# Navigating the Digital Landscape: Unveiling the Vital Soft Skills of Effective Social Media Managers

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## Abstract

The increasing significance of social media in organizations has led to collaborative efforts between IT professionals and marketers. Social media managers play a vital role in enhancing business exposure through effective strategies, requiring a diverse skill set encompassing soft skills like teamwork, emotional intelligence, communication proficiency, and leadership. Soft skills, defined as non-technical interpersonal and behavioral skills, are crucial for decision-making and project success in social media management, surpassing the importance of hard skills in project failure. Theoretical perspectives on soft skills vary, emphasizing traits such as leadership and communication. However, literature on social media management often overlooks these soft skills, necessitating a deeper understanding and prioritization. Assessing soft skills in social media managers presents challenges due to diverse skill lists and subjective evaluation. The adoption of unconventional methodologies is suggested to ensure comprehensive evaluations that consider cognitive and emotional dimensions. Success in the contemporary work environment hinges on soft skills, shaping an individual's ability to collaborate, communicate effectively, think critically, lead others, and manage conflicts.

Detailed sub-chapters delve into specific soft skills essential for social media managers, including teamwork, communication, analytical thinking, leadership, active listening, business comprehension, collaboration, adaptability, conflict resolution, credibility, customer relations, data mining, decision-making, diversity comprehension, ability to edit, and engaging people. In conclusion, recognizing and prioritizing soft skills is crucial for comprehensive training programs, equipping social media managers to navigate the multifaceted challenges of managing an online presence in the digital age.

**Keywords**: skills, soft, social media, manager, IT, soft skills, social media manager

## 1. Introduction

Social media, encompassing websites and applications facilitating the creation and sharing of information, has played a pivotal role in organizations for over a decade. The emphasis on its significance has grown, with increasing recognition of its impact (X. Li et al., 2023). IT professionals are utilizing social networking sites like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube for information discovery and exchange (Barberá et al., 2024). The collaboration between IT professionals and marketers is on the rise as they jointly develop dashboards, monitor social media, and manage social networking sites (Ong, 2024). The role of the social media manager has evolved significantly, with over 90% of global marketers acknowledging that social media marketing has expanded their business exposure(Ibañez et al., 2023). This expansion is attributed to investments in effective social media strategies. Notably, approximately 70% of business-to-consumer marketers have successfully acquired customers through Facebook, and 84% of CEOs and VPs leverage social media to inform their purchasing decisions (Tur et al., 2024).

The qualifications for a social media manager go beyond specific academic degrees and diplomas. Personal qualities, existing knowledge, and experience are crucial, along with a diverse skill set that includes teamwork, networking, emotional intelligence, strong writing and editing skills, familiarity with social media platforms, algorithms, and search engine optimization, creativity, communication proficiency, organizational abilities, multitasking, data analysis, online community management, customer service skills, accuracy, and the ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines (S. Lee et al., 2020). The role of a social media manager has become one of the most critical in marketing, with about 85% of consumers active on social media and 58% of users following at least one brand. This highlights the increasing importance of social media marketing for businesses of all sizes (Knupfer et al., 2023). Successful content and managers often possess leadership skills and empathy, allowing them to identify opportunities, create innovative content, and convert followers into loyal customers.

Soft skills, referring to non-technical skills, are essential for social media managers in their dynamic role of shaping brand narratives in the digital landscape. These skills involve interacting with others and play a critical role in decision-making. Soft skills include intuition,

learning, flexibility, and others. While technical skills are important, recent research emphasizes the significance of soft skills, suggesting that the failure of projects is often due to a lack of these skills rather than insufficient hard skills (Ayers et al., 2023). Soft skills become crucial for global marketing managers in adapting strategies to changing internal and external factors, enhancing the effectiveness of the firm's strategy (Karlsen & Aalberg, 2023).

The literature on social media management tends to focus more on technical aspects, such as analytics and content creation, leaving a gap in understanding the nuanced world of soft skills that define a proficient social media manager. Recognizing and prioritizing these soft skills is vital for developing comprehensive training programs and guidelines, preparing individuals for the multifaceted challenges of managing an online presence.

## 2. Definition of Soft skill

Soft skills, often referred to as interpersonal and behavioral skills, are not job-specific and are typically not acquired through formal education (van Heerden et al., 2023). They are intangible, not associated with a specific deliverable or output, and are employed without the use of tools or templates (Kolesnik et al., 2023). Soft skills can be considered as character traits that enhance individual performance (Feraco, Resnati, et al., 2023). They are generic skills that can be transferred to a wide range of tasks, contributing to success in interpersonal relationships and work environments, and are deemed essential for the success of organizations (Ramos-Monge et al., 2023). While hard skills are necessary for task execution, organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of soft skills in the workplace (Lourakis & Petridis, 2023). Studies suggest that a significant proportion of job success depends on soft skills, with figures ranging from 75% according to Avença et al., (2023) to an emphasis by social media managers on soft skills over hard skills in the IT industry (Tusyanah et al., 2023). The need for enhanced soft skills in the workplace is influenced by factors such as cultural diversity, globalization, and technology(Di et al., 2023). Recognizing this importance, there are calls for organizations to incorporate the development of soft skills into their corporate strategies (Beckingham, 2018).

## 3. Perspectives of Soft Skills

Soft skills, as defined by Perreault (2004) are distinctive characteristics and abilities that set an individual apart from others with similar professional backgrounds and experience. These skills encompass character traits, behaviors, and attitudes rather than technical knowledge or aptitude (Majida, 2023). Forman et al., (2023) describe soft skills as interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities that enable individuals to excel in specific social contexts. Various theoretical perspectives on soft skills have been explored by researchers. Feraco, Sella, et al., (2023) emphasizes interpersonal skills such as leadership, communication, negotiation, influencing, problem-solving, and decision-making as crucial for project managers. Thornhill-Miller et al., (2023) views soft skills through a leadership lens and identifies critical thinking, communication, conceptual skills, problem-solving, conflict management,

and team building as essential for leaders. Martino et al. (2011) link soft skills to innovation, highlighting traits like passion, optimism, tolerance for uncertainty, entrepreneurial orientation, relationship building, strategic influencing, communication, and quick study as vital for fostering innovation. Bernhard & Russmann (2023) integrates the perspectives of Halim et al., (2023) to develop a model of soft skills, emphasizing those required for innovation. Passion and optimism, tolerance for uncertainty, relationship building and maintenance, and innovation leadership skills were operationalized from these studies. For this thesis, focused on the innovativeness of low-level, front-line managers, key skills were drawn from the management, leadership, and innovation perspectives. Communication skills, interpersonal skills, strategic influencing skills, and problem-solving skills were operationalized to create a model of soft skills, keeping the framework simple and suitable for the study.

## 4. Soft Skills Assessment

The assessment of soft skills in social media managers is a critical aspect, considering their importance to both employers and employees. Islamiyati et al., (2023) highlighted the growing concern among employers regarding the evaluation of soft skills. However, Budi Santoso et al., (2023) noted that some academics resist acknowledging the significance of assessing soft skills, considering it a distraction from other academic priorities. Challenges in assessing soft skills arise from the diverse lists of skills in different studies and the subjective nature of evaluation. Lyu & Liu (2021) pointed out that the absence of objective tests for interpersonal and intrapersonal skills complicates the assessment process. Despite these challenges, Dolce et al., (2020) argued that avoiding the assessment of soft skills is not a solution. Instead, they suggested considering unconventional methodologies to evaluate these skills. The goal of assessing soft skills, according to Singh Dubey et al., (2022) is to understand how well social media managers have acquired the skills companies expect them to possess. Fadhil et al., (2021) emphasized that the assessment of soft skills relies on feedback, which can elicit positive or negative reactions from individuals. Positive or negative reactions to performance feedback, as noted by Sultanova et al., (2021) can significantly impact future performance. Stakeholders have valid concerns about the impact of soft skills assessment on individuals, particularly considering the cognitive and emotional dimensions involved. Magano et al., (2020) highlighted the potential effects of feedback on individuals and the importance of considering these dimensions in the assessment process. It is crucial to explore and adopt methodologies that address these challenges while ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of the soft skills possessed by social media managers.

## 5. Description of Soft Skills

The landscape of employment has evolved, and professional qualifications alone are no longer sufficient to secure a position in a company (Poláková et al., 2023). While academic credentials and technical skills remain important, there is a growing recognition of the significance of nonacademic attributes or soft skills in giving individuals a competitive

advantage in the labor market (Hassaro & Chailom, 2023). Success in the contemporary work environment is not solely determined by professional qualifications but also by factors such as personality compatibility with the organization's culture, the right attitude to navigate people and complex situations, and the possession of appropriate academic credentials or technical skills (Neilson et al., 2023). Soft skills play a crucial role in shaping the right attitude and the capacity to deal with people and challenging situations, contributing to overall success in the workplace. A review of the literature highlights specific soft skills that are particularly relevant in today's professional landscape. These include teamwork, communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, leadership skills, and conflict management (Levin et al., 2023). These soft skills go beyond traditional academic knowledge and technical expertise, playing a vital role in enhancing an individual's ability to collaborate, communicate effectively, think critically, lead others, and manage conflicts. The implications of these soft skills for social media managers will be further explored, considering the unique demands and dynamics of their roles in the digital age.

## 6. The Following Sub-chapters Discuss the Soft Skills Which Focus on Social Media Manager and Soft Skills Will Be Considered

### Teamwork skills

Teamwork skills have become a crucial requirement in higher educational curriculums, driven by the increasing prevalence of team-based structures in organizations (Zainuri & Huda, 2023). Graduates from various disciplines are expected to possess effective teamwork skills due to the demands of employers who prioritize better team performance. While working with people from diverse socio-cultural and academic backgrounds may seem straightforward, it is, in reality, a complex task. Individuals with strong teamwork skills can establish good rapport and interactions with others, assume leadership or follower roles, recognize and respect differences, and communicate and listen effectively (Zainuri & Huda, 2023). Nahidh et al., (2023) emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence in successful team dynamics. Successful team players exhibit high emotional intelligence, contributing positively to team performance. Effective communication within a team is considered a fundamental requirement for success, with good communicators demonstrating the ability to recognize and manage their emotions as well as those of their team members. Ellis et al., (2023) introduces a multilevel paradigm of emotional skills' performance relationship within a team setting. In this model, each team member not only manages their emotions but is also aware of the emotions of other team members, engaging in positive communication and actions to manage others' emotions. Successful team performance is attributed to factors such as good communication, the resources available to the team, the processes in which team members engage, and the individual skills of each team member (Sanwal et al., 2023). The demand for teamwork skills has intensified as organizations increasingly rely on lateral coordination rather than direct supervision (Ashaye et al., 2023). Moreover, strategic alliances between companies and organizations have become more prevalent, necessitating

collaboration across committees, cross-teams, and joint ventures (Giordani et al., 2023). As such, teamwork skills are not only essential for individual success but also crucial for the overall performance and effectiveness of organizations in today's collaborative and interconnected work environments.

## Communication Skills

Effective communication skills are paramount for social media managers in their role, involving clear and understandable communication with various stakeholders (Ihsaniyati et al., 2023). Social media managers must ensure that expectations are well understood by all stakeholders and that effective communication prevails among the stakeholders themselves. The ability to work with communities is essential, contributing to relationship strengthening, building connections, and facilitating communication within groups (Levin et al., 2023). Community building is a strategic approach that fosters teamwork and engagement with customers (Ashaye et al., 2023). Communication skills encompass not only the ability to convey ideas but also active listening, responsive engagement, and the ability to maintain conversations without monopolizing them (Trang et al., 2023). In the modern professional landscape, where technical jobs, diverse workplaces, and cross-functional teams are prevalent, communication skills are considered a fundamental trait for job seekers (Alelaimat et al., 2023). Good communication skills go beyond conveying information; they influence others positively and contribute to mature conversations (Tanhan et al., 2023).

Effective communication is linked to positive team performance and the achievement of professional and personal goals (Ruparel et al., 2023). It aligns with the rules governing the communication context, ensuring that behaviors are effective and appropriate for the given moment (Scales et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in enhancing communication skills, as individuals with higher emotional intelligence engage in positive interpersonal behaviors (Y. Xu et al., 2023). Sharing ideas, expressing personal feelings, and resolving differences are considered essential elements of the ability to relate and work with others (Pakura & Rudeloff, 2020). Communication is often referred to as the lifeblood of an organization, serving as a primary resource for managers and leaders to deliver and receive information, convey strategies, and articulate solutions (Pimdee et al., 2023). The absence of effective communication can hinder an organization's success and impede the development of interpersonal and professional relationships (Miller et al., 2023). In the workplace, skillful written communication is particularly emphasized, as it is a top requirement often lacking among college graduates (Sutcliffe et al., 2023). The ability to communicate effectively is a key determinant in career advancement and promotion (Balt et al., 2023). Employers increasingly prioritize candidates with well-developed communication skills, recognizing their role in facilitating negotiation and conflict resolution (Sunaryo et al., 2023).

## Analytical Thinking

The transformation of knowledge involves a distinct process from the mere application of knowledge. According to Reyna, (2023), knowledge transformation requires critical thinking, which, in turn, involves the objective analysis of information. Critical thinking skills are crucial for assimilating and evaluating information, enabling individuals to respond based on a thoughtful analysis (M. Wang et al., 2023). The lack of critical thinking skills may manifest in an individual's inability to integrate multiple perspectives effectively. Critical thinking is not just a general skill; rather, it needs to be developed through formal education to avoid negative consequences in one's leadership and performance at work (Lombardi, 2023). Cultures that encourage critical thinking provide individuals with opportunities to explore and enhance their skills by examining various viewpoints, perspectives, and possibilities (Koch et al., 2023). Well-developed critical thinking skills empower individuals not only to assess complex situations but also to generate feasible solutions and make logical decisions. In the context of social media management, creative and innovative thinking is essential for generating new ideas (Ahadzadeh et al., 2023). Creativity can be both domain-general (the ability to generate new ideas) and domain-specific (the ability to innovate within a specific field) (Ahadzadeh et al., 2023). Social media managers perceive creativity as both domain-general and domain-specific, and it is suggested that creativity can be taught both implicitly and explicitly (Faragó et al., 2023). Amabile et al., (1996) identifies three factors influencing creativity: skills relevant to the domain, task motivation, and cognitive skills. Analytical thinking is another crucial skill for social media managers, requiring the ability to analyze problems and issues at various stages of a project (Aldamen, 2023). Analytical thinkers tend to broaden their thinking, considering a larger set of alternatives and perspectives when solving problems (Gu et al., 2023). This analytical approach is crucial for effective decision-making and problem-solving in the dynamic field of social media management.

## Leadership skills

Leadership, as defined by Northouse et al., (2010) revolves around an individual's ability to inspire a group toward a common objective. While traditional views of leadership often emphasized charisma and eloquence, contemporary perspectives highlight a broader set of skills. Employers now value traits such as integrity, caring for others, ethics, and accepting diverse opinions as crucial components of effective leadership (Fijačko et al., 2023). Leadership is not confined to a select few; it is a process available to everyone within an organization (Agarwal et al., 2023). The traits theory posits that some individuals are born with inherent qualities that make them leaders (Lin et al., 2023). On the contrary, the behavioral theory argues that leaders are made through learning and experience (Oc et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence, encompassing self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social skills, and empathy, is recognized as a key trait of successful leaders (Heavey et al., 2020). Additionally, communication skills, teamwork, critical thinking, self-motivation, and

professional poise are also vital leadership attributes tied to emotional intelligence (Beard et al., 2008). Leaders play a crucial role in motivating team members and fostering creativity and innovation within a group (Ali et al., 2021). Leadership is particularly vital in guiding social media managers to success (Leidner et al., 2018). In summary, effective leadership in the dynamic realm of social media management involves a diverse skill set, encompassing emotional intelligence, communication, teamwork, critical thinking, monitoring, networking, organizational skills, and personal accountability. These skills collectively contribute to inspiring and guiding teams toward success in the digital landscape.

## Active Listening

Active listening is a crucial skill for effective communication, collaboration, and organizational functioning. Here are some key points related to the importance and benefits of active listening:

### 1. Increased Collaboration and Group Functioning:

Active listening has been demonstrated to enhance collaboration and overall group functioning (Ansari & Khan, 2020) . In team settings, individuals who actively listen are better equipped to understand diverse perspectives, leading to more cohesive and productive group dynamics (Waizenegger et al., 2020).

### 2. Enhanced Organizational Communication Effectiveness:

Active listening is essential for promoting effective communication between superiors and subordinates within organizations (Mui et al., 2022). Leaders who actively listen are more likely to understand the needs and concerns of their team members, fostering a positive and communicative work environment.

### 3. Improvement in Training Programs:

Active listening contributes to more effective training programs within organizations by providing valuable feedback and establishing rapport (Liu et al., 2021). Trainers who actively listen to participants can tailor their approach, address specific needs, and create a more engaging and constructive learning experience. Active listening involves not only hearing the words spoken but also understanding the underlying emotions, intentions, and perspectives. It requires full engagement, empathy, and a genuine interest in what the speaker is communicating. In organizational contexts, the ability to actively listen is a valuable asset for leaders, team members, and anyone involved in communication and collaboration.

## Business Comprehension

A wealth of research underscores the pivotal role that a profound grasp of business knowledge plays in catapulting social media managers to success as they engage with both internal and external stakeholders (Dwivedi et al., 2023). It is imperative for social media managers to intricately comprehend the fundamental functions encompassing Accounting and

Finance, Customer Service, Human Resource Management, Marketing Production and Operations, and Research and Development. This comprehensive understanding not only fortifies their interactions but also equips them to navigate the multifaceted landscape of organizational dynamics with finesse and strategic acumen.

## Collaboration and Cooperation

A proficient social media manager must possess the dual capabilities of collaboration and cooperation. Cooperation involves the exchange of pertinent information and resources in support of individual goals, whereas collaboration entails joint efforts toward a shared objective (Hamadi et al., 2022). Research underscores that cooperation expedites projects and facilitates knowledge transfer, while collaboration enhances e-learning and knowledge management (Alismaiel et al., 2022). Additionally, effective communication skills, both oral and written, are paramount for social media managers (Zarzycka et al., 2021). These communication skills are pivotal in fostering effective interaction within teams and ensuring clarity and coherence in conveying ideas and information.

## Adaptability

Recognizing the significance of adaptability, its finer intricacies merit further exploration. Obermayer et al., (2022)'s study emphasizes the necessity for social media managers to adjust to dynamic shifts in algorithms and evolving audience preferences. A closer examination of how these professionals perceive and navigate such changes can provide valuable insights into the nuanced nature of adaptability within the digital realm.

## Conflict Resolution

Conflict management entails the capacity to identify and address disputes in a rational and effective manner (Dineva et al., 2020). Within teams, goal conflicts may arise from divergent interests among various parties involved. Social media managers adept at navigating and resolving conflicts not only enhance the chances of success for multiple projects but also contribute to the overall value of the organization (Bloemen & De Coninck, 2020).

## Credibility

The credibility of social media managers can significantly impact their performance (Lai & Liu, 2020). Credibility is shaped by factors such as knowledge, professionalism, and effective communication. As highlighted by Fletcher et al., (2020) credibility not only enhances trust but also leads to increased positive word-of-mouth communication and the establishment of robust relationships. The tenth essential skill is the ability to think critically (Qureshi et al., 2021). Critical thinking involves testing assumptions, making evaluative judgments, and critically reviewing systems approaches (Singh & Kumar, 2022).

## Customer Relations Skills

The subsequent skill involves maintaining a customer focus and understanding customer needs Customer focus extends beyond mere customer service, emphasizing an understanding of what truly matters to the customer (Qureshi & Sabih, 2021). A robust customer focus is a significant contributor to the success of a business (Sabbagh et al., 2020). Social media managers should possess the ability to actively seek and listen to customer feedback, adeptly addressing concerns (Dalla-Pria & Rodríguez-de-Dios, 2022).

## Data Mining

Following that, the skill involves the capability to leverage data for generating customer insights. Data mining encompasses understanding what information needs to be captured and analyzed to gain insights into customers and competition (Leong et al., 2022). CEOs are not merely interested in data; they seek genuine understanding (insight) into the significance of the data (Berhanu & Raj, 2020). Businesses that effectively utilize such insights gain a competitive advantage (Berhanu & Raj, 2020).

## Effective Decision Making

The next skill involves the aptitude for decision-making. Decision-making entails the capability to comprehensively analyze all facets of a situation, gaining insights to make informed decisions (F. Li et al., 2021). "An employee's ability to correctly analyze a situation, understand tradeoffs, offer good recommendations, and make the right choice is often rewarded with increased freedom to self-manage, and with the opportunity to engage in more interesting and challenging projects" (Evans, 2002, p. 33).

## Comprehending Diversity

The fourteenth skill involves an understanding of diversity and its implications for an organization. Awareness and comprehension of diversity have been shown to enhance an organization's effectiveness and lead to better financial results (Villodre & Criado, 2020). Diversity skills contribute to increased understanding and success within a team (Del Vecchio et al., 2020). Moreover, an understanding of organizational diversity facilitates customer adoption of innovation (Hanaysha, 2022). This is because diversity provides a "cognitive and social environment that is a positive indicator for innovation and a negative indicator for routine tasks" (Nelson, 2014; p. 88). Wang et al., (2021) suggest that social media manager should be taught about the scope of diversity issues in the workplace and cross-culturally. Xu & Taghizadeh Larsson (2021) found that when project participant roles were dispersed geographically, it had positive influences on community engagement market success.

## Ability to Edit

The fifteenth skill involves the ability to edit. While general verbal and written communication skills are crucial, the capability to edit written communication before it

becomes public is indispensable (Thomas et al., 2020). Social media managers need to enhance documents by correcting errors, making sentences clearer, and ensuring precision. The sixteenth skill is the ability to engage people. Social media managers must effectively engage their clients by keeping them informed and interested (Wei et al., 2020). They "need to design experiences that deliver tangible value in return for customers' time, attention, endorsement, and data" (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011, p. 30).

## Empathy

The next skill for a social media manager involves the need to possess an empathetic outlook (Sabouret et al., 2020) . Empathy enables a person to perceive and understand the feelings and attitudes of others. For a social media manager, empathy is crucial in comprehending the problems faced by clients and end users. It serves as a catalyst for teamwork, collaboration, problem resolution, and learning (Stellefson et al., 2020).

## Flexibility

A social media manager must also possess the ability to be flexible (Chuang, 2020). The capacity to modify and integrate change is key to the success of a social media manager (Wajahat Hussain, 2020). Flexibility in utilizing various social media manager platforms has been demonstrated to enhance learning (Martín-Rojas et al., 2020). Flexibility, as a soft skill, is closely linked with adaptability. Being flexible implies the ability to navigate challenges smoothly and adjust plans as necessary. While flexibility may pose a challenge for individuals who prefer a specific routine, it is essential to maintain an adaptable mindset. Social media managers often juggle multiple clients or projects simultaneously, introducing numerous variables into their work life, where things can change rapidly. To thrive as a social media manager, the ability to swiftly adapt to challenges and changing circumstances is crucial. Developing flexibility involves viewing changes as opportunities for improvement rather than obstacles. Embrace the notion that changes, whether in tasks or routine, can enhance some aspect of your life or work. Remember that changes are a natural part of life and accepting them allows for ongoing personal and professional growth.

## Framing

The framing skill encompasses the ability to frame and re-frame information for decision-making. Framing involves how information is presented to a decision-maker (Banks et al., 2021). The combination of information and framing significantly influences risk attitudes, escalation of commitment, and negotiation outcomes (Morelli et al., 2022). The skill of reframing allows a social media manager to align multiple mental models to a problem, fostering a deeper understanding and effective collaboration with others (Kwon et al., 2017). Lee et al., (2022)'s case study delving into the impact of social media manager frames on Information System Delivery Processes revealed that social construction (the influence of others) facilitated participants in exploring project requirements and shaping their understanding of the endeavor.

**Ability to set Goals**

A vital skill for a social media manager is the ability to establish and attain goals (Li et al., 2021). These goals should be precise, measurable, and time-bound objectives. Aligning set goals with organizational resources is crucial for achieving overall organizational objectives (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). Additionally, the comprehension of these goals must be shared among team members for the successful completion of projects.

**Impression Management**

Impression Management, as proposed by Perkiss et al., (2021) involves the ability to create a favorable impression in the minds of others. In an ethnographic study on the performance records of a sales unit, Dunne et al., (2021) illustrated how managers can craft an "idealized version" of their accomplishments, aiming to impress others. This practice transforms information systems into showcase windows highlighting achievements upward rather than transparent windows monitoring compliance downward (Dunne et al., 2021). Another crucial skill is Positivity, encompassing the capacity to interact positively with others, which is highly valued for social media managers (Alo et al., 2023).

**Interpersonal Skills**

The recognized role of social media managers as community builders has garnered attention, yet the influence of networking on brand reach remains underexplored. Recent research by Ferreira et al., (2023) suggests that strategic networking has the potential to significantly enhance a brand's visibility. Notably, in various literature reviews, interpersonal skills consistently emerge as one of the top-rated skills for social media managers (Raeissi et al., 2019). A survey by Barlatier et al., (2023) also indicated that hiring managers prioritize interpersonal skills over previous experience. Social media managers are further expected to excel in knowledge management.

**Knowledge Management**

Knowledge management, described as the process of identifying and utilizing new knowledge for long-term organizational success, involves the development, dissemination, and application of knowledge (Deng et al., 2023). It is a competence that is tacit, complex, and firm-specific, fostering relationship-building within organizations (Gupta et al., 2022).

The success of knowledge management within an organization enhances its value, provides a competitive advantage, and strengthens customer relationships (Sahoo et al., 2023). Social media managers are particularly required to have the ability to reuse knowledge, locating and utilizing information previously generated, a crucial aspect for innovation and problem-solving (Bawack et al., 2023). Knowledge transfer is a focused, unidirectional communication of knowledge between individuals or groups, ensuring cognitive understanding and application of knowledge (Barlatier et al., 2023). Organizations must work on internal knowledge transfer to maintain a competitive advantage and prevent the external

sharing of valuable insights (Ogutu et al., 2023). Embedding knowledge in organization members, tools/technology, and tasks is recommended for effective knowledge management. In addition to these skills, social media managers should possess leadership skills, enabling them to influence individuals to willingly strive toward the achievement of group goals (Jarrahi et al., 2023).

**Planning Skills**

Social media managers must possess effective planning skills, encompassing goal-setting, strategy development, and the delineation of tasks and schedules to achieve objectives (Pakura & Rudeloff, 2020). Planning also involves allocating time to individual tasks, anticipating potential challenges, and developing contingency plans, as highlighted by Itani et al., (2023) who emphasizes the importance of recognizing issues in a project timeline and taking appropriate action for ongoing success in technical roles. Given the prevalence of private information in the IT sector, social media managers must understand and implement privacy protection measures. Privacy, in this context, refers to the ability to comprehend and uphold the confidentiality of sensitive information (Illia et al., 2023). In light of complex privacy laws that consumers may find challenging to navigate, social media managers and organizations need to ensure the maintenance of privacy through robust technological systems, including transaction logs. This ensures compliance with legal and ethical standards, safeguarding user data and maintaining trust in the digital space.

**Data Security**

Social media managers play a crucial role in ensuring the security of private information by implementing robust authentication and authorization measures (Herath et al., 2023). With the increasing frequency of data breaches, IT professionals, including social media managers, need to vigilantly monitor the usage of information, particularly personal data (Hosain, 2023). This proactive approach not only safeguards sensitive information but also helps in maintaining the trust and confidence of users in the digital realm.

**Problem Solving**

Social media managers must possess strong problem-solving skills, which involve the ability to integrate information from various sources to enhance performance through the integration of multiple platforms, functions, and technologies (Bae, 2023). Bhagat & Kim, (2023) highlight the importance of teaching individuals problem-solving skills, emphasizing the need to define problems, identify credible information sources, find and process relevant information, and effectively organize and present the gathered information. Cultivating these skills is essential for social media managers to navigate the challenges of their dynamic and multifaceted roles successfully.

**Problem-Solving**

Certainly, problem-solving is a critical skill for a social media manager, as challenges can manifest in various forms. Whether it's addressing issues with Instagram growth or encountering unique obstacles from different clients, adept problem-solving is key. For instance, if facing a challenge like slow Instagram growth, a social media manager may consider employing a growth tool such as Kicksta (Tran et al., 2023). Thorough research on available options, like Kicksta known for organic growth, is crucial in selecting an effective solution. Being able to plan ahead and think on one's feet is essential for a social media manager. When tackling obstacles, it's important to follow a structured problem-solving process (Bhagat & Kim, 2023). First, identify the problem clearly, then take time to brainstorm and consider various potential solutions. The next step involves selecting the most appropriate solution, even if it involves a bit of trial and error. After implementing the chosen solution, closely monitor its success and gather feedback for continuous improvement. In the ever-evolving landscape of social media, adaptability and a proactive problem-solving approach are invaluable traits for a social media manager to possess. This ensures they can navigate challenges efficiently and deliver optimal results for their clients (Daryanes et al., 2023).

## Professionalism

Social media managers must exemplify professionalism, signifying the ability to conduct themselves in a manner that enhances value and demonstrates respect (Itani et al., 2023). The study by Bonneau et al., (2023) underscores the impact of the Internet on perceptions of professionalism and ethics, emphasizing its role in facilitating open scrutiny of interactions between lay individuals and professions and providing easier access to professional guidelines. In the ever-evolving landscape of social media, maintaining a high level of professionalism is crucial for social media managers to build trust and credibility with their audience.

## Responsiveness

Social media managers need to be highly responsive to their clients, demonstrating the ability to provide swift and timely responses to inquiries and opportunities for communication (Santos et al., 2023). In the realm of information technology, professionals are expected to promptly address requests for information, actively engage in discussion forums, respond to emails in a timely manner, and post information promptly. The emphasis should be on ensuring the accuracy of information and maintaining responsiveness to users' needs, contributing to an effective and dynamic online presence.

## Risk Management

Effectively managing risk is a crucial skill for social media managers (Alrawad et al., 2023). Professionals in this field are expected to gather pertinent information to assess project risks, prioritize them, and develop strategies to mitigate or eliminate potential risks (Chowdhury et al., 2023). Beyond project-specific considerations, an understanding of risk management

contributes to broader business knowledge, enhancing an organization's capacity for more robust security measures (Nguyen & Macchion, 2023). Additionally, self-management skills, involving the ability to prioritize and complete tasks within desired time frames, are essential for achieving individual and organizational goals (Marx-Stoelting et al., 2023).

## Self-Awareness and Self-Management

For a social media manager, being self-motivated and possessing a high level of self-awareness is essential for achieving excellence and maximizing productivity (Cardellicchio et al., 2023). Individuals with strong self-management skills and a proactive approach positively influence their colleagues, particularly in task-interdependent work environments, as they exhibit qualities such as prompt task completion and a lack of procrastination (Robb & Mccarthy, 2023).

## Information Shaping

For a social media manager, the ability to shape information is crucial, involving the reorganization and presentation of information in a meaningful, usable, and maintainable manner (Kim et al., 2023). Shaping contributes to knowledge reuse by enhancing the integration of knowledge and positively influences perceptions of information.

## Social capital

In addition to technical expertise, a social media manager should possess the ability to develop social capital, which represents the value derived from one's network of social connections that facilitates mutually beneficial social cooperation discovered that online social capital, obtained through online communications, enhances well-being, promotes networking, and encourages the sharing of valuable information. Itani et al., (2023) noted that social capital, for social media managers, nurtures knowledge, trust, and respect among colleagues. Additionally, possessing storytelling skills, or the interest and ability to tell compelling narratives, is valuable (Sánchez-García et al., 2023).

## Story Telling

Storytelling is a powerful tool, enabling the visualization of information and condensing vast amounts of data into a few words (Żuk, 2023). Stories, as compared to straightforward instructions, tend to be more engaging and effective in conveying information (Hollinda et al., 2023). Therefore, a social media manager should possess the ability to communicate information effectively to customers, often through the use of brief stories detailing past incidents and their resolutions. Tagging is another essential skill, involving the classification of items and information (Catala et al., 2023). Social media managers should be adept at utilizing keywords or descriptive phrases in web documents, making them easier to store, sort, and search (Trang et al., 2023). This skill enhances the organization and accessibility of information within the digital landscape.

## Time Management

Time management is a crucial skill for social media managers, given the dynamic and ever-changing nature of their roles. The ability to balance various responsibilities and schedule tasks efficiently is essential for accomplishing goals without feeling overwhelmed or stressed. In the realm of social media management, where tasks are diverse and daily routines are unpredictable, effective time management becomes particularly critical. One key aspect of successful time management is accurate task prioritization. Social media managers can enhance their productivity by creating daily lists of tasks and organizing them based on urgency and importance. Starting with the most crucial and time-sensitive tasks ensures that critical objectives are met promptly. Additionally, ongoing assessment and adjustment of task priorities contribute to maintaining efficiency. Research by Liadeli et al., (2023) highlights the significance of effective time management in social media management. It suggests that mastering time management contributes to increased content output and more effective campaign execution. Further exploration into the specific strategies employed by successful social media managers in optimizing their time could provide valuable insights for the field. McCarthy & Bogers, (2023) acknowledges the challenges social media managers face in managing their time due to frequent disruptions in their roles. To address this, Lear recommends strategies such as encouraging requests to be submitted via email or a trouble-ticket system to minimize interruptions and enhance productivity.

## Literacy Skills

Visual literacy is a crucial skill for a social media manager, encompassing the ability to comprehend and generate visual messages effectively (Kozyreva et al., 2023). According to Cuic Tankovic et al., (2023), the primary objective of visual literacy is to achieve clarity in communication through accurately designing, producing, and distributing visual messages, ensuring they are correctly interpreted and understood by the intended audience (Petterson, 2010, p. 168). In the dynamic landscape of social media, where visual content plays a significant role, the mastery of visual literacy allows social media managers to create compelling and engaging content that effectively communicates messages to their audience.

## Crisis Management

The available literature on crisis management in the context of social media is relatively limited. According to research conducted by de las Heras-Pedrosa et al., (2023), adopting a proactive crisis management approach is crucial for effectively mitigating reputational damage. Potential areas for future studies might include an exploration of the specific roles played by social media managers in the early detection and response to potential crises. Additionally, investigating the long-term consequences of crisis management strategies on brand perception could provide valuable insights into the sustained impact of such measures. This research could contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved in crisis management within the realm of social media.

**Work Ethic**

Effective work ethics are integral to the triumph of a social media manager in the dynamic realm of social media (Oguntegbe et al., 2023). In this fast-paced environment, possessing essential soft skills is imperative for establishing and perpetuating a favorable online image for a brand or organization. The work ethics crucial for a social media manager can be categorized into various key aspects. Firstly, professionalism is paramount. Maintaining a professional tone and demeanor in all online interactions is essential, ensuring that the values and image of the brand or organization are consistently upheld (Pakura & Rudeloff, 2020). Reliability is another pivotal facet, necessitating the meeting of deadlines for posting schedules, campaigns, and other tasks, thereby establishing a reputation for delivering high-quality content consistently. Integrity plays a vital role, demanding honesty and transparency in all communications. Engaging in unethical practices, such as creating fake reviews or disseminating misleading information, is to be avoided at all costs. Moreover, confidentiality is of utmost importance (Illia et al., 2023). Respecting and protecting sensitive information about the company, clients, or colleagues is essential, coupled with adherence to privacy policies and guidelines when handling user data. Adaptability is a key trait, requiring social media managers to stay abreast of industry trends and changes in social media algorithms (Lyngdoh et al., 2023). Openness to learning new tools and techniques is essential for continually improving social media strategies. Communication skills are indispensable, encompassing the clear conveyance of messages and information aligned with the brand's voice, along with prompt and professional responses to comments, messages, and inquiries. Incorporating these work ethics into the role of a social media manager not only contributes significantly to the success of social media campaigns but also plays a pivotal role in building a positive and reputable online presence for the brand (Abed et al., 2023).

Infographic of soft skills for a social media manager

## 6. Methodology and Design

A mixed-method research methodology is suggested in this study to examine the soft skills necessary for efficient social media management. The principal aim of this study is to ascertain and rank the essential soft talents that characterize an adept social media manager and comprehend their influence on the prosperity of the firm (Lemke et al., 2010). The study intends to thoroughly examine and assess the soft skills necessary for social media managers by utilizing a mixed-method research methodology (Lemke et al., 2010). In order to give a comprehensive grasp of the research issue, this mixed-method approach will integrate qualitative and quantitative data collecting and analysis methodologies (Lemke et al., 2010). A more thorough analysis of the soft skills required for effective social media management will be possible with the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods, providing insights into the subtle aspects of these skills and their implications for organizational performance (Lemke et al., 2010). The study aims to advance knowledge in the field of social

media management and improve comprehension of the essential soft skills that lead to success in this field through the use of a rigorous research design.

## 7. Data Collection Methods

In order to collect qualitative data, the study will employ in-depth interviews with seasoned social media managers and business leaders to learn more about the soft skills that they believe are essential for success in the area (Rogers, 1987). A quantitative survey aimed at gauging the perceived value and competency levels of several soft skills will be sent to a broad sample of social media managers (Cassell & Young, 2002). A more thorough analysis of the soft skills required for effective social media management will be possible with the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods, providing insights into the subtle aspects of these skills and their implications for organizational performance (Cutcliffe & Ramcharan, 2002). With the use of this meticulous research methodology, the study hopes to advance knowledge in the field of social media management and broaden awareness of the essential soft skills needed to succeed in this profession (Moodley & Myer, 2007).

## 8. Sampling Strategy

In order to obtain qualitative data, a purposeful sampling of seasoned social media managers and industry professionals with at least five years of experience in the sector will be carried out in order to learn more about the soft skills that these professionals believe are essential for success in the field Majid et al. (2019). To ensure broad representation in quantitative samples, a random selection of social media managers from various industries and organizational sizes will be used to gauge the perceived value and degree of mastery of distinct soft skills (Bardus, 2015). A more thorough analysis of the soft skills required for effective social media management will be possible with the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods, providing insights into the subtle aspects of these skills and their implications for organizational performance (Jensen, n.d.). By means of this meticulous research methodology, the study aims to augment the comprehension of the essential soft skills that propel success in this domain and offer significant insights into the field of social media management (Aksar & Firdaus, 2021).

## 9. Proposed Data Analysis

In terms of qualitative analysis, Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis of interview transcripts will be used to find recurrent themes and patterns pertaining to soft skills in social media management. To perform a quantitative analysis, survey results will be statistically analyzed using software such as SPSS to determine the significance and degree of competency of various soft skills (Rahman & Muktadir, 2021). A more thorough analysis of the soft skills required for effective social media management will be possible with the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods, providing insights into the subtle aspects of these skills and their implications for organizational performance (Piatkowski et al., 2020). By means of this meticulous research methodology, the study aims to augment the

comprehension of the essential soft skills that propel success in this domain and offer significant insights into the subject of social media management (Nusair, 2020).

## 10. Ethical Considerations

Ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of participants in research investigations is crucial for maintaining ethical standards and defending the rights of those involved. This is usually accomplished by getting informed consent from each participant before any data are collected, making sure they understand the goal, methods, and possible dangers of the study (Alahmad et al., 2012). Researchers can preserve the credibility and integrity of their work by abiding by ethical principles and guidelines in their reporting and conduct (Aita & Richer, 2005). To sustain the principles of research ethics, ethical issues including beneficence, justice, and respect for participants' autonomy should be carefully included into each stage of the study process (Aita & Richer, 2005). In order to limit harm and optimize the advantages of their research activities, researchers must also take into account the potential influence of their study on participants and society (Pratt et al., 2020). Researchers can conduct their studies in a responsible and ethical manner, adding significant knowledge to their respective fields while preserving the rights and well-being of individuals engaged, by stressing participant confidentiality, anonymity, and informed permission (Aita & Richer, 2005).

## 11. Research Limitations

Potential biases in survey respondents' self-reported data present research challenges (Latkin et al., 2016), with particular attention to the effect of social desirability response bias on the accuracy of self-report data. Moreover, as noted by (Howell et al., 2015), the restricted generalizability of results resulting from certain sample selection criteria may affect the research conclusions' wider applicability. Furthermore, as (Molek-Winiarska & Kawka, 2022) examine, the difficulties academics encounter in objectively measuring and analyzing soft skills in domains such as social media management highlight the difficulties in assessing intangible skills. These problems highlight how crucial it is to deal with biases, constraints, and difficulties in data gathering and processing in order to guarantee the accuracy and consistency of research findings in a range of academic domains.

## 12. Discussion

The synthesis of existing literature underscores the intricate and multifaceted nature of soft skills in social media management. A proficient social media manager is expected to possess a diverse set of skills, including communication, empathy, creativity, time management, adaptability, networking, analytical skills, customer service, crisis management, and leadership. Recognizing these skills as integral components of success can inform the development of effective training programs, recruitment strategies, and professional development initiatives within the field. The changing lifestyle, long commuting distances, time constraints, and the rise in multitasking have significantly increased the influence of social media on emotional, interpersonal, and communication skills. The findings reveal a

high impact on emotional skills, with social media serving as both a distraction and a confidence booster for learners and practitioners. Posting creative content and receiving positive feedback contribute positively to mental and emotional well-being. However, the potential for emotional drain, anxiety, and fear of missing out is also acknowledged, especially when facing online neglect. Interpersonal skills are greatly influenced by the use of polite expressions on social media platforms, such as expressions of gratitude, apologies, and well-wishing messages. These interactions contribute to maintaining ethical behavior and strengthening virtual relationships, which are vital components of interpersonal skills. Communication skills are impacted by the use of acronyms and shorthand in messages, reflecting the need for quick and efficient communication on various social media platforms. The use of English language in these contexts also contributes to the enhancement of vocabulary, grammar, and fluency among learners and practitioners. While the current analysis focuses on emotional, interpersonal, and communication skills, there is a call for further research to understand the influence of other soft skills on the personal and professional lives of individuals, especially within the context of Indian and other nationalities. This broader exploration will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in shaping a range of soft skills across diverse cultural and professional landscapes.

## 13. Future Studies

As we look to the future of social media management, several avenues for further exploration emerge. Investigate the role of cross-cultural competence in social media management, considering the global reach of online platforms. Examine the ethical considerations involved in social media management and how ethical decision-making influences brand perception. Explore the impact of the demanding nature of social media management on the mental health and well-being of professionals in the field. Conduct research on the correlation between the proficiency of social media managers in soft skills and the return on investment (ROI) for social media campaigns.

## 14. Conclusion

In conclusion, the soft skills of a social media manager are instrumental in navigating the complexities of the digital landscape. While existing research has laid the foundation for understanding these skills, there is a notable gap that must be addressed to comprehensively prepare individuals for the challenges of social media management. By recognizing the significance of soft skills and further exploring their nuances, the field can evolve to meet the demands of an ever-changing digital landscape, ensuring the success and effectiveness of social media managers worldwide.

**Authors contributions**

Not applicable.

**Funding**

Not applicable.

**Competing interests**

Not applicable.

**Informed consent**

Obtained.

**Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Macrothink Institute.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

**Provenance and peer review**

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

**Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

**Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

**Open access**

**Copyrights**

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