

Facebook Pages and the Effects of Reputation Management

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Abstract: This paper aims to identify the categories which own the largest number of Facebook pages as well as the Romanian Facebook pages which have the largest number of fans. Another aim of this study is to analyse the categories generating the largest number of fans on their official Facebook pages, the increase of the number of fans in the last month and the Facebook pages generating the biggest feedback among their fans. The data was collected by using Social Media analysis sites, such as www.socialbakers.com and www.facebrands.ro. The study sample comprises 20 Facebook pages with the largest number of fans.

Keywords: Facebook pages; brand, image; social media; reputation management

1. Reputation Management in Social Media

The true internet and mass communication revolution in the New Media took place at the beginning of the 3rd Millennium when Web 1.0 moved on to a new stage of its evolution, Web 2.0. This step meant, as far as Horia Mihai Badau is concerned, liberation from the “oppression of technology” (Badau, 2011, p. 25). More than this, Web 2.0 was nicknamed “the user's internet”, with a new mass communication model being developed, one characterised by a high degree of interaction between transmitter(s) and the online public.

According to Camelia Beciu (2011, p. 157), the social impact of the new communication and information technologies has provided a larger social access to information and therefore to a certain dynamics for the thematic and receiving modalities diversification event.

Facebook is part of the Social Media category. In one sense, Facebook is a “free online social network which allows its registered users to create personal profiles,

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to upload photographs and video clips, to send messages and to interact with friends, family and colleagues” (Rouse, 2009). The Facebook social network was created on February the 4th 2004, and now has 906.895.580 members from 213 countries (www.socialbakers.com, 28 August, 2012).

This social network has become a platform not only for socialising between individuals but also an extremely important one for promoting the image of certain famous persons. In fact, concepts such as building, maintaining and repairing the image or increasing the social image capital, concepts well known in Public Relations, Advertising and Marketing and applied in the real world, have been replaced by Reputation Management in the Social Media (Facebook).

Thus, the concept of “image” becomes that of “reputation” which represents the more visible, more tangible part of the image, “the stance where the public no longer receives the image with its multiple dimensions, but only receives the key and most visible aspects (audience becomes more superficial, in the context of informational overload)” (Cismaru, 2012, p. 83).

Moreover, the reputation management is mainly based on the idea that, no matter if the real world is the place where the actions of a public figure takes place, “the online environment is the one that registers, filters and translates these actions into effects at the image level” (Cismaru, 2012, p. 94). This paradigm, “real environment vs. virtual environment” has been inversed because internet users have started using more and more online data as a source for information and research. Thus, the Google search engine has become the most popular tool for organizing and processing information regarding a public actor or an organisation and has provided the online environment the possibility of consecrating, promoting, labelling or eliminating an actor from the public space, the real one.

The novelty of reputation management is given by the fact that all communication channels can be managed and one can create a one-sided image rather than a multi-faceted one, as is the case with the classical strategies and techniques for creating images. Through this single perspective - a single strategy - we obtain two main benefits: “a quicker building of the image (due to the convergence of the actions) and a higher clarity thereof (due to the unity of objectives)” (Cismaru, 2012, p. 94).

The main instrument used in a reputation management plan is that of creating a means of communication which can be completely controlled by the ones managing their own reputation. The final result of this program is building self confidence, founded on the “integrity” of the person or organisation: “the unconditioned orientation towards the public well-being, congruence between internal communication, external communication and transparency” (Cismaru, 2012, p. 94). Thus, the Facebook page has become the online medium which is 100% controlled by the ones managing their own reputation; there the online public can gain the status of “fan” of the public figure or of the organisation by means of a

simple adhesion to his or her Facebook page. By means of this mechanism we have established a difference between reputation and image. Reputation has become “the essential image” (Cismaru, 2012, p. 95): those undisputed indicators, with a highly positive or highly negative value (levels with high visibility, whether positive or negative, as well as stable in time).

2. Research Methodology

Research Objectives

O₁: Identification of the categories which have the highest number of Facebook pages

O₂: Identification of the Romanian Facebook pages with the largest number of fans.

O₃: The analysis of the popular categories generating the largest number of fans on their official Facebook pages, the increase of the number of fans in the last month and the Facebook pages generating the biggest feedback among their fans.

Research Hypotheses

H₁: Musicians are the personalities investing a lot of time into promoting their personal image by means of the Facebook pages. Thus, they have the most fans and the highest monthly increases of the number of fans and generate the greatest feedback amongst the fans.

H₂: Even if the Facebook pages belonging to entertainment sites have the least number of fans from the selected samples, these succeed in generating a relatively high feedback amongst the fans.

H₃: Brands, stores or hypermarkets are more interested in increasing the number of fans on the official Facebook sites and less in generating feedback.

Research Method

In order to reach our aims, we have used the Social Media analysis site, www.socialbakers.com and www.facebrands.ro, where we collected the statistical data regarding the Romanian Facebook pages with the largest number of fans, data regarding the monthly increases in the number of users as well as data regarding the number of persons talking in the Social Media about the Facebook pages under scrutiny. We have selected a representative sample comprised of the first 20 Facebook pages according to number of fans, and the data was collected and centralized on 1st of September, 2012.

Socialbakers (<http://www.socialbakers.com/company-overview>) is a social media analysis company with clients in 75 countries on all continents. Socialbakers helps

companies evaluate the efficiency of marketing campaigns in all major social networks, such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Google+.

Facebrands.ro (<http://www.facebrands.ro/despre.html>) makes a top of the Facebook Romanian pages, calculated and displayed only according to the affinities of the Facebook users. Facebrands follows the notoriety of brands in Romania, but only as far as the Facebook social network is concerned. The number of likes per page is retrieved from the Facebook social network every 10 minutes. The percentage evolution from the list of pages represents the increase obtained for intervals of 48 to 24 hours, computed up to the current time.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

3.1. Distribution of Facebook Pages on Categories

The www.facebrands.ro site registered 18.048 Romanian Facebook pages, which were grouped in 50 categories, as follows: Local affairs (2015 Facebook pages), Art and Culture (1242), Auto & Moto (397), Banks and financial services (89), Blogs (691), Campaigns (171), Singers and Bands (839), Home and Garden (211), Tea and Coffee Shops (220), Celebrities (447), Clubs and Bars (605), Companies and firms (456), Communities (671), Culinary (137), Miscellaneous (411), Entertainment (356), Economy & Finances (15), Education (742), Events (298), Family & children (245), Fashion (360), Hotels and accommodations (426), Real Estate (194), State Institutions (1), IT&C (352), Feminine Lifestyle (108), Workplaces (57), Local Stores (348), Online Stores (813), Food and Drinks (262), Nonprofit organization (327), Pets (147), Politics (171), Products (112), Protests (42), Quizzes (32), Radio (145), Group Discounts (194), Restaurants (425), Magazines (200), Health and Personal Care (942), Web Services (247), Sport (385), Science and technology (24), Business News (50), General News (113), Local News (243), Leisure (223), Tourism & holidays (621), TV (227).

The situation of the categories with the largest number of registered Facebook pages is presented under Figure 1:

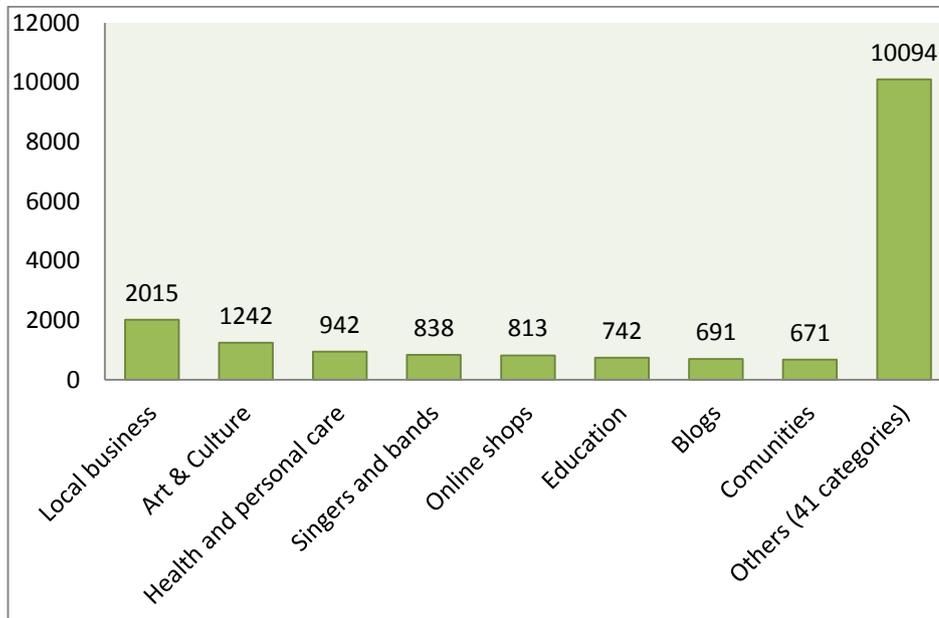


Figure 1. Situation of the categories with the largest number of registered Facebook pages

Source: www.facebrands.ro

3.2. Top of the Romanian Facebook pages with the largest number of fans

From the previous graphic we may see that Local Business has the largest number of Facebook pages, namely 2015, the “Art and Culture” category has 1242 Facebook pages, the “Health and Personal Care” category (942 pages), and the “Singers and Bands” category (838 pages).

After collecting data regarding the Romanian Facebook pages with the highest number of fans we have correlated data regarding the number of fans, persons talking in the Social Media about these pages and monthly increases that they generate, so that the top is presented like this: (Table no. 1):

Table 1. Facebook pages with the largest number of fans

Item no.	Facebook Page	No. of Fans	Persons talking about the page	Monthly Increases
1.	Inna	6,226,894	325,718	247,936
2.	Akcent	1,455,783	62,014	69,739
3.	Alexandra Stan	1,418,599	102,680	153,381
4.	Edward Maya	992,405	35,859	40,928
5.	Kiss FM	782,637	59,392	27,606
6.	Extreme Silver Jewelry	699,304	87,358	126
7.	Creative Monkeyz	666,360	3,433	7,941
8.	Smiley	660,808	38,688	26,138
9.	Jokes	618,234	118,266	9,004
10.	Radio ZU	599,464	14,626	19,957
11.	Lidl Romania	594,901	12,690	21,925
12.	ProTV	578,305	53,544	17,641
13.	Project Rosia Montana	558,863	5,485	5,351
14.	Pepsi Romania	525,157	17,619	21,942
15.	Antonia	492,277	148,628	63,614
16.	Discovery Romania	469,254	13,971	12,531
17.	Ellie White	469,097	12,280	15,876
18.	B.U.G. Mafia	445,846	10,868	15,017
19.	Sport.ro	445,472	54,351	16,815
20.	GuessWho	437,297	6,200	13,844

Source: www.socialbakers.com

The first 4 places in the rankings of the Facebook pages with the largest number of fans are held by pages belonging to bands or solo musicians.

Moreover, we see that in this top of the 20 most popular Romanian Facebook pages, 9 of the ranks belong to this category. The category ranked 2nd as far as number of fans goes is comprised of Facebook pages of the Romanian mass-media institutions. In this ranking there are also Facebook pages belonging to entertainment pages, stores, social campaigns and brands.

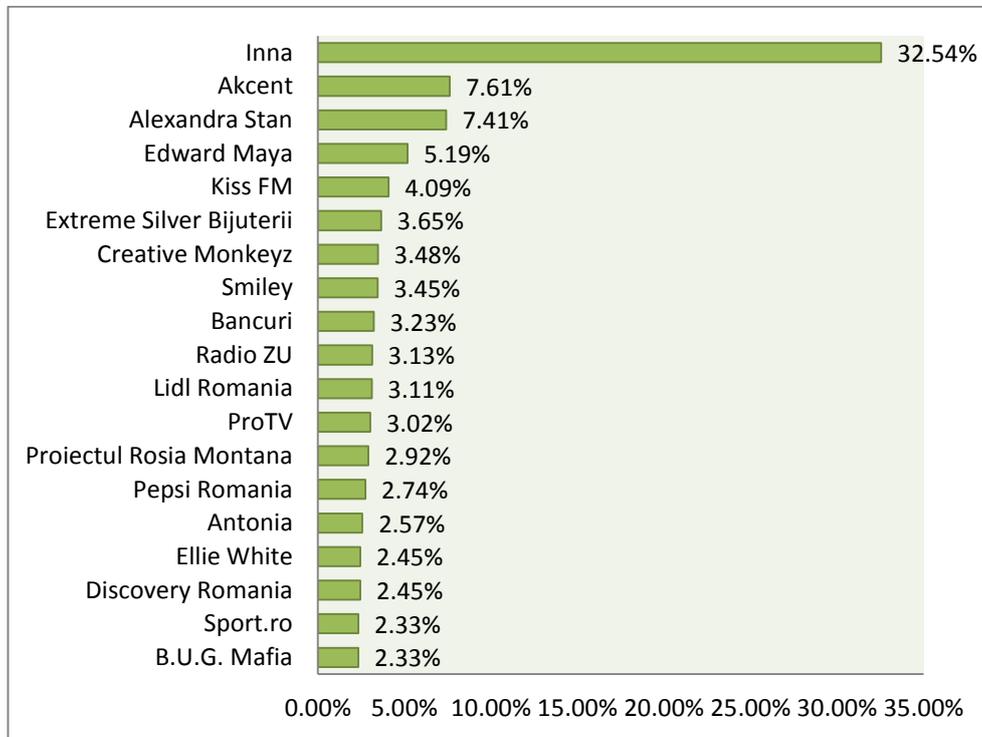


Figure 2. Facebook pages with the largest number of fans

Source: Author's own calculation

3.3. Categories of the Facebook Pages with the Largest Number of Fans

Figure no. 2 shows an asymmetrical distribution of the number of fans for the first 20 Romanian Facebook pages. The page of Inna, the solo artist, with 6,226,894 fans comprises 32.54% of the total number of fans of the first 20 Facebook pages. We must take into account the fact that the artist is not only popular in Romania and her Facebook page is the place where the artist's fans from all over the world interact. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th places are occupied by pages belonging to the "Solo Artists and Bands", with 7.61%, 7.41% and 5.19% respectively of the total number of fans. The last places in the order of fan distribution are occupied by the Facebook page of the television channel Sport.ro, with 2.33% of the total number of fans and the page of B.U.G. Mafia, with the same percentage.

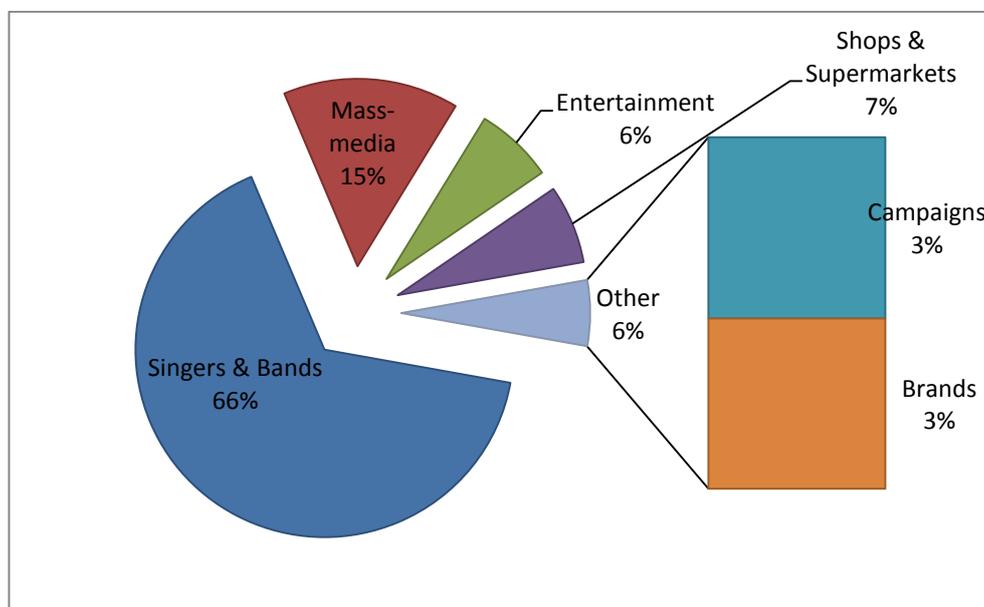


Figure 3. Distribution of the Facebook pages with the largest number of fans, according to the category they belong to

Source: Author's own calculation

We can see in the previous graphic the large proportion that Facebook pages belonging to solo artists and bands have, more exactly 66% of the total of the Facebook pages appreciated by the Romanians, which shows the high interest singers have for their personal promotion in the Social Media.

Concerts outside the Romanian borders and the success they have in the online environment have placed the above mentioned artists on the first ranks of Romanian Facebook Brands, as far as the Solo artists and Bands category is concerned.

As stated by Ionut Oprea, manager of the Standout communication agency, which launched Facebrands.ro, “stars can use their Facebook pages to create a fan community to which they can directly communicate” (Greco, 26th of January, 2011).

The pages of the mass-media institutions occupy the second place in this distribution, with a total of 15% of the Facebook fans. Fans of stores and hypermarkets make up for 7% of the total number, while entertainment pages fans amount to 6%. The pages of social campaigns and those of brands share 3% of the fans each.

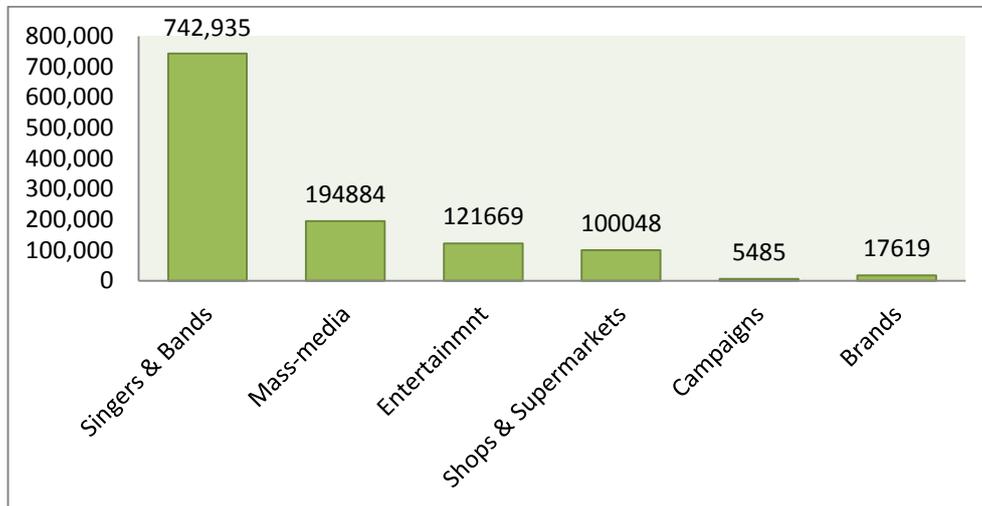


Figure 4. Number of persons talking about the Facebook pages

Source: Author's own calculation

Taking into account the previous graphic, we may notice that the Facebook pages belonging to solo artists or musical bands generate a high feedback in the Social Media; 742,935 is the number of fans that choose to comment or share information posted on the official pages of their favorite singers or bands. The press institution generates feedback from 194,884 Facebook users, entertainment sites from 121,669 users, stores and hypermarkets from 100,048 users of the social network. We observe that musical bands and solo artists are very interested in generating talks and in interacting with fans through the social network, which would guarantee them a higher image capital. On the opposite pole, brands and social campaigns seek unilateral communication with their fans, being interested more in transmitting messages to the public and less in generating feedback.

For example, Inna received 61,998 likes after posting a photograph and 1,479 users decided to share that photograph in their friends' network, and the number of comments received was 2,588, posting photographs and videos represents the main means of communication of artists with their Facebook fans.

On the other hand, press institutions post on their Facebook pages links to news or information on their official website, but the fan feedback is much smaller compared to the feedback received by musicians on their Facebook places. Stores, hypermarkets and brands post on their Facebook pages information regarding products and promotions, linking them to their official website. We see that fan feedback comes more under the form of "likes" and less under the form of comments or redistributions of the posted message.

Taking for example into account the Facebook page of the Pepsi brand, we may observe that after posting the winners for a contest launched by the company, that post received 40 likes and only one comment. Another example to this extent is given by the Facebook page of the Lidl hypermarket which, although it counts 594,901 fans, cannot generate more than 20-30 comments for posts regarding its promotions (chocolate truffles, icecream cake, bread etc.)

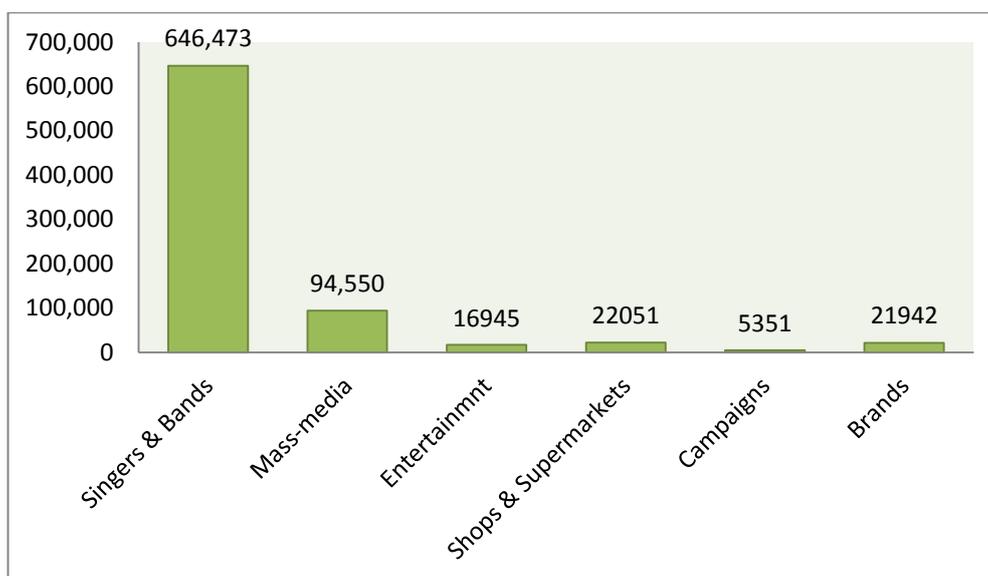


Figure 5. Increase in the number of fans in the last month

Source: Author's own calculation

The higher preoccupation of musical solo artists and bands can be observed from the previous graphic, where we notice an increase of 646,473 of the number of fans for the Facebook pages in this category during the last month, which amounts to 80% of the total of increases in the last month. The Facebook pages belonging to press institutions registered an increase of 94,550 fans over the course of last month, followed by the pages of stores and hypermarkets – 22,051 and of other brands – 21,942. Less Facebook users, namely 16,945 and respectively 5,351 have chosen, during the last month, to become fans of the entertainment pages and of the social campaign pages.

4. Conclusions

By synthesizing we can conclude that musical solo artists and bands (66% of the Facebook pages under scrutiny) place a great importance both on promoting their image through the Facebook social network and on generating and managing

comments from fans. The advantage of the social network lies in the direct contact that musicians have with the people they admire; announcing a surprise also determines fans to wait impatiently for its disclosure. Facebook helps users find when the concerts of their favourite bands take place or whether those shows have been cancelled.

Even though just 6% of the fans belong to the entertainment Facebook page category, we notice that they generate a larger feedback than brands, campaigns or hypermarket Facebook pages do. In fact, these last three categories are more interested in increasing their fan database, to which they unilaterally transmit messages regarding their products and services. The pages of mass-media institutions are large feedback generators, but there are differences between them and the pages belonging to musicians.

For a company, institution or even for a public person, everything that is posted on the official page or on Facebook must be closely monitored in order to have the possibility of reporting or attack racist, hateful or untrue messages.

The Facebook social network has become a powerful centre of the marketing activity due to the large number of active users and to the ease with each one can directly connect to said users. Facebook is not seen as merely a channel destined to direct sales, it also facilitates brand interaction with the fans, helps them win their appreciation and they do not omit including in some of their posts direct links to their website.

From this analysis we may conclude that the most popular Facebook pages are those sending catchy messages once or twice per day, as in this context we consider that too many posts might lead to irritation and a lack of interest from the fans. The pages that the Facebook users appreciate are those where stories are being told or questions are being asked, tips and tricks are being offered, relevant news is posted and feedback is encouraged. Moreover, an important argument for winning popularity on Facebook lies in the quality of the posted pictures. This is what gives a brand more reliability, as well as bringing more colour to the page itself. Sharing pictures on Facebook contributes to gaining notoriety among Facebook users and to obtaining new fans as well as, why not, new clients, as the fans on the Facebook page must always be regarded as potential clients.

Facebook succeeded in attracting an impressive number of users in extremely diverse environments, and the provisions for the years to come are only favourable to those wishing to use Facebook as a marketing platform for their business.

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