

The versatile use of social media in today's business environment

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<p>Nowadays, the use of social media has become essential for many businesses. It helps companies to market themselves, raise their brand awareness and move towards new achievements and experiences. Companies must pay better attention to the changing trends in social media, in order to stay competitive. Social media trends need to be followed and learned accordingly, because gaining success can not happen without challenges.</p> <p>This is a portfolio thesis that contents four previous learning assignments. The purpose is to improve the quality and content of the assignments with additional information. The main aim of this thesis is to fully present opportunities, new trends and alternatives that social media has to offer for small and medium-sized businesses.</p> <p>The theoretical part of this thesis describes paid advertising in social media as well as the effective use of affordable promotional and analytics tools for measuring a company's performance on a social media platform. The importance of different marketing strategies that can be applied to social media operations are also explained in this part.</p> <p>There are four previous learning assignments that are developed and improved in this thesis based on theory on current social media trends and their opportunities. All assignments are somehow related to marketing and social media. The assignments were completed during studies in Haaga-Helia UAS. The first two assignments are individual reports from two different modules and they include certain parts that require improvement. The other two final assignments were chosen to support and complement the individual reports. The final assignments present valuable information regarding social media and paid advertising, which was also used in this thesis.</p> <p>The improvements of individual reports were executed by providing suitable and budget-friendly social media platform alternatives for both case companies. Supportive marketing strategies and paid advertising methods were presented as an additional part for reports, where they are considered necessary.</p> <p>In conclusion, the process of improvement created new insights into obstacles that small and medium-sized businesses can face while using social media marketing. The challenges are the unnecessary use of paid advertising and analytics tools as well as weak control of online privacy and security. All of them require proper solutions which is also presented in this thesis. In addition, the use of social media alongside with marketing methods, such SOSTAC and Content Marketing Matrix, appear to be a strong combination and should be used by small and medium-sized businesses.</p>	
Keywords Social Media, Trends, Small and Medium-Sized Businesses, Paid Advertising, Marketing	

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1 Introduction

The role of social media has changed significantly during the past few years. Therefore, companies can no longer rely on the self-acting success that social media may bring. Instead they must keep up with the new trends and come up with new solutions which can be used in their marketing and social media plan.

This portfolio thesis was created during spring 2016. Its main objective was to precisely present advantages, challenges, new trends as well as methods and theories that different social media platforms can offer these days for small and medium-sized businesses. It is an important topic, because having a presence in a social media enables companies to experience new marketing opportunities that could drive their business operations towards profitable success. In addition, new and already existing or new small and medium-sized businesses can benefit from this thesis as it can be used as a guide for effective social media usage.

This chapter offers further perspective into the scope, objectives and structure of the thesis.

1.1 Thesis Scope and Objectives

The purpose of this thesis is to improve the quality and content of my previous assignments with additional information.

The objective of this thesis is to present opportunities, new trends and alternatives that social media has to offer for small and medium-sized businesses. Social media platforms that I consider affordable for small and medium-sized businesses, and the advantages and challenges of the different platforms as well as suitable methods of paid advertising are also presented.

Social media is a wide topic that includes various types of marketing strategies and procedures. Therefore, the second most important objective of this thesis is to stay strictly on the main topic, which is the use of different social media platforms for companies' best interests as well as present practical marketing strategies that will both support social media operations in general, and could be applied to the previous assignments.

Some parts of digital marketing such as email marketing, inbound and outbound marketing are completely excluded from this thesis, as they represent different fields of marketing and therefore can not be used in strategies and methods presented in this thesis.

1.2 Portfolio Thesis

A portfolio thesis is one of the options for completing a Bachelor's thesis and it must be related to the writer's professional studies. In this thesis type a student can use earlier materials which can be such assignments as project reports and any other learning assignments completed during courses, work placements and/or exchanges. The purpose of this thesis type is to write a framework that combines the different elements together which then concludes the portfolio thesis. (Haaga-Helia 2013.)

The portfolio thesis can be used to good purpose for career thinking. It shows the student's professional development and allows to focus on a motivating topic area from different perspectives over a longer time period. This option supports and simplifies the thesis process, as there is a possibility for students to improve their previous materials by changing certain parts or simply applying new ideas and theories to them. (Haaga-Helia 2013.)

There are four assignments that are presented as a base for this portfolio thesis. They are all individual assignments that were accomplished as a part of completing Bachelor's Degree in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. The first two assignments are individual reports which were carried out during exchange studies in the New College Durham, the United Kingdom. The other two materials are final assignments that were optionally completed for two online courses. The exact content clarification of these assignments will be presented in Chapter 5.

It is an optimal option for creating a portfolio thesis with the included assignments, because it reflects personal learning outcomes, the ability to discuss their issues by using theories as well as enhancing the content by presenting learned information. Although the assignments have diverse structure and themes, each of them however has a strong emphasis on marketing and the use of social media from different perspectives.

Nowadays there are plenty of possibilities for companies to execute their business operations with the great use of marketing and social media. Both of them are extremely remarkable topics that require constant research and business studying in order to accomplish their profitability objectives.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters with the first chapter being the introduction.

Chapter two presents new trends in social media which includes a detailed information about popular and trending social media platforms that are suitable for the use of small and medium-sized companies. It also describes both the advantages and challenges of each platform.

Chapter three presents different marketing strategies and methods that will support companies to plan its social media marketing activities. In addition, it explains why the engagement with customers plays a big role in today's social networks.

Chapter four goes into the detailed information about paid advertising methods and different promotional and analytics tools that are useful for measuring companies' results in social media.

Chapter five presents four learning assignments that were completed by the author during courses and exchange studies. The chapter also describes the reason why assignments should be improved and what social media and marketing methods could be applied in them.

Chapter six will then discuss the thesis author's insights regarding challenges in social media and finding suitable solutions for them. In addition, it presents author's personal experiences and learnings regarding writing this thesis.

The appendix will contain the original versions of all four assignments that were used as an essential part for this thesis.

2 New trends in social media marketing

The usage of social media and its purpose have changed significantly during the past few years. It provides companies with more visibility and creates opportunities for better profits, if it is used accordingly.

This chapter presents popular and trending social media platforms that may bring great success for any company. Also the advantages and challenges of each social media platform are presented.

2.1 Popular social media platforms

The existence of social media is a valuable thing, because it allows people to communicate with their family and friends on a daily basis. Also it gives the opportunity to network, make new acquaintances and stay tuned with the latest news. The art of social media's concept is that it presents platforms of all kind to choose from. Some of them have more users than others which puts them in a constant rivalry or simply creates new business opportunities. Nonetheless, all of them have something unique to offer both for companies and regular social media users.

The popularity of certain social media platforms has risen to a level, where most of the people became addicted to them and find themselves reluctant to reduce or even stop a usage of their favorite channels due to personal or business related reasons. Apparently, life exists and happens online as well. Social media never sleeps and it is a great benefit for business companies, since social media platforms have a direct connection to a brand's website where people can place an order whenever they wish regardless of the time.

The following chapters describe the different social media platforms that are currently considered to be the most popular due to high amount of daily users and the opportunities as well as benefits they offer for business companies in order to reach their objectives. In addition, these social media platforms are favorable options for creating an effective online campaign that can reach extremely large audience during a short time period.



2.1.1 Facebook

Facebook is a social media website that was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. “Facebook’s mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to find out what is going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.” (Facebook 2014.)

Facebook started as a network for college students and has modified into the largest social network and website in the world today. It can not be ignored, as it is global, addictive, useful and the biggest essence in history. (Schaefer 2014, 127.)

Almost every company should have a Facebook page, because it offers unique opportunities to reach their target audience in the quickest possible manner. Any company can create its own public and official profile that have many of the same features as a normal user’s profile. However, other users can not add a company page as a friend. Instead they can connect with a page and give them a “like” i.e. thumbs up, and that way they become fans and are able to see its updates on their own timeline. “Facebook pages have public messaging walls, events, photos and custom applications.” (Zarella 2009, 67.)

Maintaining an own public Facebook page allows companies to have a better communication with their customers, since users can connect them anytime by asking questions related to the company’s products or services, and/or giving a star rating with positive feedback which is always a great bonus for the company. In addition, it can help to create more traffic to a company’s website.

Sometimes a business company can have multiple or duplicate Facebook pages. For this matter there is a specific way for Facebook users to recognize the authenticity of certain pages and it is called verification. Some pages and profiles have been verified by Facebook to inform the users of the platform that they are authentic. If there is a blue badge “” on a page or profile, it means that Facebook confirmed its authenticity for this public figure, media company or brand. If there is a gray badge “” on a page, it means that Facebook confirmed that this is an authentic page for this business or organization. (Facebook Help center 2016.)

From users’ perspective pages and profiles with the blue colored verification badge are considered popular and safe, since they generally have a good quality content and a high amount of likes and followers, which can easily reach over a million. When searching for a

certain page on Facebook, verified pages are the ones that show up higher in search results. Therefore, it is necessary for business companies to have their Facebook page verified, because it ensures that users will find and communicate with right and an official page, which in turn may create a lot of traffic and engagement that comes from their target audience.

The process of page verification is quite simple to implement for any business company. First step is to click on general settings where page verification can be found and edited. When choosing to verify the page, a pop-up window will appear and ask the user to fill in the following details: business company's publicly listed phone number, country and language. By continuing, the user agrees to receive an automatic call from Facebook that will give a 4-digit verification code, which is the next step. After entering the code, the business page on Facebook becomes verified and the grey verified badge "✔" appears next to the business name. (Business 2 Community 2016.)

One must be aware of important fact regarding the verified badges – they are only available for business pages in the US, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. (Business 2 Community 2016.) Facebook however is constantly improving its features and facilities, which is why business companies should keep this option in their mind and react quickly once it becomes available in their continent.

For many companies, Facebook may seem as an easy and free option to market themselves and make good sales. In actual fact, companies should approach this platform rationally, because reaching effective marketing success on Facebook can be as pricey and one of the most challenging suggestions. This famous platform uses a pattern known as "Edge Rank" to edit everyone's timeline, which is the daily newsfeed that shows the status updates of all user's friends. That way the message is usually seen by less than one-fifth of all Facebook friends. (Schaefer 2014, 127.)

To make the status update visible for a bigger audience, the user can either pay Facebook money to make it a "sponsored post", purchase ads, or offer up resources to complete excellent content that has a possibility to breakthrough Edge Rank. Although companies may success from using this options, there is still a chance for them to end up being nearly invisible to their target audience. (Schaefer 2014, 128)

Paid advertising in social media is broadly presented in the chapter 4.3 Facebook Adverts.

Facebook has an amazing feature which is Facebook Live, which is an amazing benefit for companies to engage with the largest audience in the world. Facebook Live is a broadcasting service that lets people, public figures and pages, e.g. company pages, share live video with their followers and friends. The time limit for live streaming is no longer than 90 minutes. (Live.fb.com 2016.)

Live streaming is a unique way to interact with viewers in real time and to reach different audiences (Live.fb.com 2016.) For example, it eases the conversation engagement in such way that live streamers are able to answer many questions during short periods of time and at the same time seeing followers' comments. In addition, followers can invite their friends to join watching live broadcast. People enjoy watching videos, because it creates a good feeling of meeting and getting to know a person or a company representative better in a natural and reliable way. Therefore, Facebook Live broadcasting is an optimal feature that companies should be dedicated to in order to create their engaging content and raise awareness of their brand and products.

2.1.2 Instagram

Instagram is a fun and fanciful way to share your life with friends through a series of pictures. Take a photo with your smartphone, then choose a filter to change the picture into a memory to keep around for a lifetime. The main aim of Instagram is to allow users to experience moments in their friends' lives through pictures as they happen, because world becomes more connected through photos. (FAQ Instagram 2016.)

Instagram is a free smart phone application and it is available at App Store and Google Play. People can also use Instagram on their computers simply by going to its website. However, using Instagram via website may seem somewhat challenging for companies compared to a usage on smartphones, because a website does not allow uploading pictures. Nevertheless, it is possible to post comments and observe other users' pictures while using Instagram's website on computer, which is also a simple way for companies to monitor their profile settings.

Many companies can benefit from Instagram, as it is a dominant photo-sharing social media platform. It has a strong importance of visual content that nowadays is being driven by two market factors. First, there are no barriers to creating and sharing photographic content due to the general use of smartphones and tablets. Second, pictures speak for themselves and for users it is a lot easier to give them a thumbnail i.e. to like a picture than sharing comments and participating in long conversations. (Schaefer 2014, 133.)

Creating high quality, brand-focused and strong content is the best way for companies to grow their audience. There is a likelihood that company's account will be discovered by non-followers, because some posts may appear on the Explore tab (which is a section that uses algorithm to surface interesting content) or News tab (where people see that what posts the users they follow have liked). (Help.instagram.com 2016.)

Visual content attracts users' attention effectively. Therefore, any business company that aims to sell their products and/or services should absolutely have an Instagram account, as it brings a competitive advantage that offers various of possibilities to build their brand – if it is used correctly. (Healthy Wealthy Affiliate 2016.) Instagram has gained a statement “The World's Most Powerful Selling Tool”, as most users of the platform are young, engaged in social life and shops online. (Macarthy 2013, 149.) For example, Instagram users are more likely to purchase the products of a certain brand when there is a photo with someone wearing, presenting or reviewing them. Normally, these kind of photos include also a hashtag with the product's name or a direct link to company's Instagram profile where their official website can be found.

There is a huge profit opportunity as an outcome of using Instagram, because it benefits both parties – business companies and users that are potential customers, who take Instagram seriously. (Healthy Wealthy Affiliate 2016.)

Instagram users that have a great number of followers can earn extra income by posting sponsored content for brands. It is a photo or video that emphasizes a product or brand and includes detailed information where the product can be purchased, which is usually a company's URL i.e. a website of an online shop. These type of users are called brand ambassadors and/or affiliates, as they represent a certain company's brand for a commission which can either be a bonus per product sale or free products. In the business world this method is called affiliate marketing. (TwelveSkip 2016.)

Co-operating with affiliates is an amazing and optimal way for brands to market themselves and create a strong visibility on Instagram as well as trustworthy relationship with their customers. Affiliate programs have a major and positive impact on sales with no up-front cost to a company. The only thing that takes a little time is making a solid strategy plan and finding potential affiliates that will have the best influence on business. (Entrepreneur 2016.)

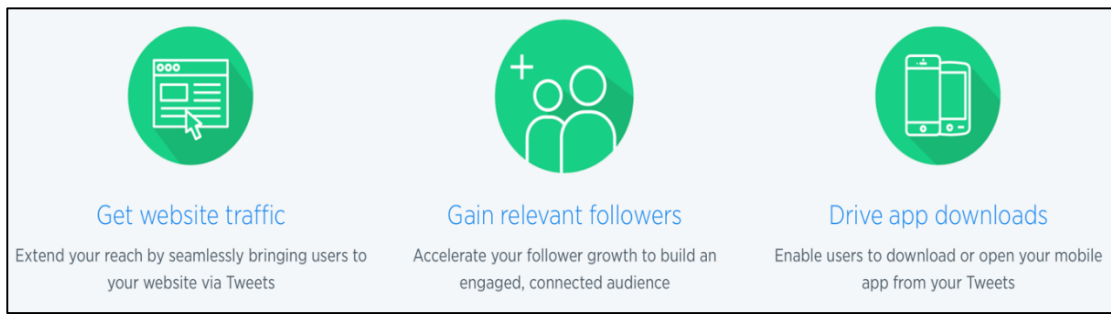
2.1.3 Twitter

“Twitter is used by millions of individuals and businesses as a way to monitor conversations about their brand, interact with costumers, manage customer service issues, promote offers, share unique and engaging content e.g. images and videos – all within 140 character per tweet i.e. status update.” The platform is powerful and presumably greater than any other social network to create loyal brand advocates, since Twitter users are more likely to buy from brands they follow. (Macarthy 2013, 64.)

Twitter has been an essential part of microblogging since 2008. Microblogging is a method of publishing online short status updates that generally include 140 characters or even less. (Gunelius 2010, 81.) It has offered many options for businesses to leverage their marketing opportunities. While business companies may sometimes face the challenge to get their main messages delivered in an understandable manner, consumers do not wish to waste their time writing and processing long messages. (Gunelius 2010, 83.) Tweets with 140-characters are great solution for both parties, as companies learn to summarize their message and their statements become clearer while keeping consumer’s interest to participate in the conversation and re-tweet i.e. share companies’ updates. On that account, Twitter is a suitable platform for companies’ marketing communications and excellent way to provide customer service. (Gunelius 2010, 84.)

Companies can build their communication both directly and indirectly by using Twitter. The platform offers the ability to grow a targeted audience in the fastest way. In addition, it has introduced different types of advertising platforms. Twitter is used by most companies as an extension of the customer service department. It is the fact that people who follow a certain company on Twitter tend to be very loyal to their brand and industry. (Schaefer 2014, 126.)

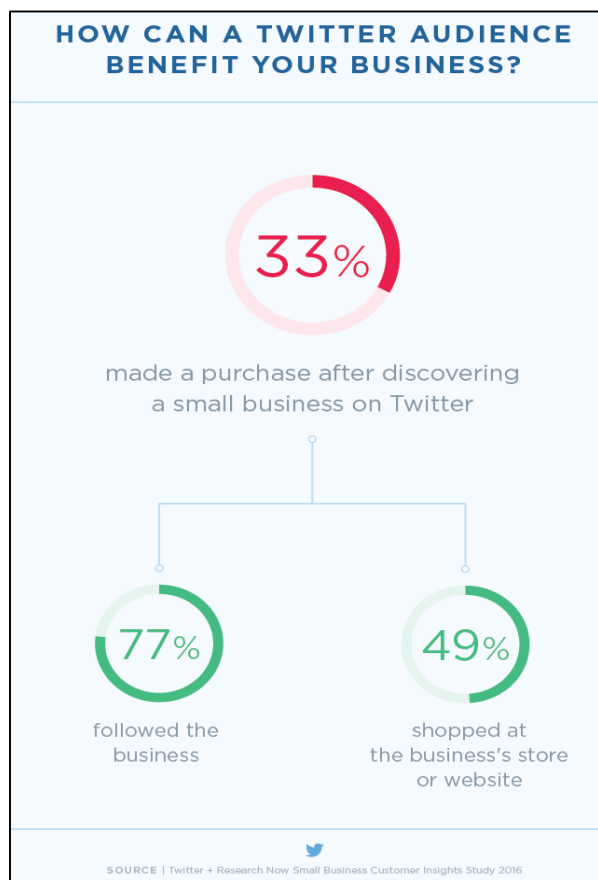
The most powerful benefit of Twitter is networking. It is considered as effective as live networking events, except everything happens online and much faster. Twitter has the open and public nature that allows to create and develop the relationship with new customers, potential employees, and business partners in company’s region and beyond. (Schaefer 2014, 126.)



Picture 1. Basics of Twitter for Businesses (Business Twitter 2016).

In 2016, Twitter co-operated with the world's leading digital data collection company "Research Now" that provided them with a research about how Twitter's audience can benefit small and medium-sized businesses. The research was completed based on the behavior of 1000 active users who followed small and medium-sized businesses on Twitter.

According to the research, 77% of people made the decision to follow a small or medium-sized business, 49% of people shopped at the store of the business or their website, and 33% of people even made a purchase after finding a business on Twitter. Consequently, the customers are more interested in companies' products and services when they have a Twitter presence. (Twitter Blogs 2016).



Picture 2. How Can a Twitter Audience Benefit Your Business? (Twitter Blogs 2016)

Companies should explore the advanced search function on Twitter since it is free and one of the most powerful sources for marketing research and insight. Twitter searches can be saved for different purposes such as monitoring discussions about brands, watching competitors, and discovering new customer's wants and needs. However, Twitter also has its downsides and challenges. The social media platform has many functions that are difficult to understand, which is why companies that plan to use Twitter primarily must dedicate time to study it comprehensively. (Schaefer 2014, 126.)

However, companies must be accurate when choosing Twitter as their primer social media platform that they will use to represent their brand. Even though Twitter is effective and popular globally, it still may not be quite active in many countries. In addition, companies should even study the most used social media platforms in countries they operate or planning to expand their business. For example, one of the most used platforms in China is Sina Weibo which is Twitter-Facebook hybrid, which has over 100 million messages posted per day. (Forbes 2016.) Consequently, the approach of beginning to use Twitter requires consideration.

2.2 Trending social media platforms

Alongside with above-mentioned popular social media platforms there are also many other applications that offer plenty of opportunities and advantages, especially for small and medium-sized business companies. Those platforms also have approximately over a million users worldwide, but for one reason or another they haven't had a strong visibility and online presence until the last couple of years.

Most people tend to get bored with the same applications despite their popularity and wide range of features. People are eager to try new things and when it comes to exploring social media, they want to make as much use of it as possible for personal communication and business purposes. A social media platform becomes trending as a result of obtaining a large amount of user during a short time period. (Giraffe Social Media 2013.)

The following chapters describe four different social media platforms that are considered to be trending, which means they get new users daily and become the most talked about topics both online and offline worlds. Each chapter includes a short presentation of a platform and a precise explanation of its advantages for business companies to experience success and reduce spends on marketing as well as challenges that they may face while using a platform.

2.2.1 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest networking site for professionals and businesses to connect and promote their brand, expertise and skills. It is mostly used by job seekers and recruiters. It is mainly free to use, but the site has an optional fee for some types of access such as the ability to see who profile views. The paid-for features are meant also for recruiters, as they can post and contact people they are not directly connected to. (Zarrella 2009, 71.)

LinkedIn is a trending platform, because it can help businesses to obtain a stable online presence as well as to keep up with the progressively competitive market. (Business 2 Community 2016.) Companies may provide further information about themselves on a LinkedIn Company Page where they can also present their products and services, employment opportunities as well as sharing expert point-of-view. The Page can be followed by any LinkedIn user which increases a company's chance for customer engagement. According to LinkedIn's research, a company only needs approximately 100 followers of their Company Page to begin making an influence and driving engagement. (Macarthy 2013, 108).

The networking website offers many kinds of advantages for businesses such as reaching a bigger audience of potential customers, receiving recommendations about products and services from previous customers and business clients, and the ability to make quality business connections that may offer new co-working opportunities. The connections that company can build on LinkedIn are manifestly more efficient than those on other social media platforms. (Business 2 Community 2016). Besides, the companies can use LinkedIn for recruiting employees since it is a lot easier and faster method than using email communications.

Even though LinkedIn has a strong visibility in social media, users may not visit it as actively as they use other platforms, which in fact can be an obstacle to a Company Page's engagement. Generally, people tend to get bored which makes them to check out what is happening in LinkedIn. (Macarthy 2013, 128). Nonetheless, there are people who take LinkedIn seriously, as it offers a various type of career opportunities and perspectives. Many of them however have a feeling of being forced to use formal language while communicating with co-workers or classmates, whereas other platforms such Facebook and Snapchat allow them to be themselves outside the office hours and to post a diverse content related to their personal life.

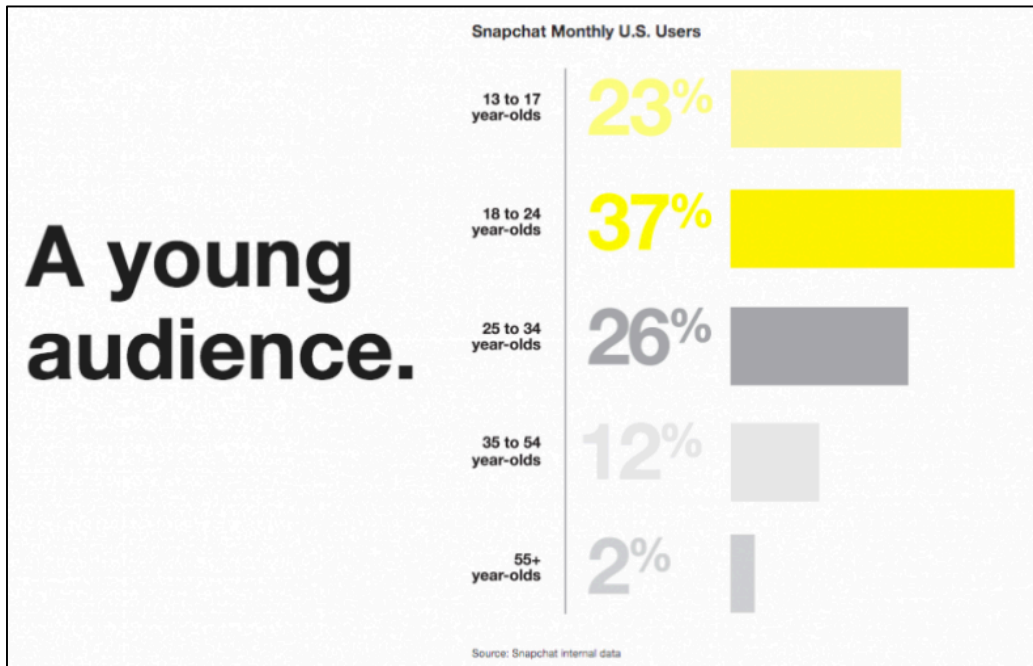
2.2.2 Snapchat

Snapchat is a simply and fun mobile application that allows its users to share temporary, self-destructing photos, videos, and messages that are also known as “Snaps”. Users can adorn each Snap with filters, captions and drawings. Snaps i.e. videos and pictures will last anywhere from one to ten seconds and once they have been viewed by other users, they will be gone permanently. (Buffer Blog 2016.) However, if some of users are quick enough, they can take a screenshot of other user’s Snaps although one will receive a notification regarding user who took a screenshot.

Compared to Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn Snapchat has accomplished great things for a mobile-only social platform. (Forbes 2016). In April 2016 Snapchat had more than 200 million monthly active users. (Statista 2016.) The amount is growing constantly, because most of people find Snapchat a handy and amusing way to communicate with others by recording 10-second video rather than texting long messages. In addition, people tend to be curious about what is happening in others lives. Therefore, the mobile application allows people to follow and explore the everyday lives of the public figures and goings-on of the biggest brands.

The use of Snapchat is beneficial both for regular user and business companies. It is a solid way for providing customer service, as it takes followers in a more private queue in which customer concerns and complaints are far less observable than on other social platforms. (Forbes 2016.) While using Snapchat properly, many companies have a unique opportunity to reach their target audience whose average age is between 13 – 34 years. (Snapchat 2016.)

Having a young audience is a great advantage, since most of them are online shoppers which perfectly make them potential customers. Companies, in turn, can give a sneak peek of upcoming products and services that are not officially available, and promote the upcoming events with detailed information. Once users have seen their Snaps, words begin to spread quickly than in any other social media platform. Also it is a great place to create contests where people have a chance of winning a special prize as well as to announce the winner.



Picture 3. Snapchat Monthly U.S. Users (Snapchat 2016).

The downside of Snapchat is that unlike other social media platforms it does not have a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) which is a public analytics tool that measures companies' performance and activity in social media. (Buffer Blog 2016.) KPI is generally used by companies to determine their progress in accomplishing their operational and strategic goals. (Investopedia 2005.) However, companies can create their own KPIs by calculating the average views for their Snaps each day and write down that number in a separate digital file. That way companies can begin to track the progress of their daily views and set realistic goals. (Buffer Blog 2016.)

Another challenge companies may face with Snapchat is to understand how their brand can have a direct value. Sharing important messages and announcements will support company's brand value as well as raise engagement and drive action. For example, sharing Snap with a URL caption will make followers to take screenshots and visit the website. (Buffer Blog 2016.)

2.2.3 Periscope

Periscope is a free mobile application that allows people to broadcast live video to the world. Followers will be notified instantly when other users are broadcasting live and they will be able to comment and send hearts i.e. give them video likes in real time. The more hearts users receive, the higher their live broadcast will flutter on the screen. (App Store

2016). The application is owned by Twitter and it has quite similar features as Snapchat, except the length of broadcast is not unlimited which makes it easy to make a live video.

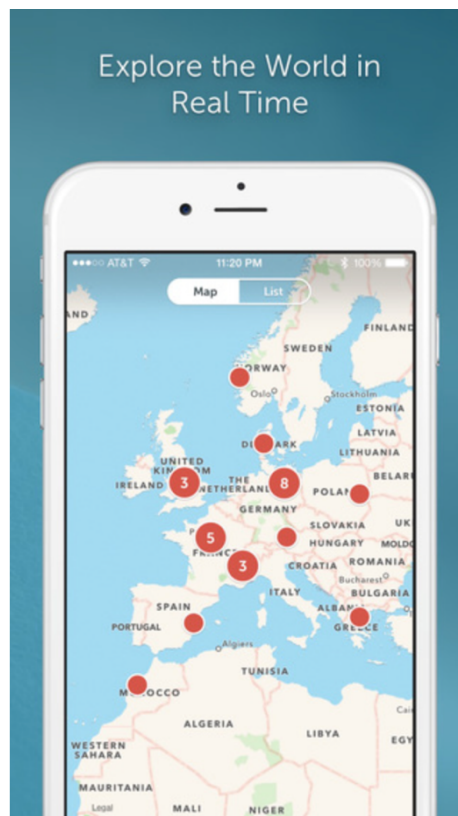
Many companies should use Periscope more actively, because it is an excellent way to gain visibility for their business. Even though at first they may not have much of an audience, it is still a simple way to test out whether this platform is suitable for their marketing purposes, since the application is totally free to use. Companies can take their first step by beginning to promote their Periscope channel, in order to get more engagement. (Forbes 2016). From a business perspective, Periscope is a perfect alternative for companies to promote their brand, products and services in the following ways. They can have a real-time engagement with their target audience by keeping “Questions and Answers” (Q&A) sessions, showing live tutorials, offer a behind-the-scenes look of company premises, and give a showcase of a new product launch or broadcast live at a big event. (Entrepreneur 2015.)



Picture 4. Live Broadcasting on Periscope (Cbsnews.com 2016)

While there are many benefits of Periscope, companies should have an extremely careful approach to using the application, since privacy is considered being its most concerned thing. First of all, while Periscope users are making a live broadcast video, other users are

able to see their exact location (a region and a street name). Although most companies show their street name on their website along with further information, they must take into consideration the fact that people have different purposes online and can easily access their devices by using their hacking skills. In addition, companies must note that according to Twitter statement their broadcasts, or data taken from their broadcasts can be shared with third parties such as developers, search engines, and publishers that integrate Twitter content into their services. (Motherboard 2015.) Technically, it means that there is a chance that the video broadcasts may be used by someone afterwards, even though generally video broadcasts disappear after 24 hours when they are no longer available.



Picture 5. Exploring Live Broadcasts worldwide on Periscope (App Store 2016)

2.2.4 WhatsApp Messenger

“WhatsApp Messenger is a cross-platform mobile messaging application which allows people to exchange messages without having to pay for SMS. WhatsApp Messenger is available for iPhone, BlackBerry, Windows Phone, Android and Nokia.” (WhatsApp 2016.)

While Facebook is leading in the statistics of daily users, WhatsApp takes second place, as it has obtained one billion users in April 2016. (Statista 2016.) WhatsApp additionally allows its users to create groups for conversations, send each other unlimited images, video

and audio messages. There is no cost to messaging with WhatsApp, because the application uses the same Internet data that is used for other purposes such as email and web browsing. Users can download the application for free and use it for a year, after which it becomes paid and will then charge 0.99 cents yearly, which is an economic benefit especially for business companies. (USA Today 2014.)

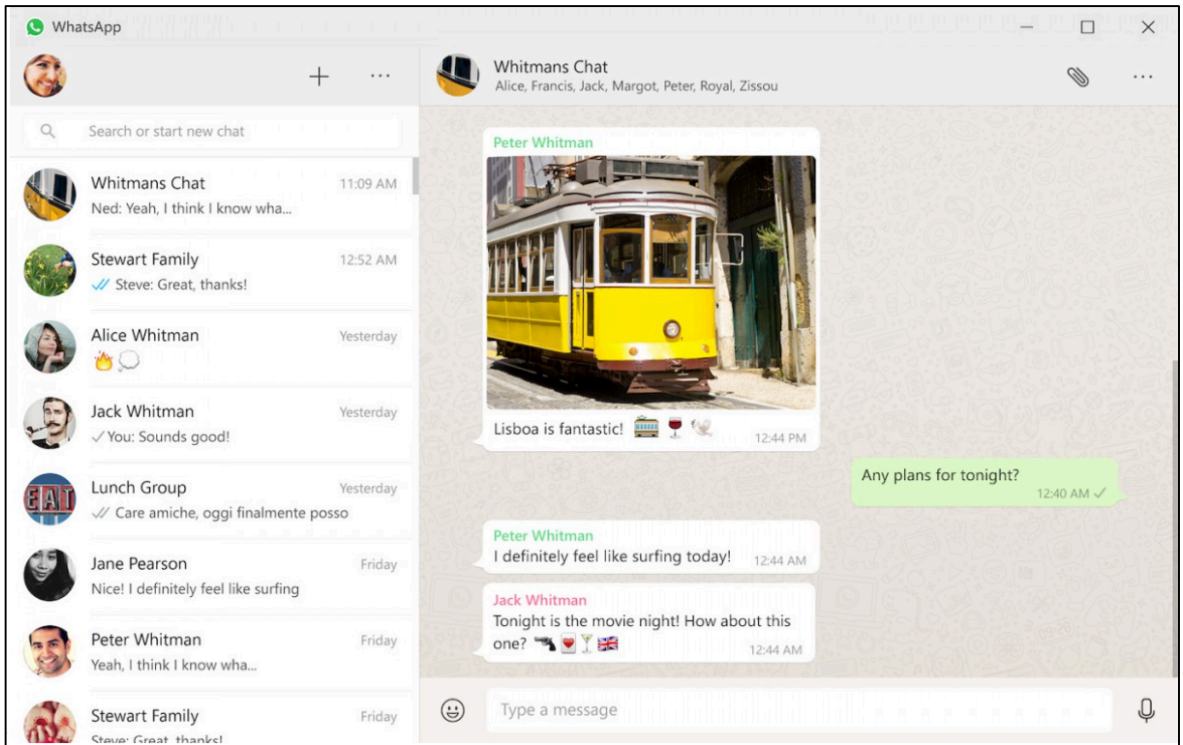
WhatsApp brings many advantages for businesses, which is why the corporate world have become interested in using this application among other social media platforms. However, the founders of the application Brian Acton and Jan Koum have had a reluctant attitude towards making the application more business friendly as their main aim of WhatsApp is to provide service to the people rather than a tool from which businesses can economically benefit from. (LinkedIn 2016).

Despite the thoughts of WhatsApp's founders, business companies are still legally able to use the application as their social media platform for communication purposes. WhatsApp has Messenger function which is a great benefit for companies, as it enables them to offer valuable things for their users including personal assistance, real-time support, online ordering and concierge services as well as opportunity for giving customer feedback. In other words, it allows companies to have both direct and two-way interactions with their audience. WhatsApp is also a suitable application for businesses for having a well-working team communication and coordination inside the company. (Oratio Insights 2016).

For example, it is general in Hong Kong to make a table reservation at a restaurant by simply sending a text message on WhatsApp. People can send text message about their news tip to BBC or any other broadcast company that uses WhatsApp. (Forbes 2016.) In addition, small and medium-sized businesses can use WhatsApp for hiring new staff by simply requiring applicants to send their short CV video. It is a more efficient way than receiving and going through hundreds of emails, as it would save a lot of time and companies are able to contact perfect candidates right away.

One of the greatest challenges companies may face is failing to monitor their conversations on WhatsApp, as a result of receiving too much text messages and having too little time to answer all of them. Companies should not receive a one-way conversation from customers when using WhatsApp, because it could affect their reputation and give a bad impression to the audience as if their personnel is neglecting their customer care. Luckily there is solution to this matter. Nowadays WhatsApp can be downloaded to computers as a desktop application called WhatsApp Web which is available for Windows and Mac computers. The desktop application is an extension of user's smartphone, as it mirrors

messages and conversations from their mobile device. Using WhatsApp on computer is a lot easier since it allows users to write messages and respond to them much faster as well as sending multimedia files. (WhatsApp Blog 2016).



Picture 6. WhatsApp Web Chat on Computer Desktop (WhatsApp Blog 2016)

3 Marketing methods for social media plan

Nowadays in order to achieve great results, companies must have a proper marketing plan for their social media where they can use resources from different marketing methods and strategies. Companies must plan their social media activities wisely and be prepared to face unexpected situations, and react to them not only in a quick, but also in a clever and professional manner.

There are various of approaches to support a company's business operations and choosing a suitable marketing method is essential part of it. This chapter presents the most general and helpful marketing methods that can and should be utilized especially by small and medium-sized businesses.

3.1 The SOSTAC Model of Marketing

SOSTAC is a PR Smith's marketing planning model for creating a digital or general marketing strategy, and it can be used as a template that secures consistency when presenting plans from different teams, departments or regional offices throughout a company. (Smith 2015, 11).

SOSTAC is an abbreviation that defines the following meaning:

Situation Analysis – Where is a company now?

Objectives – Where does it want to get?

Strategy – How does it get there?

Tactics – The details of company's strategy.

Action – The details of tactics i.e. resources, guidelines and checklists.

Control – Measurement and metrics of a company's achievements.

(Smith 2015, 15).

SOSTAC is an optimal option for small and medium-sized businesses and their marketing planning process, because the model will support their social media activities, in order to achieve excellent results. It is a clear and logical method of setting realistic goals, being in control of the activity, creating and implementing different tactics, and measuring the overall results. Also, it eases the planning process for personnel, as the model can be fully explored during a short time period. (Smith 2015, 11.) Moreover, companies can download a

free guide for SOSTAC template from the internet. The template includes detailed information and valuable features related to each stage of SOSTAC. It will noticeably save their time and keep their personnel focused on the right thing.



Picture 7. The SOSTAC Marketing Planning Model Guide (Smart Insights 2016)

PR Smith has also added 3 M's to the original SOSTAC plan. They are three key resources that stand for men and women (human resources), money (budgets) and minutes (time scales). (Smith 2015, 11.) The aim of these key resources is to support a company's marketing strategy. However, a company should have an accurate approach to them, as they can be significantly challenging to maintain.

During the process of preparing the marketing model a company will need a skilled workforce that will effectively implement the main tasks. Effective implementation requires a proper budget which is approximately 5% of forecasted sales. Therefore, a company must estimate its budget and sale results accordingly. Time is the most challenging resource, as it is often limited. A company can have a lot of valuable information for decision-making and completing the most important tasks, but too little time to achieve the desired results. Compliance of time management is essential, otherwise a company's business operation can fail entirely. (Smith 2015, 258).

3.2 Content Marketing

"Content is a broad term refers to anything created and uploaded to a website: the words, images, or other things that reside there. All of the pages of company's website and social media pages are content: the About Us page, the FAQ page, the product information pages, etc. All of the things a company creates as a part of their marketing are content as well." (Handley & Chapman 2011, 6.)

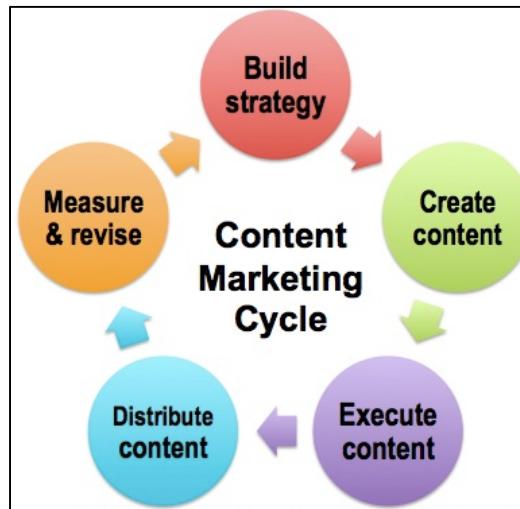
Online content can take various forms for companies which depends on following factors: the preferences and needs of a target audience, company's goals and expertise as well as obtainable time, abilities, and budget. (Handley & Chapman 2011, 7.)

Almost every business needs a content marketing strategy, as any brand can easily be a potential publisher. The importance of content marketing has become valuable, since anyone including consumers have the ability to create and share online. Many of trending social media platforms have over 10 million daily users and what drives them to use these platforms is the powerful content that people post there. Consumers participate actively in the content creation and sharing content created by other people as well, which is a great benefit for companies to attract their attention and perhaps to gain more potential buyers. (Odden 2012, 53.)

While most companies are looking to get more customers and to keep those they have, the main challenge they have is to acquire and engage customers in more effective and efficient way. (Odden 2012, 53.) Consumers are not interested in interruption marketing which is any marketing activity that makes the people stop what they are doing to pay attention to the product or service that is being promoted. Interruption marketing ads usually annoy people which is why they simply tend to ignore them. (Callrail 2016.) Therefore, consumers prefer to be educated and entertained, and they progressively expect value of some kind from brands before moving on to purchasing situation. They also have an expectation to discover a brand's content easily as well as the ability to interact with and socially share content with people who have similar interests. (Odden 2012, 53.)

The use of content marketing beneficial both for companies and their consumers. Content reinforces customer engagement at all stages of the customer life cycle. It can educate perspective about the company's products and services as well as it can help to educate about the purchasing process and how to get the most out of it. Content is able to strengthen the brand and customer relationship and inspire to reformations, upgrades and referrals. (Odden 2012, 54.) Creating content as a part of company's marketing can establish its credibility, trust and authority in their brand and industry. (Handley & Chapman 2011, 8.)

Marketing Specialist Heidi Cohen explains that companies need to take certain actions to make their content marketing procedures even more efficient. The content companies post should include good-quality features as well as they must keep on continuously reaching a bigger audience. Therefore, the five-step model of content marketing cycle will help companies to operate accordingly and stay result-oriented even after achieving the desired objectives. The model begins with building content marketing strategy following by creating, executing and distributing content. The final step is measuring and revising companies' content marketing results. (Heidi Cohen 2013).



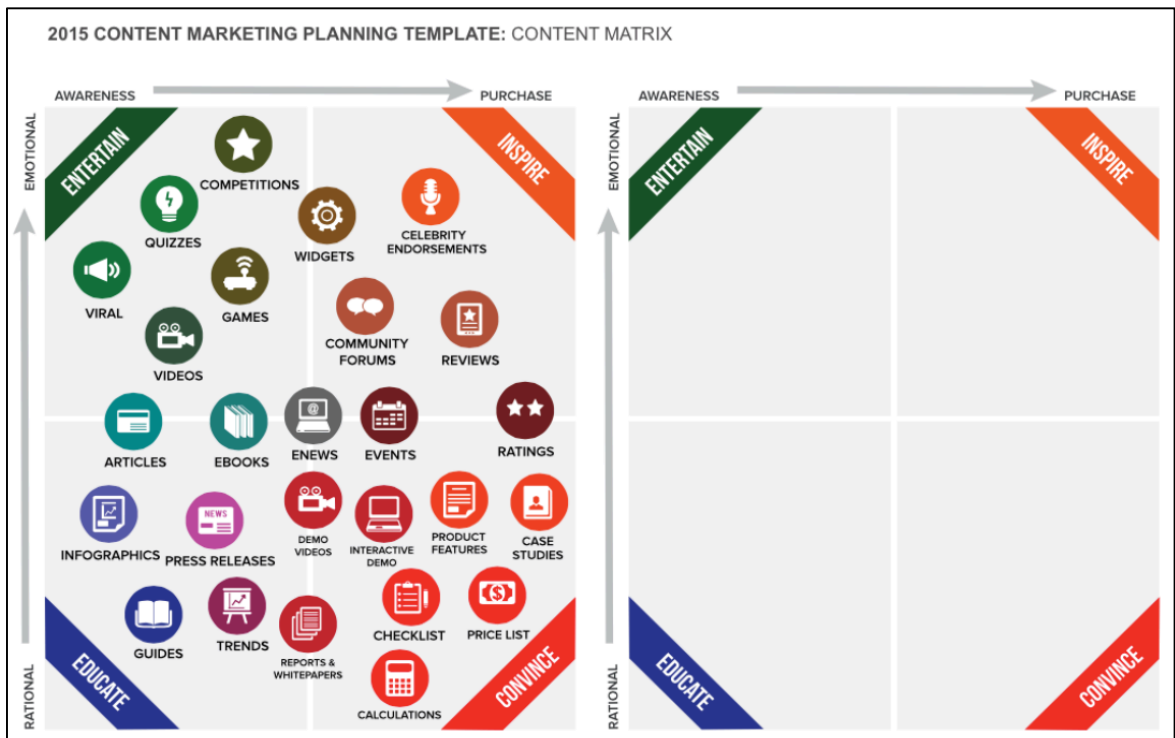
Picture 8. Model of Content Marketing Cycle (Heidi Cohen 2013)

3.3 Content marketing planning

Content matrix is a content marketing planning template that helps companies to generate ideas for content types that will be the most engaging for their audiences. The template also helps the personnel to brainstorm on content ideas to engage customers and encourage them to share a company's content. (Smart Insights 2014).

The content marketing planning template was updated in 2015 for a simplified version that can be used by many businesses. It includes the original Content Matrix template that describes different aims of action for content marketing which are to entertain, inspire, educate, and convince. (Smart Insights 2014). Each aim gives various of options to make the content most appealing for the audience.

The structure of the updated template eases thinking through the dimensions of different content based on the company's objectives and the thoughts of its audience. It also allows companies to determine their starting point for their idea generation as well as to compare their current plan with the future approach. (Smart Insights 2014).



Picture 9. Updated Content Marketing Template (Smart Insights 2014)

The template should be utilized by companies, because it is free, it will save them plenty of time, and it is helpful for planning their content marketing activities and choosing the most essential factors that may affect the engagement rate.

3.4 Importance of engagement in social media

Social media platforms must post powerful content that will create an engagement with their customers who wish to an easy and fast access to interesting content on the platforms the use regularly. Great content will always attract customers' attention and make them attend the conversation by leaving a comment. Nowadays people are not reluctant to have a public conversation on companies' social media platforms. Instead they have become more demanding, as they want companies to pay further attention to what is being said and strive to anticipate where the conversation is going. (Macy & Thompson 2011, 40.)

According to Kyra Reed and Marjorie Kase, the principals of Los Angeles based social media agency "Markyr Media", there is a model that can be used as a base for an engagement plan in social media. The model is called "Cult of Conversation" and it is about being accessed and opened where people are eager to find out what other are thinking

regarding a certain matter and seek their opinions from Facebook’s news feed. (Macy & Thompson 2011, 42.)

Reed and Kase divide the cult of conversation to identify semi social vs. social media personae. The term is based on a 3C’s pyramid that stands for conversation, connection and community. As with a three-legged bench, if one of the C’s is weak or neglected, social media efforts will become weak or eventually fail. (Macy & Thompson 2011, 42.)

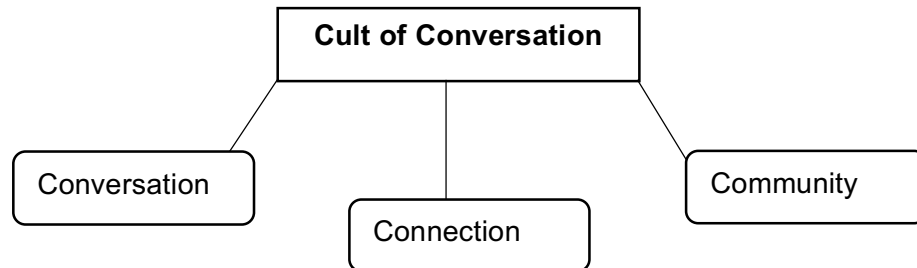


Figure 1. Cult of Conversation Model (Macy & Thompson 2011, 43)

This model is inventive, because it separates between companies that enter social media to serve themselves (semi-social) and companies that actually are eager to get to know customers, learn what is important to them, and become part of their world (social). The observation has shown that the most powerful social media campaigns and the most memorable, are social. (Macy & Thompson 2011, 42.) Consequently, in order to become truly social, companies must value the model and its factors as well as aspire to stay dedicated to engage with the customers.

Companies must define what determines engagement based on their objectives. They need to approach their business comprehensively, not in terms of roles. Important factors such as marketing and sales, service and support, customer experience, employee experience, innovation, collaboration – all have engagement touch points internally and externally. However, most companies cannot operate fast and predict what the next actions and statements of the customers are. There are many tools that help companies to manage their engagement points and responses. (Macy & Thompson 2011, 48.)

The creation of social Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is seen as a way to help putting engagement into operation. Simply gaining a certain amount of followers or seeking for likes is not an option for a strategy. Instead companies should create a base through active engagement which is an optimal strategy for their business. (Macy & Thompson 2011, 48.)

4 Paid Social Media Advertising

Importance of paid social media advertising is to create an enjoyable and fun content, and to promote it in order to get people's attention. It is the fact that paid social ads convert more customers and have better conversion rates for business companies. (Rouhiainen 2015.) However, spending marketing budget on paid advertising should be accurately approached, as the method entails threats and a strong competition.

Testing is essential part of paid advertising when creating a campaign. Everything must be tested before a final implementation. (Rouhiainen 2015.) This chapter covers general methods and platforms for paid advertising as well as promotional and analytics tools that any small and medium-sized company should use.

4.1 Pay-Per-Click

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) is a type of online advertising in which companies pay a fee each time one of their ads is clicked. (Wordstream 2016).

Basically, it is a method where companies can pay for visits to their website. The main aim is to gain more visitors during a scheduled time period rather than expecting people to visit a company's website organically i.e. finding a website without adverts. (Wordstream 2016). PPC is a useful way for companies to market themselves and it can be used by any type of businesses.

PPC provides immediate and consistent traffic which then enables to gain prospective customers. Because of Geo targeting, the companies' ads can reach a larger audience, as they can choose which continents of the globe an advertisement will be visible. The perks of PPC is that ads can be easily changed and edited anytime. Also it allows companies to test and monitor their campaign in the simplest way possible. At least 10% of company's marketing budget should be spent for testing, because achieved results will help to choose the right method for creating paid advertising and campaigns. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

In order to make PPC the most effective, there are three key elements that must be fulfilled; interesting offer, target audience and keywords and a relevant landing page i.e. on which website paid adverts will appear. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

4.2 Google AdWords

Google AdWords is the most popular Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising tool in the world. The AdWords platform allows companies to build ads that will be showed up on Google's search engine and other Google properties. (Wordstream 2016).

PPC model works within Google AdWords which allows users make a tender for keywords and pay for each click on their advertisements. Every time someone initiates a search, Google looks through all of its AdWords advertisers and selects the most optimal options to appear in the valuable ad space on its search results page. The selection is based on the following factors; the quality and relevance of keywords, ad campaigns and the amount of keyword bids. (Wordstream 2016).

Google AdWords is an extremely powerful tool with the main purpose of promoting own or someone's business. What makes this tool rather effective, is that it includes plenty of benefits. It enables a company to reach the people who have commercial intent at the precise moment when they are searching for what the company has to offer and thus drives traffic to the company's website. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

Google AdWords helps companies to figure out exactly what is working in their ads and build them in a way which would attract people's attention. Furthermore, this channel eases to control company's budget although it can be a pricey option for creating campaigns which is considered a major disadvantage for small and medium-sized businesses. An average cost of Google AdWords' keyword is approximately 2,50\$ on a Pay-Per-Click level which is more expensive than Facebook's 0,80\$ PPC. Working with Google AdWords takes time and dedication, and it is more complicated to monitor compared to Facebook Ads. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

Google AdWords Keyword Tool presents information about the estimated volume of monthly searches that happen on Google for a keyword, on average over the past 12 months (Odden 2012, 84). In addition, it shows the price and competition rate for the keyword.

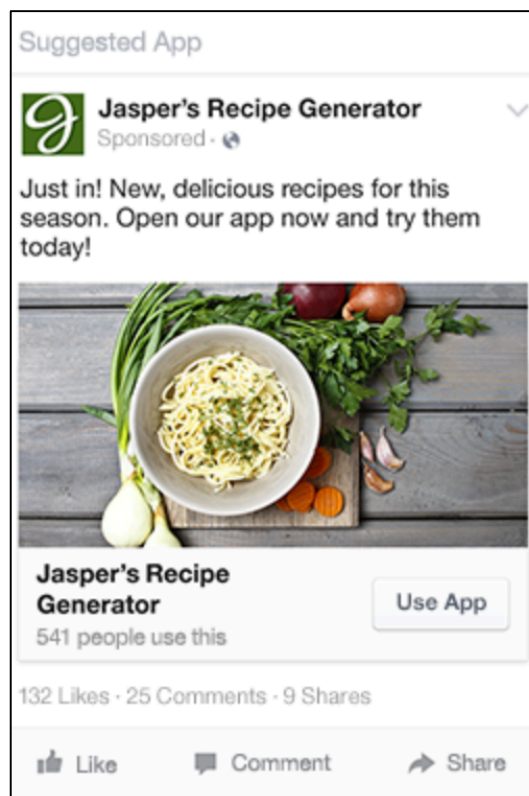
4.3 Facebook Adverts

Marketing on Facebook helps all kinds of businesses to network with people, find new customers and create visibility. Facebook Adverts is easy and effective type of paid advertising that enables creating targeted adverts to reach custom audiences and achieve a company's business objectives. (Facebook for Business 2016).



Picture 10. How to Use Facebook Adverts for Business (Facebook for Business 2016)

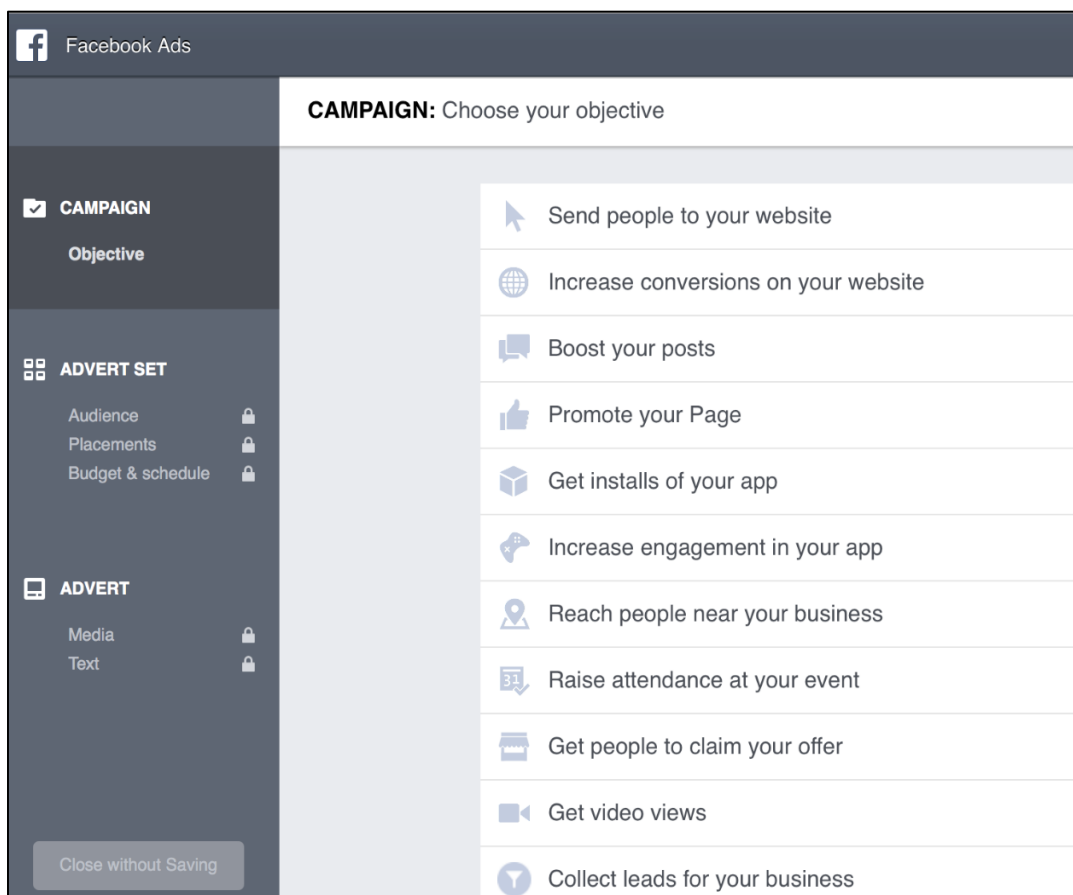
When using Facebook Adverts companies are able to select what type of audience they want to reach and company's adverts will be delivered to their Facebook, which makes adverts even more essential for targeted audience and brings better success for a company. People are more likely to see companies' adverts and react to them, since Facebook Adverts are set in the stream of information. (Facebook for Business 2016).



Picture 11. Paid Advert on Facebook (Facebook for Business 2016)

Testing is essential part of creating a paid advertising and at least 10% of company's marketing budget should go for testing. (Rouhiainen 2015). Therefore, every detail should be tested accordingly before running a final version of advert. Initially, a company should set a realistic budget that can be controlled whether it is a daily limit for an advert or the total sum for a campaign. Facebook allows companies to be in control of their budget and how much they spend on an advert, as they can schedule each ad and inform Facebook of its duration. In turn, Facebook charges the company for as long as its adverts run but the bill will never exceed the company's initial budget. (Facebook for Business 2016).

Paid adverts and campaigns can be created and implemented at the Adverts Manager which is a tool for managing one's adverts and reviewing their performance. The tool also includes other features such as targeting users' ads for the audience they care about, setting budget, reviewing the performance of the ads, seeing billing summary, and payment related information. (Facebook 2016.)



Picture 12. Adverts Manager on Facebook (Facebook 2016)

4.4 SEO – Searching Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is an internet marketing method which mainly aims to grow visibility and get traffic from organic or paid search results on a search engine such as Google. (Moz 2016).

The vast majority of consumers turn to Google when they need to find information about a product service, brand or business. In order to be found, business companies should be represented in higher rows of the search results, otherwise they are likely to lose a lot of potential customers. Therefore, using search engine optimization techniques is essential to increase search ranking for company's targeted keywords. (Gunelius 2010, 14.)

Keywords are one of the most important units of SEO. They are the key words and phrases in a company's web content that enables people to find their website via search engines i.e. Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc. A company's website should be well optimized for search engines, in order to reach their visitors. (Wordstream 2016). Using the correct language is essential, as Google analyses everything on a website and spelling mistakes might reduce a website's visibility. Furthermore, companies must be specific with their keywords, because they have a major influence on company's ROI. (Rouhiainen 2015).

SEO is important for companies, because it allows them to reach new customers in a swift manner as well as provide them with pleasant experience of online shopping and sharing their thoughts regarding a company's product and services, which can drive more people to a website. Besides, approximately 44% of online shoppers use Google and other search engines to start their shopping procedure. Consequently, a company's website is definitely worth having its content optimized for search engines. (LinkedIn 2016).

4.5 Promotional and analytics tools

There are a number of applications and services available that help companies to measure their activity on social media platforms. Many individual social media platforms have their own analytics, such as the statistics of Facebook Insights, YouTube Insights and LinkedIn business pages. (Odden 2012, 206.)

Analytics tools will definitely help small and medium-sized companies to get started with their business and marketing performance. They help companies to understand their main

objectives and measurement relationship as well as the importance of developing a viewpoint towards measurement assumption, benchmarking, assessment and gentility. (Odden 2012, 208.)

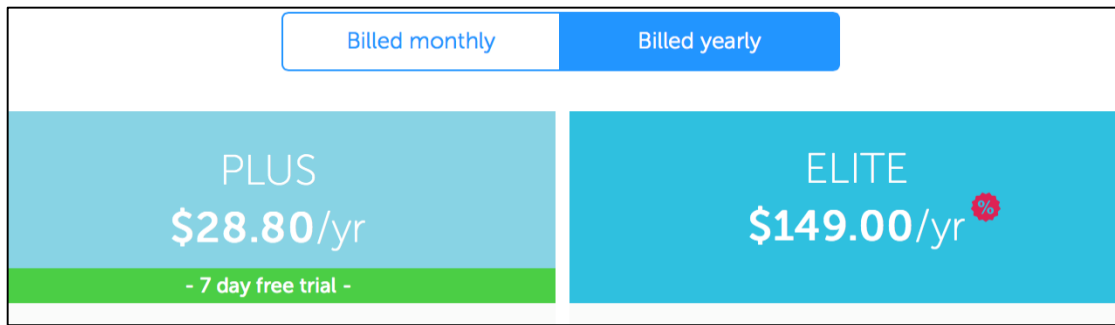
There are also several third-party web analytics, social measurement tools and other useful websites for companies to choose from. Some of them are free to use and others have a complimentary trial of 30 days. The most common analytics tools for companies are presented in the following chapters.

4.5.1 Iconosquare

Iconosquare is a user-friendly analytics tool for managing and analyzing company's Instagram activity. Any company can use it by logging in with their Instagram account and it will provide them with key metrics such as professional statistics as their follower growth, total amount of likes, their most liked picture, the average number of likes and comment per photo and more advanced analytics. Consequently, the tool helps to build and integrate their strategy and social media plan for Instagram usage. (Iconosquare 2016).

Companies should utilize Iconosquare, because it allows them many useful things. Companies can promote their account across other social platforms with photo widgets and feed tabs, which is great for creating visibility. Iconosquare eases the company's communication with its followers. The tool allows its users to manage their comments and respond to them quickly, since there is a page where each Instagram photo has its own comment box. In addition, Iconosquare is a powerful tool for creating engagement, as users can quickly set up their own campaign or create a photo contest, which results can be published on their Instagram account. (Iconosquare 2016).

Before starting to use Iconsquare companies must be aware of the fact that it is not completely free to use. It has one-week free trial which is a proper time for testing whether the analytics tool is suitable for company's needs and interests. However, the time must be used accordingly, because the tool will charge a certain fee depending on the user's subscription status which can be either "PLUS" or "ELITE". If a company wants to have an access to all features including new exports such as weekly export, monthly export and hashtag performance, then the "ELITE" subscription must be chosen. Companies have to keep in mind their budget, since both subscriptions offer different fees. (Iconosquare 2016). Also they must make sure that Instagram is one of their most profitable social media platform before considering to use it.



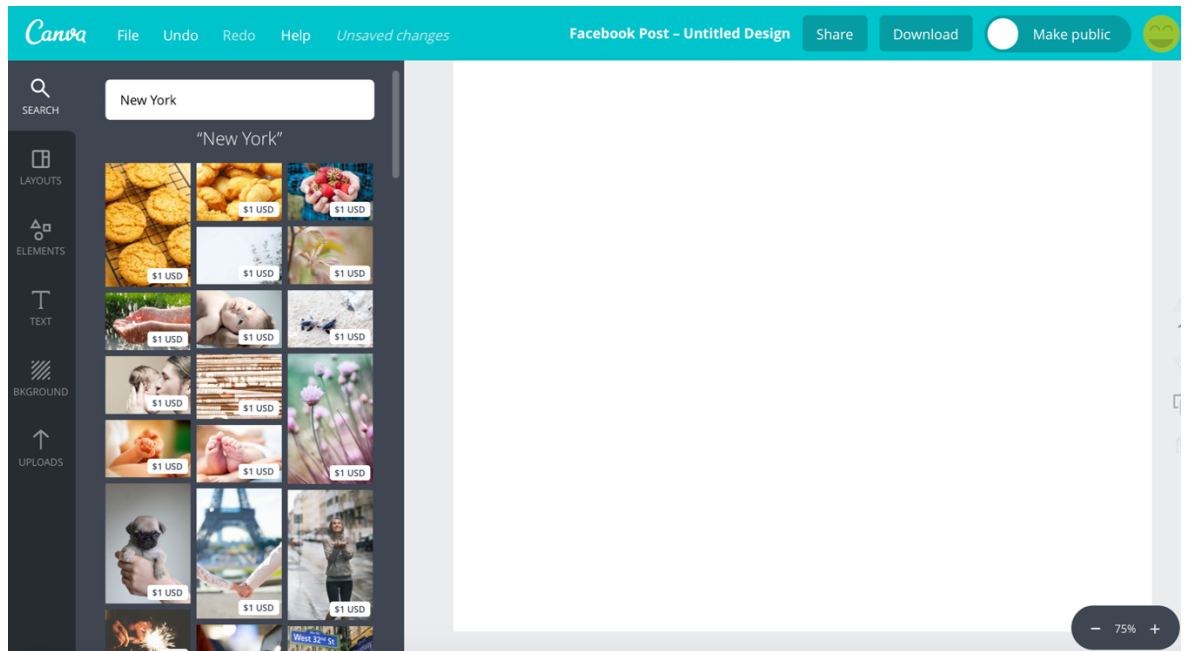
Picture 13. Yearly Subscription Fees for Iconosquare Usage (Iconosquare 2016)

The yearly price for the analytics tool is not high considering the benefits it brings for a company. Also, Iconosquare has no official contract and therefore a company can unsubscribe their membership anytime and features will remain available for a year since the beginning of usage. (Iconosquare 2016.)

4.5.2 CANVA.com

Canva is a free useful tool for making images for Facebook ads. (Rouhiainen 2015.) This tool allows companies to create beautiful designs and documents that have high-quality graphics. In addition to ads Canva users are able to create any type of image which can be fliers and posters for events, social media posts, email headers, and marketing materials as well as infographics that can be used for company's internal purposes such as user guides and training programs. (Canva 2016.)

Canva is a suitable option for small and medium-sized businesses to create a unique design that would help their brand to stand out from competitors. The entire usage of Canva is free and anyone can sign up either by email or by a personal Facebook profile. Canva offers 1,000,000 layouts i.e. images and some of them may cost only a dollar, but there is also a possibility to upload own pictures which is a suitable option for low-budgeters. (Canva 2016.)



Picture 14. Layout for Making Images on Canva (Canva 2016)

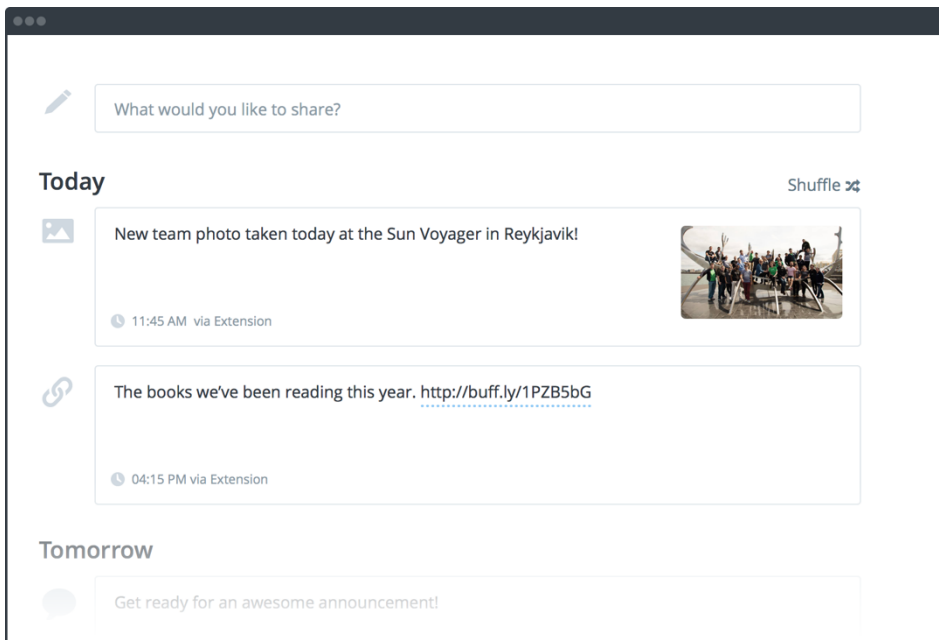
In the end, a dollar is a small sum compared to the amount of money that companies pay advertising agencies monthly. Therefore, companies should use Canva on a daily basis, since it would bring plenty of benefits not only for the marketing budget purpose, but also for internal use. The existence of such a helpful tool as Canva is a great solution for small and medium-sized businesses to avoid unnecessary marketing costs and hiring graphical designers, when everything can be accomplishing by a single person.

4.5.3 Buffer

Buffer is a social media tool that helps people to save time by scheduling their posts. (Rouhiainen 2015.) Small and medium-sized businesses are able to utilize this tool in many ways. It provides the best way to drive traffic, increase the audience engagement and save time on social media. Also it helps companies to manage their upcoming campaigns on different social media platforms and reach to a larger audience living in a different time zone. (Buffer 2016.)

Buffer can be used with the following social media platforms; Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Google+. Therefore, a company can prepare many different posts at one time and choose on which platforms they will be posted. Buffer will spread them out throughout a scheduled time e.g. a week or a month, which would save a lot of time for a

company to focus on other important tasks while it has a social media presence. In addition, Buffer also provides more analytics such as weekly reports to inform its users about the performance of their social media platform. (Buffer 2016).



Picture 15. Scheduling Posts on Buffer (Buffer 2016)

Individual user can use the social media tool completely for free, but on the condition that they can use only one social media platform and share 10 scheduled posts monthly. However, Buffer offers solutions for every business and each option includes different monthly fee depending on the amount of posts and social profiles that a company wish to have. (Buffer 2016.)

	Individuals		Teams and Agencies		
	Individual	Awesome	Small	Medium	Large
Monthly price	Free	\$10	\$99	\$199	\$399
Social profiles	1 per platform	10	25	50	150
Additional Team Members	0	0	5	10	25
Scheduled posts per profile	10	100	2000	2000	2000
Social networks					

Picture 16. Monthly Subscription Fee for Buffer usage (Buffer 2016)

Even though Buffer is a time-saving tool, companies should consider its usage carefully, as it might not be the best alternative for their budget. They should at least select the free trial of 30 days and test whether it is suitable for their posts to social media platforms.

4.5.4 Pay-Per-Click ROI Calculator

Companies' marketing budget must be used accurately when choosing Pay-Per-Click as a method for their online advertising. Fortunately, there is a useful tool that helps companies to set realistic goals and estimate their Return On Investment (ROI). The tool is called "Pay-Per-Click ROI Calculator" and it is completely free to use, and can be accessed on Fuel's official website at <http://www.fueltravel.com/hotel-ppc/>. (FuelTravel 2016.)

Fuel is a digital agency for the hotel industry, that specializes in offering simple and efficient electronic commerce options and decisions for the travel and hospitality industry. (FuelTravel 2016.) Despite the fact that the website represents a certain industry, companies should absolutely utilize the free ROI calculator, which would help to manage their budget and see whether paid advertising is even necessary for their business.

In order to receive an overview of expected results one needs to enter the following metrics; monthly spend budget, conversion rate i.e. the percent of visitors who would buy a product or service, cost per click, average sale i.e. the average price of a product or service. If users are not satisfied with the received results, they can also change the values and see how increases and decreases in various metrics affect on a company's ROI. (FuelTravel 2016).

Monthly Spend [\$]	250
Conversion Rate [%]	10
Cost Per Click [\$]	2.50
Average Sale [\$]	40
<input type="button" value="Calculate"/>	
EXPECTED RESULTS	
Total Number Of Clicks =	100
Number of Sales =	10
Total Revenue =	\$400.00
Profit =	\$150.00
Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) =	160%
Return On Investment (ROI) =	60%

Picture 17. Using Pay-Per-Click ROI Calculator on Fuel (FuelTravel 2016)

After estimating the desired results, a company should save them by taking a screenshot of the calculator, which can be utilized afterwards as a plan for upcoming paid advertising projects and an objective to stay within budget. Moreover, the website provides users with valuable information regarding terms for Pay-Per-Click advertising that should also be used by companies. (FuelTravel 2016.)

Factors to consider

Here's a look at the terms that affect your Pay-Per-Click advertising:

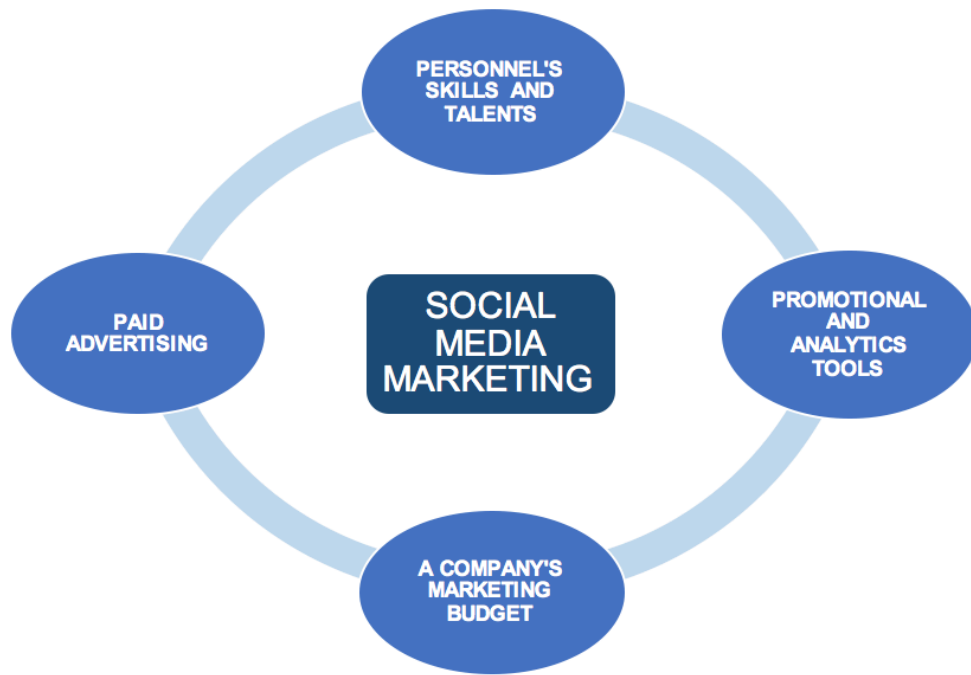
- **ROI** = Return On Investment (Gross Profit/Cost)
- **ROAS** = Return On Ad Spend (Revenue/Cost)
- **CPC** = Cost Per Click
- **Conversion Rate** = % Of Visitors Who Buy
- **Average Sale** = Value Per Conversion = Revenue Per Conversion

Picture 18. Important Factors for Pay-Per-Click Advertising (FuelTravel 2016)

4.6 Overall conclusion

Paid advertising in social media brings new opportunities and solutions for small and medium-sized businesses to market themselves and reach a larger audience. It is an optimal alternative for companies to try different technique for their marketing and see whether it is effective enough to boost their visibility. However, paid advertising can be challenging to handle, especially when it comes to small and medium-sized businesses, because many of them are eager to test every single method that could somehow help them to gain success while being totally unaware of the downsides they may face.

Promotional and analytics tools are excellent in supporting companies to achieve their objectives and help them to manage their marketing performance. They also ease the process of measuring and estimating the results that were achieved from the use of paid advertising. Promotional and analytics tools should be used specifically by small and medium-sized businesses, because they are budget-friendly and time saving alternatives that will speed up their decision-making and improve their social media plans. Consequently, paid advertising and analytics tools present a powerful combination that eases the companies' social media activities while simultaneously allowing them to maintain their marketing budget and expand their know-how.



Picture 19: The Dimensions of Social Media Marketing (Created by Thesis Author)

5 Assignments and improvements

In the thesis there are four learning assignments that were completed during author's studies at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in 2015. The assignments were chosen specifically for this thesis, because they describe valuable insights related to social media and marketing in general. They are perfect alternatives for this portfolio thesis, because they enable to present the author's professional development i.e. what was learned from marketing and business courses during a time period of one academic year.

Even though the author received good grades for the assignments, two of them includes specific parts that need improvement, because nowadays there are many new trends and tactics in social media marketing that can be utilized by companies. In addition, the author's professional and academic skills have developed since then. Therefore, writing a portfolio thesis is a great opportunity for applying new ideas and strategies to the assignments that can be also used by small and medium-sized businesses that are in need of new solutions for their social media operations.

To clarify the above-mentioned information regarding the improvement of assignments, the main idea of this portfolio thesis is to present new trends in social media and marketing strategies that can be all applied to the assignments. The content of assignments will remain the same and they are shown in the appendices.

5.1 Assignments

The learning assignments have different types of structure. Two of them are individual reports that were completed during exchange studies in New College Durham, the United Kingdom. The other two assignments are final assignments of two different marketing online courses that were completed in Haaga-Helia UAS. The aforementioned assignments include important information regarding social media. Therefore, their aim is to support the individual reports.

The topics and main objectives of the assignments are fully presented in the following subchapters.

5.1.1 Event Marketing Plan for the Beamish Museum

This assignment is an individual report that was completed for module “Event and Marketing Management” during Erasmus exchange studies in New Collage Durham, the United Kingdom. The module required working in teams as well as preparing the team presentation and written report which was the first essential part of the module.

The main objective of the module was to create an imaginary event for Beamish museum that could be implemented with the effective use of social media and marketing strategies keeping in mind the budget and services that the museum could allow for the event

In the second task, each team member had to deliver an individual report where personal insights on marketing strategies and operation could be presented and explained. The report has four parts that describes the following things; different ways of using social media to promote the event, marketing strategies, budgeting, and the evaluation of teamwork.

The alternative of using paid advertising was totally excluded from this report due to budget limitations and suspicion if it could work. This is the part that could have been done differently, since paid adverts might have helped to reach the target audience.

5.1.2 Doing Business in India

This assignment is an individual report that was completed for module “International Business and Marketing” during exchange studies in the United Kingdom. This module also required a team work, a presentation and an individual report from each team member.

The main task of this module was to create a business plan for an imaginary UK-based medium-sized company “Howarth and White” that produced cereal bars and wanted to expand its business to India. Important factors such as marketing strategies, financial issues, different cultural backgrounds were considered when preparing the individual report.

The implementation of the individual report was a bit challenging, because it had to be very long and detailed. In addition, it required a wide academic knowledge of managing finances and foreign currency as well as doing business globally. The structure of the individual report present author’s personal insights into the following tasks:

1. The pattern of internationalization. The extent to which companies can become a truly global business' in terms of its products, markets, the organization of business functions, structure and choice of appropriate international business strategies etc.
2. The contextualized theories of international trade that seem relevant in explaining this changing picture, including an identification of any barriers or restrictions.
3. The issues of finance when conducting international business. What methods a company can use to offset risks when conducting international business.
4. Evaluate a range of market entry strategies. Make recommendations for Howarth and White to select.
5. Using the methods of international market research, evaluate international marketing mix and what mix can be used by the Howarth and White.

There are a few parts in assignment that requires improvement. International marketing mix could have been performed alongside with the use of different social media platforms that are also popular in India. In addition, paid advertising should have been used in this report, as it would have helped to reach target audience and raise brand awareness in foreign country.

5.1.3 Social Media Plan

This assignment was optionally completed for online marketing course "Social Media in Modern Business" in Haaga-Helia UAS. The course taught how companies use and leverage the most important social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram. The learning outcome included also to understand and describe social media marketing as a strategic tool in today's international business environment, and apply social media marketing theories to practical marketing campaigns.

The task for final assignment was to create a simple social media plan for any company. The structure of social media plan is similar to a basic analysis that includes advices on the features that should be improved or done differently as well as positive feedback about things that works well in company's social media activity. The target for this assignment was a cosmetic company "Urban Decay" which is one of the leading brands nowadays.

This assignment does not require any improvements, as it presents important factors of social media marketing. Consequently, the information supports the individual reports that were completed during exchange studies.

5.1.4 Paid Advertising Plan

This assignment was also optionally completed for online marketing course “Paid Social Media Advertising in Modern Business” in Haaga-Helia UAS. The learning outcome of this course was to understand and describe social media advertising as a strategic tool in today’s international business environment, and to gain in-depth knowledge of Facebook advertising and Google advertising. It also helped to learn how to apply social media advertising theories to practical marketing campaigns.

The final assignment was to create a paid advertising plan for any company and the author chose to analyze another cosmetic brand called “Dose of Colors”. The plan includes the detailed description of how the company could use the different digital marketing strategies such as paid advertising strategy, Google AdWords, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube advertising. In addition, it describes the positive things of the company’s social media marketing.

The assignment does not require any improvements. It presents important factors for small and medium-sized businesses, which is why it is used as a supportive assignment both for this thesis and the individual reports.

5.2 Description of improvements

Some part of two individual reports that were completed during exchange studies requires improvement, as they lack important and budget-friendly factors that will guarantee better opportunities for the success of their businesses. The improvement is essential, because there are specific parts that could have been done differently, with more effort and dedication.

The use of different paid advertising methods such as Facebook advertising would have completed the final report “Event Marketing Plan for the Beamish museum”. Facebook was the most important social media platform for promoting the event, since the representatives of Beamish museum use it actively and always share the invitations of their events to their followers. However, this method is not effective enough nowadays, because Facebook users can easily ignore another boring event invitation or even forget to react to it.

The museum needs to be noticed and reached by larger audience that is unaware of the upcoming events. According to the chapter 4.3, Facebook adverts are a suitable alternative for companies that actively use Facebook for their businesses. With Facebook Adverts, the Beamish museum could select what type of audience they want to reach. The event's adverts will be shown on target audience's Facebook newsfeed. Therefore, Facebook adverts is a method worth trying out, as it allows the museum's personnel to test something new.

The achieved results would show them if the how Pay-Per-Click affects their social media operations and marketing budget. Facebook would allow the Beamish museum to monitor their budget and how much they spend on the event advert, as they would be able to schedule each ad and Facebook would not charge the museum more than its budget limit, which is spent for as long as company's adverts run.

Paid advertising require certain amount of the museum's budget and the best way they can estimate their expenses is to use Pay-Per-Click ROI calculator – a completely free tool that not only would help setting the exact budget, but also it would show the estimated income that comes from paid adverts. Chapter 4.5.4. explains that the most useful feature of ROI calculator is that it allows companies to test different amount of metrics i.e. monthly spend budget, conversion rate, and the price of service, in order to estimate the desired results. The Beamish museum should take a screenshot of the metrics and use them for their paid advertising plan. The ROI calculator is effective tool and therefore it should be absolutely used by the museum. In addition, it is free of charges and it would help them to monitor their budget and be aware of how much exactly they are spending for paid adverts.

Other useful promotional tools that could have been used in this assignments are Buffer and Canva. Chapter 4.5.3. describes Buffer as a useful tool that should be utilized in many ways by small and medium-sized businesses. Buffer would help the museum to promote their event by scheduling their posts both on Facebook and Instagram. It would also help the museum to drive traffic to their website and increase engagement with their Facebook and Instagram audience. The tool is time-saving alternative that offers a free trial for 30 days, which at least should be tested. Besides, Buffer is great for announcing the winners of social media campaigns, where people can win free tickets to the event. The method increases the credibility of the Beamish museum's social media professionalism.

Canva, in turn, is a useful and even essential tool that can be used both for print media and online marketing purposes. According to the chapter 4.5.2. Canva can be used by small and medium-sized companies as a creative solution. The tool could help the museum to create illustrations for posters and flyers that would support the promotion process of the event. The museum would save their time and budget since the method does not require special talents or hiring a team of designers. Instead all print material can be completed by one creative person. Preparing and printing all posters and flyers would not take much time and therefore it would be ready for distribution after a couple of days. Training materials for personnel and voluntary workers can be prepared by Canva, as there are different templates available for that matter. The tool is also good for creating the event agenda that would be shared for the participants. The use of Canva would make the Beamish museum stand out and look unique with good-quality graphics.

The second individual report “Doing Business in India” was a challenging project, because cultural differences had to be considered when choosing proper business strategies. The assignment includes only one part that present various alternatives of international marketing mix that could have been used by the UK-based company “Howarth and White”.

Paid advertising is excluded from this report, because its topic is focused more on the marketing strategies and how they would be implemented. The marketing part of this report would be complete by adding SOSTAC marketing planning model and the use Content Marketing Matrix. Both of these marketing methods are extremely valuable and beneficial for medium-sized companies like Howarth and White. Companies can easily face the toughest challenges when expanding their businesses to foreign countries. Therefore, the use of SOSTAC model is an optimal solution for Howarth and White, because it would help them to stay focused and set realistic objectives, overview company’s situation as well as to monitor and review the achieved results.

As mentioned in Chapter 5.1. SOSTAC model could be used as a template that assures consistency when executing plans from different teams, departments or regional offices throughout a company. Howarth and White could use SOSTAC model in India, while the same method is being used in all of their offices in the United Kingdom. Eventually, this approach would benefit the entire company as all of its offices would have updated information and methods in order to achieve the main objectives.

In this thesis chapter 3.3. Content Marketing Matrix is presented as a proper planning template for companies’ content marketing operations. The matrix helps businesses to produce ideas for contents that may achieve a high engagement rate. It would benefit the

business of Howarth and White in many ways. The company would become more familiar with this method and learn its importance business-wise. Also, it would ease the process of choosing the essential factors that support company's objectives regarding the customer engagement in social media. With the use of matrix Howarth and White would be able to see their starting point and re-create the matrix according to the most profitable factors for their business. This content marketing planning method is also time-saving, as the matrix is user-friendly and its template can be downloaded online for free.

The use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and LinkedIn should be added to the marketing part of the second report. Social media marketing is an efficient way for the company to raise their brand awareness and reach the right customers, especially when starting business operations in a new country. For example, LinkedIn is helpful a platform for seeking and hiring Indian personnel that understand how business works in their country. Indians are hardworking people by nature. They always aim higher in life, and working for a European company would be a privilege for them career-wise.

WhatsApp is one of the most used applications in India which is why Howarth and White could use the application for customer service purposes. It is a good base for creating close and loyal customer relationships. The company can use WhatsApp for promotion purposes as well, by sending their customers text messages regarding offers and upcoming products.

All in all, both individual reports did not require a major change, only some additions were made that have a strong impact on the business operations in general. Social media plays a big role in nowadays business environment and new trends have to be followed and tested by companies. Nonetheless, marketing strategies are important as well, because they are supportive and crucial factors for achieving the success in social media. When both parts emerge, it becomes easier for small and medium-sized businesses to stay competitive and motivated.

6 Discussion and evaluation

This chapter provides further insights of thesis writer's personal overall thoughts and statements regarding biggest challenges in social media, and solutions that can be used to overcome even the toughest obstacles. In addition, the chapter presents an overview of the topic and how the thesis was implemented as well as writer's self-evaluation.

The previous chapter gave insights into author's conclusions regarding improvements of learning assignments. The use of social media alongside with marketing methods, such as SOSTAC and Content Marketing Matrix, appear to be a strong combination for small and medium-sized companies. Nonetheless, it requires a constant dedication and control, because the combination can fail if either social media or marketing operations are weakly performed. Therefore, companies must be aware of possible challenges and create solutions for them.

6.1 Biggest challenges in social media

Small and medium-sized businesses could be in a serious trouble as a consequence of neglecting their social media operations. Social media has a few drawbacks that companies should keep in mind and learn how to react in unexpected situations. From my personal perspectives and experiences the most challenging things in social media are unnecessary use of paid advertising and analytics tool as well as a clumsy approach towards the company's online privacy and security.

Paid advertising surely allows companies to have more visibility and reach to a larger audience. However, they should be careful when considering to choose paid advertising, because the method may even be unnecessary for their marketing. Many companies are spending a lot of money from their budget to make paid adverts a successful source of income. They are not well aware of the fact that there are various types of tools that can block adverts. Nowadays people use them more often, because they are irritated by constantly showing adverts that can even hide the content of an entire website. Consequently, they choose to ignore them.

A company should also be extremely careful with their marketing budget, since most promotion and analytics tools have a certain fee which ranges from ten to hundreds of dollars monthly. The expenses can add up and make a huge portion of a company's marketing budget. Therefore, promotion and analytic tools must be tested and chosen accordingly to

avoid unnecessary expenses. However, analytics tools can be of aid when measuring the effectiveness of paid advertising. Depending on the results companies need to evaluate whether paid advertising is a suitable and profitable option.

Privacy is a complicated issue on social networks and companies should pay better attention to their online security. Nowadays even the most detailed and top secret information about a company can be found online and copied by third parties. The internet is full of viruses and ratters i.e. people who hack personal devices to stalk other people's activities. In fact, any device that has access to the internet can be hacked, which can ruin company's database. For example, if someone hacks companies' Facebook, Twitter or Instagram accounts, they may go through a lot of trouble in order to get their accounts back. In the worst case all pictures and campaigns could be deleted for good, and creating new account will require a lot of time and patience as well as building a new social media plan for each platform.

Making a comparison of different paid advertising methods could help companies to choose the most suitable alternative for their budget. If companies have used a certain tool for paid advertising during a long time period, they should still overview their budget by comparing the expenses and sales that come from paid adverts to find out whether the method is really effective. The same approach must be applied for promotional and analytics tools.

In addition, companies should be able to exclude some of social media platforms, as they might not be profitable or have their best interests. For example, Twitter may not be the most popular platform in certain countries where creating user engagement can be quite a challenging task. Periscope, in turn, is a great tool for creating engagement, but it provides users with too valuable information such as an exact location of a live broadcaster. Therefore, it is not a good thing for companies' privacy.

Companies must pay more attention to privacy in social media by securing folders and storing important information separately. The personnel should also be trained properly and the company must always have an own social media plan in case of unexpected events e.g. hacking or lack of engagement. The plan would help decision-making and avoiding common mistakes. An own plan is a far better alternative than copying competitors' actions in social media as it also helps keeping the content unique by representing the company's own voice and may appear more attractive to customers.

There are various types of effective and quality antivirus programs that can be installed anytime to protect companies for data loss and viruses. They are an inexpensive option to monitor companies' online activity and make sure everything goes according to their plan.

6.2 Overview and self-evaluation

I have been interested in social media business for a while, because it has become an essential part of marketing. Therefore, I find the topic of this thesis extremely important for many businesses. My aim was to provide thesis readers with an updated information about social media marketing and at the same time present what I have learned during my studies at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences.

Implementing this thesis was an enjoyable and educational experience. I have not faced any obstacles due to my interests in social media. Despite a limited schedule that I had for writing this thesis, I managed to completed it in time. Nonetheless, I felt somewhat anxious sometimes since I had to work on other school tasks at the same time. Luckily I was able to have a practical approach for thesis writing, as I focused on finishing a few sub-chapters per day. In addition, this experience helped me to develop my time-management skills and increased my confidence and discipline. It reassured me of my capabilities to complete any task in a limited time.

I have not faced any difficulties with finding a proper information for this thesis although it took me some time to make comprehensive information retrieval. I aimed to use mainly book references, since they were useful for theoretical parts of this thesis. The books gave me specific insights into theories regarding social media marketing and marketing strategies in general. They also helped me to understand and expand my knowledge in the particular areas such as SOSTAC marketing planning model and content marketing.

The following books were essential part of writing this thesis and can provide substantial value for small and medium-sized businesses:

- 30-Minute Social Media Marketing
- 500 Social Media Marketing Tips
- Optimize – How to Attract and Engage More Customers by Integrating SEO, Social Media and Content Marketing
- Social Media Explained
- SOSTAC The Guide to your Perfect Digital Marketing Plan
- The Power of Real-Time Social Media Marketing
- The Social Media Marketing

Other types of references such as news websites and my old course materials helped me to complement information regarding new trends in social media. The websites of each social media platform provided quality information and different solutions for companies. News websites, such as Forbes, Entrepreneur and LinkedIn, provided facts on what is popular on social media and why companies should utilize certain platforms and marketing strategies for their businesses.

As I wrote this thesis, I have also learned so many great things about social media and how beneficial it is for companies. My dream job is to work for medium-sized company in the field of social media, where I could provide interesting content for company blogs. The topic reassured my career plans and that marketing was a right major for me. Consequently, completing this thesis supported my personal and professional growth as well as brought many insights about social media in general and its biggest challenges.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Assignment 1 - Event Marketing Plan for the Beamish Museum



BAM 608

BA (Hons) Management

Events and Marketing Management 2015

Final Assignment: Task 2

Individual task

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student

a)

In order to gain a success and create a competitive advantage for Beamish event, we must first choose the right marketing tool for our operation. Marketing tool consist of the techniques and materials used by those who promotes the good and services. (BusinessDictionary.com, 2015)

One of the marketing tools we will use for our event is Social Media Marketing. Now days everything can be found online – the latest updates, news and information about the upcoming events. The information spreads very fast and people have all the access to hear or read about it, since they use different Social Media platform on their smartphones on a daily basis. Most of the companies save a lot on their advertising costs by promoting their products and/or services on Social Media. The use of Social Media does not require any payments, unless the company uses the paid Social Media marketing which would not be included in the process of organizing our Beamish event.

Therefore, creating active profiles and engaging with customers are the best ways to use Social Media Marketing. By posting relevant content and engaging in conversations with customers and influential people in your target audience, you build relationships over time and can increase your brand awareness as well. (Small Business - Chron.com, 2015)

Our event will be promoted on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook page of the Beamish. The Beamish staff will be well informed by our team on how and what time of the day they will share the link or a picture of our event. In Social Media timing is essential. By using the time right, they could get more engagement from people e.g. likes and shares on all Social Media platforms they use. That way they will also raise awareness of our event.

We will also give a brief of useful information and advices on how Beamish could improve their use of Social Media within this event. There are many software tools that can be used to monitor the Social Media activity and effectiveness. Such tools as LikeAlyzer, Tweet Binder and Iconosquare give a total analysis on what is done right and what can be improved. They are free of charges and easy to use.

LikeAlyzer helps a company to measure and analyse the potential and effectiveness of their Facebook Pages. It allows them to monitor, compare and explore all the possibilities of their Facebook. (LikeAlyzer, 2015)

“Tweet Binder analyses, classifies and reports company’s terms or hashtags on Twitter.” (Tweetbinder.com, 2015)

“Iconosquare is the system that gives key metrics about company’s Instagram account. It gets total number of likes received, most liked photos ever, average number of likes per photo, follower growth charts and more advanced analytics.” (Iconosquare, 2015)

In addition to Social Media our team will also use our own networks. Since we won’t use the paid social media marketing, we will do the best we can to spread the word. Each team member will share the link of the event on their own social media platforms and send an invitation of the event to their friends.

Our second promotional tool is print media advertising. It is a suitable option for people who don’t have an access to the internet or don’t use any social media platform. Those people are generally used to get information from newspapers of other print media adverts, which is why we have done a draft of an article to be sent to different newspaper. We will press copies of

100 poster and 1000 flyers of our event advert. These copies will be distributed to places that are situated close to Beamish.

One of our main motives to organize this event is also to give help to those who need it the most. It is very important for our event management team to have a charitable purposes in our business. Each one who will purchase the ticket to Beamish event, will also make a donation for the victims of the earthquake in Nepal. The percentage of donation money is already included to the price of the ticket. However, our visitors can make a donation individually if they wish to do so. Even if we won't get a large sum of money, we would still have something that can help people's lives and that is all that matters.

b)

The aim of our event is to promote Beamish as a unique place people can visit more often. We want to provide an entertaining and fun event for our visitors. Part of this action is also to raise awareness about Beamish as a brand. This event will help Beamish to improve their brand image.

“Brand image is the impression of the consumers' thoughts of a brand's personality and entity. Brand image is developed through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme, and is authenticated through the consumers' direct experience.” (BusinessDictionary.com, 2015)

Before creating any campaigns, we must remember few things regarding the sales brand extension possibilities of The Beamish museum. According a representative of Beamish, the museum is approximately financially 98% self-funded. They have two resources of sales which are their main income. From customer point of view, they are called spends, because it defines on which Beamish services visitors spend their money on. The primer spends of Beamish are entrance tickets, which are usually sold out. The second spend are services that are provided by Beamish e.g. Beamish souvenir store, Coffee and candy shops, snack stands, Fish & Chips place, etc. Using this valuable information, we will create a proper merchandise idea which would help to raise the sales of Beamish and to extend their brand.

Sometimes price can be a barrier when it comes to purchasing a brand item. Generally, people have prejudices towards purchasing items from souvenir shops, because they find them to be quite expensive, even if it was only £3 pounds more expensive than in a normal store. On the other hand, people can easily change their minds when they receive discount coupons. We will make a certain discount deal with Beamish store. People who will buy their tickets online or from the Box Office, will receive a discount coupon that says e.g. “By making a purchase over £25 in the Beamish store, you will get a 30% discount.” The coupons can also include a valid discount of £2 off the price from Fish & Chip place.

We will also include some of the goody bags with the freebies that have a connection to the event and the Beamish name on. These items could be for example pens, badges and small toys for kids or household tools for adults. People love to get things for free, whether they are big or small. Of course, in this kind of a promotion all it may take for a little attention is to give something away to the visitors. By giving away something for free, we can guarantee some type of interest and excitement. (Preston, 2012)

The decoration of Beamish store will be well organized and some of the products will have “a tester” for visitors to try how the product works and actually looks out of the package. Some of the product can be as sample and part of decoration in Pit Village where our event will take place. The items can attract visitor's attention and our volunteers can present the item and

give more information where it can be purchased. Therefore, it is very important that our volunteers will provide a good customer service when promoting the brand.

c)

We expect to have a high number of visitors attending our event, as there will be sold approx. 1,000 tickets and 25 extra tickets for the promotion. One of our main goals is to sell all the tickets and hold our event successfully. Our aim is also to get a lot of positive feedback from our visitors. In order to achieve the success, we must think beyond, be accurate and pay very good attention to everything when monitoring our event.

First of all we have to be realistic and overview every single details such as negative things that could happen all of the sudden and ruin not only our event but also the reputation of our company. This requires estimation and research which will be done before our event as early as possible. We will be monitoring the number of the event ticket sales daily via Beamish online and office box database. This would help us to be well aware of how many people already bought their tickets and will surely come to our event. It is also a wise way of be prepared to know how to act when unexpected situation occurs.

We will monitor our ticket selling process by following the sales numbers till an exact date/month that we will chose. For example, if we notice that by that time we have sold only a minimum amount of tickets e.g. 200 copies, we won't be terrified by hearing that information. On the contrary, we will act professionally and come up with new ideas - either to create more massive marketing campaign/advert or to re-schedule our event. If it will be mandatory to change the date of our event due to a low number of ticket sales, we will have a quick reaction to make all the necessary arrangements to do so. Our events team will make sure everything goes well during the re-arrangement procedures.

Before the event we will make a strict work schedule that will be followed by each of our event members. In addition, we will create a brief and a work rota for Beamish staff and provide a training for volunteers. By attending the training, they will get important information regarding the event and health and safety issues. Also they will learn how to act in unexpected situation during the event and who they need to contact if that will happen. Our brief and training will include an observation check list which we will use before, during and after the event.

The visitors/customers are our major stakeholder, so for us it is very important that the event will meet their needs and expectations. We will make sure that during the event Beamish staff and our volunteers have a positive and productive approach to work. Having a small talk with the visitors and providing them a high-quality customer service is an example of how to get our visitors loyalty and a positive feedback of your event. The visitors will be able to give a feedback to any of our volunteers. However, there will be a survey copies that our visitors can fill anonymously and put them in the box at the entrance gate. After the event we will also create a short online survey that will be sent to all attendees via Beamish database. All the received feedback will help us to improve both our operation and event management skills.

After the event our team will have a meeting with the Beamish staff for the event brief. There will be discussed such things as the evaluation of the event; what was good and what action could have been improved. This will be an opportunity for Beamish staff to give a straight feedback. They can also do it anonymously via our online survey, which will be sent for the volunteers as well. Their feedback is valuable to us.

We will create a document for each volunteer as a proof they worked at our event. For some volunteers this event might be the first work experience, so we will make sure they have a good working conditions e.g. having enough time for a break. We will keep up the good work atmosphere and emphasize on our internal communication.

d)

Our team was well organized and there wasn't hierarchy or any other problems within our team. We came along very well and were able to communicate and spend time with each other also outside of the meetings. We planned our meetings in advance and followed our schedule. Sometimes we made a compromise to re-schedule a meeting because of the personal or other understandable reasons. Otherwise, we tried to do our best to achieve our goal and make the most of this project no matter how stressed or unmotivated we felt from time to time. Outside of the meetings we worked individually by collecting information and creating new ideas for our presentation.

Before starting this project, I created a secret group in Facebook for our team members, because it is easy and useful way to keep in touch and post comments or questions related to the assignment. It is also a good way to back up your files just in case if your laptop won't work properly which actually happened to me. Besides, no one else but our team members could not see the content of our Facebook group page. There we also shared the ideas and websites with relevant information related to the assignment which helped us to remember all the references we used. One of our team members also made a WhatsApp group chat, which helped us to communicate all the time.

At the beginning of working together, there were a lot of confusion, frustration and misunderstanding regarding the assignment. Perhaps it was due to complicated explanation of the assignment.

It was a bit challenging to make a quick progress with the presentation during our meetings, since we had a five-person group. Each one presented creative ideas and sometimes it was hard to focus on one thing at a time, because there were a lot of ideas to think about and to put into presentation. We planned our event accurately by taking into consideration a lot of small details related to the event. We went through our ideas and prioritized which of them were the most important in order to make our event successful. Our way of thinking was realistic and we acted as it would be a real event.

During our project one of our team members decided to quite the module due to personal reasons. As a team we totally understood and respected her decision and were able to continue our project without any problems. Overall, we have managed to measure our ideas and create a good result of our hard work.

Each team member was satisfied with their part of the presentation and their roles. My role was to work as a Marketing Manager of our company. According to Belbin team role theory it is important that team members use their strengths to advantage and that they manage they weaknesses as best they can. (Belbin.com, 2015)

I chose a Marketing Manager as my role, because marketing is my major and I enjoy following and learning different ways of how companies market their business. Marketing is one of the most important resource when it comes to gaining a success and reaching a high number of sales. I have also done a module of Social Media Marketing in modern business at my home

university, which helped me to come up with marketing ideas for our event. In addition, my dream is to work for a big company in the tasks of Marketing. This project was a good practice to overview my skills.

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New College Durham

BA (Hons) MANAGEMENT

International Business and Marketing Assignment

2015

INDIVIDUAL REPORT

Howarth and White
DOING BUSINESS IN INDIA

Final report
Kristiina Rööb
30259563

Introduction

The main purpose of this report is to answer the questions regarding international business and marketing, and what one expects when conducting business in India. The case of this report is the company Howarth and White, which is a UK based producer of cereals who are thinking of expanding into India. The company has a strong demand of their product in the UK and the experience in exporting their products to the Europe. However, this is the first time for them to expand their successful cereal bar outside the EU area. This report will provide the management of Howarth and White with a range of useful information and the right solutions to their business operation.

The internationalization and a 'global business'

Now days many companies see themselves as international, because of their co-operation with companies from foreign countries where their products or services may have a high demand and popularity among consumers. This kind of companies have also international environment at their work places as they hire multilingual employees who have a wide experience of international business.

However, sometimes companies face challenges when trying to enter a foreign market where they have to play by the rules and being only international is not always enough. Companies have to be able to understand other countries' cultural issues and market differences, which means they have to internationalize themselves. "Internationalization means the process by which a company enters a foreign market." (Rugman and Collinson, 2012)

"The internationalization process is one of going abroad at gradual stages, on the premise that foreign markets are risky. Therefore, a typical process is: license, export, sales, office and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)." (Rugman and Collinson, 2012)

Internationalization also means the design of product must be done in a proper way that it will meet the users' need in many countries or can be easily adapted to do so. (Investopedia, 2010)

In this case Howarth and White have to be very patient and accurate when planning their product package. The design of their product should be adaptable to India's market criteria. For example, the text of the packaging should have both English and Hindi languages, so that people can be aware of what they are buying and can read what ingredients the product contains. English is also important, because it is one of the most spoken languages in India and they should not exclude the fact that English speaking tourist and citizens are potential consumers.

Translating the text from English to Hindi can be challenging, because some words may have different meaning in Hindi and have more or less characters. In that phase the company should pay attention to the layout of the product. Howarth and White has to be prepared to any obstacles. They have to be able to think fast and use their creativity in case if for example, translated text won't fit the package or it gives a wrong message to the consumers. Therefore, it is very important to evaluate the layout of the product to make sure whether it will work with the translated text.

To become a global business, the company must start thinking globally early which means studying the market of country the company is planning to expand into. Doing a market research won't harm their operation. "This includes determining the size of their target market,

consumption and production of competitive products, income level, pricing demands, demographic trends and economic stability.” (Larmore, 2010)

The more Howarth and White are familiar with the country’s local demographics, the easier it will be for them to determine the market and promote their brand of a cereal bar. They also have to do SWOT analysis to find their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats they might face when expanding their product overseas. Therefore, it is important to study their competitors, what they offer customers and any trade barriers to entry for new business. (Larmore, 2010)

International trade and challenges

“India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world with recent growth levels reaching close to 9%.” (Doing business in India: India trade and export guide, 2014)

Howarth and White made a good choice to expand their product into Indian market, as it is a country that offers lot of benefits for UK businesses. In India English is general language that most of people can speak fluently. The UK and India have common legal and administrative history, which facilitates the conduct of business for Howarth and White. In addition, there is a possibility for a rise of personal incomes that create a new middle class consumer market. If Howarth and White’s product will have a major success in India, they would probably want to expand their product to other countries as well. Therefore, from India they have an easy gateway to Southeast Asian markets.

There is also a lot of strengths of Indian market that can be useful for Howarth and White. India is fast growing economy with one of the world’s largest youth populations. Among that target group there can be a strong demand for Howarth and White’s main product cereal bar. They have a chance to expand their product to more than 50 cities with over a million people. This could have a huge impact on the sales and profit of the company.

India has almost all the necessary facilities for the conduction of the business, such as a good network of banks, financial institutions and an organized capital market.

The company will also save on employee costs, as in India there is a good availability of skilled, low cost workforce. Of course, the company has to make sure that they employ people with the right age and know-how e.g. not under-aged children. Also they should be paid fairly by the rules of the legal contract. That way the company can eliminate the risks of having any difficulties with the law.

National competitive advantage is an international trade theory that is suitable for Howarth and White in expanding their business to the country outside of the EU. It is also called ‘Porters Diamond Model’ which was resulted from a study of patterns of comparative advantage among industrialized nations. (White, 2015)

“Porters Diamond Model looks at the sources of competitive advantage sourced from the national context. It can be used both to analyze company’s ability to function in a national market, as well as analyze a national markets ability to compete in an international market.”

(White, 2015). In this case, it is the optimal option for Howarth and White to make a research by analyzing both positive and negative sides of Indian market and find out its’ perks and opportunities for they business conduction.

As you can see from the Figure 1 below, Porters Diamond Model recognizes four pillars of research that are factor conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industries, firm structure, strategy and rivalry. They analyze the viability of a nation competing in a particular international market. This model also can be used as a comparative analysis tool in finding out which country a certain company is suited to expanding into. (White, 2015)

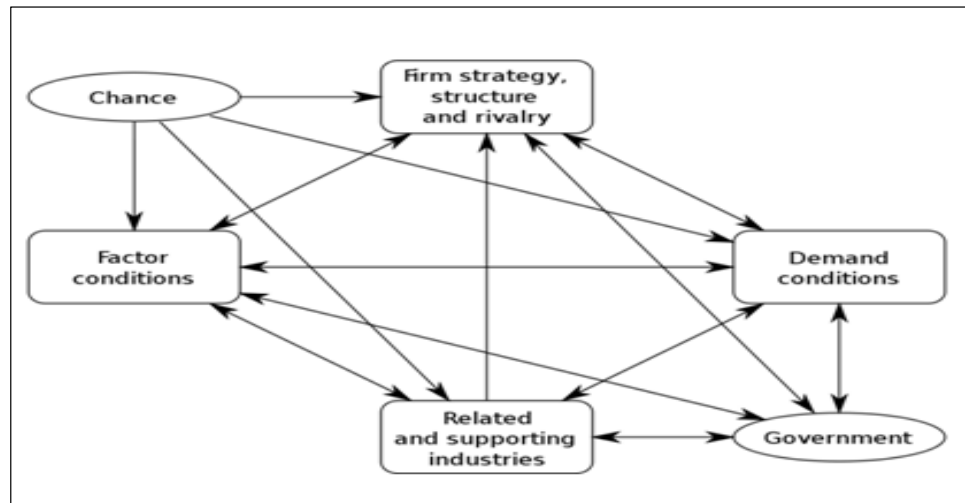


Figure 1. (Source: <http://www.assignmentpoint.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Porters-diamond-model.png>)

Porter also thinks that chance (such as new innovations) and government policies (such as investments) can have an impact on the Diamond Model. (Hill, 2011)

Using the Porter Diamond Model, I will present Howarth and White a short research of valuable information e.g. what they have to know about Indian market before expanding their product there. Starting with the first pillar ‘Factor conditions’. India has a large population of approx. 1.2 billion people, which is a positive side for doing business in that kind of a country, as the company won’t be fighting for gaining the consumers. Also with India’s high population the company wouldn’t have difficulties in hiring people their factories, offices, etc. India has all the elements of a knowledge-based economy by redeeming qualities of English language and human resources. However, there is also a negative side to factor conditions. India is going through a huge setback because of its poor infrastructure which needs a lot of attention for moving forward, to attract investments.

Moving on with the next pillar ‘Demand conditions’. “The more demanding the customers in economy, the greater the pressure facing nation to constantly upgrade its competitiveness via innovation and improving its quality.” (Hill, 2011)

The economy of India is approximately the world’s 12th-largest. As the educated middle class continues to rise and becomes more powerful and successful, the country would demand more and their consumptions will increase. With this happening the demand conditions are going to upgrade which may lead to better quality of education for the people, better governance, less corruption and better equality. This will only increase the Gross domestic product (GDP) and lead to developments in its innovation and services. The sales of Howarth and White’s cereal bar will also influence India’s GDP.

From the point of view of ‘Related and supporting industries’ India has low cost high-quality labor compared to any other country in the world and it will have a young workforce as long as it possibly can. However, it hasn’t made any progress in the field of the manufacturing, as

the corruption has halted the India from becoming the world's leading manufacturer. There are many reasons to that fact. One of them is the poor conditions and lack of integrity at work. Generally, the employers are not fair with a young workforce, as they are very strict and sometimes forces them to work over hours. Howarth and White must avoid doing so, because it could harm their international reputation.

Finishing this research with the last pillar of Porters Diamond Model which is 'Firm Strategy, structure and rivalry'. "India has moved on from being a socialist country towards a capitalist economy.

There is an open market economics for most of the goods and services produced there. Thus this healthy rivalry among the peers in their industry have made the companies to be more innovative and effective in their offerings." (Hill, 2011)

All in all, there are many positive sides of conducting business in India that Howarth and White can benefit from. In many resources India has better chances to improve its market. The only downside is the corruption of the country. Nevertheless, Howarth and White still has a good chance to gain a success in that market.

The issues of finance when conducting international business

The main issue that Howarth and White must remember is financial risks when expanding into India. The company must remember that India has a different currency 'Indian rupee' (INR). This is where an exchange rate plays a huge role, as it can affect the price of company's product. Exchange rate means the price of one currency in terms of another. (White, 2015). For example, now days according to XE Currency Converter One British pound equals 97.87 Indian rupee. (Xe.com, 2015).

In this case Howarth and White will use 'The Foreign Exchange Market (FOREX) and there are many reasons to that. First of all, it is very important, because it is general method that is used to convert currency of one country into the currency of another. It also provides some insurances against foreign exchange risks which means the adverse consequences of unpredictable changes in exchange rates. The company has to remember that events in foreign exchange market can affect its sales, profits and strategy. (White, 2015). Howarth and White can be involved in 'Currency speculation' which is "the short-term movement of funds from one currency to another in the hopes of profiting shifts in exchange rates". (White, 2015).

There are also many risks in exchange rate that the company should be careful when exchanging their assets. Exposure to foreign exchange risk may develop from volatility in currency markets e.g. if the company pays invoices for imported raw materials priced in a foreign currency, holds assets located overseas or borrows foreign currency. However, there are also three strategies for managing risk of exchange rate that are exchange risk avoidance, exchange risk adaptation and currency diversification. (White, 2015). The most suitable strategy for Howarth and White is exchange risk adaptation which means the use of hedging to provide protection for the company. It can be done, for example, by holding into fixed rates or using flexible products.

Choosing the right market entry strategy

Expanding into a new market can be an effective way to influence Howarth and White's core business for growth. But they have to go through a strict process to accurately assess the potential of each growth opportunity, because a bad decision can wreck their business.

When the company has made a decision to enter an overseas market, in this case Indian market, there are a variety of options to do it in the right way. "These options vary with cost, risk and the degree of control which can be exercised over them." (Fao.org, 2015)

The company that wants to go international usually faces three major issues; marketing (which countries, which segments, how to manage and implement marketing effort, etc.), sourcing (whether to obtain products, make or buy?) and investment and control (joint venture, global partner, acquisition). However, by choosing the right and suitable market entry strategy the company could face less issues and gain more success on foreign market. Market entry strategy shows the company how to sell, deliver and distribute their products in another country.

There is two market entry strategies that are suitable for expanding Howarth and White's business, which are exporting, and licensing. Exporting is the most traditional, cost effective and well established method of entering and operating in foreign markets. It can be defined as the marketing of goods produced in one country to another. For Howarth and White this is an optimal option, as the less investment allows their business to experience exporting on a small scale as a useful way of improving and testing their international plans and strategies without great commitment. Exporting also allows you to put your production in a single location, allowing for better economies of scales and quality control measures. (White, 2015)

By following this strategy, the company would have a lower risk to fail and if it won't success, the company will react fast in order to improve the situation. The company can have great advantages from exporting, such as having greater control, improved communications, proactive approach and possibility to build expertise and knowledge. It also gives an opportunity for the company to learn how things work in Indian market before making big investments.

Second market entry strategy for Howarth and White is licensing. Now days it's also known as franchising which is a form for licensing. As a franchisor or licensor, the company's business effectively gives the licensee of franchisee the rights to use the company's trademark and brand. Also it allows the permission to other things such as producing a patented product or patented production process, using the company's manufacturing know-how and receiving its' technical and marketing advice and know-how. (White, 2015)

Even though franchising is considered to be suitable for a certain business mode, such as a fast-food retail format and menu, it still can be suitable for expanding Howarth and White's cereal bar. They can contact a few company that produces similar products on the same market in India (e.g. crisps, chocolate bars and spicy food products) and try out their methods of doing business. The company can also sell the cereal bar not only in food stores, but also in brand coffee shops, such as Starbucks or any other coffee place that is popular in India.

"Franchising and licensing have many advantages as both are easy and quick to implement and offer the advantage of minimal business costs as well as access to some markets which may otherwise have been closed due to government policies etc." (White, 2015)

There are also some disadvantages that can affect Howarth and White's business. With this market entry method, revenue is likely to be significantly lower than with other ones. However, it is one of the most secured methods of how to conduct business surely in order to gain a success.

International Marketing Mix

“When targeting and segmenting markets, companies have three basic options, including segmenting by country, by global segment, or by multiple criteria” (White, 2015). A company can choose to segment its market by selecting a single country to enter which is exactly what Howarth and White are planning to do. With this approach they would have an opportunity of gaining economies through standardization.

The company can use either standard marketing mix or adapt their marketing mix when launching their product into foreign market. Standardized global marketing is an international marketing strategy for using basically the same marketing strategy and mix in all the company's international markets (Armstrong & Kotler, 2008).

The second strategy is using the adapted marketing mix. Adapted global marketing is an international marketing strategy for adjusting the marketing strategy and mix elements to each international target market, bearing more costs but hoping for a larger market share and return (Armstrong & Kotler, 2008). It is also the most suitable option for Howarth and White when entering the Indian market. Adaptation might be a costly option, but when the company has done its costing properly, there is value for money. There are also many reasons for choosing adaptation, such as cultural and usage factors, legal standards and product liability. (Howarth, 2015)

However, before choosing the marketing mix Howarth and White has to do the first step to thorough understanding of global markets, which can be accomplished by doing marketing research of country e.g. a research about how people shop, eat and socialize in India. This also includes to approach the knowledge of international marketing mix which has four components (4P's): product, price, place and promotion. (Howarth, 2015).

Once information has been gathered about the market the most important concern is whether the promotional strategy needs to be changed. Sometimes products that are expanded overseas can face a failure due to local cultural differences. If the research shows that Howarth and White's cereal bar fits the needs of the country's consumers only by making a little change to the original product, the company should follow by making a product adaptation. Product adaptation occurs when a company modifies a product for a foreign market (Study.com, 2015). For example, if there are black and white colors on Howarth and White's product packaging, they should change them, as in India they are considered to be for the bad luck. They should change them into colors that bring luck e.g. yellow, green and/or red color.

If marketing research shows that there is no need for changes of the product and its layout, the company should choose the final type of change which is called promotional adaptation. This happens when the company decides to keep the product exactly the same but fixes the promotional strategy. This means Howarth and White will have to come up with the new promotional strategy for their product, as the consumer behavior in India may be very different compared to the UK's market.

The company might also face place and price changes through the result of research. Even though there are great opportunities for manufacturing in India, in some particular places there might have very different distribution structure or retail environments e.g. poor conditions and old machines. If it will be seeming as an issue for the company, then will probably be necessary to make new distribution and transportation strategies.

Howarth and White must be very accurate with extra transportation costs, tariffs and taxes to come up with the end retail price. They also have to remember that the price of their product would be different in Indian currency compared to the UK's. Which is why the exchange rate is a huge factor, as it depends on the demand for and supply of each currency. This is where Howarth and White should the right pricing method/policy. One of them is called 'Dumping' which is "the export by a country or company of a product at a price that is lower in the foreign market than the price charged in the domestic market". (Investopedia, 2003). Another method of pricing strategy is 'Counter-trade' where "the main idea is that all or part of the payment for goods or services is in the form of other goods or services". (Study.com, 2015).

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Appendix 3. Assignment 3 – Social Media Marketing in Modern Business

FINAL ASSIGNMENT – SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN

YOUR DETAILS

Your name: **Kristiina Rõös**

Your student number: **1300276**

COMPANY INFORMATION:

Name: **Urban Decay**

Industry: **Personal Care**

Products & Services: **Cosmetics and beauty products**

Other information: **The company was acquired by L'Oréal in 2012.**

Introduction:

Urban Decay is a cosmetics brand founded and headquartered in California, USA. The company is known for its high-quality cosmetics production. I chose this company for my final assignment, because I use their products daily and their brand stands out from their competitors by having a unique packaging and offering good value for money.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this course, I will help my friend to create her own social media account (Facebook/Instagram) where she can promote her work as a make-up artist. She uses mostly Urban Decay products in her work. By analyzing the company's social media marketing I could find out more ideas of how she could use her social media platforms on a professional capacity.

1. STRATEGY (Topic 1)

Urban Decay seems to be very advanced in the use of their social media platforms. They are very aware of their target group and who is their ideal client. The content of their social media has professional visual materials – high-quality pictures and videos. Using the shades of Urban Decay's logo on other pictures makes the content very nice looking.

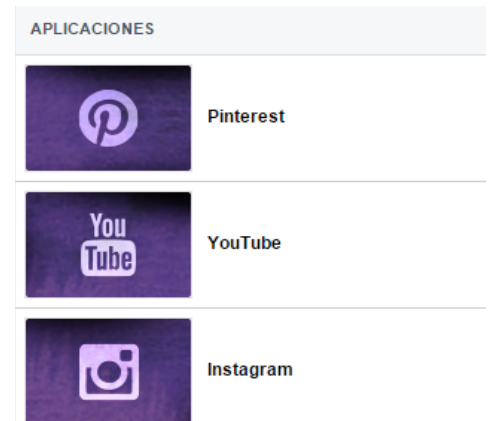
- **Research.** UD should identify the right social media channel. It seems that they have more followers on Instagram than on YouTube, because they post more content there. YouTube could be the right channel to promote their product, because videos can show so much more than just a single photo. The company should identify their competition and learn from them on how they use their social media.
- **Content.** The company should give more information about themselves, not only a web site and short introduction e.g. a short story of how UD was founded. The use of **Infographics** could be a good choice for make-up artists, video bloggers, etc.
- **Interaction/Promotion.** UD should use more interaction on social media e.g. more video tutorials on new products and direct link where people can purchase them. Listening to people/followers and answering their question is important to company's success and engagement rate. UD should definitely make more surveys, which would help to gain more followers. It will help to find out what customers really want.
- **Measurement.** Focusing more on campaigns and analyzing monthly how many sales are coming from social media and which platform is the most effective. **Google Analytics** is a useful tool for tracking sales and followers. The company should measure their results to improve their activity and operation.

2. FACEBOOK MARKETING (Topic 2)

I used LikeAlyzer to analyze the company's FB page. To be honest, I was both quite surprised and disappointed when finding out the outcome.

First I will point out **good things** about their FB operation:

- The page is well organized. Visually it looks nice and professional. The logo and color of Urban Decay is violet, so profile and cover pictures have the violet shades as well. Also the pictures of other social media platforms they use have the violet shade, as you can see in the picture.
- Posting on a daily basis and using hashtags - GREAT!
- They post good quality pictures of their products. On their FB page is also mentioned other relevant information e.g. website, presentation of the company.

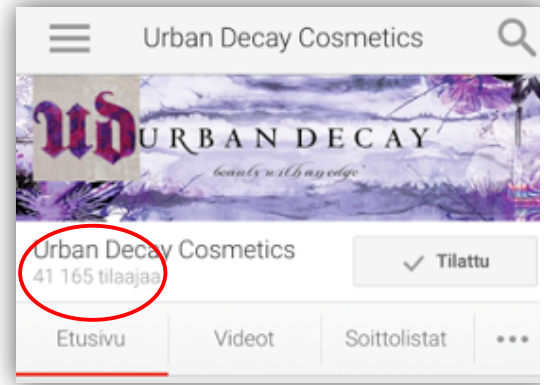


What they could improve:

- Like other FB pages and interact with them. Good examples could be L'Oreal, famous vloggers/bloggers who use Urban Decay products and their retailers. Liking other pages shows that the company is active and interested what is happening around. It is also a good way to getting to know your competitors.
- With amount of likes of their page they should be able to engage more of their followers. Which is why creating more engaging posts is important. The text of the post should be shorter and more simple. At the end of each post they should write a question related to the picture for people to participate in commenting and discussing the topic e.g. what is your favorite lip gloss/eye shadow color for this summer? They could also arrange some competitions; it wouldn't make harm to their reputation. On the contrary, it could help to raise the curiosity of their followers.
- To keep the followers satisfied they should answer to their posts more frequently and be more active. That way they could show they have a respect towards their followers. They should also improve their timing to engage more followers e.g. publishing posts between 21 - 24 (GMT).

3. VIDEO AND YOUTUBE MARKETING (Topic 3)

- Urban Decay posts only high-quality videos with a length of approx. 2-5 minutes which is good to keep their audience interested and watch the video till the end. Compared to the other social media platforms that Urban Decay uses, in YouTube they have less followers. Using **YouTube Analytics** is essential in order to improve their activity and effectiveness.
- They should step out of the box and post more videos e.g. tutorials/campaigns that people could share and attend. That way they could gain more followers. Also the person in the video should ask more questions e.g. “What did you like about this new collection? If you liked it hit ‘thumbs up’ to this video below the link.” People will comment and share their ideas that company can get benefit from.
- In the description there should be a link to their website or a direct link to online stop where people can purchase a product that was shown in the video. It could be very useful way of promoting the brand and increasing the sales.



4. INSTAGRAM MARKETING (Topic 4)

- In Instagram Urban Decay has a verified account, which means they have high number of Instagram followers. It seems that they use of Instagram is very punctual. Pictures they post are professional and visually beautiful. Urban Decay’s Instagram operations seems to be quite advanced and open minded.
- However, they are following **only 2 Instagram users** – the professional photographer and founding partner of Urban Decay. They should follow more people to show they are also having interest in their followers and other business partners. Otherwise, they just seem focusing only on themselves which seems quite awkward/disrespectful to their followers.
- Asking more question within the picture posts will increase their engagement. In addition to professional pictures, they should also do more reposts of their product consumers, not only the famous and popular ones. For example, they could arrange competitions which would say e.g. by tagging your friend in this picture you have a chance to win X product. / By sharing the picture of your favorite product you can win a voucher of 100 €//\$ to our online shop. / Share a summer picture of you using our



summer eye shadow palette and use hashtag #UDsummer etc. I know many women who would attend such a hashtag movement on Instagram.

5. TWITTER MARKETING (Topic 5)

- The company's Twitter account looks advanced and professional. They do daily posts and visually their page looks perfect because of the high-quality pictures they post. The good thing is that they actually follow other Twitter users, unlike on other social media platforms where they follow only 2 users.
- To improve their Twitter activity, the company should absolutely use **TWEET BINDER** to analyze their Twitter effectiveness. They should definitely focus on the engagement of their followers and target group. Adding more questions and hashtags to their post could increase their rate of retweets and gaining more followers – **potential impacts and reach**.
- They should also be more active in replies by answering on comments and questions which is very important. That way they will show they care about the feedback from their followers/other users. When doing posts timing is very important as well. Urban Decay could use **HOOTSUITE** online tool to manage their Twitter and Facebook account. It will help them to generate their contacts and schedule their activities and posts.



6. OTHER INFORMATION

During this course I've learned so much about how the social media can be used as a marketing tool. Last year I deleted both of my accounts – Instagram and Twitter. The reason why I did so was because I started to have too much followers on Instagram and wanted to take a break from social media. I deleted my Twitter account, because I didn't really use it and found it irrelevant. I made it in the first place, because of the school assignment I once had where each student had to post daily what they learned during a month-long school project.

However, this course made me realize how important social media can be in order to make your business successful by using right marketing techniques. During this course I made Twitter account and Twitter tutorial helped me to understand how I should use it. I also made a new Instagram account in the beginning of this year and thanks to this course I learned how easily it can be managed. I already recommended to use ICOSQUARE to all of my friends who are bloggers or have their own company.

This course also helped me to with my exchange studies. We had an assignment where we had to choose the right social marketing strategy for the event we organized.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT – PAID SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING IN MODERN BUSINESS

YOUR DETAILS

Your name: Kristiina Rööös
Your student number: 1300276

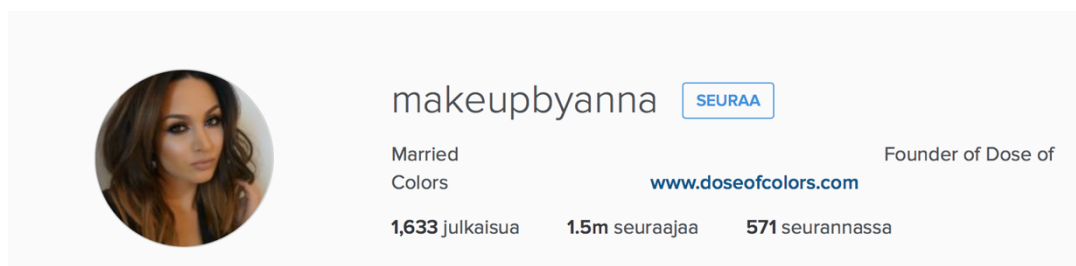
COMPANY INFORMATION:



Name: Dose of Colors
Industry: Makeup and cosmetics
Products & Services: Makeup products; matte lipsticks and lip glosses, eyelashes and three different shades of highlighters. Online shopping, shipping internationally.

Other information:

Dose of Colors is a cosmetic line for women. It was founded by a woman who works as a professional makeup-artist. The company is based in the US and its main operation happens online. The company is cruelty-free which means they don't test their products on the animals. For such a small company, Dose of Colors has an amazing success overseas and there is a high demand for their products as they have been sold out many times.



(source: Instagram)

I have chosen this company for my final assignment, because I am myself very interested in cosmetics and in different brands. This company doesn't use paid advertising at all. They don't even have an official Facebook page or a Twitter account. They only use

Instagram and co-operate with beauty bloggers/vloggers that have a lot of followers on different social media tools. There is only very little information about the founder and the company overall.

I think with using paid advertisement the company could raise their brand awareness and boost their sales, since it is possible to ship their products internationally. Also, this brand challenges other well-established brands within the industry such as L'Oreal, Benefits Cosmetic, Maybelline and Urban Decay.

7. INTRODUCTION AND STRATEGY

- The main objectives are to raise company's brand awareness and boost their sales by reaching as many customers as possible. **Also trying something new!** The best way to create valuable experiences is to test different options. That way the company can also find out which methods are the most suitable for their advertising and marketing plan.
- The company already has a large audience in the US and South America, but it is quite unknown in Europe and other continents. Of course, including me there are people who are familiar with the brand, because they might have seen the vloggers' review of Dose of Colors products on YouTube. However, watching videos takes time and people can get bored easily which is why paid advertisement (Pay-Per-Click) is a suitable option to reach more people and create immediate traffic.
- The company should try Pay-Per-Click with Facebook, because it is easier and more cost-effective method that delivers stronger results than waiting for those clicks to come "organically". In addition, the company can change their ads easily and choose which parts of the globe their ads will be visible.
- At least 10% of their budget should go for testing which means they should start with a small amount. For example, www.fueltravel.com/calculator is a useful tool to analyze company's ROI. It is FREE to use and has PPC calculator that shows the expected results when entering specific values e.g. monthly spend \$. That way company will have a clear vision for their budget.

fuel MARKETING

the cost of advertising, but ROAS does not.

Monthly Spend [\$]	100
Conversion Rate [%]	10
Cost Per Click [\$]	1.50
Average Sale [\$]	25

Calculate

EXPECTED RESULTS

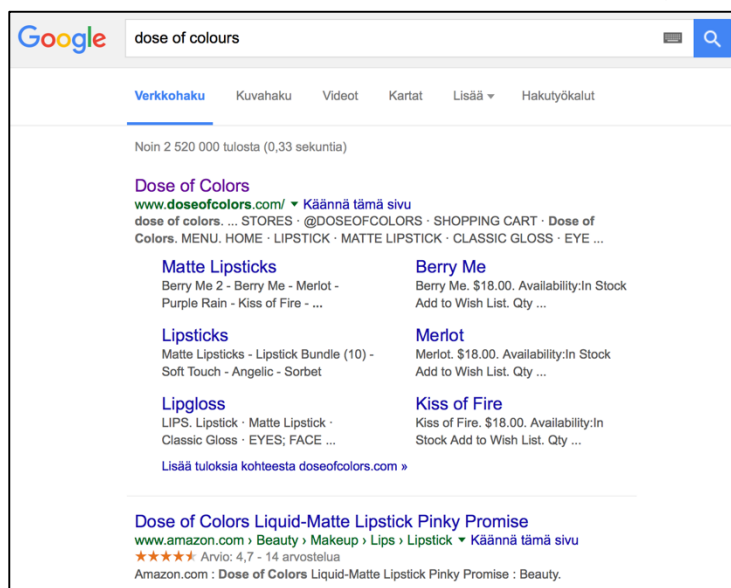
Total Number Of Clicks =	$100 / 1.5 = 66$
Number of Sales =	$Total\ 100 \times 0.1 = 6$
Total Revenue =	$6 \times 25 = \$150.00$
Profit =	$150 - 100 = \$50.00$
Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) =	$(150 / 100) \times 100 = 150\%$
Return On Investment (ROI) =	$(50 / 100) \times 100 = 50\%$

– The average price of the company’s product is 25 \$. If the use of PPC will bring them success during the first three months, they should consider raising their budget on advertising, because it could a positive effect on their ROI.

– The company will launch new line of eye shadows in the end of this year and a brush collection in the beginning of 2016. If they start using PPC now, they could increase the traffic on their website, because people will click their link as soon as those products will be launched. The whole business is online, so some of products will be surely sold out.

8. GOOGLE ADWORDS

- In this plan the company should use Facebook advertising rather than Google Adwords as their PPC platform, because it is cheaper, easier to manage and create conversion based on likes and sharing.
- However, Google Adwords could increase their visibility. Therefore, they should give it a try and see if it would work. When typing “Dose of Colors” in Google, their website is the first on the list which proves their SEO. If I type “Matte Lipsticks”



which are actually their most sold and popular products, their website appears on 7th row which is why they could use keywords to reach customers that are searching for what the company offers.

- It is important to create keywords that describe the product they are selling in order to stand out from their competitors. For example, Maybelline and NYX Cosmetics came as the first options when I typed “Matte Lipsticks”, instead Dose of Colors came fifth. People who have commercial intent will more likely click on the first websites. By using Google Adwords the first website listed Dose of Colors could have a lot of clicks and conversion, since nowadays Matte lipsticks have a very strong demand.

[Matte Lipstick - Maybelline.com](#)
Mainos www.maybelline.com/LipStudio-Color-Blur ▼
Our Unique Cream Matte Pencil with Blurring Smudger For a Fierce Look!

[Matte Lipstick | NYX Cosmetics](#)
www.nyxcosmetics.com > Lips > Lipstick ▼ [Käännä tämä sivu](#)
Highly pigmented, richly formulated and long-wearing.

[Matte Lipsticks - Dose of Colors](#)
www.doseofcolors.com/lipsticks/mattelipsticks ▼ [Käännä tämä sivu](#)
Lipstick · [Matte Lipstick](#) · Classic Gloss · EYES; FACE. Highlighter · STORES
DOSEOFCOLORS · SHOPPING CART · Dose of Colors. MENU.



- **Attracting attention & landing page.** Their advertisement campaign could include the high quality picture of their logo or any product and the text below saying “Free shipping on orders over 50 \$” or “20% discount on orders over 50\$”. The discount code would be on their website.

9. FACEBOOK ADVERTISING

- FB ads are easier to manage
- Must have attractive ad image and high/good quality pictures which is not a problem for this company. They use colorful pictures which match their brand quite good
-
- What would you promote EXACTLY?
- What image would you use? Image editing tools?
- Targeting
- Analysing results

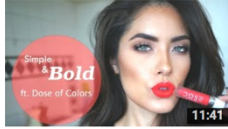
10. TWITTER AND YOUTUBE ADVERTISING

- The main focus is only on Twitter Ads, because the use of Twitter is more general in the US rather than Europe.
- As you can see the company doesn't pay for YouTube ads and it is kind of not necessary as they already have a lot of advertisement provided by YouTube beauty vloggers that do the reviews of their products. Co-operating with famous

bloggers/vloggers is always a good move to promote your business. Also it creates credibility, because they can give their honest opinion about the product and show how it really works or looks in person.

YouTube ^{FI} dose of colors

Suodattimet Noin 60 000 tulosta




Simple Makeup for BOLD Lips ft. NEW Dose of Colors lip swatches | Melissa Alatorre

tekijä: Melissa Alatorre
1 kuukausi sitten • 32 640 näyttökertaa

NEW Dose of Colors lippies in order swatched! Bellini Rosé Truffle Coral Crush Shop Dose of Colors HERE!

HD




REVIEW : Dose of Colors Matte Lipsticks | terra collection

tekijä: Beauty by Sara
5 kuukautta sitten • 24 263 näyttökertaa

Hi Guys! I ordered these new matte lippies from Dose of Colors and I wanted to share my first impression with you! Ginsmakeup ...

HD




Dose of Colors Matte Lipstick Lip Swatches | Katie Danger

tekijä: Katie Danger
3 viikkoa sitten • 5 993 näyttökertaa

Welcome back friends! Thank you for being such a HUGE part of this channel! Be sure to SUBSCRIBE, get comfy, and make ...

HD

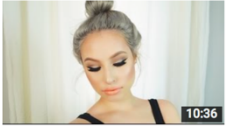


Lipstick Swatches-Coloured Raine, LA Splash & Dose of Colors!

tekijä: Young Wild and Polished
4 kuukautta sitten • 64 544 näyttökertaa

Hello my sweets, today we have a simple little lip swatch vid!! Hope it helps you guys decide what to buy!! NONE OF THESE ...

HD




DOSE OF COLORS COLLECTION SWATCH VIDEO | LIPSTICK, LIP GLOSS, AND LIQUID LIPSTICKS !


tekijä: Ashley Wagner
1 kuukausi sitten • 9 816 näyttökertaa

Hi guys! I hope you enjoyed this swatch video as much as I enjoyed filming it for you all! Thank you so much for your support!

HD




MAC, Sephora, Limecrime and Dose of Colors Haul | Fall 2014

tekijä: Nitraa B 
1 vuosi sitten • 66 858 näyttökertaa

Watch my Previous Videos: August Favorite - <http://bit.ly/1AHkcx> Get Ready With Me - <http://bit.ly/1uDyA0A> Neutral Glam Makeup ...

HD




GRWM ft. Dose of Colors Black Rose Lipstick

tekijä: theycallme_mo
8 kuukautta sitten • 20 586 näyttökertaa

Get Ready with Me creating this simple winged liner look with a bold lip! Using the BRAND NEW Dose of Colors Liquid Lipstick in ...

HD



Dose of Colors Liquid Matte Lipstick Review

tekijä: Chelsea March
8 kuukautta sitten • 10 970 näyttökertaa

INSTAGRAM: @southstreetstyle FASHION BLOG: www.thesouthstreetstyle.com
Ricky's Location: SoHo, 590 Broadway.

HD