

МАЈКА

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STUDY ON LEGO GROUP'S CSR COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ КСВ LEGO GROUP У СОЦІАЛЬНИХ ЗМІ

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*The following research analysed how LEGO Group communicates corporate social responsibility (CSR) through social media. It is an in-depth study case that can be considered a first step towards understanding how social media can be used to communicate CSR and, consequently, help to improve corporate and brand's image, and, engage more stakeholders.*

*У дослідженні проаналізовано комунікації LEGO Group у сфері корпоративної соціальної відповідальності (КСВ) через соціальні мережі. Це поглиблене дослідження, яке можна вважати першим кроком до розуміння того, як соціальні медіа можуть використовуватися для комунікації у сфері КСВ, а отже, допомогти поліпшити імідж корпорації та бренду і залучити більше зацікавлених сторін.*

**Keywords:** corporate social responsibility, social media, digital marketing, social marketing, LEGO Group

**Ключові слова:** корпоративна соціальна відповідальність, соціальні медіа, цифровий маркетинг, соціальний маркетинг, LEGO Group

## INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility on digital media channels has increased in recent years. It is now known as an important part of corporate online communication and branding. Big multinational organizations, aware of the increasing demands of their stakeholders have been implementing CSR into their social media communication strategies. Consumers' awareness of corporate social responsibility has increased over the past decades, and this has grown to the level that affects consumer behavior and purchase intention. Information about companies' socially responsible commitment is important to be transmitted to their stakeholders by presenting the real developed actions. An assertive and engaging CSR communication strategy through social media provides tangible benefits to the brand like corporate image improvement achievement of better economic benefits to the society and environment.

No study yet has analyzed LEGO Group's usage of digital social marketing to communicate the company's CSR campaigns and actions, and the engagement of posts related to LEGO's corporate social responsibility. This paper aims at filling the gap. The author interest in the topic and the company is justified by the increasing importance of CSR in the global economy and the lead reputation LEGO Group holds in this field.

LEGO Group was chosen as the target company for this study case because it is a multinational company with global presence, and currently occupies the first position in the last Global CSR RepTrak [1], an international research carried out by the Reputation Institute that analyzes the best companies under a corporate social responsibility perspective. Moreover, according to Adweek, LEGO Group is the number one brand on social media and YouTube in the toy industry [2], and

according to Mediapost, the company is the most engaging brand in the world on social media [3].

To establish the corporate line and branding general guidelines for LEGO Group, the company's official website was carefully checked [4]. LEGO's corporate responsibility information are embedded into the "About Us" section of the website and named "Responsibility". Other digital marketing links were taken from the company's home page and through internet search. The study took into consideration only digital marketing official channels with English-language content.

The social networks chosen for the analysis in this research were Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. This choice was made because these media reach a big and diverse audience, are used worldwide and are the most active within LEGO's communication strategy on social networks. After having established the studied social media, all the content of any kind (images, videos, gifs, texts and links) posted by the LEGO Group on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn within the stipulated time period – between January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2018 – were collected and analyzed. The content was then classified according to whether they were linked with the company's corporate social responsibility or not. To study how LEGO shares CSR-related content on YouTube, the researcher searched for videos featuring words such as "CSR", "responsibility", and "sustainability" as well as the key passwords LEGO uses in its responsible practice like "children", "environment" and "people". To carry out this analysis, the post was considered as a CSR message if its content was related to at least one of the CSR categories established by the Global Reporting Initiative (economic, environmental, labour relations, human rights, society and product responsibility) or to other CSR topics specific to the company's CSR strategy and actions. This research

analyzes the one-way communication, which takes into consideration the messages transferred by the company to its stakeholders, but not the other way around [5].

The study analyzed LEGO Group's posts about corporate social responsibility on social media, their frequency, volume, engagement and performance in comparison to posts about general topics. These posts' content form and substance were also analyzed. The form is related to how the communication is realized; it analyzes the use of texts, images, videos, links, emojis, hashtags, speech, among other format factors. The substance, on the other hand, is related to the core message transferred by the content.

**STUDY OBJECTIVE**

The main objective of this research paper was to answer the research question "How does LEGO Group communicate corporate social responsibility through social media?" To support the main objective, this study considered some specific objectives that helped providing a better response to the main research question. These objectives analyzed what are the main social media channels LEGO uses, what is the frequency of CSR-related posts on LEGO's social networks, how engaging is the LEGO's social responsible content on social media, and what are the form and substance of the posts called to communicate LEGO's corporate social responsibility on social platforms.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

This paper's research method involved a study case, which is relevant for investigating a specific phenomenon in its natural context. It considers a descriptive single-case approach to critically test a significant theory, more precisely the communication of corporate social respon-

sibility via social media [6]. The article, which is a qualitative, interpretative, inductive and descriptive research, used the support theoretical framework to describe and interpret how corporate social responsibility and social media communication are connected and used by a big multinational company. In this case, it was specifically applied to the study case of LEGO Group.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The data obtained showed (table 1) that, in average, 8 % of LEGO Group's content on social media deals with corporate social responsibility. Facebook is the social network with the highest frequency of CSR-related posts (5.3 posts/month), LinkedIn ranks second with an average of 4.7 posts / month, Instagram – with 3 posts in average / month and Twitter – with just 2.7 was the social media channel with the lowest observed frequency.

In terms of engagement, the relevance of CSR posts is analysed under two different perspectives: the average engagement for CSR-related posts and the representativeness of CSR engagement over the total engagement. Even though LinkedIn is the most representative social media in terms of CSR engagement, with 27.6 %, of the total engagement being represented by socially responsible content, the average engagement is relatively low in comparison to other digital media channels. Instagram's CSR-related posts' engagement accounts for 2.8% of the total engagement of this media but its big reach leads to a high average engagement of more than 40,000 actions / post. Facebook and Twitter presented similar results in terms of the representativeness of CSR engagement, with 2.1 % and 2 %, respectively. However, in terms of average engagement absolute numbers, Facebook is 3.5 times more engaging than Twitter.

Table 1

**LEGO's CSR communication on digital media in 2018 (January – March)**

[composed by the author based on [7, 8, 9, 10]]

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn	Total
<b>Total Posts</b>	171	98	183	116	568
<b>CSR-Related Posts</b>	16	8	9	14	47
<b>% of CSR-Related Posts/Total Posts</b>	9 %	8 %	5 %	12 %	8 %
<b>Frequency of CSR Posts/month</b>	5.3	2.7	3	4.7	15.7
<b>Average Engagement of CSR Posts</b>	1,294	365	41,240	437	8,530
<b>CSR Engagement/Total Engagement</b>	2.1 %	2 %	2.8 %	27.6 %	5.5 %

YouTube was not considered in this cross-analysis because its characteristics requested a different analysis focused more on the content, form and substance.

In order to analyse the content characteristics of the CSR-related posts on the five studied digital media channels, this research follows Yin [6] methodology that analyses the content under its form and substance. The form is related to how the communication is performed, it analyses the use of texts, images, videos, links, emojis, hashtags, speech, among other format factors. The substance, on the other hand, is related to the core of the content of the transferred message (table 2).

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram use the same content form and substance for their posts. LEGO often creates a post on one of these social media and also

uploads it to the other ones. Short messages, images, short videos, stop-motion animations, questions, hashtags, external links, emoticons and tags are the main content forms used in these channels. LinkedIn uses similar content form, but it applies a different language, more focused on a professional audience and that also includes longer videos dedicated to CSR actions and projects. On YouTube, the main content form is videos, short-motion animations, short descriptions of the posted content and hashtags. YouTube followers are more interested in the visual content than the written text, what's important is the message included in the videos.

All of the content substance is related to LEGO's CSR campaigns and actions like LEGO Life app, Power of Play and Partners in Play campaign with UNICEF,

Learning through Play, Plants from Plants campaign, Do not Disturb Playtime campaign, waste management, CO<sub>2</sub> reduction or helping kids in the hospitals. The CSR-

related posts published over LEGO's different digital channels haven't presented significant differences in terms of content substance.

Table 2

**LEGO's CSR content form and substance on digital media in 2018 (January – March)**

[composed by the author based on [7, 8, 9, 10, 11]]

	Content Form	Content Substance
<b>Facebook, Twitter and Instagram</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• short text - maximum 2 sentences</li> <li>• images</li> <li>• short videos</li> <li>• stop-motion animations</li> <li>• questions</li> <li>• hashtags</li> <li>• links to other pages and websites</li> <li>• emoticons</li> <li>• tagged partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEGO Life - online safety for children;</li> <li>• Power of Play campaign with UNICEF - kid's right to play;</li> <li>• Plants from Plants - sustainable LEGO bricks;</li> <li>• Do not Disturb Playtime campaign - uninterrupted family time;</li> <li>• Earth Hour -LEGO focus on combining climate change and reducing resource use;</li> </ul>
<b>LinkedIn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• short text - maximum 2 sentences</li> <li>• links to other digital channels</li> <li>• hashtags</li> <li>• videos</li> <li>• images</li> <li>• questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building LEGO ornaments to help kids in hospitals;</li> <li>• Building a safe social network for kids - LEGO Life;</li> <li>• Learning through Play - learning opportunities for children;</li> <li>• Do not Disturb campaign- parents to play with their kids;</li> <li>• Plants from Plants campaign - plant-based plastic sources;</li> </ul>
<b>YouTube</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• videos</li> <li>• title and short description of the video</li> <li>• hashtags</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEGO 100% renewable energy and reduce of CO<sub>2</sub>;</li> <li>• Build the Change campaign - kids to build sustainable future;</li> <li>• Partners in Play campaign - LEGO Duplo and UNICEF partnership to bring play opportunities children;</li> <li>• LEGO Life - safe kid's online;</li> <li>• Plants from Plants campaign - plant-based plastic sources;</li> <li>• Building LEGO ornaments to help kids in hospitals;</li> </ul>

The cross-analysis of all previously presented data shows that LEGO Group dedicates an average of 8 % of its posts on social media to the company's corporate social responsibility campaigns and actions. These posts content is presented in the form of videos and images combined with short descriptive texts, and are responsible for more than 5 % of the digital engagement which represents an average of 8,530 engagement actions/post.

### CONCLUSIONS

This paper achieves its main research objective by answering the core research question and understanding how LEGO Group communicates corporate social responsibility through social media. The company has a strong presence on all the main worldwide used social networks – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube, and dedicates 8 %, in average, of its content in these media vehicles to engaging corporate social responsibility posts featuring the organization's socially responsible actions and projects.

This publication allows its consideration for related studies and encourages future research. For future studies, the limitations, which lead to future improvements, advise to consider a longer period of time that allows a longitudinal analysis. It is important to consider that digital communication, mainly over social media, is

changing all the time and the period of time to be analysed needs to be carefully selected to lead to quality results. In order to achieve findings that can be more representative and give more knowledge for the development of a solid theoretical framework connecting CSR and social media communication, another suggestion is to consider more companies that are known by applying best practices about CSR on future studies. Lastly, future studies can expand the scope to a two-way communication analysis that can provide better findings not only about the content's frequency, form, substance and engagement, but also interaction between the organizations and their stakeholders through CSR communication.

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