

Reflection of Stongdal Media Intervention

Introduction

Stongdal Media is a media organization based on the web. Originally created as a YouTube-channel under the name Assa03 in 2014, the channel focused on producing video content with the aim of entertainment and video games. From 2015, after running the channel for one year it was instead rebranded to be niched towards producing journalistic content from the perspective of entertainment. The journalistic content on Stongdal Media usually covers sports events and other cultural activities. The organization is based in Kalmar, Sweden and the content of events focuses on a lot of local activities. Hence, there is no real global audience or interest in everything produced.

Another main approach in the organization has been the idea of being a source of knowledge about cultural events, sports, and entertainment (Stongdal Media, 2020). The idea of producing different types of news from the mainstream media could fit into the context of alternative news production or citizen journalism. Hence, the unique and different form of approach to journalism could be a form of entrepreneurial journalism or another form of an activist approach.

The organization is only available on the web and does not have any physical location or premises. It is run through its website and is supported by its YouTube-channel and other social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. It is also a very local company that does not have a global audience at the moment. However, the projects and the organization are built around the idea to be available globally. The intervention in the project did, however, work towards the local audience.

The project we developed in the course focused primarily on analyzing the organization from the perspective of entrepreneurship and how it makes use of entrepreneurial journalism and the concept of citizen journalism. However, the organization could also fit into all the three perspectives of the course. The prototype for the project we developed was for instance made from a strategic perspective, while we used an entrepreneurial approach to the organization.

We choose the organization Stongdal Media since it is situated in the journalism and media sector and could thus be suitable for analysis in all three of the course's perspectives, Activism, Entrepreneurship, and Strategy. During its initial production, we first wanted to focus on the

concept of activism, since the organization wants to make societal change through its content (Stongdal Media, 2020), but during the first stages of production and initial feedback, we decided to focus on entrepreneurship and strategy since these two concepts were closer in line to the focus of the organization's current and previous projects. Strategic communication refers to as: "purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission" (Hallahan et. al., 2007, p.3) which was one of our primary goals when intervening in the organization's structure and marketing. A strategy is a primary goal for an organization of how to be attractive or seen (Hallahan et. al., 2007).

The concept of activism can cover different types of activities such as working for human rights or animals to environmental protection (Carragee & Lawrence, 2016). This was not the case with any of the current or previously developed projects within the chosen organization. We could not find any project that had a clear activist purpose or was suitable as one, and this made us exclude this concept from our project since we deemed it was not relevant for our intervention in any other way.

The organization we studied could be suited for Entrepreneurship since it uses a unique approach to producing journalism and entertainment. Another important concept that came up during the production of the intervention project was community and citizen journalism.

In this paper, I will reflect upon the organization's use of Entrepreneurship and Strategy, and how it could be employed within the organization Stongdal Media and I will discuss the organization's relation to different concepts about Entrepreneurship and Strategy.

The prototype

In the project, we developed a prototype based on the functionality of Facebook as a networking tool. Facebook, as Ricketts (2012) emphasizes, is made primarily as a social networking tool and is not as good as an activist tool. However, with this statement, he could instead suggest that it works as an excellent tool for developing, marketing and creating social value which are key elements in strategic communication and entrepreneurship as discussed above. Our aim was then to use the possibilities of Facebook as a strategic tool for the organization and to engage the audience in the organization. Facebook, which is already used by the organization, is not used fully which made it more interesting to work with this platform and its social networking possibilities that Ricketts (2012) discusses.

Social media could be an excellent tool for our purpose of attracting audience since it has previously also been used in a lot of activists' movement in the last decade, and these also attracted large activities (Lonkila et. al., 2019).

Our prototype aimed at promoting the organization through the many functions of the platform. The prototype was developed with the group function on the platform. In the groups, we made examples of how to integrate the audience of the organization into the process of journalism.

The prototype we developed also builds on the idea of participation and collaboration. As citizen journalism is one of the primary core concepts we worked with, we believed social media was a perfect tool for this aim and to engage the audience in participation and collaboration.

Literature review

I will in this chapter discuss how the concepts of Activism, Entrepreneurship, and strategy could be linked to the concepts of Citizen Journalism and Entrepreneurial Journalism in relation to our particular project.

The project focused, as mentioned above, only on the perspectives of entrepreneurship and strategy. The organization builds on the concept of entrepreneurship through its use of what we call entrepreneurial journalism. The concept of Strategy first becomes relevant when discussing the development of a prototype for the organization and how to market it. The challenge we identified in the Social Business Model Canvas aimed to increase the number of followers to the channels and build a larger audience amongst the content. We do this by using an entrepreneurial idea of creating a community where the followers can participate.

Entrepreneurship is the idea of creating something of value, for different people and purposes (Daugaard, 2020). Wiklund et. al. (2019) suggest that entrepreneurship, while it is based on growth and development for organization or individuals, it could also be based and aimed towards fulfilling personal goals or a personal agenda. These personal goals could have different purposes, which could be an activist goal.

Gawell (2014) discusses the concept of social entrepreneurship in her article. She writes: "Social entrepreneurship is about social engagement and entrepreneurial action" (p.28).

A regular recurring concept in our project is that of Citizen Journalism. Citizen journalism, which could, for instance, be text, images or audio, is produced by the citizens and the

audiences (Noor, 2020). Citizen journalism could connect both to entrepreneurship as shown in the organization Stongdal Media, or it could connect to activism in how it supposed to create social change. Citizen journalism could be a form of social engagement in journalistic activities.

Briggs (2012) emphasizes that there are different requirements to start up an organization such as innovation and time investing. Citizen journalism also becomes more common with new technological advancements (Briggs, 2012; Noor, 2020). This would also show that citizen journalism is a form of entrepreneurship that could exist in the new digital era. However, it is important to remember that citizen journalism is not a new phenomenon, it has existed for a long time but has become more common in the digital era (Noor, 2020). She also points out that citizen journalism is journalism by the audience for the audience. And as mentioned above, by Wiklund et. al. (2019) entrepreneurship could aim at developing personal interests. Citizen journalism in the new era could as such be a form of entrepreneurship of its own since it could build on the personal growth of individuals or other personal aims with the activities and that it is an activity by the audience.

As Ricketts (2012) also points out, digital tools have helped activism develop even more which could also further strengthen the idea that Citizen Journalism could be a form of activism. He also explains that technology is a factor in how social change is performed. Digital tools could as such be responsible for creating the social entrepreneurship that Gawell mentions.

Ricketts (2012) also discusses the concept of digital activism which describes how activism can be employed through digital tools. This is similar to the idea of citizen journalism which is also related to the use of digital tools (Noor, 2020).

We also discussed the concept of community within our intervention and when developing our prototypes. Community is according to Gawell (2014) an important part of the concept of entrepreneurship and could create a feeling of belonging. I suggest community as being a part of citizen journalism as well. Citizen journalism is journalism by the audience and could be built upon the concept of a person wanting to feel part of a community. Gawell also explains: “Entrepreneurship, by definition, calls for an openness and willingness to explore new ideas and new combinations of resources. It therefore challenges the established order.” (p. 38). In this quote, Gawell clearly shows that the challenge of an established order is a form of entrepreneurship that could have an activist goal. What this quote also suggests is that of “combinations of resources” which was one of our goals with our prototype. To engage the

audience in the production of content could be what she means is a combination of resources. That is to make use of other people's skills and interests and use those towards the goal of the organization. This was the aim of our prototype to both engage the audience in the community of an entrepreneurial organization and use their skills and competence to combine different types of resources.

The collaborative work processes

A first issue within the process was to identify what part and which of the course's perspectives we wanted to focus on and what the organization was aimed towards through its content. Initially, the idea was to focus on activism, since we believed citizen journalism itself to be a form of activism. But later on in the process, we decided with using entrepreneurship after some initial feedback and analyzing the organization and its projects. With only a group of two people, we had to divide the work equally among our different skills. In the beginning, it was a bit uneven in the division of our work since I, as the founder of the chosen organization, already knew everything about it. This balance was a bit uneven in the beginning since I had to make all the information available for the other group member so we would have an equal understanding of the chosen organization and also be equally involved in filling out the Business Model Canvas and identifying challenges.

My previous knowledge with the organization also made me, before filling out the Social Business Model Canvas, already know what some challenges were in the organization and some possible directions to use in the project. Joyce and Paquin (2016) point out that the business model canvas is about identifying what could create social value within the organization, but this was something I already had some ideas about which made starting up the project a bit easier. However, there were no issues with my previous knowledge when working with the challenges. It rather helped us with further understanding of the SBMC as a tool within organizations and corporations and how it can be deployed.

The collaboration process has worked well since we had different skill sets. We used shared documents and slides to make our collaborative workflow simple and easier for both of us.

However, when developing the prototype some other issues emerged. Since I was the only one having access to the webserver of the website, and as well the only one with knowledge in HTML and web design, I had to focus more on the development of the part of the website was

the prototype is presented for its followers. The project is presented at <http://stongdal.se/makinguse.html>.

My previous knowledge of the organization was also an issue at some moments because I already was familiar with the structure and aim of the organization and what I wanted to work towards. Hence, our division of the work was even more important to be divided equally among the two of us and to make sure everyone was involved in the process of understanding and analyzing the organization for an interesting challenge.

The use of Facebook as a prototyping tool was easier for both of us to collaborative on since we both could join the groups and work on the content and development of collaborative tools.

Since I am also the founder of the organization we analyzed there were no issues with cooperation with the organization or retrieving data to fill out the Social Business Model Canvas. In the same way, there was no issue with finding challenges within the organization and something suitable to work on. The identification of a challenge, when we had decided on a theoretical approach, was one of the easiest parts of the project.

Having firsthand information about the organization, its structure and being its owner made some parts of the project much easier and no extra time was needed to make the organization work together with us or giving us the problem of no cooperation which could result in the project failing because we would have any data. The amount of time I have spent working with it also made it an easy choice due to my familiarity with the organization. There were a lot of previous videos and content to choose from when developing the project which also made it more fun to work with and there are still more types of projects that can be performed on the organization.

There are however issues and limitations with the prototype we present. It is no guarantee that everyone in the audience will participate or are interested in the participation, as we expect for the prototype to work. The idea is built around the concepts of free labor. However, the prototype is designed with the idea of having a small and loyal community and it is also not designed to be vital to the process of working on new projects. Scholz (2012) explains that most of the content on the internet is actually created by the users' or the regular people and this could also make the concept of our prototype interesting for some audiences.

Conclusion

I have in this reflective paper connected the concepts of entrepreneurship and strategy. I have also discussed the concept of Entrepreneurial Journalism and Citizen Journalism concepts concerning both the perspectives of activism and entrepreneurship and the concepts' place within the media organization Stongdal Media.

The entire project has as well helped with a deeper understanding of the relations between all the three concepts and theoretical perspectives of the course. Activism, entrepreneurship, and strategy go together and share similarities. Although our specific project and intervention did not focus on all three, the link between the three theoretical concepts is still visible and clearer and how it can be applied to organizations.

Activism and entrepreneurship could both be about some sort of societal change that wants to be achieved by the organizations while the concept of strategy is the practical application of how to use the media. Activism and citizen journalism are similar concepts with a similar agenda, entrepreneurship is the idea of creating something different which may lead to social change and strategy is about how to deploy a strategy to reach the entrepreneurial and/or activist goal. This shows that all three concepts are somewhat linked to each other.

The issue we had first, with placing our organization into the theoretical context also confirms this claim since it was difficult finding Stongdal Media's role in these concepts and one perspective that was more suitable than the other for our specific project. All three perspectives were somewhat visible in the organization.

It is also clearer how the project builds on the concepts of Collaborative Media and previously encountered theoretical perspectives within the programme.

However, the project also helped me with further understanding of my organization and its place in the theoretical concepts presented in the course and the academic subject of media and communication studies.

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