

# Use of social media among speciality clothing companies

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<p>This thesis is a research about how certain clothing companies in Finland use social media, especially Facebook and Instagram, in their marketing. The idea of the thesis was created during my work placement, which I completed at the case company, Dropinmarket. Dropinmarket has quite a poor social media presence at the moment and the goal of this thesis is to give recommendations on how to improve it.</p> <p>The introduction gives a more detailed view to the background of this thesis, introduces the case company, clarifies the key words of the thesis, and introduces the research questions as well.</p> <p>The theoretical framework helps the reader to understand what social media is all about and how it can be used in marketing, and what the challenges and the benefits of social media are. Different social media channels are introduced, and the sections on Facebook and Instagram provide visual illustrations to understand how the channel works. The pros and cons of each channel are also discussed.</p> <p>The research methods explain the research process in more detail. The data was collected during a three-month period, from November 2015 to January 2016. The data was collected from selected companies' Facebook and Instagram accounts and it was put into tables. Each company has its own table.</p> <p>The research contains a presentation of all five companies and the findings that emerged from the data. The findings show how Facebook and Instagram are used, how often the company uses those channels, and what kind of content can be found in the channels. Customer service on Facebook and Instagram is also examined.</p> <p>Finally the differences between the companies studied are discussed. Attention is given to possible major differences between Finnish and foreign companies. Based on the findings, the conclusions provide recommendations to Dropinmarket about how to improve its social media presence.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> social media, clothing company, engagement, keywords	

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# 1 Introduction

This thesis is about “Use of social media among speciality clothing companies” and the introduction chapter leads to this topic. The chapter covers the case company, key concepts, research questions and the research scope of this research, benefits of this thesis, international aspect, and the background of this thesis, what evaluated the need for this research.

## 1.1 Background

I completed my work placement for Dropinmarket in autumn 2015, I produced content to their web store and social media channels. I became interested in other companies’ social media behaviour, and wanted to investigate how clothing companies use social media in their marketing. I also wanted to help Dropinmarket to improve their social media presence, and at the end of this thesis recommendations for improvement can be found.

According to research How Finnish companies’ use social media (Dingle 2013) 83 % of the companies were on Facebook, 73 % on YouTube and 62 % on LinkedIn. So 17 % of the companies were not on Facebook, and 73 % of the companies agreed that social media is important to their company, and only 3 % of the companies did not agree with that.

But 39 % of the companies using social media used less than 1 hour per week to update their average four social media channels, which means approximately only 15 minutes per week per channel. 70 % of the companies using social media spent less than five hours per week to manage their social media. (Dingle 2013.)

Five main reasons why companies use social media were: brand awareness, to increase traffic to website, to improve sales, to generate leads, and recruitment. Customer service was on seventh place. (Dingle 2013.)

Importance of this thesis for clothing companies is to make them understand the value of social media and to awake them to use it more, and in a different ways. Social media should be used more actively and more diversely. The time spent to manage the social media should be higher due it is growing rapidly and people use it on a daily basis.

Importance of the thesis for me is to support my professional learning, because clothing industry and social media interest me. Learning more about social media is very fascinating due it is growing and changing constantly.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

This thesis aims to find an answer to how different clothing companies use social media in their marketing in Finland, and how Dropinmarket could improve its social media presence. The aim is to benefit Dropinmarket to understand the value of social media, and based on the results of the research, to give recommendations on how it can improve its social media presence.

The investigative questions are listed below, and on chapter 3.1 Research methods, the methods of the research are introduced better.

IQ 1. What is the current social media presence of Dropinmarket?

IQ 2. What is the social media presence of the competitors' like?

IQ 3. What kind of differences there are between the case company and the competitors?

IQ 4. What kind of recommendations can be done to Dropinmarket to improve their social media presence?

## **1.3 Research Scope**

This thesis will focus on four clothing companies. Two of these clothing companies are operating only in web and two other companies operate both online and on store. The two online companies are Overboard and Junkyard, the other two companies investigated in are Ponke's the Shop and Lamina.

These companies are chosen because they all operate online and have similar products on sale. Overboard is chosen because it is the most similar company as Dropinmarket, because it is operating only online and it is Finnish. Junkyard is chosen because it operates only online and it brings the international aspect to this comparison. Ponke's the Shop and Lamina are taken into this comparison because both of those are Finnish companies and target audience is pretty similar as Dropinmarket has. All of the chosen companies use actively social media and especially Facebook and Instagram which are the social media channels to focus on this thesis. Number of companies is limited to make sure that the research do not get too wide and complex.

In the chapter two the theory about social media and how it is used in marketing in clothing companies is explained. This is to make it easier to understand what social media is and why it is used in marketing. The theory part is made to support the understanding of the research and the key findings.

On the chapter 3 the research approach and the process have been introduced in more detailed. A figure that reflects the research process can be found the chapter 3 as well.

The aim is to give recommendations to Dropinmarket on how they can improve their presence on Facebook and Instagram based on the findings of this research.

#### **1.4 International Aspect**

International aspect is coming along with Junkyard. Junkyard is the only company which is based abroad. It also operates in Finland. Overboard is the only Finnish company who delivers to abroad as well. It will be taken into consideration when doing comparison between the companies, how it affects to the business.

#### **1.5 Benefits**

This thesis benefits me and Dropinmarket. I will learn a lot about social media and its usage in marketing. Also learning about how clothing companies use it is very vital, due working in clothing industry is very big interest of mine. In the future I would like to work in environment related to clothes and social media.

Dropinmarket will gain benefit as well because in this thesis are compared clothing companies which are very similar as Dropinmarket is, and in the end there will be recommendations how Dropinmarket can improve their social media presence. After reading this thesis Dropinmarket also understands the value of social media and why to use it on its marketing.

#### **1.6 Key Concepts**

The key concepts of this thesis are social media, keywords and engagement. All these key words are defined below.

“**Social media** provides the way people share ideas, content, thoughts, and relationships online. Social media differ from so called “mainstream media” in that anyone can create, comment on, and add to social media content. Social media can take the form of text, audio, video, images, and communities.” (Meerman Scott 2010.)

To promote and represent company’s website **keywords** are vital. Keywords are the link how visitors find their way to company. To choose the right keywords it is important to know the audience and what they are looking for. (Michael & Salter 2008, 69.)

When attracting customers it is important to have them engaged. **Engagement** is measured how involved consumer is with the content or an activity which has been provided via advertisement in blog, email or in website. In this view the customer has been seen as a fish by fisherman. (Evans & McKee 2010, 211.)

### **1.7 Case company**

The case company of this thesis is Dropinmarket, it has been founded in 2012 in Helsinki and Sami Helpelä is the owner of the company. Dropinmarket is importing clothes from Volcom and they are selling it to its retailers. Volcom produces clothing, footwear, accessories and related products to young men and women. Dropinmarket does also retailing via its web store, dropinmarket.com, and they design and produce its own clothing brand White Moment. Target audience of Dropinmarket are young adults, and people interested in boardsports.

The social media presence of Dropinmarket is very limited and not very active. The resources to use social media are better than they are using it now, and with the help of this thesis the use of social media can be improved.

## **2 Social media used in marketing communication**

The theoretical framework of this thesis is introduced in this chapter. This chapter tells the more detailed definition of social media, how social media is used in marketing, what are the benefits of using social media in marketing. Challenges of social media are discussed as well, and some of different social media channels are introduced. Choosing the right channel to reach the target audience is also told.

“A set of highly interactive technology tools that leverage the fundamental human desire to interact with others and provide a new way for organizations to communicate with and relate to employees, consumers, partners, and other stakeholders” (Goldenberg 2015, 243). This is how Goldenberg (2015) defines social media, it is new ways to interact, communicate, and share online.

Social media is also known as a web 2.0. Social media means websites where the users of the site create the content to the site, not the owners or the employees. Or at least most of the content comes from the users. Before social media there was web 1.0, and most of the websites were passive, there was no interaction between the consumers and the company. Very common way to contact the company, was to send an email and hope for the answer. (Olin 2011, 1.)

The great challenge now for companies is to understand that marketing in social media is a two-way road. Company can speak to its customers and customers can speak back to the company as well. Companies need to remember this and be available for the customers, to answer their comments and questions, and notice them.

Marketing in social media is part of a company's marketing in online, using different social media platforms to send commercial messages to its potential customers. The aim is to create commercial publicity via social media channels, and the reason is simple: go where the customer spends time. And this phase is pretty simple, because people spend a lot of time online nowadays. More difficult phase is to do marketing via social media channels, and send the right message to the right people. (Olin 2011, 2-3.)

According to Goldenberg (2015, 2) there is possibility that if the company does not use social media, it will be left behind in marketing in the future because social media is having such a strong influence in marketing.

## 2.1 Social media used as a marketing avenue

Social media is a quite new way to do marketing and it is not yet very common way to do marketing for all companies. Social media is one segment to do marketing; if the company has previously done marketing via radio or certain magazine there is no need to abandon that, but social media can be other segment to do marketing. Even though social media marketing is often free of cost, it does not mean it is effective or easy, if you do not know how to do it. It is free to create a Facebook account, but if the company wants to expand the marketing opportunities, money is needed.

To use social media in a proper way it is vital to create a plan as in every marketing channel has its own plan. Social media is not something that it does not need any planning or effort. Social media requires wise presence, meaning committing activities and constant listening (Siniaalto, 2014). Social media is two-way channel which is differing from previous marketing styles. Back in the days it was only companies who were able to talk to the customers. Nowadays customers are able to talk back. And that is something what companies should learn and assimilate.

Each social media channel is different and on each channel the company cannot publish the exact same content. First of all the same content does not work on every channel, if the post works on Facebook it might not work on Instagram. For example, use of hashtags is more common on Instagram than on Facebook. Also each channel has its own users, all people do not use same social media platforms, but if there are same users on many channels then again it is important to update different content to different channels, to keep customers interested in. It is not interesting to see the same post from three different channels.

Planning and scheduling social media content in advance is possible and worth it. It helps the company to involve more people to make and edit that content, when you plan it in advance. It helps also during time-sensitive season, for example events, holidays, contests, and product launches can be planned beforehand. Planning in advance helps the company to publish material consistency, consumers can expect content to be published and it helps to maximize the engagement. When planning the content in advance there is easier to use "411 rule" which is referring to a ratio of sharing on social media. There can be 4 educational and entertaining posts for every 1 light and nice promotion and every 1 hard and tough promotion. (Lee 2014.)

Planning and scheduling works on every social media channel, and it is very wise to do social media marketing calendar which would include all used social media channels, and the information what to post and when. Thus all used channels would be taken into consideration and updated constantly, so there would not be channels which do not update regularly. Careful planning and the calendar would also help to post coherent content on every channel.

The plan should also take into consideration what time the post should be published so it would reach as many users as possible, thinking when users are the most active. Facebook allows the company to see at what time the followers of the page are online and it offers a curve of the information. The social media planning calendar could also include the major events of the target field, such as fairs. There would be good to mark the dates when people have most commonly pay days in Finland.

When the calendar has been created, it is vital to think the content of the channels. What kind of photos, or videos, and what to write as a message. Even the hashtags can be planned. Hashtags are used to categorize conversations, and are marked with # sign (Miles, 2014, 28). Hashtags are sort of a key words and used more commonly on Twitter and Instagram, hashtags can be used on Facebook as well, but it is not as popular as on Twitter and Instagram.

To be able to reach people on Instagram it is vital to use right hashtags to maximize the visibility on Instagram. Using the right amount of hashtags is important, due too many looks like spamming and too less limits the visibility on searches. Sweet spot is often between 5-10 hashtags per post. (Lee 2014.)

Using the right and relevant keywords on hashtags is important because it might do brand damage by using the wrong hashtags. Very good way to establish brand recognition is to use branded hashtag. (Lee 2014.)

To be able to use hashtags correctly it is vital to keep it short, only one word or short phrase. When creating hashtags, try to think ones which are easy to understand and memorable. Once the hashtag has been created it has become a communication tool for everyone to use and there is no way to control its use. (Miles 2014, 29.)

Kortesuo (2014, 54) gives a tip about Google Trends which is a free service offered by Google. With Google Trends company can see how often a certain key word have been searched with Google in a certain time period. For example if the company is struggling

which key word to use, it can compare different terms for certain item, such as “muffin” and “cupcake”, to see which one is more searched in Google, and decide which key word to use.

## **2.2 Benefits of using social media in marketing**

Domo has released its third report “Data never sleeps” (2015) which is an infographic showing how fast data proliferates. Domo released its first report in 2013 and since then the global internet population grew from 2.4 billion to 3.2 billion people which is nearly 20%. James (2015) gives examples what happens in every minute of every day

- Facebook users like 4,166,667 posts
- Twitter users send 347,222 tweets
- YouTube users upload 300 hours of new video
- Instagram users like 1,736,111 photos
- Pinterest users pin 9,722 images
- Snapchat users share 284,722 snaps.

Social media is growing constantly, and Haligan & Shah (2014, xii) give a great example of it. In 2009 when the first edition of the book was released Facebook had 150 users, which were mostly students, but in 2014 it had 1,3 billion users. At the 2009 Twitter had 18 million users, but in five years the number of users had grown to 241 million users.

Social media is growing and changing constantly, and the information flow is constant. But why to use social media if the company already has a working website? The social media is to reach the people, people spend plenty of time on online and via social media the company can reach plenty of people. It is vital to be there where the people spend their time. (Halligan & Shah, 2014, 70.) Social media pages are sort of an extension for the website and nowadays it is almost as important to use social media as to have a website (Halligan & Shah. 2014, 73).

If the data above did not convince, a few numbers from Facebook: every day over 700 users log in to Facebook, there is over 1.1 billion active users, and people aged 45-54 is the fastest growing demographic. At the very beginning Facebook was a website for students. (Halligan & Shah, 2014, 70.)

Social media channels can be used as well as a customer service platform, when answering to a one comment on social media, many other customer can see the answer as well. E-mail or phone call does not spread the word as effectively, because the company can

handle only one customer at a time. Of course there are risks as well when serving customers via social media, it is important to mention on a comment that the certain answer is only valid for the certain question and case, because other customer who has seen the answer might think that it concerns him as well. Also questions which include very private information, are not suitable to answer publicly. There should be used for example private message to answer on that. (Kortesuo 2016, 64-65.)

### **2.3 Challenges of social media**

Even if social media is very quick way to spread good news it is even faster to spread bad news and publicity. As we can see on the chapter 2.4 list of data's proliferation it is fast. It might be easy and quick to set up a profile to social media, but it requires time and effort to update it and produce the content that interests the consumers.

As earlier mentioned, back in the days marketing was only one-way road, and conversations were done by the company. Now when the social media has changed the way the conversations are happening, the company must remember that customers are able to use their voice, and share their opinions, comments, and thoughts about company's products, services, and about the company itself. These comments and thoughts are visible to everyone. (Goldenberg 2015, 2.)

The two-way road forces the company to create more customer-centred content, something that stimulates the interaction between the customer and the company. This is the challenge phase, to learn new effective communicating ways on social media because it makes customer happier when the company comes to the customer. Willingness to learn use of social media will also help the company to understand how to minimize the negative posts on social media. (Goldenberg 2015, 3.)

To make sure that the customer service is taken into consideration on every social media channel is vital. Who responses to the questions, or reacts to the comments on Facebook wall, is it marketing department's task or communication's task.

For example on Instagram it is quite easy to miss a question, if it is posted to on older post, and the newer posts gain plenty of likes. All of the likes will be notified separately on Instagram and due that the comment will be missed easily. The only way to prevent this is to check older posts regularly, or follow the notifications bar very carefully and constantly. Both options requires time and effort.

One big challenge of social media is the above mentioned fact that the news spread very fast, so the company must be prepared for bad news and crisis. Siniaalto (2014, 94-95) has listed ways how to prevent the crisis. Siniaalto advises to have enough resources update the channels and to be online, someone needs to take care that comments and questions are responded to avoid harm. The company should listen their customers' wishes and try to carry out those, because as mentioned, social media is a two-way road. There should not occur any harm, if the company is transparent and open on its actions. The messages should be clear and honest, and this will help the company gain trust which will help if negative news appear.

## **2.4 Different channels of social media**

There exists plenty of different social media channels and new channels are constantly seeing the daylight. As well some old social media channels are fading away. Of course all of the channels do not reach such a big popularity as other channels. According to Siniaalto (2014, 36) social media channels can be divided roughly in three different categories: short text communication channels, such as Facebook and Twitter, long text communication channels such as blogs, and image communication channels such as Instagram and Pinterest. Below are listed six very popular social media channels, Instagram and Facebook are the channels which are on main role on this thesis but Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, and Pinterest are pointed out to inform other possibilities.

According to Statista (2016) the first social network which passed the 1 billion registered users was Facebook, and presently has 1.55 billion active users. Instagram has over 400 million accounts which are active monthly. Social networks are used by roughly 2 billion Internet users and these numbers are forecasted to still increase. (Statista, 2016.)

### **2.1.1 Facebook**

Facebook was founded in 2004, and its mission is to make the world more open and connected by giving the power and opportunity to people to share. Facebook is used to stay connected with friends and family, also to discover what is happening in the world. On Facebook people can also share important things to them and express themselves. (Facebook, 2016.)

According to Facebook there is daily active users 1,04 billion, average from December 2015, and in a monthly level there is 1,59 monthly active users, from December 2015. 83,6 % of the users are outside of the US and Canada. (Facebook, 2016.)

On Facebook the user can create an own account, which requires registration. On Facebook the user can share multiple things, such as own status, photos, videos, links, location, and other Facebook pages and groups. Navigation is made easy on Facebook with search bar.

Companies can create a public company page and secret groups, but public pages are more common. The users can like the public page and thus follow the company on Facebook and see the latest news and happenings on user's very own newsfeed.

Facebook offers a quite lot of different statistics about the followers of the page without any payment. With an extra payment the company can for example get more visibility to its posts. On Facebook the users can write wall posts to the company's page and rate the service.

Facebook does not publish all of the company's posts to all of its followers, it sifts the posts with Page Rank-algorithm. With the payment the posts appear on more followers' wall. (Kortesuo, K. 2014, 37.)

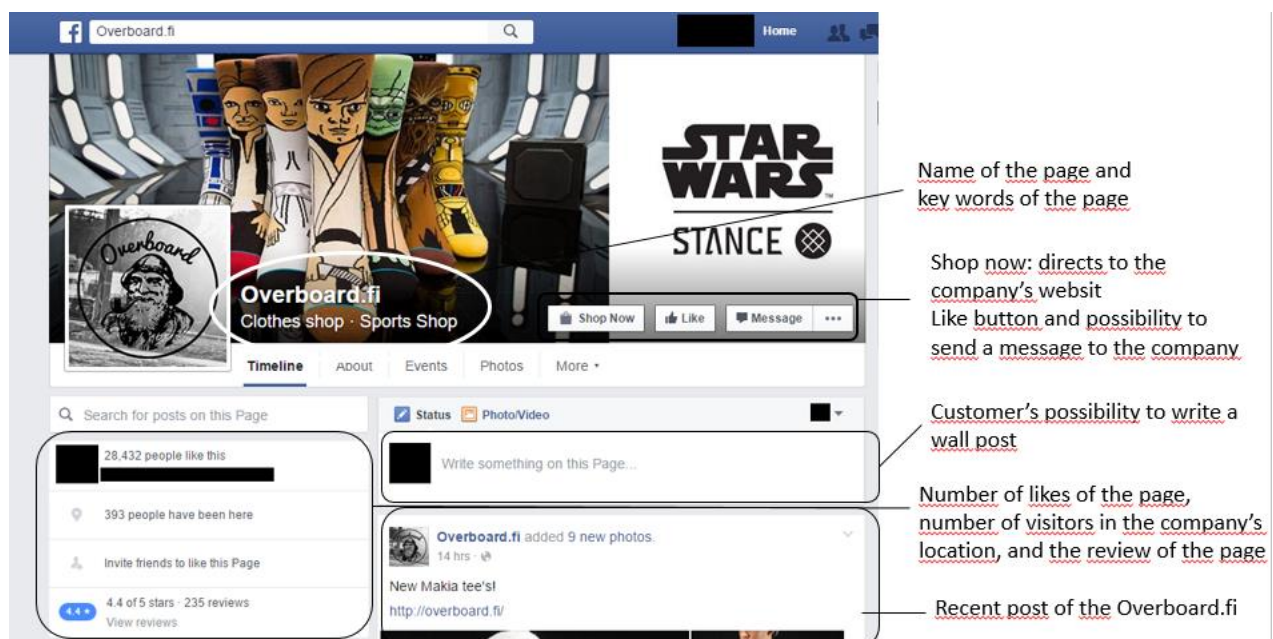


Figure 1. Screenshot from Overboard.fi's Facebook page to demonstrate company's Facebook page

The layout of company's public Facebook page can be seen on figure 1. Top of the view is the search bar and below it is the place for cover photo, which the company can choose itself. There is also possibility to use straight link to the company's website by using the "shop now"-button, which is next to the "like"-button and "message"-button. Information

about how many followers the page has, and what is the rate of the company, can be seen on the left side of the page. Users can rate the company by giving stars and comment. The consumer can write a comment straight to the company's page and it is called as a wall post, below the comment box is all the posts posted by the company.

Facebook is very good channel to use for marketing, because it has so many active users and it reaches plenty of people, but the minus side is that the posts do not appear to everyone's wall always.

### **2.1.2 Instagram**

Instagram is the first social media platform developed for mobile phones (Miles 2014, XV). It has been launched in 2010 and acquired by Facebook on 2012 (Halligan & Shah. 2014, 94). Instagram can be fully used only via mobile phone or tablet, via computer it is only possible to see posts on Instagram, and like and comment those. Creating a post to Instagram from the computer is not possible.

Instagram is a social media application where the user can upload photos and share them to all Instagram users or only the followers, if the user uses private mode. User can snap a photo with his mobile phone or choose it from the camera roll, after that there is possibility to choose a filter to modify the photo, and then it is time to write the caption and put the right hashtags. Then the post is ready to be published. (Instagram, 2016.) Besides the photos, there can be shared short 15-second videos (Halligan & Shah. 2014, 94).

Hashtags are originally coming from Twitter, and after Twitter many social media platform have followed Twitter and started to use hashtags as well. Always when there is used hashtag in the caption it appears under that certain hashtag. Hashtag is marked with # sign, and originally Twitter user Chris Messina launched the idea of use of hashtag to categorize conversations. (Miles 2014, 27-28.)

Instagram is easy way to share moments on a photo format. On Instagram the user can follow other Instagram users, comment others' posts, like others' posts, and even regram others' posts. Regramming means posting a photo from another user's Instagram account to user's own account.

When using Instagram for business purposes it is vital to read the Terms of Service (TOS) and Privacy Policy documents to avoid misunderstandings which might lead to suspending or terminating from Instagram. These documents inform what is allowed to do on In-

stagram and what is not. These documents are updated over time, so it is important to check the TOS and Privacy Policy regularly. (Miles 2014, 15.)

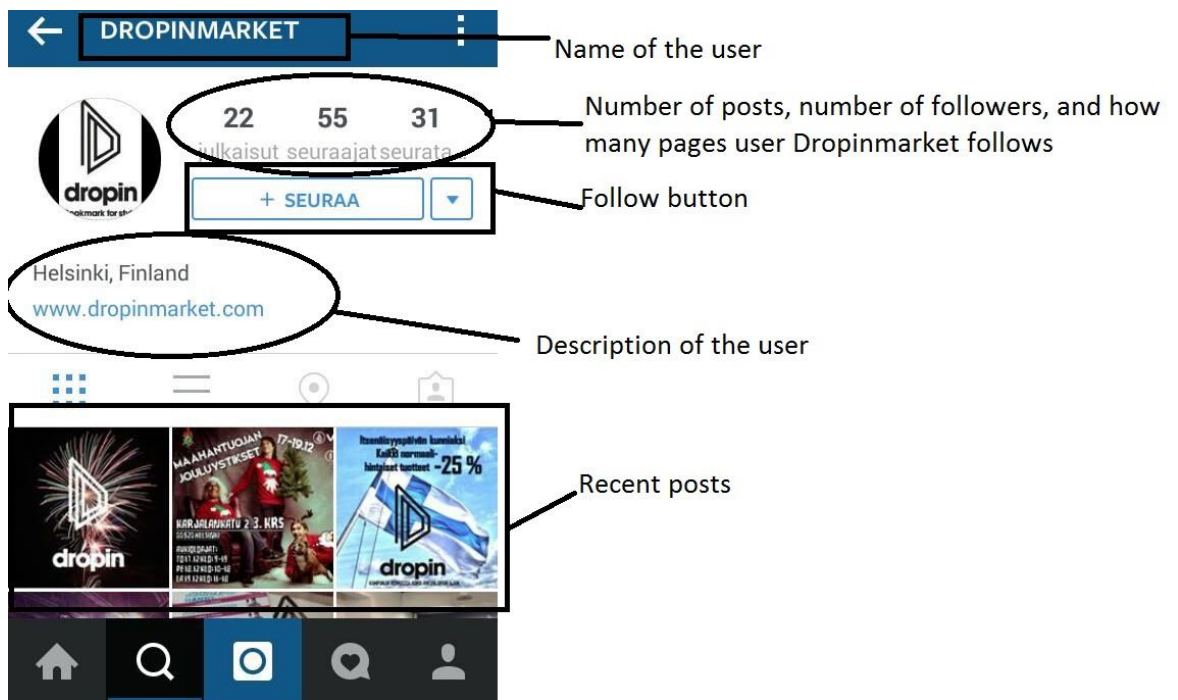


Figure 2. Screenshot from Dropinmarket's Instagram account's main page

The layout of Dropinmarket's Instagram account can be seen from the figure 2, the layout is similar for all Instagram accounts. It includes all the basic information, number of posts, number of followers, and number of how many pages the user Dropinmarket follows on Instagram. The three latest posts are visible and the information what the user has written about itself is above the posts. The description box of the account is called bio.

On Instagram it is not possible to add straight links to a comment or the caption. It is only possible to put the link to the bio. This is the reason why on the caption can be seen a phrase "link on the bio". This might be changing in the future, but at least for now it is not possible.

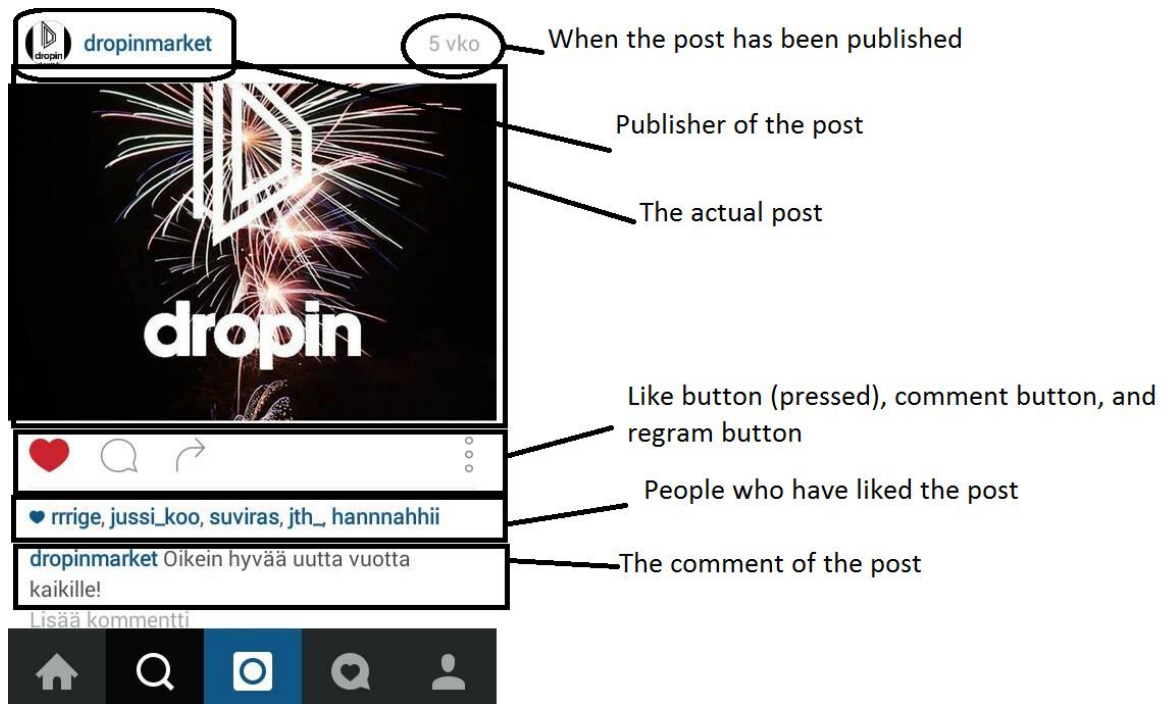


Figure 3. Screenshot from an Instagram post on a newsfeed

The layout of an Instagram post can be seen from the figure 3, it is a screenshot taken from an Instagram post, which is visible on newsfeed, on mobile version. The posts shows when the post has been published and who has published it. Below the picture the tools are available: like, comment and regram. There can be also see how many likes the picture has received and the capture of the post, and possible other comments as well.

Usage of Instagram is pretty simple and to get users engage to the post is not that difficult, engagement does not require as much social interaction as Facebook because on Instagram the primary social engagement is to like an image. (Miles, J. 2014, 44.) Instagram users do not grave for conversation, they want photos which attract them to press like. The challenge of Instagram is to be different, and to be seen from the mass, and to use the right hashtags to maximize the visibility.

### 2.1.3 Twitter

Twitter is an online micro blog service founded in 2006. On Twitter people can send messages which are 140-character long and the message is called as a “tweet”. To send tweets registration is needed, only to read the messages there is no need for registration. Twitter can be used from mobile phone, tablet, or computer. (Enbuske & Stubb, 2014.)

On Twitter people use plenty of hashtags to define the topic of the tweet. The certain hashtag shows all the tweets which have used the hashtag. To have a conversation on

Twitter it needs usage of @-character and the username of conversation partner. Anyone can follow anyone and join the conversation on Twitter. (Enbuske & Stubb 2014.)

The benefit of Twitter is that is quick and the messages are not long, but the challenge is that on Twitter is very different to do marketing than other channels and it requires effort to do marketing via Twitter.

#### **2.1.4 YouTube**

YouTube has been founded in May in 2005, it is a channel where users can search, watch and share videos done by the users. On YouTube the videos can be rated as well.

YouTube is owned by Google. There are over billion YouTube users, watching every day hundreds of millions of hours on YouTube. Over billion users means almost a third of all people on the Internet. (YouTube, 2016.)

The challenge of using YouTube on marketing is that the video needs to be done carefully and it requires time to accomplish the video. It does not require huge budget, but time and knowledge how to use video editors it requires. Then again the benefit of using video on marketing is that well done it can be very impressive and memorable. It is different to publish a video on YouTube than on Instagram, because people do not expect that good quality on Instagram than on YouTube.

#### **2.1.5 Snapchat**

Snapchat is a mobile-app, launched in 2011, allowing the users to send videos and photos. After a couple seconds of watching, the material will be self-destructed. There can be added captions or doodles to the photos or videos. The material can be send straight to a friend or it can be added to the user's own "story", which is a 24-hour collection of the user's material. It can be shown to everyone or just for the followers. The videos and photos are called snaps, the maximum time to view the snap is 10 seconds and then it will disappear. (Better 2015.)

The users of Snapchat are called Snapchatters, and according to Snapchat (2016) there are over 100 million active users daily, and the number is still growing. All in all there is watched every day over 7 billion views on Snapchat (Snapchat 2016).

The challenge to use Snapchat on marketing is that it is quite new marketing channel to companies and it is not that common app to everyone. There cannot be shared any discount codes or information which needs to be remembered because after watching the

video or the photo, the material will be destroyed, and it might be bit tricky to for example remember such an offer code. The benefit of Snapchat is that most of the users are young people, which helps the company to find their young audience. With Snapchat the company can also give more humane vision of the company to the consumers, because the snaps are instant moments, perfect for sharing for example behind the scenes material.

### **2.1.6 Pinterest**

Pinterest is a tool for visual bookmarking, it helps the user to discover and save creative ideas. On Pinterest user can create “boards” which consist of “pins”, which are visual bookmarks. Boards can be secret, invite only, or public for anyone. (Pinterest, 2016.)

On Pinterest there is a home feed which is a collection about the pins from the boards, people and interest you follow, and there is as well as a couple promoted pins which Pinterest has picked to you according to your previous pins. On Pinterest is easy to search inspiring material by using the search tool by writing a word there or by using the category which interests the user. Use of Pinterest requires registration. (Pinterest, 2016).

Pinterest is good place to inspire and share for example outfit of the day sort of photos or product photos. The challenge of Pinterest is that younger audience do not use it very actively.

## **2.5 Choosing the right channel to reach the target audience**

To reach the target audience it is important to market where the target audience spends time, it is useless, and waste of money and time to market in a place where the target audience does not spend time. Of course first of all it is needed to define the target group and find the information about them. If there is no knowledge where the target audience is, it is possible to ask them. Picking a few people who represent the target audience and asking what they do online and where they spend time online. If the asking is not possible, there can be done marketing survey to find out where to do marketing. (Kortesuo 2014, 102.)

To reach the target audience it is vital also think about the posting time, when the target audience is online. According Kortesuo (2014, 37) young people are online mostly in the evening, around 21:00, and office workers around 11:00-12:00.

To choose the right channel it is vital to think the needs and the resources of the company and the target group of the audience. If the company is not capable to produce good quali-

ty videos, YouTube might not be the right place to do marketing. Or if the target group of the company is 50 to 70 year old ladies, they might not use Snapchat as actively as young people. On chapter 2.5 a couple different channels of social media are listed and the main idea is explained.

The company should also take into consideration how much time and effort it is ready to put on social media. If the company is not ready to spend many hours per week to do marketing on social media, then it is not wise to have 5 different social media platforms. Quality is more important than quantity.

### **3 Research methods**

This chapter introduces the approach of the research, how the data has been collected for the research, and how it has been analysed, how the research has been accomplished. At the last chapter the reliability and validity of the research has been discussed.

#### **3.1 Research approach**

This research is qualitative because it includes many questions, which cannot be answered with yes or no question, or with a number. There are also quantitative elements which come from questions such as how many followers company has on Facebook and Instagram, and how many likes there are on a post, and number of posts which have gained comments. These questions refer to quantitative research, with the intention that there are used numbers and detachment which both methods are related to quantitative research (Daymon & Holloway 2016, 12). Quantitative elements are in a minor role, thus the research is qualitative.

The purpose of the qualitative research is to increase awareness, give meanings to things, allow different interpretations, and produce simulations of things (Pitkäranta, 2014, 13). This refers to the point that the aim of this thesis is to increase Dropinmarket's awareness about social media and how they should use it in their marketing. One of the key methods used in qualitative research is lush description (Daymond & Holloway 2016, 12), and this method is used in when answering the question what kind of posts the company has posted to its Facebook and Instagram accounts.

#### **3.2 Data collection and analysis**

The research material is collected from time period 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2016, thus the data collection period is three months, all in all 92 days. The data collection period is enough long to get sufficient amount of data to analyse and give recommendations to Dropinmarket. Longer time period might increase the amount of data too much, and make it difficult to analyse.

Data is collected from selected companies' public Instagram and Facebook accounts. These certain channels are used because all of the companies use selected channels and these channels are very popular in Finland. Facebook and Instagram are chosen as well because Facebook acquired Instagram on 2012 (Miles 2014, 42). Acquisition will encourage Facebook to offer better integration possibilities between Facebook and Instagram, and the use of both channels together will be more flawless.

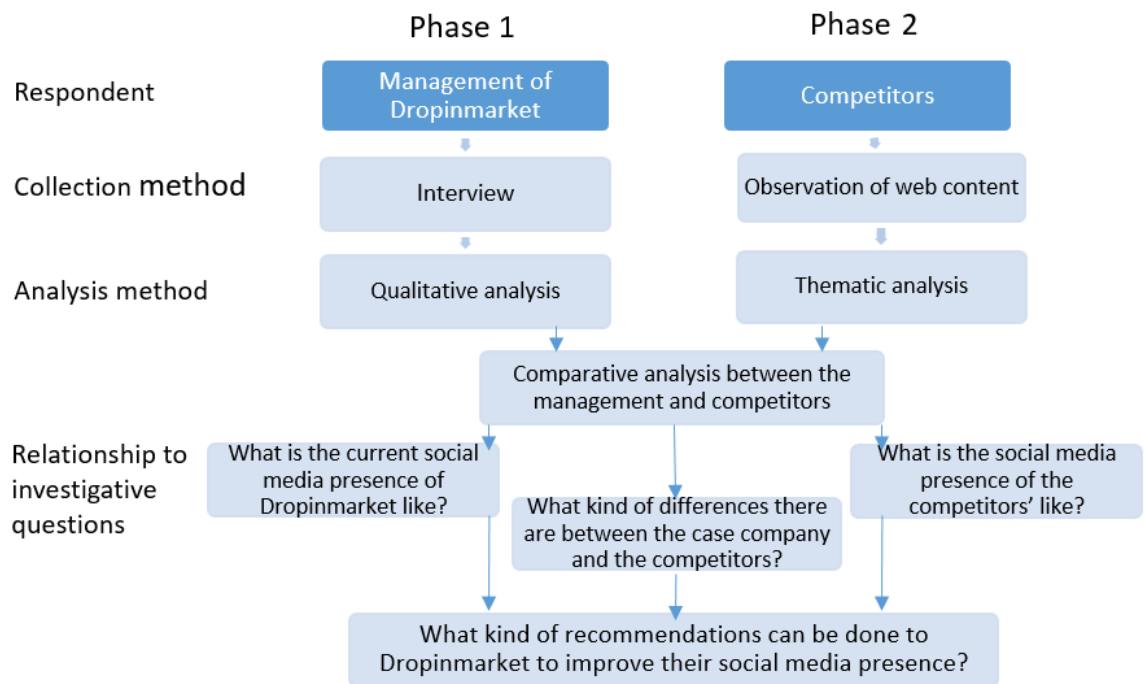


Figure 4. Research approach

Research process of the thesis is presented on the figure 4. At the first phase there was interview with the management of Dropinmarket to understand their social media usage and the aim of it, and what are their future plans for social media. The interview was done to understand what are the future goals of Dropinmarket, and based on the goals the final recommendations were given. The answers of the interview were analysed by qualitative analysis.

On phase two the competitors' social media channels were observed and analysed. Based on both phases analysis results, the comparison between the case company and the competitors were done. The comparison were done based on the findings about what is the current social media presence of Dropinmarket like and what is the current social media presence of the competitors' like? Comparing the results from these two questions, there can be found differences between the companies. After all these observations and comparison, there can be given recommendations to Dropinmarket to improve their social media presence.

From Lamina there has been chosen their Laminafi Instagram and Facebook account due it is more comparable to Dropinmarket than the Lamina Instagram and Facebook account, because Laminafi is a specific account to the company's online store. Other companies had, except Junkyard, only one channel to the store. Junkyard has Facebook pages for certain countries, such as Junkyard.fi for Finnish followers but in this thesis there has

been used the main page Junkyard to collect the data. This has been done to get the international aspect. From Dropinmarket there has been investigated their Facebook page Dropin and Instagram account dropinmarket.

Analysis is made based on the questions which are used to investigate each of the company's Facebook and Instagram account.

### **3.3 Reliability and validity**

To make sure that the research is as reliable and valid as possible, the research has been planned carefully, and the data collection process has been systematic, and the collection has done with care. Same questions have been used to investigate each company. The data has been collected from same sources for every company, only Facebook and Instagram accounts have been used to produce as reliable information as possible.

Dropinmarket accepted the chosen companies before starting the research. The companies are chosen due the similarity of the case company, to offer useful data.

Of course it is vital to take into consideration that the company can easily delete its posts, comments from the posts, and on Facebook the wall posts can be easily deleted without anyone noticing. That might effect on reliability of the results. For example one of the case companies had Christmas calendar on their Facebook page, every day during the December till the Christmas the company had a competition to its customers. They had interactive content to its customers. Now there is no sign of the competition on their Facebook page. Also there cannot be known if any of the companies has deleted negative wall posts from their Facebook page.

#### 4 Results from social media presence from selected companies

This chapter focuses on the investigation of the companies. Above the table presents the numbers of followers on both channels, Instagram and Facebook, and tells if the company uses newsletter, and what other social media channels the company is using.

Table 1. Information about companies' social media channels and the number of followers on Facebook and Instagram. The data has been collected on 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2016.

Company	Facebook	Number of followers	Instagram	Number of followers	Newsletter	Other social media
Overboard.fi	✘	28,285	✘	2,808	✘	
Junkyard.com	✘	20,814	✘	49,500	✘	
Ponke's the Shop	✘	14,968	✘	15,200	✘	YouTube
Lamina	✘	20,621	✘	4,822		Vimeo, Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest, YouTube, Google+
Dropinmarket	✘	35,087	✘	56	✘	Vimeo

The number of followers of each company on Instagram and Facebook, also other social media channels used are listed on table 1. The number of followers for each channel and each company has been collected on a same date. From the table 2 can be seen that all companies use Facebook and Instagram, and Lamina is the only company who does not have a newsletter.

##### 4.1 Current social media presence of the case company

To understand better the current situation of Dropinmarket's social media presence, there were done interview with Jussi Koskiniemi, product manager of the company. Besides the interview the same research was done to the case company as well to the competitors.

Koskiniemi told that Dropinmarket uses Facebook, Instagram and newsletter to inform their customer and market their products. Facebook and Instagram are chosen because both channels are easy to use and they reach their customers well via these channels. Also when they published these channels, these were the most popular ones and it was natural to select these channels. Nowadays they have a plenty of followers gained during

the years of presence on Facebook and it is easy way to communicate to them. (Koskiniemi, 2016.)

Dropinmarket's aim on social media is to create bigger sales and get more visibility. Due their store was closed for a while a year ago, they still receive messages that customers did not know that they have opened the store again. Besides the bigger sales the aim is to let people know that the store is running again, which would lead bigger sales. (Koskiniemi, 2016.)

Dropinmarket does not have a plan to follow to produce content to their social media channels, because they do not have enough routines on their marketing. Their marketing attitude is more like "what shall we do today" than planning carefully. They also lack resources to produce plenty of different content. They aim to produce content which is easy to do alone from the office, which does not require a plenty of effort. One challenge is also that Koskiniemi does most of the things alone, and it might be tricky to be creative sometimes, and create plenty of different campaigns and posts. (Koskiniemi, 2016.)

Their style on both channels is mostly to introduce different products and campaigns, because according to Koskiniemi it is the easiest way to tell about the products. Other reason is above mentioned fact that Koskiniemi creates and produces all posts by himself, and does not have big resources to use. (Koskiniemi, 2016.)

In the future they do not plan to use new social media channel, but they would like to improve their usage of social media, and are waiting for the recommendations what this thesis can offer. In case there will be a new and very popular social media channel which is "channel to be", they are willing to enter there. They were also interested in to hear more about planning the content to their social media channels. (Koskiniemi, 2016.)

Table 2. Data about Dropinmarket's Facebook and Instagram usage

	Facebook	Instagram
How many posts	32	3
What kind of posts	Campaign, product photos, plain text, profile picture update, event	Event, current topic, campaign
Customer service	No	-
Interaction	No	No
Comments, likes, shares	Max likes 38, min likes 0 Comments on 2 posts Shares on 5 posts	Max likes 5, min likes 3
Same content	Yes	

Dropinmarket uses Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and Pinterest, most actively Facebook and Instagram. On Twitter there are headlines of the posts published on Facebook, but it has not been used otherwise. On Facebook Dropinmarket has over ten times more posts on Facebook than on Instagram, and that can be seen as well on follower numbers.

Dropinmarket uses exactly the same content on both channels, same photos and same sort of a text. The posts can be divided into categories such as campaign, product advertisement, event, current topic, plain text, and on Facebook there are few photo updates, such as updated profile picture and cover photo. Posts include humorous elements, such as on sixth of November 2015, Finnish Swedish heritage day, there has been posted a photo where is king of Sweden, Carl XVI Gustav, wearing yellow Volcom hoodie and yellow White Moment beanie and it says "congrats Sweden, 2 yellow products on sale...".

There is not at all interaction on posts which would encourage the followers to participate or comment. All in all there is not even that much action happening on either channel, on Instagram biggest number of likes is 5 and smallest number is 3, and no comments at all. On Facebook then again number of likes vary from 0 to 38, and comments are on two posts out of 32. Five of the posts have been shared.

Customer service cannot be analysed from Instagram because there is no any comments or questions on the posts. On Facebook there has not published any wall posts, but on comments there is one question on a post which have not been answered.

## 4.2 Social media presence of the competitors'

Social media presence of each competitor has been discussed each separately, every company in different subchapter.

### 4.1.1 Overboard

Overboard is Finnish company, founded in 2002. Overboard sells skateboards and street style clothes for men and boys online. (Overboard.fi, 2016.)

Table 3. Data about Overboard's Instagram and Facebook usage

	Facebook	Instagram
How many posts	29	86
What kind of posts	Humour, advertising a product, skateboarding video, profile picture update, plain text, campaign	Humour, advertising a product, atmospheric, skateboarding video, event, campaign, current topic
Customer service	Yes	Yes
Interaction	No	No
Comments, likes, shares	Max likes 356, min likes 1 Comments on 3 posts Shares on 2 posts	Max likes 593, min likes 95 Comments on 34 posts
Same content	Yes and no	

Overboard uses Facebook, Instagram, and newsletter and according to their Facebook page, Overboard has Pinterest account as well, but it is not mentioned on their webpage. Pinterest is not used actively. As above on the table 3 are listed, on Facebook Overboard has ten times more followers than on Instagram. But when comparing the number of posts we can clearly see that on Instagram Overboard is much more active than on Facebook.

On Instagram Overboard posts approximately 6 times a week and usually one post per day. Hashtags are not used much and the most common hashtag is #overboardfi, and according to Lee (2014) hashtags help company maximize their visibility. Posts can be divided into different categories: current topics, humour, advertisement, campaign, events, inspiration, and atmospheric photos and videos. Same categories are used on both channels. In current topic posts on Instagram I would include recent posts about David Bowie's death, attacks in Paris in 2015, and World Junior Hockey Championship in 2016. On Facebook current topics are not that common as on Overboard's Instagram but for example World Junior Hockey Championship in 2016 had its own post. On both channels current

topic is often combined with a campaign. Such as during the Father's day, on 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, there was a same post on both channels. There was a photo which congratulated fathers by saying "happy Father's day" and the caption said at "For Father's day all products -20 %". Overboard uses plenty of humour on its posts as can be seen from the figure 5 there has been used humorous elements to campaign Overboard's sales. But there are as well posts which have been posted only in sense of humour.

On campaign posts Overboard uses humour and text on photo. Really good example can be seen from the figure 5 which purpose is to advertise Overboard's sales on Christmas time. To the photo has been infiltrated Overboard's trademark, the beer can with Overboard text on it.



Figure 5. Screenshot from Overboardfi's Instagram account on 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2015

On both channels Overboard posts also atmospheric and inspiration photos and videos. Photos can be taken from a Christmas tree at Christmas time or skate video clips. The purpose of these posts is to inspire, and encourage to try a new skate trick.

Overboard uses both channels, Facebook and Instagram, to advertise its products as well. There are plenty of product photos, all are not taken by Overboard and are available for all retailers of the product. All product photos which are taken by Overboard are very good quality and clear, there has been used time and effort to take the photos. On Insta-

gram Overboard advertises events as well, such as skate movie premiers, skateboarding events, and snowboarding movie events.

On Facebook Overboard posts more seldom than on Instagram and 27 posts out of 29 includes photos. But even most of the posts are including photos, the same photo is not always used on both channels. There are often same sort of a content on both channels but not same photo, or if there has been posted the same photo on both channels, the posting date can differ from other channel. When posting product photos on Facebook there often appears to be plenty of photos on a same post, but on Instagram there is only one photo of the same session.

There is no any interaction between Overboard and the followers, such as posts which would ask followers' opinion or encourage them to share their opinion. There is no any competitions. This might be one reason why there is not that much commenting on either channel, on Instagram there is comments on 34 posts out of 86 posts, only 40 % of the posts on Instagram have been able to get comments. And on Facebook only 3 posts out of 29 posts have received comments and 2 of the posts are shared. Likes there are on every post, on Facebook there is always at least 1 like and the biggest number of likes is 365, which is not many when we take into consideration that the Facebook page has over 20,000 followers. On Instagram the smallest amount of likes is 95 and the biggest amount of likes is 593, which is pretty well compared to the amount of Facebook likes because on Instagram Overboard has 2,808 followers, so in that case the post has collected a like from 21 % of the followers.

Customer service is done well on both channels, customers' questions have been answered and posts on the Overboard's Facebook wall have received a like in case of there has not been a question. Only one person has not received an answer on Overboard's Facebook wall.

#### **4.1.2 Junkyard**

Junkyard has started in 2002 as a little skateboarding shop in Sweden and nowadays it is the biggest urban and streetwear clothing online store operating in Nordic countries (Junkyard, 2016).

Table 4. Data about Junkyard's Facebook and Instagram usage

	Facebook	Instagram
How many posts	27	144
What kind of posts	campaign, product advertisement	campaign, product advertisement, current topic, competition, atmospheric,
Customer service	Yes	Yes and no
Interaction	No	Yes
Comments, likes, shares	Max likes 101, min likes 0 Shares on 5 posts Comments on 3 posts	Max likes 2,339, min likes 503 Comments on 136 posts
Same content	Yes and no	

During the 92 days data collection period, Junkyard has posted entirely 144 posts on Instagram and 27 posts on Facebook. This means that on Instagram they posted over 1,5 posts per day and over five times more often to Instagram than on Facebook. Their activity might result from the fact that on Facebook they had 20,814 followers, and on Instagram the number has doubled, they have 49,500 followers.

Junkyard's most of the posts are product advertisement, either they have given products for a known person and they are regramming the post when the known person wears the product, or a model is wearing the product. Some of the posts do not include any person, and the product is presented alone. The photos are very cool and clean, and even distance. There is not that much humour used on posts.

On Facebook 7 posts were exactly the same as on Instagram, 6 out of the 27 posts were the same posts but with a different picture than on Instagram, and rest of the posts were completely different than published on Instagram. Junkyard uses diversely its channels and does not repeat itself in every channel, which hooks its customer to follow it on both channels.

Junkyard had a competition on 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2015 on Instagram. The competition required two things: tagging a friend to the post and following certain Instagram accounts which were @junkyard and @somewearsandfriends, which was the company whose product was as a reward of the competition. The competition post gathered all in all 341 comments, and only 3 of the comments were not participating to the competition. It was easy way to collect followers for both channels.

Every post on Instagram include hashtags or both, hashtags and tagging. Hashtags are often used many, not only one or two. The most common hashtag used is #junkyardcom, and very often as well #junkyardstyle. This shows that they have created their own hashtag.

On Facebook the posts do not create that much buzz, biggest like amount is 101 and smallest is 1, 4 of the posts have been shared, and 3 of the post have been commented. But the amount of wall posts is big compared to other actions, all in all 11 wall posts, 10 of those were questions, and Junkyard has answered to all of them. One of the wall posts was a message to thank for and Junkyard has liked it.

On Instagram the smallest amount of likes on a post is 507 and then again the biggest number is 2,339. All in all 136 posts gathered comments or at least one comment, which is very high percent even though the content is not very interactive.



Figure 6. Screenshot from Junkyardcom's Instagram post on 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2016

Example from Junkyardcom's Instagram post can be seen on figure 6. The caption says: "@kingstolas wearing Perfect Bomber by #junkyardxxxxy. Now restocked! #junkyardstyle #bomberjacket #utility". In this case the Junkyard and @kingstolas have perhaps created a deal. Junkyardcom gives that jacket for @kingstolas, and he gives social media visibility for that jacket and the company. This post is at the same time inspiring and marketing, it is telling the perfect name of the jacket and where it can be found. More hashtags could

have been used to maximize the visibility of the post, and 2 out of 4 hashtags are company's own hashtags.

#### 4.1.3 Ponke's the Shop

Ponke's the Shop has been founded in 1990 in Finland and it is the most long-lived shop specializing to skateboarding. It operates online and has two stores, one in Forum, in Helsinki and one in Jumbo, in Vantaa. (Ponke's the Shop, 2016.)

Table 5. Data about Ponke's the shop's Facebook and Instagram usage

	Facebook	Instagram
How many followers	14,968	15,200
How many posts	16	120
What kind of posts	Advertising, atmospheric, skateboard video, event, plain text, humour	Advertising, atmospheric, skateboard video, campaign, event
Customer service	-	Yes and no
Interaction	No	No
Comments, likes, shares	Max likes 39, min likes 0 No comments 2 shares on posts	Max likes 1,463, min likes 754 Comments on 90 posts
Same content	yes and no	

Ponke's the Shop uses Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube from social media channels. It uses Instagram much more actively than Facebook, as we can see that it has posted only 16 times on Facebook as at the same time it has been posted to Instagram 120 times, which is over seven times more. It also means that due the research period was 92 days, it is more than a one post per day.

The content of the channels is quite similar, both channels include promotion photos and advertisement pictures, which advertise products or the opening hours of the shops. On both channels can be found skateboard videos, and event advertisements. On Facebook there is also plain text post, which is focused on customer service. It is about reaching a customer who has been looking for a certain shirt and the post announces that the shirt can be found from the store on certain size. On Facebook there is one humour post as well.

From Instagram account can be found also atmospheric posts, and campaign posts, such as if you buy a jacket you will get a beanie for free. The biggest category on both channels is marketing post of a product, often including the text about the product and sometimes even the price have been added.

Ponke's the Shop has used the same photo on both channels 7 times out of all 16 Facebook posts, but twice they had the same message delivered with a different photo. On Facebook there was all in all 7 post which were not at all on Instagram, which supports the fact that the content on Facebook and on Instagram is pretty different, not completely but there are differences which is really positive thing and encourages people to follow both channels. Ponke's the shop has not only used still photos to market their products and opening hours, they have used as well short videos. All the marketing photos have been taken by themselves.

Content which would encourage people to participate and comment does not exist, but if we look at that there have been commented 90 posts out of 120 posts on Instagram, interactive content is not required. Only once there has been used a question on post on Instagram which would have encouraged followers to comment. There has not been any competitions either.

On Facebook they do not have that much activities all in all, the posts on Facebook during the data analysis time have not collected any comments, there was 2 posts shared once and the number of likes vary from 0 to 39. Then again on Instagram where Ponke's the Shop is remarkably more active and there they have more active followers as well. 90 posts out of 120 have collected comments and each post have gained likes, number of likes varies between from 754 to 1463.

Hashtags are used on posts and only 23 posts are done so that there is no hashtag or any person tagged to the post. But there is very often quite same hashtags used such as #ponkes. Customer service cannot be evaluate from Facebook due there was no wall posts posted during the data collection period. But on Instagram there occurred all in all 39 questions and only 12 had been answered, which is less than a third of the questions.

#### **4.1.4 Lamina**

Lamina is skateboarding shop, selling clothes and products related to skateboarding and it has been founded in 1997 in Finland. Lamina operates online and it has one store in Kamppi, in Helsinki. (Lamina, 2016.)

Table 6. Information about Laminafi's Facebook and Instagram accounts

	Facebook	Instagram
How many posts	81	82
What kind of posts	skateboarding video, atmospheric, committing, campaign, information, teaching video, product advertisement	skateboarding video, atmospheric, committing, campaign, information, teaching video, product advertisement
Customer service	yes	yes
Interaction	yes	yes
Comments, likes, shares	Max likes 132, min likes 0 Shares 19 on posts Comments on 9 posts	Max likes 522, min likes 240 Comments on 47 posts
Same content	yes and no	

Lamina uses multiple different social media channels: Instagram, Facebook, Vimeo, Pinterest, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, and Tumblr. It is only company of this research which does not have a newsletter.

Laminafi has posted all in all 81 posts on Facebook and 82 posts on Instagram during the data collection period, 25 of those posts are exactly the same on both channels, except a few of the posts has been published on different day on different channel. Otherwise the content is not the same, even though the categories of the posts are similar. Laminafi has posted approximately 6 times a week on both channels. Laminafi has not used only still photos on posts, on Facebook there has been posted videos and GIFs, and on Instagram there are videos used as well.

On Facebook Laminafi has posted skateboard videos, campaigns, product advertisements, and information posts. Even when there has been posted a skateboard video, very often it still contains a market link. For example there has been posted a skateboard video on 27<sup>th</sup> of January, and as a caption of the post there has been told that the skateboarder is called Jappe and now you can find skateboard decks starting from 27 euros from the webstore and the link to the webstore attached. From the video cannot be seen the brand of the skateboard deck, and perhaps it has not been done originally for marketing purposes, but after the text and the link someone might have got inspiration about it and bought a skateboard deck. On Instagram there has been used same elements as well, even if the post is a skateboarding video, the text can include information about the shop opening

times or include information about when the order needs to be done to receive it before the Christmas.

Laminafi informs their customers very well, for example in Finland post and logistics union arranged a strike on November 2015, and Laminafi has created a post to its both channels about it. On the post they inform that postal services do not work properly, but to receive the order the customer can use services of Matkahuolto or pick up the package from their store, which is located in Kamppi. This post can be seen from figure 7. The customer has been taken into consideration as well before the Christmas, when they shared products to their customers. On both channels can be found videos where they tell that every day until Christmas they add extra products to one lucky customer's package once a day.

All in all the atmosphere of both channels is warm and welcoming, there are as well teaching videos such as how to put the grip to the skateboard deck. They inform their customers very well and they treat their customer well on both channels. All in all there was 12 questions on posts on Instagram and two of those were without an answer. On Facebook there was a one wall post and Laminafi had answered on that.

On Instagram Laminafi arranged a competition, the participation was simple: share and tag. Participant needed to share a certain picture on their own Instagram account and tag it with certain hashtag and Instagram users. With the needed hashtag #LaminaSourArvonta can be found all in all 41 posts from Instagram.

Posts on Instagram do not include hashtags that much but Laminafi has used more tags. It has tagged often a person or the brand to the post. All in all 53 posts included tag to other Instagram user and 14 posts included both, a hashtag and a tag to other Instagram user. Left 14 posts did not include any tag or hashtag. The most common used tag was @laminakamppi.

Each post on Instagram has collected likes and the smallest amount of likes is 240, and the biggest amount of likes is 522. All in all 47 posts has collected comments on Instagram. Then again the Facebook posts do not collect likes and comments as actively as Instagram posts, the biggest number of likes on a post is 132 and the minimum is 0 likes. 7 posts has collected comments but contrarily there has been shared 19 posts all in all which a quite big amount of shares is.



Figure 7. Screenshot from Laminafi's post on 19<sup>th</sup> of November

One example post from Laminafi's Instagram account shows very good example of good customer service. This post has been categorized into information post category. On November in Finland post and logistic service union arranged a strike, which impacted on postal services in Finland. In this post Laminafi explains that the post packages might be late due the strike, but it is possible to pick up the packages from their store, or use services of Matkahuolto. This shows that the customer is taken care and explained what is going on, why the packages might be late. Also they market their store at a same time, where it is located and why the customer should visit there.

#### 4.3 Differences between the case company and the competitors

All of the five companies post quite similar posts to Facebook and Instagram, which can be categorized easily. All of the companies use these channels for same purposes: to market their products, their shop, and their services. Biggest difference between the case company and the competitors is that Dropinmarket uses Facebook more actively than Instagram, and it is only one doing this way. Laminafi has used Facebook almost as much as Instagram, but Laminafi has all in all been more active on both channels than Dropinmarket.

Ponke's the Shop and Overboard have pretty similar style to use Facebook and Instagram, Ponke's the Shop uses it maybe more human closely than Overboard. Then again Overboard and Laminafi has similar style, and are linked in a way together. Junkyard differs very much from others with its touch to social media, its all photos are very clean and distant. It has used bloggers or other social media celebrities to market its products.

Big difference between the Finnish companies' and Junkyard is the style how the posts have been presented. Finnish companies use much more humour on their posts than Junkyard, as above mentioned Junkyard has more distant and clean touch to its social media than the others have.

Of course because the number of posts of Dropinmarket is very limited on both channels, the number of different categories is not that high. But even though Junkyard has multiple posts on both channels the number of different types of posts is still more limited compared to Dropinmarket. Apparently it satisfies the followers of Junkyard, because it has most followers on Instagram and it has most commenting and liking as well on Instagram.

Any of the companies do not use hashtags on Instagram as much as they could, but few of those has created an own hashtag, such as #junkyardstyle and #overboardfi, and Dropinmarket has not used hashtags at all on its posts.

Level of interaction with customers on any channel is very limited on every company. Only company who has been used interaction on Facebook and Instagram is Laminafi. Junkyard had one competition on Instagram, but otherwise the interaction is very limited on all companies.

Dropinmarket has neglected the value of customer service on Facebook, on Instagram there has not been any comments to respond. Other companies, such as Laminafi has done well with the answering and reacting to customers' comments. Other competitors have answered quite well, but not in every case.

All of the competitors use the same content on both channels sometimes, all of the posts on both channels are not the same, but part of the posts are. Dropinmarket is the only company who has used same posts on Instagram and Facebook in every case.

## 5 Discussion

Final chapter of this thesis covers the key findings of the research, and key findings have been pointed out. Based on the observations and key results, the recommendations to Dropinmarket have been given. The aim of the recommendations is to inspire and motivate Dropinmarket to activate their social media usage. To support that there can be found an example plan for May. Validity and reliability are discussed and analysed as well, and finally the reflection on learning has been written.

As a key result it can be said that the social media usage of Dropinmarket is poor compared to other companies. They post less actively than others, and their content is less diverse than other companies', also the content on both channels is always the same. Dropinmarket does not even use hashtags on Instagram. These facts might affect the fact that Dropinmarket is not doing so well compared to others.

When considering the use of humour in posts, there can be clearly seen that Finnish companies use it more, and sometimes the jokes on the posts can be understood only by a limited group of people. Junkyard has very clean and distant touch to its posts and it can be explained with the fact that they are the biggest company measured by the number of followers on both channels. They have so many followers that they cannot post inside jokes and very humorous posts to avoid resentment among the followers. Also other companies have more segmented target group which allows them to post very humorous posts.

Junkyard's revenue in 12/2014 was 205,583 tkr (allabolag.se), which is approximately over 22 m€. Other companies' revenue was not that easy to find out, due all the stores have separate revenue sheet for each store and the revenue from web shop was not available from every store. But the revenues varied approximately between 0,4-2 m€ (finder.fi), which means that Junkyard is also biggest in revenue, which allows them to use studio, models, and bloggers in their marketing. This can be seen clearly when comparing the content on companies' social media channels. Junkyard had more professional photos posted, than the other companies.

As another key result can be said as well that the level of interaction with followers is very limited, and there is such an easy and simple things to do so that the level of interaction would be higher. Companies do not encourage and activate their followers much to comment, share or like the posts. Level of interaction could be added easily by adding a ques-

tion to a post, such as asking the follower's opinion about a certain products, "which one you would choose?" or when posting an event advertisement, and asking who is going to participate.

Companies could use much more hashtags than they are using now. Use of Instagram is very common for companies, they do know how to post to Instagram, but doing marketing and using the channel as effective as possible is still bit clumsy.

As a recommendation to Dropinmarket, it should first of all create a plan when, where and what to post on their social media channels. On the plan Dropinmarket should take into consideration when there is most of their followers online, and the most common paydays in Finland. The plan would help to create the content beforehand and ease the fact that there is no need to think every day again how the working hours should be spent. The plan would include both channels and the posts would be coherent on both channels, not exactly the same posts but with similar content which would support the message of the company.

The plan should take into consideration the season and the events related to the products as well. For example in the end of October, beginning of November there is organized BoardExpo, which is an annual fair focused on snowboarding and downhill skiing, and for example before Christmas it is good to remain customer when it is the last day to order so that the products will arrive for Christmas. Elements like that should be considered and marked to the plan.

Besides the plan Dropinmarket could improve their Instagram presence a lot, they have around 50 followers there, which is very small amount. To gain attention on Instagram Dropinmarket should use hashtags and possible even create an own hashtag. The hashtag would create visibility through customers' as well, when they would use it on their own posts if they have products ordered from Dropinmarket. On Facebook Dropinmarket could market that they can be found from Instagram.

From appendices there can be found example plan for May, Appendix 3. Social media calendar. The plan includes approximately 5 to 7 posts per week all in all for both channels. There is no need to post on every day because the resources are limited. Common paydays in Finland have been marked to the plan, the common paydays of Finland have been marked 15<sup>th</sup> of month and at the end of the month. On the plan there are two different campaigns, at the beginning of month is "all jeans -20 %" –campaign for a week and at the end of the month is "free delivery from Thursday to Sunday for all orders" –

campaign. The main events of the month, such as First of May and Mother's day have been marked, and a post for those days is planned. The green line marks the time period of the campaign, above the planned days, and paydays are marked with the red star.

Also competition on either channel, would create a little buzz around the channels. The competition could be type of a "among our Instagram followers we will raffle something" or on Instagram "share this post and use hashtag #dropincompetition and tag @dropinmarket". If the competition is on Instagram, it still can be marketed on Facebook and the other way around.

The content of both channels could be improved easily by using different posts. For example video, or atmospheric posts could be posted. From the products of Dropinmarket a teaching video is hard to create, but perhaps an atmospheric video. Dropinmarket could also consider to post behind the scenes type of photo, or current topic post, such as during the spring time there will be plenty of different events, Easter, First of May, ice hockey world championship and Eurovision song contest, just to mention few.

Nowadays there can be found plenty of different apps to smart phones for photo and video editing, these apps could serve Dropinmarket's need. Those apps are very often free of cost or only a few euros.

### **5.1 Validity and reliability**

These results are based completely on the observations of the companies' Facebook and Instagram accounts, and my own experiences of Facebook and Instagram. The results may suffer if any of the companies delete some material from their social media channels, and it immediately affects the number of posts and the content of the channel. The company can also delete anything, such as wall posts or comments, and this harms the result of the customer service.

The post categorizing is completely based on my opinion about the post and perhaps another reader would have categorized a certain post to another group. This needs to be taken into consideration when reading the results.

Social media is constantly changing and improving, channels are updating the tools and channels are changing. This needs to be taken into consideration when reading the facts about the social media channels. During the writing and research process the things were as mentioned on the text, but in a two years everything might be completely different.

## **5.2 Reflection on learning**

During the writing process of this thesis I have learnt a lot of about social media, how does it work and how it is used in marketing. All the read material has not been used in this thesis but it has helped to understand the bigger picture of the social media. Doing all the reading has inspired me to continue to learn more about social media. It was sometimes hard to find information about social media because it is such a new way to do marketing, and the information is changing and improving constantly.

Doing such a research alone has been an instructive experience, it requires lot of work and nerves. Going through all the companies' social media channels taught a lot of being a systematic, to go each post through and make the notes. Doing the research is not just going through the posts, it is also defining what kind of things I want to take into consideration when going through the posts, how long is the time period, and how much data is enough.

Because the aim of this thesis was to give recommendations how Dropinmarket can improve their use of social media, it was important to think what Dropinmarket wants. Such as which companies I should compare, and what kind of recommendations I can give based on their aims.

All in all the research has been interesting and teaching experience, it has taught me lot of about doing a research. Also the knowledge I have now about social media is much bigger than it was before this thesis.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1. Interview questions with Jussi Koskiniemi**

For what purposes Dropinmarket uses social media?

Which social media channels have you chosen, and why these certain channels?

What kind of content you publish on your social media channels, and why have you chosen that certain style?

Do you have a plan for producing content to your social media channels? If you do not have, why not?

What is the purpose and the aim of the company's social media presence?

What are the plans and goals for the use of social media in the future?

## Appendix 2. Companies' Facebook and Instagram accounts

Dropinmarket's Facebook and Instagram accounts, accessed 8.3.2016

Dropin, <https://www.facebook.com/dropinmarket/>

@Dropinmarket, <https://www.instagram.com/dropinmarket/>

Junkyard's Facebook and Instagram accounts, accessed 8.3.2016

Junkyard, <https://www.facebook.com/junkyard/>

@Junkyard.com, <https://www.instagram.com/junkyardcom/>

Lamina.fi's Facebook and Instagram accounts, accessed 8.3.2016

Lamina.fi, <https://www.facebook.com/laminafi/>

@Laminafi, <https://www.instagram.com/laminafi/>

Overboard's Facebook and Instagram accounts, accessed 8.3.2016

Overboard.fi, <https://www.facebook.com/overboardfi/>

@Overboardfi, <https://www.instagram.com/overboardfi/>

Ponke's the Shop's Facebook and Instagram accounts, accessed 8.3.2016

Ponke's The Shop, <https://www.facebook.com/PonkesTheShop/>

@Ponkestheshop, <https://www.instagram.com/ponkestheshop/>

### Appendix 3. Social media calendar for Dropinmarket

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
						1.5 Happy 1st of May, atmospheric post, FB&IG
2.5. Jeans campaign, jeans -20 %, IG&FB		Jeans post on FB	Ascension day/ Jeans post on IG	"Last change.." jeans post both IG&FB		
9.5. Cap post/ product photo IG&FB	Behind the scenes, IG		Product post, FB	★ Atmospheric post IG		Mother's Day! Atmospheric post, IG&FB
16.5. Outfit inspiration, IG	"We are on IG" – post, FB		Product photo / t-shirts, IG&FB		Product photo / spring jackets, FB	
23.5. Product photo / spring jackets, IG		Outfit inspiration, IG	Free delivery from Thu-Sun, IG&FB		Free delivery, IG&FB	
30.5. Atmospheric post, IG & FB	★ Outfit Inspiration, IG	★	= common pay day	IG= Instagram FB= Facebook		