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# **How are consumers being affected through online promotion and social media strategies? Pilot evaluation in the case of an innovative online business.**

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SID: 12345678

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

A thesis submitted for the degree of

*Master of Science (MSc) in Information and Communication  
Systems*

NOVEMBER 2013  
THESSALONIKI – GREECE



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## Abstract

This dissertation was written as a part of the MSc in ICT Systems at the International Hellenic University.

The central objective of this thesis is to assess current online advertising practices and mechanisms that exist or arise gradually. Achieving this goal was not an easy issue because literature has proceeded into an in depth exploration and interpretation of various ways with which consumers are affected through online advertising. In my thesis, evaluation is the main point because it defines the feedback needed for marketers to check the acceptance of their marketing mix. For this reason, apart from applying some of widely known online advertising practices in the case of “The Imaginary Creators”, a further survey was being realized so as to “sense” the important feeling of acceptance or avoidance inside our audience. The results of the survey confirmed the fact that technology has enriched our possibilities in “manipulating” humans’ behaviors for the purposes of marketing profit. Furthermore, based again on literature which focuses on behavioral attitudes, we aim to shed some light into modern forms of online advertising which are characterized by both technical expertise and knowledge of humans’ instincts. In this direction, becoming familiarized with individual’s attitude towards online promotion strategies, leads marketers to give rise to Word of Mouth phenomenon which is surely responsible for the brand awareness of an online firm and customers’ loyalty. But how could Word of Mouth phenomenon result in brand awareness and loyalty? The answer is simple if we take into consideration that WOM is the physical reaction of humans who desire to share a buying behavior with others in the name of information, avoidance or inviting. Last but not least, the fact that Social media have become the method of statement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, enables us to express our opinion that Social Media amplifies the power of WOM because Social Media is the breeding ground for users’ interaction and users’ expression about their buying/navigational experiences.

Here, I would like to thank everyone that contributed with his/her manner to achieve the goal of this dissertation. Thus, I would like especially to thank:

My supervisor, Dr. Katerina Pramataris for her trust on my capabilities and the opportunity she gave me to work on a topic relevant to my interests. Moreover, I would like

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I would like also to thank my classmate and cooperator Kyriaki Lampropoulou because together we imagined and proceeded in implementing "The Imaginary Creators" idea. Moreover, I would like to thank her for supporting me in every occurring issue and for her suggestions.

In addition, my family deserves many thanks because they supported me both morally and financially during my dissertation and throughout the entire duration of my master studies.

Finally, because this paper represents the completion of my master studies, I would like to thank my professors for the knowledge they share with me, my classmates for experience exchanging and the academic staff of the University for facilitating my work in a daily base.

# Index

Abstract.....	3
Index.....	5
Chapter1. Introduction.....	7
Chapter2. Literature review .....	9
2.1. Current Practices and Mechanisms of online advertising.....	9
2.1.1 Social Media Marketing .....	10
2.1.1.1 Examples of famous online advertising techniques with wider adoption.....	16
2.1.2 SEO (Search Engine Optimization).....	19
2.1.2.1 SEO Definitions and PPC (Pay Per Click).....	20
2.1.2.2 SEO Applications.....	20
2.1.3 Gamification Elements.....	21
2.1.3.1 Gamification characteristics .....	22
2.1.4 Banners.....	24
2.1.5 Viral Marketing.....	26
Chapter 3. Online advertising effectiveness and impact on consumers' behavior.....	27
3.1 S-O-R MODEL.....	27
3.1.1 Questions/Answers related to S-O-R.....	29
3.2 Word of Mouth .....	31
3.2.1 Description of WOM through conceptual models .....	31
3.2.1.1 The Organic Interconsumer Influence Model .....	32
3.2.1.2 The Linear Marketer Influence Model .....	32
3.2.1.3 The Network Coproduction Model.....	33
3.2.1.4 Exogenous Social, Cultural and Psychological Elements based model.....	34
Chapter 4. Designing the online promotion and social media strategy for the case of "The Imaginary Creators".....	36
4.1 What is "The Imaginary Creators"?.....	36
4.2 Step by step the brainstorming of the marketing ideas including in "The Imaginary Creators"? .....	38
4.3 Description of these online promotion and social media strategies .....	39
4.4.1 Banner.....	54
4.4.1.1 Step by Step Photoshop Process:.....	54
4.4.2 Facebook Account .....	57

4.4.3 Facebook Contests/Discounts.....	58
4.4.3.1 Step by Step Heyo Process: .....	58
4.4.4 Twitter account .....	61
4.4.5 Blog .....	65
Chapter 5. Evaluating the online promotion and social media strategy in the case of “The Imaginary Creators” .....	67
5.1 Description of the evaluation process.....	67
5.2 Results .....	68
5.3 Discussion and implications of the results.....	79
Chapter 6. Conclusions.....	82
Conclusions .....	82
Future Work .....	84
References .....	85
Appendix.....	91

## Chapter1. Introduction

*How are consumers being affected through online promotion and social media strategies?  
Pilot evaluation in the case of an innovative online business.*

Online promotion, social media and evaluation could be defined as the basic key words of this thesis that give an insight about our researching field. Online advertising via current widely adopted practices and mechanisms would be our main content but also the evaluation of the above would be our indicator of humans' behavioral reactions. In simple words, evaluation could be translated as the important feedback the marketers need to assess their marketing strategies.

More in detail, our title consists of two parts. The first one is the theoretical one (chapter 2, 3), which aims to furnish us with theoretical statements derived from recent researches. The researches' objectives focus on various ways either technical or clearly promotional that depict a modern style of affecting humans' online reactions. In this direction, well-known international journals exploit rich literature material in the field of behavioral models with principal goal to enhance general understanding on the one hand and on the other hand to push contemporary marketers to apply online promotion tools inside their e-businesses with respect to behavioral models.

Furthermore, we estimated and in fact we comprehended that the incorporation of social media is very useful due to the fact that both online audience and famous researchers have been interested in being occupied with this kind of interactive SNS (Social Media Sites). Thus, in our dissertation in its first part, we make additionally an effort to present some widely adopted social media strategies that respect the famous S-O-R behavioral model and also contribute in the flourishing of WOM. WOM in international bibliography is a natural occurring phenomenon that enhances brand awareness inside consumers and motivates loyalty, two elements that marketers desire to achieve.

In consequence, the above discussion explains the reason why we selected this specific researching area for this dissertation. We, as the majority, are online users that in a daily manner receive an ads' deluge both in official websites, e-commerce platforms and in social media networks and in this ads' deluge, we accordingly react. In simple words, we evaluate

online promotion strategies every day consciously or unconsciously. Therefore, it was a great motive for us to enrich our knowledge in an issue that we are daily involved.

The second part of our title, the more practical one is characterized by an overview where evaluation of the above described online advertising mechanisms is achieved. In this section (chapters 4, 5) we present you how we applied the best practices retrieved from the international bibliography in our e-commerce platform called “The Imaginary Creators”. We would like to observe through our personal experience the success or failure of these strategies. For this reason, we proceed in creating Facebook, Twitter, Blog accounts with similar quality content, discounts/special offers, online advertisements, Facebook contests and in second level we estimated in a more quantitative statistical way the acceptance within a population of 51 individuals with different educational backgrounds, age range and technology familiarity. In this point, we would like to highlight the important variable of evaluation during a marketing strategy because success in marketing terms means “followers”. And “followers” appear under the precondition of acceptance, giving marketers the necessary feedback to continue or to stop an existing marketing mix. So, via our survey, we made an effort to “listen” this feedback inside our audience. The results of the survey are maybe an arising researching area because it could combine technology and applied psychology in an innovative manner.



## **Chapter2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Current Practices and Mechanisms of online advertising**

Nowadays, Internet is the social tool in order to achieve the interaction needed for e-businesses to accomplish both easy profit and brand awareness/loyalty. And Internet is the tool because it offers the ability to a majority of technical promotion applications to be widely known and accepted. Thus, through the continuous development of Internet tools, marketers have acquired a great power so as to proceed to a whole business turnaround concerning both the online marketing/advertising strategies and company-customers relationships. The graphical interface that the Web can create between the company and its customers promotes its use as a medium of marketing/advertising communication. So, it is obvious that companies can exploit all the advantages offered which include timeliness, cost and interactivity. However, users are daily confronted with large masses of information which may affect the issue of effectiveness of this form of communication. It is therefore necessary to know whether the information transmitted is accessed and if it achieves the objectives associated with it. In other words, to what extent the internet communication is effective and which technical online advertising practices can contribute to this effectiveness.

#### ***But how do we define effectiveness on the WEB?***

“In contrast to traditional media, Web advertising does not occur accidentally but under the desire of online consumer who determines the duration of his visit and his exposure. According to Raman and Leckenby (1998), the degree of the visitor's interaction with advertising is the best measure of the value and effectiveness of electronic communication. Apart from this, the effectiveness of the Web advertising tools could also be evaluated through exposure assessment and commitment in terms of time spent viewing the advertising. Or, online advertising can be audited through some business factors such as brand awareness, product or services recall, changes in the attitudes and behavior. However, it should be noted that the click rate is a measure widely adopted by researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of advertising on the web. Unfortunately, the negative aspect of this measure is that it presents the limit of being an immediate action that does not reflect a genuine commitment and effectiveness of communications.

Three possible levels of measurement of advertising effectiveness:

- The first level is tied to the **memorization** of the brand and advertising. **It is the cognitive level.**
- The second level focuses on changing the image or fidelity. **It is the emotional level.**
- The third level is the most difficult to assess. **It is simply the level that takes the behavioral dimension of intent to purchase or the actual purchase.**

Below, we will present some widely used online advertising techniques and their effectiveness in the name of memorization, intent to purchase and loyalty.” *(Ziadi Nihel, 2013)*

### **2.1.1 Social Media Marketing**

Time by time, achieving a successful communication was and continues to be the worry of many marketers. Their continuous search for an affective interaction with the customer resulted in their need to make use of the emerging phenomenon of Social Media. Thus, nowadays we refer to Social Media Marketing as a methodologically well-developed business sector which adapts its rules, its processes to the developments taken place in the Social Media era. However, to guarantee an effective attendance on social media, e-companies should take into consideration collectively different marketing theories in order to boost their brand in different aspects. If this can be applied, interaction with the customer would be a step closer due to the fact that customers are the members who support actively the SNS (Social Networking Sites). And, if we prefer to quantify this emerging social media phenomenon, we can only say that” if Facebook were a country, it would be third largest, next to China and India” *(Dr.M.Saravanakumar and Dr.T. SuganthaLakshmi, 2012)*. Apart from Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn get also a great share of market. “For this reason, there are not few these that support that this is the biggest shift since the industrial revolution, which means that the world has a brand new playing meadow at its center as social media is any kind of online media that stimulates parti"icipation, openness' conversation, connectors and sense of community.” *(Dr.M.Saravanakumar and Dr.T. SuganthaLakshmi, 2012)*

“Now as for the advertising world, social media plays a hybrid role in the promotion mix. It allows companies to interact with clients/online users and at the same time it allows the parallel interaction among users/customers for achieving Word of Mouth influences in their attitude. Another strategies allowed by SNS is shaping customers' discussions to ensure they are aligned to the organization's goals is the firm's best importance. So, it is obvious that Social media is seen by Marketers today as a great opportunity to boost market share figures. Marketers are only too happy to view the social web as a new set of channels through which to promote their goods or services, build brand equity and boost clientele faithfulness. However, as it is a two-way channel, it requires effort and care to manage this communication. Dissatisfied customers can protest out loud, attainment many other customers easily and damaging the brand's image. In order to avoid the risk of derogation, the company should align their social media marketing with the global marketing strategy of the company. In order to do this, the business should choose the profile of people that matches its target segment and communicate with them accordingly.”  
*(Dr.M.Saravanakumar and Dr.T. SuganthaLakshmi, 2012).*

Below, we will present Social Media Marketing via some technical online advertising strategies such as **blogging, microblogging, social networks, media sharing sites, social bookmarking and voting**.

### **Blogging**

“A blog is a type of content management system that makes it easy for anyone to publish short articles called posts. Blog software provides a variety of social features, including comments, blog rolls, trackbacks and subscriptions that make it perfect for marketing purposes. Blogs make great hubs for other social media marketing efforts, as they can be integrated with nearly every tool and platform. Every company with a website should have a blog that speaks to its current and potential customers as real people. Blogs are not the right place for corporate- speak press releases; blogs should be conversational in tone. Mashable is one of the five most popular blogs on the web, according to Technocratic, and is the leader in the social media niche. Blogs influence roughly one in five readers at important purchase- decision stages, according to Buzz Logic and Jupiter Research's "Harnessing the Power of Blogs" report. Specifically, blogs help consumers discover

products and services, refine choices, get support and answers, and decide on a specific product or service. From a direct marketing perspective, these findings make sense because blogs aggregate customers who have similar demographic, psychographic, and behavioral traits. According to the research, readers trust blog content more than social media sites for shopping. This makes sense, since shoppers look for detailed information to help them make a decision rather than engage with random posters who may have opinions about products. While no longer the latest, preferred form of online communications, blogs can be highly effective and cost-efficient in driving sales. But they aren't a quick marketing fix. They're a form of online media that requires a long-term investment to help and engage the customers and create more interest in the product offering. By their nature, blogs also aid search optimization and reduce the burden of post-purchase support and customer service.”  
*(Dr.M. Saravanakumar and Dr.T.SuganthaLashmi, 2012)*

### **Microblogging**

“Microblogging is another synonym for SNS, another word to express the great necessity for companies to interact with their consumers in a new kind of platforms which called microblogs and consist of Facebook, Twitter, Google +, etc. Briefly, microblogging enables users to write brief text updates, in the form of micro-blogs (usually less than 140 characters),to post micro-blogs about their life, work or anything of their interest that they are willing to share with others via instant messages, mobile phones, email or the web. These users/costumers’ capabilities is the necessary feedback needed by companies so as to evaluate their services, their brand loyalty, the online marketing tactics and in general their acceptance from the audience. For instance, Twitter is currently one of the most popular microblogging sites on the Internet. The number of Twitter’ users has increased from 94,000 in 2007 to 200 million in 2010, and jumped up to 517 million before July 1st 2012. So establishing their own enterprise accounts (called as enterprise microblogs in this case) within the context of microblogging is an effective channel for companies to broadcast product information, interact with consumers, and promote their brands. Along with the explosive amount of ordinary users, the number of these enterprise microblogs is fast growing and some of them successfully own a great deal of followers (called fans). It is crucial for us to notice how enterprise microblogs are influencing consumers’ cognition,

understanding of related brands and their buying behavior. The four key factors that influence the online user from a microblogging perspective are:

1. *Brand Loyalty*
2. *Enterprise Microblog Commitment*
3. *Enterprise Microblog Trust*
4. *Sense of Community through Enterprise Microblogs” (Zhang Hong et al.)*

## **SNS**

Today we are discussing about the invasion of Social Media sites. There is a dominant abbreviation referring to this phenomenon which is SNS (Social Networking Sites). So, whenever we refer to SNS, we refer to second generation web applications that allow the creation of personal online networks which in turn connect thousands and millions of people worldwide ( *Efthymios Constantinides et al., 2013*). The evolution of SNS is remarkable as their online environments growing more and more and this fact has motivated businesses to explore their usability in the name of costumers’ influence, profit, costumers’ loyalty and their online advertising. But apart from the fact that SNS are generally accepted by the majority of the population, which means that there is a sensor inside the market, SNS could alternate the existing applied marketing tactics. If we want to go more in depth, we can define SNS as Social Networking Sites (SNS) belong to the second generation of Internet applications commonly known as Web 2.0 of Social Web. SNS are a relatively recent Internet phenomenon; the first examples appeared at the end of the 20th Century. Today hundreds of millions of web users are connected through SNS worldwide, many of them having fully integrated SNS into their everyday life. (*Efthymios Constantinides et al., 2013*) A second more detailed definition is that SNS are “services based on Internet that allow individuals to build a public or semi-public profile within a system, create a list of other users that share a connection, and see and navigate through their list of connections and of those created by others within the system” ( Boyd and Ellison, 2007 cited in *Efthymios Constantinides et al., 2013*) . The importance of SNS to both individuals and businesses is grace of attention because it is one of the feasible ways of interacting with users who are the recipients of their actions. SNS is a mean of manipulating positively the audience, building users’ relationships, finding common interests among users’ groups. This phenomenon is explained due to the fact that nowadays

users exploit their power offered by Internet in order to indicate how they prefer to become the receiver of the marketing tactics as this power can make them powerful from the knowledge perspective.

Below, we present you some basic advantages and usages of SNS stated in the research of *Efthymios Constantinides et al., 2013*:

- SNS could contribute to the creation of an integrated company's profile in order to attract users with common to the business offered characteristics. In other words, creation of an interest group within these websites.
- Relationship marketing is favored thanks to the possibility of transferring easily both information and updates to the audience and making communication quick simple and efficient.
- Enhancement of brand loyalty is achieved without much effort due to the fact that daily users' interaction results in trust to brand of SNS promotion.
- Online marketing via SNS is less costly than the traditional one because mainly it is based on the Word of mouth phenomenon(WOM) which in simple words means transmission of reputation through users' cycles. But apart from WOM, banners, buying keywords and other SNS marketing tactics are supported by internet and so on they are cheaper.
- Personalization is also a key element achieved via SNS and it is about great importance if we take into consideration that offering personalized services to users automatically you can increase brand loyalty, users' trust and you can reduce the risk of business failure.
- SNS could help in costumers' segmentation depending on their interests and online behavior. Based on user analysis and segmentation companies could selectively inform their customers even on personalized level, about their products or services, provide them with useful and interesting information or use the SNS as customer service channels.
- SNS could operate as a feedback mechanism for the introduction of a new service or product.

## **Media sharing sites**

“Media sharing sites are these ones that enable users to upload photos, videos and audio to a website which is accessible by anyone anywhere in the world. The majority of these sites have additional social features such as profiles, commenting (like an imitation of social media sites). The most popular by far are YouTube (videos) and Flickr (pictures). Whether it's Pinterest, Instagram, Flickr or one of the many photo sharing sites popping up online, image-driven social media networks and sites are a great resource for B2B companies. Online marketing doesn't just consist of Facebook, PPC efforts, and banners. Online marketing is about providing current and potential customers with interesting, informative content. This includes images, audio and video sharing. Especially in the case of photo sharing sites which are free, it could be a business's biggest investment in time. B2B companies can truly benefit from having corporate accounts on a number of these photo sharing sites.” *(Dr.M. Saravanakumar and Dr.T.SuganthaLashmi, 2012)*

## **Social bookmarking and voting**

“Social bookmarking sites are a popular way to store, classify, share and search links through the practice of folksonomy (an Internet-based information retrieval methodology consisting of collaboratively generated, open-ended labels that categorize content such as Web pages, online photographs, and Web links) techniques on the Internet. Social Bookmarking is a technique that is explained as organizing and maintaining resourceful bookmarks online. The method began in April 1996 when the website itList was launched giving users the capability of having public or private bookmarks. Over the next few years online bookmark services began to go head to head with each other and the industry became very competitive with venture- backed institutions such as Hotlinks, ClickMarks, Clip2, Blink and Backflip amongst others entering the marketplace. In 2003, Delicious was formed and pioneered a term called 'tagging' which allowed users to search for bookmarked items by a keyword, Delicious also coined the phrase 'Social Bookmarking'. Social bookmarking is a very useful way to access a compiled list of bookmarks from a variety of computers, manage a large amount of bookmarks and share the bookmarks with contacts. Many bookmarking sites have implemented a voting system where users are encouraged to indicate bookmarks that they found to be interesting or of use. As a bookmark receives

more votes its visibility increases on the website which in turn generates more and more votes.” (Dr.M. Saravanakumar and Dr.T.SuganthaLashmi, 2012).

#### **2.1.1.1 Examples of famous online advertising techniques with wider adoption**

##### **1. Facebook**

Facebook is a SNS platform that gives users the opportunity to create each personal profile page free, add “friends”, and chat online via sending instant messages. The company that is behind Facebook was founded in 2004 and has become the top SNS in the recent years due to the wide acceptance from 300 million current active users that counts until now. There are extreme claims by users that highlight their dependence from Facebook as they consider it as “a necessity, along the lines of oxygen, water, and food” (Verna, 2009 cited in Katherine K. Roberts, 2010). This means that Facebook has entered into the daily lives of a great part of the population, provoking a kind of addiction in some cases where “Facebook interferes with relationships, jobs and normal daily life” (Elizabeth Cohen, 2009 cited in Katherine K. Roberts, 2010). “Nevertheless, Facebook generally has a lower click through rate (CTR) for advertisements than most major Web sites. According to BusinessWeek.com, banner advertisements on Facebook have generally received one-fifth the number of clicks compared to those on the Web as a whole although specific comparisons can reveal a much larger disparity. For example, while Google users click on the first advertisement for search results an average of 8% of the time (80,000 clicks for every one million searches) Facebook's users click on advertisements an average of 0.04% of the time (400 clicks for every one million pages)”. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>)

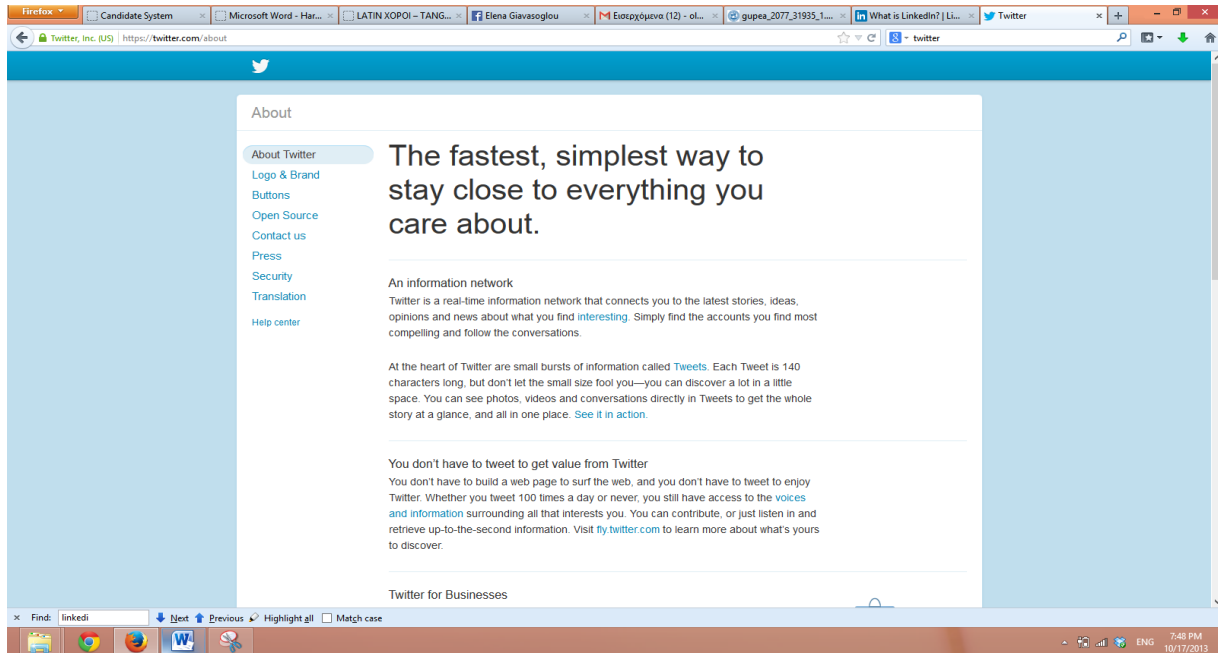
“Positive effects are in favor of digital marketers that exploit this Facebook phenomenon for the purposes of online advertising of their e-business or forums or blogs or e-magazines etc. And how this exploitation occurs? It is simple, if we take into consideration that since it is free to create an account, Facebook has to generate income elsewhere, through the venue of advertising. In this way, both Facebook and marketers are favorable due to the fact that Facebook has a monetary profit and growth and marketers a chance to interact with their customers and create the coveted customer loyalty. More in depth, we can refer that from Facebook side, it always searches to advance its furnishing services in order to attract the advertisers and also from marketers’ side, they use these



advanced services to create fan group pages to collect online users with common interests to their firm. Last but not least, marketers focus on digital marketing tools that can be implemented in SNS platforms like Facebook such as gamification elements that encourage online users to transform the navigation rate to Facebook page into a good conversion rate into the official website or e-shop platform.” (Katherine K. Roberts, 2010)

## 2. Twitter<sup>1</sup>

- Twitter is a real-time information network that connects you to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what you find interesting. Everyone can simply find the accounts that finds most compelling and follows the conversations.
- Twitter was founded in San Francisco, but it's used by people in nearly every country in the world.
- At the heart of Twitter are small bursts of information called Tweets. Each Tweet is 140 characters long. The Twitter followers can see photos, videos and conversations directly in Tweets to get the whole story at a glance, and all in one place.
- Furthermore, Twitter connects businesses to customers in real time and businesses use Twitter to quickly share information with people interested in their products and services, gather real-time market intelligence and feedback, and build relationships with customers, partners and influencers. From brand lift to CRM to direct sales, Twitter offers businesses an easy way to reach an engaged audience.
- Last but not least, everyone could experience Twitter on his/her mobile device by using one of the free Twitter apps for iPhone, iPad, Android, BlackBerry and Windows 7



<sup>1</sup>Source: <https://twitter.com/about>

### 3. **Linkedin<sup>2</sup>**

- LinkedIn started out in the living room of co-founder Reid Hoffman in 2002, and it officially launched on May 5, 2003.
- Jeff Weiner is the CEO, and the company's management team is made up of seasoned executives from companies like Yahoo!, Google, Microsoft, TiVo, PayPal, and Electronic Arts.
- LinkedIn is publicly held and has a diversified business model with revenues coming from member subscriptions, advertising sales, and talent solutions.
- Its mission: connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. When someone joins LinkedIn, he/she gets access to people, jobs, news, updates, and insights that help him/ her be great at what he/she does.
- It is the world's largest professional network with 225 million members in over 200 countries and territories around the globe.

TECHNOLOGY						
Work title (Business)	Private usage	Professionals usage	External Knowledge	Internal knowledge	Firm account	Explicit strategies
CO (EA) 1-1	f in	f t in		f t in	f t in	f t in
LA (EA) 1-2	f			f	f t in	
MA (LO) 2-1	f in			f in	f t	f
MA (LO) 2-2	f in			f in	f t	f
CO (LO) 3-1	f	t		f t	t	f
CO (PO) 4-1	f	t		f t	f t in	f t
CO (PO) 4-2	f in	f t		f t in	f t in	f t
CO (PO) 5-1	f t in	f t in		f t in	f t in	f t
CO (CO) 6-1	f t in	f t in	f t in	f t in	f t in	f t in
HR (CO) 7-1	f	f t in		f t in	f in	f in
HR (CO) 7-2	f t		in	f t in	f in	f in

Figure 5: A social media compare and contrast table (Alexander Sjöberg, 2012, pp.11)

<sup>2</sup>Source: <http://www.linkedin.com/about-us>

### 2.1.2 SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

“A recent research by (*Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011*) states that SEO is a kind of method that uses data observation and marketing research to identify the most suitable "keyword" for the site, which is also called "keyword advertisement" (Malaga, 2007 cited in *Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011*), but which implies a lot of knowledge, such as how to choose keywords, how to use keywords to make our website to be quickly found by search engines such as Google and Yahoo, and enhance the website's ranking in search engines. Through this way, the study's website variable was not made to be highly visible only, but also have the opportunity to improve sales of its products. So how to find out the best keywords, through the survey and summaries results, and get good ranking of those keywords are both important subjects. In SEO (search engine optimization), there are many skills that we need to pay attention to, because they are used by the search engine manager as an offense and defense mechanism. If everybody should know how to increase access to high-ranking, the probability that users who really want to find what they wanted would be reduced, would imply a lot of spam. Therefore, search engine manager will be timing in updating their technology, and many of the rules would be set out to punish those who intentionally deceive the search engines. After all, making sure that users could find the

most useful information is their highest law (Lee, 2010; Lee, Chen and Wu, 2010; Lee and Lin, 2010 cited in *Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011*). Therefore, how to stand out in the search engine honestly would be inevitable (Kent, 2008 cited in *Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011*). Kisiel (2010) brought up an article which focused on the significance of search engine optimization (SEO). It is stated in the article that to increase the volume of traffic to individual company sites from search engines, dealerships should use this process (Kisiel, 2010 cited in *Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011*). Summarily, SEO skill is a developed method that can be used in search engines. So, if one wants his/her website to get a good ranking, he/she should pay attention to SEO. On the other hand, it also means that one should always pay attention to search engines, because if one loses some updates from the search engines, their ranking might drop down.” (*Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011*)

#### **2.1.2.1 SEO Definitions and PPC (Pay Per Click)**

“Aspects of search engine marketing in general are known as SEM (search engine marketing) (Beer, 2008 cited in *Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011*), which generally includes both SEO and PPC. PPC, also known as a non-natural website ranking, is what we paid a common type of keyword advertisement to, and the locations of their occurrence are right, above and left at the site. Quite to the contrary, SEO is known as a natural website ranking. PPC, as the name suggests, is a marketing approach that one have to pay advertising costs to after the consumer clicks. According to different keywords, there will be different spreads, and the more popular keyword cost per click would be higher.” (*Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011*)

#### **2.1.2.2 SEO Applications**

“SEO (search engine optimization) can be used in many different ways. One of those ways is how a business, offering technical communication services, used search engine optimization techniques to attract prospective clients to their business web sites. The other way of exploiting SEO is for brand positioning (Dou et al., 2010 cited in *Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011*), with a good page ranking or good ranking in Google or Yahoo, which might create a good impression about the website or brand on consumers. Also, SEO provides opportunities for accounting firms (Eric, 2008 cited in *Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011*), in that

they can use search engine to find out a lot of related information that can be used for their cases. “(Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011)

	SEO	PPC
<b>Cost</b>	SEO, on the other hand could be regarded as a free search engine marketing, so the cost will be lower.	PPC, have to pay per click cost of the keyword, the cost will be higher.
<b>Stay of rankings</b>	Use SEO rankings, in general use of formal behavior and without of foul under, the resulting ranking is more permanent, and will not easily change.	In advance, using the PPC's website the exposure is relatively high, but after not using the attached fee still return to the nature sort.
<b>Risk of invalid clicks</b>	Do not have to bear the risk of invalid clicks.	Have to bear the risk of invalid clicks.
<b>Time</b>	Longer	Shorter
<b>Uncertainty of ranking</b>	Because of the popularity of each keyword and the first few pages of the website PR value is different, so to ensure that each keyword appear in the high rankings, will be more uncertainty factors.	Although each keyword's cost are different, but after paying, can be seen in the keyword search, belong to the unnatural order and the relatively high certainty.
<b>Be diversionary</b>	Because search engine algorithms are not static, so it is easier to contain by the search engine algorithms.	Paid to obtain the ranking is not easy to contain by the search engine algorithms

*Figure 1: A comparison of SEO and PPC (Chen-Yuan Chen et al., 2011, p.4646)*

### 2.1.3 Gamification Elements

In a recent research conducted by *Juho Hamari and Jonna Koivisto, 2013*, we structured this section in order to highlight the use and general characteristics of gamifying experience for marketing reasons. In this direction, *Gartner (2011)* cited in *Juho Hamari*

and *Jonna Koivisto, 2013*, predicted that by 2015 a full 50% of organizations will have gamified their processes. The reason for this prediction is that in the last two years, gamification and persuasive technologies have been strongly harnessed for purposes of marketing, attitude change, and motivation pull. But this phenomenon is also combined with the wide dominance of SNS because SNS is a great channel for the promotion of Gamification elements (SNGs). “In other words, SNS such as Facebook, Twitter, Google +, Myspace, which have gained the general acceptance of the online users could contain games in the name of marketing interactive promotion activity. Some evidences show that in a contrast to the general nature of the above-mentioned SNSs, some social networking services are specifically focused on gamifying a specific activity, such as listening to music (Last.fm - a gamified music-tracking SNS), watching TV (GetGlue a gamified television-watching SNS) or exercising (Fitocracy - a gamified exercise-tracking SNS), which presents a common mutual interest for all users of the SNS in question. In essence, these special-interest SNSs are gamified services, providing game-like features that enable, for example, goal-setting by providing objectives, rewards, tracking, and monitoring activities related to the behavior of the social network and reporting them on the user’s ‘wall’, where other users ‘like’ the reports and thus encourage more of the same behavior. Users of these gamification services receive, in addition to enjoyment and a sense of playfulness, reciprocal benefits through other community members – social feedback loops encourage people to continue with the activities and community.” (*Juho Hamari and Jonna Koivisto, 2013*)

- ✓ But a general question of this new Gamification phenomenon is how we can predict users’ attitude toward Gamification via social factors related to network effects, social influence, recognition, and reciprocal benefits? (*Juho Hamari and Jonna Koivisto, 2013*)
- ✓ Also, positive attitude toward Gamification is translated to an intention of repeating use of this Gamification element and a possible intention to recommend it. (*Juho Hamari and Jonna Koivisto, 2013*)

#### 2.1.3.1 Gamification characteristics

“**Definition:** Gamification refers to service design aimed at providing game-like experiences to users, commonly with the end-goal of affecting user behavior (*Huotari and Hamari, 2012 cited in Juho Hamari and Jonna Koivisto, 2013*).

**Characteristics:** Gamification differs from other, parallel developments in a few key ways:

- Gamification attempts to afford and create experiences reminiscent of games, involving a sense of flow, and feelings of mastery and autonomy, rather than offering direct hedonic experiences by means such as audiovisual content or economic incentives as seen in loyalty marketing.
- It also attempts to affect motivations rather than attitude and/or behavior directly, as is the case in persuasive technologies (*Fogg, 2003, and Oinas-Kukkonen and Harjumaa, 2009 cited in Juho Hamari and Jonna Koivisto, 2013*).
- Gamification refers to adding ‘gamefulness’ to existing systems rather than building an entirely new game as is done with ‘serious games’.

**Persuasive technologies VS gamification:** Persuasive technologies are interactive computer systems designed to change the attitude and/or behavior of the user (*Fogg, 2003; Oinas-Kukkonen and Harjumaa, 2009 cited in Juho Hamari and Jonna Koivisto, 2013*). Clearly there is some overlap between gamification and persuasive technology. For instance, some persuasion mechanisms can be regarded as similar to those applied in gamification, such as feedback and rewards (*Oinas-Kukkonen and Harjumaa, 2008 cited in Juho Hamari and Jonna Koivisto, 2013* ). Gamification can be seen as an overarching concept in the sense that it can be utilized in attempts to influence behavior in several domains by providing gameful experiences that subsequently can influence attitude and behavior or affect customer loyalty or decision-making.” (*Juho Hamari and Jonna Koivisto, 2013*)

***For explanatory reasons, we added a descriptive table in order to find the differences among the new terms that derive from the evolution of gamification elements for marketing purposes.***

Concept	Definition	Goal
Gamification	'A process of enhancing a service with affordances for gameful experiences in order to support the user's overall value creation' — Huotari and Hamari (2012).	to support the user's overall value creation by providing gameful experiences (see goal of games)
Games <sup>1</sup>	Free, no material interest, voluntary, uncertain, governed by rules, interesting choices, mastery, flow — Huizinga (1955), Caillois (1958), Avedon and Sutton-Smith (1971)	to create experiences such as flow, intrinsic motivation, achievement and mastery
Loyalty programme	'Marketing efforts which reward, and therefore, encourage loyal customer behavior in order to increase the profitability of stable customer relationships' — Sharp and Sharp (1997)	to increase customer loyalty
Persuasive technology	Interactive information technology designed for changing users' attitudes or behaviour — Fogg (2003), Oinas-Kukkonen and Harjumaa (2009)	to change attitudes and behaviours
Choice architecture	'To nudge people towards the right choices [to make their lives better]' — Sunstein and Thaler (2008)	to help people make better decisions
Decision support systems	'A computer based system to aid decision-making [for running organisations more efficiently]' — Sol et al. (1987)	to make decision-making activity more effective

*Figure 2: Comparison between parallel concepts related to changing attitude and behavior (Juho Hamari and Jonna Koivisto, 2013)*

#### 2.1.4 Banners

“In one sense, the main objective of the banners is to attract users who browse other sites. The click rate expresses the percentage of users who click on it to go to the advertiser's site. This indicator has quickly established itself as a major indicator and often misconstrued as the exclusive measure of the effectiveness of Internet advertising. A recent research conducted by *Ziadi Nihel from Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Tunis, 2013*, resulted in the fact that the effectiveness of Internet advertising can be measured through the **click rate** and degree of **memorization** of the **banner advertising**. The first measure refers to the affective component, while the second is cognitive.” (*Ziadi Nihel, 2013*)

#### Memorization

“The individual has two memories, one short and one long-term”(Dussart, 1983 cited in *Ziadi Nihel, 2013*). “<sup>5</sup>The first memory is characterized mainly by a limited capacity, and therefore, a short period of storage. Given its functions, the user should be able to judge the



quality and relevance of information given by the banner advertising. If the judgment is negative, the information will be rejected. If the judgment is positive, treatment can continue using the secondary memory whose capacity is virtually unlimited and information is stored permanently. With this last memory, the Internet user will have a wealth of information enabling him to analyze and interpret information received in full. The Internet user will be able to remember several banners in which he found information that it deems appropriate in its search for information. The concept of memorization is commonly used for measuring the effectiveness of advertising. According to (*Carat, 2002 cited in Ziadi Nihel, 2013*), the Internet proves to be the third medium in terms of memorization just after television. The memory is very important in the context of online advertising. In addition, exposure to banner advertising improves the visibility, branding and purchase intent. In parallel, showed that exposure and recognition enhance the brand image significantly. Finally, users memorize well the structure of the pages they visit regularly.” (*Ziadi Nihel, 2013*)

### **The click**

“The click rate on banner is considered a key indicator and a measure used to judge the effectiveness of advertisements on the Web. According to Chtourou and Chandon (2002), the click rate is the number of times a visitor clicks on a banner over the number of times the support page of the banner is loaded on the computer screen of the user. This is actually an observable behavioral response to indicate an immediate interaction with the brand communicated. The measure click-through rate is an operation technically easier to achieve in the sense that we can easily know the number of times the Web page is loaded and the number of times one has clicked on the banner. But the click is not an end in itself insofar as it captures only a single action and not a long term commitment. Empirical work, such as those of Briggs and Hollis (1997) and Drèze and Zurifden (1998) showed that the exclusive use of the click rate as a determinant of the effectiveness of Internet advertising is not always evident to the extent it does not reflect the true value of exposure to banner advertising. In addition, the click rate on banner advertising does not always translate into a buying behavior. Finally, there is a trend towards less click banners deemed unattractive and lacking credibility.” (*Ziadi Nihel, 2013*)

### 2.1.5 Viral Marketing

“Viral Marketing is another a technical online advertising tool used to pass along a message to the online audience. Terms as buzz marketing, word-of-mouth are used as synonyms of viral marketing in the literature. This marketing technique focuses on increasing brand awareness with a spread analogous to this of virus. It may take the form of video clips, interactive Flash games, e-books, text messages or email messages. For instance, viral marketing through e-mails can occur most commonly in three different ways: through pass-along e-mails, e-mail or a web prompt and incentivized e-mails.” (*Vida Davidaviciene, 2012*)

Viral marketing<sup>3</sup> often involves and utilizes:

- Customer participation and polling services
- Industry-specific organization contributions
- Internet search engines and blogs
- Mobile smartphone integration
- Multiple forms of print and direct marketing
- Target marketing web services
- Search engine optimization (SEO)
- Social media optimization (SMO)
- Television and radio

<sup>3</sup>Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viral\\_marketing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viral_marketing) 26

## Chapter 3. Online advertising effectiveness and impact on consumers' behavior

### 3.1 S-O-R MODEL

Exploring the possible consequences of the above online advertising mechanisms as far as the behavioral reactions of the online users are concerned is the main objective of this chapter. By deepening into the bibliography, we result in a basic behavioral model that focuses on two major behavioral responses which consist of approach and avoidance (SOR). Beside the couple of approach and avoidance, *Jian Tang et al, 2013 and other researchers* have incorporated also active-passive behaviors in order to enrich our understanding for the adopting attitudes of users. When we refer to adopting, we mean the general action of coping strategies. Active and passive attitudes towards online advertising techniques differ among individuals due to the different intensity levels of adopting and the positive or negative consumers' view concerning the online ads.

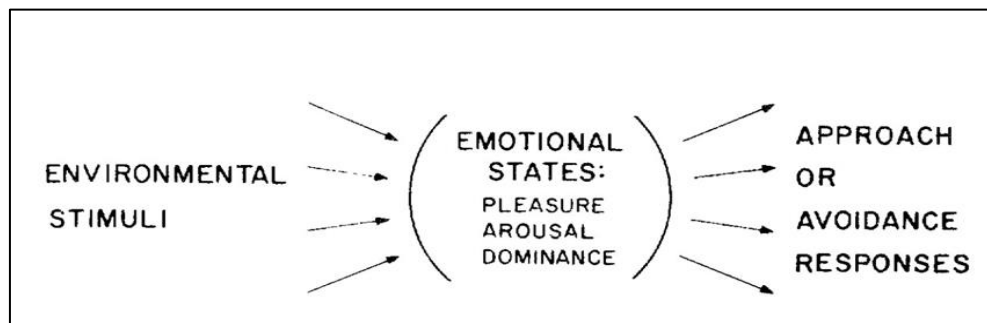
But what is exactly the meaning that researchers have given to active and passive attitudes?

- “Active behavioral responses imply that consumers act upon online ads and make efforts to approach or avoid them.” (*Jian Tang et al, 2013*)
- “Passive behavioral responses indicate that consumers make little efforts to change the current status, and would rather approach or avoid in a passive way.” (*Jian Tang et al, 2013*)

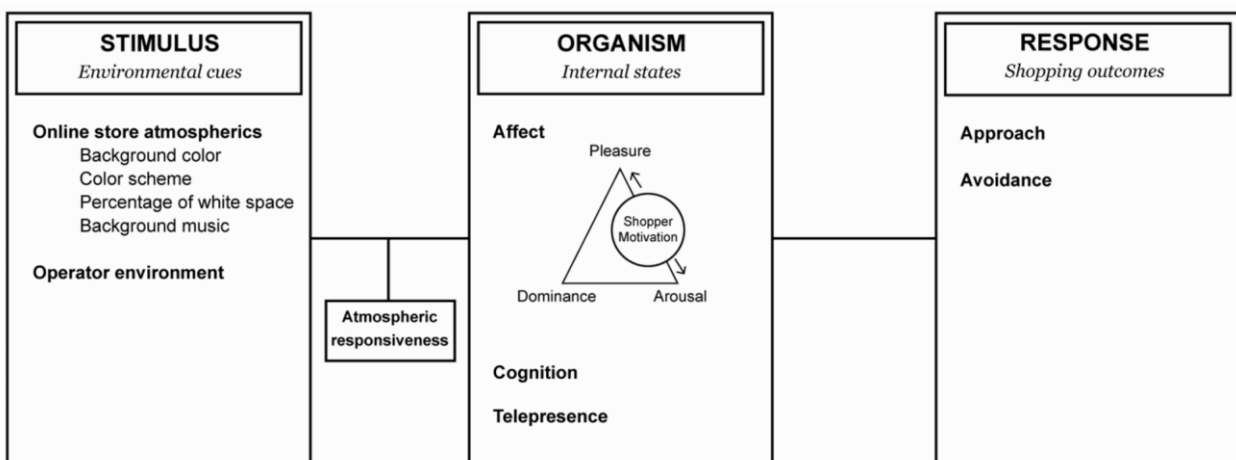
In this point, we should mention that online consumers may characterize one specific online advertisement as intrusive, uninformative, *disturbing* (*McCoy, Everard, Polak, & Galletta, 2007; Zhang, 2000 cited in Jian Tang et al, 2013*) on the first time and well accepted, informative and attractive in the second time of interaction with the ad because of mixed feelings. This confused condition is the result of various feelings such as annoyance, interruption, offence, inspiration, pleasure or educational motivation. “These various feelings lead to their negative or positive views of different types of online ads and potentially influence their behaviors toward online ads.” (*Jian Tang et al, 2013*)

Based on the recent research conducted by *Jian Tang et al. (2013)*, we conclude that the above description provides us with insights concerning the fact that modern online advertising has acquired a greater power than traditional media because modern online advertising has at its disposal a higher degree of variety in terms of content (e.g., product, education, public good), form (e.g., location, size, color), and behavior (e.g., movement, onset timing). In simple words, online advertising has become the major Web marketing tool used by marketers because the evolution of Internet contributed to the evolution of Web “capabilities” and because online advertising has become one important component of website design.

Below, we will present the behavioral model referred previously in more details:



*Figure 3:* The M-B model by Mehrabian and Russell(1974)



*Figure 4:* Theoretical Framework adapted from Eroglu et al. (2001), Sautter et al. (2004) and Kaltcheva and Weitz(2006)

These figures are representations of the SOR model adapted by Eroglu et al. (2001).

“As demonstrated above, online environments including websites with online ads and SNS platforms with online advertisements too, have significant effects on consumers’ cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. Behavioral response refers to the actions undertaken by users during or after their interactions with external environments. Approach and avoidance are two major categories of behavioral responses in the stimulus-organism-response theoretical paradigm (Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis, 2003; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Without any doubt, this model furnishes us with a wide understanding as far as the consumers’ behavioral reactions. However, there will be a misunderstanding because consumers do not always take actions immediately, they may approach or avoid the website or the ad in a more passive way. For example, let’s count down how many consumers may choose to read online ads without clicking on them or to wait for them to go away instead of taking any action? These behavioral responses are more passive, because they demand less effort from consumers.” (*Jian Tang et al, 2013*)

### 3.1.1 Questions/Answers related to S-O-R

Below, with questions-answers inspired by the article’s structure of (*Jian Tang et al, 2013*), we will make an effort to explain more in depth the SOR model and its importance as a marketing variable that marketers should take into account and as designing driving tool for web designers.

#### 1. How online ads stimulate online users? What are the stimuli of contemporary ads?

- Ad content (e.g., emotional message, usefulness, and credibility)
- Form (e.g., banner, color, and animation)
- Design features (e.g., bright color)
- Others (e.g., flash, animation)

#### 2. Which feeling is prohibitive to arise during an online ad based on the SOR model?

When consumers characterize an ad disruptive or distracting, the general meaning is that they feel a lack of freedom. Constrains in consumers’ sense of freedom (events e.g., promotional influences, sell tactics and persuasion) contribute to behavioral responses active mainly with a long term horizon. The SOR model presents two major threats to freedom with personal or impersonal character. “Characteristics of online ads that impede freedom of user behaviors are considered as impersonal threats.” (*Jian Tang et al, 2013*)

### 3. Which are the three consumer responses indicated by SOR model?

“Three types of consumer responses (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) to online environment stimuli have been identified. Compared to behavioral responses, cognitive and affective responses usually happen within a short period of time after users’ exposure to the environment and can possibly influence their behavioral responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Approach and avoidance behaviors are two general behavioral intentions or behavioral responses when human beings interact with the environment. According to the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), approach and avoidance are two distinct behavioral responses to affective or cognitive evaluations aroused by environmental stimuli. Approach and avoidance are also considered as the motivation of human behaviors in some literature. Elliot (2006) had a hierarchical explanation of approach-avoidance motivation, which encompasses both the energization and direction of behaviors. Approach motivation encourages behaviors towards the positive stimuli, whereas the avoidance motivation leads to behaviors away from the negative stimuli. Approach and avoidance are also two distinctive action strategies undertaken by people to cope with stress, leading them toward or away from the threat (Roth & Cohen, 1986; Skinner, Edge, Altman, & Sherwood, 2003). Active and passive coping strategies differ from each other in the amount of effort people apply to solve problems; people adopt these two coping strategies to deal with affect, arousal, and stress (Asmus & Bell, 1999; Hobfoll, Dunahoo, Ben-Porath, & Monnier, 1994). The primary appraisal is an evaluation of the potential consequences, and the secondary appraisal is an evaluation of the amounts of cognitive and affective efforts required to perform different actions (Beaudry & Pinsonneault, 2005; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). If the demand of pursuing the pleasure or avoiding the pain is not very high, people may passively react to the environment and invest less effort, which represents the passive dimension of behavioral reactions to internal or external environments. Active and passive dimensions are also applied to understand the use of social networking sites (Pagani, Hofacker, & Goldsmith, 2011). Active technology use indicates actions that require larger amounts of effort, such as creating comments and uploading pictures, whereas passive technology use includes actions that need smaller amounts of effort, such as browsing and reading content. Therefore, approach-avoidance and active-passive can be two underlying dimensions of understanding consumer behaviors toward online ads.” (*Jian Tang et al, 2013*)

## 3.2 Word of Mouth

A discussion upon how we could amplify the online advertising messages transmitted through the mechanisms and current practices described in the previous chapter is necessary. In other words, it is the appropriate time to refer to Word of Mouth phenomenon. Inspired by a recent research (*Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010*), the whole section goes in depth following the research's structure so as to analyze this contemporary phenomenon, its dimensions, and its conceptual models. So, *Robert V. Kozinets, et al. in their published research in Journal of Marketing stated some definitions: a complicated one and a simpler one for WOM. The complicated describes WOM as the intentional influencing of consumer-to-consumer communications by professional marketing techniques. The simpler one defines how users influence each other concerning their online navigation or purchase behavior/attitude. Its importance was recognized by many marketers and sociologists who try to exploit this naturally occurring phenomenon which affects the majority of all online purchases and not only decisions.*

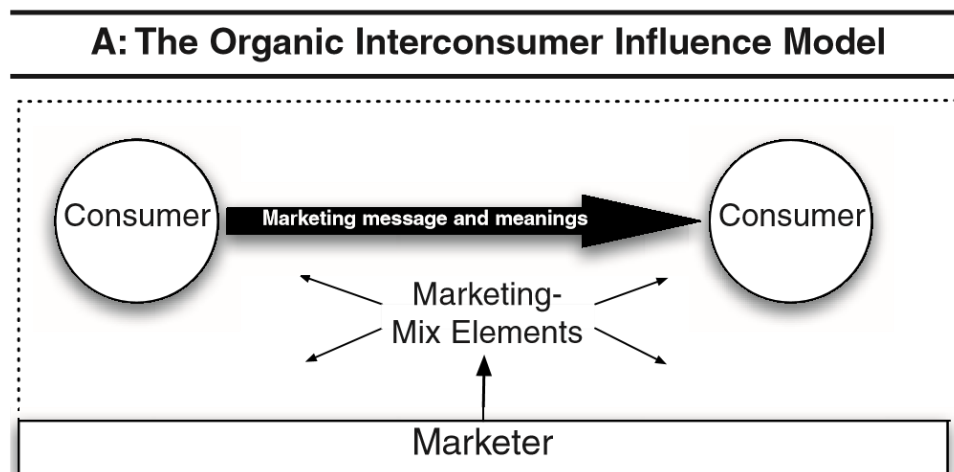
The influential power of Word of Mouth phenomenon began to arise when blogs made their first appearance due to the fact that blogs motivated the interaction among all users without any limit. This interaction was the synonym of expression of opinions, satisfactory or dissatisfactory comments about a purchase, navigation, online engagement among a great community that in few minutes transmits all this commentary to the whole web in unforgettable speeds. Thus, WOM started as simple occurring phenomenon whose existing reason was the interaction of online users that in previous years were few millions and nowadays are much more. And it results in dominating as the ideal behavioral reaction; marketers need it in order to enhance their brand awareness, loyalty, and confidentiality, repetition of purchase and higher navigation or much better increasing conversion rate among billions or trillions of online users today.

### 3.2.1 Description of WOM through conceptual models

In this section, we provide the evolution of WOM phenomenon with the guidance of three models that currently coexist and each pertains to different circumstances.

### 3.2.1.1 The Organic Interconsumer Influence Model

Early theories supported that WOM had a significant force that influenced marketing thoughts and practices. For instance, *Ryan and Gross's* diffusion study (1943) suggested that conversations among buyers were more important than marketing communications in influencing adoption. In this specific model, WOM is organic because it occurs between one consumer and another without direct prompting, influence or measurement by marketers. Stated also by (*Arndt 1967; Engel et al. 1969; Gatignon and Robertson 1986*), it is mainly inspired by the consumers' desire to help others, to warn them in order to avoid poor services or transactional problems or unexpected low quality or lack of security sense. In other words, WOM in this case is organic due to the fact that it occurs naturally as naturally the motivation of one consumer to help the other in the name of communication and help, arises. Views of WOM in this model assume that WOM occurs naturally among consumers when marketers perform their job of developing market innovations and performing effective product notification through advertising and promotions (*Bass 1969; Whyte 1954 cited in Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010*).



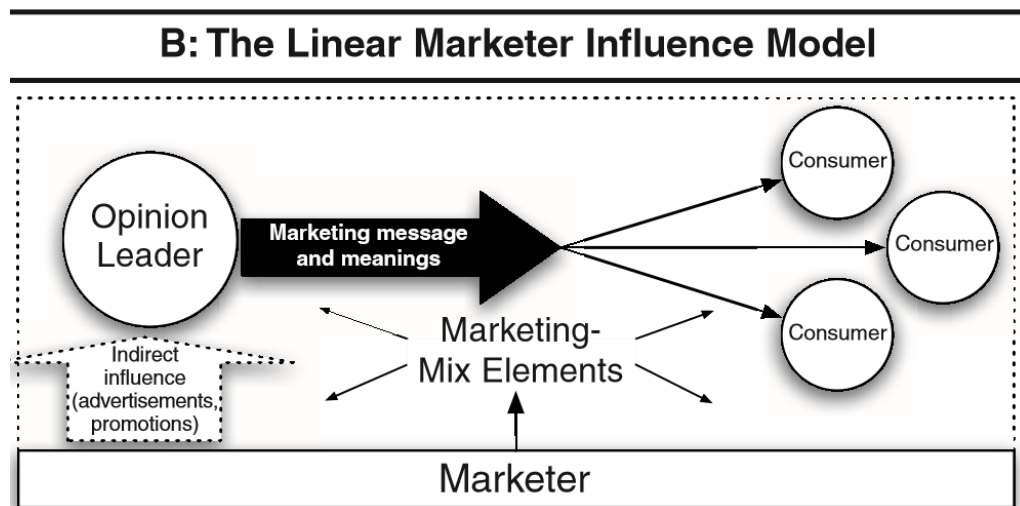
**Figure 6:** (Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010, p.72)

### 3.2.1.2 The Linear Marketer Influence Model

As marketing science was developing more and more, theories of WOM began to focus on particularly influential consumers in the WOM process (*Feick and Price 1987; King and Summers 1976 cited in Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010*). "Accordingly, it was in marketers' interests to identify and attempt to influence these influential, respected, credible, WOM-spreading consumers. This understanding motivated marketers to make a harder effort to



influence consumer WOM through the use of traditional means, such as advertising and promotions. Therefore, we refer to this stage as a model of linear influence.” (Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010) Due to the fact that this phenomenon occurred during the post-World War era, which was characterized by increasingly resistant buyers, some consumers had taken the role of “opinion leaders” who could be targeted and influenced only by smart marketers (Holt 2002 cited in Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010). Thus, marketers would now be able to work through “the friend who recommends a tried and trusted product” rather than the “salesman who tries to get rid of merchandise” (Dichter 1966, p.165 cited in Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010). Accurate, realistic information in marketing was important in these early conceptions because the opinion leader was assumed to transmit marketing messages more or less faithfully, without substantially altering them or having them altered by ongoing communications with other consumers (Brooks 1957; Engel, Kegerreis, and Blackwell 1969; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955 cited in Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010, p.72).



*Figure 7:* (Robert V. Kozinets, et al, 2010, p.72)

### 3.2.1.3 The Network Coproduction Model

This model comes with a more contemporary view because it coincides with the development and recognition of the importance of Internet. “Marketers have become interested in directly managing WOM activity through targeted one-to-one seeding and communication programs, with the Internet allowing unprecedented new levels of management and measurement of these campaigns and new professional organizations allowing the efficient development and diffusion of WOMM knowledge. Marketing

strategies now depend on consumers' relationships, focusing mainly on consumers' networks, groups and communities. Now, consumers are regarded as active coproducers of value and meaning. Thus, WOM communications are coproduced in consumer networks.” (Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010)

“There are two distinguishing characteristics of this new model of understanding. First is marketers' use of new tactics and metrics to deliberately and directly target and influence the consumer or opinion leader. Second is the acknowledgment that market messages and meanings do not flow unidirectionally but rather are exchanged among members of the consumer network.” (Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010)

Yet, however the awareness of the complexity of communal relationships, marketers just understand the effects of communally based marketing promotions.

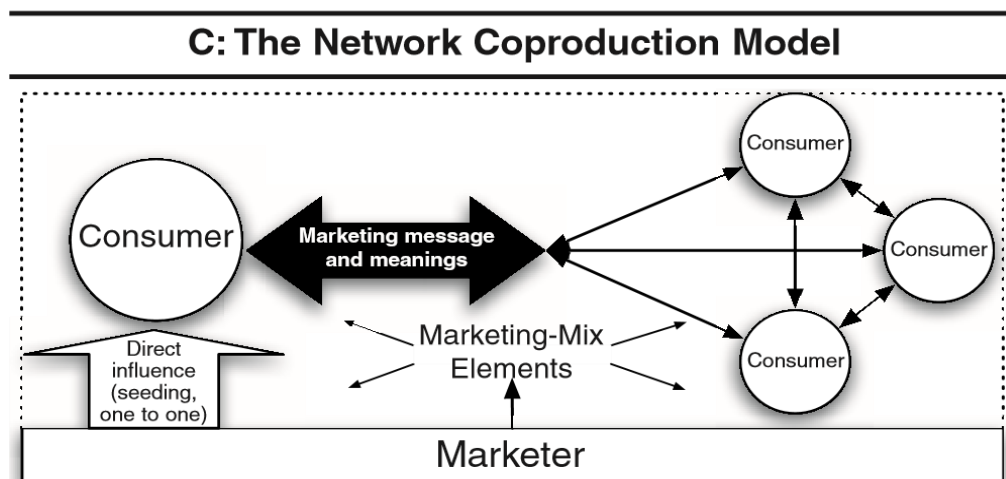


Figure 8: (Robert V. Kozinets, et al, 2010, p.72)

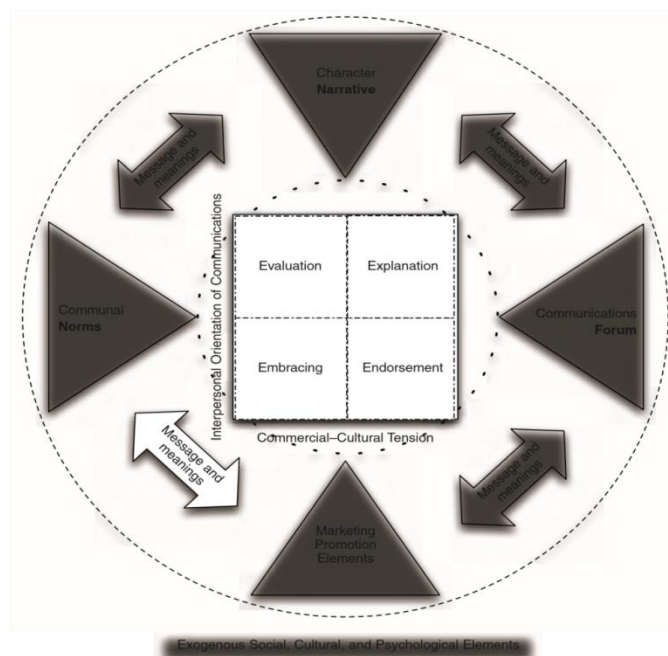
### 3.2.1.4 Exogenous Social, Cultural and Psychological Elements based model.

In the research of (Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010), it is stated that the WOM communication that interests marketers is how the marketing message and its meanings is delivered and appropriately received by the intended audience. So, this WOM communication is influenced by four important factors:

- “First, it is affected by particular expressed character types.” (Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010)

- “Second, WOM communications take place while embedded in a particular forum. There are different types of blog, forums. Sports, health, fashion, celebrity, and news are other examples of forum topics.” (Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010)
- Third, “the WOM communication is affected by communal norms that govern the expression, transmission, and reception of a message and its meanings. These norms differentiate based on size of community, the average age of community members, their interests, their lifestyles, their ethnic orientation, social class, and extent of shared history, among other factors.” (Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010)
- “Fourth, the message and meanings of the WOM communication are affected by the promotional characteristics of the WOMM campaign and related promotions, such as the type of product or service, the product’s brand equity and the objectives, terms, hard-sell nature, and humorousness of the campaign.” (Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010)

“In the network of WOM communications, these four elements work in concert to alter the nature of the WOMM message and its associated meanings. They influence its expression. They transform it, as explained subsequently, from a commercial promotion to communally valuable information.” (Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010, p.74)



**Figure 9:** (Robert V. Kozinets, et al., 2010, p.75)

## Chapter 4. Designing the online promotion and social media strategy for the case of “The Imaginary Creators”

### 4.1 What is “The Imaginary Creators”?

“The Imaginary Creators” is the result of brainstorming for the development of an innovative e-business. Behind of this business idea is a group of two individuals, including myself. My main responsibility is the commercial part of this online store. But what we mean with the term commercial? We are referring to the digital means used in order for our e-creature to acquire brand awareness, loyalty and interaction with its online users. In other words, we managed to organize a digital marketing campaign with the aim of achieving incoming links to our website and increasing the navigation time which in turn may lead to higher conversion rate.

The name of our online store is “The Imaginary Creators” and the choice of this name is the result of our e-business content. Handmade products need **Imagination** to be **created**, so whoever becomes the constructor of a handmade product, can automatically be called “**Imaginary Creator**”. But apart from the creators, consumers that buy this category of products have surely **Imagination**.

Some details:

- Our online store will enter into an almost arising market which is the online market of handmade products made by Greek raw materials.
- Our main operation will be to become the intermediary between the customers and the creators of these original products. For this reason, we will create a product catalogue and with a simple click the online customer will have the opportunity to buy the product of his preference. But this catalogue will contain a menu where the categories are related to the usage of these products, for example for special occasions (events), touristic cases, inter communication with Greeks abroad.
- Due to the fact that we aim to have special target groups, the existence of a blog inside the site would be another evaluation bridge in order to achieve the interaction.

- The use of hypermedia and multimedia it is determinant so as to achieve attractive aesthetics.
- Moreover in order to facilitate the navigation process throughout the whole site, we will offer a central banner in the index page in which we will describe the whole procedure needed by both a creator and a customer to become an active member of **“The Imaginary Creators”**. Apart from that, in our banner we will promote the 3 other sections/functionalities of our website which are the **gamification section, the recycling checking evaluation functionality** and **“do it on your own” section**.
  - As for gamification, we will furnish to our user the possibility of an on line digital assembly of a handmade product in order to be familiarized with our business idea in an innovative manner. After the finishing of the assembly the user would gain some pounds that will help him/her to have a future discount in his/her future transaction. The main precondition in order to join in gamification process is becoming member of our website.
  - As far as the recycling checking evaluation functionality is concerned, we aim to inspire the recycling feeling both to our collaborative creators and our customers. So for this reason, we will implement an online evaluation process about how recyclable a handmade product is and we will star the production which is based on the recycling ethics.
  - Moreover, we will introduce to our audience the “do it on your own concept” by providing YouTube videos for the reuse of old materials.
  - Furthermore, we will have another section with special information about the origin of the raw materials used, their recycling value and their history.
- As far as the promotion plan is concerned, we will use our technical background in order to increase the usability and the attractiveness of our website and the contemporary advertising tools offered by Google, Facebook and YouTube in order to become known to our target group. The fact that our target group is mainly people who use technology in a daily manner would make our promotion strategy as successful as possible.

- Last but not least, our revenue will come from the subscription that the creator will pay to us so as to promote his work. Also the advertising campaign will result in more visitors which may lead to more purchases.

## 4.2 Step by step the brainstorming of the marketing ideas including in “The Imaginary Creators”?

1. After ending up to the general content of our online store, we made efforts to explore means to promote our business ideas. For this action, we need to specify our target group so as to particularize the marketing strategy. So, we result in these target groups for facilitating our brainstorming :

- a. Due to the fact that we are characterized by a Greek identity in our handmade products, we could address our content to Greeks that live abroad years and always have a desire to maintain their “roots” with their country. So we will come in contact with travel agencies, airport in order to come closer to our customers who travel to or from Greece.
- b. Individuals who are familiarized with new technologies so as to make wide use of internet in a daily manner.
- c. People with recycling ethics
- d. Young persons who are keen on joining in gamification sections and innovative applications in their navigation time spent.
- e. A great percentage of citizens who are inspired by the concept of reusing old raw materials for money savings especially in these difficult economic conditions.

2. Resulting in these target groups was the starting point to start thinking about various ways to attract them to our online store. Because of our business and technical educational background, we were searching for technical ideas that would be characterized by a business perspective. The interaction with users was our main motivation especially when we took into consideration the wide dominance of Social Networks Sites (SNS) in the marketing era. We should combine SNS and applications in our website in order to furnish a variety of promotion tools. Thus, the only word that came to our mind for all these thoughts was innovation or differentiation or integrated services.

3. In the beginning of promotion, we focused on the creation of SNS accounts in the name of **“The Imaginary Creators”**, such as Facebook and Twitter accounts. Interaction was our main goal. Ideally the friends of Facebook would be buyers of our products. In this direction we were thinking to implement Facebook competitions for attracting the attention and support of our community and due to the fact that you will always want new entrances we can define the prize of our Facebook competition to be appealing. Special offers or discounts would be an option too. Moreover we could invest some money in Facebook Ads.

4. For our website, we are brainstorming about what alternative promotion tools we could use to make it more attractive. Via a banner, we were thinking to inform our users for more choices apart from the classic product e-shop functionality. So, we result in advertising through our banner some innovative apps or gamification elements or info sections. Thus, innovation would be appeared in the name of:

- a. Gamification section for virtual assembly of handmade products
- b. Recycling Checking Evaluation Functionality
- c. Do it on your own section where there will be YouTube videos with instructions on how you can reuse old materials in order to create a new handmade product on your own.
- d. Info section where we will offer general information about the raw materials, their origin and history.

5. Last but not least, we added the SEO strategy for advertising reasons so as to exploit the various promotion services Google offers for dominance to the organic results of Google search engines.

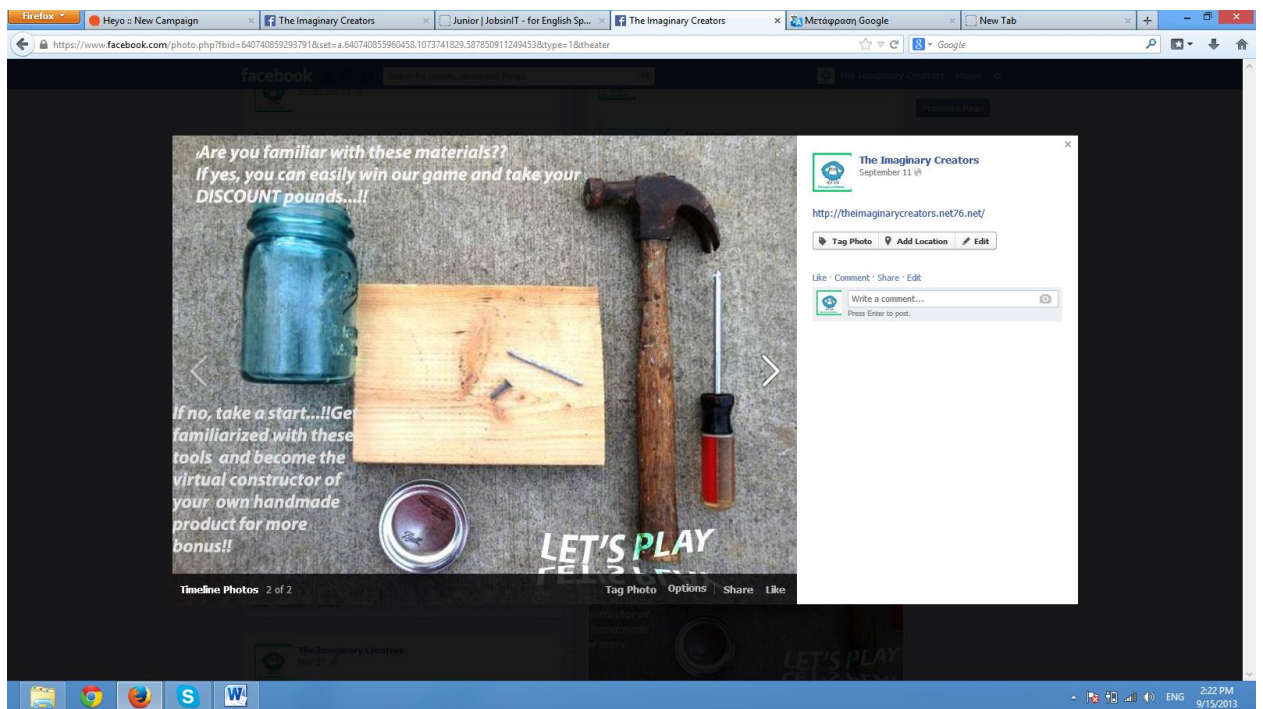
### **4.3 Description of these online promotion and social media strategies**

#### **1. Facebook Page**

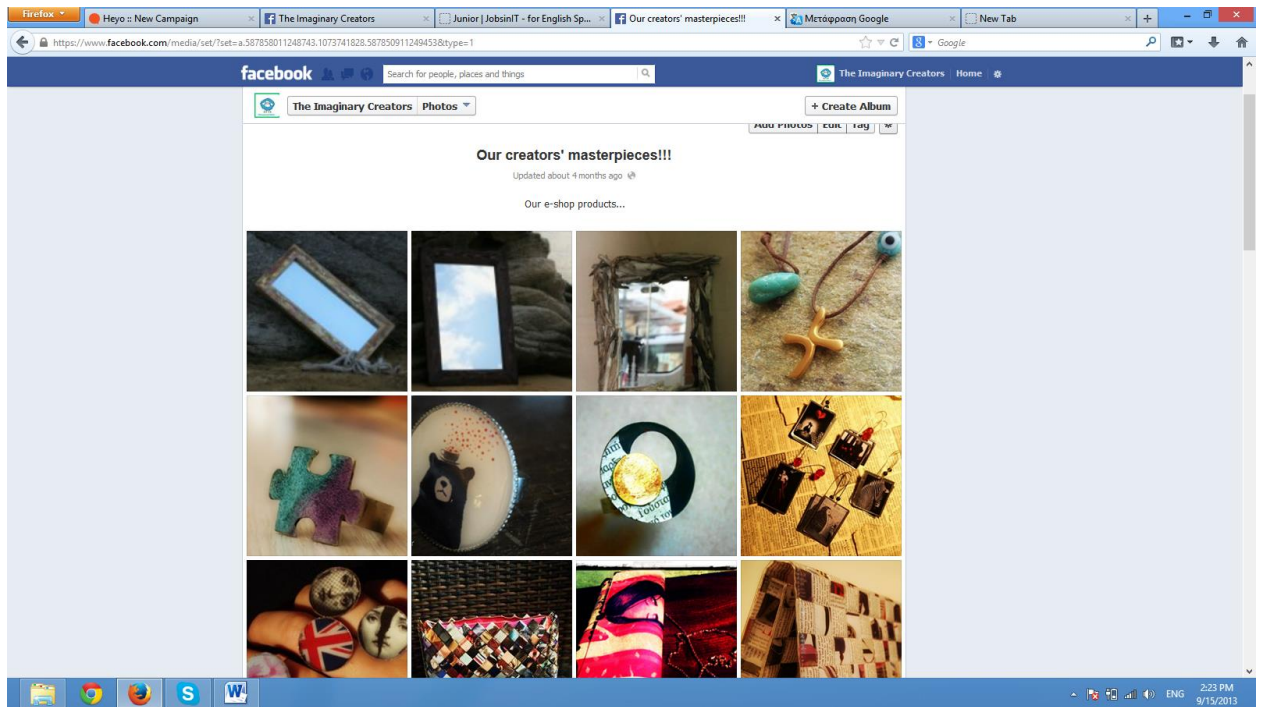
The creation of Facebook account is the simplest thing in this technological era. In our case, we use our existing Facebook accounts and we proceed in creating a Facebook fan page for the **“The Imaginary Creators”**. Through Facebook settings, we fix our privacy, the role of the admins, the role of our audience/friends and then we tried to add qualitative content to this fan page in order to contribute to the SEO tactics. The content is relatively close to the content of the official website so as for our fan not to be confused when click on links that go to our website. Our main goal is the incoming links, and for this reason, we



are always making an effort to exploit our Facebook fan page for increasing our site's traffic. Firstly, we desire to acquire users that spend time to navigate to our site and in second phase we will try this time spent to be transformed into higher level of conversion rate.

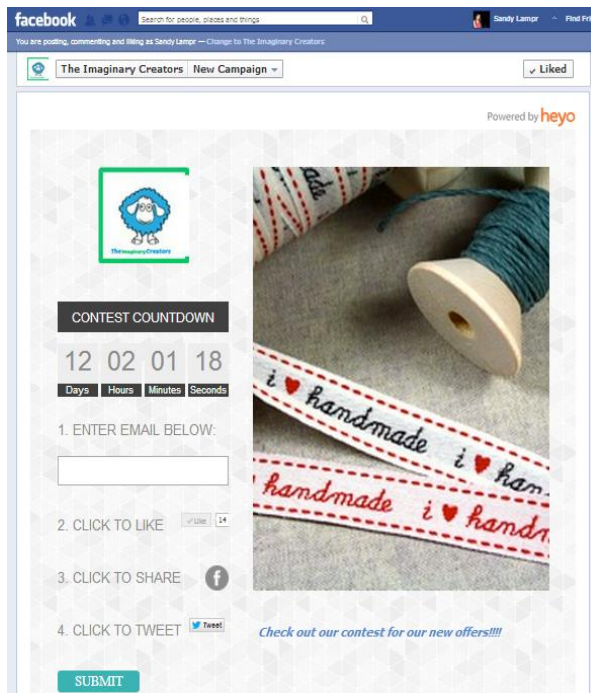






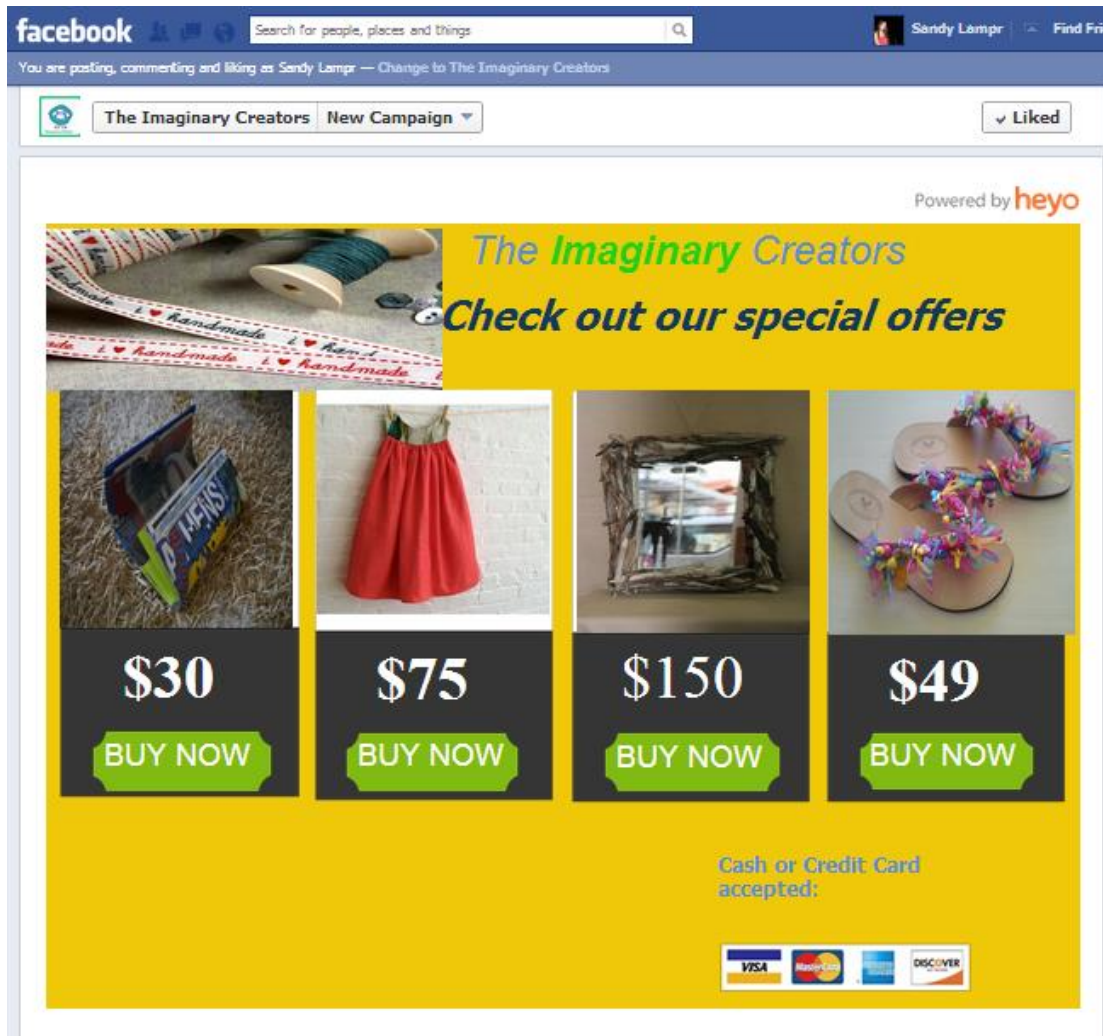
**a. Facebook Contests**

The conversion rate needs a push and this push maybe comes from a Facebook contest where the Facebook audience becomes aware of the contest offers. In simple words, via a Facebook contest we can create incoming links to our site that lead to purchase process.



**b. Facebook Discounts**

In the same direction with Facebook Contest, Facebook Discounts can contribute to the creation of incoming links to our website with greater possibility of purchase and in parallel increase of conversion rate.



**c. Facebook Events**

Facebook Events have the main role of enhancing the interactivity between admins and the “fans”. Thus, we focus on keeping touch with the needs, the desires and the general profile of our fans by organizing events with the only concern of receiving the valuable feedback of acceptance or reject.



Below we present you some additional ways for interacting with our customers on Facebook page.

### **Promotion strategies for our e-commerce platform**

In simple words, the key is for our “fans” to understand that they have special treatment in contrast to other customers and special access to offers and specific information of events too. There is a modern approach in this direction, which refers as rewarding fans by, for instance, providing Facebook-only discounts and sneak peeks at upcoming products. This can contribute to the amelioration of the two-way communication that Facebook provides. Thus, our aim is to create participatory promotions so as to add excitement to online purchasing and more incentive for our customers to invite other friends.

### **Check-ins.**

Modern mobile devices offer to users the possibility of checking ins in various visiting places. This phenomenon that has attracted the interest of the majority of social media fans gives great potentials to us who wish to decode our users’ behavior, life attitude and general preferences so as to offer personalized services. In this way, we could exploit check ins in

order to influence a purchase before a check out in the name of electronic coupons offered or loyalty points furnished in the place of arrival or in close attraction points.

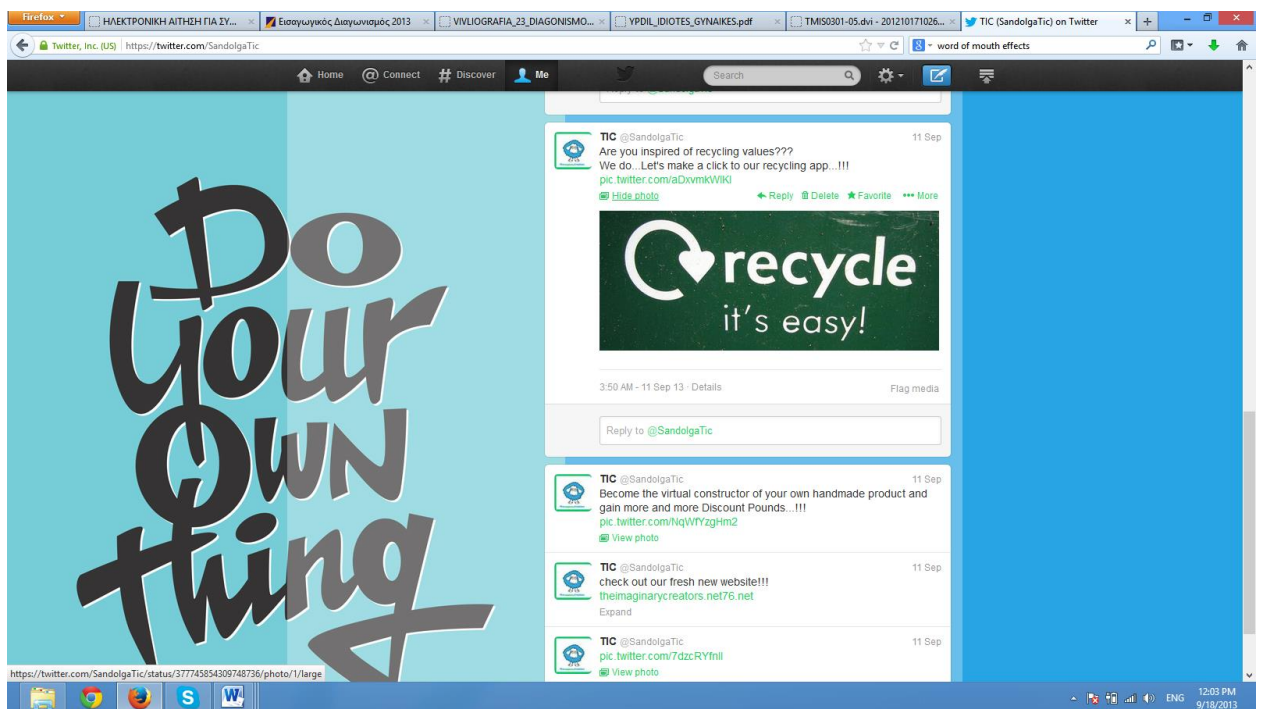
## **Games**

We are thinking of implementing a gamification element in our company's Facebook page. The reason is that we are of the opinion that it is easier to attract audience and incoming links from the game element to the transaction process of the official website.

## **2. Twitter Page**

For further expanding of our interactivity with our online users, we proceed to the creation of a Twitter account. The procedure of creating a Twitter account is similar to this one in Facebook as Twitter is a posterior SNS platform. We made an effort to keep the same profile, colors and functionalities as in Facebook account so as not to provoke misunderstandings in our online users/fans' consciousness. Also, we maintain the same content so as to achieve SEO successful results through our quality content in all web presences (Facebook, Twitter, Official website). Moreover, we exploit the "tweet" mechanisms in order to inform in a daily base our Twitter fans for special offers, discounts and events. In this direction, the parallel connection of the Twitter account with our corresponding Facebook Fan page. Finally, we "cooperate" with e-enterprises in Twitter with same interests and product catalogues in order to accomplish an interaction and sharing of fans among these Twitter presences. As for our followers, we try to approach the appropriate audience by searching inside admins' cycle and adjacent e-businesses with coherent content.

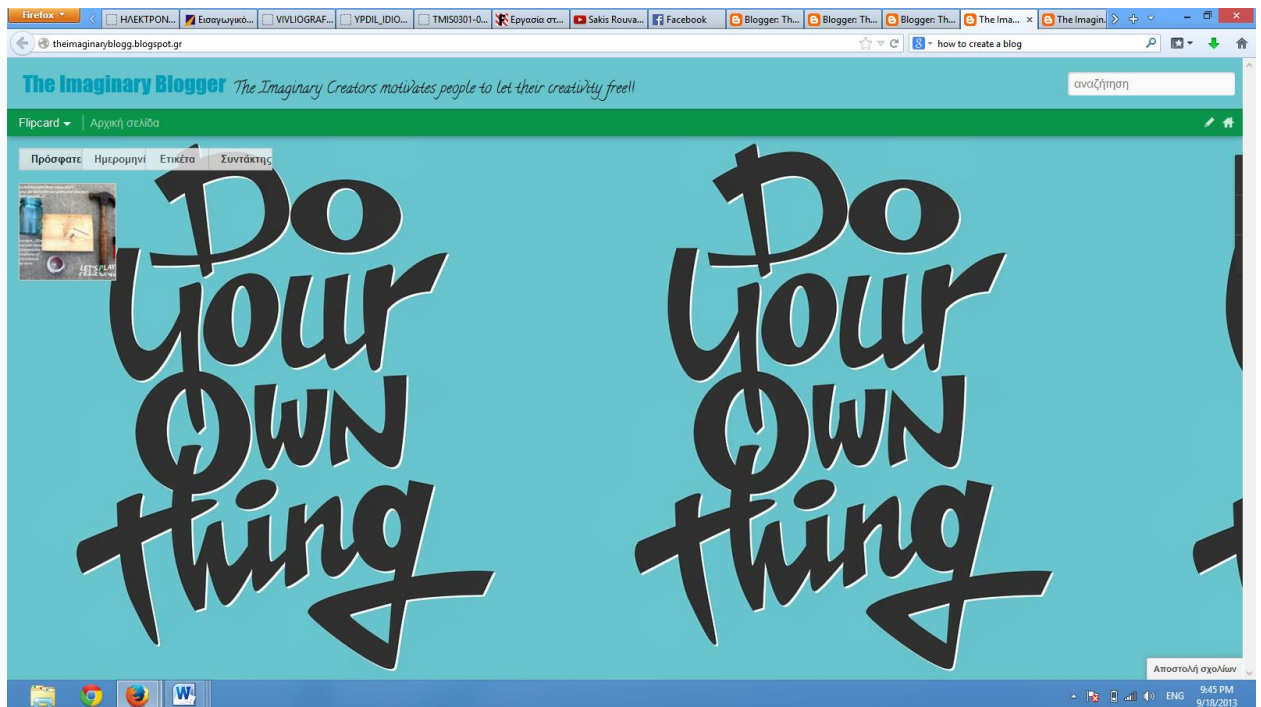




### 3. Blog “The Imaginary Blogger”

The main reason to create “The Imaginary Blogger” is to enhance the Word of Mouth phenomenon. Word of mouth in the name of our blog means: contribution to SEO techniques by offering quality content, interactivity with the audience, ability for our


customers to express their feelings either negative or positive, communication with other customers with same interests, feeling of owning in a group, exchanging of feedback among others for preventing or suggesting our services. Furthermore, the blog is an interactive solution for the audience that is keen on usual/old means of interaction like blogs. In other words, with our online promotion strategy we desire to satisfy the preferences from all target groups that are selected in our marketing plan.



Firefox

theimaginaryblogger.blogspot.gr/2013/09/make-click-and-les-play-var-vgnlnk.html

SEP 18



**Make a click and le's play!**

Δημοσιεύθηκε 40 minutes ago από τον χρήστη Olga Nousi

1 Tweet 0 Like 0

0 Add a comment

Πληκτρολογήστε το σχόλιό σας...

2.bp.blogspot.com/-34dYfE722c/Ujng-ErdN0U/AAAAAAAAAK4/7smYOkwoPac/s1600/uilka.jpg


Αποστολή σχολίων

9:45 PM 9/18/2013

Firefox

theimaginaryblogger.blogspot.gr/2013/09/blog-post.html

SEP 18



**Join our Facebook Page!!!**

Δημοσιεύθηκε 11 minutes ago από τον χρήστη Olga Nousi

1 Tweet 0 Like 0

0 Add a comment

Πληκτρολογήστε το σχόλιό σας...

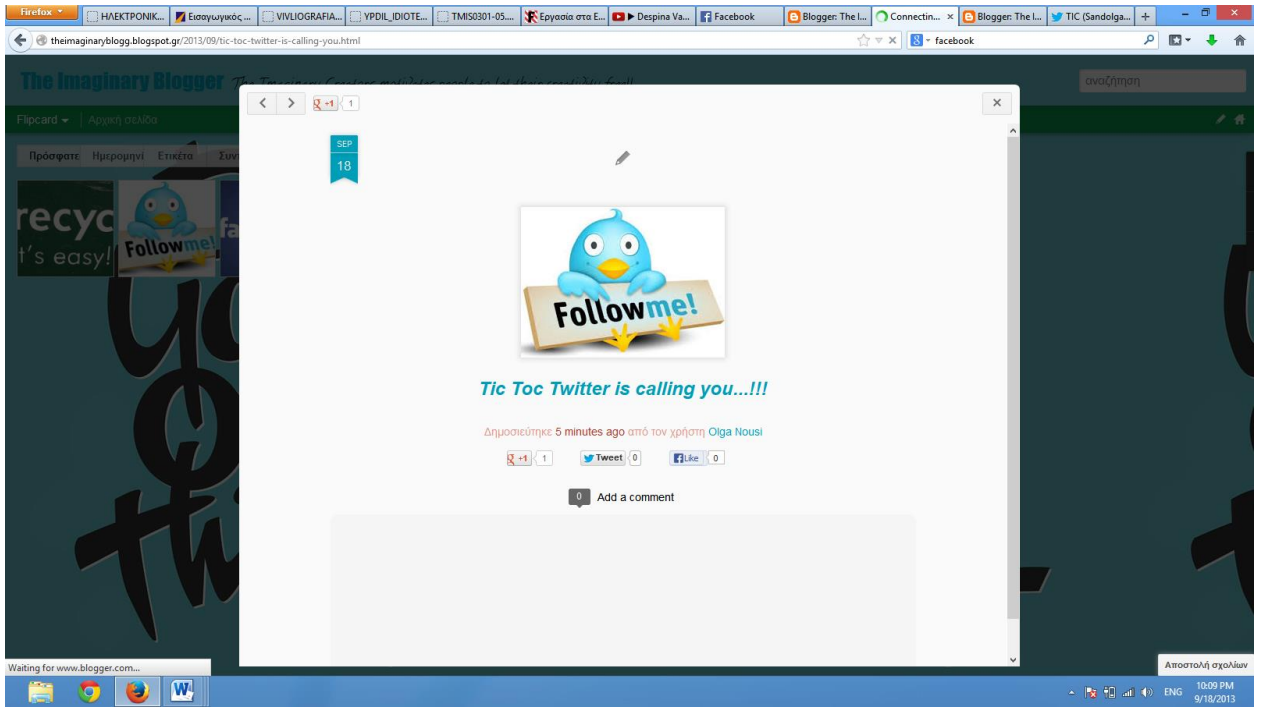
Υποβολή σχολίου ως: Olga Nousi (Google) Αποσύνδεση

Δημοσίευση Προεπισκόπηση Εγγραφή μέσω ηλεκτρονικού ταχυδρομείου

4.bp.blogspot.com/-IzFljKgm5wM/Ujn3f7NLSdI/AAAAAAAAAMk/y0NiwH41th4/s1600/facebook-logo\_1.jpg

Αποστολή σχολίων

10:09 PM 9/18/2013



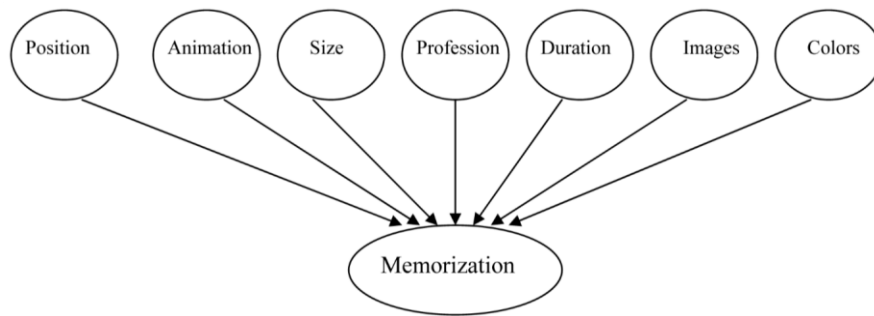
#### 4. Advertising Banner



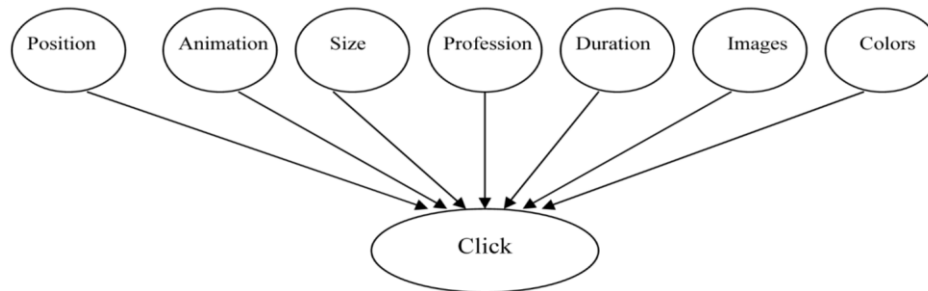


With respect to a famous conceptual framework presented in the recent research of Ziadi Nihel (2013), we build our banner using Photoshop. Best practices for an effective advertising banner with respect to Ziadi Nihel (2013) research, became our guide for creating our banner. In this direction, literature indicates that effectiveness of online advertising via banners which is evaluated through memorization and click rate on the banner. For this reason, we exploit the seven framework indicators so as for our banners to be effective. These seven factors are: : **the position of the banner, animation, size, and profession of the visitor, the duration in terms of user experience, the images used, and colors.**

Below, we present you a depiction of the framework on which we worked:



*Figure 10:* Determinants of memorization (Ziadi Nihel, 2013, pp.95)



*Figure 11:* Determinants of click (Ziadi Nihel, 2013, pp.96)

### The Position Effect

“Throughout the bibliography, we distinguished two levels of location. The first concerns the location on the page, the second concerns the choice of the page under which

the banner is inserted. We as the advertiser, we can negotiate so that the banner is placed at top, right, left, bottom center etc. Generally, the place that advertisers prefer is on top of the page. This seems to be the best place in that, whatever the screen size of the Internet user. For this reason, we follow the classic attitude as we placed our banner on the top of our page.” (*Ziadi Nihel, 2013*)

### **The Size Effect**

“Our searching resulted in the fact that the size of banner advertising creates a gap between the online ads. A number of factors related to the stimulus are likely to attract attention as the size, motion and contrast with the background. (Chandon et al., 2000 cited in Ziadi Nihel, 2013) showed that the size of the banner increases spontaneous and aided awareness and purchase intent. Indeed, when the banner is larger, the file size (and therefore download time) also increases. Paradoxically, banners with large size causes of reluctance on the part of users to click them (Lendrevie, 2000 cited in Ziadi Nihel, 2013). Thus, the medium format banners act positively on research information from the Internet users (Kely and Hoell, 1991, cited in Ziadi Nihel, 2013). (Hoan and Chang, 1999, cited in Ziadi Nihel, 2013) showed in the sense that the size of the banner is acting positively on the intention to click for most users. For the above mentioned reasons, we chose a medium size banner appeared on the top of the index page.” (*Ziadi Nihel, 2013*)

### **The Animation Effect**

Advertisers are beginning to increasingly adopt drastic methods to attract users. Among these methods, we find the animation of the banner as a very successful option (*Burke, 2000 cited in Ziadi Nihel, 2013*). Indeed, animation has added an undeniable attraction to web pages and also we can claim that animated banners can improve significantly the memorization and reputation. Thus, we made an effort to give an animated character on our banner for achieving high levels of attraction.

### **The Duration Effect**

“By duration we mean the user experience with the web. According to *Lendrevie, 2000 cited in Ziadi Nihel, 2013* when the user is more experienced with Internet, unless he clicks on the banners. Usually the user has a specific purpose and wants access as quickly as possible to his navigation target. Regarding memorization, studies still agree that repeated

exposure to an advertisement makes a better memorization. So, the more time a user is exposed to the advertising banner, the more possibility exists to click on it or to memorize it.”(Ziadi Nihel, 2013)

### **The Images Effect**

A web image is a file that resembles the text of any CGI (Common Gateway Interface) on this page. Users pay much more attention to fixed images than texts.”(Ziadi Nihel, 2013) In this direction, our banner is characterized by fixed, well-formed colorful eye-catching images.

### **The Effect of Colors**

Last but not least, achieving an Internet presence needs to choose colors (Stern, 1997 cited in Ziadi Nihel, 2013). The variable color has caught the attention of researchers in the context of the effectiveness of Internet advertising (Valdez, 1997 cited in Ziadi Nihel, 2013). It is necessary to arrange the colors according to their brightness dimension (bright and clear). Respecting these rules, we tried to obey to the harmony of colors that comes from our website content.

## **5. “Do it on your own” website section**

In the “Do it on your own” section, we would make an effort to enhance the feeling of personal construction/creation in our followers in the future plans. In other words, by giving the chance of creating their own handmade product with the exploitation of their existing personal old materials, we aim to make new partakers of our “Do it on your own” idea. Especially, the financial crisis could be a reason to search for similar ideas. So, this section could be a creative way spending free time in order to offer to themselves or the others a new hobby firstly and secondly a new handmade product.

In addition, we should refer that the guidance for our followers to “build” their own handmade product would be part of YouTube videos where producers of handmade products will advise them. Moreover, despite YouTube videos, we will also furnish the more demanding of our followers with written instructions. Last but not least, we should claim that the addition of this section is part of our online promotion campaign which aims to increase the time spent in our official website where this section will exist.

## **6. SEO**

Step by step the SEO strategy<sup>4</sup>:

### **1. Focus on the long tail**

Due to the fact that we are a new website, it is difficult to go after popular keywords right away. For this reason, we find better to write many quality articles on very specific keywords than to go after the ones with more search traffic. A great benefit of staying focused with long-tail key terms is that they usually convert better.

### **2. Link Building**

As keyword-embedded links are the foundation of off-page search engine optimization and also links can be free, we just ask vendors, partners, press, and any other credible source that we interact with to embed hyperlinked keywords back to our website for the terms that we are targeting. We believe that if the referring source has a high page rank, we should see a pop in your rankings in less time than of them being published.

### **3. Use of Keyword Google Tool**

We use Google's Keyword Tool to find long-tail keywords that are not as competitive and then we try to structure some content around those.

### **4. Creation of company's blog to enhance traffic**

SEO is king in organic search traffic. The more popular search terms within our niche that we include on our website, the more searches will organically lead to our site. So, we find interesting the idea of using our blog to write about our niche. We did a keyword research to find out which phrases are trending in our industry and included them in our blog posts. We are of the opinion that as long as our blog has a highly visible link back to the main page of the website, the blog will increase our visibility.

### **5. Content Management in our website**

Our main concern is to create content that readers find valuable and Google will deem search-worthy. It is a common fact that visitors are more likely to share content that they enjoyed reading and also they will stay on a site longer for the same reason. Moreover, if our content quality is high, we believe that there is great possibility for bloggers and media

to use our site as a reference, which means more organic links.

<sup>4</sup>Source:[http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Social-Media-SEO-B2B-Marketing-68961?home=&gid=68961&trk=anet\\_ug\\_hm](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Social-Media-SEO-B2B-Marketing-68961?home=&gid=68961&trk=anet_ug_hm).

#### 4.4 Insights from the development and execution

In this section, we present the core development and execution tools used in order to result in the above online advertising techniques. A throughout market research gave us an insight of the existence of multiple open source software. In simple words, almost any marketer without any technical knowledge has the ability to build his own promotion activity easily with simple clicks in few minutes.

In the case of “The Imaginary Creators” we relied on common open source software in the name of elimination of time and cost. Below, a table with what software used, is added in every promotion technique that has been implemented:

Implemented techniques	Photoshop CSS6	Facebook platform	Twitter platform	HEYO	Blogspot.gr
Banner	X				
Facebook account		X			
Facebook contests				X	
Facebook discounts				X	
Facebook events		X			
Twitter account			X		
Blog					X

**Table 1:** Implementation tools

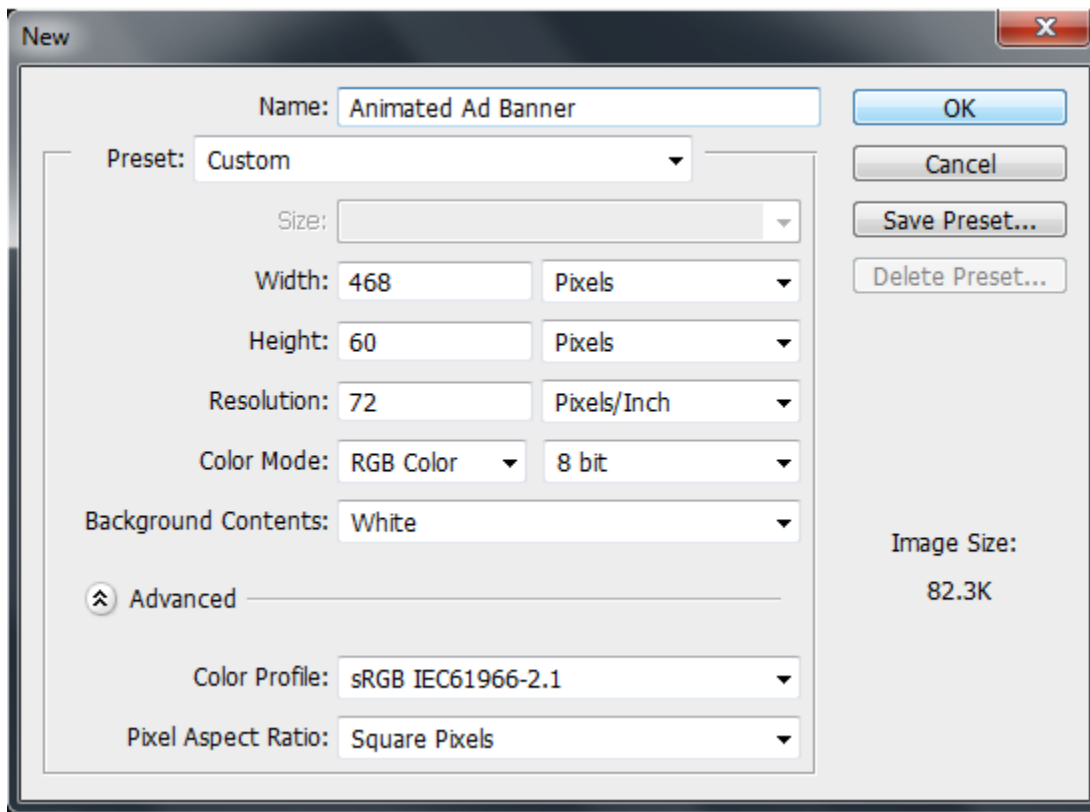
The above table would be our indicator in order to furnish you with an in depth description of the open source software used. Thus:

#### 4.4.1 Banner

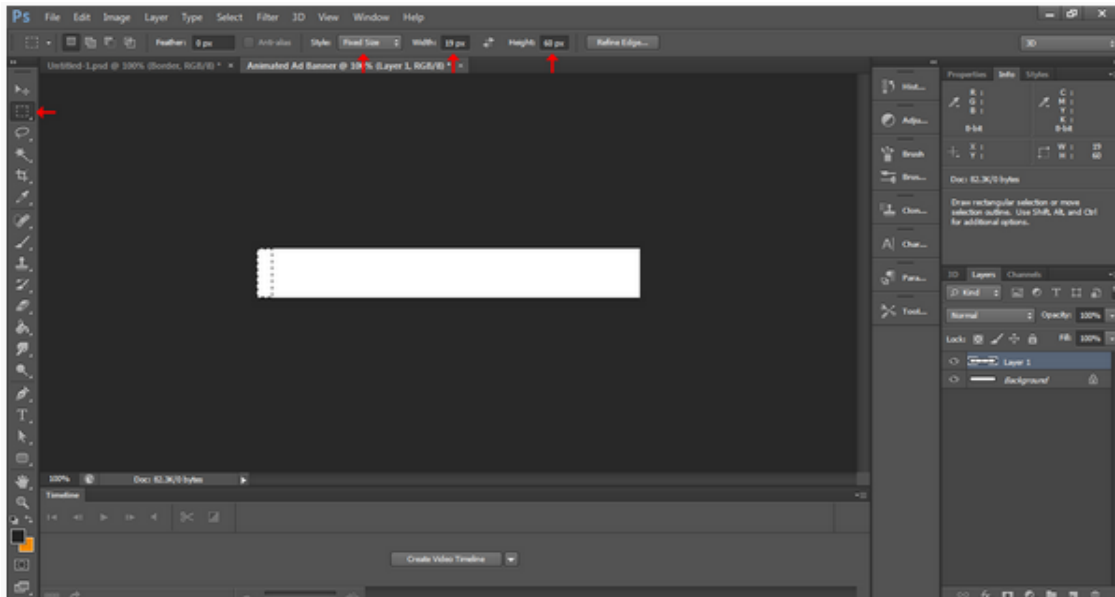
For the implementation of the central banner of our website, we made use of Photoshop CSS 6 (latest edition). With this tool, we made an effort to respect the bibliography as far as the banner's effectiveness rules are concerned. So, we added our logo in the left side of the banner with the Photoshop option of inserting an image [1] in order for our customers to be always aware of the website that they navigate to. Furthermore, we selected the colors used in the whole website in the CSS code so as for users not to be confused. We aim to make these colors the representative elements with which our online visitors would immediately recognize our brand in few seconds. Moreover, we gave a move [2] to our banner because bibliography recommends animated banners as the more attractive. Last but not least, we have 3 slides in our animated banners. In every slide, we advertise the most popular sections of our website which in parallel consist our main promotion strategies. Thus, there are slides for recycling, do it on your own concept, YouTube videos.

##### 4.4.1.1 Step by Step Photoshop Process:

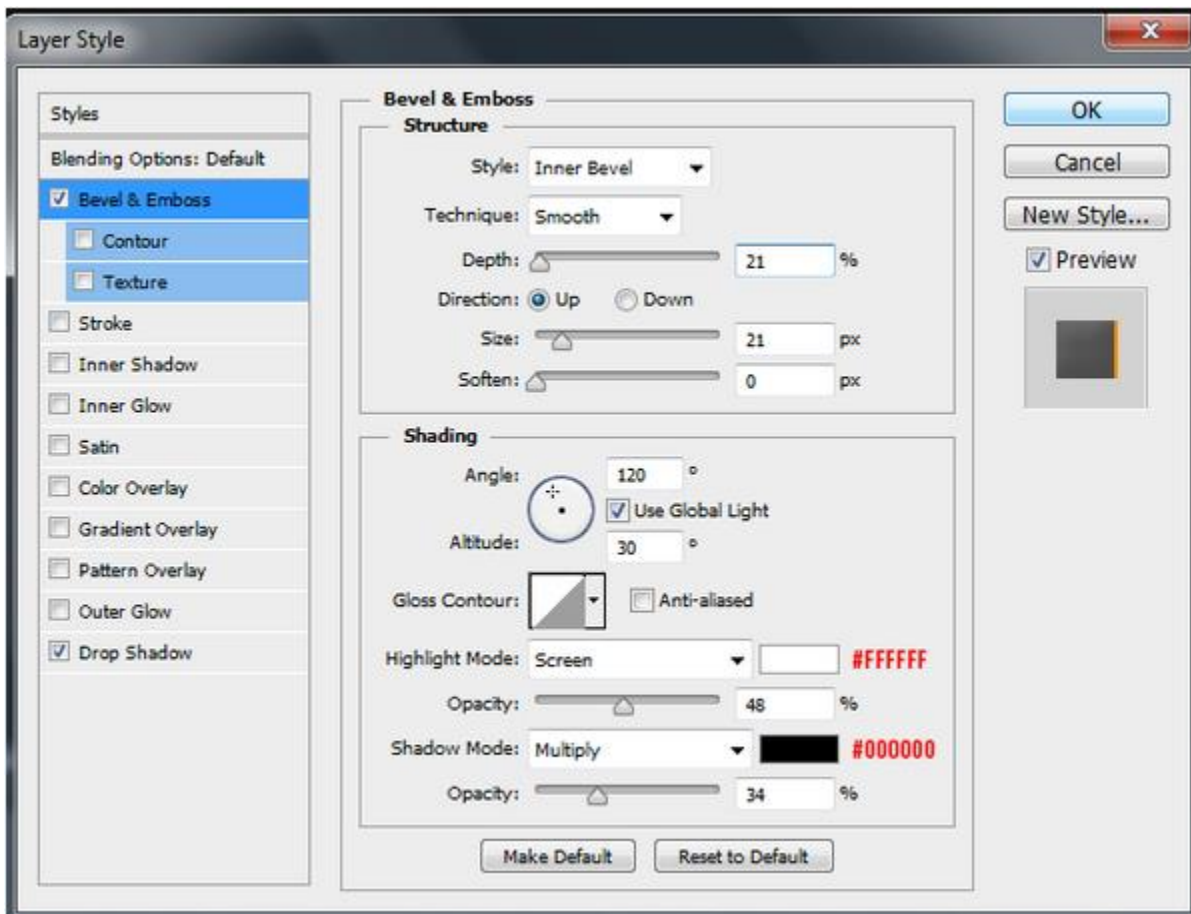
- a. Step 1: Set up the document



b. Step 2: Creating left bevel:



c. Step 3: Bevel/Emboss style



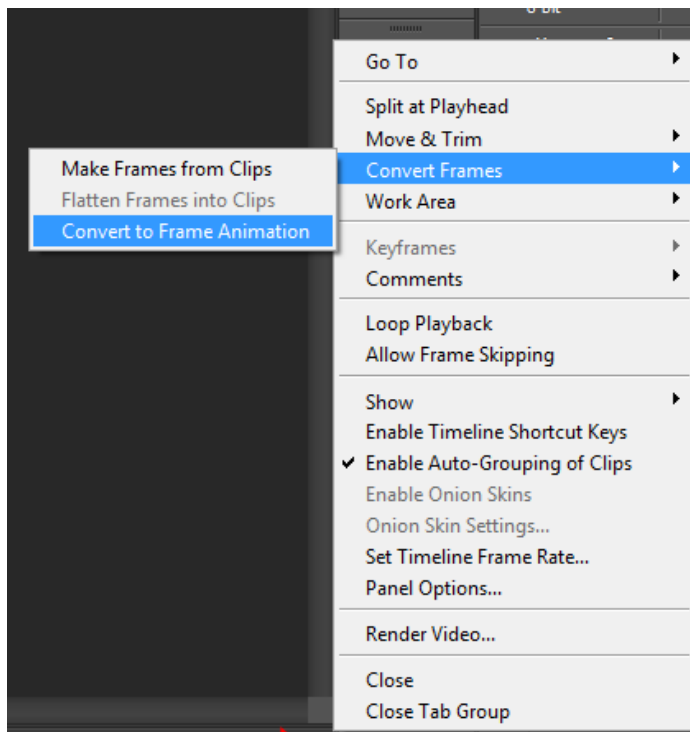
d. Step 4: Add logo to the banner



e. Step 5: Place images [1]

We went to File > Place. Here you browsed for our images and place them. We have the option to resize our images accordingly to the banner size by holding Ctrl + dragging from a corner diagonally inward. Then we clicked enter to close the transformation.

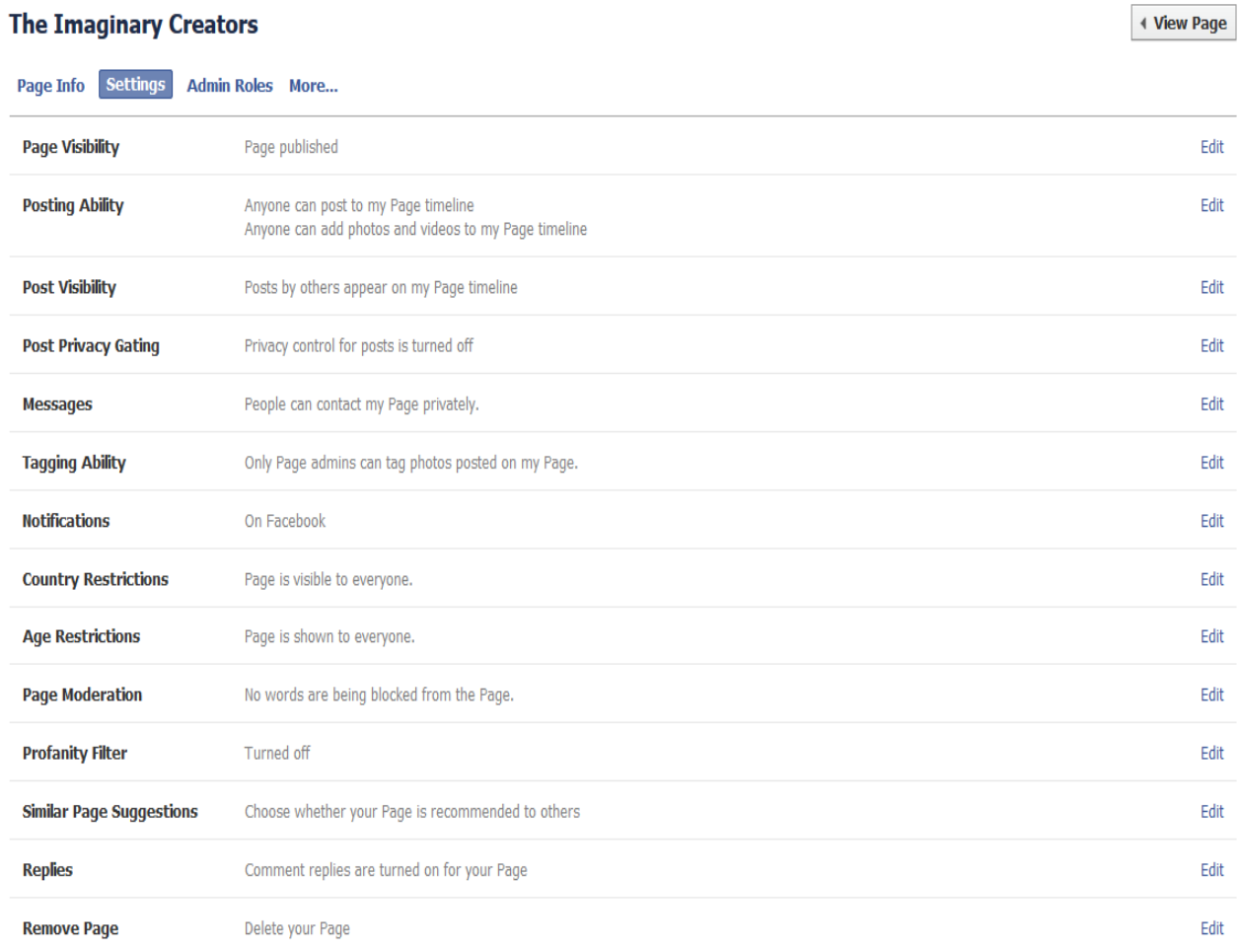
f. Step 6: Give move to the banner [2]





## 4.4.2 Facebook Account

The process that we follow to create a Facebook account is the common procedure of creating a fan page. So, from our own account, we become the admins of the Facebook fan page “The Imaginary Creators”. After building the fan page, we clicked on Edit page where we made our setting as shown below:



The screenshot shows the Facebook page settings for "The Imaginary Creators". At the top right, there is a "View Page" button. Below the page name, there are navigation tabs: "Page Info", "Settings" (which is highlighted), "Admin Roles", and "More...". The main content is a list of settings, each with a title, a description of the current setting, and an "Edit" link.

Setting	Current Value	Action
Page Visibility	Page published	Edit
Posting Ability	Anyone can post to my Page timeline Anyone can add photos and videos to my Page timeline	Edit
Post Visibility	Posts by others appear on my Page timeline	Edit
Post Privacy Gating	Privacy control for posts is turned off	Edit
Messages	People can contact my Page privately.	Edit
Tagging Ability	Only Page admins can tag photos posted on my Page.	Edit
Notifications	On Facebook	Edit
Country Restrictions	Page is visible to everyone.	Edit
Age Restrictions	Page is shown to everyone.	Edit
Page Moderation	No words are being blocked from the Page.	Edit
Profanity Filter	Turned off	Edit
Similar Page Suggestions	Choose whether your Page is recommended to others	Edit
Replies	Comment replies are turned on for your Page	Edit
Remove Page	Delete your Page	Edit

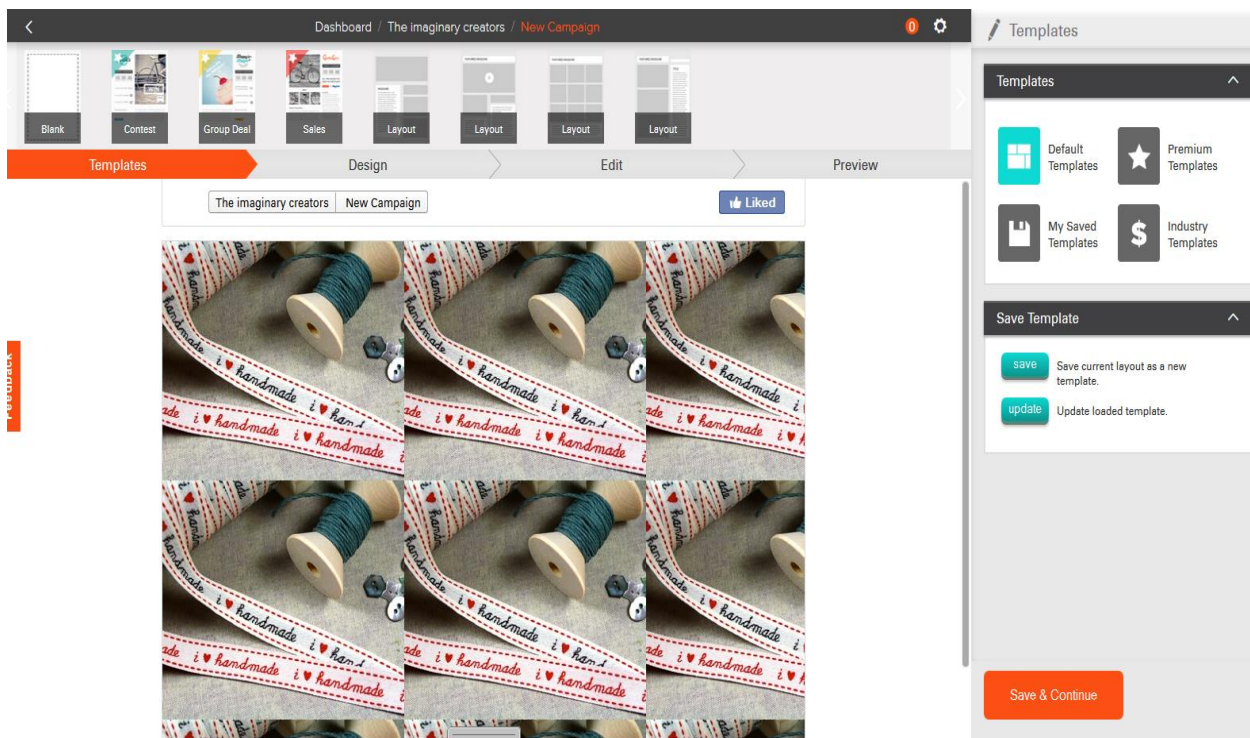
In the second phase, we added the same photos appeared in our website in order for our Facebook fan page followers to have a first view of our product catalogue before proceeding to our website. In addition to, we chose to place the logo photo as profile picture because we aim to achieve brand awareness and also to place similar cover photos in order to avoid confusions with other sites. Finally, we did not put any limit to our followers' activity so as to feel free interacting with us, expressing their opinion, making comments or suggestion for increasing the effectiveness of our fan page.

### 4.4.3 Facebook Contests/Discounts

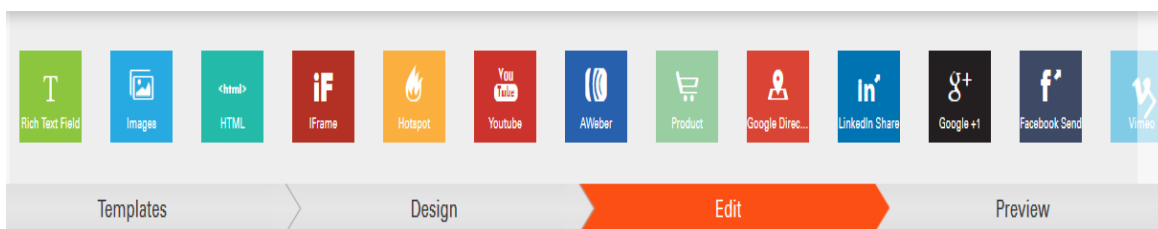
For Facebook Contests/Discounts, we made use of open source software called heyo. There is an official web page [heyo.com](http://heyo.com) in which after becoming member, you have all rights to create your own contests or discounts by selecting from already existing template. These existing templates could be easily edited in order to fit our needs. Thus, we exploited this opportunity, we chose a specific template and we adapted it to our needs and our e-business culture. We selected our representative colors, we placed our logo and we put a list of our products.

#### 4.4.3.1 Step by Step Heyo Process:

- a. Step 1: Selecting the template of our choice



- b. Step 2: Designing of our template



c. Step 3: Editing of our template

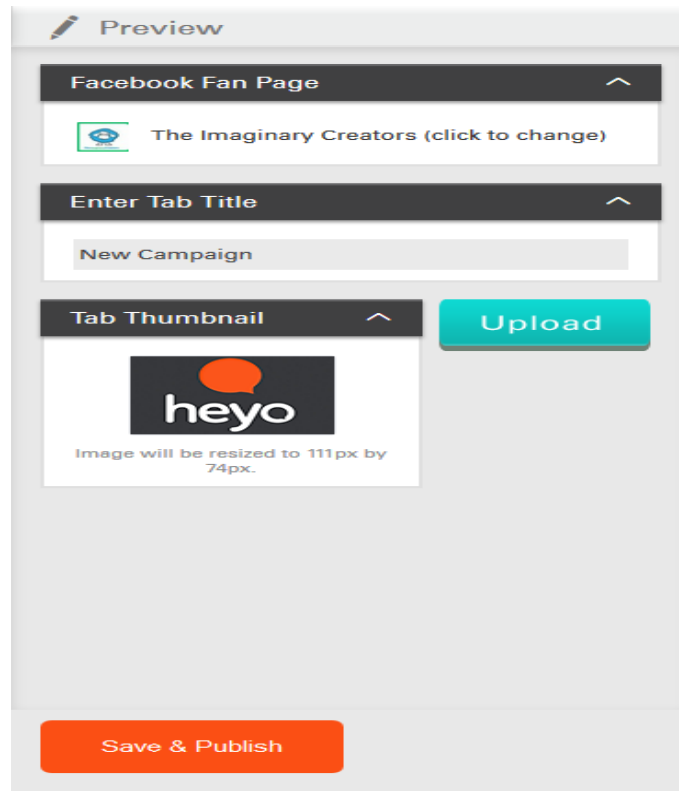


d. Step 4: Choose Facebook Fan page/Upload

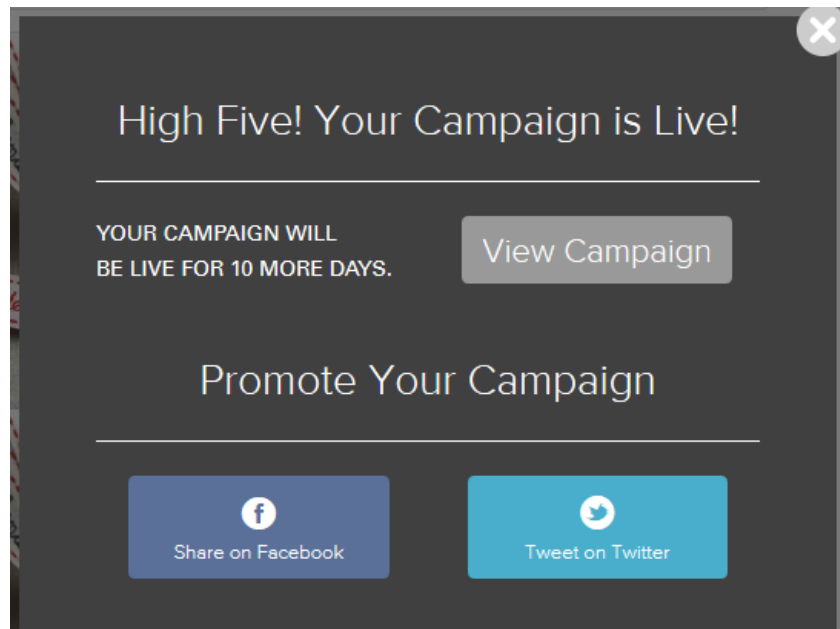
1. First option:



2. Second option:

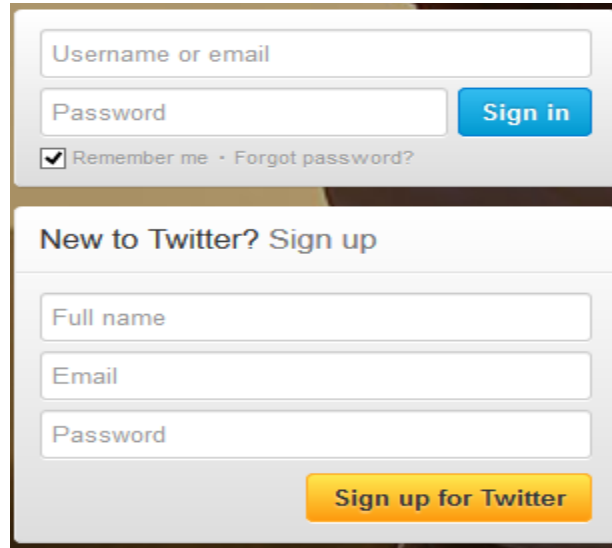


3. Third option:



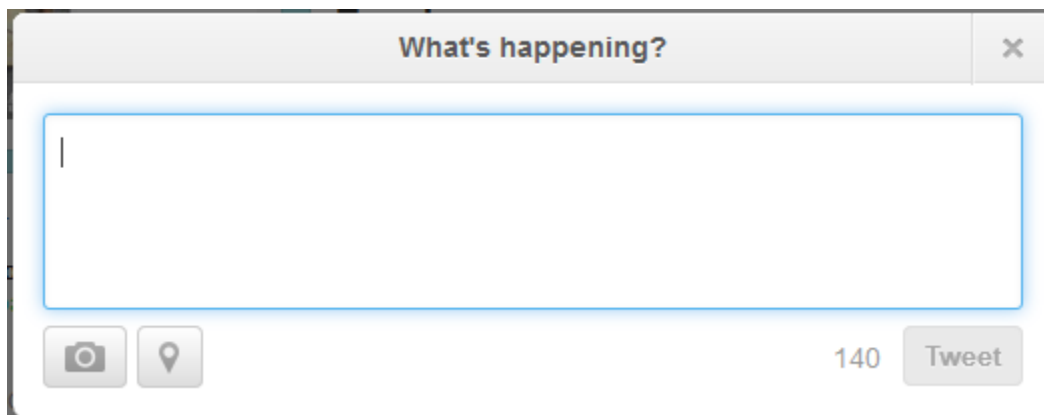
#### 4.4.4 Twitter account

The procedure followed for creating a twitter account is a little bit similar with this one of Facebook. Both Facebook and Twitter are SNS platforms with common characteristics in the case of account setting. For this reason, as in Facebook, we entered into the home page of [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com), we followed the steps in order to create an account for a Twitter account as shown in the picture below:



The image shows a screenshot of the Twitter website's sign-up interface. At the top, there is a 'Sign in' section with a text input field for 'Username or email', a password input field, and a blue 'Sign in' button. Below this is a checkbox for 'Remember me' and a link for 'Forgot password?'. The main section is titled 'New to Twitter? Sign up' and contains three text input fields: 'Full name', 'Email', and 'Password'. A yellow 'Sign up for Twitter' button is located at the bottom right of this section.

After creating our Twitter profile, we proceed into adding of cover photos (similar with these in Facebook fan page) , setting the logo as profile picture, doing some tweets with the purpose of transmitting our ideas to our followers. Making a tweet/Upload a photo is as easy as it should be. The picture below will indicate to you the easiness of the process:



The image shows a screenshot of the Twitter 'What's happening?' tweet creation window. It features a large text input area with a vertical cursor at the beginning. Below the input area are two icons: a camera icon for adding photos and a location pin icon for adding a location. On the right side, there is a character count '140' and a 'Tweet' button.

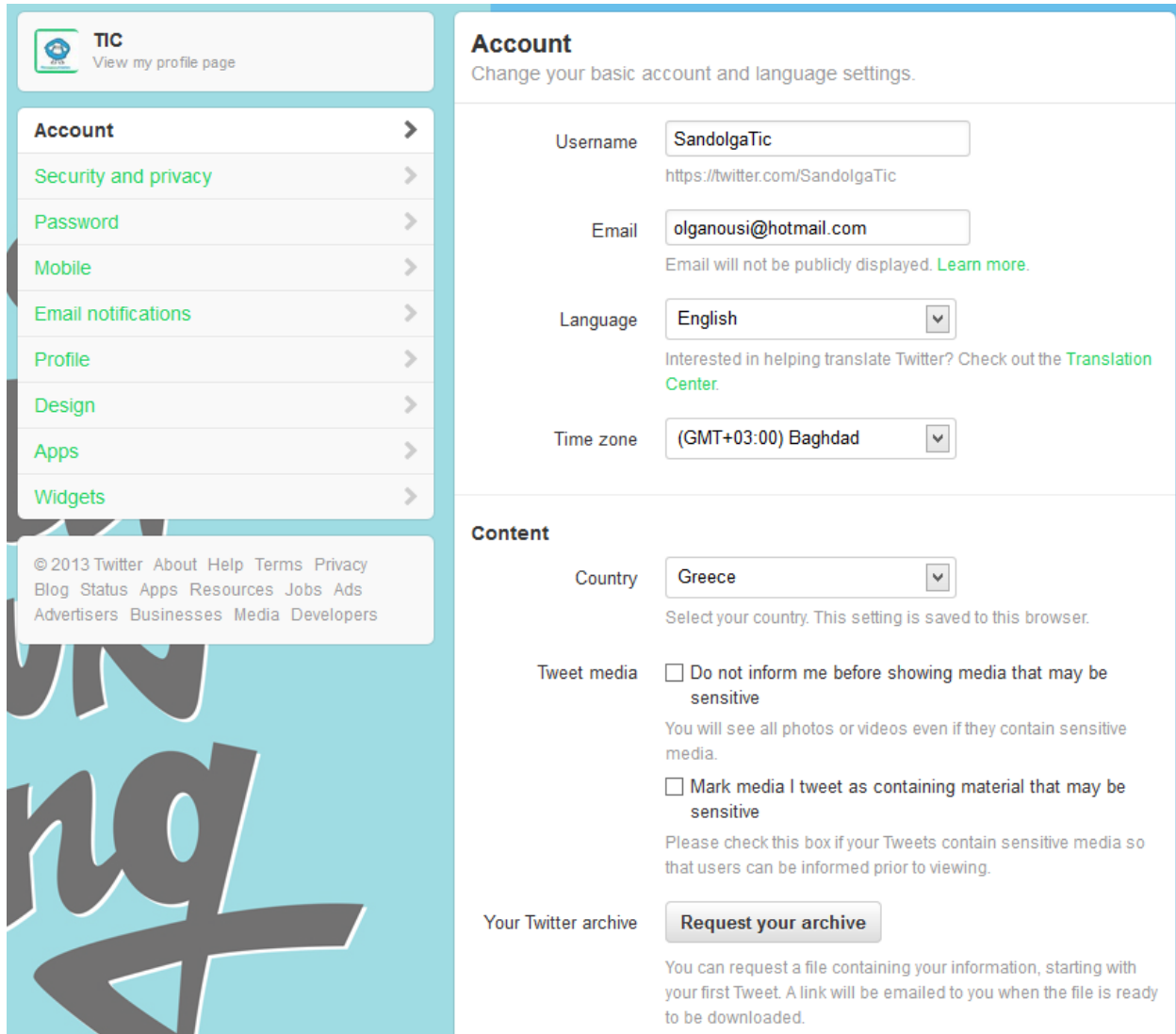
The difficult issue was the search for our followers. In this direction we work daily and we hope to increase the estimated number with the official operation of our website. Despite

this, we based also our search in the following companies that have Twitter accounts. We are of the opinion that companies with the same interest would be a pole of attraction of new followers. In other words, we were hoping for followers' exchange.

The screenshot shows a 'Following' list on Twitter with the following entries:

- Global Greek World** (@GGWorld): Global Greek World: We ♥ Greece...and it shows! For and about Greeks all over the world - from Auckland to Zanzibar, from Aruba to Zimbabwe
- instructables** (@instructables): Sharing DIY goodness from [Instructables.com](http://Instructables.com) and across the web. Brought to you by @edabot and @canida
- MAKE** (@make): The twitter home of MAKE magazine.
- Greek Reporter** (@GreekReporter): Greek News From Around The Globe [GreekReporter.com](http://GreekReporter.com)
- Ελληνικά Προϊόντα** (@GreekProducts): Επιμένουμε Ελληνικά!
- Greek History** (@GreeceHistory): Greece: History and Culture is an iPhone & iPad app about the history of the Land of Gods and Heroes
- Travel Channel** (@travelchannel): The official Twitter account of Travel Channel (US). Follow us to talk about all things travel!

The setting as far as the privacy, the general account, the admin roles and the followers rights are fixed through the below page:



Last but not least, we manage to synchronize our Twitter account with our Facebook fan page in order to achieve a parallel communication and also to share “fans” between these two SNS platforms. The way to achieve this is the above described in steps<sup>6</sup>:

- a. **Step 1:** We searched for “Twitter” in Facebook and we added the first “Twitter” application that shows up in the search results.



b. **Step 2:** We allowed Twitter to access our profile.



c. **Step 3:** We logged into our Twitter account (via the Twitter application inside Facebook).



d. **Step 4:** In the end, we allowed status updates from Twitter back to Facebook.

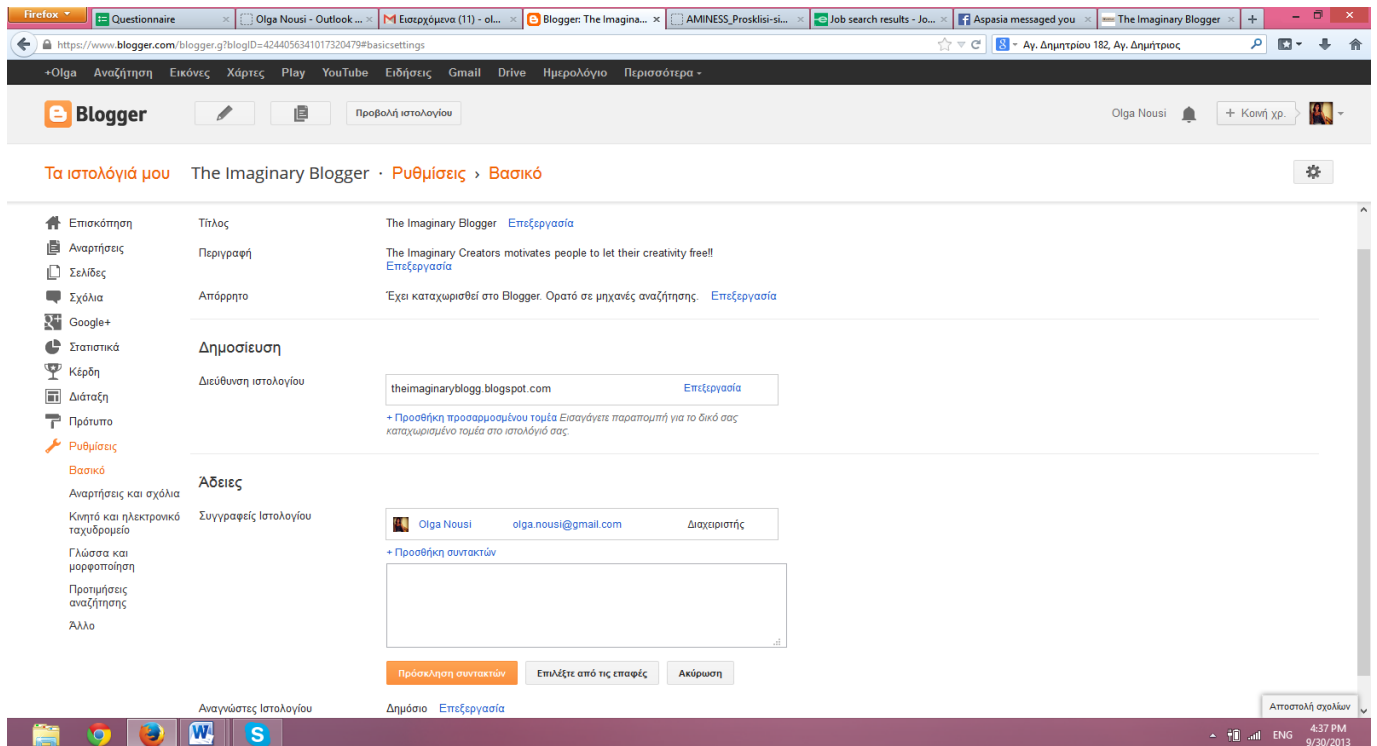


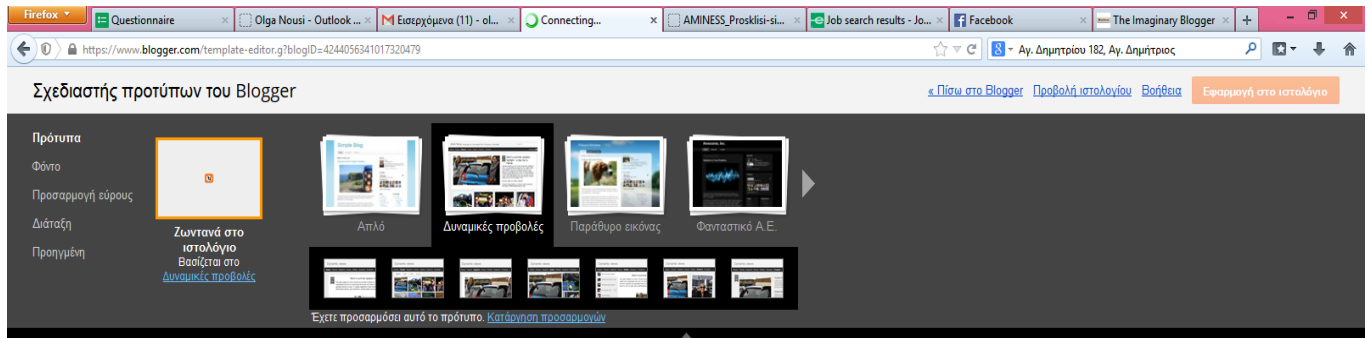


<sup>6</sup>Source: <http://www.insidefacebook.com/2009/01/22/how-to-sync-your-twitter-and-facebook-status-updates/>

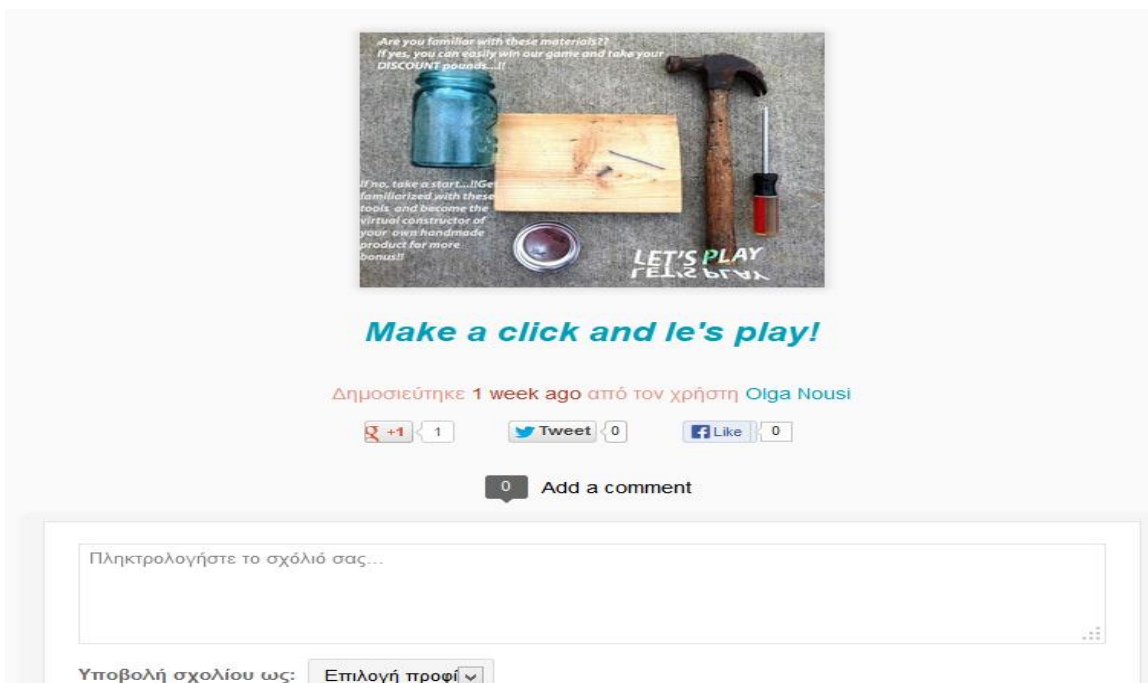
#### 4.4.5 Blog

In our blog, we used the template offered and based on this one we adapted it on our content. In other words, we placed our usual cover photo and our logo in order to always be easily recognizable. Moreover, the settings that we realized were the results of the “Ρυθμίσεις” section shown below:





Finally, the posts in our blog give to our “bloggers” the ability to comment, express their opinion, interact with Facebook and Twitter account (like, tweets).



## Chapter 5. Evaluating the online promotion and social media strategy in the case of “The Imaginary Creators”

### 5.1 Description of the evaluation process

In this chapter, we went in depth by analyzing the effects of our online promotion and social media strategy in a more practical essence. But, for analyzing the effects, we would receive the feedback from our possible users who would be the recipients of our promotion strategy. Thus, in this direction, we created a questionnaire with 34 questions in order to receive a quantitative feedback of users’ “attitude” and “tendency to do” concerning our strategy.

Attitude and tendency are the two major variables that we were trying to estimate and evaluate so as to acquire a sense of our market. Attitude is defined as the way of thinking as far as a specific promotion and social media strategy is concerned, for example we estimated the users’ attitude via our banner, our FB fan page, our Twitter page, and our contests. Tendency to do is defined as how motivated is a user in order to click on the online advertising link.

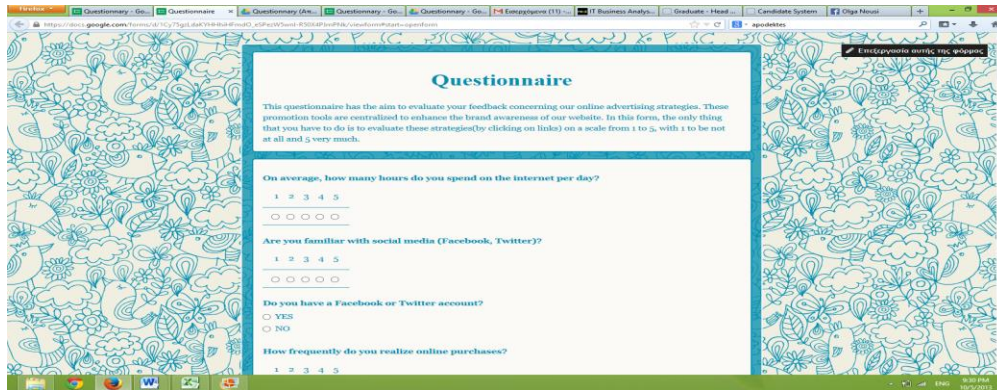
As for our sample, we should mention that we received 51 answers to our questions and as for our population; its age range fluctuates between 20 to 40 years old. In simple words, our statistical population is based mainly on young persons who are surely familiarized with technology and social media.

Below, we present you our questionnaire created in Google Docs and in the second phase we furnish you with some statistical elements and charts that offer a throughout image of our online promotion and social media strategy success in the name of the positive or negative feedback given by our sample.

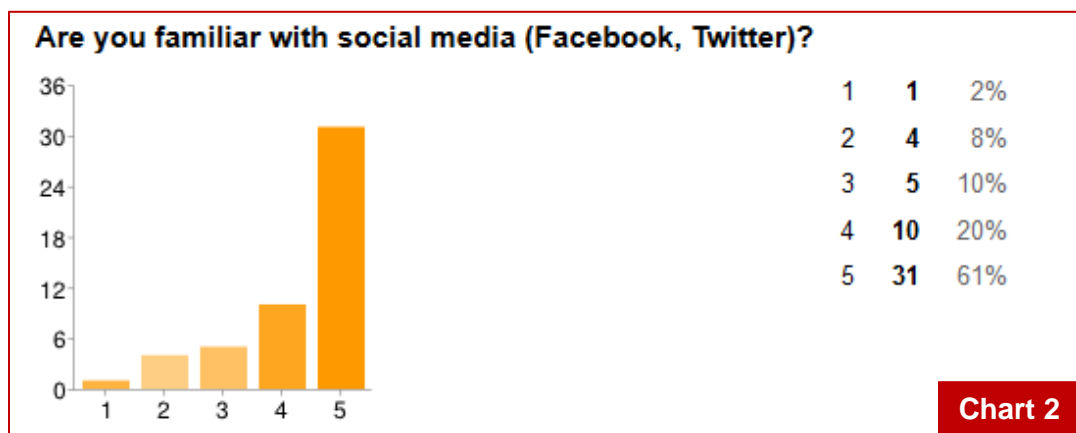
- **Questionnaire**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Cy75gzLdaKYHHhiHFmdO\\_eSPezW5wnl-R50X4PJmPNk/viewform#start=openform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Cy75gzLdaKYHHhiHFmdO_eSPezW5wnl-R50X4PJmPNk/viewform#start=openform)<sup>7</sup>

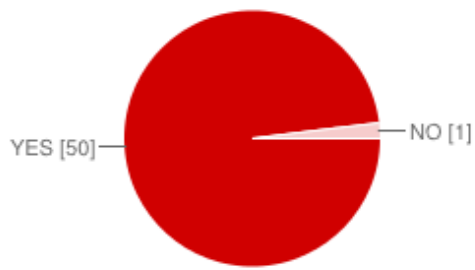
<sup>7</sup>Source: Inspired by hypothesis found in (Ziadi Nihel, 2013), (Zhang Hong et al.)



## 5.2 Results



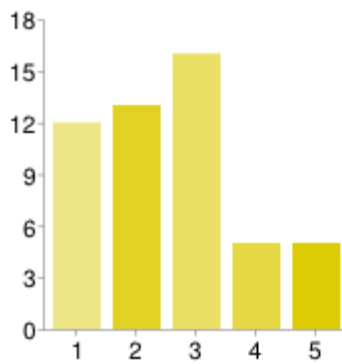
### Do you have a Facebook or Twitter account?



YES	50	98%
NO	1	2%

Chart 3

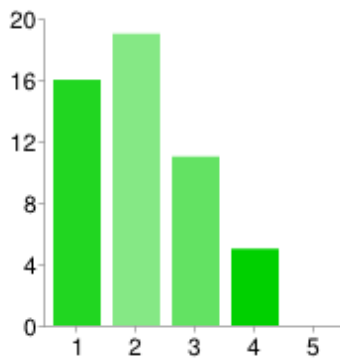
### How frequently do you realize online purchases?



1	12	24%
2	13	25%
3	16	31%
4	5	10%
5	5	10%

Chart 4

### What are your feelings toward online advertising:

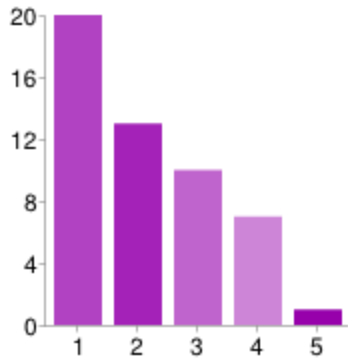


Via Banners

1	16	31%
2	19	37%
3	11	22%
4	5	10%
5	0	0%

Chart 5

**What are your feelings toward online advertising:**

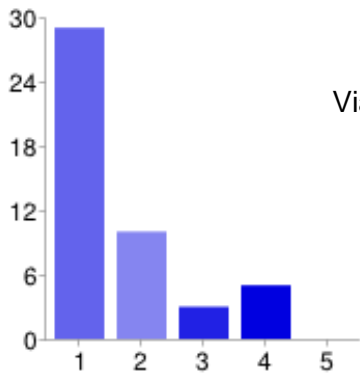


Via Facebook

1	20	39%
2	13	25%
3	10	20%
4	7	14%
5	1	2%

**Chart 6**

**What are your feelings toward online advertising:**

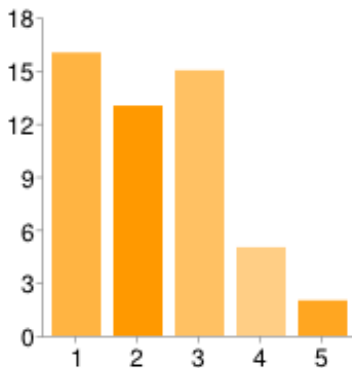


Via Twitter

1	29	62%
2	10	21%
3	3	6%
4	5	11%
5	0	0%

**Chart 7**

**What are your feelings toward online advertising:**

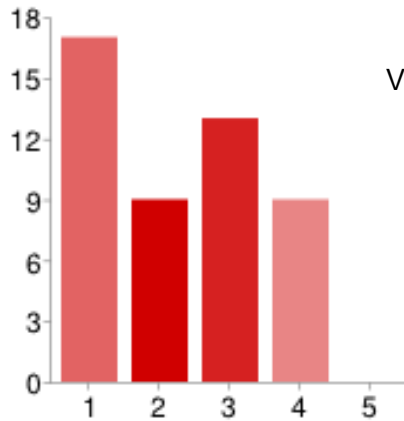


Via Blogs

1	16	31%
2	13	25%
3	15	29%
4	5	10%
5	2	4%

**Chart 8**

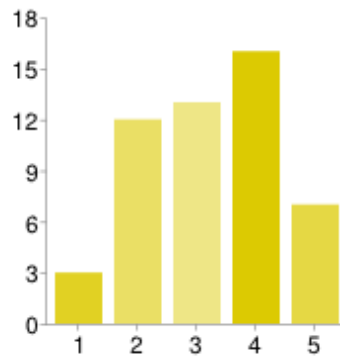
### What are your feelings toward online advertising:



1	17	35%
2	9	19%
3	13	27%
4	9	19%
5	0	0%

Chart 9

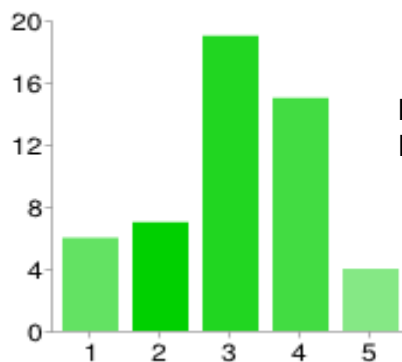
### As for our banner (<http://theimaginarycreators.net76.net/>), do you like the fact that:



1	3	6%
2	12	24%
3	13	25%
4	16	31%
5	7	14%

Chart 10

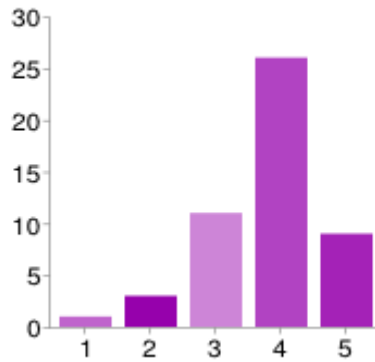
### As for our banner, do you like the fact that:



1	6	12%
2	7	14%
3	19	37%
4	15	29%
5	4	8%

Chart 11

**As for our banner, do you like the fact that:**

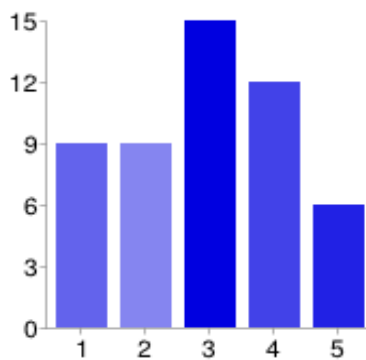


c) The banner has colors and images?

1	1	2%
2	3	6%
3	11	22%
4	26	52%
5	9	18%

**Chart 12**

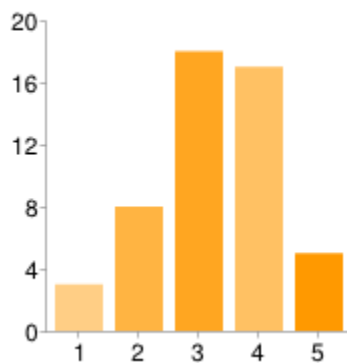
**Would you click on our banner?**



1	9	18%
2	9	18%
3	15	29%
4	12	24%
5	6	12%

**Chart 13**

**Does our banner attract your first impression when you enter to our website?**

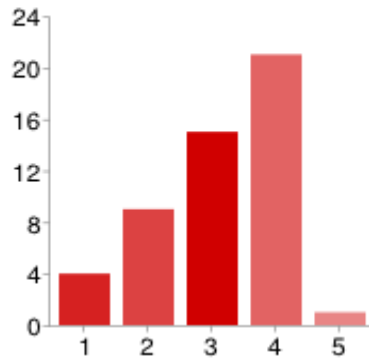


1	3	6%
2	8	16%
3	18	35%
4	17	33%
5	5	10%

**Chart 14**



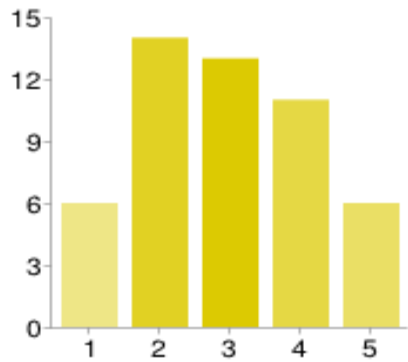
**The logo of our company in the banner enhances the trust to click on it?**



1	4	8%
2	9	18%
3	15	30%
4	21	42%
5	1	2%

**Chart 15**

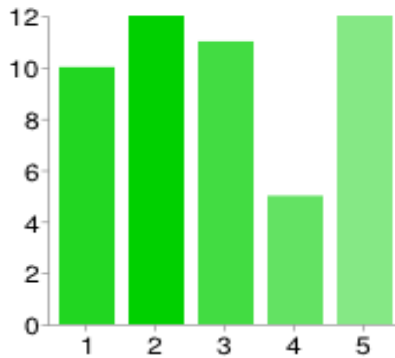
**Are your interests close to our website objective?**



1	6	12%
2	14	28%
3	13	26%
4	11	22%
5	6	12%

**Chart 16**

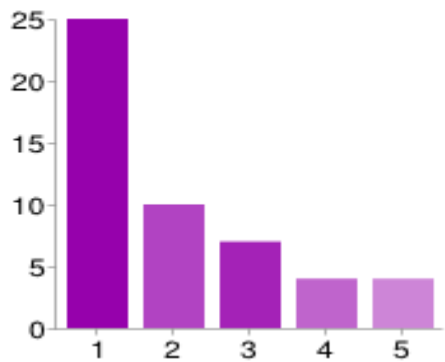
**Are you willing to become member of our Facebook fan page?**



1	10	20%
2	12	24%
3	11	22%
4	5	10%
5	12	24%

**Chart 17**

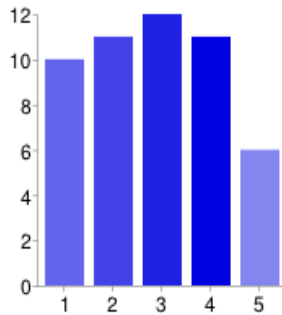
### Are you willing to become member of our Twitter fan page?



1	25	50%
2	10	20%
3	7	14%
4	4	8%
5	4	8%

Chart 18

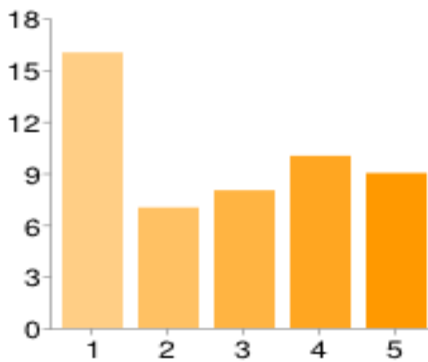
### Will you share content with other fans, interact with us for example in the case of a complaint or satisfaction?



1	10	20%
2	11	22%
3	12	24%
4	11	22%
5	6	12%

Chart 19

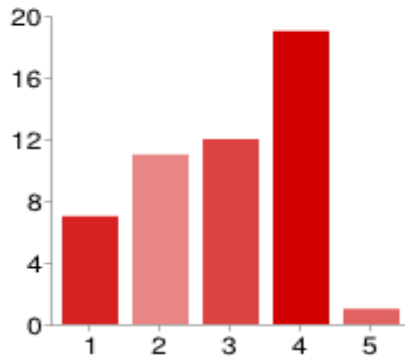
### Would you follow our Facebook contest and discount offers?



1	16	32%
2	7	14%
3	8	16%
4	10	20%
5	9	18%

Chart 20

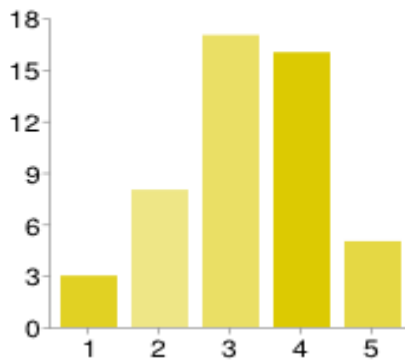
**Do you feel secure to further click on our website purchase process?**



1	7	14%
2	11	22%
3	12	24%
4	19	38%
5	1	2%

**Chart 21**

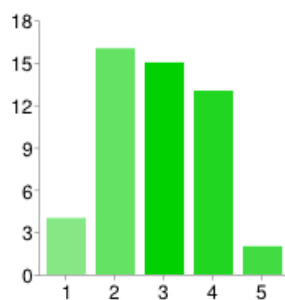
**Do you have a positive predisposition on Social media events?**



1	3	6%
2	8	16%
3	17	35%
4	16	33%
5	5	10%

**Chart 22**

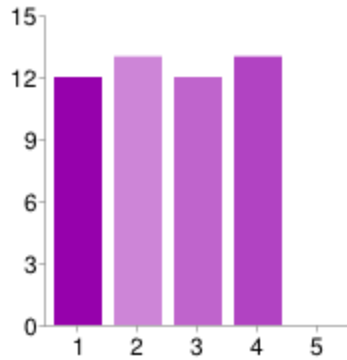
**The events organized through our Facebook page make you feel a sense of family inside the members?**



1	4	8%
2	16	32%
3	15	30%
4	13	26%
5	2	4%

**Chart 23**

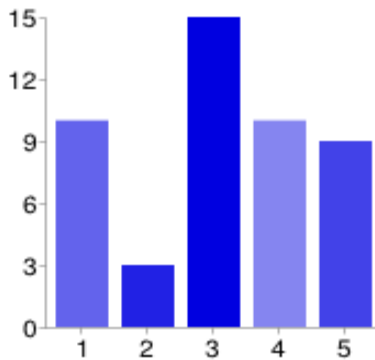
**Would you participate in our events published either on Facebook or Twitter?**



1	12	24%
2	13	26%
3	12	24%
4	13	26%
5	0	0%

**Chart 24**

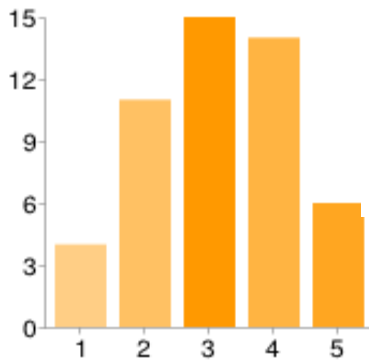
**Would you write complaints about a purchase experience in a blog?**



1	10	21%
2	3	6%
3	15	32%
4	10	21%
5	9	19%

**Chart 25**

**The reasons for participating in our blog would be:**

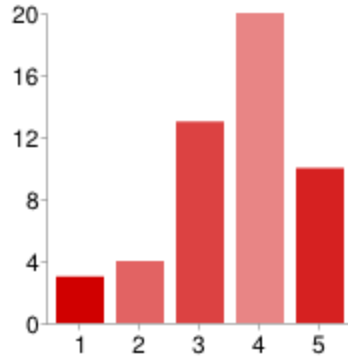


a) Interaction with the company (complaints, explanations, satisfaction)?

1	4	8%
2	11	22%
3	15	30%
4	14	28%
5	6	12%

**Chart 26**

**The reasons for participating in our blog would be:**

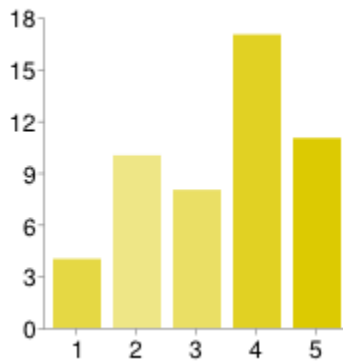


b) Becoming aware of discounts, special offers from the experience of others?

1	3	6%
2	4	8%
3	13	26%
4	20	40%
5	10	20%

**Chart 27**

**The reasons for participating in our blog would be:**

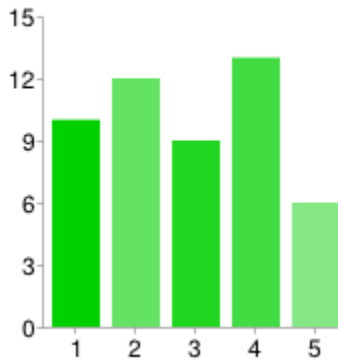


c) Observing the evaluation feedback by other followers?

1	4	8%
2	10	20%
3	8	16%
4	17	34%
5	11	22%

**Chart 28**

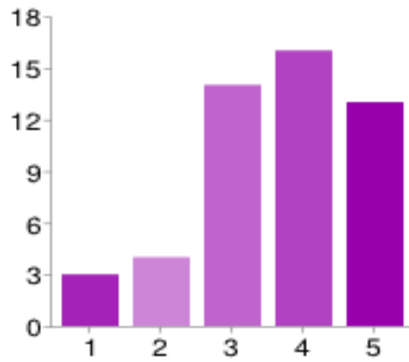
**Would you like join in our blog?**



1	10	20%
2	12	24%
3	9	18%
4	13	26%
5	6	12%

**Chart 29**

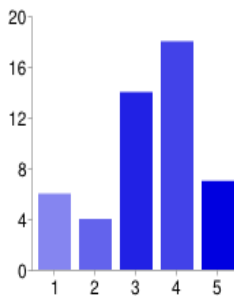
### Are you familiar with recycling ethics?



1	3	6%
2	4	8%
3	14	28%
4	16	32%
5	13	26%

Chart 30

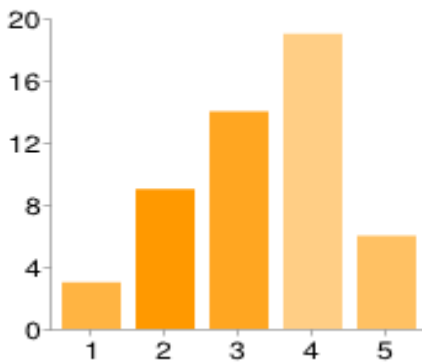
### Will you spend time to click on an application offered by our website to check how recyclable a selected handmade product is?



1	6	12%
2	4	8%
3	14	29%
4	18	37%
5	7	14%

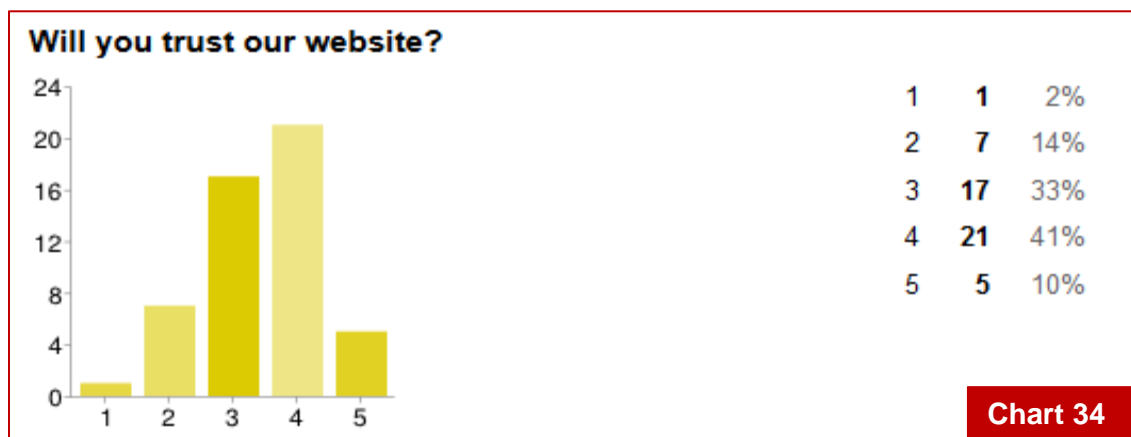
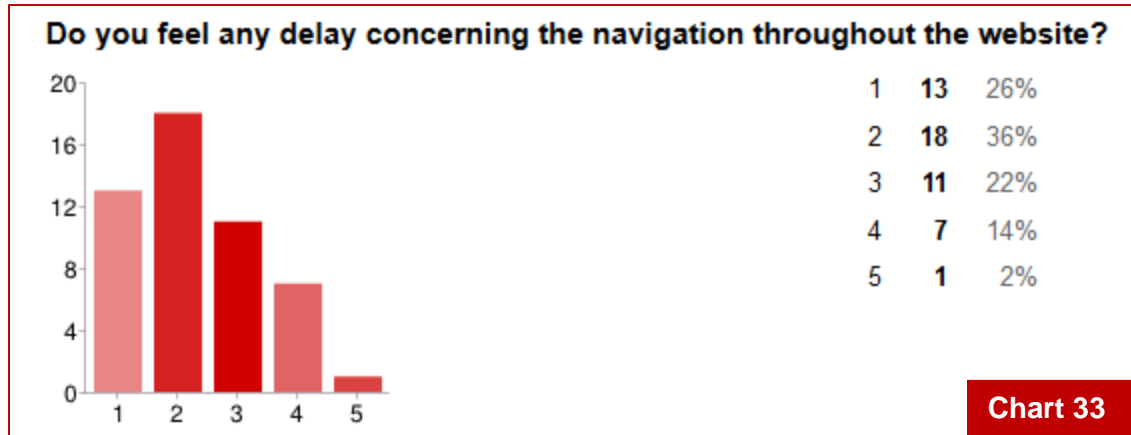
Chart 31

### Do you think that our website is attractive?



1	3	6%
2	9	18%
3	14	27%
4	19	37%
5	6	12%

Chart 32



### 5.3 Discussion and implications of the results

A close look to the charts resulted in the below observations:

- The market is still unfamiliar as far as the online purchase is concerned. Although, individuals nowadays are familiar with technology and social media operation, they are characterized as skeptical in proceeding in online purchase. They give their personal data for creating a SNS account and in parallel they distrust the online process of purchasing. **(Chart 1,2,3,4)**
- Online advertising provokes negative feelings to our statistical population. There is no great difference among the various advertising tools that we used for our promotional campaign (banners, Facebook, twitter, blogs, and web applications). In simple words, attitude towards online advertising is negative. Consequently, the possibility of converting this attitude to tendency to do is limited, hardly rare. **(Chart 5,6,7,8,9)**

- In the case of our banner, the fact that it is animated and it consists of images and colors satisfies more the users compared to the fact that it is big in size. Thus, the attitude of our population concerning our banner is positive due to its characteristics referred above. For this reason, the variable “tendency to do” is increased as we show in **Chart 13** where the intention to click on our banner is high enough. (**Chart 10, 11, 12, 13**). Moreover, the “tendency to do” in the case of clicking on our banner is being influenced also by the existence of our logo and the fact that our banner attracts the first impression when entering in the website with a percentage of 33-35 % (**Chart 14,15**)
- As for our Facebook fan page, we observe a big dispersion inside our statistical population. In other words, their preferences are shared among various options from negative to positive ones. Thus, we could result in the existence of mistrust in professional Facebook page which aims at promoting our business. This is obvious if we take into consideration that in the range of 1 to 5, a percentage of 24% dominates both in the scale of 2 and 4. The population expresses a total acceptance of Social media (Twitter, Facebook) as the majority has a SNS account (**Chart 2**), but as for joining a Facebook/Twitter professional fan page is skeptical enough. Especially Twitter page appears to be a little bit “unacceptable”. (**Chart 17, 18**). So, in this part we receive a negative attitude for joining in our SNS professional pages.
- The negative attitude above is expressed in a hardly negative “tendency to do” if we take into consideration the great dispersion concerning the active participation in our SNS pages such as content sharing, events’ joining, offers/discounts offerings. (**Chart 19, 20, 22, 23, 24**).
- Apart from marketing perspective, the population does not trust the online purchasing in general which is expected, because Greece is one country that does not show confidence to e-commerce platforms. (**Chart 21**). Maybe this attitude is characterized in our case by the fact that the interests of our official website are not much close to these ones of our population. (**Chart 16**)
- Now, in order to evaluate our variables “attitude” and “tendency to do” as far as blogs are concerned, we made an effort with our questionnaire to “export” the feelings of our population. So, (**Charts 25, 26, 27, 28**) present us a confused result



due to the high level of dispersion in our statistical scale. The perspective of participating in a blog for evaluating the feedback from others' experience is one motivation that gained the most supporters and it would be in consequence the greater motive for our population to proceed in becoming members of our blog. In simple words, attitude is confusing, we could not make any assumption or proceeding in a specific conclusion. As for "tendency to do" variable, **(Chart 29)** depicts a similar behavior for a specific part of our population. A percentage of 26% declare positive in the possibility of joining in our blog but also a percentage of 24% declare in parallel negative in the same possibility. There is no clear image for our variables in the aspect of our "The Imaginary Blogger"

- Concerning the recycling culture, our population is familiar with relative issues/ethics. So, there a positive attitude shown in **(Chart 30)**. As for the tendency to click on a "recycling application", our statistical population is characterized by a positive predisposition towards the possibility to being occupied with a web "recycling" application. **(Chart 31)**
- Finally, there is also the important evaluation of the whole website and its operation containing the navigation time and the aesthetics. In these sections related to our website, 36% answered that they did not face any navigation delay and 37% stated that they found our site attractive. **(Chart 32, 33)**. For this reason, we could assume a positive predisposition in clicking and navigating throughout our official website due to the 41% percentage of high trust shown in **(Chart 34)**.

## Chapter 6. Conclusions

### Conclusions

Through our research we are interested in studying online promotional and social media tools with which online users' behavior is affected. In this research two steps have been taken. We first conducted a literature review on the well-known current practices and mechanisms. In this step we made an effort to demonstrate the importance for contemporary marketers to apply innovative strategies supported by technological evolution in their marketing mix. We have also highlighted the possible effects of these strategies on users' behavioral reaction in the name of S-O-R behavioral model. Moreover, we enriched our understanding of humans' buying behavior by referring to Word of Mouth phenomenon which is responsible for interactivity between both online consumers and e-enterprises. Surely, interactivity is a basic key word in our research due to the fact that represents the ideal achievement for marketers in the modern term of "profit". In a second step, we tried to verify all theoretical findings by applying all these mechanisms in our incoming e-commerce platform called "The Imaginary Creators". After becoming the organizers of our online promotional mix which consists of Facebook, Twitter, Blog accounts, special offers, social media events, social media discounts and banners in the official website, we forwarded with measuring the acceptance of the above described marketing practice. In this point, highlighting the great importance of evaluating the adopted plans is achieved by a survey conducted with the help of a questionnaire. Evaluation means feedback which in consequence means positive or negative interactivity with consumers. Here is the basic objective or goal of this thesis, to explore various ways to assess the effectiveness of online advertising. The population selected to answer the questionnaire was more than 50 individuals. The analysis and the interpretation of this data from the survey have yielded the following results:

The market is still unfamiliar as far as the online purchase is concerned. Although individuals nowadays are familiar with technology and social media operations, they are characterized as skeptical in proceeding in online purchase. Furthermore, they face online advertising in a suspicious attitude. Now as far as the social media are concerned, social media acceptance is obvious but this does not mean that Facebook or Twitter advertising creates positive feelings inside our population. Last but not least, in our survey conducted

via the questionnaire we define two basic variables: “attitude” and “tendency to do accordingly” concerning how thrilled is our population with our applied online promotion/social media techniques. In this direction, we observe that “attitude” and “tendency to act accordingly” present mainly an inverse correlation rather than a proportional one in few of the cases examined in our questionnaire. As a consequence we could assume that Word of Mouth phenomenon is influenced by the relationship between “attitude” and “tendency to do”. Thus, WOM is a natural occurring reaction or maybe a result of the above relationship of these two variables.

In the end, we could also mention that as both social media activity and e-commerce sites will continue to soar, e-enterprises would increasingly face the challenge to further applying emerging features that would have more positive implications for individuals and e-firms. In this direction, we hope that our research will generate greater progress in understanding the symbiotic relationship between technology and marketing mix. And when we refer to technology, we refer to the majority of applications, technical tools whose operation depends on technological evolution. We also hope that this dissertation stimulates a discussion concerning the further understanding of humans’ behavioral attitudes in the name of online advertising. We would like to see more work on improving the online marketing strategy with respect to behavioral models and also with the necessary help of technology. Gamification elements or web applications related to the content of the addressing website would be an idea without any difficulties concerning the implementation. Furthermore, the above techniques would contribute to ameliorate the interaction between e-firms and customers. In the end, we desire to observe more attention to the success factor called evaluation. In this thesis, evaluation is believed to be the necessary feedback which is obviously helpful as far as profit in the name of users’ acceptance is concerned. So, we desire to see in the future more and more e-firms to follow an assessing process before or during introducing their promotional strategy and also more researchers to discovery new innovative means of evaluation.

Therefore, to conclude from the above statements, any company that bases its operation on Internet must not only take into account the dimensions of effective marketing mix described above in order to succeed in the name of customers’ relationships/interactivity and online advertising mechanisms but also the feedback before and during the online marketing campaign.

## Future Work

What else are we thinking of in order to further enhance the commercial image of our e-commerce platform “The Imaginary Creators”? Thus, we would like to proceed in incorporating in our website:

- A **Web application** for the recycling section of our website. With this application, every user could check how recyclable its selected handmade product is. This functionality will be implemented with the excessive use of Data Mining techniques and PHP coding. We would select the appropriate information about how recyclable each raw material is and then we would save this information on our database. As a consequence, when any user clicks in our recycling section advertised via our banner, he could check if the handmade product that he chose to buy respects the “environmental laws”. Every handmade product consists of various raw materials; this means that the percentage of how recycling a product is, would be the result of the mean value of all raw materials percentage.
- A **gamification element**: This idea is part of an innovative incoming trend that is characterized by game elements. So, with respect to “The Imaginary Creators” content, we would like to add a virtual game. The primary idea is to offer the user the chance to play while navigating in our website and becoming constructor of his handmade product. In simple words, every user could be able to make its handmade product step by step in virtual reality. In this reality, he would have available any tool, paint or raw material he desires from a predefined list.

Finally, further exploring the reasons, the effects and the general aspects related to evaluation of online advertising would be also a personal ambition. Considering the necessity of feedback in every business perspective and going in depth to invent new evaluation methods and criteria would contribute so as for both business professionals and me personally to receive a more detailed image of the acceptance inside humans.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire

This questionnaire has the aim to evaluate your feedback concerning our online advertising strategies. These promotion tools are centralized to enhance the brand awareness of our website. In this form, the only thing that you have to do is to evaluate these strategies (by clicking on links) on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 to be not at all and 5 very much.

1. **On average, how many hours do you spend on the internet per day?**

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

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2. **Are you familiar with social media (Facebook, Twitter)?**

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

3. **Do you have a Facebook or Twitter account?**

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

YES

NO

4. **How frequently do you realize online purchases?**

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

5. **What are your feelings toward online advertising:**

a) via banners:

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. **What are your feelings toward online advertising:**

b) via Facebook:

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. **What are your feelings toward online advertising:**

c) via Twitter:

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. **What are your feelings toward online advertising:**

d) via Blogs:

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. **What are your feelings toward online advertising:**

e) via Web applications:

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. **As for our banner (<http://theimaginarycreators.net76.net/>), do you like the fact that:**

a) the banner is animated?

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

11. **As for our banner, do you like the fact that:**

b) the banner is large?

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

12. **As for our banner, do you like the fact that:**

c) the banner has colors and images?

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

13. **Would you click on our banner?**

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

14. **Does our banner attract your first impression when you enter to our website?**

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

15. **The logo of our company in the banner enhances the trust to click on it?**

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1    2    3    4    5

---

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16. **Are your interests close to our website objective?**

Greek handmade products

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1    2    3    4    5

---

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17. **Are you willing to become member of our Facebook fan page?**

<https://www.facebook.com/TheImaginaryCreators>

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1    2    3    4    5

---

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18. **Are you willing to become member of our Twitter fan page?**

<https://twitter.com/SandolgaTic>

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1    2    3    4    5

---

---

19. **Will you share content with other fans, interact with us for example in the case of a complaint or satisfaction?**

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1    2    3    4    5

---

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20. **Would you follow our Facebook contest and discount offers?**

[https://www.facebook.com/TheImaginaryCreators/app\\_359014544128821](https://www.facebook.com/TheImaginaryCreators/app_359014544128821)

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

---

21. **Do you feel secure to further click on our website purchase process?**

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

---

22. **Do you have a positive predisposition on Social media events?**

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

---

23. **The events organized through our Facebook page make you feel a sense of family inside the members?**

<https://www.facebook.com/events/328318107304749/>

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

---

24. **Would you participate in our events published either on Facebook or Twitter?**

<https://www.facebook.com/events/328318107304749/>

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

---

25. **Would you write complaints about a purchase experience in a blog?**

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

---

26. **The reasons for participating in our blog would be:**

a) interaction with the company (complaints, explanations, satisfaction)?

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

---

27. **The reasons for participating in our blog would be:**

b) becoming aware of discounts, special offers from the experience of others?

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

---

28. **The reasons for participating in our blog would be:**

c) observing the evaluation feedback by other followers?

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

---

29. **Would you like join in our blog?**

<http://theimaginaryblogg.blogspot.gr/>

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1      2      3      4      5

---

---



30. Are you familiar with recycling ethics?

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1 2 3 4 5

---

31. Will you spend time to click on an application offered by our website to check how recyclable a selected handmade product is?

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1 2 3 4 5

---

32. Do you think that our website is attractive?

<http://theimaginarycreators.net76.net/>

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1 2 3 4 5

---

33. Do you feel any delay concerning the navigation throughout the website?

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1 2 3 4 5

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34. Will you trust our website?

<http://theimaginarycreators.net76.net/>

*Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.*

1 2 3 4 5

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