



METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES

Analysis of sectorial positioning on social networks

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1. Executive summary

RocaSalvatella shares its method for analysing the activity and positioning on social networks of the stakeholders of a determined sector, with the purpose of understanding the different strategies involved, identifying good practices, and making decisions.

The method begins by proposing how to define which agents and social channels should form part of the study, and continues by suggesting a data analysis method to identify which types of strategies are being developed (relational, service, sales or brand development) and with what intensity.

The results are then used to make strategic decisions, identifying the orientation of the activity of each of the players in the same sector, which channels they concentrate their forces on and where they obtain greatest efficiency. All this enables inferring good and not so good practices that, on the one hand, could lead to reconsidering some decisions, and on the other, help identify the players to be taken into account.

2. Editor's note

This document has been created to share the method that RocaSalvatella project units use to provide advisory services and make sectorial analysis of strategic positioning on social networks. The main criteria when editing this document were aimed at producing a publication that was clear, concise, consistent and oriented as far as possible to the participation of the greatest number of people in its future revisions.

The editor made a cursory analysis of what other consulting companies on an international level are doing in this area to guarantee there is no repetition of efforts. This revealed that almost all the organisations have incorporated a section dedicated exclusively to measuring the efficiency of actions in the area of social networks and Internet in general into their digital marketing consulting services. Outstanding for its scope and depth is the Altimeter method "A framework for Social Analytics[4]" which measures the performance of the organisation by considering five possible objectives to be met by its digital presence; innovation, brand, optimisation of marketing, customer experience, operational efficiency and the generation of services. Nevertheless, this procedure does not include the comparison measurements inherent to Benchmarking and furthermore, the scope and specificity of the data required makes it impossible for it to be put into practice by companies that do not control their social channels directly. The method described in "The ROI of Social Media Marketing" suggested by Forrester[5] could be classified in a similar way. Although with less precision, the Boston Consulting Group[6] or Accenture[7] also have this type of method available. From an even wider approach, Nielsen prefers measuring brand performance as a whole with action on social networks only being one very specific aspect of the questions the company assesses in its analysis[8]. Many of these measurements concentrate on the concept of ROI as a basic element to be considered.

Three methods were found for the specific concept of Benchmarking. One is that offered by the company ComScore under the name "Competitive Digital Advertising and Website Strategies[9]" which assesses the efficiency of the action of a company while at the same time introducing indicators for comparison with competitor companies. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the information that ComScore provides about this analysis on its web site only refers to web pages and not to activity on social networks. McKinsey also offers a Benchmarking service[10] in the field of information technologies but in this case the information included in the analysis is more generic than that of the ComScore study, being focused on aspects such as investment in information technologies for example. Finally there is the "Social Business Index[11]" an initiative of Dachis Group. Its objective is to measure the performance of more than 25,000 companies on social networks. The Company collects exhaustive data on these companies and constructs an index that is used to make rankings classified by the effectiveness of each company in the field of social media. This process makes it much easier to establish comparisons between companies. Nevertheless, this

[4] For more information about this method, see: <http://www.altimetergroup.com/research/reports/a-framework-for-socialanalytics>

[5] For a deeper understanding of this method, visit <http://www.forrester.com/The+ROI+Of+Social+Marketing/fulltext/-/E-RES57009?docid=57009>

[6] Learn more about this company's proposal in this area by analysing its service "Marketing Capabilities for the Digital Ages" (<http://www.slideshare.net/fred.zimny/bcg-report-marketing-for-the-digital-age>)

[7] For more information see the description of the service "Interactive Marketing" (<http://www.accenture.com/us-en/consulting/interactive-marketing/Pages/interactive-marketing-index.aspx>)

[8] The service is called "Wining Brands" and its main features can be consulted at http://es.nielsen.com/products/crs_winingbrands.shtml

[9] More information at http://www.comscore.com/Products_Services/Product_Index/Benchmarking_Studies

[10] See <https://mckbench.mckinsey.com/> for additional information

[11] <http://www.socialbusinessindex.com/>

2. Editor's note

[12] https://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/Demystifying_social_media_2958

[13] http://www.bcg.com/expertise_impact/capabilities/center_consumer_customer_insight/competencies.aspx

[14] <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/social/>

index has two important limitations; on the one hand it has not been possible to determine what types of measurements and calculations are used to produce the index and, therefore, it is difficult to establish the terms of the comparison and, on the other hand and logically, many companies are not included in the sample making it impossible to use this index as a wide ranging tool.

There is another series of services focused on the analysis of data related to consumer behaviour. That is, the idea that they would share all the methods integrated in this category is to provide customer companies with information and knowledge about the “digital behaviour” of their potential buyers. Without being exhaustive, only with the objective of giving the reader some examples, three of them are of special interest; “Consumer design journey[12]” by McKinsey, “Digital customer insight[13]” by Boston Consulting Group” and “State of Social Media[14]” by Nielsen.

In summary, as editor of the method I think the effort of creating a sectorial analysis method for strategies on social media is pertinent because, as far as I have been able to determine, there is no explicit, shared method to do this. There is a procedure for calculating the efficiency of the action of a company, to get a better understanding of our customers from the point of view of their digital behaviour or to compare more general variables in the scope of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) or between very large companies, but not specifically to overcome the challenge presented in this document.

Apart from the basic question, this short review of what companies in the consulting services sector are doing has revealed a lack of openness of the methods proposed. Except in some cases, it is very difficult to precisely define what the proposed methods consist of. This has two consequences; on the one hand, it makes it very difficult to add new knowledge to improve these methods and, on the other, it prevents evaluating the thoroughness of the methods used. Therefore, apart from including new knowledge in the field of digital marketing, also outstanding is the effort to transparently share all the details and parameters for its development, and this should enable a process of improvement shared with all those who want to collaborate in advancing this proposal.

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3. Development of the method

Purpose of the method

The purpose of this method is to generate a robust and realistic procedure for comparison of the activity on social networks of a series of agents (companies, brands, products...) so that it is not only possible to establish differences and similarities but, especially, to simplify strategic decision-making.

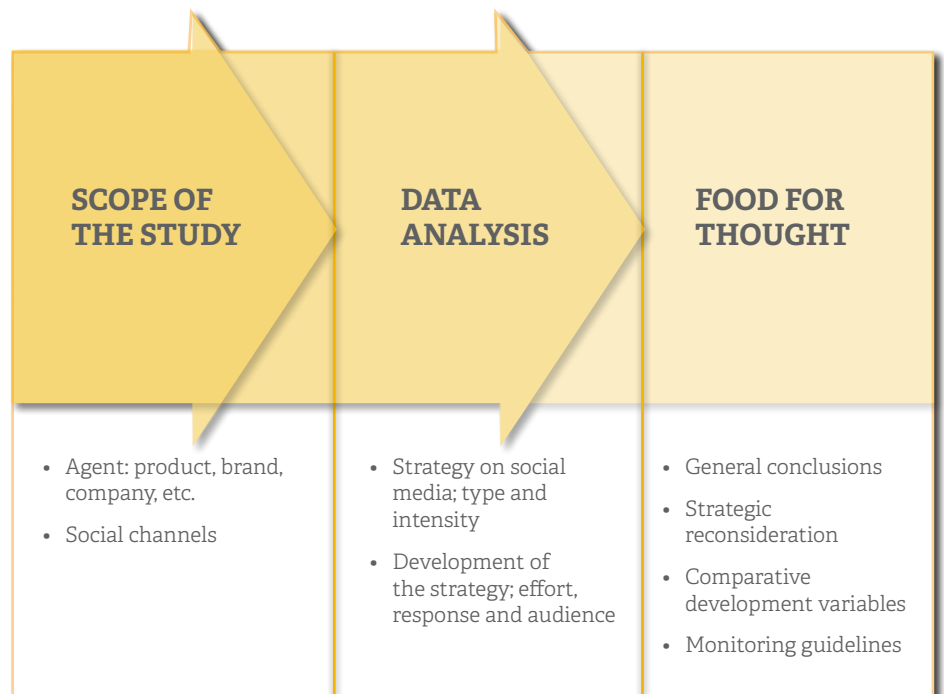
To achieve this we consider that the procedure must set out clear action guidelines for the following elements:

- ▶ Define which **agents** and which **social channels** should form part of the analysis.
- ▶ Determine what type of **strategies on social networks**, and with what **intensity**, are being developed by each of the agents considered in the analysis.
- ▶ Measure, in the most efficient and at the same time most realistic way possible, **how this digital action is being undertaken** on the basis of a series of key variables.
- ▶ Create supports to **simplify reflection** on the results of the analysis with the intention of favouring ideas for **future actions**.

Methodological procedure

The procedure has been divided into three sections to meet all the targets the analysis hopes to reach: area of action, data analysis and food for thought (refer to Figure 2) described in the following points.

FIGURE 2
Diagram of the study procedure



3. Development of the method

“In the current situation it seems that analysing the activity on Facebook, Twitter and blogs is inexcusable.”

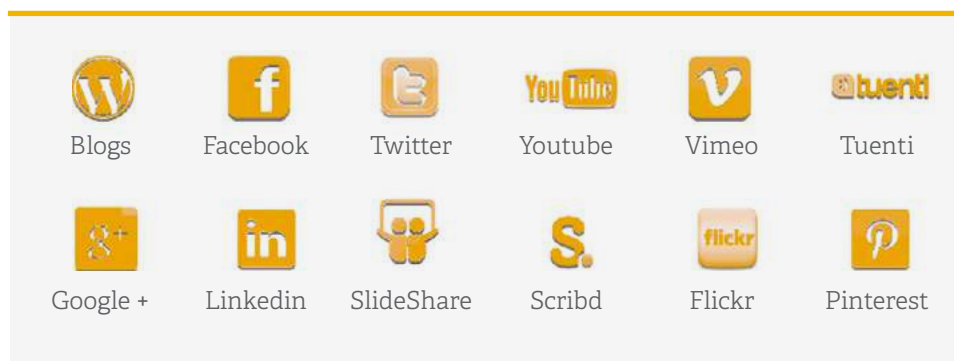
Scope of the study

The first step consists of determining the agents that will form part of the study, that is, which companies, brands, products or services are to be analysed. Two criteria are normally taken into account when making this decision. On the one hand, sectorial criteria or the competition on the market, that is, the analysis usually includes those companies, brands, products or services that directly affect the company or institution the study is for, irrespective of whether they are competitors or a source of useful learning. In any case, we should not lose sight of the fact that any agent that is included in the study must have a reality close to the other members to prevent comparisons of heterogeneous things and so distort the research.

The second is aimed at identifying which social media is to be analysed for each of the agents included in the study. It is relatively easy to identify a group of social networks and spaces that cover the greater part of the activity on the social Internet and which must form part of the study (refer to Figure 3). The ideal solution would be to include the highest number of these channels in the analysis. Nevertheless, a higher number of selected channels will also require more time to harvest the information and analyse it. This is why, on occasions, the only solution is to select some of them. In these cases, priority must be given to those with greatest penetration in the sector or market being analysed. Nevertheless, in the current situation, it seems that analysing the activity on Facebook, Twitter and blogs is inexcusable.

FIGURE 3

Main social channels for potential inclusion in the analysis



There may sometimes be a digital space without a wide presence in the society but which has considerable penetration on the market and/or sector being analysed. The most obvious case could be vertical social networks; or Tuenti, highly focused on an adolescent public, which is of obligatory inclusion when analysing a sector aimed at a very young target public.

3. Development of the method

Another situation that may arise is when the same company has more than one account on a social network. In these cases, it is necessary to determine which of these accounts should be included in the study (consolidating their data) and which not, depending on a series of criteria. It is of little use to try to standardise these criteria as they are very contingent, nevertheless as an example the following premises could be considered:

- ▶ Take all **global corporate** users into account.
- ▶ Only consider **users and activities** that develop action for a **specific area**. For example, if the analysis is of the Spanish market, only consider users that act in this area or departments associated with the Spanish headquarters such as Customer Service or Press. The activity on networks oriented to other countries or territories is not considered.
- ▶ Take into account users and activities aimed at **employees, interest groups** and other **corporate logistic areas**, even though they are not of direct interest for customers or society in general.
- ▶ Do not consider activity on networks that obviously belong to sectors other than those being analysed.

As a result of this first phase we must be capable of constructing the General Presence Map to show a summary of the most relevant activity on the network of the agents analysed. It is interesting to distinguish between **presence channels**, those where the agent is present and only shares information, and **relationship channels** where the agent participates and interacts with the public. The following figure shows the Presence Map for a study of the pharmaceutical industry performed by RocaSalvatella. It considers multiple agents and different territories:

FIGURE 4
General presence map
(example)

Brand / market											
World	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Spain				✓		✓			✓		✓
United Kingdom			✓	✓		N.O.					N.O.
Germany			✓	✓							N.O.

Brand / market											
World	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spain	✓	✓				✓		✓			
United Kingdom			✓			✓					N.O.
Germany			✓			✓	✓				N.O.

✓ Brands with at least one of the following social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, + Goggle, Blogs, Youtube, SlideShare, Flickr, LinkedIn).
N.O. Brands that do not operate on a particular market.

3. Development of the method

In summary, on completing this first phase called “scope of the study” we should have defined where the information for the analysis is to be harvested, and so it is necessary to have identified agents as well as channels.

Data Analysis

The first objective of this section is to identify which types of strategy are followed by each agent in their activity on the social media and, the intensity of each of the strategies they follow.

Therefore, the first thing to do is determine what type of strategies can be undertaken by a brand, product or company on social media. For RocaSalvatella there are four basic types of strategy: relational, service, brand, and sales. It is obvious that when developing their activity on social media each agent mixes all of them so that their strategy contains elements of all four types although, very probably, at different intensities. Figure 5 shows these four typical strategies as well as the indications and criteria for determining when a message or action can be considered to be one or the other strategy.

FIGURE 5
Indications for the classification of messages by type of strategy

RELATIONAL	SERVICE	BRAND	SALES
Ask for the opinion or participation of users (e.g.: product surveys)	Respond to queries from customers and the public	Show company activity or results	Show and describe a product with commercial intent
Attempt to maintain contact with the community	Attend to complaints	Refer to references from third parties	Emphasise the price
Attempt to obtain information from people for a better understanding or even to feed a database	Send practical messages	Use the image of celebrities or charismatic leaders	Communicate discounts or promotions
		Transmit the differential values of the brand	Promote direct or incentivated purchase
		Communicate CSR activities/actions (Corporative Social Responsibility)	
		Highlight brand characteristics not necessarily with a sales focus	

3. Development of the method

We are aware that these four strategies can evolve over time and become more complex. For example, within the “relational” objective, data acquisition and improved user information could constitute a fifth strategy in itself. Nevertheless, for the time being, and in order to simplify this process, we have opted for this first proposal of only 4 main options.

After agreeing on these four basic types of strategy, **the first thing to do will be to analyse the actions of each agent on the selected channels.** For each action, post, video, etc. found on these channels we have to ask ourselves the following question; *what was the purpose of the agent with this message, post, video, update, message, etc. considering the four typical strategies?* That is, the type of reflection made by the investigator is: what was behind the agent’s update of Twitter (for example); provide a service to the user? Generate a more powerful brand image? Increase sales? Construct relations with potential customers and users? After deciding the type of strategy the message belongs to, it is classified and counted as being part of a certain strategy. This process of analysing the messages continues until completing all of them for all agents on all channels.

One important decision to take is for how long the activity of the agents is to be analysed. It is not possible to determine the ideal timeframe for all types of situations. This will depend, among other things, on the research resources available for the study, or the level of activity of the agents. In general, the timeframe that has proved most acceptable in our experience is between 15 days and one month.

As usual it is easier to see the work to be done with an example. The figure below shows a very simple example of an analysis for eight agents on two social channels, Facebook and Twitter. Once all the messages have been analysed the result would be:

FIGURE 6

Analysis of the activity classified by type of strategy (example)

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

BRAND	FACEBOOK			
	Service	Brand	Sales	Relational
Agent 1	41	25	2	73
Agent 2	92	4	15	27
Agent 3	11	3	2	30
Agent 4	94	5	0	32
Agent 5	23	4	1	189
Agent 6	145	3	1	13
Agent 7	14	2	2	70
Agent 8	0	0	0	0
Agent 9	5	3	1	2
Agent 10	0	0	0	0
Sector total	425	49	24	436

FIGURE 6 (CONTINUED)

Analysis of the activity classified by type of strategy (example)

BRAND	TWITTER			
	Service	Brand	Sales	Relational
Agent 1	17	44	4	49
Agent 2	37	15	24	66
Agent 3	3	20	10	36
Agent 4	160	31	27	19
Agent 5	15	7	5	42
Agent 6	0	4	24	11
Agent 7	6	5	2	13
Agent 8	0	0	0	0
Agent 9	0	1	0	1
Agent 10	2	9	1	3
Sector total	240	136	97	240

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Interpreting this data shows that after analysing all the messages on Facebook the conclusion is that, for Agent 1, 41 of them were aimed at constructing a service strategy, 25 to developing the brand image, 2 to increasing sales and 73 to clinching the relationship to customers and users.

Logically there is no precise formula for determining the type of each message. At this point the subjectivity of the investigator comes into play. Nevertheless, in an attempt to unify criteria, the consultants of RocaSalvatella share a series of indications (already mentioned above) that indicate, or at least give hints about, how to group all these messages (refer to Figure 5 for the indications per strategy).

Once all the messages have been classified, the second step consists of consolidating the information by showing the total per agent and for all the agents involved in the study according to the type of strategy. Continuing with the above numerical example:

FIGURE 7

Consolidated analysis of activity per agent and type of strategy (example)

BRAND	Service	Brand	Sales	Relational	Total
Agent 1	58	69	6	122	255
Agent 2	129	19	39	93	280
Agent 3	14	23	12	66	115
Agent 4	254	36	27	51	368
Agent 5	38	11	6	231	286
Agent 6	145	7	25	24	201
Agent 7	20	7	4	83	114
Agent 8	0	0	0	0	0
Agent 9	5	4	1	3	13
Agent 10	2	9	1	3	15
Sector total	665	185	121	676	1,647

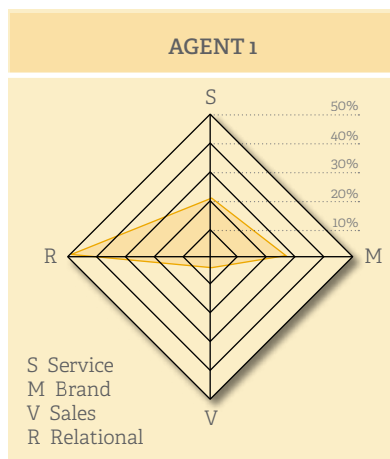
3. Development of the method

The 58 messages in the service strategy of Agent 1 are the total of the 41 that this strategy counted on Facebook plus the 17 identified for this agent on Twitter (refer to Figure 6).

With these data, we now embark on the third step that consists of calculating the intensity of each strategy for each of the agents. This means calculating the percentage that these messages represent for each type of strategy compared to the total messages sent by each agent. At the same time we obtain information corresponding to all the agents forming part of the Benchmarking.

Finally, it is convenient to plot the results on a diagram like the one below for a better and more intuitive understanding of the strategy followed by a particular agent.

FIGURE 8
Intensity for each type of strategy for each of the agents (example)



BRAND	Service	Brand	Sales	Relational
Agent 1	23%	27%	2%	48%
Agent 2	46%	7%	14%	33%
Agent 3	12%	20%	10%	57%
Agent 4	69%	10%	7%	14%
Agent 5	13%	4%	2%	81%
Agent 6	72%	3%	12%	12%
Agent 7	18%	6%	4%	73%
Agent 8	38%	31%	8%	23%
Agent 9	13%	60%	7%	20%
Sector total	40%	11%	7%	41%

At this point we have already reached the first objective; determine the type of strategies followed by each agent and assess the intensity of each one. In this case, we can see that Agent 1 employs a large part of their activity in messages that foster customer relationships. Service and brand construction are rather more secondary objectives and increasing sales is merely anecdotal. That is, we can clarify the orientation of this agent on social networks, a question that is often unclear in many companies and institutions.

Let us now discuss the second main objective of this section on data analysis; assess some quantitative variables that describe the development of the strategy being implemented by the different agents on social media.

RocaSalvatella has decided to carry out this task by measuring three specific variables: effort, response and audience. Let us consider the calculation of each one separately.

3. Development of the method

“On the majority of occasions it will be necessary to weight the participation according to its importance”

In the first place, consider **effort**. The most direct option for calculating the effort made by an agent on social media is to total all the activity shown. In el example we are using, we add the number of posts published on Facebook and the number of tweets published by the agent during the time period of the analysis. For example, in our case, the effort of Agent 1 is 255 (refer to Figure 9). In addition to these two actions, other elements that could be counted (if these channels formed part of the scope of the study) would be; posts on Google+, videos on Youtube, videos on Vimeo, presentations and/or documents on SlideShare, presentations and/or documents on Scribd, photos on Flickr or the responses made by the agent to comments received on the different channels.

FIGURE 9
Calculation of the effort variable (example)

EFFORT	FB Posts	Tweets	Total	% Effort
Agent 1	141	114	255	70%
Agent 2	140	142	282	77%
Agent 3	44	69	113	31%
Agent 4	129	237	366	100%
Agent 5	218	69	287	78%
Agent 6	162	39	201	55%
Agent 7	88	27	115	31%
Agent 8	0	0	0	0%
Agent 9	11	2	13	4%
Agent 10	0	15	15	4%

But, in our opinion, some reflections should be made about the validity of information calculated in this way. In the first place, in the majority of cases it will be necessary to weigh the participation according to its importance (from the point of view of the effort required of the agent). That is, it is not the same to publish a tweet as it is to create and publish a video, or a presentation on SlideShare. In the case we are following, we have considered that a post on Facebook requires the same effort as a tweet, and so we don't think it necessary to apply any weighting. However if we add a third channel to the scope of the study, for example videos on Youtube, weighting should be applied by multiplying each participation unit by a corrective factor higher than one to increase the value of each video uploaded on this channel.

“The effort calculated as the sum of the activity on social media should be relativised by the size of the company as measured by turnover, number of employees, or any other factor associated with its size”

Another element that must also be taken into consideration is the size of the agent. Logically, a large business has the capacity to mobilise more effort because it has more resources and, perhaps, a larger number of things to explain. From this point of view, the effort calculated as the sum of the activity on social media should be relativised by the size of the company as measured by turnover, number of employees, or any other factor associated with its size.

3. Development of the method

Nevertheless there are a series of situations where using this standardisation is not recommended; in the first place when the information is complex or very costly to obtain as this may lead (always in our experience.), to paralysis by analysis. In second place when the agents involved in the study are of a similar size: in this case it is not beneficial to search for this information as it is not an important distorting element. And in third place when, irrespective of the validity of the comparison, what we want to highlight is who accumulates the highest amount of participation as they are considered the best option for learning. That is, in the latter context, we use the absolute number as a way of identifying the agent who can teach us most things, irrespective of the agent's size. In summary, not using size as a weighting factor is justified in that we do not want to perform an exercise of measuring "who comes out best in the photo", that is a measurement of efficiency, but who can provide most clues about what actions can be implemented.

In any case, for each agent we will finally have a column that shows the total effort carried out on social media (weighted or not by the type of participation and the size of the agent). To finish with this part of the analysis, we relativise each of these totals by dividing them by the highest total participation among all the agents. This gives the last column of Figure 9. This last operation is designed to make the degree of effort made by each agent compared to the others more intuitive and easier to assimilate, as well as simplifying its graphic representation as we will see later.

"It is not the same for a user to respond to a post on Facebook with a "Like" as it is to write a comment"

Let us now analyse the response obtained. The idea behind this variable is to highlight that a large part of the efficiency of an action on the social media is marked by the level, in amount and quality, of response from the public. In this case we have introduced the quality of response factor from the first moment. That is, it is not the same for a user to respond to a post on Facebook with a "Like" as it is to write a comment. The second action implies greater commitment by the user and therefore, when calculating the answer, its value should be higher than a "Like". In this case of the response variable, the pertinence of weighting participation in this regard seems more necessary than in the case of the effort variable, as the variability of participating in one action or another is considerably greater. Our experience on social media has led to establishing scales for weighting different types of response that can be given by a user on different social media (refer to Figure 10). Logically, these criteria are in constant revision to include new channels or re-evaluate the specific weight of each action. It is also important to remember that in this point the majority of responses are induced by the activity of the brand and not so much by spontaneous responses that could be measured in terms of mentions of a brand or hits on its web. We hope to advance in this direction in upcoming versions of this method.

FIGURE 10

Scales for weighting the response of users on social media

SOCIAL MEDIA	Scale	SOCIAL MEDIA	Scale
FB Comments	1	G+ +1	0.2
Likes	0.2	G+ shares	0.5
Times shared (FB)	0.5	SlideShare comments	1
Mentions (Twitter)	1	SlideShare favourite	0.2
RT's	0.5	Scribd comments	1
G+ comments	1	Scribd shares	0.5
Blog comments	1	Flickr comments	0.2
Page Rank	1	Flickr favourite	0.2
YT comments	1	Youtube views	0.2
YT Likes	0.2	Vimeo views	0.2
YT Dislikes	0.2	SlideShare views	0.2
Vimeo Likes	0.2	Scribd views	0.2
Vimeo Comments	1	Flickr views	0.2

“The effort variable also seems to be important in this context, as a higher number of contents shared by the agent; the more responses should be obtained”

Apart from the commitment in the reply, in this case there could also be other variables that could be used to weight the sum of the different comments, “Likes”, mentions, etc. One could once again be size as it seems logical that with higher brand exposure or more presence on the market, the possibilities that citizens refer to this agent increase. The effort variable also seems to be important in this context, as a higher number of contents shared by the agent; the more responses should be obtained. Another essential element is the size of the audience (the subject of analysis below) as a greater number of followers on social networks means more possibility of obtaining feed-back. In short, there are many variables that can be used to weight the number of responses an agent receives. The risk of using this information to relativise the total number of responses is that we are not at all sure about how many of them have a real effect and to what extent, and how many have no effect at all. In any case, the investigator should consider the appropriateness of including these scales considering what is gained or lost in the quality of the measurement and how difficult it makes the process by adding complexity and effort to the study. Not including any of these weighting variables (except those already mentioned as essential and related to commitment in the participation) suggests that what the investigator is underlining is the amount of response and not so much the efficiency in getting it. This decision should be based on the idea that a greater amount of response could provide more clues to improve our strategy in this regard. A later, more in-depth examination could enable determining the reasons why an agent is getting good results in this variable and whether this is significant when assessing good practice.

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Another element that must be taken into account when considering this variable is that the responses of the public may be positive, negative or neutral. It is very interesting to have this information available, but is not at all easy to objectively determine the conditions for classifying this participation, and the software platforms that offer these analyses still seem unreliable (difficulty in interpreting irony, metaphors, contextualisation of phrases...), all of which means that making this type of analysis means intensive work by the investigators.

Continuing with our example, the figure below shows the calculation of the response variable for the channels selected in the scope of the research (Facebook and Twitter). In this case we also relativise each of these totals by dividing them by the highest total response among all the agents. Remember that this last operation is designed to make the degree of effort made by each agent compared to the others more intuitive and easier to assimilate, as well as simplifying its graphic representation as we will see later.

FIGURE 11
Calculation of the response variable (example)

RESPONSE	FB Comments	FB Likes	Mentions	RT's	Total	% Response
Agent 1	151	3,227	210	40	1,026	50%
Agent 2	117	1,645	1582	49	2,053	100%
Agent 3	23	199	70	13	139	7%
Agent 4	59	1,773	540	33	970	47%
Agent 5	63	548	23	10	201	10%
Agent 6	132	3,399	24	2	837	41%
Agent 7	89	1,572	96	8	503	25%
Agent 8	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Agent 9	6	48	0	0	16	1%

As part of the second main objective of the analysis designed to assess development of the strategy, we will now explain how we calculate the third variable: audience.

The audience of an agent is calculated as the sum of the followers and subscribers on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Flickr, Youtube, Flickr, Vimeo, SlideShare, Scribd, LinkedIn, etc.

Nevertheless, once more, consideration must be given to the weighting of this calculation. Just like earlier, the size or level of effort made are variables to be taken into account. That is, we could think that for a large-sized company, for example, it is much easier to have more audience even though this is only because it is normally better known among the public. Another alternative is to apply a scale to the information depending on the penetration of each social medium in the sector or group of companies being analysed.

“The audience of an agent is calculated as the sum of the followers and subscribers on platforms”

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That is, consider a sector where LinkedIn is a very important network. Nevertheless, because of the penetration of Facebook in society, it is highly likely that the number of followers in absolute terms on Facebook is higher for all the agents. The thousands of followers on this second network eclipse in some way the more modest number on the first one. However, qualitatively the second ones are more valued. Therefore, a correction factor should be applied to the information to enhance the importance of followers on LinkedIn. Nevertheless, once more, the suitability of applying this scale will depend greatly on the situation or sector being analysed.

Reiterating what has been discussed so far, it is up to the investigator to assess the cost of including this information in the study and the type of results to be obtained, and so decide whether or not to do so.

Continuing with the example we are using throughout this document, the following figure show the results of the calculation of the audience (without applying any type of weighting). In this case we have also divided the value obtained by the highest number of responses among all the agents. Remember that this last operation is designed to make the degree of effort made by each agent compared to the others more intuitive and easier to assimilate, as well as simplifying its graphic representation as we will see later (refer to Figure 13).

FIGURE 12

Calculations of the audience variable (example)

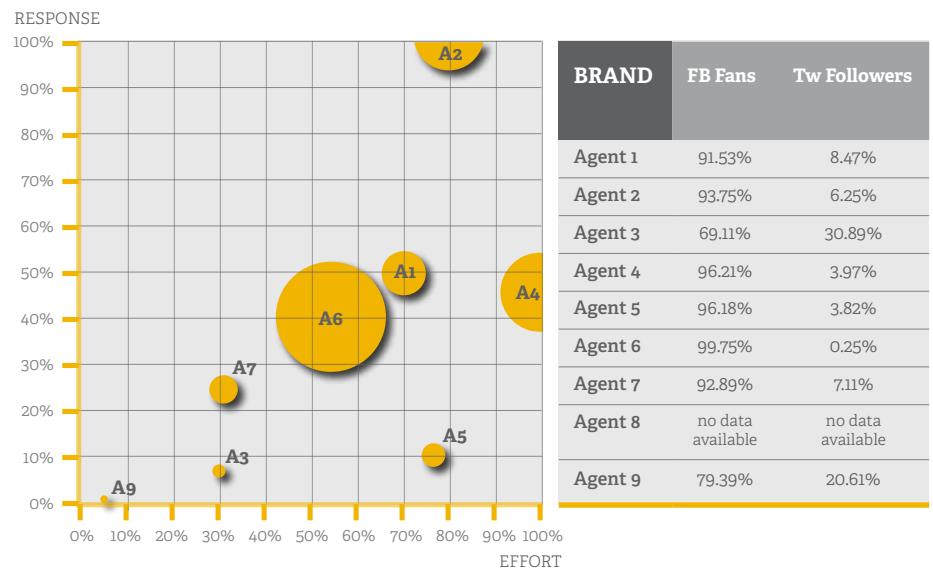
AUDIENCE	FB Fans	Tw Followers	Total	% Audience
Agent 1	23,226	2,148	25,374	14.75%
Agent 2	60,471	4,032	64,503	37.49%
Agent 3	1,821	814	2,635	1.53%
Agent 4	101,701	4,001	105,702	61.43%
Agent 5	8,871	352	9,223	5.36%
Agent 6	171,635	429	172,064	100%
Agent 7	9,544	730	10,274	5.97%
Agent 8	751	0	751	0.44%
Agent 9	674	175	849	0.49%
Agent 10	0	4,638	4,683	2.72%

Once the three variables have been calculated: effort, response and audience; all that remains to be done is to plot them on a graph to make understanding more intuitive. On this graph the horizontal axis represents the effort and vertical axis the response obtained. Using these coordinates we plot each agent on the graph according to their results using a dot whose size depends on the audience data. That is, the greater the audience, the larger the dot representing an agent. At the same time, the graph is made even more significant by including a breakdown of the audience data indicating, as a percentage, where the audience comes from.

3. Development of the method

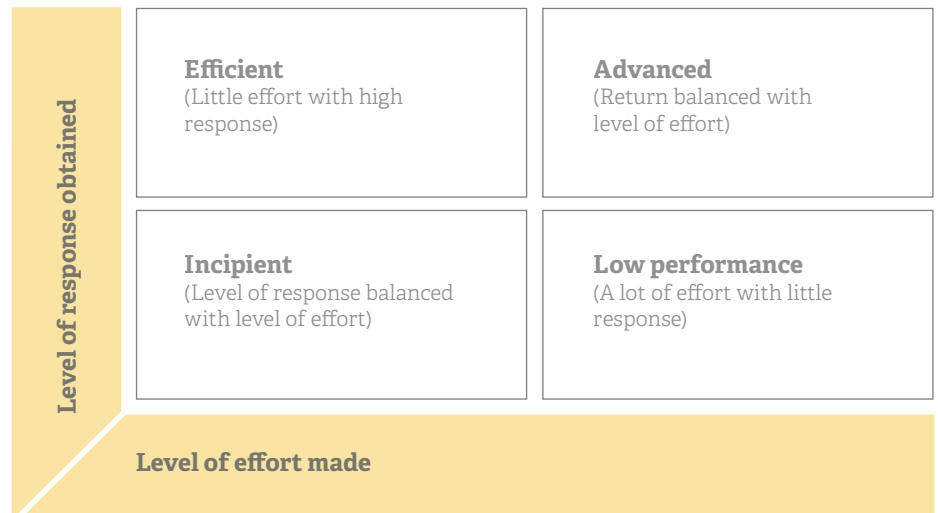
All this information enables plotting the graph for development of the strategy as shown in Figure 13

FIGURE 13
Graph of development of the strategy (example)



In order to further simplify understanding the results of this graph, it is possible to use the diagram shown in figure 14 as it may help to clarify the main ideas it transmits.

FIGURE 14
Chart classifying development of the strategy



3. Development of the method

“Every effort made for data harvesting and analysis must result in the emergence of a series of ideas that enable designing future strategies that are much more effective and efficient.”

We are coming to the end of this section on data analysis, which has given a step-by-step explanation of all components of the study model used in this method. We have seen how to calculate the type of strategy followed by an agent on social media through qualitative analysis of information, as well as its more quantitative aspects:

- ▶ **the intensity of the commitment** to the strategy (the effort made to achieve it)
- ▶ **the response** that is being obtained from the public
- ▶ and **the audience level** it has been capable of congregating.

We have also suggested possible graphic forms of the information to aid in its assimilation.

Food for thought

As we have reiterated on more than one occasion in this document, positioning analysis cannot merely be the mechanics of comparison. **Every effort made for data harvesting and analysis must result in the emergence of a series of ideas that enable designing future strategies that are much more effective and efficient.** It is not really possible to formulate systematic, objective procedures for this point, but we will dare to propose a little food for thought that could simplify this creative process.

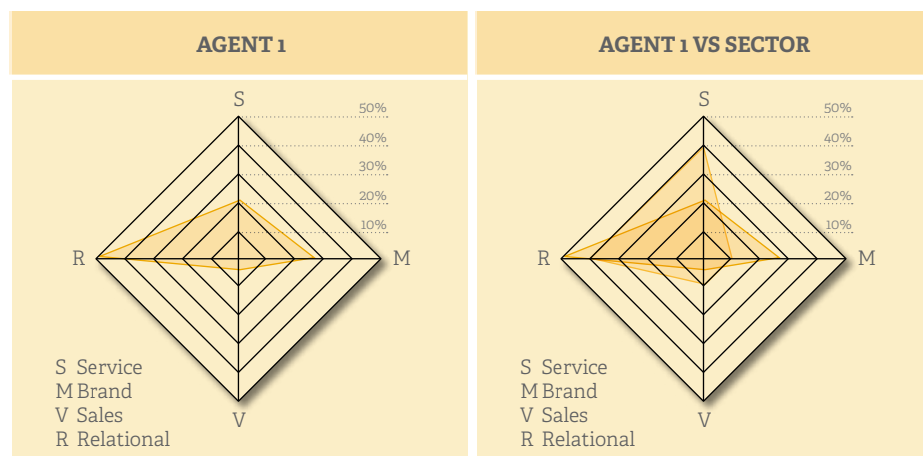
In the first place, the research team must extract a series of **general conclusions from the information.** The idea is to confine the analysis within its most outstanding aspects; what general usage level do the channels have, what types of messages are mainly sent through them, what types of public consult the media analysed, revision of the main indicators highlighting the most outstanding information, highlight the performance of some of the agents, etc. The idea is that any person who has not participated in the study can quickly understand the main traits revealed by the analysis for the selected scope. This task of summarising also forces the investigator to delve into and think about the information much more carefully.

A second item to consider would be related to a possible **rethinking of the company's strategy on social media.** The idea behind this point is that the agent have a clearer concept of the type of strategies currently being developed and with what intensity, know how to contextualise them in the scope of the particular sector and that we simplify, as far as possible, the decision about which strategy could strengthen the position and which, if applicable, weaken it.

3. Development of the method

This begins by comparing the strategy of the company being studied on social media with the rest of the sector:

FIGURE 15
Comparison of an agent's strategy on social media with the rest of the sector



These graphs enable deducing, for example, that Agent 1 has a disadvantage in the services area, that is, competitors are using the social media to provide a service to their customers and Agent 1 does not and so they could regard this as a negative factor. On the other hand, as the sector has practically no activity in the sales area, concentrating on the use of social networks for this purpose could perhaps be an opportunity for differentiation. In any case, these are only examples of the types of ideas and thoughts that should be provoked by a figure like the one above. Depending on the time available, it is possible to extend the study adding comparisons of Agent 1 with each of the competitors or comparisons between each and every agent and the sector. In short, many are the possibilities that the research team must evaluate and select. It is important to point out that the information provided by this analysis is not the only thing to be taken into consideration: it should include aspects such as the general objectives of the agent, the availability and nature of the resources available, etc.

We can then create a classification of the agents depending on the level of intensity they dedicate to each strategy (refer to Figure 16). Continuing with the above example, the idea is that if we think we should do more in the service and sales strategies we can find out which of our competitors in the study are more active in both areas and so monitor their activity in search of good practices. In fact, with the information shown below we can see that Agent 6 may be especially interesting to follow as this agent is in a high position for both service strategy and sales.

FIGURE 16

Classification of agents depending on the strategic intensity (example)

BRAND	Service	BRAND	Brand	BRAND	Sales	BRAND	Relational
Agent 6	72%	Agent 9	60%	Agent 2	14%	Agent 5	81%
Agent 4	69%	Agent 8	31%	Agent 6	12%	Agent 7	73%
Agent 2	46%	Agent 1	27%	Agent 3	10%	Agent 3	57%
Agent 8	38%	Agent 3	20%	Agent 8	8%	Agent 1	48%
Agent 1	23%	Agent 4	10%	Agent 4	7%	Agent 2	33%
Agent 7	18%	Agent 2	7%	Agent 9	7%	Agent 8	23%
Agent 9	13%	Agent 7	6%	Agent 7	4%	Agent 9	20%
Agent 5	13%	Agent 5	4%	Agent 1	2%	Agent 4	14%
Agent 3	12%	Agent 6	3%	Agent 5	2%	Agent 6	12%

Finally, when re-considering the strategy on social media we can develop a matrix of strategic interpretations like those shown in Figure 17 that are an agile summary of the information and perspectives that have appeared (following the previous example).

FIGURE 17

Matrix of strategic interpretations (example)

TYPE OF STRATEGY	Intensity	Coherence with the general strategy of the company	Sector Intensity	Strategic Interpretation
Sales	2%	Low, because the company is immersed in a growth strategy	7%	Opportunity to take advantage of
Services	23%	Low, because customer service should be a flagship of the company	40%	Weakness to overcome
Relationship	48%	The strategy of the company does not include an express reference to the relational aspect	41%	Excess intensity , reduce the activity
Brand	27%	Coherent, because without being a basic aspect, brand construction is important	15%	Maintain or cut-back slightly to favour the effort in other strategies

3. Development of the method

A third item for analysis consists of identifying which cases should be monitored to improve the response and audience obtained with our effort.

The proposed comparison of the effort variable not only analyses who makes more effort in general, but also that for each of the possible strategies. The information in Figures 7 and 9 makes it easy to create the following table:

FIGURE 18
Effort data for sales and service strategies (example)

BRAND	Sales		BRAND	Service	
	Intensity	Effort		Intensity	Effort
Agent 2	14%	39	Agent 4	69%	254
Agent 4	7%	27	Agent 6	72%	145
Agent 6	12%	25	Agent 2	46%	129
Agent 3	10%	12	Agent 1	23%	58
Agent 1	2%	6	Agent 5	13%	38
Agent 5	2%	6	Agent 7	18%	20
Agent 7	4%	4	Agent 3	12%	14
Agent 8	8%	1	Agent 8	38%	5
Agent 9	7%	1	Agent 9	13%	2

This could lead us to think that in the scope of sales strategy there are not many possibilities of harvesting action ideas from our competitors and that perhaps development of this strategy requires gathering good practices from agents outside our sector. However, in service strategy there are a series of competitors with a lot of activity and so we could absorb innumerable ways of developing practices on social media. Agents 4 and 6 are especially relevant as they not only dedicate considerable effort at the service of the user, but the intensity of this strategy is also high, indicating that it is relatively simple to cull good practices from mere observation. In addition, the above data indicates that there is considerable margin for improvement in the service strategy, both in terms of intensity as well as effort, to reach the same level as our competitors. If we again refer to Figures 8 and 9, we can see that, in comparison to other agents, our effort in the relational strategy is perhaps excessive and that we could divert activity to other strategies such as service and sales that seem more interesting.

The data harvesting proposed in this study does not allow for such a “fine” analysis of the information on response and audience. In the first of them, because assessing what type of message (service, sales, relationship or brand) is being answered by each response an agent receives is very costly as it is a manual process that is difficult to automate. In the case of the audience, it is quite impossible to know which part of an agent’s audience is due to a strategy of one type or another. This information would require direct questioning of the agent’s followers, a task rejected for its complexity unless we decide to resort to survey techniques.

3. Development of the method

Continuing with our example, the following table shows the response and the audience of each agent classified by the effort made on the service strategy which, as we have seen is the one with most interest and also the one we can take most advantage of in this example. We have to consult Figures 12 and 13 to get the information we need.

FIGURE 19
Comparison of the response and audience among agents (example)

BRAND	Effort	Intensity	Response	Audience
Agent 4	254	69%	970	105,702
Agent 6	145	72%	837	172,064
Agent 2	129	46%	2,053	64,503
Agent 1	58	23%	1,026	25,374
Agent 5	38	13%	201	9,223
Agent 6	20	18%	503	10,274
Agent 7	14	12%	139	2,635
Agent 8	5	38%	16	849
Agent 9	2	13%	237	4,683

The above figure shows that the work of Agent 6 is giving very good results as the effort is rewarded by response and audience. The fact that there is high intensity in the service strategy indicates that these responses and this audience are related to service messages. Nevertheless, we insist that this conclusion cannot be validated objectively because the information available is not precise enough.

A fourth element we want to include is a certain basic chart of the more specific and tactical questions we should focus on to monitor these cases of agents identified as useful to extract good practices and activity ideas (in our example Agent 6 seems to be a good candidate). Without being exhaustive, one such list could be:

- ▶ **Editorial lines:** What type of content does the agent share? What different subject lines can be identified? How much public content? Who seem to be the creators of these contents? Are special campaigns of any type carried out at regular intervals?
- ▶ **Management of the channels:** Do the agents themselves manage their channels? Do they use any type of corporate user? Can the unique voice of a Community Manager be identified? Is publication diversified among a large number of the agent's people? Is there any type of code, guide, regulation, etc. that defines the publication directives of the agent?
- ▶ **Reaction:** How does the agent react to criticism on the network? And to praise? And to requests? Does there seem to be some type of protocol should a conflict arise? Is there a quick response to messages from people?

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- ▶ **Tone:** What tone does the agent use; close; institutional, adapted to the target public? Are there different forms of communication depending on the channels, the public, the editorial lines?
- ▶ **Community:** Is there a certain perception of community on the channels used by the agent? Is it possible to identify a series of users that are more active and prescribers of the agent? Does the agent take any special care of some of the followers? Are there conversations between users in the agent's spaces without the latter expressly intervening?

In summary, in this phase of food for thought we have tried to introduce the reader to series of guidelines for simplify a more productive interpretation of the information. Remember that without useful conclusions to guide decision making and new actions, the task of positioning analysis makes no sense.

4. About RocaSalvatella

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RocaSalvatella methods

The publication of “Analysis of sectorial positioning on social networks” forms part of the effort by RocaSalvatella to explain and share the tools and methods it uses to perform its activities to provide strategic consulting services.

We share and open, under Creative Commons licence (CC 3.0 by-nc-sa), our methods with professionals, scholars and clients interested in the tools used to produce digital strategy projects.

About RocaSalvatella

Strategic consulting services specialised in the digital transformation of business.

Founded in 2008, with offices in Barcelona and Madrid, it provides services to large companies in multiple business sectors, accompanying their executives when facing the challenges of digitisation by detecting opportunities, understanding the organisation and its culture, organising the activity and orienting it towards measurable results.

Experts in the digital transformation of business: Digitalisation affects all sectors of economic activity, creating new relations, new opportunities and even redefining the business model of some industries. Understanding the digital change, its tempo and consequences is critical for the future of organisations.

Result oriented: The result of incorporating digital logic is not measured by new indicators such as the number of fans, but with the specific metrics of each business: units sold, records harvested in database, decreased arrears in customer payment, customer service response times, etc.

Exploring digital opportunities: Internet, as a technology and area of activity, is becoming the greatest source of business growth and creation of opportunities. The strategies to increase sales and access new markets, as well as the optimisation and reduction of costs are based on the correct use of digital concepts and resources.

Understanding organisations and their culture: Adopting new solutions and managing changes does not depend on technology. We accompany management teams in the correct understanding of how digital activities change business and its functional areas, and provide them with criteria and a strategic outlook.

Resolving the strategy and guiding its implementation: We identify the need and, based on the opportunities offered by the digital environment, define strategic plans, itemise action plans, identify the necessary profiles, evaluate costs and construct management teams.

