Communication and content generation in a B2B presence on social media: A case study on social capital in the tourism industry

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# Foreword

This report has been written as part of a graduation internship performed at Zizerones, which is located in Valencia, Spain. The experience has been very valuable to me and has given me insight not only into the life of a start-up in general, but also into Spain’s tourism industry.

I would like to start by thanking every colleague who worked or still works within the company and made my experience both valuable and enjoyable. During my time at the company I was able to learn a lot about the different sides of a start-up and doing business in Spain.

Special thanks are due to Luis Noé and Mónica Nicolás for guiding me throughout the internship. Even though my time with Mónica Nicolás was cut short, it was still very useful. Furthermore, I would also like to thank my primary and secondary supervisors, respectively Katinka Wieringa and Guido van der Burg, for the advice and support they have given me throughout the graduation internship process.

I wish everyone the best and I hope to see you again in the future.

Menno van der Vooren

# Executive summary

Zizerones is a start-up company that currently develops a Software as a Service (SaaS) called Guidango for tour guides and companies that operate within Spain’s tourism sector. This report has been written to facilitate recommendations on the communication between Guidango and its clients on social media. The research question, which reflects the core focus of the report, is “How should Zizerones communicate with their current and potential customers through the social media platforms for Guidango?”

The research conducted involves desk research; analyses of Zizerones’ competitors vis-à-vis Guidango, leaders of the industry and social media in general; and in-depth interviews with current and potential Guidango clients. All of this research leads to the final recommendations that are provided at the end of this report.

The findings chapter brings forward many differences between the competitors, leaders, Zizerones, interviewees and the literature for 11 factors that were identified through the desk research. The most prominent difference between the literature and the other information sources was discovered in relation to the tangibility factor, which was found to be much less important than suggested in the literature. For Zizerones, the most important factors are anonymity, information and effectiveness. The phone and e-mail are currently considered more effective channels, although as the company grows that may change. For the remaining eight factors, no major discoveries were made.

The recommendations show that the company should show their identity to current and potential clients on social media when making a comment, add different types of content topics to current topics that are discussed and consider using social media for customer service as well, so long as the company continues to grow. The business-to-business (B2B) side of the tourism industry is a very personal sector where most conversations take place by phone and e-mail. As the company grows, the personalisation of the channels becomes more difficult, as more and more phone calls and e-mail conversations will need to be held. Using social media for customer service can be an effective solution to this problem. More types of information would create more variety and would also provide tour guides and companies with content that they in turn could share with their customers.

More research will be needed on the necessity of tangibility as a factor in this particular industry, as the investigation showed major differences with the literature. For Zizerones, more research is recommended to discover when social media becomes more cost-effective than phone and e-mail for handling different customer service-related issues.

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# Glossary of terms

**Anonymity:** A factor of social capital. Anonymity is about whether or not to show the identity of the person who is posting for a company on social media (Hvass & Munar, 2012).

**B2B:** Business to business; a commercial transaction that exists between businesses (Investopedia, n.d.).

**B2C:** Business to consumer; a business or transaction that is conducted directly between companies and consumers (Investopedia, n.d.)

**Characteristics:** A factor of social capital. Reliability of a response of the company and the quickness of said response (Canhoto & Clark, 2013).

**Effectiveness:** A factor of social capital. The effectiveness of support on social media as compared to other channels (Canhoto & Clark, 2013)

**Emotional:** A factor of social capital. The feeling of being listened to (Canhoto & Clark, 2013).

**eWoM:** Electronic word of mouth; an immediate and credible form of word of mouth (Hung & Li, 2007).

**Facebook:** A social networking website (Techtarget, n.d.).

**Google+:** A social networking website designed around the way people interact offline (Techtarget, n.d.).

**Hierarchy:** A factor of social capital. Different communication styles, which can differ between a horizontal relationship and a vertical relationship (Canhoto & Clark, 2013).

**Information:** A factor of social capital. Encompasses the exchanges between two parties (Canhoto & Clark, 2013).

**LinkedIn:** A social networking website designed specifically for the business community (Techtarget, n.d.).

**Membership:** A factor of social capital. A formal interaction in a structured manner or an informal interaction without following set rules (Canhoto & Clark, 2013).

**Personalisation:** A factor of social capital. The personalisation of communication to the customer using personal information about the company (Canhoto & Clark, 2013).

**Pinterest:** A social website for sharing and categorizing images found online (Techtarget, n.d.).

**Retweet:** The reposting or forwarding of a message of another user (Oxford dictionaries, n.d.).

**SaaS:** Software as a Service, where software is licensed on a subscription model and is centrally hosted (Pcmag, n.d.).

**Social:** A factor of social capital. The engagement and formation of a community (Canhoto & Clark, 2013).

**Social capital:** Encompasses online social network relationships and support (Canhoto & Clark, 2013).

**Tangible:** A factor of social capital. Solving a problem while providing financial or other tangible benefits (Canhoto & Clark, 2013).

**Tone:** A factor of social capital. Encompasses an informal talking style or a formal communication style (Baeza-Yates & Rello, 2011).

**Tour company:** A company that provides tours and activities.

**Tour guide:** A person who leads others on a short trip around a place (Collins dictionary, n.d.).

**Twitter:** A free social networking microblogging service (Techtarget, n.d.).

**Vimeo:** A video-sharing website that allows members to view, upload and share videos (Techtarget, n.d.).

**YouTube:** A free video-hosting website that allows members to store and serve video content (Techtarget, n.d.).

# Chapter 1 – Introduction

## The company

Zizerones is a small start-up company that is located in Valencia, Spain, and works in the Spanish tourism industry. Zizerones has been chosen for Mercadona’s Lanzadera programme, which finances many start-ups. Twenty projects were chosen out of 1,210 projects in total.

The company currently has two products in development, although it mainly focuses on one. The first is a marketplace called Zizerones. The second, which is the product under development that is currently receiving the most attention, is called Guidango. Guidango is a resource management product that is customised to the needs of tour and activity providers.

## The problem

As a new company, part of Zizerones’ strategy is to set up a social media platform. Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden (2011) note that the social media ecosystem offers the most promising potential when it comes to communicating with the different stakeholders of a company. Further building on this, Verhoeven et al. (2012) discuss that European practitioners expect that the content of communication will become more important as the use of social media increases further. Verhoeven et al. mention, however, that open dialogue without control and the ease of spreading information are possible threats for organisations. To take advantage of this opportunity while reducing the threats, a social media strategy therefore has to be established.

## Research statement and objectives

To solve the problem the following proposed research question: How should Zizerones communicate with their current and potential customers through the social media platforms for Guidango? The aim of the research is to look into the different parts of the various social media platforms and find out how to use the platforms to connect to the companies and guides in the way that they prefer. In order to answer this question, several sub-questions have to be formulated. These include:

* What is the current situation with regards to Zizerones and their use of social media?
* How do competitors and industry leaders communicate with their client base?
* What do the clients want from Guidango’s social media?
* What will the costs and benefits of using and monitoring communication on social media be for Zizerones?

## Audience

This report has been written for both the Zizerones company (as part of the internship) and the supervisors of Hogeschool Utrecht (as part of the graduation assignment). The research therefore has two purposes or expectations:, first, the business purpose is to uncover practical information on how to communicate on social media with the company’s current and potential customers; second, the academic purpose is to investigate a topic of interest through research. The technical knowledge of social media of both parties is more than sufficient to cover all necessary areas of communication. The hope is to accomplish both the business and academic purposes and to find a better course of social media action in a B2B setting between Zizerones and the tour companies and guides.

## Report outline

This report evaluates the social media communication strategy of Guidango. The social media communication strategy is evaluated against the literature, Guidango’s major competitors, industry leaders and the needs of Guidango’s current and potential customers. Based on the findings that are evaluated in the discussion, recommendations are given.

# Chapter 2 – Literature review

The objective of the literature review is to investigate what is currently already known with regards to communication between companies and customers on social media. This review shows both areas that have already been investigated and those that are lacking and in need of more investigation.

## Social capital

Social capital theory is a suitable way to examine the interactions between individuals and organisations on social media because it examines how individuals benefit from their relationships with the organisations (Canhoto & Clark, 2013). Social capital encompasses a wide range of topics (Lin & Lu, 2011). Canhoto and Clark note that it encompasses online social network relationships and support. This is similar to what Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) show in their three particular dimensions, namely: structural (i.e. social interaction ties), cognitive (i.e. shared values), and relational (i.e. trust). The two topics mentioned by Canhoto and Clark encompass many factors of importance. These factors are further discussed below, broken into two categories (namely social network relationships and available support).

## Online social network relationships

One, hierarchy. Hierarchy is the first of six factors concerning online social network relationships (Canhoto & Clark, 2013). Hvass and Munar (2012) argue that there are both top-down (i.e. vertical) and bottom-up (i.e. horizontal and interactive) approaches. Social media is very suitable for an interactive/horizontal approach (Putnam, 2000; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), as it offers a convenient communication style for engaging with other people (Zarella, 2010). An interactive communication style is therefore preferred on social media platforms.

Two, membership. Membership is separated into formal interaction (i.e. in a structured way) or informal interaction (i.e. without following set rules) (Canhoto & Clark, 2013). Putnam (2000) argues that social media is suitable for both formal and informal networks. However, Canhoto and Clark (2013) discuss that in commercial situations there is a strong preference for firms to use a formal approach in which there is a clear process of dealing with the situation and integration with other channels. A formal network would therefore be preferred over an informal network.

Three, personalisation. Personalisation encompasses the personalisation of communication between the company and the customer in a way that shows knowledge of the customer, which is very much preferred (Canhoto & Clark, 2013). However, people do place a high emphasis on controlling the terms of their relationship with marketers (Phelps, Nowak, & Ferrell, 2000). There is therefore no clear answer here yet.

Four, characteristics. Canhoto and Clark (2013) show that the reliability of a quick response and the consistency of service levels are very important in social media, as is often mentioned by respondents in their research. This is consistent with other customer expectations research in which reliability is a source of value (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991). A focus on both consistency of service levels and staying responsive are therefore recommended.

Five, anonymity. Hvass and Munar (2012) argue for an additional factor, which is the anonymity of the employee. This concerns whether or not the identity of the employee who is posting should be shown. They argue that making fans and followers aware of the identity of the employee results in stronger ties between the company and their customers. However, there is also a drawback. If the person with whom the fans and followers have a relationship is no longer able to post, these relationships will have to be rebuilt with someone else – which can be difficult. On the other hand, Naylor, Lamberton and West (2012) argue that showing the identity is not a good idea. Overall, there is no clear answer yet as to whether or not to show the employee’s identity.

Six, tone. Tone refers to whether the style is informal or formal (Baeza-Yates & Rello, 2011). According to Hvass and Munar (2012), the informal tone resembles face-to-face communication and expresses emotion, closeness and availability (Baym, 2010). However, Canhoto and Clark (2013) argue that formal conversations are preferred between organisations and customers. Further investigations should be conducted concerning what tone customers prefer before a final decision is made.

## Available support

Seven, information. Information is the first of the factors that relate to the support that is available to social media users when interacting with organisations. Information encompasses the number of exchanges between the two parties. Social media is good for keeping customers informed in cases of service updates and other product information (Canhoto & Clark, 2013). When a good strategy is in place, it is also a good way for users to educate their audience (Schlinke & Crain, 2013). Part of a good strategy would be content marketing, as the technological barrier is removed in social media (Pulizzi, 2012). Pulizzi continues that content marketing is creating content that does not generate profit directly but that does attract and retain customers. The right information strategy therefore has to be established, in which the information is created according to what the target party wants. Content marketing should play an important part in the overall strategy.

Eight, emotional. This deals with the degree to which people feel that they are being listened to. Vernuccio (2014) argues that in social media, a company needs to have a listening orientation. Canhoto and Clark (2013) continue that consumers have the need to express themselves and that the feeling of being heard is a very important component of this. This is also shown by the company Maersk, where Katona and Sarvary (2014) discuss that it is important for organisations to have discussions with customers to show that they are listening to these individuals’ stories.

Nine, tangibility. This refers to the functional need to solve problems with added benefits. According to Canhoto and Clark (2013), many people found tangible benefits and support important and greatly appreciated softer benefits. Furthermore, resolving situations in public has such a positive effect that it turns “demoters” into promoters (Katona and Sarvary, 2014). Therefore, solving problems publically with extra benefits when appropriate is recommended.

Ten, social. The social factor concerns the engagement of the community. This refers to the organisation sharing news, links to things they discover and information about charity initiatives. (Canhoto & Clark, 2013), all of which are done to create a community. Engagement creates connections with consumers by having conversations about the company’s other interests, instead of talking solely about the brand experience (Vernuccio, 2014). It is therefore preferable to have a community around a brand.

Eleven, effective. This relates to the effectiveness of the support on social media, which exceeds that of other channels. According to Canhoto and Clark (2013), social media is more effective because companies are available outside of service hours and due to the speed of the answers (which are sometimes provided within 15 minutes). Another benefit they mention is pre-empting other customers’ need for help by providing a solution on the wall.

## Social media in general

There are many social media platforms, and differences exist between them. According to, Agnihotri, Kothandaraman, Kashyap and Sing (2012), with Facebook and Google+ a “push” strategy is better than a “pull” strategy. This means that the company pushes information to the customer. LinkedIn, which is more popular among professionals than the other social media platforms, enables individuals to obtain recommendations. Twitter is a place where customers have control over the information they consume. Here a pull strategy is better than a push strategy, which means that the customer is lead to the information. In addition, a company also has to know on which platforms its customers are most active. In the end, whether a pull or a push strategy is better depends on this factor. Furthermore, the social capital factors might have to be adapted due to the differences between the platforms.

Social media has its own risks and benefits for companies. Overall, social media-supported dimensions have become an integral part of how people communicate with one another (Stephen & Toubia, 2010). These dimensions include electronic word of mouth, or eWoM, which is considered both immediate and credible (Hung & Li, 2007). Furthermore, social media requires a low amount of monetary investment. Maersk Line showed this by becoming a major player on social media on a budget lower than $100,000 (Katona & Sarvary, 2014). However, there are also risks. Once something is posted, it takes on a life of its own and a damaging post can have an immeasurable impact on a brand (Schlinke & Crain, 2013). This means that even though social media has many benefits, the risks should be considered and reduced.

## Conclusion

In the end, social media has become something that companies cannot ignore; however, knowing how to implement it is difficult. It is recommended that organisations adapt the eleven factors of social capital to each platform differently as necessary, as this will allow them to take full advantage of the opportunities that are present on each social media platform. This results in the following conceptual model:



*Figure 1.* Conceptual model of the creation of social capital. Adapted from “Customer service 140 characters at a time: The users’ perspective,” by Canhoto and Clark, 2013, *Journal of Marketing Management, 29,* p. 528. Copyright 2013 by Westburn Publishers Ltd.

Due to the differences between the social media platforms, the starting point of the model is platform-based. The two main topics come next, each with their own set of factors. These factors are important for each platform, although each factor might differ. In that sense a vertical hierarchy might be preferred on one platform and a horizontal on another.

# Chapter 3 – Methodology

## Orientation

To gather the information that is necessary to answer the research question, a research strategy has to be chosen. Of research collection strategy there are two types, According to Verhoeven (2007), there are two types of research collection strategy, each of which has its own methods (Verhoeven, 2007). The two types are qualitative and quantitative research. According to DePaulo (2000), qualitative research is used to uncover reasons, perceptions or other kinds of insights. To put it in a different way: “Maybe there is more… than merely ticking the correct box in an answer category” (Verhoeven, p. 80). Quantitative research is for determining prevalence with statistical precision (DePaulo).

This research focuses on discovering new factors and uncovering new ideas underlying each concept. It further focuses on discovering the reasons why these ideas are important. Qualitative research is therefore chosen.

## Data collection

There are different methods of data collection that can be used with qualitative research, including observations, textual or visual analysis, and interviews (Silverman, 2013). Since all forms are useful in their own way, a mix of data collection methods is used. Observational data is gathered by looking at the interactions between the clients and the competitors and industry leaders. Observational data obtained during the internship is also included. Interviews are held with the target group of Zizerones as well as with its employees. Transcripts of these interviews are made and then analysed to get a better insight into the different research topics.

Interviews may be held in different ways. According to Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008), options include structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Semi-structured interviews that are structured using knowledge from the previously-conducted desk research are conducted for this study. The semi-structured nature of the interviews provides an opportunity to diverge from key questions and to ask more about certain answers that are given by the interviewees. After analysing the data obtained during each interview, revisions are made to the interview structure as necessary. This is done to ensure that the subsequent interviews can be used to get better insights into topics that were found to be either lacking or interesting. The semi-structured interviews and observational data gathering are both guided by the conceptual model and factors presented in figure 1.

## Data analysis

According to Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008), there are two types of approaches to qualitative data analysis, namely inductive and deductive. Since the questions are asked according to the conceptual model, the information will be analysed using that model as well. This means that a deductive approach is used. This approach results in easier identification of the different themes, which, since there is already an existing framework, in turn makes it easier to identify outliers and new ideas.

The type of analysis used is thematic content analysis, which identifies themes and categories that emerge from the data (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). The first step is to assign themes to a collection of words or sentences from the transcripts. These themes show the general idea of the extract. The only exceptions are places where the interviewee went off-track, as these ideas are considered dross and ignored (Morse & Field, 1996). In the second step, each theme is put into a table that has the themes on the Y-axis and the interviewees on the X-axis. A code, which consists of the page and line number where the theme was found, is placed under the correct interviewee and next to the correct theme (Wargo, 2013). If a theme is discussed by multiple interviewees, multiple codes appear next to that theme, but under different interviewees. In the third step, the themes are allocated to categories (Burnard et al.). These categories are created according to the social capital factors and possible new factors. The themes that fit within a specific category are added to that category’s table. The different category tables are put into one Excel file.

The data is presented in two sections. In the findings section, the key findings are reported and illustrated using verbatim quotes (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). A description of how the different categories relate to each other is also included (Löfgren, 2013). In the discussion section, the findings are interpreted and discussed in relation to the existing research (Burnard et al., 2008; Löfgren, 2013).

## Population and sampling

### Zizerones’ employees

A purposive sample is used for the employees. Interviews are held with the employees who are responsible for the marketing side of the company’s social media. The employees are interviewed for familiarisation with the topic and the current situation of the company. The size of the population of employees handling the marketing side of the company’s social media is two, which is also the size of the sample.

### Current and potential customers

The companies and guides chosen are currently offering tours and activities in the Spanish tourism market, have a social media presence and are part of the target group of Guidango. Interviewees are found using two different channels, namely employees of Zizerones and the social media that are frequented by tour companies and guides. According to Verhoeven (2007), both theoretical and practical arguments have to be taken into account when planning research. With the limited timeframe and the limited size of the customer database of the company, a mix of snowball and purposive sampling is therefore used. Snowballing happens when the company’s employees refer the researcher to tour companies and guides that can be contacted for interview. This technique is mixed with purposive sampling on the social media, as the companies and guides are chosen depending on their availability and usefulness to the studied area.

The population size of the potential and current Spanish customers of Zizerones is difficult to determine, as the companies that are active in tours and activities are not confined to a single industry.

The size of the sample depends on when saturation is achieved (Patton & Cochran, 2002; Mason, 2010; DePaulo, 2000). This is achieved when new ideas about the research topic are no longer heard from the interviewees. The mean sample size is 31 (Mason). However, according to Guest, a sample size of six can be sufficient for very homogenous target groups (Mason, 2010). Fifteen is the sample size of very homogenous groups according to Patton and Cochran (2002). DePaulo (2000) suggests that a sample of 30 is a good starting point. However, practical arguments should also be considered (Verhoeven, 2007). Therefore, with a total of 16 weeks of investigation and analysis time (excluding preparation) and a very homogenous target group, the chosen sample size is 10.

## Limitations

Due to the nature of the activities of Zizerones, the research is limited to the tours market in Spain. Furthermore, due to time restrictions the research is prepared, performed and analysed in 20 weeks. This time restriction restricts the scope of the research and the sample size to its current level. Academic research into social media is still young, which results in timely information but also a lack of empirical research. This research was performed by one researcher, who was guided by one primary supervisor and one secondary supervisor.

## Delimitations

The chosen topic is the development of a communications plan for Zizerones’ use of social media in relation to Guidango in the Spanish tour market. This means that anything not related to the topic is ignored. This includes information about other markets, industries and company areas and products that relate to both the literature and the investigated population. Due to the rapidly changing environment of social media, literature from the last three years is considered more important than older literature. A qualitative research collection strategy is chosen, which results in not evaluating the statistical significance of each factor in exchange for discovering new factors and different reasoning.

## Ethics

This research is performed as part of a graduation internship for Zizerones (which is located in Spain) and is supervised by the Hogeschool Utrecht in the Netherlands. The graduation internship is a mandatory part of the fourth year of International Business and Management Studies at this school.

There are two ethical issues that should be considered for any project, which are consent and confidentiality (Patton & Cochran, 2002). As a result, consent for the interview is always asked and the subject area and the related research questions are always shared. Furthermore, for confidentiality reasons the data is only stored on a laptop, a Google Drive account and a notebook that is only stored at home or at work.

# Chapter 4 – Findings

This chapter begins by presenting findings related to the first sub-question, which concerns the current situation of Zizerones and their use of social media. Findings related to the second and third sub-questions are shown next. These findings concern what competitors and industry leaders are doing and what the clients want from Guidango’s social media.

## Current situation

Zizerones is currently promoting Guidango on multiple platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. These are the platforms where the company believes that the clients are present. The main purpose of using these platforms is to improve identity, credibility and visibility and to improve traffic to the Guidango website. Zizerones does this by having a blog where it writes about guided tours, industry themes, recommendations for companies and guides, interviews with relevant people from the sector and people doing interesting things. Each blog post is then shared on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The communication strategy across the social media platforms is mostly the same. For Zizerones, the only difference lies in the purpose of each platform: the purpose of Facebook is to interact with groups of people in a more carefree manner, the purpose of Twitter is to have sector-related conversations and the purpose of LinkedIn is to present itself as a solid company.

On Twitter and Facebook, the company uses a horizontal way of writing with its target base by mentioning the names of the people the company is addressing and writing in a style that puts the company on the same level as its readers. On Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, a push strategy is used to push information to the viewer. A small community is starting to form around the company’s different blogs, due to the interaction between readers and the company in the blogs’ comments section. Answers to questions that readers post on Facebook are personalised to the poster and the question that person asked. The responses of Zizerones show that they listen to each person’s issues. The answers are made in a conversational manner without a clear structure and the identity of the person answering for the company is not shown. In relation to both Facebook and its blogs, the company is consistent with quality and answers quickly, often within an hour after the initial comment was made. Blog posts are made three times per week on average, and on Twitter news items or messages are shared three times per day. If problems occur with Zizerones’ services they only offer tangible benefits to clients when the issue was severe.

## Competitors

The main competitors of Zizerones are Xola and Rezgo, which are both companies that offer a booking and marketing system that includes administration and management. The companies are active on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Xola is also active on Vimeo. The companies use the same communication strategy across platforms. Xola and Rezgo both use horizontal communication, in which they write at their clients’ level (for instance, using words such as “fellow colleagues”). The comments made by the companies are unstructured, have an informal tone and are made anonymously, although Xola does show the identities of employees who comment on LinkedIn. Xola shares videos with tips, blog posts, success stories of other companies and company events on social media. These posts are made three to four times per week. Rezgo only posts phrases and wishes, which appear once per week. Xola addresses the comments made by clients in a way that shows that they listen to their clients. Furthermore, the company is consistent and quick, answering within four hours of when the comment was made. Both Xola and Rezgo are inactive on social media during the weekend. Neither company has formed a community on Facebook, but Xola did join a group on LinkedIn in which they hold conversations about marketing for tour and activities companies; their clients are free to join in.

## Leaders

The companies looked at are tourism industry leader Viator and a leader of the shipping industry, Maersk. Viator and Maersk are different in their approaches on social media. They are both formal, although Viator’s messages are structured while Maersk’s are unstructured and conversational. Viator is very vertical in their communication and uses social media primarily for customer service and promotion. It does customer service on social media due to public pressure, as many comments are from people who have had no reaction from Viator by phone or e-mail. Maersk is horizontal with both their clients and employees by sharing pictures that are connected to the company, which shows that they are on the same level as their readers. Both companies lack personalisation in their comments, although Maersk is more consistent in quality, speed and reliability in its comments and content. Maersk posts content multiple times per day and responds to reader comments within the hour. Viator, on the other hand, is unreliable and not 100% consistent. Viator answers all of the week’s comments, complaints and questions in one specific hour instead of immediately after each post was made. Neither company shares the identity of who writes their content and comments, although the employees of Maersk also use LinkedIn and Facebook privately to be part of the conversation. Maersk’s employees do add content themselves, separate from the company. Both companies do show that they listen, although Maersk tries to create a community while Viator does not. Strategy wise, Facebook, Twitter and Google+ are the same for Viator in terms of social capital factors and are used for promotion, customer service and news. Maersk is very similar across platforms – only the information factor is different. For Maersk, LinkedIn is focussed on the company culture, Facebook is used for sharing the Maersk brand, Flickr and Instagram are used for sharing pictures, Sina Weibo and Twitter are used for sharing news and opinions, YouTube is used for sharing videos and their blog is used for disseminating opinion pieces on achievements, innovations and news. Their blog is also shared on all their major social media platforms.

## Current and potential Guidango customers

During the interviews that were conducted as part of this research, the following twelve factors came forward: platforms, hierarchy, membership, personalisation, characteristics, anonymity, tone, information, emotional, tangibility, social and effectiveness. No new factors were discovered in the end, although more in-depth knowledge was gathered for each factor. The platforms are discussed before the factors of social capitals, as each factor can be different for each platform. The platforms and each factor are further explored below.

Platforms. The platforms most used by the interviewees are Facebook and Twitter. Facebook was mentioned by nine interviewees and Twitter by eight. LinkedIn, Instagram, Google+ and Pinterest were also mentioned, but less often than Facebook. Facebook can be considered the arch feeder for all other platforms, including Twitter, and is used for reading new information. Twitter, on the other hand, is used for following newsflashes and industrial information while LinkedIn (which is for professionals) is used for reading opinions from within the sector and news. Instagram was mentioned as being more popular in the United States, where it is used more often than Facebook. Instagram is good for gastronomy and photos of cities, as it is a photo-based platform. Two interviewees said they do not use Google+ at all, while one interviewee reported using it only for the Google ranking of his/her website. Pinterest was less important and was only mentioned by one interviewee. Other than content and purpose, the interviewees did not find any differences in the use of the different social media platforms.

The first factor is hierarchy. The interviewees have different opinions about this factor. Three interviewees want to talk on the same level as the company employees with whom they are talking. They appreciate knowing that humans work in the company. On the other hand, two other interviewees just want assistance and are focused on functionality based conversations. One interviewee mentioned that to him it was a very vertical relationship in which the company is looking to sell and the clients just want the product.

The second factor is membership, which is about the dialogue between a company and their clients and whether it has to be structured or free-flowing and conversational. Multiple interviewees preferred a structured conversation, while others preferred a free-flowing one. Although one interviewee specifically preferred structured conversations, two others only want a solution and are very functionality focused. One of these two interviewees preferred rules in the conversation. On the other hand, three other interviewees preferred a conversational style; as one interviewee put it, a free-flowing conversation shows that the company employee has experience and can handle the issue without sticking to a structure. Continuing the conversation through other channels of communication was only preferred when a more personal approach is necessary than is possible on social media. As social media is sufficient for conversations related to simple issues or comments, changing channels would be excessive.

The third factor is personalisation, which relates to companies using private knowledge of their clients to provide personalised answers when answering clients on social media. Five interviewees preferred a personalised response. Three of the interviewees said that a personal response comes closer to the issue at hand than generalised answers. However, one interviewee also mentioned that it depends on the question that is asked by the client and whether or not a personalised answer helps the client more than a general one.

The fourth factor is characteristics, which refers to the characteristics of the use of social media by the company. Availability of companies on social media during the week and weekend was important to nine interviewees. One interviewee mentioned that jobs in tourism are a lifestyle. Another interviewee suggested that it depends on how important it is that the issue is fixed immediately; if the issue is something integral to a company’s processes, it has to be fixed within the hour. Consistency was considered important by four interviewees, and one interviewee found it important that a company was open to feedback in public. One interviewee added that complaints and questions through social media do force a reaction from companies, as the companies are asked to reply in public. Lastly, one interviewee found an apology to be very important when a company makes a mistake.

The fifth factor is anonymity, which is about whether the company does or does not show the identity of the employee who is posting on social media. Three interviewees want to know the identity of the employee, as it creates an ability to remember that person. One interviewee made the comment that it shows him that he is having a conversation with a person and one interviewee also said that it is good to know who you are talking to. This is the reason why many conversations are held face-to-face instead of over the phone in the tourism industry, as mentioned by another interviewee. On the other hand, one interviewee did not need to know the identity of the employee, only his or her function within the company.

The sixth factor is tone, which is about the formality of the content a company posts on social media and the conversations that are held between a company and its clients. Overall, informal conversations were preferred by eight interviewees. One of these interviewees said that informal conversations are as if you are speaking in-person. Another interviewee said that the strength of social media is that big companies use an informal form. However, one interviewee mentioned that caution should be taken when switching channels, as the formalities of channels vary and a formal conversation might be preferred even after having an informal conversation on social media. On the other hand, two interviewees preferred that conversations start formally and then change to an informal style later. One of these interviewees said that even though it depends on the business, the initial conversation should always be formal and professional. Two other interviewees considered both formal and informal tones to be correct.

The seventh factor is information, which relates to the content and information shared on the platforms. Fifty per cent of the interviewees are interested in blogs. These interviewees find it most important that the content is qualitatively well made and addresses novel subjects and information. Pictures were seen by the interviewees as being very important – perhaps even more valuable than the text. The interviewees were most interested in information about the particular city where they are, but also other cities in general. The interviewees were also interested in customers’ experiences and opinions, new products and features, news about the industry and company, practical information and gastronomy. Overall, the interviewees want to read something interesting that they could react to in the comments section. The interviewees were also interested in the accomplishments of the company and its employees and do want to know the company on a more personal level. In the end, the information could be something that is either personally interesting to the interviewees or valuable for their clients (which they would be able to retweet or share with them). The interviewees prefer the frequency of new content to be from daily to once per month. The most important thing was that each piece of content is new and interesting.

The eighth factor is emotional, which is about the company showing that it listens to its clients. Six interviewees found this to be a very important factor and two interviewees found this to be the most important factor of social capital. One interviewee mentioned that if a company does not show that it listens to its clients, nothing will be bought from that company.

The ninth factor is tangibility, which refers to a company offering financial or other benefits when solving a problem. Two interviewees considered it to be of medium importance in comparison to the other factors of social capital and receiving tangible benefits was only important if the problem was severe. Two other interviewees found a company solving the issue to be enough. On the other hand, one interviewee found it important that the costs incurred from the issue were recovered. Furthermore, one interviewee gave importance to solving an issue through channels other than social media. A company offering benefits that exceed covering the costs generated by an issue was considered decent but not important by two interviewees and not necessary by another. However, one interviewee would appreciate additional benefits.

The tenth factor is social, which concerns creating communities surrounding a company and/or product. Having a community was overall seen as being less important than the other factors by the interviewees. They did not give it a priority because the interviewees’ customers will never know the company with which the interviewees talk. Furthermore, being part of a community requires a great deal of manpower for the interviewees. On the other hand, two interviewees found a community important because it enables them to see other people’s opinions on different issues. One other interviewee found it important to be able to see problems that had occurred before.

The eleventh and last factor is effectiveness, which is about whether or not social media has an advantage over other channels in terms of speed and quality. Half the interviewees found social media to be quicker and more effective than other channels such as phone and e-mail. For three other interviewees it depends on when it is used; they consider phone and e-mail often to be more personal than social media, while phone is often quicker. Five interviewees preferred a reaction from a company to their question on social media within twenty-four hours. Between six and twelve hours was considered ideal by one interviewee, as that means a company will have responded by the evening after having received a comment or question in the morning. Three interviewees found social media to be complementary to phone and e-mail, as opposed to replace them. One interviewee only uses social media to connect to his or her own customers and did not give it any other importance. A barrier mentioned by one interviewee was the older age of the people working in the tourism industry; this person suggested that social media should grow in importance over the next decade.

# Chapter 5 – Discussion and conclusions

In this chapter, the findings of the first three sub-questions are compared to each other and with the literature. The findings suggest that there are differences between the literature, what the companies do and what the interviewees want. Overall, no new factors were found.

## The different social media platforms

The interviewees are most active on Facebook and Twitter. Instagram and LinkedIn were also frequently mentioned by interviewees, but the usage of Google+ was considered to be non-existent (it is only used for Google rankings). Zizerones’ competitors do not use Instagram, although Xola is active on Vimeo. Viator is active on the same platforms, while Maersk is available on many additional ones. Zizerones is currently only active on Facebook and Twitter. Facebook and Twitter can therefore be seen as the most important social media platforms overall, as more people are active on them than on other social media platforms.

No differences were found in the use of ten of the eleven factors of social capital between the platforms utilized by the interviewees, leaders, competitors and Zizerones. The only difference lies in the use of the information factor. Viator and the competitors of Zizerones use a general strategy for each platform with regards to information and Zizerones only differentiates on Twitter. Maersk, on the other hand, has a specific use for each platform and attracts different people to each one. Interviewees use Facebook for finding general information, Twitter and LinkedIn for getting information about the industry and newsflashes and Instagram for viewing pictures of cities and gastronomy. A clear difference in usage is found between the different parties, in that Instagram is underused by companies in comparison to the interviewees.

## The social capital factors

After considering the implications of the findings on the different social media platforms, it is interesting to consider them in relation to each of the social capital factors.

One, hierarchy. A horizontal hierarchy is preferred by the interviewees, as they want to know that there are people behind the company and to talk to them on the same level. Of the competitors and leaders, only Viator communicates in a vertical manner, which shows that horizontal communication is preferred within the industry as well. Zizerones also communicates horizontally, which is similar to what the interviewees need and what the industry and leader do. This result is in agreement with the literature, as a horizontal approach is said to be suitable for social media (Putnam, 2000; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Talking on the same level is also in agreement with Zarella (2010), as an interactive communication style is preferred by both the literature and the companies and interviewees.

Two, membership. The interviewees gave a preference for structured and conversational approaches. The interviewees overall prefer a conversational approach, as it shows both flexibility and expertise. On the other hand, two interviewees did prefer a constructed conversation. The integration of other channels into the conversation is appreciated when a more personalised response is necessary, which shows a mix of preferences for structured and conversational approaches. Of the leaders and competitors, only Viator uses a structured style. Zizerones uses an unstructured conversational style, which is in line with the interviewees, competitors and Maersk. These mixed results partially support and partially contrast the literature: Canhoto and Clark (2013) discuss that there is a clear preference for a structured approach, while Putnam (2000) argue that both are suitable.

Three, personalisation. A personalised response is preferred by the interviewees if it means that they are helped better as a result than without, as sometimes general responses do not answer questions well. Personalisation was found in the answers of Xola, but not in those of Rezgo. The results of Xola and interviewees are in contrast with the lack of personalisation done in the comments made by the leaders. On the other hand, Zizerones uses a personalised response. According to the literature, more research is needed here for a definitive answer on whether or not to personalise responses. The interviewees’ needs are in agreement with the literature of Canhoto and Clark (2013), in that a personalised response is preferred. This is surprising given the observation that people place a high emphasis on controlling the terms of their relationship with marketers (Phelps, Noway, & Ferrell, 2000), which shows that the interviewees want the company to use anything that results in better assistance. Xola and Zizerones both use a personalised response, which means that they act in agreement with the literature and the interviewees’ wants. However, Rezgo and the leaders act in contrast with what is suggested by the literature and the interviewees.

Four, characteristics. Consistency and availability are very important characteristics to the interviewees. This is in contrast with what the competitors and leaders do, as they are only available on social media during the week (although they can still be contacted through different channels during the weekend). Zizerones is available during both the week and weekend via phone, e-mail and social media. The importance of consistency and availability supports Canhoto and Clark (2013) and is in line with the customer expectations research that proposes that reliability is a source of value (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991). Zizerones thus acts in agreement with the literature and the interviewees’ wants, but in contrast to the competitors and leaders.

Five, anonymity. Knowing the identity of the person posting comments on social media for a company is important to the interviewees. This enables them to know that they are talking with a person and whether or not they have talked with that person before. It also shows to the readers that the company employees take responsibility for what they are doing, instead of hiding behind the company name. Some interviewees did not consider it important, although they still found it good to know if the same person helped them throughout the entire complaint-solving process. Among the competitors, leaders and Zizerones, nobody shows their identity. The identity is only shown on LinkedIn, as it is obligatory on that platform. The interviewees’ wants are in line with the literature, particularly the argument of Hvass and Munar (2012) that it results in stronger ties between the company and its clients. However, the companies work in contrast with what the literature and interviewees suggest, which can be attributed to the risk of losing company-client relationships when the person who posted the comments is no longer able to do so (as suggested by Hvass and Munar).

Six, tone. An informal tone was preferred by the interviewees. However, during the initial company-client contact on social media, some preferred a formal conversation while others would like to have an informal start. The competitors, leaders and Zizerones use an informal tone on social media, which is similar to the interviewees’ wants. This solves the need for investigating the tone in the literature. Formal conversations are recommended between organisations and customers (Canhoto and Clark, 2013), but the informal tone is recommended on social media. This shows that people prefer the communication to resemble face-to-face conversations by showing emotion and expressing closeness on social media (Baym, 2010).

Seven, information. The information has to be interesting and qualitatively well presented, according to the interviewees. The content has to be something that is personally interesting for the interviewees or something general that can be shared with the interviewees’ customers. Posting can occur with a frequency of one piece of content per week to one piece of content daily, as long as the content is interesting and novel. The content that the interviewees prefer to read about concerns cities, customer experiences, new products and features, company information and history, ways how the interviewees can improve, destination videos, and, more importantly, service updates in the event that something important malfunctions and is currently being worked on. Of the competitors, Xola is more active on social media than Rezgo and releases blog posts, videos and success stories three to four times per week. Rezgo only shares phrases and wishes and captures very little attention as a result. Of the leaders, Maersk is the more active, as Viator uses social media only for promotion and customer service. The promotion of Viator captures little attention and the customer service is done more as a result of their other channels failing, which supports the interviewees’ observation that public pressure helps to force answers from companies. On the other hand, Maersk is very active on social media and captures attention from both clients and the general public. Its social media is very interactive and has a great deal of user-generated content. The fact that the social media of Xola and Maersk perform better than those of the other competitors and Viator is in agreement with the interviewees’ comments, as Xola and Maersk provide more interesting content. Zizerones creates blog posts that are focused on guides and capture the interest of the company’s followers. The importance interviewees gave service updates is in agreement with the literature, as these updates keep people informed (Canhoto & Clark, 2013). Producing engaging content is seen as most important for companies to do on social media, this is seen with Xola’s and Maersk’s posts and with the interviewees’ responses, which is in agreement with literature as it is seen as the most important challenge (Pulizzi, 2012). Consistency and frequency are less important than quality in relation to content, although according to the literature they are still important; this is supported by the interviewees’ reactions as well as by Xola, Maersk and Zizerones. Blog posts, which are often written by Xola, Maersk and Zizerones, are seen within the literature as being third most important after articles and social media itself (Pulizzi, 2012). Videos are only created by Maersk and Xola, which is in agreement with the findings in the literature that videos are of lesser importance in comparison to other types of content (Pulizzi, 2012).

Eight, emotional. Showing that the readers are listened to by the company is seen as very important – and often most important – by the interviewees. The competitors and leaders do this through their comments. Zizerones has done the same. The companies’ acts and the interviewees’ wants are in agreement with the literature, which suggests that a listening orientation is necessary (Vernuccio, 2014) and that customers need to be able to express themselves (Canhoto & Clark, 2013).

Nine, tangibility. The biggest difference found between the investigation and the literature is the lack of importance of tangibility. Interviewees find receiving a tangible benefit decent but not important, because having the issue solved is enough for them. Only one interviewee found it important that costs were compensated, but that interviewee also mentioned that it is normal to make losses here and there when doing business with other people and therefore did not find compensation always necessary. The leaders and the competitors of Zizerones do not offer tangible benefits either, and Zizerones only compensates its clients when the issue is very severe. All of this is in contrast with the literature of Canhoto and Clark (2013), which suggests that tangibility is the most important support factor. Katona and Sarvary (2014) also argued that offering tangible benefits turns “demoters” into promoters. Even though tangibility is still a factor worth considering, its importance is shown to be lacking.

Ten, social. A community in which the users talk with each other and with the company was seen as being less important than all of the other social capital factors. It was seen as time consuming. Furthermore, the guides do not need another community, as they already have those that they need elsewhere. Of the competitors, leaders and Zizerones, only Maersk has the outlay of a community to facilitate conversations between its employees and the public. Xola joined a community instead of creating one. The companies thus act in agreement with the interviewees’ wants. However, this is in contrast with the literature, which has found that the engagement of the community is important (Canhoto & Clark, 2013) as it creates conversations about the brand experience to create connections (Vernuccio, 2014).

Eleven, effectiveness. The interviewees found social media to be quicker and more effective than other channels, depending on the situation. For small problems where a reaction from a company within 6-12 hours is sufficient, it is more effective. The ideal reaction time from the moment someone asks a company a question was mentioned to be within 1-2 hours. Contacting big companies through social media is considered more effective than by phone and e-mail, as social media’s public nature forces a response. This is in agreement with Viator’s page, which is often used for customer service, and in contrast with Maersk’s page, where only small problems are mentioned. With small companies, phone and e-mail are preferred because they are quicker and more effective than social media. This is seen with Zizerones and its competitors, as much is handled via both phone and e-mail. Smaller companies use social media for small conversations. This is in contrast with the literature, where social media support is perceived as being important as it is quicker, there is service outside of service hours and it pre-empts other customers’ doubts (Canhoto & Clark, 2013). This can be attributed to the size differences between companies, as social media is easier to handle than phone and e-mail conversations for bigger companies than for smaller companies. It can also be attributed to there being many small companies in the tourism industry that are already available by phone and e-mail outside of service hours.

## Conclusions and implications

### Implications for Zizerones

There are many factors that Zizerones does not have to change, namely platforms, membership, characteristics, hierarchy, personalisation, emotional, effectiveness, social and tone. For the emotional and membership factors, differences were found between Zizerones and the leaders, although more importance is placed on the responses of the interviewees and the literature. With the effectiveness factor, differences were found between the literature and the investigation due to the difference between small and big companies and the face-to-face nature of the communication in the tourism industry. This means that Zizerones should not adapt to the conclusions that were made in the literature in this case. Information and anonymity are where change is possible for Zizerones. The interviewees and literature suggest that showing the identity of the employees can be very useful. Competitors and leaders do not do this, which shows that although a risk is involved, there is also an opportunity for Zizerones. In relation to the information factor, Zizerones could consider creating more types of content, as this would be in line with both the literature and the interviewees. The content topics can be what the clients of Zizerones would prefer, as well what the clients of these clients would like to read.

### Academic implications

The initial model brought forward by Canhoto and Clark was incomplete. Anonymity and tone were both shown to be important to the interviewees who were questioned during the research, which shows further expansion of the social capital theory model is possible. The largest discovery made during this investigation was the lack of importance given by the industry to tangibility. Tangibility was found to be the most important support factor in the research of Canhoto and Clark (2013), although this research has shown the lack of importance it has to the interviewees who work in the B2B tourism sector. Further research has to be conducted to decide whether tangibility is in fact still an important factor.

The second factor was the effectiveness of social media above other channels such as phone and e-mail. The views of the industry differ here from those in the literature. The reason brought forward was that social media is more effective than other channels when it is used with large companies, because it forces an answer. With smaller companies, the interviewees preferred to contact companies by phone and e-mail as these channels are quicker and more direct. This factor should therefore mainly be considered with larger companies in the literature.

The last difference was in the social factor. Creating communities is considered important in the literature due to discussions about the brand and engagement, although few communities have been created around companies or brands in this industry. The reasons brought forward by the interviewees were that communities cost time and are not a priority; more importantly, they noted that many other communities already exist and therefore a new one is not needed. This implies that the usefulness of forming a community around a brand depends not only on the product and industry, but also on whether the community actually adds something new to the industry.

### Generalisation of the findings

This research focused on communication via social media in a B2B environment within the Spanish tourism sector. On many points, the findings related to the different companies and the interviewees validate the literature, which suggests that many factors are the same across multiple industries. The difference found in the importance of tangibility between the industry and the literature is not yet associated to a cause and therefore cannot be generalizable. However, the change in the effectiveness of social media above other channels is generalizable to an extent, because it was due to differences in company sizes. This still has to be researched further to exclude or include other possible causes. The importance of the social factor was not disputed; it was just found that with important communities already in place, an additional one would not be needed for Zizerones. This means that for a community to form around a brand, the community needs to add something new to the industry that the current communities are not yet doing. When there is an opportunity to add something new, the costs and benefits for the creation of a community have to be researched and quantified for a company before creating one.

# Chapter 6 – Recommendations

The main research question is “How should Zizerones communicate with their current and potential customers through the social media platforms for Guidango?” Based on the findings and discussion, multiple recommendations can be made in response to this question.

## More types of information

The first recommendation for Zizerones is regarding the information factor. Zizerones currently focuses on three blog posts per week, with a focus on tour guides and companies. The posts range from different experiences to different things that can help tour guides with their jobs. In line with competitors, leaders and the interviewees’ responses, the current frequency is good as long as the quality stays consistent. However, a recommendation is to not only focus on what the tour guides want to read, but also on content that can be interesting to their clients. This enables the companies and tour guides to share information with their customers, which satisfies the content needs of companies and tour guides as well helps Zizerones to extend the reach of their content within the industry. Different topics that can be interesting were found in the interviewees’ responses and the pages of Xola and Maersk, such as city information, new city hotspots, customer experiences, product features, company information and – most importantly – service updates. The number of posts per week does not have to be increased to attain a more ideal frequency, which means additional costs are not created.

## Showing identity

The second recommendation relates to whether or not to show the identity of the employee that posts on social media. The importance of showing the identity of this employee has been shown by both the interviewees and the literature. However, Hvass and Munar (2012) suggest caution, as the relationships that employees make with the clients when they show their identity can be hard to replace. Zizerones is recommended to show the identity of the people replying on behalf of the company in the comments, as the tourism industry is a very personal industry. Interviewees said that revealing the poster’s identity shows responsibility and makes it possible for them to contact the same person again. Much is currently done by phone, e-mail and face-to-face contact, as these options are more personal. Seizing the opportunity to be different from other companies in the industry by showing the identity of their employees on social media can change the dynamic and make social media more personal. In addition, as much of the communication is already performed by phone and e-mail, the risk related to the difficulty of replacing the relationships if someone leaves is not new; This is done to adapt the conversations on social media more to the conversations that are held by phone and e-mail, thus making them more personal.

## Effectiveness

The third recommendation pertains to the effectiveness factor. Currently, most of Zizerones’ communication is done by phone and e-mail, although social media can be used more as the company grows. Here pre-empting client questions by leaving questions and answers on Guidango’s social media page (Canhoto and Clark, 2013) helps because it reduces work while keeping the clients up-to-date. Furthermore, as the company grows it becomes more difficult to maintain the personalisation standards of communication done by phone and e-mail. The same question has to be answered multiple times for many different people. The effectiveness of social media therefore becomes more and more relevant as the phone lines will become too busy to be handled by the same people within the company. It is therefore recommended that as the company grows, it should consider moving more communication from the phone and e-mail to social media. What should be researched is when social media becomes more effective than the phone and e-mail for different issues. Furthermore, channels can always be switched when more personalisation is needed.

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# Appendix

## Question form

### Questions

1) Which platforms do you find more important/do you use more?

2) Do you follow/connect to the social media pages of companies you work with?

* 2.1) What content would you be interested in from these companies?
  + Links to blog posts
  + Industry news items
  + Product features
  + Company achievements
  + FAQ
  + Videos
  + Product information or usage ideas
  + Client spotlight
* What topics would you be interested in?
* 2.2) How would you feel about the company sharing its accomplishments?
* 2.3) Is there a difference between platforms?
* 2.4) What characteristics are important to you in relation to the content provided?
  + Such as:
    - Frequency (how many times should content be posted?)
    - Consistency
    - Quality
    - Innovativeness
    - Timeliness
    - Tone
  + 2.4.1) Are there other characteristics that you find important?
  + 2.4.2) Why do you find these characteristics important?
  + 2.4.3) Is there a difference between platforms?
  + 2.4.4) (optional after multiple interviews) Why did you not mention “characteristic”?
  + 2.4.5) (optional after multiple interviews) Why did you mention “new characteristic”?

Now I would like to ask you questions regarding the communication between you and the companies you follow. For each topic, please say if there is a difference between the platforms you use.

* 3) If you were to follow a company, would you also interact with the company through social media? Or other people who react on the same page?
  + How do you feel about answers being tailored to your specific company in the public space of social media, meaning personal info about your company is used in answers?
* 4) How do you believe social media relates to other channels in terms of effectiveness and speed? How quick do answers have to come to be able to compete against the phone and email?
* 5) Would the identity of the person who is talking be important? How come?
  + What would the effect be if you knew and had a relationship with a person, but that person then left? Would it be worth it?
* 6) Does the employee you talk with have to follow a set structure, switching channels if necessary to solve the issue? Or do you prefer to have the issue addressed in a more unstructured, conversational manner? Does it matter if you see the company having conversations with other users in a different way?
* 7) Now I am going to mention some characteristics. For each characteristic, please say if it is important to you or not.
  + Problem solving with tangible benefits (such as financial benefits). That tangible benefit compensates for the trouble. That besides compensating there is something extra for the relationship.
  + Feeling listened to. How could a company show you that they are listening?
  + Availability of access to support
  + Assurance of getting a response
  + Consistency.
  + Engagement with the company and other users
  + Content posted by the company
  + Users interacting with the company and each other
* 8) (optional) You said you found one characteristic not important; how come?
* 9) Are there more characteristics that you find important?
  + 9.1) Why do you also find these important?
* 10) Of the characteristics mentioned before and those that you mentioned, which ones do you find most important?
* 11) In relation to the content shown by the company and the conversations you have with the companies do you prefer the conversations to be as informal as on when talking on the phone or as formal as via email?
  + What would this degree of formality include for you?
  + (optional) What would a formal conversation mean to you?
  + (optional) What would an informal conversation mean to you?

### Explanation

Each question was asked to determine the interviewees’ reasoning for a specific factor and to find out which factor they found to be most important (if important at all). Furthermore, interviewees were also asked if they could think of other new factors. If a person said something interesting and new, the structure was deviated from in order to find out the reasoning.