



SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR AFRICAN HANDMADE ACCESSORIES COMPANY

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<p>This Research is about how an African handmade accessories company should have effective social media marketing, specifically for Facebook and Instagram. The case company social media presence is poor and minimal usage of it. The objective of the thesis is to provide successful social media marketing and through this, it improves sales, customer satisfaction and building social brand. The background of the thesis gives an introduction of the case company. Explanations of the key words are given. It also introduces the research scope of thesis which entails the research objectives and investigative questions.</p> <p>The theoretical framework enables the reader to have better understanding of how to use social media in marketing. The benefits and challenges of using social media are discussed. Choosing the right channel for the target audience and how to measure the success of social media marketing is discussed. Facebook and Instagram as part of the different social media platforms are explained in detail and how to use them for both personal and company use. The research method used was qualitative and benchmarking. Data was collected for duration of three months, summer 2016. The tables in chapter 5 clearly illustrate the Facebook and Instagram page of the competitors. The comparison show how often the two platforms are used by the companies, type of the content posted on the channels and examination of the consumers feedback.</p> <p>In conclusion, the differences between the competitors and case company are discussed. The findings show that the case company social media usage is low and inactive as to compare with the competitors. The recommendations based on the theoretical information, qualitative analysis and benchmarking give information to the case company on how to improve and have effective social media marketing.</p>	
Keywords Social media, Social media marketing, engagement, social brand, target audience	

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Structure of the thesis	2
2.2	Key concepts	2
3	Social media marketing	4
3.1	Marketing	4
3.2	Choosing the right channel for target audience	6
3.3	Social media as a channel of marketing and how to use it	7
3.4	A few social media platforms.....	11
3.5	Relevance and challenges of social media and social media marketing.....	16
3.6	Measuring the success of social media marketing	19
4	Research method.....	21
4.1	Research approach.....	21
4.2	Data collection and analysis.....	23
5	Results of social media presence in selected companies	25
5.1	Current social media profile of the case company	25
5.2	Survey results analysis	26
5.3	Social media profile of the competitors.....	27
5.3.1	Benchmarking Ankara accessories	27
5.3.2	Benchmarking Monnabbey.....	30
5.4	Differences between the social media profile of the case company and competitors	33
6	Discussion.....	34
6.1	Findings	34
6.2	Recommendations	35
6.3	Validity and reliability.....	36
6.4	Own learning Reflection	36
7	References.....	38
8	Appendices	41
8.1	Appendix 1. Qualitative interview questions	41
8.2	Appendix 2. Survey questionnaire.....	42
8.3	Appendix 3. An example of Social media calendar for Accessorize by Ziza and KPI's	44

1 Introduction

This thesis is a research done for commissioner “Accessorize by Ziza” .The Company was founded in 2014 by the owner in Helsinki. At the moment it is an online based which makes trendy handmade luxury accessories which are made from colourful unique patterns from durable African fabric at an affordable price. The main aim for doing the research with the commissioner was to improve and effectively use social media marketing. The company has minimal interaction on social media and thus low sale is made. Their target audience are young adults and people who are interested with African fabric accessories. The author chose the company because it is one of the interests in future entrepreneurship plans.

The research will major on benchmarking two companies. The case company social media presence will be analysed. The two companies were chosen because they both operate both online and store, sell the same products with the case company. The two companies also have more followers and posts on Facebook and Instagram pages. The author decided to have limited number of companies to make the research not complex and too wide. Facebook and Instagram were chosen because the case company will focus on the two only. Despite benchmarking, an interview with the owner of the case company will be done and a short survey to gather information on how consumers use social media and what they do on the various platforms.

This thesis will benefit both the author and the case company. Author will deepen the knowledge on social media marketing and how to effectively use social media. I will also gain experience from the research that I can apply to career life. Even though social media is growing and changing constantly. The case company will benefit by gaining much information on how competitors handle social media marketing. The recommendation at the end of the thesis gives clear outline of how it will effectively use social media marketing to improve sales, customer satisfaction and help them build social brand and brand awareness.

2 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of the following chapters, background information, theoretical part, research and data collection, results and discussion. Introduction part explains the scope of the background, aim of the thesis, research, outcome of the thesis and the key concepts are discussed. Theoretical background gives a deeper knowledge of marketing, choosing the right target audience, social media as a channel for marketing, discussion of few social media platforms how to use social media marketing, benefits and challenges of social media marketing, and measuring success of social media marketing. The empirical part analyses the current situation of the case company and competitors. The differences are outlined and a summary is explained at the end of the chapter. The last chapters will explain the findings and recommendations on effective social media marketing, also reflection of the learning goals will be discussed at the end.

2.1 Research scope

This thesis aims at answering how different fashion brands use social media to market and how the case company could improve and effectively use social media marketing. This thesis benefits the case company by deepening knowledge on social media marketing and based on the research, recommendations give various ways to improve on effective social media marketing... These are the investigative questions for the research. More detailed information will be discussed in chapter 3.

- 1) How does social media presence of case company look like?
- 2) How are social media presences of the competitors like?
- 3) The difference between the case company and the competitors
- 4) What are the recommendations for the case company?

2.2 Key concepts

The key concepts are social media, social media marketing, engagement, social brand, target audience.

Marketing- Described as “activity that entails set institutions processes for creating, delivering and exchanging ideas that have value to consumers and society”. (Cohen, 2011)

Social media-It is an application that enables users to create and exchange ideas through the internet and application based on technology. (Olin 2011)

Social media marketing- It entails increasing brand awareness and building customer relationships through social media platforms. (Foulger 2014)

Engagement- Engagement is the behaviour of consumers in an open social environment which is active. (Evans & McKee 2010, 2011)

Social brand- In this study its means the image of the brand portrayed on social media platforms. (Evans & McKee 2010, 2011)

Target audience- Target audience is the focused group of people on social media by a company/brand. (Evans & McKee 2010, 2011)

3 Social media marketing

The theory part will major in the definition of marketing, choosing the right channel for the target market, social media as a channel; how to use social media for marketing, definitions of a few social media platforms, relevance and challenges of social media and social media marketing and measuring the success of social media marketing will be discussed.

3.1 Marketing

Marketing entails dealing with customers, creating customer value and satisfaction as explained with the modern marketing practise. It can be defined also as management of profitable customer relationship with the aim of attracting new consumers and delivering satisfaction to the current consumers. Traditionally, marketing was viewed as a way of selling while currently it's about customer satisfaction. Marketing is a process where companies create value for their consumers, communicate and delivering their values to consumers and thus building strong customer relationships. (Philip Kotler 4-5)

Marketing is explained as activities which are set in the process to create, communicate, deliver and offer exchange which add value to customers, partners or society. (AMA 2015)

Marketing mix is tool created to structure how companies would deliver goods to their consumers. This was based on four P's which are product, place, price and promotion. It was introduced in the 1960's by E.J McCarthy. The tool was used to deliver the products to their consumer at the right place and time. (Mind tools 2016)

Marketing mix has evolved due to digitalization and the 4E's have replaced 4P's. Product changed to Experience which entails the journey of the consumer in a brand. Price was changed to Exchange which shows the value and worth of the consumer's engagement. Place was changed to Everyplace which cover the media and development of the channels. Promotion was changed to Evangelism which covers the passion and emotion in a brand to the consumers and employees. (Ogilvy & Mather, 2009)

One of the marketing aims is to satisfy both human and social needs in a profitable manner. There are various ways in which companies use to know consumers need. Once they know, establishment of good relationship is the major aim for the company. One of the objectives in marketing is adding value to new consumers and increasing the consumer base by satisfying the needs. (Armstrong & Kotler 2012, 8)

In the past the promotional mix which were used by marketers were advertising, public reaction, personal selling, sales promotion and direct marketing tools. This was used to persuade and communicate with customer and building customer relationship. The messages were delivered to the target audience through the media which time and space was paid for. Advertising helped in building brand values while sales promotions helped to encourage customer's decisions and public relations for the goodwill and interested on the company. (Philip Kotler & Gary Armstrong 2012, 429)

Due to digitalisation, marketing evolved and businesses connect with customer through digital platforms. The use of internet changed the consumer's perception of convenience, price and information about the price. Digital marketing has influenced the marketer's creation of values and maintaining customer relationship. Internet and other form of digital networks have enabled more audience control and increased knowledge on filtering marketing messages. (Philip Kotler & Gary Armstrong, 518)

Digital marketing is almost similar to internet marketing that entails management and execution of various electronic media. These are: social networks, e-mail, mobile phone, smart TV, and wireless media. The wide range of accessing platforms and communication tools have shaped the virtual channels for companies to use in building and nurturing strong consumer relationships. It entails different approaches such as e-mail marketing, mobile phone marketing, search engine marketing, content marketing and social media marketing.

This research will focus on social media marketing and specifically on two social media platforms. The rising use of social media marketing has enabled marketers to massively have opportunities but also tremendous challenges. The most challenging factor is the complexity and fragmentation of the digital world and how to integrate the marketing information to the channels critically and efficiently. It is important for business to use selected social media channels to give better understanding of consumers and engaging in communication that will lead to achieving the business objectives. The next subchapter explains how to choose the right social media channel for business when a company has its own target audience.

3.2 Choosing the right channel for target audience

There are various platforms that a company need to first know who are the target customers and the objectives of its social media marketing plan. Research in the marketing could help the company through social internet and the never ending channels. an easier way is to get through the clutter and separate the various “Zones of Social Media”. The framework sorts the functions of the various social media platforms and groups them with similar channels. This helps the company to view the whole social media and focus on the important platform. (Tuten T. & Solomon M. 2015, 137-138)



Figure 1. Social Media Zones (Tuten T. & Solomon M. 2015, 137)

According to the data shown above, the various channels have been divided into social community, social publishing, social entertainment and social commerce. Social community zone shows that social media channels are focused on building relationships by sharing with others the similar activities. People communicate and interact with other users. These platforms are Facebook, Wikipedia and Suomi24.

The second zone, social publishing gives the content to the audience other than interaction. The content shared could be in photos, videos, writing or music. These platforms include: blogs, twitter, YouTube and Instagram. The third zone social entertainment entails the interactive functions in multi-player games and entertainments. The users in social games share content that have been achieved on social channels. These channels are Candy Crush, Trivia Crack and MySpace. The last zone of the framework is the social commerce. It influences the consumers' decision making process. Users find the infor-

mation and read reviews on various brands and products. The social channels in this stage are Yelp and Trip advisor. (Tuten T. & Solomon M.2015, 137-138.)

However, to reach the target audience it is important to consider the posting time. Korteso explains that young people are online in the evening about 2100hrs and working users between 11.00-12.00am.

In addition to that, company should consider the time and effort invested on social media. If company is not prepared to have more time on social media marketing, then it will not be appropriate to have many social media platforms. Content (quantity) is important in a few platforms other than quality.

3.3 Social media as a channel of marketing and how to use it

Social media is explained as high use of technology tools that enable human to interact with others. This could be through organisation to employees, partners and consumers. Social media means websites where users are the ones who create content other than the owners of the sites. Social media was initially referred as web 1.0 where there was no engagement between the consumers and the business. It is now referred to Web2.0. (Olin 2011, 1)

The consumers spend their free time on the internet especially through their smartphone and tablet. The figure 2 illustrates daily average time spent by a person on social networking in 2012-2014

TIME SPENT SOCIAL NETWORKING

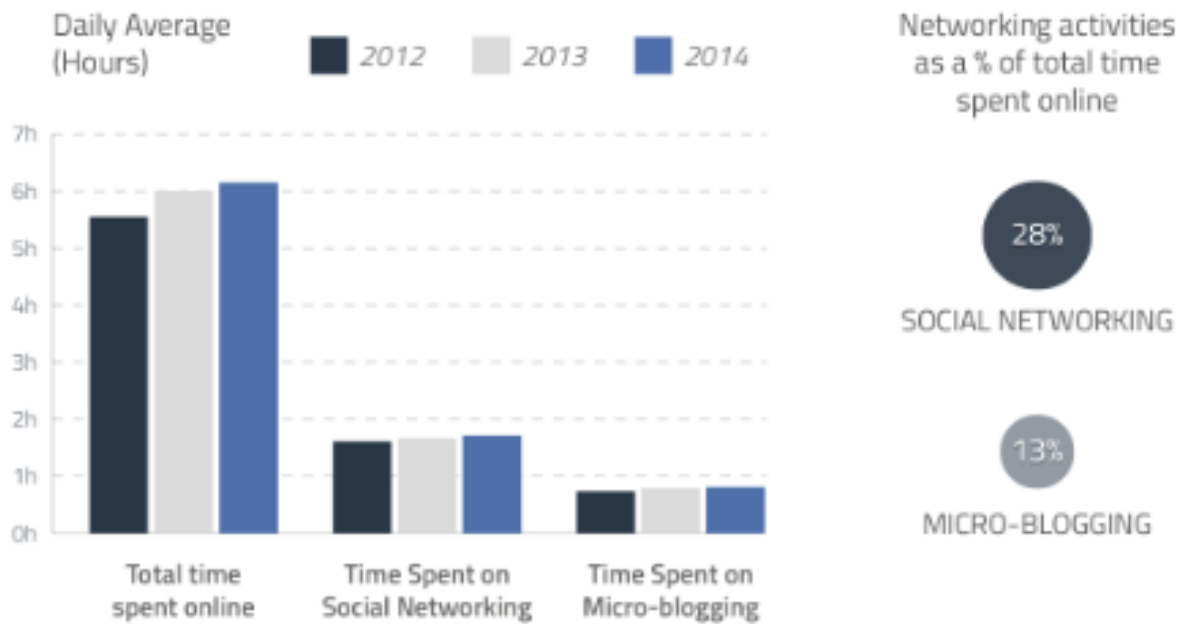


Figure 2. Daily average time spent on social networking by average person in 2012-2014. (Globalwebindex, 2015)

From the data shown above, information is collected by consumers through the social networks other than traditional methods. The social networks enable the consumers to share experience on the different brands and thus affecting the decision for purchasing to the new consumers. Currently, the process of purchasing a brand begins on social media platforms. Firstly the consumers have expectation then they do a research on social media and lastly sharing out the real experience to the other consumers. This shows why social media is also known as digital word of mouth. (Evans, McKee, 2010, 4-5, Kabani 2010, 1-2)

Although social media has been focused as a way of engaging with consumers, it has enabled the companies to pass information and engage with the clients in a more detailed and complex manner. The companies could use social media ineffectively without adequate knowledge and planned strategy when marketing. (Kabani 2010, 2-3)

Social media marketing is a way of sending commercial messages to the target market through the various platforms which have been created. Social media is one of the newest marketing strategies used by almost all the companies. Even though when creating an account on various platforms is free, this does not guarantee an effective marketing plan.

Money becomes a necessity when a company wants to expand its marketing strategy. The content should be meaningful and earlier proper planning. (Siniaalto 2014)

To add on the information given, social media can give bad impression of a brand image. (Evans, McKee, 2010, 3-4). Proper planning and scheduling content beforehand should be considered. The planned content help in consistency when publishing materials. The consumers expect the publishing of content to increase the interaction on social media. The 411 rule refers to the ratio of sharing through social media. It explains that 4 educational and entertainment posts represent 1 easy promotion and 1 tough promotion. (Lee, 2014)

The various social media platforms have a different way of approach when sharing content. An example of such a case is, Facebook mostly uses content when publishing post on the platform while Instagram uses images and hash tags. Businesses should be updated on the type of content to share on specific platform.

The time to post an item should be considered also, Facebook allows one to view online users, it would be ideal to post when majority of the users are online so that information may be reached widely. Planning calendar of events on social media would be a good idea on pay days here in Finland. Business need to plan promotions, fairs that can reach their target audience.

When the calendars have been created, time should be considered when planning the content of each social media platform. During Instagram marketing, one of the major considerations is the type of images used and amount of hash tags. The sign used for hash tag is # and is used for categorising content. It is majorly used on Twitter and Instagram. (Miles, 2014, 28)

To add on the information about Instagram, the number of hash tags used is important to avoid boredom to the audience. The right amount of hash tags used should be about 5-10. To build social brand and increase of brand awareness, the specific use of the key words should be used in the hash tags. The use of short hash tags makes the consumers to understand and memorise thus acting as a communication tool to the audience. (Miles, 2014, 29)

Different social media platforms have different way of working. The platforms enable the brands to engage with their audience. Social media has connected consumers and brands, companies itself and other organisation. The development of commercials is changing the relation of company to consumer marketing. Online shopping is increasing rapidly. (Evans, McKee, 2010, 4-6).

The major elements that enable selling in social media are marketing and operations. Companies need to come up with social programs that relate with the consumers lifestyle and passion. They have to listen actively, respond and collaborate and retain their consumers. (Evans, McKee, 2010, 62)

However, companies could benefit from social media marketing plan as part of their sales cycle. If the resources are limited, company should not participate in social media marketing. (Miles 2014, 39)

Although social media marketing may be expensive, Sedrati explains that it is relatively inexpensive compared to the traditional medias. The company should find the right strategy to reach target audience and build awareness regionally, nationally and globally. This needs effective approach in commitment, planning and persistence. The consumer's behaviour is affected majorly by social media. The brand image of the company is also affected by social media. It also enables the consumers and brands to build strong relationship. An effective social media marketing should have proper planning of content to increase sales and building of brand image.

3.4 A few social media platforms

There are so many social media platforms but they are constantly changing. Siniaalto (2014, 36) categorises social media into these cases; short text communication channels which are Twitter and Facebook. Long text communication channels include blogs while Image communication channels are Instagram, Pinterest. This thesis will only focus on Facebook and Instagram because the case company are interested in the two channels. Statista (2016) shows that Facebook was the first social network that has over 1 billion users and at the present it 1.55 billion users are active. However, Instagram has about 400 million accounts which are active every month.

3.4.1 Facebook

This social media platform was founded in 2004 and its main aim was to make the world open, connecting and giving opportunity people to share. It connects family and friends', discovering what is happening globally. The Facebook users share important information and expression or feelings. There are 1, 04 billion daily active users from December 2015 and monthly level there is 1, 59 users. (Facebook, 2016)

On Facebook page, registration of an account needs basic information. The user can later share various items according to the aim of the page. This entails photos, own status, videos, links, location and sharing other Facebook groups and pages. The navigation is made easy with the Facebook search bar. Companies do create public company page. The users like their public pages and thus following the company updates and happenings on the newsfeed.

Facebook provide different view to the company pages. Company need to make extra payment to increase it visibility. The company's page enables users to engage on their pages and give feedback. All company's post is not published to the users because Facebook uses Rank-algorithm. The payment makes the followers to view the company posts on their page. (Kortesuo, K. 2014.37)

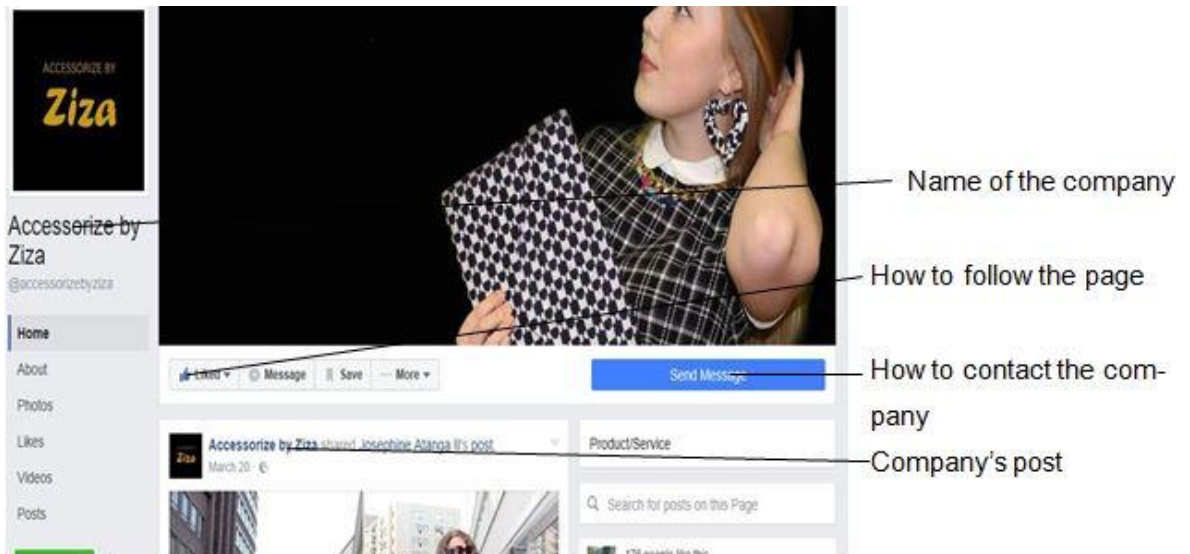


Figure 3. Screenshot from Accessorize by Ziza's Facebook page for demonstration of company's Facebook page.

The figure 3 shows the layout of the case company Facebook page. The top view is the cover photo which the company decides on the photo to upload. The about on the top left shows basic information of the company and the contact links or phone number is included. Also, the users or consumers can message the company directly through Facebook with the blue button. (Send message) The like button enables users to follow the company's page and get recent updates and information.

To conclude Facebook is an easy channel to use for marketing because of its many active users thus increasing company's visibility and increase in sales. Despite the post not appearing on all the users' walls it still reach to the majority.

3.4.2 Instagram

Miles explains that Instagram was the first social media platform designed for mobile phones. It was launched in 2010 but later in 2012 Facebook bought. It works well on the mobile phones and tablets since one can create post on instagram page unlike Computer where one views posts, likes and comments only. (Halligan & Shah. 2014, 94)

Instagram enables users to upload photos and share them on their walls and only followers can view them, if the user has private account. The photo uploaded can be taken from instagram camera or can be uploaded directly from the mobile phone gallery, then the user can choose how to modify the photo with the various filters provided and lastly one can write the caption with the hash tags. The post is ready and published on the instagram page. Apart from the pictures videos too can be shared which takes about 60 seconds. (Instagram 2016)

Instagram has been used mostly for marketing and branding in companies. The use of skilful words and images tell more interesting story about accompany or brand. Users tend to like images which are emotionally driven. These pictures raise emotions for example sunsets, dresses, sandy beaches, shoes, vacation destinations etc. Users would want also to see the technical brilliance of the images in a relatable content.by triggering the emotions consumers have thoughts and feeling of buying decisions. (Miles 2014, 71, 83, 85)

The social media platform introduced Regramming. It means posting photo which has been posted by another users instagram account to personal account. Use of hash tags is also common in Instagram but it was originally used mostly in Twitter. Hash tag is marked with the sign #.It was originally used to categorise conversations in twitter. The images in Instagram can be search on the news feed by using the hash tags. (Miles 2014, 27)

Miles explains the five stages for business marketers to leverage the hash tag system. (Miles 2014, 27)

1. Creation of hash tags and using them creatively in comparison to the business
2. Use of hash tags in researching popular trends in business niche
3. Participating in conversation within the business by use of hash tags
4. Using hash tags to identify new prospects
5. Share images with much group of users other than followers only

In addition to the mentioned points, hash tags can be used to indicate a campaign. In this case business should use relevant hash tag related to their brand. (Asad 2014, 12-14, Wood, 2015, 181) Miles further explains how hash tags should be presented:

1. It should be brief
2. It should be easily understood and memorised
3. It should not be open to multiple interpretations to avoid wrong perception
4. It should not be already over used
5. It should not include other company's name or brand name

One of the best ways to use hash tags is using running a contest with a specific hash tags accompanied by it. The contest encourages the followers to share images from the profile on instagram pages using the company's own hash tags. Another alternative could be promoting the company among its employees, consumers and partners, shareholders. (Neher, 2013, 115-116) It is important to read the Terms of service and Privacy policy documents on instagram before creating company's page. This is to avoid being terminat-

ed due misinterpretation. The policies are updated always and it's vital to be updated all time. (Miles, 2014, 15)

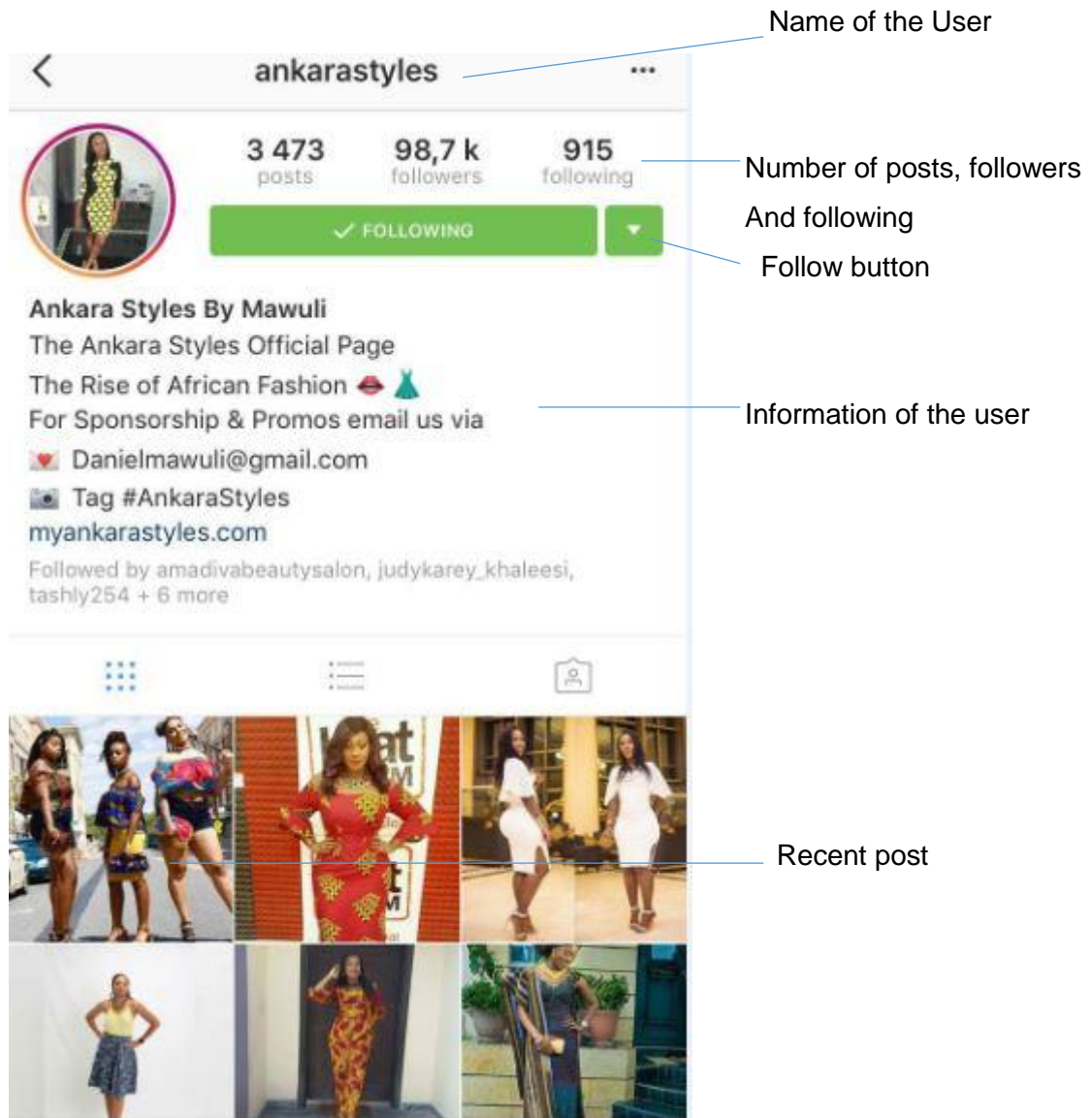


Figure 4. Screenshot from Ankara's Instagram page

The figure 4 above shows an example of Instagram page. It basically entails information, number of posts, number of followers and the number of the users the page is following. The bio entails all the details necessary for contacting the user. It is impossible to include links in a comment. The links are usually written on the Bio.

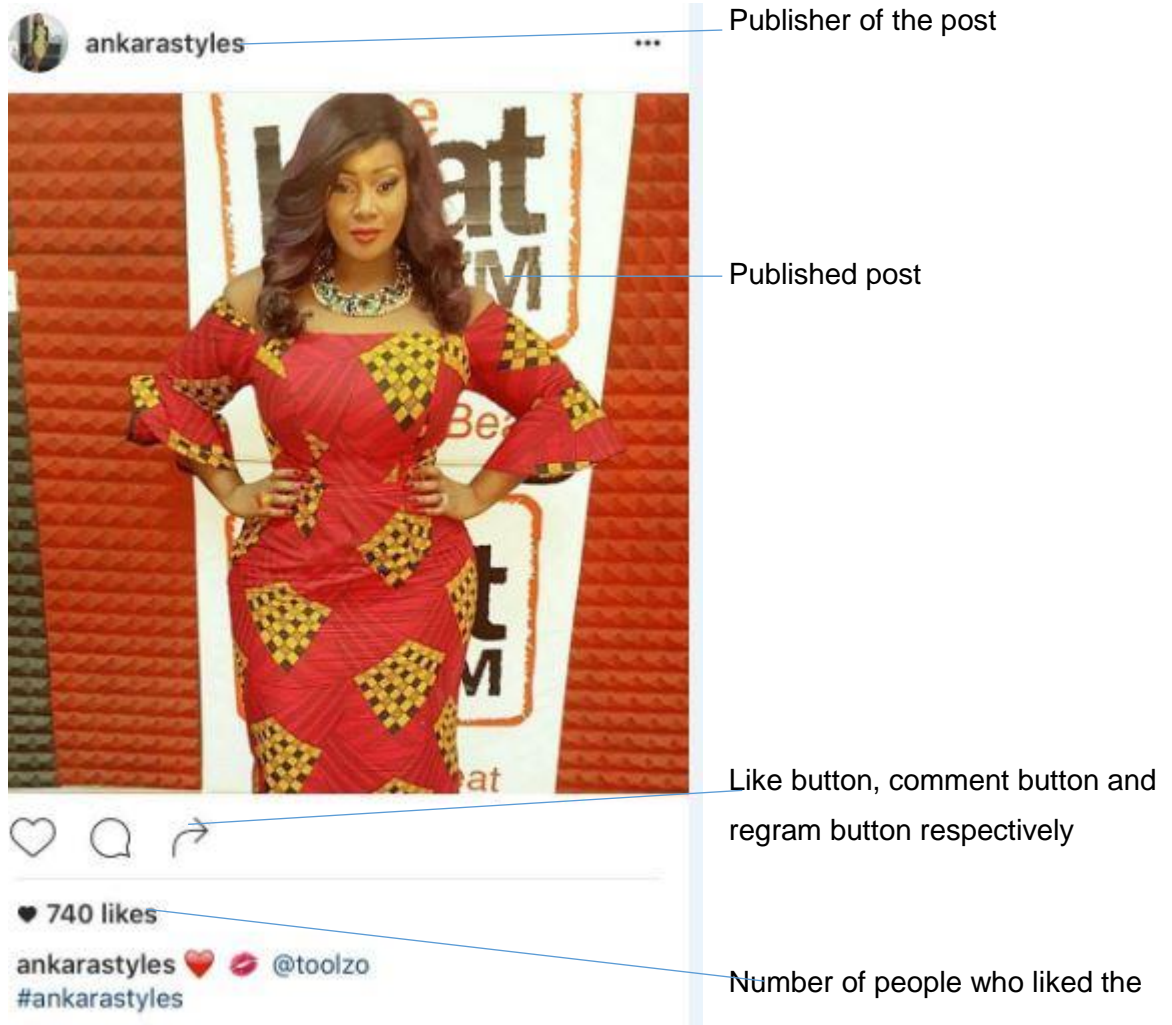


Figure 5. Screenshot From Ankara's Instagram post

Figure 5 above shows a screenshot taken from Instagram page on a mobile version. The post has the details of who published it and when it was posted. Below the picture are tools such as comment and like. One can view how many like the post has and view all the comments.

In conclusion, using Instagram is easy, engaging and time consuming. Here, the engagement is to like the posts of users and comment. (Miles, J.2014, 44) The users need photos which are easily attractive and capture the attention for them to like. The challenge is to be seen different from other social media platforms and using the right amount of hash tags to maximise visibility.

3.5 Relevance and challenges of social media and social media marketing

Social media entails communicating online as explained earlier; it's the newest way of communicating through various channels. Social media is hot and trendy. It has shaped people's social life in the society. Through it people can interact with other people, companies and organisations. It's one of the unique ways that was never possible before.

(Dr. Bhaskar & Dr.kim, 2014)

It has enabled entrepreneurs, small business and companies to build their brand and increase brand awareness. This shows that any company can utilise social media as marketing plan. It has low costs for marketing compared to the traditional marketing ways. Companies will generate more revenue and reduce costs by cutting down the number of staff and time. (Gunelius 2011, 13-14)

The first report released in 2013 shows that the global internet population has grown from about 2.4billion people to 3.2 billion people. James (2015) illustrates the everyday usage in a minute.

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

From the above information, social media is growing constantly. Company can reach many people through social media since people spend a lot of time on it. It is important for companies to be where customers spend their time. The social media platforms act as extension pages for the company's website and it is a necessity to use social media. (Halligan & Shah. 2014, 73)

However, social media can act as customer service platform. One can get information from social media platforms. The users can give comment on social media and other users can answer or comment about it. Before e-mail or phone call was used to answer customer's questions but this was not effective since it handled one customer at a time. Although answering in public may lead to risks, it is important for company to mention the validity of the answer. Private information is better handled in private messages.

(Kortesuo 2016, 64-65)

Through social media, companies can offer discounts and opportunities to its consumers. The promotions enable the consumers to feel appreciated and valued. In addition to that, social media aids the company to carry out a market research through the social channels. This will help the company learning about their customers, creating demographic and behavioural profiles, finding the niche audience and studying their competitors. (Gunelius 2011, 15-16)

Despite social media conveying information to the public fast, bad news could also be spread easily. Company should set up profile that has enough time and effort to be updated and provide content that attracts the consumers. Social media enable the consumers to pass their voice, share ideas, comments and opinions about a particular brand or company. The information is visible to the public and this includes the interested consumers. (Goldenberg 2015, 2)

According to businesses report, difficulties occur when measuring the ROI from social media, binding activities and how to develop social media marketing strategy. Business has got challenges and social media too. The figure 2 shows the most challenging aspects of social program. (Hill C.2015)

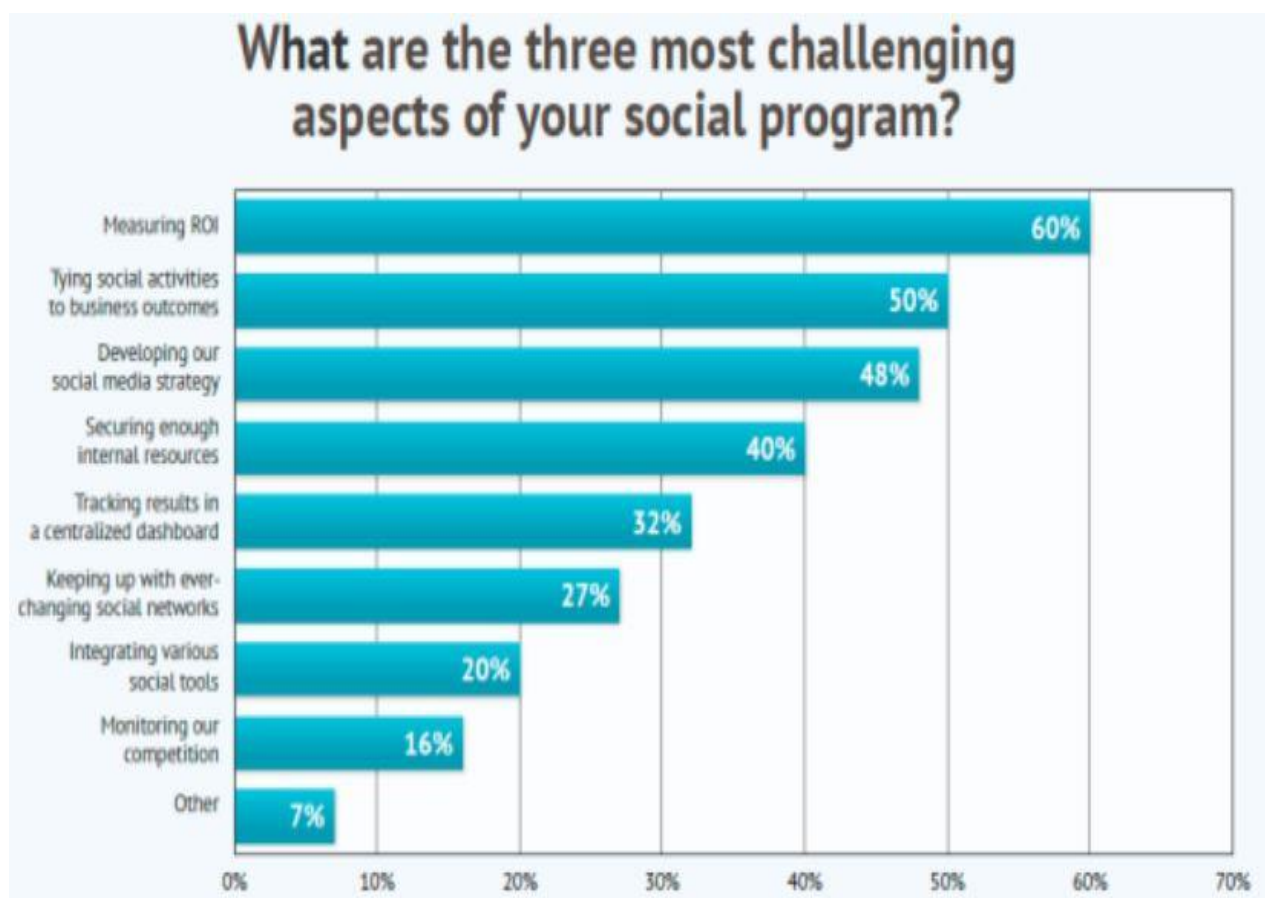


Figure 6. Most challenging aspects of Social Program (Hill C.2015)

From the reports, 60% of the marketers claim that measuring ROI of the social media is the most challenging task while 80% say that engaging is the most useful metric for social media campaigns. Some businesses are still using old marketing ways and 28% show that revenue is the key metric for social media success. (Hill C.2015)

Among other challenges is company trying to figure out its objectives and deciding on the appropriate social media channel. Company should be able to post the right content on time and get prepared to reply on comments and questions. Efficient social media marketing should stay on time to check what is viral at that moment. Problem would occur if content is posted regularly but it does not add value to consumers. Company should focus on posting relevant and high quality content. Even though the content might be high quality, company should avoid posting it too often. This could end up filling users' timelines and harass the users to stop following the company's page. (Dr. Bhaskar & Dr. Kim, 2014)

Companies should have knowledge that they cannot control social media. Consumers "own" because the companies cannot have information on what is discussed on the internet. Therefore, companies cannot control the negative comments or wrong information on the social media platforms. The most ideal thing is to indulge in existing conversations by adding value and communicating with the target audience. Company could fight, flight or flood the negative comments or wrong information conveyed. In this case fight means responding to the negative feedback by giving attention through positive interaction. Flight means ignoring the negative feedback while flood means giving the keyword so the search engine in order to bury the negative comments. (Gunelius 2011, 49-50)

To conclude this section, companies surrender easily with social media marketing because they think it requires a lot of effort and time with little or no profit. Although other companies would want to make effort towards social media marketing but due to various reasons the companies are not taking appropriate actions. It is notable that social media entails new concepts. Social media is the new form of passing information from person to another. Companies can market with low cost to the targeted audience. Social media marketing help companies to show their personality and identity to the customers. It also establishes company's influence, reputation and brand to the potential customers. (Dr. Bhaskar & Dr. Kim, 2014)

3.6 Measuring the success of social media marketing

Different kind of social media platforms have different ways of measures which can be assessed by marketers of PR professionals. When the consumers are satisfied it is important to agree on the objective that measure standard of the consumers. Metrics is always specific when matching results of the consumer's response and reaction spiked by the target audience. (Berkowitz, 2009)

Facebook and Instagram measures show the brand awareness through the number of users following or the brand has attained. Also the number of installation of applications, number of bookmarks and amount of review and ratings show how the platform has popular. The specific metric that are used for the two platforms measure the engagement rate of the marketing. An effective way of measuring social media should be through the traditional ROI approach. Social media marketing should consider consumer motivation to use social media platforms and measuring the engagement on the various platforms. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010) (Bartholomew and Bagnall, 2016)

The cost of launching the platform should be important factor when planning to calculate social media ROI. For example a blog, one has to calculate the return on sales from the social media costs. However, they could think about the aims of marketing. The aims could be for improving sales, consumer feedback and brand engagement. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010)

The behaviours are measured from the consumer by the marketers in social media. The returns from social media investments can never be measurable in currency only but also can be monitored. The consumers investments measures the number of visits, time invested in the application, number of updates. The investments could be used as measures of marketing outcome. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010)

There are qualitative and quantitative measures for social media platforms. Some of these measure are; exposure, engagement, influence, impact and advocacy. To measure activity and the interactions of social media audiences one can enable marketers to formulate the image performance of a particular brand. The quantitative measures the one affected by the marketers. This affects the successful platforms and the target audience. Qualitative measures the deeper view of the marketers to the audience affected, how and what can be improved for future. (Mike Brown, 2010). The table below shows how to track various platforms by social media metric.

Table 1, Mike Brown 2010. Metric used for tracking on social media.

Category/Characteristics	Qualitative measures	Quantitative measures
Involvement	Social media involvement	Number, frequency, recency of post Comments/reply on photo post Activity across media channel
Interaction / responses	Sentiment Engagement Influence effects Recommendations Virality	occurrence, Frequencies, recent registrations Bookmarks/Favorited/likes/ratings Comments/posts/mention/tags Downloads/installs/embeds Subscription Fans/followers/friends Share/invitation Reviews Traffic/visits/views/impressions site time development of profile effect of echo
Performance / outcome	Attitude towards a brand Brand loyalty Customer satisfaction Service quality perception	Cost conversation rate Average revenue per customer efficiency of costs value of customer value earned by media average sales in shifts Traffic/ ratings on search engines voice to share investment to be returned

4 Research method

In this chapter, the introduction of the research approach is discussed; the method of collecting data and how data will be analysed are also explained. Lastly, reliability and validity of the research has been explained.

4.1 Research approach

The research approach used was qualitative analysis and benchmarking. This was to analyse the performance of competitors in this fashion industry. The research focused on observing manually the companies' social media behaviour, this was majorly on Facebook and Instagram. Research templates were used to get the right information from each social media channel. The qualitative analysis focused on the interview with the management of the case company. It is referred to qualitative analysis because the questions cannot be answered with yes or no or with any number. A questionnaire was also created to know how consumers use social media. The aim of the survey was to know what time specifically do consumers log in to social media and what they do.

An interview about the company's social media marketing plan was done. The company has two major platforms, Facebook and Instagram but they would like to get more information on how to manage them successfully. Although different social media channels have special features and information to analyse, there are some common features. The table below shows the research template used to gather information from the company's profile on the different channels.

profile	Was profile updated Was it engaging
Followers	How many followers What kind of growth was there monthly? Do fans post questions or comments? Do the company answer the questions/ reply to comments?
Posts	What was the frequency of posts? What time do company post? Were customers engaging to posts i.e. sharing, commenting, liking it

Table 2. Research template

Benchmarking is defined as a tool used to give comparison on performance of companies or brands. By comparing the marketing strategy, company could improve its performance and hence attracting more target audience. The idea is not effective if one imitates the benchmarked company but to come up with findings which can help to improve the success of social media marketing. (Jurevicius, 2014)

The author selected two other brands for benchmarking. During the research of the brands to benchmark, the author focused on the brands which have done well in social media marketing. The aim was to focus on social media marketing strategies of the brands/companies. These factors included: quality and quantity of content, customer engagement and versatile use of social media platforms.

The table below shows the two benchmarking brands (Table 2)

Brand Name	Offering section	location	Benchmark reason
Ankara accessories	African clothing, accessories	online	Many followers, customer engagement, content planning
Monnabbey	Handmade African print jewellery	Athens, Greece	Many followers, customer engagement, campaign posts ,promotional events

Table 3. Benchmarking brands

Facebook

The Facebook page of the above brands were analyzed and given more attention. The first step was to view the company's profile the research template shows the major information to be analyzed. This entails: company's updated information, followers, follower growth and posts to the page. This will give information on the customers' engagement by liking, commenting and sharing posts. The last section focuses on the kind of content the company post on their page.

Instagram

In this platform, the profile is viewed by checking on the profile picture and the information in the bio. Finding out the number of followers and average follower growth monthly will be done. The company's page could be analyzed by the frequency of posting the photos and content. The posts show how many likes the photo got and the type of comments, whether in basic statements or questions. In addition, company can view tagged pictures that users post and also the use of hash tags

4.2 Data collection and analysis

The research material is collected for a period of one month. The data collected is sufficient enough to analyse and give recommendations for the case company. The competitor brands will be observed for that period of time. Long period would increase the amount of data and might be difficult to analyse. The data will be collected from two major social platforms, Facebook and Instagram accounts. Instagram was acquired by Facebook on 2012 (Miles 2014, 42). The acquisition has enabled Facebook to link better the two platforms. The data collection will be done in two phases.

Phase one entails interviewing the management of Accessorize by Ziza. The purpose of the interview is to understand the social media usage and future plans in social media marketing. The response on the interview were analysed by qualitative analysis. The researcher came up with a questionnaire that was delivered in form of survey. The qualitative analysis entails the questionnaire. It was conducted in English because of inadequate Finnish skills. The questionnaire has about 5 questions which could take 2-3 minutes to answer.

Phase two entails benchmarking the competitors Facebook and Instagram profiles. The analysis is based on the research template used to investigate company's Facebook, Instagram account and competitors. The comparison was based on the findings based on current social media use by the case company and that of the competitors. Discussion of the observation and comparison are explained and recommendations are given on how to improve the case company's social media presence. The figure below summarises the research process used by the author

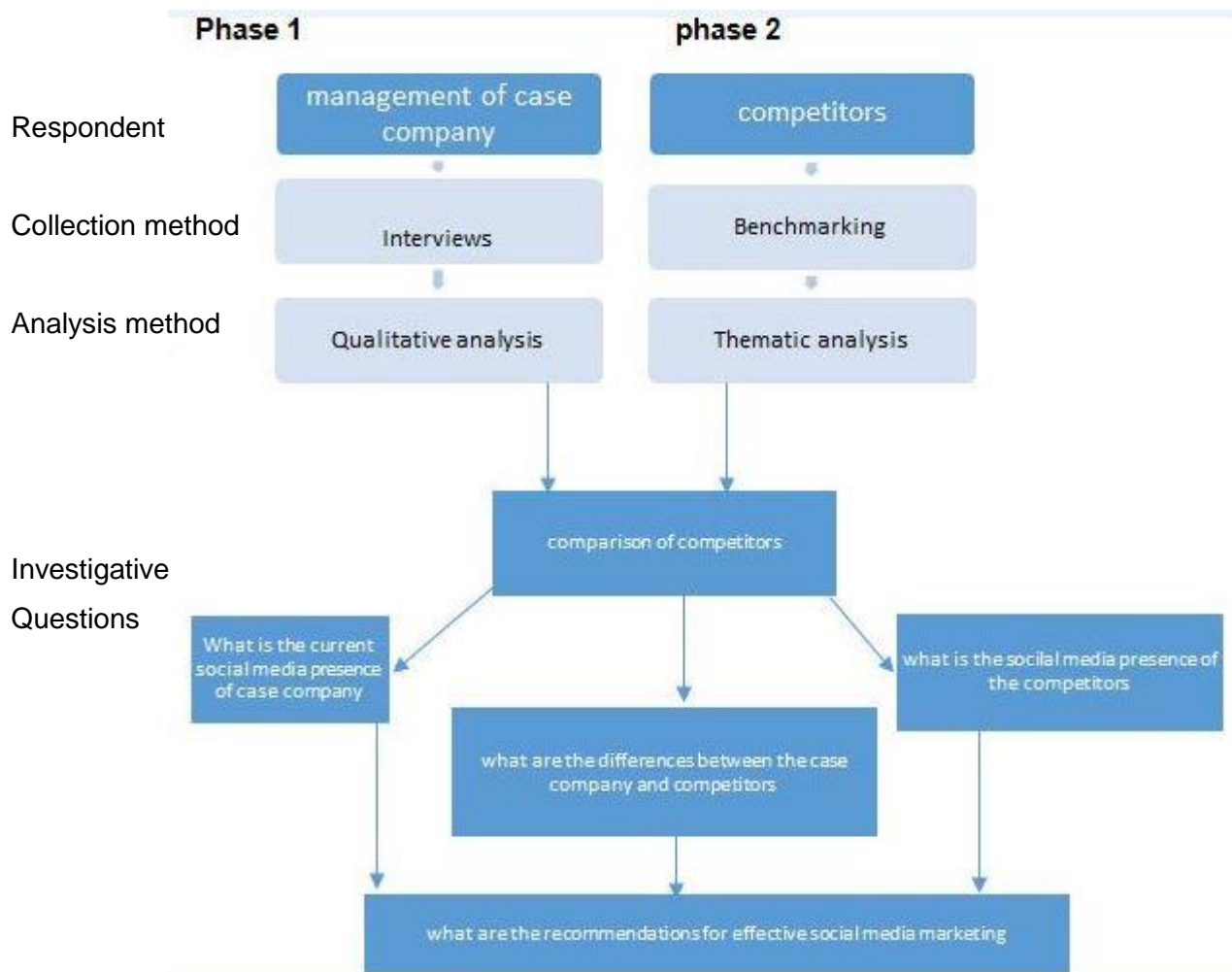


Figure 7. Research Approach

5 Results of social media presence in selected companies

This chapter gives the clear view of the social media presence of both the case company and the competitors. The specific platforms are Facebook and Instagram page of the companies. The current situation of the case company is explained in details and the future plan in social media marketing.

5.1 Current social media profile of the case company

Qualitative analysis was used to collect data on the current social media presence of the case company. An interview was done with the owner of the case company. Despite the interview, benchmarking was also done to the case company Facebook and Instagram page. The owner of Accessorise by Ziza explained that the company uses Facebook and Instagram, although no posts have been published on Instagram. The reason for choosing the two social media channels are easy to use and can reach their target audience. (Accessorise by Ziza, 2016)

Accessorise by Ziza's aim on social media is to increase sale, build customer relationship and maximising their visibility. The company is still small and hoping to grow in future. At the moment, they do not have a proper plan on how to share content on their social media platforms. This is due to lack of resources and personnel who can build their content on social media. One of the biggest challenges is creating the different campaigns and posts on what to Publish. The type of style used when publishing post is mostly introducing the different kind of products they offer. They believe it is the simplest way of selling a product and consume less time. In the future, the company plans to invest in more social media platforms. Firstly, they would want to improve and have effective social media marketing plan. This also entailed creating content before publishing to the social web. (Accessorise by Ziza, 2016)

During the collection of data period, Accessorise by Ziza was also analysed on how they use their social media platforms. The table 4 illustrates the figures gathered.

Table 4, Data about Accessorise by Ziza’s Facebook and Instagram usage.

	Facebook	Instagram
Number of posts	10	0
The kind of posts	Description photos	No posts
Customer service	No	No
Engagement	No	No
Comment, likes and shares	Max likes 10 min likes 0 No comments and shares on posts	No
Type of content	different	

Accessorise by Ziza uses only face book as we can see from table 4. Although it uses only Facebook there are very few posts which were posted during the data collection process .Approximately one post was posted in a month. The Facebook page has about 200 followers. During this period there was no campaign, product advertising posts which was published. The posts had few likes and no comments at all. This shows that there was no engagement with the consumers; also no customer service was needed. From the Instagram page, analysis was not done because there were no posts. To conclude, the social media usage of the company was very minimal and that explains why they have few followers and the need for proper planning in social media marketing.

5.2 Survey results analysis

Based on the results gathered from the questionnaire, there were only 20 respondents. Unfortunately the number is minimal to make a conclusion based on it. Previous survey was conducted by Pew Research Center in September 2014 shows social media update. The results were based on the American Adults and here are the findings based on the survey. The results shows how American adults 18+ use social media platforms. The figures may vary as to compare to Europe.

1. 52% of online adults use two or more platforms
2. Young adults about age 18-29 use Instagram and half of this use it daily
3. More than half of online adults 65 and older 56% use Facebook
4. Facebook users engage more 70% use it fully while 45% use it several times a day
5. American adults usage in platforms: Facebook 58%,Linkedin 23% Pinterest 22% Instagram 21% Twitter

5.3 Social media profile of the competitors

Analysis of the competitor's social media presence on Facebook and Instagram are well explained in the chapter.

5.3.1 Benchmarking Ankara accessories

Ankara is an online store which sells African printed clothes and accessories. It ships its products globally. The company has only Facebook and Instagram page. (Ankara.com, 2016)The information below illustrates Ankara accessories Instagram and Facebook usage.

Table 5, Data about Ankara accessories Facebook and Instagram usage

	Facebook	Instagram
Number of posts	300	574
The kind of posts	Humour, advertising, campaign, informative videos, plain posts,	Advertising products, fashion trends Humour, Videos on models dressed by Ankara styles,
Customer service	Very active	Very active
Engagement	Respond to clients	Respond to clients
Comments, likes and shares	Max likes for a post 200,min likes for post 4,share many posts on their page,	Max likes for a post 1000,min likes for a post 169,much comments
Type of content	Different content in every post	Different content based on trends

Based on the information provided above, it is clear that Ankara accessories are very active on Instagram than on Facebook. On the Instagram page, the company posts every day. They use many hash tags and the most common hash tag is #ankarastlyes_etal. The hash tags help to maximise the visibility of the brand or company.

There were different categories of post depending on the campaign or the trending topic. These categories include fashion trend, humour, advertising, campaign, fashion trends. On campaign and fashion trend, Ankara uses a lot of hash tags to create awareness of their page. An example of how a post with such information is illustrated on the figure below to show a clear view of how the hash tags are used.



Figure 8. Screenshot from Ankara's Instagram page

On Facebook page the company post humour and advertising posts. All the pictures posted both on Facebook and Instagram pages are good quality, clear and eye catching. Although on Facebook there is minimal post per week as to compare to Instagram page. The Facebook posts are plain photos with no description or hash tags.

The Facebook page was also updated. The company automated the photos that are posted on Instagram are also posted on Facebook at that moment. The company updated their profile photo on Facebook to show the target audience what they offer. The figure below show how the profile photo was updated and the number of likes, comments and shares.

Ankara Styles et al updated their cover photo.
August 31 · 🌐



Figure 9 Screenshot from Ankara's Facebook update

Most of the posts on Facebook get about 2 shares and few comments. While on Instagram there are more comments. The Facebook page has 112 998 likes while Instagram has 33,9k followers. The smallest amount of like on Instagram is 169 while the highest amount of likes is 1000. On Facebook the smallest amount is 4 likes while the biggest amount is 200 likes. The amount of likes is different because they are more active on Instagram than on Facebook.

In conclusion, customer engagement on both social media platforms is done perfectly. Satisfied customers post pictures with the dresses and accessories from Ankara and the company repost these pictures on their page. There were not many questions on the Facebook and Instagram page. The customers could have contacted through email for further inquire. On both platforms there were no negative feedbacks from the consumers.

5.3.2 Benchmarking Monnabbey

Monnabbey is a company which is based in Athens, Greece and it sells Handmade African Print jewellery and accessories. It also has online shop which ships its products Worldwide. The Company was founded in 2012. (Monnabbey.com, 2016) The table shows the data collected from their Facebook and Instagram page.

Table 6, Information gathered from Monnabbey's Facebook and Instagram usage.

	Facebook	Instagram
Number of posts published	50	700
type of posts published	Jewellery video, Information about products, advertisement, updates on their events	Campaign, product information, update on events, sales/offers, information about their snap chat page, competition
Customer service	Yes	Yes
Engagement	Respond to clients	Respond to questions
Comments, likes and shares	Max likes were 20 while Min were 5 likes 1 share 3 comments on a post	Max likes were 200 while min likes were 25 about 3 comments in a post
Type of content	Different type of content on posts	Different information on posts

Monnabbey uses also snap chat to make their company more updated with the recent social media platforms. On Facebook it has posted about 50 posts in total. However during the data collection period, the company posted about 3 times a week. Although it has about 5,123 following the company updates, they get very minimum number of likes, comments and shares on Facebook. Most of the posts on Facebook are basically posts from instagram which entails the products they offer. Monnabbey shared a video which was posted some years back as a remembrance of the products they offer. In Facebook it is referred to as sharing a memory.

It informs their target audience of their upcoming events in Paris and what it entails. The event was arranged to showcase their products and maximise the visibility of the brand in France. Even though they don't get many questions from Facebook, they publish post with

much information. There were few plain posts published on Facebook. The figure below illustrates how the event information was published on Monnabbey Facebook page.

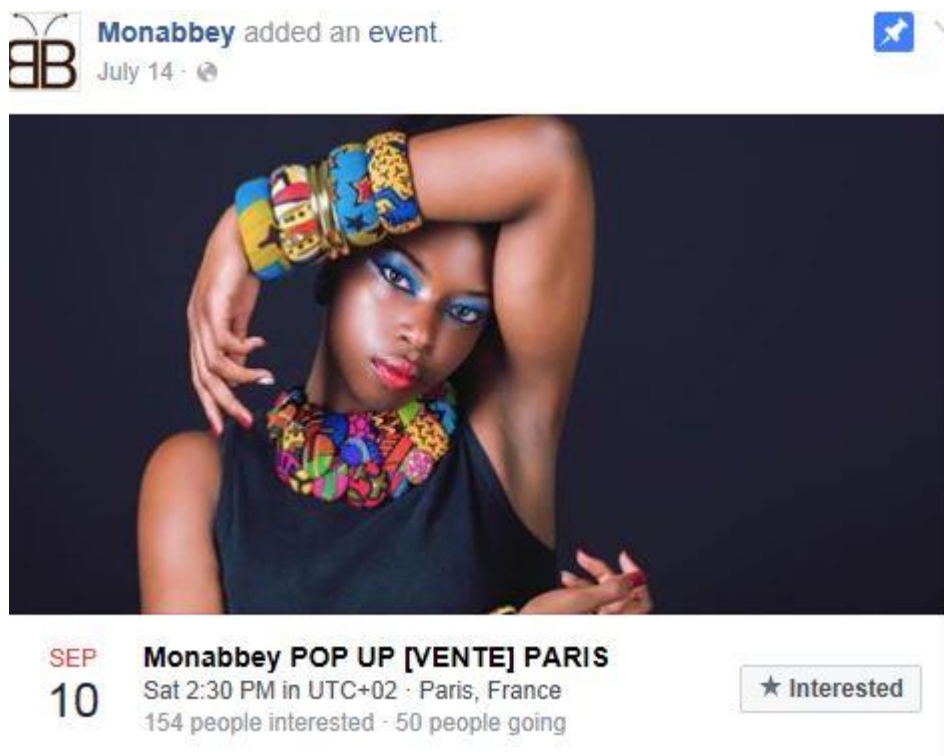


Figure 10 Screenshot from Monnabbey Facebook Post on 14th July, 2016

On Instagram, Monnabbey post about 6 times in every week on .their page. It has about 900 posts in total with about 10,000 followers. This is twice the number of followers on Facebook. During the data collection period, Instagram page was more actively used as to compare to Facebook. The kind of posts here were product advertisement, sale/offer, event update. The published posts entail models or consumers who are dressed with the products from Monnabbey. Although some post are without person just the products. Monnabbey also engaged with their consumers by Regramming some of their photos to their Instagram page. The photos which were posted were clear and professional. The videos were also used to illustrate how the models are dressed with the jewellery.

The most common hash tag used here was #monnabbey. About every post on instagram has lots of hash tags used. Other common hash tags used were like #throwback #African print #handmade which promoted heir brand and maximise their visibility. It is also on Instagram where the major sale was advertised since information may be reached to many. The company also used Instagram a competition. This was simple because it entails sharing a picture dressed with Monnabbey products and tagging Monnabbey with specific hash tags. The specific hash tags were the brand entities such as #African prints #handmade #monnabbey.

Later, the winners are the two most with the highest number of likes on the post. The total number of the participants from the hash tags used was 100 from Instagram. Here is an example of a sale published in post during summer.



Figure 11. Screenshot from Monnabbey's Instagram Post in July, 2016

In conclusion, the two channels publish almost similar post which include promotional and advertisement photos. It is clear that Monnabbey is very active on Instagram and that where most information and updates are published.

5.4 Differences between the social media profile of the case company and competitors

The three companies use social media to market their products and increase visibility. They all use Facebook and Instagram as the main social media platforms. The similarities and the differences are shown below in table 7.

Table 7. Differences between Accessorise by Ziza and Ankara styles, Monnabbey on Facebook and Instagram usage. The data was collected during summer, 2016.

Information	Accessorise by Ziza	Ankara styles	Monnabbey
The kind of posts	Description posts only	Humour, advertising, campaign, Informative videos, plain posts	Campaign, product information, update on events, sales/offers, information about their snap chat page, competition, Jewellery video
Customer service Engagement	No	Yes	Yes
Types of content	No content created	Content created	Content created

The two competitors have tried to use the two platforms effectively. The content has been created based on the published post. Especially on Instagram the two companies have used hash tags wisely. Ankara has enabled its Instagram to share photos on Facebook at the same time with Instagram. In this way it has reduced time to post two items on different platforms and making it easy to publish posts frequently.

To conclude this chapter, Accessorise by Ziza is the only company which still has poor social media marketing plan. It publishes few posts on social media and has no customer engagement. This is why it should have an effective social media marketing plan.

6 Discussion

This is the final chapter of this thesis and it entails findings based on the data collected and the recommendation to Accessorise by Ziza is explained. Detailed information on validity and reliability, reflection on learning is also discussed.

6.1 Findings

Based on the results shown in chapter 4, the case company's use of social media is poor and needs a plan on how to make it effective. The number of posts on Facebook is minimal and less content is given. The other companies have invested on creating content both on Facebook and Instagram. This explains why they have many followers and posts as to compare to the Case Company. On Instagram page of the competitor's pages, a lot of hash tags have been created used wisely. The use of hash tags have enable the consumers to participate on competitions which lead to gifting thus promoting the products and increasing the visibility. This in return increases the number of followers.

The level of customer interactions is very limited with the case company social media platforms. The type of posts published should be engaging. For example posts which questions asking the consumers on their opinions on how the product works or how the colours blend. This increases the number of followers on social media platforms. As a result of this thesis, social media marketing play important role for both the company and target audience. The various companies and brand could utilise social media in establishing long lasting relationships with target audience and increasing the brand awareness. When using social media marketing the company need to check the consumer's motivation when using social media and measuring the investment customers engage with the brands. (Hoffman & Fonor, 2010)

Social media marketing is a wide topic and needs a lot study and research. This thesis only gives a frame work to the case company on how to start planning successful social media marketing. The information gathered are soon to be used by the case company to give an idea on how to plan content and have effective social media marketing which may lead to increasing sales and its visibility.

6.2 Recommendations

The recommendations given are based on the theory and benchmarking of the two other companies. The case company should first create a plan on when, which and what type of post to publish on social media channels. When is the actual time to publish their post on social media? This is important when one know the target audience and what time they are active. Also, one of the considerations is the most common pay days here in Finland. This plan should be used to create content beforehand and make it easy when publishing post and saves time. The plan should be implemented on both Facebook and Instagram. Some posts maybe posted on both platforms but not exact since Instagram uses more hash tags than Facebook.

The instagram page could gain more followers and increase it visibility by using the correct amount of hash tags and creating own hash tags. The hash tags could be used by the consumers who have brought products from Accessorize by Ziza. Competition could also be used and the followers share post with the company's hash tags. For example sharing posts and using this hash tag #accessorizebyziza. The use of campaigns at the end or beginning of seasons should be marked when planning content on social media. On both Facebook and Instagram, the photos posted should be of high quality and clear. This enables users to be attracted to the post and press the like button which may lead to following the company's social page.

When using Facebook it is important to consider the following. One is the type of audience their age and what are the common interests. The frequency of post affects the interest of the target audience. Posting rapidly may lead to boredom and neglect from the target audience. The case company should be active and be able to participate in comments and answering questions from the consumers. From the appendices, an example plan of social media calendar is shown and what should be followed up. It also shows what the case company should aim while publishing a post on social media.

To conclude, the case company should always have aim when publishing a post. It should clearly state what number of likes and followers are intended by a particular post and if they have achieved. After certain duration on time, a follow up on the number of followers on the social media should be done.

6.3 Validity and reliability

The results gathered from this researched were based on observations of the competitors Instagram and Facebook accounts. Some of information such as negative comments could have been deleted to avoid reaching the targeted audience. This may lead to inaccuracy of the results.

Categorising data was not based on any formula other than reading the description of the post or the hash tags used in the post. My view of categorising post may differ with someone else. For example a post with various hash tags could be mistaken for a campaign or description post. The research was planned and the data collection process was systematic. The investigative questions are used for all the companies to make the data collected reliable and viable. The two platforms used for all the companies are Facebook and Instagram only. The competitors were chosen due to similarity of the case company products and also have invested more on social media marketing. It is vital to consider a company deleting posts or comments which are negative or positive and this may happen without noticing. That might affect the reliability of the results. Unfortunately the short survey conducted was not used because of the minimal respondents which were less than 100. But previous survey done was used to give recommendations for the case company.

In today world of business especially marketing, social media is constantly changing. Tools used to measure success of social media are been updated and changed on daily basis. This information may be valid for this period but not in few years to come. Social media might have changed and other techniques are used. It is important to take that into consideration.

6.4 Own learning Reflection

I have learnt a lot during this thesis writing process. One of the major issues is social media marketing. How is it used and when it should be used? Through gathering the information from various sources, I have gained more knowledge on social media marketing although it is the newest way of marketing the information is changing every day. I have the bigger picture of what should be done before introducing social media marketing and all that it entails while planning content.

Despite learning about social media marketing, there were challenges too I encountered during the process of writing, was lack of enough concentration while gathering infor-

mation from various sources. Checking all the companies' social media platforms and gathering what is relevant and needed. Keeping up with the time period and knowing the amount of data to collect was not an easy task.

The main aim of the thesis was to give recommendation to Accessorise by Ziza on how to effectively use social media marketing to improve sales and their visibility as explained earlier. It is important to focus on what the company would take in consideration and use it in their daily business.

In conclusion the research was a great experience and has taught me to work on time plan. It was interesting to go through the various posts on the social media platforms and learn how companies come up with their own hash tags. Above all my knowledge on social media marketing has been deepened as compared to before.

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8 Appendices

Appendix 1. Qualitative interview questions

Interviewer: Tanui Natalie

Interviewee: owner of Accessorize by Ziza

Main topic: The current usage of social media and the future plans for Accessorize by Ziza.

Question 1

What is the purpose of using social media for the company?

Question 2

Which social media platforms do you use and why?

Question 3

What type of content is published on social media?

Question 4

What are your future plans in social media marketing?

Social media marketing

Social technology has connected business with consumers and amongst business. Through the various social media platforms companies have benefited from social marketing plan as part of their sales cycle. The research is used to gather information on how consumers use the various social media platforms for a brand which is planning to establish successful social media marketing.

The survey is very short and it takes about 3 minutes to get it done.

* Required

Gender *

Female Male

Age *

below 25 26-40 above 40

How many times do you log on to social media platforms in a day? *

- Once twice Thrice Other

What time do you log in to social media platforms? *

- Morning noon Evening all of the above

Which site do you comment/like mostly? *

- Individuals sites brands site Both

Do you follow any company on social media? *

- Yes No

8.3 Appendix 3. An example of Social media calendar for Accessorize by Ziza and KPI's

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
		Goals and KPI's	Target	achieve/ not	Jan	Feb	March	April	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
		Engagement on platforms													
		Number of followers													
		Number of comments													
		Number of shares													
		Enhancing awareness													
		Number of followers													
		Number of posts													
		Number of shares													

Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View

Cut

Copy

Format Painter

Font: Calibri, 11, A⁺, A⁻

Alignment: Wrap Text, Merge & Center

Number: General, %, .00, .0

Styles: Conditional Formatting, Format as Table, Cell Styles

Cells: Insert, Delete, Format

Editing: AutoSum, Fill, Clear, Sort & Filter

37 Number of shares

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Week 1	Target	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	
frequency of post		post		post		post			
Aim		give information		offer		campaign			
Number of likes									
Number of comments									
Number of shares									