Corporate blogging strategies of the *Fortune* 500 companies

Sang Lee (Department of Management, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA)
Taewon Hwang (Department of Management, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA)
Hong-Hee Lee (Department of Management, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA)

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Abstract
Purpose
This study aims to investigate the emerging new phenomenon of corporate blogging and its objectives. In particular, this study focuses on how *Fortune* 500 firms attempt to maintain control, while supporting employee autonomy in corporate blogging.

Design/methodology/approach
Using the framework of corporate blogging strategies proposed in this study, corporate blogging practices of the 2005 *Fortune* 500 companies were analysed.

Findings
Most organisations maintain high levels of control by implementing top-down blogging strategies, while few support employee autonomy by applying a bottom-up blogging strategy. Because of the inherent limitation of each strategy, many organisations attempt to take advantage of the complementary mechanism that balances autonomy and control. Organisations emphasising bottom-up blogging tend to focus on product development and customer service content strategy, while those practising top-down blogging focus on thought leadership or promotional content strategy.

Research limitations/implications
This study reports leading blogging firms among the *Fortune* 500 companies. However, the study sample accounts for only 3.6 percent of the 500 firms. The results of the study shed insights on newly emerging corporate blogging in terms of its trends, issues, and possible future direction.

Practical implications
Companies that adopt blogs must realise that developing a candid dialogue with customers is the best way to build a meaningful customer relationship.

Originality/value
This study is the first attempt to systematically investigate the corporate blogging phenomenon.

Keywords
Corporate communications | Online operations | Reports | Promotion | Worldwide web

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Using the framework of corporate blogging strategies proposed in this study, corporate blogging practices of the 2005 Fortune 500 companies were analysed.

Findings – Most organisations maintain high levels of control by implementing top-down blogging strategies, while few support employee autonomy by applying a bottom-up blogging strategy. Organisations emphasising bottom-up blogging tend to focus on product development and customer service content strategy, while those practising top-down blogging focus on thought leadership or promotional content strategy.

Research limitations/implications – This study reports leading blogging firms among the Fortune 500 companies. 31% of the Fortune 500 companies had public-facing RSS feeds in 2014. Since 2008, blog integration into digital marketing strategies has almost doubled for Fortune 500 companies. This proves that blogging is a strategy that is here to stay and is critical to implement. But based on the positive statistics and blogging research, wouldn't you guess that practically every Fortune 500 company invests in blogging? These companies have the ability to tap into almost unlimited resources, so why don't all of them start blogging? Marketing expert Sally Falkow explains what this disconnect shows: While Fortune 500 companies are ranked by their annual revenue, Skytop Strategies analyzed their CSR ratings using CSRHub to see how they measure up in terms of corporate social responsibility. The companies listed on CSRHub are rated using a database of socially responsible investing research firms, indexes, publications, ranking systems, NGOs, crowd sources and government agencies. While Fortune 500 companies may maintain the highest total revenue, the varying CSR ratings of the top-ranking companies show that fiscal performance doesn't necessarily factor in social and environmental value.

Practical implications – The Fortune 500 list of companies is a true measurement of success. They are the best of the best at what they are able to do and provide a lot of opportunities to the world. The CEOs of those Fortune 500 companies are also an interesting set of people and their demographics hold some surprising information. There are just 6 African-American or Black CEOs that run a Fortune 500 company. To say that the white male has a domination on the Fortune 500 list is an understatement. Not only do white males make up a large majority of the CEO demographics, but they are also the best compensated for the