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Whose Turf? Public Relations and Marketing in Social Media

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Whose Turf? Public Relations and Marketing in Social Media

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Organizations have found Twitter and Facebook to be the most effective way to converse with audiences. Current positions now require new skills to understand, shape, and engage with social networks and online communities. This study examines how organizations structure the management of social media. As the field develops, it is crucial to understand the current trends. By surveying the perception of social media management, one can better understand how organizations will handle digital communication in the future. Professionals were categorized into six professional specialties: Public Relations Agency, Marketing Agency, Corporate Public Relations, Corporate Marketing, Non-Profit Public Relations, and Non-Profit Marketing. In the survey, participants were asked how social media is used in marketing and/or public relations. By bringing the co-orientation model of communication into the research analysis (a comparison of perceptions vs. actual usage to determine gap), the study compared responses from public relations and marketing professionals to represent their specialty. The results indicate there is a division of labor in social media usage for each profession. Public relations professionals utilize social media as a dialogic approach (two-way communication) and marketing professionals do less environmental monitoring and utilize primarily an asymmetrical approach (one-way communication).

Information about the Author:

Katie Davis is a senior public relations major with a business minor. She currently interns at Wheatley Timmons Public Relations Agency in Chicago where she became interested in the management of social media. Katie also interned with ExactTarget, an interactive provider of marketing solutions. Last semester, Katie and a team of VU students won the national SAP Marketing Innovators Competition. She plans to graduate in May and pursue a career in digital media.

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