Recommendations on Age-friendly and Gender-balanced Media Content Delivery of Products for Seniors: Findings from a Case Study

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Abstract: Society is ageing at an unprecedented pace. In tandem, the number of technology-enabled solutions targeted at older adults continues to rise. It is therefore important to understand how to best communicate these solutions to seniors and facilitate use and adoption. To develop an understanding of what could be an improved strategy of communication and media content delivery for companies that provide older adults with technology-based solutions is the goal of this research. Aware of the potential stereotypes that may emerge towards the ageing population, this paper takes a special interest on ageism and gender to determine imbalances. With this in mind, this paper conducts an in-depth case study of the online presence of a company that developed a digital product for seniors that has been nominated for a Prize on Best Practice on Active and Healthy Ageing. Findings concerning the communication strategy of the company are extracted based on the analysis of their website and their five social media profiles. In total 120 posts were inspected, containing 120 text excerpts, 352 pictures, and 21 videos. Results show that the organisation sustains a continuous engagement with both seniors and the seniors’ organisations that use their product, privileging a relationship of close proximity. The representation of older adults is one that shows exceptionally happy and active seniors, who are surrounded by an aura of admiration. There seem to be no considerable differences with regards to gender.

Keywords: social media, gender, ageism, digital media, seniors

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Introduction

In 2018, 19.8% of the population in European Union were aged 65+; in 2100 this number is forecasted to reach 31.3% (Eurostat, 2019). As population ages at an unprecedented pace, ageing and people’s attitude towards ageing are changing. In parallel, society witnesses an increase in technology pervasiveness and, while some seniors may still struggle to master the intricacies of modern technology, technology is here to stay.

According to a 2017 report by Pew Research, technology adoption among seniors is increasing and both Internet and broadband adoption as well as smartphones and tablet ownership are growing among seniors, with a large number of seniors – about a third – on social media (Anderson & Perrin, 2017). Alongside, the appeal for the market for technology solutions for seniors gains momentum and
companies look at these solutions as an interesting market to explore, at the promise of providing the aged with solutions that enable the promotion of their physical, cognitive, and psychosocial health (Mangrove, 2018; Oxford Economics, 2016).

In this context, it is important to understand how, within their communication strategy, companies that develop solutions for seniors present their products and services and, most importantly, how they portray older adults. In particular, it is relevant to develop an understanding of companies' strategic communication, i.e.: the “purposeful use of communication by an organisation to fulfil its mission” (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 3), which links to how the organisation, as a social actor, presents and promotes itself through the intentional activities of its leaders and employees (Hallahan et al., 2007).

This study investigates the communication strategy of a company that developed a digital product for seniors that was nominated for a Prize on Best Practice on Active and Healthy Ageing. In this case study, which follows a mixed methods approach, an in-depth analysis is performed, to analyse the communication strategy of the organisation across its online presence through its website, and Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn profiles. 120 posts, 120 text excerpts, 352 pictures, and 21 videos are examined with regards to target audience, communication purpose, type of content, and tone of messages. The study then extracts conclusions about the media content delivery and communication strategy of the company, taking a special interest over the presence of ageism or gender issues. Findings indicate that the organisation resort to their online media to communicate not only with their target users and clients, but also with its collaborators to promote team building. We found no negative discrimination based on age. Conversely, an aura of admiration is built around older adults, who are represented as exceptionally happy and active seniors, where the representation of men and women is levelled.

This section outlines the research conducted in this paper. Next, the work is situated in relation to previous research, after which we present the research strategy and its results. The paper concludes by discussing the research findings and developing eight recommendations for media content delivery.

1. Related Work

The current demographic shift and increase of digitalization introduce change in society. It is important to ensure that these transformations enable older adults to continue to exercise their agency and empower them to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. In carefully monitoring this transition, it is essential that an inclusive society is promoted in which stigma, based on age, gender, or other such factors, are minimised, and ideally, entirely eradicated.
1.1. Developing Technology Targeted at Older Adults

There has been a rising interest in the longevity economy and the so-called silver market (Mangrove, 2018; Oxford Economics, 2016), with numerous technology-enabled solutions targeted at older adults entering the market, thorough smartphones, tablets and other devices. These solutions aim to leverage technology to improve the quality-of-life of older adults, serving many purposes, from the management of health conditions and medication intake to the facilitation of activities that support older adults in staying active and in touch with family/friends.

Regardless of the number of solutions available, the issues of seniors’ proficiency and adoption technology and of the accessibility of solutions are often raised (see for e.g. Francis et al., 2019; Neves & Vetere, 2019). While some seniors are likely to be less confident using technology, others are tech savvy and thrilled with the new possibilities they discover through technology every day. About this subject, research argues that seniors are willing to invest the necessary effort to be able to use technology once they realise benefits leading to an enhanced quality of life (Francis et al., 2019).

From books to research papers and online articles, there is a large corpus of research focusing on accessibility and how to design digital products that accommodate for the specific needs of older adults (e.g. Kurniawan & Zaphiris, 2005; Nielsen, 2013; Pak & McLaughlin, 2010). Regardless of those efforts, the use, acceptance, and adoption of technology by older adults is still debatable, with research signalling the limited uptake of technologies among this user population (for e.g. Judges et al., 2017; Waycott et al., 2016). In this context, it is urgent to avoid paternalistic approaches that tend to favour technology innovation and economic savings to, instead, adopt more human approaches, that reflect about how a given technology affects, enables and empowers older adults (Bechtold & Capari, 2020).

1.2. Previous Studies Addressing Ageism and Gender

The notion of ageing is one that brings about a number of assumptions, explicit and implicit, about older people (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2018). When these assumptions turn into generalisations, eventually they lead to discrimination. Age, especially old age, is the most common form of discrimination (Cicero, 2019). The term ageism designates this form of prejudice. First introduced by Butler (1969), “Ageism is manifested in the way we think, feel and act towards age and ageing. It is directed towards people of any age group and can be both positive and negative” (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2018, p. 1). As such, one can also find ageism in digital media delivery.

Studies have focused on the investigation of ageism in assistive technologies, the media, and discourse, (e.g.: Ferri et al., 2017; Loos & Ivan, 2018; Phelan, 2018) but, to our knowledge, the specific issue of online strategic communication has not yet been addressed. It is important to investigate this subject because media plays a
crucial role in defining the cultural characters of a society, thus shaping the process of everyday sense making and the conceptions about ageing, the aged, and their role (Loos et al., 2017; Raycheva et al., 2018). Furthermore, while some studies argue that since the 2000’s there has been a shift towards a more levelled representation of both older and younger generations, with seniors increasingly associated with positive representations (Loos & Ivan, 2018), recent studies report that older adults continue to be portrayed in “stereotypical roles (as grandmothers and grandfathers, retirees), or as poor, unfortunate, suffering from some illness” (Raycheva et al., 2018; p. 46.).

A further issue emerges when ageism is combined with gender imbalances. Recent studies have highlighted the underrepresentation of women, both very old and very young ones (Raycheva et al., 2018). This (in)visibility of women models society perceptions of women and may lead others to render them second place or women themselves to become disengaged. In avoiding ageism and gender imbalances, dynamic diversity and a more nuanced imagery should be preferred, if we are to counteract stereotypes and the over-homogeneity of representations of older adults (Loos & Ivan, 2018).

2. Research Approach

The goal of this research is to investigate the characteristics of the media content delivery and communication strategy of an organisation that developed an award-winning digital product for seniors to develop a set of recommendations on age-friendly and gender-balanced media content delivery. In line with this goal, we take interest in understanding how a product, which is perceived as successful, portrays seniors and interacts with its audience, to explore ageism and gender issues. To guide this research, the following research question was posed: What online media communication strategy can contribute to age-friendly and gender-balanced media content delivery?

To address our goal, this research follows a mixed methods approach that unfolds into a quantitative analysis, to give an overview of the products’ online presence, and a qualitative study, to investigate the target audience, communication purpose, type of content, and tone of messages. The analysis is based upon the examination of the product website and the online activity observed across its social network profiles, over the month of November 2019.

The exploratory and preliminary nature of our research justifies the choice in methodology, as a qualitative approach provides an opportunity to gain insights on trends and helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research (Creswell & Clark, 2010). A case study allows researchers to develop an understanding and dive deeper into a specific case, by carrying out a detailed examination of that particular case and develop interpretations of it (Stake, 1995). This methodology was deemed appropriate because an in-depth understanding of
this preliminary study may better inform broader more systematic studies on the subject in the future that could target other products.

Following a qualitative approach does, however, pose limitations, because it implies that, to some extent, the research depends on the researcher’s interpretations and professional backgrounds. It may be the case that both dimensions and categories of analysis (detailed in section 3.2 Strategy for data extraction) were influenced by the authors' internal bias; they may as well change over time. To counteract biases, the researchers defined and agreed upon dimensions and categories beforehand and made it a priority that coherence was kept throughout the process. Another limitation of the methodology pertains to the quantitative dimension of the study: it may be the case that the organisation could replicate content in different communications channels, but this study did not account for that. The following sections detail the choice of case study and the strategy for data extraction.

2.1. Choice of Case Study

The product examined in this study was one of the finalists for the 2019 edition of the Prize on Best Practice on Active and Healthy Ageing, which is organized by Ageing@Coimbra1 and promoted by the Regional Authority of the Center Region of Portugal2. Ageing@Coimbra is one of the 32 European Reference Sites for active and healthy ageing, as part of the European Partnership for Active and Healthy Ageing3. As stated in their website, the goal of Ageing@Coimbra is to enhance the role of the older adult person in society and the application of best practices that benefit older adults’ general well-being and active and healthy aging.

The Prize on Best Practice on Active and Healthy Ageing (CCDRC & Ageing@Coimbra, 2019) is a yearly award that aims to recognize projects and initiatives that promote active and healthy ageing in the Centro region of Portugal. The prize considers three categories – Knowledge+, Health+, and Life+ – to which public and private companies and associations can submit their entries. The category Knowledge+ is particularly relevant for this research, as it welcomes submissions that link to good practices that value research and technologies in active and healthy aging, specifically initiatives related to the creation of innovative products, that stimulate the economy based on new technologies. Because of this, in November 2019, the researchers set out to identify the finalists running for the Prize on Best Practice on Active and Healthy Ageing, under the category Knowledge+. There were three finalists4 for this category (CCDRC, 2019). The researchers investigated their online presence and whether they had a product website and/or social networks profiles.

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4 For ethical reasons, the researchers chose to protect the identity of the companies/products.
Table 1. Online Presence of Finalists for the Prize on Best Practice on Active and Healthy Ageing the Knowledge + Category (on January 7th, 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Platform</th>
<th>Product A</th>
<th>Product B</th>
<th>Product C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√ +1K followers</td>
<td>√ +10K followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√ 37 followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√ 57 followers</td>
<td>√ 734 followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√ 1 subscriber</td>
<td>√ 38 subscribers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√ 779 followers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: √ = yes; X = No profile

Based on the digital presence and activity of each finalist (overview in Table 1), the researchers decided to analyse Product C, which showed the most substantial online presence and activity, not only in terms of having a profile in different platforms but also into what concerns to their number of followers. The researchers considered those numbers and that diversified online presence to be a good indication of its success, and recognition by users.

2.2. Strategy for Data Extraction

In order to characterise the media content delivery and the communication strategy of the organisation, we used a data extraction form that included several dimensions and categories, developed and perfected by the researchers along a number of meetings. The dimensions analysed were: Platform, Target audience, Communication purpose, Type of content, and Tone of messages.

Platform comprised the digital media featuring the contents, i.e.: Website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn. To grasp the level of community involvement, we also recorded number of followers, likes, comments, and shares.

Target audience aimed at identifying whom messages were addressed to and included: All audiences/no particular audience; Older adult users; Association(s) within network; Future associates; and Internal members of the team.

Communication purpose intended to determine the purpose of the message and comprised: Business development; Product promotion; Team building; Express gratitude; and Share news and/or events.

Type of content analysed the pictures and videos posted by the organisation and characterised those to determine weather they portrayed a Larger group/Smaller group, a Female/Male, Caregivers, and/or Community Managers5. A picture or

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5 Community managers are people who take care of the business development and product promotion in the field.
A video with less than ten older adults was considered a smaller group. To investigate content with regards to gender only smaller groups were considered.

**Tone of messages** looked at the content to determine whether messages were Formal/Informal, Humorous, Empathetic, Stereotyping, and/or Otherness. A distinction was made between content that was unrealistically humorous to spot ‘excessive’ humour. Although subjective, the researchers decided to make this distinction after a preliminary analysis revealed that content which neared ridicule. Also subject to researchers’ interpretations were messages marked as:

- Empathetic, when there was an explicit acknowledgment and ‘caring’ feeling which is expressed towards the older adult;
- Stereotypical, when an explicit mention to age or generation was made;
- Otherness, when there was some sort of us vs. others dynamic, as opposed to inclusiveness.

Building upon the above, we explored and analysed issues related to ageism and/or gender-related imbalances. To investigate gender, we took stock from the audio-visual materials recorded under **Type of content**.

### 3. Results and Findings

This study analysed the online activity and digital media content produced by a company that commercialises a digital product for seniors, over the month of November 2019. Six online services/platforms were examined that included the organisations’ website, its Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn profiles. This section describes our results and findings. This study did not systematically analysed whether posts and contents were replicated across platforms. This being said, it could be the case that content was considered multiple times, thus inflating some of the numbers which are reported. Additionally, there was a contest taking place at the time of the study, which may have further increased numbers.

#### 3.1. Presence in Digital Media

The online presence of the company is diversified and shows different levels of activity depending on the channel in use. **Table 2** shows an overview of this activity and the data analysed for this study; there was no audio only content. To correctly interpret the results is it important to note that data may be replicated across platforms, so numbers do not necessarily imply new data.

In total, the analysis included the website in its entirety and considered 120 entries in social media, which included 120 text excerpts, 352 pictures, and 21 videos. With exception of Twitter, which had a profile but no tweets, each service/platform used by the company is further described in the following sections. Afterwards, we analyse the data with regards to target audience, communication purpose, type of content, and tone of messages.
Looking at Table 2 it is possible to observe that the company mostly uses Facebook and Instagram, while remaining channels are almost unexplored. In terms of audio-visual content, while pictures clearly outnumber videos, the number of videos is considerable, especially if we consider the time frame of a month.

3.1.1. Website

More than a product website, the organisation presents an institutional website. The top of the website displays two pictures in a banner representing the connection between the organisation and its main objective: bringing digital interactive tools and contents to a senior audience in a simple manner. The website has five main sections: product promotion; contacts; access of community associates to the platform; join us, and links to organisation social networks.

The ‘product promotion’ section features content that emphasizes the main features of the platform developed by the company. English is used in video voice over while Portuguese is used in subtitling. All other contents of the website are in Portuguese. The website also contains a form to ask for a product demonstration.

The ‘Contacts’ section includes the organisation address, email and landline phone number. To give community associates access to the platform, there is link that points to a different URL.

The ‘Join us’ section shows pictures of team members and a short text inviting professionals to join the team, where a connection to LinkedIn platform is included.

The website footer includes links to Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn. It is important to note the absence of a link to Twitter, which confirms that this social network may not be part of the social media mix of the company.
3.1.2. Facebook Profile

During the month of November, the company made 83 posts, where 36 were re-shares. From those re-shares, 19 were re-shares of their own posts/albums or of their projects’ profiles; 15 were re-shares of their associates, i.e.: client institutions; and two were re-shares from unrelated institutions, namely a government institution. Several of these posts contained links to other URL’s, one of them linking to the registration of an event organized by them and nine linking to external activity: external events registration, a university, and a diversity of newspaper articles featuring the product, a contest the company was organising at the time, information about funding, the work of a famous artist, and another highlighting the work of the National Guard with seniors.

All posts received on average 48.6 likes (max=399, min=3). With regards to comments and shares, 45 of the 83 posts were commented, and 43 re-shared, with the number of comments varying from one to 27 (2.4) and the number of shares spanning from 1 to 160 (avr=4.5).

With regards to tags, 25 posts tagged their community associates, 23 tagged external institutions, 21 tagged their own website and/or projects, and 10 tagged individual people. These individuals were typically their collaborators, yet they also tagged one caregiver and one older adult. Interestingly enough, and regardless of not using the tag function, posts made reference to specific older adult individuals, who are referred to by their names (13 instances), and to community associates (21 instances). The tags to external institutions connected to universities, cultural centres, the national Alzheimer association, conferences, and a fitness company

The Facebook profile itself is very detailed, containing the description of the company’s mission, as well as their founding date and a list of awards that they received. There is also a more technical text that pleases other institutions to join them in research and innovation endeavours. Contacts show their landline phone number, their email, and a link to their website.

3.1.3. Other social media profiles

This section provides an overview of the Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn profiles. The Instagram profile presents an overview of formal and informal activities within the organisation. During the month of analysis, the organisation made 29 posts. All posts received on average 30 likes (max=86, min=11) from the community. Seven out of 29 posts were commented. The number of comments is low (1-5). Seven posts have tags: four of them to their own organisation and/or projects, two to a community associate, one to a business partner, and two posts tagged collaborators. Without using tags, the organisation referred names of associate institutions, collaborators, a civil parish and an external organisation. Seven posts mention older adults’ names (four females and three males).

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6 This fitness company was related to a contest that the company was running in the month of November.
Activity in the organisation profile on YouTube and LinkedIn is limited when compared with Instagram and even lower when compared with Facebook. Six videos were published in YouTube during November 2019. All videos received on average 11.1 views (max=23, min=7) from the community. Only two videos received likes and none were commented. Within YouTube, the profile includes a couple of ‘Playlists’ and does not seem to make use of the ‘Channels’ or ‘Discussion’ sections. The ‘About’ section links to the Company website and Facebook profile.

The LinkedIn profile shows the mission statement of the organisation, address and GPS coordinates. For the period of analysis, there are only two posts, consisting of job offers.

3.2. Target Audience

In order to understand the company’s target audience, we analysed their posts to determine whom they were being addressed. Table 3 covers the addressed target audience across services/platforms, for which we selected all that applied, i.e. one single post could be aimed at more than one single target group.

The website provides information about the main features of the tools/services developed and commercialised by the organisation; in doing so, it targets all audiences and future associates. The website also provides the point of entry to the platform, so associations within network are important users of this medium. The section ‘Join us’ highlights the importance of collaborators to the company.

Into what concerns social media platforms, looking at Table 3, it is possible to observe that besides the large number of messages directed at all audiences, communication privileges the associations within the network, followed by future associates, and then older adults and internal members of the team, in almost equal numbers. On Facebook, this pattern is slightly different, with future associates receiving less attention.

Table 3. Overview of target audience across services/platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Platform</th>
<th>All / No particular audience</th>
<th>Older adult users</th>
<th>Associations within network</th>
<th>Future associates</th>
<th>Internal members of the team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: √ = yes; X = No
Facebook is directed at all audiences, with associations within the network and older adults having an almost equal number of messages addressed to them. In second, but still receiving significant importance, are the members of the team and future associates. On Instagram, most posts are addressed to the associations that are part of the community of adopters. A significant number of posts is aimed at a generic audience. Ten posts are intended at attracting new associates and seven directed at collaborators. Older adults only receive a residual number of posts, indicating this channel privileges other target audiences. The videos published in YouTube communicate different messages aimed at different types of audiences that include internal audiences (i.e. collaborators) and external audiences (current and future associates). No audience seems to deserve preferred attention on YouTube, indicating that possibly no particular communication strategy is in place or that unexplored. LinkedIn shows only two job opportunities, which indicates that it is being only used to target the general public.

With exception of LinkedIn, all services/platforms produce messages targeted at all types of audiences. Still, the fact that a reasonable number of messages, both on Facebook and Instagram, is directed at the internal members of the team is surprising, as internal communication is usually less transparent to the outside of an organisation. This indicates the possible lack of barriers between the team and their customers and users, and maybe even, the overlapping of the company’s values with those of the collaborators.

3.3. Communication Purpose

To develop an understanding of the online communication purposes of the organisation, posts were analysed to identify whether they were meant to facilitate business development, product promotion, team building, express gratitude, or to share news and events. Table 4 shows an overview of the results. Again, one single post could have more than one purpose.

Table 4. Overview of communication purpose across services/platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Platform</th>
<th>Business development</th>
<th>Product promotion</th>
<th>Team building</th>
<th>Express gratitude</th>
<th>Share news and events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of the website reveals that this medium is used with three main purposes: business development (e.g. via a form that can be filled-in to ask for a
demo), product promotion (e.g. through the listing of advantages of their interactive system), and team building (e.g. by including photos of the team members, in the section ‘Join us’). This shows the relevance and the esteem the organisation gives to their collaborators and human resources, a key asset in any business.

Focusing on social media profiles, Table 4 shows that most posts are dedicated to the product promotion followed by the dissemination of news and events and the expression of gratitude. Business development and team building are also observed in smaller numbers. We also observe that the organisation uses all channels, yet the organisation is more active on Facebook and Instagram. The three main communication purposes on Facebook are to promote the product, to share news and events, and to express gratitude. The Instagram profile is used for business development, share news and events, and express gratitude. Results show that YouTube mostly publishes videos aimed at promoting the company’s products and that LinkedIn is only used for its main original purpose (job seeking and posting). The remaining channels are multi-purposed, even if in uneven proportions.

Different strategies of communication are used for product promotion that are common to all social media profiles: i) pictures in which older adults pose while use/imply to use the product and ii) videos, in which caregivers mention the advantages of the company’s interactive system or older adults are recorded using the system and referring the functionalities they like most. These contents are recorded inside the affiliated institutions, in realistic contexts and situations.

The company expresses gratitude by explicitly saying ‘thank you’ to seniors and affiliated institutions, who/which are addressed in dedicated posts referring their names. This indicates that the company’s communication strategy closely observes the relationship with their affiliated members and end-users.

The way in which product promotion is done, which typically consists of sharing audio-visual material showing end-users utilizing the product, or next to a screen that implies that the product is in use, is made in a very clever way, because, oftentimes, product promotion is combined with the expression of gratitude and the acknowledgement of the important role and experience older adults have in society and the life of others, including community managers5. In fact, these purposes are combined in such an intricate and intertwined way that they are sometimes difficult to untangle.

Business development is made through posts that highlight the involvement of the company in strategic partnerships, or the announcement of a new community associate or of a visit to a city for product demonstration purposes. Again, this is done in a particular way: by saying they are proud to have xyz as a (new) affiliated member. Finally, the company also posts about the participation in ageing-related events, funding opportunities and news that somehow relate to ageing, aged-people, or the product itself. Worth of note is that the company gives visibility to the events they participate, while highlighting features and characteristic of the product as well as their research and development strategies.
3.4. Type of Content

Table 2 provides an overview of the overall numbers of posts, texts excerpts, images and videos considered for this research. To analyse the audio-visual content with regards to gender and stereotypical representations of older adults, only a subset of those contents was inspected. While text excerpts (alone or accompanying audio-visual content) are produced by the company, pictures and videos may be re-shares, and thus may, or may not, represent the views of the organisation, therefore re-shared pictures and videos from Facebook were excluded from this analysis. In Instagram it is not possible to distinguish between shares and re-share, so all posts were considered. Content featuring more than 10 older adults, and which was repeated within the same social media profile were also excluded.

Table 5 presents an overview of the contents analysed in this section, organised depending on weather older adults appeared in groups of older adults only (GOAO), groups of older adults with others (GWO), or alone. We also recorded how many of those pictures/videos included men and/or women.

Table 5. Overview of pictures and videos that included older adults across services/platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Platform</th>
<th>Type of content</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Not possible to determine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Pictures: 8</td>
<td>GOAO: 1</td>
<td>GOAO: 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GWO: 4</td>
<td>GWO: 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GOAO: 1</td>
<td>GWO: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alone: 1</td>
<td>Alone: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Pictures: 34</td>
<td>GOAO: 8</td>
<td>GOAO: 7</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GWO: 17</td>
<td>GWO: 17</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GWO: 17</td>
<td>GWO: 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alone: 8</td>
<td>Alone: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Videos: 8</td>
<td>GOAO: 1</td>
<td>GOAO: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>GWO: 3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>GOAO: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GWO: 3</td>
<td>GWO: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alone: 3</td>
<td>Alone: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Pictures: 34</td>
<td>GOAO: 2</td>
<td>GOAO: 1</td>
<td>GWO: 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GWO: 15</td>
<td>GWO: 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GOAO: 2</td>
<td>GOAO: 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GWO: 15</td>
<td>GWO: 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alone: 10</td>
<td>Alone: 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Videos: 4</td>
<td>GOAO: 3</td>
<td>GOAO: 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GWO: 1</td>
<td>GWO: 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GOAO: 1</td>
<td>GOAO: 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>Pictures: 1</td>
<td>GOAO: 1</td>
<td>GOAO: 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GWO: 1</td>
<td>GWO: 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: GOAO = groups of older adults only; GWO = groups of older adults with others
3.4.1. Website

Five pictures were excluded because they featured company collaborators. The website displays eight pictures with older adults. The banner displays one photo with a senior woman with a laptop in a park and one photo with a senior man and a child using a tablet. Both pictures include the company logo. The other six emphasize features of the senior platform developed by the company: one photo displays a group of female older adults; four photos display older adults (female or male) with caregivers, and one last photo displays a male older adult alone. The only video in the website was not analysed because it was an animation.

3.4.2. Facebook

The analysis of Facebook audio-visual content included 34 pictures and 8 videos. From the total number of pictures, 318 were not analysed, most because they were sets of re-shared pictures (244). The others were pictures announcing visits to cities (7), of newspaper news (6), of events (5), of the company team (5), linked to the contest (4), of posters of events (3). 16 had over 10 older adults and 4 four were repeated. The 34 pictures from Facebook that were analysed, included:

- 9 pictures where older adults are alone, of which 8 displayed a woman and 1 displayed a man. Here, a significant difference is noted with more women than man being represented in the pictures. 8 pictures showed older adults in a group of older adults only (GOAO). In one of these pictures older adults were covering their faces and it was not possible to determine if they were man or women. For the remaining 7, in general, photos had more women than man, however while all 7 photos featured man, only 6 photos displayed women, as one of the photos displayed only two male older adults.

- 17 pictures featuring a group of older adults with others (GWO). In 14 of these photos there was always a mix of man and women. Of the remaining, two featured a caregiver with one woman/man and another an older woman with two community managers. From the 14 pictures, the presence of male and female older adults was only matched in three instances, with males being (often largely) outnumbered by women. In six cases by a difference of five or six more women compared to the number of men. Photos were taken with the caregivers and/or the product community managers. As said above, two pictures were of pairs with caregivers. Of the remaining pictures 15 pictures, 13 were with caregivers, two with caregivers and community managers and the remaining two with community managers only.

Pictures displayed different types of activity. To conveniently analyse the activities displayed in the photos, we will analyse the pictures related with the contest separately, because those pictures are likely to have been sent by their associates, so they may or may not reflect the strategy of the company. However, the company created an album in their profile with these pictures and created posts with them, so they need to be analysed, because, by creating posts with them, to some extent, the company 'appropriated' them.
From the 15 pictures unrelated to the contest, the vast majority shows older adults, both alone and in a group, using, or implying to be using, the product - this is the case for 10 instances, where older adults sit by a computer screen displaying the product in use or implying the possibility of using it. This (subliminal) product promotion strategy appears together with the acknowledgement and expression of gratitude towards older adults (4 instances) as well as with business development purposes. In the former, the picture is combined with a text emphasising the valuable life experience and wonderful smiles of older adults. In the latter, the photos are accompanied by text stating that a new association has acquired the product and thus entered the community. The expression of gratitude, which appears eight times in total, is conveyed four more times, two of them together with the intention of business development, where the photos are used not only to praise older adults but also to mark the visits of community managers (who are together with older adults in one of the photos) to the associates who use the product; this is manifested in the text of the posts together with the photos. Again, older adults appear posing next to a computer screen showing the product. Only in two cases photos are linked to gratitude alone, where one is to acknowledge older adults, showing a group of three older adults in an expression of companionship, and the other is used to highlight the valuable role of caregivers, on the National caregivers’ day. In this case, the photo shows a caregiver and an older adult in an expression of care. One last photo is used to promote team building alone, where again older adults are linked to the community managers, celebrating someone’s birthday.

From the 34 photos analysed, 19 (just over half) were connected to the contest that the company was promoting in the month of the analysis. These pictures mostly displayed older adults posing for the pictures, in a context that made reference to the gym (5 instances) or to the company product, by showing its logo or the product in use (9 instances). In 11 instances, the pictures implied some kind of fun/joke, where in 8 instances the jokes appeared a bit exaggerated. For example, in one of the pictures, older adults are showed outside in a street on a cloudy day holding two skateboards, while one of them lies down on the wet street. From the photos related to the contest, only one does not fit into the above categories; that picture displays a female blowing a kiss and wearing an unnatural (excessive) amount of make-up.

It is noteworthy that, from all the pictures analysed, only one shows a group of ‘gloomy’ older adults. All other pictures display happy and cheerful older adults, sometimes even in an excessively festive atmosphere. This is especially preponderant in the subset of pictures that are part of the album related to the contest.

Facebook included 14 videos; six were not analysed, because they did not feature older adults (5) or were of a large group (1). The eight Facebook videos analysed include:

- 1 of a group of older adults only (GOAO), with two female and two male older adults.
3 of older adults with others (GWO), where older adults appear with caregivers and/or community managers, 1 with both and the other 2 only with caregivers. While men appear in all of these videos, women only appear in two of the videos. Men are outnumbered by women in 2 videos, where one shows 7 more women than men, however only men appear in the remaining video.

- 4 videos show female (3) or male older adults alone (1).

Into what concerns the activities and the messages conveyed in the videos, from the eight videos analysed, six of them show the different facets of the product and how it can be used. In particular, the videos show older adults using the product to read the news, check the weather, play crosswords, chat with grandkids, play physical activity games, and play a song while an older adult lady sings along. These six videos present different nuances, all highlighting the richness of the product and the activities it promotes in a very clever way of product promotion. For e.g. one video shows seniors playing, as they are guided and motivated by a caregiver, supporting them through the journey of using the product. In another video, an older adult advices/enticed others to use the product, which she uses regularly, while another shows an older adult man playing a game and levelling up, as a number of others watch and cheer for him. A final video shows an emotional speech of an older adult lady in which she reflects over her life and speaks about her love for her grandchildren in a profound and touching discourse.

The remaining two videos related to the contest that was taking place in the month of November. In one of the videos, older adults in a senior home advertise the contest and appeal for the use of the product, while the protagonists make jokes and laugh compulsively as others in the background continue their normal activities. The other video features an older adult lady teaching how to take a selfie in a kind of stand-up comedy, reality show style.

### 3.4.3. Other Social Media Profiles

This section reports the results of the audio-visual content included in Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn. From a total of 60 pictures posted on Instagram, 26 were not analysed because they were pictures of events (12), of collaborators (10), had over 10 older adults (2), were repeated (1), or announcing a visit (1). From the pictures posted in Instagram, 34 were analysed, where:

- 17 pictures displayed older adults alone. Six of these pictures are close-ups of older adults faces (5 of women and 1 of a man). The other 11 pictures displayed older adults (six men and 5 women) in front or near a screen displaying the interactive system developed by the company;

- 15 pictures featured a group of older adults with others (GWO). In all of these photos there was a mix of men and women with caregivers and/or product community managers. Almost perfect parity between men and women is found; and
2 showed older adults in a group of older adults only (GOAO). 1 of the pictures displayed 1 man and 1 woman and the other a group of 5 women.

From the 34 photos analysed, three were connected to the contest. Two of those pictures displayed older adults, in a context related to the gym. The other picture displayed a group of older adults near a screen exhibiting the company product. 25 pictures displayed older adults, in a group or alone, in activities that fit in the subliminal product promotion we previously described: most photos show the older adults sitting near a computer screen that displays the product and some of its functionalities. The other six photos are close-ups of older adults faces.

Over the month of November, the company published six videos on YouTube. From these, two were not analysed because they do not feature older adults. Into what concerns the videos that did include older adults, one recorded an old lady talking about her life and family (also posted in Facebook and previously described). Another video recorded an old gentleman talking with the product community managers about the importance of dressing appropriately. The other two videos recorded a woman and a man talking about their favourite functionalities of the interactive system. In one of the videos two caregivers talk about the functionalities most used by the older adult, or about the benefits to the institution of product adoption (interactive system).

The LinkedIn profile has 1 photo (also displayed in website banner). The photo has a female older adult (by the appearance a foreign woman) in a park with a laptop. The photo displays the company logo.

3.4.4. Findings Concerning Gender Representations

The numbers in Table 5 shows that overall there are more women than man represented in the audio-visual materials of the company. For pictures/videos featuring older adults alone, the larger number of females is confirmed in almost all types of audio-visual content and communication channel. However, if we look at group pictures, numbers are almost balanced and there are pictures in which women are outnumbered. Our interpretation is that the observed difference is more likely to be rooted in demographics rather than a matter of imbalance in terms of the representation of male or female persons. In Portugal, among those who are 65+, 52.8% are women (PORDATA, 2019), with a larger percentage of women being observed in those who are 80 years of age or older (INE, 2019).

3.4.5. Findings Concerning Ageism

The analysis of the pictures and videos shows that more often than not, groups of older adults include others as well, that is: caregivers and community managers. This type of group pictures shows larger numbers than those with older adults only (Table 5). These numbers suggest an inclusive rather than an ‘us vs. others’ milieu. Furthermore, while we expected to find older adults with the caregivers with whom they coexist on a daily basis, we did not expect to find pictures with the company
community managers. We consider this a good indication that the organisation does want to promote an environment that is inclusive of older adults.

Taking a closer look at the audio-visual materials published within the contest context (possibly, originally produced by the affiliated institutions that use the product), we sometimes detected a tendency to represent overly festive contexts. In these materials, older adults make jokes and laugh compulsively and pose with skateboards and wear colourful tops. These audio-visual materials are difficult to interpret, as because excessive, they could be linked to stereotypes. In these materials, it appears that older adults want to appear younger and more fun and thus pretend to engage in activities usually associated with children and teenagers. Still, these could reflect the views of caregivers or whoever planned the picture/video and not older adults themselves, not the company who owns the product.

3.5. Tone of Messages

While the analysis of the pictures and videos is key in our study, text itself is an equally important element, as, in accompanying audio-visual materials, it conveys the desired point-of-view of the specific photo/video. Building upon the previous sections, this section further analyses the tone of the messages produced by the company to investigate not only the tone of the communication itself but also the presence of stereotypes. This analysis is based on 83 text excerpts from Facebook, 29 text excerpts from Instagram, and 6 text excerpts from YouTube.

3.5.1. General Tone of Messages

To determine the tone of communication, text excerpts were marked as formal or informal and as very positive (++), positive (+), or neutral (-); no negative tone was identified so it is not included. We also took note of the use of emoticons. An overview of these results is presented in Table 6.

The website mostly uses a formal and neutral tone, with short and succinct texts. Into what concerns the company’s social media profiles, the tone of the messages is predominantly colloquial and informal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Platform</th>
<th>Institutional Sentiment</th>
<th># posts with emoticons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 6 shows, no messages were marked as having a negative tone and a significant number of posts include emoticons. The analysis of the Facebook text excerpts showed formal messages slightly outnumber informal ones and that the tone conveyed in the messages was either very positive or positive, with both having roughly equivalent distributions. The tone in 64 posts is complemented with the use of emoticons. There was no particular pattern detected when text is used to highlight a particular purpose or topic or when associated with a picture or video. The majority of the texts inserted on Instagram profile are informal. All of them are positive or very positive, usually highly adjetivised and, interestingly, sometimes emotional and personal. All posts use at least one emoticon. Texts in YouTube are mostly positive, where those involving the company collaborators or caregivers have a more formal tone and those featuring seniors using the product tend to be informal. Texts on LinkedIn profile are formal and neutral.

3.5.2. Findings Concerning Ageism

While going through the posts, we were also interested in finding traces of ageism. With this purpose in mind we examined the tone of messages to investigate whether there were traces of a differentiated treatment, being it positive or negative. Table 7 captures these results, and characterizes messages as satiric, humorous, empathetic, stereotyping, and otherness. This analysis considered the text excerpts as well as the text and videos accompanying them. LinkedIn was not included in this analysis because it only listed jobs, and to investigate those was out of the scope of this work.

Table 7. Overview of ageism-related analysis across services/platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Platform</th>
<th>Humorous, unrealistic?</th>
<th>Empathetic</th>
<th>Stereotyping</th>
<th>Otherness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Facebook</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we can see in Table 7, the messages seem to indicate an almost total absence of stereotyped treatment. In fact, communication seems to be inclusive as the columns dedicated to stereotyping and otherness are mostly empty. Conversely, the column displaying the count of empathetic messages shows larger numbers.

There are only two instances in which a direct reference is made to age. However, one of these entries is related to the contest and there is a chance it was initially produced by the person who planed the picture, which show older adults in
an unrealistic scenario where they pretend to play with skateboards. The other instance links to the previously described emotional video of an older adult lady. In that video she does mentions differences between generations and asserts that she is not young anymore. It may be difficult to completely avoid age comparisons and, having analysed the content of that video, it is our understanding that those references to generations do not necessarily indicate ageism.

The analysis of humorous content aimed to examine weather that type of content was unrealistically humorous. Overall 48 posts were marked as humorous. While the majority of posts displayed funny moments that seniors experience in the institutions they attend, our analysis found that in 20 instances, most of them related to the contest that was being organised by the company in November 2019, the content and tone of messages were unrealistically humorous. In such cases, older adults are displayed, for e.g., wearing masks and slippers and onesies while holding traffic cones and gym equipment; playing with skateboards outside and lying down on wet streets; and sitting in a common room in robes and colourful shower caps. Video material examples include a video in which an older adult lady explains how to take a selfie or in which older adults tell jokes and laugh compulsively. In these examples, there seems to be a tendency to overcompensate stereotypes of old age with young childish-like ones, with media content favouring the presentation exceptionally happy and active seniors. The nature of this content will be further discussed next.

Finally, it is noteworthy that no posts were marked as conveying a sense of otherness and that those casting messages tagged as empathetic and thus conveying a caring attitude towards the older adult are those with the larger numbers. The absence of the ‘us vs. others’ confirms what we had already noted with regards to the audio-visual content, in which older adults frequently appear with caregivers and community managers. As previously noted, there is an almost constant presence of messages of gratitude. Taking the Instagram pictures as an example, there are several portrait-like pictures of older adults with the solo purpose of showing appreciation for them. This is made by specifically mentioning the name of the person in the picture, praising and showing appreciation for their smiles, their inspiring life stories and energy. Their contagious smiles are also used to greet everyone ‘good morning’ and wish everyone let’s themselves be ‘infected’ by older adults’ smiles. Stories are created in such a way that feelings of esteem and devotion for the aged are actively nurtured. To conclude, we found no traces of ageism or otherness, rather the opposite.

4. Discussion and Lessons Learned

Some of our findings and interpretations deserve to be discussed, as we will do in this section. We will also consider limitations and lessons learned with this work.
Results show that Facebook is the channel in which the organisation has the most activity. Instagram also shows activity, but the other channels are underexplored. The strategy seems to be to use Facebook to maintain a close relationship with the community of older adults and affiliated members, while Instagram seems to privilege business development and team members. This accompanies the tendencies reflected in the social media demographics that show Facebook usage amounts those aged 65% is of 46% while others social media channels have smaller percentages, i.e.: YouTube – 38%, LinkedIn – 11%, Instagram – 8%, Twitter – 7% (Chen, 2020). While the preference over Facebook to engage with seniors seems appropriate, the company may be missing out on opportunities, by not exploring YouTube to its full potential. It is hard to determine the age range of those who buy and/or develop solutions for seniors, but statistics show diversified preferences over younger work age generations (Chen, 2020), so it could be a smart choice to use other social media for these.

The analysis of the audio-visual content posted by the company revealed that pictures and videos sometimes seem a little too festive. This may mean that the life of those seniors is indeed more extravagant than the one society generally has of older adults, or that the content published was curated to appear more fun and create the impression of an exceptionally happy and active older adult. Although this may indicate a tendency to overcompensate stereotypes of old age, these results might have been influenced by the contest that was taking place at the time data analysis took place. In this case, this excessive fun that could hide away reality, may actually be related to the perceptions that senior organisations and/or seniors may have of the company. Still, while these contents were marked as unrealistic, we consider that what is displayed cannot be ‘fabricated’ and requires future research to be fully understood and then determine whether this could be a form of ageism. Regardless of age, we argue it is ok to play and to act ‘foolishly’, so it would be too early to identify this as ageism.

5. Recommendations on Age-Friendly Media Content Delivery

A number of recommendations can be derived from this study that could inform organisations going forward on how to adequately communicate in an inclusive, age-friendly, and gender-balanced way. The following recommendations (R) list activities that could lead to a good communication strategy; built upon the insights of this study, this list should not be considered prescriptive nor complete:

- **R1 - Develop a community and celebrate (it) together**: Organize contests between organisations within a network, remember important dates in a given institution or at national level (e.g. grandparents day, caregivers day) and publish contents created by community members.

- **R2 - Treat everyone as unique and as peers**: In becoming an active member of the community, consider all members as unique and as peers. Do not be afraid to
join them in their activities/context, reducing or even eliminating any perception of ‘us vs. them’. Also, it is ok to personalize contents, to mention names, and to praise specific persons, institutions, and partners.

- **R3 - Express gratitude**: In getting involved with end-users and other stakeholders, say thank you and show appreciation for them.

- **R4 - Leverage audio-visual materials to create impact**: Contents have a powerful impact on message retention; so, curate audio-visual materials to create an engaging story made of original and realistic photos, videos or audio contents (e.g. photos and videos in real contexts of older adults’ daily life). Refrain from using filters or other editing process. Emotion is also a powerful strategy to engage users, so film and share such stories.

- **R5 - Share ‘real’, humorous, positive and inclusive content**: Following the previous recommendation, share content that induces a sense of wellbeing in, to and from the audience; create engaging real and up-beat stories featuring real people in real life contexts.

- **R6 - Know your users and engage them individually**: Carefully monitor those users engaging with your service and direct your messages at them; it is ok to keep messages short.

- **R7 - Privilege end-users over (explicit) product promotion**: for organisations with a commercial purpose, consider applying the Pareto principle (Sanders, 1987) where only 20% of the contents should be dedicated to product promotion (not explicitly), and the others 80% should be dedicated to contents interesting to the end-users, namely older adults.

- **R8 – Take advantage of the potential of the sharing and tagging features**: in all of the above leverage features that will emphasise and facilitate the generation of links among community members.

**Conclusions and Future Work**

This paper analysed the online digital media communication a company that has developed a system for older adults, during the month of November 2019. This was done with the purpose to understand the communication strategy of this company in communicating with its users, and in promoting its product to determine successful communication strategies. Taking stock from this analysis, the paper contributes a number of findings and eight recommendations that can inform other organisations developing products for seniors going forward. In addition to investigating the company’s communication strategy, this work took a particular interest on the company’s content deliver, in particular pictures and video, to explore issues related to gender and ageism.
In terms of presence in digital media, the product greatly favours the Facebook platform – that seems to aggregate all info – in detriment of all other forms of digital presence. The second most used is Instagram, YouTube is somehow unexplored, and LinkedIn is only used for job listing. Finally, while the organisation created a Twitter profile, it does not show any activity, indicating Twitter is not part of the company’s social media mix. In using social media, the organisation keeps a constant connection and a close relationship with older adults and partner institutions, by using tags and re-shares. When this functionality is unavailable community members are mentioned by their names.

The organisation seems to address different audiences through different communication channels. Facebook tends to address older-adults and associations while Instagram aims at a spread over various audiences. This gains stronger relevance when observing the company’s communication purposes, where again Instagram is diversified, and Facebook emphasises product promotion and the expression of gratitude. Product promotion is done in a clever way, with little nuggets of product endorsement, though pictures and videos showing older adults using (or implying to use) their system; caregivers advising the use of the system and older adults listing/demoing what they use the product for and cheering for fellow older adults using the product. Interestingly enough, the company uses social media also to promote team building. With regards to the type of content, results showed that the company does not use audio and that pictures are the type of content with the greatest numbers.

The organisation strategy is very inclusive. In fact, instead of a ‘us vs. others’ relationship, we found that the company keeps a close relationship with their associates and end-users, participating in their activities and expressing gratitude for them. This study also indicates that the organisation’s strategy is to develop a nurturing esteem and admiration for the ‘everyday’ older person, where stereotypes have no place.

Some questions remain unanswered upon completion of this study that would benefit from future research. It would be interesting to interview the owners of the company as well as the community managers, frequently present in the data we analysed. In inquiring them, it would be possible to learn about the rationale behind their communication and interaction strategy, which would allow us to develop a holistic understanding of it. Furthermore, and as noted before, the organisation seems to replicate their digital media content in different channels. This was not thoroughly investigated, thus warranting future research where the interlinks between the channels are analysed, and, given these interlinks are confirmed, it would be interesting to discuss them with the product communication team to, again, peak into their strategy, and, in doing so, learning from it.
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