

# **Using inbound marketing strategy for raising brand awareness on the Finnish market; case: bee smart city**

Anastasiia Ageeva



<b>Author(s)</b> Anastasiia Ageeva	
<b>Degree programme</b> Business Administration, International Sales and Marketing	
<b>Report/thesis title</b> Using inbound marketing strategy for raising brand awareness on the Finnish market; case: bee smart city	<b>Number of pages and appendix pages</b> <b>75 + 4</b>
<p>This thesis covers inbound marketing strategy developed to raise brand awareness about the German smart solution platform on the Finnish market. This thesis accommodates information about inbound marketing, social media marketing, and brand awareness. Product development methods used in the thesis helped to gather a better customer understanding, find effective approaches in reaching probable customers, create a long-list of potential customers and develop an inbound marketing strategy for raising brand awareness among Finnish hypothetical customers.</p> <p>The theoretical part of the study combines research completed in an inbound marketing sphere, books based on the thesis' topic, and successful cases of inbound marketing strategies, that have been applied to social media campaigns and gained incredible results. Moreover, the theoretical part includes marketing trends and best practices, which were partly applied in the inbound marketing strategy for the case company.</p> <p>The chosen methods for product development were interviews, long-list and inbound marketing strategy, which were applied during May 2020. Interviews were made with existing customers online and long-list was created based on the internet search. The inbound marketing strategy was created based on the results of the interviews with using long-list data. The results of the thesis include tested inbound marketing strategy for raising brand awareness on the Finnish market and suggestions based on implementation results.</p> <p>Results of interviews, long-list, and planned actions were designed into tables for most convenient perception and analysis. Results of strategy testing, and its analysis presented partly in tables. After the analysis was made, conclusions and suggestions were made. Suggestions were made by the author and can be implemented by the case company to increase possible brand awareness on the Finnish market.</p> <p>Suggestions were designed on basis of tested strategy. Suggestions include ideas, that can be implemented in future inbound marketing activities. Aim of new suggestions given to increase bee smart city's brand awareness in Finland, make it more recognizable and get new customers and new smart solutions.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Inbound marketing, social media, brand awareness	

## Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Case company .....	1
1.2	Thesis Objectives.....	2
1.3	Thesis Scope .....	2
1.4	Risk Analysis.....	3
1.5	Benefits .....	4
1.6	Key concepts .....	6
2	Inbound Marketing.....	8
2.1	Channels used in Inbound Marketing.....	10
2.1.1	LinkedIn .....	10
2.1.2	Facebook.....	12
2.1.3	Instagram.....	14
2.2	Types of content used in Inbound Marketing.....	18
2.3	Inbound Marketing Strategies.....	20
2.3.1	Successful Inbound Marketing Strategies .....	21
2.4	Tools used in Inbound Marketing .....	23
3	Product-Development Methodology .....	25
3.1	Method 1: Interviews.....	25
3.1.1	Step 1: Creating questions for the interviews .....	26
3.1.2	Step 2: Finding and contacting with smart solution companies from Finland 26	
3.1.3	Step 3: Executing interviews .....	26
3.1.4	Step 4: Analysing collected data .....	27
3.2	Method 2: Long-list of potential customers .....	29
3.3	Results of the interviews and long-list creation.....	34
3.4	Method 3: Inbound Marketing Strategy .....	34
4	Inbound marketing strategy: bee smart city case.....	35
4.1	Setting Goals .....	35
4.2	Determining and tracking KPI's .....	36
4.3	Outlining tactics.....	37
4.4	Planning the campaign .....	38
5	Implementation.....	46
5.1	Strategy testing .....	46
5.2	Analysis.....	57
6	Conclusions and suggestions .....	68
7	Reflections.....	71
	References.....	73

Appendices.....	76
Appendix 1. 30 key questions for the interview .....	76
Appendix 2. Long-list of potential customers.....	78

# 1 Introduction

This chapter is an introduction to the topic and the objective of the thesis to the reader. The project is a product-based thesis for the case company bee smart city. In this chapter, I will introduce the commissioner company, explain the company's activities, and clarify the need for such project.

Inbound marketing is the new form of marketing, that lets companies not just throwing promotional messages at people and waiting to find a lead, but rather an opportunity for customers to find the companies by using inbound marketing. Inbound marketing focuses on building long-lasting relationships and a positive brand reputation instead of shooting up the company's sales. Mass marketing techniques are no longer as effective as they were before. Nowadays customers decide what to buy, from whom and if they want to be advertised or not. This is one of the reasons why bee smart city decided to embrace inbound marketing for increasing brand awareness and reaching new customers in Finland.

In order to apply inbound content marketing strategy bee smart city needed someone to make research of existing customers and smart solution companies in Finland and based on this research develop a strategy, which can be applied in the nearest future. As I am the person, who had a three months internship and knows the company from the inside, it will be decided that I will be the person to do all the mentioned above procedures and base my thesis on that.

## 1.1 Case company

bee smart city is the case (commissioner) company, which also will be the case company for this project. bee smart city is the leading global community, connecting all smart city stakeholders with proven solutions, and the preferred network of United for Smart Sustainable Cities IP, the global smart city initiative of the United Nations. bee smart city is located in Mülheim an der Ruhr, Germany. bee smart city platform currently has more than 13,000 members from 170 countries, featuring 650+ smart city solutions implemented in over 1,000 cities and communities across the globe. bee smart city empowers smart sustainable cities by facilitating the global exchange of best practice solutions and lessons, operates as a global smart city knowledge center, and provides advisory services to cities, local, regional and national government bodies.

bee smart city is a smart solutions provider, which helps smart cities and smart solution creators to find one another and solve each other problems. Also, bee smart city provides consulting services for city managers and advertising services for smart solution providers and events related to smart cities and smart solutions. (bee smart city, 2020.)

## 1.2 Thesis Objectives

After my summer internship at bee smart city I found that even though the company works globally, there are only six smart solutions added from Finland and this amount has no growth for a long time. From my perspective it means, that bee smart city brand awareness is not high, and most companies do not have the opportunity to share their smart city solutions and have a partnership with bee smart city. Also, there is no clear approach in marketing for expanding and reaching the Finnish market.

For this purpose, I decided to make a research and create an inbound marketing strategy for possible reach of companies with smart city solutions in Finland. This strategy will help to raise brand awareness of bee smart city, to grow and reach potential customers and partners. This strategy will be applied during thesis writing for examining results and further suggestions for the commissioning company. The objective of this thesis is to have tested content inbound marketing strategy and possible development suggestions for the future bee smart city inbound marketing campaigns.

## 1.3 Thesis Scope

bee smart city has been operating without any clear inbound marketing plan to increase brand awareness in Finland and reaching customers and partners in there. The goal of this thesis is to provide inbound marketing strategy according to the needs and wishes of the case company and apply it. The inbound marketing strategy is a product that can be used by bee smart city as a part of the company's daily operations. Based on the results of the tested strategy, I will provide conclusions and develop suggestions, which case company can use for the future inbound marketing strategies. bee smart city wishes to increase brand awareness in Finland, followers from Finland, get new contacts and new solution. More detailed scope description can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Thesis Scope Statement, spring 2020 (Ageeva 2020)

<b>Thesis Name</b>	Using inbound marketing strategy for raising brand awareness on the Finnish market; case: bee smart city
--------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<b>Thesis Executor</b>	Anastasiia Ageeva	<b>Case company</b>	bee smart city
<b>Start of the thesis</b>	9 March 2020	<b>End of the thesis</b>	15 May 2020
<b>Thesis Description</b>	IN SCOPE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use product-development methods</li> <li>- Analysis of collected data</li> <li>- Creating inbound content strategy</li> <li>- Implementation of the strategy</li> <li>- Closing the project, making conclusions &amp; suggestions</li> <li>- Discussions with commissioning company</li> </ul>		
<b>Thesis Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An increase of brand awareness in Finland (five new contacts from Finland)</li> <li>- Getting one new smart solution from Finnish smart solution's company</li> <li>- Getting three new registered members on bee smart city platform from Finland</li> <li>- Getting ten new followers in each social media channel (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram)</li> </ul>		
<b>Constraints</b>	Time limits for the thesis (9 March 2020 - 15 May 2020)		
<b>Assumptions</b>	The case company employers will be available for discussions, making changes and support executor with company's materials.		

The inbound marketing tactics addressed in this thesis are content and social media marketing, as that is the wish of the case company. This thesis will focus on creating the inbound marketing strategy for B2B point of view. The focus is to grow the current Finnish customer base, to reach new customers and followers, and to gain new smart solutions.

#### 1.4 Risk Analysis

In order to avoid unwanted problems and issues during the thesis process, it is important to follow a clear plan on how to execute the whole thesis process. Time management is one of the crucial keys to succeed. This can be monitored by setting proper time slots for

each task and section. Smooth completion of the thesis is possible and for this I created a proper timetable in the project plan, which can be found as an attachment at the end of this document.

It can be challenging to collect data through interviews of the existing solution providers from Finland, because of COVID-19 pandemic, time limits, and small amount of companies, who added their solutions. In order to avoid such risk, all possible channels should be used to contact companies, organize interviews and collect the data.

Additionally, if the quality or amount of information from interviews would be not enough to make significant conclusions and use it for inbound marketing strategy creation, it would not be a problem, because I will also collect quantitative data through search. This will decrease the possibility to get lack of information.

## **1.5 Benefits**

This thesis will benefit the commissioning company in many ways. bee smart city will get better awareness in Finland. Furthermore, this inbound marketing strategy will be created and applied by me, which means that it does not require making an effort from the case company's employees. Executed inbound marketing strategy and developed suggestions can be extremely valuable for the company and can help to work on future strategies. Furthermore, this thesis will help to save company's resources: time and money.

The core value for bee smart city is to accelerate the transformation to smart sustainable cities, to facilitate smart district and smart building development, to market solutions more efficiently and to better reach their prospective target groups. Also, for bee smart city is it important to improve stakeholder engagement. Thus, becoming more aware of the company bee smart city, Finnish customers may find new smart solutions for their cities or share their smart solutions for better engaging with potential clients (other stakeholders).

Smart solutions and smart cities are growing trend in Finland. According to Google Trends (2020) the most interest between 2017 to 2020 smart city, as a term, had in May 2019. As it might be seen in the figure 1, smart city as a trend tends to be regularly searched in Finland. This index is kept at around value of fifty, which means that term is half as popular for the last three years.



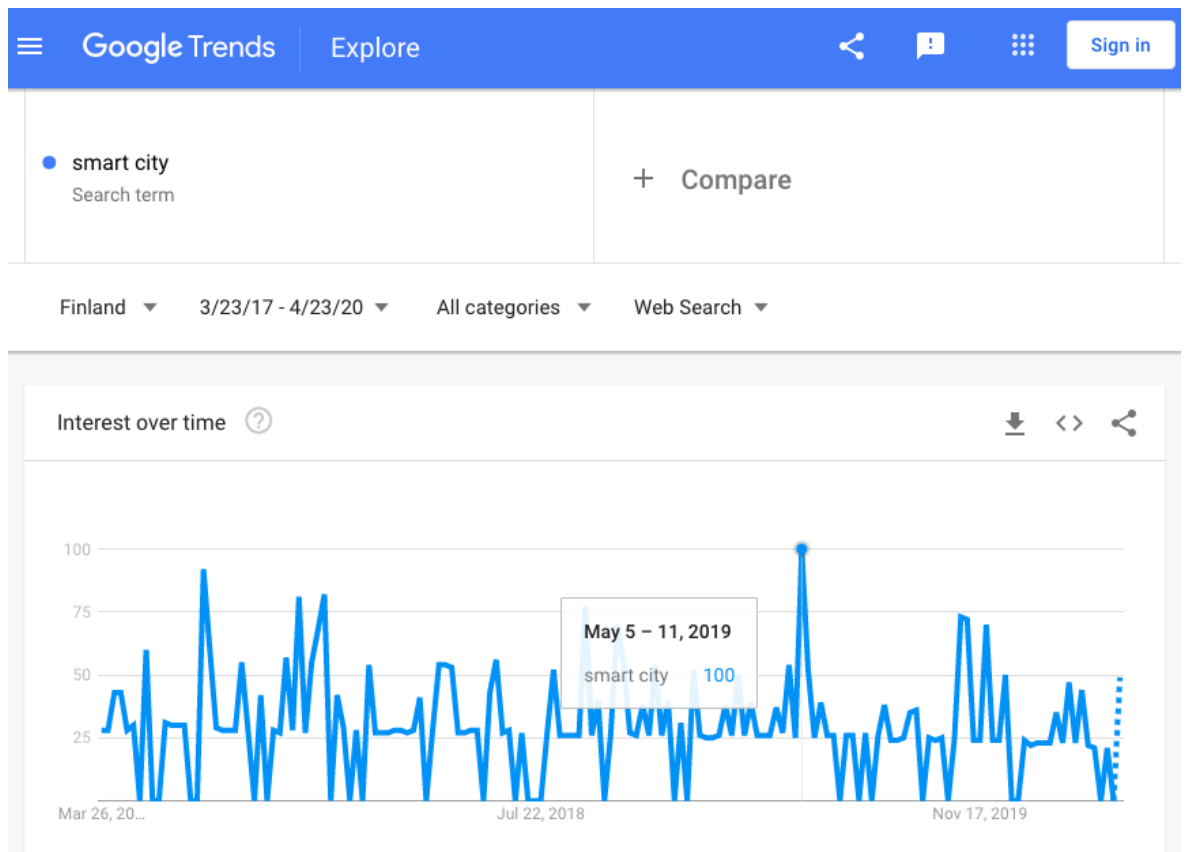


Figure 1: Term smart city on Google Trends (Google Trends 2020)

This statistic shows that there is a regular interest in smart cities and smart solutions are compulsory part of smart cities. This also shows that the trend has a potential to grow. Other statistic shows growing interest in e-scooters, which is a smart solution. As it might be seen in the figure 2, e-scooter as the term had its pick in April 2020. The data of the past three years (2017-2020) also shows that index of interest keeps around fifty.

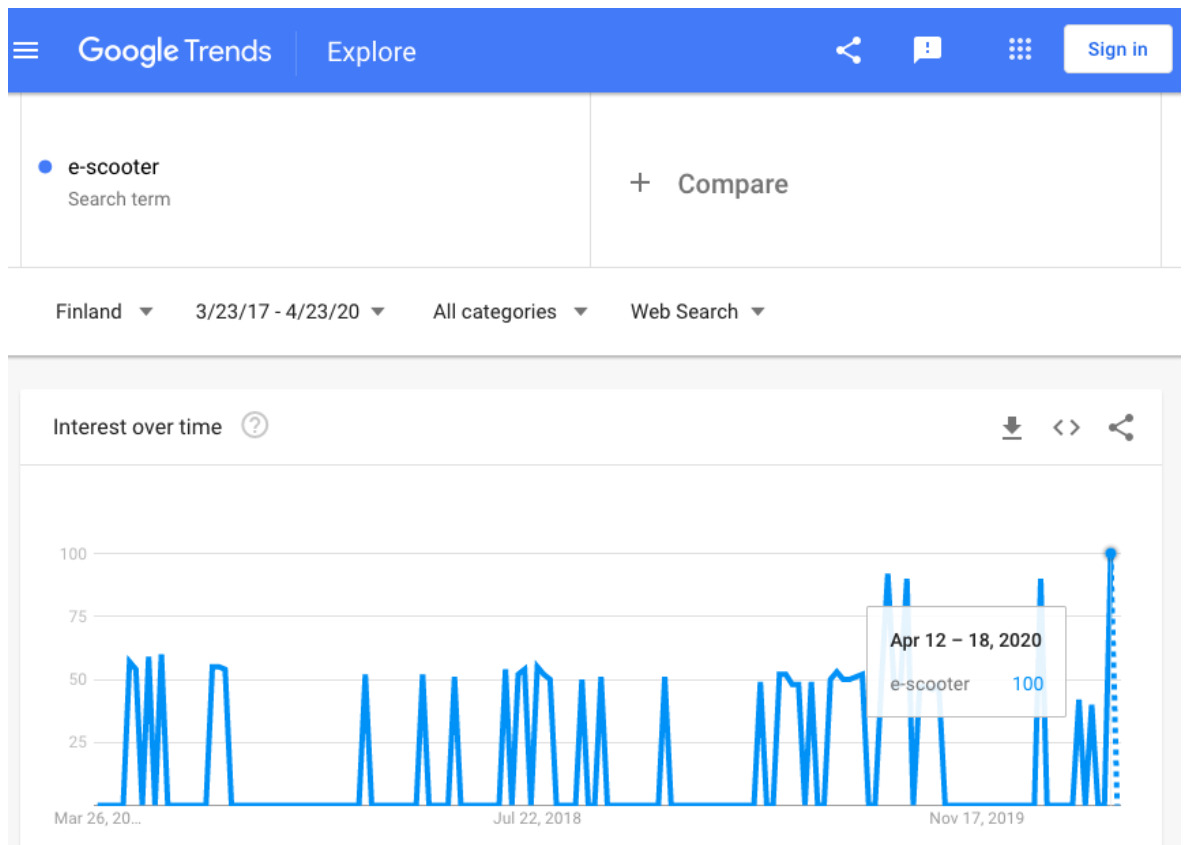


Figure 2: Term e-scooter on Google Trends (Google Trends 2020)

E-scooter is also a growing trend in Finland. bee smart city has some e-scooter solutions on the platform, which might be interesting for Finnish cities. Being aware of bee smart city's platform would benefit Finnish cities, as they would have the opportunity to find the most suitable smart solutions and to share their own for reaching new targets.

## 1.6 Key concepts

«*Inbound marketing*» describes the combination of organic channels, such as: search engine optimization (SEO), social media, and content marketing in their roles and responsibilities (Fishkin & Høgenhaven 2013).

«*Content marketing*» involves the creation and sharing of online material that does not explicitly promote a brand but stimulate interest in products or services (Lexico 2020).

«*Social media marketing*» create a syndication of on-site and off-site content, while Influencer marketing creates promotion of the company's business through influencers of the industry (Entrepreneur 2016).

«*Smart city concept*» according to the bee smart city describes the ability for utilizing the capacity of a city/community to create and adopt solutions for overcoming challenges. Also, smart city concept means seizing opportunities that help transform municipalities/cities to more prosperous and livable places for all stakeholders (bee smart city 2020).

«*Smart solutions*» according to bee smart city are those that get all chosen target groups engaged inside a city or community (bee smart city 2020).

## 2 Inbound Marketing

The goal of this chapter is to introduce inbound marketing and its theory to the reader and create a supportive base for creating content marketing strategy. Furthermore, this chapter outlines the relevant sub-concepts of inbound marketing as channels, content, inbound marketing strategies, and tools.

Inbound marketing as a term has its beginning in 2009, when Brian Halligan and Dharmesh Shah used it in their seminal book. The concept of inbound marketing began much earlier in 1999 and was called by Seth Godin as privilege permission marketing for delivering personal, anticipated, and relevant messages for people who want to get them. Inbound marketing describes the combination of organic channels, such as: search engine optimization (SEO), social media, and content marketing in their roles and responsibilities. (Fishkin & Høgenhaven, 2013.)

The importance of inbound marketing keeps growing and it has many reasons, but there are two reasons which are not losing their applicability: time and relevance. These reasons are the changes of Google and SEO. First reason is that Google, as the world leader in search, keeps evolving and its algorithms too. All historic SEO factors were damped by Google's new types of search results, spam decrease, and improving detection ability and removing of low-quality content. Second reason is that SEO practices have evolved as well and now it needs to be used as part of a broader set of marketing tools. Multichannel approach is necessary in order to succeed in SEO. (Fishkin & Høgenhaven, 2013.)

All of these reasons should be taken into consideration, when it comes to the business decision to use inbound marketing and its strategy. Moreover, there is a big difference between inbound and outbound marketing. According to Burnes (2017): in outbound marketing companies focus on finding customers and this marketing interrupts people, while in inbound marketing companies focus on getting found by customers and use marketing communication, which potential customers want to see. It is not a repeating one message again and again as a hammer, but it is a message which attracts potential customers like a magnet. Christ Belote (2019) from Innovative marketing supports HubSpot's view on inbound and outbound marketing and states outbound marketing as marketer-centric, and inbound marketing as customer-centric. Also, Christ Belote claims that intent-based marketing (inbound) is anything potential customer is actively looking for, which is a big benefit for the business companies.

According to Miller S.A. (2015), inbound marketing is a connected system of online customer attraction and conversion. Flawless execution of inbound marketing can be, when strangers turn into leads, leads turn into customers, and then customers live and advocate the brand. This strategy with the powerful conversion process attracts businesses and more companies start to practice inbound marketing. Bee smart city should not be the exception and should use inbound marketing for increasing brand awareness and entering the Finnish market more effectively. Inbound marketing will not only create new leads but bring new customers and create loyalty between bee smart city and these customers.

When the company will have a wish to start using inbound marketing, it is important to go through four phases and actions of inbound marketing process. In referring to Bezhovski Zlatko (2015), who has been studying Halligan's and Shah's studies about Inbound marketing, these four phases include:

- Attracting visitors
- Converting visitors to leads
- Closing sales
- Recognition customer by loyal, lifelong customers and brand promoters

Attracting visitors to the company's website through proven inbound tactics is the goal of the first phase. These tactics can be SEO, social publishing, blogging, link baits, attractive content, etc. Success of such tactics heavily relies on high-quality content creation.

As soon as visitors arrive at the website for the first time, the second phase begins, and its goal is to convert these visitors to leads by collecting their information. For such hard task it would be smart for a company to offer something valuable in return to users, for example: newsletters, eBooks, a trial, or other beneficial content. Here important role plays a landing page which should be optimized beforehand. Collected leads should be managed appropriately as well.

The closing phase is the next one and here leads are converted to sales. It can be done through email marketing, which can have useful and relevant content to increase leads trust and prepare them to buy. During this phase companies should use automated CRM and emailing to handle large numbers of leads.

The hardest phase in marketing, Bezhovski Zlatko (2015) stated as the last one: to turn a customer into a promoter. The last phase of the Inbound marketing process is all about

achieving that. Marketing does not stop even after the customer is acquired. Interaction with the customer keeps going and the company should share engaging content, continue qualified client service and listen to customers' feedback. Only by doing that customers will be satisfied, will return, and promote the business.

## **2.1 Channels used in Inbound Marketing**

An inbound marketing strategy can include a number of different channels and types of content for attracting customers and prospects to the website. These channels according to the Walker-Ford (2018) can be: blogging, website, social media, SEO, email, etc. For bee smart city case I will focus mostly on social media channels, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. These channels are already in use by bee smart city and will be the most helpful as my work will be concentrated on social media marketing as an inbound strategy.

### **2.1.1 LinkedIn**

LinkedIn website (2020) is the world's biggest professional network for connecting professionals and making them more successful and productive. It has more than 675M registered users worldwide. Many companies have LinkedIn company page and use it for boosting chances of success by publishing valuable content, connecting to existing and potential customers, using page for promotion worldwide.

There are many advantages for businesses in using LinkedIn. There are four the most important which was highlighted by Scott (2019) and which every company can take for themselves:

- getting connected by networking
- building trust for the brand, by using groups with professional topics
- promoting the brand as an authority, by sharing valuable content
- gathering feedback from people with ideas and opinions

In order to increase company's chances to get more followers (and potential customers), Newberry (2018) from Hootsuite recommends businesses to follow some tips and strategies:

- publishing valuable content
- including rich media (not only text posts)
- taking advantages of LinkedIn groups

- trying showcase pages (sub-pages of your company)
- going global with multi-language tools (possibility to have a page in other languages than English)
- understanding the LinkedIn algorithms (by learning it from the company)
- learning from LinkedIn Analytics (checking visitors, updates and followers)

One can use all benefits of LinkedIn use and make them work on the company. The use of LinkedIn also allows companies to create a meaningful network, build credibility and grow brand. Some of them, such as publishing rich media and using LinkedIn groups, bee smart city uses already, and some can be applied in the future inbound marketing strategy.

bee smart city has been using LinkedIn since the company was found and already tried different techniques and features, such as publishing content, personal groups and, analytics. Nowadays companies can do even more for self-promotion and also use showcase pages, groups, and advanced search.

According to Neil Patel (2020), prospects now always can find the company, so the company can find them by LinkedIn advanced search, and this is possible to make without upgraded LinkedIn membership. The advanced search can help to use filter and narrow down a search. Prospects can be found by location, company, industry, or profile language. Advanced search is a powerful technique for direct finding targets, which allows us to find warm prospects.

Other effective LinkedIn technique, which Neil Patel (2020) mentioned for the marketing is Groups. It is important to find groups in a relative niche, join them, maintain some level of activities and nurture leads in that way. In order to use this technique effectively, the company should look for highly relevant (match to the target audience) and active groups (select very active ones).

In Neil Patel's (2020) opinion last, but not the least perfect way for a company to segment its inbound LinkedIn traffic is the showcase page. Showcase pages were made for generating leads and through it much easier to present a brand, business unit, company initiative, and develop long-term relationships with the audience. With showcase page one customer segment should be targeted and should receive relevant information. With showcase page more targeted leads can be gained.

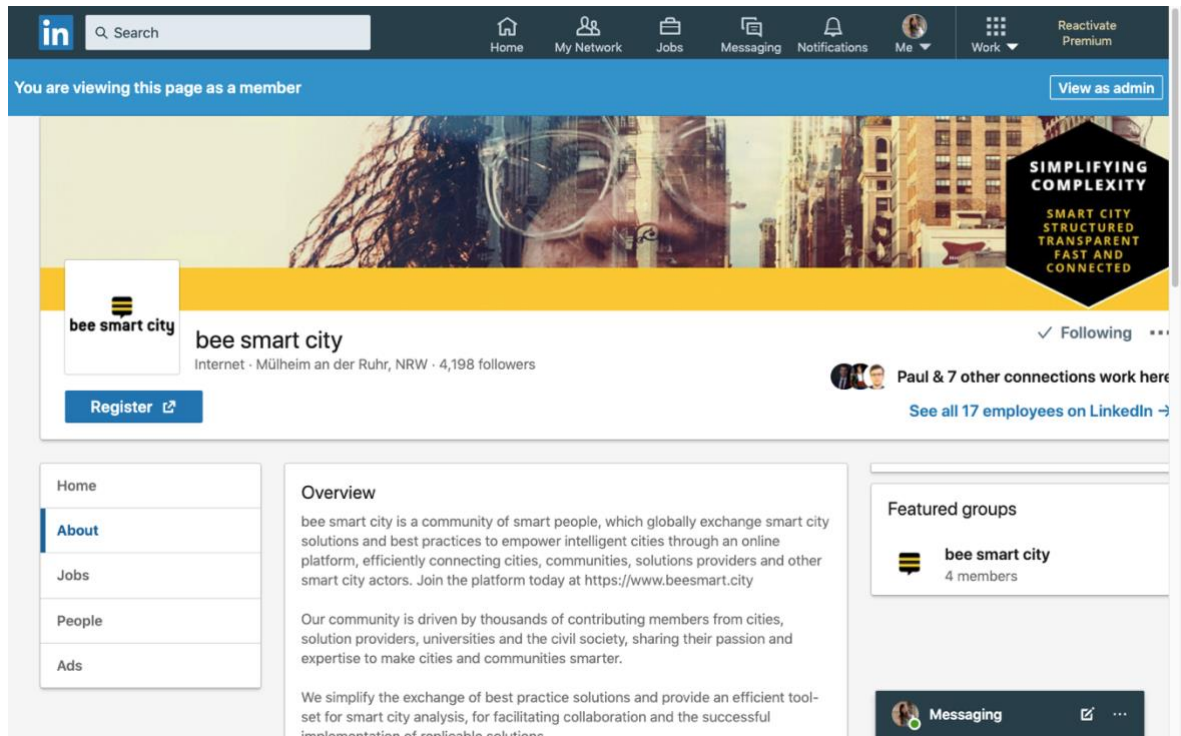


Figure 3: Screenshot from bee smart city's LinkedIn page (bee smart city 2020)

bee smart city started to use LinkedIn from the company's foundation in 2017. Since then the company got 4,198 followers worldwide and it can be seen in the figure 3. The page has been using for sharing (new smart solutions, smart cities, tech events, reached milestones), for promotion bee smart city (company, its services and opportunities) and for connecting with customers (existing and potential). bee smart city now has one group, which calls Smart cities and digital city transformation, but there is no active content publishing for now.

### 2.1.2 Facebook

Facebook website (2020) is an online social media and social networking service with more than 2bn active users. Through Facebook people share ideas, offer support, grow their network, and work. One of the Facebook principles is to promote economic opportunity, which means that through Facebook tools businesses can grow, create jobs, and strengthen the economy. Facebook is not just for connecting professionals, but it can be used with such purpose as well.

Facebook offers ad options for any budget and any expertise level. Also, companies can track the results of ads and make changes along the way. Advertisement can be not only paid, but for free as well. Through Facebook business page companies can share



informative posts, communicate with existing and potential customers, advertise the company itself and its services and share direct links.

Driver (2019) shared some advices on how to use the advantages of Facebook for business. Here are seven advices:

- Use Facebook Insights (free analytic tool) to measure success of campaigns and improving posts
- Use publishing tools (e.g. Hootsuite) and schedule posts in the future to post regularly and save time in the long run
- Be responsible, not salesy and post not only advertisements, but also interesting and informative content
- Create and advertise events (it is one way to engage with the audience)
- Share relevant content from other sources (to create benefit through networking)
- Have conversations: respond to comments, questions and concerns to make company's posts visible
- Create Facebook videos to broadcast large audience for free.

This is not the full enumeration of possible actions on Facebook for businesses, but the ones above can be taken for the future bee smart city inbound marketing strategy. Other actions could be paid advertisement or Facebook messenger marketing. In my thesis, I will focus on using Facebook Insights and sharing relevant and informative content.

In an article by Robinson (2019) from Forbes articles about social media and inbound marketing, the author shared an opinion that social media users tend to reject content that sounds like it is over trying to persuade them. He believes that social media ads need to deliver value to the customer and as an example business can give away a free ebook or share a link to the company's latest blog post. These actions would strengthen the company's reputation and build a stronger relationship with potential leads.

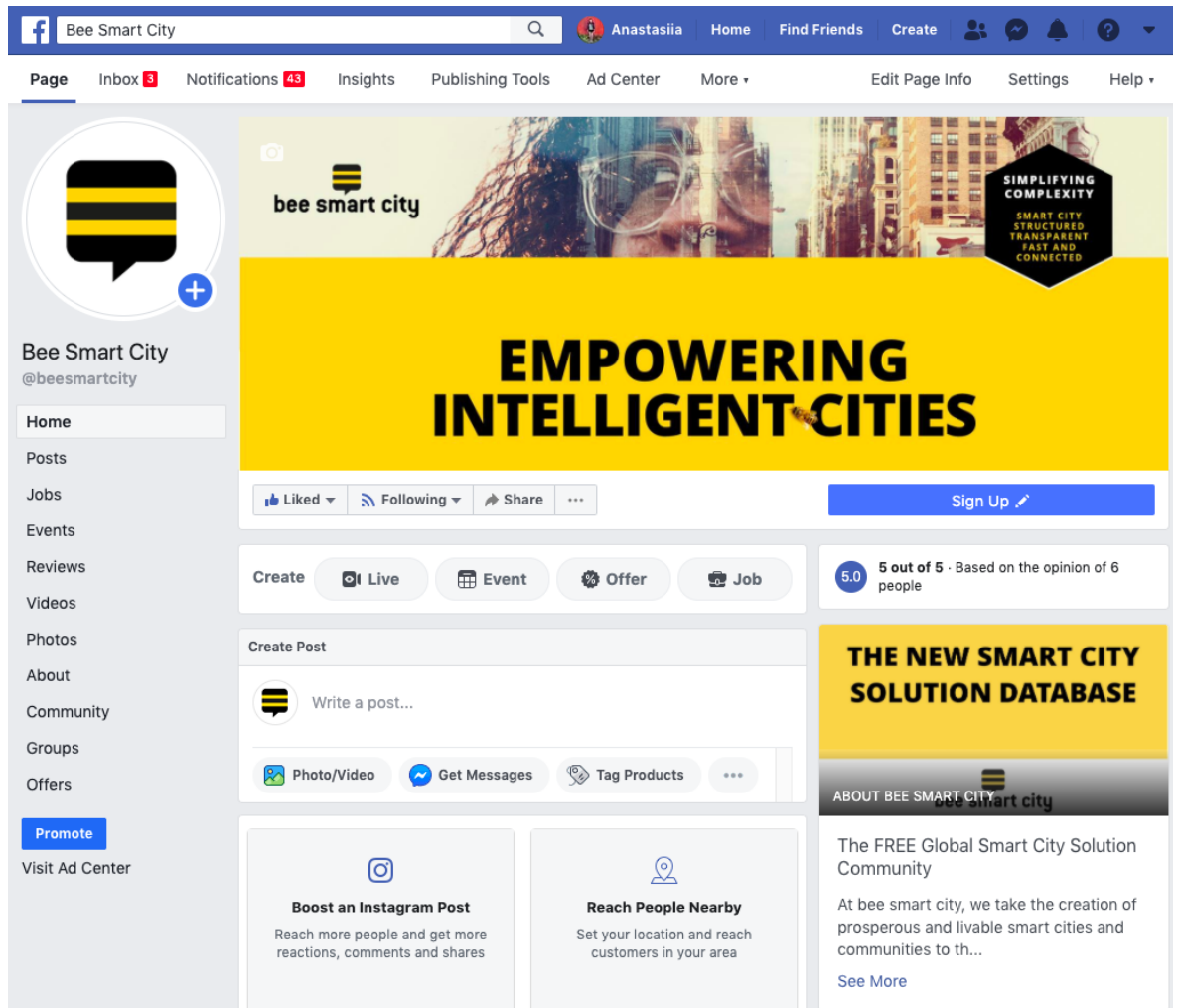


Figure 4: Screenshot from bee smart city's Facebook page (bee smart city 2020)

bee smart city uses Facebook and by now (April 2020) has 977 followers and it can be seen in the figure 4. Facebook is a second important social media for the company. The content is almost the same as in LinkedIn: promotions, shares, and connections. bee smart city also has eight sub-groups, but the company actively runs two of them: bee smart city company page and smart cities group. These groups were intended for topic or focus-group related topics.

### 2.1.3 Instagram

According to Rouse (2017) Instagram is a free, social network platform and online application that was acquired in 2012 by Facebook. It is a tool for individuals and businesses as well. Companies can start their free business account for self-promotion (brand and products or services). In case when the company has a business account, the company also has a free engagement and impression metrics. Instagram allows

advertisers to use stories and drive business results. Instagram has paid advertisement options as Facebook and LinkedIn.

Instagram began as a massively popular photo-sharing and social networking service, but nowadays it has more features than ever before. The main features of Instagram platform (2020) now are photo and video sharing, stories, direct, IGTV, and shopping. All of these features can be used for business purposes. According to Instagram Business webpage (2020) more than 1bn Instagram accounts worldwide are active every month, 90% of accounts follow a business on Instagram, and more than 500M accounts use Instagram Stories every day. These numbers are impressive and can give a real chance for businesses to become visible, get new followers (potential customers) and increase sales.

Many tips and tricks can be found on the Internet for being effective as a business on Instagram. There are eight effective tips for marketing through Instagram, which were shared by Mottola (2019):

- Having a well-optimized bio is important because it is the first thing potential clients will see and it will explain why prospects should care
- Switching to business account will make followers life easier in turn of contacting the company and will let the company use free tools (e.g. Instagram analytics)
- Maximizing hashtags for attracting the right audience and helping the company to build and increase engagement
- Reposting with permission from clients, to make them feel more appreciated
- Having great visuals to help customers associate brand with particular patterns and being recognizable
- Using Instagram Stories for telling more, increasing engagement and learning about audience preferences
- Partnering with relevant influencers for boosting following and market company's business to a bigger audience
- Being interactive to build and keep followers and convert them to customers.

All of these tips can help to improve existing Instagram account of bee smart city and make it more effective. Also, it can be used in bee smart city inbound marketing strategy for raising brand awareness, expanding and reaching potential customers.

Newberry (2019) from Hootsuite shared seventeen Instagram marketing tips that companies can't afford to ignore, and I picked eleven which can be useful and used in inbound marketing stratagem for bee smart city. These tips are:

- Clearly define goals (it can increase brand awareness or make leads, etc)
- Define audience (the right target market for whom content will be)
- Create visually compelling content (photos or pictures which tells the story)
- Establish brand's «look» (Instagram aesthetic, right colors for brand and for recognition)
- Write great captions (quick quip and detailed storytelling)
- Use hashtags wisely (between 5 to 9 and they should be relevant and specific)
- Engage (answer comments and interact with other profiles)
- Do not neglect Instagram Stories (possibility to tell a story or use a call to action)
- Use stories highlights and covers to boost bio
- Post at the right times (technology Monday and Tuesday, 2 p.m.)
- Try an influencer partnership

The combination of these tips can be tried out as a part of an inbound marketing strategy and might bring positive results such as increasing audiences' activity, strengthen bee smart city brand and attracting new followers. As an example, Instagram Stories can be combined with hashtags and highlights, to facilitate brand engagement and bring new followers. At the same time, it will help to engage with an existing audience.

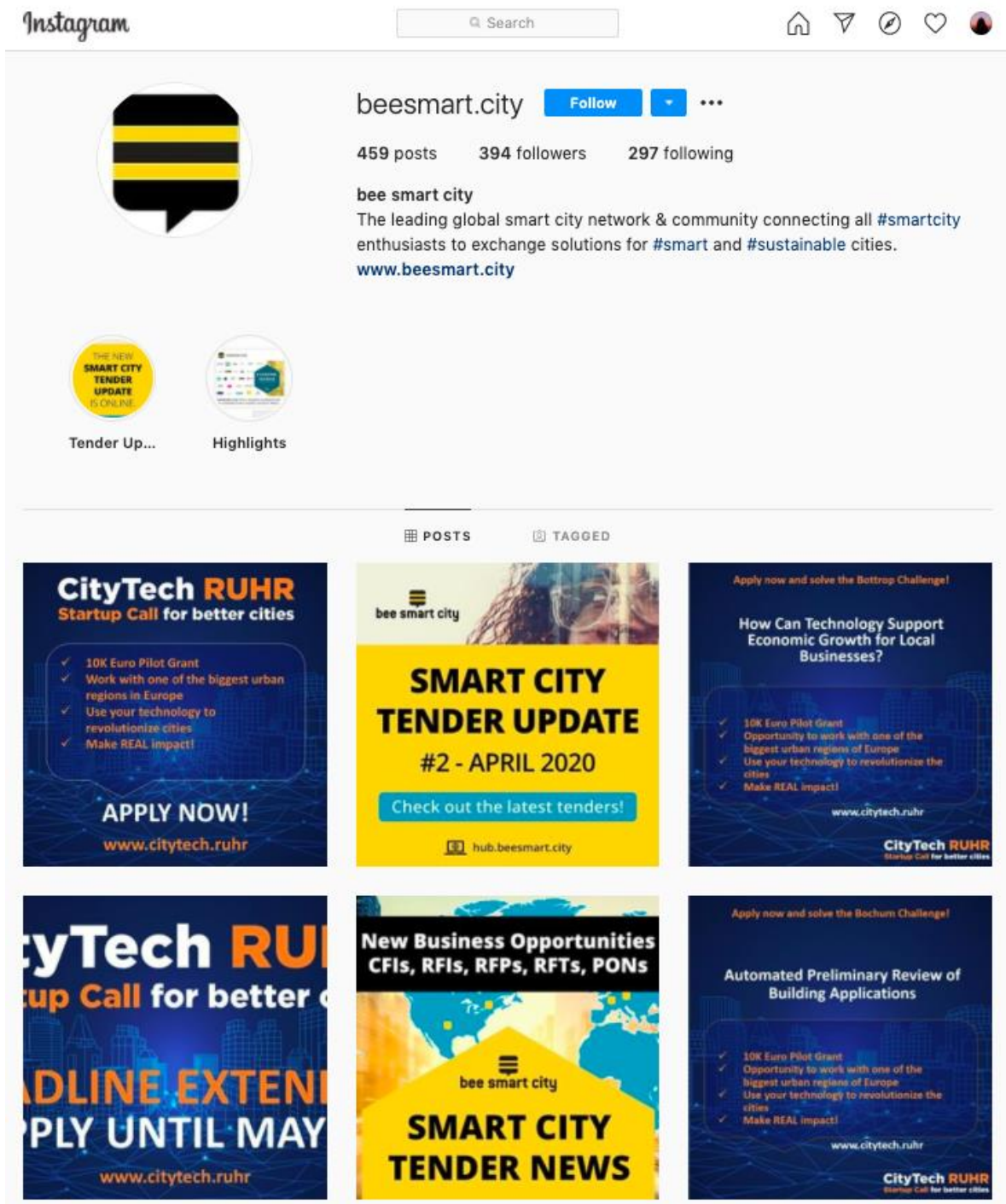


Figure 5: Screenshot from bee smart city’s Instagram page (bee smart city 2020)

bee smart city uses Instagram business account and for today (April 2020) has 394 followers. The company has a clickable link, which brings to the website, category, and bio as it showed on the figure 5. It has two highlights positions for E-scooter and Smart Tenders, and Tender Update. Though Instagram channel bee smart city shares new solutions and future events, uses thank you and holidays posts, posts photo and video content from events and customers, and advertise the company and its activities.

## 2.2 Types of content used in Inbound Marketing

As marked in the book «Inbound Marketing: Attract, Engage, and Delight Customers Online» by Halligan and Shah (2014) businesses should have not only a remarkable proposition, but also, they should create a remarkable content about the company and its products. There are two reasons for that, and they are:

- Remarkable content attracts links from other websites to company's one, helps to get better Google ranking and brings free traffic from Google via search
- Remarkable content spreads much faster and easier on social media sites, like Facebook and LinkedIn and company's content can spread like wildfire within concrete market

So, the main idea is to build high-quality remarkable content to make it spread fast and increase number of links, which brings to the company's website. Businesses can use remarkable content instead of paid advertising and still get a lot of visitors to the website.

Content can vary for different markets and it is important to find which type is the most effective for the particular company. Halligan and Shah (2014) mentioned in their book seven possible types of content:

1. Blog articles
2. White papers (education papers, not catalog)
3. Videos (e.g. 2-3 minutes video about industry or product)
4. Webinars (live online presentations)
5. Podcasts (10-20-minute audio program)
6. Webcasts (live video shows online)
7. Visuals (infographics, slide desks)

To know better what can be suitable for a particular company, it can be tested with different types of content. In the case with bee smart city I would rather focus on blog articles in social media, videos, webcasts in the form of Instagram Stories or IGTV, and visuals (infographics, GIFs, etc.). I am going to concentrate on these types of content because bee smart city has mainly online business and all of the content from the website can be used directly on social media channels and be part of the inbound marketing strategy.

According to Halligan and Shah (2014) marketing effectiveness is no more a function of the width of company's wallet, but rather is a function of the width of company's brain. No

more customer interruption through money. Now companies in order to succeed need to create remarkable content, optimized it for social media and search engines, publish and market the content through social media, and measure the effectiveness of that content.

Tague (2020) from ClearVoice shared with readers top twenty-five content types for Inbound Marketing and I will mention some of them, which can be rather useful for bee smart city from my perspective, which is based on my observations:

- Articles
- Blogs
- Case studies
- Customer stories
- Email
- FAQs
- Guides
- Infographics
- Landing pages
- Livestreams
- Motion graphics
- Newsletters
- Presentations
- Press releases
- Social media posts
- Tutorials
- Videos

Some of these types of content bee smart city already uses in marketing and some can be discovered and planned as a part of the inbound marketing strategy. Some types can be combined and applied at the same time. All of these content types can be a great possibility, but I want to focus on three of them and they are: live streams, social media posts, and video.

Live streams can be done through Facebook or Instagram and allow to discuss company's product or service, show off knowledge of the industry, or simply entertain and the grow audience. Bump (2019) gave three tips from there to start for Facebook Live and it includes:

- embracing interactivity by request commenting and questing from the audience

- trying a series with pre-recording to increase audience interest and gain some engagement
- considering mobile formatting (video can be done with music and make it still enjoyed)

These simple tips can help to fight with stress and start using Facebook Live. Also, it is smart to have preparations and even the creation of a video script. Live streaming can be a part of an inbound marketing strategy and an effective tool for increasing engagement and expanding the audience.

Instagram can be used in a similar way as Facebook Live and tips from HubSpot can be applied as well. Instagram has a possibility not only to make live streams, but also to upload longer videos and it calls IGTV.

### **2.3 Inbound Marketing Strategies**

In marketing and advertising, according to DeMers (2016), inbound marketing has become increasingly popular, and inbound campaigns focus on the value they can provide users. Many businesses prefer inbound marketing strategies because they are less expensive, have more benefits and generate a higher rate of return in the long term.

Co-founder of Neil Patel Digital (a digital marketing agency) and top influencer on the web, Neil Patel shared in his blog 22 Inbound Marketing Strategies for using today by startups. He offers to create reasons for the customers to come to the business through inbound marketing, instead of doing traditional outbound marketing and broadcasting to the customers.

What Neil Patel recommends, can be applied as a part of research and inbound marketing strategy planning for bee smart city and it can include next actions:

- Review Facebook page Insights and Fans column to get better understanding who demographically is interested in the company
- Survey current customers and leads to find problems and create effective content to target customers deepest interest
- Conduct in-depth interviews and use data to create content
- Produce incredible content (unique, supplementary for the customer journey), by using relevant titles, different forms of media in content (video, charts, graphs, etc.), blog posts and storytelling



- Host a webinar (training) to encourage customers to learn in real-time and have more engagement
- Have an influencer marketing campaign to get other influencers to market the company
- Build effective email campaigns to promote the brand through email
- Test and refine strategies to improve all kinds of marketing

Some of these actions can be combined and used in a particular strategy. According to Demers (2016) companies can consider next seven inbound marketing strategies and apply up to their need: on-site content marketing, off-site content marketing, search engine optimization, social media marketing, influencer media marketing, email newsletters, personal branding. Each strategy has its goal and can be used for different purposes. For example, on-site content marketing focuses on producing valuable content on the website, while off-site produces this content by publishing it on another site. Search Engine Optimization can be applied as website optimization for mobile devices or improving site speed. Social Media Marketing create a syndication of on-site and off-site content, while Influencer marketing creates promotion of the company's business through influencers of the industry. Email newsletters concentrate on email marketing. Personal branding can be used in conjunction with almost any mentioned strategies.

These strategies as Neil Patel recommended actions can be also applied together for the better results of inbound marketing. For bee smart city, I would rather focus on social media marketing and personal branding, because bee smart city already has experiences with other strategies and now social media market is the new focus in turn of marketing for expending on the Finnish market.

There are two tactics that can be applied in social media as bee smart city inbound marketing strategy and they are: infographic and video series. Infographic as a quick snapshot of insightful data can be shared through all social media platforms and make prospects talk about the brand. Video series can be used to deliver basic ideas of the services, features, and possibilities. Video series can be applied through all bee smart city social media channels.

### **2.3.1 Successful Inbound Marketing Strategies**

Before beginning work on inbound marketing strategy and campaign for bee smart city, it is never redundant to get some inspiration and check other companies' cases of success.

Fallon (2019) shared an example of WE R CBD successful inbound marketing case, where for the aim of high ROI with email marketing, the company created an interactive wheel on its landing page. People got excited to spin the wheel and get 5% or 10% discount, so they signed up. Meanwhile it helped the company to increase email list by 5000 subscribers for three months.

Another inspiring example that Fallon (2019) shared related to social media and company ElectrIQ Marketing. For their customer Vertagear company made a successful social media campaign, where they focused on organically increasing engagement, driving website traffic, building loyalty, generating buzz, and curating a community. The strategy involved creating and developing strong content. It was shared daily across all social channels and the result was a 35% increase in total transactions and a 24% boost in revenue. This was made by social media campaign as an inbound marketing strategy.

Besides looking at successful cases of others, it is important to check trends and best practices. According to Balkhi (2020) there are five content marketing trends that can be significant in 2020: video and live streaming; optimizing content for voice search; AR-powered visuals, conversational marketing and dynamic content delivery. I will focus on two of them, because in my opinion they are more relevant for my case.

Video and live-streaming have become popular because of popular platforms: YouTube, TikTok, and Twitch. According to HubSpot big amount of consumers (54%) want to see more video content from businesses. This research shows that for connecting and engaging with the audience through content marketing, it is important to start incorporating more videos. It can be done through popular video platforms or through others, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. The easiest way to apply more video content is to try live-streaming trend and make live videos. As an example, for such videos business can hold a live Questions & Answers and interact in real-time with the audience. (Balkhi 2020.)

Conversational marketing will be a notable trend in 2020, because many businesses are realizing that one-to-one conversations are the fastest way to move buyers through marketing funnels. To create a more human buying experience it is important to have personal conversations with the audience. Also, it is a way to learn more about audience and create more relevant content and marketing messages in the future. Conversational marketing can be done in many forms: email marketing, live support, chatbots, Facebook Messenger marketing, and other. Life-like conversations with users is a part of

conversational marketing game in 2020, which businesses need to step in, if they want to keep up with the competition. (Balkhi 2020.)

These two trends: live-streaming (video) and conversational marketing can be used for an inbound marketing strategy of bee smart city. Both methods can be applied by using particular tools. For example, for live-streaming can be used Facebook or Instagram Live and for sharing video can be used LinkedIn posts. For conversational marketing can be used Facebook Messenger and LinkedIn messages.

## **2.4 Tools used in Inbound Marketing**

For inbound marketing accomplishment it is valuable to use tools. There are many tools for different purposes, such as social media and community management, content creation and collaboration, marketing automation, and analytics. I will focus on those, which bee smart city already uses (HubSpot, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, analytics, etc) and will mention those, which can be used for inbound marketing strategy (Quora, Facebook, and Instagram Live, etc)

### **Social Media Management & Community management**

Quora – a popular Questions & Answers website and it has nearly 100 million monthly visitors. Members of Quora can submit questions and give answers in threads, based on a large number of topics. It can become a powerful tool, because by using Quora companies can build authority by answering lots of questions. When companies get authority, they can improve SEO (many upvotes of the post will show that it's popular among readers). Another great way to get additional exposure is to use Quora blog and publish posts there. This tool is free of charge for all users.

### **Content creation**

LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram are the platforms, which can be used as separate tools for inbound marketing. For example, LinkedIn messages and Facebook Messenger can be used for conversational marketing and reaching new targets. LinkedIn showcase pages can be used for posting tailored and frequent messages which are relevant for a specific audience segment. Facebook Live and Instagram Live can be used for live-streaming and increasing engagement with the audience. Instagram highlights can be used to boost bio and getting potential customers attention. All tools and their possibilities from these platforms, which can be used for bee smart city inbound marketing strategy can be found in chapter 2.1 Channels used in Inbound Marketing and in its subparts.

**Marketing automation**

HubSpot is an inbound marketing platform that integrates email marketing, marketing automation, blogging, social media publishing and monitoring and analytics. HubSpot can manage social media sites, launching marketing campaigns, and scheduling updates on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Also, it can track campaign results and industry trends to adjust company's strategy.

**Analytics**

LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram analytics can be used to boost strategies, measuring the effectiveness of these strategies, and pointing out strengths. Also, analytics on these platforms can help to understand followers (their behavior, interests, and actions) and use this knowledge for making changes in existing strategy and improving the final result.

### **3 Product-Development Methodology**

The objective of this thesis is to create the final product, which is tested inbound marketing strategy and suggestions for future use, based on this testing. To develop final product, I will use next methods: interviews, long-list of potential customers, and inbound marketing strategy. In this chapter I will present three methods, which have been applied to collect data and after its analysis, data was used for inbound marketing strategy creation. These methods were picked because of their relevance for the thesis and they were the most possible for accomplishment within thesis schedule. Both methods helped to get the information needed and move closer to the final result.

#### **3.1 Method 1: Interviews**

First product-development method was interviews with smart solution companies, who added their smart solutions on bee smart city platform. As was mentioned in the introduction, for the beginning of the thesis there were six smart solutions from Finland on the platform. The initial plan was to have interviews with six representatives (salesperson, CEO or anyone related to the smart solution creation) from those companies.

There are several reasons why interviews were picked as a product-development method:

- To get better understanding of the businesses and their product
- To find out how these companies or representatives were found or if they found bee smart city on their own
- To learn about more social media these companies use and how they search partners
- To get the idea what inbound marketing strategies they use

Collected data from the interviews was planned to be used for searching potential customers in similar business areas, using same social media channels for advertising, picking the relevant form for content creation and using all data for inbound marketing strategy creation. The interview process was divided into four steps in order to accomplish interviews and data collection beneficially.

Step 1: Creating questions for the interviews

Step 2: Finding and contacting with smart solution companies from Finland

Step 3: Executing interviews

Step 4: Analysing collected data

### **3.1.1 Step 1: Creating questions for the interviews**

In order to create questions for the interviews, I turned to the theoretical part of my thesis and based on that developed a list of possible questions. I created about thirty key questions (Appendix 1), which were related to inbound marketing topic. All of those questions were divided into four main thematical categories and one more in case of having extra interview time: about solution and company, related to bee smart city, about content, about channels, and about customer's inbound marketing strategies (extra questions). Questions about solution and company were developed for the better understanding of a customer company, its solution, and results of adding solution to bee smart city platform. Questions for the category related to bee smart city were made to understand companies' experience with the case company. Questions about the content and channels were created based on theoretical framework from subchapters 2.1 and 2.1, which are channels and types of content used in inbound marketing. These subchapters helped to create questions for data collection of possible types of content and channels in order to use it for developing an inbound marketing strategy. Time planned for the interviews was from fifteen to thirty minutes each. Extra questions could be asked if there still would be a time for that. It was possible to skip questions if they were not relevant for the particular interviewee.

### **3.1.2 Step 2: Finding and contacting with smart solution companies from Finland**

For finding and contacting smart solution companies from Finland, I made a short research on bee smart city platform and found all needed companies' names, websites, and names of contact persons, who added their smart solutions to bee smart city platform. Contacting process included creating a message and sending it to potential interviewees through all possible channels: bee smart city messages, emails, LinkedIn / Facebook / Instagram direct messages, or through contact us- form on the websites. During step two I contacted all six companies and after it scheduled three interviews within two weeks. All interviewees suggested different tools for interviews' calls: Google Hangouts, Skype and WhatsApp.

### **3.1.3 Step 3: Executing interviews**

As it was mentioned in subchapter 3.1.2, I had three interviews. Average time for the interviews was twenty minutes. All interviewees were inspired to discuss their smart solutions, its features, and benefits. During the interview responders were able to give small amount of details about bee smart city social media channels and its content,

because of lack of experience with it. After three interviews all interviewees were curious to know if they could see the results of interviews.

#### **3.1.4 Step 4: Analysing collected data**

All collected data after the interviews were divided into three topics: companies' interaction with bee smart city, social media and content preferences, and companies' social media and marketing activities. Each topic had subparts which help to navigate within one topic. All topics' results can be found below.

##### **Companies' interaction with bee smart city**

All three interviewed companies added their solutions to bee smart city platform for more than one year ago. None of the companies got new contacts (not customers or partners). All three smart solutions did not become any more popular or visible after being added to the platform. Representatives believe that on such result could influence three things:

1. no promotion of their smart solutions outside Finland through bee smart city or other resellers and partners
2. small number of posts for particular smart solution in social media
3. bee smart city platform is more like a phonebook and only people who know about the companies with their smart solutions, can find them there.

Some companies have partners outside Finland, but they found these partners themselves, not because of using bee smart city platform. All representatives answered that key role for adding their smart solutions on the platform played platform price (free of charge for adding solution) and ease of use. Also, customers mentioned that they just decided to give bee smart city a chance and saw in the company potential international partner. Companies' representatives mentioned that they cannot say good or bad things about their experience with bee smart city, because they do not have enough experience.

##### **Social media and content preferences**

In the interviews, responders were asked if they were found by bee smart city or they found bee smart city by themselves. One representative answered that he found bee smart city himself and according to the answer he saw the post from bee smart city in LinkedIn about other smart solution. Other two representatives said that they were found by bee smart city and got email and direct message on LinkedIn.

One company representative mentioned that he prefers social media posts, which presenting new solutions. In his opinion this type of posts can be made as short videos and present new IT smart solutions. Other interviewees did not mention any specific types of content but suggested limited and concentrated information based on keywords. One representative answered that he would appreciate to see a short review of the most important world news once a week. Two representatives out of free answered that they are subscribed for bee smart city newsletters and they saw «something about the platform» in them. Also interviews mentioned that it is fine to get newsletters once a month. One representative answered that he tries to limit the information.

There were no specific answers from interviewees about the content they would like to see on bee smart city social media channels. All interviewees mentioned that the most important for the content that it would be valuable, interesting, and related to IT smart solutions. Also, representatives mentioned that they do not have any recommendations about the post publishing frequency, but not everything can be seen on time of posting, so it can be repetitive.

### **Companies' social media and marketing activities**

All representatives answered that on a daily base they use LinkedIn. Also, two representatives sometimes use Twitter and Facebook. Companies, which were represented use LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and one company uses Instagram. Answering the question about following bee smart city social media channels, interviewees mentioned that they follow bee smart city's LinkedIn. One representative also follows bee smart city's Twitter. Same representative mentioned that he would like to follow bee smart city for knowing what his clients and competitors are doing, asking, or looking for. All interviewees agreed that there is no key call-to-action for everyone and it should be specific for the target audience. Two companies use inbound marketing for promoting their solutions and increasing brand awareness. One company out of three does promotion directly through calls and emails. Other one does inbound marketing and focuses on emails, blogs, and events.

### **Conclusions**

After having three interviews, I was able to obtain partly necessary information and make the conclusions, that helped me to develop method two and to use information for creating an inbound marketing strategy for bee smart city. All conclusions can be found below:

- All three companies added their solutions more than one year ago and since then did not get any new contacts (customers or partners), it could mean that they did



not know about the possibilities to connect and message with possible new customers or partners

- three key factors are attractive for potential customers and can be used in marketing strategy: adding solution is free of charge, easy process to add solution and chance to become international partners with bee smart city
- Emails and LinkedIn direct messages are effective for connecting with new customers and can be used for connection with potential customers
- bee smart city can make posts with short videos with new solutions (preferable IT solutions), which means that video can be used for inbound marketing strategy
- Keywords can be used in posts for those, who read posts fast and not pay much attention to each word
- Content posted by bee smart city should be valuable, interesting, and related to IT smart solutions.

Based on those conclusions I saw possibilities for using LinkedIn, direct messages, and video content for bee smart city inbound marketing strategy. For example, LinkedIn can be used for increasing brand awareness through direct messages and posts in groups. Also, LinkedIn can be used for getting more followers, who can become potential customers, through posting relevant content on bee smart city LinkedIn page. Another example of using video content for increasing engagement with existing followers and attracting new, by using tags and hashtags.

### **3.2 Method 2: Long-list of potential customers**

The second product-development method was creating a long-list of potential customers. I created the list based on the internet search and filling an Excel table. I planned to find twenty smart solutions in Finland and collect all data, which can be valuable for creating and using it in bee smart city inbound marketing strategy.

I created an Excel table, divided it into eleven columns and added titles for each column: name of the company, industry, website, location, languages of websites, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn level of activity, Facebook level of activity, and Instagram level of activity. Column languages were made for find common language for companies to use it in strategy for posts and possible direct messages. All columns with social media channels were made for collecting links. All columns with social media channels' level of activity were made to find the most active channels used by a particular company. Activity level could have active or not active meaning (based on last post in social media

channels). If the company's post were made more than one month ago (from the date 28th April) it was counted as not active. All the results can be found in Appendix 2.

After searching I found twenty smart solution companies, collected all planned data (names, website, languages, social media channels and activity). Then I made a research on companies' activity in social media channels. Below in the figures 6 - 12 can be found the results summarized as pie-charts and graphics.

According to my search, all companies use English language on their websites (Figure 6), which means that future messages and posts for increasing brand awareness about bee smart city can be done in English language. I found that not all companies use Finnish language even though all the companies located in Finland. Some companies have other languages (Swedish, Estonian, Latvian), but they are not relevant for this case. Only one company have German language for the website.

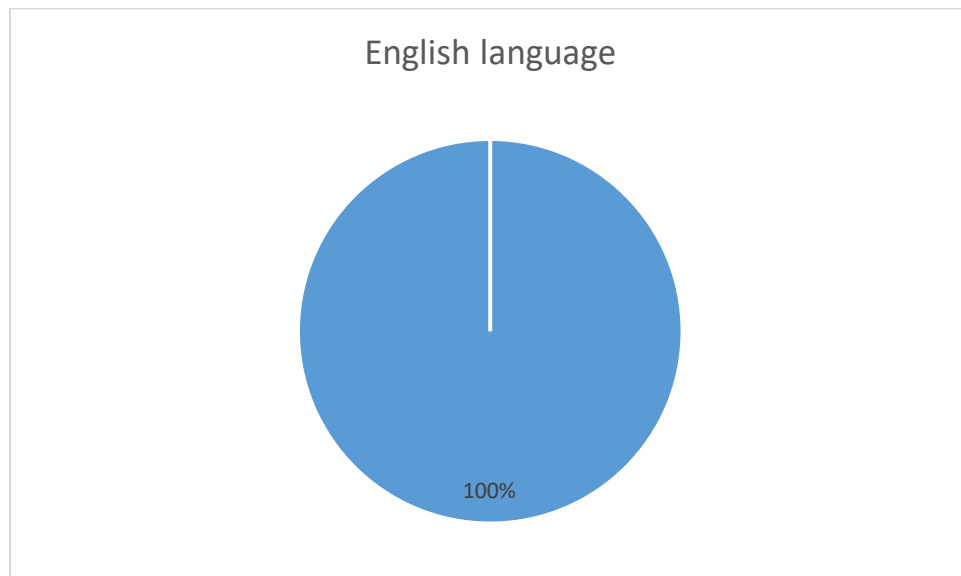


Figure 6: Amount of companies using English on their website (Ageeva 2020)

My research about activity of companies in social media helped to understand what social media channels can be used in bee smart city inbound marketing strategy. For better understanding, I checked all social media channels of target companies and divided them on active and not active. The results can be found below:

- 80% of companies have profile in LinkedIn (Figure 7)
- 85% of companies have profile on Facebook (Figure 8)
- 35 % of companies have profile on Instagram (Figure 9)

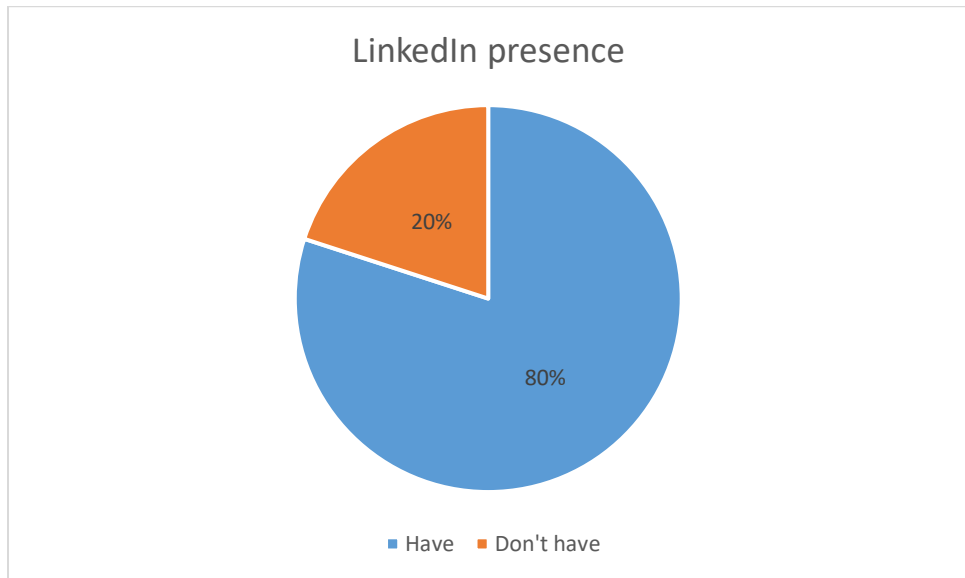


Figure 7: Amount of companies presented in LinkedIn (Ageeva 2020)

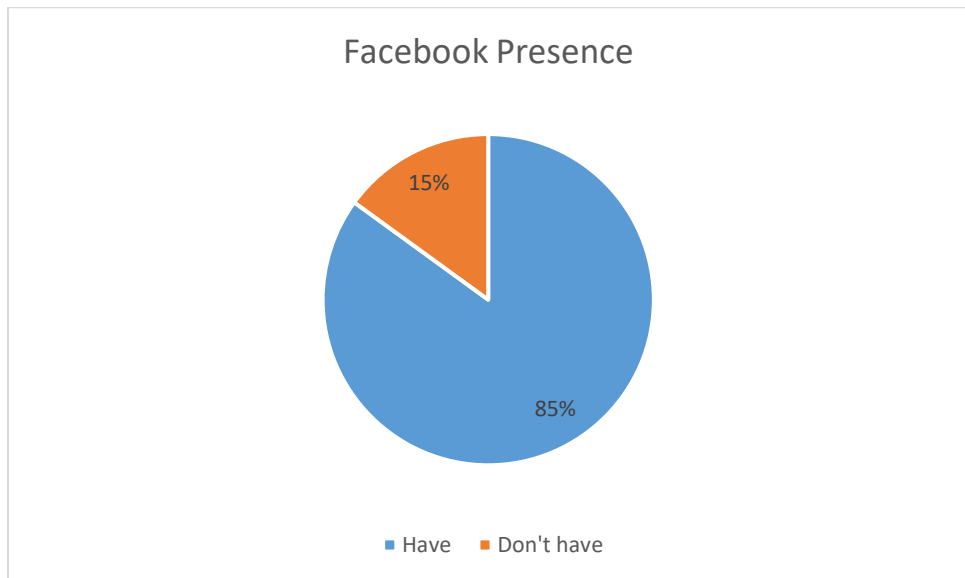


Figure 8: Amount of companies presented on Facebook (Ageeva 2020)

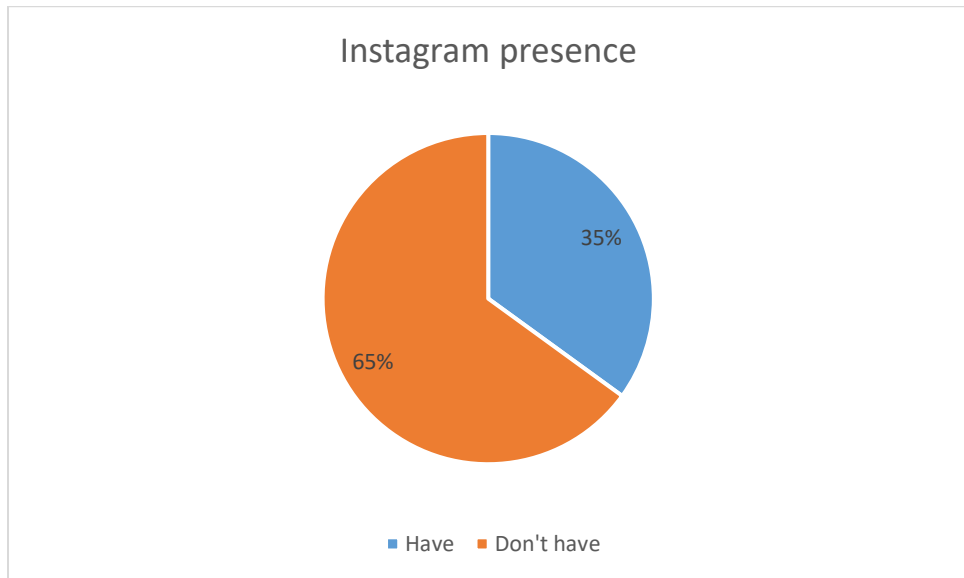


Figure 9: Amount of companies presented in Instagram (Ageeva 2020)

These results mean that for inbound marketing strategy of bee smart city priority for using social media channels will be Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram. To be sure that these channels can be relevant for inbound strategy, I made second research to know how active those companies, who have profiles in those social media channels. Active companies were posted within 1,5 months (from 28 April 2020), not active posted last time more than 1,5 month ago. I picked such time limit criteria, because it would show if it is possible to reach the company through social media channels. These are the results of my second research:

- 13 companies out of 16 are active in LinkedIn (Figure 10)
- 11 companies out of 17 are active on Facebook (Figure 11)
- 6 companies out of 7 are active on Instagram (Figure 12)

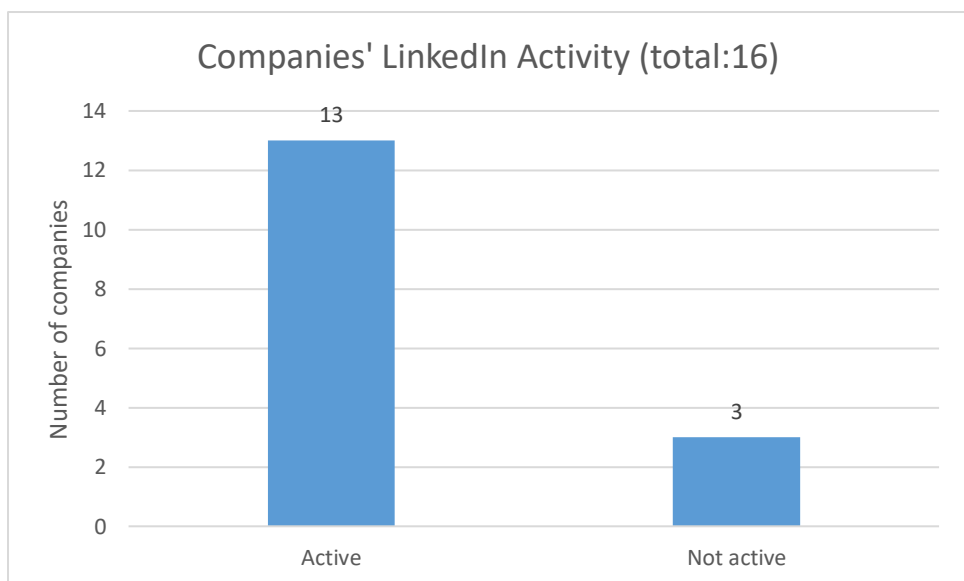


Figure 10: Number of the companies active in LinkedIn (Ageeva 2020)

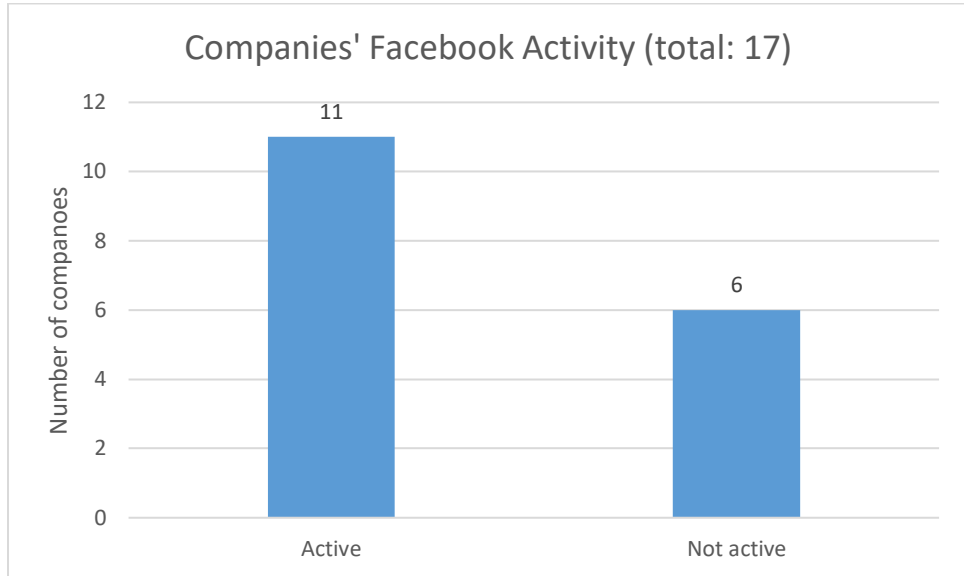


Figure 11: Number of the companies active on Facebook (Ageeva 2020)

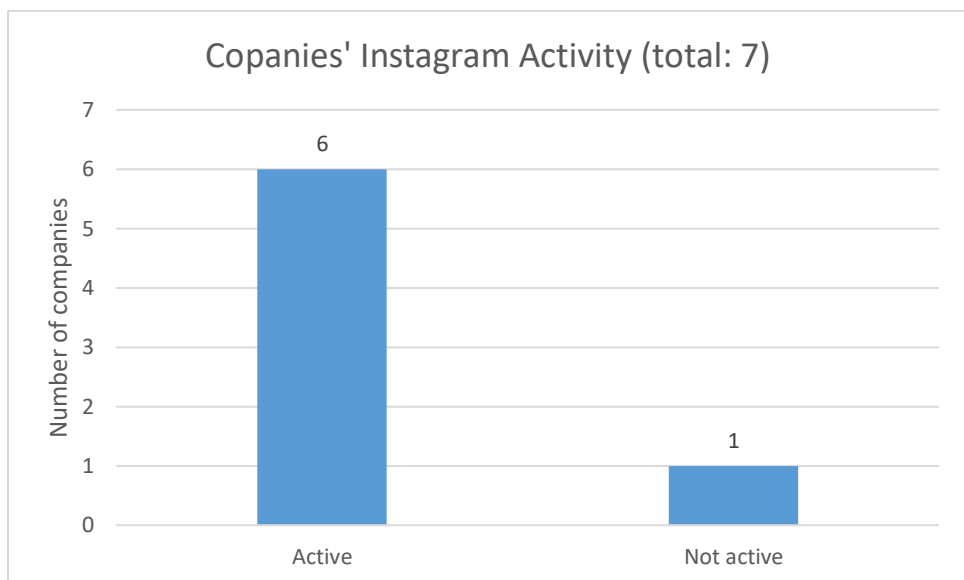


Figure 12: Number of the companies active in Instagram (Ageeva 2020)

These results support my assumption about using these social media for bee smart city inbound marketing strategy. Also, these results look optimistic (most companies are active) and show possibilities in using them. In my research, I found seven companies, which either do not have an account on social media or they are not active, but since they are target companies, they can be reached through other channels.

### **3.3 Results of the interviews and long-list creation**

Both methods from chapter 3 were used as product-development methods and helped to collect all needed data for an creating inbound marketing strategy. All results can be combined and presented next statements:

- Priority in using social media channels: LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram
- LinkedIn can be used for: direct messages to the company representatives, valuable and interesting posts with keywords, presenting new solutions (included IT ones) through short videos, trying groups or showcase pages
- Facebook can be used for: direct messages to the company representatives, smart solutions video sharing, valuable and interesting posts with keywords
- Instagram can be used for: tagging potential customers in post or stories, following potential customers companies' pages, new solutions video sharing
- Emails can be sent to those companies and representatives, who do not have social media channels or are not active there
- Content for social media posts can include information about bee smart city and its possibilities (partnership and search of new customers and partners) after adding smart solution to the platform, short video presenting bee smart city, its possibilities, add solution option and some smart solutions, some examples of IT smart solutions and smart solutions from Finland, posts with keywords for attracting potential customers attention.

### **3.4 Method 3: Inbound Marketing Strategy**

Last method is the inbound marketing strategy, which will be created based on the theoretical part and results of previous two methods. In inbound marketing strategy I will use social media marketing in LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram; emails, and Quora answers. All of these methods will be used as it was discussed and agreed with the case company. Inbound marketing strategy method includes many different aspects, such as goals setting, determining KPI's, outlining tactics, and campaign planning, and that is why I will highlight inbound marketing strategy in the separate chapter (chapter 4).

## 4 Inbound marketing strategy: bee smart city case

In this chapter, I will describe goals, KPI's (Key Performance Indicator) and tactics for inbound marketing strategy. Also, I will plan a campaign for increasing brand awareness of bee smart city in Finland and reaching new customers. Campaign plan will include target audience, content, channels, and timing for implementation.

After the discussion with the case company, we agreed that city personas and solution providers are the target audience. bee smart city has its list of personas. City personas include people with jobs in economic development or as department heads, chief innovation (information) officers or chief digital officers. Solution providers can be from Business Development, marketing or sales and can be from any industry, but the main focus is the same as for city personas: Information Technology (Internet, Computer Software, IT Services, Computer and Network Security, etc.), Real Estate, Government Administration and Relations, Engineering. All target audience is from Finland.

### 4.1 Setting Goals

Main goal is to increase bee smart city brand awareness in Finland, get new contacts for raising business opportunities, and have readymade suggestions for future use in inbound marketing activities. The desired outcome of this strategy is to increase bee smart city followers (more subscribers, more marketing contacts), new customers, and smart solutions. A short period of time can be considered as risk for strategy implementation. This risk might cause fewer results than planned, because it would not be enough time to approach the target audience. The strategy would be developed by thesis executor and would be discussed with the case company's representative before implementing it. If strategy will not bring expected results that would mean that goals are not achieved, and this strategy can be further developed and tested in longer period of time. For reaching success it can be required months, but since the thesis has very tight time limits its success will be evaluated on 13 May 2020. Main three goals presented in table 2. Planned numbers for the goals will be presented in table 3.

Table 2. Inbound marketing strategy goals (Ageeva 2020)

Attract & Engage	Goal: increase brand awareness in Finland (in order to grow business bee smart city needs to	Attract - Engage
------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------

	increase brand awareness of brand in Finland among new qualified audience and engage them)	
Subscribe	Goal: increase new contacts (after audiences' attention will be gained, it would be important to opt-in them to bee smart city marketing by starting to follow any social media or subscribing for bee smart city platform)	Engage - Subscribe
Convert	Goal: increase number of smart solutions (when contacts will be in funnel and enjoying content, it would be smart to make them add their smart solutions to the platform)	Subscribe – Add smart solution to the platform

#### 4.2 Determining and tracking KPI's

To keep objectives of the business at the forefront of decision making it is important to create and track KPI's. KPI's help to track results and see the progress of applied strategy to measure its success and analyze if goals were reached. KPI's for inbound marketing strategy are presented in table 3 and should be achieved by 13 May 2020:

Table 3. Inbound marketing strategy KPI's (Ageeva 2020)

Attract & Engage		Subscribe		Convert	
Current (4 May 2020)	Goal (13 May 2020)	Current (4 May 2020)	Goal (13 May 2020)	Current (4 May2020)	Goal (13 May 2020)
Facebook: 994 followers	Facebook: 1004 followers	LinkedIn: 4,211 followers	LinkedIn: 4,221 followers	bee smart city	bee smart city platform: 7



Facebook page likes: 897	Facebook page likes: 907			platform: 6 smart solutions from Finland	smart solutions from Finland
Instagram: 399 followers	Instagram: 409 followers	bee smart city platform's members from Finland: 38	bee smart city platform's members from Finland: 43		
		bee smart city platform's members: 14,598	bee smart city platform's members: 14,608		

### 4.3 Outlining tactics

When goals and KPI's are clear, it is important to determine tactics, which will bring the results. For goal attract and engage I will use such tactics as: social media marketing (posts, stories), call-to-action, emails, direct messages in Facebook, advanced search LinkedIn and invitations through adding contacts and sending direct messages. Social media marketing will be implemented on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram, based on long-list and research of activity level. For social media implementation I will create posts and pictures for them. Also, I will make Instagram stories and Facebook stories. I will also use Quora for attracting attention and increasing brand awareness.

For the goal subscribe, I will use social media marketing (post, stories, tagging), emails and direct messages as well. Social media marketing will include posts with pictures and call-to-action (e.g. sign up or register now). Emails and direct messages will have general description of bee smart city, platform, its benefits, link for signing up and will also have call-to-action. Some emails will be personalized by using potential customers names and names of companies, emails will be created based on long-list. Some emails will be sent on general companies' emails.

For goal convert I will use social media posts and stories, emails, and direct messages. They will include call-to-action to sign up and add smart solutions to bee smart city platform. In posts and stories, I will tag potential companies in order to help them see these posts and to explain why they should add their smart solutions.

#### 4.4 Planning the campaign

Below you can find three tables (tables 4,5 and 6) that will show all planned actions for three social media channels (LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram). Also, I will describe actions for emails and Quora. Social media channels' tables will display planned dates, actions, hashtags, call-to-actions, and purposes of posts. Planned usage Instagram and Facebook stories, Instagram and Facebook Live will be displayed under the tables.

Table 4: Schedule for LinkedIn posts (Ageeva 2020)

Post number	Topic	Call-to-action	Tags	Planned date and time	Purposes
Post 1	What is bee smart city?	Register now. Join the community	@BIG Business Insight Group @Forum Virium Helsinki @Wirepas @Tehomet @Greenled Group	4 May 2020 (Monday) 14:05	Reminder. Attracting attention of potential customers. Free ad.
Post 2	Benefits of adding smart solution to the platform	Add your smart solution	@PayiQ @Sitowise @FutureDialog @Citynomadi @Vincit	6 May 2020 (Wednesday) 9:05	Attracting attention. Sharing benefits of adding solution feature.
Post 3	6 smart solutions on bee smart city platform	Share your smart solutions	@Sniffie @HeadPower Oy @Softability Oy	7 May 2020 (Thursday) 13:59	Attracting attention of Finnish companies

Post 4	Finland – innovative country and its solutions	Join now and share your solutions	@Eventz International @Trimble Inc. @Sova3D Oy	8 May 2020 (Friday) 10:33	Attracting attention of Finnish companies. Post for possible repost.
Post 5	Thank you post for Finnish companies	Join the global smart city community	@BlindSquare @Sova3D Oy @CHAOS @Events International @Trimble Inc.	11 May 2020 (Monday) 09:15	Attracting attention of Finnish companies. Post for possible repost.
Post 6 with video	Smart solution from Finland on the platform (Trimble)	Find more solutions. Add your solution.		12 May 2020 (Tuesday) 10:35	Increasing visibility and engagement with Finnish company.
Post 7	Finnish Statistics	Join to add and share your solutions		13 May 2020 (Wednesday) 11:07	Attracting attention. Increasing visibility.

All posts will from six to ten hashtags from mentioned to increase visibility in specific topics: #smartcity, #smartcities, #smartsolution, #smartsolutions, #beesmartcity, #community, #smartivist, #beabee, #newsolutions, #Finland, #Helsinki, #Vantaa, #Espoo, #Oulu, #DigitalCity, #eGovernment, #CitizenEngagement. In all planned posted I will tag existing customers' companies and potential ones for attracting attention and getting the possibility to increase engagement (by commenting, liked or shares).

Also, I plan to find and enter five groups in LinkedIn related smart cities or smart solutions topic in Finland and make there five posts about bee smart city. This action will help to increase brand awareness in Finland, bee smart city's visibility, and will attract possible customers attention. It also might help to increase visits to bee smart city's LinkedIn page. Another step includes finding five members thorough LinkedIn Advanced Search,

connecting with them, and sending five direct messages with invitation to join bee smart city platform and community.

Table 5: Schedule for Facebook posts (Ageeva 2020)

Post number	Topic	Call-to-action	Tags	Planned date and time	Purposes
Post 1	What is bee smart city?	Register now. Join the community	@Softability @HeadPower Oy @LeaseGreen @Sniffie Software	4 May 2020 (Monday) 16:51	Reminder. Attracting attention of potential customers. Free ad.
Post 2	Benefits of adding smart solution to the platform	Add your smart solution		7 May 2020 (Thursday) 10:32	Attracting attention. Sharing benefits of adding solution feature.
Post 3	Finland – innovative country and its solutions	Join now and share your solutions	@Eventz International Oy	8 May 2020 (Friday) 15:15	Attracting attention of Finnish companies. Post for possible repost.
Post 4	6 smart solutions on bee smart city platform	Share your smart solutions		8 May 2020 (Friday) 22:31	Attracting attention of Finnish companies
Post 5	Thank you post for Finnish companies	Join the global smart city community		11 May 2020 (Monday) 09:35	Attracting attention of Finnish companies. Post for

					possible repost.
Post 6	Facebook 1000 Followers	Like, share. Join the community. Follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn.		11 May 2020 (Monday) 15:15	Increasing possibility to be more visible because of followers likes
Post 7 with video	Smart solution from Finland on the platform (Trimble)	Find more solutions. Add your solution.		12 May 2020 (Tuesday) 10:35	Increasing visibility and engagement with Finnish company.
Post 8	Finnish Statistics	Join to add and share your solutions		13 May 2020 (Wednesday) 11:07	Attracting attention. Increasing visibility.

Facebook posts will also have from five to ten hashtags per post. These hashtags will be picked from mentioned: #smartcity, #smartcities, #smartsolution, #smartsolutions, #beesmartcity, #community, #smartivist, #beabee, #newsolutions, #Finland, #Helsinki, #Vantaa, #Espoo, #Oulu. Hashtags usage will make posts visible for people interested in particular topics or in concrete locations. It should help in attracting right audience for reaching the goal of increasing brand awareness. I also plan to use Facebook Live for one live video and two times for posting pictures through Facebook Stories (similar to Instagram Stories). These actions will grab followers' attention and also support one of the main goals: adding solution to bee smart city platform. Moreover, I will send eleven direct messages to potential customers' companies with invitation to join bee smart city and share their solutions on the platform. My last planned action is to find five Facebook groups related to smart cities and smart solutions in Finland, join them, and make five posts with information about bee smart city and invitation to join the community and add smart solutions to the platform.

Table 6: Schedule for Instagram posts (Ageeva 2020)

Post number	Topic	Call-to-action	Tags	Planned date and time	Purposes
Post 1	What is bee smart city?	Register now. Join the community		5 May 2020 (Tuesday) 15:03	Reminder. Attracting attention of potential customers. Free ad.
Post 2	Benefits of adding smart solution to the platform	Add your smart solution		6 May 2020 (Wednesday) 13:25	Attracting attention. Sharing benefits of adding solution feature.
Post 3	6 smart solutions on bee smart city platform	Share your smart solutions		7 May 2020 (Thursday) 14:15	Attracting attention of Finnish companies
Post 4	Finland – innovative country and its solutions	Join now and share your solutions	@Eventz International Oy	8 May 2020 (Friday) 15:15	Attracting attention of Finnish companies. Post for possible repost.
Post 5 with video	Thank you post for Finnish companies	Join the global smart city community		11 May 2020 (Monday) 09:35	Attracting attention of Finnish companies. Post for possible repost.
Post 6	Smart solution	Find more solutions.		12 May 2020 (Tuesday)	Increasing visibility and

	from Finland on the platform (Trimble)	Add your solution.		11:35	engagement with Finnish company.
Post 7	Finnish Statistics	Join to add and share your solutions		13 May 2020 (Wednesday) 12:07	Attracting attention. Increasing visibility.
Post 8	Follow bee smart city LinkedIn	Follow us on LinkedIn. Join our group		12 May (Tuesday)	Call-to-action for increasing followers in LinkedIn

In Instagram posts I will also use hashtags similar to LinkedIn and Facebook ones (e.g. #smartcity, #smartsolutions, #beesmartcity, etc.) to increase visibility of posts for the target audience. On Instagram I will use Instagram Stories to make two days with pictures in stories and one day with video. I can also use hashtags for Instagram Stories and location to make these stories more relevant for target audience from Finland and to increase the possibility to be found. Some Instagram stories will be made as pictures based on posts.

Instagram stories for day one will include images with next messages:

Story image one: What is bee smart city?

Story image two: Benefits of adding solution to the platform

Story image three: Add your smart solutions in 5 steps. Step 1: sign up for free

Story image four: Step 2: Click the «Add solution button»

Story image five: Step 3: Fill in the form, then preview and submit your solution

Story image six: Step 4: Wait for our message – we are checking your solution

Story image seven: Step 5: Your solution is live for everyone to explore and contact you!

These images will invite followers (including new ones) to add their smart solutions and give a detailed explanation of the add solution process. After these images will be published, I will fix them in Instagram Highlights for future use.

Instagram stories for day two will include images with next messages:

Story image one: How to join bee smart city?

Story image two: Sign up for free

Story image three: Fill information

Story image four: Ready to use!

In case of new followers, it will help them to sign up and will explain why they should join. These stories will also be fixed as highlights for new followers.

As for emails, I will send seven emails for those Finnish companies, who has been considered as not active in social media channels. The email addresses I will take from companies' websites. These emails will be sent in order to increase brand awareness in Finland within potential customers and possibly get new platform users. The draft for emails can be found below:

Dear "Contact First name",

My name is Anastasiia Ageeva and I am Junior Marketing & Sales Manager at bee smart city. I have come across "Company Name" several times as an innovative solution provider and decided to finally reach out to you and invite you to add your solutions for free to the leading global smart city solutions platform.

bee smart city is the world's largest smart city solutions network and community with a clear focus on smart city actors around the globe. We connect solution providers with cities, governments and other businesses through our platform, to increase their visibility in the market in order to generate new leads. I am sure that in these current times more visibility and creating connections online is critically important for you as well.

Register at <https://www.beesmart.city> and get immediate access to the network - or simply click below to join. There are no obligations - the platform is completely free and adding your solutions as well. Feel free to contact me via email in case of questions or if you need help in adding your solutions.

I look forward to your reply.

Best regards,

Anastasiia Ageeva

By getting such emails potential customers can learn about bee smart city platform, read about its possibilities, and get interest to visit website or other social media channels in order to get more information. After emails will be sent, all receivers can reply directly in case they will have any questions related to bee smart city.

Last planned tool to use is Quora, which is Questions & Answers website. I will create bee smart city account, will find five questions related to smart cities and smart solutions, and



will answer them. Answers will have examples from bee smart city platform and will have direct link to the platform. This strategy is long term, but already now Quora users can be attracted to the platform by bee smart city's answers and potentially can click to open the link with the website. It will increase brand awareness and can bring new followers and platform's users.

## 5 Implementation

Inbound marketing strategy testing happened from 4 May 2020 to 13 May 2020. All planned actions from chapter 4 were discussed and approved for use by managing partner from bee smart city side. All social media posts were scheduled by HubSpot and used under campaign called #bsc\_Finland in order to track results. Instagram and Facebook stories were made manually and tracked manually as well. In this chapter I will explain how the strategy was tested, will show examples of posts, text, and images and will present the analysis of the results for that inbound marketing strategy.

### 5.1 Strategy testing

All tested materials, such as images and texts for posts, emails, and Quora answers were discussed and confirmed by bee smart city representative before publishing. It was made in order to keep company's business style and to avoid disagreements between thesis executor and case company. All materials were created and published by me. Below the reader can find published posts from different social media channels (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram), example of sent email and Quora answers. Some posts will also show results of publishing, such as likes, shares, comments or views. All posts were published according to schedules which can be found in tables above (tables 4,5,6).

All posts in LinkedIn had hashtags and most of them had tags for companies of existing or potential customers. Hashtags were used to increase the possibility for potential customers to see posts on concrete topics (e.g. smart cities, smart solutions, etc.) or for concrete locations (e.g. Finland, Helsinki, Espoo, etc.). Also, all posts had call-to-actions and direct link to bee smart city platform in order to let interested potential customers move directly to the platform. Below there are three screenshots (figures 13,14,15) of LinkedIn posts which were made by me during inbound marketing strategy implementation. These three screenshots display the most successful posts in relation to organic impressions (organic impressions – number of times unpaid content is show to members).

**bee smart city**  
 4,232 followers  
 1w · 🌐

**bee smart city** is the leading global smart city community, connecting all smart city stakeholders among each other to share and find proven solutions. As a member of bee smart city, you can greatly increase the visibility of your solutions to more than 14,500 registered, share expertise and find new collaboration partners. If you are not yet a member of bee smart city, register now for free and join the global community: <https://bit.ly/2YDdDei>

**BIG Business Insight Group Forum Virium Helsinki Wirepas Tehomet - A Valmont Company Greenled Group** #beesmartcity #community #smartivist #smartsolution #smartcities #smartcity #beabee #newsolutions

**JOIN THE GLOBAL SMART CITY NETWORK**

680+ verified solutions to implement in your city

1,000+ cities to learn from & to get in contact with

14,500+ registered users to connect and network with

**SIGN UP FREE - SHARE EXPERTISE, SOLUTIONS & GROW YOUR NETWORK!**

8

Like Comment

Be the first to comment on this

Organic impressions: 429 Impressions Hide stats

Figure 13: LinkedIn post one (bee smart city LinkedIn 2020)

**bee smart city**  
 4,232 followers  
 6d · 🌐

Adding your solution to the global smart city solutions platform of **bee smart city** is a great possibility not only to share your smart solution with more than 14,500 registered smart users, but also a way to find new customers and international partners. Adding your solution to the platform is fast, easy and free of charge. Add your smart solution now to show it to the world and make it work for you: <https://bit.ly/3c4YfeE>

**PayiQ Sitowise Future Dialog Citynomadi Vincit**  
 #smartsolution #smartcity #smartcities #partners #platform #beabee #beesmartcity

**BENEFITS OF ADDING YOUR SOLUTION**

Get in touch with cities & communities to implement your solutions.

Connect and network with 14,500+ smart city experts from 170 countries.

Promote your solutions & increase your visibility in the global market.

**JOIN & ADD YOUR SMART CITY SOLUTIONS FOR FREE**

[www.beesmart.city](http://www.beesmart.city)

8

Like Comment

Be the first to comment on this

Organic impressions: 433 Impressions Hide stats

Figure 14: LinkedIn post two (bee smart city LinkedIn 2020)

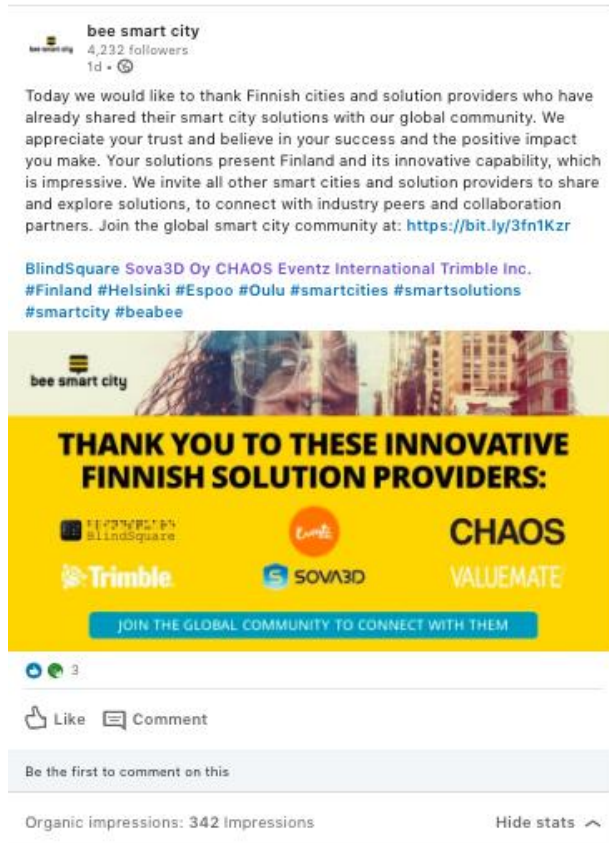


Figure 15: LinkedIn post five (bee smart city LinkedIn 2020)

Through LinkedIn Advanced Search I was searching five potential bee smart city users. My search included next parameters: Finland, English language, title includes word smart. LinkedIn found 109 results, after that I started to search people manually. Suitable person was supposed to have a suitable job position: solution developer, solution consultant, solution manager, solution architect, or similar. After I found the most suitable persons, I checked the industries of the companies they work in. I also was searching for five LinkedIn groups through the search and key words: Finland, smart solution(s), smart city(ies).

Facebook marketing was implemented through posts, Facebook stories, direct messages, and posts in groups. For marketing activities, I created texts for posts and messages, images, found possible tags for companies, and picked hashtags. I planned to find five Facebook groups related to smart cities, smart solutions, and Finland, but I found only four (Business Opportunities in Finland, StartUp Finland, Foreigners in Finland, Robotics Finland). After all my requests to enter the groups were confirmed, I tried to make four posts and only two were published by groups' administrators. Below can be found

screenshot from the post in one of the groups (figure 16), the screenshot of the post from bee smart city's Facebook page (figure 17), screenshot for Facebook Stories (figure 18), screenshot from Facebook Messenger chats with potential clients (figure 19). All of these screenshots display taken marketing actions, which were part of the inbound marketing strategy.

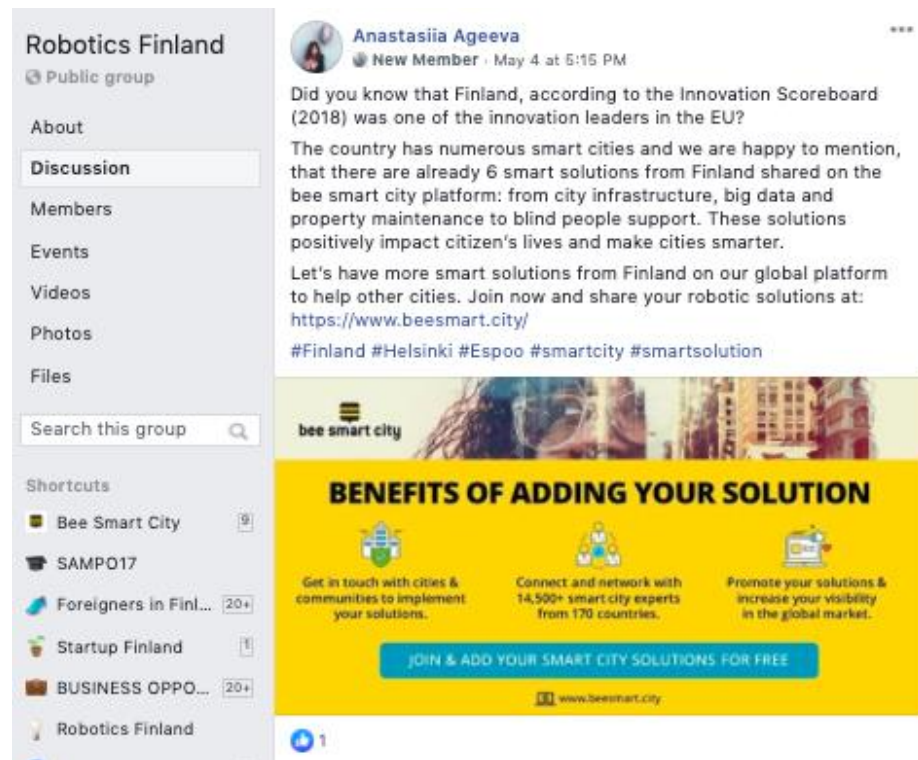


Figure 16: Facebook post in the group (bee smart city Facebook 2020)



Figure 17: Facebook post on the bee smart city page (bee smart city Facebook 2020)

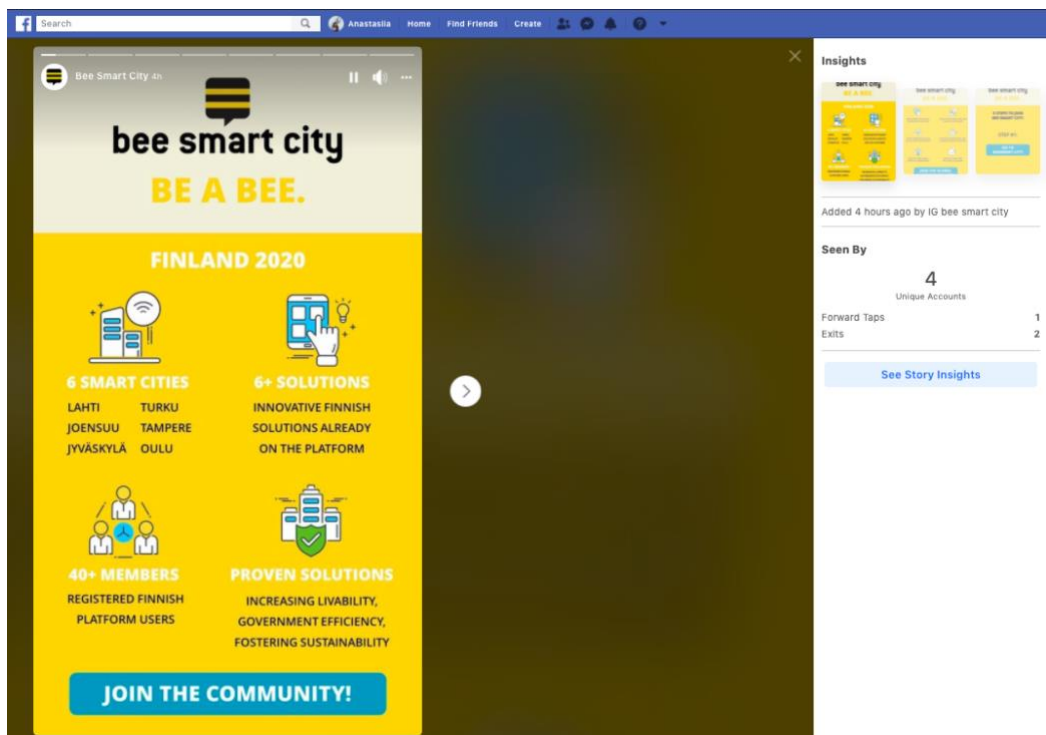


Figure 18: Facebook stories (bee smart city Facebook 2020)



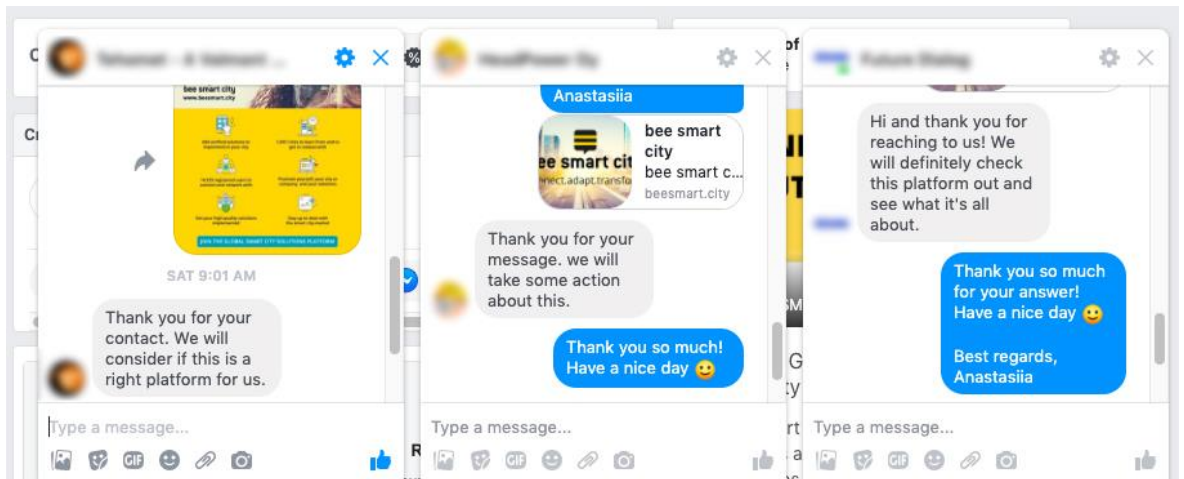


Figure 19: Facebook Messenger chats (bee smart city Facebook 2020)

Regarding Instagram activities, I made posts, stories, used hashtags, and tagged existing and potential bee smart city customers. All text and images were made by me according to schedule for Instagram. One post included video from bee smart city's customer Trimble and it was posted with the company's permission. Below can be found screenshots of different marketing activities on Instagram, such as: posts (figures 20 and 21) and stories (figures 22 and 23).

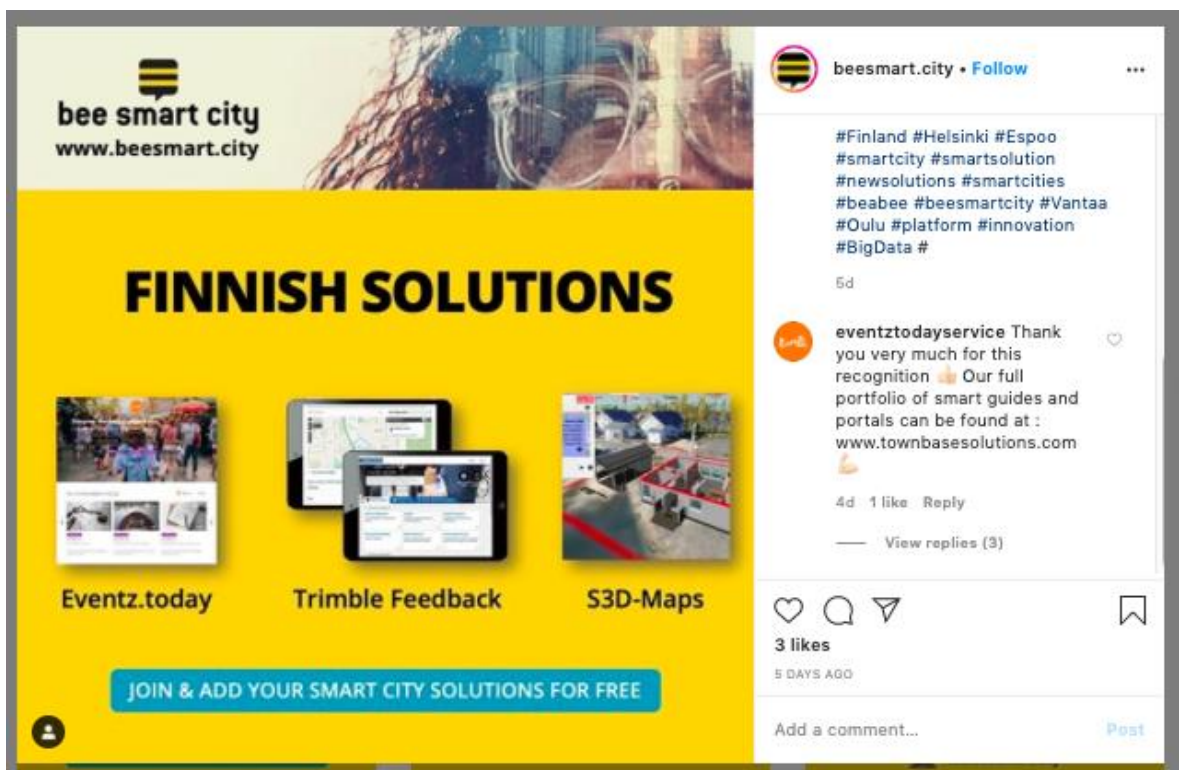


Figure 20: Instagram post four (bee smart city Instagram 2020)

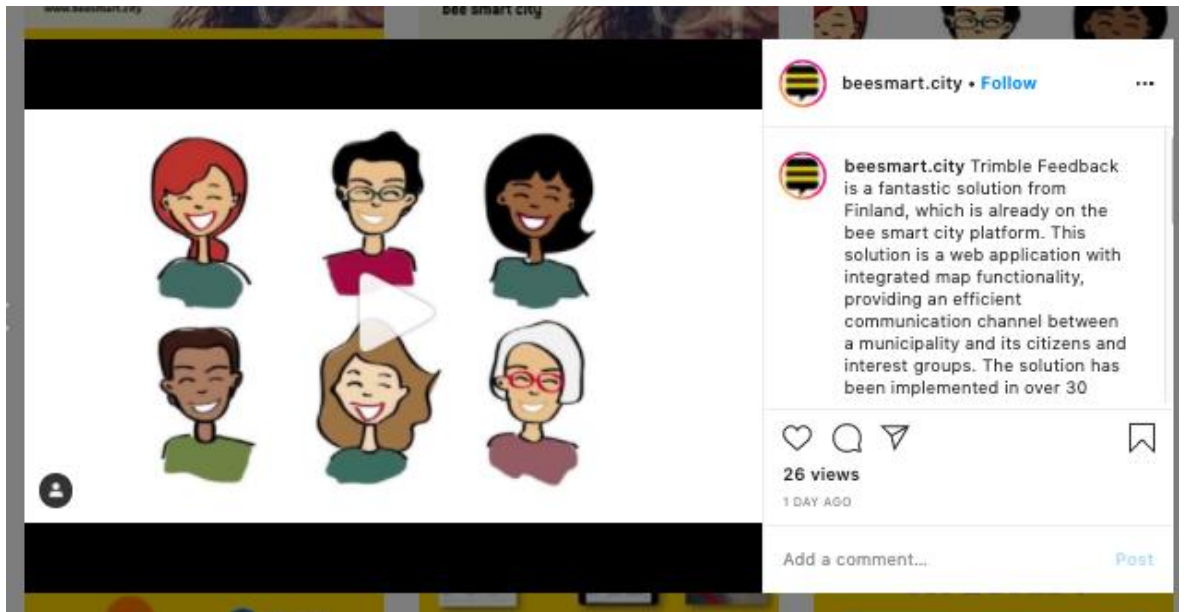


Figure 21: Instagram post with Trimble video (bee smart city Instagram 2020)



Figure 22: Instagram Stories «5 steps to add your smart solution»  
(bee smart city Instagram 2020)





Figure 23: Instagram stories «Thank you» and «Finnish solutions wanted»  
 (bee smart city Instagram 2020)

One of the methods used in inbound marketing strategy was email marketing. I planned and sent seven emails to the potential customers from long-list, who were designated as not active in social media channels. Figure 24 shows one sent message and all contact details were blurred to maintain confidentiality.

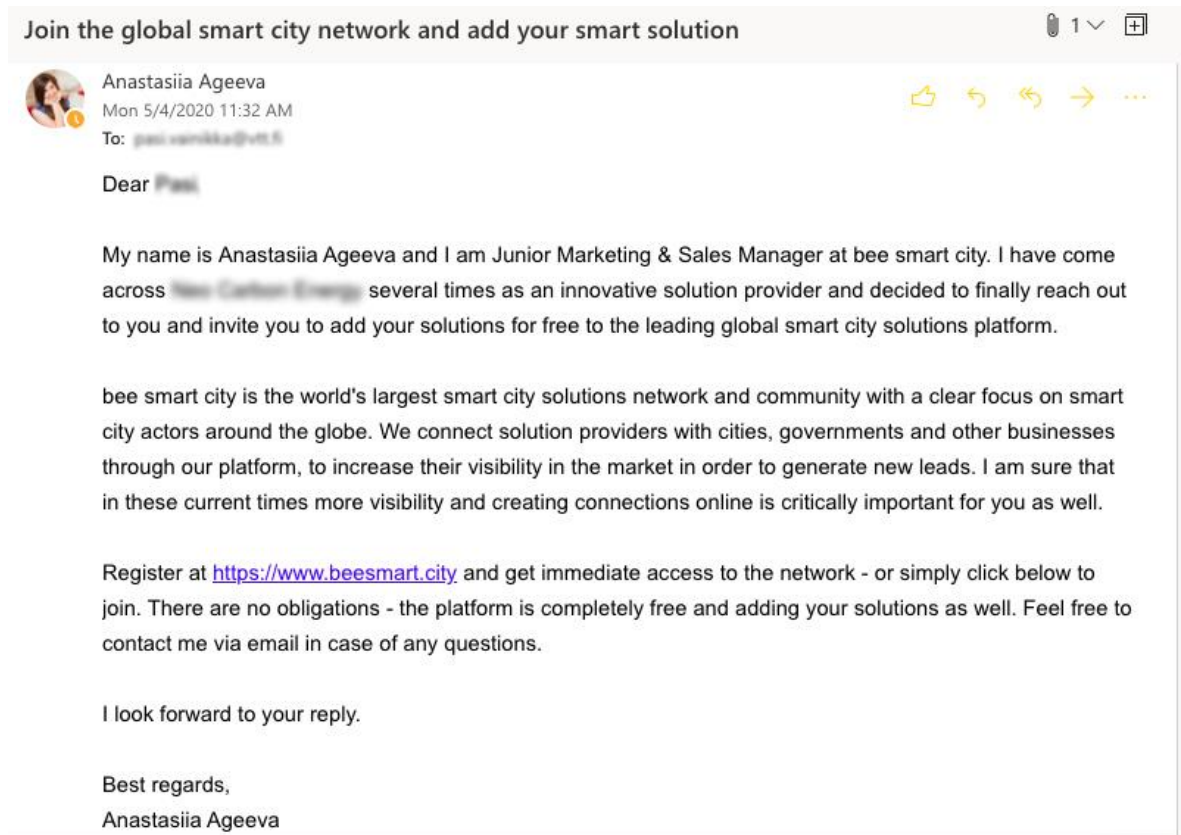


Figure 24: Email screenshot (Ageeva 2020)

During strategy testing, which included trying out Quora website, I created bee smart account but with the real name of one bee smart city manager partner according to his wish. Also, real person's profile has different credentials (e.g. workplace, experience in the field, university degree) which increase reliability of given answers and created questions. My plan was to find five questions in topics related to smart cities and smart solutions, because it would help to share bee smart city knowledge and attract people to the platform. Quora allows to share a direct link to the source of response, that is why I added the link to bee smart city in some answers. In some answers, where it was not possible to add the link, I added the name of bee smart city in case someone Quora users will like the answer and will be interested to see more. Figure 25 displays the result of marketing activities in Quora: created account, five answered questions and views per each answer. Figures 26 and 27 present full answers, with the direct link and with the case company's name.

Quora Home Answer Spaces Notifications Search

---

**Alexander Gelsin** · Tue  
Managing Partner at Bee Smart City (2017–present)

**What makes up a Smart City?**  
At bee smart city we believe that collective intelligence is the key success factor for smart cities, representing a new paradigm in the development of smarter cities and intelligent communities: Being smart builds on the human capacity as a [\(more\)](#)

10 views  
0 0 0

---

**Alexander Gelsin** · Tue  
Managing Partner at Bee Smart City (2017–present)

**What is a "smart city"?**  
The smart city is kind of a sticky concept in a slippery environment. A multitude of definitions and alternative names for this concept exist. Most smart city definitions focus on the role of technology and data as a key enabler for becoming sma [\(more\)](#)

34 views  
0 0 0

---

**Alexander Gelsin** · Tue  
Managing Partner at Bee Smart City (2017–present)

**What is smart energy?**  
Smart energy refers to the new way of relating to the energy supply, through the installation of smart electricity meter, which enables to manage better energy consumption and deliver renewable energy into the grid. The need for a gre: [\(more\)](#)

6 views  
0 0 0

---

**Alexander Gelsin** · May 7  
Managing Partner at Bee Smart City (2017–present)

**What is a smart energy meter?**  
Through capturing real time data directly from the energy meter, smart energy meters allow the tracking of energy consumption, its control and optimisation through a single platform. Smart Meters offer different stakeholders (privat: [\(more\)](#)

23 views  
0 0 0

---

**Alexander Gelsin** · May 7  
knows English

**How smart solutions can ease traffic jams in our cities?**  
A good example of smart solutions to solve the problem with traffic jams in cities are Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS). Based on sensor technology and Machine Learning / Artificial Intelligence, they help to analyze and predict traffic patt: [\(more\)](#)

15 views  
0 0 0

Figure 25: Screenshot from bee smart city's Quora profile (bee smart city Quora 2020)



**Alexander Gelsin** · May 7  
Managing Partner at Bee Smart City (2017–present)

### **What is a smart energy meter?**

Through capturing real time data directly from the energy meter, smart energy meters allow the tracking of energy consumption, its control and optimisation through a single platform. Smart Meters offer different stakeholders (private, commercial, public buildings) the opportunity to optimise their energy consumption. Further, the implementation of algorithms will make predictive maintenance of certain devices, such as heat pumps, possible, and errors can be easily detected through remote management.

One smart metering solution presented on the free global smart city solutions platform [bee smart city](#) ([bee smart city](#)) is the Retrofit Meter Reading Solution of the Danish company NorthQ . The Q-Reader (smart energy reader) delivers complete data independence from utility suppliers, simplifying access to consumption patterns, ensures reliable, user friendly and secure data exchange, aggregates data across suppliers on one single platform and enables secure and private customer use and access to own data.

23 views

Figure 26: Answer one by bee smart city in Quora (bee smart city Quora 2020)



**Alexander Gelsin** · Tue  
Managing Partner at Bee Smart City (2017–present)

### **What is a "smart city"?**

The smart city is kind of a sticky concept in a slippery environment. A multitude of definitions and alternative names for this concept exist. Most smart city definitions focus on the role of technology and data as a key enabler for becoming smart. From our perspective, technology indeed is an important enabler, but the way it is utilized is far more important: the smartest solutions are those that get all stakeholders inside a city or community engaged – may it be as users, as contributors or as ambassadors.

At bee smart city we define the smart city concept as follows:

The smart city concept describes the ability for utilizing the capacity of a city/community to create and adopt solutions for overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities that help transform cities / municipalities to more prosperous and livable places for all stakeholders. The ecosystem of implemented solutions is what defines how smart a city or community is.

Our smart city definition clearly states that being smart is about initiating/adapting and implementing solutions that create added value and transform into collective good. The term "smart" in this sense includes technology as an enabler but does not limit the concept to technological solutions.

34 views

Figure 27: Answer two by bee smart city in Quora (bee smart city Quora 2020)

## 5.2 Analysis

After inbound marketing strategy implementation, I analyzed all possible metrics to see the results, make conclusions and suggestions based on these results. Table 7 below displays what numbers were before strategy implementation, numbers I planned and agreed with the case company and numbers I got after inbound marketing activities were applied.

Table 7: Results of inbound marketing strategy testing (Ageeva 2020)

	Originally (4 May 2020)	Planned (13 May 2020)	Reached (13 May 2020)
Bee smart city solutions from Finland	6	7	6
Bee smart city users	14598	14625	14637
Bee smart city users from Finland	38	43	38
LinkedIn Followers	4211	4221	4232
Facebook followers	994	1004	1001
Facebook likes	897	907	902
Instagram followers	399	409	405

The number of smart city solutions from Finland, did not increase. The number of bee smart city platform users increased and became twelve more than planned. Finnish bee smart city users' number did not increase, even though it was possible according to Facebook marketing results, which will be presented below. All numbers for LinkedIn, Facebook and, Instagram followers increased, but only LinkedIn result crossed expected number. Facebook likes' number also had a growth. All of these results show that marketing activities had positive dynamic and could have expected results if implementation time would be longer, that it was at that time.

LinkedIn marketing activities included posts on bee smart city page and in LinkedIn groups, and from LinkedIn advanced search. All results will be presented as three tables (table 8, 9, 10). In order to analyze results from marketing activities in LinkedIn I exported results from LinkedIn Analytics for nine days period before the inbound marketing strategy started and after it ended. Time range for the result were taken as such: 1) from 24 April 2020 to 3 May 2020, 2) from 4 May 2020 to 13 May 2020.

Table 8: Results of inbound marketing strategy testing – locations of visitors (Ageeva 2020)

24.04.2020 - 03.05.2020		04.05.2020 - 13.05.2020	
Location	Total views	Location	Total views
		Greater Boston Area	1
		Dallas/Fort Worth Area	2
		Greater New York City Area	3
		San Francisco Bay Area	1
		Fort Collins, Colorado Area	16
		Kansas City, Missouri Area	6
		Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida Area	2
		Guildford, United Kingdom	4
		Basel Area, Switzerland	3
		Bielefeld Area, Germany	2
		Cologne Area, Germany	24
		Dortmund Area, Germany	3
Greater New York City Area	2	Frankfurt Am Main Area, Germany	3
Phoenix, Arizona Area	1	Hamburg Area, Germany	2
Montreal, Canada Area	2	Kreisfreie Stadt Aachen Area, Germany	1
Zürich Area, Switzerland	1	Munich Area, Germany	2
Berlin Area, Germany	5	Barcelona Area, Spain	3
Bielefeld Area, Germany	6	Bilbao Area, Spain	3
Cologne Area, Germany	10	Pamplona Area, Spain	1
Dortmund Area, Germany	8	Paris Area, France	4
Frankfurt Am Main Area, Germany	2	Enschede Area, Netherlands	2
Munich Area, Germany	3	Nijmegen Area, Netherlands	2
Barcelona Area, Spain	4	Rotterdam Area, Netherlands	3
Madrid Area, Spain	3	Araruama Area, Brazil	1
Vitoria-Gasteiz Area, Spain	1	Ahmedabad Area, India	2
Sassari Area, Italy	2	Mumbai Area, India	2
Utrecht Area, Netherlands	1	Porto Area, Portugal	4
Concórdia Area, Brazil	3	Lisbon Area, Portugal	2
Hyderabad Area, India	1	Alba County, Romania	1
Timis County, Romania	3	Prague, The Capital, Czech Republic	1
Istanbul, Turkey	1	Beijing City, China	4
Warsaw, Masovian District, Poland	4	Austria area	1
Prague, The Capital, Czech Republic	6	Helsinki Area, Finland	5
Beijing City, China	4	Porvoo Area, Finland	7
Helsinki Area, Finland	7	Turku Area, Finland	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>

Table 8 displays LinkedIn visitors' locations for taken periods. As it might be seen (before inbound marketing strategy started) bee smart city's LinkedIn page had only 7 views from



Finland (Helsinki area) and after inbound marketing strategy testing ended there were 14 views from Finland (Helsinki area – 5, Porvoo area – 7, Turku area – 2). Also, LinkedIn page had 80 views from all locations before inbound marketing strategy and 125 views after. This shows clearly that the number of views from Finland increased in two times and general increase in traffic by 56%. These results show the effectiveness of taken actions in order to attract attention of the Finnish potential customers.

Table 9: Results of inbound marketing strategy testing – job function of visitors (Ageeva 2020)

24.04.2020 - 03.05.2020		04.05.2020 - 13.05.2020	
Job function	Total views	Job function	Total views
Administrative	3		
Arts and Design	2		
Business Development	28	Business Development	54
Community and Social Services	4	Community and Social Services	5
Consulting	2	Consulting	5
Education	5	Education	1
Engineering	4	Engineering	3
Entrepreneurship	2	Finance	1
Healthcare Services	1	Healthcare Services	1
Human Resources	1	Human Resources	2
Information Technology	1	Information Technology	9
Legal	2	Marketing	11
Marketing	9	Media and Communication	2
Media and Communication	1	Operations	7
Operations	4	Program and Project Management	2
Program and Project Management	7	Purchasing	1
Research	2	Real Estate	1
Sales	5	Research	1
Support	1	Sales	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>

Table 9 shows job function of bee smart city LinkedIn page visitors before and after inbound marketing strategy. Before the inbound marketing strategy was applied there were many visitors with very different job functions and the most interesting for bee smart city were business development (28), marketing (9), and sales (5). It does not exclude the possibility that visitors with other job functions could not become bee smart city potential customers, but as for now mentioned job functions represent bee smart city actual clients which case company are looking for in solution providers. The total number of views was 83. The second column shows that after inbound marketing strategy was applied, those job functions of interest increased: business development (54), marketing (11) and sales (11). Total number of views also increased (117). These numbers show that posts and messages approach during one and half weeks brought positive results and it can be used for future inbound marketing strategies as well.

Table 10: Results of inbound marketing strategy testing – industry of visitors (Ageeva 2020)

24.04.2020 - 03.05.2020		04.05.2020 - 13.05.2020	
Industry	Total views	Industry	Total views
Internet	18	Computer Software	3
Semiconductors	1	Internet	29
Telecommunications	3	Management Consulting	7
Management Consulting	2	Hospital & Health Care	1
Hospital & Health Care	1	Food Production	2
Pharmaceuticals	3	Consumer Electronics	4
Consumer Electronics	1	Real Estate	2
Real Estate	2	Construction	4
Architecture & Planning	4	Architecture & Planning	2
Chemicals	1	Civil Engineering	1
Utilities	1	Aviation & Aerospace	1
Ranching	2	Automotive	2
Higher Education	3	Primary/Secondary Education	2
Education Management	3	Higher Education	1
Government Administration	1	Education Management	3
Publishing	1	Research	1
Information Services	2	Government Administration	1
Environmental Services	1	Marketing and Advertising	5
Transportation/Trucking/Railroad	2	Environmental Services	3
Information Technology and Services	17	Religious Institutions	2
Design	1	Civic & Social Organization	1
Staffing and Recruiting	1	Consumer Services	1
Venture Capital & Private Equity	2	Information Technology and Services	30
Events Services	3	Events Services	2
Electrical/Electronic Manufacturing	3	Logistics and Supply Chain	1
Human Resources	2	Computer & Network Security	4
International Trade and Development	3	Wireless	2
		Security and Investigations	1
		Renewables & Environment	1
		Government Relations	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>

Table 10 displays bee smart city visitors' industries before and after the inbound marketing strategy. It was growing and gaining great increases in such visitors' industries as Internet, Information Technology and Services. Also, as seen on the second column number of targeted industries like Real Estate, Government Administration, and Relations are also increased. The total number of views increased by 51%. This outcome shows a positive dynamic and confirms the effectiveness of the chosen approach and increasing of brand awareness within target LinkedIn page visitors.

After five persons from Finland were found through LinkedIn Advanced Search and connected, only two out of five got direct messages and were invited to bee smart city's LinkedIn group: Smart Cities and Digital City Transformation. None of those two invited members entered the group. Other three got messages about bee smart city while I was trying to connect with them through invitation messages. It is hard to evaluate the result as there is no information available (if those members saw my messages, if they checked



bee smart city or bee smart city's LinkedIn page). But it could be a chance that they saw at least the name of bee smart city, that can be searched by them in the future.

After I entered five groups in LinkedIn related to smart cities, smart solutions and Finland, I made five posts. Only one got a like, but that does not mean that nobody saw those posts, because all five groups have 4154 members altogether. Even it is hard to say how many members from those groups saw posts and checked bee smart city page, it increased bee smart city visibility in Finnish groups with related topics.

All of these results show that even for a short period of time marketing actions were planned and applied in quite effective way. Valuable content in posts and messages confirmed its productivity. According to these numbers and quality of results it can be stated that brand awareness about bee smart city in Finland increased and there could be potential customers among bee smart city LinkedIn visitors. Before strategy implementation bee smart city had 4211 followers. I planned to increase it up to 4221 and after implementation I increase number to 4232 followers. Overall results of inbound marketing activities in LinkedIn are satisfied and can be recommended in using for future inbound marketing strategies.

Facebook marketing activities were applied as Facebook posts on bee smart city page and in groups, Facebook Stories, and direct messages to potential customers via Facebook Messenger. After sending eleven direct messages to potential customers in Finland from the long-list, I got four replies. Three out of four responders mentioned that they want to take a look on bee smart city platform in order to decide if the platform will be suitable for them. One responder (figure 28) was positive about registration on bee smart city platform. These results are positive and show that brand awareness among Finnish companies increased. Also, these results show that direct Facebook messages bring a personal touch in communication between companies and can influence on potential customers' decision to register or at least check information about bee smart city or platform itself.

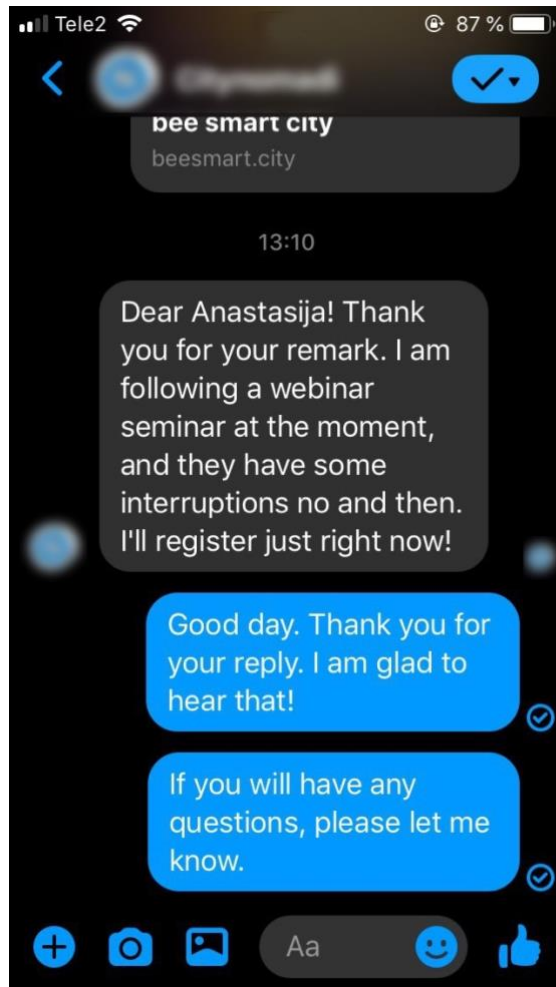


Figure 28: Positive respond about registration (bee smart city Facebook 2020)

During inbound marketing strategy implementation, I found only four Facebook groups related to smart city or smart solutions in Finland. I was accepted in all groups and made four posts in each group, but only two of them were approved. Those posts did not get many likes, comments or shares. It is hard to evaluate the number of people, who might saw posts and went through the direct link. Such outcome shows that method with posting in groups is not easy to apply and does not guarantee any results. This approach has some difficulties such as possible refusal to join the group, possible deny of suggested post, and possible ban for spamming. Also, this approach takes unknown amount of time to be applied and results cannot be easily measured. After testing it is not visible if it increased or not bee smart city brand awareness in Finland and I would neither call this method effective, nor recommend using it in future strategies.

Facebook Stories were implemented in order to increase brand awareness if possible potential customers from posts or direct messages would visit bee smart city's Facebook page. They included different content about bee smart city, add solution, Finnish statistics

from bee smart city, invitation to join the platform and add smart city solutions there. Facebook Stories analytics can display only results for past 28 days and the results presented in figure 29.

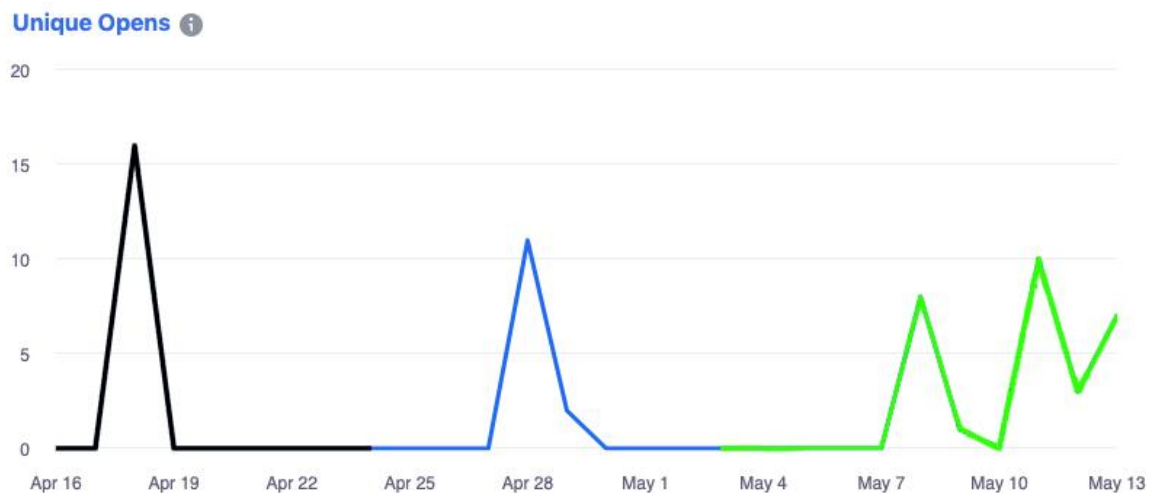


Figure 29: Facebook Stories analytics (bee smart city Facebook 2020)

The blue line shows approximately unique opens of Facebook Stories in period from 24 April 2020 to 3 May 2020, and the green line shows abstractly unique opens from 4 May 2020 to 13 May 2020. These periods of time were chosen because they display time before inbound marketing strategy implementation and after. It can be seen from the figure above that strategy implementation brought more frequent unique opens (number of unique people who viewed active stories in the past 28 days). These results show positive dynamic, but Facebook Stories cannot be considered as an effective tool for increasing brand awareness in the Finnish market, because there are not enough results in stories to show audience demographic data. It can be tested by bee smart city after gathering larger audience, but more as an engagement tool than a tool for increasing brand awareness.

Instagram marketing activities included posts with hashtags and tagging potential customers, Instagram Stories with hashtags, tags, and locations. Instagram posts with tagging potential customers from the long-list did not bring results. Instagram posts with tagging existing customers from Finland brought next results: one company out of six started to follow bee smart city Instagram (figure 30), one company left comments (figure 31). These positive results show that such activity as tagging customers can work as a reminder of bee smart city and help to build stronger relationships with future customers. Also, it means that there can be a dialog about mutual actions for promotion in posts or Instagram stories.

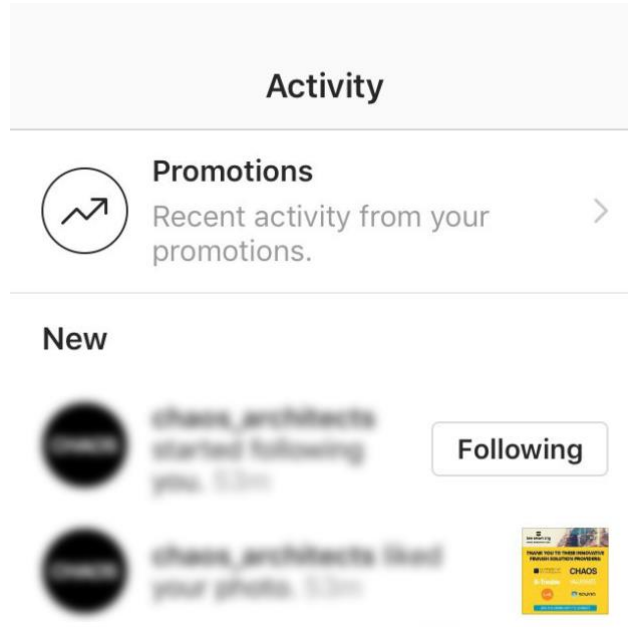


Figure 30: Existing customer as new follower (bee smart city Instagram 2020)

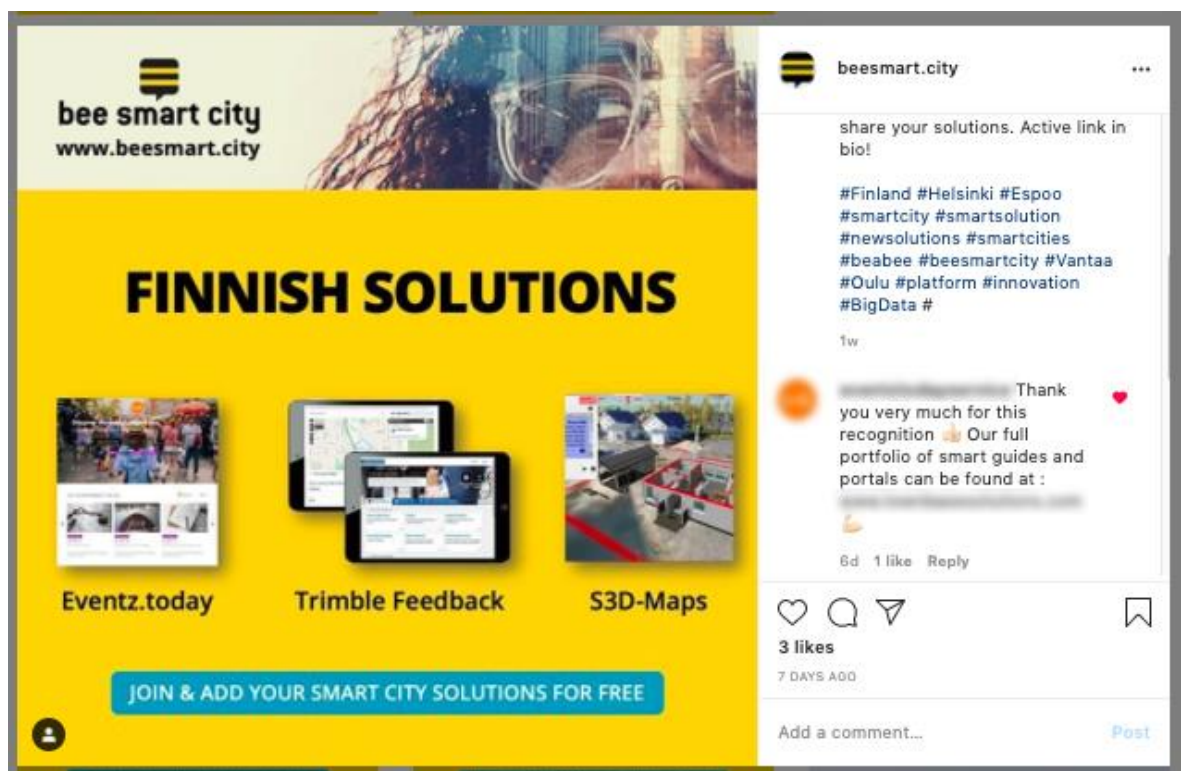


Figure 31: Existing customer comments (bee smart city Instagram 2020)

Stories or posts with tags were not reposted in existing customers' Instagram, but it was not agreed and did not guarantee any results like this. This way of promotion and

increasing bee smart city brand awareness can be improved for the next inbound marketing implementation. bee smart city Instagram Stories helped to increase views and engagement in general. One story included poll (figure 32) with the question «are you signed up for bee smart city» and answers «yes» or «no». It had five replies: four – yes, one – no. This tool helps to increase engagement and can be also tested in future inbound marketing activities. After all Instagram Stories were created, I made two highlights with call-to-action: join us (bee smart city) and add a solution. This can help future followers to understand how they can register on bee smart city platform and guide them to add their smart city solution. It can work not only for Finnish potential customers, but for international ones as well.

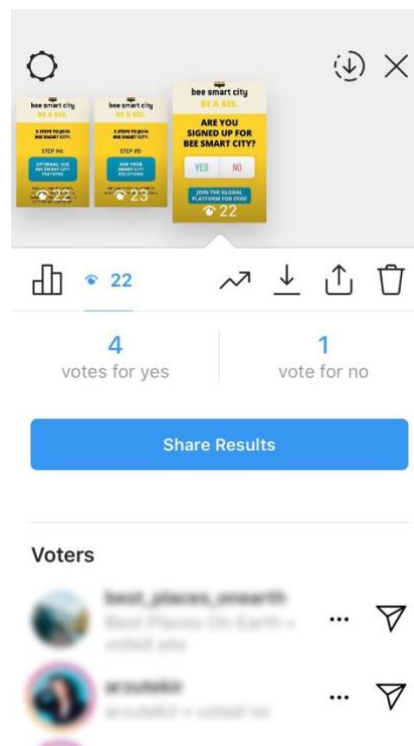


Figure 32: Instagram poll's results (bee smart city Instagram 2020)

Before inbound marketing activities started bee smart city's Instagram had 399 followers. I planned to reach 409 followers and with strategy implementation I reached 405. All in all, the results of marketing actions show increasing Instagram engagement and have a positive impact on relations with existing customers. In my opinion, these methods can be tested in a longer period to get more results for analysis and decision of further use.

Emails' marketing included finding potential customers' emails, creating effective text, and sending seven emails to potential customers, who are not active in social media channels. The results of email marketing are not surprising, because most of them were sent to the

general companies' emails and it could happen that they went to spam or were ignored by the person responsible for the emails. Emails, which were personalized did not bring any results (e.g. answer) either. The reason for that can be the same as for emails on general companies' emails. In my opinion emails can be an effective marketing tool, but for the warm leads.

Quora is a good tool to increase potential followers and customer loyalty and to build a trustful brand through smart answers and interesting questions. Getting loyalty and brand recognition through Quora is a long-term goal and can take a long period of time to get qualified results. Also, it is important to use it on a regular base in order to increase brand awareness within Quora users.

As for now, after I created profile in Quora and answered five questions the results (table 11) are hard to interpret because there was not much time between answers were made and analysis started. Also, it is important not only to give answers or make questions but check if someone requested bee smart city to answer a particular question.

Table 11: Results of marketing activities in Quora (Ageeva 2020)

Question 1:	Question 2:	Question 3:	Question 4:	Question 5:
Total answers: 7	Total answers: 9	Total answers: 1	Total answers: 1	Total answers: 1
Question's followers: 22	Question's followers: 14	Question's followers: 3	Question's followers: 2	Question's followers: 2
Views of bee smart city answer: 10	Views of bee smart city answer: 34	Views of bee smart city answer: 6	Views of bee smart city answer: 23	Views of bee smart city answer: 15

Total answers – number of answers which were made on question including bee smart city response. Questions' followers – number of followers for the questions including bee smart city account. Views of bee smart city answer – number of views from Quora's readers.

I will try to summarize the results and observations about using Quora:

- Using Quora is easy, but time-consuming because there can be too many or too small amount of questions on the particular topic (also, it can be so that there are too many answers on the concrete question and adding answer will not bring much attention)

- Using Quora for increasing brand awareness is possible, via adding company's name in the answers and (or) direct link to bee smart city's platform, which will be visible for Quora users (potential bee smart city's followers or customers)
- bee smart city Quora's profile exists from the beginning of May and had five answers and it already had 88 views from all answers, and this number keeps growing, which helps to increase brand awareness via company's name in answers and direct link to bee smart city
- There is no upvotes, which might mean that answers are not popular among users
- Credentials for the account makes account's answers more reliable and profile looks professional
- bee smart city account already got one requested answer from the reader (figure 33) which might mean that this reader sees responder as a professional who has experience or knowledge in a particular topic

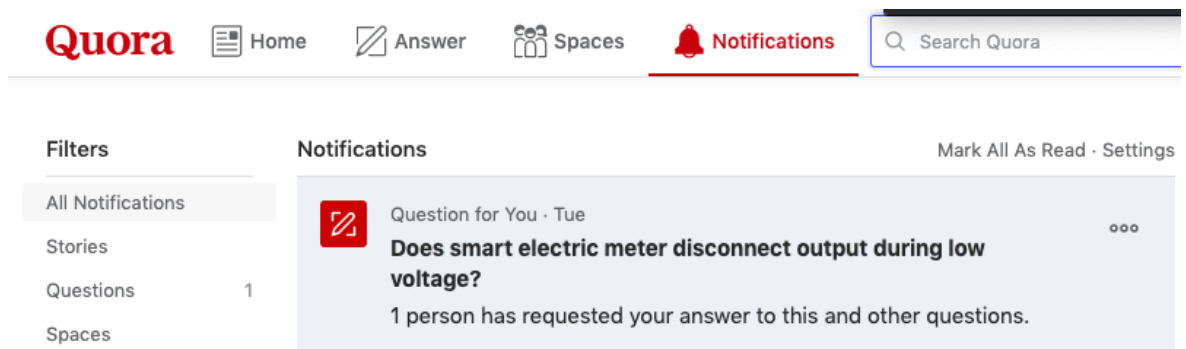


Figure 33: Requested answer from Quora's reader (bee smart city Quora 2020)

All of these results show that even though it was not much period of time for testing, Quora can become a valuable marketing tool for bee smart city in the long run. It allows to give answers, create questions, and by doing that build readers loyalty through sharing valuable and interesting information. Also, this is a powerful tool to increase brand awareness (in Finland as well) by mentioning company's name and sharing bee smart city knowledge and experience. Moreover, this tool can increase website traffic through direct links which can be shared in answers.

## 6 Conclusions and suggestions

After the inbound marketing strategy was applied and analysis made it is smart to conclude that next marketing strategies' implementation should be applied within a longer period of time than one and a half weeks. Even though this implementation was made during a short time frame, it brought affirmative results, showed positive dynamic of taken actions, and gave an idea of what marketing activities work, what not work, and what should be tested more.

While talking about tools and approached which work it is possible to mention: Facebook direct messages, Instagram posts with tags of existing customers, LinkedIn posts. Facebook direct messages are fast and easy to use, also they can give fast results, bring personal touch in conversations with customers, build and strengthen relations with customers. Instagram posts with tagging customers also improve relations with customers and can be used to attract attention of potential customers. LinkedIn posts with hashtags and tags work effectively toward such goal as increasing brand awareness and attracting potential customers attention.

Least or no results were brought from email marketing, Facebook posts in groups, and direct messages to potential customers from LinkedIn Advance Search. Emails on general companies' email addresses or personalized emails can be missed because of the big number of other emails, can be automatically marked by the system as spam and not reach recipients, or can also be ignored by recipients. This approach is time-consuming, hard to track, and can bring invisible results or no results at all. Facebook posts in groups are also hard to track. Moreover, to post something in groups request finding valuable groups, entering them, and sending posts for administrator checking. It is possible to face problems (e.g. not approving post) at any step of implementation, which can break all planned actions and not bring results after all. Approach with direct messaged to potential customers from LinkedIn Advanced Search has similar problems to Facebook posts in groups. It means that potential customers can not approve a connection request or later ignore the message. This approach also time-consuming in order to find people and connect with them.

Some marketing activities showed a positive dynamic in results but need to be tested more in order to gather more data to analyze and make conclusions. These tools and approaches include Quora, Instagram, and Facebook Stories. Quora is a new tool for bee smart city and even though it was used not long time, answers on Quora already got



views (which means Quora readers saw either case company name, the direct link to bee smart city platform or both) and it helped to increase brand awareness. Also, bee smart city Quora's account got one requested answer from the reader. Answering questions on Quora can be a long-term strategy that needs to be tested more in order to gather results and analyze them. Instagram Stories increased activities on bee smart city Instagram account and engagement was increased as well. This tool can be used for increasing brand awareness for the Finnish market, but in another way than now. Same for Facebook Stories which also increased activity level and should be tested in the future.

After all tested tools and methods these are general conclusions:

- Lack of time for inbound marketing strategy implementation, gathering results and analysis
- Not all planned marketing activities were applied because of the short time frame for the planning and implementation
- Social media tools and activities are more effective than email marketing
- Tagging potential customers in posts or stories can be not very efficient
- Posts on Facebook groups hard to implement and track
- Direct messages for potential customers from LinkedIn Advanced Search are hard to apply and cannot bring expected results
- LinkedIn posts are efficient to increase brand awareness
- Quora can become a powerful tool for marketing activities

After the inbound marketing strategy was tested, results analyzed, and conclusions made it is possible to make suggestions for bee smart city and their future inbound marketing activities. I will present 6 suggestions.

Suggestion 1. If bee smart city would implement inbound marketing activities, they need to take more time for planning and implementation. Suggested time for implementation at least one month, because not all activities can bring fast results.

Suggestion 2. LinkedIn posts with hashtags and tagging customers can be kept and used in future marketing activities as it showed positive results, especially for visitors growth and brand awareness.

Suggestion 3. bee smart city can use Facebook direct messages (via Facebook Messenger), because it adds personal touch, fast to implement, can build and strength relations with customers (existing and potential) and can be used after customers' registration on bee smart city platform for short guidance or answering questions. For this

tool bee smart city needs to create list of potential clients with companies' Facebook pages, know if these customers are active on Facebook, improved respond time and check messages on a regular base. bee smart city can also use Facebook Stories and Live videos to increase engagement with followers and gather new followers.

Suggestion 4. Instagram Stories can be used by bee smart city to attract customers, who are not follow bee smart city page and then make agreement with customers to make mutual posts with tagging, Instagram Stories and reposts for mutual promotion. It will help to improve relationships with customers and increase brand awareness by them. Moreover, Instagram Stories can be used by bee smart city to increase engagement with followers or get promotion by Instagram Influencers (e.g. influencer from well-known smart solution company).

Suggestion 5. Quora can be used in long-term perspective. bee smart city while using Quora can focus on general topics (smart cities and smart solutions) and specific ones (Finland, Finnish solution providers, smart solutions or smart cities). Focusing on specific topics will help to increase brand awareness among Finnish readers and potential bring new platform customers, partners and followers for bee smart city social media channels. Quora as a tool should be used and checked on a regular base. bee smart city can also create more accounts to gather more questions and increase bee smart city visibility on Quora. Also, Quora can be used in Finnish language and it can become opportunity for bee smart city to increase brand awareness for Finnish market in case bee smart city will have Finnish employee or Finnish partner. Creating posts or blog in Quora can be also tested by bee smart city to see effectiveness of these methods.

Suggestion 6. The last suggestion for bee smart city is to test Instagram and Facebook Live Videos which were not implemented because lack of time. These tools can help to increase bee smart city engagement with the audience, attract new followers, and become a powerful tool for increasing brand awareness.

All of these suggestions are made to increase bee smart city's brand awareness in Finland and in other countries, make it more recognizable and possibly get new customers, followers, and new smart solutions.

## 7 Reflections

While reflecting on the experience of writing the thesis, I came to the realization that I was hardworking during the whole process and there was no time to waste. My thesis was created within a very strict and short time frame which brought extra pressure on the process. Sometimes pressure and stress levels demotivated me, but I found strength to went through them and moved forward. While doing my thesis, I read a lot of marketing articles, found useful books and learned new techniques. Thesis process never stopped until the planned deadline. Even after that I will keep learning things about inbound marketing and especially social media, because it has a tendency to change quickly. All of the tools and methods which I used in my thesis and suggested to bee smart city, can change within one year and new ways of marketing will be in trends.

Being a part of bee smart city community during my summer internship allowed me to learn that social media marketing is actively used by bee smart city. Also, as a member of bee smart city platform I found that there were only six smart solutions from Finland at the time I started my thesis. Such result gave me an idea to increase brand awareness in Finland and to possibly get a new smart solution from there. After discussions with the case company it became a topic of my thesis.

I really enjoyed cooperation with bee smart city and especially cooperation with my coordinator from the case company side. I felt supported while doing my thesis and was sure in every taken action toward the final goal. Inbound marketing topic was already known for me and it helped to orient within definitions, tools and methods. Also, social media marketing was a big part of my summer internship at bee smart city and I spent a lot of hours learning different social media channels (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram), tools (HubSpot, Instagram Stories, Facebook Stories, etc.), and marketing methods (blogging, call-to-action, social publishing, etc.)

Interviews as product development method helped to gather better customer understanding, finding tools and methods for reaching potential customers, and learning their experience with bee smart city. Results of interviews helped in developing the inbound marketing strategy and creating long-list. Creating long-list helped to find potential customers (solution providers) in Finland, collect needed data (emails, social media channels) for marketing strategy and understand the level of activity in social media of target companies. In turn long-list creation also helped in creating the inbound marketing strategy. After the inbound marketing strategy was tested and analyzed I made

conclusions and created suggestions that can be applied by bee smart city in order to increase brand awareness on the Finnish market and get new customers.

My suggestions were designed based on tested tools and methods. Also, I added ideas from theory learning and ones, that were not applied because of lack of time. Suggested I made are free of charge, easy to use, and possible to implement already as next marketing activities. In my experience these suggested methods have all chances to be successful and bring at least expected results rather fast.

Reflecting on my own learning now, when I look back and realize that this experience has helped me both as a student and as a young marketing professional. Inbound marketing knowledge are not only valued in the academic setting, but also in business sector as well. I now feel more confident about my marketing skills and information learned. I still plan to learn more about inbound marketing and social media marketing in particular. In my opinion, there is always a space for learning and improvements. Overall, I feel that this has been an enjoyable and valuable experience and now I feel prepared to start my career in the marketing field.

## References

- Bezhovski Z. 2015. Inbound marketing – a new concept in digital business. URL: <http://eprints.ugd.edu.mk/16421/2/Inbound-Markeitng-a-new-concept-in-digital-busienss-ZB.pdf> Accessed: 14 April 2020
- bee smart city 2020. Redefining the Smart City Concept: a New Smart City Definition. URL: <https://hub.beesmart.city/strategy/en/towards-a-new-smart-city-definition> Accessed: 23 April 2020
- Driver, S. 2019. Business New Daily: Facebook for Business: Everything You Need To Know. URL: <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/7761-facebook-business-guide.html> Accessed: 13 April 2020
- Tague, A. 2020. ClearVoice: Top 25 Content Types for Inbound Marketing. URL: <https://www.clearvoice.com/blog/content-types-inbound-marketing/> Accessed: 13 April 2020
- Fallon, N. 2019. CO: 6 Examples of Successful Inbound Marketing Campaigns. URL: <https://www.uschamber.com/co/grow/marketing/inbound-marketing-campaign-examples> Accessed: 14 April 2020
- DeMers, J. 2016. Entrepreneur: 7 Essential Inbound Marketing Strategies for Every Startup. URL: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/275751> Accessed: 14 April 2020
- Balkhi, S. 2020. Entrepreneur: 5 Content Marketing Trends You Need to Know for 2020. URL: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/343230> Accessed: 23 April 2020
- Facebook 2020. About Facebook. URL: <https://about.fb.com/company-info/> Accessed: 13 April 2020
- Fishkin, R. & Høgenhaven T. 2013. Inbound Marketing and SEO: Insights from the MOZ Blog. Introduction. URL: [https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/Inbound+Marketing+and+SEO:+Insights+from+the+Moz+Blog/9781118551585/03\\_9781118551585-intro.html#a3](https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/Inbound+Marketing+and+SEO:+Insights+from+the+Moz+Blog/9781118551585/03_9781118551585-intro.html#a3) Accessed: 7 April 2020.

Mottola, M. 2019. Forbes: Eight Effective Tips For Marketing Through Instagram. URL: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2019/08/06/eight-effective-tips-for-marketing-through-instagram/#6d0c936f1562> Accessed: 13 April 2020

Robinson, R. 2019. Forbes: How To Use Social Media To Supercharge Your Inbound Marketing Strategy. URL: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ryanrobinson/2019/09/18/social-media-marketing-strategy/#47e0cacf1ff3> Accessed: 15 April 2020

Halligan, B. & Shah, D. 2014. Inbound Marketing: Attract, Engage, and Delight Customers Online. URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/haaga/reader.action?docID=1762792> Accessed: 13 April 2020

Newberry, C. 2018. Hootsuite: LinkedIn for Business: The Ultimate Marketing Guide. URL: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/linkedin-for-business/> Accessed: 12 April 2020

Newberry, C. 2019. Hootsuite: 17 Instagram Marketing Tips You Can't Afford to Ignore. URL: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-marketing/> Accessed: 15 April 2020

Burnes, R. 2017. HubSpot: Inbound Marketing & the Next Phase of Marketing on the Web. URL: <https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/4416/Inbound-Marketing-the-Next-Phase-of-Marketing-on-the-Web.aspx> Accessed: 8 April 2020

Bump, P. 2019. HubSpot: 13 of the Best Facebook Live Videos We've Ever Seen. URL: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/facebook-live-video-examples> Accessed: 15 April 2020

Belote, C. 2019. Digital Marketing 101: Intent-Based Marketing vs Interruption Marketing. Innovative Marketing. URL: <https://www.innovativemarketing.net/digital-marketing-101-intent-based-marketing-vs-interruption-marketing> Accessed: 8 April 2020

Instagram About Us 2020. URL: <https://about.instagram.com/about-us> Accessed: 13 April 2020

Instagram Business 2020. URL: <https://business.instagram.com/> Accessed: 13 April 2020

Lexico 2020. Meaning of content marketing in English. URL: [https://www.lexico.com/definition/content\\_marketing](https://www.lexico.com/definition/content_marketing) Accessed: 23 April 2020

Miller, S.A. 2015. Inbound Marketing For Dummies. URL:  
[https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/inbound-marketing-for/9781119120506/05\\_9781119120506-ch01.xhtml](https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/inbound-marketing-for/9781119120506/05_9781119120506-ch01.xhtml)  
Accessed: 9 April 2020

Neil Patel 2020. 7 Advanced LinkedIn Strategies for B2B Marketing. URL:  
<https://neilpatel.com/blog/linkedin-strategies-b2b-marketing/> Accessed: 15 April 2020

Nail Patel 2020. 22 Inbound Marketing Strategies Your Startup Needs to Start Using Today. URL: <https://neilpatel.com/blog/22-inbound-marketing-strategies-startup-needs-start-using-today/> Accessed: 14 April 2020

Rouse, M. 2017. SearchCIO: Definition: Instagram. URL:  
<https://searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/Instagram> Accessed: 13 April 2020

Walker-Ford, M. 2018. SocialMediaToday: 9 Inbound Marketing Channels & Techniques That Will Grow Your Business [Infographic]. URL:  
<https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/9-inbound-marketing-channels-techniques-that-will-grow-your-business-inf/524015/> Accessed: 11 April 2020

Scott, S. 2019. Walsworth: Four Advantages of Using LinkedIn. URL:  
<https://www.walsworth.com/blog/four-advantages-using-linkedin> Accessed: 12 April 2020

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. 30 key questions for the interview

Questions for the interviews:

About solution and company:

Your solution calls «name of solution»:

- Can you please explain me in couple words how does it work? Who are the customers?
- What area of business your solution relates?
- How popular is your solution?
- Did it get any more popularity / visibility after publishing solution on bee smart city platform?
- What do you think could influence on such result?

Related to bee smart city:

- How long is your solution on the platform?
- How did you find bee smart city or were you found by them? Was it through advertisement or social media? What was attractive / important in that?
- Are you satisfied with your bee smart city experience? Yes/no, why? What are the benefits of being part of bee smart city?
- What did you find attractive in bee smart city and its content before became their customer?
- What did you find attractive about bee smart city and its content after you became their customer?
- What played a key role of your decision to share your solution on bee smart city platform?
- Would you recommend bee smart city to other smart solution companies? Yes/no? Why?
- IF YES: how would you do it? Through email / social media / reference on google / other?

About content:

- What type of content you prefer (blog / social media posts / webinar) and why? In what situation? As a private person or as a customer of bee smart city?
- What is important for you in content: visual part / informative part / mixture?



- Do you or anyone from the company subscribed to bee smart city monthly newsletter? Yes / no, why?
- What would make you to sign up for the site: newsletters / white papers / exclusive content / possibility to get a discount on services or product?
- Do you know about bee smart city posts, e.g. solution of the day / add your solution? What do you think about them?
- In your opinion how often should be posted new content in LinkedIn / Facebook / Instagram?

About channels:

- Do you use LinkedIn / Facebook / Instagram? Which some channels do you follow daily/weekly/monthly?
- Do you follow bee smart city social media channels? Which ones?
- What do you find interesting/useful about it?
- What you would like to see more? Less?
- Would you search partners / customers in these social media channels? Yes / no, why?
- In your opinion what call-to-action would works the best for getting your attention?

Extra time:

About customer's inbound:

- Do you use inbound marketing strategy for promoting your smart solution and increasing brand awareness?
- What content do you share for this? Through what channels?

## Appendix 2. Long-list of potential customers

No	Name of the company	Industry	Website	Location	Languages	LinkedIn	Facebook	Instagram	LI activity	FB activity	INSTA activity
1	WIREPAS	IoT solution	<a href="https://wirepas.com/">https://wirepas.com/</a>	Tampere	English	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/wirepas/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/wirepas/</a>	n	n	Active	-	-
2	TEHOMET	Smart Energy (Lightning solutions)	<a href="http://www.tehomet.com/index.php/en/">http://www.tehomet.com/index.php/en/</a>	Kangasniemi	English, Finnish	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/tehometa-valmont-company/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/tehometa-valmont-company/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Tehomet/">https://www.facebook.com/Tehomet/</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/tehommet/?hl=fi">https://www.instagram.com/tehommet/?hl=fi</a>	Active	Active	NA
3	GREENLED	Smart Energy (Lightning solutions)	<a href="https://greenled.com/">https://greenled.com/</a>	Kempele, Tampere, Vantaa	English, Finnish, Deutsch, Swedish	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/greenled-oy/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/greenled-oy/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/GreenledGlobal/">https://www.facebook.com/GreenledGlobal/</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/greenledglobal/">https://www.instagram.com/greenledglobal/</a>	Active	NA	Active
4	SOLIXI	Smart Energy (Energy Storage)	<a href="http://www.solixi.com/">http://www.solixi.com/</a>	Vantaa	English, Finnish	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/in/jyri-jaakkola-15a465131/">https://www.linkedin.com/in/jyri-jaakkola-15a465131/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Solixi">https://www.facebook.com/Solixi</a>	n	NA	NA	-
5	PayiQ	Smart Transport	<a href="https://payiq.net/">https://payiq.net/</a>	Turku	English, Finnish	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/payiq/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/payiq/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/iqpayments/">https://www.facebook.com/iqpayments/</a>	n	Active	Active	-
6	SITOWISE	Smart Transport	<a href="https://www.sitowise.com/en">https://www.sitowise.com/en</a>	Espoo	English, Finnish, Estonian, Swedish, Latvian	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/61169/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/61169/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/sitowise">https://www.facebook.com/sitowise</a>	n	Active	Active	-
7	Future Dialog	Smart Building and ICT	<a href="https://futuredialog.co/">https://futuredialog.co/</a>	Helsinki	English, Finnish, Estonian	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/oy-future-dialog-ltd/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/oy-future-dialog-ltd/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/futuredialog/">https://www.facebook.com/futuredialog/</a>	n	Active	Active	-
8	AINS Group	Smart Building and ICT	<a href="https://www.ains.fi/en/">https://www.ains.fi/en/</a>	Espoo	English, Finnish	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/ainsinoorit-oy/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/ainsinoorit-oy/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/ainsinoorit/">https://www.facebook.com/ainsinoorit/</a>	n	Active	Active	-
9	Terra Solid	Smart Building and ICT	<a href="http://www.terrasolid.com/home.php">http://www.terrasolid.com/home.php</a>	Helsinki, Espoo	English	n	n	n	-	-	-
10	City Nomadi	Smart Building and ICT	<a href="https://citynomadi.com/">https://citynomadi.com/</a>	Tampere	English, Finnish	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/citynomadi-ltd/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/citynomadi-ltd/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/citynomadi">https://www.facebook.com/citynomadi</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/citynomadi/">https://www.instagram.com/citynomadi/</a>	Active	Active	Active
11	Vincit	Smart Building and ICT	<a href="https://www.vincit.fi/en/">https://www.vincit.fi/en/</a>	Tampere, Helsinki	English, Finnish	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/vincit-oy/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/vincit-oy/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/VincitOyi">https://www.facebook.com/VincitOyi</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/vincit_plc/">https://www.instagram.com/vincit_plc/</a>	active	active	active
12	NeoCarbonEnergy	Research Project	<a href="http://www.neocarbonenergy.fi/">http://www.neocarbonenergy.fi/</a>		English	n	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/neocarbonenergy">https://www.facebook.com/neocarbonenergy</a>	n	-	not active	-
13	Smart Cart	Smart Solution for Retailers	<a href="https://www.smartcart.fi/">https://www.smartcart.fi/</a>	Vantaa	English, Finnish	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/smartcart-oy-ltd-/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/smartcart-oy-ltd-/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/smartcart.fi">https://www.facebook.com/smartcart.fi</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/smartcart_finland/">https://www.instagram.com/smartcart_finland/</a>	not active	not active	not active
14	Walkbase	Smart Solution for Retailers	<a href="https://www.walkbase.com/">https://www.walkbase.com/</a>	Turku	English	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/walkbase-a-stratacache-company/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/walkbase-a-stratacache-company/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/walkbase">https://www.facebook.com/walkbase</a>	n	not active	not active	-
15	Sniffie	Smart Solution for Retailers	<a href="https://www.sniffie.io/">https://www.sniffie.io/</a>	Helsinki	English, Finnish, Swedish	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/sniffie-software-oy/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/sniffie-software-oy/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/sniffiesoftware">https://www.facebook.com/sniffiesoftware</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/sniffiesoftware/">https://www.instagram.com/sniffiesoftware/</a>	active	active	active
16	Rivender	Smart Solution for Retailers	<a href="https://rivender.com/en/">https://rivender.com/en/</a>	Espoo	English, Finnish	n	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Rivender/">https://www.facebook.com/Rivender/</a>	n	-	not active	-

17	Lease Green	Smart Energy	<a href="https://leasegreen.com/en/">https://leasegreen.com/en/</a>	Helsinki	English, Finnish	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/leasegreen/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/leasegreen/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/LeaseGreen">https://www.facebook.com/LeaseGreen</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/leasegreen_suomi_oy/">https://www.instagram.com/leasegreen_suomi_oy/</a>	active	active	active
18	HeadPower Oy	Smart Energy	<a href="https://headpower.com/">https://headpower.com/</a>	Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere	English, Finnish, Swedish	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/headpower-oy/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/headpower-oy/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/HeadPowerOy/">https://www.facebook.com/HeadPowerOy/</a>	n	active	active	active
19	Soletair	Smart Energy	<a href="https://soletair.fi/">https://soletair.fi/</a>	Laappentala	English	n	n	n	-	-	-
20	Softability	Smart Energy	<a href="https://softability.fi/en/">https://softability.fi/en/</a>	Vantaa	English	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/softability-group-oy/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/softability-group-oy/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/SoftabilityOy/">https://www.facebook.com/SoftabilityOy/</a>	n	active	active	-