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(CBUSO1001U) Copenhagen Business School Master of Science in Business
Administration and Ebusiness Group Case Report, Group 7 Case Study: “

Maersk Line: B2B Social Media – “ It’s Communication, Not

Marketing” Christian Dyrhøj (080793-2071) Sebastian Engelmann (270894-
3633) Karla Nüsing (160393-4624) Jara Osterfeld (040194-4370) Date of

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Characters/Page: 2, 263 Maersk Line: B2B Social Media Group Case Report,

Group 7 1 Introduction The purpose of this report is to analyze the success of
Maersk Line’s social media strategy and to give an overview of its

management and competitors.

The basis for this report is the case study Maersk Line: B2B Social Media – “
Its Communication, not Marketing” (Katona & Sarvary, 2014). Maersk Line’s
social media strategy was the first in the container shipping industry that

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received recognition from social media experts. Hence, this report will also provide findings about the implementation of social media for B2B companies in general. Why do you think Maersk Line was so successful in social media? What are the key drivers of their success? Maersk Line began using social media in 2011. Back then only Jonathan Wichmann, the driving force behind its success, was responsible for their social media activity. Since social media was much more used by B2C companies compared to B2B companies, Maersk Line has not focused on social media before. The general perception was that the company was boring and that no one was interested in them.

Therefore, it was believed to be a waste of time and resources. However, this has changed after Wichmann's social media management actually skyrocketed. There are five particularly important drivers for its success, which are presented in the following: Maersk Line had the right approach to social media. Maersk Line thought of the end-user as being the consumer who they could engage with. They didn't think social media as marketing in the sense of pushing products and sell them to consumers. Instead their mind-set was that social media was about communication and engagement. Their focus was to increase brand awareness, humanize the company and to connect customers.

Also, they adapted a content strategy based on storytelling which ensured further engagement and reach. At all times, they made sure to consider if a post was relevant and interesting for the end-user – else they would not post it. Trust from the management. Wichmann was trusted by the management

at Maersk Line, which allowed him to act spontaneously and act flexibly on social media.

It was a big advantage because Maersk Line thus avoided predictable and boring content compared to other B2B companies. Normally a social media department in a B2B company must get everything approved by the management, and this means Maersk Line: B2B Social Media Group Case Report, Group 7 2 that it takes a long time for a company to make just one post. Jonathan Wichmann didn't need approval, which made it possible for him to be flexible and to engage with the users. It showed a different side of the company, which gave them lots of new followers. First mover status gave a head start Maersk Line was the first mover of B2B companies on social media. It gave the company a kick-start and many likes. Their use of social media was something new and interesting which gave them many likes in the beginning.

On top of that Maersk Line was a big company with many employees. This was a big advantage as many of the employees made sure to like Maersk Line on Facebook and then the company attracted even more likes from the employees' networks. The company learned from best practices Even though Maersk Line was considered a first mover of B2B companies on social media, there were some other B2B companies that used social media. Wichmann made sure to learn from best practices before he launched Maersk Line on social media. By learning from best practices like Dell and GE, Wichmann avoided common mistakes and developed a successful strategy. Especially thinking of social media as communication instead of marketing was a crucial part of the strategy (see first point). Understanding of various social
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media channels The company understood the difference between the various social media channels.

It is crucial to have a unique strategy on all the different social media channels as there are different target groups. Wichmann was aware of this right way and acted accordingly, which means shaping the content to the appropriate channel. In general, the company used Facebook to engage with followers in a visual and conversational way, Twitter as a news outlet (initially), and LinkedIn as a platform to reach its customers.

Wichmann ranked their social media channels from least to most “corporate” and segmented them into four quadrants (fans, customers, employees, and experts), which turned out to a very successful strategy. How do you think Maersk Line’s competitors will react to the company’s success in social media? Maersk Line: B2B Social Media Group Case Report, Group 7 3 There are four different possible ways for Maersk Line’s competitors to react to the company’s success in social media. Two of these options include becoming active in social media, whereas the other two would follow a passive approach.

Four options to react to competitors As a first option, the competitors could ignore what Maersk Line does on social media. This is because they might stick to the prevailing industry view that social media is not pertinent to the container shipping industry. Furthermore, they might think that social media simply does not translate into sales numbers. The second option, includes that the competitors observe what Maersk Line does on social media.

By this, the competitors are able to monitor and react to the social media activity later, for example in case it turns out that social media actually does add to the business of a container shipping company. If the competitors decide to actively react, they might copy the approach of Maersk Line, because the approach has proven to be successful. However, the competitor would run the risk of being perceived as a copycat. Finally, the competitors might see the success of Maersk Line as an inspiration to create a customized approach to social media that fits their company's strategy and goals.

One possible manner to implement such a tailored reaction is explained in the next section. Suggested Competitors' Strategy In order to react in a structured way, it is important for the competitor to build a solid basis. In a first step, the company should therefore pool the competences. This means a social media focus team is established coordinating all related topics, and functioning as a contact for everybody inside and outside the company. It should set measurable targets (e. g., conversion rate), which should support the company in achieving its overall goal and therefore match the company's strategy.

Furthermore, it is important to align these targets with the top-management of the company so that the internal support to accomplish the targets is provided. Maersk Line: B2B Social Media Group Case Report, Group 7 4 The next step in actively reacting to Maersk Line's success in social media is to execute the individualized social-media strategy. This means the company is actually building its own social media presence. As a basic principle, the company should focus on its concrete target audience. In concrete terms, <https://assignbuster.com/pp1-that-no-one-was-interested-in/>

this means it could be more rewarding to concentrate on one or two platforms (e. g., LinkedIn) instead of being somewhat active on every platform. To support a successful social media presence the company should share industry relevant news and information.

By doing so the company underlines its core competences, which will be helpful in creating leads. The last part of implementing a successful social media presence includes reflecting and measuring the impact. Therefore, it is important that the performance is tracked all the time.

This should then be compared to the goals set at the beginning of the process. Furthermore, metrics will support the company in finding the most rewarding social media platform, which will then enable the company to better target its audience. However, this process will certainly take some time to be implemented and show a measurable success (i. e., in sales numbers). Furthermore, Maersk Line has an edge of time over its competition in the field of social media - this also includes more experience.

Consequently, it is important for the competitors to give the social media strategy a fair amount of time to establish before critically evaluating it. What are the challenges facing Maersk Line in social media going forward? From the point of the case study, Maersk is facing the following challenges in their social media strategy: Personage First, the fact that Wichmann is leaving the company is a major challenge to overcome.

Although his successor Nina Skyum-Nielsen has already been working in the company's social media department before, Wichmann's trusting relationships with key people from the management that allowed him to act

freely and flexibly in his approach to social media have turned out as a driving force behind the success. Whether Skyum-Nielsen can experience a similar level of trust and freedom is uncertain, and subsequently it is to question whether this will limit the future success of Maersk's social media strategy. Maersk Line: B2B Social Media Group Case Report, Group 7 5 Structural Change The internal pressure Skyum-Nielsen experienced already at the beginning of her time in office to integrate the social media department into the overall marketing strategy is a second challenge to overcome. While such a structural change can also be beneficial in terms of efficiency and better-integrated communications, it is also related to less freedom in the decision-making process. This could ultimately lead to prolonged response times, which is key in social media marketing, and the strategy could lose its explorative approach that Wichmann followed. Therefore, the integration of the social media department into the overall marketing department requires clearly identifying the social media objectives, and subsequently making a well-informed decision that reflects the objectives best.

Reliable financial figures A third internal challenge for Maersk's social media strategy is its value and the return on investment (ROI). Although sales were not one of Wichmann's main objectives but his focus was on more intangible assets, making profit still is the bottom line for the company. Yet, the ROI calculations following Wichmann were only based on existing studies. While those were drawn on a B2B background, too, it is questionable whether they also apply to Maersk since the largest proportion of their audience were only private shipping enthusiasts rather than potential customers.

Budget allocations and decisions on expanding the social media department need to be made while keeping this into account, particularly when considering that the initial success has receded which leads to the following challenge. Future social media strategy Being the first company in the shipping industry to use social media was the driving force behind Maersk's success. Using storytelling to create a buzz around the usually low-profile industry enabled the company to attract attention from a wide audience. Yet, it is increasingly difficult for Maersk to continue to attract a similar amount of attention, as there is an information overload for consumers nowadays (Laudon & Traver, 2017). While competitors have barely started to use social media in their marketing, which has been elaborated in the previous question, Maersk is also competing for attention online with companies from other industries. As a result, it requires Maersk Line: B2B Social Media Group Case Report, Group 7 6 developing a content strategy that is innovative, which might in fact be more difficult in a low-profile industry like the shipping industry and in a B2B context. A second challenge that evolves around Maersk's social media audience and that has briefly been raised in relation to a possible structural change is the future objectives Maersk is trying to fulfil with their social media marketing.

Maersk experienced a rapid growth in numbers of followers when they started using social media but since the date of the case study and today, numbers barely grew further. Therefore, it requires a shift from acquisition to build awareness to retention to build relationships with the audience, which also requires an integrated marketing communications plan to be successful in building their brand and which leads to the next section. What should

Maersk Line do next? What areas should the company focus on and why? Considering the challenges mentioned above, Maersk should set a new vision for their B2B social media in the future. Their original goal was to bring Maersk Line closer to its customers (Katona & Sarvary, 2014).

Through their previous social media activities, they successfully generated brand awareness and broadened their brand's reach. They created appealing content to a wide audience and established a memorable brand image through real-life story telling. In this way, Maersk Line humanized their brand and made it more tangible for costumers. However, most of the channels, such as Instagram, Pinterest, and Flickr, are B2C customer targeted and do not result in lead generation. In order to create sales opportunities and make use of their large number of followers Maersk needs to identify and concentrate on the most relevant marketing channels for B2B marketing. Nowadays, more than the majority of professionals use social media daily to get the latest news, get industry insights or inspiring ideas (Schreiner, 2014). Three social media channels are especially important to Maersk for engaging with promising customers and improving their existing customers' loyalty: LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

In the following, it will explain how these channels can contribute to Maersk's social media success. LinkedIn As the most trusted professional content platform, LinkedIn is the best platform to target B2B customers.

Professionals recognize LinkedIn as a trustworthy source for professional content (Schreiner, 2014).

Industry Experts share news, engage in discussions and engage with customers. Maersk Line: B2B Social Media Group Case Report, Group 7 7 Maersk is advised to focus on creating professional content in order to establish credibility and to attract like-minded customers. Through sharing webinars, podcasts showcasing interviews with industry experts and blog entries of employees, they will position themselves as trusted industry expert and as a valuable source for industry knowledge. By using their existing connections on LinkedIn, the content is likely to be shared and reaches a large number of users. The content created by employees, for example blog entries about the daily business, can support to give industry insights and engage customers with Maersk's business. This will soon result in more lead generation.

Furthermore, it is important to combine different social platforms in order to address all target groups and create an appearance on multiple devices. Hence, Maersk should integrate their engagement on LinkedIn with Twitter to use their credibility to help spread validated content even faster. Twitter Maersk's Twitter account is managed by employees and hence creates transparency in a simple and effective way (Perek, 2014). The company needs to ensure that the posts are on time and always up-to-date to ensure a trusted image among followers. Twitter should be used to share news with the industry, humanize the brand, and interact publicly with various stakeholders.

The target groups are fans, employees and experts. Facebook The third social media identified for successful B2B social media marketing is Facebook. With the user group being mostly B2C customers, Facebook does <https://assignbuster.com/pp1-that-no-one-was-interested-in/>

not seem to be a platform that will result in business opportunities.

Nevertheless, Facebook established a dominant market presence and its influence is too big for companies to ignore.

Maersk should use Facebook accordingly and try to engage with users through sharing engaging content through stories and visuals in a conversational way (Moth, 2015). By building upon the most promising social media channels, Maersk can have a lucrative impact on their bottom line growth. Customers engage with technical insights and recognize the economic value proposition of working with Maersk. Once clients acknowledged Maersk's expertise, Maersk Maersk Line: B2B Social Media Group Case Report, Group 7 8 gains a top-of-mind awareness and will become the go-to shipping company for industry clients.

At the same time, the sharing of industry knowledge can give Maersk valuable insights and can result in the reduction of costs and optimization of shipping costs through the improvement of existing processes. Besides the appearance on important social media channels, it is important to link back social media activities to content on the company's website or company page. Once the interest of costumers is spiked, they might deepen the newly acquired knowledge through more professional content or through the contact to an industry expert (Schreiner, 2014). Therefore, it is advisable that Maersk sets up a unified marketing process and focusses on multichannel marketing. At the moment, the social media department stands alone and is separated from the others. In order to guarantee a unified marketing strategy so that the company is able to track the marketing activities effectively, and to approach future customers, the B2B social <https://assignbuster.com/pp1-that-no-one-was-interested-in/>

media should be integrated into the existing marketing department.

Moreover, it is important to establish a process for contacting clients that engaged with Maersk's social media channels not only to create new business opportunities but also to guarantee a satisfying customer service.

Conclusions This report has identified the right approach to social media, trust from top-management, first mover advantage, the company's ability to learn from best practice, and understanding the different social media channels as the main factors for the success of Maersk Line in social media. Furthermore, it has highlighted four possible ways for Maersk Line's competitors to react as well as it has developed a suggested strategy for competitors to react to Maersk Line's success. Personage, internal expectations, reliable financial figures, and relationship building through social media has been identified as the main challenges for Maersk Line in the future.

Finally, this report has identified LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook as the main social media channels to further improve the positive impact of social media on the company's overall performance. Maersk Line: B2B Social Media Group Case Report, Group 7 9 Bibliography Katona, Z., & Sarvary, M.

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