



Facebook as a Communication Tool of Successful Brands in Turkey

N. Hanzade URALMAN¹

Keywords
interactivity,
social
networking
analysis,
branding,
contents, digital
public relations.

Abstract

After the increase in opportunities offered by web 2.0 technologies that enable individuals to share and discuss online, developing content for social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., has been issued in public relations strategies of organizations. This article aims to provide information about public relations strategies used in branding through social networking channel contents in Turkey. In this sense, it proposes an evaluation of Turkish brands' contents on Facebook. Contents shared on Facebook pages of Turkish brands are considered essential in understanding of brand strategies in Turkey as Facebook is the most commonly used social media site among other global social media channels. The evaluation is based on qualitative content analysis of most valuable ten Turkish brands' Facebook contents. The brands selected for the research are the first ten most valuable brands of Turkey in 2015 according to UK Consulting Organization named as Brand Finance Limited. Article provides a new understanding on using corporate social networking contents in branding through country level analysis.

1. Introduction

Introduction of new media tools to corporate communication have provided a new understanding of branding strategies. Initially, while corporate websites were highly considered in branding (Angehrn, 1998; Ellwood, 2002), various new media tools (blogs, forums, social networking sites) have become the focal point in developing brands along with corporate websites in consequence of the increase in opportunities offered by web 2.0 technologies. Aforementioned technologies enabled individuals to share and discuss online in various online platforms. Today, almost all significant brands take place in various platforms that enable people to publish contents in their corporate blogs, forums, location sharing platforms, social networking platforms, annotation platforms, media sharing platforms, question and answer platforms, to rating and review platforms.

Social media which is used as a general term to define web 2.0 platforms has been realized as an extraordinary value and power by organizations and played a major communication role in today's public relations campaigns (Wilcox, Ault and Agee, 2015, p.198; Kesavan, Bernacchi and Mascarenhas, 2013, p.60). In parallel, contents on social media have become important to provide effective communication instead of channel in public relations (Brown, 2009, p.79). Social media contents which are in different formats, such as posters, photos, videos,

¹ Corresponding Author. Assist. Prof., Okan University, School of Applied Sciences, Public Relations and Advertising Department, hanzade.uralman@okan.edu.tr

links and texts, have two aspects in terms of public relations strategies. One is created by individuals and refers to the term 'user generated content'. In this aspect, controlling and watching individuals on social media is considered as public relations strategies. The groups so called 'influencers' such as bloggers, virtual communities have considered as stakeholders whom have been given priority in corporate communication to control social media in these strategies (Solis and Breakenridge, 2009, p.10; Smith, 2011, p.1).

Other aspect refers to the contents which are shared by organizations to support corporate and product branding. While corporate branding is supported by the contents which are related with corporate identity, product branding is supported by the contents which express product associations. These contents are used to attract consumers, to create word of mouth effect and to have support of individuals in creating brand values on social media in line with public relations strategies. Contents which are shared by corporations on social media provide opportunity to encourage individuals' participation. Individuals can like, comment on, response in various ways to corporate sharings. In this respect, this participatory role of social media is vitally important for public relations, which is a strategic communication process. As Friedrichsen and Mühl-Benninghaus (2013, p.278) stated, it is named as "conversational" or "two-way media" which encourages publishing one's own content and commenting on other people's thereof. For this reason, social media has been functioned as a public relations method and conventional public relations methods such as sponsorship, corporate social responsibility, media relations, events, etc. were reinvented along with social media. This study focuses on the new meaning of public relations strategies in the context of corporate contents which were shared by brands' social networking sites.

Two major goals of the study can be classified as follows; defining the characteristics of the contents in brands' corporate social networking platforms and determining new public relations strategies through mentioned contents resulting with an evaluation regarding Turkish brands. Analysis at country level will bring up new perspectives which may be different from the general assumptions in the literature. For instance, according to a research on social media impact and brand loyalty conducted in Turkey, consumers in the country positively affected by the brands' advantageous campaigns on social media more than the messages about corporate identity (Erdogmus and Cicek, 2012, p.1358). This figure points out that consumers in Turkey have different attitude, despite the theoretical importance of corporate branding in marketing and public relations literature.

Firstly, characteristics of social media contents which provide effective communication between brands and individuals were investigated through marketing, public relations and branding literature search for this purpose. Then, Facebook contents of the most valuable ten Turkish brands' Facebook accounts between the dates of June 1st 2014 – May 30rd 2015 were analyzed to evaluate public relations strategies. Contents shared on Facebook pages of Turkish brands are considered essential in understanding of brand strategies in Turkey as Facebook is the most commonly used social media site among other global social

media channels in Turkey with the rate of %93 according to the social media statistics in 2014 (Wearesocial, 2014, p.160).

The brands selected for the research were the first ten most valuable brands of Turkey in 2015 according to UK Consulting Organization named as Brand Finance Limited. These brands are; Akbank, Turk Telekom, Turkiye Is Bankası, Turkish Airlines, Garanti, Arcelik, Turkcell, Yapı Kredi, BIM, and Efes respectively which represent banking, telecommunication, durable consumable products, aviation, shopping centre and food sector in Turkey. Study gives an idea about successful Turkish brands and sectoral analysis in a sectoral base. Additionally, shopping center and food sector were out of this study. The study based upon eight brands as BIM and Efes brands do not have corporate Facebook network.

2. Literature Review

Strategic public relations is concerned with managing the communication between an organization and its stakeholders at a given time. Although public relations planning involves the coordination of multiple methods—social media, news releases, special events, web pages, press kits, news conferences, media interviews, brochures, newsletters, speeches, advocacy ads, and so on—to achieve specific results (Wilcox, Ault, and Agee 2015, p.178), in modern day public relations professionals mostly have been defined as social media experts. Social media has been considered as a significant tool to create brand value through communicating with individuals more personally and directly by organizations (Green, 2010, 135; Edelman, 2009, 130). In these sense, content management has become a new task of public relations professionals. The remarkable development of marketing and public relations in social media supports the importance of content creation (Brown, 2009, p.79; Wilcox, Ault and Agee, 2015, p.92). According to studies on new media tools, public relations professionals provide development in corporate communication skills such as corporate communication skills such as cost-effective use of technology, creativity, interaction with consumers and all other stakeholders by means of content management (Angehrn, 1998; Ellwood, 2002; Green, 2010; Edelman, 2009).

Brian Solis who have been actively writing about new public relations since the mid-90s, defines social media as the biggest evolution in the history of public relations and emphasizes the importance of creating and disseminating the content in different formats (texts, videos) and sharing images, demos, and behind-the-scenes footage using social networking sites (Solis and Breakenridge, 2009, p.18). Transferring brand values through contents in different channels is a low-cost public relations tactic which can make a graeat impact on consumers. Furthermore, management of cross-media content diversifies firms' corporate portfolios while reducing financial risk in highly volatile global markets (Friedrichsen and Mühl-Benninghaus, 2013, p.279).

It is a fact that impact of social media is duplicated by word of mouth effect. As Fog et al, (2010, p.198) proposed that stories of brands can be staged with many pieces of film, photos, text messages and all of them can be spread out via specific social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc. Then, the impact on consumers can show increase in line with brand's purpose. In any case, individuals enjoy sharing

their feelings and detailed experiences in their own communities. Individuals enjoy contributing to brands, if brands provide them a charming story.

In addition to its entertaining function, consumers use social media platforms to figure out product experiences and opinions. In this context, creative public relations strategy is about creating corporate contents which motivate people to share the brand messages through their own social networking sites is vitally important. Muñiz and Schau, (2011, p.215), emphasize the importance of creating content in a “narrative way” which encourages the tendency to document and share even if it means relinquishing some control of the brand conversation in marketing. Booth and Matic (2011, p.185) defines consumers as individuals broadcasting personal or second-hand stories to their social networks and the world – they are a brand’s storytellers – the new brand ambassadors. At this point, reaching key stakeholders who can affect brand though social media have become more important. Key stakeholders are also regarded as brands’ storytellers who leverage brands and cultivated as part of a firm’s social media strategy (Booth and Matic, 2011, p.185; Wilcox, Ault, and Agee, 2015, p. 174).

Creating contents for web environment is based upon not only entertaining and informing functions of online multimedia, but also the brand experience, which means that agents can follow individual’s journey and individuals can follow each other through cyberspace (Angehrn, 1998, p.288). Chauhan and Pillai (2013) also pointed out the importance of content type and content context in receiving likes and comments. Accordingly, As Solis and Breakenridge (2009, p.38) indicated, new public relations’ goal is to understand the communities we want to reach and how to engage them in conversations without marketing. In this context, social media provides opportunity not only in reaching individual’s rates, comments and postings on social media but also in identifying consumers. Consumers are somehow identifiable on social media. Kesavan, Bernacchi, and Mascarenhas (2013, p.62), indicated that the social media are modern day extensions of interpersonal communications where individuals show their personalities and choices. Eventually, brands do not only control groups, communities and influencers, but also create interactive environments with their contents in their own corporate social networking sites to activate the communication between consumers and the organization. A responsible of improvised online campaign of Sony indicated that “On these social media sites, the user is in control and all we can do is to encourage the conversation to go in a particular direction” (Fog et al, 2010, p.187).

All mentioned features of corporate contents are based on two-way communication between individuals, organization and individuals, and refer to term interactivity. Although interactivity can be provided through likes, shares and comments of individuals in social networking sites, creating an interactive environment is more than just to share videos, posters, photographs, and texts. Interactivity can be fostered more by contents which invite consumers to give response in social networking sites. The contents which call people to do something on web environment can also be more effective than the contents which only entertain and inform individuals in terms of monitoring and controlling consumers as well as creating brand values collectively. The contents which only

promote products and organizations like advertisements are useful to increase market popularity.

Interactive contents are essential tools for cost effective public relations activities. On the other hand, transmissions via interactive contents is beneficial to understand public relations strategies of brands. The core story which is important in content creation, closely tied into a company's corporate brand and these stories must be built on the real-life stories told by the employees, customers, and working partners (Fog et al, 2010, 50, 104). Aaker (1995, p.117-118) states that corporate branding is related with brand associations driven by values/culture, people, programs, and assests/skills of the organization that are qualitatively different than the product-class specific associations. Van Riel (2007, p.4) describes the purpose of a corporate brand as personalizing the company as a whole in order to create value from the company's strategic position, institutional activities, organization, employees, and portfolio of products and services. Hatch and Schultz (2003, p.1044) indicated that corporate communication is used in corporate branding, while only marketing communication is used in product branding. In this framework brands should create contents about their corporate identities which include their culture, values, programs, employees, skills, behavior, as well as their products.

Today, traditional public relations activities such as corporate social responbilitiy, sponsorship, corporate events for internal and external environment used for corporate branding are not sufficient, if they are executed single-handedly. Social media contents are also considered extremely important to indicate organizations' place in global or national marketplace, social, cultural and economic environment. Based on their resarch, Kesavan, Bernacchi, and Mascarenhas (2013, p.62), claimed that social media will propose more than the message of corporate social responsibility, and it will become the soul of corporate social responsibility. Therefore, they propose that it should be embedded as part of the brand and its message. On the other hand, it is stated that corporate branding can be built into the web of relationships to sustain newly founded organizations in the future (Hatch and Schultz, 2008, p.123).

3. Methodology

The literature research performed on branding illustrates that interactivity of contents and their connections to corporate identity are essential for brands to reach their goals via social media. On the other hand, basic assumptions in the literature, sometimes may not always match with the country-level analysis. Analysis at country level will bring up new perspectives in order to understand branding strategies on social media. In this sense, analysis of Analyzing contents shared on social networking platforms is beneficial in understanding of diversified public relations strategies.

Main focus of this study is social networking contents of successful brands of Turkey. Turkish brands have been evaluated by leading UK Consulting Organization named as Brand Finance Limited since 2007. According to the research of the organization, the value of Turkish brands have increased consistently last eight years and 15 percent increase in comparision to last year in

2015 (Brand Finance, 2015). Therefore, it is worth to analyze how successful Turkish brands shape their contents on social networking sites. Social networking contents of ten most valuable Turkish brands in 2015 were studied in terms of their interactivity and their connections to corporate identity. Two research questions were addressed: (a) How do these Turkish brands interact with consumers on Facebook? (b) Are the Turkish brand's public relation strategies on Facebook based on corporate branding or product branding?

The brands selected for the research were the first ten valuable brands of Turkey in 2015 according to UK Brand Finance Limited. These brands are; Akbank, Turk Telekom, Turkiye Is Bankasi, Turkish Airlines, Garanti, Arcelik, Turkcell, Yapı Kredi, BIM, and Efes respectively which represent banking, telecommunication, durable consumable products, aviation, shopping centre and food sector in Turkey. The study based upon eight brands as BIM and Efes brands do not have corporate Facebook network. Specifically, Facebook contents of Turkish brands' Facebook contents were analyzed in the study. Facebook is the most commonly used social media site among other global social media channels in Turkey with the rate of 93 percent according to the social media statistics in 2014 (Wearesocial, 2014, p.160). The data were taken from ten Turkish most valuable brands' Facebook pages between the dates of June 1st 2014 – May 30rd 2015 and categorized according to their branding context and interactivity. There are number of ways that materials can be evaluated in public relations researches such as content analysis, readership-interest surveys, readership recall of articles actually read, and the use of advisory boards (Wilcox, Ault, and Agee, 2015, p.240). In this research, qualitative content analysis method was executed in two main categories.

Firstly, contents were categorized in the perspective of their branding context as product oriented and corporate oriented. While product oriented contents focus on promoting products in marketing communication perspective, corporate oriented contents are about corporate identities which include corporate culture, values, programs, employees, skills, behavior. Further analysis was applied to both content types to understand the issues which were used in creation of these contents. Relationship between contents and traditional public relations tools was questioned. Furthermore, sectoral categories were taken into consideration in this further analysis. Secondly contents were categorized as promotional contents and interactive oriented contents. While promotional oriented contents refer to promotional products and/or organizations like advertisements, interactive oriented contents are the tools which specifically invite consumers to give response in social networking sites. Interactivity which can be provided through likes, shares and comments of individuals in social networking sites were considered as promotional contents like advertisements and news. The contents which call people to do something on web environment were classified as interactive oriented contents.

4. Findings

Akbank, which is the most successful brand of Turkey, has 122 contents on Facebook, in the given period. When its contents were analyzed according to their branding context, it was determined that 49 percent of them were product oriented contents and 51 percent were corporate oriented, as seen in table 1. The

second most successful brand of Turkey, Turk Telekom, has 132 contents on Facebook. 64 percent of them were product oriented contents and 36 percent of them were corporate oriented, as illustrated in table 1. Turkiye Is Bankasi, which is the third successful brand of Turkey, has 98 contents in the given period. It is remarkable that Turkiye Is Bankasi share contents rarely on Facebook. When Facebook contents of Turkiye Is Bankasi were analyzed according to their branding context on Facebook, it was observed that 64 percent of the sharings were product oriented contents and 36 percent of them were corporate oriented contents, as seen in table 1. The fourth most successful brand of Turkey, Turkish Airlines, has 92 contents, in the given period. This figure points out that Turkish Airlines doesn't share messages often on Facebook. It was determined that 45 percent of them were product oriented and 55 percent of them were corporate oriented, as seen in table 1. It was seen that the fifth most successful brand of Turkey, Garanti Bankasi, has 115 contents in the given period. It was determined that 53 percent of contents were product oriented contents and 47 percent of them were corporate oriented contents, as seen in table 1. The sixth most successful brand of Turkey, Arcelik, has 128 contents. It was determined that 51 percent of these contents were product oriented and 49 percent of them were corporate oriented contents, as seen in table 1. The seventh most successful brand of Turkey, Turkcell, has 143 contents. It was determined that 55 percent of these contents were product oriented and 45 percent of them were corporate oriented, as seen in table 1. The eighth most successful brand of Turkey, Yapı Kredi, has 134 contents. It was determined that 60 percent of these contents were product oriented and 40 percent of them were corporate oriented contents, as seen in table 1. It was figured out that Akbank and Turkish Airlines were two successful brands which has more corporate oriented contents than product oriented contents in the given period. This figures also point out that Turk Telekom is the brand which have product oriented contents in higher rate than the others.

Table 1: Facebook contents of most successful brands of Turkey in 2015 according to their branding context

	Product oriented messages	Corporate oriented messages
Akbank	60	62
Turk Telekom	85	47
Turkiye Is Bankasi	63	35
Turkish Airlines	41	51
Garanti	61	54
Arcelik	65	63
Turkcell	80	63
Yapı Kredi	80	54

All the product oriented contents of brands were classified in two categories as sales promotion materials and promotional materials. On the other hand, corporate oriented contents are in various types. Corporate oriented messages are reminders, tips, and advices in service or product category, information about human resources, information about investments of brand, information about corporate history, information about corporate philosophy, corporate anniversaries, corporate projects, promotion of internal events, promotion of events for consumers, job postings, special day messages (mother's day, fathers

day, valentines day, national and religious days, etc.) corporate achievements and awards, promotion of corporate social responsibilities, promotion of sponsorships, questions to consumers about their preferences, life, or knowledge, questions to consumers about the company. Further analysis was considered in sectoral base and each successful Turkish brands were analyzed in its own sector. Within this scope further analysis asserted some notes about banking, telecommunication, durable consumable products, and aviation sectors of Turkey.

Banking sector is the leading sector in branding. There are four banks in the most successful Turkish brands 2015. These banks are Akbank, Turkiye Is Bankasi, and Yapı Kredi. Contents of the product oriented contents of Akbank mostly were developed around the stories and characters which were created for TV advertisements and its corporate sponsorships. Akbank prefers to publish advertisements on Facebook prior to TV. Corporate oriented contents of Akbank were mostly transmitted through photographs of offline events. 17 percent of corporate oriented contents of Akbank consist of photographs taken in offline events which were sponsored by Akbank, arranged for Akbank employees and customers offering awards as seen in table 2. It was observed that the brand emphasizes its corporate identity in some product oriented contents.

Another brand in banking sector Turkiye Is Bankasi considers it highly important to announce job postings on Facebook. 34 percent of corporate oriented contents were about job postings. Second important issue in the Bank's corporate oriented contents was corporate social responsibilities of the Bank. 31 percent of corporate oriented messages of Turkiye Is Bankasi on Facebook were about the Bank's corporate social responsibility activities, as seen in table 2. Although Turkiye Is Bankasi does not share information about corporate history, philosophy, identity, it was observed that the brand strongly emphasizes its corporate identity in product oriented contents in a narrative way. Additionally, it was figured out that the gap between corporate oriented contents and product oriented contents of the bank is higher than other successful brands in banking sector.

It was determined that Garanti Bankasi mostly tends to share contents about corporate events. 28 percent of corporate oriented contents of Garanti Bankasi were about customer events. These include offline events, online events on web environment including Facebook. The other corporate oriented contents of the Bank are mostly, questions to consumers about their preferences, knowledge, and contents related to sponsorships, and corporate social responsibilities of the Bank. It was seen that Garanti's product oriented events were created around the Bank's TV advertisement stories.

It was determined that Yapı Kredi was the most successful banking brand which has most sharings on Facebook. Yapı Kredi is highly prone to share product oriented contents rather than sharing contents about its corporate history, philosophy and investments. Contents of these product oriented contents of Akbank mostly were developed around the stories and characters which were created for TV advertisements and its corporate sponsorships, as it had been observed in Akbank's Facebook contents. However, as it was in other successful brands in banking sector Yapı Kredi prefers to share contents about its corporate social responsibility activities. 17 percent of corporate oriented contents were

about the bank's corporate social responsibility practices, as seen in table 2. Yapı Kredi also shares its sponsorships as other successful brands in banking sector. As it is shown in table 2, 13 percent of corporate oriented messages were about sponsorships of Yapı Kredi. On the other hand, most of these events were the online events specifically designed for Facebook and related with Yapı Kredi's sponsorships. Yapı Kredi emphasizes its sponsorships while creating interactive oriented contents. This points out that Yapı Kredi's sharings on Facebook were well integrated with its sponsorships.

It was figured out that there are some similar approaches in Facebook contents of successful Turkish brands in banking sector. Firstly, it was confirmed that all brands in banking sector consider publishing messages on special days such as mother's day, father's day, valentine days, and national days etc. Secondly it was figured out that they mostly positioned their corporate oriented contents around their sponsorships and/or corporate sponsorships on Facebook. Thirdly, corporate oriented messages were not considered more important than product oriented messages, except Akbank as its corporate oriented contents were more than its product oriented contents. The last but not least, brands in banking sector of Turkey disseminate stories through their Facebook based TV advertisement contents.

Table 2: Classification of corporate oriented Facebook messages of the most successful Turkish brands in banking sector for the year 2015

	Akbank	Turkiye Is Bankası	Garanti	Yapı Kredi
Information about human resources	5	-	-	-
Information about investments	1	-	-	-
Information about corporate history	-	-	3	1
Information about corporate philosophy/identity	-	-	4	2
Corporate anniversary	1	2	-	-
Corporate projects	-	-	-	6
Internal events	5	-	-	-
Events for Customers	3	-	15	9
Job posting	-	12	1	-
Special day messages	12	9	13	14
Achievements and awards	8	-	1	4
Corporate social responsibilities	8	11	6	9
Sponsorships	11	-	1	7
Questions to consumers about their preferences/knowledge	7	-	7	-
Questions to consumers about the company	-	-	-	-
Information, reminders, Tips and advices about the product category	-	-	3	2

Arcelik is a successful brand of durable consumable products sector. Arcelik's 57 percent of the corporate oriented contents are about events for customers, as shown in table 3. It was observed that these contents include photographs, videos and posters of offline events of Arcelik. It is figured out that Arcelik considers it essential to share its offline corporate events on Facebook, as Akbank does.

Table 3: Classification of corporate oriented Facebook messages of the most successful Turkish brands in consumer durable sector for the year 2015

	Arcelik
Information about human resources	-
Information about investments	-
Information about corporate history	-
Information about corporate philosophy/identity	-
Corporate anniversary	-
Corporate projects	-
Internal events	-
Events for Customers	36
Job posting	-
Special day messages	16
Achievements and awards	-
Corporate social responsibilities	5
Sponsorships	-
Questions to consumers about their preferences/knowledge	-
Questions to consumers about the company	-
Information, reminders, tips and advices about the product category	6

The most successful brand of aviation sector is Turkish Airlines. The issues shared by Turkish Airlines on Facebook as corporate oriented contents were mostly customer events and information, reminders, tips and advices for travelling. 22 percent of the corporate oriented contents were about offline and online customer events, 22 percent of them were about reminders, tips and advices about the product category, as seen table in 4. Advices were mostly about travelling in the world. Furthermore, issues about corporate sponsorships remarkably shared as corporate oriented contents on Turkish Airlines' Facebook channel. The rate of these contents about corporate sponsorship is 18 percent. Although Turkish Airlines use Facebook for job postings, the brand does not share any information about human resources or corporate investments. In fact, Turkish Airlines is a well-known Turkish Brand which remarkably makes national and international investments. Turkish Airlines is a brand which has more corporate oriented contents than product oriented contents in the given period, as Akbank.

Table 4: Classification of corporate oriented Facebook messages of the most successful Turkish brands in aviation sector for the year 2015

	Turkish Airlines
Information about human resources	-
Information about investments	-
Information about corporate history	2
Information about corporate philosophy/identity	3
Corporate anniversary	-
Corporate projects	1
Internal events	-
Events for Customers	11
Job posting	2
Special day messages	7
Achievements and awards	-
Corporate social responsibilities	-
Sponsorships	9
Questions to consumers about their preferences/knowledge	4
Questions to consumers about the company	4
Information, reminders, Tips and advices about the product category	11

Turk Telekom is one of two successful Turkish brands in telecommunication sector. Product oriented contents of Turk Telekom include mostly sales promotions of the brand. 72 percent of the product oriented messages of Turk Telekom were conveyed by posters and videos of sales promotion efforts as seen in table 5. In addition, most of the corporate oriented contents do not reflect the features of corporate identity as a whole. 34 percent of the corporate oriented messages were only special day messages such as father's day, mother's day, valentine's day, national and religious days etc, as seen in table 6. On the other hand, Turk Telekom does not have any messages on Facebook about corporate identity. It was figured out that TurkTelekom does not use Facebook as a corporate branding tool.

Another successful brand of telecommunication sector is Turkcell. Turkcell's corporate oriented contents are mostly about customer events. 17 percent of its corporate oriented contents were photos, posters of offline events, and online events which were specifically designed for its corporate web site and Facebook, as seen in table 5. Corporate social responsibility activities and sponsorships were the second mostly mentioned issue in corporate oriented messages. 27 percent of the corporate oriented contents were about corporate social responsibility activities and sponsorships of Turkcell, as seen in table 5. Brand also often shares contents about its current achievements and awards. 11 percent of the contents

were about the brands' achievements and awards, as seen in table 5. This figures show that Facebook has an important function in Turkcell's corporate branding as a media which advertises corporate social responsibility activities, sponsorships and customer events of the brand. It was observed that Turkcell remarkably informed individuals to read and watch the contents on its corporate blog and corporate web site very often through both product oriented and corporate oriented messages. This point out that content creation is mostly executed by other platforms such as corporate web site, forum and blog.

Table 5: Classification of corporate oriented Facebook messages of the most successful Turkish brands in telecommunication sector for the year 2015

	Turk Telekom	Turkcell
Information about human resources	-	-
Information about investments	-	-
Information about corporate history	-	-
Information about corporate philosophy/identity	-	2
Corporate anniversary	-	-
Corporate projects	3	5
Internal events	-	-
Events for customers	6	11
Job posting	-	2
Special day messages	16	10
Achievements and awards	6	7
Corporate social responsibilities	3	8
Sponsorships	3	9
Questions to consumers about their preferences/knowledge	10	2
Questions to consumers about the company	-	-
Information, reminders, tips and advices about the product category	-	7

Akbank's interactive oriented contents constitute 8 percent of corporate oriented contents, as seen in table 6. These interactive oriented contents include an invitation poster to a Facebook game, information about a Twitter campaign and posters asking questions to consumers about their preferences, life or knowledge. The brand's questions were about media, travel and residence choices of consumers like their favorite TV programs, music, travelling place and travelling accompany etc. Product oriented contents were applied to interactivity by inviting a specific target group to share their stories through Facebook hashtags. The analysis of corporate oriented contents of Akbank showed that the brand gave importance to share photographs of offline events for employees and customers rather than creating events on web environment. 10 percent of the corporate

oriented messages were about the offline events for employees and customers, as seen in table 6. On the other hand, some of these contents were transformed into interactivity oriented contents via related hashtags.

According to interactivity analysis, 11 percent of the Turk Telekom's Facebook sharings were interactive oriented contents, as seen table 6. This figure shows that Turk Telekom develops more promotional contents rather than interactive oriented contents. These interactive oriented contents include mostly posters asking questions to consumers about their preferences, life, or knowledge. 66 percent of the interactive oriented contents were asking questions about individual's choices of city trips, feelings about the public agenda etc, as seen in table 6. The other interactive oriented contents were about events on social networking sites and the corporate web sites. Only one of these contents was shared differently as a game created for Facebook. This figure points out that interactive oriented contents were not in various formats.

Although *Turkiye Is Bankasi* is the third successful Turkish brand; it has no interactive oriented content on Facebook. All sharings were promotional contents, as seen in table 6. Brand mostly shares contents about its products, information about job postings, and corporate social responsibility activities. This shows that the Brand gives priority to disseminate messages created through traditional marketing public relations activities in order to widen the number of consumers.

According to interactivity analysis, 4 percent of Turkish Airlines' Facebook contents were interactive oriented contents, as seen in table 6. These interactive oriented messages include poster, video and photos of games specifically created for Facebook. Additionally, the brand informs individuals to vote Istanbul for a city competition on web environment. On the other hand, it was observed that Turkish Airlines mostly prefers to use communication technologies. 16 percent of the product oriented messages were about promoting the brands' mobile application.

It was determined that 17 percent of Garanti's Facebook contents were interactive oriented messages, as seen in table 6. Garanti is the most successful Turkish brand in using interactive oriented contents. These interactive oriented contents were sales promotion campaigns, customer events on social networking sites and its corporate website, and questions to consumers about their preferences, life, or knowledge. 6 percent of Garanti's Facebook contents in a given time were posters of events specifically created for Facebook. It was determined that Garanti benefits from interactivity of Facebook properly in corporate branding. Additionally, it must be stated that the brand considers communication technologies highly important to reach its consumers. Most of promotional messages about the bank's products and services were about the bank's online help service through Facebook and Twitter and brand's other mobil applications. These messages show that the bank considers communication with individuals one to one through mobile applications and its corporate social networking sites as well.

Since Facebook contents of Arcelik were analyzed, it was observed that the interactive oriented contents had a share of 7 percent, as seen in table 6. The interactive oriented contents include only customer event on its corporate website. It was specified that Arcelik mostly use Facebook to support promotion of

its products and offline customer events. Brand does not tend to develop interactive oriented contents specifically for Facebook. Additionally, it was observed that Arcelik did not have any event created for social networking sites in the given time. Brand promotes an online event on its corporate website through Facebook.

Since the contents of Turkcell were analyzed, it was observed that interactive oriented contents had a share of 4 percent, as seen in table 6. These interactive oriented contents include promotion of customer events on corporate website and Facebook; and posters asking questions to consumers about their preferences, life, or knowledge. 1 percent of Turkcell's contents were interactive oriented contents which were specifically prepared for Facebook. Only 3 percent of the corporate oriented contents were about Facebook events. Through these interactive events, Turkcell invites individuals to change profile photos to celebrate a special day and announces that it helps its customers in creating digital book composed from their Facebook photos.

Since the contents of Yapı Kredi were analyzed, it was observed that interactive oriented contents had a share of 9 percent, as seen in table 6. Most of the interactive oriented contents on the bank's Facebook channel involve customer events specifically designed for Facebook. These events were online campaigns related to the bank's sponsorships. Other interactive oriented contents include video promotion of Twitter and Instagram campaigns which were related to the bank's sponsorships; and hashtags embedded to product oriented and corporate oriented contents. Additionally, as in Akbank's contents, some of Yapı Kredi's Facebook contents were transformed into interactivity oriented contents via related hashtags. It was seen that hashtags about sponsorships, special day messages, and product promotions were embedded to contents.

Table 6: Facebook sharings of the most successful Turkish brands in 2015 according in terms of interactivity

	Interactive oriented messages	Promotional contents
Akbank	37	85
Turk Telekom	15	117
Turkiye Is Bankasi	-	98
Turkish Airlines	4	88
Garanti	20	95
Arcelik	2	126
Turkcell	7	136
Yapı Kredi	27	107

5. Results and Recommendations

As literature review shows, corporate social networking sites have been preferred as a cost effective and interactive tool in public relations. In terms of branding, brand values can be transferred through creative and participative contents based on brand values and stories on social networking sites. Theoretically, two-way communication which refers to interactivity provides understanding and monitoring consumers, and also communicating with them effectively. Creation and management of corporate contents on social media, is a strategic approach to

build an active community. Furthermore, it is an authentic two-way relationship based on reliability for branding. It is pointed out that interactivity in public relations literature should not be limited with sharing promotional contents to be liked, shared, and commented via social networking sites. In a broader sense, interactivity also includes provocative questions to consumers and campaigns inviting them to do something on social media. Since interactivity should not be left to chance; these Facebook contents are interactive oriented and they are more privileged in terms of providing two-way communication.

On the other hand, analysis of the most successful Turkish brands' contents on Facebook brought up a new understanding regarding corporate social networking platforms. Remarkably, the results of the analysis indicated that Turkish brands were not compatible with public relations strategies which had been theoretically offered for effective brand communication. Valuable Turkish brands generally do not aim to establish corporate branding which is based on two-way communication and receiving feedback from consumers through Facebook.

According to content analysis on country level, it was determined that there were successful Turkish brands which use Facebook in a different way in comparison with traditional ones in the literature. As it was stated in the literature, interactive characteristic of social networking contents is beneficial to develop effective public relations strategies. In spite of this assumption, it was figured out that most of the successful Turkish brands did not give much importance to interactive oriented sharings on Facebook excluding some brands in banking sector such as Akbank, Garanti, and Yapı Kredi. However, some brands which use interactive contents are considered less valuable compared with the others which underestimate interactivity. It is remarkable that the second successful brand Turk Telekom has limited interactive oriented contents and third successful brand Turkiye Is Bankası does not have any interactive oriented contents on Facebook. In the light of these evaluations which are specific to Turkish market, creating interactive contents on Facebook is not considered as a must to implement effective public relations strategies.

As per branding literature, corporate branding requires content creation via any media channel about corporate identity. On the other hand, country level analysis showed that, dissemination of contents which include corporate culture, values, programs, employees, skills, and behaviors were not significant as much as it was assumed in branding literature. For instance, although Garanti use Facebook as a corporate branding tool, it is evaluated less valuable than Turk Telekom and Turkiye Is Bankası which did not have any corporate oriented contents on Facebook. As a result, country level analysis indicates that effective branding strategies can be established on product branding via Facebook in public relations.

Analysis in country level showed that successful brands develop Facebook contents as an extension of traditional public relations tools rather than transforming their all characteristics in contrary to the assumption claiming that social media has been transforming the traditional corporate branding tools.

It was confirmed that, traditional public relations tools such as events, corporate social responsibility and sponsorship activities are essential in developing

strategies as they support creating contents on Facebook. Most of the successful brands from different sectors such as Akbank, Turkcell, Arcelik, and Turkish Airlines share photographs from their offline corporate events and sometimes they create hashtags to provide participation of consumers. It was observed that brands considered offline events more important than online ones. Even Turkish Airlines, Turkcell, and Yapı Kredi which promote mobile applications through Facebook have limited online events. In this perspective, Facebook is essential as it integrates offline events to online events for successful branding. Additionally, using Facebook as an information centre can be an effective public relations strategy. It was figured out that brands would redirect consumers to corporate blogs, websites, and forums.

According to content analysis, it was specified that the relationship between brand value and interactive Facebook contents is negligible. This resolution should be studied in detail, as it is considered very striking. Another subject to be studied is, the effectiveness of product oriented contents compared with corporate oriented ones in corporate branding. While product oriented messages have a high potential of attracting customers by using gifts, and discounts; effectiveness of corporate oriented messages should be evaluated regarding corporate branding and attracting customers in the context of a prospective Facebook public relations strategy.

In this respect, some new strategies can be issued considering Turkey's specific circumstances. Focusing on product branding via Facebook can be an effective public relations strategy. Facebook contents can be considered as effective marketing communication tools in branding. As for interactivity, two-way communication on Facebook does not always mean branding success. It is also possible to redefine the function of Facebook in branding within the context of Turkish brands' content analysis. Facebook is a social media platform which focuses on messages in the form of traditional public relations practices rather than developing its own interactive contents.

References

- Angehrn, A. A. (1998). Towards the high tech, high touch Website. *Financial Times*, 9.
- Aaker, D. A. (1995). *Building strong brands*, USA: Simon and Schuster.
- Brand Finance (2015), Turkey 100 2015. Reached from http://brandfinance.com/images/upload/brand_finance_turkey_100_2015.pdf (July 2015).
- Booth, N., & Matic, J. A. (2011). Mapping and leveraging influencers in social media to shape corporate brand perceptions, *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 16(3), 184-191.
- Brown, R. (2009). *Public Relations and the Social Web: How to use social media and web 2.0 in communications*, USA: Kogan Page Publishers.

- Chauhan, K., & Pillai, A. (2013). Role of content strategy in social media brand communities: a case of higher education institutes in India. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 22(1), 40-51.
- Edelman, R. (2002). The Power of Public Relations in a Complex World. İçinde C. Komisarjevsky, R. Jernstedt, & D. Middleberg (Ed.), *Inside the Minds: The Art of Public Relations Industry Visionaries Reveal the Secrets to Successful Public Relations*, Aspatore Books (pp. 125-141), USA: Aspatore Books.
- Ellwood, I. (2002). *The Essential brand book: Over 100 techniques to increase brand value*, 2nd ed., USA: Taylor & Francis.
- Erdogmuş, İ. E., & Cicek, M. (2012). The impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 58, 1353-1360.
- Fog, K., Budtz, C., Munch, P., & Blanchette, S. (2010). *Storytelling: Branding in Practice*, Springer Science & Business Media.
- Friedrichsen, M. and Mühl-Benninghaus, W. (2013). *Handbook of social media management: value chain and business models in changing media markets*, Springer Science & Business Media.
- Wearesocial (2014). Global Digital Statistics We are Social's Snapshot of Key Digital Indicators. Reached from <http://etonpreneurs.com/uploads/Global%20Social,%20Digital%20&%20Mobile%20Statistics,%20Jan%202014.pdf> (May 2015).
- Green, A. (2010). *Creativity in public relations*. USA: Kogan Page Publishers.
- Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (2008). *Taking brand initiative: How companies can align strategy, culture, and identity through corporate branding*, USA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Kesavan, R., Bernacchi, M. D., & Mascarenhas, O. A. (2013). Word of mouse: CSR communication and the social media, *International Management Review*, 9(1), 58-66.
- Muñiz, A. M., & Schau, H. J. (2011). How to inspire value-laden collaborative consumer-generated content. *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 209-217.
- Solis, B., & Breakenridge, D. K. (2009). *Putting the public back in public relations: How social media is reinventing the aging business of PR*, USA: FT Press.
- Smith, B. G. (2011). Becoming—quirky|| towards an understanding of practitioner and blogger relations in public relations, *Public Relations Journal*, 5(4), 1-17.
- Wilcox, D. L., Ault, P. H., & Agee, W. K. (2015). *Public relations: Strategies and tactics*, UK: Pearson.

© Copyright of Journal of Current Researches on Social Science is the property of Strategic Research Academy and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.