

# Building Brand Awareness through Social Media: Case study of Juan Choconat



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# Abstract

This dissertation is a theoretical work based on the analysis of the use of social media as brand awareness building tool, placing as a practical example a Colombian company called Juan Choconat, which is a producer of cocoa-based products. The purpose of this dissertation is to identify the tools used and the different practices that must be implemented through Social Media, in order to reach the company's goal, which is to build brand awareness abroad.

Due to the descriptive nature of this paper, in order to achieve the objectives, it is vital to develop a thorough literature review regarding the different components of the subject, which are: social media, branding, brand awareness and brand equity. That will enable analysing the characteristics that make the traditional communication directed towards the Social Media in line to the changes that should be made in the message and content to make it a powerful brand awareness building tool.

Moreover, in order to have an insight of how people use social media a survey has been designed. The data collected through this method altogether with data gathered via conducting a questionnaire with the case company representative will provide the dissertation with a knowledge originating from two different perspectives - the company perspective and the consumer's perspective. The questions in both the survey and the questionnaire are aimed at getting a better understanding of the research topic from the practical side.

The narrative literature review in conjunction with the data analysis that was gathered via questionnaire and survey led to the conclusion that social media can influence the process of building brand awareness.

**Key words:** Social media, Brand awareness, Brand equity, Branding, Social Media Communications.

# 1.Introduction

Nowadays, social media is seen as a powerful engine of people's lives and as a tool used on daily basis. Information is constantly being searched and shared by social media. (Hinton & Hjorth, 2013). Social Media as a tool has transcended, from being used to share content of people's private lives, feelings, events or news, to become a vital tool for companies that want to generate economic benefits through innovative communications and greater interaction with the public. It is possible thank to the fact that social media are easy to access, as the access to the Internet is constantly growing around the world. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media has changed the classic marketing communication. Currently it is the Internet users that are in control over the shape of brand communication shape, instead of the company's managers. It is possible to notice a shift from traditional one-way communication to two-way, peer-to-peer and multi-way communication. Therefore, nowadays a multi-dimensional communication can be noticed. (Berthon et al., 2008) The rapid development of social media and their popularity in the whole world across both companies and individual users started to bring the attention of scholars, researchers and practitioners. (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015).

Creating and enhancing the brand awareness is one of the most important tasks for companies. It plays a very important role in modern marketing environment. It is said that strong brand awareness can generate a competitive advantage for the company on the market. That, subsequently leads to embracing the company's reputation and credibility. (Latif, et al., 2014) The main goal of all the businesses is to generate profits, which can be accomplished by increasing the sales. Having a strong brand awareness which results in higher reputation and credibility helps the company to start to exist in potential customers' consideration set. That can lead to purchase and eventually to profits for the company. (C. L. L. Martin in L. E. Swayne & M. Dodds, 2011) Without the recognition of a product,



company or brand, the potential customers will not have the information where and how to fulfill their wants and need. Hence, it can be concluded that brand awareness from company's perspective is absolutely critical. The reason for that is that without the brand awareness, the principal objective of any company, namely generating a profit will not be accomplished. (ibid.)

With social media being a powerful tool and brand awareness being a goal for the companies, it has become clear that using social media in order to create and later enhance the brand awareness can be a successful strategy for companies. That will be researched on the example of a case company, that has been chosen for the purpose of this dissertation due to its contextual fit to the subject. The company is Juan Choconat, a Colombian company, born in 2014 as an entrepreneurial project which has done a great of social work inclusion with the peasants victims of the internal conflict of the country (Colombia-Inn, 2015). The core business is cocoa production in association with these peasants and later the manufacture of dark cocoa products with percentages ranging from 52 to 100. Their products, can be categorised in bars, cakes, cacao powder and beverages (juanchoconat.com, 2019).

Hence, the aim of this dissertation is to understand how social media can help to build brand awareness. This will be explained by showing how social media should be used and how companies should adjust to use this tool. Moreover, the importance of the content will be clarified.

### ***1.1 Structure of the dissertation***

This dissertation consists of 8 chapters, which are: Introduction, Methodology, Literature Review, Case Company's story, Data Presentation and Analysis, Results, Conclusion and eventually Reflections and Limitations.

The first chapter, Introduction, includes the structure of the thesis, the justification of the chosen topic, the main objective of the dissertation and Problem Formulation together with the Research Questions.

Chapter number two is Methodology. Here, it will be described what the research method of the dissertation is, including the research approach, research philosophy, the method of data collection and the data analysis.

In the third chapter, namely Literature Review, the knowledge gathered while reviewing the relevant literature will be described. The Literature Review of this dissertation regards the concepts of social media, branding, brand awareness and brand equity. The theory regarding these concepts will be thoroughly described and analysed.

In chapter number four, the case company, Juan Choconat, will be introduced. Moreover, the company's social media branding strategy will be described, what will serve as a starting point to compare it to the results of the literature review regarding the use of social media as a branding tool and the data collected via a survey and a questionnaire.

The fifth chapter is the Data Presentation and Analysis. Here, the results of the questionnaire and the survey will be presented and subsequently analysed.

Chapter number six, Results, will present the findings of both Literature Review and Data Collection. Here, the results of them will be described, compared and subsequently conjuncted. That will lead to the conceptual framework of this dissertation, that is created as a combination of the previously mentioned Literature Review and Data gathered. The conceptual framework will answer the research question of the dissertation.

The following chapter number seven demonstrates the conclusion of the dissertation. In this chapter, the whole thesis is summarised and concluded. That will show if the main objective of the paper has been achieved and if the research question has been answered.

The conclusion will be allowed as the result of analysing the findings of the previous chapters of the dissertation.

Finally, the eighth and last chapter of the dissertation is called Reflections and Limitations. Here the authors share their reflections regarding the process of writing the paper. Moreover, also the limitations will be described. Therefore, the areas for possible further research in the future will be addressed.

The pictorial representation of the structure of the dissertation is presented on the figure below.

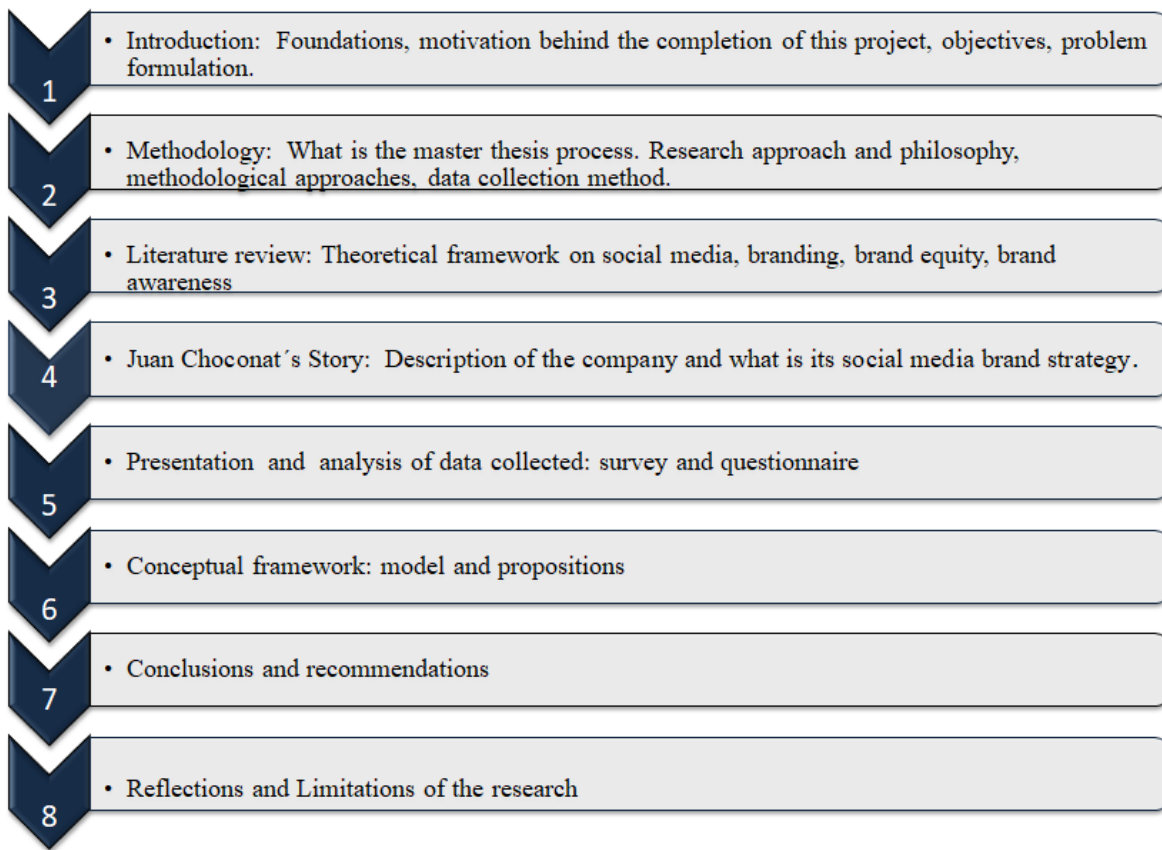


Figure 1: Structure of the thesis (own production)

## ***1.2 Justification***

The project is intended to be carried out as a research that is based on a theoretical review of literature written by different authors in the area of Social Media, Branding and Brand Awareness including a variety of other concepts related to these two previously mentioned. The dissertation aims to identify how effective Social Media is, as a tool to build brand awareness. Moreover, it also considers which factors and practices must be taken into consideration and implemented in order to develop a strategy for companies in favour of a new way of sharing information to innovate and reorient their promotion and communication practices.

## ***1.3 Objective***

The main objective of this dissertation is to perform an investigation in which the main concepts will be social media, branding with focus on brand awareness and eventually the relation between how social media and branding elements merge to create an effective social media marketing strategy, with the aim to build brand awareness. It will be possible from the presented theoretical expositions described in the literature review chapter and evidence of the different practices implemented at corporate level. The practical point of view regarding how social media can help building brand awareness will be researched with the help of the case company for this dissertation - Juan Choconat.

## ***1.4 Problem Formulation and Research Questions***

The world has witnessed a huge and fast development and growth of new ways of communication, which have led to a greater, inclusive and participative way to exchange information. However, this phenomenon has forced companies to adapt by changing, designing and implementing communication and content generating strategies aimed to position themselves and their brands into consumers brains. Based on this scenario,

specialists such as the Department of Industry Innovation and Science of the Government of Australia (business.gov.au) have remarked pros and cons in regards to social media use for businesses. They can be found on the table below.

<b>Pros and cons of using social media for businesses</b>	
<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
Marketing costs reduced	Not having a clear marketing or social media strategy may result in reduced benefits for your business
Sales increase	Social media is immediate and needs daily monitoring
Increases the website traffic	Social media platforms need to be managed actively to obtain real benefits
Ranking improved on search engines	Risk of unwanted or inappropriate behaviour on the firm's site, including bullying and harassment
Greater customer engagement	Greater exposure online has the potential to attract risks. Risks can include negative feedback, information leaks or hacking
Greater access to international markets	
Opportunity for customer feedback	
Opportunity to conduct market research about the customer	
Networking opportunities improvement with customers and other businesses	

**Table 1. Pros and cons of using social media for business (own production based on business.gov.au)**

After analysing the aforementioned advantages and disadvantages of using social media for businesses, it is possible to notice, that social media can be a very powerful and effective tool if used properly. It means that from the company's point of view it is necessary to develop a strategy that will allow the communication and sharing of content in a creative, effective, quick and interactive way. It is also important to remember, that this strategy should involve a consumer who makes the purchasing decisions after obtaining information from social media. (business.gov.au, 2018) However, not all the companies are ready to launch social media strategy.

Considering all the pros and cons which have been mentioned in the previous table has led to a research question of this dissertation:

### **Is social media a beneficial tool for Juan Choconat to build brand awareness?**

Moreover, in order to complement the previous question, four another research question have been developed in order to support the dissertation:

1. What are the most popular and influential social media platforms and post types used by companies as branding tool?
2. What are the features that make social media posts appealing for brand communications?
3. From customer/user perspective, what are the features that make them interested into a brand?
4. Does Juan Choconat take seriously its social media activities as brand awareness building tool? If so, does Juan Choconat use social media as a tool to pursue its brand awareness building goal in order to expand its scope nationally and internationally?

## 2. Methodology

This chapter of the dissertation will elaborate on the inherent assumption of the authors, as well as on the research approach and philosophy and finally the methodology for both the research design and method. Moreover, it will be explained how these choices will influence the methods and findings of this dissertation.

To achieve the objectives set out for the purpose of this dissertation, a mix of qualitative and quantitative research approach has been employed. A questionnaire will be carried out, since it is about specifying the set of characteristics, descriptions, properties and features of the analysed subject. In the theoretical approach, a systematic literature review of the different authors specialised in social media and brand awareness research will be made. Moreover, a survey will be conducted among social media users in order to gather practical knowledge originating from its users. Within the investigation, a review of the profile of the company Juan Choconat will be created.

In the theoretical-practical approach, real examples on how Juan Choconat is performing in terms of building brand awareness using social media as communication and exposure tool will be described in the further parts of the dissertation.

### ***2.1 Research Approach***

While deciding on the research approach, the authors can choose between *deductive*, *inductive* and *abductive* approach. (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009)

*Deductive* approach means that the knowledge creator is moving from theory to facts. It means that hypotheses are deducted based on the theory and subsequently tested via empirical analysis. (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009)

*Inductive* approach is exactly the opposite of deductive, what means the the process goes the other way round. In inductive approach the creator of knowledge moves from observation to theory. (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009)

When it comes to *abductive* approach, that is a combination of the previously described deductive and inductive approach. Abductive approach starts like induction, from facts, however it does not move to theory. Therefore, from this side it is similar to deductive approach. Hence, it can be noticed that abductive approach is moving back and forth between facts and theories. It means that the research process using abductive approach includes the alternations between facts and theories which are both seen in each other's light. (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009)

As a matter of facts it is very rare that research is totally inductive or totally deductive. Very often the findings of deductive research can lead to implications for the theory. Hence, the research is becoming more inductive at the end. On the other hand, the findings of inductive research can lead to applying empirical analysis in order to test new fields. Thus, it is possible to conclude, that it can transform into deductive approach. (Bryman & Bell, 2011)

For the purpose of the dissertation the deductive approach is being used throughout the paper. It means that the authors move from theory to facts. It can be noticed on the example of the thorough literature review which is the paper's theory. Subsequently, several propositions are created based on that theory.

## ***2.2 Research Philosophy***

Research philosophy regards the development of knowledge, as well as the nature of this knowledge. The research philosophy that the authors are adopting includes key assumptions regarding the way how the authors see the world. The previously mentioned assumptions support the research strategy, as well as the methods that are chosen as this strategy's part.



It is said that here, the essential influence is the specific view of the relationship that exists between the knowledge and its development process. (Saunders et al., 2003)

It is possible to differentiate three different approaches that describe the research process such as: positivism, realism and interpretivism. (Saunders et al., 2003)

The positivistic view adopts the philosophical stance of the natural scientist. That explains the truth of social appearance, as well as the positivistic research result can be compared with rules and laws. One of the most important elements of positivism is that the research made has done in a value-free way as much as possible, what meant that the researcher is independent from the study subject. Besides that, this method is highly structured. (Saunders et al., 2003)

The second view is realism. According to this belief, what the senses show the people as reality is the truth and the objects have an independent from human minds existence. In realism, a reality exists independent of the mind. (Saunders et al., 2003)

Interpretivism on the other hand, is the contrary of positivism. This belief sees the world as too complex to be defined by theory, laws and physical sciences. In interpretivism there is no objective reality, but instead a subjective reality, in which it is vital to comprehend the participants' goals, behaviours and purposes. (Saunders et al., 2003)

### ***2.3 Paradigm***

The term paradigm has been attributed to Kuhn (1970), who is arguing that each research field is being characterised by common understanding set of the studied phenomenon. Moreover, the types of questions which are necessary to ask regarding that phenomenon and the way how the researchers ought to structure the approach in order to ask that research question and the way of how the results ought to be analysed and interpreted, are the characteristics which together create the paradigm. Furthermore, the scholars see a

paradigm as a set of four assumptions such as: ontology, epistemology, methodology and human nature. (Kuada, 2012)

Ontology regards the nature of what researchers look for to know something about. In other words, ontology describes what researchers consider to be a “reality”. (Kuada, 2012)

Epistemology is describing the knowledge nature, as well as the means of knowing and what might be believed by researchers to be the “truth”. (Kuada, 2012)

Human nature regards the way how researchers see the relationship between people and the environment. (Kuada, 2012)

Finally, methodology is the plan that guides the whole research. Methodology describes all the reasons that underlie the decision regarding the particular methods within the research. In other words, methodology is the research design which shows how researchers go when it comes to looking for the knowledge they want to find. (Kuada, 2012)

Two main perspectives are the objectivist approach and the subjectivist approach. The differences can be seen on the table below:

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>The Objectivist Approach</b>	<b>The Subjectivists Approach</b>
<b>Ontology</b>	Realism	Nominalism
<b>Epistemology</b>	Positivism	Antipositivism
<b>Human Nature</b>	Determinism	Voluntarism
<b>Methodology</b>	Nomothetic	Idiographic

**Table 2. The differences between the objectivist approach and the subjectivist approach. (own production, based on Kuada, 2012, p. 37)**

Within the **objectivist** approach, the positivist paradigm is working with realism. Here it is believed that the world is real, however external from human beings. Therefore, it can be

noticed that also the human nature is explained in this paradigm. When it comes to the epistemology, positivism means that researchers want to predict what is happening in the social world and subsequently explain it via analysing regularities. Finally, when it comes to the methodology, the nomothetic view is working with systematic protocols and techniques which come from various studies. (Kuada, 2012)

When it comes to the **subjectivist** approach, according to the antipositivist paradigm, known also as interpretivist paradigm, it describes the reality as made of individuals' interactions with each other and presented as concepts, names and labels. That is the essence of nominalism. This paradigm believes in multiple realities in social science. The antipositivism assumes that social world is essentially relativistic, for instance socially constructed. Therefore, it can only be comprehended from the individuals' standpoint, when they are involved in the social activities. When it comes to the methodology, the idiographic view sees the reality in terms of ideas and symbols. (Kuada, 2012)

For the purpose of this dissertation the subjectivist approach has been chosen and applied throughout the whole paper. Therefore, the authors can be called as researchers using subjectivist type of research, which is often labeled as “interpretivism” or “antipositivism”. It means that the authors believe that the reality is made of individuals' interactions with each other and presented as concepts, names and labels. Moreover, the authors think that the social world is socially constructed. (Kuada, 2012) The research can be done in an subjective way and understood from the researchers' individual standpoint, as they are involved in the social activities. According to that view, the results gathered were collected with personal and emotional relation, as the authors decided to collect data using a survey with the focus on participants' psychographics. (ibid.) When it comes to the methodology, its choice will be explained in the next part of this dissertation.

## ***2.4 Methodological approaches***

Arbnor and Bjerke (2009) proposed three distinct methodological approaches, namely: the analytical approach, the systems approach and the actors approach. All of these aforementioned methodologies have different assumptions regarding the reality.

The analytical approach accentuates that the reality is factive and that the specialists will utilise the existing theories and different techniques, what will enable to either verify or falsify the created hypotheses. The main objective of that approach is to comprehend and discover casual relations, where the researchers' aim is clarifying effects through presenting an earlier or current cause. (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2014)

The systems approach is also working with existing theories, however in different way than analytical approach, because in this approach, the theories application is not general. One of the vital thoughts when it comes to working inside the systems approach is the assumption that diverse elements of the framework combined are always different from the entirety. That means that the relations between the parts of the systems approach can have both negative and positive consequences on the whole. The result of working within the system approach is to find these synergy effects. This approach works with the terms system theory and holism. (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2014)

The third methodological approach, according to Arbnor and Bjerke (2014) is the actors approach. This view assumes that reality is socially constructed. The researcher using the actors approach tries to increase understanding through describing dialectical relations. The effect of working within this approach is the description of the dialectic and how that develops in particular situations over time. (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2014)

This dissertation, as described before, uses the objectivistic approach. When it comes to the methodology, the one that has been chosen by the researchers is the systems approach. The systems view believes that different parts of the framework combined are always different

from the whole and that the relation between these parts can have both positive or negative consequences on the entirety. That view fits to the authors' who try to find the relation between social media and brand awareness. The results of working within the systems approach is to find synergy effect between the elements of the system. (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2014) Finding the synergy between social media and brand awareness is the main goal of that dissertation. Therefore, it has been decided that the systems view is the most feasible to be applied within this dissertation.

## ***2.5 Data Collection***

For the purpose of this dissertation both primary data and secondary data was used. Secondary data come from the thorough literature review regarding social media, branding, brand awareness and brand equity. When it comes to primary data, it has been collected as the result of the questionnaire that has been designed for the case company, Juan Choconat, as well as from the survey that has been aimed at social media users.

### **2.5.1 Secondary Data**

The secondary data has been collected as a result of conducting the literature review in the area of social media, brand awareness, branding and brand equity. The knowledge has been gathered via undertaking a search for relevant sources that could be use as a base for theory of this dissertation. Subsequently the theory has been analysed, compared and if relevant, incorporated into the dissertation.

### **2.5.2 Primary Data**

Based on the chosen topic, it has been decided to perform a mix of qualitative and quantitative research approach for the implementation of the study, along with the data

collection and analysis procedures. As a data collection tool, one questionnaire and one survey have been created and performed by the researchers (see appendices A and B).

The survey has been conducted with social media users as a target group. Some of its questions have been designed from elements found in the literature review. Through this instrument, an approach is sought to the brand perception of these users and potential consumers through social media influence.

The questionnaire was performed with one of the owners of the case company Juan Choconat, N. Bulla. This questionnaire aimed to deepen the knowledge about the company's social media activity, procedures and plans. Thank to the data collected, it will be possible for the researches to understand what are the company's motivations to get involved in social media marketing and have evidence of the derived outcomes, namely profitability, brand recognition and brand awareness.

## ***2.6 Data Triangulation and Mixed Research Methods***

In this dissertation it has been decided to use both quantitative and qualitative method of collecting data. The authors have designed a survey directed at social media users and a questionnaire aimed at the case company's representative. It has been decided that gathering data in these two methods can be effective and provide the dissertation with the desired outcome. However, among the academics, mixing the quantitative and qualitative method has been a very controversial subject. (Kuada, 2012)

Rossmann and Wilson (1985) have divided the current views regarding the usage of both quantitative and qualitative research method of collecting data into three distinct groups: the pragmatists, the purists and the situationists.

The pragmatists are endorsing the mixed usage of qualitative and quantitative methods. They argue that the dichotomy that exists between the quantitative and qualitative method

is false. Therefore, the pragmatists convince that using both approaches is the best method, as they both contribute to each other. Such approach is called triangulation. (Rossman and Wilson, 1985 in Kuada, 2012)

The purists, on the other hand, consider different paradigms as mutually exclusive and incompatible. Therefore, they only allow the usage of one paradigm at a time and convince that using multiple paradigms in the same research is impossible. (Rossman and Wilson, 1985 in Kuada, 2012)

Finally, the situationists suggest that various paradigms can contribute to a comprehension of any particular social phenomenon researched. Therefore, in order to find the truth, it requires the researchers to accept various perspectives and different interpretations of the researched phenomena. (Rossman and Wilson, 1985 in Kuada, 2012)

As mentioned before, the approach of the pragmatists is known as triangulation. Jick (1979) believes that triangulation enables the researchers to enhance the conclusions' accuracy thank to using data collected from more than only one single method. (Kuada, 2012)

Denzin (1978) has divided the triangulation into four different kinds:

- Theoretical triangulation
- Data triangulation
- Investigator triangulation
- Methodological triangulation

(Kuada, 2012)

Theoretical triangulation is alike the approach of multiple paradigms. It allows the researchers to build an operative paradigm that contains two or even more meta-theoretical perspectives. (Kuada, 2012)

Data triangulation is a strategy of collecting data from multiple samples or sources. An example of that can be collecting both quantitative and qualitative data for the purpose of one research. (Kuada, 2012)

Investigator triangulation regards the usage of more than only one investigator, for instance interviewer or observer, or data analyst or coder in one research. The multiple investigators that did not discussed with each other before about the investigated subject can make the data more reliable and credible. (Kuada, 2012)

Finally, the methodological triangulation has two distinct forms: within method triangulation and between method triangulation. The first one refers to using various techniques within the same method. The latter, on the other hand, consists in employing various methods in the same research. An example of that can be using both qualitative and quantitative methods. (Kuada, 2012)

Furthermore, some academics distinguish also multiple triangulation, which is a strategy which uses two or more of the triangulation types described before. (Kuada, 2012)

The authors of this dissertation are pragmatists, as they think that using both the quantitative and qualitative method is the best way to research the chosen topic. Moreover, they also think that these two aforementioned methods complement each other and contribute to each other. Therefore, using them both in one research can provide the dissertation with more credible results. Hence, the authors have decided to use triangulation. The chosen type of triangulation that has been applied for the purpose of this dissertation is the methodological triangulation. Within that approach, the technique called between method triangulation is being used. It means that the authors use both qualitative method of data collection in the form of a questionnaire aimed at the case company's representative; and quantitative method of data collection in the form of a survey with the social media users at a target group.



## **2.7 Actors**

### **2.7.1 Juan Choconat**

N. Bulla based in Ibagué, Colombia, representative and owner of Juan Choconat, collaborated with the researchers by answering a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions.

The reason for choosing N. Bulla is the fact that as the owner of the company, she is present in all the processes involved; the cocoa tree growth, production, brand and product promotion and local and international fairs participation.

### **2.7.2 Social media Users**

Psychographic factors aim to divide people according to their values, motivations, lifestyles, opinions and interests (Pickton and Broderick, 2005). For this purpose, the researchers of this dissertation, designed the questions in order to try to identify what the social media users attitudes towards a brand are; what motivates them to like it and what they want to see, know and get from it.

This survey aims to make a deeper exploration on psychographic factors that could give a closer insight to a company or brand about who the individuals making the part of its audience are. Moreover, the survey will also help the company to understand what the audience need, want and expect and most importantly, what is that key element that make them interested. Thank to that the brand can connect better with the audience by adjusting the message and content on social media.

## 3. Literature Review

### *3.1 Styles of the Literature Review*

The process of reviewing the relevant current literature is said to be a vital part of academic papers. Properly created literature review creates a foundation that helps with advancing the knowledge. Furthermore, it also facilitates the development of theory, as well as uncover the areas, in which a further research should be done. (Webster & Watson, 2002) Conducting a thorough literature review is an evidence of deep analysis of the chosen subject. The literature review is said to be a critical evaluation of the existing, current knowledge regarding the researched area. (Winchester and Salji, 2016)

“The Sage Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation” (2018), simply describes the conduction of literature review as the process of gathering together and summarising or synthesising the previously published work on a specific topic. The main aim of conducting the literature review is to educate oneself in the described subject. Moreover, writing the literature review helps to demonstrate the knowledge about a particular area. Besides that, the literature review also provides a framework, which can relate the new findings to the old findings. (Randolph, 2009)

According to “The Sage Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation” (2018) there are four major styles of literature review: systematic, narrative (also known as traditional), meta-analysis and meta-synthesis. However, the dominant styles are systematic and narrative literature review.

For the purpose of this dissertation, the narrative literature review has been chosen. The reason for that is that this style is seen as more helpful in order to create problem formulation, as well as research questions and subsequently answer them. Furthermore, the narrative style of the literature review helps with developing theoretical and practical

frameworks. Therefore, it has been seen as the most feasible in order to write this dissertation. (Danson & Arshad, 2014)

### **3.1.1 Stages of conducting the Literature Review**

In order to conduct the literature review, the relevant books, scientific articles, journals, dictionaries and encyclopaedias in the area of branding, social media, brand awareness and other related to them concepts have been searched. Even though the authors originated from all over the world, most of the sources were published in English. Only some of the sources have been published in Spanish.

The literature review chapter of this dissertation contains various concepts, visions, ideas, definitions and models related to social media, branding, brand awareness and other terms related to them.

The process of searching for relevant to this dissertation literature consisted of two stages: establishing search terms (keywords) and snowball method.

In order to start the search for literature, first of all search terms had to be established. For the purpose of this dissertation the chosen keywords were: social media, branding, brand equity and brand awareness. Subsequently the literature have been looked for using these keywords via Aalborg University Library, Google Scholar and Scopus websites. Next, the found literature have been assessed according to its relevance to this dissertation, the amount of citations and year of publication. For this dissertation, the general assumption was that the higher the number of citations, the higher importance of the article. (Tranfield et al., 2003)

When the articles have been found using the aforementioned keywords, the search using the snowball method has started. In this stage of looking for the relevant literature the citation lists of previously found articles have been carefully checked. From the citation lists of

previously found articles, next articles have been accessed. Therefore, it can be noticed that using the snowball method allows the authors to gather more knowledge than to finding more literature by using the citation list of the main article to access few more and so on. (Lecy & Beatty, 2012).

The effect of conducting the literature search is finding relevant literature which will provide the knowledge which will enable the authors to answer the research question of the dissertation.

### ***3.2 Defining Key terms***

In order to facilitate the reading, the key terms of this dissertation will be briefly presented. The central concepts around which the dissertation is built are: social media, branding, brand awareness and brand equity. This part of the dissertation will only provide one definition of each concept, that has been found by the authors as the most appropriate one for the purpose of this paper. Therefore, the definitions described below will be used as the main definitions of the aforementioned concepts. However, in the next parts of the dissertation also another definitions will be presented in order to compare them to the definitions described in this part of the paper.

Social Media are defined as *“The online and mobile technologies or platforms people use to interact and share content, including social networking sites, social bookmarking and social news sites, geosocial networking sites, blogs, online forums, file-sharing and media-sharing sites, social gaming sites, social commerce sites, virtual worlds, and wikis.”* (Chandler & Munday, 2016)

Branding is said to be *“The intelligent, strategic and creative management of all those elements that differentiate the identity of a brand (tangible or intangible). That contribute to the construction of a promise and a distinctive, relevant, complete and sustainable brand*

*experience over time.*" (AEBRAND,2019)

Brand awareness is seen as *"The ability for potential consumers to correctly associate a brand and product. In other words, brand awareness refers to the consumer's awareness of the company, brand, and product."* (C. L. L. Martin in L. E. Swayne & M. Dodds, 2011)

Brand equity on the other hand, is defined as *"Differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand."* (Keller, 1993, p. 2)

As the aforementioned concepts are the key terms of the dissertation, they will be thoroughly elaborated upon throughout this paper.

### **3.3 Social Media**

#### **3.3.1 Social Media antecedent - Web 2.0**

To provide a better understanding, the knowledge of certain important concepts is necessary. As the dissertation regards social media, it is mandatory to underline its background: Web 2.0, as that has provided the fundamental principles not only technological but at ideological extent for the development of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

According to several literature references, this concept is still dynamic and subject to changes due to the number of dimensions in which it is found, bringing with it a lack of consensus (O'Reilly, 2007). But as a fairly accurate approach, authors such as O' Reilly (2007) defines: *"Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating*

*network effects through an 'architecture of participation,' and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences".*

In a simpler definition, Aced (2010) states: *"Web 2.0 is characterised by two-way communication and user participation, as opposed to the previous era, when it was necessary to have advanced knowledge of programming to create a website"*. In here, the author points out, how easy it is nowadays to create and share content. On the other hand, Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010 defined it as: *"a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion"*. Other researchers, such as Hinton & Hjorth (2013) gave major importance to this term as they highlighted that at present time users can produce and share their own content as a result of the Web 2.0 revolution.

From these four authors it can be said that all agreed on the premise that Web 2.0 is a tool to participate in creating and sharing content that others are able to see, interact with and modify.

### **3.3.2 Social Media**

The notion of social media originates from two words: social and media. The part social is referring to the interaction that appears between individuals, which collectively form a group or community. Media, on the other hand refers to the process of communication of ideas or information via channels or publications, and to advertising. Hence, it can be noticed that the whole notion of social media is referring to communication platforms and publication platforms, that are built and sustained thank to 'individuals' interpersonal interactions via particular medium or tool. In other words, social media are said to be media for social interactions, which happens by highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. It means that social media are using web-based technologies in order to transform simple communication into interactive dialogues. (Neti, 2011)

As described previously, the definition of Social Media that has been decided to be used as the main one in this paper is the one created by Oxford's Dictionary, that defines social media as *"The online and mobile technologies or platforms people use to interact and share content, including social networking sites, social bookmarking and social news sites, geosocial networking sites, blogs, online forums, file-sharing and media-sharing sites, social gaming sites, social commerce sites, virtual worlds, and wikis"*

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), on the other hand, as a result of their research and work in the publication entitled *"Back to the roots and back to the future"* defined social media as *"a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content"*.

### **3.3.3 The Zones of Social Media**

Since the concept of social media has been defined, the next step is to understand how social media work. As it was mentioned before, social media is an evolution of the traditional way of communicating, by using new channels and tools based on content, context, connection and community (Manning, 2014). This communication tool is synthesised in empowering or emphasising the creation and sharing content at personal or at a corporate level.

All social media require a digital platform in line to aim the two main purposes; first, the opportunity to **interact** and second to **participate** (Manning, 2014).

In spite of what may seem at first, not all social media are the same. Although they share a common goal (allow interaction and participation of two or more individuals) or functionalities (create a profile, share and review content); they have different functions and provide the users with different possibilities. Therefore, it is vital to make the due classification (Manning, 2014).

Tuten and Solomon (2017) divide social media into four different zones:

- 1st Zone - Social Community,
- 2nd Zone - Social Publishing,
- 3rd Zone - Social Commerce,
- 4th Zone - Social Entertainment.

It can be seen on the Figure 2.



**Figure 2. The Zones of Social Media (Tuten & Solomon, 2017)**

Social Community relates to the social media channels that are focused on relationships, as well as other activities in which people with similar interests take part. Therefore, it can be noticed that social community is based on two-way and multi-way communication, collaboration, conversation and sharing the user's experiences. The main reason why people engage in social communities is to interact and collaborate in order to build relationships and maintain them. The channels in social communities zone contain: fora, wikis, message board and most importantly social network sites. (Tuten & Solomon, 2017)



The second zone of social media, namely Social Publishing is referring to the process of creating and sharing the produced content through social media. Social publishing allows the audiences to both participate and share the content, which is called user-generated content. Social publishers can be individual users, but also independent professionals, news media or even brands, which create content for their social media accounts as part of their marketing strategy. The social publishing channels include: social bookmarking services, blogs, media sharing sites and micro sharing sites. Even though both social community and social publishing relate to sharing the content there is a difference between these two zones. While social community focuses on networking relationships, social publishing puts focus on sharing the knowledge. (Tuten & Solomon, 2017)

Social Commerce is the third zone of social media. This zone is related to the usage of social media in online shopping, which is both buying and selling services and products. Social commerce encloses social marketplaces, social shopping and hybrid tools and channels that allow the shared participation in buying decision. Hence, it can be noticed that social commerce is about providing people, both sellers and buyers, with the possibility to take part in selling online both services and products in online communities and marketplaces (Tuten & Solomon, 2017)

Finally, the last zone of social media is Social Entertainment. In this case, what constitutes the zone is: performances, events and other activities which are designed in order to grant people enjoyment and pleasure that are supposed to be firstly experienced and lately shared through social media. Social entertainment is alike social publishing when it comes to sharing the content. The main difference, however, is the fact that while social publishing refers to sharing knowledge, social entertainment is about sharing entertainment. The channels of social entertainment are: social games, social music, video and social television. Inside these, it is possible to mention for instance YouTube and Spotify. (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

Despite the division, It is worth noting that most of these platforms functionalities are not exclusive (Manning, 2014). Some of them, such as Facebook, which in their beginnings

intended to connect people (social community), currently allow not only such connection but also to create, review, evaluate and share all kinds of content, from personal reflections to advertising (Kotler, Hollensen & Opresnik, 2019).

### **3.3.4 The role of Social Media in Marketing**

The interest in social media is constantly growing. Currently, social media are being used not only by individuals, but are also becoming an important aspect of public relations, national defense strategies, political campaigns, brand management and internal communication in a company. (Neti, 2011)

From company's perspective, the most important role of marketing is to provide potential and current consumers with the information about the company itself, as well as about its products or services. To achieve that goal, social media marketing can be a very effective tool. (Neti, 2011) In order to comprehend how important social media are in marketing, the roles that social media play in marketing will be mentioned.

- Social media can help to create relationships with individuals who never heard about the company, its products or services and what the company represents.
- Social media can provide an identity about the firm and the services or products it offers.
- Thank to social media, the company can be seemed as more real to the consumers. Talking only about company's products is not a way to make people follow them. However, sharing a personality with consumers can result in creating a bond between the consumers and the company.
- Social media can also help with communicating and providing the interactions that certain consumers are searching.
- Social media help companies with associating themselves with their peers who might serve the same target market.

(Neti, 2011)

The advantages of using social media by companies are undeniable. Some of the main reasons why companies should start using social media are:

- Size - the amount of people using social networks is tremendous. Only Facebook has about 2.3 billions active users as of January 2019 (Statista, 2019). This shows the power of social media, as the potential audience can be huge, and it is social media that give the license to communicate to them. However, the companies should also remember that such big audiences also bring risks and are dangerous. In case of a negative event the bad word-of-mouth can spread quickly and affect company's reputation. (Neti, 2011)
- Transparency - social media allow users to write reviews. Therefore, people who know the company or have purchased its product or service are enabled to review their experience with the company and assess it by writing a positive or negative review. These, are authentic and not controllable by the companies. Such word-of-mouth can put a company in bright light if positive or discourage to potential customers if negative. Most importantly, by seeing independent reviews, consumers can find information about the company and its products or service written by individuals, not created by the company. It means that companies cannot fake their authenticity. (Neti, 2011)
- Reach - using the social media can help with making a brand global in a faster way. The possibility to access potential consumers from all over the world by social media is a great advantage. Adding the fact that this is quick, easy and usually free of charge, it makes social media a powerful tool which can be used to enter new markets and eventually to build a global brand. (Neti, 2011)
- Boosting the website traffic - social media are known for being the easiest and the quickest mean to redirect the traffic to firm's webpage. It is enough to place company's official webpage link on social media profile. People who see company's social network account are likely to enter the website as well. Therefore, it can be concluded that over time the traffic on the webpage will be higher. (Neti, 2011)

- Branding - using social media is said to be a smart way to build a brand. Social media platforms are one of the fastest and most powerful means that can be used for branding. (Neti, 2011) This concept, however, will be further elaborated in next parts of the dissertation.

Last years more and more companies use social media for business purposes. Therefore, the strategies of the usage of social media are becoming more diversified and sophisticated. It is believed that at present companies cannot survive on the market without presence on social media. The reason for that is the amount of other companies who are already there. Hence, it can be concluded that companies simply cannot afford being not present on social media, because it could substantially limit their possibilities. Currently social media is used by a great extent of companies, starting from giants such as IBM and finishing at local small businesses. Presence on social media and conversations is a must for companies. However, being effective there requires time, effort and expertise. All the companies are trying to survive on the market and being present on social media provide them with new opportunities to achieve success. (Neti, 2011)

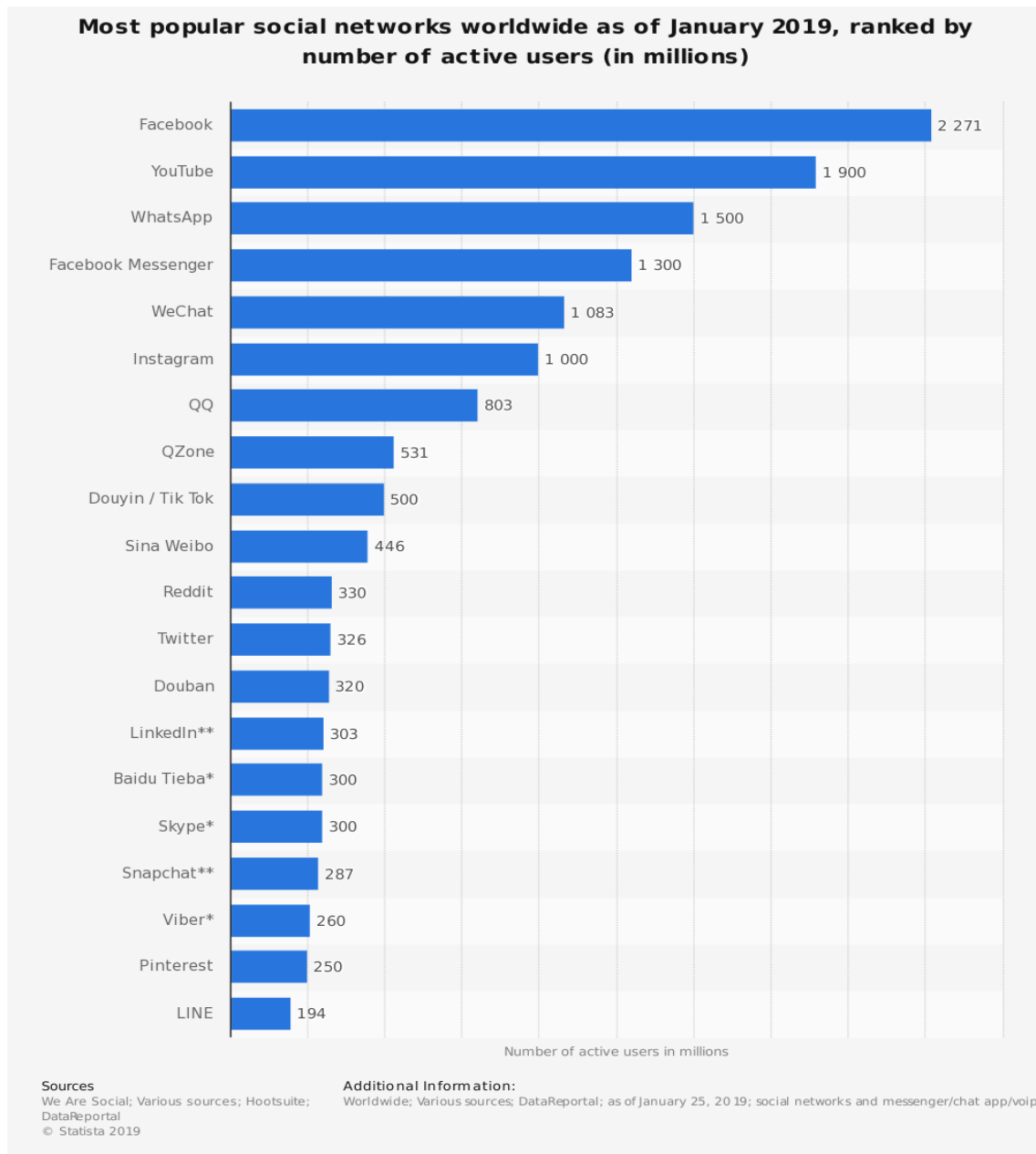
### ***3.4 Social media marketing - Platforms of online communication and the impact of social media on consumer behaviour***

The concept of social media marketing is about trying to use social media in order to convince the consumers that a company and the products or services they offer are worthwhile. (Neti, 2011)

Hence, it can be noticed that social media marketing is marketing that uses social networks, blogs, online communities etc. However, just being present at a social network cannot be called as social media marketing. This type of marketing is a complex, methodical and first of all strategic process that aims to build the firm's reputation, influence and brand among the online communities of potential viewers, customers, supporters or readers. (Neti, 2011)

### 3.4.1 Most popular social media platforms

Web statistics portal Statista, provides free data Statistics and studies analysed from thousands of sources worldwide. In order to be able to fully comprehend how powerful social media are these days, a figure regarding the most popular social networks worldwide and their number of active users will be introduced:



**Figure 3. Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2019, ranked by number of active users (in millions). (Statista, 2019)**

Without having yet a target segment, broadly, this chart provides information on the most used social media platforms worldwide by January 2019. As it can be observed, the leader is Facebook with 2.27 billion monthly active users, followed by Youtube and Instagram with 1.90 billion and 1 billion respectively.

In regards to consumer behaviour, some sources, intended to prove by numbers that consumer purchasing behaviour is definitely highly influenced by social media content. Nowadays, social media platforms have taken the lead in business practices in order to gain recognition and profitability Hinton & Hjorth (2013).

To complete the previous statement made by Hinton & Hjorth, the following data gathered from studies made by different sources, is worth considering.

<b>Statistics</b>	<b>Study source</b>
81% of consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by their friends' social media posts	Is Social Media the Biggest Influencer of Buying Decisions? (Forbes, May 28 2015)
Consumers are 71% more likely to make a purchase based on social media referrals	71% More Likely to Purchase Based on Social Media Referrals (Hubspot, Mike Ewing, July 28 2017)
Facebook accounts for 50% of total social referrals and 64% of total social revenue	It's time for retailers to start paying close attention to social media (Business Insider, Cooper Smith, June 30 2015)
31% of consumers say they are using social media channels to browse for	Social commerce: How willing are consumers to buy through social media?

new items to purchase	(Marketing week, <a href="#">Mindi Chahal</a> , Mar 23 2016)
84% of millennials say user-generated content from strangers has at least some influence on what they buy	Fuel Social Marketing With User Generated Content. (Gartner, <a href="#">Chris Pemberton</a> , June 10, 2016)
53% of consumers recommend companies or products in tweets, with 48% following through to purchase those products or services	Why You Need a Well-Crafted Social Media Strategy Right Now  ( <a href="#">Dave Orecchio</a> , 2018)
78% of consumers say companies' social media posts impact their purchases	Are Brands Wielding More Influence In Social Media Than We Thought? (Forbes, Steve Olenski, May 7, 2012)
Customers are 6x more likely to purchase a product if the page includes pictures from social media	Retailers Are Increasingly Using Real People's Social Pics (Adweek, Christopher Heine, Sep 15, 2013)
Conversions increase 133% when mobile shoppers see positive reviews before buying	7 ways the mobile consumer changes everything Bazaar Voice, 2014
In 2015, Facebook influenced 52% of consumers' online and offline purchases	Facebook influences over half of shoppers says DigitasLBI's Connected Commerce report  (DigitasLBI, <a href="#">John McCarthy</a> , April 24 2015)
Global social commerce revenue reached \$30 billion in 2015	Worldwide social commerce revenue from 2011 to 2015 (in billion U.S. dollars) - Prognosis (Statista, Worldwide, Booz & Company, Jan 2011)

**Table 3. Statistics. (DeGruttola, 2017)**

Table 3 displays how social media influence the audience and the positive outcome for companies with presence on social media. But, what is interesting from the company’s point of view is what makes social media an engaging tool and how can their effectiveness being measured.

Social media usage for firms does not consist only in creating the account and being present. Behind this purpose, there must be a previous study of their functionality, the reason behind it and a purpose (Kotler, 2019). Engaging an audience through social media requires understanding what the audience is and what their expectations are. Back in 2011, Kietzman, Hermkens & McCarthy proposed “The honeycomb of social media” model:

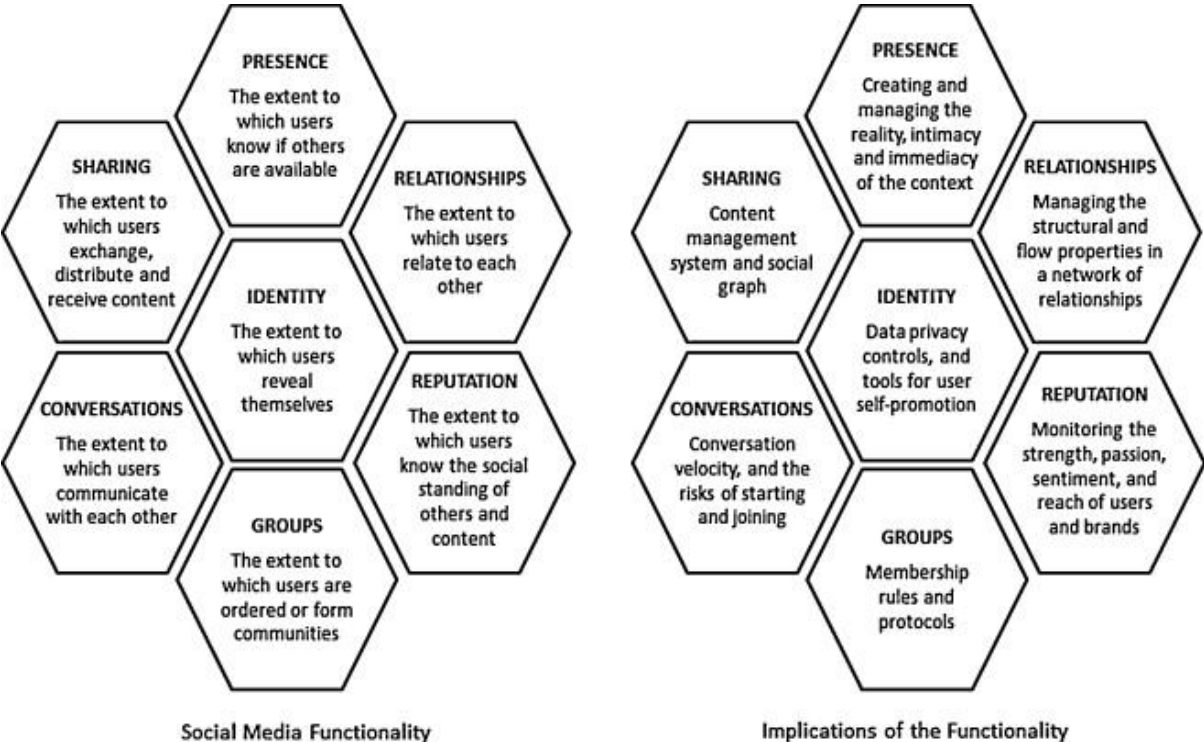


Figure 4. The honeycomb of social media (Kietzman, Hermkens & McCarthy, 2011 p: 243)



In general, this model works as a tool. Hence, it allows in a concrete way to examine the characteristic elements of social media. Each one of the seven outlined elements enables the analysis on how the audience makes use of social media platforms.

This model is divided into seven blocks of functionalities: identity, presence, relationships, sharing, conversations, reputation and groups. At the same time, these blocks underline the implication of their usage within firms. According to its creators, through this model, brands, companies and managers can configure its social media presence by selecting the platform and choosing in which of the functionalities (could be one or more) the company wants to focus on and dedicate the efforts (Kietzman, Hermkens & McCarthy, 2011).

It is possible to differentiate a plethora of benefits of social media marketing. However, there are three major benefits. The first of them is about providing a company with platforms where marketers can present company's services and products to potential customers. Moreover, on that platforms the company can also find out customers' suggestions, recommendations and grievances. The second major advantage of social media marketing is enabling the marketers to identify different influencers and peer groups what can eventually lead to finding someone to become brand evangelist who could help with organic growth of the brand. The third and last major benefit of social media marketing is the cost of that, which is usually very low or even zero, as most of social networking websites are free of charge. (Neti, 2011)

Furthermore, according to Neti (2011) Social media marketing can help with:

- Increasing traffic and subscribers
- Generating the exposure for businesses
- Creating new business partnerships
- Higher position in search engine rankings
- Increase in sales
- Decrease of overall marketing costs
- Creating qualified leads because of better lead generation efforts.

Nowadays companies are investing more and more in social media marketing, as it can help them to connect with current and potential customers. Interaction with consumers helps to understand their wants and needs better. Then, the company can make the service or product better to match the consumers' needs. Social media marketing is the best way to learn about product's shortcomings and about customers' expectations towards it. However, the companies have to be aware that social media marketing unlike the traditional, conventional advertising, is about a very personal method of promotion and advertising. In this case, when it comes to targeting, only particular groups that show interest in the particular domain can be targeted. (Neti, 2011)

Social media is performing a revolution on the consumer's life (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). This, considering that all strong and defining messages in the content shared by brands and firms are having a noticeable influence on every stage of the user/consumer decision-making process, which includes how the information is acquired, what type of information is wanted, recognition or awareness of the brand, recommendations and post-purchase communication. Additionally, positive or negative reviews after purchase, can influence general opinions and the formation of attitude towards the product, brand, company or service (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

### **3.4.2 Social media platforms by zones**

#### **1. Social community zone**

- **Facebook**

*"Facebook is the social media giant"* (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019). This platform makes it possible for both individuals and companies to connect and access a global communication channel (ibid.) According to them, for every business, big or small, pursuing the creation of a community, fans, followers and audience grow by numbers.

Among its features, Facebook offers the possibility to create a personal profile or page. Pages are strategically designed for business use (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019). Their features, allow a common audience to become a fan and follow any company's public content, namely reviews, public messages, pictures and videos (ibid.) That public content allows business to develop a better brand positioning and presence by creating, exchanging and sharing substantial information that people want to see and share (Zuckerberg, 2018).

One of the obvious reasons for having a Facebook business page are the 2.27 billion monthly active users, which number exponentially increased since its launch in 2004 (see figure 3). The "like" button is a powerful tool this platform counts with, as it is the link between the company and the user, and mostly it is a double-sided tool; users will have access to information, and the business will have visibility through the mobilisation of information through family and friends' networks (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

## **2. Social Publishing zone**

- **Instagram**

Instagram was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, and was launched in October 2010 as a free mobile app, although it can also be managed through an Internet browser (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019). In January 2019, the number of active users amounted to 1 billion (see figure 3).

The main purpose of this app is the dissemination of photo/video-sharing content either to a public or a private audience. This social network is highly used by brands as it not only enables to publish creative pictures and videos, but also to interact with their followers through live broadcast and streaming. Besides the aforementioned, Instagram has built a major community based on the lifestyle and individual interests (fashion, animals, shopping, care and beauty, food, music, celebrities, entertainment, sports, travel, among hundreds more). (Instagram, 2019)

The ease of its use, due to its mobile nature, allows the audience to have a more spontaneous, quick and natural interaction with the brand. Instagram as connection tool uses the #hashtag which is the mix of # with keywords. Hashtags work both ways. It can help the target audience to find a brand and relate to it. On the other hand, marketers can use them to find the target audience by searching on specific hashtags categories (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

To any business, this type of platform represents major potential for branding. By delivering eye-catching content through the combination of outstanding images or videos with an interesting storytelling about the brand and its strengths, the brand will reap the benefits (Johnston, 2016).

As it was mentioned before, depending on the social media platform chosen, there must be tailored objectives, reflecting what the brand wants to reach by using them (Kotler, 2016). Johnston (2016) suggests that when using Instagram, at least some of the following objectives should be included on the social media marketing plan:

- Increasing brand awareness
- Visualising the culture of the company
- Showing the personnel behind the corporate activities (team, workers)
- Connecting with influencers
- Sharing company news and progress
- Displaying products and services
- Creating incentives to increase customer loyalty and engagement with activities and events invitations.
- Growing the followers base and the community

### **3. Social entertainment zone**

- **Pokémon Go**

- In just 3 years after its release, Pokemon Go has become a real empire (Forbes, 2019), thanks to the milestone created from augmented reality what allowed them to go from virtual to real (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

Its marketing secret lies in the ability to keep fans trapped with its content. Pokémon Go offers its users the possibility to catch a pokemon in real world environments and take them out of their comfort zone. Moreover, the game releases content namely news, new events and rewards on a weekly basis, taking gamification to another level (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

Niantic, its developer, released statistical data to put into context the magnitude of this phenomenon:

- In 2018, the company earned 800 Million USD of revenue worldwide. Growing 35% over 2017
- It has 5 million of daily active users
- The number of friend connections that has been made on the game since its launch, is estimated to be 113 millions
- Pokemon Go has driven 500 million visitors to sponsored locations

(Sensor Tower, 2019)

#### **4. Social Commerce zone**

- **Amazon**

*“The most incredible form of advertising comes straight from the people we know and trust”* (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

As it was mentioned, the social commerce zone aims to assist the online purchasing or selling of product and services.

Amazon, which started its commercial activities back in 1995 with Jeff Bezos on charge, selling just books, currently, is a giant reference for online shopping. The company has grown exponentially and with it, its product catalog (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

According to Bezos (2018) the key to Amazon success is its customer driven nature. The company focuses tirelessly on satisfying the customer by providing comfort, security, low prices, and door-to-door delivery service.

One of the methods in which Amazon engages its users, is through personalised home pages, which are generated after the user makes a certain product search. Additionally, it has also become a community, in which users can share opinions, reviews and queries in regards to a determinate product (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

### **3.4.3 Social Media Marketing Strategies**

Before a company decides to invest in social media marketing, it is vital to fully comprehend why this strategy is relevant for companies, how this strategy can help the company and how to use it in order to get benefits. (Neti, 2011)

Currently, we live in an era where sales are not the only aim of companies. What is also important now is customer satisfaction. Therefore, the interaction with customers is crucial, as it is possible to learn from them. Thanks to social media it is possible to identify customers and then to listen to what they have to say about the company and its products or services. Subsequently, the company can use that feedback to improve or to innovate their services or products. (Neti, 2011)

Companies must be aware that social media marketing is not a mass advertising strategy. However, social media marketing can help in the process of identification peer groups and advertising to that specific group. Moreover, social media marketing can be used to identify

influencers. Later, through these influencers it is possible to guide a group into purchasing company's service or product. (Neti, 2011)

When a firm decides to conduct social media marketing activities, it is crucial to create content that will bring consumer's attention. Nowadays, multitasking is said to be a large phenomenon. Many people while watching a video clip on Youtube simultaneously use their smartphones to surf on Facebook etc. Therefore, social media marketing has to be appealing, so that the consumers do not get distracted from the content that the company creates and share. Hence, the company should create advertisements that are both interesting and innovative. That can help to keep the consumer's attention on the content. In the same time, the shared content must also provoke the consumers to action, for instance looking for detailed product description on the official company's webpage or recommending the product to a friend. Therefore, the content shared on social media should also indicate the link to the official website where it is possible to purchase in an easy and quick way. (Neti, 2011)

Social media marketing can also help with increasing the customer loyalty. That can happen via customer support services on social media. Keeping customers happy and satisfied can subsequently positively influence the customer retention. Moreover, social media also serves as a platform where e-WoM is generated. Reviews regarding the company and its product help to build brand awareness. (Shojaee and Bin Azman, 2013; Neti, 2011; Tarigan and Tritama 2016)

### ***3.5 Significance of social media for branding***

Social media is constantly evolving. Saying this, there is no secret formula to apply for its proper use. However, scholars: Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, back in 2017, after their research on social media usage, developed a six-step set of guidelines which suggests that any company trying to make a successful incursion in social media with marketing

purposes, should at first consider social media marketing plan implementation, that can be seen on Figure 5.

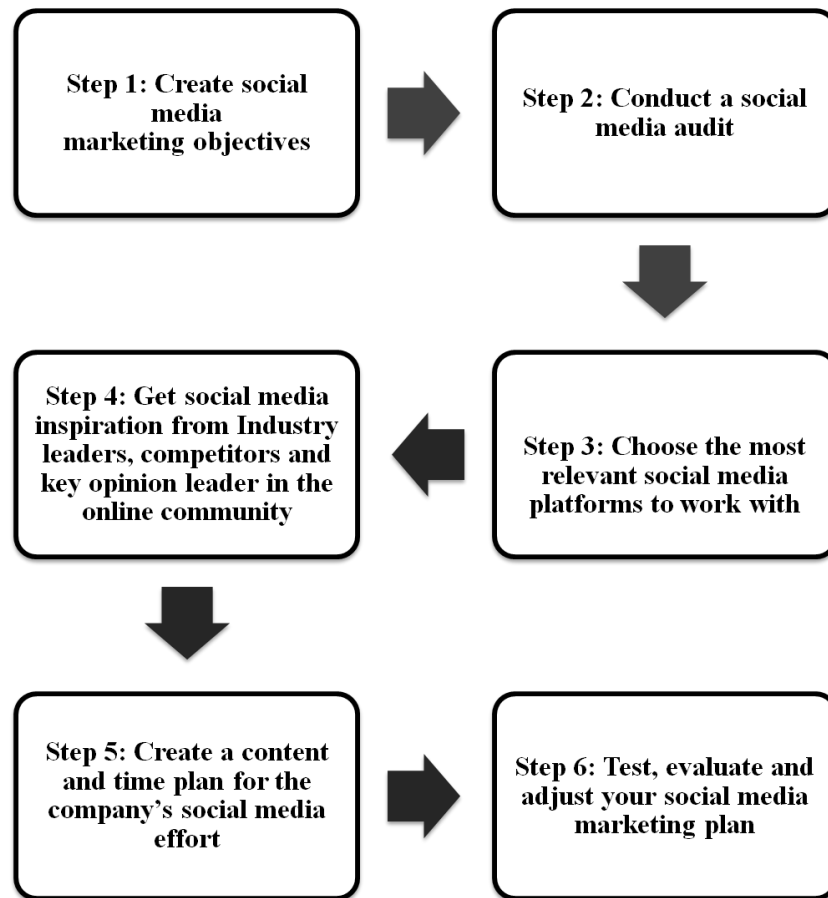


Figure 5. The stages of building a social media marketing plan (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019)

### **Step 1: Create social media marketing objectives**

This is the most basic, however, vital starting point. Without an accurate definition of the business objectives that want to be achieved with the social media plan, it will be difficult to define strategies and measure results that indicate the success or failure of the strategy.

By using the SMART framework, these objectives should be:

- Specific – by targeting a determined area for improvement.
- Measurable – by quantifying and proposing which indicators can be used to measure the efficiency and progress.



- Achievable – coherent with the corporate goals.
- Realistic – objectives must be realistic and achievable in relation to the resources that are available. They must represent a challenge, however keeping in mind a down to earth mindset.
- Time-related – by determining the period of time in which the objectives should be achieved.

(Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019)

The proposed objectives can be used to build brand awareness, create a community beyond demographic borders, sales increment, increase customer loyalty, attract new customers or brand leads to support the brand or to engage better with customers (Forbes communication council, 2018).

### **Step 2: Conduct a social media audit**

This stage consists in asking at first if the company has presence on Social Media. If that is the case, it is necessary for the company to evaluate why determinate social media platforms were selected, how are they being used, and what outcome is generated through them. This exhaustive evaluation, should aim to find out who follows the company and who is connected with the company and the brand through social platforms. After this, the company can start to propose a social media marketing plan, since it knows its target market (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019)

Moreover, this audit should allow the company to have a clear reference and conception on how each platform used to represent it on social media is working and who is in charge of making it work in a consistent and continuous way (ibid.)

### **Step 3: Choose the most relevant social media platforms to work with**

*“Choose which networks best meet the company’s social media missions and objectives”* (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019). This statement is clear. After carrying out the second step, only those social media platforms relevant to the company, should be the ones

to work with. The point is not to be everywhere but to be where the company can actually perform to achieve its objectives.

#### **Step 4: Get social media inspiration from industry leaders, competitors and key opinion leader in the online community**

Determining what type of content is interesting and effective to engage the public with the brand is not an easy task. However, the company can take as a guide and inspiration model the content that other companies are sharing and make their own content more distinctive and striking, by improving it. If the content is attractive, it will not only keep its target interested, but it can attract more audience (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

Another big help could be obtained through the industry leaders. These companies have done an incredible job by developing a strong social media presence. Some of them share content on web, sharing their own experience, strategies and also provide practical advice and recommendations (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

#### **Step 5: Create a content and time plan for the company's social media efforts**

The content is key. Companies cannot overlook the importance of which type of content they are creating and sharing. They should engage in the development of a content plan which should include also objectives and strategies (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

In here, the company should have a clear statement on how each of the social media platforms work, and with what objective the company wants to use each of them for instance to connect or to create a major presence and make a reputation. Depending on what the company wants to achieve, it must carefully design a content plan, to prepare the message and format accordingly, as every content shared, like, review, comment, reply, should serve a purpose (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019). The company should always keep in mind that there must be a double-sided communication, because as it was mentioned before, social media aims to allow the interaction and participation (Manning, 2014)

## **Creating and generating social media content**

Analysing how social media are being used and considering mostly how to engage and keep the audience interested, Manning (2014) stated that it is vital for companies and/or brands, to maintain a constant social media presence along all platforms use, by nurturing the audience with appealing and light content that enables the audience participation.

Social media is an powerful tool, as long as there is coherence between the content that wants to be shared. Such content must be conscientiously planned with the objectives in mind, the type of industry in which the firm operates and the specific audience which the content is intended to reach (Forbes communication council, 2018).

In an article published by Forbes magazine (2018), some corporate and freelancers communication experts, have shared strategies to make the content generated in social media appealing and engaging for brand awareness purposes:

1. Educating. Depending on the industry, the firm can share useful tips that can be applied in daily life contexts (Pawel Kijko, TimeCamp, 2018)
2. Showing leadership. It is said the a firm should build the brand through leadership that can be done through posts that lead to show the company as an industry leader. The type of posts shared in this case, could include advice from the industry, behind the scenes videos, and recent related editorial articles (Sarah Pendley, Cream Media Group, 2018).
3. Sharing company core values. The company should show the sense of belonging and pride by being part of determinate business culture and the values that govern within the firm. This can be perceived through posts that show corporate social responsibility, both inside and outside the company, the innovative processes it carries out and the benefits of working with it (Jesse Williams, ExecVision, 2018)

4. Being useful. The company or brand should express how the activities performed by them are contributing in a meaningful and useful way to the society and generate conscience (Alina Morkin, Voices.com, 2018).

5. Generating interaction. Generating and posting content is not just about getting comments or likes. Social media platforms are tools that cross borders. Through these, the brand can listen and respond to its audience in a timely manner, additionally it can also provide opportunely customer support. They are designed to allow direct and meaningful conversations with the audience; *“Consumers value and respect brands that understand them”* (Edward Bourelly, 2018).

6. Value messages to create engagement. The posts should aim to generate engagement. However, it is important to highlight that the posts must be accompanied by a tool that allows them to measure their effectiveness. Measuring the commitment, will allow to determine if the message that the company creates is reaching the audience, generating value and motivating the audience to engage with the brand (Monica McCafferty, MCM Strategies LLC, 2018).

7. Sharing experiences and knowledge. Experiences motivate people to participate actively, and they also show a high degree of enthusiasm when they receive from the brand side a helpful and custom-made response when seeking for knowledge (Sloan, Bodey, Gyrd-Jones, 2015). Through experience brands have had the opportunity to collect valuable information that can be shared to the social community and that can be helpful to tackle daily challenges on context. (Arina Katrycheva, actiTIME, 2018)

8. Delivering the brand promise. This is one of the focal points. The brand should be able to create and share social media content that delivers value of what has been promised. If the brand promises status, that should be reflected on every message, video or image shared. (Kristy Stromberg, Shopkick, 2018)

9. Building brand reputation. *“Build a brand reputation by providing content that educates and entertains while establishing yourself as a leading expert in the field. When the need*

*arises, consumers will immediately think of you as the most desirable resource, well respected by others, offering the most efficient and user-friendly experience” (Jenny Hester, LIVE Design Group)*

10. Brand awareness. The main reason why marketers are using social media is to build brand awareness which can be simplified to a question “who knows you?”. The level of visibility and exposure (seen, heard or read) of the brand among its audience, lead to brand awareness. Above all, whether this visibility guarantees that social media content exposes the brand identity (Christina Crawley, Forum One, 2018). How visible is the brand, can be measured through the active participation through the social media posts interactions which include: reviews, likes, reactions, shares, mentions or hashtags (ibid.)

11. Creating and reflecting a lifestyle. The targeted audience wants to see somehow their lifestyle reflected on the brand they are following. The added value the brand is offering them will keep them engaged, connected and interested in long-term (Keith Bendes, Float Hybrid, 2018)

#### **Step 6: Test, evaluate and adjust your social media marketing plan**

Lines above, it has been repeatedly mentioned that social media are not static, their characteristics, functionalities and uses are constantly evolving.

At this stage of the plan, an assessment of all social media activities and efforts is a must. Successes and failures must be evaluated to proceed in performing the improvements and reinforcements accordingly.

It is worth mentioning, that the aforementioned plan is quite consistent and aims to support intelligently any company that wants to develop a social media marketing plan. In general terms, the authors underline that this plan, should comprise the goals, and the social media tools the company wants to use, after a comprehensive revision.

To conclude, the design of social media marketing plan is drafting which activities a firm is planning to do and the outcomes that the company wants to achieve through social media. Moreover, it also works as guideline to determine which actions should be taken when the plan is evaluated, and displays success or failure (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

### ***3.6 Branding***

One of the most vital aspects of business strategy is branding. Even though this concept is not new, yet still might be confusing. The reason for that is, that sometimes branding is perceived as only an advertising function. Moreover, some businesses and even managers still consider branding as the management of the brand image. Even though it is right, that is just one narrow part of branding. (Holt, 2003)

A brand is set to be a set of both intangible and tangible characteristics that are designed in order to build identity and awareness, as well as to create product's, service's, person's, organisation's or place's reputation. In the holistic perspective, branding is seen as a long-term strategy and incorporates a broad set of various activities that include marketing communications and product innovation. (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015)

Branding is said to be the continuous process thank to which the customers should build a positive perception for a particular product. Branding provides unique identification which brings benefits for either side in the exchange process. Therefore, it makes the process of buying and selling easier for both parties. (Brassington and Pettitt, 2006)

Kotler and Keller (2006), on the other hand, see branding as something that provides services and products with the supremacy of the specific brand. They also convince that branding regards creating divergences. In order for the product to be branded it is fundamental to teach the consumers about it. They have to know “who” the product is, “what” does the product do and most importantly “why” the consumers ought to be interested in it. Moreover, branding relates also to building psychological constitution as

well as to help the consumers with systemising one's cognitive knowledge regarding the services and products in such way to provide the company with a value and illuminate consumer's decision making process. In order for branding strategies to be successful and effective what leads to value creation, it is critical that the consumers are convinced that among brands offering the same product or service, there are substantial differences.

AE BRAND, the Spanish Association of Branding Companies, on the other hand, defines branding as *"The intelligent, strategic and creative management of all those elements that differentiate the identity of a brand (tangible or intangible). That contribute to the construction of a promise and a distinctive, relevant, complete and sustainable brand experience over time"*.

According to Holt (2003), besides the basic function of management the brand image, branding can be seen from another perspectives:

- Branding is the key to build customer value, not only the images
- Branding is said to be a strategic point of view, not how often considered by companies - chosen activities set
- Branding is a crucial tool that helps to create and maintain competitive advantage
- Brands are said to be cultures, which are circulating in the society as regular, conventional stories.
- Brand strategies, in order to be effective and successful, have to address four specific elements of brand value
- These brand strategies have to also be integrated with the marketing mix.

(Holt, 2003)

The main aim of a branding strategy is creating brands, which are distinguishable from competitors and that way, to reduce the amount of substitutes on the market. Through brand differentiation it is possible to achieve higher brand equity, which, when is already high, makes the price elasticity of demand lower. Thank to that, the firm can rise the price and therefore, improve profitability. (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015) Brand strategies are said to be

built on interdependent frameworks of a couple of concepts such as: brand equity management, value chain development and competitive brand positioning. (ibid.)

Brand equity is a set of liabilities and assets which are associated with a particular brand. Brand equity management becomes currently a very important element of corporate strategy. Companies are trying to build on the positive brand's aspect and minimise the negative liabilities by: brand protection and association and differentiation. (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015) Brand protection regards protecting the brand by copyrights and trademarks. For instance, Google has 293 trademarks. (ibid) The latter, which is association and differentiation, relates to building the brand equity by either associating the brand with another established, successful brand or by differentiating it adequately in order to be able to attract new consumers. Differentiating the brand from other competitors can happen via marketing communications and visual imagery. These two enable the firm to position its services or product on the market. (ibid.) When it comes to measuring the brand equity, it is possible by combining the financial value and positive consumer affinity. (ibid) The concept of brand equity will be further described in the next part of the dissertation.

Value chain development regards mainly market development and product innovation. Market development relates to the pricing strategy, distribution strategy and marketing communications. These communications' main aim is creating consumer mindset in which brand awareness, attitudes and associations are built. The elements of market development that can be noticed are brand logos, brand names, product packaging and advertising. (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015) Product innovation, on the other hand, encompasses strategic initiatives regarding the design of the product, as well as the capability of introducing new product categories and line extensions. (ibid.) Combined efforts of both market development and product development can help with securing for the brand a competitive position. That, subsequently, results in increment of the shareholder value, as well as in higher revenues. (ibid.)

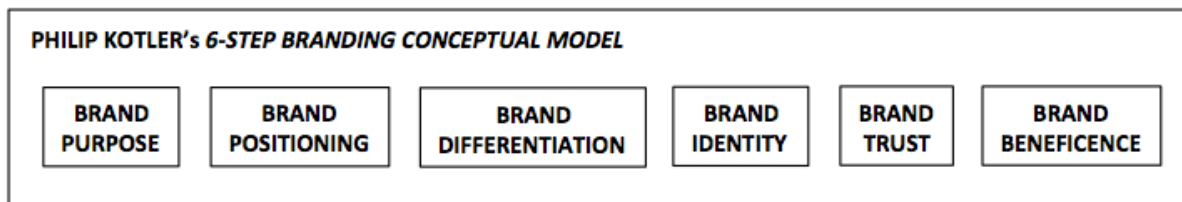
For competitive brand positioning, identification of a specific market space, as well as cognitive location as perceived by consumers is required. (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015) If the



brand positioning is effective and successful, it can help to determine the unique selling points of the company, what the brand stands for, how the brand is overlapping with competitors and what is the value that come from the usage of the specific brand. (ibid.) Strong brand recognition, that can be achieved through product attributes differentiation can earn the company a competitive position. The aforementioned product attributes are products characteristics such as: product quality, price, availability and selection. When each phase in the value chain starting from production and finishing in the point of sale is addressed, the competitive brand positioning is able to develop. (ibid.)

According to Sammut-Bonnici (2015) the current trend in branding strategy is to focus on expanding the brand experience and to pervade the brand identity through all of the company's functions which are addressing the customers. It is also possible to notice that nowadays, the brand experience focus moves above consumers' brand perception to assessable customer satisfaction metrics through value chain and customer retention. (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015)

To provide a greater highlight regarding branding and complete the previous definitions, Kotler's branding conceptual mode will be introduced.



**Figure 6. Kotler's branding conceptual model (Kotler, 2016)**

As its author, Kotler finds this concept model a comprehensive guide and tool of great benefit for those who want to undertake a way in the marketing accompanied by social media. Thanks to the infinite amount of information supplied on the network, the consumer is empowered and has the necessary tools to make purchasing decisions (Kotler, 2016). He also suggests that in order to build brand awareness, the firm must have objectives and a

clear position to help it shine with its own star. This, due to the great influence that word of mouth has, which he considers a double-edge weapon.

Kotler (2016) also adds that for any firm, that is trying to build a brand and looks after brand positioning and brand differentiation, it is vital to get to the consumer's hearts by exposing a higher purpose, namely emotional and social benefits.

### **Brief model explanation**

1. **Brand purpose.** The purpose is the justification of brand's existence and the main reason behind for being a brand or business. The reason must be deep and touching. It must go beyond financial reasons and the typical value creation for shareholders Kotler (2016).
2. **Brand positioning.** Kotler & Armstrong (2007) defined brand positioning as the spot the brand takes in the mind of consumers in relation to its competitors. Moreover, positioning gives the company a distinctive image in the mind of the consumer, which enables the company to achieve differentiation from the rest of its competitors. Constructing this image, can be made through the active communication of some attributes, benefits or distinctive values, to the audience and target market (Kotler, 2016).
3. **Brand differentiation.** Kotler & Keller (2011) suggest a differentiation based on the company's best capabilities, strengths and available resources. Based on that, Kotler proposes 4 differentiation strategies:

**Product:** It is all about the differentiation made through the different attributes and features of the product (Kotler & Keller, 2011).

**Personnel:** It is one of the best and most effective ways to differentiate a brand. The customer can easily perceive a well-trained and committed staff. The staff behaviour and attitude also counts: a friendly treatment, credibility and confidence, knowledge and skill demonstration make a perfect professional combination. (Kotler & Keller, 2011)

**Image:** The image is what brings personality to the brand. Among its functionalities, it can establish the character and value proposition of the brand (Kotler & Keller, 2011). This differentiation refers to the way the public captures the corporate messages delivered through symbols, written and audiovisual media, sponsorships, among others (ibid.)

**Channel:** This is based on how easily the customer can acquire the firm products or services. Companies must work hard on designing their communication and distribution channels so that they can perform flawlessly to make customer purchasing and delivery process a satisfactory experience, which can constitute a key competitive advantage. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007)

4. **Brand equity.** Kotler (2016) defines it as the added value that is endowed to products and services. This value reflects on how consumers are responding to the brand, outlining their thoughts and feelings. To succeed on the value generation offers, consumers must be convinced that there are significant differences between the brands variety offering the same category of products or services (Kotler, 2016)
5. **Brand trust.** “*A brand needs brand trust*” (Kotler, 2016). Credibility is crucial to influence the customers’ perception. This trust is built through the deliverance of what the brand promises, what the brand can do for its customers and what values are offered to them (Kotler, 2016).
6. **Brand beneficence.** Lately, brand practices are highly questioned. It is not just about the product or its quality, but also about how brands can be ethically-minded by having socially good and sustainability approaches (Greene, 2016). Brands should care and act responsibly: They should work to make the world a better place through their offerings (Kotler, 2016).

### ***3.7 Branding with Social Media***

The development and popularity of social media resulted in huge interest in them from company's perspective. The amount of people present on social media and its constant growth provided the companies with a new paradigm for branding activities. (Gao and Feng, 2016) A research conducted by InSites Consulting (2011), which consisted of a survey with the sample of 9027 participants from 35 countries across the globe measured the percentage of consumers connected to the brands on social media. The results indicate that 50% of social media users have some sort of connection to a brand or brands. Moreover, 42% of social media users admitted to having had a conversation with a brand via social media, while 36% of social media users have previously posted content regarding a company or a brand. Furthermore, the research says that more than 1 billion people across the planet is using the social networks, which constitutes to more than 70% of Internet population. (Van Belleghem et al., 2011) Only in Europe, 98% of Internet users population is aware of Social Media. Moreover, 73% of them is a user of at least one social network. However, 50% of Internet users in Europe is active on only one social network, mainly Facebook (ibid.)

The plethora of different social media gives the companies a chance to reach different people. The statistics gathered by Insites Consulting, indicate that on average, Europeans join 1.9 social networks. As a comparison, this number for Americans is 2.1, for Brazilians 3.1, while for Indians it is 3.9 social networks on average for person. (Van Belleghem et al., 2011) The newest statistics, from data collected in 2019, indicate that there are over 2.32 billion monthly active users of Facebook. When it comes to daily active users, their number exceeds 1.52 billion. Only in Europe, there are over 307 million of Facebook users. These statistics show how huge potential it has, to be present on Facebook, as it gives the possibility to reach huge audiences around the whole world. Furthermore, there are five new Facebook profiles created every one second. It means, that the audience is growing very rapidly and also exponentially. Moreover, the statistics indicate that every one minute, there are 510000 new comments, 293000 new updates and 136000 new photos shared.

This, on the other hands, show that the the number of active and engaged users is high. However, because of the high amount of information shared, which compete for users attention, the quality of the content has to be high to encourage the potential viewers. The average quantity of photos which are shared on Facebook on a daily basis is 300 millions, what proves that the amount of engaged users is substantial. However, as mentioned before, high quantity of information shared, requires the company to create and share content of a high quality to catch attention of users. What is important from the company's point of view is the fact that statistically, 52% of respondents from Europe is willing to provide a personal feedback about the used product or brand. It also shows how big potential for a word of mouth exists in social media. (Facebook, 2018)

Thank to these statistics, it is possible to notice that there is a great opportunity to leverage the social media for brand management. Creating company's profile on social media is said to provide a source of information for consumers which is updated continuously. Moreover, simultaneously to that, a brand exposure appears. The capability of maintaining conversations directly with customers on social media makes the relation between the customer and brand much more intimate. Furthermore, it improves the quality of contact with the consumers, mainly with young people. The interactive dialogues between the company and consumers, besides the aforementioned benefits, also provides an opportunity to lower the misunderstanding towards the brand. (Gao and Feng, 2016)

The research says that taking part in fan communities has a positive impact on customer commitment and loyalty (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Kim, Lee, & Hiemstra, 2004 in Gao and Feng, 2016). The authors Dholakia and Durham (2010) were researching the consumers' behaviour towards the restaurant, who has a profile on Facebook. Their results stated that after becoming fans of the restaurant on Facebook, the customers' behaviour has changed substantially. These customers started to visit the restaurant more often, as well as started to create positive word of mouth. Kim and Ko (2012), on the other hand, proved that there is a positive impact of social media marketing behaviours on equity drivers, purchase intentions and first of all consumers' relationships.

### ***3.8 Brand Equity***

Amongst the main concepts of the paper the brand awareness can be found. However, it has been decided that in order to completely understand the notion of brand awareness, firstly the concept of brand equity has to be introduced, as both concepts are connected. Moreover, brand awareness constitutes one of the brand equity dimensions (Aaker & Biel, 1993).

One of the first founders of the term “equity” was Aaker, who defined it as the whole value (not only monetary) that the brand presents. The concept of brand equity has been born in the 1980s. Subsequently the interest of this topic has risen among business strategists and marketing managers (Aaker & Biel, 1993).

According to Aaker & Biel (1993) brand equity can be seen differently from company’s view, managerial view and consumer’s view. From the company’s point of view, brand equity is “the future discounted value of the profit stream that can be attributed to the price premium or enhanced loyalty generated by the brand name” (Aaker & Biel, 1993, p. 2). The managerial view sees brand equity as a concept that encompasses five different assets, namely: brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand association, perceived brand quality and other proprietary brand assets. (Aaker & Biel, 1993) Consumers, on the other hand are said to perceive equity as the value that is added to the functional service or product through associating them with the brand name. (ibid.)

Nowadays, the marketing communications environment differs from the one that has been known 10 or 20 years ago. The development of technology and Internet has changed and is still changing the way how the world communicates and interacts. Simultaneously, branding has started to become a crucial priority for companies. Currently, it is absolutely vital to understand how companies should be firstly built and then managed in present marketing communications environment. In previous years one of the most important, as

well as popular topics among the marketers has been the importance of intangible value brought to companies by brands and therefore, the concept of brand equity. (Keller, 2009)

In other words, brand equity regards the recognition that the brand has, which is earned over time. When the brand equity is already established the company often times can notice an increase in the revenues. This happens due to the fact, that the probability of buying a product by a consumer grows, when the consumer is aware of the product, brand or company. As the recognition of the brand increases over time, the marketers try to move the consumers into a higher level of commitment towards the brand or product. It means that the marketers want the products to be positioned in such way, that the consumers will prefer them over other products of the same category. (C. L. L. Martin in L. E. Swayne & M. Dodds, 2011)

### **3.8.1 Customer-based brand equity**

There are various ways how marketing communications can help with successful branding and with building brand equity. Moreover, due to the aforementioned developments in technology and Internet, currently marketers are forced to use more varied marketing communications strategies than they have done in the past. In order to understand the types of marketing communications to build a strong brand, a comprehensive model of brand equity is required. That type of model has been created and presented by Keller. In this model, called customer-based brand equity model, Keller convinces that brand equity is strongly determined by the brand knowledge that is said to be created in minds of consumers through various marketing activities and programmes. (Keller, 2009) When it comes to customer-based brand equity, Keller (1993) defines it as “the differential effect that consumer knowledge about the brand has on their response to marketing for that brand” (Keller, 1993, p.2). The customer-based brand equity appears when consumers are familiar with a brand and keep strong, unique and favourable brand associations in their minds. When it comes to the company, one has positive customer-based brand equity if the consumers are reacting in more favourable way to the brand’s element of marketing mix,

comparing to the same element of the marketing mix of an unnamed or fictional version of that service or product. (Keller, 1993)

Brand knowledge, which is indicated in customer-based brand equity definition created by Keller, regards not only the facts about the brand, but also all the perceptions, images, feelings, thoughts and even experiences which can be linked to the particular brand in consumers' minds. All the previously indicated information about the brand are said to be seen as a set of associations to the particular brand in consumers' memories. (Keller, 2009) The primary assumption of Keller's customer-based brand equity model is the fact that the brand's power is located in the minds of the consumers and the meaning that this brand achieved in the broadest sense. (Janiszewski & van Osselaer, 2000)

The aforementioned brand knowledge consists of two important components, namely brand image and brand awareness. Keller defines brand image as consumers' perception of a brand and preference for one which are reflected by diverse brand associations kept in consumers' minds. If the brand associations are unique, strong and favourable they become a crucial points of difference. These can serve the company as sources of brand equity to drive the differential effect. The aforementioned effects contain better communication and channel effectiveness, price premiums and more favourable price elasticity, growth opportunities by licensing or extensions and enhanced loyalty (Hoeffler and Keller, 2003; Keller, 2008 in Keller, 2009).

When it comes to the second component of brand knowledge, which is brand awareness, this concept is said to be related to the power of the brand traces and nodes in the memory of the consumers, which are reflected by consumers capability of recognising or recalling the brand under various conditions. The concept of brand awareness will be further elaborated upon in the next part of the dissertation, as it is one of its main pillars. (Keller, 2009)



### 3.8.2 The Brand Resonance Pyramid

The previous part of the paper described how brand equity can help a company becoming strong and successful. All the benefits of having a high brand equity, encourage the companies to build it. However, the process might be long and difficult. The customer-based brand equity model has been created to answer the questions what makes a brand strong and how to how to build such strong brand. This model helps to understand what brand equity is, as well the best way of building, measuring and managing it. (Keller, 2001)

After creating the concept of customer-based brand equity, Keller decided to extend it in order to help with addressing in more precise way how to build a brand in terms of consumer knowledge structures. (Keller, 2009)

According to Keller's customer-based brand equity model, the process of building a powerful brand can be divided into four steps. It is important to remember that each one of them is strongly dependent on successful accomplishment of the previous one. (Keller, 2001)

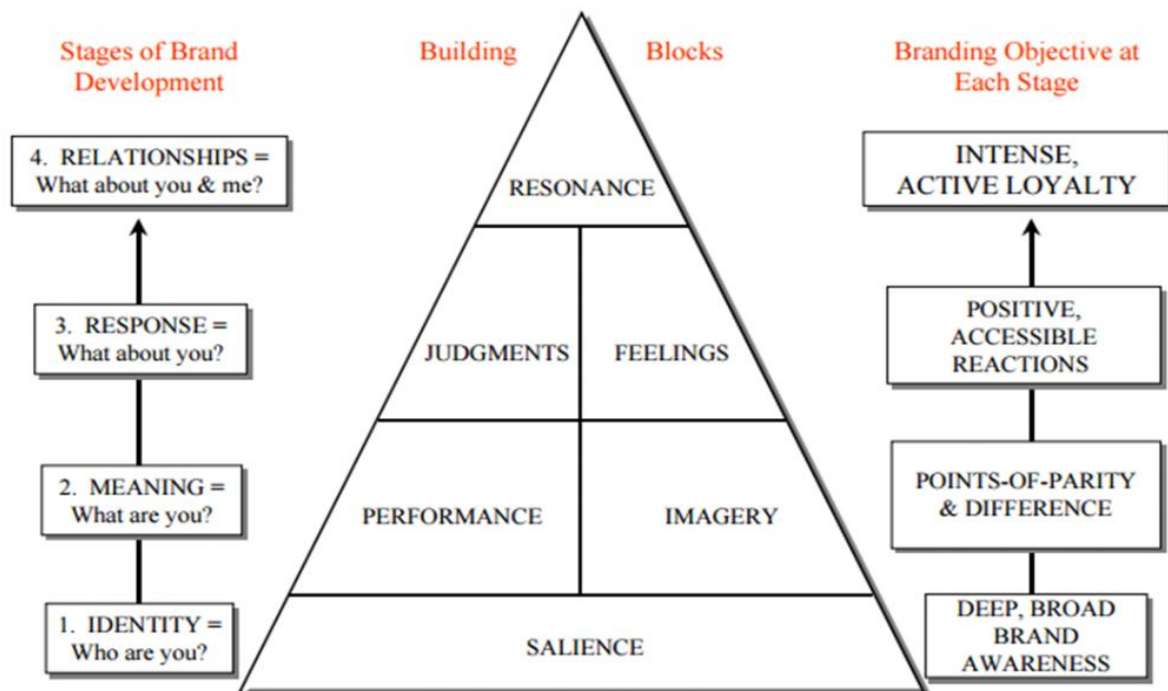


Figure 7. Customer-based brand equity model pyramid (Keller, 2009)

The first step in building a strong brand according to customer-based brand equity model is to ensure brand identification with consumers and brand association in consumers' minds with a particular customer need or product class. The second step requires to establish the completeness of brand meaning in consumers' heads for example via linking strategically a host of intangible and tangible brand associations. Step number three refers to inducing the appropriate consumer answer when it comes to brand-related feelings and judgement. Finally, the last step in customer-based brand equity model is to convert the brand response in order to create an active and intense loyalty relationship between the brand and its customers. (Keller, 2001)

The previously described four steps in the customer-based brand equity model refer to another four crucial questions which consumers ask implicitly or explicitly about the brand.

The first question is referring to the **brand identity** (who are you?). In order to achieve the brand identity, the company must firstly create brand salience with the customers. Brand salience refers to the fact how often and how easy the consumers think about the brand under different consumption or purchase situations. (Keller, 2009)

This brand salience is related to aspects of brand awareness. The aim of creating the brand awareness is to ensure that consumers comprehend the category of the service or product where the brand is competing and subsequently to create clear links to services or products which are being sold under that brand name. In other words, it means that the company has to make their customers sure which of their wants or needs the brand is created to satisfy. (Keller, 2001) When it comes to the criteria of brand identity, the two crucial dimensions of brand awareness are its depth and breadth. The breadth is referring to scope of consumption and purchase situations when the particular brand comes to mind. When it comes to the depth of brand awareness, it regards the level of ease how the consumers can recognise or recall the particular brand. A brand with high level of brand salience must also have broad and deep brand awareness. It means that the consumers make sufficient purchases and besides that, always think about the brand under various conditions. However, for companies only recalling or recognising the brand by its customers is not sufficient. The

key aspect is when and where the consumers think about the brand as well as how often and how easily they think about that brand. The reason for that is that many products and brands are often forgotten or ignored. Thanks to increasing the brand salience is useful to drive consumption and therefore, increase sales. (Keller, 2001)

Question number two represents **brand meaning** (what are you?). In order to give a meaning to a brand, it is absolutely crucial to build a brand image and clearly establish what characterises the brand and therefore, what ought to stand for it in heads of consumers. Even though it is possible to distinguish many various brand associations, the brand meaning can be differentiated in terms of performance-related and more functional considerations versus imagery-related and more abstract considerations. The brand associations are created directly from consumers' own personal experiences as well as their contact with the particular brand via word-of-mouth or advertising. (Keller, 2001)

One of the blocks on this level of the resonance pyramid is brand performance, which regards how good is the service or product satisfying consumer functional needs. Here, it is important to remember that the heart of the brand equity is the product. The reason for that is, that it is the product, that is the main influence of what the customers hear about the brand, what the company tells the consumers regarding the brand, and therefore, what the customers experience. (Keller, 2001) A product has to be designed and delivered in such way to utterly satisfy the wants and needs of the consumers. Only that can influence the success of a marketing of a brand, regardless if it is a service or a product. If companies want to create brand loyalty and resonance, it is imperative that the product not only meets consumers' expectations, but even exceeds them. When it comes to brand performance, this is how the product or service tries to meet functional needs of the consumers. Therefore, it regards the interior characteristics of the brand, including the properties and characteristics of the offered good. (ibid.) There are five different types of benefits and attributes of brand performance:

- Primary characteristics and supplementary features,
- Product reliability, durability and serviceability,
- Service effectiveness, efficiency and empathy,

- Style and design,
- Price.

These brand performance dimensions help the brand to differentiate from other brands. (Keller, 2001)

The second element of brand meaning is called brand imagery. This refers to the external characteristics of a service or a product. Furthermore, it also includes the ways how the brand is trying to meet consumers' social or more abstract psychological needs. It is possible to distinguish four categories of brand imagery:

- User profiles,
- Purchase and usage situations,
- Personality and values,
- History, heritage and experiences.

(Keller, 2001)

The brand associations that constitute the brand image have three crucial dimensions: strength, favorability and uniqueness. If the results of these three dimensions are successful, it can help produce positive brand responses, which will be described in the next paragraph of the dissertation. Creating brand equity, requires the company to have strong, favourable and unique brand associations in exactly that order. Powerful brands are said to have strong, favourable and unique brand associations with their consumers. These are vital to build brand equity. Some examples of such companies are: Volvo (safety), Intel (performance, compatibility), Disney (family entertainment, fun) or BMW (driving performance, style). (Keller, 2001)

The next question regards the **brand responses** (What do I think/feel about you? / What about you?). Implementing the customer-based brand equity model force the companies to focus on customers' respond to the particular brand, as well as its marketing activities and information sources. The brand responses can be differentiated depending if they come from the heart or from the head to brand feelings and brand judgements. (Keller, 2001)

When it comes to feelings, these are the emotional reactions of the consumers towards the brand, which are related to the social currency that the particular brand induces. The feelings can be mild, intense, negative and positive. It is possible to distinguish six types of feelings, which regard the process of building a brand. These types are:

- Warmth,
- Fun,
- Excitement,
- Security,
- Social approval,
- Self-respect.

(Keller, 2001)

Judgements, on the other hand, refer to personal opinions of the customers about the brand. These judgements are based on how the customers connect various performance and imagery associations. There are four main judgements, which are said to be vital to create a powerful brand:

- Quality,
- Credibility,
- Consideration,
- Superiority. (Keller, 2001)

Even though all different types of customer responses are possible, coming from both head and the heart, however, the most important thing about them is whether they are positive or not. Moreover, the responses should be accessible and whenever the consumers think about the brand, come to their mind. (Keller, 2001)

Finally, the fourth question refers to **brand relationships** (What kind of associations and how much of a connection would I like to have with you? / What about you & me?). Brand relationships are regarding the nature of the relationship between the brand and its

customers. Moreover, it also refers to the extent till which the customers feel that they are concurrent with the particular brand. Brand resonance has four categories:

- Behavioural loyalty,
- Attitudinal attachment,
- Sense of community,
- Active engagement.

(Keller, 2001; Keller, 2009)

Brand relationships have two dimensions: activity that regards the frequency of customers' purchases and usages of the brand, as well as the engagement in other activities not connected to consumption and purchase; and intensity which means the strength of the sense of community and of the attitudinal attachment. (Keller, 2001)

All the steps are following an order, from identity to meaning, from meaning to responses, from responses to relationships. These steps have to occur in the aforementioned order. Therefore, meaning cannot be established if the company hasn't created identity previously. The same applies to responses, that cannot appear if the company did not firstly develop a proper brand meaning. Finally, relationships cannot be created unless the company has already gotten the right responses from consumers before. (Keller, 2001)

In accordance with Keller's customer-based brand equity model to manage the four aforementioned steps it is required to build a pyramid of six brand building blocks with customers: salience, performance, imagery, judgements, feelings and resonance. This can be seen on the previously presented figure. (Keller, 2009)

Keller's customer-based brand equity model underlines the brands' duality. The rational path of building the brand can be seen on the left side of the pyramid. Right side of the pyramid, on the other hand, presents the emotional path of building a brand. Building the brand equity requires the company to reach the top of the brand resonance pyramid. However, this is enabled only if all the building blocks are appropriately built. As

mentioned previously, the six brand building blocks are: salience, performance, imagery, judgements, feelings and resonance. (Keller, 2009)

The details of each building blocks can be seen on the Figure 8.



**Figure 8. Sub-dimensions of brand building blocks (Keller, 2009)**

Brand resonance is reflecting the depth, as well as the intensity of the psychological bond that exists between the brand and its customers. Furthermore, it also refers to the level of activity which is caused by the loyalty. Some categories of services and products are said to enable to get more resonance, due to their high level of activity and interest, such as Apple, eBay or Harley-Davidson. (Keller, 2009)

Building the brand resonance is a long process. However, the strongest brands are able to surpass in all six blocks of the pyramid. In order to build the brand resonance, the marketers should remember firstly to build a foundation, to build the brand resonance on. Brand resonance, as the most important building block can occur only if all the other blocks are utterly concurrent to customers' desires, wants and needs. In other words, brand resonance is reflecting an utterly harmonious relationship that exists between the brand and its customers. (Keller, 2001) In accordance to customer-based brand equity model, the

resonance is mostly probable to exist, when marketers start the process of creating the following:

- Appropriate salience, as well as depth and breadth of awareness,
  - Strongly established points-of-difference and points-of-parity,
  - Positive feelings and judgements, which can appeal to both the heart and the head.
- (Keller, 2009)

The previous paragraphs clearly indicated that brand awareness is one of the dimensions of brand equity. This paper will, however, focus mainly on this dimension of brand equity, as brand awareness has been chosen as one of the main concepts of this dissertation.

### ***3.9 Brand Awareness***

The primary aim of all the companies is to generate profits. This can be achieved by increasing the sales. The perfect scenario for companies is to attract new customers and encourage them to repetitive purchases. Brand awareness is the concept that regards how aware are the customers and potential customers of the company, brand and its products. An example of extremely high awareness can be seen in the case of iPhone. It is said that 90% of Americans have heard about the phone within just one week after the release of the product. This was possible to achieve as a result of news reports and first of all, advertising. In other words, having brand awareness means the brand is famous, easy recognisable and well known. In order to be able to differentiate the brand and its products from the competition, building brand awareness is absolutely crucial. (Gustafson and Chabot, 2007)

The Business Dictionary defines brand awareness as the ability of potential customers to appropriately associate a product and a brand. It means that brand awareness is referring to customer awareness of the firm, its brand and products or services. If there is no recognition of a brand, company or product, the potential customers will lack the information regarding where and how to satisfy their wants and needs. Therefore, it can be



noticed that brand awareness is crucial for companies, as without it, the main company's aim, namely to generate profit, will not be achieved. (C. L. L. Martin in L. E. Swayne & M. Dodds, 2011)

Brand awareness should be considered as the starting point in building brand equity, which has been thoroughly described in the previous part of the dissertation. (C. L. L. Martin in L. E. Swayne & M. Dodds, 2011)

Brand awareness is said to be the first step to establish a niche on the marketplace. What is important to remember is that building the brand awareness should not start if the research to understand the company, consumers, competitors and climate has not been done before. Moreover, brand awareness leads to brand equity. When the consumers have already a positive image of the brand, product and the company, the probability of a purchase grows. (C. L. L. Martin in L. E. Swayne & M. Dodds, 2011)

Tritama and Tarigan (2016) describe brand awareness as the potential customer's ability to recall and recognise the brand as a part of the particular product category. Brand awareness is said to require a continuum that ranges from the feeling of uncertainty if the particular brand had been known before, what makes the customer think that this particular product is the only brand in a particular group. Moreover, the authors divide brand awareness into four phases: brand unaware, brand recognition, brand recall and finally top of mind. (Tarigan & Tritama, 2016)

The first level of brand awareness is brand recognition, which is also known as levels of aided recall. (Tarigan & Tritama, 2016)

The second level of brand awareness is called brand recall or in other words unaided brand recall, as on this level the consumers do not require any help to remember the particular brand. (ibid.)

The unaided brand recognition is said to be more complicated comparing to the aided brand recognition. The examples of the aid in aided brand recognition could be advertisements, posters, videos, social media or banners. (ibid.)

Finally, the highest level of brand awareness is called top of mind or conscious top of mind. It appears when the brand is introduced for the first time in unaided brand recognition. Conscious top of mind is the highest level of brand awareness, which is on the top of other various brands which exist in customer's mind as well. (ibid.)

When a company has built sufficient brand awareness, the next step should be to maintain and enhance the recognition. In order to achieve the brand awareness and subsequently maintain it, it is imperative to be consistent when it comes to the brand. Moreover, managers should evaluate at daily basis company's plans in order to highlight company's positive aspect and minimise and eventually eliminate the negative aspects. While conducting the evaluation, which has to be tailored for the particular brand, product or company, often times new ways of creating brand awareness are produced. (C. L. L. Martin in L. E. Swayne & M. Dodds, 2011)

The literature review provided a profound knowledge of the main concepts of the dissertation which were social media, branding, brand awareness and brand equity. These concepts have been defined, clarified and explained thoroughly. Most of the content of the literature review originate from the academics. Some of the knowledge, however, comes also from the practitioners. The research questions of the dissertation have been answered within the literature review. However, the theory itself is not sufficient to answer the whole research problem of the dissertation, as it requires also the empirical evidence. Therefore, in the next parts of the paper, the empirical data gathered will be presented and analysed. Subsequently, as a result of a conjunction of the knowledge collected via the literature review and the data gathered, a conceptual framework will be presented. This model will eventually answer the research problem of the dissertation.

## 4. Juan Choconat

This chapter of the dissertation will present and describe the case company of the paper - Juan Choconat. The profile of the company will be created and subsequently the company's products will be presented.

The plan to gather the knowledge about the company encompasses an exploration of the following elements:

**General information about the case company:** Juan Choconat will be explored. The information about what is behind the company story, what the company does, what kind of products are produced and offered, will be collected.

**Insights:** The data about the company will be gathered by using primary and secondary sources of information.

**Data Collection:** A questionnaire will be conducted in order to deepen the knowledge about the company with the company's owner as the respondent.

**Press and publications:** To complete the construction of Juan Choconat's profile also information about the company from other sources such as press and another publications will be used.

**Social media usage:** It will be analysed how the company is using social media and if the content shown on the company social media platforms is coherent with the information gathered from the company's owner.

**Review:** A review of the information collected will be analysed to assess the perceived benefits and provide recommendations for the company.

**Brand Awareness:** Thank to the gathered data and knowledge about the company, the level of company's brand awareness will be observed.

The story of Juan Choconat started when a couple of young people from Ibagué, Colombia had in mind to start their own entrepreneurial project. However, after witnessing and being affected by the Colombian Armed conflict in the region, their initial purpose changed for the better. They wanted to undertake a project that would have a great both social and economic impact in their region. They planned to achieve it by the development of productive, sustainable and value generating activities from the economic point of view, devised to give opportunities for inclusion in the economy to vulnerable groups (Colombia-Inn, 2018).

In 2014, their company was born, however it started its commercial activity in 2015. Through their project characterised by high quality and innovation, the two young people offered cocoa-based products transformed into exotic chocolate bars that, depending on their type, can be a mix with coffee, citric fruits, such as orange or lime, raspberry, golden berries and nuts. The cocoa percentage ranges from 52% to 100% with all chocolates sweetened with panela (Colombia-Inn, 2018).

To increase the support to their activities and social project, Fundación Social, a non profit organisation, joined them by providing capacity building to the cocoa farmers for the harvest, and post-harvest with a sustainable approach and chocolate marketing processes. In this way, they have shown that it is possible to work with the inhabitants of the countryside and find support that encourages them to overcome the poverty (Fundación Social, 2017). The major achievement of their project, is “the social impact generated among the cocoa farmers of the region, who now can enjoy better standards of living, thanks to the fact that they receive a fairer economic income” (Fundación Social, 2017).

This is how, Juan Choconat brand has been built under “responsible chocolate” motto.

From the start, Juan choconat has been participating in both national and international chocolate fairs and contests, with the intention to build brand awareness by sharing their motto "Chocolate responsable" (responsible chocolate) and inviting people to taste and talk about their products (process, ingredients, quality), all history behind them and the social

inclusion project as main purpose with the cocoa farmers involved (Juan Choconat blog, 2019).

Currently, Juan Choconat only counts with a main commercial establishment that works as shop and café. In addition, the company distributes its products in retail stores and in almost 100 organic, gourmet and healthy stores throughout the country (Juan Choconat homepage, 2019).

To name some of the events in which Juan Choconat participated, in 2017, the Colombian embassy in Belgium, held the gastronomic event "La Paz en Colombia sabe a cacao" (The peace in Colombia tastes like cocoa), in partnership with the Commercial Office of Colombia in Brussels and Procolombia. There, several Colombian companies, had the possibility to show their social projects and products, including Juan Choconat. (Embajada de Bélgica en Colombia, 2017)

Additionally, the International Chocolate Awards in New York, held the 2018 Americas competition. It counted with more than 800 products exposed by 130 participant companies, from 16 different countries from North and Latin America and the Caribbeans. Juan Choconat participated and was awarded in the “plain/origin dark chocolate bars made with alternative natural sugar” category with the silver medal (2nd place) (International chocolate awards, 2018).

#### ***4.1 International distributors of Juan Choconat***

Al Grano and Be Food & Soul from Chile are retail and healthy lifestyle online platforms dedicated to sell healthy, natural and gourmet products and to give wellness tips. Currently, their products portfolio offer more than 6 products from Juan Choconat, including chocolate bars and cocoa powder (Al grano homepage, 2019; Be food homepage, 2019).

Ripley is one of the biggest Chilean department stores offering electronics, furniture, health, beauty, and food. It also counts with an online bank services and an online shopping platform. There, 10 different products from Juan Choconat are available (Ripley, 2019).

The Chocolate Bar is a retail chocolate shop from New Zealand, which only sells what it considers the finest and ethical treated chocolate worldwide (The Chocolate Bar, 2019). Currently it offers Juan Choconat's golden berry chocolate bar and 76% unroasted cocoa bar.

It is worth mentioning that all online platforms selling Juan Choconat products are always describing it as socially responsible artisan chocolate.

## ***4.2 Juan Choconat's Products***

Juan Choconat has an extensive variety of products made from cocoa.

The company claimed they are high quality, healthy, organic and sustainable. Some features to assure that their products are healthy are:

- The sugar. Some of them are sugar free, while the rest are sweetened with panela, which is an unrefined or non-centrifugal alternative to sugar. Pons Sintes (2017) as nutritional expert, explains that panela is an organic and unrefined sugar cane derivative, with no chemicals used to its preservation. Panela, as the whole-wheat cane sugar, in which production industrial processes are not involved, is done in small, artisanal mills.
- The high nutritional value. Panela, by itself contains a remarkable amount of components to body wellness. It is a vitamin, essential salts as chromium(III) and a mineral provider including iron, calcium, magnesium, potassium, among others. Its carbohydrates are mostly represented by sucrose, glucose and fructose, which share a greater biological and nutritional value, while providing the required energy to perform all metabolic processes (Jaffer, 2012). Additionally, its contribution to health has been proven by several scientific investigations. Among its benefits the

highlights are: anticariogenic effects (fights cavities), skin healing and whitening. (ibid.)

Juan Choconat products' high quality comes from the raw material and processes involved. The company highlights the use of cocoa "criollo", which means "of local origin". Garnsworthy (2003) describes "criollo" cocoa beans as a very high quality variety product, mostly used for producing fine or premium chocolate. It can be found in Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Madagascar, México, Nicaragua, Samoan Islands, Sri Lanka and Venezuela.



Figure 9. Juan Choconat's product offering "Héroes del cultivo". (Juan Choconat homepage, 2019)

This collection of chocolates represents Juan Choconat’s purpose (Bulla, 2019). In here, their social and inclusion project is shaped, by showing the work and effort of the Colombian cocoa farmers involved in a determined type of cocoa production. Its main characteristic is honouring the cocoa farmers by designing a package with their names, faces and a little story about their lives.



Figure 10. Juan Choconat’s product offering “Fine chocolate”. (Juan Choconat homepage, 2019)



The fine chocolate has the “Marca Colombia” label, which gives guarantee of authenticity of origin and quality to the export products (Colombia.co, 2019).

The varieties in this collection include 100% cocoa bars that can be eaten or melted in milk or water. Moreover, chocolate bars with exotic flavours from fruits, such as lime, pineapple, golden berries and orange can also be found in this collection (Juan Choconat homepage, 2019).



Figure 11. Juan Choconat’s product offering “Cocoa powder”. (Juan Choconat homepage, 2019)

Cocoa powder is a versatile product. It can be used to prepare hot and cold beverages, but also for baking brownies, cookies and cakes. Juan Choconat offers cocoa powder in 3 varieties:

- Traditional Colombian chocolate, which is traditionally drunk as hot beverage.
- Pure sugar free cocoa, used to bake and preparing hot and cold drinks.

The cocoa nibs (seeds) which can be added to smoothies, desserts and other preparations. (Juan Choconat homepage, 2019)



Figure 12. Juan Choconat's product offering "Inhouse specialities". (Juan Choconat homepage, 2019)

The company counts with an open commercial space located in a major shopping mall (Centro Comercial la Estación, 2019) in Ibagué. This place has both functions as store and café, where inhouse specialities can be offered and which only visitors or local customers have access to.

### ***4.3 Juan Choconat social media usage***

Juan Choconat´s social media is compound by 4 platforms:

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/juanchoconat/?hl=en>

Home Page <http://www.juanchoconat.com/chocolates?lang=en>

Blog <http://www.juanchoconat.com/blog>

Facebook fan page <https://www.facebook.com/juanchoconat/>

From the four aforementioned platforms, their homepage and blog are available in both languages Spanish and English. That gives the possibility to the current and new/potential customers to get from first hand more knowledge about the company and its story, including all the actors involved into the whole cocoa production, from the bean to the final products, that can be also purchased through their website.

In all of them, a world full of brightness, colours, stories, reviews, happy customers, international participation in fairs, invitations to chocolate tasting sessions, and behind cameras scenes can be seen. Moreover, Juan Choconat is indirectly promoting another gourmet shops at local and national level, by showing to the public where their products can be found.



WE CAN DELIVER HOPE AND PROSPERITY TO OUR SMALL FARMERS WITH YOUR SUPPORT

1



77 Me gusta  
juancoconat Ya conocían a Don Zenón? Muchos de ustedes seguramente sí! Don Zenón es uno de nuestros #heroesdecultivo y es la portada de nuestro delicioso chocolate 52% cacao + leche y naranja. Nuestro propósito con ellos es llevar desarrollo y lazos de comunidad para que construyamos paz desde el campo a la ciudad. #cacao #cacaolover #cacaolove #treetolive #delarbolalabarra #chocolate #chocolatelovers

7 Me gusta  
juancoconat Queremos generar en la ciudad una mirada hacia el campesino como lo hace Lucas con su hija, y con esto luchar por ingresos verdaderamente sostenibles, que le permitan al campesino salir de la pobreza, mejorar su vida, obtener educación especializada y salud. Queremos apoyar a pequeños campesinos medianos y de medianos pasen a grandes. #chocolateresponsable

2

3



67 Me gusta  
juancoconat Agricultores felices, eso sí que nos mueve! Disfruta su alegría en nuestros productos. #chocolate #cafe #cacao #organico #agricultor

4

**CACAO HEROES: ARIEL**  
Hard work, perseverance and leadership are must-have qualities to surpass the poverty and abandonment caused by war and there is no better-equipped person than our farmer Ariel. He wakes up not only to produce the highest quality cacao, He also seeks young kids to teach them our agriculture has a bright future and conduces to prosperity and development.



5



**CACAO HEROES: ZENON**  
Some rural communities in Colombia were hit hard with war during many years. No matter how long or how painful it was, small farmers like Zenon endured the pain and now hope a peaceful environment will let them enjoy the jewels they protected and preserved: specialty cacao.

6

**FREE OF REFINED SUGARS**

WHY IS UNREFINED SUGAR HEALTHIER?

- LESS CALORIES  
Unrefined cane sugar contains 25-30% less calories than regular sugar.
- BECOMES ENERGY  
Panela offers energy needed for your daily physical and metabolic processes.
- NUTRITIONAL VALUE  
Panela has lots of vitamins and minerals vital to your organism such as calcium, potassium, iron, magnesium and more.
- NATURAL SUGAR  
Panela is an unprocessed sugar free of chemicals, additives or preservatives.

7



80 Me gusta  
juancoconat La bebida de los dioses que describe muy bien esta delicia. Han probado ya?

8



34 Me gusta  
juancoconat La fermentación del cacao es el proceso en el que pasamos de calidad de grano. Sin esto el mejor árbol expresaría su superioridad sensorial. Recuerden en la vida sacarle provecho a las fortalezas pues guardadas no hacen nada.

9



**Nueva cosecha**  
JUANCHOCONAT

10



Hoy atemperamos manualmente

11



Para darle brillo al chocolate. Si no, sería como este!

12



TOLIMA, COLOMBIA  
Luego de fundirlo a 45-48 se extiende en mesa de mármol

13



14



Y moldeamos!  
YEAH!

15





16



17



18



19



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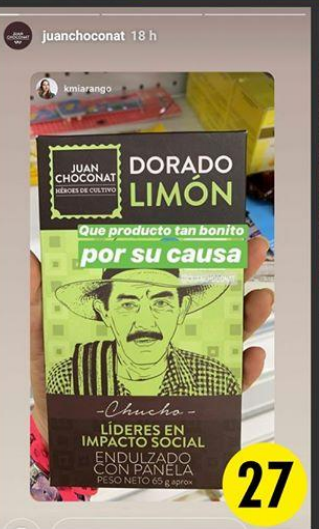
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## Description of the images

### Recognition and support to the Colombian cocoa farmers working with them

1. Introduction image from "responsible chocolate" - social impact entrance. In here, the main purpose of the company is devised: the support to cocoa farmers. (Juan Choconat's homepage)

2. *"Bringing happiness to the small Colombian farmer is our purpose. Generating prosperity and a better quality of life is possible through quality, love for what is done and gratitude for the immense support we receive from our consumers. Thank you for supporting "HÉROES DEL CULTIVO" and the generation of smiles and motivation in the Colombian agriculture".* Translated from Spanish. (Juan Choconat Instagram profile)

3. *"We want to make the city look at peasant as Lucas does with his daughter, and with this fight for truly sustainable incomes, that allow the peasant to get out of poverty, improve his life quality , to obtain specialised education and to prosper. We want to support small farmers to be medium-sized from that large-sized farmers. #chocolateresponsable".* Translated from Spanish. (Juan Choconat Instagram profile)

4. *"Happy farmers, that's what motivates us! Enjoy their happiness with our products".* Translated from Spanish. (Juan Choconat Instagram profile).

#### 5. COCOA HEROES: ARIEL

*"Hard work, perseverance and leadership are must-have qualities to surpass the poverty and abandonment caused by war and there is no better-equipped person than our farmer Ariel.*

*He wakes up not only to produce the highest quality cacao, he also seeks young kids to teach them that our agriculture has a bright future and conduces to prosperity and development".* (Juan Choconat's homepage - "responsible chocolate" - social impact entrance)

#### 6. COCOA HEROES: ZENON

*"Some rural communities in Colombia were hit hard with war during many years. No matter how long or how painful it was, small farmers like Zenon endured the pain and now hope that peaceful environment will let them enjoy the jewell they protected and preserved:*

*specialty cocoa*". (Juan Choconat's homepage - "responsible chocolate" - social impact entrance)

### **Sharing knowledge and experience**

**7.** This image aims to provide facts about the benefits of consuming non-refined sugar.

*"Why is panela healthy?"*

**Less calories** *Unrefined cane sugar contains 25-30% less calories than regular sugar.*

**Becomes energy** *Panela offers energy needed for you daily physical and metabolic processes.*

**Nutritional value** *Panela has lots of vitamins and minerals vital to your organism such as calcium, potassium, iron, magnesium and more.*

**Natural sugar** *Panela is an unprocessed sugar free of chemicals, additives or preservatives.*

(Juan Choconat's homepage)

**8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16.** These images, show a process of the cocoa treatment and a process that ends with a ready-to-use product. Everything starts with the cocoa beans, the dehydration process, and then the packing of the new harvest in fiber bags called "costales". Eventually it can be seen how it is melt, and modeled to get final cocoa tablets. (Juan Choconat Instagram profile)

### **Events hosted by Juan Choconat – National and international fair participation**

**17, 18 & 19.** These images are invitations to participate in events. In this specific case, cocoa tasting sessions. (Juan Choconat Instagram profile)

**20.** The company often participates in local fairs. This image is an invitation to the public to join. (Juan Choconat Instagram stories)

**21 & 22.** Juan Choconat also participates national and international fairs. These images display the latest participation in April 2019 At Ecogorodexpo in Moscow, Russia. (Juan Choconat Instagram profile)

**23 & 24.** *"Join us this 27<sup>th</sup> of April at 3pm to learn everything about chocolate"*. Image 24 was taken during the session. (Juan Choconat Instagram profile).

25. Health summit participation *“Promoting towards positive change is one of our focuses. A sustainable world is not only the one in which we take care of the planet and we fight for social equity, it is also one in which we take care of our bodies to enjoy the change we fight for. Excellent summit with the doctor @drCarlosJaramillo #chocolateresponsable. We recommend his book and blog on instagram!* Translated from Spanish. (Juan Choconat Instagram profile)

### **Products**

26. *“Our golden and golden lemon chocolates crave from their aspect. They deliver a new flavour for white chocolate and something healthier, as they do not have refined sugar. In addition, the lemon tells the story of Chucho, an ingenious peasant who had to withstand the panela fall prices in the 90s”*Translated from Spanish. (Juan Choconat Instagram profile).

28. *“New!!! Cocoa Nibs, enjoy all their antioxidant properties, the nibs are roasted and peeled cocoa beans, adding them to your daily diet, in salads, cereals and desserts, are a source of energy and prevent heart diseases. EAT HEALTHILY !! Find them in our store of @laestacioncc”* Translated from Spanish (Juan Choconat Instagram profile)

30. *“Achiras (Salty cheese biscuits) with chocolate. Happy beginning of the week”* Translated from Spanish (Juan Choconat Instagram profile)

### **Customer reviews and tagging**

27. *“What a beautiful product, because of its cause”.* Translated from Spanish (Juan Choconat Instagram stories)

29. Tagging from customer. (Juan Choconat Instagram stories)

31. *“My new favourite”* (Juan Choconat Instagram stories)

32. Tagging from a customer on Ecogorodexpo fair in Russia. (Juan Choconat Instagram stories)

33. Customer tagging. Gift for mother’s day. (Juan Choconat Instagram stories)

34. Customer tagging. (Juan Choconat Instagram stories)

35. Customer tagging: *“Juan Choconat a delicious product from my land”.* Translated from Spanish (Juan Choconat Instagram stories)



The images show: the coherence in what the company claims and what is shown on social media platforms; promoting and impulsing the cocoa farmers development and the presentation of their products and where to find them; customer reviews and tagging; information about cocoa and participation in fairs. (Bulla, 2019).

## 5. Data presentation and analysis

### 5.1 Research Approach

The researchers adopted both qualitative and quantitative approach and conducted one carefully designed questionnaire and a survey to understand the position, opinions and perceptions from the two identified actors, vital to solve and reach the objectives set from the beginning of this paper.

This approach, will lead this investigation through a descriptive path because the purpose of the research is to determine and analyse the perceptions and outcomes regarding social media uses from the business and potential customers' point of view.

#### Fact sheet of the survey

<b>Responsibles</b>	Alejandra De La Roche & Krzysztof Mizerski, Economics and Business Administration, programme MSc. International Marketing, Aalborg University.
<b>Date</b>	Start : May 16 / 2019 End : May 22 / 2019
<b>Objective</b>	Getting a better insight on the attitude, preferences and sentiments towards what brands offer on social media, aiming to evaluate which features make them more

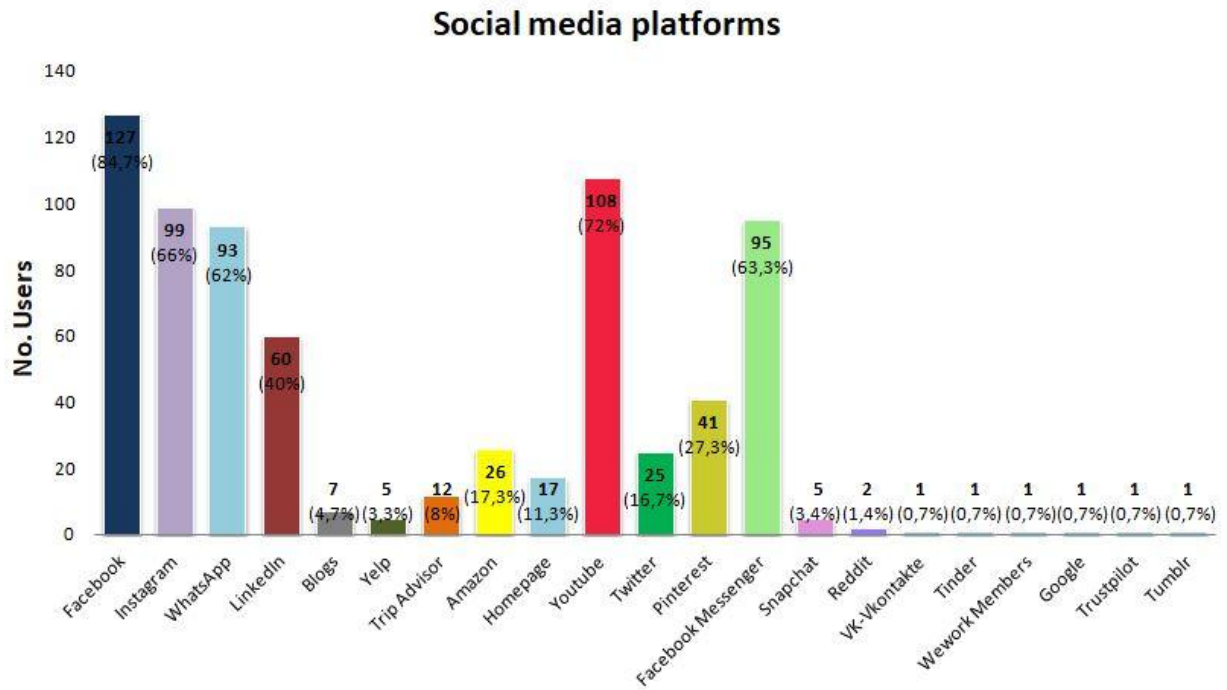
	attractive and can help them to build brand awareness from consumers perspective.
<b>Study population</b>	Social media users
<b>Sample size</b>	150 participants, Men: 63 Women: 87
<b>Instrument</b>	12 - question survey Link: <a href="https://forms.gle/pUmyRjSy7V1479qQ8">https://forms.gle/pUmyRjSy7V1479qQ8</a>
<b>Nationalities covered</b>	Latin America: Colombia, Mexico & Uruguay North America: USA Africa: Algeria, Ethiopia, Kenya Asia: Bangladesh, India Europa: Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Turkey

**Table 4. Fact sheet of the Survey**

## 5.2 Data Analysis

### 5.2.1. Survey

1) Which Social media platforms are you currently using?



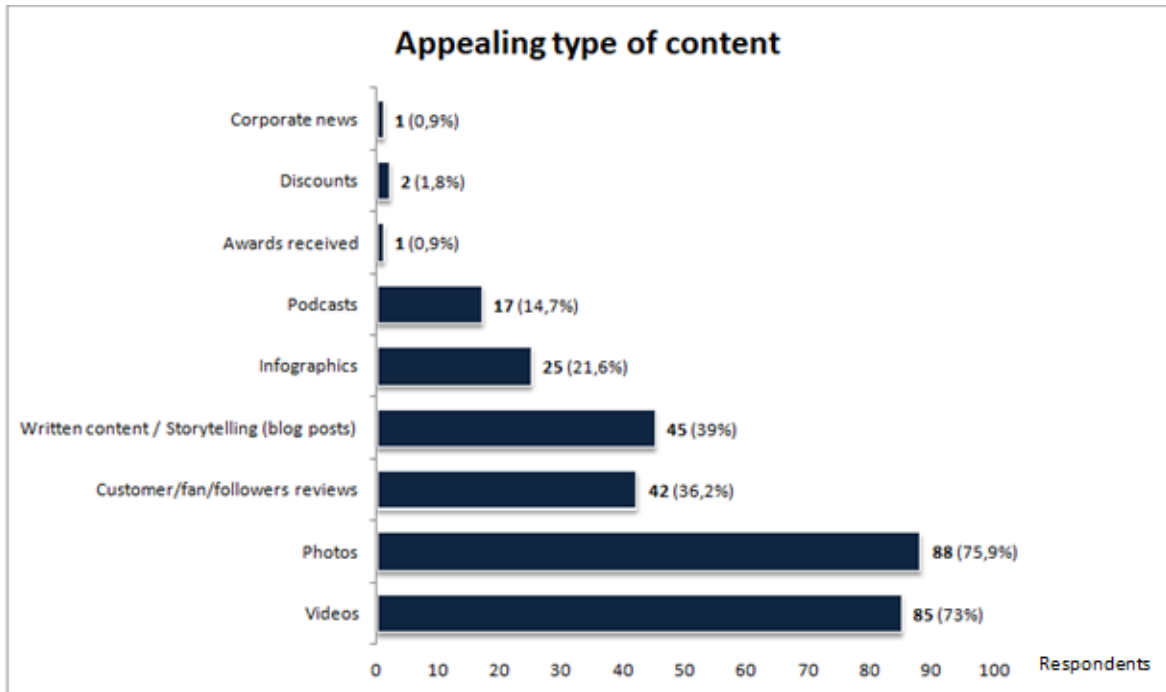
Social media platforms	Number of users	Percentage	Social media platforms	Number of users	Percentage
<b>Facebook</b>	127	84,7%	<b>Twitter</b>	25	16,7%
<b>Instagram</b>	99	66%	<b>Pinterest</b>	41	27,3%
<b>WhatsApp</b>	93	62%	<b>Facebook Messenger</b>	95	63,3%
<b>LinkedIn</b>	60	40%	<b>Snapchat</b>	5	3,4%

<b>Blogs</b>	7	4,7%	<b>Reddit</b>	2	1,4%
<b>Yelp</b>	5	3,3%	<b>VK- Vkontakte</b>	1	0,7%
<b>Trip Advisor</b>	12	8%	<b>Tinder</b>	1	0,7%
<b>Amazon</b>	26	17,3%	<b>Wework Members</b>	1	0,7%
<b>Homepage</b>	17	11,3%	<b>Google</b>	1	0,7%
<b>Youtube</b>	108	72%	<b>Tumblr</b>	1	0,7%
<b>Trustpilot</b>	1	0,7%			

This graphic provides information on how many respondents are using the indicated social media platforms. The most popular is Facebook with an 84,7%, represented by 127 active users out of 150. Following, Youtube with 108 users (72%). Third and fourth place are represented by Instagram and Facebook Messenger with 99 (66%) and 95 (63,3%) users respectively.

Note: percentages do not correspond exactly to 100% because participants had the possibility of choosing more than one social media platform.

2) What are your reasons for using social media platforms?



Reasons	Respondents	Percentage
Staying in touch with your friends and family	138	92%
Staying up to date with current events and news	73	49%
Finding interesting/entertainment /educational content	78	52%
General networking with other people	57	38%

Regarding the reasons that lead the participants to use social media platforms, the main one is staying in touch with 138 users out of 150 representing the 92%.

The second placed is occupied by finding interesting/entertaining and/or educational content, with 52%.

The third place with a difference of 3 percentage points (49%) is taken by staying up to date with current events and news, represented by 73 users. Fourth and fifth place correspond to sharing own content

Sharing photos or videos with others	60	40,7%
Filling up some spare time	45	30%
Researching new products to buy	27	18%
Meeting new people	19	12,7%
Sharing my opinion	21	14%
Asking for products/services/places recommendations	29	19,3%
Looking for employees	1	0,7%
Looking for jobs	1	0,7%
learn	1	0,7%
Selling used articles	1	0,7%
Work	1	0,7%

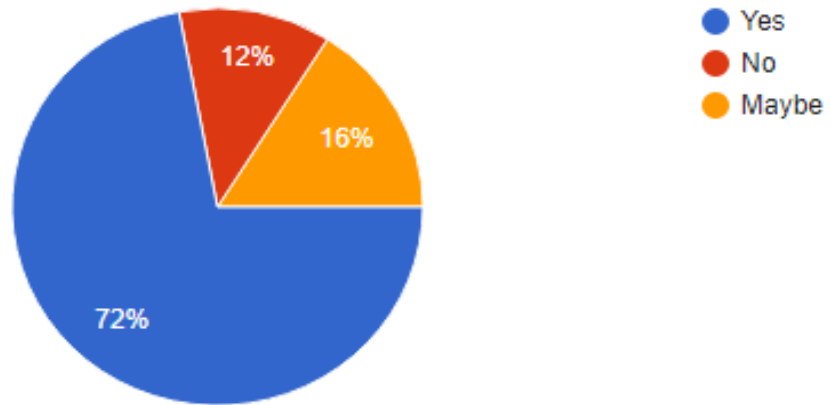
(40,7%) and networking with others (38%), respectively.

In the case of looking for products to buy and asking for products/places/services recommendations, only 27 and 29 users stated to use social media for this purpose, representing the 18% and 19,3% respectively.

Note: percentages do not correspond exactly to 100% because participants had the possibility of choosing more than one reason.

3) Have you ever been interested in a product/brand after seeing it on social media posts or reviews?

150 responses



Interested?	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	108	72%
No	18	12%
Maybe	24	16%

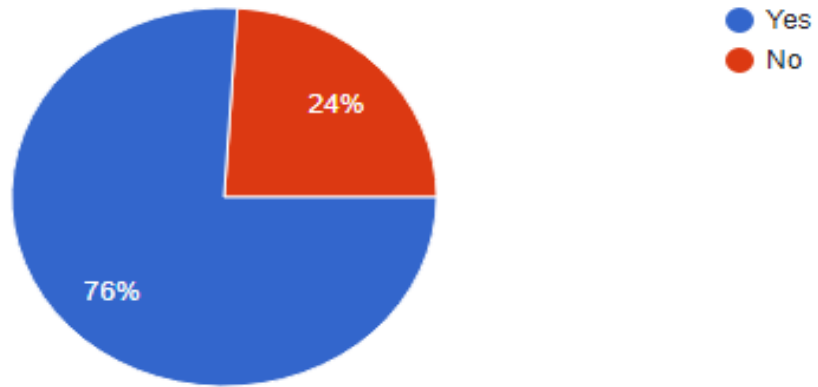
According to the results, 72% of the participants affirmed that they have been interested in a brand and/or product after seeing it on social media.

While the 12% stated, that they have never been interested in any a product or a brand seen on social media, the remaining 16% responded they might have done it.



#### 4) Do you follow companies on social media?

150 responses

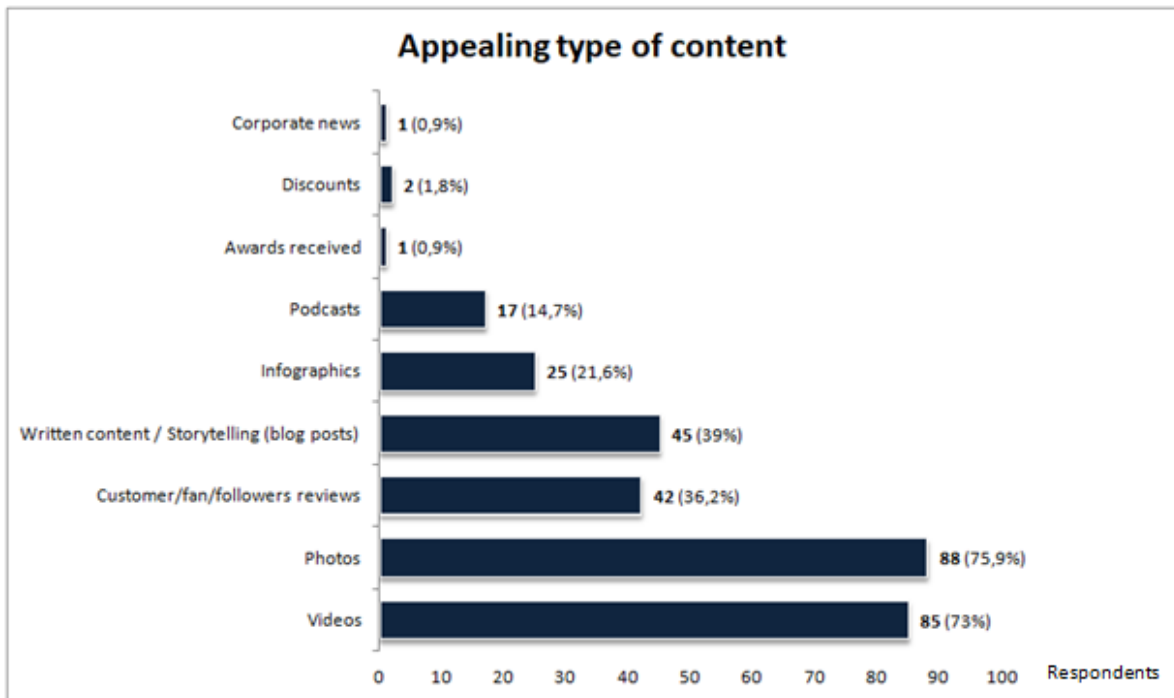


Interested?	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	114	76%
No	36	24%

114 of the participants, representing the 74%, are following companies on social media.

While the remaining 24%, represented by 36 respondents claimed they are not doing it.

5) What type of content posted by companies appeals to you the most?



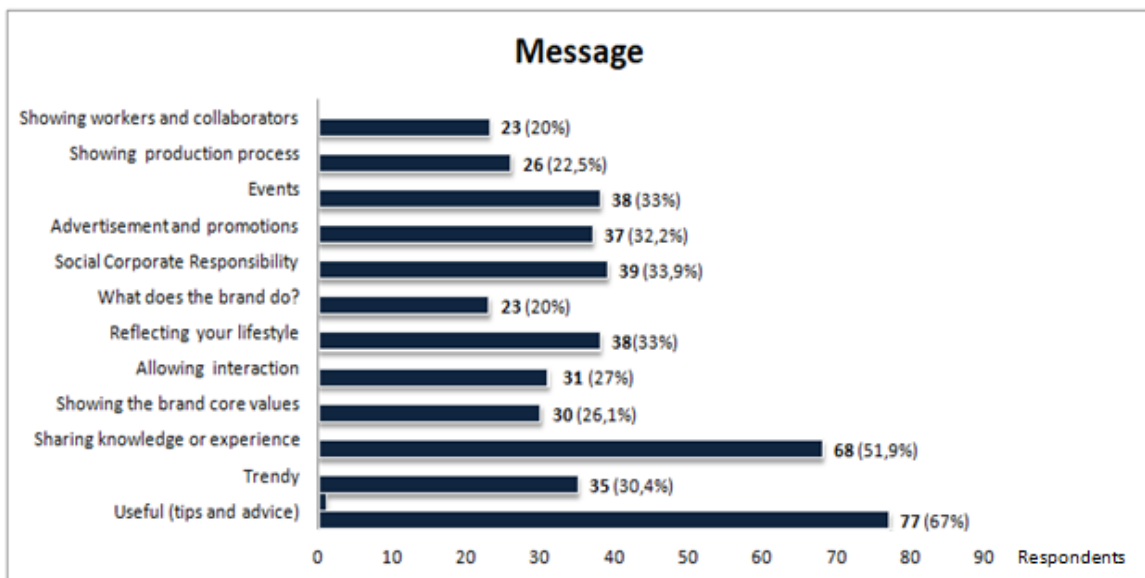
Type of content	Respondents	Percentage
Videos	85	73%
Photos	88	75,9%
Customer/fan/followers reviews	42	36,2%
Written content / Storytelling (blog posts)	45	39%
Infographics	25	21,6%
Podcasts	17	14,7%
Awards received	1	0,9%

The appealing content taking the lead is the one containing photos with 75,9% of preference, followed closely by the videos with 73%.

On the other hand, the written content and reviews are half the percentage of the first two, with 39% and 36,2% of preference,

Discounts	2	1,8%	respectively.
Corporate news	1	0,9%	

6) What kind of content or message style would call your attention the most into a brand on Social media?

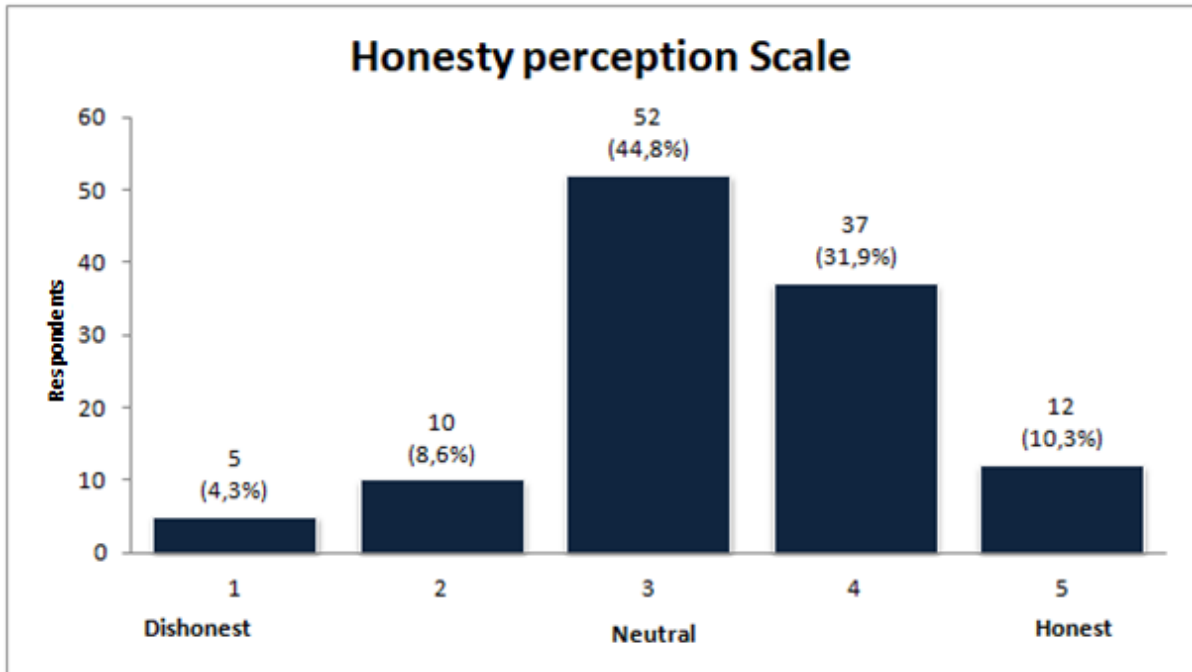


Message	Respondents	Percentage
Useful (tips and advice)	77	67%
Trendy	35	30,4%
Sharing knowledge or experience	68	51,9%

Showing the brand core values	30	26,1%
Allowing interaction	31	27%
Reflecting your lifestyle	38	33%
What does the brand do?	23	20%
Social Corporate Responsibility	39	33,9%
Advertisement and promotions	37	32,2%
Events	38	33%
Showing production process	26	22,5%
Showing workers and collaborators	23	20%

When comparing the results of which type of message style should be delivered in the content, “useful” which is the type containing tips and advice occupies the first place, since it registers 67%. Subsequently, “knowledge and experience” comes with 51,9%. The third place is taken by the “social corporate responsibility” approach, represented by 33,9% of participants. Closely, the fourth place, which represents the 33% is shared equally by two types of content corresponding to “events” and “reflecting the lifestyle”.

7) On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is dishonest, 3 is neutral and 5 is honest), how honest do you find the social media content shared by companies?



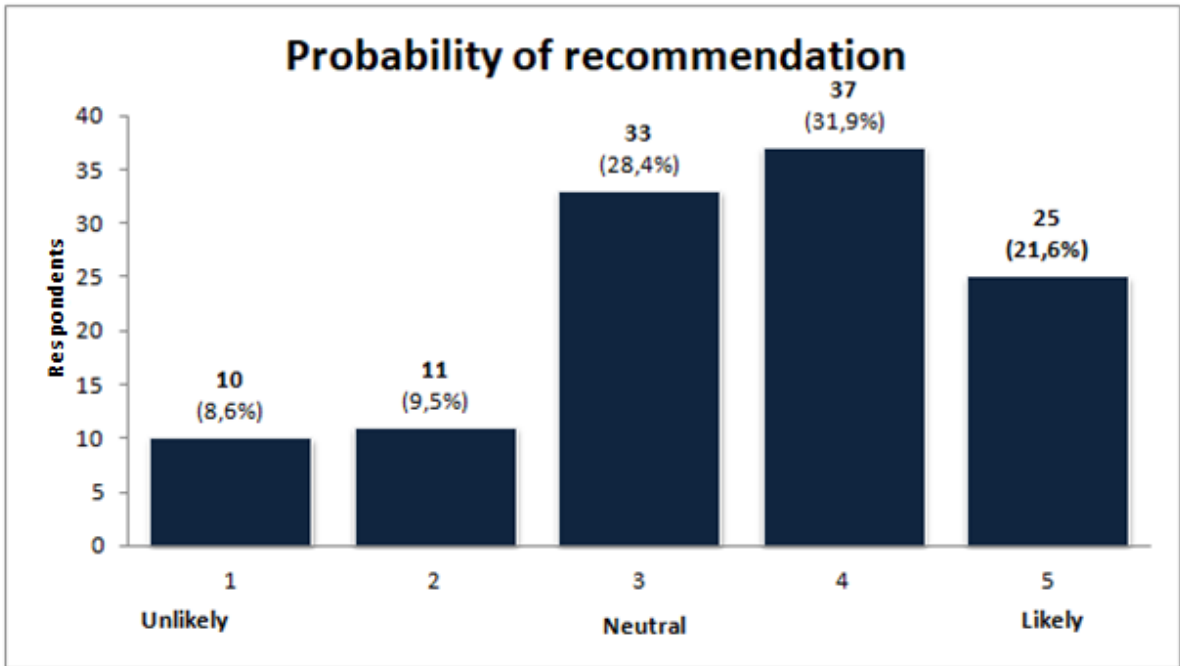
Scale	Respondents	Percentage
1	5	4,3%
2	10	8,6%
3	52	44,8%
4	37	31,9%
5	12	10,3%

By using the Likert scale, it is shown that 44% of the participants are neutral in relation to how honest they find the content that brands share on social media. Furthermore, 31% of participants, find somewhat honest the content shown by brands. On the other hand, only 8,6% considers the content somewhat dishonest.

10,3% stated it as completely honest, only 4,3% considered the content dishonest.

			Note: Only 116 respondents were allowed to reply this question, due to the given condition in question number 4.
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8) On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is unlikely, 3 is neutral and 5 likely), how likely are you to recommend a brand/company found on social media?

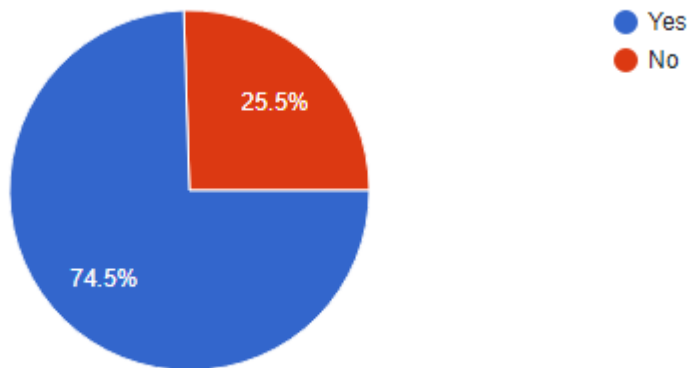


Scale	Respondents	Percentage
1	10	8,6%
2	11	9,5%
3	33	28,4%

What can be observed in the graph, is that 31,9% of the respondents, represented by 37 people, are somewhat likely when recommending a company/brand found on

4	37	31,9%	<p>social media.</p> <p>33% declared to be neutral while the 21,6% are likely to make a recommendation. Only 8,6% of the respondents are unlikely to recommend a company/brand found on social media.</p> <p>Note: Only 116 respondents were allowed to reply this question, due to the given condition in question number 4.</p>
5	25	21,6%	

9) Do you like dark chocolate? (Yes: continue to question 10, No: Jump to the end)

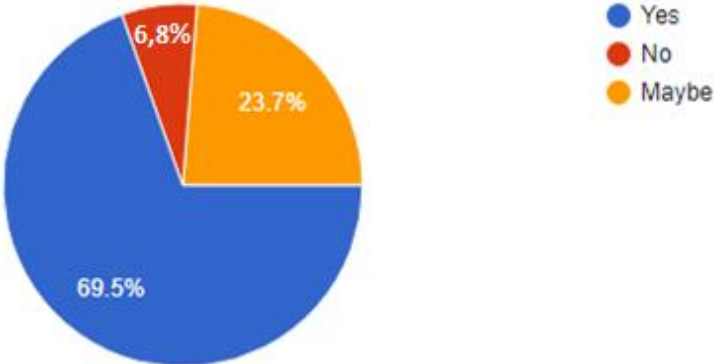


Option	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	111	74,5%
No	38	25,5%

As can be seen on the graph, the number of participants who affirmed to like dark chocolate (74.5%) is nearly 3 times higher than the number of the participants claimed that they do not like it (25.5%).

Note: 1 participant did not reply to this question.

10) Would you be interested in a dark chocolate brand that claims to offer high quality products, based on sustainable cocoa farming and that has a social program to increase prosperity and reduce poverty to its cocoa farmers?



Option	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	82	69,5%
No	8	6,8%
Maybe	28	23,7%

82 of respondents which correspond to 69.5% expressed their interest into a sustainable and socially responsible cocoa-based product brand.

23,7% of the participants claimed they might be interested, while the 6,8% claimed they wouldn't be.

11) Have you ever heard of a similar brand? If so, could you mention them? Otherwise, please write "no"



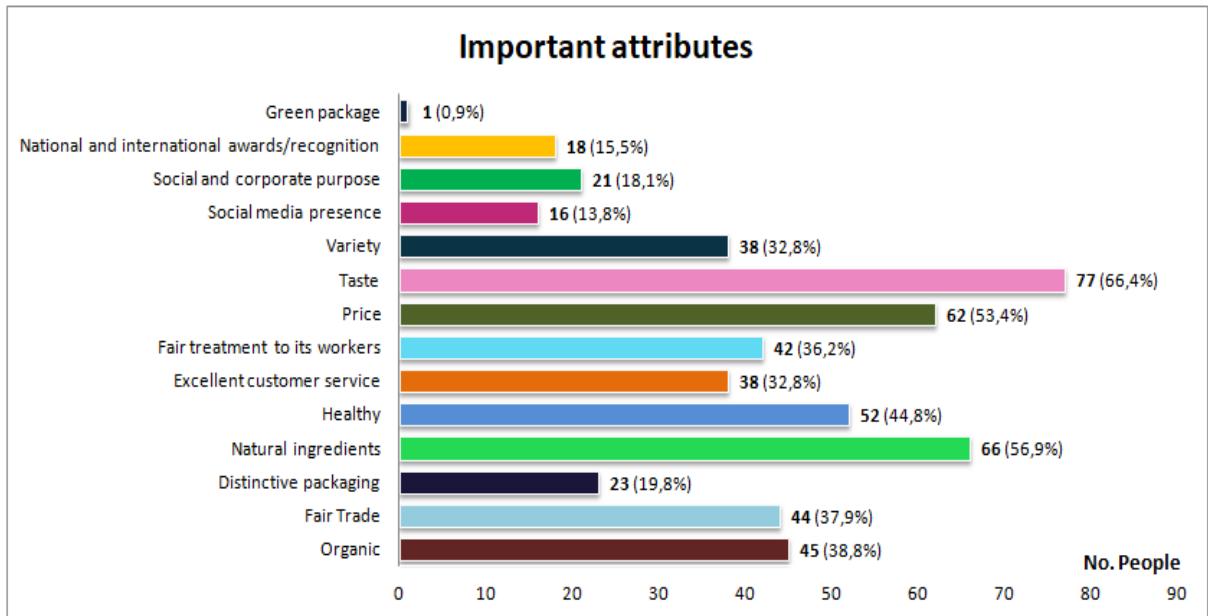
116 respondents were allowed to reply this question, due to the condition on question number 9. However, only 102 responded. 76 (out of 102) respondents claimed they do not know cocoa-based products with a similar approach described on question number 8. On the other hand 13 of them left the question in blank, and 4 claimed to know similar brands, but did not remember their names.

The names of brands associated to this question are listed below, with the respective number of people naming them:

Chocolate brand	Respondents
Divine- Oxfam (Ghana)	4
Cacao Hunters (Colombia)	3
Arlequin - La chocolatería (Colombia) *	1
Juan Choconat (Colombia)	9
Truffelinos - La Chocolatería (Colombia)	1
Moré (Colombia)	1
Color Cacao (Colombia)	1
The Chocolate House (USA) *	1
Lök (Colombia)	1
La Maison du Chocolat (USA) *	2
Godiva (USA)	1
La Ibérica (Perú)*	1

Helena Chocolatier (Perú)*	1
Mi Kcao (Perú)	1
Serge Thiry (Colombia)*	1
Fairglobe (Ghana)	1
Ritter Sport (Germany)*	1
Endangered Animals (USA)	1
Lindell (Germany)	1
<p>In spite all the aforementioned companies are cocoa-chocolate related, the names with * have been identified by the researchers as those with no relation to the described attributes, namely sustainable and with social programs to tackle poverty.</p>	

12) Besides high quality, which attributes of a cocoa-based product brand are the most important for you?



Important Attributes	No. People	Percentage
Organic	45	38,8%
Fair Trade	44	37,9%
Distinctive packaging	23	19,8%
Natural ingredients	66	56,9%
Healthy	52	44,8%
Excellent customer service	38	32,8%
Fair treatment to its workers	42	36,2%
Price	62	53,4%

Taste, natural ingredients and price are the most important attributes for the participants when it comes to cocoa-based product brand. 66,4% corresponds to taste, 56,9% to natural ingredients and 53,4% to price.

Other attributes worth

Taste	77	66,4%	considering are healthy, organic and fair trade with 44,8%, 38,8% and 37,9% respectively  Note: percentages do not correspond exactly to 100% because participants had the possibility to choose more than 1 option.
Variety	38	32,8%	
Social media presence	16	13,8%	
Social and corporate purpose	21	18,1%	
National and international awards/recognition	18	15,5%	
Green package	1	0,9%	

The international scope of this survey was quite broad, with participants from North and South America, Africa, Asia and Europe. This demonstrates the global power that social media have.

Facebook remains the social platform number one when it comes to the number of users. The 84.7% of respondents affirmed its usage (see graph 1). This reinforces the information found during this investigation (see figure 2) in which the social platform is indicated as the mostly used as of January 2019.

To start with, it is worth mentioning that to discover if there is brand awareness of cocoa-based product brands aiming for social development, fair trade and health, the sample designed was general by not mentioning any brand. With this, the results of the survey reflected some relevant facts. Firstly, the lack of knowledge of Juan Choconat at local and national level on consumers side (see list question 11). From a total of 150 respondents, 66 were Colombian and only 9 of them mentioned Juan Choconat. That shows that the brand awareness even at the national level is on a low level.

Secondly, and as a general fact, 114 respondents (out of 150) claimed following companies on social media (see graph 4), however, only 27 of them use social media to buy products and 29 are looking for recommendations (see graph 2). In addition, only 12 of the respondents find the companies' content honest while the biggest number is represented by a neutral position with 52 (see graph 7). The aforementioned come with some questions for future investigations: what is the main reason for users to follow companies on social media, and what could be a determined factor to engage the audience to companies.

To finalise, in regards to the content generated, the preferred types are pictures, videos and storytelling (see graph 5). When it comes to the message that calls the attention the most important ones are those communicating tips and advice (useful), knowledge and experience, social corporate responsibility, events, advertisement and promotions (see graph 6).

**5.2.2 Questionnaire**

To have a deeper insight from the company's side, related to the social media usage and the perceived benefits from it, a questionnaire has been performed, what resulted in obtaining the following answers:

<p><b>1</b> What is Juan Choconat target market?</p>	<p>Juan Choconat tries to reach all public. We don't think everybody likes chocolate, but, our variety of healthy products makes our target bigger. Our catalogue includes hot cocoa, which is perfect for families due to our cultural background. Dark, light and white chocolate bars which can also be flavoured with citric and exotic fruits. Truffles, brownies and milkshakes for kids and our last</p>
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	<p>addition: Chocolate beer, which has had a great acceptance amongst all local public.</p> <p>Additionally, our products are sweetened with non-refined sugar (panela) or are sugar free also, which allows the consumption to diabetic patients, people that do not like too sweet products or the ones with special diets. (Bulla, 2019)</p>
<p><b>2</b> Which social media platforms are you using?</p>	<p>Juan Choconat uses four social media platforms, the official homepage, which is linked directly to the corporate blog, Facebook and Instagram. (Bulla, 2019)</p>
<p><b>3</b> What is your purpose when using social media?</p>	<p>We like to share our experiences. The corporate blog is mostly dedicated to recognise the cocoa farmers working with us. There, it is shown to the public how to the cocoa trees look like, the cultivation and harvesting process and also videos showing how customers support have changed the lives of these farmers. We are also trying to educate our audience about all topics related to cocoa and why the product we sell is healthy and responsible.</p> <p>Our main purpose in social media is to show our essence. We put our heart in this cause. We are proud of our product, and we expose all benefits that come with its sustainable production and how our purchasing product is helping all people involved, from the mountains to our shops. The main goal with our project is to give a decent life to people that have suffered because of the</p>

	Colombian internal conflict. (Bulla, 2019)
<b>4</b> Have you considered social media as a brand awareness generator and a tool to penetrate other markets?	Not from the very beginning. At first, our goal was to share the incredible social labor we do and of course, give to the public broad information about us, our products and the option of online purchasing. Now that we are more public and accessible, we can perceive the benefits. Saying this, now we are trying to be more present on social media, but there is a lot of work ahead. (Bulla, 2019)
<b>5</b> How do you measure user traffic on your social media platforms in regards to new followers, online purchases, visits to the store, messages from interested people?	Our main shop is located in Ibagué, and more than a shop it is a place where all public can visit and have our delicious products, like chocolate bars turned out into warm or cold cocoa beverages. In here, many people have been visiting us, thanks to what they see on Facebook and Instagram, turning the brand recognition into an actual purchase. Also, we use Facebook and Instagram insights, which are giving us information about new followers. (Bulla, 2019)
<b>6</b> How do you decide how to create the content shared?	I must admit that we don't have a content plan. We basically create the content based on what we know which is all cocoa-related. As it was previously said, we mostly focus on cultivation and harvesting of cocoa, and mostly we try to highlight the social project we have with the cocoa farmers.

	<p>“Heroes del cultivo” (harvesting heroes) is of what are we most proud of. We love to share why our packaging looks the way it does. On the other hand, we post pictures and videos of our products catalogue and the shops where they can be found. We are much proud of what we are offering, so we like to share the positive reviews from customers. (Bulla, 2019)</p>
<p><b>7</b> Is the influence of the content generated through social media perceived and measured (statistically and economically)? Taking as an example the registration and participation to the chocolate tastings, the interest on the actors involved such as the cocoa farmers, visits to the stores that sell the products and the main store?</p>	<p>Yes. Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram have been of a great help to our company. Thanks to them, Juan Choconat has been gaining recognition, and with it the possibility to expand its national scope by opening new stores in other cities such as Manizález, Medellín and Bogotá, situation that has led to increase substantially our sales.</p> <p>On the other hand, lately we have been inviting people to chocolate tastings in different Colombian cities through Juan Choconat Instagram account. The number of participants have been considerable. (Bulla, 2019)</p>
<p><b>8</b> Have you identified what kind of generated and posted content has most responses and likes from the public?</p>	<p>The major social media activity and amount of followers exists on Instagram. We have identified 3 types of content as the most appealing ones:</p> <p>1) The one related to the countryside labour. All what is related to the cocoa farmers “Heroes del cultivo”. Videos and pictures shared in our blog are exposing the cocoa farmers lives and work, the</p>



	<p>cocoa trees, and the raw material, which are the cocoa beans.</p> <p>2) Our main shop and the people working with us (sellers) and the products offered there.</p> <p>3) Our awards and participation in fairs at national and international level. (Bulla, 2019)</p>
<p><b>9</b> Have you received external offers (purchase or alliances) from publications made through social media?</p>	<p>Yes, we have received them. And it was quite surprising when a retail online shop from New Zealand contacted us claiming they were interested in us due to our ethics in the cocoa production treatment. Now, they are selling 2 of our dark chocolate bars. (Bulla, 2019)</p>
<p><b>10</b> Do you invest in Social media?</p>	<p>The only investment is time. All the content is made by us and as it was mentioned before, as analysing tool, we use Facebook and Instagram insights which are free. (Bulla, 2019)</p>
<p>Note: The answers were sent by audio file, and have been translated from Spanish language to English.</p>	

**Table 5. Questionnaire transcription (own production)**

The company's purpose is to generate prosperity and development for the Colombian countryside and that is what the company is aiming to share to the public through all the messages and posts on social media. The images (pages 86 & 87) taken from their social media platforms as an example, confirm this claim. Through them, the work with the cocoa farmers, knowledge of raw material (cocoa beans and plantations) and production process and high quality final products can be seen.

However, the fact that it doesn't count neither with an established social media plan nor a target market to address, might explain the results from the survey, which indicates the lack of knowledge and awareness of Juan Choconat's brand (see survey question 11).

The company has been able also to perceive benefits from the social media usage, by increasing the sales, directly to customers or to gourmet shops and the contact from international online shops interested in distributing Juan Choconat's products and their "responsible chocolate" brand motto.

### **5.3 Data validation**

To obtain the required information, a questionnaire consisting of 12 questions has been elaborated, which was subsequently applied through a survey, to a sample of 150 people, using a non-probabilistic convenience sampling. Convenience sampling also known as Haphazard Sampling or Accidental Sampling is a "*type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study*" (Etikan, Abubakar, Sunusi, 2015).

The survey, was designed and distributed through a Google Form link, and to secure genuine obtainment of results, the option "*Allow only one response per user.*" was enabled. Its aim was to avoid the submission of multiple entries from the same respondent (Agarwal, 2014).

Once the information was collected, it was processed in Excel.

The data from the company side was collected through audio recording in Spanish language. However, all transcriptions and translations were transparently made by the researchers.

## 6. Conceptual Framework

As the result of the literature review findings and the analysis of the data collected, a conceptual framework based on that will be presented. The model will present the influence of social media on the brand awareness. Moreover, certain propositions based on both the literature review, the data analysis and the conceptual framework itself will be created.

### ***6.1 Conceptual framework model***

The model has been designed as a result of the knowledge gathered from the literature review and from the analysis of the collected data. The aim of this framework is to answer the research question. Therefore, the model will show the influence of social media on brand awareness, however, it will also take into consideration another relevant elements related to the main concepts of the dissertation.

The model proposes social media as a starting point to create brand awareness. From social media two actors have been identified, first, the firm performing a social media communications and second, the users which perform several roles. The two actors, are generating content that will behave as an outcome and as an income. At the same time, the content generated will mediate between the firm and the users, to finally reach brand awareness and eventually brand equity.

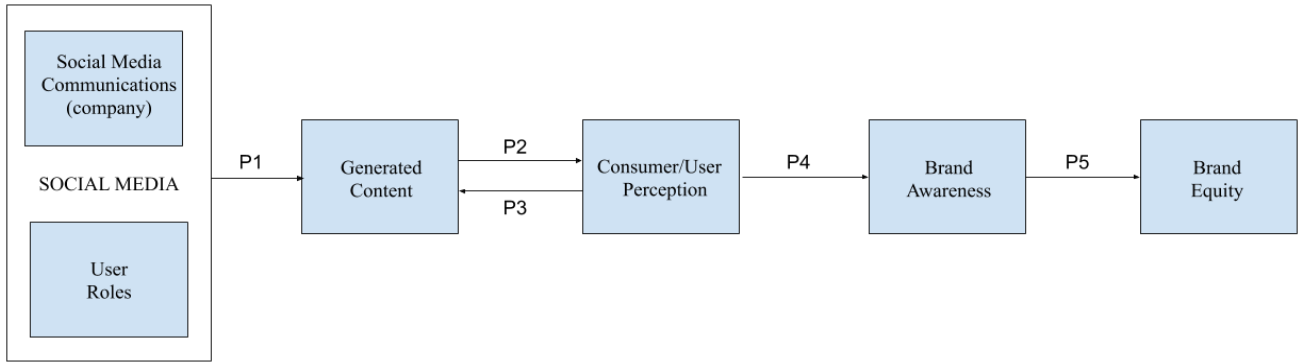


Figure 13. Conceptual Framework - “Social Media influence on brand awareness”. (own production)

## 6.2 Propositions

As can be seen on the previously demonstrated conceptual framework, several propositions have been created in order to clarify and investigate the elements of the model.

**Proposition 1:** Social Media provide opportunities for Internet users to generate and share content.

For the purpose of the conceptual framework social media are seen as a big general concept that includes the social media brand communication, when it comes to the company, and user roles when it comes to the Internet users. Within the user roles a creator, publisher, reviewer and conversationalist can be distinguished. These roles emerge while social media users can use them to create and publish their personalised content, but also create reviews of companies, brands and products, and take part in conversations. (Tuten & Solomon, 2017)

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2012), social media provide the Internet users with opportunities to create content and then to share it. In other words thank to social media, the users have all means to adopt a role by interacting with each other and participating. The content that is being shared by Internet users regards various topics which includes the brands and their products. Therefore, the firms are no longer the main brand

communication source. (Berthon et al., 2008). The research claims that social media are seen as more credible source of information comparing to the classic marketing communications instruments that the companies use. (Karakaya and Barnes, 2010). Hence, the marketers believe that the brand communications will be increased via user-generated social media communication. (Smith et al., 2012)

However, It is very important to be aware that social media communications have two forms:

- Company-created social media communications
- User-generated social media communications.

(Godes and Mayzlin, 2009)

The company-created social media communications is under the control of the company management. User-generated social media communications, on the other hand, is utterly independent from the company. (Vanden Bergh et al., 2011)

Thus, it can be concluded that social media gives the opportunity to create and share content for both the companies and Internet users. Therefore, the result of that opportunity is the generated content.

**Proposition 2:** Appealing content will generate a better perception from the user side of the firm/brand.

When it comes to social media performance the content is the key and companies should be aware of this in order to succeed (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019). Additionally, Kaplan & Haenlein, Mangold & Faulds (2009) agreed on, that a strong and well defined message, can significantly influence the perception and attitude towards a product or service, brands or firms.

However, the content must be carefully thought and be designed aiming to highlight the distinctive attributes that makes the brand to the target market valuable and at the same time attract new audiences (Kotler, 2016).

Furthermore, considering the results of the questionnaire performed, the respondents affirmed, the type of content more appealing to them is the one contained in photos, videos and story telling and reviews, this last one, reinforcing the statement made by Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen (2019) "*the most incredible way of advertising comes straight from the people we know and trust*". To complement, and taking into consideration the respondents' opinion, the message within the content to enhance the brand perception should contain topics related to sharing knowledge, experience and useful information, events, Social Corporate Responsibility, advertising and promotions, and finally messages reflecting their lifestyle.

**Proposition 3:** The consumer/user perception of the generated and shared content allows firms to redesign and adequate their sharings to make the users perceive the brand in a more positive way.

Interaction and participation is what social media should aim for (Manning, 2014). As mentioned before, social media is based on tools that allow reciprocity in the communication (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012).

To serve its purpose, social media communication should be two-way and multi-way (Tuten & Solomon, 2017) and companies and their brands can use this in their favour. Currently, social media make it possible to identify the interested audiences, customers and the potential ones, and see from first-hand the comments and conversation topics they have about the company, its brands and all marketing practices implemented, this including all social media content shared. The interaction with the public, customers and potential ones is vital, since brands can use this feedback to undertake improvements in all their processes and make the shared content valuable and eye-catching (Neti, 2011).

**Proposition 4:** The Consumer/User Perception of the brand builds brand awareness

As described earlier in the dissertation, brand awareness is said to be related to the power of the brand traces and nodes in the memory of the consumers, which are reflected by consumers capability of recognising or recalling the brand under various conditions. (Keller, 2009). Hence, it can be noticed that if the brand or company or its product is exposed to the consumers, noticed and perceived by them, then it starts to root in their memories. Therefore certain associations are created and subsequently the brand starts to be recognised by these consumers. (Tarigan & Tritama, 2016)

Moreover, the more times the consumer is exposed to the brand, the higher the brand awareness of that brand. As explained in the previous parts of the dissertation, the first level of brand awareness is brand recognition. If the consumer has already seen positive and meaningful information about the brand, then mind associations are created and the consumer starts to be aware of this brand. Over time, being exposed to a certain brand can result in building brand awareness and place the brand into consumer's mind on next levels of brand awareness, namely brand recall and top of mind, which is the highest level of brand awareness. (Tarigan & Tritama, 2016)

From the company point of view it is important that the information the potential customer gets about the company is positive. Then the consumer creates positive associations about the brand in his/her mind. That can help substantially as positive image of a brand in consumer's mind results in starting to have this brand in one's consideration set when it comes to purchasing decision. Furthermore, such positive association of a brand helps the company with building brand equity. Moreover, when the consumers have already a positive image of the brand, product and the company, the probability of a purchase grows. (C. L. L. Martin in L. E. Swayne & M. Dodds, 2011) The influence of brand awareness on brand equity however, will be explained in the next proposition.

**Proposition 5:** Brand awareness creates brand equity

Keller's customer-based brand equity model claim that brand equity is determined by brand knowledge. The brand knowledge, on the other hand, consists of brand awareness and brand image. (Keller, 2009) Hence, it can be concluded that brand awareness has an indirect influence on the brand equity.

Moreover, the research also convinces that brand awareness itself has an influence on brand equity. This is happening via: creating the brand node in the memory of the consumers; acting as a signal of trust towards the particular brand, and eventually by becoming a reason thank to which a consumer will start to have that brand in his/her consideration set during purchasing decision (Gil et al., 2007).

Similarly to the previous authors, also Martin in Swayne & M. Dodds (2011) claims that brand awareness should be considered as the starting point in building brand equity.

Therefore, it can be concluded that a company with high level of brand awareness is easier to recognise by the consumers and hence, the probability of choosing the known brand is higher. Thus, a firm that is characterised by high level of brand awareness has also a higher level of brand equity.



## 7. Conclusion

This dissertation comprises eight chapters: Introduction, Methodology, Literature Review, Case Company - Juan Choconat - description, Data Presentation and Analysis, Conceptual Framework, Conclusion and Reflections and Limitations. The main purpose of this paper was to answer the research question by analysing the relation between social media and brand awareness, including some other connected concepts. The previously mentioned concepts have been described in the Literature Review chapter according to the researchers' methodology and philosophy of science. Subsequently the case company has been introduced. Later, the gathered data has been presented and analysed, what in conjunction with the knowledge collected during the conduction of the Literature Review resulted in creating a Conceptual Framework showing the influence of social media on brand awareness in chapter number six. Moreover, the authors' Reflections and Limitations and finally the Recommendations are presented in the next parts of the paper.

From the research that has been carried out, it can be concluded that, in spite of how easy it is to access, create and share content (Aced, 2010) on social media platforms, for a brand that wants to build recognition through these, the situation is different. The brand, firstly must take a look at its goals and assess if they match with the social media use. Saying this, the brand needs to be organised by creating a social media plan (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

The social media plan must be synergistic. Brands should establish their priorities and commit to them (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019). To begin with, there must be coherence in what the brand values are and what their target market wants. Therefore, the content, style and message created and shared are crucial, as the successful connection and engagement with the audience depends on them (Kotler, Opresnik & Hollensen, 2019).

The companies and their brands should no longer focus only on selling. After the evidence shown throughout this paper, it has been demonstrated that the brands should firstly focus on creating an identity to create a mind association and then on transmitting the brand values to the consumers (Keller, 2001).

Based on the survey results, it is clearly exposed that there is lack of brand awareness of Juan Choconat. Out of 150 respondents where 66 were represented by Colombian people, only 9 of them related Juan Choconat to the description of social and responsible chocolate brand given in the survey. This could be explained through the lack of identification of a target market and the development of promotional campaigns addressed to it.

Additionally, according to the results of the conducted survey, when checking on the type of content shared by companies or brands, the predominant type the respondents would like to see are photos, videos and the reviews. The story-telling is in fourth place, however, and using synergy, it is important to note that both videos and photos should be accompanied by a text, to put the audience into context.

The style of messages that call the attention of the most of the respondents are those containing useful information, those showing knowledge and experience, advertisements, promotion, events and elements reflecting their lifestyle. This type of preferred style of the message is showing coherence with the social media communication experts' recommendations (Forbes Magazine, 2018).

As a positive outcome, it can be seen that 21,6% of the respondents, would be likely to recommend companies they have seen on social media media. On the other hand, the neutral and somehow likely to do it, represented by the 28,4% and 31,9% respectively, led the researchers to assume that depending on how interesting, convincing and eye-catching the content shared by the brand is, they would decide whether share it or not. However, the most of respondents find the shared content by companies neither honest nor dishonest.

Without creating any bias with a specific dark chocolate brand, described as a sustainable, with social purpose and fair trade in the survey, 82 out of 116 respondents affirmed they would be interested in such brand, additionally as a positive outcome for Juan Choconat, the respondents are looking for brand attributes such as natural ingredients, healthy, fair trade and fair treatment to workers, and variety, which are strong and present in Juan Choconat's products.

The researchers found out that step by step, Juan Choconat has been building brand awareness through social media, by highlighting the main attribute that brand is based on: "responsibility". Most of the identified online shops, and the local shops selling their products promote the brand as healthy, social and responsible.

When it comes to the recommendations to the case company, the researchers believe that even though the price, according to the survey results, plays a fundamental attribute, Juan Choconat needs to build a strong image. This way, the customers would be prioritising the major good they are doing when purchasing its products by receiving tangible (high quality and healthy product) and intangible (the personal value perceived by helping to tackle poverty) benefits which outbalance the price.

Juan Choconat's main goal is to expose its healthy and responsible identity and the content shared on social media is consistent to this goal. However, and as a result of the questionnaire addressed to its owner, there is not much clarity on the target market. The company wants to "sell to everybody", even though it seems that they have a clear idea on how their products could be good for a specific group, the brand is not making major effort on designing messages to attract the targeted audience and on reaching a determinate or potential markets.

The personnel in charge of the social media communication of the company, should be consistent on the replies given to the interested public. The researchers through the investigation carried out, found that the company replies only to these comments that praise their products, and doesn't reply to the interested public inquiries. The literature review

exposed how important it is to have a two-way communication (Tuten & Solomon, 2017), therefore, it is highly recommended to maintain the relation with all interested parties.

The main aim of this dissertation was to investigate the social media as a tool for building brand awareness for companies. Firstly, the theoretical knowledge has been presented. Subsequently, a survey and a questionnaire have been designed in order to collect empirical data to complement the theoretical findings. Eventually, a comprehensive conceptual framework that is a result of a conjunction of findings from both theoretical and practical findings of this thesis, has been created and explained. This model shows that the influence of social media on brand awareness exists. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research question of this dissertation has been answered. Hence, the main aim of the paper has been achieved. To summarise, it can be noticed that this dissertation provides a reader with an extensive knowledge overview, as well as a empirical data regarding social media, brand awareness and the relation between these two concepts. Moreover, the dissertation can also serve as both theoretical and practical guideline for companies interested in starting social media activities in order to build and subsequently enhance the brand awareness.

## 8. Reflections and Limitations

The aim of this dissertation was to provide knowledge and a general overview of the current body of literature regarding the concepts of social media, branding, brand awareness, brand equity and social media communications. Furthermore, also the relations between the concepts will be introduced and explained throughout the paper.

The main research question of this dissertation was: **“Is social media a beneficial tool for Juan Choconat to build brand awareness?”**

Throughout this paper this question has been answered. However, the authors have recognised certain difficulties and limitations.

The first identified limitation regards the literature about social media. It has been recognised that the concept of social media is growing rapidly. Therefore, more and more authors decide to write about it. The popularity and significance of social media in the present world is also currently increasing. Hence, it is highly probable that the concept will evolve and change over time. Thus, it is recommended to conduct a research in the future in order to get knowledge about how the concept developed over time. Furthermore, also comparing the relation between social media and brand awareness would be necessary, as that can also be affected and change in the future.

Moreover, the number of literature regarding social media is very high. Because of that it is unavoidable to omit or skip important research and sources while undertaking the literature review, as it is impossible to include the knowledge generated by each researcher in this field.

Furthermore, the amount of literature about how social media influence brand awareness has been assessed as limited. While there is a substantial amount of literature regarding social media and brand awareness, the amount of literature that regards the relation of these

concepts is not that substantial. Therefore, it is important to recommend a further research on this topic in the future, as this concept can also evolve and change over time.

In regards to the data collection some other limitations are acknowledged. From the company's side, the first and main idea was to perform a semi-structured interview to not limit the responses and have a spontaneous conversation. However, due to agenda restrictions, performing such interview was not possible. Instead, audio recordings with the responses were sent to the researchers, limiting the possibility to gather more information, after the initial set of questions.

Moreover, obtaining the information in English language was not possible. All evidence was provided in Spanish, thus translating the audio transcription was required. Fortunately, complicated terms were not used, giving the researchers the opportunity to avoid mistakes as much as possible in interpreting the answers.

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# Appendices

## *A) Survey*

### Brand Awareness and Social Media

As part of our master thesis research topic on how Social Media is an effective tool for brand awareness creation, we have designed the following questionnaire.

We highly appreciate your collaboration, it is a great help and of a significant value to us.

Thank you!

**\*Required**

Your age range \*

Choose

Gender \*

Male

Female

Your country \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which social media platforms are you currently using?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- WhatsApp
- LinkedIn
- Blogs
- Yelp
- Trip Advisor
- Amazon
- Homepage
- Youtube
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- Facebook Messenger
- Other:

2. What are your reasons for using social media platforms?

- Staying in touch with your friends and family
- Staying up to date with current events and news
- Finding interesting/entertainment ent/educational content
- General networking with other people
- Sharing photos or videos with others
- Filling up some spare time
- Researching new products to buy
- Meeting new people
- Sharing my opinion
- Asking for products/services/places recommendations
- Other:

3. Have you ever been interested in a product/brand after seeing it on social media posts or reviews?

- Yes

No

Maybe

4. Do you follow companies on social media? (Yes: continue to question 5 , No: jump to question 9)

Yes

No

5. What type of content posted by companies appeals to you the most? (select one or more options)

Videos

Photos

Customer/fan/followers reviews

Written content / Storytelling (blog posts)

Infographics

Podcasts

Other:

6. What kind of content or message style would call your attention the most into a brand on Social media?

Useful (tips and advice)

Trendy

Sharing knowledge or experience

Showing the brand core values

Allowing interaction

Reflecting your lifestyle

What does the brand do?

Social Corporate Responsibility

Advertisement and promotions

Events

Showing production process





important to you?

- Organic
- Fair Trade
- Distinctive packaging
- Natural ingredients
- Healthy
- Excellent customer service
- Fair treatment to its workers
- Price
- Taste
- Variety
- Social media presence
- Social and corporate purpose
- National and international awards/recognition
- Other:

## ***B) Questionnaire***

Audio Transcription Answers (Original language: Spanish)

1. Cómo se compone el mercado objetivo de Juan Choconat? /What is Juan Choconat's target market?

Juan choconat trata de llegar a todos los públicos. No creemos que a todos les guste el chocolate, pero nuestra variedad de productos saludables hace que nuestro objetivo sea más grande. Nuestro catálogo incluye chocolate caliente, que es perfecto para familias debido a nuestros antecedentes culturales. Barras de chocolate oscuras, claras y blancas que también se pueden condimentar con frutas cítricas y exóticas. Trufas, brownies y batidos para niños

y nuestra última adición: la cerveza de chocolate, que ha tenido una gran aceptación entre el público local.

Además, nuestros productos están endulzados con azúcar no refinada (panela) o también son sin azúcar, lo que permite el consumo a pacientes diabéticos, personas que no les gustan los productos demasiado dulces o los que tienen dietas especiales.

2. Cuáles son las plataformas (redes) sociales utilizadas por ustedes / [Which social media platforms are you currently using ?](#)

Juan Choconat utiliza cuatro plataformas de redes sociales, la página oficial, que está vinculada directamente al blog corporativo, Facebook e Instagram.

3.Cuál es el propósito del uso de las redes sociales? / [What is your purpose when using social media?](#)

Nos gusta compartir nuestras experiencias. El blog corporativo está dedicado principalmente a reconocer a los productores de cacao que trabajan con nosotros. Allí, se muestra al público cómo se ven los árboles de cacao, el proceso de cultivo y cosecha y también los videos que muestran cómo el apoyo de los clientes ha cambiado la vida de estos agricultores. También estamos tratando de educar a nuestra audiencia sobre todos los temas relacionados con el cacao y por qué el producto que vendemos es saludable y responsable.

Nuestro principal objetivo en las redes sociales es mostrar nuestra esencia. Ponemos nuestro corazón en esta causa. Estamos orgullosos de nuestro producto, y exponemos todos los beneficios que vienen con su producción sostenible y cómo nuestro producto de compra ayuda a todas las personas involucradas, desde las montañas hasta nuestras tiendas; El objetivo principal de nuestro proyecto es dar una vida digna a las personas que han sufrido a causa del conflicto interno colombiano.

4. Han considerado las redes sociales como herramienta para generar reconocimiento de la marca y penetrar otros mercados? / [Have you considered social media as a brand awareness generator and a tool to penetrate other markets?](#)

No desde el principio. Al principio, nuestro objetivo era compartir la increíble labor social que hacemos y, por supuesto, brindar al público información general sobre nosotros, nuestros productos y la opción de compra en línea. Ahora que somos más públicos y accesibles, podemos percibir los beneficios. Al decir esto, ahora estamos tratando de estar más presentes en las redes sociales, pero hay mucho trabajo por delante.

5. Cómo miden el tráfico de usuarios en la redes sociales (nuevos seguidores, compras virtuales, visitas a la tienda, mensajes de personas interesadas?) / [How do you measure user traffic on your social media platforms in regards to new followers, online purchases, visits to the store, messages from interested people?](#)

Nuestra tienda principal está ubicada en Ibagué, y más que una tienda es un lugar donde todos los públicos pueden visitar y degustar nuestros deliciosos productos, como las barras de chocolate que se convierten en bebidas de cacao tibias o frías. Aquí, muchas personas nos han estado visitando, gracias a lo que ven en Facebook e Instagram, convirtiendo el reconocimiento de la marca en una compra real. Además, utilizamos perspectivas de Facebook e Instagram, que nos proporcionan información sobre nuevos seguidores.

6. Cómo deciden la creación del contenido en las redes? / [How do you decide how to create the content shared?](#)

Debo admitir que no tenemos un plan de contenido. Básicamente, creamos el contenido en función de lo que sabemos: el cacao. Como se dijo anteriormente, nos centramos principalmente en el cultivo y la cosecha de cacao, y principalmente tratamos de resaltar el proyecto social que tenemos con los productores de cacao. "Heroes del cultivo" es de lo que estamos más orgullosos. Nos encanta compartir por qué nuestro empaque se ve como

lo hace. Por otro lado, publicamos fotos y videos de nuestro catálogo de productos y las tiendas donde se pueden encontrar. Estamos muy orgullosos de lo que ofrecemos, por eso nos gusta compartir las opiniones positivas de los clientes.

7. Se percibe y se mide (estadística y económicamente) la influencia del contenido generado a través de las redes sociales? Inscripción y participación a las catas de chocolate, interés por los actores (campesinos) productores de cacao, visitas a las tiendas que venden los productos y el establecimiento principal? / *Is the influence of the content generated through social media perceived and measured (statistically and economically)? Taking as an example the registration and participation to the chocolate tastings, interest on the actors involved such as the cocoa farmers, visits to the stores that sell the products and the main store?*

Sí. Las plataformas de redes sociales como Facebook e Instagram han sido de gran ayuda para nuestra empresa. Gracias a ellos, Juan Choconat ha ido ganando reconocimiento y con ello la posibilidad de ampliar su alcance nacional abriendo nuevas tiendas en otras ciudades como Manizales, Medellín y Bogotá, situación que ha llevado a aumentar sustancialmente nuestras ventas.

Por otro lado, últimamente hemos estado invitando a personas a degustaciones de chocolate en diferentes ciudades colombianas a través de la cuenta de Instagram de Juan Choconat. El número de participantes ha sido considerable.

8. Han identificado qué clase de contenido publicado tiene más respuesta y likes del público? *Have you identified what kind of generated and posted content has most responses and likes from the public?*

La principal actividad en redes sociales y la cantidad de seguidores existen en Instagram. Hemos identificado 3 tipos de contenido como los más atractivos: la primera, es la relacionada con el trabajo de campo. Todo lo relacionado con los “Héroes del cultivo” de los productores de cacao (los videos de los productores de cacao también se encuentran en

nuestro blog, los árboles de cacao y la materia prima (granos de cacao). La segunda, nuestra tienda principal y las personas que trabajan con nosotros (vendedores) y los productos ofrecidos allí. y la tercera, nuestros premios y participación en ferias a nivel nacional e internacional.

9. Han recibido ofertas externas (compra o alianzas) por publicaciones hechas a través de las redes sociales? / [Have you received external offers \(purchase or alliances\) from publications made through social media?](#)

Sí, los hemos recibido. Y fue bastante sorprendente cuando una tienda minorista en línea de Nueva Zelanda (<https://thechocolatebar.nz/>) nos contactó diciendo que estaban interesados en nosotros debido a nuestra ética en el tratamiento de la producción de cacao. Ahora, están vendiendo 2 de nuestras barras de chocolate oscuro.

10. Invierten en las redes sociales? / [Do you invest in Social media?](#)

La única inversión es el tiempo. Todo el contenido está hecho por nosotros y, como se mencionó anteriormente, como herramienta de análisis, usamos las herramientas de Facebook e Instagram insight que son gratuitas.