

Social media platforms as engagement tools: An audit of Facebook and Twitter use by regional sports networks.

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Abstract

This study employs a social media audit of the Facebook and Twitter content of regional sports networks. The work is heavily grounded in academic literature pertaining to Grunig's public relations models and the uses and gratifications theory. As a result, the notion of engagement is used to emphasize the importance of interaction between a sports entity and its audience. Current best practices for social media use are also researched and considered. A three-week content analysis is performed in order to study the substance of the Facebook and Twitter platforms of three different regional sports networks. Results are analyzed in an attempt to assess the level of interaction between regional sports networks and their publics. Return on engagement is defined and relied upon heavily as a point of comparison. Effective social media techniques are noted, and suggestions are made as to how Facebook and Twitter can be used in a manner that generates greater interaction with the audience.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Fox Sports Southwest	
A. Overview.....	2
B. Stakeholders	
1. Viewers	3
2. Business Partners	4
3. Sponsors.....	5
4. Community	6
III. Literature Review	
A. Public Relations Model.....	7
B. Uses and Gratifications	10
C. Engagement.....	12
D. Social Media	
1. Facebook.....	14
2. Twitter.....	16
E. Best Practices	
1. Public Opinion	17
2. Transparency and Authenticity	18
3. Content.....	20
4. Interaction	20

IV. Research

A. Methods22

B. Findings.....24

V. Discussion and Limitations

A. Discussion31

B. Limitations32

References.....34

Appendices

A. Fox Sports Southwest Social Media Top 20 ROE42

B. ESPN Dallas Social Media Top 20 ROE.....43

C. Comcast Sports Net Social Media Top 20 ROE.....44

Introduction

The Pew Research Center recently marked the 25th anniversary of the Internet with a study examining which communication platforms Americans view as the most indispensable. The survey found that individuals were far more attached to the Internet and cellular phones than to televisions and landline telephones (Caumont, 2014). Indeed, the diffusion of new technologies seems to have nearly saturated the entire population of the United States. The Internet is used by 87 percent of adults in America, and 90 percent use cellular phones (Pew Research Center, 2014). This is an important fact for communication professionals. It seems that, as technology alters the mediums and methods used to communicate, the practitioners tasked with messaging key publics certainly need to adapt as well.

In particular, the pairing of social media applications with technological devices promises to assist communicators in reaching large audiences in an efficient and unprecedented manner. And, perhaps most importantly, specific platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, look to provide an opportunity for corporations to create reciprocal communications with stakeholders. Intuitively, establishing the often sought after two-way symmetrical model of public relations could be aided greatly by the current hi-tech innovations. As such, the purpose of this research project is to examine how social media is currently being utilized by a company to interact with its audience. Specifically, a content analysis of the Facebook and Twitter accounts of Fox Sports Southwest (FSS) and two of its competitors will be employed to determine if the organizations are maximizing their usage. This study will first provide a general corporate overview of FSS and define key stakeholders. These analyses will be followed

by a literature review examining the public relations model, uses and gratifications theory, notions of audience engagement, and two specific social media platforms—Facebook and Twitter. Social media best practices will then be discussed. Lastly, methods and findings of the content analysis will be examined, and practical suggestions will be made for social media practices at FSS.

Fox Sports Southwest

Overview

FSS is a regional television affiliate of Fox Sports Network and is owned by the Fox Entertainment Group. Corporate offices are located in the Las Colinas area of Irving, Texas. The cable footprint of the FSS network mostly covers the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas, as well as a portion of New Mexico. According to Nielsen (2013), eight of the top 60 television markets in the United States are in the FSS region: Dallas-Fort Worth (5), Houston (10), San Antonio (36), Austin (40), Oklahoma City (41), New Orleans (51), Little Rock-Pine Bluff (56), and Tulsa (60). A large portion of the network's programming consists of sporting events at the professional, collegiate, and high school levels. Much of the network's visibility is due to broadcast agreements with major sports franchises. FSS is the primary television outlet for four clubs in the National Basketball Association (NBA): Dallas Mavericks, New Orleans Pelicans, Oklahoma City Thunder, and San Antonio Spurs. The station also serves as the broadcast home for the Texas Rangers of Major League Baseball (MLB), Dallas Stars of the National Hockey League (NHL), and San Antonio Silver Spurs of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). In addition, FSS has broadcast agreements with collegiate athletic organizations, such as the Big 12 Conference,

Southeastern Conference, and Conference USA, as well as high school sports authorities like the University Interscholastic League (UIL) in Texas and the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association. The involvement of FSS with so many organizations and diverse audiences would seem to make public relations an area of emphasis.

Stakeholders

Viewers. One very large group of FSS stakeholders is comprised of the individuals who view the programs airing on the network. This is as an important public in several ways. Foremost, the amount of people watching a program has a direct impact on what FSS is able to charge clients for purchasing advertising; quite simply, more viewers translates to more revenue. Second, because FSS is a tiered cable network that is not included in basic packages, viewers must pay a monetary premium to obtain the programming. Subscribers pay a price to receive the programs airing on FSS, but they pay it as a monthly fee to a distribution outlet rather than directly to the network. Third, a sizeable population of viewers has the potential to contribute significantly to an overall positive public opinion of the brand. The importance of word-of-mouth and peer influence is not a recent phenomenon. Rogers (2000) noted the key role of mass communications in the diffusion of beliefs by allowing ideas to immediately reach a large number of people. These individuals then pass information along through their interpersonal channels. Yet, media can also exert a straightforward influence. Albert Bandura (2001), a highly regarded psychologist in the field of social learning, believed that mass media served as a powerful force for directly impacting an individual's behavior. As such, research strongly suggests that mass media has dual paths of influence. That is, it can sway attitudes of individuals directly or by reaching adopters

who pass down the beliefs. Still, others have also noted an additional phenomenon that may be aided by mass media. In their research on influencers, Watts and Dodds (2007) surmised that change in public opinion was more a result of a critical mass of persuadable individuals rather than a minute hub of opinion leaders. Regardless, its relatively large audience would seem to give FSS a good opportunity to create a positive public perception of its brand—whether by word-of-mouth, direct influence, swaying opinion leaders, or impacting a critical mass.

Business Partners. Two significant factors in the FSS business plan are sports teams and program distribution partners. The network relies heavily on the teams' games to provide desirable content for viewers and is dependent on professional corporate partners, such as cable companies and satellite service providers, to offer a reliable and attractive distribution channel for that content. These business associates, such as the many sports teams and organizations that claim FSS as their broadcast home, comprise another critical group of stakeholders. Theoretically, the better the sports franchises perform in the athletic arena, the more people will be watching FSS. A poor performing athletic team paired with an undesirable distribution channel can reap disastrous consequences for a regional sports television network. For example, Comcast Sports Net Houston (CSNH)—broadcast home of the Houston Astros—recently entered bankruptcy after three of the worst baseball seasons in the club's history (Barron, 2014). While there are certainly other economic and business factors influencing the network's demise, the Astros' poor performance provided little incentive for viewers to watch the programming. Additionally, it likely had a negative impact on Comcast's leverage with potential service providers in attempts to grow the subscriber base. These providers certainly comprise

another key group of stakeholders. As noted earlier, FSS is a cable channel broadcast by distribution partners. It depends on these distribution channels to get its programming to customers. Again, using CSNH as an example, a poor relationship with channel partners can ruin the business model of a regional sports network. Among the many problems that reportedly contributed to the bankruptcy of CSNH, distribution has been cited as a major factor. CSNH is only able to reach 40 percent of its region, because it has failed to gain agreements with some service providers in the Houston area (Reynolds, 2013). The point here is that FSS has a keen interest in the success of the teams that air on the network and the distribution channels that provide the broadcast service. If social media does indeed have the potential to influence perceptions among the public, then its use should be a high priority for FSS. It would seem important to use any means available to aid in promoting a positive perception of the teams airing on the network and nurture relationships with channel partners.

Sponsors. FSS generates a bulk of its revenue by selling advertising to commercial businesses. These customers are a vital group of stakeholders for the network. Quite simply, FSS relies on the revenue generated from ad sales to fund the operations of the company. While social media is probably not the ideal forum to nurture a business/client relationship, it can certainly be used to add overall value to the association. Making followers of social media aware of a new innovation or opportunity from a commercial partner, if done correctly, could provide value for both social media followers and clients. An emphasis on social exchange seems applicable here. These opportunities for promotion on social media would seemingly need to be executed in a manner that provides value for all parties. One specific initiative, undertaken by Baylor

Athletics in late 2011, serves as a good example of combining digital content with the marketing of an athletic team. In the campaign, Baylor offered prizes to fans as an incentive to engage in social media by posting videos, sharing photos, retweeting Baylor stories, and using specific hashtags. The results were very positive. Baylor Athletics' Facebook page collected over 4 million impressions in the first three weeks of the promotion and, after about two months, the amount of Facebook fans climbed from 18,000 to 26,000 (Scheiner, 2012). FSS has two of the same main components (a sports fan base and social media platform) as the Baylor campaign. It seems capable of easily adopting the same type of promotion. And, by using a client's products as prizes, the network could garner some brand awareness for its sponsors. The key is to be certain that everyone benefits from the relationship. Fans get prizes. Sponsors gain exposure. And, FSS engages and grows its social media audience.

Community. Lastly, because of its role in the electronic media, FSS is a visible member of its local community. How other members of society view a company can have important implications for a business. Specifically, the manner in which FSS connects with the general public would seem to influence the amount of goodwill it generates. Kotler, Hessekiel, and Lee (2012) believe that a robust connection with stakeholders increases respect among publics, leads to a competitive advantage, and strengthens brand position. The researchers also feel that successful community initiatives rely on connecting and resonating with key publics. As such, healthy community relations between a business and the general public appear to be a key ingredient to corporate success. One area that seems capable of strengthening brand reputation with the general public is that of social corporate responsibility. A recent

study by Cone Communications (2013) found that 93 percent of American consumers evaluate a brand higher when the business supports a cause. The study brings the importance of corporate social responsibility into focus and stresses how social media can be an asset to a brand. Results show that 51 percent of Americans say they use social media to interact with businesses about social and environmental matters, and 27 percent of US consumers employ social media to spread positive information about corporations and issues with others in their network (Cone Communications, 2013). These findings seem to suggest that FSS' social media can be combined with corporate social initiatives to strengthen and maintain a positive brand image.

Literature Review

Public Relations Model

Public relations authority James Grunig conducted a vast amount of research focused on professional, organized, managed systems of communication. The work was partly grounded on the logical belief that companies will practice approaches that are most beneficial to their businesses. His research integrated the variables of direction (one-way versus two-way) and intended effect (asymmetrical versus symmetrical). Grunig concluded that there were four primary models of public relations behavior: press agency/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1989).

Research by J. Grunig, L. Grunig, Sriramesh, Yi-Hui, and Lyra (1995) provides a good summary of the four models. The press agency/publicity type depicts a propagandist situation where media attention is sought in any way possible. The public information model describes a setting with an in-house-journalist who distributes fairly

accurate information about the organization but offers nothing negative. The two-way asymmetrical model is one where research is conducted to understand audience needs in order to create messages that will influence their behavior in a manner beneficial to the organization; yet, the organization has no desire to change its own behavior. And, lastly, the two-way symmetrical model seeks to use communication that changes the behavior and attitudes of the organization and the publics in a manner that is beneficial to both. The first two models are situations where information is given *to* publics, but no feedback is sought *from* the publics in return. The last two models are distinguished by practicing two-way communication and research.

Of these four models, the two-way symmetrical is largely viewed as the most desirable. Establishing two-way dialogue that benefits the consumer and the organization is generally seen as the ideal relationship between a company and its publics. Furthermore, a company that is willing to alter its own behavior on the basis of communication from its external stakeholders would seem to be an organization capable of establishing positive brand awareness, strong bonds with consumers, and general goodwill in the community. A literature review by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) that focused on interactive media relations suggested that top public relations organizations did indeed model their communications more after the two-way symmetrical model than any other (Grunig, 1990). One takeaway from the IABC review is the high value of strategic public relations. Specifically, based on a review of the IABC efforts, J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1998) acknowledged that the project “shows that public relations makes an organization more effective when it

identifies strategic constituencies in the environment and then develops communication programs to build long-term, trusting relationships with them” (p. 141).

Furthermore, in their book on interactive theory and communication, L. Grunig, J. Grunig, and Dozier (2002) advised that the two-way symmetrical public relations model “epitomizes professional public relations and reflects the growing body of knowledge in the field” (p. 307). The authors also stressed the role communication staffers should play in monitoring and scanning the environment in an attempt to understand the voice of key publics. Overall, many of the key components of Grunig’s research—targeted messages, two-way communication, and monitoring audience voice—seem ideally suited to provide a framework for communication via social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Yet, a recent study indicates that many current organizations are not making full use of existing social media tools even though these devices seem uniquely tailored to engage audiences in two-way dialogue. For instance, O’Neil (2014) studied how Fortune 500 companies and nonprofits use relationship strategies on Facebook and found that two-way communication is lacking; large businesses are more likely to use tactics that demonstrate one-way communication. Another study of Fortune 500 companies indicated that Twitter was also underutilized by businesses to expedite dialogue with stakeholders (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). Such findings suggest that companies could be lagging in establishing a two-way symmetrical model of communication on social media platforms. This is one area where a company such as FSS may be able to gain a competitive advantage. If most of the research grounded in Grunig’s public relations model is to be believed, present day firms could benefit by using more of a two-way symmetrical communications approach.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

The uses and gratifications theory also proposes a significant role for the audience. The theory is built on the premise that individuals interact with media in a manner that meets their personal needs. In a review of prevailing studies, research by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973) specifically addressed the behaviors of publics. The researchers noted that audiences are very active participants. The findings depicted individuals as goal directed when using mass media, responsible for linking media choice with need gratification, and self-aware of their reasons for consuming media. The research was also key in proposing the use of media by individuals to connect with others. The scientists suggested that individuals have a “preference for different media for different kinds of connections” (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973, p. 513). As a whole, the early uses and gratifications work implies that traditional forms of mass media (television, radio, and newspapers) are actively consumed by individuals to satisfy certain needs.

The advent of innovative nontraditional communication technologies, such as cell phones and tablet computers, seems to reinforce the importance of understanding how and why consumers use certain types of communication. Research has acknowledged that the emergence of the Internet raised the notion of an active audience to a new level. Specifically, Haridakis and Hanson (2009) studied the link between new media and user activity. They noted a rise of fresh media tools that allowed an unprecedented range of communication activities. The study of new media consumption found that individuals’ use of YouTube conformed to the uses and gratifications model. That is, people used the video service to satisfy entertainment and information seeking needs. Social interaction

needs were also met by co-viewing videos with other individuals. In *Uses and Grats 2.0: New Gratifications for New Media*, Sundar and Limperos (2013) reviewed twenty studies on the subject of uses and gratifications and media usage and concluded:

Across the landscape of U&G studies from 1940 to 2011, two trends are noteworthy: (1) As we move from old to newer media, it appears that new gratifications do emerge with new technology; (2) Some broad gratifications, especially those related to social and information functions, tend to get more nuanced and specific with newer media. (p. 508)

It certainly seems significant to note the confirmation that individuals' social and information functions are firmly entrenched with media usage. Also, it does appear that original innovations bring about new gratifications. Sundar studied this notion while addressing the credibility of new media. The researcher suggested that the innovations of new media afford users the possibility of new needs to be gratified, such as, modality (text, audio, or video) and interactivity (Sundar, 2008).

Furthermore, uses and gratifications theory has provided the foundation for other valuable research based around how people interface with media. Ko, Cho, and Roberts (2005) specifically addressed the interactive potential of websites. They believed that the Internet was capable of transcending physical boundaries in order to strengthen customer relationships. The researchers' work outlined two major dimensions of online interaction: human-human and human-message. Their study of online web activity found that consumers who engaged in human-human and human-message interactions evaluated a website more positively. This led to increased purchase intentions and a positive attitude toward the brand (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005). Interaction, however, is

certainly not limited to websites. One study of Facebook and Twitter indicated that a motivation for social interaction predicted commenting, sharing, and liking on Facebook, as well as replies on Twitter (Alhabash, McAlister, Rifon, Taylor Quilliam, Sternadori, & Richards, 2013). Undoubtedly, the interactive use of new media and social platforms to meet the needs of individuals seems central to current communications studies.

Engagement

Of the many concepts studied in relation to people's active involvement with media, one of the most salient themes is the notion of engagement. In their research on websites, Mollen and Wilson (2010) viewed engagement as "a cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand" (p. 919). They felt the idea centered on the relevance of brands to consumers. As with the research on two-way symmetrical communication and the work targeting uses and gratifications, Mollen and Wilson's study included the notion of an active audience. Their review of academic studies found a trio of consistent themes associated with engagement: (a) active cognitive processing, (b) the ability to solve a need or want, and (c) emotional bonding (Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Furthermore, they proposed a relationship between online engagement and improved consumer attitudes and behavior.

Currently there is an acknowledged effort in the public relations field to use social media engagement as a means to influence the attitudes and behavior of publics (Bowen, 2013). A major benefit of the social media platforms is the ability to contact an audience directly without having to pass through traditional media channels where the message may be filtered or blocked altogether. Simply put, engagement with a mass audience is only one post or Tweet away from reality. Furthermore, social media can greatly extend

brand awareness. Engaging well-known individuals can lead to widespread attention from their fans. John Yembrick, manager of social media at NASA is candid about the organizations' attempt to involve influencers. He acknowledges:

We try to engage influencers. We tweeted a happy birthday to Star Trek's Leonard Nimoy, engaged with Tom Hanks reliving the making of the film *Apollo 13* and were also engaged and got retweeted by Justin Bieber (Fidelman, 2013, n.p).

Initializing a social media conversation and garnering a retweet from someone like Bieber (with over 50 million followers) is certainly an effective and inexpensive way for a brand to extend its reach. Overall, this current trend of public relations professionals would seemingly be reinforced by the findings of the academic community that tout the benefits of engaging the audience. Indeed, the value of establishing dialogue with publics has been researched extensively. Kent and Taylor (1998) examined how a dialogic framework could be applied during the early years of the web and suggested five elements for the effective implementation of dialogic public relations online: (a) information that is valuable to the publics, (b) a dialogic loop that provides appropriate responses to requests and concerns, (c) site features, such as updated information, online question and answer sessions, commentaries, and access to experts, that generate return visits, (d) an easy to use interface, and (e) limited use of links. A 2010 study found that, while some companies have incorporated the principles recommended by Kent and Taylor, there is ample room for improvement. For instance, among Fortune 500 companies, 60 percent responded to users' comments, 30 percent asked questions in an attempt to stimulate discussion, and approximately 26 percent asked follow-up questions

(Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). Blue chip corporations did appear to make some efforts at engaging publics in dialogue, but the numbers seem lower than might be expected from large conglomerates staffed with talented communications personnel. Because social media platforms look to provide an ideal channel to establish dialogue with publics, this is one area where corporate public relations appear to have room for improvement.

Social Media

Ed Moran, Deloitte Services director of product innovation, bluntly stated, “In the marketing and PR functions, social media is one of the best things to come down the pike” (McLaughlin, 2009). Indeed, social media is certainly garnering a lot of attention. As such, the present study will benefit from a better understanding of the two social media platforms serving as the focus of the content analysis—Facebook and Twitter. While both entities can be categorized as social media, there are several points of distinction between them.

Facebook. Turning 10 years old in 2014, Facebook is a senior member of the social media club. It is also the most used social platform. In fact, its use is still intensifying. The percentage of Facebook users visiting sites on a daily basis increased 13 percent—rising from 51 percent in 2010 to 64 percent in 2013 (Smith, 2014). Beyond percentages, the raw number of users is impressive. The Associated Press (2013) reported that as of March 2013, Facebook had approximately 1.1 billion active users. The platform is certainly popular among individuals, but corporations are also participants. A study found that 70 percent of Fortune 500 companies were represented on Facebook (Barnes, Lescault, & Wright, 2013). Coca-Cola, for instance, has over 80 million followers of its page (Facebook, 2014). Indeed, businesses seem to be benefiting

from exposure on the social networking site. One research project targeted purchasing habits at American retailers over the 2011 holiday season and reported “fans of brands on Facebook spent more both online and in-store than the general population—more than twice as much in the case of Amazon and Best Buy” (Krashinsky, 2012). Research has further indicated that 37 percent of consumers cite online social connections, like noticing the mention of a brand on Facebook, as a powerful influence when making decisions (Lecinski, 2011)

In addition to noting the amount users Facebook has and how it can provide business benefits, communication practitioners should certainly consider *why* users engage with the site. Current market research seemingly tends to agree with the academic disciplines emphasizing the importance of two-way symmetrical communication, uses and gratifications, and engagement. For instance, a Pew Research Center Internet Project survey cited the top four reasons people use Facebook as (1) seeing photos or videos, (2) sharing with a lot of people at once, (3) seeing entertaining or funny posts, and (4) learning about ways to help others (Duggan & Smith, 2014). An additional study targeted the Millennial generation—these individuals are estimated to comprise more than half of the total number of Facebook users in the United States. The results suggest that, at least for some audiences, a social exchange approach is applicable. The study found that the younger users wanted updates, information, discounts, and other benefits when engaging on Facebook (McCorkindale, DiStaso, & Fussell-Sisco, 2013). The researchers felt that “utilizing social media not only provides another medium to communicate, but it delivers messages in a format that encourages engagement resulting in relationship development” (McCorkindale et al., 2013, p. 67).

Twitter. The other social media tool to be examined in this study is Twitter. Corporate use of Twitter is similar to that of Facebook. 387 Fortune 500 companies (77 percent) have a Twitter account (Barnes, Lescault, & Wright, 2013). However, research indicates that only 18 percent of online adults use Twitter compared to 71 percent who use Facebook (Pew Research Internet Project, 2013). Whereas Coca-Cola has over 80 million followers on Facebook, its Twitter account has just over 2.3 million likes (Twitter, 2014). And, while Twitter and all other social platforms are trailing Facebook in overall use, one area where Twitter seems to be distinguishing itself is in the delivery of news. The Radio Television Digital News Association chairman, Chris Carl, has touted the usefulness of Twitter for journalists. Carl notes the capability of Twitter to be “a way to find information and sources, a platform to deliver stories and content, a promotional tool and a way to engage audiences” when used correctly (Carl, 2013, n.p.). A content analysis of news articles posted by social media editors indicated that Twitter does appear to have an advantage over other outlets as a tool to deliver breaking news (Wasike, 2013). Perhaps one reason is its speedy adaption to mobile devices. Social media news consumers are more likely to get information from Twitter (54 percent) than Facebook (38 percent) by using a mobile device (Holcomb, Gottfried, & Mitchell, 2013). An essential advantage of Twitter seems to be its ability to deliver parts of an event to a public on the move; its traits are particularly suited to pass along small bits of news as a story unfolds (Mitchell & Guskin, 2013)

Importantly for FSS, the sports genre is a specific category of news where Twitter demonstrates promise to engage audiences. In comparison with nonusers, Twitter users have been shown to be more likely to play fantasy sports, attend sporting events, and

intently follow all of the major American sports leagues (Dick, 2014). An exploratory study by Gibbs and Hayes (2013) suggested that Twitter is the most significant social media tool in sports today. The researchers noted that the media relations staffs of sports teams rely on the speed of Twitter communications. They found, “Media relations staff understand the importance of direct contact with individual fans to meet their expectation of receiving an immediate response” (Gibbs & Haynes, 2013, p. 401). In sum, communicating with fans of sports teams is an area where Twitter seems to excel in comparison with other social media platforms. This can certainly be viewed as an encouraging finding for regional sports networks like FSS.

The literature review of academic texts and market research has thus far revealed several prominent notions of successful communication with publics, such as two-way symmetrical communication, meeting the needs of the audience, and the power of engagement. A pair of potent social media platforms—Facebook and Twitter—has also emerged. The findings have additionally provided several traits that distinguish the two platforms from each other. The present research will now switch to a pragmatic examination of social media practices among communication practitioners with the intent to discover prominent techniques and recommendations.

Best Practices

Avoid assumptions on public opinion. One of the more interesting revelations to come out of the recent rounds of social media studies is the finding that the sentiments expressed in social media can shift rapidly and do not follow the same path as overall public opinion. Viewpoints on firearm regulation expressed following the Newtown school shooting tragedy provide a valid example. An analysis of Twitter conversations

after the incident revealed that 64 percent of those surveyed supported more severe gun controls while 21 percent opposed them, yet a Pew study at the same time showed that 49 percent favored gun control with 42 percent wanting to prioritize the rights of gun owners (Mitchell & Guskin, 2013). This finding illustrates one central notion of social media best practices. It is important to avoid generalizing the overall tone of social media conversations to the entire audience. While it is key for public relations professionals to scan and monitor social media communications, practitioners should realize that the prevailing voices on Facebook and Twitter are not representative of the entire public. And, in fact, they may be a very poor representation of how many stakeholders truly feel. Therefore, it would be a mistake to base corporate communications on the assumption that the overall tone of social media commentary is an accurate proxy for public opinion.

Transparency and Authenticity. In a review of Millennials' social media behavior, one finding was that companies should avoid any temptation to pass off company created material as user generated. Agozzino (2012) noted, "Millennials can detect this issue of authenticity and often feel betrayed and belittled when companies or brands try to blur the social media authenticity lines" (p. 196). This notion of transparency is applicable to more than just the Millennials. The Coca-Cola Company, one of the top followed corporations on Facebook, is a firm advocate of transparency in social media engagement. The business lists five essential company values to be adhered to online. The first core value is transparency. The company requires that all online outlets controlled by Coca-Cola must make that fact known (The Coca-Cola Company, 2009). Coke also requires influencers and bloggers to disclose any associations with the company.

One additional notion that consistently appears when perusing social media texts is a fear that engaging audiences in two-way symmetrical conversations will make the business vulnerable to criticism. Indeed, there is no guarantee that dialogue with the public will only frame a business in a positive light. In his book the *Zero Moment of Truth*, author Dave Lecinski of Google assures professionals that if a brand is really good it should not fear occasional negative comments (Lecinski, 2011). In fact, Lecinski believes openly allowing negative feedback via social media adds authenticity to the platform and reassures other visitors that they are in a truthful environment. Another trait that indicates authenticity is how the corporation responds to posts. Responding publicly to questions from fans and followers is another way organizations can illustrate genuineness to their publics. In his marketing text, Miller (2011) adds that a public reply may answer potential questions from others that have yet to be asked, and it also shows that a company is responsive to the needs of its stakeholders. Actually, many social media practitioners seem to take a similar approach that negative feedback offers an opportunity to strengthen the brand. And, there is data to reinforce this approach. A survey from 2011 found 33 percent of customers who received a response after a negative post actually responded by posting something positive and 34 percent even deleted the original critical post (Cunningham, 2014). Additionally, Drew Hendricks, a contributor to Forbes.com, encourages businesses to refrain from overlooking the opportunity present in a positive post. As Hendricks (2013) notes, responding to a complimentary post with a simple thank you not only shows politeness, but it also sheds light on the fact that the company is attentive to what audience members are saying. Overall, responding to posts,

whether the posts were positive or negative, is viewed as a best practice for social media platforms and makes the brand seem more authentic.

Content. It has been nearly twenty years since Microsoft CEO Bill Gates deemed content as the supreme king of the electronic marketing jungle, but the exhortation rings as true today as it did in 1996 (Schwager, 2011). As uses and gratifications research has shown, there is a variety of content that influences why people use media. Entertainment, humor, connecting with others, and gaining information are often cited as needs that can be met by using social media content (Smith, 2014). Agozzino's (2012) study found that videos were watched by 52 percent of online adults and by 72 percent of Millennials that were online. Additionally, users indicated they also were motivated to get online to receive news updates and learn of ways to help people. The consistency of content is also essential. A study of the 25 most engaging brands on Twitter found that it was more important to consistently post engaging content than to post a large volume of content (Petouhof, 2013). It seems that quality should be valued above quantity. Mike Hollywood, a social media guru for Cone Communications, has stressed that communication practitioners need to provide something of value to consumers. He recommends, "Ask yourself 'Have we enriched our consumers' day with useful information, insights, tools or experiences?'" (Hollywood, n.d.). Indeed, prioritizing content that holds unique value for publics is certainly viewed as an additional social media best practice.

Interaction. Finally, interaction also seems to be a best practice for social media success. One particular study examined Twitter using a dialogic framework. Rybalko & Seltzer (2010) looked at how organizations engaged publics by posing questions or

responding directly to posts of other users. The researchers felt that businesses needed to adopt a dialogic approach on Twitter with the potential to engage and stimulate conversations with publics. They concluded that Twitter should be treated differently than other communications channels. That is, it should not simply distribute the same publicity messages that are already being sent via other platforms. The point seems to be that social media needs to be a unique content outlet rather than simply an additional channel for spewing the same corporate chatter as elsewhere. Tom Fishman, Director of Social Media at MTV Social Networks, believes that creating a narrative is a great way to achieve the engagement objective. In particular, Fishman feels that Toms and Starbucks drive emotion and add meaning to the brand by telling a story. He notes, “It’s really a great strategy to how they add to the brand. They are just coffee and shoes, but we believe they are something more meaningful” (Fidelman, 2013, n.p.). Toms, which operates with the stated intent of making a positive impact on society, is certainly a good example of how interaction with publics can help build a strong brand. Indeed, a company that can provide an authentic narrative on how it helps communities can benefit from social media. And, while the narrative is vital, the fact that Toms is interacting in a manner that benefits society is also important. In his work on social media guidelines, Bowen (2013) notes that encouraging the greater good can build community goodwill and connectedness. This notion blends well with the idea that corporate social responsibility can be aligned with social media outlets to interact with audiences in a manner that meets some of their needs. And, Twitter appears to be a valid platform to instigate community connectedness. Civic Science (2014) reported that Twitter users are more likely than nonusers to donate to community charities centered on the arts, environment, education, or cultural endeavors.

Research

Methods

A content analysis was deemed as an appropriate procedure to fit the exploratory nature of the current study. Academic literature endorses the approach as an apt method to audit social media. Even in the current big data environment, the best available instrument for a content analysis looks to be a person. Specifically, Hemann and Burbary (2013) advocate:

There is not currently any piece of analytics software that can do as good a job as a human at interpreting the data collected into meaningful information in the context of your particular brand, product, or service. (p. 110)

In addition to FSS, social media posts of ESPN Dallas (ESPND) and CSNH were sampled in the evaluation. All three are regional sports entities based in Texas. And, while the two businesses selected do not necessarily provide ideal direct comparisons to FSS, the organizations compete for the attention of sports fans within several of the same major markets. Facebook and Twitter posts were analyzed over a three-week period from February 11, 2014 through March 3, 2014. Categories were developed a priori from the current literature review. In all, content was defined using 13 different units of analysis: date, social media platform, fans/followers, comments/replies, likes/favorites, shares/retweets, return on engagement (ROE), category, subcategory, meta tag, dialogic content, and overall substance of the topic. The first six categories consist of quantitative measures taken directly from the social media sites. ROE (see Figure 1) was calculated for each post by dividing the total amount of fans/followers by the total number of interactive actions (comments/replies, likes/favorites, and shares/retweets). Texts have

noted ROE to be a useful measure for comparisons. Additionally, engagement emerged in the literature review as a key component of two-way communication, and the ROE

Figure 1. Calculating Return on Engagement (ROE)

$$\text{Facebook ROE} = \frac{\text{Comments} + \text{Likes} + \text{Shares}}{\text{Fans}}$$

$$\text{Twitter ROE} = \frac{\text{Replies} + \text{Favorites} + \text{Retweets}}{\text{Followers}}$$

figure serves as a general guide to measure this interfacing. The category, subcategory, and meta tag classifications were created as a means to understand the essence of

the posts and provide some basis for comparison on how audiences interacted with different subject matter. The intent of the dialogic category was to note instances when the organizations made an explicit effort to engage the audience. Examples of dialogic elements included soliciting opinions on a matter or asking the audience to vote in a poll. Finally, the overall substance of each post was noted.

A single individual coded content into Excel spreadsheets for analysis. In order to give sufficient opportunity for audiences to interact with messages, at least 72 hours were allowed to lapse between the time of the social media posting and the coding process. In total, 154 Facebook posts (FSS 56, ESPND 54, CSNH 44) and 242 Tweets (FSS 74, ESPND 84, CSNH 84) were coded. Both ESPND and CSNH are prolific Tweeters. Due to the limitations of this study, only the first four tweets of each day were considered for those organizations. Finally, a subscription to Scoreboard Social was utilized during the same time period as the coding. Scoreboard Social is a social media monitoring business that provided additional data as a general means to reinforce the findings of the human coder.

Findings

Social media use continues to rise. All three organizations saw an increase in the amount of fans on Facebook and the number of followers on Twitter over the three weeks of study. FSS added 676 fans on Facebook (2%). Twitter followers also increased for FSS but at a much smaller rate (.3%). Overall, the organizations followed the same ranking for total social media audience. As of the last day of analysis, ESPN had the largest audience of Facebook fans (115,165) and Twitter followers (51,300). FSS was second (31,728 and 31,900). And, CSNH had the smallest number of followers (6,439 and 28,600).

Examining some of the coding categories individually provides noteworthy details. For instance, it is interesting to see the difference in audience sizes as it relates to the platforms. All three networks are quite different in this category. FSS is very balanced; the network has an almost identical amount of Facebook fans as Twitter followers. However, the size of ESPN's social media audience is over two times greater on Facebook than Twitter. Yet, CSNH is the complete opposite. The Houston network's social following is over three times greater on Twitter than on Facebook. This is a curious finding with no obvious explanation and provides a prime area for further investigation. Additional analysis of the platform category as it relates to ROE shows Facebook with a distinct advantage over Twitter. All three sports outlets consistently generated the highest ROE with content posted on Facebook. When the top 20 scores from each network (see Appendices A, B, and C) are combined from the content analysis, over 90 percent (56/60) of the largest ROE calculations are from Facebook. The Social Scoreboard board data follows a very similar pattern. Because both platforms are used to

convey identical stories, it is also possible to compare how engagement varied between the two. For example, a story posted on Facebook about Jeff Gordon's new Texas A&M themed racecar generated the fifth highest ROE of the study for FSS. When the same subject was broadcast via Twitter by FSS, it resulted in an ROE that ranked 26. Similarly, an FSS post on Facebook about Texas Ranger's shortstop Elvis Andrus becoming more of a team leader returned the seventh highest ROE for the network, while mentioning the same story on Twitter resulted in an ROE ranking of 101. Using the current method of calculating ROE, it is clear from these findings that Facebook is the favored tool for social engagement. One can speculate that, possibly, the overall high number of Tweets compared to the lower number of total Facebook posts has lessened the impact of Twitter content and created some sort of overall message decay. Or, perhaps Twitter caters more to consumers using mobile devices on the go that do not take time to engage in two-way dialogues. Regardless, further narrowing in on FSS's content reinforces the dominant engagement trait of Facebook. In total, seven of the top ten social media engagement scores for original FSS content were from Facebook. This trend held for the majority of the FSS data analyzed. Of the top 40 ROE results, 34 were from Facebook posts and only six were from tweets. This finding looks somewhat counterintuitive as research highlighted Twitter as a preferred social media tool for sports fans. It would seem that preference might translate into higher engagement scores for Twitter than Facebook, but the analysis of FSS ROE scores does not support that notion. This could be an area of untapped potential. It is quite possible that FSS can discover new ways to interact with its Twitter audience. Perhaps including unique bits of

information with otherwise plain Tweets will engage the audience. Passing along breaking sports news would also seem like a good way for FSS to utilize Twitter.

It can also be useful to analyze the findings for how each social media post was classified. Using the category as a unit of analysis looks to connect both ESPND and CSNH with specific sports, while FSS seems much more balanced in the types of subject matter that engages its audience. Again using ROE to rank the results, ESPND recorded 16 of its top 20 scores with topics centered on the National Football League (NFL). The other four scores consisted of three postings on MLB and one on the NBA. Of CSNH's 20 highest ROE results, 18 focused on the NBA and two on MLB. So, when the top 20 posts each from ESPND and CSNH are compiled, only three different categories are represented (NFL, NBA, MLB) among the 40 results. By contrast, the top 20 ROE scores for FSS span eight different categories: MLB (8), NFL (3), NCAA (3), NBA (2), NHL (1), Olympics (1), UIL (1), and other football (1). This appears to be an encouraging finding for the network. It looks like its audience is more diverse and, as such, perhaps offers a greater opportunity for extended reach. There also appears to be a larger variety of topics for FSS to select as a way to engage its audience. Further analyzing content by subcategory brings to light those sports teams which audiences seem to favor the most. Again, both of the competitors had clear leaders in this area among their top 20 ROE scores. ESPND's leading posts were dominated by substance relating to the Dallas Cowboys (15/20) while CSNH's highest ROE came from subject matter dealing with the Houston Rockets (18/20). The best ROE numbers for FSS were more varied. Their leading subcategory in the top 20 was the Texas Rangers (7/20). Similar to analyzing the category, examining the subcategory findings shows the FSS

audience has a more diverse range of engagement. Yet, perhaps, it also shows a couple of areas where FSS can improve—engaging fans of the Cowboys and Rockets. Indeed, one of the major broadcast partners of the NFL is Fox Sports. Perhaps, FSS can use its affiliation with Fox to obtain unique and interesting information about the Cowboys that can be used to engage its social media audience.

In general, from studying the coding results of the dialogic category, the interactive approach to engaging a social media audience appears validated. The technique of asking a question or requesting a response from the audience did seem to result in increased interaction. While only a little over 5 percent of the social media messages analyzed for FSS were coded as being dialogic in nature (7/130), interactive messages did comprise 20 percent of the top 20 posts (4/20). So, even though FSS does not seem to prioritize engagement, it does generally get results when the approach is used. Overall, it looks as if FSS practices dialogic techniques less than the other two organizations in the study. Both ESPND and CSNH consistently use an interactive approach successfully. The dialogic category accounted for a majority of the top posts for ESPND (13/20) and CSNH (12/20). The competition scored high engagement marks by asking people to leave their favorite memories of retiring athletes, vote in a poll, and caption photos. Specifically, for the final week of study, the top three Facebook posts by ESPND were audience polls: (1) Do you want to see



Demarcus Ware stay with the Cowboys? (2) Will Romo win a championship in Dallas? and (3) Will the Cowboys win another Super Bowl under Jerry Jones? (Scoreboard Social, 2014). The top post for CSNH during the same week of the study was a photo of a Houston Rockets player with text urging audience members to submit a caption for the picture (see Figure 2).

Additionally, isolating ROE as the unit of analysis reveals that CSNH seems to provide the most consistent level of engagement with an audience. All of CSNH's top 20 ROE scores were 1.28 or greater. By contrast, FSS had just 4 scores above that threshold, while ESPND achieved 5 results better than a 1.28 ROE. As such, modeling some of the interactive techniques used by CSNH could potentially improve audience engagement for FSS.

Its association with professional athletes is one area that FSS seems to be leveraging effectively to engage the audience. The top social media post over the three-week study was a retweet on February 20 of a photo of Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson wearing a Texas Rangers jersey (see Figure 3). Wilson had won the Super Bowl a few weeks earlier, but he had also been drafted by the Rangers to



play professional baseball. His tweet that he would be attending spring training activities in Surprise, Arizona with the Rangers was retweeted by FSS and seemed to excite

followers. This looks to reinforce the notion that aligning an organization with influencers is a good avenue to extend overall reach.

One of FSS' top Facebook posts was a picture of Ranger's outfielder Alex Rios along with text urging fans to *Like* the photo as a means to wish Rios a happy birthday (see Figure 4). According to the coding analysis, as well as the Scoreboard Social weekly report, this message was one of the most engaging original posts of the study.



This fact
reinforces several
notions from the

literature review. For instance, social media fans do appear to enjoy photos and other media and like to learn unique information. It seems doubtful any traditional media sources published anything dealing with the birthday of a single Rangers team member. Also, content is indeed important. As noted, FSS fans and followers appear to react strongly to subject matter that is centered on the Texas Rangers—three of the top four ROE scores were from Facebook posts coded with Rangers as the subcategory. And, as noted, the bit of information on one player's birthday was, perhaps, content distinct to social media. This reinforces the notion that social media outlets can be used to meet the needs of individuals to receive unique and timely information.

Insights are also available by analyzing what was absent from the content audit. First, no direct contact information was listed for FSS on either their Facebook or Twitter page. It seems to be a public relations best practice to provide a direct method of contact (phone number or email address) for publics to reach an organization directly in case they prefer not to communicate via social media. Providing this information simply allows

another channel to initiate two-way communication with members of the public. Neither of the two competitors listed a direct contact either, but ESPND did provide the physical address of their office and a generic email address. Also, FSS failed to include any sort of legal disclaimer in their social media company overviews stating that any content posted could be used in one of the network's broadcasts. This seems like a sensible addition to each of the social media platforms to protect the company from litigation as well as providing a bit of transparency. Plus, integrating communications from the Facebook and Twitter crowds in some of the on-air programs has the potential to both enhance the programming and further engage the social media audience.

Moreover, there was little specific enticement offered to publics to use the social media platforms of FSS. Only two messages involved a promotion with prizes. As the Baylor example from earlier illustrates, it seems like offering an incentive as part of a marketing promotion would be a good approach for FSS, yet this tactic was largely missing during the three weeks analyzed. Offering FSS branded items as rewards for participating in social media seems like a good way to create a more loyal following and also attract a greater number of fans—all while spreading brand awareness. Likewise, giving away sponsors products could strengthen loyalty and increase the number of individuals following the social platforms while also benefiting advertisers.

Additionally, it seems like FSS could involve some of the personalities that are involved with the network's programming. Yet, there was no content related to individuals who serve as hosts and reporters on the programs comprising the majority of the on-air content. Certainly, these individuals are well-known among sports fans. They also have rare access to prominent athletes and a unique perspective on major

professional sports teams. Intuitively, it seems that audiences would find the involvement of such individuals in social media platforms a welcome addition.

Lastly, there was no attempt at using social media to generate goodwill or promote the overall well-being of the community. Certainly FSS is involved on some level with corporate social initiatives that benefit society. Promoting these causes via social media seems like it would be a good practice for strengthening the brand and developing long-term relationships with publics. These two areas, utilizing a social exchange approach that benefits the audience and building community goodwill, are two areas where FSS may be under utilizing its social media platforms.

Discussion

The importance of social media as a significant element in corporate messaging seems apparent. Two-way symmetrical communication via social media can be a dynamic and intricate process and is best handled by skilled public relations professionals. As the content audit suggests, when operated appropriately, social media platforms are indeed capable of engaging an audience. Yet, there is still ample room for improvement. Specifically, it seems that the social tools are being under utilized to build long-term relationships with publics.

Strategically highlighting the positive role a network plays in the community and enabling audience members to join the organization in contributing to the greater good seems like a good first step. Additionally, as the uses and gratifications research notes, new technology creates new needs for consumers. For social media technology this would seem to include providing timely and exclusive information as well as opportunities for the audience to gain something of value. Much of the way sports

networks appear to use social media platforms falls into Grunig's public information type. Certainly they pass along useful information to fans about when games are airing and which teams are playing. Yet, the networks seem situated in prime position to provide unique and timely content on sports teams and their stars. The lower ROE scores for FSS on Twitter may suggest that this is indeed an area that can be strengthened.

In addition to valuable content, networks can also use social media better as a means to provide something of physical value to their audiences. Promotions giving away sports merchandise or event tickets for instance could fit nicely into a social exchange framework as a way to increase audience loyalty. Additionally, such activities could be initiated in a manner that generates awareness of other stakeholders, such as sports teams and sponsors. Overall, the findings seem to agree with other studies that have found businesses somewhat lacking in the use of two-way symmetrical communication on social media platforms.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. Foremost, the time period used for analysis was likely not optimal for a social media audit of sports organizations. Of the four major US sports leagues, only the NBA was consistently engaged in competition. During the time of year studied, both the NFL and MLB were idle. Additionally, although the NHL season was taking place for much of the audit, it was interrupted by a scheduled break in play to allow players to participate in the Olympics. Also, providing a single content category for coding did little to determine which type an audience prefers, because the category was far from exclusive. That is, social media posts routinely included multiple content types (text, photo, video, and links) in a single message. Finally, using the day of

the year (1 of 365) as a category was likely of less practical use than coding according to the day of the week (1 of 7). There are some who believe social media posts should target specific times on certain days of the week for peak effectiveness (Solis, 2009). Recording the day of the week content was created would have provided a better opportunity to link audience engagement with specific days of the week.

Still, the study does provide a good benchmark to measure the progress of FSS in future studies, and it delivers a nice snapshot of the Facebook and Twitter accounts of FSS and its competitors over a period of three weeks. Additionally, denoting how the social audience reacts to a variety of content can help FSS become more strategic in its use of social media.

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Appendix A
 Fox Sports Southwest Social Media Audit
 February 11, 2014 - March 3, 2014
 ROE Top 20

PLATFORM	FANS/ FOLLOWERS	CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	DIALOGIC	COMMENTS /REPLIES	LIKES/ FAVORITE	SHARES/ RETWEET	ROE	SUBSTANCE
TWITTER	31,800	MLB	RANGERS	NO	35	6222	8172	45.37%	RT RUSSELL WILSON WILL BE AT RANGERS SPRING TRAINING
TWITTER	31,800	OLYMPICS	USA	NO	11	5416	7982	42.17%	USA/CANADA LOSER KEEPS BEIBER
FACEBOOK	31,152	MLB	RANGERS	NO	30	992	69	3.50%	RUSSELL WILSON TO ATTEND RANGERS SPRING TRAINING
FACEBOOK	31,052	MLB	RANGERS	YES	28	877	47	3.07%	LIKE PHOTO TO WISH ALEX RIOS HAPPY BDAY
FACEBOOK	31,728	NCAA	SEC	NO	31	159	187	1.19%	JEFF GORDON TAMU ENGINEERING NASCAR
FACEBOOK	31,152	MLB	RANGERS	NO	7	279	19	0.98%	ANDRUS EMBRACING VETERAN ROLE
TWITTER	31,800	MLB	RANGERS	NO	2	148	138	0.91%	DARVISH RT. JUST JOKING.
FACEBOOK	31,336	NFL	COWBOYS	NO	150	107	24	0.90%	JONES THINKS COWBOYS CAN COMPETE FOR SUPER BOWL
FACEBOOK	31,152	NCAA	SEC	NO	33	187	22	0.78%	TAMU WILL HAVE LARGEST VIDEO BOARD IN NCAA
FACEBOOK	31,728	NBA	MAVS	YES	6	203	1	0.66%	LIKE PHOTO TO WISH DEVIN HARRIS HAPPY BDAY
FACEBOOK	31,052	FOOTBALL		NO	19	133	12	0.53%	FEMALE PLAYER IN PRO FOOTBALL TAKES HIT
FACEBOOK	31,336	NCAA	INDEPENDENCE BOWL	NO	11	138	13	0.52%	DUCK DYNASTY TO SPONSOR INDEPENDENCE BOWL
FACEBOOK	31,336	NFL	COWBOYS	NO	40	96	6	0.45%	STEPHEN JONES SAYS MANZIEL IS WHOLE PACKAGE
FACEBOOK	31,052	MLB	RANGERS	NO	10	115	3	0.41%	DARVISH THINKS TANAKA WAS OVERPAID
FACEBOOK	31,728	NHL	STARS	YES	5	114	1	0.38%	CLICK TO WISH ROBIDAS HAPPY BIRTHDAY
FACEBOOK	31,152	MLB	RANGERS	NO	16	99	1	0.37%	ARENCIBIA TO WEAR PUDGE OLD NUMBER
FACEBOOK	31,152	MLB	MAVS	NO	30	70	3	0.33%	CUBAN DOESN'T THINK HE COULD AFFORD COWBOYS
FACEBOOK	31,052	NBA	MAVS	NO	6	88	2	0.31%	MAVS HOST HEAT
FACEBOOK	31,728	NFL	ROMO	YES	17	76	1	0.30%	COULD MANZIEL BE MORE POLARIZING THAN ROMO?
FACEBOOK	31,728	UIL	ALLEN	NO	29	49	15	0.29%	BIG PROBLEM FOR ALLEN STADIUM

Appendix B
 ESPN Dallas Social Media Audit
 February 11, 2014 - March 3, 2014
 ROE Top 20

PLATFORM	FANS/ FOLLOWERS	CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	DIALOGIC	COMMENTS /REPLIES	LIKES/ FAVORITE	SHARES/ RETWEET	ROE	SUBSTANCE
FACEBOOK	114,945	NFL	COWBOYS	NO	773	1625	53	2.13%	COWBOYS WITH TOSS FOR 16TH PICK
FACEBOOK	114,945	NFL	COWBOYS	YES	114	1801	20	1.68%	GOOD ADVICE? LEBRON-ROMO SHOULD TUNE OUT CRITICS
FACEBOOK	114,978	NFL	DRAFT	YES	451	1279	25	1.53%	WOULD MANZIEL BE GOOD FIT FOR COWBOYS?
FACEBOOK	115,163	NFL	COWBOYS	YES	714	963	20	1.47%	DO YOU BELIEVE JONES THAT COWBOYS CAN COMPETE FOR CHAMPIONSHIP?
FACEBOOK	114,978	NFL	COWBOYS	YES	1031	574	20	1.41%	ARE YOU OK WITH COWBOYS CUTTING WARE?
FACEBOOK	114,945	NFL	COWBOYS	NO	135	1294	24	1.26%	ROMO DUE BACK FROM OFFSEASON SURGERY
FACEBOOK	114,945	MLB	RANGERS	YES	101	1255	44	1.22%	WHAT ROLE SHOULD RUSSELL WILSON HAVE FOR RANGERS?
FACEBOOK	114,945	NFL	COWBOYS	YES	688	633	15	1.16%	PAY OR RELEASE DEMARCUS WARE?
FACEBOOK	114,978	NFL	COWBOYS	YES	717	551	12	1.11%	SHOULD GARRETT GET A NEW DEAL?
FACEBOOK	114,945	NFL	COWBOYS	YES	302	769	3	0.93%	WHO SHOULD COWBOYS RESIGN FIRST? BYANT OR SMITH?
FACEBOOK	115,163	NFL	COWBOYS	NO	170	559	2	0.63%	STRONG DRAFT CAN SAVE GARRETT
FACEBOOK	114,945	NFL	COWBOYS	YES	155	509	2	0.58%	SHOULD COWBOYS RESIGN BRIAN WATERS?
FACEBOOK	114,945	NBA	MAVS	YES	50	536	1	0.51%	WAS MAVS WIN OVER PACERS BIGGEST OF SEASON?
FACEBOOK	114,945	NFL	COWBOYS	YES	171	405	4	0.50%	SHOULD COWBOYS EXTENT TYSON SMITH/DEZ BRYANT?
FACEBOOK	114,945	MLB	RANGERS	YES	77	421	3	0.44%	HOW MANY HOMERS WILL FIELDER HIT?
FACEBOOK	114,945	MLB	RANGERS	NO	19	420	2	0.38%	RANGER INJURY REPORT
TWITTER	51,000	NFL	COWBOYS	NO	0	52	119	0.34%	COWBOYS SCHEDULE MANZIEL INTERVIEW
FACEBOOK	115,163	NFL	COWBOYS	YES	141	229	3	0.32%	VALID POINT THAT SYSTEM WON'T ALLOW OVERHAUL?
FACEBOOK	114,945	NFL	COWBOYS	NO	57	296	2	0.31%	GARRETT COULD LEARN FROM LARRY BROWN
FACEBOOK	114,945	NFL	COWBOYS	NO	39	292	3	0.29%	COWBOYS TO PAY ATTENTION TO SCRUGGS CONTRACT

Appendix C
Comcast Sports Net Houston Social Media Audit
February 11, 2014 - March 3, 2014
ROE Top 20

PLATFORM	FANS/ FOLLOWERS	CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	DIALOGIC	COMMENTS /REPLIES	LIKES/ FAVORITE	SHARES/ RETWEET	ROE	SUBSTANCE
FACEBOOK	6,079	MLB	ASTROS	YES	20	267	16	4.98%	DO YOU LIKE BERKMAN/OSWALT RETIRING AS ASTROS?
FACEBOOK	6,079	NBA	ROCKETS	YES	4	248	4	4.21%	CLICK LIKE FOR JAMES HARDEN GAME WINNING SHOT
FACEBOOK	6,079	NBA	ROCKETS	YES	33	186	3	3.65%	CAPTION HOWARD/HARDEN PHOTO
FACEBOOK	6,079	NBA	ROCKETS	NO	6	161	2	2.78%	ROCKETS CAN SNEAK INTO 4TH BEFORE ALL-STAR BREAK
FACEBOOK	6,439	NBA	ROCKETS	YES	44	133	1	2.76%	CAPTION HARDEN PHOTO
FACEBOOK	6,439	NBA	ROCKETS	YES	2	167	2	2.66%	CLICK LIKE FOR HOWARD/JONES ALLEY OOP
FACEBOOK	6,079	NBA	ROCKETS	YES	3	141	14	2.60%	HARDEN AN ALL-STAR. CLICK LIKE FOR THE BEARD.
FACEBOOK	6,089	NBA	ROCKETS	NO	2	155	0	2.58%	HOWARD DOMINATES LAKERS
FACEBOOK	6,439	NBA	ROCKETS	YES	2	150	1	2.38%	CLICK LIKE FOR HARDEN CONF. PLAYER OF WEEK
FACEBOOK	6,089	NBA	ROCKETS	YES	9	111	2	2.00%	PREDICTIONS FOR ROCKETS/LAKERS?
FACEBOOK	6,079	NBA	ROCKETS	NO	1	113	2	1.91%	WATCH DWIGHT HOWARDS DUNK
FACEBOOK	6,089	NBA	ROCKETS	NO	1	114	1	1.91%	HOWARD HAS MONSTER FIRST HALF VS LAKERS
FACEBOOK	6,089	NBA	ROCKETS	NO	5	109	0	1.87%	HOWARD STARTS HOT VS LAKERS
FACEBOOK	6,079	NBA	ROCKETS	NO	4	92	2	1.61%	ROCKETS BEAT WIZARDS
FACEBOOK	6,079	NBA	ROCKETS	YES	1	90	1	1.51%	CLICK LIKE FOR COVINGTON--D-LEAGUE ALL-STAR MVP
FACEBOOK	6,079	MLB	ASTROS	YES	7	78	2	1.43%	OSWALT RETIRES. CLICK LIKE AND LEAVE MEMORIES
FACEBOOK	6,181	NBA	ROCKETS	NO	3	83	0	1.39%	ROCKETS FINISH STRONG AGAINST SUNS
FACEBOOK	6,079	NBA	ROCKETS	NO	2	79	1	1.35%	ROCKETS LOOK TO KEEP WINNING STREAK ALIVE
FACEBOOK	6,089	NBA	ROCKETS	YES	33	45	1	1.30%	SHOULD ROCKETS HAVE TRADED AARON BROOKS?
FACEBOOK	6,089	NBA	ROCKETS	YES	3	73	2	1.28%	CLICK LIKE TO WELCOME JORDAN HAMILTON TO ROCKETS