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PERSONAL BRANDING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The characteristics of strong personal brands in Finland

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in Marketing

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1 INTRODUCTION

Everyone should understand the importance of personal branding regardless of the age, position or business (Peters 1997). By creating a personal brand one can stand out and prosper in the fast-paced business world. (Vitberg 2009, 11.) According to Schawbel (2009), the interest towards personal branding has grown significantly during the last years. Also its importance in career development has been stressed. Personal branding and self-marketing have been popular educational topics in books, on the internet and consulting services, especially in the United States (Shepherd 2005, 589). Personal brand is a perception in the minds of other people, which can be created and controlled as wished.

Personal branding has gone through a dramatic change during the last decade. The definition of a personal brand was earlier limited to people who had a possibility to communicate to large masses. Especially prior to the widespread adoption of Internet, the options for mass communications were limited, which is the reason personal branding was seen as a tool mainly for top celebrities or politicians in managing their identities and the image people have of them. The growing number of channels for mass communications in social media has further extended the concept of branding from what it used to be. As social media sites have become extremely popular, personal branding has become a part of our normal life (Schawbel 2009). Social networks like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, with many others, have made the playground for personal branding bigger than it has ever been. Nowadays almost anyone with a working internet connection can start building a personal brand online. To achieve personal success in the dynamic social environment requires strategic planning of the personal brand building and the brand communication.

Strategic management of one's personal brand is becoming a significant factor in differentiating the proactive individuals from the reactive ones in our society. It is important to understand the opportunities the social networking sites offer for building a strong brand identity. (Harris 2011, 14.) According to Vitberg (2009, 11) the mantra of marketing and business development has changed after the rise of the social media from "it's not what you know, but who you know" to "it's not who you know, but who knows you." A personal brand is built on a combination of who you know, what you know, how you share that knowledge and how fast you are to communicate your insights (Vitberg 2009, 11). As nowadays almost anyone can create content and share it on different social media platforms, also the possibilities for personal branding have extended into people who might not have had that chance before. Social media channels provide a perfect platform for building relationships and trust, which are among the most important aspects in building a personal reputation (Beal & Strauss 2008).

There is a great amount of academic research about branding companies and products, but personal branding is still a relatively new topic. Especially research about the usage of the digital channels as a part of creating online identities is needed. The digital revolution and the change in online behavior have created the need for a deeper analysis of the characteristics of personal brand building on social media. Recognizing these characteristics are at the center of this study.

1.1 Research purpose

The purpose of the study is to define the characteristics of strong personal brands on social media in Finland. The sub-questions of the study are:

- How is a personal brand created?
- How can a personal brand identity be formed on social media?
- What are the personal branding tactics used by strong personal brands on social media?

The expected contribution of the study is to understand how strong social media personal brands perform and manage their personal brand in Finland. The research will give an overview of the current state of social media personal brands in Finland as well as provide a deeper understanding of successful brand building practices.

1.2 Method

In this research, mixed methods are used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used in the study. First, a broad quantitative analysis is executed on strong social media personal brand profiles and their activities. This will provide an overview of the current state of the social media personal branding phenomenon in Finland.

After that, two case studies are conducted to provide a deeper understanding of personal branding practices of strong social media personal brands. In-depth interviews are used to describe the brand evolution, the brand identities and social media branding activities of the chosen brands. The interviewees are two strong social media influencers – stand-up comedian Sami Hedberg and professional photographer Mikko Lagerstedt. The case brands were chosen based on their relevance to the study. Hedberg has been under the public eye before the popularity of his social media accounts whereas Lagerstedt has built his personal brand solely through the use of social media platforms.

1.3 Structure

This study is divided into three main chapters – Chapter 2 provides the literature review on the research topic, Chapter 3 demonstrates the research methodology and Chapter 4 consists of the results of the empirical part of the study.

The literature review of this study in Chapter 2 will define the concept of personal branding on social media by first introducing the concept of a personal branding, then defining the concept of online identities and the characteristics of the studied social media channels. Finally, a refined framework for building a personal brand on social media is presented. In Chapter 3 the methods of the study, both quantitative and qualitative, are presented. The data description, collection and analysis are explored after which the validity and reliability of the study is evaluated. Chapter 4 shows the results of the quantitative and qualitative studies. First, an overview of the current state of the social media personal branding phenomenon in Finland is described by analyzing the characteristics and behavior of the most followed personal brands on three different social media channels. After that, two personal branding cases, conducted by interviews, are examined individually. Finally, the findings of the research are presented in Chapter 5. The conclusions are divided into the research themes presented later in this study. The summary of the study can be found in Chapter 6.

2 PERSONAL BRANDING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Theories from personal branding, impression management and brand identity are presented to create a thorough understanding on the topic in this chapter. After the presentation of the personal branding theories the characteristics of social media are demonstrated in Chapter 2.2. In Chapter 2.3, a model for the process of personal branding on social media is structured by combining the presented branding theories to fit the social media environment.

2.1 Personal branding

In this chapter, the different phases of personal branding as a phenomenon are presented. The work of different academics on the subject is described in relation to the current understanding of the topic. The term personal brand was first used by Tom Peters in 1997. In his article Peters (1997) emphasized that everyone should pay attention to marketing one's own personal brand:

“We are the CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You.”

Rampersad (2008, 34.) defines personal brand as:

“- - the synthesis of all the expectations, images and perceptions it creates in the minds of others when they see or hear your name”.

A personal brand is built on a combination of who you know, what you know, how you share that knowledge and how fast you are to communicate your insights (Vitberg 2009, 11).

Personal branding is an individualistic approach (Khedher 2014, 30) which can be defined as a process by which individuals and entrepreneurs differentiate themselves and stand out from a crowd by identifying and articulating their unique value proposition, whether professional or personal, and then leveraging it across platforms with a consistent message and image to achieve a specific goal. In this way a person can enhance one's professional image and self-esteem, strengthen one's reputation and reliability and progress in one's career. (Schawbel 2009, 3–4.) Building a brand requires long-term commitment, resources and skill (Kapferer 2004, 33).

Personal branding has never been an unequivocal process, but the digitalization of the society and the modern communication methods have changed the way a personal brand can be built. Personal branding has become more tangible and it is now possible in any phase of one's career. (Schawbel 2009.) It can be said that in this era of social media also the regular people have turned into self-marketers. By positioning a brand finds its place

in the existing markets. This is done by defining one's position according to its features, competition, value and potential customers. (Kapferer 2004, 176.)

The brand should be authentic and should be built on real values and strengths. It should reflect your true character in a unique but reliable way. Everyone has a personal brand, but not all are aware of it and thus are not managing it strategically, consistently and effectively. Taking control of one's brand is essential because it affects the perception of others. Managing the brand strategically helps in distinguishing oneself as an exceptional professional. (Rampersad 2008, 34.) Brands bring intangible value for the business. Where copying a product or service can be easy, copying a brand is more complicated. That is why brands can be valuable and long-lasting equity. (Kapferer 2004, 9; 148.)

2.1.1 Impression management

While personal branding as a term has not existed for a long time, theories related to the broader phenomenon of self-presentation and self-management have been investigated in the literature for quite some time. The base of impression management theory is the premise that people actively monitor the environment in pursuance of finding indications about how others perceive them and to notice differences between their desired professional image and their perceived professional image. In impression management theory, individuals that encounter a difference between those images and are motivated to reduce that gap will attempt to present themselves in a way that emulate their desired professional image. (Leary & Kowalski 1990, 34.) This can be seen as the starting point for personal brand building as well.

Roberts (2005, 688–711) presents a conceptual model of professional image construction by entwining multiple streams of research in impression management, social identity and organizational behavior (Figure 1). By finding connections among the theories the model deepens the understanding of a complex phenomenon and clarifies the concept of personal branding in the psychological level.

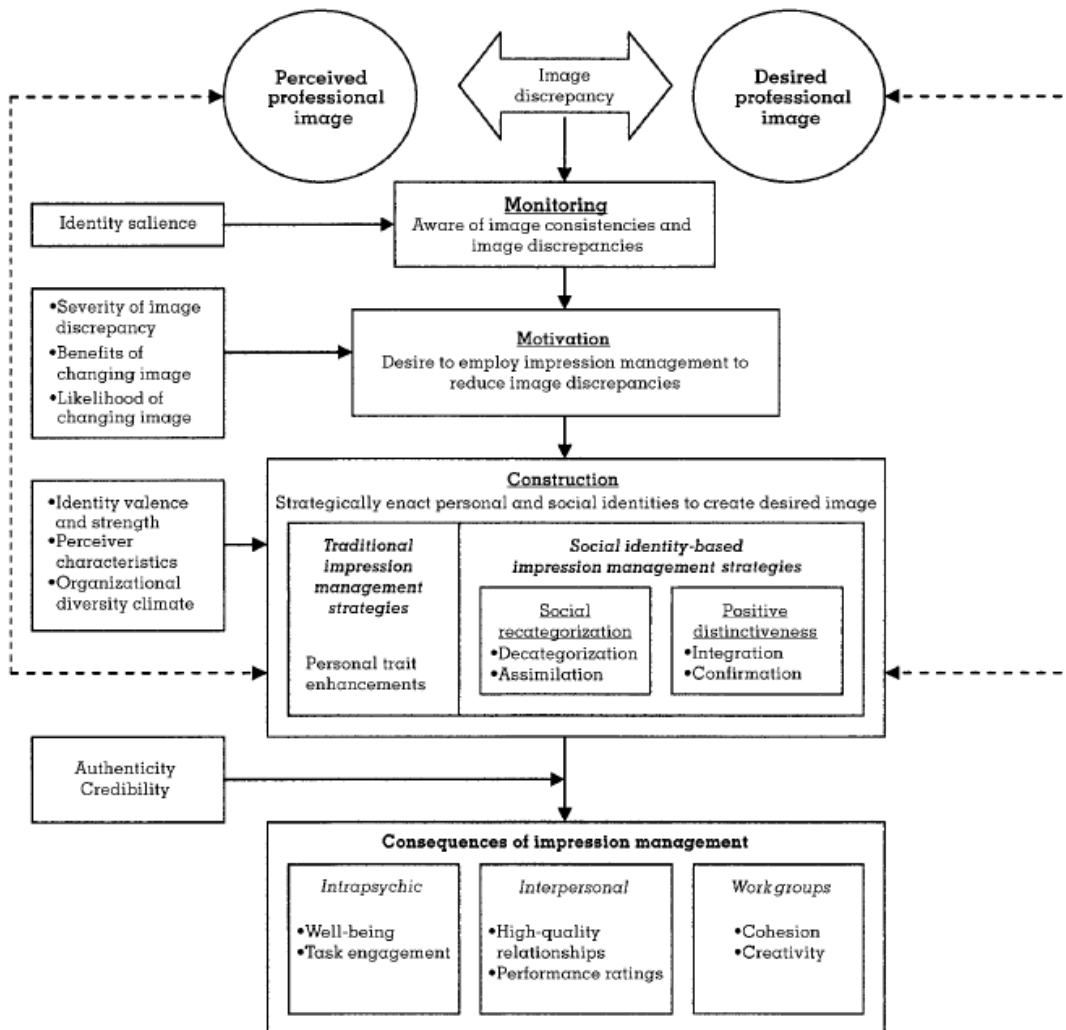


Figure 1 Conceptual model of professional image construction (Roberts 2005, 686)

Creation of a professional image boosts the process of comparison between desired and current identities. With respect to one's personal identity, the desired professional image consists of the personal characteristics, such as knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences and values that one wishes for others to attribute to him or her in a given context. (Roberts 2005, 692.)

Professional image is framed by personal values and societal expectations. It does not stand only for personal identity characteristics but also the characteristics of social identity groups that one wishes to be associated to him or her.

The social identity is defined by Roberts (2005, 688) as follows:

The social identity component of one's desired professional image refers to how one wants others to perceive him or her as a member of various social identity groups, and it is often shaped by one's hopes to be publicly affiliated with or distanced from the stereotypical characteristics of the social identity groups to which he or she belongs.

According to Roberts (2005, 688) nonverbal cues, verbal disclosures and actions shape others' judgement of one's character, competence and ability to unite with the cultural standards of professional behavior. Aspects like appearance, displayed emotions, available information about self and performance play a substantial role in defining how one is perceived by others. The perceived professional image is formulated from one's perceptions of how others feel about his personal identity characteristics and social identity affiliations. Social identities are an important part of the perceived professional image as individuals interpret and categorize each other's behavior according to their assumptions of social identity groups. (Roberts 2005, 688.)

The socially constructed nature of identity suggests that expectations and values of others' may have strong influence on an individual's desired professional image. On the other hand, having pure values and wanting to become determined, courageous and honest will likely make others perceive one as such, because reflected appraisals authenticate that one actually possesses these personal identity characters. (Roberts 2005, 688.)

Impression management has three components (Roberts 2005, 689; Leary & Kowalski 1990, 35): monitoring, motivation and construction. While monitoring refers to becoming aware of other's perceptions, motivation indicates the will to change that perception of others'. Construction consists of the efforts made to change other's perceptions by enacting a persona.

The impression management process begins with monitoring. The cornerstone for impression management, as stated earlier, is to generate an awareness of others' perception in a given situation. While interacting with one another, individuals often search for clues that indicate how others perceive them (Higgins, 1996, 1066) and compare their perceived professional image with their desired professional image (Roberts 2005, 689). After that they determine whether this perceived image is consistent with the desired one or if the perceived professional image is inconsistent with how they want to be seen (Leary & Kowalski 1990, 38; Roberts 2005, 690-691). This evaluation is done with respect to personal and social identities. This makes monitoring more complex as individuals may monitor perceptions of certain social identities over others, based on their salience. Some primary bases of identity categorization, such as sex, gender, ethnicity, race, age, nationality and socioeconomic class remain salient across situations. (Roberts 2005, 690.)

Most people experience a difference in their desired professional image and their perceived professional image. The motivation to adjust the negative image varies according to the severity of the existing image discrepancy, the potential benefits one might gain from a successful impression management and the likelihood of successful impression management attempt. Roberts (2005, 693) sums the definition as --an individual's desire to change another's impression of him/her—is contingent on the individual's assessment that he or she has experienced a severe threat and has the capacity to reduce the threat to his or her professional image--. Negative image discrepancies can be results from both

personal identity and social identity threats. Personal mistakes and errors as well as unexpected denigration of a social identity group or questioning of an individual's membership in a group can all lead to a devaluation of the perceived image. The motivation in reducing the negative image is dependent on the severity of the discrepancy (Roberts 2005, 691.) Individuals identifying strongly with their work are more prone to engage in impression management. People obtain two primary benefits from successful impression management: pleasing the audience and maintaining consistency between the desired and the perceived images. (Roberts 2005, 691.) The motivation of making a good impression is greater when there is an expected future interdependence with the perceiver (Leary & Kowalski 1990, 38).

In addition to the severity of the image discrepancy, also the estimated likelihood of successful attempt in impression management determines the degree of motivation. The more likely reaching the desired image feels, the more motivated one is towards the efforts for achieving it. (Roberts 2005, 692-693.)

In order to create their desired professional images, individuals must execute and apply their personal and professional images according to the plan. This phase is known as impression construction. It includes a broad range of strategies that need to be selected and employed in order to shape others' perceptions of them as individuals and as a group member. Others' perception on their personal characteristics and traits can be directly influenced by the use of traditional impression management strategies. Social identity-based impression management strategies can be used to influence indirectly by communicating any affiliation with social identity groups. (Roberts 2005, 693.)

Direct self-presentation tactics include assertive and defensive strategies. They both aim to present information about one's own traits, abilities and accomplishments (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980). Drawing attention to personal accomplishments and doing favors for others in order to appear appealing or likable can be seen as examples of self-promotion activities. Also defensive self-presentation strategies can be used to maintain a particular image. Common preventive activities also include minimizing deficiencies and avoiding any negative image coverage. These strategies include activities seeking justifications, excuses and apologies in order to repair a negative identity. (Roberts 2005, 693-694.)

Indirect tactics include all those activities made by an individual in attempt to influence others' perceptions of their group affiliations. These tactics are often used to protect or enhance one's image by focusing the management of the information about the people, groups and other things associated to the individual.

Social identities play a powerful role in influencing others' perceptions of character and competence. According to Roberts (2005, 694) the social identity-based impression management strategies are not yet been incorporated into a conceptual model of professional image construction. Individual's attempts to affiliate with positively valued groups

and to improve one's status inside these groups can be seen as a distinct form of impression management. By affiliating with social identity groups that reflect one's values can be a useful way to strengthen one's professional image. Some prefer avoiding associations to social identity groups as then one's image is less prone to be threatened by the accompanying negative stereotypes. Assimilation refers to an effort of altering the social category they are assigned. In some cases, individuals are likely to de-categorize themselves completely from social identity groups so that others' perception and evaluation of an individual is more focused on personal characteristics rather than group memberships. This is done by decreasing the amount of information related to these specific social identity groups. (Roberts 2005, 694-695.)

On the other hand, instead of re-categorization one can focus on restoring positive distinctiveness. By communicating the favorable aspects of the social identity group and questioning negative stereotypes of that group, one can incorporate a given social identity into one's professional image. This activity is here referred as integration. Confirmation, on the other hand, refers to gaining desired outcomes and rewards by capitalizing on these social identity stereotypes. (Roberts 2005, 696-697.)

People's decisions regarding which self-presentation strategies to use are influenced by their perceived and desired professional images; they reassess how they want others to perceive them and how others currently perceive them, and then use this assessment as a basis for determining how to bring their perceived professional image in alignment with their desired professional image.

Detecting the source of image discrepancy is vital when selecting the suitable strategy. This needs to be done in manner that is consistent with the desired professional image. (Roberts 2005, 697.)

In addition to shaping the perceived professional image impression management can also have favorable or conflicting consequences that stretch beyond one's image to cover one's relationships, psyche, workgroups and employing organizations. No impression management strategy is universally better than another. Authenticity and credibility of the strategy are more apparent indicators in differentiating the successful strategies from the failures. Authenticity refers to the extent to which an individual acts in accord with the true self – the degree of conformity between internal values and external expressions. This involves owning one's personal experiences, emotions, preferences, beliefs, needs, wants or thoughts. (Roberts 2005, 699.)

Presenting of oneself is done properly when it is both true to oneself and valued and believed by others. This can have positive outcomes for individuals, groups and entire organizations. If impression management is done improperly, it may have negative consequences on one's well-being, performance and relationships. (Roberts 2005, 699–700.)

Roberts (2005, 700–704) lists four outcomes of impression management: Intrapsychic, interpersonal workgroup and organizational consequences. These outcomes include consequences related to well-being, task engagement, relationships, performance, cohesion, creativity, retention, social capital, innovation and reputation.

Successful impression management behavior with high authenticity and credibility often results in a variety of psychological benefits. Impression management can in a way create psychological empowerment by enabling individuals to reduce gaps between who they are and who they would like to become. On the other hand, as maintaining credibility and authenticity is challenging, impression management attempts are often also linked to detrimental psychological outcomes. Natural desires to express valued personality characteristics can sometimes be countered by efforts to enhance credibility, which can negatively effect on *well-being*. In addition to the effect on well-being, impression management can also have an impact on task *engagement* because of cognitive distraction. This can be seen as irrelevant self-presentation worries and self-consciousness. (Roberts 2005, 700–701.)

Impression management can result in the development of *high-quality relationships*. Being authentic can enhance the quality of the relationships, while inauthenticity can make it worse. People are more prone to disclose information to those they like initially. Career success of an individual is partially determined by the perception of others about the technical and social skills of an individual in comparison to the demand on a given culture or profession. A person's *performance* is often reflected on one's ability to meet context-specific standards for professional behavior. Individual's impression management can also have consequences on *workgroup cohesion* and *creativity*. Authenticity in self-presentation is vital for group functioning and providing diverse perspectives and approaches for any group work. (Roberts 2005, 701–703.)

All of the positive consequences mentioned above are likely to enhance quality in organizational level as well. This can be seen in improved *work satisfaction*, *social capital*, product and service quality, *innovations* and *culture*.

Schlenker and Weigold (1992, 135) state that self-presentation has the “necessary function of communicating definitions of each person's identity and plans” in which impression management gives the ground for interactions to “run smoothly and efficiently”.

2.1.2 *Personal branding models*

The concept of branding applies to individuals in the same way it applies to companies and products (Vitberg 2009, 13). There are various different formats for creating a plan for personal branding. According to Rampersad (2008, 35) building an authentic personal brand is a process that consists of four phases:

- Define and formulate your personal ambition
- Define and formulate your personal brand
- Formulate your personal balanced scorecard (PBSC)
- Implement and cultivate your personal ambition personal brand and personal balanced scorecard

In the first phase it is essential to identify one's personal ambition and the personalities and values that make one different and unique. The personal ambition is the soul and the core of a personal brand and encompasses one's personal vision, mission and key roles. In the second phase one should create a brand promise, which should be authentic, distinctive, consistent, concise, meaningful, and persuasive. This promise should be used as a base for one's behavior and actions. The personal statement should be done by performing a personal SWOT analysis to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of oneself. (Rampersad 2008, 35–36.)

Personal ambitions and personal brand are not valuable if no action is taken to make them reality. The aim in the third phase is to create an action plan to reach the objectives that have been set up. The personal ambitions and personal brand should be translated into easily managed and measurable objectives and milestones. This should be done by creating a Personal Balanced Scorecard that would help to improve the actions and manage and master the personal brand. These objectives should be an effective tool to improve the actions, monitor the progress, build networks and quantify accomplishments. The fourth phase of the process is implementing and cultivating the personal ambition, brand and personal balanced scorecard into reality. With the help of chosen media channels, one should, living in accordance to the brand values, gain experience in the areas of your brand, promote and deliver the brand promise by being active in the valuable networks. Launching is an important part of the process, but so is the maintenance of the brand, as continuity is one of the most important factors of building a strong brand. This whole process is a cycle, which needs to keep spinning in order to gain the maximum progress. After the last phase is complete, the process starts again with adjustment and improvement rounds. (Rampersad 2008, 36–37.)

Vitberg (2009, 13) has created a process that has been also referred as a personal marketing plan. The framework takes into account both analog and digital personal branding:

1. Personal branding statement
2. Personal brand strategy
3. Personal and business development goals
4. Personal branding tactics
 - Phase 1: Secure a digital footprint
 - Phase 2: Start dialoguing
5. Lead harvesting

Personal branding statement is similar to corporate positioning statement. It should be a short, accurate and understandable statement about what one does, how and how does one differ from others. Building a *personal brand strategy* is also similar to building one for a company. By conducting situation and SWOT analysis one needs to identify niche opportunities and the target market, define one's unique selling proposition, differentiations and positioning and plan the process of promoting the brand. The digital world requires some additional steps in the process of creating a personal brand strategy. This means incorporating plans for social media activities in terms of what platforms should be used and how one should act on those different platforms. A well planned personal marketing plan always needs measurable goals related to business development. *Personal development goals* for the analog portion of the goal could be measured for example in numbers of articles written or speeches given. There is a large variety of different metrics that can be used to measure the goals in the digital environment, such as friends, followers, contacts, connections, comments and SEO rankings. (Vitberg 2009, 13.)

Analog *personal branding tactics* would include all community and trade association involvement, making presentations and writing articles in traditional print media and building a referral networks. Social media tactics can be divided into two phases. The first phase would be about securing a digital footprint. This means creating and developing profiles on social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. The digital footprint can be improved by improving one's position in search engine results and creating an integrated profile network between different platforms. The second phase is about starting dialoguing and showcasing the personal brand in the selected platforms. This means delivering insight to the selected field and being active in different channels of one's expertise. The last step is about identifying and *harvesting the leads* that your digital personal branding has resulted. According to Vitberg (2009, 19) there has never been a more opportune time, and there has never been the depth and breadth of personal branding tools available to do so.

2.1.3 *Brand identity*

Brand identity is the foundation of brand by defining the concrete and intangible features that create the brand (Kapferer 2004, 178). Brand identity represents the associations and values that the one building the brand wants the brand to stand for. Those involved in the brand building should aim to create a clear brand identity and should be involved and interested in maintaining it over time. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2002, 40.) The brand identity is built to represent the overall brand and it should adapt to any change and growth it faces (Kapferer 2004, 95). It is important for the one in charge of the branding to understand the larger aspirations of a brand identity (Wheeler 2006, 16). The brand

identity should be memorable, concise, focused and motivating in order to be communicated effectively (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000, 93).

Brand identity is the core for brand building, which makes the planning of it important. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2002, 40) see brand identity as one of the four pillars of creating strong brands. The other main pillars in their theory are brand architecture, brand building programs and organizational structure and processes.

According to Wheeler (2006, 16) there are certain ideals characterizing the best brand identities. He lists nine different characteristics that stand for an ideal brand identity: vision, meaning, authenticity, differentiation, sustainability, coherence, flexibility, commitment and value.

Vision is the future vision of the brand delivered through a well-articulated, effective and passionate leader. A leader of this kind is seen as the foundation and the inspiration for the best brands. (Wheeler 2006, 18-19.) *Meaning* of a brand is defined as the set of values, a strategic position or any big idea that the brand stands for. The core of the meaning needs to be explained, communicated and developed. A brand cannot be *authentic* if it doesn't have clarity about its positioning, market, value proposition and competitive difference. Brand identity needs to be a real, authentic expression of unique vision, values, goals, voice and personality. (Wheeler 2006, 21-22.) As brands always compete with each other, one must draw attention in a way that it *differentiates* from the brands in the same category or field of expertise. The competition is always about the customer attention and loyalty. (Wheeler 2006, 24.) *Sustainability* is a key factor in creating a credible image. According to Wheeler (2006, 26) brands are messengers of trust, which emphasizes the importance of delivering a continuous identity even when the methods and media are changing. *Coherence* refers to the quality of experience where every meeting with the brand feels seamless and familiar to the customer. Every place where a customer can be in contact with a brand be seen as a touch point for customer experience. An effective identity needs to be *flexible* and thus be ready to change and grow over time. By being flexible a brand and the communication methods can stay relevant and fresh. (Wheeler 2006, 28-31.) *Commitment* in developing the identity after it has been created is commonly neglected although it should be one of the top priorities in designing an identity. Active management of the asset, is perhaps the most important characteristic of a strong identity. The asset in this case includes elements such as the brand name, the system, and the standards the brand has. *Value* creation is an absolute goal of most brands. A brand identity is valuable when it builds awareness, communicates uniqueness and quality, shows competitive difference and meets customer's needs. (Wheeler 2006, 32.)

Kapferer (2004, 107), on the other hand, identifies six aspects of brand identity: physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image. Brands with strong brand identity are capable of intertwining all of the above into an effective unity. These aspects are divided over two dimensions: internal vs. external expression and constructed

source vs. constructed receiver. The brand identity prism by Kapferer (2004, 107) is illustrated in Figure 2.

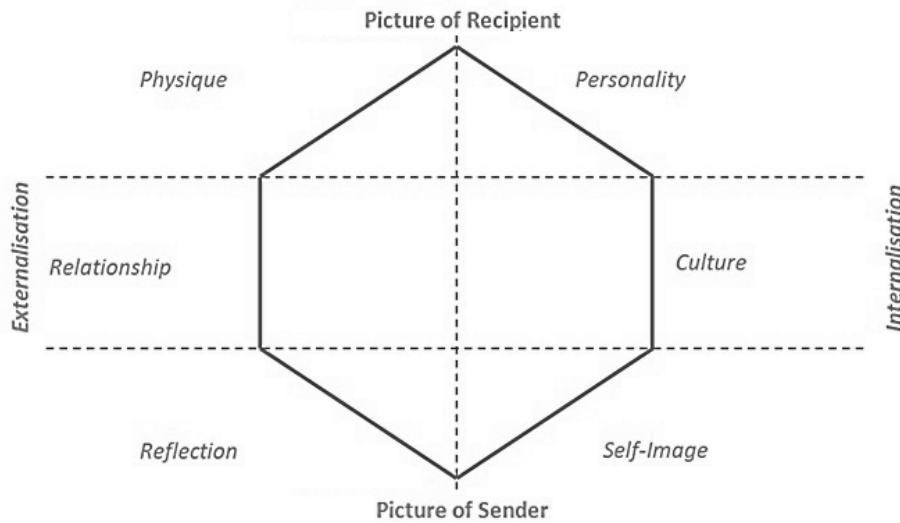


Figure 2 Brand identity prism (Kapferer 2004, 107)

Physique is the set of the brand's physical features that people think of when they hear the brand name. This answers questions such as 'what does the brand look like?' and 'how can it be recognized?'. *Personality* refers to the character of the brand. Unique personality can be built by communicating about one's true self, which can be accomplished by the use of different styles of writing, design and color schemes. *Culture* consists of all of the basic principles and values on which the brand bases its behavior. The origin of the brand often plays an important role in how its culture is understood. *Relationship* between the brand and its audience is an essential part of brand identity. The brand and its features *reflect* the consumer of the brand and the brand reflects the *self-image* of the consumer. It means that a part of the brand is defined by its consumer and a part of each person being its advocate is defined by the brand. By the use of the brand identity prism as a development tool, the brand can assess its strengths and weaknesses in order to build a strong brand identity. (Kapferer 2004, 107-111.)

2.2 Characteristics of social media

In this chapter, the different facets of the online identities and the nature of the communication as well as the various branding tactics in the digital world are examined to provide an understanding of the role of the social media in personal brand building.

2.2.1 Online identities

Aalto and Uusisaari (2010, 21–34) explain the online identity by dividing the online behavior into four sectors by making a separation between professional and private as well as public and non-public behavior. The concept is demonstrated in the 360 degrees of the online identity model below (Figure 3):

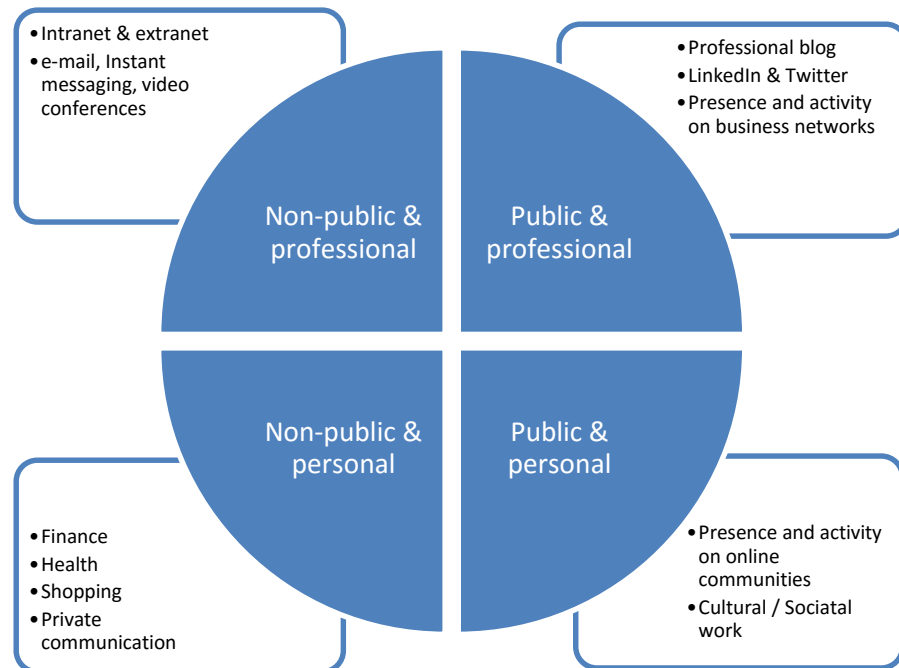


Figure 3 The 360 degrees of the online identity (Aalto & Uusisaari 2010, 21–34)

The *non-public and professional* online behavior consists of internal online activities within the organization. This sector includes behavior in the intranets, extranets and other online environments facilitated by the organization. It also includes communication via e-mail or instant messaging services. Many organizations have digital internal communication channels, through which employees can connect and interact with each other. Most companies have at least some kind of forum through which they are able to post news or other relevant information regarding the organization. The behavior in these different channels can vary from formal to informal. Anyhow, the presence and activity on these channels should be relevant, professional and in line with the organizational culture. The *public and professional* behavior covers the open online performance related to one's profession. This includes all the public tasks done in one's professional position as well as all the behavior performed as one's professional self. These activities are usually done in the business networks or services related to one's profession, but also in social media

channels such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Professional blogs and any public professional appearances are also included in this sector. The *public and personal* behavior consists of all the activities related to personal information sharing in online communities. One's personality can be expressed in many forms including publications, blog writings and social media updates. *Non-public and personal* online behavior is a sum of all the private life maintenance activities done in the internet. It can include any activities related to finance, health, e-shopping or private communication done online. A common factor for all the activities in this sector is privacy. Meaning, this part of the online behavior is usually shared only with close family. (Aalto and Uusisaari 2010, 21–34.)

Apart from the non-public and private, all the four sectors demonstrated above are relevant for personal branding online. However, only the public dimension of online behavior can be counted in as the social media activity. In many cases it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the professional and private use of social media when investigating personal brands. Often times, the behavior first intended to be only private can evolve into professional identity building. In the next chapter, the characteristics of the social media channels highly related to personal branding are presented.

2.2.2 From analog to digital and from web 1.0 to web 2.0

The roots of personal branding are in the analog world. Therefore, using tactics such as public speaking and white papers were essential in building one's personal brand. Nowadays there are more opportunities to engage and connect with people through the digital channels as well. Digital personal branding includes methods as blogs, podcasts and other social media. These methods now need to be incorporated into the personal brand development mix. (Vitberg 2009, 10.) Even though the digital media has fundamentally changed branding, in many cases it is not only social media that creates your brand, as a brand combines all the experiences that the target audience has of a brand. (Rowles 2014, 3-4.) Vitberg (2009, 11) divides branding tactics into an analog and a digital approach (Table 1).

Table 1 Analog vs. digital personal branding tactics (Vitberg 2009, 11)

Analog Personal Branding Tactics	Digital Personal Branding Tactics
Build personal relationships – social and professional Speaking engagements Articles & white papers Newsletters Business letters Collateral (brochures) Public relations Community involvement Boards Awards Sales skills development	Podcasts Videocasts Web sites Blogs Wikis Social Media E-newsletters E-mail Various ways and means to link and connect all of the above in an integrated fashion

All media channels have their own characteristics. Just like different channels on television and radio, also social media channels have a huge diversity of users. One of the biggest difference between social media and traditional media is the possibility for people to create and share content seamlessly in social media platforms (Lietsala & Sirkkunen 2008, 19). In their research comparing brand equity creation through traditional media and social media channels Bruhn, Schoenmueller and Schäfer (2012, 781) found out that traditional communication methods have a higher impact on brand awareness whereas social media communication methods have the strongest influence on brand image. This is in line with fact that traditional and social media channels used together contribute to the process of successful brand equity building.

Communication in the traditional media is typically seen as a one-way process where the message is delivered from the sender to the receiver. In social media the interactions between different users are more open and thus it has been said that the communication process has shifted from one-way to two-way communication (Mayfield 2008). Thus, the roles of the sender and the receiver are not as clear and the communication between different parties is more interactive. Social media provides an easy platform for creating communities and the communication between their members (Mayfield 2008).

There are many similarities in the two worlds. Facebook and LinkedIn can be seen as digital editions of traditional networking events (Vitberg 2009, 11). Social media has affected personal branding by democratized the personal branding process, made the time for building a brand shorter and reduced the cost of building a brand. Before, only powerful thought leaders could deliver their thoughts to a large mass of people, but now everyone can make their voice heard through various social media platforms. (Vitberg 2009, 11.) However, the digital tactics will not replace the analog personal branding as face-to-face relationship building can never be replaced (Vitberg 2009, 11).

Analog and digital tactics should to be in balance to achieve the right mix of methods for brand building. It is not an easy task, and there is a difference how different generations value each method. Younger professionals might have the tendency to put emphasis on digital tactics, while older generations prefer traditional methods over digital efforts and activities. Both should incorporate a complementing mix of personal branding methods to get the best possible results. (Vitberg 2009, 12.)

The technology shift from web 1.0 to web 2.0 has changed the way the people act online. Where web 1.0 is seen as one way communication, in which the interaction between the sender and the receiver is weak, web 2.0 creates an opportunity for everyone to create and share content like never before (Zarrella 2010, 4). Figure 4 below demonstrates Barefoot's (2010, 4) viewpoint on the change in the traditional World Wide Web created by web 2.0.

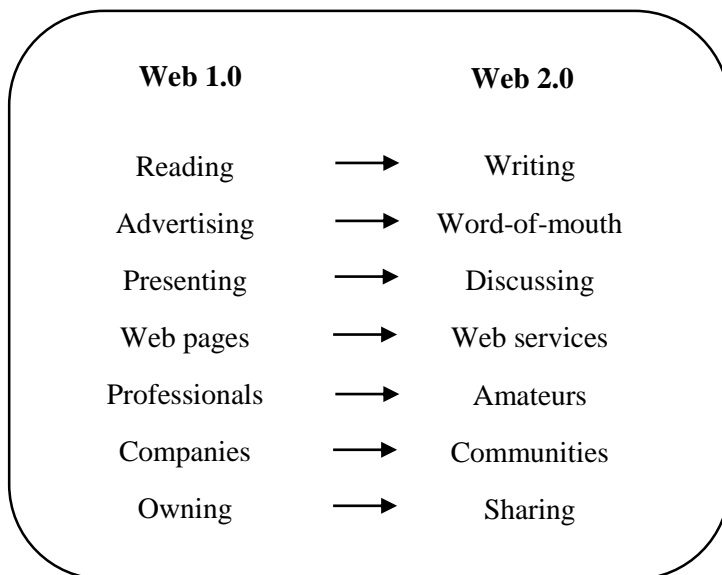


Figure 4 From web 1.0 to web 2.0 (Barefoot 2010, 4)

The most popular social media channels are based on features that improve and facilitate contacting, content sharing and co-operation (Barefoot 2010, 3). Social networks provide platforms that call for people to join the content creation. With only little effort, these services can turn audience into content creators and strangers into acquaintances. On social media, users share content, such as photos, videos, writing or music into a service based on a social software (Lietsala & Sirkkunen 2008, 19).

Kaplan (2010) defines social media as a group of Internet-based services that are built on web 2.0 technology and allow users to create content. Mayfield (2008) adds that social media hold some, or all, of the following features: engagement, openness, interaction, communality and cohesion.

The relevant social media channels for personal brand building can be divided into following categories:

- Content creation and publishing
- Content sharing
- Social networking

The platforms for *content creation and publishing* are the earliest forms of social media. A blog is a web page that contains posts usually displayed in chronological order (Kaplan 2010). Blogs first became popular in the mid-1990s, but reached their real glory in the early 2000 (Barefoot 2010, 3). The new technical innovations in tools for internet-based sharing in the beginning of the 21st century made blog publishing and maintenance easier. Blogs can be seen as equivalents to personal web pages in social media. A blog is usually managed by one person, but it offers a possibility to interact between different users via comments etc. (Kaplan 2010). Blogs can be divided into personal and professional based on their content. However, often this division may be difficult as personal content can easily evolve into something more professional over time. (Aalto & Uusisaari 2010, 97.) Numerous well-known digital news portals have developed from personal blog pages to become huge international businesses (see e.g. Mashable 2016). In addition to personal blogs, many companies use blogs to keep their personnel, customers and shareholders informed of the latest news. In addition, many corporate leaders and other company representatives write personal blogs to improve the transparency of their organization or business activities. (Kaplan 2010.) Aalto and Uusisaari (2010, 97) claim that blogs have a solid role in the creation of an effective online personae. Even though some argue that the role of blogs as a form of online expression is diminishing, they still offer an easy and natural way of keeping the web page's content relevant (Aalto & Uusisaari 2010, 97). According to Isokangas and Vassinen (2010, 66–68) blog posts can deliver successful content marketing when the content is beneficial and entertaining.

Alongside with the text, sound, photo and video blogs a new form of blogging – microblogging – has become extremely popular (Scoble & Israel 2008, 11). In microblogging the users have to express themselves in a brief and interesting manner (Seppälä 2011, 46). Microblogs are platforms where the size of the content is restricted. Twitter, the most popular microblogging platform, has restricted its post size to the maximum of 140 characters (Zarella 2010, 35). One of the reasons of Twitter's huge popularity is its simplicity. Also the fact that the users were able to follow any profiles, attracted more people to join and follow the people they were interest about (Bodnar & Cohen 2012, 109). A person as well as a company can gain advantage by the use of Twitter. It is an excellent tool for doing research as it offers an enormous amount of information created and shared by others as well as the possibility for asking questions and viewing answers. Due to the openness and transparency of the service, Twitter provides a suitable platform for extensive word-of-mouth communication. (Bodnar & Cohen 2012, 110.)

The idea behind the *content communities* is sharing media content among the users of the service (Kaplan 2010). The content communities can share a diverse set of content, including books, videos, photos, music and presentations. The users of the content communities do not always need to create their own profile to use the service and using the service is often free. Many commercial organizations have strengthened their activities on these channels due to the typically large user bases and the often also cost-efficient professional usage. There are also many individuals that have succeeded in building their professions and awareness for their work by the use of channels, especially in YouTube.

The social networking sites allow the users to connect to other users by creating personal profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to join and communicate via instant messaging applications. Personal profiles may include photos, videos, recordings, blogs and general information about the user. (Kaplan 2010.) In addition to Facebook and LinkedIn, the extremely popular social networking sites, there is a large amount of sites with a similar functionality (Google+, MySpace & IRC-Galleria). Out of the above, LinkedIn is designed for more professional use. LinkedIn is a business-oriented social network used for professional networking, recruitment and job hunting by both the employers, and the current or future employees (Zarrella 2010, 71).

Salmenkivi and Nyman (2007, 108) list three characteristics without which a service cannot be called a social networking service. These characteristics are:

- possibility to create a user profile
- possibility to view other users' profiles
- allowing interactive communication between the users

Common for all the social networks is the possibility for the users to create a profile, with which they are able to build their own image (Salmenkivi & Nyman 2007, 108). The profile can be set as public or private, according to one's preference about the visibility of the profile. Social networking sites differ from chats and forums in the users' presence. In social networking channels the users exist through their profiles where the in chats and forums users are usually present only when they take part in the discussions.

2.3 Theoretical framework for building a personal brand on social media

In this chapter, the theory presented earlier is organized and refined to demonstrate the process of personal brand building on social media. Digital branding is the sum of online experiences (Rowles 2014, 3). According to Yan (2011, 689) we now live in an era of short attention spans and competing media where Facebook updates, Tweets and fan pages on different channels have become part of the branding toolbox. Even though web 2.0 technology is broadly used by brands and companies, it was primarily developed to

connect people and create social communities. Due to this, while operating on social media, one has to take into account all the different characteristics of these channels in order to find the right methods of brand building. (Fournier & Avery 2011, 193.) Also, while social media holds some technical limitations and is not completely controllable, it can make more harm to neglect its potential (Yan 2011, 690). Being invisible on social media automatically creates a gap in the overall exposure. Today, social media profile can be as relevant for a brand as a web site or a phone number. (Schlinke & Crain 2013, 90.)

Figure 5 demonstrates the process of personal branding on social media. It is a simplified model derived from personal branding, impression management and brand identity theories that are combined in a way that fits the social media environment. The process of personal brand building on social media is divided into three phases: background, planning and tactics.

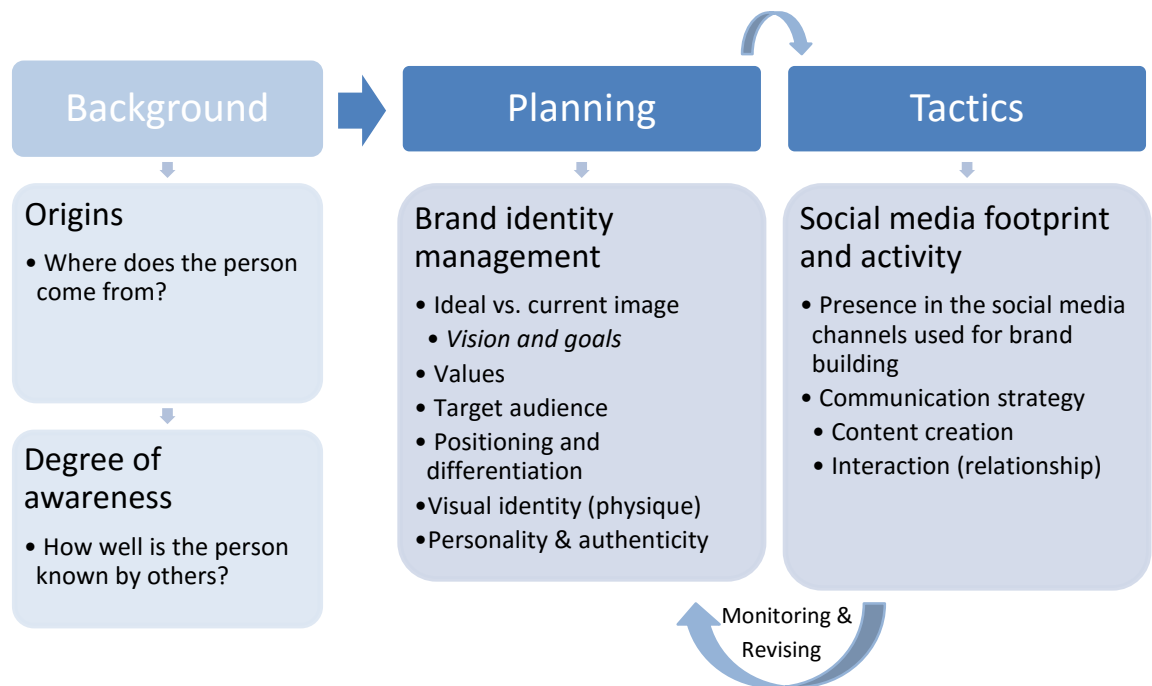


Figure 5 Process of building a personal brand on social media

The first phase of the process can be seen as a starting point to any personal branding efforts, whether online or offline. The background of the person affects the way the brand is and should be treated and managed. This is a phase before and in the beginning of monitoring (impression management) and personal brand ambition creation (personal branding models). This can be seen as the phase where most people that are not motivated or aware of their brand building process stand. Whether being a well-known and highly recognizable celebrity or an unknown professional searching for growth through social

media, many basic principles remain the same; social media is a way to center marketing to a specific audience (Yan 2011, 689.)

2.3.1 *Planning – brand identity formation*

The personal brand identity creation starts when an individual detects a discrepancy in one's image and starts acting on reducing the gap between the *ideal image* and the *current image*. There can be different levels of discrepancy that require different levels of action in order to be reduced. As discussed in Chapter 2.1.1 the desired image consists of the personal characteristics, such as knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences and values that one wishes for others to attribute to him or her in a given context. (Roberts 2005, 692.)

The personal branding statement and *value proposition* should be based on personal values and fit the societal expectations. They do not stand only for personal identity characteristics but also the characteristics of social identity groups that one wishes to be associated to him. (Roberts 2005, 692.) It is essential to identify one's personal ambition and the personalities and values that make one different and unique. This is the soul and the core of a personal brand. It encompasses one's personal vision, mission and key roles (Rampersad 2008, 35.)

There are many different ways to form an understanding of one's *target audience*. Listening and monitoring the activity on the related profiles, forums or channels can provide valuable information for a brand to perform effectively. (Rowles 2014, 50.) As stated earlier, the brand and its features reflect the consumer of the brand as well as the brand reflects the self-image of the consumer (Kapferer 2004, 107-111). One of the most important things is to monitor different social media channels to understand the activity around the main topics related to your brand. This so called 'social listening', can be extremely valuable to do before any social media activity is done. Before starting any social media activity a brand needs to understand what its audience is interested in in order to provide value for them (Rowles 2014, 46).

Individuals should use brand *positioning* to focus on their positive characteristics that bring value to their target group. At the same time the brand should *differentiate* itself from other individuals, the competitors, in the marketplace. (Khedher 2014.) By differentiating a brand can stand out from the crowd (Parmentier, Fischer & Reuber 2012). This is done by answering to the expectations and needs of their target market. In order to stand out an individual should create an understanding of one's personal characteristics in order to fully understand the target market and the competitors. Once these dimensions of the brand identity creation have been established, one should consider the tactics in communicating the brand identity to the potential target group.

An adequate amount of focus needs to be put on managing the brand communication. An authentic brand requires consistency on its identity. When the intangible identity of the brand has been established, one should concentrate on the visible identity communication. As stated earlier, identity's *physique* is the set of the brand's physical features that people think of when they hear the brand name. The physical features usually define what the brand looks like and how it can be recognized. While visual identity of a brand can rely strongly on recognizable features, social media can have obvious limitations for the brand. Many of the social media channels cannot be substantially adjusted or modified from their default design. All the brand building has to be done within the rules in the interface. (Yan 2011, 690.)

Personality refers to the character of the brand. Unique personality can be built by communicating about one's true self, which can be accomplished with the use of different styles of writing, design and color schemes. The new era of interactive communication has led to changes also in brand management as social media has given more power to consumers. A large variety of information is being shared and documented faster and more widely than ever, which emphasizes the focus that needs to be put on brand building and management. (Fournier & Avery 2011, 195-202.) The improved transparency makes it challenging for the brands to, in example, hide information in the way they might have been able to do before. *Authenticity* can be seen as one of the most important parts of personal brand building. The digital world has provided many more ways for one's lack of authenticity to be exposed. Powerful brands based on real, authentic promises can now be built faster than ever before. On the other hand, this transparency means also that a lack of authenticity will be exposed. (Rowles 2014, 40.) The communication needs to be in line with the so called culture of the brand, which consists of all the basic principles and values on which brand bases its behavior. The background of the brand often defines how its culture is understood. By choosing the right channels and activities a brand can build a relationship with its audience. (Wheeler 2006, 32.)

2.3.2 *Tactics - social media footprint and activity*

There are a variety of different social media *channels* for a personal brand to build its identity on. The brand needs to understand which social media platforms are used by its target audience and that using these channels will provide value for them (Rowles 2014, 46). According to Yan (2011, 691) in order for an external audience to become a group of brand evangelists, the brand needs to be understood thoroughly for them to communicate its values correctly. The user journey of a brand is very unlikely linear in nature. With many different channels and a large amount of content to choose from, it is important for the online presence of a brand to be well manage. Many organizations have a

Facebook page without even knowing why they have them or what to do with them. In fact, majority of organizations are not using social media effectively, even while they have extended their presence in them. (Rowles 2014, 5.) The variety of touch points, and thus the ability for a consumer to have experiences with a brand has multiplied (Rowles 2014, 3). Social media has forced brands to adjust their communication strategy as it is not just one new channel alongside the traditional media, but a diverse mixture of platforms with different content and technologies (Castronovo & Huang 2012, 122).

In order to utilize these chosen channels effectively, a brand needs to create useful and interesting *content* and to be able and willing to engage in an authentic way. Content marketing is about providing engaging and useful content for the target audience. It is about providing value beyond the direct product offering. The focus of content marketing changes between different fields of business. Many brands offer tutorials, tips and tools or share knowledge or entertaining content related to their field of business by using digital technologies creatively to deliver their value proposition. (Rowles 2014, 25-27.)

Social media is all about content, frequency and consistency of interaction (Vitberg 2009, 12). Using it requires dedication via consistent maintenance of one's personal brand. According to Vitberg (2009, 12) this means "- - regular postings, comments and updates to whatever social media platform the practitioner employs." Building a personal brand is seen as being a thought leader in the selected field. Frequency of messaging relates directly to relevancy, which is the basis for creating the perception of thought leadership. (Vitberg 2009, 12.)

As stated earlier, social media provides a platform for open *interaction* between brands and consumers. Nevertheless, most communication done online does not involve a brand at all, but happens between consumers. (Rowles 2014, 3.). As conversation in the digital media is no longer one way, consumers can challenge, ask questions and develop a more authentic image of a brand. Consumers can impact a global organization's brand in a way that was not possible before. (Rowles 2014, 8.). People can now impact personal brands in the same way. The *analytics* on the social media can help a brand to map the impact of certain campaigns or other social media activities. Thus, adjusting the activities to perform towards the broader digital objectives of a brand becomes easier.

Like stated earlier, there are many social media channels that can be used for brand building. A deeper look into the characteristics of the three social media channels selected for this research are presented below.

Since its commercial launch in 2006, **Facebook**'s aim has been to connect friends and contacts, and has successfully created a closed network of over 1.5 billion users by the end of 2015 (Yan 2011, 689; Statista Q4 2015). For brands it created the opportunity for direct interaction with the consumers. Being able to communicate directly with one's supporters, brands were now able to bridge the gap and openly interact with its audience. (Yan 2011, 689.)

Twitter can be seen as a less formal social media channel. Barack Obama's presidential campaign is a good example of a masterful use of the service. Twitter provided a great channel for Obama not only for reaching various target groups, but also for communicating his political content and campaign ideals in a way that had never been seen before. People were able to ask questions and engage with Obama through Twitter. Twitter, alongside with many other social media channels, provide an option for its users to follow and be followed by other users of the service. Being followed by someone can satisfy the audiences feeling of being engaged: in Obama's case it really created an authentic belief of a two-way communication with him. (Yan 2011, 690.)

Instagram was officially launched in 2010, which makes it four years younger than Twitter. However, after its acquisition by Facebook in 2012 Instagram has grown to become one of the most promising social media channels for brands to communicate with a massive consumer audience. Not only has the number of brand posts made in Instagram increased rapidly, but it also generates more powerful audience engagement compared to Facebook and Twitter. The users don't only look at photos and videos posted by brands, but also share and take photos related to brands and products. (Klie 2015, 15.) Instagram differs from these channels in other ways as well: compared to Facebook and Twitter, the content on Instagram is more thoughtful, which means that the users are not exposed to an overflow of posts in a way they are on those channels. The content is also only photos and videos, which gives more playground for brands to communicate visually. (Klie 2015, 15.)

3 METHOD

This chapter explains how the empirical part of the study has been conducted. First, an overview of the used methods is presented in Chapter 3.1 after which the data collection process of the study is explained together with the operationalization table of the study in the Chapter 3.2. Data description and data analysis methods are explained in Chapters 3.3 and 3.4 after which the evaluation of the study is presented in Chapter 3.5. The chapters about data collection, data description and data analysis are all divided into two sub-chapters according to the two different methods used in this study.

3.1 Overview

Mixed methods are used in the research. According to Creswell's and Plano-Clark's (2007, 6) definition, mixed methods research involves both collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used in the study. By using mixed methods, the data collected from each part can be combined in a way that creates a rich combination of data. The qualitative data, consisting of words and narratives, can be combined with quantitative, numerical data from a larger-scale study on the same topic. Thus, narrative and words can be used to add meaning to numbers. (Hesse-Biber 2010, 3.) Greene, Caracelli and Graham. (1989, 255) list five reasons for a mixed methods to be beneficial: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion. In this research, mixed methods are used to gain a fuller, complementary understanding of the research problem. Complementarity means providing a wider perception of the research problem by utilizing both numerical and narrative explanation of the given research result. Also, when using mixed methods, the findings may rise contradictions that may initiate a new study on the subject. (Hesse-Biber 2010, 4.)

The quantitative data consists of close-ended information that has been gathered from the social media profiles of the top social media personal brands in Finland. This will provide a broad perception of the current state of the social media personal branding phenomenon.

The other part of the research is conducted by single case study including two Finnish personal brands to provide a deeper understanding of personal branding practices of strong social media personal brands. Single cases are notably useful when exploring new phenomena under extreme or rare circumstances (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The single case study method is appropriate for the purposes of this study, as the approach is centered on providing an extensive description of the case and on deepening theoretical understanding of this new phenomenon.

In contrast to the quantitative data, the qualitative data consists of open-ended information that is gathered through interviews with participants. The interviewees are among the strongest social media influencers in Finland – stand-up comedian Sami Hedberg and professional photographer Mikko Lagerstedt. The case brands were chosen based on their relevance to the study.

In order to form a complete picture of the research problem, the datasets from each method need to be mixed (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007, 7). In this research, both methods are used to describe the three research themes: *the background of the brand*, *the brand identity management* and *the social media behavior and interaction* of the strong personal brands. The results of both research methods is presented according to these themes which and the findings will be merged in the conclusion section of the study to provide a thorough understanding of the themes.

3.2 Data collection

As stated earlier, the data of the research consists of both quantitative and qualitative content. The quantitative data was collected by first gathering a list of the most followed personal brands in Finland on each selected social media channel. Lists of the 100 most followed personal brand profiles on each channel were provided by a data analytics company called Brandsome. The company uses the open data of the social media platforms to gather information on selected profiles. According to Petteri Sintonen, the founder of the company, the list is verified and up to date. Due to the fact that the field of social media is rapidly changing and new profiles are created as we speak, the listings are constantly changing. There were some requirements set for the profiles to be listed in this research. First of all, the profile has to point to a specific person. Band profiles were not included in the listing, but some artist profiles were accepted if they were seen to refer to a specific person or if a specific person was seen as a clear spokesperson of the brand. Secondly, only profiles managed by the brand itself were accepted. That ruled out any unofficial profiles, including fan pages and profiles managed by other parties.

The qualitative data on personal branding from the viewpoint of the personal brands themselves was collected in two semi-structured interviews. The respondents were both asked the same questions but were able to respond freely and in their own words (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 86). The reasoning behind the use of a semi-structured method was to achieve comparable information from the interviews and to ensure that the focus remains the same. The operationalization table below (Table 2) clarifies the data collection of the study by demonstrating the subjects of the research in accordance to the structure of the overall research. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are demonstrated in the table gain a holistic understanding of the overall data

Table 2 Operationalization table

Research purpose	Sub-questions	Theoretical framework	Research themes	Quantitative analysis subjects (<i>Top profiles</i>)	Qualitative analysis subjects (<i>Case studies</i>)
What are the characteristics of strong personal brands on social media?	How is a personal brand created?	Personal branding <i>Roberts (2005)</i> <i>Peters (2005)</i>	Background of the brand	Age	Brand creation and awareness
				Sex	
				Occupation	
	How can a personal brand identity be formed on social media?	Personal brand identity <i>Rampersad (2008)</i> <i>Kapferer (2004)</i> <i>Wheeler (2006)</i>	Management of the brand identity	Visual identity: Profile picture information	Vision & goals
				Textual identity: Bio text information	Values
				Linking information	Identity consistency
				Username information	
	What are the personal branding tactics used by strong personal brands on social media?	Social media branding tactics <i>Yan (2011)</i> <i>Vitberg (2009)</i> <i>Rowles (2014)</i> <i>Kaplan (2010)</i>	Social media behavior & interaction	Reach statistics (followers)	Social media footprint
				Activity statistics (posts)	Content creation
					Interaction & dialogue

The three research themes – background of the brand, management of the brand identity and social media behavior and interaction – are derived from the theoretical framework presented earlier in Chapter 2.3. The research themes are then divided into several subjects based on the theoretical framework and the characteristic of the used methods. The more detailed demonstration of data collection for each method is presented in the Chapters 3.1.1 and 3.1.2.

3.2.1 Data collection of the quantitative research

The research consists of data gathered from a total of 300 social media profiles – 100 from each selected channel. As the focus of the research is to investigate strong personal brands, only profiles with high follower counts were selected. The information about the follower counts was collected and organized based on a listing of a marketing analytics organization Brandsome. After the lists of the 100 most followed personal brands on each channel were gathered, the lists were verified and the more detailed information about the profiles was investigated and collected. The Table 3 below demonstrates the information collected in the first part of the research.

Table 3 Data collected from the profiles

Research themes	Quantitative analysis subject (<i>Top profiles</i>)	Data collected
Background of the brand	Age	The age of the person (number)
	Sex	The gender of the person (male/female)
	Occupation	The occupation of the person (occupation)
Management of the brand identity	Visual identity: Profile picture information	Whether or not a profile photo can be found. (yes/no)
	Textual identity: Bio text information	Whether or not the profile has a bio text that introduces the person and gives some attributes on its brand identity. (yes/no)
	Linking information	Whether or not the profile has links to other online sites of the brand. (yes/no)
	Username	The username of the brand in the profile (username)
Social media behavior and activities	Reach statistics (followers)	Total number of followers (number)
	Activity statistics (posts)	Total number of posts made by the brand (number)

The top social media personal brands were investigated through the three research themes: the background of the brand, the management of the brand identity and the social media behavior and activities. First, the general information about the *personal brands' backgrounds* were collected. As only few brands provide the general information on their social media profiles, needed information regarding age, sex and occupation of the personal brands were collected from personal websites, social media profiles and trustworthy

news articles. In six cases the information about the person's age could not be found and was estimated according to other information on several online sources.

The general data was then extended to include more information about the personal brand profiles. The information about *the management of the brand identity* was collected by reviewing information about the profile pictures, bio texts, linking and usernames in the selected social media profiles. All the data was collected manually from each profile on the week 46 of 2015.

In order to gain a deeper understanding on each profile's *social media behavior and activity*, changes in two key figures – reach and activity – were studied in more detail. The data concerning the total number of followers and the total number of posts made by the brand was collected in two data collection periods – first on the week 46 in 2015, and again on the week 3 in 2016. With 9 weeks in between the two collection periods, the changes in activity was made possible to investigate. The data about the number of the followers was collected for all of the social media channels mentioned above. The data concerning the posts made by the brand was collected only from Twitter and Instagram as Facebook did not provide easily acceptable way of collecting information about the total number of the posts. The data for both attributes in both collection periods were gathered from the personal brand profiles on each social media channel separately.

Once the general information was collected, parts of the data were organized and divided in groups. Four age groups and six occupation groups were formed to bring depth for the upcoming analysis. The groups are presented in the Tables 4 and 5 below.

Table 4 Age groups

Age group category	Age	Size of the group
A	<25	84
B	26-35	109
C	36-45	67
D	45+	40

Group A consists of people under 26 years old. The size of that group is 84 people. The largest age group (B) includes 109 people and consists of people in between 26 and 35 years of age. Size of the group C, consisting of people of 36-45 years old, is 67 people. The smallest group is the age group D with a total of 40 people in it. People in this group are more than 45 years old.

Table 5 Occupation groups

Occupation group	Including occupations	Size of the group
Musician	Music artists	91
Expert	Politicians, entrepreneurs, professionals, leaders	41
Media person	Radiopersons, TV-persons, reporters, journalists	28
Athlete	Professional athletes, e-sports players	53
Social Media person	Bloggers, vloggers, social media celebrities	37
Artist / Entertainer	Artists, photographers, designers, actors, comedians, writers, models, public figures	50

The people were divided into six groups according to their occupation. Professional athletes and musicians were given own groups called *Musician* and *Athlete*. Politicians, corporate leaders, reporters, entrepreneurs and other specific professionals were put into a group *Expert*. People working closely in the field of media were put into a group *Media person*. Bloggers, vloggers and other major social media content providers were put into a group *Social media person*. The group *Artist / Entertainer* consists of actors, comedians, photographers, designers, authors and others professionals related to arts and entertainment. Musicians were separated from this group as they can be seen as a clear and independent group of brands with unique characteristics when comparing to other artists and entertainers.

3.2.2 Data collection of the qualitative research

The interview questions were formed based on the theoretical framework presented in this study. It was made sure that all the necessary themes were covered. Both of the interviews were conducted in Finnish. The interview questions were based on the three research themes: the background of the brand, the brand identity management and the social media behavior and activities. In that way the questions covered all of the phases of the social media personal branding process model presented earlier in the theoretical part of the research. Table 6 demonstrates the relation of the interview questions to the research themes.

Table 6 Data collection - interviews

Research themes	Qualitative analysis subject (Case studies)	Interview questions
Background of the brand	Brand creation and awareness	How did your personal brand building start? How has your already existing brand awareness affected your online personal brand building? How has your social media activity affected your brand building?
Management of the brand identity	Vision & goals	How strategic is your social media behavior? What are your vision and goals? (ideal vs. current image)
	Values	How would you describe the values of your personal brand? What is the value you create for your audience? What, in your opinion, is your competitive advantage?
	Consistency	How consistent is your online identity?
Social media behavior and activities	Social media footprint	What social media channels do you use? What do you use them for?
	Content creation	What type of content do you create? What works best? Does the content differ on each channel?
	Interaction / dialogue	How important is interacting with the audience? Is there dialogue in your social media activity?

Case study method is most appropriate for studying “how” and “why” questions (Yin 2003a, 7). The interview questions concerning *the background of the brand* were focused on the origins of the brand and the part that social media has played in the brand building and the personal brand awareness. *The management of the brand identity* questions were formed to reveal the strategic base of the brand as different fundamental brand management topics were covered. The questions about the vision and the goals, the values, and the consistency were designed to provide a deeper understanding of the brand identity behind the daily activities. The questions were defined according to the brand identity literature presented earlier (e.g. Wheeler 2006; Kapferer 2004; Rampersad 2008). In order to apprehend the dimensions of *the social media behavior and the activities* of the brands, questions concerning the social media footprint, content creation and social media interaction were designed in accordance to the theoretical framework of social media tactics (e.g. Yan 2011; Vitberg 2009).

3.3 Data description

The quantitative data consists of information of 300 profiles of the most followed Finnish personal brands on three different social media channels – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A total number of 225 unique persons were included, as some of them appeared in more than one top 100 listing.

In the qualitative part of the research two cases were studied in detail to get a deeper understanding of the personal brands' perspectives. The interviews were held separately in late 2015. The more detailed information about the interviews can be seen in the Table 7 below:

Table 7 Research interviewees

Name:	Occupation:	Date:	Channel:	Duration:
Sami Hedberg	Stand-up comedian / Entrepreneur	November 13th, 2015	Phone interview	1:14 h
Mikko Lagerstedt	Photographer	November 20th, 2015	Phone interview	1:09 h

Both of the interviews were conducted via telephone as both interviewees were travelling during the time of the interviews. The interviews were held in similar conditions one week apart from each other. Both of the interviews were a little over an hour in length.

3.3.1 Selection of the social media channels

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were chosen for this research as all of the three channels are among the most used social media channels in the world. According to Facebook (Facebook statistics 2016), its service has 1.04 billion daily active users on average for December 2015. Instagram has over 400 million monthly active users with an average of over 80 million photos totally shared in Instagram daily (Instagram statistics 2016). Out of the three Twitter is the smallest when it comes to active users of the service with around 320 million monthly active users (Twitter usage 2016).

Another reason for the selection of the channels was the availability of the needed information. The data can be rather easily gathered and verified from the public information on chosen channels.

Finally, although all of the chosen channels have their own characteristics, they are often used together in order to provide more content or to reach a larger audience. It is interesting not only to investigate how the characteristics on these channels differ, but

also to examine if connections can be found. Compared to investigating one specific channel, the combination of the selected channels provide broader insight into the nature of social media personal branding.

3.3.2 *Selection of interviewees*

The interviewees were selected to represent strong social media personal brands. Choosing single-case design requires either critical case for theory testing or a unique and extreme case appearing only in a certain context (Yin 2003b, 40–41). Both of the selected personal brands are performing extremely well in more than one social media channel and have shown continuous growth during the last years. The decision of including two different personal brands in this single case study is to provide a more comprehensive representation of different backgrounds. They both use social media to boost their personal brand but represent different backgrounds as their professions and social media focuses are different. Sami Hedberg is a good extreme example of a person that was rather known for a larger audience before he joined the social media whereas Mikko Lagerstedt's awareness has seen a significant growth because of his social media presence and activity. Both Hedberg and Lagerstedt are the most followed brands among the people of their professions in Finland in at least one of the researched social media channels.

The interviewees were contacted in person and via e-mail and were asked to take part in the research by giving a one-hour interview. A brief introduction to the research topic was given to both interviewees before the interview.

3.4 **Data analysis**

3.4.1 *Top 100 personal brand profiles*

In the analysis of the backgrounds of the personal brands descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data concerning the age, the sex and the occupation distribution of the sample. Frequency and percentage distributions, and central tendencies of the data were calculated by using Microsoft Excel, a calculating program capable of processing the collected amount of data. These analysis were done in all of the three research themes. A data processing tool, pivot table, was used in the summarization and visualization of the data. The follower counts and the post activity are not distributed symmetrically amongst the top profiles. As the data in this study has extreme scores, using the arithmetic mean

is not ideal, and instead median is used to indicate a more representative number of the sample.

Contingency tables were used to analyze the connections and differences between the variables. Contingency table is one of the most used methods in understanding the relations between the selected variables, and it is used for the analysis of categorical variables. (Tähtinen, Laakkonen & Broberg 2011, 123.). The follower counts and the post activity data was analyzed by comparing the data between the different age and occupation categories presented earlier in this chapter.

3.4.2 *In-depth interviews*

The analysis proceeded as follows. The interviews were recorded with a mobile application after which they were transcribed into a text document. In spite of the fact that the interview questions were divided into themes, parts of the interviews were covered in an unplanned order. Due to that, the transcribed text was reorganized into more logical themes. After the reorganization was done the raw data were carefully reviewed several times before the analysis was conducted. This is important as a thorough understanding of the data is needed before the conclusions should be made (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 152). Finally the transcribed data was studied in detail and the relevant findings were highlighted and the irrelevant data was deleted. The analysis was done in line with the three research themes: the background of the brand, the management of the brand identity and the social media behavior and activities

3.5 Evaluation of the study

There are several different ways to measure and evaluate the credibility of the study (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2007, 226). The validity and the reliability of the study are evaluated in this chapter. The validity of the research can be divided into internal and external validity. The internal validity refers to the logicity and consistency of the interpretation, where external validity determines the possible generalization of the results. (Koskinen, Alasuutari & Peltonen 2005, 255–257.) The formulation of the research themes is based on the theoretical framework created in Chapter 2.3. This theoretical framework is used as a base in both research methods; for the question formulation and the conclusions in order to improve the internal validity of this study. The external validity is strengthened by consistent documentation of the research data. The interviews were recorded and transcribed after the interview to make sure all the results were documented correctly. In the used interview method, the effect of the interviewer is greater (Hyysalo

2009, 127), and therefore much attention was paid into formulating the questions so that they would not be biased. The external validity of the study is adequate when the interpretations and conclusions reflect the research subject in an authentic way (Koskinen et. al. 2005, 257). While the statements made by the interviewees are mainly subjective interpretations on the subject, there are no reasons to doubt distortion or dishonesty. The analysis of the study was done with a focus in neutrality and accuracy. In the qualitative part of the study, the validity of the analysis is improved by using citations from the interviews. As the quantitative data was collected from a secondary source, the role of the researcher is minimal in the data collection phase. The decisions related to the selection and the analysis methods of the quantitative data are, however, extremely important. The quantitative sample consists of 300 of the most followed personal brand profiles online. The results of the research were analyzed in accordance to the characteristics of the data. The selected descriptive statistical analysis methods were used to support comprehensive and accurate findings.

The research is reliable when there are no contradictions in the interpretation of the research (Grönfors 1982, 174). Simplified, it means that a research is reliable if it can be repeated with same end results (Hirsjärvi et. al. 2007, 226). The processes of data collection and analysis are described comprehensively in earlier chapter to create a clear understanding of the used methods. With a great certainty, the same results would be found from the documented data of this research – even when analyzed by a different researcher. Due to the fact that the social media behavior and activities of the personal brands evolve quite rapidly, parts of the quantitative results would rather possibly differ from the findings of this research.

The purpose of the study is not to generalize the findings but to gain an understanding of the characteristics of strong social media personal brands in Finland. However, the findings on the characteristics of the personal brands can be generalized in some degree as only the most successful brands were selected to this study and thus their activities could be seen as good examples of successful brand building.

4 USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PERSONAL BRANDING

In this chapter, the results of the research are presented. The chapter is divided into three sub-chapters. First, the results of the quantitative study of the top 100 personal brands of each channel are demonstrated. Later, in Chapters 4.2 and 4.3 the results of the single case study are explained. All the following chapters are divided into sub-chapters according to the research themes introduced earlier. After introducing quantified statistics of the top social media personal brands in Finland, the two unique personal branding cases provide a more comprehensive understanding of the personal branding phenomenon.

4.1 Overview of social media personal brands in Finland

In this chapter an overview of strong social media personal brands in Finland is presented. As stated earlier, a total of 300 different profiles were included in this study. The statistics shown in this chapter illustrate the characteristics of these top personal brands. The sample consists of 100 of the most followed personal brand profiles on each channel. The chapter is divided into four sub-chapters. The first research theme; *the background of the brands* is presented in Chapter 4.1.1. In Chapter 4.1.2 the second research theme; *the management of the brand identity* is investigated. The third research theme; *social media behavior and activities* is divided into two sub-chapters, where Chapter 4.1.3 presents the results on the reach statistics and Chapter 4.1.4 demonstrates the activity statistics of the top social media personal brands in Finland.

4.1.1 Backgrounds of the brands

The backgrounds of the top personal brands vary quite significantly. To understand the different backgrounds of the brands, three demographic characteristics are studied. This chapter provides an understanding of the demographic distribution of the top social media personal brands in Finland. Below the distribution by age, sex and occupation is provided to gain a deeper understanding of some fundamental characteristics of these brands.

The age distribution of the top social media personal brands in Finland can be seen in Figure 6 below.

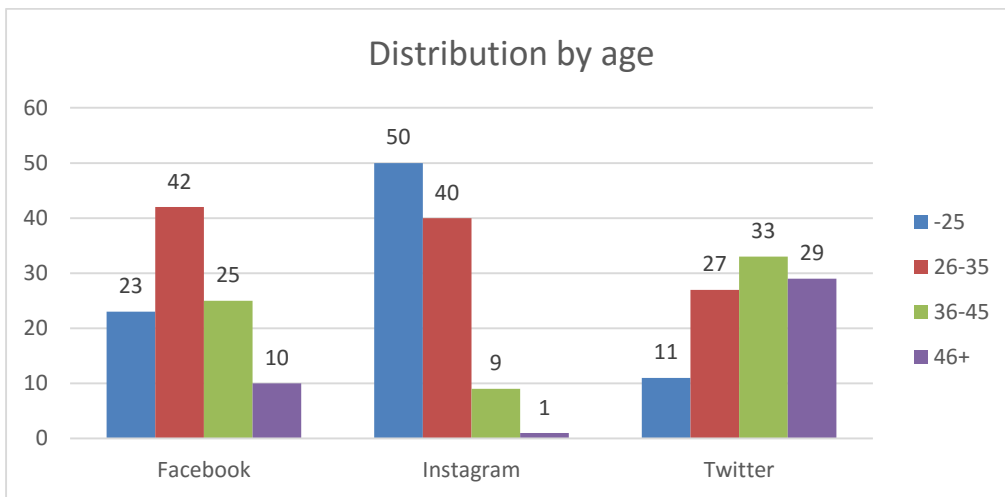


Figure 6 Top 100 personal brands - Distribution by age

As the figure demonstrates, there are remarkable differences in the distribution of the age groups. Group categories were named as follows:

- **age group A:** under 26 years old
- **age group B:** 26-35 years old
- **age group C:** 36-45 years old
- **age group D:** Over 45 years old

The biggest age group in Facebook is age group B, with a total of 42 people, followed by age groups C and A with the totals of 25 and 23 people and finally age group D with a total 10 people in it.

In Instagram, a total of 50 people belong to age group A. Calculated together age groups A and B cover a great majority as 40 people belong to age group B. Age groups C and D are clear minorities with the totals of 9 and 1 people.

In Twitter, age groups B, C and D totaled close to each other with 27, 33 and 29 people. A total of 11 people represented age group A.

The average age on each channel varies quite remarkably. The average age of the whole sample is 33.4 years. The average age of a Facebook brand is 33.7 years, while the average age in Instagram is 26.7 years and in Twitter 39.8 years. In Facebook, 65 % of the sample are under 36 years old, where the same proportion in Instagram is 90 % and in Twitter only 38 %. A little over one third of the persons in the overall listing fall between the ages 26 and 35.

The distribution between men and women can be seen from Figure 7 below.

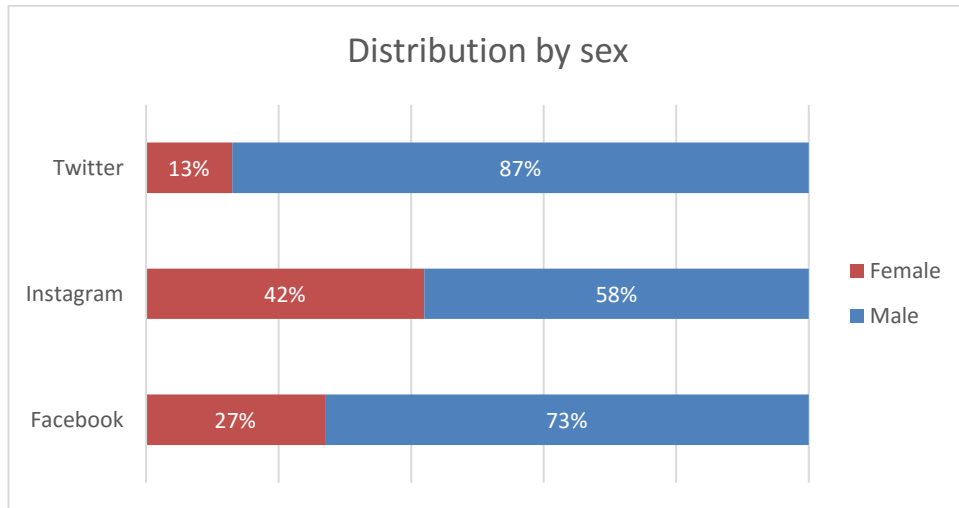


Figure 7 Distribution by sex

From the 300 most followed personal brand profiles 82 (27.3 %) are women and 218 (72.7 %) are men. A notable difference in the distribution can be seen when comparing the three channels with each other. Majority of the listed personal brands are men with some variability between the channels. Men make up for 73 % of the total sample in Facebook, 58 % in Instagram and as much as 87 % in Twitter.

The average age of women (27.9 years) is notably lower than the average age of men (35.5 years). Almost half (47.6 %) of the women are under 26 years old, where only 15 % are over 35 years old. In Instagram 97.6 % of the women were under 36 years old and there are no women of age of more than 45.

As stated earlier in Chapter 3, the sample was divided into six occupation groups according to the background or profession of the person. Figure 8 demonstrates the total distribution by occupation.

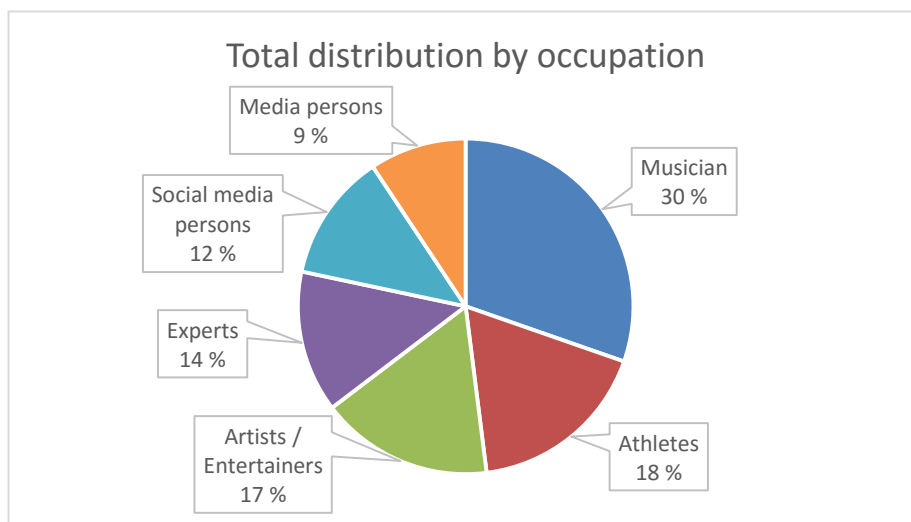


Figure 8 Total distribution by occupation

Out of all 300 brands the biggest occupation group is Musician with 91 people, 30 % of the total count. It is followed by Athletes (18 %), Artists / Entertainers (17 %), Experts (14 %), Social media persons (12 %) and media persons (9 %). Figure 10 illustrates the distribution between different channels.

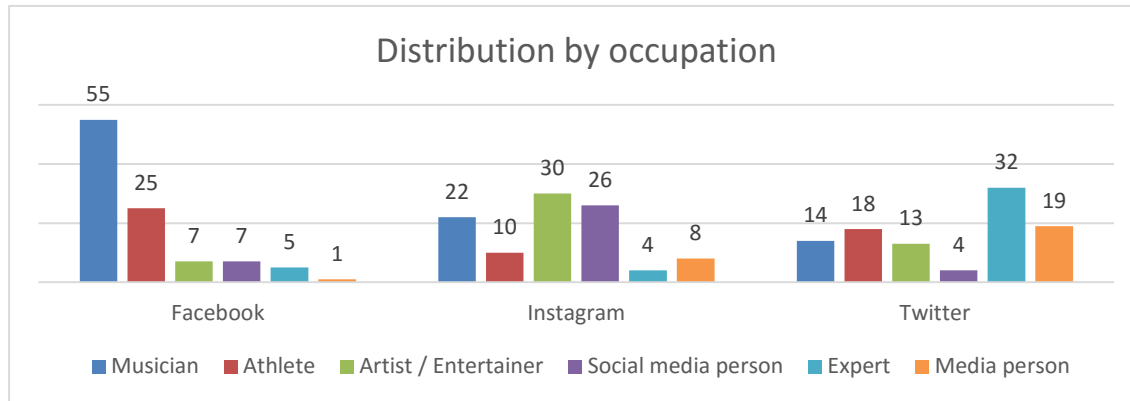


Figure 9 Channel-by-channel distribution by occupation

Figure 9 indicates a strong kurtosis in the distribution by occupation in Facebook, whereas in Instagram and Twitter the shares of the occupation groups are more equally divided. In Facebook musicians are the majority occupation as 55 % of the brands fall under that category. 25 % of the brands are athletes and the rest 20 % is divided between other categories. In Instagram artists / entertainers are the majority with 30 %, followed by social media persons with 26 % and musicians with 22 % of the total share. Experts, which is one of the smallest groups in Facebook and Twitter is the majority occupation in Twitter with the proportion of 32 %. In Twitter experts are followed by media persons with 19 % and athletes with 18 % of the total share.

Only one occupation group, social media persons, contains more women than men. In all the rest, 70-90 % of the group are men. The average age of the occupation groups vary from 22.2 years (social media person) to 45.0 years (expert). The average age of each occupation group from youngest to oldest are:

- social media person (22.2 years)
- athlete (30 years)
- artist / entertainer (32.1 years)
- musician (33.2 years)
- media person (40.6 years)
- expert (45 years)

4.1.2 Management of the brand identity in the profiles

In this chapter the level of management of the social media brand profile elements of the strongest Finnish social media personal brands are presented. The analysis was done by listing all the visible elements in the profiles that can be seen as tools for brand identity building. More specifically, the information about the pictures, bio texts, profile linking and usernames were listed and studied to get an overview of the identity management practices in the profiles. The results for management of the pictures, linking and bio text are presented below in Figure 10.

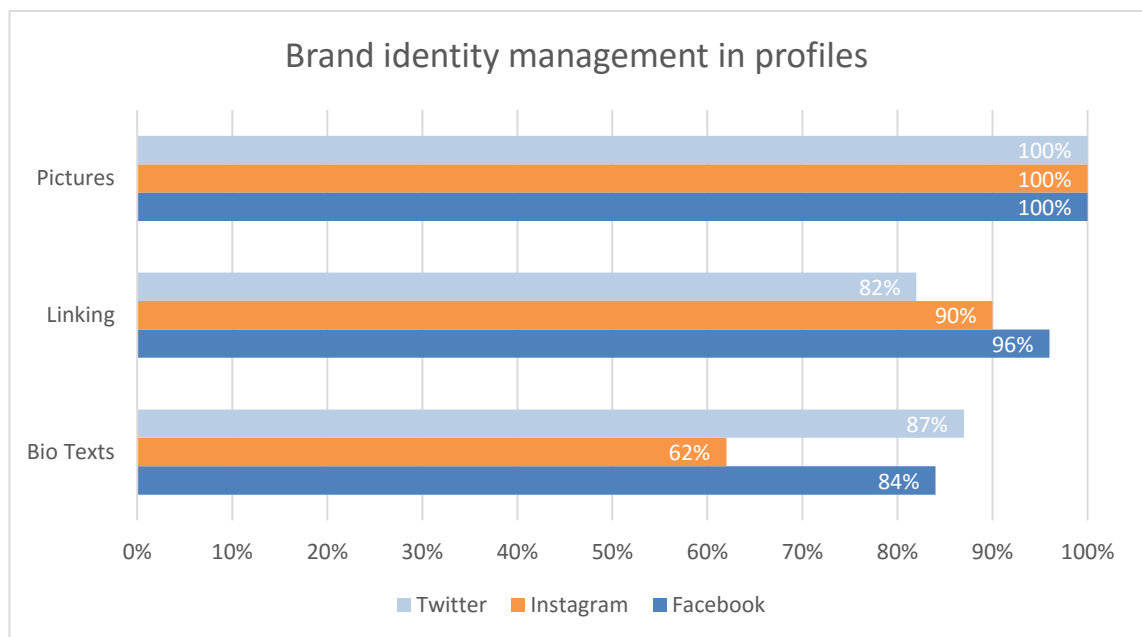


Figure 10 Brand identity management in profiles

The basic profile page elements for communicating brand identity are managed with a rather high level of professionalism on each channel. Every personal brand in every channel of this study has a picture on their profile. As the profile picture is one of the most visible elements of a profile, it is clearly well noted by the brands. On the other hand, not having a profile picture or cover photos on your profile can create a negative and informal impression of the page for the visitor.

All three channels provide a specific section for adding links to a brand profile. Approximately 89 % of all the profiles include links to other social media profiles or personal websites of the brand. Linking is most properly done in Facebook, where 96 % of the profiles are using links to make sure the visitors were able to find more content about the brand if interested. 90 % of the profiles in Instagram and 82 % of the profiles in Twitter provide external links. In all of channels the links are located either on the general description box or in a specific section dedicated for external links. Those brands that do

not provide a link to another social media site usually use this part of the profile to promote their business in some other way or do not have any content in this part of the profile.

Textual information about the brand can be added to description section of the profile. A little under 78 % of the brands are using these textual description sections in order to communicate about their brand. This information varies from general personal information to more extensive information about the brand, its history and its values. This is most successfully done in Twitter and Facebook where 87 % and 84 % of the brands use this option to communicate about their brand identity. In Instagram only 62 % of the profiles have such information. Many brands in Instagram use this description section of their profile to promote some relevant happenings related to their business, for example new songs or upcoming events.

As stated earlier, name is one of the key elements of a personal brand. The usernames of the personal brands were analyzed to find out how the top brands have formatted one of their most visible online identity communication elements. Each personal brand has a unique name. Different types of usernames were found:

- Person's full name
- Person's name partly
- Nick name

Figure 11 below demonstrates the characteristics of usernames used by the personal brands. Overall, a total of 55 % of the brands use their full name as the profiles username. There are differences between the three channels, which can most probably be explained by the characteristics of the channel.

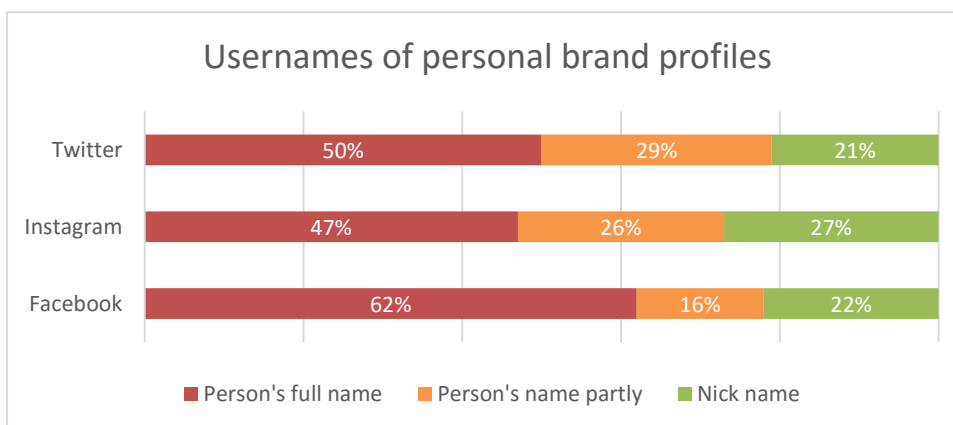


Figure 11 Usernames in personal brand profiles

Even though it is common for people in Facebook to appear with their full name, the percentage of brand's using their full names is only 62 %. 16 % use their name partly and 22 % use some kind of a nick name. The reason for this, in Facebook, is the rather large number of musician brands that are known by only their first name or other artist name that have nothing to do with their real name. These kind of brands are not included in the

‘Full name’ category. The average of the total characters used in username in Facebook is approximately 10.8 characters. The longest username in Facebook is ‘Jari-Matti Latvala Official Fanclub’ with a total of 35 characters. The shortest username is ‘Asa’ with only three characters.

In Instagram, a little under half (47 %) of the brands’ usernames include their full name. The rest is divided between brands that use their name partly (26 %) and brands that use a nick name (27 %). This smaller number for the full name usage can again be explained by the characteristics of the channel. People are more likely to use nick names or abbreviations of their full names. The average of the total characters used in username in Instagram is approximately 11.3 characters. The longest username in Instagram is ‘martinaaitolehtiofficial’ with a total of 24 characters. The shortest username is ‘tume’ with only four characters.

Regarding the formation of the usernames, there is no significant difference between Instagram and Twitter. In Twitter, exactly half of the brands use their full name as a username and 29 % use their name partly. The biggest difference between Twitter and Instagram is with the nick name usage, as only 21 % of the brands in Twitter fall under that category. The average of the total characters used in username in Twitter is approximately 13.6 characters. The longest username in Instagram is ‘photojournalism’ with a total of 15 characters. The shortest username is ‘wili’ with only four characters.

Even though the number for full name usage in Facebook is not significantly higher than in Instagram and Twitter, it can be stated that Facebook is a more formal channel when it comes to usernames. In Instagram and Twitter are more likely to create nick names or artist names for themselves as the channels are not seen as formal in that sense.

As stated earlier, some brands use additional words together with their usernames. Most commonly used word is ‘official’ which is used in 7 % of the usernames. Also the Finnish equivalent word “virallinen” is used by some national brands. These words are mostly used in order to differentiate from fan pages or other profiles managed by fans or other parties. One could argue that this is in some cases also used to add a professional image to the profile. This is more commonly used in Facebook (11 %) and Instagram (9 %). It is also rather common to add a reference word to the username to link it with one’s profession or field of interest. In many cases it is also a team or a group one is affiliated with. A reference word is used in a total of 8 % of the usernames. Reference words, unlike the word ‘official’, is used equally in each channel. Examples of general reference words used by the brands are: design, fit, photography, art. More unique words are related to specific groups or teams such as: Dudesons, EasyCar Rally Team, CSGO etc.

Overall, the top brands’ performance in management of the identity in the social media profiles is relatively good. The provided tools in the profiles are used well, with only a few exceptions. Although, the content varies quite remarkably. Although, while many of the brands succeed well in the identity management efforts done in the profiles, it can be

argued that these efforts are somewhat crucial and fundamental for social media identity building. The strongest

It must be noted that some of these brands have many strong communication channels in addition to the social media channels investigated in this research. For some personal brands – musicians for example – it may be more effective to use these profile elements to more tactical operations such as promoting new songs and shows as the brand identity building is being built more strategically elsewhere. Thus, the content on the profile pictures, the description texts and other elements of the profile might change more rapidly for the brands that can be seen as strong offline brands as well. The more social media driven brands need to put more focus on these provided tools and thus may benefit from a more consistent brand identity management in these channels.

4.1.3 *Digital footprint - followers by channel*

In this chapter the digital footprints, the key statistics of the follower counts and the follower count growths of the personal brand profiles are analyzed.

Out of the 225 most followed personal brands, almost 90 % are present in more than one social media channel. This means that approximately 10 % of the personal brands are present in only one channel. However, the activity between the channels varies significantly - many of the brands that are present in more than one channels are clearly active in one channel only. 15 of the brands are among the 100 most followed personal brands in all three channels. Out of these 15 brands, 7 are musicians. 45 of the personal brands are among the 100 most followed personal brands in two of the selected channels. 165 of the 225 most followed personal brands are listed only in one of the selected channel's top listing.

In the Table 8 below, the key statistics regarding the follower counts of the Top 100 personal brand profiles are presented.

Table 8 Key total follower count statistics

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Total follower count (top 100)	13,521,839	13,588,087	8,447,514
Median follower count	65,638	96,841	47,253
Smallest follower count	26,952	40,270	24,481
Largest follower count	1,708,286	634,044	1,141,531
Top 5 profiles	41 %	18.2 %	31 %

As the Table 6 indicates, the follower counts of the top profiles are not distributed symmetrically. In all channels, especially in Facebook and Twitter, the top 5 profiles have extremely large follower counts compared to the rest of the brands on the list. The top

100 profiles in both Facebook and Instagram have the total amount of over 13.5 million followers. The total follower count of the personal brand profiles in Twitter is a little under 8.5 million. As stated earlier in Chapter 3, due to the fact that distribution of the data is not normal, median is used to indicate a more representative number of the sample.

The median varies on each channel. The median of the total follower count is the greatest in Instagram with a total of 96,841. The same number for Facebook is 65,638 and for Twitter 47,253. When comparing the largest and the smallest follower counts on each profile, the data indicates that, out of these three channels, Instagram has also the smallest difference between the most and the least followed top brands. In Instagram, all of the top 100 brands have more than 40,000 followers, whereas in Facebook the smallest follower count is below 27,000 and in Twitter below 25,000. Even more remarkable are the differences amongst the top profiles. In Facebook, the most followed profile, Helly Luv, has more than 1.7 million followers. Konsta Punkka, the most followed profile on Instagram, has a total of over 634,000 followers and Twitter's most followed profile, Nico Rosberg, a total of more than 1.1 million followers. In all of the channels, top 5 most followed profiles make up a large proportion of the total follower count. In Facebook for example, 41 % of the total of over 13.5 million followers are followers the top 5 brands. In Instagram the share of the top 5 brands is 18.2 % and in Twitter the share is 31 %.

In Instagram, there are 48 personal brands with more than 100,000 followers. In Twitter the number of brands with more than 100,000 followers is 20 and in Facebook the number is 32.

The Table 9 identifies the differences of the weekly follower growths on each channel.

Table 9 Key follower growth statistics (per week)

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Median follower count growth	88	871	321
Largest follower count growth	8,687	12,033	4,937
Smallest follower count growth	- 4,859	- 225	- 454

The median for weekly follower count growth is 88 for the profiles in Facebook, 871 for the profiles in Instagram and 321 for the profiles in Twitter. The most followed brands by the follower growth are the same brands as the top brands by total follower count. The greatest initial growth, an average of 12,033 new followers each week was reached by Konsta Punkka in Instagram. Helly Luv gained an average of 8,687 new followers weekly in Facebook, Nico Rosberg 4,937 in Twitter. In all channels the follower count of some brands decreased during the time of research. In Facebook, Kimi Räikkönen, the famous Formula One driver had the largest decrease totaling for 4859 lost followers per week on average. Rauli Mård in Instagram (225 lost followers) and Henri Alen in Twitter (454 lost followers) suffered also quite remarkable weekly losses during the time of the research.

The covariance of the variables was studied by using Pearson correlation coefficient. No correlation between the follower growth and the post activity can be found on either channel. Some positive correlation was, however, found between the follower growth and the total follower count both in Instagram (0,725) and in Twitter (0,828). This means that the bigger the total follower count of the brand is, the more likely it is to have a strong follower growth as well.

To visualize the diverse characteristics of the top personal brands, the ten most followed personal brands are listed in Table 10 below.

Table 10 Top 10 personal brands by total follower count

	Name	Followers (Total)	Weekly follower growth	Posts / week	Joined	Age group	Occupation
FACEBOOK							
1	Helly Luv	1,708,286	8,687	-	2011	26–35	Musician
2	Nico Rosberg	1,179,975	6,161	-	2007	26–35	Athlete
3	Tarja Turunen	989,524	2,505	-	2010	36–45	Musician
4	Sara Fabel	873,200	- 702	-	2010	26–35	Artist/Entertainer
5	Mikko Lagerstedt	792,874	6,705	-	2008	26–35	Artist/Entertainer
6	Samu Haber	630,679	- 533	-	2013	36–45	Musician
7	Kimi Raikkönen	289,256	- 4,859	-	2012	36–45	Athlete
8	Cheek	229,095	100	-	2008	26–35	Musician
9	Heikki Kovalainen	205,573	- 176	-	2010	26–35	Athlete
10	Jari-Matti Latvala	192,504	1,189	-	2008	26–35	Athlete
INSTAGRAM							
1	Konsta Punkka	634,044	12,033	7.7	2012	-25	Artist/Entertainer
2	Helly Luv	484,346	10,497	16.2	2012	26–35	Musician
3	Sara Fabel	469,304	- 145	4.7	2011	26–35	Artist/Entertainer
4	Nico Rosberg	456,448	6,733	2.2	2013	26–35	Athlete
5	Isac Elliot	435,645	3,175	9.1	2013	-25	Musician
6	Jukka Hilden	348,919	2,571	6.9	2012	26–35	Media person
7	Robin	328,093	2,213	6.9	2012	-25	Musician
8	Benjamin Peltonen	322,469	1,130	4.1	2012	-25	Musician
9	River Viiperi	314,837	6,669	1.7	2013	-25	Artist/Entertainer
10	Miisa Rotola-Pukkila	256,418	2,738	3.1	2013	-25	Social media pers.
TWITTER							
1	Nico Rosberg	1,141,531	4,937	6.6	2010	26–35	Athlete
2	Kim Dotcom	479,091	1,100	38.1	2012	36–45	Expert
3	Rauli Mård	401,581	1,435	52.2	2011	46+	Artist/Entertainer
4	Heikki Kovalainen	338,803	488	3.7	2010	26–35	Athlete
5	Alexander Stubb	255,644	1,239	52.7	2009	46+	Expert
6	Valtteri Bottas	241,545	560	8.2	2013	26–35	Athlete
7	Petteri Tarkkonen	177,949	387	104.8	2010	46+	Expert
8	Arman Alizad	159,944	1,346	29.8	2010	36–45	Media person
9	Lauri Happonen	148,663	321	6.1	2012	-25	Athlete
10	Tarja Turunen	147,355	333	10.6	2010	36–45	Musician

In the Table 12, the channels are presented separately and the brands are listed starting from the most followed brand profiles. All of the occupation and age groups are presented in the top 10 listings of the three channels. In Facebook, the top 10 consisted of only musicians, athletes and artists & entertainers. These occupation categories are included in all of the social media channels' top 10 lists. Media persons are seen in both Instagram's and Twitter's top 10 lists, where one social media person is listed in Instagram's

list and experts only in Twitter's list. In Facebook, only people from two age groups are listed in the top 10 list. All the brands listed in Facebook's list are between 26 and 45 years old. In Instagram, on the other hand, all the personal brands are under 36 years of age. In Twitter, all the age groups are presented in the top 10 listing. The year when the brand has joined the channel varies in Facebook between 2008 and 2013, in Instagram between 2011 and 2013 and in Twitter between 2009 and 2013.

As can be seen from the table, the weekly follower growth of the top brands varies significantly. In Facebook, four of the brands lost followers more than they gained them during the research period, which led into a smaller number of total followers. Thus, one can argue that even the most followed brands need to make an effort in holding on to their fan base. In Instagram and in Twitter, the top brands performed better according to the follower growth. An interesting finding related to the post activity of the most followed brands is that there seems to be no correlation between post activity and total follower count. The least active brand in Instagram posted only less than two times in average in a week, where the most active posted over 16 times in average. In Twitter the least active brand tweeted less than four times in a week in average, where the most active brand tweeted almost 105 times in a week. The post activities of all of the top brands as well as the most active brands are studied more thoroughly in the next chapter.

4.1.4 Activity statistics – posts by channel

The content of this chapter is similar to previous chapter, but instead of focusing on follower counts this chapter focuses on posting activity of the brands. The key statistics of the total posts and the post activity of the personal brand profiles are demonstrated and analyzed. As stated in the Chapter 3, due to the accessibility of the needed data in Facebook, this chapter focuses only on Instagram and Twitter. First, the average total post count on both channels are construed (Table 11).

Table 11 Key total post statistics

	Instagram	Twitter
Median	738	4,376
Largest amount of total posts	3,384	278,239
Smallest amount of total posts	111	7

There is a substantial difference on posting activity between Instagram and Twitter. The median of total posts made by the brand is 738 in Instagram and 4,376 in Twitter. The largest amount of total posts by a single brand is 3,384 (Rauli Mård) in Instagram and 278,239 (Halo Efekti) in Twitter. The smallest amount of total posts is 111 (Ronny

Roslöf) in Instagram and 7 (Sauli Niinistö) in Twitter. The key statistics of the weekly posting activity of the top brands is presented in the Table 12.

Table 12 Key post activity statistics (per week)

	Instagram	Twitter
Median	3.8	16.2
Largest amount of posts per week	37.9	770.8
Smallest amount of posts per week	0.1	0

Amongst the top personal brands in Finland the median for posting activity is 3.8 posts per week in Instagram and 16.2 posts in Twitter. This means that every time one of the top brands in Instagram shares a post, a top brand in Twitter has posted more than four times. The largest number of posts made by a single brand in Instagram (Rauli Mård) is almost 38 posts per week, which converts to a little more than 5 posts per day on average. The most active brand in Twitter (Halo Efekti) tweeted more than 770 times in a week on average, which converts to more than 110 tweets per day. If an average time for writing a single tweet would take around a minute, this would mean that this brand uses almost two hours of her daily time for writing tweets. The smallest amount of posts shared by a brand is more difficult to analyze as some brands deleted posts during the research period, which effected the total numbers of posts made and thus the average weekly posts. The smallest positive number for post activity according to the research data is 0.1 posts per week in Instagram and 0 tweets per week in Twitter. This indicates that some of the top brands are not actively posting even while having a large follower count.

There are variations in the post activity of the different occupation and age groups. The post activity in different age groups is presented in Figure 12 below. One profile (Halo Efekti, 770 posts per week in Twitter) was excluded from the calculations because of an extreme effect on the group averages. She belongs to the age group 46+ and to the occupation group social media persons.

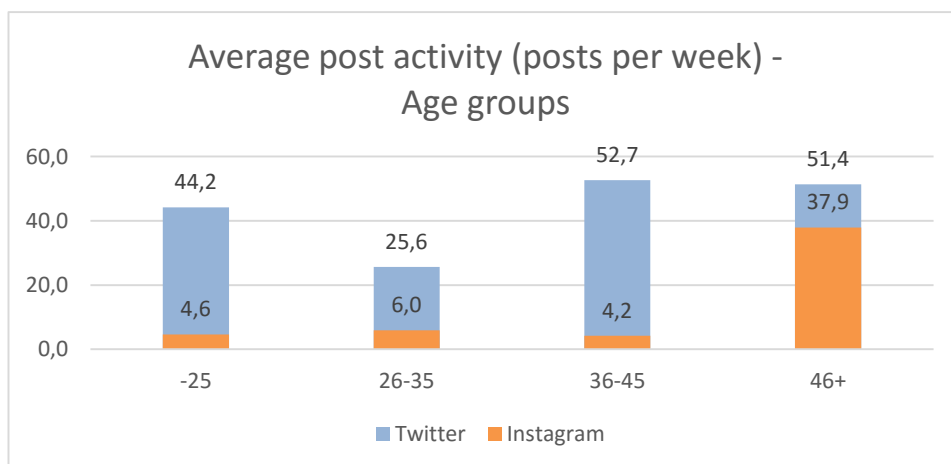


Figure 12 Post activity in different age groups

In Twitter, the most active age group is group C (36-45 years old) with an average of almost 53 tweets per week. It is followed by groups D (46+ years old) and A (-25 years old) with around 51 and 44 tweets per week. The least active age group in Twitter is group B (26-35 years old) with roughly 26 tweets per week in average.

In Instagram, only one person (Rauli Mård) belongs to group D (45+ years old). He is the most active person in the channel, which makes group D the most active group as well. After that, the most active age group is group B (-25 years old) with an average of 6 posts per week. It is followed by the groups A (-25 years old) and C (36-45 years old) with an average of a little more than four posts per week.

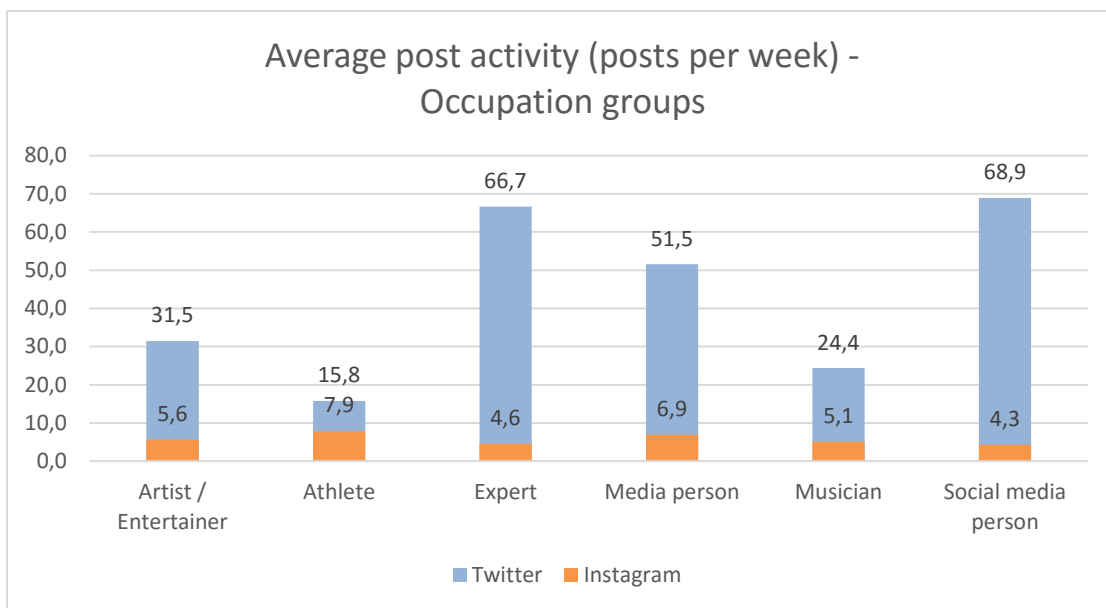


Figure 13 Post activity in different occupation groups

In Twitter, the most active occupation group is social media persons with an average of almost 69 tweets per week, followed by experts (67 tweets per week) and media persons (52 tweets per week). Clearly the least active occupation group in Twitter is athletes with only a little less than 16 tweets per week.

Athletes, which is the least active occupation group in Twitter, is the most active group in Instagram with an average of nearly 8 posts per week. It is followed by media persons (almost 7 posts per week), artists and entertainers (almost 6 posts per week) and musicians (around 5 posts per week). The least active occupation group is social media persons with an average of a little over 4 posts per week.

The top 10 brands on Instagram and Twitter are studied to examine the characteristics of the active brands (Table 13).

Table 13 Top 10 personal brands by post activity

	Name	Posts /week	Total posts	Followers	Joined	Age group	Occupation
INSTAGRAM							
1	Rauli Mård	37.9	3,384	90,908	2013	46+	Artist/Entertainer
2	Helly Luv	16.2	1,664	484,346	2012	26–35	Musician
3	Sofia Ruusila	13.9	1,910	48,780	2012	26–35	Athlete
4	Eevi Teittinen	13.4	2,047	77,646	2013	26–35	Athlete
5	Martina Aitolehti	13.0	2,486	51,837	2012	26–35	Artist/Entertainer
6	Oona Tolppanen	12.4	1,210	43,543	2012	-25	Athlete
7	Anni Hautala	11.7	1,353	48,241	2013	26–35	Media person
8	Annika Ollila	11.6	2,023	95,231	2012	-25	Social media pers.
9	Arto Saari	11.3	2,373	148,172	2011	26–35	Athlete
10	Antti Tuisku	11.2	1,103	78,078	2013	26–35	Musician
TWITTER							
1	Halo Efekti	770.7	278,239	26,036	2008	46+	Social media pers.
2	Aleksi Valavuori	293.3	58,510	93,047	2012	36–45	Media person
3	Pekka Sauri	270.6	18,410	39,661	2011	46+	Expert
4	Tuomas Enbuske	261.6	46,018	138,909	2011	36–45	Media person
5	Jari Sarasvuo	244.2	18,474	102,931	2013	46+	Expert
6	Kaj Kunnas	193.4	25,207	35,137	2013	46+	Media person
7	Henri Alen	177.8	33,173	35,320	2013	36–45	Expert
8	Esko Seppänen	175.9	88,966	65,147	2010	26–35	Expert
9	Tomi Kovanen	165.9	13,207	33,139	2011	26–35	Athlete
10	Mikko Hyppönen	120.7	30,550	117,931	2009	46+	Expert

In the Table 13, the channels are presented separately and the brands are listed starting from the most followed brand profiles.

All the occupation groups are presented in the top 10 listings of these two channels, Instagram and Twitter. In Instagram, the top 10 consisted of five groups: musicians, athletes, artists & entertainers, media persons and social media persons. Athletes, media persons and social media persons are seen in both Instagram's and Twitter's top 10 lists. In addition to these three groups, also experts are included in Twitter's top list. All the age groups are included in Instagram's top list. In Twitter, on the other hand, all the personal brands are over 25 years of age. The year when the most active brands have joined the channel varies between 2011 and 2013 in Instagram, and between 2008 and 2013 in Twitter.

As presented earlier in Chapter 4.1.3 the median total follower count of the top 100 brands is a little over 97,000 in Instagram and almost 47,000 in Twitter. Out of the ten most active brands, only three had a follower count of at least that size. In Twitter, five of the most active brands had a follower count larger than the median. The median of the

weekly follower growth is 871 in Instagram and 321 in Twitter. In Instagram, only three of the brands, had a weekly follower growth larger than the median. In Twitter the number of those brands is seven. In Instagram, the only brand that lost followers during the research period is Rauli Mård, the most active brand in the channel with an average of almost 38 posts per week. In Twitter, there was also only one brand (Henri Alen) in the top 10 list of activity with a negative follower growth number. Again, no correlation between the post activity and the total follower count can be seen. However, in Twitter, a brand with high post activity was more likely to have a strong follower growth than similar brand in Instagram.

4.2 Case Sami Hedberg: Branding a stand-up comedian

4.2.1 Evolution of the brand

Hedberg's brand building started offline, as he built his reputation as a comedian by doing stand-up shows all around Finland. During the last ten years, he has been doing stand-up shows all over the country, which has built awareness for his work. At first the fan base was formed by people who went to see his shows and talked about it to their friends, who eventually came to see the show as well.

Even though the ground work for Hedberg's brand building started offline, social media had a remarkable part in making the brand visible for a larger audience. Eventually his content spread to internet, as people that had seen his live stand-up started posting videos from the show uploading them to Youtube and other social media channels. Thus, why it was quite natural for Hedberg to join the social media to create even more content for this audience. According to his beliefs, many of his fans on social media have never seen him performing a live show. Channels like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have provided a great platform for people to get in the bandwagon.

The brand building started when Hedberg got noticed more as an individual talent. In his own words, he became a brand of a kind when people came to see his solo act. At that point things changed from being just one of the many comedians. That is when he started building the Sami Hedberg brand by publishing comedy DVD's and branded merchandise such as t-shirts, playing cards etc. According to Hedberg, during the last few years he has dedicated more of his time for building his company and his personal brand alongside with it.

The comedian Sami Hedberg that is on the stage is the same Sami Hedberg off the stage as well. I'm being truly myself so I guess it's pretty authentic as a brand then. So the person you see on TV being interviewed by Arto

Nyberg is the normal Sami Hedberg. On stage you see the funny side of Sami Hedberg, but it's still the same person.

4.2.2 Planning – brand identity management

When asked about the **vision and goals** of brand building Hedberg highlighted his will to create a consistent image that would be seen as a real reflection of everything he does. In addition to comedy, he is highly involved in sports, humanitarian help and many entrepreneurial activities in the fields of marketing and entertainment. He is a stakeholder of the basketball team Helsinki Seagulls and he is involved in different charity campaigns. So, even stand-up and comedy is what Hedberg is mostly associated with, it is not the only thing that he would like to be included in the image.

But that's when it gets challenging, as if in Facebook, for example, you suddenly post about charity work, then about basketball and then about a comedy tour or an arena show, it's starts to sound a little complicated. So I have been thinking how I should communicate about all of that in a nice way for it to feel consistent.

The problem that Hedberg sees here is having many separate activities including an e-store and other activities related to his company, which all have their own visual identity. That alone creates some challenges for building one strong brand identity.

It would be damn nice if I had a clear identity, but I don't. It would be so much easier if I only sold golden toilet papers for example – but I happen to have quite many things in my hands.

Hedberg felt happy about his situation of not being very controversial or provocative brand. In his words, a part of the publicity that people need to accept is that there are always people that do not like them. When there are people who love you, there will be people that hate you as well. When comparing his brand to other celebrity brands, Hedberg found it pleasant that he had not experienced as much hatred as some other brands have. However, for many celebrities, for example musicians, personal brands represent the whole band or some specific group of people or musical style. Hedberg felt that this is different for him. When he is on stage, he is being very open as there is no band or other crew to hide behind to as he is performing alone. Also the fact that he often discusses about his personal life and experiences adds some authenticity to the brand.

One of the reasons for that might be that Hedberg has been able to keep a clean brand image – even while being sure that the media is always looking for something to write about. He puts emphasis on the fact that the image needs to be managed in a right way for it to stay clean.

I'm very happy that my brand has stayed clean. I know that media is eagerly waiting for me to screw up something so that they could write about Sami Hedberg being naked in the market square of Savonlinna or something. But it won't happen today either. But just to say it, it's not always easy to hold the brand image together – it requires some work.

One future vision that Hedberg noted having at times, concerned potential international markets. As social media provides endless opportunities for people to reach massive audiences, it can be tempting to try one's wings in front of bigger audience. Hedberg has used different international hashtags in his posts on Instagram and finds it interesting that they have gained a lot of attention internationally as well. So, what if Sami Hedberg was an international artist? What would the target group and the followers look like then? That, according to Hedberg, would need a lot of planning as it would be an enormous step.

As Hedberg's brand has gained a large audience in several social media channels, it is clear that he creates **value** for his audience online too. The value that Hedberg is willing to provide to his target group is entertainment. He describes his social media content being about:

-- observing life – everyday tasks and happenings – through joy and comedy. The main idea behind my social media presence is that when people have stepped into my channel, they would leave with smile on their face.

When discussing about the **target group** of his brand Hedberg states that compared to many comedians his target group is extremely broad. He compares his show content to some of his colleagues whose content limit the size of their target group.

I have performing friends who really create content that should never be seen by a 13-year-old. And they like doing it like that, it's their way of doing comedy. But, I just have my own appearance, brand and comic style that happens to please a pretty wide target group. That includes teenagers, middle aged people as well as elderly – that is freaking wide. A little something for everyone.

Hedberg has lately put more focus on his brand's visual identity as well. His brand now has a brand manual with specifications on the brand colors and the brand hierarchy. This is, however, related to a bigger reform of the business brand Hedberg is now building around all the different entrepreneurial activities.

4.2.3 *Tactics – social media footprint*

Hedberg is active on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube. His first official fan page was established on Facebook. This was a platform for people to follow the 'stand-

up Sami' and to get up-to-date information about his shows. In Hedberg's point-of-view it was a channel for promoting his shows and e-store as well as sharing latest news. From that it has evolved to an important channel not only for him but for the whole company.

After Facebook he joined to Instagram, where the follower count grew quite rapidly. There Hedberg was able to create more personal content about his life also in-between the stand-up shows. That would include videos, funny photos and all kinds of humorous content. The objective for the communication of that kind is to make people feel good and laugh. For Hedberg, Twitter plays a little more passive role. The activity on that channel is based on mostly sharing the content made on Instagram.

According to Hedberg, he has over 30 million views on videos of his shows. The majority of those views are generated in the videos posted by his fans on their own accounts. When talking about other social media channels Hedberg pointed out that he has been thinking about putting more effort in joining new channels, but has not had the time it would require.

There must have been over a thousand people that have come to me to say that 'Why are you not on Snapchat? Snapchat this, Snapchat that'. I already spend so much time on social media that if I joined Snapchat, I wouldn't be doing anything else. I know I would love it, but I also know how addicting it can be.

According to Hedberg, it is easy to think that building a brand in social is free. And in a way it of course is. However, creating content requires investments and it is not free to build a personal brand in that sense. It is easy to think that one can build a brand by creating an event or a campaign and promoting it on Facebook, when in reality it requires a lot more commitment. So even while the brand building is done in so called free channels, building an authentic brand always requires time and for some, money too. Even though Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have grown to become extremely strong channels, it might not be enough to operate only in some of them. The way people act in these channels is rapidly changing, which requires commitment and ability to adjust to these changes if willing to stay on the top.

4.2.4 Tactics – social media activities

Hedberg admits that the social media behavior of a brand of this size needs to be strategic. He states that he has lately focused more in improving the management of his brand assets so that the content would be more consistent and relevant for the target group. Hedberg has employees, with whom he has decided about the communicative tactics – the main focus on each campaign etc. He states that using scheduled posts and promoting specific

social media activities plays a role in personal brand building. His Facebook page is managed mainly by his employees, but he is personally updating his own posts in Twitter and Instagram. He admits that, when considering the time required for the post activities, it is hard to believe that all big international brands do all the updates on their own. While not knowing the optimal frequency for post activity, Hedberg has found out that the performance has been successful when there is an ongoing flow of posts and something completely new content every now and then.

It's quite interesting how some posts just get more viral. Like, I have posts with about 300,000 views and sometimes there are only 12,500 views and 250 likes. It is just amazing how it sometimes happens. Like, we have done a little investigation on the most successful posts – when have they been posted, what is the subject etc.

Hedberg estimates that the best response is on the content that is a little exaggerated. He recalls his most liked post to be a picture of him dressed as a fairy. But the response can vary between the channels as well – sometimes certain posts perform better on Facebook than on Instagram. On the other hand, having too much content in a short period of time may have a negative effect on people's response. For example, posting too much on the same subject may result into a low interest and engagement. Some specific activities were found notably successful in increasing the engagement with the target group.

One thing that is good, not sure if vital, is hosting competitions or something that people can participate in and feel like being part of something bigger. It can be something one can benefit from – but I mean, it can even be enough to just ask what the best city in Finland is and people start commenting like crazy.

Also, many times a plain request will be enough to create interaction within the brand profile. Hedberg described a small campaign he did in Instagram, where with a simple post with a request to “tag your friend and win a show ticket” the post generated about 4,500 comments.

As Hedberg is a well-known brand also offline, it is clear that he is visible in other media as well. But according to him, there can be a downside to this:

-- every time a newspaper or other medium shares my stuff, people get more active on my content. But it's also pretty creepy. Like, once I posted a photo on Instagram of my wife sleeping in a bed and in an hour someone had made a news story about it -- and it was the freaking most read article on Iltasanomat: 'Hedberg posted a funny picture of his sleeping wife'. So it can get a little weird.

Hedberg finds it important to monitor the social media behavior and activities so that the performance of specific activities can be identified and the behavior can be improved

over time. In that way it will be possible to see how the brand and its social media activity has progressed in long term and where it might evolve in the future.

4.3 Case Mikko Lagerstedt: Branding a photographer

4.3.1 Evolution of the brand

According to Lagerstedt, it is obvious that the background from which the person comes from makes quite a difference in social media. There are many examples of people that have a massive follower count with not much activity from their side on the profile. Even though it is impossible to divide people into exact groups, two extremities can be found. There are those who have gained followers due to their brand offline or in other channels and those who have done it by the content they have created on that social media. In a way it would mean that people are interested either about the name or the content. Although, majority of the strong brands fall in between these two extremities. For Lagerstedt it has clearly started from gaining followers by creating content. It is the content that brought the first followers to his profiles. For his field of business word-of-mouth plays an important role. Little by little, more people have liked and shared his content, which has generated more followers and brand advocates.

When I first started photographing night skies it wasn't really a big boom yet. Maybe it was a little special, and that's one of the reasons that it pulled me to do more of it. And when people started to like my work, I was like okay, maybe I should seriously put some more time in it.

4.3.2 Planning – brand identity formation

For Lagerstedt, keeping his work in line with the core vision is important – even if it might take time to construct it. He is convinced that if he had started sharing too miscellaneous content, he would not be where he is now.

It is very common to have a clear vision in the very beginning, but once you have found your thing, it's important to hold on to it. It's your production after all.

Lagerstedt felt that there has not been any big and clear strategy in his social media activity. When discussing about the strategies of personal branding Lagerstedt addressed some skepticism towards an assumption that many people building their personal brand would start off by having a clear branding strategy in their mind.

I would be surprised if many of these strong personal brands would had been thinking about big strategies when they joined the social media. By doing so you might be pushing yourself away from your own vision. I think that all of the big brands that have gained followers are doing their own thing and have their unique presence. And that is what has brought them there.

In the beginning, majority of Lagerstedt's activity on social media was relatively spontaneous. Now that the brand's audience has grown, he has put more focus on certain activities to improve his performance and to add value for his target group.

Lagerstedt is happy with being mostly an online brand. He also adds that he is not willing to share his personal life openly online, while many photographers discuss about very personal issues on social media. He shared an example of another famous photographer with a strong personal brand, who has gained such personal awareness that Lagerstedt himself would not desire to have.

One photographer in Finland, for example, is becoming such a big name that he gets recognized also offline. There have been situations where teenage girls have started following him in Helsinki city center – which is getting a bit ridiculous. - - For me the awareness has remained pretty much in the digital world. And I'm glad of that.

Lagerstedt's states that his aim is to create value by capturing atmospheric and inspiring moments of the everyday life – by showing the world people may not have learned to appreciate. The aim, according to Lagerstedt, is to make people think and look at things in a new perspective.

Even if the first things you do wouldn't skyrocket right away, it's ok - as long as you keep improving in your work and keep it in line with your vision. Many times you see brands that have a good product or presence falling apart as they start doing million things at the same time at the expense of the original vision. It's of course good to evolve and change over time, but the core should stay the same. - - If you do too many different things people get easily confused and think that this is not the person I started following - this is not the content that got me interested in the first place.

For Lagerstedt focusing on things he likes and is good at has been clear from the beginning. He has not worried about being too specific or that that the size of the audience of that niche would be too small. He clearly shares the ideology that if you are being too generic and broad with your specialty, it will be very difficult to stand out.

4.3.3 *Tactics – social media footprint*

In some cases I feel like people have joined the social media only because they feel like they have to. You can see it with musicians especially. People just go and follow them, but that's it. There is no engagement or interaction. It's quite different.

Lagerstedt started sharing his photos to some of the local photographing forums quite early in his photographing career. After those smaller forums he joined Flickr, a popular social media channel where photographers from all over the world can upload their work. His motivation was to get feedback from other people as well as to find inspiration from the work of others. According to Lagerstedt, Flickr provided a great opportunity to see what kind of photos are popular but also to find out what style would suit for himself.

In the beginning, social media was a platform that felt natural for photography as it provides a way to make your work visible for a larger audience. Basically it was like, I have here this photo that I like, what might others think of it? -- But of course, these platforms offer a real opportunity if you feel even a little shy about promoting your own work. Like, compared to going around the streets showing your work to random people - these platforms really can be an easier way to boost your visibility.

A little later Lagerstedt joined Facebook, where he would first only share links to his Flickr profile. After realizing that native posts made on Facebook get a lot more visibility, as the photos posted directly to Facebook appear bigger in the feed, he started experimenting what would happen if he changed the way he posted his content. And it wasn't only about the size of the photos, the engagement was a lot better when posting native Facebook posts in comparison to these external links. People would like and comment more likely when the content seemed closer. That is when Lagerstedt shifted his main focus more towards Facebook.

Different professional forums still played an important role in his way of work. When his work got noticed by other professionals on these forums, he would be more confident in sharing it to Facebook. After being curated and accepted by professionals, it would be more likely to please a larger audience as well. On these forums he would also learn about the specific styles that people seem to appreciate in his work, which helped him to create even more good content.

Lagerstedt focusing more on Instagram a little over a year ago. He states that now it feels like out of all channels, he is being the most active on Instagram.

Instagram was the next step for me. Now, I think that I upload more photos on Instagram than on Facebook. It changes all the time - you just have to find out the channels that are worth of the dedication.

4.3.4 *Tactics – social media activities*

According to Lagerstedt, the aim was first just to share photos to see if they get noticed and if people were interested in what he was creating. But now that people have got very interested about his work he has started to post also educative content on his social media channels. Posting photos please a big crowd – whereas posting tutorials about his workflow pleases fellow photographers. Pleasing this target group supports his aim to build his business by selling extensive tutorials and artistic plug-ins for creative software for others to use. In that sense being open and ready to help the followers can be seen pretty vital.

Lagerstedt stresses the importance of not being too pushy even when talking about his products. He prefers tying the message about his products together with the photos that in a way speak for the product – whether it is a tutorial explaining the technique used to create that photo or something related to it.

One has to think what's reasonable. Like, if you have something that you really want to share and you have a good opportunity to market your products you should do it. But if you start to repeat yourself being 'remember this, remember that', people will easily feel that there is too much pushing involved. It's all about finding the balance.

But according to Lagerstedt, there is no one simple solution for successful communication. Every case and channel is different and a lot of testing needs to be made in order to find the best solution for one's brand and audience.

On Facebook one does not have to be extremely active as it might not make much difference. On Instagram and Twitter it is different. It is common for profiles on these channels to be more active and thus the content is not as polished as compared to Facebook for example.

Different channels have their own characteristics but each of them is also developing over time. New functions and visual systems are created constantly which always changes the way the platforms are being used. Often times these updates bring new opportunities for the content creators, but they can also challenge them by forcing the creators to change the way they operate. Lagerstedt shared a good example of how some changes on these channels have affected his techniques as a photographer.

Photos are generally taken either in a landscape or in a portrait mode. The image orientation although – which is the way a picture is displayed - has changed over time on different social media channels. In addition, some restrictions on photo sizes and ratios have affected the visibility of the photos on these channels. At some point Facebook favored photos with portrait orientation by giving them the best visibility on its news feed. Now it might show only a cropped version of a portrait photo, not showing it completely.

Instagram, on the contrary, first only accepted photos that were perfect squares. For photographers it makes a big difference whether a photo will be delivered in a square or in a more common aspect ratio like 4:3. In some cases a normal ratio photo can be cropped to a square ratio, 1:1 without a problem. Although, in many cases the photo composition will not work well in a square. That is why these decisions are not done only in the post production but have to usually be thought of before taking the photo. Now Instagram allows people to upload photos in different ratios – both in landscape and portrait orientations. Portrait photos seem to get the best visibility on its feed. All of these modifications and settings have affected Lagerstedt's posts and he states that they have also influenced the way he takes photos.

The updates on these channels have changed my behavior and the way I use my camera. Earlier I used to take a lot of photos in landscape orientation. Now I try to adjust the orientation and the ratio according to what's good for each channel.

According to Lagerstedt, the interaction with the followers has played an important role in building his presence online.

Being an active listener has been important for creating engagement amongst my followers. And being open for questions has in a way contributed to better activity and finally growing the total number of my followers. That's what you need to know when you step into this game. If you want to get followers, you need to be ready for some dialogue and interaction.

This is the case for a brand like Lagerstedt's where the broad recognition has been created solely on social media. But as the activity grows alongside with the follower count it would not be possible to answer to everyone's questions. He tends to check his updates a little after he has posted a photo and responds to the comments during a specific time period or if he sees something that seems important to answer to. Sometimes he puts more effort to being in contact with his followers and discusses about things that they are interested of. Lagerstedt also stated that it would not be possible for him to answer all the comments as he would not be doing anything else otherwise. He has also noticed that being interactive has boosted the activity and engagement of his followers. He also believes that it creates a more authentic image when there is communication between the brand and the followers.

-- of course the level of activity rises if people know that there is someone listening. Nobody's interested to comment or ask anything if it seems that there is no one. That's just how it is.

Even though Lagerstedt states that dialogue is important, he stresses that it is just a part of the big picture.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Building a strong personal brand is a long-term process, which requires strategic planning, consistency and authentic communication. Depending on the brand itself – the values, the vision and goals – as well as the target audience and their behavior, a brand needs to figure out the right touch points and activities to reach its audience and to communicate its brand identity authentically. A person becomes a social media personal brand when it creates value for its target audience through social media. As social media provides a platform where a user can reach an enormous audience, it is clear that for people interested in building a personal brand these channels provide an opportunity to reach their goals.

Table 14 Summary of the research findings

Research question	Findings
How is a personal brand created?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The background of the person affects the process of personal brand building. • One needs to understand the origins as well as the strengths to be able to start building a personal brand. • A strong personal brand can only be created by creating value and engaging the target audience.
How can a personal brand identity be formed on social media?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the discrepancy between the current and the ideal image. • Understanding the target group and the value one creates for it. • Positioning and differentiating from others with a clear vision. • Establishing the physical identity of the brand.
What are the personal branding tactics used by strong personal brands on social media?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent and authentic activity in the right social media channels • Providing content that is in line with the brand identity and is relevant to one's target group. • Interacting with the target audience by listening and engaging with activities.

5.1 Background of the brand

Before starting the personal brand building one needs to understand the background and the environment in which a person was brought up. These aspects may effect on the process of the brand building and will create the core for the brand identity creation. Social media provides a platform for a large variety of demographics. However, the amount of success in social media personal branding cannot be explained by specific demographic qualities. Different social media channels have been proved to create successful social media personal brands of certain characteristics. There are several characteristics that can define the background of a personal brand. The typical user profiles and demographic characteristics of strong personal brands in each of the selected channels are presented later in Chapter 5.3 where a channel specific findings are explained.

The amount of awareness is usually related to successful brand building, but being a strong social media personal brand one needs to bring value online as well. A simplified matrix for the formation of a strong personal brand is presented in Figure 14 below.

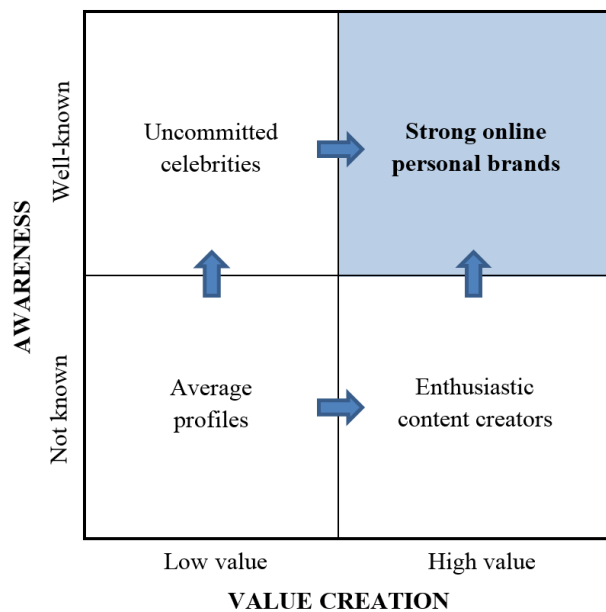


Figure 14 Formation of the strong online personal brands

The matrix is divided into two dimensions, awareness (vertical) and online value creation (horizontal). The awareness represents the amount of awareness a person has, whether online or offline. The value creation defines the amount of value the brand creates for its audience. The matrix is divided into four categories that represents the four different variations of these dimensions: low value and not known, low value and well-known, high value and not known and high value and well-known. These categories were again renamed with characteristics found in the research.

Average profiles define the majority of all the existing social media profiles. The persons in this category can be seen as the average users of these channels. These people are not known by a large audience and do not create great value for their profile's audience. This category was not investigated in this research as only top brands were included.

Enthusiastic content creators are not known by a large audience, but they are creating great value for their audience. This is typical for social media brands that have started their personal communication activities online and have maybe already gained some awareness in specific channels or target groups. *Uncommitted celebrities* consists of people that have gained awareness offline or in other media, but are not committed in social media activities. A *strong social media personal brand* is a person, who creates great value to the audience and has gained a large awareness for one's brand.

The formation of a strong social media personal brand can occur in various ways, but to simplify the process, it can be seen that becoming a strong personal brand can happen in two ways. The first is to create an audience outside of social media and then focusing on the strategic social media activities to bring value to this audience also online. However, there are many examples of celebrities that have gained awareness and joined social media without the commitment in the online activities. There are a great amount of personal brand profiles that have been set up just for being part of the social media community. This can first result with a large number of followers but without commitment and real value creation online does not succeed in growing and creating engagement with the audience. The second path for becoming a strong social media personal brand is by creating value for the audience and gaining a more generic growth with commitment and relevant content. There are several examples of people that have created their brand exclusively on social media by creating content that eventually brings more audience around the brand. When the background is well understood the brand identity formation and management is better in line with the personal qualities a person possesses.

5.2 Personal brand planning – brand identity management

Personal branding is all about the efforts made to reach the ideal brand image. The brand should always reflect the values and the vision of the person. The current image of the person needs to be understood and the brand needs to be managed to reach these goals. It does not have to be a clear strategic list of goals and tactics, but the personal vision should be clear from the beginning. If the vision is not yet crystal clear, one can use different social media channels to listen, learn and build the vision before starting the brand building. Thus, the brand identity management does not end after the identity has been established. On the contrary, as the brand grows the brand identity management becomes even more crucial and more strategy and planning is needed. Once the vision and goals of the

brand are clear, one needs to understand the target audience and the touch points they operate in on social media. However, even more important is to understand the value that one brings for the target audience. One should define the ways how to differentiate and be heard by the audience. One should also pay attention to every aspect of the ideal image and plan the presence and activities according to them.

Typically, when comparing products or companies to a person, a person has more dimensions in its behavior. Thus, there are more touch points and activities that may affect the brand. While the personal brand needs to be authentic and consistent the identity needs to be concise as well. If there are many competing characteristics or actions that are related to the personal brand, the brand identity may become incoherent.

It is good to point out the fact that even while the social media channels are free to use, building a personal brand requires resources. For many, in addition to requiring time, the brand building may require also money.

Many of the strong social media personal brands make effort in managing and communicating their brand identities. This can be clearly seen in social media profiles, where both visual and textual tools are used in personal brand building. All of the strong personal brands use their social media profiles to reflect the visual identity of the brand with pictures and other visual elements. Linking different social media channels together and creating a consistent online identity is important. The top brands perform relatively well in linking their social media channels and personal web pages together and allowing the target audience to see more content and information about the brand. One of the most concrete elements that identify a personal brand in social media is the username. It is very common for a personal brand to build a brand identity with a username related to the real name or the artist name of the person.

5.3 Personal branding tactics – social media footprint and activities

Identifying the touch points and creating the digital footprint in the suitable channels for the personal brand is crucial. Different social media channels provide possibilities for different kinds of content creation. The typical user profiles for each social media channel researched in this study – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter – are presented below. The three channels differ in terms of the backgrounds of the personal brands (Table 14). While all of the channels have a diverse set of different backgrounds, the channels are proved to provide a good platform for these specific characteristics.

Table 15 Typical user profile in each channel

	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	TWITTER
Occupation	Musician / Athlete	Artist / Entertainer / Social Media Person	Expert / Media Person
Sex	Male	Male / Female	Male
Age	33 years	24 years	44 years
Followers	66,000	97,000	47,000
Post activity	-	4 posts / week	16 posts / week

A typical strong personal brand in Facebook is a well-known celebrity, who uses this channel to communicate about relevant news and promote one's business. Most of the personal brands in the top 100 followed personal brand list are either musicians or athletes. The average age of the person is 33 years and the brand profile has a total of 66,000 followers in average. This, however, varies a lot as some of the most followed brands reach a number of way over one million followers. Many times this profile can be seen as an addition to the personal web page of a brand and it can many times have characteristics of a fan page. As there are not so many limitations on the form of content, this channel suits well for many different types of brands. However, as the total user base is enormous, also differentiation in this channel is difficult. This might be the reason why the already well-known brands succeed relatively better in Facebook than in Instagram or Twitter.

Although Facebook's top profiles are quite dominated by well-known celebrities, it can be categorized as a rather generic social media channel when it comes to the characteristics of the brands. Instagram and Twitter, on the other hand, represent a great variety of characteristics of the top personal brands. In Instagram, the typical user profile can be described as a young and active male or female that operates in the fields of arts and entertainment. The average age of the person is 24 years and the brand profile has a total of 97,000 followers. The post activity of a typical user profile in Instagram is 4 posts per week. Clearly, when compared to Facebook, Instagram provides a more structured platform for people willing to create entertaining and visually appealing content. Due to the fact that Instagram can often be seen as a behind-the-scenes communication, it can create a feeling of a more authentic and personal communication when compared to Facebook for example.

The typical user profile in Twitter differs quite remarkably from the one of Instagram's. A personal brand is likely to be a middle aged, professional man whose social media activity is quite consistent. He can be defined as an expert in his field of business

– including various different occupations varying from politicians to corporate leaders and media persons, such as journalists and reporters. The average age of the person is 44 years and the brand profile has a total of 47,000 followers in average. The post activity of a typical user profile in Twitter is 16 posts per week. With the amount of posts made in average by the top brands it is safe to say that the use of Twitter requires commitment from its users. As Twitter is a microblog platform, it has many characteristics that are similar to blogs. This would include active interaction with other users as well as consistent and frequent content creation. Even while experts and media persons dominate Twitter, there are room for other occupations as well. When compared to Facebook and Instagram, where visually appealing or interesting content can create awareness and engagement extremely well, in Twitter the content can be seen often more textual rather than visual. For textual information to be relevant and interesting for a larger group an expertise of some kind may be required.

After all, it comes down to the content creation. Different personal brands create value by creating different kinds of content – but what is common for all, is the importance of understanding the target audience and the characteristics of different channels. Like in many other cases, also personal branding activities are all about quality over quantity. While frequency and consistency are important the content created in the social media channels needs to be relevant for the audience. It can be hard to maintain the great value creation for one's audience if the activity in the channel is too frequent. There are several examples of brands that create an enormous amount of content on social media with no greater results in gaining followers when compared to more passive brands. The most important aspects in social media activities according to the case brands are relevancy, listening, engaging activities and adjusting to change.

As social media activities require consistency, the communication needs to be authentic in order to reflect the real identity of the person. Everything a brand does affects its image. If the brand identity is not authentic, the brand communication can be extremely hard and may result in misinterpretations and inaccurate image creation.

It is important to create social media engagement among the target group by creating content or hosting competitions and challenges. The communication should not be too pushy – even when promoting one's business. Interaction with the brand's audience can create value and may result in high engagement. There is no great interest for the audience to be active, if they feel that no one is listening. It is important to monitor the social media behavior and activities so that the performance of specific activities can be identified and the behavior can be improved over time. Finally, it is important to be aware of the fact that the channels are constantly changing and the social media activity should adjust to these changes.

5.4 Limitations of the study and the future research

As the purpose of this study was to create a general understanding of this relevant phenomenon, two different research methods were used to analyze the characteristics of strong social media personal brands. While the quantitative part of the study provides a great overview of the most successful personal brands on social media in Finland, the case studies provide a deeper insight of the brand building practices. However, as the social media brand building practices of the personal brands vary quite significantly, it is impossible to define one clear process or list of best practices. Also, due to the small quantity of the conducted interviews no saturation can be expected. This study was limited to the most followed personal brands in Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The lists included brands with very diverse backgrounds and characteristics. Even while the number of total followers is an easy way to organize the profiles, not all personal brands with a large follower count are necessarily strong personal brands. In this study, the activities of the personal brands were measured and analyzed based on the change in total posts and follower counts. While this provides an understanding of the trends, it lacks the information on the reasons behind these trends. In order to examine the specific tactical activities behind successful brands, a more precise research should be conducted with a smaller sample of successful personal brands.

The study identifies implications for further research by refining the process model for personal branding on social media. The theoretical framework created in Chapter 2 and later examined in Chapter 4 is an inventive process model for social media personal brand building. The findings on all of the three phases of the process model provide support for the existing literature. The study provides interesting new viewpoints on different characteristics related to the different branding processes and tactics used by brands with different backgrounds in different channels. As this research presented a broad insight of different characteristics of the strong personal brands, further research can be conducted on the topic to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this rapidly evolving phenomenon.

A research focusing on specific content creation styles or the interaction between the personal brand and its audience would bring an interesting addition to the results of this study. Classifying and measuring the different contents created by the strong personal brands – text, links, photos, videos etc. – would provide a viewpoint to successful social media personal brands' content creation tactics. Comparing these content creation tactics to the engagement; likes, comments, shares and other activities by the brands' audience would be an interesting approach for new research on the topic. Also, an extensive comparative study between brands that have been built solely on social media and brands that have gained broad awareness before joining social media would provide interesting results related to the meaning of the background of the brand. While brands are almost

always built both online and offline, research about the relation of these two worlds – the integration of all the possible personal brand building touch points – would provide interesting insight on the social media activities as a part of the overall brand building.

6 SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics of strong social media personal brands in Finland. The research was divided into three sub-questions that were:

- How is a personal brand created?
- How can a personal brand identity be formed on social media?
- What are the personal branding tactics used by strong personal brands on social media?

The literature related to personal branding as a phenomenon were presented in Chapter 2. The work of different academics on personal branding were examined to gain a comprehensive understanding on the research topic. Early impression management theory was refined to include elements from more modern literature related to personal branding, brand identity management and social media to create a theoretical framework that would simplify the process of personal brand building on social media. The framework consists of three phases that created the three research themes: the background of the brand, the brand identity management and the social media behavior and activities. The results of the study were presented in line with these three research themes.

Mixed methods were used in the research to provide a broad perception on the subject. The quantitative part of the study defined general characteristics concerning the most follower personal brands in Finland in three social media channels – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Data about the demographic characteristics, the social media brand identity management activities as well as the reach and post activities of the personal brands were collected from the selected channels. The other part of the research was conducted by single case study including two Finnish personal brands cases to provide a deeper understanding of personal branding practices of strong social media personal brands. The selected interviewees are among the strongest social media influencers in Finland – stand-up comedian Sami Hedberg and professional photographer Mikko Lagerstedt.

The results of the study show that the most used social media channels differ in terms of the personal brand characteristics and personal branding activities. As Facebook, Instagram and Twitter all provide different possibilities in terms of content creation, it can be seen that different occupation and age groups are being active in different social media channels. Due to the characteristics of the channels also the post activities of the personal brands differ quite significantly. It can be also inferred that there is a difference between brands with an existing offline awareness and the brands with no awareness before joining the social media. One thing that should be common for all the brands is a well-managed brand identity. In order to reduce the gap between the ideal brand image and the current image, the brand should have a clear vision as well as a good understanding of the target group and the value it creates for its target audience. The brand identity needs to be managed by communicating with the target audience authentically in the right channels with

relevant content. The dedication, the target group's behavior and the ability to create valuable and relevant content determines the right channels for the social media personal branding practices.

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8 APPENDIX 1 PERSONAL BRAND PROFILES

FACEBOOK

1	Helly Luv	https://www.facebook.com/HellyLuv
2	Nico Rosberg	https://www.facebook.com/nicorosberg
3	Tarja Turunen	https://www.facebook.com/tarjaofficial
4	Sara Fabel	https://www.facebook.com/SaraFabel
5	Mikko Lagerstedt	https://www.facebook.com/Photography-Mikko-Lagerstedt-137616549627247/
6	Samu Haber	https://www.facebook.com/samuhaberofficial
7	Kimi Raikkönen	https://www.facebook.com/kimiraikkonen
8	Cheek	https://www.facebook.com/cheekfb
9	Heikki Kovalainen	https://www.facebook.com/kovalainenheikki
10	Jari-Matti Latvala	https://www.facebook.com/JariMattiLatvala
11	Mikko Hirvonen	https://www.facebook.com/mikkowrc
12	Lauri Happonen	https://www.facebook.com/OGCyanide
13	Sauli Niinistö	https://www.facebook.com/niinisto
14	Alex Kunnari	https://www.facebook.com/djalexkunnari
15	Isac Elliot	https://www.facebook.com/IsacElliot
16	Petri Nygård	https://www.facebook.com/seopetriii
17	Valtteri Bottas	https://www.facebook.com/ValtteriBottas
18	Jenni Vartiainen	https://www.facebook.com/jennivartiainenofficial
19	Vesa-Matti Loiri	https://www.facebook.com/Vesa-Matti-Loiri-298381623599667
20	Elastinen	https://www.facebook.com/Elastinen/
21	Teemu Selänne	https://www.facebook.com/teemuselmanne
22	Robin	https://www.facebook.com/RobinPackalen
23	Chisu	https://www.facebook.com/chisuofficial
24	Sami Hedberg	https://www.facebook.com/samihedberg
25	Kaisa Mäkäräinen	https://www.facebook.com/KaisaMakarainen
26	Suvi Teräsniiska	https://www.facebook.com/suviterasniska
27	Juha Tapio	https://www.facebook.com/juhatapio
28	Rauli Mård	https://www.facebook.com/enginesofrauli
29	Makwan Amirkhani	https://www.facebook.com/amirkhanimakwan
30	Musta Barbaari	https://www.facebook.com/mustabarbaariofficial
31	Marianna Mäkelä	https://www.facebook.com/Mariannan-176465265724170
32	Pekka Hyysalo	https://www.facebook.com/thebackfighter
33	Anna Abreu	https://www.facebook.com/annaabreuofficial
34	Sami Minkkinen	https://www.facebook.com/HavaintojaParisuhteesta
35	Mikael Gabriel	https://www.facebook.com/MikaelGabriel
36	Jukka Poika	https://www.facebook.com/jahpoika
37	Darude	https://www.facebook.com/Darude
38	Perttu Kivilaakso	https://www.facebook.com/PerttuDiapermoleKivilaakso
39	Kaija Koo	https://www.facebook.com/KaijaKooofficial

40	Michael Monroe	https://www.facebook.com/michaelmonroeoofficial
41	Anssi Kela	https://www.facebook.com/naamattu
42	Sara Forsberg	https://www.facebook.com/helloimSAARA
43	Jirka Vinse Jonatan Väätäinen	https://www.facebook.com/JirkaVinse/
44	Esapekka Lappi	https://www.facebook.com/EsapekkaLappiOfficial
45	Vellu Saarela	https://www.facebook.com/Vellusta
46	Uniikki	https://www.facebook.com/uniikki
47	Kiira Korpi	https://www.facebook.com/Kiira-Korpi-12523150943
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64	Rami Jaber	https://www.instagram.com/ramijaber1/
65	Sandra Hagelstam	https://www.instagram.com/5inchandup/
66	Sara Sieppi	https://www.instagram.com/sarasieppi/
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70	Esko Seppänen	https://www.instagram.com/urheilujatka/
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32	Pekka Haavisto	https://twitter.com/Haavisto
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35	Jarppi Leppälä	https://twitter.com/JarppiDudeson
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9 APPENDIX 2 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did your personal brand building start?
2. How has your already existing brand awareness affected your online personal brand building?
3. How has your social media activity affected your brand building?
4. How strategic is your social media behavior?
5. What are your vision and goals? (ideal vs. current image)
6. How would you describe the values of your personal brand?
7. What is the value you create for your audience?
8. What, in your opinion, is your competitive advantage?
9. How consistent is your online identity?
10. What social media channels do you use?
11. What do you use them for?
12. What type of content do you create?
13. Does the content differ on each channel? If so, how?
14. How important is interacting with the audience?
15. Is there dialogue in your social media activity?