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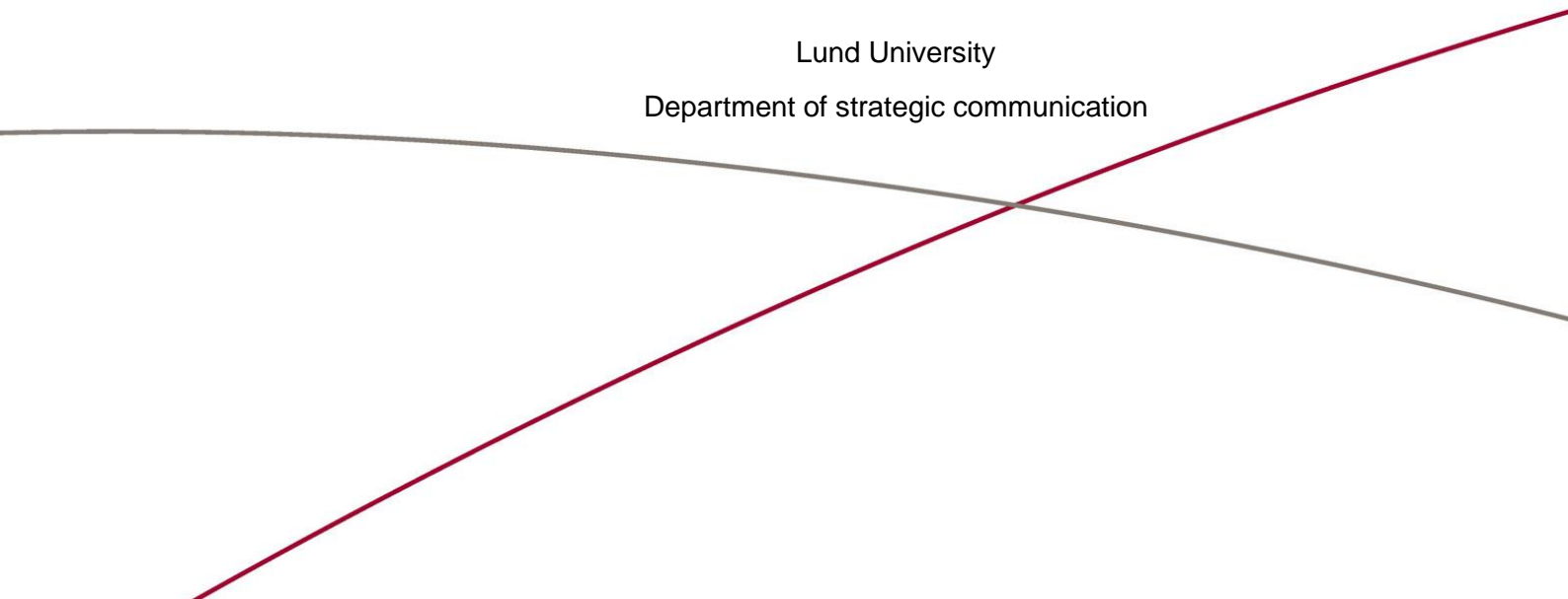
"Champions master their own success"

- A study on online self-promotion as a tactic to gain employment in a Swedish public relations agency.

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Abstract

As the Internet and various social media platforms become key mechanisms in people's lives additional stages for self-construction and self-presentation have become accessible. In a competitive job market with a range of possibilities to be heard and seen, people are advised to stick their necks out to gain employment. Since communication has to a large extent become digital, conditions of working in industries such as the public relations industry have changed and more focus is being put on managing the digital arena. The present study aims at exploring perceptions of online self-promotion in order to see if it can help a first-job seeker gain employment in a public relations agency today. By analyzing 10 Swedish news articles and carrying out 10 interviews with PR agency recruiters the findings suggest that self-promotion does not determine whether an applicant gets employed. There is a skepticism towards the concept of self-promotion among the agency recruiters which is displayed in their argumentation as they appear to view the "online world" as simply a representation of the "offline world" where true evidence of who someone is can be collected. The findings show that the recruiters ascribe self-promotion with significance, especially as a way for young adults without experience to be seen, and to get a chance to come to an interview. However, its role ends there, and what is described as most important is to present someone likeable in the offline world.

Keywords: self-promotion, self-description, Impression management, 'the self', social saturation, authenticity, social media, young adults, first-job seekers.

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1. Introduction

”Failing to toot your horn – with the *right* people, in the *right* way, and at the *right* time – doesn't serve anyone.” – Margie Warrell (Forbes 130429)

With social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and numerous blogging sites we are provided with platforms to easily upload job qualifications and share personal and professional information. Increasingly, companies have started using these platforms to recruit people and to do checks of CV's and references of potential candidates (Roberts & Roach 2009, p.111; Tulgan 2009, p.24).

In the public relations industry much has changed due to technical advancement, from an emphasis on traditional media channels for communication to a bigger focus on online communication. Today, many public relations agencies not simply use social media to help their clients with their communication, they search for future PR professionals on these platforms. However, these new social platforms do not simply provide us with new benefits they also bring new challenges in for example the presentation of 'the self' (Miller 1995, p.1).

Social media provides stages for identity construction where different aspects of 'the self' can be expressed, and a place for people to strategically create and manage personal profiles to control how they are perceived by others (Labrecque 2011, p.38; Rosenberg & Egbert 2011, p.1). Even though people have always been involved in identity construction, it remains a fact that online communication provides new forms and ways to display 'the self' and market claims about who we are. No longer constrained by physical reality (Chester & Bretherton 2007, p.223; Miller 1995, p.7).

Today, business management experts and "self-help" gurus advise people to actively engage in self-promotion, for the purpose of being successful in today's job market and gain employment (Salenbacher 2013; Shepherd 2005 p.590). A new management and consultancy industry concerning personal development has also emerged, focusing on encouraging individuals to market themselves professionally in a similar way that businesses market their products (Shepherd 2005, p.589).

The generation likely to be applying for their first jobs today, or in the beginning of their careers, is Generation Y (Tulgan 2009, p.5). Gen Y consists of individuals born between 1978 and 1990, and they are the ones who have grown up with the Internet and who frequently engages in social media. For this generation the construction of the self is sought after and constantly experimented upon, and the menu of options available for them today is infinite (Tulgan 2009, p.8).

Despite recommendations made by experts to engage in self-promotion, particularly online, little research has been conducted with the purpose of exploring the thoughts and concerns of the people who are the actual targets of online self-promotion, most commonly, recruiters. Without conducting research to help better understand the views and concerns of recruiters targeted by self-promotional acts, the question of its role in today's job market, and whether it contributes to employment or not, remains unanswered.

1.1 Problem statement

In a public relations agency a key task is to portray a favorable image of the clients that the agency is representing, one could call it; to Impression manage for others. Due to the rise of the Internet and social media, much of the Impression management for clients occurs online.

For this reason it is particularly interesting to explore a phenomenon such as online self-promotion in an industry where image-creation is already a common feature, and digital platforms are key mechanisms in the everyday environment.

Applying for your first job in a public relations agency today an assumption is that it requires familiarity with digital communication channels. Some recruiters might see it as beneficial that not only do applicants know how to use online communication channels, they have established an online presence of their own, while others might put less thought to the applicant's presence online. Questions of its importance can therefore be raised. Does it play a part in the recruitment process? And if so, what role does it have? Does self-promotion on a blog for example help prove an applicant's writing skills? Or is a Twitter account where an applicant shares interesting thoughts on PR an advantage because the account has 10 000 followers and displays a big social capital? What does self-promotion online really say about an applicant? And does it matter? So far no previous studies have been conducted to find this out.

Taking a closer look at Sweden, it is a country where the number of Internet users is high, and a lot of people are active on social media platforms (Svenskarna och Internet 2013)[1]. In Sweden there are several PR agencies, both national and international, many of which recruit through social media, which is displayed when for example searching on the platform LinkedIn.

Historically, Sweden is a country with the famous "Law of Jante" which says that you should not brag about your own achievements and act as though you are better than others (International Business Times 130823).

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[1] 95% of the Swedish population between 16-75 years old use the internet, according to numbers from 2013 (http://www.soi2013.se)

Some might argue that this is changing and that "Jante" is outdated today, because of the rise of social media providing Swedes, and particularly the younger generation, with platforms to show off (BBC 130507). However, it might still be something rooted in the Swedish culture and affect the way some people reason. For motives stated, Sweden with its several PR-agencies, a population which is up-to-date with technology, but historically has been connected with the "Law of Jante", is an interesting country in which to conduct a study on online self-promotion.

1.2 Aim of research and research questions

To help close the gap in research on the subject this thesis has as its aim to explore if online self-promotion is essential in order for a first-job seeker to gain employment in a public relations agency today. The following research questions will help guide the research.

1. What is common advice in Swedish news media when it comes to self-promotion?

2. Which indications make PR agency recruiters in Sweden label an activity as self-promotion (as opposed to legitimate self-description)?
   - When is self-promotion positive and when is it negative?

3. What importance do Swedish PR agency recruiters attribute to online self-promotion activities of first job-seekers in public relations?

4. What role, if any, does the act of online self-promotion play in the course of the recruitment process in PR agencies in Sweden?

1.3 Background

Having access to wide-ranging online resources and social media platforms the way we communicate has fundamentally changed and enabled new ways in which we can interact with one another. This has not only changed the way we communicate privately but also how companies conduct their work.

Studies by Blum & Tremarco (2008) & Cafasso (2007) showed that Generation Y can pose a challenge for the public relations practice since some PR recruiters in their studies complained about the selfishness of this generation which has grown up with the Internet, and have a range of possibilities for self-construction accessible (as cited in Derville-Gallicano et al. 2012, p.222; Tulgan 2009, p.8).

With several platforms to promote who we are some scholars argue that the risk of increasing self-promotion is that people might lie in order to achieve the immediate goal of employment, and that the Internet helps make it possible to communicate an idealized self rather than displaying a more real and honest identity (Back et al. 2010, p. 372; Weiss & Feldman 2006, p.1072). Author and marketing strategist, Geoff Livingston for example says: "The personal branding movement has reduced individual communications to a contrived popularity contest … I've heard all the arguments for doing this right, and while they sound good, personal branding has diminished authenticity, turning it into a fool's pursuit." (Forbes 111013)

Although there seems to be concerns related to self-promotion a growing industry of personal development, where experts tell people to engage in self-promotion, is taking place. Hence, the impression is that self-promotion a as a phenomenon appears very complex and needs further investigation.

Self-promotion has previously been researched in order to study how it is used by people in different settings, or which characteristics people that engage in this type of behavior possess (Bolino & Turnley 2003; Bolino et al; 2008; Carpenter 2012; Chiaburu et al. 2013; De Cuyper & De Witte 2010; Kristof-Brown et al. 2002; Roberts & Roach 2009). Research on particularly self-promotion is however limited. A greater extent of previous research has focused on exploring the wider concept of Impression Management, under which self-promotion is considered a tactic.

Studying self-promotion in a public relations context it is worth acknowledging that there is extensive literature carried out on public relations roles and functions (Broom, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Dozier 1984; Grunig et al, 2006; Guth, 1995; Toth et al. 1998). Previous research has focused on investigating for example gender roles and different functional roles in the industry. Four of the most discussed roles that communicators play in an organization have been identified as: the manager, the senior adviser, technician, and media relations roles (Grunig et al. 2006). These theories however do not put emphasis on first-job seekers, which make them inaccurate to include in this study.

1.4 Expected contribution to research

Noticed when reviewing previous research on self-promotion there is a lack of research on online self-promotion from the view of the target/audience to that type of behavior. Further on, more specific research on online self-promotion and employability in the public relations industry is absent. With an objective to provide scholarship with a different insight than what has been done in previous studies this study takes another, equally important, approach when studying the phenomenon.

The expected contribution of the study at hand is to expand the knowledge on self-promotion in an online context and its potential to influence organizational processes, such as the recruitment process. This thesis can be seen as a first step to fill a gap in research by exploring cues and concerns related to an emerging trend in the ever-changing media landscape that we are part of today.

This study belongs well within the field of strategic public relations because it explores strategically managed presentations, on particularly digital platforms, which have become key components in public relations in later years. It also explores a phenomenon closely related to image-building which is a common feature in public relations. The proposed definition of strategic public relations in this thesis is: "The process of strategically managing communication efforts to build relationships with key stakeholders".

2. Literature Review

In this chapter the author of this thesis will present previous research on the concept of self, Impression management and self-promotion, which will further help to analyze the empirical data. After a short overview of two different approaches towards the concept of self, the literature review will be presented in historical chronology starting with theories on 'the self' from scholars back in the 1930's, to more post-modern views on 'the self'. This will make it easier for the reader to follow how theories have changed due to societal and technological transformations in time.

2.1 The concept of self and identity

Studying a concept such as self-promotion assumes that there is a self to promote. A long list of researchers have provided theories to explain what 'the self' is and how the self is constructed. The notion of the self however tends to vary among these researchers. As Oshana (2010, p.15) points out, how one defines 'the self' depends on what explanatory work one wants the concept of self to do. Closely related to studying 'the self' is the concept of identity, which is to discuss "the status of being the same as, or equivalent to, some person of self" (Oshana 2010, p.17).

Frankfurt (1971) and Taylor (1989) belong to a group of researchers who view the self as a volitional essence (as cited in Oshana 2010, pp.39-40). Frankfurt (1971) argues that the individual's own essential nature or identity as an agent is established by attributes that express the character of the agent's will (as cited in Oshana 2010, p.39). Taylor (1989) resonates in a similar way by saying that the key traits of our identities are those that we authenticate subsequent to strong moral evaluation. One becomes a person, a self, when reflecting over one's notion of what is most important, and by taking a stand.

He argues that without a moral framework we would become disoriented and go through an identity crisis (as cited in Oshana 2010, p.40; as cited in Zhao & Biesta 2008, p.4; as cited in Calhoun 1991, p.233).

Another approach to the concept of 'the self' is the narrative approach. This approach comes from the perspective of *symbolic interactionism,* which interprets the unity of the person, or the identity of a self, as a manifestation of a personal narrative (Oshana 2010, p.26). The *symbolic interactionist perspective* introduced by Mead (1934) and further developed by Blumer (1969) suggest that people take on roles based on the people with whom they interact. Mead and Blumer argue that people act in certain ways because they believe that it is the way their audience expects them to act (as cited in Ornstein 1989, p.412).

Erving Goffman (1956), one of the most praised, yet critiqued, sociologists of our time also took a symbolic interactionist perspective to explain how 'the self' is constructed. Goffman was the first person to introduce the term dramaturgy into sociology to help him explain the notion of the self. *Dramaturgy* means to put the focus on social acts and emergent meanings and to recognize that meaning is a problematic accomplishment of interaction between individuals, and that it is concerned with change, novelty and ambiguity (Brissett & Edgley 1990, as cited in Benford & Hunt 1992, p.37). Goffman uses a dramaturgical approach and the metaphor of a theatre with its stage, actors, and audience to explain how people behave in the presence of others. This to emphasize that the construction of self can be seen in terms of performances that an individual engages in. According to Goffman when an individual appears in front of others there will be a reason for the individual to organize the activity so that it gives an impression to others, which is in the individual's interest to convey.

Goffman argues that an individual may not be performing on the stage all the time and talks about *the front*, as the place where the individual performs, which he defined as "that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance" (1956, p.13). He also talks about the *backstage*, where the individual constructs his performance in form of setting, appearance and manner.

Argued by Goffman embarrassment serves as an indicator of that people fail in their performance to present an acceptable self. During a performance the audience can however be helpful due to being motivated to minimize a failure that they predict will occur. As concluded by Miller (1995, p.2): "in this sense, our selves are presented for the purpose of interacting with others, and are developed and maintained with the cooperation of others through the interaction".

Battershill (1990, p.173) believes that Goffman has transformed a Freudian idea of intrapsychic communicative relations into a post-modern view of subjects as embedded in communicative networks. He also believs that Goffman's theories on 'the self' reflect a society different from the one during Mead's day (1934), when symbolic interactionism as a term was introduced. This because Goffman reflects on multiple relationships in a more complex society.

Even though Goffman's work is often cited, and praised for contributing to studying social interaction his work is also criticized. Clarke (2008, p.511) who is critical to Goffman argues that what is missing from his theory is that it lacks any sense of emotion, passion or motivation when describing the construction of self.

Gouldner (1970, as cited in Raffel 2013, p.164-165) who is one of Goffman's greatest critics, further argues that Goffman is portraying a superficial world and that his way of seeing the individual is unattractive and looks at people as "tricky, and harassed little devils". Giddens (1986, as cited in Handler 2009, p.287) who most often celebrates Goffman's work also criticize that Goffmans conclusions are drawn from little empirical backing.

2.1.1 The global self

As research on the concept of 'the self' goes far back in history, before society had gone into major transformations with regards to mass-industrialization, globalization and technological advancements, the views on the construction of self from the 1990's and onward have changed, or been modified, to help better explain society today.

Similar to Goffman (1956), Gergen (1991) has also taken on a symbolic interactionist approach. He reasons that each truth about ourselves is a construction for the moment, and is only true for a certain amount of time and within certain relationships. Gergen argues that due to the rise of a modern society how people view 'the self' has changed from a romantic view, one that attributes to every individuals characteristics of personal depth like passion, creativity and moral, to a modern view where characteristics of 'the self' do not exist in personal depth, rather in individuals ability to reason – in their beliefs, opinions and conscious intentions. Gergen however believes that both these views are becoming less usable due to what he calls *social saturation*.

With this term Gergen wishes to disclose that technological advancement has saturated us with the voice of humankind.

The phenomenon of social saturation has provided individuals with multiple languages of the self and by being targeted by an overload of electronical messages people are open to more personal relationships. With this said Gergen takes a stand from the romantic and modern view of the self and argues that there is a postmodern self.

With the view of an existing post-modern self he argues that everything that we know to be true about ourselves, other voices within reply with doubt and even contempt. This destruction of self-conceptions has to do with multiple incoherent and disconnected relationships. To quote Gergen, "These relationships also allow us to play such a variety of roles that the concept of an authentic and true self with knowable characteristics recedes from view. The fully saturated self becomes no self at all" (1991 p.7). In postmodern settings the individual constantly constructs and reconstructs himself and each reality of the self opens up for questioning, irony and examining another reality. In a postmodern society, "The center fails to hold" (Gergen 1991, p.7).

Giddens (1991, p.74) also highlights that the idea of every individual having their own unique character is alien in pre-modern culture, and that things are not fixed as it was argued back in the medieval days. Giddens (1991) views the self as reflexive, for which the individual is responsible for.

In recent years McCracken (2008, p.294) has further emphasized the self as post-modern by calling the self today a "global self". With this term McCracken argues that today we accept that identity has less to do with things that remain identical. With post-modernism comes a claim for many different identities and a fluidity of self.

He claims: "The global self is, often, a set that makes no conditions of entry, insists on no boundary rules, and forsakes the very idea of governing principles, overriding logics, or internal rules of order" (2008, p.299). Further he argues that global selves serve as evidence of the post-modernist argument about heterogeneity, difference, multiplicity and constant becoming.

The issues raised by scholars from the beginning of the 1990's and onwards can be summarized with a question posed by Gergen (1991, p.13): "Can our present conventions hold up against the forces of twentieth-century technologies that are set against all "truths about the self"?"

Bearing this question in mind it is worth emphasizing the idea of *authenticity*[2], today often discussed in relation to social media and the Internet. In this context authenticity can be seen as a synonym to 'the real self', argued as not existent by the researchers mentioned above. Discussing authenticity on the social media platform Twitter, Marwick & Boyd (2010, p.124) argues just like the scholars above, against a notion of an "authentic self". They argue that authenticity is a temporally situated social construction that varies based on community, and that the fact that individuals vary in the way they present themselves reveals authenticity as a construct. Whether something is authentic for that reason solely depends on the definition imposed by the person doing the judging (Marwick & Boyd 2010, p.124).

2.2 Impression Management

Goffman (1956) is the one who first introduced the concept of Impression management, which has later been researched by many scholars after him.

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[2] Authenticity = "The quality of being real or true" (Cambridge Dictionaries Online)

Impression management (IM) can be defined as: "an attempt to portray a particular (usually positive) image of oneself to a target person" (Schlenker 1980, as cited in Kristof-Brown et. al 2002, p.29). IM occurs when an individual decides to create a specific identity, and is achieved by strategically presenting behaviors which can be both verbal and non-verbal, and lead others to view the person as more desirable (Bozeman & Kacmar 1997, as cited in Zaidman & Drory 2001, p.671). Impression management is predicted on Goffman's theatrical analogy of people as actors, trying to convey positive images of themselves to their audiences. IM is something that people engage in to achieve an objective, which can be for example a job, a promotion or friendship (Weiss & Feldman 2006, p.1070).

Researchers Jones & Pittman (1982, as cited in Bolino & Turnley, 2003, p.43) claim that there are four different forms of IM. 1) *Ingratiation*, where the individual seeks to be liked by flattering others and doing them favors, 2) *Self-promotion,* where the individual wishes to be viewed as competent by endorsing his own abilities and accomplishments, 3) *Exemplification,* when the individual wishes to be seen as dedicated and goes above and beyond the call of duty, 4) *Intimidation,* when the individual wants to be seen as intimidating by threatening and bullying others.

Zaidman & Drory (2001, p.676) & Bolino et al (2008, p.1082) later shed light on two broader categorizations of Impression management and categorized tactics of IM as either *defensive* or *assertive*. Ingratiation and self-promotion are examples of assertive tactics that aim to portray a positive image while defensive tactics are tactics used to repair an image, for example when an individual claims that he is not responsible for an act.

Previous research on Impression management has been conducted mostly to investigate characteristics and motives of people engaging in IM and how the different tactics are used in job related settings (Bolino & Turnley 2003; Bolino et al; 2008; Chiaburu et al. 2013; De Cuyper & De Witte 2010; Kristof-Brown et al. 2002). The study conducted by Bolino & Turnley (2003) for example showed that women are less aggressive in their use of Impression management and that individuals with high levels of machavellianism[3] use IM tactics indiscriminately, while De Cuyper & De Witte's (2010) study showed that temporary workers are more likely to use Impression management in organizations than permanent workers.

2.3 Self-promotion and public relations

Studying an assertive tactic of IM, in particular self-promotion, it can be defined as: "positive statements to describe oneself, one's future plans or past accomplishments" (Zaidman & Drory 2001, p.675). More specifically self-promotion is used to enhance specific character attributions such as competence rather than for example similarity (Kristof-Brown et. al 2002, p.29; Zaidman & Drory 2001, pp.675-676).

Earlier research on self-promotion has focused on pinpointing the typical "self-promoter" and investigated motivations to engage in this type of behavior, all from the perspective of the "actor" and mostly in an offline context. (Bolino & Turnley 2003; Bolino et al; 2008; Carpenter 2012; Chiaburu et al. 2013; De Cuyper & De Witte 2010; Kristof-Brown et al. 2002; Roberts & Roach 2009). Studies on online behavior have also been conducted from the perspective of the person being active on for example social media platforms.

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[3] Machavellianism = "Describes the extent to which individuals behave manipulatively, hold cynical views of human nature, and have a generally low regard for conventional standards of morality" (Christie & Geis 1970, as cited in Bolino & Turnley 2003, pp.148-149)

The study of Reinecke & Trepte (2013) for example focused on authenticity online and its effect on a person's well-being, while Back et al. (2010) investigated whether online social networks were used to portray idealized selves, however finding no support for their assumption that it was.

In public relations literature it is more common to talk about personal public relations instead of using the term self-promotion, even though the definitions are similar. Personal public relations can be defined as "the constitution, positioning, and promotion of individuals to form a public identity" (Motion 2000, p.476). Grunig (1993, p.128) for example argues that much of the rhetoric behind IM is similar to that of public relations. However, he depicts the use of an image and IM approach towards PR because he believes that it connects PR with manipulation.

3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter the author will present a theoretical framework which will serve as an outline of the author's own interpretation of the concepts brought to light in the literature review. This will make it easier for the reader to understand the theoretical basis of the thesis and the approach that is undertaken to analyze the findings.

3.1 Modifying the concept of self

With a long tradition of researchers explaining the concept of self in differing ways, the author of this thesis suggests a synthesis of two existing explanatory works', both grounded in a symbolic interactionist perspective.

Model 1: A synthesis of Goffman (1956) and Gergen (1991)

	Stage-acting in face-to-face encounters **(Based on Goffman)**	**Additional stages and the constantly modified self** **(Based on Gergen)**
Public platform and purpose	Theater stage. Performing for a specific audience to make an impression.	New technologies with many options for selfhood. Constant modification of our selves.
Private platform and purpose	Backstage. Preparations.	Dissolution of border between private sphere and public
Other characteristics/issues:	The self is a social product defined in interactions with others. Embarrassment can be avoided with the help and support from an audience. Addresses the offline context.	Additional communication platforms leave us clueless. No existence of one true self in society because of multiple choices available and the multiple relationships we engage in, both online and offline.

One of the explanatory works' is that of Goffman (1956) and his view of the individual as an actor. Regardless of the fact that Goffman did not live during major transformations in society in the 1990's and onwards Tseëlon (1992, p.8) for example argues that the Goffmanesque way of viewing the self is indeed post-modern because it consists of surfaces or performances.

Even though some of Goffman's ideas seem to be better suited for face-to-face interaction the author of this thesis believes that there is much to learn from Goffman's work. His theatrical analogy can for example help understand behavior on social media platforms. Once you post something on social media you are on stage, performing, and exposing yourself to an audience, while "offline" you have your own backstage where you prepare what to post and where to post it. As Goffman argues, the preparation backstage is to help the actor make the best strategic decision so that the performance is successful. Instead of receiving applause from an audience the author sees success on social media as measured in for example likes, shares, positive comments or by someone initiating contact after a "performance".

Due to the fact that the Internet was development after Goffman's time, some of his ideas are not applicable to online communication. His idea about the audience helping the actor to create a good image due to the audience´s sense of when failure and embarrassment is ahead, is an example of one of his ideas that does not apply in an online context. Putting Goffman on the Internet, Miller (1995, p.3) for example argues "It is easy to make a fool out of yourself on the Internet". This because there is no audience providing you with a direct indication of how they judge your behavior, through for example facial expressions.

From a different perspective it could also be argued that it is easier to portray a certain image online and get away with it since verbal and visual cues are absent, which can make it difficult to spot a liar. Chester & Bretherton (2007, p.225) argue that degrees of freedom in the online context and visual anonymity make it easier for us to create and maintain impressions than if compared with the offline context. They claim: "Unconstrained by the limitations that operate in the offline world, users are free to self-select traits". Thus, it is noticeable that when mixing an online and offline appearance issues can occur, for example in a recruitment process.

To fill the gaps of the theoretical basis so far grounded in Goffman's most fundamental ideas, the author suggests that the explanatory work of Gergen (1991) serves as a good way to close these gaps. Using Gergen's concept of social saturation can help further explain why the self is not a fixed entity in today's society. Gergen's theories take into consideration technological advancement and its influence on the more personal relationships we engage in today and explains why the concept of an authentic self is not accurate, due to factors in society that Goffman could not address.

Gergen argues that technology has provided us with many options of selfhood, but at the same time left us clueless. There is no existence of one true self in society according to Gergen, this because of the multiple choices we have and the multiple relationships we engage in, both online and offline.

Even though social media platforms emerged after Gergen's theory on social saturation the author believes that his ideas can still be applied, considering their post-modern character and focus on technology.

To summarize the approach of the author in this thesis, grounded in the two explanatory works' revisited, the self is socially constructed in the numerous relationships and interactions it is a part of today, whether online or offline. The Internet is a platform for us to construct and reconstruct ourselves in a way that is favorable to us. There is no existence of a one true self, and our performances on the Internet and on "the social media stage", are consciously planned, instantly carried out and constantly reconsidered.

3.3 Self-promotion in the eye of the beholder

The author of this thesis considers self-promotion to be a subjective and gradual concept in the sense that the existence of self-promotion or its extent, for example "too much" (negative) or "on a good level" (positive), is in the eyes of the audience. The taken perspective is that there is no fixed definition of when something is self-promotion, it is simply self-promotion when the particular audience targeted ascribes it as such. The author argues that it is with self-promotion as with the concept of authenticity, as described by Marwick & Boyd (2010, p.124), it solely depends on the definition that is imposed by the particular audience doing the judging. The following model demonstrates the researcher's taken perspective.

Model 2: The subjective scale of self-presentation
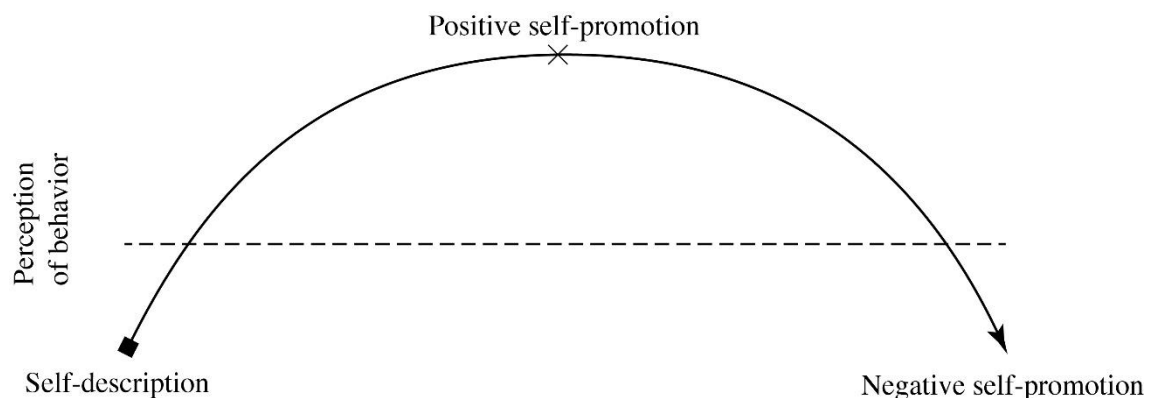
With this model the author suggests that the perception of a person's self-presentation, or one's own perception of one's behavior, can be positioned on a gradual scale that is subjective and therefore looks different for everyone. An applicant/actor may for example consider his own act as positive self-promotion while the audience targeted might place the same act somewhere else on the gradual scale, as for example too much i.e. negative. The equivalent is possible if having multiple audiences, who all have their own subjective scales on which they will position a person's behavior.

Where an audience positions an act can depend on many factors such as a particular job a person is applying for, certain role expectations, or cultural factors. Further, an assumption is that labelling a person's behavior as self-promotion and positioning it on a certain point on the scale is not set in stone, it can be negotiated if circumstances change. If for example a job applicant's activities online gives an employer the impression of negative self-promotion this picture might change if the audience meets the applicant in a face-to-face interaction.

4. Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological framework that helped carry out the study. It serves the reader with an overview of research focus, the relevance of choosing qualitative research, study objects, particular methods used to analyze the empirical data, and a final reflection.

4.1 Research focus & research questions

The focus of this thesis was to study the phenomenon of online self-promotion in the process of applying for your first job. With the help of qualitative research the aim was to explore if self-promotion online is essential in order for a first-job seeker to gain employment in a PR agency today. Coming up with research questions to help explore the issue the author had in mind recommendations provided by Sandberg & Alvesson (2011, p.23) who argue that it is important to produce innovative questions that will serve to open up new research problems, resolve controversies, or challenge old beliefs.

The first question aimed at exploring the general advice given on self-promotion in Swedish news articles, with the help of content analysis. This question served as an introduction to get a first glance towards how the concept of self-promotion is approached in Sweden.

1. *What is common advice in Swedish news media when it comes to self-promotion?*

The second question aimed at providing the author with knowledge about which indications Swedish PR agency recruiters react to when they consider something to be self-promotion.

This to gain in-depth knowledge about underlying concerns and the level of sensitivity towards the concept among the respondents. An additional question to this key question was proposed to help investigate; if an action is categorized as self-promotion, what makes it positive, and what makes it negative.

2. *Which indications make PR agency recruiters in Sweden label an activity as self-promotion (as opposed to simply self-description)?*
   - *When is self-promotion positive and when is it negative?*

The third question acted as the main guiding question to help find out the importance placed on self-promotion online when recruiting a new employee.

3. *What importance do Swedish PR agency recruiters attribute to online self-promotion activities of first job-seekers?*

The objective with the fourth question was to discover more specifically if self-promotion plays a role in the process, and if so, what that role might be. The fourth question aimed at guiding the author to explore what PR recruiters look at in particular when they review an applicant's digital footprint, and which meaning they ascribe to its role. This served to provide further insight to the underlying thoughts on the issue.

4. *What role, if any, does the act of online self-promotion play in the course of the recruitment process in PR agencies in Sweden?*

4.2 Use of concepts

In Sweden, there is no direct translation of the term self-promotion and the closest one gets to a translation is the notion of "selling yourself" and arguments of creating your own personal brand (Nordstedts Ord 2014).

In Sweden the term is either used in its English form or as described, hence the author used the terms *self-promotion* and *personal branding*[4] as synonyms when gathering empirical data from the interviews and the news articles.

4.3 Qualitative research in public relations

The chosen strategy to approach the stated research problem and the questions was to conduct research within the qualitative research paradigm. In particular, by carrying out interviews with Swedish PR agency recruiters and by using content analysis to study Swedish news articles.

Conducting qualitative research means conducting interpretive research with a focus on producing a description, uncover cultural discourse or reaching an understanding in how meaning is created (Daymon & Holloway 2011, p.6; Denzin & Lincoln 2011, p.3; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.17; Creswell 2009, p.182; Silverman, 2005, p.9). Hence, one of the strengths of using qualitative research is its appropriateness for studying people's lives, behavior and the construction of meaning (Silverman, 2005 p.6).

Since public relations operates in the communication field and involves communication between various stakeholders and publics Daymon & Holloway (2011, pp.4-5) argue that there is an ongoing transformation and re-construction of meaning within the field. They claim that it is important for public relations scholarship to help explain how managed communication affects the process through which we create our own realities and cultures. This is when qualitative research becomes significant, focusing on the creation of meaning, power-relations and complexity.

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[4] Personal branding shares various similarities with self-promotion however puts more focus on self-packaging, meaning that success is measured by how effectively an individual manages to "crystallize, arrange and label" their skills, motivations and interests (Lair et al. 2005, p.308).

4.4 Using interviews

Interviews allows a researcher to come in contact with areas of reality that would otherwise not be available, such as people's own experiences (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori 2011, p.529). A researcher uses interviews in order to attempt to understand the world from the respondents' point of view, in order to help uncover a greater meaning (Daymon & Holloway, 2011 p.8; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009 p.1; Silverman, 2005 p.154). Hence, the interview process produces knowledge through the interaction between the researcher and the respondent (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009 p.17).

Choosing to use qualitative interviews in this study the author put focus on gathering relevant and qualitative content over quantity. For this study interviews were considered a relevant method because of the project's focus on gaining insight to agency recruiters' perceptions on self-promotional behavior, and because it allowed an attempt to reach a deeper understanding of how individual's within the PR discipline view their own environment. Using a survey in this case would for example have provided a limited room for the respondents to answer questions, consequently diminishing the possibility for follow-up questions.

4.4.1 Study objects

As declared, the study objects in this study were recruiters from PR agencies in Sweden. PR agencies in particular were chosen to narrow down the field of possible respondents and to interview people from the same type of working environment.

Considering PR agencies located in Sweden, many are to be found in either in Stockholm or Malmö. The decision was therefore made to interview recruiters from agencies from these two cities in particular, also taking into consideration the fact that the author herself lives in Malmö.

The choice of which agencies to contact was made based on the author's own knowledge of the agencies as well as by searching for agencies in the areas online. The agencies were contacted via a standard email, asking whether there was an interest to participate in the study. Since none of the agencies had a particular person responsible for human resources the email was sent to the CEO's of the agencies.

The number of agencies contacted were 16 and the goal was to get between 10-12 participants. The number of respondents ended up at 11 professionals from 10 different agencies, this since one CEO brought one of his project managers with him.

Table 1: List of participating agencies

Agency	Location	Number of employees	Respondent(s)
Cohn & Wolfe	Stockholm	35	Angelica Larsson (AL)
Edelman	Stockholm	16	Linda Waxin (LW1)
Hill + Knowlton Strategies	Stockholm	28	Liselott Florén (LF)
ID Kommunikation	Malmö	22	Lotte Hoflund (LH1)
Kommunicera	Malmö	4	Tomas André (TA) Maria Reimers (MR)
Mannov	Malmö	7	Carl Magnus Cronholm (CC)
Navigator	Malmö	16	Lovisa Hermansson (LH2)
Prat PR	Stockholm	17	Gabriella Finnborg (GF)
Spotlight PR	Stockholm	21	Lisa Wahlström (LW2)
Wirtén	Malmö	9	Kristina Lang Falck (KF)

In total, eight out of the 11 PR professionals interviewed had the title of CEO, or in Swedish titled byråledare or VD, while three of the respondents, AL, MR, and LH2, had the title of team leader/project manager. Nine out of the 11 respondents were women and two were men.

Most interviews lasted between 35-45 minutes, while the interview with the two respondents lasted approximately an hour. None of the respondents wished to be anonymous.

4.4.2 The interview process

All of the interviews were held in Swedish and were conducted at the agencies own offices in either Stockholm or Malmö. Conducting face-to-face interviews gave the author the possibility of maximizing the quality of the data by being present. This made it possible for the author to interpret what the respondents reacted to and how they felt about what was being asked or discussed (Daymon & Holloway 2011, p.221).

The interviews were compiled as *semi-structured interviews* meaning that the author had written down topics and questions to discuss in an interview guide, before the interviews (Bryman 2002, p.301). By carrying out semi-structured interviews the author ensured that she would collect the same data from the respondents, and at the same time could ask follow up questions depending on the answers she received from the respondents (Bryman 2002, p.301; Daymon & Holloway 2011, p.225). Choosing semi-structured interviews seemed relevant for this type of study since the author believed that the phenomenon under discussion would not come as natural for some respondents to discuss. Hence some guidance seemed accurate, without completely constraining the possibility for the respondents to discuss freely, by for example carrying out structured interviews (Bryman 2002, p.301; Daymon & Holloway 2011, pp.225-226).

For the complete interview guide, translated into English, see Appendix. 1.

4.4.3 Analyzing the interviews

All interviews were recorded and later transcribed in their original language. Further on the transcripts of each interview served as the basis for the analysis[5].

Analyzing the data started off somewhat inductively. As the researcher already had structured headlines/topics under which questions where stated in the interview guide, a couple of general themes where already predefined which helped the coding of the interviews (Daymon & Holloway 2011, p.303). However, some themes later arose directly from the data, given additional meaning when addressed frequently by the respondents during the interviews.

The author used a system of colors and tags to highlight the different patterns in the material to easily get an overview of the respondents' arguments under each of the stated themes, and to help answer the research questions. The analysis further on became deductive because the author developed working ideas which were used to relate the findings to other conducted studies and theoretical ideas (Daymon & Holloway 2011, p.303).

4.5 Undertaking content analysis

To conduct qualitative content analysis means to analyze a written document in order to uncover meaning. Content analysis can be carried out on any type of documents such as blogs, web pages, YouTube, newsletters, and articles (Daymon & Holloway 2011, p.277). This type of method is important in qualitative research because the information provided in documents can give different information than what can be available in spoken form (Daymon & Holloway 2011, p.277). In this study the content analysis on Swedish news articles served as a complement to the conducted interviews.

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[5] The transcripts from the interviews can be provided and translated upon request.

4.5.1 Online news articles

The articles chosen to analyze were all Swedish news articles. To make the process of looking for these articles less time consuming, as this was a complementary method, the author only focused on newspapers that published their articles online.

The reason for excluding other content on the topic found online, such as blog posts, articles on private company websites or on websites owned by communication agencies, was to narrow down the search and minimize the amount of influenced sources.

The articles were searched for on Google and on some of the newspapers' own websites. The search concentrated on articles discussing self-promotion and/or personal branding.

Table 2: List of newspapers and articles

Newspaper	Article published
Aftonbladet (AB)	2013-03-11
Civilekonomen (CE)	2014-03-03
Dagens Juridik (DJ)	2012-09-17
Dagens Nyheter (DN)	2013-10-14
Göteborgs Posten (GP)	2006-11-18
Metro (M)	2010-08-31
Svenska Dagbladet (SvD1)	2010-10-27
Svenska Dagbladet (SvD2)	2012-11-20
Svenska Yle (SY)	2013-11-20
Sydsvenskan (S)	2007-11-13

The number of articles chosen to analyze was 10. For more detail on the articles, see Appendix 2.

4.5.2 Analyzing the articles

The articles were analyzed in an informal way meaning that the author did not use any predefined protocols in the analysis of the written texts.

By reading and re-reading the material the author tried to find themes and patterns in the texts and draw meaning from them (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori 2011, p.530). Argued by Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori (2011, p.530) an informal approach may be the best way to analyze the results in research that focuses on written texts, especially when the text analysis has a more complementary and additional role, as it had in this study. Under such circumstances no other, more sophisticated method is needed.

4.6 Reflection

The author believes that the study proves good validity[6]. Conducting the interviews with only one person at a time, maximum two, contributed to an open and transparent discussion. The fact that the interviews were conducted in the respondents own working environments also seemed to contribute to a comfortable setting for the respondents.

The study cannot claim representativeness of the findings from the interviews since the interviews were carried out in a small scale with only 11 respondents. However, it still provides an in-depth insight to the environment of 11 Swedish PR agency recruiters and how they view challenges in their industry, and the phenomenon of online self-promotion.

During the course of gathering empirical data an obstacle was that it was hard to find Swedish news articles on the topic. Firstly the idea was to simply use articles from bigger newspapers that are available both as a physical newspaper and an online newspaper, such as local press and tabloid newspapers. However this changed during the course of the study since overall very few articles were to be found. Therefore it was decided to focus on newspapers that were available online as a minimum requirement, in order to ensure more articles in the study.

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[6] Validity is the term used when talking about how trustworthy the information given by the respondents is (Daymon & Holloway 2011, p.79).

Under the circumstance that only few Swedish articles were found on the topic it is easier to claim representativeness for the findings ranging from the content analysis.

Another obstacle met was that at some points during the course of the interviews it was difficult to get the respondents to give examples of how they felt, and why, which together with few articles on the topic served to show that self-promotion is not as frequently discussed as assumed, at least not in Sweden.

5. Presenting the findings

In this part of the thesis the author will present the findings from the content analysis and the interviews. The author will engage with the findings as they are presented, and analyze them together with previous research highlighted in the theoretical framework.

5.1 The Media Discourse on Self-promotion

As identified, individuals aiming for careers in certain industries are advised to engage in self-promotion and create their very own personal brand. This in order to increase their possibilities of gaining employment and become successful in today's job market (Salenbacher 2013; Shepherd 2005 p.590).

Going through 10 online news articles from Sweden, covering self-promotion, these articles were in general written from a positive approach towards the concept. The overall claim in the articles was that self-promotion is something that individuals have to engage in today, in order to gain employment. The articles however varied in their focus.

One article stuck out because it raised the issue of the audience as the judge of self-promotional behavior, which serves to provide support to the author´s model (see model 2).

"Different recruiters have different boundaries for what they consider to be 'too much'[…] An applicant can end up in the 'absolutely not' pile by one recruiter and be loved by another […] So the question of when it is too much is really a question about who you have in front of you [...] You have to see it as; the recruiter chooses the limit. Before you make jokes, ask yourself: Is this a person you joke with? " – (M)

This particular article emphasized the complexity of self-promotion and the difficulty for an applicant to know which boundaries to stay within. Further it gave general advice on what to avoid when engaging in self-promotion, stating such things as exaggerating responsibilities and saying that you know things that you do not. A majority of the articles pointed out similar things, giving recommendations on what not to do rather than the opposite.

The articles kept the advice on a very general level, giving the reader the overall recommendation not to lie and to 'be yourself' which gave the impression of poor assistance, leaving room for any kind of interpretation.

"We build our brand on our own personality, we should not copy someone else Mia says. - It should never be theatrical. It is about believing yourself, not about believing who you should be in this particular moment" – (AB)

"It is not about creating a new you, but to enhance the true you and your unique characteristics" – (SY)

"People are attracted to people who are authentic and we quickly discover when something is false. It is more about finding the essence of your personality and then market just that" – (DJ)

Taking into consideration the first statement it can be argued that the approach taken is backing away from theories such as Impression management since it is argued that you should not portray who you think is most desirable in the moment, which indicates that the author of the article sees it as something optional. This is opposite to Goffman's (1956) and Gergen's (1991) theories claiming that social interactions are based on performances and portraying a desirable person for the moment.

Since the author of this thesis shares the views of Goffman and Gergen this contrary approach is considered to lack appropriateness, this since self-promotion is about enhancing one's own qualities and competence with the purpose of achieving a goal. It therefore seems unreasonable to think that an individual would portray anything else than the most desirable self to reach this goal.

5.1.1 'The hottest career tool out there is YOU!'

Two of the articles put emphasis on self-promotion in an online context. One of the two also talked about particularly young adults entering the job market.

"Which picture do you present of yourself on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or your blog? That is becoming more important as recruiters to a greater extent looks online to find information about applicants. Embarrassing things will not only get noticed by your friends but by potential employers too" – (SvD2)

"Newly examined and looking for your first job. The competition is hard. Try something new that makes you stick your neck out: a creative application through social media. Ways of applying for a job today have reached another dimension in recent years. A regular personal letter and a CV has got competition from more creative and innovative ways in social media" – (C)

The second article, C, moreover gave examples of real cases where people had applied for jobs in creative ways and what it had led to. It also provided more detailed advice, as opposed to the other articles analyzed. The article included a factual box where a recruiter provided her advice on what she believed worked, in terms of good self-promotion using social media. She also gave examples of which platforms to use, highlighting Twitter and LinkedIn for job related purposes. All based on experiences from her daily working environment.

Providing some distinction to the collection of articles there was one article which appeared highly contradicting in its argumentation. In this article it was argued that you should not be someone that you are not, as claimed in a majority of the other articles. However, in an additional factual box next to the main text there was advice on how to answer personal questions if asked by for example a journalist.

Two examples were:

"Don't answer: A crime fiction novel, answer: An amulet that I received from a poor man during a trip to India. It gives me reason to reflect" – (GP).

"Don't answer: A piece of cheese, answer: A bottle of champagne, there is always reason to celebrate" – (GP)

Analyzing the content of the article the argumentation went from that you should not portray someone that you are not, to telling you how to answer in order to seem extraordinary. This article clearly managed to display how people's approach can vary, depending on what they ascribe to the very act of self-promotion, and brought to light the complexity of the phenomenon.

Thoroughly reviewing the collection of articles, few of them were specific when giving recommendations on how to behave. Claiming the importance of self-promotion without clear advice, and contradiction in the line of argumentation gave the impression of poor help. The author was also given the impression that there were no clear rules available. The etiquette simply seemed to be: 'Do it, but make sure you do it *right'*.

5.2 'If you are not visible, you do not exist'

With the vague and rather disappointing advice from the media in the background the author will further present the findings from the conducted interviews. The material is analyzed along themes that have derived from the topics and questions in the interview guide as well as themes that have emerged from the data.

Opening up the interviews with the agency-recruiters directed in the study, the emerging trend to encourage people to engage in self-promotion was addressed.

One of the respondents expressed the following:

"People are becoming more transparent. Today maybe you just have to be able to say that 'I'm good at this' but before it was more about saying that you are nice and like to work hard" – (AL)

Argued by the author this can be discussed from another perspective, especially in relation to social media were it can be assumed that this transparency is not always self-decided. Posts and pictures appearing online and for everyone to see might not have been decided upon by the person in the actual posts or pictures, which makes the discussion of transparency in an online context quite complex. It also shows that some concepts need to be reinterpreted when put in an online context.

Regardless of the fact that theories on Impression management and self-promotion have existed for many years the rise of the Internet and social media platforms has provided more platforms for self-promotion and made it a popular topic to discuss. This was also stated by one of the respondents:

"I think it is something everyone does. Some are probably more aware and structured than others, but everyone does it, more or less, and they have always done so. Today, there are just more tools to do it" – (LH2)

As noticed by the respondent, with the emergence of more channels for communication, the character and motivation for engaging in self-promotion has changed. Argued by the author, this has in its turn been further strengthened as other societal factors play a part, such as a competitive job market.

5.3 Expectations

Continuing with a discussion about the public relations industry and expectations on people applying for a job, all respondents argued that digital channels for communication has changed the way PR work is carried out and as a result stronger emphasis has been put on applicants to know how to use digital platforms.

The traditional expectations, as most respondents called them, are still there, such as being a good writer, business minded, self-going, social and up-to-date about what happens in the industry. However, an additional skill related to digital communication has been added to the check list. One respondent said the following:

"You have the entire digital media landscape today which you need to be able to handle and understand. It's a hygiene factor. If you don't know how to manage that, it doesn't matter how experienced you are" – (CC)

An assumption drawn from analyzing this statement is that it is important to understand the digital arena and know how to manage a presence. However the author argues that anyone can learn how to use Twitter and to manage an account whilst other expectations such as good writing skills, or being social, is not something you can learn in a few days.

Using Gergen's (1991) concept an applicant could technically construct a "digital self" for the moment on social media and meet that requirement in no time today. Thinking strategically, accounts could be set up on multiple platforms to give the notion of being a "social media guru". Would that requirement then be fulfilled? It is worth questioning. If recruiters simply ascribe digital knowledge as having a presence online, can it really be judged on the same basis as the other expectations mentioned which most of them take years to acquire?

Continuing the discussion two respondents argued the following when asked if they believe that expectations on young applicants are affected by the fact that they have grown up with the Internet.

"If I would meet someone who is born in the late 80's or even in the 90's, and that person is not keen on social media, I would get disappointed, because I believe you should be. So I think it is really important as a young adult. Even more important" – (KF)

"Everything I'm trying to learn and find complicated I kind of expect them to know in their sleep, and right now it seems to be just that. But I think it has always been like that, when I graduated people in my age expected me to know things, which back then probably was; how to use Word " – (LH1)

Reviewing the responses from this particular discussion there was an underlying expectation among the respondents that particularly young adults need to know how to use digital platforms. Analyzing the answers thus gave the same notion as declared before, the requirement is for someone to know social media and be good at it. But what does that really mean? And how is someone good at it?

Does it mean to be knowledgeable on which settings to choose and where to click, or to have the ability to create opinion on these platforms? The viewpoints shared on expectations, related to digital platforms, were in that sense vague.

One respondent wished to declare that she does not require different things from applicants of different generations.

"Long experience, yes but at the same time, what is crisis management about today? It is about social media, and if that person does not have a Twitter account it says something" – (LW1)

This respondent's statement also portrayed a sense of non-clarity because she did not declare what she ascribed to having a Twitter account, she just gave the notion of it as important. Using Gergen (1991) once again, a Twitter presence could be constructed and set-up in a few days while for example constructing a self who is great at writing, would be a bit more complicated, if even doable.

5.3.1 A changing industry

Disputed by one respondent, the roles and expectations will continue to be modified as our ways to communicate change.

"The competition for people's attention today is vast […] It's about content marketing, like the whole thing with the Zlatan commercial. You give content that people share, that people talk about and the story gets a life of its own. That's nothing like what the old PR practitioner used to do. In this case it was done by an advertising agency, but still, the borders between PR and advertising are becoming blurry. How the whole thing gets viral buzz, that's however a PR machinery. "- (CC)

All respondents viewed their environment as changing a long with the development of new platforms for communication, a majority of them with a positive attitude. Yet one of the respondent's was a bit skeptical, and raised his concerns about changes in the industry, particularly relating it to young adults entering the job market.

"Everything is becoming messier. The way of expressing oneself is becoming sloppy. People don't know how to use the language […] everything that an old journalist had to know when I was twenty. I think this new, fast media has effected that because it seems more important to get the message out than to make sure it is written correctly " – (TA)

As discussed previously, studies have shown that young adults, especially Generation Y, can pose a challenge for the public relations practice because of the selfishness and laid-back attitude of this generation (Derville-Gallicano et al. 2012, p.222). A majority of the respondents in this particular study however did not make such skeptical claims when talking about young adults. Little emphasis was put on any characteristics of those young adults, entering the job market.

The statement by TA is nonetheless significant in this study in the sense that it gives nuance to the findings from the other interviews. The statement provides cues to a belief that PR is becoming more about getting a message through on the numerous platforms that exist today, than about spell-checking and language, indicating that the respondent believes that it does not center as much around writing skills as it has done before. Whether this is an effect of young adults entering the job market or social media changing the type of communication people wish to consume today is on the other hand debatable.

5.4 Promoting me, myself and I

When asking the agency recruiters what their first thoughts were when they heard the word self-promotion, some of the respondents replied the following:

"For me, I don't associate it with anything positive… In the long run I don't believe that those who make the most noise are the ones who get the best in return." – (LW2)

"The first thing I think about is that we have become so individualized and that there are many discussions about creating a personal brand today. I think a lot of that is just nonsense. I believe that many people just try to portray themselves as professional and then in the end they are not. When I meet someone in his twenties who is applying for a job and he says that his biggest asset is his personal brand and that he has a lot of contacts I start thinking, but hey, do you know anything?" – (TA)

"I think about self-obsessed individuals born in the 90's" – (CC)

"I think about Facebook and social media. I don't see it as something positive, but then again I don't see it as something directly negative either" – (AL)

"Narcissism. It's not a positive word for me. I think selfie, me, myself and I, and very shallow." – (KF)

"I think about Americans. Being able to step into a room and have the confidence to say who you are, what you do and why someone should hire you" – (GF)

"I'm a bit skeptical about it. I think about young adults who are eager, and vary in their success of showing parts of their competence. " – (LF)

Reviewing the answers to this question it was clear to the author that a majority of the respondents do not see self-promotion as something positive, and associate it with something that young adults engage in. This is particularly remarkable when reviewing the outcome of the discussion on expectations and young adults entering the industry.

During that discussion little concern was raised about for example selfishness or other characteristics but when talking about self-promotion it was portrayed as something negative and associated with young adults. One can therefore ask why self-promotion would be negative and associated with young adults, but on the other hand, without much of a concern when discussing them entering the PR industry.

When asked about why they thought they perceived self-promotion as something negative most respondents argued that they relate it to empty words and doing a lot of talking without really showing what is truly there. Even though most respondents declared that they see it as negative, they still argued that there is a need for it.

"It's a thin line because for a company in our industry it might be really important that all employees are strong brands in themselves" – (LH2)

"It's going to get even harder for young adults to enter the job market today which proves that there is a requirement for some kind of self-promotion or sticking out [..]" – (GF)

"I think that you can definitely get a chance to enter this industry by sticking your neck out. If you don't have any contacts that can be a way to do it, but it should not be an aim in itself" – (LW1)

With such statements the issue that arose was that of discrepancy in what the recruiters believed was needed and what their own first gut feeling on self-promotion told them.

This is particularly interesting looking at it from a recruiting point of view. In the recruitment process applicants will have a recruiter in front of them who will judge them based on his/her own perception of their behavior. The question is therefore if the fact that the agency recruiters believe that it is needed today overweigh their own skepticism about the concept when recruiting someone for their first job?

Discovered when asking follow-up questions was that one reason for the respondents skepticism was an underlying view of self-promotion as a truly sensitive issue.

With this said a majority of the respondents meant that in order for self-promotion to really be successful, it had to be carried out in an "appropriate way", stressing that there is a fine line between what is successful and what is considered too much. Relating this to the author's model (see model 2) the respondents' answers displayed that they saw the gradual steps between the two last key marks on the scale, positive self-promotion and negative self-promotion, as few.

5.4.1 Being nobody else but yourself

Further exploring self-promotion linked to the recruitment process, most respondents argued that in order for a person to leave the best possible impression the portrayal given must be truthful.

Looking at it from Goffman's (1956) theatrical approach a performance must be well carried out in order for the audience to leave the theater impressed. But if considering social interaction to be about performances, an applicant is never completely truthful. Arguing for such a case what is displayed in front of recruiters is not a truthful self, it is largely the self that the applicant believes will make the best impression in that particular situation, with the intended aim of portraying someone desirable. And whether the recruiter places an act on the top of the scale, as positive, depends on simply the belief and notion of authenticity. In theatrical terms, getting the feeling that a performance is realistic.

When asking the respondents about perceived risks with self-promotional behavior, the greatest concern raised by all respondents was, not surprisingly with regards to previous discussions, that of a non-authentic portrayal and hiring someone who does not seem truly genuine. Nevertheless this was not the only risk brought to light.

"There is always a risk that you, in the eyes of a client, seem like the type of person that is working full-time on yourself" – (KF)

"…that working on your own personal brand becomes more important than the company" - (LW1)

As acknowledged with these statements the discussions on self-promotion also tended to revolve around a skepticism on hiring someone who might turn out to put aside a company's interest in the advantage of his or her own private interests. This was in particular discussed with regards to social media. In this sense the respondents appeared to consider the online context as a separate world, where one cannot be too active and at the same time keep full control of what happens in the physical world. Relating this to Gergen's (1991) concept of social saturation, the multiple relationships online and offline makes individuals confused, here recognized by the two respondents as a risk of affecting an individual's work.

5.5 A perfectly controlled surface

Grounded in earlier discussions the author further got to be acquainted with the respondents' own personal experiences of being the audiences exposed to self-promotional acts.

There was a clear difference among the indications that the respondents reacted to when classifying specific acts as either legitimate self-description or self-promotion.

One respondent, LH2, for example shared that she once recognized an act as self-promotion when an applicant sent her a CV in the format of a press release, written as if the applicant had already gotten hired, while two respondents, AL, CC, argued that self-promotion goes from self-description when someone does the outrageous such as singing a CV. Other respondents claimed more generally that they react to pictures and cues in a person's way of speaking. It appeared challenging for the respondents to be concrete and state when something went from description to promotion.

Reviewing for example the answers of those respondents who claimed to react to cues in the language, and pictures, these statements were very vague and did not provide any specifics. It disclosed that the agency recruiters found it hard to put to words exactly what they felt was self-promotion. Relating this to the author's model (see model 2) it was hard for the respondents to position acts on the first part of the scale, between self-description and self-promotion. However, it seemed easier for them to discuss the part of the model where one positioned something as either positive self-promotion or negative self-promotion.

Asking the respondents to share their experiences and perceptions of negative self-promotion, the following was shared:

"Sometimes when you talk to people it can clash. It can be such things as having a cool picture and a nice layout and then you meet the person and the person does not even shake your hand. Then I get confused" – (LH1)

"It can for example be when a person writes in their CV that; I have been responsible for that, or I have managed that, and then when you interview them it turns out that they have not really been responsible, maybe they have had to write the texts but someone else has been responsible for the client" – (GF)

"I react to when the pictures don't add up" – (LF)

"I must say that I think about when people post these kinds of clever and intellectual links online, I can do that too […] then I want to see some kind of distance to it, that you can joke about yourself and that you have humor. Not just only this perfectly controlled surface, you want to see a person as well. It's a fine line, but you have to show that you have both a brain and a heart" – (KF)

Many of the examples given concerned portraying different selves in the recruitment process, focusing on the complexity of mixing online and offline, and what happens when the pictures shown do not create one unified picture.

Gergen's (1991) theory on social saturation certainly comes to place when for example analyzing LF's statement where she said that she reacts to when the pictures do not add up. As Gergen (1991) argues, the multiple platforms available make us confused. LF talked about a mix of selves shown on different platforms which in the end does not provide a coherent picture of a person, which for her turns out to be negative self-promotion in the sense that it is not truthful. The other respondents also confessed that there must be coherency among the pictures one presents, which clarifies that the self today is something we manage and control, especially on digital platforms.

KF's statement further resonates with Goffman's (1956) idea of backstage preparations. Posting these intellectual links that she mentioned as self-promotion, could have been posted by a person for different motives, it does not have to be that the person had the intention of engaging in self-promotion. Either way, backstage activity has occurred. Deciding where to post the link or what caption to write has been carefully planned, and it will send out a message about who the person is, further to be interpreted by the audience seeing the message.

What was argued as negative by KF was when these intellectual links which she saw as self-promotion, are not backed up by something less intellectual, such as showing a sense of humor. This statement showed that the respondent saw more value in portraying a likeable person, rather than just showing off competencies and intellect.

It could be concluded that negative self-promotion for the recruiters mostly had to do with not providing a coherent and truthful picture, enhancing one's previous responsibilities, and simply being too intellectual in the sense that one tends to forget to show other qualities, such as simply being a nice person.

5.5.1 Give proof of your greatness

Asking the respondents to share their experiences and perceptions of positive self-promotion, the following was shared:

"I think you should say what you are good at and what you have done and those kinds of things, but showing that does not mean to say that you are the best. You can have someone else say that you are the best, use references, show examples of what you have done rather than just saying it" – (LW2)

"There was one time when a person showed up here and said: 'hi my name is, and I'm applying for a job' and I thought that was fun. I think it was a girl looking for an internship and she got it too, because I thought that was a great way to show that you have courage. And then she had the qualifications needed too" – (CC)

"A girl that works here she is born in the 90's and she was the first person that I have ever hired that is born in the 90's. It was one of these things that stuck out. Now she is giving out her second book and when she got a job here she had already given out one book. You kind of understand that she has ambition if you have done that when your are that young" – (LW1)

For a majority of the respondents positive self-promotion had to do with applicants giving proof of what they can do, not in the form of expressing their own greatness but in the form of a portfolio or by having someone else carry out the Impression management for them, in the form of references. This disclosed a hesitation towards simply believing self-promotion that could not be backed up by direct evidence.

Two respondents also revealed that sometimes one can be more opened to self-promotion in the recruitment process, when for example looking for a specific type of person.

"Yes I've had some experience with that. I was a bit surprised because sometimes it is good with diversity. Sometimes you need a person that is a little bit more superficial in a way. It cannot be too many of those types of persons but sometimes I have bought an act like that because there has been other perks" – (KF)

"It is a part of the job. We are helping others to succeed and that is mostly about sticking out, but I have met a lot of people in the industry and there is a certain kind of mentality here. A lot of people have the constant urge to be seen and heard, it does not have to be wrong, sometimes it can be just right because some clients and tasks will demand it and need those types of individuals" – (LW2)

These statements helped to further provide evidence to an inner skepticism towards self-promotion among the recruiters, using words with negative connotations such as act and superficial, and claiming that there is an urge to be seen and heard. Although at the same time arguing that there were occasionally perks of having a "self-promoter" type of person in the organization. Yet again displaying a discrepancy in what they believed was needed in PR and what their own gut-feeling told them.

5.6 Footprints in a digital space

Discussing self-promotion, in particularly the online context, a majority of the respondents said that social media has changed their recruitment processes. They also argued that social media offers a good way to recruit people and serves a greater possibility to find the right person. As expressed by two respondents:

"It's good, because the more you understand the receiver […] I mean as a CEO of a PR agency you get around 300 emails a day. I get about 2-10 job applications per day and that's not only unique for me I think. If someone sends me a message on Facebook or LinkedIn and I have less messages in those inboxes then that's smart. There is a greater chance that I will see it" (LW1)

"In the recruitment process it gives me, as the recruiter, a possibility to get a better picture of someone, even though I know that it is a modified picture that I am shown. But maybe that is the picture that I want to see, I am not interested in seeing an applicant's party pictures" - (LH2)

The statement made by LH2 showed a greater awareness of the fact that the self on social media is controllable and up for modification. Her statement demonstrated that she did not mind whether there had been lots of preparation backstage as long as she was provided with a truthful portrayal that appealed to her, she would be satisfied with the outcome. As argued by McCracken (2008) the post-modern individual to greater extent accepts that identity has less to do with things that remain identical.

Resonating with Goffman (1956) and Gergen (1991) the statement by LH2 provides nuance to what has been argued by other respondents in previous discussions on authenticity, since it shows that she understands that there will be no such thing as a true self portrayed, and she is satisfied with it.

Further asking the respondents about online self-promotion and its importance for individuals who are looking for their first jobs in PR the following was shared:

"Because of the fact that the media landscape is changing […] our role will be more about working with communication to build relationships and for that social media is great. If you know social media and you are comfortable in using it and know the platforms, I think the best place to build the personal brand is online" - (GF)

"Yes, it is a way to show that you know something without having any work life experience. It's important to show more than academic credits" – (LH2)

"Yes, because those are the channels were you are expected to contribute with your knowledge, I mean building opinion on Twitter for example, or understand how a Facebook campaign works. It's kind of given that you need to be active yourself. Yes you have too." – (KF)

"I think it can be a bonus and help someone further in the recruitment process. The more experience you have the less my boss will look you up on Facebook" – (AL)

All respondents argued that it is important for first-job seekers to self-promote online because the media landscape is changing. The statement by KF was however the only statement providing a bit more detail of what was seen as valuable.

5.6.1 Reviewing online presence and self-promotional efforts

Asking the respondents more specifically what they look at when looking up applicants online, a majority of the respondents firstly pointed out that they do not put much effort towards looking online. A majority however said that when, and if they would look at an applicant's online presence they would primarily look at content, more specifically, how someone writes and the language that the person keeps online.

Some respondents stated:

"In particular I look at the writing since it's a core competence here, so I can for example look at spelling" – (LF)

"LinkedIn is a good way to see what kind of contacts a person has, if that person has recommendations from other employers, what kind of network does the person have, which companies does the person show an interest for, and things like that […] If I looked at a blog I would look at the language and stylistic, it is like a writing test" – (LW2)

"I would look at pictures and posts. Then I would of course look at the presence on each of the platforms. I mean it is one thing to be on Twitter or not. Twitter is much more of an intellectual channel than for example Instagram, and Facebook is more mainstream. If they would have a blog it would be a bonus, I would check to see what it is about" – (KF)

"I think we would look at the content, how you write, and maybe if we are looking for a person with an interest in for example sports and that person has a blog about sports, than that would be really interesting, more than if that blog was about hamsters" – (AL)

One respondent argued completely different, putting focus on another aspect than content.

"I would look at traffic, how many people follow this person and how many people read this blog, more than what they write. The important thing is to be an interesting person for someone else" – (GF)

This respondent claimed that it was more important for her to see that others had shown that an applicant was somehow interesting, as some kind of proof of that the individual is legitimate and likeable, without basing it on her own judging.

Analyzing this from Goffman's (1956) theatrical approach, one could say that the recruiter in this case would check to see what others have said about an actor before deciding to go to the play, as a way of reference checking.

5.7 A Twitter account will not get you hired

Enquiring the respondents to summarize what part online self-promotion actually plays in the course of the recruitment process the following was shared:

"Based on how it has been before it does play a part, but it is not what determines if you get a job […] It is still the personal meeting. 'Is this a person that I believe would be able to take responsibility and be reliable? How does it work with such things as for example working hours?' and more. That is not something you can determine through online channels." – (KF)

"Yes it does play a part in the process but it is not crucial. It is crucial for face-time, to be able to come here and present yourself. However, during interviews we have discussions about how the person views communication, and maybe we talk about a case and try to get input on that. It is not about having the correct answer but more about seeing how a person has a red thread throughout his or her arguments" – (CC)

"I think it is important but it does not determine anything" - (AL)

Argued by a majority of the respondents self-promotion online can help an applicant in the first steps of the process by giving the recruiter a sense of who a person is and what that person knows, especially for first-job seekers without experience. However, it can equally exclude an applicant from the selection process.

"It's more something to check off the list, you check that there is nothing that will scare you, rather than the opposite" - (LH2)

"It is not important for the job but you can exclude yourself by behaving badly on social media […] It is more a possibility to make a fool out of yourself" - (TA)

As argued by Miller (1995) embarrassment is not as easily avoided online, which was acknowledged by the respondents as one of the down sides of online self-promotion, displayed as overweighing its benefits.

The respondents' answers emphasized the personal meeting and getting a feeling that an applicant is someone likeable, as mostly important. Further a majority of the respondents argued that references are, as they have always been, core components in the recruitment process. Some respondents even argued that those references that originate from other people than those provided by the applicants themselves, are regarded as even more valuable.

"I think people want references by others than those that the applicants provides themselves to greater extent today" – (LH1)

"I think that in most cases you need some kind of personal relation to rise above the crowd […] When I get a tip from someone, an old colleague or alike [...] we exchange names, and that's something else. I look at those applications differently" - (LF)

Concluded by these statements, Gergen's (1991) theory on multiple selves on the Internet making us confused, is additionally provided accuracy, recognized in the underlying skepticism among the recruiters to trust what they see online.

Even though the agency recruiters argued that online self-promotion is important in the recruitment process and that it provides additional information about an applicant, their skepticism towards the concept still makes them want to search for their own evidence, to review in an offline context.

Once more it is displayed that the recruiters see the online world as dependent on the offline world in the sense that it is primarily provided with meaning when backed up in an offline context.

6. Discussion & Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to explore whether online self-promotion is essential in order for a first-job seeker to gain employment in a public relations agency today. In this chapter the research questions that have guided the study will be revisited a long with conclusions and discussions of the findings under each stated question. A closing discussion and suggestions for future research will be provided in the end of the chapter.

1. What is common advice in Swedish news media when it comes to self-promotion?

This study shows that the general advice when it comes to self-promotion, expressed in Swedish news articles, is simply; be yourself, and enhance your true qualities. The findings suggest that there is an underlying consensus in the articles that everyone is already who they wish to be and therefore it is simple to self-promote, you just have to enhance the true you and your qualities, and anyone can do it!

What can be concluded from the content in the articles is that it provides little material help for a reader seeking advice on how and why to engage in self-promotion, in many cases leaving the reader more confused than before reading. In the articles it was more often spelt out what not to do, which was rather misleading since the approach of the articles was to encourage people to act.

A hypothesis is that the lack of concrete advice in the articles might have to do with a cautiousness to give too specific recommendations on a concept acknowledged can be interpreted differently, depending on the audience. Independent of the imprecise advice, the contribution and helpfulness of the articles has to be considered rather questionable.

2. Which indications make PR agency recruiters in Sweden label an activity as self-promotion (as opposed to legitimate self-description)?

- *When is self-promotion positive and when is it negative?*

This study shows that the recruiters directed in the interviews find it difficult to pinpoint which indications make them characterize behavior as self-promotion as opposed to legitimate self-description. For some, self-promotion becomes self-description when an applicant behaves too unconventional by for example singing a CV, while for others certain words in the language make them characterize a person's behavior as self-promotion. In this sense, the findings provide significance to the researcher's own model (see model 2) since the varying answers indicate that individuals to a great extent describe different behavior as self-promotion, and react to different cues.

The findings display that the interviewed agency recruiters have a negative view of self-promotion which is also why it appeared easier for them to give examples of when self-promotion is negative in the recruitment process. Negative self-promotion is for example considered to be the case when an applicant boosts responsibilities from previous work, provides an incoherent portrayal on multiple platforms online, and when presenting 'different persons' online and offline.

Positive self-promotion on the other hand is considered to be carried out when an applicant can prove competence by for example providing a proper portfolio of previous work, or when Impression management is carried out by others, through for example references.

The findings suggest that even though Goffman's (1956) theatrical analogy was developed in the late 1950's it is still relevant, and given even more significance because of the rise of digital platforms and more stages for self-construction and Impression management. Much of what we see online is constructed in Goffman's backstage, with the purpose to show a constructed and well-executed self on the social media front stage. Since some of the respondents highlighted looking for evidence themselves, by for example trying to find references through their own contacts, the findings also give significance to Gergen's (1991) theory on social saturation. New digital platforms make us confused and in this case skeptic to what we see online. The Internet and social media lets people construct themselves in a way that suits them which seems to be one reason for the recruiters' skepticism towards the concept of online self-promotion. The findings give the impression that the agency recruiters see the online context as a separate entity and simply as a representation of the offline world. Or at best, of complementary value.

3. *What importance do Swedish PR agency recruiters attribute to online self-promotion activities of first job-seekers in public relations?*

There is a consensus among the agency recruiters that online self-promotion is important and that it gives especially first-job seekers an additional possibility to show who they are, without experience to rely on. At best it can premier an applicant by resulting in an interview, but after that, it no longer plays a part.

Although describing online self-promotion as a good way to be seen in a tough job market, the agency recruiters' skepticism towards the concept appears significant during the whole course of the interviews as they often wished to declare risks of engaging in this type of behavior rather than benefits.

The outcome from a discussion on what the agency recruiters expect from people applying for a job in the industry also showed that at first they placed much importance on a newly added skill, namely digital knowledge, but further on never really described or developed what they ascribed to this skill. The agency recruiters appeared to put more prominence in discussing other more traditional expectations, such as being social and a good writer. This gives additional support to put forward that there is a confusion among the recruiters on what they really want, and a clear discrepancy in what they believe is important in public relations and what they truly consider in their judging. The actual importance ascribed to online self-promotion for that reason still seems unsettled and it is worth questioning, is it their personal viewpoint that online self-promotion is important? Or do they express a common recommendation that one should self-promote online because they feel obliged to, considering their roles being more digital today?

4. *What role, if any, does the act of online self-promotion play in the course of the recruitment process in PR agencies in Sweden?*

The findings show that the role of online self-promotion is mainly an additional writing test, since the agency recruiters put great emphasis on content. If an applicant for example has a blog the recruiters will try to see what it is about and check the writing style of the person, and which topics he or she has chosen to discuss. Only one respondent mentioned that she would look at traffic, and that the important thing is if an applicant is interesting in the eyes of others. This is particularly interesting because it shows that the success of online self-promotion, by the recruiter, is based on how others have judged it before, such as likes, shares or followers, which would be interesting to study further.

6.1 Closing discussion

The author of this thesis believes that the study at hand contributes to public relations scholarship since it provides an insight to how PR professionals in the agency sector view challenges in the industry, and in recruiting new employees, considering everything becoming more digital.

The main finding of this study is that you do not have to be an "online animal" in order to gain employment in a public relations agency in Sweden. Social media might have raised the game, but it has not created a new type of person. Recruiters are looking for competent people but they still want someone who fits in well with the others in the organization and someone nice to talk to in the coffee room. As one respondent said, 'you must show that you have both a brain and a heart' highlighting the importance of showing that you are someone likeable.

The online world only seems to be a representation of the offline world, and it is in the offline world that the applicant can truly make an impression that will help him gain a job. One could see it as, the recruiters have one foot in the online world but the rest is still steady in the offline world where the personal meeting takes place.

Some of the author's own critical thoughts on the findings are that there seems to be very few voices that recognize the job-seekers who most likely are the ones paying the prize for this 'raised game' and whose identities are subject to evaluation and judgment of these agency recruiters that can under the best of circumstances provide them with employment.

One must reflect over whether it is appropriate to judge a job applicant in the same way as one chooses a life partner, after all it is only a job, not a lifelong commitment where you need to know everything about a person.

These first- job seekers certainly seem to pay the prize for the confusion of employers who do not know what they are looking for, and an environment which has blurred the lines between the private and the public sphere, making us clueless.

6.2 Suggestions for future research

It would be interesting to conduct this type of study on a larger scale interviewing a greater number of agency recruiters in public relations. Such a study could for example center on indications. A researcher could show already prearranged examples of different self-presentation behavior on various online platforms, using pictures and texts to ask respondents about how they interpret the behavior. This could mean exploring patterns in another way than what has been possible in this study, by not allowing the respondents to state their own examples.

It would also be of interest to conduct a cross-country study to see how agencies in different countries might differ in their sensitivity and embracement of self-promotional behavior. Finally this type of study would be of interest to conduct in other types of industries/sectors since digital platforms are becoming normal features in people's daily lives today, but the recognition of online self-promotion and embracement of it most likely differs across industries.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Role expectations:

- Let us say that you are hiring someone who has recently graduated and has no working experience within PR. What do look at/for?

- If you try to think of the last person you hired, what did that person contribute with?

- Do you have experience of hiring someone newly graduated?

- What do you believe is expected of someone looking for a job in a PR agency?

- What is included in the PR role?

- Do you believe that the expectations have changed during the time you have worked in the industry?

Self-promotion in general terms:

- What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word self-promotion?

- What does self-promotion mean to you?

- If you think about yourself, can you remember anytime when you have thought 'that is self-promotion'?

- What indications makes you classify something as self-promotion?

- Do you have any good and bad examples of self-promotion in the recruitment process?

- Do you believe that there are any risks related to self-promotion?

- If you think about the fact that there are different fields and disciplines to work in, do you believe that there is a difference in how self-promotion is viewed depending on the discipline?
- Do you believe there is a cultural difference in how self-promotion is viewed?

Self-promotion online:

- It is common to use social media to apply for jobs today, and self-promotion online has become popular. What do you think of that?
- There can be a difference in who someone portrays on the Internet and how that person is in real life. Do you have any experiences of that in the recruitment process?
- Do you consider it to be important for people to engage in self-promotion online to get a job in a PR agency today?
- What role do you consider self-promotion online to have in the recruitment process, for someone who is applying for their first job in an agency?
- What would you say that you look at if you look at an applicant's online presence?
- Do you think it is more important for someone newly graduated to engage in self-promotion?
- How important do you think it is to finally get offered the job?

Generational differences

- A lot of people applying for their first jobs today belong to a generation who have grown up with the Internet. Do you believe it changes the expectations of them, in the PR industry?
- Have you experienced a difference when people from younger generations enter the industry?

- What advice would you give to someone applying for their first job today? Considering both the offline and the online context.

Appendix 2: News articles

Newspaper: Aftonbladet

Title: Marknadsför dig själv

Date published: 2014-04-10

Author: Mia Sahl

Online source: http://www.aftonbladet.se/wellness/inrehalsa/article16381020.ab

Marknadsför dig själv!

➕ **Hitta ditt varumärke!** Hur vill du framstå och uppfattas? Vad vill du att andra tänker när de hör ditt namn? Vad vill du samman- kopplas med? Vad vill du förmedla?

Publicerad: 2013-03-11

INRE HÄLSA En spikrak karriär är få förunnat. Men du kan komma längre genom att marknadsföra dig själv mer aktivt.
Wellness expert Mia Törnblom vet hur du säljer in dig själv.
Här är hennes bästa tips från nya boken "Du säljer".

Newspaper: Civilekonomen

Title: #Förstajobbet

Date published: 2014-03-03

Author: Tomas Nilsson

Online source: http://www.civilekonomen.se/artikel/forsta-jobbet

#Första jobbet

MÅN, 2014-03-03 08:54 GUIDE NUMMER 2014-02

Nyexaminerad och dags att söka första jobbet. Men konkurrensen är stenhård. Testa ett nytt grepp som får dig att sticka ut från mängden: en kreativ ansökan via sociala medier. Civilekonomen berättar hur du går tillväga.

Dela Maila

Författare: Tomas Nilsson

Sätten att söka jobb på har nått en annan dimension på senare år. Vanligt personligt brev och cv har i dag fått konkurrens av mer påhittiga och nyskapande metoder i sociala medier. Det här kan både vara en utmaning och en möjlighet när du ska söka ditt första jobb.

Tänk dig följande: Du ska söka jobb och bestämmer dig för att lägga upp ett klipp på Youtube, där du rakt upp och ner kommunicerar ditt personliga brev och cv med hjälp av hiphop. Någon vecka senare kan du välja och vraka bland jobberbjudanden – du har fått över 50 stycken. Låter detta som kvalificerad humbug? Det är det inte.

Foto: Istockphoto

Personligt varumärke – största konkurrensfördelen

Publicerad 2012-09-17 10:12

Varumärkesstrategen Pia Lanneberg om vikten av ett starkt personligt varumärke för att ta sig fram i karriären.

Det har väl inte undgått någon att det hetaste karriärverktyget idag är DU. Ditt varumärke. Att vara kunnig räcker inte, det är en hygienfaktor. Det är inte vad du kan som avgör om du hamnar på dina kunders mentala shoppinglista, utan vad andra tänker och känner när de hör ditt namn. Du kan också se det som ditt rykte, det byggs över tid och blir så småningom synonymt med hur andra beskriver dig.

Newspaper: Dagens Nyheter

Title: Så lyckas du på sociala medier

Date published: 2013-10-14

Author: Caroline Englund

Online source: http://www.civilekonomen.se/artikel/forsta-jobbet

Så lyckas du på sociala medier

Publicerad 2013-10-14 10:21

Martin Ridne

Lyssna på andra, glöm inte att det handlar om kommunikation och tänk på vad du kan bidra med. De råden ger Emanuel Karlsten, expert på sociala medier, den som vill använda Twitter för att stärka sitt personliga varumärke.

Twitter är inte längre något nytt men förra året fick mikrobloggen ett uppsving då fler svenskar än någonsin tidigare skapade ett konto. I dag finns 500.000 svenska konton registrerade.

Skriv ut

A Öka textstorlek

Rätta artikeln

LÄSARREAKTIONER

Tweet 39

Rekommendera

Newspaper: Göteborgs Posten

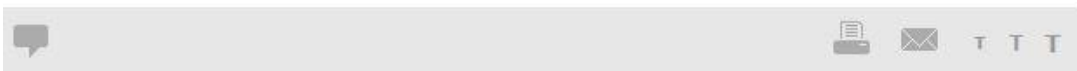**Title**: Gör som stjärnorna: förvandla ditt namn till ett varumärke

Date published: 2006-11-18

Author: Kenny Genborg

Online source: http://www.gp.se/ekonomi/1.153115-gor-som-stjarnorna-forvandla-ditt-namn-till-ett-varumarke

Gör som stjärnorna: förvandla ditt namn till ett varumärke

Publicerad 18 november 2006 | Uppdaterad 21 september 2009

David Beckham har lyckats. Och Veckorevyns chefredaktör Ebba von Sydow är en mästare. Nu är det din tur. Så här gör du för att göra ditt namn till ett värdefullt varumärke.

Beckham är kanske inte längre en spelare i absolut världsklass. Men finns han på planen när Real Madrid gör mål kan man fortfarande se honom snabbast av alla sprinta långa sträckor för att klättra upp på målskyttens rygg.

Fakta

Om du råkar ut för en tidningsjournalist är det bra att ha förberett svaren på den obligatoriska faktarutan med personliga frågor. Här råder viss konstnärlig frihet, anser PR-experterna.

Newspaper: Metro

Title: Undvik att sälja in dig själv "för mycket"

Date published: 2010-08-31

Author: Kristian Borglund

Online source: http://www.metrojobb.se/artikel/6440-undvik-att-s%C3%A4lja-in-dig-sj%C3%A4lv-f%C3%B6r-mycket

2010-08-31

Foto: Foto: Peter Brinch

Undvik att sälja in dig själv "för mycket"

Publ. 2010-08-31 06:27

Du har hört det förr: Om du vill få ett nytt jobb måste du sälja in dig själv. Men säljsnacket kan gå överstyr. Se här hur du undviker att bli "för mycket".

– Det kan definitivt bli "too much" när jobbkandidater vill göra intryck, säger Daniella Kallaris Ibis.

Hon var tidigare chefrekryterare på Poolia och jobbar nu som headhunter ihop med Cristofer Lavesson Eckermalm i egna företaget Like Consulting.

Det är framför allt två saker som du ska sälja på jobbintervjun: din kompetens och din personlighet. Båda aspekterna är viktiga – men personligheten är ofta det som väger tyngst i bedömningen.
– I lägen där en arbetsgivare tvingas välja mellan två kandidater med likvärdig kompetens, blir personligheten avgörande.

Olika rekryterare har olika gränser för vad de anser är "för mycket". En kandidat kan hamna i "Verkligen inte"-högen av en rekryterare och älskad av en annan.
– Själv gillar jag när kandidaterna har en hel del kaxighet, medan andra rekryterare kanske föredrar en mycket mer nedtonad attityd, säger Daniella Kallaris Ibis.

Newspaper: Svenska Dagbladet

Title: Låt personliga varumärket lyfta din karriär

Date published: 2010-10-27

Author: Josefin Jakobsson

Online source: http://www.svd.se/naringsliv/karriar/lat-personliga-varumarket-lyfta-din-karriar_7014709.svd

Låt personliga varumärket lyfta din karriär

KARRIÄRSKOLAN DEL 4 Ett personligt varumärke är hårdvaluta på arbetsmarknaden och allt jobbsökande handlar i grund och botten om att styra hur andra uppfattar dig. Det anser karriärcoachen Charlotte Hågård och sticker hål på myten att varumärkestänkande bara är något som kändisbloggare sysslar med.

27 oktober 2010 kl 10:29, uppdaterad: 8 februari 2014 kl 10:00

– Att ha ett personligt varumärke är viktigt, men det är egentligen bara ett flashigt ord för god självinsikt, säger Charlotte Hågård.

Som ofta tillfrågad expert och karriärcoach har hon mångårig erfarenhet av att hjälpa människor vidare i sina karriärer. Trots att orden i sig kanske låter komplicerade anser hon att begreppet "personligt varumärke" egentligen bara handlar om att känna sig själv och sina styrkor, och att kommunicera dessa till andra.

BÖRSEN

OMX Sthlm, kl 17.30

Newspaper: Svenska Dagbladet

Title: Det måste du vara bra på 2013

Date published: 2012-11-20

Author: unknown

Online source: http://www.svd.se/naringsliv/karriar/det-maste-du-vara-bra-pa-

2013_7682232.svd

Det måste du vara bra på 2013

Det är tuffa tider på arbetsmarknaden. För att fixa ett jobb under nästa år räcker det inte med att ha rätt kompetens, konstaterar Wall Street Journal som listar fyra personliga egenskaper som arbetsgivarna letar efter.

BÖRSEN

OMX Sthlm, kl 17.30
-0,20% 440,81 SEK

1 mån: 1,49%
Årsskiftet: 4,05%

20 november 2012 kl 19:08

1. Tydlig kommunikation

Att göra sig själv förstådd och kunna uttrycka sina åsikter och på sätt skapa kontakt med hjälp av kommunikation, är en viktig egenskap som lyfts fram av Holly Paul, rekryteringschef på Pricewaterhousecoopers,

Newspaper: Svenska Yle

Title: "Vi har alla ett personligt varumärke vare sig vi vill det eller ej"

Date published: 2013-11-20

Author: Anna Ekström

Online source: http://svenska.yle.fi/artikel/2013/11/20/vi-har-alla-ett-personligt-

varumarke-vare-sig-vi-vill-det-eller-ej

"Vi har alla ett personligt varumärke, vare sig vi vill det eller ej"

Publicerad 20.11.2013 - 12:30. Uppdaterad 20.11.2013 - 21:57

Ditt personliga varumärke innefattar allt du gör och säger, både i verkligheten och på sociala medier. Och frågan är inte om vi vill ha ett personligt varumärke eller inte, utan om vi vill styra det själva, menar Harini Chari, marknadsföringsstrateg på American Chambers i Helsingfors.

- Då jag föreläser om personliga varumärken finns det ofta någon i publiken som säger att de inte är intresserade av att skapa något personligt varumärke och att det inte hör hemma i deras kultur. Men då brukar jag säga till dem att ifall du inte tar kontrollen över ditt personliga varumärke, kommer någon annan göra det för dig i stället. Vi har alla ett personligt varumärke, vare sig vi vill det eller ej, säger hon.

Lektion i att sälja sig själv

Malmö. Kan man få ett genombrott i sin karriär genom att presentera sig på 30 sekunder? Ja, svarar PR-konsulten och medietränaren Vesna Maldaner. Hennes bok i ämnet har just kommit ut.

MALMÖ. – Jag heter Vesna Maldaner. Syns du inte finns du inte. Kom till mig. Jag kan hjälpa dig paketera ditt budskap.

Så lyder hennes egen hälsningsfras när hon på snabbaste sätt ska presentera sig vid ett mingelparty med presumtiva kunder. Det var ett sådant som fick henne att börja fundera i banor som nu resulterat i boken "Sälj dig själv på 30 sekunder".

– Jag kände mig förvirrad av att man fick så kort tid med varje person för att sälja sitt budskap. Vad ska man egentligen säga för att de ska komma ihåg vem man är när man bara har en halv minut på sig?

Bokens tes är att man ska skaffa sig vad hon kallar ett egotal, en slagkraftig och snabb beskrivning av vem man är. Det gäller att hitta en formulering som får den andra att studsa till. Att bara säga vad man heter och vilket yrke man har duger inte.

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