

Green E-branding: the Spanish Experience

by *Alfonso Méndiz, Araceli Castelló*

Introduction

This conference paper is structured in two parts. The first part describes the situation of Spanish companies in regards to the communication of environmental values: the concept of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), the organisations which see to its development, the monitors of corporate reputation, the influence of environmental issues to the company's reputation, and the importance of interactive media (Internet and social networks) in the development of green marketing. In the second part, we set out the results of a field research conducted by 20 industrial businesses of a certain relevance regarding online communication of environmental subjects. These 20 case studies have been selected based on geographic and sectorial criteria: the 4 Spanish Autonomous Communities with the largest turnover figures (Catalonia, Andalusia, Valencia and the Basque Country) and the 5 industrial areas with the largest total revenue: Electricity, Chemical, Oil and Natural Gas, Automotive, and Meat.

1. Environmental Awareness

The term eco-efficiency was used for the first time in 1992, at a United Nations Conference, the "Rio Summit". It was the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) who stressed the importance of assessing the contribution of industry to sustainable development in order for businesses to stop being part of the problem of environmental degradation and become part of the solution for sustainability. Olcese, Rodríguez and Alfaro reproduce the definition of the WBCSD for this concept: «Eco-efficiency is obtained through the supply of goods and services at competitive prices, to satisfy human needs and provide quality of life, while progressively reducing the ecological impact and intensity of use of resources

throughout their life-cycle, at a level which is, at least, consistent with the estimated carrying capacity of the Earth» (Rodríguez, Alfaro 2008, p.161).

All in all, it means creating more value with less impact and linking the value of the product or service with its environmental influence. The thing is that, although we sometimes forget it, economic activity would be impossible without the utility provided by ecosystems.

Another important concept in the environmental sphere is sustainable development, which was first described in 1987 by the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development, in the report "Our Common Future", as «the development which satisfies our present needs without compromising the capacity of future generations to satisfy theirs». This report pointed out three dimensions of sustainable development, namely: economic development, environmental protection, and social equity. Essentially, sustainable development is a change process towards an ideal in which the production, consumption and investment habits enable people to enjoy, now and in the future, the material and environmental conditions that give them access to a dignified existence and a better quality of life.

2. Green Marketing in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): The situation in Spain

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Spain

Corporate social responsibility arose in the United States in the fifties, within the context of post World War II (Maira 2009, p. 42). The demand of society for the private sector to find a new model of coexistence and management which allows for a solution to an ever-changing reality, characterised by globalisation and relocation, began in the mid-nineties. In the last few years, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has experienced a strong development, both in the academic sphere and in business management. Albareda and Balaguer state that: «in just a few years, CSR has turned into a practice of great interest, since among other issues; the companies' voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns into their commercial operations and the relations with their agents is proving the capacity to create value for the business itself» (Albareda, Balaguer 2007, p. 13). CSR implies that, besides a strict compliance of their legal and economic obligations, companies assume social, environmental, and human concerns through a voluntary commitment. Therefore, the company includes «the moral dimension in the decision making, the strategic planning, and the policy designing in such a way that all its business areas are involved» (Castelló 2010b, p. 41).

In the EU's Green Paper (2001), created to promote a European framework for corporate social responsibility, this is described as «a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis» (Commission of the European Communities 2001). In a broader sense, it is also described as «a concept whereby companies voluntarily decide to contribute to the achievement of a better society and a cleaner environment»¹.

In a global scope, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has given its definition for CSR in article 4 of its code "Advertising and Marketing Communication Practice"². In such text it states: «marketing communication should respect human dignity and should not incite or condone any form of discrimination, including that based upon race, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation. Marketing communication should not without justifiable reason play on fear or exploit misfortune or suffering. Marketing communication should not appear to condone or incite violent, unlawful or anti-social behaviour. Marketing communication should not play on superstition».

In Spain there are an ever increasing number of organisations which are promoting different kinds of initiatives in the CSR sphere. Amongst them, maybe the most outstanding, is *Fundación Empresa y Sociedad* which was set up in 1995 with the purpose of «stimulating the scope and quality of social action in the enterprise»³.

In February 2008, the *Consejo Estatal de RSE* [State Council for CSR] was created in Spain, as an advisory and consultative body, in order to forward and boost public policies for the support and promotion of social responsibility⁴. In October 2009, the *Asociación de Directivos de Comunicación* (DirCom) published a special issue titled "Responsible Communication, the key to fostering CSR", where it highlights the role played by companies for the achievement of sustainable development and the importance of CSR as a new business model, beyond occasional or corporate image actions⁵. In order to ensure the authenticity of the environmental commitment in advertising communication, in September 2009 the "Self-regulation Code for Environmental Arguments in Business Communications" came

¹ Available at: www.jussempere.org/Inicio/Recursos/Actividad%20Corporativa/Recursos/Libro%20verde.pdf.

² Available at: www.iccwbo.org/uploadedFiles/ICC/policy/marketing/Statements/330%20Final%20version%20of%20the%20Consolidated%20Code%20with%20covers.pdf.

³ www.empresaysociedad.org.

⁴ Spanish Royal Decree 221/2008, of 15 February, publishing its creation, may be consulted at http://www.mtas.es/es/empleo/economia-soc/RespoSocEmpresas/docs/RD_CONSEJORSE290208.pdf.

⁵ It may be downloaded from: www.dircom.org/images/stories/news/Noticias/ActualidadDircom/cuadernomonograficocomunicacionresponsable.pdf.

into force, published by Autocontrol⁶, a self-regulating organisation for commercial communication to whose rules and judgements are voluntarily submitted to the advertising agencies, the advertisers, and the mass media. This code conveys the need for publicity to be conducted in such a way that it does not abuse consumers' concern for the environment and does not exploit the possible lack of knowledge on environmental issues by consumers. To this end, it invokes the "social responsibility principle" for any advertising action and establishes a set of rules for its message development, implementation, and dissemination. For example: "Commercial communications must not show any behaviour which is prejudicial to the environment" (art. 4); and "Environmental arguments must be based on evidence, and must be verifiable" (art. 7).

Companies have understood that, from their part, the consumer expects that their sustainable development policies do not remain as a mere declaration of intent. As a result, the publication of *annual reports on sustainability* describing all their activities for the contribution of sustainable development has become a general practice. Companies have already assumed on a recurring basis that, from a corporate point of view that they must cater on three fronts: the economic, the social, and the environmental⁷. This translates into the frequently tripartite structure of their annual reports: economic, social, and environmental results. In order to see to its compliance, in May 2009 the *Fundación Ecología y Desarrollo* (ECODES) (Ecology and Development Foundation) was created, which actively collaborates with companies and public bodies to make sustainable development a reality. It pays special attention to public activities. In its "Yearbook on Business Social Responsibility in Spain" it includes a full listing of the initiatives carried out by governmental institutions at a autonomous, national, and international level⁸.

2.2 *The Environmental Commitment in Brand Reputation*

Obviously, the degree of commitment with sustainable development is very diverse amongst businesses. We may find from a basic – nearly defensive level –, in which the company just prepares CSR in view of possible attacks from stakeholders, up to the full integration of CSR as a strategic approach, and through the development of actions on an occasional basis.

⁶ www.mma.es/secciones/cambio_climatico/pdf/codigo_autorelacion_argumentos_comunicacomerciales.pdf.

⁷ The Dow Jones Sustainability Index expressly declares that a company shall be sustainable in the future if it is capable of juggling the "triple income statement: economic, social and environmental".

⁸ www.ecodes.org/documentos/archivo/Anuario_RSC_2006.pdf.

Due to its intangible nature, it is difficult to measure the effect which CSR actions bring about to the corporate image and to the company's sales figure, but there is no doubt that its importance is increasing. The consumers, who are more and more learned and informed on environmental issues, incorporate this criterion into their purchasing decision. According to the study *Climate Change: The Consumer's Perception and its Implications in Marketing and Communication*, implemented by *Havas Media*, three out of every four Spanish consumers prefer to buy products in companies which are "committed with the environment"⁹. Another study, published by Gyro International, revealed that 81% of Spanish consumers consider that environmental issues are important, much more so than British consumers (63%) or Americans (51%). Besides, the Spanish consumer is also more prepared to pay a bit more for products and services which are environmentally-friendly (Spain 63%; United Kingdom 28%; United States 32%)¹⁰.

The *Monitor Español de Reputación Corporativa* (MERCO) (Spanish Corporate Reputation Business Monitor) publishes every year a ranking of the top 100 companies and top 100 managers with the best reputation in Spain. Amongst the most relevant indicators it includes ethics and CSR. Something similar happens with the ranking published by *Fortune Magazine* regarding American companies: among its eight variables we find social and environmental responsibility. That is why the Director of MERCO claims that, from the economic point of view, «responsible companies are more profitable» (Villafañe 2009, p. 80). In the last published report (April 2011), the Spanish companies with the best reputation were: *Banco de Santander*, *Inditex* and *Telefónica*; and their respective CEOs, Emilio Botín, Amancio Ortega and César Alierta, were the most highly valued leaders¹¹. DIRCOM2R¹² is a tool similar to MERCO, offered by the Spanish Association of Communication Directors (DirCom) in order to assess the integration of corporate reputation. This instrument attaches a value of 17% to the environment and to climate change, as one of the variables which make up the strategic management of CSR, in line with the generation of reputational value. In the DirCom's opinion, the indicators of this variable are:

- ✓ measurement and management of environmental impact (weight: 15.24);
- ✓ projects for reduced consumption of natural resources or promotion of renewable energy (weight: 10.56);
- ✓ procedures for the management/purchasing of responsible products (weight: 10.07);

⁹ www.marketingnews.es/Noticias/Varios/20080714002.

¹⁰ www.puromarketing.com/53/5724/los-consumidores-siguen-exigiendo-grandesmarcas-claridad-sobre-su-compromiso-medioambiental.html.

¹¹ Report available at: www.merco.info/es/countries/4/rankings/2.

¹² <http://2r.dircom.org/>.

- ✓ environmental report (weight: 9.98);
- ✓ initiatives to mitigate environmental impact (weight: 9.83);
- ✓ recycling programmes (weight: 9.78);
- ✓ positioning against climate change (weight: 9.71);
- ✓ environmental requirements for the supply chain (weight: 9.66);
- ✓ environmental certifications (weight: 8.78);
- ✓ attachment to environmental initiatives (weight: 6.39).

Nowadays consumers demand from companies a contribution to improve society, the fulfilment of their CSR programmes and, above all, a smooth communication which allows them to be informed of the initiatives and projects carried out by the companies, to share them with their own community and to feel that they are part of those initiatives. According to the study on attitudes, "LifeStyles 4", implemented by the research enterprise *Kantar Worldpanel*, environmentalism is one of the main trends which shall exert an influence on purchasing habits of consumers in the medium-long term¹³.

For its part, the *Confederación de Consumidores y Usuarios* (Spanish Confederation of Consumers and Users) (CECU) publishes every year the report "Opinion and Assessment by Consumers of the Social Responsibility of Businesses in Spain"¹⁴. And the results of its last edition show a very low global assessment of the social and environmental performance of Spanish companies: merely 5.3 out of 10. In general, users demand more information about CSR.

To complete the framework of reputational reports, we may highlight the survey carried out by DirCom amongst its associates in order to know the degree of development of CSR in Spanish companies. Among its main conclusions was the fact that 75% of the Communication Directors think that SMEs are not taking social responsibility into account and that 95% of them think that CSR is poorly represented in public services companies. Besides, 75% of said professionals believe that Spanish society demands that companies pay more attention to CSR, and 90% think that companies, in their own interest, should grant a high or very high level of importance to CSR. To sum it up, an organisation needs to showcase its responsible actions, through its communication, not only to generate a positive return for its brand, but also to disseminate good practices and contribute to extend CSR. The main difficulty which CSR communication has to face is its instrumental conception, the fact of its direct and often reductionist association with reputation. Of course, if it is carried out with transparency, it gen-

¹³

www.kantarworldpanel.com/kwp_ftp/Spain/NdP/20101122_desayunos/20101122_BalanceyFuturoGC_presentacion.pdf.

¹⁴ www.cecu.es/GuiaRSE3.pdf.

erates confidence and reputation; but this is not its purpose, since that would rather be the systematisation of good business behaviours in the relations with their stakeholders. Reputation is just an additional reward.

3. Green E-marketing

3.1 *The New Public Space: Internet and Social Media*

The Internet has grown to be one of the essential channels for the interaction and communication of people, companies and institutions. In Spain, according to the third wave in 2011 of the "General Mass Media Survey" (GMS) [*Estudio General de Medios*] published by the *Asociación para la Investigación de Medios de Comunicación* (AIMC) [Association for Mass Media Research]¹⁵, the monthly audience for the Internet amounts to 57.6% of the Spanish population aged 14 or over, and 73.7% of the Internet surfers have daily access to the Internet. In regards to investment, the Internet has consolidated a position of privilege within the advertising system, while other media (TV, Radio, Films, Press, Magazines, etc.) have experienced steep declines since the outbreak of the economic crisis (2007). Internet has been the only media to continue growing, until it has reached third position in the sharing out of the advertising cake, just after Television and the Press¹⁶. According to the last report, from January to September 2011 the advertising investment in the Internet increased even more: 8.5% compared with the same period in 2010¹⁷.

The outburst of online platforms at the service of businesses, derived from the Web 2.0 spaces and based on contents' integration, has brought about that collaborative environments such as Facebook and Twitter are now also used as channels for business (corporate and advertising), as well as marketing (sales and customer support) communication. With their presence in these environments, companies are not only in search of communication with their clients, but also their loyalty to the brand and, even, their complicity to promote and recommend it amongst their acquaintances. In any purchasing decision, the confidence inspired by a close source (the message of a friend or a person we know) is much stronger than that generated by the whole of the advertising messages or the different marketing actions. On the other hand, in regards to any public issue which may affect companies (crises, rumours, exchange of shareholders or dissatisfaction

¹⁵ It may be consulted at www.aimc.es.

¹⁶ *Estudio InfoAdex de la inversión publicitaria en España 2011*, published by InfoAdex and available at: www.infoadex.es.

¹⁷ The press release may be found at: www.optimediainelligence.es/noticias_archivos/458_20111025170411.pdf.

about a defective product); the public conversation which is channelled by social networks is much more powerful than that of the other conventional media: press, radio, television, etc.

The concept of Web 2.0 stands for the Internet as a social space; that is, not only a space for browsing and information, but for the creation of contents by the users themselves. That is why it is in line with the digital interactive communication theory, characterised by hypermediations (Scolari 2008, pp. 113-114). Social networks are redefining the way in which individuals interact with brands and companies. The recipients are no longer the simple addressees of the message: they have now become the core of the communication processes due to their capacity to create contents ("User Generated Content"). The recipient creates, participates and interacts. «The recipient, besides being audience, public and consumer, turns into user and prosumer, that is to say, producer and consumer, all at the same time» (Bermejo Berros 2008, p. 49). Terms such as "crossuser", "prosumer", "fansuser" or "persuser" emphasise the «interactive dimension of the user» (Marshall 2004, p. 51), who has turned his or her position of mere audience into that of constructor or destroyer of the reputation of brands.

From the point of view of businesses, listening to and relating with clients through the social networks, trying to create bonds with the user ("engagement"), implies a total transformation of the corporate culture and communication, by integrating the consumer, whether real and/or potential, precisely at the core of the process, while he or she participates, in an interactive way, in the communication processes of companies and institutions.

And so, the market economy turns into a relations economy. As was already predicted by the *Cluetrain Manifesto* («markets are conversations»¹⁸), social media allow companies to take part in conversations and to provide contents of interest to users. On this subject, Madinabeitia points out that: «now the best part of specialists acknowledges that as important as the persuasive role of advertising is its capacity to "generate conversations". The consumer is now, truly, at the core of the whole system. This fact has brought on a radical change in commercial communication» (Madinabeitia 2010, p. 49).

Approximately half of the users of the Net declare they adhere to and follow activities of the brands. In this context, *Facebook* is considered a reference channel when looking for information on a business or a brand, and 16% of *Facebook* users connect with new users through the interaction with brands. Furthermore, since they have become a part of a brand community, the users have a more positive vision of such brand, they

¹⁸ www.well-comm.es/wellcommunity/wp-content/uploads/cluetrain.pdf.

acknowledge that they have a higher probability of buying it, feel more loyal towards it and invite other users to join the community¹⁹.

The report *Marketing in social media* published by *Territorio Creativo* in April 2010, underlines that eight out of every ten companies which carry out actions of "Social Media Marketing" (SMM) approve the efficiency of social media to raise brand awareness²⁰. According to the study of *Chief Marketer 2011 Interactive Marketing Survey*, of May 2011, the creation of a bond which gains the loyalty of consumers, whether real or potential is the main benefit of the SMM campaigns, followed by direct communication with the customer, speedy feedback and knowledge of the client's preferences²¹. This is how Lamas explains it: «measuring the effectiveness of the communication carried out through these networks will probably require new metrics which include, besides the classic audience indicators, other factors closer to engagement, influence, relevance or credibility» (Lamas 2010, p. 100). All things considered, the presence of companies and brands in the new digital environments is a reality brought on by the advantages of social platforms in the spheres of marketing and business communication, thanks to the possibilities of business orientation based on relations (the philosophy of "client first"), creation of social branding, segmentation and personalisation of messages, evangelisation through prescription and virality, and the implementation of an "experiential marketing" that produces customer engagement (Castelló 2010a, pp. 79-98).

3.2 Green Marketing in Social Networks: For and Against Companies

The environmental marketing of companies has been redefined by the 2.0 values of social platforms, characterised by collective intelligence, the global commons and the User Generated Content (UGC). According to the study *CSR communication: exploring the transnational differences and trends in Europe* by the IE University²², only 12% of the leading Spanish companies offer information about their social and environmental commitment through the social networks. But users who are discontent due to actions contrary to the environment are tremendously active in the Internet,

¹⁹ Results from the second wave of the study "Observatorio de Redes Sociales" [Observatory of Social Networks], conducted by The Cocktail Analysis, published in February 2010 and available at: www.slideshare.net/TCAAnalysis/tca-2010-observatorio-redes-informe-pblicov2-2, and of the report "Wave 5. The socialisation of Brands", by Universal McCann, which may be consulted at: www.slideshare.net/Olivier.mermet/universal-mccann-wave-5-the-socialisation-of-brands.

²⁰ http://dl.dropbox.com/u/4905692/TC_Estudio_encuestaSMM_abril2010.pdf.

²¹ <http://chiefmarketer.com/research/cm-interactive-survey-2011/>.

²² www.compromisorse.com/upload/estudios/000/51/CSRcomreport2010.pdf.

and they publish every day their dissatisfactions and denunciations in the social networks.

An example of this is the Spanish website of "Fotodenuncias" [Photo-denunciations] launched by *Greenpeace* in March 2008. This site enables the web surfers to report, in a simple way, any attack to the environment. With a camera or a mobile phone they can take a photograph of situations such as pollution of the seas or rivers, constructions in protected areas, arsons, discharges, etc., and thus contribute to make public these situations. With this initiative, which takes advantage of the collaborative nature of Web 2.0, *Greenpeace* has managed to channel the citizens' dissatisfaction and see that denunciations acquire gigantic dimensions. In fact, "Photo-denunciations" finds its origin in the great number of people who turned to this organisation to report some specific environmental attack.

As Enrique Soler, the person in charge of volunteers for this NGO, explained: «we want to involve all the citizens in order to stop the increasing degradation of the environment. This is a direct and effective way for each one of us to do our bit to defend our planet»²³. In the first quarter alone, this website published 690 photo-denunciations, classified as follows: Pollution (347), Coasts (156), Woods (117), Climate (45), Water (16) and Transgenics (9). An example, from the companies' point of view, is the project "Save the Beach", created in 2009 by the brand Cerveza Coronita. This business has been communicating for years the area of the beach in its advertising campaigns worldwide, and therefore, this territory has always been in its DNA. And it is precisely in Europe where beaches are becoming damaged very quickly, so the company saw in this territory an opportunity to establish an environmental commitment. They designed the campaign "Save the Beach" and presented it to the mass media through prescribers such as the fashion designer Custo Barcelona, the top model Bar Refaeli and the Australian surfer Xavier Rudd, who is also a well-known eco-activist connected with the music world. Then the brand created an online platform and asked the users to report the problems existing in beaches of their cities through photographs, videos or texts.

At the same time, they gave the user the opportunity to choose the beach which Coronita would clean that year. Once the voting was cast, there was a technical draw between the Capocotta beach, near Rome, and Puertito de Güimar, a beach in Tenerife (Spain). In this town, everyone was on the lookout for the final ballot, and a village of some ten thousand inhabitants generated over 42,400 votes. In the end, Capocotta won, and soon after that began the volunteer recruitment. In order to reinforce it, a strategy in social networks (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc.) was drawn up, to provide information on the actions carried out. Coronita's presence in environmental blogs was also scheduled so as to involve consumers, establishing a direct

²³ www.greenpeace.org/espana/es/news/fotodenuncia-una-herramienta/.

dialogue with them and encouraging their participation in those cleaning up actions ("call to action").

The goal was achieved with more than 1 ton of waste removed from a square kilometre that year, saving the beach from more pollution. All this effort generated a lot of media interest: in 8 months, 63 minutes on Spanish televisions and over 15,000 references in Google. On the next year (2010) the beach of Bahía de Portmán, in Cartagena (Spain) was saved, and in 2011 it was the one on Litorale di Augusta, in Sicily (Italy).

In spite of all that, the neglect of social networks by companies is the settled practice throughout the world. The report "Social Media Sustainability Index" states that 60% of the companies in the United States and Europe fail in their use of social media since they do not have any space 2.0 devoted to their sustainability actions²⁴. In fact, only 22.5% of the analysed companies have a platform in the social media devoted to sustainability and to issues related to their CSR actions.

4. Industrial Areas and Companies in Spain

In 1986 the Spanish National Plan for Scientific Research and Development was created. Spain, which was very underdeveloped in comparison with the EU, began an international expansion phase, characterised by: recent growth, external dependency and geographical concentration. The participation of foreign capital gave rise to an increase of scientific and technological advances throughout the nineties. All this was favoured by an abundance of a young and qualified work-force, and good prospects for development. Spain currently has 4 industrial areas very well differentiated:

1) *Regions with long industrial tradition*: this includes two large zones: *Atlantic Spain* (Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria and the Basque Country), and *Bipolar Spain* (Catalonia and Madrid). These two areas have concentrated the major part of the Spanish industry, and therefore, the investments. However, while "Atlantic Spain" has experienced significant crises (since it was specialised in industries which have retrenched since, such as steel, shipping or chemical), Catalonia and Madrid have endured well the different changes. Madrid has largely benefitted from the fact of being the capital city of the State. The strong foreign investment and technological renovation have also turned it into one of the best choices for industrial production. For all that, Catalonia (which in olden days was specialised in the textile industry) managed to diversify on time and today remains the leading industrial area.

²⁴http://socialmediainfluence.com/SMIreport/download_extract.php?oid=827&h=b5a96ef57940948c80362365883d8988.

2) *The new axes of development*: these are the zones with a manufacturing basis, which is directly related to the possibilities of the area where they are located. There are two sub-zones: *the Mediterranean Coast*, characterised by the sectorial and territorial dispersion (small and medium-sized companies, family-owned: toys, stationery, footwear) and the *Ebro Valley*, which benefits from its location, as interface between Madrid, Catalonia and the Basque Country. In this area we find a mixture of large industries and family-owned businesses. Saragossa stands apart, under the leadership of *General Motors*.

3) *Regions with a late and polarised industrialisation*. These areas maintain an important basis on agriculture, with an ever-increasing value of their cities and tertiary sector. They have possibilities for great development due to their nearness to the industrial beltway of Madrid. In this section we find:

- ✓ *Castile and Leon*, and particularly, Valladolid and Burgos, which concentrate two thirds of the industrial activity. This is a recent axis, specialised in car manufacturing;
- ✓ *Andalusia*, particularly Malaga and Seville, where innovative companies are being set up through technology parks, etc;
- ✓ *Castile-La Mancha*, which can make the most of the large industrial decongestion of Madrid. The most prominent nuclei are the 'Henares corridor' and the industrial area of Toledo.

4) *Spaces scarcely industrialised*. This includes: *The Canary Islands*, which have stopped their industrialisation and are now very much focused on tourism, and *Extremadura*, which revolves around agricultural productivity, with low levels of demography and infrastructures.

The current situation is one of expansion. The net amount of the Spanish industrial companies' turnover in year 2010 was 520,864 million euros, with an increase of 5% in comparison with the precedent year²⁵.

73.8% of the sales of industrial companies were carried out within Spain, 18.6% were aimed at countries of the European Union and 7.6% at the rest of the world. By sectors, the activity with a highest sales percentage outside of Spain was transport material, with 58.5% of its sales. This activity was the only one to sell more on the overseas market than on the national one. The sectors with a lower percentage of foreign sales were: extractive industries, energy, water and waste, with 7.7%.

By sectors, manufacturing, transport and distribution of electrical energy (9%), as well as oil and natural gas industry (6.8%) are the sectors of activity which mostly contribute to the total turnover.

²⁵ Instituto Nacional de Estadística [Spanish National Statistical Institute] (2011): "Encuesta industrial de empresas 2010". Available at: www.ine.es/prensa/np702.pdf.

The autonomous communities with the largest participation in the turnover figure of the Spanish industrial sector during 2010 were: Catalonia (with 24.0% of the total), Andalusia (11.2%) and the Valencian Community (9.8%). For their part, the communities with least weight in the industry's turnover were: the Balearic Islands (0.8%), La Rioja and Extremadura (both with 1.1%). According to the Environment Sustainability Index (IES) 2009, from the *Fundación Entorno-BCSD* (Consejo Empresarial Español para el Desarrollo Sostenible) (Spanish Business Council for Sustainable Development), the social development and the protection of the environment constitute strategic factors for only 4.8% of the Spanish businesses. On the other hand, only 12.5% of the Spanish companies have integrated these issues in their business administration. As one of the main conclusions, the study points out that 23.8% of national companies maintain a reactive stance in this respect. In general, the weak spot of Spanish companies is their poor sense of "compromise" with the environment, since they perceive the social and environmental factors as "obligations" which they have to comply with in order to avoid problems. That is why they do not implement management measures which are effective enough²⁶.

5. Fieldwork

5.1 Methodology

As a complement to the descriptive work, in this second part we will analyse the communication that Spanish manufacturing firms have conducted in the digital platforms in regard to their social responsibility programs with the environment. To do this, we will study the communication of their environmental commitment policy through online channels: websites, corporate blogs and social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube). We hypothesized that this commitment to sustainable development is poorly represented in the messages broadcast by Spanish industrial companies, so it is necessary for organizations to highlight the value of their responsible actions, and furthermore disseminate good practices to help to extend the CSR. This is now more necessary because the consumer demands and requires entrepreneurial behaviours that result in a more responsible management. In order to verify or disprove the initial hypothesis, we have conducted an exploratory study, through case studies of a representative sample of Spanish manufacturing companies. The selection of sample units is based on the intersection of the five sectors and the four autonomous regions with the highest turnover in 2010.

²⁶ Executive summary from Fundación Entorno BCSD España. Available at: <http://es.scribd.com/doc/16057297/Resumen-ejecutivo-Informe-Fundacion-Entorno-2009>.

Subsequently, we performed a search on Google for the identification of units in the sample, and we selected those industrial firms that met these three requirements: the existence of its own website, its presence in business directories, and its appearance in the top Google search results by sector and region. The fieldwork was carried out during the month of March 2012. Variables relating to the communication of environmental CSR programs in their various online channels have been monitored in the twenty sample units, as well as the interaction with users in terms of their environmental commitment actions in social platforms. For the website, we have analysed the existence of sections devoted to environmental responsibility programs. We have also studied whether the company had a blog devoted exclusively to programs and actions for environmental sustainability of the company. With regard to social media investigated (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube), this study examines the existence of publications related to environmental commitment in the week from 12th to 18th March 2012. For this purpose, the following variables were monitored:

- ✓ YouTube: Total number of videos, subscribers, channel views, plays of videos uploaded, and number of videos uploaded in the period of analysis, noting at this last point whether there were publications related to environmental CSR;
- ✓ Twitter: number of followers, people followed by the company, total number of tweets and number of tweets in the period of analysis, identifying at this last point whether there were publications related to the environmental CSR;
- ✓ Facebook: number of "likes" on the page, number of "people talking about this", number of publications on the wall in the analysis period, number of times that these publications were shared by users, and number of comments by users on these publications, with particular attention to those publications related to environmental CSR and user interaction with them.

We present below, in two broad sections, the main findings on the online communication of corporate environmental commitment. First, we analyse its presence in the corporate websites and business blogs. Then we will deal with its presence in the leading social networks.

5.2 Results in the Corporate Websites and Corporate Blogs

With respect to the website, Figure 10 shows the presence of environmental CSR content.

As we see, 60% of the twenty companies which have been analysed, have sections on their websites devoted to their environmental commitment. By sector, companies in the oil and natural gas industry are those that include a greater percentage content linked to their environmental sustainability programs, as they do the four selected companies. This sector is followed by the production, transport and distribution of electricity one: all these companies devote some content to this matter in their website, except *Eléctrica de Cádiz*. By contrast, the manufacturing sector of basic chemicals is that which provides less information on its website on environmental CSR actions. A breakdown by regions shows that they all get a 60% in terms of companies that do report on this aspect.

The website of the *Associació Nuclear Ascó-Vandellós II (ANAV)* includes a section on the environment, in a highly visible place. It explains its policies and environmental culture and describes the Environmental Radiation Monitoring Programme (ERSP), waste management, and energy saving measures. A total of five subpages provide extensive information on their environmental commitment.

In the case of *Gas Natural Fenosa*, the contents related to environmental sustainability have a significant presence on its website, since it has several subsections devoted to these issues: ethical code within the "Company" section, Efficiency and Sustainability in the section "Activities". It also has a section dedicated to "Reputation and Corporate Responsibility", which describes the policies and actions undertaken to contribute to sustainable development, reports on the sustainability indices to which the company is attached, and publishes Corporate Responsibility Reports. Additional information and environmental statements are published in the "Documentation" section, including: air quality, underground gas storage, natural gas vehicles and electric ones, CO² capture and storage.

Batallé Group devotes a section to social responsibility, which explains its programs for the protection and conservation of the environment: animal welfare, water conservation, waste management, and energy saving and recycling. Under "About Us", *Cepsa* includes a section on Corporate Responsibility, which presents its mission, vision and institutional principles. In addition to this, information is provided on those initiatives in which the company is engaged, such as the Global Compact of United Nations and the Commitment of Progress in the chemical industry. We also find information on the actions carried out in the interests of energy efficiency and environmental protection as well as the Corporate Responsibility reports.

The company *Covap* includes a link to its management and environmental policies at two prominent parts of its website: at the top and the bottom of the home page. Furthermore, several reports on its environmen-

tal management system and environmental projects are included, such as a wastewater treatment plant and the business plan packaging prevention.

The content relating to the environment occupy prominent positions in the home page of *Cofrentes* Nuclear Power Station, as it belongs to *Iberdrola*, one of the leading energy supply companies in Spain.

Any Internet user can find information on their environmental management system, corporate policies of the group, the annual environmental report and certificates obtained, such as ISO 14001:2004. He may even also download all these documents in PDF format.

We find a similar case in the Derivatives Division of *Repsol* Company. On its website the "Corporate Responsibility" also has a significant presence. This section includes extensive content on this subject, including the president's message, vision and corporate values, Corporate Responsibility reports, annual sustainability plan, the sustainability indices, awards, certificates and its involvement in committees, working groups and forums in order to improve their corporate social responsibility. Under the subsection entitled Environment, *Repsol* develops the specific strategy in this area, management systems, air emissions, water and waste management, the main projects in which it collaborates and several case studies with actions undertaken. In the section "Environment", *Ford Spain* explains its commitment to sustainability, reporting on the initiatives that the company develops, such as Flexifuel vehicles, European projects, the sustainability index of the vehicle and the management of end-of-life vehicles.

HC Energy Spain displays on its website its code of environment and sustainability, environmental policy with regard to emission control, waste management and waste treatment, and its specific actions, environmental impact studies and training and awareness of employees.

On the website of *Esergui*, an oil company in the Basque Country, commitment to the environment is one of the main sections displayed on the top, although the policies that the company develops are not exposed in a very extensive manner. Regarding the blogs, among the twenty companies that have been analysed, only *Repsol* has a corporate blog (which equates to only 5%). In it we find content related to CSR in the environmental field, since it is a blog dedicated to technological innovation, in which *Repsol* reports on progress of its Technology Centre, with particular attention to all initiatives of R & D + i that promote sustainable development.

5.3 Results in Social Networks

Turning to the analysis of their presence in the social media, only 4 among the 20 industrial companies analysed have their own site (which means 20%). Furthermore, only ten channels of social media (16,7%) have been identified from the sixties that would exist in the case of the twenty companies had their own site in the three leading social networks.

These 4 companies belong to the following sectors: motor vehicle manufacturing (*Seat* and *Ford*, 50%), oil and natural gas (*Repsol Derivatives*, 25%) and the meat industry (*Meat Serrano*, 25%). On the other hand, companies in the area of the production, transportation and distribution of electricity, as well as those from the basic chemical manufacturing sector do not seem particularly interested in communicating with their audiences through the social media. According to region, 3 of the 4 companies are in Valencia (*Repsol Derivatives*, *Ford* and *Meat Serrano*) and 1 is in Catalonia (*Seat*). The companies from Andalusia and the Basque Country, have no social media sites.

Only 2 of these 4 companies, *Seat* and *Ford*, have their own sites in the three social platforms monitored. Both of them belong to the sector of motor vehicle manufacturing. The other 2 companies (*Repsol* and *Meat Serrano*) have their respective sites in two social media, Twitter and Facebook, without paying any attention to YouTube.

The 4 companies joined in the sample week, 166 publications on all three platforms (17 in YouTube, 119 in Twitter and 30 in Facebook). This means an average of 41.5 publications per company, and 55.3 publications per channel, while the mode is 5 publications, which appears three times (*Seat* in YouTube, and *Meat Serrano* in Twitter and Facebook), followed by seven publications, which appears twice (*Seat* and *Ford* en Facebook), so the average is skewed by *Repsol* publications on Twitter, with 93 tweets.

In the case of YouTube, companies manufacturing motor vehicles, in particular, *Seat* and *Ford*, are the only ones that are present (10% of the total sample and 50% of those who have a presence in social media). The two companies present a high activity level, as evidenced by the number of videos posted in the period of analysis (5 and 12, respectively, in a week), and an important follow-up by users according to the number of subscribers, and the number of channel and video views. However, none of the 17 videos posted by the two companies is related to CSR actions.

Attending to the four companies on Twitter, *Repsol* is the one with the largest number of followers (11,215), the one following more users in the network of micro blogging (1,982), and the company which has published more tweets since the opening of its account on this channel (22,246). If we calculate the ratio between followers and people they follow, the

company which gets a value closer to 1 is *Seat* (1.50), while *Repsol* and *Ford* have a ratio of five times more followers than people they follow (5.66 and 5.44, respectively). By contrast, *Meat Serrano* is the only one which is following more people than it has followers, with a value of 0.36.

In none of the 119 tweets posted during the week under review, did we find any reference to environmental CSR actions or any content related to commitment to the environment. In the case of *Repsol*, the Twitter account is not a corporate one but is devoted to the *Repsol Guide*, so that the main topics of the talks are about gastronomy and tourism.

On Facebook, the 30 publications examined had generated 1,111 interactions: 738 "likes" (with an average of 24.6), the information had been shared 91 times (which means an average of 3), and had 282 comments (an average of 9.4). The company with more publications in the period under analysis was *Repsol* with 11 posts on Facebook. It was also the company with the highest number of fans (72,451), although the most popular in terms of "people who are talking about this" was *Seat* (3031). This is a metric offered by Facebook for the pages published since October 2011, which measures the activity related to the page based on the number of "likes", the time that something is shared on the walls, comments, answers to questions, references and check-ins.

If we calculate the rate of engagement²⁷ generated from the publications of the 20 sampled companies in the period under study, *Seat* obtains the highest value (0.246), as its 7 publications had generated a total of 374 interactions among 21,690 fans, followed by *Ford* (0,162), with 7 posts that generated a total of 522 interactions among 45,933 fans. *Repsol* is the company that obtained the lowest value in this ratio (0.025).

The companies have not posted on Facebook any content on environmental issues in the period of analysis. Neither do they include on their corporate Facebook site any tab devoted to corporate responsibility.

In summary, although the companies analysed which are present in social media show a considerable activity and a mid-high frequency of publication on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and they receive much feedback from users, companies do not use these channels to provide content related to its environmental policies, since none of the 166 examined posts is related to this issue.

²⁷ The engagement rate is obtained from the following formula: [(No. "I like" + No. Comments + No. "Shared")/No. posts on the wall]/Total "Like" * 100.

6. Conclusions

In recent years, Spanish companies have made progress in developing policies of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Several agencies have been created to promote this, both at an entrepreneurial and a state level. Standards have been published to streamline and authenticate advertising communications with environmental arguments, and monitors about corporate reputation (MERCO, DIRCOM2R) have been launched with special attention to the commitment to sustainable development.

The consumer demands a closer relationship with companies and wants them to be more committed to the environment. In this sense, platforms 2.0 (Internet, social media) will allow companies to participate in discussions and provide content of interest to users.

The voluntary sharing of environmental awareness with consistency, transparency, accuracy and utility, shall provide the link with the consumer, as well as it will strengthen corporate values and generate new business opportunities. As our fieldwork revealed, industrial companies of the main areas of activity in Spain do include on their websites information about their commitment to the environment and their environmental CSR programs. However, this does not happen in social platforms like blogs, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

That is, industrial companies do not use social media to broadcast their environmental programs, despite having them and including them on their websites, wasting the opportunity to communicate with a user who requires from companies a firm and lasting commitment in this field.

Social media sites are not the most appropriate channels to provide corporate information, but to interact with the community, create dialogue with users, and engage in the social conversation.

High interactive platforms like Twitter can be used as a channel of customer service to resolve questions and issues with immediacy, while other less dynamic but more visual networks, like Facebook and YouTube, can be used to encourage participation of the users with content relevant to them: on Facebook, it offers promotions and discount deals, and on YouTube, features and video testimonials. Furthermore, since user awareness for sustainability is growing, publishing content on environmental issues related to the activity of the company, would help the creation of added value (publishing content relevant to the user), while this would facilitate the dissemination of its policy and environmental programs.

The commitment to sustainable development has become a factor in business success. Social networks and values 2.0 can be configured as an excellent tool for disseminating and promoting CSR policies of compa-

nies, although they should be aware that the mere fact of resorting to this does not necessarily turn a company into a socially responsible one.

In short, despite the potential for interaction and dialogue, social media sites are still a missed opportunity as a means for communication of environmental commitment.

The immediacy, transparency and democratization that characterizes the interaction in social networks, particularly in spaces like Twitter, can help in the dissemination of socially responsible actions undertaken by the company and, thus, contribute to its corporate reputation.