Digital Organisational Storytellers:

Online Marketing as Identity Work

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Abstract

The thesis examines the effects of online marketing practices on the identity construction of individual marketers, referred to as the Digital Organisational Storyteller (DOS), across five business-to-business (B2B) organisations. I focus on illuminating their marketing processes and self-understanding when undertaking online marketing work, a practice I describe as bringing the organisation into being online. My research questions examine what the online marketing work processes the DOS undertake tell us about identity at work. They also enquire as to how they construct and understand their online identity work negotiations through these marketing activities, while considering how the DOS makes sense and gives sense to an intended audience. To investigate identity construction, I review studies on identity and identity work from organisation studies, management and social sciences' literature. I also review marketing work, branding and co-creation literature from marketing scholarship. As the means to understand their lived experience, I study the work the DOS does, as a process of sensemaking and sensegiving through storytelling. Taking an interpretive, qualitative approach, I engage with storytelling through the methodology by asking the DOS to tell stories during the interviews. The first contribution of the thesis includes the introduction of four different character 'types' that summarise the way the DOS approaches sensemaking and sensegiving processes. The second contribution extends an understanding of online marketing work in contemporary B2B organisations. Accordingly, it can be categorised as a range of preparatory offline and online activities that culminate in textual and pictorial representations of the organisation, in a process described as 'bringing the online organisation into being.' These contributions are useful in informing our understanding of the types of identity constructions and practices that are emerging from online marketing work processes.

Dedication

For Dale, my husband and best friend and our son Jacob – thank you for your enduring support, love and laughter.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter explains why identity construction processes in contemporary business-to-business (B2B) marketing practice necessitate investigation. In particular the experiences of marketing professionals using the internet-based, social networking site (SNS), Twitter, will provide a different perspective of online identity negotiations at work. I argue that while identity has been extensively studied within organisations, there has been limited focus from the perspective of marketers, within organisation studies, management and marketing literature. Identity formation processes are important to study empirically within organisational settings, as they provide insights into how individuals and collectives balance and negotiate organisational demands during work-based activities (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). As such, conceptually and theoretically an understanding of identity experiences within different online areas and spaces is important, so as to understand how employees react to, and engage within virtual contexts, to illuminate a broader awareness of the self at work.

Within this chapter I also detail my research questions, as well as providing an overview of the content within each chapter of the thesis.

Online marketing as identity work

This thesis focuses on illuminating the online marketing processes and self-understanding of business-to-business (B2B) marketing professionals, when updating the SNS, Twitter. Online marketing work describes a range of practices undertaken, by marketing professionals, using digital technologies, facilitated by the internet to promote products, services and better engagement with customers (Kotler and Keller, 2016; James, 2007; Dewdney and Ride, 2006). The process of identity formation, experienced by the marketer, whom I refer to as the Digital Organisational Storyteller (DOS), when undertaking online marketing work and communicating on behalf of the organisation, is examined within this thesis as a form of identity work (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002).

Key theoretical contributions

The thesis contributes to organisational studies and identity theory through the exploration of online marketing work as a form of identity work for B2B marketing professionals, as organisational members, referred to as the DOS. As such the research explicates their specific online marketing work practices and self-understanding. In this sense the process of marketing work as the management of meaning and perception online, by the DOS is illuminated through their communication of the organisational identity within the tweets. Organisational identity is traditionally that which is considered as “central, distinctive and enduring” (Lievens et al, 2007: 46) about the character of an organisation. Thus the process for the DOS when engaging with the organisational identity during online marketing work also extends an existing theoretical understanding of identity construction as a mental process, as the DOS needs to make sense of what they need to communicate on behalf of the organisation, as well as engaging with the physical process of writing the tweet (Watson, 2008). Therefore, the nature of the work may be understood through the undertaking of it. It is also suggested that the nature of the DOS online representations include an exploration of how different temporary personas and identities are drawn upon by employees, in the course of their work, to improve relationships and engagement with their intended audience. The thesis therefore extends existing identity theory (Mead, 1934; Stryker, 1980) by suggesting that individuals, who communicate on behalf of their organisation online, such as the DOS, seek validation and approval from their intended audience to help them establish the value of their work and also their identity as an online specialist. It is also acknowledged that political and cultural issues such as hierarchy and role expectations, influence the development and presentation of the DOS and their identity online, especially in relation to the answering of complaints or communicating during periods of dis-identification with the organisation, such as when there is uncertainty during periods of change.

A further theoretical contribution is a better understanding of what online marketing work is, in terms of the range of preparatory offline and online activities, such as tweeting from events that culminate in textual and pictorial representations of the organisation. Another aspect of the work the DOS does is the monitoring and checking of the online organisational presence, in order to protect the continuity of the positive brand identity. As distinct from organisational identity, brand identity includes those qualities, originated by the organisation, which differentiate the product or service, such as its unique features (Nandan, 2005). The tweets may thus be described as including elements of the organisational identity when they highlight the “central distinctive or enduring” (Lievens et al, 2007) qualities of the organisation, such as reflecting on past achievements, future initiatives and their values. In contrast those tweets, which relate to the brand identity focus on the product or service features and characteristics. Therefore another aspect of the work undertaken by the DOS is representational, which often includes answering complaints, queries and sending tweets outside of traditional/paid working hours. In this way, it is suggested that exploitative value co-creation (Cova et al, 2011) activities are not just restricted to customers but they may also affect employees utilising their own time, resources and personal interests when protecting and preserving the positive features of a brand online (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011). An understanding of these representational practices significantly extends an appreciation of the complexity and challenges associated with online marketing, that enriches current theory (Ardley and Quinn, 2013; Jaakola, 2011). Firstly though I explain the concept of the digital organisational storyteller (DOS) as the individual who performs this type of work.

The digital organisational storyteller

I describe individuals who update Twitter on behalf of their B2B organisation as the digital organisational storyteller (DOS), for two specific reasons. Firstly, the concept has been originated for practical purposes, as due to the limited resource within B2B marketing departments, it is anticipated that other roles, such as customer services executives and departmental specialists may also support the marketing team in drafting text to be included within the tweets, as well as answering queries and complaints via Twitter. In this regard, an appropriate term was sought to describe not just marketing professionals, but also their affiliated colleagues who are involved in updating the organisational Twitter site. Secondly, the term Digital Organisational Storyteller (DOS) is a relevant and valuable concept because it specifically describes the work these individuals' perform. This is because they are responsible for communicating the organisational identity story online, including the recounting of "history values and vision" (Kaye and Jacobson, 1999:44), which are also encompassed within a brand. It is argued that the brand is the designation, emblem, representation, artistic impression, or any given combination, which is used to define goods or services from a single, or group of organisations, so as to distinguish them from the competition (Kotler, 2000). Branding scholarship (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012; Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010; Woodside, 2010; Brown, Kozinets and Sherry, 2003) has previously established the influence of storytelling as a tool utilised by marketers to give meaning and improve customer's relationships with a brand. For example McKee (2003) supports the idea of telling a convincing story as being one of the best ways to engage an intended audience's feelings and vigour. Stories also provide a subject designed to stimulate conversations with new or existing customers. In particular it is suggested that story directories, including places, activities, issues, approaches and characterisations are easier for customers to recall and thus engage with (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012).

In this sense, when communicating via SNSs it is argued that the 'owner' of the brand, which is the DOS on Twitter, utilises a series of designated stories, which include key messages agreed by senior managers, in order to construct positive aspects of the organisation. The DOS thus recounts stories via Twitter in order to make sense of (Weick, 1995) and give sense and meaning to the organisational/brand identity, with the aim of engaging an intended audience (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012). The intended audience is also invited to participate and contribute content via their own tweets, but due to the more complex and specialist nature of B2B products (Karkkainen et al, 2011; Tanner and Raymond, 2010) it is envisaged the stories told by the DOS, are likely to dominate. It is also suggested that the continuous process of relaying organisational/brand identity, as part of their role, impacts upon the identity construction processes of the DOS. In other words how they identify with the organisation and relate to the brand, impacts upon their sense of self, who they are. Therefore the DOS has a responsibility to fulfil the obligations of their role, which is described as their professional identity, the set of qualities, attitudes, standards and previous undertakings, in terms of which a person describes themselves, in relation to a job role (Schein, 1978). Accordingly for the DOS, this includes primarily the representational work they are doing to communicate on behalf of the organisation and the brand. It is also suggested that due to the less formal format of Twitter, the DOS may also draw upon facets of their personal identity, in order to communicate the organisational identity and the brand features in an engaging and enthralling way, to help the organisation seem more human (Kotler and Keller, 2016; Cova et al, 2015). Brands, like humans can hypothetically include personalities to encourage the means to distinguish one from the other (Schembri et al, 2010). In order to sustain a coherent sense of self when communicating on behalf of the organisation, it is thus suggested the DOS needs to engage in identity work (Alvesson, 2008).

Identity work is understood here as:

> …the ongoing mental activity that an individual undertakes in *constructing an understanding of self* that is *coherent, distinct* and positively valued (Alvesson et al, 2008:15, emphasis added).

Such an explanation outlines the *process* of identity as incessant and continually evolving. Thus, when identity work has been studied previously within organisational settings it is because researchers are interested in the processes and emerging aspects of identity constructions (Beech et al, 2008). As such online marketing processes are described as a form of identity work, due to the likelihood that the DOS will need to combine organisational messages within an informal conversational style, as is dictated by the 140-character format of Twitter (Griffiths and McLean, 2015; Marwick and Boyd, 2010; Java et al, 2007). Therefore online marketing work, as a form of identity work, is defined throughout the thesis within two principal terms, bringing the organisation into being online and the online organisational presence, as defined and explained within the next section.

Bringing the organisation into being and the online organisational presence

Bringing the organisation into being online is a new concept introduced here to help make sense of the work the DOS does to construct their organisation via Twitter. This term describes all of the preparatory offline and online marketing work activities undertaken by them including writing the tweets, to help them continually construct the organisation. The offline preparatory marketing work processes may include talking to colleagues and senior managers, researching a new product and deciding upon a theme for the tweets. Online marketing work processes include the writing and/or editing and uploading of the tweets, videos and images onto the organisational Twitter account. The DOS constructs the organisation in a particular way, which is designed to communicate it positively for a particular purpose, to engage with the intended audience through the tweets. In this sense they continuously construct and bring new dimensions of the organisation into being, as their proactive conversations take place in the public domain and are based on shared observations and opinions on a specific subject, event or occurrence, such as a news item (Kwon and Sung, 2011). Accordingly, the concept of bringing the organisation into being online, is based on the principle of the DOS constructing the organisation vis-à-vis the intended

Twitter audience as an important influence on their identity processes. As Albu and Etter (2016: 5, emphasis added) explain:

> Through the use of social media technologies, *organisational members* and non-organisational members alike have the *capacity to author organisational texts* that co-constitute an organisation as an entity with *a specific identity in a situational space and time*.

This suggests that the SNS online environment provides a setting where the organisation may be brought into being by the DOS, in relation to and occasionally in conjunction with, its intended online audience, if they reply to tweets and at least try to engage in online conversation. However, in the B2B context it is anticipated that the DOS will lead the dialogue via the tweet conversations due to the nature of relationships and the complex characteristics of the products. Also, due to the less formal nature of conversational dialogue within Twitter, making the products and the organisation interesting and engaging may include the DOS utilising aspects of their individual identity in conjunction with their professional identity (Albu and Etter, 2016; Griffiths and McLean, 2015; Meijer and Torenvlied, 2014).

The online organisational presence is also a new term discussed here to describe the way that the combination of tweets, replies and retweets create a public and continuously evolving material and cultural presence for the organisation, within the online environment. As such the intended audience can see the perception of the organisation created by the DOS through the tweets and images in ‘real time’ online. The outcome of the process of the

DOS bringing the organisation into being therefore creates the online organisational presence. They may also react to and update the online organisational presence directly when they reply to a complaint or a query.

To summarise the first definition, bringing the organisation into being online relates to the offline and online marketing work processes undertaken by the DOS to continually create the online organisation positively and proactively, via Twitter. In comparison, the online organisational presence is the resulting collection of tweets and images based on the perception and construction of the organisation by the DOS, which may occasionally also include, retweets and replies from followers. In this sense the DOS continually monitors the online organisational presence in order to maintain their perception of the organisation. They try to shape how it is perceived and give it a place, a situated reality online, where it is accessible.

Why online marketing work as a form of identity work is significant now

An analysis of online marketing work is pertinent now as the relatively new developments within contemporary marketing practices, including technological inventions, such as Web 2.0, and the expansion of digital marketing initiatives incorporating SNSs, such as Twitter (Shin and Jisu Huh, 2009; Dou, Nielsen and Tan, 2002). In this sense it is a particularly interesting domain for empirical analysis as little is known about the processes and experiences of the marketers undertaking this type of work day to day. Given the unique facets of the B2B environment, including the complexity of the products and the likelihood of closer more developed relationships between B2B marketers and their customers, the process of online identity creation and delivery is an area that requires greater exploration. This is due to little being known currently about the processes involved in bringing the organisation into being online, via Twitter from the perspective of marketing professionals, which also includes their self-understanding (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). This concept of self-understanding relates to how they comprehend and make sense of the work that they do, which often combines personal and organisational identity negotiations. An awareness of day-to-day challenges is also desirable to better inform future online practice. Bearing in mind the difficulties and benefits of introducing and maintaining SNSs such as Twitter within the B2B sector, a better understanding of the work of B2B marketers from their day-to-day experiences would therefore be advantageous to scholars and practitioners, in order to better explain the complexity of the work they do.

The processes involved in online marketing work via SNSs, are as yet little understood and would potentially add a new dimension to existing identity work literature which primarily focuses on offline identity negotiations during periods of duress for employees (Järventie-Theslef and Tienari, 2016; Wieland, 2010; Watson, 2008). Additionally, current studies, relating to SNS implementation within the B2B sector, outside the marketing specific literature, as discussed in Chapter One (Habibi et al 2015; Karkkainen et al, 2011, for example), lack the marketer's perspective. Existing research is also missing the detail of those processes involved in writing the tweets and managing potential 'audience' interaction day to day. I argue this is required to provide an understanding of what online marketing work processes include via SNSs, such as Twitter, as this is a significant and growing aspect of marketing practice. Arguably, it is also important to understand identity negotiations for individual employees within online organisational domains, where customer relationships may also be understood and constructed differently. This is because customers within the online environment are often referred to as the "imagined online audience" (Marwick and Boyd, 2010:114) in this sense who the DOS is communicating with are their intended recipients including: existing purchasers of their products and/or services.

Having set out the context and some of the key definitions, I will now confirm the rest of the key literatures and introduce some of the debates that have informed my work and the research questions, by providing a brief overview of the thesis. I continue first by reflecting for a moment on my original inspiration for starting this work.

A moment of reflection

This thesis was inspired in part by my desire to tell the story of the DOS, from their perspective, as an insight into their lived experience. Having worked for more than 16 years as a marketing practitioner and latterly as a DOS within B2B industry settings, one of my strengths as a researcher is therefore as an 'insider' (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009) – an individual who has shared similar traits, roles and understandings as the participants. This means I already have a detailed awareness of the phenomenon being studied. Equally I understand that a key limitation is that I also bring a certain amount of preconception to my understanding of the DOS role and responsibilities, due to my experience. In this sense I need to challenge my epistemological and ontological assumptions more than an ‘outsider’ would for example. I also need to engage in a process of continually questioning where my beliefs, motivations and assumptions are emerging from, to ensure as much transparency as possible, which is initially reflected within the following overview of the thesis.

Overview of the thesis

The first three chapters of the thesis introduce key concepts and review relevant literature in order to position the research in pertinent academic work to date.

Chapter One outlines the key concepts including the DOS, bringing the online organisation into being and the online organisational presence. It also provides an overview of the thesis, including the research questions and the key contributions.

Chapter Two addresses the question as to why online marketing work in B2B environments has been chosen for exploration within the thesis. I achieve this through a review of contemporary marketing in practice, and its leading theoretical contributions, such as relationship management (Harker and Egan, 2006; Coviello et al, 2000; Grönroos, 1990) and ‘exchange’ – based communication, as facilitated through ‘interactions’ (Grönroos, 2006), which have contributed to the emergence of interactive digital online marketing practices (Shin and Jisu Huh, 2009; Dou, Nielsen and Tan, 2002). In order to inform the processes and practices involved in the DOS experience, I review the existing literature relating to marketing work (Ardley and Quinn, 2013), brand narrative (Cooper et al, 2010) and value co-creation (Cova et al, 2011). I then specifically examine the growth of social media sites, such as Twitter within organisational settings, and provide an overview of the emerging and diverse academic literature within the social science, organisation studies management and marketing fields, which has so far analysed it.

Within Chapter Three I define an understanding of self, based on the self-concept (Oyserman et al, 2012). In addition the work of Mead (1934) is utilised to inform the relational construct of self, in the interplay between self and other(s), to explain the focal perspective on identity within the thesis, as being processual and situated in relation to and in response with others, such as the intended online audience and the individual employee’s organisation, as a form of ‘generalised other’ (Mead, 1934). As such I argue identity work (Pratt, 2012; Watson, 2008; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) provides a useful and additional lens, for examining the process of identity formation undertaken by employees such as the DOS when communicating on behalf of the organisation. The reason why online marketing work specifically challenges identity negotiation processes is then outlined and related to the work of Meijer and Torenvlied, (2014) who suggest there are three different approaches, official, unofficial and a mixture of the two, to highlight identity construction within organisational Twitter accounts. I therefore take forward from this that a study of the DOS engaging with everyday tasks, including online marketing activities will contribute a new dimension to existing identity work studies that frequently focus on individuals and collectives under duress, such as during periods of change (Järventie-Theslef and Tienari, 2016; Wieland, 2010; Watson, 2008). In this way, focussing on the work of Maitlis and Christianson (2014) sensemaking can be used as the means to understand identity constructions, while sensegiving is established as another lens for understanding the role of the DOS when communicating (giving sense) to the intended online audience. From this chapter I establish and take forward the concept of sensemaking through storytelling, and sensegiving as the theoretical lens, under which identity construction may be examined during online marketing work processes.

Chapter Four sets out the methodology, where I explain the reasons for adopting a qualitative, interpretivist, abductivist approach (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013). I also justify seeking to understand the lived experiences of the DOS, by getting them to tell their own stories. In terms of methods I explicate the need to collect data from five B2B case study organisations, as the means to enrich an understanding of the life world of the DOS from several different interpretations. It is also possible to review the experiences of the DOS within different organisations in a way that allows similarities in working practices to be compared, but also polyphonic perspectives to emerge. I focus on the semi-structured interviews in order to understand the identity construction processes of the DOS (Andrews et al, 2012; Czarniawska, 2004). Considerations in relation to ethical (Saunders et al, 2009) and quality (Silverman, 2011) issues are also explained. Utilising thematic coding the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews were coded (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The coding words and phrases were generated directly from the interview text, utilising "descriptive codes" (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 57) relating to the descriptions of the work the DOS does – such as engaging, participating and personalising. The aim of the thesis, as set out within the research questions, is thus to analyse and explicate how the DOS brings the online organisation into being via Twitter, through their online marketing work, as a form of identity work.

My core research question is:

How do the Digital Organisational Storytellers (DOSs) bring an organisation into being online?

Emanating from the core question are three supplementary questions to be addressed:

1. What do the online marketing work processes the DOS undertakes tell us about identity at work?
2. How does the DOS construct and understand their online identity work negotiations, through their online marketing work activities?

3. How does the DOS make sense and give sense during these online marketing work processes?

The overall contribution of the thesis is an understanding of how the DOS constructs identity, personal, individual and organisational, via Twitter, and what can be drawn from this in terms of online identity work categorisations. Therefore, how might the DOS make sense of their online marketing work and negotiate their identity online as a result? It is important to think about this as little is known currently about these everyday organisational practices and their influence on the individual and what is communicated about the organisation to an online audience. A brief summary of the key themes within the data are summarised below.

Within Chapters Five to Seven I present the online marketing work categories that have emerged from my engagement with the empirical materials that represent my findings. These categorisations show how the DOS makes sense of, constructs and understands their online identity work negotiations, through their online marketing work activities.

Chapter Five sets out the data in two stages, from online apprenticing to online specialising. These categories illustrate progress from starting to bring the online organisation into being via Twitter, to a point where they are able to competently provide expert information about the organisation and its products/services, within the tweets. Online apprenticing explicates experiences of the DOS drawing from previous knowledge of traditional marketing work, in order to sustain the online organisational presence, due to a lack of organisational guidance and training. This may be deliberate ambiguity, a theme I return to in the data and discussion below. Online specialising illustrates how the DOS chooses to prioritise preferred ‘personalised’ identities within their Twitter profile pages by integrating their real name, images that reflect personal interests and subjects they feel passionately about. These online marketing work tactics are adopted to try to ‘humanise’ the organisation in order to generate interest and engagement from the intended online audience. As an example of themes discussed in this chapter, Tim, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare explains how he understands his identity work negotiations as a result:

> I think it is important that the organisation has a personality on Twitter or customers won’t engage…I suggested having Karen and I named at the top of the page, so it is clear there are people who care behind the logo.

As such the DOS describes how they bring the organisation into being online, by utilising elements of self. The data then outlines how some of them seek validation and proof that this type of online marketing work that projects aspects of self, is worthwhile from the intended audience. Links are made throughout the chapter to existing theory, indicating for example how the empirical data connects Meijer and Torenvlied’s (2014) conception of identity within tweets combining formality, informality and a mixture of the two, to Ibarra and Petriglieri’s (2010) notion of identity play, where the DOS is perceived as ‘trialling’ possible selves within the online domain.

Chapter Six considers three further categories, which encapsulate shaping and guiding identity when bringing the organisation into being online. Initially the section on online perception shaping illustrates how the DOS tries to bring the organisation into being online, in a way that is consistently positive, as they feel there is an expectation by senior managers to do so. Being positive also aligns with the DOS and their obligation to try and support the organisation with the selling and promotion of products and services, as a core aim of their online marketing work. This can be challenging however when the individual offline experiences of the DOS do not concur consistently with this positive persona, as John, Operational marketing manager, Forsdyke Industrial, outlines (emphasis added):

> Not that I'm suggesting this is always easy, especially when you don't always feel that positive…(laughs) but then I don't want to get sacked either…*so I put on my best tweeting smile and get on with it.*

This quotation alludes to a need for compromise when engaging in online marketing work practices, where the DOS acknowledges the need to make sense of and present a positive organisational identity, while not necessarily identifying with the organisation consistently in this way. This is a key theme emerging from the data and discussed in Chapter Six. The second category outlines online provoking processes, including the adoption of more emboldened behaviours and tactics, so as to try and invoke a response from their intended audience. As such, the third category explicates occurrences of online combining and connecting, which examines the need for the DOS to coordinate simultaneous processes of tweeting and face-to-face communication, when they are at organisational events. Theoretically I draw from existing work that has illustrated identity work as the means to negotiate tensions between self and situational factors (Kreiner et al, 2006; Ashforth and Mael, 1996), while also acknowledging the need to continually present a “central, distinctive or enduring” (Lievens et al, 2007: 46) organisational identity that takes account of the audience’s existing perception or “construed external image” (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991: 547).

Chapter Seven elaborates three further categories that have emerged from my engagement with the empirical data, focussing on sustaining identity including: preserving identity, influencing identity and online professional ‘friending’ activities. Preserving identity illustrates how the DOS tries to produce and maintain the online organisational presence as an interesting and interactive place to visit, with the intention of securing repeat visits from the intended audience. Several of the DOSs’ admit to continually checking Twitter, outside of traditional/paid working hours, as the means to preserve the online organisational presence, to maintain its features and benefits. They answer complaints or queries quickly so as to prevent negative comments being retained within the online organisational presence. Sarah, customer services manager, Sonic Business Solutions, captures the essence of this ‘obliged’ commitment generated by online preserving practices, which informs us about online identity processes inside and outside of work:

> Unfortunately I do occasionally catch myself logging into the Twitter page out of hours from home, mainly as I don’t want to go into problems on Monday morning.

Online identity work negotiations can be understood through these online marketing work processes as protecting the self, as well as the organisation from negative comments, thus, providing insight into the collapsing of boundaries. Lastly in this chapter, online professional ‘friending’ processes are illustrated so as to explain how the DOS utilises their individual Twitter account as the means to also support organisational messages. Such activities inform our understanding of how the DOS did not distinguish their personal, individual and professional identities online. Rather identity is either combined or amalgamated within online marketing work.

Within Chapter Eight I review these findings in conjunction with relevant theoretical and conceptual observations and previous empirical study outcomes, from Chapters One, Two and Three. Firstly, in relation to research question three – how the DOS makes sense and gives sense during these online marketing work processes – I argue that there are four different characterisations adopted by the DOSs, when undertaking online marketing work and trying to engage with the intended Twitter audience. Therefore, by drawing on the theoretical contributions of Cornelissen, 2012; Rhodes and Brown, 2005 and Humphreys and Brown, 2002, discussed in Chapter Three, I contend the DOS makes sense and gives sense through one of these four characterisations:

1) ‘The eager, but inexperienced/naive audience-pleasing DOS - These individuals adopt enthusiastic and overly fervent sensemaking and

sensegiving processes, orientated towards greater understanding for the audience, so as to encourage interaction, primarily (Boudreau et al, 2014; Ardley, 2006).

2) ‘The non-risk taking policy and procedures-informed conformist DOS – They engage in committed, affiliate, rule-driven sensemaking and restrained/ordered sensegiving (Pratt, 2012; Watson, 2008).

3) ‘The reluctant, restrained and self-preserving strategist DOS - Those in this category are involved in strategic sensemaking and normative sensegiving (Madsen and Verhoeven, 2016; Ravasi and Schultz, 2006; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991).

4) ‘The flexible, ‘self-sacrificing’ forward-looking idealist DOS - They engage in natural, logical and impassioned sense-making which is aligned with organisational and individual ideals, which relate to ‘doing good and making a difference’ through their sensegiving (Brown, 2015; Brown and Humphreys, 2003).

These characterisations, which are not exclusive, but overlapping, help to inform our understanding of the identity constructions that have emerged from online marketing work processes. In this way they tell us something different and insightful about the identity work that contemporary marketing professionals engage with online, which encompasses some of the challenges and opportunities related to this type of work. More generally the thesis also draws attention to the influences on identity negotiations during routine tasks, rather than just when employees are under duress, which is more frequently seen in previous studies (Järventie-Theslef and Tienari, 2016; Wieland, 2010; Watson, 2008).

Within my response to research question two – how the DOS constructs and understands online identity work negotiations, through online marketing work activities - I reflect back on the findings and theory principally within Chapters One and Two. Specifically, I highlighted identity issues and challenges that each of the four different DOS characters experienced. Then I explicated how they managed them based on their different character types, through their online marketing work activities. For example I argued that the process of balancing self, linked to the self-concept (Oyserman et al, 2012; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003) with the demands of social identities (Watson, 2008; Kreiner et al, 2006) may be better understood through online marketing work activities as an ongoing cycle of instrumental reflexivity within bounded aesthetic parameters for the 'eager, but inexperienced/naive audience-pleasing DOS. This means that the DOS continuously reflects upon identity work negotiations, where they are conscious of how they are perceived, and of how the organisation is perceived, because of their actions and appearances. As such they try to maintain ontological stability while traversing between online and offline environments, such as at events. I also reflected upon the specific identity issues and challenges for the other three DOS characters in order to argue that the online marketing work processes they demonstrated are far more complex than previous studies have suggested (Cova et al, 2015; Meijer and Torenvlied, 2014).

In response to research question one - which relates to what the online marketing work processes undertaken by the DOS informs us about identity at work - I suggested that as a result of the identity issues and challenges the DOS characters' experience they adopt different approaches to managing online marketing work. Thus, I identify six different identity work approaches, utilised by the DOSs to orient them in relation to successful engagement with the organisation and the intended Twitter audience: idealised, combined, amalgamated, entrapped, situated and preferred identity work. These categorisations are useful in informing an understanding of the types of identity constructions that contemporary marketing professionals are seen to engage in online, which helps to increase an awareness and understanding of this type of work.

Within Chapter Nine I conclude by outlining the conceptual and theoretical contributions in relation to online marketing as identity work, resulting from answering the research questions. For example, it is suggested that the DOS draws upon aspects of their individual identity, personal experiences and perceptions to 'humanise' the online organisational presence, thus adding to existing online identity work theory, such as Cova et al, (2015). Conceptually, I also expand upon existing identity work categories and recommend new characterisations to help explain sensemaking and sensegiving processes as they relate to the DOS and the management of online marketing work. I also outline the theoretical contributions to organisational studies and identity as well as to online marketing work. In particular I suggest that the thesis extends existing identity theory (Mead, 1934; Stryker, 1980) by suggesting that individuals who communicate on behalf of their organisation online, such as the DOS, seek validation and approval from their intended audience to help them establish the value of their work and also their identity as an online specialist. These contributions that have emerged from my engagement with the empirical materials also provoke a discussion of limitations, as well as inspiring recommendations for online marketing work practice. Finally, suggestions are made for future research directions, which could include different methodological approaches and build on developing theoretical frameworks, such as boundary management (Ollier-Malaterre et al, 2013; Stutzman and Hartzog, 2009) and/or brand-centred control (Müller, 2016; Mumby, 2016; Brannan et al, 2015).

Chapter Two: Marketing and the role of online marketers in business-to-business environments

Introduction

In this chapter the question of why business-to-business (B2B) marketing departments have been chosen as the empirical context for this thesis is addressed. Firstly this is achieved by examining the setting of contemporary marketing practice, outlining the core components of this work, and therefore justifying why this setting is the most suitable for the investigation and analysis of online identity processes. I begin with a definition and explanation of what marketing is, explaining the significance of recent changes in practice, including the introduction of digital online marketing. Then, I also outline the specific challenges and benefits this has provided for the B2B sector and specifically the B2B marketer, when integrating and managing this new technology on a day to day basis and therefore why this is worthy of further investigation.

Although the marketing literature has made important contributions to the debate about social media adoption by B2B organisations (Siamagka et al, 2015), this thesis is positioned within the field of organisation studies and management. Some of the key areas addressed within the marketing literature include: business relationship development and business performance enhancement via social media networks, (Quinton and Wilson, 2016), reasons for social media adoption by B2B organisations (Siamagka et al, 2015), barriers to and measurement of social media marketing on B2B brands (Michaelidou et al, 2011) and an analysis of online meanings in B2B marketing conversations (Mehmet and Clarke, 2015). The Quinton and Wilson (2016) study includes a netnographic analysis of LinkedIn group interactions and 12 interviews from one global industry in order to understand business relationship growth. The Siamagka et al, (2015) study focuses on the potential use of social media more broadly as a marketing tool in industrial settings. The findings suggest that B2B companies are influenced by desired impression, envisaged ease of use and imagined difficulties, as well as the innovativeness of the organisation and any overall practical benefits of implementing social media to communicate marketing messages. Marketing scholarship primarily examines the outcomes of social media and SNS practice, on business performance and customer relationships, this thesis examines the process of updating Twitter from the perspective of marketers. This is because an understanding of the day-to-day lived experiences and activities of the marketers, as the DOS, has been hitherto absent.

The marketers are responsible for bringing the organisation into being online via the social networking site (SNSs), Twitter. As outlined in the Introduction, bringing the organisation into being is a new concept, which alludes to the way the DOS presents their organisation online. Specifically they write and/or edit and upload the tweets, videos and pictures onto the organisational Twitter profile page. In this sense, although they don't necessarily give the organisation a material presence, they shape how it is perceived and by whom. Accordingly they shape what it means and influence the contents that are visible to the intended Twitter audience as much as they are able to. Any replies or retweets from members of the Twitter audience will also contribute to the conversations and the online organisational presence. Therefore it is also the responsibility of the DOS to monitor and intervene in conversations in order to minimise any negative comments or queries. Despite their important boundary spanning role vis-à-vis customers, where they are the first point of contact between the organisation and the external environment, and the growing relevance of mediated communication inside and outside the organisation, there are only very few studies that have scrutinised marketing departments/advertising consultancies as empirical settings (for example Jacobi et al, 2014; Kelly et al, 2005; Grant, 2004; Hogg and Scoggins, 2001; Alvesson, 1994). Outside of the marketing literature they are particularly scarce. However there is an emerging sub-field of organisation studies and management literature that are examining the integration of social media into business practice within organisations (Zwick and Bradshaw, 2016; Upchurch and Grassman, 2015; Kietzmann et al, 2011; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). From this literature, the main insights include the analysis of online customer groups as an idealistic notion, that scarcely occurs, and the role of social media marketing managers in trying to facilitate communication with customers through them (Zwick and Bradsham, 2016). Additionally, the use of social media during organisational disagreements as the means to assemble communal movements at the time and afterwards, is also discussed (Upchurch and Grassman, 2015). The study by Kietzmann et al, (2011) illuminates social media practices through seven practical steps: individuality, dialogue, distribution, online existence, partnerships, status and communities, as well as providing suggestions as to how organisations should respond to these activities.

Within the introduction I have highlighted the focus of the thesis and confirmed it as an important contribution to the emerging literature on online identity construction. I have argued that, while there has been considerable interest in the construction of identity for individuals and groups within organisations, an understanding of how organisations are brought into being online through the work of individual marketers has not yet been explored empirically in organisation studies and management literature. This thesis contributes new understandings by asking what processes the marketing professionals are going through to construct the organisation online and how they make sense of this for themselves, the intended online audience and the organisation. Initially though an understanding of what marketing is and therefore why it is the most suitable empirical setting for this research is outlined.

Contemporary marketing in practice

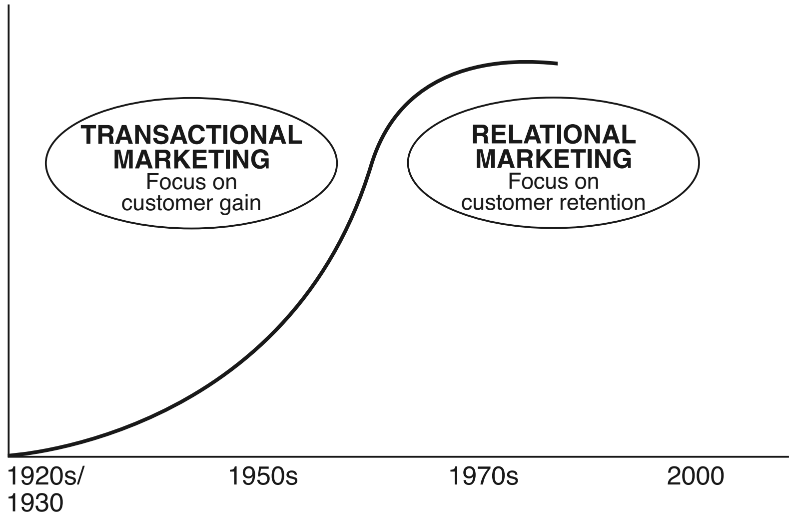
The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) defines marketing as: “The management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably” (CIM, 2016). These processes are driven by potential customers, and categorised as needs, wants and demands (Kotler and Keller, 2016), which the marketing department or team assesses and then develops a product or service to meet (Lindgreen et al, 2004).

Marketing roles are typically broken down into in-house (working within a marketing department inside an organisation) or working for a marketing agency/consultancy that specialises usually in one particular area of marketing, such as consumer research. The focus of this thesis is on in-house roles within the business-to-business (B2B) sector, as will be outlined and explained later in this chapter. In small to medium sized companies these roles can be quite far-reaching and involve elements of planning, promotion, market research, media relations and advertising and PR (Porcu et al, 2012).

The aim is to facilitate a process of exchange between the organisation and their intended customers (Shariq et al, 2014; Bagozzi, 1975). Despite significant advances in marketing scholarship, marketing practice has been dominated by a simplified notion of marketing exemplified by the 4Ps of the so-called “marketing mix” product, price, place and promotion (McCarthy,1964), or derivations of it. Utilising these elements a company could firstly devise a product that appeals to an adequate number of customers, at a price they can afford, from a location (place/supply chain) within convenient reach, as well as ensuring they are aware of it, which is achieved through promotions, such as advertisements (Shariq et al, 2014).

Marketing was based on a short-term transactional approach (Borden, 1964), based on the 4Ps. However from the 1980’s onwards this has been replaced by the aim of maintaining long-term relationships with customers through, inter alia, marketing communications (Kotler, 1992, Gronroos, 1990) see Figure 1.1:

Figure 1.1: The lifecycle of marketing as a business function (Lindgreen et al, 2004)



Notes: In the 1920s and 1930s: emergence of marketing as a business function. In the late 1940s and through the 1950s: post-war consumer boom.
In the 1970s: a series of oil crises. From the 1980's and onwards: decline of functional marketing, and increasing significance of relationship marketing.

Referred to as relationship marketing this approach is more focussed on establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial longer-term relationships with customers, so that both their objectives and those of the organisation are met (Harker and Egan, 2006; Coviello et al, 2000; Grönroos, 1990). Despite a difference in emphasis over the years, generating exchanges is still at the centre of effective contemporary marketing practice. Only in contemporary practice there is more emphasis on the relationship being beneficial for both the organisation and the customer, as either may choose to end it. These relationships may also extend to other stakeholders such as suppliers, journalists, members of the public and competitors (Coviello et al, 2000) where “exchanges” are facilitated through “interactions” (Grönroos, 2006: 395). In this way, the fulfillment of promises and customers’ expectations is facilitated by internal marketing practices and technological methods, such as social media. This facilitates interactions through conversations, in real time and forms a key aspect of an organisation's marketing processes (Grönroos, 2006).

One of the primary means of building effective relationships and facilitating interactions (Grönroos, 2006) with intended customers (sometimes referred to as target audiences) in contemporary marketing practice is by creating firstly a marketing strategy, then a marketing plan, containing actions (Baines et al, 2011). These are designed to create then deliver a series of marketing communications' activities or tactics. These are usually broken down into three primary areas: advertising, promotions and public relations (Fill, 2009). As such the marketers' role today usually involves more than being facilitators of exchange (or relationships for that matter) but also speaking on behalf of the organisation as much as re-enacting the organisation vis-à-vis customers and other stakeholders (i.e. a boundary-spanning and interface-managing role that is not only communicative of, but also constitutive of what the organisation is) (Kotler and Keller, 2016; Baines et al, 2013). Here, I am focussing on an exploration of the lived experiences of those marketing professionals who manage the activities or tactics, and specifically how they bring the organisation into being. Therefore the strategic and planning levels of marketing will not be explored within this thesis.

However, more recently significant developments in the business environment, has led to fundamental changes for contemporary marketing practices in their approach and activities. Such changes are driven by globalisation, which has increased competition and the influence of technological innovations, such as the Internet, leading to more informed and therefore often more demanding customers and increased channels for communication (Kotler et al, 2015). How customers are accessing marketing materials is also changing. For example they are more frequently researching organisations via mobile technology including smart phones, tablets and laptops. As such, the increasingly international marketplace is encouraging customers to demand more from companies than mere product/service features and benefits (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2016).

Successful contemporary marketing is thus more open to engagement and is characterised by its “human or emotional element” (Kotler and Keller, 2016: 37). This means that customers want to be treated as individuals, as opposed to commodities. For example, since the arrival of the Internet there is now more emphasis on creating personalised communications, which are more targeted, customised and relevant to individual customer’s needs, such as personalised e-mails (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2016). Increasingly this means the effective integration of digital online marketing campaigns with more traditional marketing, so as to facilitate an increasing desire by customers to interact with organisations in real-time and at their convenience (Kotler and Keller, 2016). However to date there are few studies that focus on an empirical understanding of marketing work, the work that marketers do, and therefore the exact nature of these practices and activities are still relatively undeveloped from a theoretical and conceptual perspective.

Marketing work

Marketing work is described as a "ubiquitous and far-reaching phenomenon in contemporary consumer societies," (Svensson, 2007: 271) as well as an under-developed field of research (Cova et al, 2015). Previous investigations of marketing work have placed the emphasis on writing texts (Lien, 1997) and mechanical managerial processes, such as marketing research and customer targeting, in order to increase consumer demand (Skålén et al, 2008; Witkowski, 2005). Marketing management approaches to marketing work practices predominate in textbooks, (see Kotler and Keller, 2016; Jobber, 2010) and stipulate a specific ordered and rational approach within primarily offline contexts, at the detriment of individualised episodes, as described by practicing marketers (Ardley and Quinn, 2013; Jaakkola, 2011). As a result the predominant descriptions of marketing work do not encapsulate the complex and ambiguous nature of managing socially dynamic, multi-faceted realities, as has long been noted (Smircich and Stubbart, 1985). They rely instead on simplified analyses of an organisation within its current environmental setting, leaving important disparities as to what marketing work actually is, as is outlined by Ardley and Quinn, (2013: 101):

> …there are some significant gaps in our understanding of the actual processes involved in carrying out marketing activities that need unpacking in order that we may better understand the nuances…of marketing in organisations.

As is reiterated here, few specific details are known about the day-to-day marketing practices within contemporary companies. One of the reasons for this gap in current literature is due to marketers utilising an element of "tacit" expertise, and thus the nature of their work is challenging to observe empirically and/or express through words (Hackley, 1999: 722). Examples of implicit expertise includes awareness of when to use one problem-solving process over another, such as when more research is required, creating specific meanings for consumers, as well as skills relating to persuasion, growth potential for products/services and charisma. The unspoken dimension of marketing work is also closely related to experience and is therefore constantly developing over time (Cronin, 2004; Hackley, 1999). This is particularly pertinent to digital online marketing activities, which are also constantly evolving, and an increasing feature of contemporary organisational and/or brand identity management (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012).

Thus, as has been outlined in Chapter One, an aspect of online marketing work for the DOS is the practice of bringing the organisation into being online. One element of this 'bringing into being' is the representational work they are doing online to communicate the organisational and/or brand identity. Within the existing marketing literature there is a lot of emphasis on how business-to-consumer (B2C) brand stories and narratives, are communicated by organisations and interpreted by consumers (Cooper et al, 2010; Smith, 2011; Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012; Dahlen et al, 2010; Megehee and Woodside, 2010; Woodside, 2010; Schembri et al, 2010). However there is much less emphasis on the online communicative processes and experiences of the employees, such as the DOS. This is important, as an understanding of their figurative role would provide additional insights into how they construct the self in relation to organisational identities and brand narratives. This is important to practitioners, as a better understanding of the work of the B2B marketers would help to inform organisational strategy, policy and practice in this area. In addition scholars would have a better understanding of the complexities involved in online marketing work, which would influence further explorations in other sectors and SNSs, for example. Thus an explanation of brand narratives together with a brief review of current literature is considered below.

Brand narratives

Put simply, the narrative form differs from story, in its ability to recount personal and collective experiences and feelings, together with a perspective on certain events, as opposed to sequential action based on plot, characters and description (Freshwater and Holloway, 2010; Prince, 1982). A narrative includes the retelling of a sequence of happenings or occurrences, within a certain space, in which individuals interact with or create a number of sequenced events (Poulter, 2005). Brand narratives are thus primarily originated by organisations in order to encourage individual brand congruity (Smith, 2007). Engagement from customers generally occurs when the values espoused by the brand link directly to the past experiences and emotionally generated influences of the audience. For example Cooper et al (2010) examines three differing narratives within the James Bond film series, focussing on the luxury brands, Bollinger, Aston Martin and Jaguar. It is suggested every narrative connected to these brands strengthens a specific archetypical fable of the lover, hero or outlaw. As a result, fresh insights are provided into the ways that aspirational brands, which means those that provoke consumer desires because they are perceived to offer self-improving qualities, as well as providing a focus for their own “consumption ideals” (Cooper et al, 2010: 557). An alternative approach, utilising consumer narratives is considered by Schembri et al (2010), through their examination of how consumption, the utilisation of a brand to satisfy specific needs, (Caldwell and Frieire, 2004) facilitates the creation of the self. In particular Schembri et al (2010: 624) describes brand consumption as a “powerful social tool that consumers employ in their quest for self-identity.” This suggests that consumers draw upon these symbols and brand stories as the means to convey the self and thus make sense of whom they are. As such consumers use brands symbolically to convey different meanings. They may also see the brand as iconic, which suggests an aspirational relationship, or indexical, where there is a logical connection, linked to historical connotations (Schembri et al, 2010). In this way, it is suggested that brands satisfy significant emotional and communal needs, in assorted ways for different consumers. A further way that brand narratives are utilised by organisations to engage consumers and enhance connections, is within social media networks (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012). However within an online B2C context the consumer’s role is changing from an inactive recipient to that of a proactive contributor. The process of storytelling in social media is thus described as an incessant and communal experience between the brand owner and the consumer, who is encouraged to share their experiences to enrich the story. As such the tweets can be described as "brand narratives co-created from interrelated stories…into brand performances" (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012: 192). It is concluded though that such collaborations within online conversations/narratives are unpredictable, dominated by tension between the organisation, the issue being discussed and the consumer. Thus, the brand owner requires a detailed awareness of the intended audience to sustain worthwhile performances that enhance brand meaning. The Singh and Sonnenburg (2012) study is relevant here as it provides a different dimension to the discussion on brand narratives but also it introduces another relevant idea, the concept of interactive value formation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004).

Value co-creation

Interactive value formation locates the focus of economic value creation as being embedded within interactions between the organisation and the customer, referred to more recently as value co-creation (Cova et al, 2011). This potential reliance on customer participation as the means to enhance productivity and boost brand loyalty for the organisation is considered exploitative in at least two ways. Firstly customers are not financially compensated for their work and secondly the value produced by communities of consumers' co-creating content is likely to be considerably higher than traditional strategic marketing tactics. In other words, consumers are not paid for their contributions and in fact their advocacy may actually contribute to an increase in overall prices for the products they are engaging with, as their endorsement helps to increase their marketable value (Cova et al, 2011; Ainasoja and Linna, 2011; Echeverri and Skålén, 2011). It is these potentially exploitative possibilities that originally provoked a critical approach to value co-creation as drawn from Foucault's notion of government (Zwick et al, 2008). In this sense, the notion of free will is exploitative as instructions, systems and standards, as a form of power and control are supplemented for a more subtle approach, embedded within the lower hierarchical tier of an organisation, in established practices, that suggest notions of freedom and choice. As Cova et al, (2011: 232) outlines, as a result governmentality in the marketing context can be seen as equally manipulative and also subtly controlling:

> Marketing governmentality aims at constructing consumers as partners in mutually beneficial innovation and production processes. Yet, by doing so companies are not only exploiting consumer labour but are also reducing the risk of consumer behaviour evolving in ways other than those desired by the company.

It is thus suggested that consumers who believe they are working collaboratively with the organisation on production processes are more likely to comply with normative controls in a similar way to paid employees. Normative control for employees is often linked to a strong identification with the organisation/brand identity, rather than intimidation or the promise of financial rewards (Müller, 2016; Brannan et al, 2015: Fleming and Sturdy, 2011; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Gabriel, 1999), which is equally relevant here for consumers in reference to value co-creation principles. This is because it is suggested they are also motivated by an attachment to the organisation/brand identity narrative. In particular as already observed from the Singh and Sonnenburg (2012) study, social media platforms, including Twitter have only served to heighten the issue of free labour, which is given often without due consideration, payment, primarily for pleasure and also sometimes as the result of manipulation.

The issue with many of the existing value-co-creation studies however, is that the majority are theoretical, overtly positive, based as they are on themes of consumer empowerment and service-logic, rather than empirical contexts, offering fresh insights into practice-based realities (Zwick et al, 2008; Cova and Dalli, 2009). Of those studies that do have an empirical basis i.e. (Fisher and Smith, 2011; Schau et al, 2009) the focus is primarily on consumer experiences of co-creation. For example Schau et al, (2009) specifically identifies value-establishing activities between consumers in nine online brand communities, where they experience value beyond that which the organisation generates, through their own self-motivated activities. Additionally, the Fisher and Smith, (2011) paper considers the chaotic and interconnected environment of an online brand community dedicated to the film franchise Indiana Jones and related memorabilia, where they observe control to be firmly in the hands of the consumers. In contrast, Echeverri and Skålén, (2011) examine issues of value co-creation and co-destruction by focusing on an empirical study of a public transport operator in Sweden. The latter concept of co-destruction considers negative interactions such as when the customer does not understand why the individual or organisation is acting in a particular way and thus they may become disengaged with the brand, individual and/or organisation as a result. At other times value is co-created when misunderstandings focussing on operational issues such as timetable changes are corrected as the result of interactions. This study is of particular interest as it is one of the few to examine the transport workers as representatives of the organisational and/or brand identity during face-to-face interactions. However, there are still limitations within current empirical research, which relate to an understanding of the representational work that employees are undertaking. In particular, to date there has been a limited focus on an employees’ role in value co-creation activities online within the B2B context. This would be a valuable addition to existing literature, because as is outlined within the next section, the nature of the B2B market necessitates the progression and preservation of mutually beneficial associations between purchasing and trading organisations to succeed. Thus, a better appreciation of the role employees, such as the DOS play online in creating value and thus maintaining those relationships would prove beneficial to current practitioners. Additionally a greater understanding as to how marketers co-create value through organisational/brand identity communications online would extend existing theory in this area.

Business-to-business marketing

As Baines et al, (2011: 517, emphasis added) outlines B2B marketing practices can be categorised by a number of key features of the market:

> …the nature of demand, the buying processes, international dimensions, and, perhaps most importantly *the relationships that develop between organisations in the process of buying and selling*.

Of most significance here is the nature of relationships between the marketers and their intended customers, which is significantly different from business to consumer (B2C) marketing as those purchasing the product or service buy it on behalf of their organisation, not to utilise themselves. As such the engagement between potential purchasers and those selling products or services is of great importance to sustain repeat business. Thus, a blend of personalised and more neutral marketing communications tactics are directed principally towards these purchasing decision-makers (Chlebisova et al, 2011). Additionally, mutual dependency, teamwork and affiliation during the origination, provision of goods or amenities are a primary aspect of B2B marketing practice (Baines et al, 2011; Fill and Fill, 2005). Thus, arguably the empirical setting of B2B marketing organisations and their teams will provide significant scope for analysing marketing processes, as there is more of a necessity to maintain relationships, in order to secure continued sales. Additionally B2B marketing empirical settings remain a less common focus of research (Sheth and Sharma, 2006; Danneels and Lilien, 1998; Webster, 1978). Therefore broader understandings of B2B marketing work would also prove valuable to researchers in organisation studies and management in order to illuminate a focus on specific activities, which includes digital online marketing, as discussed within the next section.

Digital online marketing

The invention of the World Wide Web by Tim Berners-Lee in 1989 (World Wide Web Foundation, 2016) has helped to facilitate new innovations in marketing practice. Such inimitable features of the Internet, including data loading and storing, digitalisation, and the ability to communicate to and with a global customer base, has enabled marketing researchers (Wymbs, 2011; Parsons, 2009) and marketers (Abashidze and Dabrowski, 2016; Bagautdinova et al, 2016; Zwick and Bradshaw, 2016; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) to expand their activities significantly. Many marketers have adopted a range of Internet-facilitated communication instruments such as corporate websites to build an online organisational presence initially and develop stronger relationships with customers (Shin and Jisu Huh, 2009; Dou and Tan, 2002).

The emergence of digital online marketing has occurred due to the introduction of Web 2.0 online applications that are designed to facilitate better communication (Sheehan, 2010; Constanides and Fountain, 2008), between companies and potential online customers, often referred to as the online “imagined audience” (Marwick and Boyd, 2010:114). These technologies include functions, such as enhanced search engines, new programming facilities to speed up messages and also feedback/review facilities for external audiences to complete. As de Swaan Arons et al, (2014: 1) surmises marketing practices have changed exponentially in recent times:

> In the past decade, what marketers do to engage customers has changed almost beyond recognition. Tools and strategies that were cutting edge just a few years ago are fast becoming obsolete and new approaches are appearing every day.

Considering this rapidity of change in the marketing environment, it is arguably one of the most exciting and challenging periods, for those who work within the discipline (see also Appendix One for current approaches to engage customers utilising six types of online digital marketing tools). This suggests that empirical analyses of current practice would prove insightful and timely in order to encourage further theory development, including within social media practice, as discussed below.

The growth of social media sites and Twitter

Social media sites (SMSs) have grown exponentially in user numbers since the launch of Facebook.com in 2005, which was originally intended just for students to network and share experiences with other students (Phillips, 2007). According to a research study conducted by *We Are Social in the UK* in early 2016 there are more than 2.3 billion SMS users globally, which is up 10% from 2015. Divided into social networking sites (Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn), blogs and content sharing sites (YouTube) social media sites now attract millions of users worldwide (Hodeghatta and Sahney, 2016; Weller, 2016; Edosomwan et al, 2011). In the UK, 38 million people (59%) out of a population of 64.9 million were active social media users in 2016. Each user accesses one or more SMSs for a duration of one hour and 29 minutes on average per day (We are Social, 2016). During their early adoption, Boyd and Ellison (2008:211) defined social networking sites (SNSs) as:

> …web-based services that allow individuals[1] to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others in the system.

Launched in 2006, Twitter is an SNS, which facilitates brief 140 character updates. It includes short posts, called tweets highlighting an organisations' or individuals' present status, which answers the question: 'What's happening?' (Marwick and Boyd, 2010; Java et al, 2007). Twitter provides a new free conversational medium, where members are unrestricted in location, and may not be known offline by the participants. In this sense Twitter is an unbounded media designed to encourage interaction and the sharing of information. At first its use was restricted to individuals, but latterly business use has grown significantly. Therefore a greater understanding of Twitter, in terms of how it is managed in practice, is required.

As the active user numbers and connectivity via mobile technology has increased, marketers have become another key group to recognise the probable advantages of SNS platforms for increasing awareness of products/services, including online sales, customer engagement, and even recruitment (Kwon and Sung, 2011). A more detailed understanding of the

[1] Also more commonly organisations and groups (Ngai et al, 2015).

experiences by those responsible for updating their organisation's Twitter site, is of particular interest as it introduces a new communication dynamic between the marketer as the producer of the tweets and an intendedaudience. This dynamic relationship is facilitated by specific features within the Twitter environment such as hashtags[2], news links and the @username facility - so as to be able to respond directly to certain users, or as part of a retweet (forwarding an existing message). The conversations take place in the public domain and are based on shared observations and opinions on a specific subject, event or occurrence, such as a news item (Kwon and Sung, 2011). In particular it is suggested that the introduction of online discourse between companies and customers has created a notable change in the relationship status between customers and the company.

Arguably customers experience more control, and the company acts as an equivalent partner in the communication process, with the purpose of maintaining engagements so as to establish long-term relationships with customers of mutual benefit (Mihalcea and Savulescu, 2013; Brown, 2010). Thus as yet there is limited academic research that examines the processfrom the perspective of the B2B marketer, as opposed to the user side (Bulearca

[2] Hashtags are key words or phrases preceded by the # symbol that people/organisations include in their social media posts. It is so these terms or phrases are easily searchable even by non-followers, literally anyone who uses the Internet. When clicking on a hashtag, Twitter users will see other tweets containing the same keyword or topic." (The Twitter Glossary, 2016c: 1) Hashtags are used to connect individuals around a specific topic or to those who are attending the same event. Often organisations use trending hashtags in the hope that a wider audience will notice their message.

and Bulearca, 2010). Also, little is known about the individual marketers' lived experiences and the processes they undertake to bring the organisation into being. Incorporating SNSs and specifically Twitter into digital online marketing strategies is only a fairly recent activity at the time of writing. Particularly in the B2B sector, where there has been notable reluctance initially to embrace new technology (Habibi et al, 2015; Marx, 2013).

As the integration of SNSs has grown within organisational settings so has their study by scholars from diverse fields. The emphasis to date in organisation studies, social science and management literature has included an understanding of user's discourses (Davidson and Vaast, 2009), individual self-presentation and performance online (Bullingham and Vasconcelos, 2013; Murthy, 2012; Gilpin, 2010), boundary work to differentiate and separate professional and personal online personas (Ollier-Malaterre et al, 2013; Stutzman and Hartzog, 2009; Kreiner et al, 2006), as well as an analysis of engagement approaches to multiple and imagined online audiences (Marwick and Boyd, 2010). Studies that focus on an analysis of Twitter implementation within specific types of organisation, including: small medium enterprises (Bulearca and Bulearca, 2010), UK trade publishers (Thoring, 2011), libraries (Aharony, 2010) and tourism services (Sotiriadis and van Zyl, 2013), for example, have argued that users can more effectively maintain relationships by 'speaking' to customers (Honey and Herring, 2009). Talking to customers less formally utilising conversational discourse online is seen as an advantageous way to build and develop relationships. This approach is suitable for different sectors, but arguably even more important within the B2B environment, where establishing and maintaining relationships is more challenging given the knowledgeable professional customer types, complexity of products and emphasis on performance and personal selling (Karkkainen et al, 2010) as is explained within the next section.

Social media management in business-to-business organisations

Current literature suggests that the implementation of social media and Twitter specifically within B2B organisations has been more cautious and less sophisticated than within the business to consumer sector (Habibi et al, 2015; Marx, 2013; Karkkainen et al, 2011). Studies have so far suggested this is partly due to the challenges within the B2B sector, which are highlighted above and can be summarised as the more complex and technical nature of the products and product development and the closer relationships between buyers and sellers – see the next section on the role of the B2B marketer for a more detailed analysis of customer relationships. In terms of the products they are often more multifaceted and therefore difficult to explain simply in brief online messages. The development of new products also takes more time and the customers are single or groups of individuals within organisations, as opposed to single independent individuals (Jussila et al, 2014).

The products or offerings within the B2B sector, are principally grouped within four categories: capital equipment, such as machinery; raw materials in large commodities for trade; original equipment manufacturer products, sold directly to a manufacturer or assembler of a final product, such as an on/off switch; maintenance, repair and operation, including nuts and bolts in large quantities

(Tanner and Raymond, 2010). The specialist nature of B2B products means they are often deemed less visually interesting than their consumer counterparts. For example there are more complex features and benefits, relating principally to performance characteristics, quality and price differentiators (Karkkainen et al, 2011). This makes B2B products/services potentially more difficult to promote in brief tweets and therefore messages are more difficult to write in order to maintain the customer’s interest.

However, despite the challenges presented by the specific characteristics of the B2B environment, there are also considerable advantages to the implementation of SNSs such as Twitter, for long-term relationship management. Market research reports outline the main benefits of utilising SNSs are to: increase visits to the website, create new business leads, develop community groups, disseminate key organisational messages, gain customer feedback, and generally to raise awareness of the products/services (Martin and Bavel, 2013; eMarketer, 2010; Breslauer and Smith, 2009). In particular SNSs are designed to engage customers and build relationships through two-way conversational communication and interaction. As such, their collaborative approach, where text within the tweets invites comments (replies) is considered more appropriate for gathering information and responses from customers (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Enders et al, 2008). More recent commentary outlines the main benefits of utilising SNSs in B2B practice as providing an opportunity to: boost search engine optimisation for the organisation (ensuring the organisation’s name appears as early as possible when searched through Google). Their use also encourages customer visits to the website; highlighting the organisation as a credible and trustworthy source of information; providing effective customer service, such as answering complaints, are seen as key gains for B2B organisations utilising SNSs. In addition encouraging customers to think of the organisation as a person with a personality helps B2B organisations get to know their customers better and generate sales leads with minimum investment (Madden, 2015). All of these factors may contribute to better overall customer engagement through SNSs as the result of their empowered status through frequent open information exchange and possible joint creation of conversations (Kärkkäinen et al, 2010; Füller et al, 2009).

However, their implementation will be determined by the specific organisation, in terms of their willingness to learn new technologies (time and training) and the perceived benefits for their product/service (Buehrer et al, 2005; Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). For example a healthcare company, with a 'caring' ethos may be quicker to see the benefit of talking more directly to potential and existing customers via Twitter, than an industrial manufacturer, that may not initially see the immediate usefulness. The ability for B2B marketers to adopt and manage SNSs will therefore depend on many, perhaps lesser-understood factors, which includes a willingness to adopt the technology (Kärkkäinen et al, 2010; Dillon and Morris, 1996; Iacovou et al, 1995), which can only be understood through further empirical investigation. This will aid an understanding of the day-to-day application and usefulness of social media as a communications tool facilitating conversations between marketers and their customers. The processes involved in bringing the organisation into being online via Twitter, by the marketer is as yet little understood and would potentially add a new dimension to existing literature.

Current studies, (Habibi, Hamilton and Valos, 2015; Karkkainen et al, 2011 for example), relating to SNS implementation within the B2B sector, outside the marketing specific literature, arguably lack a narrative from the marketer's perspective. Existing research is also missing the detail of those processes involved in writing the tweets and managing customer interaction day to day. The known aspects and challenges associated with the B2B marketers' role is explained within the next section.

The role of the online business-to-business marketer

A key part of the B2B marketers' role is to effectively manage relationships online (and offline) with customers that directly contribute to the success of the organisation. These relationships are considered more honest and intense within B2B markets. This is because the majority of customers are repeat purchasers over a longer-term period than is traditionally seen in consumer markets. Therefore they also have different motivators, expectations and behaviours, which impacts upon the role and practices of the B2B marketer online, as is alluded to by Kärkkäinen et al, (2011:3) in their description of traditional B2B customers:

> Industrial products are usually purchased by professional buying people who consider a large number of different criteria when making the buying

> decisions. They tend to acquire plenty of information…and they normally evaluate the different alternatives objectively.

Given the professional nature of customers and the fact they undertake research prior to purchase, the B2B marketers' role may be considered more demanding. As has already been outlined B2B products are more complex. Therefore, communicating the complexity, but also the desirable qualities of products, services and the organisation is likely to be more challenging. Also, generally there are fewer customers and therefore also fewer members of the marketing team to manage them (Karkkainen et al, 2011).

For example, existing literature suggests (Wiersema, 2013; Kärkkäinen et al, 2010) B2B marketing teams are operating under resource constraints, due to the efficient operating preferences of their organisations. However, this still means that they have to manage the diverse range of marketing tools with less resource, and often fewer people. The nature of social media as a constant communications method, operating 24 hours, seven days a week, is a previously under-explored field of research. Given the likelihood that B2B marketers are less used than their consumer colleagues to monitoring their organisations' activities around the clock, there may be concern about keeping up to date with answering queries, complaints and comments online. Bearing in mind the challenges and benefits of introducing and maintaining social media platforms such as Twitter within the B2B sector, a better understanding of the work of B2B marketers from their day-to-day experiences would therefore be advantageous to organisational researchers wishing to further their understanding of online marketing processes utilising

SNSs. This is because the thesis not only explains the activities undertaken by the marketers when creating and maintaining the online organisational presence, but it also enhances the different ways that the individuals make sense of them and adapt the way they construct their individual and organisational identities, as a result.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined why the contemporary marketing function is a relevant setting for an empirical investigation of the online Twitter environment. As outlined, marketing is a front-line service, engaging directly with the external environment, including customers. In addition the recent changes to marketing practices including technological innovation and the significant growth in digital online marketing through SNSs, including Twitter makes this an ideal time to investigate these practices. Arguably, they have been in place long enough to become established, in relation to their broader theoretical and empirical significance.

The B2B context with its challenges relating to the complexity of products and demanding customer dynamics is the ideal forum for further exploration, because it provides a challenging dynamic environment to explore the practices of marketing professionals. Thus, an investigation from the B2B marketers' perspective offers an understanding of the processes involved in producing the tweets, based on rich analysis of their lived experience, designed to illuminate their self-understanding.

The B2B marketers and their affiliated colleagues also have a pivotal role as the DOS, constructing and telling the organisation's/brand narrative to external audiences, including positive messages about new products, achievements and good news stories, as agreed with senior managers. In particular the representational work that employees, such as the DOS are doing online when bringing the organisation into being, is also considered within this chapter through discussions on marketing work, brand narrative and value co-creation. As such they have an important role in communicating the organisation's/brand identity positively and convincingly online, to secure ongoing engagement with their intended audience. As one of the first points of contact between the organisation and the outside world, their influence is significant. Indeed, given the importance of these relationships, which are increasingly one to one, facilitated through dialogical marketing media such as tweets, an understanding of the processes these individuals undertake is timely, with the potential to be especially insightful. This is because through the DOS there is an opportunity to understand how the organisation and aspects of their individual identities are constructed through the identity work that contemporary marketing professionals engage in, that may also apply to other forms of online identity creation, such as YouTube video creation. In this sense marketing can be seen as a form of identity work for the DOS. To appreciate the dynamics of identity and identity work within marketing, these concepts will be defined and discussed in the next chapter. Chapter Three will therefore focus on an exploration and discussion of identity, identity work, online marketing work and online marketing as a form of identity work.

Chapter Three: Identity, Identity Work and Sensemaking

Introduction

In this chapter I define and discuss the concepts of identity and identity work as relevant and applied to the thesis. Initially, I explain how the thesis is positioned within a sociological understanding of self and identity. In particular I draw from symbolic interactionism, which suggests that individuals act towards objects and others, based on the personal meanings and interpretations that they ascribe to them (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). Specifically I draw from the work of Mead (1934) to explain how the DOS constructs their identity in a way that is processual and situational. Such constructions may be described as processual because the DOS is continually developing and redeveloping their activities, associations and identities according to their actual or intended interactions with their envisaged online audience. In addition their identity formation is situational, as it is influenced by their interaction with and interpretation of their organisational and/or brand identity. This is because their role focuses upon bringing the online organisation into being, thus giving it a subjective meaning, designed to appeal to their intended audience. Therefore I also focus on organisational identity and identification literature (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Ravasi and Schultz, 2006) in order to provide an overview of the extant debates within existing literature and to reiterate the influences on the lived experience of the DOS. Then, I review organisation studies and management literature to understand identity work, as it is relevant to online marketing work. Drawing on the marketing literature and the role of the DOS, as discussed in Chapter Two, and also using Brown’s (2015) review of identity work, I suggest that online marketing work should be explored as a form of identity work within organisations.

Specifically online marketing work, as a form of identity work, is the process the DOS undertakes when preparing the tweets and therefore bringing the organisation into being online, as described within the introduction to this thesis. To analyse these online spaces would provide a better understanding of the processes, employees responsible for communicating online, such as the DOS, undertake. To date, online settings have provided only a very limited focus within identity work studies.

For the DOS responsible for writing the tweets, a friendly, approachable style is required to encourage engagement, while they must also communicate key organisational information and product features and benefits in an interesting way. As a result of this combination of the informal and formal communication, it is anticipated the DOS will need to draw upon the self and thus present different identities. The process of identity creation may be considered intrinsically and socially negotiated therefore. This may be explained in terms of the effect of identity influences and processes of identity and marketing work on the individual DOS, as considered below.

Identity and Self

The sociological concept of identity work, which is drawn upon further into this chapter, has at its centre an important difference concerning an individual's internal self-identities, how we understand who we are and their external social identities (Watson, 2008). According to Stets and Burke (2003), the idea that the self develops during social interactions, as part of complicated, methodical and differentiated society, links to the notion that the self must also be complicated, methodical and distinguished to substantiate the claim that "self reflects society" (Stryker, 1980: 59). As such it is claimed that there are as many selves as views one wishes to hold in society, and as such many different groups who react to the self. In this way, the self is arranged into differentiated parts, identities, which relate to social situations. Accordingly, each individual ascribes an identity, for every one of the differentiated situations or role relationships the person has in society. In this regard self as a work colleague is an identity, as is self as a mother, which is based on the various positions or roles one ascribes to oneself (Stets and Burke, 2003). To summarise, "identities are the meanings one has as a group member, as a role-holder or as a person" and as such the denotations are the substance of these identities (Stets and Burke, 2003: 132).

The basis by which we understand meanings and ourselves, is termed as the "self-concept" (Stets and Burke: 2003: 128). The self-concept relies on both an introspective reflection of self and an appraisal of others in response to an individual, which leads to the development of external social identities. In this sense the self-concept is "the set of meanings that we hold for ourselves when we look at ourselves" (Stets and Burke, 2003: 129). There are three orientations in relation to the self-concept for the individual. The first of these self-concepts relates to individual characteristics, and has its origins in psychoanalysis and psychological studies (Tesser, 2002; John et al, 2008; Mischel et al, 2008). In contrast, the second emphasis of the self-concept considers the role of self in relation to others (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934). The third alludes to self within a category or group of others (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1978).

The thesis specifically draws upon the second component of the 'self-concept', which considers the role of self in relation to others. This concept links to the notion of role relationships, where it is necessary to draw upon a sociological conceptualisation of identity. Specifically, the framework where identity is conceptualised as socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), but also distinctly reflexive (Giddens, 1991; Blumer, 1969; Mead,1934). To explain the relational construct of self, in the interplay between self and other, the 'symbolic interactionist' approach is particularly important (Mead, 1934). Symbolic interactionism as highlighted within the introduction to this chapter is based upon the interpretation and subsequent meanings ascribed to actions, by others, as more significant than the actions alone (Stryker, 1980). In this sense as Blumer (2005:91) surmises:

> …human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. This mediation is

> equivalent to inserting a process of interpretation between stimulus and response in the case of human behaviour.

As such, the self according to sociologists is not static, it is reflexively and continuously evaluated by the individual in terms of her or his life/work situation, such as the context where identity formation takes place and experiences in relation to others (Stryker, 1980; Giddens, 1991). The basis of self and identity being a continual process of development is established in the work of social psychologist George Herbert Mead (1934) in Mind, Self and Society. He describes the self as the individual's core understanding of who they are, the 'me', which is based on the prearranged attitudes of others, that the individual takes on (Mead, 1934). The other aspect of the self, Mead refers to is the 'I', which is the response of the individual to the attitudes of others. He suggests the concepts of 'me' and 'I' are developed in a child's early development. During play for example, he outlines how the individual child (the 'me') responds directly to the social interaction from others, their attitudes to him or her and each other directly affect their behaviour. However at the second stage the child interprets the singular attitudes from each of the individual children as well as generalising the responses of the group as a whole. This allows the children's actions and identity formations (the 'I') to be inter-related and responsive to each other. In order to illustrate this reciprocal nature of identity formation, it is suggested that one can only catch a ball if one is able to envisage the attitude of the thrower. The two (the 'me' and the 'I') are therefore closely related; there is a necessary succession of the throw and then the catch. This also suggests a certain shared interdependence between self and others in order to sustain existence (Stryker, 1980).

Given the characteristics of bringing the online organisation into being for the DOS, as outlined earlier, it can be questioned whether Twitter shares the same characteristics as the classic communication scenarios described here. It is argued that given the work that the DOS does, there is a relationship of anticipated reciprocation and mutual dependency with their intended or "imagined audience" (Marwick and Boyd, 2010:114). This is because the DOS brings the online organisation into being by trying to anticipate what will be interesting to the intended audience and therefore what is most likely to be responded to, with a re-tweet or reply. The DOS and the intended audience could be described as having a mutual dependency, because they can be said to rely on their idea of what the intended audience will find interesting when writing the content. Also they need the audience to respond to their communication, thus theoretically confirming the value of what it is they are communicating. In this context the DOS and their intended audience have the option to write/share a tweet to which the other has to interpret its meaning and then decide whether to respond and as relevant, the nature of the response. At times also however the DOS may not receive any interaction at all from the intended audience and it appear as very much a one-sided conversation, at least on screen. Without the physical cues from the intended audience and when there is no obvious interaction it is potentially more difficult to interpret and/or predict their attitudes and thus what to write next or how to respond. There are though linguistic and visual clues, such as images and videos or organisational and/or brand identity symbols, such as the logo within the tweets, which are designed to help the individual audience members recognise the nature of the message, as belonging to the DOS and their organisation, in order to build relational identity constructs (Stryker, 1980; Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Criticisms of the social interactionist approach have focussed on its overtly rational approach, as well as a tendency to omit political and cultural implications on the development of self (Stryker, 1980). This critique is important to acknowledge here, as the social interactions between the DOS and their intended Twitter audience are likely to be less clear, sequential and logical, as there will not be the same visual clues as experienced in face-to-face communication, arguably. Communication is also likely to be briefer and more sporadic within the tweets. In addition, the DOS will potentially be influenced by political and cultural implications from within the organisation, which suggests their work is partially embedded in power relations and therefore that the tone and style of their responses will be affected.

The online organisational presence may therefore also be described as a form of society or community, where those interested in a product or service come together, including business customers and members of the organisation the DOS belongs to. In this instance the imagined audience, as a collective social group may be said to act like a form of “generalised other” (Mead, 1934: 154). Accordingly it may be suggested the DOS aligns their activity to that of others by ascertaining what they are engaged in now or will be in the future, by understanding why they are doing what they are doing (Blumer, 2005), as in responding or not responding to the tweets in the way that they are. Such an understanding, as Blumer (2005: 94) explains from Mead's perspective is achieved:

> …by the individual taking the role of others—either the role of a specific person or the role of a group (Mead's "generalized other"). In taking such roles the individual seeks to ascertain the intention or direction of the acts of others. He forms and aligns his own action on the basis of such interpretation of the acts of others.

Accordingly the individual, as is suggested above is described as trying to imagine the collective approach of a particular group, so as to shape their identity. As is suggested here this imagining or taking on of the role of others may encourage the DOS to take account of and internalise their expectations and attitudes of the group, the intended audience as a whole, when bringing the online organisation into being. It is therefore partly the audience's imagined presence, views and expectations, but also the organisational identity and/or branding aims and objectives that are utilised by the DOS, in terms of shaping their content and tone, when bringing the online organisation into being.

Thus, it can also be suggested that the organisation is another form of 'society' or 'community' and its employees, who may also be part of the intended audience, another type of 'generalised other'. This is because the DOS brings the online organisation into being with help and assistance from colleagues, utilising organisational and/or brand identity messages, in the knowledge that organisational members can observe and monitor their activity at any time, as it occurs in a publicly accessible space. As such the presence of the ‘organisation’ as a generalised other can also be said to influence the situated and processual identity processes of individuals, such as the DOS, as is outlined within the next section which initially focuses on identity creation, including a review of identity and persona considerations in organisation studies and management literature. Further into the chapter the influence of organisational identity on the identity construction processes of individuals, such as the DOS will also be discussed.

Identity construction of individuals within organisations

Studies that focus on identity construction within organisations frequently examine “identity processes” (Brown, 2015: 24). These include a diverse range of approaches and tactics utilised by employees to create and renegotiate professional (Skorikov and Vandracek, 2011), social (Ellemers et al, 2003) and organisationally situated identities (Miscenko and Day, 2015). Nevertheless across these studies there are also many similarities, as Brown (2015:24) surmises:

> Identity scholars’…deal often with related theoretical and applied issues, notably the extent to which identities are chosen or ascribed, stable or dynamic, coherent or fragmented and motivated by desires for positive meaning and authenticity.

The description of identities within organisations above suggests they are selected or assigned, fixed or evolving, constant or disjointed. In this sense the process of identity construction is depicted as either primarily static or continually evolving. The latter view is adopted here, in that the nature of identity formation is suggested as being influenced by an individual's actual and intended interactions, such as those with individual colleagues, customers and groups concurrently (Johansen, 2012), such as the generalised other, as described above, as well as the specific organisational context. Given also that identity construction for the individual can be considered situational, and thus influenced by the context where formation takes place, it is often aligned with the "metaphor of liquid modernity" (Coupland and Brown, 2012: 1), the idea that contemporary organisations and societies are fluid, unpredictable and flexible. As such individual identity constructions within these changeable contexts are also considered "complex, iterative, often unstable and always in process" (Coupland and Brown, 2012: 2). As such within organisations, identity is constantly susceptible to negotiation and renegotiation, due to complex hierarchical systems, which include relationships with insiders, work groups and also outsiders such as customers (Tracy and Tretheway, 2005; Collinson,1992). Thus, it is reiterated within this section that identity construction is both situated and processual for the DOS, as they need to confidently renegotiate their identity to communicate and build relationships with a range of internal and external colleagues and customers (Johnansen, 2012; Coupland and Brown, 2012; Watson, 2008). The nature of their identity is always evolving, as they have to adapt and change their identities in order to respond to perceived and actual interactional relationships, as they bring the online organisation into being (Sillince and Brown, 2009; Coupland and Brown, 2004). This brings into question whether it is actually their identities that are changing or whether it is simply a persona, a temporary character for example that they take on in order to communicate a particular message in a certain way, as is discussed within the next section.

Identity versus persona

Several studies, (van Dijck, 2013; Sillince and Brown, 2009; Watson, 2008: Tracy and Trethewey, 2005) suggest it is not the identities of the organisational employees such as the DOS that change within organisational exchanges but rather individuals adopt different personas, which include specific roles or characters they consciously present to colleagues and customers. According to Watson, (2008: 122) employees, specifically managers, utilise “corporate personas” to help navigate who they are at work, as opposed to outside. It is suggested these personas are necessary as individuals cannot simply act as they wish or “be themselves” (Watson, 2008: 122) at work. As he explains in relation to managers:

> They have to act as the voice or face of the corporation. They must be seen as knowledgeable, authoritative and, above all in control. Yet, at the same time, they must present themselves to others as credible human individuals.

As is explained here, due to the manager’s role as primarily customer facing, it is important they are perceived as both professional and approachable in order to build the appropriate relationships with their intended audience. It is considered therefore that work identities are just one aspect of ‘identity’ that each person has to work on continuously (Watson, 2008). According to van Dijck (2013) users are aware of the need for online self-presentation and the suitability of SNSs as the means for professional self-promotion. In this study which focuses on the use of Linked In and Facebook it is suggested the structure of the sites themselves with profile images and brief personal details encourages complex persona displays. Drawing upon Goffman's (1959) theory of impression management, van Dijck (2013) suggests a performance of the self differentiates between symbols given consciously and unconsciously. As an example symbols relating to an individual's gender or professional status may be disclosed willingly during online conversations or they can be calculated and intentionally stressed or withheld. As van Dijck (2013: 201 emphasis added) outlines, Goffman emphasises how intended presentational tactics is a "very *basic persona sculpting strategy*, even if naïve or unaware are always also a part of *self-expression*." In this sense it is suggested here that individuals may not be consciously aware, all of the time but they are always choosing how to present themselves, as a means of expressing different parts of their identity. This is important, as the DOS may not always be aware that they are presenting a persona simply to appeal more to their intended audience.

Other scholars such as Tracy and Tretheway, (2005) suggest rather than personas, that individual employees adopt different subject positions during communications. Subject positions are constructed during particular discourses, and it is thus argued that individual employees need to understand and communicate power-based messages emanating from senior managers and potentially repressive discourses originating from organisational environments. Accordingly, it is their responsibility to give these potentially difficult discourses meaning and to make them interesting within the tweets. In this sense the identity of employees and their self-esteem needs are at least partly decided by their affiliation with the organisation they work for (Lievens et al, 2007). This is why the next section outlines the importance and relevance of the literature on organisational identity and identification to the identity construction processes of the individual DOS within organisational contexts. It is useful due to the fact the DOS is responsible for bringing the online organisation into being, essentially recreating the organisational/brand identity online and thus their interpretation and relation of meaning to the intended audience is an important aspect of their role.

Organisational identity

It was 1985 when Albert and Whetten were framing the work environment in terms of a means to answer the central questions of “who we are?” and “what we are?” (Albert and Whetten, 1985: 263). At this stage in the metamorphosis of the term organisational identity, Albert and Whetten suggested it should satisfy three criteria: i) it needed to draw attention to the characteristics that are central to the organisation -“the criteria of claimed central character”; ii) these characteristics should differentiate the organisation from its competitors- “the criterion of claimed distinctiveness” and iii) it should exhibit qualities that promise a degree of continuity - “the criteria of claimed temporal continuity”

(Albert and Whetten, 2004:90). These three criteria are more commonly referred to today as "central, distinctive and enduring" (Lievens et al, 2007:46).

The employee's perception of the central delineating characteristics of the organisation has also been the focus in existing literature (Alvesson and Empson 2008, Goia et al, 2000, Gioia and Thomas, 1996). This is important as how the individual interprets the organisational identity can impact upon how they try to communicate it to external audiences, which is why it is relevant to the processes of identity formation (individual and organisational) through Twitter. Another aspect of organisational identity is the concept of 'construed external image' (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991: 547), i.e. how organisational members believe others see the organisation, which also influences the way individuals identify with their organisation (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquil, 1994). This is also useful as it suggests there are two principle organisational images for the DOS to convey. The first is based on what the employee interprets as "central, distinctive and enduring" (Lievens et al, 2007: 46), as discussed above. In comparison, the second is focussed on the individual's beliefs about what the intended external audiences believe about the organisation (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991). Both of these perceptions are useful when interpreting the conceptual identity negotiations of individual employees such as the DOS who are responsible for presenting a consistent image of the organisation online. The way in which conversations and texts establish organisations is not a new phenomenon. Studies have been undertaken for more than 30 years (Soar, 2000; Cook, 1992;

Williamson, 1978) which have examined and critiqued the processes of describing organisations as positively as possible, within predominantly printed marketing materials, such as advertisements, to create a specific impression or image upon the desired audience (Albu and Etter, 2016; Gioia and Thomas, 1996). However an analysis of the process of identity construction for the individual DOS, within online environments has not been explored, within current organisation studies and management literature.

Rather, traditionally two approaches have been taken within existing organisational identity studies: social constructivist and social actor perspective. The social constructivist stance includes the process of constructing organisational identity based on shared views and collective awareness of organisational features and specifically what makes it "central distinctive and enduring" (Lievens et al, 2007: 46). With regards to the social actor perspective, it is suggested definitions of organisational identity provided by senior managers directly affect employee's perceptions of the central features of the organisation (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006). The same meaning attributed by senior managers will not necessarily be understood and communicated by employees (Whetten, 2006; Whetten and Mackey, 2002; Ashforth and Mael, 1996). Instead employees such as the DOS, have responsibility for interpretation and presentation of organisational identity. This is because as Chatman et al (1986:211) concurs:

> When we look at individual behaviour in organisations, we are actually seeing two entities: the individual as himself/herself and the individual as representative of his/her collectivity…Thus, the individual not only acts on

> behalf of the organisation in the usual agency sense, but he/she also acts, more subtly "as the organisation" when he embodies the values, beliefs and goals of the collectivity.

For the DOS, perception of self and organisation are inextricably linked, as so much of the role is communicating to others about the 'positive' aspects of the organisation. Arguably the online Twitter environment provides another "identity workspace" (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010:44) for the DOS to present their organisation. In this sense the role of the DOS, as explained in Chapter Two is to construct and sustain an online organisational presence, where they aim to shape the perception of the Twitter audience. Also it is a space where power is more ambiguous between the customer and the DOS. This is because it is a public space. So the audience could say something negative about the organisation and the DOS will need to respond "as the organisation" (Chatman et al 1986:211) and try to resolve any issues so as to limit damage to the organisational identity and reputation. The DOS also strives to encourage participation by communicating the aims of the organisation. However, as explained within the Chapter One, the intended audiences include business professionals primarily. Therefore, they are arguably more aware of the competitive environment and also potentially what identity claims the organisation has made previously, which will influence their willingness to engage. Given the responsive format of Twitter (see also Chapter Two) as previously highlighted, it is also unlikely perhaps that the tweets will be subjected to such rigorous checks as a printed corporate brochure, for example. Despite a possible relaxation of formal approval processes, the work undertaken by marketers communicating about the organisational identity, via Twitter and other printed mediums, is still focussed upon protecting the corporate reputation by building a consistently positive image of the company i.e. through marketing.

As highlighted within this section, the extant debates and contributions within organisation studies and management literature re: identity, are limited in terms of furthering our understanding of identity constructions during online marketing processes. In particular there is limited existing literature that examines the self-understanding of the individual marketing practitioners, such as the DOS, in relation to their colleagues and their intended Twitter audience, during their everyday online marketing practices. As such I argue 'identity work' provides a useful and additional lens to examine this, as is discussed within the next section.

Identity work

The process of identity formation undertaken by employees, such as the DOS when they are communicating on behalf of the organisation, can be defined as identity work (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). As Pratt (2012) explains the term identity work is needed, so as to be able to consider the processes involved in actively doing or taking part in identity construction. It is different from the previously discussed ways of looking at identity as it is about the process of identity formation. Earlier discussions have examined the influences on identity creation, such as the self, social and organisational, but not how these elements are combined, strengthened or revised to create a sense of consistency, complexity, contradiction and also uniqueness within the individual, working in an organisational context (Kriener et al, 2006) Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). In explaining the always-evolving nature of identity formation, Alvesson et al (2008: 15) describes identity work as: "the ongoing mental activity that an individual undertakes in constructing an understanding of self that is coherent, distinct and positively valued." This explanation suggests that the process of identity construction is continuous and intrinsically defined. However, Watson (2008: 129, emphasis added) argues that:

> Identity work involves the *mutually constitutive processes* whereby people strive to shape a relatively *coherent and distinctive notion of personal self*-identity and *struggle* to come to terms with and, *within limits* to influence the *various social identities*, which pertain to them in the various milieu in which they live their lives.

The process of identity work is therefore intrinsic, externally influenced and defined through speech (conversations) and activities (Watson, 2008). Indeed attempts to find optimum balance between personal individual and social identities is a recurrent theme within the literature. Many of these studies (for example: Kriener et al, 2006; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003) also focus on personal experiences of the process of identity work, and the agency that actors exhibit (Brown, 2015), as is considered within the next section and then in relation to marketing and online marketing work, further into this chapter.

Identity work has been studied in organisations because researchers are interested in the processes and changing aspects of identity constructions (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008). According to Brown (2015) in his review of the literature, existing identity work studies have various objectives which include: an understanding of the degree to which identities are assigned to or selected by organisational employees, how unchanging, able to adapt to different circumstances/environments they are, as well as evaluating if they are united, logical, disjointed or inconsistent. However, an understanding of the processes organisational members undertake when communicating on behalf of an organisation online, is still an underdeveloped area of research. This is because the emphasis within a significant selection of identity work studies has been on multifaceted and precarious organisational/situational environments, such as among homeless street people (Snow and Anderson, 1987), within merged organisations and those undergoing change (Järventie-Theslef and Tienari, 2016; Wieland, 2010; Watson, 2008), organisations actively regulating identity (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Alvesson and Wilmott, 2002;) and as the means of managing threats to personal identities (Brown and Coupland, 2015). An assumption is made therefore that identity processes are more interesting when the individuals are under duress, as identity mobilises in crisis, under pressure. This has arguably resulted in a lack of focus on the day-to-day lived experiences and identity work management of professionals in dynamic roles such as the DOS, which is largely absent within existing studies. A notable exception to this is a study focussing on frontline service processes and the influence of the brand on employee identity work and meaning-making in everyday tasks (Brannan et al, 2015), as is discussed in more detail below. Brown (2015) argues that, many attempts have been made to highlight common processes involved in identity work. Despite this, there is still a lack of agreement on exactly what these processes are within existing studies. Therefore a greater understanding of the activities and processes involved in identity work for individual employees, not in pressured environments, is needed.

Within the online environment the DOS may find themselves trying hard to meet the requirements of the organisation, and the expectations of the intended Twitter audience. Therefore the situational influences in this thesis are related to the online environment but also the presence of the Twitter audience. In this sense internal and external members of the organisation are reading the tweets and the work of the DOS is open to public scrutiny on a regular basis.[1] For the DOS communicating on behalf of the organisation consistently positively, as is required by their role within the marketing function, may also invoke tensions between self and situational factors, as occurs within the Kreiner et al (2006) study. The tension in this thesis may be between what the DOS knows they need to write to fulfil their role, which may

[1] It is acknowledged here that critical theorists argue that the capitalist organisational form is exploitative for everyone involved except for the owners (and managers as their agents). Therefore I am aware there are political, power-related dimensions to the DOS role which are alluded to within this thesis. The fact that power relations exist in every organisation is acknowledged but this is not the basis of this thesis. This focus would make for a very different thesis, needing to be far more focussed on individual relationships, rather than processes and lived experiences, which is the emphasis here (Costas and Kärreman, 2013); Fleming and Spicer, 2003; Gabriel, 1999).

at times contrast, less positively, with what they observe from their experiences within the organisation (Ashforth and Mael,1996). Due to the medium of Twitter as being part of, though separate from the organisation, it is argued here that a compromise may be possible where enactment of the Organisation's identity may not necessitate complete dissolution of the self. At least in part therefore, identity construction processes are seen as reciprocal between the organisation and its employees, making it more likely, arguably, to be a continually ongoing process, as organisational identities change and develop over time (Alvesson and Empson, 2008). This is important as how the organisational identity is understood and expressed by the DOS can be said to have a direct impact on how the organisation is seen and understood through the tweets. This resonates with theories of identification within organisations (Pratt, 1998; Edwards, 2005; Ashforth et al, 2008) and may at times influence the ease or difficulty of undertaking processes of identity work for the DOSs. For example whether they identify closely or not with the values of their organisation will arguably influence how closely they align their identity with it.

Another area of the identity work literature that is relevant to this thesis focuses on so-called 'greedy' occupations (Ashcraft 2007; Kreiner et al, 2006) 'Greedy' in this context relates to the demands on the individual to comply with the requirements, wants or traits of a shared group identity. Such groups or collectives may include: "organisations, clubs, churches and vocations" (Kreiner et al, 2006: 1031). To investigate the possibility of maintaining balance each of the participants suggests they utilise various tactics to segment, or merge their individual and social identities. Clear techniques are highlighted for merging identities, including the conscious amalgamation of role and personal identity (self). Ultimately if equilibrium cannot be achieved then segmentation is recommended, so that the individual maintains a clear differentiation between personal and social identities and avoids identity threat (see also Brown and Coupland, 2015; Amiot et al, 2012; Clark et al 2010; Corley and Gioia, 2004; Goia and Thomas, 1996). In comparison, a study that examines call service representatives (CSRs) at a multinational corporation referred to as “Cygnus”, with expertise in consultancy services and IT, draws upon the powerful influence of the brand in order to develop and sustain an “idealised identity” (Brannan et al, 2015: 38). A romanticised view of their possible future identities as ‘consultants’ with a profession and evident skill-set, rather than CSRs, sustains the identity expectations of primarily university graduates. As such, they utilise the promise of a possible future promotion as a tactic to maintain their professional individual identity, despite the routine and dull nature of existing work. It was my intention to build upon this study in order to understand what influences the identity work of the DOSs when bringing the organisation into being online each day. In order to do this I needed to understand the challenges and negotiations evident within their every day identity creation processes online.

The focus here is the identity work of the DOSs as they create, negotiate and navigate between the offline organisation and its online organisational presence, so as to communicate with an intended Twitter audience. Therefore there is also potentially an interesting relationship between online self-presentation and offline identity. This may also involve identity tensions for the DOSs to navigate through identity work. For example they may already have a personal online presence within one or more SNSs. To date research examining online self-presentation strategies, in the context of offline identities has been limited. Available studies include an analysis of dating site profiles (see Ellison et al, 2006) and children's behaviour (Jayne et al, 2006). More recently the presentation of identity within SNSs is noted as being constrained by three elements, the applications themselves, those people who the participant believes they are connecting with, such as the intended audience, described within Chapter Two and the environment, such as the Twitter format, where the online communication is constructed (Boyd, 2010; Boyd et al 2010).

Thus, organisational identity work is very much a balancing act, between what is required to maintain professionalism, whilst also remaining personable and friendly to colleagues/external audiences. In the same regard the DOS's role is often depicted as the primary contact online between the intended Twitter audience and the organisation. Due to their focus on maintaining organisational image as a marketer (Muhr and Rehn, 2014; Gonzalez and Chakraborty, 2012) this will also have a significant influence on their identity construction. However they also need to make their communication through the tweets to the informed B2B audience (see also Chapter Two) not just professional and factual, but also interesting to be appealing.

Given the online context, where communication is less formal and regulated, there may also be the potential for identity play (Brown, 2015; Pratt, 2012; Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2010). Defined “as the crafting and provisional trial of immature (i.e. as yet unelaborated) possible selves” (Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2010: 13) identity play offers the possibility of identity experimentation and exploration, outside of role-specific identity presentations (Goffman, 1959). This may be possible as identity play is differentiated from identity work in terms of its purpose place and process (Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2010). With its inventive creative inference, play in this sense “unfolds at the threshold between fantasy and reality” (Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2010: 15). In this way, the space where identity work takes place for the DOS, i.e. online (Twitter) and outside the physical world of the organisation, may offer a more experimental area where they can try out possible future identities, which are more enjoyable and intuitive potentially (Pratt, 2012). There are few studies currently that consider the process of identity work or play, when it involves online identity spaces. It is suggested that this is an element of identity work research that is thus currently under-developed. To broaden our understanding of the potential explorations of identity within the online environment, the next section explains the dynamics of online marketing work. This exploration is required, as the existing emphasis within identity work studies is confirmed here as during offline practices, when employees are under duress. As a result, there is a lack of focus upon online identity construction processes, as part of everyday tasks, which as considered above, may provide the scope for greater experimentation or identity play (Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2010).

Online marketing work

Online marketing work, the work undertaken by marketing professionals, when communicating on behalf of the organisation online, is an emerging field of academic research. The emphasis, as with its predecessor marketing work, see also Chapter Two, is on writing, but the text is briefer and arguably less formal, such as website content, e-mail bulletins/newsletters, adverts, blogs and social media posts (Griffiths and McLean 2015). Traditional hard copy materials such as press releases and reports are also promoted through online channels. The textbook descriptions of the work online marketers do however, doesn't really take account of the 'human' interactional element. It is argued within several studies that online marketers need to communicate more openly in order to engage in conversational style interaction with customers within SNSs (Griffiths and McLean, 2015; Cova et al, 2015; Zwick and Cayla, 2011).

From interviewing social media managers, Griffiths and McLean (2015) suggest reduced formality in online marketing work is required. They argue that organisational 'scripts' should be discarded in favour of going "off script" and "breaking organisational taboos" (Griffiths and McLean 2015: 149) such as using humour and sarcasm in tweets so as to seem more sociable and approachable as an organisation. They argue this helps to break down the usual barriers and previously established roles between organisations and their online audience also. To facilitate this, they argue that the social media managers they spoke to, require more autonomy arguably to create appealing organisational identities through SNSs (Griffiths and McLean, 2015). Such informality and autonomy is rarely described in official texts relating to online marketing work. In their study Meijer and Torenvlied (2014) investigated whether Twitter use can reduce the bureaucracy and therefore increase accessibility to the Dutch police. To investigate this they interviewed the police officers that were responsible for writing the tweets.

Meijer and Torenvlied (2014) looked at three propositions relating to: the decentralisation of social media, the personalisation of the individual authors within the tweets and ensuring external social media content is better disseminated internally to facilitate more effective material sharing. As explained earlier in this chapter and in the introduction, of most interest to this thesis is the process of bringing the organisation into being online through the tweets, which is encompassed in the second proposition and which, arguably relates to the personalisation of tweet content. A differentiation was made between "formal, informal and hybrid twitter accounts," Meijer and Torenvlied (2014: 11). Hybrid communication includes a blend of formality and informality within the tweets. An example provided of a hybrid identity is of a female officer who uses an informal Twitter account name, but her profile includes some formality. Also the tweets are occasionally personally orientated, such as when she includes information about her family. This is an interesting concept as it links to the possible hybrid nature of the DOS identity when they potentially link personal and organisational identities within their own identity constructs in Twitter. In this sense, SNSs provide a unique public space where the DOS and online audience are able to communicate interactively. This has challenges and advantages for the practice of online marketing work, as is considered in a recent ethnographic study of the Italian car manufacturer, Alfa Romeo, in relation to their collaborative online marketing programme (Cova et al, 2015).

The exploration of online marketing work by Cova et al (2015) focuses on a collaboration between marketers and online enthusiasts for the Alfa Romeo brand. Although the thesis examines online marketing work from the perspective of the marketers only, this study contributes to an understanding of how they integrate the anticipated response of the intended audience into their online marketing work. However it is clear that the marketers and the customers have very different perceptions of their roles and the nature of the online marketing work each is to undertake within this forum, as is explained by Cova et al (2015: 693) below:

> The marketing team discovered that it could not simply request and obtain ideas without first giving. You must be ready to give and not just take said one of the marketing managers.

Pressures and power struggles between the marketers and their customers influence the practice of online marketing work within this study. This is partly because the marketers have an initial expectation that customers are merely there to facilitate the communication of organisational messages. The DOS may also develop relationships with existing B2B customers during business transactions over time, which is also impacted upon by different pressures and power relations. These relationships may have a slightly different dynamic within the Twitter environment. The public nature of the tweets for example arguably gives the Twitter audience a more equal and ambiguous position, where they can complain within the public domain and therefore expect to be responded to quickly. The fact that the marketers in the Cova et al (2015) study also potentially try to repress expressive engagement, through emotional labour suggests the process of engagement and communication online negates more than just the functional practice of online marketing work. It suggests the possibility that the process of online marketing work is a form of identity work. To consider this as a possible area for investigation, an analysis of the gaps in the current identity work literature are considered in more detail within the next section.

Online marketing work as a form of identity work

Within his recent identity work review, Brown (2015) makes a number of suggestions where further research may be advantageous. For example, he identifies, the importance of exploring additional organisational contexts, specifically different “identity workspaces” (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010:44) and “meaning arenas” (Westenholz, 2006:1015). The thesis addresses the requirement for an exploration of different and dynamic ‘identity locations’. Specifically it is argued the online marketing context is an ideal empirical setting to examine individuals’ identity issues and processes of identity work. Therefore the question of whether individuals who work across similar sectors, which within this thesis is the B2B online marketing environment, share collective and/or individual experiences, will be addressed.

Additionally, Brown (2015) identifies a gap in our understanding of the many processes through which identity work is achieved in organisations. It is suggested this may include an exploration as to how varying roles and personalities work on their identities, as well as their individual requirements for self-coherence. This is because online marketing work comprises a series of processes within a previously under-explored online context. As has been discussed within the online marketing work section, the processes undertaken by the DOS also includes some offline activities. An example of offline marketing work, which contributes to the writing of the tweets, includes talking to colleagues and senior managers about possible tweet content (Griffiths and McLean, 2015; Meijer and Torevlied, 2014). The DOS utilises this information to write the tweets and essentially reconstitute the organisational identity online. However, as is discussed within the online marketing work section the process of undertaking the online marketing work, potentially includes a blend of formality and informality within the tweets. This blend of formal, (organisational) and informal (individual) is described by Meijer and Torenvlied (2014:11) as “hybrid communication.” The process of developing ‘hybrid communication’, where the DOS expresses aspects of self and organisation can be described as a form of identity work online. This process of interactions via Twitter, is described by Albu and Etter (2016: 5) as the means by which the “organisational actor” concurrently coproduces aspects of themselves and the organisation. However in the Albu and Etter (2016) study, they focus on the integration of hashtags into tweets, arguing that their use often detracts from the identity the organisation intended to communicate. This is because hashtag symbols (#) are used within tweets to identify messages relating to a specific topic and therefore they are a particular form of online marketing work that is designed to 'group' content for the benefit of the audience, as it makes them easier to search for and find. In this sense the 'grouping' detracts from the individualist nature of the organisational identity and categorises the messages under subject headings such as # keyword, for example #Gameofthrones – which relates to a popular television series. This thesis will consider the inclusion of hashtags within the context of online marketing work more generally, although they will not be a specific focus.

Therefore it is suggested that in relation to the DOS coproducing content with the organisation, further investigations are required to better understand how they make sense of these experiences. Arguably the online marketing work process will provide a new lens to explore the dynamics of the ongoing mental activity individual employees undertake, in "constructing an understanding of self that is coherent, distinct and positively valued" *(*Alvesson and Empson, 2008: 15*).* As so far it is not clear from existing literature how the two identities (organisational and individual) can be conjoined into an organisational online presence, what the processes might include, whether this is desirable for the DOS and how this may effect the style, tone and content of the tweet. Therefore, it is anticipated that these investigations will broaden understanding of digital identity processes and awareness of the individual DOS and their identity construction, work and organisational position, in order to provide fresh insights theoretically and conceptually. This is important as less is written currently about the multi-faceted nature of online marketing work and how it impacts upon the individuals. Such insights will make a valuable contribution arguably into these lesser-understood organisational roles. A better understanding of this should also inform future social media research directions. In addition, studies that focus on the role of narrative and storytelling as a form of identity work are also pertinent here. This is because the storytelling approach as defined by Boje, (2008) Brown (2008) and Czarniawska, (2004) broadens an understanding of identity within organisations and also potentially identity work, as situated, broad, varied, disparate and most importantly for the thesis, processual (Johansen, 2012), as was alluded to earlier in this chapter.

Narrative and storytelling as the means to understand identity

Within organisations stories are told about specific events, while, narratives are often utilised as the means to understand these experiences, for the benefit of the individual/group, and as the means to recount understandings to others (Poulter, 2005). Many scholars use the terms narrative and story interchangeably within their studies as they suggest they can be combined to provide clarity in regards to organisational happenings, (Brown and Rhodes, 2005; Boje, 2011). This suggests that the combination of story and narrative from within organisations may provide the means to explain experiences and provide understandings for employees, in times of duress for example, such as organisational change (Brown, Humphreys and Gurney, 2005: Humphreys and Brown, 2002), but also in everyday tasks (Rouleau, 2005; Patriotta, 2003). Accordingly the experience of telling stories, should provide clarity as to what individuals are doing and why.

Studies that utilise narrative and storytelling approaches as a means for organisational members to express aspects of their lived experiences are varied (Brown, 2006; Boland and Tenkasi, 1995; Boje, 1991). For example the Brown (2006) paper focuses on a theoretical analysis of collective identity and specifically how organisational members, make sense of and narrate discursive stories that reiterates individual's differences and interpretations. Boland and Tenkasi (1995: 350, emphasis added) examine processes of "perspective *making* and perspective *taking*" in knowledge intensive firms so as to recommend two different examples of communication. The Boje (1991) study focused on an ethnographic analysis where employees are observed reciting stories to make sense of current events. Reciting stories provided a collective experience that helped them to replace single experiences with organisational reminiscences. For example, within their review of the 'narrative turn' in organisation studies literature, Fenton and Langley (2008) utilise the work of Czarniawska (1995,1998, 2004) to establish three main areas, where narrative examination is utilised as the means of studying organisations. These include research written in the form of a story, studies that collect stories from individuals and those that adopt an interpretive approach that consider organisational experiences as a continuous "process of storytelling that constructs meaning within organisations" (Fenton and Langley, 2008: 7). The thesis primarily focuses on the third approach; the work of the DOS is studied as a process of sensemaking through storytelling. This is because storytelling is one of the primary ways of providing clarity and structure in organisational settings, which emanate from individual's experiences (Islam, 2013; Brown et al, 2008; Boje, 2001).

Therefore, to understand how identity initially is linked to narrative, storytelling and sensemaking it is important to consider the definitions and ideas of Rhodes and Brown (2005), Read and Bartowski, (2000) and McAdams and McLean (2013) as they specifically illuminate work practices in organisational settings. The studies by Brown and Humphreys (2002; 2005) are insightful in terms of their analysis of "processes of organising" (Brown et al, 2008: 3). These processes are understood as activities or procedures that help the organisation to function, whilst maintaining the organisational identity through communications, such as SNSs. Therefore when these processes are described by social actors, including the DOS through narrative and storytelling, they should also provide useful perspectives on individual and organisational identity construction, as it relates to the online organisational space.

How identity is linked to narrative, storytelling and sensemaking

According to Rhodes and Brown (2005), identity as understood through narrative processes, provides an added explanatory transparency designed to increase opportunities for new directions and insights in identity scholarship. This is because the broad range of organisational routines, contexts and environments where individual and collective identities are established (Brown and Humphreys, 2002) offer "social actors…important symbolic resources for identity negotiation" (Read and Bartowski, 2000: 398). In addition, McAdams and McLean (2013) describe narrative identity as "a person's internalised and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose." The idea of narrative identity as an evolving process is useful here in several ways. Initially it suggests the incomplete ongoing and developing nature of narrative and identity, which is relevant within an SNS environment, as the 'list' of tweets is continuous and conversational in nature, as outlined in Chapter Two.

For example researchers (Brown et al, 2009; Czarniawska, 1997; Boyce, 1996) believe storytelling also has an influence in establishing and maintaining organisational identity. This is because, as Brown (2006: 731) outlines:

> From a narrative perspective, organisations' identities are discursive (linguistic) constructs constituted by the multiple identity-relevant narratives that their participants author about them.

This quote suggests that organisations have their identities established through the conversational narratives that their employees tell about them. Indeed, experiential studies claim that continuously telling stories serves to develop and sustain organisational identity (Rhodes and Brown, 2005; McWhinney and Battista, 1988). Definitions of organisational identity provided by senior managers, it may be suggested, directly affect employee's perceptions of the central features of the organisation (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006). This is because the senior managers strive to give sense to other employees through their interpretations (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). These clarifications are often given sense through organisational identity narratives, where central themes about who organisations are, their history and planned future endeavours are communicated to employees as stories (Ashforth and Mael, 1996). In turn, staff members are tasked with communicating these positive identity narratives to customers, to encourage long-term relationships of mutual benefit. It is argued the DOS brings the organisational presence into being online via the tweets, which are a form of narrative - and therefore they make sense of the work that they do through storytelling. In this sense their activity can be theorised as online “storytelling practices” (Rhodes and Brown, 2005:6). As such an understanding as to the day-to-day activities and processes undertaken by the DOS would be insightful.

Drawing upon these ideas of narrative identity as a process, which is ongoing, evolving, sometimes contradictory, collective or individual, but which can also be contested, the understanding of narrative identity within the thesis is shaped by the DOS and their ability to recount their identity stories and lived experiences. Given the DOS role as explained in Chapter Two, as the narrator of positive organisational identity stories, they are also constrained to an extent by “the limited repertoire of available and sanctioned stories” (Ezzy, 1998: 248). These positive organisational identity stories may at times constrain the DOS in their ability to understand and convey their own insights (Humpreys and Brown, 2002; Ricoeur, 1991). Despite these possible restrictions, existing organisational studies and management argues that identity (within organisations) only exists through narration (McInnes and Corlett, 2012; Horrocks and Callahan, 2006), and that identity is a form of performed narrative (Boje, 2008,1995,1991; MacIntyre, 1981; Goffman, 1959). More specifically Boje (1995) suggests the main purpose for organisations is to recount their shared stories, to exist through these stories, and to undertake ongoing negotiations, so as to ensure the stories of internal and external audiences are similarly positive. For the purpose of the discussion here the work that the DOS does is being studied as a process of sensemaking through storytelling. Such a theoretical approach considers that employees, such as the DOS conceptualise organisational identities as potentially including the identity narratives they develop to make sense of their history current role responsibilities, including conflict and tensions (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Firstly though the concept of sensemaking in relation to narrative identity is considered as it is argued within the thesis that sensemaking can be used as the means to understand identity constructions.

Sensemaking is a useful framework in which to understand narrative identities, as it is a “process through which people work to understand issues or events that are novel, ambiguous, confusing…” Maitlis and Christianson (2014:57). Accounts of sensemaking as a self-conscious process, has put identity formation at the forefront of existing literature (Weick, 1995; Weick et al, 2005). However, Boje (1991: 106) confirms that: “storytelling is the preferred sensemaking currency of human relationships among internal and external stakeholders.” The process of social sensemaking is regarded as a process between self and others “as meaning is negotiated, contested and mutually co-constructed” (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014:66). The narrative viewpoint adopted here examines organisations as socially constructed phenomenon (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). As was also alluded to in the earlier section on storytelling, this enables the DOS to effectively ‘tell’ the official story, in a way that can be understood by the intended Twitter audience.

The narrative-as-sensemaking literature has expanded the situational context and communicative possibilities of sensemaking practices quite considerably (e.g. Cornelissen, 2012; Quinn and Worline, 2008; Maitlis, 2005). As such, the rest of this section will now examine those studies that specifically link identity, narrative and sensemaking within organisational settings (for example Brown, Stacey and Nandhakumar, 2008; Humphreys and Brown, 2008; Brown, 2006; Brown, Humphreys and Gurney, 2005).

Often sensemaking research within the organisation studies field focuses on a narratological approach to understanding, which is required by employees due to changes and initiatives introduced by senior managers (Brown and Humphreys, 2003; Currie and Brown, 2003; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Brown and Humphreys, 2002). For example Currie and Brown (2003) examine individual and group sensemaking during change within a UK hospital. Specifically this study gives an explanation as to how employees make sense of happenings during their working day, and how they describe their identities at work through storytelling and narrative (Currie and Brown, 2003). Essentially the two sets of narratives from senior managers and staff, viewed within the context of an NHS hospital at a particular moment in time, highlights how a narratological approach can illuminate processes of organising within a specific context. This is helpful as it demonstrates how narratives provide the means to understand the lived experience of organisational environments, as Currie and Brown (2003: 579) explain:

> Predicated on the argument that people are by nature storytellers we have argued that narratives are one symbolic category through which people create or enact the reality of organisations. Currie and Brown (2003: 579)

As this quote suggests, employee's narratives within this study provide rare glimpses into their experiences. They provide meaning to these happenings and more details about how the individuals are feeling. Similarly the study entitled: 'Epic and Tragic Tales – Making sense of change' (Brown and Humphreys, 2003) also examines the different experiences of senior managers and two subordinate groups through narratives, in a UK college, following a merger. Here the senior managers authored narratives focussing on the positives of major change, while the subordinate groupings utilised the narratives to express these changes as tragic events. A key finding from this study is that sensemaking experiences develop following amends to interpretations, which are encrypted in narratives and distributed and maintained in conversations, which legitimise actuality for their members (Brown and Humphreys, 2003). In a similar way, two further studies examine the nature of collective identity narratives during periods of change within educational environments (Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Brown and Humphreys, 2002).

Of note are the different focuses on identity narratives within these two studies. For example the paper by Humphreys and Brown (2002) examines issues related to identity and identification, through personal and shared narratives. As before there is a clear distinction between the aspirational narratives of senior managers who envisage that their UK based institution of higher education (Westville Institute) will be granted University status, and the lived experiences of the faculty members through their storytelling. As Humphreys and Brown (2002) outline, by referring to the work of Czarniawska (1997: 49), in this sense identity may be effectively categorised as a:

> …continuous process of narration where both the narrator and the audience are involved in formulating, editing, applauding and refusing various elements of the ever-produced narrative. (Czarniawska, 1997: 49).

Within this study the senior managers strive to enforce the ‘truth’ of their shared aspirational narrative onto faculty members and thus there is an omnipresence of power relations. In turn the faculty enter into a process of editing and declining aspects of the central organisational identity narrative through sensemaking, which has a direct impact upon their willingness to identify with the organisation. This is useful as it reflects upon the multiple ways that individuals are able to relate and renegotiate their self-narratives in conjunction with organisational identity narratives. Within the thesis the DOS can be described as the audience to the positive organisational/brand identity stories provided by senior managers, which they are expected, due to hierarchical power relations, to narrate through the tweets. In addition the presence of the imagined online audience also has an influence on the process of sensemaking and storytelling for the DOS. Therefore as the DOS wants the intended Twitter audience to engage with the online organisational presence, they need to make the tweet content appealing and relevant – please also see the next section in this chapter, which goes into more detail RE: sensegiving through narrative as part of the sensemaking process, for the benefit of the imagined online audience (Marwick and Boyd, 2010). Within the thesis, both the online environment and the constraints of the Twitter format may impact upon the individual DOS and their identity narratives. Translating and condensing organisational narratives into 140 characters within the online Twitter context may certainly be considered a relatively recent challenge for the DOS due to the fairly new technology (Web 2.0) required to facilitate this type of work, as outlined in Chapter Two. As a result sensemaking may be used to understand online marketing as identity work, as is discussed within the next section.

Using sensemaking to understand online marketing as identity work

As outlined within this chapter, sensemaking provides the means for individuals to better comprehend matters that are original, unclear, conflicting or that cause confusion *(*Maitlis and Christianson (2014). As discussed in Chapter Two, online marketing work is suggested as a sequence of construction, adaptation, revision and reinvention within the social context (Alvesson et al, 2008; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Therefore sensemaking is a useful framework to help understand the processes of identity work undertaken by the DOS in order to bring the online organisation into being. To explain further, Giddens (1991:54) draws attention to the creation and maintenance of processes of identity through language as a continuous process, requiring the narrator to persevere, if they want their identity to be understood. He suggests:

> A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor – important though this is – in the reaction of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going.

Having the ability to keep a specific narrative going may be more difficult within an organisational setting arguably if it is not the personal narrative of the individual, but the official organisational narrative. Reconciling personal (self) and organisational narratives may be considered challenging for the DOS, which is why they need to engage in a continuous process of online marketing work as a form of identity work. In this sense there is support for the notion that identity in organisations is entrenched in narratives and shared in online conversations (Brown et al, 2005). However, as Ardley (2006) has noted previously, sensemaking through storytelling and narrative is rarely applied to the marketing context. In particular within his study 'Telling stories about strategies: A narratological approach to marketing planning', sensemaking through storytelling is utilised to examine marketing and identity work during processes of marketing planning. The Ardley (2006) paper argues that previous studies focussing on marketing planning processes focus on a logical sequence of events, and therefore fail to explain the lived experience of those undertaking the marketing role, where stories may be more adept at analysing sensemaking experiences. As Ardley (2006: 197) explains:

> The narratives used by the marketing managers in this study appear to strongly influence the way they construct meaning and act in organisational settings.

Here, it is suggested that the narratives themselves help the marketing managers to understand the meaning of their work, as well as their actions, within the organisational environment. This is helpful as the marketing managers in this study show that storytelling highlights not just a simple process to develop our social existence and find meaning, but also as the means to generate and instigate specific actions. How these findings may translate into a better understanding of the processes of online marketing work, as a form of identity work, would help to clarify whether storytelling may also instigate specific activities and actions for the DOS.

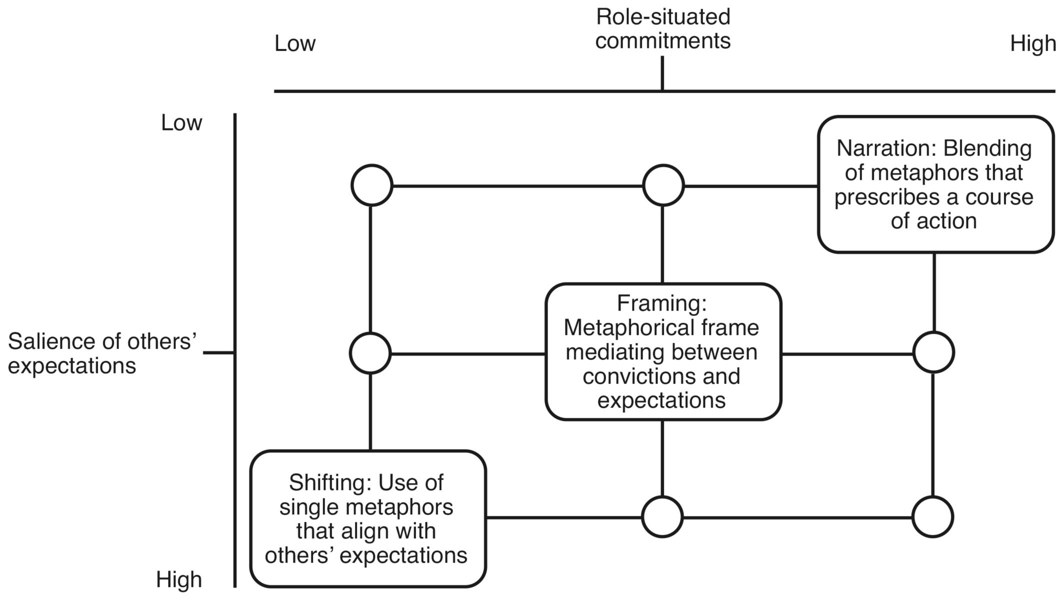
More recently sensemaking has also been linked to technology and to how new media, such as intranets, blogs and webcasts offer novel ways for managers to give sense to staff members and an external audience (Reynolds, 2015; Macnamara and Zerfass, 2012). As an example when Macnamara and Zerfass (2012) spoke to marketing communications' professionals within Europe and Australasia about the challenges of updating SNSs within organisations they cited the blurring of private (independence) and public (actions governed by the employee contract) spaces, and also the lack of strategy or guidelines (governance) as the main issues – see also Chapter Two. A lack of expertise as to how to use SNSs effectively is also a potential barrier. Therefore the open and conversational nature of SNSs, updated by individuals working in environments governed by rigid management processes, may involve more intense online marketing work and therefore also sensemaking potentially. This is because although the style of the SNS is informal the DOS will still need to maintain an element of control so as maintain the consistency of the formal organisational narrative during intended engagements. As Macnamara and Zerfass (2012: 304) state:

> …balancing the dual purposes of communication requires participation involving openness and community on one hand and effectiveness in representing organisational interests and achieving organisational objectives on the other.

Although it is argued this balancing of transparency and friendliness, as outlined within the quotation, on one side and the need to represent a consistent organisational identity on the other is the norm in marketing practice (see also Chapter Two). The interactive and potentially continuous nature of SNSs place further demands on the individual to engage effectively and consistently with the intended Twitter audience. As such sensemaking is used to understand processes of identity work, generated by the digitisation of a working environment (Boudreau et al, 2014). Within this longitudinal case study, the identity origination process, of a team of librarians is examined as they introduce a new online library resource within a university. Initially the librarians developed new identities by presenting temporary personas. These temporary or trial identities were created through sensemaking practices and enacted through processes of identity work to meet the requirements of their intended audience i.e. students. During the identity transitions they also needed to overcome various threats, including their previously perceived role as ‘just’ clerks and also opportunities, such as taking the lead and becoming the experts on the new digital system. Attending to these challenges provided the librarians with the chance to try new group identities and to examine the differences between these, and the externally received personas that the students fed back to them. Thus, within this study there is evidence that the librarians use sensemaking to understand the processes of identity work for themselves and their intended online audience of students.

The sensemaking of corporate communications professionals in the moment, across six UK organisations is also relevant (Cornelissen, 2012). This paper is interesting as it outlines how professionals, influenced by role obligations, use sensemaking narratives, to communicate (sensegiving) with internal and external stakeholders. This involves a certain degree of negotiation between personal obligations and anticipated social requirements. For example metaphorical language helps to reassure the individual they are undertaking a useful role, which is aligned with senior management concerns and the obligations of corporate communication. The process of integrating metaphors, framing and strategic shifting is outlined below within Figure 3.1:

Figure 3.1: A Discursive Model of Sensemaking: Processes and Conditions (Cornelissen, 2012: 128)



From this figure it is suggested that 'role commitments' and an understanding of the audiences' expectations impact upon the 'framing' process, where the professional attempts to mediate communication between their beliefs and the audience's needs. On occasions when the communications professionals' have to deal with situations where they cannot easily envisage the stakeholders' response, they undertake a "process of internalised dialogue" (Cornelissen, 2012:130). This results in the development of a narrative that the professional can believe in, as it takes into account personal perspectives and role commitments, which they hope will overcome any criticisms from the intended recipients.

There is limited research that explores the sensemaking processes of individual employees, together with their sensegiving aims through new media. As was highlighted previously, it is argued that the first stage of the process of possible identity unification would require the undertaking of identity work.

Identity as the central theme of sensemaking may also be negotiated through intended interaction with others. The process of identity is considered as a continuous process, where the DOS is considered to possibly ratify elements of organisational and individual identity to present a unified, consistent narrative when interacting with the Twitter audience. Here, Weick (1995) explains that once the organisational member has made sense of who they are, they will have a better understanding of how to make sense of the world around them, so as to communicate more effectively with others. As such Weick (1995: 20) explains:

> Identities are constituted out of the process of interaction. To shift among interactions is to shift among definitions of self. Thus the sensemaker is himself or herself an ongoing puzzle undergoing continual redefinition, coincident with presenting some self to others and trying to decide which self is appropriate.

This quotation alludes to the contextual and ongoing processes of sensemaking, which are useful to consider when examining the work of the DOS. Following on from Erez and Earley (1993), Weick (1995, 2001, 2011) suggests the sensemaker, in this context the DOS is socially situated and open to change dependent on which self is most appropriate to present in any given social (online) situation. How the sensemaker views the world therefore is very much dependent not only on how they define who they are, but also their perception of how others view the organisation they work for. As has already been noted, for the DOS, their perception of self and organisation are inextricably linked, as so much of the role is communicating to others about the positive aspects of the organisation/brand. Weick (1995) argues individuals are more likely to maintain an optimistic perception of the organisation, restoring a less favourable version, “through association and disassociation with actions on issues” (Weick, 1995: 21). As he outlines:

> It is this very associating and disassociating with what come to be seen as threats to images as well as identities, or opportunities to repair and reaffirm them, that affects a person’s view of what is out there and what it means.

Sensemaking in this instance may equally therefore be considered a process of negotiating and eventually marrying characteristics of the individual, with the individualities of an organisation’s desired impression. The emphasis on making their situation rationally accountable is a significant point. The type and style of interactions within the online platform will differ considerably depending on the type of communication engaged in, such as replying to complaints, providing product information and event promotion. For example simple messages, including information delivery, product and event promotion, that allows the sensemaker to preserve and deliver a positive organisational persona is less likely to generate a response from customers, as it is non-emotive. Managing complaints will subject the DOS to a negative image of the organisation, as experienced by others, which may in turn challenge their own identity work processes and/or perspective of the organisation/brand. Nevertheless, Weick (1995) argues that internal organisational members will routinely opt for a socially acceptable vision, that reflects favourably on the organisation. This in his opinion, allows employees to constitute a reality that is more likely to lead to personal improvement, such as promotion, maintaining effectiveness and continuity. Any negative experiences can be neutralised in his view, when employees consciously amend their perspective, even so far as to reconstitute an organisation's identity in their mind. This does not however explain how employees, such as the DOS feels about maintaining such an idealised perspective, constituting as it does their day to day lived experience.

Summary

This chapter has considered a number of aspects of identity. As is outlined early on it is a problematic concept. It is argued within this chapter that this is because identity formation is an ongoing process for an individual working within an organisation. It is something that has to be continually worked on to aid coherence and value for the individual and the organisation. Specifically these discussions have focussed upon the influences on identity construction for the DOS, which arguably includes: individual, social, and organisational identity. These different perspectives on identity are not however intended to be mutually exclusive or static. Instead it is a matter of personal choice or situational factors, as to how much emphasis is placed upon each by the self at any given time (Brewer and Chen, 2007). These aspects contribute to the nature and intensity of the identity work required to formulate a coherent sense of identity for the individual online.

There is considerable evidence from organisation studies and management literature that individuals are engaged within an ongoing process of identity work within organisational contexts. However, previous literature has focused on offline contexts, during times of duress for individuals (Järventie-Theslef and Tienari, 2016; Wieland, 2010; Watson, 2008). The primary focus has been on an understanding of identity and identity work through stressful situations, such as adapting to new organisational structures and roles. As such the day-to-day lived experience of employees undertaking identity work, has been hitherto absent. Particularly when these roles include an online marketing dimension.

Studies relating to marketing work within organisation studies and management literature highlight its text-based nature, as the means to engage with an intended audience about products and services (Kotler and Keller, 2016; Lien, 1997). Emerging studies relating to online marketing work highlight the importance of communicating via text also. Although, there is more emphasis on being open, and using personal identity traits such as humour, to encourage interaction through conversational communication. This approach is described as being more “human” (Kwon and Sung, 2011:4). It therefore encourages the individuals to potentially combine their personal identity, with the organisational identity, through online marketing work so as to better engage with an intended Twitter audience

Given the focus of my research questions, this chapter has justified a focus on online marketing work as identity work for the DOS within this thesis, specifically to address the current gaps in the existing literature as identified by Brown (2015). Identity as expressed through narrative has also been discussed principally as a theoretical concept (Rhodes and Brown, 2005). From this exploration it is clear that storytelling provides the means to communicate experiences and generate meaning for individuals and collectives, as such it links to identity processes, arguably. This is because identity, individual and organisational, can be understood and presented through narrative and storytelling (Rhodes and Brown, 2005). Several studies (for example, McInnes and Corlett, 2012; Horrocks and Callahan, 2006) focus on identity construction through narrative during periods of duress (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010; Brown et al, 2005).

There are relatively few studies that focus on processes of online identity construction. As a result, sensemaking is suggested as the means to understand processes of online marketing work, as a form of identity work. This is considered in relation to the intended Twitter audience as a way to give sense to them, but also in relation to the DOS and their understanding of the work they do and their lived experience, for themselves.

How the thesis will build on Chapters One, Two and Three

Within Chapter One, I have explained conceptually what I mean by the process of trying to bring the organisation into being, based on existing literature. Specifically I argue that the DOS is engaging in a continuous process of creating an organisational online presence. Within Chapter Two I have suggested why marketing in the B2B environment is the most suitable empirical setting for examining the processes of creating an organisation online. For example, marketing is a front-line service, engaging directly with the external environment, including customers. Also, recent changes to marketing practices, such as the significant growth in digital online marketing through SNSs, make this an ideal forum for further exploration. Accordingly, an investigation from the B2B marketer's perspective offers an understanding of the processes involved in producing the tweets, their marketing work, based on the rich analysis of their lived experience. Then in Chapter Three the process that the DOS engages in is discussed as online marketing work, which is considered as a form of identity work. In my methodological approach therefore I outline how the DOS describes their lived experiences, through their own stories, during semi-structured interviews.

Methodologically, studies focussing on processes of sensemaking through storytelling within organisations utilise ethnography, observations and interviews (Brown, Humphreys and Gurney, 2005; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Within Chapter Four I outline the approach I took to understand the lived experiences and online marketing work processes, which includes asking the DOS to tell their own stories about the work they do. These stories will be told as part of semi-structured interviews, as will be explained within the next chapter.

My particular focus through the methodological approach is an understanding of the lived experience of the DOS, as they are undertaking and engaging with their everyday activities and processes. I am adopting this approach so as to understand how the DOS brings an organisation into being online. I am therefore interested in studying their experiences through the stories that they tell. This will provide an opportunity to understand the process of online marketing work as it is experienced, individually and collectively in the B2B environment. To date this understanding of identity work in the online context has been hitherto missing from organisation studies, management and marketing literature.

Within the findings and analysis chapter I will specifically outline the everyday work the DOS does "in their own words and from their own perspective" (Tyler, 2011:1483), so as to develop a better understanding of the online marketing/identity work they do, as a process of sensemaking through storytelling. As a result, the empirical chapters will be based on the key findings from the data and led in structure by the themes that emerge. Within the discussion chapters I will return to the studies included in Chapters One to Three, to further analyse, reflect upon and outline how the key concepts can be drawn upon and developed.

As outlined within the literature review chapters, the main focus is to investigate not just what the DOS does but how and why they do it and what implications there are for online marketing work practices. It is therefore the intention to take the theoretical frameworks that I have highlighted, such as identity work, as a form of online marketing work and the process of sensemaking and sensegiving, to demonstrate existing limitations, but also possibilities for expansion, and further exploration as a consequence of the thesis. It is also my intention to draw out processes that explain the practices of sensemaking online.

The first step in this understanding and development of existing theoretical frameworks though, is to reiterate the research questions and explain the methodological approach in more depth and detail. Therefore the next chapter will cover the methodological approach, research questions, study design, semi-structured interviews, ethics, analysis and coding, leading into the empirical discussion.

Chapter Four: Methodology – Understanding lived experience through stories

Introduction

This chapter will explain how the empirical work was undertaken. I will therefore outline, explain and evaluate my methodology, its connections to my research questions, the ontological and epistemological bases of the study, the methods of data collection and analysis. I will also consider ethics and reflexivity within this chapter. The methods, including interviews that encourage storytelling and tweet collection from five B2B organisations are discussed, and their applicability to the research questions and literature review gaps and challenges evaluated. In particular I draw attention to my reflexivity in relation to adapting the study design, data collection and the research questions, within the story of my fieldwork section. The method of analysis as thematic coding is also explained and examples provided. The final stage of this chapter is focused upon explaining the main focus of the empirical chapters.

Paradigmatic framework

In order to explain and justify the approach taken to the study of identity work through storytelling, in organisational settings, I will firstly explain my ontological and epistemological convictions. These are important to state initially, as they inform an understanding as to how this research is positioned in terms of a methodological approach, as explained in more detail below and underpinning the research questions.

Ontological and Epistemological convictions

The study on which the thesis is based is supported by a social constructionist ontology (Schwandt, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Social constructionism[1] is premised on the belief that social reality is the outcome of the attribution of meaning and therefore also sensemaking through social interaction (Patriotta and Spedale, 2009). Therefore truth claims about social reality are based on individual actors' beliefs, views and values. Drawing upon the work of Strauss et al, (1973), which is linked to symbolic interactionism, it is argued that elements such as identity within organisations are continually negotiated and worked at (Bryman and Bell, 2015). This understanding of social reality underpinned my approach to studying identity in the research process.

Therefore this thesis asserts that *"*social phenomenon and their meanings are *continually being accomplished* by social actors" (Bryman and Bell, 2015: 33 emphasis added) as a process of identity work. This statement suggests that social phenomenon are not just created through the process of intended and actual social interaction, but are also continuously being developed. So the

[1] It is noteworthy here that I am aware constructionism is increasingly being discussed in relation to epistemological considerations. However in the tradition of Bryman and Bell, (2015) it is being utilised as an ontological position in *"relating to social objects and categories – that is one that views them as socially constructed"* (Bryman and Bell, 2015:33)

construction and negotiation of social reality, including identity, is an on-going process, one that can be understood as identity work. Language and specifically conversation (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) narrative and stories (Rhodes and Brown, 2005) provide the means for social actors to structure and communicate existence and the way the world is experienced.

To complement this ontological positioning, my epistemological assumptions are based on an interpretive approach. Interpretivism, in opposition to positivism, is concerned with the "*subjective* meaning of social action" (Bryman and Bell, 2015: 29, emphasis added). Knowledge is therefore based on the interpretations and perspectives (world view) of social actors. Thus, truth claims are also based on subjective experiences and their meaning as ascribed by individuals. In this sense interpretivism argues that an understanding of any given subject matter, such as identity work is best understood from the perspective of those experiencing it (Grint, 2000, as cited in Bryman and Bell, 2015). This approach therefore assumes that I need to be continuously reflexive in a process of constructing rather than analysing data. Such reflexivity is required in order to manage other's knowledge, which may otherwise be influenced by my own sense of how I know what I know (Duberley, Johnson and Cassell, 2012).

The objective of interpretivist and social constructionist research designs is therefore to comprehend through specific processes how meaning is "created, negotiated, sustained and modified within a specific context" (Schwandt, 1994:120). As such my aim is to ascertain how the DOS undertakes online marketing work as a form of identity work, to bring the online organisation into being, which alludes to the way they present their organisation via Twitter. The approach I have adopted to clarify these human endeavours is to understand the lived experience of the DOS, by allowing them to tell their own story about the identity work they do, in order to give it meaning. Having outlined the ontological and epistemological influences on this research, the next section outlines and then explains the methodological approach in the context of previous studies focussing on identity work.

Methodological approach

Within the organisation studies and management literature, processes of identity work have previously been studied through qualitative methods such as interviews, document analysis and observation, utilising one or two organisations (Järventie-Theslef and Tienari, 2016; Koveshnikov et al, 2016; Brown and Coupland, 2015; Brown and Toyoki, 2013). In management and marketing literature also qualitative case study evaluation is commonplace including interviews and observations (Kriener et al, 2006). More recently however those scholars studying individual and collective lived experience within organisations, usually during periods of change, have combined qualitative case study analysis with more varied methods including storytelling and narrative, for example: (Abolafia, 2010; Brown et al, 2009; Humphreys and Brown, 2008; Bird, 2007). As such scholars have been able to understand the lived experience of their subjects by letting them tell their own stories (Rhodes and Brown, 2005). In order to understand the day-to-day lived experiences of the DOS, I have adopted an approach that is designed to capture the stories of their identity work.

As argued in Chapter Three the identity work undertaken by the DOS can be studied as a process of sensemaking through storytelling. Additionally, narrative is one of the primary ways of providing clarity and structure in organisational settings, which emanate from individual's storytelling activities (Islam, 2013; Brown et al, 2008; Boje, 2001). As highlighted within the literature review, storytelling in academic research is particularly insightful when considering processes and specific circumstances as they happen within organisations (Rosile et al, 2013). Building on these arguments, one of the ways that social actors are able to communicate their social reality is through storytelling. Increasingly scholars (Brown et al, 2008; Bird, 2007) have recognised the influence of narrative and storytelling, as the means to establish social reality. As Turner (1999: 78-79) explains: …"narrative can be described as a means of making sense of our social world and sharing that sense with others." Other literature has gone further to suggest that it is the narratives themselves that create the organisations through the "resulting polyphony" of individual and collective voices (Humphreys and Brown, 2008: 6). In order to further elaborate on how a methodological approach that focuses on lived experience through stories may be developed, the final, amended research questions are outlined and explained within the next section.

Final research questions

The development of the final research questions for the thesis aims to address three main gaps and underexplored research areas, as outlined within the literature review.

- Firstly, this includes a better understanding of everyday social media management practices from the perspective of the DOS within the B2B marketing environment (Habibi et al, 2015; Marx, 2013; Jussila et al, 2014), as an empirical context.
- Secondly a greater appreciation of online marketing work (Kotler and Keller, 2016; James, 2007; Dewdney and Ride, 2006) as a form of identity work (Pratt, 2012; Alvesson and Empson, 2008, undertaken by the DOS is sought.
- Thirdly, as is highlighted within the previous section the work the DOS does should be studied as a process of sensemaking through storytelling.

Specifically, as discussed within the introduction, the DOS is responsible for bringing the organisation into being online. As such the online Twitter environment provides another “identity workspace” (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010:44) and “meaning arena” (Westenholz, 2006: 1,015) for the DOS to present their organisation. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the DOS and contemporary marketing to be more open to engagement, as is characterised by its “human or emotional element” (Kotler and Keller, 2016:37), which includes less formal and merged personal and organisational communication.

This is because an awareness of the processes organisational members undertake when communicating on behalf of an organisation online, is still an underdeveloped area of research. Brown (2015) for example, identifies a gap in our understanding of the many processes through which identity work is achieved in organisations. It is suggested this may include an exploration as to how varying roles and personalities work on their identities, as well as their individual requirements for self-coherence.

There are relatively few studies that focus on processes of online identity construction through storytelling. As a result, sensemaking is suggested as the means to understand processes of online marketing work, as a form of identity work. This is considered in relation to the imagined online audience as a way to give sense to them, but also with regard to the DOS and their understanding of the work they do and their lived experience, for themselves.

To help meet the criteria of each of these research gaps, the main research question is defined as:

How do Digital Organisational Storytellers (DOSs) bring an organisation into being online?

As outlined within the introduction, bringing the organisation into being online is a new concept introduced within the thesis, which links to the way the DOS interprets and projects aspects of the organisation. As explained, although they don't necessarily give the organisation a material presence, they shape how it is perceived and they also give it a place, a situated reality online where it is accessible. Specifically they write and/or edit and upload the tweets, videos and images onto the organisational Twitter account.

Emanating from the core question are three supplementary questions to be addressed within the thesis:

- What do the online marketing work processes the DOS undertakes inform us about identity at work?
- How does the DOS construct and understand their online identity work negotiations, through their online marketing work activities?
- How does the DOS make sense of and give sense during these online marketing work processes?

Originally it was anticipated that a combination of tweet data analysis and interview data would be most suitable to answer the core research question and the three supplementary questions. This is because the initial aim of the data collection was to combine two processes of understanding, including firstly, the presentation of identity, organisational and the DOS within organisational online communication i.e. the tweets. Secondly, an understanding of identity construction issues through the processes of online identity work undertaken by the DOS, through the interviews. However as will be outlined in the next sections, the two data sets proved particularly difficult to utilise conjointly as the means to answer the research questions and also make a theoretical and conceptual contribution to the thesis. Firstly I will outline the study design and data collection processes and then I include a section, which tells the story of how the research design and the interviews changed as I went along in response to my changing objectives. First an overview of the original study design and data collection methods is outlined.

Study design

This section will highlight the study design and strategy for data collection. The data collection techniques utilise a qualitative approach, which allows an in depth examination of attitudes, experiences and behaviours within the social world, of organisations. Distinct from quantitative approaches, qualitative studies focus on interpretation as opposed to numerically quantifying data, are more interested in subjectivity, while offering a variety of means to conduct research including interviews and participant observation (Brewerton and Millward, 2001; Cassell and Symon, 1994). There is also more of an emphasis on the understanding of processes, rather than distinct outcomes (Cassell and Symon, 1994). This is because a qualitative approach relies on the gathering of data in a natural setting, which is respectful of the people and places that are being considered (Creswell, 2007). In this regard, it is the best means to observe and understand the lived experience of the DOS, as it will allow them to express a subjective construction of meaning about online identity work experiences (Creswell, 2007). Given my epistemological stance, I am studying specific organisational cases, qualitatively, as illustrative empirical examples of particular phenomenon, that of digital organisational storytelling, from the perspective of the DOS, (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). In light also of my ontological approach, I will be able to collate interpretations and sensemaking episodes. These interpretations will be developed in partnership with the constructed reality of the DOS and gathered through illustrative organisational cases. It is also acknowledged that there are three perspectives of relevance here, the subject, the researcher as interpreter and also eventually the reader, who will also have a slightly different interpretation (Stake, 1995). Knowledge is thus co-constructed through these multiple perspectives, as each individual explores different meanings and insights during their engagement with the study.

Case selection

The approach that has been undertaken in light of my worldview is a qualitative analysis of the DOS, within five B2B organisations. Therefore, these individual marketers, the DOS, have been chosen as the empirical “units of analysis” (Miles and Huberman, 1994:25), within the context of B2B online marketing work, the empirical case. Often, a single case study approach has been applied to identity work research, so as to gain an in-depth experience of one organisation, usually during change processes (i.e. Boudreau et al, 2014; Brown and Humphreys, 2003; Currie and Brown, 2003; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Brown and Humphreys, 2002). The reason for choosing multiple organisational sites, as cases, is in qualitative terms, to enrich an understanding of the DOS and their life world from several different interpretations. It is also possible to review the experiences of the DOS within different organisations in a way that allows similarities in working practices to be compared, but also polyphonic perspectives, conflict and tensions to emerge, that help to provide different perspectives on similar experiences and issues (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

As such the following organisations have been chosen primarily due to their heterogeneity, which is expected to make them more robust, as well as enabling greater understanding (Gomm et al, 2000). As although they all have a B2B aspect to their business, they have very different portfolios, comprising a diverse mix of products and services. Additionally, due to my own industry background, I knew several contacts either working directly within these organisations, or as consultants to these companies and therefore choosing the specific organisational cases was based also on ease of access. Although I purposely chose organisations that I haven't worked for directly, so as to be able to experience the processes of working for the DOS, without personal experience of the organisation affecting my own interpretations. The five organisations focus on the following products and/or services: IT communications; financial and business services; health, social care and care home provision; office space rental and manufacturing. A synopsis of each of the five organisations' characteristics is provided within Appendix Two. Additionally, pseudonyms for each of the organisations and the employees that were interviewed are included in Table 4.1, which is included further into this chapter, following an analysis of my role as the researcher.

My role as the researcher

Ahead of an explanation of the data collection process, I would like to reiterate briefly some aspects of my own story that I feel are relevant to my methodological approach. I want to explain how my experience and background benefitted the study design and also what limitations and difficulties it posed. As highlighted within the introduction, I have more than 16 years experience working as a marketing practitioner and latterly also as a DOS within B2B industry settings. Having my own personal lived experiences of undertaking the DOS role has provided an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Arguably this is a benefit, as being an ‘insider’ – someone who has shared similar traits, roles and understandings as the participants (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009), I am able to identify some of the key challenges and opportunities experienced by these individuals day to day. However I am also aware that I still have a lot of presumptions attached to my background and experience. Having an understanding and shared experiences with the participant DOS is therefore both advantageous, but also difficult in terms of keeping a certain amount of neutrality (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). I therefore needed to be continuously reflexive to ensure the study design and methods are free from preconceived ideas. This is important *“in time”* during the fieldwork and also *“after the time”* during the analysis (Weick, 2002: 897, emphasis added) as will be explained in more depth later in this chapter. Initially the next section will review the chosen data collection methods for the study of online marketing work.

Data Collection

As highlighted above in relation to the research questions, phase one of the data collection methods originally included the collection of tweet data from the Twitter sites of the five B2B organisations, over a three-month period, from January to March 2014. The second phase of the data collection included storytelling interviews, which took place between June 2014 and January 2015, with 15 of the DOSs from the five B2B organisations.

Phase One: Tweet data collection

As highlighted within the previous section I collected the tweet data including text with links, images and video content was collected every three days for a three-month period from online Twitter sites, managed by the five B2B organisations. This was a fully immersive process, which helped me to understand much more about the organisations and the content, tone and style of the tweets they were producing and thus the DOS seemed to be trying to give meaning to their intended Twitter audience.

Every three days was a practical collection time for the tweets as the organisations wrote between 2-10 tweets on average most days. Therefore collecting every day would have meant a very large number of small files, whereas every three days provided fewer files with more data on each. When collecting the tweet data a ‘screenshot’ (Gillen and Merchant, 2013) – an image of the tweets collected from the desktop version of Twitter, was taken of the tweets and images (see figures 4.1.and 4.2 for examples) which were stored in individual Portable Network Graphics (PNG) files. As illustrated below I was able to collect approximately 3-6 tweets for each organisation in one ‘screenshot’.

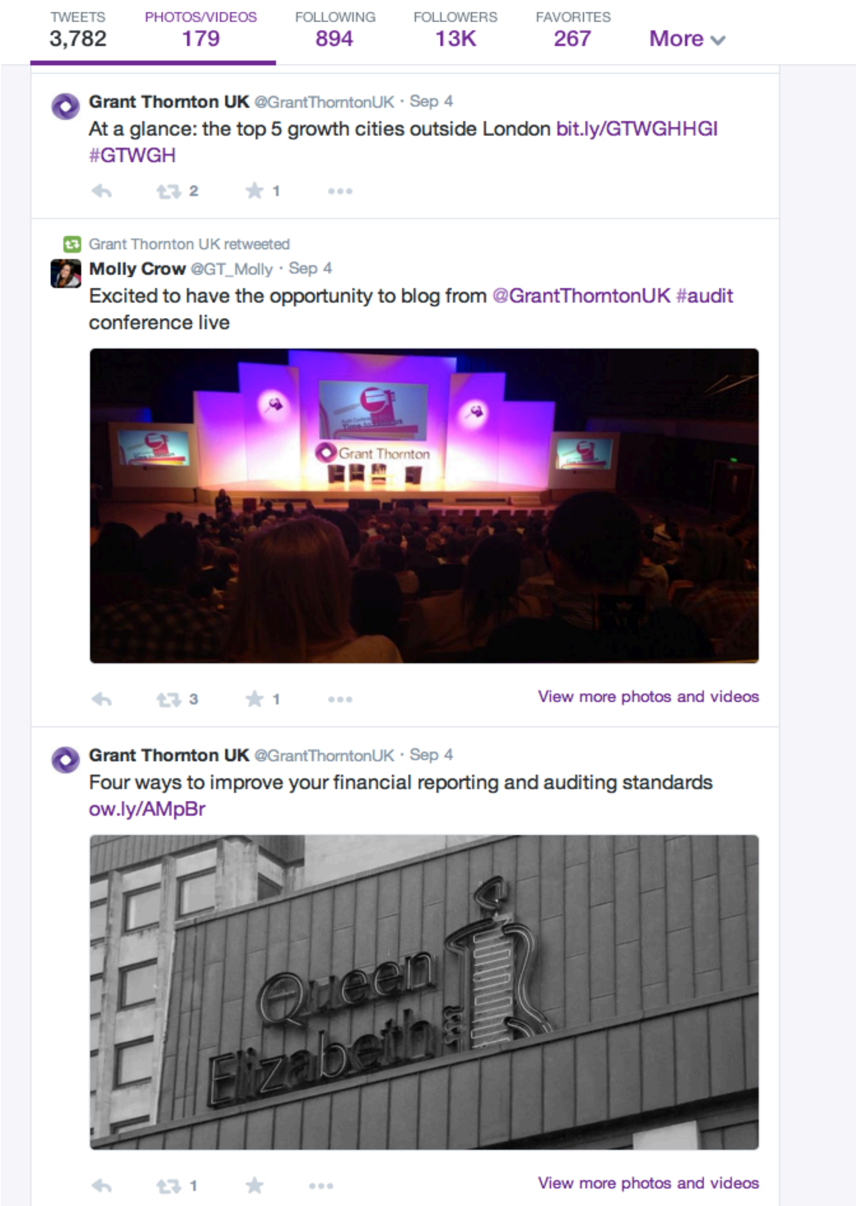


Figure 4.1: This Grant Thornton Twitter page or ‘feed’ includes a mixture of images and text produced by the organisation over less than a one-day period. There is also an example of a retweet – which may at first appear to be a customer, but is actually an employee (@GT_Molly).

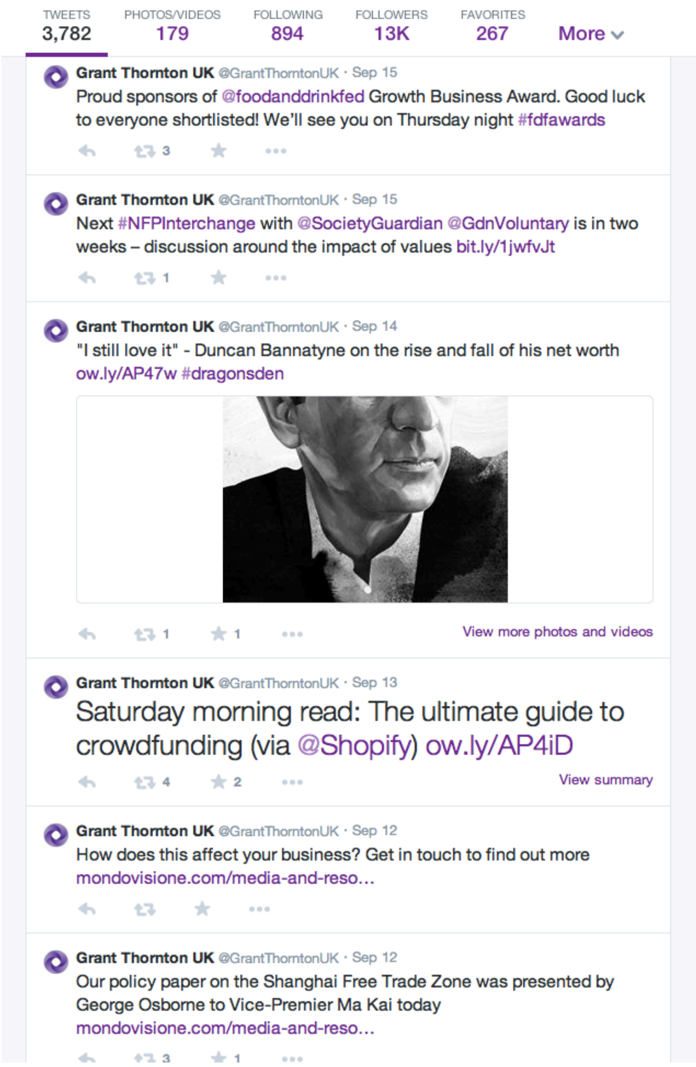


Figure 4.2: This Twitter page includes primarily text-based tweets, produced by Grant Thornton, [one of the five B2B case-study organisations, [included here with their permission], produced by the organisational storyteller over a four-day period. It is an example of a ‘screen-grab’, the method of data capture used to collect the tweets.

The main purpose of this stage of data collection was to understand the information contained within the organisational tweets. An analysis of the content of the tweets was then used to identify the nature of the questions to be included within the interview scripts for the DOS, to answer the supplementary questions as explained within the data analysis of the tweets section below.

Tweet data analysis

Elliott and Robinson's (2014) framework originally provided a lens with which to frame the two processes of data analysis. As highlighted earlier in this chapter, it is an established coding model that is designed to categorise online text, image and video files. Using this model enabled the grouping of the tweets into initial themes, these included:

- Mobility - Movement of the site itself and the mobility of the site's users to navigate around it
- Accessibility - Helping customers find what they are looking for
- Interactivity - Facilitating interactivity and dialogue with customers
- Visuality - The occurrence of videos and images and how these impact on relationships with customers
- Customisation - Includes key messages and repeated phrases relating to the identity of the organisation and its story

See also Appendix Three for details as to how these categories were adapted specifically for the analysis of tweet data.

The next stage of the process was to use these headings and their descriptions to group the tweets for each of the organisations (Kozinets, 2010), which led to the drafting of specific questions utilised within the interviews – please see Appendix Five for examples of the tweet analysis and the subsequent interview questions generated. This framework (Elliott and Robinson, 2014) originally helped to highlight the dominant style of tweets for each organisation, as well as contributing to the key questions and themes for the storytelling interviews, as described within the next section.

Phase Two: Storytelling interviews

Phase one of the data collection as explained above included the gathering and analysis of tweets, from each of the five B2B organisations, which once grouped into themes helped to generate the interview questions (see Appendix Five). I also utilised individual and groups of tweets from each of the organisations, to show to the DOS during the interviews as visual prompts. This enabled me to find out further details from each of the DOS about the process of writing them. The second phase of the data collection was therefore designed to allow the DOS to describe their lived experience by getting them to tell their own stories of online marketing work (Andrews et al, 2012; Czarniawska, 2004). To help build rapport and to encourage interaction with the interviewees I drew from my own past experience in this career, which really made a difference in the interviews and to the data I collected. My experience was particularly important when opening the interview, establishing shared experiences, building empathy and embedding rapport through shared understanding (Ryan and Dundon, 2008).

At the start of each interview I stressed how valuable each of the interviewee’s input would be to my research and how I was keen to better understand the current issues in managing Twitter within organisations. From the outset I made it clear that my background had been in marketing, and I explained how I still had a great passion for the discipline and was greatly looking forward to gaining a better understanding from them, thus continually reiterating their importance to my research. Quite a few of the interviewees asked me which organisations I had worked with and whether I knew certain individuals. On some occasions we found we had collective experiences in similar sectors and also shared contacts. This dialogue contributed greatly to positive social interaction from the outset, which helped the interviewees to relax and see me more as an insider (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009).

Also, in preparation for each of the interviews I ensured that I read all publicly available information about the interviewees, their roles, sector-specific issues and any recent events/media stories relating to the organisation (Ryan and Dundon, 2008). This knowledge was useful as the means to start the conversation from the moment they collected me from reception and helped to ensure the dialogue flowed from the outset. Although these conversations were not central to my research agenda and so I had to consider the time focussed on them, they really helped to establish common ground and shared areas of knowledge and interest. They also reiterated my understanding of the issues they were facing.

From the beginning of the interview I also encouraged them to tell their stories by introducing questions in a way that prompted each interviewee to respond through storytelling and narrative. For example when asking about their experience and career history I asked them to: ‘Tell me the story of how you came to be in a role where you are responsible for updating the organisation’s Twitter site?.’ Also, I utilised conversational prompts, by telling stories of my own memories of being a DOS, in order to prompt reciprocal responses, featuring interviewee’s experience stories (Andrews et al, 2012). For example when I interviewed Rebecca Williams, marketing assistant, Forsdyke Industrial she was initially almost apologetic that she worked for an industrial manufacturing company, suggesting “…you think of this type of manufacturing as *quite an old fashioned*, *male-orientated*, people have been here for years type place to work.” Due to my own experience within the trade and technical sector I was quickly able to reassure her that in more established organisations it is easier to really make an impact with the marketing activities, as new ideas are really appreciated. I also told the story of how I had worked for an industrial boiler manufacturer and one of my jobs included tweeting as a ‘plumber’ character called Alan, in a feature on Twitter known as “Ask Alan”, in order to try and engage with other plumbers. My intended audience were encouraged to tweet their questions. The ‘real’ Alan, whom the character was based on, was the technical manager, and he helped to advise on accurate responses to the questions being asked online. I was the ‘customer-facing Alan’ who replied directly to the customer with the information they required. From this we enjoyed a humorous exchange of stories, where Rebecca clearly felt comfortable enough to disclose how she also felt the need to adopt a character as the “the guy next door” in order to better reflect the type of person she believed her intended audience were expecting to hear from. In explaining this she temporarily took on the character of her “guy next door” by speaking in a deep voice and adopting a more masculine pose to suggest that she needed to really feel and understand how a character such as this would speak and feel. This follows Mishler’s (1986: 69, emphasis added) assumption that:

> *Telling stories* is far from unusual in *everyday conversation* and it is…no more unusual for interviewees to respond to questions *with narratives* if they are given some room to speak.

Where possible I allowed the interviewees time to reflect on the questions and think through their experiences, so they were able to provide the most interesting stories possible. In this way I had also to commit a bit of time within the interviews to establish my credibility as an experienced marketer. In order to achieve this, I felt it was important also to highlight from my own stories how my marketing endeavours had not always gone to plan, particularly in relation to my digital marketing experience. For example, I was clear that I found it very difficult initially to secure any response whatsoever from my intended audience via Twitter and I did not always provoke a positive response. The interviewee at this point would often reciprocate with their ideas and experiences of provoking or maintaining engagement, which I enjoyed listening to and I think this genuine interest and enthusiasm, evident in my body language, including continuous nodding and occasional laughter, helped to build rapport. There was certainly an approach that encouraged understanding and respect, but more than that it allowed the interviewing process to be an “entire narrative told to and with a researcher” (Andrews et al, 2012: 49). In this sense, for me as the interviewer it was an opportunity to share past experiences and memories, whilst for the interviewee it provided the chance for them to contribute their perspective on their everyday lived experiences of online marketing work.

Another way that I developed relationships and encouraged interaction with the interviewees was in building empathy. In some senses I felt like a confidant to the younger and less experienced DOS, as well as the customer service specialists, who seemed keen to draw from my experience as an independent and knowledgeable advisor, in relation to issues such as answering tweets outside of work and what to do if a complaint escalates online. When such issues of commonality arose I simply reciprocated with stories of my own experience and approach in a similar situation, reiterating that I have also made mistakes, which I’ve learnt from. Due to my experience working in healthcare, I also empathised with how the DOSs from Sunrise Healthcare were so passionate in their approach to customer engagement and their fear at letting customers’ down. As soon as I mentioned that I had worked for several pharmaceutical companies and the NHS, I noticed that the interviewees at Sunrise Healthcare started using phrases such as: “As you will remember" and "I'm sure you understand what I mean." This contributed to an acknowledgement of mutual understanding almost straight away and as such it was easier and quicker to delve deeper into relevant areas of their experience.

The interviews were undertaken with 15 employees in total, who are involved in writing and responding to tweets on the organisation's Twitter site. Interviews lasted between one and a half hours and three hours. Two to five employees were interviewed per organisation, the majority of these worked across management levels. The participants were interviewed once and there is a breakdown of the interviewees included below in Table 4.1. I have also introduced pseudonyms for each of the organisations (column one) and the interviewees (column seven):

Table 4.1: Breakdown of Interviewees

Organisational types and pseudonyms	**Ages**	**Time with the organisation**	**Access to uploading material**	**Responsibility for Twitter**	**Experience of social media/Twitter**	**DOSs with pseudonyms and real job titles, in alphabetical order**
Case one IT Communications services Pseudonym: Orion Communications Group effort in managing the Twitter feed	47	28 years – working in marketing for the last 10 years	Yes	Used to have a more senior social media/Twitter role but has recently stepped back – still contributes regular content to Twitter proactively	Personal and business use for many years	Collin Baker – social media lead, works primarily from home reports to the Head of shared services, in the London office, and liaises regularly with Lola and Fiona about Twitter content
	38	Less than a year	Yes	Responsibility for social media strategy and blog	Very experienced digital marketing and	Lola Bloom – head of online adoption and social media – strategic focus and coordinates the blogs

				management	social media practitioner at work and outside	primarily, works in the London office. Line managers Fiona and works with Craig.
	27	10 years	Yes	She was asked to support on Twitter by answering complaints and queries	Experience of social media/Twitter restricted to work usage	Suzi Clarke – customer experience consultant, reports into the head of customer services and works in the customer services dept.
	50	24 years	No	Very experienced blog and tweet writer, also runs events, which she tweets from	Social media enthusiast, very experienced on Twitter	Natalie Mason – head of customer insight and futures, senior manager, reports into the head of global innovation and is based in the eastern regional office
	35	Less than two years	Yes	Day to day responsibility for managing the B2B Twitter site, primarily responsible for coordinating new content.	Experienced marketer, first role with social media/Twitter as a focus	Fiona Saunders – social media marketing content manager, reports into Lola and is based in the eastern regional office
Case two Financial and business services consultancy Pseudonym: Clark Spencer Jones (CSJ) Simon has overall responsibility for managing the Twitter site	38	Five months	Yes	Day to day responsibility for managing the Twitter site	Passionate about social media/Twitter and is a prolific enthusiast and user in work and at home	Simon Peterson – digital content manager, reports into the head of marketing and is a colleague at a similar level in the organisation to Philip.
	46	Seven years	Yes	Before Simon started Philip used to have a more active role in managing the Twitter site, now he contributes content less	Enthusiastic about social media/Twitter and pioneered its early integration at CSJ and is an active user	Philip Thwaites – senior manager, marketing, reports to the head of communications – this is historical, rather than being the most approapriate line manager. He is a colleague at a similar level to Simon.

				frequently – but still enjoys participating during events	outside of work. He contributes regularly to the organisational Twitter account in his own time.	
Case three Health, social care and care home provision Pseudonym: Sunrise Healthcare Tim and Karen have overall responsibility for managing Twitter	31 34 49	Two years Nine months 15 years	Yes No Yes	Day to day responsibility for Twitter Responsible for all strategic aspects of digital marketing, including the website, contributes content to the Twitter site Originally started the Twitter site and shares some responsibility with Tim for updating the current site, although he leads now	All job roles since 2005 have focused on digital marketing/ social media Active user of social media/Twitter at work and outside – presents on social media useage for business at conferences and events Uses Twitter at work, but has experience of other social media sites such as Facebook outside of work	Tim Crane – PR manager, reports into Karen and works in the same office as Theo. Theo Gibbins – head of digital marketing communications, he reports into the head of digital and brand strategy, works closely in the same office with Tim and Karen but is not their line manager Karen Tennant – group communications manager, reports into the Communications' Director and line manges Tim
Case four Office space rental Pseudonym:	48	Two years	Yes	Manages Twitter, Linked In, Facebook and You Tube	Keen social media user in his role and also outside of work	Andrew Teretto – social media manager who reports into the Marketing Director. He liases with Sarah about Twitter, but he has no line

Sonic business solutions (SBS) Andrew has day to day responsibility for managing Twitter	45	Seven years	Yes	Answers complaints and service-related queries via Twitter	No previous experience of social media	management authority Sarah Dawson – customer services manager, reports into the head of customer services and liaises with Andrew when she has queries about Twitter
Case five Manufacturing Pseudonym: Forsdyke Industrial Rebecca has day to day responsibility for managing Twitter	49	More than 20 years	Yes	Day to day management responsibility for Twitter and also he was the person who started the FI Twitter site and who used to manage it day to day before Rebecca started	Keen user of social media/Twitter in his role and outside of work	John Griggs – operational marketing manager and Shaun and Rebecca's line manager, based in the same office
	42	Four years	Yes	Contributes content to Twitter, such as press release links	User of Twitter/social media outside of work, but not in previous work roles	Shaun Troughton – PR manager, reports into John and Rebecca is his colleague
	25	Less than a year	Yes	Manages Twitter, Linked In, YouTube and GooglePlus day to day	Experience of using Facebook outside of work, but has not updated social media as part of a job role before	Rebecca Williams – marketing assistant, reports into John and Shaun is her colleague

Within the five B2B organisations social media management is considered a specialism but still part of the marketing function, (Orion communications, CSJ and SBS) or fully integrated into the marketing function (Sunrise Healthcare, Forsdyke Industrial) as another aspect of marketing work. My prior knowledge and experience of working within the social media function in the B2B sector also enabled me to use established contacts to gain access into the organisations initially. Introductions were then made from established contacts to those individuals working on updating the organisational Twitter site. The individuals being interviewed were the DOS, and rather than adopting a particular sampling strategy, each interviewee was asked to recommend others in the organisation that they felt I should talk to. Essentially, then I interviewed everyone within each of the organisations who had responsibility for digital organisational storytelling via Twitter.

Brown & Thompson (2013) in their research on sensemaking, also drew attention to the necessity of talking to several members of the same team in order to understand the discrepancies and how these are translated into individual and team action. Different interpretations and responses to the same or similar processes is certainly a key element of the sensemaking process here, which is why at least two people per team are being included within the interviews. As summarised by Tongco, (2007) this is a non-randomised method where the researcher understands some of the information to be investigated, and then they choose the appropriate contacts based on their expertise in this field of study (Lewis & Sheppard 2006). Criticisms of sampling strategies in qualitative research are common, as Coyne (1997) summarises due to poorly explained assumptions, blurring of methods and theoretical standpoints. These criticisms do not apply directly to this study as the identification of roles and key contacts is based on experience and informed research of the selected organisations from those updating and monitoring Twitter sites.

As discussed the interview schedules with the above employees were loosely structured around the themes that emerged from the tweet analysis. In addition the interviewees were shown tweet data comprising text, images and video links, specific to their own corporate Twitter site in order to provoke an opportunity for them to explicate and expand upon the sensemaking of their specific phenomenon (Saunders et al, 2009). It is though worth noting for the purposes of this thesis that preparation has been central to ensure the validity of the data gathered. This is particularly relevant here as individual organisational tweets, images and video clip ‘stills’ were downloaded and printed out (prepared) on pages to be shown to the interviewee, in order to elicit detail about the process of managing tweet content. In addition, a list of key headings, questions and tweet data had been collated in advance to suit the specific organisation each time. The fact that there are only small teams working closely together on social media functions, including Twitter, within organisations meant that shared meanings and experiences were common among interviewees, which also helped to strengthen the value and reality of their accounts. Reality or lived experience in this sense, relates to the constructionist tradition of an agreement of opinions, as to what can be understood as truth (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). I can prove this by being able to establish a “range of different realities” (Seale, 1999: 468) through this naturalistic inquiry.

To encourage reflection, all participants were interviewed away from their desks in the cafeteria or open seating area. They were also shown printed examples of the tweets they had written, so they were able to reflect directly on the process of creating them. In addition I allowed sufficient breaks between each of the questions to allow contemplation and also sensemaking processes. As highlighted earlier it is sensemaking that provides the central theoretical framework that enables the researcher to literally make sense of the DOS and their identity work processes. An explanation provided by Weick (2001) is the idea of an individual being put into a position of chaos, forced to make sense of it, to avoid humiliation and where possible make progress in the face of adversity. This relates to the interview process here as the interviewee is asked to make sense of the process of writing a tweet. Although writing a tweet may not be a process that generates chaos, many of those interviewed have to make sense of difficult organisational/brand messages and then write them into 140 character messages. Allowing the interviewee to make sense of writing and managing tweet content, particularly when the interviewer has some practical experience in this area, helped to create easy-flowing dialogue. The importance of and challenges associated with a dependence on the interaction between interviewer and interviewee based on open dialogue, is outlined by Creswell, (2005: 177, emphasis added):

…qualitative research is interpretive, with the inquirer typically involved in a *sustained* and *intensive* experience with participants. This introduces a range of *strategic, ethical and personal issues* into the process.

There is of course a balance to be sought in this relationship to gather information, largely views and opinions, while appreciating the absolutism of the participants' constructed realities (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Any preconceived notions, about the potential for the voice of the researcher mixing with or influencing the interviewee's voices (Lincoln and Guba, 2000) were risks initially considered to the validity of this study. However these concerns proved unfounded and actually my understanding of the role of the DOS helped to put them at their ease and elicit richer, deeper information. As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the study design, approach to data collection and research questions slightly changed during the course of my fieldwork, therefore the next section explains the story of my fieldwork.

The Story of my Fieldwork

This section outlines how and why the research design changed during the fieldwork, drawing on my own personal experience as a researcher of the research process. Within the previous sections I have set out the factual step-by-step process of my data collection. Although the details are all factually correct, this does not really tell the story of my fieldwork and so I explain my research process in detail here to illuminate lessons learnt and the importance of reflexivity (Riach, 2009). Reflexivity can be discerned in a number of key areas such as the research questions and study design, during the data collection and data analysis. I outline here how throughout the data collection process it was necessary to continually reflect and revise my approach to the fieldwork. This has included revising the original objectives and research questions, continually reflecting upon and adapting the interview approach and questions, as well as deciding finally which aspects of the data to focus on within the findings chapters.

My initial research question and objectives focussed on an understanding of how the identity of the DOS and the identity of the organisation were constructed through Twitter for B2B organisations. Thus, the original core research question was: How is the identity of the digital organisational storyteller (DOS) and the organisation constructed through Twitter for B2B organisations?

The three supplementary questions were:
How is the identity of the online organisation brought into being through the DOS within the tweets, incorporating the interplay between self, customer and organisation?

How does the DOS make sense of their personal and the organisational identity narrative within the tweets, so as to initiate sensegiving to the intended audience?

What implications do these processes have for the DOS as the producer of the tweets?

In this sense there was slightly less explicit emphasis within the core research question originally, on the identity work of the DOS, as this emerged strongly during the interviews. It is though implicitly referenced within the supplementary questions, particularly the second which focuses on identity processes.

In order to answer the research questions I planned to draw from two different data sets, the tweets and the interviews with the DOS. The main reason for choosing the different data collection methods was because I expected the tweets to reflect the organisational identity primarily and the interviews to provide an understanding of the identity construction processes of the individual DOS when establishing the organisational/brand identity and managing its meaning, in order to encourage engagement with the intended audience. However, I was always concerned about the volume of tweets and interview data that five cases would produce. To put this into context, three months of tweet data collected from one of the bigger organisations, Orion Communications, produced 258 pages of data, while the interview transcripts from all five organisations included a total of 458 pages. I didn't however want to reduce the number of cases, as explained earlier, due to their heterogeneity, which is expected to make them more robust, as well as enabling greater understanding (Gomm et al, 2000).

Thus, I felt initially the best approach was to speak to my supervisor about possible ways to frame or group the tweet data and the interview questions in order to meet the objectives within the research questions and ensure a practical data set to work with. As a result my initial supervisor suggested that I could utilise an existing corporate identity framework for websites (Elliott and

Robinson, 2014). It was agreed this could be beneficial as the means to categorise, order and rationalise the two data sets. Once the data was collected from each of the organisational Twitter sites, as described above, I started to code each of the tweets within one of the five categories (mobility, accessibility, interactivity, visuality and customisation). I noted there was some overlap, especially between accessibility, which focused on helping customers and interactivity that facilitated dialogue with customers. Also, there were occasions when the tweets exhibited features of more than one category and so the dominant one was chosen. For example most of the tweets featured an aspect of mobility as they contained a link to the website or another online article, but in many instances, movement wasn't the main purpose of the tweet and so often they were given a different category. The process of coding every tweet was laborious, but quite straightforward. This is because the framework was originally developed to analyse website text and therefore the tweet data was very similar in style and content, in terms of being concise and including links and visual images.

However, when it came to drawing from the Elliott and Robinson (2014) framework in order to write the interview questions, the rigidity of the categories was more problematic. For example, when I started to try and write questions it soon became evident that I would need to think quite creatively to make the precise definitions within the categories link to my research questions, which were focussed principally on identity, narrative, storytelling, sensemaking and sensegiving. This is because mobility, moving customers around the Twitter site, is more about practical marketing activities such as encouraging customers to click on links, moving or redirecting them back to the organisation's website, rather than specific identity construction processes for the DOS. As such the questions within the mobility section focused on an understanding of the physical prompts such as hashtags @links and the links to articles and the website, as well as how customers were navigated to engage with the organisation and the DOS at events. In the same way, visuality links to the inclusion of videos and visual images within the tweets and thus these may also be linked to an understanding of marketing practices.

Therefore I used the categories more broadly to group questions that related to the identity of the DOS, how they understood and communicated their organisation's identity, including references to narrative/storytelling (see Appendix Six for a copy of The Interview Schedule). For example, as highlighted in an earlier section, the first question I asked each DOS was in relation to them telling the story of how they came to be in a role where they are responsible for updating the organisation's Twitter site?.This relates to identity in terms of how the DOS developed their professional identity and also whether their previous marketing experience has helped them in preparation for this role and communicating the organisational/brand identity online. I also asked them about what they think their organisation's story is via Twitter – in particular I explained this relates to how the organisation communicates its identity and thus how the DOS manages meaning. In terms of visuality I also asked how useful visuals are at stimulating interest and whether they feel more should be included to help communicate the organisational identity. Thus, initially I started the interview process with a lot of questions and prompts written down, as I was trying to cover processes of identity, storytelling and narrative, sensemaking and sensegiving and also asking questions about specific marketing activities to fit in with the practical components of the Elliott and Robinson (2014) framework, such as visuality, interactivity and mobility.

After the first three or four interviews I started to realise there were too many different topics I was trying to cover and thus some of the interviews were lasting a few hours and I wasn't completely sure how relevant all of the answers were in helping me to meet my objectives, as set out in the research questions. In addition questions relating to organisational identity, where I was asking the DOS to describe the identity or story of their organisation were not always understood, or at least not in the way I was expecting, as the DOS replied with a list of key marketing messages and slogans each time. It was also evident that organisational identity and the identity construction processes of the DOS were much more closely interrelated than I had envisaged. For example, they described amalgamating their professional and personal identities online through the integration of their personal and Twitter account, with the online organisational presence, as will be discussed later in the thesis.

Although I didn't amend the interview schedule I did find myself naturally and consciously missing out certain questions during the interviews including those relating to narrative/storytelling. Less emphasis was also given to discussing all of the questions that related to the Twitter images (visuality), which I felt were not specifically relevant to my objective of understanding online identity construction processes. In addition I learnt to adapt the questions asked slightly when interviewing customer service specialists and heads of service, as opposed to PR, marketing and social media specialists who had DOS responsibilities as a central aspect of their role – see Table 4.1 for details of the specific job roles of the DOSs. For example I asked the customer service specialists about the tweets that related to queries or complaints. I also learnt that the heads of service focussed on specific aspects of bringing the online organisation into being, such as writing the blogs, as well as social media strategy, and thus some of the questions were not relevant and so I missed some out. Throughout the interviewing process I grew much more familiar with the everyday marketing practices of the DOS and I considered how their experiences were similar but also different to mine. This understanding meant that I actually relied less on the written questions as the interviews progressed. Instead I talked much more to them about their everyday marketing activities in order to understand how they were constructing their identity and the organisational/brand identity as well as the challenges they were facing.

When I completed the interviews, I took the opportunity to again reflect upon the suitability of using the tweet and the interview data to inform the rest of the thesis. During this period of reflection I discussed with my supervisors a number of concerns, relating to the overall quantity of data (tweets and interview stories), the relevancy of the Elliott and Robinson (2014) framework for the interview data analysis and coding as well as to the rest of the theoretical argument. As a result of these discussions it was apparent the framework was useful primarily as a sensitising tool for the tweet data. This is because the tweet data content focussed primarily on issues of organisational/corporate identity and the interview data was more focussed on individual interpretations of the online marketing work processes. This meant that it was difficult to utilise the understandings from the two data sets conjointly to give meaningful insights into identity work processes.

Following further conversations with my supervisors and consideration of the thesis objectives, as contained within the research questions, I took the decision to utilise the empirical storytelling interview data only within the finding and analysis section. This means that the tweet data will not be specifically analysed further here. Although, as highlighted above, there is some tweet data included within the interview scripts, which the DOS commented upon. The same ontological and epistemological convictions are still relevant and although the development of the interview questions was achieved through the tweet analysis using the Elliott and Robinson (2014) framework, I would not make any significant changes to the questions asked. However, I do acknowledge that some questions asked during the interviews are now less relevant, and others more so. This decision has been made though on the basis that there is too much empirical data and more importantly the two data sets are not mutually supportive of one another when combined, rather they answer two potentially different research questions. The tweets reveal how the organisational/brand identity is communicated, the interview data is much more about the identity processes of the DOS, which is the focus and emphasis within the literature review chapters. Therefore a focus on their stories will provide thick description (Geertz, 1973; Ryle, 1949) of their lived experience within the findings in a way, which is complementary to the interpretive qualitative tradition of truth, where the results present an appropriate representation of participants' lives, through substantive quotes (Ponterotto, 2006).

This decision to focus upon the storytelling interview data also encouraged reflection on my research objectives and questions, in order to acknowledge the fact the DOS was not always consciously communicating the organisational identity and their personal identity separately online. Thus I felt that the second supplementary research question, which focussed on how the online organisation is brought into being by the DOS more appropriately, surmised the processes that were being discussed within the interviews and thus I amended the core research question to reflect this. Therefore, my final core research question is:

How do Digital Organisational Storytellers (DOSs) bring an organisation into being online?

In addition, I slightly amended the other supplementary questions as part of a continual process of referring back to the literature review and forward to the data from the interviews (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). This process was invaluable as it allowed me to really engage with the existing theory again, in order to draw fresh insights from the empirical study. The amended supplementary research questions were thus amended to reflect this.

1. What does the online marketing work processes the DOS undertakes tell us about identity at work?
2. How does the DOS construct and understand their online identity work negotiations, through their online marketing work activities?
3. How does the DOS make sense and give sense during these online marketing work processes?

In these revised research questions there is much more emphasis on the processes of marketing work, identity work, sensemaking and sensegiving and in my view this is much more reflective of the themes from the literature review chapters and that were emerging from the interviews.

At the start of this data collection process I wanted to find a meaningful way to collect and group the data that would prove useful and beneficial to other researchers and practitioners when explaining what it was that had emerged, the phenomenon of online marketing as identity work that I studied (Blair, 2015). However, in hindsight my decision to utilise the Elliott and Robinson (2014) corporate identity framework slightly constrained my approach to data collection initially. Adopting a reflexive position throughout has though changed how I understand the process of research, in that it "is not a matter of looking harder or more closely, but of seeing what frames our seeing" (Drake, 2010: 16). In this way I realised at first that I tried a little too hard to ‘frame’ the way the data was seen by utilising an established framework, rather than allowing a little more fluidity to “allow the data to speak through me, rather than at me” (Blair, 2015: 19). I also appreciate that I needed to give myself more time to let the research process develop more organically, without feeling the need to categorise every aspect of the process. I did learn to relax more and be less prescriptive during the latter interviews, where I relied less on the interview schedule and more on my own reflexivity in the moment. In this way I enabled my experience both as a marketer and a researcher to inform the structure and flow of the questions more flexibly. As a result the interviews felt much more like a natural process of co-construction between two people with shared experiences. In this regard I felt that the highest possible levels of rigour and quality were maintained, as is reiterated briefly within the next section.

Quality considerations

Three measures and approaches, relevant to qualitative methods were implemented (Moravcsik, 2014). In particular, theoretical transparency was applied to ensure the clear communication of research design decisions – such as the ontological, epistemological and axiological convictions (Flick, 2008). Procedural transparency is thus evident within the transparent outline of research processes and decisions made: data collection and examples of data analysis procedures. Additionally empirical transparency is applied through the descriptions and details of the organisational cases together with ethical factors and inclusion of empirical evidence in support of the findings (Silverman, 2011; Bluhm et al, 2011; Seale et al, 2004).

It is also argued the processes by which the interview data is generated should be a topic for exploration too. Silverman (2013: 238) suggests through interviews “we *open up* for analysis the *culturally rich methods* through which interviewers and interviewees, *in concert* generate *plausible* accounts of the world.” The process of exchange between the researcher and interviewee perhaps may combine the two approaches during an interview. This may enrich the experience for both parties while generating a process of ongoing reflexivity for both individuals (Schwandt, 1994). In this instance my being experienced in the professional field, but also an independent PhD researcher seemed to help the interviewees relax as if they were talking to a like-minded individual, but who also had the independence of not being their immediate colleague. Arguably the embodied dynamics as outlined above such as, the location where the interview takes place and whether it is recorded may also have an influence on the nature of the dialogue between the researcher and interviewee. Whether or not the location of the interview contributes to or hinders the individual’s process of constructing and making sense of their experiences was considered, as well as whether recording the interview may make interviewee’s more self-conscious and therefore less participative. Potentially taking the interviewee away from their organisational setting may encourage more sensemaking by the individual (Weick, 1995), although realistically decisions relating to location and timing are much more likely to be based on individual commitments and availability. As such I was guided by each of the participant’s preferences as to when and where the interviews took place. In all cases they occurred in the organisational setting, most commonly within a leisure area, such as the company coffee shop or within a meeting room in order to allow for more privacy and openness of dialogue. The atmosphere was fairly relaxed and none of the individuals objected to the interview being recorded.

Ethical considerations

As described above the identification of suitable participants for this study was central to achieving the richest possible set of data. In each instance initial contact was made with potential participants via e-mail. Once the contact was identified a one page summary of the study, often described as a “participant’s information sheet” (Saunders et al, 2009: 597) was sent to aid transparency and clarity and gain informed consent. The information provided was a succinct and an authentic account of what the study was about, why it would be beneficial for the organisation to partake, plus it outlined the rigorous ethical approval process that was undertaken through the University. This summary was intended to instil confidence and also ensure that the initial contact and any further participants were clear that their confidentiality and that of the organisation was protected at all times. Both the organisation and the participants were given pseudonyms (see table 4.1) so as to conceal their identity within the following findings and analysis chapters, although one organisation is revealed within the tweet examples, as they gave permission. Primarily, only the type of organisation was revealed, while any distinguishing characteristics are omitted. In terms of ethical adherence, the thesis subscribes to the notion of beneficence. As Orb et al, (2001: 95) states:

> …if researchers are maintaining the principle of beneficence (doing good for others and preventing harm), overseeing the potential consequences of revealing participant’s identities is a moral obligation.

This principle applies equally to any participant who wished to withdraw before or after the interview was undertaken. If any data had been collected prior to withdrawal, reassurance was given that it would be effectively disposed of. In all instances where data is taken, it is entitled to remain secure, confidential and anonymous. These details are reinforced within the PhD research interview consent form, which each of the participants is required to read and sign in the presence of the researcher to ensure complete transparency. Although there is nothing within the agreement that specifies where the interview must take place there is formal approval for it to be recorded.

Having completed the interviews the next stage was to start analysing the data as explained below.

Analysis of the interviews and coding practices

Having confirmed that the interview data will provide the focus for the empirical findings, the next stage is to explain the analysis of the interview data. The Elliott and Robinson (2014) framework was confirmed to be only useful for categorising the tweet data. Although, as highlighted, it was also utilised to develop the interview questions and themes. As such the interview data required a different analytical tool. Thus, the narrative viewpoint adopted in this thesis, as outlined in Chapter Three, examines organisations as phenomenon, which is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Accordingly, as was also alluded to in the earlier section (Chapter Three), this enables the DOS to effectively ‘tell’ the official story, in a way that can be understood by the intended Twitter audience. Therefore, as previously argued storytelling enables sensemaking practices in a constant process of understanding between self and others (Boje, 1991; Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). Aligning also with the abductive approach, the analysis needs to be driven by the interview data, but also by the theories within the literature review, in a continuous process of review, back and forth between theory and empirical data (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010; Wodak and Meyer, 2001). It is argued therefore abductive reasoning will allow an opportunity to ‘select’ the most appropriate explanation from competing interpretations of the data collected (Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013). In this way, awareness and interpretation is seen as an ‘ongoing conversation’ between the existing theories and my previous experience with the research. It is also suggested that language between employee and researcher is a means of creating, rather than reflecting phenomenon (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000, Alvesson, 2003). Therefore the process of referring back to the theory (relating specifically to online marketing work as a form of identity work, made sense of through storytelling) and looking ahead at the empirical data, should therefore inform a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied, as well as providing new insights/knowledge (Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013).

The focus within the literature review is on identity construction within the empirical context of marketing. Specifically there is an emphasis on understanding the online marketing work the DOS does as a form of identity work. Therefore, firstly the processes of identity work within the DOS stories were identified, and analysed using coding (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The coding words and phrases were generated directly from the interview text, utilising "descriptive codes" (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 57) relating to the DOS descriptions of the work they do – such as engaging, participating and personalising. This was quite a lengthy process as initially I started with at least 70 different codes, including words and phrases related to the work they do and it then necessitated narrowing these down by reading and then re-reading the transcribed interview scripts and checking for duplication in the coding process. I treated every account of a work process related to Twitter, as a story. In this sense any experience of planning, writing or actually communicating the tweets online, as well as perceptions of the work itself and its intended impact on the online audience was included. This helped to combine experiences as physical, including action phrases, such as planning and also intrinsic intentions or perceptions such as engaging, which provided greater insights into their individual sensemaking processes also. The codes have also been categorised within three sequential parts, which relate to early experiences, medium term experiences and longer-term and future experiences for the DOS. I have therefore produced a table detailing the codes used in describing the identity work they do alongside the number of identity work stories told, that contain these terms or phrases (See Appendix Eight).

Once this initial analysis was undertaken, the next stage was to re-review the existing literature in conjunction with the empirical data, so as to explicate the importance of identity work in this research and to expand current thinking in this field (Van Maanen et al, 2007). In particular the aim of the analysis was to understand the identity construction processes of the DOS, which explores the stages and influences within tweet creation (Langley et al, 2013) from their experience. The emphasis within Langley's paper is an examination of phenomenon over duration and specifically how it evolves, alters and develops. There isn't quite the same emphasis on turning points and how you can identify these from the data within this thesis. Rather here the emphasis is on process research focusing on sequential developments of actions as the means of more easily making sense of them. For example the process of writing the tweets is an emerging phenomenon that is examined here from the basis of what the authors (DOS) say about the process of writing them. In addition the attribution of meaning is shared mutually between the observer and the observed (Silverman, 2011). This is an important point as in this sense the experiences already have meaning, but the main focus within the next three chapters will be on providing rich and convincing evidence for the conceptual framework of processes.

Summary

Within this chapter I have explained the methodology. I started by outlining my ontological and epistemological convictions as those that reside in a social constructionist and interpretivist paradigm. I also explained my axiological convictions as abductive, outlining how I see the need for continuous reflection on theory and empirics conjointly (Wodak, 2004:188; Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013). This paradigm and my espoused worldview informed the methodology, the employed methods and also the process of analysing the data.

I also discussed the structure and purpose of the methodology, as the means to generate data to answer the research questions, which relates to an understanding as to how the DOS brings an organisation into being online. Given the suggested processual, sensemaking nature of the work that the DOS does, I have also presented the case for adopting a qualitative case related approach. This is because the data for the research question and related areas of study for this thesis is embedded in an understanding of lived experience, which cannot be gleaned from quantitative numbered analysis alone. I then told the story of my original intention to combine two methods of qualitative analysis: tweet data and storytelling interviews from five B2B organisations. The process of collecting and analysing tweet data utilising an established corporate identity framework was discussed. Then the reasons for utilising only the interview data were explained, along with details of the reasons for amending the research questions to reflect this slightly different focus. The ethics of examining interviews through storytelling was also considered.

I then outlined the means to analyse the interview data using coding, specifically descriptive phrases relating to identity work that originated from the empirical data itself, but which were also present in the theoretical literature. Primarily the aim of the analysis was to identify the online identity/marketing work processes that the DOS undertakes in bringing the organisation into being and sustaining the online organisational presence. I also wanted to better understand both the physical actions and the mental perspectives of the identity work that they do. These explorations of the theoretical concepts emerging from the storytelling interviews will form the basis for the empirical analysis within the next three chapters.

Chapter Five - Creating identity: From apprentice to specialist storytellers

Introduction: Basis for the empirical discussion

In order to explain how I will set out my empirical findings from this data collection, I will firstly describe some of the points of similarity and difference of the interview data. This should help to illustrate some of the ways that the DOS made sense of their experiences.

There were widespread similarities in the stories that were told about online identity work. Sometimes the similarities were linked to age, seniority and also the length of time the DOS had been with an organisation. For example those who were younger and less experienced were more enthusiastic about the progress they had made from tentative early online identity work on Twitter to longer-term and future preparations. They were also much more willing to take risks and experiment online. Perhaps as they are more used to using a range of SNS technology outside of work. The DOS whom had been with the organisation longer, and were therefore older were less enthused, more regimented in their descriptions and increasingly cynical in their perceptions. In this sense, experience within the organisation had some impact upon processes of online marketing work.

The DOS spoke about a range of topics from how they planned the tweets, engaged their followers in conversations and also aimed to protect the online organisational presence. It was clear when I spoke to the DOS, that many were very passionate, enthusiastic and engaged in the work that they did. These employees were usually those that had online working as a priority objective within their job role. However, for others it has less priority, as compared with other more traditional marketing tasks, such as answering media queries, organising events and writing marketing text for advertisements or product brochures. Also, some of the DOSs were only aligned with, rather than part of the marketing team on a day-to-day basis, such as those working within the customer services department.

Given that there are different and similar perspectives expressed by the DOS, which I have referred to very briefly above, I have decided to group the processes of identity work for the DOS into three categories, or conceptual abstractions, within the findings section: Creating identity: From apprentice to specialist storytellers, Shaping and guiding identity: From provocative to persuasive storytellers and Sustaining identity: From preserving to 'friending' storytellers. These are in some regards representative of the chronological journey that the DOS experiences. From early formality, where they strive to be principally 'online experts', speaking on behalf of the organisation, utilising Twitter as another communications' medium through to more accomplished, less formal online provoking and more personalised 'friending' activities. Questioning, coaxing, enticing (forms of online provoking) and 'friending' (communicating with the online audience as if they were friends, in a similar way to how SNSs are used for personal purposes) are phrases the DOS used to make sense of and explain the processes utilised by them to update the

Twitter accounts. In the main they are strategies to encourage engagement with the intended Twitter audience.

The structure for this chapter, is broken down into three main sections: Online apprenticing, Progressing from online apprenticing to online specialising and Online specialising. Online apprenticing is a term that I have originated to describe how the DOS initially reported to me the processes involved when starting to bring the online organisation into being. The majority of the DOSs have quite a lot of experience in marketing work, but they describe how they had very limited experience of online marketing work when they first became responsible for the organisational Twitter page. Online specialising is a term that emerges from the data, as will be illustrated further into this chapter, and can be described as the process when the DOS is able to competently provide expert information, advice and support about the organisation and its products or services within the tweets, for the benefit of the intended online Twitter audience.

Online apprenticing describes the initial online marketing processes undertaken by the DOS, when they start in their role. Initially there is uncertainty as to how to create and manage the online organisational presence, which challenges their previously constructed identities as competent and experienced (offline) marketers. Due to a lack of established guidelines or written processes all of the DOSs have to learn how to construct the online organisation through ‘doing the job’, which helps them to make sense of what they need to do.

Activities that highlight how the DOS progresses from online apprenticing to online specialising are the focus of the second section of this chapter. In particular, there is a noticeable difference in experience and approach by the DOS who have been with the organisation over a longer period as they have spent longer periods undertaking experimental online marketing work. As such their online specialising is described as a process that has developed over time, often by them learning from mistakes. In contrast, the newer DOS expressed a desire to improve the previously created online organisational presence, in order to quickly establish themselves as online specialists.

The third section, online specialising, focuses principally upon three key perspectives on maintaining online specialising processes. The first of these is ‘identity association’, where the DOS establishes their identity as an online specialist by aligning themselves with other experts, either in or outside the organisation. The second category, in comparison, includes the conceptualisation of ‘identity play’, which enables identity experimentation for the DOS with identity presentations, to better meet the needs of their intended audience. The third approach sets out how the DOS describe seeking validation from the imagined online audience responses, which helps them to see their work as valuable and worthwhile.

Online apprenticing

Within this first section, I establish that the DOS initially sees the undertaking of online marketing work as a challenge and in some instances as a threat, to their established professional identities. To substantiate this, I then discuss three specific challenges when the DOS first undertake online marketing work: lack of written or verbal guidance from senior managers/colleagues, lack of training, and the complex nature of the B2B product portfolio for online communication. This impacts upon how the DOS do their identity work and also how they try to give sense to the online Twitter audience. The strategies the DOS uses to make sense of and manage these challenges are varied and discursive, depending on experience and length of time with the organisation and the product portfolio, and can be summarised principally as experimenting and testing new ideas, or "learning through doing" (Parsons, 2010: 294).

Getting started

One of the ways a DOS described the initial process of bringing the organisation into being online, via the tweets, was *"exciting* but also a bit *daunting"* (Fiona, social media marketing content manager, Orion Communications, emphasis added). Initially she explains there is uncertainty how to bring the online organisation into being via Twitter. As illustrated within the following examples, this is because it challenges her and others' previously established identity construction as a confident [offline] marketer.

For example Fiona, who is an experienced marketer, but less experienced in online marketing work, highlights her doubts and also how the lack of written or verbal guidance and established online marketing processes within her organisation, impacts upon the way she felt, and therefore also her identity work:

> Initially I suppose it was a bit like going back to the early days of working in marketing. I didn't really know what I was doing or how I was supposed to do it, and there was no written guidance, no tried and tested processes to follow and no specific training - exciting, but also a bit daunting. But I soon got started, experimenting and testing out new ways of communicating the organisation in the tweets using images, descriptions and links.

What is suggested by Fiona's words above and was borne out across all the DOSs I interviewed is the lack of any consistent or established written processes to help bring the online organisation into being via Twitter, for any of the five organisations. Fiona likens the experience of not knowing what to do, as similar to how she felt at the start of her career. She relates back to a past identity as a junior marketer, because she reports feeling unsure how to communicate in an online environment. However she quickly strives to appropriate this threat to her identity by using her established marketing experience to start the process of "learning through doing" (Parsons, 2010: 294) and finding new ways to present the organisation online.

Learning, whilst doing the job is also how Rebecca, marketing assistant, Forsdyke Industrial and Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions, overcome their uncertainty when faced with undertaking online marketing work via Twitter, for the first time. Rebecca has limited understanding about the process of how to communicate via Twitter initially and the product portfolios, which are primarily industrialised fans and air ventilation systems, also intimidate her:

> I found it really difficult at first, especially as no-one else in the organisation had been directly responsible for Twitter before, it was just a bit ad-hoc and now I need to make it work. I knew nothing about industrialised fans when I started as I was from a music and jewellery background and even less about how to use Twitter – but I just had to learn on the job really, which is made more difficult by the very public nature of social media.

As such she reports a desire to quickly know more about both aspects of online marketing work, which includes a better understanding of the organisation's product portfolio and the Twitter format itself. Also as Rebecca confirms she is the first person to really take responsibility for managing Twitter every day within the organisation, as it has not been given priority before. In this sense she described feeling more personal responsibility for making the Twitter page successful, but was not completely sure what that meant. Her comments conjure up a sense that she is unsure how to adapt her previous marketing experience to focus on bringing an entirely different organisation into being online. This doubt is exemplified by the public nature of the organisation's Twitter account and the lack of any guidance as to what to do and also what would be considered a successful outcome.

Experienced marketer, Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions also comments on how a lack of guidance and training on what he needed to do, impacted on the identity work he undertook:

> So with regards to training I've not had anyone specifically sit down with me and say, 'this is how to use Twitter'…it has been very much about me developing my own understanding, experimenting through the activity I've done and the stuff I've been involved in. It has very much been the case of learning as I go along, but I think that has been the same for a lot of people working in social media.

However, Andrew seems less surprised or concerned by the lack of guidance. He suggests it is simply the nature of online marketing work, particularly social media management, due to its recent introduction into B2B marketing practice. In the absence of written and verbal guidance, "learning through doing" (Parsons, 2010: 294), is again reported to me as the best way for the DOSs to make sense of the work that is required. Therefore, what Rebecca and Andrew highlight was also evident from the majority of the DOSs that I spoke to, is that they are some of the first individuals to take complete responsibility for managing the online organisational presence via Twitter.

Experienced marketer, Simon Peterson, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones, who has been with the organisation for just a few months, also reiterates the organisation's reliance on him to bring the organisation into being online, through his self-directed 'doing' of the work, which allows him to make sense of what he needs to do:

> Training, no *nothing at all internally*, but I would obviously keep up to date with the latest online and Twitter trends, tips and advice through *my own research and reading*, not as part of a course or anything like that and not just because it is my job, but because I really *enjoy anything digital* and I liked the idea of a fresh challenge. (Emphasis added).

He also confirms he enjoys the nature of the work, but also importantly that he sees the process of becoming adept at online marketing work as his personal responsibility.

Others express concern that undertaking online marketing work or "learning by doing" (Parsons, 2010: 294) threatens their already established professional identity within the organisation. Sarah, customer services manager, Sonic Business Solutions, is affiliated with the marketing team to answer some queries and complaints via Twitter. She is worried about the lack of guidance and online marketing training when she starts as she feels it impacts upon her ability to make sense of and complete the work effectively, like she would her 'normal' job:

> I had no idea what I was doing when I started and there was no one to ask really. Training wasn't offered, as there was no one experienced to provide it. I'm in customer services and I didn't know how to use Twitter, but marketing needed me engaging with customers to stop the complaints and queries escalating really. So I did it, not very well though, not like my normal job.

Sarah makes sense of the process of starting online marketing work as something she has to do. It is outside her comfort zone and her control. As she explains, Sarah works in customer services and therefore undertakes online marketing work under some duress, because she has been asked to protect the organisational identity by stopping negative comments from members of the online Twitter audience having an impact. She therefore chooses to reiterate her expert customer services' identity, while distancing herself initially from the less competent marketer identity, as she learns what she needs to do.

Another DOS that has been with his organisation longer seems less concerned about learning online marketing work processes as he goes along. Having been with Forsdyke Industrial for more than 20 years, John, operational marketing manager is much more comfortable making sense of and undertaking online marketing work without specific training, as this is the way it has always been *"here"* (emphasis added):

> So to be honest there is no right or wrong answer, you're always learning as you go along here, making decisions and hope they turn out okay. I guess a lot of marketing is sort of intuition, testing things out and so I wouldn't necessarily expect any training or guidance, and that's the same for the digital market.

He makes sense of the online marketing work he needs to do based on previous experience primarily of the organisation. As is illustrated within the following examples the DOS uses various means such as their previous experience, other professional roles and interest to make sense of and give sense to their online marketing work, in the early stages. The nature of online marketing work via Twitter was not specifically given sense by other more senior organisational members or through established practices or procedures; therefore, it does put more emphasis on the DOS. Therefore what we see initially in the next section is a dependence on more traditional offline marketing work to start the process of bringing the organisation into being online, due to this lack of training and established guidance.

Progressing from online apprenticing to online specialising

This section focuses on the DOS describing what they did when initially trying to create content for the organisational Twitter site, which is the second main dimension that specifies creating identity, as a key categorisation derived from my empirical analysis. This includes the initial preparatory work, producing a description of the organisation and choosing a visual image for the top of the Twitter page, the online organisational presence, as well as planning and writing the tweets. Initially the DOS that have been with their organisations over a longer period rely on their experience of established offline marketing work practices to help them in making sense of the required online marketing work. However, those that are more recently appointed start to adopt a more confident experimental approach, which includes a desire to express aspects of their individual identities (name) on the Twitter page and less formal communication within the tweets in order to create a more engaging and 'human' organisational identity online. Accordingly, all of them are starting to transition from online apprentices to online specialists by making key decisions and taking responsibility for the tone, style and content of the tweets.

As such creating identity, and specifically where the DOS progresses from online apprenticing to online specialising, is achieved and divided into two sections: traditional marketing work and balancing preferred identities. Achieving online specialising through traditional marketing work describes the way in which the DOS draws from their previous experience as offline marketers in order to feel more confident when undertaking online marketing work initially. In comparison, balancing preferred identities outlines how the DOS gives priority to the most appropriate aspect of self to deliver the message within the tweet.

The process of creating the online organisation through Twitter starts for the DOS with either the creation of, or a review of the current Twitter template, which helps them to create their online organisational presence (see Figure 4.1 and 4.2 in the Methodology chapter) and below (Figure 5.1). I start this section with a generic reminder of the layout of the Twitter page – see Figure 5.1:

Figure 5.1: Example of a generic Twitter template

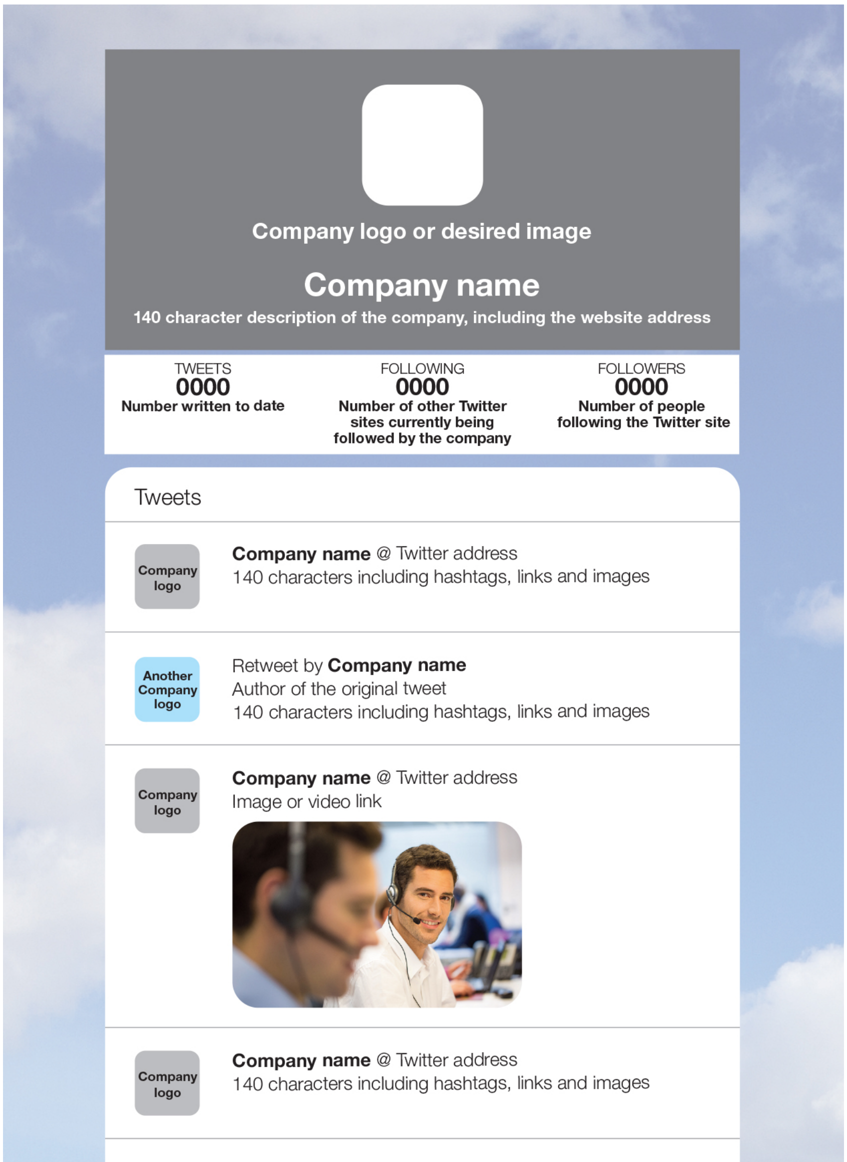


Figure 5.1: At the top of the Twitter template is a visual image, often the company logo, and a brief 140-character description of the organisation. This is an important aspect of the online organisational presence, as it is the main visual and descriptive representation of the online organisation via Twitter (The Twitter Glossary, 2016a).

Online specialising through traditional marketing work

There is a notable difference in approach by those DOSs that have been with the organisation longer and therefore they set up their Twitter pages and started creating the tweets when less was known about online marketing work. John, operational marketing manager, Forsdyke Industrial was originally responsible for creating his organisation's Twitter page in July 2011, although in his words he was just "dabbling" (testing out) a possible online identity for the organisation initially:

> For us as a company Twitter is relatively new. I set up the page originally, because I suggested it was something we needed to be doing, engaging better with customers online. I was just 'dabbling' really, so I just copied the logo and text from the website and put it at the top of the Twitter page, so *at least the organisational identity was consistent*. (Emphasis added)

Due to his long and established history with the organisation, John is confident to advocate Twitter as another means to engage with customers. However when it comes to the process of designing the Twitter page, he opts for a safe and consistent option by utilising the established organisational logo and text from the website. Therefore, what we see through John's comments is an example of him projecting a preferred self, as someone who is cutting edge, willing to suggest new things and 'dabble.' However in reality through his actions, he safely maintains his established identity within the organisation, by using marketing material that he knows is already acceptable and used elsewhere. Similarly, Andrew aims to demonstrate his online specialising at first by relying on traditional marketing work within the online context:

> When I set up the original Twitter page I just included the logo and a bit of blurb (text) from our statement of accounts. This seemed fine at first. It was very much about driving out the message to those people who are already customers to help retain them…but also for those people who may want to find out a bit more about us.

He uses existing printed marketing material in order to reconstitute the offline organisation online, without making any significant changes. This provides stability for Andrew, at first, as he continues to project his experienced offline professional identity, online. This gives him more time to make sense of online marketing practices and also give sense to the intended Twitter audience.

Similarly, Karen, Group communications manager, Sunrise Healthcare, originally set up the Twitter page in 2009, and she now works closely with Tim, who started in 2012 to maintain it. She also admits a reliance on her previous experience of offline marketing work to demonstrate online specialising when writing the tweets, in the early days:

> My early tweets would really make me cringe now, as it is obvious I was just cutting and pasting old press releases into 140 characters with a logo and expecting this content to be really engaging for our customers. I wasn't really clear what the purpose was. These days we think a lot more about what we write demonstrating what we specialise in …regularly offering links within the tweets on how to manage serious long-term conditions such as dementia, cancer and arthritis.

Initially, Karen focuses on using her previous marketing experience to create the tweets. More recently however she acknowledges a desire to make a difference by sharing up to date advice on how to manage some very serious health conditions when bringing the organisation into being online. Thus, over time, she acknowledges a greater need for balance between individual, organisational and social identities. She is also able to create online specialising practices, through providing advice and guidance to the intended Twitter audience. Also her personal and social identity as part of the marketing team is conjoined through her repeated use of “we” as opposed to the singular “my” of her earlier comments. This “we” she confirms refers sometimes to her and Tim, and at other times her and the organisation. Her online marketing work in this sense has become more consistent and balanced now that she has identified a purpose for the tweets, to support the intended audience with their serious health issues. In the beginning she was less clear as to the purpose, which is why she put in limited effort.

Such a transition to online specialising where individual and organisational interests may be more effectively balanced through online marketing work is also reflected in Philip’s comments. As a Senior manager, marketing, at Clark Spencer Jones, he highlights that over time he has completely changed his approach to writing the tweets, from traditional marketing work processes, to a more proactive and interactive approach, which demonstrates more confidence and expertise:

> When they first started the Twitter account if somebody had of come back and asked us a question it would have gone unnoticed until the next press

> release went out. But over time we have tried to ask the questions, to be a bit provocative. Last night we hosted a social media event. Two or three people who attended got involved in the conversation during the event …I think it takes a certain mindset, to show that level of expertise, when updating Twitter 'live' – but obviously I can't be at every event.

Interestingly, Philip now distances himself from his early efforts at bringing the organisation into being online, by using the term *"they"* (emphasis added). However latterly as he becomes more experienced and confident in online specialising, he is better able to engage the online audience. He also suggests it is a more personal experience for the DOS, and that a certain mindset is required, which makes him better able to do it. Philip also comments on the need for a DOS to be physically present at events in order to manage more effective conversations with the intended audience, online. This relates to a need for the DOS to combine physical and virtual identity sometimes through online marketing work, which is an area that I will return to in more detail in Chapter Six.

Online specialising achieved through negotiating preferred identities

When the DOS who are more recently appointed start with the organisation, they reported to me the Twitter page for the organisation had already been created. Many of these felt the initial design and representation of the organisation online could be improved and that they wanted to establish themselves quickly as online specialists. What is borne out in the three comments below from Rebecca, Simon and Suzi is their desire to engage in online specialising in order to establish a preferred identity as online experts, which is also reflected in the more detailed comments on the coming pages:

> I really want to make an impact…to be the expert on Twitter for our customers. (Rebecca, marketing assistant, Forsdyke Industrial)

It is clear from Rebecca's comment that she sees appearing to be the 'expert' as her preferred identity, through her online marketing work, as the means to create an impact with the intended online audience. Similarly, Simon, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones, also suggests 'specialising' is the means to encourage engagement with the intended audience online: "I've got to offer something…expertise, guidance, support or why would people read the tweets." As such he outlines a need to provide a reason for them to read the tweets that is beneficial and insightful. Suzi, customer experience consultant, Orion Communications, outlines a slightly different approach through her online marketing work, which includes specific targets, such as answering complaints and increasing engagement through enquiries, which both require expertise.

> I'm here to answer complaints and where possible raise those enquiry numbers and increase the revenue… this can be done if we have the answers, you know we are seen to be the experts…

Therefore, at least presenting an identity as the 'expert,' is seen by several of them to be their preferred means to communicate experience and something of value, such as guidance and also the answer to complaints. As a result the DOS that have only recently been appointed by their organisation, describe how they have suggested making changes and wanted to contribute to amending the original Twitter page design. This is an attempt to make the online organisational presence feel more aligned to their interpretation of the organisation and their individual identity, as the author of the tweets. For example when Tim, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare first started working with Karen, group communications manager on updating Twitter, he suggested that including the names of those responsible within the organisation for tweeting and managing content at the top of the Twitter page would help to give the organisation more of a 'personality' which would encourage the online audience to engage with them as online experts for the organisation. He comments:

> When I started I thought the Twitter page didn't really represent how I saw the organisation as being experts in what we do, as well as being caring and friendly. The logo and the description seemed quite cold and corporate. I think it is important that the organisation has a personality on Twitter or customers won't engage – which I suppose is partly mine and partly Karen's. I suggested having Karen and I named at the top of the page, so it is clear that there are people who care behind the logo.

Tim reports that he needs to include his own name in order to personalise the identity of the organisation via Twitter. He is consciously projecting his preferred image of self and the organisation as 'experts who are caring and friendly' as part of his online marketing work. By choosing the conscious amalgamation of professional and individual identity (name) on Twitter, he thinks this will help to ensure the intended audience is more engaged with what they are communicating. This is because, potentially the nature of the online environment, if the DOS is given sufficient autonomy, provides greater opportunities for this merging of the individual and organisational into an online 'hybrid' identity (Meijer and Torenvlied, 2014).

Similarly, being able to customise the Twitter page to include something that aligns individual and organisational identity, a theme that I will come back to within the discussion, creates a sense of balance for Natalie, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications. She tells a story about how she chose the image for her organisation's Twitter page:

> I get quite a bit of input into the emerging design aspect of Twitter. I even suggested including one of my favourite paintings to support an existing marketing theme the 'Art of connectivity'. To me this is a better way of showing our expertise, but also that we can be creative. I *never* thought I would get that one through though (laughs). (Emphasis added)

She is delighted when she is able to include an image of the girl with the pearl earring painting by 17th-century Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer as the temporary image and theme on the top of the Twitter site. Through her online marketing work she is able to align self, her interests, with organisational needs and the marketing theme. Although, she sees this achievement as surprising, it is still pleasing to her when she is able to do this, as it is the means for her to integrate an aspect of her personal identity, which pleases her. Thus, integrating personal identity preferences into online marketing work, as this example shows can bring happiness and a feeling of ownership, as an aspect of self is integrated into the online organisational presence.

Rebecca, marketing assistant, Forsdyke Industrial, also reports being able to highlight a combination of formal communication with a more personalised approach, when she reports her experiences of online specialising through the tweets she writes:

> With some tweets to show our expertise, it is very much copy and paste from the website for new products, but there are other things, a smaller part maybe, where you do try to be slightly more chatty and personable especially when we are promoting new job roles, as we want to seem engaging and friendly, so people want to work here, there is a bit of personality in there. It is sometimes good to have more of a personal feel to these things as it brings it back more to reality, more like we are a real organisation that just happens to also be online.

Through her online marketing work she comments on the process of specially adapting her tone and style depending on the subject of the tweet in order to present a preferred self. As such there is fluidity in self-presentation, a theme that I will come back to in Chapters Six, Seven and the discussion (Chapter Eight). So for example, when announcing new products more formalised, communication is suitable. But when encouraging members of the Twitter audience to apply for a job with the company, she suggests aspects of individual identity, are required to seem friendlier. Through her identity work, the priority is given to the most appropriate aspect of self to deliver the message effectively, which links to literature on project of the self, where the individual responds reflexively to specific activities in an ongoing process of creating and sustaining self-identity, (Giddens,1991; Taylor, 1989). This idea of maintaining a balance between informative organisation-led specialising and personable customer-focussed communication within the tweets over time is also reiterated by Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions. He outlines the style, tone and variety of the tweets he has been writing more recently:

> The way we write our tweets really is quite broad, so it may be a testimonial…or a case study…It varies, but specifically with Twitter our expertise is customer service, delivering the best and ensuring that any queries or comments are answered and turned around very quickly. Over time this means a more personal approach than you would normally see in printed marketing collateral… By this I mean more human, not that horrible corporate tone I've heard from call centres, when it is obvious the company doesn't care at all.

Andrew aims to maintain a balance through his online marketing work, ensuring that he provides online specialising through informative and factual information in testimonials and case-studies, while also maintaining a more 'personal approach' when engaging more directly with specific members of the intended Twitter audience. More significantly, he discusses the need to sound 'human', which is an individual quality, rather than maintaining a 'corporate, organisational, tone'.

Over time the DOS describes progressing to more sophisticated processes of online specialising via Twitter. This includes planned processes of coordinating or writing blogs, included as a link from within the tweets. They achieve this by utilising the specialist knowledge of colleagues and also external experts such as freelance copywriters, in order to write topic specific blogs. The links to the blogs, are embedded within the tweets that the DOS writes, as is discussed within the next section.

Online specialising

This section examines how the DOS make sense of what they need to do, such as coordinating or writing blogs and how they progress their online specialising as a result, which is the third main dimension that specifies creating identity, as derived from my empirical analysis. For example, the DOS from four of the case study organisations (Orion Communications, Clark Spencer Jones, Sonic Business Solutions and Sunrise Healthcare) described to me how the blogs are written by them and specialists in a particular subject or product area and include: employees, external marketing agencies and journalists. The tweets are then written by the DOS to prompt customers to read the blogs via a link to the organisation's website where they are hosted. This section examines stories from those DOS that write and coordinate the specialist blog content. As the manufacturing company, Forsdyke Industrial doesn't include blogs within their Twitter site – their story of online specialising is focussed on identity association with the online trade journals.

There are three descriptive labels that identify different aspects of the 'online specialising' process: identity association, identity play and identity validation. Identity association as detailed within this section occurs when the DOS associated their identity with that of another specialist, as the means to improve their status with colleagues and the intended online audience. Identity play identifies the possibility for the DOS to experiment and explore presentations of self, outside of expected offline identity presentations when bringing the organisation into being online. In comparison, identity validation refers to the need for the DOS to imagine the responses of the intended Twitter audience. Each concept is discussed in relation to specific data examples below.

Online specialising by identity association

One way that the DOS establish their identity as online specialists over time is through creating an association with other experts either within the organisation or external to it. Lola, head of online adoption and social media, Orion Communications outlines the process of coordinating the blog content and how it has impacted on her processes of online specialising through association:

> One of the ways we work is to have a blog written by Fiona or other members of the organisation, not just marketing, which is the sort of spine of our expert content, and then Twitter is used to promote the content that goes on the blog. I write the tweets or someone in my team does. It is great for me *personally* as I think these blogs have really helped to show *our online expertise*. I also feel like no-one notices who writes the actual blog internally, because they keep saying *I'm* doing a great job sort of coordinating it all and the customers keep retweeting the link! (laughs) (Emphasis added).

Lola benefits from the conscious affiliation of her identity with that of the specialist blog writer. The process of online specialising for the DOS, as we see here in Lola's words and is also highlighted throughout the next few examples therefore includes the conscious merging of their identity with that of the 'real' online specialist to increase their profile, personal value and perceived expertise. This ambiguity within the tweet is of great benefit to Lola personally and professionally, because she is seen as the expert, a fact that she readily embraces because she is receiving positive recognition from her colleagues.

Andrew describes a similar example of online specialising by association through his online marketing work. At Sonic Business Solutions they employ journalists to anonymously write ('ghostwrite') the blogs. Despite this Andrew ensures the content is read thoroughly, as he believes his colleagues and senior managers see him as the online specialist author:

> All the blog content is checked by me before it goes out to ensure it reflects the marketing messages…I am quite anal about ensuring it is accurate…I think most people assume I write it, there is no officially named author, so it reflects on me and how we are engaging with customers out there, so I make sure it is polished…The other day the CEO said 'Good to see the flexible working blog is getting some shares on Twitter' and I thought great, he's noticed…I'm obviously doing something right.

As we see from Andrew's comment, although he does not claim to be the author of the blog, equally he does not deny it is his work, as it enhances his professional identity and perceived expertise with senior managers. Therefore arguably subtle tactics are utilised by Andrew and Lola, such as the conscious ambiguity of the blog author, which is under their control, familiarity with the content through detailed editing/checking to align and in some instances merge their identity online with that of the online specialist, to increase their own perceived expertise.

John, operational marketing manager, Forsdyke Industrial, instigates similar online identity association tactics. He describes ensuring that he is aligned with the quality trade journals through the process of retweeting to enhance his own online specialising:

> I'm not ashamed to say that *I actively retweet the trade journals* or I mention them in a tweet *because it makes me look good*. I'm also hoping they will return the favour. We were on the front cover of 'Modern Building Service' magazine this month – and so I tweeted "Great looking front cover on 'Modern Building Service' magazine this month" – which was a bit tongue in cheek I suppose, but hey *I wanted to look like I knew what the experts were saying about us.* I tweeted them and they retweeted me back eventually, which was great. (Emphasis added).

Through John's online marketing work he is carefully creating, negotiating and navigating his identity to ensure that he is aligned with the specialists in his industry sector. He uses sarcasm to engage with a quality trade journal online. This is an approach that may be classed as unprofessional offline, here however it is reciprocated with a retweet. With few established rules of engagement in place within the online organisational presence, the identity work for the DOS sees them engage more readily in experimental and daring expressions of self, using humour and sarcasm to build relationships.

A different sort of identity association occurs online for Karen, group communications manager, Sunrise Healthcare, when she manages to effectively establish a partnership with a well-known and respected dementia charity online via Twitter. They then work together to jointly write a blog to support a national campaign. She attempts to achieve this online specialising association as she tells the story to me and alludes to briefly below, by undertaking a series of processes that are unique to Twitter. Firstly she follows the national dementia charity, then she continually retweets their posts to show support and then she includes hashtags that are relevant to both organisations to develop synergy within their tweets. However it is when she includes a story within her blog about her own experiences of dementia, as a family member has the condition, that the charity starts following Sunrise Healthcare and the relationship develops. She explains:

> It was a long process to build up the relationship with the charity from initially following them, retweeting, hashtags, but we really needed them on board to give our dementia campaign gravitas. It was my experiences of dementia within one of the earlier blogs that persuaded them to work with us…It was really exciting we had so many retweets, shares and likes and lots of my colleagues mentioned it, it felt great for a few days, generating and creating so much interest in such a worthy cause and being seen as credible, making a difference and not just trying to push services.

As we see from Karen's comments, she utilises her personal experiences to engage effectively with a useful business partner. Again we see the breaking of traditional organisational behaviour taboos through online marketing work processes, where there is less concern about expressing and sharing aspects of individual identity. Karen also comments that work combined with personal interests makes more sense as a 'worthy cause' and therefore she is also better able to give sense to the intended Twitter audience, who respond positively by sharing and retweeting her content. As we see in the next section, who the DOS imagines the online audience to be has a direct impact on their processes of identity construction.

Online specialising through identity play

Identity play in this sense allows for the possibility of identity experimentation and exploration, outside of expected identity presentations and it serves within this section to specify the main dimension of ‘online specialising’. In order to be able to provide specialist information and guidance via Twitter it is arguably important to have a thorough understanding as to whom the intended online Twitter audience are. However, the DOS reported to me that they did not know exactly who their Twitter followers were, although many have made some assumptions based primarily on those they try to target, as the following comments illustrate.

Simon, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones and his colleagues imagine their online audience, based on the types of individuals they try to target:

> So, broadly I see it as *the audiences that we try to target and the tweets we receive*, so it might be *business executives, CEOs, senior financial officers*, those kind of guys. (Emphasis added)

As such a range of roles are encompassed within the intended online audience for Simon. Another DOS, Colin, admits to not being clear as to whom they are liaising with online:

> I don’t think in terms of having any priority customers really, they are all important from the big corporate accounts to the self-employed bloke down the road, mainly because I don’t know exactly who they are (laughs).

What is significant here from these comments is that the majority made assumptions based on who they think their intended online audience is, or whom they would like them to be. Therefore, who they ‘imagine’ they are directly impacts upon how they produce the tweets and therefore also how they construct their online identities. As illustrated within this section, the DOS demonstrates they are far more likely to ‘play’ and experiment with different personas online in order to better undertake online specialising and connect with their intended Twitter audience. For example Rebecca, marketing assistant, Forsdyke Industrial, constructs her identity online as *‘the guy next door’:*

> When I write *on Twitter I aim to be ‘the guy next door’* because I think that’s what our customers need to hear and who they are used to engaging with and sometimes you get *better interaction* when you do that and because of the types of things that we do use it for, you know like product information – so I don’t think that if it was really the voice of a marketing person it would have much legibility with people…where possible we try to sound friendly and non-corporate experts, if that makes sense. (Emphasis added).

Rebecca makes a purposeful decision to construct her identity differently online, within the constraints of her professional identity and also whom she perceives the online audience will connect with. Suzi, customer experience consultant, Orion Communications, works in marketing two days a week to help coordinate their social media channels, including Twitter. She also takes on another identity online and comments:

> I am trying to defuse problems and answer complaints and queries quickly on Twitter with minimum damage to the company so *I try to be quite Mumsy*, to show the confident expert, but also the caring side of the company and me I suppose. (Emphasis added).

Suzi adopts a personal individual identity online because it is a role she is familiar with outside of work and because she hopes it makes her and the organisation sound more supportive. This approach is also more suitable for diffusing and managing complaints and queries arguably, which is the main aspect of her online marketing work.

The DOS involved in online specialising through writing the blogs also describe Twitter as an experimental area where they have more freedom to try out possible future identities, which are more enjoyable and intuitive potentially. For example Simon, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones, describes how he imagines he is talking to an old friend, through the style and tone of his tweets:

> I know we need to be providing expert information, guidance and support, but *the temptation* is to always try and be quite conversational, like you are in a cafe, talking to an old friend. I was trying to get our followers to click on the link to the blog, so I put something like *“Give it a go, thanks guys.”* One of my colleagues who saw the tweet was surprised by my casual approach and said, *“oh, so we are using guys now are we?”* I’d just put it without

> even thinking, it's that sort of thing, Twitter, part of the organisation, but also sort of separate. (Emphasis added).

It is significant here that Simon is 'tempted' to utilise informal language, which reveals more of his own personality, but that at least one of his colleagues finds it strange. This highlights that the nature of the online organisational space that Twitter creates, is aligned with, but also separate from the physical organisation, which encourages the DOS to approach their identity work differently. As Simon confirms he approaches conversations informally without too much consideration, as the most effective means to build relationships and in this instance prompt action, such as asking the online audience to read a blog.

Also Fiona, social media marketing content manager, Orion Communications outlines the vigorous offline marketing work approval processes are not usually required for online content, which provides an opportunity for 'play':

> So I published a piece of research recently on the call centre of the future, that paper went through a vigorous approval process with the head of marketing. I then have *a real opportunity to play…sometimes I even try to add a little humour…* rather than just ticking the corporate boxes. (Emphasis added).

This approach potentially offers more chances to humanise the online organisation through the DOS and their personal experimentation, as well as breaking down old taboos and barriers, such as using humour in organisational communications. As she explains:

> At the end of the day it is my work [my baby] this initiative and how people want to access it on Twitter will be vastly different to how they read it if they go to the trouble of downloading the full report. It is my responsibility to make it exciting, well interesting at least. If no-one clicks on it I then feel as if I could have done more to make it sound appealing.

Having the freedom and autonomy to experiment with the tweet writing opens up new opportunities for Fiona where she is able to make sense and give sense to subjects she cares about (her baby). She is given some temporary control, but also the full responsibility in relation to what she wants to say and how she wants to say it, as such any negative outcomes are also assigned to her to manage.

Similarly, Philip, senior manager, marketing, Clark Spencer Jones is also giving more of himself, when experimenting, using humour and being a little ‘playful’ when bringing the organisation into being online, via Twitter:

> I think it was last year – ‘National Poetry Day’ – it was a really big thing on Twitter one day everyone was tweeting poetry and we did a sort of rhyming couplet. And that was just me sitting there and being a bit bloody minded about it…experimenting. And another time I got a bit more playful with it was the budget – it is big time for us and I was just bringing my personal conversational tone to it, so serious stuff, but also comments like “phew, now that’s all over with, we’re going to go off and crunch some numbers.” People really do see, oh there is a human being there.

He also comments that he is injecting his ‘personal conversational tone’ to the tweets as well as humour as another means to humanise the online organisational presence, which will be discussed more later. This is important as it suggests a style of communication that sounds more personable. Arguably the nature of the online environment provides greater opportunities for this merging of individual and professional identity for the DOS due to less formal control over content approval, as Fiona, Simon and Philip allude to.

Online specialising validated through audience responses

Another way the DOS validates their online specialising is through the imagined online audience responses. For example the way that Natalie, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications, believes the online audience will respond to her tweets and blog, influences her process of identity creation, in a slightly different way. In this example she constructs her blog, which focuses on her and the work she is doing, in order to gain the audience's validation through the number of clicks/views it receives. She describes imagining the audience's responses before she starts writing her blog for Orion Communications:

> When I write my blog it is about me and the work I'm doing… I try to tie in with current news and try to imagine what the *response from the customers* will be. If I don't think they will respond I don't write it, simple as that…. (Emphasis added).

Although the main aspect of her marketing work, writing the blog is completed offline, it is only when it is uploaded online that it can be validated by the reactions of the online audience. In this respect, we see how she needs the intended Twitter audience response rates to establish her identity as an online specialist. Natalie also describes how she authenticates online specialising skills through her organisation's internal monitoring system, which rates the most popular blogs, based on responses through clicks/views from the online Twitter audience. She adds:

> The company also monitor the clicks/views from the blogs and there is a table that is published, showing whose blog was the most popular, which incites a bit of internal competition as everyone wants to be the most popular! *I'm not really bothered about that*. Actually I think *I was in the top ten last year* (she remarks with pride and a knowing smile). This makes me feel that what I'm doing is *worthwhile and that I'm valued somewhere*. (Emphasis added).

Despite initially suggesting she isn't concerned if her work is recognised as 'popular', Natalie subsequently reveals her pride in having a blog (link) in the top ten. Clearly the appreciation of her work from the organisation and its intended Twitter audience, helps to validate her professional identity and online expertise. Also receiving feedback especially face-to-face gives recognition to Natalie personally making her feel that her work is worthwhile. The intended Twitter audience validate the importance of her blog, confirming that they have understood it, and therefore they give sense to her work.

In a similar way Tim tells the story of how the blogs he coordinates with specialist services within his organisation are validated by the online audience and help him give sense to customers about serious health conditions, which can make a real difference to people's lives:

> The blogs are developed very much from what our services are trying to achieve and focus on educating people on MRSA, dementia support, choosing the right healthcare for you, that sort of thing. Sometimes I get a bit carried away on Twitter when representing the organisation… and when people come to me for advice I sometimes actually think I am the specialist and start intervening in service delivery.

Tim is able to make sense of the online specialising work that he does by the reactions of the online audience via Twitter. Within the online environment he is breaking down traditional assigned organisational roles and prescribed service and department barriers, by directly intervening to give sense to customers directly. In this sense the processes of identity work and online specialising allow him to break down barriers and transcend traditional offline referral processes.

This notion of the individual DOS coaxing and enticing the online Twitter audience to explore different aspects of the online organisational presence, is explored in more detail next. Within Chapter Six we see the DOS focussing on processes of shaping and guiding, further experimenting and breaking free of traditional organisational boundaries and role-prescribed identities via their online marketing work, to engage, interact and give sense to themselves and their intended Twitter audience.

Summary

The main contribution of this chapter, which focuses on the DOS progression from an online apprentice to a specialist, is the elaboration of the first three main categorisations that have emerged from my interpretive engagement with the empirical material. The first insight from the categorisation of the DOS as an online apprentice, describes how they initially find the process of bringing the organisation into being online stimulating, but also intimidating, as they lack guidance, training and advice from the organisation. The second insight from the categorisation of the DOS as progressing from apprentice to specialist within the data, shows how they compensate for this, by engaging with traditional marketing work experiences to create the online organisational presence. They also give priority to the most appropriate aspect of self, their preferred identity, to deliver the message and encourage engagement with the intended online audience. The third insight from the categorisation of the DOS as an online specialist, illustrates how they attempt to associate their identity with other specialists to improve their online profile with the intended audience, and their offline profile with colleagues. They also engage in identity play, where they test out temporary experimental personas, as the means to appear sociable in order to engage with the intended online audience. Finally the DOS acknowledges the need to have their identity validated by an imagined other in order to substantiate their online marketing work, to make it seem more worthwhile and valued.

What can be taken forward from this chapter is that the notion of online marketing work as a form of identity work is perceived by the DOS as temporary, complex, but also far less regulated online. In terms of points to take forward into the discussion, there are also some aspects from the literature that are worth drawing attention to here.

How these findings contribute to, contradict and develop existing literature

This chapter on online apprenticing to online specialising practices principally contributes to and develops five areas of existing theory, as covered within the literature review chapters.

Identity and self

Drawing on the sociological, symbolic interactionist perspective on identity suggests that identity formation is not static, it is reflexively and continuously evaluated by the individual in terms of her or his life/work situation and experiences in relation to others (Mead, 1934; Stryker, 1980). In this sense it is suggested that an individual's core understanding of who they are, the 'me', is based on the prearranged attitudes of others that the individual takes on. The other aspect of the self is referred to as the 'I', which is the response of the individual to these attitudes of others (Mead, 1934). Clearly these theories were designed to evaluate the experiences of identity construction during face-to-face interaction. Thus, these theories can be developed for the online context from the empirical data, as there is evidence of an anticipated reciprocation and mutual dependency between the DOS and their intended audience. The anticipated reciprocation is particularly evident within the ‘Online specialising validated through audience responses section’. For example, Natalie Mason, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications confirms that when writing her blog she tries to “imagine what the response from the customers will be” and if she doesn’t think they will respond she states: “I don’t write it, simple as that.” In this sense the DOS suggests they take on the prearranged attitudes of others, their intended audience, by trying to imagine whom they are communicating with and therefore what information they may wish to read. If they do not think the audience will respond, they do not write the content, so in this sense, each is dependent on the other. Thus, it is these prearranged attitudes of their intended audience that shapes the way the DOS brings the online organisation into being, including the blog and tweet content.

Additionally, it is suggested that there are other symbols, other than those exhibited in face-to-face interaction that shapes the DOS response. For example the DOS draws on their experience of what content their intended audience has enjoyed in the past, in order to produce new tweets. In this way the symbols are computer-generated, such as likes, re-tweets and shares, rather than physical face to face cues, such as facial reactions to signify approval or disapproval. In addition there is mutual dependency as the DOS relies on their intended audience to validate the value of their work through these approval processes (likes, shares, retweets). However this is different to the nature of interactions described by Mead (1934) as the DOS does not know exactly who their audience are and they cannot see them or their physical reactions.

Identity work

The literature describes the process of identity work as continuous and intrinsically defined, for example Alvesson et al (2008: 15 emphasis added) describe it as an "ongoing *mental* activity." Watson (2008) in comparison alludes to the process of identity work as having an intrinsic and a social dimension, as well as one that can be defined through speech (conversations) and activities. The empirical data within this chapter suggests a position closer to Watson's (2008) description of identity work. In particular the data illustrates how the initial process of undertaking online marketing work, led the DOS to experience identity issues and challenges. Within existing literature it is also well documented that constructing identity within an organisational context is a struggle (Watson, 2008; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003), and one that threatens existing identity assumptions (Brown and Coupland, 2015). This is frequently attributed to the process of balancing self with the demands of social identities (Watson, 2008; Kreiner et al, 2006) and also because the majority of existing studies examine the processes of identity construction during periods of duress for employees (Wieland, 2010), rather than during everyday tasks. The DOS is seen to be experiencing identity work as a struggle and a threat initially when they first start trying to bring the online organisation into being, due to a lack of guidance and training. They overcame this through “learning by doing” (Parsons, 2010: 294) strategies, due to the absence of established guidance, training and the complex nature of the product portfolio. In this sense the data develops Watson’s (2008) claims by suggesting that identity work is not just a mental process, but that it includes practical, physical processes of doing marketing work. In this sense it is situated and processual as these activities help the individual to work through new experiences that challenge established identities, such as the ‘experienced marketer’, as is illustrated within this chapter, particularly within the section on ‘Getting started’. For example, Fiona Saunders, social media marketing content manager, Orion Communications, suggests initially that she felt she was going back to the beginning of her career, when first undertaking online marketing work. However, by “experimenting and testing out new ways of communicating” she was able to progress. Therefore, the process of ‘doing’ online marketing work is described as one means to stabilise the individual DOS professional identity. In this sense the thesis provides examples of the DOS undertaking marketing work as a form of identity work in order to reinstate a previous more confident expert identity.

Identity and persona

Several studies (van Dijck, 2013; Sillince and Brown, 2009; Watson, 2008; Tracy and Tretheway, 2005) suggest that individuals within organisations purposefully adopt different personas, in order to help orientate them at work. In particular Watson (2008: 122) suggests this is necessary to depict professionals, particularly managers, as “authoritative and in control.” The empirical data suggests that the DOS do adopt personas. However, I would argue this is designed to help them communicate more effectively with their intended online audience. Accordingly, it is designed to make them seem credible as Watson (2008) suggests. This is particularly evident when Rebecca Williams, marketing assistant, Forsdyke Industrial suggests she needs to adopt the persona of the "guy next door" as this is what she perceives her intended audience will better respond to. However, my data contradicts existing theory by suggesting that one of the DOS prefers to draw upon another existing identity, rather than a persona, when bringing the online organisation into being, such as their identity as a Mum. This is evident when Suzi Clarke, customer experience consultant, Orion Communications, suggests that she prefers being "Mumsy" as it is an identity she is familiar with and thus she draws on it to sound more supportive to the customers who tweet complaints. Thus it can be ascertained from these examples that personas are drawn upon by some of the DOSs to communicate credibility. In addition identities may also be drawn upon to provide stability and comfort when another identity is being challenged. To explain this, Suzi responds in a style and tone she describes as being "quite Mumsy" in order to quickly diffuse a problem where her professional identity is less suitable as it is a complaint about the organisation, which she represents. As such here we see the conscious decision to adopt a familiar identity to manage a difficult situation more effectively.

Marketing Work and Online Marketing Work

Existing literature relating to marketing work suggests a lack of understanding and awareness of the processes involved in day-to-day marketing accomplishments (Ardley and Quinn, 2013), particularly in contemporary organisations. Previously it has been discussed that one of the reasons for this gap is the fact that marketers draw upon an element of “tacit” (Hackley, 1999: 722) expertise when they perform their duties. Thus, because the nature of unspoken knowledge is highlighted as being difficult to observe or describe, few studies have attempted to categorise it. Within the empirical data in this chapter, the DOS describes drawing upon tacit knowledge, due to a lack of training or guidance, when they first start bringing the online organisation into being. In this way they rely upon their previous experiences of marketing work, intuition and testing things out through the process of doing online marketing work, in order to understand what it is that works well and receives positive responses form the intended online audience. They also describe utilising established organisational identity/brand narratives (Smith, 2011; Cooper et al, 2010) such as those found in press releases and website links to create the online organisational presence initially. This helps to develop our understanding as to how marketer’s progress from undertaking marketing activities to doing online marketing work, such as writing tweets. In this sense the empirical data suggests the DOS learns how to do online marketing work through a process that resembles trial and error, i.e. by making mistakes and then proactively trying other activities/methods to engage with customers.

Existing literature suggests online marketing work includes a range of practices utilising digital technologies, facilitated by the Internet to promote products, services and better engagement with customers (Kotler and Keller, 2016; James, 2007; Dewdney and Ride, 2006). It is also suggested that organisational employees manage a range of “formal, informal and hybrid Twitter accounts” (Meijer and Torenvlied, 2014: 11). My empirical findings contradict the simplicity of this analysis and suggest the process of online marketing work has far more complexity than these studies suggest. The DOS describes a much broader range of online marketing work processes that include a combination of offline research and preparation that culminates in online writing. For example within this chapter a number of online marketing practices, with a text-based emphasis are identified and described, including the writing and adapting of the Twitter template for an individual organisation; the creating of individual tweets, including the coordination of the different types of content, such as links to case-studies, press releases and blogs.

The DOS also describes other online marketing work activities designed to help develop relationships with partners via Twitter, such as trade publications, for example John, Forsdyke Industrial describes “actively retweeting the trade journals.” In addition, Karen, Sunrise Healthcare, describes a relationship built with a local charity online that has complementary interests to “give their dementia campaign gravitas.” In this way we see new ways of strengthening marketing efforts online through the initial contacting of different organisations online and also the coordination of tweet campaigns with other similar organisations, which potentially strengthens the brand narrative (Smith, 2007).

Existing theory also describes the tone and style of writing within online marketing work is different to traditional printed marketing collateral (Griffiths and McLean, 2015). The empirical findings develop this further by providing specific examples of the differences, such as when Simon, Clark Spencer Jones, describes being “conversational.” Additionally, Fiona (Orion Communications) suggests integrating “a little humour, rather than just ticking the corporate boxes” is also a better way to develop relationships with the intended audience online.

Additionally, the concept and characteristics of the DOS that I have originated for the thesis, see Chapter One, to describe the individual(s) responsible for recounting the organisational/brand stories and narrative online (Singh and Sonnenberg, 2012) can be observed for the first time within this chapter. The emerging social media scholarship utilises a variety of titles to describe the individuals who undertake online marketing work, which could equally be applied to marketers more generally. To summarise a few briefly here, Singh and Sonnenburg (2012: 189) refer to “brand owners”, Albu and Etter (2016) refer to the individuals by their specified job titles i.e. communications manager and Cova et al (2015: 682) describe them collectively as “marketing professionals.” Therefore the empirical data here and throughout the proceeding findings chapters, helps to illuminate the characteristics and responsibilities of these individuals. As a result it is evident from this chapter that the DOS concept can be applied to a range of job titles from fairly inexperienced marketing executives, such as Rebecca Williams, marketing assistant, Forsdyke Industrial, to senior managers such as Natalie Mason, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications. In addition customer service specialists, such as Suzi Clarke, Orion Communications and Sarah Dawson, Sonic Business Solutions have been seconded into undertaking specific online marketing work tasks, which include answering queries and complaints and are thus also described as DOSs. Due to the individual's varying marketing experience, job titles and main focus in their online marketing work activities, there are several different categories or types of DOS emerging from the empirical data. As such how they make sense of the online marketing work they need to do and the ways in which they try to give sense to their intended online audience will also be explored further, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight. The concept of the DOS and the online marketing work they do as highlighted within this chapter, builds significantly on our understanding of what online marketing work includes within contemporary organisations, which I will return to at the end of each of the next two chapters, so as to outline further examples of online marketing work processes and practices.

Organisational identity

It is suggested that customer-facing employees such as the DOS have the responsibility of communicating the “central, distinctive and enduring” (Lievens et al, 2007: 46) qualities of the organisational identity, whilst also considering how the intended audience already perceives the organisation, the “construed external image”, (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991: 547). I would argue that my conceptual findings develop these theories by highlighting the ways that the DOS contributes directly to the creation of the organisational/brand narrative via Twitter through the integration of aspects of their identity. In this sense the online organisational presence is based on their perception of the organisation. It also includes the integration of their personal details, including their real name and interests such as the inclusion of a painting they like, to represent the organisation online. For example Karen and Tim, Sunrise Healthcare aim to personalise their Twitter profile page by including their real names and Natalie, Orion Communications integrates her liking for a particular painting. Philip, Clark Spencer Jones integrates his personal interests, such as national poetry day, which do not relate directly to organisational interests. As such it is argued that they embed aspects of self into the online organisational presence, by creating it partially within their image, so as to improve the audience’s perception of the organisation. In this way the DOS engages in processes of writing text and utilising pictorial images that summarise the organisational/brand identity from their perspective, in order to give it greater meaning for themselves and their intended audience. The personalisation of online tweet content has been highlighted in previous studies as the means to seem more sociable and approachable as an organisation (Griffiths and Mclean, 2015; Meijer and Torenvlied, 2014). However, previously this informality or personalisation has been evident within an organisational employee's own individual Twitter account utilised to promote the organisation, rather than the central organisational Twitter account. Accordingly, it is possible to see a development in our understanding of marketers personalising the organisational/brand identity in order to make sense and give meaning to the representational work they are doing.

The following chapter outlines the next categorisations, from provocative to persuasive storytellers, as drawn from the empirical materials, so as to outline processes of shaping and guiding identity.

Chapter Six - Shaping and guiding identity: From provocative to persuasive storytellers

Introduction

This chapter elaborates three further categories that have emerged from my engagement with the empirical materials, which represent my findings. I now examine how the DOS engages in more accomplished shaping and guiding aspects of online marketing work, via Twitter. As such I illustrate how the DOS engages in specific processes to bring the organisation into being online, to comply with internal organisational expectations, as well as making it appealing to the intended audience, by shaping and guiding perceptions of the organisation. For the purpose of illustrating these descriptive concepts, this chapter is structured into three primary parts: Online perception shaping, Online provoking and Online combining and connecting.

Online perception shaping illustrates how the DOS strives to shape the online organisational presence consistently positively as they feel an expectation from senior managers to do so and because it is a key facet of their online marketing work, to promote products and services. The DOS also explain how they try to negotiate a compromise so they meet expected promotional practices online, while also making the tweet content interesting. There are also examples where the DOS tried to re-categorise their organisation as innovative and cutting edge using videos and images within the tweets in order to alter the way the online audience sees it and the way the DOS felt about it. Another aspect of positive perception shaping illustrated within this section relates to online protecting processes or neutralising complaints.

Online provoking details how the DOS tries to generate a response and/or interaction from their intended Twitter audience. Those aspects of online marketing work illustrated within this section includes the need to adopt temporary personas, utilising aspirational and deviant identity traits in order to guide, coax and entice the Twitter audience to participate by tweeting replies.

Online combining and connecting details the need for the DOS to coordinate concurrent processes of online and offline communication via tweets and face-to-face communication at organisational events. Here we see the DOS negotiating their dual identities in different ways so as to engage with established and potential new members of the Twitter audience. In addition connecting through hashtagging, where the DOS and the attendees at the event use the same hashtag to connect and form a temporary online community is also considered as it shows a different way of bringing the organisation into being online, conjointly.

Online perception shaping

The DOS described the need to present the online organisational presence consistently positively. In this sense a key part of their online identity work is to guide and shape perceptions of the online Twitter audience to help them see the most favourable version of the online organisational presence, as will be discussed in more detail within this section. Accordingly the DOS explained they feel a duty to be positive, which is passed down to them from senior managers through the organisational mission statement and core organisational strategies. It is also embedded in the work they do, which is to promote products, services and initiatives within the tweets. The need to present the organisation in a positive way is derived principally from a need to persuade the online Twitter audience to buy or utilise the organisational products or services.

As such shaping identity positively is achieved through three key aspects of the DOS online marketing work, which they explained to me is focussed on negotiating a compromise to ensure tweets are positive, but also interesting, the shaping of the online organisational presence as ‘cutting edge/innovative’, as well as the engagement in protecting processes. Negotiating a compromise to ensure tweets are positive, but also interesting, sometimes includes disassociating with individual offline experiences of the organisation through segmenting or partitioning aspects of the self (Knapp et al, 2013). As two of the DOS describe, due to the conversational style of Twitter they believe the online audience are less tolerant of blatantly promotional organisational material within a tweet. Therefore a compromise needs to be negotiated to ensure the text and links in the tweet guide the followers to information, which is also interesting, rather than just promotional. The shaping of the online organisational presence as innovative and cutting edge includes a process where the DOS associates themselves with a version of their organisation that they create to be infinitely more exciting than the ‘real’ organisation. The DOS describes trying to achieve this through the development of videos and images, included within the tweets that provide carefully crafted impressions of products and services in situ. Engagement in online protecting processes are those practices put in place by the DOS to protect the positive persona of the organisation, and are designed to guide the complainant to see a more positive perspective.

However, at times as we will see, this required positive presentation is problematic for the DOS, such as when the content is perceived by them as not reflective of the products/services the organisation provides. At times, it also contradicts and challenges their individual offline experiences, perceptions and identification with the organisation and colleagues.

Shaping perceptions positively

One of the responsibilities the DOS outlined when bringing the organisation into being online is the need to “always present the most positive and desirable side of the organisation” (Tim Crane, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare). When I asked Tim why he felt the need to be consistently positive he confirmed he felt:

> …being enthusiastic and *conveying positive messages* was the best way of *guiding customers* to the *best bits of the organisation*, in the hope they may just use our services. Online this can be trickier as we are restricted on words and I think customers are less tolerant of blatant ‘puff’ (obviously promotional text) pieces, so *I have to find a compromise that is positive, but also interesting and relevant.* (Emphasis added).

In this sense, as he explains, a central aspect of their online marketing work is positively guiding or shaping opinion of the online organisational presence and its products/services. However, as Tim highlights this process is not always easy due to the briefness of tweets and his perception that the intended online Twitter audience is less tolerant of promotional material. One of the ways Tim has managed to overcome this identity challenge is to negotiate a compromise between content that is positive, but also interesting and relevant to the online audience. For example, Tim describes the responsibility he feels to deliver positive ‘messages’ via Twitter but also that he needs the content to reflect what the company is actually delivering and achieving and not just ‘ticking boxes’ and showing support for national health initiatives. He comments:

> I get the need to be *positive as much as possible* to convey what services we can offer which is very much *the message* I know *the organisation needs to deliver*, but at the same time I try to avoid just ticking boxes and tweeting: *‘Wow it’s national no smoking day’* and guiding customers towards links providing either lots of statistics on lung disease or smiley happy people watching wind turbines – feeling the clean air in their lungs! (he says sarcastically) (Emphasis added).

As Tim explains he tries to negotiate a compromise in his online marketing work, so that he can meet internal objectives to communicate positively about the organisation’s products and services, but also make the content as interesting as possible. In his opinion this approach better reflects the reality of what the company delivers, rather than just aligning their achievements alongside national objectives without an obvious reason. As he explained to me, he feels strongly about being not just positive but also *"interesting and relevant"* (emphasis added). This is because as he confirmed to me his name is on the Twitter site as one of the people responsible for writing the tweets. As such with his own personal identity aligned so closely with the organisation, he feels even more strongly the tweet content should be *"worth reading as it reflects on him"* (emphasis added). He also explains how his wariness of a negative public reaction from the intended Twitter audience, influences how he puts together the tweets:

> …that is always at the back of your mind, if the content isn't interesting or relevant the online audience will immediately reject it, whereas with a promotional advert in a magazine, people can just ignore it, *getting it wrong is a much bigger risk* online as people *can comment/reply negatively* or ignore the post almost straight away and everyone sees it, or at least that's how it feels…like a failure of sorts…for me and for the organisation. (Emphasis added).

The tweet content, in his view needs to be very engaging or a negative response will occur quickly and publicly. Tim explains that he interprets both reactions, commenting negatively and ignoring the tweets, from the online Twitter audience, as a *"failure of sorts"* (emphasis added), which he describes as an individual and organisational failing. When I enquired why he saw it specifically as an individual failing if the tweet was not acknowledged Tim explained that he feels his work is constantly open to public scrutiny from colleagues. Therefore he describes feeling more pressure to find a compromise through his online marketing work, to ensure he brings the organisation into being positively, but also in a way that is going to pique the intended Twitter audience's interest.

Lola, head of online adoption, Orion Communications, concurs with Tim that shaping the organisation consistently positively is problematic, but also something *"the organisation expects marketers to achieve"* (emphasis added) and so a compromise should be sought. By 'the organisation' she explained that she really means senior managers, specifically the marketing director. Although she is *"unsure how often he actually checks Twitter"* (emphasis added). As she explains communicating consistently positively via Twitter is difficult partly due to the nature of the online environment, where the audience is less tolerant of obviously promotional material, in her view. She explains her approach to bringing the organisation into being online, taking into consideration the Twitter strategy:

> So the underlying strategy is around trying to stimulate positive conversations with customers about interesting stuff. That's what our followers expect, you can't really get away with overly promotional stuff online, they will see right through that. I mean you wouldn't get Stephen Fry saying follow me I'm fab…he has to have something interesting to say. Having said that a fair bit of the stuff we tweet is around our portfolio and it doesn't stimulate a whole lot of conversation to be honest. It's still being read though…(she says slightly defensively).

Despite the fact, Lola confirms that she needs to negotiate content for the tweet that is interesting, in order to generate interaction with customers, a point that I will return to later in this chapter (see also 'Identity questioning, coaxing and enticing'). She also admits that most of the content that is tweeted by her and the other DOSs in her organisation is product-focussed and therefore fails to generate much online conversation. Therefore, upon reflection Lola highlights there is a contradiction here in terms of the organisational intention, linked to the strategy, and the actual content and outcome from her online marketing work, which doesn't generate much interaction. In her final comment she then tries to make sense of why this strategy is adopted, clarifying somewhat defensively that although few comments are generated the material is still read, so to an extent sense is still given.

In a slightly different way, John, operational marketing manager, Forsdyke Industrial, also acknowledges the need to produce online tweet content that is consistently positive, which he is clear is an organisational requirement due to the nature of online marketing work, which he explains needs to be primarily positive due to the nature of the content. However he also highlights the individual challenges associated with this:

> Of course it has to be positive when much of what we are doing is primarily promoting new products and engaging with existing customers to ensure they see us as a trustworthy and reliable company to do business with. I mean we've got to sell products. Not that I'm suggesting this is always easy, especially when you don't always feel that positive…(laughs) but then I don't want to get sacked either…so I put on my best tweeting smile and get on with it…(laughs)…well Rebecca does mostly…

John makes sense of what he needs to do, due to the nature of the message content and the need to sell products. Although he also acknowledges that this isn’t always straightforward, but he is persuaded to consistently shape the organisation positively within the tweets, as he feels not doing so could have negative consequences, such as the loss of his job. Therefore, in order to update Twitter consistently positively he describes the need to prioritise on his professional identity. Sometimes this means consciously adopting a ‘tweeting smile’, which he explained to me means being positive, even when he does not feel particularly positive or like identifying closely with the organisation that day. He further elaborates on the challenge of shaping the organisational presence consistently positively online, which as he explains, is more to do with his fluid perceptions of the organisation:

> I guess I am what you would call on the cynical side of marketing… you know more experienced with the company shall we say. There were times when I first started tweeting when there were a lot of changes going on internally, my line manager changed about three times and I was worried they might outsource marketing again. At this time writing “aren’t our products great” everyday seemed a bit…false maybe. I think I managed to strike a balance though for the customers, not the bosses! (Laughs)

Due to John’s 20-year history and experiences, he reflects upon the way he has had to continually make sense of the organisation. For example he draws attention to the challenge of communicating continually positively through his online marketing work when he feels anxious about the future of his own professional identity. To overcome this he tries to negotiate a compromise, in order to continually meet the needs of the customers, rather than the senior managers. This is a situation made more difficult due to its occurrence in ‘real time’ as John is having to communicate online at the same time as the uncertain situation is unfolding offline.

In his comment Philip, senior manager, marketing, Clark Spencer Jones, also describes the need to separate aspects of his identity when undertaking online marketing work. However, although he admits the need to suppress his individual identity at times, in order to bring the organisation into being, he also values hearing about organisational happenings, often before others, a position he describes as ‘privileged’. He comments:

> Okay, so I can’t always say what I want…*but I suppose it is a privileged position communicating online*, because they (senior managers) allow you to be connected into the board *you get to hear the messages before they’ve even happened*, so you know that something is coming along that may be disruptive to *staff and customers…because both follow our Twitter* account and it is often where they hear about new initiatives first, it is important to know so you can craft the message that goes out. (Emphasis added).

As he suggests also being informed enables him to take a bit more time to make sense of the messages that need to be included and given sense through the tweets. He also draws attention to the fact that both staff and customers often hear about new initiatives online first, which is a point that I will return to later in this chapter, when considering the impact of shaping the organisation positively online while managing complaints.

The next section will focus on other ways the DOS engages in guiding and shaping the online organisational presence positively by utilising images and videos. In many cases images and videos are utilised because the DOS is trying to change previous negative or out-dated perceptions of the organisation, as will be discussed.

Shaping identity as innovative and cutting edge

Another way the DOS helps to shape the online organisational presence positively and establish their identity as online perception shapers is by developing and then associating themselves with a version of their organisation that is both ‘innovative and cutting edge’. The DOS describes trying to achieve this through the development of videos and images, included within the tweets that provide carefully crafted impressions of products and services in situ. Images are usually photographs of new products, members of staff and events uploaded with the tweets. In addition, videos are usually limited to five minutes maximum in length and are uploaded with the tweets to highlight new products in action, as well as members of staff speaking about the new products/services/initiatives, often at events.

Rebecca, marketing assistant, Forsdyke Industrial describes how she is determined to change the perception customers have of her organisation as ‘old fashioned’ and ‘boring’. One of the ways she aims to achieve this is through re-establishing the online organisational presence as ‘cutting edge’, though her development of videos showing her organisations’ heavily industrialised products in ‘exciting’ locations. This is important to her as she feels the way the organisation is portrayed online reflects on her and the way she feels and associates with the work that she does. Therefore negative feedback as we shall see even more clearly in the next section, can impact upon the identity work of the DOS. This is because their individual identity is often closely aligned with the organisation online. Accordingly we see Rebecca describe working harder to establish a version of the organisation that she can be individually proud of. She comments:

> Through the videos I'm really promoting the organisation, as it is now, not how it was 100 years ago, as there is a danger that people don't think we have moved on. I want to show that we are modern, upcoming, cutting edge even, so I've been developing short videos with different departments to show our products in-situ in sexier locations, like New York, Hong Kong and London. You think of this type of manufacturing as quite old fashioned…so I've made it my mission to change that, as I don't want to be associated with a boring place! (laughs).

One of Rebecca's aims is to guide the online Twitter audience to see the organisation as more progressive, perhaps even 'cutting edge'. As she intimates this is because part of her online marketing work is to change out-dated perceptions others have of the organisation. Accordingly, she doesn't want her individual identity to be associated with somewhere that is 'boring', only somewhere that is innovative. In this sense how the DOS shapes and brings the online organisation into being impacts directly upon their individual identity work.

In a similar way, Collin, social media lead, Orion Communications, describes how one of his key aims through Twitter is to reshape the way his intended online audience sees the organisation. As a result he outlines the process of bringing aspects of the organisation into being through video and images as a way to guide and persuade the online Twitter audience that what the organisation is now, is not what it was a few years ago. He explains:

> When we include video it is a *bit like opening the door to our customers* and giving them a more realistic, well, (pauses) *slightly staged* (laughs) view of what we have to offer. Of course it is also a way of showcasing and promoting new technology, making it more accessible and letting them know again that we are no longer just a 'telephone company', we're so much more than that and *it is my responsibility and my passion to guide them to something new…different…innovative.* (Emphasis added).

Collin describes utilising video to 'open the door' for the intended online Twitter audience to see a particular lifelike visual impression of the organisation, its products and employees. In this way he suggests video helps to give the organisation a more tangible and accessible place online. However, although initially Collin suggests this is a 'realistic' portrayal, he then contradicts this by suggesting it is 'slightly staged', and that he is also 'showcasing' the organisation. As such, part of Collin's online marketing work and indeed his individual 'passion' is to present selective positive aspects of the organisation through video in order to shape the audience's perception. This is required as he considers that many still have an out-dated view of what the organisation is, 'a telephone company'. Therefore he strives to make and give sense to the online Twitter audience as to what the organisation is like now and one way to do this is to show them visually through the images and videos. Another way the DOS helps to protect the online organisational presence is through the prompt answering of complaints, as is illustrated within the next section.

Online protecting processes

Four of the organisations included within the thesis have at some point received complaints via Twitter. These complaints originate primarily from external members of the online Twitter audience who are disgruntled with the quality of a product or service. However, as will be illustrated below, they may also include complaints from staff utilising their own personal Twitter accounts to comment upon an issue they are upset about within their own organisation. From my conversations with the DOS only Forsdyke Industrial have never received a complaint via Twitter. As a result most of the DOS have at some point had to engage in online protecting processes. These are practices put in place by the DOS to protect the (positive) identity and reputation of the organisation, which are designed to guide the complainant to see a more positive perspective.

In terms of the online marketing work undertaken when complaints are received via Twitter, Simon, digital content manager Clark Spencer Jones suggests: "…responding quickly minimises the impact of the negative tweets." However, he highlights an example where it was staff that complained when the organisation decided to stop supplying free biscuits and fruit squash due to a health and well-being initiative. As he explains, several members of staff were very unhappy about the withdrawal of free drinks and snacks and rather than complain internally through their line manager for example, they started tweeting negative comments from their own personal Twitter accounts. The incident described below was referred to as #biscuitgate by Simon and his colleague Philip, at the time and was exacerbated by staff tweeting negative comments:

> So in the old world if an organisation made changes, people would bitch and moan about it in the corridors and by the coffee machine and hardly anyone would be aware of it. *In the new world they can take to their personal Twitter accounts and make a fuss if they want and some have*…sometimes they are subtle other times more blatantly critical. But what is worrying is I see the comments coming up in our timeline and I know some of our clients follow these guys too! I suppose I feel a bit protective then. It is a *bit petty* really. (Emphasis added).

As Simon explained to me, this issue highlights how the introduction of Twitter has opened up some significant challenges in relation to where individual and professional identities start and finish online. Accordingly, he suggests staff now feel they can complain about their organisation publicly online without the usual employment codes of practice, relating to respect and behaviours applying. The problem is as Simon outlines: *"…parameters where work and personal time start and finish are less clear online"* (emphasis added). This is because as he explains, there have been no formal guidelines or restrictions on staff members' behaviours following the introduction of his organisation's Twitter account. In turn he confirms when he first started that some staff members' were followed back from the organisational account, which in hindsight may not have been the "best idea." In light of this Simon expresses concern about the risk to the reputation and positive image of the organisation as he can see the comments and is aware that some of their clients also follow individual staff member's accounts.

Accordingly he makes sense of the situation by dissociating himself from these staff members and prioritising his professional identity, as opposed to his social identity with colleagues. He suggests:

> …more work is needed to guide staff to understand that *there does still need to be boundaries between what can be said online even from personal accounts* if it relates to company business. After this happened I insisted we produce a guide to help staff understand how they can communicate via Twitter in an attempt to outlaw complaining…I know it sounds a bit harsh but it was necessary to stop this happening again. (Emphasis added)

To protect the organisation Simon suggests the main way he gave sense to staff about the seriousness of the incident was to produce restrictive guidelines to prevent them tweeting negative comments again. He suggests this may have been perceived by some staff as 'a bit harsh', but he felt it was required to prevent a repeat of this incident. Accordingly he intimates that at times the responsibility of being the DOS and his commitment to online protecting overrides his other identity as a colleague, or at least at this time it takes greater priority. He also minimises his affinity with the staff members by continually calling this incident #biscuitgate as another means to ridicule or minimise the seriousness of the incident for staff members and therefore reiterating that his priority is protecting the organisation.

Suzi, customer experience consultant, Orion Communications, also highlights how she has to disassociate herself from other identity restrictions and immerse herself in online protecting processes, when she is asked to respond to complaints online. She describes having to keep her distance, so as to prioritise her professional self in order to engage in consistent online protecting processes for the organisation:

> Although I do sympathise with some customer's issues sometimes you just have to take a step back and remember that we're representing the organisation online, *so we can't show any weaknesses* (laughs). Although *I do also try to kill them with kindness, by being overly sympathetic and supportive in my responses as a tactic to stop them keep coming back.* It doesn't always work though, so sometimes I just offer them money (laughs again) not really, usually just the occasional voucher to get them offline! I do care though really. (Emphasis added).

Interestingly Suzi, who previously described her identity when managing customers online, as 'Mumsy', suggests adopting an approach where she disassociates herself with the complainant, to a point where the online audience almost seemed less human. For example she suggests little empathy by not showing any weakness, 'killing them with kindness' as the means to quickly guide them offline. Thus, giving them a token gift is utilised as a 'bribe' to persuade them to cease their negative tweeting. Upon reflection she seems to recognise this dehumanisation of others by claiming to have sympathy or feelings really, by suggesting she does care.

In a similar way Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions, also disassociates himself from empathising with the complainant through his online marketing work. It is however a position he struggles to make sense of as he would much rather guide the complainant to experience a more positive and rewarding encounter with the organisation, but he is restricted by organisational protocol, which he admits to finding frustrating. He comments:

> If it was up to me *I would probably respond differently to complaints*… rather than always deferring to the standard: “Sorry to hear you have an issue please contact our customer service team.” It’s a bit of a copout as we don’t have enough staff. *I would rather just be honest* and say ‘this is really bad, we’re really sorry it has happened…and then look at what we can do specifically for that customer, let’s really personalise it for them. *Otherwise what’s the point, really?!* (Emphasis added).

Andrew outlines that he finds deferring to a standard response is unsatisfactory and it fails to give sense to the complainant as to why the situation has occurred. His frustration is therefore due to the lack of staff available to answer the complaints online, which is why the response can only be limited. He also feels the response online should be personalised and demonstrate the ability to guide and shape perception of the organisation, as he explains in more detail:

> Guiding them from that negative online experience to seeing the organisation positively again is the aim. My view is we should get the

> general manager to turn up at the centre they are complaining about and say 'you know we're really sorry that the vending machine was empty, there's a six pack of Coke on us!' There is so much potential, *where Twitter should be seen as a gateway from the online organisation to the customer,* so we should be doing more to change their minds. It's not my call unfortunately. (He says sadly). (Emphasis added).

Andrew describes his central aim following a complaint is to try to restore a positive experience of the organisation. Therefore he confirms seeing the shaping and guiding of perceptions of the organisation as a key component of his online marketing work. He also suggests the organisation could be adopting a more personalised resolution for the customer, where a local manager presents a free gift in person. Accordingly, he describes the online organisational presence as the 'gateway to the customer' where the DOS has the potential to influence their initial perceptions more positively if only more resources were available to answer their initial tweet. This however is not a decision Andrew is able to influence which he laments as a possible opportunity missed to give sense to their grievances.

Another way the DOS aims to make the tweet content engaging but also provocative to encourage interaction is to present an alternative online persona which is more daring, enticing and engaging than their individual offline or professional selves. In this sense the online identity space provides less perceived boundaries to identity play and exploration (see also Chapter Five: 'Online specialising through identity play').

Online provoking

This section examines how the DOS engages in online provoking processes in order to try and generate a response and/or interaction from their intended Twitter audience, which is the second main dimension that specifies shaping and guiding identity, as a key categorisation derived from my empirical analysis. The findings suggest a further descriptive label that identifies a different aspect of the online provoking process, elaborated from the empirical domain. This includes: Identity questioning, coaxing and enticing, which is designed to provoke online interaction with the intended Twitter audience. This section describes a more provocative tone and style of tweets, utilised by the DOS when they are trying to provoke a response, which may include a retweet, replies, shares or attendance at events. These responses are designed to help the DOS continually shape and guide the way the intended Twitter audience accesses the online organisational presence.

Identity questioning, coaxing and enticing

A specific challenge the DOS explained to me they experience when shaping the online organisational presence is a lack of ‘positive’ interaction with the intended Twitter audience, as opposed to negative reaction such as complaints (see also ‘Online protecting processes’ within this chapter). As a result they often lack direct contact and therefore also helpful feedback, comments or suggestions about how to shape the online organisational presence. As they explained to me and is discussed within this section, this also leaves them wondering whether the work they are doing is reaching the right people, via Twitter and if what they produce is read and appreciated. As John, operational marketing manager, Forsdyke Industrial outlines, interaction is desired, but achieving it can also prove problematic.

> For me journalists are very high up on the priority list, but not necessarily for the company – so *it would be good to get some interaction going with them,* but some of the journalists are really difficult to engage with online, partly because it is a competitive environment and they don't want to show their favourites and partly because some of them haven't really embraced the technology yet. *I just have to try harder to be charming* (laughs) if I want them to talk to me online. (Emphasis added).

As we see from John's comments he considers journalists to be an important section of the Twitter audience whom he wishes to build a reciprocal relationship with. However he also acknowledges that although he considers them to be a priority group the 'organisation', by this he explained he means senior managers, may not. Therefore he suggests experiencing a certain freedom of decision-making based on his own preferences within the online organisational presence that may not be possible offline, due to more rigorous policies and procedures. He also acknowledges the difficulties in engaging with journalists, which he summarises as the competitive environment and the fact they have been slower than other groups to embed Twitter communication into day-to-day working practices. In order to overcome these challenges he suggests the need to adopt an aspirational identity through his online marketing work. This builds on a key theme that was introduced in

Chapter Five, ‘Online specialising through identity play’, which allows for the possibility of identity experimentation and exploration, outside of expected identity presentations. Here, we see the DOS further experiment with individual identity presentations online that may not necessarily be part of their identity offline. Their adoption is a result of their willingness to engage in more experimental identity work online. Accordingly they feel more inclined to trial less familiar and more daring personality characteristics such as being charming, through utilising different styles and tones within the tweets, in order to appeal directly to their intended audience.

To try and provoke more direct interaction from the Twitter audience the majority described to me how they utilise a different tone and style of writing, as well as specific tactics such as questions, for example: We’ve just launched a new product to help with software viruses – have you tried it, what do you think? Can we do better? (Example tweet from Orion Communications). The DOS also utilise tweets that include an incentive, such as a competition, which direct members of the online audience to engage with the organisation offline. For example Sunrise Healthcare suggest within one of their tweets that if any members of their online Twitter audience visit their stand at the Scottish Dementia Congress, they can enter a competition to win an Easter egg. Another approach is the use of provocative statements to instigate a reaction via the ‘reply’ function on Twitter. An example of a provocative statement is one that is often linked by the DOS to an action such as reading a link to an article and then asking the online Twitter audience to tweet a comment expressing their views. For example Sonic Business

Solutions frequently include the results from independent research about work-related topics such as flexible working and then ask the audience to ‘discuss.’ Therefore one way that the DOS aims to shape the online organisational presence in the longer term is through trying to create a reciprocating relationship of mutual value with the Twitter audience. As Natalie, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications explains, this often necessitates a different, more daring tone and style that can be described as “coaxing and enticing”, within the tweets:

> A large part of my job is to engage our online customers in conversations, which are around the innovation capability the company, has. Oh that sounds boring doesn’t it? No wonder they don’t respond (laughs). What I mean is I’m trying to engage with them to find out if they liked our recent research, products, services that kind of thing. *I use questions to try and provoke responses, but also I’ll phrase things differently on Twitter to how I would offline, more provocatively…in a way that is designed for coaxing a reply or enticing a reaction*…to get them participating in conversations…(Emphasis added).

Natalie confirms that one of her key aims when writing the tweets is to try and engage in conversation with the online Twitter audience. Previously in Chapter Five (‘Online specialising validated through audience responses’), she described how the Twitter audience influences her identity creation processes online. She confirmed the need to have her blog validated by the reactions of the online audience to confirm her identity as an online specialist. A different sort of identity validation is sought here where she tries to develop a reciprocal relationship with the Twitter audience by persuading them to engage through dialogue, rather than just ‘likes’ or ‘views’ (when the audience clicks on the ‘like’ button to acknowledge interest or views, clicking on the link and reading the blog). In order to do this though, as she explained to me, she needs to adopt behaviours that are outside of her comfort zone. In this sense part of her online marketing work is testing new versions of self to meet a desired outcome, in this case responses from at least a section of the Twitter audience is sought to help shape the content of the online organisational presence.

A slightly different approach to provoking interaction is described by Simon, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones. He describes how he needed to change his approach to online marketing work in order to achieve the objective of getting the intended audience to respond:

> I think our tweets became more personable because we tried focusing on more interaction by giving followers the content they are after in a tone that we hoped was more appealing. Recently though we’ve found asking the questions and being a bit provocative is more successful. So, we put up more controversial articles these days about topics such as whistleblowing and fraud and challenge our followers to respond… when they do we know they appreciate what we’re trying to do…get them talking, so we know who they are and what they need.

Initially as Simon comments he tried to align the tone of the tweets to his individual identity, including being personable, while aligning the tweet content with what he felt the Twitter audience were expecting and would therefore respond to. However as he explained to me this initial approach was not particularly successful in securing replies. As a result he changed his approach to being more confrontational using questions and articles covering more contentious issues, with the aim of prompting replies. Such an approach highlights how aspects of online marketing work may be outside of traditional professional behaviours and include those that are usually avoided in everyday contact, such as provocation. In this sense the DOSs are experimenting with ‘other selves’, identity characteristics that are outside of their usual professional or individual identity to gain in this case, interaction with the intended Twitter audience.

A different sort of approach to interaction with the intended Twitter audience is described by Theo, head of digital marketing communications, Sunrise Healthcare. He comments initially about the tactics his colleagues utilise to encourage engagement from the Twitter audience online. Then he suggests a temporary engagement with a ‘deviant’ self in order to tease the online audience into giving their contact details unwittingly. He explains:

> So they (Tim and Karen) will continuously find *innovative new ways to engage with the customers asking questions, teasing them into responding* through a heart-warming story from one of our care homes to encourage that engagement. Competitions are an easy one for getting responses, it’s kind of lazy social media, but it works. We’re a bit sneaky really (laughs); we just want to get their contact details and a better idea of who our audience are. It’s just a small part of what we do and it makes the content better in the long run. (Emphasis added).

Theo suggests he initially makes sense of the activities undertaken by his colleagues, Tim and Karen, as innovative. However as his commentary progresses he alludes to a more calculated approach, where they utilise a sad story about one of their patients in a care home to ‘tease’ the audience into responding. He also suggests they are engaging with indolent practices, which are less than transparent in order to secure personal details from the audience, so they have a better idea of whom they are. Accordingly they could be described as experimenting with ‘temporary deviant selves’ through their online marketing work, in order to extract the information they need. However, Theo tries to justify this facet of persuasive identity work by remarking that it is only a small aspect of the work they do online. It is also suggested the Twitter audience’s input better shapes the way they bring the organisation into being in the longer term.

Sometimes though as Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions, explains interaction can be a contradictory process online. As he outlined to me, interaction is desired by the DOSs to help shape the content on Twitter, but if there is not enough resource to manage the replies it is simply problematic. He comments:

> We’ve not really used Twitter in that way – like we’ve never set up a Q&A (online question and answer session), or done anything like that, simply because *it is such a headache if people do start to interact with you and you haven’t got enough resources, as I know we haven’t at the moment.* So, we really do want people to interact with us but mainly that means guiding them away from Twitter, you know click on here and go have a look at another part of the organisation on the website, where you can fill in your details and comments. (Emphasis added).

In order to try and strike a balance through his online marketing work, which enables, but does not actively encourage interaction, Andrew purposely guides them away from the Twitter homepage. As such he explained to me how he sees the online organisational presence as divided into several complementary parts, including the different social media channels, such as Twitter and also the website. Therefore he sees a key component of his interaction as guiding a quick route from one part of the online organisation (Twitter) to another (the website). Another aspect of shaping and guiding interaction with the online Twitter audience may be achieved as part of events, as will be addressed within the next section.

Online combining and connecting

As the DOS becomes more accomplished at online marketing work, they described the need to coordinate concurrent processes of tweeting and face-to-face communication offline, such as when they are at organisational events. This includes three sequential processes, the first is the promotion of events via Twitter before they occur, the second is the attendance by the DOS at events to welcome and speak to attendees offline. The third, as illustrated here, includes the tweeting of a commentary about the event online as it is happening. The main focus within this section will be on the shaping of the second and third processes as the findings have identified two descriptive labels that highlight different aspects of the online (virtual) and offline (physical) shaping of identity work, elaborated from the empirical domain. These include the following processes: Coordinating dual identities and connecting through hashtagging. Coordinating dual identities describes the way the DOS carefully coordinates online and offline identity work in person and via Twitter when communicating at an event. In comparison, ‘connecting through hashtagging’ relates to the temporary relationships that are built around an event when all attendees, including the DOS, other staff and existing or potential members of the Twitter audience, use the same hashtag when tweeting, so as to group the messages together. Tweeting during the event helps the DOS to connect with other attendees usually via the use of the hashtag (#)[1] function, so that ideas and comments can be shared live on Twitter. This relates to a need for the DOS to combine physical and virtual identity sometimes through online marketing work.

Coordinating dual identities

Several confirmed that, when at organisational events, they try to effectively negotiate a combination of offline and online marketing work. This includes managing relationships with attendees face-to-face, as well as managing ‘live’ online Twitter updates. Accordingly the online organisational

[1] Hashtags are key words or phrases preceded by the # symbol that people/organisations include in their social media posts. It is so these terms or phrases are easily searchable even by non-followers, literally anyone who uses the Internet. When clicking on a hashtag, Twitter users will see other tweets containing the same keyword or topic.” (The Twitter Glossary, 2016c: 1). Hashtags are used to connect individuals around a specific topic or to those who are attending the same event. Often organisations use trending hashtags in the hope that a wider audience will notice their messages.

presence is brought into being and shaped during the event by the DOS in their tweets and the Twitter audience's replies. For example Fiona, social media marketing content manager, Orion Communications, outlines the process of balancing her online and offline professional identities during organisational events. She explains:

> I often mingle at the reception desk at one-day events, doing the PR bit and introducing myself to people as they come in. Then as soon as the event starts *I'm sitting there at the back tweeting and connecting away with only a few people really knowing it's me and being quite opinionated and bold*…sometimes I'm even sarcastic…I'm always professional in person and then I let loose a bit, online…it's not always easy to maintain though. (Emphasis added).

Initially she describes meeting organisational event attendees in person and being open about her professional identity. However when highlighting the process of producing the tweets during the event, she prefers to sit at the back of the room and retain a degree of anonymity. This gives her the freedom to 'let loose' or feel more emboldened when she is communicating online. In this sense she carefully coordinates the online and offline aspects of her identity work so they complement each other and are suitable for the particular style of engagement required face-to-face and within the tweets. Fiona describes being sedate and polite face-to-face with attendees, because as she explained to me, this is expected behaviour. Once online she feels that she has more freedom to experiment with opinions and sarcasm, which are likely to be considered outside of expected professional identity norms.

Although she contradicts this when explaining that it is difficult to control and sustain these dual identities.

There are also instances where the DOS is not invited to attend the event and as such they have to make sense of how to undertake the appropriate online marketing work by talking to colleagues on the phone. For example Rebecca, marketing assistant, Forsdyke Industrial, describes an event that a colleague attended recently and then attempted to advise her how to communicate the key aspects via Twitter. Making sense of a more senior colleague's experiences of an event and transferring his suggested content into tweets was not straightforward, as Rebecca explains:

> A few weeks ago I was asked to post a few tweets about an event we were running in London. I wasn't invited, so a senior manager told John he would call me with the details of what to tweet. It didn't really work as he sent through some slightly out of focus pictures on email and he was dictating lots of copy which would have been okay if we were drafting a press release… we're not quite there yet with events.

In this instance Rebecca as the DOS is not invited to attend the event so has to try and make sense of the possible content for the tweets through the experiences and comments from a senior colleague over the telephone. As she confirms her interpretation of how to shape the online organisational presence to reflect the event activity was not the same as her non-marketing colleague. Therefore it was very difficult to combine his offline experience with her online marketing work in order to recreate 'live' (living) aspects of the online organisational presence. Therefore as she explained to me being physically present at the event is essential to facilitate her sensemaking of the main features of the event, so as to be able to translate it for the Twitter audience, via the tweets. Not being present at the event is therefore a barrier to her identity work, as she has to rely on others to give sense to her.

Another way the DOS described to me they tried to connect with the Twitter audience at events was via the use of hashtags.

Connecting through hashtagging

Connecting through hashtagging is the second descriptive label that identifies different aspects of combining and connecting identities within the online organisational presence. It relates to the temporary connections that are built around an event when all attendees, including the DOS, other staff and existing or potential members of the Twitter audience, use the same hashtag when tweeting, so as to group the messages together and form a temporary community. Tim, PR manager at Sunrise Healthcare enjoys shaping the online organisational presence in conjunction with the Twitter audience as he suggests it helps him to understand another perspective. He explains:

> In terms of hashtags sometimes they can be useful as there will be ones where a location or event-based hashtag is used. So I think it works from that respect. *For a short period we're all connecting and feeling like one big happy family*… so I'm better able to understand what the issues are for them which are never what you think, or ever the same as ours. (Emphasis added).

As Tim describes the online organisational presence is shaped temporarily online through the use of hashtags, as it brings together the DOS and the Twitter audience into one collective group. This short-term intense connecting around a particular focal point, an event, allows Tim to connect with the Twitter audience in a way that aids his understanding of their concerns and issues, which often surprise him. Thus, Tim adapts his approach to better integrate his identity to fit in with a different online social 'community'. As a result he is able to observe and contribute through his online marketing work to a different form of online organisational presence that includes different contributions and perspectives, from just that of the organisation, which he has described facilitating before.

Similarly, Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions, suggests that he gains valuable insights from the Twitter audience when he connects with them through the use of hashtags at events. He also gives an insight into how he understands and builds relationships with the online Twitter audience, which is entirely through the online organisational presence he sometimes conjointly shapes with them. He explains:

> The use of hashtags has had a very positive impact in my opinion. *I don't personally ever get to meet the customers unless it is through Twitter.* So I never know if the customers talk about what they have seen on Twitter unless they mention it on Twitter and they often do use the hashtags if they are at an event, which helps us find out what they think and I'm then shaping content accordingly. (Emphasis added).

From his comments it is evident Andrew's understanding of the organisation's 'customers' is through their interaction via Twitter. As such he explained to me that a key focus of his online marketing work is listening or observing what is said by the Twitter audience in order to shape the tweets according to their interests. The hashtags help to stimulate online conversations around a single event and encourage all contributors to feel they are temporarily linked through their experiences shared offline, but communicated online. In this sense the online organisational presence is a space where hierarchies and role barriers (customer/client) are less apparent and therefore openness is encouraged. This is a key theme, the breaking down of previously conceived boundaries online, which is why it is introduced only briefly here, so that it can be further discussed within the next chapter which will elaborate the third key categorisation from the empirics: Chapter Seven: Online 'friending'.

Summary

This chapter has elaborated the second key categorisation that has emerged from my interpretive engagement with the empirical material. In particular it has provided specific insights into how the DOS engages in processes of online perception shaping. The following themes present within this chapter will be considered again within the discussion: Chapter Eight.

How these findings contribute to, contradict and develop existing literature

This chapter on shaping and guiding identity, from provocative to persuasive storytellers develops and builds on some of the theoretical areas mentioned within the discussion at the end of Chapter Five, as well as introducing new areas, such as brand narrative.

Identity and self

A criticism of the social interactionist approach to identity formation, as highlighted within the literature review, is its focus on an overtly rational approach, as well as a tendency to omit political and cultural implications on the development of self (Stryker, 1980). This critique is important to acknowledge here, as the DOS would potentially be influenced by political and cultural implications from within the organisation, which suggests their work is partially embedded in power relations and will therefore affect the tone and style of their responses. The empirical data within this chapter develops existing symbolic interactionist perspectives, by considering how the DOS manages political and cultural implications when bringing the online organisation into being. This is particularly relevant when the DOS describes managing complaints. For example Andrew Teretto, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions, describes interpreting the meaning of another's actions (Blumer, 2005) via Twitter, but being unable to respond as he would like to, due to political and cultural considerations, in this situation a lack of staff resource. He describes preferring a more "personalised" response to complaints, but being constrained by the standard response dictated by the organisation. Thus, in this instance Andrew appears to take on the negative experiences of the intended audience, but he is unable to respond to the attitudes of others (Mead, 1934) because of cultural and political issues. In this instance he has to present an identity or corporate persona (Watson, 2008), which he considers to be a “copout” and prevents him from being himself, honest and apologising, which would be his preferred approach. In this sense political and cultural issues are a barrier to the DOS ‘being themselves’ during interactions with their intended audience, when responding to complaints. In another example, Simon Peterson, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones, decides to prioritise his identity as a DOS, over his identity as a colleague, when other members of staff start complaining via Twitter about a minor political issue. Accordingly Simon finds a solution that is designed to to curtail the actions of others, rather than taking them upon himself, he produces a guide designed to “outlaw complaining.” In this way Simon responds reflexively to the unfolding situation, but decides due to his role and the political nature of the complaint that he must distance himself from the situation and prevent something similar happening again.

Identity Work

The emphasis within a significant selection of identity work studies has been on multifaceted and precarious organisational/situational environments, such as within merging organisations and those undergoing change (Järventie-Theslef and Tienari, 2016; Wieland, 2010; Watson, 2008). This has arguably resulted in a lack of focus on the day-to-day lived experiences and identity work management of professionals in dynamic roles such as the DOS, which is largely absent within existing studies. My conceptual findings develop existing identity work theories by examining the everyday practice of online marketing work as a form of identity work. From a review of the data within this chapter I would suggest that identity work might be better understood within online environments as a process of instrumental reflexivity within bounded aesthetic parameters. To explain this, I draw attention to online marketing work processes undertaken by the DOS as instrumentally reflexive, even as they are aesthetic, in a virtual environment, because they are conscious of how they and the organisation are being perceived, because of their actions (tweeting) and appearances, physical and virtual such as at events. In addition their identity construction is always ‘bounded’ by their professional DOS role, which is to communicate the organisational/brand identity. It is also bounded by the fact that their activities can be monitored as they occur in an easily accessible public arena and thus it is always to an extent defined by organisational rules and regulations, relating to behaviour and conduct. This is one of the reasons, the DOS comments on their need to always present the organisational/brand identity positively as their managers within the public arena can always observe it. The construction of their identity is therefore self-conscious, due to this ‘bounded environment’ but also continuously evolving due to the ongoing nature of their different actions and identity appearances or presentations.

For example when they are at events they often have to manage dual identities, online and offline, simultaneously. In the literature review there are studies that comment upon the need to maintain balance between dual identities, where organisational employees suggest they utilise various tactics to segment, or merge their individual and social identities (Ashcraft, 2007; Kreiner et al, 2006). The nature of dual identities explored through the empirical data within this chapter focuses on the nature and simultaneous occurrence of face-to-face and online identity construction, as part of communicating with customers at an event. As such this data extends our understanding of how the DOS negotiates a combination of offline and online marketing work. For Fiona Saunders, social media marketing content manager, Orion Communications, she draws upon her professional identity when communicating face to face and a more playful identity online. This is possible because she responds reflexively, consciously aware that her identity is less obvious online, so she feels more inclined to be “quite opinionated and bold.” In this sense her perceived online anonymity provides an opportunity for her to experiment with opinions and sarcasm, although they are still bounded as she uses them to coax a response to the organisational event. In addition the diversity of their work, from answering complaints and queries to provoking engagement through questions, dictates the need to constantly engage with fluidity in self-presentation, as is explained in more detail within Chapter Eight.

Online marketing work processes and practices

At the end of the first findings chapter I highlighted several examples of online marketing work, the majority of which were text-based (Lien, 1997), such as writing tweets and coordinating blogs, case studies and links. However, as we see from this chapter, the DOS undertakes a lot of additional online marketing work that does not necessarily culminate in the production of text, but rather it is more focussed on online monitoring and is illustrated by the DOS in terms of their online protecting and preservation behaviours. In addition their work includes a combination of proactive and reactive activities that include trying to generate responses from their intended audience through the use of questions and also the answering of complaints and queries. There are also a significant variety of activities that are undertaken by the DOS, which cannot be analysed from the tweet text alone, but only from an understanding of the rationale for specific actions. For example the DOS describe online preserving protecting and checking processes, which are a significant part of their work but that are linked to, but not always evident within the text construction. The empirical data also develops our understanding of how tweets may also be utilised to answer queries and complaints. Several describe utilising the speed and ease of writing responses on Twitter as an effective way to “defuse problems and answer complaints” (Suzi Clarke, customer experience consultant, Orion Communications). As such Twitter may be said to make it easier for customers to complain publicly about an organisation, but it is also easier for the organisation to respond in a way that protects and potentially enhances their organisational and/or brand identity.

Identity and persona

At the end of Chapter Five, I highlighted how the DOS create temporary personas to help them communicate to, and engage with their intended online audience. I also suggested that another DOS draws from one of their existing identities, being a Mum. The literature suggests that employees who communicate publicly on behalf of their organisation adopt “corporate personas” (Watson, 2008:122) to help them navigate who they are at work. Within this chapter we see another example of a DOS utilising a type of corporate persona, only it is not to navigate who they are, but rather to provide a means to present the organisation/brand identity narrative when feeling low levels of identification or dis-identification with their organisation. In this sense the empirical data develops existing theory (Watson, 2008) by suggesting the DOS purposely adopts different personas online when they feel less positive about their organisation, such as during periods of change. For example John Griggs, operational marketing manager, Forsdyke Industrial suggests he puts on “my best tweeting smile “in order to continue communicating as positively as possible about the organisation. In this sense he performs a different self online (Goffman, 1959) in order to be able to sustain the organisational/brand identity narrative, which helps him to competently perform his role, which includes promoting the organisation and its products.

There are also examples within the chapter where the DOS draws upon more daring or provocative identity personas online in order to try and provoke a response from their intended audience. For example Natalie Mason, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications describes phrasing things differently on Twitter “more provocatively” as the means to coax a reply or entice a reaction, which may not be possible if interacting face-to-face offline. In addition Theo Gibbins, head of digital marketing communications, Sunrise Healthcare suggests bringing the organisation into being online provides more opportunities to be “a bit sneaky”, where “heart-warming stories” are utilised to secure engagement and competitions are designed to help the organisation secure contact details from the intended audience. Rather than actual different character personas here, I would suggest the DOS adopts different tones and styles of communicating/undertaking online marketing work in order to secure a desired response.

Brand narrative

Within existing brand scholarship it is the consumers who draw upon brand stories and narratives as the means to convey the self (Schembri et al, 2010), rather than the marketers. There is also a lot of emphasis within current theory, as to how brand narratives are communicated between consumers as well as by organisations (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012; Cooper et al, 2010; Smith, 2007). Thus, the representational work the DOS does with regards the practice of bringing the online organisation into being, is as yet an under-explored area of marketing research. Therefore, the empirical data within this chapter develops existing theory by examining how the DOS makes sense of the organisational/brand identity narratives and tries to give sense to their intended audience, via Twitter. For example one way, we see the DOS make sense of and communicate the brand narratives, within this chapter is consistently positively. In this sense as Tim Crane, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare suggests, “conveying positive messages” or stories is the best means of “guiding customers to the best bits of the organisation.” Accordingly, the argument here is that positive brand narratives need to be consistent, but also “interesting and relevant” (Tim Crane) so as to be consumed by the intended online audience. This is a point supported within this chapter by Lola Bloom, head of online adoption and social media, Orion Communications when she also concurs that her underlying strategy is to “stimulate positive conversations with customers about interesting stuff.” Therefore, given the nature and complexity of B2B products, it is less likely, they will be considered aspirational brands, and thus the tweets will not immediately provoke consumer desires (Cooper at al, 2010). Accordingly the DOS has to work extremely hard to try to stimulate awareness and potentially interest and as such they feel the approach should be positive but also stimulating. Both Tim and Lola acknowledge the difficulties in sustaining such consistently positive and ‘interesting’ brand narratives when also needing to convey the products and services being offered, as part of bringing the online organisation into being.

Within the next chapter the possible amalgamation of the professional identity with their individual identity online for the DOS will be explored, as the third key categorisation from the empirics focuses on ‘Online friending’. Such notions of ‘friending’ are perhaps outside the expected norms of professional identity practices, but as has already been alluded to within this chapter the boundaries between online and offline, individual and organisational are becoming less clearly defined. As such the next chapter will explore key themes relating to the conjoining of individual and professional identities and the intrusion of online marketing work into personal space and time.

Chapter Seven - Sustaining Identity: From preserving to friending storytellers

Introduction

This chapter elaborates three further categories that have emerged from my engagement with the empirical materials, which represent my findings. I now examine how the DOS engages in sustaining identity processes through their online marketing work, via Twitter. To illustrate this I draw upon the ways in which they strive to preserve the online organisational presence in a format that is lively, interesting and engaging. I also illustrate examples where the DOS is striving to sustain longer-term relationships with the intended Twitter audience through processes of online friending. The concept of online friending has emerged from the empirical domain and relates to different tactics and activities the DOS engages in to build stronger relationships between them, the organisation and segments of the intended Twitter audience. One of the ways in which they strive to achieve this, as is illustrated throughout this chapter, is by utilising their individual Twitter accounts to contribute to the online organisational presence.

For the purpose of illustrating the descriptive concepts that illustrate processes of sustaining identity, this chapter is structured into three primary parts: Preserving identity, Influencing identity and Online professional friending.

Preserving identity, as discussed within this chapter, illustrates the principle ways the DOS aimed to maintain the online organisational presence as a vibrant and stimulating place to visit, in order to sustain interest from the intended Twitter audience. As a result many of the DOS engaged in processes such as continuously checking the online organisational presence. In this way, many of them consistently compromise their individual identity, outside of traditional/paid working hours, in order to ensure the online organisational presence is preserved in a way that best illustrates its features and benefits consistently. They do this to ensure they have not received any negative comments, but also it is an opportunity to follow up as quickly as possible on positive comments. Another way the DOS aimed to preserve the way the organisation is brought into being online is by controlling the content that is tweeted by their colleagues. In this way they describe acting as 'gatekeepers', in control of approving or rejecting any planned text or images produced by their colleagues.

Influencing identity as discussed within the second section of this chapter relates to those processes, which are designed to encourage the intended audience to read and/or reply to the tweets. This section includes online advocating where employees are encouraged to utilise their personal Twitter sites to promote the organisational and/or brand identity.

Online professional friending processes are described within the third section of this chapter and include a more detailed focus on the integration of the individual individual Twitter accounts of the DOS, with the online organisational presence. Some of them combine their individual and professional/organisational identity through their tweets, while others may be described as fully amalgamating their identity by utilising their individual accounts to support the organisational messages. Many make a conscious decision for convenience or kudos to amalgamate different aspects of self through Twitter. Others do so more hesitantly even reluctantly out of duty and a sense of personal pride in their work, and a determination to make the online organisational presence a success, as it reflects on them.

Preserving identity

As the DOS progresses to being more experienced and confident at online marketing work, they explained to me they engage in more frequent online preserving processes, which include: online checking and online gatekeeping. These are descriptive labels that identify different aspects of the 'preserving' processes, elaborated from the empirical domain. Preserving processes are those activities undertaken by the DOS to maintain the online organisational presence. Therefore they engage in two specific processes. The first includes 'online checking' which is when the DOS frequently checks the organisational

Twitter account to see if there is any activity within the timeline[1], the online organisational presence, they may wish to retweet and also to ensure there are no complaints or questions that need to be responded to. This sees the DOS closely aligning their individual identity with the organisation, outside of traditional/paid working hours and away from their 'desk'.

The second process is online gatekeeping. This is a term that has come directly from the DOS and refers to the way they monitor and control the content other people from the organisation request to have included within tweets on Twitter. Generally only the DOS is permitted to upload content to Twitter, so other members of staff ask them to add content on their behalf. The DOS reported to me how they scrutinise any intended content from other staff members and either edit or reject it according to their view on how suitable it is for contributing positively to the online organisational presence. In this sense they bring the organisation into being according to their individual views and experience of appropriate content and they preserve it through maintaining monitoring and control processes.

[1] When logging into Twitter as an account holder, the first page that opens is the Home timeline. This contains a list of tweets from those accounts the organisation/DOS has chosen to follow. It is possible to reply, retweet or like any tweets contained within the timeline. Those tweets likely to be of most relevance will be listed first within the timeline. These are chosen based on accounts and tweets the DOSs interact with most. A collection of the most pertinent tweets is also summarised from the last visit and entitled: 'While you were away' so the DOS's know which tweets they have missed since their last visit (The Twitter Glossary, 2016a).

Online Checking

One of the ways the DOS engaged in preserving the online organisational presence is by constantly checking or viewing the Twitter account outside of paid working hours, such as at the weekends, during annual leave and in the evenings. The majority of them explained to me that due to the ease of accessing Twitter from their mobile or home laptop, they often couldn't resist checking to see the latest updates. For example Fiona, social media marketing content manager, Orion Communications, admits she is aware that she checks the organisational Twitter account on her mobile phone as it is straightforward to do so. She comments:

> I've caught myself checking Twitter outside of work a few times on my mobile, *it's too easy… to be fair it's mostly when we have just launched a new product or service* and I want to know whether people have been interested in it or not. And *I don't want to miss an opportunity to follow up on that possible new customer,* I think in the social media world Monday is sometimes too far away for customers, they are a bit impatient maybe…or at least I sometimes think they are. (Emphasis added).

What is outlined within Fiona's comments above, and was also consistently borne out across the DOSs I interviewed, is that they all felt it was 'normal practice' to check the organisational Twitter account outside of traditional/paid working hours. However, there were differing reasons given by each for doing so. Fiona makes sense of her need to check the organisational Twitter account outside of traditional/paid working hours in two different ways. Firstly she suggests accessing Twitter outside the office is *"too easy"* and therefore she cannot resist the temptation to have a look to see what activity has happened since she last looked. Secondly, she does not want to miss an opportunity to engage with members of the online Twitter audience if they reply and they want further information about a product that she is promoting. In this sense she acknowledges that her professional identity and her need to feel valued/needed, sometimes dominates, even outside of work. Through her online marketing work she is therefore continually aligning her individual identity with the organisation, even outside of working hours. Although she also tries to make sense of her need to keep checking on the organisational Twitter account, by suggesting it is the nature of social media. As she explained it is her belief the Twitter audience are expecting an immediate response and so she feels obligated to keep checking and providing responses.

For other DOSs such as Philip, senior manager, marketing, Clark Spencer Jones, he considers engaging in online checking processes is just another aspect of marketing work and as such it is expected, as he explains:

> …you will find yourselves *responding to something at the weekend* or when you are on holiday or whatever and that is just part and parcel of how work is today, not for everyone, but *it is the case for marketing* and it always has been to an extent as before social media there have always been telephones, so you're always tapped in to what is going on and *you can't really ever completely switch off*. (Emphasis added).

Philip accepts and makes sense of responding to work matters during annual leave and at weekends, as it is the way it is, and to an extent, always has been. As he suggests, before the introduction of SNSs such as Twitter, which are easily accessible and continuously available, there was telephone contact. Due to this ease of contact out of hours Philip acknowledges that he is never really able to entirely disassociate from his professional identity, as such he has just learnt to negotiate when he allows it to dominate out of hours. He adds:

> You will find that you do things because *you are there and you can and because it is easy to do*, so I think responding to bits and pieces as you see them is also quite natural and also I think that the *out of hours response* I always quite appreciate as *you can tell those companies that have gone home for the weekend.* (Emphasis added).

As such, when things are easy to do they are more ordinary, and as a result, he was less conscious that his online marketing work is intruding on his time away from work. In addition he was critical of those companies who are unresponsive, while praising organisations such as his, which do respond out of hours. In this way bringing the organisation into being online is seen as a continuous process of checking, preserving and as we saw earlier in Chapter Six, ('Online protecting'). As such the individual DOS may be said to compromise their individual identity in order to fulfil the obligations of their role.

The DOS also described processes of online checking that resulted in an action, such as sending tweets outside of normal working hours, despite there not being a specific requirement from the organisation to do so. Tim, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare, describes how he has previously engaged in online checking and responding processes on Christmas Day. He comments:

> *I've been on the organisation's Twitter page on Christmas day before* and wished our followers Merry Christmas and a happy new year, so yes *I would say that I am committed (slightly embarrassed) or just very sad* (laughs). Actually, despite having Tweetdeck[2] now, which schedules the tweets, I still quite often keep checking what is going on… if you're checking your own social media it's an easy habit to slip into and I'm sure some of our followers appreciate the personal touch.

As is evident from Tim's comments he struggles to disassociate his individual identity from his professional identity, even on a UK national holiday. Initially he describes his online checking processes as a sign of dedication and then in reflection he suggests that this might actually be quite 'sad', as it is embarrassing for him to admit to. Even with the introduction of new technology such as Tweetdeck, which facilitates the timed uploading of pre-written tweets, Tim admits a tendency to keep checking the organisational Twitter site as it is easy to do so, especially when checking a personal account at the same time. This draws attention to the nature of online marketing work, as being more tempting out of hours due to its close

[2] Tweetdeck is a software programme that allows users to view multiple Twitter timelines in one template. Aimed at more advanced users of Twitter, its features enable users to schedule tweets for posting in the future, as well as build tweet collections. Users just need to sign in utilising their personal or organisational Twitter account at tweetdeck.twitter.com to utilise its services (The Twitter Glossary, 2016b).

alignment with individual identity pursuits, such as updating personal Twitter accounts. Also, there is the suggestion that Tim chooses to maintain contact with the Twitter audience so as to authenticate the value of his marketing work, as he envisages that his followers appreciate his personalised messages. However as he confirmed to me the only people who replied via Twitter on Christmas Day were actually other staff members who were working in out of hours care services. This suggests the only people that appreciate his efforts are also employees engaging in similar processes of online checking. As such a broader organisational culture of compliance may be embedded across all employees. Or perhaps as Tim intimated by his comments there is just a reinforced sense of duty as it is a ‘caring’ service orientated, rather than a product orientated, healthcare organisational sector.

Sarah, customer services manager, Sonic Business Solutions, describes engaging in similar online checking processes. However she readily admits they often intrude upon her time out of hours, which she resents. She comments:

> *Unfortunately* I do occasionally *catch myself* logging into the Twitter page out of hours from home, mainly as *I don’t want to go into problems on Monday morning… I would sooner spend 10 minutes on Sunday night,* rather than hours on Monday resolving issues, so *I just write a couple of quick and apologetic tweets to try and stop any problems escalating…* (Emphasis added).

Due to the type of online marketing work Sarah, engages with, which is primarily resolving complaints, she feels obliged to engage in out of hours online checking processes. In her view, these activities help to prevent complaints escalating through the sending of repeated tweets by the complainant. If left unanswered she explained they could “impact negatively on the perception of the organisation by others online.” She therefore suggests responding to complaints promptly out of hours does help to prevent issues intensifying. However through her actions she purposely compromises her individual identity in favour of allowing her professional identity to dominate, even at home. A point she acknowledges and also resents notably by her use of the word, “unfortunately”, at the beginning of her comment. This brings into question therefore, if she responds only because she feels obliged due to fear of being reprimanded, if complaints go unanswered out of hours. When I asked her about the reason she felt ‘obliged’ to reply she said it was related to a sense of loyalty and duty to the company, however. She also remarked that her intention was also to “try and diffuse the issue so that it didn’t reflect badly on her or the organisation.” As such her out of hours online marketing work activities are designed to preserve her and the organisation’s reputation for effective customer service. In this sense she sees her and the organisation’s identity as inexplicably aligned within the online organisational presence.

For Shaun, PR manager, Forsdyke Industrial, online checking processes are more a matter of choice, but within the constraints of professional responsibility, as he suggests (emphasis added):

> Tweetdeck is used to cover out of hours and holiday periods as you can *just schedule the tweets in*. Of course *it doesn't stop you keep looking at the tweets coming in though*, that can't be helped it's just human nature when it's your responsibility.

As is borne out in Shaun's comment and was also mentioned by Tim, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare earlier in this section, and several other DOSs, recently there is a more structured and planned approach utilised to schedule in the tweets. The introduction of Tweetdeck as Shaun outlines is utilised to schedule in specific tweets, although there is no mechanism to respond to customer queries or complaints during any non-active holiday periods. Therefore, Shaun confirms for him the checking and monitoring of the online organisational presence has become a natural process out of hours. This is because he feels preserving the online organisational presence is his responsibility. When I asked him why and what motivates this feeling, he responded that it was due to a "fear of negative feedback and therefore others not thinking he was managing Twitter very well". Accordingly due to the nature of online marketing work, his professional identity is an omnipresent aspect of his overall identity, even during times when the individual identity is expected to dominate, such as during holidays from work. What is therefore brought into question is whether it is ever possible to sustain an individual identity, separate from the professional identity, outside of traditional/paid working hours, when engaging in practices that involve an online element. This is due to the nature of online marketing work, which can include answering queries and complaints, the responsibility and commitment the DOS feels to online checking processes, as well as the availability of Twitter outside of the office environment. Important issues such as these that are drawn from the empirical domain will be discussed later on within this chapter and also within Chapter Eight, as part of the discussion.

Online Gatekeeping

The majority demonstrate a slightly different approach to online preserving when they engage in processes that prevent other staff members directly uploading content onto the organisational Twitter site. Accordingly, they engage in processes of monitoring and controlling the content other people from the organisation request to have included within the organisational Twitter account. As Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions, explains he feels a duty to check any suggested content from other employees to ensure it is appealing to the intended Twitter audience. He comments:

> The approval process is that everything must come through me. I have to act as the gatekeeper for Twitter, as I've come across so many occasions where someone (staff member) has provided me with what they thought was acceptable tweet copy, only for me to find that it was a cut and pasted version of a press release…embarrassing really. If customers are coming through Twitter they don't want to be re-directed to a press release, they are not a journalist they want to get to a post that is friendly and informative and that's what we are trying to do as we don't want to lose that customer if they have gone to the trouble of finding our Twitter site.

What is clear from Andrew's comments is that his online marketing work often starts with more traditional offline marketing processes, which includes reading, editing and possibly approving relevant copy for inclusion within a tweet. He describes feeling obliged to undertake a ‘gatekeeper’ role, so as to give sense about the online organisational presence to the intended Twitter audience in a way that will appeal to them and retain their interest. Accordingly, he makes sense of producing the tweets by trying to meet the needs of the intended Twitter audience, as well as trying to manage relationships with his colleagues. Although he feels obliged to work cooperatively with colleagues, he is also very aware as to what he thinks constitutes appealing, ‘friendly and informative’ tweet copy for the Twitter audience. As such through his identity work he combines being a ‘friend’ to the Twitter audience with being a ‘manager of tweet content’ or ‘gatekeeper’ to his colleagues. At times negotiating this dual role can be problematic, such as when he receives unsatisfactory tweet text from a colleague and has to go back to them to explain why it is unsuitable.

Similarly Simon, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones, describes a process of trying to balance tweet content he believes the audience will engage with, as well as the requirements of his colleagues, who want to contribute their own material to Twitter. However, he also acknowledges the problematic nature of trying to manage the two very different expectations, via his online marketing work. He comments:

> I had one guy, he is probably our most prolific tweeter, he has lots and lots of followers and is very influential in his sector and he frequently sends e-mails to me saying: “I sent something out and no-one re-tweeted it.” So, I had to send him back a firmly worded e-mail to say that we only re-tweet

> what we want to on that particular day because it ties in with particular events and initiatives.

In this instance, Simon describes a situation where a colleague had been tweeting content related to his specific work interests from his individual Twitter account. The staff member, an expert in his own field, then expected this content to be retweeted via the company account, as it focussed on related business issues, which would then endorse or give further support to his messages. However, as Simon reiterates a key element of his online marketing work includes giving sense to the intended audience about the organisation's events and initiatives and therefore it is not possible to retweet every one of this staff member's tweets. As Simon further explains his monitoring and controlling of the online organisational presence is not always appreciated or understood by his colleagues. He adds:

> It happened a couple of times though. He kept coming back, saying: "I've tweeted this and I think it is interesting and no-one has re-tweeted it why"? So I went back and said, "We've re-tweeted a lot today and we can't re-tweet everything." I can't sit here and amplify everything he says or we will just become the guy's fan club.

As we see from Simon's additional comments, his colleague is struggling to make sense of why every single one of his tweets is not retweeted if they are 'interesting'. Accordingly, Simon clarifies that regardless of the hierarchical structure within the organisation, as he confirmed this colleague is senior to him, he feels a responsibility to ensure the tweets represent the organisation in a balanced way and do not just reflect one individual's perspective. In this regard Simon's identity work surpasses traditional organisational norms such as hierarchical structures. Arguably, this is because the online organisational presence represents aspects of the organisation, but here the DOS monitors and controls the content, to an extent, within boundaries. Therefore, he is able to make the decision not to support or endorse every tweet his more senior colleague sends out.

In a similar way, Collin, social media lead, Orion Communications, describes how he is able to prioritise giving sense to the intended Twitter audience as his online preserving processes also supersede established offline hierarchical structures. As he explains this means having control over more senior colleagues' Twitter contributions and therefore rejecting any text he is not completely content with. He comments:

> We would try not to communicate anything that we are not completely happy with, if there is any ambiguity, basically if we don't understand it, it wouldn't go. We have that control which is good. In that sense we are very much the gatekeeper on Twitter. We stop anything getting through that we are not happy with and that we don't think customers would get.

Through his online gatekeeping processes, Collin ensures that he can make sense of any proposed content from colleagues, before approving it and uploading it as a tweet. This is to ensure the intended Twitter audience will also be able to make sense of any proposed content. In this way, part of Collin's online marketing work is to ensure the online organisational presence is accessible and therefore any tweet content needs to be unambiguous.

Another DOS such as Theo, head of digital marketing communications, Sunrise Healthcare, engages in online gatekeeping processes in order to preserve the positive nature of the online organisational presence. In this sense he sees a key part of his marketing work as preparing and educating colleagues about bringing the organisation into being online, carefully. He comments:

> …most of our colleagues think that social media *is an easy and straightforward thing to do as they use it at home* and invariably it is, but equally that can lead to it being run in a way that isn't quite as measured or considered as it should be, and especially *as at Sunrise Healthcare* we have such potential for contentious stories, *we've really got to manage that carefully.* (Emphasis added).

As Theo highlights many of his colleagues think social media is simple and easy to use. As he explained to me this is because they make sense of it as a personal tool they use confidently outside of work. However he draws attention to the fact that when undertaking online marketing work on behalf of the organisation their identity is conjoined with the organisations. This is reiterated by his use of the term *"as Sunrise Healthcare"* (emphasis added) which he explained is required as they are communicating *as* the organisation, rather than as an individual. In this sense there is a prioritising of the professional identity in order to prevent the potential for negative comments or stories. The prioritising of one identity over another through identity work is one way the DOS strives to influence the way the intended

Twitter audience sees the online organisational presence. This theme of influencing identity is discussed in more detail within the next section.

Influencing identity

Several of the DOSs explained engaging in online influencing processes, which includes online advocating. The term online influencing as drawn from the empirical domain, relates to the activities the DOS undertakes via their online marketing work, that are intended to influence the Twitter audience to continually read and as relevant, reply to the tweets. These processes include strategies to maintain their interest and encourage them to continuously ‘follow’ and engage with the online organisational presence. The descriptive label utilised to explain online advocating, includes utilising members of the organisation outside of the marketing team to reply to, or retweet text and image content from the organisational Twitter account from their individual accounts. This is requested of them to try and ensure the content is distributed to more members of the Twitter audience. It is also designed to make it seem as though the organisational Twitter account has more followers and is independently endorsed by others, as it is rarely clear the individuals’ work for the organisation.

Online advocating

One of the ways the DOS described to me they engaged in online influencing processes was through utilising staff members as ‘spokespeople’ to reply and retweet organisational content, to add ‘independent’ authority to the online organisational presence. As Natalie Mason, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications, confirms within her organisation the process of online influencing through the use of advocates or spokespeople is a prominent aspect of the online organisational strategy via Twitter. She explains:

> So I think we’re trying to create a little ‘Twitter army’ – so basically certain members of staff are tasked with re-tweeting from their personal individual Twitter accounts to retweet organisational messages. It isn’t always immediately evident that these people work for us so some customers might not know. Although no-one hides anything if the customer clicks through to the Twitter homepage – but how many people are going to bother to do that?

As she outlines, there is a group of individuals within the organisation, including the DOS who are asked to incorporate retweeting organisational messages from their individual Twitter accounts into their day-to-day activities. Natalie refers to this group, which she is part of, as the ‘Twitter army,’ which suggests a regimented team-based approach to increasing awareness of organisational messages. In this way part of her online marketing work includes the amalgamation of her individual and professional identity through the incorporation of her personal Twitter account, as the means to promote organisational messages. This is a process, which she and others are specifically requested to undertake by their line manager. In this way they are told to utilise personal individual resources, often outside of working hours to promote the organisation. Natalie recognises this but accepts it is simply “part of the organisation's ambitions to increase followers." Evidently, it isn't always obvious that these individuals work for the organisation. Although Natalie confirms that if members of the Twitter audience click through to her's and other individuals' homepages then the information is there and therefore sense is given as to their 'true' identities, if the audience proactively searches for it.

Collin, social media lead, Orion Communications also mentions this particular form of online advocating, where staff members are asked to retweet or reply to content from their individual Twitter accounts. Although he suggests this approach is required to make the online organisational presence seem more human and to generate more conversations. He comments:

> And the way we have tried to structure Twitter… we are encouraging our employees to do things with their personal Twitter accounts is because we want to have our people present in the conversation and not just use it as a corporate channel. We try to ensure that all staff who use their personal Twitter accounts to promote the business are fully trained so they understand that they need to state that the views are of the individual and not necessarily of the business, for example.

Although Collin suggests that staff members are encouraged to use their individual Twitter accounts, other employees from Orion Communications, including Natalie interpreted this as a more of a direct request from their line manager. Indeed his initial suggestion that this activity is only 'encouraged' seems to be contradicted when he confirms that any staff utilising their individual Twitter accounts have to undertake a rigorous process of training.

Also on their Twitter homepage they are requested to state that any views expressed are of the individual and not necessarily reflective of the organisation. Given the organisational request to integrate self with organisation through the tweets and replies, it seems highly unlikely that the individual will be expressing any views that contradict those of the organisation, especially after being “fully trained”. In this way any suggestion of ‘freedom’ of expression during tweeting, which relates to individual views or opinions is highly unlikely given the regimented approach to its management. Therefore organisational policies and procedures are acting as the means to constrain individual identity expression.

A slightly different approach to online advocating is suggested by Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions, where each of the service managers, which he refers to as social media spokespeople in each of the different countries, is asked to retweet messages from the UK based online organisational presence, utilising their individual Twitter accounts. The service managers are also responsible for ensuring the tweet is translated into the relevant language of their particular country. He describes the current process for disseminating UK messages nationally:

> The information that we share through the UK Twitter account has to be sent out by all the social media spokespeople in each of the different countries that we operate in, so they can get it translated into the language of their particular country. Sometimes of course there are issues when stuff I’m sending out doesn’t translate that well. So then I advise what they may like to say as an alternative to talking about the British weather for example.

Andrew describes a situation within his organisation where essentially the material he produces to form the online organisational presence in the UK has to be translated and disseminated to bring the online organisation into being within the other countries. Thus through his online marketing work he is trying to make sense of and recreate aspects of the online organisation, so that it can be easily translated and advocated to a broader audience. When I asked him if the service managers minded using their individual Twitter accounts to promote the organisation, he confirmed it wasn't something he had ever spoken to them about. He further explains:

> The organisation expects all of us to promote it whenever we can, we all do our bit, but for the service managers in some ways it is easier as they just fit in when they can. I feel I need to get at least three or four tweets out a day. These guys can just tweet from the car using their own accounts.

Andrew clarifies there is an expectation from the organisation to give sense to the intended Twitter audience through the tweets. This is a request he takes for granted as a natural part of his online marketing work and therefore he does not even consider that the service managers may object to utilising their individual Twitter accounts. In fact he suggests it is a positive aspect of their work as they have more flexibility as to where they are able to send the tweets from, in his view. This suggests Andrew is so used to prioritising his professional identity that he is unable to see that other staff members may not want to promote the organisation through their individual Twitter accounts. He doesn't ask them he just assumes they will do what the organisation, (by this he means their line managers), expects. The amalgamation of individual

Twitter accounts and therefore individual identities within the online organisational presence is a theme that has emerged from the empirical domain and will be discussed in more depth within the next section.

Online professional ‘friending’

The DOS also outlined examples where they frequently engage in processes of online friending. The DOS may be described as undertaking online friending activities when their main priority is to appear friendlier, more personable and approachable within the tweets. It is hoped by the DOS that being friendlier may persuade the intended Twitter audience to interact with the online organisational presence more frequently and also continue to follow the Twitter feed. To facilitate online friending, the DOS are engaging in identity work tactics which focus on partially or completely “merging role with identity” (Kreiner et al, 2006: 1046) within the Twitter environment. This means the conscious association of individual identity (who they are) with being a DOS (what they do).

Within this chapter, two specific descriptive labels that identify different aspects of the online friending process elaborated from the empirical domain have been identified to describe this type of identity work: Combining aspects of identity and Amalgamating identity. Combining aspects of identity involves a conscious decision by the DOS to assimilate elements of their individual identity with their role duties via Twitter. An example of this, as will be illustrated within this section, includes the DOS sometimes utilising their individual Twitter account to promote organisational messages. They may also include some colleagues as followers. As such 'amalgamating identity' describes an approach where the DOS is asked by their manager(s) to act as 'spokespeople' and therefore to utilise their individual Twitter account to support/reinforce organisational messages. As a result, they highlight their role and the organisation they work for on their homepage and they only tweet about work-related matters and adopt their tone to always being professional. For example they do not use bad language or express a different opinion to that of their organisation when tweeting from their own Twitter accounts. In this sense they allow their professional identity to dominate inside and outside of work.

Combining identity

One of the ways, the DOS and their colleagues establish their identity as online friends is through the integration of their individual Twitter account with the online organisational presence. In most instances, this means the DOS retweets and replies from their individual Twitter account during and in addition to traditional/paid working hours, directly into the online organisational presence. An individual profile picture of the DOS is therefore visible within the online organisational presence. The inclusion of individual and less formal images alongside the more formal organisational logo is intended to sustain a friendlier persona, which suggests a more 'human' side to the organisation. This is intended to firmly establish those who work there as 'real people', as Simon, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones, explains. He comments:

> I think ideally customers want to see the real people behind the organisation… with this in mind, sometimes it works well mixing personal and organisational Twitter accounts. Last night a customer tweeted can you send me a press release so I emailed someone in the marketing team, just to say "Have you seen the tweet?" She e-mailed him the press release but then tweeted him from her own personal account to say "I've sent it to you." So the customer had interaction with the CSJ account as I had replied from that account and from the PR team and also directly to a person as well – so the best of both worlds really.

Simon describes encouraging a process that includes the purposeful combination of communication from an employee's individual Twitter account and the organisation's when responding to a query. He suggests this combining of the individual's input with the organisation's helps to give sense to individual Twitter audience members, as they are being connected to an organisational team, which is professional and prompt, but also an individual person. In this sense, Simon sees a key element of his online marketing work as facilitating connections and conversations between the online organisational presence and individual employees to provide the best of both worlds, which he explained means: *"human contact with a prompt and efficient service"* (emphasis added).

Also as Simon further explained another element of 'doing' identity work for the DOS involves choosing how much of the self to divulge online. As is borne out in Simon's comments below and in the following examples within this section, is that there appears to be two possible processes of divulgence for the DOS. The first is the presentation of a professional identity only and the second is a combination of professional and personal identity. For example Simon adopts an approach that combines his professional with some small aspects of his individual identity because he utilises his individual Twitter account to retweet and reply to organisational messages and he encourages his colleagues to do the same. As such he presents his professional identity within his individual Twitter account by including a formal profile picture of him in a business suit, while also combining aspects of his individual identity by tweeting non-business related content from this account. He therefore clarifies how he thinks he and others within his organisation combine professional and individual identity presentations via Twitter. He adds:

> It isn't scientific but I would say that the people who use their business photo tend to 'talk' mostly about business and the people who don't, don't – but it's not always the case, such as stuff is split down the middle, Olivia (another manager) for example has an official photo but then often tweets about her cats and I have an official photo and occasionally talk about golf and non-business related stuff.

He describes above the way that some employees choose to divulge only their professional identity and therefore discuss only business related matters within their tweets, while others such as he, choose to combine elements of professional and individual identity (less formal profile picture). Although when I asked why he uses his individual Twitter account to send out organisational messages he confirmed that he "wanted to" make the online organisational presence, which he is principally responsible for, "more vibrant and interesting and of course to increase followers." In this way he is willing to divulge more of his individual identity so as to try and make the organisational presence 'more interesting'.

John, operational marketing manager, Forsdyke Industrial, insists that the nature of his online friending processes is to engage as one professional to another with the intended Twitter audience. As he explains this is required due to the predominantly product focussed nature of his organisation's tweet content. He comments:

> I suppose we just try to keep it professional, third person, not really first person. I sort of feel we need to keep a professional distance… because we're talking to other professionals I guess and as I'm not Cheryl Cole or whatever her name is now – customers don't want to know what I had for breakfast, they want to know if our products are the best value for money on the market and that's what I try to tell them in 140 characters or less.

As he explains John equates more trivial content such as details of food choices as being associated with individual identity traits, which is why given the more serious industrialised nature of his organisation's product portfolio, he opts to maintain his professional identity via Twitter. The nature of his online marketing work is therefore focussed as he states on communicating product features and benefits from the online organisational presence. However, this approach was immediately contradicted when I asked John if he ever used his individual Twitter account to support the online organisational presence. As his comments suggest, he seems rather unaware how much of his individual identity he reveals daily to the same professional Twitter audience. He comments:

> To be honest a lot of the followers are the same on my individual and work Twitter accounts. Even though on my personal one I mainly talk about football… it's still getting the Forsdyke Industrial name out there, especially as I think they only follow me as I work there. I am still mindful of what I say though, no swearing, as they are business contacts too.

When pressed for further clarification it is apparent from John's comments that he is willing to compromise his individual identity online via Twitter in order to prioritise his professional identity. Although the content is focussed on his individual interests, he still adopts his behaviours in line with his professional identity, which includes the lack of swearing as he deems this unprofessional.

Theo Gibbins, head of digital marketing, Sunrise Healthcare, associates online friending processes with a more general tone, which he suggests the DOS within his organisation try to maintain when sustaining the online organisational presence, such as that of the 'expert friend,' as he explains:

> Within Twitter our strategy is really just to adopt a similar tone and style, as that of the expert friend, by that I mean we want it to be friendly and approachable, but at the same time we are also able to have that sense of authority and credence, in every tweet whoever writes it and sends it out and that also includes those people who use their individual accounts to promote organisational messages.

From Theo's comments it is clear that he anticipates a consistent approach to online marketing work, which is required even when the DOS is replying or retweeting from their individual account outside of traditional/paid working hours. However, when reflecting upon this, he also slightly contradicts this approach when he confirms that he did have an individual Twitter account, but that when he joined Sunrise Healthcare he chose to close it down, as he did not want his individual views and opinions to be associated with those of the organisation. Therefore he chooses to suppress his individual identity and only utilise his professional identity via Twitter. He comments:

> I used to have my own Twitter account but I locked it down (closed it) when I started working here, as there are quite a few contentious issues that we deal with, so I didn't want to say the wrong thing there and for the organisation to suffer because I said something out of place late one night from my account.

It is notable from Theo's comments that when he started with the organisation he chose to close his individual Twitter account. As he explains this was to ensure that he did not include any content within his tweets, which could be linked negatively to the online organisational presence. Although he has since reflected upon this and made sense of it by recently opening a new individual Twitter account that focuses primarily on "discussions relating to developments in digital technology," where he feels comfortable following and speaking with ex-clients and current colleagues. He has changed his view therefore on combining his individual and professional identity via Twitter. As he explains this is due to his opinion that professional and individual identity are less differentiated, due to the changing nature of work, especially when it includes an online element. He adds:

> I'm not sure that there is really such a difference now between who you are at home and who you are at work, especially with the online dimension. We all work such long hours and most of us are guilty of constantly checking the company's social media and replying to tweets these days from home that I don't think there is any need to be vastly different anymore. Years ago I used to put on my suit and get on the train for work and feel like I was teleporting to a different world, but now, perhaps it's the type of work I do that I feel different about being one person at work and one person at home and it is definitely the same online, at least the two are rapidly combining.

There are several reasons why Theo suggests he does not see such a significant differentiation between his professional and individual identity when undertaking online marketing work. Initially he suggests the ease of accessing the online organisational presence and the tendency to work long hours means there is more temptation to keep checking and replying to tweets as required. Partly, as he explains, this is because he sees that he engages in several different aspects of online friending, which are bringing the two different identity aspects closer together. For example he describes accessing the online organisational presence from home and replying to tweets, while also including work colleagues as followers on his individual Twitter account. Arguably with the online dimension there are also less physical barriers to seeing and contributing to the online organisational presence, as there is no need to be in a particular place to access it. In this sense the ease of accessing Twitter from home and out of hours has influenced how the DOS continuously gives sense about the organisation and its products/services to the intended Twitter audience. For a couple, as has been illustrated within this section, this is because they take pride in their work and want to make the online organisational presence seem more vibrant, ‘human’ and popular. In comparison, others have started to see less need for differentiation when undertaking online marketing work and are happy to ‘follow’ and be followed by work colleagues and focus on only work-related subject matter. Within the next section I will draw upon the empirical domain in order to discuss how the DOS has made a conscious decision to prioritise their professional identity via their updates to the online organisational presence and also no longer sees the need to separate different aspects of self via Twitter.

Amalgamating identity

The DOS from two of the case study organisations (Orion Communications and Sonic Business Solutions) described to me how they have taken a conscious decision to prioritise their professional identity continuously online. This means they utilise their individual Twitter account only to support and contribute to the content within the online organisational presence. They also utilise a professional profile image, and any tweets that are sent out are either directly related to their organisation or their professional identity. The language utilised is also still quite formal and although they tweet outside of paid working hours, they do so only to promote the organisation or the work that they and others in their field do. In this sense they align their interests and opinions directly with those of their organisation.

When discussing online advocating processes earlier in this chapter, Collin, social media lead, Orion Communications highlighted that he encourages his colleagues to utilise their individual Twitter accounts to promote the organisation. However, he feels due to his role as a DOS it is impossible for him to separate out his individual identity from his occupation or the organisation online, even when tweeting from his individual Twitter account. He explains:

> I feel that I have to be careful about what I say (pauses) – certainly where Twitter is concerned I am Orion, at least my identity is inexplicably linked with the organisation as people when they private message me asking for stuff they definitely don't differentiate – to them I'm always just Collin, professional friend, who works at Orion and sorts stuff out for them, I don't have any other identity whether that is on a Monday morning or Friday night – My work identity is the only one that I am allowed, if you like to portray online, that's the nature of this job (sighs).

Initially Collin describes utilising tactics, such as being careful about the subjects he discusses, in order to sustain his professional identity and appear as a 'professional friend' to the online Twitter audience. Then as he pauses and reflects he explains that he feels those members of the Twitter audience that contact him link his identity closely with the organisations. As such he feels that due to the continuous nature of the queries he receives and the 'nature of the DOS role', that he is not permitted to have another identity, during working hours, or outside via Twitter.

In a similar way, Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions, describes finding it easier to amalgamate his identity with the organisation/his professional identity, so that he can answer queries quickly and easily from either account. Accordingly he makes sense of using his individual account interchangeably with the organisations as a matter of convenience. He explains:

> I really don't think too much about how much I use my Twitter account to retweet or reply to the organisation's… it's just an easy way to keep the conversations going and to stop some of the issues developing as I'm not completely sure they know who it is when I reply as 'me'. It's really just about convenience, sharing and keeping things friendly.

As Andrew explains he doesn't think too much about using his individual identity to respond positively to tweets or to answer queries. In this regard he explained not really being concerned with: "separating out different parts of me, as he presumed no-one really cared that much". However he does suggest that keeping things friendly is a core aspect of sustaining the online organisational presence and therefore replying from his individual account does add identity ambiguity. This is because he does not think the intended audience knows who he is and this makes them less keen to respond negatively in his view.

A different type of identity amalgamation is suggested by Lola, head of online adoption and social media, Orion Communications. She describes purposely amalgamating her individual identity with the organisation, through the inclusion of symbols, such as the company logo and similar colours, to illustrate her affiliation, on her individual Twitter account.

> Typically if I speak at an event then you get quite a few members of the audience following you straight after or actually during sometimes and sometimes tweeting about it, which is great as it spreads the word more widely about things that are important to me. So it’s helpful to look like you are part of the organisation, by using the company logo, company colours and being really clear that you work there, so they might just follow you anyway, even if it’s by mistake (laughs).

Lola’s comments suggest that she makes a conscious choice to amalgamate her identity with the organisation and specifically, the organisational symbols, so as to increase the likelihood of engagement with the Intended Twitter audience. In this regard she makes sense of utilising her individual Twitter account by ensuring that her areas of interest are communicated more widely than she may be able to achieve through her individual identity alone. Therefore her desire to increase awareness of subjects that are important to her individually is enough to persuade her to amalgamate identity through her online marketing work, at least temporarily during events.

For Natalie, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications, amalgamating her identity with the DOS role and the online organisational presence is also a conscious choice. She explains:

> I’ve been using Twitter since about 2009. I think prior to that I had experimented with it and initially I had divided it into personal and business

> but then I decided that was just too much to handle and I would just merge the two together, so intentionally I'm just speaking about organisational stuff. I invest a lot in my job and I am genuinely interested in the work that I do so actually that is a very big part of me, so I don't have the particular dilemma of this is personal and this is business.

Having initially tried separating her individual and professional identities online she soon realised it was too laborious to maintain. Thus, upon reflection she feels that her professional identity represents a significant aspect of who she is offline and what she cares about and therefore amalgamating this with her individual identity seemed natural to her. Also she confirms that when she is communicating via Twitter it is the work she does that inspires her to contribute frequently to the online organisational presence. In this way she is able to give sense to herself and others through her online marketing work. She is more able to sustain a consistent identity, as she is communicating about issues of interest to her and that she sees as a core part of what makes her the person she is.

Summary

This chapter has expounded the third key categorisation, sustaining identity that has emerged from my interpretive engagement with the empirical material. For example the first section focuses on how the DOS engages in processes of online preserving. Therefore one of the main themes discussed is how the DOS feels a responsibility to preserve the online organisational presence. As such they continuously engage in processes of online checking. This is much more than a technical process as will be discussed within the next chapter, as it epitomises the power relations being played out. The DOS regularly reviewed the online organisational presence, often outside of traditional/paid hours to check for retweets and replies principally as they feel obligated to do so, to protect the online organisational presence and because they are fearful of negative tweets. Such online checking processes often also lead to the DOS replying and retweeting outside of normal/paid working hours also. Accordingly they are compromising and arguably sacrificing their individual identity, in order to complete aspects of their online marketing work out of hours and from home. Some of them also engage in online gatekeeping processes, including monitoring and controlling what their colleagues are able to communicate via the online organisational presence. In this instance the DOS adopts those identity work tactics best placed to meet the needs of their intended Twitter audience, as well as trying to manage relationships with their colleagues.

A further theme, which is elaborated upon within this chapter, includes online influencing processes. The DOS strives to influence the intended Twitter audience to continually read and reply to the tweets through the sharing of text, links images and videos at times when they are most likely to be accessing the online organisational presence, such as on their way to work or at lunchtimes. In addition the DOS and many of their colleagues also engage in advocating activities, which includes them utilising their individual Twitter accounts to promote and endorse the online organisational presence. As a result of these activities, the DOS often have to compromise their individual identity in order to fulfil the obligations of role and organisation through their online marketing work.

The last theme generated from the empirical domain within this chapter focuses on online professional friending processes. These include activities where the DOS utilised their individual Twitter account to support organisational messages within the online organisational presence. In this sense they are combining and amalgamating their individual identity with their DOS role and the organisation through their contribution to the online organisational presence. Such processes often see the DOS prioritising their professional identity as the individual Twitter account is utilised to support and give authority to the organisations. The themes that have emerged from this chapter including compromising, combining and amalgamating identity will be considered again within the discussion.

Summary of the conceptual findings from the empirical data

Within Chapters Five to Seven I have presented and explained the data that originated from the interviews. From this empirical data I focus on the following insights, which will be developed within the discussion, Chapter Eight.

Within Chapter Five there is evidence from the data that the DOS's draw on their past experiences of offline marketing work, and the imagined online audience responses to help them bring the online organisation into being. They also utilise aspects of their personal individual identity in order to humanise the online organisational presence. In this sense they willingly donate aspects of self, their name and personal interests to enhance the image of the organisation.

I identify within Chapter Six that one of the requirements of online marketing work for the DOS is to present the organisation consistently positively. This is achieved through text, images and video as the means to provide an impression of their organisation as innovative and cutting edge. Another aspect of the DOS role includes online protecting processes, where they are responsible for answering complaints and thus, changing negative perceptions of the organisation through their replies. They also try to provoke responses from the intended audience through questioning, coaxing and enticing approaches, as they seek recognition that their work is worthwhile. We also see them striving to navigate dual identity appearances, online and offline at events, where they try to regulate their identity in response to different stimulants including face-to-face interaction and anticipated online responses.

Finally, in Chapter Seven I introduced the concept of ‘online friending,’ which is where we see the DOS amalgamating and combining their role with their individual identity when they utilise their individual, personal Twitter accounts to endorse the online organisational presence. It is thus evident that the DOS often has to compromise their personal, individual identity to fulfil the obligations of role and organisation through their online marketing work, often outside of traditional/paid working hours.

How these findings contribute to and develop existing literature

This section briefly outlines the ways that my conceptual findings confirm, contradict and develop current debates, which is also elaborated upon in more detail within Chapter Eight.

Identity work

Many of the themes highlighted within this chapter are evident within the literature review. For example several studies argue that online marketers need to communicate more openly in order to engage in conversational style interaction with customers within SNSs (Griffiths and McLean, 2015; Cova et al, 2015; Zwick and Cayla, 2011). Griffiths and McLean (2015) argue organisational ‘scripts’ should be discarded in favour of going “off script” and “breaking organisational taboos” (Griffiths and McLean 2015: 149) so as to seem more sociable and approachable as an organisation. As is illustrated within this chapter, informality and the breaking of taboos may also be achieved, although highly bounded, when the DOS utilised their individual Twitter account to communicate on behalf of and to support the online organisational presence. In addition, the Kreiner et al (2006) study discussed within the literature review also explored processes of amalgamating identity where the participants, either adopt differentiation or blending tactics. Where they amalgamate “their individual identities with the professional and/or organisational identity” (Kreiner et al, 2006: 1046) it is due to the all-consuming nature of their work as episcopal priests. Within this chapter, however I interpret the DOS actions as a matter of convenience or perceived obligation, rather than a feeling of being made whole by their vocational calling, as is suggested within the Kreiner et al (2006) study. Indeed the online organisational presence may be seen as providing a forum where professional and personal identities unify or at least comfortably co-exist. This is due in part to the nature of the online dimension as Theo, Gibbins, head of digital marketing communications, Sunrise Healthcare outlines, where there is less difference “between who you are at home and who you are at work.” This also alludes to the overlapping nature of personal and professional identities as he admits to checking the organisational Twitter account from home and replying to tweets, as well as including the same followers on his personal account.

Online marketing work

As previously outlined, existing literature confirms “there are some significant gaps in our understanding of the actual processes in carrying out marketing activities” (Ardley and Quinn, 2013: 101). Therefore, this chapter also contributes to a much broader understanding of online marketing work practices that combines the writing of text, as well as online preserving, influencing and advocating activities. Specifically within this chapter it is clear the DOS role expands beyond just the writing of the tweets. For example there are further examples of where the DOS monitored the activity within the online organisational presence and then sometimes responded out of hours to queries and complaints. They also aimed to protect the organisational/brand identity by ensuring they acted as ‘gatekeepers’ to prevent their colleagues uploading content directly. In this way they can ensure they bring the online organisation into being consistently, in a way that is “measured” and “considered” as Theo Gibbins, head of digital marketing communications, Sunrise Healthcare outlines, to help avoid the potential for “contentious stories.” Additionally, the DOS engaged in processes of online checking, where they monitor the organisational Twitter account continuously inside and outside of work, which sometimes includes replying to queries or complaints outside of traditional working hours. In this way the DOS role is more complex than the simplified textbook descriptions suggest (Kotler and Keller, 2016; Jobber, 2010).

Brand narrative

Existing branding theory suggests consumers draw upon brand stories as the means to convey the self and thus make sense of whom they are. In this way, consumers use brands symbolically to convey different meanings (Schembri et al, 2010). The emphasis thus within existing studies is on the consumer’s relationship and identification with brand stories and narratives, rather than employees, such as the DOS. The empirical data therefore develops existing theory by suggesting when the DOS brings the online organisation into being, part of the work they are doing is representational, as they are communicating an organisational/brand identity. In this way the DOS makes sense of the organisational/brand identity, through their online marketing work, as well as giving sense to the intended online audience. Within this chapter for example we see the DOS trying to protect their interpretation of the organisational/brand identity through online preserving and gatekeeping behaviours. For example several of the DOSs, including Tim Crane, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare, Sarah Dawson, customer services manager, Sonic business solutions, Philip Thwaites, senior manager, marketing, Clark Spencer Jones and admit to continually checking the online organisational presence outside of traditional/paid hours. They do this, it is suggested, to preserve the positive brand narrative. In addition the DOS also highlights how they preserve the organisational/brand identity narrative through their 'gatekeeping' activities, which means they ensure they approve any proposed content, predominantly before it becomes part of the online organisational presence. Therefore, part of the online marketing work for the DOS includes the communication and preservation of the organisational/brand identity narrative. Another aspect discussed here relates to the value creation activities of the DOS, as discussed within the next section.

Value co-creation

Current value co-creation literature locates its economic worth within interactions between the organisation and the customer (Cova et al, 2011). It is thus argued this is exploitative, as consumers are not paid for their contributions (Cova et al, 2011; Ainasoja and Linna, 2011; Echeverri and, Skålén, 2011). However, few studies focus on employees' value co-creation activities with their organisation/brand identity, which can be seen as equally exploitative. The lack of emphasis on employees' co-creating value for organisations is primarily due to the fact they are engaged in paid labour and thus more likely to already comply with the organisation's normative controls. However it may be suggested from a review of the empirical data that some of the online marketing work processes and practices the DOS is engaged in are in excess of those expected of employees and thus they are essentially adding value and being encouraged to give more of themselves as free labour (Müller, 2016; Brannan et al, 2015; Fleming and Sturdy, 2011; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Gabriel, 1999). Thus, the use of their personal Twitter account by the DOS to contribute to the vibrancy of the online organisational presence is an example of employee value co-creation, for example. In addition checking the organisation's Twitter account, retweeting, writing tweets, answering complaints and queries outside of traditional/paid working hours are all examples of where the DOS is essentially creating additional value for the organisation. In addition within earlier chapters the willingness of the DOS to include their own creative suggestions to communicate the organisational/brand identity, including the personalisation of the Twitter profile, are also arguably examples of where the DOS is co-creating value for the organisation for free as it is not a core part of their role. Therefore it is suggested here that exploitative value co-creation is not just restricted to consumers, but may also affect employees willing to utilise their own time, resources and facets of their own identity/personal interests when bringing the online organisation into being.

Sensemaking and sensegiving

As is discussed in Chapter Three, the majority of existing studies relating to sensemaking focus on a narratological approach to understanding, required by employees, due to changes introduced by senior managers (Brown and Humphreys, 2003; Currie and Brown, 2003; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). As such the literature suggests sensemaking aids the understanding of narrative identities, as they are often the means to comprehend subjects or activities, that are new, vague or unclear, (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). My conceptual findings contradict the majority of existing studies slightly by suggesting that sensemaking is equally important when managing day-to-day tasks, which can be just as ambiguous, especially when they incorporate relatively new technologies and recently developed practices, such as tweeting. As a result the DOS needs to make sense of how to do online marketing work, before being able to give sense to the intended Twitter audience, in relation to organisational/brand identity narratives. It is also suggested from the data that there are different types of DOSs, they do slightly different online marketing work, have varying marketing experience and also differing motivations. To substantiate this I highlight how Suzi and Sarah demonstrate risk-averse behaviours as they are not familiar with marketing practices and primarily answer complaints. Fiona and Rachel are quite inexperienced but strive to achieve customer responses from their tweets. Thus how the different DOS makes sense and gives sense varies. In order to explain this further within the discussion chapter I group the DOS into four different character types, in order to discuss in more detail their different approaches to sensemaking and sensegiving through their online marketing work.

Emerging from these discussions is the identification of the main concepts and contributions, originating from the literature to be discussed within the next chapter. This includes: the grouping of the DOS into four character types to explain the different approaches to sensemaking and sensegiving, as well as an analysis of the identity issues and challenges that each of the four different types of experience. These relate to fluidity in self-presentation, dual identity practices, autonomy, linked to responsibility, the amalgamating and combining of personal Twitter accounts with the organisations, the personalisation of content and validation via the intended audience.

Chapter Eight - Discussion: Online marketing as identity work and the process of bringing the organisation into being

Introduction

In Chapters Five to Seven I have presented and discussed the empirical data that was generated from the interviews with the Digital Organisational Storytellers (DOSs) from five B2B organisations. It is therefore the purpose of this chapter to draw together the key themes and perceptions from the theoretical literature, as presented in Chapters One to Three, together with the key insights and contributions from the empirical data. I also draw upon the overall research focus for this thesis, which is based on achieving an understanding of how the DOS brings an organisation into being online. Specifically, this focus is advanced via three further research questions, as were introduced within the introduction and also reiterated within Chapter Four (Methodology). Each of these questions are addressed within this chapter, although not sequentially, in order to reflect upon the work of other scholars and illustrate how the data can provide additional understandings and make a contribution to each one.

The first section within each of the four parts to this chapter, starts by addressing and conceptualising how the DOS makes sense and gives sense when bringing the organisation into being online, via Twitter, which is the first contribution of this thesis. In particular a character analysis of four different types of DOS is proposed to explicate different sensemaking and sensegiving processes, through online marketing work. Through these characters I answer the research question: How does the DOS make sense and give sense during these online marketing work processes? This is achieved because these character types help to describe and categorise the approaches to sensemaking and sensegiving the DOS has adopted, as part of their online marketing work.

The second research question: How does the DOS construct and understand their online identity work negotiations, through their online marketing work activities? is answered through a focus on the specific identity negotiation issues each of the different types of DOS encounter when undertaking online marketing work. These help to explain and conceptualise the nature of the DOS identity challenges and issues when undertaking online marketing work and also how each of the different DOS character types manages them.

The final research question: What does the online marketing work processes the DOS undertake tell us about identity at work? is answered through the identification of six different identity work approaches demonstrated by the DOS as the result of their online identity issues and challenges. Thus, each of these identity work descriptions aims to identify the different types of identity constructions that may be utilised to manage specific online marketing work processes. This is insightful in furthering an understanding of identity construction processes at work, when there is an online dimension.

Making sense of online marketing work

Within the literature review in Chapter Three I outlined that staff members are tasked with communicating positive identity narratives to the intended Twitter audience, to encourage long-term relationships of mutual benefit (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006; Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Ashforth and Mael, 1996). This is a process that is described as ongoing, discursive, evolving, collective and individual (Cornelissen, 2012; Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Boje, 1995). Within the data, the DOS did try to make sense of the organisational narratives and communicate them positively, by undertaking online marketing processes that are based on preserving and protecting the organisation.

As is also highlighted, processes of sensemaking are often linked to the need to achieve sensegiving within organisational settings and spaces (Weick et al, 2005; Weick, 1995; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). As is outlined within Chapters Five to Seven, the DOS is involved in using sensemaking to facilitate sensegiving processes to internal and external audiences via the online organisational presence (Cornelissen, 2012). In order to explain how the DOS's engage with and utilise sensemaking and sensegiving approaches examples from the empirical domain have been grouped within this section into specific character analysis categories.

I have thus divided the chapter into four parts, each with two primary sections, to highlight firstly who the DOSs are, their character types (see below one to four), and secondly to provide an analysis of the identity construction issues they experience during their online marketing work. The four different DOS character types are explained briefly below and in more detail at the start of each of the four parts of this chapter:

1) ‘The eager, but inexperienced/naive audience-pleasing DOS - They adopt enthusiastic and overly fervent sensemaking and sensegiving processes, orientated towards greater understanding for the audience, so as to encourage interaction, primarily.

2) ‘The non-risk taking policy and procedures-informed conformist DOS – They, as will be explained in more detail, engage in committed, affiliate, rule-driven sensemaking and restrained/ordered sensegiving.

3) ‘The reluctant, restrained and self-preserving strategist DOS - In this category they are involved in strategic sensemaking and normative sensegiving.

4) ‘The flexible, ‘self-sacrificing’ forward-looking idealist DOS – They engage in natural, logical and impassioned sensemaking which is aligned with organisational and individual ideals which relate to ‘doing good and making a difference’ through their sensegiving.

Each of these character categorisations is discussed and related to sensemaking and sensegiving examples from the empirical context, as well as relevant literature from Chapter Three.

The first DOS character is discussed below and their specific identity work challenges and issues explored through the online marketing work activities.

1) 'The eager, but inexperienced/naive audience-pleasing DOS

The DOS are enthusiastic and engage in overly fervent sensemaking and sensegiving orientated towards greater understanding for the audience, so as to encourage interaction. They approach online marketing work in this way as they are fairly new to the organisation, as well as being keen to make a positive impact and although they are experienced at marketing work, they have limited experience of bringing the organisation into being online, via Twitter. The DOS, as described within this category are: Fiona Saunders, social media marketing content manager, Orion Communications and Rebecca Williams, marketing assistant, Forsdyke Industrial.

They are early career marketers keen to establish their position as positive, trustworthy and reliable in terms of their ability to operate within established norms, to deliver organisational identity messages and encourage engagement with the intended audience. In this way the organisational identity narratives they tell within the tweets impact directly upon their meaning construction and the way they act when undertaking their online marketing work (Ardley, 2006). For example, when Rebecca adopts a temporary persona as part of her online marketing work as the “guy next door” she does so in order to conform to organisationally implied identity expectations, in order to give sense to the envisaged online audience, in a way that will be better understood by them. Fiona, on the other hand is willing to adopt provocative identity traits, because she envisages an organisational need for her “to be a bit more daring, risqué even, more than you would normally be in an offline conversation,” so as to secure audience responses. In this way she makes sense of what she needs to achieve through her online marketing work, by prioritising behaviours that are more likely to entice the audience, even when it takes her outside of what she is initially comfortable with. Additionally Rebecca describes working harder and dedicating more time and energy to make sense of and establish a version or external image of the organisation (Boudreau et al, 2014) that she can be individually proud of, as she suggests: “I want to show that we are modern, upcoming, cutting edge… as I don’t want to be associated with a boring place!” In this way Rebecca’s process of giving sense to others, as to her vision of the organisation she works for, helps her to also give sense to herself, as to why her work is worthwhile. In a similar way the librarians within the Boudreau et al, (2014) study also utilise interactions with others (students) to clarify their vision and give sense to themselves as to their required role within a new digitalised work space. Fiona also tries to influence how the intended audience see the organisation positively, by “trying to make people curious about the organisation and what we do.” Accordingly, Rebecca and Fiona prioritise a positive, inexperienced interpretation of organisational aims/messages in order to engage with the intended audience and encourage interaction. But more than that, they also both express a willingness to put in more time and effort (aspects of self) to help shape and continuously influence the online organisational presence, as the means to give sense to others, as to why it may prove worthy of engagement over a longer period. In this sense freedom and self-directed work encourages Rebecca and Fiona, as eager and less experienced, to work harder in order to try and understand what success in terms of bringing an organisation into being online actually means. As such a lack of guidance can be seen here as a form of control (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Willmott, 1997), especially as the outcome is public, but also as a powerful means to exert increased commitment in pursuit of an 'as yet undefined' form of success.

An example of an identity issue that Fiona and Rebecca experience during their online marketing work is described here as: Fluidity in self-presentation and I establish how due to their inexperience and desire to please, they adapt their tone and style depending on the subject of the tweet and the situation. For example at organisational events they may need to negotiate a combination of offline and online marketing work, in order to present an (dual) identity they hope will be preferred by the intended audience.

Fluidity in self-presentation

Presentation of self here refers to the different ways the DOS amended their tone, style and approach when bringing the organisation into being online, as opposed to impression management (DiMicco and Millen, 2007; Shamir, 1991). For example, within Chapter Two, several theoretical perspectives are presented in order to position the process of identity construction as continuous and both intrinsically and socially defined (Alvesson and Empson, 2008). However the vast majority of studies within organisations to date have focussed upon the study of individual’s identity work processes when they are under duress (see: Järventie-Theslef and Tienari, 2016; Wieland, 2010; Snow and Anderson, 1987) rather than as part of everyday work tasks.

As such an understanding is sought as to how the DOS constructs and understands their online identity work, through their online marketing work activities. Within Chapters Five to Seven, there were many different examples of online marketing work processes, where the DOS demonstrates instrumental reflexivity. For example this occurs when they are conscious of how they and the organisation are perceived, because of their actions and appearances. According to Watson (2008) certain roles need to reflexively enact a required presentation of self, referred to as ‘personas’ that instinctively follow organisational role requirements. This theme of instrumental reflexivity is seen within the empirical data, where the ‘inexperienced DOS’ adapt their tone and style depending on the subject of the tweet, in order to present a preferred self. This instrumental orientation is their way of coping and complying with what they perceive the organisation/senior managers are expecting them to do. For example Rebecca describes utilising a formal tone when extracting information from previously approved documents, such as press releases, when promoting new products. However, when including recruitment advertising via Twitter, she suggests (emphasis added):

> …more of a *personal feel* to these things as it brings it back more to reality…like we are a *real organisation* that just happens to *also be online*

In this sense Rebecca is trying to maintain ontological stability by recognising that priority can be given to the most appropriate aspect of self to deliver the message appropriately (Dawson, 2015; Watson, 2008; Giddens,1991). The process of balancing self with the demands of social identities as conceptualised by Watson, (2008) and Kreiner et al, (2006) may be better understood within online environments as the process of instrumental reflexivity within bounded aesthetic parameters. The presentation of the self by the DOS is thus self-conscious, but also continuously evolving due to the ongoing nature of their actions and appearances.

Such appearances which require the DOS to appropriately (Dawson, 2015) manage online and offline identities simultaneously at events (Chapter Six: 'Coordinating dual identities'), therefore also poses ontological questions – such as whether the same self is required in person as online? The reason there may be a difference is the stimulant offline are real people, whereas online they are primarily imagined or intended audiences. As is illustrated within a specific example below, Fiona reflexively coordinates and balances dual identities offline (face-to-face) and via Twitter (online), as part of a continuous cycle of ontological stabilising. However, in order to achieve stabilisation, she has to first experience fluidity/flexibility in order to continually react to situational cues.

Fiona illustrates fluidity in self-presentation when she describes initially meeting guests face to face at an organisational event at the reception desk and then trying to communicate with them via Twitter. Her online identity is surreptitiously presented from the back of the room in a style that she describes as "*opinionated* and *bold*" (emphasis added). Due to the activities she undertakes; writing the tweets, and the face-to-face interaction at this event, she is arguably more conscious as to how she is perceived and thus she works hard to keep control of these dual identities. As she confirms, due to only a few people knowing she is the person undertaking the tweeting at the event, her self presentations online are generally more brave and daring, as she states "sometimes I'm even sarcastic…I'm always professional in person and then I let loose a bit, online" (Fiona). This therefore suggests that the work of the DOS involves a prioritisation of preferred self-presentations (Kreiner et al, 2006). Occasionally these negotiations may also be dependent on whether the DOS has a physical (in person) or aesthetic (online) identity or whether the two presentations are interacting during the same time period.

It is argued here that these 'preferred self-presentations' are created instrumentally as part of an ongoing process of adapting to places and people where identity work takes place (Brown, 2015). Therefore the fluidity of self (presentation) and ontological stabilising during online marketing work may also be linked to different reflexive prompts or cues that are different within the two (online and offline) contexts, which help to shape how they wish themselves and the organisation to be seen. However the fluidity of self is also constrained due to the awareness of organisationally defined parameters that dictate expectations of ‘appropriateness’ (Dawson, 2015), which may be suggested to regulate the behaviour of the DOS.

This concept of the fluidity of self being constrained due to organisational dictate, is illustrated by Rebecca when she is asked to make sense of a senior manager’s observations from an event, that she is not permitted to attend. She explains that not being present at the event is a barrier to her online marketing work, as she has to rely on others to give sense to her. Instead she comments in frustration that the process of dictating tweets by the senior manager “didn’t really work” and that “we’re not quite there yet with events.” Thus, not allowing Rebecca to attend the event and make sense of it herself is seen here as the means to regulate her identity work.

This section examined the fluidity, instrumentality and constraining of self and organisational identity via online marketing work. For Fiona, this necessitates the coordination of dual identity presentations, simultaneously through her identity work, where her adaptation is argued to be instrumentally reflexive, in coordination with reactions of the audience. Rebecca describes trying to maintain ontological stability by recognising that priority should be given to the most appropriate aspect of self to deliver the message. However she also acknowledges frustration when her identity work is constrained and she is unable to make sense of the intended online marketing work subject, an event, in person.

Rachel and Fiona's online marketing work processes illustrate that there is more complexity than existing studies have suggested when constructing an online identity (Griffiths and McLean, 2015; Cova et al, 2015; Meijer and Torenvlied, 2014). For example, the conceptualisations described above extend much further than simply "*formal*, *informal* and *hybrid* twitter" identity constructions (Meijer and Torenvlied, 2014:11). There are also arguably broader categories of identity separations and combinations for the 'inexperienced DOS', including: situated and preferred identity work. These are defined below.

Situated identity work

This approach relates to the need for the DOS to undertake identity work in response to their situated circumstances. In this way identity is instrumentally reflexive as a direct response to the actions and appearances of the DOS. Their aim is to maintain interest and provoke responses from the intended Twitter audience such as when they are at events, which results in the creation and management of dual identities, which they admit can be a struggle to maintain. However, the inability to attend an event and engage with dual identities significantly constrains online marketing work opportunities for the individual, 'audience pleasing' DOS.

Preferred identity work

When the DOS engages in preferred identity work, priority is given to the most appropriate identity to deliver the message, in the most appealing way. In this sense the ‘preferred’ nature of the identity work relates to their interpretation of what the audience wants and expects to hear. Their aim is to utilise these preferred identity constructions to coax, entice and provoke engagement with the intended audience, as well as to secure ontological stability for the ‘inexperienced DOS’.

It is suggested these identity work categorisations, included here and within the next three sections provide an insight into the identity work issues and challenges experienced by the specific DOS during their online marketing work. In order to build on these empirical insights, the next section will start by introducing the second DOS character and outline how they make sense and give sense during their online marketing activities.

2) The non-risk taking policy and procedures-informed conformist DOS

The key characteristics of this particular DOS (referred to as the ‘conformist DOS), which were derived from the data analysis, include being committed and loyal to the organisation, due to a long duration with the company in the same or similar role. They also have no intention of leaving the organisation as they are risk-averse and fear change, which is also why they prefer to conform to policies and procedures within a familiar customer services role.

They are affiliated to the marketing department for a set period per week, to perform a specific function, such as answering complaints. They engage in rule-driven sensemaking and restrained/ordered sensegiving, as their means to comply with organisational policies and regulations, such as their job description or the requirements of a new role. The DOS that fit this character analysis are: Suzi Clarke, customer experience consultant, Orion Communications and Sarah Dawson, customer services manager, Sonic Business Solutions.

These individual professionals are already outside their comfort-zone when asked to affiliate themselves with the marketing team. Therefore they seek to make sense of the online marketing work they are asked to do, by suggesting that it has a specific sensegiving purpose, which is answering queries and neutralising negative comments via Twitter. As Sarah, customer services manager, Sonic Business Solutions, asserts: “I didn’t know how to use Twitter, but marketing needed me engaging with customers to stop the complaints.” In this way her means of understanding an unfamiliar and perplexing situation (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014) is to reassure herself she is an essential component in communicating a favoured definition of her organisation’s identity (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Sarah and Suzi require and engage in sensemaking processes as they are more used to performing their policy-driven professional identity within normative boundaries and organisational scripts, as their primary role is in customer services (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011; Kinnie et al, 2000). The public nature of their text-orientated narrative makes them nervous and self-conscious so they engage in a ‘distancing’ process of identity work. Sarah, customer services manager, Sonic Business Solutions, makes sense of the process of online marketing as a role that is outside and not part of her traditional professional identity. She explains: “…I did it, not very well though, not like my normal job.” Suzi, customer experience consultant, Orion Communications, draws upon a facet of her individual identity, she describes as trying to be “quite Mumsy,” initially as the means to retain some control over her ‘projected’ identity. This approach is also an attempt, by Suzi, to show a more ‘caring’ side to the organisation, in order to influence the perception of the intended audience, through less formalised sensegiving approaches. However, Suzi also describes a greater need to ‘disassociate’ herself when continuously engaging in online protecting processes and more mundane complaint-answering tasks. She makes sense of what she needs to do by saying that she needs to “take a step back” as although she cares, her priority is “representing the organisation online” not her individual identity and as such the ‘Mumsy approach’ is recognised as less genuine and relevant over time.

Instead she is more detached and focussed on self/organisational-preservation, utilising quick, routine exchanges with audience members, as the means to achieve organisational objectives, as the priority (Macnamara and Zerfass, 2012). The different sensemaking and sensegiving approaches Sarah and Suzi adopt relate directly to the nature of the online marketing work they do, primarily answering complaints, the fact they are outside their comfort zone and wish to protect themselves and the organisation from harmful criticism. In order to explore the specific identity issues that the non-risk taking policy and procedures-informed conformist DOS experiences, I will draw specifically on Sarah’s adoption of online checking processes outside of working hours (Chapter Seven). As such I describe initially how autonomy in online marketing work can be interpreted as a ‘license to exploit’ particularly when the DOS is risk averse and therefore struggles to retain control over their work, even out of hours, especially when they are also out of their comfort zone, undertaking a different role.

Autonomy in online marketing work as a ‘license to exploit’

The introduction of SNSs has facilitated the interaction of marketing professionals on a one to one basis with their intended audience (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Within Chapter Two, Griffiths and McLean (2015) argue organisational ‘scripts’ should be discarded in favour of going “off script” and “breaking organisational taboos” (Griffiths and McLean 2015: 149), such as using humour and sarcasm in tweets so as to seem more sociable and approachable as an organisation. To facilitate this, it is suggested social media managers are given more autonomy to create appealing organisational identities through social media (Griffiths and McLean 2015). However, this autonomy may also be seen as a license to exploit (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011). Several studies have suggested that organisations utilise a variety of approaches to increase the commitment of customer-facing employees, while also controlling their behaviours such as within call centres (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011; Kinnie et al, 2000; Taylor and Bain, 1999). There are some similarities between call centre responders and the DOS engaging in online marketing work, as they are both one of the first points of contact between the organisation and the outside world, so their influence is significant. As such their work is subject to similar forms of surveillance and ‘scripted’ constraints (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011; Kinnie et al, 2000). For example the ‘conformist DOS often utilises marketing messages or extracts from press releases to answer queries and complaints, which are a form of corporate scripting within the tweets, while the public nature of the online organisational presence allows their work to be consistently monitored. Despite these forms of control there is also evidence to suggest the DOS is given a significant amount of autonomy within their work, as there is little guidance given and approval processes are also less formalised. Therefore, what can be seen from the empirical analysis is that the suggested autonomy for the ‘conformist DOS’ serves to heighten their perceived level of responsibility and commitment to protect and preserve the online organisational presence. As such the empirical analysis suggests being given more autonomy, what Fleming and Sturdy (2011: 177) describe as a “just be yourself” or in this case, ‘just write what you think’ mandate for workers, increases the ‘conformist DOS’ to retain loyalty and obligation to protect the online organisational presence from negative comments, complaints and queries. As is illustrated within the following empirical episode, the fact the ‘conformist DOS’ is one of only a few ‘select’ members of the organisation directly responsible for the day-to-day management of the online organisational presence, via Twitter, only serves to increase their perceived levels of accountability, which extends outside of traditional/paid working hours and the ‘office’ environment.

Therefore, the willing and frequent checking of the online organisational presence, described by Sarah, customer services manager, Sonic Business Solutions in Chapter Seven (‘Online Checking’), is an additional way that the organisation is able to engage and exploit the emotional labour of the employee (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011; Kinnie et al, 2000). In this sense the construction and understanding of online identity work negotiations are seen to extend beyond the boundaries of the office environment – if the DOS permits them to. The perception of the DOS that they are obligated to protect the organisation is also related to a need to protect themselves, as they fear the repercussions of negative comments appearing on the online organisational presence, from managers at work the next day.

For example, Sarah, customer services manager, Sonic Business Solutions frequently checks and then responds to complaints received via Twitter, out of hours. She convinces herself this type of identity work is required to protect and preserve the “perception of the organisation by others online.” However, she also admits, “I don’t want *to go into problems* on Monday morning” (emphasis added). Therefore, there are suggestions of conflict and contradictions within Sarah’s experiences here. This is because initially she suggests engaging in online checking as the means of ‘protecting’ the perception of the organisation, but then she suggests her motivation is due to a fear of “problems” arising from any potential negative tweets. Thus, arguably she is only checking Twitter out of fear of recrimination that something will go wrong and as such the organisation, or at least, her perception of the organisation’s expectation of her role, is controlling her actions even outside of work. However, through Sarah's willingness to spend her own time responding to complaints the organisation (senior managers) are never aware there is an issue and as such her loyalty and commitment is taken for granted and unappreciated. Sarah seems unaware that her concerns about complaints going unanswered, and possible public humiliation allows her to be continually subjected to normative controls and identity regulation processes (Andersson, 2012; Fleming and Sturdy, 2011; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). In fact her willingness to engage in a continuous struggle to retain control, in order to preserve and protect the online organisational presence encourages her to repeat the same online marketing work processes in her own time, in a cycle that I will refer to as 'identity entrapment'. This notion of entrapment, which includes repeating the same rudimentary tasks, outside of traditional working hours is facilitated by her fear of negative identity representation for her and the organisation within the online organisational presence. Accordingly, perceived autonomy is also a means of organisational control, within online marketing work activities, especially for the DOS who are reluctant to take risks and who usually conform to and follow organisational policies and procedures. However, a willingness to conform also creates conflict when it comes to their identity construction processes, especially when they consistently prioritise their professional identity, even outside of traditional/paid working hours. As such I suggest that Sarah in particular and also Suzi engage in entrapped identity work, where they conform to their line manager's request to undertake online marketing work, whilst also desperately trying to retain some control over theirs' and the organisations' 'projected' identities.

Entrapped identity work

This occurs when the DOS felt the need to continuously check and then respond to negative tweets/complaints or queries received via Twitter, out of hours. It also occurs when they try to retain control over how they project themselves and the organisation to the intended audience, either through a constant monitoring of the Twitter site, or by the initial projection of a facet of their individual identity, which is more familiar to them (‘being Mumsy’, Suzie). They convince themselves this type of identity work is required to protect and preserve the perception of the organisation and themselves, by others online.

According to Griffiths and McLean (2015) employees should be encouraged to be more autonomous, refraining from using approved organisational messages and using humour instead, when communicating via Twitter. However, for Sarah and Suzi, autonomy, rather than tasks prescribed through policy and procedures, only serves to increase their perceived levels of responsibility and obligation, when responding to queries and complaints. As such for the DOS autonomy is not liberating it is controlling, as the lack of specific guidance only contributes to their fear of doing something wrong and thus more of their time and effort is dedicated to checking the online organisational presence and how they project themselves within it. The next section will build upon this theme of identity compliance, but also how the DOS here is cajoled into willingly sharing more of themselves, their views and personality within the tweets. Initially though, the third proposed DOS characters are introduced.

3) 'The compliant, experienced and self-preserving strategist DOS

The key characteristics these 'strategist DOS' display include strategic sensemaking and normative sensegiving. Strategic sensemaking, as is elaborated on within this section, involves making sense of organisational messages in a way that ensures the DOS are seen to be compliant with the expectations of senior managers. In a similar way, normative sensegiving suggests they also comply with the transmission of organisational narratives directly as instructed to do, so as to preserve their identity as reliable and trustworthy. The 'strategist DOS' include: Theo Gibbins, head of digital marketing, Sunrise Healthcare, Andrew Teretto, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions, Philip Thwaites, senior manager, marketing, Clark Spencer Jones; Collin Baker, social media lead, Orion Communications, John Griggs, operational marketing manager, Forsdyke Industrial, Shaun Troughton, PR manager, Forsdyke Industrial and Lola Bloom, head of online adoption and social media, Orion Communications.

These are the marketing professionals who have been with their organisation for longer periods of time, who have learnt to make sense and metamorphose into whatever the required normative quality/value is in order to retain their position within the organisation. In this way they engage in strategic sensemaking, which involves a conscious awareness of their work appearing within the public domain, where other employees and senior managers may see and scrutinise it (Madsen and Verhoeven, 2016). As a result, they may also choose strategically to remain quiet on certain issues and refrain from providing a true reflection on organisational initiatives, which would make them seem out of sync with organisational norms (Morrison, 2014; Detert and Burris, 2007; Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Such approaches, termed as “voluntary self-restricting behaviours” and “online self-censorship” are utilised specifically to ensure the ‘strategic DOS’s always appear to be loyal and committed to the official organisational identity narratives when bringing the organisation into being online (Madsen and Verhoeven, 2016: 388). For example a component of strategic sensemaking and normative sensegiving as illustrated by John, operational marketing manager, Forsdyke Industrial (Chapter Six: ‘Shaping perceptions positively’) is in sustaining a consistently positive online organisational presence, regardless of any personal experiences or feelings about the organisation. This positivity is required, so as to always be trying to “sell products” (John) and because John doesn’t want to get sacked either…so as he says: “I put on *my best tweeting smile* and get on with it” (John, emphasis added). Similarly Shaun, PR manager, Forsdyke Industrial ‘chooses’ to engage in online checking processes (Chapter Seven) strategically, so he always knows what is going on, as he suggests it is “human nature”, intuitive for his role. Lola, head of online adoption and social media, Orion Communications, also acknowledges the importance of complying with strategic sensemaking when she confirms that although communicating consistently positively about the organisation is problematic, as the aim of stimulating “positive conversations with customers about interesting stuff" doesn't stimulate "much conversation", it is still something she feels "the organisation expects marketers to achieve." Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions, also concurs that strategic sensemaking can at times be difficult, especially when it interferes with sensegiving (Chapter Six: 'Online protecting processes'). He explains how he finds it difficult to consistently deliver a standard response to complaints via the tweets, when he would prefer a more open and honest approach. Despite this frustration he still consistently complies with strategic sensemaking stating simply "it's not my call unfortunately." Theo, head of digital marketing, Sunrise Healthcare, though, is quite happy to embrace strategic sensemaking (Chapter Five: 'Getting started') as it enables him to stay out of the spotlight, where he is more comfortable and leave the experimentation and sense giving responsibilities to the communications' team. Collin, social media lead, Orion Communications, in comparison, acknowledges that what is used to give sense to the intended audience is a "slightly staged view of what we have to offer" intended to persuade them to support and endorse the online organisational presence (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991).

A specific example of when they experience conflicting identity issues due to engaging consistently with strategic sensemaking, is when they are asked to combine or amalgamate their role with their individual online identity, as is discussed within the next section: Identity compliance and amalgamation. Identity compliance is defined as when the 'strategic DOS' conforms to organisational norms, dictated by their DOS role even when utilising their individual Twitter account, by retweeting corporate messages. They are also willing to amalgamate their individual and professional identities when they are asked to act as spokespeople for the organisation, which also includes the use of the individual personal, individual Twitter account of the DOS, to endorse organisational messages, as is elaborated upon within the next section.

Identity compliance and amalgamation

From my interviews with the ‘strategic DOS’, some have expressed a willingness to share more of themselves, their views and personality within the tweets, as the means to encourage engagement through a “human or emotional element” (Kotler and Keller, 2016:37). For example, within Chapter Five (‘Online specialising through identity play’) there is the inclusion of “a more personal approach” from Andrew, social media manager, Sonic business solutions and a “personal conversational tone” and humour from Philip, senior manager, marketing, Clarke Spencer Jones. In Philip’s extract he describes contributing to ‘National Poetry Day’ by writing his own rhyming couplet and joking about the impact of the budget within his tweets. He describes being “a bit bloody-minded” and “experimenting” as the basis for bringing the organisation into being online. These are practices and approaches that are traditionally outside of organisational norms and processes (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011) but they utilise them strategically as the means to make the online organisation seem “distinctive” (Lievens et al, 2007:46) and therefore appealing to the intended audience.

However, there is also evidence from these examples that the organisations are extracting additional free labour and commitment from the ‘strategic DOS’ as a form of exploitation or manipulation. Such ‘free labour’ is usually more typically directed at external online participants, rather than staff members, as the means to encourage endorsement, (Cova et al, 2015; Hesmondhalgh, 2010). This is suggested potentially because the incorporation of the “whole person” (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011:195) and the socialising attributes of the DOS, evident in non-work or outside of work practices, contributes to the communal capabilities and ‘emotional/aesthetic labour’ requirements of skilful interactive online marketing work.

As highlighted within Chapter Seven, the DOS engage in processes of ‘online professional friending’. Such ‘online friending’ actions include identity work tactics that combine or amalgamate the DOS role with their individual online identity. An example of where such processes occur includes when the DOS utilises individual/personal Twitter accounts to endorse the online organisational presence, as the means to combine or amalgamate their personal and professional identities. Combining identities includes the occasional or regular tweet(s) being sent from the personal Twitter account of the ‘strategic DOS’ in order to support or endorse messages within the online organisational presence, either because they choose or feel obliged to do this to make the online organisational presence more friendly, lively and interesting. The ‘strategic DOS’ may also have some work-related followers and follow work colleagues, clients or suppliers. They may also include the fact they work for their organisation within their profile, although they may highlight their views are their own and include tweets and replies on non-work related matters. Amalgamating professional and individual identities, includes utilising an individual Twitter account primarily to support the online organisational presence on a daily basis, often from home, as well as writing the tweets directly for the organisation because the DOS has been asked to act as ‘spokespeople’. Being a spokesperson thus obliges the DOS to utilise their individual Twitter account to support organisational messages. Therefore their personal Twitter account will incorporate the same followers and ensure all tweets are supportive or certainly not derogatory, or critical, of the online organisational presence. As such many of the ‘strategic DOS’ are utilising their own individual Twitter accounts to directly contribute to their online organisational presence, outside of work and often from their own personal devices (smart phone/laptop).

Each DOS claims different motivating factors for combining or amalgamating their individual and professional identities. For example, several of the DOS suggest they find it more convenient to combine their identity through their online marketing work, so as to avoid updating two accounts and any related confusion with followers. This approach is suggested as more convenient and practical to some, such as Philip Thwaites, senior manager marketing, Clark Spencer Jones, because they feel they can “choose when or what organisational content to retweet, reply or share”. Although once they make the commitment to start retweeting organisational messages, arguably a precedence is set for the ‘strategic DOS’, which is designed to align personal and organisational identities even more closely (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011).

Combining individual Twitter accounts with the online organisational presence has happened more organically, without them really noticing, for others such as John Griggs, operational marketing manager, Forsdyke Industrial and Theo Gibbins, head of digital, Sunrise Healthcare. They start amalgamating followers with the organisational online presence and sending the occasional retweet or reply, which contributes positively to the online organisational presence. As Theo suggests this process occurred naturally for him, as he’s not sure “there is really such a difference now between who you are at home and who you are at work”. In this way, Theo perceives a less clear divide between work and non-work activities online, even when using his individual Twitter account. Thus, despite these assertions of shared interests and convenience they are all essentially contributing free labour (Cova et al, 2015; Hesmondhalgh, 2010) in order to enhance the appeal of the online organisational presence.

The DOS that amalgamate their identity via Twitter do it because they are asked by their manager when they join to act as ‘spokespeople’ for the organisation. Being a spokesperson includes re-tweeting organisational messages regularly, clearly stating their professional identity as part of their Twitter profile and including the same followers as the online organisational presence. Therefore the ‘strategic DOS’ are motivated by duty/loyalty to the organisation as well as fear of being reprimanded if they do not comply with these normative controls (Andersson, 2012; Fleming and Sturdy, 2011; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002), which are not contractual obligations, but usually verbal requests once the DOS is in post. This only impacts upon two of the organisations: Orion Communications and Sonic Business Solutions and then not all the staff are included, as some do not have individual Twitter accounts, or have asked not to participate due to the nature of their online marketing work.

The ‘strategic DOS’ who are assigned spokesperson status and who are therefore required to “promote it (the organisation) when they can” (Collin) includes Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions; Collin, social media lead and Lola, head of online adoption and social media, Orion Communications. Although Collin suggests he encourages other colleagues to promote the organisation from their personal Twitter accounts, he also admits it is impossible for him to ever separate his individual identity from his occupation, or the organisation online, even when tweeting from his individual Twitter account. As a result, he always has to be “careful.” In this sense he is permanently restricted and cautious, to ensure his professional identity dominates during any online interactions via Twitter. Therefore, being an ‘online spokesperson’ is another way their social and emotional skills are utilised by the organisation, (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011), often outside of traditional/paid hours. As is also possible to see here, the DOS often has to compromise their individual identity in order to fulfil the obligations of role and organisation through their online marketing work. Accordingly, I also suggest that combined and amalgamated identity work describe a key component of the online marketing work for the ‘strategic DOS’, as detailed below.

Combined identity work

This is an approach adopted by the strategically motivated DOSs where they utilise their personal individual Twitter accounts to support the online organisational presence. The aim of the personalised contributions from the DOS, is to make the online organisational presence seem more friendly, lively and interesting, but it always necessitates free labour from the DOSs and the intrusion and/or combination of their professional identity as they often retweet, share and like organisational tweets from home and outside of traditional/paid working hours.

Amalgamated identity work

When the DOS engages in amalgamated identity work, it is because they have been asked by the organisation/senior managers to act as a spokesperson. This means they utilise their individual Twitter account only to support and contribute to the content within the online organisational presence. As it is not a formal contractual obligation, the DOS’s ‘willingly’ engage in additional online marketing work, free labour, often from home, in order to fulfil the obligations of role and organisation.

Within the next section I continue this theme of personal identity compromise, due to the obligations of the DOS's professional identity. However, in this instance it is not due to an ascribed role (such as a spokesperson), but as the means to give sense to the intended online audience.

4) 'The flexible, 'self-sacrificing' forward-looking idealist DOS

These DOSs (abbreviated to 'idealist DOS') are grouped together as they share a passion for their online marketing work, either due to their love of new technology or through a desire to help and give sense to the intended Twitter audience. They undertake natural, (it comes naturally to them), and impassioned sensemaking which are aligned with organisational and individual ideals relating to 'doing good and making a difference' through their sensegiving. The DOSs that are grouped under this character description include: Karen, group communications manager and Tim, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare, Simon, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones and Natalie, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications.

Several working within the health organisation [as an example] epitomise these qualities as they align their ideals with the aims and objectives of the organisation on the basis they are having an impact on improving the lives of 'real people'. These are the individuals most likely to willingly and enthusiastically embrace a unified identity, where they do not feel the need to differentiate so clearly between self (individual) and social (organisational) identity. They engage in online marketing processes because they feel passionately about the technology and the nature of online “identity workspaces” (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010:44) as an innovation within marketing practice and the difference it can make to engagements with the intended Twitter audience. They therefore willingly and actively sacrifice self (personal time) in favour of professional identity in order to engage in continuous sense giving activities. Karen, group communications manager, Sunrise Healthcare, describes how she engages in impassioned sensemaking, where she thinks “a lot more about what we write…demonstrating what we specialise in and making a difference…” In this way the organisational narratives that are distributed and maintained within the tweets legitimise actuality for her (Brown and Humphreys, 2003). However, for Natalie, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications, the organisational ideals related to innovation and pioneering technology are so closely aligned with her own, that she is only too willing to give sense to the intended online audience. She does this through her tweets, which are primarily sent from her personal, individual Twitter account, because as she highlights:

> I invest a lot in my job and I am genuinely interested in the work that I do so actually that is a very big part of me, so I don’t have the particular dilemma of this is personal and this is business.

As she confirms, it is a natural and logical sense making process to have one identity online that combines both business and personal interests. Tim, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare, also confirms a desire to create a more caring and ‘humanised’ organisation, which includes trying to create a personality for the online organisation, which is reflective of his own. For example, having seen the original Twitter profile page as quite “cold and corporate” he suggested “having Karen and I named at the top of the page, so it is clear there are people who care behind the logo.” This means utilising the real names of the DOS to authenticate the online organisational presence as a place where sense is given in relation to recent initiatives. Accordingly Simon, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones, also sees “…parameters where work and personal time start and finish are less clear online” and therefore sensemaking processes are not restricted to time spent within the office environment. As such sense giving is also less constrained and more commonly aligned to making a difference for this group. This is why they are more responsive and conscious, arguably, to gain recognition by an imagined other, their intended Twitter audience, as discussed below as the first identity issue experienced by the ‘idealist DOS’. The second introduces the concept of personalised details and idealistic identity work, where the DOS freely and naively donates aspects of their individual identity to the organisation.

Recognition by an imagined other substantiates online identity validity

Several scholars (Lievens et al, 2007; Dutton et al, 1994; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) have drawn attention to the influence of the “imagined” (Marwick and Boyd, 2010:114) or intended online audience (Cova et al, 2015;) on the creation of text and images. However importantly the intended online audience is a mixture of recognised and unrecognised individuals

(Madsen and Verhoeven, 2016). They are recognised in the sense they retweet, share and reply to tweets on the organisational site, so their identity will be recognised by the DOS. The ‘unrecognised’ members of the Twitter audience are individuals who work for organisations that are not known to the DOS or the broader organisation, who may come across the organisational Twitter account by chance, follow a particular hashtag for a short period, or perhaps be a member of the competition. These desired, i.e. non-competitive, recognised and unrecognised members of the online audience are described as the intended Twitter audience.

Subject areas for the tweets are chosen based on their likely reaction and reciprocation from the intended Twitter audience. Bearing this in mind, within the last section I outlined how the ‘strategist DOS’ amalgamate and combine their individual and professional identity during their online marketing work. I argue here that the ‘idealist DOS’ try to make their organisation seem more friendly and approachable as well as potentially less boring, due to the complex nature of B2B product portfolios (Kärkkäinen, Jussila and Janhonen, 2011), by trying to envisage how the intended audience will respond before deciding what to write. Then they seek validation and proof through the number of clicks/views, that this type of online marketing work, which is focussed on audience responses, is worthwhile. Within this section I explore examples from the data, where the DOS needs recognition and also to generate ‘interactions’ (Grönroos, 2006) from their intended Twitter audience, to substantiate and validate their identity work. For example, within ‘online specialising validated through audience responses’ Natalie, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications, describes visualising the audience's responses before she starts writing her blog, which is featured as a link within her tweets. She describes not writing the blog or tweet at all if she doesn't think there will be any response from the intended audience. In this sense she needs recognition by an imagined other when bringing the organisation into being online and it is this that shapes the tweet content. Therefore her approach suggests she is not just imagining who the audience are and what they perceive about the organisation from her tweets (Marwick and Boyd, 2010; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991), but more specifically, she tries to envisage the response of the Twitter audience. If she thinks they will not respond favourably she does not write the blog or the tweet(s). In this way, she demonstrates flexibility and a willingness to sacrifice her time and effort to please others and her subjective understanding of what the intended Twitter audience perceives as interesting, and what they will respond to with clicks and views determines how she brings the online organisation into being. As such through her demonstration of being forward-looking, she tries to imagine how the audience may react, and thus she is arguably coaxed to work harder and care more (Hanlon, 2016: 14).

For Simon, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones, within 'online provoking' (Chapter Six) there is another alternative conceptualisation of the intended Twitter audience as one that will respond to 'questioning, coaxing and enticing'. He describes initially adopting a "personable" approach, where he is disclosing more of his identity, (Marwick and Boyd, 2010) trying to give the 'followers' the content he envisaged they wanted in a friendly tone.

However, when this doesn’t generate responses via clicks, views and more importantly, in his view, retweets and replies, he adopted a different more forthright approach. This included using more stimulating, flexible and forward-looking material focussing on whistleblowing and fraud articles within the links, as part of the tweets, and asking questions and being “a bit *provocative*” (emphasis added). Thus, Simon describes creating the online organisational presence through his online marketing work, in a way that is specifically designed to provoke a response from the intended audience, so he has a better idea of who they are and what they need. In this sense both social actor and social construction perspectives on organisational identity formation activities influence the process of bringing the organisation into being online for Simon (Gioia et al, 2010; Chatman et al, 1986). His willingness to engage in identity experimentation, by adopting a style of writing within the tweets, that is provocative, coaxing and enticing is outside of more traditional professional identity constraints. Therefore, through his online marketing work, there is also a suggested desire to fulfil his own self-esteem (self-concept) needs, when bringing the organisation into being online. In this way his requirements to experience success through the validation by another, compels and sustains his attempts at identity work online, which influences and controls the subjectivity of the online organisational presence produced as a result (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002).

I have illustrated so far from the data how the ‘idealist DOS’ are motivated to develop content and adapt the style of their online marketing work, based on what they perceive will be interesting and stimulating to the intended Twitter audience. Receiving recognition helps to give their work value and to make them feel it is worthwhile. I now discuss how they are also willing to disclose their personal details and interests, as the means to engage with the intended Twitter audience.

Personalised details and idealistic identity work

Over time and as the DOS grows in confidence and/or experience they opt more frequently to personalise the online organisational presence utilising images they like or content they feel passionately about. For example, Tim, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare, describes advocating the inclusion of his 'real' name on the organisational Twitter page as the means to 'humanise' his organisation. So he decided to try and make its presence more approachable, as he suggests: "to give it a *personality*" (emphasis added), so as to ensure the online audience recognise there are "people who care behind the logo" and therefore may be more willing to engage. According to Lievens et al (2007) an employee's identity and self-worth are partially shaped by their association with their organisation. Additionally, when outsiders appear to view the organisation positively, or preferably idealistically, being part of the organisation increases employees' feelings of self-worth. In this sense the attributes that define the individual DOS, such as their name and text that suggests being caring, compel the online organisational presence. Therefore, the DOS is prepared to reveal and project aspects of their individual identity within the tweets, such as when they use 'I' and less formal 'caring' phrases, such as 'loved ones' and tweets that suggest one person is communicating directly to another. However, perhaps unwittingly Tim is also willingly giving more aspects of his individual identity in pursuit of organisational aims, such as ongoing engagement with customers. Potentially allowing employees to utilise their real name is also a form of 'identity regulation' (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) as they are less likely to write anything contumacious if they have their name associated with it, in a public "identity workspace" (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010: 44).

In Chapter Five ('Online specialising achieved through negotiating preferred identities'), Natalie, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications, also describes customising her organisation's Twitter profile page to reflect personal interests, not specifically related to work, or her organisation. As part of her online marketing work she describes being able to align self, her interests with organisational needs and the latest marketing campaign theme. She utilises an image of the 'girl with the pearl earring' painting by 17th-century Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer to support her organisation's marketing theme: 'The Art of Connectivity'. In this way she describes striking a balance by communicating what she interprets as "distinctive" (Lievens et al, 2007:46) about the organisation, their technical expertise through the services they provide, i.e. literal broadband connectivity and also to show a more 'creative' side also. She comments, "I never thought I would get that one through though." Thus Natalie perceives the inclusion of personally chosen images as potentially risqué, rebellious and not the norm. Perhaps this is because she recognises that her freedom and autonomy to input personal interests thus serves to compel an organisational presence that is the consequence of her subjective interpretation. Even though she primarily inputs her personal interests, as an attempt to amend the 'traditional (potentially dull) technical' "construed external image" (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991: 547). What is also evident here is the notion of 'labour' beyond the constraints of the work organisation. Natalie's personal interests are essentially subsumed into the "means of production" (Hanlon, 2016: 1). In this way it is suggested that she is inadvertently manipulating a preferred response to, or idealised image of her organisation. In turn her desire to inject personal interests, her enjoyment of art, into the online organisational presence to make its 'construed external image' (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991: 547) more appealing to the intended online audience is an example of "capitalist social relations" (Hanlon, 2016:14). This suggests a situation where she allows the organisation, as a form of capital, to extract their personal interests as a "free gift of the social individual" (Hanlon, 2016: 14). In this way, by integrating their individual interests in order to personalise the online organisational presence, they are engaging in a form of idealised identity work, as is defined and explained below.

Idealised identity work

This approach is utilised by the 'idealist DOS' to make the online organisational presence appear less corporate and more appealing to the intended Twitter audience, through the integration of their personal interests and details. In this way the DOS freely and naively donates their individual/personal interests to the organisation, in order to create the Twitter profile page in a way that is reflective of an individual, rather than a 'cold' B2B corporate persona. This provides another way for the DOS to 'humanise' the organisation, but it also arguably exploits them, as they conjoin their individual identity traits with the online organisational presence.

Summary

Within this chapter I have referred back to the data in Chapters Five to Seven in order to relate my findings to the literature discussed in Chapters One to Three. I focussed initially on answering my third research question that related to how the DOS makes sense of and narrates online marketing work processes. I drew upon existing literature on sensemaking and sensegiving from Chapter Three (Cornelissen, 2012; Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Humphreys and Brown, 2002) in order to develop four different character 'types'. These summarised the approaches of the DOS to sensemaking and sensegiving during online marketing work and provided observations from the empirical data in relation to behaviours, attitudes and activities, based on experience in marketing and within the organisation.

When considering my second research question, How does the DOS construct and understand their online identity work negotiations, through their online marketing work activities? I highlighted identity issues and challenges that each of the four different DOS characters experienced. Then I explained how they managed them based on their different character types through their online marketing work activities. This included relating the literature discussed in Chapter Two on contemporary marketing practices (Kotler and Kellar, 2016), which can be related to B2B contexts, as well as the identity literature in Chapter Three. In particular I drew upon scholarship relating to online marketing work (Marwick and Boyd, 2010), organisational identity (Watson, 2008: Lievens et al, 2007; Chatman et al, 1986) and the “construed external image” (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991: 547). I came to the conclusion that the DOS brings the organisation into being subjectively and reflexively. This is as the result of different influences on their identity work, including their response to the intended Twitter audience and situational circumstances such as when they are at events.

I answered my first research question, which relates to an understanding of the online marketing work processes the DOS undertakes to produce the online organisational presence and what these processes inform us about identity at work, through the identification of six different types of online marketing work and their impact on identity work processes for specific DOS characters. The DOS as the result of an online identity issue or challenge demonstrates these different types of identity work. Thus, each of these identity work descriptions aims to identify the different types of identity construction that may be undertaken, utilised and demonstrated to manage specific online marketing work processes. This is insightful in furthering an understanding of how the different types of DOS can manage issues and challenges when there is an online dimension.

The conclusions will elaborate further upon these thematic observations and key empirical and conceptual contributions. In addition an overview of the thesis will be provided, together with a review of the research questions and aims, a critical evaluation of limitations, recommendations for online marketing work practice and finally future research directions.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions - Online marketing as identity work

This chapter concludes the thesis by setting out the original contributions to knowledge. An overview is also provided by way of a reminder of the key components, followed by a critical evaluation of the limitations, which also alludes to possible opportunities for other organisation studies and management researchers. My own future research directions are also outlined, together with some closing thoughts.

Original conceptual contributions

This thesis develops the existing literature on identity and marketing work, sensemaking and sensegiving in its examination of online marketing processes as a form of identity work from the perspective of the DOS, when updating the organisational Twitter account within UK B2B environments. The emphasis within this thesis is on the individual DOS and their self-understandings of online marketing processes, which is based on both an introspective reflection of self and an appraisal of the actual and perceived interactions/reactions of others, including the intended online audience and the broader 'organisation'. This acknowledges the role of the individual, the organisation and the intended Twitter audience as fundamental to an understanding of identity work during online marketing activities.

The emphasis as explained within previous identity work studies has been on examining individuals and collectives often during periods of duress, change or transition (Järventie-Theslef and Tienari, 2016; Brown and Coupland, 2015; Wieland, 2010; Watson, 2008; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Alvesson and Wilmott, 2002; Snow and Anderson, 1987). There have not been many studies to date within the organisation studies, management and marketing field, that have examined online marketing processes and the self understanding of marketers, and those seconded into marketing teams, referred to throughout the thesis as the Digital Organisational Storyteller (DOS).

The first contribution of the thesis includes four different character 'types' that summarise the way the DOS approaches sensemaking and sensegiving processes and which include:

1. 'The eager, but inexperienced/naive audience-pleasing DOS, who are enthusiastic and overly fervent sensemaking and sensegiving orientated towards greater understanding for the audience, so as to encourage interaction

2. 'The non-risk taking policy and procedures-informed conformist DOS, who engage in committed, affiliate, rule-driven sensemaking and restrained/ordered sensegiving.

3. 'The reluctant, restrained and self-preserving strategist DOS, who undertake strategic sensemaking and normative sensegiving

4. 'The flexible, 'self-sacrificing' forward-looking idealist DOS, who engage in natural and impassioned sensemaking which is aligned with organisational and individual ideals which relate to 'doing good and making a difference' through their sensegiving.

These character analyses are utilised so as to provide insights into the type of sensemaking and sensegiving activities that arise from undertaking online marketing work, depending on experience with marketing and in relation to the specific B2B organisation. They provide insightful observations about behaviours, attitudes and activities, in order to illuminate the challenges and dependencies placed upon the DOS in their everyday work tasks. This is useful in several ways as it provides a new lens to appreciate the complexity of online marketing work and the demands placed upon the individuals. It is also insightful in relation to the individual and social influences, which are different across the four groups, suggesting that interpretation and perception also influence online marketing work practices.

The second contribution is a discussion of the identity construction issues and challenges experienced by each of the different types of DOS characters. Previously scholars have suggested that tweets are constructed within organisational settings based on a combination of individual and organisational identities that combine formality, informality and a mixture of the two (Meijer and Torenvlied, 2014). It is argued here that the online marketing work processes engaged in by the DOS demonstrate far more complexity than previous studies have suggested. For example, the DOS called upon aspects of their individual identity, personal experiences and perceptions to bring the online organisation into being, in a way that they hope will encourage greater engagement with the intended Twitter audience. In order to substantiate this, I reiterate briefly some of the identity issues and challenges each of the different DOS characters experience and how they understand and manage them during their online marketing activities.

DOS character group one - Due to their eagerness, inexperience and desire to please, I draw upon the identity issues for the 'inexperienced DOS', relating to fluidity and instrumental reflexivity. This is because they feel an expectation by the organisation to continuously adapt their tone and style depending on the subject of the tweet and the context where they undertake their online marketing work. I conclude that the process of balancing self with the demands of social identities as conceptualised by Watson, (2008) and Kreiner et al, (2006) may be better understood within online environments for the DOS, as the process of instrumental reflexivity within bounded aesthetic parameters. The presentation of self by the DOS is thus described as bounded, self-conscious, but also continuously evolving due to the ongoing nature of their actions and appearances. In this sense they try to maintain ontological stability while instrumentally traversing between online and offline environments.

DOS character group two - As a result of the 'conformist DOS' preference for established policies and procedures, the idea of working autonomously threatens their professional identity. Also, due to their risk-averse nature, autonomy may be seen as a license to exploit (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011). This is because they tried to retain control over their work, due to the public nature of the online organisational presence, which is always open to scrutiny. As a result, they felt a duty to monitor and protect it from negative comments, complaints and queries, even out of hours. Thus, I suggest that frequent 'online checking' behaviours are an additional way the organisation is able to exploit emotional labour processes, where she is used to and thus instinctively shows a genuine concern for customers' needs, on the basis of protecting the organisation and herself (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011; Kinnie et al, 2000).

DOS character group three – Due to their compliant and self-preserving behaviours, the 'strategic DOS' are more amenable to combining and amalgamating their personal, individual identities during their online marketing work. However, through their willingness to comply with non-contractual roles, such as that of the 'spokesperson', which includes tweeting from personal, individual accounts, there is also evidence that the organisations are extracting additional free socialised labour and exploiting the DOS (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011). Thus, Collin's (social media lead, Orion Communications) admittance that he always has to be "careful" now when utilising his personal individual Twitter account, confirms the identity issues that the 'strategic DOS' experiences, where they often have to compromise their individual identity, in order to fulfil the obligations of role and organisation, through their online marketing work.

DOS character group four – As a result of their ‘self-sacrificing’ tendencies and need to ‘make a difference’, the ‘idealistic DOS’ experienced identity issues relating to the need for recognition through engagement from the intended Twitter audience. This helps them to feel their online marketing work is worthwhile. They are also inclined to donate and project their personal details (real name) and interests within the Twitter profile page, so as to ‘humanise’ the organisation (Kotler and Keller, 2016) and try to influence the “construed external image” (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991: 547). As such they allow the organisation as a form of capital to extract their personal details as a “free gift of the social individual” (Hanlon, 2016:14). Specifically Tim, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare and Natalie, head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications, illustrate this when they insist on including their personal details and interests via the online organisational presence. I argue the ‘idealist DOS’ partake in these online marketing work activities to make their organisation seem more friendly and less technically-orientated, due to the complex nature of their B2B product portfolios.

As a result of the identity issues the different DOS characters’ experience, a summary of their approaches to managing online marketing work from the empirical data, are discussed.

These six identity work categorisations describe the specific processes and approaches utilised by the DOS, to orient them in relation to successful engagement with the organisation and the intended Twitter audience:

idealised, combined, amalgamated, entrapped, situated and preferred identity work, as explained below.

Idealised identity work - refers to the process of making the online organisational presence appear less corporate and more appealing to the intended Twitter audience. Through the naive integration of their personal interests and details, the DOS unwittingly donate aspects of self, as the means to make the organisation vibrant.

Situated identity work – relates to the instrumental processes engaged in by the DOS when they are conscious of how they are perceived, and of how the organisation is perceived, because of their actions and appearances – such as when they are tweeting from, or at events and responsible for face-to-face and online identity presentations.

Combined identity work – alludes specifically to the processes the DOS undertakes that combines their individual identity with their professional identity, such as when they utilise their individual Twitter accounts to occasionally support and promote the online organisational presence.

Amalgamated identity work – describes the conscious process of merging individual and professional identities via Twitter, when the DOS is asked to act as ‘spokespeople’ for the organisation. As a result, the DOS utilises their individual Twitter accounts exclusively to endorse the online organisational presence.

Entrapped identity work – occurs when the DOS feel the need to continuously check and then respond to negative tweets/complaints or queries received via Twitter, out of hours. They convince themselves this type of identity work is required to protect and preserve the perception of the organisation by others online.

Preferred identity work – suggests the DOS gave priority to the most appropriate aspect of self to deliver the message effectively. This includes delivering the message, in the most appealing way. As such the nature of 'preferred identity work' relates to the interpretation of what the DOS think the intended audience wants and expects to hear, in terms of tone, style and content of the tweet.

These categorisations are useful in informing an understanding of the types of identity constructions that are emerging from online marketing work processes. They tell us something insightful about the different types of identity work contemporary marketing professionals are seen to engage in online, which helps to inform our understandings of both the challenges and opportunities related to this type of work.

Theoretical contributions to organisational studies and identity

Having elaborated upon the different types of DOS characters that undertake online marketing work, within the conceptual contribution, I will now draw upon their practices and processes, in order to contribute to existing organisational studies and identity theory. Firstly I suggest the process of online marketing for the DOS extends existing theory in relation to sensemaking and sensegiving, which has predominantly focussed on employee's experiences under duress (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014; Brown and Humphreys, 2003; Currie and Brown, 2003; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Brown and Humphreys, 2002). Thus, it is suggested that the practice of updating Twitter can be explained as bringing the online organisation into being. This term describes all of the preparatory offline and online marketing work activities undertaken by the DOS to help them create and maintain an online organisational presence, as explained in Chapter One. As such the online marketing work the DOS does, is principally the management of meaning and perception online. This suggests the way the DOS presents the organisational identity and the brand narrative, such as consistently positively, is designed to create a favourable perspective of the organisation. Part of this management of meaning and perception work they do is therefore embedded in sensemaking, making sense of the organisational identity in order to be able to give sense to the intended Twitter audience, as part of everyday tasks. Therefore the thesis adds to extant research (Cornelissen, 2012; Quinn and Worline, 2008; Maitlis, 2005; Brown and Humphreys, 2003; Humphreys and Brown, 2002) by outlining how sensemaking and sensegiving are also regular activities that occur not only within organisations, but also vis-à-vis external stakeholders, such as the intended online audience.

The online marketing work the DOS does also extends existing theory in relation to the interpretation and communication of organisational identity. Existing literature (Lievens et al, 2007: 46) argues customer-facing employees such as the DOS, have the responsibility of communicating the “central, distinctive and enduring” qualities of the organisational identity. Contrary to extant research (Lievens et al, 2007; Albert and Whetten, 2004) the thesis demonstrated how the DOS contributes directly to the creation of the organisational identity. They achieve this through the integration of aspects of their identity, as the means to improve a positive perception, through personalised/human content and contact. For example Karen Tennant, group communications manager and Tim Crane, PR manager, Sunrise Healthcare, personalise their Twitter page by including their real names and Philip Thwaites, senior marketing manager, Clark Spencer Jones, integrates his personal interests, including national poetry day that does not necessarily relate to organisational foci. Therefore, this study adds to organisational identity scholarship by showing how the DOS integrates aspects of self into the online organisational presence, by creating it partially within their image, so as to improve the audience’s perception of the organisation and thus increase a willingness to engage with it. Accordingly it is suggested the DOS engages in processes of writing text and utilising certain visual images that they think summarises the organisational identity from their perspective, in order to give it greater meaning and enjoyment for themselves and their intended online audience.

The process of online marketing work as a form of identity work also extends an existing understanding of identity formation as both a mental and a physical process (Watson, 2008). In particular the thesis shows when the DOS starts experimenting with online marketing work, it is only through the processes of doing the work, they are able to make sense of it and stabilise any initial threat to their professional identity, caused by their uncertainty. In this sense the undertaking of online marketing work, as identity work helps to reinstate a previous more confident ‘expert’ identity. In addition the ‘doing’ of online marketing work provides a forum where professional and personal identities unify or at least co-exist. This is seen most acutely when the DOS utilise their personal Twitter accounts to contribute to the online organisational presence. However, contrary to existing research which suggests there are three ways for employees to personalise the tone and content within the tweets, “formal, informal and hybrid” (Meijer and Torevlied, 2014) the thesis highlights how the DOS utilises a more complex approach. This includes the amalgamating and combining of personal and professional identities online, through retweeting and replying to tweets from their individual Twitter accounts, during and outside of traditional/paid working hours. In this sense the study develops existing identity work theory by suggesting that when the DOS undertakes online marketing work they may utilise aspects of their personal and professional identities simultaneously to encourage engagement with their intended audience. They will also have different reasons for doing so, as the DOS utilise their Twitter accounts within the online organisational presence for convenience, as part of perceived and actual role responsibilities and in pursuit of conjoined interests.

The nature of online marketing work may also be understood as a process of instrumental reflexivity within bounded aesthetic parameters. Put simply, this means the DOS constantly has to reflect on how to project their identity in response to interactions and/or different situations online. They are also conscious of being 'bounded' by Twitter, as a communications medium and also the fact they are representing the organisational identity online, where they may be continually publicly scrutinised, due to it occurring in a public space. Existing literature argues that individuals utilise various tactics to segment, or merge their personal and social identities (Ashcraft, 2007; Kriener et al, 2006) the thesis indicates the identity work of the DOS is 'bounded', situational and also continuously evolving due to the ongoing nature of their different actions and identity appearances, such as at events, where they need to combine face to face and online representations of self. Therefore, this study contributes to identity work scholarship by highlighting how the DOS, during their online marketing work activities, needs to be continuously responsive through their identity construction processes, to different offline and online situations and interactions.

Accordingly another theoretical contribution is the nature of the DOS online representations, which extends our understanding of how different personas and identities are drawn upon by employees, in the course of their online marketing work. Contrary to extant research (van Dijck, 2013; Sillince and Brown, 2009; Watson, 2008), which highlights how employees' utilise personas to help orient who they are at work, as opposed to outside, the thesis argues the DOS adopts different personas to facilitate better engagement with their intended online audience. Therefore the thesis shows how the DOS adopts the persona of individuals they believe their online audience will want to engage with, such as Rebecca Williams, marketing assistant, Forsdyke Industrial, when she describes adopting the tone of the “guy next door”. Simon Peterson, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones, also describes being conversational as similar to “talking to an old friend.” Therefore the thesis shows the DOS’s motivation for adopting a particular persona is focussed on increasing online engagement. However, there are also times where the DOS adopts a particular corporate persona in order to distance them from the organisation, such as in times of change or uncertainty. In particular John Griggs, operational marketing manager, Forsdyke industrial suggests adopting a “tweeting smile” to maintain a happy demeanour despite a lack of identification with his organisation at the time. There is though also an example of where a DOS draws from another identity that of a Mum, as it is an identity she is familiar with and thus she draws upon it to provide reassurance and support to herself and complainants. Therefore the thesis extends theory on personas (Watson, 2008) by highlighting how they are adopted online to encourage engagement with similar others and also to help bring the online organisation into being continually positively in times of dis-identification, such as during change. In addition the thesis contributes an explanation as to how other non-professional identities may be drawn upon, as the means to provide comfort and reassurance during unfamiliar or difficult online marketing work, such as managing complaints.

The creation of identity for the DOS is thus established as part of symbolic interactions with an intended audience (Mead, 1934). However contrary to the nature of interactions described by Mead (1934), the DOS does not know exactly who their audience are. In this sense the thesis contributes to traditional identity theory (Mead, 1934; Stryker, 1980), by highlighting how the DOS takes on the symbolic attitudes of intended others which they exhibit through their likes, retweets and shares. They also create new text in response to these envisaged attitudes of others, i.e. what they had previously responded favourably to. The intended audience in turn requires the continuation of the organisational identity (Smith, 2011) to meet their requirement for information. The data therefore extends existing identity theory by suggesting that individuals, who communicate on behalf of their organisation online, such as the DOS, need validation and approval from their intended audience to help them establish the value of their work and also their identity as an online specialist. In addition a consideration of political and cultural implications on the development of identity suggests that the DOS cannot simply respond directly as themselves. This is particularly evident in terms of managing complaints online, where the DOS takes on the envisaged attitudes of the complainants but is unable to respond as they wish to, due to the influence of political and cultural organisational issues. Therefore it is acknowledged that political and cultural issues do influence the development and presentation of the DOS identities online. Thus it is reiterated that the DOS's identity work is embedded in power relations, which also influences their need to draw upon temporary personas.

Having discussed the theoretical contributions to organisation studies and identity, I will now consider the theoretical contributions to online marketing work.

Theoretical contributions to online marketing work

The existing literature highlights a lack of understanding and awareness of the processes and practices involved in day-to-day marketing work in contemporary organisations (Ardley and Quinn, 2013). Therefore, the thesis contributes to online marketing work theory by explaining who the individuals are that undertake this work, the DOSs, as explained within the conceptual contributions, the training and guidance provided to help them do the work, as well as the varied activities they engage in.

In terms of the preparatory training and guidance, it is apparent from the empirical research that minimal training, guidance and support are provided to the DOS, in preparation for online marketing work and therefore most of their activities are based on experimentation, as part of doing the job. This is particularly problematic when the DOS asked to complete the online marketing work is not a marketer, but is seconded into the marketing team for a specific purpose, such as answering queries and complaints. Thus, the study contributes to an understanding of online marketing work practices as individualised, based on other previous marketing work experience and also constantly developing, as the DOS, in most instances, gains confidence through experience.

A further theoretical contribution is a better understanding of what online marketing work is within contemporary B2B organisations. Accordingly, online marketing work can be categorised as a range of preparatory offline and online activities that culminate in textual and pictorial representations of the organisation, in a process described as bringing the online organisation into being. There are also a combination of proactive and reactive activities that include trying to build relationships and generate responses from an intended audience, through the use of questions and also the answering of complaints and queries. It is also notable, contrary to existing marketing work research, (Griffiths and McLean, 2015, Lien, 1997) that online marketing work activity does not necessarily always culminate in the production of text. For example the DOS spends time monitoring and checking the online organisational presence, in order to protect the continuity of the positive organisational/brand narrative.

Therefore, another aspect of the ‘bringing the organisation into being’ process the DOS does is the representational work they undertake on behalf of the organisation. This extends an understanding of existing brand narrative theory (Schembri et al, 2010; Cooper et al, 2010) by illustrating how employees' interpret and subsequently communicate an organisational/brand identity online. For example the DOS tries to protect their interpretation of the organisational/brand identity through online preserving and gatekeeping activities. These include being responsive to queries and complaints by checking and as required preparing tweets, outside of traditional paid hours, as well as acting as ‘gatekeepers’ by checking and uploading content on behalf of other staff members.

Also, the DOS highlights the need to disseminate, positive, but also interesting, rather than simply promotional brand stories. The DOS also acknowledges the difficulties in communicating the complexity of B2B products in an interesting way due to the complicated nature of the products (i.e. Forsdyke Industrial and Orion Communications). Accordingly, there are examples of where the DOS draws from their own interests to influence the content and images within the tweets, designed to humanise campaigns and make the brand narrative more accessible and engaging. These personalisation activities extend previous online marketing work theory (Griffiths and McLean, 2015; Cova et al, 2015; Meijer and Torenvlied, 2014; Zwick and Cayla, 2011), which has not previously taken account of the diversity and complexity involved within online marketing work, on a day-to-day basis. Certainly the personalisation seen within the empirical data extends beyond just the tone, style and content of the tweets. For example Natalie Mason, Head of customer insight and futures, Orion Communications, chooses the picture that represents the organisational/brand identity on the Twitter profile page, based on a painting she likes. In addition, Karen Tennant, group communications manager, Sunrise Healthcare, describes utilising her personal experiences of caring for a relative with dementia as the subject matter within one of the organisational blogs. Therefore, this study contributes to existing branding scholarship (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012; Schembri et al, 2010; Cooper et al, 2010) and by highlighting how the DOS communicates and preserves the brand narrative through the inclusion of self.

In addition it is suggested the thesis extends existing value co-creation literature, which predominantly suggests its economic worth is situated within interactions between the organisation and the customer, despite their potentially exploitative nature, as customers are not paid for their contributions (Cova et al, 2011; Ainasoja and Linna, 2011; Echeverri and Skålén). The empirical data significantly extends our theoretical understanding of value co-creation, which is seen here as being just as exploitative for employees, as they are also encouraged to give more of themselves as free labour. In particular the thesis contributes to extant literature by highlighting how employees also contribute free labour outside of work, utilising their own resources in order to increase productivity and brand engagement. For example the DOS is continually seen to be undertaking organisational/brand representational work, such as answering complaints, queries and sending tweets outside of traditional/paid working hours. In addition they are seen to be using their own personal Twitter accounts, out of hours, to contribute to the online organisational presence.

Therefore it is suggested here that exploitative value co-creation is not just restricted to consumers, but it may also affect employees utilising their own time, resources and personal interests when bringing the online organisation into being. The reasons why the DOS contributes free socialised and emotional labour are thus categorised as the preservation of the positive brand narrative, as any negativity is perceived to reflect badly upon the organisation, but also upon the DOS in charge of it. Other DOSs though state a genuine interest in their area of work as the central reason why they dedicate their own time and resources to the preserving and protecting of the online organisational presence. An understanding of these representational practices significantly extends an appreciation of the complexity and challenges associated with online marketing work that enriches current theory. The next section provides a reminder of how the theoretical contributions have emerged from the earlier chapters as provided by a final overview, included below.

Overview of the thesis

Within the thesis I have shown how the DOS can be grouped into four different characters to explain the type of sensemaking and sensegiving activities that arise from undertaking online marketing work. I also describe how each of the different DOS characters experience identity issues and challenges when undertaking online marketing work.

This was achieved firstly through an examination of why business-to-business (B2B) marketing departments are an interesting and relevant empirical context to examine online marketing processes. Initially this involved an analysis of contemporary marketing in practice, where relationship management (Kotler, 1992, Gronroos, 1990) and exchanges facilitated through interactions were analysed as the means to deliver contemporary strategies (Grönroos, 2006). It was thus ascertained an investigation from the perspective of the B2B marketers offered an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the online marketing processes involved in producing the tweets based on an analysis of their lived experience and self-understanding. From this chapter I justified the idea that there is an opportunity to analyse the rich experience of contemporary online marketing practices.

My next focus was to understand the ways in which identity, self, identity work and online marketing have been studied within organisational settings. I sought an initial understanding of self from the social science literature. As a theoretical construct the self-concept (Oyserman et al, 2012), has been referred to in order to acknowledge the influence of the introspective, reflection of self and an appraisal of social influences on the individual. In this sense self-understanding, particularly in relation to the individual, organisation and vis `a vis the intended online audience were identified as central influences on the DOS. Therefore it was established less is known about individual identity constructions during specific work tasks. From this chapter I was able to conclude the online context would provide a new lens in order to explore the dynamics of online marketing as a form of identity work. Thus, I also considered how narrative and storytelling have impacted upon identity formation within organisations (Brown et al, 2005; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). Of specific relevance to the thesis is how storytelling and narrative links to sensemaking and identity (work). In particular the narrative-as-sensemaking literature has expanded its communicative possibilities and opened the door to explorations of new identity domains, such as SNSs and new media (for example Cornelissen, 2012; Macnamara and Zerfass, 2012; Quinn and Worline, 2008; Maitlis, 2005). In addition, sensegiving as an approach to influence the sensemaking activities of others, and the means to give sense to self, was also discussed (Weick, 1995, Weick et al, 2005; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). I concluded from the literature review chapters that sensemaking and sensegiving could be utilised to understand and explain processes of online marketing as a form of identity work. This is because they provide the means to help individuals understand processes and happenings within organisational contexts, on an ongoing basis.

Methodologically, in order to understand the DOS and their lived experience, I asked them to tell their own stories of bringing their organisation into being online as part of the interview process. I then coded the processes of identity work within the DOS stories using coding (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Generated directly from the interview text the coding words and phrases utilised “descriptive codes” (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 57) relating to the descriptions of the work the DOS does – such as engaging, participating and personalising.

I presented the findings over three chapters, from Five to Seven, which focussed on creating, shaping, guiding and sustaining identity for the DOS. In particular I drew attention within Chapter Five to how the DOS made sense of their online marketing work processes as they progressed from online apprenticing, initially bringing the organisation into being online, to online specialising, where they were more adept and confident. I illustrated within

Chapter Six how the DOS tried to give sense to the intended Twitter audience through online perception shaping, where they try to present a consistently positive organisational presence. At other times, when interaction with the audience is the aim, more provocative methods are used to generate a response. Finally in Chapter Seven I elaborated upon three further categories, which provided an understanding of how the DOS engaged in preserving identity, influencing identity and online professional friending, which included the combining and amalgamating by some DOSs, of their individual Twitter accounts with the online organisational presence.

My final conclusions are centred on the three research questions (see the ‘Original contributions’ section) and were discussed in light of the literature from Chapters One to Three. Firstly, I concluded that the DOS could be grouped into four character types, which helps to illuminate their sensemaking and sensegiving approaches and methods during online marketing work. Secondly, I analysed and discussed the identity issues and challenges these DOS characters experience and the various ways they manage them through their online marketing activities. Thirdly, I concluded online marketing work processes are much more complex than initial studies suggested. As such six new identity work categories are introduced to better define the different types of online marketing work approaches, experienced by the DOS across the five B2B organisations.

Research questions and aims changed slightly

The reason I approached the thesis from an interpretive, abductive, qualitative approach, is because I wanted to understand how DOS brings an organisation into being online. This is the process of online marketing as identity work. But more than that the aim was also to undertake a rich, in-depth and detailed analysis of their lived experiences in their words, from their perspective. This was intended to broaden and add to the existing understanding of identity work within online “identity workspaces” (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010: 44). Such workspaces, the example within their study are business schools, are defined as establishments that offer a safe place or “holding environment” (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010: 44) for individuals to experiment with their identity work. It is suggested here that the online context, although still linked to the organisation, may also provide a different context for the DOS to explore their identity work. It was also envisaged through the DOS there would be an opportunity to understand something intuitive and experimental about the identity work that contemporary marketing professionals engage in that may also contribute to a broader awareness of online identity creation issues in other virtual domains, such as live webinars.

Emanating from the core question relating to bringing the organisation into being online, three supplementary questions were developed and addressed within the thesis and include:

What do the online marketing work processes the DOS undertakes inform us about identity at work?

There are several components within this first question, which were identified as largely absent or quite limited within existing organisation studies and management literature. For example an understanding of online marketing work processes from the perspective of the DOS, working within the B2B environment is limited. Additionally, existing studies, of which there are few, primarily focus on traditional marketing practices, as opposed to online marketing work processes and therefore there was additional scope to understand exactly what the day to day tasks for the DOS included, as well as how it impacted on their identity constructions at work.

How does the DOS construct and understand their online identity work negotiations, through their online marketing work activities?

An understanding of the online identity work negotiations was also sought, as part of the online marketing work activities, as these have been not been considered empirically, often, within UK B2B environments. Existing literature suggested that online marketing work for individual employees might include “formal, informal and hybrid Twitter accounts” (Meijer and Torenvlied, 2014:11) but it was perceived this did not take account of the diversity and complexity involved within online marketing work, on a day to day basis and that more empirical work was required to understand the issues.

How does the DOS make sense and give sense during these online marketing work processes?

The nature of online exchanges vis à vis the intended online audience was intended to provide a fresh approach to the study of both sensemaking and sensegiving within organisational settings. In particular an understanding as to how the DOS makes sense of the work they need to do when they start in the role is largely absent. As such, sensegiving processes when an employee is communicating online and therefore trying to give sense in relation to a desired image of the organisational identity was hitherto absent. However, there are of course still limitations to this approach.

Critical evaluation of limitations

This study exhibits certain limitations, some of which can be linked directly to my own experience as a DOS, and in marketing more generally, in terms of scope and focus. Firstly in concentrating on B2B organisations that I was familiar with, and utilising contacts that I knew from previous roles, may have provided a particular perspective on the issue of online marketing as identity work. For example the empirical work focussed on the DOS, as opposed to others with different identity work experiences. However it is impossible to determine whether those that took part in the empirical aspect of this thesis were more or less typical of other B2B marketers in similar roles.

Additionally, due to my experience as a DOS within the B2B sector I did have a certain degree of pre-conceived ideas and expectations, which were reflected to an extent within the questions asked of the participants. In this way, the direction of the research and the manner in which I asked the questions of the participants was predetermined by my experience, but I would also argue this helped to build quicker rapports and improved overall communication and openness during the interview process.

Lastly, the thesis has focussed specifically on online marketing as identity work, but there were also other themes that arose from the interviews, which could have more significantly influenced the direction of the discussion, such as motivation, perception and gratification (see Whiting and Williams, 2013 for a customer perspective) experiences, from the DOS perspective. Although these themes were not deemed as significant, they were there and could be examined within a different empirical setting, I would suggest.

Recommendations for online marketing work practice

There are several themes that reoccurred during the empirical aspect of this thesis, which include: the lack of guidance, support and training for the DOS when they start in their roles, the use of personal Twitter accounts to support organisational messages and out of office/hours online checking of organisational Twitter accounts. Therefore this thesis has several implications for practice, which I have summarised into two sections below.

Firstly, I highlighted within Chapter Five (Getting started) how the DOS experienced identity threat due to a lack of written or verbal guidance and established online marketing processes. As such they were forced to draw upon their past experiences of marketing work or learn on the job, which proved unsatisfactory and/or ‘daunting’ to the DOS. My experience as a DOS was similar, little verbal guidance, no written instructions, policies or training were provided, and as such I also drew from my own prior marketing experiences, but I also felt obliged to undertake my own research, so as to prevent myself from appearing incompetent. As such I would recommend that written or online training/guidance be provided to new DOSs which provides specific details as to how to use the social media technology, how to write the tweets, including specific advice about suitable content, style and tone and how to utilise appropriate images. New DOSs should also be mentored by more experienced DOSs if possible. Independent institutions such as the Chartered Institute of Management (CMI) also offer mentoring programmes designed to support specialist skills and progression.

Secondly, the DOS outlined (Chapter Seven) how they feel obliged to continuously preserve the online organisational presence. As such they continuously engage in processes of online checking. This involves regularly reviewing the online organisational presence often outside of normal/paid hours to check for retweets and replies principally (see Chapter Seven: ‘Preserving identity). Such online checking processes often also lead to the DOS replying and retweeting outside of traditional/paid working hours if they see a negative comment/complaint or query in particular. Since the inception of the thesis technology has become more commonplace such as 'Tweetdeck', which allows the DOS to schedule tweets at specific times, including outside of normal working hours, which should prevent the need for online checking. Also the role and responsibilities of the DOS should be clarified prior to employment explicitly within a job description and also within their contract of employment, so as to clarify any out of hour's obligations. This point also relates to incidents of amalgamating and combining identity (Chapter Seven) that may also be explored further in future research.

Future research directions

Future research in this field would be of great value to further an understanding of online marketing work processes, from a variety of different directions and perspectives. In relation to the nature of the participants I focussed on those employees who were specifically responsible for updating the online organisational Twitter account within five UK B2B organisations. Reviewing the experience of DOS in different types of organisations may provide interesting new perspectives. In particular by focussing on those DOS within organisations more used to managing a larger volume of audience interaction via Twitter, such as national charities, NHS hospital trusts and housing associations, may provide fresh insights into identity work negotiations. In addition, perhaps an understanding from the intended Twitter audience would prove an insightful addition to sensemaking and sensegiving practices.

Methodologically there are also alternative ways Twitter or other SNS conversations can be analysed. For example a discourse analysis of the tweets could prove advantageous in terms of providing a clearer definition of how the organisation conveys its identity through the tweets. Although I ruled out an ethnographic study in relation to B2B contexts due to the small teams and relatively low levels of audience interaction, a participant observation study may prove more insightful within a service-led environment (such as those organisations highlighted above) where there is more audience led communication. In this way the conversations offline between the marketers may provide a useful insight into their motivations, opinions and priorities when communicating online.

One aspect of the thesis that I found interesting, but also a little surprising was in relation to the DOS utilising their individual Twitter accounts to support the online organisational presence, out of hours. Empirically, I would also like to understand what other aspects of online marketing work/marketing work encourage the combining or amalgamating aspects of the individual and organisational identity. This could complement and add to the emerging theoretical papers emerging within organisation studies literature that have reflected upon value and labour within the new economy and the way in which employees are perceived as “subjects of value” as part of “capitalism’s social reproduction.”(Hanlon, 2016: 1) – see also Beverungen, Bohm and Land, 2015. Additionally and related to this, I chose to focus on facets of organisational identity and the “construed external image” (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991: 547) as opposed to brand and specifically internalised branding as the means for the DOS to understand how to bring the organisation into being. This was because the case-study organisations that were chosen did not have a particularly strong corporate culture and brand. However there is also an emerging field of organisation studies literature which are linked to 'subjects of value', that is starting to examine brand-centred control, internal branding, normative systems and communicative capitalism (Müller, 2016; Mumby, 2016; Brannan et al, 2015). There is scope in my view to investigate these principles as part of an analysis of B2B organisations and Twitter management in particular, due to its blurring of boundaries between individual and organisational identity presentations.

Closing thoughts

I will build on the theme of online marketing as identity work within my next study, which focuses on freelance workers, who are based permanently from home. This research focuses on how they construct and market their identity online, as well as how they negotiate and define boundaries between personal and professional identities. Therefore this study aims to identify, explore and analyse the identity work (Watson, 2008) these individuals do to create and sustain a consistent professional persona online. So far I have undertaken six preliminary interviews and the main themes emerging relate to the intrusion of social media, such as messages from potential clients via Linked In at weekends, the challenges of mastering the technology and the laborious nature of marketing work based on 'promoting oneself' as an engaging, branded personality online.

The importance of individuals utilising their personality and a more personal approach when bringing the organisation into being online, is a theme that emerged from my empirical data within the thesis. Here, Andrew, social media manager, Sonic Business Solutions, reiterates the need to project aspects of individual personality to make his organisation seem more caring.

> Over time this means a more personal approach [online] than you would normally see in printed marketing collateral…by this I mean more human, not that horrible corporate tone…when it is obvious the company doesn't care at all.

As such the importance of creating a friendly 'human' persona has already been established. Arguably, though, the experiences of the DOS are but one strand of a myriad of fascinating and insightful online marketing as identity work research areas to explore, now and into the future.

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Appendix One: Examples of Online Digital Marketing Tools

To illustrate its diversity, current approaches to engage customers include the following six types of online digital marketing tools, which are recommended for integrating into marketing communications plans – see Table: 1.1 (Adapted from: Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2016: 33):

Table 1.1 – The key types of online digital marketing

Search Engine Marketing Placing messages on a search engine such as Google to encourage potential customers to click on the link to the organisation's website when they type a specific keyword phrase.
Online Public Relations Maximising favourable mentions of an organisation, brands, products and websites online such as on social networking sites (SNSs) or blogs (a frequently updated online personal journal or diary) that are likely to be visited by the target audience.
Online Partnerships Creating and managing long-term arrangements to promote an organisation's online services on other websites or through e-mail communications.
Display advertising Use of online advertisements to raise awareness and click through to a target site.
Opt-in e-mail marketing Renting e-mail lists or placing advertisements in other organisation's newsletters.
Social Media Marketing (see also next section for more detail) Companies participate and advertise within social networking sites to reach and engage their audience, such as Twitter and Facebook.

The impact of these new technologies on marketers and marketing practice has been significant, creating new opportunities and challenges. This is important to note as the emphasis within current literature, outside of the marketing discipline, focuses primarily on their impact and influence on customers, as opposed to marketers (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2010; Basheer and Ibrahim, 2010; Stephen and Berger, 2009).

Appendix Two: Synopsis of the Five B2B Organisations and their approach to social media use

The approach that has been undertaken in light of my worldview is a qualitative analysis of the DOSs, within five B2B organisations. The B2B organisations selected focus on the following products and/or services: IT communications, financial and business services, health, social care and care home provision, office space rental and manufacturing. A synopsis of each of the five organisations' characteristics is provided below.

Orion Communications (Referred to here as OC)

The first organisation is a global provider of communications services, with their headquarters in the UK. Their main activities are the provision of fixed-line services, broadband, mobile and TV products, together with networked IT services. They have approximately 19,800 employees within 180 countries. Their B2B customers include: small and medium-sized enterprises, the public sector, multinational corporations, domestic businesses and national and local government organisations. Aside from Twitter, the organisation utilises other social networking sites (SNSs) including: Linked In, Facebook, Google +, Flickr and YouTube. As the organisation has a business to consumer (B2C) and a business-to-business (B2B) section of the business, they have separate SNSs to cater to the needs of these two different customer types. So for example the Twitter site dedicated to businesses (B2B) is @OC Business and the consumer-orientated site is called @OC Care. In addition they have country-specific Twitter sites. The thesis focussed on the UK based @OC Business site only.

Every new and existing member of staff is required to undertake brand language training, which is called "Speaking with one voice". This training is not specifically focussed on how to update Twitter or social media, but it is more generally focussed on simplifying technical language during any communication between staff and existing or potential customers. The course lasts a couple of hours and is designed to help staff to be more aware of the language that they use in order to make the services and products more accessible and simpler to understand. The purpose and content of the training is explained by Natalie Mason, Head of Customer Insight and Futures, Orion Communications:

> … it is basically around learning about the language that you use and simplifying it, de-jargonizing it. Just talking in 'normal' language frankly. Using active rather than passive, using I rather than we, all of those very basic things around really simplifying the language and making it more accessible to our customers, just making it less complex.

As Natalie outlines the main aim of this training is to make staff aware of the need to simplify the language they use when communicating, which is applicable to the writing of tweets, due to their brief and informal nature. In addition there are a number of general guidelines and policies (listed below), which are included on OC's intranet (OC's SM Guidelines, 2008: 3), which all staff responsible for communicating via SNSs, on behalf of the organisation, are expected to adhere to. These focus on the following key areas:

"OC's business principles": Every staff member intending to communicate via an SNS, must be aware of and adhere to their business principles as outlined in 'The Way We Work' policy document
"Compliance": They must also ensure not to disclose any commercially sensitive information or any documents marked as private. All published information, including the links within the tweets must adhere to the organisation's code of practice guidelines
"Copyright": Rules relating to copyright must not be infringed during the production or communication of any organisational material, via SNSs
"Identification": When discussing OC or its business, staff members are required to always identify clearly who they are; their role and they should communicate in the first person (I). A disclaimer should also be used when appropriate.

“Disclaimer”: Any staff publishing information about OC, from a personal SNS account needs to include a disclaimer – this should confirm that the views expressed are their own and are not reflective of their employer.
“Personal Responsibility” – each member of staff is directly responsible for any material published or shared via social media and thus they should also be mindful that it will be publicly available for many years.
“Authenticity” – being honest and open is encouraged, as is being aware of the influence that your contribution could have on anyone’s views of OC as an organisation. If a mistake is made, users are encouraged to own up to it, as it is anticipated that honesty of this kind will help you to build a rapport and relationships based on mutual respect with other users.
“Keep calm” – don’t escalate disagreements by reiterating your opinion in ‘heated’ discussions. Instead adopt an approach that is peace making and deferential. Avoiding making contributions when you are angry is also strongly advised – instead it is advised not to respond, instead remain calm and contribute later if you really need to, but only if you are able to think and behave rationally.
“Personal judgement” – if at any time you experience any feelings of uneasiness about any content that you intend to publish, it is probably best not to do it. If you have any doubts, have a conversation first with your line manager.
“Discretion” – you are prohibited from discussing competitors, customers, partners or suppliers, without their consent.
“Respect” – Avoid using any content that may be perceived as a smear based on ethnicity, insults of a personal nature, offensive or obscene language, and also desist from the engagement in any behaviour that would be intolerable within an OC workspace. The consideration of other’s privacy is paramount and therefore try to avoid provocative subjects, such as political matters and religious issues.
“Personal privacy” – Refrain from publishing personal contact details, where they can be seen and shared by people you did not intend to communicate with in this way. It is advisable to contact individuals outside of the social media environment, if you want to have a more detailed conversation.

“Etiquette” – It is a good idea to watch the activity on any social media site, prior to contribution, so as to ensure that you understand the type of contributions, such as the themes within the conversations and any specific unofficial rules that other authors may follow.
“Day job” – overall any contributions to social media during work time should enhance and/or reinforce your role in OC.

Clark Spencer Jones (Referred to here as CSJ)

The second organisation is a global expert in business and financial advice, which has a London-based headquarters and regional offices. They work with more than 40,000 large corporate multi-national companies (MNCs), small, medium enterprises (SMEs) and start-up companies and entrepreneurs to help them develop from where they are now to where they aspire to be, primarily managing challenges and expansion opportunities. Their three core areas of expertise include: audit management, tax and business support and advice – from financial modelling to pensions’ advisory services. They employ more than 42,000 people within 130 countries.

In addition to Twitter the organisation is active on Linked In and You Tube. News content from Twitter is frequently utilised as a news item on Linked In and the videos on You Tube have also been utilised within the tweets on occasion, so there is clear sharing of content between the three organisational SNS sites. At the point of undertaking the interview there was no specific Twitter training provided by the organisation, however Simon Peterson, digital content manager, Clark Spencer Jones, who has overall responsibility for managing the Twitter site, commented upon how he undertakes his own research and keeps up to date on developments through reading, as he confirms, during his interview:

> Training, no nothing at all internally, but I would obviously keep up to date with the latest online and Twitter trends, tips and advice through my own research and reading, not as part of a course or anything like that and not

> just because it is my job but because I really enjoy anything like that and not just because it is my job, but because I really enjoy anything digital and I liked the idea of a fresh challenge.

In addition, Simon also confirmed that he had drafted a social media guide after an incident within the organisation, which included staff utilising their personal Twitter account to complain about the organisation, as he explained:

> After this happened I insisted we produce a guide to help staff understand how they can communicate via Twitter in an attempt to outlaw complaining.

The guide Simon describes above was intended to include guidelines for Twitter usage inside and outside of work in order to curtail negative comments about the organisation being inadvertently communicated to customers who happen to also follow the Twitter account of CSJ staff.

Sunrise Healthcare (Referred to here as SH)

Based in the UK only, the third organisation has approximately 10,000 employees across three main offices and 110 care homes. It is one of the largest independent providers of health and social care. The business was founded on the provision of care home services, and has expanded its provisions to a much wider range of health and social care services, including care at home, support for those with learning disabilities or mental health challenges and health care services ranging from GP practices, diagnostics and scheduled surgeries, to urgent care services and prison health. Their B2B customers primarily include: Local Government, specifically County Councils who are responsible for outsourcing healthcare contracts (state-funded elderly care homes) locally.

In addition to Twitter the organisation is active on Facebook, Linked In and You Tube. News content from the corporate Twitter account is frequently utilised as a news item on Linked In and the videos on You Tube and images on Facebook have also been utilised within the tweets on occasion, so there is clear sharing of content between the organisational SNS sites. There are also approximately six regional Twitter accounts which are managed by the care homes and regional healthcare specialist centres. At the point of undertaking the interview there was no specific Twitter training provided by the organisation. However, Tim Crane, PR manager, SH had recently written a draft social media guide for staff who are based in the regional care homes and specialist centres, who may wish to start their own Twitter account. The headings within this draft social media guidelines document for staff were summarised as: Introduction – social media at SH, Objectives: Why do you want to use social media?, Approach: Getting started, types of content, frequency of posts, Username/page name, Who publishes content/writes posts?, How to manage, How often do I post an update?, Are there rules?, What do I say?, Audience: Who are you targeting?, Complaints: To respond or not to respond, and how to escalate?, Monitoring and measuring success, Tools: Before you get started and a social media briefing sheet, which included the details of proposed content.

Sonic Business Solutions (Referred to as SBS)

The Fourth organisation is a provider of office space, meeting facilities, virtual offices, video conferencing and support services such as IT, in 900 cities, across 120 countries globally. They have an office in the UK, but their headquarters are in Europe, where they started in 1989. Employing over 10,000 staff, their B2B customers include some of the most successful entrepreneurs, freelancers, small and medium-sized companies and large corporations. They claim to enable people to work how they want, where they want and at times that suit their business. They also offer a wide range of products and services at varying costs; to suit start-ups and more established organisations and individuals.

At the time of the interview Andrew Teretto, social media manager, SBS was the main employee with day to day responsibility for managing Twitter and the organisation's other SNS sites, which include: Linked In, You Tube and Facebook. Sarah Dawson, customer services manager, SBS, answers complaints and service-related queries via Twitter. There is some overlap RE: content across the SNS sites, primarily due to the limited resource allocated at this moment in time. At the time of the interviews, both Andrew and Sarah confirmed there is no Twitter training offered:

> So with regards to training I've not had anyone specially sit down with me and say, 'this is how to use Twitter'…it has been very much about me developing my own understanding, experimenting through the activity I've done and the stuff I've been involved in. It has very much been a case of learning as I go along, but I think that has been the same for a lot of people working in social media. (Andrew Teretto, social media manager, SBS).

> I had no idea what I was doing when I started and there was no-one to ask really. Training wasn't offered, as there was no-one experienced to provide it. I'm in customer services and I don't know how to use Twitter, but marketing needed engaging with customers to stop the complaints and queries escalating really. So I did it, not very well though, not like my normal job. (Sarah Dawson, customer services manager, SBS).

However, at the time of interviewing Andrew, he was very clear that he was about to start a programme of SNS training with some of their regional managers to try and expand the reach and impact of Twitter and Linked In, in particular, as he confirms:

We want to eventually train the staff on exactly what we want them to do on their Twitter and Linked In accounts to ensure they are able to spread the SBS message, spread their own messages that they found appropriate to their networks but also to watch out and monitor for those opportunities where they can monitor people and actually say to them this is my job and this is how I can help you and then follow that up so that obviously they have the opportunity then to hit targets using social. (Andrew Teretto, social media manager, SBS – Quote not used in the thesis).

Andrew also made it clear that they do have specific guidelines on what can be tweeted by employees, even if they are using their personal Twitter accounts, as he said in the interview:

> Yes, we do have guidelines also as to what to post and upload when and also these are applied very much for our social media spokespeople – they have very clear guidelines on what to do when using their Twitter accounts, even though they are their personal Twitter accounts primarily, they are still representing the organisation, so we have to be careful with them, and they do still need to carefully follow the guidelines. There are still strict guidelines whoever you are if you are tweeting on behalf of SBS everyone needs to say the same thing, so for example no-one is allowed to discuss share prices or anything financial, but I would hope that for most people that is common sense. They are also not permitted to discuss competitors in a negative manner, nothing like that, so there are those basic rules in place. (Andrew Teretto, social media manager, SBS, not used in the thesis).

Forsdyke Industrial – (Referred to as FI)

As a global leader in air technology solutions, the fifth company manufactures and sells industrialised fans and air ventilation units for factories, tunnels and metros, office and residential buildings. The company is the result of a merger in 2002 between a UK-based industrialised fan manufacturer, which has been operating since 1909 and a Swedish manufacturer of air technologies and treatments, founded in 1918. The merged company, which has a UK headquarters, employs 2,230 employees within 65 countries in Europe, North America and Asia. Their B2B customers are primarily either in the construction industry or facilities and include: commissioners, facilities managers, mechanical design engineers and building services experts.

FI has limited resource allocated to SNSs as there are only three people within the marketing team and one team member, the most junior, Rebecca Williams, marketing assistant, takes day to day responsibility for all of the SNSs, including: Facebook, Linked In, You Tube and Google Plus. There is sharing of content and some duplication of content across each of the sites, due to the limited resource. In addition the Twitter profile page is very similar to the design of the website, in terms of the images and the description of the organisation. There is no Twitter or SNS training provided within the organisation and at the time of the interviews there were no social media policies in place.

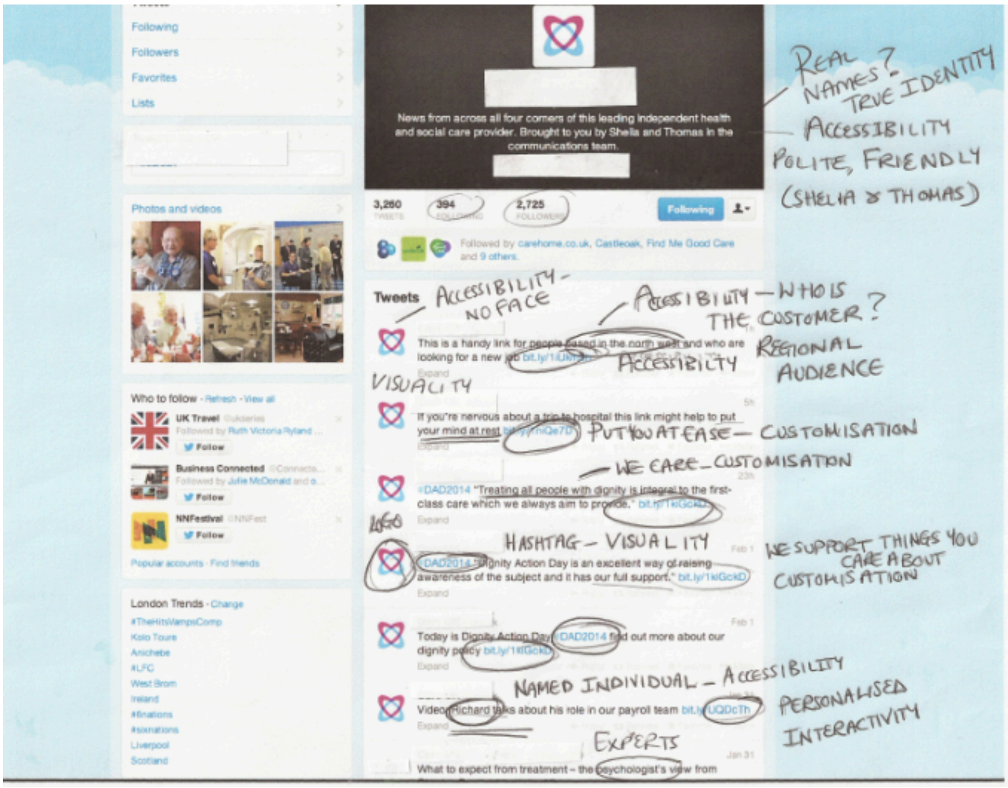
Appendix Three: The established web identity framework used to code the tweets

Mobility *Movement of the site itself and the mobility of the site's users to navigate around it.*	Description (Web identity): *"Movement of the site itself and the mobility of the site's users to navigate around it." (Elliott and Robinson, 2014: 277). This includes the links to articles or blogs.* *Adaption for Twitter data in this study:* How many tweets encourage mobility – movement away from the core Twitter site? What it is within the tweets that encourage movement/action? - links, moving the reader away from the central text What are the different types of mobility – links to blogs, independent articles written by organisations other than the case study and links back to the company website?
Accessibility Helping customers find what they are looking for	Description (Web identity): *"Helping customers find what they are looking for." (Elliott and Robinson, 2014:277)* *Adaption for Twitter data in this study:* Ways that the DOS tries to make the marketing content and the organisation more accessible to the Twitter audience, which still includes helping customers to find what they are looking for - Friendly and welcoming tone within the tweets so that customers feel happy and confident engaging with the organisation via the DOS - Making the organisation and its products/services more accessible - Helping customers find what they are looking for - Making company specific messages more relevant and comprehensible by linking them to national campaigns
Interactivity *Facilitating interactivity and dialogue with customers*	Description (Web identity): *"Facilitating interactivity and dialogue with customers" (Elliott and Robinson, 2014: 278/9).* *Adaption for Twitter data:* Attempts by the DOS to encourage interaction with customers: - Tweets designed to generate questions and feedback on products or services - Hashtags used to increase the likelihood of interactivity and

	recognition - Competitions and quizzes to increase engagement by the customers with the organisational storyteller - How does the organisation manage complaints, so as to ensure customers feel they are being 'listened to'
Visuality *The occurrence of videos and images and how these impact on relationships with customers.*	Description (Web identity): *Covers the occurrence of videos and images and how these impact on relationships with customers. (Elliott and Robinson, 2014).* - Influence and occurrence of videos and images; content, style and tone - what they are and how they relate to the organisation
Customisation *Includes key messages and repeated phrases relating to the identity of the organisation and its story*	Description (Web identity) *Includes key messages and repeated phrases relating to the identity of the organisation and its story. (Elliott and Robinson, 2014).* - Strategic messages – organisational identity and key messages and how these are written to appeal to customers - Training that is designed to facilitate a consistent corporate voice - Management of a planning schedule which outlines tweet content that the DOS should produce

Example of manually coded tweet data

This is an example of where the tweet data from one of the case study organisations has been manually coded using the headings and descriptions from the Elliott and Robinson, (2014) framework.



Appendix Four: Description of the tweet data collection

As Kozinets (2010: 56) explains, the observation of: "…*online community conversations (as illustrated above) and other internet discourse combines options that are both naturalistic and unobtrusive*." Observing the tweets as they appeared in 'real-time' contributed to the sense of seeing a naturalistic narrative unfold, without the organisation or the followers of each Twitter site being conscious of the observation, as the researcher did not make any interventions on the site. This is important, as the researcher wanted to observe the Twitter site as if they are part of the Twitter audience, initially learning and making sense of the organisation for the first time, through the type of language and images contained in the tweets. As a potential or pseudo customer there is the opportunity to observe what there is to glean in terms of data and clues about the identity of the organisation. The idea here is that the tweets highlight to the Twitter audience those issues of most interest or significance to the organisation and therefore are where researchers should look for data/clues about how the organisation wishes to portray itself.

As the content of the tweets was primarily informative, the messages are described as "closed texts" (Kozinets, 2010: 170). This means that each tweet is presented principally as a finished statement or absolute reality that cannot be amended by others (Kozinets, 2010). Customers can of course disagree with organisational comments by replying to a tweet via their own Twitter account, however this will not affect the content of the original tweet and therefore it remains a 'closed' text. As illustrated in the Grant Thornton 'twitter feeds' in figures 4.1 and 4.2 (Chapter Four), the organisational Twitter feed is infrequently impacted or interrupted by customer responses to organisational tweets and therefore the DOS's narrative predominates. The customer contributions and presence is consequently more passive, which is why the researcher is also adopting a similar inert position.

When undertaking the first phase of the data collection, the researcher views each tweet in detail while also trying to understand the broader themes and considerations relating to the organisation's and the DOS's identity. In this sense the organisational setting where the tweets are written, as well as the identity work of the DOSs is of principal interest and is explored in more depth during the storytelling interviews.

How many screenshots were required depended on how many tweets were written on a daily basis for each of the five organisations as explained above. Due to the volume and variety of tweets, this first phase of data collection provided a detailed understanding of the organisation's style of tweets (such as product promotion, new initiatives and events, as examples) their followers, hashtags used, re-tweets included and complaints received. The tweets also gave the first insight into sensemaking of the organisational narrative by the DOSs. This type of analysis provides a means of understanding sequences of language formation and customer responses and silences (who speaks, who does not communicate and what is said proactively or in response to whom?).

Appendix Five: Examples of Tweet analysis and the interview questions generated

A priori categories	**Example of interview question generated**
Mobility *Movement of the site itself and the mobility of the site's users to navigate around it.*	These links include reference back to the organisation's website, promotional videos or to independent articles, which include issues the organisation 'cares' about or has interests in [Example from healthcare company].  Repeated tweets/links (example from Healthcare company – 'Holiday health issues'): Example of an interview question generated: How do you put together the tweets and does this encourage movement back to your website or other links to organisational content such as blogs?
Accessibility *Helping customers find what they are looking for*	Inviting the 'audience' to join the 'team' by advertising new roles (Manufacturing company) Example of interview questions generated: How many of your followers would you say you knew well? Are they customers that use your services/products? How does knowing or not knowing your customers well influence the process of writing the tweets?
Interactivity *Facilitating interactivity and dialogue with the online audience*	Personalised narrators to generate conversational dialogue from customers to participate in the living story - (Karen and Tim – Healthcare company): *"News from across all four corners of this leading independent health and social care provider. Brought to you by Sheila and Thomas in the communications team."* Examples of hashtags – (Healthcare company): # dementia # Frimley # NHS # family carers Example of an interview question generated: How much interaction would you say that you have with customers through Twitter?

Visuality *The occurrence of videos and images and how these impact on relationships with customers.*	Image example (Business Support Company): **Grant Thornton UK** @GrantThorntonUK · Aug 7 How Unilever's acquisition of Ben & Jerry's turned cold profits red hot in just three years ow.ly/zs0g7  2 1 View more photos and videos Example of interview question generated: Why do you include video links, images, hashtags and @links – why do you include these and how do they shape/inform your intended relationships with customers?
Customisation and communication of 'special' strategic messages *Includes key messages and repeated phrases relating to the identity of the organisation and its story*	Keys areas of the business promoted in a way that may be more appealing to customers (the target audience) as helpful advice from an 'old friend' – (Business Support Company): **Grant Thornton UK** @GrantThorntonUK · Aug 7 Alan Dale reviews four areas to address in order to deliver a successful acquisition ow.ly/zs0u0 Example of interview questions generated: What do you think your organisation's story is via Twitter – how would you sum up how the organisation describes and illustrates its identity to its customers?

Interview Schedule: Sunrise Healthcare

Introductions:

- Introduce myself to participant
- Brief introduction to my research
- Explain confidentiality and consent forms
- Request permission to record/take notes

Background: Please tell me the story of your career and how you have come to be doing your current job

<u>Prompts</u>

What do you do day to day, what are the main elements of your job and any training received

How long you have been with the organisation and who do you report to?

What did you do before? Previous job, (in, or outside of the organisation) or study?

Accessibility - Tell me your story of the process of producing the online organisational identity

<u>Prompts</u>

- Who do you think the organisation's customers are?
- Is Twitter aimed at a particular group or groups?
- Do you have a good relationship with them?
- How many of your followers would you say you knew well? Are they customers that use your services?
- How does knowing or not knowing your customers well influence the process of writing the tweets?
- Which are the priority customers and why?
- What other forms of communication do you use apart from SMNs?
- In your view what is the purpose of your Twitter site?

- How do you put together the tweets and what are you trying to achieve?
- What is the approval process? In other words: How much freedom do you have normally when communicating with customers and does this differ when communicating online?
- Does only having a 140-character limit make it easier or more difficult to communicate about the organisation online?
- Do you aim to send out a certain number of tweets each day?
- Are there specific events, messages and news items that you have to communicate online?
- Is your identity obvious or anonymous to the customers – how do you feel about this? (I'm hoping to tease out here about how the DOS feels they are communicating as themselves or as the organisation – where/how do they see their identity in the tweets?)
- Do you feel that you tweet as yourself, as you would if it was your own account or as the organisation?
- What are the main themes that you try to cover through Twitter? I may need to prompt here by saying – it seems that Care UK like to announce new care home openings, staff awards and good news stories
- If this was your company – would you put together tweets in a similar way – what might you do differently?
- What would you like to see more or less of in terms of content (videos, images, text) for example?
- If you could make changes what would they be?

I have included below a series of tweets from earlier this year, please can you tell me the story of what they are about, why they are important and why you have re-tweeted the three tweets from customers below?
Let's start with the one at the top – were you asked to write this tweet?, how does it link to the aims and objectives of the organisation (the organisational identity) or did you decide to write it to tie in with a particular event/activity/initiative?

How much of the text is down to you as compared to how much is dictated and has to be officially signed off? (I’m trying to find out here as to how much of what they write in their tweets is their choice and how much is the ‘official organisational speak’ and how much difficulty this causes (or not) for the individual?)

Feb 7
Turn to p.14 for a comparison of services provided by independent healthcare organisations bit.ly/1dGtE3b
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

Feb 7
Just in time for the weekend – five new jobs added to our careers website bit.ly/ywQrS9
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

Feb 7
Interesting piece from @CR_UK chief clinician Prof Peter Johnson, discussing data sharing, medical records & research bbc.in/1f1g8FP
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

Care Opinion @careopinion · Feb 7
Great to see @careuk talking to service users and customers @SheffCouncil home support provider workshop
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

Retweeted by Care UK
NHS Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
Vincent Square @VSEDS · Feb 7
Service have a great #blog – take a look here - careukeatingdisorders.com/blog/
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

Feb 7
Resourceful team-player wanted to join our Group #HR team as head of reward bit.ly/1exl2iW
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

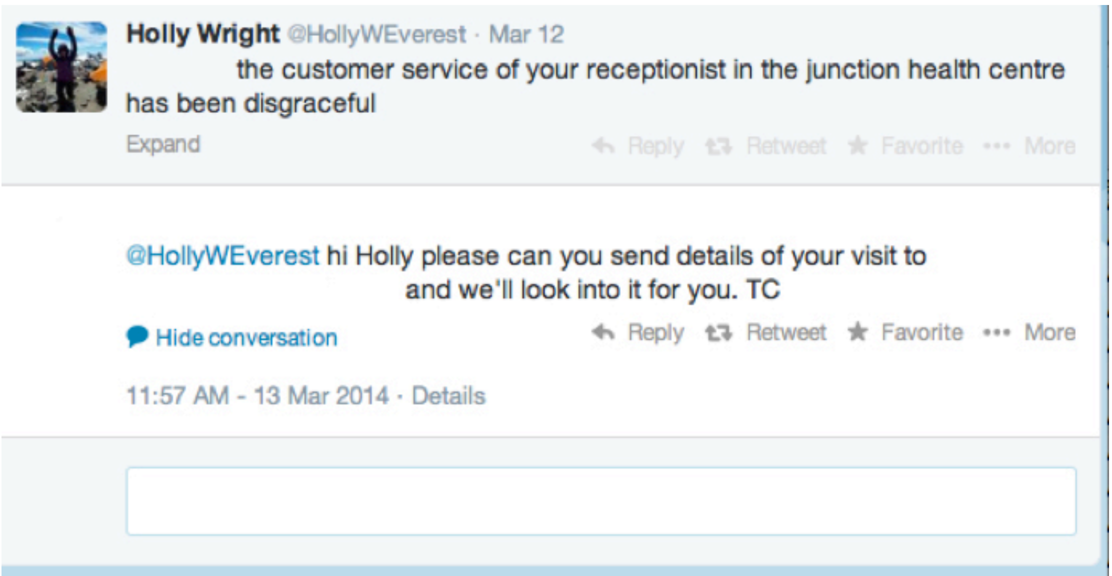
Feb 7
A nice pic of patients and colleagues at Barlborough #NHS Treatment Centre celebrating Dignity Action Day pic.twitter.com/sCVmq9KLhU

Expand Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

Interactivity – Tell me the story of how you build relationships and engage your customers

<u>Prompts</u>

- When you produce tweets do you always have a customer-type in mind that you are writing for, how does this influence your tone, style and the content?
- How much interaction would you say that you have with customers through Twitter?
- Does it concern you if a tweet is not re-tweeted or you do not get any response?
- What do you consider a good outcome from Twitter communication, more followers, re-tweets, increased sales – how do you measure its success?
- What techniques do you use to help you engage with your customers within the tweets? What happens when you receive a complaint such as the one below?



Talk me through the tweets listed below – Do you use much humour/sarcasm within the tweets? What works well? Do you feel that you can communicate less formally online (as yourself)?

nicholas yarsley @nicholasyarsley · 19h
carehomes Radio 4, my favourite armchair, a good book & a nice pot of tea, perfect. pic.twitter.com/8yyj9znRyi

Expand   Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

Chris Skidmore MP @chrisskidmoremp · 14h
Companies attending MP Apprenticeship Fair on Thurs 5-7 at Hanham High include @RollsRoyceATL @Airbus FarmfoodsUK @McDonalds 1/2

Expand   Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

@olliee_17 please can you email enquiries@careuk.com with as much info as possible. It will come through to me. TC

Expand   Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

SotonTreatmentCentre @SotonTC · Feb 27
If you are working in an office today, remember to sit with good posture and stretch your legs when you can! bbc.in/1ljdCT4

Expand   Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

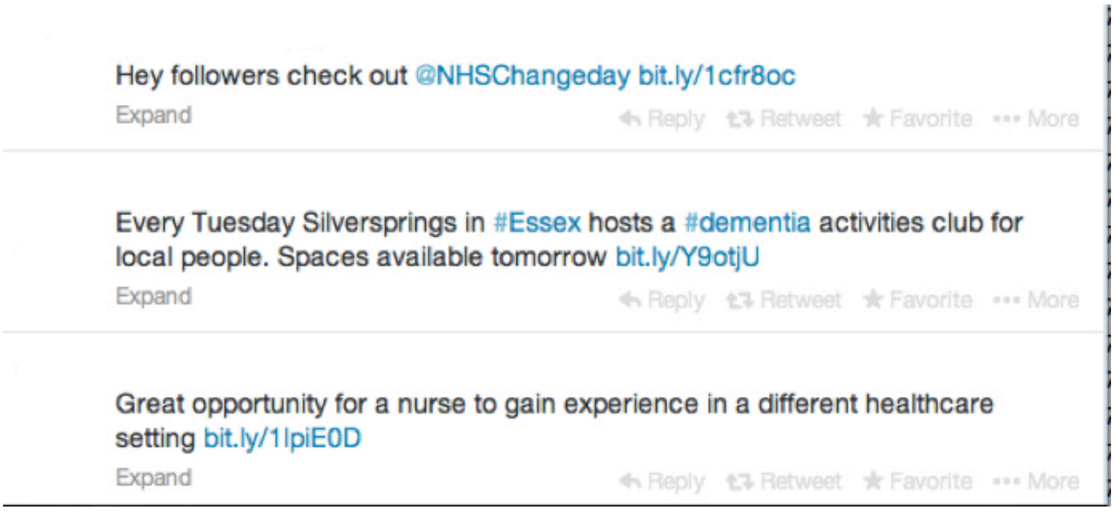
@andrewstonell1 apologies headed paper wasn't used. Calls to 0333 cost the same as standard landlines. More info bit.ly/1dTeA0H

Expand   Reply Retweet Favorite ••• More

Mobility – Tell me the story of how you move customers around the Twitter site, what tactics do you use?

<u>Prompts</u>

- Throughout your Twitter feeds there are a lot of links to articles written by other organisations such as the Chamber of commerce – why do you include these – how do they shape/inform how you present the organisation online?
- Does how you put together the tweets encourage movement back to your website or other links to organisational content such as blogs?
- What happens at events? Does how you present the organisational identity and yourself change? How? Why? What other techniques do you use to prompt a response from customers from the tweets?



Visuality – How do tell the story of the organisation through video and images

<u>Prompts</u>

- Why do you include video links, images, hashtags and @links? – and how do they shape/inform your intended relationships with customers?
- Do you ever include photos of yourself/personal details? Why was this video used? Who put it together? What reaction do these videos receive?

Apr 2

Video: Three lovely men; three extraordinary lives bit.ly/1i6skcL

Hide media Reply Retweet Favorite More

YouTube

- Three extraordinary lives

Discover the extraordinary lives and loves of three residents told in their own words. Meet Alan at Pinetum, Frank at Foxbridge House and Vera, wife ...

View on web

RETWEETS 2 FAVORITE 1

6:01 PM - 2 Apr 2014 · Details Flag media

Customisation – What is the story of your organisation's identity and has it changed much?

Prompts

- What do you think your organisation's story is via Twitter – what I mean by that is how would you sum up how the organisation describes and illustrates its identity to its customers in a couple of lines or words?
- Are any terms or phrases that you are asked to use/do use when communicating about the organisation to customers?
- There should be opportunities here to also examine:
- How they personally identify with the organisation – what is their interpretation of the organisational narrative/identity and does it change much day to day/influences – colleagues, senior managers, other aspects of organisational life?
- Does how you communicate online differ from how you communicate through other channels? How? Why?

Closing

- You joined Twitter in June, 2009 – what impact if any has it had on how you communicate about the organisation, personally and how you communicate with customers, how?
- Do you think online communication including Twitter will continue to be used as a main way of communicating with customers in the short and long-term future within the organisation?

Transcript from an interview: Sonic Business Solutions (SBS)

Andrew Terretto, Social Media Manager
SBS UK Twitter account

LC: Please tell me the story of your career and how you have come to be doing your current job?

AT: Up until recently it was managing a team of community managers. So we had somebody in Dallas, Brazil. Mexico. We've also had someone else working here internally with me in the UK in customer services. So we've got quite a dispersed team. The way that it works is the function we have here is 'Group' and then the other community managers here are based 'in country'. So we're the umbrella over-arching authority I suppose over activity and they partake in the localised activity specific to their areas. There has since been a re-structuring programme so we're looking at how we can align the social team differently and divide those responsibilities up according to location as we have one just for Brazil, whereas ideally we are looking to cover north and south America together. So there was the management of the community managers and also the content management – managing copy writing with the professional journalists for the 42 blogs that we have. Working with the translating agency to ensure that is a smooth translation from the English content we've got into the specific language and then getting that uploaded, so working with the agency to upload that. The information that we share through the UK Twitter account has to be sent out by all the social media spokespeople in each of the different countries that we operate in, so they can get it translated into the language of their particular country. Sometimes of course there are issues when stuff I'm sending out doesn't translate that well. So then I advise what they may like to say as an alternative to talking about the British weather for example. Also there is the training as well which I devised and implemented which means the ultimate objective here at SBS when using social media is to drive up revenue so identify opportunities where we can make money through social media, that's the heart of SBS social media activity. Raising those enquiry numbers and therefore increasing that revenue and as a result we wanted to turn those staff members we have out in the field, you know on the ground into online brand ambassadors so we really wanted to give them a good understanding as to what we wanted them to achieve with their personal social networks and through research we identified in the UK that it was Twitter and Linked in that were the important channels for B2B. We want to eventually train the staff on exactly what we want them to do on their Twitter and Linked In accounts to ensure they are able to spread the SBS message, spread their own messages that they found appropriate to their networks but also to watch out and monitor for those opportunities where they can monitor people and actually say to them this is my job and this is how I can help you and then follow that up so that obviously they have the opportunity then to hit targets using social.

LC: So in summary then you are responsible for managing community managers, content management on the Twitter feeds.
AT: Yes and leading the training eventually when we get to that point.

Prompt - LC: Have you had any specific social media training, either prior to coming here or since you've been with SBS?
AT: Because I started working in social media around 2008/09 it was very much in its infancy. So I studied management at university and then journalism, I'd also worked in sales and marketing before so marrying those skills together led me very much towards social media, PR, which I firstly went towards, but then seeing what was happening with social media, I saw a massive potential there to actually get involved and get an understanding at the very early stages. So what I did was I worked freelance to get myself into other businesses because that's what they wanted then and still do now – back then in 2009/10 people didn't know what they wanted. They just knew that they wanted to be active on social media. So, after that I went to work in an agency to really get a real insight into what clients were asking and how that could be delivered via an agency and where I came across there were issues simply because working to a retainer on social media and managing accounts is very difficult. Time quickly disappears when you are dealing with

complaints. So following on from that experience I was keen to get a better understanding as to how it was working in-house, so actually spending all your time on a few accounts that you are fully accountable for in the long-term. So this is what I have been doing for the last two years and it has given me a great perspective of looking at it from an agency perspective, but also from an in-house perspective. So with regards to training I've not had anyone specifically sit down with me and say, this is how to use Twitter…it has been very much about me developing my own understanding, experimenting through the activity I've done and the stuff I've been involved in. It has very much been the case of learning as I go along, but I think that has been the same for a lot of people working in social media.

LC: I agree and I know what you mean I didn't have any particular training either when I first started tweeting for an industrialised boiler company and I didn't know what to say or how to say it and the SNS technology was very new and my boss was always asking me if I'd done much 'twittering' that day… (laughter) Prompt - LC: How long you have been with the organisation?

AT: Two years.

Prompt - LC: Who do you report to in the organisation?

AT: We work with the communications team, which sits within the marketing department. Social media sits within 'Group' and not UK. It is a Group function so my efforts are cascaded down to assist the Marketing Director in the UK with the objectives he is trying to achieve. The PR work otherwise is mainly delegated to agencies according to location. Social media sits very much within communications as part of the communications team that sits within global marketing. It is definitely a group function – but I also come in and support the UK with the social media function as I do with all the other countries. So if the Netherlands wanted assistance, I work with them very closely I would then work with them just as I would the UK. There isn't a dedicated social media person other than me in the UK, so there isn't a community manager.

LC: Tell me the story of the process of producing the online organisational identity. By this I mean how do you communicate who your organisation is and who to? Is Twitter aimed at a particular group or groups?

AT: Existing and potential customers who are start-ups, freelancers, business owners, employees of corporate companies, we think, for example. Again it is very much about driving out the message to those people who are already customers to help retain them with commercial messages, but also for those people who may want to find out a bit more about us, so it is definitely aimed at passing on information about our services, ultimately to get them to use them. **LC: Is it mainly aimed at companies or individuals?** AT: Both really as we appeal to start-ups, right up to International companies. It varies, so the way we write our tweets really is quite broad, so it may be a testimonial…or a case study…It varies, but specifically with Twitter our expertise is customer service, delivering the best and ensuring that any queries or comments are answered and turned around very quickly. Over time this means a more personal approach than you would normally see in printed marketing collateral…By this I mean more human, not that horrible corporate tone I've heard from call centres, when it is obvious the company doesn't care at all. So if it's a sales inquiry it is turned around by the social media team, but if it's a complaint or a query on billing or whatever then the customer services manager is monitoring Twitter 24/7. So she will be working with the social media team to make sure that an adequate response is put back and that we do get those complaints turned around very quickly.

LC: Do you know what your breakdown of followers looks like then, what's their story? The followers that you have on your various Twitter sites, is there any work that goes into understanding exactly who they are and therefore what sort of tweets might appeal to your various audiences?

AT: No. There's not. Ideally it would be great if we could be so granular it's probably as well because the accounts are so different. So, for example the

US-based Twitter account has over 20,000 followers now so it varies. The UK one, did you say it had 4,000 approx. followers? That's not exactly 100's of thousands of people so we wouldn't feel the need to understand all of them.

LC: In your view what's the purpose of your Twitter site? So for mine it really was just about getting the name of the organisation out there…

AT: It is definitely first and foremost a brand awareness tool. Also driving people towards any specific offers and of course answering complaints.

LC: How do you put together the tweets?

AT: In the UK if for example it is a customer service complaint then customer service will come to us, so they'll come to me and they will say this is the complaint and this is the suitable response we plan to send back – do you agree? That's if it is quite a tricky one, but otherwise there tends to be a standard response, that customer service will go out with. In the UK it is done by up until recently the community manager that we had here in the UK, but we are going through a re-structure to understand the best way forward so at the moment it would be done by myself. **LC: And what is the plan for the future?** AT: The plan for the future is to extend the social media team quite significantly, so it is definitely a bigger step towards social, we are definitely understanding the benefits and seeing that it can offer a lot of potential now and in the future, in terms of quick responses to complaints, circulation of special offers and as a promotional channel.

LC: What is the approval process? In other words: How much freedom do you have normally when communicating with customers and does this differ when communicating online?

AT: The approval process is that everything must come through me. All the blog content is checked by me before it goes out to ensure it reflects the marketing messages…I am quite anal about ensuring it is accurate…I think most people assume I write it, there is no officially named author, so it reflects on me and how we are engaging with customers out there, so I make sure it is polished…The other day the CEO said: 'Good to see the flexible working blog is getting some shares on Twitter' and I thought great, he's noticed. I'm obviously doing something right. So what we will do is sort information and keep a balance of commercial messages and also general information – what we don't want to do is just come across as broadcasting the same corporate spiel all the time, we want to vary it. So whether it is an article in The Times, or an article that is specific to us that we've placed in a trade publication specific to a certain country, regardless what it is, as long as it has some interest there for the reader. We try and keep it like 60% general interest and 40% SBS specific, so that we keep a nice balance. What we will then do is work with the translation agency to get all the information we want out there translated into eight languages and what will happen then is they will be cascaded to each of those spokespeople within the various markets that require the inclusion of that language, who will then be able to send them out. Whereas before they were translated individually in-country after being approved by me. They will then go out cascaded to each country and shared.

LC: So does the original idea for the content come from you?
AT: It comes from the global communications calendar we've got various themes and various angles and they all follow those. For example if one month it is productivity then for that month all the tweets will follow that theme. For the SBS UK account I write and approve those ones.

LC: That's helpful isn't it, so the emphasis isn't completely on you. Do you aim to send out a certain number of tweets each day to really tell the story of what's going on?
AT: We were doing more up until recently when the community manager was in post for the UK, as he was with us for a year. The organisation expects us to promote it whenever we can, we all do our bit, but for the service managers in some ways it is easier as they just fit it in when they can. I feel I need to get at least three or four tweets out a day. These guys can just tweet from the car using their own accounts. So now it is predominantly posting those global blogs so when we have blog content sharing that and when we have any specific offers we send those out and of course responses to complaints and queries. That's where we are at, at the moment but of course moving forward

there is so much potential. Getting people interested and engaged with things that we have to say and as the team grows we can explore that further. At the moment it is purely down to the capacity that we have to fulfil what we are doing, so it is definitely more reactive.

LC: Does anyone ever say to you why did such and such a tweet go out?

AT: Yes. The Global Comms Director is always aware of what is happening and I'll get the odd 'test' where he will mention someone's name and try and see whether I remember seeing it on Twitter, so for example one of our centre staff may have won an award and he will check in with me to see if I have really been focusing on what I am putting out through Twitter. Another member of staff did a selfie – like a video pod about her role, because she is very active on Twitter and enjoys it and he happened to mention her name. He was like did you see what she did? So I went back straight away and said what the think pod selfie that she took in central Twitter? And he came back and said: "Oh I just wanted to check that you had seen it." He's on board. Keeping me on my toes, definitely.

LC: Do you think there's a difference in the way that you're communicating via Twitter as opposed to within the printed literature?

AT: Yeah. The tone is different and the style is difficult to get right on Twitter. Simply because people expect a certain tone and a certain style when you have multiple people responding you do find yourself having to be quite restrictive in the way that you respond, I suppose what I mean is in how open you are. You notice some organisations such as Jet Blue (Airways) Staples, their use of social media, of Twitter is very friendly, chatty tone and chatty feel; we don't have that luxury. Simply because there are so many complaints that need to be dealt with on occasion that we can't always personalise the messages, well the responses to complaints that do go back to different people, also it is the size of the team as well if we had a huge bank of social media specialists then it wouldn't be an issue, we could talk about the different tones required to answer specific queries and also to be more proactive with the positive stuff. As it is we just send the same bland corporate response to every customer that complains. What people associate with SBS is that they see an established business dealing with corporates, so we are playing it a bit safe with the messaging which is similar to how we would speak to them on the phone or how our general managers would speak to them. So I think otherwise it might be a bit confusing to them if it differed significantly. And how we have managed this is we've thought to ourselves, right so we've got a certain tone around our branded accounts but we are training up our own general managers so that they through their own personal Twitter accounts can come in with the more personalised tone. So for example if someone comes through Twitter and says they need a meeting room, a general manager could come back with a response to say 'Hi, how are you doing?' Do you need us to do anything else to provide that support? Or let me know if you want some help. We did some tests and we found that with the actual branded accounts that if we responded like that they didn't actually work too well, people didn't really respond to them. There were different reasons across the globe as to why that happened – some customers were very sceptical as to why a brand would reach out like that. So we felt get the General Managers talking, get a face on there and they'll see that as a human voice coming out to them so that for us has been how we have got around that.

LC: Does only having a 140-character limit make it easier or more difficult to communicate key messages?

AT: We've made it work for us as what you will have is one message, maybe it is about a new centre, so what you will do is just condense the messaging, as long as you have the link to drive people through you are fine. It's just about making sure that the main message fits within the 140 characters. The issue we get is when we have a tweet that is 100 characters in English and then during the translation to Russian, for example, it is 200 characters. That's when it can become a problem.

LC: Your identity is fairly anonymous to the customers – how do you feel about this? I notice that at one point your community manager I'm presuming was called Ben – and so he was signing off as Ben, he didn't do that every time, just sometimes. Do you do that, if not why not? I never used to put my name on the tweets, but then I was talking to plumbers, so maybe I don't know having a woman tweeting might have been weird (laughter).

AT: It is one of the issues that you've got when you're in 101/102 countries. If we were just a UK-based company it would be a lot easier I suppose to do that personalisation because you wouldn't have to take into consideration well, who am I dealing with? The variance is significant, I mean culturally when working with people in Germany for example the response required in terms of formality is much stronger there than in the UK, they are not comfortable with informality to someone they hardly know via Twitter – so it is impossible to make the Twitter feeds consistent in a globalised environment except of course by the branding. It is completely different again in the Netherlands where they have a completely informal approach. In Germany if you are not referring to someone you don't particularly know by his or her second name then it is considered impolite. They find it very strange when you come up and say hello and refer to someone you have only just met by their first name. Given our global market place I have to take a lot into consideration. I think at the moment we're reaching that medium, whereas I feel that if we continue to invest in social media we can then explore more.

LC: Do you feel that you tweet in a natural speaking voice or as the voice of the organisation?

AT: Definitely as the voice of the organisation at this moment in time, but obviously Ben used more of a natural speaking voice and tried to engage on a more personal level overall and with more resource in place this should be possible again – especially now that we are planning on including the general managers' responses also from their personal Twitter accounts.

LC: If resources weren't an issue would you prefer a more personalised approach then? I mean I often just used to mention the sunny weather or the time of year.

AT: Oh yes, definitely.

LC: Would you for example consider having your own photo on the SBS UK Twitter site?

AT: I've never really thought about that – I know it is something that Costa Coffee have trialed, they have the images of the team on there so I don't know about that probably as people can find me anyway through Linked In and through Twitter if they want to find me. I would probably be fine with that.

LC: Do you imagine a particular customer that you are talking to when you are writing the tweets? So my boss used to tell me to imagine tweeting to "hairy arsed plumbers" it didn't really help me… (laughter).

AT: My opinion of our customers on Twitter is changing and my process of putting things together, because there is just so much noise out there now. Sometimes I have noticed more and more that businesses sensationalise headings in order to provoke customers to click on the link, which actually didn't mirror the title they gave it. It was like…rubbish. They've done it though because they want that click through and they need that engagement to justify their existence. They want people to come back and say why this heading, it doesn't make sense. But so over time my opinion has changed, if was left to me I would love to be able to speak to people as a 'human' so just to be able to respond to them in a different tone. If it was up to me I would probably respond differently to complaints…rather than always deferring to the standard: "Sorry to hear that you have an issue please contact our customer service team." It's a bit of a copout as we don't have enough staff. I would rather just be honest and say you know "This is really bad, we're really sorry it has happened, we can't believe it and then possibly look at what can we do specifically for that customer, let's really personalise it for them. Otherwise what's the point really?! I mean we know what centre they're in, let's get straight round to them – guiding them from that negative online experience to seeing the organisation positively again is the aim. My view is we should get the general manager to turn up at the centre they are complaining about and say: "You know we're really sorry that the vending machine was empty, there's a six pack of Coke on us!" There is so much potential, where Twitter should be seen as a gateway from the online organisation to the customer, so we should be doing more to change their minds. It's not my call unfortunately.

LC: Do you ever have to respond on Twitter out of office hours? For example who manages Twitter when you are on annual leave/at the weekend/during national holidays?

AT: There's always someone on line. We have the customer service team monitoring it, we've got Sarah, customer services manager in the UK, we've got Sandra, she sits in Paris and Maggie she sits in Hong Kong, so we've always got someone there looking at it at regular intervals that's monitoring. When it comes to a national holiday we will still monitor it but only respond if it is something really important/severe. So if it is just a general query then it can wait. We've been praised before in articles in relation to the swiftness of our response to people making enquiries and making complaints.

LC: Do you regularly check the Twitter accounts when you're not actually working? I tried not to do that…

AT: Yes – it's difficult. It is something that you want to make sure is done right and if someone has a problem you want to help them and so if you see something happening when you are at home at 7'0 Clock at night and you can see it and you have to make sure that something is in place to answer it and make sure that it is dealt with, but it is tricky, especially when you have it linked to your personal phone as well as your work phone, so there is definitely no switching off from it. It is not as if you can ever go home and think work is done for the day it's always pinging away, pinging away, but you tend to find that people and I understand why they get angry because there is a theme, there's a common occurrence around when people get angry and it's usually around when they receive their bill. When they see the cost they suddenly have a renewed interest in whether they thought the service was up to what they are being asked to pay for it, regardless perhaps of what they thought at the time. Perhaps also they have been billed twice so this has annoyed them, this will have been by complete accident, but of course that will get people very upset and when they turn to social media they do get quite venomous and they don't mean to, it is just the same as if they were on the phone to customer service and they would get angry. The thing is though with Twitter they can hide behind a name, they can have anonymity on there and the same with Facebook as well. You find that the things that they would type on Twitter. Of course on Linked In it is a very constructive comment, very rarely will you see someone getting really angry as they know how that will reflect on them. On Twitter there are no rules, it's like if I want to swear if I want to get angry I will do and then they do. A lot of people don't realise that if they are even just mentioning us, like I was recently at SBS UK and I can't believe how bad the service was, blah, blah, blah, or I've been billed twice, whatever, they don't realise that will only be seen by them and us and so actually if people have got Tweetdeck open they are not even going to see it. So you do tend to see people using Twitter like that who are a bit clueless and you think okay, this isn't going to get too bad. Then there are also people who put a full stop in and then mention us and you think to yourself oh dear they know what they are doing. Some people as well, they will talk to their friends and you see businesses doing exactly the same, they've had a conversation and someone is annoyed and so you just have to say to yourself okay who do we go to, to have this conversation on Twitter to douse this fire. Then you find the person who has the issue, speak to them and the rest will fall away.

LC: So you mentioned that you have this global calendar that you use so as to ensure that you cover all the relevant SBS events on Twitter, do you also have any guidelines as to how to use Twitter internally?

AT: Yes, we do have guidelines also as to what to post and upload when and also these are applied very much for our social media spokespeople – they have very clear guidelines on what to do when using their Twitter accounts, even though they are their personal Twitter accounts, they are still representing the organisation, so we have to be careful with them, and they do still need to carefully follow the guidelines. There are still strict guidelines whoever you are if you are tweeting on behalf of SBS everyone needs to say the same thing, so for example no-one is allowed to discuss share prices or anything financial, but I would hope that for most people that is common sense. They are also not permitted to discuss competitors in a negative manner, nothing like that, so there are those basic rules in place.

LC: So how many spokespeople do you think that you have in place?
AT: We have trained in the last few years about 1,000.

LC: Is it obvious when employees tweet within the Twitter feed that they work for SBS?
AT: On their Twitter biography I give them a standard piece of information as to what to say, ultimately it just tells you that they work for SBS, their location. They then get a sentence that they put in of their own, but then they need to say that all the views are their own and not that of SBS. Just in case anything happens to their account, but they are given clear instructions as to what image they can have on there, what to say and what they include on there in terms of re-tweets etc, to how to participate and interact with people. So the obstacles they faced as initially multiple people from SBS were having the same conversations with someone. So a customer would say I need an office in London, he would then get Bill speaking to him, he would then get Mike and then the customer would say but you're both from SBS, why are you talking to me? So we did have to make that very clear in their biography exactly where they are from.

LC: Do you feel that you personally tweet in a natural speaking voice or always as the voice of the organisation?
AT: Do you mean on my personal Twitter account? **LC: No, when you write for SBS UK?** AT: It's the voice of the organisation. It's tricky, it is a fine balance because you know what would work and what would get more clicks, but you do Tweet on behalf. On the other hand though from my personal

account I am well aware that I am also representing SBS because most of my followers are well aware that I work for them and what my job entails i.e. social media management. So when I am using my own personal Twitter account it's always still there in the back of my head that I am still representing SBS whatever time of the day it is. Occasionally, you will see something is happening and you'll want to jump in and say you're an idiot but you just don't want people to view your account and think badly of SBS – it's because the spokespeople they will go to my personal account (which they also follow) and look how I conduct myself to then look at their own account. So I've then got to be careful as to what I say, so I can't get involved in any contentious areas or say "I hate Ant and Dec" for example, even though it's my own personal account.

LC: And do you send tweets from your personal account to the SBS UK account?

AT: I'll re-tweet if it is something that is quite exciting, like the opening of a new lounge for example. I'll interject as myself, if I think it is a good topic to comment upon for SBS. I really don't think too much about how much I use my Twitter account to retweet or reply to the organisation's…it's just an easy way to keep the conversations going and to stop some of the issues developing as I'm not completely sure they know who it is when I reply as me. It's really just about convenience, sharing and keeping things friendly.

LC: Just to confirm, it sounds like you have some of the same followers on your personal and Twitter UK accounts?

AT: Yes I have a lot of the same followers. For example the spokespeople will follow me, and SBS UK as well.

LC: Having reviewed the main themes on the SBS UK site, they seem to focus on new building openings, and there are a lot focussing on answering and neutralising complaints. There are also some examples of partnership working and where larger organisations are tweeting on your behalf. There's also lots of opportunities where there's been a

Chamber of Commerce story for example, which you've re-tweeted. Is this typical of your general tweet content?

AT: Yes. One thing I've been really keen to do for SBS because I have worked on a lot of different Twitter accounts for different organisations in different sectors. I always say to people someone following this Twitter account is no different from you or me what makes us follow an account and what makes us stop following someone is going to be the same for most of us, so we've got to bear that in mind. Some people will say to me, oh why aren't you tweeting about this office and that office and the other office and I'll say because people don't want to read it, okay so they may be a customer but they want something else, a little bit of variety so that is what we aim for.

LC: There are not many video links on your Twitter – Is this something you are keen on/proactive about?

AT: We're not too worried about videos to be honest. The videos that we do produce are very commercial and very much geared towards selling offices, so I suppose if we were a little bit more fluid and a little more relaxed we could include some quirky work, like something a bit more fun and light then yes of course that would be great to share via Twitter as it would be something that customers would want to share. But the issue I have and this is something I've mentioned here is that there are things people will watch and then there are things people will share, so it is very much the case that if it is just a branded message then they will probably look at it, but they will definitely not share it. So to actually get a piece of shareable content it does need to be lighter and it does need to reflect them (the customer). So it needs to say a lot about the individual so that they will share it with their network as well. So that is something especially in relation to the blog content that we have had to try and strike a balance with.

LC: If this was your company – would you put together tweets in a similar way – what might you do differently?

AT: The main thing as we are moving forward is growing the team because the more people you have the more collaboration you can have and the more ideas you will get. But it is what we are moving towards and we will be there very soon. In addition we have invested in a management tool, which I'm working towards integrating further so that the customer services team have also got access. So all basically logging into the same place, utilising the same portal and seeing the same things, which will be great for consistency.

LC: Do you think the business generally is moving towards more of a focus on digital marketing?
AT: They do have a very much a focus on oh, if we are going to have an event, we better haver a leaflet, have a flyer, they are still very much of that mind set, but also they are coming round to the way of thinking that we could do things differently – such as what can we do to actually make sure that the social media spokespeople have a PDF that they can share with their connections. How can we get them to use their own network to push this message out for example? Again it just takes time in a very large organisation to actually make people realise that there are other ways to reach out to people and more cost-effective ways.

LC: What do you think your organisation's story is via Twitter – what I mean by that is how would you sum up how the organisation describes and illustrates its identity to its customers in a couple of lines or words?
AT: It's a very sales led organisation. But at its heart it has a real entrepreneurial spirit – so it has never lost what it was originally based on. So it was founded by a British entrepreneur, so the whole ethos of the business is it was set up by an entrepreneur and driven forward and who is still very much an integral part of the business, that is still very much about who we are- based on who he is, if that makes sense – it's his identity that drives the corporate identity if you like. Yes, it is sales-led there are targets, it is challenging, it is demanding but it is very rewarding and we focus on growth as well, so you will notice that there is very much a drive towards making sure that we are moving forward. It is an ambitious, rather than a friendly organisation.

LC: Who are your competitors?

AT: It is primarily regionalised competitors and certainly this is the case globally as in Australia we have ServeCorp (http://www.servcorp.com.au/en/) they are a competitor to us. The truth is that SBS don't really have one single competitor globally, they are individualised regional outlets in each of our markets. If there are competitors that we can identify, then we tend to buy them, so that's what we do and either we will keep their branding or turn them into an SBS centre. That gives us that flexibility. It can be a good thing that you don't have any competitors as you can hold on to market share, but ultimately you have no-one to compare your activity to. So I can't say to you, we're doing really well, because if you look at xx office's tweets we're much more proactive for example.

LC: Are there key messages, terms or phrases that you are asked to use/do use when communicating about the organisation to customers?

The SBS message is all about flexibility, productivity and retention and recruitment, all the benefits that are at the heart of what SBS provide that is what is encompassed by those key messages and we try to include them in tweets, not necessarily the words but the values. **LC: And is that mirrored in your strategic plan?** AT: Yes, definitely.

LC: Do you believe in the authenticity/truthfulness of these messages?

AT: I think they are quite authentic because what we are saying is…well we do something called the great big survey which interviews over 20,000 people across the globe and it is an authority on various people's opinions on business activities. So for example the great big survey pulled out business people's thoughts and views on the state of business in 2014, so whenever we are going out with a piece of information, like a Twitter or blog post and we need to include in there a statistic then we have our great big survey in there to refer to, so this is completely objective, people answering completely independently and it gives us a great pool of data to use to say this is going to shape the workforce this month or this is going happen and so yes this is a genuine resource that can help us. So it focuses on everything from mother's going back to work and flexible working that sort of thing. If you look at Slideshare, if you go to SBS on Slideshare you will find we've got all the data there, so you can have a look at all of the papers.

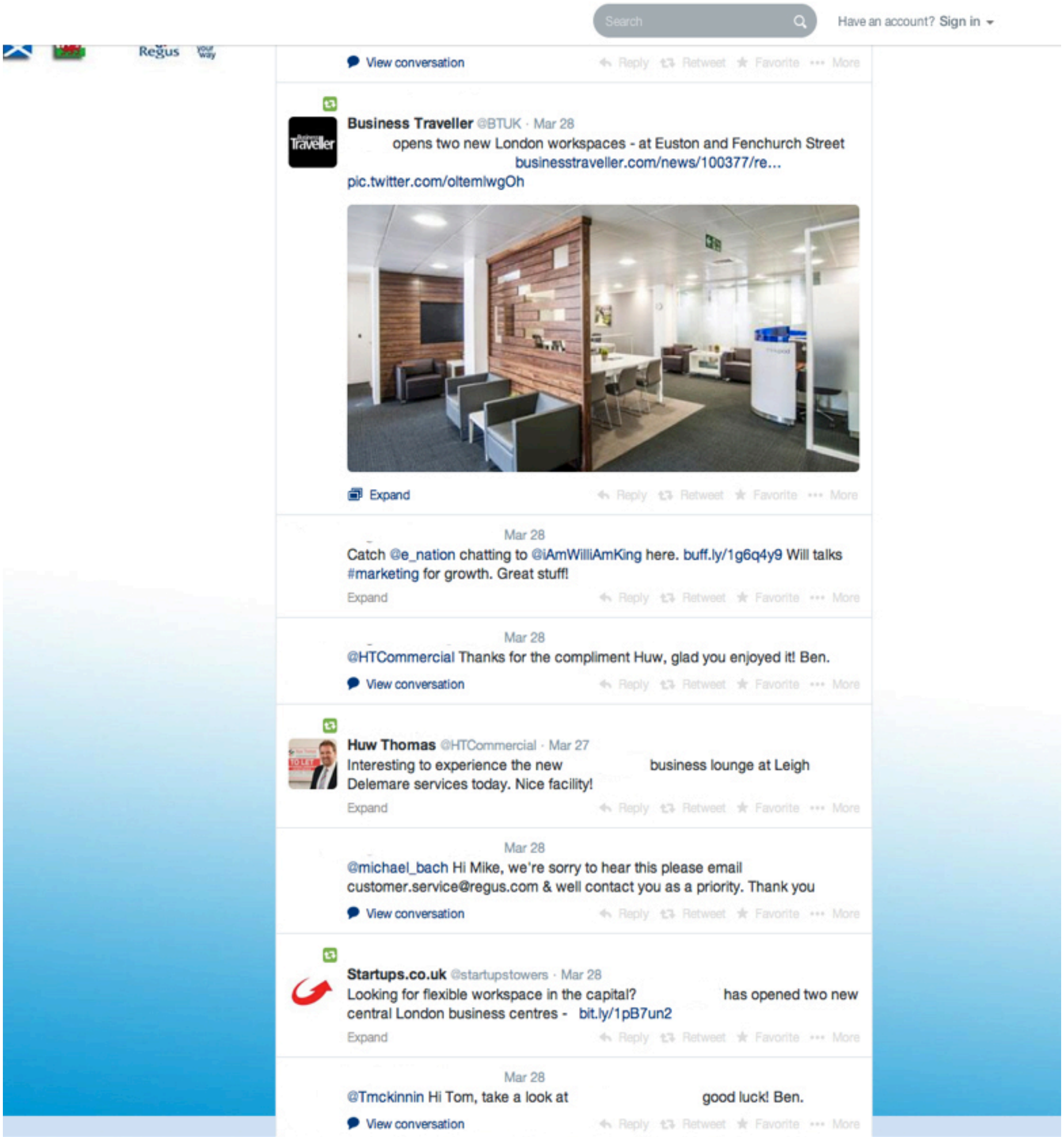
LC: How do you identify with the organisation – what is your interpretation of the organisational story and does it change much day to day/influences – colleagues, senior managers, other aspects of organisational life?

AT: I think because at the root of what we are trying to say is about helping people to find a better way to work. I mean I wasn't aware of that when I first arrived, as to me I wasn't really aware as to what SBS did it was completely new to me, so yes, my understanding and belief in what they were trying to do has only developed over the years, as originally I didn't really understand it and was a complete novice to it. But now I definitely think there is a definite story to it, lots of messages there that have been shared.

LC: Does how you communicate online differ from how you communicate through other channels?

AT: I find now the heavy printed documents so dry and it is horrible when people use extracts from them on social media including Twitter in my view. I see it all the time, I used to work in PR, I used to write press releases. Blogging and using Twitter it is not a skill that everyone has just because they have an account it doesn't mean that they can use it effectively. It is amazing agencies and businesses that say we provide social media support as well, it is almost like can we use Twitter, oh yes I have an account we can now offer that service. You would never consider doing that with any other discipline, so why do it on Twitter. That's why…the approval process is that everything must come through me. I have to act as the gatekeeper for Twitter, as I've come across so many occasions where someone has provided me with what they thought was a acceptable tweet copy, only for me to find that it was a cut and pasted version of a press release…embarrassing really and it was very much then a case of me having to educate them that the reader should be moving seamlessly through the style and content that you would normally put on a tweet or a Facebook post. If customers are coming through Twitter they don't want to be re-directed to a press release, they are not a journalist they want to get to a blog post that is friendly and informative…it follows through and that's what we are trying to do as we don't want to lose that customer if they have gone to the trouble of finding our Twitter site and because there's a whole process here of, if we can get them through to Twitter we can also get them through to the blog and maybe therefore to also use one of our sites (SBS centres). The share value of them hitting the blog is good but only if they find the copy light and engaging, so it is very different. Basically if we don't write the tweet/blog in accordance with what the customer wants then of course there is a chance that we will lose them and also if they really like it there is an enquiry tab on the blog as well. So we can get them from the Twitter to the blog at the Search Engine Optimisation value and hopefully it will be shared a bit and become viral, but if not we have the enquiry tab as another means of catching the customer's data.

LC: I have included below a series of tweets from earlier this year, please can you talk me through what they are about, why they are important, do you use humour and why you have re-tweeted the three tweets from customers below?



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Business Traveller @BTUK · Mar 28
opens two new London workspaces - at Euston and Fenchurch Street businesstraveller.com/news/100377/re... pic.twitter.com/oltemlwgOh

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Mar 28
Catch @e_nation chatting to @iAmWilliAmKing here. buff.ly/1g6q4y9 Will talks #marketing for growth. Great stuff!
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

Mar 28
@HTCommercial Thanks for the compliment Huw, glad you enjoyed it! Ben.
View conversation Reply Retweet Favorite More

Huw Thomas @HTCommercial · Mar 27
Interesting to experience the new business lounge at Leigh Delemare services today. Nice facility!
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

Mar 28
@michael_bach Hi Mike, we're sorry to hear this please email customer.service@regus.com & well contact you as a priority. Thank you
View conversation Reply Retweet Favorite More

Startups.co.uk @startupstowers · Mar 28
Looking for flexible workspace in the capital? has opened two new central London business centres - bit.ly/1pB7un2
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

Mar 28
@Tmckinnin Hi Tom, take a look at good luck! Ben.
View conversation Reply Retweet Favorite More

AT: The tweet at the bottom as we discussed earlier was sent out by the previous community manager (Ben) and he very much liked the personal approach and would always sign off as himself. We've worked with Startups.co.uk, so they are a partner of sorts so they are individuals that we are aware of and basically if they support us, then we will return the favour and re-tweet for them. In terms of Huw Thomas sometimes we are made aware of them if they contact us to say they are going to attend a centre or something like that or otherwise basically if it is a positive message, especially if it is from a person who is quite influential (like they have plenty of followers) we will almost always re-tweet their message and then also send them a follow up message to say thank you for the mention. We do a bit of research on who they are first and if they have got at least a couple of 100 followers then we like to get them re-tweeted. But even if it is just a really nice message, like the other day we heard from this guy in Munich and even though he didn't have many followers, he took a picture of himself in the Think Pod, said how great it was, we re-tweeted him on the German account. It's good to share that. Business Traveller is basically a trade publication that will write about us from time to time so we again re-tweet any positive stories.

AT: We have our school of Excellence in Prague so here Pirjo, who is a general manager in Helsinki, was trying to do here was promote the business and event, she did some media training earlier in the year and those who attended we obviously encouraged the attendees to #SBS on their Twitter accounts to make the story go further. So she's obviously in Prague at the

School of Excellence and sending it on. She is one of the spokespeople. The rest there are mainly responses unfortunately to complaints but also some queries. As I said earlier we do rely a little bit on the generic responses.

LC: Do you have a good relationship with your customers?
AT: Yes, I do believe that those people that are following us, you see the thing is that you know you go to work and most people will use their social time to follow things that they find interesting out of work, so to ask someone to go home and to use Facebook to like or to use Twitter to follow where they work it is not an easy task, or an easy ask, so we have to give them a reason to do that. So the relationship we have got with those people who have decided to follow us is really good I mean the evidence of that is whenever we put anything out that maybe, an example of that is we have an express brands now, so express centres have been opening up at service stations, train stations and one at the airport coming up (Gatwick) and people will see the images coming up and they'll start sharing, commenting and liking on how much they like it. You tend to find that those people that aren't happy are generally those people who have been billed twice, or the heating has gone wrong, in general it is a rarity and those people that we do have, I mean we haven't got 100's of thousands of followers, I guess we have a lot for B2B, but the ones we do have we work with very well.

LC: Which are the priority customers and why?
AT: It is all about their level of influence. If they have a significant number of followers, if they know how to use Twitter so you can watch them to see which tips and tricks they are using and also see if they are hashtagging. You know whether their customer service is good, whether they are bringing other people into the conversation – yes we will make them a priority, they are the individuals that need to be dealt with very quickly, so yeah we do see them and prioritise according to influence. But saying that of course no complaint goes unanswered or is seen as better than the other of course.

LC: What other forms of communication do you use apart from SNSs?
AT: The usual, PR, brochures, leaflets etc. I don't have much involvement in that as I only look after social media.

LC: How many of your followers would you say you knew well? Are they customers that use your services? What is the breakdown of customer types?
AT: We honestly don't know exactly who our followers are – obviously we know a few who interact with us regularly but not many.

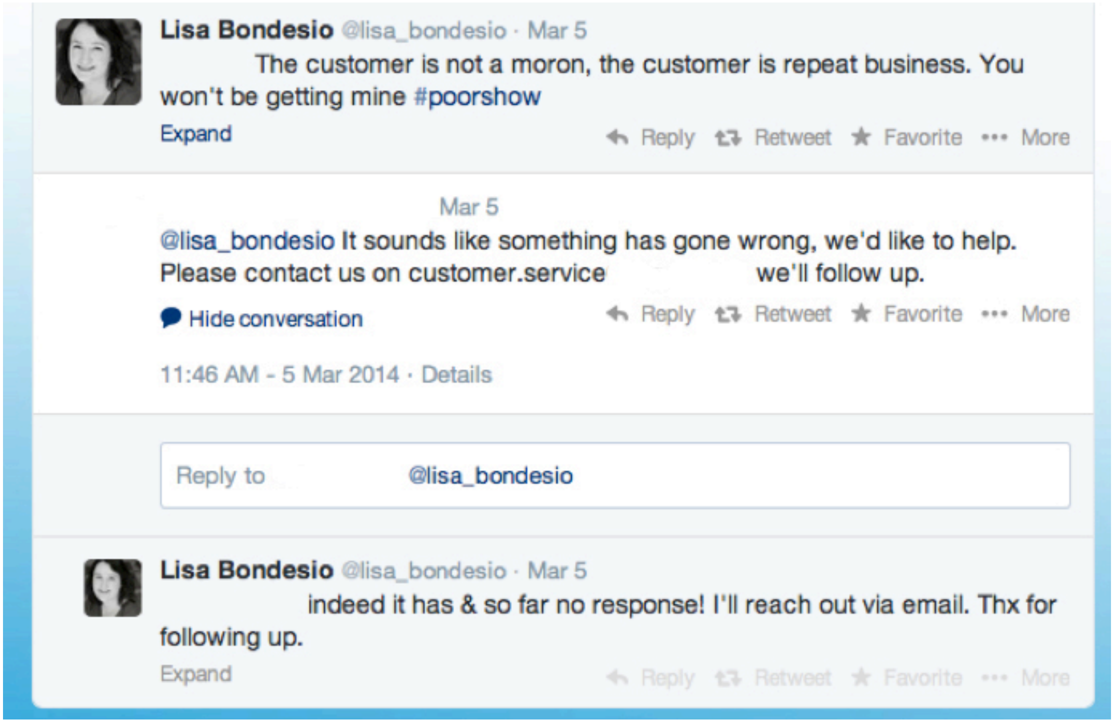
LC: What do you consider a good outcome from Twitter communication, more followers, re-tweets, increased sales – how do you measure its success? I mean I just used to be glad if someone read it (laughs):
AT: It varies. If I look at my Key performance indicators for the business, then success is driving traffic through to a specific landing page and then getting them to convert (use our services). Using Twitter in that way, if we manage to get enough people through to a landing page and a have a high number of people, that's success! Especially if we can measure revenue from it, because we can say that tweet managed to generate xx amount of pounds, great. But success also comes in different ways for example we did have somebody that came on and they were upset about something and so they complained and we were able to reach out to their general manager at their centre and say look this individual is not happy, something like the lift had broken and I think it was, or someone had tweeted about not having enough spoons in the cutlery tray, but we were able to turn those around with our prompt and helpful responses, so to be able to get them to come back that for me is a big sign of success because it is about a process of getting other people involved and using social as a catalyst then prompt people to go and do something so as to turn that person from someone that could easily have gone out there and bad-mouthed us. You know what it's like – if someone has a bad experience they will tell ten people, so if we can turn that around and actually get people to come back and admit that they were wrong and how nice that they have been treated that for me is really successful.

LC: Do you ever use Twitter proactively or are you always just responding to customer complaints/queries – such as those below and generally promoting your services?

AT: We've not really used Twitter in that way – like we've never set up a Q&A, or done anything like that, simply because it is such a headache if people do start to interact with you and you haven't got enough resources, as I know we haven't at the moment. We've got to get so many people involved we just haven't been able to do that. So we do tend to drive people through somewhere. So, we really do want people to interact with us but mainly that means guiding them away from Twitter, you know click on here and go have a look at another part of the organisation on the website, where you can fill in your details and comments. The advertising opportunities that Twitter offer now are fantastic and it's something that moving forward we are going to be looking into using, such as the lead-generation cards, promoted tweets, things like that as we do want people to do more when we are investing money, but at the moment, no, it's not a priority.

LC: What techniques do you use to help you engage with your customers within the tweets? What happens when you receive a complaint such as the one below? Tell the story of how it is managed?

AT: We have a good system of addressing complaints – as I said ideally we would like this to be more personalised and given more resources it may well be, in the future. We direct them first and foremost to the customer.service@SBS.com address. We would love to be able to address all of them via Tweets, but we try to take the complaint off-line in the first instance to minimise the ongoing impact.


Lisa Bondesio @lisa_bondesio · Mar 5
The customer is not a moron, the customer is repeat business. You won't be getting mine #poorshow
Expand
Reply Retweet Favorite More
Mar 5
@lisa_bondesio It sounds like something has gone wrong, we'd like to help. Please contact us on customer.service we'll follow up.
Hide conversation
Reply Retweet Favorite More
11:46 AM - 5 Mar 2014 · Details
Reply to @lisa_bondesio
Lisa Bondesio @lisa_bondesio · Mar 5
indeed it has & so far no response! I'll reach out via email. Thx for following up.
Expand
Reply Retweet Favorite More

LC: Are there opportunities also to support some of your partner organisations via Twitter – please explain the sequence of tweets below.
AT: What we've done is, I think there is a new person who has just been recruited to deal with partnerships, in terms of what value exchange we've got (What they can do for us and we can do for them in other words) but what I've done and made apparent last year is that we have an optimum audience of over 150,000 people which means that we have some social clout to actually be able to say when we are leveraging a partnership that what we can offer you is to share messages through Twitter we can put it on our blog and on Facebook as part of a bargain to say this is what we would like in exchange. That is definitely something we have done with partnerships to improve them is to say you can either share your content with us or we will give you content to share. So for example we went to Staples when we were launching express locations there with an actual set list of tweets and asked them to send them out at set times and they were all linked back to the SBS blog. So ultimately Staples were doing our work on our behalf it was just a useful way to make sure we got our messages out via another account, so it looked less promotional. **LC: What was in it for Staples?** We were opening Express centres in Staples centres, so they needed the awareness building but after we'd actually done the work the MD of Staples UK said to the team why aren't we doing what SBS are doing on social media? Why have they given us things to tweet, why haven't you given things to them to tweet. They'd given all the social media stuff to their customer services team who of course weren't putting in quite as much effort as they were mainly answering queries and complaints. They certainly weren't adopting a strategic approach; they were kind of just mentioning things as they went through the day, so that was quite interesting.

Search

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Dina Medland @dinamedland · Mar 9
Working on the go in a box at Gatwick soon - inspired ! Via (spotted in FT) vimeo.com/m/69312263
View media Reply Retweet Favorite More

Mar 7
@StMungos Thank you for putting on such a fun fundraising concept! #WHD14
View conversation Reply Retweet Favorite More

St Mungo's @StMungos · Mar 7
Huge thanks to for raising over £3,000 to help us rebuild lives with their Woolly Hat Day fundraising. We tip our hats!
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

Mar 7
@fluffyemily Would you let me know which site you are at? I'll ask the IT guys to check on the connection. Best
View conversation Reply Retweet Favorite More

FM&FS 365 B.Days @FM365days · Mar 7
C.Donne: IT allows us working in a way more flexible,productive whilst reducing RE's cost and boost employee's motivation #fmfs365days
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

FM&FS 365 B.Days @FM365days · Mar 7
Celia Donne, VP Global Operations from talks about the future of work #fmfs365days
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

Mar 7
@debsdoesevents Can we help with any outstanding issues? our service team are available to you on customer.service Thank you.
View conversation Reply Retweet Favorite More

DocuSign @DocuSign · Mar 6
Work everywhere: introduces the new remote working hub at Gatwick airport ow.ly/u4kQM via @startupstowers
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

Role of video, images, hashtags and links

LC: Throughout your Twitter feeds there are a few hashtags, @links, as well as links to articles written by other tweeters – why do you include these – how do they shape/inform your relationships with customers?

AT: As you can see the use of hashtags has had a very positive impact in my opinion. I don't personally ever get to meet the customers unless it is through Twitter or our other social media channels. So I never know if the customers talk about what they have seen on Twitter unless they mention it on Twitter and they often do use the hashtags if they are at an event, which helps us find out what they think and I'm then shaping content accordingly. Our general managers though will monitor their comments…Great image of our New York office there. Alex Mortimer was someone who was using our…we have various people who can use our centres for their own personal events. So what they will do is take a meeting room you know like this and then go and host a networking session there, so they will have met us that way.

Sofie Varrewaere @SofieVarrewaere · Mar 13
Lovely office 2day #executive #coaching pic.twitter.com/cge1kbdpZ1

Expand   Reply Retweet Favorite More

Mar 13
@HelioStor
1/2 Day PM is: 1300-1700 but we can be flexible on start and end times. Email social.media for more info

View conversation   Reply Retweet Favorite More

Mar 13
A warehouse in Gloucester, a lounge on 3rd Avenue and hotdesking in Piccadily Circus. Our latest fave centres bit.ly/1csTOtF

View summary   Reply Retweet Favorite More

Alex Mortimer @thealexmortimer · Mar 12
Mini MIPIM tonight in #Hertfordshire Connect @HertsChamber business networking over 60 confirmed #hatfield. eventbrite.co.uk/e/national-cen...

Expand   Reply Retweet Favorite More

Mar 12
@EngagePT Hi Emma, we're sorry to hear you were unhappy when visiting our centre, we'll immediately review & put this right

View conversation   Reply Retweet Favorite More

Mar 11
@SpottyOctopus Thanks for the plug @MissSueFlay Lucy, email social.media if you want to know more

View conversation   Reply Retweet Favorite More

LC: You joined Twitter in February, 2011 – what impact if any has it had on your relationships with customers in your opinion?

AT: It's had a very positive relationship in my opinion. It's great, as they may not get the information sent directly to them all the time as they may have missed it but if they go home they are following SBS UK on Twitter so they get to see that information. So the feedback that I get I can see the complaints turned around on Twitter, which I know if we hadn't got they wouldn't be dealt with because occasionally they can fall through the net. They know if they come on social media that we will deal with them straight away and it is great to see that. I suppose the customers for me are the general managers and so I work quite closely with them, because the thing is that they can cascade that out through their personal twitter accounts. As long as we provide that information we have them, like Pirjot they're re-tweeting she was putting up information, she is a great brand advocate.

LC: Do you think online communication including Twitter will continue to be used as a main way of communicating with customers in the short and long-term future for SBS UK?

AT: In the short term it is definitely going to be used. I think now with the implementation of the new tool, the new dashboard (Tweetdeck) the new portal I think for the long-term who knows? The question now is how lucrative the advertising can be for us? So if the advertising is something that we can push forwards with and actually show that there is a very positive return on investment there, then that will have an impact on the business, in terms of engagement at least with more customers – taking the emphasis very much away from traditional advertising and putting the emphasis on online engagement and will ensure its legacy. There's a few factors to consider but the customer service team are all over it now, they want it. And we have to report back on the number of complaints now that we are getting through and Mick Doughty, the boss takes an avid interest in how these complaints are being dealt with. It's a great way to deal with customers that otherwise may take to other channels to actually complain about us, and they have done that in the past. It's a great way to douse that fire before it really starts.

LC: Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix Eight: Coding the interview data

DOS Processes of Identity Work	**Number of identity work stories told by employees**
Phase one: Early experiences – Creating identity: From apprentice to specialist storytellers (listed in alphabetical order)	
Planning	13
Emerging [organisational and personal identity]	20
Creating [online presence/identity]	14
Testing [new ideas]	10
Generating [interest]	8
Engaging	24
Experimenting	12
Generating [interest]	8
Growing [awareness/follower numbers]	7
Marketing	33
Phase two: Medium-term experiences – Shaping and Guiding Identity: From provocative to persuasive storytellers	
Teasing [the online audience]	5
Coaxing [interaction]	7
Connecting [through hashtags]	12
Enticing	6
Interacting [with the Twitter audience]	26
Promoting [the online organisation]	15
Protecting	10
Guiding	10
Linking [from the online space to the	12

‘real’ organisation	
Shaping	9
Phase three: Longer-term and future experiences – Sustaining identity: DOS’s as online friends (listed in alphabetical order)	
Preserving [the organisational presence]	11
Controlling	8
Personalising [content]	21
Expanding [content, audience and experiences]	7
‘Friending’ [retaining the interest of the followers by being friendly]	12
Gatekeeping [DOS acting as the gatekeeper between the organisation and the online audience so as to maintain the quality of the tweets]	20
Influencing	12
Speaking [to the online audience]	8
Sharing [information]	13
Checking [for updates]	8

Appendix Nine: List of figures

Table