Brand dissemination in Canadian hospitals through Facebook

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Abstract
Social networks have managed to boost hospitals’ corporate communication. The aim of this paper is to study the impact of Facebook on the dissemination of hospitals' brand architectures. To this end, the Facebook profiles of 311 Canadian hospitals are analysed, and 10 indicators of brand architecture (identity, mission, vision, values, culture and image) are used. The data show that 57.88% of the surveyed hospitals have Facebook profiles; however, 85% displayed only 2 to 4 indicators. Unique brand awareness, the commitment to building a collective brand between the hospital and its stakeholders, and the need for corporate communication professionals are fundamental to the proper dissemination of hospital brands through Facebook.

Keywords: hospital, corporate communication, brand architecture, social media, Facebook

Introduction
In recent years, hospitals have increasingly opted to create strong brands that enable them to be differentiated from competitors, attract the best employees, have a positive impact on patients’ perceptions and create closer ties with different stakeholders with whom they interact (e.g., health authorities and the media). To this end, these organisations have established communication departments that are responsible for conceptualising and implementing different corporate communication initiatives that aim at promoting the hospital's brand. Among these initiatives, communicating hospitals' brand attributes through social networks stands out. This article aims to examine the true role of social networks in hospitals' brand communication. In order to achieve its objective, this article is divided into two distinct parts. The first part is a literature review on hospital branding, brand architecture and the role of social networks in disseminating brands. The second part presents the results of fieldwork that analysed 311 Canadian hospitals' brand communication through Facebook.

Hospital corporate communication

Interpersonal, internal and corporate communication
In hospitals, three factors influence consultations between healthcare professionals and patients: the information imbalance between them (McKee & Healy, 2002), the social support that the patient gets from friends and family (Wright, Sparks, & O’Hair, 2008) and the cultural factor, i.e. the patient's and healthcare professional’s religion, language and customs (Angelelli & Geist-Martin, 2005). However, the key factor that influences the physician-patient relationship is interpersonal communication (Clever, Jin, Levinson, & Meltzer, 2008); it has a positive influence on the success of medical consultations and on the patient’s physical and psychological outcomes (Berry, 2007; Wright et al., 2008). In hospitals, besides physician-patient interpersonal communication, there are two other communicative activities. Internal communication helps employees strengthen their sense of belonging to the brand (Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2012) and is considered to be one of the most important areas in
organisational communication for the future (Elving, 2010). Additionally, corporate communication is a strategic management function that focuses on building stakeholders’ trust in the organisation (Goodman, 2006; Luecke, 2007). According to Van Riel and Fombrun (2007), corporate communication is “the set of activities involved in managing and orchestrating all internal and external communications aimed at creating favourable starting points with stakeholders on which the company depends”. This concept must be understood from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes marketing approaches, public relations and corporate communications (Mazzei, 2014). Corporate communication concerns the entire organisation (Illia & Balmer, 2012), focusing on identity, image, reputation and relationships with stakeholders (Frandsen & Johansen, 2013), and aims to achieve particular results, which can then be measured in a functional way (Macnamara, 2014).

A hospital’s director of communications assumes the main function of managing the hospital’s brand; in other words, he or she tries to effectively position the brand in stakeholders’ minds (Brown, Dacin, Pratt, & Whetten, 2006) and to nurture it with a high level of credibility (Hyun & Whitehill, 2011). The brand can be defined as a group of emotional and functional values that allow the organisation to deliver on its promise(s) (De Chernatony, 2010). Managing a brand implies making every effort to transmit the organisation’s unique identity (Abratt & Kley, 2012). To this end, the hospital’s communications director may adopt three brand models: (1) a monolithic model, in which the importance is placed on the hospital brand; (2) an endorsed model, in which the brands of the hospital’s departments are more meaningful than the hospital’s global brand; and (3) a hybrid model, in which both brands are equally significant (Buckley, 2007). Hospitals must develop solid brand strategies because these organisations operate in changing environments (Kemp, Jillapalli & Becerra, 2014). As for the public to which brand communication is directed, hospitals must consider two main strategic targets: hospital staff and patients. Promoting the brand among employees is essential for branding (Abratt & Kley, 2012); on the one hand, this promotion helps the organisation to raise brand awareness (Drake, Gulman, & Roberts, 2005), and on the other hand, it helps employees to be committed to their work and to their employer (i.e., the organisation) (Argenti, 2003). Patients are increasingly selective in choosing their healthcare products (Sparer, 2011); therefore, hospitals must promote their brands and thereby have a positive impact on the patient’s selection process (Naveen, Anil & Smruthi, 2014). The organisation promotes its brand, first, to create brand equity, which has a positive impact on brand preference and on the consumer’s decisions (Chang & Liu, 2009), and, second, to build a corporate reputation, which is determined by the patient’s confidence in the hospital and his or her knowledge about the organisation (Kyung, Kang, Dong, Jong, & Suk, 2008).

From corporate communication to brand architecture

Hospital branding that is capable of increasing the organisation’s value and corporate reputation first needs to define the brand architecture. According to Nieto (2005), this architecture comprises five elements: identity, values, mission, vision and culture. These elements are very valuable intangible elements for any organisation (Veltri & Nardo, 2013). Corporate identity is a source of competitive advantage (Atakan & Eker, 2007; He & Balmer, 2007) and refers to the organisation’s personality, i.e. its history, ethics, philosophy, behaviour and standards (Capriotti, 1999). Corporate identity relates to other corporate elements, such as brand (He & Balmer, 2007), image, mission, corporate vision (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007), corporate culture (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006), and organisational strategies (Balmer, Stuart, & Greyser, 2009; He & Balmer, 2013). According to Mora (2009), an organisation’s corporate communication must embody the organisation’s identity and help develop its culture. The main objective of corporate identity is, first, to transmit and substantiate the brand’s promise to stakeholders (Balmer, 2012) and, second, to differentiate the company’s positioning and services in the eyes of stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2007).

Alongside corporate identity, values are the second corporate element. The organisation’s employees share these values, which build trust and community (Barret, 2003); these values also provide a connecting thread that guides the organisation in its communication actions (Morel, 2005). Values must be expressed as an added value, i.e. as something unique that the consumer experiences and that no other organisation is able to imitate (Urde, 2003). Additionally, values affect employees and their way of working (Sheehan & Isaac, 2014); therefore, organisations devote significant time and effort to informing their employees about corporate values (Aggerholm, Andersen, Asmuß & Thomsen, 2009). This action is significant because employees can only live and promulgate corporate values in their everyday lives when they internalise the organisation’s corporate identity (Cornelissen, 2007). Furthermore, values also have an impact on the organisation’s communication (Mucchielli, 2005) and even on its governance (Thomsen, 2005).
Once it has defined its identity and values, a hospital must then define its mission and vision. The mission is the goal that the organisation pursues (Nieto, 2005). Companies must develop their missions and explain how these missions are applied in practice (Cady, Wheeler, DeWolf & Brodke, 2011). From time to time, companies even reformulate their missions to adapt them to changing contexts (David & David, 2003). A mission provides a company with several benefits: it has a positive impact on workers' behaviours (Blair-Loy, Wharton & Goodstein, 2011); it improves communication with the organisation's stakeholders (Desmidt, Prinzie & Decramer, 2011); and it helps explain the organisation's true objectives (Barthuss & Glassman, 2008). A vision has a long-term component (Nieto, 2005) and defines the organisation's way forward to achieve its goals in the future (Singal & Jain, 2013). According to Barret (2003), a vision is a captivating statement of the organisation's long-term objectives. The vision must be clear, concise and inspirational for employees (Kantabutra, 2008); moreover, it must include all the organisation's interests, motivate its employees to do good work (Kantabutra & Avery, 2010) and be aligned with its brand objectives and corporate values (De Chernatony, 2010). Defining the vision and mission is critical, as these elements ensure that the organisation's stakeholders are clear about its objectives and the strategies used to achieve these objectives (Toftoy & Chatterjee, 2004).

Defining its identity, values, mission and vision helps set the tone for a way of working within the hospital that is called "corporate culture". Culture is a cultural source that determines employees' behaviours (Marshall & Adamic, 2010). In hospitals, corporate culture can be defined as the set of beliefs and attitudes that guide employees' behaviours (Wright et al., 2008). A hospital must align its culture with its everyday mission, values and professional practices; otherwise, it cannot offer added value to the patient (Nelson, Taylor & Walsh, 2014). Moreover, a hospital’s culture must be consistent with its brand (De Chernatony & Cottam, 2008).

A hospital’s brand architecture (identity, values, mission, vision and culture) is communicated to internal and external stakeholders to lay the foundations for the so-called "brand image". According to Van Riel (1998), personal impressions, interpersonal communication and mass media communication combine to produce a mixture of real and parallel impressions whose totality forms the brand image. In other words, brand image is the mental set of images that consumers and stakeholders have about a brand (Balmer & Greyser, 2002; Faircloth, 2005). Therefore, it is often said that brand image is the corporate identity that stakeholders perceive (He & Balmer, 2007). Additionally, brand image must be aligned with the organisation’s vision, corporate culture, (Gregory, 2007) and identity (Chun, 2005). For any organisation, managing brand image is something strategic (Balmer & Greyser, 2006; Morel, 2005), as it helps the organisation generate value for its business and products (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007).

**Brand architecture dissemination through Facebook**

In a hospital setting, the use of social networks has become a mass phenomenon (Chou et al., 2009). Due to this phenomenon, patients can share health experiences and even create self-help groups (Kamel & Wheeler, 2007; McLean, Richards & Wardman, 2007). These networks also enable hospitals to improve their services (Van de Belt, Berben, Samsom, Engelen & Schoonhoven, 2012) and establish more fluid communicative relationships with patients (The Change Foundation, 2011). Social networks provide a participatory environment in which the protagonist is the user (Adams, 2010; Eysenbach, 2008); this type of environment strengthens the brand’s vitality, value (Jensen, Muñiz & Amould, 2009), and awareness (Fanion, 2011).

Facebook stands out among all social networks, with 829 million active daily users and 654 million active daily users through smartphones in June 2014 (Facebook Newsroom, 2014), which makes it the most important social network at the global level. A social network's strategic impact on a company's communication has led authors, such as Gómez and Soto (2011) and Zerfass, Tench, Verhoeven, Vercic, and Moreno (2010), to assert that public relations professionals must manage social networks. Professionally managing a Facebook page involves the creation of basic structures and regulatory frameworks (Linke & Zerfass, 2013) to exploit this network's communicative potential (Wright & Hinson, 2009) and to establish bidirectional and intense relationships with users (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Social networks (e.g., Facebook) have become powerful public relations tools (Waters, Burnett, Lamm & Lucas, 2009), helping disseminate some of the organisation's corporate elements (e.g., mission) (Booth & Matic, 2011; McCorkindale, 2010). These networks thus generate brand awareness (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014) and have a positive impact on the organisation's brand image (Bruhn, Schoenmueller & Schäfer, 2012). In fact, 80% of social network users prefer Facebook pages as the tools that brands use to contact them (Business2Community, 2013). Thus, when users post comments on a company's Facebook page, a stronger community feeling is created among these users and the company's brand (Hays, Page & Buhalis, 2013). Facebook has become a fundamental tool for any...
company’s branding (Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt & Füller, 2013) for three reasons. First, brands are built through an on-going social process, in which value is created through the interaction between users and brands (Füller, Schroll, Dennhardt & Hutter, 2012). Second, Facebook is able to generate consumer commitment and strengthen consumers’ relationships with brands (Brodie, Ilic, Biljana & Hollebeek, 2013; Kim, Choi, Qualls & Han, 2008). Third, brand communities in social networks have a positive impact on consumers’ trust in the brand and thus on their brand loyalty (Laroche, Habibi & Richard, 2013).

Methodology

To better understand Canadian hospitals’ brand communication on Facebook, we analysed the Facebook profiles of 311 hospitals that appear on the list of Canadian hospitals developed by the Ranking Web of World Hospitals. The Spanish National Research Council (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas de España, CSIC), one of the most prestigious scientific organisations in Europe, develops this ranking.¹ In July 2014, Canada’s Top Hospitals List consisted of a total of 311 hospitals, all of which had independent web domains.² In this study, we analysed each hospital’s official corporate page on Facebook (i.e., not those of specific departments or unofficial pages). To perform the analysis, we used 10 indicators of corporate communication³ and studied 3 sections on each Facebook page: Information, Events and Videos. In the Information section, we analysed the inclusion of particular indicators related to corporate identity: (1) a description of the hospital, (2) links to its other corporate websites, (3) a description of its values, (4) a description of its mission, (5) a description of its vision, culture or working method, (6) a list of its awards and distinctions, (7) a description of its background (i.e., its historical milestones), (8) and its corporate logo as the profile picture. In the Events section, we analysed the inclusion of an indicator related to corporate culture: (9) a description of corporate events. In the Videos section, another indicator related to corporate culture was analysed: (10) the existence of videos starring healthcare professionals from the hospital.

Bearing in mind the ideas pointed out in the theoretical framework, the following three hypotheses are proposed:

H1. It is expected that Facebook is a strategic tool for corporate communication.
H2. It is expected that hospitals disseminate all elements of Brand architecture on Facebook – identity, values, mission, vision and culture.
H3. It is expected that hospitals consider Facebook as a strategic tool to enhance their Brand image.

Results

To perform this analysis, we only considered the information displayed in an organised way in the different Facebook sections analysed (Information, Events and Videos). Moreover, we only analysed corporate elements that were clearly identified as such by the hospital organisation itself (e.g., mission, vision, and corporate values). Finally, along with order and precision, this study was also based on linguistic plurality; although most hospitals posted their Facebook profiles in English, we also analysed the profiles of hospitals that posted their profiles in French.

Of the 311 hospitals considered, only 180 have an active Facebook profile, which means that 57.88% of Canadian hospitals have an official Facebook page. The remaining 131 hospitals do not have a Facebook profile, or they have a profile that is inactive or does not contain any information. We display the results for each of the 10 indicators considered, which can be divided into different blocks: identity, values, mission, vision, corporate culture and brand image. This analysis aims to assess how the best hospitals in Canada use these indicators to disseminate their brand architectures through Facebook.

Identity

The two indicators that were used to evaluate this block were (a) the existence of a description of the hospital and (b) the existence of links to its other corporate websites. According to the data obtained, 93.89% of hospitals had a company description, and 96.11% had links to their other corporate webpages, such as their official websites or their pages on other social networks (e.g. Twitter or YouTube).

Values

To evaluate this criterion, the following indicator was used: the description of the hospital’s corporate values. The results show that only 2.78% of hospitals clearly described their corporate values.

¹ The development of the ranking is based on web indicators that measure the professional and research activities that the hospital performs. The web impact factor is measured by four indicators: page size, visibility, rich files and academic character. Official website: http://hospitals.webometrics.info/en/Methodology.
² The complete list of surveyed hospitals can be consulted in Annex - Analyzed hospitals.
³ The analysis was conducted from 24 December 2014 to 11 January 2015.
Mission
Another indicator used in this study was the description of the hospital's corporate mission, which only 9.44% of the surveyed hospitals included on their Facebook profiles.

Vision
This indicator aimed at knowing whether hospitals described their corporate vision on their Facebook pages. According to the data obtained, only 4.44% described this corporate element.

Corporate culture
To analyse the impact of this criterion on corporate communications via Facebook, we considered two indicators: (a) the existence of a description of the hospital's awards and distinctions and (b) the existence of corporate videos starring hospital staff. According to the study, 6.67% of hospitals described awards and distinctions, and 3.33% had videos in which the medical staff explained medical treatments, clinical findings, etc.

Corporate image
Three indicators were used to evaluate this criterion: (a) the inclusion of a description of the hospital's historical milestones, (b) the presence of the hospital's corporate logo for the profile picture, and (c) the inclusion of a description of the hospital's corporate events. According to the study, 26.11% of hospitals described their main historical milestones (e.g., scientific findings and the opening of new offices); 80.55% used the corporate logo as their Facebook profile pictures; and 6.67% described at least one corporate event in which the hospital participated (e.g., conferences, congresses or scientific awareness days).

One of the most significant findings is that 85% of the surveyed hospitals displayed two to four of the ten indicators considered. Furthermore, no hospital displayed 8 or more indicators (See Table 1). Moreover, the hospitals that displayed the most indicators were Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, Windsor Essex County Health Unit and Cambridge Memorial Hospital (See Table 2). Finally, it must be noted that the three most commonly displayed indicators were the inclusion of links to the hospital's other corporate websites, a description of the hospital, and the hospital's logo as the profile picture (see Table 3).

Table 1 Percentage of displayed indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of displayed indicators</th>
<th>Number of hospitals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 Hospitals displaying at least 50% of the indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>Number of indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor Essex County Health Unit; Cambridge Memorial Hospital</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Sainte-Justine; Vancouver Island Health Authority; Saskatoon Health Region; Baycrest; Iwk Health Centre; Prairie Women’s Health Centre; Hopital Regional de Sudbury; Lasik MD Laser Eye Surgery and Vision Correction; Royal Ottawa Health Care Group; Hotel Dieu Hospital; Somerset West Community Health Centre; Norfolk General Hospital; Renfrew Victoria Hospital; Riverview Health Center.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Most commonly displayed indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Percentage of hospitals displaying this indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Links to the hospital’s other corporate websites</td>
<td>96.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A description of the hospital</td>
<td>93.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The hospital logo for the profile picture</td>
<td>80.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A description of historical milestones</td>
<td>26.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A description of the mission</td>
<td>9.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A list of awards and distinctions</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A description of corporate events</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A description of the vision</td>
<td>4.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Videos with healthcare professionals from the hospital</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. A description of the values</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

Social networks have become a strategic communication tool for healthcare organisations (Park, Rodgers & Stemmle, 2011), which allow them to explore new methods for institutional communication (Ratzan, 2011). Among other popular social networks, Facebook is one of the most significant because it helps hospital organisations to properly manage their brand identities (Scott, 2010), disseminate their brands, and promote their corporate images (Parket et al., 2011). This paper aims to determine whether Facebook is a genuine institutional communication tool for Canadian hospitals. The results allow us to answer the three hypothesis around which this research revolves:

H1. It is expected that Facebook is a strategic tool for corporate communication.
H2. It is expected that hospitals disseminate all elements of Brand architecture on Facebook – identity, values, mission, vision and culture-.
H3. It is expected that hospitals consider Facebook as a strategic tool to enhance their Brand image.

To answer the first hypothesis, one finding will suffice: 57.88% of the surveyed hospitals have an official Facebook page. Thus, there is fairly widespread use of Facebook as a strategic tool for corporate communication. However, only 3 hospitals display six or more indicators and no hospital display all 10 indicators that were used to assess these organisations’ brand communications. Facebook has the power to attract consumers to a brand (Tuten, 2008), and this tool has a positive impact on an organisation’s global communication strategy (Parket et al., 2011); it is thus crucial that hospitals continue developing their Facebook presences.

The second hypothesis is more difficult to answer. However, according to the data obtained, there is still limited use of Facebook as a tool to disseminate hospitals’ brand architectures. Although some hospitals do use this tool for this function (e.g. Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region, Windsor Essex County Health Unit and Cambridge Memorial Hospital) most of the analysed hospitals do not disseminate their brand architectures in a complete and organised way. For example, it may be noted that descriptions of the mission, vision and values, which are basic corporate elements for any brand positioning, are only displayed by 9.44%, 4.44% and 2.78% of the surveyed hospitals, respectively. However, most hospitals display the two indicators that relate to corporate identity: 96.11% of hospitals have links to their
other corporate websites, and 93.89% include company descriptions (with objectives, organisational dimensions, and structure). In the context of Communication 2.0, an organisation’s brand identity is created through its social network profiles (Scott, 2010), which are also very useful in making a positive impression on stakeholders (Parket al., 2011). Therefore, it would be interesting for hospitals to further implement these communication tools as a way of disseminating their brand architectures.

Regarding the third hypothesis, the data show that most Canadian hospitals do consider Facebook to be a tool that is capable of having a positive impact on their brand images. In fact, most hospitals display two brand image indicators: the inclusion of the hospital’s logo as the profile picture (80.55%) and a description of historical milestones (26.11%). However, only 6.67% describe the corporate events in which the hospital participates (e.g., conventions and scientific awareness days). Facebook is a tool that can influence consumer attitudes towards brands (Thackery, Hanson, & McKenzie, 2008); in addition, it may also generate positive word-of-mouth among physicians and patients and even within the hospital itself (McCarroll et al., 2014). It is thus very important that a hospital’s brand image management is also based on tools such as Facebook. In summary, this research demonstrated that Facebook should be a suitable communication tool for Canadian hospitals.

After analysing the results of this study, we believe that future lines of research may emerge, which would significantly help us better understand the brand communication phenomenon that hospitals have developed through social networks. Three lines of research stand out: (1) monitoring and measuring the strategies that hospitals use to optimise their brand communication through social networks, (2) examining the role of medical and nursing staff in the Communication 2.0 that has been developed by hospitals, and (3) observing and/or developing strategies of collective brand building between the hospital and its stakeholders. Finally, this article has some drawbacks, among which the following can be highlighted: a lack of knowledge about (1) each hospital’s global communication strategy, (2) the impact of social networks on this strategy, (3) the different stakeholders’ opinions about the analysed hospital brands, and (4) the type of communicative structure that is available to each hospital (e.g., department, number of employees, and material and financial resources).

Conclusions

Social networks have become tools that boost the corporate communication that a hospital develops; these media are especially interesting to disseminate the hospitals brand architecture to several stakeholders as patients, journalists, government, etc. They allow more fluid and bidirectional communication between the hospital and its stakeholders, which is a considerable help in disseminating scientific knowledge, but they also help position the brand in stakeholders’ minds. To conclude this study, we provide three parting ideas. First, we recommend that hospitals explain all the corporate elements that constitute their brand architectures in a comprehensive and organised way; otherwise, a unique perception of the hospital’s brand cannot be generated. According to the data obtained, hospitals do not always present these elements in a comprehensive and organised way, especially with regard to the mission (9.44%), vision (4.44%) and corporate values (2.78%). Second, it is worth enhancing the collective brand building between the hospital and its stakeholders, and it is crucial to facilitate the principal role of healthcare professionals in the branding activities that the hospital undertakes. Therefore, we recommend that more hospitals use videos that star healthcare professionals. The data show that only 3.33% of the surveyed hospitals use video to promote the role of health professionals. Third, as in all sectors, the professionalization of hospitals’ brand communication must rely on the expertise of corporate communication professionals who have the necessary resources–time and money – to implement communication strategies that aim at achieving concrete results, which must be measured and used as a basis for future communication actions. This is a key point to all Canadian hospitals which don’t have a Facebook profile (42.2% of 311 hospitals analyzed). In summary, the conclusions of this study provide elements of information that are of interest of those involved in the management of corporate communication, and particularly in the designing of communication campaigns to disseminate hospital’s brand architectures through Facebook more effectively.

Appendix - Hospitals analysed

In July 2014, the ranking of the best Canadian hospitals consisted of the following hospitals:

1) Alberta Health Services, 2) Hospital for Sick Children, 3) Santé Montérégie, 4) Vancouver Coastal Health, 5) London Health Sciences Centre, 6) Fraser Health, 7) Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, 8) Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Sainte Justine, 9) Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital, 10) Vancouver Island Health Authority, 11) University Health Network, 12) St Michael’s Hospital, 13) Mount Sinai Hospital Toronto, 14) Ottawa Hospital, 15) Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, 16) Alberta Health & Wellness, 17) Hamilton Health Sciences, 18) Capital
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