

# Digital Content Marketing



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## TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä opinnäytetyö on tehty asianajotoimistolle nimeltä TRUST. Yritys toimii lähinnä Suomessa, mutta palvelee myös kansainvälisiä asiakkaita. Heidän tavoitteenaan on parantaa digitaalista sisältömarkkinointiaan. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on kartoittaa ja löytää sisältömarkkinoinnin keinoja, joilla yritys tavoittaisi uusia asiakkaita sosiaalisessa mediassa tehokkaasti ja edullisesti. Sen lisäksi tutkitaan keinoja, joilla TRUST voisi kasvattaa brändiään asiantuntija yrityksenä ja kasvattaa asiakkaidensa luottamusta yritykseen. Tutkimus auttaa löytämään TRUSTille oikeita asiakassegmenttejä ja kehityskeinoja.

Aluksi käydään läpi mitä digitaalinen markkinointi nykyään tarkoittaa ja kuinka se on vaikuttanut perinteisempiin markkinointi tapoihin. Ennen markkinointi oli rajatumpaa ja uusien asiakkaiden tavoittamiseen oli vähemmän keinoja. Nykyään internet mahdollistaa oikeiden asiakkaiden tavoittamisen huomattavasti helpommin.

Ensin suoritetaan tilanneanalyysi, jossa käydään läpi parhaita keinoja selvittää yrityksen vahvuudet ja heikkoudet. Suosituksena on käyttää mm. SWOT- ja PESTLE analyysiä. Toinen askel on selvittää asiakas segmentit, persoonat ja asiakaspolku. Näiden perusteella yrityksen sisältömarkkinoinnin tyyli ja kanavat voidaan suunnitella ja optimoida. Teksti käy läpi muitakin tapoja houkuttaa uusia asiakkaita.

Yrityksellä on paljon parannettavaa digitaalisen sisältömarkkinoinnin suhteen. Sen täytyy löytää asiakaspersonat ja segmentit, joilla kommunikointi voidaan suunnitella tarkemmin. Sisältömarkkinoinnin uudet keinot täytyy osata, jotta pärjää uusia kilpailijoita vastaan.

**Avainsanat** Digitaalinen sisältömarkkinointi, digitaalinen markkinointi strategia, digitaalinen markkinointi.

**Sivut** 39 sivua, joista liitteitä 19 sivua



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## ABSTRACT

The case company for this thesis is The TRUST. An attorney company based in Finland. They wanted to improve their digital content marketing. The research aims were to find a way for them to use digital content marketing as a way of gaining more leads while being cost effective. The goal was to increase their image as a specialized company in their area of expertise. Furthermore, to find a way to attract more customers from their target segments. The research goes through the most important tools and methods the case company should use to grow.

The first part of the thesis explains what digital marketing is and how it has affected the older ways of marketing businesses. Before there was a very limited way of reaching people and finding the right people to target wasn't that simple. Nowadays all the different social media channels allow companies to use very intricate ways to react their customer segments.

First comes the situation analysis. Doing a situation analysis by utilizing models like SWOT and PESTLE help a business to set their strengths, weaknesses and see their opportunities. The next step is to find out the most optimal customer segments. To find out their customer personas and journeys. Then plan the communication style and platforms accordingly. While also finding out how to optimize other types of digital marketing to reach more leads like search engine marketing.

It became clear that because The TRUST is lacking in many of these areas they should improve their digital content marketing greatly. They should find out their targets and how they want to communicate. Content creation will help them a lot when trying to get new customers and to retain old ones. Today's successful business needs know all these things.

**Keywords** Digital marketing, digital content marketing, digital marketing strategy

**Pages** 39 pages including appendices 19 pages



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the thesis

The traditional marketing styles and techniques have changed much over time. However, digital marketing has made the biggest impact on it so far. After the creation of the World Wide Web much has happened. Suddenly millions of different sites exist, and consumers have everything within their reach just a few clicks away.

New innovations in technology allow people and companies to develop new platforms to communicate on and the Internet has brought people together from all corners of the earth. Almost anybody can access the Internet with many different devices. Computers, tablets, laptops and of course smartphones. These all allow 24/7 communication between people. Almost anybody can be reached and found in some corner of the Internet.

This allows marketers and companies to reach whole new customers with more ease. The Internet allows smaller companies to step up and compete with bigger ones. This is as long as they know all the tricks on how exactly to do that. This is interesting, and the better the companies know their game the more successful they can become.

## 1.2 Purpose of the study

The case company for this thesis is The TRUST. An attorney company based in Finland. They were looking into improving their digital content marketing and they were interested in this research and on what new ideas it could give them for improvement. The goal was to find a way for them to use digital content marketing as a way of gaining more leads while being cost effective. Moreover, their goal was to increase their image as a specialized company in their area of expertise. They wanted to find a way to attract more customers from their target segments.

The task was to find the most suitable tactics, platforms and ways to share their content on in order to attract the customers. While keeping in mind that the company has a limited amount of employees and little time, all of the tasks should be done as efficiently as possible.

When given the assignment, the TRUST had a basic online presence. However, their most effective way of getting customers was through calling, email and by word of mouth. Their customers weren't very active at commenting or interacting with the social media platforms TRUST used. The important thing was to find out a way to increase interaction and bring



new leads to their channels. This thesis looks into the options they have and to what are the best ways to gain more visibility amongst the possible target segments.

### 1.3 Methodology

The thesis starts with research of the basics and theory on what to build the digital marketing based on. There are several steps that must be done first before doing any digital marketing or content marketing for that matter. The first chapter explains the idea of digital marketing and what it means. Then it goes through all the necessary information the company or any business needs to find and map out in order to move forward. This includes situation analysis, digital micro- and macro marketing environments by researching and using customer personas, STP model, and competition research.

Then after finding out these bases, the thesis goes through digital marketing and how to use content to generate visibility, leads and to grow the company brand. Furthermore, researching some of the most useful tools and activities to conduct in digital content marketing.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND 1

### 2.1 Digital marketing

The short definition of digital marketing is: achieving marketing objectives by using digital technologies and media. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 11)

When the Internet came there was an immediate change with technologies and marketing along with them. The basic marketing tactics that used to work had to be improved to fit the changing times. We still use some of the old marketing models but now they must be adapted to the to all the new inventions and the needs of the customers. Different styles must be created to reach the right customers in the most optimal ways. Additionally, different customers use different platforms and even many separate appliances to reach them like laptops and smartphones. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. xiii)

These changes are an obstacle but also an opportunity for businesses. It creates new jobs and skills and a possibility to develop new competitive advantages over other companies. Unfortunately, this change brings almost just as many threats and problems if not managed well enough. For example, online clothing stores have begun to heavily compete with normal retail stores on the streets. Websites enable people to go and buy their services and goods easily without ever even going outside if they don't want to.

Obviously, this scares many older and smaller companies that lack either the money or skills to do this new type of marketing and services. Social networks and sites like Facebook, Twitter and Linked in are now a regular part of many people's lives and carried all around via their smartphones and tablets. The fastest and smartest businesses embrace the change and become much bigger than ever before. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. xiii)

To use digital marketing effectively and to manage it properly you must first understand it. There are several marketing activities throughout the whole process. To understand them and to visualise it. It is good to follow a model called RACE by Dave Chaffey. It shows and describes all the activities and tactics you need to know and have in order to reach, interact, convert and engage with your online target audience across the customer journey. All the way from generating awareness, conversion, sales, and retention of the customer. Even how to keep them and grow their love for the brand. The model includes several different marketing activities and combines them to support gaining leads by communications on different social media sites and third-party websites. Additionally, it enables website visits to be converted to sales and then online media to use in encouraging further sales. All the new digital platforms should be integrated with the old multichannel marketing and to adapt customer journeys to fit both new and old channels. (Dave Chaffey, 2016).

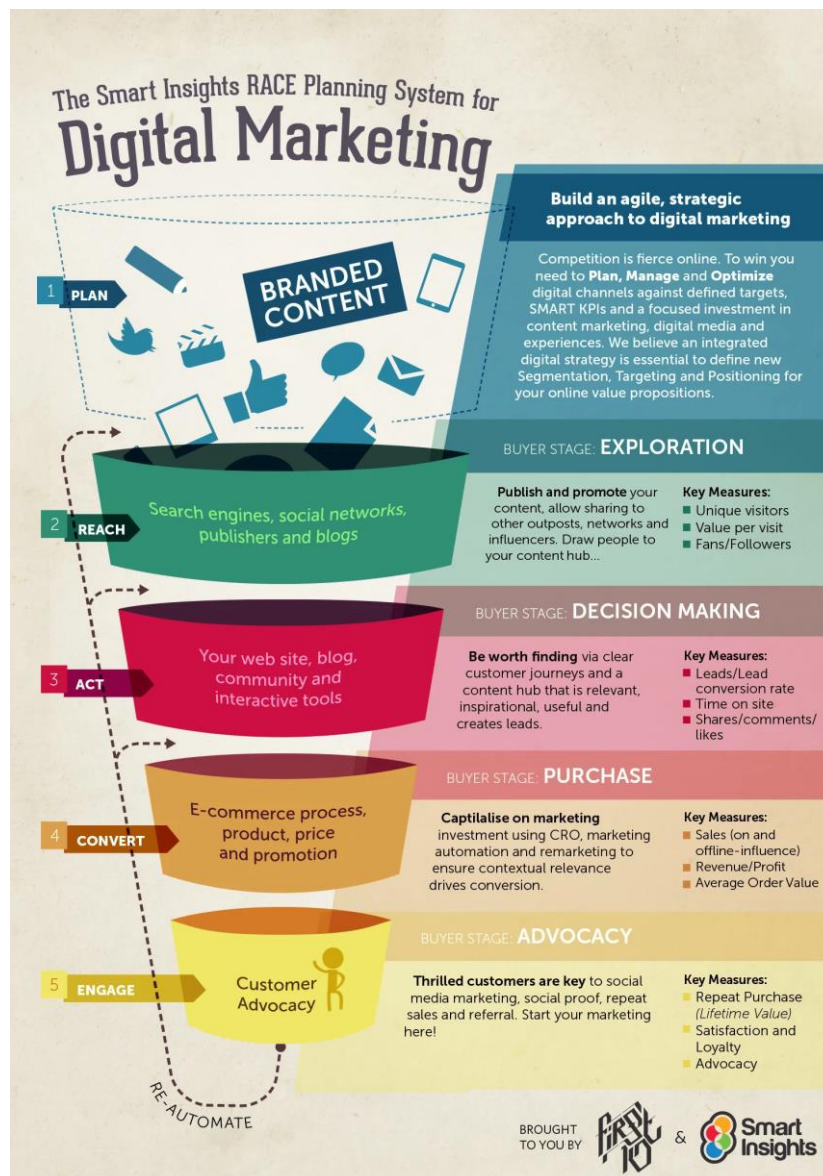


Figure 1. RACE model (Chaffey, Smart Insights, 2017)

In order to create a successful digital strategy, you must understand this new complex and competitive environment, with all kinds of different customer journeys along with it. There are three main types of media channels. Paid, owned and earned media. These are all types that a marketer can use to influence their customers. Paid media is exactly what it sounds like. To convert new customers a company can do things like paying for ads or affiliate marketing. Offline these are, for example, news articles and TV ads. Owned media is the company's own things like the content it creates to its own social media sites and blogs. Before digital marketing owned media could have been retail stores or brochures. Earned media is extremely useful. It is something the company doesn't necessarily need to pay for at all. At its core, it is promotion gotten from someone else. This can be an influencer who likes the product/service and talk about it or just simple word of mouth between customers. Sometimes there are even conversations on forums and the company might pop up

there in the conversation and in this way the business gets promoted (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 12).

To control all of these media and the possible sites and devices used to access them there are SaaS (software as a service) platforms. They help on managing the new ways of marketing. It is also more affordable for a smaller company and easy to control (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 13).

In order to get started with digital marketing, the company must create a digital marketing strategy much like in traditional marketing. For that, you must conduct an analysis of the company and the market. The basic things like customer segmentation, targeting and positioning should all be done. It is all about target marketing. You should know your customer so that you can provide the most compelling content possible to them. Referring to Philip Kotler's Five product levels model. Digital marketing helps with the extended product or online value proposition (OVP). Defining the way the customer sees the product and experiences the brand through the content, interaction and visual design online. As well as how the company's online presence correlates with their offline presence (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 16).

There are many benefits and goals of digital marketing and what it can offer. Some of them are mentioned in the 5Ss model of Caffey and Smith. Sell (growing sales), serve (add value), speak (closer to customers), save (saving costs), sizzle (brand extension online). (Chaffey & P.R., 2012).

Digital marketing can also be very challenging if you don't have a clear plan and strategy. Some most common problems are unclear responsibilities and objectives. Budget and metrics being used insufficiently. To avoid these problems the best way is to create a carefully planned digital marketing strategy (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 25)

## 2.2 Situation analysis /Marketplace analysis

In the online marketplace, the consumer's decisions are affected by many things like search results, customer reviews, conversations, and comments on social media sites and of course company websites. Nowadays people even might multitask and use several devices at the same time to look up information. Like while watching TV shows they might interact with Twitter and the conversations going on there. This is called multiscreening.

A company should analyse the market context in which they operate. They should find out their opportunities and plan accordingly to be able to compete against their competitors. Understanding the environment is a part of the situation analysis.

Situation analysis should always be done before anything else. With it the company gains important and useful background information on sales, costs, the current market, competitors and the micro- and macro environment. It helps on seeing and defining what the actual market is, how big it is and how is it growing and developing. (Philip Kotler K. L., 2016). Situation analysis should include all current marketing channels. This helps to find out, where the company has the most impact, what should it change or even stop. (Pulizzi, 2012).

The analysis should also include things like customers as the communications should be based on them and their behaviour. According to Dave Chaffey this is where any marketer should start the situation analysis. Then marketplace analysis that includes possible influences and partners. There are many different types of influencers online. Like a search engine, review sites and blogs. This part also should include threats from new innovations and technologies. The third thing to consider is competitors and how communications can be improved to gain new opportunities. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 56).

Additionally, there is the macro-environment that analyses the broader strategic influences like social- and legal environments and political- and technological influences. The biggest part of situation analysis is about analysing the company itself and how it operates. It is all about looking at what the company is currently doing and what things could be improved. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 56). This includes reviewing the current results from digital marketing key performance indicators (KPIs) and the possibilities of the organisation to process and manage the digital marketing summarised in strengths and weaknesses.

After gathering all this information, the company can gather it by a method of their choosing. One common and easy way is to create a SWOT analysis to evaluate the company's current situation (Philip Kotler K. L., 2016, pp. 71, 78).

### 2.3 Digital marketing environment

This environment refers to the contexts where companies operate at. For example, how they relate to customers and other competing businesses. There are two main areas where businesses compete. The first is the immediate competitors that are very much like the company and the second is the ones competing in a wider environment. These two elements are called micro- and macro-environments. Micro is the environment that focuses on things that affect the immediate trading environment. These are customers, competitors, intermediaries and suppliers. They affect the marketplace in a such a big way that they affect the company's digital strategy and how they develop it (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 59)

Macro-environment is the external things that can have a significant effect on the company. These are often things that aren't under the businesses own control. Economic changes and new innovations in technology are two of these things just to start with. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 60)

Both of these environments should be constantly monitored as they can have a major influence on the success of a business. The process of staying on top of these things is called environmental scanning (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 60). There are several different tools to analyse their environments. Several social media platforms offer their own analytics to companies so that they can optimise their sales and advertising. For example, Facebook, Twitter and Google offer some useful information. Especially Google that offers options to create ad campaigns and to follow analytics from different sources to the company websites and more.

## 2.4 Micro-environment

### 2.4.1 SWOT

This analysis includes the company strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It helps to evaluate them and monitor the company's external and internal marketing environment. (Philip Kotler K. L., 2009, s. 52). These factors can make a difference in the company's ability to make a profit and see opportunities whenever they arise. In SWOT analysis the opportunity and threat parts are about the external environment. Tracking trends, developments, opportunities and threats are important as they might offer a marketing opportunity. This is an area where the customer has a high need and interest and the company can provide a profitable solution for them.

One way of finding out opportunities is by using the MAO analysis (market opportunity analysis). It can help to offer the customer an existing product or service in an entirely new way (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016), (Philip Kotler G. A., 2008, p. 153). Digital content marketing offers many solutions to this. A Company can use the MAO (market opportunity analysis) to ask questions like:

- Can they tell their target customers the benefits convincingly?
- Is the company able to find and reach the target market with the current medias available and in use?
- Does the company have the resources to and ability to provide the benefits?
- Can they provide the benefits better than the competitors?
- Is the company financially able to support the requirements? (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016).

Threats are developments or trends in the marketing environment that might result in losing profits for the company if they aren't prepared to take actions to counter them. There are different types of threats. Some are more serious than others. Companies must pay attention to the most prominent ones and have a way to monitor them.. This could be for example other similar companies following the businesses online content and possibly copy it for their own benefit. (Philip Kotler K. L., 2016, p. 72)

Strengths and weaknesses describe the internal environment. After finding out the opportunities and threats the company must consider whether it's capable of taking advantage of them. (Philip Kotler K. L., 2016, p. 72) By considering its strengths and weaknesses a company can see where it needs to grow and if it has some unused potential. Sometimes a company has a massive potential to grow their brand image however, they do not have the tools or knowledge to do so. A weakness can even be something like not having enough time to optimise their digital content marketing. (Philip Kotler G. A., 2008)

## 2.5 21<sup>st</sup> century customer

As mentioned before Chaffey says that the first thing to research on a situation analysis is the customer. In order to set realistic marketing objectives, a company must understand who they are selling to. Nowadays customers are more informed about online marketplaces. They know where to find information and what to buy. It is very normal to get goods and services through different online channels.

From micro-environments perspective, the customers are important to the immediate trading environment. This means that understanding them and analysing their behaviour is essential when developing a digital marketing strategy. To understand your customer, you must do a consumer behaviour analysis and then later you can use this information to create your customer personas. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 68)

With digital marketing, Dave Chaffey recommends doing customer analysis on two parts. They are Demand analysis and Digital consumer behaviour. Demand analysis basically helps the company to find out what factors have affected on the platforms and social media services that the customers use. It helps to uncover possibilities and opportunities for digital media marketing and influencing. It helps to make marketing campaigns more accurate and effective. Businesses should consider how many customers have access to what channels. If they use any other sites that might affect their decisions like review sites or if they currently are using some other sites to get their goods and services. All of these helps to create the most optimal way of communications to the customers. Additionally, it gives a better idea for customer segmentation. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 69).

### 2.5.1 Customer persona

Customer personas are made in order to create relevant and useful content for the key target segments. The personas help the company to truly create useful content and not just content that they know how to do and what is easy. Without a persona, a company often ends up just guessing. When this information is created it helps the whole company to have the same mindset about the customers and the content they need. Documenting it keeps the marketing focused. Persona creation helps to take advantage of unique marketing opportunities and challenges. (Harris, How to create easy, yet actionable, content marketing personas, 2015).

To create a customer persona, you should consider who your customer is. Research things like age, job title, type of company they work in, their typical day at work. Also, what type of role or responsibility do they have in the buying process? What are their problems and what are they looking for to fix them? Where are they in their decision making and are they even the ones who make the last decision?

Furthermore, you should think about their content consumption patterns. The company should find out the platforms their customers use and what devices they use to access them. Furthermore, what affects their consumption? They might have influencers they like in the industry or colleagues who they listen to. Sometimes the customers get their information through word of mouth. (Harris, 2015).

Finding out the previous things accurately can be challenging. There are ways to collect the information in order to make the content true. You should keep profiling and be perfecting the persona all the time. You can use analytics to follow consumer behaviour. Interviews and customer feedback can help to develop details. Even things like A/B testing on ads can show what works or doesn't for the target audience. This is when you create several different ads and see what works the best and just keep developing the ones that work most effectively (Harris, 2015).

### 2.5.2 Customer journey

After creating customer personas, the next step is to formulate the customer journey. Usually, in normal marketing, the customer journey simply means using the sales funnel to map out the different phase's customers go through to finally purchase the product or service. However, according to Marcia Riefer Johnson from Content marketing institute, it is more useful to think of customer journey as the thing the customers want to accomplish when interacting with the brand. The content should rather be mapped to the customer goals (Johnson, 2016).



To create a customer journey map, you should first have at least two customer personas created and they should represent the biggest customer segments of the company. These will be the people you should think about when planning all of your marketing. (Johnson, 2016). The third thing you should use is a customer journey map template, like the following template from Content marketing institute.

Customer-Journey Map				
Persona	User State	Journey (including tasks)	Channels	Content

The Next Generation of Content Strategy: Building a Performance Driven Model  
Information Development World 2015 Workshop

Kevin Mihalik and Paula Land

Figure 2. Customer journey map template by Content marketing institute.

The first column is for the customer personas. The second is for their user state which is meant to identify any possibilities for personalization and data gathering. However, this should rather be after the Channels column as it is more fitting and easier to figure out after choosing the channels that'll be used. (Johnson, 2016)

The third column is about choosing the customer goals that also go along with the company's business goals. What goals does the persona want to accomplish with the company and, how would they support the business goals? (Johnson, 2016). For example, if a grocery store has a student as a customer the student's goal might be to buy cheap food. The company can fit this into their goals as they need to sell similar products. Next, the goals should be broken down to tasks. For example, if a company X's customer persona was another company Y's representative with a goal to find an attorney company to work with. The company X should list the tasks this person would go through. For example, searching attorney companies in Finland or some other country. Finding the most suitable one. In this case the company X. Then visit the web page of the company and then possibly contacting them. An important thing to remember is that customer journeys are rarely linear and come in different orders. Each step should be given its own row in the template in order to create fitting content for each step. (Johnson, 2016).

The fourth column is about identifying the appropriate channels. What channels are the personas most likely to use? This includes all channels from online to printed material and over the phone sales. One must also remember that some customers can use multiple channels at the same time. (Johnson, 2016).

When possible, you should avoid guessing the channels and look at the user research and analysis. This way you avoid using the same old channels and content. Plan for all truly relevant channels even the ones outside of digital content marketing at first. However, it is possible that after a while the personas will change and their channels and content requirements too. (Johnson, 2016).

The fifth column is about the actual content the personas will consume and look for. Content is any information that is recorded. Even a picture is content. Here you should brainstorm content ideas for all the channels the persona goes through. After mapping out the content ideas the company should plan what tasks to do first. (Johnson, 2016).

## 2.6 STP

It is impossible to sell your product to “everyone”. In order to actually have a great product or a service to sell a company must choose their target segments. It is just a waste of money and time trying to sell to a too wide audience. People have varied needs and buying behaviours. If a company chooses to use Target marketing instead of old-style Mass marketing, they will surely gain more customers and do more sales.

There are clear benefits to using Target marketing. By choosing the correct market segments you the company is able to tailor their marketing and products towards the customers. This also helps to choose the right pricing, marketing channels and content. (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005).

### 2.6.1 Segmentation

In the STP model Segmentation is the first and the most important part. It is a bit different from the customer persona. In fact, in segmentation, you divide your market into distinct groups of customers with their own needs and behaviours. You choose the most optimal ones for you to target and create the personas for those groups. A market consists of buyers and all of them are different. They have their own resources, locations and buying practices and attitudes.

However, serving all customers individually is not an option for many businesses as it can get time-consuming and expensive. Here they need to make a choice of using mass marketing, complete segmentation

(micromarketing) or like Kotler says in his Principles of marketing book “something in between” (segment marketing or niche marketing). Segment marketing is when a company directs its marketing towards one or more segments.

Niche marketing is less competitive however, it requires the company to truly understand its customers much better. It is about adapting marketing, products and services to match the needs of one or more subsegments of customers. For example, selling wheelchairs specifically to the elderly. (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005, pp. 391-394), (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016, p. 283).

Some companies don't obviously just work inside of their own origin country but work globally. Working internationally means that you must pay more attention to the segmentation in the other countries as well. People can be very different from different cultures and often react differently to marketing and communications. (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005, pp. 410-411).

There are some requirements when creating effective segmentation. The segmentation must be relevant to the business and to what it sells. First it should be Measurable. The company should be able to measure the buying power and size of the of the segments. They should also be Accessible. Can the people be actually reached and sell to? There are many factors to take into account like the channels they use and what type of content they consume.

Sustainability is fourth. Are the market segments large enough and how long are they going to be around? For example, if you are marketing towards students you know that at some point they will stop being your customer and the company must be able to capture new people. Lastly Actionability, meaning how easy it is to, for example, launch a campaign targeted towards them. (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005, p. 415), (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016, p. 285).

## 2.6.2 Targeting

In order to concentrate their marketing effectively, a company should first find out its target market segments as mentioned earlier. It is impossible to connect with everyone and this means that specific and well thought out target market segment is the best option when the goal is a successful marketing strategy and plan. Focusing marketing also saves money as it is limited in size. (Philip Kotler G. A., 2008). As market segmentation reveals all the different options for the company they must choose only the most important ones. When evaluating the market segments the company should think of segment attractiveness and company fit. (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005, p. 415).

To measure the attractiveness, you should collect and analyse data from current sales value, growth and profit possibilities from various segments. The segments with good size and growth possibilities are the usual options. However, this might not suit all companies as sometimes the biggest option might have been actually too big for a smaller company and they choose one that is more suitable in size and their capabilities.

They also pay attention to the number of competitors in each segment. A market segment with a lot of competitors might not be the best solution at the start. Furthermore, does the company have the right skill set and products for the segment? If not it's better to choose a safer option sometimes. (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005, pp. 415-417).

### 2.6.3 Positioning

Lastly comes positioning which means the company optimizes its communications with the targets. (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016, p. 267). Additionally, how the consumers define the product and how they see it compared to other competing products. The company's competitive advantages and the positioning can be very different from each other.

The advantage is a strength, but the positioning is a prospect's perception of a product. The competitive advantage can be a cheap price or a feature that others don't possess, and it can have some effect on the position, but it doesn't necessarily affect it too much. (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005, pp. 432-434).

There are several different positioning strategies that businesses follow, and they use associations to change the way consumers see the products. *Product attributes* are about explaining and selling specific technical features that your product might have. If a company is selling phones it might sell them by showing off the features they have that the other competitors don't have. With *benefits offered* the company usually is filling quite a few required features and can sell them all to the customers.

*Usage occasion* is used when there is a specific time or place to use the product. This could be a toothpaste in the morning or an energy drink for the gym. *User category* can help with selling towards very specific people like for people who need products for sensitive skin. *Activities* are used for expensive products. For example, sports cars and some expensive outdoor clothing brands. A company can also use *personalities* to sell specific products. Makeup and luxury products can be sold by using relevant influencers. There are many different other ways to position the products, but the next step is to choose the right one. (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005, pp. 435-438).

After choosing the biggest competitive advantages the company can choose its positioning with them. Let's, say that a company has several advantages. It should still choose one that it focuses on the most. The one advantage it wants its customers to know and associate it by. This is called the unique selling proposition (USP). A brand should stick to it too as the consumer often remembers that one the best. As keeping the best USP is difficult some companies start using also an emotional selling proposition (ESP). The product might be similar to the competitors, but they associate it with something else like a high quality or a better status.

Then there are four mistakes some companies make. Under positioning, when the company is too vague with its marketing. Over positioning when the company might sell many different things, but the consumer only knows about a specific one and might not even look up for more. Confused positioning happens when the company marketing is all over the place and doesn't give a solid image of the brand to the customers. Lastly implausible positioning when the customer doesn't even believe the positioning and thinks the company's marketing to be a complete lie. (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005, pp. 442-443).

To choose the right advantage and difference it should be consistent with the product or service sold. It should be distinctive, communicable and affordable to promote. If the company is too daring and reckless with the choice it might backfire fast. (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005, p. 443).

Once the position is chosen it must be communicated properly for it to reach the consumer's, minds. All the company's marketing should support the positioning strategy. If it promises high quality to the customers, it must be able to deliver it as well. It is often easier to find the position than to truly deliver it. Establishing a position in the consumers eyes might take years so consistency is the key. The position, however, will evolve with the marketing environment as it changes. (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005, pp. 443-446).

## 2.7 Competition

For all companies, one of the biggest points to consider is the competition and how to satisfy the customers' needs better than them. There are many things that can affect competition. One model to measure it and see its effect is Porter's five forces. It helps when analysing the competition. Additionally, another tool is competitor benchmarking. It is a structured analysis of online services, capabilities and performance of a business organisation. It helps to find threats to the company's own business idea. It is all about understanding the customer personas and their requirements (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 92)..

Competitor benchmarking has six steps. First *internal capabilities*. It includes resourcing, structure and process. In short, what can the company do for their customers on their site? Second is different *aspects of customer lifecycle* such as customer acquisition, conversion to retention. For example, how visible is a competitor in online search engines and how popular their site is to click on as well as their online ads presence? The third part is *qualitative vs. quantitative*. This means how many possible customers they have vs. how many they are truly capable of keeping active. The fourth is *in sector and out-of-sector*. This is done by comparing the site to other similar sites that are significantly bigger and tend to be more advanced and to smaller ones as well. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 88-93).

Fifth is *financial and non-financial measures*. The company can look up any available company reports and tax info to gain additional information. This part also includes other skills and innovation the competitor company might have. Lastly *user experience and expert evaluation* that is exactly what it sounds like. There are two points of view. A possible normal customer reviews the site as well as an expert who knows more on the subject matter. It is useful to rate the competitors and mark them up with their biggest threats to the company. Furthermore, this benchmarking should be done regularly as the internet is a big place and new rivalry companies pop up all the time. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 93).

## 2.8 Macro-environment

Macro-economic forces influence digital marketing. However, unlike micro-economic forces these are things that the company has only limited direct influence over. There are changes all the time and they can change the company situation drastically and this is why a company should follow them and see what changes might become relevant to the company in their market environment. One of the most common tools to measure these changes is the PESTLE model. All the letters represent different macro-environment factors. Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental.

In digital marketing when using this tool, it is important to keep in mind to think of the online environment. And to see what forces affect it and what are the most relevant. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 120). The factors are explained in the next chapter in the order of relevancy to digital marketing. Online things can change very quickly depending on what are you work with. Pop culture and popular things online change very quickly and often. However, legal things can take more time to happen and are earlier to get ready for.

Companies should pay attention to their macro-environment and especially to the matters that will affect them the most. A smart way to prepare for any threats is to develop a strategic agility. It is the capability

to gain a competitive advantage in a marketplace by innovating and by following changes in the marketplace and then after being able to evaluate alternative strategies, selecting, reviewing and lastly implementing candidate strategies. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 123).

### 2.8.1 PESTLE

*Technology:* The changes in technology can create challenges but also opportunities for companies in marketing. At first, people were seeing advertisements only on TV and then on computers and now they are bringing their smartphones everywhere with them. And this means that with some careful marketing companies can reach their potential customers around the clock whenever they want and where ever they want. As Michael E. Porter said already in 2001 “The key question is not whether to deploy Internet technology – companies have no choice if they want to stay competitive – but how to deploy it.” (Portes, 2001)

Digital security is a factor that companies and their digital marketers must pay attention to. Digital marketers should know the risks they might face and how to avoid and manage them. Some of these risks are keeping safe the user information like passwords and confidential information. Today’s digital marketers should be aware of these risks and learn how to manage them.

Some prevention methods already exist and here’s a few of them. A Digital certificate is one. It is a key made up of large unique numbers that are used to identify a person. Digital signatures are the equivalent of electronic hand-written signatures. The most common security mechanism on transactional sites is the Secure Sockets Layer protocol (SSL). (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 130-134).

It is also important to keep in mind all the new technology that can affect the markets. SMS messaging and mobile applications can be used to reach people. For SMS a company will need a database, but for apps it isn’t always necessary. They also allow easier communications, however, first you need the people to use your application which by itself can be difficult. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 135-137).

*Economic forces:* These forces affect all companies and their supply and demand. This is why it is very important to find out the economic influences that affect the company the most and monitor them. Two examples of these factors are market growth and employment. Additionally, the changing age of the population should be considered as it affects the markets and especially digital markets. Think about people getting old. They’ll start losing their eyesight and hearing and this hinders their capability of using websites. Depending on your demographics you need to plan how your website works for people in different ages. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 143).

Another factor in economic forces is globalisation it refers to the international markets moving towards a single global market. Consequently, blending cultures together. The internet is a big part of this all as it gives people from all over the world to interact without any effort what so ever. For brands, this is good to keep in mind as different online marketing campaigns might get a different response from the consumers in other cultures. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 143)

*Political forces:* In the political environment several things can affect the trading. These can be taxation, investments and management of company affairs both public and private. Also, government control and democracy over the internet can change what people see and what sites they can use online.

*Legal forces:* Laws are developed to keep both consumers and businesses safe. They provide a framework of control. There are six significant laws controlling digital marketing that every company should be aware of online. *Data protection law and privacy law* that makes sure that nobody's personal information ends up in wrong hands or is used against their will. *Brand and trademark protection* help companies keep their brands safe from any copycats.

Buying and reserving a unique domain name and have it protected is part of these laws. *Intellectual property rights* keep people's digital assets safe. These can be things like text, pictures and audio. *Contract law* is mostly used in online stores and any sites you can buy something from. *Online advertising law* is similar to the normal advertising laws and restrictions. It can vary from country to country but mostly keeps anything offensive from being used in marketing.

## 2.9 Digital marketing strategy

Digital marketing strategy provides companies with a consistent direction to follow with their many channels and communications online in a way that they support all of their other marketing channels. It follows traditional marketing strategies in many ways but has some changes to it. Additionally, to showing direction with the digital marketing it includes many things to optimise it all.

It includes an analysis like mentioned before in the company's internal and external environments and overall situation. It will define the company's digital marketing objectives and show how they support all other marketing. It involves the company target markets, positioning and market mix. These show what type of things the company should pursue or what not to. Moreover, it maps out how all of this will be achieved and who in the company has what tasks to get everything done. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 178)



There are three main parts to a digital marketing strategy. Some of them have been discussed earlier in the thesis. Situation analysis, setting goals and objectives and finally strategy formulation. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 178).

Digital marketing is basically a channel marketing strategy. This is because it helps the company to set goals and guidelines to its digital channels like its web page, social media channels and communications on them all. All channels should have specific content types and communication styles, however, they should all still match the company image and brand. Digital marketing should support the existing marketing and use its strengths to its advantage and cope with the weaknesses. This is multichannel marketing and it combines all marketing efforts on different areas to one. While also keeping the communication consistent.

Digital marketing is not just about the company mobile and desktop websites. Nowadays it is so much more than that. It is about using automation tools to enhance customer relationships, developing customer experiences across all the marketing channels. Getting the best possible results when partnering with other people or when getting publicity from other media. And using user-generated content with the social media sites like Facebook and Twitter just as an example.

According to Fareena Sultan and Andrew J. Rohm, the development of digital technology provides many new opportunities in business processes. In their study, they identified four strategic objectives. Cost reduction and process effectiveness, revenue generation, channel partnership and communication and branding. New technology helps to find new ways to promote the company, but it also means that they must be able to protect their competitive positioning from other similar companies. (Sultan & Rohm, 2004).

Digital marketing is becoming increasingly more popular and used, however, people still find difficulties in creating a strategy for their companies. Common problems at the beginning are gaining a consistent audience, conflicts between the marketing team a different opinion about it, coordination between all the channels, managing and integrating customer information, doing consistent reporting, dividing tasks, keeping sites up to date, insourcing versus outsourcing marketing and staff recruitment and keeping them with the company. Despite all of these problems, the biggest issue is to be able to integrate the whole process to the traditional marketing.

Porter has recommended for companies six principles that can help companies to keep their strategy distinctive and cohesive. As technology develops all the time it becomes increasingly hard to keep a competitive advantage over others. The six principles are the following. Start with the

*right goal* that is achievable and makes sense economically. Define your *value proposition* that is unique and doable. Differentiate from others and create a *distinctive value chain*. Be ready to do *trade-offs*. This means that if necessary the company must be able to give up on some products or services if they don't work out as well as they should and become a hindrance. (Portes, 2001, p. 71).

Make sure that all the channels and marketing actions within the strategy *fit* together. This makes the strategy harder for competitors to imitate. Make sure your strategy and actions have *continuity*. Even when this means missing on some opportunities. Always follow the strategy guidelines and don't strand of. This doesn't mean now evolving at all but evolving and utilising new things in a way that they fit the original strategy and brand image/communication. (Portes, 2001, p. 71).

### 2.9.1 SOSTAC model

There are several steps in digital marketing strategy development. And a way to keep everything organised is by following the SOSTAC model by Caffey and Smith. (Chaffey & Smith, 2012, pp. 537-538). SOSTAC model has six main parts that are situation analysis, objectives, strategy, tactics, actions and control.

### 2.9.2 SOSTAC, situation analysis

For situation analysis, you can use the SWOT analysis mentioned before in chapter 2.2. This analysis involves all the internal and external strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. As well as the micro- and macro-environments explained before. Then after comes an internal audit for competition that involves three parts and reviews the current contribution of the digital channels and what they are delivering. *Business effectiveness* is the first part and it includes the financial and commercial contribution from all of their digital channels.

The second one is Marketing effectiveness and it can include leads; sales; customer retention, satisfaction and loyalty including lifetime value; online market, brand enhancement and customer service. The third part is digital marketing effectiveness. This is how effective the marketing is towards the target audience and to measure it you can use key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs can be for example amount of visitors, repeat visits and the duration of the visit to the website. (Chaffey & Smith, 2012, pp. 224-225).

To situation analysis a company should also research and conduct a customer analysis and with the information create a customer persona as mentioned earlier in chapter 2.5. Additionally, a competitor analysis as mentioned in the chapter 2.7. In short review the current trends of the industry, benchmark competitors, identify best practices and copy them if

necessary and set targets for improvement. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 191-194).

### 2.9.3 SOSTAC, Setting goals

Often businesses don't set clear goals for digital marketing as they would for traditional marketing. More often than not they end up just trying things blindly and just seeing what happens. Especially if they have just started with digital marketing and don't know much about it. They lose the sight of their goals and objectives. (Portes, 2001, p. 71).

By setting goals the company can follow its development and whether their marketing strategy is working. The objectives can include things like profitability, the growth of sales, improvements in market share, innovation, image control and being able to handle risks. (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016, p. 74). According to Kotler, there is four criteria witch the goals should fulfil. They should be arranged in the order of importance. The goals should be measurable as it helps to visualize the growth. They should be realistic and come from the opportunities and strengths found out before on the SWOT analysis. Lastly, the goals must be consistent. (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016, p. 74).

As a measurement, you can use KPIs. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 198). KPIs are meant to be metrics that improve the company's effectiveness and efficiency of processes. It can simply be a measurement of how well an ad is bringing visitors to the website or how many people open and read a campaign email. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 205-206).

One main objective of digital marketing is online revenue contribution. It gives the company a measure of the proportion of online sales achieved in different products and services. It is the amount of which the online presence affects the actual sales revenue of the company. The amount can give some direction on where to pay attention to and invest resources to. It is often shown as a percentage. Setting sales revenue goals is important as it also helps to figure out an estimate of how much it actually cost to gain one lead through digital marketing efforts. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 200-201).

One possible way of creating useful goals is by using the SMART goals model. It helps you to sort out your ideas, focus your work and time and to use your resources properly. SMART is a combination of different factors and all letters have their own meaning. They are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. (Mind Tools).

Paul J Meyer described SMART goals in 2003 accordingly. The specific means that the goal should be clear and specific. If it is not, it might feel unmotivating and too broad to work on. You should try to answer the basic

five “W” questions what, why, who, where and which? They help you to visualize what should be accomplished, why the goal is important, who are part of it, where it happens and what resources and/or limitations does it have. (Meyer, 2006), (Mind Tools, ei pvm), (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 203).

Next, the goal should be Measurable because it helps on tracing the progress which often leads to motivation. Furthermore, it helps with meeting deadlines. This goal should answer points like how much, how many and how to know when the goal is accomplished. For example, setting a visitor target amount for the blog. This can be followed with different analytics tools the company uses to track its visitors. (Meyer, 2006), (Mind Tools, ei pvm).

The “A” stands for an achievable goal. This must be realistic and possible with the current set of resources and skills available. It might even help to find new opportunities. This might also help the company to improve their performance. (Meyer, 2006), (Mind Tools, ei pvm), (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 203).

“Relevant” is all about ensuring that the goal fits the current situation. It should be worth working towards for. It shouldn’t be a waste of time and it should be possible in the current environment. A company’s goal could be to gain more leads by increasing promotion. (Meyer, 2006), (Mind Tools).

Lastly a Time- bound/related goal. Deadlines help to control the work and provides limitations and structure. For example, a company could set goals for when different tasks like promotions should be finished and how will they be followed up later on. (Meyer, 2006), (Mind Tools, ei pvm), (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 203).

#### 2.9.4 SOSTAC, tactics and actions

In order to create a strategy, the company should go through and review a selection of strategies and with them create some objectives that are suitable. The objectives should fit the market environment and the company’s capabilities and resources. It is important to remember that at its core digital marketing strategy should support the same things as a traditional marketing strategy does. These things are simply segmentation, differentiation, targeting and positioning. And as mentioned before digital marketing is really just multi-channel marketing. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 208).

There are a few important things to pay attention to when creating a digital strategy. And while making these decisions It is good to keep in mind the fact that digital marketing is just a form of multi-channel marketing. And you should pay attention to all of the different types of people on these sites. Chaffey claims there are nine different strategy decisions to make.

They are the following, however, there are many different strategies and the ones mentioned here are the most relevant and fitting choices for the case company TRUST.

### 1. Market and product development

Market penetration strategy means to sell existing products to existing markets. This gives the opportunity to get market share growth. However, this also requires the website to be efficient at the conversion of visitors and getting sales. Additionally, the communications must be done properly. Techniques as affiliate marketing and online advertising and search engine marketing should be done well. This helps to create customer loyalty. Loyalty comes as the company raises their online value proposition by offering more relevant content. One tactic is to improve customer value. Some companies do this by offering lower prices online. This offers more value to the customer while increasing the sales.

Product development is another option. Internet can offer cheap possibilities to improve or extend existing products or services. Companies can provide extra information on top of their services. These can be provided in a shape of downloadable brochures or infographics. This only requires some extra time but doesn't cost anything is everything is done online. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 210-212).

### 2. Target marketing strategy

As discussed earlier it is important to know the company target markets. Especially when planning a digital marketing strategy. Different target segments react to different styles of marketing and communications. The company must also remember to follow its brand guidelines when doing this. Target segments also help to create relevant content.

Once you know "who" you are talking to it is easier to create content that resonates with them and what they find interesting or useful. A company can also try to look up what their competitors are doing and try to provide something completely different or just better. There are also differences in the activity times of different target segment that should be kept in mind. The more you know about your customers the easier it gets to target and sell to them.

Keep in mind that there are different customer lifecycle groups. This means that some customers will always prefer more traditional communications while some are happy to use the newer methods of social media channels. Also, shape your tone of communications to match the right target segments. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 215-219).

### 3. Positioning and differentiation

The main idea in positioning is to develop a different advantage over your competitors. Segmentation can be a way to differentiate from your competitors. When targeting different people, you also will need to offer different types of content and services. The price of your product is not the only way to differentiate but you can use branding and customer experience and value to your benefit.

You should develop content that enhances and grows your brand image and what you want to convey about your company to the customers. Communicating your Online Value Proposition (OVP) will help. Show what your values are online and, on your webpage, and social media. It helps in communication and on guiding the content according to plans and towards the goals. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 220-223).

#### 4. Customer engagement on social media

Social media marketing means more communication between the businesses and the consumers. Therefore, creating a consumer engagement strategy is useful. It should include things like how to create compelling content amongst other things. On all the basic social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn communication can be the key when creating better customer experiences and attracting new ones to use the company services.

You should pay attention to who your target audience is, and this can vary on sites sometimes. What type of content do you need to create for them so that it is compelling and fits the OVP? In Facebook, videos might be the most popular type of content and in Twitter people might want more infographics. Benchmarking your content and finding what works the best is always useful. You can find this out by looking at your analytics. It is also ok to repost some old posts that did well before if they are still relevant.

What type of content should have the priority on your sites? Based on what you find out in the benchmarking you can start creating the most suitable content for your customers. It is good to market your channels on other communications. However, remember to mention what you offer to the customer if they, for example, start following you on Facebook. You can mention that by following the company where they will get the latest news and company insights into the industry.

Then there is the frequency of posts. This can be done by using the editorial calendar. This is explained in more depth later. However, in all simplicity it is the plan of what and when will the company post. These things are good to plan ahead of time so there is more time to react to news that happens suddenly and is good to react to quickly. It also saves time in the long run when the company's digital marketers don't need to pay attention to the post all the time.

After content creation you must post something about it online to create engagement. This takes time and sometimes companies even outsource this job. However, if you want to do it properly again it is good to have an editorial calendar that helps, you to organize everything and you can create social media post in beforehand. Creating good engaging a social media post take their own time even though it is just a short text to Twitter. You still need to find all the relevant hashtags and find people to tag if necessary.

There needs to be decisions made within the company on communication responsibilities. Who will answer to comments and questions on each site? When that person can't do it, who will and how exactly is the communication done. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 223-225).

There are different tools and platforms to help with social media posting. Several tools exist for social media content management you can find many, but one choice is Hootsuite. It provides a scheduling tool and depending on what features you want you can even get some analytics and promotion post budgets. (Hootsuite, 2018).

For newsletters there is MailChimp. It is useful for emails and marketing automation. (MailChimp, 2018). To follow the effectiveness of your posts and campaigns some sites offer some analytics for that. Facebook and Twitter, for example, offer some. This following of all the social media activity is called Social Media Optimisation (SMO). (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 225).

## 5. Multichannel communications

How does the company handle all of its different sites and channels? Customer segments all have their preferences and needs in different points of their customer journey. The company must choose the most effective channels and then create clear guidelines on how they are used in different steps. How are they used for capturing the customer as well as for retention of the customer in the long run? (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 228-230).

## 6. Online communications mix and budget

While it is nice to have all these sites the next step is to map out what is it exactly that the company wants to do with the customers. There are different communications options and the company must choose what it wants to use and for what purposes.

Some of these communication options are search engine marketing, affiliate marketing, email marketing as well as online advertising. The important decision to make is, does the company want to acquire

customers, have a better customer retention or to build customer relationships? (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 231-232).

## 7. Organisational capabilities and governance

Lastly reviewing the company's capabilities of implementing the digital marketing strategy. What are the main challenges and how can they be overcome or managed? Having a clear structure for the marketing is a big help. Also making sure that everyone in the company is aware of the digital marketing strategy and communications style. This way the company can make sure that the content stays consistent with the brand and the image of the company. Additionally, keeping in mind the goals and objectives and all the task necessary in order to get to them.

Reporting the process along the way is a good way of showing everyone where the company situation lies. However, this must be done clearly so that everyone understands it. Follow the Key performance indicators (KPIs). (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 232-236).

### 2.9.5 SOSTAC, implementation and control

The next part is implementing and controlling the actions that will be used to achieve the digital marketing goals and that help to follow the marketing strategy. As mentioned earlier there are several different Customer Relation Ship (CRM) systems and social media management systems. The company should find out the best one for them and utilise it to control their communications and to follow their budget and analytics. The company needs to follow the chosen KPIs and improve the digital marketing as they get better analytics and information on their target segments behaviour. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 236-239). The chapter 2.9.7 explains this more in depth.

### 2.9.6 Channel plan

When doing a channel plan the company must think about its current situation and the channels it is using to share its content. The basic channels companies usually have are their own websites, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, blog, email, events and some articles. The company should consider their customer personas, journey and the brand story. Is there something that should be changed or even possibly stopped. By going through these factors, the company can determine its prioritize, consider their budget and the actions that should be done additionally to the time available for all content creation. (Pulizzi, 2012).



Next, the channel objectives should be chosen. You connect the marketing channels to the engagement cycle and customer journey of the target audience. This should be done by closely keeping in mind the goals and objectives that the company has set for its content marketing. It is not a problem if a channel is there mainly just to drive traffic to another. For example, Facebook can promote the blog. This decision should be done if it fits the goals and fits the “story” that the company wants to show and promote about itself. Keeping this in mind Facebooks goal would simply be to create a community and share the content around. (Pulizzi, 2012), (Caffey;Richard;Johnson;& Ellis-Chadwick, 2000). Another channel to use if necessary could be SlideShare. It could be mainly meant for gaining new leads by providing content that possible new leads are looking for online.

The third part is the content plan which is how the company is going to map its channel. In short, how the content is organized for the channel. For example, if a company’s Facebook pages main objective was to create a community and gain new leads the company could set up an event and post about it on Facebook where it can be shared from. In the event, they could gather emails and ask about the content they like to see. Then start creating content tailored towards their audience. For example, shorter more factual blog posts for busy business people. Furthermore, this can start to attract the people from the target segments the company is looking for and it services. (Pulizzi, 2012).

After setting up channel plans the company can look at the metrics they should use. Metrics mean the KPIs and results. They help to keep track of all the channels and their contents. They are in a way goals that fit the story of the content marketing. For example, a company might set a certain number of people they would like to visit their blog from the event they have held. (Pulizzi, 2012).

The company should remember to pay attention to its customer personas. It is unlikely that all of them will use the same channels. Each channel’s content should be directed to the audience that is more likely to use it. When looking at the current situation the company might find out that it should change its current channels content. It is possible that the channel plan doesn’t even address the right customer personas on the right channels. (Pulizzi, 2012).

For the content management process, the company should make clear who are the responsible ones for each channels content creation and how will they do it. Lastly, they should have an editorial plan for the channels. This is connected to the editorial calendar. However, it doesn’t include timings. It should determine the amount, tone, desired action and structure for the channels. For example, small events might be held once a month. Its tone should be professional. The desired action would be to collect emails and get the customers to read the company blog. The structure would be set as a meeting well beforehand. (Pulizzi, 2012).

## 2.10 Customer relationship

When doing digital marketing one of the key things to remember is to build long term customer relationships. Failure to do this can be the end of many online marketers struggles to create a presence in social media. Failing to build customer relationships means more costs spent on gaining new ones.

A good tool to use in maintaining current customer relationships and with gaining new ones is marketing automation. Like mentioned before in chapter 2.9.4 part 4 there are several tools to create and schedule online content. For example, in MailChimp marketers can create emails specifically to businesses. Marketing automation is closely related to the term one-to-one marketing. However, as managing customer relationships in such individual basis is costly. Therefore, many companies apply marketing automation and tailor communications to fit their customer target segments rather than just to an individual. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 300).

To manage customer relationships online companies can try some digital marketing activities. Managing customer profile information. Meaning they make sure that their email lists are up to date and that they have all the customer information in one place. For example, their contact information and previous interactions recorded clearly all in one place. They should make sure that the customers have an easy access to get connected with the company. Contact options through email, mobile and social media.

They could do data mining which is finding more information on important customers and recording it to the database. Providing the customers with an online customer service facility. This can be simply done by adding frequently asked questions and answers to the website. This way if a customer has a question they might get an answer to it faster and be happier. Lastly, businesses should make sure that their channels support the whole journey of the customer and not just the start and buying process but even the retention. The nature of the internet is all about connection and communication, so it is ideal for building customer relationships. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 302).

## 2.11 Customer engagement

Customer engagement refers to the time the company can keep the customer's attention and have them interactive. It is about repeated actions between the company and the customer. For example, emails and newsletters. The aim should be on building a good customer relationship so that they engage with the company's content and possibly even create something that the company can use in marketing like positive review or comments. Recognising the customer engagement and the value that comes with it is important. Once customers are engaged the marketing can

shift from expensive lead generation more to customer understanding. (Haven, August 8. 2007), (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 308).

Customers data should be recorded. Starting from their personal data that includes their contact details and basic profiling. It should include their business and occupation as well as position in the buying decision. Next is transactional data. Record all the information involving the purchases and transactions. What did the customer use to buy? Where and when did they buy and why? Finally, remember to record all the interaction with the customer. All conversations should be recorded somehow and especially if they raised any questions. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 308-309).

## 2.12 Customer lifecycle

There are roughly four stages in the customer lifecycle. You should pay attention to this. Depending on the customer lifecycle position the communication should be different with customers.

First is customer selection. This is the part where the company is finding its target segments and choosing the customers it wants to start attracting. Then customer acquisition. These are marketing activities to gain new leads and create customer relationships with the new customers while minimising the customer acquisition costs. This is where you would try to convert the customer to a loyal one through specific marketing and services.

Customer retention comes up next. It refers to the actions taken to keep the customer as a loyal customer. The company should try to encourage the customer to buy from them again if possible. When given the chance they can try to offer additional services to keep up the relationship. Finally, customer extension or customer development. This is the part where the company can do several things with the customers. Either to sell them more additional services or to use them to gain new sales. This can be done for example by asking for recommendations from the customers. If a happy customer recommends the company to someone other they are likely to believe and try the company services giving the company a cheap new customer. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 311-312).

Businesses often use permission marketing. Newsletters can be permission marketing. The company can create content for its current loyal customers and with their consent, they can send weekly or monthly updates and new to their customers. This can be to either selling more of for customer retention. Sometimes when doing too many emails and newsletters people can stop opening them and ignoring the company's messages. This can be avoided and prevented by trying to keep up a dialogue between the customer and the company. Try to keep up with the email opening rates and find out if the content is read. If not try creating something more compelling to activate the old customers again. Listen to questions and the

customers to gain content ideas. Support and involve customers when possible. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 313-314).

### 2.12.1 Measuring and maintaining the process

To measure content marketing success, you should first decide on the frequency of your data collection. A good choice is to measure marketing effectiveness monthly and track some important parts weekly to make sure everything goes to plan. The company should create a spreadsheet that documents a few things affecting their marketing. Firstly, the goals because they help to keep the priorities straight. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 432).

Next is key performance indicators (KPIs) that will help to measure the effectiveness of the content. Some KPIs can be for example, website traffic, views on different content, referral links, blog comments, likes and shares, email subscriptions and sales. Then create the plan to collect the performance information and who is responsible for gathering it and sharing it. By using a Google spreadsheet all of this information is easily shared when needed. (Mcphillips, 2014), (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 433).

Important thing is to make sure that the metrics used, actually support the key goals. They should be able to provide insight to how can the content be improved. One thing could be tracking email subscribers and where do they come from. Additionally, finding out which topics brought the most customers. (Mcphillips, 2014).

Keeping track of everything and then recoding it takes time, but it is essential in order to optimise the content marketing and get the most out of it. Tracking conversions are more important than just following vanity metrics like Twitter followers or website traffic. Conversions can be measured by for example following email subscriptions and topics of interest. This helps in producing relevant and more fitting content to the audience.

Collect data that you can use and effect, for example, event registrations and email subscribers. If the company is using platforms like SlideShare they should track additionally to subscribers, their presentation downloads and subscriber downloads. This can produce new leads. It also helps the company again to make better fitting content for the audience. (Mcphillips, 2014).

The things measured can change and the company should be ready to adapt when necessary. Furthermore, whenever possible they should strive toward automating the data collection. Reports can help with this. Analysing the data should be done on its own time so that the marketing can be improved. (Mcphillips, 2014).

Remember to focus on digital content marketing. Content gives the power to communications on digital marketing. Without content, any social media site is not worth anything. Social media, search, email marketing and conversion rate optimisation all need content to function. With campaigns, the content is the key factor in gaining customers and their attention. Any company should not ignore digital content marketing as it is a massive asset to have. Furthermore, they should not set to just one type of content. So many options are available from blogs to video content

### 2.12.2 Editorial mission statement

The editorial mission statement is used to refine the brands content marketing and to make it clear to everyone in the company. Content created for everyone eventually works for no one. Editorial mission is created after the following is clear. What are the company and its brand image? Who are the customers the company wants to reach? How will they reach them and what does the company want to accomplish after that? In short, it is one of the tools that help the company to keep its content marketing targeted at the right customers. It is not the same as the mission statement. Instead of describing the goals of the company, in general, it is strictly a tool to help with focusing on the audience. (Linn, 2015)

The editorial mission statements work by helping the marketers to focus. There are many possibilities for content creation however, you must know what to use and what not to use. The editorial mission statement helps to see and limit the content that might be unnecessary. It is especially useful when there is more than one content creator. The whole team can with ease create content that matches the brand and the company image. Moreover, this might save money in the long run when assets are used wisely. (Linn, 2015).

When creating the editorial mission statement, you must pay attention to three main things. These should be researched in beforehand. The first is the target audience. The second is the content offered to that audience and how it supports the company brand story. Lastly, you must include the outcome of this content. How does it benefit the audience? (Linn, 2015), (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 466).

### 2.12.3 Editorial calendar

The editorial calendar can be a simple document or more intricate map for content creation. Having an accurate account of the company's editorial assets and activities helps it to be more effective with marketing. (Harris, 2017). A few things will work as the basis of the calendar. These are things like the audience the content is directed to, the reasons for the content creation like gaining more leads or growing brand image. The marketing

mission and goals affect things the company will publish, when will it publish and how is everything prioritized and organized. The formats and frequency of the content changes along with the resources and skills available.

Sometimes the company might have an influencer to write a blog post and at times they will do it themselves. All of this should be written down to the calendar. The last thing is to think about how the company will stand out. Is there anything lacking on the current content marketing or even is there any holes in the content marketing of competitors? They should think if there is any possibility of tying event to the content to increase exposure. (Harris, 2017).

One way of setting up the calendar is by simply using Excel spreadsheet or shareable Google Sheet. This will help the employees in charge of content creation to keep on track with all the tasks. There are a few main things to mention on an editorial calendar. Mention the date of content publishing, the topic of the content, the author, the owner of the content who makes sure that the content is published in time and according to the schedule, the status of the assets which will be updated as the process goes. (Harris, 2017).

Depending on the content marketing plan of the company there are a few things additionally to pay attention to. Keeping track of all the different channels and platforms that promotion is done through. The company might be using blogs, email, newsletters, social media channels, paid search or even advertising. The more things there are the more important it is to keep track of these things and their content. What would be the best time and way to use them?

Some content formats can be re-used later so it is good to keep track of them. For example, a picture or an infographic. Writing down categories can help to find the information late and even possibly find holes in the current content marketing. Keywords, SEO (search engine optimisation) titles and meta descriptions should be recorded too. This way the company can optimize their search engine visibility and develop their advertisements in an attracting way to the audience. As well as tracking the most effective keywords. (Harris, 2017).

An additional benefit of keeping an editorial calendar is that it helps the company to keep a record of all the content that is put out. This provides the chance to keep track of their performance. Additionally, it helps on sharing the information within the company. Sections for page views, clicks and conversions could be added to the Excel sheet. (Harris, 2017).

#### 2.12.4 Consistent content and marketing

A consistent messaging style can be achieved with a tool called messaging architecture. It is terms, phrases or statements arranged hierarchically to visually show and put in order the company's communication goals. This is one tool that helps the company to deliver consistent content (messages). The message actually means the impression that the company wants to give to the customers. (Johnston, 2017).

The message architecture should fit the corporate vision, mission and the brand values. The tool shows three specific qualities. It shows the levels of priority, it is actionable (immediately informs content decisions), it is specific to communication. It can look different in situations however, usually it is a concise outline of the company attributes within bullet points. (Johnston, 2017). For example, Content marketing institutions article showed the following for a financial institution:

### **MESSAGE ARCHITECTURE FOR A FINANCIAL INSTITUTION**

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#### **1. Respected**

- Relevant
- Trusted

#### **2. Deep but Narrow Expertise**

- Focused on Large-Cap Funds
- Premium

#### **3. Serving an Exclusive Class of Investors**

Figure 3. Message architecture for financial institution by Content marketing institute (Johnston, 2017).

This tells the company characteristics, purpose, tells what the institution does and even what it focuses on. You can use also statements and not just words. The three parts of the message architecture are the first impression, value statement and proof. It is important that this message is always available for those who need it and who create the content. This is because everyone should be able to clearly match the brand image.

The most effective way to create the message architecture is by gathering together all the people who might have any say to the company's brand, image and values. Then together talk about the company. Who they are? Who aren't they? Who would they like to be? And then come up with some adjectives and descriptions for it. All of this helps to bring the team together and ends up giving them a cohesive way of communicating with the customers. (Johnston, 2017).

## 2.13 Search engine marketing

Search engine marketing (SEM) is one of the biggest techniques for gaining quality leads and attracting visitors to the site. Search engines are after all the first place many people go to look for information, services and products. The biggest and most popular search engine being Google and the second one being YouTube that is in fact owned by Google. There is two search engine marketing processes that are very distinct and important. These are Search engine optimisation (SEO) and Paid search marketing (PPC).

### 1. Search engine marketing (SEO)

It is all about achieving the highest possible ranking position on the search engines results. Across a whole bunch of relevant keywords or phrases used by people. Google uses an algorithm that makes the decision of the rankings in the search engine. Google has stated that its algorithm uses over 200 different factors to rank sites. These factors include ones that are likely to boost the position if a site and ones that tend to lower the ranking score. There are so many different factors that it is impossible to know them all. However, there is some good findings and speculations.

Keywords and phrases are one of the most well-known factors. This comes to use when for example writing blog posts. When using WordPress to generate blog posts its gives you SEO optimisation options. You can write the actual title that will show on the search engine results. This should be something captivating or create curiosity in the customers.

Next, it asks you to add a meta description. It is a two to three lines of text combining the context of the blog post. The meta text should include the main keyword or phrase of the blog post. If the post is for example about some new legislation the keyword could be its name. This way when people look for that legislation in the Google search it might rank up and they'll find it easier. The keyword or phrase should also be used in the actual blog text several times. At least more than three. If you are using WordPress it will warn you about the strength of your SEO. Before posting make sure you have also set up a personalised feature picture. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 487), (WordPress, n.d.).

Next thing is to use inbound links. These can be links to your other blog posts or to some part of your website. If you are able to create in a way a web of content that all somehow correlates to each other and your ranking goes up. Google algorithm is able to see that you have a consistent theme going on in your page and that there's more on the subject on the page than just that one blog post. This is also useful for



the company not just because of the algorithm but it also keeps the customer on the company site for longer. If you are able to offer them more relevant information they will read more and stay longer. This again gives you more give to convert them to be the company's customer. They might even become willing to order a newsletter. Remember to also link to other relevant sites every so often. However, not too much not to direct your customers away from you. (WordPress, n.d.), (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 487-488).

The positives of using SEO in marketing is that if done well it can bring many new customers. The company can possibly gain low-cost visitors. Additionally, it is highly targeted. The visitors for looking for particular products and services are reachable with good content and SEO usage.

The disadvantages are the lack of predictability. Compares to other types of media it can be difficult to predict how well it works. However, with some keyword research, for example using Google keyword search, you can easily get the chance of gaining visitors. Another problem is the time it takes. Sometimes it can take months to gain a strong SEO. However, some good blog posts and content have the possibility to do well if you are lucky enough to find a popular subject with less competition. Lastly, as Google does not reveal how exactly the algorithm selects the sites to the ranking it can sometimes be unpredictable to use. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 488).

#### 2.13.1 Researching keywords by using Google Ads

Finding the right keywords is important. To figure out good keywords for blogs, for example the company can use Google Ads keyword planner. They can use it to search relevant and popular keywords that relate to the blog post. After finding good ones they can check if they want to pay for them or just use search engine marketing to rank on that search. The following screenshot of a Google Ads key planner shows an example of this.

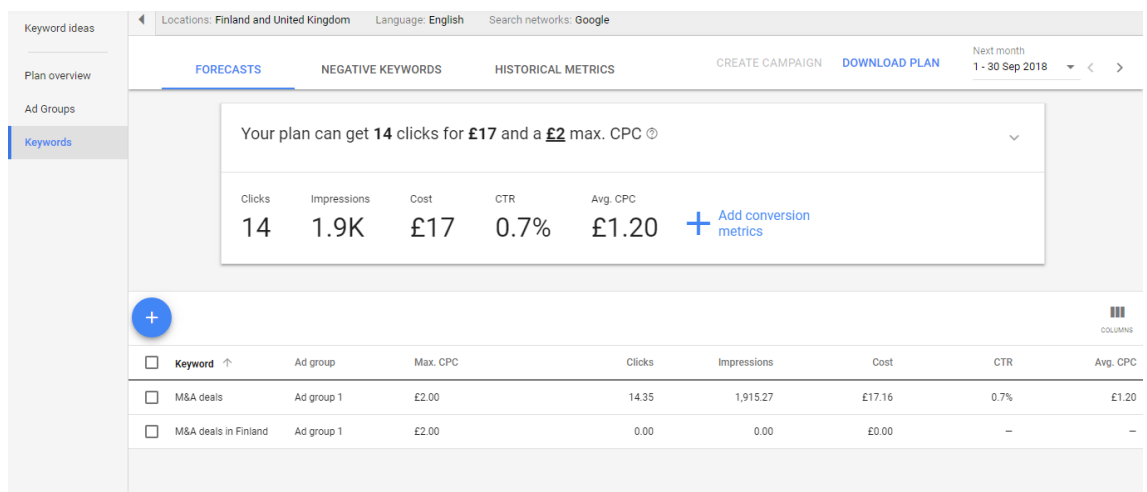


Figure 4. Google Ads keyword planner. (Google, 2018).

This chart shows how two keywords relevant to the case company of this thesis The TRUST would compare to each other. The first one is “M&A deals”. It has the most impressions meaning that it gains the most visibility and people tend to look it up more often. It also has a very high cost if the company would want to bid on it. The second one is “M&A deals in Finland”. Now, this is not a keyword with a lot of competition. And if you type it to Google search you can see it has about 1,350,000 results. This means that the company could either pay for it or just try to rank on it with SEO as it doesn’t have too much competition. The first keyword has 13,500,000 results so it is definitely more used and harder to rank on. (Google, 2018).

## 2.14 Paid search marketing

Even though Search engine marketing has proven to be a very effective marketing tool many uses paid search marketing in addition to it. It provides more control over the views and visitors the company wants to attract to its sites. Additionally, it gives the opportunity to control the appearance of the ads. The placement and the price of the ad depend on how visible they want it to be. The ads can be for example be shown at the top of a Google search. However, depending on how many other companies want to use that keyword or phrase the price will go up and down.

The cost can also be dependent on the amount of clicks it gets. This is called pay-per-action. This type of ads includes just normal text ones as well as graphic display ads and videos. Selling these ads is one of the main ways Google gets its revenue. Another type of paid ads is buying ad space from trusted channels like online news magazines or influencer blogs. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 495-497).

As always there is advantages and disadvantages even to paid search marketing. The benefits are that the advertiser doesn’t pay to have the ad visible on display. However, whenever a person clicks on the ad it costs

some money every time. For good keywords and phrases, the competition can be fierce. This means that the cost-per-click is always higher on the most effective ones. This type of ads is easy to follow and the results they bring are often measurable and visible.

In a way, it is also simpler than SEO marketing as the company doesn't need to go through the trouble of paying attention to all the factors that normally would affect their ranking. However, you should remember that the costs will be higher as SEO marketing doesn't cost anything more than the time and effort you are willing to put into it. Paid search marketing might not be cost effective to all companies. Especially the smaller ones. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 497-499).

## 2.15 Using brand story on marketing

According to Kotler, many marketers believe that brand positioning should have both rational and emotional parts. A brand should include differences and benefits that appeal to both the head and heart of the consumers. (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016). A company should try to combine functionality with emotions. For an SME company this could, for example mean emphasizing the fact that it is a small company but an expert on what they do. For this reason, they can work with the customer extremely closely and provide very specific help and services. To get loyalty from the customers a company should try to come out as authentic and genuine. Having done differentiation and emotional branding properly the company is more likely to get profits. (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016), (Philip Kotler G. A., 2008).

To guide the way of thinking about the brand for both marketers and consumers the company should create a brand mantra. It's a three- or five- word articulation of the essence of the brand. It should capture the core brand promise. According to Kotler, it tells what the brand is and isn't. A brand mantra has a few main key criteria that it should fulfil. It should tell what is unique about the brand and what business area the company works in. Furthermore, it should be simple, memorable and inspire employees personally. (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016).

For a small business positioning and strong branding can be difficult. However, it is not impossible. In Kotler's and Lanes book Marketing management, there are a few guidelines that small businesses can follow. Finding differences between the services and products between the business and its competitors that can be useful. The brand should be built, around the strengths and differences of the business. The business should encourage its customers to try its services or engage them in any possible way. In a way giving "a taste" of what they could get with this company. A solid and put together digital strategy can give the customers a bigger image of the company that it truly is. It is also a way of keeping the

company visible all the time. (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016, pp. 315-316).

A small business can create a loyal community of brand supporters by using things like word of mouth, social networking, inexpensive promotions and sponsorships. They should look to use these types of customers on promoting them. The business should emphasize the brand in any possible ways. By making the communications, services and the visuals in a way that describes and emphasizes the brand. Brand elements should be memorable and meaningful. For example, the services could always be offered in a similar way at the beginning before making the service more specialized for the customer. (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016, pp. 315-316).

Work together with any other secondary associations, people, places or anything related to the businesses' industry. They can be a cost-effective way to boost the brand and give it a more reliable image. A company could work together with its most loyal customers and ask for an interview to be published on their blog. Again, this would be good content to have. Lastly, small businesses often have a very limited budget. They should conduct their marketing researches in low-cost ways like working together with university students and professors or by using online research options available. (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016, pp. 315-316).

### 2.15.1 Strategic alliances

It can be difficult to become a successful and trusted company in a competitive industry. Some companies use strategic alliances to kick-start their marketing or to support it. Even when marketing in another country it can help if the company is working with a local company or person in that specific country. Companies can create a global strategic network that supports their marketing. Often the strategic partnerships evolve into marketing alliances. According to Kotler, there are four types of these alliances. They are called Product or service alliance, Promotional alliance, Logistic alliance and Pricing collaboration. (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016, pp. 74-75)

The promotional alliance often works very well. It is when a company offers to do a promotion for another company's product or service. The key is to find a partner to work with that promotes the strengths of the company and make any possible weaknesses irrelevant. When these alliances are handled well they can produce better sales impact with fewer costs. In fact, it is necessary to be able to keep these alliances going and support them. Some businesses even create organizational structures to support them. The ability to form and manage these relationships is called, partner relationship management (PRM). (Philip Kotler K. L., Marketing management, 2016, pp. 74-75)

### 2.15.2 Influencer marketing

According to Content marketing institute and Chaffey online influencer marketing helps to increase the company's marketing reach. People often trust brand recommendations from people even when they don't necessarily know them as long as the person recommending the brand is an individual high-profile professional. This often increases the brand's credibility and trustworthiness. Additionally, this type of marketing often generates new leads and increases ROI (return on investment). (Harris, An 8-step process to use influencers to elevate your brand, 2016), (Dave Chaffey, 2016, p. 502).

Before starting to use this method, the company must find the right influencers. Preferably they should be willing to work together on a long long-term collaboration. To find these people the company must become familiar with the most important people in their industry. They should try to find people who match the brand values, views and would seem important to the target audience. (Harris, An 8-step process to use influencers to elevate your brand, 2016).

The company should pay attention to three things when finding the right influencers. They should investigate if the content currently shared by the person matches the brand image. If not that person isn't a good option. Next, they must pay attention to the engagement for example on Twitter. Paying attention to the shares and the amount of communication on the top posts. The goal is to find out whether the influencer interacts with the audience because that automatically increases the spread of his messages. They should see how often the person posts and what type of content they promote.

An effective way of determining the quality is to see how the influencer shows up on Google search. When they have a high ranking in some relevant keywords it means that they are likely ranked influential in that category by Google. (Lehr, 2016). After, finding the right people it is good to negotiate specific terms, fees and discuss the things to be shared. When the collaboration is done the company should track and manage the influencer's content on an ongoing basis to make sure that everything goes to plan. (Harris, An 8-step process to use influencers to elevate your brand, 2016).

After starting to work together with the influencers the company should do its best to keep the collaboration going and make it long term. One way of doing this is to offer something in return for their efforts. Eventually, the company can try to get even more benefits from its influencers. For example, if they contribute to the blog posts of the company. They could combine these blog posts into e-books that could be distributed a few times a year. Or the testimonials given by them could be collected and

used in sales. (Harris, An 8-step process to use influencers to elevate your brand, 2016).

## 2.16 Content creation with blogging

Blogs provide an easy method of spreading the company's brand awareness to new customers. Additionally, it gives the old one a reason to stay. Company blogs often contain news of a particular subject or provide the company to give their opinion on things. Blogs combine text, images and links in one place. Often, they even provide a place for the readers to comment on and interact with the content. There are many sites that provide anyone the possibility to blog. One of the most popular ones is WordPress.

Blogging was mentioned earlier in the chapter 2.13 search engine marketing as it helps to create the company cheap visibility online. However, the writer must pay attention to the factors that can influence the search rankings. Some of these are the topic, tags, keywords and phrases. Even the time of the day can have a big effect on the readers. There are certain times that are the most optimal to post anything online. This is usually anywhere between 12:00 am to 6:00 pm. There changes to the optimal times depending on the sites, content and day of the week. For example, Sundays aren't as popular as Mondays to read blogs. (Dave Chaffey, 2016, pp. 507-508).

## 3 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

The goal of this thesis was to research and create a recommendation for digital content marketing for the case company TRUST. This research is meant to prove the points of the recommendation for the company. The purpose was to research what digital marketing is and what are the best tools for a smaller company to use. Furthermore, what are the tools and tactics to use in content marketing to create visibility, new leads and to improve brand image and visibility when the budget and time is constricted?

Nowadays the better you know all of these tactics and tools the better you will do. After learning them once it isn't too hard and can be a lifesaver to a smaller company and can even give them the next kick they need to grow bigger. The theoretical part researched the meaning of digital marketing and what type of research it requires to function at its best capacity. By using several models like PESTLE, STP, SOSTAC the research is structured in a way that is easier to follow.

The TRUST's current branding is very good and gives a good understanding of the customers they target and want to serve. Additionally, the information is provided in both Finnish and English which is obviously good as The TRUST is an international company. However, there is room for improvements on many areas.

The recommendation added to the appendix is done based on this thesis research can help the case company to improve its current digital marketing. Most of these tricks and tools don't cost anything but the time invested in them. This means that with time they can hopefully implement some of the recommendations and use the information in order to reach their goals. Digital marketing is a journey and growing a stable and loyal customer base takes some time. However, after gaining it and finding out what makes them "tick" it becomes easier and less costly.

The research was not easy to do. There is a lot of information out there on digital marketing. However, specifically on digital content marketing the information is a little sparse. And there's many factors that can have an effect on it. The digital environment changes all the time and it can be difficult to keep up with it. It is not unlikely for this research to become too old to use in some areas after a few years. Especially with SEO marketing.

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APPENDIX HEADING

Digital Content Marketing Proposition.