

#TransformFFA: An Analysis of Social Media Content During the 2016 National FFA Convention

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Abstract

The proliferation of social media has the ability to considerably impact stakeholders' perspective of an organization's brand. Due to this relationship, social media analysis is crucial to executing informed brand communication strategies. In October 2016, the brand communication strategies of the National FFA Organization were focused on promoting the 89th National FFA Convention. A large portion of these efforts and resources were dedicated towards the utilization of social media. This study was designed as a content analysis of the National FFA Organization's social media presence during the dates of the convention. The goal was to identify the prominent themes of communication and the alignment of these themes with the organizational brand. Conversations on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat yielded a total of 344 posts for evaluation. The results indicated the presence of seven predominate themes: recognition, connectivity, appreciation, spirit, service, influence, and support. The researchers suggest opportunities exist for closer alignment between published social media content and the defined organizational and event brands. Specific attention should be placed on event-specific theme promotion. Renewed efforts to increase interactivity will allow for stakeholders to take part in the brand co-building process. It should be ensured that all communications are an accurate reflection of the brand's image, connections, and reputation.

Keywords

social media, brand, content analysis, organization, case study

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According to its mission, the National FFA Organization makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education (National FFA Organization, 2015d). The National FFA Organization's brand mirrors these three tenants of its mission statement: premier leadership, personal growth, and career success (National FFA Organization, 2015b). Well-established branding resources have been made available to promote the following attributes. The organization has remained true to its historical roots by steadfastly pursuing its original goal to prepare future generations for the challenges of feeding a growing population. The organization continues to dutifully follow the philosophy set forth by its founders that agriculture is more than planting and harvesting - it's a science, it's a business, and it's an art. The National FFA Organization has self-declared to exemplify the personality of it's hard-working, trustworthy, enthusiastic, moral, and ethical membership. The FFA encourages all communication associated with the organization to carry a tone and voice that is encouraging, aspirational, knowledgeable, accessible, helpful, and steeped in tradition. The utmost organizational priority is serving its extensive and diverse membership (National FFA Organization, 2015b).

The National FFA Convention is held annually and is considered to be the organization's premier gathering (National FFA Organization, 2016). The 89th Convention was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, in October 2016, and had an attendance of 64,094 members, advisors, and guests. While the entire convention typified the aforementioned organizational brand, it also operated under a unique annual event brand. The 2016 theme was "Transform: Purpose to Action" (National FFA Organization, 2016, para. 1). A large portion of the convention interactions occurs amongst the 64,094 members, advisors, and guests in attendance at the convention. However, a good deal of this interaction also takes place online through social media for those attendees that are in Indianapolis and those at home. When asked what users are hoping to get out of their social media interactions during the convention, National FFA Social Media Specialist, Geoffrey Miller, shares that they simply want to feel connected and part of the convention experience (G. Miller, personal communication, January 25, 2017).

FFA's social media presence extends across numerous social media platforms including Facebook (National FFA Organization), Instagram (@nationalffa), Twitter (@NationalFFA), and Snapchat (@NationalFFA and paid geofilters). The followership for each of these platforms at the time of convention was respectively: 350,515 likes, 71,728 followers, and 66,097 followers. Facebook remains the organization's largest driver of social media visibility by a factor of at least two as they reached 4,418,899 unique users during the convention (G. Miller, personal communication, December 7, 2016). The hashtag used to distinguish all convention-related materials was "#TransformFFA." During the 2016 convention week, this team collectively produced 718 posts that drove 1.88 million engagements and 19.9 million impressions (G. Miller, personal communication, December 7, 2016).

Social media engagement plays an instrumental role in the interactivity of convention for participants in attendance and even FFA stakeholders who are viewing from afar (G. Miller, personal communication, January 25, 2017). It is utilized to share real-time results and highlights, promote nearly all convention events, build a community of engaged attendees, and serve as a robust communication tool to put forth important messages and updates. Social media is viewed as a channel for the organization to demonstrate what National Convention is. The organization's

Marketing/Communications and Brand Management (MARCOMBS) team also appreciates the influence its social media content can have on an individual member. Social media is seen as a vehicle that encapsulates the convention experience in a way that members can share with those who might be unfamiliar with the organization or event. For those who have hung up their blue jacket, it is seen as a path for them to recall past experiences and exhibit pride in the organization to their own social groups (G. Miller, personal communication, January 25, 2017).

According to the MARCOMBS team, the organization's social media presence is considered to be a unique avenue to carry out key communication objectives and provides a direct reflection of the FFA brand. The organization has placed a sizable emphasis on developing, maintaining, and promoting their brand because it believes that its brand is "the image we put forth as an organization and what the world sees" (National FFA Organization, 2015b, para. 1). The organization's approach to branding is reflective of the principle that "branding does not happen by accident; communication professionals work to strengthen the brand and continue to demonstrate its value over time" (Settle, Baker, & Irani, 2014, p. 2). A key piece of successful branding is portraying a consistent identity in online and offline communities. In the context of agriculture and natural resources organizations, branding refers to how they are perceived by the general public (Settle, Goodwin, Telg, Irani & Carter, 2012). "While it is not plausible to affect the public's perceptions of agriculture and natural resources as a whole through any one action, it is plausible to affect the public's perceptions of individual organizations one study at a time" (Settle et al., 2012, p. 2). Therefore, the practice of agricultural communications stands to gain a great deal of insight by evaluating agricultural organizations' social media presence, such as the National FFA Organization, to determine how they align with carefully crafted brands.

Literature Review

American business management writer, Tom Peters (1987) is known for ascertaining that the world is "branded, branded, branded, branded" (para. 3). Brands are not only prevalent in today's market, but brands contain a significant value. According to Vernuccio (2014), organizational brands become the center of gravity for developing and maintaining a valuable identity, image, reputation, and relationships. They have the capability to convey "uniform quality, credibility, and experience" (Goodson, 2012, para. 1). This study elected to embrace a broad perspective of a brand as outlined by Jerry McLaughlin,

"Put simply, your "brand" is what your prospect thinks of when he or she hears your brand name. It's everything the public thinks it knows about your brand offering—both functional and emotional values. Your brand name exists objectively; people can see it. It's fixed. But your brand exists only in someone's mind." (2011, para. 9)

The concepts of branding and brand communication have become cornerstones for the communication discipline (Vernuccio, 2014). Communicators are becoming increasingly aware that brands are universal in both online and offline settings. "A brand is brand regardless of environment. What is different is the way the brand's essence is executed.... To thrive on the Internet, a looser form of brand control is needed, welcoming the active participation of consumers" (De Chernatony, 2001, p. 193). The interaction between organizations and stakeholders allows for the co-building of a brand (Vernuccio, 2014). The most conducive platforms for facilitating the co-building of a brand between these two entities are social media networks. The level of interactivity offered by social media platforms affords the opportunity for

stakeholders to “contribute directly and continuously in the process of brand building and become co-producers of the values that underpin the brand” (Vernuccio, 2014, p. 213).

User-participation and user-generated content are the two core tenants of social networking sites according to Tredinnick (2006). These functionalities provide a variety of ways for users to become engaged with organizations. The web 2.0 evolution has ushered in a new age of opportunities for organizations to reach out to and engage the public and stakeholders (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Social media has reached such a point of saturation in today’s social culture that it has been proven to impact the values, attitudes, beliefs, intentions, and behaviors of individuals (Lai & To, 2015). Social media also provides a unique outlet for organizations to impact stakeholder perceptions of their brand through social media dialogues versus broadcast monologues (Lai & To, 2015). Social media can be leveraged for branding communication through three primary practices: reaching out to online opinion leaders, listening to stakeholders, and ensuring that all communication reinforces the brand’s “connections, image, and reputation” (Vernuccio, 2014, p. 215).

Social media tools are beneficial methods of communicating for organizations in the non-profit sector. Social media can be used to achieve organizational goals by reaching target audiences, promoting a specific cause, and further developing communication strategies (Curtis et al., 2010). Beyond achieving organizational goals, Wagler and Cannon (2015) contend that organizations have the ability to become thought and opinion leaders through their social media accounts. Being a trusted voice for information could result in audiences turning to the organization for “accurate, authentic, and interesting content” (Wagler & Cannon, 2015, p. 57). Some of the strategies to establish opinion leadership include: building brand equity through content marketing, audience engagement, and thinking personally.

In order to reap the benefits of a successful online presence, Kerpen (2015) asserts the need for organizations to become “likable.” It is suggested that this likable status develops through forming the brand personality, acknowledging follower feedback, asking questions, sharing stories, and inspiring users to share their own stories (Kerpen, 2015). Social media capabilities can also be leveraged during event promotion to share both organizational and event brand content. According to Glosby (2015), “using social media increases your credibility and amplifies your brand’s message to all who view your convention” (para. 2). “If a [stakeholder] sees that you invest in educating and supporting your organization while having fun doing it, your brand loyalty and integrity can increase exponentially” (Glosby, 2015, para. 2).

Glosby (2015) dictates the following best practices for event social media execution. Staff members should be designated to listen to and engage social media users during the event. A short and recognizable hashtag should be crafted to brand all event promotion that is posted on social media. Attendees should be encouraged to utilize the hashtag by featuring it prominently on all convention materials. If feasible, live streaming the event should be considered to allow those who are unable to attend to participate to some degree. Provide monitors at the location to highlight current social media activity. Social media provides an additional outlet to show sponsor appreciation by tagging their social media pages. Recognizing participants by sharing their content, “tagging” them in posts, or other forms of engagement demonstrates that the organization values their members and invests in individuals. In an ideal situation, an effort should be made to capture each and every attendee during the course of the event (Glosby, 2015).

The rapid diffusion of social media and subsequent stakeholder perceptions have the potential to have “a considerable effect on an organization” (Lai & To, 2015, p. 139). The pervasive and multidimensional nature of online relationships between non-profits and stakeholders have led

these interactions to become imperative to organizational performance (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Due to the intimate ties between branding, social media content, and organizational success, Lai and To (2015) posit that it “is crucial to convert social media content into information, key concepts, and themes” (p. 138). As suggested by Lai and To (2015), this study sought to generate knowledge and formulate strategies based on the themes resulting from social media content analysis.

Purpose and Research Questions

To better understand how social media content reflects an agricultural organization’s brand, the purpose of the study was to uncover the predominant themes of the National FFA Organization’s social media conversations on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat during the 2016 National FFA Convention. Furthermore, this study sought to determine the alignment of these themes with the organization’s prescribed brand. The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

Research Question 1: What themes emerged in the National FFA Organization’s social media communication during the 2016 National FFA Convention?

Research Question 2: How did these communications and themes reflect the National FFA Organization’s brand?

Methods

The intent of this study was to evaluate the content posted to various social media outlets by the National FFA Organization during the time frame of the 2016 National FFA Convention. Specific attention was placed on exposing the prevalent themes presented through the content. For these reasons, a case study approach was employed to conduct the evaluation. Investigating social media and qualitative methodologies partner together to allow for in-depth examination of why and how users engage online (Wagler & Cannon, 2015).

Case study practices as prescribed by Creswell (2007), guided this exploration to be conducted within a bounded system that led to a descriptive report of the case, and resulting case-based themes. Content analysis is “any technique for making an inference by objectively and systematically identifying specified characterizes of messages” (Holsti, 1969, p. 14). It was selected for this study because it provides insight into situations which is not limited by existing viewpoints or methodologies, allowing new topics to be discovered (Lai & To, 2015).

This analysis addressed content published by the organization across four social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. These accounts were monitored and archived during the dates of the convention, October 19 to October 22, 2016. During this time period, 40 Facebook posts were collected, 168 tweets, 53 Instagram posts, and 83 Snapchats, for a compilation of 344 published posts. These posts were chronicled through URLs and screenshots taken during the convention.

A coding instrument and instructions were developed by the researcher to assist in analyzing each piece of content. The instrument recorded qualitative data such as the original text contained in the post, descriptions of attached or included media, and factors from both text and media that contributed to emergent themes. The coding instrument was tailored to the terminology and available analytics of each platform while capturing cohesive data to code for theme presence. A proportionate stratified sample was gathered using an online research randomizer. The resulting

sample consisted of eight Facebook posts, 33 tweets, 11 Instagram posts, and 17 Snapchats. This created a total pool of 69 posts to be analyzed to ensure inter-rater agreement (Hruschka, Schwarts, St. John, Picone-Decaro, Jenkins, & Carey, 2004). The primary researcher and two co-coders, all graduate students in agricultural communications, coded the 69 posts and reached an 81.87% average pairwise agreement, with a base acceptable pairwise agreement of 80.0% (Lombard, Snyder-Dutch, & Bracken, 2002). The primary researcher then coded the remaining of the aggregate 344 pieces of content.

The inductive coding process was used to identify emerging themes which were then further refined (Saldana, 2012). Thematic analysis “is able to offer the systematic element characteristic of content analysis, but also permits the researcher to combine analysis of the frequency of codes with analysis of their meaning in context, thus adding the advantages of the subtlety and complexity of a truly qualitative analysis” (Marks & Yardley, 2004, p. 57). Manifest content, which is directly observable, along with latent level content, in which the theme is implied, were both coded for in this study (Marks & Yardley, 2004). The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis (Glaser, 1965) was used to analyze the data and reconceptualize the identified themes. This was done by assigning incidents to categories, solidifying category limitations, and labeling themes. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), evaluating the worth of a study relies on its ability to evoke trustworthiness. To meet these acceptable standards of trustworthiness, the researchers followed Lincoln and Guba’s guidelines for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Results

Research Question 1: What themes emerged in the National FFA Organization’s social media communication during the 2016 National FFA Convention?

Between the dates of October 19 to 22, 2016, an examination of National FFA social media accounts produced the following number of posts per platform; Facebook: 40, Twitter: 168, Instagram: 53, and Snapchat: 83. Seven primary themes were distinguished during the thematic analysis of these posts. The seven primary themes included: recognition, connectivity, appreciation, spirit, service, influence, and support.

Recognition theme. The recognition theme was by far the most salient of the themes present in the content. The convention is treated as a celebration of the year’s accomplishments, recognizing students and supporters for their outstanding achievements; and the organization’s social media activity reflected that. Congratulatory words were offered to the 24 career development event champions, 47 proficiency category winners, National AgriScience Fair finalists, Honorary American Degree recipients, and National Chapter award winners. For example, a Snapchat image of one recipient receiving their award onstage under the traditional white arch was labeled with the text, “Our Honorary American Degree Recipients!” underscored by three gold medal emojis. Profiles of the four Stars Over America were published to the National FFA blog and shared on Facebook and Twitter. Facebook was utilized to recognize members by sharing the following, “The American FFA Degree is awarded to FFA members who have demonstrated the highest level of commitment to FFA. This morning, 3,780 FFA members will be recognized for the award....”

Connectivity theme. The connectivity theme played into the idea of establishing connections for stakeholders to engage in convention happenings through various media and platforms. Thus, this theme had a strong technology undertone referencing different sources of

connection: RFD-TV, live stream, Rural Radio 147, and the convention app. This theme often encouraged users to participate or get involved in some way by watching, tuning in, downloading, or following through these sources. The connectivity theme frequently carried a sense of urgency and immediacy with language such as “starts now,” “it’s time for,” and “live now.” It was often implied that failing to connect would result in the user “missing out.” An example of several of these sub-themes coming together was displayed on Facebook through the following post, “It’s time for No. 3! Watch the third General Session broadcast now! Tune in as we announce the Stars Over America recipients #Transform FFA. TV: RFD-TV. Radio: Ruralradio147. Stream: (link to live stream content).”

Appreciation theme. The appreciation theme was used to express thankfulness. This gratitude was extended to various stakeholders throughout the event. After each national officer’s retiring address, a post similar to the following was published to Facebook, “Congratulations and thank you Abbey Gretsch for your year of service on the National FFA Officer Team!” An overwhelming majority of the appreciation content was directed toward supporters of the organization. “Another year of incredible support of FFA members from the donors and supporters of the National FFA Foundation. Thank you!” was seen on Facebook. Instagram was used to thank keynote speakers and special guests for attending the convention. “Thank you @ColinRyanSpeaks for your inspirational words tonight regarding standing up for yourself and making the small changes in your life transform into big differences.” Appreciation was also expressed to American servicemen and women on several occasions.

Spirit theme. Excitement and enthusiasm were displayed as the spirit theme. Spirit was evident through the energy level of individuals and the buzz of energy that existed in the convention culture and environment. This theme came to life predominately through visual representations on Snapchat. Once such snap asked, “How do the National FFA Officers prep for the opening session?” along with a video of the officers dancing backstage before the session. This enthusiasm extended to a snap that showed members flooding the stage during pre-session to dance to the “Cupid Shuffle.” Another snap posed the question, “Convention special guest?” over a video of a member in an inflatable T-Rex suit dancing through the expo. The subtheme of excitement often accompanied the recognition theme as the excited and surprised reactions of award winners were showcased through images.

Service theme. The service theme was characterized by selflessness, volunteerism, and community focus. The service theme was displayed on a patriotic level through Snapchat with an image of the presentation of colors as onlookers have their hands placed over their hearts. The accompanying text read, “Thank you to those who serve our country.” Facebook depicted scenes of members engaging in service activities in the surrounding communities: packing meals, organizing books, and cleaning up landscapes through hundreds of images placed in albums dedicated to convention activities. This theme was often placed in conjunction with the final line of the FFA motto, “Living to Serve.” “Thank you to every one of our FFA members who volunteered their time with National Days of Service and demonstrated the last line of the FFA motto, ‘Living to Serve.’ #FFAProud.”

Influence theme. Leadership, impact, and inspiration contributed to the influence theme. The influence theme was exhibited on Instagram through the images and influential quotes posted in tribute to each national officer’s retiring address and keynote speaker’s presentation. Snapchat was used to document the election of the new officers for the coming year. Six individual snaps were shared as each new officer’s name and position was announced. Users would also find videos of each new officer on Instagram as they expressed what it means to them

to be in a position of leadership for the Nation FFA Organization and what impact they hope to have in the coming year. The influence theme was also evidenced by stories and statements of the impact the organization had on current and alumni members.

Support theme. The support theme frequently came to life during the recognition of convention sponsorship showing how they gave of their time, talent, and resources. “Another year of incredible support of FFA members from the donors and supporters of the National FFA Foundation,” was found on Facebook. This text was in juxtaposed with an image showing a figure of \$21,000,000 on the arena screen, the monetary amount the Foundation raised over the past year. Instagram was utilized as a platform to encourage members to engage with supporters in the expo. For example, members could “Put down [their] roots in @syngenta’s FFA Expo booth 535!” or get a picture with various photo booth props like the one at the Zoetis booth that sports the hashtag: #Zoetis4FFA. The support theme was also used to convey the extensive support systems that students have at home by sharing images of members with their parents and agricultural education instructors.

Research Question 2: How did these communications and themes reflect the National FFA Organization's brand?

When considering the defined elements of the National FFA Brand, the organization has created three areas of focus: “Who We Are,” “Who We Serve,” and “Our Personality” (National FFA Organization, 2015b). The following highlights how the themes and content shared during convention align with these brand elements and the convention theme.

“Who we are.” Emphasis on the “Who We Are” portion of the brand was extracted directly from the organization’s mission, to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. The brand emphasizes the three components of premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. The influence theme directly aligned with the premier leadership portion of the brand. The present themes provided some loose connections to the other two elements, personal growth, and career success. References to personal growth were seen through highlights of convention activities such as student workshops. Career success had connections to content about career development events and opportunities in the career expo. However, the evidence of personal growth and career success in the social media content was not as substantial as that of premier leadership.

The traditions and agricultural roots of the organization are also contributing factors to this portion of the brand. The convention-oriented content eluded to tradition through visuals of the national officers reciting opening ceremonies, speaking finalists delivering the FFA Creed, and images of members in official dress. The references to agriculture were mainly through content delivered by speakers outside of the organization during their addresses, such as references made by Secretary Vilsack and comments by Jason Brown. The connections to agriculture in the content produced by the organization were lacking.

“Who we serve.” When prompted, “who do we serve?” The organization responds with, “our members.” It describes an extensive membership of more than 649,000 students from more than 7,600 chapters. It is noted that members have different motives for joining the organization, and different interests that spur their continued involvement. The diversity of its membership is likened to the diversity in the agricultural industry. The themes present strong ties to the organization’s purpose of serving the members through both the service and support themes. The recognition theme also celebrated member accomplishments.

“Our personality.” The personality of the organization is intended to be analogous to the personality embodied by its members. The organization describes its members, and consequently itself, as the following. FFA members are considered trustworthy because they are honest and fair in the game of life. Members communicate in an appropriate, purposeful, and positive manner to promote enthusiasm. A high level of conduct at all times leads FFA members to be seen as moral and ethical. With a faith born not of words, but of deeds, FFA members are hard-working in all areas of their life as leaders and scholars. The enthusiastic personality of the brand was captured through the spirit theme. Members were shown to be hard-working through visuals of engaging in laborious activities such as National Days of service. However, the moral/ethical and trustworthy personality traits were somewhat absent from the predominant themes and content.

“Transform: Purpose to action.” The description of the convention theme articulates the ability of members to “transform” the message of agriculture.” In terms of social media content, transformation references were made through videos of speakers sharing the message. The hashtag, #TransformFFA, and the convention logo proliferated media content. However, as an emergent theme, connections to transformation were surprisingly absent.

Conclusions

The goal of this study was to gain greater insight into the themes presented through the National FFA Organization’s social media presence during the 2016 National FFA Convention. As this study sought to explore the predominate frames expressed, it can be concluded through a qualitative, inductive thematic analysis that the seven predominate frames were: recognition, connectivity, appreciation, spirit, service, influence, and support. The brand of the organization emphasizes the following components: premier leadership, personal growth, career success. Premier leadership was brought forth by the influence theme, while personal growth and career success were not directly represented in the themes. The brand identifies with its historical roots through tradition and agriculture, both of which were present in the social media conversation, but not enough so to emerge into a theme. The brand prides itself on its service to a diverse array of members. While the service, support, and recognition theme brought attention to the members, the diversification of the students, organization, and industry was not represented in the primary themes. The organization believes its personality to be an integral part of the brand (National FFA Organization, 2015b). The spirit theme showcased the enthusiastic personality trait. However, hard-working, trustworthy, and moral and ethical traits did not gain enough traction to be considered a theme. The event theme, “Transform: Purpose into Action,” was evidenced mainly through hashtag use and visuals, but lacked the robustness to develop into a content theme.

Recommendations

Beyond FFA, this research holds implications for agricultural organizations and agricultural communicators. Agricultural organizations should ensure that all social media actions and interactions should reinforce the brand’s connections, image, and reputation (Vernuccio, 2014). To ensure this alignment, social media content should reflect agricultural organizations’ mission, vision, initiatives, and brand. The execution of this will vary from organization to organization, however consistent social media content analysis, similar to the one utilized in this study should

be conducted periodically to determine the brand positioning being communicated via social media.

Agricultural organizations, along with the National FFA Organization, can take advantage of the recommendations put forth by Vernuccio (2014) and Kerpen (2015). Commodity groups, livestock associations, agricultural policy and leadership organizations, along with youth organizations based in agriculture should embrace the interactive principles of social media to communicate its brand. Stakeholders should be encouraged to share their story, and user-generated content should be elicited. Levels of engagement with users can be elevated through increased interactions through comments and replies on behalf of the organization. Agricultural organizations should also place a renewed effort behind leveraging connections with online opinion leaders. The agriculture industry could benefit from agricultural organizations implementing these above-listed strategies of brand co-building, utilizing social media interactivity capabilities, encouraging stakeholders to share their stories, eliciting user-generated content, engaging with follower feedback, and connecting with opinion leaders.

Specifically, FFA has the opportunity to further highlight the personal growth and career success components of its brand through social media. It is recommended that the organization consider ways to strengthen the connection to these two tenants of its mission. This could be achieved by placing more emphasis on student workshops, individually tailored messages delivered during keynotes, or publishing alumni profiles. Career success could be further enforced by showcasing a larger variety of career development events, spotlights on the current careers of past members, or sharing career insights from industry professionals in the career expo. It should also be ensured that the full term “career development event” is used for those unfamiliar with the acronym. Communicators should consider creative ways to present the traditional roots of the organization and agricultural ties through social media platforms, such as asking past members to share pictures of their old jackets. The diversity of member demographics and interests, along with the diversity of the agriculture industry, should be reflected in stories and visuals. This could be enhanced by more in-depth references to the 47 varieties of proficiency awards or mini-profiles on an FFA member from each state. There is also an opportunity to expand the emphasis on the event brand beyond graphics and hashtag use. The implementation of this would vary based on the theme from year to year. An example for this year’s theme might include asking members how their FFA experience has transformed them.

The practice of brand co-building should be leveraged to allow stakeholders to enhance and contribute to the brand (Vernuccio, 2014). This could be accomplished by exercising the full range of interactivity that social media has to offer (Vernuccio, 2014). Strategies such as encouraging stakeholders to share their FFA story, favorite FFA memory, favorite part of the convention, their biggest takeaway from a session, or how they might apply what they learned in their personal life could increase interactivity (Kerpen, 2015). Eliciting user-generated content to showcase the brand in the form of pictures and videos could help with this as well. The level of interactivity could also be elevated by increased interaction with users by responding to comments and replies (Kerpen, 2015). For branding purposes, the capabilities of social media can be capitalized upon by connecting with online opinion leaders and influencers (Vernuccio, 2014). Renewed efforts to tag stakeholders who act as influencers within the organization and industry could expand the reach of brand content. These influencers might take the form of sponsors, universities, speakers, individual national officers, state officers, state associations, or local chapters.

Further research is recommended to analyze the effectiveness of the organization’s social media content. While this study served as an in-depth qualitative analysis of themes of content, it

is recommended that further research is conducted with a quantitative approach and utilizing the appropriate social media analytics. It is recommended that further research assess how the organization's daily social media presence aligns with its communication objectives. It is also recommended that this research is replicated in different contexts with other agricultural organizations.

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