

# EFFICIENT REAL ESTATE MARKETING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Case: Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune

## Abstract

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Abstract <p>Social media has become a defining pillar in the modern cultural landscape and has an essential presence in digital marketing practices. The efficiency of social media marketing could be the difference maker in a businesses' road to success. This thesis uses the social media platform Facebook as the core platform of study.</p> <p>This thesis researches what concrete and abstract methods are used in social media that result in the most engaging content. The study was conducted by applying mixed research methods to quantitative data, as is common in a case study. The core company used in this study is Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune.</p> <p>The quantitative data proved that content that is not directly aimed to market a certain product or service proved most effective in attaining engagement among people. Consumers do not want to see advertisements or direct marketing in their social media feed, and thus react to content that is not trying to push products or services.</p>		
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## Tiivistelmä

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Tiivistelmä <p>Sosiaalisesta mediasta on muodostunut yksi modernin kulttuurin tukipilareista. Sosiaalisella medialla on oleellinen läsnäolo digitaalisen markkinoinnin käytännöissä. Tehokas markkinointi sosiaalisessa mediassa voi usein olla vaikuttava tekijä yrityksen matkalla kohti läpimurtoa. Tämä tutkimus käyttää kaikista sosiaalisen median verkostoista Facebookia ydinalustana.</p> <p>Tämä opinnäytetyö tutkii millä konkreettisilla ja abstrakteilla menetelmillä sosiaalisessa mediassa jaettu sisältö on kaikista keskusteluun vetävintä. Opinnäytetyössä käytetään monimenetelmätutkimusta kvantitatiivisen tiedon analysoimisessa, kuten on usein tapana tapauskohtaisissa tutkimuksissa. Tutkimus on yrityksen Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune tapaustutkimus.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat kuluttajien olevan enemmän kiinnostunut yritysten tuotteisiin ja palveluihin liittymättömistä asioista. Ihmiset harvoin haluavat nähdä mainoksiin liitettäviä asioita sosiaalisen median syötössä vapaa-ajalla.</p>		
Asiasanat Kiinteistönvälitys, Digitaalinen markkinointi, Sosiaalinen media, Facebook		

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

I had operated as one of the social media managers for Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune for several years at the time of writing this thesis. This included occasionally generating content mainly on the social media platform Facebook. During these years I became interested in what are the aspects in a social media post that attract the most engagement in readers. An outline started to form shape and with the help of the case company's founding entrepreneur I started to realize the potential for study in the work.

The key topics in this thesis are social media marketing and especially marketing in the social media platform Facebook. There are a multitude of ways to approach research when investigating phenomena related to these topics. This thesis aims to find interesting correlations and parallels in social media content between two time periods. The core company for this research is the fore-mentioned Finnish real estate company Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune.

### 1.1 Thesis value

For businesses, social media can be utilized in a multitude of ways. Because it is simple for an individual to create social media post, the post should be as efficient as possible. As illustrated in Image 2, it is a high probability that a businesses' customers use social media daily. Because there are many subtle nuances in social media content generation, the core value of this thesis is to inform the reader on what kind of social media content should a business focus on. The secondary value of this study is to provide the knowledge for a better understanding of digital marketing, social media and the content types available. Not all businesses need a dedicated social media manager. This study provides the groundwork for anyone, even the CEO, to generate as efficient social media as possible with the tools available in Facebook. Especially in as competitive field as real estate brokering, efficient social media management could be the defining factor for success.

Digital marketing is a broad concept that covers a multitude of different concepts, such as search engine optimization, email marketing, content marketing and social media marketing. This study focuses mainly on social media marketing. The other concepts are explained for better understanding of the broader phenomenon. Focusing on social media marketing and especially Facebook marketing is relevant because the main research question requires key knowledge in these areas.

## 1.2 Research questions

The general purpose of the study is to find out what type of content in social media is most efficient for follower engagement. While it is easy for anyone to produce social media marketing content, the content itself might not be most efficient in terms of gathering possible likes and shares for example. This study aims to figure out the formula for most engaging results in social media content. Thus, the key question the thesis aims to answer is the following:

- What kind of social media content provides the most engagement in potential customers?

There are a lot of nuances to the core question. The core question, while broad, has a set agenda. The choice of words in the research question is key because there are countless ways one could categorize social media content. The challenge is to find parallels between all the different ways social media content can be categorized. All this data must be compiled and analyzed in order to find the potential correlations. Throughout this thesis, the term engagement refers to the different ways a Facebook user performs actions on pieces of social media content (Facebook 2020).

Another objective is to provide a deeper understanding of the subject matter. I have selected key subjects for discussion. The sub-questions are in parallel with the core question and help in focusing the research to results that are relevant in this thesis. The additional sub-questions are the following:

- Is there a specific type of media content that attracts more engagement on average than others?
- What effect does paid advertising on Facebook have on engagement numbers?
- Does content unrelated to the product or service being sold provide more engagement in followers?

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter acts as an introduction to the topic and expands on the actual thesis overview. The second chapter provides information about the research methodology used in this thesis. The third chapter is reserved for explaining the core concepts of digital marketing, social media and an emphasis on the social media platform Facebook. The fourth chapter is for explaining the core company and the social media marketing plan. The fifth chapter dissects the research findings and provides conclusions for the research questions. The final sixth chapter summarizes the thesis and provides closure.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is done by utilizing Facebook data of a mid-size company, making the study relatively small in scale. This does not mean that the results cannot be scaled upwards or downwards. All businesses, no matter the size, follow the same principles of social media. The content producer creates a post that can be a poll, a video, a picture or many other types of illustrative or textual content. All of this is the same for all business sizes. The data provided is 100% by individual consumers.

The purpose of social media presence for real estate businesses such as the core company is to provide content from business to consumer. This Business-to-Consumer method of business is the process of selling products or services directly from the business to the individual consumer. This business model is more commonly referred to as B2C and it is common in most sales-oriented entrepreneurial fields. (Investopedia 2020.) The core company works mainly as a B2C business. The data is that of a real estate company, but the results can be applied to most B2C-businesses. While it is rare in a small to mid-sized real estate company, it is possible for such a company to broker real estate to other business. Thus, for the sake of simplicity, the data gathered by the core company is treated as all participants being individual consumers. The probability of another business in the raw data is minimal and irrelevant to the core question.

### 2.1 Research approach

This thesis uses a case study research approach. The selected research company is Kinteistömaailma Asuntolaune, a franchised real estate agency based in Lahti, Finland. The research question aims to find answers to a relatively broad question and is not presented as a hypothesis. There are two broadly used research methods: inductive and deductive research. According to Dr. Deborah Gabriel, deductive approach usually begins with a hypothesis and attempts to find proof in the data to prove an established hypothesis. However, inductive research is focused on exploring new phenomena or looking at previously researched phenomena from a different perspective. (Gabriel 2013.) Thus, research is approached primarily on an inductive level in this thesis. The inductive research approach is also expanded to the additional secondary research questions.

The research of this study compares two timeframes of the core company's social media content. The time of year for both study periods are the same. Studying two timeframes in the same time of year eliminates the possibility of seasonal fluctuations in the results. This means that the same holidays are given the same treatment in social media for both study periods. According to a study by Paul Schulze, the amount of social media engagement

always increases during bad weather and reactions to social media content increases 42% on average when the sun is not shining. (Schulze 2013.) Winter is known to be a darker season than summer. If the other time period had been winter and the other during summer, additional discussion would arise on whether the results should be scaled upwards or downwards according to the season. This way it is also not possible the other period having more national holidays, for example. If the other study period was set during the winter and the other during the summer, it would create another issue with Christmas greetings being potentially more engaging among followers than Mid-Summer greetings. Another issue would arise with the other timeframe having potential seasonal differences in follower engagement.

It is important that the two timeframes are both summer periods, because those periods had the most amount of social media posts for the core company in terms of quantity. This provides more data for the study. The periods in question are the summers of 2018 and 2019. The exact dates for this study are 1.6.2018 – 31.8.2018 and 1.6.2019 – 31.8.2019. As previously stated, Facebook was chosen as the sole social media network due to the core company selling products and services that tend to be for people of older age. Thus, as Facebook has a relatively high average age of users, it is the perfect platform to reach the target audience.

## 2.2 Research methods

All data for this thesis is gathered via Facebook analytical tools on select timeframes. The data gathered is studied utilizing a mixed research method. There are three main approaches to research: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research. Quantitative and qualitative research methods require the use of surveys to gather data directly from participants. Mixed methods research is the approach that combines and analyzes statistical data with deeper contextual insight. (University of Newcastle Library guides, 2020.) Mixed Methods research method is used for this thesis because there is no need to convey questionnaires, interviews or other surveys for the research question to be answered.

The data is gathered by Facebook analytical tools that allow the researcher to gather data from the businesses' social media history. This data is separated and categorized according to the type of content. The quantitative metrics used in this thesis are comparing different types of engagement in relation to the method of visual media and flair.

As mentioned in previous chapters, engagement refers to the different ways a Facebook user can interact with the piece of posted social media content. This includes all operational actions, such as reactions, likes, comments, shares, views and clicking on links.

(Facebook 2020b). Engagement is the most important metric in this study. Engagement provides the possibility of highlighting effectiveness in social media content. Throughout this thesis, the different areas of engagement are left unstudied and engagement in its' entirety is treated as the key parameter for answering the research question.

Engagement is compared to the different types of visual media, content purpose and content flair. To analyze the type of visual media, we can use plain quantitative statistics in the raw data provided by Facebook analytical tools. The different types of visual media are as follows:

- Picture
- Video
- Shared video
- Link
- Collage

While most of these visual media content types are self-explanatory, some are not. Pictures are the use of individual pictures for a Facebook post. For a piece of Facebook content to be categorized as a picture, no more than one picture must be used. The visual media content type collage is for posts that utilize more than just one picture. Facebook allows videos to be uploaded directly to the platform, causing it to be one of the categories in visual media content. Shared videos differ from the other video-category due to them not being directly uploaded and embedded to the platform. To be classified as a shared video, the content must be shared from another Facebook page. When sharing content from an external website other than Facebook, it falls under the Link category.

The content purpose and flair are abstract metrics for differentiating sales-oriented content from seasonal greetings or other fluff pieces. Facebook analytical tools do not provide quantitative means to analyze and differentiate these aspects from the social media content. Thus, to analyze flair and content purpose, I contextualize and use mixed research methods to categorize the social media content according to these metrics. The metrics for content purpose and flair are as follows:

- Sales-oriented content
- Fluff content

Sales-oriented content is the attempt of directly pushing individual or multiple available real estate options to consumers. Pieces of fluff content are seasonal greetings, links to articles, congratulations and everything else that does not attempt to directly attract customers by showcasing visual content of available real estate.

### 3 CORE CONCEPTS

Even before people had a name for it, marketing co-existed hand in hand with trade when early humans started exchanging goods for services or vice versa. Throughout the ages, traders have sought to lure in customers using different methods. It is as of late, that these methods have evolved to the digital marketing concepts we are familiar with today.

Social media has over the years become a vital platform in the marketing landscape. Large corporations and rising enterprises especially have invested ever increasing amounts in social media presence and activity. The following subchapters explain the theoretical framework and core concepts that are relevant in this thesis. The first concepts that one needs to know are the different ways of marketing with a heavy emphasis on digital marketing. The other half of theoretical framework is reserved for the explanations of social media and especially the social media platform Facebook.

#### 3.1 Marketing

Before tackling on the terminology and areas of digital marketing, one must understand the core theory of marketing itself. The concept of marketing refers to the different ways and activities a company does to promote a certain service or product. (Twin 2020.) The basic purpose of marketing is to attract a potential consumer into becoming a customer. Marketing has become such a staple of society that it can be truly seen everywhere. The art of marketing has evolved to the point where it is a respected academical field.

The seven P's of marketing, the Marketing mix, is one of the most popular tools marketers use for creating marketing content. However, I'm not using it for content creational purposes, but rather utilizing the concept as an effective tool for explaining the principles of marketing. The marketing mix covers all essential areas of marketing. The concept of a marketing mix was first brought upon by professor James Culliton in 1940. The Culliton model originally used just four P's and has over the years been tweaked and improved upon by several academics. The variation of the core Marketing mix model that is most used today is referred to as the Booms and Bitner model. (Silcox 2018.)

The seven P's of marketing are price, promotion, physical evidence, people, product, process and place. Potential marketers must take all these all these into consideration when creating marketing content. The methods are clearly illustrated in Image 1. Within the original model, price is the cost of the product, product is the actual matter or service being sold, promotion is the method of providing the content in the eyes of the consumer and place is the physical location where the marketing is taken place. These are the original

four P's in the first iteration of Marketing mix. The latest additions to the model are physical evidence, people and process. Physical evidence could for example be the product packaging or the layout of the physical store, people is the employees and human contact when promoting the product or service and lastly process is everything related to the background operations when creating or delivering the method of marketing to the consumer. Putting all the areas of marketing mix together creates the best possible image for the core concept of Marketing. (Lake 2019.)



Image 1 Service Marketing Mix (Silcox 2018)

## 3.2 Digital Marketing

The cultural climate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is embedded with an overwhelming importance in digital utilizations for marketing. It has already been surveyed in 2018, that within a sample size of 351 small businesses, 64% have a website as contact channel with customers. On the remaining percentage of small businesses without a website, 58% planned on building one for themselves by the end of the same year. Even though owning a functional website is just one aspect of efficient digital marketing, the study results of its' importance is staggering. (Delgado 2018.)

Digital marketing is an extension to the greater marketing concept. It utilizes most, if not all, the aspects of the marketing mix but uses them in digital channels such as the internet, mobile devices, search engines and social media. The term digital marketing is a broad concept itself and covers a large landscape of varied commercial methods. The different channels of digital marketing are website marketing, Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising, content marketing, email marketing, affiliate marketing, video marketing, SMS messaging and social media marketing. (Barone 2020.)

For a business to have a functional website, the business is already practicing website marketing. A website is the medium that is necessary for executing online marketing campaigns. However, a functional website is not necessary to reach potential customers. Businesses can also use email, social media, video sharing platforms, SMS messaging and affiliate marketing to promote products and services. Email marketing is said to be one of the most effective digital marketing channels. To practice email marketing, the business generates emails that are sent to potential customers or people that are interested in the businesses' brand. Efficient email marketing should not be confused with spam email messages, even though that is the general opinion people have on the art. Video marketing is the use of video sharing platforms such as YouTube to generate and share content. In addition to businesses, SMS messaging is often utilized by nonprofit organizations and political campaigns. SMS messaging is the method of sending text messages about latest promotions or products and services to potential customers. Affiliate marketing is the utilization of influencers to promote a businesses' products and services. Affiliate marketing is said to be one of the oldest marketing methods still used today. Social media marketing is the most essential of these channels in this thesis and is thus given more depth in following chapters. (Barone 2020.)

PPC Advertising is the use of paid advertisements in the internet. These PPC campaigns are set by businesses on search engines or social media platforms to showcase specific advertisements to consumers that search terms related to the specific products of

services. These PPC campaigns are often carefully segmented by personal demographics, interests and geographical factors. (Barone 2020.)

One key method of digital marketing that utilizes all fore-mentioned channels is Search Engine Optimization (SEO). SEO is the practice of increasing traffic to a specific website through organic search engine results. Organic search engine results all the different searches people make using search engines such as Google and Bing. With a proper SEO plan, a business can attract customers that were in no intention to ever being potential customers. For a real estate example, if Kiinteistömaailma were well versed in search engine optimization, the home page of Kiinteistömaailma would pop up every time a person would search real estate in search engines in Finland. (Moz 2020.) SEO practices can also be utilized in social media marketing. A well thought of SEO plan does not necessarily need to direct the result to a private domain.

### 3.3 Social Media

Nobody really knew what would become of social media after the first social media platforms were introduced to the masses. What started as something quirky has become one of the true defining pillars of modern society. In a survey done by Statista.com in March 2019, more than one thousand responders admitted to using at least one social media platform daily. The second most commonly used social media platform in Finland is Facebook after the instant messaging service WhatsApp. As illustrated in Image 2, 54% of all respondents in the questionnaire use Facebook daily. (Statista 2020.) The impact of social media can easily be seen in our daily lives. Social media has evolved into a dominant pillar in our society.

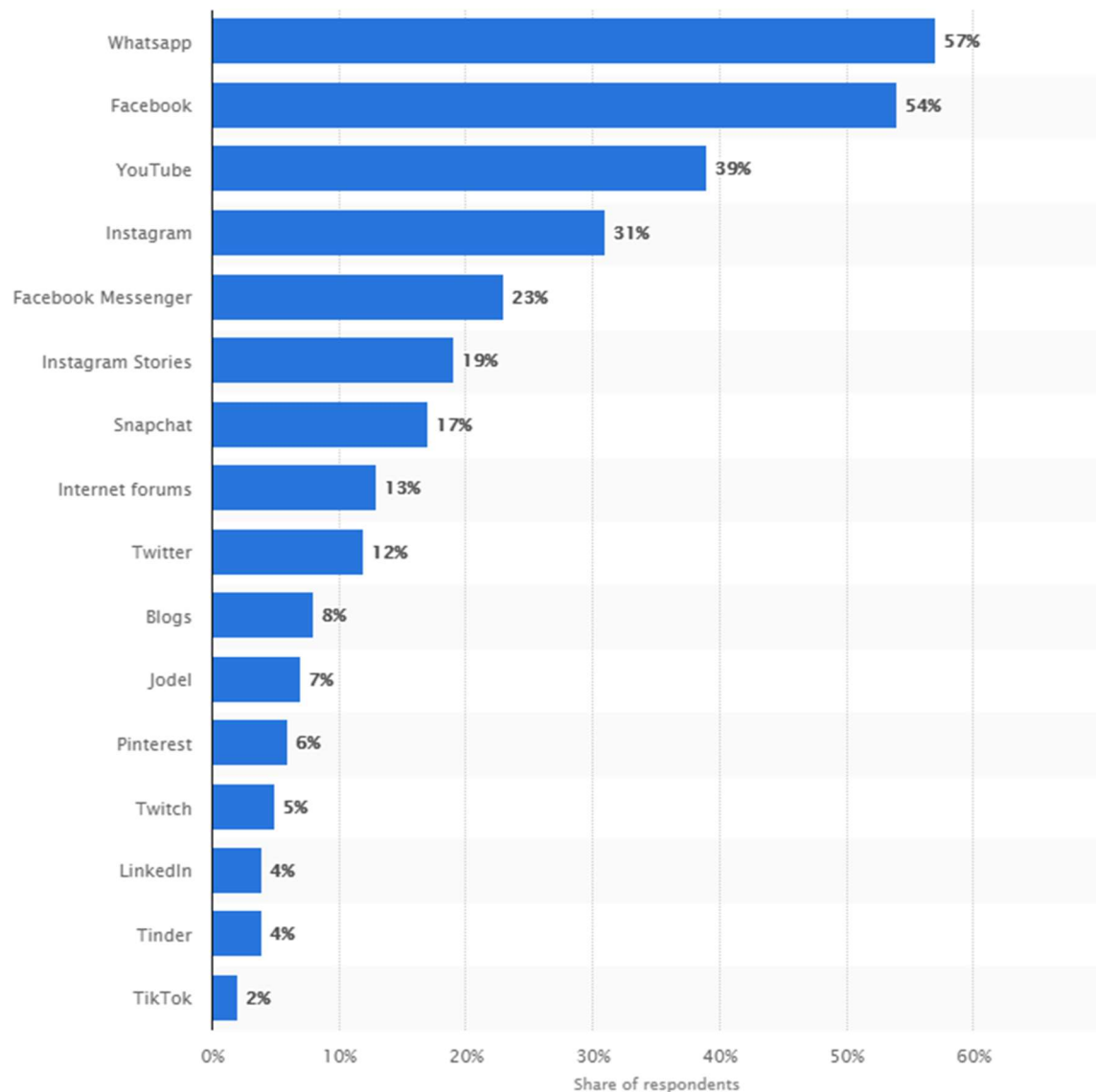


Image 2 Share of daily social media usage Finland 2019, by platform (Statista 2020)

It is difficult to pinpoint the origin of the term social media. Multiple people throughout the years have laid claim to the invention of the title, ranging from as far back as the early 1990's. While it may not be productive to dwell on the words' origin, it is without a doubt that social media has become a true monolith of modern culture. One of the people claiming to have invented the word has additionally said that as all media is bound to become social, the term itself will be ultimately become obsolete. (Bercovici 2010.)

There are many ways the concept can be defined. The best definition for the term is provided by the Merriam-Webster dictionary. The fore-mentioned dictionary defines social media as following:

*Forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos) (Merriam-Webster 2020).*

Social media is a landscape of applications and websites designed for the purpose of allowing swift real-time content sharing between people. The term is often misconceived as being the catalogue of apps on a smart device. Even though a significant portion social media services have laid focus on the mobile market, the term cannot be reliably applied to the entire catalogue of smart applications. (Hudson 2019.)

### 3.3.1 Social Media Landscape

As the personal computer became a common consumer product somewhere between 1980's and 1990's, so emerged the first social media platforms. There have been several social media sites throughout the history of internet, of which many have failed to stand the test of time. The first credited social media platform was the website Six Degrees. The website was launched in 1997. Afterwards throughout the following years, many other social media platforms such as Friendster, LinkedIn, Myspace and Facebook started operations. Many of these are recognizable today due to relevance or sheer cultural impact. (Jones 2015.)

The social media climate today has evolved dramatically throughout the years. By the beginning of 2020, Facebook is the most active social media platform ranked by the amount of total active users. As it is clearly illustrated in image 3, there is a clear placing and a dominant platform for each type of social media service provider. For example, YouTube has the most users for pure video sharing social media content, and WhatsApp messenger is a clear number one for instant messaging between consumers. (Statista 2020.) The instant messaging service Facebook messenger is a separated application from the main social media platform.

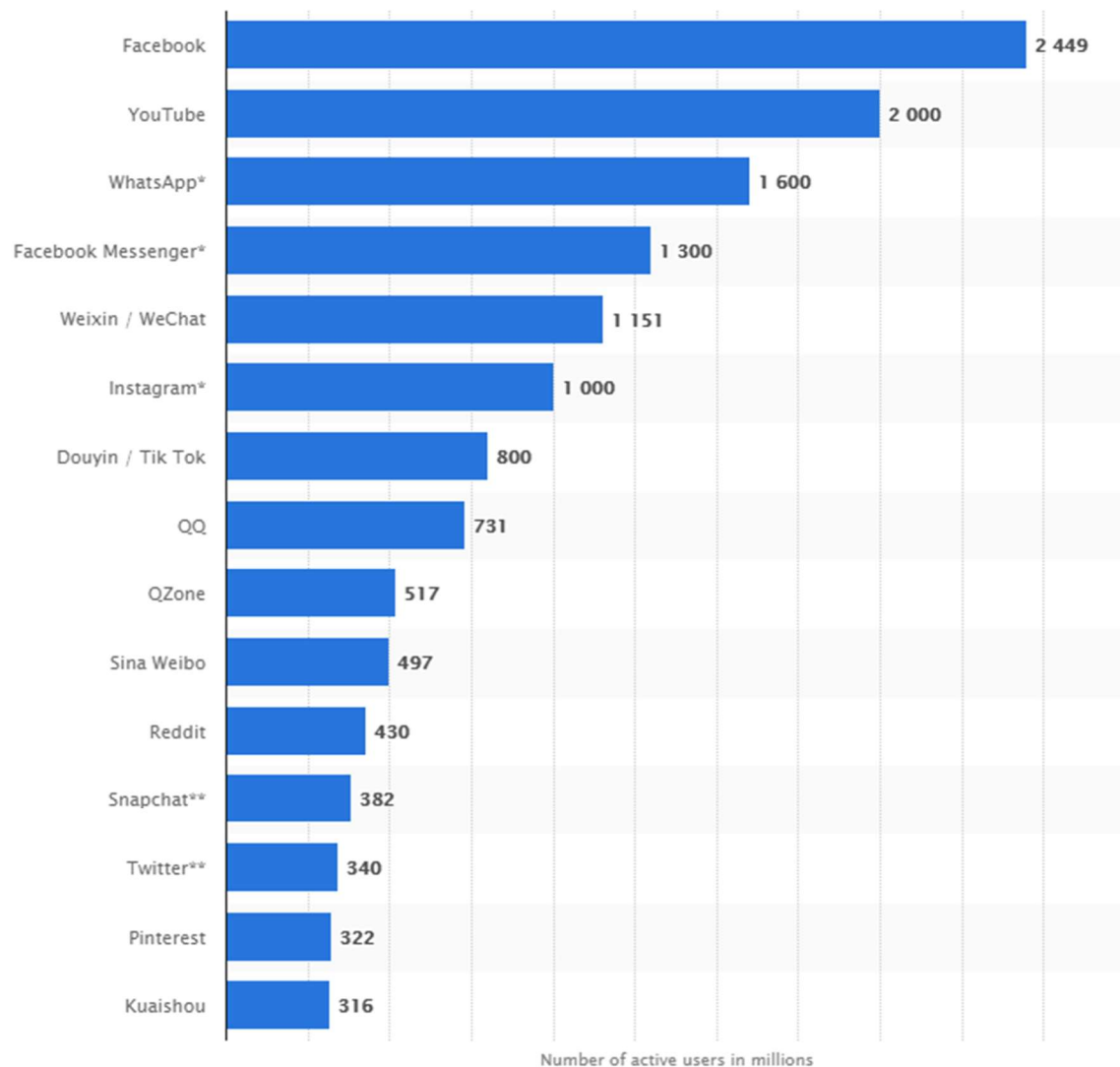


Image 3 Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2020, ranked by number of active users (Statista.com 2020)

### 3.3.2 Social Media Marketing

When a business uses social media platforms and other social networks to promote products and services, the business practices social media marketing. Social media marketing is an essential channel in the broader landscape of digital marketing. Social media marketing is often utilized to reach new customers and to engage with pre-existing customers. Marketing in social media is particularly efficient in promoting desired culture, mission and tone to consumers. Social media networks often provide embedded tools for analyzing data. (Kenton 2018.)

There are several strategies used in social media marketing. One major strategy is to generate messages and develop content with the goal that followers would engage with as much as possible. A key component in social media is gathering of demographical,

geographical and personal data. Social media networks often provide embedded tools for analyzing data. For reference, all quantitative data in this thesis is provided by Facebook analytical tools. By analyzing data and mixing it with key demographics of followers, social media marketers can tailor posts and messages to what resonates the most with followers. This tailoring can also be utilized to attract the type of demographics the business wants to have as customers. (Kenton 2018.)

Another key strategy in social media content is to generate content that captivates people's attention. By ensuring that the piece of social media content is as captivating as possible, the possibility of engagement or the person becoming a customer is increased. Businesses often aim to create content with the goal of becoming viral. For content to be viral, the content must be shared between multiple outlets and generate engagement numbers that are way above median for the business. Social media content that is against the business can also become viral, which highlights the importance in understanding the social media marketing landscape. (Kenton 2018.)

### 3.4 Facebook

Facebook is arguably the most influential social media platform in history. It is the second most daily used social media network in Finland. The company was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and three other students of Harvard University. Throughout its existence, the company experienced multiple privacy concerns but has managed to establish a stable foothold in the wide social media landscape. (Hall 2020.)

The social media landscape is vast and covers a magnitude of platforms. This study is focused solely on the social media platform Facebook. The core company has always had a larger presence on this platform than in any other commonly used social media provider in Finland. As illustrated in Image 2, Facebook has the second most daily users of any social media platforms in Finland. It is arguable, that Facebook is in truth the most used social media platform for vast content sharing. Whatsapp, the most daily used social media platform in Finland, is mostly used for direct messaging between individuals and groups. Facebook works as an ideal platform for this study due to its' popularity with the Finnish people. Facebook also has a surprisingly high median-age compared to most other social media platforms (Sweney 2018). The older average age in Facebook fits well with the core company's business model, as people buying real estate often tend to be older than teenagers or young adults.

Facebook operates within the same core rules as any other social media platforms. Registering as a user for the service is free and allows the user to choose a profile picture,

cover photo and multiple other options for personalization for the individual profile. Facebook users can send friend requests to other users and thus expand their sphere and influence in the platform. Content sharing in Facebook is done via posts. Posts are photos, videos, text or any form of visual content that users can create to share with their friends on Facebook. Facebook users can also engage with content created by businesses or other people. The different methods of engagement are listed in previous chapters. Facebook has a plethora of features such as live streaming, direct messaging and games, but those are not relevant in this thesis. (Chi 2020.)

### 3.5 Marketing on Facebook

As a social media platform, Marketing in Facebook covers all the social media marketing methods listed in a previous chapter. There are various ways to promote a business by modifying and personalizing the businesses Facebook profile. Content marketing in Facebook is done by posts. Facebook also has various analytical tools for analyzing demographics. (Conley 2020.)

Paid advertising in Facebook is possible with the Facebook Ads Manager tool. The tool allows the marketer to choose objectives for the Facebook advertisement. There are 15 objectives categorized in three groups to choose from. All the objectives are visualized in Image 4. The first objective group, awareness, covers the objectives that generate interest in the product or service. The second objective group, consideration, lists objectives that aim to initiate intrigue about the business. The third group of objectives, conversion, are the methods for encouraging people to be interested in becoming a customer. (Lee 2018.)
















What's your marketing objective?		
Awareness	Consideration	Conversion
 Boost your posts	 Send people to a destination on or off Facebook	 Increase conversions on your website
 Promote your Page	 Get installs of your app	 Increase engagement in your app
 Reach people near your business	 Raise attendance at your event	 Get people to claim your offer
 Increase Brand Awareness	 Get video views	 Promote a product catalogue
 Increase your reach	 Collect leads for your business	 Get people to visit your shops

Image 4 Objectives in Facebook advertisements (Lee 2018)

After the objectives are set, target audience and budget are to be determined when generating an advertisement in Facebook. The target audience can be customized entirely by selecting key demographics, such as, location, age, gender, languages, interests, behaviors and connections. Location narrows the geographical reach of the advert to a specific area that is to be presented. Age, gender and languages are all objective demographics, that also narrow the target audience to a group that is most likely to be interested in the advertised product or service. Interests are all the pages that the target audience is following on Facebook. For example, if a business wanted to create an advert to sell car-related products or services, the business would select cars as an interest group for the advertisement. By doing this, the car-related advertisement would show up to people already following car-related pages in Facebook. Behaviors and connections are options to narrow the target audience to people that use certain devices and people that have certain connections linked to their Facebook profiles. (Lee 2018.)

The next step when generating Facebook advertisements is to create a budget for the ad-campaign. The amount of money that is established in the budget can never be surpassed. There are two types of budgets that can be created for Facebook advertisements:

- Total budget
- Daily budget

The total budget is the maximum amount that is created for the entirety of the ad-campaign. The advertisement is thus run up until the total budget is spent. The daily budget is for establishing a daily average amount for the advertisement. For example, if setting a daily amount of 10 euros, that specific amount is spent on the advertisement daily until the total budget is met. (Facebook 2020a.) An efficient Facebook ad-campaign is a smart balance of both budgeting types.

When the objectives are set and the budget is established, the content for the advertisement is created. The advertisement utilizes all the methods that regular Facebook post creation has. There are additional options for choosing placement locations for the advertisements. Facebook, however, recommends using default placements. (Lee 2018.)

## 4 CASE COMPANY ANALYSIS

The following chapters are fully reserved for describing the parent company Kiinteistömaailma and its franchisee Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune. The concept of franchising is also opened for the viewer to fully understand the business model of the case company. In addition to explaining the core company how it operates, some of their social media content pieces are also visualized to provide insight on the study.

### 4.1 Franchising

The business of Kiinteistömaailma operates on a franchising principle, where each individual office is granted total autonomy for handling day-to-day operations. In each Kiinteistömaailma office, there is at least one entrepreneur that owns the office and operates as a manager for the hired realtors for the specific Kiinteistömaailma branch office.

To become a franchise, the entrepreneur pays an initial fee to the franchisor to become a franchisee. After this the franchisee continuously pays royalties to the franchisor to obtain the use of the franchisors brand and trademark for use in daily operations. The franchisor thus has the right and the ability to use the core company's business model and system of doing business. (Entrepreneur 2020.)

The relationship is highly symbiotic and beneficial for both parties. The entrepreneur does not have to spend time figuring out which suppliers to use, which marketing stils to use or even worry about getting their name noticed and recognized. The benefit for the franchisee is that it removes the logistical difficulty of managing suppliers, marketing, flow of customers and creating a trustworthy and reliable brand. (Entrepreneur 2020.) For the franchisor, the core company enjoys a steady flow of income through royalties, and in the case of Kiinteistömaailma, a share of the sales without having to micromanage the franchise itself. The franchisee can also take advantage of the mother company's marketing resources for creating stils, videos, holiday greetings and all imaginable high-quality materials that are free for the franchisee to use.

### 4.2 Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune

The parent company Kiinteistömaailma was founded in 1990 and according to their own research, currently holds the title of largest real estate brokering chain in Finland when measured by the quantity of sales. The brand currently has a little less than 700 employees on payroll in more than 100 offices nationally. In their website, the brand describes

their core mission statement as wanting to make the buying and selling of homes as easy and safe as possible for their customers. (Kiinteistömaailma 2020a.)

During the time of writing this thesis, there were two Kiinteistömaailma franchises in the greater Lahti area, Kiinteistömaailma Lahden Kodit and Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune. Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune was formed by Hannu Väänänen and employs seven realtors and one secretary of sales. The branch is managed by the CEO Hannu Väänänen and major shareholder Riitta Turunen. Two of the licensed realtors hold minor shares of the parent company as a result of being salespeople of the year for multiple years in a row. (Kiinteistömaailma 2020b.) The franchise is relatively successful in the highly competitive field of real estate.

The case company has had an operational Facebook page for long before I became a part of its' occasional management. The output of content, however, was sparse and only covered occasional seasonal greetings and rarely had anything related to marketing individual houses and apartments. The content usually had a picture or a video but failed to include additional flair in the text field. The committed content most often proved unengaging to followers. There were no schedules in the marketing plan for Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune. For the longest time, the idea was to have direct sales-oriented marketing content roughly one and a half times a week. This also meant that there were no specific days of the week for when a post was to be made.

All Facebook posts in Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune's Facebook page are in Finnish. Translations are included in English for all examples showcasing the types of posts that the core company has made throughout both time periods. The content pieces are censored to ensure that this study sufficiently complies with data protection regulations.

#### 4.3 Sales-oriented content

Before the second study period in 2019, the core company's social media content plan was to market the real estate directly through videos or photos. Up until 2019, the Facebook content of Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune mainly revolved around sales-oriented marketing posts. There were mostly two types of real estate marketing content the core company was trying to sell through their individual Facebook posts:

1. Photos of multiple pieces of available real estate that had exhibits on the coming weekend.
2. Targeting a single piece of available real estate with an embedded video showcasing the product.

#### 4.3.1 Utilizing pictures in Facebook marketing

For the first type of social media content, the collage, the real estate was often on the hands of a specific realtor. This was because it was simpler to promote one realtor as a part of the product being sold. It is common for a real estate realtor to schedule multiple exhibits for a single day. Realtors also schedule most common exhibits for the weekends because the potential customers often have free time during the weekends rather than in the middle of the week. The plan would often be to pick a single realtor and gather the most interesting houses, apartments or cottages that the realtor had exhibits on during the weekend, preferably on a single day. The picture that is shown as the default online picture for the real estate is then picked as the main picture and additional pictures are used as secondary photos on the collage.

The amount of real estate promoted in these Facebook posts was often from three to five, depending on the availability of interesting real estate. The post would have small text about the locations of the real estate, the time schedules for the exhibitions, links for the online pages of the real estate on the Kiinteistömaailma webpage and lastly the realtors' contact information. A good example of this type of Facebook post is shown on Image 5.



Image 5 Example of a sales-oriented Facebook post using pictures

The Facebook post utilizing pictures as a visual method showcased in Image 5 translates to the following in English:

*There are an astonishing seven exhibition debuts this Sunday 12.8! Get more closely acquainted to the attractions on our website: a link to the information page of the real estate. As one team.*

#### 4.3.2 Utilizing videos in Facebook marketing

When the core company's aim was to focus a Facebook post on a single piece of real estate, a virtual exhibit video of the house would be used as the main content type. These videos made by a professional photographer are one of the many services the customer receives as a part of using Kiinteistömaailma as a brokerage to sell real estate. The video includes short edited cuts of the camera showcasing the different areas of the real estate and are often from one to two minutes in length. The video, while lacking narration, has neutral homely music on the background.

Because these videos were included in many of the real estate targets that Kiinteistömaailma had under their brokerage, they would always be utilized if possible. By downloading the video file, an embedded video could be created without links to external video streaming websites such as Youtube. Thus, for the person receiving the social media content on their timeline, the experience would be interesting and unobtrusive due to the video also starting to play automatically on mute. Attached to the video would be a more detailed sales pitch of a few sentences trying to highlight the most attractive aspects of the real estate. Also as shown on Image 6, included in the content would also be the contact information of the realtor and a link to the house's information page on the Kiinteistömaailma websites.



Image 6 Example of a sales-oriented Facebook post using a video

The Facebook post utilizing a video as a visual method showcased in Image 6 translates to the following in English:

*How many times have you seen a detached house and a summerhouse in a same package? This pinnacle of an attraction is exhibited Tuesday 28.8. at 16:30 pm! For contact: (name of the realtor, phone number and the email address) + a link to the information page of the real estate.*

#### 4.3.3 Utilizing paid advertising in Facebook marketing

During 2019, the core company promoted one house via paid Facebook advertising. The house in question was an expensive and exclusive piece of real estate. Because the house included a vast garage that fit multiple cars, the aim was to get the product into the eyes of people with similar interests. A post was generated that highlights the most marketable aspects of the house as a collage. The post in question is shown in Image 7. Had a video exhibit been created for this piece of real estate, it would have been used instead. This post would then be promoted as a paid Facebook advertisement.

**KM** Kiinteistömaailma Hämeenkatu, Lahti  
 Julkaisija: Severi Jukarainen [?] · 6. maaliskuuta 2019 · 🌐

Autoharrastajan unelma. 🚗  
 Vesijärven ääreltä, tämä laadukkaasti sisustettu ja hyvänä pidetty uniikki koti, jossa pihalla hulppea autohallirakennus. Autohallissa 2 nosturia autoille sekä auton pesupaikka erikseen.

Phone number and a link to the real estate's information page censored.










Image 7 Example of a sales-oriented Facebook post using paid advertising

The Facebook post utilizing paid advertising methods showcased in Image 7 translates to the following in English:

*A car-hobbyist's dream. By the lake Vesijärvi, quality furnished and well-kept unique home with a gorgeous garage building. There are two cranes for cars in the garage and a separate carwash-location. Book an appointment for a private exhibition from (phone number) + a link to the information page of the real estate.*

This post had a total budget of 100 euros and a daily budget of 5 euros. The target audience was people who followed Facebook pages of everything related to car enthusiasm, to have people who might own multiple cars see the post and the house in their Facebook feed. The target audience was also narrowed down to people who lived in the greater Lahti area or in nearby municipalities. No audience targeting was selected for demographics such as gender, age or connections.

#### 4.4 Fluff content

As mentioned in previous chapters, fluff content includes all other non-sales-oriented pieces of social media content. Fluff can be everything from seasonal greetings to articles. Most fluff content in the core company's Facebook page are seasonal greetings, articles, celebrations of staff or company achievements or in-the-moment side-content captured from the office. The fluff content is thus categorized into two sub-categories:

- Seasonal greetings
- Miscellaneous content

Seasonal greetings are its' own category because the format is very formulaic and repeatable throughout the years. After all, there are only a handful of ways to wish a person merry Christmas, for example. Miscellaneous content includes all that is not sales-oriented content or a seasonal greeting. The amount of categorization that could be done for this category is staggering. Thus, all remaining content types are gathered in this one category of miscellaneous content.

##### 4.4.1 Seasonal greetings

The Finnish national holiday Midsummer is held every year in mid-July. This means that the event was present during both 2018 and 2019 time periods that this research was conducted on. There are many seasonal greetings throughout the year and most businesses often seasonal greetings on social media for the national holidays in question. The seasonal greetings for Midsummer in 2018 was just a shared post from the mother company's Facebook page. In 2019 however, the greeting was created as an original post by Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune, rather than reusing a post generated by Kiinteistömaailma. Both Midsummer greetings in 2018 and 2019 had extremely similar texts attached to the post. Both posts are presented clearly in images 8 and 9.



Image 8 Midsummer greeting 2019

Translated in English, the text Midsummer greeting Facebook post showcased in Image 8 simply says “Have a good Midsummer everyone!” The text in the image used in the fore-mentioned post translates to “Have a joyful Midsummer fest!”. In the Midsummer greeting of 2018 however, the topmost text showcased in Image 9 translates to “Have a lovely Midsummer!”, while the text in the picture translates to “Have a relaxing Midsummer!”. As mentioned previously, the Midsummer greeting of 2018 was a shared post from the mother franchise company’s Facebook page. The original post that was shared used the following text when translated to English: “Have a safe journey towards spending Mindsummer. Let us enjoy the fest of Midsummer in any weather imaginable.”



Image 9 Midsummer greeting 2018

#### 4.4.2 Miscellaneous content

Miscellaneous content in Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune's Facebook pages consists of everything that is not sales-oriented or considered a seasonal greeting. Two examples that show the essence of miscellaneous content in the core company's Facebook activity are showcased in Images 10 and 11. The examples are a celebration of a record breaking result that the company achieved in July 2019 and a link to an article about a new service Kiinteistömaailma started to offer in 2018. All miscellaneous content is free and unformulaic in style. There is usually more text than in seasonal greetings but less than in sales-oriented content. While sales-oriented content has a defined style in the format, the style in miscellaneous content is more descriptive.



Image 10 Record-breaking July 2019

Translated to English, the Facebook post showcased in Image 10 celebrating a record-breaking July in 2019 states the following:

*Summer breaks did not stop us in breaking a record with 40 confirmed sales in July. Thank you to all of our hard-working and professional realtors.*


The Facebook post promoting a new service in 2018 translated to the following from Finnish to English:

*We are bringing a completely new Cottage Ready service to the market together with Finsilva and Kontio, which will be built entirely on your terms.*

**KM** Kiinteistömaailma Hämeenkatu, Lahti ...

Julkaisija: Severi Jukarainen [?] · 5. heinäkuuta 2018 · 🌐

Yhdessä Finsilvan ja Kontion kanssa tuomme markkinoille täysin uudenlaisen Mökkivalmis-palvelun, joka rakennetaan täysin omilla ehdoillasi. 🌞



KIINTEISTOMAAILMA.FI i

**Mökkivalmis-palvelulla uuden mökin voi rakennuttaa ennätyshelposti**

Image 11 Promotion of a new service.

#### 4.5 Change in culture

A change was made to the core company's Facebook marketing culture between the two studied time periods. Before 2019, the culture was to promote as much sales-oriented content as possible and most fluff content revolved around seasonal greeting and the odd miscellaneous content. No data was studied by this point, but though sheer eye-test results it could be seen that fluff content was more engaging than sales-oriented content. Thus, more emphasis was put towards fluff content in the future. After this, sales-oriented content was still occasionally produced but it was not generated one and a half times a week as it was formerly generated.

## 5 FINDINGS

The following chapters dissect the results of conducted research during the two study periods. The results are visualized with the help of graphs and dissected with further analysis on the reasoning of the results. The organic growth of the Facebook page must also be taken to account. The amount of total likes on a Facebook page directly affects the amount of people seeing the content on their feed. The total amount of organic individuals that have liked the Facebook page of Kiinteistömaailma Asuntolaune was 319 at the beginning of the 2018 study period and 339 by the end. At the beginning of the study period in 2019, the Facebook page had cultivated 420 individual people liking the page. By the end of the 2019 study period, the likes for the page was 436. The growth is by all appearances organic and dramatic differences in the data results can be resulted in factors other than organic page growth.

### 5.1 Quantity and Purpose

The culture change between the two research periods resulted in far less total posted content in the summer of 2019 than in 2018. In the three-month timespan, only 15 posts were generated in 2019, while 2018 held an amount of 41 posts in total. This is because the loose marketing plan established before 2019 only covered posting of sales-oriented content at least once a week, resulting in a higher amount of total quantity of posts. The change in culture between the two years resulted in less content being posted in 2019 than before. The overall quantity of Facebook posts between both study periods is 56. The results are highlighted by amount in Figure 1.

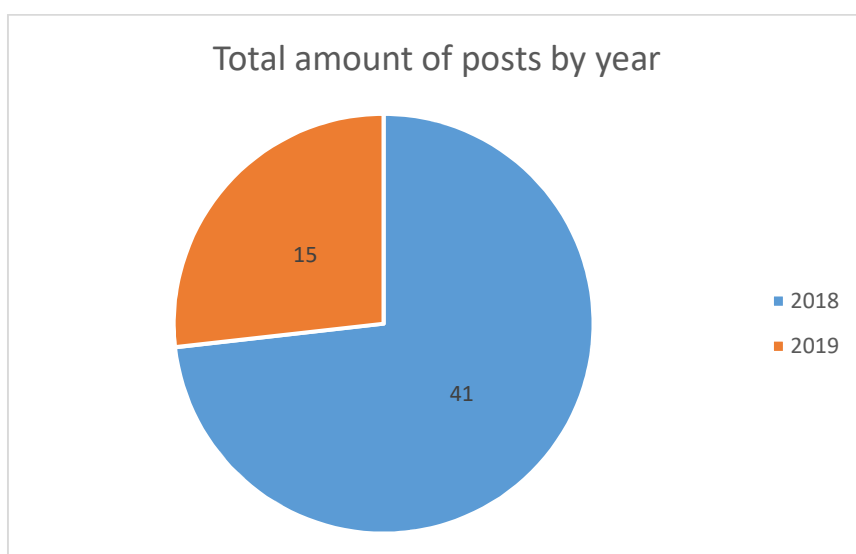


Figure 1 Divide of the total amount of Facebook posts content between the summers of 2018 and 2019

The divide between the amount fluff content and sales-oriented content was also radically different between the two summers. The change in culture shifted emphasis from sales-oriented content to a more fluff-heavy plan in the core company's Facebook presence. This resulted in far more fluff content being posted in the summer of 2019 than 2018. In 2018, 68% of all the posts were sales-oriented and the remaining 32% was fluff content. In 2019 however, the amount of fluff content was 73% with the remaining 27% being sales-oriented Facebook posts. The change in culture between the two years resulted in the company focusing more on fluff content. The total amount of fluff content 2019 was not more than in 2018. In 2018, 13 out of 41 posts were considered fluff content, while 11 out of 15 posts were fluff in 2019. While the total amount in 2019 was less than in 2018, the share of all content being posted is far more than in 2018. The divide of content purpose between the two years is showcased by percentage in Figure 2.

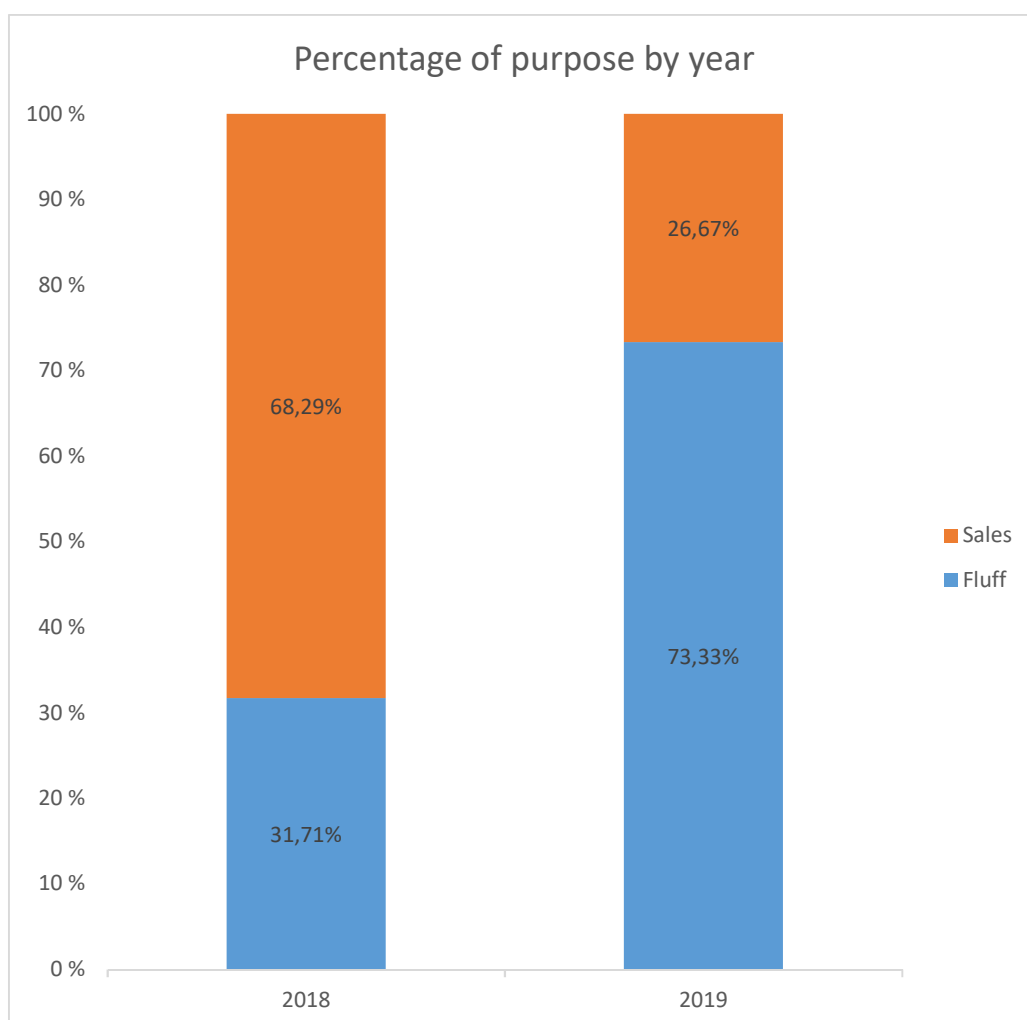


Figure 2 Divide of fluff and sales-oriented content by percentage between the summers of 2018 and 2019

Photos were by far the most used type of visual media used in the Facebook posts of Kinteistömaailma Asuntolaune. Individual singular pictures were 36% of all 56 posts across both study periods. Multiple pictures in the form of collages were 18% of all posted content. Photos together, be in singular or in a collage, hold over half of all generated Facebook content. All this data is showcased in Figure 3.

There is a clear use of certain visual media methods in the different content purposes. As highlighted in Figure 4, only one video was used in fluff content across both study periods. A staggering amount of singular pictures were used in fluff content. Collages were mainly used in sales-oriented content. The least used methods of visual content in total were shared videos from other Facebook pages.

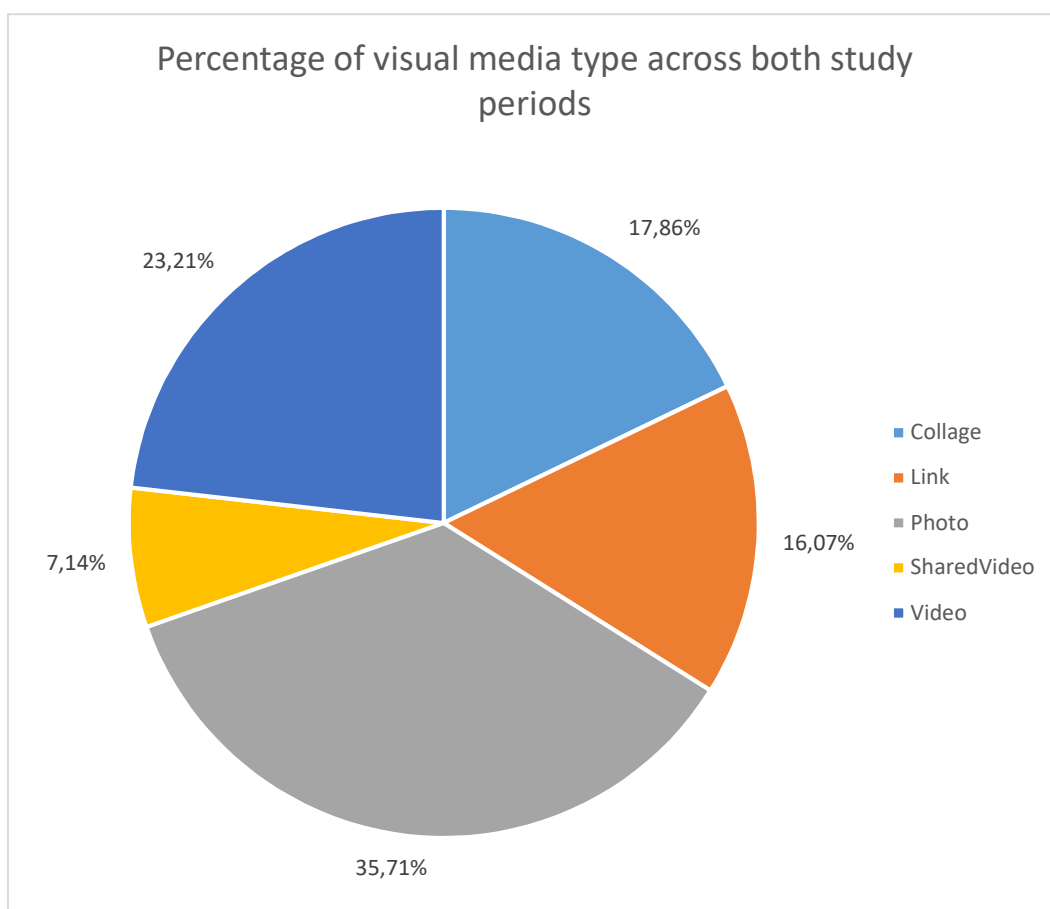


Figure 3 Divide of visual media content type by percentage across all data

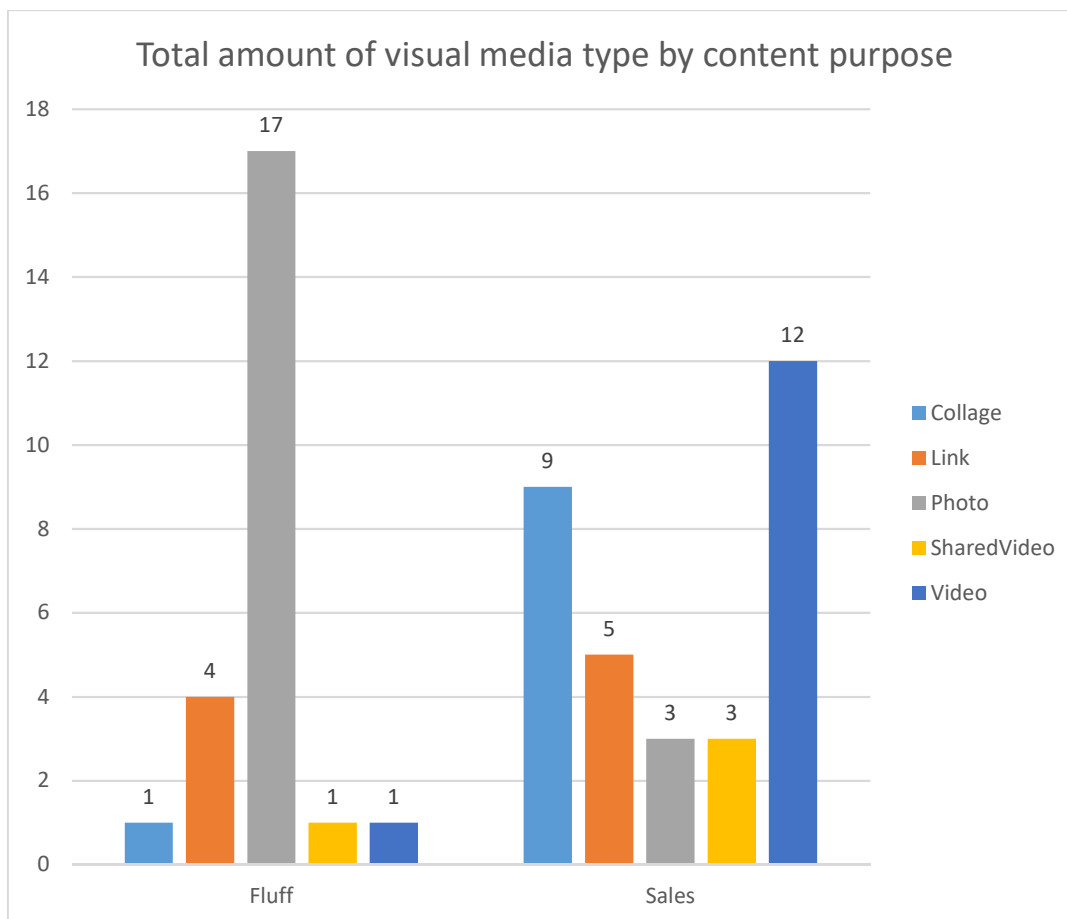


Figure 4 Divide of the total amount of visual media content type between purpose across all data

## 5.2 Engagement

Even though 2019 had far less Facebooks posts in total than in 2018, the amount of engagement was still more in 2019. As showcased in Figure 5, 2019 had 501 overall engagements as 2018 had had just 481. The total engagement across both study periods is 982. As seen in Figure 2, the second study period in 2019 had a much larger emphasis on fluff rather than sales-oriented content.

The fore-mentioned result is verified when studying the average amount of engagement by content purpose showcased in Figure 6. Across both study periods, fluff content had engaged far more people than sales-oriented content. Fluff content has managed to engage an average of 30 people per Facebook post, which is staggeringly high compared to the average of 8,1 per post in sales-oriented content. Thus, it can be observed that fluff content has proved much larger results in engagement than sales-oriented content.

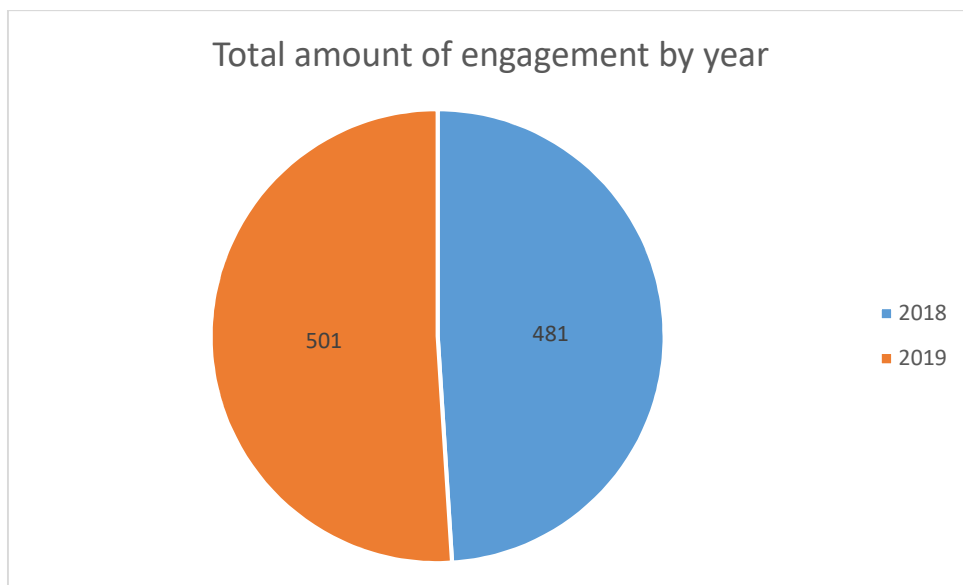


Figure 5 Divide of engagement between the summers of 2018 and 2019

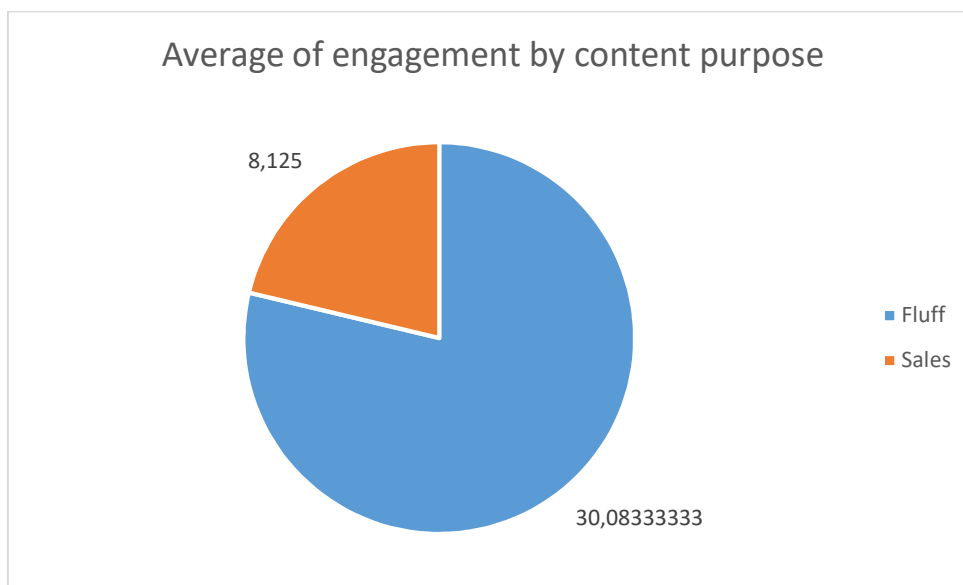


Figure 6 Average of engagement by content purpose across all data

By average, posts with just a single photo gathered more engagement on average than any other visual media type. As showcased in Figure 7, Facebook posts that were just shares of from other pages were least engaging across both study periods. Videos, that were also the most used media type in sales-oriented content engaged less than photo collages. The media type that yields the best engagement results is the use of a picture in a Facebook post. By observational deduction, photos are the most engaging method of visual media in Facebook.

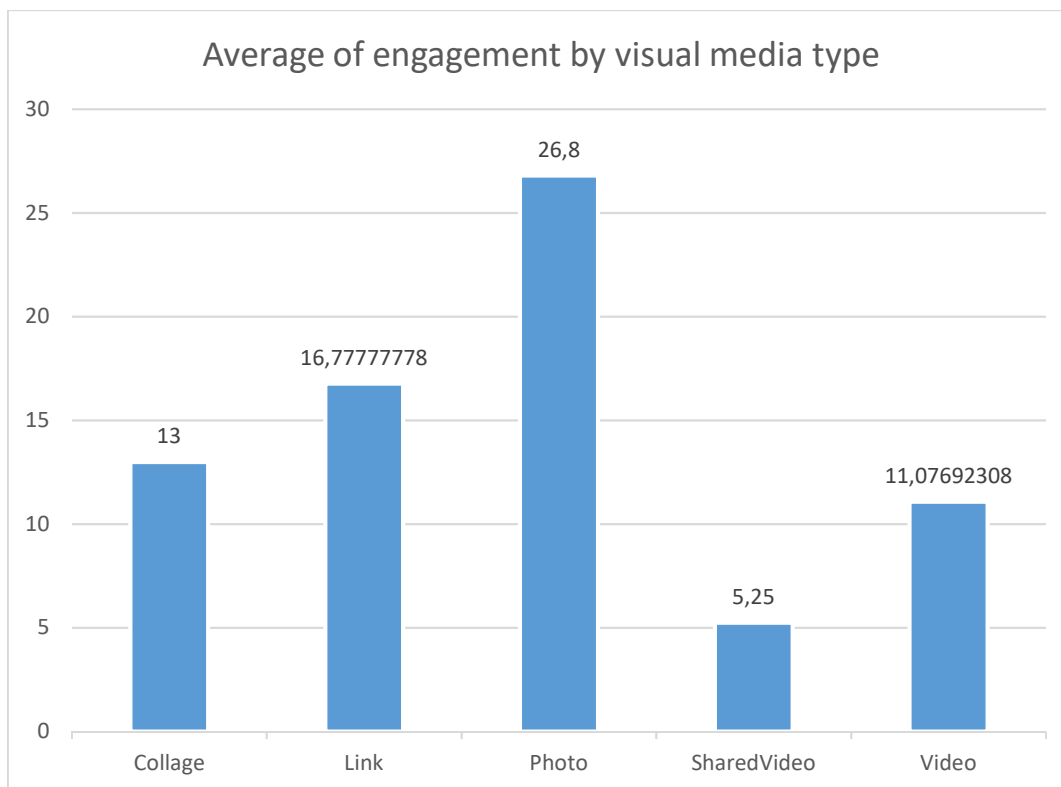


Figure 7 Divide of engagement by visual media type across all data

### 5.3 Paid advertising

By looking at the engagement results of the Facebook post that used paid advertising methods showcased in Image 7, paid advertising yields staggeringly elevated results when compared to organic sales-oriented content. The one individual post that used paid advertising had a total of 125 people engaged in the content. As shown on Figure 6, the average engagement in an organic sales-oriented Facebook post is just 8,1. For 100 euros, this one Facebook post had managed to yield engagement results that are over ten-fold the amount of organic sales-oriented Facebook content. Whether the payment itself is worth it for the business, is a different question. However, it can be observed that paid Facebook advertisements provide superlative results when compared to organic sales-oriented marketing.

## 6 SUMMARY

The research was conducted with data provided from a relatively small scaled local real estate company. While the data and results can be applied to other entrepreneurial fields, it must be taken to account that real estate is a business that sells expensive products and services in a very small quantity. The research question does not pre-dictate any certain business type, therefore the results can be in a general sense applied to most other fields. The distribution of content purpose in a businesses' social media presence should not be comparable to the types of conducted commerce.

This thesis is aimed to provide better understanding for marketing in social media, and especially in the social media platform Facebook. To help with explain the fore-mentioned key concepts, a plethora of core concepts were also introduced and explained. Digital marketing is a new branch in the broader marketing concept that should be utilized in all entrepreneurial fields. There are many different social media platforms, most of which work within the same principles. To better understand the entirety of the social media landscape is a better understanding on marketing possibilities. The research was conducted by using quantitative data analyzed with mixed contextual methods.

Several sub-questions were successfully attempted to be answered to help with tackling the main research question. One of these sub-questions were to find out what visual media type is most effective in social media. As presented in figures 4 and 7, all findings in this thesis point to individual pictures being most effective in attaining engagement in potential customers. Another sub-question was presented to examine how paid advertising on Facebook affects engagement numbers. The answer to this question is a definite increased trend in engagement numbers. From data conducted by this research, a Facebook advertisement with a budget of 100 euros has 1443% more engagement levels than the average of organically posted pieces of sales-oriented Facebook marketing content without paid advertising.

The main research question inquired on what kind of social media content provides the most engagement in potential customers, while the last sub-question was aimed to find out whether non-sales-related content is more engaging among people. The last sub-question turned out to be the answer to the main research question. Based on all the data presented in figure 6, the answer to the last sub-question is a definite yes. Content that does is not attempting to directly market a certain product or a service is more engaging than direct sales-targeted marketing.

While the findings in this research illustrates a clear trend on consumer behavior in social media, it leaves much for possible follow-up research. For instance, why do people tend to engage more on social media content that utilizes individual pictures? Why is direct marketing of products and services significantly less prone to engagement than fluff pieces? All these questions could be researched by asking the people on social media to answer questionnaires that directly provide these questions.

To summarize, all businesses should focus on the content purposes and media types that are used in their social media presence. There are clear differences in the effectiveness of media types, flair and style when practicing marketing in social media.

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