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EXAMINING TWITTER AS A CORPORATE TOOL FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

LAURA TULLEY

DR. WENDY FREEMAN

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Abstract

Twitter is an increasingly popular and widely used microblogging tool that limits messages to 140 characters for the purpose of information sharing with a group of voluntary followers. This research paper examines Twitter through a corporate communication lens to better understand how one company adapted Twitter as a means of engaging stakeholders and creating a community of shared knowledge. Using genre analysis as a theoretical frame, Twitter is investigated as a communicative strategy that encompasses a highly recognizable structure and style of text to serve a distinct purpose. Principles of corporate communication strategy that aim to motivate and inform a target audience were found to be reflected in the way Twitter was utilized to connect with stakeholders using calls to action, a consistent textual strategy using Twitter's unique language that is used to engage with followers. This research study finds and discusses Twitter's function as a useful means for engaging stakeholders and disseminating corporate information that encourages social action and participation. Information sharing is Twitter's primary purpose, allowing a company to improve public perception and the growth and maintenance of relationships with the public.

Acknowledgements

This research paper arose out of an interest in the rapidly changing landscape of corporate communication as a result of digitized communicative practices. Twitter has become a common tool for corporate communication practice, growing in popularity and familiarity. It was important for me to investigate an area of study that is, and will continue to be, relevant to the field of professional communications, both practically and theoretically.

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Examining Twitter as a Corporate Tool for Social Engagement

Introduction

The emergence of new digitized communication channels has raised questions regarding the way texts are classified as unique communicative tools. It is important to understand why certain channels emerge, what message is being communicated and what social arenas are created in response to distinct categories of text. In 2004, the increasing popularity of blogs drew the attention of scholars such as Carolyn R. Miller and Dawn Shepherd, interested in investigating the rhetorical issues that blogs were creating. The unique form, motives and textual characteristics of a blog were all part of a recognizable form that was seen as a strategy working to encompass situations, defining the rhetorical practice of a blog (Miller & Shepherd, 2004). Twitter, a microblogging platform used to share messages limited to 140 characters, is now raising similar questions as an increasingly popular and widely used corporate communication tool. Through Twitter, users can also share images, video links, website URLs and other abbreviated messages. Tweets allow users to relocate to a different website by clicking on hyperlinks embedded in the text, increasing the ease of information sharing and making it one of the most used social media applications in public relations and corporate communication campaigns (Waters & Williams, 2011).

Investigating the work that Twitter performs and its function as a communicative strategy is relevant to the rapidly changing corporate landscape and adoption of Web 2.0 platforms. Web 2.0 refers to web applications that facilitate information sharing, collaboration, interoperability and a user experience that is inherently social (Keenan & Shiri, 2009). For the purpose of this study, integrating elements of genre analysis will help to determine what textual features are unique to Twitter, and how it is used as a social tool to engage stakeholders as part of a company's public relations strategy.

Twitter is used by individuals and organizations to achieve specific communicative goals. It was originally developed for mobile phones and designed to let people share 140-character text updates or 'tweets' to a network of others (Marwick & boyd, 2010). Twitter creates an updated timeline or stream of messages that range from personal text updates to those with a corporate agenda. It has a directed friendship model, allowing participants to choose other Twitter accounts to 'follow' (Marwick & boyd, 2010). Each user also has his or her own group of followers (Marwick & boyd, 2010). Twitter was created using short message service (SMS) technology, restricting user interaction to the limited number of characters per tweet (Keenan & Shiri, 2009). Tweets can also be posted and read on the Internet and on a variety of third-party clients written for desktop computers, smart-phones and other devices (Marwick & boyd).

Twitter was launched in 2006 and broke into mainstream usage between 2008 and 2009. After this surge of popularity, the Nielsen Company reported that

Twitter had 18.2 million users in May 2009 - a growth rate of 1448 per cent from May 2008 (Marwick & boyd). As of March 2011, it was reported that Twitter had 175 million users and growing, and a June 2011 report revealed Twitter had reached 200 million tweets per day (Parr, 2011). As a platform still experiencing exponential growth, Twitter reportedly acquired 100 million new accounts in 2010 and a 62 per cent spike in mobile usage (Parr, 2011).

Some corporations use Twitter as part of a communication strategy to connect with stakeholders and engage in ongoing communication. This paper will examine some of the different ways that Twitter was used as a social platform to improve public perception and build and maintain positive relationships with the public by one company. As the primary function of Twitter, information sharing will be investigated to better understand what strategies and techniques were employed to engage with followers.

Corporate communication is described by Goodman (1994) as a company's efforts to communicate effectively and profitably, and, he notes, it is often executed as part of a public relations strategic plan. Corporate communication strategies are rooted in rhetoric, and used to motivate, persuade and inform the public. Responsible also for maintaining a corporation's image and exerting influence on stakeholders, corporate communication integrates specific language and technology to attain communication goals (Goodman, 1994).

It is relevant to the increasing popularity of digitized communicative practices to consider Twitter as a tool for corporate communication by establishing the work it performs and the social function it provides corporations. This research study builds on prior examination of Twitter as a web-based technology that allows for interactive communication and acts as an effective and sustainable corporate tool. Integrating a genre analysis approach to determine how Twitter functions will help to reveal the social arenas that are created and the possible positive public relations that companies can experience if active in engaging stakeholders via Twitter. As noted by Miller (1984), genres are typified not only by substance and form, but more so by the social action they work to achieve. This research study aims to better understand if Twitter, as an organizational communication tool, is recognizable, functional and performing rhetorical practices that fit within an organization's communication strategy.

Theoretical Orientation

Genre studies focus on the recurring, flexible practices expressed through text that create meaningful social action and serve a distinct purpose. Genres are flexible resources, function as a set of strategies, used by agents to negotiate and improvise meaning (Schryer, 2000). Genres also act to express current social beliefs regarding the context and actions of individuals, or agents engaged with said genre (Schryer, 2000). Widely recognized genres include novels, grants, emails or sermons. Genre studies characteristically focus on recurrent gestures in the form of semantic content, formal features and pragmatic value as social action (Miller & Shepherd, 2004). For example, Carolyn Miller and Dawn Shepherd (2004) explore genre analysis in the context of the weblog. Weblogs were among the first new media genre to generate academic attention and the authors found that genre analysis was useful in exploring the rhetorical purpose of this public form of communication.

In *Genre as Social Action*, Carolyn Miller (1984) defines social action as the response of an audience as they interact and negotiate with the rhetorical purpose of a genre within the context of a recurrent situation. Genres are an integral element of community culture and provide a way in which social action is cultivated and motivated. Classification becomes important in understanding the distinct rhetorical purpose of a genre, and consequently, the social action cultivated in response to a genre (Miller, 1984). The rhetorical practices unique to

distinct genres vary, and include what work the genre performs, how the work is performed and who is motivated to participate (Miller, 2004).

Genre theorists posit that genres act as a means of social action and that they serve rhetorical purposes that meet the needs of a community. Situational demands are the needs or wants of a community, and Miller (1984) suggests that distinct genres emerge to satisfy these community desires. Miller's research has resulted in a better understanding of the way individuals encounter, interpret and react to certain texts, which is important to the study of new genres, specifically in regards to technology's allowance for social media channels. Identifying highly recognizable forms of text and the possibility of a new rhetorical purpose are central to conducting a genre analysis in order to determine if certain texts are in fact distinct genres. A focus on distinct forms that meets specific communication needs is of particular importance to the study of Twitter as a tool that aims to engage public stakeholders and encourage participation.

Catherine Schryer (2000) suggests that the idea of social action places focus on genres from a pragmatic perspective – asserting that the only people who can label a situation as recurrent or a response as typical are the social actors involved. This understanding of the actor's agency in defining a genre considers the larger social context and asserts that genres cannot be collapsed into text alone (Schryer, 2000). The social response and actions that develop around a genre are as much a reflection of a genre as the text itself. Looking at genres as both flexible and reoccurring is fundamental to the study of social

media as a communication tool due to the rapidly evolving corporate practice that includes digitized communication.

Genre studies have emphasized a genre's dynamic and evolutionary nature and this is particularly relevant to the investigation of new media texts (Miller & Shepherd, 2004). This discussion of dynamic change and flexibility speaks to the ever-changing communication practices implemented by companies to better reach audiences and improve public perception. In relation to genres of organizational communication, Orlikowski and Yates (1992) found distinct texts such as memos or proposals as typified communicative actions in response to recurrent situations. The nature and role of communication are always changing and technology is fast advancing, resulting in the demand for different forms of communication (Orlikowski & Yates, 1992). This theoretical framing lends itself well to more contemporary studies of technology and the genres that are emerging as a result of technology and new media channels.

Into the Blogosphere (Gurak, Antonijevic, Johnson, Ratliff & Reyman, 2004) is an online collection of articles that explores the communicative features of weblogs. Weblogs, now referred to as blogs, were gaining popularity and raising a number of rhetorical issues as they were addressed to everyone and no one at the same time (Miller & Shepherd, 2004). Genre analyses raised questions of the work that was performed, the motivation of readers and writers, and the features that made blogs recognizable and functional as distinct genres (Miller & Shepherd, 2004). More importantly, scholars recognized that structured

arenas of social action were beginning to create pockets of community-based knowledge in direct relation to weblogs participants (Miller & Shepherd, 2004). Again, notions of genres as rooted in social practice are considered, and this scholarly review provides rhetorical framework as well as discussion of a genre analysis in a similar new media context – blogs were an emerging trend in the midst of becoming mainstream, as Twitter is today.

Understanding genre in relation to corporate communication practice is useful as a background to exploring how Twitter functions as a newly adopted communicative technology. Graham Smart (as cited in Freedman & Medway, 1994) suggests that genres produce specialized knowledge, similar to the way in which corporate communicators craft and disseminate messages for a target public. Smart defines regularities in textual features as repeated patterns in the structure as well as rhetorical moves and styles of text that are readily recognizable aspects of the genre (Freedman & Medway, 1994). Common style is also determined by sentence length, references to self or to readers, specialized terminology and set phrases or tones that remain fairly consistent across multiple texts within a genre (Freedman & Medway, 1994).

A tweet, or Twitter message, has a distinctive structure. All tweets must remain under 140 characters, creating a very unique, textually consistent and highly recognizable form. The repeated patterns in structure and styles of text are the most readily observable aspects of genre and affect how people interpret them (Freedman & Medway, 1994). Similar to title pages, abstracts, introductions

and conclusions, a pattern is created that communicates the same function performed consistently (Freedman & Medway, 1994). Examples of Twitter's consistent, specialized terminology include:

A mention: @beautyconnexion – the @ symbol is a direct way of mentioning another Twitter account. The account that is mentioned is notified when another user has replied using the @ symbol attached to the user's name.

A hashtag: #beautyconnexion – the # symbol is a way of emphasizing names or words without directly mentioning them. Hashtags are used to track certain trends across all Twitter feeds using the search function available on any user's Twitter homepage. Hashtags allow users to participate in conversations that occur across a wide scope of users.

A retweet (RT): Twitter followers can chose to retweet a tweet sent out by another user. This allows users to copy another user's message, and send it out to their own followers. The message can appear verbatim or can be edited by the user that is re-tweeting. An RT appears as part of the message and includes a mention of the original user.

Bit.ly: A URL shortening service that abbreviates long website addresses to fit within Twitter's 140 character limit. Although bit.ly is Twitter's default URL shortening service, other websites such as TinyURL perform similar work. URL shortening is an important textual structure to allow for more content per tweet.

Twitpic: A website that allows Twitter users to easily post pictures to their Twitter accounts to share with followers. Twitpic URLs are short, making it easy for users to include the hyperlink in a tweet. The website operates independently of Twitter but is a convenient tool because of the website's ability to upload and distribute pictures in real-time.

Twitlonger: A website service that allows Twitter users to post messages that are longer than 140 character. Twitlonger appears as a hyperlink embedded in a tweet that directs followers to the Twitlonger website that publishes the rest of the tweet. Twitlonger is a useful tool for users who are not able to stay within the text limitations and may require more space to explain something technical or accurately discuss certain information.

The understanding of genre studies situated within a corporate context is useful in investigating Twitter as a distinct genre with specific communicative functions. Genres function as a set of strategies that cultivate social action based on highly recognizable forms of text that disseminate consistent content for a target audience. Genre analysis is an appropriate method for investigating Twitter's repeated patterns in structure and style of text because it helps to better understand the strategies implemented for sharing information, and is used in this study to explore how one company used it over a period of two weeks to meet particular corporate communication goals.

Literature Review

When companies implement a communication strategy using traditional or social media, improving public relations is one of the primary goals. The function of public relations within a corporate environment is to build and maintain an organization's relationship with stakeholders (Ledingham, 2000). More specifically, measuring, analyzing and influencing public opinion, and targeting public stakeholders are the core communication functions that link an organization to its various publics in order to maintain mutually beneficial relationships (Ledingham, 2000). Public relations research emphasizes a focus on relationships and the linkages that result in said relationships, including asymmetry, reciprocity, efficiency and stability (Ledingham, 2000). Ledingham's investigation of relationships from a public relations standpoint also includes elements of exchange theory that detail voluntary transactions or communication as a result of similar knowledge or interest that lead to mutual benefit and mutual goal achievement (Ledingham, 2000). Mutual benefit is achieved by satisfying stakeholder needs as well as corporate communication goals, an undertaking that has become increasingly popular as companies explore social media as a medium for social interaction (Keenan & Shiri, 2009).

Research into the value of social media as a corporate communication tool suggests that social websites, including Twitter, offer unique features that facilitate socialization on the Internet (Keenan & Shiri, 2009). It is the sharing of

information, messages, photos and sense of community that make social websites, 'social' (Keenan & Shiri, 2009). Examining Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn, Keenan & Shiri (2009) investigate the social network of human interaction that is constructed through social websites. The authors consider the framework of Preece and Maloney-Krichmar (2003) that evaluates social media's online communities looking at purpose, people and sociability (Keenan & Shiri, 2009). Purpose is a reoccurring theme throughout social media research, and is relevant to determining how and why corporations adopt certain social media platforms to execute communication goals. Other measures of a social media platform's sociability and efficacy include the number of participants, the number of messages sent, retention of participants, the number of new users and the number of 'on-topic' messages among other qualitative measures (Keenan & Shiri, 2009). This research reveals that social media platforms function as a form of community and, as opposed to earlier internet websites that provided a message board-like opportunity for communication, have incorporated increasingly interactive social elements, encouraging ongoing engagement and interaction on websites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn (Keenan & Shiri, 2009). This function and the opportunity for engagement with stakeholders affects how corporations use social media and the influence they have on the public.

Enrique Bonson and Francisco Flores (2011) investigate how social media facilitates corporate dialogue, analyzing financial institutions and the platforms

adopted to help virtual communities learn together and share experiences. Bonson and Flores (2011) acknowledge that social media has allowed for new levels of technological democratization, participation and the multidirectional flow of communication between stakeholders. The authors' findings reveal that social media platforms do, in fact, actively open corporate dialogue and improve the opportunity for information sharing. Moreover, transparency and immediacy are the result of the social elements of social media platforms that allow for comments, mentions of other users and contributions that add to original content.

Research on social media as a corporate communication tool shows that its increased popularity and the emergence of new platforms have not only changed the practice of public relations, but the opportunities made available to interact with a widened scope of stakeholders (DiStatso, McCorkindale & Wright, 2011). A 2011 study written by DiStatso et al. reveals that communication practitioners see social media as a more important tool within an organization than they did in 2010. This is based on the recognition that the ability to spread a message is not only faster and more efficient, but gaining insight into public perception has also become a simpler task (DiStatso, et al., 2011). Corporations are using social media to enhance their understanding of market, customers, and competitors and connect with all stakeholders on a social level, for ongoing communication (DiStatso, et al., 2011).

As one part of a corporation's social media strategy, Twitter may encourage sociability through a niche community and maintain the 'social'

elements of social media that facilitate engagement and serve a corporate communicative purpose. The connection between public relations research and the way companies use Twitter begins to explore the purpose of tweets as used by corporations to communicate with stakeholders. The linkages created as a result of interaction and information sharing have the potential to create mutually beneficial relationships that satisfy both the company and its publics.

Research into Twitter suggests that as a social media tool used by corporations, it can facilitate increased social interaction because of its simplicity and intuitive interface that allows for niche communities to exchange quick and frequent information (Keenan & Shiri, 2009). Keenan and Shiri's research shows that as a social media platform, Twitter has social capabilities based on its technology that create a familiar interface that is streamlined and easy to use.

Noah Arceneaux and Amy Schmitz Weiss (2010) discuss Twitter as a communication technology that mirrors the telegraph, radio and early Internet in terms of generating public response. Using grounded theory, the authors analyze press coverage on Twitter. Their research reveals how the public perceives Twitter as a communication tool in comparison to communication technologies that have emerged throughout history. Many companies and government agencies have embraced Twitter as a communication tool, using it for marketing, publicity and customer services tasks (Arceneaux & Schmitz Weiss, 2010). Compared to how individuals use Twitter, a use that has been criticized as a "running commentary of daily routines" (Arceneaux & Schmitz Weiss, 2010), a

growing number of companies have adopted this communication technology to create an online social network to connect with non-geographic communities and reap the potential benefits of electronically mediated communication (Arceneaux & Schmitz Weiss, 2010). Using a corporate lens and considering historical precedents, the authors reveal that positive commercial response to Twitter comes as a result of its brevity and speed along with other influential factors (Arceneaux & Schmitz Weiss, 2010). The authors also recognize that the corporate function of utilizing Twitter is to encourage and publicize company promotion, interaction, questions and answers, and to update media and stakeholders on organizational events (Arceneaux & Schmitz Weiss, 2010).

This study discusses the primarily positive response to Twitter as a microblogging service based on users recognizing the value of Twitter as a platform for community to engage and interact. The authors conclude that Twitter is an electronic form of communication that will increasingly become routine for corporate online communication and sharing. They also posit that it has become part of a family of Web 2.0 platforms like YouTube, Facebook and MySpace that have distinct social purposes (Arceneaux & Schmitz Weiss, 2010).

Why We Twitter: Understanding Microblogging Usage and Communities is a recent study that also describes Twitter as a microblogging phenomenon that allows for easy sharing, publicity and communication within a particular social network (Java, Finin, Song & Tseng, 2007). In this study the authors analyze the intentions of those that use Twitter along with users' aggregate behaviour across

community groups. Java et al.'s investigation of social networks using Twitter shows that communities are connected through groups of nodes (Twitter followers) that share common interests. This results in similar sharing of content or directing Tweets between likeminded users. Sharing news and information in the form of a URL is a common trend among Twitter users, and characterizes the intentions of each tweet. A high degree of reciprocity is also recognized among communities on Twitter, indicating mutual benefit among users and the purpose of companies using Twitter as a communication tool. Information sharing and community formation suggests that Twitter is a means to engage audiences and communicate in a way that improves public perception and company image.

The intentions of Twitter users and the corporate function of sharing information are also discussed in Svetlana Rybalko and Trent Seltzer's *Dialogic Communication in 140 Characters or less: How Fortune 500 Companies Engage Stakeholders using Twitter* (2010). This study investigates the process of building and maintaining relationships online by examining Fortune 500 companies and their use of Twitter to facilitate communication with public stakeholders. Defining dialogic communication as 'any negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions" (p. 336), the authors investigate the dialogic potential of Twitter as an online communication platform for maintaining relationships with publics (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). The author's note that for Fortune 500 companies, Twitter is managed by public relations practitioners to cultivate healthy relationships between organizations and stakeholders (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). This is done

by establishing channels and procedures for dialogic communication to take place, providing an avenue for fostering dialogue while providing useful information to a variety of publics (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). The authors performed a content analysis of active corporate Twitter accounts and their findings indicate that the ease of the interface, the generation of return visits, the distribution of useful information and the ability to maintain the dialogic loop all contribute to the reasons that Fortune 500 companies are increasingly using Twitter (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). Rybalko and Seltzer define a dialogic loop as providing users the opportunity to ask questions and in turn, provide feedback.

Results of this research indicate that companies that use Twitter receive a better response from users when employing a dialogic orientation. Fortune 500 companies that include useful information and the dialogic loop are better engaged with followers and can better perform the goals of their public relations strategy. Twitter is used to engage followers in likeminded communities for mutual benefit – coinciding with other academic reviews that posit that Twitter's rhetorical purpose is to facilitate communication with public stakeholders. Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) also discuss which dialogic features Fortune 500 companies use most frequently. The three most popular features are a tweet in response to a follower's tweet, posting of newsworthy information about the company and posting a question or link to the company's webpage (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). These features of dialogic communication can be construed as a call to action from the organization and requesting a response from other Twitter

users. The request for response more accurately pinpoints the purpose of a corporate Twitter account, and its function to connect with public stakeholders in a social capacity.

Tweet Tweet Retweet: Conversational Aspects of Retweeting on Twitter by danah boyd, Scott Golder, and Gilad Lotan (2010) also discuss the ease with which Twitter enables conversation. Twitter allows users to communicate both asynchronously and beyond geographic constraints while also enabling individuals or companies to engage and be peripherally aware without directly participating. boyd et al. (2010) aims to examine Twitter as a conversational practice, taking into consideration the tool's devised language, use of mentions and hashtags, and information sharing by the use of hyperlinks. As a communication strategy, retweets display similar motivations and rhetorical opportunity as shared among all tweets – to share information (boyd, et al., 2010). Retweets also encourage social action as a result of content being tied to goals of promotion, conversation and community building (boyd, et al., 2010). Gina Masullo Chen's *Tweet This: A Uses and Gratifications Perspective on How Active Twitter use Gratifies a Need to Connect with Others* (2011), also details Twitter as a way to give and receive advice and gather and share information. Results of Chen's study prove that Twitter does gratify the need to connect, but it is dependent on the number of tweets, replies and length of time one uses Twitter as a communication tool. Although this study implements Uses and Gratification theory, the results that detail the number of tweets sent out and the

number of replies as a formula for gratification are rooted in the genre's ability to satisfy social need. The notion of a response and feedback are central to investigating the work Twitter performs, and the social action cultivated in response.

Corporations are beginning to recognize the value of Twitter as a communication tool to better engage with stakeholders. Web 2.0 platforms are based on participatory action and interoperability, encouraging companies to adopt these technologies as a part of communicative strategy to improve public perception and the maintenance of relationships. Twitter is a social tool with unique features that generate dialogic interaction, aid in information sharing and contribute to a sense of community felt by users. All of these characteristics have contributed to the rapid adoption of Twitter as a communication tool, but also to academic interest in the work it performs and how Twitter should be classified as a text. In the interest of categorization, a genre analysis of Twitter is an appropriate approach to better understand what textual features are used and how its simplicity and streamlined technology results in social interaction with the tool. This type of analysis may result in a better understanding of Twitter as a possible genre, and may be useful in working towards findings that make sense of the following research questions. How and why are companies are using Twitter? What kind of response is generated in the form of social action? How does Twitter fit within a company's corporate communication strategy with the

intent to engage stakeholders through a social platform?

Methodology

This paper presents an analysis of a set of tweets collected from the Beauty Connexion Twitter feed. Beauty Connexion Inc., founded in October of 2009, is a company that provides both business-to-business (b2b) and business-to-consumer (b2c) services. Services include providing clients and customers with expert information, personal and professional development, and a unique insider experience through learning about original health, beauty and wellness content. Business-to-business services are restricted to the Beauty Connexion website, connecting companies with online tutorials to increase profitability and productivity. Business-to-consumer practices include connecting public stakeholders with Beauty Connexion services – this includes contests, editorials, product recommendations and all other information related to Canadian beauty, health and wellness industries. Beauty Connexion's overall business plan, implemented through both b2b and b2c services, is to become a prominent and reliable source for Canadian beauty and lifestyle content. Social media is a large part of the business plan because of its proven ability to connect stakeholders to a company through enhanced engagement and interactivity.

A Twitter account is one part of the company's online presence, used daily by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to increase traffic to the website where advertising is sold as a means of financing Beauty Connexion Inc. Beauty Connexion is a small start-up company with only one full-time staff member, the CEO, who is responsible for carrying out all social media initiatives. Part-time

staff including editorial writers, website developer and co-op students, develop content for the website.

Seventy-five tweets were collected over a two-week period from April 1, 2011 to April 14, 2011 from the Beauty Connexion Twitter account. Tweets are considered public information once the information is shared by a user, requiring no ethics clearance. The tweets were copied into an offline document due to Twitter's poor archiving abilities. Organized chronologically, analysis looked to categorize patterns and instances of unique semantic structure and elements found within tweets such as website URLs, mentions and hashtags, as well as the content and frequency of tweets.

As a corporate communication tool, Twitter is an effective way to share information with stakeholders and disseminate messages that improve public relations between an organization and its targeted publics. It is a tool that creates an online, social environment for companies and followers to interact. This paper will investigate the corporate use of Twitter as a possible distinct genre, and analyzes tweets according to the way in which they engage audiences using a call to action. A call to action can be defined as a request for response that is embedded in the text of a tweet disseminated by a corporation – this element of a tweet will help to explore Twitter as a genre, to determine if it meets the requirements of a recognizable genre as defined by genre theorists such as Miller and Smart. Calls to action include a URL, a link to a picture or video, unique forms of text like hashtags or mentions - all of which are embedded

in the text of a tweet. All of these different forms demand that followers not only read the tweets sent out, but also engage and react to the message in a way that leads audiences beyond Twitter. Like a communication stepping stone, hyperlinks increase the ease with which followers may change to a new website to better connect with information relevant to the company.

The calls to action unique to Twitter create patterns of texts - these textual structures are what will be categorized and discussed in regard to the work they perform and the social action they cultivate for Beauty Connexion.

Taking a grounded theory approach, analysis derived patterns inductively, revealing patterns that were discovered, developed and then verified (Miller & Fredericks, 1999). Widely used in human sciences and qualitatively oriented research, grounded theory is an approach rooted in the logic of discovery (Miller & Fredericks, 1999). First, the tweets were examined to find patterns of text found across the data set. Next, the patterns discovered were analyzed to reveal consistency in calls to action and to better explain the work Twitter performs from an organizational standpoint. These patterns were of particular interest in exploring Twitter as a recognizable genre and to identify the rhetorical opportunities created.

Findings

The data set consisted of 75 tweets collected over a two-week period and were exclusively from the Beauty Connexion Twitter account. Responses or mentions of Beauty Connexion written by other Twitter accounts were not categorized or analyzed, but are considered for larger findings in the discussion section to make note of instances of dialogue and interaction. The categories, described in Table 1, were based on patterns that isolated different calls to action and represented consistent strategies used by Beauty Connexion as a way to engage followers. Categories also represent Beauty Connexion's overall strategy to grow and connect with followers, using Twitter as a tool to achieve the goals of corporate communication.

Table 1.0

Category & Description	Example	Instances of tweets	Instances of Hashtags	Instances of Mentions	Instances of URLs
1. **Questions** directed at no one follower in particular	**@beautyconnexion** Okay ladies what was your first skin care product. And a few pointers for those starting one out…http://bit.ly/eWFPUv	7	1	3	6
2. **Requests** for an action directed at no one follower in particular	**@beautyconnexion** Enter to win celebs favourite new line **@NipandFab** http://bit.ly/bTnJxC We hear it's Jennifer Aniston's fav	14	6	10	12
3. **Informative** tweets provide followers with fact or information pertaining to the company	**@beautyconnexion** April1st & we are not kidding we are giving away the entire **@NipandFab** body line! http://bit.ly/eJJ7Hf	18	4	5	18
4. **Re-tweets** repeat information as tweeted by another user	**@beautyconnexion** Thx for including us RT **@cafegabriel:** The Fashion & Beauty Daily is out! http://bit.ly/gLlyjN	12	3	20	9

Tweets belonging to the Question category represent questions that are directed at no one Twitter follower in particular – these Beauty Connexion tweets are made public to all Twitter users who follow the company Twitter account. (See Table 1.0 for example). An analysis of tweets that ask a question was undertaken to explore the way in which Beauty Connexion connects with followers, and how those relationships were maintained.

Seven of the 75 tweets collected fall into this category and include a call to action in the form of a hashtag, mention or URL hyperlink. URL hyperlinks were

the most common call to action coupled with a question directed at no one follower, occurring six times across seven tweets. Five of the six URLs belonged to either the Beauty Connexion website or a website that was connected with the company – that of a client or health and beauty-related theme. In two instances, a question tweeted by Beauty Connexion was unrelated to consistent company messaging and one URL provided a hyperlink to a picture unrelated to company messaging. These tweets received minimal response from followers but also represent a small percentage of tweets that provide followers with a URL unrelated to Beauty Connexion.

Hashtags, mentions and URLs are forms of text unique to Twitter that represent a distinct structural element embedded in a tweet. This language exclusive to Twitter is understood by Twitter users, resulting in immediate usability and inherent interaction with Twitter as a communication tool. The accompanying text that is tweeted with a URL does not explain or direct followers to click on the hyperlink explicitly. Figure 2.1 shows that links as well as mentions are highlighted in a different colour, helping followers distinguish between simple text and a link that contains the URL to another online location. Questions that are accompanied by a call to action, in the form of a hashtag, mention or URL are highlighted to encourage followers to click on the hyperlinks and to relocate to a new website. Information about whether users responded to these questions by clicking on the provided link was unavailable for analysis. Questions were posed as rhetorical – an open ended question asked without the hopes of a specific

answer.

Figure 2.1

beautyconnexion beauty connexion

Can't wait to see the final! @FAToronto inspiration for looks by Make Up For Ever @stellmel http://yfrog.com/h091qvwj

Unlike questions that are asked to foster dialogue and gain answers, questions made public via Twitter may have been asked to peak interest and complement the URL, hashtag or mention embedded in the text. This corporate communication strategy may have been intended to engage followers primarily through the call to action as opposed to the question itself. On the four occasions that followers responded, dialogue stopped after the response. Beauty Connexion did not continue to interact with the follower and the conversation was not extended beyond the original tweet, and the single response. These findings, may reveal that tweets used as part of a corporate communication strategy are not necessarily designed to engage in dialogue with stakeholders, but to publicize information that benefits the company while directing followers to the company website.

The hyperlinks found across question tweets taking followers to other websites also took a variety of forms that appeared consistently across tweets that included a website URL. Recognizable forms of text included **bit.ly** (Figure 2.2), **twitpic** (Figure 2.1) and **twitlonger** (Figure 2.3) links, all of which are

abbreviated URLs to better accommodate the 140 character tweet limit. Shortened links that appear highlighted, and as an obvious call to action for Twitter followers are highly recognizable and consistent among Beauty Connexion tweets.

Figure 2.2

beautyconnexion beauty connexion
What was the first skin care product you used? http://bit.ly/iiL2Kyyour first skincare routine dos and don'ts

Figure 2.3

beautyconnexion beauty connexion
#Makeup foundation provides a more finish look than tinted moisturizer http://bit.ly/esj3Ax & more tips fr… (cont)http://deck.ly/~GEfre

Tweets that fall under the Request category demand a response from users in the form of a request. These tweets differ from questions because they do not ask for an answer, but command users to actively respond to the tweet (See Table 1.0 for example). An analysis of tweets that post requests to followers

was undertaken, to explore the way Beauty Connexion engages Twitter users by posting information and calls to action.

Requests were more widely used than questions, representing 14 of the 75 tweets collected as seen in Table 1.0. The requests characterize a strategy to grab the attention of Beauty Connexion followers and also demand some form of response. The requests seemingly offer incentive for followers to click on any of the hyperlinks, as a call to action embedded in the text. The incentive is the promise of more information, and that in keeping with Beauty Connexion services, followers will receive original, exclusive information pertaining to health, beauty and wellness. With the exception of one instance, the hyperlinks took followers to the Beauty Connexion website or engaged them in a way that worked toward the corporate communication goals of the company. These goals include not only to drive traffic to the Beauty Connexion website, but also to create a social community for followers to learn and share information. This included drawing attention to pictures, stories, companies or individuals that are associated with the company and work to promote Beauty Connexion as well as their own products or services. URLs were the most commonly used call to action within the Request category with 12 instances across 14 tweets. There were five mentions across the collected tweets and four hashtags.

The strategies employed by Beauty Connexion, as suggested by these findings, aim to drive traffic to the company website using a Twitter account. The requests coupled with a website URL encouraged followers to participate with the

company through Twitter, demanding action that moves them from Twitter, to another location that benefits the company and provides something positive for the follower – this could include information, a contest or an answer to a question.

Informative tweets provide followers with information that is pertinent to Beauty Connexion (See Table 1.0 for example). The fact or information does not pose a question or make a request, but it simply presents followers with text that is consistent with company messaging and relates to health and beauty. Eighteen tweets, the largest number of instances across all four categories, provided company-relevant information that also, but not exclusively, included a URL, mention or hashtag as part of the text. The 18 tweets synthesize text to fit within the character limitation and discuss the company or associated products or services. As with tweets that were categorized as questions or requests, URLs are again the most popular call to action for tweets that provide followers with facts or information. There were 18 URLs found across 18 tweets, a much higher instance than four hashtags and five mentions included across this category. Because the information being provided is directly related to the company's products and services, hashtags that contribute to a larger conversation and mentions that include another follower may not be the best approach to connecting followers with information useful and relevant to Beauty Connexion. These two calls to action do not act to connect followers with company information directly.

This strategy allows followers to connect with Beauty Connexion and be made aware of information without participating directly. The information or fact that is coupled with a URL is not intended for a direct reply, but to connect followers with company-relevant information or the company website that is an elaboration of the tweet. In many cases the information is formatted as an answer to a question in which followers may be interested. Because Twitter provides a short biography that allows followers to learn about different Twitter accounts, followers of any one person or company know generally what theme tweets will take. Corporations, as exemplified by Beauty Connexion, may tweet solely about their company and company related information. Beauty Connexion provides information or facts that may answer questions that followers are interested in, based on the company's focus. As a pattern among the tweets, this strategy is further encouragement to click on a link and engage with the company website. Similar to Request tweets, the format of the tweet that includes a call to action is self-explanatory based on the recognizable form that website URLs, mentions and hashtags take on. Hashtags are another strategy implemented by Beauty Connexion as a means of contributing to a much larger conversation that is happening beyond the company and its followers. Including a hashtag is another call to action that works to promote the company and engage followers without participating in a one-on-one dialogue.

Retweets represents tweets that Beauty Connexion has retweeted, copying information tweeted by another user to send out to Beauty Connexion

followers (See Table 1.0 for example). An analysis of tweets that contain a retweet was undertaken to investigate how Beauty Connexion maintains followers, involves followers through the use of Twitter as a communication tool, and potentially grows followers by using retweets to mention users that may have different followers the company hopes to attract. Tweets that were a retweet of another users text totalled 12 tweets. Within these 12 tweets, there were 20 mentions. Retweets automatically include the mention of the original tweet, meaning every retweet contains at least one mention. This tweet structure can also be manipulated to add content to the original tweet, which may include another call to action. Analysis reveals multiple mentions within one tweet, making the total number of mentions greater than the number of tweets - an attempt to engage with followers through recognition and also the promotion of the original tweet. Tweets in this category had nine URLs and three hashtags. The most common call to action, unlike other categories, was the mention of another Twitter user, although the URL instances remained fairly consistent with other categories.

Given the patterns found across all four categories, and high instances of mentions and URLs, an analysis of all 75 tweets by calls to action was undertaken. This analysis also looked at tweets chronologically and instances per day.

Table 2.0

Date	Instances of Tweets	Instances of Hashtags	Instances of Mentions	Instances of URLs
Friday, April 1	8	3	23	5
Saturday, April 2	3	1	1	1
Sunday, April 3	7	0	7	2
Monday, April 4	6	3	3	6
Tuesday, April 5	8	1	6	5
Wednesday, April 6	6	0	5	4
Thursday, April 7	7	3	6	5
Friday, April 8	3	1	8	0
Saturday, April 9	0	0	0	0
Sunday, April 10	3	2	8	0
Monday, April 11	9	1	5	9
Tuesday, April 12	3	0	4	3
Wednesday, April 13	4	4	3	3
Thursday, April 14	8	3	7	6
TOTAL	**75**	**22**	**85**	**49**

Sample size: Two weeks (April 1, 2011 – April 14, 2011)

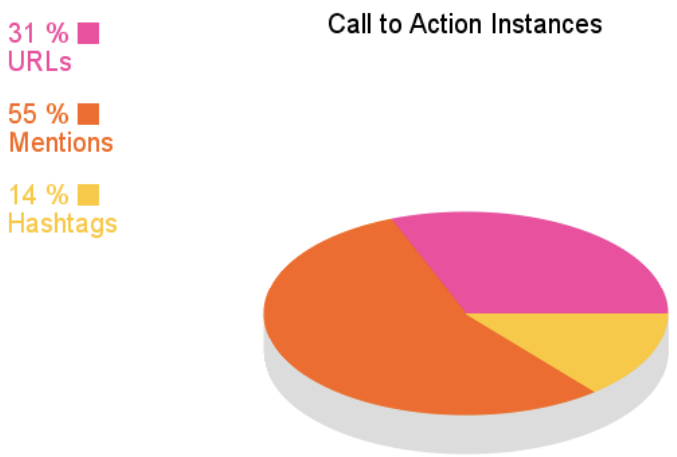
Total number of tweets: 75

Daily mean tweet frequency: 5.3 tweets per day

The tweets revealed no pattern in regards to number of tweets per day, but with the exception of Saturday, April 9 showing no Twitter activity, every other day included a minimum of three tweets. The highest number of tweets per day was

Monday, April 11 with nine tweets, and over the two week analysis period an average of 5.3 tweets per day were sent out by Beauty Connexion. It is difficult to assert how many tweets per day is normal, or average among other Twitter users. For the purposes of Beauty Connexion, an average of 5.3 tweets is an appropriate number to not overwhelm or deprive followers of information.

Figure 3.1



Of the 75 tweets, analysis also revealed that 49 URLs were counted across the data set, 85 mentions and 22 hashtags. As a call to action, mentions of another Twitter user was the most popular strategy used by Beauty Connexion, in some cases more than one mention per tweet. This number represented 55 per cent of all calls to action included in Beauty Connexion tweets. On Friday, April 1 there were 23 instances of mentions within eight tweets. This was a result of trend on Twitter referred to as #FF, or Follow Friday. Follow Friday is a way for Twitter users to mention other users deemed useful or

pertinent to their followers as a way to promote and connect with a larger Twitter population. The users mentioned are usually Twitter users that have recently been followed by the user that is tweeting mentions accompanied by the hashtag #FF, or a way of sharing with followers which users should be followed (See Figure 2.4 for example). Friday, April 8 revealed eight mentions found within three tweets, a strategy used by Beauty Connexion to maintain followers and encourage new users to follow.

Figure 2.4

beautyconnexion beauty connexion
b #FF s @oohlafroufrou @KendraRichards @cynthiarowland @WGsShoeCloset @prttypeaushun @NellaBellaBrand @Miss_Annie_M @ialuxury

URLs remain a consistent strategy to connect followers with content that is related to Beauty Connexion. Hashtags are revealed as an unpopular tool used by Beauty Connexion to engage with followers, a call to action that was only used on ten of the 14 days considered for analysis. Hashtags allow Twitter users to engage in conversation that spans beyond a set list of followers and participate with Beauty Connexion tweets. Although it may be employed to grow and maintain followers it does not direct followers to information that directly promotes company products or services.

A final area of analysis was undertaken to explore the different thematic content communicated through Beauty Connexion tweets. The three subcategories in regard to content include: tweets related to health, lifestyle and beauty (Beauty category, see Figure 3.3); tweets that do not specify content, but include a call to action in the form of a URL (Unknown category, see Figure 3.4); and tweets that do not reflect Beauty Connexion products or services and are seemingly unrelated to company (Unrelated category, see Figure 3.5).

Table 3.0

Date	Instances of tweets	Beauty	Unknown	Unrelated
Friday, April 1	8	4	1	3
Saturday, April 2	3	1	0	2
Sunday, April 3	7	0	2	5
Monday, April 4	6	6	0	0
Tuesday, April 5	8	5	0	3
Wednesday, April 6	6	4	0	2
Thursday, April 7	7	5	0	2
Friday, April 8	3	0	0	3
Saturday, April 9	0	0	0	0
Sunday, April 10	3	2	0	1
Monday, April 11	9	2	3	4
Tuesday, April 12	3	0	0	3
Wednesday, April 13	4	1	1	2
Thursday, April 14	8	3	3	2
TOTAL	**75**	**33**	**10**	**32**

Figure 3.2

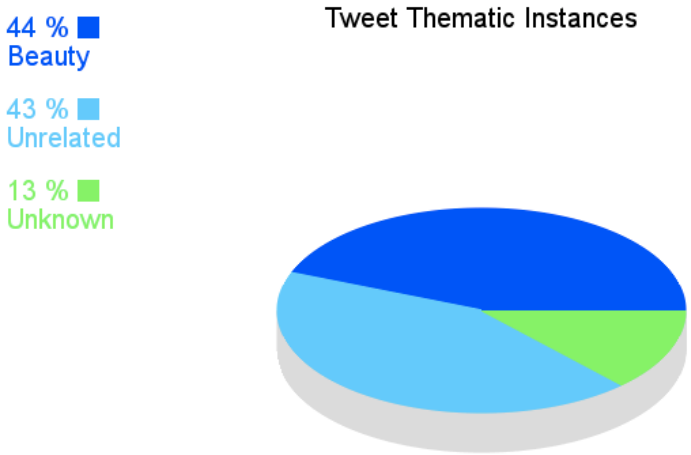


Figure 3.3

beautyconnexion beauty connexion

@langton @shopNYCtours can help to find the best vintage stores in NYC...http://bit.ly/f0nTc6

Figure 3.4

beautyconnexion beauty connexion

For those that may have missed Kendra's article http://bit.ly/grnj2U Hopefully, we can persuade her to righ… (cont)http://deck.ly/~by8Qa

Figure 3.5

beautyconnexion beauty connexion

Hey TO does anyone know the name of the indian resto on gerrard with the tent outside.

An analysis of tweet content was explored to better understand what Beauty Connexion tweets and how that may affect how many followers are maintained or gained as a result of information they receive through Beauty Connexion's Twitter account. Forty-four percent of tweets contained information pertinent to Beauty Connexion products or services, including health, beauty and lifestyle-related information - this finding reveals that of all tweets, the largest percentage are company related. Twitter users have the ability to publicize a biography that gives other users the opportunity to gauge what Twitter accounts might tweet in regards to a specific topic. Thirty-three of the 75 tweets collected are consistent thematically with the Beauty Connexion biography. This finding may be important to the maintenance and growing of followers, in disseminating consistent information that appeals to users who have voluntarily followed Beauty Connexion based on the company's Twitter biography. However, these findings also revealed that 43 per cent of tweets were unrelated to Beauty Connexion products or services. Tweets inconsistent with the Twitter biography of a company may negatively impact the maintenance, growth and engagement of

followers. In the two instances when Beauty Connexion posed a question to all followers that also did not contain relevant content, there was minimal to no response from other users. Twitter users follow an account voluntarily, making the analysis of content relevant to the impact and engagement a company achieves in working towards the goals of corporate communication. The Unknown subcategory reflects Twitter users' understanding of structure and expected response – by providing a vague description accompanied with a URL hyperlink, users know the click on the hyperlink to find out more. In all cases, the tweets that contained ambiguous content in relation to Beauty Connexion, were coupled with a URL that directed followers back to the company website. As a pattern, users would come to associate this structure with tweets that directed them back to the Beauty Connexion website. In all cases, the vague or unknown content was regarding a new editorial or product story posted to the website.

Content and consistent messaging can be directly related to influence and success in growing and maintaining Twitter followers. These goals coincide with the ultimate goals of corporate communicative practices, rendering content an important area of analysis.

Discussion

Findings suggest that Beauty Connexion uses Twitter to disseminate information to followers as a way to connect them with the company, promote Beauty Connexion products and services and create a social environment for interaction. This is done using a call to action that takes the form of a mention, hashtag, or URL that appears as a hyperlink embedded in the tweet - tweets provide synthesized information that then encourages followers to relocate to a website that further promotes the company. A tweet functions as a form of company promotion that further enhances the corporate brand, and achieves the ultimate goals of corporate communication. The structure of a tweet and instances of calls to action also reveal the function of a tweet to create a sociable online environment, and use Twitter as a platform to encourage and maintain followers. The goals of corporate communication as discussed by Goodman are to communicate with stakeholders effectively and profitably (1994). For Beauty Connexion, Twitter provides stakeholders with information that is relevant to the company and that encourages them to participate with the website or persons associated with Beauty Connexion. Following a Twitter account is an active decision, as is the decision to continue following. The textual structure and instances of calls to action are unique to Twitter as a social media tool and encourage participation and information sharing, the currency of public relations as carried out by Beauty Connexion. Ultimately, this results in profit for the company via website traffic that helps beautyconnexion.com attract more paid

advertisements online while promotion of associated products or services also benefits the company.

Kate Ehrlich and N. Sadat Shami (2010) discuss Twitter as a tool intended for information sharing. While investigating how Twitter functions as both an internal and external corporate communication tool, Ehrlich and Shami examine Twitter as a public application that is most frequently used for information sharing and expertise seeking, using most commonly the mention of another follower, and information shared via a URL. Communicating content directly or indirectly with followers is Twitter's primary purpose, and corporate communication strategies using Twitter perform this work through a call to action that promotes strong and consistent corporate messaging.

The consistent use of hyperlinks that direct followers to different URLs provides an effective tool for company promotion and the dissemination of corporate messaging according to Bakshy, E., Mason, W. A., Hofman, J. M., & Watts, D. W., (2011). Bakshy, et al. investigate the attributes and relative influence Twitter users have, based on a two-month case study of 1.6 million users. Research revealed that URLs were among the highest rated strategies for eliciting positive feelings and word to spread quickly (Bakshy, et al., 2011). Speaking again to Twitter's main function to disseminate information, the authors discuss the effectiveness of URLs to help perform this function.

> Twitter is expressly devoted to disseminating information, in that users subscribe to broadcasts of other users… In addition, because users frequently share web-content, and because tweets are restricted to 140 characters in length, a popular strategy has been to use URL shorteners which effectively tag distinct pieces of content with unique, easily identifiable tokens (Bakshy, et al., 2011).

Bakshy, et al. also discuss the influence tweets may have if a Twitter account disproportionately impacts the spread of information. Although it is difficult to measure influence and also the related behaviour as a result of tweets, 75 tweets over a two-week period appear to be a corporate strategy intended to constantly spread information to followers. With 65 per cent of tweets containing a hyperlink to a URL, and 73 of 75 tweet including a call to action, including hashtags or mentions, Beauty Connexion is implementing communication strategies that inform and influence followers to engage with company products and services.

The language and textual structure that takes the form of the different calls to action are another pattern that contributes to the work the tweets perform as part of a corporate communication strategy. Because a purpose of Beauty Connexion tweets is to connect followers to company information, the highly recognizable patterns are what garner predictable responses. An interesting characteristic of Beauty Connexion tweets is the lack of direction or explanation, explicitly informing followers what to do with the embedded hyperlinks. For followers, repetitive language and recognizable forms of text create an ease and high level of usability when engaging with Twitter and knowing how to respond to tweets.

Mashable.com reports on the importance of digital innovation and Twitter is a common occurrence among online articles. *How to: Build Community on Twitter* was published November 10, 2008, highlighting Twitter as a community lifeline while also recommending tips to grow and improve community engagement (Evans, 2010). Learning the terminology unique to Twitter was primary on the list, as the article discusses Twitter's distinct language that is essential to using and understanding the platform as a communication tool. As with any new network, or emerging genre, there is a learning curve involved in getting to recognizable structures and texts that increase functionality.

The information Beauty Connexion tweets share with followers also adheres to a distinct structure in regards to content. Freedman and Medway (1994) define one dimension of a genre as the composing process involved in creating text. Seventy-three of Beauty Connexion's 75 tweets included information relevant to the company itself: themes involving beauty, health, lifestyle content or mention of Beauty Connexion follower(s). Because Twitter provides each user the opportunity to publicize a biography, users follow Twitter accounts based on interest, making niche information generally appropriate for and interesting to the voluntary followers. The content disseminated by Beauty Connexion meets the expectations of followers because they have made the choice to follow based on interest. Beauty Connexion would lose followers if they tweeted outside the expected focus; however analysis reveals the company may not be tweeting to its best advantage. Only 44 per cent of tweets include direct

mention of company related content within the tweet itself, making the content not as readily available to users. As of July 2011, Beauty Connexion follows 1,202 Twitter accounts and has 1,462 followers. This number, alongside the analysis of call to action instances and content pattern, shows that Beauty Connexion may not be influencing as many followers as it could be, lessening its influence and ability to connect with new Twitter users. Bakshy, et al. (2011) define influence as a disproportionate number of followers to accounts being followed, and those with low influence are not able to spread information as well as those with high influence. Although it is difficult to measure influence, Bakshy, et al. examine Twitter accounts based purely on diffusion of information to followers. Because Beauty Connexion has a relatively similar number of followers to accounts being followed, this may reflect a weakness in strategy and disadvantage to tweeting about company related content almost as much as content that appears to be unrelated to Beauty Connexion. As a social tool used for information sharing, the calls to action are a means to engage followers, but may not be the best tool for encouraging new followers and disseminating information that falls within the expected focus of followers.

boyd, et al. (2010) reinforce that Twitter is a tool used primarily for sharing specific pieces of information. It is not dialogue that corporate Twitter accounts aim to perform, but a social and participatory online environment to connect with stakeholders using different calls to action. The social action that is cultivated is the continual engagement with the Beauty Connexion Twitter account and the

response to a call to action that garners a certain behaviour. This behaviour is a result of language and abbreviations unique to Twitter and repetitive structure that creates a pattern among tweets and consistent textual format that is highly recognizable to Twitter users. As stated by Keenan & Shiri (2009), Twitter encourages sociability through simplicity and the inherent usability of the interface.

Conclusion

Although Twitter is still a relatively new social media tool that is gaining traction as part of corporate communications strategy, this research study shows that it is a useful means of engaging stakeholders and disseminating corporate information and messaging all within a platform that encourages social action and a degree of participation with only 140 characters.

Twitter connects public stakeholders with a company and uses unique language and structural patterns to increase its functionality as a communication tool. Genres are defined as a constellation of shared commonalities of form, audience and rhetorical situations that act as forms of social action (Schryer, 2000). From a pragmatic and social context perspective, genres perform work that meets the needs of the current environment, and reflects social values (Schryer, 2000). This research recognized a call to action as a shared commonality of text and also a means to cultivate social action. Most Beauty Connexion tweets directed followers back to an online address that promoted the company and shared more pertinent information with the public.

Schryer (2000) notes the work of Raymond Williams that aptly recognizes the nature of a genre to reflect and shape social values in a way that seems to be common sense. Language in the form of mentions, hashtags, URL hyperlinks, retweets and abbreviated URLs were found consistently across the Beauty Connexion tweets examined, contributing to the usability of Twitter as a

communication tool and commonsense understanding of how to respond to tweets.

As the primary pattern revealed through this research study, information sharing is the strategy used by a company to promote corporate messaging and better engage with followers. As a social media platform, Twitter serves to connect individuals and keep them connected through the exchange of short and frequent messages, Twitter is unique in that its simplistic structure encourages social interaction online (Keenan & Shiri, 2009). Creating a niche community and tweeting information to connect with followers is consistent with the goals of corporate communication strategy, which are to improve public perception and build and maintain relationships with stakeholders. Micro-blogging is a unique tool, rapidly increasing in popularity as a Web 2.0 social platform those corporations can adopt to utilize Twitter's simplistic and social interface to better connect with publics.

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