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Transmedia Storytelling, an ally of Corporate Communication: #Dropped by Heineken case study

La Narrativa Transmedia como aliada de la Comunicación Corporativa: Estudio del caso #Dropped by Heineken

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ABSTRACT: Corporate Communication changes trying to follow new social, technological and media dynamics. In the current context, it begins to experience with transmedia storytelling that offers a story to explain, multiple platforms and distinct levels of audience participation. Up to now, transmedia storytelling has been studied especially linked to fiction brands (television, cinematographic or literary, fundamentally). This article is one of the first in tackling a corporate campaign from the key elements of transmedia storytelling: story, media/platforms and audiences. It highlights the importance of the new tendency for the future of Corporate Communication.

RESUMEN: *La Comunicación Corporativa cambia intentando seguir las nuevas dinámicas sociales, tecnológicas y mediáticas. En el contexto actual, comienza a experimentar con narrativas transmedia que ofrecen una historia que contar, múltiples plataformas para ello y distintos niveles de participación para las audiencias. Hasta ahora, las narrativas transmedia se han estudiado sobre todo vinculadas a marcas de ficción (televisiva, cinematográfica o literaria, fundamentalmente). El presente artículo es uno de los primeros en abordar una campaña corporativa desde los elementos claves de las narrativas transmedia: historia, medios/plataformas y audiencias. Se pone de relevo la importancia de la nueva tendencia para el futuro de la Comunicación Corporativa.*

Keywords: Corporate Communication, Transmedia Storytelling, audience, media, participation.

Palabras clave: Comunicación Corporativa, narrativas transmedia, audiencias, medios, participación.

1. Corporate Communication in a changing context

Corporate communication, and its theoretical conception, has evolved along with the media, social and technological context of organisations. Currently, corporate communication could be defined as: “a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with stakeholders groups upon which the organization is dependent”¹.

This definition is inspired directly by the one formulated by Van Riel (1997)², who explains that corporate communication is a tool to manage all forms of internal and external communication as effectively and efficiently as possible, to create a favourable relation with the different publics on which the company depends.

However, the reality of corporate communication differs from that conceived in manuals, since organisations not always have the resources or the right attitude to implement corporate communication strategies in their everyday activities³.

Apart from the developments and setbacks that have occurred in the professional reality of the sector, corporate communication, which emerged from the area of Public Relations, has experienced an evolution throughout the 20th century in terms of models, dynamics, philosophy and practices. The models of Public Relations (theorised by Grünig and Hunt,

¹ CORNELISSEN, Joep, *Corporate communication: a guide to theory and practice*, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, 2011, p. 5.

² VAN RIEL, Cees B.M., *Comunicación corporativa*, Prentice Hall, Madrid, 1997, p. 26.

³ Examples are the third sector organisations (cfr. GARCÍA OROSA, Berta, “Aproximación teórica a la comunicación en el Tercer Sector. La necesaria reclasificación de la comunicación organizacional”, *Telos*, nº 69, 2006) and the SMEs. For an in-depth analysis of the situation in Spain see ALMANSA, Ana, “Gabinetes de comunicación. Estudio sobre su presencia en las organizaciones”, *Anàlisi*, 34, 2006; GARCÍA OROSA, B., *Los altavoces de la actualidad: radiografía de los gabinetes de comunicación*, Netbiblo, A Coruña, 2005.

1984)⁴ could illustrate this evolution, especially the transition from the press agent to the model of public information, in which the change of perspective has been radical⁵. Thus, corporate communication continues, just like the organisations in which it is used, in a context of constant change.

The most important transformations that have conditioned the function of corporate communication and its adaptation to the new environment include:

First, the change of role. From the press office to the Communications Office and from this one to the Communications Department. The changes in the nomenclature have been accompanied by a change in the conception of the department responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the communication policy of the organisation⁶.

While the press office was the department that dealt, almost exclusively, with the media, the communications office extended this function to the external, internal and intermediate areas of communication from a perspective that tried to manage all the communicative aspects in coherent and coordinated manner. “This is how we have gone from those press offices, whose main occupation was to maintain informative relations with the media, to the current offices, in which communication is managed holistically, in a way that is more similar to public relations”⁷.

Currently, the transformation of the press office into the Communications Department involves a higher influence in three issues of fundamental importance:

a) The new name implies the location of the communications function at the highest level of the organisation chart, directly reporting to the senior management, at the same level as other managerial departments. The main consequence is the alliance established to the benefit of the strategic objectives between the executive departments, including the communications department, whose function is not considered complementary but of first-order.

b) In Spain, the new term (*Dirección de Comunicación*) derives from the term *dircom*, which refers to the communications director (*Director de Comunicación*), who used to coordinate the communications office but is now a key member of the team, a leader, a strategist, an executive, and a key figure in the department. “*Dircom* is the apocope of communications director, the executive responsible for communication in organisations, based on the conception of corporate communication as a strategic management tool capable of generating value”⁸.

c) An invisible transformation, in which corporate reputation and the management of intangible assets of the organisation became the responsibility of the communications team, in addition to the coordination of the different dimensions of communications.

⁴ GRÜNIG, James E., & HUNT, T. Todd, *Managing Public Relations*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1984.

⁵ COSTA SÁNCHEZ, Carmen, “Del press agent a la comunicación estratégica. Cómo hacer que la comunicación sirva a la estrategia de gestión”, *Razón y Palabra*, nº 70, 2009, http://www.razonypalabra.org.mx/Costa_revisado.pdf, 20-01-2014.

⁶ GARCÍA OROSA, Berta, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

⁷ ALMANSA MARTÍNEZ, Ana, *Del gabinete de prensa al gabinete de comunicación: la dirección de comunicación en la actualidad*, Comunicación Social, Sevilla, 2011, p. 22

⁸ MORALES, Francisca & ENRIQUE, Ana M., “La figura del Dircom. Su importancia en el modelo de comunicación integral”, *Anàlisi*, 35, 2007, p. 92.

The *dircom* [Communication Director] ceased to be a strategic communicator to become a strategic manager of the intangible assets of the organisation in a permanent reconstruction (...) The *dircom* jointly designs, manages and controls everything that communicates (events and symbols) and adds value to the organisation⁹.

Second, technological and social changes have prompted an evolution in the use of participatory tools in the context of the Web 2.0. The Communications Department also directs the communication strategy in the Internet. In this sense, the changes that are taking place are remarkable: the communication flow in the websites of organisations cease to be one-way and the online spaces designed to maintain relations with the media (online press room) are no longer just a noticeboard full of previously-delivered press releases, and instead allow users to interact and participate (with the focus on journalists, but also acknowledging that any citizen is a potential communicator and can operate as an ally of the brand, product, or service).

According to Molina Cañabate (2011), there is no unique model of press room and certain tools will be used more than others according to the personality of the institution but always ensuring a two-way or multi-way flow of communication.

On the other hand, in the new context, the Communications Department combines the online and offline environments to improve the communication strategy, which is configured as a continuous strategy to promote a positive brand, reputation and intangibles assets. “Within the framework of corporate reputation, we see online reputation as an intangible asset of holistic and integrative nature”¹⁰.

Put differently, the image that we project online should be a faithful reflection of the offline image of the business or brand; in other words... we cannot allow our brand to be dissociated and create two parallel concepts or messages: the branding strategy has to be the same for all the elements that surround our products and services¹¹.

At the level of social media, according to the *2013 Digital Influence Report* (produced by Technorati), of the sampled brands (mostly American) more than 91% had presence on Facebook, 85% on Twitter, and 73% on YouTube. Other social platforms, however, did not manage to pull the majority of the sampled brands.

Table 1. Social media most used by the studied brands

Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	Pinterest	LinkedIn	Blogs	Instagram	Google +
91%	85%	73%	41%	33%	32%	29%	26%

Source: Technorati, 2013.

⁹ DIRCOM, *Manual de la comunicación*, Dircom, Asociación de Directivos de la Comunicación, Madrid, 2013, p. 36.

¹⁰ VAQUERO COLLADO, Alicia, “La reputación online en el marco de la Comunicación Corporativa. Una visión sobre la investigación de tendencias y perspectivas profesionales”, *Revista adComunica*, 2012, nº 3, p. 61.

¹¹ VELA GARCÍA, Dolores, *Social media manager*, Anaya Multimedia, Madrid, 2013, p.165.

According to the report produced by *Estudio de Comunicación* about the 35 Spanish companies listed on the IBEX35, the social media in which these companies have the greatest presence are Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, while YouTube is the platform that is experiencing the highest growth since 2010. That year YouTube was used as a corporate channel by 26.6% of the 35 companies, but in 2013 this percentage rose to 65.7%, which represents an increase of 56.5%¹².

The changes that have taken place in the new environment encourage organisations to transmit their messages in formats intended for the new media, which are increasingly interactive and audiovisual. “The development of the Web 2.0 is indirectly provoking an avalanche of audiovisual content, and its capacity to create communities provides an extensive use of audiovisual formats.”¹³

Third, the formats have evolved too. Never before has audiovisual content been as consumed as now, nor there have been as many professional and non-professional tools available for its creation and consumption as now. We are currently living in a society surrounded by audiovisual contents, and in which the audiovisual message acquires more importance among both the transmitter and the receiver¹⁴. In the context of the attention economy, the audiovisual content gains importance and becomes a key ally of the corporate and marketing strategies. In the new context, surviving the existing excess of information and gaining access to the consumer by other means becomes a priority¹⁵.

The evolution can be observed, for example, in the classic communications tools used to communicate with the public, like the press release. From the written to the multimedia format, the new press release aims to serve the information needs not only of the print media, but also of the new media, by using all the tools that they provide: photo galleries, videos, social networks, audio files, interviews, etc. Costa and Piñeiro (2013)¹⁶ have termed this new external communication tool as “online release” (*comunicado online*). This makes more sense in a context where the Internet, the host of all media, has favoured the convergence of traditional media and multimedia platforms, which offer written, visual, audiovisual and interactive content to citizens (like the TV portals of the digital newspapers).

Organisations and their communication strategies, therefore, need to be adapted to the new media and communications context.

¹² Based on data collected between April and June 2013, available at: <http://www.estudiodecomunicacion.com/extranet/presencia-de-las-empresas-del-ibex-35-en-la-web-2-0/>.

¹³ LLORET ROMERO, Nuria & CANET CENTELLAS, Fernando, “New stages, new narrative forms: The Web 2.0 and audiovisual language”, *Hipertext.net*, nº 6, 2008, <http://www.upf.edu/hipertextnet/en/numero-6/lenguaje-audiovisual.html>, 12-01-2014.

¹⁴ MUT CAMACHO, Magdalena & BERNAD MONFERRER, Estela, “Diálogo y compromiso audiovisual. Un camino para ejercer y mostrar la responsabilidad”, Proceedings of the II Congreso Internacional Latina de Comunicación Social, 2010, p. 1, http://www.revistalatinacs.org/10SLCS/actas_2010/10Mut.pdf, 01-12-2013.

¹⁵ BERMEJO, Jesús, “Sobre la muerte y resurrección de la publicidad”, *Pensar la publicidad*, vol. III, (2), 2009, p. 14

¹⁶ COSTA SÁNCHEZ, Carmen & PIÑEIRO OTERO, Teresa, *Estrategias de comunicación multimedia*, UOC, Barcelona, 2013, p. 181.

Table 2. Proposal to classify new audiovisual formats for external communication

Traditional corporate audiovisual formats	New corporate audiovisual formats
Spot	New corporate video
Corporate video	Video release/announcement
Infomercial	Viral video
Interviews	Lipdub
Statements	Flash mob video
	Informative micro-videos
	Teaser
	Branded content
	Web series / Mob series
	Advergaming
	Advertainment
	Making off

Source: The author.

2. Transmedia storytelling

Transmedia storytelling (a term coined by Jenkins in the article published in 2003 by *MIT Technology Review*) is revolutionising the production strategies of both television and cinema¹⁷. Applied to the context of fictional narratives, this technique has proved successful in narrative expansion, user involvement, content recycling and project's monetisation¹⁸.

Despite its recent emergence, this term has been increasingly adopted by media professionals and researchers¹⁹. It consists of a narrative structure that expands a story across different media, offering multiple points of entry and different reading levels to users:

TS [transmedia storytelling] is a particular narrative structure that expands through both different languages (verbal, iconic, etc.) and media (cinema, comics, television, video games, etc.). TS is not just an adaptation from one media to another (...) the different media and languages participate and contribute to the construction of the transmedia narrative world. This textual dispersion is one of the most important sources of complexity in contemporary popular culture²⁰.

¹⁷ Cfr. JENKINS, Henry, *Cultura de la convergencia*, Barcelona, Paidós, 2008; SCOLARI, Carlos A., JIMÉNEZ, Manel & GUERRERO, Mar, "Narrativas transmediáticas en España: cuatro ficciones en busca de un destino cross-media", *Comunicación y Sociedad*, vol. XXV, n° 1, 2012, p. 139.

¹⁸ Cfr. VELIKOVSKY, J.T., "Two Successful Transmedia Case Studies: The Blair Witch Project (1999) and The Devil Inside (2012)", 2013, <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/research/research-nexus/digital-nexus/global-project-on-transmedia/transmedia-storytelling-and-beyond/conference-programme-papers-and-abstracts/session-14/>

¹⁹ Cfr. KONZAL, Alberto, *Entertainment Architecture. Constructing a framework for the creation of an emerging transmedia form*, PhD Thesis, Queensland University of Technology, Queensland, 2011.

²⁰ SCOLARI, Carlos A., "Transmedia storytelling: Implicit consumers, narrative worlds, and branding in contemporary media production", *International Journal of Communication*, n°3, 2009, p. 587.

Insisting on the conceptual dimension of transmedia storytelling, and in an attempt to distinguish it from the term crossmedia, with which the former is often confused, it is important to highlight that crossmedia strategies direct the public from one medium to another, given that a complete experience is required (in all channels / platforms) to get the complete message (or storyline) across, which is not necessary in transmedia strategies²¹. “The requirement for movement between channels or media is a vital characteristic of cross media; however, to be inclusive of all the aspects of a cross media work, activity within a channel needs to be recognised”²².

In general terms, in comparison to conventional and single-medium narratives, transmedia narratives are characterised by a series of differential elements that affect both story (or content) and discourse²³:

a) Transmedia narratives involve higher levels of depth than linear narratives do, so the complexity of the former type of narrative and their degree of sophistication are also higher²⁴.

b) The expansion of the story to multiple platforms involves the creation of specific content for each of them, in order to provide a satisfactory user experience through each content and platform. According to the definition of the Producer’s Guild of America, a transmedia project must consist at least three storylines that belong to the same fictional universe and are developed through different platforms (cinema, TV, print publications, comics, animation, mobile devices, etc.).

In addition, each platform represents a bridge and a point-of-entry into the universe of the story for the different audiences, which breaks down the concept of family audience in which the traditional audiovisual products have been focused in the last decades, especially in Spain.

The addressing of different audiences with different content in different media and environments is described as tiering. Tiering denotes the design of projects that facilitate different points-of-entry into a transmedia fiction through targeting different content (and in many cases media) to different audiences²⁵.

c) The role granted to the audience is central and can go beyond simple interactivity. Audiences participate in the adventure in one or multiple ways. This level of narrative immersion is what triggers the fan phenomena.

²¹ COSTA SÁNCHEZ, Carmen, PIÑEIRO OTERO, Teresa, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

²² DENA, Christie, “Current State of Cross Media Storytelling: Preliminary observations for future design”, *European Information Systems Technologies Event*, Netherlands, The Hague, 15 Nov., 2004. http://www.christydena.com/Docs/DENA_CrossMediaObservations.pdf

²³ COSTA SÁNCHEZ, Carmen & PIÑEIRO OTERO, Teresa, “Nuevas narrativas audiovisuales: multiplataforma, crossmedia y transmedia. El caso de Águila Roja (RTVE)”, *Icono 14*, vol.10, nº 2, 2012, p. 115.

²⁴ “Such a multilayered approach to storytelling will enable a more complex, more sophisticated, more rewarding mode of narrative to emerge within the constraints of commercial entertainment”, JENKINS, Henry, “Transmedia Storytelling”. *Technology Review*. <http://www.technologyreview.com/biomedicine/13052/>

²⁵ DENA, Christy, *Transmedia practice: theorising the practice of expressing a fictional world across distinct media and environments*, PhD Thesis, Department of Media and Communications, University of Sydney, Sydney, 2009, p. 255.

In order to avoid using the terms reader, viewer or player, Dinehart²⁶ coined a multiple concept: the VUP (viewer-user-player), which brings together the various roles of the new media audience.

Scolari²⁷ explains it in the following way: “some consumers became prosumers (producers + consumers), they appropriated their favourite characters and further expanded their narrative worlds (...) Either by writing a fictional story and posting it in Fanfiction, or by recording a parody and uploading it to YouTube, the 21st century prosumers are active militants of the narratives they love. For Beddows²⁸, “the role of human actors in the transmedia network is significant because both author and audience can influence the structure of the text”.

The art of storytelling, however, is not exclusive of the cultural industries (editorials, film and music companies, etc.), but is in fact an important asset for organisations, which increasingly look for new ways to explain their activities to themselves and others, to differentiate themselves in a context saturated with messages (both informational and advertising), and to get closer to their publics (both internal and external).

Companies can easily tell stories about themselves and their products. They have to create a framework within in order to tell the unique story behind the enterprise by adding an emotional level to the corporation [...] Well-told company or brand stories can have a positive influence to a consumer’s brand experience and create positive associations and increase a consumer’s willingness to pay for the product²⁹.

Already since long ago companies and institutions no longer focus, in communication terms, in selling the benefits of a product or a service, or in only selling the “intangible” assets associated with them. In the new context, organisations are targeting the most intrinsic aspects of humans, their most innate ability: storytelling. “Storytelling is not a simple narrative, but a discourse created as a means to persuade [...] They are narratives that carry an ideology, and creates intimate feelings and desires that did not exist prior to their consumption. That is why storytelling is so powerful”³⁰. Narratives form a framework within which the discourses about humans’ thinking and potential are developed; in this sense, their main function is to make human actions intelligible for ourselves and others³¹. Humans are eager to hear a good story. We are more or less skilled narrators and, at the same time, also, avid receptors (viewers / readers / listeners) of those narratives. Stories allow us to (re)create other realities, and to live and get immersed in them.

²⁶ DINEHART, Stephen, “Transmedial play: Cognitive and cross-platform narrative”, <http://www.narrativedesign.org/2008/05/transmedial-play-the-aim-of-na.html>, 10-12-2009.

²⁷ SCOLARI, Carlos A., *Narrativas transmedia. Cuando todos los medios cuentan*, Deusto, Barcelona, p. 27.

²⁸ BEDDOWS, Emma, *Consuming transmedia: how audiences engage with narrative across multiple story modes*, PhD Thesis, Swinburne University of Technology, Swinburne, p. 68, <http://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/swin:32315>.

²⁹ BRIEGER, Christian, *Exploring New Communication Strategies for a Global Brand - Transmedia Storytelling and Gamification*, Norwegian School Of Economics, Bergen, 2013, p. 10.

³⁰ BERNASCONI, Analú, ALFEU, Adenil & ALEIXO, Dalva, “Storytelling Empresarial: relações públicas contador de histórias”, Intercom, Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Comunicação, São Paulo, 2011, p. 8, <http://www.intercom.org.br/papers/regionais/sudeste2011/resumos/R24-0760-1.pdf>.

³¹ BETTENDORF, María E., “¿Por qué Contamos? El retorno a la narrativa como herramienta didáctica”, *El rol docente frente a los nuevos escenarios profesionales*, Universidad de Palermo, Buenos Aires, 2000, p. 13.

Although each corporate storytelling is different in terms of objectives, they all have some common underlying elements³²: 1) the need to connect emotionally with their target audiences; 2) the simplicity of the message, since stories do not need to be overly complicated, but need to have the potential to be customisable and memorable; 3) the credibility and transparency, regardless of whether the stories are real or not, because users/consumers are very aware of the techniques of advertising and, thus, the stories must not appear to be part of the range of commercial or brand messages, but messages about identity.

The application of transmedia storytelling has allowed companies and institutions to regain that connection with the human essence in a context rich in media, platforms, channels and forms of interaction. The reasons that have led to this new way of interaction with audiences have been already mentioned: a contextual framework characterised by the overabundance of messages; the need to stand out from other companies in a highly competitive world; the need to improve relations with stakeholders; and people's boredom with highly standardised communication formats (both advertising and informative).

Moreover, here it is important to add a new objective that has emerged among organisations: to provide experiences to those users (potential consumers and brand allies) who want to take a more active role in the communicative processes, thanks to the new opportunities and tools provided by the Web 2.0, which affords new dynamics of media consumption, and whose attention becomes the most-valued good.

Consumers are increasingly looking for experience and adventures – they are looking for things that lure the heart rather than the brain and they buy stories along with the products. Companies' strategies changed to tell stories involving their products to create a memorable customer experience³³.

On the other hand, affording (not conditioning) a more active role to users/consumers favours the development of their sensibility, their involvement and commitment towards the brand, to the extent that they want. Two of the main advantages of transmedia storytelling are the different levels of depth and its focus on promoting participatory users (even co-creators). For these reasons, this new form of communication constitutes the paradigm of the symmetrical two-way communication model that is adjustable to the interests of brands and consumers.

Thus, organisations are increasingly creating universes and stories as the central components of their new communication strategies.

Like never before, brands are building fictional universes and stories as the pivotal point of their external communication. Especially in the context of identity brands, companies are

³² Summary base on GILL, Rob, “An integrative review of storytelling: Using corporate stories to strengthen employee engagement and internal and external reputation”, *PRism* 8(1), 2011, <http://www.prismjournal.org/homepage.html>; SILVEIRA COGO, Rodrigo, *Memória como recurso de Comunicação Organizacional: a atratividade do storytelling em tempos de atenção difusa-um estudo teórico*, Universidade de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, 2010; ERKAS, Eivor & BARON, Jennifer, *The Importance of Storytelling in Today's Business – A case study*, University of Gävle, Department of Business Administration, Gävle, 2007, <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:119742>.

³³ BRIEGER, Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

increasingly disregarding traditional focus on product and prize and are instead focusing their efforts on the story and trying to engage and involve consumers emotionally³⁴.

2.1. *Game dynamics or gamification*

Transmedia narratives tend to incorporate game dynamics to promote the participation of the public. Gamification is a rising trend in the field of corporate communication as it promotes participation, and facilitates the generation of experiences in users. The objectives of the use of game dynamics are to increase engagement, loyalty, fun, participation and learning³⁵.

As McGonigal³⁶ points out, games are as old as humans, as shown by Herodotus who documented the different game dynamics existing in ancient Greece. Since then, humans have enjoyed different games which with the emergence of the digital world have moved to the online environment and expanded to different media (especially thanks to the rise of mobile devices), in multiple modalities and different areas, although perhaps its greatest public recognition is the acknowledgement of the video game industry as a cultural industry (which occurred very recently, in 2009, in Spain).

However, beyond this specific fact, what is really relevant is that our culture has become ludic, in a wide and deep sense³⁷. Corporate communication is no stranger to this trend and is one of the areas that are approaching this new phenomenon from an academic and experimental perspective (currently, based more on the practice of the profession than on its observation and study).

The concept of gamification arises, thus, as a need for companies to reach consumers through the use of interactive technologies and by incorporating its identifying characteristics to their campaigns (bi-directionality, community, participation, etc.), in order to gain a greater number of users, improve their perception of the brand, sell more and ultimately get more benefits³⁸.

However, economic profit is not the only immediate objective of gamification; its main objective is to generate commitment and loyalty in users, by providing them with a positive and pleasurable experience that they can associate with the brand.

³⁴ HOLSTEEN LARSEN, Per; HØGSBERG, Tobias Maria, *The ideal aesthetics. Transmedia storytelling in contemporary brand communication*, Frederiksberg, Copenhagen, 2009, p. 43, <http://hdl.handle.net/10417/436>.

³⁵ Cfr. HUOTARI, Kai & HAMARI, Juho, *Defining gamification - A service marketing perspective*, 2012, https://www.hiit.fi/u/hamari/2012-defining_gamification-a_service_marketing_perspective.pdf; DELOITTE, *Tech Trends 2012. Elevate IT for digital Business*, Technology Trends, 2012; KAPP, Karl M., *The Gamification of Learning and Instruction*, Pfeiffer, San Francisco, 2012.

³⁶ MCGONIGAL, Jane, *Reality is broken*, Penguin Press HC, London, 2011.

³⁷ PÉREZ LATORRE, Oliver, “Apuntes sobre la teoría de la diversión”, in SCOLARI, Carlos A. (ed.), *Homo Videoludens 2.0. De Pacman a la gamification*, Col·lecció Transmedia XXI, Laboratori de Mitjans Interactius, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, 2013, p. 249.

³⁸ LEGERÉN, Beatriz, “La Gamificación, una moda o una estrategia de futuro”, in LEDO ANDIÓN, Margarita & VASALLO LOPES, Inmaculada, *XIII Congreso Internacional Ibercom. Comunicación, Cultura y Esferas de Poder*, IBERCOM, AssIBERCOM, AGACOM, Santiago de Compostela, 2013, p. 3621.

Contests in social networks and social media follow this trend. They seek to encourage user participation, interactivity, loyalty and to allow users to adopt an active role if they wish to do so.

Gamification strategies are also present, explicitly or implicitly, in many of the new formats of marketing, such as the flagship stores (of Apple, for example) that are entertainment-oriented and the viral campaigns centred on “riddles” to be solved by the public³⁹.

Gamification opens a new opportunity for corporate communication to create new links between consumers and brands and to establish customised relations between organisations and stakeholders. “Gamified campaigns [...] in which the borders between advertising and public relations are blurred, manage to surprise, amuse and attract users to participate actively, increasing engagement, promoting virality and, ultimately, increasing notoriety”⁴⁰.

3. Method: A case study

The empirical work is qualitative and based on the case study method, applied to a recent transmedia communication campaigns developed by an international beer brand, Heineken. As some authors explain⁴¹, the case study is the most appropriate method to answer research questions such as “how?” and “why?”, when there is little or zero degree of control over the actual behaviour of the objects/events under study and when the object of study is contemporary.

Applied to our area of knowledge, the case study can facilitate the examination of how a brand uses different platforms in the creation of a transmedia campaign that aims to tell a story and create an experience that affords users varying degrees of involvement. The case study has demonstrated its validity in previous research works with similar objects of study⁴².

The campaign chosen from the Heineken brand for this study is the one called #Dropped. The fundamental reasons for choosing this campaign for the case study are the following: -First, the recognition achieved by the campaign. Heineken has developed international transmedia campaigns for some time already, which have earned it recognition at important festivals. The brand won the *Creative Effectiveness Grand Prix* at the 2013 Cannes Lions International Festival for its *Heineken Legendary Journey* campaign (which began in 2011 as part of ‘Open Your World’). This campaign won a total of 17 awards.

³⁹ PÉREZ LATORRE, O., *op. cit.*, p. 229.

⁴⁰ ESTANYOL, Elisenda, MONTAÑA, Mireia & LALUEZA, Ferran, “Comunicar jugando. Gamificación en publicidad y relaciones públicas”, in ZILLES, K., CUENCA, J., ROM, J. (eds.), *Breaking the Media Value Chain*, Universitat Ramon Llull, Barcelona, 2013, p. 116.

⁴¹ ESCUDERO, Jesús, DELFÍN, Luís A. & GUTIÉRREZ, Leonor, “El estudio de caso como estrategia de investigación en las ciencias sociales”, *Revista de Ciencia Administrativa* 1, p. 8, 2008.

⁴² For example: HOLSTEEN LARSEN, Per, HØGSBERG, Tobias Maria, *op. cit.*; BELSUNCES, Andrés, *Producción, consumo y prácticas culturales en torno a los nuevos media en la cultura de la convergencia: el caso de Fringe como narración transmedia*, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona, 2011; BRIEGER, Christian, *op. cit.*; RUTKAUSKAITE, Inga, *Successful Brand Strategy Execution on Social Media*, 2012, <http://hdl.handle.net/10417/3884>; FALZON, Charles, “Brand development and transmedia production-The Geofreakz case study”, *Journalism and mass communication*, vol. 2, nº 9, 2012.

-Second, the novelty of the campaign, which combines online and offline strategies and different platforms, and thus can help us to understand how these strategies are used in storytelling to promote audience participation.

-Third, Heineken is an active brand that is continually innovating in communicative terms. It links one campaign with the next one and stands out at different levels: organisation of events, public relations, advertising, transmediality, etc. In this sense, it offers an opportunity to analyse a transmedia campaign produced by an experienced brand that is continuously renewing itself.

-Fourth, the campaign incorporates three of the most important new trends that currently characterise the strategies of brand communication: storytelling, transmediality and gamification.

It is precisely the diversity of media, the need to open new communication channels and the changes in the mentality of consumers what makes it necessary to plan campaigns of greater spatial coverage, i.e., campaigns that complement the *offline* and *online* (traditional and digital) media. What in Europe are known as *transmedia* or *crossmedia* campaigns⁴³.

-Fifth, the campaign, our object of study, meets the requirement of contemporaneity, and since the analysis of social media requires access to their contents this is facilitated when we deal with a recent campaign.

In this case study, the analysis will be structured according to the main elements of a transmedia project⁴⁴: story, platforms-media and audiences-experience.

4. Results

4.1. Context and objectives of the campaign. Key-messages

#Dropped is a global campaign developed by Wieden+Kennedy Amsterdam for Heineken. The campaign, which is featured in 'The Voyage's spot, was released in June 2013 under the motto: *Legends aren't born. They're dropped.*

Considered by the brand as a social experiment, the campaign aims to take participants out of their comfort zone and find out how they react in unknown situations, in an unknown country, in which they had to fulfil a challenge in order to go back home. The experience is narrated through a web series whose protagonists were selected through a casting-call. The project involves online and offline activities that seek the participation of audiences.

⁴³ MORENO LÓPEZ, Begoña, "Los "showcases" como nuevo formato publicitario al servicio de la marca", Proceedings of the IV Congreso Internacional Latina de Comunicación Social, 2012, p. 7, retrieved from http://www.revistalatinacs.org/12SLCS/2012_actas/126_Moreno.pdf, 10/01/2014.

⁴⁴ Recognised as such in PRATTEN, Robert, *Getting started in transmedia storytelling*, 2011, p. 4 <http://talkingobjects.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/book-by-robert-pratten.pdf>; HAYES, Gary P., *How to write a transmedia production bible. A template for multi-platform producers*, Screen Australia, 2011, <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/getmedia/2b6459ab-3d05-4607-8fc6-10e1a8fff13d/Transmedia-production-bible-template.pdf>; SCOLARI, Carlos A., *Narrativas transmedia. Cuando todos los medios cuentan*, Deusto, Barcelona, 2013, p. 79.

As Sandrine Huijgen, the Global Communications Director of Heineken, explained in the campaign press conference, “Dropped is a social experiment that will challenge the participant to display their true character and if they do, have a legendary travel experience”⁴⁵.

The campaign, which uses a variety of platforms (social media, TV spots, social events, etc.), aims to convey several key-messages:

- Live the moment, you only live once.
- Life is adventure.
- Heroes conquer their fears and face their destiny with inventiveness.

These three key-messages are transmitted through different media and platforms throughout the campaign. The campaign, therefore, seeks to associate the brand (Heineken) with adventure, fun, heroism and ingenuity, through the main stories and experiences of the participants.

4.2. *Story*

At the narrative level, the campaign proposes the keys to the journey of the hero, who embarks on an adventure in which he must overcome different obstacles in order to fulfil the challenge. The hero’s journey is a “master narrative”⁴⁶ structure with which people has become familiar through literary and audiovisual products.

In this case, the fact that these are real heroes, anonymous people, increases the degree of audience identification with the protagonists of the campaign, because many of us dream of travelling to distant countries and becoming the protagonists and heroes of great adventures.

One of the drama stories most used for writers is precisely the myth of how people become heroes, also known as the hero’s journey. In itself, it is not an archaic story; but rather the result of all initiatory experiences of the literary heroes of all times and all cultures, whose abundance has resulted in a modern structural canon⁴⁷.

We all share these needs, but we also share experiences that are universal: growth, development, transformation, search for a partner, the realisation of an ideal, the overcoming of an obstacle, a misfortune or a challenge, the participation in a collective task. They are experiences that we can discover in the myths in which heroes and archetypes are the protagonists⁴⁸.

The master plot in which the campaign is centred, and which frames the missions of the hero, is none other than the quest master plot. In this case, the quest to find the way back home, which is a plot that has been already addressed in numerous mythic tales such as that

⁴⁵ <http://www.theheinekencompany.com/welcome-to-dropped-heinekens-social-experiment>

⁴⁶ Sánchez-Escalonilla, A., *Estrategias de guión cinematográfico*, Ariel cine, Barcelona, 2001, p. 93.

⁴⁷ Sánchez-Escalonilla, A., *Guión de aventura y forja del héroe*, Ariel cine, Barcelona, 2002, p. 13.

⁴⁸ Álvarez, Joan, *Imágenes que cuentan. Reflexiones sobre el arte de escribir guiones*, Generalitat Valenciana, Valencia, 1998, p. 116.

of Ulysses, who struggles to go back to Ithaca. This is an archetypal mission of literary narrative fiction, since the quest is typical of the hero character⁴⁹.

The quest master plot is a resource that favours the development of transmedia projects because they incite the curiosity of audiences and engage them in the process. Quest plots also involve the evolution of the protagonists throughout their journey, so that at the end of the story they are different than when they started the journey. “In other words, heroes simultaneously take a journey to their inner world, guided by an inner goal that, along with the tangible object of the quest, makes them to re-evaluate the adventure itself. And that inner adventure leaves an indelible mark on them for the rest of their life”⁵⁰.

This is also transmitted by the statements of the protagonists, who claim that they have changed, that they are no longer the same, after living the experience.

“I’m here. Crazy, real crazy! Everything is different now. In the nature and then back again the civilization. Feelings are mixed up”, says Greek participant Stravos Kottas, after having travelled from Athens to Cambodia⁵¹.

4.3. *Media and formats*

The #Dropped campaign is composed of the following platforms-media and contents:

- A TV ad, which can also be watched on Heineken’s *The Voyage* YouTube channel, in which a young man in India must overcome various challenges to enjoy Heineken.

- A reality-style web series, whose episodes can be found in Heineken’s YouTube channel. The initial question is: *What are men truly made of when taken out of their daily lives and dropped into the great unknown?* Following the strategies of a TV show and with some resemblance to the American format of Jerry Bruckheimer’s *The Amazing Race* (CBS), each participant must find their own way to go back to their place of origin. Each web series is composed of three episodes. In each of them, the main character, who is not an actor, but a participant chosen to be part of the experience, is dropped in an unknown place from where he must return home. This is the common plot throughout the three episodes of each “season”. In addition, each one of these seasons has its corresponding trailer.

In the first season, the protagonist, Rikar Gil, a Madrid-based Catalan man, is taken to Alaska, from where he must return to Spain. The first webisode includes the introduction of the protagonist, by himself, his arrival in Alaska, his surprises and two clues left by the production team: an arrow and a telephone booth. In the next webisode, the participant is saved from a blizzard from a villager who invites him to his house. In the third and final webisode, Rikar combines different means of transport to get to an airport from where he can fly back to Madrid.

⁴⁹ Propp, Vladimir, *Morfología del cuento*, Akal, Madrid, 1985.

⁵⁰ Propp, Vladimir, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁵¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7s7JKzHZfk>.

Figure 1. Infograph of Rikar's adventure posted in Heineken's Instagram account

Source: <http://instagram.com/heineken>.

In the second season the protagonist is a Greek dancer and yoga instructor. Stravos Kottas, who is dropped in Athens to travel to Cambodia. The structure of this and the previous season are the same. The participant introduces himself (becomes our guide in this adventure), is dropped in the chosen destination, provided with some clues and instructions, and offers a touch of comedy throughout his adventures. The episodes always include cliffhanger endings to persuade the audience to watch the next episode.

The third season is set in Morocco. The protagonist, William Englehardt, a New York photographer, must carry a ton-heavy block of ice throughout the desert to a camp and asks for help to the people he finds in his way.

In the fourth season, the protagonist, Clint Jacobs, a South African graphic designer who described himself as “crazy about bikes” and expected to be sent to Texas (the perfect place for cycling), is dropped with a parachute in Poland. His mission is to get to Berlin where he has to put on a circus show.

The last season has two protagonists from different countries: Murray (from Ireland) and Jakob (from Poland), who are dropped in the Philippines and must survive together in the island in the Robison Crusoe style.

Each episode has a very short duration, less than five minutes. Following the web series format, each episode includes a summary of the previous episode and a preview of the next. All seasons include product placement.

In pseudo-documentary style, the protagonists talk to the camera about their thoughts and experiences during their adventure.

Throughout the five seasons, all the selected protagonists are young, male, aged 25 to 40, with liberal professions, with a sense of humour, proficient in the English language, and have travelling experience.

- A compilation video of the best moments of the web series: *Best of Heineken Dropped*.

- Events (alternate reality game). The campaign also uses events in the real world, although it is a game: the *Departure Roulette*, which was installed at the JFK International Airport. The campaign's organisers ask travellers to participate by pressing the roulette's button and accepting to travel to the destination randomly selected by the roulette. Another modality of this game is the *Departure Roulette En Route*, which moves in search of people who tweeted that they would participate in the experience without hesitation. These people can also press the button and go to the destination shown on the roulette's display. The videos of this game appear on Heineken's campaign YouTube channel. In addition, participants are unaware of their destination until they are on board.

- Music videos. Heineken Greece asked the band Koza Mostra to write a song about the adventure of Stavros Kottas in Cambodia. The result was a song and a music video titled "Ti kanw edw / What am I doing here".

- Heineken's website, which is another platform of the campaign where people can see the TV ad, play online games and follow the press releases.

- The social networks Instagram, Twitter and Facebook promoted the campaign and encouraged followers to participate in it. Heineken's Instagram account offered photographs of participants accompanied by witty phrases and infographs-summaries of their adventures (seen Figure 1). The campaign's Twitter account invited users to visit the YouTube channel and the Instagram account. The campaign's Facebook account posted videos and encouraged people to visit the YouTube channel and Instagram page.

Participation in social networks was large: On Facebook, the content about the *Departure Roulette*, posted by 30 September 2013, generated 49,471 Likes, 9,713 comments and was shared 4,677 times. The campaign-related content posted on Facebook was the one that achieved the greatest social impact.

From June to September 2013, the Instagram page of the campaign posted a total of 43 photographs or infographs that obtained between 15 and 99 likes. However, these posts provoked few comments (between 0 and 5) each.

Twitter played a special role because it could be employed by users to show interest to participate in the *En Route* version of the *Departure Roulette* game (video available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqXOiQ1c42c>).

Figure 2. Conversation about the campaign on Twitter



Source: <https://twitter.com/Heineken>.

- The Heineken Dropped YouTube Channel, created for this campaign on 3 May 2013, obtained 6,247,466 views and 8,471 subscribers over a period of eight months (until January 2014). This channels also served to promote the webisodes of the adventures, gave users the opportunity to participate in the casting of participants by uploading videos requesting so. The YouTube channel was the main platform of the project.

- Casting couch videos. These are short videos that introduce the protagonists of the web series: who they are and their reasons to participate in the adventure. For instance, Swiss candidate, Sylvain Nicolier, introduced himself to be chosen in the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPtkYZXX2Vo>.

- An online game named *Dropped in the Net*. Consumers who bought the special Heineken packs obtain a code to play an online game that tests their navigation skills with challenges that have to be achieved the fewest possible number of clicks, etc. Users of this game have the chance to win an exciting experience: a trip around the world for two, a parachute jump, etc. This game offers the online experience of the campaign in the real world.

- *Dropped in the Net (Live!)*. This online game is carried out in a joint event created for this purpose. As if it were a LAN party, a group of Spanish users was invited to gather at Madrid's Palacio Neptuno and take a series of seemingly simple online challenges that had to be achieved without basic tools such as search engines, like finding out the price of a Shanghai subway ticket or booking a train ticket between Frankfurt and Berlin. The goal was similar to that of the whole campaign: to take participants out of their comfort zone to demonstrate that ingenuity can overcome obstacles and fulfil challenges.

- Some parodies and user-generated content. Jono and Ben, comedians from New Zealand's TV3 channel, performed a parody of the adventure of Murray and Jakob in which they clearly promoted the keys messages of the campaign (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jTiOSaVkxA>).

Some users have been critical of the brand and its initiative, for example, with respect to the reality of the country where a chapter of #Dropped took place, in this case Cambodia (like *John traveller* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0N7nHMXWXw>)). However, there are other YouTube users who posted content from the campaign in their own channels because they felt identified with them (like *andreiskisser*: <https://www.youtube.com/user/andreiskisser>). In addition, it is important to note that some materials related to the campaign were created by participants, like Rosse Greenberg who posted the video titled *My Heineken Departure Roulette Story* on her YouTube channel to narrate her experience at Panama City, the destination to where the Roulette sent her (video available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z51wI-GPUV8 & list = UUhgqEw7eUceeVfcPkSh3Cuw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z51wI-GPUV8&list=UUhgqEw7eUceeVfcPkSh3Cuw)).

In this sense, one of the limitations of the campaign was that it did not promote to a greater extent the creation of audiovisual content by followers who, as shown in the social networks, do like the campaign's proposed style and contents.

Table 3. #Dropped Transmedia Universe

TV	YouTube Channel	Website	Events	Social media	Co-creations	Gaming
<i>The Voyage</i> advertisement	Heineken Dropped // Heineken USA	Heineken.com	Departure Roulette game (at JFK airport)	Facebook	Casting couch	<i>Dropped in the Net</i> (online game)
	Web series Alaska		Departure Roulette en Route	Twitter	Parodies	
	Web series Cambodia		Dropped in the Net (Live!)	Instagram	Videos of the protagonists of the Departure Roulette	
	Web series Morocco					
	Web series Poland					
	Web series Philippines					
	Trailer Alaska					
	Trailer Cambodia					
	Trailer Morocco					
	Trailer Poland					
	Trailer Philippines					
	Music video					
	<i>Best of</i>					

Source: The author

The transmedia universe of the *Dropped* campaign is broad and rich in platforms. The central platform of the campaign, as we have seen, is the YouTube channel, which was not the usual platform of the brand, but it is a channel created exclusively for this campaign. The YouTube channel was created mainly to promote y disseminate the web series, which is the most important content of the campaign and the main container of the story, which is configured as a mosaic of the micro-stories of the everyday heroes who face challenging situations in unknown countries. This structure requires a lower degree of fidelity to the story, which allows users to engage with one season and miss another without missing the plot of the adventure as a whole. The episodes, on the other hand, thanks to the inclusion of summaries of the previous episode, contribute to that dynamic of independence of contents. This feature blends with a distinctive feature of transmedia projects:

Each medium does what it does best -a story can be told through a film, expanded through television, novels and comics, and its world can be explored and experienced through a video game. Each product of the franchise should be self-contained enough to enable its

independent consumption. (...) Any given product is an entry point to the franchise as a whole⁵².

Based on this principle, each medium serves a function⁵³: television (where the spot is disseminated) is used for storytelling; the website is used to inform, for non-sequential storytelling, to interact, participate, or explore; social networks are used to chat and share; and online (and live) gaming is used to immerse the user in the narrative world; the webisodes are used for storytelling, summarising and generating expectations; the alternate reality game (ARG) proposed by the real roulette is used to converse with users and also to immerse them in the narrative experience; trailers are used to preview content and encourage interest in the story; and finally, the *best of* video is used to summarise the best moments of the story as a whole.

The main strategies employed in the campaign for the expansion of the narrative universe were⁵⁴:

- The creation of parallel stories. Each “season” of the web series is a good example of this. We can follow the story of Rikar, Stavros, William, Klint, Murray and Jakob without having to have watched the previous stories.
- The creation of peripheral stories. Participants of the real-life game offer audiences a small fragment of their life story in which they explain why they decided to participate in the adventure proposed to them.
- The user-generated content. This strategy is exemplified, for example, by the casting videos and the videos created by participants of the Roulette game to share their experience in their YouTube channels.

4.4. *The role of audiences*

Dena⁵⁵ speaks of the various points-of-entry for different audiences. Costa⁵⁶ proposes a scale about the level of involvement that ranges from the traditional *spectator* to the *co-creator* and including the *follower*. In the *Dropped* campaign these three levels of audience involvement are proposed through different platforms.

- The spot focuses on the classic spectator, who plays essentially a passive role. The story is told by the spot and the spectator acts as a receptor.
- The YouTube channel and the contents offered by this platform, as well as the website and the social networks mostly targeted the “follower”, i.e., those who like story and look for more content through the official channels created by the campaign.
- The parodies, the casting videos, the online and offline event and the real roulette targeted those users who were involved to a greater level in the campaign. They are the so-called

⁵² JENKINS, Henry, *Cultura de la convergencia*, Paidós, Barcelona, 2008, p. 101.

⁵³ Cfr. SCOLARI, Carlos A., *Narrativas transmedia. Cuando todos los... op. cit.*

⁵⁴ SCOLARI, Carlos A., “Transmedia storytelling: Implicit consumers...”, *op. cit.*, p. 598.

⁵⁵ “Tiering denotes the design of projects that facilitate different points-of-entry into a transmedia fiction through targeting different content (and in many cases media) to different audiences”, DENA, C., *op. cit.*, p. 239.

⁵⁶ COSTA SÁNCHEZ, Carmen, PIÑEIRO OTERO, Teresa, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

fans and can also be called co-creators, i.e. those who participate fully in the story, becoming (or trying to become) its protagonists. The key is participation.

Thus, the levels to what the audience got involved with the campaign (and its adventures) varied depending on their choices. Transmedia narratives are intended for audiences who converse with the narratives and decide by themselves their level of commitment. These types of narratives pose a challenge to their creators and producers because they must work on the public's involvement from the outset. However, they are also an interesting way to create a community of *followers* for the project, what advertising, in its traditional sense, has never been able of achieving. As Jenkins⁵⁷ explains, "The concentrated ownership of media conglomerates increases the desirability of properties that can exploit 'synergies' between different parts of the medium system and 'maximise touch-points' with different niches of consumers. The result has been the push towards franchise-building in general and transmedia entertainment in particular".

5. Conclusions

The possibilities and tools of Corporate Communication are always increasing. Channels and formats are multiplying. Corporate communication must be able to reach a public that is chained to the new technologies and immersed in the multi-screen phenomenon. The target public may become brand allies and, even, their co-creators⁵⁸. Transmedia campaigns are the best example of the great diversification of the range of platforms that can be used to tell a story capable of generating emotions and memorable positive values and experiences.

In the past, products and intangible assets associated to them were sold through advertising, while organisations used introduce themselves to audiences through their corporate videos. Now, the traditional strategies are maintained, but other media are added and the goals are intertwined: brands tell us a story, entertain us, make us participate and give us experiences. As Regueira⁵⁹ points out, "Experiences allow people to connect a brand with the customer's lifestyle and provide sensorial and emotional values that transcend the functional values".

One of the advantages of transmedia campaigns is the multiplication of the story's points-of-entry. In this case study, users could simply see the ad on their TV; or find a code when buying a pack of Heineken; or visit the brand's website; or follow any of the web series on its YouTube channel; or use all of these options; or ignore all of these options and remain alien to the story.

⁵⁷ JENKINS, Henry, "Transmedia storytelling and entertainment: an annotated syllabus", *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, vol. 24 (6), 2010, p. 948.

⁵⁸ MOLINA CAÑABATE, Juan Pedro, "Transmedia y storytelling", Communication Paper presented in the panel *Nuevas Tendencias en Comunicación de marca y en la Reputación Corporativa*, University Cardenal Herrera, Valencia, 2013, http://www.uchceu.es/actividades_culturales/2013/congresos/documentos/transmedia_storytelling_juan_pedro_molina.pdf.

⁵⁹ REGUEIRA MOURENTE, Francisco Javier, *El contenido como herramienta eficaz de comunicación de marca. Análisis teórico y empírico*, PhD Thesis, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, 2012, p. 92.

The levels of participation offered are diverse and range from the most traditional spectator, to the airport user airport who decides to become the protagonist of his or her own adventure by playing the roulette (thus becoming the protagonist of the campaign).

The aspect to highlight here is not the fact that more communication channels have merged, which would lead to a technocentric perspective, but instead that the use of traditional channels has become insufficient in the conception of a communication strategy that aims to go beyond a descriptive discourse about the benefits of a product, service or organisation. Fatigue affects not only advertising, but also the informative discourse.

Both advertising and public relations used to perform the communication roles that eventually became specialised areas. However both professions were originally manifestations of a functional core curriculum that was separated excessively in the 20th century. The new context requires the review of their mutual relations and the roles that they would have to perform in the new social, economic and cultural order⁶⁰.

The application of transmedia strategies in corporate communication is beginning to show its potential, although in Spain only few brands have transitioned from a descriptive to a narrative story to reach different audiences and listened to their responses⁶¹. The principles of transmedia narratives recommend a story with which audiences can identify, a broad set of media and platforms that combine online and offline communication, as well as an approach that encourages the collaboration of the public (acknowledging that user-generated content can be parodic or critical).

The new organisational discourse, therefore, becomes a story, a ludic and interactive approach for those who accept the proposal. The adaptation of corporate communication to the new context requires at least three elements: *transmedia*, *storytelling* and *gamification*.

⁶⁰ BERMEJO, Jesús, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁶¹ Research in storytelling supports this: “Researchers hope to transform the audience into an active partner, capable of creating bridges between the real and virtual worlds, by intervening in the course of the narration process”, SALMON, Christian, *La estrategia de Sherezade. Apostillas a storytelling*, Ediciones Península, Barcelona, 2011, p. 162.

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