ISCTE ◈ Business School

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SPORTING CLUBE DE PORTUGAL, A SOCIAL MEDIA BENCHMARK IN THE FOOTBALL CLUBS' SECTOR

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Project

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Table of Contents

Index of Charts

Index of Tables

Index of Figures

Sumário

No mundo de hoje em dia, é cada vez mais acentuada a importância que a Internet e as redes sociais vão tendo na sociedade e na vida de cada um dos indivíduos que a compõem. Com o aumento exponencial do número de utilizadores e com o aparecimento de novas redes, os clubes de futebol têm visto nestas plataformas a possibilidade de comunicarem de uma forma não muito dispendiosa para uma audiência de milhares ou milhões de fãs de uma maneira relativamente segmentada. Portugal não é exceção e de uma melhor ou pior forma, a maioria dos clubes da Liga Portuguesa já se encontra nas redes sociais mais populares.

O presente estudo de caso, partindo da temática referida anteriormente, pretende retratar a forma como o Sporting Clube de Portugal alterou a sua estratégia de marketing nos últimos anos e a centrou em torno dos seus adeptos, evidenciando um grande foco na vertente online e mais especificamente nas redes sociais. Partindo deste pressuposto, será apresentada a evolução do clube nas diversas plataformas, desde o momento da sua criação até aos dias de hoje, pretendendo demonstrar que na sua generalidade, a presença do Sporting nos social media poderá ser considerada como uma referência não só nacional mas também internacional.

Para facilitar o entendimento do caso será efetuada uma abordagem ao tema do marketing desportivo, à importância dos fãs e como estes se relacionam com os clubes de futebol e finalmente ao crescimento dos social media no contexto da Internet.

Palavras-Chave: Redes Sociais, Marketing Desportivo, Futebol, Sporting Clube de Portugal

JEL Classification System: M31 – Marketing; L83 – Sports

Abstract

In today's world, it is becoming more prominent the importance that Internet and social media have been having in society and in the lives of each individuals who compose it. With the exponential increase in the number of users and with the emergence of new social networks, football clubs have seen in these platforms the possibility to communicate in a not very expensive way to an audience of thousands or millions of fans in a fairly segmented form. Portugal is no exception and in a better or worse manner, the majority of the Portuguese League clubs are already present in the most popular social networks.

This case study, based on the theme referred above, seeks to portray how Sporting Clube de Portugal has changed its marketing strategy in the last years by shaping it around the club's fans, revealing a strong focus on the online component and more specifically on social networks. On that basis, it will be presented the progress of the club in the various platforms, from the moment of its creation to the present day, intending to show that in general, Sporting CP's presence in social media can be considered not only as a national but also as an international benchmark.

To contribute for a generic comprehension of the case study, a literature review will highlight the main concepts of sports marketing, the importance of fans and how they relate to football clubs and finally the growth of social media in the Internet context.

Keywords: Social Media, Sports Marketing, Football, Sporting Clube de Portugal

JEL Classification System: M31 – Marketing; L83 – Sports

1. CASE STUDY

1.1. Problem Presentation

In 2013, after the worst sports season in the history of Sporting Clube de Portugal and with accumulated losses of 90 Million Euros, the club is forced to carry out a thorough financial restructuring as well as several collective redundancies.

As a result of this process, in April 2014, Sporting hires two 24-year-old community managers, belonging to a Portuguese communication agency, to take over the club's social networks. Following the motto of the club: Effort, Dedication, Devotion and Glory, they reach in October 2014 the highest Facebook engagement rate among European football clubs and the 3rd best in the World, the most important statistic of this social media platform according to reputable website Social Media Today (**Appendix I**).

This Case Study, just like the "Astérix et Obélix" tale, tells us the story of all the changes performed in the various club's social networks by these two young "Gauls", which without a single euro invested in Facebook ads, have been able to defeat several powerful "Roman" clubs all around Europe and remain to date among the world's highest interaction rates.

1.2. Sporting Clube de Portugal

1.2.1. History

Following several failed attempts to establish a notorious football club in the Lisbon district, a group of aristocrats gathered and decided to create "a big club as big as the biggest in Europe". On the 1st July of 1906, Sporting Clube de Portugal, also known as Sporting or Sporting CP, was founded by Visconde de Alvalade and his grandson, José Alvalade, among 34 other people.

The club's main colour is green while its symbol is the rampant lion. The green colour represents the hope in the club's success while the lion embodies strength, power, leadership and courage. Both attributes have always been present in the six crests the club has had so far. At the same time, Sporting's kit is known for its horizontal green and white stripes.

Figure 1 - Sporting's crest and the 3 kits for 2015/2016

Source – Retrieved from Google and adapted by the author

With more than one century of existence, Sporting Clube de Portugal is nowadays one of the biggest clubs in Portugal and in the World, as shown by the fact that Sporting is the 2nd most titled European club, in the whole set of its sports, right after FC Barcelona. In total, Sporting has over 20k titles in its different sports.

As of today, Sporting accounts 45 national titles in Portuguese competitions and 1 international title, the 1964 European Cup Winners' Cup, reflecting its long history of successes. Sporting is also known for the prestige of its football training facility, recently considered as one of the TOP 15 in the World, as well as the continuous development of world class footballers like Ballon d'Or recipients Cristiano Ronaldo and Luís Figo along with Nani, João Moutinho, Ricardo Quaresma, Rui Patrício, Adrien Silva, among others.

Although football is the club's main sport, Sporting Clube de Portugal has 35 different sports, which reflects its eclectic philosophy. Athletics, Futsal, Handball, Roller Hockey and Swimming are also very popular among fans. The regular participation of Sporting athletes in the Olympic Games is also a proof of its greatness. In 27 editions of the Olympic Games, Sporting was represented in 19 of them, having had 124 Olympic athletes in 16 different sports by 2012.

With the arrival of the 21st century, Sporting pioneered again by building a state of the art stadium that could hold capacity for 51k people. Estádio José Alvalade, classified by UEFA as a 5-star stadium, is located in Campo Grande, Lisboa, and is part of a complex that includes a movie theatre, a health club, the club's museum as well as its headquarters, a clinic, an indoor training facility and is scheduled to debut an Arena for its major indoor sports in 2017. Claiming to be the "greatest club in the national sport", the club has nowadays more than 3 million supporters and around 125k associates.

Figure 2 - Estádio José Alvalade

Source - Sporting CP Facebook

1.2.2. The stumbling of the roaring lion

After 18 years without winning the national title, the turn of the millennium would bring the much desired trophy, a feat that would be repeated 2 years later. Everything seemed to go well and the transition to the new stadium in 2003 as well the debut of the new training facility in Alcochete seemed to create a sense of encouragement among the fans.

Despite the good forecasts, the opposite happened. Since 2003, year of the switch to the new stadium, the club hasn't achieved any national championship title. In the last decade,

sports results have proved to be much lower than the expected by the fans, reaching only 3 Portuguese Cups and 2 Super Cups and well as 4 appearances in the Champions League.

In addition to the sporting aspect, in the last 10 years it was possible to behold several distancing policies of the associates by the club's board, wishing to have customers rather than associates that could interfere in the management of the club. As a result, the club dropped the number of members to 80k in 2010, significantly lower numbers than main rivals Sport Lisboa e Benfica e Futebol Clube do Porto. Directly linked to these data is also the drop in the average attendances of the new stadium, from 30,958 in 2003/2004 to 24,858 in 2010/2011 (**Appendix II**). Something had to change to reverse the course of events.

1.2.3. A new president…a brand new marketing strategy

In 2013, Sporting Clube de Portugal faces the most difficult period of its century-old history. Financially, after several years in a row giving negative results, the club in only 2 years reaches around 90 million of accumulated losses, leaving it on the verge of a collapse. Only a miracle could save Sporting from bankruptcy. On the sporting side, the situation wasn't much different, with the club achieving a painful 7th place in the national football league, its lowest rating in history.

On March 24, 2013, Bruno de Carvalho takes over the presidency of the club after the resignation of his predecessor. The club was divided and in a much weakened situation. Bruno de Carvalho, a 39-year-old business manager with a huge passion for the club, now had the difficult task of "uniting" the supporters, financially restructure the club and bring back many Sporting fans who had lost faith in the club. His first words, surrounded by many hundreds of associates, were: "Sporting Clube de Portugal belongs to its associates and fans. Sporting is ours again".

And indeed Sporting approached its fans. At the beginning of the season 2013/2014, Sporting launched a slogan called "o Sporting é Nosso" (**Appendix III**). With this positioning more oriented for its associates and fans, the club seeks to boost the pride and strength of being a "lion". Therefore, over the season, several initiatives would be launched to bring back the fans.

One of the first measures was to make Cristiano Ronaldo the 100.000th associate of the club and thus help raising new members to Sporting Clube de Portugal. In September

2013, the start of the new season, Sporting launches the "Bilhete Família" and the "Bilhete Anti-Crise". Intended only for associates, this measure aimed to bring more families to the stadium as well as fans with economic difficulties. In addition to these measures, the following month the club launched a new member's ranking at half the price (6€) for those fans who are physically distant from the club but still want to be part of the "leonine family". At the same time, to honour its members and fans, Sporting removes the number 12 from all the club's teams, making it belong exclusively to the supporters. This campaign was called: "12º Jogador". All fans who bought a shirt with this number could be selected to take a picture with the squad before the game and be received by the President on the pitch (**Appendix IV**).

Figure 3 - Cristiano Ronaldo, the 100.000th associate of Sporting

Source - Sporting CP Website

The next season followed the same theme, this time with a different slogan: "Tu és a Nossa Fé"(**Appendix V**). Again, with this positioning Sporting Clube de Portugal claimed that the fans were the faith of the club and they should get increasingly involved, employing their strength, devotion and race just like the Sporting's motto. For a greater connection with them, the club launched in July 2014, Sporting TV, the official TV channel of Sporting Clube de Portugal. Besides the obvious content targeted to fans, this was a way of boosting the commercial side of the club, generating more and better revenue such as sponsorships and advertising.

The CRM component was also quite worked by the club during these two years. It is worth noting the increased personalization of Emails, SMS and other types of direct marketing, sending different messages to different targets (**Appendix VI**). Still in 2014, Sporting reshapes the official club's shop, merging in the same space the merchandising and the service to members, intending thereby to increase impulse purchase.

In March 2015, to promote a straight relationship between the football team and the fans, the club invites its members to an open training session, choosing three of them to train alongside their idols and have a moment to remember later. As a result of the policies pursued by the club to bring more members, Sporting Clube de Portugal reaches, in July 2015, the milestone of 125k members.

1.2.4. The online lift-off

If Sporting managed to get closer to its fans, much is due to its online strategy. Over the past two years, there has been a growing concern in establishing a more two-way communication, with the boom of social networks and the internet itself being the major contributors, putting fans at the centre of the talks. Moreover, the use of a more relational and less transactional marketing, is something that is also reflected in the online component of the club.

The "MVP" of this online component has been undoubtedly its social networks. As a result of the great improvements made in the last two years, the club's official Facebook achieved in October 2014, the biggest interaction rate in Europe and one of the largest in the World in terms of football clubs. However, all this success is not limited to its media platforms. In November 2014, Sporting Clube de Portugal launched a website called "Sócio num Minuto" (**Appendix VII**), which promised that without paperwork, hassles or delays, any person around the world could be member of the club in just a minute. Not only this campaign was a tremendous success, with hundreds of new registrations in the early hours and thousands in the coming months, as it was replicated by Sporting's main rival Sport Lisboa e Benfica.

In order to take advantage of the two-way communication referred above, in December 2014, Sporting launched the "Voz Leonina" (**Appendix VIII**) initiative, which allowed members of the online community "FórumSCP", a Sporting's supporting platform with over 10 years of existence, to make several questions to the account of Sporting Clube de Portugal related not only to the new member's campaign ("Sócio num Minuto") as well as the presence of the club in digital media. Finally, following the perspective of bilateral communication as well as the modernization of its online facet, Sporting launched in September 2015, an entirely renovated website at the same level of the best clubs in the world.

1.3. Internet and Social Networks in Portugal

1.3.1. Internet in Portugal

According to the International Telecommunication Union, an agency of the United Nations, about 44% of the world population already uses the Internet which totals up to approximately 3.2 billion people. Portugal, following the global trend of growth when it comes to Internet penetration rate, reached in 2014 the value of 64%, corresponding to 5.48 million people. A much higher value than the 37.6% in 2005 and 57.1% in 2010 (Marktest, Bareme Internet 2014).

Table 1- Portuguese Internet Usage (%)
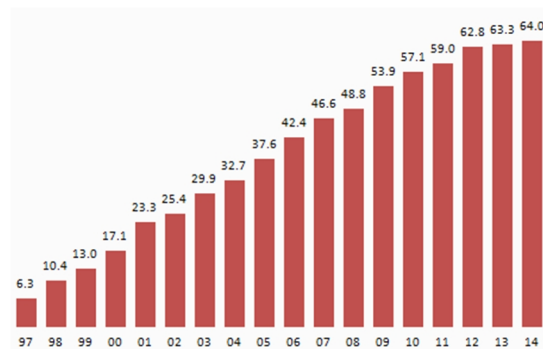
Source - Marktest, Bareme Internet 2014

As reported by a study of Obercom (2014), the use of Internet is quite similar in terms of gender (51% of male users compared to 49% female). However, the usage rate drops sharply with the increasing age of the respondents or the decreasing level of education.

In terms of Internet usage, 72.9% of the respondents access it daily, 13.2% say they log in 3 or 4 times a week and only 9.6% surfs the web 1 or 2 times per week (Obercom, 2014). However, it is in the way of using the Internet that the situation more has changed. If, on the one hand, the computer remains the most used device to access the Internet (61%), on the other hand, mobile devices such as smartphones (42.3%), tablets (25.7%), TVs (4%) or video game consoles (4.9%) are starting to stand out. For example, tablets were the device with the biggest leap, with a growth of 50% from 2014 to 2015 (Marktest, 2015). According to TNS/Google (2014), on average, each Portuguese adult already uses 2.1 devices to access the Internet.

Despite the growing use of mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, during the access to the Internet, most respondents still perform few tasks in these gadgets, being the

computer the number one choice most of the times to consume content or to perform online tasks (Obercom, 2014). The most popular online activities, done at least once a month, are the access to e-mail account (92%), checking news, sports and weather (84%), the use of search engines (83%) , visiting social networks (77%), looking for product information online (75%), watching online videos (73%), among others (TNS / Google, 2014).

1.3.2. Social Networks in Portugal

As claimed by the survey "Os Portugueses e as Redes Sociais" conducted by Marktest in 2014, about 70% of internet users in Portugal access social networks. A percentage significantly above the EU average (57%).

According to the Facebook managing director for Portugal, in 2015, the most popular social network in Portugal was Facebook with 5.2 million unique monthly users, followed by Google+, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram (**Appendix IX**). It is important to stress the expected decrease of Google + in the coming years, a trend common to the rest of the world. On the other hand, it is worth noting the major growth of LinkedIn (fruit of greater instability in the labour market) and Instagram (nearly 400%) last year (Fullsix, 2014).

Figure 4- Most popular social networks in Portugal

Source - Retrieved from Google and adapted by the author

In terms of gender, men and women are present in the same proportion, 50%. The most popular age group is 25-34 years (25.2%), followed by 18-24 (22.5%) and 35-44 (22.1%) (Expresso, 2014).

In 2012, each Portuguese spent around 88 minutes a day on social networks. Today, in 2015, only on Facebook, they already spend 47-48 minutes a day on average. On top of that, during prime time, Facebook online users can reach from 1.7 up to 1.8 million people beating any TV channel audience. Regarding the preferred time of access to social networks, it takes place between 20h and 24h (TEK Sapo, 2015).

If the computer is still the chosen means of access to social networks, this may change in a near future. In some periods in the morning (7h-9h) and during the lunch hour (13h-15h) the smartphone is already the preferred device to access social media platforms (Marktest, 2014). As a result of the growing importance of mobile devices, several social networks like Instagram, Snapchat, Vine and Periscope (**Appendix IX**) bet exclusively in this kind of devices. It won't be any surprise to say that these social networks are also among the favourite of young people up to 25 years along with Pinterest and Tumblr. Betting on multimedia content (a must nowadays for the younger crowd) such as photos, video streaming or short clips, sometimes with limited viewing time, the truth is that more and more these social networks are gaining followers in Portugal.

Figure 5 - Emerging Social Networks in Portugal
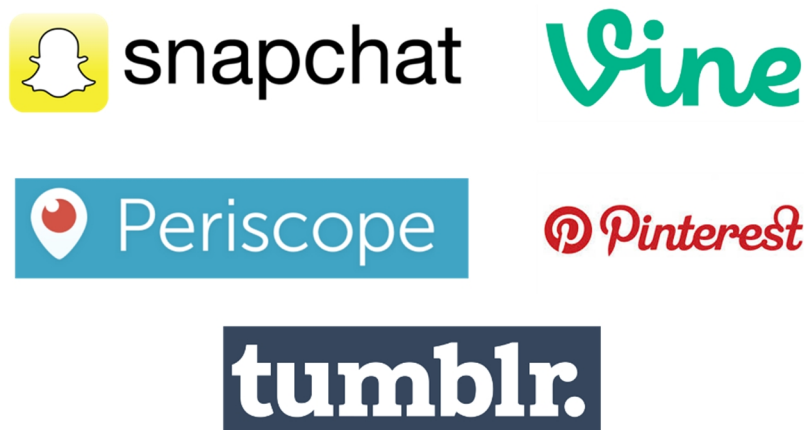
Source - Retrieved from Google and adapted by the author

1.4. Football in Portugal and in Social Networks

1.4.1. Football in Portugal

In Portugal, as in many countries especially in Europe and South America, football is a very popular phenomenon, having a growing importance in society over the decades, asserting itself as the preferred sport of the Portuguese people. It is largely due to this multi-million dollar football industry that Portugal, a small rectangle in the corner of Europe, keeps standing out in the eyes of the world, especially due to its national football team and football clubs as well as FIFA Ballon D'Or, Cristiano Ronaldo.

Football in Portugal is dominated by the 3 most popular clubs, respectively: Sport Lisboa e Benfica, Sporting Clube de Portugal and Futebol Clube do Porto. Together, not only they win most of the titles in the various sports, as their fan base totals around 77% of the population. As reported by a survey of O&O Performance, held in 2012, SL Benfica has about 6 million supporters while Sporting CP and FC Porto have around 3 million fans each. Still according to the same survey, the other 23% of the Portuguese population (10.5 million in Portugal and 5 million abroad) either has no club or is a fan of a different club.

If in other countries, such as Germany and England, the choice of a club is mainly due to family and geographical reasons, where the main club of a fan is the one of his city, in Portugal the situation is not totally identical. In some cities, such as Guimarães, Braga and Coimbra, this still happens in part, but in the rest of the country the first club of fans is predominantly one of the "big three", with supporters of Sporting CP and SL Benfica dominating in the capital Lisbon and fans of FC Porto being the majority in Porto.

Figure 6 - The "big three" clubs of Portugal

Source - Retrieved from Google and adapted by the author

1.4.2. Portuguese Football Clubs in Social Networks

From the second half of the 20th century on, football in Portugal has been gaining increasing popularity as well as a progressive media coverage. The newspapers were the first main carrier of sports information. Then, technological advances brought the radio along with television, allowing matches broadcast as well as a tremendous highlight of football in the news. As a result of a "blue ocean" in media, in the last 10 years, 2 TV sports channels showed up naturally, devoting most of its programming to national football. Recently we have witnessed the rise of social networks and with it came the opportunity for national media to easily deliver the latest sports information to millions of Portuguese in Portugal and around the globe.

Following this evolution of the media, clubs realized that their supporters are nowadays "blended" consumers, being present in traditional platforms but turning exponentially to digital. This forced clubs into creating their own digital marketing strategy, leading them to create accounts on various social networking websites in order to communicate with different targets, adapting content and tone of voice in each one.

If the most popular social networks among the Portuguese are Facebook, Google +, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram, it is in 4 of these 6 social platforms that most Portuguese league clubs are concentrated. Indeed, most clubs don't feel their presence is required in social networks like LinkedIn or Google + as they are mainly focused on the professional side or just falling into disuse.

At first glance, when analysing the presence of Portuguese football clubs in social media platforms, the first thing to highlight is the significant weight that the "big three" have in the various social media. Together, FC Porto, SL Benfica and Sporting CP account 91% of followers among first league clubs, totalling 10 million out of 11 possible (**Appendix X**). Therefore, it will not be surprising that each of these clubs have exclusive departments responsible for their club's online communication. At a great distance from the Top 3 we have clubs such as Sp. Braga, Académica (Coimbra) and V. Guimarães with significant weight in its city and with great tradition in the league but only achieving no more than 100k followers each.

Chart 1 - The huge weight of the "big three" social media followers in the Portuguese League

- Followers of FC Porto
- Followers of Sporting
- Followers of Benfica
- Followers of the other Portuguese League Clubs
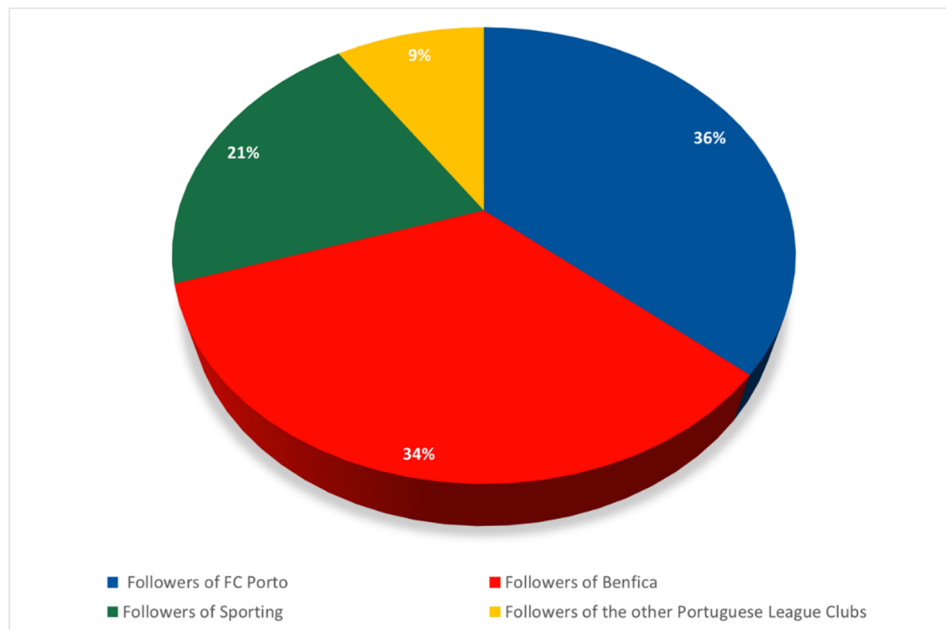
Source - The Author

The preferred network of Portuguese clubs is Facebook, with all clubs of the first Portuguese league being present. Most clubs, including the smaller ones, already do an acceptable use of Facebook. However, while they are already expanding their presence to other digital platforms, they still miss some strategy, coherence and interaction in their main social network. The communication on this page is mostly formal having as its primary goal to keep their fans up to date with the news of their club. Other clubs with bigger experience on Facebook, especially the "big three", try to go beyond and achieve higher engagement by performing other kind of activities such as interaction with fans, contests, promoting the club sponsors, among others…

The Portuguese club with most likes on Facebook is FC Porto with 3 million likes, followed by SL Benfica and Sporting CP. It is this latter however that presents the best engagement rate with their fans among the clubs of the national league, having obtained the highest engagement rate in Europe and the 3rd best in the world in October 2014. Speaking of fans, on average every club from the Portuguese league has 60% of Portuguese fans against 40% of foreign fans, important data that reveal the importance of social networks in helping to attract fans from all around the globe (**Appendix X**). These statistics are even more surprising if we note that the "real" rate of domestic fans is in fact 40% (only 3.5 million fans are Portuguese out of the 9 million followers) much due to the internationalization of FC Porto, SL Benfica and Sporting CP.

12

Chart 2 - Local vs Foreign Social Media Followers in the Portuguese League
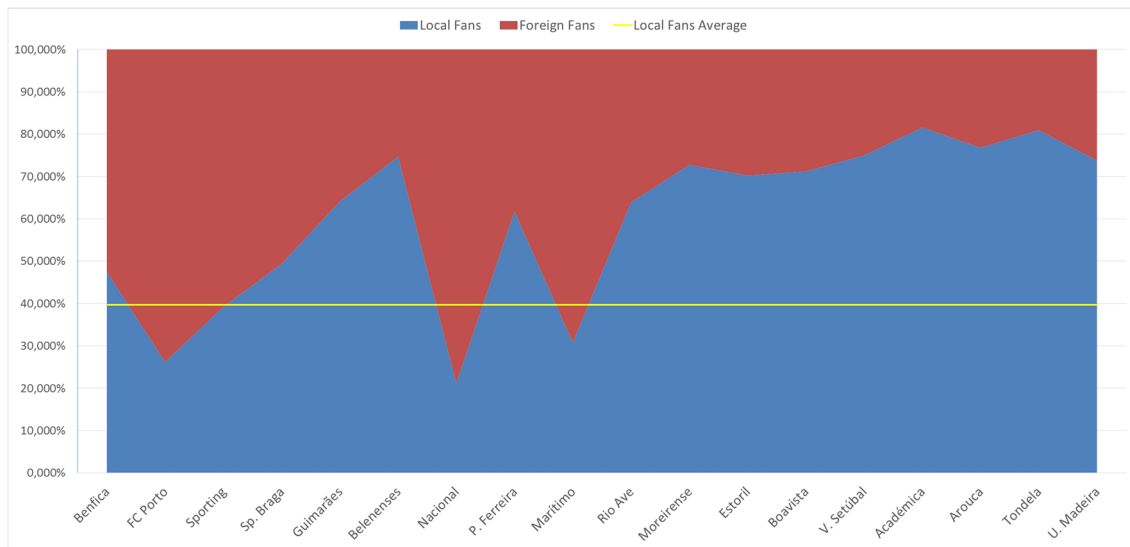
Source - The Author

The second social media platform with most followers is Twitter, reaching nearly 1.5 million followers among first league clubs. Estoril and U. Madeira are the only clubs in the Portuguese league who are not yet present. Portuguese users and therefore most Portuguese clubs are now beginning to understand that Twitter is not an extension of Facebook, with some of them already using specific and customized content to this platform, bonding with fans and promoting several contests. Others, despite being present, underestimate Twitter merely replicating Facebook content or posting infrequently - factors that lead to a low or even null interaction with fans. Since Twitter tend to have a different and younger target, clubs' communication is quite informal, starting to occur occasionally the interaction between players, fans and clubs, sometimes with the exchange of provocative comments but without being disrespectful.

The club with most followers in this social network is FC Porto, reaching almost 500k followers, closely followed by SL Benfica, with Sporting CP closing the podium. Once more, it is Sporting who has the best engagement rate with their fans among the "big three". As this is a social media platform where everyone interacts with everyone, sometimes at a frenetic speed (each Tweet has a lifespan of only 18 minutes in average), it is natural that the average number of posts throughout the week by Portuguese clubs is somewhat higher than Facebook, 52 tweets against 35 Facebook posts (**Appendix X**).

The third most popular social network is Instagram reaching a little over 500k followers if we total all Portuguese league clubs. Having in account that it is a social network that is trending in Portugal and clearly on the rise, it is expected a significant increase in followers in late 2015 and during 2016. Despite the great popularity among the Portuguese, this still does not happen among Portuguese clubs, with 5 clubs from the national league yet not being present in Instagram and with many failing to surpass 2k followers mark. Clubs have been using this platform until now to post transfers, squad line-ups, photos of game day and training. However, the future may be promising since in the week under review by the author, the average of new followers on Portuguese clubs was twice comparing to Twitter and only half of Facebook. Since it is a social media platform dedicated to photos and videos, with a "chic" and "premium" connotation, it is expected that Portuguese football clubs will be increasingly active in the future, posting unique content such as behind-the-scenes in order to attract more followers and ensure more interaction with fans.

The club who stands out the most in Instagram is FC Porto with 300k followers, twice as much as SL Benfica and 4 times more than Sporting CP. Unlike Facebook and Twitter, FC Porto takes the lead in the engagement with its fans followed almost immediately by Sporting CP. Besides, it is also the club that publishes the most per week (27 times), twice as much as Benfica and Sporting and 3times more than the Portuguese league average (9 times) (**Appendix X**).

In fourth and last place is YouTube, collecting 140k subscribers among first league clubs. Despite being in last place this does not mean a lower popularity of this social network. In fact, the videos present on the Youtube channels from all Portuguese league clubs have been seen over 34 million times. Being in last place only reveals that the communication on this platform is more unidirectional than bidirectional. Thus, fans prefer to have a more passive attitude inside Youtube, feeling on the other hand more open to engage with that same content in other social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Blogs or Forums. Most clubs use this social network to upload videos promoting future matches, interviews to players and coaches as well as match highlights. Clubs with higher number of subscribers go a litter further and try to engage with fans by uploading motivational videos as well as memorable goals in important matches.

If SL Benfica is the club with the highest number of subscribers and videos posted by week, FC Porto is the club that reaches most views in that same period. Only Maritimo is not present on Youtube (opting to publish their videos on its online TV channel) which reveals the predominance of this social network when having to choose a website to host the clubs' videos.

Finally it is worth mentioning the shy use of Vine by some football clubs such as Belenenses and Sporting. Vine is a social network that allows users to publish micro videos with a maximum of 6 seconds being directly linked to Twitter. In Portugal it is used primarily by these two clubs to show the stadium's atmosphere but in other European clubs it is also used to show team plays, teams leaving the lockers towards the pitch, moments in training, among other situations. It is expected that more clubs bet on this social network during 2015/2016 season. Snapchat and Periscope are also other trending social networks that are not being used by Portuguese clubs. However, it is very likely that the "big three" may end up trying out those applications in a near future as other European and American clubs are already sharing exclusive photos and videos to its fans or even live streaming them.

Figure 7 - Jack Cork (Southampton FC) using the club's Snapchat account

Source - HITC Website

1.5. Social Media Benchmarking for Sporting Clube de Portugal

As seen before, most Portuguese League clubs still miss much of the potential of social media, not adapting their presence to the target of each social network, not providing the most appealing content to its fans and therefore lacking in terms of the engagement they have with them. On the contrary, the "big three" show an acceptable performance in each social media platform they participate, with the exception of Youtube where none of them stands out in terms of content. If Sporting CP takes the lead in Facebook and Twitter in terms of engagement rate, FC Porto on the other hand dominates Instagram, being a good national benchmark for Sporting Clube de Portugal.

If most of the Portuguese clubs are still below expectations, the same cannot be said for the majority of clubs in the Premier League (UK) and Bundesliga (Germany). In fact, the vast majority of clubs in both leagues have a strong presence in social networks and show a good engagement with fans being therefore a good benchmark for the "leonine club".

1.5.1. Facebook: Manchester United

Manchester United is an English football club based in Trafford, Manchester's metropolitan area, being nowadays one of the most popular and most succeeded clubs in England and in the World, having won throughout its long history 20 Premier League and 3 UEFA Champions League titles.

To communicate with their fans, Manchester United is actively present on social networks, having accounts in Facebook, Google +, Twitter, Instagram, Weibo, Renren and Vine. Despite such differentiated presence it is Man United's Facebook who clearly takes the lead, being the 3rd football club page most liked with an astounding mark of 66 million followers and with almost 2 million people engaging with the page a week.

The first thing that picks the viewer's attention in Manchester United's Facebook is the design used in its images. Regarding the digital art, images normally have a red background with a retro look, looking quite consistent across the several posts. On the other hand, photos published by the club are normally covered with a red soft filter, giving them a more refine touch as if they had been taken with Instagram.

Figure 8 - Example of 2 Manchester United Facebook Posts

Source- Manchester United Facebook

The club publishes on Facebook about 8 times a day, with a tone of voice mostly formal, highlighting the club news, providing exclusive interviews or behind-the-scenes videos and allowing the interaction of fans through its Facebook Apps with polls, contests and questions (**Appendix XI**) . To participate in those Apps, where fans can choose their starting eleven, win a signed shirt or answer a quiz for example, users are required to leave some personal information such as email or date of birth which is then used by the club to CRM or to provide to the club sponsors. And this tight relationship with sponsors usually brings good results for both sides. In 2012, Manchester United and Turkish Airlines launched a contest in the club's Facebook where 19 Man Utd fans from all around the globe could win a trip to the club's first home match with all expenses paid by the airline company. The campaign was a tremendous success with 322 million views in the club's communication channels as well as 200k new followers in Turkish Airlines' Facebook, making it the 4th most followed airline company in this social network.

1.5.2. Twitter: Borussia Dortmund

Borussia Dortmund is a 105 year old German sports club based in Dortmund, being one of the most successful clubs in German football history with 8 championships and 1 UEFA Champions League title. Nowadays BVB, as it is known by fans, is one of the

most popular clubs in the world with more than 13 million fans on Facebook. Its stadium is the largest in the country and the club has the highest average attendance of a football club in the world, showing how Borussia fans are really committed with the club.

BVB is present in the majority of social networks, having an active presence in Facebook, Google +, Twitter, Instagram and Vine. Borussia's Twitter is clearly the platform that stands out the most, totalling 1.75 million followers, being the 20th football club most followed as well as the one with the best engagement rate of the entire Bundesliga.

The main strength of Borussia Dortmund on this social network is the tone of voice used by BVB that according to David Görges, the club's communication director, "is one you would normally associate with fans, rather than a strict PR department" giving "a quirky and informal feel to most posts". To increase the interaction with fans "being able to produce one-liners and jokes is crucial". On the other hand, the ability to change between styles, from informal to formal, is another thing the club's communication department masters very well as "jokes are only meant for certain situations".

Figure 9 - The informal tone-of-voice is present in almost every tweet

Source - Borussia Dortmund Twitter

Dortmund's Twitter has over 38k tweets, which makes it the 9th football club with most tweets in the world. With an average of 20 tweets a day, and with its content in German and English, BVB's page also gives a strong emphasis to content posted by others, replying to fans' tweets very often or retweeting fan pages, players, sponsors and opinion makers (**Appendix XII**).

1.5.3. Instagram: FC Bayern Munich

Bayern Munich is a German sports club based in Munich, being the most successful club in Germany and one of the best in the world. To date, FC Bayern has won 25 national titles and 5 UEFA Champions League titles. All this success also extends to Facebook where the club has more than 31 million fans being the 6th football club most followed.

The club has a strong presence in several social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and Google + but it is Bayern Munich's Instagram that has been attracting the fans attention by accumulating almost 3.4 million followers and leaving it in the 6th position of the football clubs with most fans in this platform.

FC Bayern's outstanding performance on this social network is mainly due to three reasons. Firstly, the club does a remarkable photo coverage of the main events, from match line-up, goals and final score to moments in training, photos of fans and behind-the-scenes, always adopting a modern and eye catching design (**Appendix XIII**). Secondly, Bayern Munich steals everyone's attention by posting several videos a month in this platform to engage with fans, by showing some exclusive behind-the-scenes clips, bloopers and funny moments in training. Finally, the club uses witty customized hashtags for each player with helps increasing the levels of engagement with fans.

The club posts around 5 times a day with both photos and videos having short and informal fan-oriented captions that for being written in English end up increasing its interaction with fans, easily achieving each more than 100k likes and 10k comments.

Figure 10 - Example of an Instagram posts with witty descriptions
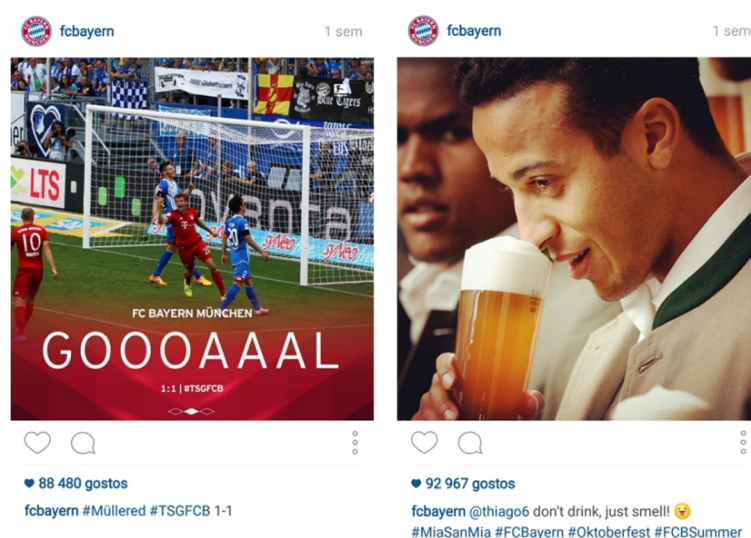
Source - FC Bayern Munich Instagram

1.5.4. Youtube: Manchester City

Manchester City is a 121 year old English football club based in Manchester, being nowadays one of the wealthiest clubs in the world after Abu Dhabi United Group bought it in 2008. Throughout its long history Man City won the Premier League for 4 times as well as a UEFA Cup Winners' Cup. Today, the club has almost 20 million fans on Facebook which ranks the "Citizens" in 10th place of the most followed football clubs.

To be closer to its fans, Manchester City is present in 11 different social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Google +, Vine, Snapchat, Periscope, Pinterest, Foursquare and Flickr. Despite such extensive presence on social media platforms, the club's major bet in the last 4 years has been on Youtube. Due to its engaging and creative videos, Manchester City is already the 3rd most followed football club with almost 500k subscribers.

Being referred by many as the best football club's YouTube channel in the world, the "Citizens" have been far ahead of its competitors, showing an incredible imagination in its exclusive behind-the-scenes videos. In 2015, Manchester City upgraded its already existing Tunnel Cam, allowing fans to control the view of Etihad Stadium tunnel before, during and after the match thanks to the introduction of a 360 degree camera (**Appendix XIV**). It is also quite common to see players in rarely seen situations like singing Christmas carols, making pranks to each other or preparing postcards for fans. To please those who appreciate football related moments, is not unusual for City to upload videos of a player's first day in the club as well as funny moments in training or freestyle skills.

With over 2814 videos uploaded, an average of 8 videos a week, the club has been getting a positive return of its bet in unique and creative videos, accumulating 25k new subscribers and 8 million views every month.

Figure 11 - Example of some Manchester City Youtube Videos

Source - Manchester City Youtube Channel

20

1.6. The presence of Sporting Clube de Portugal in Social Media

1.6.1. Introduction

As we have seen before, Sporting Clube de Portugal is a century-old sports institution with a deep impact on the various sectors of society, from sports to social, counting as of today with more than 3 million fans. Social networks are nowadays a vital platform to communicate with fans around the globe but also a way of exploring more successfully its commercial side. Thus, Sporting CP made its debut in social media in 2009, currently having an active presence in 7 different social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Vine, Tumblr and Pinterest. In addition to the official pages mostly dedicated to the football team, also 18 other sports sections of Sporting CP are present in social networks – the majority of them in Facebook.

In 2014, as a result of the club's financial restructuring, the communication department was no exception with several layoffs. With Sporting CP's board wanting to do more with less resources, Diogo Bernardo and Christopher Halder were hired to take over the club's social media and boost its presence.

Loaded with new ideas, they wanted football to be seen by the leonine supporters not only as a sport but also as a form of entertainment. Adopting an informal approach in the various social networks, their first task was to adapt the contents of each page to its target. Over the past 16 months, they increasingly strengthened the relationship with the fans, showing major improvements in terms of coherence, design, communication and interaction. After achieving the highest engagement rate of

Figure 12 - The social media presence of Sporting CP

Source – Sporting CP Facebook

football clubs in Europe and the 3rd best in the world on Facebook in only a 5 months' time, the future looks promising with more improvements and innovation yet to come during the 2015/2016 season. But let's look at each social network in particular and see how changed for the better.

1.6.2. Facebook

1.6.2.1. Statistical Insights

Sporting Clube de Portugal joined Facebook in June 2009. Six years past, by August 2015, the club surpassed the 1.85 million mark expecting to reach 2 million followers in a few months. If the club took three and half years to reach its 1 million fans, with the significant changes made over the last year, the club is now about to double the number of its followers little over a year and a half later .

From its nearly 2 million followers, only 727k are Portuguese, reflecting the need for top clubs to communicate to a global audience. In fact, according to Diogo, Sporting CP should bet more and more on attracting international fans to its page as they are struggling, just like SL Benfica and FC Porto, to reach more local fans without resorting to paid Facebook Ads. The key relies in good performances in European competitions as well as through big-name signings. Something FC Porto has been doing very successfully in the past couple of years.

In terms of gender, Sporting's Facebook population is composed by 75% men and 25% women, a gap not so evident when speaking in terms of active users. The 18-24 age group is the most popular representing 39% of users, followed by 25-34 with 20% and 13-17 with 16%. With 75% of its users under 34 year's age, it is important to maintain an informal and interactive relationship – something Sporting has been doing quite well. According to the study conducted by the author, Sporting achieved an engagement rate of 10.11% in the selected week (**Appendix X**), a number slightly below the 10.69% that made Sporting the European club with the highest engagement rate back in October 2014 but still more than enough to lead the Portuguese League ranking of clubs with the highest interaction (if we only consider pages with more than 100k followers).

1.6.2.2. From standing still to outstanding

By the time Sporting CP joined Facebook in 2009, there was a widespread unfamiliarity with this social network both by the club and its users in general. It will not be surprising that for many months the club simply published the news' links to its website.

From 2009 to the end of 2011 major changes took place in Sporting's Facebook. It was possible to see an increase in the variety of content published by page. If before some

posts were being replicated more than 10 times in a row, as days went by new content started to arise such as contests, sales promotion, other sports information, among others. Aesthetical inconsistency was another problem the club's community managers weren't efficiently taking care of during this time period. Some images were large while others were small, some had a decent resolution whereas others look blurry and pixelated (**Appendix XV**).

In the following year, the page started showing some improvements. In March 2012, Sporting introduced historical events in the club's Facebook timeline allowing fans to get to know more about Sporting Clube de Portugal's history. The club also increased its interaction with fans. Firstly, several contests took place exclusively on Facebook giving away season tickets to club members. Sporting would reveal some hints in its posts and fans had to search the club's mascot in Lisbon's City Centre. Secondly, Sporting started inviting players from different sports to live interviews where fans could ask their questions. An initiative repeated throughout time that turned out to be a major success.

During 2013, the club decided to put more effort in this social platform as they were now communicating to an audience of more than half a million followers. Most of the pictures already had a reasonable quality as well as a watermark yet a consistent design was something that still did not exist (**Appendix XVI**). On the other hand, there was significant progress in the club's tone of voice. Not only had the communication become more informal, asking frequently for the followers' opinions, as Sporting's Facebook page started answering fans' replies and posts.

The 1 million followers' milestone was achieved in March 2014 mainly due to the signing of Egyptian famous player Shikabala. In a 1 month period, the page skyrocketed its number of likes, being literally invaded by 200k new Egyptian fans. Sporting's reaction was immediate posting several content in Egyptian and English in order to engage with its new audience. A short-lived response as Sporting quit using foreign languages a few months after, indicating that a coherent strategy was still to be found.

In May 2014, Diogo and Christopher took over Sporting's Facebook account. If they knew they had to keep what was being done well, it was also important to give it their own personal touch. Their first job was to solve the great lack of aesthetical consistency that was persisting along the years. In an interview given to the author of this Case Study, Diogo claimed that "content was not standardized until that moment". For example: "one

image could be posted with a lighter shade of green while another right after could have a darker one", giving the impression that "Sporting's Facebook was under control of several different people". With the help of a designer they created specific templates for almost every kind of content. Not only they were consistent among each other but at the same time very eye-catching.

If graphically speaking things were on the right track, much still had to be done about everyday's content. Their next move was to come up with a strategy regarding what should be published on a daily basis. According to Christopher, from that moment on "people knew that on Mondays they would find all sports results from the weekend, on Thursdays the squad list and so on". Although planning was important, even more vital was to be prepared for some good real time marketing. Full of good examples in a recent past, impromptu definitely became Sporting CP's middle name (**Appendix XVII**).

Figure 13 - The aesthetically appealing posts of Sporting CP's Facebook

Source - Sporting CP Facebook

The formula for success was almost complete. Content and aesthetics were already there but the right way to deliver the message was somewhat missing. To achieve higher interaction, Diogo and Christopher adapted the tone of voice and the language used to

each specific post. "If the subject is for example the promotion of the club's newspaper, it doesn't make that much sense to post it both in Portuguese and English as it is mainly intended for Portuguese users" they said. On the other hand, it was also important for fans to identify themselves with the "language" used by the page. Indeed, it has been recurrent the use of fan chants' jargon in Sporting's Facebook posts (**Appendix XVIII**).

After this first year and a half of major changes in Sporting Clube de Portugal's Facebook, the future looks promising with more improvements yet to come mainly focused on providing greater financial return to the club.

1.6.3. Twitter

1.6.3.1. Statistical Insights

Sporting Clube de Portugal has been actively present on Twitter since February 2009. By August 2015, six years after its debut, the club has over 323k followers in its main account. To communicate exclusively with its foreign audience, Sporting CP has reactivated its English-speaking account in September 2014, having nowadays around 12k followers. As the main goal of this secondary Twitter is to replicate the content of the primary account in English, not bringing any kind of exclusive material, it will not be discussed along this case study.

The local fan ratio is 55% meaning that 178k followers are from Portugal, followed at great distance by Brazilians with 13k and both British and Indonesians with 10k each. In terms of gender, 81% of Sporting CP followers are men while only 19% are women. Again, like in Facebook, this gap is not so prominent when we take only in consideration the active users. Regarding age groups, although there is no official information, Diogo and Christopher state that the most popular must be the one with users ranging between 13-17 closely followed by the 18-24 age group. As the average users' age is lower than Facebook, it only reassures the real need to establish a very active, engaging and informal presence in this social platform in order to achieve higher levels of interaction with fans.

In the week selected for analysis, Sporting Clube de Portugal achieved a fan engagement rate of 1.84% (**Appendix X**), being the Portuguese League club with the highest interaction from all 18 clubs (if we only consider pages with more than 10k followers). This "award" is only a small proof of the remarkable effort that has been done in the last year and a half which will be discussed in the next subchapter.

1.6.3.2. From litter to a remarkable Twitter

The presence of Sporting on Twitter has always been quite undervalued by the club's communication department over the years. The main explanation to this attitude may be well related to the fact that this social media platform never reached the levels of attractiveness it has achieved in places like the United Kingdom or the United States. Therefore, it will not be surprising that Sporting didn't pay much attention to its Twitter account, simply publishing the recent news from the club's website in its tweets. With the increasing popularity of Facebook over the last 5 years, from November 2011 onward, Sporting started to automatically replicate its Facebook posts on Twitter: a minor change that still did not bring any kind of interaction to the page.

When Diogo and Christopher took control of Sporting CP's Twitter they knew the club had to show a much more active attitude in this social platform as it was Twitter was starting to gain increasing popularity in Portugal, especially among teenagers. In April 2014, the club finally started tweeting and interacting and a sudden boom was immediately felt with over 60k new followers in a one month period.

With all the aesthetics changes in the club's Facebook multimedia content being also applied to Twitter, it was time to set the right strategy to this social network. With Sporting fans to be known for their great love for the club as well as their enormous dedication, participation and commitment, Diogo and Christopher took advantage of it starting to interact with fans by retweeting their publications, answering fans' tweets even wishing a happy birthday to some of them. In Christopher's opinion, Sporting wanted not only to reinforce its proximity to the fans but also to show that Twitter is "supposed to be a place for a lighter, funnier and more informal chat". The informality present in the page doesn't end only in the communication with fans. In fact, Sporting CP's Twitter also interacts with the club's sponsors, brands, players, fan clubs' pages or even with other club's fans whenever they feel it is relevant (**Appendix XIX**).

Figure 14 - A strong informality present in Sporting CP's tweets

Source - Sporting CP Twitter

Besides from engaging with others, this social platform is also the chosen way for the club to provide the latest information as well as to follow step by step every moment of the club's matches from football to futsal, female futsal, handball, hockey or even beach soccer. Recently, following the latest trends, Sporting was the first to club to start using Vine in order to publish six second-long looping videos in the club's Twitter feed as a way to fans who cannot attend the club's football match to get a taste of the environment.

Another major contributor for the tremendous success Sporting has been achieving on Twitter is the flawless use of hashtags, being quite often a national trend. Diogo and Christopher use them as a way to put fans speaking about a certain topic. With several hundreds of thousands of tweets and images using the club's hashtags, the most popular ones are: #SportingCP, #OndaVerde, #DiaDeSporting, #EuVouLaEstar and #VocesSabemLa.

With such a strong presence at a domestic level, it is expected that the focus of these 2 young community managers may shift temporarily to the English-speaking Twitter as a way to provide them the same experience as the Portuguese audience already have.

1.6.4. Instagram

1.6.4.1. Statistical Insights

Being the youngest of the four main social networks of Sporting Clube de Portugal, the club decided to join Instagram on February 2014. One year and a half after establishing its presence, the club has nowadays 70k followers, being reasonably behind its main national competitors: SL Benfica and FC Porto (168k and 307k respectively). However, with several improvements in the last year, Sporting's Instagram has doubled its number of followers in the last six months.

If in terms of followers the scenario isn't the most appealing, in the matter of interaction with fans the scenario is not so dark. In the last six months, following the increasing number of new followers in the page, Sporting CP doubled its number of average likes per photo (3500 in February 2015 vs 6907 in August 2015). To corroborate this data, in the week selected for analysis, Sporting Clube de Portugal reached an engagement rate of 15.64% (**Appendix X**), a number very close to the leader FC Porto with 16.53% (if we only consider pages with more than 2k followers).

Although there is no official information, Diogo and Christopher believe that the ratio of men vs. women is more balanced than on Facebook or Twitter, being quite evident the number of women to interact with Instagram page. Regarding the average users' age is likely that it is higher than Twitter but lower than Facebook.

1.6.4.2. Interaction but still no satisfaction

When Sporting decided to join Instagram back in February 2014, there wasn't any kind of clear strategy defined for this app. The objective back then was to be present in a social network that was being followed for an increasingly number of people. Making quite an entrance on Instagram, Sporting published around 40 images in only 4 or 5 days. Having spent all their stock of photos, the club stayed inactive for a while, posting only every 2 weeks.

As time went by, several mistakes kept persisting. Firstly, there was an overall lack of quality in the photos. On top of that, photos had a watermark with the club's logo right in the middle of the image making them less appealing than they were supposed to be.

Secondly, the hashtags used were not the most appropriate making their use redundant. Finally, the club remained 8 weeks without posting any kind of media.

When Diogo and Christopher joined the club and took over the club's Instagram, they immediately knew they had a difficult task in hands. Their immediate first action was to be seen by fans. They started posting regularly in order to get more followers and make them know that Sporting is on Instagram to interact and build a relationship with them. Only after that goal being achieved they could think of new ways to engage more with fans and to bring innovative content to the club's Instagram.

If in the first months the images uploaded were simple, with an average quality and with short descriptions, a couple of months after, they started bringing new and better content to this social platform. Soon, video content began to be published more regularly whereas brand new hashtags started giving a more professional look to the image captions. By the end of the year, Diogo and Christopher decided to increase the interaction the page has with its followers by making contests, publishing fan photos as well as to give likes to the Instagram photos of their fans – a rarely seen gesture by a sports club in today's world (**Appendix XX**).

Throughout the year of 2015, Sporting Clube de Portugal Instagram's page has been increasing the type of content published. On the one hand, the page started posting much more information on matchday like the squad list, the line-up, goals and the final score but also about other Sporting CP sports (**Appendix XXI**). On the other hand, the club's Instagram pays much more attention to everyday's content such as wishing players Happy Birthday, using players' phrases to emphasize the importance of the club's supporters or showing memorable moments on that date. With a growing number of foreign supporters following Sporting CP on this social media platform, the club decided to post their captions both in Portuguese and English in posts where it would be relevant to have interaction from international fans.

Today, it is quite clear the major improvements that took place on Sporting Clube de Portugal's Instagram since its very beginning. However, the lack of quality in some media as well as the use of few exclusive content may indicate that there is still a long way to go in order to reach the level of those who most stand out in this social network.

Figure 15 - Example of Sporting CP Instagram posts

Source - Sporting CP Instagram

1.6.5. Youtube

1.6.5.1. Statistical Insights

Sporting Clube de Portugal opened its YouTube account on June 2010. Nowadays, the club has almost 25k subscribers and over 4 million views in this social network, being the third most viewed Youtube channel from all the Portuguese League clubs. If the situation isn't that bad in terms of channel views, it gets pretty much worse when it comes to number of videos. As a matter of fact, Sporting CP is only the 9th club from the Portuguese League with most videos uploaded with a total of 360 in the last 5 years. Not a very pleasant indicator for a club of the size of Sporting Clube de Portugal. Another data that reflects the weak performance of the club in this social platform is the number of videos uploaded in the selected for analysis: only one (**Appendix X**). A significantly lower number to those recorded by Benfica and Porto (23 and 14 respectively).

In the last 30 days, 85% of Sporting CP's channel views came from Portugal, followed at great distance by France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Three countries with large communities of Portuguese emigrants. According to YouTube, 90% of the

subscribers are men while only 10 % are women. The greatest distance we have seen so far in terms of gender. The most popular age group among subscribers is the one with ages between 18-24, followed by 25-34, 35-44 and 13-17. That same order is also observed for the most popular age group in terms of channel views.

1.6.5.2. A million views channel going down the tube

If we take a good look at the presence of Sporting Clube de Portugal in the several different social networks it is possible to see a progressive improvement over time: Facebook achieved the highest interaction rate of a football club in Europe, Twitter is considered by many as one of the most active and engaging accounts in Portugal and Instagram has been showing very positive signs with several new types of content in the last months. On an opposite direction we have the Sporting CP's Youtube being the black sheep of the family.

When Sporting decided to join Youtube back in 2010, it was not seen as a new social network but as a way to solve two main problems: address the lack of a club's TV channel and to be a content provider for Facebook.

Throughout the years, with more or less quality, Sporting has been uploading match highlights from several club's sports like Football, Futsal, Handball and Hockey. Despite only being placed online some of the matches, often without any obvious criteria, it was in some cases the only way for fans to be able to get access to that content. These type of content account for 50% of the videos posted in Sporting's channel.

Having in mind the increasing popularity of YouTube, one of the most famous websites in Portugal and on Earth, the club realized that this social network could be not only more than a content provider for Facebook but also a free and targeted way of delivering content and messages to supporters in a video format. Therefore, the club started using it to upload motivational and historical videos to engage with Sporting CP's fans but also to promote commercial campaigns, events, football and other sports matches. Together, all these content represent the other 50% of the videos posted in the club's YouTube.

If on the one hand, match highlights have always been feeding Sporting CP's Youtube channel at a constant pace and with the same quality, gathering most of the times the same views, on the other hand, the same cannot be said about the "engaging videos". From 2010 to 2013, this kind of content was more and more present, hitting its climax in 2012

when Sporting reached the semi-finals of Europa League. In that year, 48 videos were uploaded to interact with fans totalling more than 700k views. In 2013, the number of videos dropped to 19, achieving a total of 440k views. A decreasing trend also seen in 2014, where the number of those videos fell to 17, accumulating only 230k views. After a 5 month hiatus without any new video in Sporting's Youtube, in 2015 the club has only posted 6 videos with content to interact with fans reaching only a mild 33k views.

When the club's TV channel finally started to broadcast in July 2014, it was expected that synergies could take place and more and better content could be provided to Diogo and Christopher. Unfortunately, with the club's board not realizing the importance of this social network, exchanges of content and information have been difficult and few media from Sporting TV has been uploaded in the club's YouTube.

Figure 16 - A lack of engaging videos among the most seen content of Sporting CP Youtube channel

Source - Sporting CP Youtube Channel

1.6.6. Hashtag Campaign: #OndaVerde

Hashtags play a very important role in today's social networks, being a major tool in the use of Twitter and Instagram. As we have seen before, a hashtag is simply a way for people to search for tweets / posts / images that have a common topic. With the increasing popularity of Twitter and Instagram in Portugal as well as the introduction of hashtags in Facebook, hashtags are becoming a trend and several brand already develop marketing campaigns around them.

When the two young community managers started working at Sporting Clube de Portugal, both knew really well what they wished to implement in the club's social networks. Following Sporting's new marketing strategy, 100% focused on the fans, Diogo and Christopher knew that it was important to create an initiative that would not only be a tribute to them but would also increase the levels of interaction between them and the

club. Diogo wanted to show the supporters and how it is to be a Sporting fan on a daily basis while Christopher wanted to show fans on vacations. They decided to merge both their ideas and this is how #OndaVerde (green wave) was born on May 2014. For them "Onda Verde is a way to show that you live Sporting every day even in those that Sporting doesn't play".

To put this campaign in motion they needed a logo as well as a platform for all photos and videos they would be receiving from the fans. After having taken care of the logo, they decided to create a Tumblr and Pinterest social network account to help them achieve the second objective. Tumblr would be the chosen archive for all photos while Pinterest would have 2 main purposes for them: to help them divide photos by categories (Sporting in Summer Festivals, Sporting around Portugal, Sporting around the world, among others) and to integrate it in a Facebook App of "Onda Verde" in Sporting CP's Facebook (**Appendix XXII**).

The campaign turned out to be a major success with more than 3000 photos received by email and 25000 posted by users on Instagram since the beginning of the campaign. Although there is no official information about Twitter, only in August 2015 there was more than 1800 tweets about Onda Verde. With so many photos available, Diogo and Christopher try to group them by several kinds of categories (in which country they were taken, if it is underwater, with animals, children, among others) and post them later on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

After successfully developing the Onda Verde campaign online, the two youngsters decided to go even further with this initiative. Recently, they registered Onda Verde as a trademark having scarves on sale at the club's shop. According to Diogo, "the objective is for supporters to buy this scarf at a symbolic price at the club's store and give to someone you know or will get to know when you go on holiday as a way to transmit your Sporting CP passion".

Figure 17 - Several pictures of Onda Verde posted in Sporting's Facebook

Source - Sporting CP Facebook

1.7. Questions

1st Question: Given the information on the case, develop a dynamic SWOT analysis for the presence of Sporting Clube de Portugal on social networks with one specific strategy for each quadrant.

2nd Question: Based on your answer to the first question, elaborate further on one idea from the strategies proposed in the quadrants.

3rd Question: Do you think that Sporting is providing targeted content depending on the social networks they address? Justify your answer.

4th Question: Having in mind the benchmarking analysis covered in the Case Study, suggest ideas to improve the Instagram of Sporting Clube de Portugal.

5th Question: Foreign fans represent nowadays around 60% of the total Sporting CP Facebook followers. How do you evaluate the club's current approach to this target in the different social networks? Propose solutions if necessary.

1.8. Appendix

Appendix I – The article about the highest engagement rate of Sporting CP on Facebook

Sporting no Facebook: 'gostos' não se discutem

A página oficial de Facebook do Sporting tem crescido exponencialmente em número de fãs, mas é na métrica mais importante que se mostra das melhores do Mundo: a interacção

O conceituado site Social Media Today escreve um artigo intitulado "Por que é a Taxa de Interacção mais importante do que os Likes no seu Facebook." A justificação é simples e já conhecida entre os 'marketeers' digitais: "a Taxa de Interacção oferece uma imagem muito mais clara do sucesso que a marca tem no Facebook, porque permite perceber o quanto as pessoas interagem com a plataforma".

Mas o que é isto da interacção? Não será uma questão secundária? Não será expectável que uma página com mais fãs se traduza numa marca mais conhecida? A resposta, para os profissionais na ferramenta digital, é clara: nem sempre. E o Social Media Today esclarece: "um marketeer amador ou uma empresa que é novata em 'social media marketing' no Facebook deverá estar feliz por ver a sua página receber muitos

'likes'. Isto é um dos maiores erros que se pode cometer no Facebook. A maior plataforma de 'social media' no Mundo providencia muitas ferramentas de análise de sucesso e a maior parte das pessoas não sabe como usá-las".

Afinal, que ferramentas são essas? A mais importante tem um nome que talvez já tenha visto mas a que nunca ligou: "pessoas que falam sobre isto". Trata-se do número de utilizadores que, por dia, interage com a marca na página, através de 'likes', comentários ou partilhas e que depois é dividido pelo número total de fãs da página, dando um valor em percentagem – a Taxa de Interacção. Para os 'experts', uma taxa superior a 1% é considerada razoável, ainda que algumas páginas consigam valores bem mais altos, como é o caso da página… do Sporting Clube de Portugal, que tem a melhor Taxa de Interacção da Europa entre clubes e a terceira melhor do Mundo (ver quadro).

Voltemos atrás: afinal, se uma página tiver muitos fãs, isso não significa que o seu conteúdo vai chegar a mais pessoas do que uma página mais pequena? A teoria diria que sim, até porque é de senso comum que, se falarmos para um grupo maior, significa que mais pessoas nos vão ouvir. Mas o Facebook não funciona desta forma.

"A maioria das pessoas faz 'like' numa página porque vê amigos a fazer ou porque gostou da marca ou de uma campanha numa certa altura. Porém, a maior parte esquece-se das páginas em que tem 'like', pelo que um grande número de fãs da página não significa necessariamente que a marca esteja a realizar um bom trabalho". Pense bem: tem noção do número de páginas de Facebook em que já fez um 'like'?

Além desta justificação do Social Media Today, é importante recordar que o Facebook foca-se cada vez mais em

mostrar aos utilizadores apenas conteúdos de qualidade. E a qualidade avalia-se por uma métrica: interacção. Um post, quando é colocado numa página de Facebook, é mostrado apenas a uma pequena parte dos seus fãs. Se tiver pouca interacção, não cresce; mas se, pelo contrário, tiver muitos 'likes', comentários e partilhas, cada vez mais pessoas vão vê-lo, porque tem qualidade.

Resumindo: dependendo da interacção, uma página de 1,5 milhões de fãs poderá ter um alcance muito superior a uma página de três milhões. Afinal, 'gostos' não se discutem. Porque há algo muito mais importante a discutir – e os Sportinguistas fazem-no, todos os dias, nas redes sociais.

Fonte: Social Media Today e Social-Bakers *http://www.socialmediatoday.com/content/why-wengagement-rate-more-important-likes-your-facebook*

Taxa de interacção: Europa

CLUBE	FÃS LOCAIS	TOTAL DE FÃS	PESSOAS QUE FALAM SOBRE ISTO	INTERACÇÃO
1. Sporting CP	685 778	1 557 814	166 200	10,67%
2. Olympiacos	411 068	563 734	40 029	7,1%
3. FC Porto	795 836	2 317 093	140 297	6,05%
4. Legia Varsóvia	619 419	714 278	41 124	5,76%
5. Fenerbahçe	8 749 394	9 939 473	553 049	5,56%
6. Lech Poznan	486 696	542 069	29 067	5,36%
7. Bayern Munique	2 232 099	22 697 866	991 081	4,37%
8. SL Benfica	1 329 131	2 583 965	107 841	4,17%
9. Real Madrid	2 336 650	75 451 862	2 974 507	3,94%
10. Schalke 04	563 111	2 354 528	88 102	3,74%
11. Manchester Utd	2 120 150	60 013 833	2 194 774	3,66%
12. Chelsea FC	950 128	37 244 410	1 335 807	3,59%
13. Juventus	2 692 370	14 465 727	477 639	3,3%
14. Liverpool	1 633 942	23 555 832	745 213	3,16%
15. Borussia Dortmund	1 514 547	10 948 512	318 725	2,91%
16. Arsenal	1 226 286	30 013 420	853 397	2,84%
17. Besiktas	4 758 599	5 468 561	155 039	2,84%
18. Manchester City	398 906	16 256 325	459 764	2,83%
19. Barcelona	2 188 224	77 218 354	2 160 788	2,8%
20. Galatasaray	10 386 046	12 748 764	348 956	2,74%
21. Lyon	788 842	1 668 029	43 337	2,6%
22. Paris Saint Germain	1 903 314	14 026 349	359 090	2,56%
23. Marselha	1 985 910	3 735 765	88 053	2,36%
24. Atlético Madrid	496 652	8 673 940	189 952	2,19%
25. AS Roma	893 248	3 989 896	85 687	2,15%
26. Inter de Milão	1 033 021	4 310 885	79 400	1,84%
27. Ajax	555 847	1 689 444	31 043	1,84%
28. Celtic FC	376 896	1 201 680	16 860	1,4%
29. Tottenham	439 915	5 651 701	67 297	1,19%
30. Zenit	631 497	879 740	9 137	1,04%
31. Nápoles	996 639	3 143 291	31 012	0,97%
32. Spartak Moscovo	515 939	721 656	7 182	0,96%
33. AC Milan	1 884 900	23 187 778	208 721	0,9%
34. Estrela Vermelha	491 136	768 346	4 968	0,65%

Taxa de interacção: Mundo

CLUBE	FÃS LOCAIS	TOTAL DE FÃS	PESSOAS QUE FALAM SOBRE ISTO	INTERACÇÃO
1. Colo-Colo	1 748 785	1 924 041	444 187	23,09%
2. Internacional P.A.	1 657 653	1 802 474	196 543	10,9%
3. Sporting CP	685 778	1 557 814	166 200	10,67%
4. Atlético Mineiro	1 591 342	2 184 362	210 927	9,66%
5. Botafogo	987 968	1 124 216	104 568	9,3%
6. Club America	4 982 402	6 308 392	558 237	8,85%
7. São Paulo	5 449 550	5 800 023	451 740	7,79%
8. River Plate	3 790 468	4 877 056	373 947	7,67%
9. Olympiacos	411 068	563 734	40 029	7,1%
10. Vasco Da Gama	2 252 595	2 349 458	158 704	6,75%
11. Boca	4 270 920	6 238 051	379 765	6,09%
12. FC Porto	795 836	2 317 093	140 297	6,05%
13. Zamalek	2 089 690	2 769 265	162 488	5,87%
14. Club Atlético Nacional	2 935 683	3 285 627	190 259	5,8%
15. Legia Varsóvia	619 419	714 278	41 124	5,76%
16. Corinthians	9 204 578	9 762 894	551 295	5,65%
17. Fenerbahçe	8 749 394	9 939 473	553 049	5,56%
18. Lech Poznan	486 696	542 069	29 067	5,36%
19. Fluminense	971 089	1 062 788	53 458	5,03%
20. Alianza Lima	2 508 033	2 805 356	139 056	4,96%
21. Sporting Cristal	534 951	621 394	29 703	4,78%
22. Santos	2 094 941	3 035 608	133 669	4,4%
23. Bayern Munique	2 232 099	22 697 866	991 081	4,37%
24. SL Benfica	1 329 131	2 583 965	107 841	4,17%
25. Grémio	2 185 934	2 339 499	94 587	4,04%
26. Flamengo	8 821 841	9 316 944	367 744	3,95%
27. Real Madrid	2 336 650	75 451 862	2 974 507	3,94%
28. LA Galaxy	299 327	1 049 727	39 754	3,79%
29. Schalke 04	563 111	2 354 528	88 102	3,74%
30. Manchester United	2 120 150	60 013 833	2 194 774	3,66%

Notas: Taxa de interação = Pessoas que falam sobre isto / Total de fãs | Dados retirados no dia 20 de Outubro | Páginas com muito poucos fãs podem levar a Taxas de Interação de 20% ou 30%, pelo que só foram contabilizadas páginas com mais de 500.000 fãs. | Os dados são variáveis, fazendo com que a Taxa de Interação oscile até três pontos percentuais de um dia para o outro – aumenta em dias de jogo de futebol | Dada essa

Source - Jornal Sporting

Appendix II – National football league average attendances in Estádio José Alvalade
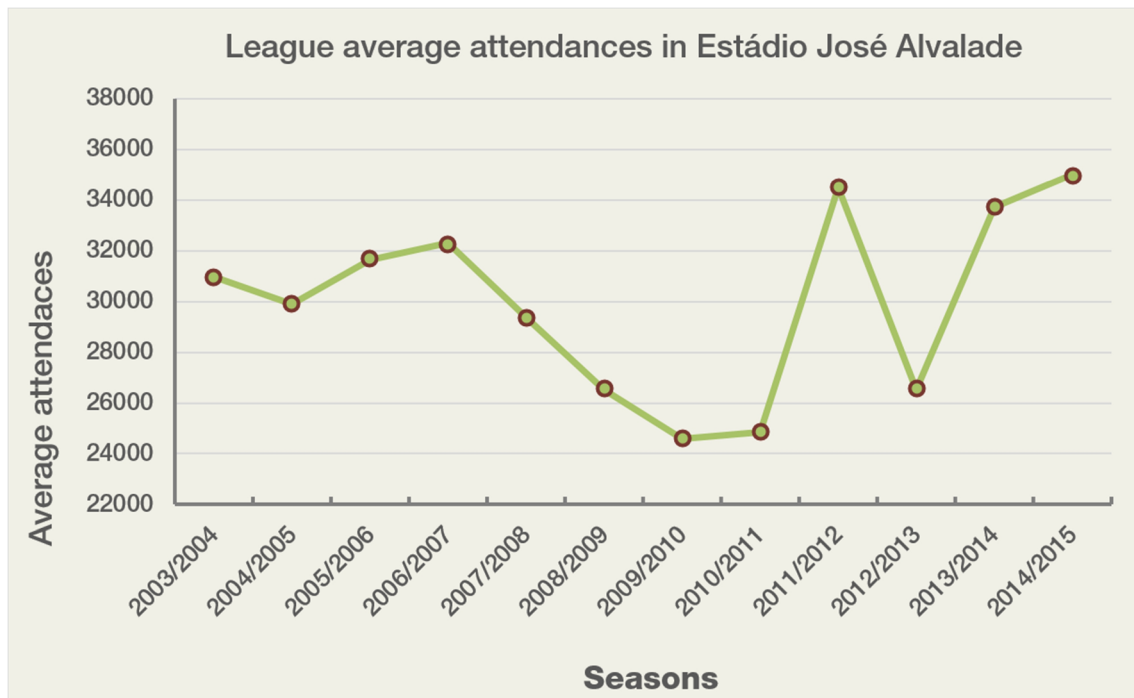
Source - Retrieved from FórumSCP and adapted by the author

Appendix III – Printed communication of "O SPORTING É NOSSO!" slogan

Source - Sporting CP Website

Appendix IV – The "12º Jogador" member taking a photo with the team
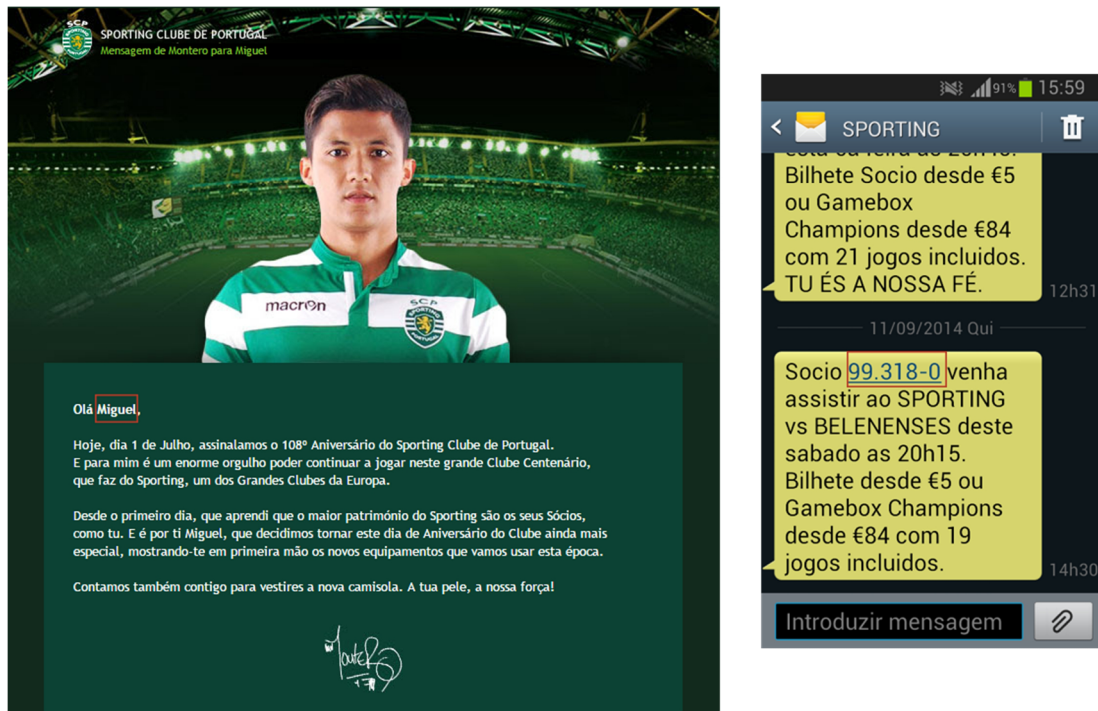

Source - Sporting CP Website

Appendix V – Printed Communication of "TU ÉS A NOSSA FÉ" slogan

Source - Sporting CP Website

Appendix VI – Customized Email and SMS Marketing from Sporting Clube de Portugal

Source – The Author

Appendix VII – "Sócio num Minuto" Website with 2 associate ranking options

Source - Sócio num Minuto Website

Appendix VIII – Sporting CP answering a fan in the "Voz Leonina" Initiative

Sporting Clube de Portugal ✎ 38 · 👤 109

Maio 08, 2015, 14:12 pm

Citação de: Gtony em Janeiro 15, 2015, 11:13 am

1) App MeuSporting

Estão previstos desenvolvimentos futuros para esta aplicação? A aplicação é boa, bastante util (para bilhetes então é excelente 🟢 🟢) mas creio que tem margem para ser melhorada, e nomeadamente deixo algumas sugestões:

- Disponibilização dos videos dos Golos da Equipa B;
- Disponibilização de estatisticas e calendarios á semelhança das apresentadas para o futebol, para as restantes modalidades;
- Disponibilização da programação e de conteudos da SportingTV;
- E por ultimo uma sugestão inovadora. Integrar a Game Box no MeuSporting para quem assim o desejar. Neste caso convinha que a aplicação funcionasse Off Line. Nem sempre há rede/saldo para ligar a App, e por isso convinha que a App funcione Off Line.

Olá, Gtony!
Por agora ainda não estão previstos desenvolvimentos para a App, mas tal irá acontecer após a implementação do novo site, na lógica de coerência e melhoramento de todas as plataformas que temos vindo a seguir. As tuas sugestões serão levadas em conta e certamente irão ajudar. Obrigado!

Source - FórumSCP Website

Appendix IX – Short description of the most popular and trending social networks

Facebook is a social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages, keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues as well as to interact with companies and organizations

Google Plus is a social networking website that enables you to connect with other people who are interested in your passions. It lets you categorize people by circles, allowing you to upload photos, video chat, share thoughts, among other things.

Youtube is a video-sharing website where registered users can upload and share videos with anyone as well as rate and comment other users' videos. Several companies and organizations also use YouTube to promote their business.

LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.

Twitter is an online social networking tool in which users post 140 character updates of what is going on in their lives along with links to things they think are interesting, funny or useful to their followers.

Instagram is an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them on a variety of social networking platforms such as Facebook or Twitter. A distinctive feature is that it confines photos to a squared shape similar to Polaroid images.

Snapchat is a mobile app which you can then use to "chat" with friends through photos, videos and captions. One of the most unique things about Snapchat is the "self-destructing" feature for photos a few seconds after photos have been viewed.

Vine is a video-sharing app that is designed in a way for users to film short, separate instances so they can be linked together for a total of six seconds. Each short video plays in a continuous loop and is viewable directly in Twitter's timeline or embedded into a web page.

Periscope is a "live video streaming platform", which allows its users to transmit a live recording of themselves to their Periscope and Twitter followers. It lets whoever's watching to comment and ask questions.

Pinterest is like a virtual bulletin or cork board that allows users to find and curate images and videos. Unlike other photo sharing sites, the emphasis here is on the discovery and curation of other people's content and not storing your own.

Tumblr is a free social networking website that allows registered users to post multimedia content like text, images, videos, links and audio files to their own customizable blogs.

Source - The Author

Appendix X – Social Networks' Statistics of Portuguese League Clubs

Clubs (1)	Facebook						
	Likes (2)	Local Fans (3)	Local Fans Ratio (4)	Weekly Fan Growth (5)	Posts 7 day period (6)	Fan Engagement (7)	Fan Engagement Rate (8)
Benfica	2 991 704	1 421 861	47,53%	10 345	38	250 055	8,36%
FC Porto	3 150 781	824 380	26,16%	13 339	63	149 191	4,74%
Sporting	1 855 631	727 731	39,22%	13 641	68	187 592	10,11%
Sp. Braga	139 166	68 695	49,36%	676	55	8 789	6,32%
V. Guimarães	99 229	63 615	64,11%	824	10	5 773	5,82%
Belenenses	82 855	61 900	74,71%	566	27	12 987	15,67%
Nacional	34 870	7 379	21,16%	39	40	616	1,77%
P. Ferreira	58 875	36 360	61,76%	463	15	5 129	8,71%
Marítimo	91 744	28 249	30,79%	1 253	21	5 435	5,92%
Rio Ave	43 054	27 504	63,88%	162	34	3 624	8,42%
Moreirense	7 116	5 178	72,77%	89	12	394	5,54%
Estoril	17 705	12 437	70,25%	487	4	807	4,56%
Boavista	98 992	70 494	71,21%	552	37	6 085	6,15%
V. Setúbal	46 494	34 859	74,98%	198	31	1 861	4,00%
Académica	135 463	110 511	81,58%	354	57	3 643	2,69%
Arouca	10 825	8 315	76,81%	137	20	3 386	31,28%
Tondela	24 518	19 850	80,96%	347	37	2 055	8,38%
U. Madeira	9 212	6 793	73,74%	153	51	2 131	23,13%
Total (9)	8 898 234	3 536 111		37325			
Average (10)		39,74%	60,05%	12 442	34		8,98%

(1) - 2015/2016 Portuguese league clubs

(2) - Retrieved from Facebook on August 20

(3) - Retrieved from SocialBakers on August 20

(4) - LF Ratio = Local Fans / Likes

(5) - New Facebook fans from 14/08 to 20/08 (SocialBakers)

(6) - Number of Facebook posts from 14/08 to 20/08

(7) - "People talking about this" on August 20 (Facebook)

(8) - Fan Engagement Rate = F.E. / Likes

(9) - The Weekly Fan Growth Total only considers Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting

(10) - The Weekly Fan Growth Average only considers Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting

Source - The Author

Clubs (1)	Twitter						
	Followers (11)	Tweets (12)	Weekly Fan Growth (13)	Tweets 7 day period (14)	Fan Engagement (15)	Page Engagement Rate (16)	Fan Engagement Rate (17)
Benfica	486 433	28 276	3 812	112	23 343	253	0,69%
FC Porto	497 226	19 826	3 753	122	26 277	207	0,75%
Sporting	334 490	36 696	3 246	296	42 606	117	1,84%
Sp. Braga	75 410	3 728	95	86	1 149	13	0,22%
V. Guimarães	801	140	NA	2	23	1,6	0,41%
Belenenses	2 986	22 641	53	60	371	7,5	1,77%
Nacional	2 251	6 886	22	20	15	0,8	0,10%
P. Ferreira	3 136	3 627	20	24	13	0,6	0,06%
Marítimo	178	45	NA	14	60	5,3	4,82%
Rio Ave	2 371	4 588	NA	42	31	0,5	0,10%
Moreirense	3 447	974	NA	5	0	0	0,00%
Estoril							
Boavista	1 918	266	15	0	0	0	0,00%
V. Setúbal	613	341	NA	3	7	0,3	0,16%
Académica	1 344	1 343	NA	12	104	5	1,11%
Arouca	1 616	1 652	NA	20	34	0,9	0,30%
Tondela	1 629	1 863	NA	14	163	7,1	1,43%
U. Madeira							
Total (9)	1 415 849		10 811				
Average (10)			3 604	52			0,86%

(9) - The Weekly Fan Growth Total only considers Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting

(10) - The Weekly Fan Growth Average only considers Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting

(11) - Retrieved from Twitter on August 20

(12) - Retrieved from Twitter on August 20

(13) - New Twitter Followers from 14/08 to 20/08

(14) - Number of Tweets from 14/08 to 20/08

(15) - Fan Engagement = (Favorites + Retweets + Replies) from 14/08 to 20/08

(16) - Page Engagement Rate = F.E. / Number of Tweets from 14/08 to 20/08

(17) - Fan Engagement Rate = F.E. / Number of Followers

Source - The Author

	Instagram						
Clubs (1)	Followers (18)	Media (19)	Weekly Fan Growth (20)	Media 7 day period (21)	Fan Engagement (22)	Page Engagement Rate (23)	Fan Engagement Rate (24)
Benfica	167 634	1 222	4 735	13	128 577	5 186	10,96%
FC Porto	307 310	1 018	8 773	27	355 553	13 106	16,53%
Sporting	69 936	605	1 747	11	76 561	5 925	15,64%
Sp. Braga	4 902	790	NA	11	4 377	274	12,79%
V. Guimarães	6 354	321	NA	1	637	91	1,43%
Belenenses	1 194	294	NA	12	1 394	87	16,68%
Nacional	1 400	795	NA	13	589	21	6,01%
P. Ferreira							
Marítimo	454	63	NA	3	141	20	4,44%
Rio Ave	1 695	221	NA	1	117	17	0,99%
Moreirense							
Estoril							
Boavista	2 142	335	83	0	0	0	0,00%
V. Setúbal							
Académica	1 802	327	NA	6	988	116	7,83%
Arouca	566	71	NA	12	627	25	15,83%
Tondela	1 745	626	NA	8	1 077	74	8,82%
U. Madeira							
Total (9)	567 134		15 255				
Average (10)			5 085	9			9,07%

(9) - The Weekly Fan Growth Total only considers Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting

(10) - The Weekly Fan Growth Average only considers Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting

(18) - Retrieved from Instagram on August 20

(19) - Retrieved from Instagram on August 20

(20) - New Instagram Followers from 14/08 to 20/08

(21) - Number of Instagram posts from 14/08 to 20/08

(22) - Fan Engagement = (Likes + Comments) from 14/08 to 20/08

(23) - Page Engagement Rate = F.E. / Number of Posts from 14/08 to 20/08

(24) - Fan Engagement Rate = F.E. / Number of Followers

Source - The Author

Clubs (1)	Youtube					
	Subscribers (25)	Videos (26)	Total Views (27)	Weekly Fan Growth (28)	New videos 7 day period (29)	Channel Video Views 7 day period (30)
Benfica	58 257	1 788	7 396 218	159	23	38 380
FC Porto	47 713	1 948	15 611 185	166	14	55 089
Sporting	24 549	360	4 022 947	100	1	14 375
Sp. Braga	1 480	373	988 723	6	12	8 616
V. Guimarães	1 416	619	1 530 796	20	0	4 480
Belenenses	213	38	24 051	NA	2	NA
Nacional	805	1 925	1 368 811	6	5	3 649
P. Ferreira	1 106	298	1 275 116	9	1	1 750
Marítimo						
Rio Ave	610	277	312 209	NA	6	NA
Moreirense	85	129	18 647	NA	1	NA
Estoril	455	250	169 894	NA	0	NA
Boavista	903	88	199 825	NA	0	NA
V. Setúbal	241	255	97 821	NA	1	NA
Académica	755	452	244 284	NA	3	NA
Arouca	112	18	11 972	NA	0	NA
Tondela	867	498	626 331	NA	3	NA
U. Madeira	192	375	65 214	NA	3	NA
Total (9)	139 759			425		
Average (10)				142	4	

(9) - The Weekly Fan Growth Total only considers Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting

(10) - The Weekly Fan Growth Average only considers Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting

(25) - Retrieved from Youtube on August 20

(26) - Retrieved from Youtube on August 20

(27) - Retrieved from Youtube on August 20

(28) - New Youtube Subscribers from 14/08 to 20/08

(29) - Number of new Youtube videos from 14/08 to 20/08

(30) - Channel video views from 14/08 to 20/08

Source - The Author

Clubs	Total Followers on all Social Networks
FC Porto	4 003 030
Benfica	3 704 028
Sporting	2 284 606
Sp. Braga	220 958
Académica	139 364
V. Guimarães	107 800
Boavista	103 955
Belenenses	87 248
Marítimo	92 376
P. Ferreira	63 117
Rio Ave	47 730
V. Setúbal	47 348
Nacional	39 326
Tondela	28 759
Estoril	18 160
Arouca	13 119
Moreirense	10 648
U. Madeira	9 404
Total	**11 020 976**

Source - The Author

Appendix XI – Example of a Manchester United Facebook App

Source - Manchester United Facebook

Appendix XII – Example of Borussia Dortmund's answer and Retweets on Twitter

Source - Borussia Dortmund Twitter

Appendix XIII – Example of several Bayern Munich Instagram posts

fcbayern   3 sem

♥ 83 047 gostos

fcbayern #FCBayern fans getting a shower during the #DFBCup match against FC Nöttingen. #MiaSanMia

fcbayern   3 sem

♥ 95 096 gostos

fcbayern Football ✔ Popcorn ✔ Anticipation ✔ We can't wait for #FCBHSV to kick off! What about you?

fcbayern   3 sem

♥ 83 344 gostos

fcbayern Line-up #FCBayern for #FCBHSV. #packmas #MiaSanMia #Bundesliga

fcbayern   2 sem

♥ 124 200 gostos

fcbayern Happy Birthday, @_rl9 (27)! #HappyBirthday #MiaSanMia
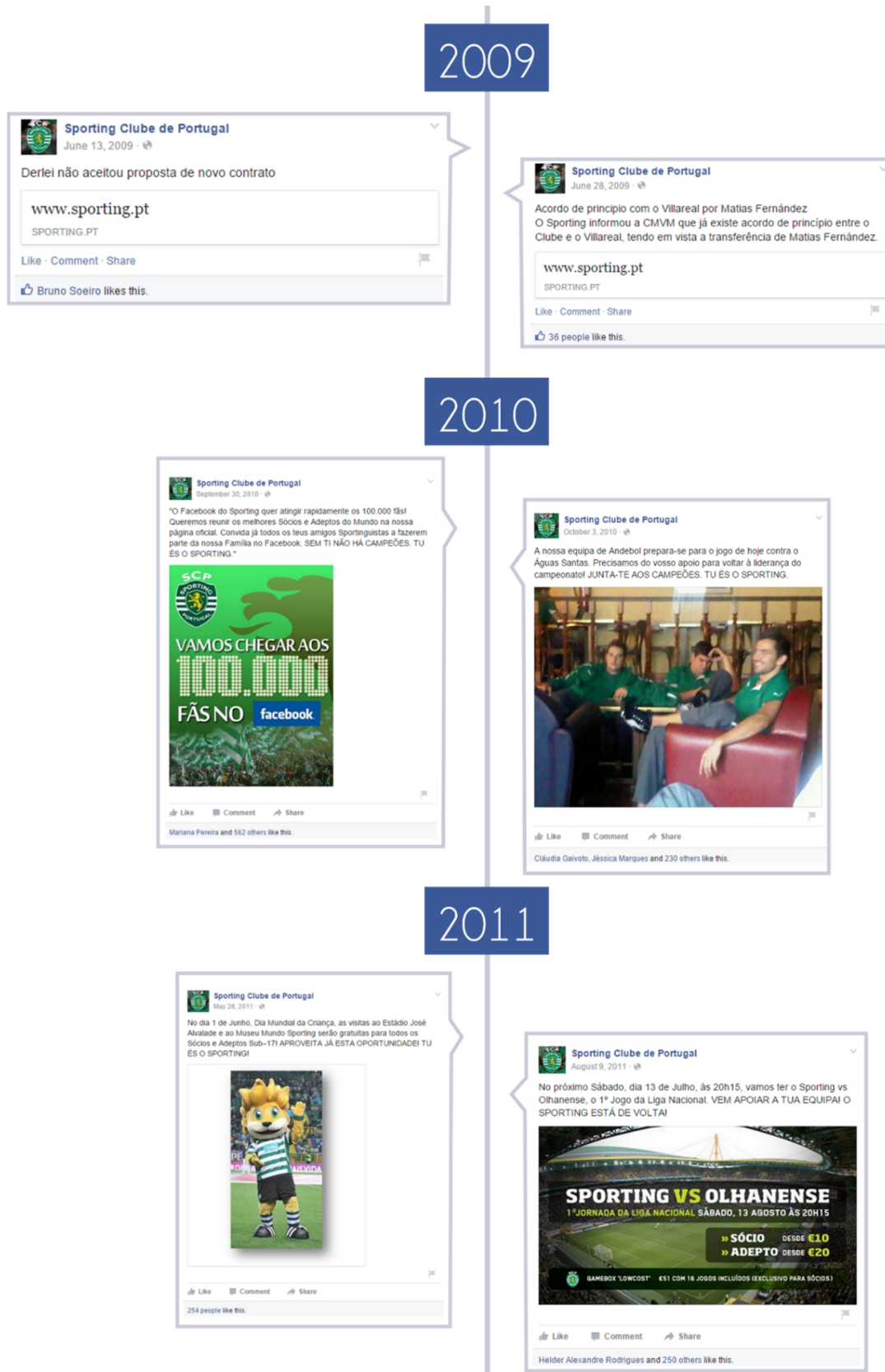
Source - Bayern Munich Instagram

Appendix XIV – Manchester City 360º Tunnel Cam
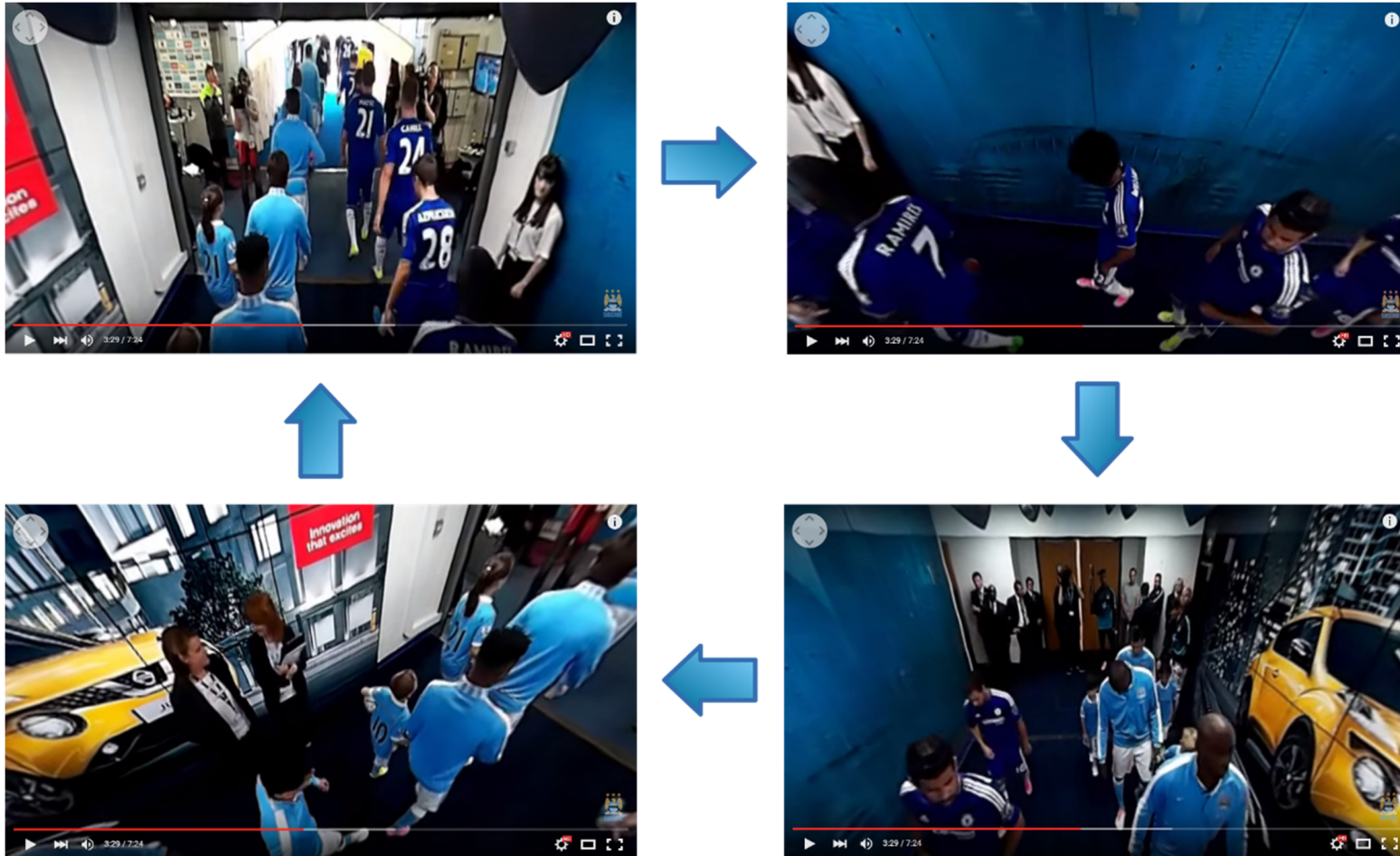
Source - Manchester City YouTube Channel

Appendix XV – The evolution of Sporting's Facebook from 2009 to 2011

Source – Retrieved from Sporting CP Facebook and adapted by the author

Appendix XVI – The inexistence of a consistent design in Sporting CP's Facebook

Source – Retrieved from Sporting CP Facebook and adapted by the author

Appendix XVII – The use of real-time marketing by Sporting Clube de Portugal

Source - Sporting CP Facebook

Source - Sporting CP Facebook

Appendix XVIII – The use of fans jargon in Sporting CP's Facebook posts

Source - Sporting CP Facebook

Appendix XIX – The interaction of Sporting's Twitter with other brands, clubs and users

Source - Sporting CP Twitter

Source - Sporting CP Twitter

Appendix XX – Sporting's Instagram contest to increase the interaction with followers

Source - Sporting CP Instagram

Appendix XXI – Sporting CP's Instagram post with the squad list

Source - Sporting CP Instagram

Appendix XXII – Onda Verde's Pinterest World Map and Tumblr account

Source - Sporting CP Pinterest
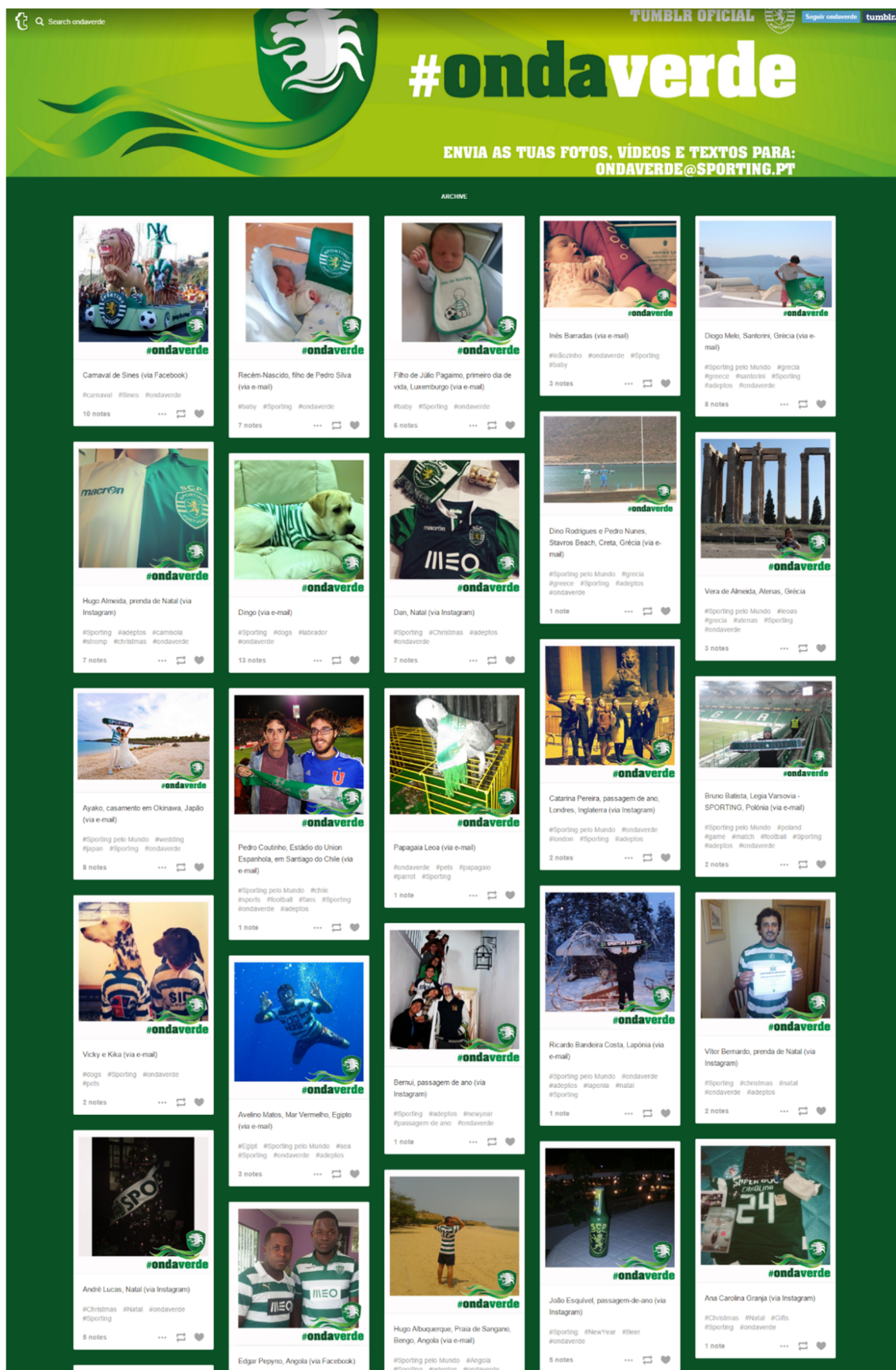
Source - Sporting CP Tumblr

2. Pedagogical Note

2.1. Case Study Target

This case study is intended for:

- Bachelor or Masters students attending courses related to Marketing, Digital Marketing, Sports Marketing, Communication, Brand Management who may aim to acquire further knowledge in key issues such as social media strategy;

- Marketing professionals working in the sports clubs sector or in social media management who may use it in order to have a more focused approach in their own organization, using this as a reference.

2.2. Pedagogical Objectives

This case study was developed with the following pedagogical objectives:

- To clarify the concept of Sports Marketing and its particularity in relation to Marketing in general;

- To provide readers an explanation of what are social networks, its different characteristics and how they are established in the Portuguese society and football;

- To demonstrate the evolution of a fan-centric online marketing strategy by a football club and how its improvements in the several social networks led the club to a high interaction with followers;

- To recognize the importance of adapting content and communication to the respective targets in the different social networks;

- To encourage readers the use of analytical skills and creativity in the development of a social media strategy.

2.3. Literature Review

2.3.1. Introduction

In an academic research project like this, we are asked to develop a literature review that not only will help the writer but also the reader to understand better the concepts that lie behind the research problem.

Therefore, in this chapter it will be covered the most important topics to analyse the subject of this study. As a result, this literature review will focus on 3 main topics:

- Sports Marketing and the relationship with sports fans;

- Internet, Social Media and Social Networks;

- The presence of sports clubs on the Internet.

2.3.2. Sports Marketing and the relationship with sports fans

2.3.2.1. What is Marketing?

Before centring the topic on Sports Marketing itself, it is very important that we understand the big picture first. Therefore, a definition of Marketing is needed to comprehend why this topic has some much impact on today's management world.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012, p.25), Marketing is "the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return". Consequently, Marketing nowadays is no longer only about sales but about satisfying consumer needs, creating products that provide superior customer value, at the right price and place with an effective promotion

2.3.2.2. Definition of Sports Marketing

Focusing now the subject on Sports Marketing and relating it to the definition of Marketing stated above, it is possible to see that although it suits most companies doing business out there, it isn't differentiating sports from other products or services. As companies are nowadays "increasingly using sports as promotional vehicle" (Gray & McEvoy, 2005, p.229), using a general Marketing approach is failing to capture the essence of sport. "Buying a ticket to watch a game or paying a subscription to a sports internet website is not the same as marketing industrial components or boxes of washing

powder" (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, p.4). Therefore, Sports Marketing includes all activities that are designed to meet the needs and wants of sport consumers through exchange processes. If its main element is "the marketing of sports products and services directly to consumers of sport", on the other hand "the marketing of other consumer and industrial products or services through the use of sport promotions" must not be forgotten (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007, p.11).

2.3.2.3. Characteristics of Sports Marketing

As we have seen, there are many disparities between Sports Marketing and other types of marketing in general. The major difference that really distinguishes sports from other products or services is the uncertainty of outcome as, according to Dobson and Goddard (2001), this is the most fundamental appeal of sports. People watch a football match or a tennis game because nobody knows in advance what is going to happen creating a huge sense of excitement and expectation. If we took this tension and drama away from it, people would start to lose interest.

Beech and Chadwick (2007) state that sport organizations performance on the pitch as well as sport consumers have a significant influence in the success of the club's marketing strategy, therefore indicating that sport is product led. In fact, the presence of other customers is a crucial part of the product and it plays a vital role in the whole consumer's experience. An experience that can be further enhanced if the consumer watches the game together with friends, family or other fans.

Another big difference between sport marketing and the marketing of normal products is the fact that it is quite common that sport fans are unlikely to purchase products from a rival club (company). A standard that usually does not apply to most products as consumers desire competition in order to make the most adequate choice.

Finally, the need of competition, the fact that the Marketing directors cannot change the main product rules and the spontaneity of the players' performance are also other specificities of sports marketing (Dionísio, Rodrigues, Lindon, Lendrevie, & Lévi, 2015).

2.3.2.4. Sports fans loyalty and its importance

As it is possible to conclude from the previous chapter, fans have a totally different relationship when it comes to sports clubs. Normally, it is much easier to establish a long lasting relationship with a football club, for example, than with a normal brand. In the opinion of James (2001, p.233) "preferences for and commitment to sport teams can start developing at the age of 5". According to Harris and Ogbonna (2008), the main four elements of a club maintaining a successful relationship with football fans are: intimacy, mutuality, trust and commitment. However, in the opinion of the authors, although most fans feel they have a relationship with the club, in almost every case there is a lack of at least one of the four elements. This may be a good indicator of why some football fans are more passionate than others regarding their club.

In fact, Shank (2005) believes that fans can be divided into three different groups: the ones with low identification, medium identification and high identification. The first group, also called aficionados-fans, are very committed to the sport and to one team in particular often recruiting new supporters to the team. The second group, also called fair-weather fans, can even change teams depending on the club's results although enjoying football as much as the first group. Their main motivation is seeing good results and therefore only identify themselves with a team for a short period of time. It is very important for the club to be able to convert this kind of supporters into aficionados-fans as they are only lacking commitment in their relationship with the team. Finally, the last group also called theatre goers, attends sport because of the benefits they can gain for themselves feeling more passion for the external elements of a match and not so much for the team itself.

If there are several different kinds of fans, they are also motivated by different factors. Research by Shank (2005) state that 8 different factors influence fans:

- **Self-Esteem Enhancement** – Fans feel better when their team of choice is winning;

- **Diversion from everyday life** – Fans watch games as a reason to distract themselves from normal routine, being a way of putting aside their personal problems;

- **Entertainment Value** – Football matches provide drama and entertainment and it is a way of focusing on something else;

- **Eustress** – Football generates a positive level of arousal which leads supporters to attend more matches;

- **Economic Value** – A diminutive number of fans sees football as a way to increase financials by gambling on sports events;

- **Aesthetic Value** – Some fans are motivated by the beauty in the athletic performance seeing it as an-form;

- **Need for Affiliation** – Watching a game together with friends or family increases the perceived quality of the game as fans are truly motivated by being part of something;

- **Family Ties** – Football can be seen as a way to get the family together and spend quality time with each other.

As it was stated earlier, football fans show a remarkable brand loyalty, keeping the love for their club despite the fact that other football clubs might be more successful. A positive affected bond in the point of view of Foster and Hyatt (2007).

With such importance for football clubs, fans are considered as the club's main asset, contributing directly for ticket sales, associate fees, sales of merchandising and being tied indirectly to others such as sponsorships or the TV market pool (Van Leeuwen, Quick, & Daniel, 2002). Nevertheless, football clubs cannot solely rely on the loyalty of fans in order to maintain its relationship. As we have seen before, fans can change the level of identification with club and it can be connected with factors such as the poor sports results, the trading of players or the increase in ticket prices.

With so many different kinds of supporters and motivations, football clubs must be aware of fan behaviour changes and try to develop targeted marketing strategies to satisfy the needs of different groups (Parker & Stuart, 1997). To achieve that, clubs must address specific actions to fulfil different fan motivations. It is quite common nowadays to see promotional activies before and during the match break to satisfy those who seek entertainment for example or family and group tickets in order to attract those who are motivated by the need for affiliation.

2.3.3. Internet, Social Media and Social Networks

2.3.3.1. The evolution of Internet

"The emergence of the Internet in the 1990's has had tremendous global effects on every sphere of the human existence" (Enonbun, 2010, p.18). With the turn of the century, we switched from Web 1.0, where internet users had a more passive approach and communication was made in one direction, to Web 2.0, where communication is done both ways, allowing internet users to have a more active approach by having the possibility to interact with others (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008).

Figure 18 - Web 1.0 vs. Web 2.0

Source - Emplo.com

2.3.3.2. What is Web 2.0?

According to the inventor of the Web 2.0 concept, Tim O'Reilly: "Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an architecture of participation, and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences". (O'Reilly, 2005, para.1).

Therefore we can understand that "Web 2.0 refers to a perceived second generation of Web development and design that facilitates communications and secures information

sharing, interoperability and collaboration on the World Wide Web" (Enonbun, 2010, p.20).

Having this in mind, by creating a technological infrastructure that supports the social phenomenon of consumer-generated content and collective media, the world was able to watch a "a shift in locus of activity from the desktop to the web, a shift in locus of value production from the firm to the consumer, and a shift in the locus of power away from the firm to the consumer" (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012, p.4).

2.3.3.3. Web 2.0 tools

There are plenty of tools available on the Web 2.0 that ease and promote communication and collaboration. These tools are very interactive and encourage user's involvement and participation. Some of these tools are:

- **Wikis**: a collection of Web pages designed to enable anyone with access to contribute or modify content, using a simplified mark-up language and is often used to create collaborative Websites;

- **Blogs**: a "personal webpage, kept by the author in reverse chronological diary form" with regular commentary entries, event descriptions or other material such as graphics or video. (Wagner, 2003, p.131);

- **Podcasts:** a **"**digital media file, usually digital audio or video that is freely available for download from the Internet using software that can handle RSS feeds" (Enonbun, 2010, p.20);

- **Social Networks:** a "social structure made up of a set of social actors (such as individuals or organizations) and a set of the dyadic ties between these actors. The social network perspective provides a set of methods for analysing the structure of whole social entities as well as a variety of theories explaining the patterns observed in these structures" (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p.1);

- **Virtual Worlds**: a "computer simulated environment" (Bartle, 2003, p.2) that allows users to interact with each other without any geographical restrictions.

2.3.3.4. The exponential growth of Social Media

Before focusing the subject on the new platforms that have arisen with the growth of social media in the internet context, it is important to define what this concept is.

We can define Social Media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p.61). According to Kietzmann and Hermkens (2011), by breeding these highly interactive platforms on the Web, individuals and communities and welcomed to share, co-create, discuss their thoughts, ideas, feelings, transforming broadcast media monologues into social media dialogues (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012).

Besides the Web 2.0 tools mentioned before, the exponential growth of social media brought with it some new platforms like:

- **Picture-sharing websites:** users are invited to store and share their photos (e.g. Yahoo Flickr, Google Picasa, Photobucket, among others);

- **Video-sharing websites:** users are invited to upload and share their videos (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, Dailymotion, Metacafe, among others);

- **Micro-blogs:** social networking websites that allow users to send and read very short messages, with a limited number of characters (e.g. Twitter, Tumblr, among others).

With more and more people using the Internet nowadays and spending more time in social media platforms, sharing information and connecting with others, customer relationships, marketing and business are changing rapidly. Companies are taking advantage of that by exploring Word-of-Mouth Marketing, listening to the complaints and advices of their (potential) customers as well as engaging with them allowing brands and products to go viral (Jenkins, 2009).

2.3.3.5. Social Networks, its different types and adjacent opportunities

In 1994, Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust defined social networks as a social structure made up of a set of social actors (such as individuals or organizations) and a set of dyadic ties between these actors. The social network perspective provides a set of methods for analysing the structure of whole social entities as well as a variety of theories explaining the patterns observed in these structures. (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

However, with the growth of Internet and social network websites, this definition was adapted to the online context. Therefore, in 2009, Jose Gomez-Arias and Larisa Genin defined social networks as "web-based services that allow individuals to construct a profile (public or private) within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view their list of connections and those made by others with the system" (Gomez-Arias & Genin, 2009, p.79).

Nowadays, with the boom of Social Network websites, people have a lot of options to choose from when the time comes to register in one of them. As all these social networks don't focus on the same targets and contents, is possible to list them in seven different categories (White, 2011):

- **Social Connections:** allow people to keep in touch with friends and family, being Facebook, Twitter, Google + and Myspace the most popular ones;

- **Multimedia Sharing:** platforms where people are welcome to share video and photography content online, being YouTube, Instagram the most visited ones;

- **Professional:** the goal here is to provide opportunities for career related growth, being LinkedIn and Classroom 2.0 some of the most popular social networks inside this category;

- **Informational:** the aim of this category of social networks is to gather people who seek answers for everyday problems from home improvement to technology or gardening;

- **Educational:** these are social networks where students collaborate with each other and share materials, opinions, projects among other things;

- **Hobbies:** allow people to discuss their favourite projects or topics of interest related to their personal hobbies, gathering people from around the world who share the same passion and interests;

- **Academic:** social platforms for academic researchers be able to share their research as well as review results achieved by colleagues.

It is worth noticing that sometimes some social network websites, mainly the most visited ones like Facebook or Twitter may be able to mix more than one category, being exactly that one of the reasons for their success. Other aspect that is related and relevant is the fact that although some social networks are global and very popular, in some countries some local social network may be as powerful as the global ones and companies while developing their social media strategy must give attention to that detail.

To sum up and relating Social Network Websites with Brands, it is undoubtedly a major win-win situation for both parties. Not only the social network platforms earn money by allowing brands to precisely capture potential consumers by providing them with very specific targeted ads, but also brands have the possibility to communicate with their target audience for free and have real-time feedback from the platforms about metrics and engagement rates and finally users who have the chance to aggregate and follow in one/few place(s) their favourite brands (Fill, 2009).

2.3.4. Football clubs on the internet

As we have already seen before, the Internet and the Web became important vehicles for advancing public relations and promoting the business of professional sports teams (Delpy & Bosetti, 1998).

Some years ago, before the Internet "boom", people would only go to the Internet to find information about event schedules, public transports, accommodations, parking, food, entertainment, weather, shopping and few other things (Filo & Funk, 2005). Though, with the development of Web 2.0 and Social Media, football fans have nowadays a much more active role on the Internet, searching more information about their team as well as they try to buy their tickets online, try to shop some merchandising or even discuss the team's strategies in internet forums. (Scholl & Carlson, 2012)

This active search by football fans in the internet triggered an intensive competition between teams throughout the web. With millions or even billions of football fans all over the globe, "professional sports teams no longer only compete in games with each other but they also compete for sustained loyalty as well as increased mindshare and followership in cyberspace". (Scholl & Carlson, 2012, p.139)

This online competition led football clubs to bet in new ways of communicating and new strategies in order to improve the relationships, businesses and information shared with their fans. Therefore, it was no surprise the fact that football clubs joined social network websites in order to be closer to their fans, informing them in real time and allowing marketers to develop blended marketing strategies merging the online and the offline world and developing content able to go viral on the web. Most of the clubs tend to be present in platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, among others.

However, engagement with the club isn't the only main objective that fans look for from their clubs on the internet. In the last decade, with the development of e-commerce and mobile apps, fans mainly from distant regions or countries started buying merchandising from the club's website store. Buying tickets online for home and away games also became a real possibility and the clubs' marketers are increasingly betting in this kind of strategy (Beech, Chadwick, & Tapp, 2000).

Besides the appearance of online football clubs' platforms, as said earlier, the emergence of fan communities have also been very important to the strength of football clubs online. Before the growth of the Internet around the world, the concept of tribal behaviour in sports, introduced by Dionísio, Leal, and Moutinho (2008), only had to do with the "offline world", where sports fans would dress similarly, sing songs to support the team and become attached to a larger social network helping them feel a sense of belonging and reducing anxiety, loneliness and isolation, being sometimes the affiliation with a football club, the only unifying subject between them (Wann, 2006). With the technological progress and subsequent evolution of Internet, these "football tribes" started establishing themselves also in the online world, giving place to several virtual communities like Blogs, Forums, Facebook groups where fans (most unknown to each other) could share and discuss information about the club as well as their passion (Hamilton & Hewer, 2010).

2.4. Animation Plan

This case study is intended to be covered and solved throughout several classes of Marketing. The case will be handled by the lecturer to students without questions and should be analysed at home in groups of 4 or 5 students. In class, it will be discussed in stages, several issues and questions related to the case study. The lecturer should also encourage students to be creative, to brainstorm and discuss different points of view between group members and to collect information from the Internet in order to improve the quality of the analysis.

Session	Objectives	Means	Time
Out of Session (optional)	- Break the ice with students; - To familiarize students with the club's history and its relation with fans.	- Visit the club's museum and attend a home football match of Sporting Clube de Portugal.	150 min.
1st Session	- General presentation of the case; - Raise students interest to the case study theme; - Create work groups.	- Hand out the case study to the students; - Use of animation questions to create a small discussion about the theme; - Summary of the case study by the lecturer using videos and images.	45 min.
Out of Session	- Generate common group understanding about the main aspects of the case study; - Enlarge the knowledge about Social Media and Sporting CP.	- Read the case study individually at home and complement the information contained in it with an online research; - Read the case study with the group and discuss the main subjects.	150 min.
2nd Session	- Converge students personal opinion with research work developed; - Brief students about case study expectations.	- Promote a dialogue between groups and discuss the importance of Social Media for football clubs, especially in Portugal; - Distribution of the case study questions.	90 min.

Out of Session	**-** Elaboration of PowerPoint presentation and Word document (10 pages max.).	**-** Case Study analysis in groups and the linkage to questions; **-** Resolution of questions 1-5 in Word document; **-** Prepare PowerPoint presentation; **-** Send lecturer the Word and PowerPoint files by email.	360 min.
3rd and 4th Session	**-** Case Study presentation by each group; **-** Promote learning through students' discussion about the presentations.	**-** Delivery of the Word document and the PowerPoint in paper to the lecturer; **-** Group presentations to the class; **-** Short review of the presentations by the lecturer and the students.	180 min.

2.5. Animation Questions

1st Question: Do you have an account on social network websites? In which ones?

2nd Question: In your opinion, what are the most popular social networks in Portugal?

3rd Question: In your opinion, what is the importance of social media for football clubs?

4th Question: In your opinion, what are the best football clubs in each social network?

5th Question: What do you know about Sporting Clube de Portugal on social media?

6th Question: Do you follow Sporting Clube de Portugal on any social network? Why?

2.6. Resolution Proposal

1ˢᵗ Question: Given the information on the case, develop a dynamic SWOT analysis for the presence of Sporting Clube de Portugal on social networks.

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Sporting is present in 7 different social media websites and was the first Portuguese club to enter trending social networks like Vine or Tumblr; **2.** The improvement of its online presence in terms of design, communication and interaction have led the club to high engagement rates on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; **3.** The increasing use of exclusive content on Facebook and Twitter has resulted in higher fan growing rates in the last months; **4.** The appropriate use of Hashtags reaching quite often "Top Trends" on Twitter.	**1.** Sporting is still quite behind its rivals in terms of the total of followers (especially the foreign ones) in the several social networks; **2.** The performance of the club's Youtube Channel is way below the expected, especially in comparison with the remaining; **3.** The club is still missing a significant amount of exclusive content on Instagram which can delay the growth rate of followers; **4.** After all the significant changes made in the last year, the club is still struggling to monetize their presence on social networks.
Opportunities	**Threats**
1. Internet usage and the time spent on social networks is growing considerably in Portugal, especially on mobile devices; **2.** The rising popularity of new social networks like Vine, Snapchat and Periscope, especially among teenagers; **3.** Instagram was the social network with the highest growth rate in Portugal in the last year (400%); **4.** The use of social networks as a means to provide more and more exclusive and behind-the-scenes content to high involvement fans.	**1.** There is an increasing struggle for the "big three" clubs in Portugal to increase the level of Portuguese followers on Facebook without resorting to paid Facebook Ads; **2.** The Portuguese League still hasn't achieved the visibility of other European leagues, holding the arrival of more foreign followers; **3.** Portuguese football clubs still find hard to attract women to their social networks; **4.** Most English and German clubs are still miles ahead from Portuguese clubs on social media in terms of content, communication, interaction and innovation, making it harder for the Portuguese to achieve new followers.

SO Strategy

(S1xO2) - Sporting should continue the bet on emerging social networks by starting to communicate with younger audiences on Snapchat or Periscope.

WO Strategy

(W3xO3) – Sporting should focus on providing more exclusive content to all social networks but especially on Instagram as it is a way to differentiate from Facebook and meet the needs of an increasingly bigger user base in Portugal.

ST Strategy

(S2xT3) - The low number of women following the club's social media pages can be reversed through greater investment in content aimed to the female audience, combined with an appealing design and an informal tone of voice.

WT Strategy

(W2xT4) – To improve the performance of Sporting's Youtube channel, the club should take a look at how German but mainly English clubs have been using this platform to show behind-the-scenes videos and try to adapt it to the Portuguese reality.

2ⁿᵈ Question: Based on your answer to the first question, elaborate further on one idea from the strategies presented in the quadrants.

If the mainstream social networks of the club are on the right track, with the rising popularity of new social networks like Snapchat or Periscope, a major opportunity is lying on the floor waiting to be grabbed. Therefore, this answer will show how **Sporting will approach a brand new target by using Snapchat (S1xO2).**

Snapchat is a mobile app that allows users to take photos and videos and share them with each other. The special feature about this social network is that each "snap" is only available for a maximum of 10 seconds from the moment it is open. Unlike Facebook or Instagram, Snapchat doesn't have a newsfeed, giving users the possibility to see content for as long as they want and if they want. At the same time, this app is still a kingdom of informality where people are supposed to send their content filled with emojis, captions, filters or drawings.

With the introduction of "Stories" on Snapchat, users got allowed to merge their daily snaps into a clip reel where others could see all other people snaps from the oldest to the newest for a period of 24 hours. This became a very interesting feature not only for people but also for brands, allowing them to show more of what is happening on a daily basis in a sort of "one-to-many" broadcast. In Portugal, some brands are slowly adopting Snapchat as another communication platform. Moche and Expresso are perhaps the most famous. The latter, a Portuguese weekly newspaper, is covering the Portuguese elections on this social network in order to bring politics in a funny way to teenagers.

For Sporting CP to stand out in this app it is very important to understand what its potential audience. The club's target will likely be teens within the 13-24 age group (millennial generation), predominantly males, living in metropolitan areas, digital natives and with a high involvement with Sporting Clube de Portugal (aficionados-fans) looking for exclusive content and prepared to interact with the club as many times as possible.

The next step after defining whom to speak, is to set the tone of voice and the communication goals for this app. Firstly, it is important to build an audience. As there is no virality (you can't like, comment or share content) it is important that Sporting uses other channels like Twitter to remind the audience that the club is on Snapchat. Secondly,

it is vital to stand out by provoking an immediate reaction from the users. To achieve that, all features available should be used like drawings, emojis, filters and captions. Thirdly, it is essential that everything done is funny as brands are expected to act more like a person and less like a talking logo. Furthermore, it is crucial to use the stories feature to build a video narrative every day. As this app is all about visual storytelling, a key aspect is to be timely, by setting a regular cadence of snaps and avoid to be off the radar for too long. Finally, it is also important to reward fans by promoting contests and giving away coupons.

In terms of content, it is important that Sporting CP's snaps are real time, engaging, exclusive and most of all relevant to its target audience. Below, it will be shown some examples of what the club's communication should be about:

- **Match Day:** as these are the days that Sporting fans are most willing to interact, the club will remind its followers of what time and where the match will take place, it will cover all the Pre-Match build up like the players arriving or the atmosphere both outside and inside the stadium and finally it will show some moments of the press conference;

- **Behind-the-Scenes:** to avoid a cool down in the relationship with fans, Sporting's Snapchat must feed regularly with content that engages with fans and that makes them wish for more such as funny moments in training, players having lunch together or simply resting, celebrating someone's birthday, among other thing;

- **Snapchat Takeovers:** as part of the close relationship with fans strategy, each week a different player will send personalized autographs Snaps to fans that request it;

- **Short-lived coupon codes and contests:** to spice things up a little, the club's Snapchat will send coupons or tickets to those who reply the fastest wearing Sporting's merchandise as well as it will hold a contest where fans will have the possibility to participate in treasure hunts around the city of Lisbon, giving them the possibility to win a season ticket or signed jerseys.

3ʳᵈ Question: Do you think that Sporting is providing targeted content depending on the social networks they address? Justify your answer.

The answer is yes. Regardless of being at a very early stage, Sporting Clube de Portugal has already started showing early signs of trying to show different content in each social network they participate.

In the past, although Sporting was present on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube, each account was managed at their own way, seeming that different people were in charge of the different social networks. Facebook was very inconsistent, content and aesthetically speaking, Twitter was simply replicating the Facebook posts, Instagram was completely still and Youtube was just a tool to feed the club's Facebook. However, in late 2013, the club started showing some signs of wanting to change its online strategy. Their first action was to work on the upgrade of the CRM component, allowing the use of personalised information in the emails, SMS and letters sent by the club to its associates.

This wish to use different messages to distinctive audiences later spread to the club's social networks when Diogo Bernardo and Christopher Halder took over Sporting's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube accounts. Their first year was essentially to create bonds and a straight relationship with fans as well as to bring improvements in terms of coherence, design, communication, presence and interaction. If graphically speaking the images used were still the same among the various platforms, on the other hand it became evident that the communication and tone of voice were becoming more adequate to each social network.

On Facebook, with users' ages ranging from 13 to more than 65 years old and a large variety in terms of nationalities, a single strategy cannot be applied. Indeed, this social network is perhaps the most important source of information for fans where aiming to find all the major news and events about the club. As a result, it is very likely that we can find several kinds of fans from the high involvement to the medium and low involvement ones, who only wish to know more of what is going on from time to time. Therefore, every post must have its content and tone of voice adapted to the intended target audience. While most of the times the club uses an informal approach, sometimes more formality is needed when Sporting CP promotes its sponsors or some products and events. Another good example is the increase on the number of posts using English language

during Match days, revealing that it is important to have the interaction of the large number of foreign fans that follow Sporting's Facebook.

The attitude of Sporting Clube de Portugal on Twitter is totally different from the former. Unlike Facebook, the presence in the social network follows a unique strategy which is to provide a good interaction with fans, clubs and brands in a very informal manner. The reasons underlying to that attitude are the fact that not only the average followers' age is much lower in comparison to the other social platforms but at the same time most fans show a high involvement with the club wishing to have as much as information as possible from the club. To improve the users' experience, Sporting also decided to split its Twitter in 2 accounts: one for its local fans, with all content in Portuguese, and the other for the foreign fans with all content in English.

Regarding the presence of Sporting on Instagram, it is evident that the club hasn't been able so far to provide the adequate content to its target audience. Sporting CP fans in this social network are mainly teenagers under 24 with a significant ratio of women. Instagram can be seen by fans, especially the medium involvement ones, as a way to have a very general idea of the latest club news in a short period of time (the objective of this social network is to share your life through photos). 5 main elements are a key success driver for this target audience: good interaction, informal tone of voice, quality of the media and exclusive content and posting captions both in Portuguese and English. If in the former two, the club already shows a good performance, in the last two elements much is still to be done. Not only are some of the photos lacking quality, as almost none of the content is exclusive, being evident that some fans may still not find necessary to be present in this social network due to the lack of a correct strategy in place.

Without any kind of strategy whatsoever, Sporting's Youtube channel hasn't been able to identify their target audience and offer them a regular set of content over time. After several years in this social network, the club hasn't been able to have a loyal audience that regularly visits the channel. While on the one hand, fans, especially the high involvement ones, expect the club to provide match highlights as well as motivational and behind-the-scenes videos, on the other hand Sporting has been uploading less and less videos, paying few attention to the interaction with fans. At the same time, Sporting CP's Youtube is still uploading its videos in Portuguese without any kind of English subtitles, which may ward off foreign fans.

4ᵗʰ Question: Having in mind the benchmarking analysis covered in the Case Study, suggest ideas to improve the Instagram of Sporting Clube de Portugal.

If Sporting Clube de Portugal already shows a good performance in its Facebook and Twitter accounts, it is also true that there is still a long road ahead in order to reach for example the level of Bayern Munich, a benchmark in this social network.

When comparing the Instagram of both clubs, Sporting and Bayern Munich, it becomes evident that the number of posts of the latter is far superior from the former. Posting with more regularity will bring more fans to the page and will help building higher brand awareness. Following the increase in terms of posts, it is also vital to have an aesthetical consistency, something FC Bayern has been doing very well. While most of the Sporting CP's Instagram photos look professional, a significant piece of them still show a watermark or look like they were taken with a lousy camera. Finally, it is also crucial to publish all the images captions both in Portuguese and English as a good percentage of the followers are likely to be foreign.

After overcoming some of the handicaps mentioned in the last paragraph, Sporting should turn its attention into the introduction of exclusive content on Instagram in order to achieve more followers and a higher engagement with fans. Below it will be presented some of the innovations Sporting CP should bring to its Instagram account:

- **Behind-the-scenes:** in order to achieve significant interaction from fans, Sporting should allow players to take photos in the locker room or during training with the club's smartphone;

- **Memorable moments / players:** every once in a while the club should post media of historical goals or wins and remarkable players who left behind brilliant legacies;

- **Instagram takeovers:** sporadically, players could be invited to share pictures of their favourite moments in the club like their first game, the best goal or a title they won;

- **Repost of player's Instagram photos:** Sporting should use apps like *Regram* or *Repost* to share photos uploaded by the players in their own account as this is a feature that is really appreciated by fans and brings more interaction to the club's page.

5th Question: Foreign fans represent nowadays around 60% of the total Sporting CP Facebook followers. How do you evaluate the club's current approach to this target in the different social networks? Propose solutions if necessary.

When performing an overall analysis to the approach Sporting Clube de Portugal has been doing to is foreign followers, it is possible to conclude that, at the moment, this target is still not being seen as a main priority to the club. The reason to this attitude may lie in the fact that the club is still implementing its new online strategy and prefers to focus first on providing a good interaction with their local fans.

Although foreign fans are not considered a primary goal in the club's current strategy, it cannot be said that they are seen as a hassle. In fact, over the last 2 years it was possible to witness significant improvements. With the exception of Youtube, Sporting CP has been paying more and more attention to this target by publishing a significant portion of its content in English. Below it will be described the club's strategy to address this target in each social network and how it is possible to improve it.

Facebook

On Facebook, Sporting CP has more than 1.1 million foreign followers, a number slightly superior to the number of Portuguese fans on the page (727k). Although the club has been adapting the language used to each specific post, it is still evident that a significant number of posts only written in Portuguese could have the potential to achieve a much higher level of interaction if they were written in English as well. Therefore, we see that the problem regarding foreign fans in this social media platform is a matter of interaction and not the number of followers.

To address this problem, Sporting CP should innovate and be the first Portuguese club to use Facebook targeting capabilities and turn Sporting CP's page into a Facebook Global Page. Something Juventus and Liverpool have been doing over the last year. With this feature, content written in Portuguese will be shown to users who either live in Portugal and Brazil or to those who have the Portuguese language selected by default in this social network. To all other foreign audiences, users are automatically transferred to their country page /region and the club will provide them all content in English (as it is the main universal language) on a regular basis as well as other important information such as the match fixtures with the correct schedule for their time zone and official TV match

broadcaster for their country. In a second phase, if this tool proves to be effective, the club may extend the number of available languages for foreign followers.

With this "gimmick", foreign users are likely to have a higher engagement with Sporting CP Facebook page as they are being subjected to better and more targeted content.

Twitter

Unlike its rivals, SL Benfica and FC Porto, Sporting Clube de Portugal splits its presence on Twitter by having 2 accounts: one for Portuguese audiences and another for foreign audiences. However, with almost 150k foreign users on the main account and only 12k on the secondary one, it is clear that the club hasn't been doing a proper job on the latter. The main reason is that the English speaking Twitter is only active during Match days which results in much fewer interaction. To revive this account, Sporting CP must provide foreign users with content on a regular basis like it does on the main Twitter account.

After successfully achieving that objective, the club must develop strategies to not only drive foreign users from the main account to the English speaking one but also to attract new fans. In order to accomplish this, the club should hold a contest during 1 month where fans from @*SportingCP_en* are invited to tweet supporting messages in English to the players and the club using the hashtag: "#Love4Sporting". To assure a high level of participations the club should also use Facebook, the main Twitter account and Instagram to promote this contest. After the deadline and 1 week before a home match for the Europa League competition, Sporting CP's community managers will selected the 14 best tweets as long as they belong to foreign users. During the game, the 11 squad players plus the 3 substitutes will wear their jerseys with the username of the winners on the back. In addition, during the half-time the stadium's video screens will loop the winning tweets. Finally, Sporting will offer those jerseys signed by the players to the respective winners.

Instagram

As Instagram is a social network essentially focused on multimedia content like images and videos, there isn't a strong difference between the approaches to local or foreign fans. Nonetheless, posting captions both in Portuguese and English is crucial to obtain higher levels of interaction from foreign fans. In this aspect, Sporting's performance falls short by failing to post much of its captions in English. It is expected that in the near future this situation may change. Another solution to engage with foreign audiences on Instagram is

to publish a higher amount of photos of the club's foreign players as a way to increase the interaction from fans of the same home country. In addition to the caption written in English, the club's community managers should also hashtag the name of the player as this is a way of exposing the photo to a higher number of users in the social network.

Another solution to not only attract more foreign followers to the club's Instagram but also to encourage their interaction with the page is to develop a contest called: "Lions All Over". In this challenge, foreign users living outside Portugal are invited to share on Instagram (in photo or video format) how they express their love and passion for Sporting Clube de Portugal in their hometown using the hashtag: "#LionsAllOver". Every month, until the end of the Portuguese League in May, the club's community managers will select the winning photo or video and will offer that user and a selected guest of his choice the possibility to attend a Sporting home match in VIP seats with all expenses paid during the weekend (flight, accommodation, among others).

<u>Youtube</u>

Like we have seen earlier, Sporting's Youtube channel is considered the black sheep of the family. As a result, it won't be surprising that the club hasn't been able to deliver any kind of targeted content to its foreign audience.

In the short term, the club should start publishing the videos' descriptions both in Portuguese and English as well as it should present subtitles in all its videos in those languages. Although this action is not specifically offering targeted content to foreign audiences, it is a simple and effective way to increase the number of views and comments on the club's videos as users speaking other languages can now understand its content.

In the long term, when a YouTube strategy has been properly developed, Sporting CP should make use of its TV Channel resources to upload videos in English specifically aimed at foreign users. As an example, the club could develop Q&A videos where fans could ask questions to the players. The club would upload a Pre-Interview video where users could leave their questions in English in the comments' section. Sporting's community managers would later choose the best ones and get them to be asked during the interview. Another possible solution to interact with foreign followers is to upload regularly 1-minute clips of Sporting Clube de Portugal historical moments in English in order for foreign fans to get to know more of the club and develop a stronger bond.

2.7. Resolution Slides

Question I

#Strengths

1. Sporting is present in 7 different social media websites and was the first Portuguese club to enter trending social networks like Vine or Tumblr;

2. The improvement of its online presence in terms of design, communication and interaction have led the club to high engagement rates on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram;

3. The increasing use of exclusive content on Facebook and Twitter has resulted in higher fan growing rates in the last months;

4. The appropriate use of Hashtags reaching quite often "Top Trends" on Twitter.

#Weaknesses

1. Sporting is still quite behind its rivals in terms of the total of followers (especially the foreign ones) in the several social networks;

2. The performance of the club's Youtube Channel is way below the expected, especially in comparison with the remaining;

3. The club is still missing a significant amount of exclusive content on Instagram which can delay the growth rate of followers;

4. After all the significant changes made in the last year, the club is still struggling to monetize their presence on social networks.

Question I

#Opportunities

1. Internet usage and the time spent on social networks is growing considerably in Portugal, especially on mobile devices;

2. The rising popularity of new social networks like Vine, Snapchat and Periscope, especially among teenagers;

3. Instagram was the social network with the highest growth rate in Portugal in the last year (400%);

4. The use of social networks as a means to provide more and more exclusive and behind-the-scenes content to high involvement fans.

#Threats

1. There is an increasing struggle for the "big three" clubs in Portugal to increase the level of Portuguese followers on Facebook without resorting to paid Facebook Ads;

2. The Portuguese League still hasn't achieved the visibility of other European leagues, holding the arrival of more foreign followers;

3. Portuguese football clubs still find hard to attract women to their social networks;

4. Most English and German clubs are still miles ahead from Portuguese clubs on social media in terms of content, communication, interaction and innovation., making it harder for the Portuguese to achieve new followers;

Question 1

1. **(S1xO2)** - Sporting should continue the bet on emerging social networks by starting to communicate with younger audiences on Snapchat or Periscope.

#SOStrategy

1. **(W3xO3)** – Sporting should focus on providing more exclusive content to all social networks but especially on Instagram as it is a way to differentiate from Facebook and meet the needs of an increasingly bigger user base in Portugal.

 # WOStrategy

Question 1

1. **(S2xT3)** - The low number of women following the club's social media pages can be reversed through greater investment in content aimed to the female audience, combined with an appealing design and an informal tone of voice.

#STStrategy

1. **(W2xT4)** – To improve the performance of Sporting's Youtube channel, the club should take a look at how German but mainly English clubs have been using this platform to show behind-the-scenes videos and try to adapt it to the Portuguese reality.

#WTStrategy

Question 2

Sporting will approach a brand new target by using Snapchat (S1xO2)

Snapchat is a mobile app that allows users to take 1-10 second photos or videos and share them with each other

Users add captions, filters, drawings and emojis to make it more fun

Question 2

Stories are daily Snaps threaded together into a clip reel lasting for 24 hours before disappearing

Brands adopted **Stories** in order to show what is happening on a daily basis in a one-to-many broadcast

In Portugal, **Moche** and **Expresso** are the best examples of a good use of **Stories** by brands
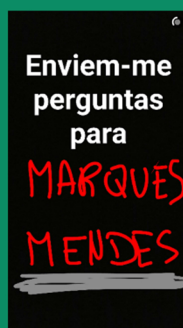
Question 2

Snapchat Target Audience for Sporting CP :

13 – 24 age group

Predominantly Males

Living in Metropolitan areas

Digital Natives

High involvement with the club

Question 2

Provide real time, engaging, exclusive and relevant content

Match Day

Behind-the-Scenes

Question 2

Provide real time, engaging, exclusive and relevant content

Takeovers

Contests

Question 3

YES !

Although at a very early age, Sporting CP has already started showing signs of trying to use **different content** to engage with **different targets**

Several changes are taking place as a result of the new marketing strategy :

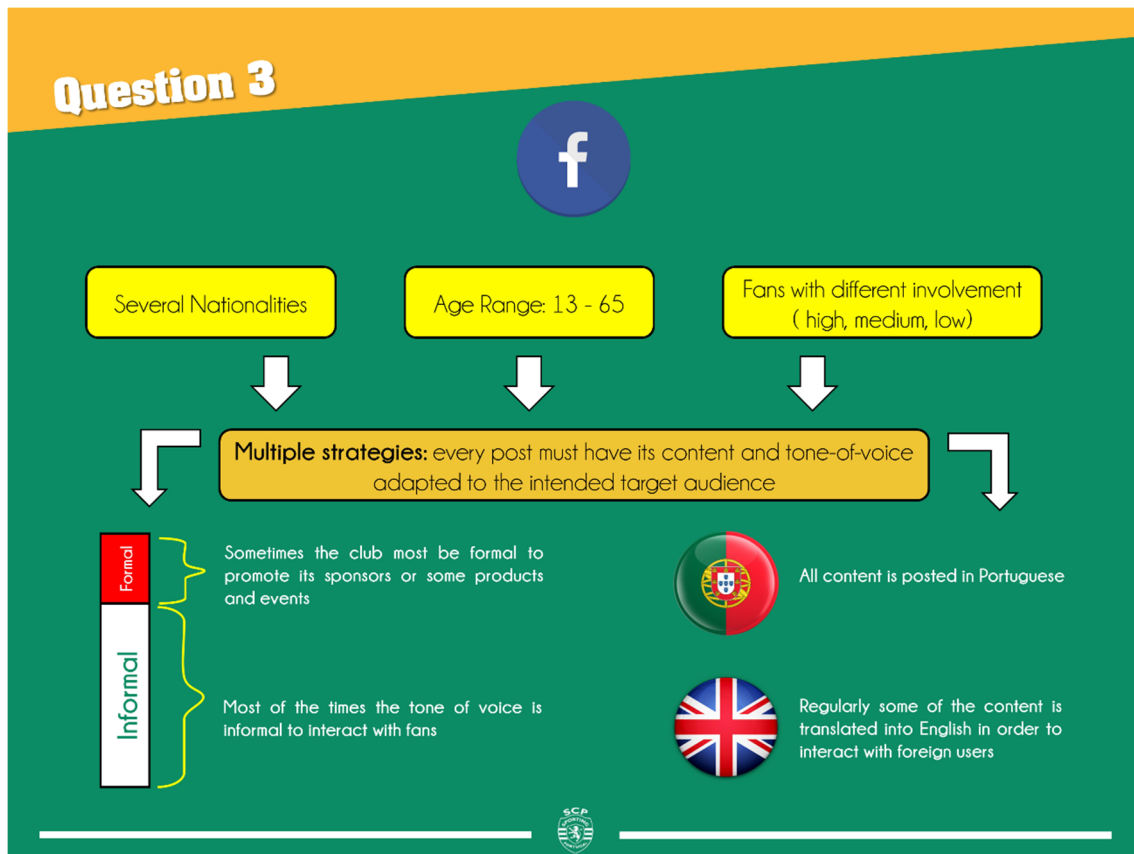Personalised information in the emails, SMS and letters of the club ✓

Different communication and tone-of-voice for each social network ✓

Different media for each social network

Question 3

Several Nationalities

Age Range: 13 - 65

Fans with different involvement (high, medium, low)

Multiple strategies: every post must have its content and tone-of-voice adapted to the intended target audience

Formal

Informal

Sometimes the club most be formal to promote its sponsors or some products and events

Most of the times the tone of voice is informal to interact with fans

All content is posted in Portuguese

Regularly some of the content is translated into English in order to interact with foreign users

Question 3

Several Nationalities

Young Audience

Fans with high involvement

1 account for Portuguese-speaking audience

1 account with content in English for foreign audiences

Single Strategy: Provide good interaction with fans, clubs and brands in a very informal manner

Provide as much updated information as possible about the club
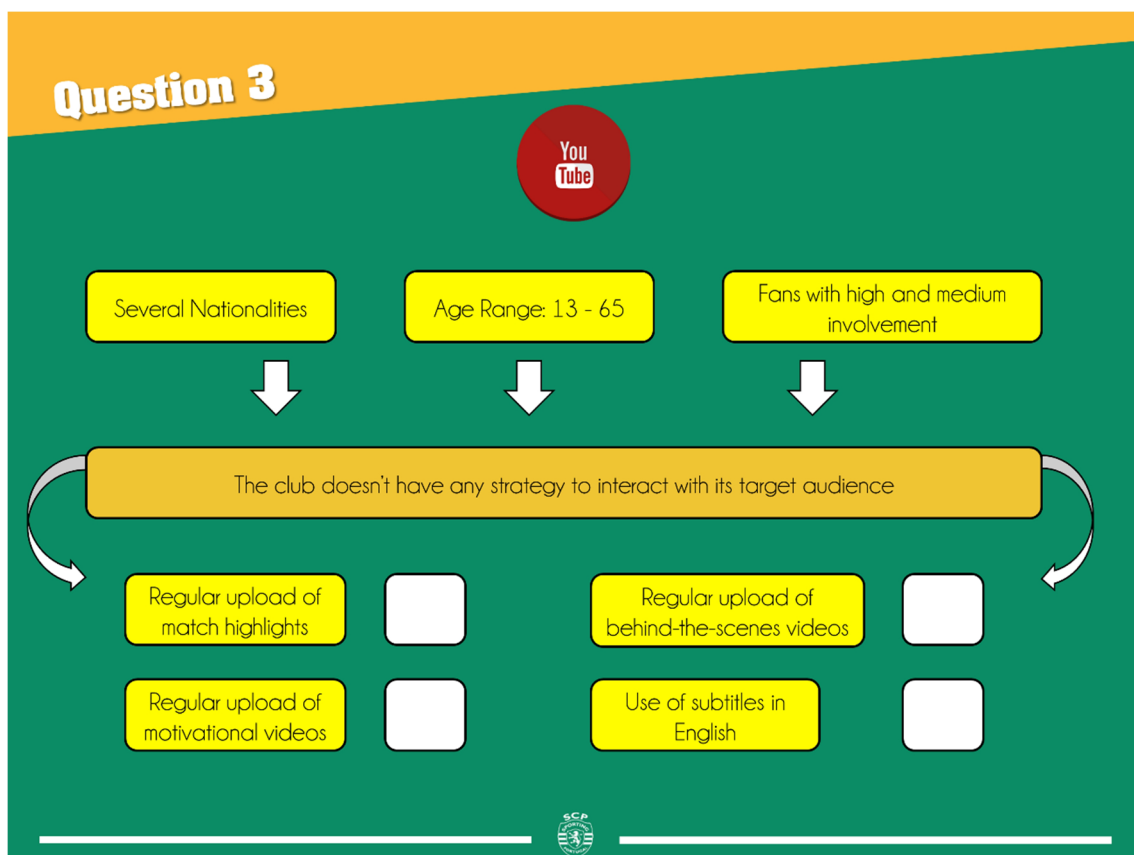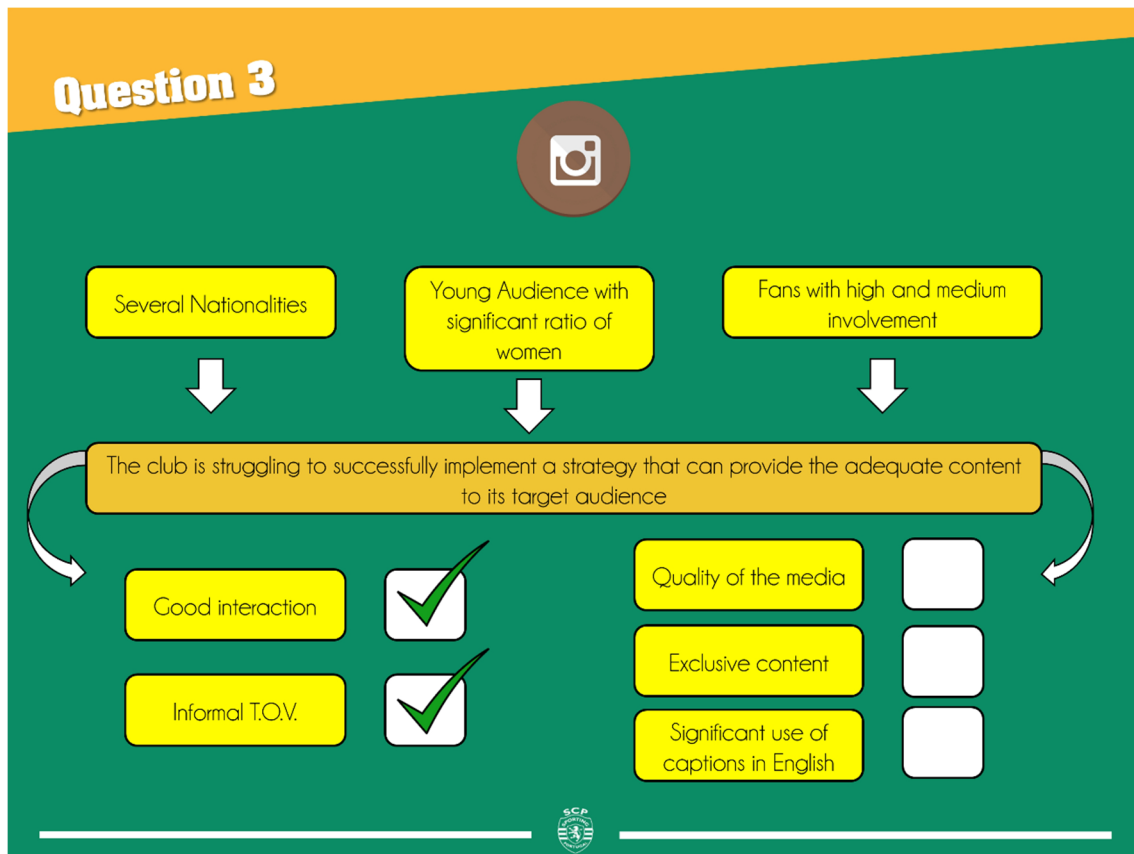
Question 4

Although on the right track, there is still a **lot of improvements to be done** in order to reach the level of Bayern Munich (a good benchmark in this social network)

Post with more regularity

Publish all captions in Portuguese and English

HOW TO IMPROVE ?

Be more consistent in terms of design

Provide exclusive content

If well implemented, the improvements will bring **more followers** as well as **higher brand awareness**

Question 4

Examples of exclusive content to be implemented :

Behind-the-Scenes

Memorable moments / players

sportingclubedeportugal   4 d

♡ ◯ ↗

♥ 8 574 gostos

sportingclubedeportugal o @andre8martins quis mostrar a alegria da equipa após a sessão de treino. @andre8martins wanted to show the joy of the team after the training session.
#SportingCP #tuvaisvencer

sportingclubedeportugal   4 d

♡ ◯ ↗

♥ 7 936 gostos

sportingclubedeportugal Que recordações guardas desta dupla?
What memories do you keep from this duo?
#SportingCP #tuvaisvencer #ograndeartista #jardelresolve

Question 5

150 k foreign users ← Sporting_CP

SportingCP_en → 12k foreign users

Intended for Portuguese-
-speaking audiences

Intended for foreign
audiences

This Twitter is mostly active solely on
Match Days so the interaction with
foreign users is low

**Short-term
solution :**

Provide more content on a regular basis like Sporting
CP's main Twitter account

Question 5

**Medium-term
objectives :**

Drive foreign fans from the main account to the English-Speaking one

Attract new followers to the English-speaking Twitter account

HOW ?

Develop a contest:
#Love4Sporting

- Foreign followers from @SportingCP_en are invited to tweet supporting messages in English to the players and the club during 1 month using #Love4Sporting hashtag ;

- After the deadline and 1 week before a home match for Europa League completion, Sporting CP's community managers choose the best 14 tweets ;

- During the game, the 11 squad players and the 3 substitutes will wear their jerseys with the username of the winners on the back ;

- At half-time, the stadium's video screens will loop the winning tweets

- Sporting will offer those jerseys signed by the players to the respective winners.

Question 5

How to increase the levels of interaction with foreign users ?

Solution N. 1 : Posts all captions both in Portuguese and English

Increase engagement

Solution N. 2 : Publish higher amount of photos of the club's foreign players

Solution N. 3 : Hashtag the name of the players in the photo captions

Expose photo to more users

Question 5

Solution N. 4 : Develop a contest called: #LionsAllOver

- Foreign followers from @sportingclubedeportugal are encouraged to share on Instagram (photo or video format) how they express their love and passion for Sporting CP in their hometown ;

- Participants are eligible to win as long as they live outside Portugal and use the contest hashtag: #LionsAllOver ;

- Every month until the end of the Portuguese League the club's community managers will select a winning photo or video;

- Winners will have the possibly to attend a Sporting home match in VIP seats in the company of a selected guest with all expenses paid during the weekend.

2.8. Key Learning Points / Conclusions

In October 2014, "Jornal Sporting" published an article stating that Sporting Clube de Portugal had the highest Facebook engagement rate among European football clubs and the third best in the world. Based on this news, this case study tried to figure out the real reasons for the recent success of the club on social networks that led it to be considered as a national and international benchmark in the football clubs' sector.

The Internet and social networks are nowadays a major hobby and tool for most people around the globe. Portugal is no exception with the Portuguese spending more and more time online in a wider range of devices, especially mobile. To address this behavioral changes, Sporting CP's board decided to implement a fan-centric marketing strategy with a strong online component settled in new technologies that could be able to connect with fans and bring them closer to the club after its worst football season in the history back in 2013.

Hiring Diogo Bernardo and Christopher Halder to the club's social networks proved to be a very wise decision. Their first task was to understand what was being done until then and start developing a social media strategy. If on the one hand they decided to abandon Google + due to lack of active users in this social network, on the other hand they reactivated the club's Twitter and opened a new account for English speaking audiences as well as they started to publish content to Sporting' Instagram on a regular basis. Something that wasn't happening until that moment.

The purpose of this case study also was also to reveal how, in a year and half period, the two community managers were able to bring improvements in terms of content, coherence, strategy, presence, interaction and design mostly to the club's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. Not only fans started accessing more frequently to Sporting's social platforms because they knew they would come across different and relevant information every day but at the same time, they started to interact much more with the pages as a result of the informal tone of voice directed towards them. Another key aspect of this transformation was the ability to adapt the communication to each of the targets. An obvious example was the use of English in certain posts to interact with a foreign audience.

After a year and a half devoted essentially to show presence and interaction in the various social networks, without any euro invested in ads, much remains to be done. It is expected, in a near future, significant improvements in the club's YouTube channel, higher amount of exclusive content on each platform as well as the interaction with new targets by joining Snapchat or Periscope.

The portrayal of Sporting CP social networks' reality through the development of this case study may also figure as an example to be followed by other clubs in Portugal and in the World. When joining new social media platforms, it is important for marketers to devise a clear strategy and have in mind the real purpose of being present and what target they wish to address.

Another issue to keep in mind is the fact that a significant number of football clubs still pay too much attention to the number of followers relegating to a secondary plane the interaction of the fans with their pages. Something quite recurrent among the clubs of the Portuguese League. In an analogy to a football match for example, it is clearly more beneficial to the team an audience of 10,000 people interacting with their players, supporting and singing than 20,000 people simply watching the game.

In a country where football is mainly centred around 3 clubs (Sporting CP, SL Benfica and FC Porto), it is very important that the smaller ones be able to interact more with their followers on the existing social media platforms before moving to new ones. In fact, if they could provide better and more relevant content on each account, not only they would have better interaction from the fans but also a higher number of supporters in the stadium. Finally, by using Sporting Clube de Portugal as a reference, it would be beneficial for the Portuguese football that a higher interaction and informality could occur between other clubs, fans and players in the various social networks, contributing for a stronger and more visible Portuguese League.

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