ISCTE ◈ Business School
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

BUSINESS DIPLOMACY, CORPORATE REPUTATION AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

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Abstract

We live in an increasingly interconnected world, with information flowing almost instantaneously, predominantly through digital media. This contributes to a rapidly changing world that creates new needs in specific and technical areas, leading to a paradigm shift in the way society, companies and countries relate.

In this context, corporate reputation is a competitive advantage within the business world, requiring constant attention.

Business Diplomacy appears as a response to both the proliferation of stakeholders, and the increasing need for corporate reputation management as a tool to ensure knowledge of the environment and an attempt to influence the social context. There are no clear answers to how this kind of diplomacy should be carried out, but the complexity of the situations demands an ever-greater preparation and adequacy of responses.

Thus, the present study seeks to understand the comprehension of this new paradigm in the relationship with multiple stakeholders, and also to understand the use of digital communication channels for this type of role.

We used a questionnaire that was built based on the literature review and collected 60 valid answers. We found that companies with a higher level of revenues perform more business diplomacy activities (BDA) than companies with lower results; also, older companies engage more in BDA than younger ones; companies with better reputation practice more BDA than others; and finally, companies with a higher level of online competition perform more BDA through digital communication channels than the companies with lower online competition.

Key-words: business diplomacy; corporate reputation; digital communications channels; stakeholders' management;

Resumo

Vivemos num mundo interligado, com informação a circular de forma instantânea, predominantemente através de meios de comunicação digitais. Este facto contribui para um mundo em mudança, que cria novas necessidades em áreas específicas, levando a uma mudança de paradigma na forma como a sociedade, empresas e países se relacionam.

Neste contexto, a reputação empresarial é uma vantagem competitiva, necessitada de constante atenção.

A diplomacia empresarial aparece como resposta à proliferação de stakeholders e à necessidade de gestão da reputação. É uma ferramenta para garantir o conhecimento da situação e tentar influenciar o seu contexto. Não há resposta certa sobre como efectuar esta diplomacia, mas as situações exigem uma cada vez maior preparação e adequação das respostas.

Assim, este estudo procura entender a transversalidade deste novo paradigma na relação com múltiplos stakeholders, e entender a utilização das comunicações digitais para estas funções.

Recorrendo a um questionário baseado na revisão de literatura, foram recolhidas 60 respostas válidas. Concluímos que as empresas com maior nível de facturação investem mais em actividades de diplomacia empresarial do que as empresas que facturam menos; assim como as empresas mais antigas o fazem comparativamente às empresas mais novas; ainda, que as empresas com melhor reputação dão mais importância a este tipo de actividades do que as empresas com menos boa reputação; também o mesmo acontece em relação às empresas que consideram ter um maior nível de competição online, que recorrem mais a meios de comunicação digital para este tipo de funções que as empresas com menor competição online.

Palavras-chave: diplomacia empresarial; reputação empresarial; meios de comunicação digitais; gestão de stakeholders;

Classificação JEL: M10, M14

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List of Abbreviations

BD – Business Diplomacy

BDA – Business Diplomacy Activity

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

DC – Digital Communications

DCC – Digital Communications Channels

ICT - Information Communication Technologies

MNE – Multinational Enterprise

PR – Public Relations

STK INT – Stakeholders Interaction

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem statement and research question

In an ever increasingly interconnected world, with massive amounts of information flowing almost instantaneously – predominantly through digital channels –, and with the raising demands on new specialization fields and technical skills, we are facing a rapid change across the globe in the way societies, companies and countries relate to each other. There is a tendency for quantifying everything on a company, in order to have an objective view of the evolution of each aspect of a company's life. However, at the end of the day, stakeholders are people, human beings, with ability (and necessity) to relate, and with increasingly pressing and specific demands, frequently non-material.

Business diplomacy emerges as a response from companies to keep up to date on their respective stakeholders needs, ensure complete knowledge of the social environment, and as a tool to maintain competitively among peers. Considering the context provided above, we have reached the following research questions: *How important are Business Diplomacy Activities for companies? What degree of importance is given by business diplomats of multinational companies to digital communications, in the development of their work? And how is it relatable to level of revenues, age, online competition and corporate reputation?*

Therefore, the present study is going to measure the importance given to each type of digital communications channels, related with specific functions, for Business Diplomats in their day-to-day practice.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reputation

Reputation is an important and valuable part of the corporate world: The word 'reputation' comes for the Latin *reputare* and it means to reckon (Dowling, 2016).

"*Corporate reputation is a construct that has gained widespread recognition in the disciplines of strategy, corporate social responsibility, management and marketing because a good reputation is thought to be more commercially valuable than a bad reputation*" (Dowling, 2016: 207).

As suggested by the author it is best for the company to have a good reputation than a bad one, since it is commercially valuable, and therefore financially relevant, defining the company's economic viability and perspective of resistance to internal and external crisis.

However, the amount of literature about the definition of reputation suggests that this is not an easy concept to define (Dowling, 2016; Walker, 2010; Barnet *et al.*, 2006; Wartick, 2002; Gotsi and Wilson, 2001). This becomes even less consensual when it comes to the method for measuring it (Fombrun *et al.*, 2015; Ponzi *et al.*, 2011; Helm, 2005; Lewis, 2001).

Hall (1993), suggests in his study that due to its importance, reputation should be subject to permanent management. The author also refers the reputation as a product of years of competence, and sees it as a fragile resource, enhancing that time is essential to create it and that reputation cannot be bought, offered or loaned. These statements suggest that, despite not being completely manageable for the company, reputation should be constantly managed, since bad reputation could seriously affect the company viability. Bad reputation can lead stakeholders to be more prudent when dealing with these organizations, by, for example, doing a previous investigation or even, ultimately, abstaining from relating with them. (Dowling, 2016).

In the same article, Stakeholders are defined as "people who affect or are affected by the company's conduct. The logic here is that, because customers, employees, business partners and shareholders have different relationships with an organization, they will each understand it from their unique point of view and thus may use a different set of attributes to evaluate it. This theory supports the view that each group is likely to hold a (slightly) different reputation of the same organization" (Dowling, 2016: 214). All the interested parties are stakeholders, which means – especially with the advent of internet, digital communication and widespread access to information – that people not closely related with a company can be a stakeholder of that very same company. Commonly,

groups have more power to influence the companies' behavior, but theoretically it is possible that one single person (a public figure, for example) can affect the perception of the firm's reputation. Especially, nowadays, it is easy to publish fake news on social media and – hypothetically – seriously affect a firm's reputation.

Walker (2010), borrowing from other scholars, refers some benefits that a good reputation may contribute to produce, such as reducing a company's operation expenditure; allowing companies to charge premium prices, making companies more appealing to applicants, investors, customers, and, also, to create competitive advantages, suggesting that it is good for the company's financial viability to invest in managing its reputation. Fang (2005) considers that, since the present value of future revenues exceeds the short-term profit from fraud, it is not financially rational for companies to be fraudulent, suggesting that behaviors that negatively affect a company's reputation are not worth it, and that the companies have more to win from just being honest.

In his study, Walker (2010) highlights five key definitional attributes for the concept of corporate reputation, and after explaining and justifying each one of them provides his own definition. He starts from the definition given by Fombrun (1996) that sees reputation as a stakeholder's perception of the company's past action and future behaviors, and represents the company's global approval in comparison to it's competitors.

The first of the key definitional attributes enhanced by Walker (2010) is that the reputation is built up based on perceptions. As we said above, it is not possible to completely control a company's reputation. This is due to the fact that it is not possible to control people's perceptions. It is possible to try to influence them, but the perception that a person has of something or someone is an interpretation of the context and the facts that a specific person has lived or of the information they heard about – or were given by –the company. It is not easily manipulated, as Fombrun (1996) defended.

The second definitional attribute conceives reputation as the aggregate perception of all stakeholders. From this point, it is possible to say that, although perceptions are individual, the sum of the individual perceptions is what makes the difference on a company's reputation. The author suggests that there could exist different reputations for

the same company, once it is possible to sub-divide stakeholders in different groups (Walker, 2010).

The third definitional attribute sees reputation as inherently comparative. Walker (2010) defends that, even though the reputation could be compared with the 'leading rivals' (Fombrun, 1996), it is not exclusively so. It can also be compared with the company's previous reputation, or other possible standards (Walker, 2010). This idea posits that reputation concerns to everything that the company is, or does, which can therefore be compared with less obvious characteristics.

The fourth definitional attribute suggested by Walker (2010) is the fact that reputation can be positive or negative.

In the fifth attribute, Walker (2010) says that reputation is stable and endures throughout time, but that it is much easier, and faster, to destroy a good reputation than it is to build one.

Walker (2010) considers reputation to be a stable and comprehensive concept of a firm's past and expected behavior, confronted with a given standard.

Fombrun (2012), updated his definition of reputation to a global comprehension of the attractiveness of the company to a specific stakeholders' group when compared to the peers that compete for the same resources. There are three main ideas that are enhanced in Fombrun's definition, which Olegario and McKenna (2013) interpreted: 1) There are multiple reputations, according to the group of stakeholders that are being considered; 2) A firm's reputation is always measured in relation to its competitors; 3) Reputations are a source of competitive advantage or disadvantage. Olegario and McKenna (2013) defended that it is not possible to separate each one of the substrates of Fombrun's (2012) definition. From this perspective, it is not possible to be aware of the importance of reputation, since it is permanently affecting the firm's performance. It is not a variable that managers can simply change at will. The idea a person has of a specific firm (the firm's reputation in that person's eyes) doesn't belong to the firm, it belongs to that person (a stakeholder) or group (stakeholders), which (in)directly can influence the society's opinion of a given firm (the same is to say, the firm's reputation). Another perspective is that firms, simultaneously, compete amongst themselves, and also compete with other forms of organizations.

Another relevant topic approached by the authors is that across undeveloped or less regulated markets, where information's price is costly and where executing contracts is more demanding, reputation serves as a relevant indicator to encourage or discourage exchange among parties (Olegario and McKenna, 2013). In this sense, the authors raised the question that, intuitively, people with less access to information have more difficulty to acquire knowledge of other options to fulfill their needs through the products or services of other companies.

2.1.1 RepTrak System for measuring Corporate Reputation

Even though we are not carrying the reputation's measurement, it is important to have an overview of what were the RepTrak concerns and way of measuring corporate reputation. Regarding RepTrak, we were able to find two articles about how the measurement is done: RepTrak ™ Pulse: Conceptualizing and Validating a Short-Form Measure of Corporate Reputation (2011); and Stakeholder Tracking and Analysis: The RepTrak® System for Measuring Corporate Reputation (2015).

RepTrak ™ Pulse suggested the measurement's division into an emotional and non-emotional binomial (Ponzi *et al*., 2011). In this study, the authors reached to four questions regarding the emotional items. The authors established reputation definition based on the perceptions of esteem, trust, admiration and overall feeling (Ponzi *et al*., 2011). These items were experimented in seven different countries, to prove their cross-cultural reliability and served to start the research project of how to measure reputation in a short-form (Ponzi *et al*., 2011). By establishing emotional and non-emotional (rational) indicators, the Reputation Institute tries to better cover all the components of reputation – both more subjective, and other more objective parameters.

However, The RepTrak® System – regarding the rational parameter – developed seven dimensions to estimate corporate reputation and stakeholders support (Fombrun *et al*., 2015). The dimensions are Products/Services; Innovation; Workplace; Governance; Citizenship; Leadership; and Financial Performance (Fombrun *et al*., 2015). After validating the dimensions, the authors developed for each one some attributes to assure external construct validity.

Regarding the Products/Services' dimension, the authors claim that companies are known by the majority of stakeholders for the products/services that they usually

provide (Fombrun *et al.*, 2015). Considering that companies exist to provide products or/and services, it is natural that the stakeholders' perception about these products or/and services influence their opinion about the company. According to the authors, this dimension evaluates the Product/Service for: 'High Quality'; 'Good Value'; 'Stands Behind'; and 'Meets Customer Needs'.

Considering the Innovation dimension, the emphasis is put on the ability to create or improve what already exists and, consequently, generates reputation by promoting an emotional reaction of respect and admiration (Fombrun *et al*., 2015). In this sense, this dimension concerns the recognition of a company as innovative and flexible to adapt (Fombrun *et al*., 2015). The attributes regarding this dimension are 'Innovative'; 'First to Market'; and 'Adapts to change'. In return, firms are challenged to remain updated and lead the technological revolution, where everything is faster and in need for specific responses.

Regarding the Workplace's dimension, authors stated that companies that have good workplaces are likely to receive stakeholders' recognition (Fombrun *et al*., 2015). Employees are also stakeholders, who influence company's reputation. Hall (1993), after emphasizing the importance of constant management attention to the company's reputation, writes that is essential to assure that each employee is predisposed to endorse and safeguard the reputation of his/her employer. The attributes regarding this dimension are 'Rewards Employees Fairly'; 'Concern Employees Well-Being'; and 'Equal Opportunity Workplace' (Fombrun *et al*., 2015).

The Governance's dimension refers to the way a given company is managed and organized. The authors defend that the Governance's dimension evaluates stakeholder's idea of a firm about ethics, fairness and transparency (Fombrun *et al*., 2015). With governance being a core issue in an increasingly complex global world, where Multinational Companies have a significant impact, the more a company is recognized as ethical and transparent, the better it fosters admiration and trust in its stakeholders (Fombrun *et al*., 2015). The attributes regarding this dimension are 'Open and Transparent'; 'Behaves Ethically'; and 'Fair in Doing Business'.

The Citizenship's dimension is related to the Corporate Social Responsibility's habits of companies, which are linked to reputation (Lange and Lee, 2011). Thus, for Fombrun *et*

al., (2015), the Citizenship's dimension is the perception stakeholders have about whether companies are promoting good causes and giving their positive contribute to society. The attributes regarding this dimension are 'Protects the Environment'; 'Supports Good Causes'; and 'Positive Influence on Society'.

Regarding the Leadership's dimension, the authors suggest that CEOs can assemble and develop a sense of admiration and trust among Stakeholders (Fombrun *et al*., 2015). For the authors, Leadership is when the company is guided through the strength and vision of the managers (Fombrun *et al*., 2015). Following these arguments, the company shows a face, creating the sense among stakeholders of the possibility to build a relationship. In other words, it is giving a human face to the company. The attributes regarding this dimension are 'Strong and Appealing Leader'; 'Clear Vision of Future'; 'Well Organized'; and 'Excellent Managers'.

The Performance's dimension relates to the financial Performance. The authors defend that companies' prospects for growth are linked to the current and past financial results, making profitability a key indicator for investors (Fombrun *et al*., 2015). This position makes sense, since (potential) investors will only pursue and remain if they believe they will be rewarded by the risk taken – otherwise the company assumes a non-profitable character and it is not common for companies to overly assume a concern with charitable causes as for profit organizations that should be, at the very least, economically sustainable. The attributes regarding this dimension are 'Profitable'; 'Good Financial Results'; and 'Strong Growth Prospects'.

2.2 Diplomacy

Allammar (2018), starts by affirming that diplomats are state agents that pursue the objectives of their states. This links with the idea that the first objective is to protect the state's interests (Bišofa, 2014), doing it by the indication of someone – a diplomat – to represent, manage and implement the home country's foreign policy outside his/her own state. (Allamar, 2018)

Following this line of reasoning, the tonic of the Diplomacy and of the diplomats' work is to defend and pursue their national interests above all others – even personal ones.

The diplomats are not representing themselves or the national Chief of State, but their own country, which is a position of great responsibility and with consequences on countries' relationships, and could turn on a source of opportunities, or by opposition, a root for potential conflicts.

The definition of Diplomacy has evolved, as well as its practice. The Cambridge Dictionary defines Diplomacy as the management of relationships between countries; H. G. Nicholson, a former British diplomat defined in 1939 diplomacy as the management through negotiation of relationships between independent States; Melissen (1999: 16-17) stated that Diplomacy is the "mechanism of representation, communication and negotiation through which states and other international actors conduct their business", broadening the spectrum beyond states as the sole diplomatic actors, more accurately reflecting the modern state of diplomacy, where non state actors play an increasingly important role, which naturally includes businesses (Jackson and Sorensen, 2013).

This evolution regarding diplomatic actors is accompanied by the evolution of public international law, which is broadening its areas of regulation as well as its subjects. For example, one single person – an individual – is also considered a subject of the international law, by the Human Rights Law (Manner, 1952). Simultaneously, countries tend to broad and profound their relations and areas of agreement to regulate and control. The International Economic Law, International Law of the Sea, among other areas (Chen, 2015), constitute crucial examples.

With the birth of the idea of the territorial state (in opposition to spiritual state) and the modern public law, it was necessary to construct an organic institution concerned specifically with the relations between the different States that co-act across the international community. Traditionally, this type of organization is presided by the Chief of State, normally including a Ministry; or/and a State Secretariat; and specific diplomatic agents (not directly or indirectly elected), the Ambassadors's figure being the highest category of this diplomatic agents. (Homem, 2009).

Traditionally, the main functions of a diplomat are 'to gather information, representation and negotiation' (Black, 2010), for – and in the name of– its own State, to promote better relations between the countries, defend the interests of national citizens that could

be immigrants on the specific State where the diplomat works, as long as it does not produces a conflicting relation with the policy conducted by the national interest.

2.3 Business Diplomacy

The path to define Business Diplomacy (BD) and its framework has been everything but straight forward, however, the increasing interest of scholars since the beginning of the century helps to define the discipline's boundaries.

Kesteleyn *et al.* (2014a), refer that BD takes place when firms act in a diplomatic way, implying that is not something intrinsic to a business activity. Allammar (2018), defended that BD, in its essence is not a novelty, in the sense that, traders – already – had to have accurate diplomatic skills in the medieval period to negotiate safe passages across multiple territories. The novelty comes for the 'severity of the geopolitical risk' (Kesteleyn *et al*., 2014a), and the power and influence raised by various stakeholders which have increased the number of companies that are facing this challenge (Allamar, 2018), enhancing the fact that stakeholders, before, did not have the ability to influence the firm's reputation. On the other hand, it is reasonable that another cause concerning the raise of that stakeholders' power is the economic power that Multinational companies detain and the ability to influence national economies and people's lives, which renders them broadly known, and consequently more exposed to stakeholders' judgement.

Alammar and Pauleen (2016: 9), offered the following BD's definition: "Business diplomacy is the practice of establishing and maintaining positive relationships with internal and external business and non-business stakeholders, including employees, businesses, governments and civil society actors, to create and maintain legitimacy and a social license to operate, create alliances, environment and shape and influence them".

This definition comes from the analysis of other definitions given by papers where BD was explicitly discussed (Allamar and Pauleen, 2016).

In this analysis, authors draw on a dialectic focused on some key notions. These assume that BD is linked to management and interacts with the stakeholders and the environment (Allamar, 2018). It follows that the comprehension of BD is associated

with the notion of creating a social license and legitimacy to operate (Allamar and Pauleen, 2016). The authors assume as well the idea that BD intends to create alliances, modulate and affect the environment, and/or produce advantageous conditions for the firm (Allamar and Pauleen, 2016).

Alammar (2018), states that Companies may fill all the requisites to operate in different countries, but that doesn't mean that they have a social license and legitimacy to do it. Ruël and Wolters (2016: 569) defined Legitimacy as: "Legitimacy in this context of business diplomacy means that a business firm is accepted by the local community and society by which it is surrounded physically". These ideas suggest that it is not enough for companies to follow the legal norms, but they should also care about the communities where they are inserted and directly or indirectly affect, promoting a sustainable human development. Drawing on this theoretical description, Alammar (2018) declares that BD doesn't refer to power or lobbying, but to the production of legitimacy, engagement with stakeholders, and management of the business environment.

2.3.1 The emergence of Business Diplomacy

Allamar and Pauleen (2016) have come forward with a set of factors that help to explain the contribution for the emergence of BD, such as 'Globalisation'; 'Technology'; 'New Standards'; 'Shift in Mission'; 'Internationalisation'; 'Geopolitical Risk'; 'Declining Government Support'; 'Increased Stakeholders'; and 'Social Change'.

Monteiro (2013) warns that, today, international businesses are intrinsically associated with politics, economics, social and cultural involvement, at an organizational, local and international level. In response, there is a rising necessity to englobe, into the same field, traditional diplomatic skills with management policies, as well as to create diplomacy practices that are very specific for each context, firm and industry. The author concludes that multinational firms, more than public relations (PR) functions, need to assembles their own diplomatic skills, to manage the environment in all its components, suggesting that BD is not the core of a PR office.

Alammar (2018), among other scholars (Kesteleyn *et al*., 2014a; Saner and Yiu, 2014; Small, 2014), considers globalisation as the most important aspect to the increase of BD, and draws on a perspective addressed by Small (2014) for whom the evolution of

the emerging context where companies operate, forces these to work across different geographies, with the requirement to act in accordance with multiple jurisdictions and stakeholders, exposing themselves to increasing geopolitical risks and pressure implying that BD is inevitable, and Multinational Companies should accompany this evolution – when corporate prospects are not necessarily aligned with their national countries' interests, embassies and home countries' governments tend to withdraw their support. This point of view comes in concordance with Kesteleyn *et al*. (2014a), when they stated that bigger companies often have more influence than national governments. The author continues defending that embassies, which are barely focused on commercial area, do not help with the geopolitical guidance that companies need. The author enhances that with the financial crisis, diplomatic services were cut, forcing companies to operate where their own national diplomats are not in service, impelling companies to find themselves a solution in an area where before embassies often offered a backup.

Saner and Yiu (2014), affirmed that multinational companies are increasingly committing themselves, by accepting guidelines from international organizations such as the United Nations (the UN Global Compact), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises), or different multi-stakeholder initiatives, which means that companies are committed with the development of new standards (Allamar, 2018), but also means that businesses need to develop new competencies that the traditional business executive normally would not have (Saner and Yiu, 2014). It's not usual for a traditional business executive push to 'raise the bar' in order to difficult the firm's operations, normally – at least at the beginning – with a possible impact on the company's profits.

According to Saner and Yiu (2014), multinational companies need to manage between pursuing wealth and social engagement, what is also called moving from 'business as usual' to 'business with ethics', and change the paradigm from company 'shark' to start being a company 'established'. This change of mindset is the gap where business diplomats can establish a collaborative connection with communities by playing a strategic role, where multinationals companies have their operations. This point of view, ultimately requires that the communities where the companies are placed, feel them as an ally, as one of their own, and consequently part of their concerns. To achieve this objective, business diplomats need to help their own companies to manage between

defending their legitimate interests, while also helping the companies to pursue the valid interests of non-business stakeholders (Saner and Yiu, 2014).

Another relevant point is that BD should offer a geopolitical and non-commercial risk perspective, which would be based on the practices and mentality of diplomats (Kesteleyn *et al*., 2014). This aspect represents a difference from the BD to related terms such as PR or public affairs. As Allamar and Pauleen (2016) claim, BD is gaining relevance with the globalisation process, as long as companies have an increasing influence on international relations. A signal that this is gaining relevance on international relations stage of Multinational Companies was the creation by Denmark of the world's first Tech Ambassador in 2017, focused on the relationships with technologic multinational companies.[1]

According to Kesteleyn *et al*. (2014a), the democratization of digital technologies increased the stakeholders' power, making more 'audible' the critics from civil society (Allamar 2018), which is a new challenge that businesses must deal with. Kesteleyn *et al*. (2014a), state that companies are rarely able to manage effectively 'digital age crises', which shows the need for specific preparation in this area. In accordance, Kesteleyn *et al*., (2014a) state that more than 25% of crises are spread to international media in less than one hour, contrasting with companies' response that in average reaches up to 21 hours. This demonstrates the existence of a large margin to improve the response time, preventing companies from suffering bigger reputational – and therefore financial – losses.

According to Alammar (2018) – when interpreting and developing the article of Saner and Yiu (2014) – businesses must acquire new tools to handle with different special interest groups and stakeholders' pressure. For this, MNE need to create relationships with the different stakeholders – not with the intent of selling goods or providing services, but to explore a common ground, create potential alliances, and prevent possible risks. Saner and Yiu (2014), in their article, defend that BD is a two-way intercommunications flow, this being a crucial characteristic of BD: the ability to maintain permanently open the communication between the firm and each one of the stakeholders. This happens increasingly as a consequence of globalization. The ultimate idea is to maintain a fluid communication channel in both directions, keeping in mind

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[1] techamb.um.dk/

that a balanced relationship helps the parties to share information freely (Heath and Bryant, 2000). By promoting this form of communication, the company will convey the feeling that it is working in the interests of the stakeholders, encouraging them to be willing to act in the company's interest (Heath and Bryant, 1992).

2.3.2 Core Aspects of Business Diplomacy

Business Diplomacy Functions and goals

Existing literature (Allamar *et al*., 2016; Ruël, 2013; Saner *et al.*, 2000) defends that a BD department area should be created within the organisation of a company, as in other areas, like public relations and public affairs, and it should be strictly connected with the CEO (Allamar *et al*., 2016). This idea promotes the thought that the business diplomat is someone who should have direct contact to the ultimate decision-maker of the company in order to better advise him/her for the potential risks that could exist (or appear), and it should be seen as the closest ally of whom has the power to manage the company.

Allamar *et al*. (2016), presented a list of the major functions of a business diplomat, and concludes that these are Environmental Management (Allamar, 2018, associates the term Environmental Scanning 'with managing the environment'); Influence; Reputation Management; Skills-Strategy Development; and Stakeholder Management and Engagement. Regarding the goals of BD, the author suggests that these are: Create and Seize Opportunities; Economic and Diplomatic Development; Legitimacy and Social License; Interests Promotion; Safeguard Reputation; and Shape Environment. Naturally, all the functions and goals cannot be taken independently and, consequently, are closely related.

Environmental Management (or Scanning) is an indispensable mark of BD. In this sense, Business diplomats should have expertise capabilities of analysis in order to manage the environment and be able to focus on long-term goals (Allamar, 2018). The author states that the environmental scanning is considered central by participants, due to the increasing complexity of the international environment in which the companies operate, including the rising of new international standards, the increasing importance of NGOs, allied to a development of civil society agents supported by the increasing speed of technology and social media. In this regard, a business diplomat should be able

to provide an impartial and informed analysis of the social and political environment, at the local, national, regional and international perspective (Allamar, 2018; Gutu, 2017; Saner and Yiu, 2005; London, 1999).

In the findings regarding the literature of Allamar *et al*. (2016), the definition of Influence includes other concepts as negotiation, lobbying and influencing. Small (2014), suggests that the difference between BD, lobbying, public and government affairs carried by firms is the temporary harmony between the business interests and the stable national interests in order to resolve a problem created by the action (or inaction) of a host country's government, exposing that for the author's experience, lobbying is a practical consequence for a Business Diplomat, although is not his/her objective.

According to Saner and Yiu (2014), business diplomats engage with different stakeholders not only to promote the company's products or services and to enhance corporate reputation. In this sense, the authors unveil that Reputation Management for itself it is not a preoccupation of BD. However, it is inherent to the core of BD regarding the objective of creating legitimacy and social license for the company. Saner and Yiu (2005), state that one of the dimensions of BD is to safeguard corporate image and reputation, demonstrating that it is not dissociable from Reputation.

In the opinion of Saner and Yiu (2014), and regarding skills in strategy development, business diplomats may have a decisive role in promoting a symbiotic relationship with local communities where companies operate. This is essential to the definition of BD when differentiated from other related terms.

Regarding Stakeholder Management and Engagement, Allamar (2018) evolves the concept to 'Establishing and Maintaining relationships', and states that BD concerns building and cultivating positive interactions with stakeholders through direct contact and engagement. Relevant as well, is 'interaction and engagement', associated with the diplomatic ability of business diplomats to build up and manage a positive relation with diverse stakeholders through pertinent communication channels. In this sense, the author emphasizes the idea of creating relations by using the specific channel that better adapts to the different stakeholders. Regarding the same aspect, the author enhances that BD is identified by being able to build, engage, relate, and preserve good relationships with stakeholders (Allamar, 2018).

The author enhances that relationship with stakeholders is an on-going process, including not only primary, but also secondary stakeholders out of the business field, as are example governments, international organizations, NGOs, media and society, this constituting an integral part of being a business diplomat (Allamar, 2018). This characteristic includes the ability to create a network and to build bridges between and with the right people, suggesting that the business diplomats should be proactive in pursuing companies' interests, even if that includes to pursue third party's interests if aligned with those of the firm, contributing for a positive environment. In this sense, the author states that this on-going process is simplified through different approaches – for example, hosting and attending events and conferences or having business lunches – in order not to provide goods or services, but to create goodwill, arrange rigorous information, safeguard the company's interests, and promote its legitimacy and influence (Allamar, 2018). Gutu (2017), enhances that inherently, the BD's responsibilities must adhere to all categories of collaboration, such as corporations and subsidiaries, international and national NGOs, Labour Unions and state representatives, under the national and international multilateral treaties and law order. The author thus broadly specifies who are the different groups of possible interested parties and notes that despite any goodwill, a subordination to the legal order remains in effect.

On the other hand, NGOs and civil societies, are becoming more exigent with MNEs for more information and transparency, which must – necessarily – be accompanied by an ethically irreproachable action (Saner *et al*., 2000). Macnamara (2012), who sees BD as a change of paradigm of the concept of PR, concludes that BD is an opportunity to promote public diplomacy and the concept of 'new diplomacy', at the same time as borrows its ideas and principles in a transversal approach that will contribute to a considerably fortified paradigm for PR that is expected to be more effective, more oriented for society, more ethical, and more accepted for the public in general.

Business diplomats are recognizable by their actions, considering that is a multifaceted role. There are recognizable functions that usually pertains to other types of professions, but this ability to have a holistic vision for the possible details that can affect the legitimacy and social license for the company to operate is the essence of a business diplomat. To congregate all these matters in the same department/person in a way that creates value for businesses is one of the main challenges for MNEs to adapt. In this sense, business diplomats will be key actors in the international relations world.

In the words of Alammar (2018: 234) "to sum up, business diplomacy can be understood as: *the ability to systematically and positively manage and influence various stakeholders, including the operating environment. This is manifested through the effective managing and engaging with stakeholders, and the application of the relevant knowledge, while considering multiple perspectives, to influence and shape the environment*".

2.4 Digital Communications

We decide to use the Public Relations (PR)' paradigm for the topic of Digital Communications (DC) since there are authors (Macnamara, 2012) that see BD linked to PR as a development of the PR's concept.

DC changed the pattern of the way PR departments work. The process of digitalization of companies provided PR' practitioners more tools and channels of communication.

Black (2014) states that Digital is the most important nowadays – more than 4,5 billion people have access to the internet[2] – but it should not be treated alone. In comparison it is less costly and permits a two-way communication. This idea shows that DC are not a 'miraculous solution' that fits all situations and strategies. For different stakeholders' groups business diplomats could have different strategies, what could imply using different ways of communication regarding the channel and the language used. In this respect, the author states that older strategies, as prints, leaflets, brochures or reports cannot be discarded as these items are still essential for a given public and for specific communication opportunities where accurate information is appropriate or when these audiences do not use other communication channels. In the same sense, the author states that it is more likely that the message is viewed if you use a form of communication that the people you directed it, is already using, uses a lot and trusts (Black, 2014).

Black (2014) presents a list of different channels (digital and non-digital) and organises it for the most to the least impactful: Face-to-face – one-to-one; Face-to-face – group; Live event; Cinema; TV/Video; Photography; Interactive digital (internet including

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[2]https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

social media); Non-interactive digital; Radio; Printed word. It's the author list, but it's natural that different people may have a different opinion.

In sequence, the author disposes the channels in different categories:

Owned Channels	e.g. own website; own newsletter; own events; all that a company have complete control.
Paid for Channels	e.g. Google AdWords; pay-per-click; promoted publications on social networks; banner ads; etc.
Rented Channels	e.g. Twitter account; LinkedIn account; Facebook account; etc. – considered rented once that if the Social Network ends, the company have no control of it.
Earned Channels	e.g. coverage in the media, independent bloggers; influencers; analysts,

These categories are related to the control and willingness that a company has when using a channel. Regarding *Earned channels*, the author emphasizes that companies' activities can be a source of good, as well as bad news, bad publicity being an existent risk. According to Black's (2014) list, the perfect communication's world would be one where it would be possible to use face-to-face communication with each one of the stakeholders (allied with the will to communicate and the desire of receiving the message), in order to cause the biggest impact. Naturally, this is a hypothetical situation, once even if theoretically possible, it wouldn't be minimally efficient. To the author, when deciding what channel to use, it should be considered the effect and influence of the channel used and if it permits not only to pass the right message to the target, but if it also enables two-way communication. In the findings of Macnamara (2010b), the author states that PRs are investing in the use of social media and understanding that

these tools, for being so interactive are contributing to reach the goal of two-way symmetrical dialogue, suggesting that social media is the channel that better fits – although not isolated – with the aim to reach effectively to each stakeholders' group.

2.4.1 Different Digital Channels

Black (2014), defines 'channel' as the instrument used to deliver and receive messages, and 'digital' can be defined as what is related to Information Communication Technologies (ICT). Thus, in this sense, digital channels are the medium used to send and receive messages through ICTs.

On the contrary, regarding the communication channels, the author defends that Digital are the most important nowadays, she also reinforces that the 'traditional' channels - in particular, social media and face-to-face relationship- prevail as highly effective (Black, 2014), as humans are relational, and always will tend to prefer directly face-to-face communication than through any indirect channel.

Another advantage of digital channels is that these can always show the link for one of the other channels.

The author presented a list of the different Digital Channels: websites; social media; blogging; virtual communities; video and audio; to which we add influencers.

Websites

As suggested by Black (2014), websites are usually the initial place where customers and potential customers will search for information about your company, so it is a platform that should be engaging. In the same sense, the author defends that nowadays it is normal for companies to have their own website arranged to be interactive, allowing visitors to execute tasks and get the respective responses, alternatively to just showing information. These interactions include writing comments, asking for answers, register for newsletters, podcasts or others, search for information and purchasing products (Black, 2014) as a way to engage the visitor with the website, and, therefore, the company. In a certain way, when people are interacting with the company's website these are building a sense of relationship that motivates them to find the information they need and more. That's why, the author defends that it is crucial to have access to good and organized content, in order to allow visitors to find what they need as rapidly

as possible. The author also states that the way a company passes the message through the website reflects the brand and the service that the company provides (Black, 2014).

Social Media

Black (2014) advances with a definition of social media that consists in aggregating websites and online tools, that permit users interacting by sharing information, knowledge, and interests, among others, with each other through digital equipment.

A relevant point, stated by Wolf and Archer (2018), is that contemporary scholars' research about PR is based on the premise that Social Media is used as a tool to build, maintain and strengthen relationships – which is also the goal of all other communication channels. In the same sense, Black (2014), defends that Social Media includes the establishment of communities and facilitates networking, the circulation of ideas and content, and promotes a collaborative mindset. One of the consequences of this fact is that business diplomats should be aware that they need to pursue – by promoting and motivating – the stakeholders' cooperation.

The author also defines that 'openness, immediacy and transparency' constitute an essential part of social media, and a direct challenge to 'closed hierarchical systems' that were used to have all the control when communicating unidirectionally, being the two-way of communication a more instantaneous and demanding way for companies to relate (Black, 2014).

Black (2014), emphasizes that Reputation should be seen as a whole, under a holistic perspective. She makes the bridge to corporate reputation and defends that it is not viable to preserve an image build through traditional media and simultaneously produce a different one on social media, enhancing that 'old' and 'new' media strategy of communication needs to persist consistently. In this sense, the author suggests that incoherence in the messages concerning the different channels would cause negative effects on companies' reputation.

Social media's evolution facilitated communication processes, commitment, and created a sense of more transparency and trustworthiness on stakeholders and audiences. (Black, 2014), however, it has not replaced traditional communication channels. On the

contrary, social media and traditional media are complementary and can be integrated into a strategy to accomplish specific communication objectives (Black, 2014).

Another relevant point noted by the author, is that this possibility for people to interact instantaneously through social media, mobile phones, cloud-based information, etc., will create the expectation of a real-time collaborative engagement among partners, employees, clients and multiple stakeholders (Black, 2014), this real-time collaborative engagement being the tonic of a business diplomats' work. Since the context can change more quickly than it is expected – or appear as a crisis situation – these should be prepared to respond, in order to preserve legitimacy and social license. In line with the data generated by the use of the digital medium, companies and governments will invest in developing analytical systems to collect the 'Big Data' produced by the usage of social media, cloud and mobiles. In this sense, 'Big Data' is extremely valued and can help to identify the trends for what stakeholders are pursuing. Social media is used as a helpful platform when it concerns scanning the company's environment.

Black (2014) advances with a list of the most important social media platforms, a list reproduced here: Facebook; Youtube; LinkedIn; Twitter; Google+; and Wordpress for blogging. To this list, it is fair to add also Instagram and Whatsapp since these have more users, and are effectively utilized, rather than, for example, Twitter or LinkedIn[3].

Blogging

Black (2014) states that Blogs have the potential to be a very fruitful marketing tool and an attractive communication channel to interact with multiple stakeholders, as staff, investors, people connected to the company's respective industry, journalists and potential customers.

The author also notes that blog visitors are intelligent and can see obvious marketing actions. Thus companies should be careful about the strategy adopted regarding positioning and messaging. The author also enhances the possibility for people to reply, and how it is an opportunity to promote discussion and permits companies to clarify their choices, ideas, policies, products, etc. (Black, 2014).

Virtual Communities

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[3]https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/

As stated by Black (2014), virtual communities are an opportunity to gather people in an online 'space' where they can connect, discuss, share opinions, and deepen relationships and the information about others over time. the author remembers that virtual communities are a tool that is often integrated into social networking sites and are not necessarily autonomous.

As defended by the author, the premise to create a virtual community is to settle the purpose and to be transparent about it to the other members (Black, 2014), enhancing that some characteristics that influence the type of community pretended exist, such as internet access, computers and browsers used, geography and time zone, among others. Other core issue of the virtual community is to decide if its public or private, and what are the consequences. The author states that closed communities are easier to safeguard from disruptive people who can try to boycott the community's purpose, where, on the other hand, these hardly promote critical thinking. Open communities have the competitive advantage of having more capacity to grow and to gather different ways of thinking (Black, 2014).

Video and Audio

Black (2014) states that companies and individuals are honing the way they engage with their targets by exploring more creative and efficient alternatives, such as creating their own video and audio content, through podcasts and broadcasting. The author enhances that frequently, nowadays, podcasts are produced by media professionals, however, many creative people also make their own podcasts with only a computer, suggesting that this is a channel available to anyone who has the access to basic digital equipment.

Influencers

For Freberg *et al* (2011), Social media influencers are a third-party, independent from other parties, with the purpose of giving shape to an audience's attitudes using different channels in social media. The concept of Influencer is related to the idea of human brand, thus influencers are often considered celebrities (even if micro-celebrities), as is suggested by Khamis *et al* (2017). In this sense, companies resort to them – despite being external to the company –, to advocate for the company's interests.

3. Method

This section characterizes the sample, measures, and the data will be mostly exploratory.

The bivariate correlation as well as the anova will be reported mentioning only those that were significant for p>0.05

The chosen process is based on pursuing research through a questionnaire, for the fact that it's an investigation strategy that simplifies describing frequencies and proceeds to the analysis of outcomes. (Yin, R. K., 2003).

Considering that BD is a recent topic among scholars and companies, it is not frequently present in the official corporate organizational structure, which makes it harder to identify the appropriate person to answer to the questionnaire.

3.1 Selection of the Participants

The survey was submitted to a pilot test between the 16th and 19th of March of 2019, where we had the opportunity to receive feedback, and therefore improve it. In a first pilot test, the survey took longer than expected to complete. We were then able to simplify it and reduce the average time for competition to 7 minutes. We began to collect answers on the 20th March, and our target audience were the 100th first MNEs listed on the Global Reptrak Ranking 2019, published on 7th March of 2019.

The first step was to try and get the institutional emails, but the response-rate was insignificant. Following that, we started to search for people' contacts of whom works on that target-companies. We did it mainly through LinkedIn, but also through Facebook and official companies' websites.

Through LinkedIn, we could chat with those people who responded, and also have the access to their emails. In this sense, we started by sending LinkedIn messages, and consequently an e-mail, explaining the context and the purpose of this dissertation. We repeated each week until we get an answer to the questionnaire from that person's company, or a message asking for us not to insist again.

Once we had some difficulties to collect a high enough number of responses, on the 7th of May, we decided to open the questionnaire to other companies, however, with the condition that these had their annual revenue above 5 million Euros.

When we decided to open the survey to other companies outside the Global Reptrak Ranking 2019, we used the same method, but also our personal network.

We collected 60 answers, characterized by the following:

- Answers from 18 different countries;

- 18 non-European answers, from 6 different countries;

- 42 European answers from 12 different countries;

- 27 companies listed on the Global Reptrak Ranking 2019;

The period of answers' collection ended on June 5th.

3.2 Questionnaire Measures

The questionnaire was build-up based on the literature review.

We used the master's dissertation of Nobre (2018) in what respects BDA and therefore articulated with the research conducted through the Literature Review in what concerns Digital Communication Channels; and with Reptrak Pulse (Fombrun, 2011) regarding corporate reputation self-perception.

The first question – almost an introduction of the questionnaire – attempted to understand if companies recognize a change in paradigm with the proliferation of non-state actors as new stakeholders, and was collected from the survey presented for Nobre (2018) ("Does your company review itself in the new business environment of multiple stakeholder's management?")

Therefore, the questionnaire is organized in 3 main blocks: BD activities, interaction with stakeholders and relation with Digital Communication Channels; self-perception of Corporate Reputation; and Company Information.

Business diplomacy activities

In what refers to BDA, the questions were gathered from different authors, as it follows:

Questions	Authors
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	Saner *et al.* (2000)
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	Saner *et al.* (2000)
Affecting the making of rules	Asquer (2012)
Scanning the business environment	Wolters (2012)
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	Wolters (2012)
Engaging in diplomatic missions	Wolters (2012)
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market-specific levels and identify who shape those risks	Riordan (2014)

Regarding Digital Communication Channels, we decided for the following categories: Website, Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Google +, LinkedIn, Twitter), Youtube, Blogs, gathered from Black (2014), and Influencers, obtained from Freberg (2011).

In this sense, we use the same digital channels to ask the participants "what is the level of usage in the interaction with stakeholders?", putted in a 5-points Likert scale from Never" to "Very Frequently".

Corporate Reputation

Regarding Corporate Reputation questions, the selected questions were:

- "Which feeling does your company transmit to stakeholders?", whose scale of response goes from "Very Bad Feeling" to "Very Good Feeling".

- "What level of trustworthiness does your company transmit to stakeholders?" whose scale of response goes from very low to very low in, also, 5-point Likert scale;

- "What level of admiration and respect does your company transmit to stakeholders?"; whose scale of response goes from "Very Low" to "Very High".

- "What is the stakeholders' view regarding your company's overall Reputation?" whose scale of response goes from "Very Bad Reputation" to "Very Good Reputation".

They were put on a 5point Likert scale, and were adapted from RepTrak pulse ("1. [Company] is a company I have a good feeling about; 2. [Company] is a company that I trust; 3. [Company] is a company that I admire and respect; 4. [Company] has a good overall reputation") (Fombrun, 2011).

Company information

The questions regarding company information were gathered mainly from Nobre (2018):

  i.   What are your company Total Revenues (in million €)?

 ii.   How many people are employed by your company?

iii.   How many employees work in the country where your headquarters is located?

iv.   How many employees work in countries other than where headquarters is located?

v.   Number of countries in which your company operates)?

vi.   How old is your company?

vii.   What is the degree of competition online to your business?

viii.   What is your department and job title?

Apart from the questions "In which sector does your company operate?" (obtained from Betlem, 2012) and "What is the name of your company?", intending to understand what companies from Global Reptrak Ranking answered the questionnaire.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptiveanalysis

From the 60 participants interviewed, 85% (n=51) were convinced there is a change of paradigm with non-state actors proliferating as new stakeholders, and 15% (n=9) disagree.

Regarding the first question, about if the respondents were convinced that there is a change of paradigm with the proliferation of non-state actors as new stakeholders, the results were 85% (n=51) Yes, and 15% (n=9) No.

4.1.2 Business Diplomacy and Digital Communications Channels

Considering BDA and DCC, we selected the 51 respondents that answered "Yes" to the previous question.

BDA	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Very Frequently		Total	x̄
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	3	5,88	6	11,76	13	25,49	16	31,37	13	25,49	51	3,59
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	1	1,96	7	13,73	12	23,53	21	41,18	10	19,61	51	3,63
Affecting the making of rules	3	5,88	9	17,65	16	31,37	17	33,33	6	11,76	51	3,27
Scanning the business environment	0	0,00	3	5,88	8	15,69	18	35,29	22	43,14	51	4,16
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	1	1,96	2	3,92	2	3,92	12	23,53	34	66,67	51	4,49
Engaging in diplomatic missions	7	13,73	9	17,65	19	37,25	11	21,57	5	9,80	51	2,96
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	3	5,88	1	1,96	8	15,69	26	50,98	13	25,49	51	3,88

Table I – Descriptives for BDA
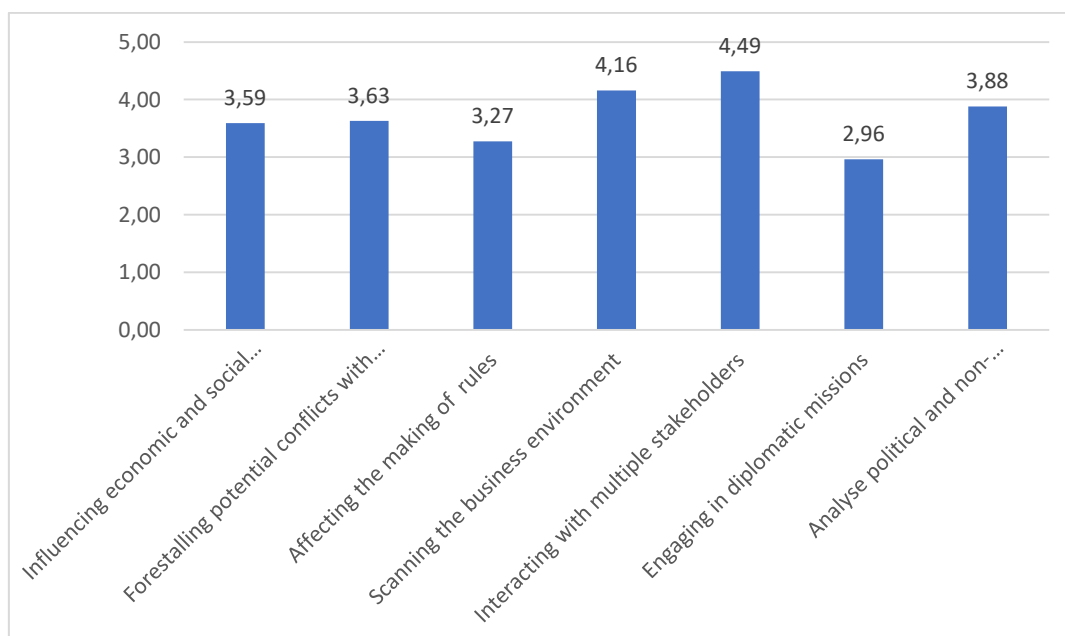
Graphic I – BDA's means

As observed, the most practiced activity is "Interacting with multiple stakeholders" (4,49), with the highest mean, and only one of the respondents reporting that he/she never does this activity. On the other hand, the less practiced activity for the respondents is "Engaging diplomatic missions" (2,96). It should be noted that "Scanning the business environment" was the only activity that did not receive a "Never" as an answer.

Regarding the usage of DCC, we observed the following results for each channel:

Website

The results obtained in what respects to the use of Website for BDA were the following:

BDA_WEBSITE	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Very Frequently		Total	x̄
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	13	25.49	7	13.73	7	13.73	10	19.61	14	27.45	51	3.10
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	15	29.41	10	19.61	13	25.49	8	15.69	5	9.80	51	2.57
Affecting the making of rules	27	52.94	8	15.69	7	13.73	7	13.73	2	3.92	51	2.00
Scanning the business environment	8	15.69	5	9.80	7	13.73	14	27.45	17	33.33	51	3.53
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	9	17.65	6	11.76	12	23.53	9	17.65	15	29.41	51	3.29
Engaging in diplomatic missions	26	50.98	9	17.65	8	15.69	3	5.88	5	9.80	51	2.06
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	11	21.57	4	7.84	8	15.69	11	21.57	17	33.33	51	3.37

Table II – Descriptives for using Website for BDA

For the activity "Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business" the two highest results were "Very Frequently" (n=14) and "Never" (n=13). However, extending the analysis to the right-next category, we conclude that almost half (47,06%) of the respondents use "Frequently" or "Very Frequently" the website platform for this activity.

Considering the activity "Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks", the result with more answers in this sample was "Never" (n=15), followed by "Sometimes" (n=13) and "Rarely" (n=10),

In what refers to the activity "Affecting the making of rules", the results showed that more than half of the sample "Never" (n=27) used a website to pursue this objective. 68,63% of the respondents assume that they do not use, or rarely use, this DCC.

Concerning "Scanning the business environment", we can see that websites were commonly used to scan the business environment, once 60,78% answered that website is "Frequently" (27,45%) or "Very Frequently" (33,33%) used.

For "Interacting with multiple stakeholders", 47,06% of the participants use "Very Frequently" (29,41%) or "Frequently" (17,65%) the website to interact with multiple stakeholders. For 29,41% websites are "Never" (17,65%) or "Rarely" (11,76%) used to pursue this activity.

Regarding the activity of "Engaging diplomatic missions", more than half (50,98%) said they "Never" use a website, and if we extend to the ones who answered "Rarely", we verify more than two thirds of the answers (68,63%) are in these two categories. 9,8% of the people answered they use "very frequently" websites to this purpose.

In what concerns to "Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks" one third of the respondents (33,33%) affirmed to use "Very Frequently", and when extended to the ones who also says that they use "Frequently" the percentage raised to 54,9%. It is also relevant to enhance that, on the other hand, 21,57% of the answers are in the category "Never" at the same level as "Frequently".

Social Media

We considered in social media, tools as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google +, among others.

BDA_SOCIAL MEDIA	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Very Frequently		Total	x̄
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	10	19,61	11	21,57	12	23,53	11	21,57	7	13,73	51	2,88
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	16	31,37	16	31,37	9	17,65	7	13,73	3	5,88	51	2,31
Affecting the making of rules	23	45,10	9	17,65	10	19,61	6	11,76	3	5,88	51	2,16
Scanning the business environment	10	19,61	4	7,84	9	17,65	17	33,33	11	21,57	51	3,29
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	11	21,57	3	5,88	14	27,45	8	15,69	15	29,41	51	3,25
Engaging in diplomatic missions	25	49,02	6	11,76	10	19,61	6	11,76	4	7,84	51	2,18
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	15	29,41	4	7,84	10	19,61	13	25,49	9	17,65	51	2,94

Table III – Descriptives for using Social Media for BDA

For the activity "Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business" the mode was "Sometimes" (23,53%), and if we extend to the right-next categories of "Rarely" and "Frequently" the sum reached to two thirds of the responses (66,67%). The category with less responses was "Very Frequently" with 13,73%.

Considering the activity "Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks", 62,75% answered they "Never" or "Rarely" used social

media for this activity. The lowest percentage was on the other extreme of responses, "Frequently" and "Very Frequently" with 13,73% and 5,88% respectively.

In what refers to the activity of "Affecting the making of rules" 45,1% of the answers were "never", and when extended to the categories of "rarely" and "sometimes" the sum reached to 82,35%, showing that social media is not regularly used for this activity.

Concerning "Scanning the business environment" we can see that using social media gathered 54,9% in "Frequently" (33,33%) or "Very Frequently" (21,57%) for this topic. With 19,61%, "Never" was the third category with more answers.

For "Interacting with multiple stakeholders", 45,1% affirmed to use "Very Frequently" (29,41%) or "Frequently" (15,69%) social media to interact with multiple stakeholders. Less than 30% say that social media is "Never" or "Rarely" used to follow this activity.

About the activity of "Engaging diplomatic missions", the category with more answers was "Never" (49,02%), and when extended to the categories of "Rarely" and "Sometimes" the sum raised to 80,39%, showing that social media was not commonly used for engaging in diplomatic missions.

In what regards to "Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks" the mode is "never" (29,41%), nevertheless, the sum of "frequently" (25,49%) and "very frequently" (17,65%) raises to 43,14%, surpassing the sum of "never" with "rarely", that reaches to 37,25%.

Youtube

The results referring to the use of Youtube were as follows:

BDA_YOUTUBE	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Very Frequently		Total	x̄
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	30	58,82	8	15,69	7	13,73	4	7,84	2	3,92	51	1,82
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	35	68,63	11	21,57	3	5,88	2	3,92	0	-	51	1,45
Affecting the making of rules	36	70,59	9	17,65	6	11,76	0	-	0	-	51	1,41
Scanning the business environment	23	45,10	15	29,41	5	9,80	4	7,84	4	7,84	51	2,04
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	30	58,82	8	15,69	6	11,76	4	7,84	3	5,88	51	1,86
Engaging in diplomatic missions	36	70,59	9	17,65	5	9,80	0	-	1	1,96	51	1,45
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	31	60,78	7	13,73	5	9,80	4	7,84	4	7,84	51	1,88

Table IV – Descriptives for using Youtube for BDA

Considering the activity "Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business", 58,82% affirmed that they "Never" used Youtube as a DCC when trying to influence economic and social actors.

For the activity "Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks", more than two thirds affirmed that they "Never" use Youtube for this activity, and when extended to the response "Rarely" the sum raises to 90,2%. On the other hand, the answer "Very Frequently", had no responses.

In what concerns the activity of "Affecting the making of rules", the collected data shows that Youtube was "Never" used to pursue this objective, for 70,59% of the sample. The categories "Frequently" and "Very Frequently" represent 0%.

Concerning "Scanning the business environment", 74,51% of the respondents, say they "Never" (45,1%) or "Rarely" (15,69%) used Youtube to scan the business environment.

About "Interacting with multiple stakeholders", Youtube was "Never" used in 58,82% and when we included "Rarely" the sum reached 74,51%. However, 5,88% affirmed that they use Youtube "Very Frequently" to interact with multiple stakeholders.

Regarding the activity of "Engaging diplomatic missions", 88,24% answered "Never" (70,59%) or "Rarely" (17,56) to the question if they used Youtube when engaging in diplomatic missions. However, for 1,96%, was used "Very Frequently".

In what refers to "Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks" the category with more responses was "Never" (60,78%), however, 15,69% of respondents answered they used "Frequently" (7,84%) or "Very Frequently" (7,84%) Youtube for this activity.

Blogs

The outcome referring the use of Blogs were the presented:

BDA_BLOGS	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Very Frequently		Total	x̄
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	26	50,98	12	23,53	5	9,80	6	11,76	2	3,92	51	1,94
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	31	60,78	8	15,69	7	13,73	3	5,88	2	3,92	51	1,76
Affecting the making of rules	35	68,63	7	13,73	8	15,69	0	-	1	1,96	51	1,53
Scanning the business environment	21	41,18	8	15,69	9	17,65	9	17,65	4	7,84	51	2,35
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	28	54,90	8	15,69	6	11,76	4	7,84	5	9,80	51	2,02
Engaging in diplomatic missions	34	66,67	6	11,76	7	13,73	2	3,92	2	3,92	51	1,67
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	27	52,94	7	13,73	5	9,80	6	11,76	6	11,76	51	2,16

Table V – Descriptives for using Blogs for BDA

Regarding the activity "Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business" the participants in 50,98% affirmed they "Never" used Blogs as a DCC when trying to influence economic and social actors. On another perspective, 15,69% declared they used it "Frequently" or "Very Frequently".

Considering the activity "Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks", 60,78% affirmed they "Never" used Blogs as a DCC when trying to forestall potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks. This percentage raised to 76,47% when we aggregate the category "Never" with "Rarely". Only 9,8% answered "Frequently" or "Very Frequently".

Concerning "Affecting the making of rules", 68,63% affirmed they "Never" used Blogs for this activity, and when extended to the response "Rarely" the sum raises to 82,35%. On the other hand, the answer "Frequently", and "Very Frequently" only reached to 1,96%.

For "Scanning the business environment" the sum of categories "Never" and "Rarely" the percentage reached to 56,86%. However, "Frequently" and "Very Frequently" reached to 25,49%.

Regarding "Interacting with multiple stakeholders", the category "Never" was the mode, with 54,9% of the answers. When we added "Rarely" the sum raised to 70,59%. On the other hand, "Very Frequently" only reached to 9,8% of participants' answers.

For "Engaging diplomatic missions", 66,67% of the respondents answered "Never" to the question if they used blogs as communication channel to engage in diplomatic missions. Only 7,84% answered "Frequently" or "Very Frequently".

In what concerns to "Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks", the category "Never" was the one with more answers, and when aggregated to "Rarely", it reached to 66,67%. On the other hand, the sum of the categories "Frequently" and "Very Frequently" reached to 23,53%.

Influencers

The results concerning to the use of Influencers were as follows:

BDA_INFLUENCERS	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Very Frequently		Total	x̄
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	23	45,10	9	17,65	9	17,65	7	13,73	3	5,88	51	2,18
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	28	54,90	6	11,76	10	19,61	5	9,80	2	3,92	51	1,96
Affecting the making of rules	30	58,82	8	15,69	7	13,73	5	9,80	1	1,96	51	1,80
Scanning the business environment	25	49,02	3	5,88	9	17,65	10	19,61	4	7,84	51	2,31
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	26	50,98	4	7,84	7	13,73	7	13,73	7	13,73	51	2,31
Engaging in diplomatic missions	34	66,67	5	9,80	7	13,73	3	5,88	2	3,92	51	1,71
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	30	58,82	3	5,88	5	9,80	11	21,57	2	3,92	51	2,06

Table VI – Descriptives for using Influencers for BDA

For the activity "Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business" the mode was "Never" with 45,1% of the answers. Adding the category "Rarely", together they gather 62,75%. On the other opposite, the sum of "Frequently" and "Very Frequently reached to 19,61%.

Considering the activity "Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks", the category "Never" achieved 54,9% of the answers. The second category with more answers was "sometimes" with 19,61%. The sum of the categories "Frequently" and "Very Frequently" reached to 13,73%.

In what respects the activity of "Affecting the making of rules", Influencers were "never" used to pursue this objective - for more than half of the participants (58,82%). When extending the category "never" with "rarely" we observed the sum reached to 74,51%.

Concerning "Scanning the business environment", 49,02% of the participants answered they "Never" used influencers to scan the business environment, however, 19,61% answered "frequently". 5,88% replied "Rarely" and 7,84% stated "Very Frequently".

For "Interacting with multiple stakeholders" the category with more responses was "Never" (50,98%), nevertheless, the categories "Frequently" (13,73%) and "Very Frequently" (13,73), even separately, have more responses than the category "Rarely" (7,84%).

Regarding the activity of "Engaging diplomatic missions", two thirds answered "Never". This result raises to more than three quarters (76,47%) when we added it the category of "Rarely" (9,8%). Only 9,8% answered "Frequently" or "Very Frequently".

In what concerns to "Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks", the mode was "never" with the result of 58,82%, however, the following response with more answers was "frequently" with 21,57%. The categories "Rarely" and "Very Frequently" have a similar result with 5,88% and 3,92% respectively.

Other digital communication channels

There was an option to present other DCC, and 13 (of the 51) participants did it. However, 7 of the answers were not digital channels (e.g. "personal contact", "lobby", "industry association participation", "public relations actions", "press/media", "papers") or individualized some tools that could be integrated in the previous categories (e.g. "WeChat" or "Facebook"). The only answers considered were "newsletters" (n=3).

Still, the overall results for "other" were the following:

BDA_OTHER	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Very Frequently		Total	x̄
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	35	68,63	5	9,80	3	5,88	3	5,88	5	9,80	51	1,78
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	34	66,67	4	7,84	7	13,73	3	5,88	3	5,88	51	1,76
Affecting the making of rules	37	72,55	3	5,88	5	9,80	2	3,92	4	7,84	51	1,69
Scanning the business environment	34	66,67	5	9,80	6	11,76	1	1,96	5	9,80	51	1,78
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	33	64,71	4	7,84	6	11,76	2	3,92	6	11,76	51	1,90
Engaging in diplomatic missions	37	72,55	4	7,84	5	9,80	1	1,96	4	7,84	51	1,65
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	34	66,67	6	11,76	4	7,84	1	1,96	6	11,76	51	1,80

Table VII –Descriptives for using Other DCC for BDA

Regarding the question "How often does your organization currently use the following channels in the relation with stakeholders?"the results for each channel are presented next.

DCC_STK INT	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Very Frequently		Total	x̄
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Website	3	5,88	5	9,80	8	15,69	14	27,45	21	41,18	51	3,88
Social Media	2	3,92	9	17,65	2	3,92	28	54,90	10	19,61	51	3,69
Youtube	18	35,29	12	23,53	10	19,61	8	15,69	3	5,88	51	2,33
Blogs	22	43,14	13	25,49	8	15,69	5	9,80	3	5,88	51	2,10
Influencers	20	39,22	4	7,84	12	23,53	11	21,57	4	7,84	51	2,51
Other	19	37,25	1	1,96	3	5,88	2	3,92	6	11,76	31	1,33

Table VIII – Descriptives for using DCC for Stakeholders interaction

For Website, 41,18% of the answers affirmed to use "very Frequently" their website in the relation with stakeholders. Adding to the category "Frequently" the result raised to 68,63%.

For Social Media, more than half of the respondents (54,9%) declared to use "Frequently" social media to interact with stakeholders. Regarding the "Very Frequently" answer, the sum was 74,51%. However, 17,65% affirmed they "Rarely" used social media.

For Youtube. the mode was "never" with 35,29%. Extending to "Rarely" the result raised to more than half, reaching to 58,82%. Although, only 5,88% affirmed they used Youtube "Very Frequently" to interact with stakeholders.

For Blogs, 68,63% answered "never" (43,14%) or "rarely" (25,49%). Nevertheless, 5,88% affirmed they use "Very Frequently" blogs to interact with stakeholders.

For Influencers, 39,22% answered they "Never" used influencers to interact with stakeholders, however, 23,52% affirmed "Sometimes" and 21,57% declared they "Frequently".

For other DCC, it was optional to complete it, so from the 31 answers collected the results obtained were 37,25% "Never", followed by "Very Frequently", with 11,76%.

4.1.2 Corporate Reputation

The results regarding Corporate Reputation were the following:

REPUTATION	Very Bad	Bad	Average	Good	Very Good	N	x̄
Which feeling does your company transmit to stakeholders?	0	1	8	29	22	60	4,20
What level of trustworthiness does your company transmit to stakeholders?	0	2	9	25	24	60	4,18
What level of admiration and respect does your company transmit to stakeholders?	0	1	11	30	18	60	4,08
What is the stakeholders' view regarding your company's overall Reputation?	0	1	3	28	28	60	4,38

Table IX - Descriptives for Corporate Reputation

To the question "Which feeling does your company transmit to stakeholders?", 85% of the answers were "Good Feeling" or "Very Good Feeling", but being "Good Feeling" the mode, with 48,33%. On the other hand, there was one participant (1,67%) that declared his company transmits a "Bad Feeling" to stakeholders.

For the question "What level of trustworthiness does your company transmit to stakeholders?" the answers "High" and "very high" collected 81,67%. For other perspective 3,33% declared their companies transmit a "Low" level of trustworthiness to stakeholders.

Considering the question "What level of admiration and respect does your company transmit to stakeholders?", 50% declared the level of admiration and respect transmitted to stakeholders for respective company was "High". When stretched to the category "Very High" the result raised to 80%.

Considering the company's overall reputation, 93,33% of the answers were "Good Reputation" (46,67%) or "Very Good Reputation" (46,67%), however, one answer (1,67%) was "Bad Reputation".

4.1.3 Company Information

Considering the companies' revenues, the answers were:

Level of Revenues	0-5M	6-10M	11-15M	16-30M	31-50M	51-100M	101-500M	501-1000M	>1000M	N	x̄
Abs. Freq.	0	7	1	2	1	4	6	1	38	60	3211,77
Rel. Freq. (%)	0,00	11,67	1,67	3,33	1,67	6,67	10,00	1,67	63,33		

Table X – Descriptives for Companies' level of Revenues

63,33% participants were from companies with a level of revenues above 1000 Million Euros. When extended the analysis to companies that have more than 51 Million in revenues, the result raised to 81,67%. Using the categories' average point, assuming a 5000 M value for the category >1000M, the mean was 3211,77 Million Euros per company.

On the questions about company's number of employees, the results were:

Nr. of employees	1-100	101-500	501-1000	1001-5000	>5000	N	x̄
How many people are employed by your company?	5	7	6	6	36	60	4858
How many employees work in the country where your headquarters is located?	5	7	10	10	28	60	4075
How many employees work in countries other than where headquarters is located?	18	3	4	5	30	60	4036

Table XI – Descriptives for Number of Employees

70% affirmed that their companies have more than 1001 employees. Nevertheless, 8,33% declared having between 1 and 100 employees. Assuming an average point for each category, except >5000, that we selected 7500 as average point, the mean reached to 4858 employees per company.

To the question of in how many countries each company operates, the obtained results were the following:

Nr. of countries	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16-30	>30	N
Abs. Freq.	16	5	3	2	34	60
Rel. Freq. (%)	26,67	8,33	5,00	3,33	56,67	

Table XII – Number of countries where companies operate

56,67% of the companies operate in more than 30 different countries. On the other hand, this result was followed by the number of companies that operate in 1 to 5 different countries, with 26,67% of the answers.

In what concerns the age of the companies the results collected were:

Years	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 30	>30	N	x̄
Abs. Freq.	3	4	3	5	45	60	40,75
Rel. Freq. (%)	5,00	6,67	5,00	8,33	75,00		

Table XIII – Descriptives for Companies' Age

Three quarters of the answers declared its companies were more than 30 years old. For other perspective, only 16,67% of the companies were 15 or less years old. Assuming an average point for each category, for the category >30 we assumed 50 as average point, the mean of the companies' age reached to 40,75 years.

Respecting to the online competition's degree the responses were as follows:

Years	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 30	>30	N	x̄
Abs. Freq.	3	4	3	5	45	60	40,75
Rel. Freq. (%)	5,00	6,67	5,00	8,33	75,00		

Table XIV – Descriptives for Companies' level of Online Competition

The mode, with more than one third of answers affirmed that the degree of competition online is "Medium" (36,67%), followed by "High" and "Very High" reaching the sum of 48,33%.

Regarding the sectors where companies operate:

	N	%
Basic Material	5	4,13
Conglomerates	5	4,13
Consumer goods	22	18,18
Financial	13	10,74
Health Care	12	9,92
Industrial Goods	10	8,26
Technology	24	19,83
Utilities	5	4,13
Education	4	3,31
Media	1	0,83
Tourism	1	0,83
Diversified Services	8	6,61

Other	11	9,09
N	121	100,00

Table XV – Sectors where companies operate

Observing the 60 answers, 38,33% affirmed they operate in more than one sector. "Technology" sector, which had more answers (19,83%), followed by consumer goods (18,18%) and financial services (10,74%). Eleven participants selected the option "Other" specifying the sectors of "sports", "chemicals", "infrastructure and mobility", "consultancy", "banking", "transportation", "forest, pulp, paper", "energy", "real estate" and "tobacco industry". From these, two answers did not specify in which other sector these companies operate.

Considering the department and respective job title, the answers were multiple, and we realized that the respondents often answered only with the department or the job title. However, we tried to catalogue the main departments considering the sample in "Manager", External Affairs", "Communications", "Marketing" and "other", and the responses gathered were the following:

	Manager	External Affairs	Communications	Marketing	Other	Total
N	15	18	8	6	14	61
%	24,59	29,51	13,11	9,84	22,95	

Table XVI – Departments where the survey's participants affirmed to work

The answers collected showed that 29,51% of the respondents work in external affairs' department (or with similar names, e.g. public affairs, governmental affairs, public sector, government relations). 24,59% of the answers affirmed that the job title is manager without specifying (or similar terms, e.g. associate, executive vice president, vice president, director). On "other" we aggregate answers as Legal department, Human Resources, Operations, Consultancy, Finance analyst, Chief Operating Officer, etc. The total sum of answers is 61 because one of the participants responded "corporate

communications and marketing manager", that we counted in "communications" and in "marketing" categories.

For the optional question about the company's name, 61,67% of the respondents preferred not to specify it. Regarding the initial sample considering the Global Reptrak Ranking 2019, 27 answers were gathered from the companies present on that list.

4.1.4 Means and Correlations

Correlations measure the strengthen of linear relationships between different variables. The results are given between the values 1 and -1, and the closer is the result of one of these values, the more strength has the correlation. When the correlation is near 0, the weaker is the relationship between those variables. Normally, we only affirm there is a correlation if the result is > 0.5 (positive correlation), or < - 0.5 (negative correlation), however, in this study, we decided to explore the correlations that had a result > 0.25.

For BDA, we obtained the following mean results regarding Revenues, Age, Online Competition and Reputation.

Referring to the level of revenues' variable the results were as follows:

μ BDA_REV	< 1000 M€	> 1000 M€	Total
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	3,62	3,57	3,59
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	3,48	3,73	3,63
Affecting the making of rules	3,19	3,33	3,27
Scanning the business environment	4,19	4,13	4,16
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	4,24	4,67	4,49
Engaging in diplomatic missions	2,38	3,37	2,96
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	3,62	4,07	3,88
n=	21	30	51

Table XVII – Means' results of BDA related to the level of Revenues

In what respects Revenues, we verified that companies with a level above 1000 Million Euros gave more importance to BDA than the companies below that level of revenue. The exceptions are "Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business" and "Scanning the business".

Considering Age' variable the results were as presented:

µ BDA_AGE	< 30	> 30	Total
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	3,38	3,66	3,59
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	3,54	3,66	3,63
Affecting the making of rules	2,77	3,45	3,27
Scanning the business environment	3,85	4,26	4,16
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	3,85	4,71	4,49
Engaging in diplomatic missions	1,77	3,37	2,96
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	3,46	4,03	3,88
n=	13	38	51

Table XVIII – Means' results of BDA related to companies' Age

Regarding the age' variable, for the sample, we verified that companies older than 30 years answered that perform more BDA comparatively to companies younger than 30 years old.

In what respects Online Competition' variable the results were as follows:

μ BDA_ONL	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	3,00	4,00	3,71	3,58	3,42
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	4,00	3,33	3,67	3,50	3,67
Affecting the making of rules	3,00	3,00	3,24	3,50	3,25
Scanning the business environment	3,33	4,33	4,05	4,25	4,42
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	4,67	5,00	4,43	4,42	4,50
Engaging in diplomatic missions	2,67	3,33	2,67	3,08	3,33
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	4,00	4,67	3,67	3,58	4,33
x̄	3,52	3,95	3,63	3,70	3,85
n=	3	3	21	12	12

Table XIX – Means' results of BDA related to companies' level of Online Competition

Considering that categories "Very Low" and "Low" are not statistically relevant for not having enough answers, we verified there is not a relevant difference among other means of the different Online Competition' levels.

About the Reputation's variable the results were as presented:

μ BDA_REP	Bad - Average	Good	Very Good
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	2,00	3,23	4,23
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	3,00	3,50	3,86
Affecting the making of rules	3,33	3,08	3,50
Scanning the business environment	3,00	4,19	4,27
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	4,33	4,35	4,68
Engaging in diplomatic missions	3,00	2,96	2,95
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	3,33	3,77	4,09
x̄	3,14	3,58	3,94
n=	3	26	22

Table XX – Means' results of BDA related to Companies' Reputation

We verified, in what concerns Reputation, that companies that have a better self-perception of reputation, tend to give more importance to BDA comparatively to the

companies that evaluate themselves with a less good reputation than "Very Good". The category "Bad – Average" has not enough answers to be pertinent statistically.

4.1.4.1 Correlations for BDA

Considering the correlation of BDA with the level of revenues, the results were the following:

BDA_REV	Revenues
Revenues	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,03
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,10
Affecting the making of rules	0,14
Scanning the business environment	0,10
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,38
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,49
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,21

Table XXI – Correlation between BDA and Revenues

Concerning the results obtained on BDA, regarding to the level of revenues' variable, we state there is no relevant correlation. However, the variable "Engaging in diplomatic missions" has a positive correlation of 0,49, so we decided to verify the possible different means.
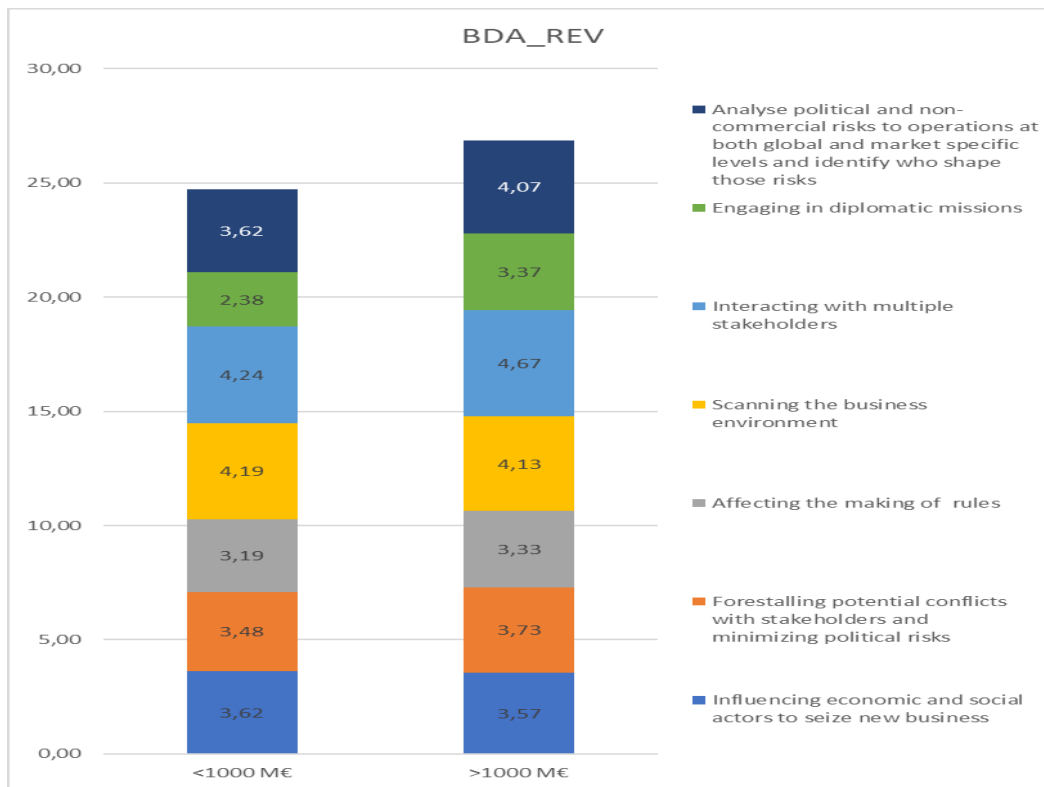
Graphic II – Means' results of BDA related with the level of Revenues

We stated that companies with revenues > 1000 Million € perform more BDA, when compared with the companies with a level of revenues < 1000 Million €.

	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	-0.141152243	0.369136686	0.704059524
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	-0.204660104	0.403293817	0.614417122
Affecting the making of rules	-0.081341248	0.363629245	0.824055733
Scanning the business environment	-0.141836336	0.456238605	0.757392458
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0.611107328	0.460379424	0.191381397
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0.89530389	0.356963002	0.015990915
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0.182618416	0.414179047	0.661482333

Table XXII – Regression analysis between BDA and Revenues

Additionally, when trying to verify the statistical relevance through a regression, we stated that only "Engaging in diplomatic missions" has a p-value < 0.05, therefore statistical relevant.

Regarding the correlation of BDA with age, the results were as presented:

BDA_AGE	Age
Age	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,11
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,06
Affecting the making of rules	0,30
Scanning the business environment	0,20
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,25
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,57
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,23

Table XXIII – Correlation between BDA and Age

In what respects to results obtained, we verified there is a positive correlation between companies age and "Engaging in diplomatic missions" (0,57). There were no negative correlations verified.
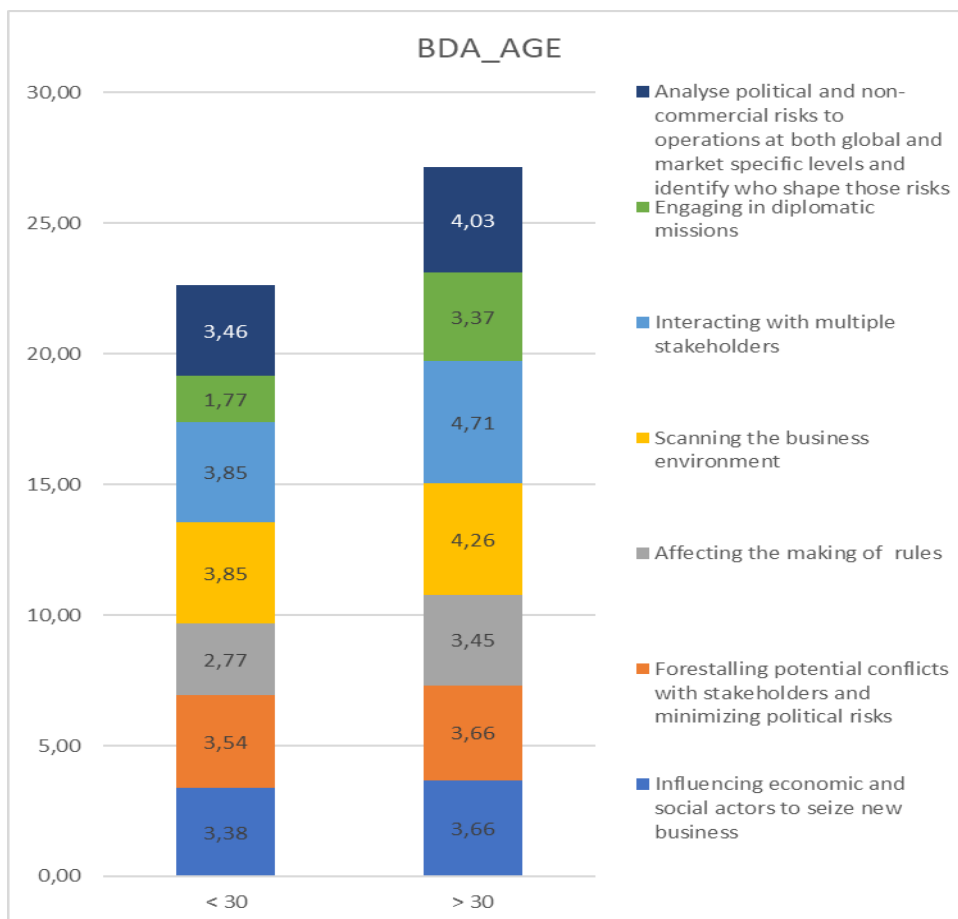
Graphic III - Means results of BDA related with companies' Age

Also, we verified that older (>30) companies had higher means in every BDA than the younger (< 30). Regarding the statistical relevance, only "Engaging in diplomatic missions" had a p-value > 0.05, being statistically relevant.

	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	-0.003914852	0.058698755	0.947134484
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	-0.101271169	0.064130296	0.121631384
Affecting the making of rules	0.038699566	0.057822982	0.506896888
Scanning the business environment	0.019480849	0.072549381	0.789584351
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0.115478948	0.073207839	0.122030042
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0.18477558	0.056762941	0.002212086
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0.016713283	0.065861225	0.800886501

Table XXIV – Regression analysis between BDA and Age

About the correlation of BDA with Online Competition' variable, the results were as presented:

BDA_ONL	Online Competition
Online Competition	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	-0,03
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	-0,03
Affecting the making of rules	0,08
Scanning the business environment	0,24
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	-0,07
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,17
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,07

Table XXV – Correlation between BDA and Online Competition

Concerning to the level of online competition' variable, we state there is no relevant correlation.

In respect of the BDA's correlation with corporate reputation' variable, the results were as follows:

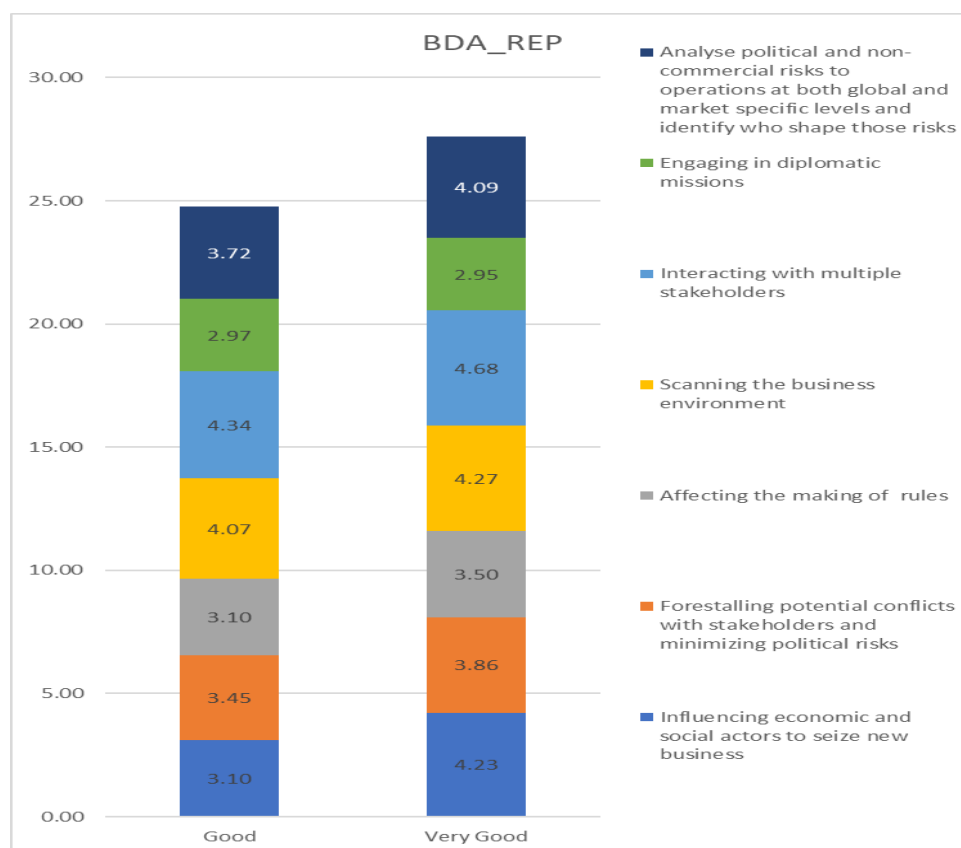| BDA_REP	Reputation
Reputation	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,51
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,20
Affecting the making of rules	0,22
Scanning the business environment	0,28
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,18
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,04
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,22

Table XXVI – Correlation between BDA and reputation

We verified there is a positive correlation (0,51) between the variables "Influencing economic and social actor to seize new business" and Reputation.

Graphic IV - Means results of BDA related with Corporate Reputation

Verifying the difference of means, we state that companies that consider themselves with "Very Good" reputation perform more BDA than the companies that only evaluate themselves as having a "Good" reputation. In what respects to statistics, we observed that the only BDA with a p-value < 0.05 was "Influencing economic and social actor to seize new business".

	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0.250575532	0.091168128	0.008716272
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	-0.055579503	0.09960414	0.579735556
Affecting the making of rules	0.057979439	0.089807919	0.521972758
Scanning the business environment	0.034621231	0.112680264	0.760134771
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0.061694758	0.11370295	0.590209418
Engaging in diplomatic missions	-0.06472524	0.088161512	0.466831859
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0.004242791	0.102292537	0.9671076

Table XXVII – Regression analysis between BDA and Reputation

Stakeholders Interaction

For Stakeholders Interaction (STK INT) we obtained the following mean's results regarding the categories previously used.

Respecting the level of revenues' variable, the results were the following:

µ STK INT_REV	< 1000 M€	> 1000 M€	Total
Website	3,43	4,20	3,88
Social Media	3,48	3,83	3,69
Youtube	1,81	2,70	2,33
Blogs	1,62	2,43	2,10
Influencers	2,05	2,83	2,51
Other	1,81	1,67	1,73
n=	21	30	51

Table XXVIII – Means' results for Stakeholders Interaction related to companies' Revenues

For the sample, we verified that companies with a level of revenues above 1000 Million Euros use more DCC to interact with stakeholders than companies with a level of revenues below to 1000 Million Euros. The exception regards to the category "other" with a similar mean.

In what concerns to the age 'variable, the mean were as follows:

µ STK INT_AGE	< 30	> 30	Total
Website	3,54	4,00	3,88
Social Media	3,85	3,63	3,69
Youtube	1,77	2,53	2,33
Blogs	1,69	2,24	2,10
Influencers	2,08	2,66	2,51
Other	1,31	1,87	1,73
x̄	2,37	2,82	2,71
n=	13	38	51

Table XXIX – Means' results for Stakeholders Interaction related to companies' Age

Regarding the age' variable, we verified that companies with more than 30 years old, tend to use more DCC to interact with stakeholders than companies with less than 30 years. Only Social Media has a highest mean (3,85) for companies with less than 30 years, meanwhile companies above 30 got a mean of 3,63.

In respect of the level of online competition's variable, the results were as presented:

µ STK_ONL	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High
Website	4,00	4,67	3,43	4,08	4,25
Social Media	4,00	4,00	3,38	4,00	3,75
Youtube	1,67	1,33	2,24	2,42	2,83
Blogs	1,00	1,67	1,95	2,33	2,50
Influencers	1,00	1,67	2,76	2,67	2,50
Other	2,33	2,33	1,81	1,00	2,00
x̄	2,33	2,61	2,60	2,75	2,97
n=	3	3	21	12	12

Table XXX – Means' results for Stakeholders Interaction related to companies' Online Competition

In what concerns to the level of online competition, the results showed that the companies who have a higher online competition use more DCC than companies that stated they have less online competition. The outsider are the companies that answered "Low", however they didn't collect enough answers to be statistically relevant.

Considering corporate reputation's variable, the results were:

µ STK INT_REP	Bad - Average	Good	Very Good	Total
Website	3,67	3,96	3,82	3,88
Social Media	3,33	3,65	3,77	3,69
Youtube	2,00	2,08	2,68	2,33
Blogs	1,00	1,77	2,64	2,10
Influencers	1,00	2,12	3,18	2,51
Other	1,00	1,73	1,82	1,73
x̄	2,00	2,55	2,98	2,71
n=	3	26	22	51

Table XXXI – Means for Stakeholders Interaction related to companies' Reputation

The results showed that companies that use more DCC to interact with stakeholders have a better perception of their own reputation.

4.1.4.2 Correlations for STK INT through DCC:

Regarding the correlation of stakeholders' interaction with DCC considering the level of revenues, the results were as presented:

STK INT_REV	Revenues
Revenues	1
Website	0,31
Social Media	0,03
Youtube	0,27
Blogs	0,25
Influencers	0,20

Table XXXII – Correlation between Stakeholders Interaction and Reputation

We verified there is not a relevant correlation, nonetheless, there are three DCC with a positive correlation > 0.25, so we decided to verify the means.
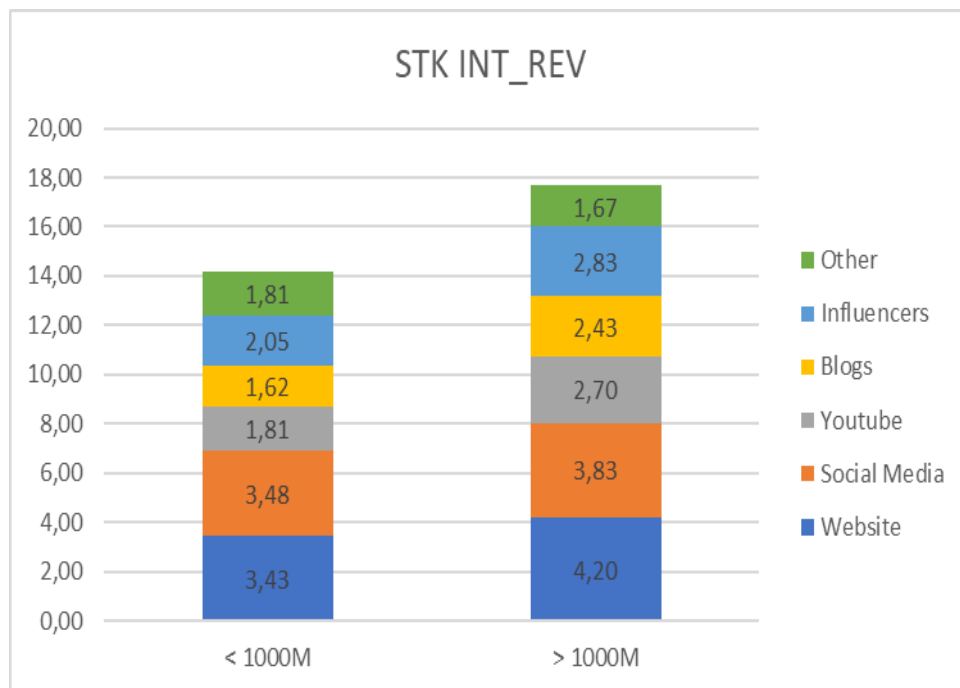
Graphic V – Means' results of STK INT related with the level of Revenues

The results showed that companies with a level of revenues > 1000 Million €, interact more with stakeholders through DCC, than the companies with a level of revenues < 1000 Million €

	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Website	0.931552184	0.323367068	0.006108704
Social Media	-0.866894297	0.40011619	0.035722308
Youtube	0.275977917	0.363148608	0.451332249
Blogs	0.427730558	0.421448081	0.315698778
Influencers	0.251890794	0.274717783	0.364189678
Other	0.057657858	0.255930043	0.822798673

Table XXXIII – Regression analysis between Stakeholders Interaction and Revenues

Examining the statistical relevance, we observed that Website and Social Media were the only DCC with a p-value < 0.05.

About the correlation of stakeholders' interaction with DCC considering companies' age, the results were the following:

STK INT_AGE	Age
Age	1
Website	0,10
Social Media	-0,15
Youtube	0,11
Blogs	0,11
Influencers	0,05

Table XXXIV – Correlation between Stakeholders Interaction and Age

On Table XXXIV, we verified there is not a relevant correlation between companies age and stakeholders' interaction through DCC.

In what concerns to the correlation of stakeholders' interaction with DCC considering companies' level of online competition, the results were the following:

STK INT_ONL	Online Competition
Online Competition	1
Website	0,12
Social Media	0,04
Youtube	0,28
Blogs	0,30
Influencers	0,17

Table XXXV – Correlation between Stakeholders Interaction and online competition

We verified there is not relevant correlation between the level of online competition of companies and the different DCC used to interact with stakeholders, although Youtube and Blogs had a result > 0.25.
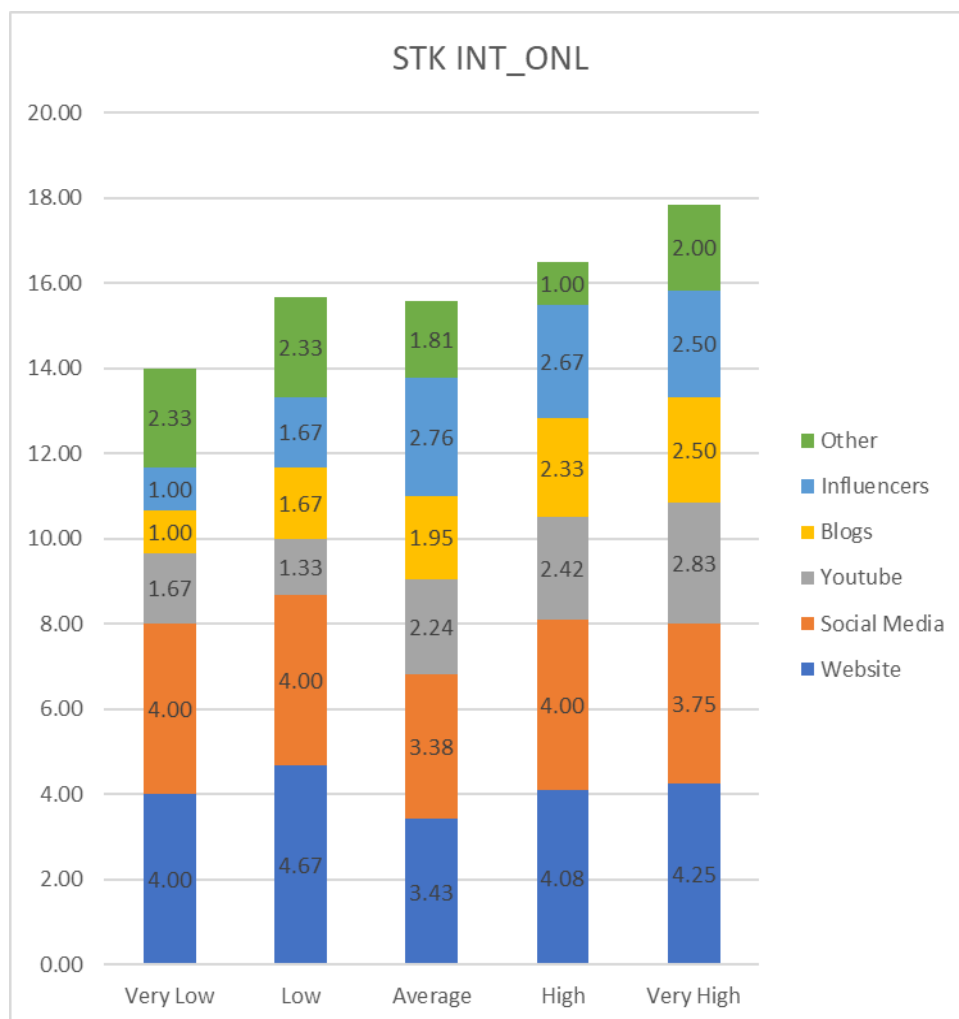
Graphic VI - Means results of STK INT related with companies' level of Online Competition

There is not an obvious trend, still, we observed that companies that affirm to have a "Very High" level of online competition give more importance to stakeholders' interaction through DCC.

Referring to the correlation of stakeholders' interaction with DCC considering corporate reputation, the results were as presented:

STK INT_REP	*Reputation*
Reputation	1
Website	-0,09
Social Media	0,01
Youtube	0,14
Blogs	0,39
Influencers	0,49

Table XXXVI – Correlation between Stakeholders Interaction and Reputation

We state there is no relevant correlation, however, there were two variables with a result > 0,25, Blogs (0,39) and Influencers (0,49).

Graphic VII - Means results of STK INT related with Corporate Reputation

Apart from Website, all the other DCC have higher results in companies that consider themselves with "Very Good" reputation than the companies that self-evaluated as having "Good" reputation.

	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Website	0.020620699	0.0855035	0.810545325
Social Media	-0.064577893	0.105797213	0.544741488
Youtube	-0.054872079	0.096022385	0.570601772
Blogs	0.184304775	0.111437711	0.105269537
Influencers	0.156445973	0.072639839	0.036780622
Other	-0.010317183	0.067672056	0.879522264

Table XXXVII – Regression analysis between Stakeholders Interaction and Reputation

Statistically speaking, we observed that the only DCC with a p-value < 0.05, was Influencers.

For BDA through DCC we obtained the following mean results regarding the categories previously used:

µ BDA_DCC	Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	Affecting the making of rules	Scanning the business environment	Interacting with multiple stakeholders	Engaging in diplomatic missions	Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	x̄ DCC
Website	3,10	2,57	2,00	3,53	3,29	2,06	3,37	2,85
Social Media	2,88	2,31	2,16	3,29	3,25	2,18	2,94	2,72
Youtube	1,82	1,45	1,41	2,04	1,86	1,45	1,88	1,70
Blogs	1,94	1,76	1,53	2,35	2,02	1,67	2,16	1,92
Influencers	2,18	1,96	1,80	2,31	2,31	1,71	2,06	2,05
Other	1,78	1,76	1,69	1,78	1,90	1,65	1,80	1,59
x̄ BDA	2,28	1,97	1,76	2,55	2,44	1,78	2,37	

Table XXXVIII – Means of BDA with DCC

For the sample, the results showed that, regarding the usage of DCC for BDA, the most utilized DCC were Websites (2,85). The BDA that companies more enhanced to practice through DCC were "Scanning the business environment" (2,55) followed by "Interacting with multiple stakeholders" (2,44).

4.1.4.3 Correlations for BDA through DCC:

Regarding the correlation of BDA with Website considering the level of revenues, the results were as presented:

BDA_WEB_REV	Revenues
Revenues	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,34
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,30
Affecting the making of rules	0,14
Scanning the business environment	0,16
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,16
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,10
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,32

Table XXXIX – Correlation between using Website to BDA and Revenues

There was no relevant correlation, nonetheless, there were three BDA with a result > 0.25.
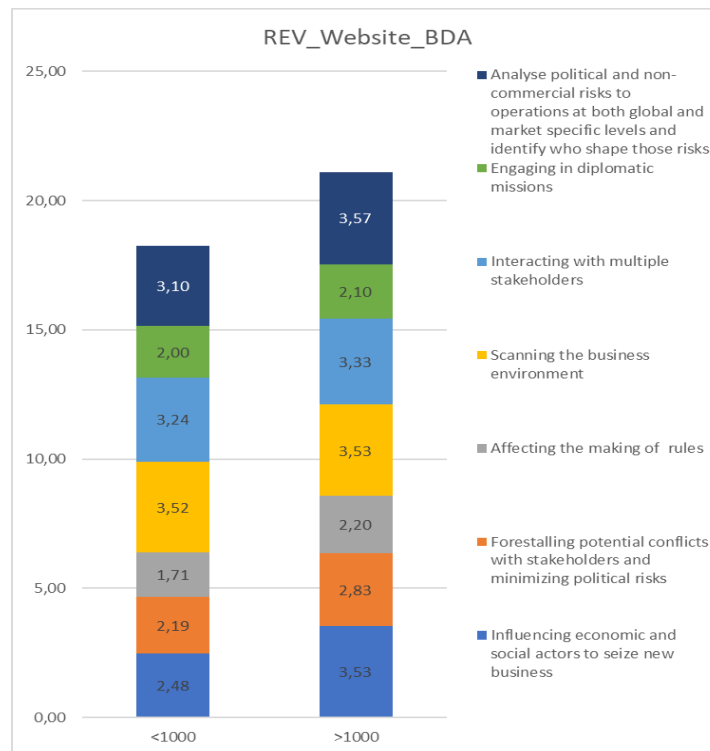
Graphic VIII – Means' results for the usage of websites to BDA related linked to companies' level of Revenues

Checking the different means, we observed that the companies with a level of revenues > 1000 Million € use more websites to perform their BDA than the companies who have a revenues' level < 1000 Million €.

	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0.354796916	0.337920923	0.29961071
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0.408786233	0.435483127	0.35312999
Affecting the making of rules	-0.151601481	0.368133433	0.68252344
Scanning the business environment	-0.58601034	0.425727156	0.17579493
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	-0.317499828	0.353435602	0.37401541
Engaging in diplomatic missions	-0.141389733	0.311487493	0.6521708
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those	0.909258437	0.416739925	0.0346338

Table XL – Regression analysis between using Website to BDA and Revenues

Examining the statistical relevance, we state that the only BDA with a p-value < 0.05 is "Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks".

About the correlation of BDA with Social Media regarding the level of revenues, the results were as presented:

BDA_SM_REV	Revenues
Revenues	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,13
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,15
Affecting the making of rules	-0,05
Scanning the business environment	-0,09
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,03
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,01
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,14

*Table XLI – Correlation between using Social Media to BDA and Revenues*

Concerning using Social Media to follow BDA, we verified there is no relevant correlation between Revenues and BDA.

In what refers to the correlation of BDA with Youtube regarding the level of revenues, the results were as follows:

BDA_YTBE_REV	Revenues
Revenues	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,30
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,33
Affecting the making of rules	0,23
Scanning the business environment	0,08
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,14
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,22
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,17

Table XLII – Correlation between using Youtube to BDA and Revenues

Respecting to Youtube, we verified there is no relevant correlation between Revenues and other variables. Nevertheless, there were two variables with a correlation > 0,25.
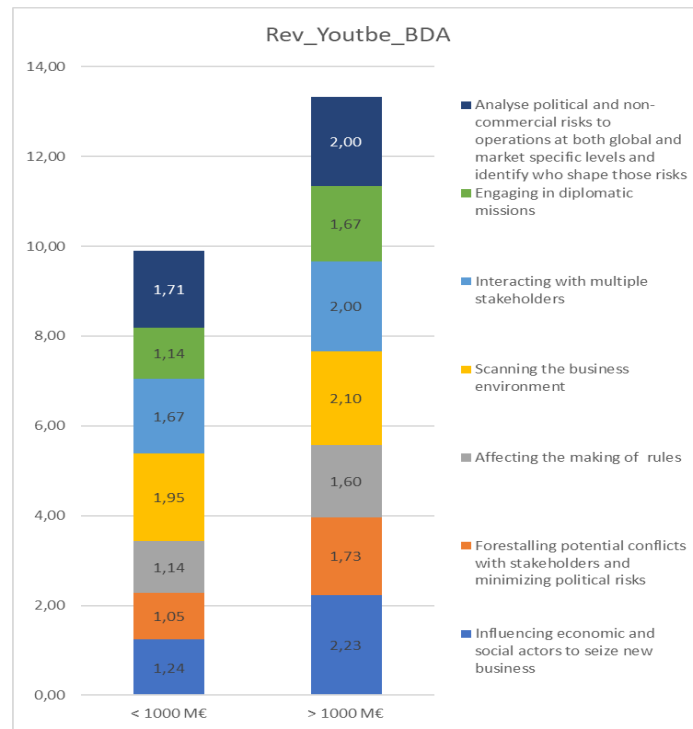
Graphic IX – Means' results for the usage of Youtube to BDA related linked to companies' level of Revenues
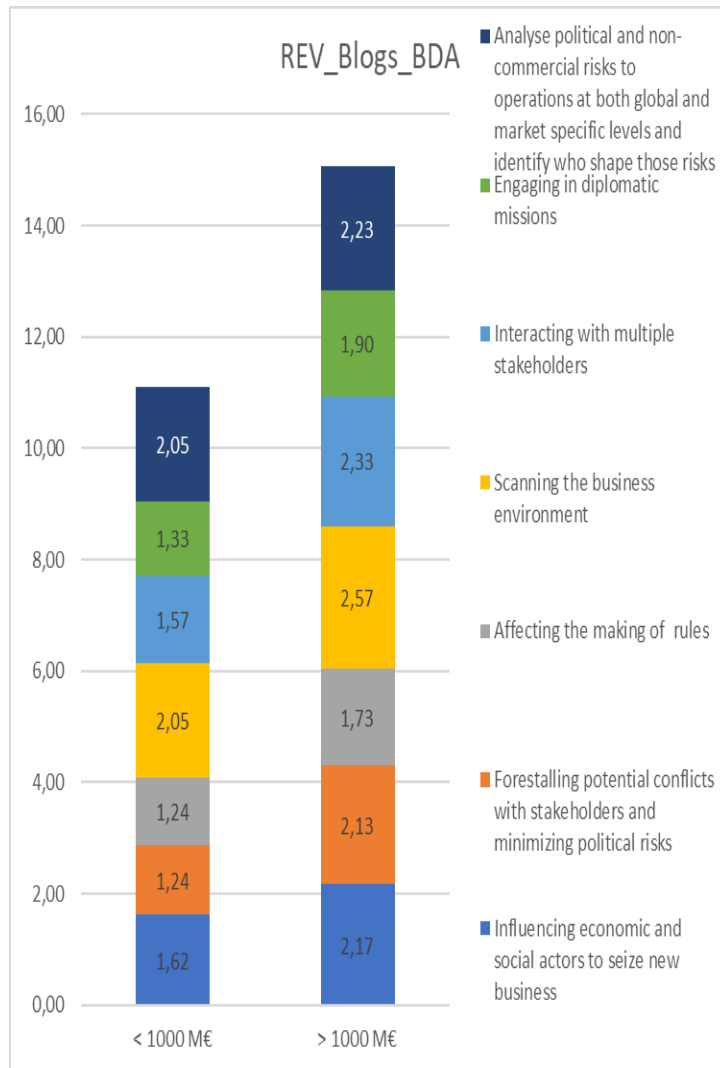
Checking the different means, we stated that companies with revenues above 1000 Million Euros use more Youtube to pursue their BDA, when compared with the companies with a level of revenues below 1000 Million Euros.

In what regards to the correlation of BDA with Blogs regarding the level of revenues, the results were the following:

BDA_BLOGS_REV	Revenues
Revenues	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,13
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,32
Affecting the making of rules	0,20
Scanning the business environment	0,23
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,27
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,30
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,22

Table XLIII – Correlation between using Blogs to BDA and Revenues

We verified there is no relevant correlation between Revenues and other variables. Nevertheless, there was three BDAs with a correlation > 0,25.

REV_Blogs_BDA

Legend:
- Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks
- Engaging in diplomatic missions
- Interacting with multiple stakeholders
- Scanning the business environment
- Affecting the making of rules
- Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks
- Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business

Values for < 1000 M€: 1,62 / 1,24 / 1,24 / 2,05 / 1,57 / 1,33 / 2,05

Values for > 1000 M€: 2,17 / 2,13 / 1,73 / 2,57 / 2,33 / 1,90 / 2,23

Graphic X – Means results for the usage of Blogs to BDA related linked to companies' level of Revenues

Observing the different means, we saw that companies with a level of revenues higher 1000 Million Euros use more Blogs to pursue their BDAs, when compared with the companies with lower level of revenues.

Considering the correlation of BDA with influencers regarding the level of revenues, the results were:

BDA_INF_REV	Revenues
Revenues	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,06
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,11
Affecting the making of rules	0,05
Scanning the business environment	0,22
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,23
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,14
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,23

Table XLIV – Correlation between using Influencers to BDA and Revenues

We observed there is no relevant correlation between Revenues and other BDA through Influencers.

Respecting to the correlation of BDA with other DCC regarding the level of revenues, the results were the following:

BDA_OTHER_REV	Revenues
Revenues	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0.07
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0.07
Affecting the making of rules	0.01
Scanning the business environment	0.04
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0.08
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0.11
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0.05

Table XLV – Correlation between for using Other DCC to BDA and Revenues

We didn't verify a relevant correlation between Revenues and BDA through other DCC.

Age

Regarding to the correlation of BDA through Website regarding the companies' age, the results were the following:

BDA_WEB_AGE	Age
Age	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0.18
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0.10
Affecting the making of rules	0.00
Scanning the business environment	0.07
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0.06
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0.14
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0.22

Table XLVI – Correlation between using website to BDA and Age

In what respects using the company's Website with the BDA's objective, we verified there is no relevant correlation with Age.

Concerning to the correlation of BDA through Social Media regarding the companies' age, the results were:

BDA_SM_AGE	Age
Age	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,03
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,01
Affecting the making of rules	-0,09
Scanning the business environment	-0,14
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	-0,09
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,06
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,03

Table XLVII – Correlation between using Social Media to BDA and Age

In what concerns to the use of Social Media with BDA's objective, we verified there is no relevant correlation with Age.

About to the correlation of BDA through Youtube regarding the companies' age, the results were:

BDA_YTBE_AGE	Age
Age	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,12
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,15
Affecting the making of rules	0,12
Scanning the business environment	0,02
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,23
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,20
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,20

*Table XLVIII – Correlation between using Youtube to BDA and Age*

In what refers to use Youtube to follow BDA's goal, we verified there is no relevant correlation concerning Age.

About to the correlation of BDA through Blogs regarding the companies' age, the results were:

BDA_BLOGS_AGE	Age
Age	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	-0,08
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,21
Affecting the making of rules	0,11
Scanning the business environment	0,10
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,20
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,27
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,19

Table XLIII – Correlation between using Blogs to BDA and Age

Regarding use Blogs to BDA's objective, we verified there is no relevant correlation with Age. Nevertheless, "Engaging diplomatic missions" has a correlation > 0,25.
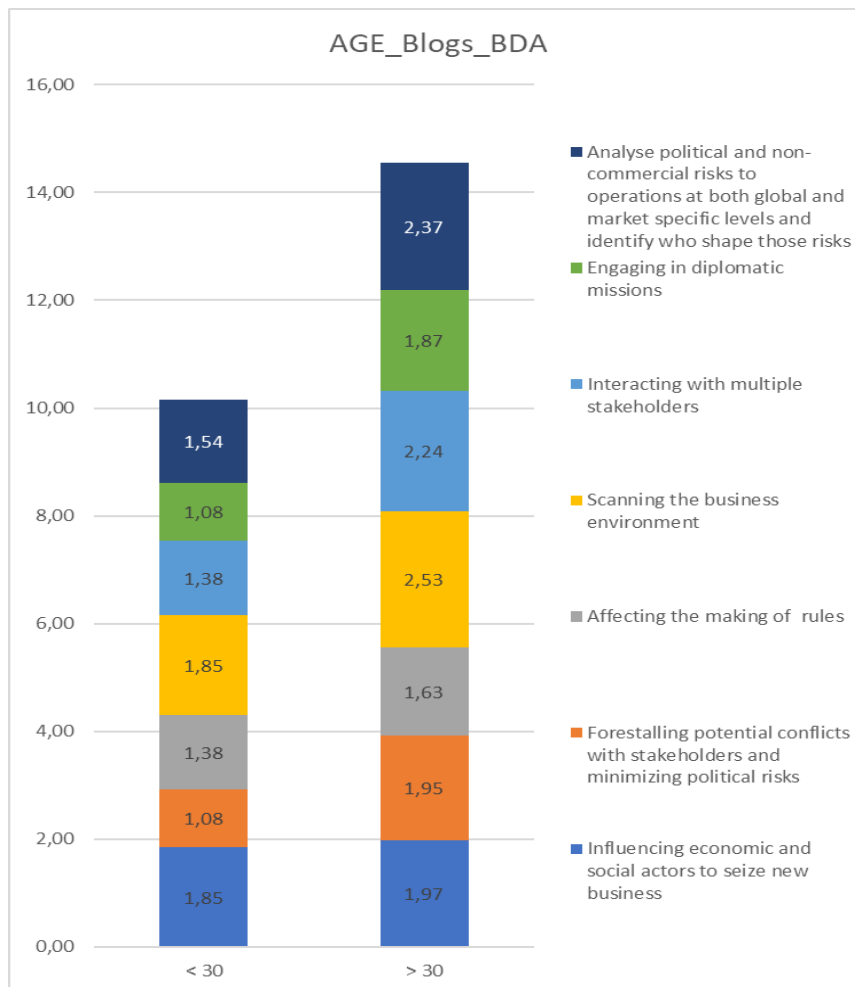
Graphic XI – Means' results for the usage of Blogs to BDA related to companies' Age

Examining the different means, we observed that companies with more than 30 years use more Blogs to pursue their BDAs, when compared with the younger companies.

	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	-0.515267653	0.247416151	0.04327151
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0.197669761	0.274221583	0.47490916
Affecting the making of rules	0.106200576	0.372069281	0.77668343
Scanning the business environment	-0.056802464	0.22390563	0.8009447
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0.222108506	0.289088062	0.44650371
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0.07355984	0.340008421	0.8297403
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0.152575881	0.172708391	0.38191633

Table XLIX – Regression analysis between using Blogs to BDA and Age

In terms of statistics, we verified that "Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business" had a p-value < 0.05.

Respecting to the correlation of BDA through Influencers regarding the companies' age, the results were:

BDA_INF_AGE	Age
Age	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	-0,09
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,00
Affecting the making of rules	-0,08
Scanning the business environment	0,10
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,13
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,15
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,19

Table L – Correlation between using Influencers to BDA and Age

About BDA's goal through Influencers, we verified there is no relevant correlation with Age.

Regarding the correlation of BDA through other DCC concerning the companies' age, the results were:

BDA_OTHER_AGE	Age
Age	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,00
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	-0,01
Affecting the making of rules	-0,04
Scanning the business environment	0,00
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,01
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,10
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,01

Table LI – Correlation between using other DCC to BDA and Age

The results obtained to the use of other DCC to follow BDA's goals, we didn't verify a relevant correlation with age.
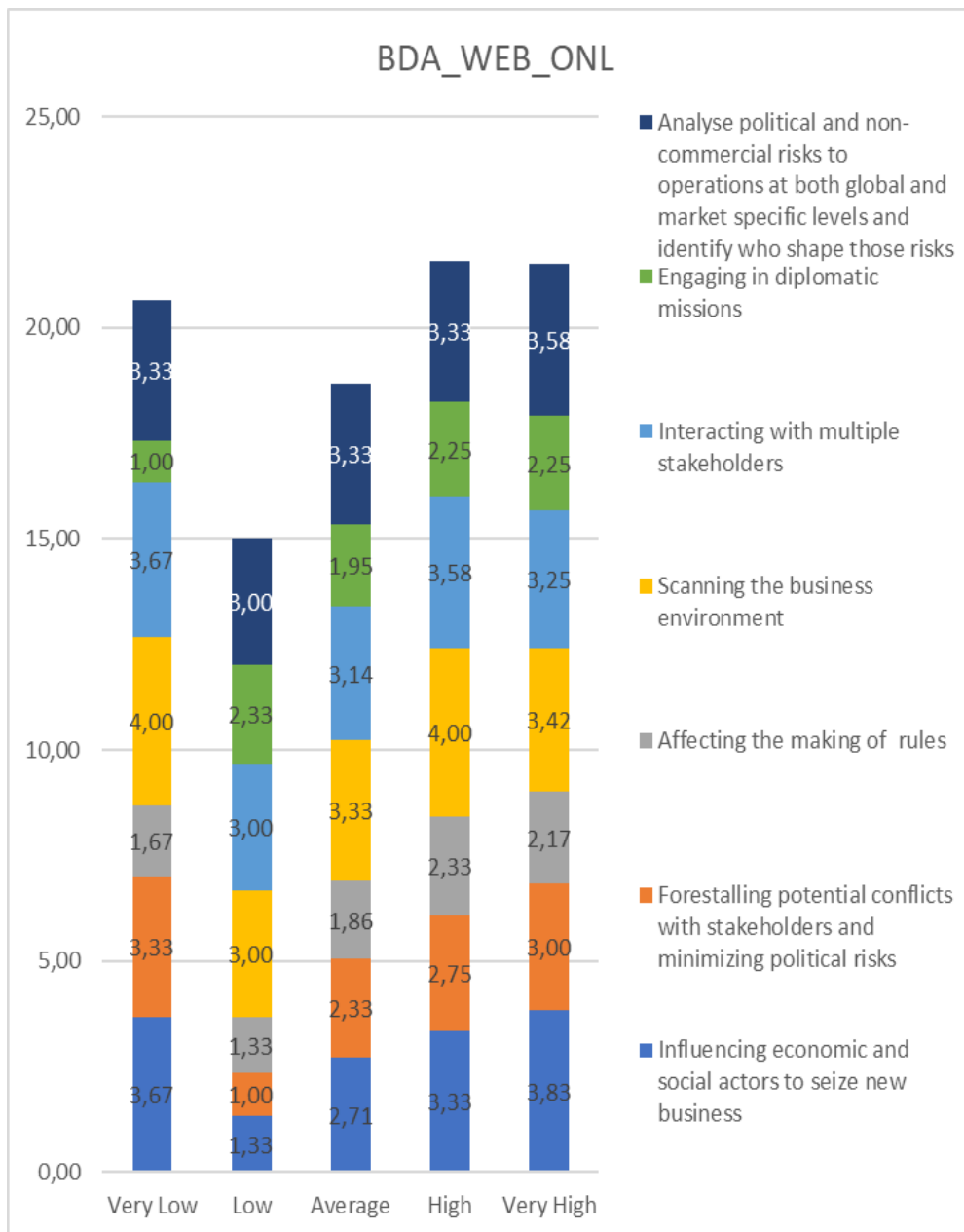
Online Competition

Regarding the correlation of BDA through Website concerning the companies' age, the results were:

BDA_WEB_ONL	Online Competition
Online Competition	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0.26
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0.17
Affecting the making of rules	0.17
Scanning the business environment	0.02
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0.01
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0.17
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0.07

Table LII – Correlation between using website to BDA and Online Competition

In what respects using the company's Website with the BDA's objective, we verified there is no relevant correlation with the level of online competition. However, there was one BDA with a result > 0.25

Graphic XII – Means' results for the usage of Website to BDA related linked to companies' level of Online Competition.

Examining the means differences, we observed that they're very similar, except in what regards to the companies that affirmed to have a "Low" level of online competition.

Concerning the correlation of BDA through Social Media referring to the companies' level of online competition, the results were the following:

BDA_SM_ONL	Online Competition
Online Competition	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,08
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,25
Affecting the making of rules	0,08
Scanning the business environment	0,18
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,26
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,16
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,18

Table LIII – Correlation between using Social Media to BDA and Online Competition

Regarding to use Social Media with BDA's objective, we verified there is no relevant correlation between Online Competition and other variables. Still, "Interacting with multiple stakeholders" has a correlation > 0,25.
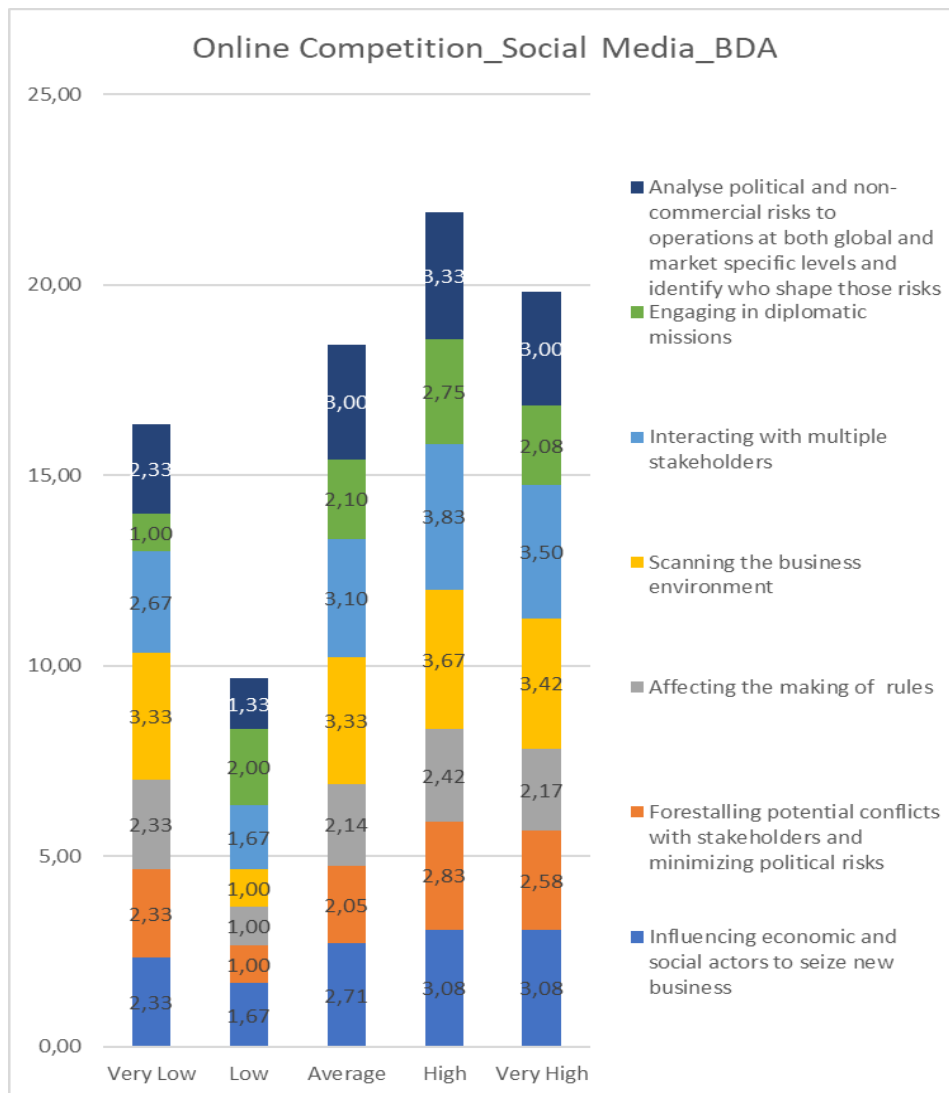
Graphic XIII – Means' results for the usage of Social Media to BDA related linked to companies' level of Online Competition
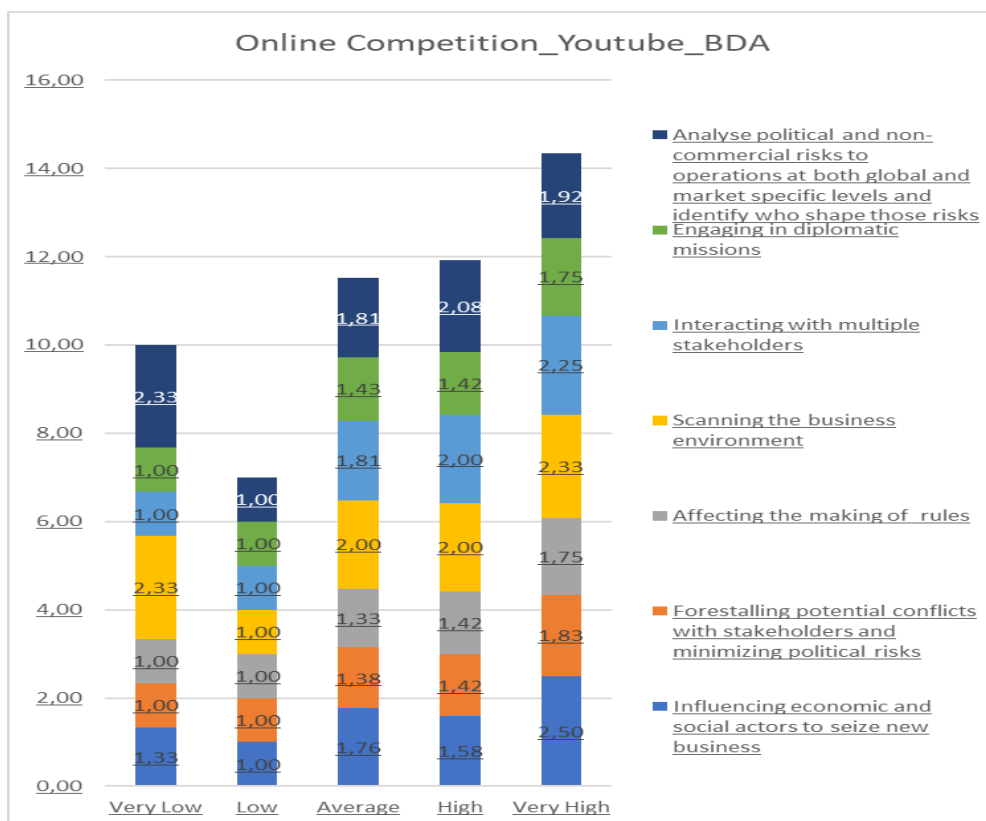
Checking the different means, we stated that companies with a "High" level of online competition use more Social Media to pursue their BDAs than other categories – even than "Very High" –, and the companies that use less Social Media regarding their level of online competition have answered "Low", even more than the companies that affirmed having a "Very Low" level of online competition.

In what regards the correlation of BDA through Youtube concerning to the companies' level of online competition, the results were:

BDA_YTBE_ONL	Online Competition
Online Competition	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,29
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,30
Affecting the making of rules	0,31
Scanning the business environment	0,11
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,27
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,24
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,04

Table LIV – Correlation between using Youtube to BDA and Online Competition

In what refers to use Youtube to follow BDA's goal, we verified there is no relevant correlation with the level of online competition. Yet, "Interacting with multiple stakeholders" has a correlation > 0,25.

Graphic XIV – Means' results for the usage of Youtube to BDA related to companies' level of online competition
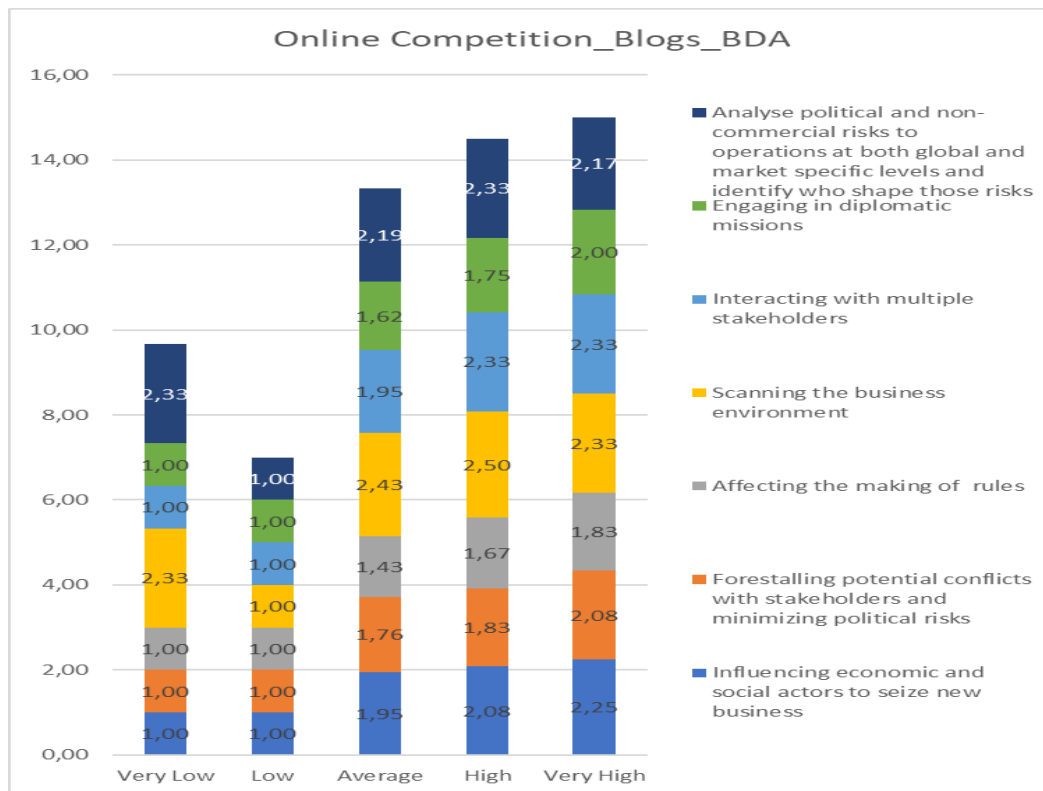
Examining the different means, we observed that companies with a "Very High" level of online competition use more Youtube to pursue their BDA than other categories. The companies that use less Youtube regarding their level of online competition are the ones that have answered "Low", even more than the companies that affirmed "Very Low".

In what regards to the correlation of BDA through Blogs concerning the companies' level of online competition, the results were:

BDA_BLOGS_ONL	Online Competition
Online Competition	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,26
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,24
Affecting the making of rules	0,28
Scanning the business environment	0,10
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,27
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,25
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,06

Table LV – Correlation between using Blogs to BDA and Online Competition

We verified there is no relevant correlation between Online Competition and other variables. However, there was four BDA with a correlation higher or equal 0,25,

Graphic XV – Means results for the usage of Blogs to BDA linked to companies' level of online competition

Observing the different means, we stated that the companies that affirmed to have a "Very High" level of online competition, use more Blogs than the others. The companies that affirmed to have a "Low" level of online competition were the ones who declare to use less Blogs for following BDA, even than the companies that affirmed to have a "Very Low" level of online competition.

Respecting to the correlation of BDA through Blogs in what concerns to the companies' level of online competition, the results were:

BDA_INF_ONL	Online Competition
Online Competition	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,10
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,24
Affecting the making of rules	0,17
Scanning the business environment	0,13
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,19
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,19
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,08

Table LVI – Correlation between using Influencers to BDA and Online Competition

We observed there is no relevant correlation between Online Competition and other variables.

About the correlation of BDA through Blogs referring the companies' level of online competition, the results were:

BDA_OTHER_ONL	Online Competition
Online Competition	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	-0,04
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,02
Affecting the making of rules	-0,04
Scanning the business environment	-0,10
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,00
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,04
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	-0,08

Table LVII – Correlation between using other DCC to BDA and Online Competition

The results obtained to the use of other DCC to pursue BDA's objectives, we didn't verify a relevant correlation with Online Competition.

Reputation

Regarding the correlation of BDA through Website concerning corporate reputation, the results were:

BDA_WEB_REP	Reputation
Reputation	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,03
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	-0,16
Affecting the making of rules	-0,10
Scanning the business environment	-0,07
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	-0,11
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,04
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,00

*Table LVIII – Correlation between using website to BDA and Reputation*

In what refers to use the company's Website for BDA, we verified there is no relevant correlation with corporate reputation.

Concerning the correlation of BDA through Social Media in what respects to corporate reputation, the results were as follows:

BDA_SM_REP	Reputation
Reputation	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,11
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,13
Affecting the making of rules	-0,03
Scanning the business environment	-0,05
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,19
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,28
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,25

Table LIX – Correlation between using Social Media to BDA and Reputation

In what respects to use Social Media with BDA's objective, we verified there is no relevant correlation with reputation. Still, there was one BDA with a result > 0.25.
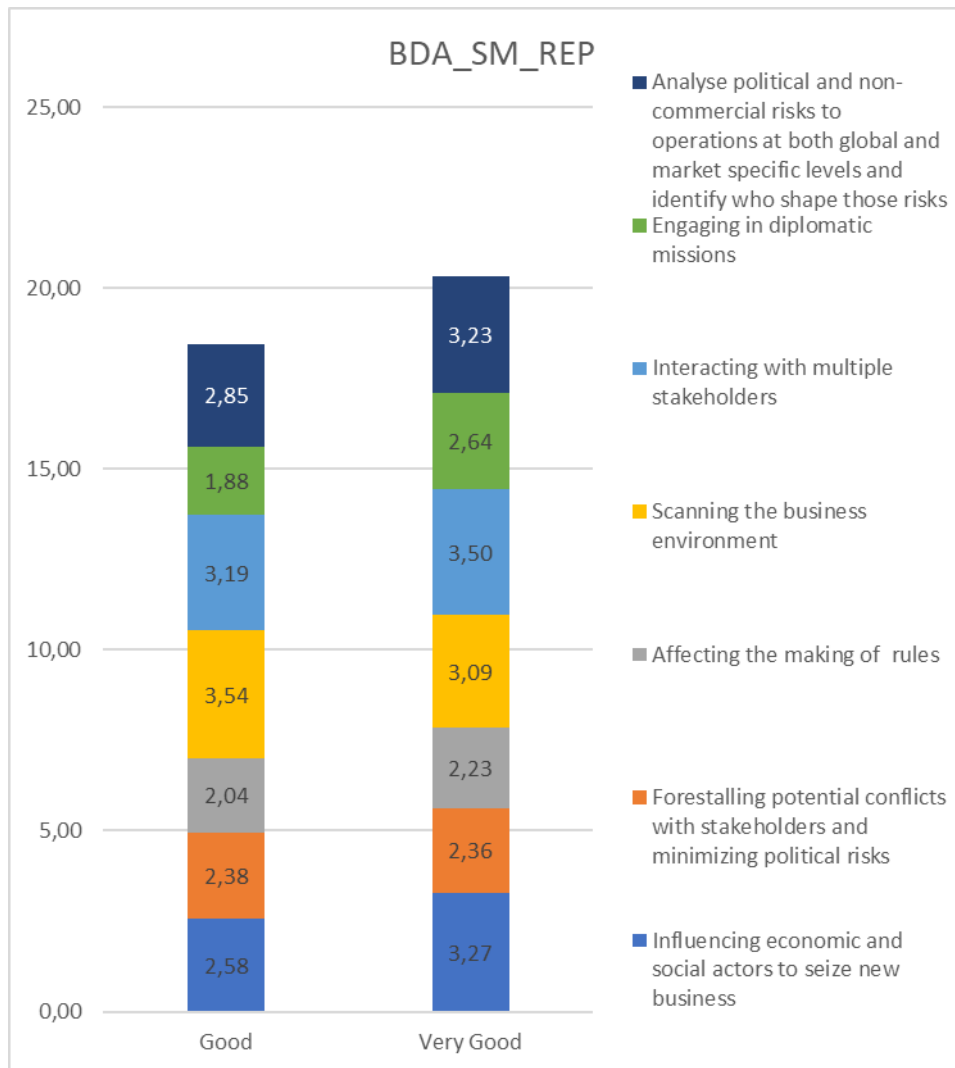
Graphic XVI – Means results for the usage of Social Media to BDA linked to Corporate Reputation

Observing the different means, we stated that the companies that affirmed to have a "Very good" corporate reputation, use more Social Media than the others that affirmed to have "Good". This is true for every BDA, except for "Scanning the business environment" and "Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks".

	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	-0.024296254	0.088127979	0.78410459
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0.089875357	0.099709545	0.37241188
Affecting the making of rules	-0.106858077	0.090575376	0.24457785
Scanning the business environment	-0.194719336	0.08851016	0.03323196
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	-0.011690857	0.103206606	0.91033876
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0.108209431	0.084151626	0.20536434
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0.188539295	0.113164812	0.10297123

Table LX – Regression analysis between using Social Media to BDA and Reputation

Examining the statistical relevance, we verified that "Scanning the business environment" had a p-value < 0.05, being, therefore, statistical relevant.

In what refers to the correlation of BDA through Youtube in what respects to corporate reputation, the results were the following:

BDA_YTBE_REP	Reputation
Reputation	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,12
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,17
Affecting the making of rules	0,16
Scanning the business environment	0,18
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,16
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,19
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,31

Table LXI – Correlation between using Youtube to BDA and Online Competition

Regarding to Youtube, we verified there is no relevant correlation with corporate reputation.

Respecting to the correlation of BDA through Blogs in what refers to corporate reputation, the results were the following:

BDA_BLOGS_REP	Reputation
Reputation	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,30
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,27
Affecting the making of rules	0,22
Scanning the business environment	0,41
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,46
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,36
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,40

Table LXII – Correlation between for using Blogs to BDA and Reputation

With regard to Blogs, we verified there is no relevant correlation between Reputation and other variables. Nevertheless, six of the BDA have a correlation > 0.25.
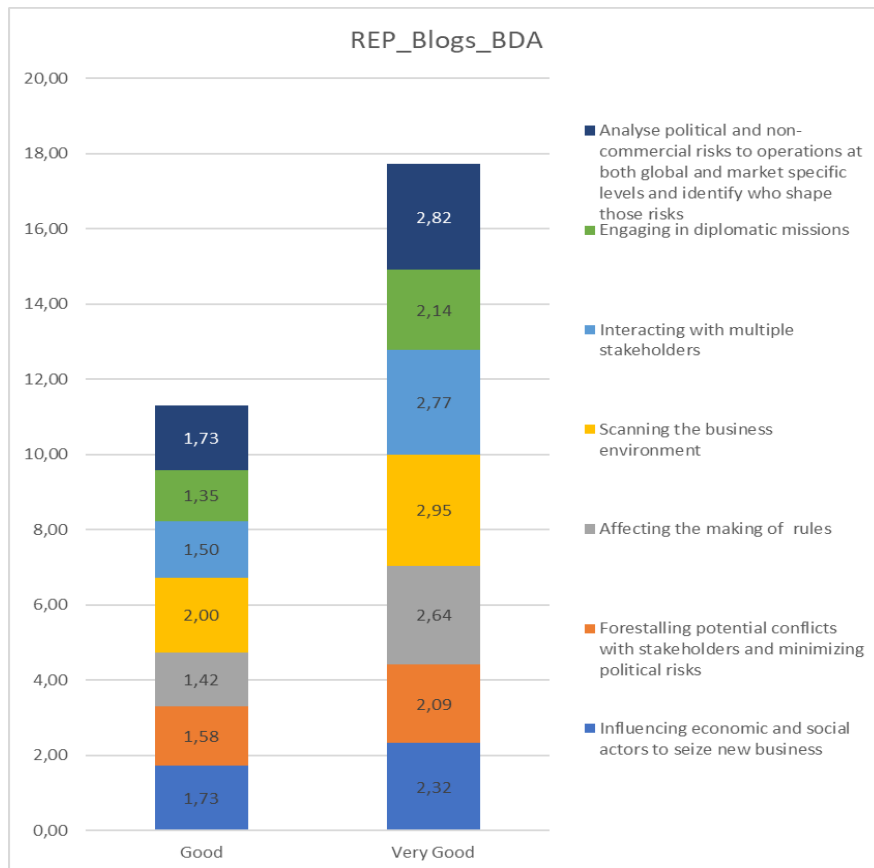
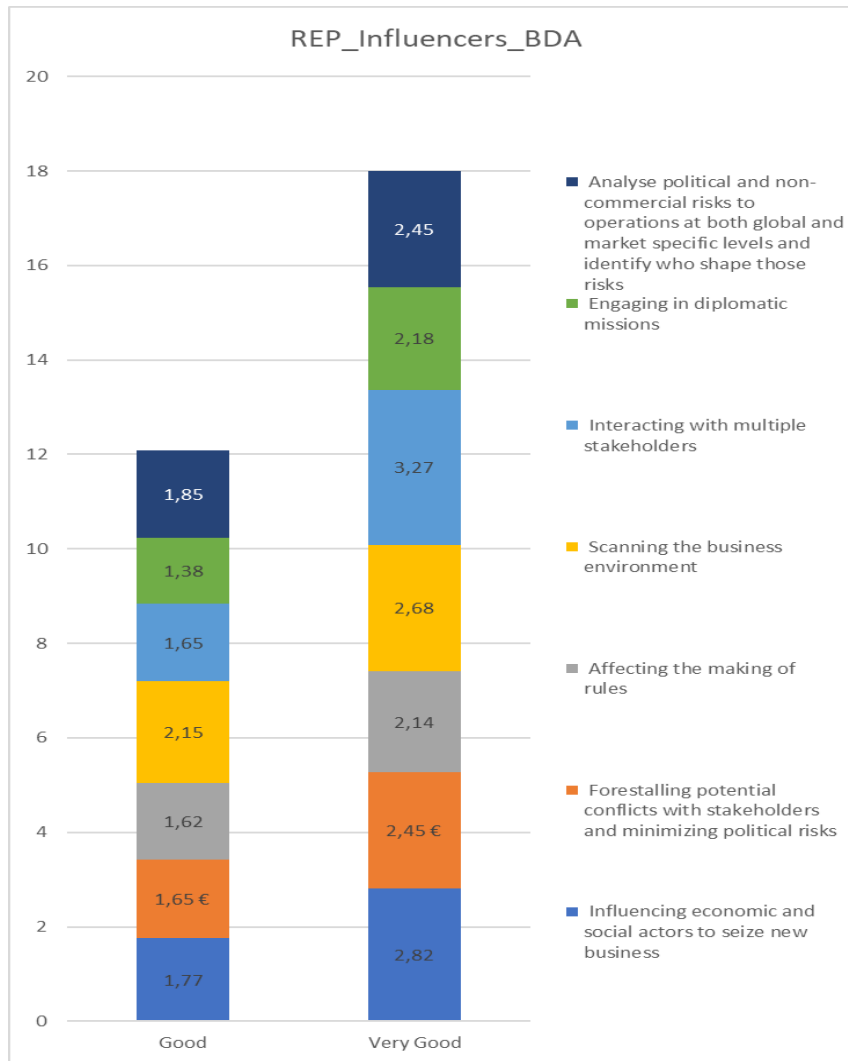*Graphic XVII – Means results for the usage of Blogs to BDA linked to Corporate Reputation*

Checking the different means, we observed that companies with a self-perception of "Very Good" reputation use more Blogs to work on their BDA, when compared with the companies that have "Good" reputation.

In what concerns to the correlation of BDA through Influencers referring to corporate reputation, the results were:

BDA_INF_REP	Reputation
Reputation	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,45
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,39
Affecting the making of rules	0,30
Scanning the business environment	0,33
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,49
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0,35
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,32

Table LXIII – Correlation between using Influencers to BDA and Reputation

Respecting to Influencers, we verified there is no relevant correlation between Reputation and other variables. Nonetheless, all the BDA have a correlation > 0.25.

Graphic XVIII – Means' results for the usage of Influencers to BDA linked to Corporate Reputation

Examining the different means, we stated that companies with a self-perception of "Very Good" reputation use more influencers to follow their BDA, when compared with the companies that have "Good" reputation.

	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0.23187642	0.152946295	0.136820678
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	-0.134733346	0.147103721	0.36482381
Affecting the making of rules	-0.100105313	0.137907555	0.471840627
Scanning the business environment	-0.008421868	0.096071639	0.930552005
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0.207624835	0.087252736	0.021839476
Engaging in diplomatic missions	0.013449301	0.15542811	0.931446252
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	-0.013547134	0.108833923	0.901519051

Table LXIV – Regression analysis between using Influencers to BDA and Reputation

We verified that "Scanning the business environment" had a p-value < 0.05, being, therefore, statistical relevant.

In what refers to the correlation of BDA through other DCC concerning corporate reputation, the results were the following:

BDA_OTHER_REP	Reputation
Reputation	1
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	0,15
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	0,06
Affecting the making of rules	0,07
Scanning the business environment	0,10
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	0,05
Engaging in diplomatic missions	-0,05
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	0,02

Table LXV – Correlation between using other DCC to BDA and Reputation

In the results obtained to the use of other DCC to follow BDA's goals, we didn't verify a relevant correlation with corporate reputation.

4.2 Analysis of the results

As stated in the beginning there were three main questions that this study tries to answer. The first was about the importance and engagement given for companies to BDA.

So, to the question "How frequently do you perform the following activities?", the results obtained showed that the BDA with lower mean was "Engaging in diplomatic missions", which coincides with Nobre (2018). Though, the author affirmed that *"it is very probable that some of the respondents engage in diplomatic missions, but do not recognize it with that specific name"* (Nobre 2018: 46). If we round the means obtained in this question "Engaging in diplomatic missions" and "Affecting the making of rules"

got a result correspondent to "Sometimes". On the other hand, all the other BDA have a higher mean, correspondent to "Frequently". Nevertheless, the two BDA with means higher than the correspondent value for "Frequently" were "Scanning the business environment" and "Interacting with multiple stakeholders".

Secondly, other main question was about the importance given for business diplomats to digital communications on their daily work. We observed that business diplomats use Websites and Social Media "Sometimes" to pursue their BDA, meanwhile the other DCC mean's results rounded stayed at the "Rarely" level.

In what respects the relation of BDA with the variables level of revenues, age, online competition and corporate reputation, the results showed that these variables affected the means' results, nonetheless, for the small dimension of the sample, this part is not statistically relevant.

Although, looking at the level of revenues, companies with a level of revenues > 1000 Million € perform more BDA than the companies with a level of revenues < 1000 Million €. This is true for all BDA, except for "Scanning the business environment" and "Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business" (Graphic II). Curiously, the only BDA with a p-value < 0.05, and therefore statistically relevant was "Engaging in diplomatic missions" – the BDA with lower mean (Table XXII). Observing the correlations between BDA, level of revenues and DCC, in that ones where there was a correlation > 0,25, we checked the means' differences, and conclude that for Website, Youtube and Blogs, in all BDA, companies with a level of revenues > 1000 Million € perform more BDA through these DCC than the companies with a level of revenues < 1000 Million €. However, only considering Website there is statistical relevance, regarding to the BDA "Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks", with a p-value < 0.05 (Table XL).

Examining the age' variable, companies with more than 30 years old perform more BDA than the younger companies, this being true for all BDA (Graphic III). Again, the only BDA statistically relevant, with a p-value < 0.05, was "Engaging in diplomatic missions" (Table XXIV). Seeing the correlations between BDA, age and DCC, we stated that companies with more than 30 years old perform more BDA through Blogs

than the companies younger, being, "Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business" the only BDA with a p-value < 0.05 (Table XLIX).

In what concerns to the online competition' variable, we observed that there was no relevant correlation. On the other hand, analysing the correlations between BDA, online competition and DCC, we verified that Websites, Social Media, Youtube and Blogs had a correlation > 0.25, which made us analyse the different means and conclude that the companies that answered having a "Low" online competition are the ones that are less engaged in BDA, even less than the companies that answered having a "Very Low" level of online competition. The companies that answered "High" and "Very High" are the ones who engage more in BDA, with prevalence for those who answered "Very High" in all the DCC considered, apart from Website.

Concerning the variables related with corporate reputation, companies that consider themselves with "Very Good" reputation perform more BDA than the companies that only evaluate themselves with "Good" reputation, being this true for all BDA, apart from "Engaging in diplomatic missions" (Graphic IV). The only BDA with a p-value < 0.05, hence statistically relevant, was "Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business" (Table XXVII). Perceiving the correlations between BDA, corporate reputation and DCC, in those where was a correlation > 0.25, we verified the means' differences, and conclude that for Blogs and Influencers in all BDA, the companies that consider themselves with "Very Good" reputation perform more BDA than the companies that only evaluate themselves with "Good" reputation (Graphic XVII and Graphic XVIII). The Influencers' correlation has a p-value < 0.05 in what respects to the BDA "Interacting with multiple stakeholders". Regarding Social Media, we verified that "Scanning the business environment" and "Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks" are more performed by companies that consider themselves with "Good" reputation, more than those who declare having a "Very Good" reputation. This correlation has a p-value < 0.05 in what respects to "Scanning the business environment" (Table LX).

On the other hand, the results for the question "How often does your organization currently use the following channels in the relation with stakeholders?" showed that Website and Social Media were "Frequently" used for organizations to interact with stakeholders. The result for influencers of the mean, rounded, reached to "Sometimes",

meanwhile Youtube and Blogs result was that they were "Rarely" used for organizations. In what regards other DCC, the mean's result states that these DCC are "Never" used for organizations to interact with stakeholders. Thus, for the results obtained (Table VII and Table VIII), we can state that the means for the organizations are higher than for business diplomats, meaning that companies use more DCC to interact with stakeholders than business diplomats do.

In what respects the relation of Stakeholders Interaction through DCC – with the variables level of revenues, age, online competition and corporate reputation – the results showed that these variables affected the means' results.

Considering the level of revenues, we stated that companies with a level of revenues > 1000 Million €, use more DCC to interact with stakeholders, except when considered "other" DCC, than the companies with a level of revenues < 1000 Million €. However, only Website and Social Media results had a p-value < 0.05, being statistically relevant.

Concerning the age, we observed that there is no correlation. However, considering the means' results, we see that companies with more than 30 years old use more DCC than the companies with less than 30 years old, except in what regards Social Media (Table XXIX).

In respect to online competition, we verified that there is no relevant correlation, nonetheless, regarding the means' results, we state that companies that consider themselves with a "Very High" level of online competition use more DCC to interact with stakeholders than other companies (Table XXX).

Regarding corporate reputation, we verified that companies that consider themselves with "Very Good" reputation interact more with stakeholders through DCC than the companies that only evaluate themselves with "Good" reputation, this being true for all DCC, except to Website (Table XXXI). Though, concerning Influencers, we verified a p-value < 0.05, therefore, with statistical relevance (Table XXXVII).

5. Final Remarks

5.1 Conclusion

Nowadays, BD is already a reality, companies are aware of its pertinence, and, in the future, they would probably have specialized agents in this area, nonetheless, the precise role of a business diplomat is not yet transversal. How BD is performed is what differs (and will always differ, since specific contexts will always need specific and different approaches). As a result of this heterogeneity, the exact functions of a business diplomat are hard to define.

Having this premise and considering the descriptive results of the obtained sample, we can develop some thoughts:

Firstly, the companies with a level of revenues above 1000 Million € tend to perform more in BDA than the companies with a lower level of revenues. This makes sense following the idea that larger companies feel the need to have more people involved in BD since they probably have more stakeholders to engage and deal with than smaller companies. Allied to an easier access to money, larger companies could be more open to invest in having people assigned with this variety of functions.

Secondly, older companies tend to engage more in BDA than companies that are younger. In this study we finish by dividing the companies into two categories; < 30 or > 30 years old, and the results of the descriptive analysis displayed that the older companies perform more frequently BDA than younger ones. The idea that an older company is better established than a new one in the market, makes it more available to have this type of concerns.

Thirdly, companies with "Very Good" reputation in this study, also perform more BDA than companies that have a "Good" reputation. For an organization with a solid reputation, it is easier to perform these types of BDA, as is "influencing economic and social actors to seize new business", however, we shouldn't forget that reputation is a fragile resource that should be a target of constant management.

Fourthly, considering the companies that where assumed to have a "High" or "Very High" level of online competition, we observed that they tend to perform more BDA through DCC than the companies with lower levels of online competition. To a

company that has online market as a priority, makes sense that these should invest in being proactive in DCC, as a privileged channel to reach to its stakeholders.

Moreover, we verified that "Affecting the making of rules" was the BDA less performed through BDA. This could be explained by the necessity of discretion of these political topics, often connected to 'backstage' manoeuvres. On the other hand, "Scanning the business environment" was the BDA that participants affirmed to perform more thorough BDA, what could be justified due to the fact that companies tend to highlight their achievements – with the idea of improving the admiration and respect of stakeholders –, making easier to rivals to be aware of their accomplishments.

Finally, we observed that companies interact more with stakeholders through DCC than business diplomats use DCC in the practice of their functions. There are other forums where BD is done, and it is not made mainly, at least until nowadays, through digital. However, noting that BD involves the active managing and engaging with multiple stakeholders, considering the various points of view, Digital will certainly win more prominence.

5.2 Research Limitations

The main limitations to this investigation are related to the size and accuracy of the obtained data.

The process of collecting surveys was something turbulent, with difficulty to find who were the right people inside the companies to complete the questionnaires and to convince them to fill these out. This process took a considerable period, and perseverance and patience were skills highly trained meanwhile. There were several cases where, by the company's policy, people were not allowed to answer the survey.

As Business Diplomats commonly are not an official role apart of other responsibilities, it was hard for some of the people to understand the full scope of the survey, what could have promoted biased answers.

Furthermore, the considerable complexity of some questions, demotivated some people that started the survey for being available to answer and complete the survey.

All these motives helped to cause a low response rate that necessarily had a considerable influence in the statistical relevance of the sample, contributing for a more descriptive dissertation.

Looking back — this ending up being a quite descriptive study — maybe it would not be a bad thing to extend the range of possible answers for the questions, i.e. for example, to extend the 5-point Likert scales to 7 points or provide higher options regarding the level of revenues and the companies' age. It could have helped to get more widespread results, potentially constituting a more interesting piece to read and forming a more accurate representation of the reality.

Finally, the sample is not large enough to be statistically relevant and, therefore, to allow us to take solid conclusions. There are some parts of the study that are statistical relevant, but it is not something that we can generalize to the majority of the study.

5.3 Future Research

As proposals for future investigations, BD – and in specific the role of business diplomats – is a world of possibilities.

We think that it could be interesting to study how companies are adapting themselves to this new paradigm, how they are incorporating the role of business diplomats in their structures, and how this is affecting company's daily practice.

Moreover, studying the practice differences through different variables regarding culture, geography and demography could be a fruitful investigation. One possible path could pass for pursuing an investigation through interviews to business diplomats in different contexts working for the same industry, as a way of illustrating if there are differences or not.

Additionally, considering GDPs or the Index of Economic Freedom as variables to the practice's study, differences and implementation of BD could be a prolific path to future researches.

Also, in what respects the use of DCC, the prevalence or not of these communication channels considering the Digital Adoption Index of World Bank (or the Digital Economy and Society Index, if preferable the European Union context), could be an upcoming investigation.

More specifically, to study the importance of influencers in industries where publicity is limited as is the tobacco industry among others, could be an interesting development of this study.

In another point of view, to understand how business diplomacy is observed by external stakeholders could be a fertile area of investigation. In particular, the local communities where companies operate – if they feel listened, if they feel their interests as community fulfilled, if they recognize the role of the company in the fulfilment of those needs, what local communities (should) expect of those companies, etc.

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7. Annexes

7.1. Survey

Business Diplomacy, Digital Communications and Corporate Reputation

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Q1 This is a short questionnaire about how companies manage relationships with external Stakeholders, Corporate Reputation and Digital Communications. Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be used to complement a Master thesis on Business Administration.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Completion of this survey will take approximately 6-7 minutes.

Thank you very much for your time and support. Please start with the survey now by clicking on the Next button below.

Page Break

Q2 Nowadays we are witnessing a reconfiguration of power within business-government-society, aligned with a huge proliferation of non-state actors as new stakeholders.

Does your company review itself in the new business environment of multiple stakeholder's management?

◯ Yes

◯ No

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Q3 How frequently do you perform the following activities?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently
Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	○	○	○	○	○
Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	○	○	○	○	○
Affecting the making of rules	○	○	○	○	○
Scanning the business environment	○	○	○	○	○
Interacting with multiple stakeholders	○	○	○	○	○
Engaging in diplomatic missions	○	○	○	○	○
Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks	○	○	○	○	○

*

Q4 How often does your organization currently use digital communications in carrying out the following activities? Answer: 1 - Never used; 2 - Rarely; 3 - Medium; 4 - Frequently; 5 - Very Frequently	Influencing economic and social actors to seize new business	Forestalling potential conflicts with stakeholders and minimizing political risks	Affecting the making of rules	Scanning the business environment	Interacting with multiple stakeholders	Engaging in diplomatic missions	Analyse political and non-commercial risks to operations at both global and market specific levels and identify who shape those risks
Website							
Social Media (e. g. Facebook, Instagram, Google +, Linkedin, Twitter)							
Youtube							
Blogs							
Influencers							
Other							

Q5

How often does your organization currently use the following channels in the relation with stakeholders?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently
Website	○	○	○	○	○
Social Media (e. g. Facebook, Instagram, Google +, Linkedin, Twitter)	○	○	○	○	○
Youtube	○	○	○	○	○
Blogs	○	○	○	○	○
Influencers	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○

Q6 Corporate Reputation

Q7 Which feeling does your company transmit to stakeholders?

○ VeryBad Feeling

○ Bad Feeling

○ NeitherGoodorBad Feeling

○ Good Feeling

○ VeryGood Feeling

Q8 What level of trustworthiness does your company transmit to stakeholders?

○ VeryLow

○ Low

○ Average

○ High

○ VeryHigh

Q9 What level of admiration and respect does your company transmit to stakeholders?

○ VeryLow

○ Low

○ Average

○ High

○ VeryHigh

Q10 What is the stakeholders' view regarding your company's overall Reputation?

○ VeryBadReputation

○ BadReputation

○ NeitherGoodorBadReputation

○ GoodReputation

○ VeryGoodReputation

Q11 Company Information

Q12 What are your company Total Revenues (in million €)?

○ 0 - 5

○ 6 - 10

○ 11 - 15

○ 16 - 30

○ 31 - 50

○ 51 - 100

○ 101 - 500

○ 501 - 1000

○ > 1001

Q13 How many people are employed by your company?

○ 1 - 100

○ 101 - 500

○ 501 - 1000

○ 1001 - 5000

○ > 5001

Q14 How many employees work in the country where your headquarters is located?

○ 1 - 100

○ 101 - 500

○ 501 - 1000

○ 1001 - 5000

○ > 5001

Q15 How many employees work in countries other than where headquarters is located?

○ 1 - 100

○ 101 - 500

○ 501 - 1000

○ 1001 - 5000

○ > 5001

Q16 Number of countries in which your company operates:

○ 1 - 5

○ 6 - 10

○ 11 - 15

○ 16 - 30

○ > 30

Q17 In which sector(s) does your company operates? Please select all that apply

☐ Basic Material

☐ Conglomerates

☐ Consumergoods

☐ Financial

☐ HealthCare

☐ Industrial Goods

☐ Technology

☐ Utilities

☐ Education

☐ Media

☐ Tourism

☐ Diversifiedservices

☐ Other _____

Q18 How old is your company (years)?

○ 1 - 5

○ 6 - 10

○ 11 - 15

○ 16 - 30

○ > 30

Q19 What is the degree of competition online to your business?

○ VeryLow

○ Low

○ Medium

○ High

○ VeryHigh

Q20 What is your department and job title? (e.g. Manager, Marketing Director, CEO)

_____

Q21 What is the name of your company (optional, but we would truly appreciate your answer)?

_____