UCL Université Catholique de Louvain – **Mons**

ANALYSIS OF THE ONLINE MARKETING POSSIBILITIES FOR « PRIVATE LABEL » PRODUCTS:
Application to McBride Company

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Summary

My dissertation deals with a study realised for McBride, the company in which I performed my end-of-year internship. It is active in the chemical sector and develops and manufactures private label (also called “distributor brands”) household and personal care products.

Given the infatuation with the internet nowadays, McBride wants to have a better understanding of this media and to know how to leverage this power to the benefit of private label (PL).
The goal of my dissertation is therefore to analyse online marketing possibilities for this kind of products in France, the United Kingdom and Germany. Actually, these three markets interest McBride a lot because they are the biggest ones for the company in terms of sales volume.
To achieve this purpose, I looked into the way branders, such as P&G, L’Oreal, Unilever, etc., communicate about their products online, on their own, but also via the retailers’ channels.
So I first identified the most influent branders and retailers for each of the three countries, and then I analyzed online communication channels to which they resort. On this basis, I could make some recommendations to McBride regarding the online marketing for PL products.

The main analysed channels are websites, social networks and newsletters. Through those platforms, firms can resort to various strategies to realize marketing around a brand. However, according to the involvement for the product category, marketers will not use the same ones. So they have to decide if a particular brand has a community strategy or not. The brand strategy can rather be linked to dream and fun or can be more serious. The brand product can be subjected to the consumers’ education by providing them expertise about it or bringing them proofs about its efficiency. A lot of other strategies will be treated in my dissertation.

Whatever the strategy, the major keyword emerging from this analysis is commitment. Indeed, firms seek to create a relationship with consumers and see to it that they feel engaged to favour a good brand image and so trigger purchase.
You will see that communicating about private label products is not so easy, in comparison with national brands, as they often suffer from their brand image. Therefore it will not be so simple to generate commitment if retailers do not first educate the consumers about the quality of PL. Yes, PL’s are cheaper but they are as good as the leading brands.

Table of contents

List of appendix

1. Introduction

The purpose of my dissertation is to analyse how retailers, in partnership with McBride, can communicate online about private label (PL) products. Most of the online marketing is made by the retailers but, as a supplier company, McBride depends on them.
To reach this goal, I am going to study which channels branders (P&G, L'Oreal, Unilever…) resort to and how they use them. Actually, branders are private label products competitors, that is why it is interesting to study what they do.

Before beginning with the subject, I am first going to present the company for which I realize my dissertation, namely McBride, in order to have a better understanding of the context this analysis takes place in.
Then I will deal with the online marketing in general and will explain how it develops, what its advantages and disadvantages are, as well as its goals and its stakes.
The following part will be dedicated to the various online communication channels companies can resort to. For each of those channels, I will explain their goal, the pros and cons, the kind of users that they target, their performance measure and their pricing method. I will conclude with some figures regarding their use in France, Germany and the UK, as well as their use in the retail sector. To make the choice of those channels easier, some criteria will be exposed.
This theoretical part will end with the consumer's attitude and behaviour toward online marketing.

The body of the subject will deal with the analysis of branders' online communication. To do that, I will highlight the three most influent branders for each of the three markets (France, the UK and Germany which are the biggest McBride's customers), as well as the most influent retailers through which branders communicate too. So I will be able to compare marketing regarding PL products and branders products at those retailers.
After this identification, I will expose the different channels that they use and how they leverage the power of those channels to their benefits.
In the conclusion of this part, I will make some suggestions to McBride in order to promote PL products online.

This work includes some limits. Indeed, I have not been able to interview experts (retailers and branders).
I have made a lot of attempts to get into contact with some retailers, by e-mail or by phone, but I have not received any answers. Still, it would be interesting to obtain more details about their online communication by asking them questions directly about their online strategy.
Regarding branders, as they are competitors, it was not ethical. Moreover, they are very big groups and thus, it is no easy task to receive information.

2. Problematics

My dissertation is subjected to a study realized for McBride, a public limited company which manufactures private label household and personal care products. The subject is the analysis of the online marketing possibilities for this kind of products.

Most of the online marketing is made by the retailers but, as a PL company, McBride depends on them. The study can be used to convince them to use online marketing, more than they do today, to push PL sales.
The most interesting markets for McBride are France, the UK and Germany, that is why I am going to take these countries into account in the theoretical and research parts.

As online marketing is growing, McBride would like to have a full understanding of this media and to know what future it could all bring. How does online marketing influence the market? What are the online trends for the fast moving consumer goods?

The aim is to know if online marketing is a good opportunity. If it is the case, I will need to find one or several appropriate web channels (social networks, banners, e-mailing...) in order to communicate with the final consumers about their products being sold in supermarkets. To find this/these channel(s), we need to get acquainted with what the branders do to communicate online.

3. The McBride Company

Before beginning with this study subject, it is important to know the company for which I am realizing the analysis. We need to be informed about McBride corporate object and to know how it works. The goal is also to understand where the issue is situated in the context.

3.1. Presentation of the company

McBride is a Europe's leading provider of private label household and personal care products. They "develop and supply products for sale under retailers' own brands. These are often referred to as private labels, store brands, own labels, distributor brands and discount brands"[1].
The factories are located in different countries: United Kingdom, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Spain, Italy, Czech Republic, Poland and south East Asia.
A group of over 5000 people work for McBride in the world. They have different cultures, languages and perspectives, but have a shared vision, and that is what represents one of the strengths of this company.

3.2. Functioning of the company

In order to explain the functioning of the company, I am going to tell you about its customers, its products, its values and its ambitions.

3.2.1. Their customers

Their customers are leading multinational and national retailers; hyper- and supermarkets and hard discounters. We can quote, among those, Auchan, Carrefour, Leclerc, Tesco, Asda, REWE, Aldi, Leader price… The company offers them product quality, consistent service, and product development.
Private label provides the customers a real value: higher margin products and retailer differentiation. So they can offer, in a fragile economic environment, products with lower prices and value for money for the consumers.

[1] McBride, "Leadership in Private Label", http://www.mcbride.co.uk/leadership-in-private-label/leadership-in-private-label , consulted on 18/11/2012

3.2.2. Their products

The firm develops, produces and sells private label household (laundry, dishwashing, home care, air care…) and personal care (hair care, shaving, skincare…) products.
McBride's core business is private label but they also have a growing portfolio of their own: the customers who do not sell enough quantities to have their own product developed and manufactured can buy McBride brands.
McBride brands are a good opportunity for the company to develop and test new ideas, products and packaging.

The work of the company is to take care of the development and the production of the empty bottles, and apply on it the specific graphics provided by the customers. McBride produces the liquid and performs the bottling.

3.2.3. Their values

Different values, related to the McBride team, the stakeholders, the products and the environment, are claimed by the firm.
In the McBride team, some essential values like teamwork, being open, striving to do better and focusing on the customers are observed.
To be sensitive to the needs of all their stakeholders (McBride team, customers, consumers, partners, suppliers, investors and the wider community) is also one of their values.
Regarding the products, they innovate so that their customers get better products that deliver value and performance for consumers. Moreover they deliver them at the right time and at the right cost.
Another important dimension for the company is the environment. Sustainability is at the top of their agenda for product development, improving their products and processes to reduce environmental impact.

3.2.4. *Their ambitions*

Their goal is, on the one hand, to “continue growing as the clear leader in private label household cleaning and personal care products in Europe and extend [their] ‘Passion for Private Label’ to the developing and emerging retail markets of Central Eastern Europe and South East Asia”[2]. On the other hand, to deliver exceptional value and performance to their customers and their consumers.

Given the fact that "value for money" continues to be a key influence for shoppers, private label products continue to gain market share, and that gives a lot of success chances to McBride for the future.

[2] McBride, “Our approach”, http://www.mcbride.co.uk/about-us/our-approach, consulted on 18/11/2012

4. Online marketing: Synthesis of the literature

Before realizing an analysis, we need to describe the issue of the subject, the theoretical foundations. It is important to know the context to be more able to understand the following aspects.

First, I am going to explain when and how internet and online marketing developed. What are the figures which prove that internet is a revolution for the planet? What are the advantages and the disadvantages? What are the goals and stakes of this new media?

In a second step, I will quote the different channels which can be used to communicate online with the final customers about the products. I will explain the pros and cons of each of them.

What is the attitude and behavior of the consumer towards online marketing? It will be the third and final part of this chapter.

4.1. Development of Internet and online marketing

4.1.1. Development of internet

Meyerson explained that "the beginnings of internet date from the seventies and it took some time before the minds effectively adapted.[3]" Then, Internet has been transformed from a network of initiates to a general public network, following the rapid growth of the number of users[4]. Worldwide population adopted internet quickly, social networks became rapidly the first use of Web, and smartphones are becoming the first way to have access to Internet. New uses and new behaviors are emerging obviously.

Today, the share of time devoted to internet, in comparison with the other media, exceeds 25% in Europe and 33% in USA.[5] Nearly 2 billion and a half persons in the world (=34.3%) use internet[6], either with their desk- or laptop, either with their phone or with their digital tablet.

[3] *Translation from* M. MEYERSON, "Les clés du succès en ligne", Paris, Ed. CampusPress, 2005, P. 30
[4] F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), P.26
[5] F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), Préface
[6] Miniwatts Marketing Group, 30/06/2012, "World internet usage and population statistics", http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm, consulted on 24/11/2012

In the UK, in the month of July 2012, an average user spent 39 hours on internet. In France, it was 26.8 and in Germany, 25.2, while in Europe, the average internet user spent 25.9 hours online during the same month.[7]

Many economic actors became aware of the potential offered by this media in the middle of the nineties, when the internet bubble has been formed. Scholars have recently said: "In ten years, the quasi universal use of internet led to the digitalization of the economy.[8]" The main result is that the internet use is a real revolution for the firms. The emergence of this media has an impact on all sectors, and so online marketing was born.

4.1.2. Development of online marketing

Online marketing corresponds to "all ways to promote an offer (Product & / or Services & / or idea) using internet technologies[9]", according to *Dico du net*. However, there are other words to express the same idea; internet marketing, cyber marketing and web marketing.

The Internet use is a real revolution which has influenced the way consumers take possession of information, advertising and our brands[10].

One example is the change in the communication. Indeed, according to an expert, "the digital marketing changes the rules of the game of the marketing, mainly because internet is a communication channel based on interaction (between companies and consumers, between consumers themselves, or into a community of persons), and instantaneous transfer of information.[11]" The dynamic of internet has changed; a firm can communicate continuously with the internet users. They are not receptors of marketing messages; they are contributors to the marketing process. Actually, the consumers take the power: "80% of purchases are preceded by an online research by internet users who have confidence in advice given by

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[7] comScore MMX, 31/08/2012, "Brits most engaged online audience in Europe", http://www.comscoredatamine.com/2012/08/brits-most-engaged-online-audience-in-europe/, consulted on 15/12/2012

[8] F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), Préface & p.23

[9] *Translation from* Dico du net, 18/03/2011, "Marketing On line", http://www.dicodunet.com/definitions/e-marketing/marketing-on-line.htm, consulted on 13/12/2012

[10] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P. XIII

[11] *Translation from* F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), Introduction

internet users[12]", explain searchers. Moreover, with the explosion of the social networks, the word of mouth comes back in force in the marketing.
From this whole revolution emerged a hard competition. The firms therefore need an appropriate strategy in order to have a competitive advantage. Indeed, each company has to be ahead of its competitors.

Here are some figures to show the infatuation with the internet media: in England, advertising investments on internet represent about 20% of the advertiser's media spendings today[13], while in France, the market share of internet represented 12.5% in 2011[14]. On this French market, 2/3 of the advertisers realize plurimedia, and among them, 9 out of 10 use internet for their media planning[13].
Germany does not know this success because internet use is very low (3%), in comparison with other media[15] (*cf. appendix 1*).

However, although online marketing is growing, Capgemini in partnership with SRI (Les régies internet) and Udecam (Union Des Entreprises de Conseil et Achat Média) recorded in 2012 a slowdown in the growth of the online communication in France. Indeed, the growth of investment tumbled of 6% between 2011 and 2012 (*cf. appendix 2*). Always according to the study realized by Capgemini, SRI and Udecam, this is due, among others, to a bad economic climate.
Moreover, we can see that the slowdown is more important in France than in the UK and Germany *(cf. appendix 3).* [16]

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[12] *Translation from* F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), Introduction
[13] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P. XVIII
[14] Kantar Media, 10/02/2012, "Baromètre des investissements publicitaires 2011", http://www.iabfrance.com/?go=edito&eid=600 (slide 9) , consulted on 06/12/2012
[15] Publisuisse, 2012, "Guide médias", http://www.publisuisse.ch/mm/mm003/Media_Guide_2012_f.pdf, consulted on 05/02/2013
[16] Capgemini Consulting, 15/01/2013, "Observatoire de l'e-pub – 9è edition", http://www.sri-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Prsentation9emeObservatoiredelepub_VF.pdf (slide 6 and 7), consulted on 22/01/2013

4.1.3. Advantages of online marketing

There are many advantages for a firm to use internet in order to communicate with the consumers about their products or their services. In comparison with traditional methods, the structure of internet allows many new ways of communication.

Firstly, internet and other telecommunication ways such as phones have expanded marketers reach. Thanks to this, it is possible to reach customers all over the globe. Furthermore, the internet is always on, allowing communication to take place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Secondly, companies can communicate and interact rapidly. They do not need to wait for days, weeks or months in order to have their message delivered. Therefore they can receive the consumer's answer in a shorter period of time, and have an idea of the campaign performance more quickly.

A more attractive cost constitutes the third advantage. Indeed, a firm can establish direct contact with its customers in a cost-effective way through multiple supports. The possibility to realize a campaign at a much lower cost, in comparison with offline advertising, is also an opportunity. For instance, while a firm has to pay 600€ for a bill in a metro station during one week, it can get 1000 high qualified clicks (clicks from internet users really interested in the content of the link) on Facebook for the same price.[17]

Another main benefit is the fact that experiences are more interactive and personalized than traditional marketing. It is interactive because the brands can invite the audience to participate and the internet user can create its own brand experience. This one is personalized because the consumer is central in the online marketing strategy and it is possible to communicate in a way which is much more targeted[18].

The fifth advantage of this media is that, in comparison with classic media, actions of "pull marketing" are implemented. "Pull marketing" is the fact that the consumers actively seek information about the product; the communication is requested by the receiver. According to

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[17] Malinea conseil, 08/02/2010, "Pub online vs pub offline", http://www.malineaconseil.com/publicite-online-vs-offline/, consulted on 07/03/2013

[18] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P. XIII, XIV

an expert, "(…) the brand invites rather than 'impose' its presence, as the 'push' can often give the impression."[19]

The opportunity offered by online marketing to reinforce the image of the brands and the efficacy of the communication and of the advertising is also a real advantage[20].

The sixth positive argument to use internet is that it is possible to have an instant and easy follow-up of campaigns thanks to a number of digital measurement metrics and tools. For instance, the number of people who view a website and click on a banner can be easily evaluated. In fact, performance measures are an essential tool to get an idea, among others, of the ROI or of the interaction and relation with the brand. It is only by evaluating ourselves that we can progress.

Finally, the mastery of online communication skills is critical for business success. As Meyerson has explained, the technologies will always be crucial for the companies' development and if they can understand and exploit them in an innovative way in order to attract the customers and win their loyalty, then those companies are definitely winning.[21]

4.1.4. The disadvantages of online marketing

Besides all those advantages, we can however notice several disadvantages.

There is a first drawback related to the impact of online advertising, in general, on the consumers. If this kind of advertising is much cheaper than the offline one, it is because it does not strike so much; it is dematerialized and it is subjected to a lot of distractions because of the multiple surrounding advertising links.[22]

Secondly, within online marketing and its different channels, there also are somehow some disadvantages regarding impact and performance of those channels.

[19] *Translation from* L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.5
[20] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P. XIII
[21] M. MEYERSON, "Les clés du succès en ligne", Paris, Ed. CampusPress, 2005, P.30
[22] Malinea conseil, 08/02/2010, "Pub online vs pub offline", http://www.malineaconseil.com/publicite-online-vs-offline/, consulted on 07/03/2013

For instance, there was optimism for the traditional display but it is a form of advertising which is still badly accepted. It is on the decline, in favor of, among others, e-stream videos and social networks[23] which are much more interactive.
Not all online marketing forms perform well. Indeed, some work better than others and it is the issue of this dissertation.

Thirdly, we have a disadvantage concerning performance evaluation of online marketing. In fact, internet pioneers, and in particular media agencies, were used to saying that everything could be measured on internet but it is not really true. We can count, but not really measure. So it is difficult for the advertisers to demonstrate its impact on the sales[24].

Despite those disadvantages, online marketing however stays a very important media for each firm. It does not mean that firms have to focus all their budget and effort on online advertising. On the contrary, a good advertising campaign has to include online and offline[25].

4.1.5. Goals for using internet in a business

According to a study of Emerald, a company can use internet for different reasons.
It can have strategic goals, namely gaining competitive edge, using marketing intelligence, putting ahead the corporate image and approaching cost-effectiveness.
Internet can be used as a marketing communication function in order to provide product information and build brand identity.
Marketing logistics function is another purpose for internet use; direct sales, online ordering facility and real time order-processing.
The last category is the customer relationship management function which aims to maintain relationships, ensure an after-sales service, an online customer service, and online communication facilities with customers. It also allows the creation of online customer communities and a promptly handing of customer queries.[26]

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[23] JDN, 15/01/2013, "L'essouflement annoncé du display traditionnel", http://www.journaldunet.com/ebusiness/publicite/marche-e-pub-2012/mort-du-display.shtml, consulted on 15/03/2013
[24] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P. XIX
[25] Malinea conseil, 08/02/2010, "Pub online vs pub offline", http://www.malineaconseil.com/publicite-online-vs-offline/, consulted on 07/03/2013
[26] A. STEWART, M. RAJENDRA, D. KENNETH R., P. DAYANANDA, "E-marketing in perspective : a three country comparison of business use of the internet", 2002, Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 20(4), p. 247, *on the basis of the categories of use reported for small business (Adam and Deans, 2001)*

All of these uses are linked to some stakes

4.1.6. Stakes of (online) marketing in interaction with consumers

According to the book *Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital*[27], the brand communication with consumers is more and more difficult. While internet offers many more possibilities to reach consumers, it presents new challenges in effectively communicating with them.

First, for the marketing in general, it is difficult to understand consumer behavior and to segment the market because sociodemographic characteristics have become less relevant. For instance, segment a market on basis of the age is not always efficient because young people tend to make themselves look older. It is the opposite for older people; they tend to make themselves look younger. Therefore how can we do to target a certain kind of consumer for our products?

Secondly, with internet, there are new contact possibilities between the consumers and the brands, and combinations between advertising messages and communication supports. So which contact possibility and which combination can we favour to attract the consumer's attention?

Thirdly, the consumer is more and more selective because he is confronted to more than 4000 marketing stimuli a day, according to the book *Les clés du succès en ligne*[28]. We can therefore wonder how to differentiate ourselves.
Retailers have also difficulty distinguishing themselves, given that price dispersion for apparently the same product is largely documented on internet. So they need to work on branding, trust and awareness. Indeed if firms realize branding efforts, it creates a significant number of loyal consumers.[29]

A fourth stake is that, even if the attitude towards ads in general is different from that towards a specific ad, consumers are very resisting to them and they are losing much of their impact. An experiment by professor Ariely shows that consumers trust information depending on the

[27] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.180 & 217
[28] M. MEYERSON, "Les clés du succès en ligne", Paris, Ed. CampusPress, 2005, P.133
[29] M. R. BAYE & J. MORGAN, "Brand and Price Advertising in Online Markets", 2009, Management Science, 55(7), p.2

source. For instance, a source seen as having an interest in influencing outcomes would be a reason for distrust. Quoted examples for such a source were, among others, Procter & Gamble.[30]

The fact that the consumer is always in movement constitutes the fifth and the last main stake. He tends to give up his messaging service in favor of social networks, so it is difficult to reach him and localize him.

Given all these facts, the general stake is to attract the consumer and make him loyal to our brand.

[30] E. K. CLEMONS, S. BARNETT, A. APPADURAI, "The Future of Advertising and the Value of Social Network Websites: Some Preliminary Examinations", August 2007, In Proceedings of the ninth international conference on Electronic commerce, p.269

4.2. The different channels of online marketing: Pros and cons

There are different ways to communicate online. This is possible thanks to the different channels - search engine marketing, display, referrals, e-mailings and websites - which have particular functions.

I'm going to explain each of them and mention for which purpose they can be used, what kind of users is targeted, but also how to measure their performance. Other elements will be presented, such as the campaign cost and the advantages and disadvantages of each channel. Then, some figures related to their use in France, the UK and Germany, and in fast moving consumer goods/retail sector, will be exposed.

This part will be concluded by a summary table and by a presentation of the criteria helping in the choice of one or several channels.

4.2.1. The search engine marketing

Let's begin with a first channel; the "search" which is a channel where the advertisers invest the most[31] *(cf. appendix 4)*. The search engine marketing allows increasing the visibility of the companies and of their website on internet.

This type of marketing includes search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine advertising (SEA). Indeed, we have two kinds of results when we launch a research on a search engine like Google, Yahoo, etc. First, we obtain the natural results which occupy the majority of the page. Secondly, we have the "sponsored links" or "commercial links" which is on the top and on the right of the page[32].

As far as natural results are concerned, there are techniques to win positions. It requires optimization: SEO[32].

The second kind of results, the sponsored links, corresponds to advertising on a search engine and it resorts to the purchase of keywords. When an internet user writes a keyword on a

[31] Capgemini Consulting, 15/01/2013, "Observatoire de l'e-pub – 9è edition", http://www.sri-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Prsentation9emeObservatoiredelepub_VF.pdf (slide 8), consulted on 22/01/2013
[32] F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), P.73

search engine and that this keyword has been bought by a company, the sponsored link of this one appears in the results.

As explained by L. Flores, "Those keywords are reserved for auction by the search engines and allow building text ads which are visible in the "commercial links" or "sponsored links" rubric of the results pages.[33]" The keywords with the highest cost per click appear in the first positions.

What is the aim of using the search engine marketing? "The sponsored links attract internet users who are in posture of active research, but it is not the ideal lever to trigger an impulsive purchase[34]", that is what we can read in the book *Le marketing digital*. Indeed, when a company uses this kind of communication, it is limited to people who already know the product or the brand.

The purpose of a search campaign is rather the performance, namely the increase of sales, of traffic, etc.

The performance of such campaign depends on the position of the sponsored link on search engines, on the traffic on this sponsored website (click rate), and then, on the conversion (e-commerce transaction, engage in a phone call …)[35]. David C. Green adds that success is also measured in terms of competitor benchmarking and brand awareness and perception[36].

There are different advantages to use this channel. Firstly, there is a positioning warranty. Secondly, the advertiser pays an amount depending on the performance. Thirdly, a brand or a product gets certain notoriety with this kind of communication. Fourthly, a sponsored link benefits from a good visibility, even if the internet user does not click on the ad. A last main advantage is that the sponsored link arrives in response to a direct request from an internet user. However, we can also note several drawbacks.

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[33] *Translation from* L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.26

[34] *Translation from* F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), P.20

[35] G4interactive, 29/01/2013, "Les KPIs du référencement", http://fr.slideshare.net/G4interactive/g4interactive-kpis-referencementemarketing2013 (slide 6), consulted on 31/01/2013

[36] D. C. GREEN, "Search Engine Marketing: Why it Benefits Us all ", 2003, Business information review, 20(4), p.196

The main disadvantages are that the costs can be important. Moreover, the number of adverts per page is limited. In fact, as told previously, the keywords are sold on basis of auction and the company which paid the most for a keyword will be in the first position.
Finally, an internet user who is familiar with the sponsored links may be suspicious because those links do not give compulsorily an answer to his search.[37]

Despite these negative points, this channel is not negligible because, according to a study of *Médiamétrie*, for 77% of the respondents, purchase preparation starts with search engine[38].
The running search ads on generic keywords influence in-store sales: there is a 1.7% lift.
As for keywords specific to one product category, it's a 2% to 5.3% lift in in-store sales[39].

According to *Comscore*, Germany was the highest ranking European market based on the number of searchers, in August 2010: 54.1 million German people conducted at least one search. The second country which is the best ranked is the United Kingdom with 43.1 millions of searchers. France, with 40 millions of searchers, comes in the third position.
Those three countries have a leg up in comparison with the others (E.g. Italy, 22.2, Spain, 22.1 and the Netherlands, 14.6)[40].
Another important piece of information for my study should be noticed: according to the "9 ème observatoire de l'e-pub" of *Capgemini Consulting*, the retail sector is the most present sector on the French search market, with agribusiness[41].

4.2.2. The display

According to the study of *Capgemini* that I have already mentioned in 4.2.1., the display channel is the second one where the investments are the highest *(cf. appendix 4).*
The display market is the channel of the traditional advertising, or "branding"[42] and is the first economic model appeared on internet[43].

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[37] J-P F. ESKENAZI, F. CAZALIS, "Markerting Online & Référencement", Paris, Webedition, 2005, p.33 & 109
[38] D. SELOSSE, 10/07/2012, "Le search marketing toujours bien planté en amont de l'achat en ligne et en magasin", http://www.commercedigital.fr/Search-marketing-pour-le-magasin, consulted on 16/12/2012
[39] GoogleBusiness, 01/04/2011, "Online to store: online advertising drives online sales", http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xpay_ckRpIU, consulted on 17/12/2012
[40] comScore qsearch, 23/09/2010, "Number of Searchers Across European Markets", http://www.comscoredatamine.com/2010/09/number-of-searchers-across-european-markets/, consulted on 23/01/2013
[41] Capgemini Consulting, 15/01/2013, "Observatoire de l'e-pub – 9è edition", http://www.sri-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Prsentation9emeObservatoiredelepub_VF.pdf (slide 11), consulted on 24/01/2013

There are different formats: banners, sponsored links (except search link), content integration, sponsorship of headings, advertising formats on newsletters, video streaming and other special operations of advertising visibility [44].

Among them, especially video, knows a certain success today. It is more and more included in display[45] and comes from the fact that interactivity is very important nowadays. Besides, *Capgemini consulting* shows that in-stream videos, with social networks are the two main growth levers for display advertising.[46] (*cf. appendix 5*)

Such a campaign has a cost which depends on the chosen pricing method. First, a banner was sold at the cost per impression (cost for thousand displayed advertisements) and then, the cost per click. This last model has been adapted by the different research tools by selling the banners on basis of keywords lists predefined by the advertiser[47].

However, these two first modes are still largely used. The cost per thousand is anyway the dominant one and is rather used for branding campaign, while the cost per click is the main method for performance pricing[48].

Actually, branding campaign and performance are the two purposes that "display" channel can reach. A company can indeed resort to it in an aim of visibility, namely develop the brands/products image and notoriety, or gain audience with impacting advertising formats. This channel can also be used in a performance goal, like traffic generation, sales generation, etc[49].

The evaluation of its performance is controversial. The success of a banner campaign is measured with the rate per click, which is relatively low (0.09% in France). However, it does

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[42] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.27

[43] J-P F. ESKENAZI, F. CAZALIS, "Markerting Online & Référencement", Paris, Webedition, 2005, P.33

[44] Kantar Media, July 2012, "Résultats du baromètre IAB-SRI investissements publicitaires bruts online au 1er semestre 2012", http://www.sri-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Bilan-Display-1er-semestre-2012.pdf (slide 3), consulted on 17/12/2012

[45] F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), P.107

[46] Capgemini Consulting, 15/01/2013, "Observatoire de l'e-pub – 9è edition", http://www.sri-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Prsentation9emeObservatoiredelepub_VF.pdf (slide 14), consulted on 02/02/2013

[47] J-P F. ESKENAZI, F. CAZALIS, "Markerting Online & Référencement", Paris, Webedition, 2005, P.33

[48] ABC net marketing, 25/08/2009, "Les modes de tarification publicitaire Internet : CPM, CPC, CPA,...", http://www.abc-netmarketing.com/modes-tarification-publicitaire.html, consulted on 14/03/2013

[49] Capgemini Consulting, 15/01/2013, "Observatoire de l'e-pub – 9è edition", http://www.sri-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Prsentation9emeObservatoiredelepub_VF.pdf (slide 10), consulted on 23/01/2013

not discourage the creativity and the vitality of the market[50]. For instance, F. Scheid, R. Vaillant and G. De Montaigu notice that, to attract even more the eye of the user, the banner exits more and more from its reserved space.

If we think that the display is not a good channel to invest because of its performance, we are wrong. The rate per click is, for some, not a sufficient indicator to measure the efficiency. It is not because the internet user does not click on the ad that it has not had any impact on him. Indeed, the consumer may have seen the brand name. This kind of campaign can contribute to the notoriety of the company, the brand or the product, and have an influence on the consumer behaviour.

The memorization rate and the indicators of brand perception or of purchase intention are new measures to assess the efficacy of a campaign[51].

The advantages to use this channel are that it is an important tool to create popularity close to a large public, but in the same time, it is possible to target specific internet users. Moreover, there are large creative opportunities.

This last advantage could become a disadvantage if the advertiser is not creative and innovative enough; the internet users get accustomed very fast to the presence of the banner. Moreover, according to a survey l'*Atelier BNP Paris* in May 2011, 83% of the French people reckon that advertising on internet disturbs the navigation. 69% find it more intrusive than classic advertising and 62% find it less creative[52]. So it is a real stake.

Display contains another drawback: the banners use an important advertising space and therefore, it is difficult to put several ads for the same keyword[53].

What about the figures related to McBride's main markets? French internet users were 97 percent having been exposed to display ads in April 2011[54]. In the UK, 42 million unique

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[50] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.27

[51] F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), P.107

[52] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.5

[53] J-P F. ESKENAZI, F. CAZALIS, "Marketing Online & Référencement", Paris, Webedition, 2005, P.33

[54] comScore Ad Metrix, 15/06/2011, "97 Percent of French Online Population Exposed to Display Ads", http://www.comscoredatamine.com/2011/06/97-percent-of-french-online-population-exposed-to-display-ads/, consulted on 01/02/2013

visitors were exposed to online display ads in January 2011[55], while there were 62 641 000 British viewers the same year[56], which corresponds to 67% of the population.

Regarding the use of this channel in the fast moving consumer good (FMCG) sector, it is the second one out of ten which invests the most in the display. The distribution sector is the sixth one. It is also the sector of display which has evolved the most between 2011 and 2012: + 66,6%. *(cf. appendix 6)*.

Nevertheless, the specialized shops (E.g. Zalando, Sephora, Ikea...) use this kind of communication more than the general shops (E.g. Intermarché, Carrefour…) (*cf. appendix 7)*.[57]

4.2.2.1. The social networks: a support of display

Let's now talk about one of the supports of the display: the social networks. Given their popularity, firms seized the opportunity to invest on it.

Here, I am going to look into the fame of these networks (thanks to their contents, such as fan pages on Facebook) which leads to an increase in the display investment on this support. I am not going to develop social networks in the display point of view because we have dealt with display in general in the previous point. Social networks in a "fan pages" point of view are not an e-pub support but are an important way to communicate though.

I wanted to address this specific support because it is experiencing a real revolution. Indeed, the figures concerning this support are completely stunning.

According to the last report (September 2012) of *Social Media around the World*[58], awareness of Facebook is close to 100%, while Twitter reaches 80% awareness. More than 7 out of 10 internet users are members of at least 1 social network, which corresponds to 1.5 billion of people.

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[55] comScore Ad Metrix, 11/03/2011, "In the UK More Than Half of Ad Exposed Unique Visitors Saw Ads on Newspaper Sites", http://www.comscoredatamine.com/2011/03/in-the-uk-more-than-half-of-ad-exposed-unique-visitors-saw-ads-on-newspaper-sites/, consulted on 02/02/2013

[56] Banque mondiale, "Population totale", http://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/SP.POP.TOTL, consulted on 02/02/2013

[57] Kantar Media, July 2012, "Résultats du baromètre IAB-SRI investissements publicitaires bruts online au 1er semestre 2012", http://www.sri-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Bilan-Display-1er-semestre-2012.pdf (slide 12 and 15), consulted on 17/12/2012

[58] S. VAN BELLEGHEM, D.THIJS, T. DE RUYCK, 2012, "Social Media around the World 2012", http://www.insites-consulting.com/8-out-of-10-u-s-internet-users-want-to-help-brands/, consulted on 23/01/2013

In January 2012, Facebook was the third most visited website (after Google and Microsoft) in France with 33.3 millions of visitors who spent 184 million hours on it. Concerning the number of spent hours in one month, Facebook exceeds all the websites[59].

As a consequence of this infatuation, some brands invested on social networks. They represent more than 25% of digital investments in a few brands[60].

Since the arrival of social networks (Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, etc), people have been enrolling in mass, as we can see in the figures above. It allows us to communicate with our friends and our family, to find old friends, but also to share information. This information concerns, among others, consumption products. In fact, again according to the last report of *Social Media around the World*, half the users send messages about brands. More than half of their comments about those brands are positive; fewer than 10% are negative.

This information exchange can be compared with word-of-mouth advertising. It is cheap advertising for the firms, it is the best media, but it can be the worst because the firms lose the control of what is said when the communication is relayed, according to Bill Bernbach, founder of the DBB agency.

Actually, the firms can use social networks to send messages to the concerned potential users who, maybe, will transfer them to their friends and their acquaintances. It is called viral marketing (online word-of-mouth) and it is a dream opportunity for the industries, with an important impact on consumer behaviour. Indeed, those messages have an influence on purchase conduct.[61]

However, it would be inappropriate for the firms to consider influencers as agents of the marketer. Influencers want only to be viewed as "knowledgeable helpers in the social network". So, the success of viral marketing depends on the recognition of this need[62].

This way to communicate with the consumers is made for the purpose of getting engagement, namely building and maintaining a relationship between customers/prospects and brands.[63]

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[59] comScore Audience Metrix, 16/02/2012, "French Sites See Strong Rise in Engagement", http://www.comscoredatamine.com/2012/02/french-sites-see-strong-rise-in-engagement/, consulted on 23/01/2013

[60] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.219

[61] H. PAUWELS, M. FINOULST, décembre 2012, "La pub se réseau-socialise… ", Le vif body talk, 7e année N°75, p. 36-37

[62] M. R. SUBRAMANI & B. RAJAGOPALAN, "Knowledge-Sharing and Influence in Online Social Networks via Viral Marketing", 2003, communications of the ACM, 46(12), p.306

[63] Capgemini Consulting, 15/01/2013, "Observatoire de l'e-pub – 9è edition", http://www.sri-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Prsentation9emeObservatoiredelepub_VF.pdf (slide 10), consulted on 23/01/2013

We can say that the goal of some companies is achieved when we see that more than the half of the users is associated with at least one brand. However, the average number of followed brands is 10.6% and an interaction between brands and consumers happens only for 5% of the brands.[64] Brands must therefore continuously endeavor to stimulate their target group.

To favour interaction, it is also important for a company to deliver correct and up-to-date information, and to keep in mind that the consumers are more and more critical and that they choose more and more knowingly. Moreover, companies need to listen to their customers and take part in discussions.[65]

Following the study of *Social Media around the World*, the challenge for social media is to integrate the vision of the customer in every organization. Until now, we only used the first dimension of social media: build reach, but collaboration is also really important[64].

Here are some figures to illustrate the facts above: 45% of the users reckon that social networks are an ideal way to share internet links. 28% make enquiries about a consumption product. 14% get acquainted with promotions concerning a brand or a service. In Europe, 37% of these internet users published information about a product, a brand or a firm at least once. 26% of the last ten visits on social networks consisted in reacting to messages sent by others about products or commercial actions; 25% were meant to ask a piece of information about a brand or a firm, and 19% to publish a message concerning a brand.[66]

Other figures, regarding McBride's main markets, are worth to being highlighted.

In October 2011, 92.7% of European people used social networks. The UK exceeds this average with 97.5%, but French and German people are under (91% and 89.6%, respectively)[67].

According to *Comscore*, 39.3% of all display ads in the UK were placed on social networking sites, followed by Germany (27.5%) and France (26.9%)[68].

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[64]S. VAN BELLEGHEM, D.THIJS, T. DE RUYCK, 2012, "Social Media around the World 2012", http://www.insites-consulting.com/8-out-of-10-u-s-internet-users-want-to-help-brands/, consulted on 23/01/2013

[65] *Remarks of the professor Van Belleghem in the following magazine* : H. PAUWELS, M. FINOULST, "La pub se réseau-socialise…", in Le vif body talk, 7e année N°75, décembre 2012

[66] H. PAUWELS, M. FINOULST, "La pub se réseau-socialise…", in Le vif body talk, 7e année N°75, décembre 2012, *following the study of InSites Consulting.*

[67] comScore Media Metrix, 05/12/2011, "Facebook Continues Strong Lead Across Europe", http://www.comscoredatamine.com/2011/12/facebook-continues-strong-lead-across-europe/, consulted on 23/01/2013

The consumer goods category is the one with the highest share of ads published on social networking sites (40.1% in February 2012)[69].

4.2.3. *Referrals*

Now I am going to deal with the following channel: referrals which are an important and growing business. It corresponds to the third main channel of online communication *(cf. appendix 4)*.

Dico du net defines referrals as an "exchange system between an affiliator website (merchant website or content editor) and an affiliated website which accepts hosting commercial content or offers of the affiliator, against remuneration (commission by contact or generated sales)"[70]. We can read in the book *Marketing Online & Référencement* that "The affiliated is a firm, an association or an individual (…) who wishes to offer an extra service to its visitors and/or get hold of ancillary revenues (…)[71]" Moreover, referrals can contribute to enhance its image. It is therefore important to choose an appropriate affiliation program. Indeed, it must fit with the service and content offer of the affiliated website, it must be relevant. For instance, a website on the theme of cybermarketing will be legitimately able to propose books on this subject to visitors.

As far as the affiliator is concerned, he is either an advertiser (E.g. Google), or a seller (E.g. Amazon). Referrals channel allows him to create "a virtual distribution network of the content (advertiser) or of the products (seller)"[71].

To build such a network, the affiliator will have to remunerate the affiliated. This remuneration may be calculated according to the cost per click (E.g. a click on a banner or a

[68] ComScore Ad Metrix, 09/12/2010, "Share of Display Ads on Social Networking across France, Germany and the UK", http://www.comscoredatamine.com/2010/12/share-of-display-ads-on-social-networking-across-france-germany-and-the-uk/, consulted on 26/01/2013

[69] comScore Ad Metrix Social, 30/03/2012, "Social Networks – The Place to Advertise Consumer Goods?", http://www.comscoredatamine.com/2012/03/social-networks-the-place-to-advertise-consumer-goods/, consulted on 23/01/2013

[70] *Translation from* Dico du net, 18/03/2011, "Affiliation", http://www.dicodunet.com/definitions/e-marketing/affiliation.htm, consulted on 24/01/2013

[71] *Translation from* J-P F. ESKENAZI, F. CAZALIS, "Marketing Online & Référencement", Paris, Webedition, 2005, P.164

text link), the cost per lead (E.g. newsletter inscription) or the pay per sale (E.g. the purchase of a product in an online shop).[72]

This system is really useful in the case firms want to generate traffic or/and sales on their affiliator website or on that of the advertiser (the affiliated person) who uses affiliators' services. Furthermore, they can resort to referrals to produce qualified commercial contacts.
In conclusion, the main goal of referrals is performance, but, attention, the affiliator will not be satisfied with multiplication of affiliation contracts. As a reminder, more relevant contracts are favored, even if they are not numerous. Once the contract is fulfilled, the affiliator will provide a marketing help to the affiliated: the affiliated websites must be findable on internet, and therefore, optimization of the web pages is primordial[73].

At this stage of the dissertation, we can wonder about the difference between display and referrals. The difference is rather based on the type of websites: referrals concerns especially small and middle websites. This kind of websites is not popular enough to interest advertisers. Display is thus addressed to bigger and known websites which are in minority though, in comparison with small and middle ones. This proportion explains the growing business of referrals.[74]

This important business is understandable given the advantages. The first one, for an affiliator website, is that the remuneration depends on the performance (visits, purchases…), and so, it reduces risk in the choice of the partners. So, the merchant website does not generally pay for advertisement on the affiliated website. It is thus free publicity.
Secondly, the remuneration of an affiliation program is generally very competitive because a part of affiliated people are amateurs or semi professionals who do not always have the power for negotiation. Moreover, an affiliation program on a website does not generally request noteworthy investment for the affiliated.

[72] JDN, 09/07/2010, "Les modes de rémunération", http://www.journaldunet.com/ebusiness/crm-marketing/l-affiliation-les-bonnes-feuilles/les-modes-de-remuneration.shtml, consulted on 02/02/2013
[73] J-P F. ESKENAZI, F. CAZALIS, "Marketing Online & Référencement", Paris, Webedition, 2005, P.166, 167
[74] Bart, 06/06/2011, "Pub sur le Net : L'affiliation, c'est pour qui ? ", http://www.intropubnet.com/2011/06/06/laffiliation-sur-internet/, consulted on 29/01/2013

Thirdly, it is the affiliated who is candidate for a program and he knows better than anybody his audience's profile. So he recommends products or services which are adapted to his visitors. It would be too much work for the affiliator if he needed to do this targeting.[75]

Besides advantages, several drawbacks were also pointed out by a survey realized by *Journal du Net*, in March 2009. 40% of the merchants say that referrals are less prestigious than display. For 38% of the respondents, traffic is not much skilled. Moreover, 34% think that a lot of time and resources are needed. 32% consider that there is an important risk of fraud. Finally, 22% indicates it is difficult to constitute a large network of affiliated.[76]

After those more general pieces of information, I looked into the McBride sector to conclude, and I noticed that household goods sector is one of the growth sectors for this channel.[77] Indeed it is the one which knew the biggest growth in 2012.[78]

4.2.4. E-mailing

E-mailing is the fifth channel where the investments are the highest and this, always according to the same source as for the other ones *(cf. appendix 4).*

We can also see on the graph in this appendix that the investments are stable for e-mailing. This can be explained by the crisis it faces. Indeed, it is the most threatened market channel[79].

Firms usually resort to it when they want to inform the internet user. The particularity is that it can be realized in a personalized way. Beyond the informational aspect, e-mailing is used, on the one hand, to encourage and trigger an impulsive purchase by the consumer, and on the other hand, to serve the image or reputation of a brand or product. Moreover, we can have

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[75] B. BATHELOT, 16/03/2004, “Les avantages de l'affiliation pour l'affilieur”, http://www.abc-netmarketing.com/Les-avantages-de-l-affiliation.html, consulted on 02/02/2013

[76] A. LE GONIDEC, 02/04/2009, “Comment les marchands utilisent l'affiliation”, http://www.journaldunet.com/ebusiness/crm-marketing/enquete-en-ligne/comment-les-marchands-utilisent-l-affiliation/un-dispositif-performant-mais-peu-qualitatif.shtml, consulted on 02/02/2013

[77] Capgemini Consulting, 15/01/2013, “Observatoire de l'e-pub – 9è edition”, http://www.sri-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Prsentation9emeObservatoiredelepub_VF.pdf (slide 11), consulted on 02/02/2013

[78] H. SEDOURAMANE, 28/01/2013, “Le secteur "maison" en plus forte hausse”, http://www.journaldunet.com/ebusiness/crm-marketing/chiffres-affiliation-2012/secteurs.shtml, consulted on 02/02/2013

[79] L. FLORES, “Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital”, Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.28

recourse to it when we want to maintain a contact with the customers in order to make them loyal. However, e-mailings for conquest/prospecting are less and less used[80].

In brief, e-mailing has the same goals as display: firstly, the visibility (namely developing brand and product image and reputation, and capturing new audiences), and secondly, the performance (increase sales, traffic, etc.)[81].

In order to measure its performance, we need to refer to different indicators: the rejection rate, the opening rate, the click rate, reactivity and transformation.

The opening rate varies between 20% and 30% for a newsletter. The click rate is between 3% and 6%[80].

The click rate and the opening rate are different according to the sector. In the distribution sector, the openers rate is about 22.5% while the clickers rate is 6%[82]. They are quite good figures when we consider the average above.

The reactivity is the number of clickers compared with the number of openers[80]. The luxury sector has the best reactivity (31.06%) and in the second place we have the distribution sector (24,8 %)[82].

Regarding the transformation; it is the number of addressees who realize the goal attributed to the campaign. For instance, place an order, register for an event, etc[80].

The advantages are that e-mailing allows reaching more targeted internet users. A company can use a large segmentation or rather use a one-to-one marketing. Furthermore, these messages can be sent at a much lower cost than for a paper mailing: there are neither printing costs nor stamp to pay.

Another benefit is that e-mailing is easy to deploy and it reaches the addressee a few minutes after the sending. The message is so quickly processed by the internet user; the opening rate, click rate... are rapidly figured out. The assessment of a campaign is thus possible in less than a week after the expedition, and we can react quickly depending on the collected data's[83]. Thanks to these indicators, e-mailing offers a very precise performance measure, as I have explained above.

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[80] F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), P.165

[81] Capgemini Consulting, 15/01/2013, "Observatoire de l'e-pub – 9è edition", http://www.sri-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Prsentation9emeObservatoiredelepub_VF.pdf (slide 10), consulted on 23/01/2013

[82] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.29

[83] J-P F. ESKENAZI, F. CAZALIS, "Markerting Online & Référencement", Paris, Webedition, 2005, P.26, 180

Nevertheless, an advertiser cannot abuse this channel and practise "mass mailing" to use these advantages as an excuse. Otherwise, the internet users would be plagued by less relevant messages, sometimes considered as spams.
In brief, if we have a qualitative approach, namely a relevant segmentation, e-mailing remains a very powerful channel[84].

We can also quote a major drawback; there is a revolution of uses and saturation in the e-mailing market. Indeed, the use of e-mailing became quickly out of time. The reason is that people, especially the 15-24 years, abandon their messaging service in favor of social networks, judged "more popular and less spammed"[85].
Actually, the best target for this channel is the 45-55+ age bracket which is the most loyal to its e-mail box.[86]

Following a study from *Tedemis* realized to 2381 internet users, "76% of the internet users affirm they feel attacked by traditional online marketing. 81.3% of them consider that the number of commercial e-mails that they receive is 'too high' or 'unbearable'. […] However, 57.3% of the respondents say that they are ready to buy a product following the reception of a commercial e-mail while 35% are ready to give their e-mail to receive offerings. Nevertheless, 40% of the people interested would be ready to communicate personal data's in so far as personalized offerings are provided to them.[87]"
Always according to *Tedemis*, the solution to restore the marketing e-mail is the retargeting. This one "should recover behavioral and personal data's, and combine them to develop a completely anonymous process […][88]", this organization states. Though, it only works if the e-merchant is able to interest the user.

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[84] F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), P.149
[85] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.28
[86] comScore Media Metrix, 03/10/2011, "Web Based Email Shows Declining Engagement Among Younger Age Group in Europe" http://www.comscoredatamine.com/2011/10/web%E2%80%93based-email-shows-declining-engagement-among-younger-age-groups-in-europe/, consulted on 03/02/2013
[87] *Translation from* H. SEDOURAMANE, 05/12/2011, "Les trois quarts des internautes se sentent agressés par l'e-marketing", http://www.journaldunet.com/ebusiness/crm-marketing/les-internautes-francais-lasses-de-l-e-marketing-1211.shtml, consulted on 21/12/2012
[88] *Translation from* A. DUVAUCHELLE, 16/09/2011, "Tedemis : le retargeting pour faire renaître l'email marketing ", http://pro.clubic.com/salon-informatique-tic/e-commerce-paris/actualite-446782-tedemis-retargeting-renaitre-email-marketing.html, consulted on 21/12/2012

Beyond those generalities, it is interesting to know a bit more about e-mail usage across the UK, Germany and France. The United Kingdom was the first country in 2010 spending so much time in one month on webmail (179 minutes), while France was in the third position with 148 minutes. Germany ranked in the 11th place with 72 minutes, below the European countries' average of 97 minutes.[89]

Even if those figures are not the most recent, we can assume that the trend between those countries was maintained stable.

4.2.5. Websites

Here, I am not going to explain the last two main online communication channels. I am not going to talk about the ShopBot (prices comparison websites) and about mobile, as illustrated in the graph of the appendix 4. ShopBot does not seem to be the most direct channel to communicate. As far as the mobile is concerned, it is a "web" screen as well as a computer and a tablet, that is why I will not explain this channel.

I am rather going to talk about websites. They are not represented in the graph because they are not e-pub channels. Indeed, an online site is not considered as advertising because it does not resort to space purchase. Yet, it is an important way to communicate for the companies.

There are different kinds of websites: corporate website (company presentation for all the stakeholders), relational website (products presentation of a company with contests, games, information, guides, reduction coupons…), promotional mini-website (for the launch of a new product, an identity change…), tribal website (for a specific customers segment or a tribe) and merchant website (online sales).[90]

According to these different sorts of websites, there are various goals.

The main goal is to inform internet users about products or services that the company offers, especially if they concern important investment. People like to inform themselves on internet before purchasing, but some pay more attention to advice from other consumers, friends or family, rather than from the company. A consumer can also take information on a website

[89] comScore Media Metrix, 04/10/2010, "European Webmail Usage by Country" http://www.comscoredatamine.com/2010/10/european-webmail-usage-by-country/, consulted on 02/02/2013

[90] L. FLORES, P. VOLLE, "Potentiel relationnel et impact du site de marque sur la performance marketing", Paris, Février 2006, Cahier n°352, P.5

because he does not really know the product or because purchase modalities or various options complicate the act of purchase.[91]

Though, the goal is not only to inform, but to create an interaction between the company and the internet users. Listening to them is essential. Actually, it is especially in relational websites that we find interactivity, which becomes more and more important.

Some websites are also designed for visibility, namely to enrich the image and reputation of a brand[92] or in a purpose of performance in order to generate sales (merchant and promotional websites).

To favor the achievement of those goals, there are some key elements to take into account. First, the design of a website really matters because it is part of its experience and influences the total experience of the brand.[93] Moreover, it is important that navigation should be easy in order to increase the customers' involvement and comfort levels. In this manner, they will be more likely to purchase online, in the case of a merchant website.[94]

A second key element is to satisfy visitors' needs and innovate according to their expectations, which involves frequent updating of the website to encourage repeat visits.[92]

A last main element of success is to dialogue with them and to get their participation. It is important to give value to visitors [95] so that they generate word-of-mouth around them. The more they will be in empathy with the brand, the more they will become opinion leaders. [96]

In order to see how well we have achieved our goal, we need to resort to frequentation rate and conversation rate.[97]

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[91] B. MELI, 04/02/2009, "Des sites utilisés surtout pour de gros achats", http://www.journaldunet.com/ebusiness/marques-sites/enquete-en-ligne/ce-que-les-internautes-attendent-des-sites-de-marques/des-sites-utilises-surtout-pour-de-gros-achats.shtml, consulted on 03/02/2013

[92] L. FLORES, P. VOLLE, "Potentiel relationnel et impact du site de marque sur la performance marketing", Paris, Février 2006, Cahier n°352, P.4

[93] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.131

[94] G. L. GEISSLER, "Building customer relationships online: The Web site designers' perspective", 2001, Journal of consumer marketing, 18(6), p.501

[95] Crmmetrix, 2009, "Mesure d'audience internet", http://fr.crmmetrix.com/solutions/mesure_d_audience_internet, consulted on 03/02/2013

[96] F. DEBOS, "Le site Internet, centre de pilotage et d'investigation de la marque vers les micro-communautés virtuelles.", Nice, 2010, Enjeux et usages des TIC. Stratégies du changement dans les systèmes et les territoires, p.13

[97] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.110, 131

Communicating via our own brand websites has some advantages. For instance, once an internet user has visited the website, it has a significant impact on purchasing intention, on attitude towards the brand and on purchasing behavior into the shop. However, the impact is stronger for brands with a weaker reputation.

In general, the visitors of a brand website are mainly "customers or prospects having strong affinity with the brand or products categories in which the brand is present"[98], L. Flores asserts. Websites are thus not a way "to recruit new customers or reach a large undifferentiated public"[99], he adds. Nevertheless, it is even though possible to attract internet users who are not familiar with the brand/company by making it known via e-pub channels.

A second advantage of this channel is that, unlike Facebook, the brand keeps a control on the content of its website. It can plan the relation that it wants to create and maintain with its different publics.[97]

Besides those advantages, there is a disadvantage: it is expensive to design and fill the brand website with life.[100]

Here are some figures, sometimes more meaningful than simple facts: according to *Crmmetrix*, 55% of internet users declare they prefer brand websites, against 22% e-mailing, 9% TV advertising, 6% online advertising, 5% addressed mail and 4% press advertising or magazine.[101]

Following the same source, the best vectors of online influence are internet websites with 20%, against 12% for online advertising and 5% for online video.[102]

Concerning the use of this channel, and more precisely that of merchant websites, we can see that the biggest user of online retail in Europe is the United Kingdom (94.2%). France is

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98 *Translation from* L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.127, 128, 129

99 *Translation from* L. FLORES, P. VOLLE, "Potentiel relationnel et impact du site de marque sur la performance marketing", Paris, Février 2006, Cahier n°352, P.8

100 L. FLORES, P. VOLLE, "Potentiel relationnel et impact du site de marque sur la performance marketing", Paris, Février 2006, Cahier n°352, P.3, *according to forrester.com*

101 L. FLORES, P. VOLLE, "Potentiel relationnel et impact du site de marque sur la performance marketing", Paris, Février 2006, Cahier n°352, P.3, *following a study of crmmetrix*

102 L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.183

ranked the third (89%), and Germany the fourth (87.6%), while the European average is 79.5%.[103]

Regarding its use performance in the McBride sector, fast moving consumer goods are bought online by 16% of internet users.[104]

[103] comScore MMX, 13/07/2012, "Online Retail: UK and Ireland Lead the Way in Europe", http://www.comscoredatamine.com/2012/07/online-retail-uk-and-ireland-lead-the-way-in-europe/, consulted on 05/02/2013

[104] Fevad, 2012, "Les produits/services achetés en ligne (au cours des 6 derniers mois)" http://www.fevad.com/uploads/files/Etudes/chiffrescles/chiffres_cles2012.pdf, consulted on 05/02/2013

4.2.6. Summary table

Every figure or ranking concerns 2012, with some exceptions that are signaled with a number into brackets.

	Search	**Display**	**Social Networks**	**Referrals**	**E-mailing**	**Websites**
Ranking in terms of investments in France (1 being the highest investment)*	1 (1 141 million)	2 (649 million)		3 (217 million)	5 (95 million)	
Goal	Performance	Visibility or performance	Engagement	Performance	Visibility or performance	Informational (corporate website), Engagement (relational website), Visibility (corporate and relational website) or Performance (merchant and promotional website)
Users	People who are in posture of active research				Especially people from 45 years old up to 55+	Mainly customers or prospects having strong affinity with the brand or products categories in which the brand is present
Performance measure	Position + Traffic (click rate) + Conversion + Competitor benchmarking + Brand awareness and perception	-Rate per click -Memorization rate - Indicators of brand perception or of purchase intention		-Rate per click -Generated sales -Generated lead	-Rejection rate -Opening rate -Click rate -Reactivity -Transformation	-Frequentation rate -Conversion rate

	Search	Display	Social Networks	Referrals	E-mailing	Websites
Pricing methods	Purchase of keywords (by auction)	-Cost per thousand -Cost per click -Keywords purchase		-Cost per click -Cost per lead -Pay per sale	Cost per sending	-
Advantages	-Positioning warranty -Payment for performance -Notoriety -Visibility (even if the internet user doesn't click on the ad) -Direct answer to an internet user's request	- High creative opportunities -Create notoriety close to a large public - Target specific internet users	-Cheap advertising - Facebook awareness: close to 100%. Twitter awareness: 80% - More than 7 out of 10 internet users are members of at least 1 social network = 1.5 billion people -Facebook: the third most visited website in France -The number of hours spent on Facebook is bigger than whatever other websites. - Viral marketing	For the affiliator: - Remuneration depends on the performance → reduces risk in the choice of the partners + free publicity -Very competitive remuneration of affiliation program -Chosen products or services of the merchant site are adapted to the audience's profile of the affiliated site	-Allow reaching more targeted internet users -Much lower cost than for a paper mailing -Easy to deploy and reach the addressee a few minutes after the sending (message quickly processed by the internet user) → Quick assessment of the campaign.	- Significant impact on purchasing intention, on attitude towards the brand and on purchasing behavior into the shop -The brand keeps a control on the content of its website

	Search	Display	Social Networks	Referrals	E-mailing	Websites
Disadvantages	-Possibility of important cost -Limited number of ads per page -Mistrust of the experimented internet user towards sponsored links which don't give compulsory an answer to his request.	- Sometimes perceived as intrusive - Can disrupt navigation - If not enough creativity and innovation, internet users get accustomed very fast to the presence of the banner - Use an important advertising space (difficult to put several ads for the same keyword)	- The firms lose the control of what is said when the communication is relayed (word-of-mouth)	For the affiliator: -Less prestigious than display -Traffic not much skilled -Takes time and resources -Important fraud risk -Large network of affiliated difficult to constituate	-Revolution of uses and saturation in the e-mailing market is a threat for e-mailing - If used massively, it's sometimes considered as a spam. -E-mailing for conquest/ prospecting is less and less used	-Expensive
Figures: Usage of the channel in France, UK and Germany for the internet users and/or for advertisers	(1) -Number of search users in Germany in one month: 54.1 million (the highest ranking European market) -The UK: 43.1 million - France: 40	- (2) In France, 97% of online population exposed to display ads. -(3) The UK: 67%	(4) –In the UK: 97.5% of the people use social networks (more than the European average: 92.7%) -France: 91% -Germany: 89.6% ---------------------		(6)-In the UK, 179 minutes were spent in one month on webmail -France: 148 min -Germany: 72 min (European average: 97 min)	<u>For merchant websites:</u> Internet audience had access to online retail sites: -In the UK: 94.2% -In France: 89% -In Germany: 87.6% (European average: 79.5%)

	million (Italy: 22.2, Spain: 22.1, Netherlands: 14.6)		(5)-In France, 26.9% of display ads on social networking -In Germany: 27.5% -In the UK, 39.3%			
Figures: Usage of the channel in retail sector	Retail sector is the market which invests the most in Display in France, with the agribusiness	-FMCG sector is the second sector out of ten which invests the most in the display - Distribution sector is the sixth one (sector of display which has evolved the most in one year: + 66,6%)	The consumer goods category is the category with the highest share of ads published on social networking sites: 40.1%	Household goods: one of the growth sectors for referrals campaign	The distribution sector is the sector with the second best reactivity (24.8%)	<u>For merchant websites:</u> FMCG are bought online by 16% of internet users

(1) Augustus 2010 – (2) April 2011 – (3) January 2011- (4) October 2011 – (5) October 2010 – (6) 2010

* Shopbots is the fourth channel but not dealt in my dissertation

4.2.7. Choice criteria

The choice among all of these channels will depend on different factors.

A company can choose a channel according to the pursued goal: are we going to communicate with the intention of giving information to the internet users/consumers? Or with the aim to trigger an impulsive buying behavior? Do we want to be particularly close to the internet users/consumers?

It can also depend on the target. Indeed, in accordance with the behavior habits of the targeted internet users/consumers, we can choose a more relevant channel than another. Are the targeted internet users more present on social networks? Are they used to opening and reading their e-mails? Which online media do they consult the most?

The choice of a web channel can be realized depending on the budget. Some channels are less expensive than others.

The last criterion which enables us to make a choice between the different channels is the competition. Which channel(s) is (are) used by the competitors? It allows identifying new channels which would have been neglected.[105]

For my research, I'm going to focus essentially on the choice of the channel(s) related to the target and the competition.

[105] F. SCHEID, R. VAILLANT, G. DE MONTAIGU, "Le marketing digital", Paris, Ed. Eyrolles, 2012, (Collection Marketing), P.20-21

4.3. Consumer's attitude and behaviour towards online marketing

While internet use becomes more and more important and the consumer becomes a major actor, it is essential to be interested in his attitude and behavior towards online marketing.

As we have seen, internet has created relationship modification between individuals and brands; consumers have become contributors to the marketing process. They "consume" media rather than "frequent" them, as we can read in the book of L. Flores. They are looking for more privileged contacts with brands and firms.[106]

The result of their interaction with these brands and firms are word-of-mouth which is a privileged way by internet users to transfer information. Brands and firms are thus "obliged to 'participate in those conversations', participation more than communication imposing itself gradually as the *new strategy* of marketing.[107]", L. Flores explains.

It is, among others, via blogs that the consumers are going to express their attempts and critics towards brands, without intimidation.[108]

Besides, the consumer has become a "consum'actor", it means that he is a responsible and engaged consumer with a reflective attitude towards his consumption.[109] He uses his purchasing power knowingly to defend ideas in which he believes.

The word-of-mouth, the fact that the consumer has become a "consum'actor" and more important volatility of the customer oblige firms to be demanding with themselves.

Another ascertainment is that individuals like to participate to company strategies, and so, brands have to take it into account. Moreover, following the study of F. Debos, French internet users are strongly expecting consideration and respect and it is also something that a company needs to keep in mind.

In conclusion, the consumer is central in the strategy and a successful brand/firm would be the one who has listening, interaction, learning and integration faculties[108].

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[106] L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.127

[107] *Translation from* L. FLORES, "Mesurer l'efficacité du marketing digital", Paris, Dunod, 2012, (Collection Fonctions de l'entreprise), P.182

[108] F. DEBOS, "Le site Internet, centre de pilotage et d'investigation de la marque vers les micro-communautés virtuelles.", Nice, 2010, Enjeux et usages des TIC. Stratégies du changement dans les systèmes et les territoires, p.2 & 13

[109] 24/08/2009, "Consom'acteur", http://www.marketingdurable.net/consomacteur, consulted on 04/02/2013

Apart from those general attitudes and behaviors, there is a particularity in the attitude of users of social networking websites which was revealed by researchers.
The sociologist Davison (1983) developed a theory named "third-person effect" (TPE) which proposes that "individuals tend to expect mass media to have a greater effect on others than on themselves". Thereafter, Jie Zhang and Terry Daugherty realized researches to see if Davison's theory was also applicable to social networking websites and they finally confirmed this hypothesis.
The study goes further and highlights some elements that influence the TPE. For instance, TPE is more important on young people who are generally ego-defensive or even narcissistic. The popularity of a media or a message also sways TPE; the more popular, the greater.[110] However, it is possible to reduce this effect. For example, when people feel close to a community, they often recognize they are as susceptible as other people, or even more, to persuasive messages compared to other people[111].

All these elements are warnings for marketers who should take them into account in their strategy.

[110] J. ZHANG & T. DAUGHERTY, "Third-Person Effect and Social Networking: Implications for Online Marketing and Word-of-Mouth Communication", 2009, American Journal of Business, 24(2), p.53, 59 & 60
[111] L. BYOUNGKWAN & R. TAMBORINI, "Third-person effect and internet pornography: The influence of collectivism and internet self-efficacy", 2005, Journal of Communication, 55, 292-310.

5. Methodological approach – Competitive analysis: How do branders use online marketing?

As a reminder, the goal of my research is the analysis online marketing possibilities for private label-type products. In order to reach this purpose, I first need to study how branders communicate about their products; which channels they use, with which intensity, and what kind of information they give. In fact, branders are private label's competitors; that is why it is important to get acquainted with what they do.

Moreover, communication about brand products is also realized by retailers. It will therefore be interesting to talk about their communication.

5.1. Branders and retailers

In this first part of the analysis, I am going to underscore the biggest branders and retailers of each of the three markets which will be subjected to my online marketing study. Then, I will explain the main trends that we can observe online nowadays among those advertisers.

5.1.1. Branders identification

The first step is to identify branders and I am going to target the most influential ones.

On the website of *Euromonitor*[112], there are data which allow us to determine the companies which have the biggest market shares per products category and per country (*cf. appendix 8 up to 13*).

Here are the boards that I have constructed on this basis:

PERSONAL CARE*	***Number 1***	***Number 2***	***Number 3***
France	L'Oréal	Procter & Gamble	Unilever
The UK	Procter & Gamble	L'Oréal	Unilever
Germany	Procter & Gamble	L'Oréal	Beiersdorf

* Bath & Shower, deodorants, hair care, men's grooming, skin care …

[112] Euromonitor, "statistics", http://www.portal.euromonitor.com/Portal/Pages/Statistics/Statistics.aspx , consulted on 11/02/2013

HOUSEHOLD*	***Number 1***	***Number 2***	***Number 3***
France	Unilever	Procter & Gamble	Reckitt Benckiser
The UK	Procter & Gamble	Unilever	Reckitt Benckiser
Germany	Henkel	Procter & Gamble	Reckitt Benckiser

* Air care, diswashing, insecticides, laundry care, toilet care …

L'Oréal and P&G are the leader companies concerning personal care category, while Reckitt takes the power in the household category, with P&G at its sides.

It is not stunning to see those companies in the top three of these 3 countries when we know that they are part of the biggest advertisers in the world[113] *(cf. appendix 14)*.

5.1.2. Retailers identification

As for branders, I highlighted the biggest retailers per country, and this, on the one hand, for hypermarkets and supermarkets, and on the other hand, for hard discounters. *(Appendix 15 to 17)*[114]

	Hypermarkets &	***Supermarkets***	***Hard discounters***
	Number 1	Number 2	One of the biggest
France	Carrefour market	Leclerc	Leader price
The UK	Tesco	Sainsbury's	Aldi
Germany	EDEKA	REWE	Aldi

5.1.3. Main online trends

From the analysis of those branders and retailers communication, two obvious trends arise.

Where formerly the Web was to push a maximum of content, the internet users' usages influenced by the advent of new online channels and platforms have as a consequence that this Web use is not as efficient anymore as in the past.

[113] Advertising age, 2010, "Les quinze premiers annonceurs dans le monde", http://www.uda.fr/fileadmin/documents_pdf/publications_etudes/Chiffres_cles_des_annonceurs_2012.pdf, consulted on 11/02/2013

[114] McBride data (From Kantar and Lebensmittelzeitung), Augustus 2012 and January 2013

Nowadays, firms' online strategy has changed on two points of view. First, sent data need to be sorted and need to be of quality. It is not about quantity but quality. This is explained by the fact that, thanks to internet, the information democratization and the multiplatform, customers have access to all information that they want and so become knowledgeable and critical.

Secondly, merely providing data is no longer sufficient, given that internet is a media based on interaction.

So, since internet has removed the barriers between brands and customers, a new challenge is born: what can firms do to attract customers and make them loyal? And what can they say to them to reach this purpose? Those questions are part of my research.

From my analysis of branders' and retailers' communication, a main online trend emerged, the commitment, which allows us to answer the first question (What can firms do to attract customers and make them loyal?).

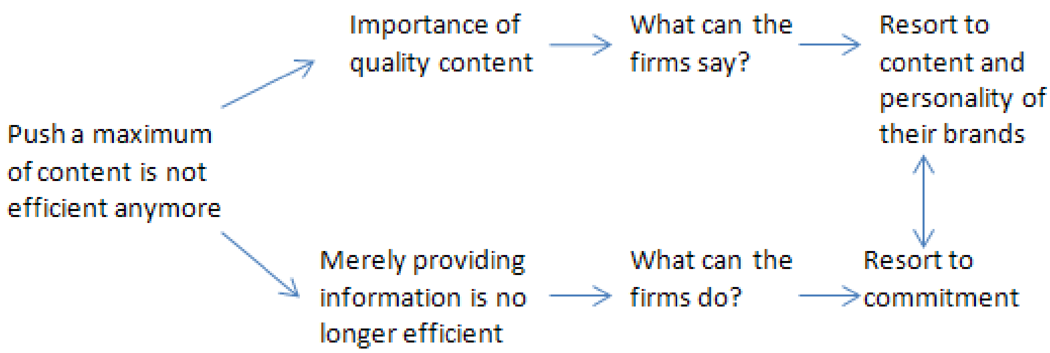
As we are going to see, firms make a lot of efforts to keep customers engaged in their brands/products. Indeed, they need to give reasons to consumers to be loyal by creating a link with them.

A second online trend results from my study and it gives an answer to the second question (As the information has to be quality, what can firms say to their customers to keep them engaged?) The key is the content and personality of their brands.

As required by the marketing nowadays, companies need to take into account what the consumers want, materially (products functionality) and relationally (what kind of relation with brands they are expecting). That is what branders and retailers are trying to do with their online communication strategy which is reflected in the two identified major trends.

Through the commitment via the various channels, they can obtain information about customers and understand their wants or needs more easily. Moreover, it is a good way to give them some value and therefore improve the relation with them.

Furthermore, bring some content and personality to a brand gives the possibility to customers to identify themselves to it, the goal being to give it a positive image and therefore encourage purchase.



Even if the online marketing of branders has the same goal as the retailers, namely create a link with consumers through the commitment to encourage the purchase afterwards, the content of their communication and the implemented ways are not always the same, because of their status (supplier versus retailer). This will be explained in the following parts.

Even so, using a multichannel strategy is common to branders and retailers. They resort to websites, newsletters and social networks, for the most part. They also certainly invest on advertising through referrals, search or display but it is not mentioned in my analysis because it is not visible; you cannot decide which brand ads you want to see because they arrive spontaneously.

5.2. Branders online marketing

In this subsection, I am going to deal with the heart of the subject and examine the channels, used by the branders, as well as the content which is exposed in it.

But first, it is interesting to get acquainted with some branders' points of view regarding online marketing, and more broadly digital marketing[115].

[115] Digital marketing is not my study subject but online marketing is actually often refers to this term, which is a bit broader. Digital and online marketing both concern marketing on every screen which allows to have access to internet (computer, mobile, tablet…), except that digital is not only internet-based. Digital also includes, for instance, mobile applications.

5.2.1. Branders' point of view about online (digital) marketing

Beyond a cheaper cost and a more accurate targeting (in comparison with marketing in the past), as well as the advantage consisting in a feed-back reception[116], L'Oreal sees digital marketing as an important key to win a lot of new consumers, and reach, in an accelerated way, young people and digital natives. It is, among others, via Facebook that L'Oreal exercises its strategy. The idea is that a company has to be present where consumers interact together. Therefore, when it realizes interactive advertising campaign on social networks, it increases the chance to provoke a considerable impact on sales, as this company experienced it with *Love your lips* video clips for *Rouge in love* of Lancôme.

The larger creativity possibilities also contribute to such success and are part of the digital assets too, the beauty giant asserts. Indeed, creativity, through video for instance, can trigger astounding virality.

For L'Oreal, digital is also an opportunity to increase the efficiency of media investments. For instance, before they broadcast the TV advertising for the launch of Garnier BB cream, this product was already famous thanks to the online plan.

Moreover, digital enables them to get closer to the consumers being constantly looking for proximity, tips and recommendations. So they can provide them personalised tips and better and better targeted services. A telling example is the mobile application called "The Color Genius" which allows customers to get an instantaneous make-up advice on basis of a dress picture.

Besides those opportunities, why not also take the advantage of digital marketing to broaden sales channels? L'Oreal resorts to e-commerce and creates a one-to-one relation with its customers along their online and offline process, even on mobiles, in order to better grasp their desires to buy.[117]

For Procter & Gamble, their online presence, and more broadly their digital presence, is due to the fact that it is the place where consumers are spending a lot of time. The company wants to be present where and when consumers are most receptive. Therefore not every brand needs to have presence in every media. This choice depends on the consumers of each brand. The key is thus to measure, test and learn on digital to take the right decisions. Anyway, according

[116] Etienne Gless, 25/01/2012, "Le digital révolutionne le marketing et augmente le QI de l'entreprise", http://lentreprise.lexpress.fr/marketing-et-vente/comment-l-oreal-revolutionne-sa-strategie-marketing-grace-au-web-selon-georges-edouard-dias-vp-e-business_31796.html, consulted on 22/04/2013

[117] L'Oreal, 2012, "Rapport d'activité 2012", http://www.loreal-finance.com/_docs/pdf/rapport-annuel/2012/LOREAL_Rapport-Activite-2012_FR.pdf, consulted on 23/04/2013

to Procter & Gamble's corporate marketing director, with the digital, you can take risks, and learn quickly and cost effectively.

For the company, mobile is one of the digital opportunities and it answers this proximity desire with customers by offering applications in accordance with consumers' interests.

Besides this proximity advantage, digital enables firms to simplify the customers' lives by allowing them to buy online and so improve their total experience with brands.

Moreover, as for L'Oreal, P&G recognizes that digital provides the occasion to truly connect people with brands and to maintain a one-to-one relation with them in order to better grasp their needs and preferences.[118]

We can see that this trend to create a link between brands and customers is present among every advertiser who resorts to digital, and is primordial for him. So, as for L'Oreal and P&G, Unilever sees digital as a way to talk directly to their consumers and connecting them securely with their brands across several digital channels.

For the company, digital is a gathering of consumers, from different geographic and demographic areas, taking part in a giant conversation in which the brands they love play an important part.[119]

From Henkel's point of view, the use of digital marketing, especially social media, to address potential customers is gaining in importance. They take advantage of this via online platforms to, among others, convey to their customers and consumers the added value of their innovations.[120] It is also a way to develop their sustainable development politics by means of their resource calculators for laundry at www.persil.de and for dishwashing at www.pril.it.[121]

For Henkel, as the use of electronic media for communicating with customers and users is increasingly becoming important, they focus on improving their existing websites and increase the use of social media.

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[118] Adam Davidi, 13/03/2013, "Digital marketing and branding: interview with P&G's Roisin Donnelly", http://www.guardian.co.uk/media-network/media-network-blog/2013/mar/13/digital-marketing-branding-procter-gamble, consulted on 23/04/2013

[119] Unilever, 2012, "Annual report and account 2012", http://www.unilever.com/images/ir_Unilever_AR12_tcm13-348376.pdf, consulted on 23/04/2013

[120] Henkel, 2012, "Annual report 2012", http://corporatereport.henkel.com/fileadmin/2012_GB/PDF_EN/Henkel_AR2012_en.pdf, consulted on 24/04/2013

[121] Henkel, 2012, "Sustainability report 2012", http://corporatereport.henkel.com/fileadmin/2012_NB/PDF_EN/Henkel_SR2012_en.pdf, consulted on 24/04/2013

However, operating globally, the firm becomes aware that social media can cause damage of its image if negative reports about their brands are widespread. Getting closer to the consumers via such platform is therefore not without risk given that there are not any limits in the information exchange.[120]

Concretely, how do those branders resort to online marketing? Below are the different channels that they use. Each of them will be divided in levels: corporate level, brands level and customers level (called relational programme).
According to the level, we will see the differences for the two product categories and for the three countries. However, as the trends are equivalent in those various markets, I am going to speak in general and will provide comments when dissimilarities are noticed.

5.2.2. Websites

Websites are online places where every consumer can reach every brander. Indeed, branders are at least accessible via their corporate website. Anyway, it would not be conceivable not to be present on the Web nowadays for companies of such a scale.
Additionally, branders that I analyzed communicate on multiple other websites about their brands, in a relational way, to trigger commitment. We will see that marketing has a big role to play in their brands' communication.

5.2.2.1. Corporate websites

L'Oreal, P&G, Unilever, Beiersdorf, Henkel and Reckitt Benckiser communicate first via their corporate website in order to introduce their company. The first goal is to inform consumers, investors, suppliers, jobseekers or any other stakeholders about their products, their history, their sales performance and the firm organization. The second purpose, less obvious for visitors, aims to develop a corporate image by associating the company with mission, ambition, values and ethical principles. Considering the consumer makes choice more and more knowingly, the presentation of those dimensions is non negligible. That is not all; firms push further their image development by showing themselves proactive, via their work in research and innovation or via their contribution in the sustainable development.
Thanks to scientific articles about their discoveries, experts' videos and collaboration with research and university centers, they increase their credibility in this field. Some firms go

even further with a website dedicated to sciences, such as L'Oreal with its website "L'Oreal Foundation", or P&G with its website "Science in the box".
Regarding sustainable development, some firms also have dedicated platform, such as Reckitt Benckiser with www.happier-homes.com which explains how to save energy, P&G with www.futurefriendly.com which provides tips for every device in every room of a house to be eco-friendly, or Unilever with its www.cleanerplanetplan.com which has a similar goal.

5.2.2.2. Brands' websites

Beyond corporate website, analyzed firms own a website per product brand, such as Garnier for L'Oreal, Ariel for P&G, Dove for Unilever, Airwick for Reckitt Benckiser… with a few exceptions. Indeed some brands do not have one.
It is in this kind of website, relational characterized, that marketing essentially acts. It resorts to the consumer's commitment by providing tips and tricks, consumers' opinions, diagnostics, articles and videos about multiple subjects, products tests and vouchers.

After having presented those tools, we will see that, according to the product category, the involvement is not the same. Therefore, efforts made by the firms to create interactivity are a bit different for a relational website regarding household goods or regarding personal care goods.
Among those strategies to trigger commitment, we can also notice variations depending on the countries. That is what I am going to expose now.

Tips and tricks
First we have tips and tricks which are sometimes shared by a person that companies consider as an expert. Firms realize, from time to time, relayed communication by calling on opinion leaders in order to influence visitors. It is, for instance, the case of Herbal Essences (P&G) in the United Kingdom which resorts to Ben Cook, London-born celebrity stylist and Herbal Essences Ambassador.
This information spread is made via articles or through videos which is more involving. The goal of this approach is, beyond triggering commitment, to make the promotion of the company's products and show consumers that, when they have a specific need, particular product properties are useful to fulfill it. For example, Ariel (P&G) advises its customers to use Ariel Derma Sensitive to protect sensitive skins.

Besides, consumers can also read tips and tricks from other consumers and sometimes have the opportunity to leave their own ones. This strategy aims to follow the trend observed among consumers who trust what other consumers say.

The sharing of the consumers' opinions

There is another interactive tool which aims to follow this trend: the sharing of the consumers' opinions. Actually, firms give them the possibility to rate brand products. However, there is a limit; we can wonder if this evaluation is not biased following a potential filtration of consumers' comments which would not be rewarding for the firm.

Nevertheless, during the analysis among the three markets, I observed that this tool was not always well highlighted in the UK, as we can see in the examples below.

Reckitt Benckiser

France

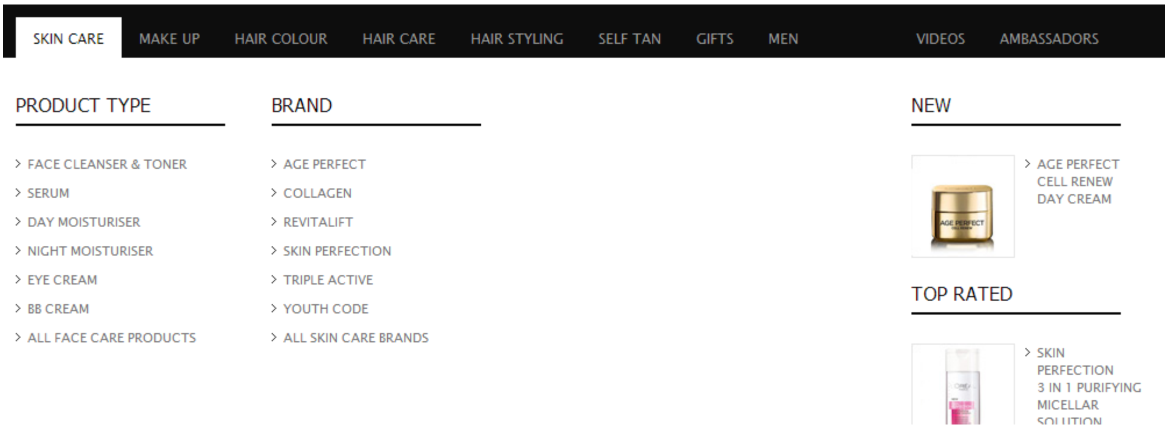
Germany

UK

L'Oreal

France

UK



Procter & Gamble

France

Germany

UK

France

Germany

UK

Diagnostic services and recommendation tools

Assisting consumers in the choice of a product is also a major trend that I could observe in this kind of website. To reach this goal, firms offer a diagnostic service, that is to say they ask various questions to consumers to target their needs accurately and then, they suggest appropriate products to consumers in accordance with their answers. Personal care products are subjected to that kind of help, such as L'Oreal Paris, Garnier and Head & Shoulders, as well as household products, such as Ariel with its "products selector".

Even if some brands do not allow the consumers to get a diagnosis, they still offer certain ergonomics by presenting products according to stains, to rooms, to surfaces, in the case of some household products, such as Vanish, Cif and Cillit Bang, for instance. This navigation ease also exists for personal care products such as Dove which presents its products by categories (Ex: Hair beauty) and subcategories (Ex: Colored hair).

Besides, brands are used to resorting to a recommendation tool which suggests to visitors, after they have consulted a product, other products that could also interest them.

As seen in the theory, navigation should be easy in order to increase customers' involvement and comfort levels. In this manner, they will be more likely to purchase.

Informative articles/videos

To involve more consumers in their products choice, some brands expose informative articles and/or videos on their website. For instance, Dove released an article to inform people about sweating, Head & Shoulders explains what dandruff is, Dettol provides information about allergens…

Other articles show the commitment of the brand in the sustainable development (Ex: Ariel, Persil) and/or in the sciences (Ex: Pantene) and send consumers to dedicated websites to those fields, such as seen above.

Always in an informative goal, some branders own a website which explains how to clean or how to wash up. Unilever has one in the UK, www.cleanipedia.co.uk, as well as Reckitt Benckiser, www.dishwashingexpert.co.uk.

Products tests and vouchers

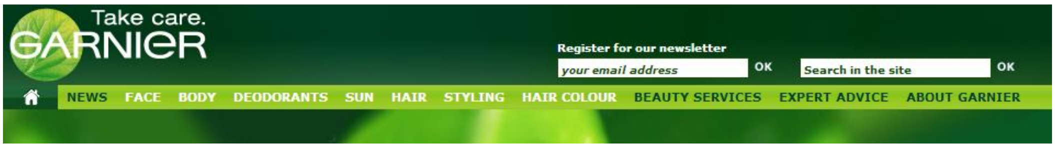
In addition to the information supply in the form of tips and tricks, consumers' opinions, personalized diagnosis and articles and videos, brands try to push further the consumers' commitment with promotion, either with monetary incentives (discount vouchers), or with product promotions (products tests), the purpose being to generate trials.

However, offering coupons does not seem to be so common in the UK, or in any case it is less prominent, as we can see in the examples below.

L'Oreal

France

UK



Reckitt Benckiser

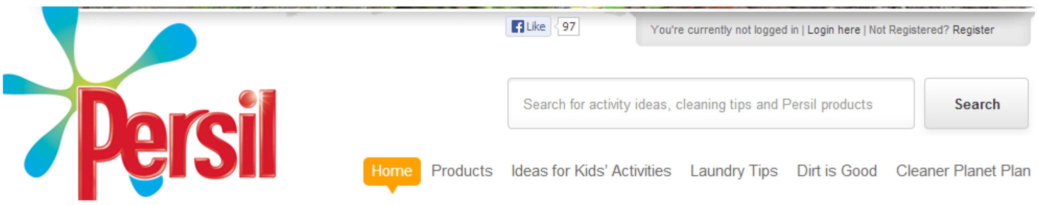
France

UK

Unilever

France

UK



France

UK

Procter & Gamble

France

UK

Bon de réduction

France

UK

Beiersdorf

France

UK

In Germany, discount vouchers exist (Ariel, Nivea) but not as much as in France.

Online purchase services

After being influenced by marketing techniques or following a spontaneous move, consumers have the possibility to buy products online via the brand website which sends them to the site of one of the retailers. L'Oreal Paris in France, as well as Nivea in Germany and the UK are exceptions, they suggest to customers that they buy products on their online shop directly. The fact that they own a big products range is certainly the reason which pushed those brands to create an e-shop.

Household category versus personal care category

After the presentation of all those marketing strategies, we can see that the efforts made by the firms to create interactivity are real. I would however add that this interactivity is not always well-developed on every website given that, in general, it depends on the products category. Indeed, personal care products are much more involving than household ones. As L'Oreal asserts, "Beauty inspires lively exchanges and creates strong bonds; consumers are always looking to build close relationships and find tips and recommendations."[122] Still, companies active in household goods try hard to involve visitors as much as possible. It is a bigger challenge which requires being imaginative. Ariel is a good example and gives tricks to mothers in order to get the participation of children in housework by making fun laundry. Those tricks have an underlying goal as well which is to ensure that children associate laundry with a positive image. When they are old enough to wash, they will be more likely to be involved in this task and to use Ariel products.

[122] L'Oreal, 2012, "Annual report 2012", http://www.loreal-finance.com/_docs/pdf/rapport-annuel/2012/LOREAL_Rapport-Activite-2012_GB.pdf, consulted on 25/04/2013

Elements giving a specific image to the brand

Beyond those tools that make a website interactive, some elements are added to those websites to give a specific image to the brand. They will favor the sales of its products.

The first element which constitutes this current trend is resorting to ambassadors. Gillette with Adrien Brody, Gael Garcia Bernal and André 3000 Benjamin; L'Oreal-Paris with Jennifer Lopez, Claudia Schiffer and its 15 other ambassadors; and Head & shoulders with Michael Phelps are a few examples. In this way, brands use the image associated to those celebrities to convey a positive feeling among consumers. However, as the household products category is less involving, it does not seem to follow the same trend.

Secondly, some brands develop their image by associating themselves with events such as Gillette with football game in order to benefit the values linked to this sport.

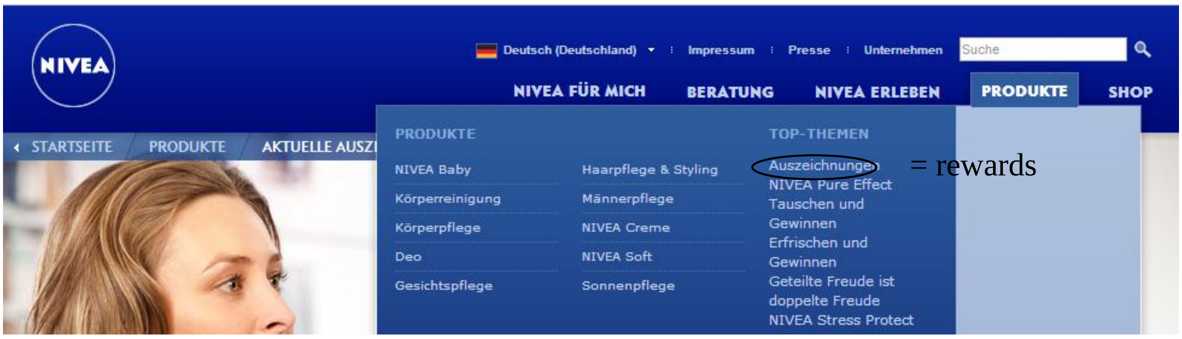
Partnership with complementary products is a third element which contributes to the image development of brands.

Always to achieve the same goal, as well as to increase their credibility and try to show objectivity, brands display prizes and distinction that they have received for some of their products. They can have several forms; "voted product of the year" mention, recommendations by complementary products (Ex: Vileda recommends Cif in France) or press articles/external organization which extols the virtues of the products.

By analyzing the trends among the German, French and English markets, I noticed that, in Germany, mentions awarding products were much more highlighted than in France and in the UK. Here are some examples:

Beiersdorf

Germany



France

UK

Reckitt Benckiser

Germany

France

UK

Procter & Gamble

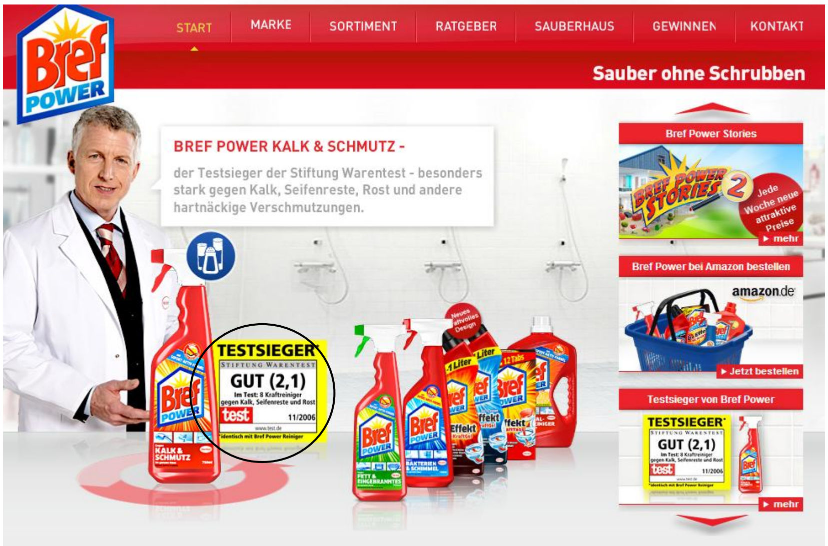
Germany

France

Henkel

Germany

Germany



Computer technologies

In addition to all those marketing techniques, there are computer technologies which allow companies to collect information about visitors' online activities. Marketing is everywhere, even where we do not expect it. Those technologies are multiple and include cookies, web beacons and other ones. Cookies are files placed on visitors' computers to monitor how they use the web in order to personalize their online experience. This sentence is a beautiful way to say to consumers that cookies memorize visited website areas, the time spent on a website, choices made by the visitor (language, country…), the websites which were visited before and after the visit of a particular website, etc.[123] As for web beacons, they enable firms to count the number of users who have visited a web page, for instance. They also can be included in e-mails to learn if messages have been opened, acted on or forwarded.

Those technologies are actually used, among others, to deliver interest-based ad, namely advertising which is more relevant to the visitor's interest. Still, the number of times the internet user sees an ad is limited.

However, in order to respect privacy, websites have to let visitors the choice to opt-out.[124]

Another computer technology feeds websites and helps firms to add new consumers, engagement and intelligence to their marketing plans. This is possible thanks to applications offered by companies such as *Add This* for instance, which give the possibility to create share buttons to boost traffic, follow buttons to increase fans and followers, welcome bar to increase conversions with custom greetings and trending content to boost social engagement.[125]

5.2.2.3. Relational programmes

Besides websites where branders expose their brands and play on the relational aspect, branders also have relational programmes which are privileged spaces for each consumer and which also sometimes have the function of community websites.

Relational program allows branders to meet the consumers' expectations, who prefer to find a maximum of brands they like in one and unique program. The advantage is that consumers have the possibility to be kept informed without having to connect to the brand website. The content is diversified; indeed, such a website provides privileged offers for members, namely products tests, tips… but also articles and videos about various subjects (beauty, home…), as well as discount vouchers. Relational programmes often offer a multiplicity of contact points thanks to a full digital ecosystem which includes websites but also newsletters, social networks, mobile applications… enabling members to connect anywhere and anytime.

[123] Unilever, May 2012, "Cookie policy", http://www.unilever.fr/resource/cookiepolicy/index.aspx, consulted on 26/04/2013

[124] P&G, 02/01/2012, "About Interest-Based Advertising", http://www.pg.com/en_US/privacy/en_na/oba_notice.shtml, consulted on 26/04/2013

[125] Add This, http://www.addthis.com/social-plugins#.UXqyIKKeO8A, consulted on 26/04/2013

Every analyzed brander owns this kind of website, except Reckitt Benckiser, it seems to me. The reason may be that it is the only one which is only active in household products being less involving, as explained previously.
Procter & Gamble disposes of a relational programme present on the three markets: “Envie de plus” in France, “Super savy me” in United Kingdom and “For me” in Germany, while Unilever seems only to have “Ma vie en couleurs” in France.
L’Oreal with “My Garnier” in France, “L’Oreal Insider” in the UK and “L’Oreal Paris VIP Lounge” in Germany also offer advantages of a relational program, but are much more personalized than those of P&G or Unilever, given that they provide coaching program and diagnostic service. The internet users have therefore to give more information about themselves to allow L’Oreal to present information tailored to their interests. Moreover, consumers also have the opportunity to discuss with other ones on forums.
As far as Beiersdorf is concerned, it resorts to “Nivea & moi” in France and “Nivea für mich” in Germany, while no relational program seems to exist in the UK.
Henkel does not seem either to use this kind of program in the UK, but still owns “La belle adresse” in France and “Lifetimes” in Germany.

5.2.2.4. Summary and conclusion

Websites are mainly developed to inform the customers, it is a kind of shop window, but in order to motivate them to pay attention to their content, firms use various tools. They are similar for the different studied products categories and countries, even if there are shades regarding their use frequency.
They are useful to reach a certain level of commitment and proximity (success keys of the online marketing) which both increase with the kind of website: very low for corporate websites, high for brand websites and very high for relational programmes. These two dimensions are even more important for the websites regarding the high involvement personal care category, where firms insist much more on personalised services, such as tips and recommendations.
So, as long as the marketers do not forget to consider these success keys, their possibilities to attract the customers and make them loyal are numerous.
Attention, it is not because the commitment and proximity are very low for corporate websites that they will not lead the companies to success. The goal of this kind of platform is simply

not the same as for the two kind of relational websites (brands websites and relational programmes) and rather tends to inform stakeholders in a formal way.

5.2.3. Social networks

There is a revolution in the way firms communicate on internet with their customers. It is called social media marketing. Indeed, every brander that I have studied is active on at least one social medium. To meet them more easily on those platforms, they often display a logo on their website mentioning on which ones they are present. Some branders cover a majority, such as L'Oreal present on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Youtube, Google +, Linked In, Flickr and Instagram.
For some brands like the high involvement beauty category, social media are even more important. This could explain the strong presence of L'Oreal on those platforms.

The most successful one in the world is without any doubt Facebook, which has a social strategy and connects people to each other. Twitter, being a micro blog, has rather a "broadcast" strategy. Indeed, Twitter's aim is rather to convey a message to a high number of followers. As far as the other networks are concerned, they are related to the sharing of pictures, music, video and professional information.

As Facebook social network is the world leader, I have focused my research on it.[126]
What explains the firms' presence on Facebook is very simple and there are several reasons. First, it is the ultimate platform to generate interaction with their customers and keep them engaged. As its name suggests, interaction goes in both ways. For the consumers, the most obvious way is that which goes from the brand to the customer, but it goes far beyond. Actually, except the fact that firms intervene in the conversations people have with each other to spread messages about themselves and their products, they listen as well to them to understand their wants and needs, and act consequently.
The second reason to resort to Facebook is that it allows companies to create massive traffic and sales thanks to the "friend feed". Indeed, the fact that people can like, comment or share the firms' contents has a big impact and may be seen by a lot of "friends".

[126] Social Media are a set of sharing systems, while social networks are a division of Social Media. Actually, social networks concern social link between individuals. (Place des réseaux, February 2011, "Quelle difference entre media sociaux et réseaux sociaux?", http://www.placedesreseaux.com/Dossiers/reseaux-sociaux/difference-media-et-reseaux-1.html, consulted on 27/04/2013)

So how are P&G, Unilever, L'Oreal, Reckitt Benckiser, Beiersdorf and Henkel leveraging this power to their benefit?

I will deal first with the communication of some of their brands active, on the one hand, in personal care products and, on the other hand, in household products. Branders also communicate about their firms and about their relational programmes, but I have rather focused my Facebook analysis on their brands' communication, being more interesting and more relevant in the case of McBride.

5.2.3.1. Brands' pages

Personal care products

Axe in France or Lynx in the UK (P&G) generates an incredible number of fans in comparison with the other brands (over 1 million fans for each). It is therefore interesting to look into their strategy.

The reason of this infatuation is, first, the image that this brand conveys: virility, power and glamour. Furthermore, the brand tries to capture the visitors' attention with essentially fun pictures that make consumers react. Those pictures are judiciously chosen because they reflect the brand image. Therefore photographs are often linked to an astronaut (Axe/Lynx mascot), to football and to girls, the goal is to make laugh or dream. (*cf. examples below*)

Besides, as the content is what stimulates the internet and social media, it is important to take care of it and not send insignificant posts or mass promotions. Sometimes people join a brand page that relentlessly hypes up something which is useless. It is irritating for the visitor. So Axe/Lynx, with its "fun" strategy, seems to ensure that such a problem does not occur.

Making “laugh”:

Effet Axe
3 avril

Certains ont déjà tenté de revenir en héros... FAIL !

J'aime · Commenter · Partager 29

477 personnes aiment ça.

Some have already tried to come back as heroes… FAIL!

Effet Axe
22 avril

Pour attirer des filles Zlatan devrait plutôt mettre du AXE non ? ;)

J'aime · Commenter · Partager 74

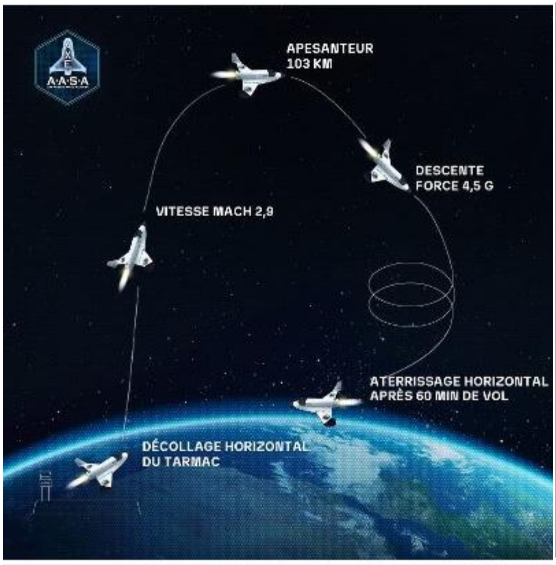
778 personnes aiment ça.

To attract girls Zlatan should rather use AXE, shouldn’t he? ;)

Making “dream”:

Effet Axe
23 avril

AXE t'emmène dans l'Espace pour un voyage de folie de 60 minutes ! La preuve !



J'aime · Commenter · Partager 52

1 980 personnes aiment ça.

Axe takes you into space for a mad trip of 60 minutes! The proof!

Effet Axe
16 avril

[Space Code N°10] Alors, chaud pour te mouiller ? N'oublie pas ton gel douche AXE Apollo ;)

J'aime · Commenter · Partager 22

424 personnes aiment ça.

[Space Code N°10] Then, ready to get wet? Don’t forget your AXE Apollo shower gel ;)

The second brand which is quite successful on Facebook is L'Oreal Paris, especially in France because it is a French brand. The reason for its success is also certainly explained by its strong brand image which attracts consumers more easily.

When the brand wants to make people react and create interaction, it is rather through questions asked to visitors. Those questions are very often linked to a product that L'Oreal Paris wants to highlight. It can be sentences with a blank to fill or open ended questions to answer. For instance, "My favourite nail polish color is ……..” or "With the return of warm weather, the tanned skins are a must! Discover our selection of tans suited to every need. Mist, foam or milk: what is your ideal texture?" A comment on a wall post is actually more powerful than getting someone to read it and take an action without interacting. This kind of interaction ensures that more people will be exposed. (*cf. example 1*)

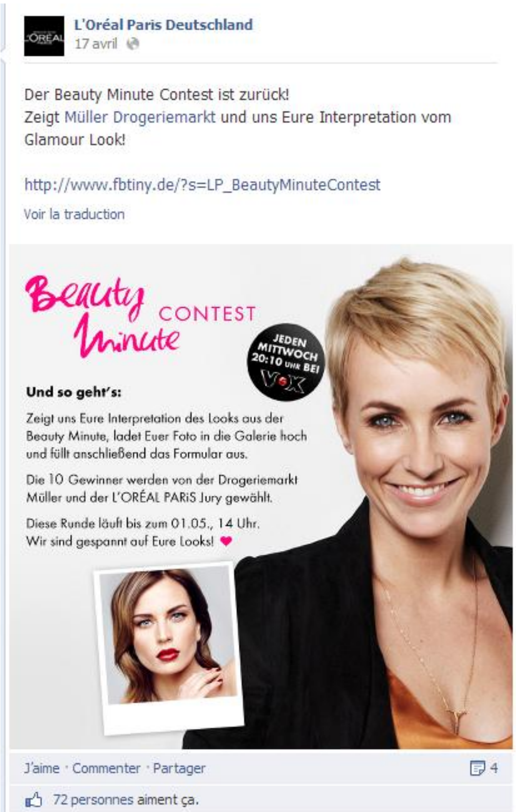
Moreover, the brand sees to it that consumers get involved by providing them tips in the form of articles or videos and asking them afterwards what they think about them or what their own are (*cf. example 2*). It is important to listen to their comments and react on them to give internet users a feeling of inclusion.

Another main element which feeds the L'Oreal Paris website to, again, achieve this commitment goal is contests organized by the brand. (*cf. example 3*) This is a win-win situation for the firm and the internet users. On the one hand, it multiplies the chances that the post is seen by a lot of other "friends" thanks to internet users interacting via the like/comment/share function. On the other hand, they have the possibility to receive a gift.

Finally, for L'Oreal, Facebook is also the opportunity to convince more by playing on the recommendation power exerted by loyal consumers or their brand ambassadors (*cf. example 4*). Actually, a message conveyed by an outsider about a product can have more effects on the consumers' attitude than if it was relayed by the company directly. As seen before, consumers tend to be suspicious when the spokesperson is the company and they rather trust what other consumers say.

Example 1: With the Top Coat Color Riche of L'Oreal Paris, manicure becomes a breeze! Will you opt for the Smoky to apply a hazy screen on your nail polish, or confetti to offer an arty touch to your nails?

Example 2



Example 3

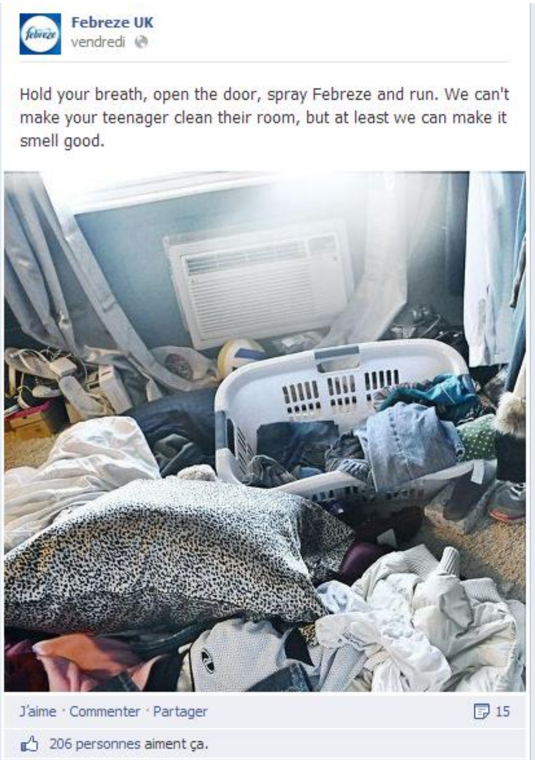
Example 4

Household products

Although it is more difficult to communicate on Facebook for household products and few brands active in this products category are present on it, some of them still set up on this platform and are able to attract the consumers' interest.

For instance, for Unilever UK, about 14 brands out of 18[127] are available on Facebook and only 3 out of those 14 brands concern household products (Persil, Comfort & Surf). In France, only 5 brands out of 18 are available on Facebook and only one of them is a household product (Cajoline, the counterpart of "Comfort" in UK). Regarding Unilever in Germany, they have 3 brands out of 8 on Facebook and do not have any household products available on this social network.

As household products, Febreze in UK or Ariel in Germany and France (P&G) are relatively popular on this platform. Their main strength is to tell stories that strike a chord with their prospects. In fact, a relatable experience can improve the link with customers and social media power.



[127] The 18 brands only include household and personal care brands.

Click on "Like" if you also fill your suitcases with "Just in case of" instead of really useful clothes!

Who has never been faced with such a situation?

Apart from this specific strategy, there are other ways used by Febreze and Ariel on Facebook in order to get more viewers.

First, they organize contests where customers have the chance to win a prize.

Secondly, these brands are used to asking open ended questions or questions with a blank, as for L'Oreal, such as "What was the favourite scent when you were a child?" or "A house without Febreze is like ………". It is a way to enhance the bond with their customers in the same time.

Thirdly, they include videos in their post with diversified contents to arouse internet users' interest. This very powerful tool enables the visitors to better assimilate the information conveyed by firms. Moreover, it is a way to make a page absorbing and to increase the time spent on it.

Another current trend observed on Facebook is to solicit fans through events as Easter feast, Valentine's Day or spring arrival. It enables firms to attract the consumers' attention in this environment full of traditional communication.

Cajoline in France (Comfort in the UK), a Unilever brand, uses a different strategy from the ones I already have analyzed among the previous brands. So it is interesting to know a bit more about it.

The teddy bear mascot of Cajoline plays an important role in the strategy of the brand given that, through its affective character, it attracts the consumers' sympathy. The Cajoline's strategy is to ensure that the bear fills the Facebook page with life, and that the consumers forget the firm's presence behind. As a reminder, a source seen as having an interest in influencing outcomes would be a reason for distrust, in the consumer's point of view. So with this strategy, such a problem is avoided.

The brand creates a story around this bear always in action (Cooking pancakes for Candlemas, reading the new book "The Hunger games"…) or in movement (Once being seen in big cities, once walking in the forest, once on the "The voice" stage, once at a musical show or once in the "Top chef" kitchens). Being either virtually, or really present in these places, he is always seeking to encourage the visitors' interacting via the three possible functions: "Like", "Share", or "Comment" function. (*cf. examples below*)

"Like" function: Today is a special day for my grandmother! Happy feast grandma ♥ Click "like" if your grandma is important for you!

"Share" function: Finally spring! It's the return of beautiful days♥ Share this picture on a friend's wall to offer this wonderful floral landscape!

"Comment" function: After some wonderful moments spent in Amsterdam, I have just arrived in Romania! Do we play together? How many bear cubs can you see on this postcard?

"Comment" function: I don't know if you are, but I, I'm a big fan of TOP CHEF! It's my Monday programme! Who do you think will be the final winner?

5.2.3.2. Summary and conclusion

Every brand, on the three different markets and in the two different categories, uses, in general, alternatively most of the techniques that I have explained; contests, fun content, tips, content linked to events, videos, ambassadors and pictures that visitors can relate to in order to stimulate the use of the like/comment/share function. However, as we have seen, they tend to favour one over the others. Indeed, Axe rather uses the fun, while L'Oreal gets its prospects to interact with their posts (regarding their products directly) rather via questions which are asked them. As far as Ariel and Febreze are concerned, they are used to syndicating news stories that their prospects can relate to, while Cajoline resorts most of the time to stories around its mascot.

Brand's use frequency of Facebook is, in general, on the three markets, at least once a day and, most of the time, two or three times a day. When brands are present on social networks, they have to accept it and devote enough time. Yes, creating a Facebook page is free but all related activities are no easy task: make the page known, animate the community, regularly publish content… They have to show their presence, which is the driving force of social networks. Besides, often, when consumers want to speak directly to a brand and receive a quick answer, they do it through social networks. It is the proof that firms have to be quite present in order to be able to react within an appropriate period of time.

5.2.4. Newsletters

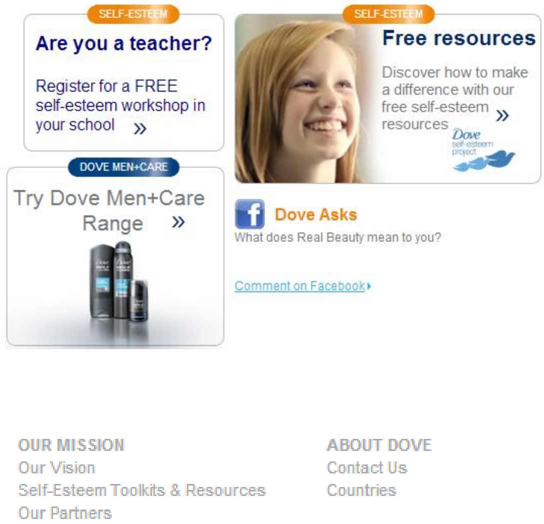
The following channel used by branders deals with newsletters.

In general, newsletters exist for branders (P&G, L'Oréal, Reckitt Benckiser, Henkel,…) but hardly ever for their brands separately, except those which have a big reputation as two of L'Oreal brands (L'Oréal Paris and Garnier), or as the famous brand of Beiersdorf (Nivea).
The other firms do not devote newsletters for a single brand, such as, for instance, Head & Shoulders, Rexona, Airwick or Ariel. Especially the last two quoted are not enough involving to share news with consumers because they are household products.
If, despite a stronger involvement for personal care products, this trend still seems nonexistent, the German market analysis makes me think that this market would be an exception. Indeed, some of the personal care brands in Germany are subjected to newsletters (*cf. examples below*).
In addition to this, branders on the three markets send out information about their products range, following the members' subscriptions to relational programmes.

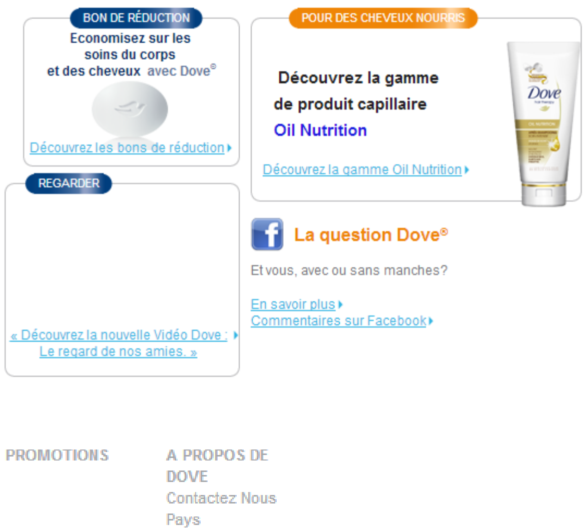
Unilever : Dove

Germany

UK



France



Procter & Gamble : Gillette

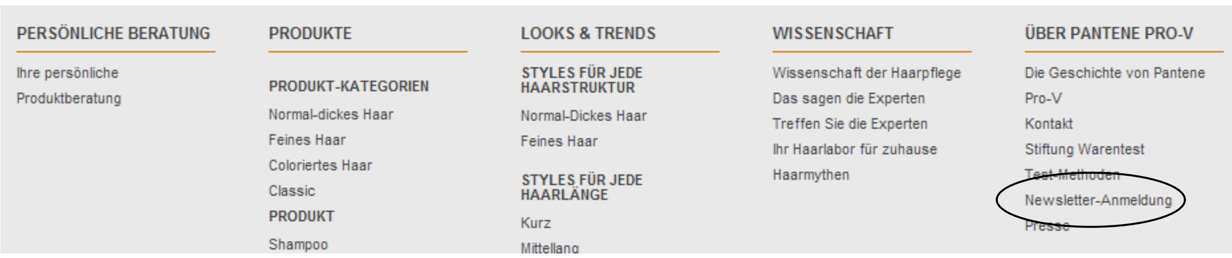
Germany

UK

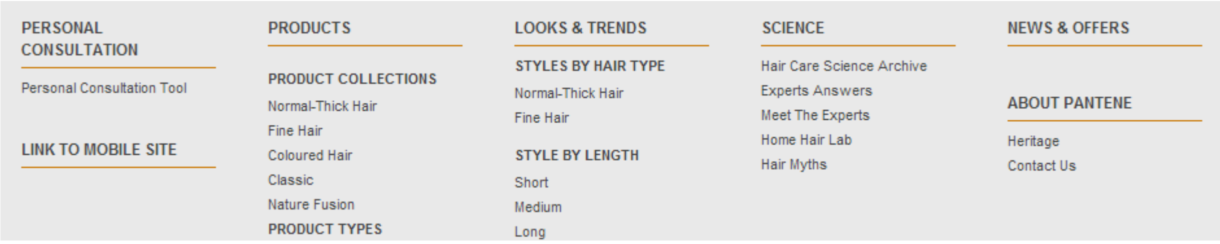
France

Procter & Gamble : Pantene

Germany



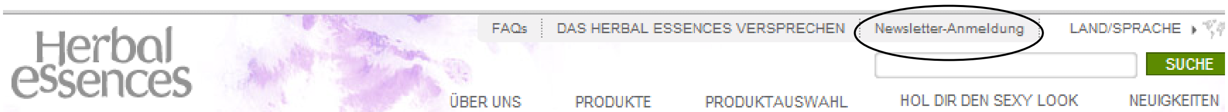
UK



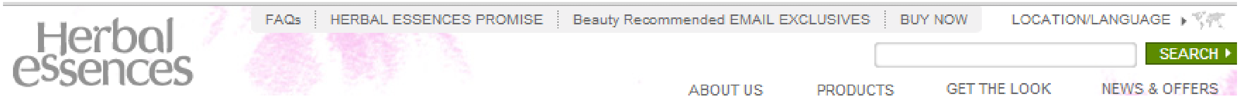
France

Procter & Gamble : Herbal Essences

Germany



UK



5.2.4.1. Corporate newsletters

Even if newsletters exist at the corporate level rather than at the level of their brands, the sending frequency is quite low. For instance, P&G runs a quarterly one. Anyway, recipients have not signed up to receive mountains of copies. So it is better to gather relevant and quality information, and send it in a reasonable period of time.

In addition to a low sending frequency (even if it is appropriate), newsletters do not always seem to be available for each country. You can see below those to which I could subscribe.

By analyzing this board, P&G seems to have a more local strategy, while Reckitt Benckiser has an international one.

Regarding L'Oreal, if this firm is active on the French market, in addition to its international strategy, it is certainly explained by the fact that it is a French company. I would provide the same explanation for Henkel and Beiersdorf, being both German companies.
As far as Unilever is concerned, no newsletters appear to exist.

	International	France	UK	Germany
Procter & Gamble		X	X	X
Unilever				
Reckitt Benckiser	X			
L'Oreal	X	X		
Henkel				X
Beiersdorf	X			X

When visitors subscribe to the company newsletter, they sometimes have to specify their profile. It is the case for L'Oreal and Beiersdorf which want to know if the subscriber is rather a consumer, an investor, a journalist… in order to send an appropriate content. Those persons subscribing to this kind of newsletters have, in general, a real interest for the firm and do not expect any specific advantages (monetary or other).

This kind of newsletters does not really have a marketing goal, but it is rather to give the recipient value by offering industry news. Indeed, spread information through this online channel can concern news about the involvement of the company in the sustainable development. It mainly includes environment protection, corporate and social responsibility and solidarity. P&G, for instance, plays an important role in this field.
Newsletters can also deal with research and innovation regarding the company's products, or events organized around their firms, such as Henkel innovation challenge or P&G's partnership with Olympic games.
Moreover, firms resort to newsletters to release reports concerning corporate performance.

5.2.4.2. Brands' newsletters

The purpose of brands' newsletters is quite different from corporate ones in the sense that internet users are expecting added value. They give their e-mail address when they are sure that there is an interest for them. What they are looking for is to make the most of promotions and not really to receive information about brands. So sending brands' newsletters is more frequent than corporate ones: for example, for Garnier and Nivea, they are sent monthly.

The content is diversified and is related to new products, special offers, competitions and sometimes tips. Actually, not every brand offers personalized advice. Some of them, as Garnier, L'Oreal Paris and Nivea, target their content and ask internet users their age, sex, family status and so on when they are subscribing. Those brands can therefore have a much more personalized relationship with their customers. Garnier UK goes even further and asks internet users to select, among a list of products, those they currently use, as well as the purchase they have done in the last 6 months, to better understand their customers' needs and desires.

5.2.4.3. Relational programmes newsletters

Through members' subscriptions to a relational programme as My Garnier (L'Oreal), Lifetimes/La belle addresse (Henkel), Ma vie en couleurs (Unilever)…, branders also resort to newsletters. They have the same goal as newsletters available on brands websites, except that they have a much more relational aspect and they cover the whole range of branders' products.

It is much more relational because their sending frequency is higher (Twice a month for "Ma vie en couleurs" (Unilever in France) and "For me" (P&G in Germany), for instance) and because branders offer much more news about available services and promotions: games, tips and tricks, articles about various subjects of daily life, as well as coupons, samples and tests.

5.2.4.4. Summary and conclusion

On the three markets, newsletters rather exist for information regarding the firms and their relational programmes. It seems that there are very few for their brands separately (at least in France and in the UK), and even fewer for household products. In other words, if this channel is present for a particular brand, it is especially in Germany for personal care products.

Whatever the level to which the newsletters act (corporate – brand – relational programme), the goal is not to push a maximum of information on the pretext that it is the purpose of this channel. Indeed, it allows consumers to be up to date without having to go on particular websites every day but it is not a reason to send content massively and in an irrelevant way. It is essential to sort the conveyed information in order to keep them interested, with tips, products news, special offers and so on (for brands and relational programmes newsletters), or with quality news (for corporate newsletters). The more it will be relevant, the more it will generate openings.

5.3. Retailers online marketing

As branders also communicate via the retailers' online channels, I am going to deal with their marketing techniques through those platforms.
Furthermore, it is interesting to know how retailers in general highlight their products online, so that McBride can make them suggestions regarding private label online development.

Before realising this analysis, it seems important to me to know a bit more about retailers' general online strategy and opportunities. Those pieces of information were released by *IGD*, a company providing research, information and education for the food and grocery industry.

5.3.1. Retailers' general online strategy and opportunities

France

E-commerce is obviously becoming increasingly popular and Carrefour definitely wants to continue to take advantage of it by developing online.
For Carrefour, Internet is a way to build more bridges with their stores. Actually, to satisfy the customers who are always seeking speed, practicality and bargains, this firm is increasing the number of shopping options. So, as well as e-commerce, it has drive-in facilities, home deliveries and mobile applications.[128]
Besides, as creating a clear PL offer for shoppers seems to be one of Carrefour's priorities[129], it would be the opportunity to combine PL with online marketing, according to me. In fact, given the deterioration in shopper sentiment in 2011, PL is likely to remain a focus for retailers.[130]

For Lerclerc, online development is also a key, with the expansion of the drive service contributing to around one third of market share gains. As for Carrefour, this online presence could be the opportunity to enhance PL image via the development of the value credentials of private label (being their third trading priorities)[131].

[128] Carrefour, 2011, "Annual Activity and Sustainability report", http://www.carrefour.com/sites/default/files/RADDEN2011.pdf, consulted on 30/04/2013
[129] IGD, "Retail profile Carrefour", http://www.retailanalysis.igd.com/, consulted on 30/04/2013
[130] IGD, "France country presentation" , http://www.retailanalysis.igd.com/, consulted on 30/04/2013
[131] IGD, "Retail profile Leclerc" & " Leclerc Snapshot", http://www.retailanalysis.igd.com/, consulted on 30/04/2013

UK

In the UK, we can observe the same trend as in France: retailers are developing their online propositions to meet changing shopping trends. Actually, online is the fastest growing sector of this market and provides much scope for growth.[132]

So, the third trading priority of Sainsbury's is to reach more customers through additional channels: notably online sales and "Click & collect". Besides, this retailer is committed to increasing digital engagement with shoppers.

Those projects are even more encouraging for them when we see the strong 3rd quarter results they have obtained, to which online, growing by 15%, has contributed.[133]

Tesco, the leading player in the UK online grocery market, with the highest household penetration[134], also planned to deepen their presence in the online sector over the time thanks to more formats and channels.[135]

Even if Aldi does not resort to e-commerce, it has an online strategy though. Indeed, the customers can sign up for the e-mail newsletter on Aldi's webpage. Moreover, the discounter uses social media for its advertising activities. Aldi Süd, for instance, is now active on Twitter and Facebook, across a number of its international markets, and aims to create a fun image and encourage followers and fans to check back on a regular basis. A recent example of a Twitter campaign that is ongoing in the UK is Aldi regularly offering voucher giveaways for followers who use the hashtag #Aldihour at the right time. Social networks are also used by Aldi to answer individual queries or concerns from shoppers.[136]

Germany

In Germany, online, as a format for grocery retail, is not so developed as in some other markets such as France and the UK. Nevertheless, REWE and EDEKA, among others, are testing drive-in services which have the potential to develop quickly if consumers adopt this system.

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[132] IGD, "UK country presentation ", http://www.retailanalysis.igd.com/, consulted on 30/04/2013
[133] IGD, "Sainsbury's snapshot ", http://www.retailanalysis.igd.com/, consulted on 30/04/2013
[134] IGD, "UK online grocery channel ", http://www.retailanalysis.igd.com/, consulted on 30/04/2013
[135] IGD, "Tesco retailer presentation", http://www.retailanalysis.igd.com/, consulted on 30/04/2013
[136] IGD, "Retail profile Aldi", http://www.retailanalysis.igd.com/, consulted on 01/05/2013

Regarding PL, Germany has one of the highest levels of retailer brand penetration in Europe. In fact, PL share is more than 30% of the market.[137]

Although e-commerce is under-developed in this country, EDEKA owns two online grocery shops which give details of the latest offers and publish news from the retailer. Besides, it takes advantage of online channels, such as social media, to enhance its retail brand. Indeed, EDEKA has a poor price image and, in a discounter-dominated German market, price image is a challenge. So, in November 2011, the retailer created a Facebook page which allows EDEKA to interact and share information about promotions with shoppers.[138]

As far as REWE is concerned, online is also part of its activities. This retailer is adapting its marketing strategy to make use of the internet and social media.
First, it is the first German retailer to offer both click & collect and a home delivery service.
Secondly, in addition to its websites, it resorts to Facebook where it has dedicated pages to its premium PL REWE Feine Welt and its REWE Drive service. So REWE can interact with its customers who are much more likely to regularly visit a Facebook page than a website.[139]

Given the progress made in the e-commerce, in addition to the online channels in general, we can notice that there are many online marketing opportunities and it is what I am going to deal with now.

[137] IGD, "Germany presentation", http://www.retailanalysis.igd.com/, consulted on 01/05/2013
[138] IGD, "Retail profile Edeka", http://www.retailanalysis.igd.com/, consulted on 01/05/2013
[139] IGD, "Retail profile Rewe", http://www.retailanalysis.igd.com/, consulted on 01/05/2013

5.3.2. Websites

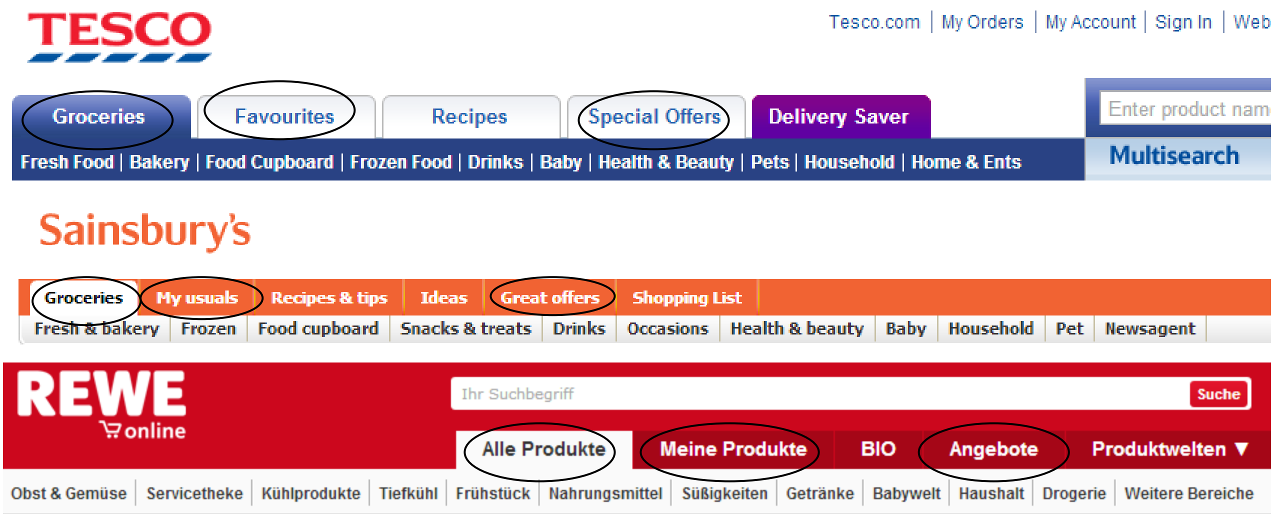
Beyond corporate websites where retailers provide information about their company, their values, their commitment, their performance and so on, retailers are, from a marketing point of view, essentially active on websites where they present their various services (shop, bank, travel, mobile…), as well as on merchant websites.
Here is an example of these kinds of websites:

Websites presenting firms' various services	**Merchant websites (Grocery)**
www.carrefour.fr	www.courses.carrefour.fr www.ooshop.fr
www.e-leclerc.com	www.leclercdrive.fr
www.leaderprice.fr	www.leaderdrive.fr
www.tesco.co.uk	www.tesco.co.uk/grocery
www.sainsburys.co.uk	www.sainsburys.co.uk/grocery
www.aldi.co.uk	-
www.edeka.de	www.edeka24.de
www.rewe.de	www.rewe-online.de
www.aldi-nord.de www.aldi-sued.de	- -

I am going to focus mainly on merchant websites related to grocery, because it better corresponds to my research subject concerning fast moving consumer goods and, especially, household and personal care products.

<u>Opportunities for branders' products</u>
Via those websites, branders have a lot of possibilities to communicate about their products and, in any case, highlight them. It is a good way for acquisition and driving penetration, and enables advertisers to create additional visibility of promotions.
Moreover, advertising via this channel gives branders/retailers the possibility to target customers by basing themselves on their purchase behaviour throughout their shopping experience. Actually, customers can shop via products categories pages, via their usuals/favorites or via offers (*cf. examples below*). So by targeting customers on specific

categories or run of site, branders can be sure to communicate their message to the most relevant customers to their brand.



Carrefour, Leclerc, Leader Price and Edeka seem to organize their products only via products categories and sometimes via novelties and promotions, but not via products that customers have bought during their last orders (my usuals/favorites).

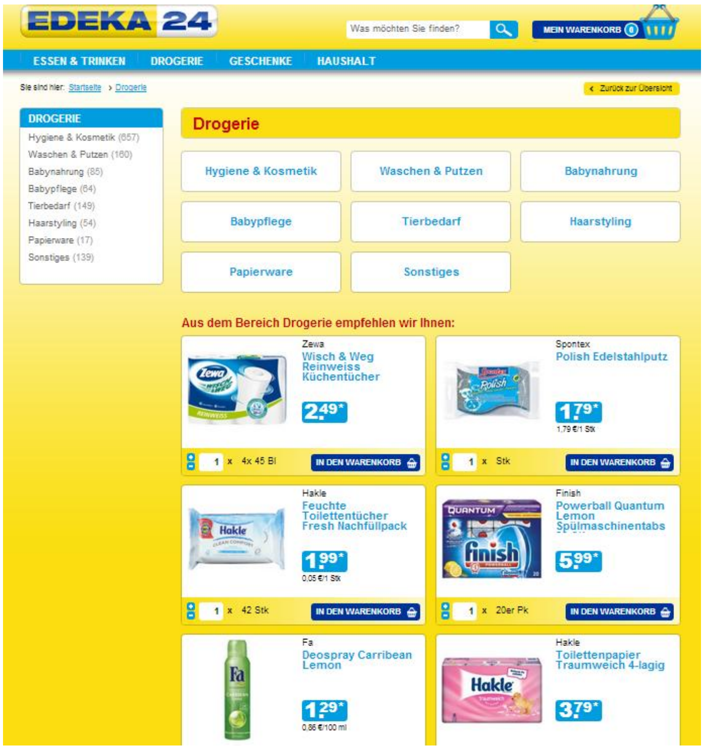
After a discussion that I could have via e-mail with *Dunhumby*, a company helping its clients with their insights and media campaigns, I gathered the following information about advertising possibilities on retailers' websites.

Branders dispose of different places on a retailer website to promote their products. Of course, they have to pay for that.

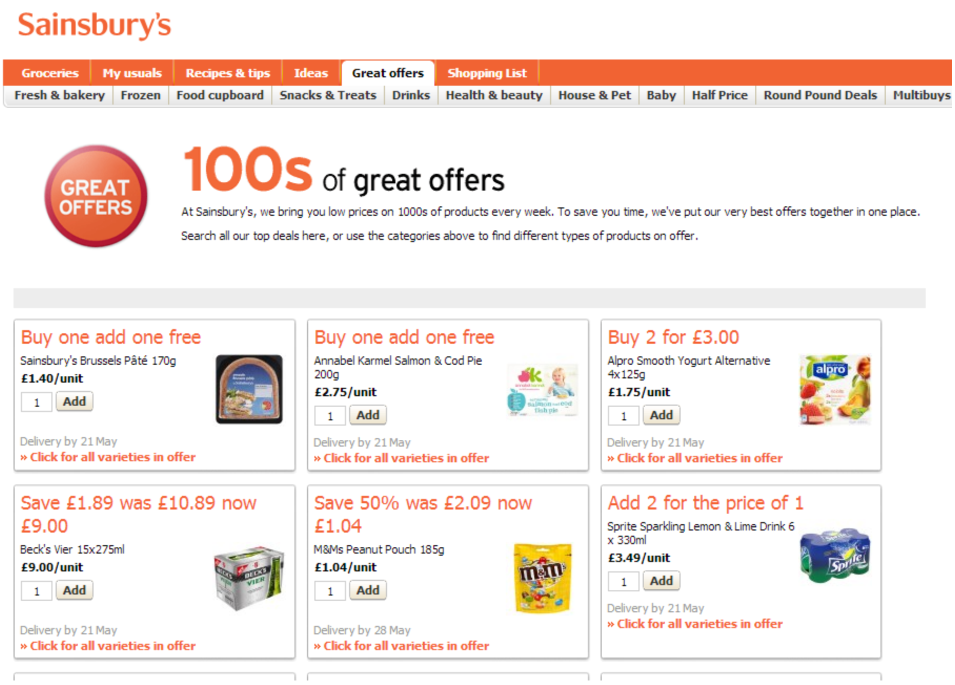
Firstly, the grocery homepage ensures a 100% visibility to all customers logging onto the website; it is the first point of contact. Depending on the retailer, advertising spaces are not the same. Here is the example of Carrefour.

On this grocery homepage, there are a top banner (Colgate) and a carousel (Head & shoulders, Carrefour biscuits, Magnum and ham). The top banner, bespoke creative format, which can be fully customized, is largely eye-catching. If consumers click on the item, they can go to a product description page or add it to a buy list. Regarding the carousel, they is no creative image, just the image of the pack which is also linked to a branded page or a buy list. Either the advertiser pays to be on the first 4 products, or on the 28 which follow. In comparison with the top banner, the images of packs do not move, so the first 4 products have much more advantageous places.

Rather than advert directly on the grocery homepage, it is possible to target customers accessing specific category pages (*cf. example below*). It is the opportunity to target more customers across the entire category (e.g. drugstore), before they choose a subcategory (e.g. hairstyling).

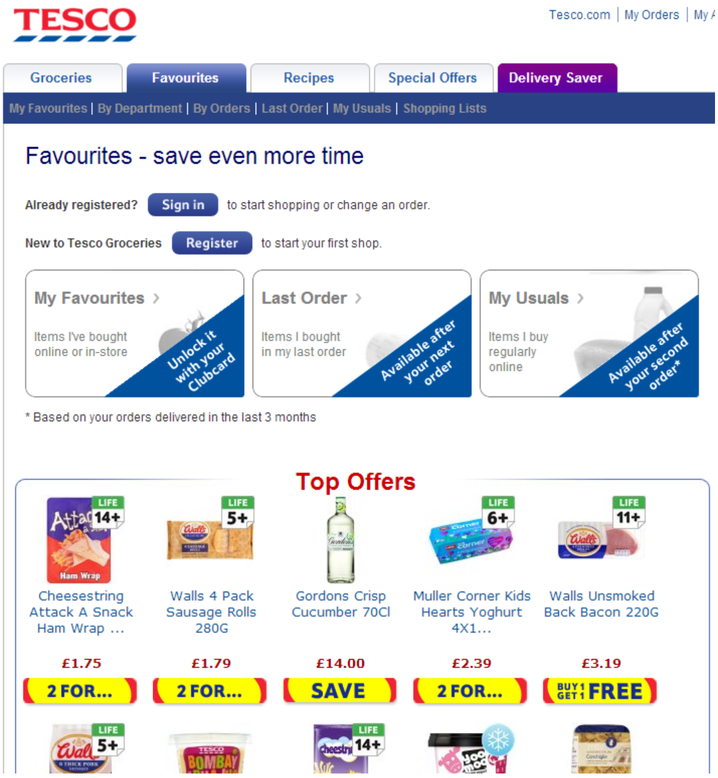


Special offers homepage is the third advertising space possibility and targets customers who are specifically looking for offers. Below is the Sainsbury's example.



It is a strategic place for branders who want to be the first seen by customers looking for deals, before they have the time to click on a specific offers category.

If branders decide to target customers who resort to their favourite list of shop (*cf. example below*), they will benefit from 90% visibility to the customers, as the majority does their shopping through their favourites.



Beside those products highlighting during the year, retailers engage with shoppers by tailoring their promotions around special events. It enables branders to really stand out by associating with a particular occasion. For instance, Moët champagne and Milka chocolate have the place of honour on the main grocery homepage of EDEKA.

Retailers also engage with shoppers via other operations of targeted promotions or contests games, as Coca Cola at REWE store which gives the chance to customers to win two bottle racks per month during one year. Beyond the development of the reputation thanks to a better visibility, such a strategy involves the consumers in the brand by offering them incentives.

Opportunities for retailers' products

Retailers can also dedicate those advertising spaces to their own brands. It is therefore important to find a balance between advertising concerning national brands and advertising concerning private label.

According to *Points de Vente*[140], French distribution and trade magazine, private label products meet very good results on the drive service (they correspond to 43% of sales in value on internet). Actually, they are overrepresented on the drive website in comparison with hypermarkets. Especially as ranking possibility by price on the web favours their visibility. (*cf. below the REWE example*. REWE private label: Ja!)

140 Points de vente, 08/04/2013, "La bataille du drive", http://www.pointsdevente.fr/, consulted on 10/04/2013

In order to highlight private label in a more obvious way, REWE gives pride of place to private label products through one of the top categories, as we can see below. Moreover, in a discounter-dominated market, it is even more important to underscore this kind of products.

As REWE, Leclerc presents its own products range, but on www.e-leclerc.com and not on its merchant website (Leclerc Drive). Consumers have the possibility to add those products to their buy list. However, when they want to shop online, they do not necessarily go on this website and so, products are not well underscored for those who directly shop through the merchant website.

Edeka is also in this situation and does not highlight private label products properly at the time consumers shop.

In France, Carrefour has even a dedicated website to its Carrefour Discount products. The purpose is only to present them by category but does not offer any interaction with customers, except the category “Vous & nous” which suggests menus for a very low price.

In addition to this website, the retailer also owns one for its personal care products (private label), called “Les Cosmétiques Design Paris” which is very relational and triggers the consumers’ commitment. Indeed, this website looks like that of Garnier or L’Oreal Paris because it offers diagnostics, tips and articles, all of this being supervised by experts (make-up artist, dermatologist, hairdresser, doctor…). Facebook is really present on this website: below each product, consumers have the possibility to share it on this social network and so increase the awareness of Carrefour’s cosmetics.

As far as Aldi is concerned, it does not sell online. It uses online as a method of communicating with customers. Besides, there is a particularly interesting section on their UK website: the discounter shows consumers that their products are like brands, namely equivalent in quality and taste, but cheaper. To support their statement, it compares national brands with Aldi brands and suggests a full refund if customers do not agree after having tried (*cf. the 2 examples below*).

Aldi has understood perfectly well: it is essential to educate consumers about the quality of PL, which do not always enjoy a positive image. In fact, consumers form beliefs (e.g. “PL have bad quality”) which have an impact on their attitude (e.g. “I do not like PL”) and, consequently, on their buying behaviour (e.g. Those consumers do not buy PL products). Therefore, the goal is to provoke a change in the consumers’ minds with an expertise delivery.

Example 1

Discover the nation's skincare secrets.

Have you wondered why your neighbour has suddenly started looking fresher faced? Or why Jane from Accounts has noticeably less wrinkles? They've switched to Aldi! Our Lacura Skincare range really does work - so it's no wonder everything from our **Wrinkle Stop** to our **Q10 Restorative Day Cream** keeps flying off the shelves. And you'll be happy to hear that all our products undergo the same rigorous testing and control as the big brands, but without the big price tag. So bring your skincare regime into the 21st Century - stock up on Lacura at your local Aldi.

Example 2

Aldi in Germany communicates about their products quality too, but in a much less explicit way: it resorts to prizes (*cf. example below*). As a reminder, displaying prize and distinction seems to be a German trend, following my analysis of branders’ communication.

This method of communicating enables customers to become aware that PL are quality products, thanks to the mentions serving as proofs. In comparison with Aldi UK, this kind of communication is more objective but maybe less meaningful.

Summary

In conclusion, I would say that high visibility opportunities are numerous, for branders as well as for private label products. Branders, essentially, can take advantage of banners with promotion operations (traditional, special events or contests), whereas retailers can mainly use the architecture of their websites to highlight their products via a dedicated tab/section, for instance.

The main goals of online marketing related to retailers' websites are to ensure a navigation ease and make sure that PL products are eye-catching when people shop online.

Note that, for this channel, there are no particular differences among the three countries, nor among the two products categories. There are rather dissimilarities regarding retailers.

5.3.3. Social networks

Resorting to social networks is not only a trend among branders, it is a general trend. Indeed, retailers do it as well; the ones that I have studied are active on Facebook, except the two hard discounters, Aldi in Germany and Leader Price.

The most popular retailer on this platform, among the three markets, is obviously Tesco with over one million fans (more than Lynx brand! *Cf. 5.2.3.1*), followed by Sainsbury's which reaches nearly 700 000 fans today. Even Aldi in the UK exceeds the number of fans acquired by any other retailers in France (e.g. E.Leclerc: about 170 000) or in Germany (e.g. EDEKA: about 140 000).

As for branders, each retailer of these three markets release post about two or three times a day.

UK

To engage their fans, Tesco and Sainsbury's publications are subjected to latest offers, latest tips, meal plans, deals and competitions.

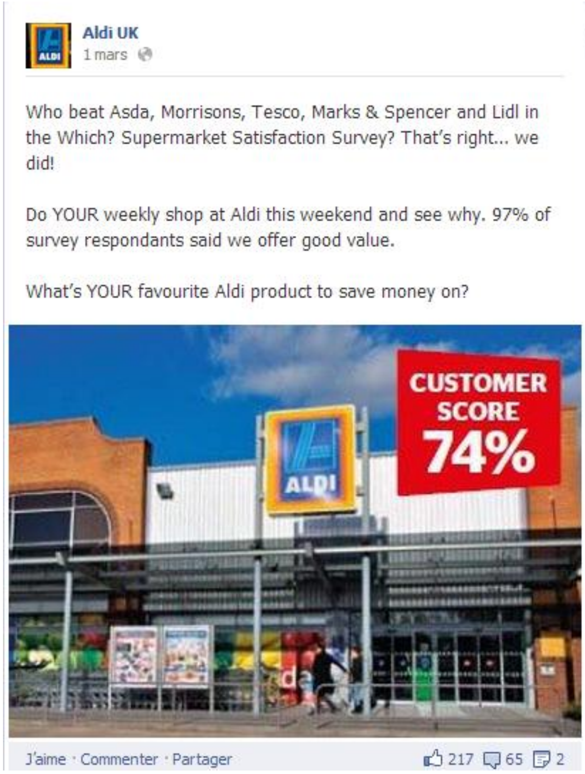
In the case of Sainsbury's, its Facebook page aims to introduce lots of new ideas to help consumers' money go further. It suggests they try its family meal plans, discover its quality, by Sainsbury's range and enjoy deals on their favourite brands: here is what it claims it offers. However, most of Sainsbury's content, as well as Tesco content, is nearly always related to ready-prepared dishes including recipes, contests, videos… and few posts concern retailers' and national brands.

Besides, regarding Tesco, I have had to go back until September 2012 to find a post related to a personal care product (*cf. below*) whereas this kind of product is involving. Furthermore, no brand was displayed on it. After asking Tesco why so little product packaging appears in their posts, it answers: "We believe it is a conversational tool that needs to be used more subtlety in order to drive trade and add value"[141].

[141] Question asked on Facebook. Answer got from Jamie (Customer Care) on 13th May

As for branders, used techniques to trigger consumers' involvement are often the same: through contests, videos and so on, Tesco is used to communicating with shoppers by asking them questions to get their comment on a post. Consumers may think that their answers will not be read, but it is not true. Their opinions have an impact. Look at the Sainsbury's post below to see how it takes shoppers' answers into account. It is important to show the viewers that their contributions are considered by the organization. In this way, they feel useful for the firm and feel motivated to continue to interact in the future.

In comparison with Tesco and Sainsbury's, Aldi in the UK focuses much more on the highlighting of products. Its goal is to share product news, keep customers updated on its world famous special buys, offer them the chance to win prizes through competitions and communicate about awards that its products keep on winning. As on its website, it makes a lot of efforts to demonstrate its products quality; it wants to deliver expertise to customers, namely educate them, about the quality of private label in comparison with national brands (*cf. examples below*).



<u>Germany</u>

There is, in general, a Facebook page per website, that is why Carrefour owns at least four pages on this social network: one for Carrefour, one for Carrefour Drive, one for Carrefour Ooshop and one for the Cosmétiques Design Paris. It is also the case for Leclerc and REWE.

REWE with is two Facebook pages (REWE and REWE online), as well as EDEKA, seem to publish much more messages about products than Tesco and Sainsbury's, even if ready-prepared dishes remain popular on the retailers' page.

REWE communicate about the branders' products nearly as much as about its own products, while EDEKA essentially release posts about its private label. Those publications concern food very often (*cf. examples 1-4 below*).

The techniques they use to engage their fans are similar to the other retailers': the most frequently used method is to do their posts so that it stimulates consumers' comments. Here is the kind of asked questions: "What was your favorite dish when you were a child?" (EDEKA, 27/03/13), "Which variety gives you pleasure?" (REWE, 05/02/13) … (*cf. example 3 & 4 below*). Moreover, they also release videos, recipes, promotions and contests to involve their customers. For instance, on the REWE page, fans can win a trip to the destination of their choice thanks to TITAN® suitcases or win a Coca Cola polar bear on REWE online page (*cf. example 1 below*).

Example 1: Win your original Coca-Cola Polar Bears! Simply send an email with the word "Coca-Cola" before 17.03.2013, and your full address to polarbaer@portica.de and be lucky enough to win the 1m big polar bear! *
(…)

Example 2: Until Saturday, Nutella is available in the 450g glass, for a very favorable price of 1.49€
(…)

Example 3: (…) Which variety gives you pleasure?

Example 4: (…) Which Elkos product is your favorite?

France

As far as Carrefour and Leclerc are concerned, their publications are related to services that they offer (drive, home delivery, fidelity card, trip, price comparison…) and to some products categories (regarding national or retailer brands). Actually, they are not used to targeting specific products with their posts. After asking Carrefour why, they asserted that, for them, Facebook is a way to discuss with their customers and it is not an extra channel to sell their products, nor to realise promotions[142].

Here are some examples of what Carrefour and Leclerc publish:

-About services that they offer: “Who is the cheapest? You could doubt but now, there is no doubt anymore! : http://www.quiestlemoinscher.com/” (E. Leclerc, 11/05/2013), “You were numerous to download LeclercDrive application, thanks! And we already want to improve it, thanks to you. In your opinion, which functionality should we add?” (E. Leclerc Drive, 27/03/2013)

-About products categories: “The Cosmétiques Design Paris brand was again honored during Beauty Victories” (Carrefour, 28/01/13), “On the occasion of the 15 days of white, you can try to win one year of laundry!” (Carrefour, 21/12/12).

For all of their pages, the way they interact is the same as for the other retailers that I have analysed: news, tips, contests, recipes, videos… without forgetting humour from time to time:

Exclusive: our competitors and friends also shop at E. Leclerc Drive. We’re happy we could convince them ☺

[142] Question asked on Facebook. Answer got from Carrefour Facebook team on 3rd May.

Beyond pages dedicated to the firm, drive services and home deliveries, Carrefour is also active on Facebook for its cosmetics (Cosmétiques Design Paris). The idea of this page is to create a universe dedicated to beauty accessible to all by sharing tricks and giving advice to customers, as well as information delivered by some experts. In this way, Carrefour tries to win the loyalty of its customers by giving them incentives.

<u>Summary</u>

Among all those retailers on the three markets, the trend is the same: discuss, interact and answer consumers' questions/complaints/suggestions. The purpose is to be very close to the "fans" and to be very accessible. So I put myself in the shoes of a consumer and asked questions to different retailers on Facebook, via private messages or messages posted on their wall. I assumed that I would receive an answer much faster than via an e-mail on their website. In general, I received an answer the next day, and in a very courteous way.

Even if the goal of the Facebook use is globally the same in France, the UK and Germany, we can notice a difference in the way they use it: German retailers tend to display more branders and retailers' products than French and English ones, with a promotion purpose.

5.3.4. Newsletters

To complete their communication on their websites and on social networks, every retailer has the possibility to communicate via newsletters. In this manner, consumers are kept informed without having to go frequently on retailers' platforms. They receive e-mails on average once a week if they decide to sign up (Except if they registered for Aldi UK newsletters which are sent two or three times a week). Newsletters include, in general, news of the signs, promotions, novelties, games … Before subscribing, the consumers can even sometimes select products they are interested in in order to avoid receiving irrelevant information.

While Facebook is a way to maintain a relation with the consumers, and websites are essentially an extra sales channel, newsletters rather aim to advertise. Actually, suppliers can pay for an e-mail shot to retailers' online data base to promote their products. Promotions constitute the main content of newsletters among French, English and German retailers. They either refer to in-store promotions, or online promotions (special offers, price reductions, contests, event communication operations…). Except for hard discounters, they nearly always concern branders' products and not private label.

However, the goal can also be simply to inform. In this context, aldi in the UK communicates about the quality of its products, as it does on its website and Facebook page. The fact that this message is the same on the three different channels is the proof that their communication is well integrated.
E-mailings also sometimes aim to involve shoppers in Aldi recipes, for instance, or in competitions to win £50 worth of Aldi vouchers. This discounter is a particularly good example of interaction via e-mail and so it tries not only to offer promotion. Carrefour, beyond a lot of promotion, is also an example of interaction: it sometimes sends e-mails related to competitions to win a prize, such as a make-up party or family holidays.

Among all those newsletters, the firms want to attract the consumers' attention and increase chances that their e-mails will be opened. So they use eye-catching titles. Here are some examples: “Gok new collection plus half price beauty essentials” (Sainsbury's, 26/04/13), “Win 1 year of shopping during the 15 incredible Carrefour days” (Carrefour, 30/05/13).

6. Analysis and results: Which channels to choose? Some suggestions to McBride

The goal of this concluding part is to underscore the best practices in order to promote online private label-type products, partially manufactured by McBride. Let's first summarize channels.

After this full analysis, I cannot say that a channel is better than another. Websites, social networks and newsletters are complementary. In fact, each one brings some specific assets that other ones do not have.

For instance, websites are ideal to expose content and provide the main information regarding a firm or its products. It is, in general, the first point of contact for consumers and, thus, cannot be neglected. Whether it is a merchant or relational website, it is essential to ensure interaction and a navigation ease in order to, respectively, increase the customers' involvement and comfort levels. In this manner, they will be more likely to purchase online, in the case of a merchant website.

As far as social networks (Facebook, more precisely) are concerned, they go beyond this content delivery and are rather conceived for internet users who already know the company or its brands and have an interest in it. It is the appropriate platform to add value by developing a close relationship with the companies' fans without any barriers. The success key is to give them a feeling of inclusion. Therefore being present on social networks does not aim to constantly highlight products.

Finally, the last main analyzed channel, newsletters, enables marketers to complete their online communication strategy by instantaneously keeping informed internet users who have required it (Otherwise it would be considered as a spam). Moreover, this channel allows firms to attract viewers on their websites thanks to links which are included in e-mailing. So those e-mailings will trigger click rates, but also transformation rates (actions sought in the framework of the campaign, such as purchase, visits…, divided by the total amount of individuals concerned by the campaign). However, we should keep in mind that the goal of e-mailing is also to entertain and enrich the content as well. Thus, yes, inform the consumers, but in an intelligent way (videos, pictures...).

Now, how can we use those channels to favour private label products? Following this analysis, here is what I recommend to McBride.

The establishment of this online strategy first begins with the definition of objectives which are the following: reach prospects and existing customers, act to achieve interaction with them and develop relationships, convert opinions into leads and/or sales, and finally engage with customers through time.
Therefore what can retailers do, in partnership with McBride, to extend private label online, get closer to customers, add value, save costs and increase private label sales? Retailers and corporate McBride both have a big part to play in developing PL with consumers.

For every channel which may be used, the first thing to do is to communicate on private labels and educate the consumer about this kind of products not always which do not always enjoy a positive image among shoppers: “copy”, “bad quality” … We need to prove them that the quality of retailers’ brands has been enhanced and that, today, it can even be higher than that of national brands. Retailers care about their image and it is not in their interest to manufacture products which compromise their reputation. In this context, private label are sometimes considered as separate brands, that is why it would be appropriate to honor them.
Whatever the channel that will be used, whatever the way retailers communicate, the first important thing is the content and then we can think about the rest.

Aldi UK understands it well: they are educating consumers, whereas retailers do not do enough. They should be pushing the benefits of PL with consumers from all their digital functions: mainly website, Facebook and e-newsletters.

The most frequent used technique would be to ask questions to consumers, via websites or social networks, in order to educate, as well as engage them. Here are some examples: “How do you consider private label products? Which difference do you make with national brands?”, “Do you/would you consider buying private label? If not, why not?”…
If those questions are asked on social networks, it is essential to be regular and frequent (about 2-3 times a day, as branders and retailers are currently doing).

This kind of message is important. Otherwise, if retailers rather tend to base their communication on lower price to hype products, it will damage their brand image. Indeed, if PL are sometimes badly considered, it is partly because of such communication.
As we have seen, the content of retailers' e-newsletters concerns promotion most of the time. Therefore it is for PL a trap to avoid. Indeed, if they resort to this channel to communicate about their own brands, it must essentially be in an interactive way to enhance their image. A communication example via this channel could be to present a day in the life of using private label products, via video's that are hugely powerful, or simply through a text with pictures to enrich the content.

This example could also be present on social networks. Retailers could target credible bloggers to become ambassadors and talk about PL products in order to improve their reputation. A telling example would be that of Mums talking about what their grocery shopping experiences are like.

Regarding websites, and in any case, merchant websites, retailers should follow the REWE example where private label are presented in a distinctive way compared with branders' products. It would give them more visibility and would be an ergonomic way to shop online.

Through all these channels, retailers have to adopt, in their conversations, an appropriate attitude towards consumers. They have to be human, open, transparent and obliging, especially on social networks. Moreover, they have to be in tune with internet users to satisfy them and have a better understanding of their needs. It is mainly through the audience engagement and participation that those results will be achieved.

7. Conclusion

In order to help McBride to make recommendations to retailers regarding highlighting online of private label products, I have analysed how branders communicate about their products on their own, but also via the retailers' channels.

The main trend dominating the online marketing is the interaction between firms and internet users aiming to trigger the commitment among the last ones. Actually, the marketing has changed; the goal is not longer to overwhelm consumers with a mountain of information but to create a relationship between firms and customers, and to expose quality information. Indeed, we are much less in a "push" marketing perspective, and rather in a "pull" one.
To achieve this aim, branders and retailers use several online communication channels.

First, branders resort to websites to communicate about their brands. Beyond their corporate website where they provide general information about their organization, they own relational websites for a majority of their brands. It is in this kind of platform that the marketing essentially acts. They seek to get closer to the consumers by providing them tips and tricks, personalized diagnostics, discount vouchers, products tests and so one. Some of those tools are more used in some countries than in others. For instance, discount vouchers are rather a trend which is much more developed in France.
Furthermore, to encourage internet users more, firms have relational programmes where consumers can find a maximum of their favourite brands without having to go on the brand websites. In this kind of platform, they can even sometimes discuss with other consumers.
In addition to this channel, branders are present on social media, especially on Facebook. The purpose is to push the interaction even further and to reach thousands of devotees more thanks to the like/comment/share functions. So, to favour those actions, branders use various strategic techniques: contests, videos, tips and tricks, fun pictures… As for websites, we can find a Facebook page for the company, for its brands and for its relational programme.
Finally, to keep consumers informed at all times, branders send newsletters about their company, about their relational programmes and sometimes about their brands. In fact, on the German market, newsletters about brands seem to be more prominent than on the two other markets.

Branders also communicate via the retailers' channels and it was interesting to compare their communication with that of PL in order to make suggestions to retailers about PL online development.

So, on retailers' websites, I noticed that branders' products can benefit from a high visibility thanks to eye-catching banners, but it does not mean that PL are neglected; they also have the place of honour on some websites. For instance, on its merchant website, REWE offers a dedicated section/tab to its own brand products. Aldi in the UK also highlights its products by educating consumers about the quality of PL, and this on its website, but also on its Facebook page and in its newsletters.

Besides websites, retailers communicate on social networks, with different methods according to the market. Among these three markets, only German retailers underscore private label and branders' products on their Facebook page. In fact, Carrefour asserts that social networks are, for them, neither extra sales channels, nor channels to realise promotion; it is only for discussing with consumers.

To complete their communication, branders have the possibility to buy spaces in the retailers' newsletters. So the content is very often subjected to promotions of branders' products.

During this analysis, some elements came to my mind. I have become aware that it was essential to communicate online about PL with the aim of educating the consumers about this type of products, which do not always enjoy a positive image. Indeed, retailers cannot trigger commitment regarding PL if their brand image is not good.

On this basis, and according to my branders' analysis, I have made some suggestions to McBride.

The difficulty of this study was to analyse everything on my own. Indeed, I could not benefit from experts' interviews because it is hard to reach people who are responsible for the online marketing among branders or retailers. Therefore, a potential track for future analysis would be to realise interviews in order to have a more accurate view on the online marketing.

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