# Startups' Discursive and Communication Strategies on Social Media

María Jesús Fernández Torres [1], Dolores Rando-Cueto [1, 2], Ainhoa del Pino Rodríguez-Vera [1]
[1] University of Malaga, Spain
[2] International University of Valencia, Spain

**ABSTRACT**

*Social media have become essential tools for startups aiming to stand out in competitive markets. This research examines the digital communication strategies adopted by 181 Andalusian startups to identify patterns of success and areas for improvement in their social media management. Using the Fanpage Karma analysis tool, data were collected over six months in 2024. Metrics such as engagement, posting frequency, audience interaction, and the effectiveness of content formats were evaluated. This study reveals trends in visual and textual content, the consistency of posts, and audience engagement strategies, offering valuable insights for researchers and entrepreneurs seeking to enhance their impact on social media.*

# 1. Introduction

In general terms, social networks have precipitated a paradigm shift in the communication strategies of companies (Castillo de Mesa et al., 2024; Pereira Da Silva et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2022), becoming pivotal tools in the management of organisations (Zeler et al., 2019, 2022). The strategic utilisation of these channels to stimulate communication has been shown to enhance corporate presence and visibility, thereby fostering relations between organisations and their respective audiences (Silva & Baldissera, 2021; Zeler et al., 2019). This is achieved through dialogues that occur at the same level in a globalised geographical context (Capriotti et al., 2021).

For companies, social networks have become the conduit through which to disseminate corporate information, while also facilitating online dialogue between diverse stakeholders (Capriotti et al., 2021; Monfort & Mas Iglesias, 2021; Rando Cueto et al., 2021). In times of crisis management or risk situations, the immediacy and fluidity of the dialogue between companies and audiences is also relevant in avoiding, slowing down or mitigating negative consequences for the company (Baniya, 2022; Camilleri, 202 1; Jungblut et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024; Ruiz-Incertis & Tuñón-Navarro, 2024; Zhang et al., 2022).

The significance attributed to the incorporation of corporate communication within social networks is such that certain authors draw parallels between its "effective management" and "business success", particularly in the context of startups, which are compelled to establish their visibility and position themselves within the market (Lobillo-Mora & Paniagua-Rojano, 2023, p. 91). However, in the case of nascent enterprises, conditions may arise in their first years of existence that may result in inadequate resources being allocated to communication, a lack of awareness of its relevance, or inexperience in its management, which may lead to suboptimal interaction practices in the virtual scenario of social networks (Guzmán-Duque et al., 2023).

# 2. Corporate Communication on Social Media: Instagram and TikTok

In the context of corporate communication on social media, the potential of Instagram and TikTok is particularly noteworthy. These social media applications are regarded as the most rapidly expanding digital community for news (Hendrickx, 2024; Newman et al., 2024). The growth in the number of followers on these platforms has been accompanied by increased engagement in online discourse by citizens, who are drawn to content that is less formal and more relatable than that offered by traditional corporate communication channels (Terhorst et al., 2024).In addition to the increased popularity of these social networks, there is growing rivalry between them (We Are Social & Meltwater, 2024).

## 2.1. Instagram

Following a 15-year period of development, Instagram has consolidated its position as a pivotal social network in the execution of corporate communication strategies, garnering significant acclaim for its capacity to establish connections with stakeholders and attain business objectives (Campo et al., 2024). This social network has met the mounting societal demand for a media landscape that is increasingly visual-centric (Dong et al., 2024).

The utilisation of Instagram within an organisation's communication strategy necessitates a distinct discourse on the part of the company. The established relationship between the various parties engenders a heightened influence on the entity's ability to influence consumer behaviour and decision-making processes when confronted with a product or service (Dudić et al., 2024).

## 2.2. TikTok

Since its appearance in 2016, the growth in the use of this social network has been continuous, derived, among other factors, from the growing interest of new generations in short video formats that have become an attractive communication channel between companies and their consumers (Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2022; Rando-Cueto et al., 2023). Consequently, TikTok has emerged as a credible and significant source of information for a substantial segment of the population that uses this social network, irrespective of the content quality of the disseminated publications (Wang et al., 2023).

This space for interaction through the dissemination of short audiovisuals has brought with it a disruption in the way different sectors of society relate to each other (Simova et al., 2021) that consolidated companies have to adapt in their communication strategies and those that are breaking

into the market have to include in their organisational culture. In addition to increasing their visibility among potential audiences through viral dissemination, companies have also reported an enhancement in the implementation and marketing of their products and services (Ren et al., 2021). However, this phenomenon is further facilitated by the consumer's positive receptiveness to such messages, along with the organisation's strategic targeted communication (Ren et al., 2021).

## 3. Startup Communication Management on social Media

In the context of the communication management of nascent enterprises via social networks, researchers have identified the swift responsiveness in social discourse as a pivotal factor for success (Picken, 2017). This facilitates the identification and exploitation of business opportunities, as well as optimising their adaptation to the environment. Furthermore, the potential of social networks to reach vast audiences without the need for substantial economic investment (Stuhldreier, 2024) is a crucial consideration, especially during the nascent stages of a business's implementation.

In the nascent stages of market positioning, the management of startup communication in social networks, their inclusion and participation in the virtual arena, is also crucial for the creation and maintenance of reputation and organisational culture (Bhandari, 2021; Desai, 2018; Watkins & Smith, 2022).

The leadership discourse of the Director of Communication (DIRCOM) is a salient agent in the communication process by startups, and it has been demonstrated that it supports employees' commitment to the company, thereby improving business performance (Men et al., 2021). However, this phenomenon manifests only when startups prioritise this activity and allocate the requisite resources to maintain agile communication on social networks (Medina-Aguerrebere et al., 2022).

At the same time, studies show controversial effects in the workplace when it comes to communication between professionals. In this sense, social networks would affect the quality of interactions between workers and lead to interruptions in their work, which would have a negative impact on professional performance (Liu et al., 2022). Thus, Pekkala et al. (2022) argue for responsible and purposeful management. These authors argue that "as managers increasingly expect employees to use social media for work-related purposes, awareness and understanding of how these expectations may affect employment relationships is essential for the development of theory and responsible management practices" (Pekkala et al., 2022, p. 57).

In comparison to established entities with a long-standing presence in the market, the objectives and interests of startups in the utilisation of social networks are distinctly different. This is evidenced by factors such as the dynamic process of branding, strategic objectives, the utilisation and prioritisation of benefits that arise, and the barriers to their realisation (Vrontis et al., 2023). In the context of crisis or risk situations, communication via social networks assumes a pivotal role for a startup, as it is instrumental in averting the potential repercussions that may ensue from such circumstances (Kaiser & Kuckertz, 2023).

Shi (2024) identifies three objectives for companies in their initial business phase when engaging with social networks: managing organisational visibility, enhancing the effectiveness of communications, and optimising the dissemination of knowledge about the organisation. In essence, entrepreneurs pursue strategies that foster affinity, awareness, and positive predisposition towards startups.

## 4. Methodology

The overarching objective of this study has been to analyse the discursive and communicational strategies employed by Andalusian startups on social networks, such as Instagram and TikTok, with a view to identifying patterns of success, areas for improvement and key factors in the management of these platforms in competitive contexts. The present research has three main specific objectives:

1. To analyse the key performance indicators on social networks, such as publication frequency, audience interaction and the effectiveness of content formats. The Fanpage Karma tool was utilised for this specific objective.

2. To identify patterns and trends in the discursive and communicational strategies of Andalusian startups, by analysing the publications with the greatest interaction on Instagram and TikTok, using generative artificial intelligence models such as GPT-4.

3. To provide practical recommendations based on the findings to optimise social media management, fostering impact and interaction in competitive business contexts.

To achieve these objectives, a methodological triangulation was carried out. After a systematic review of the scientific literature on the subject of study, the Fanpage Karma tool was used, as previously indicated, for an in-depth analysis of the discourse on the social networks Instagram and TikTok of nearly two hundred startups. Following this work, a content analysis was carried out using the GPT-4 language model of the content of the ten most interactive posts on each of the aforementioned social networks.

## 4.1. Fanpage Karma

The Fanpage Karma tool (Lozano-Blasco et al., 2021; Rando-Cueto et al., 2024) was utilised to conduct a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Instagram and TikTok social media profiles of a sample of 181 startups. These startups were selected non-randomly based on data from a previous recent study (Rando-Cueto et al., 2024). Specifically, these companies are based in the Spanish region of Andalusia, and the study period was concentrated in the last semester of 2024.

Once the quantitative data related to the activity on Instagram and TikTok of the selected profiles (number of publications; frequency of publication; interaction –number of likes, comments, retweets, replies–; type of content –text, image, audiovisual-) had been obtained, a qualitative study was carried out. The publications were then classified into the following content domains: "corporate", "educational", "informative", "entertainment" and "social engagement". This classification enabled the identification of the primary purpose of each message issued by the companies and their connection with the audiences.

The procedure carried out in the qualitative analysis consisted of the following: 1) An analysis of the text, images and hashtags of each publication; 2) identification of the predominant communicative objectives; and 3) assignment of a domain based on the narrative and focus of the content. The classification criteria are clarified in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Description of content domains

| Content mastery | Description |
|---|---|
| Corporate | Publications aimed at promoting the brand, products or services in a direct way. |
| News | Content designed to share relevant information or news on a specific topic. |
| Educational | Publications whose main purpose is to instruct, teach or provide useful knowledge to the audience. |
| Entertainment | Content that seeks to entertain, generate positive emotions or connect with the audience through humour or creativity. |
| Social commitment | Publications promoting interaction or participation in social causes or community issues |

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

The methodology was selected on account of its capacity to integrate narrative and emotional variables that reflect the interaction between publications and their audiences. Moreover, the identified domains provide a robust framework for understanding communication strategies and how they provoke engagement and reactions from users.

### *4.2. GPT-4 Language Model*

The GPT-4 language model was employed to analyse the texts of the ten posts with the highest interaction rate in each of the social networks studied, with the objective of evaluating its effectiveness in identifying predominant sentiment in user-generated content. This methodology is based on empirical and theoretical evidence from previous research highlighting the capability of large language models (LLM) in sentiment analysis tasks. Consequently, GPT-4 is recognised for its accuracy in sentiment analysis, achieving accuracy rates of 95% in recent research (Krugmann & Hartmann, 2024; Michailidis, 2024). Furthermore, the model has been noted for its ability to interpret the nuances of human language and categorise sentiment in a clear and explanatory manner (Ghatora et al., 2024; Krugmann & Hartmann, 2024). The analysis is supported by recent literature that positions LLMs as transformative tools in the field of marketing and social research. Researchers in the field have shown that the use of models such as GPT-4 significantly reduces cost and time barriers by avoiding the need for extensive training, and that the flexibility of these models to operate in zero-shot scenarios makes them an ideal choice for the analysis of unstructured data, such as social media posts (Biró et al., 2023; Krugmann & Hartmann, 2024).

In order to achieve this process, a series of phases were undertaken:

- Data collection: a total of ten publications were selected from both Instagram and TikTok, with a particular emphasis on those that were identified through quantitative content analysis. The texts were exported in their original state, without modifications, to ensure the authenticity of the content analysed, including emojis, hashtags and any other elements that are characteristic of this type of publications. In addition, their corresponding images and videos were considered to provide a more accurate context to the message.
- Automated analysis: each publication description was sent to GPT-4 with a standard prompt: "What is the sentiment of this text (Positive, Negative or Neutral)?" (Ghatora et al., 2024). The model classified the texts into one of the three categories and provided a brief explanation of its decision, reinforcing the transparency of the analysis (Krugmann & Hartmann, 2024).
- Internal verification: the results provided by GPT-4 were reviewed to confirm that the classifications and explanations generated were consistent and relevant in the context of the publications analysed.

## 5. Results

### *5.1. Startup Database Analysis*

The initial database of startups comprised 181 companies; however, 27 were eliminated, representing 15% of the total, due to various factors, including the transfer of their headquarters to an autonomous community other than Andalusia, the cessation of activities or updates to the database, among others. Consequently, the object of study for this analysis consisted of a total of 154 startups.

Figure 1 presents the subsequent results:

- With regard to sectoral distribution, the startups analysed are distributed across a wide variety of sectors. The technology sector represents the largest group with 23% of the total, followed by the consultancy sector with 11% and the energy sector with 6%. This demonstrates a marked prominence of sectors related to innovation, specialised services and sustainability. The tourism sector is the fourth most represented, followed by advertising, education, video games, biotechnology, health and engineering.
- In terms of geographical distribution and location, the province of Malaga is the most significant outlier, with 48% of the startups analysed, followed by Seville, which accounts for 22%. This pattern suggests a higher density of entrepreneurial activity in these two geographical areas, probably due to factors such as technological infrastructure, the entrepreneurial ecosystem and the availability of resources. In third place, Cordoba stands out, followed by Cadiz, Granada, Almeria, Jaen and Huelva.

- The analysis of the size of startups, according to the number of employees, shows that the majority of startups have small workforces. Consequently, 66% of startups have between 2 and 10 employees, while 25% have between 11 and 50 employees. Only a minority have a larger workforce, which reinforces the startup character of these companies. In terms of social media presence, 91 startups (59%) use Instagram, making it the most widely used platform.
- In contrast, 24 startups (16%) use TikTok, a figure that is significantly lower, suggesting a preference among startups for Instagram in their communication strategies, possibly due to its reach and versatility in visual promotion and connecting with wider audiences.

**Figure 1.** General database of startups
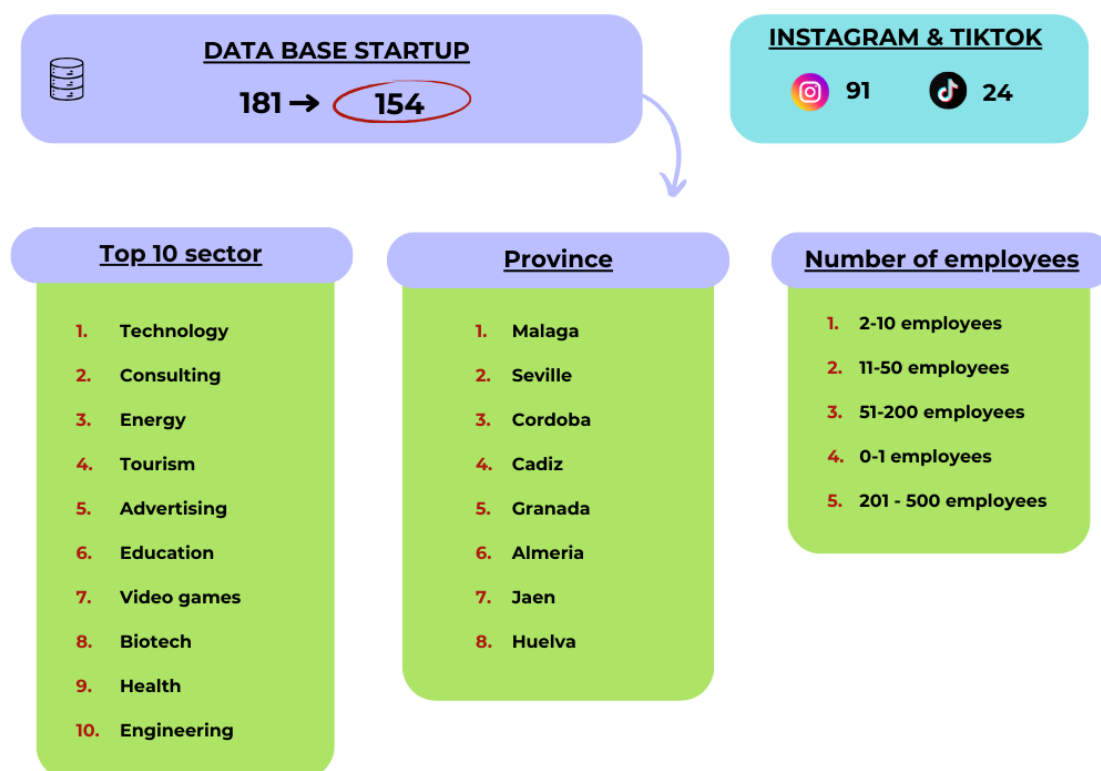


Source: Own elaboration, 2025

## 5.2. Analysis of Startups on Instagram

Figure 2 illustrates the number of followers of the 25 startup accounts with the most significant presence on Instagram, highlighting notable disparities between the leading startups and those with the lowest number of followers within the Top 25.

The first three positions are occupied by "Happymami Lactancia", a startup from Jaén that developed a bottle capable of adapting to the needs of any mother. In second place is "Rock&Change" from Malaga, with 27,537 followers, a creator of a digital platform in Web and App format that connects the work of artists with their public. In third place, although marking a decrease, is also from Malaga. "Owo" from Malaga, with 24,700 followers, has developed and patented a haptic jacket that allows users to experience sensory feedback from within a virtual environment, such as a video game or film, by recreating real physical sensations. These three accounts are particularly noteworthy in terms of their audience size.

From the fourth position onwards, which is occupied by "Lubets" (also from Malaga and focused on lubricants), the number of followers shows a more pronounced downward trend, already below 8,000 followers.

Therefore, it is possible to differentiate between two audience groups within the Top 25:

- Leading profiles with the largest number of followers: the top six startup accounts have between 7,000 and 34,000+ followers, suggesting a solid strategy to engage and retain large audiences.
- Profiles with moderate audiences: From the seventh position onwards, accounts have between 5,015 and 1,197 followers, which could suggest lower reach strategies or a more specific focus on niche markets.

Figure 2 highlights a significant gap in the reach of accounts within the Top 25, where a few startups dominate the ecosystem in terms of followers, highlighting the importance of a strong communication strategy on Instagram to maximise the visibility and impact of these emerging companies.

**Figure 2.** Top 25 accounts with the most followers
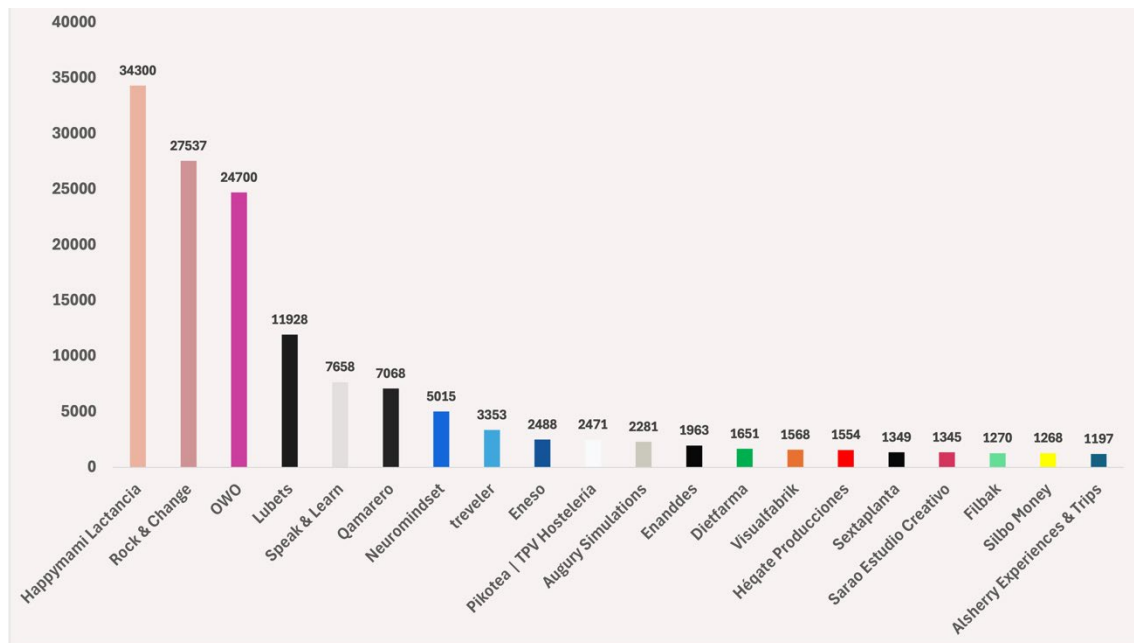


Source: Fanpage Karma. Own elaboration, 2025

As illustrated in Figure 3, a total of five variables have been analysed, including engagement, the number of posts, shared reactions and comments, the number of comments, and the interaction rate.

With respect to the engagement or level of commitment that users have with a startup, the one with the highest percentage is "Rock&Change" (5.75%), followed by the Sevillian marketing startup, "Emociona Comunicación" (1.4%). The rates are decreasing, reflecting the effectiveness of "Rock&Change" in maintaining active engagement.

In terms of the number of publications, "Happymami Lactancia" from Jaén leads with 96 publications, followed by "Rock&Change" from Málaga, with 91. The other accounts have a slightly lower frequency, suggesting a link between constancy in publications and reach.

The variable relating to shared reactions and comments was once again dominated by "Rock&Change" with 277,657 interactions, followed by the Malaga-based startup dedicated to improving and learning Spanish, "Speak&Learn", with 19,031. These data confirm the success of its content strategy in capturing the public's attention.

In terms of the number of comments, "Rock&Change" once again stands out with 2,496, followed by "Happymami Lactancia" with 1,033.

Finally, with regard to the interaction rate, "Speak&Learn" leads this indicator with 35%, highlighting its capacity to generate a high response per publication in relation to its audience.

Figure 3 illustrates that "Rock&Change" is a paradigm of success in the majority of the metrics analysed (engagement, comments and reactions). In contrast, "Happymami Lactancia" is distinguished by the volume of publications, while "Speak&Learn" is notable for its interaction rate, indicating its effectiveness with specific audiences.

**Figure 3.** Top 5 accounts by variables



| Engagement | | Number of posts | | Reactions, comments & shares | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rock & Change | 5,75% | Happymami Lactancia | 96 | Rock & Change | 277.657 |
| Emociona Comunicación | 1,4% | Rock & Change | 91 | Speak & Learn | 19.031 |
| Speak & Learn | 1,33% | Filbak | 86 | Happymami Lactancia | 5.379 |
| Minifunkids | 0,88% | Agroplanning | 77 | Filbak | 1.619 |
| Made in Verse | 0,4% | Speak & Learn | 68 | Emociona Comunicación | 1.576 |
| Number of comments | | Rate of Interactions | | | |
| Rock & Change | 2.496 | Speak & Learn | 35% | | |
| Happymami Lactancia | 1.033 | Made in Verse | 24,5% | | |
| Speak & Learn | 618 | FMIT Solutions | 21,99% | | |
| OWO | 316 | Emociona Comunicación | 16,06% | | |
| Paratyworld | 155 | Rock & Change | 11,62% | | |

Source: Fanpage Karma. Own elaboration, 2025

As demonstrated in Figure 4, the optimal times for publishing are concentrated on Monday, Thursday and Friday mornings, specifically at 10:00 and 12:00, with a significant participation of users. These times highlight the beginning of the week and the day before the weekend as opportune times to capture the attention of the audience. Additionally, a slot of particular relevance is observed at 18:00 hours on Thursday, suggesting that this day is advantageous for increasing reach. These observations underscore the significance of these moments in optimising engagement.

**Figure 4.** Best days and times to publish
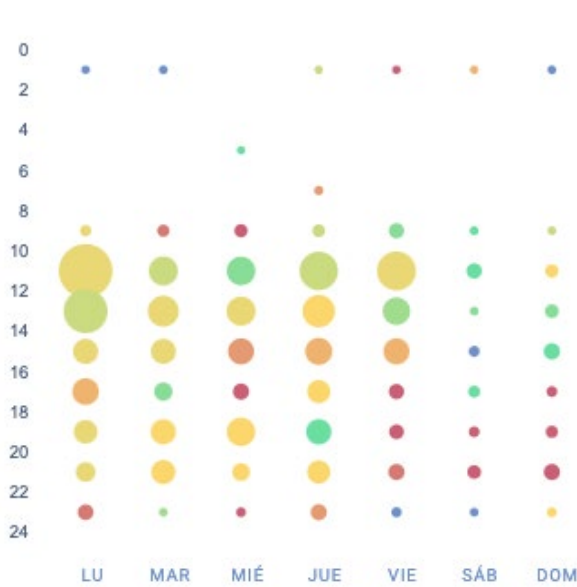


Source: Fanpage Karma. Own elaboration, 2025

As demonstrated in Figure 5, images (587 posts) are the most prevalent format employed by startups, followed by videos (444 posts) and carousels (352). This observation signifies a predilection for content that swiftly captures attention and conveys information in a direct and visually appealing manner. However, videos emerge as a notable exception due to their interactive potential, while carousels are particularly effective for presenting more detailed information.

**Figure 5.** Type of publications
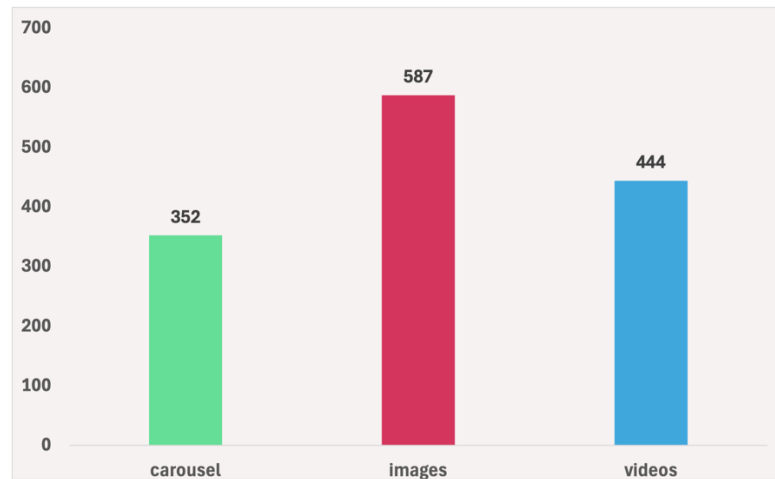
Source: Fanpage Karma. Own elaboration, 2025

Table 2 illustrates the hashtags that elicited the most interactions in the Instagram posts of startups during the specified period. Filbak, a Málaga-based interior and graphic design studio specialising in spatial branding, is distinguished by four primary hashtags (#brandingespacial, #volverasentir, #spacebranding and #filbak), showcasing its capacity to position its brand with specialised terminology and in alignment with its identity. Conversely, "Rock&Change" is noteworthy for its use of #bandsemergentes, a hashtag that is pertinent to its industry and appeals to niche audiences interested in emerging music.

**Table 2.** Hashtags with more interaction in publications

| Startup | Hashtag |
|---|---|
| Rock & Change | #emergingbands |
| Filbak | #spacebranding |
| Filbak | #comebacktofeel |
| Filbak | #spacebranding |
| Filbak | #filbak |

Source: Fanpage Karma. Own elaboration, 2025

### 5.3. Startup Analysis in TikTok

Figure 6 shows that the startup "Happymami Lactancia" is clearly dominant in the list, with 5,126 followers, significantly above the rest and a success story on TikTok.In second place is "Lubets" with 2,189 followers, followed by the Malaga-based video game development studio "Master Crowd Games" with 963 followers, reflecting a notable gap with the account that leads this top. The accounts "Qamarero" and "Rock&Change" (with 574 and 569 followers respectively) complete the top five, although these figures are considerably lower than those observed for the first three accounts. The lower positions (from position five onwards) show a range between 101 and 9 followers, which is indicative of a scarcely consolidated presence on TikTok for these startups.

**Figure 6.** Top 20 accounts with the most followers
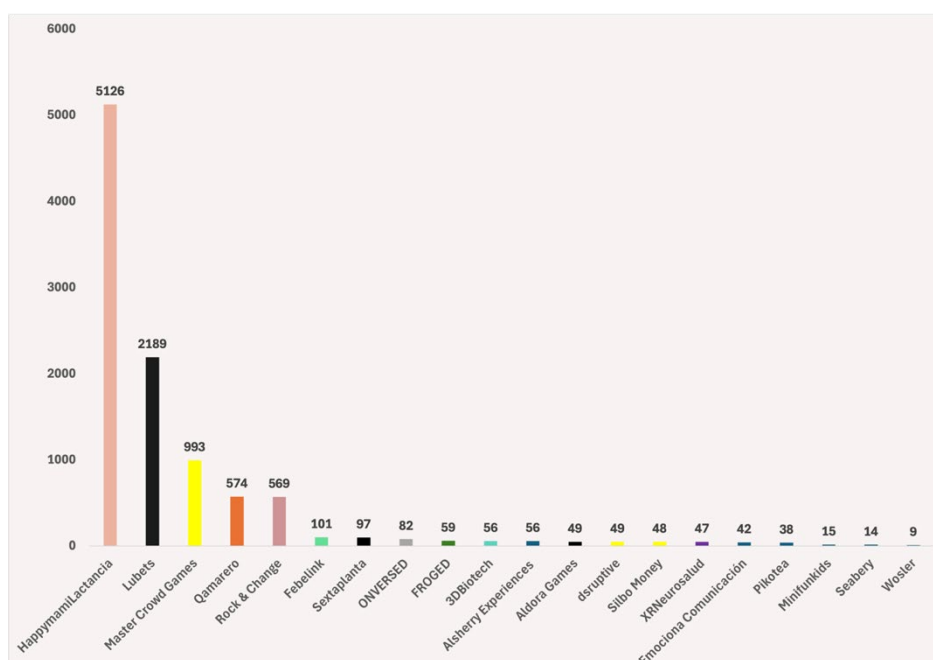


Source: Fanpage Karma. Own elaboration, 2025

As demonstrated in Figure 7, a comprehensive analysis of five variables has been conducted, analogous to the Instagram study, encompassing engagement, number of posts, shared reactions and comments, number of comments, and interaction rate.

> • The agro-tech startup from Almeria, "GrodiTech", demonstrates an engagement rate of 2.99%, closely followed by "Rock&Change" (0.56%), while the other accounts exhibit lower values.
> • With regard to the number of publications, also on TikTok, as on Instagram, the startup "Happymami Lactancia" leads with 55 publications, followed by Onversed (41) from Malaga and Seabary (35) from Huelva.
> • In reactions and comments shared, it dominates in total interactions with 6,503, consolidating its leadership on TikTok. "Onversed" (1,474) and "Rock&Change" (560) follow in relevance, although with significantly lower numbers.
> • "Rock&Change" leads the startups on TikTok with the highest number of comments (50), followed by "Happymami Lactancia" (41), suggesting that these accounts encourage more user participation.
> • Finally, in terms of interaction rate, "GrodiTech" stands out (50.5%), followed by "Emociona Comunicación" (42.5%) and "Seabery" (38.46%).

This data indicates that frequency of posting does not always guarantee the highest engagement, but that the quality and focus of the content plays a key role.

**Figure 7.** Top 5 accounts for each variable



| Engagement | | | Number of posts | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GrodiTech | | 2,99% | Happymami Lactancia | | 55 |
| Rock & Change | | 0,56% | Onversed | | 41 |
| Emociona Comunicación | | 0,23% | Seabery | | 35 |
| Fabelink | | 0,21% | Silbo Money | | 27 |
| Seabery | | 0,21% | Rock & Change | | 24 |

| Reactions, comments & shares | | |
|---|---|---|
| Happymami Lactancia | | 6.503 |
| Onversed | | 1.474 |
| Rock & Change | | 560 |
| Emociona Comunicación | | 402 |
| Wosler | | 306 |

| Number of comments | | | Rate of Interactions | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rock & Change | | 63 | GrodiTech | | 550 % |
| Happymami Lactancia | | 39 | Emociona Comunicación | | 42,5% |
| Onversed | | 8 | Seabery | | 38,46% |
| Emociona Comunicación | | 5 | Wosler | | 16,06% |
| XR Neurosalud | | 5 | Fabelink | | 9,8% |

Source: Fanpage Karma. Own elaboration, 2025

As demonstrated in Figure 8, the optimal times for posting on TikTok, a network that exhibits distinct interaction patterns compared to Instagram, are identified as follows: Thursday at 10:00 and 12:00, Friday between 10:00 and 14:00, and Sunday at 20:00. These times correspond to periods of heightened activity, particularly towards the end of the week and on Sundays. This data suggests that startups should prioritise Thursday mornings, Fridays until midday, and Sunday evenings to maximise their reach and engagement.

**Figure 8.** Best days and times to publish
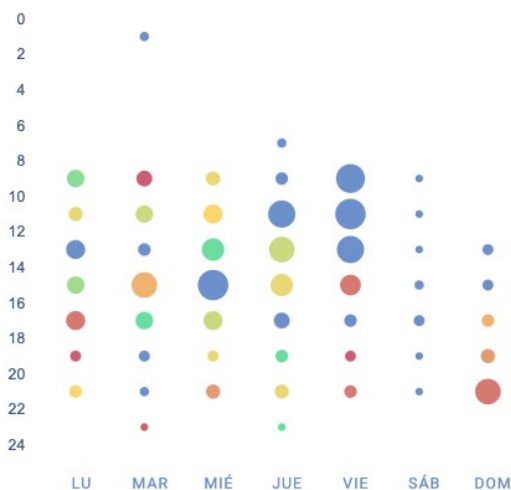


Source: Fanpage Karma. Elaboration: Fanpage Karma, 2025

The content created by startups on the social media platform TikTok is characterised by a strong emphasis on dynamic audiovisual formats, a tendency that aligns with the platform's emphasis on interaction and the propagation of content through virality. Consequently, videos predominate, accounting for 255 posts, while carousel posts, numbering 40, represent a comparatively smaller proportion of the content.

**Figure 9.** Type of publications
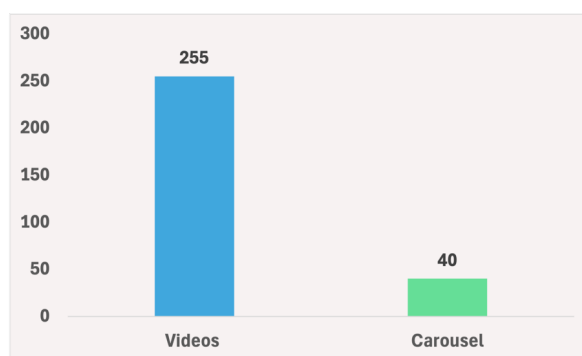


Source: Fanpage Karma. Own elaboration, 2025

As illustrated in Table 3, a close examination of the hashtags employed by startups in their TikTok posts reveals those that have garnered the most interaction. A notable example is "Happymami" from Jaén, which has a dominant presence on this social network, employing three key hashtags (#happymami, #lactanciamaterna and #happymamilactancia). This strategy reflects a strong brand identity and a deliberate focus on its niche audience. In contrast, the Sevillian startup "Silbo Money," led by former bank executives, employs its own name as a hashtag (#silbomoney). "Rock&Change, which also stood out on Instagram, maintains its positioning with the same attractive hashtag linked to its sector as #bandasemergentes, appealing to specific audiences interested in emerging music.

**Table 3.** Hashtags with the most interaction in posts

| Startup | Hashtag |
|---------|---------|
| Happymami | #happymami |
| Happymami | #lactationmotherhood |
| Happymami | #happymamilactation |
| Silbo Money | #silbomoney |
| Rock & Change | #emergingbands |

Source: Fanpage Karma. Own elaboration, 2025

## 5.4. Top Startup Posts on Instagram and TikTok

As demonstrated in Figure 10, the majority of the most successful publications are attributable to the Malaga-based startup "Rock&Change", suggesting the efficacy of a diversified content strategy that combines elements of entertainment, inspiration and dynamism to maintain the interest of the public. The utilisation of visually appealing images and highlighted texts serves to attract the attention of users, while the incorporation of diverse post types, ranging from interactive questions to reflections and trends, further enhances engagement. It is noteworthy that the language employed exhibits a close and emotional tone. The use of phrases such as "Happy Tuesday" and "Tremendous" serves to establish a motivational tone that resonates with the audience. Furthermore, engagement is fostered through direct questions such as "How's your week going, comrade?"

**Figure 10.** Top 10 Instagram posts
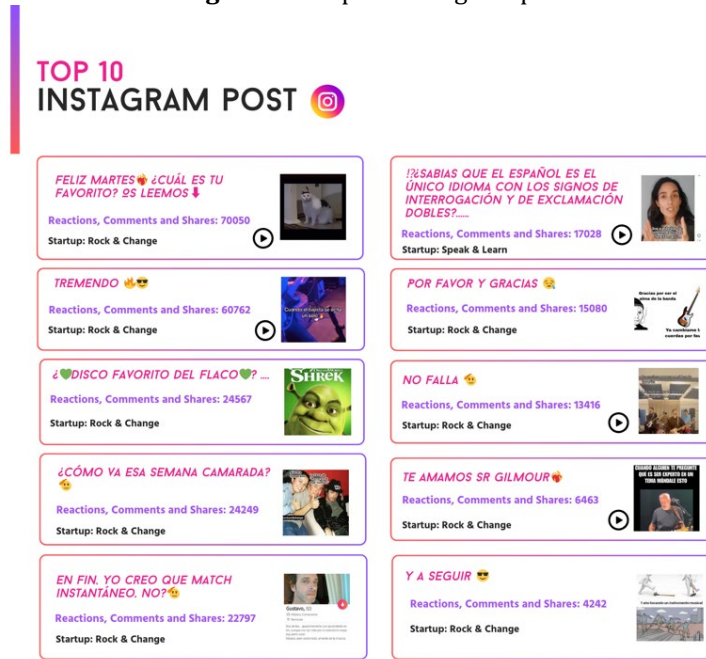


Source: Fanpage Karma. Own elaboration, 2025.

In relation to the most popular content on the TikTok platform, a marked difference emerges in comparison to Instagram, where the "Rock&Change" content category predominated. On TikTok, a more diverse array of startup content is observed, featuring notable posts by "Happymami Lactancia" and "Onversed". These videos, which constitute the entirety of the content under consideration, are characterised by their emphasis on audiovisual elements, a strategy that is well-suited to the dynamic nature of the TikTok platform and is conducive to fostering user engagement. The content is predominantly educational and demonstrative in nature, including videos such as "How to produce a natural birth safely" and those employing storytelling and emotions, such as the posts "So close and yet so unknown" and "Our improvised report" by the startup "Onversed". The objective of these videos is to establish an emotional connection with the audience.

Consequently, a greater diversity of startups is observed on TikTok, adopting educational, narrative and viral strategies that align with the platform's trends, in contrast to Instagram, where more interactive and emotional posts predominate. It is noteworthy that video is a predominant element on TikTok, while on Instagram, a combination of images, carousels and videos is prevalent.

**Figure 11.** Top 10 TikTok posts
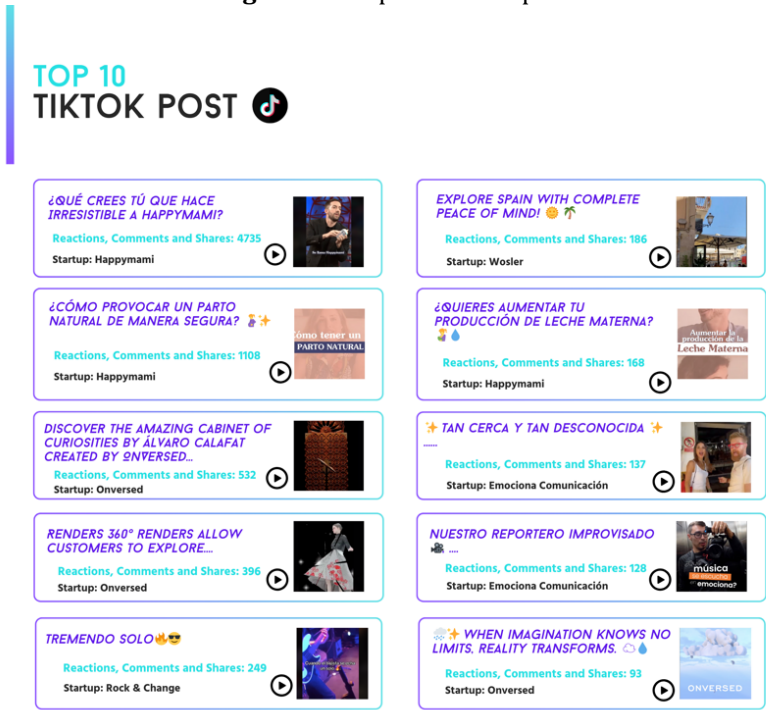


Source: Fanpage Karma. Own elaboration, 2025

## 5.5. Ranking of Dominant Content on Instagram and TikTok

The analysis of content published on Instagram (see Table 4) reveals a clear predominance of two categories in the startups' posts: entertainment and social engagement. The former category is the most prevalent, with posts based on humour, nostalgia and cultural references, highlighting memes and questions addressed to the community about iconic artists. By contrast, social engagement can be seen in posts designed to encourage active user participation through questions, expressions of admiration and messages that reinforce the sense of community. The employment of emojis and relatable language fosters dynamic communication with the audience, thereby enhancing interaction.

The most successful posts amalgamate both approaches, integrating humour, interaction and emotion to optimise engagement. The results demonstrate that Instagram startups achieve greater impact when they rely on visually appealing and emotionally charged content that encourages audience engagement.

**Table 4.** Ranking of dominant content on Instagram

| Post | Ranking | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| "Happy Tuesday🍑 which is your favourite?" | Social Commitment | Promotes interaction and emotional connection with the audience. |
| "Tremendous "🔥😎 | Entertainment | Focused on sharing fun and appreciative content within a musical community. |
| 💚 Flaco's favourite album💚?" | Entertainment | Humorous and nostalgic use of a well-known artist, appealing to entertainment. |
| Soul of the Band" Meme | Entertainment | A humorous meme related to musicians. |
| "It doesn't fail🙆 The band is @1915musica" | Social Commitment | Promotes interaction by highlighting a musical band. |
| "We love you Mr Gilmour "🍑 | Social Commitment | It expresses admiration, fostering connection with the fan community. |
| Meme "1 year playing an instrument". | Entertainment | Humorous content that appeals to common experiences of musicians. |

Own elaboration, 2025

The content analysis of TikTok reveals a categorisation into four distinct genres: corporate, educational, informative, and social engagement (see Table 5). A preponderance of the publications are corporate in nature, centring on the promotion of products, services, and innovative tools through dynamic videos. Concurrently, educational content exhibits a substantial presence, particularly in domains such as maternity and health, offering practical information to specific audiences.

The informative category encompasses content designed to highlight events, campaigns or tourism experiences, while the social engagement category encourages interaction through music trends and participatory dynamics.

**Table 5.** Ranking of dominant content in TikTok

| Post | Ranking | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| "What makes Happymami irresistible?" | Corporate | Content focused on promoting products with a light-hearted approach. |
| "How to bring about natural childbirth safely?" | Education | It provides practical and useful information for a specific audience. |
| "Discover the amazing Cabinet of Curiosities by Álvaro Calafat". | News | Present an outstanding campaign at a relevant event. |
| "360° renders allow customers to explore every detail". | Corporate | Highlights business benefits of a technological tool. |
| "Tremendous solo 🔥 😎 credits @bennu_official" | Entertainment | Focus on an attractive musical aspect. |
| "Explore Spain with complete peace of mind!" | Corporate | Promotes a specific service related to tourism. |
| "Do you want to increase your breast milk production?" | Education | It provides useful advice for a mothering audience. |
| "The route of the Silver Corridor". | News | It presents detailed information on a tourism campaign. |
| "Hits of the moment in the team". | Social Commitment | Promotes interaction and connection through an internal musical theme. |
| "When imagination knows no limits, reality transforms". | Corporate | Promotes innovative 3D design services. |

Own elaboration, 2025

## 6. Discussion

This study lends further credence to the notion that social networks are an integral component of the communication strategy employed by nascent enterprises. This finding serves to corroborate extant research that has underscored their pivotal role in the development of a cohesive brand identity and the facilitation of effective engagement (see Capriotti et al., 2021; Fernández-Torres et al., 2025; Lobillo-Mora & Paniagua-Rojano, 2023). The findings indicate that Instagram and TikTok demand distinct approaches: while Instagram fosters interaction through engaging visual content and cultural references, TikTok prioritises virality and storytelling (Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023).

In this case, the engagement on Instagram has been linked to humour and community participation, which is consistent with studies on the effectiveness of emotional content on social media (Dudić et al., 2024; Rodríguez-Vera et al., 2024). On TikTok, the highest levels of interaction have been observed on educational and demonstrative posts, aligning with research highlighting its ability to influence consumer decision-making (Ren et al., 2021; Shi, 2024).

The use of hashtags has been pivotal in both platforms, favouring positioning and audience segmentation (Bhandari, 2021; Zeler et al., 2022). However, the algorithms employed by each social network condition the extent of content reach, thereby presenting a challenge for startups in terms of achieving visibility and effective digital positioning (Jungblut et al., 2024). Despite the opportunities offered by these platforms, startups encounter challenges such as the necessity for strategic planning and effective engagement management without relying solely on posting frequency (Liu et al., 2022).

This study provides an empirical foundation for future research on digital strategies in startups. However, future research could explore the influence of influencers, the impact of sponsored content, and the integration of other platforms, such as LinkedIn and Twitter, in the communication strategy. In addition, longitudinal studies could assess the evolution of these practices and their impact on business consolidation.

Digital communication is therefore key to the success of startups, and its effectiveness will depend on the ability to adapt to each platform, the development of interactive content, and the optimisation of engagement strategies and digital reputation.

## 7. Limitations and Conclusions

This research has provided a detailed understanding of the discursive and communicational strategies employed by Andalusian startups on Instagram and TikTok, revealing differences in content management, communication tone and interaction with the audience. Key patterns in the use of these platforms have been identified, providing a solid empirical basis for future research in the field of digital communication in startups.

The majority of the startups under scrutiny are concentrated in the technology sector, with a notable presence in the consultancy and energy sectors. Geographically, the majority of these entities are based in Malaga and Seville, characterised by their compact organisational structures, which suggests an agile management of their communication. With respect to their social media presence, Instagram emerges as the predominant platform, superseding TikTok, which is indicative of a predilection for visual communication strategies within more established environments.

A discourse analysis of Instagram content reveals a prioritisation of community building and social interaction, with content focused on entertainment, memes, open-ended questions and cultural references. Optimal posting times are identified as Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays at 10:00 and 12:00, with an additional peak on Thursdays at 18:00. In terms of publication formats, images are predominant, followed by videos and carousels, confirming a trend towards content that is both consumable and highly visual. Communication strategies developed by startups such as "Rock&Change" have been based on humour, musical references and a friendly language, with the result that they have been able to consolidate active communities. In addition, the analysis of hashtags revealed their use as a tool for segmentation and positioning in specific niches.

TikTok has been identified as a dynamic and audiovisual space, emphasising branding, educational and virality strategies. The optimal posting times on this platform are observed to be on Thursdays at 10:00 and 12:00, on Fridays from 10:00 to 14:00, and on Sundays at 20:00, indicating a diversified audience behaviour. Videos predominate as the optimal format, while carousels demonstrate a marginal presence, suggesting that success on TikTok is contingent on dynamic and engaging audiovisual content. Startups such as "Happymami Lactancia" amalgamate educational content with engagement strategies, while others, including "Onversed", garner distinction through storytelling and innovative visual design. In contrast to Instagram, hashtags on TikTok prioritise tags related to branding and brand consolidation, suggesting a more oriented approach to the identification of the startup with its audience.

Sentiment analysis on both platforms reflected a predominance of positive emotional charge, with a recurrent use of enthusiastic language, cultural references and expressive emojis. While on Instagram, engagement is based on admiration, humour and community participation, on TikTok, the discourse is more aspirational, educational and motivational, adapting to the platform's consumption dynamics.Despite these findings, this study has certain limitations that should be considered. Firstly, the research has been carried out exclusively in the context of Andalusian startups, which limits the generalisability of the results to other business environments with different cultural and economic dynamics. To obtain a more global perspective on social media communication strategies, future studies could extend the sample to a national or international level.

Secondly, the analysis is based on data collected over a six-month period in 2024.Given the dynamic nature of social networks, interaction patterns and communication strategies are likely to evolve over time (Jones, 2021). Longitudinal research would make it possible to assess these changes and their impact on startups' communication performance over different periods.

The present study corroborates the notion that startups should adapt their discursive strategies to the particularities of each social network in order to maximise their impact and reach. While engaging

with Instagram requires a focus on emotional and participatory communication, the same cannot be said for TikTok, where the focus should be on innovative visual content, storytelling and virality.

## 8. Acknowledgements.

# References

Baniya, S. (2022). How Can Technical Communicators Help in Disaster Response? *Technical Communication*, *69*(2), 58-74. https://doi.org/10.55177/tc658475

Bhandari, A. (2021). Book review: Asha Kaul and Vidhi Chaudhri, Corporate Communication Through Social Media: Strategies for Managing Reputation. *Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective*, *25*(4), 492-494. https://doi.org/10.1177/09722629211005866

Biró, A., Cuesta-Vargas, A. I., & Szilágyi, L. (2023). Precognition of mental health and neurogenerative disorders using AI-parsed text and sentiment analysis. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Informatica*, *15*(2), 359-403. https://doi.org/10.2478/ausi-2023-0022

Camilleri, M. A. (2021). Strategic Dialogic Communication Through Digital Media During COVID-19 Crisis. En M. A. Camilleri (Ed.), *Strategic Corporate Communication in the Digital Age* (pp. 1-18). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80071-264-520211001

Campo, J., Argila Irurita, A. M., & Solé Moro, M. L. (2024). Maximizing Social Media Impact in Digital Marketing: Effective Instagram Strategies for Brands. En F. J. Martínez-López, L. F. Martinez, & P. Brüggemann (Eds.), *Advances in Digital Marketing and eCommerce* (pp. 300-307). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-62135-2_29

Capriotti, P., Zeler, I., & Camilleri, M. A. (2021). Corporate Communication Through Social Networks: The Identification of the Key Dimensions for Dialogic Communication. En M. A. Camilleri (Ed.), *Strategic Corporate Communication in the Digital Age* (pp. 33-51). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80071-264-520211003

Castillo de Mesa, J., López Peláez, A., Méndez-Domínguez, P., & Kirwan, G. (2024). Comunicación digital de los colegios de trabajo social en España en las redes sociales online ¿coalición, jerarquización o aislamiento? *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, *178*, 39-60. https://doi.org/10.5477/cis/reis.178.39

Cuesta-Valiño, P., Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, P., & Durán-Álamo, P. (2022). Why Do People Return to Video Platforms? Millennials and Centennials on TikTok. *Media and Communication*, *10*(1). https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v10i1.4737

Desai, A. (2018). Corporate Communication through Social Media: Strategies for Managing Reputation. *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers*, *43*(3), 171-174. https://doi.org/10.1177/0256090918792442

Dong, C., Harrison, V., & Zheng, Q. (2024). When controversy meets controversy, what do you see? Understanding the visual communication of cannabis companies' corporate social advocacy on Instagram. *Public Relations Review*, *50*(1), 102417. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2023.102417

Dudić, B., Mittelman, A., & Vojtechovský, J. (2024). Social Media and Marketing Worldwide. En I. Karabegovic, A. Kovačević, & S. Mandzuka (Eds.), *New Technologies, Development and Application VII* (Vol. 1070, pp. 271-278). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-66271-3_29

Fernández-Torres, M. J., Rando Cueto, L., & Del Pino Rodríguez-Veras, A. (2025). Influencia de startups en las Ciudades Creativas: Análisis del desempeño de empresas emergentes en la construcción de la Marca Ciudad. *Street Art & Urban Creativity*, *11*(1), 15-30. https://doi.org/10.25765/sauc.v11.5679

Ghatora, P. S., Hosseini, S. E., Pervez, S., Iqbal, M. J., & Shaukat, N. (2024). Sentiment Analysis of Product Reviews Using Machine Learning and Pre-Trained LLM. *Big Data and Cognitive Computing*, *8*(12), 199. https://doi.org/10.3390/bdcc8120199

Guzmán-Duque, A., Ibáñez-Peñuela, I., & Gil-Gómez, H. (2023). Social Networks, Social Media, Social Innovation and Technology for Society. En S. Patnaik, V. Pallotta, & K. Tajeddini

(Eds.), *Global Trends in Technology Startup Project Development and Management* (pp. 155-170). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-40324-8_10

Hendrickx, J. (2024). 'Normal news is boring': How young adults encounter and experience news on Instagram and TikTok. *New Media & Society*, 14614448241255955. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241255955

Jungblut, M., Kümpel, A. S., & Steer, R. (2024). Social media use of the police in crisis situations: A mixed-method study on communication practices of the German police. *New Media & Society*, *26*(8), 4647-4668. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221127899

Kaiser, M., & Kuckertz, A. (2023). Emotional robustness in times of crisis: The effects of venture funding on the digital communication styles of entrepreneurs. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, *30*(4), 828-850. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-10-2022-0423

Krugmann, J. O., & Hartmann, J. (2024). Sentiment Analysis in the Age of Generative AI. *Customer Needs and Solutions*, *11*(1), 3. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40547-024-00143-4

Li, N., Zheng, X., Ni, D., Kirkman, B. L., Zhang, M., Xu, M., & Liu, C. (2024). Leadership in a Crisis: A Social Network Perspective on Leader Brokerage Strategy, Intra-Organizational Communication Patterns, and Business Recovery. *Journal of Management*, 01492063241237227. https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063241237227

Liu, X., Zheng, B., & Liu, H. (2022). Understanding the social media interactivity paradox: The effects of social media interactivity on communication quality, work interruptions and job performance. *Information Technology & People*, *35*(7), 1805-1828. https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-12-2020-0845

Lobillo-Mora, G., & Paniagua-Rojano, F. J. (2023). Estudio de la estrategia comunicativa en Instagram de las startups deportivas en España. *Universitas*, *38*, 87-111. https://doi.org/10.17163/uni.n38.2023.04

Lozano-Blasco, R., Quilez-Robres, A., Delgado-Bujedo, D., & Latorre-Martínez, M. P. (2021). YouTube's growth in use among children 0–5 during COVID19: The Occidental European case. *Technology in Society*, *66*, 101648. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2021.101648

Medina-Aguerrebere, P., Gonzalez-Pacanowski, T., & Medina, E. (2022). Online reputation management in Spanish cancer patients' associations: A proposal model. *Revista Mediterránea de Comunicación*, *13*(2), 317. https://doi.org/10.14198/MEDCOM.22240

Men, L. R., Qin, Y. S., & Mitson, R. (2021). Engaging Startup Employees via Charismatic Leadership Communication: The Importance of Communicating "Vision, Passion, and Care". *International Journal of Business Communication*, 23294884211020488. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211020488

Michailidis, P. D. (2024). A Comparative Study of Sentiment Classification Models for Greek Reviews. *Big Data and Cognitive Computing*, *8*(9), 107. https://doi.org/10.3390/bdcc8090107

Monfort, A., & Mas Iglesias, J. M. (2021). Barreras y oportunidades para la comunicación de la responsabilidad social en redes sociales. *Comunicación y Hombre*, *17*, 349-361. https://doi.org/10.32466/eufv-cyh.2021.17.645.349-361

Morales-Toro, V., Guillén-Riquelme, A., & Quevedo-Blasco, R. (2019). Maltrato infantil y trastornos mentales en delincuentes juveniles: Una revisión sistemática. *Revista de Investigación en Educación*, *17*(3), 218-238. https://doi.org/10.35869/reined.v17i3.2157

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C. T., Ross Arguedas, A., & Nielsen, R. K. (2024). *Reuters Institute digital news report 2024*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. https://doi.org/10.60625/RISJ-VY6N-4V57

Pekkala, K., Auvinen, T., Sajasalo, P., & Valentini, C. (2022). What's in it for me and you? Exploring managerial perceptions of employees' work-related social media use. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, *44*(7), 46-62. https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-12-2020-0518

Pereira Da Silva, M., Santiago Resende, N., & Vieira Cunha, T. (2021). COMUNICAÇÃO ORGANIZACIONAL E HUMANIZAÇÃO EM REDES DIGITAIS: ANÁLISE DE CONTEÚDO DA NUBANK NO INSTAGRAM. *Revista Univap*, *27*(54). https://doi.org/10.18066/revistaunivap.v27i54.2618

Picken, J. C. (2017). From startup to scalable enterprise: Laying the foundation. *Business Horizons*, *60*(5), 587-595. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2017.05.002

Rando Cueto, D., De Las Heras Pedrosa, C., & Paniagua Rojano, F. J. (2021). Influencia de las redes sociales en el trabajo de profesionales de la información especializados en salud. Caso de los Colegios Oficiales de Médicos de España. *Revista Latina*, *79*, 113-133. https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2021-1491

Rando Cueto, D., De Las Heras-Pedrosa, C., & Paniagua-Rojano, F. J. (2024). Análisis sobre desinformación política en los discursos de líderes del Gobierno español vía X. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, *83*, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.4185/rlcs-2025-2308

Rando-Cueto, D., De Las Heras-Pedrosa, C., & Paniagua-Rojano, F. J. (2023). Health Communication Strategies via TikTok for the Prevention of Eating Disorders. *Systems*, *11*(6), 274. https://doi.org/10.3390/systems11060274

Rando-Cueto, D., Rodríguez-Vera, A. D. P., & De Las Heras-Pedrosa, C. (2024). Public Relations and Startups in Andalusia: Analysis of their activity with a gender perspective. *Revista Internacional de Relaciones Públicas*, *14*(28), 105-132. https://doi.org/10.5783/revrrpp.v14i28.878

Ren, J., Yang, J., Zhu, M., & Majeed, S. (2021). Relationship between consumer participation behaviors and consumer stickiness on mobile short video social platform under the development of ICT: Based on value co-creation theory perspective. *Information Technology for Development*, *27*(4), 697-717. https://doi.org/10.1080/02681102.2021.1933882

Rodríguez-Vera, A. D. P., De Las Heras-Pedrosa, C., & Jambrino-Maldonado, C. (2024). Instagram communication strategies of European museums. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, *11*(1), 2360793. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2360793

Ruiz-Incertis, R., & Tuñón-Navarro, J. (2024). European Institutional Discourse Concerning the Russian Invasion of Ukraine on the Social Network X. *Journalism and Media*, *5*(4), 1646-1683. https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia5040102

Shi, W. (2024). Early-stage entrepreneurs' communicative strategies in managing knowledge ambiguity. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 1-29. https://doi.org/10.1080/00472778.2024.2397411

Silva, D. W. D., & Baldissera, R. (2021). Comunicação organizacional e interesse público: Estratégias de (in)visibilidade nas mídias sociais. *Intercom: Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação*, *44*(2), 157-174. https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-5844202128

Simova, T., Zychová, K., & Hartman, R. (2021). Twitter analysis: How the Covid-19 change the understanding of virtual teams. *Proceedings of the European Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation*. 16th European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ECIE), Lisboa. https://doi.org/10.34190/EIE.21.256

Stuhldreier, S. M. (2024). Unlocking (re)purchase potential through corporate responsiveness on social networks: The role of perceived customer orientation. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *81*, 104041. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.104041

Sun, Y., Zhai, L., Liu, W., & Yang, K. (2022). Corporations' Owned Social Media Narrative. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, *65*(2), 280-293. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2022.3155917

Terhorst, C., Rommes, E., Van Den Bogert, K., & Verharen, L. (2024). The everyday civic engagement of social work students. *Social Work Education*, *43*(9), 2975-2991. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2024.2308681

Vrontis, D., Thrassou, A., & Viassone, M. (2023). The utilisation of digital media for branding start-ups. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, *49*(4), 495-523. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJESB.2023.132850

Wang, L., Li, Y., Gu, J., & Xiao, L. (2023). A quality analysis of thyroid cancer videos available on TikTok. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *11*, 1049728. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1049728

Watkins, B., & Smith, S. A. (2022). I want to work there: How public relations agencies communicate organizational culture and identity on Instagram. *Journal of Communication Management*, *26*(1), 58-83. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-01-2021-0005

We are Social, & Meltwater. (2024). *Digital 2024: Global Overview Report*. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-global-overview-report

Zeler, I., Oliveira, A., & Costa, L. (2022). Evaluating the use of Facebook among Mexican and global companies: A comparative study. *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, *14*(1), 41-56. https://doi.org/10.1386/cjcs_00059_1

Zeler, I., Oliveira, A., Universidad de Girona, Malaver, S., & Universidad de Girona. (2019). *La gestión comunicativa de las empresas vitivinícolas de España en las principales redes sociales / Communication management of Spanish wine companies in the main social networks*. *9*(18). https://doi.org/10.5783/revrrpp.v9i18.617

Zhang, C., Mostafavi, A., & Li, Q. (2022). Content analysis of inter-organisational communication networks on social media during disasters. *International Journal of Emergency Management*, *17*(3/4), 234. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJEM.2022.10050176