

SOCIAL NETWORKING AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES IN VOIVODSHIP CITIES

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Purpose: The aim of this article is to present the changes in the use and basic advantages of social networks in the communication of public transport companies in voivodship cities.

Design/methodology/approach: The study carried out consisted of analysing the content of the official websites belonging to the selected public transport service companies in order to see how the information on the social networks used (location of plug-ins) is shared, and a review of the active profiles on these sites was carried out to diagnose what content is published. The survey was conducted in October 2023. The results were cross-referenced with the corresponding survey carried out in 2017.

Findings: The survey showed that of the 24 companies analysed from 18 cities, 20 use at least one of the social networks. The most common is Facebook - 19 companies have a profile, followed by YouTube - 9, Instagram - 7 and Twitter 5. 2 companies have profiles on 4 sites at the same time, 4 on 3 sites, 11 have 3 official profiles on different social networks, another 7 companies have 2 each and also 7 have one each. In the case of 4 entities, no profiles were found on social networks. The content, frequency and timeliness of publications on the profiles vary.

Research limitations/implications: Social networks that were less popular at the time of writing (e.g. TikTok - official profiles were identified in 2 cases among the companies surveyed) were not included in the study. The objectives of the communication strategies of the individual entities are not known. This may be part of further research through in-depth interviews with those responsible for promoting the companies. It may also be possible to extend the research to other operators (e.g. inter-municipal, railway, smaller cities, etc.) and among the target audiences of the communication activities in particular services.

Practical implications: On the basis of the author's audit of the communication activities of public transport companies on social networks, this article suggests that the use of social media is an appropriate tactic in the communication of companies (including municipal companies), both in the promotional dimension externally and in communication with citizens - service users, due to the participatory, interactive and open nature of social media.

Originality/value: The publication presents the results of research carried out on the basis of the author's audit of the activity of the public transport companies from the voivodship's cities in the social media.

Keywords: social media, city marketing, public transport, public transport promotion, marketing communication.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

The ICT revolution, which is the genesis of the transformations observed in the last decades and encompassing various aspects of the functioning of modern society, has also had a major impact on their economic sphere. The emergence of a new hypermodal model of communication (many-to-many), associated with digital space, has led to significant modifications in the structure of economic processes, both at the macro (ensuring a previously unavailable level of transparency and globalisation of markets, creation of new exchange environments, virtualisation of some areas of economic life) and micro (streamlining of internal management processes in enterprises) scale. The turbulence of the contemporary environment of economic entities, forces them to undertake diverse and multidirectional actions aimed at ensuring their stable position, among others, by seeking new, more effective, efficient and efficient ways of communicating with the environment (Pacut, 2016).

Modern marketing activities require companies to communicate effectively with their existing and potential stakeholders. In the case of companies providing public transport services, these will mainly be passengers, but may also include other groups such as employees, advertisers, residents who do not use the company's services (activities encouraging people to change to public transport), lovers of old and new trams or buses, etc. One way of conducting an effective dialogue with the public is to use social media. Nowadays, they have a strong influence on socio-economic processes, which is changing the existing communication profile. Thanks to this, a phenomenon called marketing 2.0 is developing, which refers to the transformation of marketing resulting from the influence of the Internet on communication processes. Marketing 2.0 engages the consumer and triggers immediate feedback. As a result, the addressee of the communication is encouraged to interact or even initiate an independent action (Woźniakowski, 2017, p. 315). An extension of the concept of marketing 2.0 is marketing 3.0, which refers to so-called new wave technology that allows individuals and groups to connect and interact. Customers can express themselves and collaborate with others without much restriction. The current social media fits even more into this dimension, as in the concept of marketing 2.0 the interaction with the consumer was more of a one-to-one relationship, with marketing 3.0 it is said to be a collaboration of the many with the many, which actually reflects the evolution of multiple social communication platforms (Kotler, Kartajaga, Setiawan, 2010, pp. 18-19; Piotrowska, 2015, pp. 6-8). Now Ph. Kotler has introduced the concept of marketing 4.0, which is a natural development of marketing 3.0. Its main premise is the adaptation of marketing to the changing habits of customers in the face of the digital economy. In view of the above, one may be tempted to state emphatically that no enterprise, including a municipal enterprise, is able to communicate effectively with its environment without the use of new media, of which social media is a component.

This paper focuses on presenting the results of the author's own research on the ways in which social media are used by municipal enterprises from voivodship cities providing public transport services. Such entities were chosen because of the relatively large number of their customers and the modest representation of social media in the context of their use by municipal enterprises (in relation to typical commercial entities, especially those operating in the B2C market).

2. Social media in marketing communication

One of the first definitions of social media (used acronym SM), created by H. Rheingold (1993), characterises it as a social cluster emerged on the Internet, where individuals engage in sufficiently long public conversations, with enough emotional involvement to create personal relationships with other individuals in cyberspace. According to A.M. Kaplan and M. Haenlein (2010), social media is "a group of online applications, based on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, that allow the creation and exchange of user-sourced content". In turn, D. Kaznowski (2016) defines social media as "social media under social control that can be used on any scale, containing both the content of the message and possible viewpoints relating to the information". Thus, social media can be defined as social networks whose main purpose is to enable interaction between their users (Grębosz, Siuda, Szymański, 2016). Slightly more broadly, they can be defined as information channels that enable interaction between users in terms of exchanging information, knowledge, expressing opinions, comments, etc. (Jędrych 2015). According to the concept of many-to-many communication.

Social media can have a wide range of applications in business, well beyond marketing communications. Table 1 presents a classification of social media by type and outlines the main areas of application. It should be noted that this is one possible classification. However, at the time of writing, it appears to be the most relevant to how social media are used in business practice.

Table 1.

The use of social media in business

Type of social media	Main areas of application	Business objectives	Example
Building and maintaining relationships			
Social networking (social - mass communities)	Public relations, marketing, sales, customer service, csr (corporate social responsibility), research and development	Building image, engaging customers, communicating and obtaining information, building relationships	Facebook
Social (business) network	Human resources management, public relations	Image building, employee recruitment, networking	LinkedIn, GoldenLine

Cont. table 1.

Sharing			
Video service	Public relations, marketing, sales, csr	Image building, offer presentation	YouTube, Vimeo, TikTok
Photo service	Public relations, marketing, sales, csr	Image building, presentation of the company and its offerings	Pinterest, Instagram, Flickr
Keeping informed and commenting			
Microblog	Public relations, marketing, csr	Image building, information, relationship building	X
Publication of content (presentation of resources, opinions, views)			
Blog	Public relations, marketing, csr	Image building, information, relationship building	wordpress.com, blogger, blogspot, blox
Wiki	Information and knowledge management, research and development, public relations	Building a corporate knowledge base	Wikipedia, mfiles
Co-creation and cooperation			
Crowdsourcing service	Research and development, public relations, marketing, csr	Acquisition of knowledge and new ideas, research and development	Kickstarter, wspieram.to
Exchange of place information			
Geolocation service	Public relations, marketing, sales	Building image, improving brand awareness, building relationships	Foursquare
Exchange of opinions			
Discussion forum	Public relations, marketing	Image building, customer engagement, information gathering	forum.gazeta.pl, fora.pl

Source: own research based on: Buchnowska, 2013, p. 57.

3. Study subjects and research methodology

Municipal companies occupy an important position in the process of satisfying the needs of the population by directly performing a significant part of the public tasks imposed by law on local government units. It can be concluded that municipal companies are an institutional instrument for local development policy. The term "municipal company" does not appear in the Polish legal order. It can be regarded as a general term, indicating affiliation and, at the same time, ownership of this economic entity. Its separation into the form of a company with a market character, entails consequences in three areas: economic, political and technical. In economic functioning, such an entity is a separate legal entity and is characterised by a high degree of decision-making autonomy. It has a legal personality, has its assets separated from local government property, and acts freely in economic transactions and is liable for this. Thus, a municipal company should be understood as a management entity whose resources (assets) are fully or predominantly public property of the local government unit within which it was established. The criterion for the separation of a municipal company is essentially of

an ownership nature. It can be said that a municipal company is an enterprise providing a variety of public services (Dolewka, 2017).

Municipal companies are intended to play a servant role towards local communities, as they operate in the so-called sensitive sectors (directly providing services to residents), i.e. providing heat and water, collecting sewage, transporting public transport, etc., i.e. they carry out local government tasks of a public utility nature (Dolewka, 2017). Typical features of the public utility sphere are: meeting the daily, common needs of the users of public life; lack of storage, larger-scale production and, consequently, the need to operate continuously; the predominantly monopolistic nature of the activity; the need to have significant reserves of production capacity, which leads to a large share of fixed costs in the overall production costs; the need for significant integration of public bodies to manage activities in the public utility sphere due to the high capital intensity, social nature of the needs met and monopolistic nature of the activity (Sadowy, 2000).

All entities matching the above considerations for municipal enterprises providing public transport services from all voivodship cities were selected for the study. In the case of two voivodeships (Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Lubuskie), enterprises from two cities were taken into account due to the administrative division in force related to the location of the seat of the voivode and the regional parliament. In total, 24 entities providing public transport services were taken into account, as in 4 cities (Warsaw, Szczecin, Białystok, Katowice) there are 2 or 3 municipal companies providing the services of interest in this paper.

The study was carried out in October 2017 and repeated in October 2023. The research methodology adopted was to analyse the content of websites and social media profiles belonging to municipal companies from voivodship cities providing public transport services. The research was conducted in 3 stages. In the first, the websites of the above-mentioned entities were checked to see which social media were directly redirected on them (e.g. in the form of social plugins, classic hyperlinks, etc.).

In the second stage, in the absence of a direct reference to a profile on the currently most popular social networking site - Facebook - in the structure of the company's website, they were searched for through the site's internal browser by entering a relevant phrase, e.g. MPK Rzeszów, Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo Komunikacyjne Rzeszów, etc.

In the third stage, the social media profiles identified in the previous two steps were analysed for content. It was checked whether the profiles were updated on a regular basis, how frequent the publications were, and what the tone of the communication was (e.g. passenger information, press releases, education, offer for advertisers, etc.).

Of the 24 entities identified (and the same number of websites), more than half have at least one social media plug-in in the structure of their own website. The most common is Facebook - 17 (2 additional profiles were identified after using the Facebook browser). Next in terms of popularity are YouTube (9 plugins), Instagram (7) and X (6). Within websites, one plugin was identified for TikTok (MZK Bydgoszcz). The detailed distribution of social

plugins for social media profiles posted on company websites is shown in Table 2. It is noticeable that the number of profiles on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube has increased. There was no change in the number of accounts on X (formerly Twitter), which may be related to the turmoil surrounding the service following its acquisition by E. Musk.

The analysis carried out showed that the companies most actively using social media are MPK Kraków, Gdańskie Autobusy i Tramwaje (they have profiles on 4 sites). In 3 cases, there is no link to a social media profile on company websites, which represents a significant decrease compared to 2017 - at that time there were 12 companies.

Table 2.

Communication about owned social media profiles on websites by municipal companies from voivodship cities providing public transport services (1 = social plugin exists on website; (1) profile found in search engine; 0 = no link to social profile)

No.	City	Website	Social media plug-ins on company websites							
			Facebook		Instagram		Twitter/X		YouTube	
			2017	2023	2017	2023	2017	2023	2017	2023
1	Wrocław	mpk.wroc.pl	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
2	Bydgoszcz	mzk.bydgoszcz.pl	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
3	Toruń	mzk-torun.pl	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
4	Lublin	mpk.lublin.pl	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Gorzów Wlkp.	mzk-gorzow.com.pl	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
6	Zielona Góra	mzk.zgora.pl	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
7	Łódź	mpk.lodz.pl	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
8	Kraków	mpk.krakow.pl	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
9	Warszawa	metro.waw.pl	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
		mza.waw.pl	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
		tw.waw.pl	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
10	Opole	mzkopole.pl	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
11	Rzeszów	mpk.rzeszow.pl	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Białystok	kpk.m.pl	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		kpk.bialystok.pl	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
13	Gdańsk	gait.pl	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
14	Katowice	pkm.katowice.pl	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		tram-silesia.pl	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	Kielce	mpk.kielce.pl	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	Olsztyn	mpkolsztyn.pl	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Poznań	mpk.poznan.pl	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
18	Szczecin	ts.szczecin.pl	0	(1)	0	0	0	0	0	0
		spak.pl	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		spad.szczecin.pl	0	(1)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		24	12	17(19)	2	7	6	5	5	9

Source: own research.

Table 3.

Facebook profiles of public transport companies (rounded figures)

No.	City	Website	Number of likes		Number of followers		Content current 2023
			2017	2023	2017	2023	
1	Wrocław	mpk.wroc.pl	19900	55000	20200	62000	Tak
2	Bydgoszcz	mzk.bydgoszcz.pl	-	1000	-	1000	Tak
3	Toruń	mzk-torun.pl	4400	8000	4300	9000	Tak
4	Gorzów Wlkp.	mzk-gorzow.com.pl	1100	no data	1100	3000	Tak
5	Zielona Góra	mzk.zgora.pl	3800	no data	3800	6000	Tak
6	Łódź	mpk.lodz.pl	14300	25000	14200	27000	Tak

Cont. table 3.

7	Kraków	mpk.krakow.pl	53300	90000	53000	95000	Tak
8	Warszawa	metro.waw.pl	9500	30000	9600	34000	Tak
		mza.waw.pl	27000	39000	27800	47000	Tak
		tw.waw.pl	4700	24000	4800	28000	Tak
9	Opole	mzkopole.pl	-	1000	-	2000	Tak
10	Gdańsk	gait.pl	3500	9000	3600	12000	Tak
11	Katowice	pkm.katowice.pl	1000	1000	1000	1000	Tak
		tram-silesia.pl	-	4000	-	4000	Nie
12	Kielce	mpk.kielce.pl	-	4000	-	4000	Tak
13	Olsztyn	mpkolsztyn.pl	730	2000	730	2000	Nie
14	Poznań	mpk.poznan.pl	33000	42000	32500	45000	Tak
15	Szczecin	ts.szczecin.pl	500	5000	500	6000	Tak
		spad.szczecin.pl	600	1000	600	1000	Nie

Source: own research.

Table 4.*Companies providing public transport services on X (formerly Twitter)*

No.	City	Website	Number of posts		Number of followers		Content current 2023
			2017	2023	2017	2023	
1	Wrocław	mpk.wroc.pl	6470	14800	3633	9349	Tak
2	Gorzów Wlkp.	mzk-gorzow.com.pl	654	811	137	292	Nie
3	Kraków	mpk.krakow.pl	4396	9597	4949	12600	Tak
4	Warszawa	mza.waw.pl	155	242	692	1877	Nie
5	Gdańsk	gait.pl	-	6537	-	3327	Tak

Source: own research.

Table 5.*Public transport companies on YouTube*

No.	City	Number of subscriptions		Number of views of the most popular video		Number of films 2023	Content current 2023
		2017	2023	2017	2023		
1	Wrocław	-	702	-	30000	89	Nie
2	Toruń	-	237	-	9100	81	Tak
3	Zielona Góra	-	18	-	640	14	Nie
4	Łódź	587	1630	20800	57000	257	Tak
5	Kraków	322	35600	81700	2500000	103	Tak
6	Warszawa	43	3150	3600	70000	81	Tak
		10	5300	940	1300000	137	Tak
7	Białystok	-	14	-	700	2	Nie
8	Gdańsk	-	223	-	614000	24	Nie
9	Poznań	366	1090	29500	33000	105	Tak

Source: own research.

Table 6.*Public transport companies on Instagram*

No.	City	Website	Number of posts		Number of followers		Content current 2023
			2017	2023	2017	2023	
1	Bydgoszcz	mzk.bydgoszcz.pl	-	18	-	145	Tak
2	Kraków	mpk.krakow.pl	295	812	3280	8248	Tak
3	Warszawa	metro.waw.pl	-	58	-	3160	Tak
		mza.waw.pl	-	117	-	2719	Tak

Cont. table 6.

4	Opole	mzkopole.pl	-	496	-	534	Tak
5	Gdańsk	gait.pl	-	2526	-	6045	Tak
6	Poznań	mpk.poznan.pl	-	340	-	1927	Tak

Source: own research.

Table 3 presents the total number of likes and followers on all identified Facebook profiles. Looking at the numbers, it is clear that the size of the city does not translate into the number of fans in a given community. In order of importance, carriers from Kraków, Wrocław and Warsaw (MZA) have the highest number of followers. The Facebook profiles identified in the study are generally kept up to date. Of the 19 profiles, 3 have remained without new publications for at least 6 months. In the case of 2, posts are added infrequently, i.e. approximately 1/week (MZK Gorzów Wielkopolski; PKM Katowice). In the case of Silesian Trams, the link to Facebook was found on the new website (tramwajeslaskie.pl), while at the same time the old website (tam-silesia.pl) is active. Content is mainly presented to introduce the company to passengers (presentation of rolling stock, depot operation, etc.) and to promote collective public transport (new infrastructure investments, new rolling stock, etc.). Passengers are also informed through profiles on this site about temporary traffic disruptions, or traffic disruptions related to longer-term maintenance works.

Five of the companies surveyed have their own profile on site X. Due to the characteristics of the service itself, the posts are dominated by information about traffic disruptions. MPK Wrocław has the highest number of publications on this site, while the Kraków-based operator has the highest number of profile followers (detailed list is presented in Table 4). 2 profiles are out of date - MZA Warsaw since January 2023, and MZK Gorzów Wielkopolski since 2021.

Nine of the surveyed entities have their own channels on YouTube, but in three cases there are between 2 and 24 videos, and in four cases no new releases have been added for at least a year. In the case of presence on YouTube, the number of regular subscribers to a channel is less important, and the reach of the videos, measured among other things by the total number of views of the message, is the most important. Table 5 presents the total number of subscribers to each channel and the number of views of the most popular video. The MPK Kraków channel has the highest number of subscribers, the most popular video was posted on the same channel (a video from 2014 showing a simulation of a cyclist being hit by a tram).

The published films cover a variety of topics: presentation of vehicles, infrastructure (e.g. showing the work of a tram depot), educational (e.g. how to buy a ticket from a ticket machine or via the Internet, promotion of culture among passengers), promotional (e.g. presentation of tourist lines served by vintage vehicles). However, the most popular films are those that depict various situations from the roads, recorded with cameras installed in public transport vehicles. It can be concluded that they are educational, are often published as a "warning" and present various dangerous situations encountered by drivers and motorists on a daily basis, such as irresponsible behaviour of other road users (e.g. sudden encroachment on

the road by a pedestrian, blocking of the road by another vehicle, etc.). A second group of equally popular films are those showing the behaviour of a heavy vehicle - bus or tram - in an extreme situation, e.g. simulating the emergency braking of a tram in order to make other road users aware of the distance needed for the tram to come to a complete stop compared with the braking distance of a passenger car.

In the last social network analysed, Instagram, 7 profiles were identified. GAIT has the most posts published, while MPK Kraków has the most observers. The published photos and graphics are in keeping with the nature of the service and are usually pictures of vehicles in different parts of the city, against the background of characteristic places. With some posts, the companies try to involve participants, encourage interaction (which is one of the essential functional features of modern social media), e.g. through riddles, such as the photo published by MPK Kraków showing a fragment of a Solaris bus with a sticker with the image of the company mascot of the bus manufacturer with the question "Do you know how many 4th generation Solaris buses we currently own?". The responses that appeared indicated the number of vehicles and additional information that this number will change as the delivery of more modern buses is expected soon.

4. Summary

The study showed that municipal companies providing public transport services do not use the potential of social media to communicate with different stakeholder groups, mainly passengers. From a marketing communication point of view, their social media profiles can be communicated via their own website through dedicated plugins. The use of social media by companies is beneficial due to the following aspects (Podlaski, 2011, pp. 24-31; Woźniakowski, 2016, pp. 22-23):

- One's own website is promoted and the effectiveness of positioning is increased, making it easier for the recipient (e.g. a passenger) to find the desired content by typing the relevant keywords into a search engine;
- Users of social networks accept the presence of particular companies or brands on them. Internet users interested in a particular brand count on, among other things, dedicated competitions, promotions, offers, etc., and look for, as in other corners of the web, curiosities, various information concerning the liked brands;
- The content presented is relatively unintrusive. Once a company has created a profile, users decide for themselves whether they want to join the fan base and thus follow the published content;

- A presence in social media strengthens the image in the long term, as well as credibility and trust, provided that there is continuous contact with users and that even difficult (from the company's point of view) topics (e.g. frequent delays, rolling stock breakdowns, etc.) are not avoided;
- The company receives immediate feedback from users on the activities carried out on individual profiles;
- Active use of social media gives wide access to audiences and, through a variety of activities, it is possible to achieve a variety of marketing communication objectives aimed at predefined audiences.

The possibilities for the use of social media in different areas of the operation of a municipal public transport service company are shown in Table 7.

Table 7.

Opportunities for public transport service companies to use social media

Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased passenger loyalty through engagement in continuous dialogue • Creation of an internal community to define marketing objectives and ensure continuity of activities • Implementation of marketing communication campaigns (complementing traditional marketing) • Protecting brand reputation through active monitoring in SM and influencing them
Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating potential and attracting new customers • Increase sales through easier access to product reviews from existing customers (e.g. promotion of season tickets, etc.)
Customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing acquisition costs and improving passenger loyalty by answering frequently asked questions quickly on social media • Posting of instructions and videos giving passengers the opportunity to solve specific problems themselves (e.g. how to read new timetables at bus stops)
Human resources management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment - identification of external candidates (e.g. drivers, bus mechanics, etc.) • Training and coaching of employees using videos and podcasts (e.g. how to behave when accosted by a vulgar passenger, etc.) • Development of a community of former employees (alumni) • Employee satisfaction survey
Innovation; research and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging passengers to share suggestions and ideas for network development • Involving staff in the innovation process through the use of internal collaboration tools
CSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating existing values, ongoing programmes or csr projects • Encouraging stakeholders to share their opinions in order to get an immediate response to the content sent out • Strengthen brand image through a permanently maintained csr channel in SM and mitigate the long-term impact of any crisis situation (e.g. press release about the arrest of an intoxicated bus driver of a particular operator, etc.)

Source: own research based on: Martyniuk, Jar, Suszek, 2016, pp. 24-25.

Subscribers on all social media profiles will certainly be interested in information about promotions (e.g. a lower price for season tickets when purchasing an entire year in advance), limited offers (e.g. tickets for collectors, etc.). However, it is important to keep the right proportions. If only product information is published, the profile will become a kind of advertising post that most people will ignore. The 70-20-10 rule can be applied here, according to which 70% of the content should be information of value to fans (e.g. information about the

current traffic situation, unplanned disruptions, renovations, etc.), 20% should be links to content created by other users (e.g. photos and films showing the carrier's means of transport woven into the cityscape), and only 10% should be information about promotions - content of a commercial nature (Adamiec, 2016).

The most common mistakes surveyed entities make when running their own social media profiles are:

- The company's primary identifying element, the logo, is misaligned with the space provided for the profile picture in the profile page structure (it was usually too large);
- Clicking on a social plug-in placed in the structure of a company page does not open a new browser tab with the company's profile on a given social network, but only overlooks the content displayed so far;
- Social plug-ins are placed in an inconspicuous place on the website or are simply missing;
- Maintaining inactive profiles;
- Infrequent posting of content;
- Content not tailored to the specifics of a particular social network, as well as a lack of any incentive to interact with the company.

All of the above weaknesses in the communication process may give the recipients of the message (mainly passengers) a somewhat distorted picture of the operation of the companies, which may have an impact on its perception in general, including the quality of the services provided. One might be tempted to suggest that the lack of skilful communication activities through social media (due to the popularity of social networking sites in modern society) by public transport providers in large cities contributes to a lower interest of potential passengers in these services in favour of alternative means of urban transport (mainly their own car). It should be noted, however, that despite the apparent shortcomings, there has been progress over the years in the use of social media in the communication activities of the companies surveyed. The survey showed that of the 24 companies analysed in 18 cities, 20 use at least one social media site. The most common is Facebook - 19 carriers have a profile (12 in 2017), followed by YouTube - 9, Instagram - 7 and Twitter 5 (5, 2 and 5 respectively in 2017). 2 companies have profiles on 4 sites at the same time, 4 on 3 sites, 11 have 3 official profiles on different social networks, another 7 companies have 2 each and also 7 have one each. For 4 entities, no profiles were found on social networks.

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