

Abstract

Social media in image management for secondary schools

Changes in economic trends, dynamic technology development, education reform, the growing importance of school education and the school as a social rather than demographic institution, and the growing competition on the educational services market forces schools to take intensive actions aimed at strengthening their competitive position. Schools have also become the subject of widespread attention in the face of the challenges of the information society and knowledge society, as well as the ubiquitous risk caused by changing environments and constant competition for students.

Schools operate similarly to business organizations. The school, like every market participant, guided by the principles of competition and striving to achieve its goals, is subject to the rules of competition for clients, who are potential students and, indirectly, their parents, resulting in a conscious creation of a positive image compared to other high schools.

Image is also an important element of the school's strategy, shapes its diversity, distinguishes it from competitors, decides how the school works and how it is perceived in the local environment. When planning the concept of the school's image, one should consider who the educational offer will be addressed to and how the image is created in the minds of the addressees. The basic principle of survival is to attract attention and stand out from others. To achieve this goal, secondary schools should use available image creation tools. Innovative, cheap and easy to use, successfully used by business organizations for several years, are the so-called social media.

Presence in social media gives the chance to use both traditional and modern forms of promotion in the process of shaping one's image. The dynamic development of technology, the universality and reach of social media have resulted in that traditional *public relations* activities are increasingly accompanied by social media activity. A tool in the form of social media as one of the elements of *public relations*, should permanently enter the development and promotion strategy of secondary schools as well. Understanding the possibilities of social media in creating the image of high schools supports the school management process.

The image makes it possible to distinguish the organization from the competition, in the relation organization - environment. Stakeholders who can influence the organization or are influenced by its activities play an important role in shaping this

relationship. Schools are most strongly associated with their own students and their parents. Schools can have the greatest impact on this stakeholder group. In turn, the group of stakeholders to which schools should pay attention are potential students - graduates of schools at a lower level of education, the image among this group of stakeholders is the most important for the school. Secondary schools, following the example of modern organizations, should take care of relations with their stakeholders, using the possibilities of social media, because lasting relationships influence a positive image. The conscious use of social media can lead to the creation of a coherent image of secondary schools.

The subject of the dissertation is social media in managing the image of secondary schools. Social media are also increasingly popular on the education market. Growing popularity and growth dynamics make social media an interesting research area. Presenting the issues of the secondary schools' presence in social media has allowed the determination of the level of use of social networking sites and the balance of benefits and risks of these practices for schools.

The main purpose of the work is to define social media activities that should be undertaken to create a positive image of high schools.

This doctoral thesis indicates how to effectively use social media in shaping the image of high schools. The research showed the functional potential of social media solutions and possibilities from the point of view of meeting the image needs of schools. The results indicate that social media is an important space in the functioning of schools, which, if properly managed, will bring numerous benefits. All the surveyed schools use social media and the school's website as a tool for promoting and building their image in the local environment, which is undoubtedly the school's strength. The analysis clarifies the area of applications of social media in organizations explored in the literature. It fills the research gap in relation to the problem of using social media for image purposes and proposing effective solutions for the needs of secondary schools.

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