

## How Firms Can Steer Social Media Conversations

**Mohammad Saljoughian**

University of Tennessee

**Kelly Hewett**

University of Tennessee

**Harald van Heerde**

University of New South Wales Sydney

**Bill Rand**

North Carolina State University

Cite as:

Saljoughian Mohammad, Hewett Kelly, van Heerde Harald, Rand Bill (2022), How Firms Can Steer Social Media Conversations. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 51st, (107788)

Paper from the 51st Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 24-27, 2022



# How Firms Can Steer Social Media Conversations

## **Abstract**

Many firms struggle with how to craft their messages with customers on social media, and a lack of guidance is among the top social media challenges reported by firms. The problem is compounded by the fact that these conversations take place in different, simultaneous threads, each of which may require a different approach. This paper studies how firms can adapt their responses such that these conversations become more favorable to the firm. Based on an analysis of 1.6 million tweets capturing over 210,000 conversations involving the four major US banks across 10 years, this paper shows how firms should adjust their firm-generated content (FGC) in terms of its valence, arousal, subjectivity, and topic. The best FGC strategy depends strongly on whether the ongoing social media conversation is positive or negative in valence and whether it is high or low on arousal. Steering social media conversations into more favorable directions impacts the overall positivity of brand buzz.

**Keywords:** *social media; firm-generated content; conversations*

**Track:** Digital Marketing & Social Media