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# Analysis of the use of social media by cultural institutions shown by the example of the Teatr Śląski in Katowice

## ABSTRACT

*Analysis of the use of social media by cultural institutions shown by the example of the Teatr Śląski in Katowice*

The purpose of this article is to present the results of the analysis of activities carried out by the Teatr Śląski in the social media and the impact of these activities on the image of the institution. The study covered by social networking sites and blogs, where Teatr Śląski officially promotes its activities.

**KEYWORDS:** institutions of culture, theater, social media, promotion, image

## STRESZCZENIE

*Analiza wykorzystania mediów społecznościowych przez instytucje kultury na przykładzie Teatru Śląskiego w Katowicach*

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie wyników analizy działań prowadzonych przez Teatr Śląski w Katowicach w mediach

społecznościowych oraz przedstawienie wpływu tych działań na kreowanie wizerunku instytucji. Badaniem zostały objęte serwisy społecznościowe oraz blogi, w których Teatr Śląski oficjalnie prowadzi działalność promocyjną.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE** instytucje kultury, teatr, media społecznościowe, promocja, wizerunek

## Introduction

The Stanisław Wyspiański Teatr Śląski in Katowice is one of the most important cultural institutions in the region of Silesia, Poland. Its history starts in 1907, when it was opened to the audience as a German theater. It was only in October 1922 that, with the help of the Society of Friends of the Polish Theater, the first plays were staged there in Polish. Since then, the theater has worked with a number of renowned directors and actors. Outstanding Polish and world dramas are staged, but also literary meetings, artistic events and musical concerts are organized. Teatr Śląski, for example, hosts the “Puder i pył” [Powder and dust] cycle, which is a series of meetings with Zbigniew Białas, an author of crime novels. The writer invites local artists who create graphic novels and architecture. The cycle is intended to bring the contemporary culture of Silesia closer to the residents of Katowice and the surrounding area.<sup>1</sup> Another regular event organized by Teatr Śląski is “Galeria Foyer”, an exhibition of works by Polish and foreign artists located in the foyer of the Main Stage in the main theater building. Most often these are exhibitions of paintings and graphics.<sup>2</sup> Teatr Śląski also takes part in the organizing of popular events, e.g. the “Interpretations” National Directorship Festival (in cooperation with the City Council of Katowice and the Katowice Culture Center), whose main objective is the promotion of theater directors and the presentation of the latest trends and directions in the art of the theater.<sup>3</sup> Together with the Korez Theater, the Katowice Carnival – a festival of Polish comedy – is organized in Katowice. In addition to the events related to the day-to-day operation of the theater, the institution also carries out various promotional campaigns. For example, in the framework of the “Five for five” action, tickets for a specified performance are available for five PLN. The

1 *Puder i pył*, <http://www.teatrslaski.art.pl/strefawidza/cykl/3>, 12.05.2017

2 *Galeria Foyer*, <http://www.teatrslaski.art.pl/strefawidza/cykl/6>, 12.05.2017

3 *O Festiwalu*, <http://festiwal-interpretacje.pl/homepage-alt-3/o-festiwalu/>, 12.05.2017

“Gryfno współpraca” [Neat cooperation], viewers receive a 10% discount on purchases in a regional shop with every purchased ticket.<sup>4</sup> “Sztukowanie” is a project addressed at the seniors. It involves lectures on art,<sup>5</sup> and for children and youth theater lessons are available. The performances are also staged on the boards of theaters across Russia, Ukraine and France. All of these events are promoted through a variety of media, with particular involvement in the social media. The possibility of using social media is presented below (Table 1).

Table 1 Classification of social media according to the objectives of their application in theaters

Type of website	Objectives of application in theaters	Examples of SM
Social networking website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building and maintaining relationships;</li> <li>• Building an image of the cultural institution;</li> <li>• An association of people interested in a specific area (the actual target group);</li> <li>• The possibility of reaching many interested recipients in a minimal period of time;</li> <li>• increasing the involvement of the theater audience;</li> <li>• communication of information on theatrical events;</li> <li>• obtaining information about the expectations of the viewers, the local community;</li> <li>• promoting events organized by the theater;</li> <li>• The ability to convince a large group of people to view alternative forms of theater;</li> <li>• dialog with the local community;</li> <li>• The possibility of growing new ideas;</li> <li>• regular updating of information on the profile allows the theater to deepen its relationships with viewers;</li> <li>• The ability to post interesting facts and information about the theater;</li> <li>• announcing castings/acquisition of actors for specific roles;</li> <li>• through the social network, the theater can also acquire partners for cultural events, sponsors for performances and theatrical festivals;</li> </ul>	Facebook, Google+, nk.pl, mySpace

4 *Kulturalne promocje*, <http://www.teatrlaski.art.pl/strefawidza/kulturalnepromocje/>, 15.05.2017

5 *Sztukowanie – zajęcia dla seniorów*, <http://www.teatrlaski.art.pl/strefawidza/wydarzenie/401>, 15.05.2017

Video content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image building,</li> <li>• The acquisition of new viewers,</li> <li>• Presentation of the theater's offer: previews of films, concerts or performances;</li> <li>• Promoting the theater's offer;</li> <li>• The opportunity to encourage people to create and record their own "cultural products"</li> </ul>	YouTube
Photographic content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building an image of the cultural institution;</li> <li>• Building the image of actors and directors;</li> <li>• The ability to post photos of the popular and esteemed actors (whose images have a huge promotional impact), photos from performances and festivals;</li> <li>• Providing information;</li> <li>• Building relationships with customers/viewers</li> </ul>	Pinterest, Instagram, Picasaweb
Blog Microblog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image building,</li> <li>• Providing information;</li> <li>• Building relationships with customers/viewers</li> <li>• Strengthening the involvement of recipients</li> </ul>	Wordpress.com, blogger, blogspot, blox Twitter
Wiki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a knowledge base about the theater, its history and outstanding performances</li> <li>• Encyclopedia Teatru Polskiego [The Encyclopedia of the Polish theater] is a platform and a tool for sharing, creation or modification of the content</li> </ul>	Wikipedia, Internetowa Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego

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Through the analysis of social media used by an institution of culture one can obtain information about the methods of social media marketing, the promotional tools and preferences of the customers concerning the company's activity in the social media. Additional data can also be obtained by analyzing and comparing the popularity of the profiles of other cultural institutions in the region.

Social media is a modern and fastest-growing medium used for promotional purposes in Poland and worldwide, as it provides an interactive channel of communication and tools for maintaining and assisting promotional campaigns. According to the IRCenter report conducted in 2016, 90% of the Polish Internet users use social networking sites. By comparison, in 2015, this share was 86%. In addition, 51% of Internet users in Poland create or comment the content in social media. The measurability is

therefore very high and makes it easy to determine the effectiveness of social media marketing.

The purpose of this article is to present the results of the analysis of activities carried out by the Teatr Śląski in the social media and the impact of these activities on the image of the institution. The study covered by social networking sites and blogs, where Teatr Śląski officially promotes its activities.

## Analysis of Teatr Śląski's activity in social media

Teatr Śląski has been using several social networking sites to expand its marketing activity and reach a larger audience. Facebook has been the main and most frequently used one. Currently, the official profile of the institution at this social networking website is watched by 10,424 people, and the average rating of the institutions by all the users is 4.6 out of 5 (observation in June 2017). On its profile, Teatr Śląski shares its basic information such as contact details, the date of founding the institution or the address of its official website. The users can also easily find a link to the official Instagram profile of the theater (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Basic information about Teatr Śląski on Facebook.com

Informacje o firmie	OPIS
<p><b>Informacje biznesowe</b></p> <p>Parkowanie: Parking: Na ulicy</p> <p>Zakres cen: umiarkowane</p> <p>📅 Założenie w dniu: 1907</p>	<p>Teatr otwarty na ludzi. Teatr otwarty dla ludzi. <a href="http://www.teatrlaski.art.pl">www.teatrlaski.art.pl</a></p> <p>WSPIERAJĄ NAS: Węglokoks S.A. Polsko-Amerykańskie Kliniki Serca Polski Koks S.A. Enrgoinstal FTT Wolbrom Atende JWW Invest</p>
<p><b>DODATKOWE INFORMACJE KONTAKTOWE</b></p> <p>✉ <a href="mailto:bow@teatrlaski.art.pl">bow@teatrlaski.art.pl</a></p> <p>🌐 <a href="http://www.teatrlaski.art.pl">http://www.teatrlaski.art.pl</a></p> <p>📷 <a href="https://www.instagram.com/teatrlaski/">https://www.instagram.com/teatrlaski/</a></p>	
<p><b>Więcej informacji</b></p> <p><b>Informacje</b> Teatr Śląski im. Stanisława Wyspiańskiego w Katowicach</p> <p>🏠 Teatr · Sztuka · Rozrywka</p>	

Source: [https://www.facebook.com/pg/TeatrSlaski/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/TeatrSlaski/about/?ref=page_internal)

The institution's Facebook profile has been active since 2011. Posts are published up to three times a day on most days of the year. Most concern

upcoming events promoting theatrical events such as performances, meetings with directors and actors, and exhibitions. Their aim is to encourage the reader to participate in an event and to purchase a ticket. The art of discourse is often rejected in favor of the moral discourse, closer to the specific target groups. Persuasive messages effectively attract attention. Interest was aroused, for example, by the presentation of the play entitled *Psubracia*: “Our most bloody history ever. A theatrical equivalent of men’s cinema. A tribute to the work of Q. Tarantino. We perform on 10 and 11 June at 7.30 pm on the Painting Room stage. Admission only for adults. Come!” Under this announcement, a short video promoting the performance was posted (Fig. 2). Posts like this not only encourage consumers to participate in the event, but also to “like” or share the post, thanks to which it reaches a larger audience.

Fig. 2 Posted on the official profile of the theater at *Facebook.com*.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/TeatrSlaski/>

Thanks to the monitoring of feedback on a published post announcing an upcoming event, the institution can analyze audience behavior and thus determine the degree of interest in the event. User comments also allow it to get feedback on the performance and the moods of the audience.

Another type of frequently published posts on the profile of Teatr Śląski is pictures representing 19% of the published information. They are usually albums documenting an event or meeting with a brief description (fig. 3). Publishing photos and audiovisual materials on social networking sites enables the audience to become involved with the life of the institution, start interacting and win the sympathy of the audience.

Fig. 3. Photos of a children's party held on the occasion of Children's Day at Teatr Śląski.

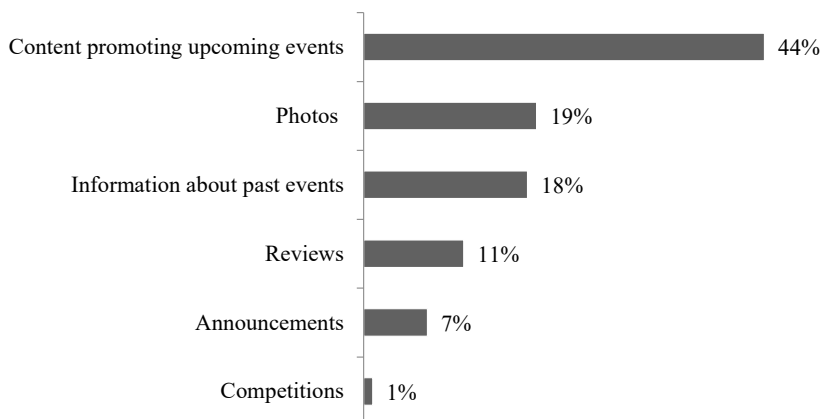


Source: <https://www.facebook.com/TeatrSlaski/>

About 18% of all posts are information about events held in the theater. Most often they refer to the premieres of the latest performances, meetings with authors and actors, press conferences or classes conducted for seniors (e.g. “Sztukowanie”). 11% of all published content are reviews. After the premieres of plays fragments of reviews by journalists invited to the performance are published on the Facebook profile of the theater, along with a link that carries the reader to the official site of the periodical where the review is found. This is to familiarize the visitors with the opinions of experts in the area of the theater on a given performance and other activities of the institution (which no doubt serves to promote the institution). Publishing reviews is also a good way to increase the brand awareness among consumers. 7% of all posts are about the institution (such as: the presentation of plans for next season, information about opening hours or obtained prizes and awards). The advantage of social media is the ability to quickly

reach people with an important message. The last type of posts that appear on the profile of the theater are competitions, which account only for 1% of all published content.

Graph 1. Posts published on the official profile of the Teatr Śląski on Facebook.



Source: Own study on the basis of the official profile of Teatr Śląski at Facebook.com (<https://www.facebook.com/TeatrSlaski/>)

In addition to acquiring new customers, informing about upcoming and past events, the presence of the theater on social networking sites can also help in monitoring the activity of users regarding the institution. It gives the opportunity to read the opinions of customers, draw inspiration to create new content and adjust it so that the feedback is as positive and wide as possible. Publishing content on Facebook also provides an opportunity to engage in two-way communication and interaction with the audience, which has a positive effect on the reception of the activities and the institution in social media and builds an emotional bond between the user and the organization. The institution's presence on Facebook also allows it to quickly react to the opinions of the users (especially the negative ones), and respond to questions about individual events, which increase user involvement in the affairs of the theater and their activity on the profile of the institution.

Another social networking site used by the Stanisław Wyspiański Teatr Śląski in Katowice for promotional purposes is Instagram. Instagram is a service based primarily on publishing photos and videos with a brief description. It allows creating a profile for an institution, so that it can reach more customers, e.g. by paying promotion of its posts. A company profile



also has a special place on the contact information and access to the statistics. Many cultural institutions, however, still use basic personal profiles which serve as tools for identity-building, dialog with customers and creating the image of the organization. This option was chosen by Teatr Śląski, which also has an Instagram profile.

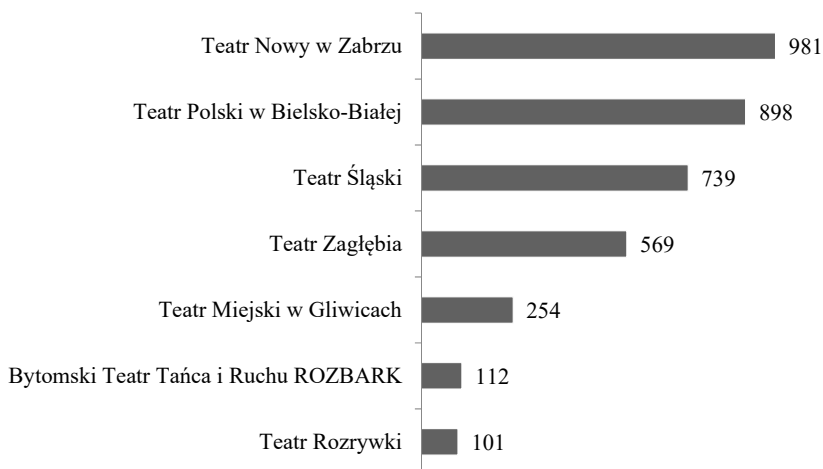
Fig. The official profile of the Teatr Śląski on Instagram.



Source: <https://www.instagram.com/teatrlaski/>

The profile of the theater on Instagram is followed by 739 people. Compared with other theaters of the Silesia Province, it is third in terms of the number of followers on this social networking website. The first two are the Teatr Polski in Bielsko-Biała and Teatr Nowy in Zabrze.

Graph 2. The number of followers on the official profiles of theaters in the Silesian province on Instagram on 15.06.2017



Source: the authors' compilation based on data from Instagram.com

Photos published by Teatr Śląski show, first of all, preparations for performances, along with rehearsals, premiers and other cultural events. The photos have more than promotional value, but also contribute to the image of the organization and invite users to interact. Instagram is considered to be the second most engaging social networking site because photos of good quality, engaging tags and catchy captions can quickly disseminate the information. Instagram additionally gives you great opportunities to promote local organizations. Each published photo can be linked with the specific location or city, thanks to which users can more easily find interesting posts.

Another social networking site used by Teatr Śląski for promotion and creation of its image is YouTube. On 15 June 2017, the official channel of the institution was subscribed by 242 users, and contained 77 film clips designed to encourage people to participate in the events and see the performances. These have often been just two-minute previews of the performances. A short teaser of the show *Psubracia. Krwawy hold dla Q. Taramino* published on the theater's official profile on YouTube shortly before the premiere of the play can be an example (Fig. 5). Materials like these are

the most frequently published by the theater. In addition to this, the channel also contains brief documentation of the events, messages from actors and directors, and documentation of rehearsals for the performances. The brief previews of performances are the highest rated videos. Most of them have about 1,000 views, while other types of materials have been viewed 400 times on average. Announcements posted on YouTube are also often shared on other social media, for example, Facebook, which increases their viewership.

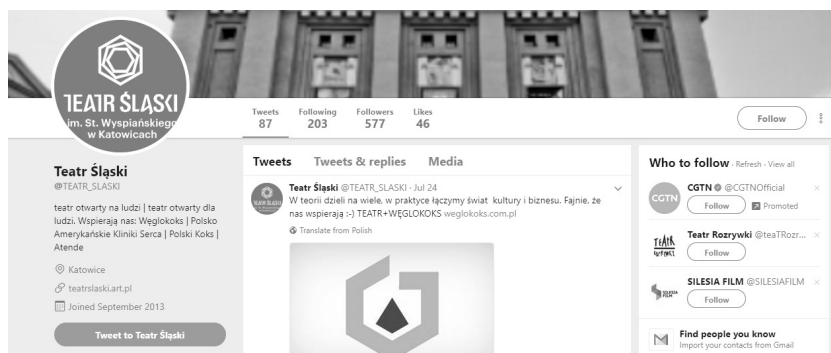
Figure 5. An example of a teaser of a performance published by the Stanisław Wyspiański Teatr Śląski on YouTube (15.06.2017)



Source: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNa\\_jh65zN-PzE8I4sY21Sw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNa_jh65zN-PzE8I4sY21Sw)

Another social networking site used by the Stanisław Wyspiański Teatr Śląski is Twitter. The theater's profile was established in September 2013. It is watched by 577 people and contains 87 posts. Teatr Śląski publishes text content on top of photos and videos on its microblog. Its Twitter account was the most active in 2015, when the posts were published several times a month. Now much it is updated less frequently. In 2016, only 3 posts were submitted, however, since June 2017, the theater's activity on Twitter began to grow.

Figure 6. Official profile of Teatr Śląski in Katowice on Twitter.



Source: [https://twitter.com/teatr\\_slaski](https://twitter.com/teatr_slaski) (20.06.2017)

The blogosphere is also used for creating the image of the Śląski Theater. The theater’s manager, Robert Talarczyk, publishes blog entries related to the operation of the theater and other friendly cultural institutions, interviews, and previews of plays he directs.

Figure 7. Official blog of the Teatr Śląski’s manager, Robert Talarczyk



Source: <http://www.roberttalarczyk.pl> (20.06.2017)

The manager’s blog operates as an unofficial company blog. It is a good place that combines the potential and existing audience with the institution and allows the use of new ways of communication.

Teatr Śląski's strategy of creating the image and reputation of the institution can be described as "inbound marketing". This concept combines elements of promoting organizations in social media, blogs and search engines. It is a kind of active marketing, thanks to which the organization can easily and efficiently adjust the content posted to the expectations of the recipients and enable them to find content of interest to them. Teatr Śląski uses the presently most popular social media to create its brand image: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. The most popular of them is Facebook. Last year, the number of Poles having accounts on the social networking site was over 20 million. The second most popular and most used social networking site in Poland is YouTube. In 2016, 19 million people used it. The third position is occupied by the best known microblog website, Twitter, where the number of Polish users last year amounted to almost 4 million. The fourth most popular social network is Instagram, where the number of users is about 2.5 million. Thanks to its presence on several differently operating social networking platforms, Teatr Śląski is able to use different methods of communication with customers.

Social media gives organizations a greater capacity of transmitting and acquiring information from current and potential customers. Activities of the institutions in social media can also help in identifying and highlighting the offer of the institutions. To do this, they use social media marketing in addition to traditional marketing offered in the form of posters and press advertisements. Teatr Śląski stands out above all thanks to the design of its promotional materials. All posters, leaflets or press releases are kept in a single, unchanging visual style.

Figure 8. An example of using a unified graphic design in a post published on Facebook.com



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/TeatrSlaski/> (22.06.2017)

The placement of a characteristic frame and the theater's logo on all its promotional materials, on top of the institution's trademark color scheme allows consumers to quickly identify the familiar content and associate the promotional material with the institution of Teatr Śląski.

Similar visual details are used in the appearance of the profiles and content published on social media (Fig. 8). The use of a unified graphic design in promotion materials strengthens the trust of customers, who had used the cultural institution's offer before, as it guarantees the reproducibility of quality and satisfaction.

Attention to the image of the institution in the social media also allows certain market segmentation. Activities at various sites attract different recipients, thanks to which Teatr Śląski, which has profiles and publishes on several websites, can adapt the content to a specific market segment. For example, the institution adapts the photos published on Instagram to young people, as 45% of users of this social networking site in Poland are aged between 18 and 24, and 91% are users under 35 years of age. Adjusting the content to the needs and preferences of specific groups of users also affects positively the image of the institution and increase the attractiveness of the offer for each such group.

## Conclusion

The growing competition in the entertainment industry and a thriving economy is forcing cultural institutions to take decisive and well-considered steps when planning their marketing strategies. Their purpose is, above all, to stand out against the background of other cultural institutions. This is often achieved through the use of social media, being not only easily accessible, but also effective marketing communication tools.

Activity in the social media gives several major benefits to cultural institutions. The first is the increasing presence of the institution in the media, which is associated with reaching more potential recipients. Social media is one of the most effective methods of digital communication used to publish content and increase the visibility of an institution on the Internet. Another one involves warming the image of the institution by publishing simple and independent content and being interested in the feedback provided by users. Another benefit from activities in social media is also an increased satisfaction of customers. Posting content on social networking sites makes visitors use the services of the institution more frequently because they trust it. Social media enable one to learn about the

audience's opinions about the offer, which makes it easier to adjust the activities to the needs and preferences of the audience.

In order to compare current social marketing activities of Teatr Śląski in Katowice in social media with the preferences of users, an analysis of the theater's official profiles on social media websites was performed on top of a survey. In the first part of the study, the profiles on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube were analyzed, followed by the official blog of the theater's manager, Robert Talarczyk. The second part of the research was interviewing a sample of 100 users of social media living in the Silesian Province. The study was conducted using an interview survey containing questions about the respondents' activity on social media sites, the frequency of interaction with companies and preferences concerning the content published by organizations in social media. The study was conducted in July 2017.

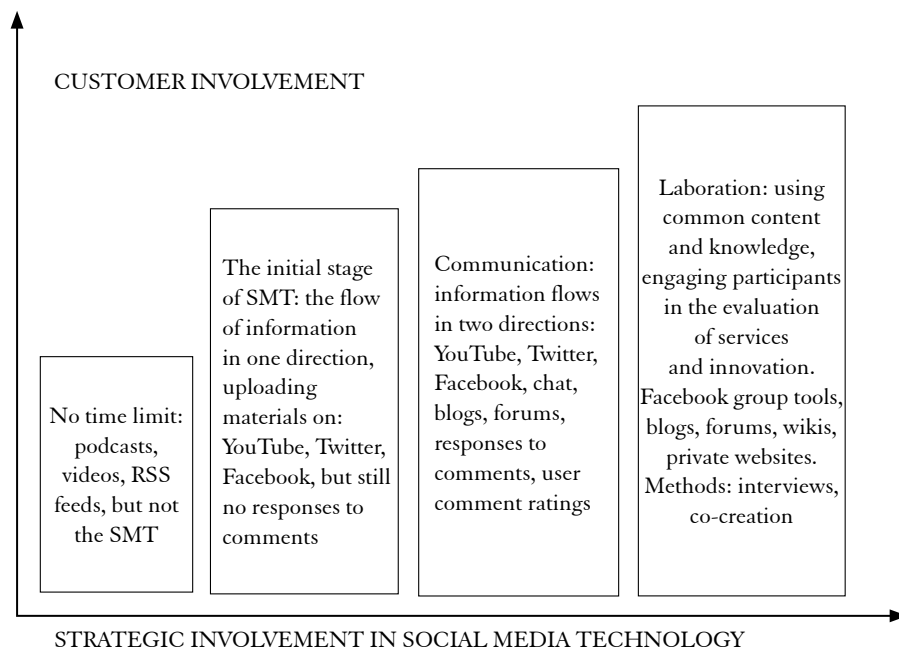
The studies have helped draw conclusions concerning social media users' preferences related to cultural institutions' activities, and then compare them with the analysis of the current social media marketing activities of Teatr Śląski in Katowice. The results of the survey helped determine the preferences of the Internet users regarding the activities of companies and cultural institutions in social media and to pinpoint the factors motivating them to follow the activities on Facebook, Instagram or similar websites. The comparison of the results from the analysis with the analysis of the marketing activities of the Teatr Śląski in the social media points to the fact that current social marketing activity of this cultural institution affect its image positively in the eyes of the recipients. The main factors that improve the image of the theater are: engaging the audience in the activities of the organization by organizing competitions and asking questions, informing the audience about the events in the life of the institution and the latest positions on offer, on top of photos and videos showing the daily life of the institution.

The majority of image building conducted by the Teatr Śląski in the social media has been correct and positively reflected by the audience. The institution might, however, avoid some of the errors and add activities that according to the respondents strengthen trust towards a company and build a positive image. The first mistake made by the Teatr Śląski is a lack of regularity in posting on social networking sites other than Facebook. While the Facebook content is regularly and frequently updated, Instagram and Twitter are updated rarely. This can result in a decrease of the interest in the activity of the institution, which can then affect the image of the organization. Another error in the activities of the theater in the social media is the small number of conducted competitions. As is apparent from the studies conducted, competitions affect the perception of cultural

institutions by recipients very positively and encourage interaction. In the last few months Teatr Śląski held only two contests on its Facebook page. Holding a larger number of competitions involving the audience, according to studies, would improve the image of the organization. In addition, in order to warm their image, cultural institutions should publish photos and videos showing the daily lives of the institution and its employees. This way, the recipients feel that the cultural institution is not only a building, but also people.

It is worth noting that (despite the above-mentioned communication errors); stage 4 was achieved by the Teatr Śląski in the Social Media Technology model (Fig. 9 below). It is worth noting that the SMT maturity model tools are the basis for the formulation of concepts of evolution of the SMT tools on the example of theaters.

Fig. 9 SMT tools use maturity models, source: Papińska-Kacperk J., Polańska K., *Obecność administracji publicznej w mediach społecznościowych*. Warszawa 2014, p. 442





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