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Abstract

The digital era has brought great changes in the music industry and to the importance of the traditional set up of major labels and the independent labels. The digitalization of music and the rise of the social media has enabled individual musicians and various forms of independent music companies to succeed and grow their markets. The topic of this master thesis is the use of social media in marketing musicians focusing on the expert interviews from independent management companies. The purpose is to understand better the approach of the independent management companies on musicians and how the social media strategies are built to gain recognition and popularity. The research is divided into three sub-questions: which social media channels are used in promotion of musicians and what is their nature, how content can be used to get better engagement with fans and how social interaction can build partnerships to create new opportunities through social media?

The theoretical background is built through the three sub-questions. Firstly, we are observing what kind of social media channels there are, how the right channel is chosen and how marketing objectives and positioning influence the choice of channel. Secondly, the different types of content are explored, what is the benefit of creating content and the different categorization of them. Thirdly, the effectuation theory is examined to study how the musicians can use social interaction to create new opportunities. The data is collected through semi-structured interviews from three Berlin based independent management companies who represent various number of musicians internationally. This study is a qualitative research using the grounded theory to build a better understanding on the topic, which doesn't have a strong base from earlier research.

The results of this study show that the independent management companies use the mainstream social media channels, which are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube and they each have an individual nature to be approached with. The content created for musicians are music, photos, videos and playlists that can improve engagement through personalization, scheduling and optimization. The new business opportunities through social interaction are mainly built with other artists, brands and charities. The key is to understand what are the means the musicians can use and what risks and losses are they willing to take in pursuing these opportunities. Overall, the marketing of musicians using social media seems to have established practices from independent management company point of view, however the practices evolve mainly around the mainstream social media.

Key words	Social media, digital marketing, musicians, music industry, music producers, music business
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Tiivistelmä

Digitaalinen aikakausi on muuttanut musiikkialaa suuresti, ja sen myötä myös perinteinen suurien ja itsenäisten levy-yhtiöiden roolit ovat muuttuneet. Musiikin digitalisaation ja sosiaalisen median käytön yleistymisen ovat mahdollistaneet itsenäisten muusikoiden ja erilaisten itsenäisten musiikkiyhtiöiden onnistumisen ja markkinoiden kasvun. Tämän pro gradu -tutkielman aihe on sosiaalisen median käyttö muusikoiden markkinoinnissa keskittyen asiantuntijoiden haastatteluihin itsenäisistä musiikkiyhtiöistä. Tutkimuksen tarkoitus on ymmärtää itsenäisten musiikkiyhtiöiden lähestymistapa muusikoihin ja miten sosiaalista median strategioiden rakentamista voidaan käyttää suosion ja tunnustuksen kasvamisen apuna. Tutkimus on jaettu kolmeen osaan: mitä sosiaalisen median kanavia käytetään muusikoiden myynninedistämisessä ja mikä on niiden luonne, miten sisältöä voidaan käyttää saavuttaakseen paremman fanien kanssakäymisen (consumer engagement) ja miten sosiaalinen vuorovaikutus voi edesauttaa kumppanuuksien rakentamisessa saavuttaakseen uusia mahdollisuuksia?

Teoreettinen tausta on johdettu tutkimuksen kolmesta eri osa-alueesta. Ensimmäinen osa määrittelee mitä kanavia voidaan käyttää, miten valitaan oikea kanava ja miten markkinointipäämäärä ja tuoteasemointi vaikuttavat kanavan valintaan. Toisessa osassa perehdytään sisällön eri muotoihin, mitä hyötyä sisällöntuotannosta on ja sen eri luokitteluun. Kolmannessa osassa tutkitaan tilaisuuteen tarttumisen (effectuation) -teorian kautta muusikoiden kykyä luoda uusia mahdollisuuksia sosiaalisen vuorovaikutuksen kautta. Aineisto on kerätty puolistrukturoidun haastattelun avulla kolmesta Berliiniin sijoittuvasta itsenäisestä musiikkiyhtiöstä, jotka edustavat useita artisteja kansainvälisesti. Tutkimuksen on luonteeltaan laadullinen käyttäen apuna grounded theory (GT) -menetelmää, jonka kautta pyrkimyksenä on luoda parempi ymmärrys aiheesta, jolla ei ole vahvaa aiempaa taustatutkimusta.

Tulokset osoittavat, että itsenäiset musiikkiyhtiöt omaksuvat valtavirran käyttämää sosiaalista mediaa, jotka ovat Facebook, Instagram, Twitter ja Youtube. Jokainen kanava on ainutlaatuinen luonteeltaan. Sisällöntuotanto koostuu musiikista, valokuvista, videoista ja soittolistoista, johon vaikuttavat henkilökohtaisuus, aikataulutus ja optimointi parantaen kuluttajien kanssakäymistä. Sosiaalinen kanssakäyminen mahdollistaa uusien kumppanuuksien muodostamisen lähinnä muiden artistien, brändien ja hyväntekeväisyysjärjestöjen kanssa. On tärkeää ymmärtää millä keinoilla ja mitkä riskit ja tappiot muusikko on valmis kohtaamaan tavoitellessaan uusia mahdollisuuksia. Yleisesti muusikoiden markkinoinnissa sosiaalisen median kautta on muodostunut vakiintuneet käytännöt itsenäisten musiikkiyhtiöiden näkökulmasta.

Asiasanat	Sosiaalinen media, digitaalinen markkinointi, muusikot, musiikkiteollisuus, musiikkikustantajat, musiikkiala
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THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING MUSICIANS

Focus on independent music management companies

Master's Thesis
in International Business
Kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan
pro gradu -tutkielma

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The originality of this thesis has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

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List of abbreviations

DRM DIGITAL RIGHTS MANAGEMENT

EMI ELECTRIC AND MUSICAL INDUSTRIES

IFPI INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE PHONOGRAPHIC INDUSTRY

IRC INTERNET RELAY CHAT

LO-FI LOW FIDELITY

RSS REALLY SIMPLE SYNDICATION



SME SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

SMS SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE

SNA SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

UMG UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

WOM WORD-OF-MOUTH

WMG WARNER MUSIC GROUP

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Digitalization of the music industry

Music industry has seen remarkable change during the past two decades due to the new digital media and the change in consumer behaviour. Digitalization has appeared on the scene shaping the core of the new business model in music from a traditional to renegade to a digital and legitimate model with increased attention to a more service and customer relationship orientation. In traditional business model the main fuel of the sales has been physical goods, which changed in 1999 when Napster, an unauthorised music distribution provider appeared offering illegal peer-to-peer music file sharing. (Vaccaro & Cohn 2004, 46—48.) After the new digitalised way of distributing music, the industry has experienced a lot of changes in the way the revenues are made. Since then the industry has developed even further turning to a legitimate digitalized form, and for the first time in 2013 the global digitalized music saw an increase in revenues of 0.3 per cent (IFPI Digital Music Report 2013). Year 2014 has been an interesting breaking point for the industry, as for the first time the global industry has dropped under \$15bn. At the same time in 2014 the share of global digital revenues of \$6.85 billion (46%) met the share of physical format sales (46%) for the first time, keeping in mind the fact that International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) has included the revenues from SoundExchange into digital revenues. (IFPI Digital Music Report 2015.) Previously these revenues had been included in performance rights (Ingham 2015). This indicates that overall the music industry has met great challenges in building revenues, but the digitalization of distribution is gaining an important role in generating the revenues.

Traditionally the music industry has worked around the tangible goods such as CDs and artists' merchandise. These were produced, promoted and marketed through mass media that required hits that would fit majority of the consumers hence the success rate was low.

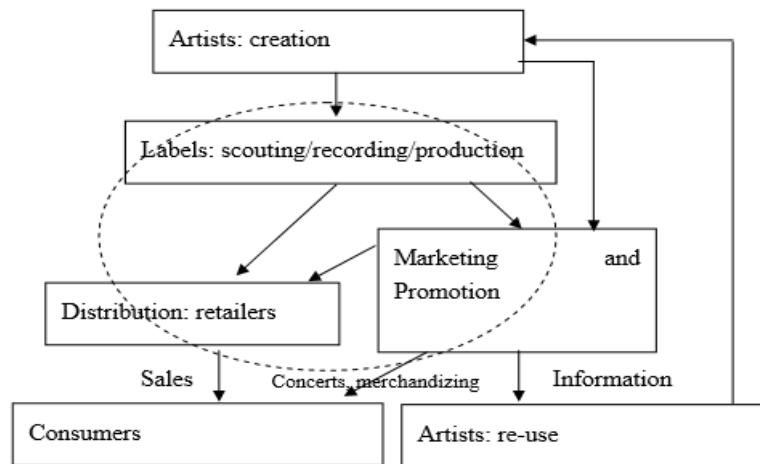


Figure 1 The traditional music industry (Peitz—Waelbroeck 2004, 5)

From Figure 1 above we can see that the main actors in the traditional music industry were artists, creating the music, who had contracts with the big record companies owning labels on each market segment. These labels would handle the scouting, recording and production related to the artist. The marketing and promotion was done by both: an artist and the labels including also concerts merchandizing. The retailers made then the final sales of the CDs and other complementary products to sell them to the consumers. The marketing and promotional material could then be reused for the same artist. (Peitz—Waelbroeck 2004, 1—7.) After Napster and other file sharing services allowed free downloads, a new way of sharing music dominated and shook the industry, which forced the record labels to act and change the traditional business model into a new form. In 2012 the global physical sales were still falling by 5 % down to \$9.5 billion as digital form and new business model started to lead the way. Consumers' main sources of music became Apple's iTunes download store, subscription to sites such as Spotify, Rhapsody and Muve, Youtube as an ad-funded site and digital radio such as Pandora. (Cookson & Edgecliffe-Johnson 2013.)

The role of the digital music has clearly increased through the changes in consumer behaviour and new platforms offered on the markets. As digital music has strengthened its position, it is still important to remember that the recovery of the industry has still not reached its stable position. Reaching a new low in the global music revenue and equal shares within digital music and physical sales during the same year of 2014 show how the industry is still struggling to reach the point of a stable increase. Despite the drawbacks on the field the musicians have also gained more independency due to the digital form of the music. Traditionally music has been produced on a CD, where the

marketing and promotion costs have accumulated the production costs up to 17€ per CD¹ (Peitz—Waelbroeck 2004, 2). For new emerging musicians, this has been a significant barrier to entry to the music industry. Now, the musicians and independent labels may display their own music due to the quick and fast digital form, reducing the marketing and promotional costs allowing their music to be heard (Renard et al. 2012, 92).

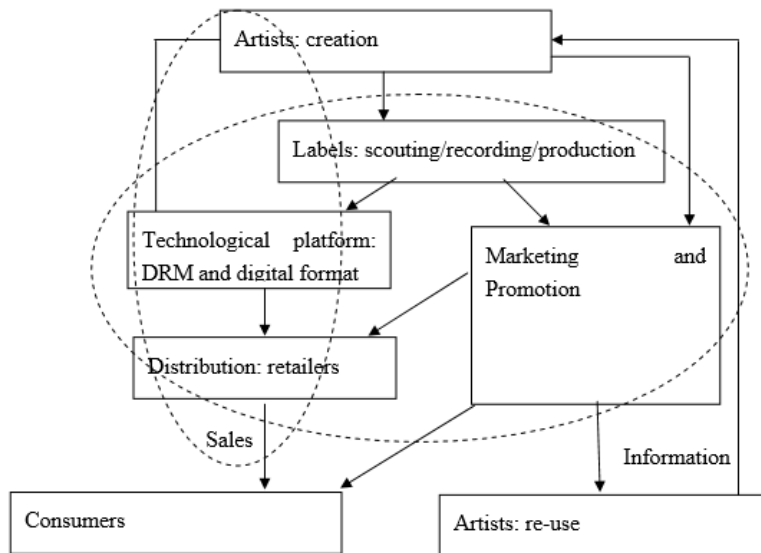


Figure 2 Digital music industry (Peitz—Waelbroeck 2004, 39)

From Figure 2 above we can see that a musician may now use a technological platform (DRM and digital format) to distribute the music straight to a retailer, who will then make a sale with a consumer, thus leaving the labels out of the process. On the new age of consuming and sharing information via social networks allows musicians to use marketing tools that helps their music to be heard on an interactive level with fewer costs. Promotion and marketing can be executed straight through different social media platforms (Peitz—Waelbroeck 2004, 39).

¹ Average cost of a CD in Euro in Euro area:

Recording	2.25
Production	0.25 to 5
Marketing and promotion	0.25 to 5
CD press	1
Margin of retailers	2 to 2.5
Margin of record companies	2.5 to 4
Copyright payment to artist	1.25
Taxes	3.5

(Peitz—Waelbroeck, 2004, 2)

1.2 Background of the research

To understand better the choice of focus in this research, it is important to define what is an independent music management company. Traditionally record labels may be major labels, independent labels and the different forms of these two. There have been several different mergers and acquisitions throughout the history of major labels, but since 2012 there are three major labels dominating the global music industry after Universal Music Group acquired Electric and Musical Industries (EMI). The three major labels are Universal Music Group (UMG), Warner Music Group (WMG) and Sony Music Entertainment (SME), which account for 80—90% of the global music markets. (McDonald, 2016; Renard et al. 2012, 92.) The growth in the major labels constitutes from vertical integration of making music including production, marketing and promotion, distribution, retailing, artist acquisition, manufacturing and music publishing. With such resources the majors own several sublabels with a different name and aim to target big general audiences. (Wallis—Malm 1984, 75; Lee 1995, 48.)

The rest 10—20% of the global music markets are shared between the independent labels, i.e. “indies” or other independent music companies working with the marketing management, which usually act in areas of music with less capital-intensive investments like artist acquisition and promotion. The smaller labels tend to do business within an ideological framework that defy the general cultural main stream. In the history of music industry, the independent labels have been identified with a specific social group, for example blues or jazz has long been associated with black people’s music, i.e. race. The relationship between art and commerce has never been strong but rather the small labels challenge the majors because of their capitalist models of production and consumption. Succeeding against the majors is mostly achieved by specializing in a specific niche market, competing with a specific segment. For example, the different genres reflecting the sociological factors, like race, age, gender and social status, are a distinctive way to compete against the majors. The genres develop and change with time creating new ones or giving a fresh sound to the existing ones. (Lee 1995, 48—50.)

Compared to the commercial or public sector in arts, the independent sector allows the artists an increased access, greater creative freedom and professional control along the possibility to develop business skills and increase the established audience. In the contrary to the positives, the independent sector is also limited by high level of instability and uncertainty, which do not serve the emerging artists’ needs. (Tipton 2014, 51.)

In this research the choice for independent music management companies is justified by the fact that these types of companies work with musicians regarding their social media presence and other related management issues. The term independent music management company is used to represent the small independent labels and it will be treated as a smaller, independent unit, which is not comparable to a big record label with a lot of

resources and musicians under its coverage. On the contrary, the independent music management companies have one or only few musicians as opposed to the major labels. This definition is based on the interviews conducted with experts from independent management labels. The term musician is used to describe the musicians as artists, and the term artists is used to describe artistic professional on other artistic fields, such as photography and design, for example. The choice of independent labels reflects my interest in the independent, more creative way of working (Wallis—Malm 1984, 85), where limited resources found the base for finding new ways of marketing. In addition, a research from Leenders et al. (2015, 1812) shows that a group of independent musicians benefit from the new age media significantly, especially from online journals and social network sites and usually have no record label.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The previous studies on the use of social media in marketing musicians has been scarce and limited to certain aspects. There is a clear gap for research in marketing musicians from independent music company point of view in terms of academic research. The earlier studies have not focused solely on the marketing of musicians through social media when considering all channels and examining the small, independent music company aspect. Compared to the amount of research on social media networks in music industry and the level of development in social media marketing practices (Buskirk 2009), this research offers valuable information for the found research gap. Previously Salo, Lankinen and Mäntymäki (2013) have made an important research on the use of social media in marketing artists, where they examine the consumer motives and the industry practices on social media marketing. However, the study is limited to Finnish markets and cannot be applied to other markets and doesn't firmly focus on independent music companies but includes also data from major labels. Fisher and Reuber (2011) have researched the aspect of the impact of social interaction through Twitter, however taking in consideration entrepreneurs from all fields. Renard, Goodrich and Fellman (2012) are studying the historical changes in the music industry supply chain through social network analysis (SNA) and scenario planning to give an overview of the information flows and revenues of the supply chain, suggesting the disappearance of the major labels. Two books have been written to guide musicians on the use of social media, however limited to a specific channel: Youtube (Hiebner 2014a), SoundCloud (Hiebner 2014b) and several magazine articles on guiding the musicians with social media (Bernard 2014; Mitchell 2016), however no scientific research on overall view of the use of social media for promoting the musicians.

Within the 21st century the new means of media have changed the way companies and businesses promote products and services, shifting from the traditional media to the social media. For example, the consumption of traditional TV for movies and TV-shows has decreased by 13 % and sports by 10 % globally from 2014 to 2015. At the same time as TV as device has decreased other devices such as computer has seen a 9% increase, smartphone 3% increase and tablets 4% increase for TV shows and movies from 2014 to 2015. The consumer preferences have changed to access more media content that allows mobility and sharing personal content with friends and family. In 2015, 87% of consumers also use a second device along a traditional TV, which indicates that new habits of video consumption should be considered. (Accenture 2015.) Not only the preferences for media have changed but also companies have increased their social media advertising remarkably globally from \$17,85 billion in 2014 to \$25,14 billion in 2015 showcasing the importance of being visible where your audience is (eMarketer 2015). New technologies give audience a new way of listening to songs and interact with music (Leenders et al. 2015, 1799).

The changes in media consumption has also reflected in the music industry in recent years and the relevance of social media is highlighted now more than ever (Dewan—Ramaprasad 2014, 101). The evolution of the industry has allowed the artists in music to take control of the marketing, promotion and distribution of their own music with free or low-cost strategies (Peitz—Waelbroeck 2004, 39). Musicians or small labels and management companies are no longer dependent on the traditional way of thinking, where the dominant major record labels would find the musician and use heavy promotional resources to bring the popularity to the artist (Margiotta 2012, 6—7). Now a musician may maintain their independency on the way to popularity and increase the chances of being heard by public through the new platforms. For example, Myspace has been a helpful platform for names like Katy Perry and Bruno Mars to get more fans and rise into popular recognition (Salter 2013).

In this research, my focus remains with the independent music management companies from the European point of view by interviewing three independent music management companies based in Berlin, as they may have a better expertise and experience with consistent social media strategies with several different musicians, rather than focusing on individual musicians, who may have very varying experience and less strategical approach as entrepreneurs. The independent music management companies and their experts also must create an effective social media strategy for marketing due to the scarce resources. The purpose of this study is *to understand better the approach of the independent music management companies on musicians and how the social media strategies are built to gain recognition and popularity*. To elaborate further on this topic, it is important to ask the following sub-questions:

- Which social media channels are used in promotion of musician and what is their nature?
- How can media content be used to get better engagement from fans?
- How can social interaction between the musician and the audience build partnerships to create new opportunities through social media?

In chapter one I have first introduced the change in the music industry from traditional model to digitalization of music. The incremental change has shifted the industry forcing the players on the field to change with it, and giving new opportunities to the newcomers. Second, I have defined the meaning of an independent music management company to support my choice in this specific part of the field. Third, I have explained the purpose of this study and what are the defining questions of the research to help to understand the different aspects of social media. Chapter two will define social media and the three elements of it, communication media, content and social interaction, leading to the three sub questions of the research. The first sub question aims at revealing the channels used by the independent music management companies to promote musicians and the nature of them, and the second sub question aims to explain what kind of content and how it is used through these channels to get better engagement. The third sub question focuses on the theoretical framework of effectual process, which aims to explain how social interaction between the musician and the audience can bring new business opportunities to the musicians. Chapter three will discuss the methodological approach and how I have designed to carry out the study regarding data collection and analysis, limitations and trustworthiness. In chapter four I will present the results achieved through three expert interviews from independent music management companies to build on the framework built in chapter two. Chapter five will analyze and conclude the entire study to have a fast understanding of the subject grounded on the theoretical framework. Chapter six will finally summarize the entire master thesis. Lastly, in chapter seven the literature used is presented in a list to support frameworks built and references made in the study. Additionally, chapter eight presents the appendices used to plan and execute the research.

2 PROMOTING MUSICIANS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

2.1 Defining social media

Throughout the history people have established social classes and categorized each other through different social circles. Due to the digital era and the new possibilities the social networks have been highlighted more than ever. The power of media no longer belongs to the traditional press but now the social web is an important source of news, information and decision making (Sheehan 2010, 100; Mangold—Faulds 2009, 360.) Marketing as a branch of business has changed dramatically throughout the recent years due to digitalization and appearance of social aspect. The society has changed into a world of networks where people as audience have the power of influence. The new generation is connected and socially networked, wanting to engage, participate, create and co-create. Social media has enabled these interactions through linking people and communities in the digital environment. (Jaokar et al. 2009, 1—2; Kietzmann et al. 2011, 241.)

Social media creates interconnections between content, users and communication technologies, which can be a specific website (Facebook), online service (Twitter) or the broader internet at large (Google Sidewiki) creating the value in bringing people together. With social media people can connect, interact and share online (Halligan—Shah 2010, 85). Virtual geography is an intermediary role connecting consumers with each other and companies, and virtual presence gives a chance for experimental social media services having a value of facilitating consumer-to-consumer connections to marketers, society and individuals. (Dann – Dann 2011, 344.) For consumers, social media is a tool to collect information about products, brands, companies and interests developing the relationship with businesses and organizations (Gale business insights handbook of social media marketing 2013, 17). The interaction between people can include text, audio, images, video and other media, individually or mixed. The most interesting perspective for marketers lies within where the interaction of the company, product and related topics are discussed as it engages the audience to the company. (Ryan – Jones 2009, 152.)

To define the characteristics of social media it is useful to define the three elements of it, which according to Dann and Dann (2011, 345) are communications media, content and social interaction that complement and interact with each other.

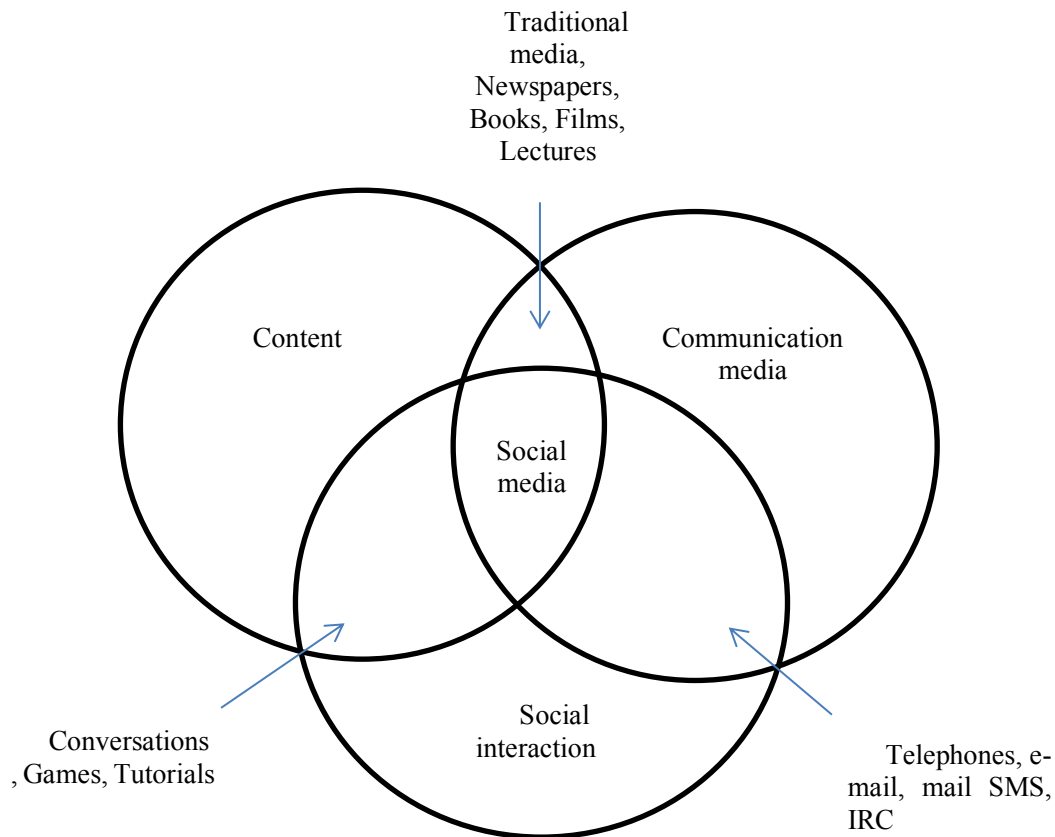


Figure 3 Social media components (Dann—Dann 2011, 345)

The figure above represents the three main components of social media: social interaction, communication media and content, which form all together, social media. Communication media is the virtual infrastructure that provides real time content and social interaction in the same virtual space. Examples of this may be Facebook, VKontakte and Youtube, which are separate spaces within Internet. The component of content is the attraction that brings people to a virtual space in the first place. This content is created by communication activity between users when they are influencing, giving social support, coordinating or sharing information with each other (Butler 2001, 350). It can be for example photos (Instagram), music (myspace.com) and news of friends (Facebook) or videos (Youtube) and because of its digital form can be easily copied, manipulated, put together or searched (Kane et. al 2014, 277). These virtual products may form a community based on the shared goods of value and establish the actual product from the social media service. The third component is social interaction, which links one user directly with another through a page, third party application or other time-independent means (blog posts, commentary). The time-independency gives mobility for physical and temporal proximity.

These three components also have overlaps between the two of them. The first overlap between social interaction and content creates conversation, games and tutorials, whereas the second overlap of social interaction and communication media generates telephones, e-mails, mails, SMS and IRC (Internet Relay Chat) and third overlap between communication media and content produces traditional media, newspapers, books, films and lectures. (Dann—Dann 2011, 345.)

These characteristics provide a great tool for marketers to reach and engage potential customers. In social media sites, the most shared feature includes the ability to create a profile, connect to others and interact and share information with the community. Having a presence in social media, for example in Facebook where more than 2 billion people in 2017 are active users, allows a company to reach and tell a message and a story to as many people as possible (Statista 2017a). (Halligan—Shah 2010, 85.) Social media can be viewed as an equivalent for audience participation, where marketers need to remember the respect for the boundaries and the traits of the audience. There are different levels of willingness to involve in the interaction, thus understanding the different characteristics of the audience will lead to a successful social media strategy. (Dann—Dann 2011, 347.)

2.2 Social media channels for music promotion

The amount of social media venues increases and develops daily, leaving the marketers with the challenge of choosing the best channels to cover the market needs. The channel is determined by a business message and which venue is used by the users. This means that a company needs to use the tools, which the members are using to interact and to get their information. (Gale business insights handbook of social media marketing 2013, 17—18.)

To choose the right social media channel the marketers also need to think about goals and what influences the choice of the right sites. These goals are put in a form of marketing objectives. An objective is a “*statement about a planned social media activity in terms of what that activity intends to accomplish*” (Tuten—Salomon 2014, 41).

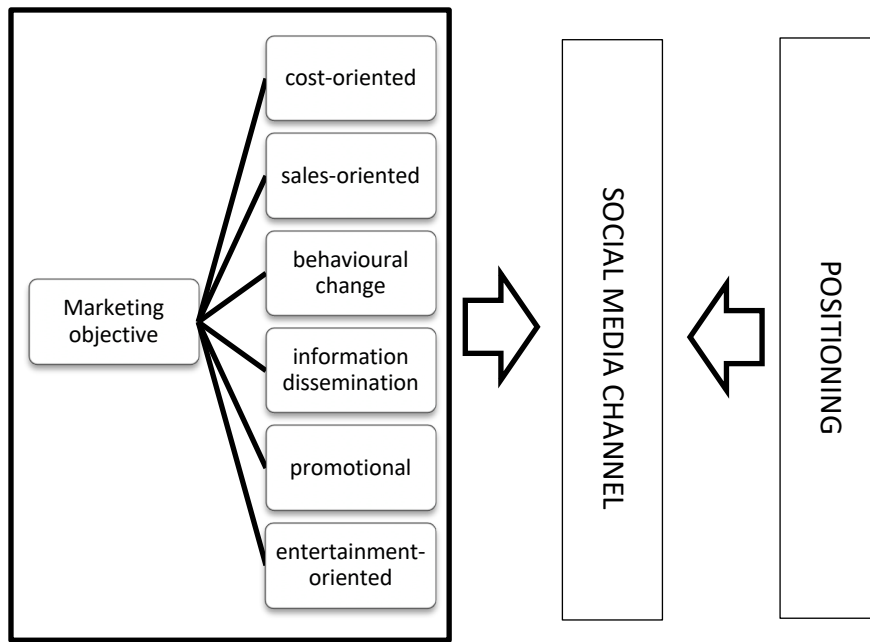


Figure 4 Choosing the right channel (adapted from Dann—Dann 2011, 352, 356—357)

The figure above represents the factors that influence the choice of the right social media channel. When choosing the right channels, the marketers need to set their objectives of what is wanted to be achieved: cost-orientation, sales-orientation, behavioural change, information dissemination, promotion or entertainment-orientation (Dann—Dann 2011, 349—350; Tuten—Salomon 2014, 41). Another factor influencing the choice of the right social media channel is positioning. Positioning emphasizes the uniqueness of the new product or service and describes the best attributes of it in comparison to the competing products or services. (Nijssen 2017, 32.) Positioning the service or product requires a combination of the right voice of communication style with the right style of the social media site, thus after choosing the right channels through objectives, the style of the channels need to fit the style of the marketing message. (Dann—Dann 2011, 356; Wollitz 2010.) When thinking of positioning, it is important to understand who is your audience and where are they placed, and through that knowledge to build a certain image and show the true essence of the brand in the customers' minds. This requires a varied marketing mix, including social media, which enables the customers to evaluate the authenticity of the brand in comparison to traditional print media. (Kotler et al. 2017, 38—39; Bernard 2014.)

When positioning a message, a marketer can create the correct image for a consumer through several ways. *Use or application positioning* tells what the end user does with the product, for example Youtube is a good channel for demonstration. Another way is *product user positioning* focuses on who are the end users of the product. Through graphic icons, badges or Facebook fan pages consumers can self-identify themselves with the company. Further on, *attributes and benefits positioning*, offers a focus based on the

features and elements of the product/service, which leads for keyword, tag or blog search on different channels. However as social media is about people rather than products, it is perhaps the least effective focus. *Price quality positioning* aims at creating the right perception of the prices coming with the product/service. Thus, content must line with the quality of the product and the channel must reflect the right audience. To focus on the image, the *cultural symbol positioning* is an important way to create a specific cultural connotation to the brand. Images, icons and wordings allow sectional interests, for which Facebook groups, LiveJournal communities and blogs offer a perfect platform. Also seeing tags of the audience is also useful to study the related images of the brand in the mind of the consumers. The last two ways of positioning a product/service are *product class positioning* and *competitor positioning*. The first one aims to choose the right categorization of the products / services outside of the company's own product category. For example, in Facebook the advertisements are sold according to the keywords in the users' profile, thus wordings created by users. The latter positioning focuses on the differences and similarities between the company and a competitor, thus appearing on the same channel to show attendance for audience. In addition to the inner operations and influences on the right channels, the marketer must consider also the external factors, through targeting and whether the site supports desired behaviour from the end users. (Dann—Dann 2011, 356—357, 359.) The strategy behind choosing the right channel should have an impact on the business and its marketplace.

2.2.1 Blogs

The word blog shortens from “web log” and is one of the first forms of social networks. The uniqueness of blogs lays in interactivity between the blogger and its audience, where they can converse not only between each other but the readers can have a conversation also among themselves. Now, blogs have become specialized, news like pages where the readers can obtain the information they are interested in. By 2011 there have been over 173 million blogs uploaded on web, and they have become a powerful media (Statista 2017b). For example, *Huffington Post*, the liberal-leaning blog posting its opinions and conversations has turned into a powerful political source for information. (Sheehan 2010, 100—101.) On the present day, the number of blogs is difficult to estimate, but counting only from the three biggest blog hosting sites like Tumblr, Squarespace and WordPress the total count amounts to over 440 million blogs, forming an essential part of the overall content in the internet (Mediakix 2017).

From marketing point of view blogs can be used as a tool in two ways: to influence the consumers' purchase behavior and get ad space on the page. Firstly, the marketers can try to influence the blogger by sending a press release or creating an ongoing relationship

by sending products and asking reviews about them. This might result in a positive outcome by a positive review and thus a good recommendation in the audience perspective. To develop the involvement further, a company may create a blog of its own or comment the popular blogs covering the same business field. (Sheehan 2010, 102.)

When marketing through a popular blog or getting involved in a conversation, marketers must be aware of the openness and transparency. Acting under as an informative consumer or paying for a positive review without an open disclosure of the relationship will harm the public image and result in negative approach by the consumers. (Sheehan 2010, 103.)

2.2.2 Wikis

The term wiki originates from a Hawaiian word “fast”, and they are software allowing different people with a different background to cooperate in building the site’s content. Anyone can edit and or upload new content combining the best efforts of masses of people. This open source approach does not exclude the created content to just a few experts but allows combined knowledge from people with several different backgrounds. The best example of a successful wiki is Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia. Whereas the potentials to gather information for Wikipedia are limitless as anyone can edit and add information on the website, the problems occur on the reliability of the information. However, the creators of the page believe the information will be corrected with time in addition to the spot-check efforts. (Sheehan 2010, 104—105.)

2.2.3 Social networks

The phenomenon of social networks has grown the fastest in the Web and have changed the world of marketing in a new way. The popularity of the networks has decreased the time people spend on their e-mails, and the content shared only on Facebook is twice as much as via e-mail. The growth of usage of internet in total is three times slower than the usage of social networks, which also accounts 10% of all online activity. (Sheehan 2010, 108.) The most used social network is Facebook. The network site has seen an incredible growth from 150 million users to 175 million users just in five weeks worldwide. In June 2017 Facebook broke a new record of 2 billion users worldwide providing the biggest audience for marketers (Constine 2017). Every day the users spend more than 3 billion minutes on Facebook. In addition to Facebook there are specialized sites like LinkedIn with 106 million users (for business) and QZone with 606 million users (biggest Chinese social network site) and VK with over 80 million users (Russian social network site)

(Statista 2017c; Chrunchbase 2018). For marketers, this gives new opportunities to get information about the consumers and target more efficiently on their audience.

For a user, social networks are a place to share information and have a conversation with friends and acquaintances. For traditional media, this creates two challenges: social media takes away time from the traditional media and consumers now base their buying decisions on the new way of hearing and learning about the products. The importance of peer opinion and word of mouth information has increased giving the importance of credibility more space in consumers' minds. (Sheehan 2010, 109.)

When marketers enter social networks for advertising, they need to be careful with their strategies since the users go there in the first hand to socialize with the people they know rather than buying a product. Brands can create Facebook pages for influencing a conversation with their consumers or fans. More authentic data can be drawn out from the general attitude towards the brand or an artist by following the conversations on social networks to create a more effective campaign. Another great channel for marketing is Twitter, which is a unique network allowing individuals to stream not only to friends but also "followers". Short micro-broadcasts (tweets) of 140 characters create a micro-blog describing what they are doing right now. Twitter has 328 million users providing also a big platform of audience (Statista 2017c). This tool can be very powerful depending on the number of followers as, for example, in case of a mega-celebrity Twitter may challenge a traditional broadcast media. Musicians and actors can use this channel to capitalize on its no-cost production to build their images and brands, and to connect with their fans directly. The traditional major labels can be left out and when the campaigns are done well there is a good opportunity on high return from very low costs. (Sheehan 2010, 110.)

2.2.4 *Virtual channels*

Another way for a social interaction is through virtual channels. Two of the most popular channels are Second Life and massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), for example World of Warcraft. These networks allow people to enter a virtual world full of fantasy with their own avatars, characters that represent themselves online. In the Second Life people may socialize with other people, participate in activities and do things from normal life. For smaller brands, this is a chance to gain presence that bigger competitors don't have. For example, Habbo has over 11 million users monthly worldwide. A cosmetics company Coty launched a "Harajuku Lover's fragrance" by the singer Gwen Stefani. The perfume was featured in an in-world room called "The Harajuku Lovers Hub" and thus gained a lot of visibility among the users. (Sheehan 2010, 112—114.)

The most popular MMORPG is World of Warcraft, owning about 60% of the MMORPG market. The game has over 10 million monthly subscribers giving a great chance to use it as a social media tool for marketers. An average gamer is a young 27-year-old and spend big amounts of time (22 hours per week) and money playing the games. (Sheehan 2010, 112—114.)

2.2.5 *Image sharing channels*

Another important and popular channel during the recent years have been the image sharing platforms, such as Instagram, Imgur or Pinterest. For example, Instagram is an image sharing platform for 800 million users generating over 95 million pictures a day (Instagram 2018; Lister 2017). For marketers, it is a powerful means of media to reach new customers and gain visibility.

On these platforms marketers can create an official account for the business to post pictures relevant to their message, which can then be commented on or loved by the users. This gives the opportunity to observe the customers' expectations and concerns, learn and direct them in a positive direction (Erkan 2015, 1437.) Each of the photo-sharing page functions in a different way and have a different purpose, so it is important to know that the visual communication by a company is valuable if it is targeted to the right audience (Holtz 2012, 8—9). For marketing, images are a powerful tool to use as they are easy to understand for the audience, in addition to the easy production of images (Manic 2015, 90).

2.2.6 *Video sharing channels*

Choosing a channel that shares videos is a powerful tool for independent music management companies to present a musician's work and the visuals related. On a video sharing platform, a marketer can upload a personalized view on their work, get comments and allow users to offer a link to a video (Gale business insights handbook of social media marketing 2013, 145). Video enables to show the dynamics of movement and convey the emotions behind the visuals (Manic 2015, 90.) The consumers that want to make a purchase on a product or a service are also 73% more likely to purchase the wanted product or service after watching a video (Enright 2014).

The video sharing got more popular in 2005 after YouTube was founded and just in a year the platform got the users to access 100 million videos a day (Gale business insights handbook of social media marketing, 2013, 145). Now, YouTube has 1.5 billion users who are watching content worth of hundreds of millions of hours of videos (Matney

2017). Another video sharing platform Vimeo, which was founded in 2004, enables to share high quality videos (Vimeo 2016). The site has now 240 million monthly video viewers and 715 million monthly video views in 2017, also representing a great demand on videos (Smith 2017).

2.3 Consumer engagement through social media content

The world of web is organized around content. Due to Facebook and other social networks, the web has changed into a social web, where the participants create content to communicate with each other. The content might appear as a form of text, video, audio and pictures. (Jaokar et al. 2009, 8.) To be efficient in creating content it must be produced rapidly and effectively spread online. There are a variety of different content a business can produce, such as blog articles, white papers, videos, webinars, podcasts or webcasts. **Blog articles** can be one-page articles related to the industry, whereas **white papers** are longer writings educating the audience on for example trends and challenges. For music industry, **videos** are one of the most effective content. Short videos can be created about the product or an industry. **Webinars** show a livestream about a PowerPoint presentation on an industry topic. **Podcasts** are like radio shows, where there is a ten- to twenty-minute audio program or an interview and **webcasts** show a livestream shows online. The different forms of content show also transparency bringing more visitors through referred links moving your ranking on Google up. (Halligan—Shah 2010, 30—31.)

For a marketer content creation is important for two reasons. Firstly, remarkable content attracts links from other sites, which will redirect the audience to your page. Other content producers will remark your products and services linking back to your own site. With the help of these links you will gain qualified visitors and tell Google that the page is worth ranking on important keywords on the market. Thus, through content a business can get more traffic from relevant sites and Google search. Secondly, creating content spreads easily on social media sites giving you more reach and visibility to consumers (Erkan 2015, 1436). In comparison to paid advertisement, content creation does not disappear and you can create it at low cost or for free. (Halligan—Shah 2010, 29—30.)

For a business, there are several benefits from creating content, which should be kept in mind. Firstly, creating content such as videos provide a low-cost platform enabling free status updates and delivering a brand message without high expenses (Chaney 2012). Secondly, a business can communicate the brand's content identity (Divol et al. 2012). Thirdly, due to the nature of social media it allows rapid engagement with customers by responding quickly to the comments and feedback (Agathou 2011). Fourthly, the social media content may intimidate with the negative feedback, however a business can improve its image through responding to negative criticism quickly (Catone 2010). The

different benefits of social media should be carefully evaluated and not be ignored, which may backfire on the business' image. Content is an essential part of the promotion, and creating relevant content for a customer can be challenging if the marketer loses the focus of the message. Sending the wrong content to the wrong audience may be perceived as a negative experience. Awareness and the purpose of the content hold a crucial role with the target customers. (Bullas 2012.)

According to Bullas (2012) content can be categorized into three different types: liquid content, linked content and “two step” content. Liquid content is the kind of content that spreads fast in the internet and creates a buzz around it. The content may have been originally created for fun or to deliver a brand message, and the purpose of this is to raise awareness and attention, as well as to bring more traffic to the desired website. The purpose of the linked content is to build a clear message of the brand values and share it with the audience. For example, this can be videos of a company presentation with a person discussing one's beliefs. In “two step” content category the first content published follows up with another one. These can be a promotional content followed up with a website link for more information. The three different content categories may overlap with each other and one category may well work as another one, for example if the company brand is about fun, then the liquid content may as well work as linked content to present what is the business about.

In comparison to traditional marketing media, creating content for social media does not require wide financial capacity. To reach consumers, a business needs to create the content, optimize it for search engines, Really Simple Syndication (RSS) readers, which allows users to get the link to the latest news update, and social media sites, publish it, market it through blogs and social media, and finally measure for constant improvement. (Halligan—Shah 2010, 31—32; Ma 2012, 740.) To create exciting content, a marketer must have innovation tolerance in two levels. Firstly, the novelty of the work and liking new things adds to the novelty added to the new content and marketer's own liking of the creation. Secondly, accepting the risks that come with the content creation allow marketers to step in the leading position for audience. (Dann—Dann 2011, 347.)

2.4 The impact of social interaction through social media on business opportunities

When talking about social media marketing, the musician is a marketer himself or herself, the independent music management company being a marketer for the musician or they work together through the output via different channels. Before entering any social media interaction, the marketer must understand that the campaigns and marketing messages sent via social media need to have an impact on the business. Without listening to the end

users and acting upon it doesn't improve the business, and results in poor time management. The feedback from the audience can improve the company through metrics, better decisions can be made from the feedback and the company will get market knowledge that it will need to manage. (Dann—Dann 2011, 361.) In this process, the marketer engages in a social interaction changing the business behaviour.

In previous research a lot of focus is put on social media as a marketing tool but in this chapter the focus is on how social interactions affect the musician as business venture (Fischer—Reuber 2011, 2). Interaction is the social contribution to social media, which holds a critical role in building new outcomes for a business. The effectuation process is suitable in this research, as the outcomes of the marketing efforts and the impact on the decision making are unknown in creative fields, where all outcomes are possible and the business relationship depend heavily on the existent network. The decision-makers expand the resources at hand and with time the goals and the aims are developed without knowing them in the beginning of the process (Read—Dew—Sarasvathy—Song—Wiltbank 2009a, 3). The logic of effectuation is enabling companies to shape and improve initiatives, develop new opportunities and goals, hence not perceive control as an exogenous power (Wiltbank et al. 2009, 129). This is examined through the effectuation process first introduced by Sarasvathy (2001), which got its inspiration from Simon's (1991) work on organizational learning in bounds of cognitive human learning psychology. The aim of the effectuation process is to explain how is the entrepreneur, the musician, affected by the social interaction and what impact does it bring to the entrepreneurial action and thinking.

Sarasvathy (2001) introduces the logic of effectuation, which is a theoretical approach for decision making. In this entrepreneurial mind-set, the idea lies on a specific goal, idea or aim that is surrounded by uncertainty, and the artefacts leading to them are not clear (Sarasvathy 2001, 245; Read et al. 2009a, 2). The underlying logic behind the effectuation is that the desired effect is unknown, which is aimed to accomplish by a given set of means. Another approach is the causation effect, where the desired effect is known and it is achieved by unknown set of means. (Sarasvathy 2001, 245.) The effectuation logic is shaped from heuristic principles, which focus on more direct approach of control on how to deal with uncertainty (Wiltbank et al. 2009, 119). From these basic logics, we can see that the process of effectuation allows the decision-maker to create one or multiple different effects, being able to shape, construct and alter the end goal as time passes, at the same time making the best out of the fortuitous events (Sarasvathy 2001, 247). In very successful cases the entrepreneur's vision has a stronger emphasis on success rather than the recognition and achievement of an opportunity. Already then Sarasvathy (2001) describes the e-commerce to have the characteristics of the effectuation process, where markets are created through contingent interactions of the decision-maker's visions and

strivings of a stakeholder (customer, investor, business ally). (Sarasvathy 2001, 249; Wiltbank et al. 2009, 117).

Effectuation process starts with determining the means, which can be done on three different levels: entrepreneurial level, firm-level and economy level. For entrepreneurs, these means are knowing who they are, what they know and whom they know. For companies, the means are the physical resources, human resources and organizational resources. (Wiltbank et al. 2009, 117.) On the economy level, the equivalents of the means are demographics, latest technology regimes and socio-political institutions (Sarasvathy 2001, 250). In this research, the focus stays on the entrepreneurial level as we are examining musicians working with independent music management companies. The musicians can be seen as brands and entrepreneurs to whom the independent music management companies give advice and knowledge on the management related issues of their brand.

To understand the effectuation process better, it is essential to compare the effectuation process with the causation process to see the distinguishing characteristics of each, and to define more clearly the ones of the effectuation process.

Table 1 Contrasting causation and effectuation (Sarasvathy 2001, 251)

Categories of Differentiation	Causation Process	Effectuation Process
Givens	-Effect is given	-Only some means or tools are given
Decision-making selection criteria	-Help choose between means to achieve the given effect -Selection criteria based on expected return -Effect dependant: Choice of means is driven by characteristics of the effect the decision maker wants to create and his or her knowledge of possible means	-Help choose between possible effects that can be created with given means -Selection criteria based on affordable loss or acceptable risk -Actor dependant: Given specific means, choice of effect is driven by characteristics of the actor and his or her ability to discover and use contingencies
Competencies employed	-Excellent at exploiting knowledge	-Excellent at exploiting contingencies
Context of relevance	-More ubiquitous in nature -More useful in static, linear and independent environments	-More ubiquitous in human action -Explicit assumption of dynamic, nonlinear and ecological environment
Nature of unknowns	-Focus on the predictable aspects of an unknown future	-Focus on the controllable aspects of an unpredictable future
Underlying logic	-To the extent we can predict future, we can control it	-To the extent we can control future, we do not need to predict it
Outcomes	-Market share in existent markets through competitive strategies	-New markets created through alliances and other cooperative strategies

Table 1 above shows us the clear differences between the two logics in 7 different categories. In causation process the effect is a given, whereas in effectuation process only some of the means or tools are given. In decision-making selection criteria, the causation process helps to choose between the means to achieve the given effect based on the predicted return. The process is effect-dependent as the choice of means is determined by the decision-maker's desired effect and knowledge about the means. The effectuation process on the other hand helps to choose between the possible different effects that can be created with given means based on affordable loss or acceptable risk. This process is actor dependent as due to the given means, the actor decides on the effect determined by his or her characteristics and ability to find and utilize contingencies. Further on, causation employs the competency of knowledge, whereas effectuation employs

contingencies. In the context of relevance, the effectuation is an excellent use in natural phenomenon where static, linear and independent environments take place. The natural occurrences have specific events with ordinary causes, that can be analyzed and understood (Sarasvathy 2001, 250). The effectuation again is more relevant with human actions, where the environment is dynamic, non-linear and ecological. Human life is about different contingencies, which cannot be easily analyzed or predicted, but rather measured and utilized. Effectuation is more useful and frequent when attempting to understand and cope with the human nature (Sarasvathy 2001, 250). When it comes to the nature of unknowns, the causation process focuses on the prediction of the unknown future, whereas the effectuation process focuses on the control of unpredictable future. The logic of the first process is based on the prediction of the future to the point where you can control it, and the second process is based on controlling the future without the need to make predictions. The outcomes are, that the causation process's market share is in the existing markets by establishing competitive strategies, and the effectuation process enables to create new markets thorough creativity, alliances and cooperative strategies (Nijssen 2017, 22—23).

To understand the logic of effectuation and how it is built, it is essential to investigate earlier research on risk and uncertainty. In the history of research made on decision-making in uncertainty, there has been two divisions: normative and rational decision-making models and empirical studies on rationality in real decision-makers (Sarasvathy 2001, 250). The first line of study is separated between risk and uncertainty. This means that risk is defined as a measurable uncertainty whereas uncertainty is unmeasurable. (Knight 1921, 19—20.) When the uncertainty is measurable and known, the risk can be calculated with classical analytical techniques. When the uncertainty is unknown, it can be examined with estimation techniques, and once these estimations are made, they can be analyzed with the first technique. Risk can be measured in the fields of insurance, gaming and stock markets. Examples of measuring uncertainty can be environmental pollution, global warming, genetic cloning and commercialization of innovation. (Sarasvathy 2001, 251.)

Often regular people tend to choose the measurable risk to unmeasurable uncertainty, as they feel more confident with their choice (Ellsberg 1961, 661—662). However, some researches that have studied entrepreneurship and creative problem solving² reveal that people working in creative fields and entrepreneurs making creative solutions would choose unmeasurable uncertainty (Dickson—Giglierano 1986; Sarasvathy 2001). The decision-makers that don't have much information on future try to collect it and use experimental cognitive techniques to make some estimations. These kinds of beliefs that the decision-maker is basing one's decisions on can be deducted by studying their

² Getzels, Jacob Warren — Csikszentmihalyi, Mihály (1976) *The creative vision: a longitudinal study of problem finding in art*. Wiley, New York.

realizations and logical approaches. (Sarasvathy 2001, 252.) These findings in previous studies confirm the appropriateness of the effectuation theory when studying creative fields such as the music industry.

The effectuation theory can be built from four different main principles. The first principle states affordable loss to expected return. This means that within given set of means the decision-maker studies as many strategies as possible to gain more opportunities in future at the cost of present returns. The second principle relies on the alliances and partnerships as opposed to competition. The third principle utilizes the unexpected events over the preexisting knowledge. Lastly, the fourth principle states that the decision-maker would rather control the unpredictable future whereas the causation theory predicts the future, which is uncontrollable. The last principle especially supports fields where future is built with human interaction, and the state of the future can be shaped by all the stakeholders involved. (Sarasvathy 2001, 252.)

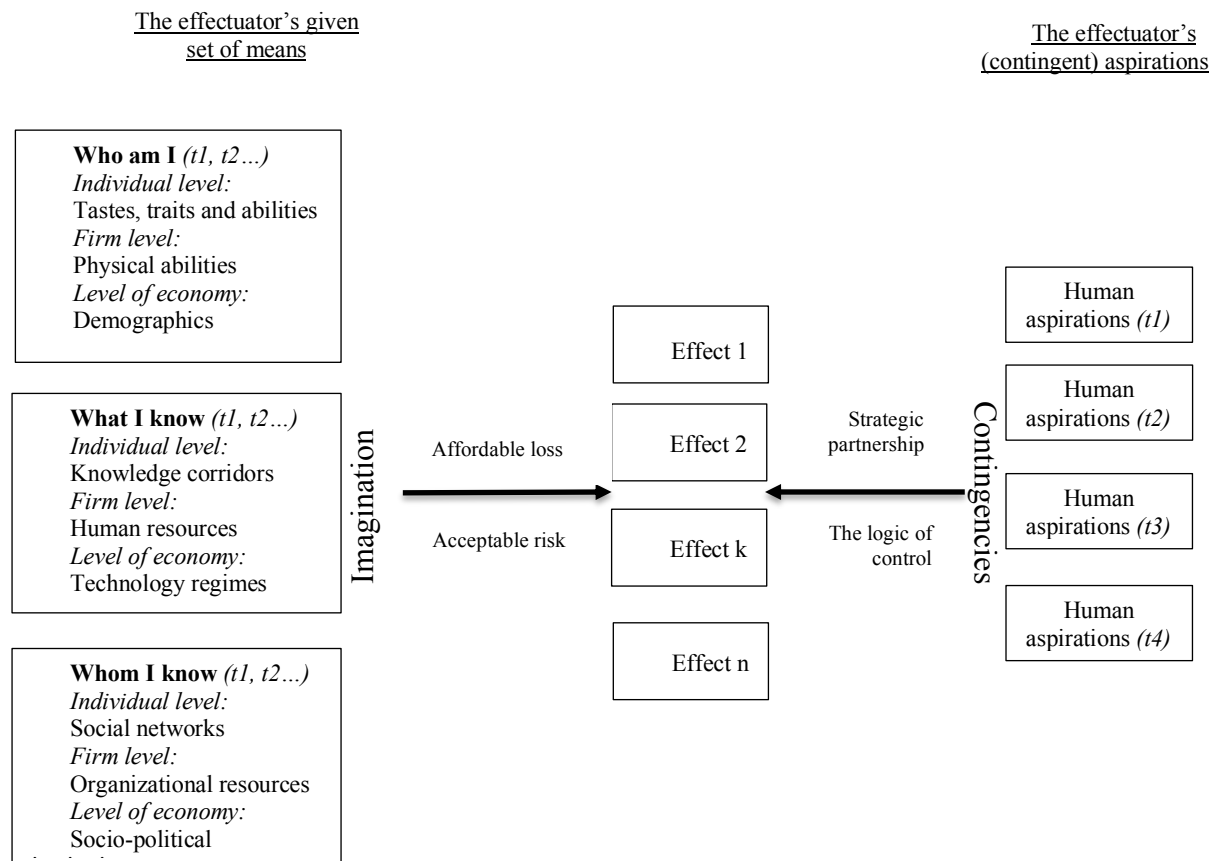


Figure 5 The theory of effectuation (adapted from Sarasvathy 2001, 253)

These four principles are formed in a theoretical base in the figure above to illustrate the logic of the effectuation theory. In the figure, the effectuator has a given set of means and aspirations to begin with, which form different effects that the effectuator must

choose from. As mentioned previously, the three main means consist of knowing who you are, what you know and whom you know on three different levels: individual level (entrepreneurial level), firm level and level of economy. Over the time these means and aspirations change creating new effects. The effects are the functions of the affordable loss or affordable risk, and the control of the future is determined by the strategic partnerships along the time. (Sarasvathy 2001, 253.)

The effectuation theory became an inverted framework from predictive rationality based decision-making (Read et al. 2009a, 2). However, when comparing the two different approaches it is important to understand that in reality no one approach is better than the other, and often the two mix with each other. Using the theory of effectuation helps us to understand how engaging in social media can help creating learning experiences and behaviours that set the base for new opportunities within creating new companies, markets or industries (Fischer—Reuber 2011, 1). As the effectuation theory is based on interaction with other people and creating new opportunities together with them, social media lays a good ground to empirical study on the impact of these relationships (Read—Song—Smit 2009b, 574). For a musician, the effectuation theory may explain the benefits of partnerships, as being part of an independent music management company offers a like-minded community and be part of creative work beyond your own sphere (Ravens—Twells—Bowe—Wilson 2016).

Moore (2014) further introduces an idea based on effectuation theory, called the bowling method. This idea proposes a strong growth of the company through targeting the right niche markets, starting from carefully selecting the first niche market to be successful in, and slowly expanding to the adjacent niche markets. Selecting the first niche market and succeeding to flourish your business in it is the key to help expand the business to the other niche markets and can reach a fast growth through the chain reaction. However, the entrepreneur is bound to have a strong vision from the start to be able to reach his or her goals. (Moore, 2014, 50; Nijssen 2017, 24.) This method can be helpful for musicians with a strong artistic vision, who have limited resources in the beginning to market themselves and as with time after gaining recognition and success through one campaign, they are able to expand and grow their marketing efforts to reach a larger awareness and more fans.

3 METHODOLOGY AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Research approach

Often research is divided into two categories: qualitative research and quantitative research, to understand and conceptualize better the differences between the two. However, the two are often integrated and in a research both approaches are used. (Alasuutari 1999, 32.)

The quantitative research is explained by arguing figures with the help of systematic, statistical relationships between the figures. Each research unit is given a value called variable, which may be both numbers and symbols. In this approach, the analysis is argued with average relationships with the premise of searching the differences between research units in relation to the different variables. The principle is to find statistical regularities from the way the different values of variables are related to each other. It is not relevant to find what is common to the research units as it does not explain the phenomenon. (Alasuutari 1999, 37.) Quantitative research approach helps to understand natural objects and phenomena though measuring it with using senses, instruments or other devices. In business and management research the aim is to build general principles of how people, organizations and social systems act. (Maylor—Blackmon 2005, 141—142.)

In a qualitative research, the purpose is to study the data where the singularly understood, internally logical entity is exposed. In this approach, the arguments cannot be built on statistical absolute truth but rather are found in a way that the factors and codes related to the phenomenon are not to be in contravention of the presented interpretations. Statistically significant differences are not in focus but the arguments of analysis and interpretations of a specific phenomenon. (Alasuutari 1999, 38—39.)

In qualitative research, the aim is to discover something new rather than test the existing knowledge. The approach takes into consideration the different perspectives and practices in each field due to the subjectivity of point of views and social background that is attached to them. Also, researches' own feelings, opinions and interpretations become part of knowledge. The methodological and theoretical approaches are not limited by a unified concept as in quantitative research but the different ways of approaching the qualitative research characterize the practices and discussions used. (Flick 2006, 14—16.)

This study is conducted with a qualitative approach as the goal is not to search for statistical regularities of the variables and their relations but to find some commonality from singular cases. The results don't form an absolute truth about the reality but aims to capture the answers that are correct and valuable to artists in a specific field, which is the music business. The results are trying to interpret the specific phenomenon of the usage

of social media with artists rather than find some irregularities or differences from the variables. In quantitative research, the existing knowledge is tested but in this qualitative research the discussion is trying to find out something new within the new opportunities created by social media. The results are very subjective due to the attachment to the musicians' point of view and what is valuable to them. To one musician that wants to profile him- or herself in a specific way may value a specific social media channel due to the opportunities it can bring in a very different way than a musician who doesn't see any value in it. As this research is conducted through interviews also the interpretations of the interviewer, me, will characterize and shape what is brought to attention, even if not on purpose.

In the chosen research approach, there are two natures of researching the phenomenon. First, idiographic approach strives to explain a singular chain of events or a phenomenon, which is not thought to represent a more general regularity, even though does not exclude to apply on other cases (Alasuutari 1999, 39). Second approach, nomothetic, is based on bigger samples sizes and aims to create an empirical generalization, a general knowledge (Punch 2014, 33). A research often has elements of both approaches however this research may be recognized more as an idiographic research by nature due to having a smaller sample size with the interviews. The research examines musicians based on expert interviews from independent music management companies representing their clients (musicians), each unique in their needs.

Another important aspect to the research is how is the research conducted. The two different ways are to do a deductive or inductive research. In deductive research approach, the theoretical proposition is tested by a research strategy that is specifically designed for testing. It aims to explain the casual relationships between variables and has a top down approach to apply the theory. (Saunders & Lewis 2012, 108—109.) The inductive research approach on the other hand has a bottom up approach moving from observations to a more generalized theory. The theories are based on empirical research however it is important to understand that also these theories are influenced by earlier research. (Flick 2006, 12.) In this research, the development of the definition has been challenging as there haven't appeared to exist an extensive background literature for this specific theme, giving the thesis more discovering nature as inductive studies are. After finding the appropriate theoretical background and references, it has shaped the premises and the point of view of what to research and what kind of information should be asked. To conclude, this research is inductive due to its discovering nature with a reference to theoretical background. The operationalization table shows the accurate approach and methodology to this study, presented in Appendix 1.

The theoretical understanding behind the chosen methods reveal a deeper reasoning for how a study has been formed and why specific approaches have been chosen. Crotty (1998, 3—4) demonstrates the relationship between methods, methodology, theoretical

perspectives and epistemology, which are the four main elements to consider while doing a research, seen in Figure 6.

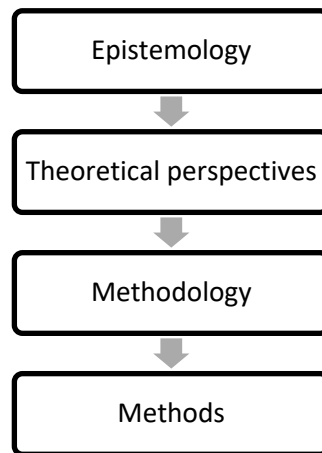


Figure 6 Four elements of research process (Crotty 1998, 4)

The first questions in research are about what methods and methodologies are taken to answer the research question. In the figure above the methods are the first element of the research process. It answers the question of how is the data collected and analyzed regarding the research questions. The second element is methodology, which is the strategy behind the chosen method that links the specific choice of method to desired results. The third element, theoretical perspectives gives us a justification to our choice of methodology and methods. The theory looks at what kind of reality does the researcher bring into the research. The fourth element, epistemology, is a broader philosophical understanding of what kind of knowledge is legitimate and how do we know what we know. In addition to the four elements presented, ontology studies the nature of existence answering the question *what is*, which is embedded in all four elements. (Crotty 1998, 6—10.)

The nature of music industry and the musicians working in it are dependent on building meanings, worlds and realities for the listeners. Each piece of song or music is unique and has a message to deliver. Social media at its core purpose exists for creating conversations and relationships between people. Both the industry and the tool to interact with the listeners consist of creating meanings between them, building the image and the reality of what is valued and seen right. For this purpose, the most appropriate epistemological position is constructivism, where the reality doesn't exist externally from the researcher or the subject but is built through interactions and relations to the world (Gray 2017, 22). The role of language constructs meanings and the outcomes of what is considered valuable and useful are influenced by the social relations (Flick 2006, 80.)

3.1.1 *Theoretical perspective*

With a strong association to constructivism, the theoretical perspective often linked to it is interpretivism, which is also the perspective used in this research. Interpretivism sees the natural, scientific world separate from the social world surrounding us, thus needs also different methods to observe and study it (Crotty 1998, 68). The history of interpretivism comes from the 19th century by German philosopher Immanuel Kant and further developed by Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Weber, Edmund Husserl and others. Their idealist thinking stemmed from the view that the surrounding world doesn't exist separate from our thoughts but the world is formed together with our mind and ideas. (Glesne 2011, 8.) The idealists don't dispute the natural or social worlds but believe that they are always construed through thoughts and mind (Schwandt 2007, 143). In the music business where artists promote themselves through creative work, thoughts about the different issues, interpretivism seems to be the only correct approach for this study.

Within interpretivism there are also different ways of looking at the approach. This study can be described to be a mix of two different ways, which are symbolic interactionism and naturalistic inquiry. The first example of interpretivism, symbolic interaction, was developed in 1930 by philosopher John Dewey and psychologist George Herbert Mead. The three prerequisites of this theory are firstly, that people act upon the interpretations of meanings they have for different things in their surrounding world, such as physical objects, human beings, institutions, activities or situations. The second prerequisite is that the meanings of these different things emerge from the process of social interaction. The third prerequisite is that the meanings encountered by people are handled in and modified by an interactive process. This suggests that each person revises their experiences and meanings including of their understanding of self. The study then should include an observation from the subject's point of view. (Blumer 1986, 2; Gray 2017, 25.)

The other example of interpretivism fitting for this research to some elements is naturalistic inquiry. The paradigm sees that there are several constructed realities, and each needs to be studied individually. The relationship between knower and known is interactive, and the inquiries made are time- and context bounded. The point of disagreement here is the possibility of causal linkages, as this paradigm believes that it is impossible to separate causes from effect. (Lincoln—Guba 1985, 37—38.) This research has three industry experts each explaining the phenomena facing the individual musician, thus there are several realities, each fitting specifically for that specific musician instead of having one theory for all musicians. However, the effectuation theory used to study what kind of new opportunities may emerge from social interaction disagrees with the last statement of the naturalistic inquiry.

3.1.2 Methodology

After establishing the ideologies and theories behind the research, appropriate methodologies linked to the theoretical perspectives need to be chosen. As established earlier, the nature of this research is inductive as the purpose of this study is to find out how the musicians are using the social media in their marketing efforts. As industry experts are being interviewed to understand this matter better, the information gathered from them builds the theory, which might be modified as new information is being presented. The most suitable methodology for this purpose is grounded theory.

The founders of the grounded theory are Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser (1967), whose ideas were further developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). The grounded theory can be defined as “discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon” (Strauss—Corbin 1998, 23). The aim is to discover and develop a theory from the data that has been observed systematically through studying the social phenomena (Glaser—Strauss 2017, 2). The focus in the methodology is in the experiences of people, what kind of issues do they express and how do they solve them. The results of the research are patterns reflected by the experiences told by people, who also give direction for the study. Thus, it is important to understand that the researcher cannot predetermine any thoughts or solutions but must expect any results expressed by the object. (Engward 2013, 37.) The data collected through research is constantly constructed to build several meanings. The information is collected, coded, categorized and compared to build a theory about the studied phenomena. (Glesne 2011, 21.)

Grounded theory is a process of interpretational work, which fits the nature of the music industry. The interviews are carried through industry specialists who have experience with several artists. Their experience is based on close relationship with the artists and working with their marketing needs. Based on this experience grounded theory is a perfect methodology to use for this research, as it allows to construct an idea and concept around how social media is used to market the musicians.

3.1.3 Methods

There are several different methods to choose from when collecting data but this chapter focuses on interviews, which is the way this research is conducted with. When the purpose of a study is exploratory, the best way to examine the feelings and attitudes is through an interview. It is a basic form of human relationship where a language is used between two or several human beings to result in a cooperative inquiry. (Gray 2017, 396—397.) According to Reason and Rowan (1981):

The best stories are those that stir people's minds, hearts and souls and by so doing, give them new insights into themselves, their problems and their human condition. (Reason—Rowan 1981, 50.)

At its core value, an interview is helping the participant to understand the lived experience and to reform these ideas into language, and document what “was” into “is”. In addition, the process of interview aims to give meaning to the lived experiences. (Seidman 2013, 18—19.) The purpose of an interview can be described in three ways. Firstly, it gives us data about the person's knowledge, values, preferences and attitudes. Secondly, an interview is a mean to test a hypothesis or find variables and the relationships existing between them. Thirdly, an interview may be conducted together with other type of methods to follow up of the topics that have come up. (Cohen—Manion—Morrison 2011, 411.)

There are several different types of interviews a researcher can use. The main dichotomy for interviews are structured and unstructured with different variations in between, for example semi-structured, group or focus group interviews (Collins 1998). The differences between each type of interview lies within the way the questions are structured and how freely are the interviewee allowed to respond to the questions. The type of interview chosen for this research is semi-structured interview where a list of questions has been planned to cover, however the questions have been modified after the first interview, thus not all questions are the exact same ones asked from all the interviewees and follow-up questions have been asked according to the answers given. The documentation of the interviews includes note taking or recording. This type of interview is ideal for this research as it allows the exploration of the phenomenon where the respondent feels it is important to elaborate more on the topic. It allows the personal meanings to be highlighted and for the conversation to take new direction that perhaps was not thought through by the interviewer. (Bryman 2015, 200—201; Gray 2017, 399).

3.2 Data collection

The data in this research is collected through three interviews conducted with the expert interviews. The task of an interview and the information produced through it have been thought to have different approaches. According to Seale (1998, 202—216) an interview has two traditions on viewing the process. The data from an interview is a resource or a topic. To elaborate the two different traditions, the first one, interview-data-as-source, sees the data as a reflective truth outside the interview. In the second approach, interview-data-as-topic, the truth is being constructed by the interaction of the interview by an interviewer and the interviewee. (Seale et al. 2004, 16) The discovery of the truth in this study aims to approach the data from the interview-data-as-topic point of view. The

research aims to find some commonalities from real-life examples and examine the truth that is meaningful to the interviewee. This truth and the importance of it may be different for each one of the interviewees, and language used during the introduction of the questions may set a specific meaning for the interviewees. The criticism to the first approach has risen through ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967; Sacks 1992) and constructionism (Gergen 1985; Shotter—Gergen 1989) where the ideology is that all data created during an interview is constructed through a language and the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, and this reality is being renewed in conversations, interactions and texts.

Due to the interview-data-as-topic approach the best method to collect data is through a semi-structured interview, as mentioned in the methods chapter. A semi-structured interview allows the flexibility for an interviewee to go deeper on the topics if they feel need more attention and time (Flick 2006, 155). The semi-structured interview has questions categorized in three different themes in accordance to the sub-questions of the research. The first set of questions asks about the social media channels, the second set of questions is about the content and the third theme is about the new opportunities created by social interaction. The interviews are recorded on a digital form, which is transcribed in text form for data analysis.

The semi-structured interview is constructed through three elements: open questions, theory-driven, hypotheses-directed questions and confrontational questions. The answers to the open questions are usually interviewee's firsthand knowledge, immediate answers. The theory-driven, hypotheses-directed questions are based on the theoretical background of the research and contain a presupposition, which the interviewee can elaborate on more or reject, hence formulating the assumptions into more accurate knowledge. Confrontational questions' task is to criticize the relationships presented by the theory or an interviewee and find alternative options. (Flick 2006, 156—157.)

Three Berlin based experts are interviewed for this research from music agencies that are marketing successful solo musicians and bands. The experts are chosen for their expertise specifically in independent music industry, thus they are not of interest as personalities as compared to a biographical interview and they represent a larger group of independent music management companies and independent labels. Their understanding and experience in social media marketing will allow a closer examination on the strategies that have helped the musicians to gain more understanding on using the social media. (Flick 2006, 165.) The three independent music management companies are all based in Berlin and work with successful musicians. The size of the companies is difficult to measure as any sales numbers are a sensitive and internal matters and the musicians they are working with work in very different markets with different set ups. Company A has two employees working with three different artists. One artist is operating in over six international territories whereas, the second band operates only in

German speaking countries with great success. The third musician is a producer working for several other musicians. Company A also own three labels for each of the musicians. Company B is currently working with one released artist, has approximately six employees. Company C is based in Berlin as well as in New York and London and has over 30 years of experience in music industry with currently seven artists signed. All of the companies have a deep understanding on the industry and have experience on managerial aspects and are a qualified source of data.

3.3 Data analysis

According to Alasuutari (1999, 40—48) the qualitative research has two phases in the research. In phase one the findings are simplified with two steps by first observing the data from a specific theoretic-methodological point of view. The attention is drawn only to factors that are relevant to the theoretical framework turning the information to a more controllable “raw findings”. In the second step, these “raw findings” are combined by searching common characteristics or nominators. By these two steps the findings of the research can be thought to be examples or samples of the same phenomenon. In contrary to the quantitative research the examples of the qualitative research should not differentiate from the theoretical framework, otherwise the exception breaks the general rule and thus leads to increase of the abstractness level, change of the theoretical framework or point of view of the research.

The second phase solves the mystery of the research or interpreting the results. Based on the researched clues and hints, a meaningful interpretation is conducted from the researched phenomenon. Thus, the structural entity is formed and the analysis can result to generalized rules with references on the literature and theoretical framework. The research leans on the previous literature, statistics and research to get support and validity for the constructed concept instead of forming just one possible outcome of many. However, it is important to keep in mind that the research cannot reach perfect reliability.

Analyzing data is a multilayered process where the goal is to go further than the description of the data. The aim is to go deeper in understanding the information through interpretation, understanding and explanation. (Dey 1993, 32.) Grounded theory offers a specific way of analyzing data that allows the recognition of new patterns and theories, and offers the greatest utilization of the theory in fields where little research has been made, thus perfectly fitting for this research where little research has been made previously (Boadu—Sorour 2015, 148).

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990, 423—424) grounded theory consists of three elements: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. These three elements together build a complex framework, conditional matrix, that helps the researcher to find

interrelations and conditions between concept and categories. To elaborate more on the different types of coding, open coding is an action where the data is fractured to smaller entities with the aim of gaining new insights from the research data. When an event is recognized from data, it is labeled and categorized to be able to compare it with other labeled events. This will develop subcategories or new categories. Another process in open coding is to exclude biases and subjectivity through asking questions against the research data itself.

Axial coding takes place when the categories are being subcategorized and their relationships are tested against the data (Strauss—Corbin 1990, 423). The coding paradigm determines which subcategories belong to which main category and what is their relation to them. This is observed by specifying what are the conditions in what the category emerged, what is the context behind the phenomenon, which action or interaction caused the phenomenon and what are the consequences that happened after. (Strauss—Corbin 1990, 423; Kendall 1999, 747.)

Selective coding is a process where the core categories are being selected to form the grounded theory. The story of the research is being formulated through the core categories, which are the central phenomena of the studies. The categories that need more explanation are being completed with more detailed descriptions. The sub-categories are in a relationship with the core categories as conditions, actions/interactions or as consequences. (Strauss—Corbin 1990, 424.) Through these processes the grounded theory is thus formulated as the more similarities the cases represent, the more validity the theory has. The differences of the categories give a possibility to new approaches and find surprising data. (Gray 2017, 704.) Selective coding usually takes place in the later phase of the research where the story of the research is formed (Strauss—Corbin 1990, 424). The three different processes of forming the grounded theory do not occur in the presented order but rather overlap each other and moving from a process to process is fast (Gray 2017, 699). Conceptualization and generalization in the research help to achieve a broader applicability of the grounded theory, which is accomplished by forming abstract ideas around the categories (Strauss—Corbin 1990, 424).

In this research, the data is analyzed from the conducted interviews from experts A, B and C where the observations are made from the answers. The experts' experiences are interpreted to analyze and compare the expertise knowledge (Flick 2006, 165). These are further coded into generalizations that describe the “raw findings”, which apply without exceptions to the whole sample size. As the research uses data, which was produced specifically for this research, also direct references are used, for example quotations from an interview, to explain and describe an interpretation conducted from the interview (Alasuutari 1999, 52; Butler-Kisber 2010, 31). Qualitative data analysis often receives criticism that coding is fragmenting the data, taking the text out of its context. For

example, a reader of a research may lose the context of a quotation that it was taken from, thus the narrative flow has been lost. (Gray 2017, 692—693.)

3.4 Trustworthiness of the study

The researcher's findings and the phenomenon experienced by the people sharing it corresponds to the quality of the research (Boeije 2010, 168). The quality is reflected in the trustworthiness of a study, which is constructed of two elements: validity and reliability. Validity of a research is found to be true when the instrument used for the research is measuring what it is supposed to be measuring. (Gray 2017, 159.) Reliability of a research means when a research can be repeated with same conditions and the same results are obtained, also seen as repeatability (Beech 2015, 91—92).

According to Gray (2017, 159—162) there are four different types of commonly used. Firstly, *face validity* tells us that the measurement instrument used appears to measure what it is supposed to measure. This is achieved by the researcher oneself by studying well his creation of instrument and possible second opinion on the instrument, especially if they are experts in the field. Second type is *internal validity*, where the cause and effect is established and to which extent the causal relationship and their conclusions can be claimed. Third type is *external validity*, which asks how generalizable the data found in the research is to a larger population. The fourth type of validity is *criterion validity*, which tells how well the existing measure predicts the outcome of a new measure. The fifth type, *construct validity*, refers to the right operational abstract measures among the concepts being researched. As sixth type of validity is *content validity*, which estimates the validity of a test or examination. This means that the content of the measurement represents the presented ideas and content of the research. The seventh type, *predictive validity*, presents how well a research can predict future properties, for example job performance. Lastly, the eighth is *statistical validity*, which refers to how well the conclusion drawn from the research used the right statistical methods and research design. It is worth mentioning that not all the different types of validities apply to all research, thus only some will be relevant for this research.

The validity for this research is pursued through the different types of validity and reliability. The semi-structured interview ensures that the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. The background for the study is made with great care and the researcher is familiar with the topic, on which the questionnaire is based on. The nature of the semi-structured interview also makes sure that the answers given are related to the topic, as opposed to a non-directive interview (Gray 2017, 402).

The internal validity of the research is ensured by interviewing experts on their fields that have worked with several artists rather than an individual band to ensure that the

answers are backed with experience from working with several different kinds of bands. If individual bands would have been chosen for the interview, it would have endangered the internal validity due to the lack of more experience and knowledge on how the social media works on several different cases rather than one specific band, thus reducing the validity of the conclusions drawn.

The external validity of the research can be questioned as within music it is difficult to say when is it feasible to generalize. The music industry contains several different kinds of layer, for example including different music genres, the amount of resources behind the artist or band, the independency. For example, in the electronic music scene some labels concentrate strictly on vinyl record sales and artists do not involve in digital marketing to build a certain image (Spice 2014). These types of genre-specific characteristics make it more difficult to generalize the theory and thus affects the external validity of this research.

The construct validity of this research applies mainly on the theoretical base of the research, where social interaction is examined through effectuation theory and what new opportunities and advantages or disadvantages does the social media bring to the musician. The measurement of “opportunity” is backed with a well-studied theory, however previous research in music industry and social media has been scarce. The construct validity is ensured with the right operational questions in the interview. The remaining types of validities, criterion validity, content validity, predictive validity and statistical validity are not relevant to this research thus left out of the evaluation of the trustworthiness.

Reliability of a research is defined by the consistency of the research when measured at different times. This can mean that research can be tested in a variety of different forms, for example two parts of an examination, different measures or instruments for the same research, same research tested on different cases, the same exam graded at two different times. The reliability of the research can be measured with the reliability coefficient with 0.00 being completely non-reliable and 1.00 totally reliable. It is important to understand that no research has a perfect representation of reliability and this will be affecting the power of the research (Black 1993, 73.)

Black (1993, 78—79) and Grey (2017, 162—163) also describes five different types of reliabilities, which are stability, equivalence, internal consistency, inter-judge reliability and intra-judge reliability. To elaborate more, the first type of reliability, *stability*, is measuring the same phenomena on two separate times, and any variation between results is called subject error. This may apply to the study to some extent as the interviews are observing the phenomenon of social media, which can rapidly change and new trends may emerge, and the interviews for this study have been conducted within the period of two months. However, the results do not show any change during this time. The second type of reliability, *equivalence*, can be tested with two equivalent measurements

on the same set of people during the same day. This can help in the evaluation of a new test compared to the old one. This does not apply to this study. *Internal consistency*, the third type of reliability, measures the correlations of the items in the same test or the homogeneity of an interview questionnaire. This study does not examine any internal consistencies; thus, the reliability does not apply. The fourth, *inter-judge reliability*, measures the reliability of the observations when there are at least two people making a personal judgement, for example in a dog show. The data is collected from three different people who are giving their own opinions and knowledge on the topic. This reliability applies, and due to the similarities of the research data and the conclusions drawn from them the standard practices in the industry confirm the answers given by the interviews can be said to be reliable to most extent. To some extent the data is also market-dependent and can vary, thus showing unreliable results. Lastly, the *intra-judge reliability* measures the consistency of the observations when a large amount of data has been collected throughout a longer period. The bias of the answers may become as a source of unreliability as the respondents do not answer honestly. The research does not involve large data and can be thus disregarded.

The trustworthiness of the research also depends on the chosen approach on the criticism. When observing the source of information as an indicator, the gained information is used as an indirect evidence from the presented question. Approaching an interview through this is quite reliable as the interviewee is not conscious about the motives of the interview, thus the answers are most likely not manipulated from the truth. Another approach is to observe the information as a testimony, where the answers are viewed as a testimony. Using an interview as a source with this approach is truthful, objective and an accurate description of the researched reality. (Alasuutari 1999, 96—96.) For this research, the testimonial approach is more suitable as the reality of the best practices are not known and the research is not trying to observe any other aspect from the answers than the questions presented.

3.5 Limitations

An interview can set some limitations on the data received, and one of the reasons can be lack of trust between the two parties. Before the interview the interviewer needs to build a good relationship with the informer, where both parties feel satisfaction and empathy towards each other's position (Keats 2003, 23). For this research the first interviewee was found from an existing relationship, thus the research data was not limited by the trust. The second interviewee was found from the first interviewees network as a referral, which also evoked the feeling of trust and confiding between the interviewer and the interviewee. The third interviewee was an unknown person, and the first contact was

made through e-mail. All three experts were told that the information they shared was confident and anything they didn't feel comfortable to share could be not answered. However, all three experts were very helpful and thus no limitations were set from the lack of trust.

As mentioned earlier, the semi-structured interview has three elements out of which one, the confrontational questions, may cause irritations in the interviewee. This may lead to answers, which are not elaborate or even not answered. As an interviewer, it is important to let the interviewee to understand that it is not a performance test and the questions can be introduced in a careful manner. (Flick 2006, 159.)

The chosen interview method, a semi-structured interview has some limitations to it. An interviewer may easily fall into following the planned questions too strictly, leaving no room for new developments in building the theory. Thus, the interviews should be open to new discussions and take a new course if needed. During the interview some follow-up questions were asked and the interviewees were allowed to talk about all subjects they felt were important to them. Another limitation deals with the confrontational questions, which may cause irritations in the interviewee. This may lead to answers, which are not elaborate or even not answered. As an interviewer, it is important to let the interviewee to understand that it is not a performance test and the questions can be introduced in a careful manner or if needed, remove them from the interview. In the analysis part of the data, the limitation lies within the interpretation of the data, and if the right conclusions are drawn. Here the coding procedure aim to reduce the possible mistakes. (Flick 2006, 159, 160—161.) The experts did not show any irritation during the interview and answered all questions, as the nature of them was not of a sensitive kind.

Another viewpoint to the limitations is introduced with interviewing the experts. According to Meuser and Nagel (2002, 77—79) there are several issues that may arise when interviewing experts. Firstly, an interviewee turns out not to be an expert in one's field, which will cut the interview short. This has been eliminated by messaging beforehand and asking from the interviewees about the relevance and longitude of their work experience. This was conducted through inquiring e-mails or ahead of the interview via messages. Another limitation may arise through the expert's enthusiasm in the inner issues of the company or issues in the field instead of the topic of the interview. In some cases, the interviewee set limitations by answering the questions with drifting to the wrong answer, and the interviewees were to be corrected by clarifying the questions for them to understand them better. Also, the expert may change the roles between a private person and an expert thus revealing more about personal information rather as an expert. Shortly during some interviews, the expert was prone to tell about their personal life or connecting personal opinion to the interview question, which lead in disregard of this data in the analysis. These limitations are considered during the interview by correcting and

redirecting the course of the interview to stay in the research topic. A limitation on elaborating the topic more objectively arises when the expert answers the questions as a lecture based on the knowledge one has as opposed to a more objective and holistic answers. Here the interviewer's task is to gently remind about the actual question, which may come across insensitive. (Meuser—Nagel 2002, 77—79.) In this research the answers were based on the expert interviewees' experience and practices they used in the independent music management companies and the answers given were also reflecting this position. One noticeable limitation to the research was the understanding of the questions in the sense that some experts perhaps considered some answers very self-evident or not worth mentioning whereas other experts explained the same answer in greater detail. This may give a false Picture of the data or less support for the conclusions.

4 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA

In this chapter the results of the research are described based on the data gathered from the interviewees with the independent music management companies. Each of the interviewees is presenting the views and practices used in their representative company. The results are presented in three different parts divided according to the theoretical base. Firstly, the different social media channels used for music artists marketing are explained and how are they used differently. Secondly, the different aspects of social media content are described and thirdly, the different opportunities and risks social media presents to a musician in finding new ways of growing business. The results are then analyzed to form a better understanding of the current situation in music business and how social media can be used to market the musicians.

4.1 Social media channels

There are multiple different social media channels, which are trending and going out of trend, and thus for marketers of music it is important to make decisions based on the right facts to improve the results and support the development in the right direction. In the first part of the interviews the independent music management companies were asked about the social media channels they are using and to understand better their choices, we need to look at which channels are used, why were they chosen and how different channels can be used to achieve their objectives and acquire the right positioning in marketing musicians and their music. The descriptions of individual social media platforms are presented to better understand the nature of each channel and how are they used by the marketers. The results are described with the support of a lot of quotations.

When asking about the **different channels that the independent music management companies are using**, they all agreed on the four most important channels, which are being used by all three of the companies. These channels are Facebook, Instagram and Youtube and Twitter:

“Youtube is there on top with Instagram and Facebook. [...] And what we are also using or what’s also important depends on the territory though, is Twitter.” (Artist Manager & Creative Director A)

“Right now, we are obviously using Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, we are not using Snapchat. [...] Twitter from time to time.” (Marketing Manager B)

“We use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube primarily.” (Digital Marketing Manager C)

In addition to these four channels mentioned by the music managers, other channels were also discussed, such as Snapchat and Musically. These two channels were left out of the marketing mix by all three companies as they didn't see them relevant enough for their musicians. According to artist manager and creative director A Snapchat specifically was seen *"more of a communications channel"* between the musician and the fans rather than a promotional tool and digital marketing manager C told that Snapchat was for younger audience, which wasn't the target audience of the musicians they were representing.

Another interesting aspect to the variety of existing channels are **virtual channels** and did the managers experience and see it being integrated in marketing in music industry. So far none of the companies were including virtual channels to their social media marketing efforts, however artist manager and creative director A recognises the potential of virtual channels in regards for future and remarks the development of technology that supports this format: *"I think that's going to be the next big step [...]. Because music is such itself a product that you experience by being there, by being there involved with your senses. [...]. And also, the access is getting better and better, so you don't need to have Oculus Rift or something like that, but you can do it on your phone."*

Despite the hidden potentials of virtual channels, they were still seen as underdeveloped to use in daily life of a consumer and were more of a *"gimmick"* according to the artist manager and creative director A: *"I don't think it's mass media already and I think it's more of a just a technical gimmick so far. It's not really something that people would return to [...]. so, there are definitely some restrictions when you can consume that content."* The main issues in integrating virtual channels into the marketing strategy for the independent music management companies were limited resources, as creating the infrastructure is expensive, and the relevance of virtual campaign in relation to the amount of sales per album. Manager A states: *"So, so far, especially as we have limited resources, we need to prioritize. [...] it's super expensive. [...] But you need a lot of resources to pull it off."* Marketing manager B emphasizes the importance of being a big artist and at what point does it contribute positively to hire developers and create a virtual campaign: *"If you're not huge enough, the effort is just too much compared to the output. So, if we start to develop a game or another gimmick who is not selling even 20000 copies, it wouldn't work out. It makes sense but you have to be big. And big means let's say 100000 copies an album at least. [...] Or I mean it could be working in a campaign but then you have to take care of the whole infrastructure."* The investment in time and budget to be able to produce content in a virtual channel is disproportional when considering the outcome of such efforts for independent music management companies.

When asking about the reason, **why did the companies choose the channels they are using**, manager A highlighted the importance of the enormous user base, which allows the independent music management companies to reach as many people as possible:

“They just have an incredible user base. So, you have billion, more than a billion of active users.” Manager A continues with explaining that the variety of the different channels chosen in their marketing strategies allow them to show the audience all the complex different aspects of the musician through pictures and short videos. Social media thus enables the musician to express him or herself visually and better convey the message they want to send: *“So, you have the whole visual spectrum covered with Instagram, Facebook and Youtube.”*

To elaborate more specifically on each channel, Facebook was seen to be the channel with the biggest number of fans, however with time it has developed to be more stiff and restricted when it came to reachability and forming a connection with the audience. Digital marketing manager C told in the interview: *“For our artists Facebook has the biggest audiences but often less reach, less organic reach. [...] ...as Facebook increasingly decreases its organic reach and makes you pay to reach the audience.”* Facebook has changed its algorithms in a way that reaching customers without paying is harder. This causes the managers to make an increase in Facebook marketing. Marketing manager B considers Facebook still to be an important tool as the Facebook users are older, which is the main target group for their artist: *“Facebook is very common and our artists are, the target group is a little bit older sometimes. So, in case of Faber for example it’s a little bit older target group and they are on Facebook as we probably know, by seeing stats and all that. [...] Facebook appears a little bit slower and older when it comes to this [documentation].”*

On the contrary to Facebook, which has a stiff and slow nature to it, artist manager and creative director A sees Instagram as the most important social media channel for musicians. *“I think first and foremost Instagram. I think it’s the most important social media channel, right now in 2017. [...] Instagram is more important [than Facebook] by now.”* Instagram allows musicians to promote their tours, show the audience small videos and the activities the musicians are doing. This allows more flexibility and easiness for musicians to use Instagram as part of their social media mix.

In addition to Facebook and Instagram, one more social media channel was mentioned by all three of the companies which was Twitter. However, the significance of it was seen in different ways. Company C, which covers not only a management aspect of the release but includes several labels and handles the distribution of music, works internationally in Europe, in Berlin and London as well as in North America, New York. Their emphasis on Twitter was very strong: *“With me the presence in Twitter is really important as Facebook [...]. Twitter is...there is an algorithm but it’s a lot less restrictive. If you post something and your fans are regular Twitter users, generally they will see it. There’s more scope for conversations.”* Twitter doesn’t seem to be as restrictive as Facebook and has more organic reach to be able to connect with the fans.

Companies A and B, which are both only Berlin based, also use Twitter. However, the importance of it in relation to the other three platforms was smaller than for company C due to the differences in the markets regarding geography and genres. Artist manager and creative director A sheds light on the different approaches the audiences have according to the geography: *“It’s much more important in the United States or Canada, for instance, Northern territories than it is in Europe. In UK also important. But Twitter is just not yet a tool that really has such an active user base in Europe.”* The audiences behave differently in Northern America and UK than in Europe, highlighting how cultural differences can affect the channels used in marketing the musicians. In addition to the cultural and territorial differences, marketing manager B also tells that they are using Twitter specifically for artists performing in hip hop genre: *“One artist we are looking at is a hip hop artist, and especially for hip hop Twitter is like very huge and important. So, it’s genre driven a little bit.”*

Youtube is one of the most important promotional channels to have presence in for musicians especially when launching new music. Marketing manager B doesn’t consider Youtube as a very interactive platform besides when releasing new videos: *“Then Youtube is obviously for videos and it’s not so much interaction, except when we push out new official music videos.”* Youtube offers a great platform to push out new music videos and show new material, which can be easily spread across other platforms, however the interaction between the musician and the fans is restricted to the period of the release of the new material. The interaction doesn’t evolve or continue after a new music video is out on Youtube. Through the platform the managers can also earn some money through their videos and the subscribers themselves are seen as a resource for mouth-to-mouth marketing: *“Youtube we can, it’s a promotional tool for us as well as social network and we can monetize the videos. It doesn’t bring in that much money, but it’s worth it. The subscribers are a social network in themselves.”* Digital marketing manager C considers the Youtube subscribers as a network of people who can tell and share about their experience to other fans or potential fans creating the buzz around the content.

All three music companies were also asked about their **marketing objectives** regarding the choice of the social media channels. The main themes that the interviewees discussed were reach, cost, sales and data. First marketing objective, reach, can refer to an artist’s promotion for the first time to a new audience, to try to reach a wider audience, promotion of an album, tour, single or event. Another objective to consider are the costs and the budget of a campaign spent and which channel to focus the budget on. Company B emphasized that eventually the end marketing objective is the sales made through the promotion. In addition, an interesting aspect for the marketing objectives was data and how it can be used in campaigns to target the right audience:

“Cost, reach, another factor is maybe more and more important is data.”
(Artist Manager & Creative Director A)

“I mean the ultimate goal is always sales, but it depends if you have a newcomer artist, you’re seeking for an audience and awareness. At the end of that there’s the sale itself. But you have bigger artist we are going for direct sale. [...]” (Marketing Manager B)

The interviewees elaborated more on the marketing objectives and how the different channels could be used in reaching these objectives. Facebook for instance is a good platform to gain data about the demographics of the audience, hence the data helps for better targeting and more effective campaigns according to artist manager and creative director A: *“But with Facebook [...] what is really interesting is that you can target your audience and you can see where your audience is coming from. [...] So, you can do a lot of market research, who is clicking with your music and work towards that, expand towards that target group.”* Through knowing the demographics of the specific audience, Facebook thus allows to expand the markets by first choosing carefully the first target audience.

Digital marketing manager C told in the interview that Facebook was also seen as a platform to meet the objectives of reachability, when a specific age group or the audience in a specific geographical location did not use other platforms like Twitter or Instagram: *“So, I’d say Facebook is good for us for certain markets, specifically Germany, where users are less likely to be on Twitter or Instagram. And older users as well who are less likely to be on Twitter or Instagram. It’s very flexible because you can add events, you can add pictures, videos, it’s boarder in those terms.”* The platform is also seen to have diverse functionalities allowing different kinds of promotional attributes such events, videos and pictures allowing the marketers to use Facebook for several different purposes.

In addition to data collection and reachability, marketing manager B highlighted the main objective for them to use Facebook: *“On Facebook it’s more like...it’s very sales driven. Every post comes along with a shop link.”* By adding a shop link with every new song or post Facebook becomes a promotional tool for sales. The shop link is a link, which allows the fans to see all the different platforms where the music is being sold through one link. Facebook was also seen to have some restrictions by marketing manager B when reaching the different objectives: *“But in terms of negatives, like I said, the algorithm is quite restrictive. [...] For me [Instagram] is a growing network while Facebook is decreasing.”*

Instagram was also seen as a good channel for customer data and their demographics, however compared with Facebook a little bit less according to artist manager and creative director A: *“Facebook for instance, or with Instagram as well, what is really interesting is that you can target your audience and you can see where your audience is coming from. [...] With Instagram [targeting] is a little bit more difficult.”* When comparing Instagram to Facebook, it also had good points to collect customer data for better targeting, however with Facebook this could be done more elaborately. However, when it came to other

attributes of Instagram, it clearly had an important position in marketing the musicians, as digital marketing manager told in the interview: *“Instagram is very visual, it’s easier to grow with hashtags. For me it’s a growing network while Facebook is decreasing. It’s good for attracting younger fans. The algorithm is less restrictive so you’re more likely to get good reach so people get your posts, we get way better engagement on Instagram than we do on Facebook for the same photo. [...] And for some Instagram as well [the artists have control over their own account]. It’s more personal.”* Instagram helped to reach objectives in terms of visual storytelling, easier growth through hashtags and better reach with followers due to less restrictions in algorithms compared to Facebook, reaching younger fans and good engagement. Instagram thus seems to be the platform for younger people who like to engage with the musicians and could be done better through Instagram than Facebook. The channel was also seen more personal to the musicians, meaning they would keep the control of the accounts themselves rather than letting the companies to post for them. This way the posts wouldn’t be too formal or impersonal for the audience.

Company A saw Youtube as a very broad platform offering to reach objectives with obtaining visibility through adds with lower costs, however the reactions for the campaigns run on another video could not be captured the same way as on other social media channels: *“And with Youtube, you can run ads and stuff like that, but it gets really broad. It’s cheaper but the whole feedback and reactions are not that direct.”* For company C Youtube offered a way of monetizing their videos and an effective marketing tool for search engines, as they could also promote and grow the amount of reviews for their videos in a more systematic way with Google AdWords: *“And Youtube, as I said, we can monetize it, promotional tool for the music. [...] we can promote those videos through Google AdWords.”* The nature of Youtube is thus less interactive as a social media platform and doesn’t allow the managers to capture the reactions of the fans as well as on other platforms. Moreover, Youtube allows to use the videos on other tools like Google AdWords and other google tools due to its ability to integrate across other Google systems.

Company C, which is located besides Berlin also in London and New York, appreciated Twitter as it gave the opportunity to show an artist’s personality and reach out to different media. For Twitter, the musicians had also control over their own accounts making it more personal. The platform also allows to connect in a fast and easy way with other media and start a discourse with them: *“It’s much more personal. For twitter, it’s a good way for an artist to show some specifics, to show their personality. It’s a good way to engage for example with media outlets, radio stations, magazines, blogs, because you can have conversations or tweet things.”* Digital marketing manager C highlighted the convenience and ease of Twitter as an important channel right next to Instagram, as they

had established audiences in North America and UK where the microblogging network is widely used by consumers.

The musicians can also use the different channels to **position** their message and image **through different channels**. For marketing manager B Youtube is a starting point for launching an artist's music and videos: *"If we are talking about positioning in general then most of the stuff starts on Youtube, because all of the videos are there. [...] So, you go for Youtube because everybody can share a Youtube link without being a member."* Youtube allows anyone to share the content without having to be a member of the channel, which is good for the promotion and allows faster and freer sharing abilities. Without any following campaigns the content stays in the platform as a history to show for an artist's work and if the campaign has a budget then the video can be running a campaign on Youtube and other Google networks and tools.

As a second channel, Facebook is seen less personal for the musician and the platform is used for marketing and sales purposes mainly. Artist manager and creative director A is emphasizing a feature that only Facebook can offer, which is the viral effect: *"So, you have the viral effect on Facebook, which you don't have on Instagram."* The chance for viral effect and the ability to share easily in Facebook also enables for good digital marketing environment, where marketing campaigns can take off faster and reach more people. The manager A continues to explain the usage of Facebook: *"So, Facebook I would use for news and everything more marketing-related, selling actually stuff that I'm interested in. [...] ...the content that you post on Facebook is like water under the bridge. You post it and you have a reaction and after a day or two or three if you don't run a campaign around it, it's gone."* In Facebook the musicians may use its flexibility to announce news, tours and ticket sales due to the short-term nature it has.

Digital marketing manager C is experiencing Facebook to be less personal due to its marketing-orientated characteristics: *"And that's why for me Facebook is less relevant anyway, because it's less personal. Facebook is good for bringing people for events, because we can sponsor, we can boost event directly. [...] So, we have artists that have much older audiences. [...] And when I see cool artists they hardly post, big artists but cool ones, they hardly ever post on Facebook."* She continues to explain that the relevance of Facebook has also decreased as the platform has an older audience and when observing big artists, they hardly ever share anything in there signaling that it is not as used for personal things as other platforms.

As for the rest of the channels that the companies A, B and C are using, they see them more as means of showing the artist oneself, a more personal and closer look to their character and image as marketing manager says: *"And then it's like all the other channels, you're telling a story."* According to digital marketing manager C channels like Instagram, Tumblr, Instagram stories and Twitter play a more relevant role in the image building than Facebook, however Facebook is recognized for its ability to create events

and other touchpoints: *“It’s all about Instagram, Tumblr, Snapchat, Instagram stories, Twitter. [...] But then you’re missing an option of the flexibility of events and things like that.”*

Instagram specifically seems to be more relaxed platform, highlighting the importance of storytelling from the musician’s point of view and gives an opportunity to be more creative and free with the posts. Marketing manager B specifically encourages the musicians to post freely and recognises the relaxed atmosphere in the platform: *“I think Instagram is even more let’s call lo-fi. We are telling our artists do whatever you want, just have a good time when you’re posting a story.”* The more relaxed atmosphere could be in place as the audience of Instagram I also younger according to digital marketing manager C: *“They might not share everything about their lives but the fans are seeing personal insight from their Instagram. [...] Instagram is good for younger market.”* Artist manager and creative director A tells in the interview that he wouldn’t use Instagram for advertising but rather to see who the musician is and what is his or her brand about. He continues with sharing that Instagram is a good channel for quick feedback: *“It’s also with Instagram, the post they [artists] make, the Instagram stories they do, those are good feedback channels.”* The nature of Instagram thus allows to better tell a personal story by a musician and show their character by posting the things they feel like posting rather than what needs to be posted due to the marketing campaigns.

Twitter is used for direct communication between the musicians themselves and the fans and to get feedback. Company B sees Twitter as a more genre driven, hip hop particularly, channel rather than for a more general audience: *“Twitter is more like an interaction between artists when you compare it to hip hop genre, they’re more like talking through Twitter. And people who are into hip hop they know that, so they’re jumping into train and ‘Aah he has commented this and he has done that and that shows!’ [...] It’s not for the mainstream. Very irrelevant.”* Twitter is thus a good channel to voice out the musician’s opinion and artist manager and creative director A adds that Twitter allows them to also follow up on the reactions and who is speaking about them: *“It’s good for communicating more directly, our artists really follow in terms of who is writing about them. For instance, after shows it’s really nice to be able to follow up how the reaction of fans is.”* Digital marketing manager C finds the younger audience also in Twitter.

Artist manager and creative director also commented on Snapchat, which is not part of their social media strategy: *“It’s not that much about positioning the artist. It’s more about keeping contact or keeping a line of communication with already established fans that are already following you.”* He finds Snapchat to be more of a communication channel between the established audience and doesn’t find it to be a good tool for positioning or acquiring new fans.

From all the different channels mentioned that a musician should use and what the companies consider **the three most important social media channels** were Facebook, Youtube and Instagram. In addition, Twitter had an important role depending on the company and its market territories:

“So, an emerging artist is not even emerging, if he or she doesn’t have Facebook page, Instagram page [...] or you go to Youtube and see how, what the visual content or another dimension of this artist is.” (Artist Manager & Creative Director A)

“Youtube, Facebook, Instagram right now.” (Marketing Manager B)

“For us...depends on the artist. It’s either Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or Facebook Instagram and Youtube. [...] Not always Twitter basically. Some artists don’t really use Twitter.” (Digital Marketing Manager C)

4.2 Media content

In this chapter the aspect of content is discussed and what type of content is created to get engagement with the audience. Creating the right kind of content can be challenging that would be exciting and engaging with the fans of the musician. A musician needs to decide on the type of content created around his campaign messages and image. To understand this better the interviewees are asked questions about the kind of content they are creating, the benefits of creating content, what negatives creating content can reveal and is the content being optimized and if so, how does this affect the artistic freedom? Also, the creators of the content are being discussed, how effectively and systematically are the marketers approaching the content creation and from the companies experience what are the attributes of a widely spread content.

Firstly, when talking about the content we need to know what are **the different types of content** that the musicians and the independent music management companies representing them are using in their marketing. The most important part of the type of content was seen music itself by Company A, without music the musician would not have anything to offer for the audience. Another important theme that occurred through companies A and C were videos, which with the right effort and thought, not necessarily needing a high budget video, could be even more engaging than the music itself. However, videos were seen an expensive part of the content creation. Companies B and C also emphasized high quality photos made by professional photographers and using small teaser videos. Digital marketing manager C told that from her experience photos would perform even better than music videos: *“So, videos, GIFs, playlists, live clips from live shows, videos, photos from the studio, track lists, single art work, Youtube music*

videos [...]. I mean in theory videos perform better on Facebook in terms of organic reach but for me I see that photos and pictures are more successful. [...] Photo of the vinyl works really well [...] it gets much better engagement than just the artwork itself or just a picture of the artwork itself."

Companies were also asked whether they saw **other types of content** relevant, besides direct music, videos and photos of an artist that would support the artist's image around him or her. Companies A and C saw Spotify playlists as an essential part of content and in promotion of the musician's tracks, which also generated royalties. In this research Spotify as a platform is not considered directly as a social media channel but rather a music streaming service with an option of following your friends' music (Spotify 2018). This view is also supported by artist manager and creative director A: *"Actually, Spotify is not really a social media channel, but is also a really important channel more and more because you can run campaigns via Spotify."* However, the playlists are seen as a type of content that can support the artist's marketing strategies according to digital marketing manager C: *"Firstly, it's just good content, just non-sales, we are not trying to sell anything, just to push the records. [...] And secondly, it's good for us because obviously promotes our tracks on Spotify. [...] there's potential money to make in royalties in them. So, our strategy on Spotify [...] is to get on to these big playlists."*

When it came to other type of content, musicians did not have for example their own blogs, podcasts or other type of content around them and it was seen more important in North American than German markets by marketing manager B: *"I think it totally depends on the artist [...] we would never force our artists to run a blog or post five stories a day. Maybe it's an American thing as well. All these German artists are keeping it low."* This indicates the cultural differences also seen in content creation between European and North American musicians and how they approach marketing as well as in use of Twitter.

Content creation was seen beneficial not only because it is the core embodiment of a musician's work to earn an income but a diverse range of content gave visibility and recognition as artist manager and creative director A told in the interview. He had a strong view on content being mostly music itself. Marketing manager B saw content as a way to tell a story without aggressive marketing and contributed a lot to the way the musician is positioned: *"The benefits of creating content is that you can create a story and you're not shoving the product down the customer's throat. [...] build a visual statement and legacy for the upcoming albums."* Content can thus be a way of marketing where not only the end product – music – is aggressively forced on the fans but build a story and an entire journey around the music to create a concept and experience exciting enough for the audience to come to the musician.

The downsides of creating content revealed to be the expenses and time used on creating the content, especially videos. Digital marketing manager C saw that photos were

a more cost-effective way of creating content than videos in terms of pair engagement. From artistic point of view a psychological risk of creating content is to receive negative feedback on the music itself. Artist manager and creative director C reveals that the production of music is very personal and the fear of being misunderstood or received badly can impact the musician in a negative way: *“But I think as a musician or most musicians I know, it’s very personal. [...] You always run a risk of being misunderstood.”* Marketing manager B admits to a lot of content being thrown away due to low quality of the content and brings up another point of view, which is that once the content has been published and shared it is impossible to remove it later if the musician changes his or her mind: *“It’s very expensive from time to time. [...] I created a lot of videos but let’s say 30 % ended up in the trash. [...] If an artist is not happy with a press photo afterwards, there’s basically nothing you can do to correct.”* The content that has been once created will always stay in people’s minds or in some channels in the internet.

It was also interesting to see if a more strategic approach was taken into consideration with **the creation of content in terms of optimization** for search engines or in any other way. Company B out of the three independent music management companies stated that optimization was never considered as a factor for improving their campaigns but relied more on their feeling: *“We basically just focus on the content and if it looks cool or not. And that’s the only measurement.”* They had created the music management company specifically to give the artistic vision the freedom from marketing rules or commercial pressure to produce anything forced.

Companies A and C shared some general rules that were to be followed when making teaser videos or other content on social media channels. Both of them stated that it was important to consider the device that the content was being watched from, as phones were the most common device for this. The musician’s message had on average from three to five seconds to attract the attention of a fan or the content was ignored. When making music videos, the optimal length seemed to be 20 seconds, in which the music and the visual aspect should be catching the attention. Company C told they used subtitles in their videos as often they were watched from phones without sounds. They also used Google AdWords to boost the viewer count for their videos on Youtube. In addition, the digital marketing manager C advised to use always a photo with a link to attract the attention and use a bank of hashtags for the musicians: *“For videoclips, teasers, we are trying to keep them below 20 seconds. [...] We make sure that videos on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are subtitled because people are watching without sound on their phones and most of these are mobile views. [...] we use Google AdWords to boost the videos on Youtube just to increase their viewer count. I really discourage just posting a link without an image, it’s much better to post an image or video. [...] we have like a bank of hashtags [...]”* This shows the diverse aspects of what a music marketer should keep in mind and in how many different ways the content can be optimized.

Relating to the previous question it was also interesting to know whether **the optimization efforts restricted the artistic freedom of the musicians**. As company B did not think about the optimization being part of their strategies they also did not see any contradiction or restrictions with the artistic freedom they had with their artists: *“We want to focus totally on the artist and the vision and ideas. Nothing else.”* Companies A and C saw the optimization influencing the music in terms of creating the music according to the audience’s tastes to earn an income. However, it is important to note that Company C did not see music as content the same way as Company A did. According to artist manager and creative director A streaming the music offers labels to examine the exact moments where the attention of a listener starts and stops. Radios act in a similar way when they are testing new music during the nighttime: *“...streaming is optimizing that way of looking at music because it has the numbers. It knows at which exact second people are skipping the track. Radios are doing the same. [...] it really differs from artist to artist. Some artists just really want to do what people love. Some artists want to do art that also overlaps what people love and some want to make something completely different.”* It seems as the artistic freedom is defined by the musician’s will to create music that is commercially successful or because they want to create their own music without any restrictions or preferences of others.

When it comes to **creating content and who is behind it**, there are several resources a musician can use. Marketing manager B told in the interview that they create the content together with the musicians if they have a vision. When the musician is lacking a clear artistic vision, the independent music management companies hire visual agencies to outsource the work to get high quality: *“...this is all in our hands, we want it that way, we are looking for director or photographer that has a certain style. [...] It’s basically most of the time the artists and us if there’s no artist vision then it’s going to be us.”* By hiring other visual artists who are specialized in their own field the managers ensure they will achieve high standards with the content creation in a style they have envisioned. For the most personal channels like Instagram, according to digital marketing manager C, the best engagement is reached with personal photos taken by the artist oneself. For newsletters, product photos and smaller things, in company C the manager made the content herself: *“I actually create a lot of the content [...]. Yeah, especially for Instagram I encourage [artists taking photos themselves]. The artists that use most personal photos, they get the best engagement by far. [Professional photos] are a lot slicker but they are a lot less personal, in that way worse reach”* It seems that when a musician is collaborating with the management company they get access to a wide visual arts network, which is a key in creation of good content and delivering the right image to the fans.

The managers interviewed for this research had experience working with several different musicians and consequently they had a better view on **how systematic and**

effective approach did the content creation have in marketing the musicians as opposed to individual musicians. The basic approach each company had with their musicians was that nothing was forced onto them, as being authentic was seen to be the key attribute in marketing. Artist manager and creative director A emphasizes authenticity in content creation: *“...we suggest them to make content as much as they can. [...] With Instagram it’s good to post at least three times per week [...]. But it doesn’t work if you force it on anyone [...] authenticity is the most important adjective that you have as in developing an artist.”* All managers had specific schedules and recommendations for the musicians in terms of the schedule of the posts. Marketing manager B elaborates on their timetable telling that 24 hours before the shows they make a little post and they have a person in charge of the posting the artist need to make and what the person in charge is posting. Digital marketing manager C adds that for every campaign they make they have a music video, GIFs and short video clips based around the album artwork keeping in mind the musician’s wishes. All of the managers agreed to have a systematic approach to their campaigns and thus content have to be created also in time to be able to promote the next campaign.

Social media offers the chance of being heard and seen through a viral effect, which means a post has been seen by a large amount of people who have also shared and told the story to their friends. For **the content to be exciting and widely spread** for the musicians, the companies had different opinions what made the content popular. Company B perceived the viral popularity for content to rely heavily on the budget spent to reach as many people as possible: *“It’s a matter of time, luck and Zeitgeist [...], I know it has to come from money. [...] I believe all these viral videos has come along with a massive marketing impact”* From this point of view the viral effect is heavily reliable on financial investments on the marketing campaigns and doesn’t depend on the quality or idea behind the content. Company A believed in artistic vision through originality, quality, skills and in the emotions of the audience: *“Originality, quality, skill, just certain impact and certain emotional response it forces out of the consumer, viewer or listener. [...] whatever you think is artistically valuable.”*

Company C saw popular viral content to be successful due to the visual attributes, short and precise, personal and contemporary. On the contrary to the view of the manager from company B, digital music manager C believes that creative content and knowhow around it is important on independent level *“But in terms of content, if you’ve been creative about it and knowledgeable about the visual style of the artist and what the audience is interested in then I don’t think there’s a huge difference at our [independent label] level.”* Money had a positive impact on the popularity of the content but company C also recognized it wasn’t alone enough to have a viral effect: *“Yes, but also you can have a big budget music video for a big artist but that doesn’t necessarily mean that’s going to be a big campaign. [...] from financial perspective, it’s less about the nature of*

the content and more about how you sponsor it in terms of advertising. Google ads, Youtube, Facebook and Instagram as well.” With smaller independent musicians with smaller fan base it was more important to know how was the budget allocated in advertising thorough Google ads, Youtube, Facebook and Instagram advertisement.

4.3 Interaction through social media

Social media can give great many opportunities for a musician from marketing point of view but as well finding and forming new business opportunities and partnerships. In this chapter the perspective of social interaction in social media is discussed in terms of new business opportunities. The theory of effectuation is used as a base to understand the different business outcomes that can emerge for musicians by using social media. For this we need to look at what kind of resources the artists need to be able to gain these opportunities, what are the risks they are willing to take for future gain, what kind of partnerships have been formed through the interaction on social media and do the musicians use this opportunity strategically in a more systematic way. Further, the negative outcomes are examined and if there is a way to correct the negatives outcomes afterwards.

When the musicians are using social media for their marketing, it is essential to understand **who are behind the accounts** and whether they are using separate accounts for private life. All three managers revealed to be working together with the musicians when it came to their social media account management. The level of cooperation varied according to the willingness of the artists to use the social media. Company A told in the interview that the musicians were managing their own accounts, however the managers had access to their accounts in case they needed to post something during a show or a tour. The musicians also had test accounts where they could approve a post by the manager. Company B revealed to be in charge for the posting schedules and the profiles and having the power to delete any of the musician’s posts if they considered the need for it. Company C had different strategies with different musicians. Some of them had a complete control over their own accounts with the manager’s guidance, whereas others were interested in managing only one channel allowing the managers to take over the other channels. They explained with some musicians the content was inappropriate or of low quality, which is why the managers needed to approve the posts according to digital marketing manager C: *“Some artists have a complete control over their social channels but with guidance from me. [...] So, we approve all the posts before posting. [The post] was just not appropriate for Youtube, so in that case we just had to say sorry we can’t use this. [...] we’ve also had videos that are not high enough standard.”* All of the approaches show that the musicians cooperated with the managers when it came to the

control of their social media accounts and that the independent music management companies had the last word on the decision-making when it came to posting to the different accounts.

The companies were also asked whether **the social media accounts the musicians are using are personal or private ones?** The social media accounts the musicians are using are mostly separated from their private accounts on Facebook, and Twitter. The two channels that would evolve from a private account into public ones were Instagram and Youtube. According to artist manager and creative director bands would create a separate account as a band on Instagram: *“With Facebook [...] we use a public account [...] and usually they have their own private accounts. And with Instagram the private account turns to be an artist account [...]. And with band we are working with they founded an artist account that works like a person. And with Youtube it’s the same as in Instagram.”*

For musicians using social media as a tool to **gain new opportunities in future require certain means and resources** on present day. The music companies gave insight to what are those important resources that musicians can utilize in search for new business partnerships and other collaborations through social media. Artist manager and creative director A brings up the skills and knowledge that the managers have on social media that can help the musician: *“Of course [an artist] can use the experience maybe management has, from other people, other artists they are working with. And sometimes they have somebody who is handling only social media campaign, you know you have a Facebook ad manager and stuff like that, that the artist sometimes doesn’t know how everything works.”*

In addition to the social media knowledge marketing manager B emphasizes the importance of quality content and the network around the musician: *“I guess you need good content, interesting content, then you need a certain network, that would help a lot, and you need some money and time. If the network is really strong [...] then you don’t have to put so much money in it. [...] but if you target a certain mainstream audience, at some point you need some money.”* The network around the musician are other artists who appreciate the artwork created by the musician and their will to share and help spread the music of this musician. This helps the musician to gain more visibility and recognition through the audience of other artists.

Digital marketing manager C explains the differences occurring with young artists and older artists and how their social media knowhow affects their need for resources. The younger musicians understand the use of social media better and more naturally than the older musicians who need more help through the independent music management companies. The manager continues to tell that a visual understanding and the knowledge of how to construct visually appealing content is an important resource: *“A good camera on your phone, but most successful artists on social media, the ones that have a strong personal visual aesthetic, they know what they’re doing [...]. So, I think it’s knowledge,*

some artists are really reluctant to post on...some artists really feel like it's a lot of time required." For musicians who are reluctant or lacking the touch for social media, the managers support them with their social media efforts.

The music companies were also asked about what were **the costs or risks that they have seen musicians willingly taking** in trying to pursue new business opportunities in future. The main theme arising through all the answers was the risk of losing the musician's authenticity when doing partnerships with brands that want the musicians to promote their product or service. The musicians need to know, be careful and align with the message they are sending with their art and what could the products they are promoting do to their image. Music genre here plays an essential role according to company B: *"Totally depends on the artist and genre. For hip hop, they have brand all over the place. It's no big deal if they feature tons of watches and shoes, and whiskey and cars, that's not a big deal. But, if you have a singer-songwriter, sensitive sort of music then I would say it's kind of a tricky thing and very well have to match the lyrics and content of the music."* With hip hop musicians it is acceptable to promote a lot of brands for their financial gain, whereas a more environmentally and socially conscious singer-songwriter can only accept socially aware partnerships to work with not to hurt their own image. Company A emphasized the moral standpoint of a post, i.e. posting something inappropriate that could singlehandedly end the musician's career. On the contrary, when a musician is taking the risk of authenticity and doing a strategic and correct choices, they can also earn a living without live performances:

"...so, every promoter, every label, brand that you're working with, they want the artist to post something affiliated to them. [...] and then they do it with everything they get for free. You can hurt their authenticity it can seem like a sell-out. Sometimes they can post something that is too private or maybe you know, bewilder people. [...] One post can end a career forever. [...] But then again artists are and can be what marketing people are calling influencers and they can make a lot of money with that. [...] they can actually live off their social media presence." (Artist Manager & Creative Director A)

Using social media can result in **new opportunities and outcomes** for the musicians through partnerships and collaborations. According to artist manager and creative director A the musicians may communicate directly between each other through social media channels and form a partnership. On the artistic field it may be musicians sharing each other's artwork, or end up doing music together. Also, directors, photographers, graphic designers, clothing designers and other people on the visual field start working with each other through social media. These collaborations often occur when the artists are enthusiastically expressing their liking in the other artist's work and would like to share their vision together as told by company A: *"A lot of corporations between artists, they*

communicate directly, [...] also by commenting on new content. Or giving props.” Digital marketing manager C reveals that different kinds of brands discover the visual appearance of a musician and want them to represent the brand. The brands may offer money or free products for a post by a musician, especially for Instagram or Youtube. The musicians may be also booked for performances and events based on their popularity with Facebook fans or Instagram likes: *“Younger brands, for example, a trainer company or a sports wear brand that have a younger market. Those financial opportunities definitely arise more when there’s an increased presence in social media. Booking and event are really important.”* The visual style and image of the content of a musician can thus play an important role into how they are perceived as artists and defines on which brands want to work with them. The musicians also can involve themselves with charity to raise awareness for a social cause. The musicians are asked to share a post with some products, which would be given to people through a draw as experienced by marketing manager B: *“Or for benefit, for social stuff. We always have a lot of requests: ‘Can you maybe share some merchandise with us and we can do a lottery and give that to the people.’ So, this is happening a lot through social media.”* The visual presentation and content communicated between the musicians and the fans on social media networks thus seem to flourish into a fruitful collaboration between the different artists, charities and brands.

An interesting theme occurred when discussing the opportunities that social media presented related to the popularity of a musician on social media. According to company B, some musicians would buy fans from bots, which generate artificial number of fans but don’t appear in engagement of the fans. The manager strongly discouraged to this action due to unethical character and low engagement from fans, which could hurt the image of the musician:

“That’s the thing where artists are tempted to buy fans, not legitimate. I strongly discourage any artists to buy fans. Because it might increase...well firstly it’s unethical. And secondly, although it might increase how big you seem, you just don’t get any engagement because they’re bots...so it’s not really worth it. I mean yes it might look bigger in terms of promoters but in the long run it’s just not a really good look.”
(Digital Marketing Manager C, interview 22.1.2018.)

Social media allows musicians to connect with other artists and brands easier than before but does this happen also on a strategic level as part of their routine or accidentally? Company A stated that the best partnerships are formed through natural find, when other creative artist or brand marketers truly like the musician’s work and start together an inspiring partnership: *“I think long term collaborations that result in really good content, they merge organically.”* This happens through presenting good content. Company B is sharing other artist’s work constantly however for a musician to approach another entrepreneur for an investment is not seen as a positive move: *“From my experience we*

are sharing a lot of stuff with the artists that we found on the internet and found cool. [...] Whenever an artist would write to a certain company 'Hey, are you interested in putting some money in my next video?' That would be very desperate." According to Company C a more systematic approach depends on the type of musicians they are working with. Some understand the outcomes social media presents itself with and thus are more aware and natural of the business partnerships that occur with it whereas other musicians don't want to concern themselves with that: *"Some are very aware of the financial opportunities specifically. Some, it doesn't bother them so much. They understand the process of social media a lot less."* An important feature on Twitter and Instagram is a verified emblem on the profile, which is believed to bring more partnerships. When the artists are collaborating naturally because they feel inspired by the style of the brand or other artist, that is when the most successful collaborations are built.

The opportunities presented by social media can also reverse into a **negative outcome or experience**. The way how musicians are interacting in social media and what do they communicate with their content can influence their business opportunities in a negative way. Companies A and C stated that inappropriate comments related to misogyny or homophobia are just a few inappropriate examples which have led to a musician's end of the career. The accountability of the musician's acts will stay in the internet permanently as stated by artist manager and creative director A: *"One post can end a career forever. There are many examples, recently with DJs who posted a homophobic post and music media as well as social media immediately jumped on it, shit-storm is the catchphrase for it. And he gets cancelled for all his gigs, got dropped out by his label, got dropped by his agents and his career is over. And this was one post. And this could happen to anyone. [...] And if that's discriminating or it's illegal, or bad in anyway. You are accountable and that is what you will have to deal with afterwards."* Digital marketing manager adds that also brand partnerships can be disrupted if the musician says inappropriate comments on social media platforms: *"A famous person or artists post something that's offensive and brands do back away from these partnerships."*

According to companies A and B, the negative feedback on the direction of the musician's work can really influence them in a negative way on a personal and emotional level as they are presenting their thoughts through the artwork. Artist manager and creative director A explains: *"If they write their own songs [...] it's a very personal act, so every reaction or mean comment on these different social media platforms is a comment against themselves. It's something very personal."* For a musician to present their art or integrating new influences on their music is a personal act of communicating their emotions and thoughts. Social media allows a two-way communication where the negative feedback from the audience can discourage the musician to continue with his visions.

After the negative feedbacks and loss of partnerships, **is there anything that a musician can do to correct their actions?** Company B told that the image of a musician is forever changed after a negative social media attention and apologies have rarely much impact: *“Everybody knows it doesn’t take much. From that day on the whole appearance is shifting and you can’t take it back.”* However, the musician can apologize and in some cases the audience, especially younger audience, understands their wrongdoings or bad comments and are flexible with their understanding. Company C saw that unless the negative behavior has not been irreversible, a controversial conversation around a musician can cause a media buzz around him or her. Even popular artists with a background with domestic violence have managed to sustain their fanbase, for example:

“Form branding and marketing perspective, unless it’s completely utterly offensive, if it creates the bait, an interest and media attention around the artist that doesn’t really have a negative impact. Of course, some things you can’t really recover from, for example these sexual assault allegations. [...] But then some artists, look at Chris Brown, he’s got several domestic violence allegations and he’s still very successful. So, it doesn’t always, sadly, fans don’t always vote with their feet in that respect.” (Digital Marketing Manager C)

Social media presents an incredible opportunity for creating a voice, however when a musician has made a mistake of stating an inappropriate post or comment, the mistake will always stay in the mind of the audience.

5 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter is concluding the research results based on the purpose of this thesis to *understand better the approach of the independent music management companies on musicians and how the social media strategies are built to gain recognition and popularity*. To examine this purpose more closely, the study is divided into three sub-questions:

- Which social media channels are used in promotion of musician and what is their nature?
- How can media content be used to get better engagement from fans?
- How can social interaction between musician and the audience build partnerships to create new opportunities through social media?

The results of the study imply that the social media marketing for musicians is important in reaching awareness and recognition due to the incredible amount of people using it through different platforms. However, the results show that the potential of social media is not understood or used by all musicians as well as it could be used and that the independent music management companies are also often restricted with the amount of resources they have. The different social media channels that are being used to promote the musicians remain mostly with the prevalently used channels where majority of the users are: Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Twitter. Each one has a specific nature to it and they are all used for a different purpose in social media marketing. The content creation for these channels is the most important resource emphasizing the visual nature of it. The independent managements companies have a more systematic approach in terms of schedule and they work together with the musician and other artists of creative industry to produce content that is engaging for the fans. Interacting through social media to gain new business opportunities seems to follow the effectuation theory, where the musician has a certain set of means as his or her resources, and there is no predetermined goal in terms of gaining new opportunities but rather natural, organic contingencies, which evolve into partnerships.

In the following chapters each one of the sub-questions is discussed and analysed based on the results and reflected on the theoretical background. The conclusions drawn attempt to build a general view on the current state of the use of social media in music industry leaning to the knowledge and theories presented in earlier chapters.

5.1 Implications on social media channels

From the earlier theoretical discussion about the use of social media channels in promotion of musicians, the social media channel consists of a virtual infrastructure that

provides real time content and social interaction in the same virtual space (Dann—Dann 2011). The most common shared characteristics of social media sites are the ability to create a profile, connect with other people and share and gain information with communities (Halligan—Shah 2010). The different types of social media channels can be categorized in blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual channels, image sharing channels and video sharing channels (Sheehan 2010).

The main drivers behind choosing the right social media channels were the objectives of the business and the knowledge about your customers, thus the correct positioning in their minds (Gale business insights handbook of social media marketing 2013). For a business the different objectives help in achieving different goals, which can be related to cost-orientation, sales-orientation, behavioural change, information dissemination, promotion or entertainment-orientation (Dann—Dann 2011; Tuten—Salomon 2014). From another aspect and tightly bind together with objectives, the marketer must also think about the customers and the audience and how to position themselves in their minds (Nijssen 2017). It is important that the chosen social media channel also fits the correct style of the message (Dann—Dann 2011; Wollitz, 2010). Kotler (2017) emphasizes the importance of authenticity from the brands, as social media offers the opportunity for the customers to evaluate the brands in comparison to the traditional media. Positioning can be done in several different ways through *use or application positioning*, *product user positioning*, *attributes and benefits positioning*, *price quality positioning*, *cultural symbol positioning*, *product class positioning* and *competitor positioning* (Dann—Dann 2011).

The first sub-question of this research is asking “*Which social media channels are used in artist promotion and what is their nature?*”. The most important social media channels seem to be Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Twitter, which are more general and mainstream channels where majority of the users are. In addition, Snapchat and Musically are potential channels for musicians, however the nature of the channels is not promotional, but rather communicational, and thus left out of the promotional mix of the marketing. These channels used by the independent music management companies are representing three different types of social media channels, which are social media network (Facebook and Twitter), image sharing channel (Instagram) and video sharing channel (Youtube). Virtual channels are underdeveloped for creation of a real musical experience and require a great amount of resources in terms of costs and technical infrastructure, leaving this type of social media channel as an option for future exploration for independent music management companies. Other three types of channels, blogs, wikis and virtual channels, explained earlier in theoretical background are not used by the independent music management companies thus leaving room for trying out new marketing channels to explore.

Each social media channel has its own way of usage and nature to it. The visual attributes of Facebook, Instagram and Youtube allow to show the musicians from the

different perspectives the management companies want and need to show them to the audience. The general nature of each social media channel used by the management companies is seen easily and described below.

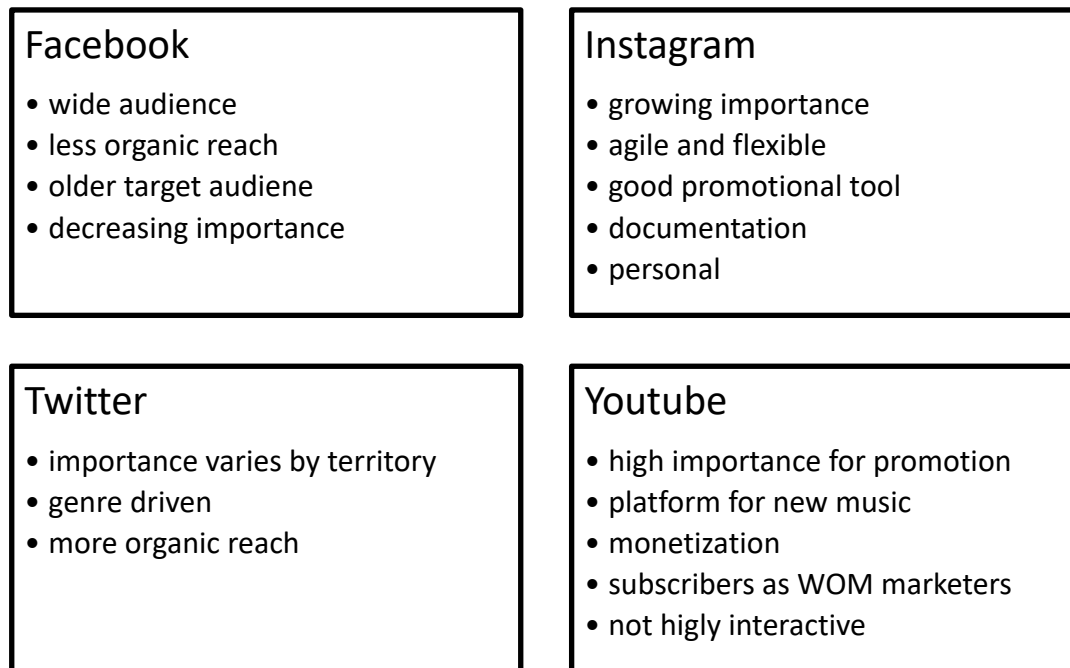


Figure 7 Nature of social media channels

Each channel has its own nature and how it is seen by marketers. The first channel, Facebook, has an incredible user base and thus a wide audience, however due to the changing algorithms and marketers need to spend more money on their marketing campaigns, which results in less organic reach. Also, the audience in Facebook has a higher average age than other social media channels. Overall the importance of Facebook is decreasing but the presence in there is central as only last year in 2017 the social network acquired 2 billion users giving a chance for musicians to be found by an enormous audience (Constine 2017). The second channel, Instagram has a growing importance due to its agility and flexibility and thus very important in storytelling. It is a good tool for artist promotion and documenting small videos and stories. This channel is also seen as a very personal channel for the musicians. The third channel, Twitter is a channel that has a varying importance depending on the markets and genre. In UK and North America Twitter has a stronger position among the users whereas in Europe, for example, not so many people use it. In addition, specific genres like hip hop use it to communicate with other artists. Twitter is less restrictive when it comes to reachability and thus has a better organic reach. The fourth channel is Youtube, which has a strong position in music promotion and is used in launching new songs. It offers the choice of monetization and the subscribers act as word-of-mouth marketers. The downside of Youtube is that after launching the new music it doesn't continue to be highly interactive.

To deepen our knowledge further and to see how these different characteristics can be used in achieving the musician's goals in marketing and positioning the message right, we will discuss each channel individually and build a theoretical frame grounded in the theories presented earlier regarding objectives and positioning. Firstly, Facebook seems to be a good platform to see the demographics of the audience to make better target marketing and build a more effective marketing plan. This is not seen in the theoretical presentation of marketing objectives and will be called *customer data collection*. Moreover, due to its over 2 billion user base it allows to reach visibility through different *promotional* needs and *information dissemination*, and is used to achieve *sales* objectives. Instagram also offers to achieve objectives regarding customer data collection and promotion, and especially due to its personal nature, where it allows musicians to show personal stories and insights about their lives, it offers the element of *entertainment*. Youtube is seen as a very broad platform helping in achieving objectives regarding promotion through several ways including ads, search engines and AdWords. Youtube help to achieve *cost orientation* objectives with lower ad costs and monetization. When choosing Twitter, the objectives of entertainment are achieved through personal tweets and promotion in reaching other media.

After setting the goals of the marketing campaigns, it is equally important to consider the positioning and how can this be done when choosing different social media channels. Youtube is seen as the most important channel when thinking of positioning as all of the videos are there, which can then easily be shared and come back to them to view all the artwork of the musician. This indicates to the *competitor positioning* as whenever anyone wants to see any video, Youtube is the first place to search for it. Facebook on the other hand offers *product user positioning* through fan pages by liking the musician's page and showing their identity, and in addition events where participants need to attend showing who are the customers. Twitter, Instagram and other channels are seen being less about the music and its promotion rather more about the musician's personal image and character. These channels thus allow the *cultural symbol positioning* telling what kind of specific cultural connotation is wanted to connect to the musician's brand.

From these implications concerning social media channels, we can now build a more general theoretical frame grounded on the previous research on how to choose the right social media channel specifically in music business.

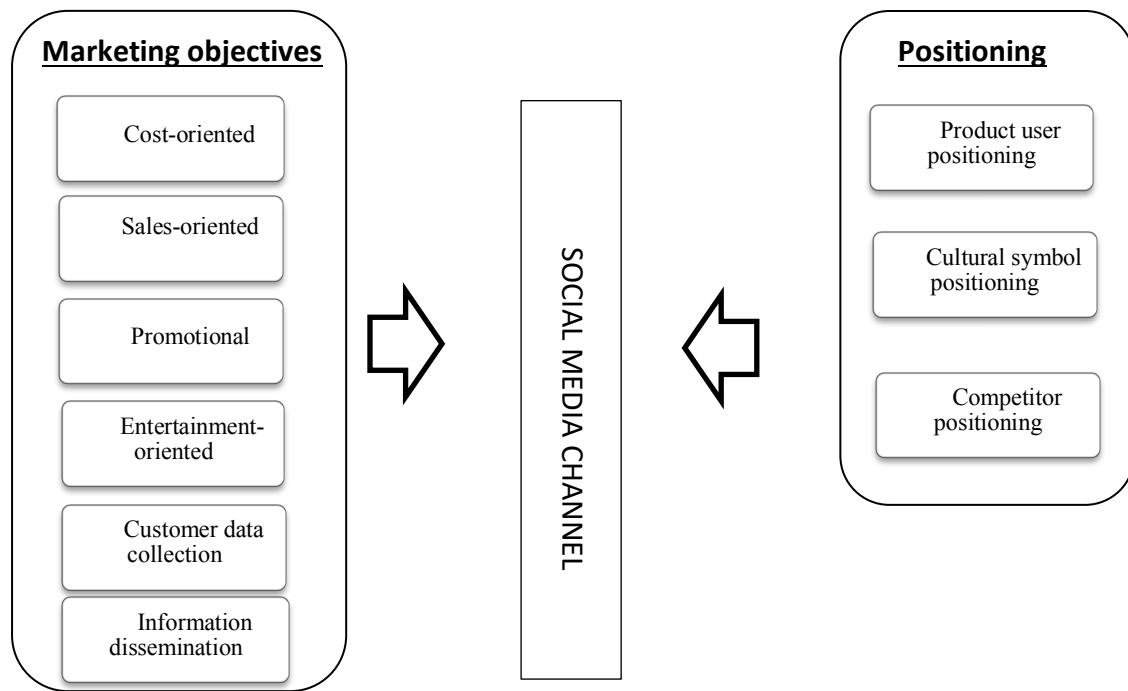


Figure 8 Choosing the right social media channel in music industry

The figure above explains how the right social media channel for musicians is chosen based on the objectives of the marketer and how do these channels help positioning the intended marketing message. According to Dann and Dann (2011) the different marketing objectives were cost-oriented, sales-oriented, behavioural change, information dissemination, promotional and entertainment-oriented. These objectives are modified from the original suggested ones by replacing behavioural change with customer data collection, which was one of the important themes risen from the research data. The six boxes below marketing objectives thus represent the new suggested objectives through the various channels examined in this research influencing the choice of social media channel, which is represented with an arrow towards the social media channels box. From the right side the influence of positioning is represented also with an arrow, where three boxes are the three different types of positioning used in music promotion: product user positioning, cultural symbol positioning and competitor positioning. Other four types of positioning according to Dann and Dann (2011) are use or application positioning, attributes & benefits positioning, price quality positioning and product class positioning, which are left out of the figure as they do not represent the research data.

The nature of each channel is very unique and seems to serve a niche purpose in marketing the musicians. The findings reveal that the state of the use of different channels remains very mainstream, as the managers are using only the channels with the biggest user base as supported by the explanation of different channel types (Constine 2017; Statista 2017c; Instagram 2018; Matney 2017). The data shows that specific social media

channels aimed only for musical purpose are not yet in general marketing use in terms of independent music management companies. Out of the four different social media channels only Twitter seemed to be bound to territory and genre whereas all other three, Facebook, Youtube and Instagram, have audience from everywhere and everyone without any restrictions to demographics. The finding about Twitter has not been supported by theoretical background and thus the research data has succeeded to find a new element to the nature of Twitter. In addition, only three different types of channels are used: social media network (Facebook and Twitter), image sharing channel (Instagram) and video sharing channel (Youtube). Other three types of channels (Sheehan 2010), blogs, wikis and virtual channels, which were presented earlier in theory chapter were not included in the marketing efforts of the independent music management companies. This implies that there are still many other types of marketing channels left to explore for musicians and find a way to stand out with their marketing.

5.2 Implications on media content

Earlier theoretical discussion defines content as something that is communicated between users through influence, social support, coordination or information sharing (Butler 2001). These communications may appear in the form of text, video, audio and photos (Jaokar et al. 2009), which can be further copied, manipulated, put together or searched (Kane et al. 2014). The content may be produced in various forms such as blog articles, white papers, videos, webinars, podcasts or webcasts, which have been earlier explained in more detail (Halligan—Shah 2010). Great content creation can bring traffic from other sites, and through this improve the Google ranks, and can spread easier on social media to gain more visibility and reach (Erkan 2015). The content creation as opposed to paid advertisement is free and doesn't disappear (Halligan—Shah 2010).

The benefits of content creation for a business are to gain low cost platform for updates and the delivery of brand message (Chaney 2012), delivering content identity (Divol et al. 2012), rapid engagement through quick commenting (Agathou, 2011) and improving company image by responding quickly to negative criticism (Catone, 2010). However, sending wrong content to the wrong people can create a negative experience, thus awareness and purpose should be carried with every message (Bullas 2012). Bullas (2012) also divides the content into three different categories: liquid content, linked content and “two step” content. The process of the content reaching the consumers does not require great financial investments (Halligan—Shah 2010; Ma 2012). An innovative marketer adds novelty to the content and can have a leading position in consumer's minds through risk taking when creating content (Dann—Dann 2011).

To answer the second sub-question of this research “*How can content be used to get better engagement from fans?*”, it is important to identify what different types of content were used to engage the audience. The most important form of content is music itself, as a musician wouldn’t exist without this audio form. The other important forms of content are videos, which can cumulate a high production cost, high quality professional photographs and small teaser videos. In addition, playlists on Spotify are an interesting addition to support the promotional purposes. It is worthwhile to note that other types of content presented in the theory (Halligan—Shah 2010) such as texts for blogs, podcasts or webcasts are not utilized in marketing of musicians.

The content creation was seen to be beneficial for several reasons. As music is the core content for a musician, it can earn a living, visibility and recognition for their art. Creating other content is in addition a way to tell a story without aggressive marketing and laid visual grounds for an upcoming album. Content allows to position the musician in the consumer’s mind and build a specific image. This is also supported by Divol et al. (2012) where they state that content creation can communicate the brand’s content identity. On the negative effects, content creation, especially videos, are a costly and time-consuming process as for musicians the visual presentation is an important part of their promotion. As opposed to the theoretical assumptions of low costs of creating content (Halligan—Shah 2010) the independent managers saw the content creation to be the most expensive part of social media marketing as the quality of the content was required to be very high to be engaging. The negative feedback for the content can also heavily influence the musician’s psychology and emotions as when it comes to music they are sharing their own thoughts and feelings to the audience. This contradicts with an idea presented by Cantone (2010) where negative feedback could be used to change the company image by responding quickly back. Sharing content is also an irreversible process, where in case of change of mind or future dislike, the content cannot be changed or make it unseen or unheard from the audience.

When creating content there seemed to be different approaches to whether the optimization of content was considered important for better consumer engagement. One independent music management company was relying more on their feeling and intuition of what worked, whereas other two companies highlighted the economies of attention. General rules of content having three to five seconds to attract the attention of the viewer, the length of a video was to be maximum 20 seconds. Posting a link would always engage more with a photo of an album cover, for example, accompanied with hashtags to capture important keywords. The consideration on the choice of device plays an important role and in which format the content would be optimized, as most of the content was seen on a mobile phone. As content is also often watched without sound, subtitles would help for videos. Depending on the chosen approach by the independent music management company, the optimization of content could potentially also influence the music

produced. Music as audio content could be analyzed by seeing on which exact seconds the music was started and stopped to produce more alike music to eventually earn higher income. However, the nature of the musicians working with the independent music management companies focuses more on artistic expression rather than commercial value in comparison with the major labels.

Another aspect to consider for better engagement is who is creating the content. Depending on the social media channel and type of content both the musician and a professional visual network are involved in the process of content creation. To explain in more detail, Instagram is a channel where the musicians are encouraged to post personal photos for better engagement and to tell a story about themselves. On other platforms the photographs are likely to be posted by the independent music management companies. These photographs are created likely by professionals and other type of content is created by the independent music management companies and visual professionals they choose to work with, such as agencies for video, photo or design production. The defining characteristics of who is creating the content is determined thus by the personalization of the content. Marketers can think if it is important to send a personal message, a story, for example on Instagram where the musician can create the content him or herself or to promote an album or a tour with a more professional visual content.

The independent music management companies equally saw better improvement in engagement when the social media marketing was done in a planned and scheduled manner concerning different campaigns. The musicians were recommended to have a certain amount of posts per week or campaign to keep the fans engaged and informed about their movements, however the key in all this was authenticity and understanding that it could not be forced upon the musician. Kotler (2017) supports the idea of authenticity by acknowledging that in social media the customers are evaluating the authenticity of a brand. In the similar way musicians represent their own brand where the fans are observing his or her authenticity through the posts and image they carry.

The theoretical framework also categorizes the content into three different types of content: liquid content, linked content and “two step” content (Bullas 2012). Based on the research data, the content that is used in social media marketing for musicians can be categorized into liquid content and “two step” content leaving out the linked content. Liquid content can be produced for entertainment or to send a brand message to raise awareness and attention and is easily causing a viral effect spreading across different platforms. These could be music videos, small teasers or photos the musicians post on their social media channels. To be successful in creation of liquid content there can be several factors influencing the success in music industry. Financial costs on marketing this type of content in social media, to reach a wide range of audience is one way a marketer can influence on the success of the content. With small and independent music management companies it is also important to allocate the financial resources right

between the social media tools. Other types of content where the musician can influence with intangible efforts are originality, skill and quality of the content, i.e. differentiation, which would appeal to the audience's emotions. Moreover, visual and contemporary designs for content are successful in engaging the fans. To build a more concise understanding of the results the figure below represents the factors leading to better engagement.

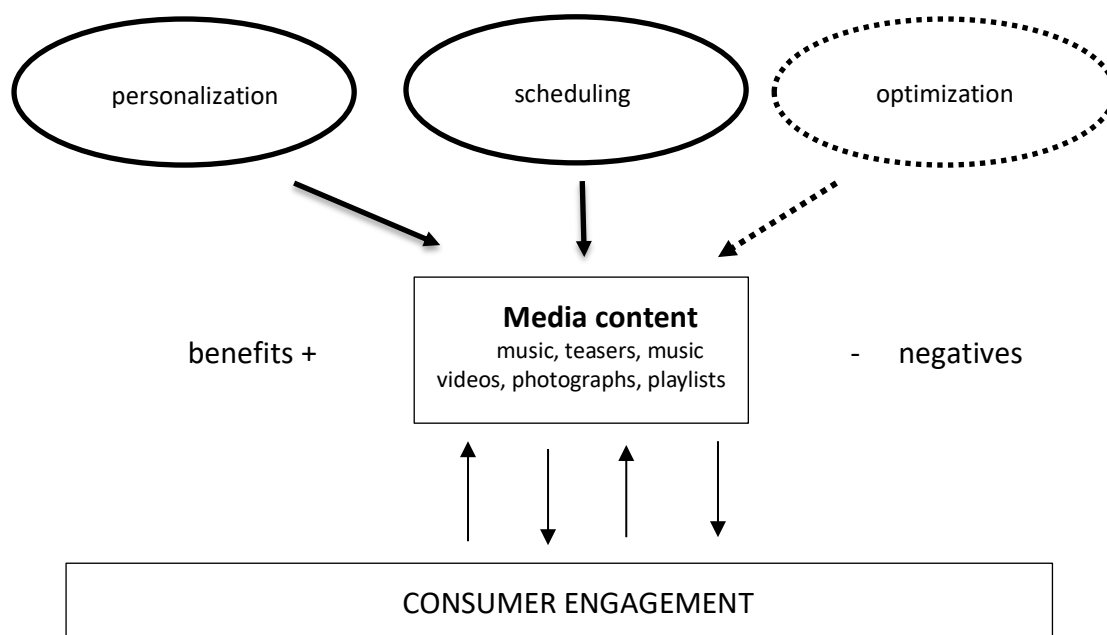


Figure 9 Factors influencing better consumer engagement

From the figure above, we can see three factors in rounded shapes, which can modify the media content to get better consumer engagement. The three factors are personalization, scheduling and optimization, the last one in dashed line representing the choice of approach by the independent music management company. As discussed earlier, the personalization of the content means how personal the posts are to the musician and if he or she is posting them themselves or the posts are more impersonal, likely made with a professional visual artist and posted by the management team. Another important factor is scheduling, and having a planned timing with the posts around a specific campaign, event, or promotion. This is one way of keeping the engagement more rapid and connected with the audience. However, willingness of the musician to post things is a key element to more authentic engagement. The third factor, optimization, is dependent on the approach of the independent music management company whether they are following certain rules and take a more mechanical approach to create content or purely concentrating on the artistic vision and their own style and feeling of what works.

In the focus of the figure 9 is media content, which in this specific research concerns music industry in the frame of independent music management companies. The content

includes music, teasers, music videos, photographs and playlists and is in a two-way conversation with the consumer engagement. Creating content has benefits on the right side, including earning a living at the very basic level, visibility, recognition for the musician's art, an opportunity to do marketing without aggressive approach to it, build visual legacy for an upcoming album and position the musician in a desired way in the consumer's mind. As opposed to the theoretical implications on the low costs of content, in music industry creating content is the most expensive part to build a professional looking image of the musician, which is part of the negatives of content creation on the left side. In addition to financial costs, it is also time consuming to create music, music videos or arrange professional photographs for promotional reasons. For musicians the content is also very personal, which in case of negative feedback can be difficult to respond in a way that would improve the musician's image.

In music industry the concept of media content is an interesting element to study as the research results show, it is a musician's personal expression of their thoughts, ideas and emotions. To some regards, the same general rules and assumptions don't apply in a similar way as it would for an industry with an impersonal service or product. To use content to have better engagement thus requires finding the right audience to engage with and attach an emotional and psychological connection with the audience. A musician shares his or her work for the public to like or dislike it, needing some ability to build tolerance for negative feedback. The independent music management companies are focused on the visual content creation leaving out many other forms of content, which could be a point of consideration for future marketing or to differentiate their marketing strategies.

5.3 Implications on new business opportunities through social interaction

From earlier framework build on the elements of social media, social interaction is the process of two users being connected through a third-party, time-independent platform or application. The overlap between content and social interaction creates communication, games and tutorials. (Dann—Dann 2011.) This communication enables the musicians to work towards new outcomes for a business, in which the effectuation theory (Sarasvathy 2001) helps to understand how these new business opportunities are built for musicians. In effectuation theory the decision-makers use the existing resources to develop and innovate outcomes, which are not known in the beginning of the process (Read—Dew—Sarasvathy—Song—Wiltbank 2009a). In creative fields the nature of creation and innovation may always lead to new, unexpected results, which is why the effectuation theory fits the nature of the studied industry.

The logic of effectuation is enabling companies to shape and improve initiatives, develop new opportunities and goals, hence not perceive control as an exogenous power (Wiltbank et al. 2009). In this theoretical approach for decision making the underlying logic is that desired effect is unknown, which is aimed to accomplish by a given set of means. During the process of decision-making the ideas and goals may be changed and the same time making the best out of the fortuitous events. In very successful cases the entrepreneur's vision has a stronger emphasis on success rather than the recognition and achievement of an opportunity. The effectuation theory is built on four main principles of affordable loss to expected return, relying on partnerships and alliances as opposed to competition, utilization of unexpected events over pre-existing knowledge and control over unpredictable future. The principles build the base for an effectuator, who has a basic set of means to work with: who you are, what you know and whom you know. The effectuator has aspirations and imagination, which become different effects with the help of the given means. The future is controlled with partnerships and alliances. (Sarasvathy 2001.) Moore (2014) introduces a bowling method based on the effectuation theory, where the decision-maker can have strong growth of the company by choosing carefully the first niche market and expand from there to other niche markets. Strong visions are a key to reach success in the niche markets (Moore 2014; Nijssen 2017).

Lastly, to answer the third sub-question *"How can social interaction build partnerships to create new opportunities through social media?"* we can use the theoretical background to help to understand how social media enables to reach these different business opportunities. The effectuation theory (Sarasvathy 2001) is used to understand how these opportunities are created. Firstly, when musicians are using the social media channels, the management of their accounts happens from both by the musician and the independent music management company together. The management is there to ensure that the content shared is of high enough quality or that inappropriate content is not share, thus working as a gate-keeper for quality. Secondly, the musicians separate between their private and artistic accounts on most social media channels, except Instagram. These two factors indicate that the musicians are perceiving themselves as entrepreneurs (Sarasvathy 2001) and separate their private life from their entrepreneurial activities. This defines them as who are they.

The second important means for a decision-maker is to understand what set of resources does one have according to the effectuation theory (Sarasvathy 2001). To be able to create new business opportunities, the musician should have the knowhow of social media, how it works and what can be done with it. The independent music management companies represent the social media knowhow and thus give them advice on the important decisions. Another vital resource is high quality content and understanding of what kind of content is engaging to the targeted audience. This can also be perceived as a way for the musician to communicate through social media. A network

of other artists is also a valuable resource, which helps in spreading the content further to the new audience. In addition, time and money were resources that are demanded to create new opportunities.

When observing affordable loss and acceptable risk the most important theme rising for a musician is to maintain authenticity with every partnership and alliance made. To explain further, the musicians making partnerships with brands, promoters, labels and other commercial alliances are exchanging to offer influence through their channels for financial gain, for example. When committing to a partnership like this, the musician needs to be careful and understand that the message they send through their own work cannot contradict with the commercial merchandise they are promoting. This may hurt their authenticity as the audience is very sensitive to transparency and hypocrisy. The decision for the affordable loss here depends greatly on the genre of the musician. For example, for a hip hop artist, making partnership with different brands and posting their merchandise on their social media channels is seen acceptable and fitting into their style, whereas an environmentally conscious singer-songwriter behaving the same way would be perceived hypocritical. On some cases the musicians have not been able to evaluate their own affordable losses and acceptable risks by posting inappropriate posts or comments for fans from a moral standpoint, have led to a negative outcome through a career destruction. Social media can thus lead to a negative, undesired effect. This negative effect will change forever the way the musician is perceived by the audience and rarely can be reserved.

Musicians work in an artistic industry where different collaborations and partnerships are a natural way to create and contribute to art. Social media offers a great platform to share this artwork and to be noticed by other artists and potential partners, who may contact or comment through social media or initiate a partnership after seeing or hearing one's work on social media. Next to commercial partnerships also artistic partnerships are seen often with movie directors, photographers, graphic designers, clothing designers and other people on the visual fields. These partnerships are built through other artist's strong liking of the musician's artwork and thus want to collaborate on a new project to share their visions. Partnership with charities is another way of building an alliance, where the musician is asked to post a product for a free giveaway to create awareness for a cause. The theoretical approach supports the way these alliances are created as all the different partnerships can be seen as unexpected partnerships and unplanned, developed with time with the resources the musicians have in the beginning (Read—Dew—Sarasvathy—Song—Wiltbank 2009a).

As seen from the research data, collaborations and partnerships are a natural part for musicians as they interact on social media through content. However, the best outcomes are created through genuine interest as opposed to forced and systematically searched

ones. Below we can see the effectuation theory presented in the frames of social media usage with musicians.

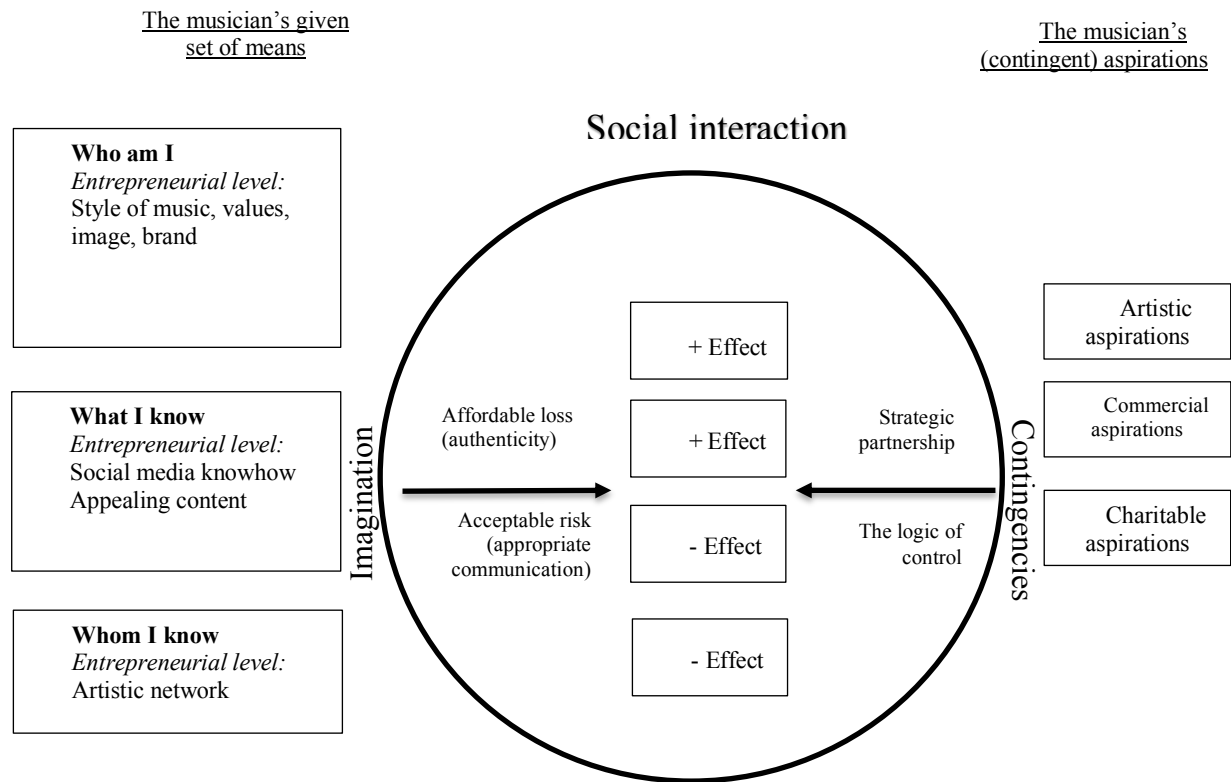


Figure 10 Effectuation theory for creating new opportunities through social interaction (adapted from Sarasvathy 2001, 252)

The figure above aims to capture how the effectuation theory enables the musicians to find new business opportunities through social interaction in social media. On the left side the musician's given set of means determine the basis for creating new business opportunities, which are who am I, what I know and whom I know. Firstly, the musician needs to determine his or her identity on the entrepreneurial level of who they are as musicians, their style, values, image and brand. Secondly, the knowledge the musician acquires to be able to communicate and influence in social media in the right way. This knowledge appeared to be social media knowhow, which the independent music management companies represent and appealing content, which is high quality and interesting. Thirdly, the whom I know represents the artistic network consisting of other artists and visual professionals, which often is presented by the independent music management company. This network help to spread the musician's artwork and gain more recognition through their audience, thus this network also enables to utilize the bowling method presented by Moore (2014) of spreading awareness through different niche markets.

With the means mentioned the musician has contingent artistic, commercial and charitable aspirations, which can be executed with partnerships described earlier, as opposed to competition. Building partnerships allows the musicians to control the unpredictable future. The musician communicates the content and builds the partnerships through social interaction in social media between the musician and the fans. These partnerships result in the utilization of unexpected events and occasionally the imagined affordable loss and acceptable risk, the authenticity and the appropriate way of communication, is misjudged and can lead to a negative effect. The effectuation theory (Sarasvathy 2001) thus is well fitted in the music industry, which is a creative field and support the way the new outcomes are created.

Social media offers a platform for the musicians to present their artwork and communicate with the audience as well with other artists, to get inspired and build partnerships with them, commercial brands and charities. The nature of building these opportunities is contingent and the best success is reached through organic, natural interest towards the other artists. The effectuation theory offers an appropriate theoretical understanding for how these new opportunities may come across.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

The use of social media has so many aspects and gives so many opportunities for musicians to express their artistic creation, that there are several different approaches the topic could be further developed. This study aimed to capture the general picture of how social media can benefit the musicians from the three elements of social media. For future it would be interesting to study in greater detail, individually the three elements: social media channels, content and social interaction.

It would be also interesting to see how musicians can build their brand image through content, for example. Social media channels present a great opportunity to study virtual channels and their utilization in the promotion of music after sufficient technological developments. Social interaction can be further research from the point of view between the musician and the fans and how this relationships work. In addition, genre specific studies and their relationship with the use of social media offer a great object for research.

6 SUMMARY

The developments in the music industry and its digitalization have changed the industry's business model and the way the musicians are able to spread their music globally. The digitalization has also reached the marketing and promotion of the musicians, and the major labels are slowly losing their power in dominating the music markets across the world. Now also independent music labels and management companies are gaining more resources to market the musicians as the marketing mix has expanded to social media marketing. This allows also the musicians to act independently and raise awareness and recognition with their artwork without the need to spend great financial investments in traditional marketing.

The purpose of this study is to understand better the approach of the independent music management companies on artists and how the social media strategies are built to gain recognition and popularity. To grasp the different aspects of the purpose, the study was divided into three sub-questions: Which social media channels are used in promotion of musician and what is their nature? How can content be used to get better engagement from fans? How can social interaction build partnerships to create new opportunities through social media? In the first chapter the digitalization of the music industry was explained, the content of the research defined and set the purpose through the sub-questions.

The second chapter laid the structure for the theoretical background by defining social media and its three elements: social media channels, content and social interaction. Each of the elements were supported with previous literature on the topic. Social media channels were divided into the different existing types and how the marketers would choose the right channel. The second element explored the types of contents and benefits of creating the content and what made it engaging for the audience. The impact of social interaction was examined through effectuation theory (Sarasvathy 2001). The third chapter explained the chosen methodology, which was qualitative research based on semi-structured interviews. The data was collected from three Berlin based independent music management companies whose experts offered their best practices and knowledge on the topic. The data collection period lasted for two months.

In the fourth chapter the research data was described with the support of quotations from the interviews. The research data was divided according the themes based on the sub-questions on social media channels, content and social interaction to gain new opportunities. The fifth chapter was analysing the research results and aimed at forming a theoretical framework in terms of music industry. The generalizations are made in a specific framework from the independent music management companies' point of view. The results are revealing that the use of social media in promotion of musicians seem to be on a rather basic level, using the mainstream social media channels due to the

restrictions with resources at hand. The emphasis on visual creation is important and have to be well thought through in order to succeed and gain recognition. In addition, suggestions for future research were made.

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Interviews

Artist Manager & Creative Director A, interview conducted in Berlin the 8th of November 2017.

Marketing Manager B, interview conducted in Berlin the 5th of December 2017.

Digital Marketing Manager C, interview conducted in Berlin the 22 of January 2018.

8 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Operationalization table

Objectives of the study	Sub-objectives	Theoretical background	Interview themes	Analysis chapters
To understand better the approach of the independent music management companies on artists and how the social media strategies are built to gain recognition and popularity	Which social media channels are used in artist promotion and what is their nature?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Types of channels -Choice of right channel -Marketing objectives -Positioning 	A	5.1 Implications on social media channels
	How can content be used to get better engagement from fans?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Type of content -Benefits of creating content - Categorization of content 	B	5.2 Implications on content
	How can social interaction between musician and audience build partnerships to create new opportunities through social media?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The effectuation theory -Bowling method 	C	5.3 Implications on new business opportunities through social interaction

Appendix 2: Interview questions

PART 1 Which channels are used in the promotion of an artist?

1. Which social media channels are used in promotion of an artist?
2. Why are these channels chosen?
3. If you think about the marketing objectives, what are the main goals to achieve in choosing the channels you mentioned? (For example: cost, sales, behaviour, information, promotion, entertainment.)
4. How can you use the social media channels you mentioned to position an artist's marketing message? (For example, Youtube for showing how a product works, self-identification through Facebook fan-pages, images for cultural symbolism, etc.)
5. From these ways, what are the (three) most important for an artist?

PART 2 What kind of content in social media attracts the fans?

1. Which type of content is used for an artist? (blogs, white papers, videos, webinars, podcasts, webcasts)
2. Besides music and (video), would it be important to create other type of content? (to create a strong reference around the artist?)
3. What are the benefits of creating content?
4. What are the downsides/negative experiences of creating content?
5. How is content optimization taken in consideration, when creating content? (For search engines)
6. Is there a contradiction between artistic freedom and optimization of the content?
7. Who creates the content for an artist?

8. When marketing an artist, does the content creation have more systematic approach or more random/hit and miss -approach? (effectiveness)
9. From your experience, what are the attributes of an exciting/widely spread content?

PART 3 What impact does social interaction have through social media?

1. Who manages the profiles of an artist? Does someone else have access to the profiles?
2. Do the artists use a personal or a public profile for social interaction?
3. What kind of resources does an artist need to use social media as a business? (time, social media knowledge, social networks)
4. What are the present costs an artist is willing to take to gain new opportunities for future through social media? (reputation, money, time...)
5. Reflecting on your experience as an expert, what kind of partnerships or outcomes have emerged from social media?
6. Is the search for new opportunities and partnerships more active / systematic or accidental? Why?
7. What kind of negative outcomes or losses can social interaction produce?
8. Is there anything an artist can do to fix/improve the negative effect caused?