

## **The Role of Social Media in Organizational Management: An Interview-Based Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

**Aim:** Nowadays, as the pace of life has accelerated, social media has become an essential tool for communication and social interaction. This trend applies not only to personal life but also to the workplace. The study aims to identify the role of social media in the context of organizational management from the perspective of enterprise employees.

**Methodology:** Individual in-depth interviews with four respondents, who were representatives of different organizations, were used to conduct the research. Respondents were selected using purposive selection. The selection criteria were to work in a managerial position in a Polish small or medium-sized organization.

**Results:** The study's results indicated that social media is a flexible tool that can be easily adapted and used to benefit a company in many activities. Respondents indicated that the companies they work for use various social media such as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. In addition, the research also pointed to the unique use of social media to organize knowledge within an organization.

**Implications and recommendations:** The research included in this paper provides an employee perspective on social media used in Polish companies and identifies ways of using social media to manage an organization. Further research is indicated to expand research on the use of social media for organizing knowledge within an organization. However, issues related to company data security when using social media should also be considered.

**Originality/value:** The value of this research is to highlight the use of social media by Polish organizations, not only in the area of marketing or employee search but also as a place to gather and organize knowledge.

**Keywords:** social media, organizational management, marketing campaigns, social platforms

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## 1. Introduction

Social media are found in almost all areas of human life. Thinking about social media in the context of social relations, researchers point out both the advantages and disadvantages of its use (Ryan et al., 2017). Social media are characterized by the rapid transmission of information and informal forms. Their importance in everyday life is constantly growing, which also affects the management of organizations. Among other things, they establish business contacts, communicate with stakeholders, and manage the company's image. The use of social media in organizational management makes it possible to quickly communicate information and build brand recognition on a large scale, which is conducive to effective advertising of products and services, promotions, information about news, or special events organized by the company. Many industry platforms allow companies to promote themselves and offer features such as recruiting employees and verifying the credibility of potential customers, which helps reduce risk. Many social media platforms can help manage a business, and the best platforms for running a business and the way of using them will depend on the organization's needs.

Given the relevance of this topic and the prevalence of social media, it is important to consider how important these platforms are in modern business and how they can be used to achieve organizational goals.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to identify the role of social media in the context of organizational management from the perspective of enterprise employees. The research questions were also formulated:

1. How can social media facilitate the management of an organization?
2. What social media do small organizations utilize, and for what reasons?

This paper begins with an introduction which outlines the reason for undertaking this topic, the purpose of the research, and the research questions. This is followed by a literature review examining the theoretical framework and existing social media studies. The next part of the article will describe the research methodology, including the research procedure. Then, the results of the research will be presented. The article closes with a discussion and conclusions.

## 2. Theoretical Background

Social media, also known as social platforms, are communication channels enabling user interaction. This interaction includes sharing information, sharing knowledge, expressing opinions, and commenting on content. The characteristics of social media, according to Joshi et al. (2008) include several key elements:

- scaling flexibility, i.e. the ability to use them at different levels,
- unlimited possibility to modify the original information,
- dissemination of content through social interaction,
- the natural way to create content (Bell, 2001),
- constant availability of all elements resulting from co-creation of content.

Over the years, researchers have observed the dynamic development of social media which gradually penetrate into different spheres of people's lives (Carr & Hayes, 2015). The popularity of social media is growing, and users of all ages and social groups are actively using it (Nayar & Raheja, 2015). These platforms effectively mobilize users' energy, enable the accumulation of resources to solve specific challenges, and support the organization and mutual motivation of different groups of people.

Research indicates that social media in business are moving from an experimental uptake phase to an acceptance and widespread deployment phase (Chyrak et al., 2023). Social media has a diverse impact on users, which is becoming increasingly relevant to the business world (Minocha et al., 2022).

Social app analysis reveals common features and mechanisms that can be used effectively in business. These platforms can strengthen people's online position by creating, collecting, and exchanging information. In addition, they enable rapid mobilization of people, lower thresholds for joining online communities, and generate the phenomenon of 'long tail', which affects the flow of information and the creation of new communities (Kavoura, 2014). As a result, social media can potentially increase organizations' effectiveness by better matching supply and demand, leveraging professional networks, and creating innovative business models based on openness and collaboration (Zhang & Zhu, 2022).

Research on a global scale suggests that the impact of social media on employee management is growing (Karasek & Hysa, 2020). Social media is becoming increasingly important in areas such as motivation, engagement building, team building, and employee recruitment (Maria Christy Wowor et al., 2022). Many researchers believe that employers are just beginning to gain experience in using social media in human resources while they are still at the stage of learning about its role and usefulness (Dejnaka, 2012). Reports indicate that the current generation of workers entering the labour market with the experience and awareness of the benefits of social media can significantly influence their implementation in HR (Johnson, 2015).

The current reality of the world of work generates an increasing need to use social media. This new reality is characterized by several significant features and trends that pose challenges for entrepreneurs and HR professionals (Jędrych, 2015):

- The traditional boundaries between professional and private life are disappearing. New technologies make us increasingly accessible and constantly connected to work.
- Communication tools such as LinkedIn, Facebook or GlassDoor make it possible to monitor the labour market and search for new growth opportunities.
- Information about organizational culture is easily accessible, allowing potential employees to gain information about the company.
- The balance of power between employees and employers is changing, with employees becoming partners rather than subordinates.
- Multicultural teams, including virtual ones, operating in different areas of the world, are increasing.
- The number of skilled workers working in flexible forms of employment, part-time or freelance, is increasing, which requires new rules of cooperation and opportunities for professional development.
- Demographics are changing, with Generation Y now accounting for more than half of the workforce, and their expectations for work are different from previous generations and require new management tools.

In recent years, companies have been actively participating in social media, where they take actions aimed at individual customers or groups of customers (Dolan et al., 2019). Social media is defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological underpinnings of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Popular social media include blogs, discussion groups, podcasts, vlogs, and social networks.

Social media is characterized by interaction, and the foundation is information. Users appreciate all useful data and shared open information. The company, thanks to the publication of job offers and other information about technology or changes in the labour market, always enjoys a great interest in the community. It can thus shape its image as a desirable employer, a trustworthy, innovative, or stable company. Recommendations from current employees are crucial in building a company's image on the Internet, so companies should pay particular attention to such recommendations, especially on social media (Lee et al., 2021).

Theoretical background review conducted indicates the relevance of the subject matter undertaken. In addition, previous research on the importance of social media in the management of organizations highlights the relevance and its impact on various areas of the organization. The use of individual in-depth interviews to study the use of social media in Polish companies will help reduce the research gap in the indicated area.

### 3. Methodology

The purpose of the research is to identify the role of social media in the context of organizational management from the perspective of enterprise employees. The individual in-depth interview (IDI) method was used to achieve the stated goal and answer the research questions. It is a qualitative method that involves conducting individual interviews with respondents to closely examine their views, experiences and opinions on a specific topic. The interview is open-ended and free-form, and the researcher aims to obtain as much information as possible from the respondent.

Interviews will be conducted with four people, whose selection was purposive. The interviews were conducted on May 13 and 14, 2024. Respondents had to meet the following criteria:

- work in a managerial position,
- work in a Polish organization,
- the organization where they work is small or medium-sized in terms of the number of employees.

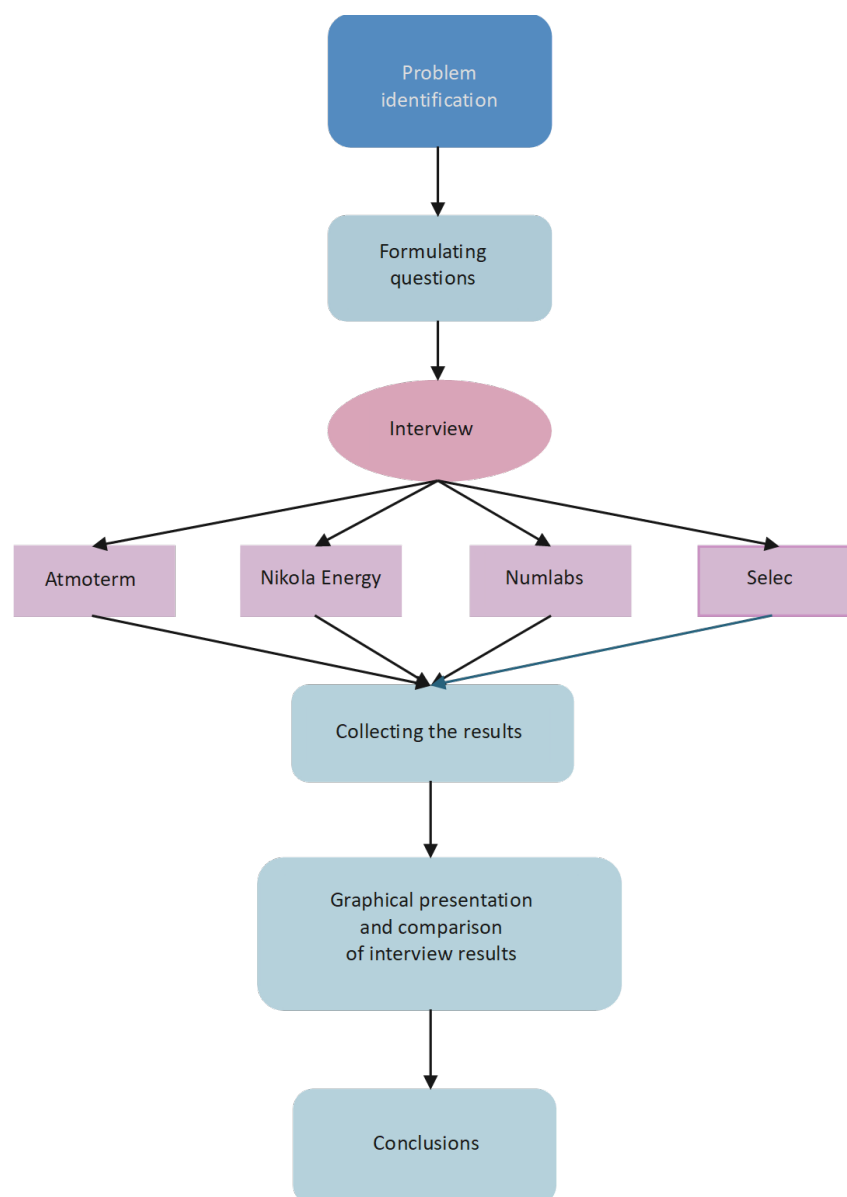


Fig. 1. Research procedure

Source: own elaboration.

Interviews were conducted personally by the author of this paper during individual meetings with each respondent. The choice of such a research method would make it possible to obtain more extended answers and give the opportunity to clarify issues of concern. Each person that was interviewed was informed of its purpose. In order to protect data of the companies, in this paper only the first name and the first letter of the last name of respondents are presented. The study was conducted according to the following procedure (see Figure 1).

1. In the first step, the research problem was identified, which concerned the use of social media in the management of organizations in Poland.
2. Then an interview scenario and questions were developed, which will be presented in the next part of the article.
3. In the next step, representatives of four organizations were interviewed: Atmoterm, Nikola Energy, Selec, and Numlabs.
4. The collected responses were then analysed and presented in the form of a table.
5. Based on the collected results, conclusions were developed.

## 4. Results

The results presentation of the conducted research will begin with a description of the respondents with whom individual in-depth interviews were conducted (see Figure 2).

Atmoterm	• Krzysztof S. - working as a head of marketing in an IT company
Nikola Energy	• Slawomir B. - working as a Sales Director of Photovoltaics at a renewable energy company
Selec	• Michal L. - working as a CFO at a GSM (phones) company
Numlabs	• Rami A. - working as a co-owner, Member of the Board and Head of Consulting in the AI software industry

Fig. 2. Presentation of respondents of individual in-depth interviews

Source: own elaboration.

The research objects were small enterprises. Atmoterm is a small company that develops software to improve environmental management. Numlabs, or Ai Software House, which helps implement AI solutions to various businesses, also employs fewer than 50 people. The penultimate organization is Selec, a consumer electronics retailer operating on the global arena. And finally, Nikola Energy, a company employing fewer than 30 people, is involved, among other things, in the sale and installation of photovoltaic panels for solar farms.

The research presents a cross-section of industries and different positions. Mr. Krzysztof S., who is responsible for marketing, will provide the information on what socials he uses for marketing communications. From Mr. Slawomir B. comes the message of whether social media supports sales in his company, which operates in the renewable energy industry. Mr. Michal L. will give his point of view and the benefits he derives from using media in his position as CFO. Mr. Rami A. will touch on the use of social media in the IT project industry. A table was used for the presentation of the responses comparison (see Table 1).

Table 1. Presentation and comparison of interview results

	Atmoterm	Nikola Energy	Numlabs	Selec
Used social media				
Facebook	x	x	x	x
Instagram	x			
TikTok				
LinkedIn		x	x	x
Other social media		x		x
Do you think the rise in popularity of social media platforms has made the job of marketing staff easier?	YES	YES	YES/NO	YES
In your opinion, has social media positively or negatively impacted branding?	Positively	Positively	Positively (opportunity for companies with small budgets to emerge).	Positively
Are you using social media platforms to recruit employees?	Not personally, but the company yes.	YES	YES	YES
Do you think there is a possibility that social media platforms will completely replace traditional media in the future?	I don't know.	YES	YES	YES/NO
Have you had the opportunity to make business contacts through social media platforms?	YES	YES	YES	YES

Source: own elaboration based on the conducted interviews.

At Atmoterm, social media helped the brand communicate with the outside world to build recognition. The most helpful for them was Instagram. As the head of marketing, Krzysztof S. stated that social media facilitated the work of the marketing department and positively influenced the creation of the brand image. He also mentioned the numerous business contacts he has made through LinkedIn.

Another interview was conducted with Mr. Slawomir B., who is a sales director in a very competitive industry, which is the renewable energy industry. The platforms Nikola Energy uses are Facebook, LinkedIn and WhatsApp. Facebook allows them to contribute to industry groups in order to gain new customers, advertise the company's services, or learn more about competitors' offerings. LinkedIn, on the other hand, serves them for purposes similar to Facebook, but it has additional features, namely, it is a platform used to find new employees. According to Mr. Slawomir B., the company uses WhatsApp to communicate between employees and customers, i.e., for internal as well as external communication, which is an interesting management improvement; he cited the speed of information transfer as an advantage of WhatsApp.

The third respondent was Mr. Michal L., who serves as CFO and co-owner of Selec, a consumer electronics retailer employing 10 people. Mr. Michal L. uses the help of social media to manage the organization, find new employees, gain references for companies he is going to work with and attract new suppliers or customers. He mentioned previous platforms, such as handelot or gsm-b2b, which are industry platforms. As the most important utility of these portals, the respondent mentioned the ability to obtain references about potential customers by making business less risky. Selec's CFO also mentioned LinkedIn as a useful tool for recruiting and attracting new contacts.

The last interview was conducted with Mr. Rami A., who is the co-founder of Numlabs, a company involved in artificial intelligence projects. When asked about the platforms that help him manage his organization, he mentioned Facebook and LinkedIn. The company mainly uses two Facebook groups, "Software Houses Community – Knowledge/Governance/Projects" and "Software House Scale It Up!", which they use to get information about employee demand among companies, pass on leads, and network. The second platform mentioned was LinkedIn, which, according to the respondent, has the greatest potential in the context of organizational management. It is used for headhunting, brand building, finding new customers, and identifying trends in the market, among other things.

As can be seen from the respondents' answers, social media greatly supports the management of small and large enterprises. Media has a positive impact on most processes in modern companies. At the very beginning, when someone is just thinking about starting a company, portals such as LinkedIn can come to their aid, where they can establish valuable business contacts or, based on industry data, create a business plan. The next stage is to recruit employees; here again, LinkedIn comes in handy, where the company can search for specialized employees with proven qualifications; in addition to LinkedIn, Facebook comes to our aid with its numerous groups where they can post job offers or advertise themselves as employees. As revealed in the interview with Mr. Michal L., there are thriving platforms in the GSM industry, such as handelot or gsm-b2b, which allow organizations to search for customers and suppliers trading in consumer electronics.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this article was to identify the role of social media in the context of organizational management from the perspective of enterprise employees. Through the research conducted, it was possible to achieve the stated goal and answer the research questions.

### 1. How can social media facilitate the management of an organization?

Based on the research, we can conclude that social media facilitates certain processes within the organization. All of the surveyed organizations used social media for employee recruitment and acquiring new business contacts.

### 2. What social media do small organizations utilize, and for what reasons?

Table 2. Representation of media used by small organizations and the purpose of their use

Organization	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	WhatsApp
Atmoterm	x	marketing	to look for business contacts	x
Nikola Energy	access to industry groups	x	recruitment, access to industry groups	work organization and communication
Numlabs	access to industry groups	x	brand building, finding new customers, and identifying trends	x
Selec	x	x	recruiting and attracting new contacts	x

Source: own elaboration based on the conducted interviews.

Larger organizations mostly use media to be close to their customers and create brand reputation. Smaller companies, on the other hand, support or facilitate some of their business processes. The most frequently mentioned social media by employees of smaller organizations were Facebook and LinkedIn.

In addition, each of the respondents stated that social media had a positive impact on creating brand image, as it significantly facilitated communication with the audience and provided more opportunities to showcase the organization's strengths. In addition to the self-promotion aspect, social media has also made it easier to attract business customers or employees, and here LinkedIn has emerged as the leading platform for this type of activity, three out of four people interviewees said that when it comes to managing an organization they see the greatest potential in this platform. Everyone interviewed confirmed that their company uses LinkedIn to recruit employees.

Marketing, recruitment, new customer acquisition are not all areas that are supported by social media, it turns out that smaller companies such as Nikola Energy use WhatsApp to organize knowledge and communication within the organization. The interview with Mr. Michal L. allowed me to get to know about new sales support platforms, such as handelot or gsm-b2b. These are platforms that bring together companies involved in the electronics trade, in addition, they allow for reducing the risk of

doing business in this industry by verifying the trustworthiness of potential customers. As one can see, social media support numerous management processes, moreover, new portals using new technologies are emerging, which is why, in my opinion, the influence of social media on management is going to grow.

To sum up, the greatest potential social media offers for organizations lies in the field of marketing. ICT (Information and Communication Technology) has been a revolution in the development of marketing, and social media are also part of ICT (Chomiak-Orsa & Liszczyk, 2020). The theoretical contribution of this article is to provide an employee perspective on social media used in Polish companies and identify less conventional ways of using social media to manage an organization, such as organizing knowledge.

Among the limitations of the study is the number of respondents – more answers could improve the reliability of the research. In addition, the change of the research method could be considered to get answers to more questions about the use of social media in organizational management. Another limitation of the study was that it concerned small organizations, which made it impossible to link the responses to a larger set of studied objects.

Further research can be identified as an area related to the use of social media to organize knowledge within an organization. In the future, the ethics of such behaviour can be considered, as well as aspects related to the security of company data transmitted through social media. Moreover, the interviews can also be conducted with management staff representing various organizations, both larger ones, e.g. Microsoft, and smaller ones, in order to capture the perspective of large organizations on the aspect of using social media in management.

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## Rola mediów społecznościowych w zarządzaniu organizacjami: perspektywa oparta na wywiadach

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### Streszczenie

**Cel:** W dzisiejszych czasach, gdy tempo życia przyspieszyło, media społecznościowe stały się niezbędnym narzędziem komunikacji i interakcji społecznych. Trend ten dotyczy nie tylko życia osobistego, ale także miejsca pracy. Badanie ma na celu określenie roli mediów społecznościowych w kontekście zarządzania organizacją z perspektywy pracowników przedsiębiorstw.

**Metodyka:** Do przeprowadzenia badań wykorzystano indywidualne wywiady pogłębione z czterema respondentami, którzy byli przedstawicielami różnych organizacji. Respondenci zostali wybrani metodą doboru celowego. Kryterium wyboru była praca na stanowisku kierowniczym w polskiej małej lub średniej organizacji.

**Wyniki:** Wyniki badania wskazały, że media społecznościowe są elastycznym narzędziem, które można łatwo dostosować i wykorzystać, aby przynieść korzyści firmie w wielu działaniach. Respondenci wskazali, że firmy, w których pracują, korzystają z różnych mediów społecznościowych, takich jak Facebook, Instagram i LinkedIn. Ponadto badanie wskazało również wyjątkowe wykorzystanie mediów społecznościowych do organizowania wiedzy w organizacji.

**Implikacje i rekomendacje:** Badania opisane w niniejszym artykule przedstawiają perspektywę pracowników na media społecznościowe wykorzystywane w polskich firmach oraz identyfikują sposoby wykorzystania mediów społecznościowych do zarządzania organizacją. Wskazane są dalsze prace w celu rozszerzenia badań nad wykorzystaniem mediów społecznościowych do organizowania wiedzy w organizacji. Należy jednak również rozważyć kwestie związane z bezpieczeństwem danych firmy podczas korzystania z mediów społecznościowych.

**Oryginalność/wartość:** Wartością tego badania jest podkreślenie wykorzystania mediów społecznościowych przez polskie organizacje, nie tylko w obszarze marketingu czy poszukiwania pracowników, ale także jako miejsca gromadzenia i organizowania wiedzy.

**Słowa kluczowe:** media społecznościowe, zarządzanie organizacją, kampanie marketingowe, platformy społeczne

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