands for 'web log', is a social media page that serves as a publicly accessible personal journal for an individual (Blood, 2002). Because the blog can be used to

convey various types of information, such as personal, public, commercial and political messages, it has become an effective and generalized communication tool on the Internet. Following this trend, businesses are adopting blogs dedicated to promotion of events, customer relationship management, and increasingly CSR, where they publish and manage content to attain their goals. Those blogs are operated by a variety of authors ranging from rank-and-file employees to CEOs. Although it is difficult to draw clear lines among the multiplicity of corporate blogs that are created every day, Lee et al. (2006) have suggested five types of corporate blogs that can be categorized based on the characteristics of authors and contents, as shown in the table 4.

Blog type	Characteristics
Employee	Maintained by a rank-and-file employee, varies in content and format
Group	Operated by a group of rank-and-file employees, focuses on a specific topic
Executive	Featuring the writings of high-ranking executives
Promotion	Promoting products and events
Newsletter	Covering company news

Table 5: Types of corporate blogs and their characteristics (Lee et al., 2006, p. 319)

One of the most important features of blogs is the built-in function that enables commentaries on each of the postings (Kolbitsch & Maurer, 2006). This function enables open discussion on every entry that is made, and therefore fosters interactive and two-way ‘micro-dialogues’ between blog authors and followers (Zerfass & Boelter, 2005). Micro-dialogues structures are proxies to face-to-face communication, enabling conversations without formal hierarchies. By enabling interested parties to read, comment, approve, disapprove, share, etc., blog discussions result in a public review process that engenders authenticity, transparency, and credibility. It is also a platform where the story gets amplified by the receivers (Scoble & Israel, 2006) as much as the senders, therefore where the public gets involved into the discussion, can express his concerns or provide some feedback. Corporate blogs therefore present all the characteristics of two-way communication tools as defined in the literature review.

Finally, it must be stressed that corporate blogs attract much less traffic on their pages compared to traditional corporate websites or social media platforms such as corporate Facebook pages. However, the CSR blog is a niche for the most active users known as lead consumers or opinion leaders (Dawkins, 2004). This has several implications that justify our choice of blogs rather than other social media for the purpose of this study. First, concerning

the CSR dialogue, the active stakeholders on these blogs are among the most interested, well-informed, and engaged stakeholders in the CSR field within a company's multiplicity of stakeholders. Therefore, the blog is where stakeholders will engage in dialogue and provide valuable feedback to the company the most (Fieseler et al., 2010). Second, because these stakeholders are the most interested, well-informed and engaged public, they are the most prone to react to the company's positive or negative impacts on the society and environment (Dawkins, 2004). Finally, building on Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) Two Step flow of communication theory, these stakeholders play a key role within the moderated connection line of information that flows from a communicator to an opinion leader, and finally to that leader's followers. For all of these reasons, CSR blog followers can be considered as early adopters, influencers, and multipliers of CSR information about companies (Fieseler et al., 2010), making them stakeholders of choice for companies.

Corporate blogs therefore seem to be simple, accessible and inexpensive ways for organizations to engage in a permanent and trustworthy dialogue with stakeholders. What's more – and contrary to other social media like social networks – blogs offer archiving and retrieval opportunities thanks to the possibility of tagging and classifying content into key categories (Albrycht, 2006). We focused this study on such type of social media for these reasons. Since literature about CSR communication through social media is still very scarce, we build upon Gomez and Chalmeta's (2013) framework of analysis of communication on Facebook and Twitter corporate profiles, that we adapt and improve by aggregating the various communication models presented in the literature review (Lasswell's model, Morsing and Schultz's framework, Du et al.'s framework) as well as scholars' findings about social media (Fieseler et al., 2010; Kent, 2008; Pressley, 2006; Schneider et al., 2010), in order to construct an analysis framework for the study of CSR communication on corporate blogs specifically.

2.3.2. Blogging CSR 2.0: features, resources, impact on communication

Because they are social media channels, corporate blogs are two-way communication platforms, as defined by Grunig and Hunt (1984) and later on Morsing and Schultz (2006). In their study about CSR communication in the age of social media, Gomez and Chalmeta (2013) set out this two-way information flow as the intrinsic nature of social media. They propose a framework of analysis of CSR communication on the social media based on the study of the Facebook and Twitter profiles of 50 most admired companies from the American

Fortune 500 list (see Table 9 in Annex). This framework, which is based on the features and resources of social media in a CSR communication perspective, is as far as we know the only existing serious attempt of creating such type of analysis grid in the field of social media communication in a CSR perspective. It allows us to map a number of concepts that we have reviewed until now, and as such, provides a helpful model for understanding the importance of key characteristics of social media for reaching effective CSR communication. We have adapted it on the basis of our literature review about corporate blog characteristics and CSR communication goals. Our framework of analysis (see Table 5) therefore includes the features of corporate blogs and the resources of corporate blogs that stem from these features. Our added-value to Gomez and Chamelta’s framework is that we argue that depending on the degree to which companies exploit the features and resources of blogs, they will be impacting their CSR communication and strategy, as we will see further down.

CSR communication features	Corporate blog resources employed
Presentation (Who)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about CSR and/or sustainability • Hyperlinks to corporate CSR and/or sustainability content • Hyperlinks to social media content • Photos/Videos/Audio devices • Information about blog authors
Content (What)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usage of CSR and/or sustainability categories • Usage of CSR and/or sustainability taggs • Source of content: corporate and/or external • Monitorship policy
Interactivity (Which Channel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity and frequency of CSR messages • Quantity of comments and answers • Buzz capacity: availability of social media sharing tools • Buzz capacity: sharing on social media • Feedback tools

Table 6: CSR blogging framework of analysis (author’s compilation)

2.3.2.1. The features of CSR communication on blogs

Gomez and Chalmeta (2013) argue that the three key features of social media are presentation, content and interactivity. While *presentation* refers to the tools and general information that support the firm’s CSR presence on the social media, the *content* feature comprises the dedicated messages to CSR that improve the communication of CSR motives and practices. Finally, *interactivity* refers to the dialogue within the social media, that is the amount and frequency of messages, the feedback and the creation of opportunities for collaboration (Gomez & Chalmeta, 2013). Looking back at corporate communication theories, Lasswell’s formula Who sends What in Which channel to Whom with What effect helps us understand the importance of the presentation feature of corporate blogs. As the

model implies, the first thing to look at, when considering planned communication, is the sender. When analyzing communication, it is important to look at internal factors of the company who is diffusing information about its CSR practices. Morsing and Schultz (2006) add that a business must insure that stakeholders are informed in a professional way in order to generate positive attributions from them. The messages must be coherent with the goals and core values of the company. The presentation characteristic therefore enables the company to inform its stakeholders about its corporate identity, its core values, and how its CSR strategy and communication are in phase with this identity. The presentation feature of corporate blogs therefore regroups all the resources that enable the company to demonstrate that the causes it supports and the messages it send are aligned with its core values and corporate behavior (Du et al., 2010). The content feature refers to Lasswell's 'What', that is the CSR messages. The content of the company's messages should encompass the different categories of the large spectrum of CSR as defined by Moreno & Capriotti (2009), depending on its focus of activities. This content could therefore be about social action, product and services or employment and human resources (Moreno & Capriotti, 2009). It is this content that must generate favorable attributions from stakeholders. Whether it reflects primarily intrinsic motives or also extrinsic motives, it should be aligned with the company's values and behavior in order to be perceived as credible by stakeholders (Forehand & Grier, 2003). Finally, the interactivity feature alludes specifically to the reciprocity, responsive and two-way communication (Morsing & Schultz, 2006) dimensions of social media that have been outlined by scholars (Nwagbara & Reid, 2013; Pressley, 2006; Schneider et al., 2007). We argue that interactivity here can be paralleled to Lasswell's 'Which channel' feature, as it refers to the ways by which information will flow from the company to the stakeholders and from the stakeholders back to the company. A successful CSR communication on corporate blogs can take advantage of all three features by effectively using the resources offered by such platforms (Gomez & Chalmeta, 2013). We describe in the next section the blog resources for the presentation dimension, the content dimension and finally the interactivity dimension.

2.3.2.2. The blog resources for effective CSR communication

The presentation of a company's identity, its CSR strategy as well as its CSR activities and how all three are aligned together, can be achieved through a number of tools and basic information that can be provided by the company on its blog. First of all, besides the regular postings, blogs can contain tools to display information in a more permanent manner about

the story behind the company's CSR commitments. That is, its vision, missions, goals, that are most often already provided on more traditional media like corporate websites. This is about sensegiving (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Morsing and Schultz, 2006) and pushing the information toward users (Clark, 2000) for them to be aware of the company's core values and CSR strategies. This will help demonstrating how CSR communication and actual behavior are aligned (Du et al., 2010). We refer here to the presence of a specific section providing such type of information, and call this in our framework the *availability of information about CSR and/or sustainability*. Second, because blogs are built upon technologies that enable easy sharing and linking of documents online (Fieseler et al., 2010), hyperlinks toward other corporate CSR content is very useful to reinforce the aforementioned alignment between CSR motives and CSR activities. This can be CSR dedicated webpages or CSR reports but also other dedicated social media like Facebook pages or YouTube channels with relevant CSR content. Hence, hyperlink to social media is also an important resource that can contribute to a comprehensive presentation of the company on the Web 2.0. We call these two resources *hyperlinks to corporate content* and *hyperlinks to social media content*. Because photos, videos and audio devices are important for the strengthening of a firm's message on the social media (Rybalko et al., 2010; Water et al., 2009), their presence can also play a part in the interactive presentation of the company's vision, mission and goals. We therefore define this element as *presence of photos, videos and audio devices*. Lastly, as blogs allow for a more personalized dialogue between the company and its public (Pressley, 2006; Schneider et al., 2007) it is important to not only display information about the company but also about the blog authors in charge of disseminating CSR information. Their number and especially their activity within or outside the company help visualizing the company's global CSR picture. We integrate this resource within the framework and name it *information about authors*.

The content of CSR corporate blogs includes the overall messages and information related to CSR that can enhance the company's CSR communication. The blog resources that can serve to effectively convey CSR information from the company to the users, from users to the company and between users as well, are fourfold. First, corporate blogs offer easy content archiving and retrieving possibilities thanks to tags and categories (Albrycht, 2006), The presence of content categories in order to classify or find messages related to a CSR specific topic as defined by Moreno and Capriotti (2009) is a useful tool. Likewise, the usage of tags can effectively improve archiving and retrieving content on a corporate blogs. We therefore

define these two resources as *presence of CSR categories* and *presence of CSR tags*. Furthermore, as social media like blogs are democratic and boundaryless platforms (Nwagbara & Reid, 2013), we argue that the source of content can also be an important element for a CSR communication to be effective. A blog can for instance present posts from the editorial team, from corporate authors, but also from external guests such as customer or supplier representants, in order to convey a multi-faceted image of CSR. We call this aspect *source of content*. Finally, social media and specifically blogs are real-time communication platforms (Pressley, 2006; Shneider et al., 2007) that usually allow for limited gatekeeping processes (Foux, 2006). Therefore we hold that the extent of monitoring can positively or negatively affect the public's perception of an authentic CSR communication, and define this resource as *monitorship policy*.

Interactivity is the last but core feature of CSR communication on corporate blogs as it allows for multidirectional, inclusive, and reciprocal flows of information. According to Shabnam et al. (2013), social media allow people to proactively participate to the discussion, and Du et al. (2010) add that social media are great tools to foster company-stakeholder dialogue. This is essential for CSR communication to move from a solely sensegiving standpoint to a sensegiving and sensemaking attitude (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Thus, the dialogue-related resources of blogs are key for an effective communication, we consider each of the following elements as separate resources in our analysis grid: *quantity of messages*, *frequency of messages*, *quantity of comments* and *quantity of answers from blog editors to comments*. We consider each of the aforementioned resources as a separate element in our analysis grid. As social media is first and foremost about social interactions, sharing is also an important part of interactivity. CSR communication must flow within the blog and spread out of the blog, relying on blog followers who become multipliers of CSR information (Fieseler et al., 2010). We call this the blog's (but also the authors', the message's) capacity to create the « buzz » on the Web 2.0. An important resources for a buzz to be possible is the availability of sharing tools on other social media, such as Facebook or Twitter widgets that give followers the means to relay the information within their own network of friends and followers. We also look at the effective sharing on such type of social media, and define these two resources as *buzz capacity: availability of sharing tools* and *buzz capacity: sharing on social media*. Finally for social media communication to be sensemaking (Morsing & Schultz, 2006), taking into account the ideas and feedback from stakeholders must be made possible (Kent, 2008), thanks to polls or surveys for instance. We name this last resource *feedback tools*. Through

the effective usage of all of these resources, companies can enhance their CSR communication on social media, that is their presentation, the content they disseminate and the interactivity they create with the public.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Explanation and justification of the methodology

This study was conducted under an exploratory research methodology, in order to investigate the emerging phenomenon of corporate blogging in the field of CSR communication and CSR strategy. According to the literature on research methodologies, exploratory research is an adequate methodology when little is known about the studied topic and when the researcher wants some flexibility while exploring the issue (Polonsky & Waller, 2011). Furthermore, the purpose of exploratory research is to attempt to generate some initial insights and understanding of a phenomenon in a very new context (Zikmund, 2003). Because there is still a lack of research available within the field of CSR communication (Dawkins, 2005), but also within the field of online stakeholder relationships, exploratory research is the best methodology for such type of study. What's more, social media is nowadays a phenomenon that is still relatively new, having been the subject of scarce research (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Since solid theories and frameworks about social media have not been conceptualized yet, exploratory research was a suitable enough methodology in order to study this new phenomenon with a fresh point of view.

We collected secondary data from the 9 corporate blogs of our sample. In order to analyze the aforementioned data, a qualitative analysis grid was developed on the basis of our literature review about CSR, CSR communication and social media. Gomez and Chalmers's (2013) conceptual framework of social media (Facebook and Twitter) features and resources was used as a basis to construct this grid. Then, CSR communication and social media prominent theories were used in order to adapt this framework to the blogging phenomenon. The preliminary grid was first tested through observation of CSR communication on corporate blogs from a larger sample of companies than the final sample of the case analysis (including companies from sectors such as telecommunications, financial services and consumer services). This iterative approach makes possible the identification of new items to investigate (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This allowed us to enrich the analysis grid thanks to elements discovered through observation, and develop adapted indicators to be able to compare the several blogs of our sample. Finally, we based our analysis of the sample on this final grid, in order to answer our research question.

3.2. Sample and selection criteria

The sample that has been selected for this study is composed of 9 companies in the Consumer Goods sector, that have been recognized in the CSR community (SMI-Wizness, 2012) for their distinctive CSR communication initiatives using social media, and that have at least one corporate blog focused on CSR issues. Among these 9 companies, 4 have an official corporate blog that focuses partly on CSR, and 5 have an official corporate blog devoted to CSR and/or sustainability.

In order to select the aforementioned sample, we went through the following steps. First, we researched all ranking reports about CSR communication in a social media perspective, using Google as a search engine. We used a variety of keywords for this search, such as “CSR communication social media ranking”, “CSR blogs ranking”, “best CSR corporate blogs”. There are actually still few rankings specifically focusing on CSR communication and social media. The SMI-Wizness Social Media Sustainability Index 2012 report³ was picked, for its up-to-date information, its broad scope of study, and the fact that it specifically focuses on CSR communication and social media. This index analyzes the CSR social media communication tools used by 400 companies from various sectors and various countries, and ranks the top 100 companies for their best practices in social media sustainability communication (the analysis criteria can be found in Figure 6 in the annex). Within these 100 companies, the best-represented sector is the Consumer Goods sector, with 27 companies ranked from the 1st position (Levi Strauss) to the 98th position (Eastman Kodak). We decided to focus on this sector in order to have the largest number possible of companies to screen because CSR dedicated corporate blogs are not a standard practice for the moment (among 400 companies, only 70 had blogs or blog-like online magazines with a focus on CSR and/or sustainability). Afterwards, we researched on the Internet which of these 27 companies had one or more official corporate blog(s) dealing with CSR issues. Using Google.com as a search engine, our research keywords were ‘name of the company’, plus the following words: ‘CSR blog’, ‘social blog’, ‘sustainability blog’. For this study, we focused only on publicly available blogs, because internal corporate blogs are confidential and non accessible to outsiders. Of the 27 companies, 16 had at least one corporate blog partly or fully dedicated to

³ SMI-Wizness (2012). Social media sustainability index. Retrieved on August 20, 2013, from <http://publisher.wizness.com/reports/the-smi-wizness-social-media-sustainability-index-2012>

CSR. Finally, we selected only the corporate blogs that had an exclusive or very strong focus on CSR issues in order to be able to compare blogs to one another without facing noise. As a result, this study focuses on 9 corporate blogs dedicated to or with a strong focus on CSR. We do not display the names of the companies and respective blogs in the study, but the detail of the nationality and sector of each company can be found in Table 6. Seven of these companies are American and are all part of the Fortune 500 list, the two remaining being a major French and a major Belgian company. Amongst the American multinationals, A manufactures household products, B and C manufacture food products and D manufactures beverages. E is an automotive manufacturer; F manufactures apparel and textile products, while G is a food retailer. The Belgian H company is a food retailer as well, while the French I is a food manufacturer. All these companies have been recognized for their CSR efforts during the past decade. What's more, all companies have developed modern and detailed communication tools on the traditional media, and have started to develop their presence on the social media during the past years. For instance, they all have created their corporate blogs between 2010 and 2012. Apart from their highly influential role in the business world, Fortune 500 companies are actually often considered as pathfinders for their use of ICT and as such have been the subject of a great number of studies about online communication (Sang et al., 2006). Understanding how these businesses use social media communication tools in a CSR perspective can therefore give us some insight into the future trends of CSR communication online (Gomez & Chalmeta, 2013).

Company	Nationality	Industry and sub-Industry
A	American	Industry: Consumer products; Sub-Industry: Household manufacturing
B	American	Industry: Consumer products ; Sub-Industry: Food manufacturing
C	American	Industry: Consumer products ; Sub-Industry: Food manufacturing
D	American	Industry: Consumer products ; Sub-Industry: Beverages
E	American	Industry: Automotive ; Sub-Industry: Automobile
F	American	Industry: Apparel & Textile Products ; Sub-Industry: Apparel, Footwear
G	American	Industry: Retail Staples ; Sub-Industry: Food Retailing
H	Belgian	Industry: Retail Staples ; Sub-Industry: Food Retailing
I	French	Industry : Consumer products ; Sub-Industry : Food manufacturing

Table 7: Nationalities, industries and sub-industries of selected sample (author's compilation)

3.3. Sources and data collection

Our research sources exclusively come from the archival material of the selected sample of corporate CSR blogs. The selected time span for data collection was the period from September 1st, 2012 to August 31st, 2013. The data was collected from the 9 corporate blogs

in order to frame the three key features of our CSR communication framework: The *presentation* of the company's identity, the *content* of the blog, and finally the *interactivity* of the discussions. First, the structure of the blog was apprehended in order to detect the number of pages to analyze. Then, within each page, data was manually collected from each message starting from the most recent and going toward the most ancient, which is the natural presentation format of blogs (Fieseler et al., 2010). Regarding *presentation*, we focused solely on the structure of the blog. We searched for all the elements that would provide the reader some insight into the company's values, missions and goals in general and more specifically in a CSR perspective: if there was a dedicated section and/or dedicated interactive content to this issue, if there were some hyperlinks toward dedicated sections on other online platforms such as traditional or social media, if there was information about the authors of the blog and their mission within the company. Regarding selection of data about the *content* of the blog, we looked both at the overall structure and the pages of the blog. We focused on the blog tools that allow classifying content, such as categories and tags. In order to detect and describe these categories, we relied on the 10 content categories defined by Moreno and Capriotti (2009). The authors have set these categories on the basis of an extensive review of various CSR sources such as the Global Reporting Initiative (2002) and of 6 corporate websites of Spanish companies of different sizes and from different industries (Acerinox, BBVA, Inditex, Metrovacesa and Telefonica). Furthermore, we also looked at the source of each posting during the one-year time span of the study and if messages are monitored or not, that is if comments have to first be validated by the editorial team before being published or not. Regarding *interactivity*, we specifically focused on the pages of the blog, in other words the sequence of chronological posts. The quantity and frequency of postings, interactions and sharing was assessed by collecting all the data from each message and summing up the data on a monthly basis in order to calculate averages that could be compared from one blog to another.

3.4. Criteria for interpretation of findings

Based on Gomez and Chalmeta's (2013) framework of analysis of communication strategies on social media (see Table 8) which we adapted to corporate blogs thanks to the theories reviewed previously, a set of indicators was defined on the basis of our literature review in order to assess the CSR communication of each company and compare corporate blogs to one another (see Table 9). 27 indicators were determined to evaluate the extent of implementation

of the 14 available resources on blogs that we have described in the part dedicated to our CSR communication framework.

Features	Resources employed
Presentation	Photos Videos Information regarding CSR (mission, vision, goals) Hyperlink to the company website or CSR/Sustainability online section Hyperlink to other social media channels (e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube)
Content	Post and tweets regarding economy Post and tweets regarding society Post and tweets regarding environment Post and tweets regarding labor practices Post and tweets regarding human rights Post and tweets regarding product responsibility Post and tweets regarding CSR/Sustainability annual reports Post and tweets for promoting special chats and discussions about CSR Post and tweets regarding CSR recognitions and honors Retweet or repost relevant CSR information (news from other organizations)
Interactivity	Presence of CSR interactive messages for community building Effective frequency of CSR interactive messages for community building Presence of CSR feedback for community building Effective frequency of feedback regarding CSR for community building Like or follow other interests, artists, organizations, causes, etc.

Table 8: Framework of CSR communication features on Facebook and Twitter (Gomez & Chalmeta, 2013, p. 10)

Features	Resources employed	Indicators for assessment
Presentation	Photos/Videos/Audio devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of photos • Presence of videos • Presence of audio devices
	Information about CSR/Sustainability identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure of the company's mission, values and goals
	Information about authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility of authors' names • Description of authors (internal/external to company, function)
	Hyperlinks to corporate CSR/Sustainability content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of hyperlinks to traditional media dedicated to CSR/Sustainability content • Nature of hyperlinks: corporate website, CSR report, etc.
	Hyperlinks to other social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of hyperlinks to other social media • Nature of hyperlinks: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, etc.
Content	Usage of CSR/Sustainability categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence and number of CSR categories • Extensiveness of CSR categories • Categories that regroup the largest number of messages
	Usage of CSR/Sustainability tags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of tags • Extensiveness of tags • Tags that regroup the largest number of messages
	Source of content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of 'corporate' messages • % of 'guest' messages
	Monitorship policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitored comments or not?
Interactivity	Quantity and frequency of CSR messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average number of posts per month • Average frequency of postings per week
	Quantity of comments and answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average number of comments per post • Average number of answers per comment
	'Buzz' capacity on social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of social media used for sharing • Nature of social media used for sharing
	Effective 'buzz' on social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average sharing per message on social media like Facebook, Twitter, Google+
	Feedback tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of polls and/or surveys

Table 9: Framework of analysis n°2: indicators for analysis (author's compilation)

Regarding the usage of photos, videos and audio devices, the indicators we look at are *presence of photos, videos, and audio devices*. To evaluate the degree of information about the company's CSR identity we want to know if the firm *discloses its missions, values and goals* on its blog. Information about authors can be analyzed through the *visibility of blog authors' names* as well as the *existence of a description of these authors*. We look at the *number and nature of hyperlinks to dedicated traditional media* (e.g. corporate websites) and *social media* (e.g. Facebook) for the assessment of hyperlink resources. So as to evaluate the usage of CSR and/or sustainability categories we examine the *existence and number of dedicated categories*, the *extensiveness of these categories* as well as the *categories that*

regroup the largest number of messages. We work on the same indicators for taggs: the existence and number of relevant taggs, the extensiveness of these taggs as well as the taggs that regroup the largest number of messages. We analyze the source of content by assessing the percentage of posts written by a corporate author and the percentage written by a guest author. The monitorship policy is always indicated on blogs, therefore the indicator for analysis is whether messages are monitored or not. Concerning dialogue, our indicators are the average number of posts per month, the average frequency of postings per week, the average number of comments per post and the average number of answers by the authors to comments. We evaluate the 'buzz' capacity thanks to the number of social media tools available for sharing information and the nature of these social media tools. We get the measure of the effective 'buzz' on social media through the average sharing per message on the aforementioned social media tools. Lastly, feedback resources are detected with the indicator presence of polls and/or surveys.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Although balancing the needs of multiple stakeholders has increasingly been part of companies' CSR endeavors since the 1980s, the recent rise of Web 2.0 technologies and social media platforms is changing the dynamics of CSR communication. Social media are also impacting awareness and perceptions of CSR efforts in an environment in which stakeholders are more and more active in holding firms accountable for their behavior. While strong pressure groups would previously raise awareness through campaigns, today opportunities for grassroots efforts to engage corporations are multiplying in the context of Web 2.0. The features of blogs – presentation, content and interactivity – enable to increase the visibility of CSR communication, the credibility of CSR efforts, and develop a dialogue-based relationship between the company and its stakeholders. Because blogs are two-way communication platforms, companies should be using them in an involvement communication strategy toward their stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). However our results demonstrate that this usage is diverse and reflects different CSR communication strategies that do not always focus on involvement and dialogue. Companies do not always take advantage of the features and resources of such type of platforms.

Although we lack empirically tested tools that could enable us to rank our sample of 9 corporate blogs, the analysis of the 27 indicators that were defined thanks to the literature review reveals that some blogs recurrently take more advantage of the resources and features of blog platforms than others, that lag behind. After applying the study's set of indicators to the selected sample (see Tables 10, 11 and 12) it was possible to delineate the common practices and the dividing lines. As such, three separate groups of corporate blogs stand out depending on their usage of blog features and resources. Each group reveals a different degree of CSR communication effectiveness on corporate blogs and the analysis of their characteristics allows us to identify the major trends in terms of impact on communication and on company-stakeholder relationships. We present these trends in the following parts. The blogs with a little presentation, a non-aligned content and a poor interactivity form the first group of companies. The companies that take advantage of the blog features and resources to display aligned presentation and content but do not manage to create an interactive platform, form the second group. Finally, the blogs that display aligned and extensive presentation and content as well as interactivity form the last group.

Resources employed	Indicators for assessment	Companies								
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Photos/Videos/Audio devices	Presence of photos	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Presence of videos	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X
	Presence of audio devices	-	X	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Information about CSR/ Sustainability identity	Disclosure of the company's mission, values and goals	X	X	X	-	X	-	X	-	X
Information about authors	Visibility of authors' names	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	-
	Description of authors	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-
Hyperlinks to corporate CSR/ Sustainability content	Number of hyperlinks to traditional media dedicated to CSR/Sustainability content	0	1	5	1	3	0	3	1	3
	Nature of hyperlinks: corporate website, CSR report, etc.	-	Corporate website	Sustainability reports; CSR news; CSR commitment	Corporate website	Sustainability report; CSR news; CSR commitment	-	Corporate website; Sustainability report; CSR news	Corporate website	Corporate website; CSR commitment
	Number of hyperlinks to other social media	3	7	7	5	3	2	4	1	3
Hyperlinks to other social media	Nature of hyperlinks: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, etc.	Facebook; Twitter; YouTube	Facebook; Twitter; YouTube; Instagram; LinkedIn; Flickr	Facebook; Twitter; YouTube; Instagram; Flickr; Google+	Facebook; Twitter; YouTube; Flickr; Slideshare	Facebook; Twitter; Pinterest	Facebook; Twitter	Facebook; Twitter; YouTube; Pinterest	Facebook	Facebook; Twitter; YouTube

Table 10: Results of the study – Presentation feature (Author's compilation)³

³ 'X' = Presence

Resources employed	Indicators for assessment	Companies								
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Usage of CSR/Sustainability categories	Existence and number of CSR categories	0	6	6	0	4	0	12	4	3
	Extensiveness of CSR categories	-	Strong	Strong	-	Low	-	Strong	Medium	Medium
	Categories that regroup the largest number of messages	-	Responsibility	Community	-	Energy Efficiency	-	Zero Waste	Products	People
Usage of CSR/Sustainability tags	Number of tags	25	63	28	82	42	41	45	10	66
	Extensiveness of tags	Low	Strong	Low	Strong	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Strong
	Tags that regroup the largest number of messages	Empowering Women; Sustainability	Sourcing; Nutrition; Sustainability	Sustainability; Community	Employee; Water; Inclusion	Energy Efficiency; Energy Stars	Social Responsibility	Sustainable living; Energy; Environment	Sustainability	Nutrition; Social Innovation; Sustainability
Source of content	% of 'corporate' messages	100%	70%	67%	100%	88%	74%	75%	-	-
	% of 'guest' messages	0%	30%	33%	0%	12%	26%	25%	-	-
Monitorship policy	Monitored comments?	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

Table 11: Results of the study – Content feature (Author’s compilation)

Resources employed	Indicators for assessment	Companies								
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Quantity and frequency of CSR messages	Average number of posts per month	1,9	18,8	8,5	1,6	11,2	3,0	11,9	3,6	14,0
	Average frequency of postings per week	0,4	4,7	2,0	0,4	3,0	0,8	3,4	0,9	3,2
Quantity of comments and answers	Average number of comments per post	2,7	1,4	0,3	0,4	0,3	1,3	1,0	0,2	0,1
	Average number of answers per comment	0,5	0,5	0,4	0,0	0,4	0,4	0,6	0,2	1,2
	Number of social media used for sharing	3	2	6	2	3	2	3	0	3
'Buzz' capacity on social media	Nature of social media used for sharing	Facebook; Twitter; Google+	Facebook; Twitter	Facebook; Twitter; LinkedIn; Reddit; Pinterest; Tumblr	Facebook; Twitter	Facebook; Twitter; Pinterest	Facebook; Twitter	Facebook; Twitter; Google+	-	Facebook; Twitter; Google+
Effective 'buzz' on social media	Average sharing per message on social media like Facebook, Twitter, Google+, etc.	126,0	23,1	15	12	12,5	10,9	10,7	-	6,9
Feedback tools	Presence of polls and/or surveys	-	X	-	-	-	-	X	-	-

Table 12: Results of the study – Interactivity feature (Author's compilation)

4.1. Blogs: a tool to increase the visibility and accessibility of CSR communication

Out of our sample, the 3 blogs of companies F, D and A demonstrate a poor usage of blog features and resources. These blogs take advantage of only some of the presentation resources and miss out much of the content and interactivity features. They display some presentation of the company's corporate identity and CSR motives in the form of a dedicated paragraph or section on the platform, but the extensiveness of this feature is relatively poor compared to other corporate blogs. More specifically, the poor degree of interactivity of the presentation is noticeable, while it has been demonstrated that such type of resources have a strong impact on social media followers (Sweetser, 2010). There are often little or no photos and videos to support the few lines about the corporate identity and strategy. On the other hand, these blogs present a significant number of hyperlinks toward the most developed social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and to some extent LinkedIn. Consequently, users can easily 'surf' from the corporate blog to other corporate social media channels such as corporate Facebook profiles or corporate Twitter accounts, these social media platform being dedicated or not to CSR issues. Contrasting with the presence of social media hyperlinks, the blogs of this group of companies do not present any link toward corporate traditional media such as CSR reports, although these companies' corporate websites often display a direct link to the company's corporate blog. Displaying such type of hyperlinks allows redirecting the public toward extensive and more formal CSR information that is available on all of these companies' websites. For instance, CSR reports contain performance indicators or precise examples about the company's commitments that are not necessarily present on CSR corporate blog and can complement the blog communication. This may suggest that such companies still do not consider their blog as a premier source of information. Companies may assume that interested stakeholders will not visit the blog and will instead directly search for the information they need within traditional communication channels. This is a missed opportunity to further push CSR information toward the general public. Moreover, 2 out of the 3 blogs display precise information about their blog authors. It is used as a communication strategy in order to demonstrate that CSR issues are not exclusively a prerogative of the CSR managers or communication department, but on the contrary issues that are tackled by diversified departments such as finance, human resources, marketing, etc. These companies also take advantage of this presentation tool to show that authors come from varying horizons.

Some are executives; others are managers or simple employees. Most authors are internal to the corporation, but some are external to the company, for instance employed by one of the company's suppliers. This personalized dialogue has a positive impact on CSR communication as a number of studies provide empirical evidence to the fact that the public responds positively to the human voice companies can communicate through social media channels (Sweetser & Metzgar, 2007; Sweetser, 2010). These blogs therefore attempt to put a name on the face of CSR by making their communication more personalized. Apart from their common presentation characteristics, these 3 blogs share the fact of having little developed content and interactivity features. First of all, they do not display any content category in order to access specific subjects in an easy and intuitive manner. This prevents from understanding the building blocks of the company's CSR communication and strategy. In addition, tags are not specific enough (exaggerated usage of the tag 'sustainability' while more precise tags are missing for example). Finally, some of these blogs are monitored, preventing from a real-time communication. On the interactivity side, blog posts present several sharing tools on social media such as Twitter, Facebook or Google + sharing hyperlinks, but the effective 'buzz effect' of posts on social media remains low (posts were shared on social media 11,4 times on average). In addition, none of the 3 blogs display feedback tools and all 3 present less than 3 blog posts per month, which represents a frequency of less than 1 post per week on average. On average these companies post 2,1 messages per month, and if we consider that the aim of blogging is to inform and generate dialogue opportunities, it is obvious that these blogs do not create the circumstances for an effective discussion to take place with blog users. The little number and little regularity of posting automatically reduce the level of activity of the blog, and do not give the incentive to actively follow it because there is little, if nothing, to actually follow.

To sum-up, these blogs do not take advantage of many resources available on such platforms to create a dynamic dialogue. However they display a great number of following and sharing tools on other social media channels – predominantly Twitter and Facebook. The blog in these cases is therefore used as an additional mean of communication adapted to such type of new media. Companies have created the tools to make word of mouth and 'virality' possible, thus to allow for increased visibility and accessibility of their CSR communication on the Internet as a whole. On the other hand, they have not insisted on the coherence and exhaustiveness of the content of their blog, they give the feeling they control comments, and finally, do not create the activity favorable to discussions. Hence, we argue that companies

use these blogs as a mean to increase the visibility and accessibility of their CSR communication, and as such, will only have a possible effect on stakeholders' awareness about the company's CSR efforts.

4.2. Blogs: a tool to increase the legitimacy and credibility of CSR communication

The 4 blogs from companies I, H, E and C were found to focus more particularly on the credibility and legitimacy of their content, in an aligned manner with the company presentation. On the other hand, these blogs were also characterized by a visible lack of interactivity and dialogue, such as the group described above. Concerning presentation, these companies do have a section dedicated to the presentation of their mission, values and goals, where they explain how CSR is integrated within the company's identity, strategy and behavior. In addition, this presentation is always supported by the usage of interactive content such as photos and videos. Interestingly, these blogs focus relatively less on the information about their authors compared to the previous group (the authors' belonging to the company or not, their function, etc.). Some blogs display messages that are not personalized but instead signed by the editorial team as a whole, which goes against the idea that personalized dialogue increases effectiveness of the dialogue. On the contrary, they display a diversified and extensive set of hyperlinks toward social media but also traditional media that complement the online information about the company's identity and its CSR motives and activities. Besides redirecting the user toward the companies' social media pages such as the dedicated CSR facebook page of the company I, these blogs present several hyperlinks toward the respective company's corporate website, its most recent CSR report, and interestingly, toward specific CSR content. This is used as an opportunity to redirect users toward dedicated CSR content such as for example special commitments to the issues of obesity or water management in the case of company C. These are key social and environmental concerns of the consumer food manufacturing industry. Regarding content, this group of blogs distinguishes itself by its relatively strong focus on CSR content. First, their tag naming is better chosen than in the case of the previous group as it is more specific and extensive. Second, categories are also more specific. These blogs are characterized by a set of 3 to 6 categories, which mostly refer to 4 of the content categories defined by Moreno and Capriotti (2009), which are 'social action', 'environmental action', 'product and services' as well as 'relationship with stakeholders'. Although 6 of the content categories defined by the two authors are left aside, it is important to notice that these blogs' categories are often aligned

with the identity and CSR motives stressed in the blog. This is the case of company E that created a 'waste reduction' and an 'energy efficiency' category, making it easier to quickly explore information about this specific issue. Moreover, the content source of these blogs is corporate but also non-corporate with a significant usage of guest posts. Finally, the apparent absence of monitoring also is specific to this group, with 3 out of 4 blogs that are not monitored. On the other hand, for 3 out of the 9 companies of our sample a number of negative comments was found, while for the others all comments during the past year were favorable. This suggests that some companies may monitor comments once they are posted by removing comments that contain negative content although they do not explicitly say that their blog is monitored. This information is not verifiable with our analysis tools. With regards to missing or poorly developed features, the 4 blogs of this group display a clear lack of interactivity. Although their average number of blog posts per month is higher than for the first group, it remains little, with less than 15 posts per month, and an average frequency of 2,5 posts per week. Furthermore, even if these companies do post more messages, their actual dialogue with blog followers is weak and sporadic. On average, their posts received between 0,1 and 0,3 comments, corresponding to a 10% to 30% rate of return from blog followers. Similarly, comments received between 0,2 and 1,2 answers per comment, with the average being 0,5 answer per comment. Therefore, even if the average number of comments is already low, the companies do not answer back one out of two times, thus missing an opportunity for creating effective dialogue. Although it is difficult to perceive a clear trend, these blogs also miss interactivity because some (1 out of 4) do not display links to share posts on social media like Facebook or Twitter, and create little word of mouth on social media. Indeed, the average number of 'shares' on other social media platforms is 11,4 shares per post with a few viral posts and a great number of posts that were shared less than 2 or 3 times. Finally, these blogs lack a fundamental tool of two-way communication that is feedback tools, contrary to 2 blogs of our sample, as we will see afterwards.

Contrary to the first group of blogs, these blogs do insist on the coherence, structure and relative exhaustiveness of the content that is communicated to the public. The companies focus more on their corporate identity, as well as their values and goals regarding operations as a whole and CSR in particular, and attempt to communicate about their behaviors accordingly. Above increasing the visibility of their communication on social media channels, they seem to seek achieving more credible and legitimate communication about their CSR activities. However, these blogs do not manage to create interactive exchanges with the

public. This leads us to infer that such type of communication on blogs can possibly affect awareness of the public about CSR, but also confidence by helping generating more favorable attributions from stakeholders.

4.3. Blogs: a tool to increase dialogue and involvement with stakeholders

Only the 2 blogs of companies G and B displayed real interactivity. Overall, the presentation and content of these blogs are developed, though relatively a little less than for the first and second group, and both blogs present substantially more dialogue and feedback tools than the ones of the groups previously discussed. Similarly to other blogs, they present the company's motives and identity and use a full set of interactive devices like photos, videos and audio. They exhibit hyperlinks toward CSR dedicated and corporate social media platforms, as well as hyperlinks toward traditional media. Contrary to the second group, these hyperlinks are limited to the companies' corporate websites and do not redirect toward more CSR specific content. Regarding content, these two blogs display an extensive set of categories and tags to classify, archive and retrieve CSR content. Most of the topics are about 'social action' (both blogs display a 'community' category) and 'environmental action' ('sustainability' or 'environment' categories are present in both cases). The 'employment and human resources' and 'corporate ethics' content categories are much less referred to. Because CSR is usually associated with social initiatives due to its name, and to environment because of the public's attention toward sustainability, it was expected that businesses would communicate more about societal and environmental actions than other CSR topics. Society and environment are part of the basic areas of CSR, and companies commonly support social and environmental initiatives when they are promoting CSR for the first time (Cohen, 2010). Interestingly, whatever the group of blogs, the 'corporate governance' category was never found. We may assume that this is because companies assume governance issues especially interest shareholders or investors, and that these stakeholders are more susceptible to analyze the company's CSR report rather than such type of corporate blog. Although both blogs present a number of categories and tags that allow easy archieval and retrieval of information, the scope of CSR is much broader than what is currently published, such as demonstrated by the list of 10 content issues developed by Moreno and Capriotti (2009). The same way companies increasingly focus on a large panel of CSR issues on their traditional communication platforms, they should broaden their focus of communication on their blog in order to convey the whole CSR scenario. Regarding interactivity, dialogue is favored by a stronger and more

frequent number of blog posts. These companies posted on average between 12 and 19 messages per month during the past 12 months. That is 1 post every 2 days on average. Additionally, a post received between 1 and 1,5 comment on average, which is a much higher level of interactivity compared to the two previous groups of blogs. Importantly, feedback tools such as polls and survey are available on these blogs, thus creating an opportunity for stakeholder involvement. One poll is displayed on one of the blogs, and a survey on the other. Such type of survey can help the company gather precise information about the needs of the public regarding its CSR communication. In this case, some of the questions of the survey were: *What blog category are you MOST likely to read a post from?* or *Have you ever shared a link to a post on the blog through email or social media? If yes, what have you used to share that link?* However, even if the interactivity feature is more developed on these 2 blogs, there are still avenues for improvement. Specifically, blogs still present a little rate of answers from the company to the comments. The analysis of these answers reveals that more than 50% of comments remain unanswered (0,4 comments received an answer on average), which can be an obstacle to dialogue. Contrary to the prevalent trend in our sample, companies should be getting more involved in the discussions for their CSR communication to be more effective as the discussion part of a blog post is considered to be an essential element for relationship building (McCorkindale, 2010). Finally, these blogs display social media sharing tools on each post but their buzz effect is unclear as the frequency of sharing on social media profiles is variable. This means that blog authors still have trouble understanding what the public 'likes' and wants to read, therefore still has trouble taking advantage of such type of interactive tools to adapt CSR communication to the requirements of stakeholders.

The blogs of the G and B companies are therefore the only ones that demonstrated real interactivity, which is a key characteristic of two-way communication. The fact of publishing on a regular basis, but also gathering comments and feedback from blog followers indicates that information is pushed but also pulled by the company (Clark, 2000). Because they also take advantage of the presentation and content features, these blogs present the most complete utilization of the tools available for CSR communication on blogs. Besides increasing the visibility of CSR communication on social media and the credibility of the company's speech, these blogs attempt to actually create some discussions with their public, although there is still a lot that can be done to build a constructive dialogue with stakeholders. According to literature, these blogs are therefore the closest to generate involvement from stakeholders, besides helping triggering their awareness and confidence toward the company's CSR efforts.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. General conclusions

The objective of this exploratory research was to find out *how do corporate blogs dedicated to communication about companies' corporate social responsibility manage to enhance company-stakeholder relationships* through the study of 9 corporate blogs and the application of a CSR communication framework of analysis. These blogs utilize with a varying intensity key features of blogs and their respective resources. We argue that the extent to which a company takes advantage of the presentation, content and interactivity features of blogs, along with their dedicated resources, reflects the company's CSR communication objectives toward stakeholders. In other words, the degree of utilization of blog tools determines the effectiveness of CSR 2.0 communication in the creation of company-stakeholder relationships. Indeed, an effective presentation allows to increase the visibility and accessibility of CSR communication and strategy. An effective presentation will also help improving the legitimacy and credibility of CSR communication, but only if it is accompanied by a convincing content. Therefore, content will be also key to achieve legitimacy and credibility toward stakeholders. Finally, optimal interactivity can foster involvement from stakeholders, but only if the communication is already visible, accessible, legitimate and credible enough to create effective dialogue. As far as presentation is concerned, the company's identity and CSR motives that were previously only available through traditional media and tools like online CSR reports, become reachable from the Internet as a whole, in an interactive and impactful manner. Furthermore, knowing who communicates can help put a name on a face, contrasting with the usually vague CSR, Public Relations or Corporate Communication department in charge of diffusing CSR messages to the public on traditional media. CSR communication and strategy becomes more visible and accessible to stakeholders. On the other hand, content that is well managed and demonstrates alignment between the identity and actual behavior of the company can increase the credibility of CSR communication. Light monitorship policies and the fact of relying on internal but also external sources of content can help demonstrating that the CSR communication is no more mere public relations tactics, but actually meaningful and transparent, therefore legitimate. Finally, once CSR communication becomes visible, accessible and credible, there is a need for two-way communication for stakeholders to get involved. Frequent dialogue, sharing on

other social media platforms and requests for feedback can help conveying the idea that stakeholders' voice counts, can enable better understanding from both parts, and ultimately create the grounds for company-stakeholder collaboration in the form of value co-creation for the CSR communication and strategy to become sustainable. Because blogs are intrinsically two-way communication platforms, companies can fully take advantage of their qualities only if they understand the mutual importance of these three features, or three steps. Therefore, an important implication of our framework is that an effective CSR communication on blogs that has a strong and positive impact on company-stakeholder relations will only be achieved if the corporate blog succeeds in achieving all three stated objectives.

Companies that take advantage the least of blog features and resources, such as the first group of blogs, mainly have an effect on the visibility of the CSR communication in the sense that what was before communicated solely on traditional media becomes now easily accessible and shareable on social media, in a democratic manner. These blogs can therefore enhance stakeholder awareness about the company's CSR motives and endeavors. Blogs that display developed and aligned presentation and content features but still exhibit poor interactivity, such as the second group, act on the visibility of CSR communication – thus on stakeholder awareness – but also on the credibility and legitimacy of the company's CSR message, which can favor confidence building amongst stakeholders. Finally, some corporate blogs as illustrated by the third group demonstrate more usage of all features and particularly the resources to create interactivity. These blogs can allow the company to go one step further in its CSR communication strategy and generate discussions with its public. We argue that company-stakeholder dialogue can ultimately generate involvement from stakeholders into the company's CSR communication and strategy.

However, this study demonstrated that blogs do not generate enough dialogue yet. Overall, these blog platforms are not used at full capacity for engaging stakeholders in an ongoing dialogue because companies utilize their CSR blog primarily as another traditional media channel, and therefore miss the opportunities for participation, engagement, and communication that blogs intrinsically make available. Most companies are making use of corporate blogs in the same ways they used the Web 1.0 media, as a means of pushing messages toward their public rather than as a strategic means of interacting with stakeholders and bringing information from the environment into organizational decision-making. Even the most interactive blogs are far from creating an ongoing mutual communication with

stakeholders, and are more a push than a push-and-pull tool for their firm. For this reason, the studied companies seem to still follow an information communication strategy, as defined by Morsing and Schultz (2006). The overall lack of interactivity amongst our sample can have two explanations. First, awareness and favorable attributions from stakeholders might need to first become stronger in order to foster dialogue. CSR blogs can be a useful tool to improve this. Second, blog resources for interactivity such as feedback or social media sharing tools must become more utilized by companies, as several blogs do not present all these resources. This brings us to the issue of the management of blogs: who is in charge of managing the social media communication within the company? What is their corporate function? Have them been trained for this purpose? Furthermore, for an effective dialogue to take place, companies must understand the importance of frequency. Contrary to the static web pages of corporate websites, creating a presence on social media requires time and attention in order to maintain an ongoing activity (Sweetser, 2010). When hosting corporate blogs it is important to post messages very regularly, which is the case for only 2 companies out of the 9 of our sample. Therefore, CSR communication requires a deeper and continuing commitment, which is a different perspective than communication on traditional media.

This study also revealed that blogs do not take enough advantage of the power of 'virality' and word of mouth, though these concepts are intrinsic to social media tools, making it easy to repost and share content across the Web. Although these blogs all display hyperlinks toward social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter, the 'buzz effect' of their posts is still far from recurrent. This is a resource companies need to understand how to use since 'virality' of messages adds an extra layer of relationship with stakeholders. For instance, customers can share organizational content with some of their non-customer friends that were not originally targeted by a campaign, thereby increasing the scope of CSR communication (Sweetser, 2010).

Overall, the study therefore reveals that selected companies are closer from CSR strategies focused on stakeholder awareness and confidence, than real stakeholder involvement. In fact, our sample of blogs is still far from engaging companies and stakeholder in a value co-creation cycle as defined by Porter and Kramer (2006). However, the heterogeneity of situations amongst these 9 blogs and the fact that some blogs manage to create more reciprocal communications than others leads us to suggest the potential of such social media platform in a CSR and business perspective, if executed and managed skillfully. Corporate

blogs can provide a wide range of opportunities for companies to interact with customers, suppliers, employees and other stakeholders, thereby offering new potential for product differentiation, corporate image enhancement, and ultimately competitive advantage. For the CSR blogging experience to be fruitful, organizations therefore need not only to understand how to better use the available tools on these channels but also work on the communication strategy behind them.

5.2. Limitations of the study

This study's findings need to be considered with caution as there has been little research in the field of CSR communication on social media. For instance, Gomez and Chalmeta's framework about CSR communication on Facebook and Twitter corporate profile is the only attempt of creation of an analysis grid that we have found. Besides having been generated from social media observation, it has not been re-utilized or completed by scholars up to now as it is very recent, and still needs to be empirically tested. Social media constantly evolve and offer new communication opportunities with the emergence of technology innovations, however academic literature cannot follow the same speed, leading to gaps like this one. Another major limitation of this study is the fact that it was not possible to study the actual content of messages in order to find out how companies communicate but also what do they communicate. A content analysis would have been very useful but was not chosen for the purpose of this study. Understanding differences of speeches from one company to another but also the content of comments and answers would provide useful insight into the quality of information, which is a very important aspect of social media communication (Sweetser, 2010). Another aspect that was deliberately put aside is the overall activity generated by the studied blogs on the social media in general, and the blogosphere in particular. It was not possible to calculate the number of blog followers nor to know the nature of blog followers, as the Internet tools providing such kind of information are solely available to one who possesses the administrator codes of the blog. This data would provide statistics about the number of people who visit the blog and read some posts without commenting them. Finally, the selected sample of blogs is too limited for our results to be applicable to corporate blogs as a whole.

5.3. Implications for future research

The weaknesses of this study suggest avenues for further research. Concerning the limited sample of selected companies, it would be interesting to analyze a greater number of corporate blogs dedicated to CSR, specifically from other industries than the consumer goods one, and from more diversified nationalities. In order to further study CSR communication in a social media perspective additional research about other channels such as Facebook or Twitter corporate profiles is also necessary. Furthermore, a content analysis of these social media messages will help evaluating the content and quality of CSR communication on these platforms and compare them to the ones of traditional means of communication. Additionally, quantitative research about the generated activity of a large sample of CSR blogs within the blogosphere, on the model of Fieseler et al.'s study of McDonald's CSR blog (2010), will serve understanding the connections that corporate blogs create, or fail to create, with stakeholders. Finally, concerning the issue of the lack of interactivity, qualitative research is needed in the field of stakeholder blogging. This will enable to better grasp what the public actually wants to read on corporate blogs and what are the mechanisms behind stakeholder involvement into dialogue with a company.

5.4. Managerial Implications

This study suggests there is a lot to be done in a managerial perspective in order to align the usage of corporate blogs with their intrinsic two-way communicative nature. Business practices would benefit from a better understanding of the role of quantity and frequency of posting, commenting and answering on corporate blogs, regarding corporate communication as a whole and CSR communication in particular. Second, the importance of creating feedback has yet to be outlined, for companies to better assess their stakeholders' reactions to CSR practices. Finally, because social media are changing tools, they require from their users a constant effort to keep up with the technological speed so as to take fully advantage of their scope of possibilities, including in the area of company-stakeholder relationships.

6. REFERENCES

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7. ANNEX

Figure 6: Evaluation criteria for the SMI-Wizness Social Media Sustainability Index 2012
(SMI-Wizness, 2012, p.6)

Successful social media communication is based around a combination of frequent, topical, relevant, open, authentic, creative and innovative content and dialogue. As such we judge each company's social media sustainability communication efforts based on:

- How often they publish, update their sustainability social media channels?
- How transparent they are in allowing comments and responding to comments and conversation?
- How authentic is their social media content? Do they communicate what the company is doing or what it says it would like to do?
- How creative and innovative is the social media content?
- How useful is the information and conversation to the community?
- How "social" is the Sustainability or Corporate Responsibility Report?