

Corporate Site: Case study on Malaysian Company

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Abstract

The World Wide Web is the biggest information repository system and it was used to serve the knowledge community around the globe. Corporate site plays an important role as it represents the company in the virtual world. However, do they really provide at least the basic information often acquired by the user when they visit a corporate site? 110 corporate sites were visited and observed based on characteristics suggested by FT Bowen Craggs Web Effectiveness Index 2012. This paper discussed the findings and outlines some recommendation to upgrade and maintain the corporate site.

Keywords: Corporate site, Malaysian Company

1. Introduction

The world wide web (www) was used as an efficient and low cost distribution medium for information [1]. Companies had taken the opportunity to use this medium to disseminate information about their company. In that matter, a corporate website or corporate site has been developed as an informational website operated by a business or other private enterprise such as a charity or nonprofit foundation. Corporate site differs from electronic commerce or portal because they only present company information to the public rather than transacting or providing other services. An outstanding corporate site integrates content and design to convey the company's essential information and strengthen the corporate brand. It should be able to explain the company to its various audiences such as clients, job seekers, investors and competitors. Nevertheless, the web audience claim for trust when navigating the corporate site. They demand for correct, timely, fast and easy information [2].

A corporate site represents the company in the virtual world. One way of doing it is to keep it simple but informative as if you are providing the answers for the visitors to your company. Since the e-world are full of miscellaneous gadgets to access websites, an adaptive web page in on demand. Thus, navigation should be easy and straightforward. The importance of corporate site is visible through its coverage, quality and quantity of information provided. Geographical obstacle is no longer an issue and corporation marketing effort could be enlarged to unreachable areas. A company who is committed to internet corporate reporting intend to make use of their corporate sites not only to market their products to their typical customers but also to market the company themselves, that is to raise the sensitivity and interest of shareholders and investors of the company [2]. Common traits of corporate sites usually consist of: a home page, a unified look, about us, the people and

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contact. The term used for site navigation is not standardized; as such the people may be represented as the team, employee or staff.

According to Bowen Craggs reports, the role of the corporate website is to guard reputations, to communicate with the customers, job hunters, investors and everyone who interested. Bowen Craggs has carried out a comprehensive study on corporate site. It has occupied 1000 man-hours to compile and is supported by 800 000 words of analysis. The benchmark used contain eight metrics: construction, message, contact, serving society, serving investors, serving the media, serving the job seekers and serving the customers. They manipulate the experts on the corporate web to do the web survey [3]. The ranking produced is to stimulate towards a more effective corporate site. Another report by Bowen Craggs [4], stated that companies were short on strategy leading to duplication and fragmentation which yield to inconsistencies within the corporate sites. At the mean time, the firms also integrating social media with their website content such as Facebook, employee Tweet, corporate video on YouTube, dashboard and newsroom. When this happens, the organization needs to monitor many things such as data leakage and may compromise security.

The study was carried out to investigate whether the corporate site has delivered what it should by taking Bowen Craggs criteria as the benchmark. We concentrate on two types of company in Malaysia: Sendirian Berhad (SDN) and Berhad (BHD). We would like to explore these company corporate sites as they may have a slightly different audience on how they represent their information to their potential corporate site visitors.

2. Methodology

A random sample of corporate site was taken from two types of company: SDN or private company and BHD or public listed company. SDN company is owned by 2-50 shareholders. The owners have limited liability and not listed on the stock exchange. BHD is listed on the Bursa Malaysia. It is a public company owned by shareholders. Minimum shareholder is two and can grow to any number with no limit. SDN and BHD list of companies was obtained from e-Yellow Pages and Bursa Malaysia, respectively. 55 sites represent SDN and 55 sites represent BHD giving a total of 110 corporate sites were visited. Checklist approach was used to gather the information. Four characteristics are examined as proposed by Bowen; contact, serving job seekers, serving investor and media. Another four characteristic were observed; year establishes, operating hours, social network and contact form.

3. Results

A web page is like a person. Visiting a page is like meeting a person. Visiting different web page is like visiting multiple persons. Each web page has their unique identity. The information provided on the web page is the representation of the page owner. The lookup criteria were in place because that is the common thing that the visitor will navigate through the corporate site. People pay a visit to a corporate site because they want to know about the company, that is why the 'hits' rating or 'likes' is not as high as commercial blogs or twitter. It has its own cluster of audience. They want to know what the company all about, what do they do, what product or services do they offer and the most important thing is that they want to get in touch with the company. The survey reveals many interesting stories about the company. The detail is discussed in the following section.

3.1. Common tab and look up criteria

Common tab listed is based on Bowen Craggs benchmark as a must have information on the corporate site. The information are as follows: description of the company, usually can be found in ‘About us’, contact in ‘Contact us’, career in ‘Career’ or ‘Vacancy’, investor relation (IR) in ‘Investor Relation’ or ‘IR’, and media in ‘Media’, ‘News’ or ‘Press’.

Table 1. Common tab on corporate sites

	About	Contact	Career	IR	Media
SDN	√	√	*		*
BHD	√	√	√	√	√

Table 1 shows the common tab on corporate sites. It clearly stated that the BHD corporate site has all the criteria suggested by Bowen Craggs. We assume they provide information on company description, contact, career, investor relation and media through the tab. This finding is supported by [1], which reports that larger corporations are more advanced in their use of the Internet as a tool to communicate and often provide richer and more sophisticated content. The asterisk shows that there are SDN companies provide info on career and media but the number is too small as stated in Table 2. BHD pays more attention with its investor relation where 96% companies provide a special tab called Investor Relation (IR). They make use the site to communicate with their investors. Most of the companies provide information about their Board of Directors and a full annual report either directs from their website or redirect from Bursa Malaysia site. There exists career tab even though not as main tab, where it can be found somewhere in the page. 37 BHD companies show themselves as a competent employer by providing career option on their web page. According to [3], job seekers contribute to consistent visitor groups to corporate sites, either to search for vacancies or to investigate the company as a potential employer.

Table 2. Lookup criteria on corporate sites

Type of business	Year establish	Contact	Operating hours	News	Social network	Jobseeker	Investor relation	Contact form
SDN ($N = 55$)	43	55	7	3	10	2	0	37
BHD ($N = 55$)	42	55	5	50	7	37	53	31
Total	85	110	12	53	17	39	53	68

One feature that has been lookup in the web page is the company incorporated year. 77% corporate sites proudly state their birth year. A few declares it in unclear sentence by putting e.g.; “was found 15 years ago”. Year of establishment shows the stability of the company. It should be stated clearly in the web so that whoever the visitor, do not have to do their own math just to calculate the birth year from the last update date stated on the page. Year founded usually can be retrieved from ‘about’ or ‘company profile’ tab. A brief description about the company was supplied in the same tab. The information supplied in the ‘contact’ should be completed without fail. From the survey, all the company has provided adequate information for contact. Four attributes were observed: address, phone, email and map. They have provided at least address and phone to be contacted. Some of them even include the GPS location to their place. We also discovered that only twelve companies provide their operating hours. This info should be considered to be stated on the page so

that the visitor could plan their visit. Another observed criterion's was contact form. From the survey, contact forms usually attached to contact details. It is not effective if not been monitored because the administrator or the person in-charge, need to give a response within specific time otherwise it is no use [5].

News comprise of news, promotion and announcement. Companies may utilize this web functionality to spread the latest product and services, road show, award received, events, warehouse sale etc. For investors they would like to know the latest news about the performance in the stock exchange and so on. From the sample, only three SDN companies publish news on their website.

3.2. Social media

Social networking is about relationships between peoples not with brands and corporations [6]. It has become a trend to integrate social media with corporate site [4], however, findings from the survey as shown in Table 3, only 7, 18 and 6 provide links to Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, respectively.

Table 3. Social media on corporate site

	Twitter	Facebook	YouTube
SDN	5	10	3
BHD	2	8	3
Total	7	18	6

It only involves companies with a close relationship with the customer such as direct selling, fashion and advertising. In a sense, social media is one of the fastest ways to spread the news; however, it may be suitable for one industry but might not be appropriate at all for others. Providing dashboard for registered workers may be acceptable as a platform for communication.

3.3. Investor relation (IR)

Usually IR may consist of annual report (AR), board of directors (BOD) and corporate social responsibility report (CSR). In the US, CSR is reported to play an important role in 70% of corporate agendas [7]. Being responsible may save money and environmental friendly (energy use, waste etc.). At the same time, it may encourage a good relationship with the community. However, on Malaysian corporate site, only ten sites provide information on CSR. Profit is still the goal but CSR may attract more investment, hence it should be explored further and make available on the web as it carry a good image to the company.

Table 4. IR component

	AR	BOD	CSR
IR	47	45	10

Most companies in the survey (85%) had financial reports on their websites in a form of the full AR whilst 82% provide information on BOD. The paper-based AR was made available for downloads mostly in pdf format. In the future, it appearance should be enhanced, e.g.; a tree like structure with drill-down capabilities [1].

The corporate site owner should consider doing constant update, to state last update date, to check broken links, to ensure response delivered from contact form received, to provide FAQ and search engine optimization by providing the right keyword.

Both SDN and BHD have other tabs, depending on their nature of business. Some of them have a special tab for their product and services. For SDN web pages, the website is simple as not much information can be shared as they only a small company compared to BHD. However, they should pay attention to the content of the corporate site because they are conveying the information to potential investor and clients. They should take this opportunity to expand and promote the company in the future.

4. Conclusion

Corporate sites are primarily concerned with two things: (i) disseminating the corporate philosophy and area of expertise (ii) creating and maintaining the corporate image [8], therefore, it is important to have and maintain an effective corporate site. Pages not necessarily changed too often but it is necessary to make it up-to-date [9]. Any information posted on the website carries its own wattage. Some information may be important to one party and some are not. Therefore, information should be organized to allow easy access. The online shop has become a trend. Integrating corporate site with commerce portal may be an added advantage. Face-to-face business may decrease but it can overcome geographical barrier. A company must strengthen their virtual representative and at the same time must cultivate a consumer believes even just communicating in cyberspace. The case stated is for Malaysian company corporate sites, other countries may obtain a different result.

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