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How to Increase Sales Online Through Social Media Platforms Instagram and Facebook

Case Study: CastleStudio

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<p>This Bachelor's Thesis was created to help a small Finnish handmade business, CastleStudio, increase its online sales through the use of two social media platforms Instagram and Facebook. The case company primarily focuses its online marketing through these two social media platforms which is why they were chosen and because of their relevance and popularity among the target market. The case company has had a very minimal amount of sales on its online store and due to its primary sales being at the markets during the summertime it needs a steady flow of income throughout the year.</p> <p>The research begins with the assessment of the case company's marketing plans which include a thorough situation analysis on their customers, target market, competitors and internal and external strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This information is continued to use in the research as a content marketing plan is formed and further strategies specifically meant the social media platforms are created. Due to the authors experience working with the case company most of the information in this thesis is prior knowledge that has not been written down before.</p> <p>The conclusion this thesis comes to is that there are multiple strategies and ways for the case company to approach its objective of increasing online sales. However, the most important one is the need to create consistent, valuable, good-quality content that is vital to plan ahead and focuses on the target market's needs. The research recommends ways in which the content can be created and methods on how to drive traffic on to the social media accounts.</p>	
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1 Introduction

The following bachelor's thesis will focus on how to generate sales online through two different social media platforms: Facebook and Instagram. To further show evidence and examples of some of these strategies being used a small Finnish company called CastleStudio will be used as a case study example. These two social media platforms were chosen because of their relevance to this type of a small handmade products business. There are many sales strategies that work through all these social media platforms which will be further discussed in this text.

In order to be able to figure out the strategies and methods of increasing the sales online it is mandatory to analyse the marketing strategies in place for the company. There are multiple goals to reach in marketing, an important one being to increase sales. This thesis will therefore focus largely on analysing CastleStudio's marketing plan at the moment and help to improve it.

Another important point to make in this introduction is that the author of this thesis has been working full-time at the company and been a part of it for a long time. For these reasons most of the knowledge of the company and related to the company have no reference as it has never been written anywhere before, until now.

1.1 Company introduction

CastleStudio is a small three-person company which focuses on producing handmade products from leather. The focus is on refillable notebooks as well as A4 folders with the leftover scraps being used to make smaller products such as bookmarks, key rings or jewellery. Why the products are so unique in comparison to other leather products is their variety in colour and use of different stamps on the cover. As the products are made by hand it is possible to customize them in accordance to the customers wished.

The company was founded in 2015 but was then more of a hobby. Now it has begun to grow due to its bigger focus on increasing online sales as well as physically attending markets and fairs. The whole summer season of 2018 was spent selling at the Helsinki Market Square which is one of the most visited attractions by tourists and locals over the

summer. It is the most known and famous market in Finland and on a must-visit list for tourists with buses directly bringing tourists from cruise boats to the market (Wood, 2017). The market is also nearby other famous sights such as the Senate Square Church and the Uspenski Cathedral.

CastleStudio focuses largely on producing customisable products in order to satisfy the customer. The colours and layout of the cover are changeable as everything is done by hand. Selling directly to customers at the market square was an ideal location to reach as many different customer groups as possible to test which is the target market group. However, as selling at the market is very seasonal, the main reason behind this thesis is to figure out a way to keep the company profitable and running during the non-market time. Even though the case company will attend other markets, such as Christmas markets, online sales would be a steady source of income. As the company is small and has not achieved much brand awareness it is vital for its management to learn how to increase their online sales.

1.2 Thesis objectives

The objectives of this research are to find methods and strategies that the company would be able to use in order to reach their target market and customers to increase their sales online. The aim to do this is organically as the company is small without extra funds to place into a marketing campaign. Fortunately, through these two social media platforms it is possible to market without monetary costs. However, it will instead require more work, time and effort.

Social media has become an important marketing tool which is why the strategies are linked closely to digital and social media marketing. As a result, in order to understand and learn the strategies the company should use, the following thesis will use the most commonly known and used digital marketing framework SOSTAC (Smith, 2017). It analyses everything related to the marketing plan in the company. The author of this thesis has modified the approach by looking at it from the perspective of the two social media platforms and the ultimate goal: to increase sales. The research will conclude with strategies related to each social media platform that will help put the digital marketing plan into action.

2 Online platforms

Currently CastleStudio focuses on selling its products through an ecommerce site called Etsy, which is explained in further detail below. The company has been present on this platform since December 2017. In accordance to the thesis topic, the company is also present on Instagram and Facebook which are currently the two and only social media platforms they are present on. The choice and relevance behind these three online platforms will be further explained in this section of the research.

2.1 Etsy

Etsy was founded in 2005 in Brooklyn, USA by a young group of four friends. It is a buying and selling community that only focuses on selling handmade and vintage products (Lilyquist, 2018). Within five years the online community had grown to include 5 million members (sellers and buyers) and the company was valued at 100USD million (Brown, 2015). Etsy has proven its value in connecting buyers and sellers of the handmade craft interest and continues to grow in popularity. Despite being an American founded and based marketplace it is known and used internationally by sellers and buyers.

CastleStudio has been present on this online shopping platform since December 2017 and has currently only had 13 sales through it. These sales have occurred either through the word-of-mouth technique and presence at the Helsinki Market Square or by the customer accidentally finding the company products on the online selling platform. The goal is to change this to ensure that customers are meant to find the company products either by knowing the products or company, or then by refining the keywords used to describe the products to increase search engine optimization.

The reason behind being on a ready-made selling platform instead of building one on their current website is the absence and lack of knowledge in the field. As it is a small company with little extra funds they cannot currently invest on a professional to build them their own website store and to maintain it. Therefore, Etsy serves the purpose well

of allowing the company access to sell to everyone as well as have a direct link to customers already interested in handmade products. Another point is that on Etsy it is possible to search for all products related to a certain category which can give the company much needed awareness as someone who is searching for a 'leather notebook' might come across their products. If the company would have their own website store this would be much harder, and the customers would have to know the company in order to find them online.

The company produces all of its products by hand which is why this platform is a suitable location to be on as the customer group who visits Etsy is already familiar and has an understanding of the handmade industry and craft. This helps to narrow down the customer group and target market as in comparison to other ecommerce platforms such as eBay or Amazon where the amount and range of products is uncontrollable and vast. In such big ecommerce websites, the price levels vary substantially due to their different production techniques, however on Etsy due to everything being handmade the price is justified and expected without much shock from the customers. Etsy shoppers are prepared to pay the asked price for handmade products which makes the shopping experience enjoyable for both parties.

2.2 Instagram

Briefly, Instagram is primarily a mobile phone application meant for socializing and sharing footage such as photos and videos. It is possible to view and use the application on a desktop browser as well, however it is not possible to post or upload content via a desktop and is therefore considered mainly as a mobile phone application. It is similar to other numerous applications, such as Facebook, in which a profile, or account, is created to represent the person using it. The footage shared is then visible through a news feed much like on Facebook (Moreau, 2018). These two social media platforms share multiple similarities as well as a parent company as Facebook bought Instagram back in 2012, however despite all of this the two are very different (Page, 2018).

Instagram's popularity and usage has grown over the years with the latest data showing that in June 2018 it reached one billion monthly active users in comparison to September 2017 when it was 800 million users (Statista, Number of monthly active Instagram users from January 2013 to June 2018 (in millions), 2018). The mobile phone application is proving to be one of the most popular social media applications. According to the latest

statistics there are about 25 million businesses on Instagram, which affirms that a social media presence for any company is important. The statistics continue to state that “six in ten online adults have an Instagram account” of which 59% are between the ages of 18 and 29, and 33% are between 30 and 49 years old (Aslam, 2018). Instagram is therefore considered to be a teen and young adult application which helps to narrow down and target posts to suit this demographic.

The notebooks that CastleStudio produces have been well received by the younger audience as they attend school and need to continuously write down notes. If there is anything they can find to boost their interest and motivation in writing and note-taking, they take it. Although many during the market square sales bought the notebook with something else in mind such as an artistic son who sketches, or a daughter who writes a diary. There are many purposes that the notebook can be used for, but the main attraction has been its vivid colours and decorative details on the cover. As the products are appealing visually and photogenetic it is an advantage to use visual sharing online platforms to increase awareness.

Considering Instagram’s social media appearance in Finland, with the local clientele, it is the fourth most used social media application with Facebook being the first. The main users of Instagram are considered teens and young adults however due to its Stories function it has grown a lot as a marketing tool with businesses and therefore gained a higher attendance with local businesses and older users as well (Reinikainen, 2017). It has become a normality for all businesses to be a part of social media and have an account.

2.2.1 Instagram for Business

Once the user has created an account on Instagram it is possible to change it from a personal, free-time format into a business one, which allows better access to analytics. These analytics provide information and data on the number of visitors and views the business profile has had, how well the posts and content have been reached and engaged with, and so much more. This information is valuable in order to know what content works, and what doesn’t. It also gives vital information of the demographics of users who have paid attention to the profile and shown interest (Driver, 2018).

Instagram provides multiple ways for businesses to market their products, however only the organic and free of cost strategies will be discussed as they align with CastleStudio's plan to reach their goal organically. It is possible to share visuals as permanent content for the account or share on the Stories feature. In short, through Instagram Stories an account user can share photos or videos that will only be accessible for the following 24 hours after they have shared them (Chacon, 2018). This means once the time is up the content disappears and does not stay on the user's profile unlike a normally shared post would through the news feed.

A very useful and important feature that Instagram has introduced is its allowance to tag products in visuals with prices and a direct link to the online store (York, How to 10x your sales with Instagram Shopping, 2017). The account has to be verified by Instagram in order to gain the right to use this addition. The tagging of products with prices and a link can also be done through Instagram Stories. This is a helpful promotional tool that simplifies the customers journey to the company online store.

Instagram has also emphasized its use of hashtags or its symbol “ # “. Hashtags are labels for the content shared and they make it easier for others to search topics of interest based on these labels. They are generally meant for words or a combination of words forming a phrase or sentence without spaces. Anyone is able to create their own hashtags which numerous businesses have done (Campbell, 2018). Hashtags and possible strategies that can be used with them will be discussed further in the individual social media strategy sections.

2.3 Facebook

Facebook is a social media platform where users share events and moments with their friends and family whether it's in text or visual form. It can be considered as an advanced version of Instagram. It does not have a similar young feel as the earlier mentioned application does, however it has been around longer and is more popular and known. In comparison to Instagram, Facebook has double the amount of monthly active users. A research conducted during the second quarter of 2018 showed that Facebook had 2.23 billion monthly users. The growth has been much steadier with Facebook than with Instagram which showed a big leap from 2017 to 2018 in active user growth. Monthly active users are described as those who have logged in to their account during the last 30 days

(Statista, Number of monthly active Facebook users worldwide as of 2nd quarter 2018 (in millions), 2018).

Regarding social media awareness Facebook is still the most commonly known online platform that works well on both the desktop and mobile phone form. It was started in 2004 by two college students studying at Harvard University. It wasn't until 2006 when it really took off and became the most popular social media platform with its ability in connecting people around the world (Nations, 2018). Since then it has evolved with the new trends and even had a movie made of it. Figure 1. demonstrates its popularity according to how many Americans are aware of it and use the application. It also shows that Instagram is close behind on the awareness scale which means that these two social media platforms are very important for a business to be present on.

	Percentage of U.S. population
Facebook	94%
Twitter	87%
Instagram	87%
Snapchat	83%
Pinterest	69%
LinkedIn	58%

Figure 1. Snipping tool shot from Statista 2018 of the social media awareness in the US (Feb 2018) (Statista, Social media awareness in the United States as of February 2018, 2018).

Facebook has grown in popularity due to its instant way of communicating and connecting with friends and family. Its popularity has also continued steadily in Finland where the user activity mainly comes from the older age group than those under 18 years (Reinikainen, 2017). This is beneficial for businesses as Facebook contains those old enough to have jobs and their own money. It is the most used social media application in Finland (Reinikainen, 2017).

Facebook has the advantage of working both through the desktop and mobile phone almost flawlessly without differences. It is possible to post and share content on both devices as well as have a similar layout of profiles and business pages. This differs from Instagram which is aimed to only be used through the mobile phone. However, Facebook was primarily made to work through the desktop and then evolved as the use of mobile

phones increased and the applications on it. When Facebook bought Instagram back in 2012 one of their reasons behind the purchase was to gain knowledge and assistance in succeeding with the development of their mobile phone application (Hill, 2012).

2.3.1 Facebook for Business

Similar to Instagram the algorithm according to which posts are seen and shown is confusing and meddlesome. For this reason, on both social media platforms promoting and advertising products organically is difficult as there is no control when and where the advertisement will be shown. However, using the appropriate hashtags and tags the post can be visible to the right audience as well as encouraging those who follow already to share and comment.

Unlike on Instagram where the account is changed to a business version, on Facebook it is possible to create pages and groups. Most commonly a business will open their own page with their business information and social media posts, and this is what the case company CastleStudio has done. Here all company related information is displayed for the followers and customers to see and read. It can be considered an online home for the business.

Much like on Instagram through the business page it is possible to access social media metrics that offer numbers and data on almost everything in relation to reach, engagement and so forth. It is also possible to set up shop on Facebook where on the page there is a separate section for all the products and their direct links to the online store where they are being sold. This allows the follower and customer direct access without them having to go through any extra hurdles in order to purchase the company products.

3 Social media marketing

Social media is generally defined as a tool that people are able to connect through with each other online (Flynn, 2018). It is increasing in value and is a definite must for all companies to have and be a part of. Social media marketing is here to stay with its main goal on increasing awareness within the company's target market through online platforms. All companies, whether they are new or old, must have some sort of presence on any social media platform to be able to connect with their target market and customers.

The main idea of a company using social media is to create relevant and interesting content for their target market. On Instagram this means sharing pictures or videos, whereas on Facebook the variety of posts is larger. It is important to uphold a relationship with the prospects and customers through communication, in order for them to feel that there is a deeper connection and that the company is not only after the profit. Those who pay attention to the company also feel that they deserve an answer in response. Whether it be a positive or negative reaction from someone it is important to show that there is a relationship between the company and customer (Flynn, 2018).

The mass population of this world is shifting more and more online. Not everyone is online and connected but with respect to the target market identified by CastleStudio, that amount is almost nothing in comparison to the amount who is. People are connected to the Internet daily whether it's through social media applications to connect with those they are close to or taking care of daily errands such as reading the news, checking bank statements, ordering missing items, and so on.

Social media has transformed into a communication tool between the business and its prospects. The idea of social media is to give a closer connection to the business, so the customer feels that they are a part of it, and that profit-making is not the only aim of the business as social media is not only used for advertisements. It is often said that the best way for a business to use social media is to provide value and information to their target market and focus very little on selling their actual products (Patel, 2018). This helps to increase the trust between the customer and the business as then they do not feel that they are being forced and pushed to purchase.

Social media has allowed a new form of customer engagement to come forth. A simple definition of what customer engagement is the way in which the business forms a relationship with its customer to increase brand awareness and loyalty (Rouse, 2017). The internet has opened new channels for businesses to grow strong and emotional relationships with its customers. Through these channels opinions and feedback are shared more openly and there is an opportunity for instant contact when questions arise.

It has become a communication tool not only between the business and its customers but also between the customers themselves. Customers are able to give forth their

thoughts in a more open manner and even influence other people's purchasing decisions. The customer's role as creating value for the business has increasingly risen through social media. As they are able to freely voice their opinions for everybody to see many businesses have suffered and succeeded among them (Sashi, 2012). If the customer experience has been positive and they have shared positive feedback publicly this may persuade a hesitant customer to make the purchase, however negative comments have the opposite effect.

In social media marketing the marketing concept has largely shifted from the needs of the seller to that of the needs of the buyer. When the buyer's needs are met and the ultimate end-goal (the sale) has been made then the seller's needs are met. Before the seller had all of the power of controlling their own marketing strategies, however now buyers have the opportunity to interact with others. Customers want to be acknowledged in the modern world and bring forth their value. If they have had a good experience with the company they are happy to share it with others (Sashi, 2012).

3.1 Active and passive approach

There are two basic strategies on how to approach social media marketing. To summarize, the passive social media approach consists of creating the social media content for each profile and the active social media approach is the more interactive strategy of using social media as a tool for communication. These two approaches are needed in order to go forward with the marketing plan and reach the goals, however the extent to which one or the other is used is completely up to the business itself.

The passive approach has none, or very little, interaction with other individuals. It is mainly a one-way conversation in which the business lays forth what it wants the consumers to hear from it and then as a result reach out. When considering the social media platforms this generally focuses on the creation and distribution of the content over each platform. It is what the business puts through and forward with the aim of getting shares, comments and links from their target group (Bunge, 2014).

The active approach means the business is in the community making things happen and having an open communication channel with other individuals, making a more of a two-way conversation than the passive approach. This is when the business makes the effort to answer messages and comments that social media followers have sent. It is when the

business creates an open conversation even with a shared post which includes a question or an invitation for an action (Bunge, 2014).

In the case of CastleStudio both approaches are currently in use, however more planning needs to be prepared for the passive approach. The case company needs to develop a content plan in which each post is planned ahead, instead of creating social media content in the spur of the moment. Due to this the passive approach strategy has yet to prove its success as not much effort or time has been placed here yet. The case company has actively been answering and communicating with its prospects and will continue to do so. Both approaches are vital and neither one outweighs the other on how important they are.

4 SOSTAC

To fully understand and layout strategies for the case company to use in its aim to increase online sales, it is important to analyse the company information at hand. The most useful way to do this is through the analysis of the company's digital marketing plan as this is the most relevant form of analysis to the research topic. The most used and best way to gather all the relevant information is through the digital marketing framework called SOSTAC. The SOSTAC framework was made in the 1990s by PR Smith, who is a business professional in the field of marketing (Swan, 2018). He has professionalized his knowledge on topics such as digital and social media marketing. His book, the SOSTAC Planning System, has been voted as one of the top three business models of all time (PR Smith Biography, 2018).

In short, the framework is designed as a template which helps to clarify and aims to ensure consistency when plans are presented. The term SOSTAC is actually an acronym and it includes six sections plus three key resources which are as follows: situation analysis, objectives, strategy, tactics, action and control. The three key resources are also called the 3 M's which are: Men and Women (labour), Money, Minutes (Smith, 2017). All of these sections will be analysed and looked into with the main research topic in mind.

4.1 Situation analysis

The situation analysis is considered as one of the most important parts of the whole digital marketing plan and should therefore have most of the time dedicated to. It helps to clarify the customers, competitors, resources as well as current market trends (Smith, 2017). It is also considered to be the base for all of the businesses future decisions. This will allow the case company to fully understand and analyse its market.

4.1.1 Customer analysis

Marketers have a very limited amount of men, money and minutes, which in the beginning of the SOSTAC introduction was mentioned as the 3 M's. This technically means that there is not enough time to search, collect and process the needed information for such a thorough research. Small businesses especially do not have the funds to hire external help to do so which is why it is vital to ease the market research in any way possible. For this reason, the most important thing is to figure out the three major points of the customer which answer to: who, why and how. This means looking at who the businesses ideal customers are, why will they purchase products the business sells and how will they buy and what are their steps along the buying journey (Smith, 2017).

Unfortunately, the case company has very little information and experience with their online sales currently, however they do have experience on selling face-to-face to the customer at physical locations. Therefore, the customer analysis will largely be based on the author's experience selling at the Finnish local markets with the most time and effort spent at the Helsinki Market Square. The time spent there was between May and September of 2018 when the tourists begin to visit Helsinki as the summer season began. International cruise ships arriving to the Helsinki harbour were vital as they brought in lots of tourists who would visit the Helsinki Market Square due to its closeness to other tourist attractions and being a tourist attraction itself. From this experience the small handmade business has gained a lot of insight into who their biggest buyers are.

Currently CastleStudio's sales online have been minimal. According to Etsy 13 sales in total have been made during their presence on this online sales platform. Most of the orders have been made from Germany, however the most visits the online store has had have been from Finland. Figure 2. shows a screenshot from the company's Etsy page providing them with the insight as to which nationality has made the most orders and

which has visited their online shop the most. Visits to the online shop have been made from around the world but the goal and aim is now to increase these visits and to turn them from visitors into buyers.

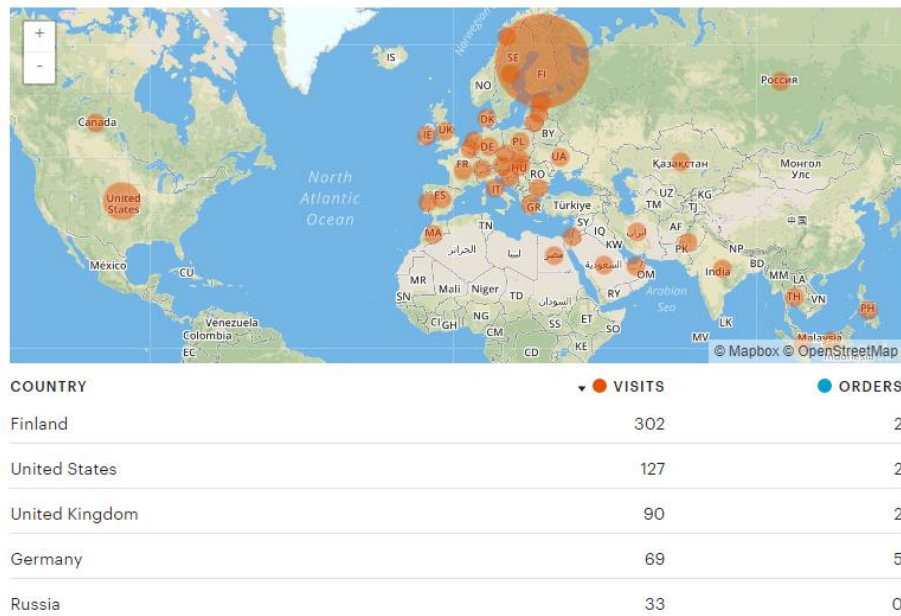
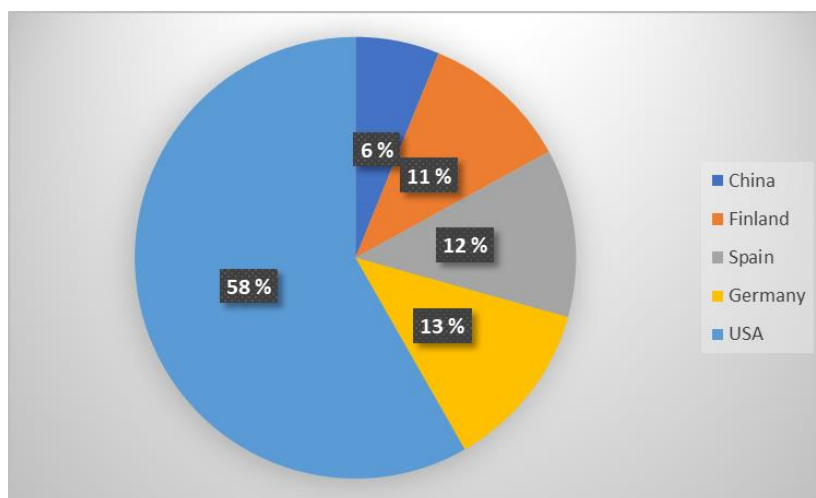


Figure 2. Screenshot from the case company's Etsy insights on online store visitors.

Based on Etsy the businesses biggest buyers are from Germany which also comes to a similar conclusion based on the market selling experience in which the second biggest buyers were Germans. Table 1. below was conducted in order to show the top five nationalities that were making purchases at the market. Clearly without a doubt the biggest buyers were Americans at the market and on Etsy they have ranked as the second highest visitors with two out of thirteen purchases, or orders. Figure 2. and Table 1. clearly show the nationality and location of the target market.

Table 1. Excel graph made by the author based on the sales analytics from the summer season at the market.



Many different nationalities visited the market, however due to the products' handmade production and Finland's high tax rate the products price must be high enough to compensate for the costs and create a profit. Therefore, the price 39€ for a leather notebook was a lot steeper for some than for others. The monthly average income rate for each country varies a lot which also helps to depict why certain nationalities spend more than others. The average monthly income of an American was 3714USD according to a research done in December 2017, which roughly translates to 3218€ (Luther, 2018). This is close to that of Finland and Germany as well which explains why they have made the most purchases as the price of the product hasn't been an obstacle.

Another reasoning behind Americans proving to be such big buyers were because of the non-existence of the language barrier. The author of this research experienced a lot of difficult days when there would be tourists visiting from certain countries such as Spain or China who would have a very poor skill level of any other language than their own. There are multiple countries in which the English language proficiency levels are poor such as China in which the language is rated at a low proficiency level based on research done by the EF English proficiency index (Pariona, 2017). Due to the author having no struggle in selling to Americans and Finns it has decreased the communication barrier and allowed there to be a better connection between the seller and customer which is what might have led to higher sales.

An important point to make as well as is the level of understanding of the handmade industry by the customers. Not everyone is familiar with the amount of effort and time

that is put into making a product without the use of automated machines through cheap labour. The handmade and craft industry has risen in popularity in America where many are beginning to try their skill in entrepreneurship. Also, the population is showing interest in trying these different types of crafts as a hobby or one-time experience (Dobush, 2017). Therefore, the reasoning behind the small Finnish handmade business being on the American handmade selling platform, Etsy, is highly justified and once the online shop has been promoted more it will prove to be successful.

Buyers are increasingly searching for authentic brands and experiences as this adds to their perception of the product quality and brand imagery (Gundlach & Neville, 2012). The story the brand brings forth is a selling point for the customer. As an example, many tourists want to bring home a souvenir made from place they have visited, and it should have a significance and authenticity of this place. The authenticity of a product represents the culture it comes from. The production methods and the craftsman behind the products are a way of building the brand imagery as it also boosts the sales story to the customer. The authenticity of the brand needs to be visible and true for the customer.

One way to bring this forth through social media is sharing with the customers the behind-the-scenes aspects of the production and company life. When authenticity is shown it needs to be seen as non-commercialised. The managers need to relinquish some of their control to the customers and engage them into an open communication of brand meaning (Beverland, 2005). The company needs to tell their story and show who they are. Storytelling is one of the most effective ways of sharing content with people as everyone enjoys a good story.

Considering the demographics of where the target customers are located have now been narrowed down. Both women and men have purchased the products of the case company, however, based on casual observation, the number of women buying has probably been double the amount of men. It is clear that the case company should target women with its products, but it should not forget or ignore its male potential customers. The products are colourful and have lots of details which is why it has been preferred by women and they have shown more interest in writing and drawing than their male counterparts. Many fathers or grandfathers have purchased the case company's products as gifts for their loved ones back home. It is also important to note that many have considered the case company's products as good gift ideas and therefore purchased them as a souvenir.

Continuing with the analysis of the customer demographics when considering the age of the customer it has varied a lot. The minimum has most definitely been the age of a student of 10 who is able to write, draw and keep the notebook in somewhat a good condition. The maximum has been around the age of 65 who still enjoy writing and can tie the thin leather strings to close the notebook. Mainly the product buyers have been between 25 and 50 who have enough income to purchase handmade products as well as enjoy using notebooks for their own purpose, or then have loved the idea to bring home to their children or another loved a souvenir.

In the Appendix 1 two buyer personas have been carefully crafted out in order to give the reader a proper understanding of who the case company's customers are. The buyer personas have been crafted based on the selling experiences the author has had over the summer season at the Helsinki market square. This has also helped to narrow down the target market in the sense of where to promote and attempt to advertise the products online. Fortunately, through the two social media platforms some insight has been given in to demographics of the current followers. The number of followers is still considerably small and needs definite improvement in order to help boost the online sales.

Currently on Facebook the case company has 91 likes and 90 follows which means very little for a business page. This also does not guarantee full access to all the possible insight analytics which are only provided after a certain amount of people have liked and followed the Facebook page. For this reason, the analytics based on Facebook is currently almost impossible to do as almost all of the likes and follows are by the business owners' and workers' friends and family. An ideal amount of likes and follows for the case company would be around 5000 in order to ensure that when others see the business page they trust it instead of doubting its authenticity. Reaching this amount seems high and unrealistic with the amount of follows and likes that it is now, but with the strategies that will be implemented this should be doable in a short period of time.

Whereas the business Facebook page is lacking in progress and success, the Instagram account has done a little better. Figure 3. and Figure 4. are two screenshots of the information the social media application provides of the follower demographics which include the nationality, age and gender. Currently all of this data matches that which has been discussed and analysed in this customer analysis section of the SOSTAC framework. The figures below also depict the kind of information that the analytics provides. This is

all essential information for the marketer to know in order to understand what kind of content works with the account followers and where improvements can be made.



Figure 3. Instagram insight analytics showing the amount of followers and their location.

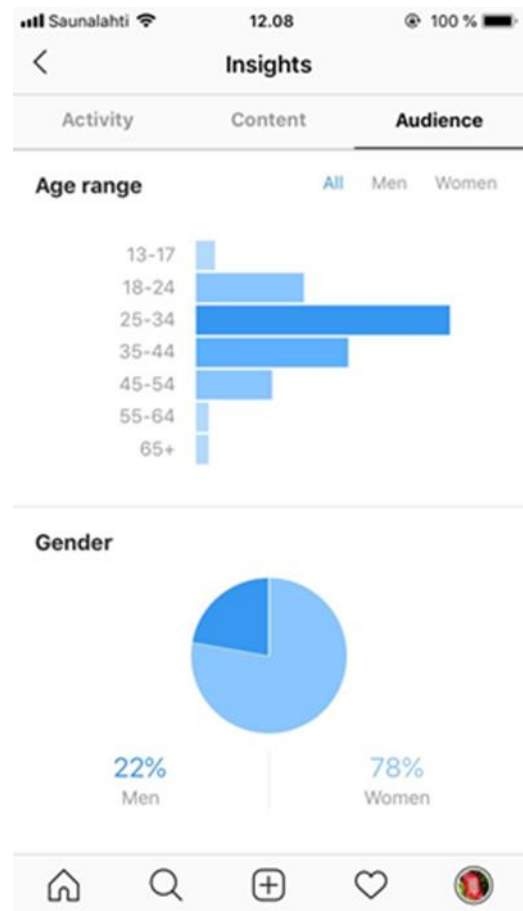


Figure 4. Instagram insight analytics showing the age range and gender of followers.

To summarize the offline customers have given the case company a lot of valuable information according to which they will target this same customer group online. Based on Instagram the case company's account followers are within this group as well which justifies that the target market is right, now just the online marketing strategies need to be enhanced and polished in order to make those interested in the products actually purchase them. The buyer personas found in the Appendix 1. will help the case company to visualize their customers and know better how to reach them.

4.1.2 Competitor analysis

There is no shortage of competition and there is always at least one company who is offering the same, if not similar, product or service. This is why it is important for each

company to understand who their competitors are from the vast selection of them and what their advantages are in regard to their social media accounts and marketing. For this section the author has narrowed down the case company's competition and what the case company's competitive advantages are.

The handmade (or craft) industry has grown in popularity and represents a large part of growing small businesses (Archer, 2018). The reason for this is that the start-up costs are considerably lower, and entrepreneurs have the ability to create their products at home. The main idea behind the craft industry is that it is all handmade and the products are one of a kind and unique (Archer, 2018). For this reason, competing in the handmade industry is tough as there are many talented individuals who are able to produce similar products but with their own personal twist.

One competitive advantage that places the company's products above all others is the variety of colour it comes in. Often leather notebooks are preserved in original dark colours of browns to give it an old-fashioned look and sustain the original leather colouring and feel. In Finland there are numerous leather product producers but none who produce as colourful versions of notebooks as CastleStudio. This has proven to be the case company's standout point and has at the local market really drawn the attention of buyers. The authenticity of the handmade product being made in the country that the tourists are visiting is a big motivation for them to make the purchase.

The outlook of the product has proven to catch the attention of the customer and draw them in, however what has usually finalized the sales deal is its ability to be refilled. The binder mechanism on the inside of the notebook allows the buyer to continue to use it for as long as they want to as the leather is a thick, durable material that is made to last. Differentiation is high for the case company; however, it is possible for any competitor to imitate and duplicate. The product can be copied however the story and authentic Finnish handmade feeling cannot.

On Etsy when someone clicks on the search and types in "leather notebook" about 28,622 search results appear (Etsy, 2018). To compete in the online world and stand out against competitors it is important to bring forth the aspects that make the product unique. With the case company it is the wide variety of colour options as well as the playful images on the covers giving them a personal touch. The binder mechanism is

another function that makes the product different. It allows the customer to continue using the product for a long time.

If the search results are refined to using specific words such as “refillable” or “colourful” the results narrow down but are still in the thousands. Therefore, in order to stand out with the competition the case company must refine its search engine optimization (SEO) skills to be able to have their products found through the search results more easily and quickly. The results are based on the name of the products and when the case company began their online journey they were unaware of this, however the Etsy online store is undergoing a makeover in which everything will be optimized for better search results and to look more appealing for the visitor with new images.

On the two social media accounts the competition is very high and it is important to compete with high quality photos and videos as well as valuable content that gives the followers a reason to come back. In both platforms the competition is between other popular notebook profiles, which are numerous. There are profiles with large follower bases and those with small ones, however they are all in competition and it is very hard to narrow down from a long list which ones are the biggest competitors as none have the exact same product in the same style as the case company. Despite none having the same product the case company needs to increase its visibility to keep up with the other accounts.

4.1.3 SWOT analysis

This marketing tool is a particularly effective means of summarizing the company’s internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as its external threats and opportunities. It provides valuable information on what the business is able to do. It is presented in a square table for faster and better assessment of the company’s position (Investopedia, SWOT Analysis, 2018). In this case the SWOT analysis will be done from the point-of-view of the case company’s social media standing.

To begin the analysis there is one aspect that can be seen as both a strength and a weakness of the company which is its size. As there are currently only three people working within the company it minimizes the amount of time that can be placed into certain aspects of the business. The author has been given the reins of handling the sales and marketing side of the company. However due to the limited amount of time and

energy there is within a day, sacrifices have had to be made. Despite there being a lack in time for everything, the small size of the company has been an asset as everyone has been up to speed with fast-moving developments and able to contribute in helping. It is easier to pass on information and there has been no communication barrier. Shortly, the opportunity costs of limited staff resources are compensated by the relative speed and clarity of internal communication. This has also been of assistance to the author as others have been able to contribute with ideas in matters of marketing and social media.

The internal strengths that the case company possesses is its understanding and knowledge of its product and its production as well as its current customers and target market. All three workers in the business have a background in business education and all have an understanding of entrepreneurship. Due to its small size the business is able to adapt and change with the new trends and as the products are made by hand they are customizable. Within such a small business, decisions are easily made and new processes pushed forward. Also, the personnel is eager to learn new things and learn along the way, this online store and its promotion being the current centre point.

The internal weaknesses are again its size as it is a small business the amount of capital is small. There are not much extra funds that can be placed which is why the digital and social media marketing must be done organically. The business is still rather unknown due to being quite new and therefore has not been able to reach the right target group yet. As the product pricing is highly based on the material, product, labour and tax costs the prices are quite high for some which is why it is impossible to sell to everyone. As the business employees are young and have a business background they have not specialized in any specific field and therefore lack specific knowledge in certain areas.

The external opportunities the case company has are its promising potential growth options. The business is still so new and the way the products are made it is able to adapt to whatever trends come along, which means it has the ability to test try different things to see what works best and makes the most success. It has proven over the summer to sell well and has a demand which means now it only needs to reach the right target group to start growing online as well. Due to the vast online world and the Etsy online platform the business has the ability to reach a large audience with its product. It is able to reach even those who it is not specifically targeting, and this can be done through the two social media platforms

The external threats that the case company faces are possible copycats and the continuously growing handmade industry. As the product is not patented it is possible for someone else to learn the process of making the products and beginning to sell the same or similar ones. Leather notebooks are popular and there are many who work with leather, so it is not unheard of that many make the same products. The handmade industry is also continuously growing as more and more people get the courage to try as entrepreneurs to sell what they are good at. The dangers of the online world are its ever changing and evolving trends and fads. It is important for businesses to keep up with them in order to be considered current.

Another important threat to point out is the increasing amount of people favouring products that are sustainable, recycled and that have not caused animals any harm. The aversion to products made from leather is changing and there is increasing growth in veganism (Veganism, 2018). In years to come it is possible that leather will be harder to obtain and become more expensive than it already is. When this change will happen the leather products will become luxury products which is a direction that the case company can look into when the time comes.

Table 2. summarizes the points mentioned in the above SWOT analysis. This was analysed and conducted by the author based on her experiences working within the case company. The case company has big potential to reach its goal in increasing its sales online, however it needs the effort and work of the company personnel to reach it. Due to it being new and small the company faces many obstacles as it continues to grow and it will need to adapt accordingly to these new threats.

Table 2. SWOT analysis of the case company.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - experience and knowledge - small company - adaptability - know-how - variety of customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - small company, labour - lack of capital - new, unknown - handmade pricing - lack of personnel knowledge, experience
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promising growth potential - ability to reach a large market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - copycats - increasing competition

- social media	- continuously evolving internet trends - veganism
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4.2 Objectives

In the second section of the SOSTAC digital marketing framework the next step is to analyse the goals and objectives of the digital marketing strategy for the case company. The framework suggests to outline the mission and vision statements as well as to make sure the business objectives follow the SMART goals principles, which means to make sure that the objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-efficient (Smith, 2017). Further along it is advised to look in to the RACE framework which analyses the customer life cycle from the first contact until the end when they become loyal customers.

Whilst analysing the objectives it is important to pay attention to the metrics and numbers which are better known as the key performance indicators (KPI). The direct definition of this “are a set of quantifiable measures that a company uses to gauge its performance over time.” (Investopedia, Key Performance Indicators - KPI, 2018). The business’s progress is measured using these metrics in order to check whether the goals have been met. Therefore, it is important to mention them as well during this part of the objectives section.

4.2.1 Mission

The mission of CastleStudio is to provide the finest leather notebooks and other leather products. The company aims to bring customers a personal product that is long-lasting and will motivate and inspire them to be their best selves.

4.2.2 Vision

The vision statement is more company oriented than the mission statement which is more customer and market focused (Smith, 2017). The vision statement looks further into the future of where the company wants to be in the following years. A strong vision

helps those in the company to focus on what matters most and what the company wants to achieve.

CastleStudio's vision is to grow as a company in order to increase its sales, both online and offline. The company aims to bring forth authentic, Finnish handmade products that are made to last and reuse as the notebooks have a refilling aspect to them. The aim is to reach its markets and establish a base there in order to grow and possibly expand into a physical store and create its own website store.

4.2.3 RACE approach

This framework is one way of looking at the company's objectives with how the customer moves along the customer life cycle which begins from a customer's interest into finally becoming a loyal customer (Smith, 2017). RACE is once again an acronym and stands for: Reach, Act, Convert and Engage. It is an important tool with which the business is able to determine where they need more effort and how they can aim to achieve returning, loyal customers who continue to buy.

In the 'reach' stage of this framework, customers are encouraged to visit the company's social media pages and online store. This is generally done through physical contact when a buyer shows interest in the product and becomes a potential customer. This way even if they do not buy anything a contact has been made and they could in the future potentially make a purchase.

During the 'act' stage the customers need to believe that it was worth it for them to find the company and its products. They need to feel that the product the company is offering is somehow going to solve a problem they have in that given time. In this case it is important that the case company shows how the products can be used through visuals or text and the social media content needs to be valuable and interesting. The link between the social media accounts and the online webstore needs to be emphasized in order to ease their online shopping experience. However, it is important not to push the sale too far as the potentially interested buyer does not want to feel forced into the sale.

In 'convert' the potential customers need to be directed into buying. Results from the earlier two stages need to come forth and here it really shows whether the effort has been worth it or not. The aim for the company is to sell its products, not to only post about

it on social media accounts. Due to CastleStudio's low online sales it is not possible to yet understand whether the customers have found the products through the social media accounts or by happenstance.

In the final stage, 'engage', the loyalty of those customers that have already purchased the company products comes forth. Throughout the whole experience the customer needs to feel that they are not being cheated and they receive the undivided attention of the company. Here those potential customers from the first stage can be turned into loyal ones who will continue to come back. This is another important goal for businesses to achieve as loyal customers are often valuable advocates of the business and can influence the purchasing choices of others.

At the moment the most important part that the case company needs to focus on is reaching its target market. A number of followers has been gained through both social media platforms but whether any has become buyers is still unknown. For this reason, the number of followers and visitors on both social media accounts need to rise in order to increase the number of potential buyers. The link to the online store is visible and easily accessible on both platforms which allows quick access for everyone to view the all of the case company products.

4.2.4 KPI's

KPI stands for key performance indicators which in this case are social media metrics. It is important in addition to just analysing the followers and amount of 'likes' to look further at the numbers. There are many different metrics that can be analysed from social media but the main points to look at are those that look into whether the company is reaching the right target group, and engaging with the right people, if followers on social media accounts are inquiring about the company's products and who actually become customers. These four points can also be linked back to the RACE approach that was discussed earlier and translated as four main categories: engagement, reach, leads and conversion (Sukhraj, 2017).

Engagement as a social media metric analyses the number of likes, shares and comments the specific social media account gets. If a given post has a high reach but a low engagement it is considered bad as this means that no marketing message is being put out there as the ones that have been reached are not otherwise interested. On Facebook

engagement is very important as the application itself shows those posts on other people's news feeds that have gotten some interactions and filters it out for others to see as well.

The same KPI's do not apply to all social media accounts but in this case, they do to a larger extent. Generally, when analysing the engagement levels, they are considered as the amount of reactions or actions the post has received such as clicks, likes, shares and comments, and it also analyses whether the post increases profile visits and follower amounts. These two apply to both social media accounts and are fortunately supplied on both platforms through the insight analysis that the applications offer.

When analysing the metrics related to reach it means looking into how far the social media post has travelled and how many have seen it. This shows how many have potentially seen it making the amounts only an estimate, whereas when analysing the engagement metrics there is a specific sum as there is a specific number of followers, for example. Here it is important to look at metrics such as impressions, which tells the company how often the post showed up on someone else's newsfeed or timeline giving them a chance to get to know who the company is. Also, traffic data needs to be checked as it analyses fully all of the information related to the amount of traffic at the company website, social media accounts and online store.

When measuring leads it comes down to how many of engaged followers really want to make a purchase of the company's products. This is important as it shows the clearest result profit-wise for the business. The aim with all of the metrics above is to understand what has worked and lead the customer to make the purchase. Therefore, it is important to understand what each metric stands for and whether it is working in favour of the business.

Due to the case companies small amount of sales online and little action on social media it is yet hard to analyse the current metrics to see potential and correct results. With the research done the case company will begin to implement the strategies passed on in order to reach their goal and begin to see some actual results. The KPI's are important in order to understand whether any of the effort made on each social media account is actually worth it, or just a waste of time.

4.2.5 SMART objectives

SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time. It is a goal setting framework that helps to make the business goals more clear and reasonable. It gives a timeline and deadline for the goals and helps to keep track and measure them (Manktelow, 2018). It is an important tool in analysing the business objectives and is therefore used and mentioned here.

The goals should be very specific. In the case of CastleStudio the clear social media goal is to increase sales as they are currently almost non-existent. To start off it would ideally have at least a couple of steady sales a week, to have new customers rolling in at a steady pace as the products are made when the order comes in. It is vital to get the sales rolling and started as through the online selling platform Etsy it is possible for everyone to see how many sales each seller has had. The seller seems more reliable and trustworthy if they have more sales.

These goals need to be measurable in order to track the company progress. As mentioned previously to start off with it would be ideal to have a couple steady sales a week and increase from there. This would hopefully increase to the point where there would be at least one online sale a day through the company's online store. However, to start off weekly sales would be ideal as this would also help to steady the production to figure out at what speed the products need to be made. The results would also be measured according to the mentioned KPI's as there would be more data to analyse.

The goals also need to be realistic and achievable. It is perfectly achievable to begin with a couple of sales a week in order to create a customer base and find out the best ways to reach them. This can then add focus to the best ways of targeting the customers and creating further traffic on the store. For a beginning this is ideal and as the case company has not had any experience on how online sales go in the beginning the steadier the orders the better and easier it is to handle.

The goals must be current and relevant to the company's general vision. As the physical sales have stopped due to the tourist season ending at the Helsinki Market Square, it is important for the company to adjust its sales online in order to create profit during the off-season time. Even though the case company will be attending other fairs and events such as week-long Christmas markets in December the events are not as constant as

everyday selling at the market square during the summer. The increasing of the online sales is very current and relevant as it helps to increase brand awareness as well as help to grow the business itself. Otherwise the business will become very reliant on the summertime when it sells at the market. It needs to create a base to have a sales outlet all year round.

The goals need to be time-efficient and have a certain deadline. Currently two of the CastleStudio employees are taking care of the Etsy online store, but one is having all control over the social media accounts and marketing side. The author herself has been given this task and as the summer time has ended with the daily physical sales she has more time to focus on this task. By the end of the year 2018 the goal is to have at least 40 sales online on Etsy which seems very reasonable, although in fact it is a very small amount. However, in order to get those sales, it requires a lot of work on the digital marketing side. It requires a lot of effort to reach the target market and make the product more available.

The objective has been clear from the beginning of the thesis which has been to increase online sales through the two social media platforms. This is very relevant, achievable and specific. There are numerous others way through which sales could be increased online such as through other forms of marketing tactics as email, website building, blogging and so forth, but the company has chosen the social media marketing path. This helps the person in charge to narrow down the numerous different options into a specific direction.

4.3 Strategy

The aim of this section is to set the strategies that will help to reach the objectives. The company's brand positioning and online value proposition (OVP) are solid steps to start with as they help to give the business an idea of what value the business and customer will receive from their brand and online presence. Another way to look at different strategies is through the TOPPP SITE tool which PR Smith created as a way of helping businesses to build a strategy (Smith, 2017).

4.3.1 Brand positioning and OVP

Kotler defines brand positioning as follows:

the act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market (Kotler, 2003)

In short it is how the brand is seen through the customers mind. Brand positioning strategies aim to shape the customers preferences and to be seen as the more favourable, different and credible choice in comparison to the competitors (Marion, 2018). This is also considered to be closely linked with the customer analysis that was done earlier as it helped to understand the company customers, however this is considered from the customers point-of-view and how they want to see the business.

CastleStudio produces handmade leather products, mainly notebooks, in Finland. They have now had their official long-term physical selling experience at the Helsinki centre market square where they were between May and September 2018. The company has proved that its products sell and there is a demand for them. The main catch for customers with the products was its handmade quality, the sturdiness of the leather and possibility to refill. The current trend is reusability which is highly emphasized with the company's products.

This is the image that the business wants to portray in the mind of the customer. The business wants the customer to feel that the product was made specifically for them with their favourite colour and image on the cover. With the ring mechanism that opens on the inside of the notebook the customer is able to add whatever they wish on the inside making it completely their own. It is a very personal item to have and to be creative with. It is a way for the buyer to stand out and show who they are with bold colours.

OVP (online value proposition) in short is the customer value proposition online. It is the value that the business provides the customer that is not necessarily linked to the product or service itself (SmartInsights, 2018). This considers ways in which to reach the customer through valuable content through social media accounts as well as ways to provide a smooth online shopping journey for the customer through the businesses online store. It can be considered as a form of customer engagement as the aim is to catch the customers attention and open a communication channel between the two (Sashi, 2012).

4.3.2 TOPPP SITE

Further along his book PR Smith introduces a short summary framework for the digital marketing strategy which is the TOPPP SITE (Smith, 2017). They are nine key components that include target markets, objectives, positioning, processes, partnerships and sequence, integration, tactical tools and engagement. Some of these components have already been thoroughly discussed in this research text, however some are new.

With the help of the digital marketing strategy CastleStudio has managed to narrow down its target market to the point that it knows where and how it will reach its potential customers. Further along the research the specifics of this will be brought forth such as the different approaches that will be needed to do on both, or each separate, social media platform. The ways on how to reach the target market are different on each online account which is why they will be detailed later.

The small company will need to introduce and look into new processes such as Google Analytics which has proven to be vital in order to understand the social media metrics, or KPI's. Google Analytics is a free website analytics tool (provided by Google) that helps to analyse the traffic on the business websites (Su, 2017). This tool can also be used to analyse the social media websites providing extra information and data that the application insights does not. For this reason, it is important for the case company to learn this tool and take it into use in order to fully achieve their objectives in their digital marketing plan.

The case company has made partnerships with other businesses forming B2B relationships and providing larger orders to be sold in souvenir shops in the centre of Helsinki and at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport. These partnerships have helped to uproot the production of leather products from a hobby to a business as the first large orders came from stores who wanted to sell the products. Although now the case company is not actively searching for new stores to form B2B partnerships with, the business is not closed off to them. Other forms of partnerships could be formed through social media with influencers, however this will be discussed later when introducing specific approaches for both social media accounts.

Sequences, or stages, consider the easy flow of each strategy and how it should look smooth, barely even noticeable, in the eye of the customer. CastleStudio is such a small

unknown brand still that they definitely need to increase their visibility among online platforms in order to gain a following. The main idea can be to increase visibility but it cannot be the only factor. The business has to keep in mind that it needs to produce valuable content that is a pleasure to follow and see, in order to keep up its credibility and increase trust among followers and the company.

Tactical tools in place have been thoroughly discussed throughout the thesis as the social media platforms are Instagram and Facebook. These are the two main key components of the case company's digital marketing plan as all of the online marketing will currently be done through these platforms. Once the targets and objectives have been reached through social media the business is open to revising its plans and trying new tools.

4.4 Tactics

The tactics in the SOSTAC framework consider points such as the techniques that will be used and what they are that can help to improve these tactics. It considers how exactly the business will reach its main objectives, which is very closely linked to the earlier strategy segment of the framework (Smith, 2017). As these two segments are so closely linked this section will be summarized.

The case company will reach its objectives through different strategies that will be fully discussed and detailed later in the research. They have been considered appropriate for their ideal social media platform as this is the main form of marketing that will be done online. Despite the two social media platforms being very similar they are very different and there are numerous ways of approaching other accounts with the goal of gaining more visibility and a larger following.

4.5 Action

This section aims to look at who does what within the business and what actions need to be done in order to reach the objectives. This means implementing the strategies set and having a clear understanding who within the business is in charge of it and takes full responsibility (Smith, 2017). When all of the planning has been done it is time to put the plan in action.

As the case company is very small there is only one employee who will be in charge of taking care of the online sales store and the social media accounts. Help from the others is guaranteed and always there if necessary, however it will be the main responsibility of one employee only. This can either work for the business's benefit or be a disadvantage, unfortunately due to being such a small business with very little extra funds they have to have to try it as it is.

It is important for the strategies to be set into motion as soon as possible in order to reach the sales target online by the end of the year. The sooner the plans are set in motion the faster the results begin to show. It is also largely a trial to see what kind of strategies work with this handmade business and what doesn't. Each business is different with a different target market and something that works for the competitor may not work for someone else, which is why the case company has to set forward its own strategies. This way the business will find its own path in the online world.

4.6 Control

In the final section of the SOSTAC framework the focus is on measuring the success of the set objectives. Here the case company needs to get more familiar with its understanding of each social media accounts analytics information as well as Google Analytics. As mentioned earlier in the research it is still too early to provide any KPIs of the current sales and success, however once positive changes begin to happen the business needs to be aware of them. As discussed earlier in the objectives section KPIs are set with each step that needs measuring and in order to have these measurements and understandings the company has to do a trial basis of posts of what will potentially work with the target market. In order to measure any results, the case company needs to begin providing them.

5 Content marketing

Content marketing is defined as:

a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience – and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action (Patel, 2018)

To clarify this simply means building a long-term strategy that focuses on having a strong relationship with the target audience by producing high-quality content that is relevant to them on daily basis (Patel, 2018). Content marketing proves to the audience that the business really cares and values them. As the world has become much louder and busier people feel more and more neglected which means attention is one of the most valuable resources to be provided.

When introducing a content marketing strategy, it should outline the key business and customer needs and in what way the content offered will address them. This means figuring out a way that solves the customers, prospects and audience's problems and in turn helps to grow the business. There are no universal templates for developing this strategy, it is merely a lot of figuring out what content plan works best for the given business. There are many, many different options of what could be included into the content which makes this section important as it helps to narrow down the direction.

Content marketing follows the three simple steps of pushing on the person's pain point, agitating that pain and then finally offering a solution. To do this the business needs to fully understand their customer and be able to push these three steps at the correct time. There are three basic stages on the customer's journey to finally deciding to buy from the business and for each stage separate content needs to be created. The three basic stages are: awareness, consideration and decision (Patel, 2018).

In the first stage it is important to teach the audience of the business. The audience does not know the existence of the business and its products and therefore needs to be introduced to them. The content published on the social media account should not be pushy to sell but entertaining and something the audience enjoys seeing on a weekly basis. Once a large enough audience has grown and the brand image has become stronger, the audience will mind less if the content is more about the discussion of the products and selling them.

Content marketing helps to raise awareness for the business and can also help to guide people towards the consideration phase of whether they might buy the products the business sells. This phase considers those returning back to the business by loyally following and commenting on shared content and reacting. Before prospects become buyers, they need to feel that they can trust the business and for that they need to understand and see the businesses brand image and their tone of voice. This is where the business

needs to create content that builds trust and the relationship between the prospect and business.

The final stage is when the results show on whether the content plan has worked on turning the audience into customers. This is where the reward for all of the work before starts showing. However, at this stage it is important to show to the customer that the business will deliver upon what it has earlier stated. From here on it is possible to gain loyal customers who will continue to return for more.

Social media has proven to be one of the most powerful tools to use content marketing online. All businesses have moved to use it to their advantage using their own voice. Large businesses have found their approach in connecting with their audience to create a trusting relationship. Social media is amazing at promoting brands as it promotes relationships (Patel, 2018). Also, on social media the audience only follows a specific account because they enjoy their content, not necessarily because they like the products.

In order to see how well the content plan is working it is important to follow the analytics. This is fortunately provided by both of the social media accounts by giving insights into each shared post as well as comparing them all together to see which worked the best. It is also important to keep the content schedule organized and ready, to improve overall effectiveness. Through a premade content schedule each social media post has been planned down to the picture and text which speeds up the process that when the time comes everything is ready to be posted.

There are two different types of content that can be created on social media which are curated and original content. Original content is specifically created for social media and usually is linked to the business in some form, such as through a campaign. Curated content refers to content that is shared from other sources on the internet (Jackson, 2017). Currently for the case company the best form of content to be created of these two is original as it creates an authentic connection between the business and its audience. This way the audience will see how much time the business has spent to share a certain photo or video with them.

5.1 Case company's content marketing plan

In the case of the CastleStudio a content plan has not been set. Before the social media posts have been done spur-of-the-moment with very little planning. This needs to be modified and adapted in order to increase brand awareness and be able to compete with larger brands with bigger follower amounts on their social media accounts. Due to the research topic being related to the two social media accounts it helps to narrow down what type of content will be displayed on each profile.

On Instagram visuals, photos and/or videos, are only used. Here the case company needs to adapt a theme in which each post is made to have a unity on its profile account. Many business accounts adopt different styles to make their profile appealing to the eye with all of the visuals together side-by-side as well as individually when they appear on a follower's news feed. This is what the case company needs to put more effort in order to gain a larger following.

Figure 5. and Figure 6. are screenshotted pictures in which Figure 5. shows the case company's current Instagram feed and Figure 6. shows what it will look like based on its content plan and strategy. The emphasis has now been placed on a theme in which there are two similar photos shared after which a business-related post is shared with a frame, this will mean sharing anything that is current with the business such as its attendance at a Christmas market. This scheduled post plan was created through a preview application that is available through the app store. It helps Instagram users to plan their posting schedule ahead of time and to see how everything will look together.

The idea behind this new theme is that it looks more appealing and clear as the visuals are separated more from another. In Figure 5. with the current layout of the case company's account all of the visuals are in a mix together with too much happening in the sense that the viewers eye does not rest but instead frantically tries to get all of the information in without fully understanding it. With Figure 6. the theme settles down and is clearer to the viewer that if they wish to see the smaller framed images closer they can do so by clicking on the image. The new format of the profile account is clearer as all of the visuals look better together and they also work well alone when appearing on follower's news feed.

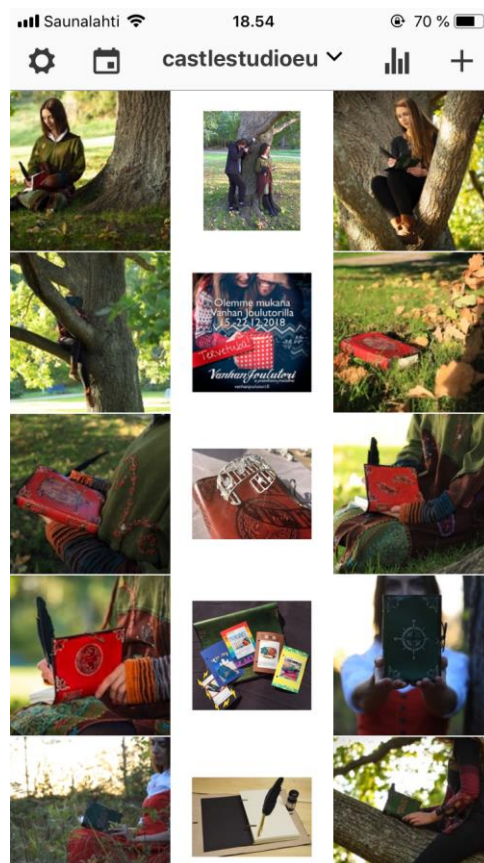
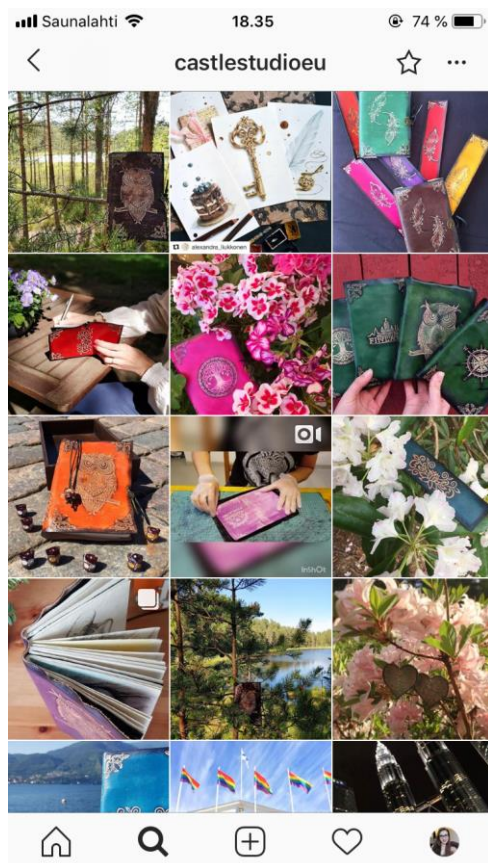


Figure 5. Current Instagram account profile and news feed of CastleStudio.

Figure 6. How the case company's account profile and news feed will look with the new plan.

The results of this new plan are unknown. However, based on the new photos and new theme it is more appealing to the eye. It is important that it works both ways as when a new follower lands on another's account the first impression they will have is that effort has been made to make everything look professional together but that they still enjoy seeing the accounts posts individually on their own news feed. This is how the case company will draw in its target audience and increase its brand awareness. After this has been begun to make progress and there is proof of a significant growth within its followers and amount of people it reaches, the business will lightly begin to publish more sales related posts and advertisements.

A large benefit that these two social media accounts share is that they are connected to each other in the sense that whatever is shared on Instagram can be shared on Facebook as well. This speeds up the process when sharing content as it only needs to be modified a little on Facebook such as removing certain tags that work on Instagram but not on Facebook. It also helps the planning of the content as both accounts can have

the same posts, however for Facebook more variety is required as the options for creating content are much larger. Instagram is restricted to sharing visuals whereas on Facebook it is possible to share anything from visuals to blog posts to polls and questionnaires.

For Facebook the content plan strategy is a little bit different. Whereas on Instagram the way to reach the target audience is by sharing quality images and videos with the appropriate hashtags and tags, on Facebook the same visuals can be shared, however they need to be with more variety in text and layout. The case company will share some of the same visuals from Instagram to Facebook, but otherwise the Facebook page will be largely focused on sharing valuable information regarding the products such as leather care, creativity ideas for the notebooks, where to purchase different pockets to add inside the ring binder and so on. The Facebook page will encourage their customers to be creative through blog posts, videos, workshop events and so on. This brings forth a variety of different content options for the case company and also opens a communication channel with customers.

With the information obtained from the customer analysis in the SOSTAC framework the case company is now able to direct its energy into creating content that is suitable for their target market. As the two social media platform users are different it is advisable to create different content for each platform. It is possible for visuals to overlap and be used in both, however the text should be modified according to the possible readers. The two plans and ideas have now been laid forth for the case company to be using.

5.2 SEO

SEO is an acronym for search engine optimization which needs to be taken into account when considering the content, and what text and hashtags will be used. This means really understanding what the target audience will search for and how to make the process of finding the case company easier for them. It is important to optimize, whether it be a website, social media account or webstore, in accordance to search engines for better results (Goodwin, 2018).

In order to gain results through search engines it is important to understand how they operate. Google has its own ways of picking up what is showed first both organically and through paid ads. The aim for the small handmade business CastleStudio is to, however,

succeed in its social media accounts which has its own special term called SMO, social media optimization. It is about strategically creating and maximizing the social media plan in order to reach and connect with the target audience (Jackson, 2017).

A core part of figuring out the SEO strategy content marketing-wise is to focus on which phrases and topics the businesses target audience is searching, which means doing a keyword research. It helps to both find the actual target audience members to make initial contact as well as it helps to know what keywords to use when making social media posts. This also applies to the keywords used on a specific social media profile which then refers back to the SMO strategy. The account profile is the foundation of the character the case company builds for its target audience (Jackson, 2017). If it is weak, it will receive poor results.

Figure 7. depicts the effectiveness of SEO. It shows that through short keywords it is almost impossible to get discovered through and very difficult to compete against bigger name-brands. However, if the search is more descriptive it has a higher result of gaining awareness. This is what the case company needs to focus on, on reaching better search results with descriptive phrases that are specific to the business. They also need to be made known to the audience. These keywords need to be placed in all social media posts and on the products on the Etsy store. The keywords currently used circle around the colours, images, material, production methods, and product features.

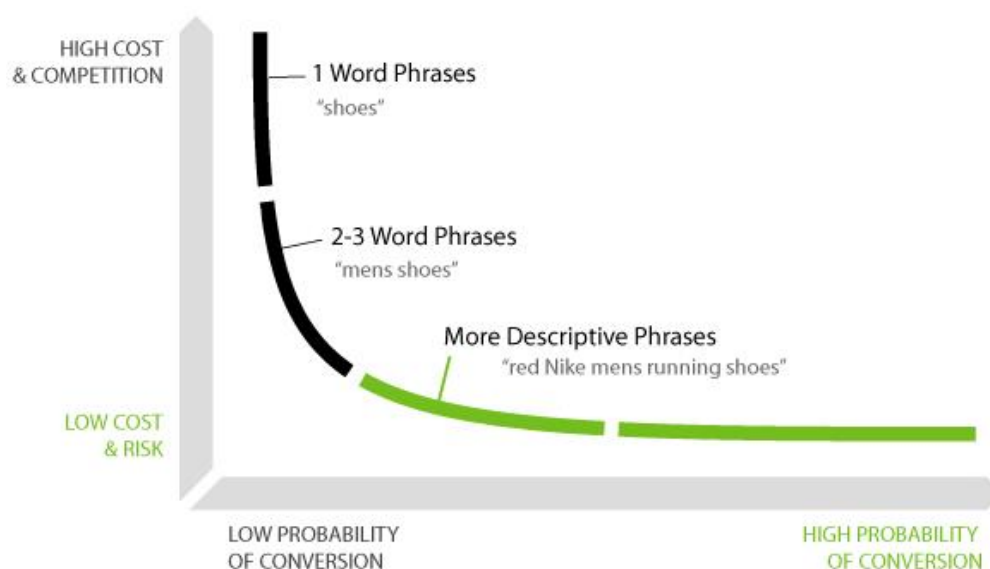


Figure 7. Effectiveness of SEO (Patel, 2018).

6 Instagram

Instagram has different functions and features that Facebook does not have. Due to this below is an analysis of all the features that Instagram has to offer that the case company may utilize in order for them to reach their goal. Following this section comes a similar detailed analysis of the features that Facebook offers. These are important to differentiate as the range of followers and viewers are different on both online platforms which means that the case company needs to understand all the advantages each platform offers in order to reach them.

6.1 Instagram Stories

Due to the changes that Instagram made to its display of the news feed it is no longer (nor has it been for a while) in accordance to the chronological order of when posts were made. The algorithm now shows posts in accordance to popularity and what the viewer might enjoy. For these reasons it is a smart idea to use the Stories section of the social media application to an advantage as this most active Instagram users flip through (Driver, 2018). This way if a post is lost in a user's news feed they will at least see something from the business on its Stories function.

On Stories the content is visible for the following 24 hours after it has been shared. It can range from photos or videos that are taken in that moment or ones that are in the mobile phone's camera roll. Special effects or filters can be added for some extra detail. It is also possible to add tags, hashtags and locations which further along help to promote whatever the content on Stories aim was. This is the main benefit for the business as through tags and hashtags further knowledge of the business is introduced and brought forth (Loren, The Ultimate Guide to Instagram Hashtags 2018, 2018).

There are also analytics that offer similar information as the insights do for the content. These analytics share the engagement and results the Stories post have made. It is possible to see whether viewers flipped through the content without watching it or whether some reaction towards the content has been made. This helps the business to understand whether the content provided is actually interesting and valuable to the followers.

6.2 Hashtags

Hashtags were introduced earlier on in the research as labels that help to organize and categorize the content so that when a label is searched within the application a list of related posts will be shown. Through the insights offered by the business account profile it is possible to see how successful the hashtags on a given post have been in influencing the amount of reaches. This helps to know whether or not the right hashtags are being used in order to reach the right target audience. If the numbers are low on how many were reached based on the hashtags it is necessary to try new ones.

Earlier this year Instagram updated its application to allow users to follow hashtags as well. Before it was only possible to follow other profiles, however now it has been extended so that whenever anything on a public profile is posted using the followed hashtag it will appear on their own newsfeed (Loren, *The Ultimate Guide to Instagram Hashtags* 2018, 2018). This means that the keywords the case company shares in its posts can be followed and the post that has been made can be seen by someone who has no prior of the account before. Through hashtags SEO is possible to utilize the most on social media.

Businesses are able to create branded hashtags that are unique to their business whether it's the name, motto or something to do with their brand identity. These help to connect themes under each label, for example, if a customer shares a business's products in use they might use a specific hashtag intended for that. Community hashtags on the other hand are not directly related to a business and are more to connect people of similar interests around a specific topic. When a hashtag is more narrowed the closer the community and the amount each hashtag contains can be up to millions.

It is important to plan where the hashtags are mentioned within the post as well as what they will be. For each post there can be certain business-related hashtags that appear every time and then ones that are more closely linked to the actual post being shared. Some businesses prefer to use their hashtags within the photo text section in which the list appears with the text, however some like to use it within the comment section, so it is hidden from viewers unless they make a comment themselves. The latter method is what case company has used as there can be up to 30 hashtags used and they have preferred to keep them hidden from the viewers eyes.

Hashtags are the way be discovered in the beginning and therefore the more they are used, the better. When figuring out the best ones to use it is important to consider the ones target audience uses and follows. They need to be relevant to the post and business. It is also good to consider using hashtags that have not been used millions of times as the niche community hashtags help to increase better awareness.

When a user searches for their intended hashtag they land on a page which gives information such as how many posts have been shared with the hashtag, other related hashtags as well as the top and most recent posts with the hashtag. Getting featured underneath the top posts or most recent posts is a great marketing tactic to increase brand awareness, however getting featured is not easy. It depends on how much and how fast engagement is gotten on a given post. Within the first 24 hours of when the post was shared is there an opening for being featured.

6.3 Featuring on the Explore Page

The Instagram Explore Page is another form of newsfeed that is made of posts the account has liked and posts that have been liked by those the account follows (Loren, The Ultimate Guide to Getting on the Instagram Explore Page, 2016). This means if the current followers of the case company's account like or react to the shared content their followers may be able to see the post on their Explore Page. This helps to spread the level of viewers reached whether they belong in the targeted audience or not. The business just receives awareness by being present on this page.

The best way to land on people's Explore Page is by having a bigger account react to the post shared. The more likes and comments the post receives the more it will appear on others Explore page. In order to gain lots of engagement on a post it needs to be relevant and of interest to those seeing it. Sometimes it is pure luck if the right person sees the post and reacts.

6.4 Instagram Shopping

Earlier in the thesis during the introduction of each social media platform the Instagram Shopping feature was mentioned. This feature is the newest way for businesses to sell their products via shared content by being able to tag up to five products on an image

sharing the price, description and direct link for purchasing. It is only available for still images and organically, and it is only available through the business account, having prices in US dollars and the products need to be approved by Facebook first (sprout-social.com,) (York, How to 10x your sales with Instagram Shopping, 2017).

This is something that the case company needs to consider once it has grown its follower base. It would provide better access to the followers to the actual product and give insight to new visitors as to what the business sells. As the idea behind social media is not to push viewers to buy, it is important to adjust this selling method slowly. Once more demand rises for more knowledge of the products that is when this feature should be brought forth.

7 Facebook

Much like the section earlier the specific functions of Facebook are further analysed here that can be used for the case companies benefit. These are small actions that can be considered when creating content for the businesses Facebook Page. As the business page is where all of the business-related actions happen these are the functions and features that can be used.

7.1 CTA

Call-to-action (CTA) buttons encourage the followers on the given social media account to act on the post. These are somehow related to the given post and can be something such as: sign up, shop now, contact us and so on. These buttons will directly link from the post to the given action. Unfortunately, in order to have access and use these buttons a separate Facebook Business Manager account must be created (SocialReport, 2018). This means that these buttons cannot be directly created on the Facebook Page but have to be done in a different program. In the next section is a description of the Facebook Business Manager.

There is a difference between having the button and just encouraging viewers to take action. Buttons can be added to the visuals however in the captions section where the text of the post comes it is possible to write words of encouragement such as “if you

enjoyed reading this, please share it!". The specific buttons are features only for Facebook but it is recommended to encourage followers in all social medias to take a small form of action to the given post.

7.2 Facebook Business Manager

This separate website was launched in 2014 when Facebook wanted businesses to have a better platform to manage multiple Facebook pages and accounts (SocialReport, 2018). Even though it has been around for years and is a very powerful tool, not many are aware of it or use it. It is mainly designed to be used to gain access to Facebook pages without having to have their own personal account linked to the page as an admin, which is required in order to be able to have full access to everything the pages have to offer. To fully have access to everything Facebook has to offer a business the case company will test-try this platform in order to gain access to using the earlier mentioned call-to-action buttons as well.

7.3 Pinning

On the Facebook Page it is possible to 'pin' posts that are current or have been successful for the business. This means that when a user lands on the page they are first shown the post that has been 'pinned'. This generally means saving the post so that it is shown first after which the content is shown in accordance to when it has been posted. This is useful when considering sales or events that the business wishes to show its followers. Businesses can also utilize this option by encouraging people to visit their page to see the latest pinned post regarding important information.

7.4 Groups

Facebook Groups are communities that are meant for open communication and discussion with others with similar interests. It is not meant to be used as a promotional tool to advertise the company products or services, that is where the Facebook Page steps in. In groups it is possible to open a freer communication channel between customers and prospects to avoid too much excessive clutter on the company's own page. The most important thing to remember with this is that it is not about the company but about the members of the group and how to provide value for them (Lee, 2018).

Groups are often also where customers share openly experiences they have had with the given company, whether it is was positive or negative. Also, many share ideas and suggestions that the company can take into consideration to improve. It is a vital channel in learning more of what kind of customer experiences people have with the given company.

8 Strategies for both social media platforms

The different functions and features each social media platform has that can be used to increase the chances of casual viewers to becoming buyers have now been thoroughly analysed above. With the help of knowing the benefits and advantages each platform offers the case company can move forth on implementing its strategies and planning its content with the tools offered. The content marketing plan that the case company will implement in order to attract awareness has been thoroughly discussed earlier in this research. The following section will look into specific strategies that can be implemented over both social media platforms in order to reach the given goal.

A strong reason behind these two social media accounts being so similar is because back in 2012 Facebook purchased Instagram for one billion USD (Hill, 2012). At the time Instagram was doing poorly and struggling to make profit. Also, the mobile phone application of Facebook was not operating well whereas Instagram's was. Facebook's general consensus has become that it isn't as cool as it used to be, and the older generation is using it more than the young (Hill, 2012). For these reasons Facebook bought Instagram and since that purchase the two social media platforms have begun to share some similarities.

Since the purchase both social media platforms have begun to resemble each other more, however not to the extent that they would be too similar and drive users away. In recent news it has become evident that the original founders of Instagram are leaving due to controversies over user data privacy. Earlier Instagram has managed to avoid such issues however now as Facebook is beginning to deepen its effect in all of its owned applications the results are showing negatively (Bradshaw & Ram, 2018). The control the parent company has begun to show more and it is a possibility that both social media platforms will change which means it is important for the case company to keep up to date to be able to adapt to the changes.

8.1 Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing is becoming one of the strongest ways of reaching the target audience on a larger scale and faster. It is when a business works together with an influential person from a social media platform to promote a product, service or campaign. These influential people are known as social media influencers who have a large dedicated and engaged follower base (Newberry, 2018). Before the original form of influencer marketing was known as celebrity endorsement however in today's digital world even those who create regular content with niche audiences can offer more value to a business.

In order to find the right influencer for the case company three R's of influence need to be considered which are: relevance, reach and resonance. The influencer needs to have the same relevant audience, they also need to have a large enough follower base to reach them to bring value to the business, but the followers need to be engaged. A research done showed that the engagement rates were often higher for influencers with 5000-25000 followers (Newberry, 2018).

All in all, the influencer needs to line up with the case company's values. The key is largely trust when marketing is considered and therefore, the influencer needs to be trusted by its own followers as well as the current ones the case company has. When the influencer is approached it is possible they will require payment for their efforts, especially those with a higher influencer status. For this reason, it is most convenient for the case company to approach those influencers with the same niche audience but a lower following as they may accept the product as payment, which would still be doable for the case company and its budget.

8.2 Content sharing timing

Both social medias have certain times of the day which are the most ideal to share content. It depends on the audience and which platform it is, nonetheless for the best engagement and reach levels to be achieved it is important to consider the timing. The most successful time to share on Facebook might not be the best time to share on Instagram.

Based on an industry research done by the data science team of Sprout's Social they have pulled together the best times to share content on both social media platforms. For Facebook they discovered that Thursday's are the best days of the week for sharing content and from 10 am to 3 pm it is the safest time to reach the most engagement. Most engagement happens during weekday lunch breaks and the least amount of reactions to social media content happen early or late during the day. Weekends are also tough as people are more active then spending time with friends or family so most success to be reached for posts is during the weekdays (York, Best times to post on social media: 2018 industry research, 2018).

On Instagram the ideal times for sharing content is during the middle of the day on week-days, much like on Facebook. A study shows that users under the age of 25 spend approximately 32 minutes a day on the app (York, Best times to post on social media: 2018 industry research, 2018). This means a possible high engagement rate during the lunch hours at the middle of the day when people are off work and school for a break.

9 Conclusion

The conclusion the research comes to is that it is very likely for the case company to reach its goals of increasing their online sales. The two social media platforms offer many solutions on how to achieve this which have been narrowed down to the most important ones to consider. On both online platforms the first thing that people see is the content whether it is visuals or text posts. Value-adding quality content is what attracts customers as they want solutions and relief to their problems. The case company needs to begin to address them with a scheduled plan.

The most valuable information that the case company can learn from this research its need to focus on a strong content marketing plan. The whole idea of sharing posts on social media is to tell a story of what the business does, where it's come from, who it is and so on. It is a behind-the-scenes view of the business in a scene that customers feel that is relaxed and calm without the added pressure of having to purchase anything.

The added strategy suggestions such as using influencers to promote the products would drive the followers onto the account. It is important to drive traffic onto the social media accounts to increase the number of followers in order to create customers from those who are already interested. The value-adding content and the ways of reaching the target

market through influencers and appropriate hashtags will help to boost the case company's brand awareness and ultimately, sales.

Each strategy idea suggested would not cost the case company anything and are therefore very cost effective. As the employees of the company have no real experience of these strategies it would be unreasonable for a small business to make large investments. Later on, once the case company has begun to create sufficient and consistent funds it is possible to introduce such features as paid advertising campaigns that both social media platforms offer.

The case company has previous knowledge of the information mentioned in this thesis but none of it has been written down as extensively as now. A full social media marketing analysis has not been done before which is why a lot of marketing tools have been used in order to provide the needed information to carry on with the research. The information gathered has allowed the case company to understand its customers and target market, to the extent that they fully understand what type of content needs to be created in order to reach them. It has also provided them with an introduction to tools and analytics methods that they need to further revise such as understanding their social media metrics. Ultimately once the case company has implemented all the ideas suggested in the research they will reach their goal.

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Buyer Personas

Sheryl Smith

Personal background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 55 years old female - married + family: three children - American, lives in Florida - personality: social (talkative), positive, kind, caring
Business background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University degree in Arts - currently teaches Arts to primary school children
Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enjoys reading and writing, as well as painting - spends lots of time with the family, travel a lot together especially with husband - enjoys yoga and swimming
Challenges/Frustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teacher budget - hard to find good gift ideas for others
Internet Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - uses Facebook daily - often shops online through different sites

Hanna Koivunen

Personal background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 25 years old female- Finnish, lives in Helsinki in a student apartment- Family (parents + two siblings) live in Turku- personality: shy, kind, artistic
Business background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- finishing off her bachelor's degree at the university (student)- part-time working at a grocery store
Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- enjoys watching movies and spending time with her friends, as well as drawing- goes to the gym often
Challenges/Frustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- too little time to spend on hobbies- student budget
Internet Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- uses Facebook and Instagram daily- uses the internet a lot for homework and studying- flips through social media applications often on the mobile phone