

CSR COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA – CASE STUDY GRUPY AZOTY ZAK S.A.

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Purpose: Communication is a vital tool in the process of building and shaping social relations, which affects the image and reputation of companies, including chemical companies. Communication, carried out in various ways, is a complex and dynamic process. In the context of social relations, communication is the basic tool and way of transmitting and receiving information. The aim of the conducted research was to evaluate the existing communication system in selected social media channels implemented by a chemical company in the context of corporate social responsibility. The article presents the communication processes in Grupa Azoty as a case study in social media in correlation with social responsibility activities.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The article applies a case study of Grupa Azoty ZAK S.A., along with the analysis of statistics collected from selected communication channels of Grupa Azoty ZAK S.A. In addition, direct interviews were conducted with employees of the organizational unit supervising communication processes to supplement the analysis.

Findings: The interpretation of the indicators described for the purposes of this article proves, among other things, that there is a mutual dependence between CSR activities and communication in social media. The research showed that CSR posts are among the most popular publications, and the analysis of the characteristics of post themes shows the audience's interest in multimedia-based CSR-related posts. Furthermore, the research proves that CSR communication depends on the geopolitical situation, current topics arousing the greatest interest among the general public, and the world situation.

Research Limitations/Implications: The analysis is based on a single case study.

Practical Implications: Those responsible for communication in the organization should be aware of the needs and expectations of the local community, which affect the level of interest in the publication's topics, translating into a positive image of the company involved in activities that are very important from the point of view of the local community.

Social Implications: Shaping social attitudes, building relationships that affect the image of a chemical company in social media is, therefore, an important and significant tool in broad and complex communication processes. Constant monitoring of statistical indicators of message recipients is a necessary activity to draw conclusions and recommendations for future actions. Companies can assess which communication channels to develop to adapt to global trends, how to attract new recipients, and how to build identity with the brand.

Originality/Value: The presented research results concern the communication processes carried out in social media in the context of corporate social responsibility - a topic that is not widely studied.

Keywords: Communication, Social Media, Corporate Social Responsibility.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Communication is a vital tool in the process of building and shaping social relations, which affects the image and reputation of companies, including chemical companies. Conducted in various forms, communication is a complex and dynamic process that involves multiple layers and constitutes an action. In the context of social relations, communication serves as the fundamental means of transmitting and receiving information. It is impossible to avoid speaking, writing, gesturing, or thinking - all these forms of communication underpin social systems and form the basis of social relations. Innovations in the field of communication have enabled the use of various transmission media, with the Internet offering the most communication opportunities through images, sound, visual effects, and social media. These platforms provide unprecedented possibilities for rapid transmission, fostering mutual connections and communication networks that contribute to the development of emotions and social relations.

2. Defining Communication in Correlation with Social Media

Until recently, communication was primarily associated with transmitting and receiving information through verbal and non-verbal means. However, with the development of the Internet, the possibilities have expanded, and various tools for building personal relationships have emerged.

In the literature on "communication", the term frequently appears in searches, and numerous publications aim to define the concept. Effective communication is said to occur when the recipient interprets the message according to the intended communicative intention (Błaszczuk, 2005). Authors of scientific publications concur that communication processes involve social relationships and mutual exchanges of information (Adler, 1986), as well as the selection of transmitted and received messages (Ross, 1983). The Internet has played a significant role in shaping social relationships, and with its development, social media has emerged. Initially, it seemed that social media would primarily serve as a tool for social communication between individuals, facilitating pleasant online meetings and nurturing social ties. However, companies soon recognized their strong social interaction potential and the opportunities they provide for building brand image, creating communities around them that acknowledge the benefits of using the brand (Brzozowska-Woś, 2013).

Social media has thus become immensely important, often defined as a "natural, unrestricted form of information exchange on the network between individuals with common interests" (Gogołek, 2010) or simply as a channel of communication, "a set of technologies for initiating communication and content transmission between people, their friends, and the social networks to which they belong" (Treadaway, Smith, 2011). Social media involves the exchange of opinions, observations, information, shared experiences, and impressions by its users. Such message exchanges contribute to building emotions in social relationships. Companies readily capitalize on this factor, as research indicates that positive emotions associated with a brand (Brzozowska-Woś, 2013) are the most prevalent factor conditioning brand liking, which in turn, impacts the positive brand image on social media. Importantly, there are also dependencies between effective internal communication and employee identification with the company, i.e. strengthening employee loyalty with the company (Cybulska, 2011).

3. Research Methodology

To gain deeper insights into the communication activities of a chemical enterprise on social media, this article presents a case study of Grupa Azoty ZAK S.A. For research purposes, the main trends in the communication of a chemical organization were examined by analysing statistics collected from the company's Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube profiles in 2018-2022, as these are the communication channels utilized in Grupa Azoty ZAK S.A.'s operations. Additionally, the research process employed direct interview techniques, and qualitative data collected (posts, information about supported events, photo materials) gathered from interviews with employees coordinating and supervising the communication processes related to building brand image were analysed. These interviews aimed to interpret the existing data and systematize the knowledge pertaining to the discussed phenomenon. For this purpose, interviews were conducted with five employees from the Communication and CSR Office. Three people deal with activities related to external and internal communication of the company, and their responsibilities include, among others, creating press releases, information and promotion, administration of the company intranet, administration of company channels on social networks and cooperation with the media. The other two people are responsible for the implementation of CSR activities, i.e. tasks related to creating a positive image, organization of promotional events, activities in the areas of sponsorship and charity, tasks related to employer branding as part of internal and external communication, including the implementation of scholarship programs.

In addition, a literature review and reports on communication trends in social media were reviewed.

4. Trends in communication in social media

With the growing popularity of the Internet, it has become an opportunity for entrepreneurs to improve the image of their companies, brands, organizations or products. Many international reports show a steady increase in interest in the Internet. Already 5 years ago, 57% of the world's population had an Internet connection, of which 45% had access to social media, and the number of business pages was also growing - in 2018 there were 80 million, currently 4.95 billion users (Kemp, 2019). Trends in social media are constantly changing - innovation, keeping up with new developments, and developing their communication strategy on them. The scope of reports on Digital Poland that examine social media trends on the Polish market focuses on measuring the growth of the number of Internet users and individual communication channels, factors influencing trends, popularity rankings of social media, and the time users spend on the Internet (Empemedia, 2023). Reports show that geopolitical events around the world affect the situation in shaping trends. In 2002, factors such as the war in Ukraine and the influx of refugees to Poland could partially explain the 8.5% increase in the population of Internet users in Poland, almost 3 million people. Research shows that the number of social media users is constantly growing. The number of Polish social media users per person is also increasing, which in 2022 was 72%, or 27 million people - compared to 2018 (Empemedia, 2022), when 16.3 Poles over 1 year old used social media (Majchrzyk, 2018). Research shows a steady upward trend. However, the time that Poles spend on the Internet is decreasing. In 2022, Poles spent 5 minutes less time online every day than the previous year (time), and even 10 minutes less time on social media. Among the available communication channels, the reports show the real presence of Poles, which indicates that the most users have Facebook (17.65 million). The next important channels are Instagram (10.1 million), LinkedIn (4.6 million), Snapchat (4.9 million), Pinterest (4.2 million), and Twitter (only 2 million) (Empemedia, 2022). An interesting fact in Polish trends is the lack of YouTube in the top popular social media channels. Despite the lack of popularity, research shows that Polish Internet users spend the most time here - over 23 hours per month (Polewko, 2022). Companies are aware that conducting promotional activities in social media is not the same as controlling previously more frequently used mass media (press, radio, television), as well as initially internet advertising. Social media users have been given new tools to create their own online networks, which can spread messages and information on their own and manipulate emotions. Thus, skilful use of social media by companies has become not only an opportunity, but a necessity, and if organizations want to build their own image on the Internet, they must constantly research and monitor trends, as well as develop their own online channels, taking into account the needs of their target audience among social media users. The most important initial action should be a thorough and skilful planning of activities, knowing their target group, setting goals, and selecting appropriate tools and communication channels (Brzozowska-Woś, 2013).

5. Analysis of research results

Analysis of Communication Activities in Grupa Azoty ZAK S.A.

In Grupa Azoty ZAK S.A., the communication strategy is based on the needs of the audience. The literature also mentions the concept of an information gap or a hope gap, which arises when recipients seek ways to fill the gap with the expectation of receiving information (Błaszczuk, 2005).

For this reason, in 2019, the audience was preliminarily identified based on the implemented social media channels, and communication assumptions and content were tailored to them. To increase the effectiveness of communication on social media, the company carried out an initial verification and determination of similarities between audience groups in correlation with social media channels. They classified the audience by gender, location of origin (where they live), experience, and social relationships. The similarity of content and the likelihood of "likes" were then matched, indicating the audience's interest in the topic, and translated into the message's reach.

The communication goal in Grupa Azoty ZAK S.A. is to establish complex relationships by responding to needs and sending messages related to both the company and society's needs. In order to send messages, create publications, and develop content according to the adopted communication policy, the company makes choices about content, appropriate words, and their connections, which together form a message for the recipient. The difficulty in building messages lies in formulating them in a way that ensures they are understood and received according to intentions and established interpretations (Olechnicki, Załęcki, 1997). The literature suggests the appropriate selection of channels for the message. However, the company determined that not only is the channel itself important, but also its audience. For this reason, the company adopted communication assumptions tailored to specific channels in social media and identified types of audience.

To present individual communication channels, the author of the article first identified the main tools used in external communication, based on the basic division of the website www.zak.grupaazoty.com and social media platforms. Social media plays a role in the organization as the company's business card, a platform for exchanging messages, and an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders. The company has its own profiles on four channels:

1. Facebook - facebook.com/GrupaAzotyZAK.
2. Twitter - twitter.com/GrupaAzoty_ZAK.
3. LinkedIn - linkedin.com/company/18058551.
4. YouTube - youtube.com/user/GrupaAzotyZAK.

In Grupa Azoty ZAK S.A., communication activities are based on a carefully prepared communication plan. Initially, the company attempted to analyse and define the main groups of communication recipients within the created social media profiles as part of the prepared plan. The analysis and main groups of message recipients are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.*Recipients of individual social media channels in Grupa Azoty ZAK S.A.*

Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn	YouTube
Employees	Media	Employees	
Local community	Industry organisations	Industry organisations	Local community
Beneficiaries of CSR programmes	Shareholders	Customers, suppliers, competitors	Industry organisations
Opinion-forming environment	State and local government administration	Scientific and research community	Scientific and research community
Grupa Azoty companies	Customers, Suppliers, Competitors	Grupa Azoty companies	Grupa Azoty companies

Source: Own elaboration based on research results.

As you can see, each of the communication channels has different groups of recipients, hence the communication assumptions must also be different. As a member of the Grupa Azoty capital group, the company's communication activities are in a constant process of consolidation, which also applies to communication activities. These activities are the result of the jointly developed Grupa Azoty Group Strategy by specialists from all Grupa Azoty companies. The author describes the consolidation processes that result in the development of Grupa Azoty's communication policy more broadly in the literature (Drozdowicz-Tomaszek, 2021, 2022). Communication lines for the main areas of business, charity, social responsibility, sponsorship, and tradition were systematized in the company's regulations. The organization divided the assumptions into internal and external communication as part of the communication processes, with social media included in the external scope.

In the age of tremendous social media popularity, companies must develop assumptions that aim not only to interest the audience in the message and build relationships that strengthen the positive image of the company but also to avoid behaviours that cause undesired consequences for reputation or image deterioration. Organizations should include in their communication plans the prediction of potential threat directions, a holistic approach to current and future threats requiring constant monitoring and relationship management, trend analysis, and the development of tools enabling a rapid response to users' undesired behaviours (Szwajca, 2017).

Communication assumptions are therefore an important element of the adopted communication plan. This is also confirmed by other studies carried out in the area of human resources, which concern the need to separate groups of employees according to the scope of information needs, drawing up a detailed program for the use of means of communication to take into account information needs (Olsztyńska, 1999).

Therefore, communication assumptions are an important element of the adopted communication plan. By identifying the recipient group in existing social media profiles, the organization adjusted the messages to its intentions, which aim to build positive emotions among social media users. The content was based on basic assumptions and intentions adapted to individual channels, which is clearly shown in Table 2.

Table 2.
Communication assumptions in Grupa Azoty ZAK S.A.

Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn	YouTube
Shaping the Company's reputation as:	Building the Company's image as:	Search and establish business contacts	Support for communication on other SM channels
the most important company in the region	Innovative enterprise	Interest of potential Customers, Suppliers	Building the company's image through:
a good employer	Communicating consciously	Emphasizing the Company's position on the markets	Presenting the aesthetic values of the company
A secure business in the neighborhood	Broad-minded	Positioning of company know-how: employees as experts	Video appeal
Strengthening loyalty by:	Building corporate identity through:	Presentation of marketing, research and scientific activities, innovations	
emphasizing direct and indirect links between the local environment and the Company;	Targeting information through interactions	Strengthening loyalty and building corporate identity:	

Source: Own elaboration based on research results.

The most common assumption, according to Table 2, is building the image and shaping the reputation of the company. Analysing the content of current posts and shared communications on each social media channel, the author of this article identified several main publication patterns and the most commonly used topics of posts.

On the organization's profile created on Facebook/Facebook/GrupaAzotyZAK, the following published topics were identified, which included:

1. Job offers.
2. Important events and corporate programs.
3. Current business activities, such as concluding cooperation agreements or other significant events in the company's industry.
4. Press releases on important events related to organization, ownership supervision, implementation of strategies, and investment plans.
5. Information related to corporate social responsibility: donations and support for local, regional, and supra-regional initiatives; successes and achievements of social program beneficiaries; information on local and regional patronages and events.
6. Successes and achievements in the field of sponsorship, including the excellent results of the Grupa Azoty ZAKSA Kędzierzyn-Koźle volleyball team.
7. Scientific research activities, including speakers' participation in conferences, cooperation with educational institutions, schools, and research institutes.
8. Information on internal communication and employee integration activities.
9. Information regarding the activities of government and local authorities.

Profile of Grupa Azoty ZAK S.A. on Twitter stands out with a different theme, mainly including information on important corporate events and programs related to various companies within Grupa Azoty and current business activities. Additionally, the published content includes media messages featuring members of the board and representatives of the company, as well as press releases. A key and characteristic feature of this channel is the speed of reaction, hence the publications also include live broadcasts and reports from so-called breaking news, such as online transmissions from press conferences or events.

LinkedIn is a channel dedicated mainly to employees and employer branding, so it is not surprising that the most frequent communications are job offers and information on employees' achievements, information about the company's life, volunteering, and other employee activities. Publications mainly focus on business and industry events, as well as broadly defined research and development activities based on personal experiences. These include, among others, the participation of speakers in conferences, scientific presentations, cooperation with educational institutions such as universities, high schools, as well as research and development institutes. This channel also communicates most frequently about innovations.

YouTube, as a channel supporting all the above-mentioned communication tools, enriches the publication theme with video materials from interviews conducted, reports on the implementation of investment tasks - the construction of installations, and reports from corporate events. In the archival materials on the company's profile, we can find videos documenting, among other things, the launch of installations, visits of representatives of government administration, or other important public figures. You can listen to interesting interviews on fertilizer production topics, learn about the history of the company, promotional videos, but also entertaining materials on employee integration activities: songs or videos from team-building events.

6. Discussion

Analysing selected statistical data from one of the social media platforms operated by the company partially addresses the article's goal, which is to present the communication process in social media in correlation with social responsibility business activities. Detailed data is confidential to the company. The description of selected data presented in this article aims to outline general assumptions that the chemical organization follows in social responsibility business communication.

The interpretation of indicators described for this article demonstrates, among other things, that there is a mutual relationship between CSR activities and communication on social media. Since 2018, statistics have shown that the range of publications is increasing, but their dynamics and the number of achieved likes are decreasing. In terms of communication processes,

companies compete in finding creative topics that may interest their audiences. However, in relation to global trends that show widespread and growing use of social media, but decreasing time that Internet users spend online, regarding adaptation to the expectations of the audience, the Azoty Group is achieving less interaction for social media posts.

Shaping social attitudes, building relationships that affect the chemical company's image on social media is an important and essential tool in wide and complex communication processes. Continuous monitoring of audience statistical indicators of messages is a necessary activity to draw conclusions and recommendations for future actions. Companies can assess which communication channels to develop to adapt to global trends, how to attract new audiences, and how to build identity with the brand. The Grupa Azoty ZAK profile is operated according to the trends observed on the social media market. Research for this article proves the existing relationships between social communication, CSR, and professional sports. In order to acquire new audiences, build brand identity, and improve reputation in local communities, businesses should adjust to the current geopolitical situation both globally and locally and increase the number of publications regarding their implemented social initiatives.

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