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1 Introduction

Since 1998, the number of people that got access to the internet had grown very quickly. For instance, due to Pew Research Center Survey (1998), 41 percent of adults in the US used the internet. Therefore, the potential of reaching customers through corporate Web site was very promising. According to Perry and Bodkin (2000), many companies were convinced of this phenomenon and started to establish their presence online. As the result of this, a great deal of companies and almost all major companies have a Web site (Budman, 1998). Maintaining good a company Website, however, is not an easy task. For example, a company named Quaker estimated that they had spent 65.000\$ for design and maintenance of their Website in the first year. In addition, it took twice as much effort and time to reply to an email than answering a customer phone call (Shermach, 1997). Therefore, at the beginning of the using of the internet it could be considered that "most corporate Websites are bad-unsightly (literally), difficult to work with, and missing vital content" (Budman, 1998).

Nowadays, most companies have better web pages and this seem to be a standard in the digital era. However, a new phenomenon has come and many companies are trying to cope with it like they did with the boom of "company homepages". The appearance of Facebook in 2004 and Twitter in 2006 strengthens the trend of using Social Networks in the world population. David Wilkins (2008), content strategy senior director of social networking solutions firms Mzinga, noted in his paper that over 50 percent of people from 20 to 30 year-olds in the U.S. have Facebook accounts. Until now, Facebook has prospered to over 500 million active users (users who have returned to the site in the last 30 days) and the site is available in over 70 languages (Elizabeth Linder, 2009). Although Twitter was launched two years later than Facebook, in October 2006, it has become one of the major social networks website. In the article of Kaplan and Haenlein (2011), Twitter enjoyed a growth of 6.2 million new users each month in 2009. In addition, these two authors found out that Twitter users are not mainly teenagers or students. Actually, one-third of the users are over 35 years old, with an average income of \$85,000 per year. Hence, many companies (such as The New York Times, Whole Foods Market or Google etc.) use Twitter for its interesting demographic profile. However, not all companies' accounts on Facebook and Twitter are meaningful and attractive. In many cases, companies just post information about themselves and not paying much attention to things started from customers while social websites are the place for people to interact with each other. The situation with these firms is somehow alike to the time when companies just make webpage because everybody did.

Therefore, we could wonder if there is any real strategy behind the "being on Facebook and Twitter" action. That is precisely the aspect we want to investigate in our thesis. It becomes more and more popular for companies to use social networks but do they really take it seriously and want to use opportunities it provides with a real content strategy. What is meant by content strategy is how the content submitted on social networks is chosen and how can it be considered as part of a firm's strategy (Halvorson, 2009).

1.1 Background

In order to conduct our thesis, we decided to study the case of Subway. Subway is an international company that has 34,601 restaurants in 98 countries over the world (Subway, 2011). The company offers fresh and customized sandwiches to customer only through franchised stores. The strategy of the company in general is to prioritize opening new shops, for which they need franchisees. That is why communication of Subway not only targets final customers but also aim to communicate with potential franchisees. We found out that Subway is quite active on Facebook and Twitter. In the countries where Subway is present and has the more restaurants, there is a Facebook and/or Twitter account dedicated only to that country. This is quite an effort since Subway has restaurant in over 90 different countries. In addition, we think that Subway is successful on Facebook since there are many customers who participate on the company's social network account, making it an interesting case to study. We, therefore, want to investigate Subway's content strategy on the main social networks and in different countries in order to compare them. Our team has members from France and Russia and we are all studying in Sweden. Hence, we decided to investigate these three countries in our thesis. Moreover, since one member of our team is Vietnamese and knowing that Subway just entered this country and launched an official Facebook page for Subway Vietnam, we will also study it.

The main social networks we will use are Facebook for France, Sweden and Vietnam, and Vkontakte for Russia because it is the most popular there. The official Subway's accounts in these four countries are all recent, almost 2 years for Russia, 7 months for France, 3 months for Sweden, and some weeks for Vietnam (in May 2011). This is then a recent tool for Subway. At the same time theories about content strategy already exists from some years but the field still deserves more effort to understand all of its aspects and above all to face the continuous and quick evolution of the internet and social networks. Theories about content strategy emerged in the late 1990s with the growth of the internet but it has evolved a lot since then.

1.2 Problem discussion

The dynamic environment of today's changing world requires companies to reach their customers and target audience worldwide in new quick ways. The appearance of social networks allows everyone to be present in the one or several internet sites and thus, making the communication easy and available despite the distance between people. Consequently, many companies try to establish their presence on these social networks such as Facebook or Twitter. Besides some companies that actually make use of social network advantages, there is also a decent amount of firms that just create "pro forma" accounts on Facebook or Twitter. Recently, we found out that Subway is quite active in social network sites. Hence, we wanted to investigate how the company deals with the challenges of using social media. It can be called a challenge because the phenomenon of social networks is still very recent and mysterious, not very well understood. The problem we are going to treat in our thesis is how companies can use social networks in an appropriate and efficient way, while minimizing risks due to the lack of knowledge about the tool and its unpredictable aspect.

Consequently, promoting the company, especially global ones, and their concept in the existing or new markets in the social networks becomes a new tool which is not clear till the end in usage and the result of which can be sometimes unpredictable. Global companies use social networks as communication tool available for everyone and in several countries. They have to choose whether to modify the advertisement and ways of being present in social networks for every country separately in order to fit into the country's peculiarity such as culture and social expectations or to use the standardized model which means targeting everyone around the world. It would mean sending the same content, either always in one language English, or just translating the content. This is a main issue for companies nowadays, and our work aim at evaluating the possibility of a global content strategy or the necessity for adaptation depending on the geographical area, language, culture, image of the brand in the country, and other factors.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this work is to discover the strategy behind the activity of Subway in social networks. We plan to analyze the content and interview managers from the firm. This will give us an overview of how Subway manages its fan pages on social networks. Thus we will assess whether there is a unified strategy that Subway use when publishing the contents on their social network pages. Also we will evaluate these pages using existing theories about content strategy.

In addition, we will compare the content strategies of Subway in different countries: France, Sweden and Russia. The goal of this comparison is to analyze if the company uses a standardized or adapted content strategy in social networks depending on the country and how the social networks' tools are used. This will able us to give recommendations for each country. Finally we will use the examples of the three countries studied to give possible recommendations to Subway Vietnam. Subway just entered Vietnam market and decided to create a Facebook account although currently, there is only one restaurant in the country (Subway, 2011a).

Research questions:

- Is there a strategy behind the contents that Subway published on their social network pages? Also, does Subway have a standardized or differentiated content strategy on social networks in France, Russia and Sweden?
- How can Subway improve its content strategy in the four studied countries (France, Russia, Sweden and Vietnam)?
- Which recommendations can we give to Subway Vietnam about usage of social networks based on the examples of France, Sweden and Russia?

1.4 Definition

Netnography is "internet – based ethnography", a qualitative studying method of on-line communities (Kozinets, 1997).

Facebook

Like: "Like is a way to give positive feedback or to connect with things you care

about on Facebook. You can like content that your friends post to give” them feedback or like a page that you want to connect with on Facebook” (Facebook, 2011).

Wall: main page of every Facebook account or fan page, the messages and discussion by Subway and other people are always on this page.

Twitter

The following definitions for Twitter’s terminology are taken from Twitter Help Center:

Tweet: ”A Tweet is a small burst of information. Each Tweet is 140 characters in length” (Twitter, 2011).

Twitter hashtag: ”The # symbol, called a hashtag, is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. It was created organically by Twitter users as a way to categorize messages” (Twitter, 2011).

Example of hashtag: “”@VegNews” added the hashtag before the word "vegan" in their message. The word is now a link to search results for all Tweets containing "#vegan" in the message” (Twitter, 2011).

Following: ”Following someone on Twitter means that you are subscribing to their messages (called tweets) as a Follower. The updates of the person you are following will appear in your homepage and that person can send you private Tweets (direct messages)” (Twitter, 2011).

Follower: “If someone follows you in Twitter, they become your follower. Followers will receive your tweets in their home page, phone, or any application (like Tweetie, TweetDeck, etc.) that they use” (Twitter, 2011).

Vkontakte

Vkontakte: a social network widely used in Russia and other Russian speaking countries. The existing worldwide known prototype is Facebook (Vel’f, 2010).

2 Frame of reference

2.1 Content strategy

For a website, if no one really care about the content of a web until the last minute, it is most likely to be an empty shell without a soul. In addition, the content is needed to be overseen and updated over time because people will forget about outdated sites (Halvorson, 2009). In order to solve these problems, Halvorson (2009) suggests a content strategy when companies want to be presence online. According to her, content strategy is “the practice of planning for the creation, delivery, and governance of useful, usable content” (Halvorson, 2009, p.21). To understand better the term, she claims that content strategy should be broken down into two parts: content and strategy. Content involves many things such as text, data, graphics, video and audio (Halvorson, 2009). A strategy is a “holistic, well-considered plan for obtaining a specific goal or result” (Halvorson, 2009, p.21). A content strategy should “use words and data to create unambiguous content that supports meaningful, interactive experiences” according to Rachel Lovinger (2007). Lovinger was the first practitioner writes an article about content strategy and guild the way for further studies of the new field afterwards (Halvorson, 2009).

Organizations often create a large amount of content in order to assist their products and business processes. In a normal firm, almost every department helps to create and modify the content in one way or another. For instance, marketing and communication department make information to target potential customers, general public and the press. They create things such as press releases, brochures, video clips, and advertisements. These information or content, then, are refined by technical department and published on the company web sites, Facebook or Twitter accounts. For a company that operate in many countries, the amount of touches and modifies of the content are even more. When content is made and modified by many different authors within the organization, “invisible walls” often exist among these content producing areas or even within content areas themselves. These contents have the tendency to be “created, and re-created, and recreated, often with changes or differences at each iteration” (Rockley, Kostur & Manning, 2003, p.3). This phenomenon is called the “content silo trap” due to Rockley, Kostur and Manning (2003).

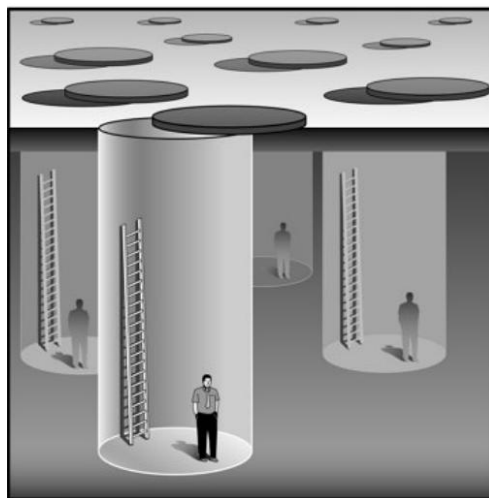


Figure 2-1: Content silo trap by Rockley, Kostur and Manning (2003)

For example, in a multinational company, the information about the company products, is originally produced from the company headquarter. After that, the information is transfer to branches of the company in different countries. The marketing departments in these branches, then, create their own marketing content in order to suit the culture, business environment of each specific country. Next, the IT department in each country needs to modify the content in order to fit in the web layout. These groups of people are making the same content, the information about the company products. However, the content produced is different in every second because the content is made in various forms and different objectives in the mind of different groups of people from different countries. Then, the next person wants to create something about the content need to review mostly all of the previous content. This creates significant inefficiency and thus, the company seems to fall into a content silo trap. For Subway, the firm operates in 98 different countries (Subway, 2011a), and hence, there is a high possibility of content silo trap problem.

Rockley, Kostur and Manning (2003) explain that there are three main causes of content silo trap in organization. First of all is lack of knowing about the other initiatives, time restrain and inconsistency of information. Secondly, people may do not have the right tools or time to look for existing content, leading to start things over again. Thirdly, the content process will stay isolated if authors or groups of authors do not identify the commonalities between their content, making it difficult to identify and reused content across organization. The existence of content silos in firms can cause many negative effects including poor communication, lack of sharing, reduced awareness of other initiatives, lack of standardization and consistency, higher cost of content creation and making the content user suffer (Rockley, Kostur & Manning, 2003).

In order to solve the content silo trap, Rockley, Kostur and Manning (2003, p.7) proposed a unified content strategy for firms:

“A unified content strategy is a repeatable method of identifying all content requirements up front, creating consistently structured content for reuse, managing that content in a definitive source, and assembling content on demand to meet your customers’ needs.”

A unified content strategy give a firm many benefits including faster time to market, better use of resources, reduced costs, improved quality and usability of content and increased customer satisfaction. A unified content strategy has three main elements: content management system, reusable content and unified processes (Rockley, Kostur & Manning, 2003).

2.1.1 Content management system

A unified content strategy is a system that manages content in a definitive source. Traditionally, content management systems is understand as mechanisms of managing such as controlling, reporting, assessment to content etc (Rockley, Kostur & Manning, 2003). However, accroding to Rockley, Kostur and Manning (2003), content management is not about technology and managing mechanisms only, it is about the essence of the business and the environment around and inside the company

A content management system starts with identifying the company’s needs, defining

the strategy, implementation support, work flow and content delivery (Rockley, Kostur & Manning, 2003).

2.1.2 Reusable content

Content reuse implies creating the original content once and then, other people in the organization just need to reuse that content many times after, without re-creating the same content again and again. Traditional documents are often stored in files of sections. However, reusable content should be created in form of objects or elements. Documents that create after that just need to combine suitable different elements to meet the needs of the author. For instance, the facts about the company (written in paragraphs) can be put in brochures, on the Web, on the company Facebook account, in company presentation or in any where else that serve the author purpose (Rockley, Kostur & Manning, 2003).

In addition, according to Rockley, Kostur and Manning (2003), reusable content should be divided into small reusable components such as sections, paragraphs and sentences. It is easier for any person in the company to choose suitable elements to reuse or repurpose according to his or her needs. Nevertheless, reusing content elements does not mean copy and paste. In fact, elements are “stored in the database or content management system and are referenced (pointed to) for inclusion in a virtual document” (Rockley, Kostur & Manning, 2003, p.10). Hence, these objects can be used in many place but still convey the same content.

2.1.3 Unified processes

Unified processes are the final element of a unified content strategy. These processes need to tear down the invisible silo walls in order to form a collaborative working environment where authors can share the progress of developing content to build a one single main source of information. The main goal of unified processes is to be sure that all departments in the firm know about the existence of available content. Then, everyone in the company can reuse these content and all processes can be repeatable and explicit (Rockley, Kostur & Manning, 2003).

2.2 Social media

In this part we will focus more on how social networks and, more globally, social media, may be opportunities for companies to improve and market their products, services and brands by adopting a content strategy. Social media appeared recently and a lot of companies have not yet recognized their tremendous potential. Still, there are already some examples of companies who started to use social networks and include them in their strategy. It is important to point out that these few companies who really involve in social media have the opportunism and bravery to face a new, unknown and unpredictable tool from their point of view. One example of a company who used social media and had success doing it is Subway. The company is active on several social networks such as Twitter and Facebook to communicate, that is to say they use these platforms to inform customers about the firm's new products, new shops, special offers

and so on.

The presence of Subway in social media can also be explained by the wish of the company to listen to people, let them share their opinions, why they like or do not like the brand, what are their good or bad experiences with the company, etc. Social media are a combination of user-generated information and company-generated information.

However using social media for a company is very tricky and as fast as the web changes the situation can turn against you in a second. We are going to list these benefits and risks and what behaviors are encouraged by the researchers.

2.2.1 How can social networks be useful for companies?

Social media can be used for several purposes by a company. These different ways to use social media can be placed in three categories: market research, communication and after-sale services. Every purpose is distinctive but they can be combined in the content strategy of the firm. Companies generally exploit social media for all its possible uses because they are related. We will further see the benefits and risks of these uses, and in this part we will only focus on the definition and delimitation of these uses.

Market research

Social media can be used to conduct marketing research, more precisely to know people needs, wishes, and demands. To lead this research, marketers can use netnography¹. Concretely companies interact and analyze the information shared by their clients or by all the people who decide to share their thoughts and opinions publicly on social media. Quinton and Harridge-March (2010) explain how companies can make a netnography research to know customers perception of a brand and of its competitors. By analyzing these information companies can find some recurrent ideas or problems which can be taken into consideration for their future strategy. Companies can use social media in two ways for marketing research. It can allow people to express new, innovative ideas which can improve the products and services of the firm. The other way is to pay attention to people complains and problems related to the use of the companies' product or to the way the services are provided. For example if different people relate the same anomaly in a product or a similar bad experience with the firm's activities, the company can quickly be aware of it and react.

The feedback by the customers, which is of course a key element of a marketing strategy, is facilitated by social media, leading to more information with higher level of relevance and reliability because the possible amount of people expressing feedback is way higher than in traditional market research which are limited in their scale and have less flexibility (Kaplan & Haelein, 2011).

¹ Netnography: "internet – based ethnography", a qualitative studying method of on-line communities (Kozinets, 1997).

Communication

Another use of social media for companies may be to promote its products and services, basically to communicate on them for marketing purposes. Social media are a very cheap way to inform potential customers about new products or new services from the company or innovations which can improve the experience of their clients. The company can also broadcast special offers on social media, like a hamburger available only for a limited time in a fast food restaurant. It could also be useful to communicate on a reduced price of a product. For example Jet Blue Airways, a British airline company, made special Twitter offers by giving the opportunity to buy tickets at very small prices on some specific flights. This kind of communication brings new customers to the company (Kaplan & Haelein, 2011). In a marketing strategy it is common to organize contest which allow people to win prizes of different natures and social media can be a mean to reach a lot of people in these games, once again the aim is to raise the notoriety of the brand. To summarize social media obviously can potentially be a very original, low-cost and efficient tool to advertise a firm's activities.

After sales services

The third main use companies can have from social media is as an after sales platform. If a company is active on social media it means that it allows everyone to share on the company and people often do share their experiences, good or bad, with the brand. Companies hire people who are specifically taken to interact on social media. These people's job is not only to create information, but also to answer customers' comments and questions. Some companies have recognized this as an opportunity to answer specific questions from customers that need more attention to solve their problems or are doubtful and need information. Social media allow recognizing these people; help them and this way the whole after sales service is improved (Kaplan & Haelein, 2011).

2.2.2 Social networks benefits and risks

Benefits

A lot of researchers believe that companies should not be afraid of social media because it can create a lot of benefits, at different levels. We already touch upon the fact that customers can express their ideas and comments on the brand, the products, the services which can be valuable information for the company to know its customers and its image but it also has positive results on the customers according to Adjei, Noble and Noble (2010). When positive feedback is expressed on social media from customers, it reduces the uncertainty of other customers on the firm and on its products. User-generated information in social media are very trusted and people who can see positive user-generated information on a specific brand or product are more inclined to buy at this firm.

Another main aspect of social networks use for marketers is the creation of an online community around the brand. The web and social media allows creating a global community, also called brand community (Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009). This brand community is the reunion of people sharing the same identity and rituals recognized in

one brand. The studies of these communities have been increasing lately and many researchers underline its positive aspects. It can perpetuate the culture of the brand and also its trendiness for the customers. The brand community also welcomes new members and gives them information; concretely it brings new customers to the firm. It has also been showed that belonging to a brand community improve the fidelity to the brand (Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009). However the possibility of a global brand community may be doubted because some discrepancies have been found between customers in different markets and then the existence of sub-tribes in a brand community has been defended (Cova, Pace & Park, 2007). It means that a global strategy for communication threw social media may be inappropriate because customers' expectations are different from a country to another. Nevertheless a brand community is definitely something a company can benefit from if it uses it well. The asset of a brand community which may be the more interesting for a company is the fidelity to the brand it creates for its customers.

Risks

Because the use of social media for marketing reasons is a very recent phenomena and it is still unsung, there are a lot of risks related to it and companies using social media or willing to do so should be aware of them. We previously discussed how good user-generated information had some positive effects on how the people perceive the products and services of the firm concerned. However the opposite effect may happen too. Negative feedback, complaints from customers on social media which are visible by other customers are bad for the company and it will discourage people to buy its products as it damages the image of the company. Researchers do not agree unanimously on this topic. For example Adjei et al. (2010) found out that the impact of negative user-generated information in online brand communities was not statistically significant. Another theory defended by Liu (2006) suggests that the positive or negative nature of the messages posted by the customers on social media is not as determining as their volume to explain the future success of the product.

Social media are platforms dedicated to people. Thus, people have the power and claim for it, everyone can express his/her thought on an equal footing. It explains partly the great success social networks such as Facebook and Twitter meet currently. People are free and they decide on social media. This fundamental aspect is an opportunity but also by nature a threat for companies which prefer to control as much as possible their environment. People could be suspicious about why a private company, with growth and profit goals, comes in their "playground". What's more companies in social media want customers to interact with them, share their opinions and ideas. There could be confusion between what is an anonymous and impartial point of view from a commercial announce made by the company (Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009). People may also be doubtful on the honesty of some positive comments from presumed customers which are actually made from the company. Whether these are legitimate thought or not it has to be avoided by the companies because it would once again damage their image (Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009). The combination and confrontation between user-generated and company-generated information may be obscure and dangerous for the legitimacy of the presence of a company on social media.

2.2.3 What content strategy to adopt on social media, tips and behaviors

We are going now to define what a good content strategy is and what answers give the theories on how to adapt its content strategy. Research has already brought some answers to the threats we listed previously, resulting in some key behaviors to adopt in utilizing social media. Some tips on how to integrate social media in a firm's content strategy can also be found by looking at the experiences and examples of companies which already are active on social media and have either positive or negative behaviors and results. The findings of researchers can be summarized in four main points: **Relevance, Listening and return, Ethic and finding a Balance**. We selected the aspects which were recurrent in different research and decided to make our own criteria. That is why the four points we will now develop does not directly result from one specific theory or work of a specific group of researchers. We instead decided to create four criteria which seemed to be the most appropriate and insightful. We are going now to explain more in depth these aspects.

- **Relevance:** means the information submitted by a company always have to be related to its activities, or related to the company in one way or another. Companies should not commit itself in a debate, or react to some events not related at all with the company or even involved in political life. The messages sent by the company should always be neutral and non-subject to controversy (Brown, Broderick & Lee, 2007). Relevance also implies that companies have to adapt to their audience, that is to say, as for every communication you use a language, a style, use supporting tools like images or videos according to the characteristics of the people you target and will receive your message. That is why companies have to know their customers and, in the case of social media, know their “likers” or “followers” and people interacting with the brand to adapt the content strategy and the way it is provided (Carter, 2006).

- **Listening and return:** means that companies willing to use social media must be aware that it is not a unilateral communication, but a bilateral one. They must expect people to react to the messages they send; people may also ask questions or even show their anger or their admiration to the brand with strong words via social media. The information is public so a lot of people can access to them so you have to be very careful on how you manage to interact with these people. Companies should both show they listen to people and take into consideration their remarks, and give solutions, explanations, answers but also thanks and excuses. Like every communication process, social media have codes companies must respect very carefully (Kaplan & Haelein, 2011) and it is also part of the behaviors companies should adopt in their content strategy.

- Listening and return is linked to the next point which is **Ethic**. Transparency, honesty is necessary when using social media for a company. Companies would take a big risk trying to manipulate its “followers” and “likers” because it would most probably be discovered one day or another. We can find one example recently with the earthquake and tsunami which happened in March 2011 in Japan. Microsoft sent a message on Twitter saying they would give one dollar to the victims in Japan for each person who would “retweet” this message to the limit of 100 000 \$ (retweet = rebroadcasting a message someone else sent to your followers, showing this way you support the message or like the idea it implies). People reacted showing they were outraged by the willingness of the company to use the catastrophe to promote itself.

Only six hours after the first message Microsoft had to send a new one saying they would finally give 100 000 \$ directly and apologized for the misunderstanding. This example is a bad content strategy choice, and it shows how cautious organizations should be using social media. Fortunately for Microsoft they reacted very fast, reducing this way the bad influence of the blunder. The third main rule is thus to allow people to express themselves freely and let the dialogue open and not censored by the company. The research of Carter (2009) highlights the importance of accepting the mistakes of the company on social media publicly, showing this way the wish of the company to move on.

To conclude this part on the values or behaviors to respect in order to use social media efficiently for an organization, we can say that **finding a balance** summarize everything. Companies or organizations should find the balance between letting people express their impressions, criticisms, etc and keeping control on what is said so that it does not have a negative impact on the image of the brand and its products and services (Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009). Transparency must be respected but the company must allow the necessary resources (people and money) to be able to adapt its strategy on social media depending on the interaction with the “followers”. It is very difficult to achieve this balanced state for a company on social media, and many which are active on social media have made mistakes because the Internet is unpredictable. Companies should not underestimate the power of social media, both in a positive and negative way. It has a tremendous potential but firms should allow enough money and people with knowledge of the field to have a successful content strategy on social media.

2.3 Literature review

Our literature review was made among the journal and newspapers articles, textbooks, internet web sites and other sources of information. We used various electronic databases, among them Google Scholar and Google Books, eJulia and other library’s platforms. Moreover, our tutor gave us useful advices concerning the key words for searching the materials.

The literature review should be done accurately. For this we checked that all the literature which we are using is relevant to our thesis topic and that this literature is up-to-date. At first we set the key words that were used for theory searching. Our next step was to search for the relevant textbooks and articles and other sources of information. The following stages are the analyzing of the collected literature and thesis writing (Saunders et al., 2009).

3 Methodology

This chapter describes the used methods applied in writing this paper. It also illustrates the ways of collecting and analyzing data. Finally, the explanation of why we chose particular methods instead of others is provided.

The methodology part of our thesis aims to inform readers about the existing research designs and the reasons we are using some of them. We explain why we chose qualitative method of collecting data instead of quantitative (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Furthermore, the description of sub methods of qualitative research will be discussed with reasons of using particularly them.

3.1 Research philosophy

The philosophy for all the time is based on two opposite views which are objectivism and subjectivism. The natural sciences gave birth to the objectivism and are using its methods in today's experiments, observations and any types of work where something concrete should be calculated or proved (Holden & Lynch, 2004).

The approach that states that the common view has to be in all scientific questions where the social world can be explained with the aims of the natural science is called positivism. (Smith, Booth & Zalewski, 1996). According to Flick (2006), gathering and analyzing data must be conducted in the similar way for both natural and social sciences. Thus, the core idea of the positivistic method is to support all studies by statistical data. This approach goes against to our views of conducting the research. We believe that using the social networks for communicating with people cannot be studied by implementing mathematical or statistical methods. Thus, positivism method is not the one we can and will use in our research and analyze part.

The method, opposite to positivism, is hermeneutics. The history of the word hermeneutics refers to the ancient Greek language where a verb *hermeneueien* can be translated as to interpret. Therefore, we can state that the hermeneutics approach deals with understanding and rephrasing the textual materials which can be in form of: "stories, interviews, participant observations, diaries, letters, or other relevant documents" (Byrne, 2001, p.968). According to Gadamer and Marshall (2004), the two researchers of the philosophical hermeneutics, hermeneutics analysis is a research which does not define clear the material (the meaning can be interpreted) and is highly connected to the situational background. The latter one can be affected by the individual assumptions of the researcher, the people surrounding him at the particular moment, their current activities. The hermeneutics research interprets the text depending on his or her prejudgment (which in their case is affected by the language the researcher uses) (Chalmers, 2004).

We decided to choose the hermeneutics approach as the basics for our analysis part. We are intending to analyze Subway and how it is presented in social networks in four very different countries: France, Russia, Sweden and Vietnam. It is impossible to create using scientific tools such a model that will take into consideration the culture, language peculiarities, specifics of every social network and other criteria by which the comparison should be made. Oppositely, the hermeneutics methods allow us to make

assumptions, discuss changes between countries and social networks and make our own conclusions verified by collected data.

Thus, as the former one is used in the qualitative research methods while the latter one in the quantitative. (Filmer, Phillipson, Silverman & Walsh, 1972), hermeneutics is appropriate for us.

3.2 Research approach

An approach should be followed and reasons. However, there exists different ways of reasoning the concept of interest (Morse & Mitcham, 2002). The two most common and used approaches are deduction and induction. The main difference lies in the way of moving along with analyzing a case.

Deduction is an approach which starts from broad and is finalized by the specifics. It implies the usage of the theory in the first stage followed by the observation and finishing with summing up the result. Thus the result one should come logically from the theory (Dey, 2004). The induction approach makes the opposite direction movements. It, vice versa, has the starting point as a case. Further the observation is made of this case and, finally, the last step is the generalization to a broader population (Dey, 2004).

Our thesis research is established on the inductive method. According to the induction the first step we need to take is to make an observation of the actual situation of how Subway is presented in every chosen country and how it uses the social networks. The following step will be conducting a research of the official pages of Subway in social networks'. Finally, the comparative analyze will be fulfilled supported by the theory (Neuman, 2010).

3.3 Research method

Qualitative and quantitative approaches are two fundamental types of collecting information that are widely used in the studies.

According to Hammersley (1992) the following comparative table can be constructed

Table 3-1: Differences between quantitative and qualitative research

Quantitative research	Qualitative research
Uses numbers	Uses words
Concerns with behavior	Focuses on meanings, generalization
Utilizes the hypothetic-deductive method	Relies on an inductive logic of inquiry
	Lack of quantitative research's power to generalize

Quantitative method is a method that proves all theories statistically. As well it presents the analyzed data in figures, charts, diagrams and other statistical - based ways. Quantitative method is highly used in natural sciences (such as chemistry, physics etc) thus a lot of terminology is the same as applied for studying the nature. For example, “variables, control, measurement, experiment” (Bryman, 1988). In the analyzing of the social networks we will use neither such scientific terminology nor the methods they imply. Being too much scientific can create an omission of the observed data. Quantitative analysis does not take into consideration the “behavior in everyday situations” as well as “the difference between natural and social world” (Silverman, 2000, p. 4). This results in the inability to investigate the social and cultural constructions of the life, which are brought there by human beings. And logically the observation of people’s behavior cannot be done. The research itself is made without or with little contact with people so it cannot analyze the reasons of any phenomena (Silverman, 2000). The absence of people in our researches contradicts to the sense of our thesis. As a result, we cannot use quantitative analysis in our thesis work.

Thus, as our aim is to find out and make a descriptive analyze of the Subway’s strategy in social networks, we are employing the controversially to the above described quantitative research a qualitative data collection method, that studies the fundamentals of the social relations (Silverman, 2000). This should be made due to the increasing complications in the life (Flick, 2006). So the aim of this research method is to separate and understand causes and effects of the studied phenomena. We need to investigate is it worth for Subway to be in social networks and also what are the main reasons for it. Moreover, the common design should be created that would allow to make the similar conclusions for analogous cases (Flick, 2006). We are intending to construct a common structure for analysis of every country and to fill it. One important rule that should be followed during conduction of the qualitative research is to eliminate as much as possible the researchers’ and as well the people’s views or influence. This is made in order to make the research less subjective what will result in a higher quality and more precise analysis (Flick, 2006). The features of the qualitative research are to observe rather than to conduct an experiment using randomly chosen people; to make unstructured interviews instead of structured and allow the conversation flow in not-determined beforehand way – so relying on the deeper answers, which can be given due to the unstrained discussion. We are planning to make an observation of the fan messages, their behavior especially in cases of not being satisfied. That has been randomly chosen followers of the social networks. Moreover, we are going to take interviews in the semi structured form. The world is studied from the view point of chosen people, so that the behavior can be explained by the unlimited amount of reasons. Obviously, it is impossible to take them all into consideration. Consequently the qualitative research method prefers to generate hypothesis (in contrarily to quantitative method which proves them) (Silverman, 2000).

All investigations of our thesis are based on the qualitative research in particularly on netnography and interviews. There is no need for us to make any statistically proved researches as we are intending to make a research of the strategies of Subway in social networks.

Netnography is rather a young method and the theoretical base of it is not so well developed comparing to other qualitative methods such as interviews. Netnography is relevant for our research as using its concepts we can make a right observation and analysis of the Facebook, Twitter and V Kontakte pages of local Subway branches.

Interviews are the best way to get relevant inside-company information. It is trust worthy data as the questions that are preferred not to be opened to the public are simply not answered with the following explanation. Thus we trust that all other information given for us by the Subway branches is trustworthy. Thus, interviews are also a method we chose in conducting our research.

3.4 Research strategy

There are a lot of research strategy methods and they are based on the purpose and questions of the thesis. Experiments, archival research, surveys, ethnography, case study, grounded theory, action research are all the existing research strategies (Saunders et al., 2009).

Our research strategy for the analysis part will be related to the case study. Case study is a tool to make a full and complete observation of a specific example. It makes the reliable conclusions just for this particular case and it is impossible to give any trustworthy information for a broader population. In any case, it gives the hypotheses which first of all can be checked on a broader number of similar cases and secondly which can be used in the beginning steps of the researches (Abercrombie et al, 1984). Case study method is used with the aim to make a deeper research of a complex issue, simplify it and to understand better. The research part we are going to divide for countries so we are dividing the case into small parts. We will make an analysis for every country and only after that it will be possible for us to make a table of comparison and conduct a full analysis of it.

The case study method has disadvantages as well. Among them the following can be mentioned: it is impossible to generalize from a single case and misunderstandings can occur as a result of the researcher's interpretation. Writing the thesis in an international team we tried to take as much advantage of it as possible. Thus, we chose our countries for the analyzing, so that there should not occur the culture and language misunderstandings. We observed all the messages left in the walls of social networks what also leads to the decreasing of our wrong interpretation as we can make our conclusions based to a wider population. We made the analysis for three countries and based on them generalized the overall strategy. We are trying to decrease as much as possible the possible disadvantages of the case study method.

Case study research is used widely in all kinds of works but still some misunderstandings can appear along with applying it (Flyvbjerg, 2004):

Misunderstanding 1: a lot of scientists and researchers believe that the most important knowledge in conducting studies is theoretical. But, in fact, experts base their results on the concrete knowledge. To be clearer, researcher is familiar up to several thousand of concrete cases based on this practical knowledge the whole analysis is made.

After finishing the observation and research of the social networks' official pages of local Subways we are writing the analysis to each country. Thus, we will get appropriate concrete knowledge for France, Russia and Sweden consequently. Based on this knowledge and the theoretical one which we gained working on the frame of reference part we can make further conclusions and general analysis.

Misunderstanding 2: It is improperly to generalize one case study to a wider population. Such study cannot be appropriate for further scientific development as the life situations are pretty much complicated and if a researcher managed to consider most reasons of the phenomena it does not mean that the same reasons are applicable to even a similar phenomenon.

We are walking away this misunderstanding by doing three case studies of the local Subways in social networks. This helps us to make the generalization as reliable as possible.

Misunderstanding 3: Researchers preconceived opinion is usually supported. Thus a "bias towards verification" (Flyvbjerg, 2004, p. 421) exists. According to Diamond (1996) the final case study analysis can be damaged sufficiently by the unscientific methods which can be used by the researcher.

In the research observation and analysis we are trying to stick ourselves to the methods described in this part (in particular to interview techniques and netnography method).

Misunderstanding 4: Specific case study can be not sufficient for summarizing and introducing a generalized theory or idea. This is so due to narrative elements that occurs in the case study description. The real life's complexities and contradictories are in most cases more complicated than it is possible to describe them. As mentioned above, this makes the generalization impossible or introduces the mistakes and contraventions.

We presented more than one case study before generalizing the result – thus the unreliability decreases. All observations and descriptions we will supply with print screens that will reduce the narrative inventing.

The case study method is the core method we will apply in the practical part. We are intending to describe the way local Subways use social networks (to be more precise Facebook, Twitter and Vkontakte), analyze its strategies, make a comparative table based on the main criteria and finally making the conclusion based on it.

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Primary data collection

In this part we will discuss our choice about which kind of primary data we will use. Primary data consists of information obtained through researches directly and which did not exist before (Silverman, 2000). Primary data's are new information and in our case we take them from interviews. We decided to use interviews among other means to have the point of view of the company we study. To understand and assess the content strategy of Subway we need internal information which cannot be found from outside the company. We will also discuss the preparation of the interviews and the treatment of the information afterwards.

Interviews

We will conduct three interviews for each country we studied (France, Russia and Sweden). We planned to make the forth interview with the representative of Subway Vietnam, but since we did not get any response we are presenting our own observations. We have decided make these interviews in our research process after having general knowledge and studying previous research about the field and existing theories about content strategy. Secondly, we need to start our netnography research before doing the interviews in order to ask more precise questions and to adapt them to what we would have already observed. This method of work also permits to ask for explanations to the managers we will contact about the facts we observe on social networks.

The interviewees are three managers of the three countries we decided to analyze for our thesis. They will be conducted by phone only. We are planning to do one interview for each person because we will already be well prepared for them and know most of the point we want to raise during the interviews thank to our previous work on theory and netnography. However, it may be possible to contact the person a second time in order to clarify complicated parts. We will take notes during the interview so that we can transcript the main points of the collected information. Because of the promise between our team and the managers, the name of these managers will remain anonymous in our thesis. We, therefore, name the head of marketing in Sweden as manager Swe, the marketing manager in France as manager Fra, the marketing manager in Russia as manger Rus. We also got a reply from a manger that is in charge of European region. He is a Communications and Customer Service Coordinator as well as an Ombudsman in Subway. We will call him manager EU in our thesis from now on.

The interviews will be semi structured. Semi structured interviews follow a general plan but at the same time is flexible so the discussion can go in several directions (Yin, 1989). The answers are not limited and do not necessarily answer just the initial question but can lead to related topics which are relevant to our work. Semi structured interviews allow to get a global impression and more understanding of the topic (Yin, 1989). We designed our interview with questions in a certain order for practical reasons but this order does not have to be followed exactly. We will make a structure to be well prepared for the interview and to be ready to jump from one question to another quickly without interrupting the discussion. We decided to use several types of questions, open, semi-open and closed. Some answers to closed questions will consequently be very short; most of such are such due to the clearness of the fact. Open questions on the contrary lead to deeper and more detailed answers. The two types of answers are primordial and valuable for our understanding of Subway's content strategy. The interviews transcript can be found in the appendix. These transcripts are results of the notes we took and the memories we have from the interviews but they cannot in any case be considered as quotes of the interviewees.

3.5.2 Secondary data collection

Netnography

The last decades changed the perception of the information a lot: instead of “watching the big networks consumers became them”. Now it is possible for everyone to gather a unique combination of the information by being a member of different communities (Kozinets, 2006). People join together to share information, experience and thoughts more and more in the World Wide Web. Thus a new qualitative method of studying people’s minds appears and it is called netnography (Kozinets, 1998).

Netnography, or “internet – based ethnography”, can be defined from 2 points of view. The first one is, as a product, netnography is a studying of textual on-line communication inside the cybercultures (Kozinets, 1997) to understand their attitudes, perception, imagery, feelings (Langer & Beckman, 2005), needs and the way decisions are formed (Kozinets, 2002). From the other point of view, netnography in terms of process or research methodology is “a new qualitative research” method in which ethnographic techniques of conducting research are used with the aim of analysis communities formed in the WWW space (Kozinets, 2002). We are intending to make an observation of the Facebook pages, Twitter accounts and V Kontakte groups. We will consider the participants’ behavior inside the social networks.

There can be mentioned the following reasons for the appearance of the netnography. The first one is the Internet becomes more and more popular way of communicating between people so different communities are formed varying by interests, beliefs, values and rules of behaving. (Bowler, 2010) Another reason for conducting netnographic research is to avoid sensitive topics in the direct communication of the researcher and informants. Sometimes it happens that people do not want to meet personally and answer all questions of the interviewer thus a good solution is to find the same target group in the Internet and make the research in their community group (Langer & Beckman, 2005).

Netnography is often compared with the traditional ethnography and it has its advantages. It is simpler to conduct the netnographic research there is no need for finding a proper person for the research or joining several people together (Kozinets, 2006). Everyone whom we need to analyze is in our place, in one social platform and it becomes easy for them to communicate and for us to evaluate. Thus such studies are made quicker so they are less time consuming (Langer & Beckman, 2005). The costs for conducting a netnographic research are smaller due to reasons of the uselessness of renting a location for focus-groups or printing expenses of paper surveys. The instantaneous research of consumers’ thoughts can be made by an immediate questionnaire in the websites of the on-line communities. (Kozinets, 2006). Netnography is the most suitable research method to study sensitive topics. It is the easiest way for people to feel free and be able to share information about their experience and knowledge concerning topics about which he would never give an interview or answer questions (Langer & Beckman, 2005). This is very important issue for us. Some people, especially those who are shy, would never complain about the experienced negative treatment or the low service quality. Oppositely, in the web environment most people feel themselves freer and thus they share with their thoughts. It is valuable for us as we can study the real people’s behavior and the way Subway answers. This effect can be gained from the netnographic researches through the fact

that informants answering the questions in their usual environment making the everyday activities, in such situation in which they feel themselves the most comfortable (Sandlin, 2007). To sum up with advantages of the netnographic research methods we can say that it is a very speedy, easy and cheap way of making an analysis.

At the same time, the weak sites of the netnographic research exist as the whole analysis is based only on the textual materials so the in-person communicating signs such as pauses, mimicry, changes in voice, body movements are absent. Thus the data collected can be wrongly analyzed. The other possible problem is that the informant does not provide with the true facts about himself. It is quite easy to create another person including sex, age, preferences and act from his name. As it comes from the name World Wide Web it is clear that the whole world is connected to the Internet and anyone can share with his/her opinion. This creates the following language and cultural problems. It can happen that due to language barriers or misunderstanding in culture the researcher will not analyze rightly the received information (Kozinets, 2006).

The netnography is usually made in 5 steps. They are entrée, data collection, analysis, research ethics, and member checks.

Entrée

Entrée can be divided into 2 steps where the first step is aimed to formulate the research question and following that it is essential to find the most proper group for analysis (Langer & Beckman, 2005). The search of the suitable group can be easily achieved as they are located in the Internet (Sandlin, 2007). We are taking three social networks for analysis. They are Facebook, Vkontakte and Twitter. These social networks are appropriate for us because Subway is presented in them. What is so, in its turn, due to the facts that these social networks are the most popular in France, Russia and Sweden. The second step is to find as much of the information concerning the chosen group as possible. (Kozinets, 1998). We monitored all the discussions, walls and any other information left on the official pages of the local Subways.

To conduct a research, participants should be understood and divided as they act in different ways. Thus according to Kozinets (1999), people using social networks or those who are active in different forms of blogs should be divided into 4 categories. The first one is tourists: the least active participants of the online community, they do not have strong links to the group and their interest can pass quickly. At the same time this is the widest group of page fans. Minglers possess with the social links to the group but their interest in the central activity of it is perfunctorily. Devotees' interest in the group activities is high still they have just few social links to it. And finally insiders are those who have the strongest links to the group and at the same time their interest in the activity is permanent and high. For the research the key two data sources are devotees and insiders as they make the hugest contribution in the development of the online community (Kozinets, 1998).

Data collection

Data, which can be obtained in the Internet and through social communications in the WWW space, sometimes might be in the enormous quantity. It is essential to choose the proper one for making the following analysis. To do so the principle of selecting the information is according to the research question. The data collection process should last as long as the important views are still written and the active discussion of the topic is exist (Kozinets, 1998). All the groups we are observing are young and maintained professionally. Participants are really active. Still the information that is in social networks is not in the enormous amount and it is possible to make the analysis of those that is presented. Plus all the information is relevant for our research. As the groups are maintained by Subway, all the messages are related to the company and no abstract discussions take place.

Data collected by the researcher can be divided into 2 types: 1) direct data from the social community's communication and 2) data that is generated (or basically, the remarks and analysis) by the researcher on the basis of the community's interactions. We provide in the research part both types of the data. We are adding the print screens to our analyze parts.

Analysis

Within the analysis stage the "Classification, coding analysis and contextualization of communicative acts" should be made. This will be basics for last steps. (Langer & Beckman, 2005). In the analysis, our group will firstly use our observation of the Facebook account of Subway and the interview result. After that, we will combine the real information we get with the theory to see the fit between them. Finally, we will draw conclusion for each country. Our group also will make a summary of three countries and make conclusion base on that summary. After that, our team will give possible recommendations for each of the three countries. Then, we will talk about Vietnam and give possible recommendation.

Research ethics

A great risk to harm a member of the online community exists. It can be done occasionally or intentionally within the community's space. The researcher has to be twice careful with choosing the ways to announce the results (King, 1996).

The four guidelines are provided by Kozinets (Kozinets, 2002; Kozinets and Handelman, 1998) that describe the rules needed to be followed in netnographic research:

- There should not be any signs of the researcher in the online community, so members would not know about the intentions under the text. This way will help to observe participants in the most natural way. We did not disclose ourselves. We acted like general participants. In case when we needed to check the speed of the answer or to pose any other question we simply left messages with the same content as everyone does;
- The gathered data from online community members should be analyzed together. The risk to misunderstand someone's word by analyzing just one

comment is high. Thus we observed someone's performance taking into consideration all his messages or ones which are close to the particular.

Member checks

The final report or parts of it are presented to the people who have been studied. This is done in order to get their views and feedback on particular topics discussed in the work. Thus, deeper information can be gathered with the members' attitude so the most finalized work will include real people's thoughts and omit researchers' misunderstandings (Kozinets, 1998).

Netnography is a rare way of analyzing Internet data. This method is rather young what can be explained by the relative novelty of the Internet itself (20-30 years is not a long time for different research methods to be formed). Still we used this method a lot in our practical part.

3.6 Method triangulation

We decided to use several research methods for our work which are netnography and interview. The reason why we decided to do so is that information obtained from different origins gives a more complete and reliable view of what is studied. This method can be called methodological triangulation (Mason, 1996). Doing a case study it is particularly appropriate to use triangulation. The fact that two sources of information are used is also an asset because it allows comparing the results. The results which are similar are thus strengthened and the discrepancies in the results allow having different point of views which can conduct to a better understanding of the situation. In any case the conclusions we came to are more detailed and reliable.

3.7 Social network ethics

Our research is based on the data collected from the social networks Facebook and Vkontakte and the data obtained during the interviews. The question about the privacy rises when the social networks' information should be analyzed and presented in the paper. We can argue the opportunity to use the print screens of some comments and of general view of the Subway's page with two main points of view. The first is that Facebook and other social networks are public and the pages in all cases we observed are open to everyone. Thus we can conclude that the information, found within this page, can be freely used. The second argument is that all the collected data is used in research aims and will not be used with the aim to harm somehow to people who were acting in the Subway's pages.

Hence, based on the these arguments we are free to use within our paper the data presented in observed by us the Subway's pages (Bos et al, 2009).

4 Empirical findings and analysis

In order to analyze the content strategy of Subway on Social Network, we will firstly observe the Facebook and/or Twitter accounts of Subway in three different countries: France, Russia, Sweden and Vietnam. Together with the observation, we will also include the information we get from the interviews in our analysis. After that, our team will compare the frame of reference to support our analysis. We will try to point out some main behaviors which can be recognized and that can be explained by a specific and wanted content strategy of Subway. After the observations, we will use the information obtained during the interview with the marketing manager of Subway for south Europe, to complement to the first findings. This will confirm, contradict or add to the previous information based only on what everyone can find on the social networks pages. Furthermore, we will use the theory we developed in the first part of our paper to understand how Subway's behavior on social networks for observed countries is part of a content strategy. It will also allow us to recognize what is good and what has to be improved. Thus, finally, we will give recommendations to every country.

4.1 France

4.1.1 Observations

In October 2010 Subway France decided to create an official page on Facebook. Seven months after its launching there were approximately 2700 “fans” of the page. It is quite low compared to the more than 3.400.000 fans of Subway in United States. However, Subway is only opened in 2001 in France and the number of restaurants is still not very high, 251 restaurants in France compare to 24,188 restaurants in the United States (Subway, 2011a). We could not find the time when Subway go online in the US. Yet, we believe that Subway US is present on Facebook much earlier than Subway France since US is the first main market of Subway. Our observations are based both on the content available on the Facebook page for Subway France and on the interview with the marketing manager for Subway France.

The first thing to know about Subway France content strategy is that the company is not directly acting on social networks, they ask for the services of a specialized communication company (Marketing manager Fra, personal communication, 2011-04-27). It would be too expensive and would need a full-time person to manage social networks by themselves. Considering the stage of Subway's France presence on social networks it is a better strategy to collaborate with an external agency. According to the marketing manager Fra in our interview (personal communication, 2011-04-27), the agency and the marketing department of Subway France have regular meetings where they make a calendar of which messages will be sent, which “items” to be promoted (special prices, offers, new products, new openings, etc). Moreover the agency has been trained and informed on Subway services and processes so the agency can manage most of the issues brought by people interacting on social networks with the firm.

Subway France official Facebook page: The first thing a Facebook user can see on the Subway France page is a welcoming message (“Bienvenue !”, Figure 4-1) with the logo and slogan of Subway, some pictures of sandwiches and vegetables to show the

healthy aspect of subway's sandwiches and an overview of what people can find on the mini website (reductions, novelties, openings, etc.) Finally on the top of this welcoming page there's a message asking to "like" the page to keep connected with the news of Subway France. The aim is thus that people first "like" the page; however it is not necessary to do so to access the rest of the mini website.



Figure 4-1: Welcome message on Facebook account of Subway France (2011)

There are five other sections everyone can access (Figure 4-2):

- Pictures (Photos): include all kind of pictures related to Subway, sandwiches, other Subway products, advertisements, restaurants' frontages in France and all around the world, map of the restaurants in Paris, etc.

- Videos (Vidéo): this section only includes three short advertisements in French.

- Openings (Ouvertures): all the openings planned in France for the upcoming weeks

- Information (Infos): This section includes a short description of Subway, its history and the number of restaurants in France and worldwide. There is also an email address and the link to the traditional website of Subway France. On this page there are also links to the nine Facebook pages of specific Subway restaurants in France whom we will discuss later.

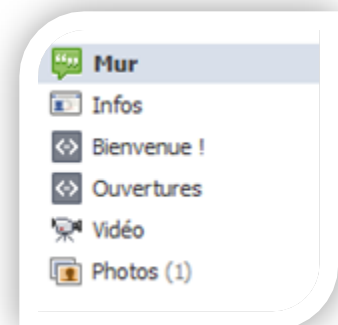


Figure 4-2: Different sections on Facebook account of Subway France (2011)

- Wall (Mur): This section is the most important of the all website because it includes all the messages posted by Subway and the comments, questions that everyone can send, visualize and interact with. This is the part we will use for our observations from now.

Messages by Subway France: Firstly, we are going to analyze the messages send by Subway. There is approximately one new message every two days. These messages typically contain one small text and either a picture, or a video or a link to subway official website, or to a newspaper article, etc. These messages can be of several types. It can be communication about a new restaurant; in that case the city, the address and the date of the opening are given, along with a picture of the restaurant (Appendix 8-1). Messages sent by Subway France are often mini-games, with small rewards (free sandwich), where people are asking a question and have to answer like “find the five mistakes in this picture to the original one” (Appendix 8-2). The aim is to make people react and to maintain activity on the mini website. Another kind of message sent by Subway France is funny facts about Subway which can be videos, pictures or small stories for example. In this case the aim is also to make people share their reactions, “like” the message and for Subway it is a way for gaining people sympathy. The last kind of message Subway France send are more serious ones in which Subway informs about how to open a new franchise (Appendix 8-3). The strategy of Subway in general is always to open new restaurants so they need volunteers to become franchisees. Facebook is a new way for them to recruit these franchisees.

Other messages: The other messages which can be seen on the Wall are the ones sent by all the other people. It includes both customers and franchisees who also like to post on this wall. Franchisees for example share the number of client they had on one day if they are particularly proud of it (Appendix 8-4). It results to reactions of other franchisees that compare their figures and this way tries to promote their own Subway restaurant. Subway France uses the “we” person but sometimes when a “discussion” starts in the comments the “I” is used. It is interesting to see how Subway tries to create a friendly environment on the Facebook page. They call people by their first names, and often talk directly to one specific person like people friends usually do on Facebook. Subway clearly wants a casual communication and makes the impression that everyone is free to talk in a not so serious way. What has to be noticed also is that Subway systematically answers to the messages published on its “Wall”. They answered in less than one hour most of the time, except during week end where no activities is made by Subway. Most of the messages sent on the Wall are questions about when a restaurant will open in that city or is it possible to get a student price, etc. In these cases Subway politely and briefly answers. Sometimes people simply show they like Subway or just discovered it and appreciated. For these messages Subway also answers something like “thank you Angélique :) what is your favorite sub?” or like the example in Figure 4-3.



Figure 4-3: Greeting messages and replies from Subway France

- Cookies are soo good! :)
- Mmmh, slightly warm?
- Yes!

Once again we can see how Subway tries to maintain a friendly climate and make people feel welcomed to share anything they want. As for the complaints or criticisms from customers, as long as they are made in a correct language and are argued, Subway France answers them most of time by asking directly the after sales service. If the complaint is about a specific Subway restaurant the Facebook page can relay it. However the conflicts are not discusses publicly and Subway contacts the person by private messages (Appendix 8-5).

Facebook fan pages for specific restaurants:

Another important part of Subway's content strategy on Facebook is the pages for specifics restaurants or for only a region of France. In May 2011 there were 9 of them only in France (for 251 restaurants in total). These pages are about the same as the main Subway France one but all the content is dedicated to only one restaurant. During the interview with the French marketing manager of Subway (Personal communication, 2011-04-27), we learned that some of these pages existed before the official Subway France one and it was even one of the main reasons to create an official page because the company had to control more what the franchisees says publically under Subway's brand. Some franchisees thus created their Facebook page but the manager of Subway France said that it was in a way problematic because the content sent by them is not always correct. The best example of inappropriate content is that one franchisee even put holiday pictures Facebook (Marketing manager Fra, personal communication, 2011-04-27). The information is sent under the name Subway, a multinational company, and Subway France is still working on how to control more these mistakes.

According to our observation, on each of these fan pages, there are between 50 and 500 hundred fans and the pages is updated with new messages on a regular basis. The information you can find on each of these fan page are more specific to the restaurant. For example the opening hours, the address, the phone number, the methods of payment accepted are often given. Small description of Subway's concept (sandwiches made in front of the customers) and some figures about Subway around the world can also be

found. Pictures of the restaurant, the personnel, and some special events which took place in the restaurant are also seeable by everyone. The communication is targeted to only one city or region so there is more proximity in the content strategy of these pages. On average a new message is sent by the franchisee who manages the page every week. Figure 4-4 shows an example of a fan page of Subway in France on Facebook.

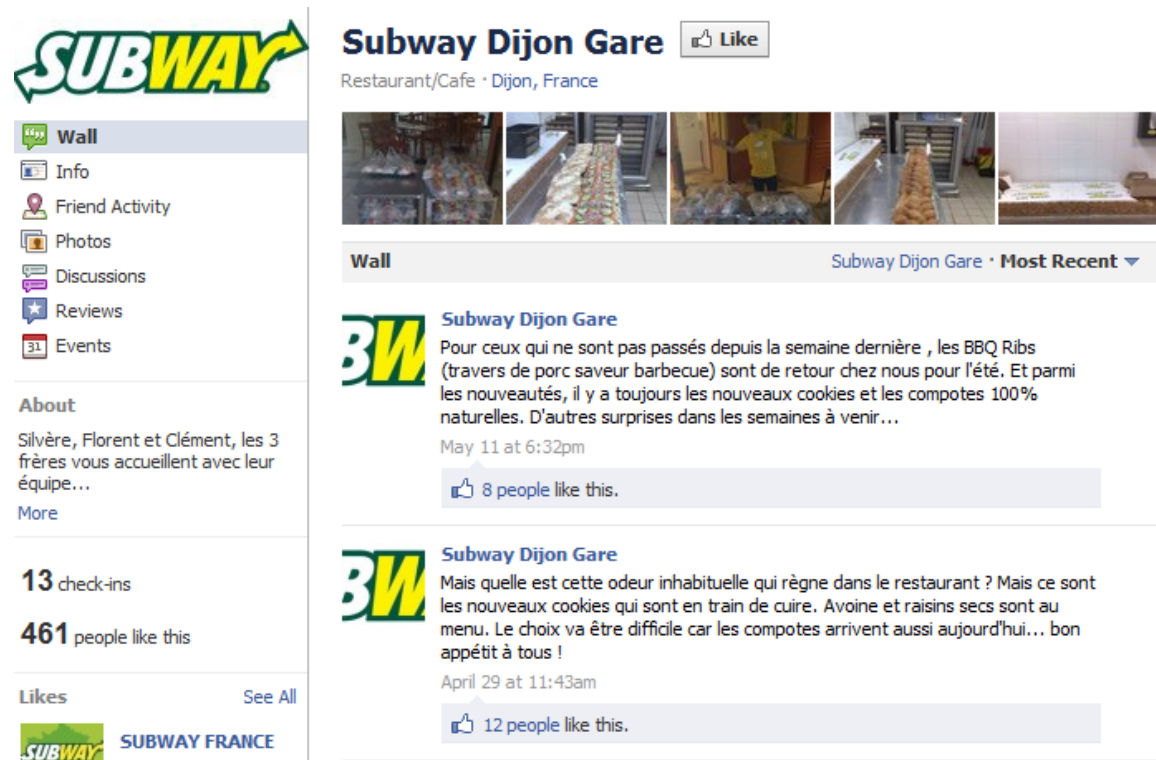


Figure 4-4: Subway Dijon Gare (2011) - One of the 9 fan pages on Facebook for specific Subway restaurants in France.

Subway Dijon Gare

The two messages sent by Subway Dijon Gare are about the new cookies and barbecue ribs which are now available in this restaurant for summer. The messages also include formulas such as “Enjoy your meal everybody!” or “Other surprises to come in the next weeks...” (The section “About” on the left of the page says “Silvère, Florent and Clément, 3 brothers, welcome you with your team every day from 9 to 23.”)

The marketing manager of Subway France (Personal communication, 2011-04-27) thinks that the interest and involvement of the franchisees is appreciable but it poses problem regarding how to control the communication and avoid big mistakes which could damage the image of Subway in general. Subway France already warned the franchisees about this and gave them guidelines on how to manage the fan page. However they still think more effort has to be done and that is why they are willing to change the strategy during the year 2011 in order to keep more control on the presence of Subway in Facebook in general (Marketing manager Fra, personal communication, 2011-04-27).

However Subway France is quite satisfied with the results, and they have been surprised by the interest of the customers (Marketing manager Fra, personal communication, 2011-04-27). Still they want to make the communication and interaction more professional, it was the initial objective of using social networks. In the case of Subway professional communication means bringing new franchisees to the company and thus opening new restaurants.

Twitter account:

Through the specialized communication agency they work with, Subway France also created very recently a Twitter account dedicated to France. For now it has less than 200 followers only. However Subway France decided to integrate this social network in its content strategy. The interview with the French manager of Subway revealed that Twitter was actually perceived by the company as more professional and that is the main reason why they decided to use it (Personal communication, 2011-04-27). In their future projects, Subway France wants the agency to improve its strategy on Facebook, being more professional and coordinate. In accordance to this orientation they also decided to try to communicate via Twitter, once again for more professional purposes, which mean in this case mainly to inform and recruit new franchisees (Marketing manager Fra, personal communication, 2011-04-27).

4.1.2 Relation with the theory

In this part we will assess how theories about social networks and content strategy are applied in the Subway case.

Content management system: base on the information we got from the interview (Marketing manager Fra, personal communication, 2011-04-27) and from our own observation, our team had made a graph about content management system of Subway France (Figure 4-5)

Subway France will receive guidelines from Subway about how to manage social network account. Then, a marketing manager, the marketing manager that we interview with, will take care of social network presence of Subway. She collaborates with the external agency as well as contacts the franchisees (Marketing manager Fra, personal communication, 2011-04-27). Then it is the responsibility of the hired agency to maintain Subway France Facebook and Twitter account. The franchisees will oversee the Facebook pages of individual restaurant but they will receive recommendations from Subway France about how should they maintain the account (Marketing manager Fra, personal communication, 2011-04-27). We believe that this management system allows Subway France to have a comprehensive flow of content. In addition, the system enables Subway France to utilize social network, by using a professional agency, as well as minimizing the cost (of maintaining social network staffs). However, Subway France just stop at giving recommendation and control level in cooperate with the franchisees.

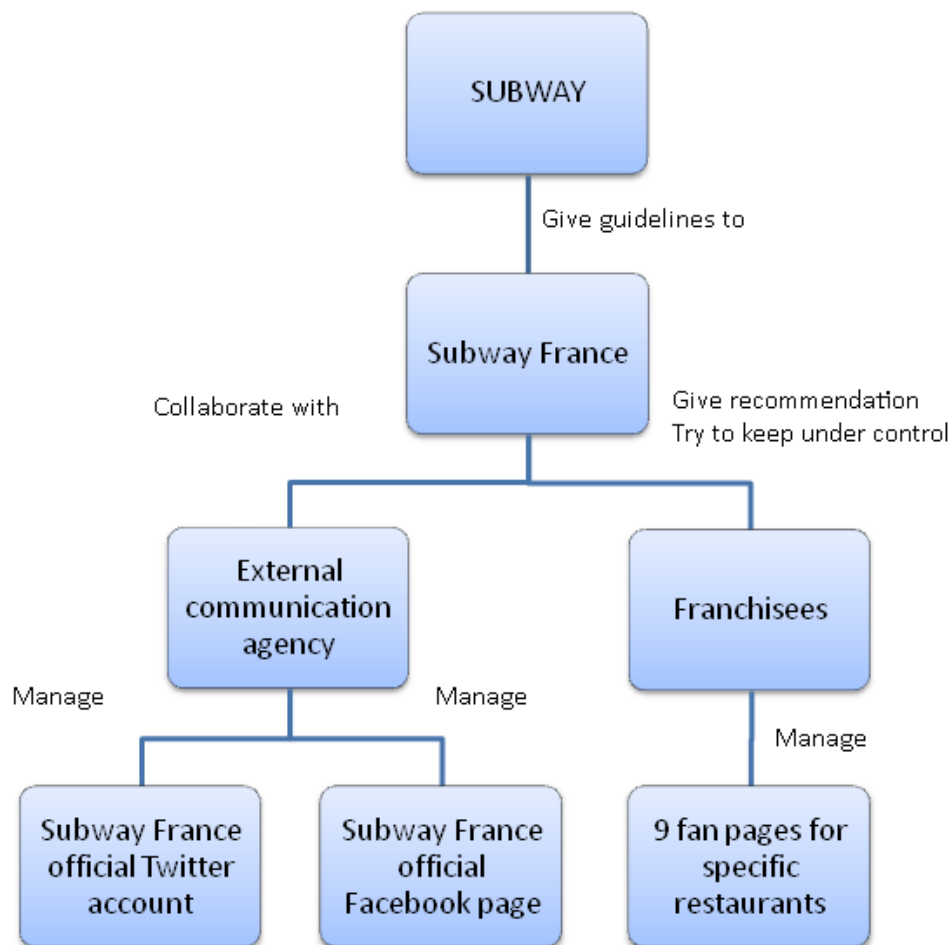


Figure 4-5: Content management system of Subway France

Reusable content: Content is reusable by Subway France. The messages on the products for example are not out of date rapidly. The texts sent are also be used several times like some typical answers to the same kind of messages. Subway France reuse answers regularly but they make special effort not to always say it exactly the same way, which is a smart decision, and accordant to a good content strategy.

Unified processes: This is a problem for Subway France because they have to control what the franchisees send on the Facebook fan pages dedicated to one restaurant. On each of these pages the content is a bit different and is not completely unified. On this aspect improvements can be made.

Market research: Subway France doesn't use directly social networks for market research purposes.

Communication: Communication is of course the main aspect of the presence of Subway France on social networks, more particularly Facebook. New restaurants openings, new products and communication in general to increase customers' fidelity and brand awareness are the main reason why the company uses social networks.

After sales services: Facebook is also used for after sales services, the best example is when someone is not satisfied with the product, the Facebook page can be for example a place to send a complain. Subway will then transmit the demand to the right person in order to identify and solve the problem.

Relevance: Relevance is well respected in general on the Facebook accounts of Subway France expect sometimes some content of the page for specific restaurants where messages, comments and also pictures are regularly not related to Subway.

Listening and return: According to us listening and return is well respected by Subway France because they systematically answer to the questions but also the comments which don't necessarily need answers. There is a real interaction between the company and the customers and the franchisees.

Ethic: Ethic is well respected because all kind of comments, negative and positive, are accepted and treated by the company. It seems like no censure is applied. Moreover the content sent is always related to Subway and is not subject to controversies.

Finding a Balance: To conclude we think a balance is found between the amount of user-generated and company-generated information. On the Facebook page of Subway France there are regularly new messages by Subway but also new messages by people, every day. The means used by Subway, using an agency to manage the account, is also a balanced decision to us because to launch the page and maintain it means a lot of time and knowledge so it would be expensive compare to the efficiency of the communication because of the small numbers of fans at the beginning. Asking for a communication agency services cost less to Subway and it allows the company to have an appropriate and efficient content strategy.

4.1.3 Conclusion

Our observations show that there is a real content strategy behind Subway France's presence on social networks. The company did not underestimate this tool and they asked for the services of an external agency to manage interaction on social networks. Our conclusion is that Subway France has a good approach of social networks, but maybe it still needs more improvements. Facebook has a huge potential for Subway in France as the first results of the page showed. For the moment, the ambition of the company seems to be too low and that explain why the page still does not have so much success. The content strategy is good if we compare it to the theory so we think Subway France is ready to involve more on social networks. This is in accordance with the note from marketing manager Fra that Subway France is going to invest more in social networks (Personal communication, 2011-04-27). After discussing the case for Russia and Sweden we will give more detailed recommendations to Subway France concerning their content strategy on social networks.

4.2 Russia

4.2.1 Observations

The Subway started to explore Russian market since the beginning of 1990s. The first Subway café was opened in Saint – Petersburg in 1994 (Denero, 2011). The Moscow market appeared just 4 years later in 1998 (Obuhova, 2001). Today there are 201 Subway restaurants (Subway, 2011a) in 47 cities (Subway Russia, 2011a).

The Russian Subway uses the social networks since July of 2009 in order to be in touch with the potential franchisee and clients of the restaurants, to increase the information knowledge about the franchising itself and the fast food Subway (Marketing manager Rus, personal communication, 2011–05-01). Subway Russia gets in touch with their clients through the most popular Russian social network Vkontakte (Vel’f, 2010). There are more than 60 million of registered users in this social network and this number is keep growing. (Vel’f, 2010). Vkontakte is supposed to be the prototype of the Facebook and, indeed, it has a lot in common. The common things are: in the company’s official page or national accounts there is a wall which can be used as a tool of communication by any liker or member of the page. The possibility to leave movies or photos exists that allows to participants to share not just textual materials. Still it has the differences and there are two the most relevant to our thesis. The first peculiarity of Vkontakte is in the possibility to create not just an official page of a company (as in the Facebook case) but the ‘group’ – what basically becomes a small social network in the particular area of the interest (or in our case of the company). The group always consist of the main page, where the description of group is presented, the logotype, photo albums, videos, the wall for general and day-to-day messages, links to group-friends or related to the same subject ones and discussions for the specific topic (the same principle as in forums where anyone can open the discussion and participate in it). Some groups add more opportunities; the extra can be links as within the group in Vkontakte as well to the outside Internet, what happens to be very useful as saves time in searching the needed information; the constantly updated news; or any other information that is regarded as important and relevant by the administrator of the group. The second difference from the Facebook’s page of the company is that every group has an administrator who is available to everybody through the link to his or her own page in Vkontakte. Consequently, the questions that are preferred to be discussed and solved privately can be sent directly to the administrator.

Subway Russia has one official group within the social network Vkontakte and several smaller unofficial regional groups, which are not controlled and maintained by the company. The group was established in the July of 2009 – that is the date of the first comment in the wall (Appendix 9-1). The quantity of the members is 2,463 persons what is considered as a big group. The potential and current customers are people in the age varied from 12 to 44 (Subway Russia, 2011b) where Vkontakte users are aged 12 – 34 years old (Trubilova, 2011). Hence, the presence in the social networks by Subway Russia is essential. Based on the interview with the marketing – manager of the company they need to be present there where their clients are (Marketing – manager Rus, personal communication, 2011 – 05 - 01).

The group administrator is the employee of Subway Russia and holds the position of the marketing-manager (Subway Russia, 2011c). She gave us the interview, which we are using to support our observations and to become familiar with some internal aspects.

The administrator is responsible for renewing all the information within the group (including a monthly update of the questionnaire; encouraging group members to keep sharing with their views and comments and participating in the discussions; writing news about the new opened restaurants). Other duties of her is to check the absence of spam and impolite behavior of the participants; to help to other Subway employees, involved in the maintenance of the Vkontakte group, in answering to clients with negative experience and thanking others for kind words. The comments on the customers' messages and replying to critics and questions are done by both the group administrator and her colleague who is also the marketing – manager in the Subway Russia (Subway Russia, 2011c).

В контакте search invite log out

My Profile edit
My Friends
My Photos
My Videos
My Music
My Messages
My Notes
My Groups
My Events
My News
My Bookmarks
My Settings
Applications
Classified Ads

Reminder
Today is Alexandra Maggiolata's birthday.

Выпускники РЭА!
magistratura.ane.ru

РАНХ
при
Президенте РФ
Приглашаем в
англоязычную
магистратуру РАНХ
Cruze: выбирать
легко!

Closed Group

SUBWAY® Russia (официальная группа)

Description: Официальная группа сети ресторанов Subway в России. Subway сегодня - это мировая сеть ресторанов быстрого обслуживания (QSR), насчитывающая более 33900 ресторанов в 95 странах. В основу системы Subway заложена специальная технология приготовления сэндвичей, называемых в США «субмаринами» или «сабани» (хлеб для приготовления сэндвичей по форме напоминает подводную лодку). Посетителям предлагаются сэндвичи длиной 1 фут (30,5 см) – на целом свежеспеченном хлебе и 6 дюймов (15 см) – на половине хлеба.

Website: <http://www.subway.ru/>
City/Town: Санкт-Петербург, Россия

Remove from Bookmarks

You are a member of this group.
Leave Group

Members
2,463 people All

Yulya Yulia Natalia
Yevgeny Stepan Katerina

Poll topic
934 votes

Выберите ваш любимый хлеб?

☐ Белый итальянский
☐ Белый с кунжутом
☐ Белый с пармезаном и орегано

Figure 4-6: Subway front page on Vkontakte

The official group consists of the brief description of the company's activity, a questionnaire, the wall, the discussions, photo albums and movies. Moreover the link to the page of the administrator and related groups are available.

A **questionnaire** is lying on the head page directly after the description so that everyone will see it entering the group even without scrolling the page (what increases the number of people who answers). It is renewed once a month and aimed to get the information about clients' preferences of the types of provided food (Appendix 9-2).

The **wall** is a tool which can be used by any member of the group. It is the place to leave their comments, movies, photos and music. The types of messages that are left on the wall can be divided to several categories: information about the opening of new

cafés, the vacancies, complains and “greeting” comments. By “greeting” comments we understand the messages like in Figure 4-7:

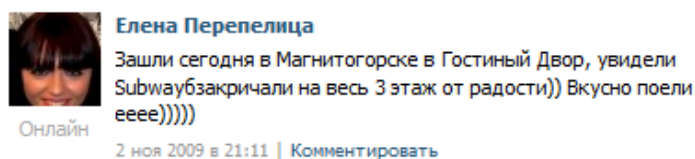


Figure 4-7: Comment from one of customer in Russia

“I saw today the Subway in my city: blissfully happy! Had a tasty lunch”

“Guys, there is one Subway in Pertrozavodsk as well”, “I am working in the Subway Krasnojarsk, welcome!” that are “greeting” comments (Appendix 9-3). Such messages do not bring any sense but they are showing the loyalty of the clients, their love to the company. Usually most of them are answered by thanking for being with Subway.

The informing messages are the most widely-spread ones. They are bringing news about the new opening cafés and their addresses (Appendix 9-4). Such comments are left by group administrator or the administrators of the local Subway cafés (Interview). Different messages about the coming events and actions held by Subway Russia are posted (Figure 4-8):

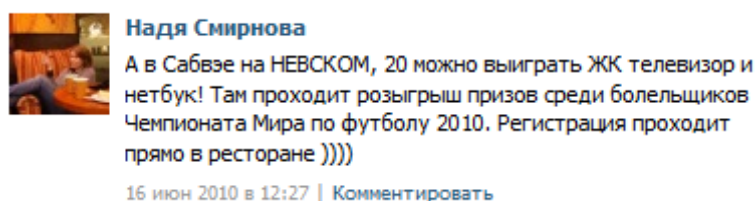


Figure 4-8: Message about comming events

A TV set or a laptop can be won in the Subway café in Nevskii avenue, 20 by the fan of the World Championship in soccer 2010. Registration is made directly in the café))))

There are a lot of messages that are announcing the vacancies. The average age requirements of the Subway Russia’s hired workers are 17 – 30 (Subway Russia, 2011d). The future employees can be found through the Vkontakte social network as the following age is widely presented there. The example of such type of the message is in Figure 4-9:

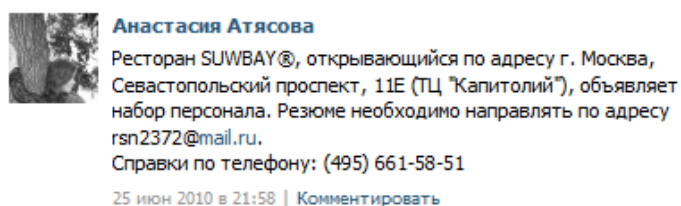


Figure 4-9: Message about available job

Subway Café, opening in Moscow Sevastopolskii st, 11E, has free vacancies. CV must be sent to rsn2372@mail.ru. All information is by tel: (495)661-58-51

The most important type of messages for analyzing the company's strategy of the performance in the social networks is to explore how they treat with the negative comments. The clients leave such messages if they are dissatisfied with the quality of the service. All these comments are answered. The marketing – manager usually thanks for the message and contacts the manager of the specific café (Appendix 9-5).

The **discussions** are the space where participants of the Subway group can create a topic for sharing views concerning one particular topic. There are 13 topics in the official page of Subway in Russia (Figure 4-10).

There are 13 topics in this group.

<p>Делитесь своими впечатлениями от посещения ресторанов Subway здесь.</p> <p>115 posts. Created Jul. 22, 2009 at 3:43 pm Pgs. 1 2 3 4 5 6</p>	<p>Updated: May 4, 2011 at 12:08 am → By Ira Buritskova.</p>
<p>Какой хлеб вы любите?</p> <p>28 posts. Created Aug. 21, 2009 at 2:11 pm Pgs. 1 2</p>	<p>Updated: Apr. 20, 2011 at 5:21 pm → By Maxim Shevela.</p>
<p>Весенняя сенсация (новый вкус)</p> <p>15 posts. Created Apr. 7, 2010 at 11:15 am</p>	<p>Updated: Apr. 10, 2011 at 11:26 pm → By Yelena Kovalenko.</p>
<p>SUBWAY обогнал McDonalds!</p> <p>2 posts. Created Mar. 10, 2011 at 9:26 am</p>	<p>Updated: Mar. 11, 2011 at 6:44 pm → By Max Rezvyh.</p>
<p>Консультант по поддержке и развитию бизнеса.</p> <p>2 posts. Created Nov. 21, 2010 at 5:20 pm</p>	<p>Updated: Jan. 15, 2011 at 1:53 pm → By Olga Curly.</p>
<p>Набор сотрудников в новый ресторан в торговом комплексе на севере Санкт-Петербурга</p> <p>1 post. Created Nov. 24, 2010 at 6:12 pm</p>	<p>Updated: Nov. 24, 2010 at 6:12 pm → By Sasha Baboon.</p>

Figure 4-10: 13 discussion topics on Vkontakte

The mostly discussed one is called “Share your Subway experience”. There are 115 posts with the last 4th May, 2010. Members do not share just with positive emotions about eating in Subway. As well, there are plenty of negative comments. They are about all: starting from the rude behavior of the staff finishing with the noticed 2 cockroaches in the kitchen. Other discussions are related to Subway Russia's events, the vacancies in new-opening cafés and some general discussions with the topic of the most favorable kind of bread and sandwich.

Photo albums and movies (Appendix 9-6) are representing the public life of the company. Photos are divided into 16 albums where each shows the single event: studying center of future managers of Subway, charity concert or other events. One

album is devoted to the photos of Subway cafes in Russia. Movies can be downloaded only by few people that are the administrator of the group and few more to whom he or she allows it to do. The total number of movies is 25, all of them are advertisements (made in English as there were no commercials in Russian), news taken from the general TV channels and actions that Subway company made in Russia. For example, Subjammer is the competition held every summer in all cities with Subway cafes in the territory of Russia for the quickest preparation of the sandwich.

The Vkontakte social network provides the opportunities to every registered member to open the group. Thus there is a plenty of Subway related groups. A lot of local managers or fans of Subway open the groups related to the particular region (for example, a city or an area of Russia) or even to a particular restaurant.

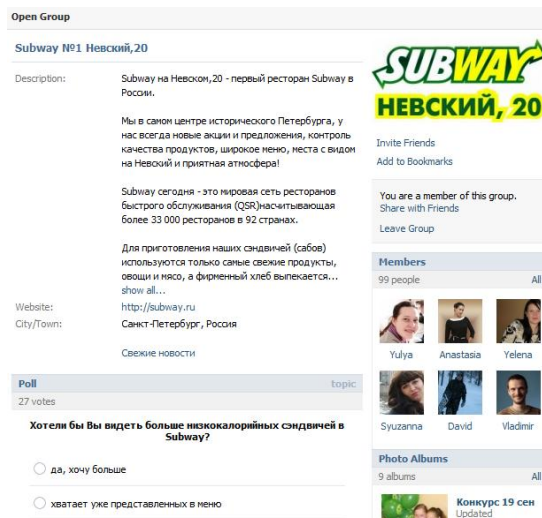


Figure 4-11: One Subway related group

The size of such groups varies a lot: it can be from 80 (Appendix 9-7) to more than 500 members (Appendix 9-7). Basically all these groups have the same structure as the official group of Subway Russia. It was a wall for general discussions and special discussion pages for particular topics; photo albums and videos which are mainly related either to local events or general news about Subway.

The Subway Russia's relation to such unofficial groups is good and supportive. According to the interview (Marketing manager Rus, personal communication, 2011–05-01), the company has not met any anti-Subway groups yet and thus all other are combining people that like and use the services of Subway. It is good that people are discussing the company and its food that means there is interest in them which can make a word of mouth advertisement.

4.2.2 Relation with the theory

The Subway case can be analyzed using the theory we discussed in the frame of reference part. We chose the most relevant criteria to evaluate the performance of Subway in social networks.

Content management system: with the information we gather from the interview and from our own observation, we could make a graph of how Subway Russia organize its content management system (Figure 4-12). One thing that Subway Russia is different from Subway Sweden and Subway France is that it uses a marketing team to manage the Vkontakte account (Marketing manager Rus, personal communication, 2011-05-01). According to the manager and to our own observation on Vkontakte, Subway Russia did make some surveys that help them to know about customers' opinion. We did not see such surveys or polls on Subway France or Sweden Facebook account. This shows us the advantages of Subway Russia when having a social network team of its own. By having such inside team, Subway can gather information from customers more efficiently than using an outside agency as in the case of Sweden or France. In addition, Subway Russia can directly control the social network account by its will and not through an intermediate agency. Moreover, an agency is still an outsider and it cannot have the insight information as the staffs of Subway. Besides the benefits from having a marketing team in charge of social network, there are also many disadvantages not using an agency. First of all, agency has professional employees who are more advance in using technology than the marketing team of Subway. Furthermore, it is more expensive to hire people for a company in Europe compare to Russia (more benefits, higher salaries). Finally, the marketing team is not in charge of social network only but the team also helps in marketing matters (Marketing manager Rus, personal communication, 2011-05-01). Hence, the team may get distracted by ordinary marketing duties and lower its effort on social network.

Besides the only difference of using marketing team, the management system of Subway Russia is alike to Subway France in many other aspects. Subway Russia gets the basic guidelines from Subway. Then a marketing manager will take care of the marketing team as well as the Franchisees. The Franchisees get recommendations from Subway and control the fan pages. The marketing team will manage the content on Vkontakte

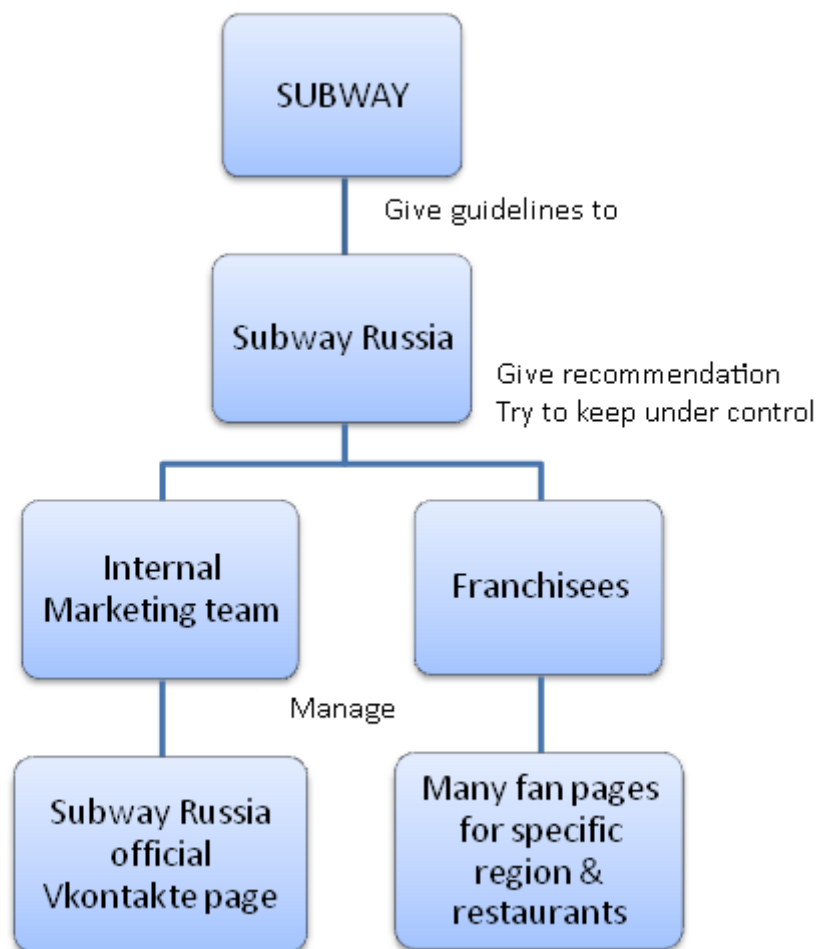


Figure 4-12: Content management system of Subway Russia

Reusable content does not take a huge part of the content strategy of Subway Russia. The brief information that is provided in the official page in Vkontakte is about the general historical facts of Subway and its main occupation. At the same time this information was taken from the official web site of Subway Russia and was shortened. All other comments and updated news are used just once in the Vkontakte's page when it is relevant.

The **unified process** is a strong part of Subway Russia. There are just two persons who are taking the marketing – managing position and who are in charge of the Vkontakte official page. Thus, it is easy for them to coordinate their work and the content they decide to publish because they are working in the same office and see each other every working day.

Market research can be made through a social network that is popular among the customers. It is the case about the Subway Russia. The total number of group members is big what allows for the company to post questionnaires in the official page. Hence, data about the clients' preference can be collected in this way.

Communication is basically done to promote company's service or product. Similarly, Subway Russia announces about the new restaurants that are going to be

opened, new ingredients or products. Finally, it starts to discuss a sandwich or other food in order to attract the customers' attention to it and indirectly to advertise this product and the company as whole.

After sale services are provided in the official page of Subway Russia in Vkontakte. There is a possibility to leave any comment or contact a person from the company. The response is given immediately and as the observations showed the feedback is always respectful and very attentive to the customers' problems.

Speaking about the **relevance** of the submitted information in the Vkontakte's page we can point out that all news is updated frequently and according to the happening date. All the comments given by the managers of the page are relevant to the customers' messages and are answered fully. The way of communicating with the members of the group is informal what is adapted to the way of most participants. Thus, we can conclude that the relevance of the Subway Russia's behavior is appropriate.

Listening and return is a strong quality of the Subway Russia's position in the Vkontakte. They do accept all comments from the customers (both positive and negative) and are doing their best to improve it. For example, they never delete the comments and for all of them, even those that shame some of the Subway's restaurants in Russia, the feedback is provided. Marketing – managers, who are leading the group, make a further contact to the local restaurants with the performance of which the clients are not satisfied.

Ethic is an essential component that should accompany any activities of the Subway Russia. The ethic is respected a lot in the official page in Vkontakte. Every message, both positive and negative, is treated friendly and polite. Members of the group can leave any messages and share with all experiences.

A **balance** should be found between positive and negative comments of the company's performance as it whole to still provide an attractive image. The Subway Russia, according to our observations, found the balance. It made a special discussion for sharing with the experience. The messages are divided approximately half to half: positive and negative. Plus all the negative comments are answered in a very friendly and helpful way what can give a chance not to lose a customer. Moreover other pages of the group consist mainly of the positive messages. The overall environment in the group seems that the customers are very loyal to the company and like a lot its food. Even those few, that were not luckily and experienced something bad, stays members of the group and are satisfied with the attentive treatment and carrying about their complains.

4.2.3 Conclusion

To conclude the analysis about the official group in the Vkontakte of Subway Russia we need to tell that for the almost two years of being presented in this social network a huge work has been done. The group becomes big with more than 2,450 members. The discussions and participation of the members is active what is good for keeping the group alive. New customers are attracted through the social media what is in fact the main reason of being there. There is definitely a content strategy applied by Subway Russia and it respects the most important aspects which include the ethic and ability to listen to the clients' feedback and give back the comments. The approach is thus quite good even if the means are different than Subway France. We see that there

are already differences with Subway France. The most obvious one is that Subway Russia has its own employees delegated to social networks in the marketing team. The content which can be found on the Vkontakte page is partly similar to the Facebook page for Subway France, the same type of messages are shared. One element which differs though is the presence of mini-surveys for Subway Russia. We will later on give detailed recommendations for Subway Russia.

4.3 Sweden

4.3.1 Observations

The Subway Sweden is presented in this country since 1991. The first restaurant was opened in the Norrlandsgatan in Stockholm (Subway Sverige, 2011). At the moment, there are 83 restaurants in Sweden (Subway, 2011).

Subway Sweden has its own Facebook account like other Subways around the world (France, Germany, etc). The peculiarities in the social networks' performance are those that they are both following the global strategy and at the same time are adapted to the Swedish culture and thus it has a local tone of voice. Subway Sweden does not have a national account in Twitter, but instead it has one in Facebook. It is explained by the head of marketing of Subway Sweden, manager Swe, in her interview to us: as the opportunities, which integrate promotions with engaging with clients, are more fully provided in the latter social network (Manager Swe, personal communication, 2011 – 05 - 03).

The managing of the Facebook account is fulfilled by two agents. The first is an agency that is outside the Subway Sweden and is hired to develop the concept of the social network page and maintain it. The second is a coordinator that is the representative of Subway whose responsibility is to provide regularly relevant information to the agency (Head of marketing department Swe, personal communication, 2011 – 05 - 03).

Subway Sweden started to open its Facebook page since March 2011 (Manager Swe, personal communication, 2011-05-03). At the moment, the facebook account has 512 people that like the page and the number keeps increasing every day.



Figure 4-13: Main page of Subway Sweden (2011, March) on Facebook

The reason of creating an account in Facebook was recognized both as a new trend and as an opportunity. In addition, Subway Sweden wants to keep in touch constantly with the existing and potential customers. That will help Subway to increase the clients' awareness and will attract more and more customers in the future (Manager Swe, personal communication, 2011-05-03).



Figure 4-14: The first post of Subway Sweden on Facebook

The national account of Subway Sweden consists of the wall, information page and page for videos and photos. Besides there are 5 more pages about Subway's performance in Sweden (Figure 4-15).



Figure 4-15: Different sections on Facebook account of Subway Sweden (2011, March)

The *wall* is a space where all discussions take place. The Subway Sweden leaves on its wall comments to customers' messages, videos and questions. The same apply to "likers"² of the page and visitors. It is possible to send a 'greeting' message that is usually from a concrete city (Appendix 10-1) or a question. The most popular question is to ask when Subway opens a restaurant in their city (Figure 4-16).

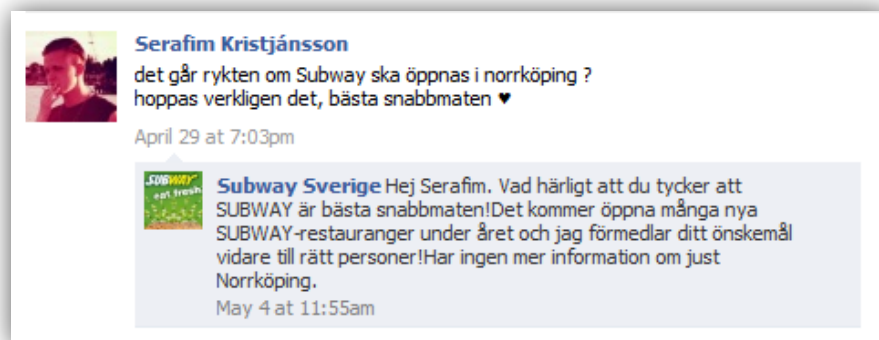


Figure 4-16: Sample question about opening in specific location

- There are gossips that Subway is going to be opened in Norrköping? I really hope for this, best fast food!
- Hi Serafim. So nice that you think Subway is the best fast food! A lot of new restaurants are going to be opened this year and I will share with your wish with the right person! Do not have any more information now about Norrköping.

The Subway comments to all the 'greeting' messages by thanking for choosing them and provides with all the relevant data which is poses. The Subway Sweden is acting very actively in Facebook. It leaves messages every 2-3 days. The content varies widely from relevant Subway news (Figure 4-17) to general discussions. Subway announces the new opening restaurants or it tells about the possibilities provided by Subway such

² People who like your Facebook account

as combining the ingredients in the way you would like and thus making the sandwich totally depended on your taste (Appendix 10-2).

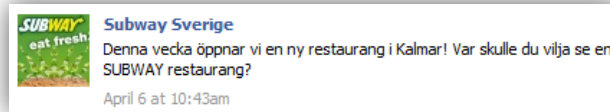


Figure 4-17: Example of Subway news

This week a new restaurant is opened in Kalmar! Where would you like to see a Subway restaurant?

One peculiarity of Subway Sweden's performance in Facebook is that it encourages likers to participate in abstract discussions. For example: 'Which are the plans for the Valborg weekends?' (Appendix 10-3). The majority of such messages is still connected somehow or are mentioning about the Subway. The advices can be to come into the restaurant passing it by (Figure 4-18).

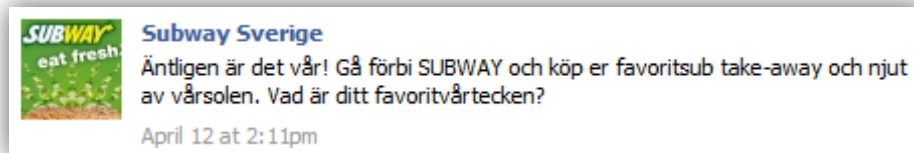


Figure 4-18: Sample of Subway message

Finally, it is spring! Go through Subway and buy your favorite sub for take-away and enjoy it under the sun.

Subway Sweden asks fans in their official page in Facebook about their preferences (Appendix 10-4). Unfortunately, the quantity of answers and likes rarely exceeds 10-12 replies and based on this data it is incorrectly to make any market conclusions.

The whole wall contains just one negative message. A man was complaining for deleting all the time his comments. The Subway Sweden answered it very friendly and in the polite form. It explained the deleting by the willingness to have just positive comments on their wall (Appendix 10-5).

The **information page** provides the brief facts about the company's history both of the establishing the company and about its performance in Swedish market. There are links to the official web site of Subway Sweden and to the page for fulfilling the Customer Service form for any kind of the feedback (<http://subway.com/applications/CustService/frmCustomerService.aspx?CC=swe&LC=swe>). Thus, Subway Sweden does not support after sales services on Social Network like the case of France or Russia. Subway France and Russia guide customer back to the feedback page and provide contact information when needed. They also actively ask for customer contact information to solve cases independently and privately

Video is not posted often; there were just 4 of them in the two-month period. They are about the healthy food and how the Subway's sandwiches meet the standards (Figure 4-19).



Figure 4-19: Example of Subway Sweden's video on Facebook

The **photo album** consists just of 5 photos of the ingredients and one logotype of the Subway.

There are 5 more pages about the Subway's performance in the territory of Sweden. The actual campaign, menu and Sub of the day provide the visitors of the page with the similar information. The former one is about the action for a 15-sm Sub for 39 SEK (Swedish currency, 1 USD approximately equals to 6.4 SEK) instead of usual 47, and the possible sandwiches that are covered by this event. The menu provides with the pictures of different sandwiches and has a link to the official web site of Subway Sweden. The latter page, Sub of the day, has the schedule of cheap 15 – and 30 – cm Subs for 35 and 60 SEK respectively. Every day of the week has a special Sub that varies by the ingredients. The restaurant page has a map of Sweden including marked cities where Subway is presented by at least one café. There is as well the address of every restaurant with a link to the map. Catering page is about the possibility to order a box of 16 Subs for 289 SEK.

4.3.2 Relation with the theory

Content management system

The management system for content strategy of Subway can be described as in Figure 4-20. Our team makes the graph base on the information we get from the interview and also with our own observation about Subway Sweden. First of all, Subway will get guidelines from the mother company. Then a marketing manager is in charge of this and he or she will contact with both external agency and the franchisees about social network issues. the marketing manager's duty is to collaborate with the agency to make sure that the content on Facebook account is in line with the Subway's policy. In the next level, the external agency will act on behalf of Subway to manage the Swedish official Facebook page

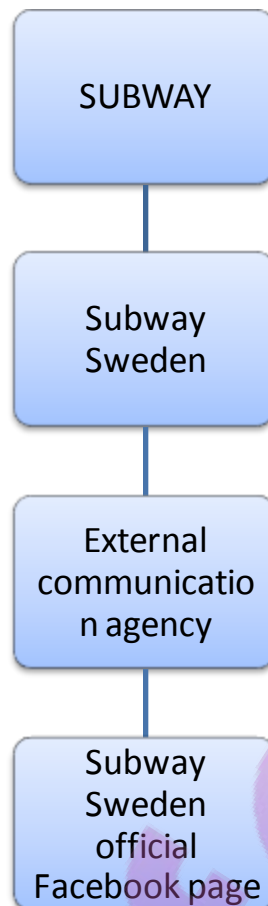


Figure 4-20: Content management system of Subway Sweden

Reusable content is not developed a lot within the Subway Sweden. It provides a short piece of the information on the company's history and its development in the Swedish market and the current situation in the market (including in how many countries the Subway is presented and how many restaurants it has around the world). This information is not presented in the official page of the Subway Sweden so it is not reusable at all. The same about all the comments and messages left by Subway in the national account, they are used once to maintain the activity of the page.

The **unified process** Due to the fact that we could not get further information about strategy from Subway Sweden because of confidential problem, we just can draw conclusion from the information we have in hands. Subway Sweden uses an agency to help them on Facebook. The company also has a coordinator to work with the agency. Thus, we think that there may be "silo wall" between Subway Sweden and the agency that is actually in charge of Facebook matters. However, there are no contradictions on the page related to the feedback or overall strategy.

Relevance of the comments to likers' messages and news is suitable. There are no clashes with the dates (for example, one could occur about the opening of the new restaurant the particular date with leaving the news about it the following day). And in general the relevance of the tone of messages is appropriately informal so that everyone feels equal in the relation to the administration.

Listening and return is a weak side of the Subway Sweden's page. They stated that they do not want negative comments and want their Facebook account be as much positive as possible (5). Therefore, Subway basically deletes negative comments on Facebook to keep it "clean". This results in the one side information, or in other words just good comments are present and what does not reflect the real situation where not every client can be satisfied with the quality of the service. At the same time, the link to the official web site is provided where customers can leave any comment (both positive and negative) about their experience in Subway but not on Facebook. This action goes against the Swedish tradition of transparency and poses a question about ethical issues. As we have already discussed in the frame of reference, people will discover such ethically issues one day or another and react very negatively toward the company like the case of Microsoft. There are, of course, risks when the company allows negative comments on Facebook. However, Subway France and Subway Russia also have quite a number of negative comments on their Facebook and Vkontakte and they manage these comments very well (as discussed in France and Russia part).

4.3.3 Conclusion

Subway Sweden has a national account in Facebook only for 3 months. Nevertheless, it has already gotten a lot of comments from the customers. Its number of likers is increasing every day. The page is alive and there are a lot of discussions that take place and most of which are encouraged and made by Subway itself. So, we think that Subway Sweden needs some more time to develop like its 'brothers' in France and Russia. It seems like social networks can be a very useful tool for Subway Sweden regarding the response of the customers. A content strategy is also applied in Sweden, just like France and Russia. The content is also similar in certain aspects. However there is one big difference with France and Russia for Subway Sweden, which is that bad comments are deleted by the company. Transparency must be part of the content strategy according to the research conducted and we believe that this is a real issue. The page is very recent so maybe some adjustments still have to be done by Subway. After summarizing all our observations for the three countries we will provide specific recommendations for Subway Sweden to improve their content strategy. This could allow them to fully utilize the potential of social networks in Sweden.

4.4 Summary of the three countries

In order to get a better overview Subway's content strategy over three countries, our team had made a summary of what we analyzed in the previous part. The table has two main parts: overview and strategy of the three countries (France, Russia and Sweden)

Table 4-1: Summary table of France, Russia and Sweden

	France	Russia	Sweden
OVERVIEW			
Language used	French	Russian	Swedish
Social networks used	Facebook / Twitter	Vkontakte	Facebook
Existing time	7 months (October 2010)	Almost 2 years (July 2009)	3 months (March 2011)
Number of fans/members	Facebook: 2772 Twitter: 189	2463	512
Number of restaurants	251	201	83
Tone of communications	Casual; polite; attentive; friendly; using smileys		
Types of information presented by Subway of Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New restaurant openings - Facts about Subway - Special offers - New products - Franchisees' information - Job opportunities - Mini-games - Subway news 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New restaurant openings - Facts about Subway - Special offers - New products - Franchisees' information - Job opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New restaurant openings - Facts about Subway - Special offers - New products - Questionnaires
Types of messages left by fans/members	Inquiry questions, greetings, shared experiences (from franchisees and from customers), complains.		

STRATEGY			
Objectives	-initially: recruit new franchisees -currently: increase customer loyalty and raise brand awareness	Be in touch with customer	Increase customer awareness, be in touch with clients and raise the stores' attendance
Format of information about Subway (communication tools)	- Textual information, - Pictures: event photo albums, company logo, photo album for restaurants' - Videos: advertisement - Links to Subway's website and newspaper's articles, etc	- Textual information, - Pictures: event photo albums, company logo, photo album for restaurants' - Videos: event video, news about Subway, - links related Subway Russia groups inside and outside Vkontakte	- Textual information, - Pictures: company logo, photos of sandwiches, - Videos: commercials about healthy Subway food, - Links to Subway's website
Use outside agency	Yes	No. A marketing team in charge of Vkontakte.	Yes
Allow negative comments on social page	Yes	Yes	No
Response to negative comments	Public constructive calm answer, then individual treatment (private messages and emails)		
Age of target audience	12 – 44 years old		
Reason for using social networks	Follow market trends and satisfy franchisees' requests	Communicate with potential franchisees and customers, increase knowledge about franchisees and Subway system	Follow market trends and meet opportunities
Cultural social networks adaptation	Following guidelines from headquarters but also putting a local tone of voice		

As we can see from the “overview” part of the table 4-1, Subway France, Russia, and Sweden have many similarities in the way they make and maintain their Facebook accounts. This is in line with what we get from the interview with European manager (Manager EU, personal communication, 2011-05-02), who is in charge of the whole European region, that Subway pursues a global structure. However, due to the fact that every nation has its own culture, Subway has to do modify the types of content the company post on Facebook. For example, we can see the mini-games such as spotting the different between two pictures are quite successful in France. Many French people enjoy these mini-games. They participate and discuss ebulliently. This makes customers happy and keeps them focus on the site besides regular posts like special offers or new product information. Swedish people, on the other hands, prefer to express their feelings and ideas towards Subway. Therefore, we can see more “greeting” and general discussion on Facebook page of Subway Sweden.

In addition, when looking at table 4-1, we think Subway follows a general structure of strategy for social network. Although there are some minor differences among the three observed countries, the basic structure still applies for all of the countries. This is also true when we compare with the information we get from Manager EU (Personal communication, 2011-05-02).

4.5 Recommendations for Subway

4.5.1 Subway France

The development of Subway France Facebook page has been promising in the first months because the number of followers increases and there is a good activity from Subway and from customers. We thought of some recommendations to keep this good dynamic and to solve some weak points we recognized on Subway France content strategy.

The tone on the Wall of the Facebook page is very casual but we think it is too much and should be more serious sometimes. There are often jokes and games in the publications of Subway and it is a good strategy to increase customer’s loyalty because they have a good image of the brand but this communication is limited. For a mass communication, which reach more people, they could for example promote more some special prices and make national events so that more people feel involve on it. Between 10 and 20 people only generally participate to the mini games Subway France share on its Facebook page, we think it is not efficient enough, it does not reach enough people. We believe that social networks are tools with a lot of potential and they are largely used by a lot of people in France. At the same time Subway is in a decisive phase in the country and the awareness is being built now. Some years ago Subway was only known by few people in Paris and 2 or 3 main cities of France. Now it becomes more famous fast food restaurant but the notoriety could be increased. We think social networks could be a way to promote Subway in all France with an ambitious marketing strategy threw social networks, Facebook in particular.

As for Sweden we think Subway should add a section for franchisees on its Facebook page. Information could be found about what is becoming a franchisee for

Subway, the advantages, opportunities in cities or region, some examples of existing franchisees, etc. It would be an easy and quick operation and can be a good tool to recruit new franchisees, which we believe Subway is seeking in France currently.

4.5.2 Subway Russia

Subway Russia's presence in the social networks is balanced. Nevertheless, there are some aspects that can be developed.

The types of the company's news can be varied. The only news that is regularly posted is about the new restaurant openings. The loyal customers would be interested in other types of news, for example the amount franchises Subway gave in the whole world or which prizes Subway or Subway Russia gets in different competition like the nomination for the best franchising system.

The social network where Subway Russia is present is Vkontakte. Besides the official group of Subway Russia there are as well a lot of local groups divided by cities or individual restaurants. The Vkontakte provides a possibility to make as much links to friend – groups as possible. Therefore, a good system of links among all the groups related to Subway should be constructed. It will help for Subway Russia control the mood of every group. Moreover, it will become easier for local managers to get to know the current news of the company.

The content of the official group in Vkontakte is full but at the same time the group is not active: the messages from Subway Russia does not appear regularly often. The comments and any other feedback that members need is given immediately but the discussions are not started frequently. It can be explained by the fact that two marketing – managers of the company do not have physically enough time to maintain daily the group in Vkontakte. For that reason, we propose them to hire an agency that will be in charge of the group. This will result in the activeness of the group that should increase.

4.5.3 Subway Sweden

Analyzing the national account of Subway Sweden in Facebook we found some ways that can be recommended to follow in order to increase the effectiveness of being present in the social network.

One of the biggest mistakes that we discovered in the current development of the page is that the money is invested by Subway Sweden in keeping the customers in the social network but the likers are explored anyhow. Thus our recommendation is to make marketing research for getting information about customers' preferences.

The page is maintained with the principle of making a positive image through deleting all the negative messages. Thus the national account of the Subway Sweden becomes unethical as likers lose their chance to say what they think and to share with real experience. All types of the messages should be allowed to be left both negative and possible. Hence, there will be the balance of the page.

There is no opportunity for potential franchisee to get the relevant information or ask questions. Therefore, we think Subway Sweden needs to make a section related to franchising in the page in Facebook. The information about all aspects of franchising

should be provided starting from what is it and how to start finishing with estimating the financial side. Moreover, useful links to the franchising part of the official page of Subway Sweden should be provided and any other links that can help to potential franchisee. A special wall can be made just in this 'sub' – page for discussing how to open the new restaurants.

The group is very active, new messages submitted by Subway Sweden comes ones two – three days, but none of these messages managed to encourage people for a big discussion. Usually up to three – four comments are left. Consequently, it is wise to make more action in the Facebook page, to make mini-games or small competitions.

The photo – video part of the page must be significantly developed. Both videos and photos are presented in a small quantity and those that are available for watching are not interesting. More videos about Subway and Subway Sweden news should be uploaded. As well new photo albums should be created (for example, devoted to the most beautiful restaurants in Sweden or in other countries where Subway is presented or devoted to the events which Subway Sweden makes or in which it participate like sponsoring of sport events).

4.6 Vietnam – a new market for Subway

4.6.1 Observation and analysis

Our group had analysed the strategy content of Subway in Facebook and/or Twitter in three different markets: Sweden, Russia and France. Until now, Subway has 248 stores in France, 201 stores in Russia, and 84 stores in Sweden. We can say that Subway has a quite good establishment in France, Russia and Sweden. The Facebook and/or Twitter accounts of Subway in these countries have been developed for at least one year and hence, good and coherent content of Subway is explainable. However, our team believes that we can grasp a better overall picture of Subway strategy by looking at how Subway does in a new market. So, we decided to choose Vietnam because we have one member from Vietnam and Subway has only opened their first store there last year.

On the 15th of May, 2010, Mr. Fred DeLuca, president and co-founder of Subway chain, announced the first presence of Subway in Vietnam at a press conference in Ho Chi Minh City. He also disclosed a plan of having 25 stores in total until 2015 (VOVNews, 2010). About a year later, in February 2011, Subway Vietnam published their first Facebook page for Vietnamese people (Subway Vietnam, 2011). Our first impression about the page is that the language is in English. However, Vietnamese people do not use English in everyday life. The page follow a structure like Subway did in the other countries: Subway updates information about the brand, reply to customer comment and provide help to customer when necessary.



Figure 4-21: Main page of Subway Vietnam on Facebook, taken on May 6, 2011

The person responsible for Vietnamese page posted that he or she was hired by Subway to manage the page. In addition, Subway Vietnam has stopped updating information for about a month on Facebook. We think that the reason for this is because Subway has only one store in Vietnam. Hence, there is not much information to post. However, we cannot find the information about Subway on Facebook, which Subway normally has on the company's Facebook account (Russia, France, and Sweden). One of the authors is a Vietnamese and he had not known about Subway until he went to the USA and tried the "bread" once. In addition, for many Vietnamese people, "Subway" means metro and has nothing related to "bread". So we think that the company should let people know about what it is offering. In addition to company information, Facebook accounts of Subway designed for other countries like Sweden or France have many different photos. But for Vietnamese account, there are only 2 pictures, one is the company logo of Subway Vietnam and one is a picture of some product (Figure 4-23)



Figure 4-22: Only two photo in the photo album of Subway Vietnam on Facebook (May 6, 2011)

4.6.2 Recommendations for Vietnam

Since Vietnam has only one store and the facebook account has been activated for only more than 2 months, there are still a lot of things for Subway Vietnam to improve. However, compare to Subway Sweden that is also out for three months, the Facebook account of Vietnam is far behind Sweden. Our group thinks that Subway should hire an agency that knows Vietnamese and use Vietnamese on Facebook. Subway used native language on its French, Russian and Swedish Facebook account. Hence, we see no reason to use English for Vietnamese page; especially Vietnam people do not use English as their primary language.

Our team also suggests that Subway Vietnam should post more information about the company and about the franchisee. Since Subway has only one store in Vietnam, this will hopefully help Subway in increase the number of stores.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Discussion

This thesis was aimed to investigate whether Subway Company has a unified content strategy in all countries or it has to adapt to every country's culture and its specifics individually. We conducted all our research on the example of four countries: France, Russia, Sweden and Vietnam. We did observations of the national accounts in social networks and we got the interviews of the managers of Subway to get a deeper knowledge of Subway strategy. All our investigations were proved theoretically based on the frame of reference section and the choice of particular ways of conducting the research was explained in the methodology part. We have answered all the three research questions that we posted in the beginning of our thesis

- Is there a strategy behind the contents that Subway published on their social network pages? Also, does Subway have a standardized or differentiated content strategy on social networks in France, Russia and Sweden?

On overall, Subway's strategy is to be present in the social networks, that are nowadays are very popular among the population. Thus, the general strategy that every local Subway has to fulfill is to create a national account and actively maintain it. The social network, the content and the way of maintaining the pages the local Subway restaurants decide by their selves applying to the peculiarities and specifics of their countries. Thus, the content strategy is differentiated by every local Subway.

- How can Subway improve its content strategy in the four studied countries (France, Russia, Sweden and Vietnam)?

To answer this question we made the observations of the four counties which were followed by the summarizing table. The table helped us to compare the implementation of social networks in different countries' Subway and based on these results provide every country with recommendations.

- Which recommendations can we give to Subway Vietnam about usage of social networks based on the examples of France, Sweden and Russia?

We created possible recommendations for Subway Vietnam based on the investigations of other three countries. They are discussed widely in the empirical findings and analysis section. And mainly they are to hire the agency to change the official page to Vietnamese language.

We believe that our study can contribute to the academic society. We would argue it by the following reasons: first and foremost, social networks become more and more powerful as the number of people using them is increasing constantly. Thus, they become a useful tool for companies to keep in touch with their customers and gain new client. Secondly, the internet as it is, and moreover social networks are young and not so many investigations have currently been made. Hence, our work can be considered as valuable to the new developing research area.

5.2 Limitations

The first limitation of our thesis is that it is a case study of Subway so like every case study the findings cannot necessarily be applied to every company. Generalization cannot be made but our aim was to study Subway and to identify the strength and weaknesses of their content strategy in different countries. Our ambition is not to generalize our result to every company but to understand what is meant by content strategy on social networks with examples of Subway. Moreover we make recommendation for Subway's case in the countries studied and these recommendations do not apply to other countries since we don't have sufficient expertise and knowledge of the market to say so.

The second limitation of our thesis is the absence of analysis for the content strategy of Subway in United States. Even if it is the biggest market for Subway and also the countries where the company is most active on Social Networks we decided not to study this country. The reasons for this choice are that we do not have sufficient knowledge and experience of the American market. We choose Russia and France because one member of our group comes from each of these countries. We all lived in Sweden for at least one year and we are currently studying there so that is why we decided to analyze Subway in Sweden. Finally one member of our group is from Vietnam and Subway very recently opened its first restaurant as well as it launched a Facebook page for the country. We thought that we could use the three other countries to give recommendations on how to use social networks in Vietnam. As for the United States we thought it could be risky and inappropriate to analyze the content strategy of Subway in the country because the data would not be interpreted correctly. We preferred to focus on the area we really knew about.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

Content strategy is permanently evolving and it is a relatively recent field of research. There are a lot of aspects to study about content strategy and social networks even if efforts are currently being made by students and researchers to understand it more. The first aspect related to our thesis which could be studied is about content strategy in United States where social networks are the most popular. The content strategy in United States is probably different and companies, like Subway, have more experience of it on this market so the results may be different.

We focused our study on Subway which is a multinational company but it could be interesting to analyze how Small to Medium-Sized companies can use social networks and adopt a content strategy as well. We could wonder if it is feasible and viable for a SME to be active on social networks or whether this tool is inappropriate for organizations of this size.

Finally a very important and challenging aspect of content strategy and social networks to be studied is how to measure efficiency of communication through social networks for a company. For now it is very difficult to evaluate the positive or negative effects of the presence of a company on social networks. Finding ways to do so would be very helpful and precious both for academic purposes and for organizations like Subway.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Subway Interview questions

About interviewee:

- What is your position in Subway?
- In which way your work in Subway is related to Facebook and/or Twitter?
- Which region/country are you in charge of?

History:

- When did you decide to use Facebook and Twitter?
- Did you feel it as a new opportunity you recognized or as a necessity to react to the new trends on the market?

Tools:

- Do you have a separate team or person delegated to manage Social Networks?
- Is there one coordinator of Social Networks for the whole organization or every country behaves separately.
- How long did it take for your Facebook (and Twitter) accounts to become well-known?

Strategy:

- Who is your target audience in Social Network?
- Why is Subway active on Facebook but not on Twitter? Is the strategy different for Facebook and Twitter?
- Do you have to adapt the Social Networks' strategy for your country and culture or you follow a global structure?

- What were your initial objectives of using Facebook and Twitter?
- Have these objectives been revised? What are they now?
- Do you think Social Networks can bring new customers? OR / AND increase customers loyalty and satisfaction?
- Do you provide after-sales services in your Facebook and Twitter platforms?
- What is your attitude toward fan and anti-fan groups on Facebook? How do you cope with these groups?

Content strategy:

- How do you choose the content you post on Social Networks, more particularly the messages, photos, videos you decide to share?
- How do you answer to questions and comments from your likers/followers?
- How do you treat the information you get from people interacting with you on Social Networks? For example do you take into consideration constructive feedback (both positive and negative)?
- Do you share the information you get on Social Networks with other departments / regions of the world?
- How do you answer to negative comments on Facebook?

Evaluation:

- Do you give importance to the number of likers or followers?
- What are the performance indicators of your Facebook (and Twitter) page presence? Are the indicators expressed in figures (numbers) or without?

- Are you satisfied with the general efficiency of Social Networks for Subway (number of followers, likers, fans, people being active on your page etc)?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP !

We will send you the final version of our thesis by the end of May. We believe that our research may benefit you.

Appendix 2: Interview with manager F ra, marketing manager of Subway France (Original in French)

Présentation:

- *Quel est votre poste à Subway?*

Directeur du marketing

- *De quelle manière votre travail à Subway est-il lié aux réseaux sociaux?*

Subway ne gère pas directement l'interaction sur les réseaux sociaux (RS) avec les gens, ils demandent les services d'une société de communication spécialisée. Il serait trop cher et il faudrait au moins une personne à temps plein pour gérer cela. A ce stade de Subway la présence de la France sur les RS: ils n'ont pas l'argent et l'engagement nécessaire.

Le rôle du manager interviewé est de décider avec l'organisme externe de la stratégie d'adaptation sur le SN, ils ont des réunions où ils s'accordent sur un calendrier avec le genre d'information qui sera envoyé, dans quelle fréquence (tous les 2 jours) ... choisir des «items» qu'ils veulent promouvoir (prix spéciaux, offres, nouveaux produits, de nouvelles ouvertures, ...)

Pas directement liées aux RS, elle est en charge du marketing en général.

- *De quelle pays/zone êtes-vous en charge?*

Méditerranée: France, Espagne, Italie, Portugal, Grèce, ...

Historique:

- *Quand avez-vous décidé d'utiliser Facebook et Twitter?*

En Octobre 2010

Mais ils veulent et planifient de mettre plus d'efforts dans les RS d'ici fin 2011, ce qui signifie plus d'argent, d'avoir plus de fans : avoir une stratégie plus efficace.

Également dans ce "renouvellement" l'objectif est de contrôler plus la stratégie de toutes les pages Facebook (Fb) des restaurants Subway en France. Elle les a déjà prévenus de faire très attention à ce qu'ils font sur les RS, mais c'est toujours difficile de contrôler et il y a parfois des contenus inappropriés. (Par exemple des photos de vacances privées du propriétaire du restaurant)

Pour résumer ce "renouvellement" d'ici la fin de l'année devraient faire la gestion des RS plus professionnelle et plus contrôlable par Subway France.

- *L'aviez-vous ressenti comme une nouvelle opportunité que vous avez reconnu ou à une nécessité de réagir aux nouvelles tendances du marché?*

De toute évidence comme une nécessité! Aussi parce que les franchisés l'ont exigé (en France)

Par exemple, en Espagne les franchisés ont aussi une demande pour une page spécifique de Subway sur Fb pour l'Espagne, mais il n'y a pas assez de restaurants dans le pays (41 comparé à 268 en France). Elle a répondu que ce n'était pas possible parce que c'est trop cher comparer au nombre de restaurants et ça serait une grosse erreur de créer une page Fb sans les moyens de le gérer! (l'argent, les gens, le temps). Il faut être professionnel, et ne pas sous-estimer les ressources que ça demande.

Pour résumer la présence sur le SN est une réaction aux tendances du marché, et aussi une réponse à la demande des franchisés, mais pour le cas de Subway France, ce n'était pas vraiment considérée comme une nouvelle opportunité ou une chance.

Moyens mis en place:

- *Avez-vous une équipe ou personne spécifique qui se consacre à la gestion des réseaux sociaux pour la France?*

Organisme extérieur, personne dans Subway France n'est directement délégué uniquement aux RS.

Stratégie:

- *Quelle est votre cible sur les réseaux sociaux?*

Au départ, pensait que surtout les jeunes, mais en fait ils ont réalisé qu'elle était plus large, jusqu'à 55 ans. Selon elle, c'est lié à la démocratisation de l'Iphone.

- *Votre stratégie est-elle différente entre les comptes Subway France de Facebook et Twitter?*

Twitter est plus professionnel, sans aucun doute pour elle.

C'est plus codé, difficile à comprendre d'ailleurs pour les non-initiés.

- *Devez-vous adapter la stratégie sur les réseaux sociaux à la France, ou suivez-vous une structure globale qui s'applique pour tous les pays où Subway est présent?*

Il existe des directives par le siège, pas plus d'infos ...

- *Quels étaient initialement vos objectifs en utilisant les réseaux sociaux? Ces objectifs ont-ils été modifiés ?*

Ils ont vraiment pensé que ce serait plutôt un outil professionnel! Le premier objectif était de trouver de nouveaux franchisés, de convaincre les gens d'ouvrir de nouveaux

restaurants Subway. Mais en fait, ils ont été vraiment surpris puisque les clients sont venus discuter sur la page Fb c'est à-dire par exemple quel est son Sandwich favori, ou pour poser des questions, etc ...

Ils ont également été surpris que les franchisés étaient aussi actifs sur la page Fb de Subway France.

C'était à la fois une bonne et une mauvaise surprise, mauvais parce qu'ils s'attendaient à ce que la présence de Subway sur les RS serait plus professionnel, bonne, car ils peuvent utiliser le succès relatif avec les clients sur le marché.

- *Pensez-vous que les réseaux sociaux peuvent apporter de nouveaux clients ou/et plutôt augmenter la fidélité et la satisfaction des clients ?*

Objectif final est toujours d'amener plus de gens dans les restaurants ... à la fois de nouveaux clients et accroître fidélisation.

Content strategy:

- *Comment choisissez-vous le contenu que vous envoyez sur les réseaux sociaux, plus particulièrement les messages, photos, vidéos que vous décidez de partager?*

Il ya un calendrier des détails de la stratégie qui est fait avec l'agence, leur objectif c'est d'envoyer 2 ou 3 publications chaque semaine.

- *Comment traitez-vous l'information que vous obtenez des gens qui interagissent avec vous sur les réseaux sociaux? Notamment quand ce sont des commentaires constructifs, qu'ils soient positifs ou négatifs ?*

Quand ce sont des questions ou une plainte d'un cas particulier ils ne peuvent pas répondre sur les RS, mais ils peuvent contacter la personne par messages privés.

Chaque message nécessite une réponse différente, si le cas est trop spécifique ils contactent la personne par message privé.

Evaluation:

- *Donnez-vous de l'importance au nombre de "likers" ou "followers"?*

Tant que l'objectif initial était pour des fins professionnelles, ça n'as pas autant d'importance mais ils changent leur stratégie d'ici la fin de 2011 et alors cela deviendra plus un objectif, d'avoir plus de public, plus d'influence.

Ils ont réalisé que les RS changent, évoluent plus rapidement que prévu, l'intérêt des gens était également une surprise, les gens qui disent aimé tel ou tel restaurant ou sandwich etc.

L'intérêt des franchisés a également été une surprise, le fait qu'ils discutent entre eux via les RS.

Pour elle, c'est une bonne surprise, bien sûr, et c'est aussi une raison pour laquelle ils veulent s'impliquer davantage sur les SN, aient une stratégie plus "sérieuse" structurée.

- *Comment mesurez-vous la performance de votre communication à travers les réseaux sociaux ?*

Comment savoir? La seule chose mesurable c'est les gens qui demandent de l'aide sur Fb, mais pour la communication sur les produits, restaurants, etc... c'est impossible ou du moins ils ne sont pas en mesure de le faire maintenant.

- *Etes-vous satisfait en général de l'efficacité et du rôle des réseaux sociaux pour Subway France ?*

Une fois encore, il ya des aspects positifs et négatifs, aspect professionnel n'est pas atteint et ils veulent devenir plus pro, mais ils sont toujours agréablement surpris par le succès de la page Fb.

MERCI BEAUCOUP POUR VOTRE AIDE !

Nous vous enverrons la version finale de notre thèse avec nos résultats. Nous croyons que nos recherches peuvent vous être utiles et espérons qu'elles le seront. Nous sommes à votre disposition si vous avez des questions/remarques.

Appendix 3: Interview with manager Fra, marketing manager of Subway France (Translated to English)

About interviewee:

- *What is your position in Subway?*

Marketing manager

- *In which way your work in Subway is related to Facebook and/or Twitter?*

Subway is not directly managing the interaction on Social Networks (SN) with the people, they ask for the services of a specialized communication company. It would be too expensive and would need at least a full-time person to manage this. At this stage of Subway's France presence on SN they don't have the money and involvement to do this.

Her role is to decide with the external agency the strategy to adapt on SN; they have meetings where they make a calendar with the kind of information which will be sent, in which frequency (every 2 days)... choose of the "items" to be promote (special prices, offers, new products, new openings, ...)

Not directly related to SN, she's in charge of marketing in general

- *Which region/country are you in charge of?*

Mediterranean area : France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece, ...

History:

- *When did you decide to use Facebook and Twitter?*

October 2010

BUT they aim at putting more effort in SN from the end of 2011 that means more money, to have more followers and likers and have a more efficient strategy.

Also in this "renewal" strategy the objective is to control more the strategy of all the Facebook (Fb) pages of Subway restaurants in France. She already warned them to be very careful with what they do on SN but it's still hard to control and there are some inappropriate content (example of private holidays picture of the owner of the restaurant)

To summarize this "renewal" by the end of the year should make the management of SN more professional and controllable by Subway France.

- *Did you feel it as a new opportunity you recognized or as a necessity to react to the new trends on the market?*

Clearly as a necessity! Also because the franchisees demanded it (in France)

For example in Spain franchisees also demand for a specific Subway page on Fb for Spain, but it's not enough restaurants in the country (41 compare to 268 in France). She answered that it wasn't possible because it was too expensive compare to the number of restaurants, and it would be a BIG mistake to create a Fb page without the means to manage it! (Money, people, time). It must be professional so not to be underestimated.

To summarize the presence on SN is a reaction to the trends of the market, and also an answer to the demand of the franchisees but for the case of Subway France it wasn't really seen as a new opportunity, a chance.

Tools:

- *Do you have a separate team or person delegated to manage Social Networks for Russia/France/Sweden/...?*

External agency, no one in Subway France is directly delegated only to SN.

Strategy:

- *Who is your target audience in Social Network?*

Initially they thought mostly young people, but actually they realized it was wider target, till 55 years old. According to her it's related to the democratization of the iPhone.

- *Why is Subway Country active on Facebook but not on Twitter? Is the strategy different for Facebook and Twitter?*

Twitter is more professional, definitely for her. It's more coded, not understandable for non-initiate.

- *Do you have to adapt the Social Networks' strategy for your country and culture or you follow a global structure?*

There are guidelines by the headquarters, not more info ...

- *What were your initial objectives of using Facebook and Twitter? Have these objectives been revised? What are they now?*

They really thought it would be more a professional tool! The first objective was to find new franchisees, to convince people to open new subs restaurants. But actually they were really surprised to see it wasn't what happened, clients discussed on the Fb page to say for example what is his/her favorite sub, or asks questions, etc...

They were also surprised that franchisees interacted on the Fb page of Subway France.

It was both a good and bad surprised, bad because they expected presence of Subway on SN to be more professional, good because they can use the relative success with clients to market, etc...

- *Do you think Social Networks can bring new customers? OR / AND increase customers loyalty and satisfaction?*

Final objective is always to bring more people in the restaurants... both new customers and increased loyalty then

Content strategy:

- *How do you choose the content you post on Social Networks, more particularly the messages, photos, videos you decide to share?*

There's a calendar and specifications which is made with the agency, their objective it to send 2 or 3 publications every week.

- *How do you treat the information you get from people interacting with you on Social Networks? For example do you take into consideration constructive feedback (both positive and negative)?*

When it is questions, complains of a specific case they cannot answer on SN but they can contact the person by private messages.

- *How do you answer to negative comments on Facebook/Vkontakte?*

Every question needs different answer, if the case is too specific they contact the person by private message.

Evaluation:

- *Do you give importance to the number of likers or followers?*

As long as the initial objective was professional purposes they don't give it so much importance but they are switching their strategy by the end of 2011 so it will become an objective, to have more audience, more influence.

They realized SN were changing, evolving faster than they expected, people's interest was also a surprised, people saying they like Subway, this sub or this restaurant etc... The interest of the franchisees was also a surprise, sharing between each other. For her it's a good surprise of course and that's also a reason why they want to involve more on SN, have a more "serious" and structured strategy.

- *What are the performance indicators of your Facebook (and Twitter) page presence? Are the indicators expressed in figures (numbers) or without?*

How to know? Only thing measurable is people which ask for help on Fb but for the communication on products, restaurants, etc... it's impossible or at least they are not able to do right now.

- *Are you satisfied with the general efficiency of Social Networks for Subway (number of followers, likers, fans, people being active on your page etc)?*

Once again there are positive and negative aspects, professional aspect is not achieved and they want to make it more pro but they are still agreeably surprised by the success of the Fb page.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!

We will send you the final version of our thesis by the end of May. We believe that our research may benefit you.

Appendix 4: Interview with manager Rus, marketing manager of Subway Russia (Original in Russian)

Про Вас:

- *Какую должность Вы занимаете в Subway?*

Маркетолог – менеджер в основном офисе Сабвей Россия, которые находится в Санкт – Петербурге.

- *Каким образом Ваша работа связана с Vkontakte и/или Twitter, Facebook?*

Сабвей Россия представлен в социальной сети Вконтакте. Сегодня, это самый популярный и посещаемый сайт, на наш взгляд, в России.

Поддерживать группу в Вконтакте – это задача маркетологов – менеджеров. Мы отвечаем на комментарии и сообщения, сообщаем о новостях, большинство которых относятся к открытию новых ресторанов. В случае жалоб, мы просим дать информацию о ресторане, в котором клиент не был обслужен должным образом, и впоследствии мы контактируем с менеджером того заведения и ставим его в известность о случившемся.

В нашей компании работают 2 маркетолога – менеджера, и мы оба поддерживаем группу. Наша задача привлекать новых членов в группу и регулярно появляться, и показывать наше присутствие, там.

- *Существует ли территориальное деление в Subway Russia? Если да, то за какой регион РФ Вы ответственны?*

В пределах маркетингового отдела Сабвей Россия территориального деления нет. И я ответственна, соответственно, за всю Россию. .

История:

- *Когда Subway Russia решил использовать Vkontakte и Twitter?*

Решение открытия официальной группы в Вконтакте было принято в июле 2009 года. В том же месяце, группа открылась.

- *Расценивали ли Вы это как новую возможность рекламы, связи с клиентами или как необходимость реагировать на новые тренды на рынке?*

Социальная сеть Вконтакте оценивалась нами как популярный инструмент коммуникации и способ увеличения информационного знания о франшизе и сети ресторанов быстрого обслуживания Сабвей.

Средства:

- *Существует ли отдельная команда или отдельный человек, ответственный за Subway Russia в социальных сетях?*

В Сабвей Россия работают 2 маркетолога – менеджера, в чьи обязанности входит ведение группы в Вконтакте.

- *Существует ли один координатор социальных сетей для всей Subway организации или каждая страна представлена независимо от других?*

В России Сабвей работает по мастер-франшизе. Это значит, что франшиза продается сначала на весь регион кому-то одному, кто в свою очередь занимается продажей индивидуальных франшиз франчайзи.

Следовательно, в Вконтакте есть официальная группа российской сети ресторанов, ей управляет отдел маркетинга головного офиса. Плюс существуют группы отдельных ресторанов (на пример, Сабвей Омск), которые управляются локально франчайзи и менеджерами.

- *Сколько времени прошло с того, как официальная страница Vkontakte (и Twitter) стала известна, и ее начали посещать клиенты?*

Процесс популяризации нашей группы в Вконтакте занял примерно полгода. Это происходил параллельно с активным развитием сети.

Стратегии:

- *Какая целевая аудитория в Воктакте?*

Целевая аудитория российского Сабвея люди в возрасте 12-30 лет, что является средним возрастом активных пользователей Вконтакте. Более точно, это школьники, студенты и молодые люди.

- *Какие были первоначальные цели в использовании социальной сети Vkontakte?*

Цели, преследуемые нами в Вконтакте, это инструмент коммуникации с потенциальными франчайзи и посетителями ресторанов, увеличение информационного знания о франшизе и сети ресторанов быстрого обслуживания Сабвей, также увеличение продажи франшизы.

- *Поменялись ли эти цели и какие они сегодня?*

Нет, цели остались прежними.

- *Предоставляете ли Вы после продажные услуги в пределах группы в Вконтакте?*

Возможность оставлять сообщения, описывая уровень услуг, предоставлена всем желающим в специальных обсуждениях или на стене группы.

- *Приходится ли адаптировать стратегии в социальных сетях под разные страны и культуры или существует единая стратегия у Subway для всех стран?*

Посыл для всех ресторанов в мире единый. Это быть активными в социальных сетях. Социальные сети популярны, это эффективный способ коммуникации, ими

нужно пользоваться. Социальные сети выбираются каждой страной индивидуально, в зависимости от того, которая самая популярная. Для России мы выбрали Вконтакте, так как это самый посещаемый сайт в РФ.

- *Верите ли Вы, что социальные сети могут привлечь новых покупателей и / или увеличить покупательскую лояльность и удовлетворение?*

Реклама в социальных сетях ведется активная. Постоянно количество участников официальной и локальных групп увеличивается. Что означает, что больше и больше людей становятся клиентами Сабвей. Поэтому, да, социальные сети способствуют привлечению новых клиентов.

Обсуждения и другие возможности в Вконтакте, такие как просмотр фотографий и видео, помогают нашему бренду стать знакомым людям, а им привыкнуть к нам. Соответственно, нам будет отдано предпочтение в ситуациях когда будет обсуждаться где бы покушать. И опять же, да, лояльность покупателей возрастает. То же самое с покупательской удовлетворенностью. Мы комментируем все сообщения, особенно тех людей, которые не удовлетворены предоставленным сервисом, поэтому клиенты удовлетворены нашей работой.

- *Как Subway относится к фанатским и 'анти' фанатским группам в Вконтакте? Как Вы реагируете на их деятельность?*

С анти-фанатскими группами нам не приходилось встречаться. Мы поддерживаем локальные группы и помогаем им быть как можно активней. Так что раз есть «разговоры» про нас, это уже хорошо.

Стратегическое содержание:

- *Как Вы выбираете информацию, которую размещаете в социальных сетях (сообщения, фотографии и картинки, видео)?*

Информация для сообщений отбирается через сотрудников компании и франчайзию. Фотографии и видео мы берем с иностранных сайтов, посвященных Сабвэй.

- *Как Вы обрабатываете полученную информацию в социальных сетях от покупателей? Например, принимаете ли Вы во внимание отзывы, как положительные, так и отрицательные?*

Мы отвечаем на все сообщения, оставленные в Вконтакте. Для этого мы используем приветливый тон. Мы стараемся быть как можно осторожней и внимательней к каждому. Мы контактируем со всеми покупателями, поделившимися с опытом некачественного обслуживания, главным образом мы интересуемся рестораном, который они посетили, чтобы искоренить недочеты.

- *Делитесь ли Вы полученной информацией с другими отделами / другими регионами или странами?*

Мы проводим анализ полученной информации через опрос. Впоследствии мы отсылаем эти результаты в отделы, к которым это относится. Также, мы

контактируем рестораны, которые были упомянуты клиентами. В общем, вся наша информация в Вконтакте доступна любому.

Оценивание:

- *Важно ли для Вас количество участников в официальной группе Subway в Вконтакте?*

Конечно! Больше количество участников группы, больше люди говорят про нас, что значит больше клиентов мы приобретаем.

- *Удовлетворены ли Вы в эффективности пользования социальными сетями Subway (количество участников в Ваших группах, количество активных пользователей и тд)?*

Есть участники официальной группы Сабвей Россия в Вконтакте, которые самые активные, которые комментируют, оставляют сообщения и участвуют в жизни группы больше остальных. В то же время, есть люди, которые время от времени что – то комментируют и заходят в группу. Нас радует то, что количество участников, вносящих вклад в жизнь группы, большое. Это означает, что не одни и те же люди комментируют, а остальные являются участниками для ‘галочки’. Нас удовлетворяет такая ситуация. Мы хотим, чтобы больше людей посещали нашу группу и мы с этим справляемся.

СПАСИБО ВАМ БОЛЬШОЕ ЗА ПОМОЩЬ!

Я вышлю Вам финальную версию диплома в конце мая. Я уверена, Ваша помощь мне очень сильно поможет.

Appendix 5: Interview with manager Rus, marketing manager of Subway Russia (Translated to English)

About interviewee:

- *What is your position in Subway?*

Marketing – manager in the head office of Subway Russia located in Saint-Petersburg

- *In which way your work in Subway is related to Vkontakte and/or Twitter ?*

We use Vkontakte social network.

It is the work of the marketing – managers to maintain the official page of Subway Russia in Vkontakte. We answer to the comments and messages, upload the news mainly about the new opening restaurants. In cases of complains we collect the information about the restaurant where the bad service was provided and further we contact the local manager to let him/her be familiar with the problems.

There are two marketing – managers working in Subway Russia and both of us are involved in maintaining the Vkontakte page and encouraging more and more people to become members and to notice our presence in the social network.

- *Which region/country are you in charge of?*

I am in charge of Russia. There is no division by regions in marketing department.

History:

- *When did you decide to use Vkontakte?*

The decision to make an official page in Vkontakte was taken in July 2009, the same month we opened one.

- *Did you feel it as a new opportunity you recognized or as a necessity to react to the new trends on the market?*

The social network Vkontakte was regarded as a new popular tool of communication and a way to increase the knowledge about the franchising system and the fast food restaurant chain Subway.

Tools:

- *Do you have a separate team or person delegated to manage Social Networks for Russia?*

We have two marketing – managers in Subway Russia and it is part of their work to maintain the group in Vkontakte.

- *Is there one coordinator of Social Networks for the whole organization or every country behaves separately?*

Subway Russia is working by the master – franchise system, what means first of all the franchise is sold to someone who would be in charge of a region and then he or she would sell franchises to franchisee. So there is one official group in Vkontakte lead by the head office Subway Russia from Saint – Petersburg. Moreover there exist local groups (for example, Subway Omsk) which are maintained by the local franchisee or managers.

- *How long did it take for your Vkontakte accounts to become well-known?*

The process of becoming popular took us approximately half a year. It was parallel to the active development of Vkontakte.

Strategy:

- *Who is your target audience in Social Network?*

The target audience of Subway Russia in Vkontakte is people aged 12 – 30 years old – the average age of people actively using Vkontakte. To be precise it is pupils, students and young people.

- *Do you have to adapt the Social Networks' strategy for your country and culture or you follow a global structure?*

All countries get the same recommendation to be actively present in the social networks as nowadays they are really popular. It is also an effective way of communication and we need to use it. The strategy is just being present in social networks. We need to be there where our clients are. Then every country chooses for itself which social network to choose. For Russia we chose Vkontakte as it is the most cited web site in our country.

- *What were your initial objectives of using Vkontakte?*

Initial objective, as well as present, are to use Vkontakte as a tool of communication with potential franchisee and customers of the restaurants, to increase the knowledge about the franchising system as it is and about the fast food chain Subway. Moreover, we do increase the number of sold franchises.

- *Do you think Social Networks can bring new customers? OR / AND increase customers loyalty and satisfaction?*

The promotion in Vkontakte is active; constantly the number of members of the official and local groups is increasing. This means more people are becoming the clients of the Subway. So, yes social networks are bringing new customers.

The discussions and other do – possibilities in Vkontakte, such as look photos or watching movies, make people become used to our brand and choose Subway to go to eat when the decision where to go should be taken. So, again, yes customer loyalty increases. The same is about satisfaction. We give feedback to all comments and especially carefully treat negative messages so customers feel satisfied with the gotten attention.

- *Do you provide after-sales services in your Vkontakte platform?*

There is a possibility to anyone leave a message about the gained experience in the discussions or wall.

- *What is your attitude toward fan and anti-fan groups in Vkontakte? How do you cope with these groups?*

We have never met anti – fan groups in Vkontakte. There are a lot of local Subway groups. We are encouraging them to stay alive and active as it is good for company if more and more people are speaking about it.

Content strategy:

- *How do you choose the content you post on Social Networks, more particularly the messages, photos, videos you decide to share?*

The messages are chosen through the employees of the company and franchisee. Photo, video and some text messages are taken from foreign web sites of Subway.

- *How do you answer to questions and comments from your members?*

All the left messages in Vkontakte are answered. We use friendly tone of voice. We are trying to be as much careful and attentive to everyone as possible. All customers who got bad experience in our restaurants are contacted further to get the information about the Subway restaurant where they were.

- *Do you share the information you get on Social Networks with other departments / regions of the world?*

We analyze the information that we got from the questionnaires. We further these results are sent to the department which needs them. Moreover, we contact restaurants with the work of which the customers were not satisfied. All other information is available in Vkontakte for everyone.

Evaluation:

- *Do you give importance to the number of likers or followers?*

Sure! The more members we have, the more people know and speak about our company what results in more clients.

- *Are you satisfied with the general efficiency of Social Networks for Subway (number of followers, likers, fans, people being active on your page etc)?*

We have members in official page of subway Russia in Vkontakte that are the most active, who leave comments very frequently. At the same time a lot of people just left few and time from time they enter the group to check the news, discussions. We are happy that the number of people participating in the life of the group is big – it means not just the same participate. We are satisfied with this situation. We want more people to visit our page and we manage to do it.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!

We will send you the final version of our thesis by the end of May. We believe that our research may benefit you.

Appendix 6: Interview with manager Swe, marketing manager of Subway Sweden

About interviewee:

- *What is your position in Subway?*

Head of marketing department

- *In which way your work in Subway is related to Facebook and/or Twitter ?*

We have a national Facebook account

- *Which region/country are you in charge of?*

Nordic

History:

- *When did you decide to use Facebook and Twitter?*

The decision to make a national account for Subway Sweden was made in 2010, March. The same month we become active in Facebook and keep being there.

- *Did you feel it as a new opportunity you recognized or as a necessity to react to the new trends on the market?*

We are considering it as a new trend first of all, but at the same time we treat it as an opportunity.

Tools:

- *Do you have a separate team or person delegated to manage Social Networks for Sweden?*

Yes, we have a separate team consisting of agency and coordinator. The agency made an analysis of our company and needs. Together with them, at first we made a content of the future Facebook page and designed its overall appearance, then they implemented our ideas and keep the page active, constantly updated. When we have news (for example, about opening new restaurants) we are sending it to them. In case they have any questions regarding our work, they contact a coordinator.

- *Is there one coordinator of Social Networks for the whole organization or every country behaves separately.*

Every country or few countries have a separate coordinator.

- *How long did it take for your Facebook (and Twitter) accounts to become well-known?*

It was established just 3 month ago. Thus due to the fact that it is so new it is impossible to tell how long it took to become popular.

Strategy:

- *Who is your target audience in Social Network?*

The target audience of Facebook is almost the same as the target audience of Subway. Thus the target audience of the Subway Sweden page on Facebook is met there.

- *Why is Subway Sweden active on Facebook but not on Twitter? Is the strategy different for Facebook and Twitter?*

The resources that are allocated for promoting ourselves in social networks are enough for being active in Facebook. We are deciding not to spend money for promoting ourselves in other social networks by now. Moreover, there are bigger opportunities that integrate promotions and also engage us with fans provided on Facebook.

- *Do you have to adapt the Social Networks' strategy for your country and culture or you follow a global structure?*

Both, we need to follow the global structure but at the same time we need to have a local tone of voice.

- *What were your initial objectives of using Facebook ?*

The aims of creating national account in Facebook are the following: to increase customers' awareness, engage with fans and drive traffic to stores.

- *Have these objectives been revised? What are they now?*

It is too early to say as we are there just 3 months.

- *Do you think Social Networks can bring new customers? OR/AND increase customers loyalty and satisfaction?*

Yes, absolutely. That is one of the aim being there presented.

- *Do you provide after-sales services in your Facebook and Twitter platforms?*

We have a customer service link.

- *What is your attitude toward fan and anti-fan groups on Facebook? How do you cope with these groups?*

We have certain fan rules that we apply. We do not like rude behavior and such comments are deleted.

Content strategy:

- *How do you choose the content you post on Social Networks, more particularly the messages, photos, videos you decide to share?*

The textual messages are coming from all departments and that is usually the news that can be interesting for fans. The photo – video materials we are taking from the official global web site of Subway or local Swedish.

- *How do you answer to questions and comments from your likers/followers?*

We are treating everyone equally, in the same friendly way. We are trying not to lose any message and to react as quick as possible.

- *How do you treat the information you get from people interacting with you on Social Networks? For example do you take into consideration constructive feedback (both positive and negative)?*

The constructive messages, left in the discussions or on the wall, are got into consideration. Such information is delivered to the department that can need it.

- *Do you share the information you get on Social Networks with other departments / regions of the world?*

Yes, all the information that can be useful to any of the department is sent there.

- *How do you answer to negative comments on Facebook?*

We are trying to have just positive messages on our wall so keep the positive view of the page itself.

Evaluation:

- *Do you give importance to the number of likers or followers?*

Yes, the more people are following our page, the more indirect advertisements we will get. As our page is young then there is a tendency that every day we get few more fans.

- *Are you satisfied with the general efficiency of Social Networks for Subway (number of followers, likers, fans, people being active on your page etc)?*

The number of followers is increasing what means than we are becoming more well-known. So my answer would be yes, we are satisfied with the efficiency of national account on Facebook.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP !

We will send you the final version of our thesis by the end of May. We believe that our research may benefit you.

Appendix 7: Interview with manager EU, communication coordinator of European Region

About interviewee:

- *What is your position in Subway?*
My position is Communications/Customer Service Coordinator/Ombudsman
- *In which way your work in Subway is related to Facebook and/or Twitter?*
I work with customer comments left on various countries Facebook pages and also help to deal with PR issues relating to both.
- *Which region/country are you in charge of?*
Europe

History:

- *When did you decide to use Facebook and Twitter?*
The company has actively pursued setting up Facebook pages in individual countries since 2010, some of our franchisees have set up their own pages prior to this.
- *Did you feel it as a new opportunity you recognized or as a necessity to react to the new trends on the market?*
Facebook and social media in general are now a necessity.

Tools:

- *Do you have a separate team or person delegated to manage Social Networks?*
We hire outside companies to manage social networks while various areas of the business are involved on an ad-hoc basis
- *Is there one coordinator of Social Networks for the whole organization or every country behaves separately.*
Every country behaves independently
- *How long did it take for your Facebook (and Twitter) accounts to become well-known?*
Currently we have over 100,00 fans in Germany, all other countries are much further behind as they were later to develop

Strategy:

- *Why is Subway active on Facebook but not on Twitter? Is the strategy different for Facebook and Twitter?*
We are on both
- *Do you have to adapt the Social Networks' strategy for your country and culture or you follow a global structure?*
There is a global structure
- *Do you provide after-sales services in your Facebook and Twitter platforms?*
We direct customers with sales issues to the correct format for registering comments

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP !

We will send you the final version of our thesis by the end of May. We believe that our research may benefit you.

Appendix 8: France analysis

Appendix 8-1:



SUBWAY FRANCE

[Ouvertures SUBWAY] Un nouveau restaurant SUBWAY® a ouvert à Nantes au 2 rue de Saverne. 150 m2 et une belle terrasse pour profiter des beaux jours !



18 avril, 14:57 · Partager

17 personnes aiment ça.

Afficher les 8 commentaires

(Subway openings) A new Subway restaurant opened at Nantes at the address "2 rue de Saverne". 150 square meters and a nice terrace to enjoy the good weather !

Appendix 8-2:



SUBWAY FRANCE

A l'occasion du mariage du siècle, voici un [SUBWAY® dans le monde] spécial Angleterre. A votre avis, dans quelle ville british, cette photo a t'elle été prise ? Un heureux mariage à Will & Kate by the way :)



29 avril, 12:36 · Partager

11 personnes aiment ça.

Afficher les 23 commentaires

In the occasion of the wedding of the century, there is a (Subway in the world) for England. According to you, in which british city, this picture has been taken ? Happy wedding to Will & Kate by the way :)

Appendix 8-3:



Create your own business with Subway in your region ! The departments Rhône-Alpes, Nord, PACA, Franche-Comté, Bourgogne et Champagne organize 3 information meetings. For more information click here: *(link to subway traditionnal website)*

Appendix 8-4:



Today at Subway 'place richebe' in Lille we exploded the record !! 128 clients/ hour ... :-))

Appendix 8-5:



Jeremy Langlois

Pire expérience de Subway au restaurant gare du nord!!! D'abord, une seule personne pour préparer les sandwiches pendant que l'autre mange son sandwich et regarde les clients attendent. Celui qui s'occupe de nous était très lent et peu motivé et nous avez servi le premier subway qui contient plus de pain que de garniture, il faut dire qu'avec sa façon de préparer les sandwich en jetant la garniture dans le pain il fallait pas s'attendre à quelque chose de génial. On est très loin du niveau des subway US et même à la limite de la décence dans ce cas particulier. Nous n'y remettons plus les pieds ça c'est sûr.

March 30 at 1:59am



Alexandre Escalona likes this.



Drindrine Sandrine Comme d'habitude il ne faut pas mettre tout les subway dans le même paquet, surmont un gros problème d'organisation et de formation de celui-ci car dans la plus grande majorité des restaurants le service est très rapide, et de bonne qualité, pour ne pas rester sur ta fin, la prochaine fois va dans un autre

March 30 at 7:13am



SUBWAY FRANCE Bonjour Jeremy, effectivement comme vous l'explique Sandrine, chaque restaurant est tenu par un franchisé indépendant. Il se peut donc que certains ne soient pas à la hauteur de vos espoirs quand d'autres sont irréprochables. La plupart le sont mais tous devraient l'être. C'est pourquoi je transmets votre message au franchisé du restaurant de Gare du Nord afin qu'il réagisse au plus vite. Merci pour votre alerte.

March 30 at 10:54am



SUBWAY FRANCE Jeremy, le franchisé du restaurant Gare du Nord vous a envoyé un mail votre adresse "epita". ;)

March 30 at 1:05pm



- Worst Subway experience at the restaurant in Gare du Nord !!! First only one person to prepare sandwiches while the other is eating and watch clients waiting. The one who prepared sandwiches was very slow and not motivated and served a subway with more bread than garnishing, not to mention his way of throwing garnishing on the bread, we didn't expect something terrific. It is very far from US Subway restaurants and it's even almost indecent in this case. We will never go again for sure.



SUBWAY FRANCE 1: Hello Jeremy, every Subway restaurant is managed by an independent franchisee. It is then possible that some of them do not live up to your hopes while others are impeccable. Most of them are but all of them should. That is why I transmit your message to the franchisee of the restaurant Gare du Nord so that he can react as fast as possible. Thank you for your alert.


SUBWAY FRANCE 2: Jeremy, the franchisee of the restaurant Gare du Nord sent you a message to your email address. :)


Appendix 9: Russia analysis


Appendix 9-1: The first comments in the wall of the group

**Салават Юлаев**

22 июл 2009 в 18:10 | [Комментировать](#)

**Sasha Baboon**
Выкладывай миксы!
21 июл 2009 в 18:15 | [Комментировать](#) [Мне нравится](#) 

**Сергей Владимиров**
Диджеи не требуются?
21 июл 2009 в 18:14 | [Комментировать](#)

**Sasha Baboon**
Привет! =)
21 июл 2009 в 18:07 | [Комментировать](#)

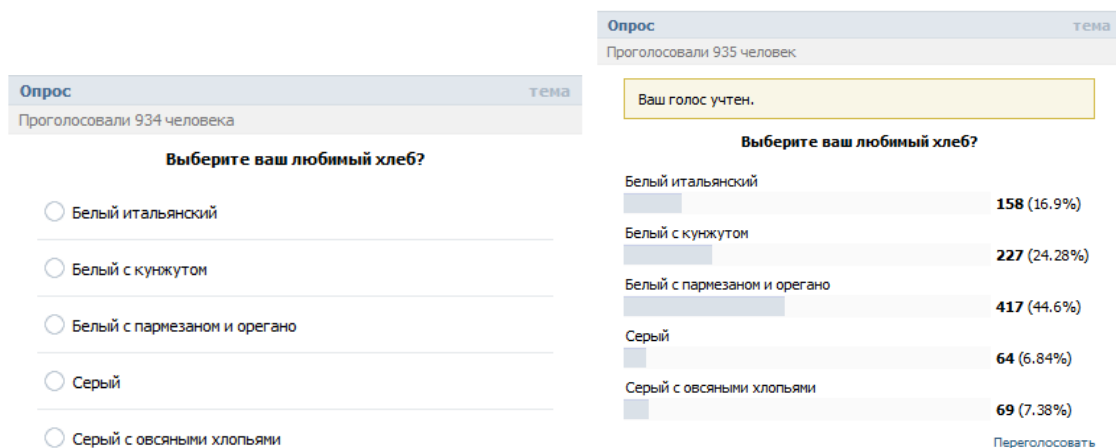
**Gospozha Bogomyakova**
Всем привет!
21 июл 2009 в 18:07 | [Комментировать](#)

[о сайте](#) [техподдержка](#) [блог](#) [правила](#) [реклама](#) [разработчикам](#)
В Контакте © 2006-2011 Русский
Павел Дуров

Gospozha Bogomyakova: Hi to everyone!

21 July 2009

Appendix 9-2: An example of the questionnaire



Which bread is your favorite?

- White italian
- White with sesame
- With with parmesane and oregano
- Grey
- Grey with oat-flakes

Number of votes

Appendix 9-3:

Артём Буглеев
работаю в Красноярске,
в Аэропорту;) Welcom)

3 ноя 2009 в 14:43 | [Комментировать](#)

I am working in Subway Krasnoyarsk, in the aeroport;) Welcome)

3 November 2009



Евгений Сухогузов

Ребята а ведь в Петрозаводске тоже есть Subway!!!!

18 ноя 2009 в 20:58 | [Комментировать](#)

Guys, there is Subway in Petrozavodsk!!!

18 November 2009

Appendix 9-4:



Дмитрий Сизов

Ярославль открывает первый ресторан, расположенный по адресу ул. Кирова, д. 11. открытие состоится 01 мая в 12:00

29 апр 2010 в 23:27 | [Комментировать](#)

The first restaurant is going to be opened in Yaroslavl, located in Kirova st, 11. The opening will be on 1 May at 12 am.

29 April 2010



Анастасия Атясова

Ресторан SUWBAY®, открывающийся по адресу г. Москва, Севастопольский проспект, 11Е (ТЦ "Капитолий"), объявляет набор персонала. Резюме необходимо направлять по адресу rsn2372@mail.ru.

Справки по телефону: (495) 661-58-51

25 июн 2010 в 21:58 | [Комментировать](#)

Subway Restaurant, opening in Moscow, Sevastoposkij pr, 11E ('Capitolij'), is seeking for stuff. CV should be send to rsn2372@mail.ru. All questions by phone: (495)661-58-51

25 June 2010



Евгений Суслов

В Кирове открылся первый ресторан расположенный по адресу Октябрьский пр-т 66

23 июл 2010 в 13:58 | [Комментировать](#)

The first restaurant is opened in Kirov, Oktjabrskij pr, 66

23 July 2010

Appendix 9-5:



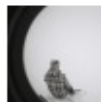
lyubov shelkovnikova

Oct. 18, 2009 at 6:38 pm

#8

В сабвее на Невском, 20 -очень не понравилась работа кассиров,отвратительное отношение к покупателям(была 17.10.09).Грязный зал,крошки и бумажки на столах...ужасно! У вас явно не было давно сс проверки?)) Срочно исправляйтесь! И проведите наконец работу с персоналом -Как Надо Обслуживать Покупателей!! впечатление,что ваши кассиры не работать пришли,а поболтать с подружками...

I did not like the work of cashier in Subway, Nevskij 20 – awful attitude to the customers (I was 17 November 2009). A dirty hall, crumbs and papers on the tables.. Disgusting! Obviously, you did not have inspections for long time?)) Try to improve immediately! And, finally, work with personal – they need to satisfy clients!! Seems that your cashiers are not working but instead just chatting with friends...



Sasha are Baboon

Oct. 19, 2009 at 10:49 am

#10


Здравствуйте Любовь! Спасибо за Ваш комментарий. Мы обязательно передадим ваши пожелания управляющим ресторана на Невском, 20.

Good day Lyubov! Thank you for Your comments. We will give your feedback to the local manger of the restaurant, necessarily.


Appendix 9-6:

Photo Albums

16 albums All




Праздник в Нижнем Новго..
Updated January 22, 2010




Санкт-Петербург.учебн
Updated December 17, 2010

Videos

25 videos All



McDonald's уступил Subway пальму первенства
11 Mar. at 9:15 am | 0 comments



SUBJAMMER 2010
Feb. 27, 2010 | 4 comments

Appendix 9-7: Examples of local Subway groups:


Subway Obninsk

Open Group

Subway Obninsk

Description: SUBWAY® — это более 30 000 ресторанов в 87 странах мира. Subway является одним из лидеров индустрии фаст-фуда, а сэндвичи SUBWAY® являются здоровой альтернативой жирной пище, приготовленной на полуфабрикатах. Глобальная миссия Subway — быть № 1 в мире в сфере обслуживания клиентов и по развитию сети ресторанов в мире.
Website: <http://www.subway.ru>
City/Town: Обнинск, Россия

Свежие новости








Invite Friends
Add to Bookmarks

You are a member of this group.
Share with Friends
Leave Group

Photos


There are 8 photos in the main album Add Photos



Wall 17 posts

go to posts made on behalf of the group

Enter a message...



Subway Obninsk
Ребята, в Subway нужен менеджер позитивный, ответственный и энергичный!
График работы 2/2. Молодой, веселый коллектив!
Обращайтесь в Subway или звоните 8 910-912-19-84!
Apr. 28, 2011 at 12:13 pm | Comment

Members

80 people All










Photo Albums

3 albums All

Subway Perm


Closed Group

SUBWAY в Перми. Известные во всем мире сэндвичи!


Description: Официальная группа ресторанов быстрого обслуживания Subway в Перми.


Website: <http://www.subway.ru/>


City/Town: Пермь, Россия





Members
568 people [All](#)



Dimko


Matvey


Tanya


Artem


Ksenia



Olga

[Add to Bookmarks](#)

You have sent a request to this group.

[Cancel Request](#)

Group Officers
1 officer [All](#)


Yevgenia Gurina (Maximova)

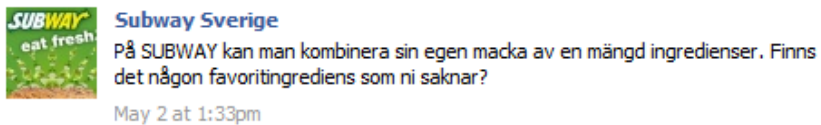
Appendix 10: Sweden analysis

Appendix 10-1: Example of greeting messages



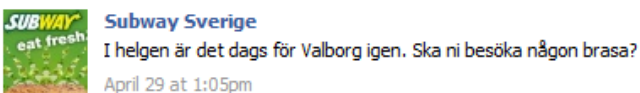
Subway Borås sends greetings to all Sweden

Appendix 10-2:



In Subway you can make your own sandwiches of variety of ingredients. Which are your favorite ones that you miss?

Appendix 10-3:



It is a Valborg day in the weekends. Will you visit any fire?

Appendix 10-4:




Subway Sverige
Hos oss på SUBWAY finns det ett stort urval av dressingar att välja på. Min favorit är honungssenap. Vilken är din?
May 10 at 2:30pm

2 people like this.

View all 9 comments

 **Thesa Edestedt** Vitlök så klart!!!
Wednesday at 4:54pm · 1 person

 **Andrew Robertson** Sweet onion with a dash of hot sauce!
Wednesday at 5:44pm · 1 person



Rabble
Vad har Arboga, Borlänge, Borås, Eskilstuna, GBG, Helsingborg, Härnösand, Hässleholm, Hölleviken, Jönköping, Kalmar, Kristianstad, Landskrona, Linköping, Ludvika, Luleå, Lund, Malmö, Örebro, Ömsköldsvik, Rimbo, Skellefteå, Söderhamn, Sthlm, Trelleborg, Uddevalla, Uppsala, Umeå, Västerås & Växjö gemensamt?
Jo, fr.o.m idag finns Rabbleerbjudanden från Subway Sverige i alla dessa städer.

- In Subway there is a huge choice of souses to choose from. My favorite is sweet mustard. Which is yours?
- Garlic!!!
- Sweet onion with a clash of hot sauce!

Appendix 10-5:



Jonas Nylander
Ni tar alltid bort mina kommentarer :(
May 2 at 3:24pm

Fredrik Stolpskottet Weidmo likes this.

 **Subway Sverige** Hej Jonas. Först och främst så tack för att du gillar SUBWAY. I informationen kan du läsa "Eftersom vi vill att den här sidan ska vara något positivt för alla inblandade kommer foton, kommentarer och annat material som SUBWAY® teamet bedömer som improduktivt att tas bort.". Detta är anledningen till att en del kommentarer tas bort och så även i ditt fall. Mvh SUBWAY
May 2 at 3:30pm · 1 person

 **Jonas Nylander** Så att jag har Asbest som favoritingrediens är inte produktivt? :O
May 2 at 3:38pm · 2 people

- You are taking away all the time my comments :(
- Hi Jonas! First and the most thank you for liking Subway. In the information you can read "Since we want this page to be positive all photos, comments and other material that SUBWAY® team considers as unrelevant will be removed". It is a reason why comments are removed even in your case. Sincerely, Subway
- So it is not relevant that I have as a favorite ingredient Asbest? :O