

Global Insights from Global Leaders

Brand Value and Reputation: Should the C-Suite be on Social Media?



Should the C-suite be on social media?

Should the CEO be tweeting? How about the CFO publishing on LinkedIn?
Does the company CMO need to be posting on Facebook and Instagram?
Better yet, what about the COO sending snaps on Snapchat?

At Vehr Communications, we think a lot about the CEO's role, and that of C-suite members more generally, in strengthening and protecting the value and reputation of a brand. It's a global concern; social media usage has become ubiquitous.

In today's world, these are important questions. The answers are not so easy and clear-cut, and often contradictory depending on who you ask.

That's why we asked the leaders of global agencies who, like us, are members of IPREX (read more about IPREX on right) to share their insights on this important topic. From Dublin to Dusseldorf, Amsterdam to Mexico City and Boston to Cincinnati, experts share their perspectives on C-suite involvement on social media.

In the future, we'll also share insights from our IPREX partners from around the globe on other ways that C-suite leaders can impact brand value and reputation. Stay tuned.

Sincerely,



Nicholas J. Vehr, President
Vehr Communications, LLC
IPREX Americas President



IPREX
Global Communication

IPREX is a \$350 million network of communication agencies, with 1,800 staff and 115 offices worldwide working across the spectrum of industry sectors and practice disciplines. Vehr Communications has been a partner of IPREX for seven years and Nick Vehr currently serves on its global board as President of the Americas region.

Should C-suite members be active in social media and, if so, how?

Communications professionals from Dublin, Dusseldorf and Mexico City seem to concur on their answer: it's "yes, but..." And, we certainly agree.

C-suite reluctance to actively engage in social media may be because it is not what comes naturally to them, at least not yet. We think that's changing. We just don't know if it's changing quickly enough.



Globally, a full **61%** of F500 CEOs have no social media presence at all.

CEO.com, 2015 Social CEO Report

No single F500 CEO is active on all six major social platforms.

CEO.com, 2015 Social CEO Report



Should C-suite members be active in social media and, if so, how?

Dublin, **Ireland**



Caroline Heywood Walsh: PR

"I don't think there is a simple or blanket answer but I would err on the side of caution when it comes to participation in social media. Certainly senior managers should be aware of what goes on in social media, especially with influencers and content that can affect their business, but this can be achieved through watching without active participation."

Dusseldorf, **Germany**



Ralf Weber

m/e brand communication

"The answer is clearly YES. C-suite members should be included in social media strategy. Especially in owner-driven companies, they play an important role in terms of credibility towards customers and employees."

Mexico City, **Mexico**



Horacio Loyo Gris Dextera Comunicación

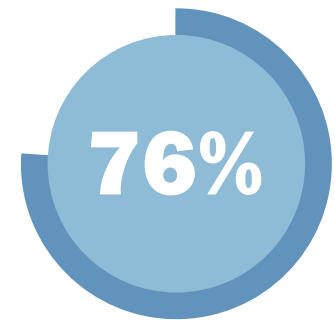
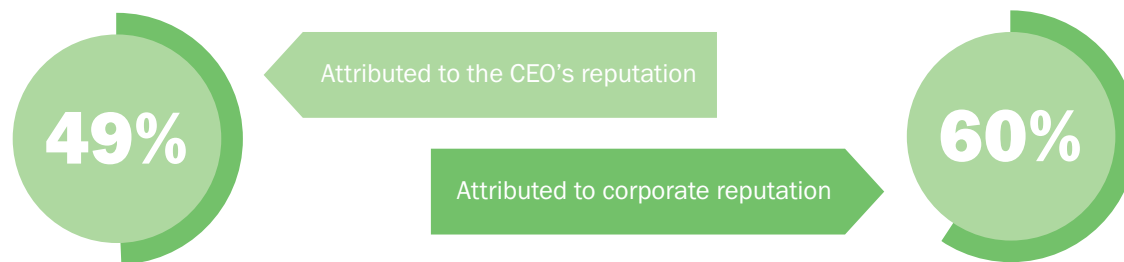
"We believe they should not be active unless they really add value to the overall organization communications and are backed up and supervised by the communication team. We believe it presents more risks than advantages."

How can a CEO's involvement in social media positively or negatively impact the value of a brand?

We know you've heard the old joke: "The good news is the boss is on Facebook and the bad news is that the boss is on Facebook." As you will read, this joke plays well in Dusseldorf, Amsterdam and Boston. C-suite involvement in social media can add value to a brand if it is thoughtful, on-message and relevant. It could just as easily damage a firm's reputation if anything but. We certainly think it's a good idea for CEOs to be on social media IF they know what they're doing and participate as part of a broader action plan.

49% of a company's reputation is attributed to the CEO's reputation and **60%** of a company's market value is attributed to corporate reputation.

Weber Shandwick, 2013, The Social CEO: Executives Tell All



76% of executives believe it is a good idea for CEOs to participate in social media.

Weber Shandwick, 2013, The Social CEO: Executives Tell All

How can a CEO's involvement in social media positively or negatively impact the value of a brand?

Amsterdam, **Netherlands**

Frank Witte

Creative Venue



“Positive: if the content strategy and contact strategy is well thought-through with clear objectives and do’s and don’ts. Negative: if the C-suite starts to shoot from the hip and their social media profiles and tone of voice is out of key with the messages of the brand.”

Boston, MA, **USA**

Mark O’Toole

HB/EMA



“Experience, or inexperience, matters here. In an age when companies use social media to disclose earnings, company news and other information relevant to brand or financials, a mistimed Tweet or errant Facebook post can be destructive. The savvy CEOs will stay involved, and they may even mess up from time to time, but they will likely have the savvy to recover. The socially-inept CEO may not.”

Dusseldorf, **Germany**

Ralf Weber

m/e brand communication



“A CEO has a holistic view on the company, and he/she should also be a visionary leader and only speak about company-level issues which are not part of daily business. The CEO always has to be aware of his/her role model function for the employees. This adds value to a brand in a positive way. A CEO negatively impacts the value of a brand if he/she starts arguing with shareholders about critical issues in public or if he/she talks about competition in a negative way.”

What are the trends in social media to which C-suite members should be paying particular attention?

We're guessing that by the time this is published, there will be something new in social media for marketers to consider and so do our colleagues in Mexico City, Boston and Dusseldorf. Some applications have developed locally and grown to be global monoliths. Others may be unique to certain countries or cultures. What we do know is that there are few limitations to online innovation around the globe and we may just not yet know from where the next big online player will come or what it might do to make business more successful.

“...the CEO **establishes** and **maintains brand trust** with mission-critical audiences. Social media has forever changed how people communicate — how they share, receive and consume information.”

Vr3 blog post, May, 2015, “CEOs on social media: Does it really matter?”



What are the trends in social media to which C-suite members should be paying particular attention?

Mexico City, **Mexico**



Horacio Loyo Gris Dextera Comunicación

“For many people, poorly educated and less informed, Facebook has become their main and trustworthy source of information, therefore it is key to keep a closer look of what is being said about their business, industries and issues around them among social networks.”

Dusseldorf, **Germany**



Ralf Weber m/e brand communication

“Particularly in B2B business, networks like XING or LinkedIn are becoming more and more important, especially due to 1:1 contact opportunities, group functions, forums, event organization tools, etc. Another trend is e-business through social media. Facebook and co. are working on shop solutions which will become important for B2C and maybe B2B in the future.”

Boston, MA, **USA**



Mark O'Toole HB/EMA

“Snapchat is emerging as a corporate communications tool. The C-suite may see their kids using it but need to have an answer ready when corporate communications suggests incorporating it into the brand marketing plan. Social is always changing. What happens when Twitter relaxes the 140-character requirement? How do you deal with brand sponsorship on Instagram? How do you monetize auto-play videos on Facebook? These are not marketing elements to experiment with anymore; they have significant brand and revenue implications, and require thoughtful consideration.”

About Vehr Communications

Vehr Communications, LLC seeks to be a strategic partner with its clients to help them manage their reputations, build valued relationships and deliver meaningful results.

To learn more about who we are, what we do and how we think, visit our website. While you're there, sign up for our monthly e-newsletter, visit our blog or download any of our publications designed to help you make the most of your strategic communications activities.

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