

Marketing instruments of corporate culture management: the role of digital signaling

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The corporate culture has been traditionally considered as an internal organization characterized by shared values and consistent management behaviors. However, the increasing role of digital communication tools suggests that the workforce today increasingly views the organization not only through internal policies but through the messages the company puts out through marketing avenues like LinkedIn and Facebook (Leonardi, 2014). The marketing avenues create endless flows of signals which the workforce interprets from the context of their meaning to the company's value and expectations (Spence, 2002). To address the needs of the emerging trend, this paper presents an innovative conceptual framework developed from the author's work – the Cultural Signaling Ecosystem (CSE). This construct has never been applied within peer-reviewed contexts before and shifts the perspectives of LinkedIn and Facebook from being communication avenues to being active players in the formation of corporate culture (Sivertzen et al., 2013). In this environment, each posting, video, message, and public interaction becomes a cultural message. This can be illustrated through the example of the same CEO posting about their views concerning leadership ethics, transparency, and innovation in LinkedIn (Men & Tsai, 2016). What happens is that each of the posting messages will be perceived as the demonstration of the company's actual priorities through the innovative platform of LinkedIn. This becomes a form of public declaration that becomes part of the company's culture. This can be explained through the viewpoint of the company's internal work environment being shaped through its public declaration of its culture through the platform of LinkedIn, turning the normal environment of internal work culture impacting the external environment of the company's completely rethink. The company posting about their various instances of innovations will send strong signals about its culture before the company's internal environment actually allows its culture to develop. Viewed as a different form of communication, Facebook also holds equal strength in culture (Madsen, 2016). Where LinkedIn delivers professional culture signals, the delivery of Facebook signals incorporates emotions and the social. Where the posting of news about community engagement and or humanitarian support and volunteer work sends out community and humanitarian culture signals, posting news about support and unity activity sends out culture signals regarding the company's unity and support. The posting of pictures of teams engaged in celebration, co-working, and shared activities sends out signals of the company's culture of unity and shared culture. The visual posting of the company's activities delivers the emotions of the culture signals posted on the platform through images rather than written messages. The company's

posting of its activities through images makes the emotions of the culture signals posted feeling stronger than when the company sends its internal messages. One of the defining features of the Cultural Signaling Ecosystem is the existence of what might be called “signal spillover.” The truth is that messages intended to reach the outside world cannot help but leak inside as well (Spence, 2002). A recruitment video promoting diversity and or innovation at the company will attract job applicants, of course, but it will also communicate the message that these same principles must be incorporated into the actions of its existing employees (Sivertzen et al., 2013). A message about the company’s employees being resilient in the face of the war on Facebook will impact the company's reputation outside the company's walls but also the emotions of the existing employees inside the company’s walls. The CSE model has three interlocking continuous processes: the production of signals from marketing communication tools, the interpretation of those signals from the company’s message by its employees, and the final culture produced from their results when the workers shift their behavior and expectations. If the company puts its emphasis again and again on leaders' learning and innovations through LinkedIn, the workers will interpret that learning and creativity are at the forefront of the company culture (Leonardi, 2014). The same will happen when the company shows them through Facebook the example of volunteer work and helping each other (Madsen, 2016). The final culture will be constructed from the company’s own internal message and the message the company sends through its marketing communication. This can be especially important during crisis circumstances that Ukrainian enterprises face while being pressured to work under wartime conditions. During the time of instability, the aim of the organization’s personnel will be to detect signals regarding the existence of continuity and safety. A simple post about the company’s care concerning the welfare of its personnel can be a stabilizing factor in corporate culture. This helps create psychological foundations through LinkedIn and Facebook when conventional organizational frameworks are disrupted because of the crisis. In this case, LinkedIn and Facebook transform from marketing instruments to psychological foundations. The paper’s novel contribution: The paper reveals that rather than being simple platforms used to communicate to the outside world, tools such as LinkedIn and Facebook provide culture-meaning-generating instruments within the organization itself (Men & Tsai, 2016). The addition of the Cultural Signaling Ecosystem model provides a novel approach to understanding the development of culture in the modern era (Spence, 2002). The culture of today does not lie strictly within the bounds of the company itself but rather through the development of signals from corporate members through the distribution of messages through the internet (Leonardi, 2014). This allows the development of internal company culture through proper messaging from the company and the dangers of internal culture disagreement from the chosen message and the internal culture of the company itself. In this major change, the corporate culture transforms and becomes a living story that is created through the constant flow of signals in the digital communication environment. LinkedIn and Facebook act as both mirrors and builders of corporate culture because they reflect the corporate culture of the

organization and at the same time shape it. Organizational leaders can efficiently handle corporate culture when they understand their position in the Cultural Signaling Ecosystem.

Keywords: Transformative corporate culture; Crisis adaptability; Marketing; Digital transformation; Corporate innovation; Crisis management; Digital tools in management.

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