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# How to reach out to more customers through Facebook: a case study of Captain's Shop

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## How to reach out to more customers through Facebook: a case study of Captain's Shop

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In the last 10 years internet usage has grown rapidly and people spend a considerable amount of time using search engines, reading newspapers, and connecting with friends and family online. The use of social media has increased considerably as well. Facebook, as the biggest social media network, has grown in the past six years to become a significant advertising channel for companies with over 750 million daily users.

The purpose of this thesis is to help Captain's Shop use the social network webpage Facebook to access more customers, both new and old.

The study was executed during the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013. A qualitative research method was used including two interviews with employees of the company, in which the same questionnaire was used for both interviewees. In addition to interviews, literature related to the subject was used. This literature was written by experts in this field.

The thesis was conducted as a case study of Captain's Shop. As an employee of the company the author had access to all necessary internal information and benefitted from informal discussions with other employees as well as personal experiences.

The results of the case study affirmed the need to advertise more through Facebook and it is recommended that the company implements the advertisement campaign.

Key words    social media, customer reach, advertising, direct marketing

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## 1 Introduction

This thesis has been written for the company Oy Vestek Ab and focuses on their subsidiary Captain's Shop in order to address the question of how the company can use Facebook to increase its visibility and attract more customers online, as well as targetting new customer groups. The company is active in many fields of business but this thesis project concentrates on the boating section and especially on online marketing.

In the last 10 years the internet usage has grown rapidly. People spend considerable amount of time using search engines, reading newspapers, connecting with friends and family online. Therefore the usages of social media have grown rapidly as well. Facebook as the biggest social media network has grown in the past six years with almost a billion users. It is a significant advertising channel for companies as there are over 750 million daily users. Very few other advertising channels reach as many users as Facebook.

### 1.1 Purpose of the thesis and research problem

The purpose of this thesis to make a marketing communications plan for Oy Vestek Ab's subsidiary Captain's shop on how they can use Facebook, a social network page, to reach out to more customers as well as to maintain the relationship with old customers.

As mentioned currently people use the internet to find products and connect with friends and family through Facebook. This can also be seen in the considerable growth of Facebook, since it opened to the public in 2006 with 6 million users it had more than a billion users as of December 2012. This is the reason many companies reach out to their customer through this enormous social network web page and this is the argument in this thesis.

The research problem for this thesis is how Captain's shop can reach out to more customers through Facebook. Therefore marketing communications have been analysed in this thesis with concentration on advertising and direct marketing as well as on Facebook. The theory is relevant for the company when preparing to go through with the plan.

### 1.2 Research approach

This thesis has been written as a case study. The author has had access to internal information as an employee of the case company. Therefore the thesis includes knowledge gained while the author has been an employee of the company. In addition to this knowledge there

were interviews with two employees of the company who are closely related to the matter at hand.

The research was mainly conducted through literature as well as a questionnaire which was used in interviews with two employees of the company. The interviews were conducted at two separate occasions individually with the two employees.

### 1.3 Theoretical approach

The theoretical approach in this thesis consists of two main parts. The first part is discussing marketing communications and concentrating on the communications mix which include; advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, events and experiences, direct marketing and public relations and publicity. As marketing communications is an important tool for companies it is seen a lot in the social media and therefore the second part explains about social media as well as concentrating on Facebook and how it is a good marketing tool.

### 1.4 Framework of thesis

The framework of the thesis shows the order of the thesis. The thesis starts with an introduction that briefly explains the purpose of the thesis and then turns into the theoretical background where marketing communications is explained as well as social media and Facebook. The next chapter is about the research done and then the empirical study about Captain's Shop. The last chapter concludes the thesis.

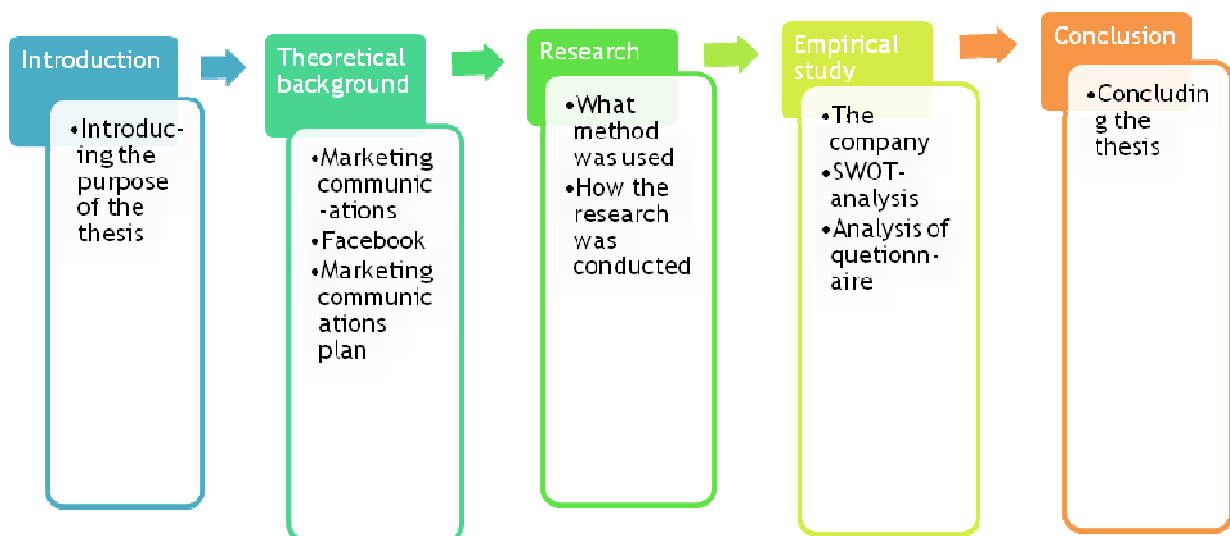


Figure 1 Framework of thesis

## 2 Theoretical background

### 2.1 Marketing communications

Marketing communications is the method for a company to keep their consumers aware and reminded of the brands the company has to offer. Marketing communications carries out many different functions for the consumer. The consumers can be taught how the product is used and what for, whom it is suitable for. It also allows the customer to learn by whom the product is made and what the company and brand represent and the consumer has the chance to get a reward or an incentive by trying the product. In recent times companies have started to use emails, text messages, social media, blogs, TV as well as their own web pages to teach the consumers of these functions. It is extremely important that the information given in one of these elements should always match any of the other ones. An example of that is that an advertisement on the TV should have the same slogan as the one on a social media page or the company's own web page. Through establishing a memorable brand and making a brand image is marketing communications able to lead to brand equity.

(Kotler & Keller 2006, 536)

#### 2.1.1 Marketing Communications mix

Advertising might have gotten the title as the central element of marketing communications but it is not the only one and at times not even the most important one in building brand equity. The marketing communications mix has six big parts of communication. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 536)



Figure 2 The six parts of the marketing communications mix



### 2.1.2 Advertising

Advertising is one of the most important and oldest instruments in the communication mix. Every year companies spend great amounts of money on advertising. Many different media channels are used such as TV, radio, magazines, online advertising and any other channels that reaches the target audience. Advertising is used in recent times almost everywhere where there is an empty space to advertise and to get the consumers attention, for example billboards, busses, toilets. Behind all that reaches the eye is a lot of research on what makes advertising effective. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 536; De Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van den Bergh 2004, 181; Dahlen, Lange & Smith 2010, 278)

<b>Sender</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturer</li> <li>• Collective</li> <li>• Retailer</li> <li>• Co-operative</li> <li>• Idea</li> </ul>	<b>Message</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informational</li> <li>• Transformational</li> <li>• Institutional</li> <li>• Selective vs generic</li> <li>• Theme vs action</li> </ul>
<b>Receiver</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer</li> <li>• Business-to-business               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Industrial</li> <li>▪ Trade</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Media</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ausiovisual</li> <li>• Print</li> <li>• Point-of purchase</li> <li>• Direct</li> </ul>

Table 1 Types of advertising (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 182)

This table shows that different kind of advertising can be divided into four different criteria; sender, message, receiver and media. The advertising can be characterized by the sender. Manufacturer advertising is launched by a company that wants to promote its own brand. Collective advertising is the result of the government launching a campaign. Also retail companies advertise the products they sell. When two companies or retailers join together to make a campaign it is called co-operative advertising. Ideas can also be promoted, mainly by not-for-profit organizations. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 182)

The receiver can be either a private consumer or another company. When the receiver is another company the purpose for the advertising message might be to get them to either buy products for their own production process (industrial) or to resell (trade) them. The advertising message can be divided into different types of messages. Informational motivations are based on practical needs while transformational motivations are based on needs for pleasure, associated with emotions derived from consuming the product in question. Government campaigns use the term institutional advertising. Selective advertising campaigns concentrate on a specific brand, while generic advertising campaigns concentrate on promoting a whole product category. Theme advertising tries to get the consumer to remember good

and positive things about the product for later purchase while the action advertising tries to get the consumer to buy the product straight away. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 182)

As the last criteria is the media which defines the medium where the advertisement is placed. Audiovisual advertising is mainly seen on TV while print advertising is found in magazines, newspapers and catalogs. Point-of-purchase advertising is found in the location where the product or service is bought, an example of this is a display that has all the main facts of the product or service on it. Direct advertising is directed straight to the consumer through mail, e-mails or phone. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 182; Kotler & Keller 2006, 568)



Figure 3 Stages in campaign development (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 183)

As any other communications plan, developing an advertising campaign is divided into different steps. It all starts with the marketing strategy, which is the base for the development of the advertising strategy. As seen from the figure the three most important points of advertising strategy is target groups, objectives and message strategy. A target group defines to whom the advertising message is directed. Objectives explain why the advertising message is done while message strategy defines what the content is. The third step is creative strategy which explains how the campaign will be done. The fourth step is the media strategy. Media strategy defines in which media the advertisement will be used, the time period for it and how often it will be repeated. When selecting the media it is important to make sure that it will reach the right target group. The most popular media is TV followed by newspapers and magazines. There are three possibilities to choose from when it comes to the time period of the advertisement. These are continuous schedule, pulsing schedule and flighting schedule. Continuous schedule means that the advertisement will be continuously shown or played. The pulsing schedule means that the advertisement is continuous but at some periods of time it is more frequent than other periods. The flighting schedule is for just some periods of time during the campaign, some periods it is not shown or played at all but then in other periods it is shown frequently. The last part of the media strategy is the frequency of the advertisement. Frequency means how often the target audience will be exposed to the advertisement. When all the ideas are ready they will be evaluated and the best one will be chosen as the one to be implemented. Eventually the whole campaign will be evaluated. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 183)

When starting to plan an advertising strategy the first thing needed is a creative brief. A creative brief contains all the main facts needed for an advertising strategy. Below the facts can be seen. Most of these facts are very crucial for the advertising strategy to succeed. It is not only important to know target groups, objectives but also to know information concerning the past, present and future to give the advertising strategy the most accurate view of the brand. (Dahlen et al. 2010, 292; De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 187)

As the creative brief has been made it is time for the first step of the creative strategy which is to develop a creative idea. There are many views on what a creative idea is and this is one way to define it “original and imaginative thought designed to produce goal-directed and problem-solving advertisements and commercials”. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 187) On the other hand other views on creative idea should be attention-grabbing.

To get the desired response from the target audience the advertising message needs to be formulated in the right way. This is what is called creative appeals. There are two main types of appeals which are rational appeals and emotional appeals. For both of these two types of appeals the same endorses can be used as seen in the table below.

<p><b>Rational appeals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking head</li> <li>• Demonstration</li> <li>• Problem solution</li> <li>• Testimonial</li> <li>• Slice of life</li> <li>• Dramatization</li> <li>• Comparative ads</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Emotional appeals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humor</li> <li>• Fear</li> <li>• Warmth</li> <li>• Eroticism</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Endorsers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert endorsement</li> <li>• Celebrity endorsement</li> </ul>	

Table 2 Creative advertising appeals, advertising formats and endorsers (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004,

189)

Talking head is the term used when the advertisement consists of a person telling their own story about the product. In Finland many people might recognize Activia yoghurt advertisements as one of these. A demonstration basically shows to the consumer how the product works while at the same time showing the benefits of the product. On TV this is mainly seen on the TV Shop channels. Problem solution shows how the problem can be solved with the product or service. A recognizable advertisement for problem solution is the different Head & Shoulders advertisements where you can see how the dandruff goes away when using the Head & Shoulders shampoo. A testimonial advertisement on the other hand includes an ordinary person telling about their experience with the product. A well known advertisement that does this is the Vanish stain remover advertisement where a mother explains how easy it is to use and you can see the results almost straight away. Slice-of-life advertisements show the product being used in a real-life setting into which the target group can relate themselves. In this category there are great amounts of washing powder advertisements that suit the real-life setting. A dramatization advertisement is very similar to a slice-of-life advertisement as they both first present a problem and afterwards the solution. The difference is that the dramatization is more intense. Examples of dramatization advertisements are Always female product advertisements. Comparative advertising is used to show how the product is better than the competitor's product. This can be divided into direct comparative advertising and

indirect comparative advertising. The difference between these two is that direct comparative advertising mentions the competitor brand while indirect comparative advertising does not mention it. In Europe comparative advertising is only allowed in certain circumstances. Rational advertisements do often contain many information cues. The table seen below is the most widely used classification system for these cues. This classification includes 14 different types of information that have been applied into more than 60 studies. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 191-192)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price</li> <li>• Quality</li> <li>• Performance</li> <li>• Components</li> <li>• Availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special offers</li> <li>• Taste</li> <li>• Nutrition</li> <li>• Packaging</li> <li>• Warranties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Independent research</li> <li>• Company research</li> <li>• New ideas</li> </ul>
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Table 3 Resnik and Stern's advertising information classification (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004)

An analysis was made by Abernethy and Franke on 59 studies in 24 different countries where this classification had been used. The analysis revealed that the average number of information cues used is 2,04. In the figure below the most frequently used information cues are listed. The analysis also revealed that in developed countries, for example USA and Western Europe, advertisements are more informative than in less developed countries, for example India and parts of Latin America. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 189)

It also has been shown in a study that rational appeals are more effective with a product in a new market while the emotional appeals work better in the market where the product is already familiar. Emotional appeals are used in advertising when the advertiser wants to evoke emotions in the consumer instead of making them think. Unfortunately this does not always work with all people. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 189)

Humor is used in advertising when the intent is to make the consumers laugh. There are many views on if it is good to use humor in advertisements and in which kind of advertisements it should be used in. It can easily give the wrong picture of a product but there is one thing that it does do and that is to attract attention. It has been noticed that humor works better on an existing and familiar product than on a totally new product. Fear on the other hand is used when wanting the consumer to feel as they would be at risk unless they buy the product. Examples of these risks are different toothpaste advertisements, deodorant and dandruff advertisements and insurance company advertisements. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 193)

Warmth is used in advertisements when wanting to get the consumer to have positive feelings like love, friendship, affection. It leads to less negative feelings and a more positive attitude towards the brand. Most often it is females and emotional individuals that are most responsive to these advertisements. An advertisement can also be classified as erotic if these ele-

ments are found in it; partial or complete nudity, physical contact between two adults, sexy or provocatively dressed persons, provocative or seductive facial expressions and suggestive words or sexually laden music. Eroticism is used more and more in advertisements as it does sell well. Examples of advertisements with eroticism are perfume advertisements. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 195)

Music is mainly used in TV and radio advertisements and is often an element of the advertisement that the consumer easily remembers. It is important to choose the right music to an advertisement as it might have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the advertisement. A good example of famous jingles is all the Coca Cola advertisements as well as the McDonald's advertisements. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 193)

The endorsers in an advertisement can either be experts or celebrities. When there is a toothpaste advertisement and a person standing in a lab coat telling what good things the toothpaste does it seems more trustworthy as it give the consumer the picture that it is a dentist telling them about the product. A study suggested that using an expert in the advertisement evokes positive response to the product. Celebrities are also used very often to achieve an effect on the target groups. A lot of advertisers use celebrities in their advertisements as these are often looked up towards. The consumers can see well-known sports people advertising for brands like Adidas and Nike, while famous models are seen in cosmetic and perfume advertisements. It is important that the advertiser uses a credible celebrity for advertising the product, for example the world's best football player Lionel Messi is in Adidas advertisements for football shoes. The celebrity should also be chosen with consideration of the target audience, in an advertisement for teenagers there should be someone whom they all know and look up to, and in an advertisement for elderly people the advertisers should use someone they recognize and is even in the same age category. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 198)

The final idea for the advertisement has to be suited for the target audience, be able to reach the objectives and to making the brand's position clear and simple. It also has to suit the company's long-term strategy as well as go together with former advertisements. As all of this has been taken into account the advertisement is left in the hands of professionals who make the actual advertisement including music, characters and the set. When the advertisement is approved by the advertiser it is sent to the media. Eventually, when the whole campaign has run, it all has to be evaluated. Therefore it is important to have clear objectives in the beginning and information of the situation prior to the campaign. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004; Dahlen et al. 2010)

### 2.1.3 Sales promotion

Sales promotion offers the consumer an incentive to try the product. These incentives can be free goods, price cuts, loyalty program, competitions, discount coupons or samples. As sales promotion is more of different techniques it is most often only done in a short period of time. Sales promotion is about getting existing consumers to buy more and at the same time attracting new consumers with a great offer. Anything extra that adds value to the product is seen as a positive benefit and makes the purchase decision even easier for the customer. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 536, 555, 585; De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 335; Dahlen et al. 2010, 278)

Sales promotion is all the time increasing in importance in the communications mix. During the past 30 years the usage of sales promotion has increased greatly as the number of product categories has also increased greatly. It has become more difficult for the consumer to differentiate brands on basis of their actual qualities and therefore the functional differences between the brands are currently less important. That is why it is more difficult for manufacturers to differentiate their brands on the basis of advertising. Promotion has become a useful tool to get the attention of the target groups and through that get them to buying their brands. As individual advertisements get lost in communications clutter it is extremely hard to reach the consumer effectively. Advertisements can easily be ignored by consumers and therefore there is a need for other tools to attract attention to the brands. Consumers have become less brand loyal as they are more price-conscious. That is one reason promotions are getting more popular. More often the buying decision is taken in the store. There are an increasing number of impulse-buying decisions and that is why it is important to have in-store communications elements and incentives in the stores. For companies to see immediate results they use promotions tools as many companies have become short-term oriented. A promotion campaign's result can be more easily measured than an advertising campaign as promotions campaigns' aim is immediate response. Distribution channels have also become a powerful tool while promoting. This result in shelf space being attracted and the retailers have the chance to decide which brands they will have on display and with which conditions. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 335)

Depending on whom the initiator for the promotions is and the target groups related, several types of promotions can be identified. It can either be the manufacturer or the retailer who is the initiator of the promotions. There are three types of audience the promotion can be aimed at; distributors, the sales force and the end consumer. Retailer usually promote to the end consumer while manufacturers target all the three target groups. This results in four types of promotions; consumer promotions by manufacturer, consumer promotions by retailer, trade promotions by manufacturer aimed at distributors and sales force promotions by manufacturers. The first two are similar as they are both aimed at the end consumer.



Figure 4 Objectives and target groups of consumer promotions (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 338)

As seen in the figure above there are several objectives and target groups in consumer promotions. Trial by new customers is one of the most important objectives. These new customers are either brand-switchers or new consumers that have never tried the product category before. “Existing customers can be made loyal, and loyal customers can be rewarded for their loyalty”. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 339)

It is often more important to keep the loyal customer than trying to convince the competitor’s customer to change brand. To increase the market size it is good to promote an entire product category. This type of promotions is suitable for market leaders who benefit from a growing market. An example is selling ice-cream during winter. Also giving discounts on larger volumes increases sales. Last but not least is reinforcing other communication tools with promotions. Linking advertising with promotions can boost the advertising campaign as well as direct marketing can have a more effective response if there is a promotional offer linked to the e-mail. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 337; Kotler & Keller 2006, 585)

There are three kind of categories in consumer promotions; monetary incentive, chance to win a prize and product promotions.



Monetary incentives	Chance to win a prize	Product promotions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price cut on the shelf</li> <li>• Coupons</li> <li>• Cash refunds</li> <li>• Extra volume</li> <li>• Savings card</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contests</li> <li>• Sweepstakes and lotteries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampling</li> <li>• Free in mail</li> <li>• Premiums</li> <li>• Self liquidators</li> <li>• Savings cards</li> </ul>

Table 4 Consumer promotions tools (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 341)

Monetary incentives mainly mean that the price will be lowered to improve the price/quality perception of the consumer. Price cut on the shelf is the most direct monetary incentive and the simplest for manufactures and retailer, as the consumer gets the discount straight away of when they go to pay the product. Although it is a price cut it does lead to additional turnover. It is though important not give the consumer the wrong picture of the product by having a price cut on the same product too often. Coupons are also a popular monetary incentive as it gives a discount on a product by showing it while paying. These can be found in newspapers, direct mailing, print advertisements, or even on the package of the already purchased product. Coupons have most often a limited time in which it has to be used. Coupons can have either a certain percentage that the consumer gets of the starting price or the advantage to buy 2 for the price of 1. Cash refunds are a sort of discount where the consumer gets a monetary refund when the product is bought and the consumer has sent a proof of buying it. A familiar brand that does this is Canon who gives a certain amount of money back for purchasing their cameras. Extra volume in products is an effective way to get regular user to buy a familiar product. Most often it is products like shampoos, soaps and food products that have extra volume to it. The price is the same as a normal size product but the bottle or package is bigger with more content. Saving cards is the last monetary incentive which mainly means that the consumer has a card that gives a discount after 10 time of buying a product from the same store or buying a specific brand a certain amount of times. This can often be seen in cafeterias where you might gain the tenth coffee for free. The chance to win a prize-category includes two different kinds of ways to win a prize. Contests differ from the others since the participant can influence the final outcome of the game while lotteries and sweepstakes are based on chance. Creating a slogan or designing a winning hamburger are some examples of different contests. Sweepstakes are planned ahead, there are certain numbers that have been chosen to win and when the consumer picks the right number they win a prize. The number and the winner of lotteries are totally unknown until the numbers are being picked after the consumers have gotten their own ones. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 341)

Product promotions offer the consumer a free product, either as an incentive or as a reward for purchasing a product. Sampling is one of the most know product promotion techniques. The consumers receive a free, often smaller, sample of the product. This can be implemented in a shop or it can be sent by mail, for example a perfume sample in a magazine. Free in-mail

promotions are very similar to the cash refund promotion although instead of a monetary refund the consumer receives a gift when showing proof of product purchase. Premiums are an add-on that the consumer receives when buying a product. For example when buying a certain quantity of a product the consumer receives something related to the product. Self-liquidators are presents that consumers can receive when proving that they have purchase a certain quantity of a product. An example is Coca-Cola who wanted the consumers to collect codes that could be found inside the bottle cap and send them in to receive a t-shirt. Saving cards can also be used to gain a gift instead of a monetary discount. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 349)

This following table shows the different promotions tools to motivate trade. Off-invoice allowances are price reductions straight directed to the trade, this can be a discount by unit or after selling a certain quantity of the product. The count-recount method is used to gain a discount in the end of a time period.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Off-invoice allowances           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual case bonus</li> <li>▪ Volume allowance</li> <li>▪ Discount overrides</li> <li>▪ Count and recount</li> <li>▪ Free merchandise</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Slotting allowances</li> <li>• Advertising/performance allowances</li> <li>• Co-operative advertising allowances</li> <li>• Buy-back allowances</li> <li>• Dealer contests</li> <li>• Dealer loaders</li> </ul>
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Table 5 Trade promotion tools (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 350)

The slotting allowance is a one-time fee that the retailers charge before taking a new product on to their shelves to cover the costs of entering a new product into the retailers system. Advertising/performance allowances are monetary incentives provided by the manufacturer to the retailer for advertising the manufacturer's brand. Sometimes a certain percentage is put into a co-operative advertising fund; this money comes from what the retailer buys from the manufacturer. Eventually the dealer also puts a certain percentage to the fund and then this is used to advertise the brand of the manufacturer. Buy-back allowance is agreed upon between the manufacturer and retailer. When the manufacturer wants to update the product on the retailers' shelves they buy back the older model and change into the newer product. For the manufacturer to motivate the retailers to sell their brands they organize a contest between all the retailers, the prize is for example a trip. Dealer loaders basically mean that in addition to the product the manufacturer offers something more, for example when selling soft-drinks the manufacturer provides the refrigerator. As mentioned, sales promotion is increasing its importance in the communication mix all the time. Depending on whom the tar-

get audience is the sales promotion can be divided into four different types of promotion. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004; Kotler & Keller 2006)

#### 2.1.4 Events and experiences

Activities and programs that are designed to make the consumer experience the brand in daily interactions. Examples of these are taking part in exhibitions that are related to the brand, or sponsoring a sports competition that is closely related to the brand. Exhibitions give the company a chance to present their products or services, demonstrate them as well as sell the products or services. This is also a chance for the company to attract business-to-business customers attention.

(Kotler & Keller 2006, 536; De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 419)

Public fairs	Trade fairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General interest</li> <li>• Special interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horizontal</li> <li>• Vertical</li> <li>• Conference-bound</li> <li>• Trade mart</li> </ul>

Table 6 Types of exhibition (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 420)

As seen in the table above exhibitions can be divided into public fairs and trade fairs. Public fairs are open to everyone. The table above shows how there are two types of public fairs; general interest fairs and special interest fairs. General interest fairs are targeted at a big audience as there is a wide range of products and services exhibited. These exhibitions are very strongly promoted and their aim is to attract as many visitors as possible. A recognizable fair in Finland is the Travelling Exhibition that always drags over 70 000 visitors during 3 days time. Special interest fairs are more focused on informing the visitors then selling them the product or service. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 420)

Trade fairs are targeted for people working in a certain industry. These fairs are divided into four types of trade fairs; horizontal, vertical, conference-bound and trade mart. Horizontal trade fairs are meant for companies from one industry exhibiting their products and services to professional target groups. Vertical trade fairs are again meant for different industries exhibiting their products to a target group from only one field of activity. Conference-bound exhibitions bring together both a conference and an exhibition. These are mainly smaller events but are effective as the target group can be very broadly selected. Trade marts are mainly for selling products and services where the participants have their samples out on display all the time. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 421)

Exhibitions and fairs are considered a personal communications tool as it includes demonstrations, face-to-face contact with the consumers, as well as direct selling and public relations.

The advantage that exhibitions and fairs have is that it makes all the senses work (listening, watching, feeling, tasting and smelling). For business-to-business markets trade shows are third on the marketing expenditures list after advertising and sales promotion. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 421)

Before participating in an exhibition or trade fair the company need to focus on the objectives it wants to achieve by participating. The next figure shows objectives that can positively influence the participation.



Figure 5 Marketing communication objectives and trade fair participation (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 424)

The selling of products is very important for companies that make an important share of their annual sales at exhibitions. Trade fairs and exhibitions are good places to make a first impression and first contact with the customer and to generate leads that eventually could lead to sales. It is important to attract the visitor's attention as they are there for the reason that they are interested in the products and services that are exhibited. This is also a good opportunity to build a good relationship with the customers. The launch and testing of a new product is also a good objective to participate in an exhibition as the visitor will learn about the new product and at the same time estimate the interest for the new product. For new companies it is a good way to get more brand awareness as well as more awareness of the company. One of the most important objectives of an exhibition is the demonstration of the products. The fact that the visitor is able to see and feel the product makes the chance of a sale bigger. As the companies are showing their best sides at the exhibitions they have a chance to strengthen their corporate image of both the company as well as its brands. Not participating in an exhibition in the company's market might give the consumers the wrong

picture and the competitors will have an advantage. Multinational companies have the chance to increase their international awareness by participating in foreign fairs which leads to new contacts and a chance to attract a retailer in a new country. Exhibitions are also a good place to follow up on the competitor and learn about their new products and prices. Companies have also the chance to motivate their employees when travelling to an exhibition by giving them a more luxurious treat at the hotel. As a final objective is the tradition of participating in an exhibition since that is something a company has done for a long time. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 424)

To succeed at an exhibition the company needs to be well prepared. The planning of an exhibition is a long process which often starts as soon as the annual exhibition is over. In the next figure the logical steps of planning an exhibition can be seen.

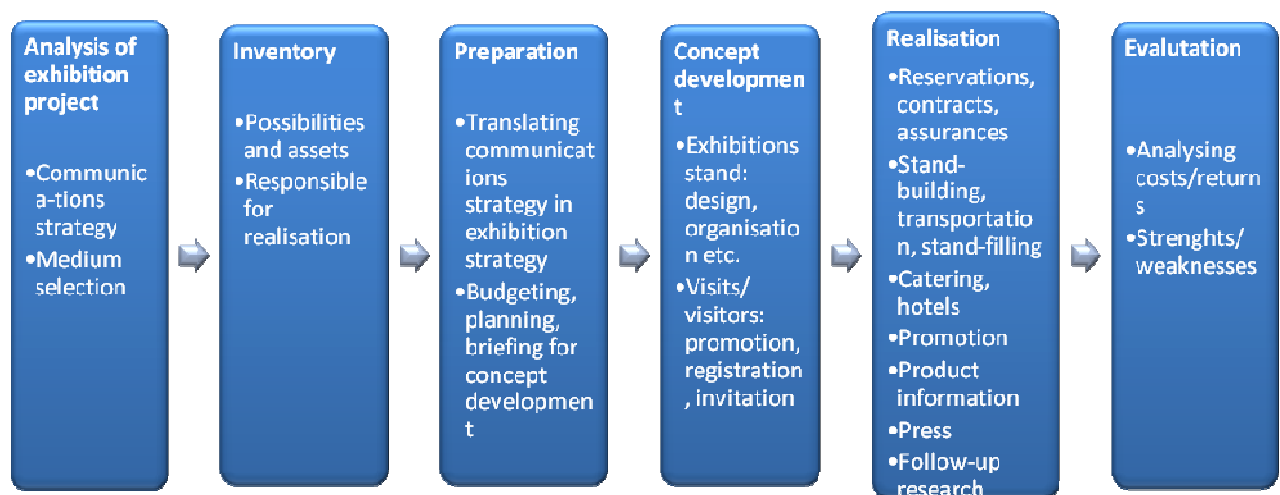


Table 7 The exhibition planning process (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 430)

The first stages of this process consider exhibitions as a media or communications tool and also compared to other kind of media to reach the communications goal. Choosing the right exhibition for the company where it will be most representative is also important. There are a number of selection criteria which will help the marketers to choose the right one to meet the communications objectives.

- Reach of the exhibition or trade fairs - both the number of visitors and profile of visitors;
- Costs and estimated return of fair participation;
- Program of the exhibition - the subject of the exhibition should correspond with the characteristics of the products or services a company is selling;
- Presence of competitors - not participating could send negative signals to the market of buyers, and competitors may use your absence as a strategic tool in negotiations with your clients;
- Reputation and fame of an exhibition and its organizer;

- Number of participants;
- Media attention for former editions;
- Own experiences with former editions of the exhibition;
- Supporting activities - workshops, readings, conferences;
- Timing of trade fair - fairs should be scheduled into the planning of a company and sales leads generated at a fair need sales capacity immediately after the fair.

The most important selection criteria among British companies were types of visitors as well as the types of products or services presented. These are not the only important criteria's as estimated number of leads, number of visitors, cost and publicity were all found important. The criteria's that were found least important were date and duration of event and the reputation of the organizer. The second step consists of checking the budget, time and capacity and one person is made responsible for the trade fair. As this have been done a strategy and what the goals for the exhibition are defined in coordination with the budget, back-timing and briefing for the development of stands. Next step is the promotion stage. This is one of the most important steps in supporting the exhibition activities planning process. At this point the company has the change to build their relationship with clients by mailing them free tickets to the exhibition. It is an advantages to advertise on the TV and radio but also very important to have an advertisement in the exhibition catalogue so that the customers will find to the stand. After the actual exhibition the whole event will be analyzed through costs and returns as well as strengths and weaknesses. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 424)

#### 2.1.5 Public relations and publicity

Determines what information of the company, brand and product comes out to the public eye and maintaining a mutual understanding between the company and its public. It is important that the press releases gain publicity as it is one of the major public relations tool. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 536; De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 5; Dahlen et al. 2010, 278)

Public relations are a communications tool that determines the personality of the company to the outer world. It is the main action to create and keep good relationships with the publics, audiences or stakeholders. These are the actions that determine the way the company want it to be seen and how the company is seen by the public. Publicity on the other hand is the term that is used to describe the media coverage of news about the company and its products and services. Publics are different groups of people that are not the main target group, hence called secondary target groups, but still have an important influence on the opinion of the company. Therefore it is vital to keep a good relationship with these publics. Public relations are primarily defined as a two-way form of communication; the company learns from its publics and then they deliver information to the publics. Additionally public relations should be a properly planned action, just as all the other communications tools. Public relations is also a

big part of a successfully integrated communications activity as it includes a wide ranges of activities that can all be linked to the other elements of the communications mix. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 274)

Public relations differ from marketing communication in a few ways such as marketing communication is short-term and commercial while public relations focus on the long-term and the reputation of the company. These two communications tools need to work together as they are relying on each other. Well done public relations groundwork creates a successful platform for marketing communications. As the company's reputation is influenced from advertising, sales effort and direct mailing and public relations it is important to know the differences between the different types of instruments. The strengths and weaknesses of public relations are mentioned next. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 274)

Public relations reach many of the target groups that the other communications tools are not able to reach due to low interest in advertising and direct mailing as well as avoiding it all. These target groups include important stakeholders, opinion leaders, financial analysts and investors. Public relations are able to reach out to them through news and indirect media exposure. With the help of public relations professionals the company is able to obtain advice on important trends. Another thing that contributes towards a good reputation of the company is to present the company as a good citizen. As public relations are more flexible in its messaging it plays an important role in guiding the company through crises. Cost-effectiveness is also a strength of public relations as all media coverage is free and it reaches out to a wide range of audience. The most important of the strengths is that public relations are more objective than marketing communication. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 275)

The biggest weakness a company can face in public relations is the control of the content that news releases cover as media priorities in their own way as well as using their own sources which leads to the fact that the story might be very different than the one released by the public relations department. Another weakness is that it is up to the journalists to decide if the news is valuable enough to be published, often there might be more important and interesting news that are covered instead. The last weakness of public relations is measuring the effectiveness in the long-run. Sometimes the amount of media coverage is used as an exposure measurement but it does not give any statistics of the long-term effect. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 274-280; Kotler & Keller 2006, 594)

#### 2.1.6 Direct marketing

Direct marketing lets the company reach out to their consumers in a personal and direct way through emails, telephone and mail. Although the company needs to watch that they do not

send too much out as many people start ignoring the attempts. There is the risk that the consumer thinks of the attempt more as a spam than an advertisement for them.

(Kotler & Keller 2006, 536; De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 5; Dahlen et al. 2010, 278)

Since the 1960s when direct marketing was first introduced by mail order companies it has gone through many changes. During the 1970s it changed into more of a marketing communications tool which emphasized on both feedback and the response rates. In the 1990s direct marketing started to concentrate on building long-term relationships with their customer as well as increasing the customer loyalty. Due to the changes the definition of direct marketing can be different depending on who to ask but in general it means the contacting of customers with the intention of generating an immediate and measurable response or reaction. "Direct" in direct marketing stands for the usage of direct media like mailings, catalogues, e-mails, telephone and social media instead of using the dealers or retailers. To keep up and maintain a direct contact with the consumers a database is needed to keep track of everything. Through this database the companies are able to identify each customer individually and therefore choose which type of direct marketing is the most efficient for the customer. For example sending e-mails to the older generation will not be a success as most of them do not even have computers and the ones that have are not very good at using them, instead reaching them by either phone or mail will be more successful whereas sending e-mails to the younger generation is the better way to approach them as sales calls are very quickly rejected.

The figure bellow shows the objectives and target groups of direct marketing communications. Direct marketing may be the right communications tool for different kind of purposes and they are explained next.

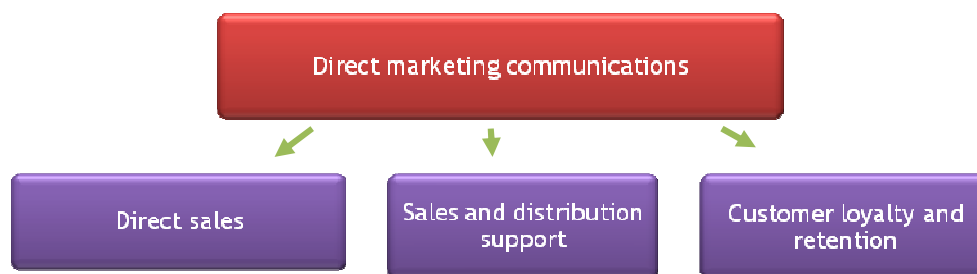


Figure 6 Objectives and target groups of direct marketing communications (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 366)



Direct sales are used to sell products and services without meeting face-to-face to salespeople, dealers and retailers. Here the database with customer details is very important as the companies are able to divide the target groups depending on their needs and maximizes the response profitability. Sales and distribution support on the other hand is the preparation, stimulation and facilitation of sales for the sales teams, dealers and retailers. It is also a good tool to follow up the sales. Finally through direct marketing the company is also able to improve the relationship between them and the customer as well as improving their satisfaction and loyalty. The loyalty of the customers is important in many ways for example loyal customers keep the sales up for the brands and keeping the customers happy decreases the losses in customer switching brand. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 364; Kotler & Keller 2006; 604)

#### 2.1.7 Personal selling

Personal selling gives the company the chance to make personal contact with the consumers and give a presentation about the product or service. This gives the company the chance to help solving the customers' problems and answer any questions the customer might have. It is also essential for the company to know the customers as well as the market. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 536; De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 5; Dahlen et al. 2010, 278)

Personal selling is different from the other communications tools due to the fact that personal selling is executed face-to-face with the customer. Although it is called face-to-face communication with the customer it also includes phone calls to the customer as well as e-mails to the customer. There are a lot of different areas that uses personal selling, including business-to-business, insurance companies and a lot of non-profit organizations such as charities. Personal selling can be divided into six different selling types depending on the target groups. Trade selling is mainly aimed at supermarkets, grocery stores, pharmacies. Here big names like Coca-Cola have a good position in trade selling as there are very few shops that can afford not having these brands on their shelves. Then again brands that are not as well known have to fight for their place on the store shelves. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 442; Kotler & Keller 2006, 625)

Missionary selling is aimed at the target group of customers of the direct customers. This basically means that for example a pharmaceutical sales representative try to attract a pharmacy to sell their products and at the same time try to attract doctors in the region to prescribe their brand to the clients. Retail selling on the other hand is direct contact between the consumer and salesperson. In this case it is often the consumer that approaches the salesperson with questions about the product. Depending on the product being sold it requires different kind of experience and training for the salesperson. Business-to-business selling is between two businesses. The business selling the products needs to know the other business'

needs and products to make their product or service as attractive as possible. Then again professional selling targets the influencers of the end target group. This includes for example architects, engineering firms or interior decorators. Here the salesperson tries to get these influencers to use their products in their assignments. Direct selling is selling the product face-to-face with the customer. This can be located in the customer house or a friend of the customers or an arrange location. One of the most known companies doing this is Tupperware, who sales a line of products for preparation, serving, storage and containment of food. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004, 441)

#### 2.1.8 Communication platforms

This next table list many different communication platforms; however company communication goes far beyond these platforms. A lot of things need to be remembered also considering the product's styling and price, how representative the salespersons are, the interior of the shop and many more as these are all key elements that helps the consumer make a final purchase decision.

Advertising	Sales Promotion	Events/Experience	Public Realties	Personal Selling	Direct Marketing
Print and broadcast ads	Contests, games, sweepstakes, lotteries	Sports	Press kits	Sales presentations	Cataloges
Packaging-outer	Premiums and gifts	Entertainment	Speeches	Sales meetings	Mailings
Packaging inserts	Sampling	Festivals	Seminars	Incentive programs	Telemarketing
Motion pictures	Fairs and trade shows	Arts	Annual reports	Samples	Electronic shopping
Borchures and booklets	Exhibits	Causes	Charitable donations	Fairs and trade shows	TV shopping
Posters and leaflets	Demonstrations	Factory tours	Publications		Fax mail
Directors	Coupons	Company museums	Community relations		E-mail
Reprints of ads	Rebates	Street activities	Lobbying		Voice mail
Billboards	Low-interest financing		Identity media		
Display signs	Entertainment		Company magazine		
Point-of-purchase displays	Trade-in allowances				
Audiovisual material	Continuity programs				
Symbols and logos	Tie-ins				
Videotapes					

Table 8 Common communication platforms (Kotler &amp; Keller 2006, 537)

There are many ways in which the different marketing communications actions help brand equity and these are the ones; creating awareness of the brand; linking the right associations to the brand image in consumer's memory; eliciting positive brand judgments or feelings; and/or facilitating a stronger consumer-brand connection. An implication of the concept of brand equity is that it does not matter in which way the brand association are developed. This mainly means that a product can be memorized by the consumer from different channels, for example either from a TV advertisement or from a sponsorship at some big race. However, these marketing communications actions need to be integrated to bring a coherent message and to achieve the strategic positioning. As the first step in planning marketing communications is to summon all the potential interactions that a consumer may have with the specific brand and company. This implies that the marketers need to find out what the main contributing factor is for the consumer to buy a specific product. Knowing these factors it is then easier for marketers to judge marketing communications according to its ability to build brand equity and drive brand sales. At this point the marketers need to find out if a proposed advertisement campaign adds to the awareness of the product or to creating, maintaining, or strengthening brand associations. From the view of building brand equity, marketers should evaluate all the different possible communication options according to effectiveness and efficiency. These activities are especially relevant when marketers are considering strategies to improve awareness. Brand awareness is the customers' ability to remember the brand in detail under different conditions. This means that anything that makes the customer recall the brand is brand awareness. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 538; Dahlen et al. 2010, 496)

As marketing communications is a strong tool for a company's marketing at present, it is also seen in the social media. The effect is seen through marketing direct straight to the customer through different social media pages. Therefore the next chapters will discuss social media and Facebook.

## 2.2 Social Media

Since the beginning of the human race social networks have existed. Clans and tribes are the predecessors to the social networks of today. As computers and the internet have grown bigger so has the style of keeping contact with people through it. Before people used to meet outside to discuss things as at present it all happens online, mainly in the social media. This includes discussing news topics, adding pictures or just something important they had on their mind. Now it is all done in the social media which is just growing each day. As the World Wide Web has a huge amount of information to share it is easier to do it online then running over to the neighbor to talk about it. The definition of social media is associated with activities,

practices and behavior between people that meet up online to share their information, knowledge and opinions using a conversational media. These conversational media pages are based on the web and are easy to use as channels to share pictures, texts, videos and words. As technology has developed anyone can be available through their mobile phones, tablet computers and laptops. Moreover all different social media networks have made their own applications for these different devices so that it would be as easy access as possible for the customer to share their feelings with others. Therefore often people can be found very unso- cial although they might as well be very social at the same time through their technological device. This also allows people from all around the world to be connected with each other all the time. (Safko & Brake 2009, 3)

As there are positives found to everything there is also negative sides to social media. As the hype of social media has grown people express their thoughts online which might be easier in many ways than to actually say it face-to-face to a person. Bullying has become a huge prob- lem in the social media and too often newspapers write about teenagers who have tried or taken their life due to bullying online. Therefore it is extremely important to think about what to share online as it can be harmful for both the sharer and someone else. (Safko & Brake 2009, 4; Cyberbullying 2013)

### 2.3 Facebook



Picture 1 The Facebook logo (newsroom.fb.com/Photos, 2013)

Facebook is a social media web page where people can connect with friends, family, cowork- ers and acquaintances. Currently there are over 1 billion users which make the page the most used social networking site in the world. (Safko & Brake 2009, 452)

Facebook was founded in February 2004 by student Mark Zuckerberg from the Harvard Univer- sity with his roommates at college Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovits and Chris Hughes. The main purpose in the beginning was to help Harvard students to easily re- member their study friends. During the next few years Facebook spread to universities around the United States and Canada and eventually in 2006 it opened for everybody who owned a

valid e-mail address and was over 13-years of age. Since then the popularity has just been increasing with 6 million users when the site opened up to the whole world to 1,11 billion monthly active users in the beginning of 2013. Whereas Facebook grew so did their amount of employees and currently there are 4 900 employees all over the world. The first main funding two the company was made by Mark Zuckerberg himself as well as his colleague Eduardo Saverin who had both taken equity stakes in the company. Currently Facebook is a big company, Facebook Inc., with big money flows. When comparing the first quarter of 2013 with the first quarter of 2012 the revenue has increased from 1,058 million dollars to 1,458 million dollars. The company has been on the stock market since May 2012 and currently the stock price is \$26,25 (16 May 2013) (Key Facts 2013; History of Facebook 2013; Earnings 2013; Nasdaq 2013)

As the popularity rose companies started to realize that they could keep their consumers up to date through Facebook where they were very sure they could reach the customer. Already in 2007 there were more than 100 000 company pages on Facebook. Since the beginning of Facebook it has been updated rapidly and therefore made it even easier to advertise through them. At the moment Facebook is able to recognize your interests through the information you give out. For example if a person like dogs and follows or likes dog pages on Facebook it recognizes it and therefore shows advertisements related to dogs or pet shops or similar. To even know better what advertisements the user wants to see Facebook asks when hiding an advertisement what the reason is for hiding it to better know which sort of advertisement to show the user. (Newsroom 2013)

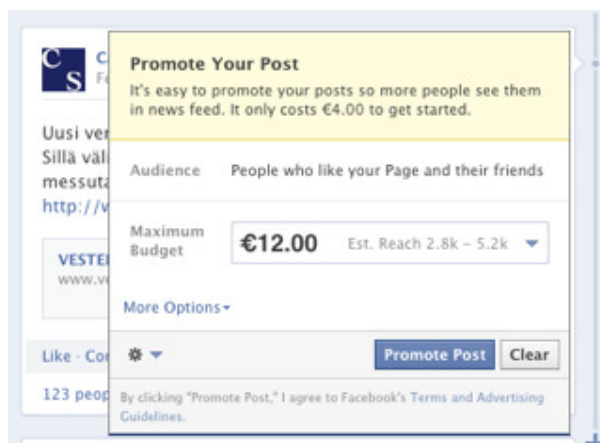


Picture 2 Facebook trying to find out the perfect advertisements for the user

This is what companies spend a lot of money on as they try to reach the users. The companies make an advertisement that they think will attract the attention of the users. For the advertisement to reach the users homepage the company needs to pay a certain sum of money per “click” on the advertisement. Facebook suggests an amount and the best option for the com-

pany to reach as many as possible is to pay the amount suggested or more. This amount is based in how many other companies are targeting the same audience.

Another way for a company to attract more attention on Facebook is to promote their pages. Promoting pages lets the advertisement be seen by people outside the range of users who are interested in the business. To promote the page the company would have had to make a page for the company where they tell about their company. When posting for example a message with an offer the company can promote their page. The picture below shows how Facebook suggests the promotion of a post and how much the company should pay and if they paid that amount how many users it would reach. (Newsroom 2013)



Picture 3 Facebook suggesting the promotion of a post

## 2.4 Marketing communications plan

This plan will explain the way that marketing communications will be used for attracting more customers through the social network page Facebook.

### 2.4.1 Target audience

The definition of target audience is an exact group of people that the advertisement is intended for. In this case the target audience is the Facebook users that are interested in boating and other water sports. This is a wide range of people and the plan is to attract people from around the whole country to be reach through Facebook to advertise the company and the possibility to buy online in the company's web shop.

#### 2.4.2 Objectives

In this case the objectives for the marketing communications plan is to creating more awareness, inform and educate and increasing sales through Facebook marketing. These objectives will be reached through thorough planning of an advertisement that will attract the attention of new customers as well as reach out to current customers.

#### 2.4.3 Strategy

The implementation of the advertisement on the social network page Facebook will be done with help of two marketing communications tools; advertising and direct marketing. These two communication tools will be carefully reviewed and the advertisement will be made according to these two communications tools. The advertisement that will eventually be launched will meet the requirements of the company and design vice attract attention. The attention can be attracted through an offer or very well written company information.

#### 2.5 Summary of the theoretical background

Marketing communications is in its whole a very important part for the company as it is trying to attract the customers attention. The theoretical background explains the marketing communication mix and the social networking page Facebook.

The marketing communications mix offers an extensive range of tools for company marketing. There is always one suitable tool for every possible situation that marketing is needed for. The most used communications mix tool is advertising that can be seen everywhere at present. Another commonly used tool is direct marketing, this includes e-mails, mail and similar channels where the companies reaches out to consumers in a private way. The third communications mix tool is sales promotion that offers the consumer an incentive to try the product; this can be for example free goods, price cuts, discount coupons or samples. As the forth tool is events and experiences that includes exhibition that are currently very popular from both the consumers and company's point of view. Here the company has the chance to demonstrate their products and services and to introduce the company to the consumers. Personal selling is the fifth tool and this tool lets the company meet face-to-face with the consumer in a place where their product or service is sold. This is often a local supermarket or a shopping mall. The company is there to display and demonstrate their products and services and the consumer has the chance to try the product. As the last communications mix tool is public relations and publicity which controls the reputation and information given out about the company. All these six marketing communications tools are meaningful to the whole marketing of a company and should all be used to some extent in the marketing strategy.

Facebook is the biggest and most widely used social network page with over a billion monthly users and the reach while advertising on the site is enormous. Therefore it is a good choice for companies to use as an advertising channel to reach out to as many consumers as possible.

The theoretical background was chosen to match the opportunities the company has the resources for. For implementing the advertisements in the social networking page Facebook the company needs to use the advertising and direct marketing part of the communications mix. These two tools are best used for Facebook as the purpose is to advertise and it is direct marketing as it comes on to the user's private page.

## 2.6 Theoretical framework

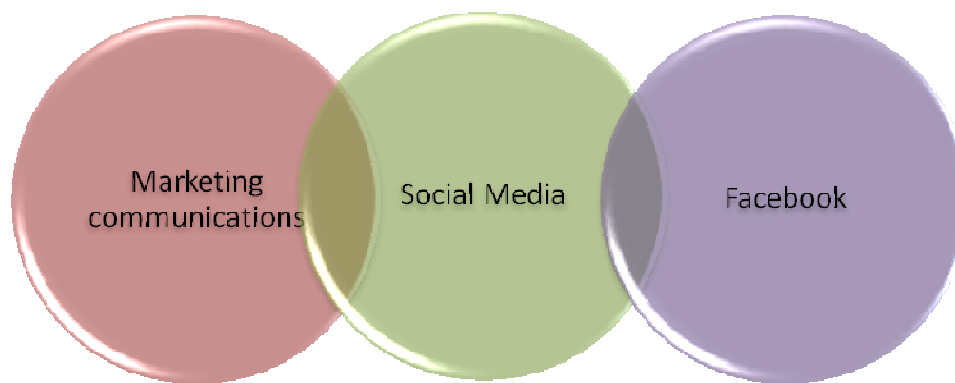


Figure 7 Theoretical framework (Riska, 2013)

## 3 Research approach

The main purpose of conducting a research is to analyze all the facts and investigate the situation at hand and to focus on all the different dimensions of the study. The two main research approaches are quantitative research which is based on the quantitative side whereas the second approach qualitative research is based on behavior of the consumers under study. A case study on the other hand is a documented study of a certain existing problem which is used as a training tool. For this thesis qualitative research was chosen. (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad 2010, 5; Business Dictionary 2013)



### 3.1 Chosen methodology

In this case, the actual research was conducted through interviews with two employees at the company whose work relates to the problem at hand. During the interviews, the employee and the author discussed the questions in the questionnaire found in the attachments list, and the author took feedback from the two employees about the suitability of the thesis. Some of this thesis will be used as a guideline for future marketing online.

The chosen research method for this thesis is the qualitative research method. This method was chosen as the author is an employee of the company and knew whom to inquire the answers for questions from relating to the thesis. This suited best as there is not enough employees to make a survey to for a quantitative research. Qualitative research is used when defining a problem and the distinctions in it. There is not only one theory in qualitative research, and therefore difficult to define. Furthermore, there are no own methods in qualitative research. (Metsämuuronen 2001, 9)

### 3.2 Validity and reliability

The validity and reliability of the information in this thesis are based on credible material listen under references. The theoretical part can be considered reliable as it all came from literature about the subject. The secondary data was collected from reliable sources online. The empirical study was written based on information retrieved from the company itself, and therefore it can be considered reliable. All information retrieved in the two separate interviews can be considered reliable, memos were written in both cases.

The reliability of the study means that there are no aimless results. The reliability can be measured in two ways; when two appraisers reach similar results it can be seen as reliable, the other way is by examine the same person twice and reaching both times similar results, that is seen as reliable. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2012, 231)

The validity of the study is to validate that the study is in relation to the subject. The methods and result are not always what the author expects as, for example, questions in interviews can be understood differently by various interviewees. The validity is thought as ambiguous as the result is hard to define as valid or not. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2012, 231)

The employees interviewed both work in areas closely to the research problem and awareness of the situation, and therefore the study can be considered valid. The author is also an em-

ployee of the company, and therefore the company can confirm the validity of the information retrieval from the company.

#### 4 Empirical study

##### 4.1 Oy Vestek Ab

Oy Vestek Ab is a family business founded in 1961 as an import company which imports supplies and machinery from both Europe and USA and to operate as a wholesale dealer to the Finnish markets. The main businesses of the company are quality products in boating, textile care, health care as well as industry.

Oy Vestek Ab reached a turnover of 11 million Euros in 2011 and currently employs about 30 people. The head office is located in Espoo near to important distribution channels. According to an international credit rating system by Dun & Bradstreet the company has the highest credit class AAA.

The company is trying to keep a close contact with customers with the help of specialized staff in every business department and to meet the needs of the customers. Oy Vestek Ab has a good reputation among their customers by providing products from suppliers that belong to the best known brands in their specific fields. The company wants to offer only the best possible products, and therefore there is only to be found a carefully selected range of products that are still price-competitive.

The company concentrates to keep a good relationship with the customers also after sales, and therefore provide a maintenance organization that help with technical support and product service. As the company expanded their premises in 2003, the service department got a totally new section for them joined with improved warehouse facilities.

The four core business areas are all handled by their own dedicated personnel. (Oy Vestek Ab, 2012)

##### 4.1.1 Boating

The boating department offers high-class products suitable both for boat builders and boat equipment retailers as well as for the private boat owner. The boating section has in addition to wholesale also their specialty shops called Captain's Shop. These shops are located in the southern parts of Finland near important boating centers.

#### 4.1.2 Textile care

On the textile care department there is to be found comprehensive solutions for the entire textile care process including machines, systems and equipments for larger and smaller laundries. A significant part of the textile care is the specialization in Cruiser Liner main laundry and launderette deliveries.

#### 4.1.3 Health care

The health care department offers first-class systems and supplies for hospitals, healthcare centers, nursing homes as well as for home care.

#### 4.1.4 Industry

The industry department offers a range of filter aids for filtering purposes and coating foils and glues for the chipboard industry. (Oy Vestek Ab, 2012)

#### 4.2 Captain's Shop

Captain's Shop is a domestic chain which is specialized on boating equipment and is owned by Oy Vestek Ab. The product range varies from dinghies to surfing gear and all the equipment needed for leisure boats. The shops are located near big marinas in the southern parts of Finland and provide personal and local service for its customers. Most of the products are also available online in the web shop [www.captainsshop.fi](http://www.captainsshop.fi). (Oy Vestek Ab, 2012)

#### 4.3 SWOT-analysis on the company



Figure 8 SWOT-analysis on the company

#### 4.4 Results of the study

The questionnaire was targeted to two workers at Oy Vestek Ab/Captain's shop who have had to do with the marketing of the company. These two employees are closely related to the problem at hand. The interviews were conducted at two separate times individually with each employee at locations chosen by the interviewees. The questionnaire can be found at the end of the thesis under attachments.

When asking what they think of the current marketing situation they both thought it was narrow and lacking slightly although both had seen improvements during the last year. During the last year the company has celebrated their 50 anniversary year and therefore there has been more marketing done to promote the long lasting company.

Improvements could be made both in the social media, search engine marketing as well as in the web shop. Daily updates on the social media would be important. Furthermore both thought that reaching out to new target groups should be improved upon.

Linked to the previous question they had to mention a target group that the company should have more contact with and how to improve it, they both thought that the co-operation with local yacht clubs should be improved. The improvement would include more visibility and sponsor deals with the yacht clubs and also improving the connection to the company's web pages from the yacht clubs own ones. The other mentioned also the motorboat owners. These could be reached better through advertisements in magazines like ERÄ-lehti (specialized in wilderness).

When asking in which way the company could use the social media to improve the situation both of them thought that Facebook could be used to improve the reach. Advertising on Facebook and reaching out to customer nearby and far, including reaching out to customers in Russia and Estonia.

Their opinion on the company's two web pages, [www.vestek.fi](http://www.vestek.fi) and [www.captainsshop.fi](http://www.captainsshop.fi) they both thought that they were easy to use and clear as they have both recently been renewed. The other thought was that it is good that the product catalogue could be found on both web pages.

The last question was to find out which of these two are more important; to market the company as a brand or to market the company as a retailer of some specific brands. Both said that it is more important to market the company as a brand as the company already has a long and good reputation as a company that always has products on the shelves.

As seen from the answer there is a need to interact more online with customers, especially through the social network Facebook. This should be made in a way that promotes the company as a brand and making sure the customers will find the new web pages.

## 5 Conclusion and recommendations

The market is competitive and therefore it is important to attract as many customers attention in any way possible. As the internet and social media keeps growing, usage of them is extremely important for companies currently. Hence has this thesis discussed the use of the biggest and most spread social network page and advertising and reaching out for more customers through it.

The research was conducted through literature and interviews with employees of the company including internal information as the author is an employee of the case company. The literature consists of books relating to the subject and written by experts in the field. The employees are closely related to the research problem due to their tasks at the company.

The interviews and internal information have shown that there is a need for a new marketing channel for the company and as Facebook is a still growing big advertising channel it is advisable to use it. This includes advertisements and offers that reach out to consumers as well as at the same time reaching out to new consumers.

The goal of this thesis was to use marketing communications as a tool to reach out to customers, both new and old, through the social network Facebook. The theoretical part explains the use of marketing communications, especially advertising and direct marketing, and also the guidelines for Facebook. These theoretical parts corresponded to the problem at hand.

For future advertising in social media, the same model can be used as the target stays the same. All the information from this thesis would be provided if needed. It would be advisable for the company to make a trial run and see if the advertising would attract more customers. Depending on the result then take the advertising on Facebook into more frequent use.

## 6 Theoretical linkage

The theoretical part of this thesis corresponds to the empirical study as well as the need of more visibility online and reach for customer is strong. The theory is easy to comprehend and

to eventually implement. The theory was all retrieved from literature regarding the subjects, most written by experts in their fields.

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## Appendices

### Questionnaire used at interviews

What do you think Vestek's marketing looks like at the moment?

What would you improve?

Which customer group do you think the company should have more contact with and how would you improve it?

In which way do you think the company could use the social media, especially Facebook in mind, to improve the situation?

What is your opinion on the web shop and the two different web pages ([www.vestek.fi](http://www.vestek.fi) and [www.captainsshop.fi](http://www.captainsshop.fi))?

Which of these two do you think is more important; to market the company as a brand or to market the company as a retailer or some specific brands?