# Designing New Marketing Solutions and Recommendations through Social Media for Case Company Formal Friday

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This thesis project was commissioned by the author´s employer, Formal Friday, a Finnish outdoor clothing brand based in Helsinki. The main purpose of this project is to create a development plan for the use of social media marketing to enhance brand awareness. The thesis aims to answer the following question: How can Instagram, as a social media marketing tool, be integrated to use in a small clothing company to enhance its brand awareness?

This thesis project has several components making up the theoretical framework. It presents concepts related to social media, social media marketing and social media marketing strategies. The analysis section takes into consideration all aspects important to the client company. This part includes company background, a SWOT analysis, and an analysis of the company´s social media presence. The research method used in this project was a quantitative online questionnaire. The audience of the questionnaire was made of people in the 20-60 age group, with interest in outdoor lifestyle and clothing garments.

The most important finding from this project is that Formal Friday would greatly benefit from adapting new marketing methods on their social media platforms, more precisely Instagram. This implementation would raise the company´s brand awareness and likely, get a higher volume of sales through their website. Another positive result was to provide the client company with new, important, and useful data about their potential new clients. This information will be useful for them not only on the marketing perspective.

Keywords: Brand awareness, Social media, Social media marketing

Contents

1    Thesis Purpose

The project was issued by the client company to the author of this project. After a few meetings with the company´s CEO and sales manager, the conclusion was to focus the research on raising the brand awareness through improvements on social media marketing. The company has most of their clothing garments sold in retail stores and is doing well on that front. Thus, they would like to have a higher influx of users noticing them on social media and finally, have more customers buying directly from them. This can be achieved by enhancing the brand awareness of the company. It was agreed that the conducted research would concentrate on marketing with the focus on social media.

Whilst the author worked during his internship on the sales department, he had clearly seen what makes Formal Friday unique, and what added value it gives to its retail buyers and customers. The problem was indeed that the company was selling very well to retailers, that they did not see the immediate need of having to rely on sales made solely through their online store. That is why the author felt it would be a great responsibility to take part in improving the social media marketing strategy of the company by coming up with new development methods.

The purpose of the thesis was to find out what type of developments can be utilized for brand enhancement through social media. By applying the correct research method and discovering valuable data about the company´s target audience, the author will elaborate a plan of developments through social media for the company to apply.

1.1    Case Company Background

Formal Friday is a Finnish outdoor clothing brand based in Helsinki. In 2014 designer Teemu Muurimäki decided to create a fashion brand along with Pentti Jokinen. The vision was to produce durable and ecological clothing. They wanted to make good quality clothing using high quality materials, which would be fit for all occasions. Before, they used to produce all types of clothing garments, from t-shirts to jackets to trousers. This business plan was not working because the costs of production surpassed the revenue from sales. They had to change something.

Since 2019, Formal Friday has decided to focus on making the best t-shirt there can possibly be. Formal Friday´s business plan is simple: Make simple but high-quality t-shirts using the best merino wool materials. The value proposition that they bring is a t-shirt fit for every occasion with premium feel. Whether the customer wants to feel comfortable on a weekday

laying on his couch or going outdoors for a hike and being in contact with nature. The t-shirts are sustainably and ethically made. The cost of the shirt is elevated (119€) but the product talks for itself.

Formal Friday has many retail stores selling their product around Europe. Some of the stores where Formal Friday products can be found are in Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Italy and Germany. Their value is the high quality and sustainability of the garment, but this of course means that the price of the shirt is in fact going to be higher than a standard.

Formal Friday employs 3 people: the CEO, a sales manager, and the designer in charge. No marketing correspondent is employed. When the author worked as an intern, he would complete jobs regarding sales and marketing, which was possible to do since the company was small. Formal Friday being a relatively new company, does not have the resources to hire more personnel. The costs of production to produce high quality material is very elevated. This means that they have a big number of jobs to cover all around. Despite that, the company has been receiving only positive reviews from their customers, and it has become clear to them that they have a special product in their hands.

This project is being managed after the author has finished his internship at the company. It was decided at the time between the employer and the author, that it would be best to work solely inside the company, to then focus on the thesis after the internship period has finished. The author is solely focusing on providing a marketing development plan for social media.

1.2    Scope and Scale

Over time, the scope and scale of this project changed. The difficulties at the beginning of the thesis process were scale the size of the project correctly. The idea was to create a marketing plan for the client company. After analyzing all the different theories and aspects that would be needed for a project like that, it was clear that it would be too big of a project to handle alone. Thankfully this was realized at the very beginnings of the project.

The author decided to focus on creating a development plan for just one platform: Instagram. This because the author had already done work with the platform before and the company´s Instagram account had a solid follower base but with many improvements that could be made. Moreover, choosing one platform means that there would be less theoretical knowledge to go over and that all the final suggestions would be more precise.

It is important to state that this project will create a development plan out of the research results collected in the survey and that these will be mere suggestions on what could be done.

1.3    Research Question and Objectives

This thesis aims to enhance Formal Friday´s brand awareness by delivering a development plan focusing on social media marketing methods for the platform "Instagram". All of this was decided with the afterthought of luring more customers to buy directly from Formal Friday. During this process, three objectives were constructed.

The first objective being the proposal of a clear and concise plan of developments regarding their social media marketing usage of Instagram. What could be done better and what are the new strategies and methods the company has yet to use?

The second objective that this project has is to try and answer the research question, which goes as follows: How can Instagram, as a social media marketing tool, be integrated to use in a small clothing company to enhance its brand awareness?

The third objective is to provide the client company with useful data from the author´s research, which is done through an online questionnaire. It was of the client company´s wish to have data regarding social media usage and preferences of their target audience. The data serves to further support the suggestions made on the development plan.

1.4    Thesis Framework

This project has nine chapters making up the contents of the thesis.

The Chapter 1. Thesis Purpose serves to:

- Give complete background about the client company.
- Explain the scope and scale of the project, how it changed over time and what was decided.
- Describe and present the research questions and objectives of the project. What will this project try to answer and find out?

The Theoretical Background (2.) chapter is serves to give theoretical insights about the project and ultimately serve to support the case of developments made in chapter 8. This chapter includes:

- An introduction to social media and its importance.
- What different social media platforms there are and their significance.
- What type of marketing can be done through social media to raise brand awareness.
- What is social media word of mouth marketing (WOM) and how it differs from traditional WOM marketing.
- How does marketing with the usage of influencers work and what are the benefits.

- What is a social media "giveaway". How does it work and what are the advantages behind it.
- How brand partnerships work on social media and how they can be used to raise a brands awareness.
- What type of strategies can be used to create content to engage users positively.

On chapter 3, Instagram will be studied and explained. This mainly because the whole developments which are going to be presented are by using Instagram.

Chapter 4. Research Method works to explain the process of choosing and implementing a research method to conduct for this thesis. It includes:

- How the questionnaire was created and implemented.
- The general information of the questionnaire (date of creation, number of respondents, number of questions etc.)
- What are some of the risks and limitations of the research.
- What makes the questionnaire reliable and valid for the purposes of this project.

Chapter 5 Empirical Part explains and examines the results of the questionnaire. What can be found from the research data collected? More specifically:

- The analysis of the questionnaire demographics.
- The analysis of data regarding social media.
- Analysis of data regarding respondents decision making, purchasing and value proposition.

Chapter 6. Data Analysis will examine, with the usage of a statistical analysis method, were the results collected from the questionnaire casual or statistically relevant. This will be done by using a Chi Square analysis.

Chapter 7. Company SWOT Analysis presents a SWOT study about the client company. It will examine the company´s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Chapter 8. Development Plan includes a plan of suggestions made for the client company of this project. The developments are made out of the inclusion of the theoretical knowledge and the data collected from the research, all for brand enhancement.

Chapter 9. Conclusions presents the learnings and why the client company should need to adapt the developments proposed.

## 2    Theoretical Background

On this section, the theoretical background for the thesis will be covered by the author. Theories included will be of social media, social media marketing for brand awareness and its subdepartment theories, all examined from the chapters 2.1 to chapter 3.1. These topics will try to set a solid base to answer the question of the thesis; how social media marketing can be used to raise a smaller company´s brand awareness. This part will also be useful to give insight on the meaning of different marketing methods and the processes behind them.

### 2.1    Social Media and its importance

Social Media is content created by everyday people using highly accessible and scalable technologies such as social media networks, blogs, micro-blogs, message boards, podcasts, social bookmarks, communities, wikis, and vlogs (Singh & Diamond, 2020 p. 8). As the world is changing rapidly, the impact that social media has on the transformation of society is unprecedented. According to the author Jagdish N. Sheth, "social media is poised to transform society in an even more fundamental matter".

It comes easy for us to underestimate the potential that social media has, since most of us are used and accustomed to it in our everyday life. Due to its constant innovation and rapid widespread adoption, it becomes increasingly obvious how hard it is to differentiate the variances between public and private spheres of life.

Just in a few years, social media has moved from it being a platform for the younger generation to connect, to being a global phenomenon. According to a report made by Statista (2021), Western and Northern Europe ranked first in social media penetration percentage (79%) in January 2021, followed by the North American region with a penetration of 74%. The global social media penetration rate was of 54%.

Regardless of age, in the world that we live in today people are constantly searching and sharing information through social media. This presents great new possibilities for businesses looking to thrive in reaching their target audiences through the usage of well sought social media brand marketing (Sheth 2018)

### 2.2    Social Media Platforms

Before going further and diving into social media marketing and branding, it is important for the purpose of this project to give some context on what different social media platforms there are and what type of reach they provide.

Social media is a blur of "likes, tweets, shares, posts and content" (Bullas, 2014), in which the most popular social media network as of today is Facebook, with more than 2.7 billion

monthly active users (Statista 2021). This means that almost two out of three of the active 4.2 billion social media users are also active users on Facebook. Plus, more than 100,000 web pages can be accessed with Facebook Login credentials (Lafferty 2014).

After Facebook, the top five of global networks is completed by YouTube, WhatsApp, Messenger, and Instagram. Figure 1.1 shows what are the most popular social media platforms as of today in 2021 (in Millions). Other popular social media platforms include Snapchat, Pinterest, LinkedIn, TikTok and SlideShare.
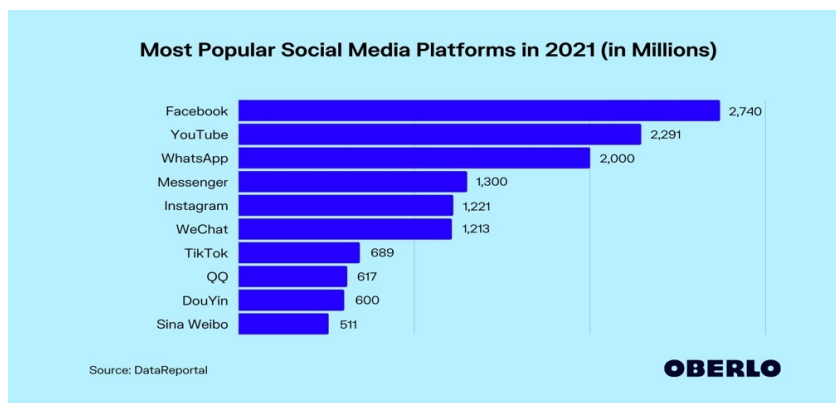


**Most Popular Social Media Platforms in 2021 (in Millions)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Facebook | 2,740 |
| YouTube | 2,291 |
| WhatsApp | 2,000 |
| Messenger | 1,300 |
| Instagram | 1,221 |
| WeChat | 1,213 |
| TikTok | 689 |
| QQ | 617 |
| DouYin | 600 |
| Sina Weibo | 511 |

Source: DataReportal

OBERLO

Figure 1.1 Most Popular Social Media Platforms in 2021 in Millions (Source: www.oberlo.com)

From a marketing perspective, it is very important for a business to make a general overview of the social media distribution channels to find out what platform/s most of their targeted audience uses.

With having many platforms which to choose from, social media helps different people with different interests to find just the right one for them. The variety of platforms also helps businesses to become more and more versatile on the marketing front, having the possibility now to reach a wider target audience, and having to spend less money on it. This rapid shift of new users and the creation of new platforms have permitted newer and smaller businesses to gain visibility in an easier way. (Sheth 2018, pp. 6)

Nowadays, a creative and up-and coming company will have a fighting chance to reach their goals by adapting the usage of social media. Also, a smaller company can offer a variety of services and products globally, by scaling up, since there are no geographical limitations to social media platforms.

2.3    Social Media Marketing for Brand Awareness

Brand awareness can be defined as a marketing term describing the degree to which a consumer recognizes a product by its name. It is a key step for organizations to create brand awareness by promoting a new brand, product or reviving an older one (Kopp, Estevez 2021).

Social media marketing is the use of social media platforms to connect with your audience to build your brand, increase sales, and drive website traffic (Buffer, 2019). It is usually done by publishing, sharing, and creating content on a social media page to attract potential customers. Other important aspects are engaging and listening with a profile´s social media following, analyzing results, traffic and managing social media advertisements.

Social media marketing first started with businesses sharing their content on social media to generate traffic to their websites. These publishing's were made usually in the hopes sales, but as stated before, social media has evolved beyond being just a place to transmit and share content. (Buffer 2019)

Currently, businesses are using the social media platforms in many ways. It all depends on what are a company x´s set of needs. If a business is trying to understand the performance it has on social media, then it would have to analyze its engagement, reach, traffic and sales through an analytics tool. Another example is that if a business is really interested in reaching a very specific set of audience, they would run highly specified and targeted social media ads to do so. This all to state that Businesses are no longer just interested in getting potential customer´s to check out their webpage. (Buffer 2019)

By utilizing social media as their marketing platform, businesses can establish strong and lasting relationships with their consumers (Weinberg & Pehlivan 2011). It gives any sized businesses an opportunity to positively engage with customers through their interactions. In fact, a business can spark up discussions, get market research data by enquiring feedback, improve on many organizational parts such as how to handle returns and complaints and it also allows the creation of strategic partnerships and collaborations with other businesses. (Khera 2019)

Here are stated some key points of the impact of social media on marketing:

- Affordability is a new reality.
- Growth of virtual communities.
- Users are the producers and promoters.
- No more targeting segmentation and positioning.
- Users can create their own media channels.
- Social media addiction has led to higher traffic on apps ---> revenue.

(Sheth 2018)

It is important to state, that since this project is being conducted for a small-sized clothing company, all of the above stated theories and examples can be applicable to all sized and types of businesses. That is the beauty of social media marketing, that a company no matter

how big or small can use these platforms for marketing benefits and to raise brand awareness.

On the next sub-chapters, the author will analyze key elements of social media marketing, which have the task of giving theoretical insights, since these concepts will be relevant on the projects empirical part with research and findings. The author will analyze WOM marketing, influencer marketing on social media, giveaway contests, brand partnerships and content creation.

## 2.4    Word of Mouth Marketing (WOM)

Consumers reliance on word of mouth (WOM) has increased over the last few years, and its impact on advertising has been significant. This is mostly because the usage of social media services has risen exponentially. Consumers tend to give it a lot of importance during their decision-making process, either from people they know closely or consumers they do not know (Heggde 2018). It is vital for businesses now a days especially those providing products, that they focus on providing the customer with a quality garment and experience.

Looking at Fig 1.2 showcasing the most influential forms of advertising, WOM from people known and online consumer reviews are the most trusted source of brand data and messaging. The first with an overwhelming 84% of global consumers surveyed indicating they trust recommendations from people they know. The second with 70% of global consumers surveyed online indicating they trust consumer opinions/reviews on online platforms.
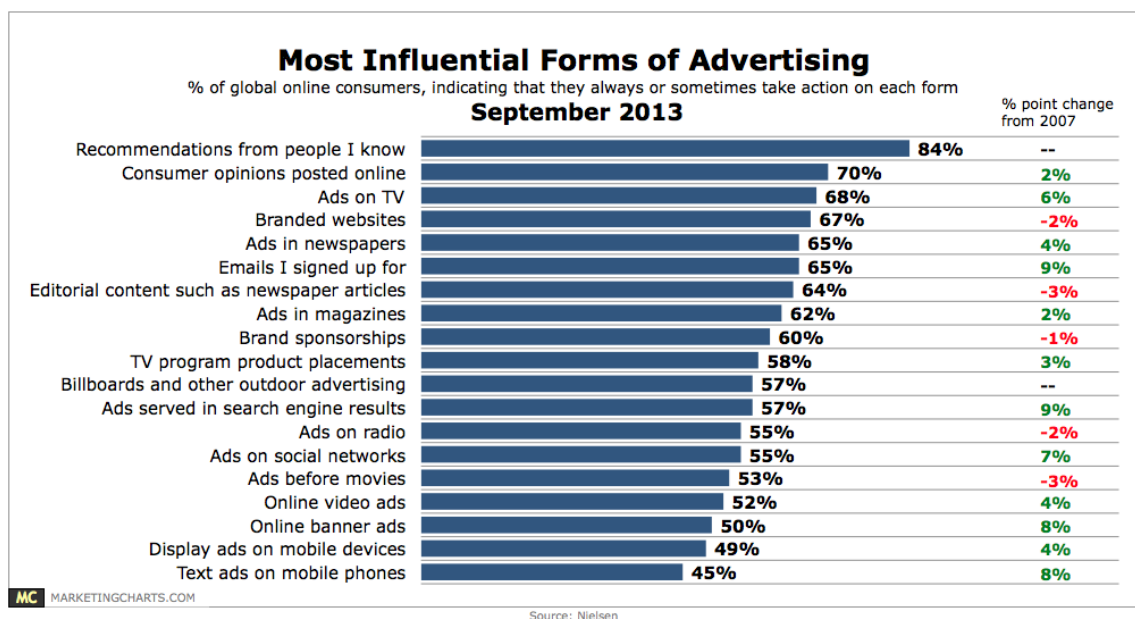


Figure 1.2 Forms of advertising most influential to consumers globally (Source: www.nielsen.com)

2.5    WOM on Social Media

The increase in growth of social media users over the years has meant that the services provided by platforms have become more and more accessible and user friendly. Users tend to talk between one another, post recommendations, give feedback and provide suggestions to others. Social media platforms have made it so that consumers can share their experiences with flexibility and with a totally global reach. Connecting with masses through sharing not only a text but also photographs, videos, graphics interchange formats (GIF) files, has never been easier. WOM on social media has no restrictions, it has the possibility of becoming viral (Sheth 2018). This meaning that a viral product broadcasted through the phenomenon of WOM can give an astounding amount of visibility to a brand for example.

Thus, WOM in social media differs a lot from the more traditional WOM. The second being in fact "controlled" by the marketer via traditional media. The marketer oversees targeting the correct audience with the right message about the products, or even the company itself. Market research is usually done periodically in this case. On Table 1.1 we can observe the primary differences between traditional WOM and social media WOM.

Social media instead is much more interactive and has more opinions due to its higher possibility to network. The WOM in social media presents a many-to-many (peer-to-peer) relationship, as opposed to the one-to-many relationship of traditional WOM. There is no opinion leader, as one communicates with the other, they both influence and are influenced reciprocately. The recipients are in charge of generating WOM on social media, unlike traditional WOM. It is the job of the marketers to try and identify the target audience and attempt to communicate, or design, the product accordingly. Thus, the marketer will not have a pre-existing idea of who the consumer of the product or service will be, this leads to the fact that in this case, the concept of traditional market segmentation is obsolete. The marketer must constantly react on the feedback its product or service receives (Sheth 2018).

In this case of the author´s project, it is important to state that WOM in social media tends to build a network of opinions, usually different, which can paint a better and more precise picture of the brand.

| *Traditional WOM* | *Social media WOM* |
|---|---|
| Local | Global |
| Voice | Text, photograph and video |
| Gated community | Viral |

| Passive recipient | Interactive recipient |
|---|---|
| Marketer in charge (targeting) | Recipient in charge |
| Episodic feedback | Continuous feedback |
| Measurable impact | Diffused impact |

Table 1.1 Different characteristics of traditional WOM vs. social media WOM (Source: Social Media Marketing: Emerging Concepts and Applications, Heggde, Shainesh & Springer 2018)

2.6    Influencer Marketing on Social Media

Influencer marketing on social media means capitalizing on the reach of an influencer, with a large following and strong brand reputation in a particular niche of social media platforms. Businesses use this process to support their brand, endorse their product, co-create content, with the intent to increase brand awareness and drive sales (Patel 2021)

There are numerous types of influencers on social media platforms. Their job is to contribute to the decisions customers make, and by doing so they influence a brands affinity and purchasing decision. Influencers can be everyday people, whether it is a best friend, a wife or a husband, a colleague from work or even a total stranger. Influencers can apply this "effect" either by directly rating products, creating competitions and giveaway challenges, wear or use a brands goods and finally, by providing discount codes (Singh & Diamond 2020 p. 9).

It makes a lot of sense for brands to invest in influencer marketing through social media. According to an article published on Forbes, only 1% of millennials nowadays trust advertisements. Thus, an estimated 33% of them trust blog reviews before making purchases (Schawbel 2015).

Around 40% of people reported to a research conducted by Adweek that they have purchased a product after seeing it used by an influencer on Instagram, Twitter, or YouTube (Patel 2021) and according to a study made by Tomoson, influencer marketing revenues a $6.50 return on investment for every dollar spent. Not only that, but influencer marketing was also rated as the fastest-growing online customer-acquisition channel, beating organic search, paid search, affiliate marketing and email marketing according to Tomoson (See Figure 1.5)

Despite of what some may think, influencers are proving that they are going to stay. According to a survey conducted by HubSpot, influencers have been projected to become a 13.8-billion-dollar industry by the end of 2021. It is a must for brands to use this marketing method to widen their customer base.
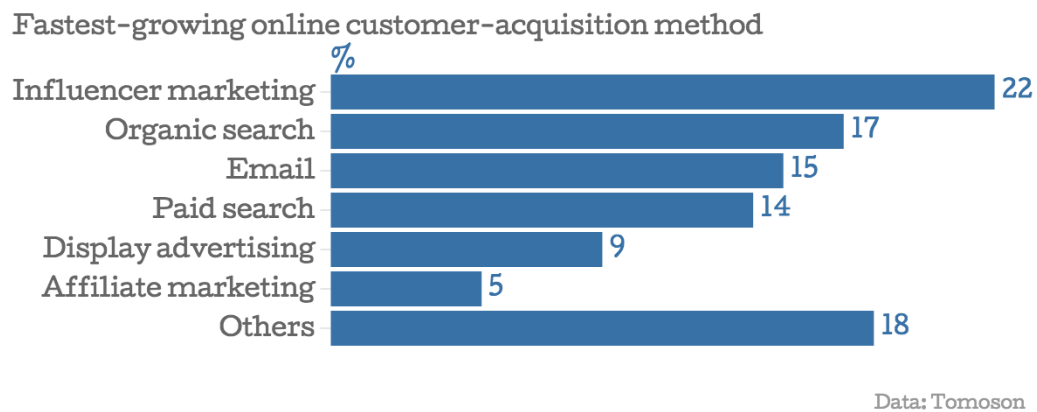
Fastest-growing online customer-acquisition method
%

| Method | Value |
|---|---|
| Influencer marketing | 22 |
| Organic search | 17 |
| Email | 15 |
| Paid search | 14 |
| Display advertising | 9 |
| Affiliate marketing | 5 |
| Others | 18 |

Data: Tomoson

Figure 1.3 shows which online customer-acquisition method was the fastest-growing in 2015. (Source: www.tomoson.com)

## 2.7    Social Media Giveaways

Social media giveaways are a method in which brands promise to give away a service or a product to one or more entrants in accords to specified sets of criteria. More specifically, they work as limited-time promotions to grow a brand´s social media following, and to encourage brand awareness by social sharing a particular giveaway post (Shewan 2020).

Brands can make room in their budget for giving away a handful of products to giveaway winners depending of course on the brands product´s price point. Also, businesses tend to send products of their choosing to influencers, who in their turn organize a giveaway challenge for their followers to take part in. (Patel 2021) This of course is done by an extensive research by the brand in order to find out which influencer has the best reach to the brands notable target audience. Brands want to maximize their reach by giving away products to challenges organized by influencers.

Some of the ways that influencers utilize their reach is by creating unboxing videos through their Instagram or YouTube platforms. Brands send a product they wish to sell and show to a wider audience, all at a minimal cost. Influencers tend to receive many free and exclusive products from brands. They usually dedicate one day of the week to unboxing all their "gifts" on social media, either by doing reviews or using them right then and there on the platform. Giveaways, competitions, and contests are excellent ways for brands to gain a greater customer reach and raising brand awareness and brand exposure. (Patel 2021).

There are a few steps brands should consider when they decide to run a giveaway contest on social media. Brands should:

- Choose the prize of the giveaway. Usually, brands tend to offer one of their best products or services to generate positive buzz around the contest.
- Determine an entry-criteria for the contest. An effective strategy is to set rules in which a giveaway participant must follow the brand and share the giveaway post with he´s/her followers.
- Consider partnerships between brands. This helps to create a lot of buzz, gain a wider reach of potential customers, and enhance brand awareness.
- Select a good campaign hashtag. As stated priorly, hashtags have an incredible amount of power for reaching a vast number of social media users. If used well, brands can gain more participants and followers to the giveaway.
- Put a time-limit on your contest. This has the benefit to get social media users to participate as soon as they see the giveaway post.
- A strong, color image to serve as the basis for the post is something that helps to capture the attention of the viewer instantly.
- Efficient use of text announcing the giveaway. This meaning that there should be not too much text. The information should go straight to the point and have a positive language usage.

(Shewan 2021)

## 2.8    Brand Partnerships on Social Media

A brand partnership is a joint agreement which is made between two or more businesses. Brands help one another through these partnerships to increase brand exposure, add additional value to products/services and break into new markets outside of their niche ("Boost brand-equity partnerships" 2019). With the usage of social media, partnering up will further amplify the reach of two or more brands and help them to make their campaign, event, service, or product big news (Pickering 2011).

Marketing through brand partnerships is not a new notion. One of the most known examples of this marketing method is the inclusion of a branded toy inside a cereal box. This combination allows the two companies to boost sales to a wider reach of potential customers (Daugstrup 2015).

Marketing brand partnerships are slightly different in the era of social media. The products or services provided are less tangible than the example given priorly about the toy in the cereal box and, there are no limitations for businesses when entering a partnership together. This meaning that it is more cost effective to partner up for brands, with also the great possibility of distributing content. ("How Brand Partnerships Boost Content Marketing" 2020)

Businesses should take into consideration doing brand partnerships on social media. If a brands target audience has become saturated, having a partner with its influence on their followers can augment their reach to a new audience that has no idea that this brand exists. This social media partnership method provides endless possibilities for smaller brands to be creative, apply reasonable costs on distribution in the quest of reaching their goals.

The factors on what a social media partnership can bring for a smaller sized brand are:

- To build trust. If a smaller brand partners up with one which has a reputable image, that is showing the customer that the brand in question can be trusted. If a consumer had a positive experience with the brands partner, it can be likely that he or she will be more inclined to trust the smaller sized brand too. A good value experience these days is like gold, and smaller sized brands should capitalize on that.
- The addition of value. Developing good and well-integrated partnerships can add a key value to the product or service of the partnering companies. With making or providing something unique, consumers will find that extra value they might be looking for.
- Generating buzz. This mainly helps partnering brands to get consumers excited for an upcoming product, service, or event. The bigger the buzz, the bigger is the exposure.

("How Brand Partnerships Boost Content Marketing" 2020, n.a)

## 2.9    Content Creation and Strategy on SM

As defined by the Content Marketing Institute: "Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action."

Businesses used to view content creation as something which was done once or twice to perfect a company website for example, and regarding the creation of media articles or blogs, this was also seen as a difficult commitment (Odden, Lee 2012). However, the view has changed. With the rapid and powerful rise of social media, companies had to adapt to a rapid shift in demand for more and better consumer generated content.

The statistics can prove it. According to a research done by BCG in 2018, brands have increased their spending on online media marketing. If we look at Figure 1.6 brands in the fashion industry spend 43% of their marketing budget on media, of which 57% of it is focused

on the online creation of content media marketing (Distler, Seara, Antrup, Krueger, Hohmann-Altmeier 2018). This is something to take into consideration for the purposes of this project; because if the shift in marketing of online media content creation is growing every year, it is imperative that smaller brands in the clothing industry adapt and adopt (within their limits) to these changes too.

One of the most popular methods used by brands in terms of content generation is user¬¬- and influencer-generated content. Brands want to utilize content generated by users and influencers as much as they can. Everything gets to be used; from product placements, customer taken and shared photos on social media and videos taken at events. The same study conducted by BCG showed that 80% of all brands surveyed are planning to increase their spending on influencer generated content.

Traditional PR spending is shifting more and more online, and in addition to that, brands are willing to maximize their reach by applying user- and influencer-generated content to multiple social media channels (Distler, Seara, Antrup, Krueger, Hohmann-Altmeier 2018). This allows brands to be multifunctional when it comes to content, not having to rely solely on themselves, but also having the possibility of outside help and creativity when it comes to content.

Furthermore, by creating content, which is well tailored and personalized to the customer, communications across different channels should provide the customer with a better user experience. This should be done with an extensive research into finding the different needs that different customer profiles present. From location, purchasing history and browsing. (Distler, Seara, Antrup, Krueger, Hohmann-Altmeier 2018). Creating different customer "personas" is a great marketing method, which works on content creation too.

Thus, regarding smaller sized brands from which this project was assigned on, it is good to interact with customers and the brands target audience, but also being creative and showing them what the company is all about. A good example of producing content at a low cost but with good quality outcomes is creating interactive videos about the brand itself. These can backstage video shoots from a fashion shows or even explaining how the production of the garments are made. Again, smaller sized brands can tailor content which most well defines them and rends them unique.

In summary, brands can consider the following points as "objectives" when working on their content creation:

- Harmonizing content across different channels.

- A great focus on content strategy by maximizing customer frequency and engagement, with the use of editorials, influencers, or brand ambassadors for example.
- Create content in house also for non-targeted audiences. This to expand reach and search for new potential customers to engage.
- Doing customer segment research and developing profiles which ultimately serve to represent reliable characteristics. These factors can be motivators to purchase, social engagement and pain points.
- Create a content plan. This is a translation of understanding the brands business goals and customer needs. The plan should include a mix of relevant content aimed at the customer, different topics, and agendas of content creation and what are the brands desired outcomes when looking at a customer's buying cycle.
- The growth and constant improvement of social media platforms. Keeping certain factors as a pattern (how often a brand should post content) to then listening, participating, and sharing provides valuable insights on the present and future content of a brand.

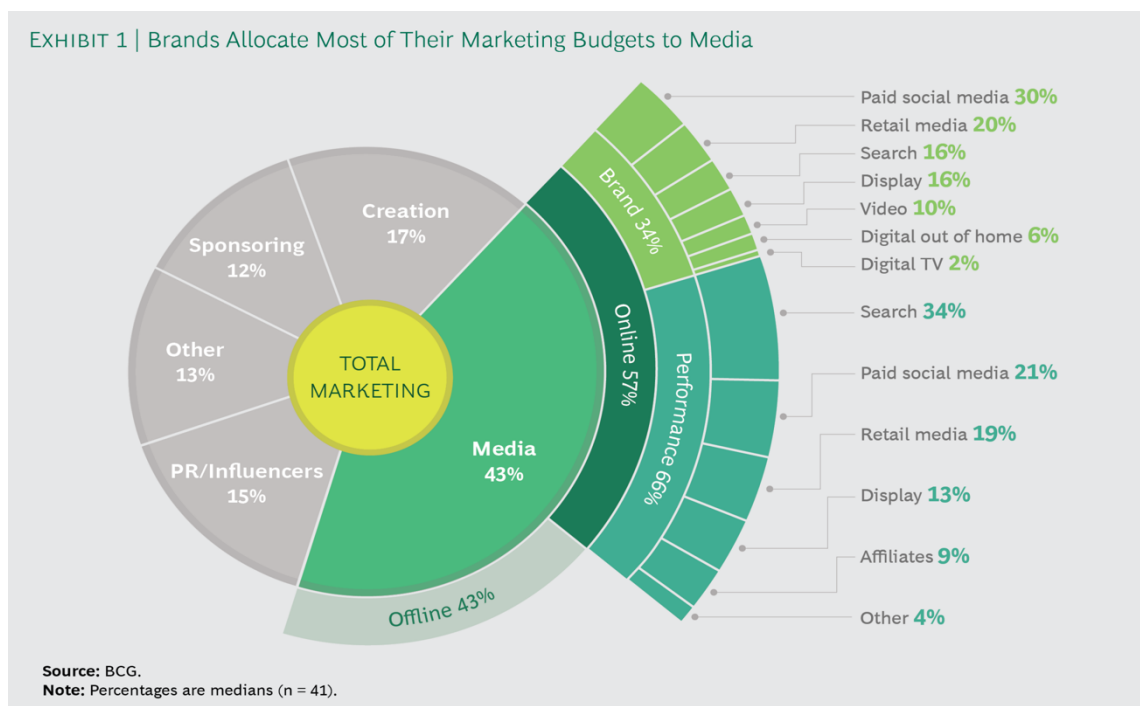(Distler, Seara, Antrup, Krueger, Hohmann-Altmeier 2018), (Odden, Lee 2018)



EXHIBIT 1 | Brands Allocate Most of Their Marketing Budgets to Media

Paid social media **30%**
Retail media **20%**
Search **16%**
Display **16%**
Video **10%**
Digital out of home **6%**
Digital TV **2%**

Search **34%**
Paid social media **21%**
Retail media **19%**
Display **13%**
Affiliates **9%**
Other **4%**

Brand 34%
Online 57%
Performance 66%
Creation 17%
Sponsoring 12%
Other 13%
PR/Influencers 15%
TOTAL MARKETING
Media 43%
Offline 43%

**Source:** BCG.
**Note:** Percentages are medians (n = 41).

Figure 1.4 Shows how brands have allocated their marketing budget and to which areas (Source: www.bcg.com)

3    Instagram

On this chapter, the author will examine Instagram. As stated in chapter 1.3, the author has decided to focus the ideas and proposals for the client company applying them on the social media platform called "Instagram". Thus, it is important for the purposes of the project to explain what Instagram is and what are some of the more important aspects of this platform; marketing wise and to raise brand awareness.

3.1    Instagram Explained

Instagram is one of the most popular social media networks in the world. It was made for users to share photos and videos with the following base of each user. The app continues to be heavily designed for mobile use rather than desktop. Instagram has seen that its accessibility and easiness to use is one of its major strengths (Herman 2018)

All posts made on the app must be generated either as an image or as a video. This makes marketing campaigns and promotions for brands fun and exciting to do. It allows brands to be creative and at the same time have a much larger reach than any other usage of marketing via traditional media. There are three major areas to share content on Instagram: on the main profile/feed, Instagram stories and videos on IGTV which permits longer videos to be uploaded on the platform (Herman 2018). Thanks to this, brands can upload full marketing campaigns on the platform.

Brands can upgrade their accounts to business profiles for free, this can be done by connecting them to a Facebook business page. Businesses use the platform to sell and promote their products, which Instagram permits them to do. Instagram makes it easy for the users to discover new accounts. Posting interesting content and using the right hashtags is a great and free marketing method for brands to utilize to get noticed. According to an article posted on jumpermedia, brand follower growth increases from 6% to 8% month-over-month (Pepe 2019).

To sort the content which a user sees as they are browsing through the app, Instagram uses an algorithm to do so. It works in a way that it selects the content most preferred by that user to appear on their home feed. It rearranges itself on the user preferences through time (Herman 2018). This has a sort of a WOM effect on the app, a brand can appear to new potential customers through a well-planned targeting campaign to gain visibility and new potential customers. Utilizing hashtags is a great method for brands to raise their brand awareness through posts. Having at least one in a brands post can generate 12.6% more engagement than not having one. In fact, seven out of ten Instagram hashtags are branded, giving even more visibility to brands adopting this method (Pepe 2019).

Instagram is a very interactive social media platform; it generates a lot of engagement from viewers. What makes this platform one of the most beloved by the younger generations is that the visuals provided by the app are almost unmatched. The app has more than 300 million users creating stories and using the platform daily. Not only that, but the monthly users who also actively visit the app are over a billion, with over 25 million business profiles registered on the platform (Herman 2018).

The age demographics on Instagram are interesting too, especially for the purposes of this project. According to a report made by Statista, 64% of users are between the age of 18-34. This backs up the statement meant before that it is a platform heavily used by the younger generation (See Figure 1.5).
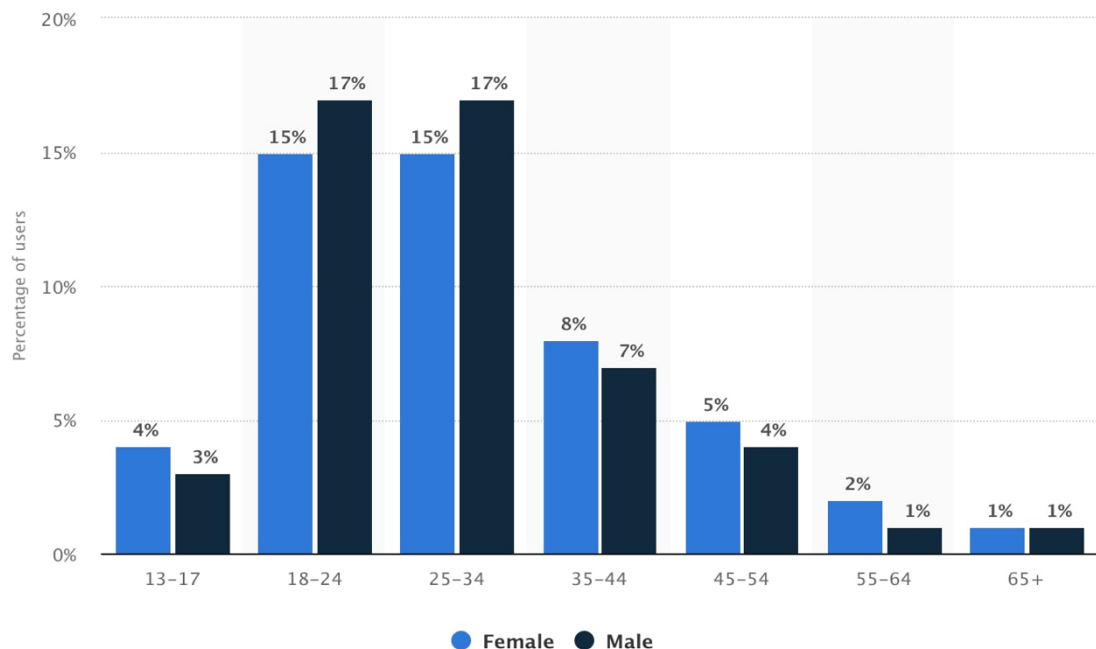


Figure 1.5 Distribution of Instagram users worldwide as of January 2021, by age and gender (Source: www.statista.com)

Overall, Instagram presents a lot of opportunities especially for smaller and up-and-coming brands to expand their customer base and build up their brand awareness on their specific market. That is why I chose this platform to create a marketing plan for my client company, because after my research (which will be explained in the coming chapters) it was the best platform I found for the company to expand their reach as a brand in the outdoor clothing market. It was important for the purpose of the authors thesis to include a brief examination of Instagram, before moving on the empirical part of the project.

4    Research Method

With the different types of research methods existing, the most common ones are the quantitative research method and qualitative research method. Quantitative research is a process of numerical data collection and analysis. Qualitative research is a process of collecting non-numerical data and analyzing it (Streefkerk 2021).

The author used a quantitative method online questionnaire to collect relevant data for the research of this project. An analysis of the client company´s social media platforms was done prior to the drafting of the questionnaire. It is important to state that also the remarks made by the author about the client company´s social media platforms are relevant to the development ideas provided later.

The author of this project found that the most suitable research method was quantitative research in a form of an online questionnaire, because:

- It will provide the client company with data relevant to their field of interest and target audience (which was one of their requests from the beginning).
- It will give valuable information about consumer behaviors and content preferences on social media.
- It wants to support, confirm the ideas and suggestions made by the author on this study, in order to raise the client company´s brand awareness through social media.

4.1    Questionnaire Implementation

It was clear from the start to the author of this project, that data should be collected from the target audience of the company. That is where the most valuable information can be taken, for there to be relevant results in terms of improvement of social media implementation and usage.

The questionnaire was drafted following the theoretical frameworks analyzed on this project. The author decided to make the questionnaire in an online form. This because it has a better reach for larger audiences. Not only that, but working as an intern to Formal Friday, the author got to discover many forums and online pages focusing on outdoor lifestyle with different users in it. This presented an opportunity to share the online questionnaire with the target audience of the company; people interested in outdoor lifestyle and clothing. The collected data will be later thoroughly examined, explaining what can be deducted from the results, taking all the different variables and possibilities into account.

In summary, the number one goal of this survey was to collect data relevant to the purpose of this project, from the clients target audience, to present suggestions on how to improve the company´s social media usage for bettering brand awareness.

## 4.2   Questionnaire Information

The questionnaire´s title was: Social Media Marketing Survey for outdoor clothing brand Formal Friday. The questionnaire presented 16 questions, with all of them being close ended ones (see Appendix 1). Four of the total 16 questions had the possibility for the user to give an open-ended answer. This was made to gain potential new insights not thought of by the author, and to provide a more holistic outcome to the questionnaire by collecting information directly from the target audience.

The target audience for this project was people aged between 20-50. Thus, there was a possibility to answer even if under the age of 18 and over the age of 55, all information is valuable to a small sized brand. More specifically, most customers buying from Formal Friday have been aged around 25-40 years old. Thus, their target audience is from 20-50. The author did not want to have a limited number of respondents to the questionnaire, because it would be better to the purposes of the project to have as many answers as possible.

The questionnaire was made through a webpage called "Survio" and then shared through multiple social media platforms. The most distinguished being Facebook groups and Reddit forums such as "r/Outdoors" (173K members) and "r/CampingandHiking" (87K members), this all with the intent to directly get relevant and important data by the target audience of the brand.

## 4.3   Risks and Limitations

There were several limitations taken into consideration by the author when entering the research phase. The most important one to take into consideration is that the information collected through a questionnaire can limit the subject answering the survey due to a lack of different answer possibilities. This may leave the person answering not being able to respond as they would mostly prefer to.

If the data collected from this research is mostly from people over or under the target audiences age group it then would limit the validity of this project. This research relays heavily on the data given by the company´s target audience for it to generate usable suggestions to provide for the client company. Furthermore, not collecting enough questionnaire answers would seriously limit the validity of this project. The sharing of the questionnaire had to be done very actively.

Other important risks and limitations to raise attention on are the differences in interpretation and understanding of the questions. Like the first point of limited answers, without clear and concise questions the questionnaire can confuse the people answering and not provide efficient data. On the other hand, making a question too complex can make it hard for it to be analyzed. The author spent a lot of time writing questions and modifying them to make them as clear as possible.

## 4.4    Questionnaire validity and reliability

It has been challenging to determine the measures of validity and reliability of this research. For instance, the research has not gone through some of the methods of testing reliability aspects, like doing a test-retest, which means making the same respondents answer the questionnaire another time. This was not possible since it was an online questionnaire, and the respondents were anonymous. It is also impossible to state whether the respondents answered truthfully, or if they understood the 16 questions of the survey.

What can be said about validity is that the questionnaire was sent to platforms in which users are prevalently interested in the world of outdooring. This means that the respondents can be considered as a target audience and potential customers to the client company. By default, collecting data from these respondents would apply to the metrics of validity of this research process.

## 5    Empirical Part

The time period to answer the questionnaire was of two weeks, starting from 20th April 2021-04th May 2021. During this time, the questionnaire managed to gather 98 responses. The original plan was to gather a minimum of 75 responses, for the research to be valid. The questionnaire´s title was "Social media marketing survey for outdoor clothing brand Formal Friday". On this section, the author will explain, examine, analyze, and interpret the data collected from the questionnaire.

## 5.1    Demographics

Table 2.1 illustrates the age groups that the survey respondents are part of. Out of 98 questionnaire responses, As stated priorly, the "broader" target audience of the company is between the ages of 20-50 years old, though most customers of the brand are part of the 30-40s age group.

As seen from the results below, the majority of respondents were part of the 31-40 age group (42.9%) which is by default the age demographic of the target audience stated by the

company prior to this project. Additionally, it can be assumed that the client company y is right to target with precision people between the age groups of 31-40, since according to this data they are the most interested in outdoor clothing and lifestyle. This result instantly provides hopes of collecting relevant data from the questions to come.

The way this questionnaire was shared was through social media platforms (Facebook and Reddit) and It can also be deduced that most respondents are more used to social media in their everyday life. It is not surprising to the author that many responses came from the age groups of 31-40 and 20-30 (29.6%).

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|--------|-----------|
| 31–40 | 42.9 % |
| 20-30 | 29.6 % |
| 41–50 | 18.4 % |
| 51–60 | 5.1 % |
| Under 20 | 3.1 % |
| 61–70 | 1 % |

Table 2.1 Age Demographics

5.2    Data regarding Social Media

This part will analyze the data collected from questions related to social media, platform preferences, user activity, content creation and promotions.

On Table 2.2 we can observe what preferences the respondents had when asked if they preferred to shop online or if they would rather shop offline, meaning browsing physical stores, trying on clothes etc. This was mainly to find some relevant and interesting data to provide to the client company, since it is an interesting fact to know what people prefer.

It did not come as a surprise that the majority of respondents would still prefer the more "classical" method of shopping, but what came as a surprise was that an incredible 31.6% of respondents would rather shop online. This proves that there are many aspects of e-

commerce to take advantage of for the client company. More precisely, starting to invest in social media with the means of gaining new and more customers is something that should be thought of.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| Offline | 68.4 % |
| Online | 31.6 % |

Table 2.2: When buying clothes, do you prefer to shop online or offline?

Table 2.3 showcases what social media platforms the respondents are most active on. This question was made to find out what the most popular platforms are used by people interested in outdoor lifestyle and clothing, in order to support the suggestions made later on. The question had the possibility to select multiple answers.

Instagram is an overwhelming favorite between respondents, with a ratio of 87.8%. Then comes Facebook with a 59.2% ratio and Reddit with a 41.8%. When looking at the words "most active on", the plan was to see what the most used and adored platform is, to pursue what the author should concentrate on when defining suggestions for the client company using a specific social media channel.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| Instagram | 87.8 % |
| Facebook | 59.2 % |
| Reddit | 41.8 % |
| LinkedIn | 32.7 % |
| Twitter | 24.5 % |
| Pinterest | 12.2 % |
| Something else, please specify. | 0 % |

Table 2.3: What social media platforms are you most active on?

Table 2.4 demonstrates on which social media platforms respondents are more active on when following a small sized clothing brand. The purpose of this question was to find out

what platform is the most used to follow brands which are alike as the client company of this project, and consequentially where can the client company expand its reach to increase brand awareness.

Instagram is again an overwhelming winner, with a ratio to response of 85.7%. This will be a recurring theme and explains why the author of this project decided, as stated in chapter 1.3, to focus solutions and suggestions on the platform "Instagram".

We can also observe that there is a substantial gap between Facebook and the other alternatives. This may be because the platforms of Instagram and Facebook are more accessible, easy to use and suitable for following and discovering new brands.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| Instagram | 85.5 % |
| Facebook | 49 % |
| LinkedIn | 11.2 % |
| Pinterest | 8.1 % |
| Twitter | 7.1 % |
| Something else, please specify. | 0 % |

Table 2.4 Do you follow any small clothing brands on your social media accounts. If yes, which platforms are you most active on to follow them?

Table 2.5 reveals what different marketing strategies are the most common when it comes to finding information about promotions of any brand x followed by a respondent. The purpose of creating this question was to find out what the most efficient ways are to share and market promotions for brand enhancement purposes. Additionally, the data collected served to point out what promotional methods the author should concentrate on when drafting suggestions to the client company.

The results to the question are proportionate. The three most popular methods of promoting according to the results all involve social media: a promotional social media post (82.7%), word of mouth through social media (60.2%) and a promotional social media story (59.2%). This is very interesting data, and it shows how much digital marketing is shifting more and more to social media and its possibilities.

(Promotional social media story is a collection of either promotional images or short promotional videos, that a brand can add at any given time of the day on their social media account, but which disappears after 24 hours.)

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| Promotional social media post | 82.7 % |
| Word of mouth through social media (WOM) | 60.2 % |
| Promotional social media story | 59.2 % |
| Email newsletter | 55.1 % |
| Internet ads | 35.7 % |
| Word of mouth through family or friends (Traditional WOM) | 31.6 % |
| Something else, please specify | 0 % |

Table 2.5: Where are you most likely to find information regarding promotions of a brand x you like?

Examining table 2.6 it can be seen how many posts per day should a brand make to keep a follower (the survey respondents in this case) positively engaged with content. This question not only serves to provide data to the client company, but also indicates what type of "timetable" could be kept by a brand when posting content on social media. Thus, a limit to this question is the fact that if a brand has a high buzz around itself, then the amount of content creation is not as important than it is to a company which tries to enhance its brand awareness. This is subject to interpretation by the respondent.

When looking at the data collected in table 2.6, a well sought plan for content creation and sharing is made around one post per week or one post per three to four days. After that, many weeks between content sharing can lower the engagement of a user. Posting content too often can also affect negatively on a user´s engagement when following a brand.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| 1 post per week | 35.7 % |
| 1 post per four days | 30.6 % |

| 1 post per three days | 23.5 % |
|---|---|
| 1 post per two days | 4.1 % |
| 1 post per day | 3.1 % |
| 1 post per every two weeks | 1 % |
| 1 post per month | 1 % |

Table 2.6 How many posts is enough to be positively engaged with a brand you follow on social media?

Finally, table 2.7 indicates what is the importance for a smaller clothing brand to regularly use social media. This question was drafted to find if users appreciate and understand if a smaller sized clothing brand is active on social media. The other side to this was to support the claim that it is seriously important for brands to be active on social media if they wish to expand their brand awareness. Nearly all the respondents (94.9%) believed it was important for a smaller clothing brand to regularly use social media.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| Very important (5) | 53.1 % |
| Important (4) | 41.8 % |
| Averagely important (3) | 4.1 % |
| Not at all important (1) | 1 % |
| Barely important (2) | 0 % |

Table 2.7 On a scale of 1-5, how important do you believe it is for a smaller clothing brand to regularly use social media?

## 5.3    Data regarding decision making, purchasing and value proposition

This part is dedicated to the analysis of the data collected on questions about purchasing habits, preferences and decision making. This mainly served to find relevant data to support suggestions about what new ideas can be brought into the client company´s marketing strategy.

Table 3.1 reveals to what kind of extent can a brands social media presence influence a a user´s purchasing decision. The purpose of this question was to simply find out to what extent can a brand influence a customer in the outdoor clothing market to buy a product by using a social media platform for marketing and branding purposes.

The results indicate that it is not enough to have a well sought and planned social media presence to bring a customer to directly buy from a brand. Thus, the majority of respondents voted "to an average extent" (48%) meaning it can partly be a reason to a purchasing decision. Customers are looking for experiences when buying online too, and a well planned and executed social media presence by a brand can add to this experience.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| To an average extent | 48 % |
| To a small extent | 26.5 % |
| To some extent | 21.4 % |
| Never | 4.1 % |
| To a large extent | 0 % |

Table 3.1: To what extent does a brand´s social media presence influence your purchasing decision?

Table 3.2 shows what respondents answered when asked the likeliness of them buying a product online if it was also user recommended, meaning given for example a review or shared by other users on social media. The objective of set question was partly to discover what scale of importance other users give to product reviews and recommendations by their "peers", and consequentially provide the author with valuable data to work on ideas regarding user recommendations.

The results are presented on the table below, which shows most respondents (55.1%) feeling that if a product was also user recommended, they would be somewhat more likely to purchase set product. A smaller number of respondents (17.1%) answered "undecided" when presented this question. To some, if it is user recommended or not, might not make an actual difference whilst thinking of purchasing something. It is important to take into consideration the fact that some respondents might not entirely trust other users.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Somewhat likely | 55.1 % |
| Undecided | 17.3 % |
| Quite unlikely | 15.3 % |
| Very likely | 11.2 % |
| Very unlikely | 1 % |

Table 3.2: How likely are you to buy a product online if it is also user recommended?

Table 3.3 illustrates the likelihood respondents must buy an outdoor clothing product if it is worn by an influencer they follow. In a case like this, it was important to research valuable data to figure out how much power outdoor influencers have when it comes to increasing brand awareness and sales of a garment.

As it is exemplified in table 3.3, people interested in outdoor lifestyle tend to not buy a product solely if it is worn by an influencer of their niche of interest. Sure, influencers tend to raise brand awareness and expose users to new brands, but it is not solely enough to impact the users purchasing decision.

The majority of respondents (37.8%) answered that it is quite unlikely that a product worn by an influencer influences their buying habits as a whole. On the other hand, the second response with the highest ratio (23.5%) was that respondents felt it can be somewhat likely that it impacts their purchasing decision, meaning it is not something to "throw out the window" as a marketing method. The other responses and ratios can be seen in the table below:

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| Quite unlikely | 37.8 % |
| Somewhat likely | 23.5 % |
| Undecided | 21.4 % |
| Very unlikely | 17.3 % |
| Very likely | 0 % |

Table 3.3: How likely are you to buy a product online if it is worn by an influencer you follow?

It was interesting to find out what the people of the outdoor niche value most in clothing garments. As stated before, the company this project is done for makes high quality garments using the best materials, therefore discovering data relevant to the question "when buying an outdoor clothing garment, what do you value most" is necessary. Additionally, the data collected will help to mirror how much effort should done for marketing the quality of Formal Friday´s clothing garments.

Table 3.4 indicates the ratio per answer given by the respondents when asked what it is they value most if buying an outdoor clothing garment. The results are as follows: Quality and comfort got an overwhelming 73.3% response rate, whilst a reasonable pricing got 17.3%, followed by the trendiness of the product with a 9.2% response rate.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| Quality and comfort | 73.3 % |
| Reasonable pricing | 17.3 % |
| How trendy it is at the moment | 9.2 % |
| Something else, please specify | 0 % |

Table 3.4: When buying an outdoor clothing garment, what do you value more?

Table 3.5 explores data relative to the likeliness of respondents buying a clothing garment directly after being on a smaller brands social media page. The main purpose of drafting this question was to find out to what extent can a brand influence a user's purchasing decision through their social media page.

The data collected indicates that it is quite unlikely that users buy directly from visiting a brands social media page, this is probably due to the fact that a smaller brand might have problems with image trustworthiness, shipping timetables and garment quality. Many responded "undecided" to this question (28.6%) which can delimit slightly the wholeness of the data collected through this question.

Thus, through well sought brand marketing the awareness of the brands strong points can be used to the maximum to even more influence a user to buy directly. This is supported by the 25.5% response ratio stating that some are somewhat likely to purchase something after visiting a brands social media page. Brands can take advantage of this.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Quite unlikely | 35.7 % |
| Undecided | 28.6 % |
| Somewhat likely | 25.5 % |
| Very likely | 6.1 % |
| Very unlikely | 4.1 % |

Table 3.5: How likely are you to buy a clothing garment from a smaller brand after directly being on their social media account?

As stated in the theoretical background chapter 2.3 giveaways are a great method to raise brand awareness. For this reason, creating a question about the likeliness to participate in giveaways on social media by the respondents was key.

The objective was to find out to what extent would people in the target audience of the client company be willing to participate in giveaways. Furthermore, positive results would sustain the method of giveaways to raise the brand awareness of the client company by creating valuable suggestions using a giveaway method.

The results are indeed positive, in the sense that 36.7% of respondents are somewhat likely to participate and 18.4% are very likely to participate in giveaways.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| Somewhat likely | 36.7 % |
| Quite unlikely | 26.5 % |
| Very likely | 18.4 % |
| Undecided | 14.3 % |
| Very unlikely | 4.1 % |

Table 3.6: How likely are you to participate in giveaways on social media?

As per giveaways on social media also brand partnerships were a topic touched in the theoretical analysis chapter (see 2.3). Brand partnerships can raise brand awareness and create the possibility of gaining a new customer base when doing so.

The purpose of this question was to see the scale on which people in the client company´s target audience feel and value brand collaborations. It also served to provide relevant data to support proposals for the client company regarding this social media marketing methodology. The scale used for this question went from 1-5, and many respondents did indeed value brand collaborations, which is almost surprising.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| Important (4) | 48 % |
| Very important (5) | 30.6 % |
| Averagely important (3) | 19.4 % |
| Barely important (2) | 1 % |
| Not at all important (1) | 1 % |

Table. 3.7: On a scale of 1-5, how much do you value collaborations between brands?

To get the most out of this project, it was important to find out whether the client company could make partnerships with brands or influencers who not in the field of outdooring. Meaning, would it interest people of the company´s target audience if they engaged in collaborations with influencers or brands not in the same niche?

The following two questions are related to this matter and had the purpose of collecting pertinent data to provide for the client company and support this project.

Table 3.8 shows the results to what respondents felt when asked if it is fine for an outdoor brand to collaborate with influencers not in the same field. The majority of respondents (30.6%) slightly disagreed with this question, whilst 21.4% agreed in some ways. A strong 15.3% disagreed, meaning that a large number of respondents would not be attracted to this idea. Even though some agreed, the margin between the two is not big enough.

Influencers not in the field of outdooring are not affecting the target audience of the company but could have helped to raise brand awareness in any case.

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| Slightly disagree | 30.6 % |

| | |
|---|---|
| Agree in some ways | 21.4 % |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 18.4 % |
| Disagree | 15.3 % |
| Agree | 14.3 % |

Table 3.8: If a brand specializes in outdoor clothing, would it be fine for them to collaborate with influencers not in the field of outdooring?

Thus, when asked if it would be fine for an outdoor brand to collaborate with another not in the same field, the results were totally different. An incredible 41.8% of respondents agreed to this and 39.8% agreed in some ways.

The target audience of the company is very keen in brand collaborations, they create a lot of positive buzz around the company. Additionally, the reach to new audiences is far greater with collaborating with another brand working on a different niche as the one of this project. It can generate many new potential customers, other than enhancing brand awareness

| Answer | Ratio (%) |
|---|---|
| Agree | 41.8 % |
| Agree in some ways | 39.8 % |
| Slightly disagree | 7.1 % |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 7.1 % |
| Disagree | 4.1 % |

Table 3.9: If a brand specializes in outdoor clothing, would it be fine for them to collaborate with another brand not in the field of outdooring?

To conclude, these results are all important for the following reasons:

- They provide relevant data on the target audience of the company.
- The results helped the author to create new recommendations out of them to enhance brand awareness.
- They deliver important general data for the client company to look at from their side
- The results serve to sustain and support future suggestions.

## 6    Data Analysis

This chapter has the objective of analyzing data collected from the questionnaire by utilizing a statistical testing method. Utilizing a significant statistical testing method would determine if there were a relation between two or more categorical variables, or if the data collected has occurred by chance alone (Zach 2020). For the analysis of the research conducted in this project, the Chi Square Test of Independence has been chosen.

The Chi-Square ($x^2$) is a test statistic used to determine whether proportions in two or more categories differ significantly (Christmann 2011). A Chi-Square test has the following null and alternative hypotheses:

- H0: (null hypothesis) The two variables are independent.
- H1: (alternative hypothesis) The two variables are not independent. (i.e., they are associated)

(Zach 2020).

For this test, degrees of freedom are utilized for determining if a null hypothesis can be rejected, based on the variables and samples of the research in question. To calculate the Chi Square analysis statistic ($x^2$), the following formula is used:

$$\chi_c^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

c = Degrees of freedom

O = Observed value(s)

E = Expected value(s)

The formula calculates the variation between the observed values and the expected values. Utilizing a Chi Square significance value of p 0.05 serves to either accept or reject the null hypothesis of the test with a 95% confidence level. If the p-value is below of $x^2$ the null hypothesis is rejected, and vice versa. The expected values are calculated by finding the mean value between the sample responses (Hayes 2020).

For the purposes of this project, the author will analyze only a set of relevant results collected from the questionnaire. The objective of applying the Chi Square analysis is to find out if answers to the questionnaire and the results were casual, or if they were indeed not casual and statistically relevant.

For each survey question, the hypotheses must be determined:

- The null hypothesis (H0) = Results are casual
- The alternative hypothesis (H1) = Results are not casual and statistically relevant

When examining the results of Table 2.3: "What social media platforms are you most active on", the objective was to find out the most popular social media platform amongst respondents of the outdoor lifestyle niche. After applying the Chi Square formula to the set of observed results, the test statistic was $x^2$ (83.7). With a critical value of 11.07, the null hypothesis can be rejected. There is sufficient evidence to state that the results of this sample are statistically relevant at p-value 0.05. The results are calculated by applying the Chi Square analysis formula.

| Answers | Instagram | Facebook | Reddit | LinkedIn | Twitter | Pinterest |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observed values (O) | 86 | 58 | 41 | 32 | 24 | 12 |
| Expected values (E) | 42 | 42 | 42 | 42 | 42 | 42 |

Table 5.1: Chi Square analysis table calculating $x^2$ for table 2.3

Table 3.2: "How likely are you to buy a product online if it is also user recommended", had the purpose of finding out the likeliness of people buying a product which was recommended to by other users. When the Chi Square analysis was applied on the observed results of the question, the test statistic was found to be $x^2$ (81.6). Since the critical value was 9.48, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the results of the sample are statistically relevant in a confidence interval of 95% (p-value 0.05). The results are calculated by applying the Chi Square analysis formula.

| Answers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observed values | 1 | 15 | 17 | 54 | 11 |
| Expected values | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |

Table 5.2: Chi Square analysis table calculating $x^2$ for table 3.2

The following question examined is the one of Table 3.4: "When buying an outdoor clothing garment, what do you value more". The objective was to find out what respondents valued the most in an outdoor clothing garment, and hence prove what the client company should focus their product marketing on. The test statistic of this sample was $x^2$ (71.3). Since the sample´s critical value was 7.81, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is enough evidence to state that the results of this sample are statistically relevant at p-value 0.05. The results are calculated by applying the Chi Square analysis formula.

| Answers | Quality and Comfort | Price affordability | Garment trendiness |
|---|---|---|---|
| Observed values (O) | 72 | 17 | 9 |
| Expected values (E) | 33 | 33 | 33 |

Table 5.3: Chi Square analysis table calculating $x^2$ for table 3.4

Analyzing the question from Table 3.6: "How likely are you to participate in giveaways on social media", the following can be stated; With a Chi Square test statistic of $x^2$ (29.4) and a critical value of 9.48, the null hypothesis of the sample is rejected and by consequence the results of the sample are statistically significant with a confidence level of 95% (p-value 0.05). The results are calculated by applying the Chi Square analysis formula.

| Answers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observed values (O) | 4 | 26 | 14 | 36 | 18 |
| Expected values (E) | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |

Table 5.4: Chi Square analysis table calculating $x^2$ for table 3.6

Lastly, examining the question for Table 3.9: "If a brand specializes in outdoor clothing, would it be fine for them to collaborate with another brand not in the field of outdooring", the following can be stated; With a Chi Square test statistic of $x^2$ (68.9) and a critical value of 9.48, the null hypothesis of the sample is rejected and by consequence the results of the sample are statistically significant with a p-value of 0.05. The results are calculated by applying the Chi Square analysis formula.

| Answers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observed values (O) | 4 | 7 | 7 | 39 | 41 |
| Expected values (E) | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |

Table 5.5: Chi Square analysis table calculating $x^2$ for table 3.9

In conclusion, the Chi Square analysis helped to further demonstrate that the most important results collected from the questionnaire have a statistical relevance and are not casual.

7    Company SWOT Analysis

Creating a company SWOT analysis is a great way to explore and explain more about the company. In this part of the project, it was especially important to make one, since it will not only benefit the company´s strategic purposes but also give valuable insights to the reader of this thesis before the development ideas part.

A SWOT analysis can be defined as a pluridimensional tool used by businesses for strategic purposes. The analysis classifies the organizations internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) which are connected to the internal functioning of such entity, and the external factors (opportunities and threats) which depend on the environment such entity is operating in (Speth, Probert 2015 p. 4).

| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|---|---|---|---|
| Incredible product: sustainable and of the highest quality. Can be used for many occasions | Product price point is above competitors | Better online sales through a well-sought social media marketing strategy | Entry of new competitor with a lower product price point |
| Good sales to outdoor retailers around Europe | Low sales made through company online store | Numerous brand collaboration possibilities | Lack of new garment evolution and addition; Product differentiation |
| Original packaging and good-looking explanatory brochure | No brand collaborations for marketing purposes | Possibility of a brand ambassador | Market saturation |
| Amazing brand website. Great visuals and site experience | There is no set schedule for posting content on social media | Influencer coverage for pop-up events | A change in trends affecting outdoor clothing negatively |
| Solid Instagram following base (2735) with a lot of room to grow | Missing an employee/intern for marketing | Visual campaign videos for marketing purposes on Instagram (IGTV) | A combination of increase in taxes + tumbling revenue can be a threat |
| Positive user experience from clothing garments | No giveaways of products or discounts for marketing purposes | New merino clothing garments, other than shirts, to hit the market | Political & economic reasons, such as high customs charges or shipping costs can be a threat to the company |
| Very talented team: From the CEO to the sales manager and designer | Marketing of user experience could be done better and often | Growing user base on social media accounts | |

Table 4.1: Formal Friday SWOT analysis

The author decided to create a table (4.1) in which the SWOT analysis of Formal Friday is laid out. By doing so, it becomes more efficient to indicate all the different aspects of the company. For the purposes of this project to stay relevant, it is important to state that the weaknesses and opportunities will heavily analyze the social media marketing usage and possibilities of the company.

8    Development Plan

After studying the difficulties of the company to use social media to its advantage and the questionnaire results, solid data was used to proceed and construct development ideas for the company to use in the future.

As shown by the results of the questionnaire, the suggestions that should be implemented are going to be made for Instagram, which was the most popular and used platform. This to offer concise and straight to the point ideas on how the company can use one platform to enhance its own brand awareness.

The development plan will be done by creating a list of suggestions, which together with the theoretical background studies and research results should validate the proposals.

*Content creation on Instagram*

It is advisable that the company start to post content on their Instagram page following a set schedule. Until now, posting has been made irregularly which tends not to be effective for getting the brand "out there". Being active is important and It is proven by the research data, in which many respondents felt posting content once every four days or once per week is enough to be positively engaged. Formal Friday could:

- Make a post once per week and share it on their Instagram page, for example every Friday.
- Create a hashtag, for example #fridayisformal. This will extend the reach of the brand and make a memorable statement
- Diversify their content. Behind the scenes footage, garment creation/designing, testing, and presenting the team all are ways to familiarize users with the brand; make them feel part of a "family".
- Creating Q&A´s is a very used method by many influencers and clothing brands on social media. Taking time in creating one through the Instagram stories method is great content for users to see. They will have the chance to ask anything about the brand and responding to those questions shows care and interest towards Formal Friday´s follower community.
- Creating challenges and asking product buyers to tag the company in Instagram stories or posts is good for marketing and costs nothing. For example, a small letter of thanks within the package reading: "We appreciate you buying our product and becoming part of the FF family! If you feel like the product met your expectations do not hesitate to tag us on your social media posts", is gold.

*Garment quality focus*

Quality and comfort were an all-time favorite amongst survey respondents (73.5%). This should be used to the company´s advantage.

- A video in which the whole process of making a Formal Friday shirt is showcased can make a positive difference to a user finding out about a company and thinking about buying a product. Posting this video on Instagram through its IGTV permits also for other users to share it. Even pictures identifying the material superiority against shirts not using 100% ecologically sustainable merino wool show the user how much the brand cares about quality and experience.

Formal Friday shirts if left outside to dry after a sweaty day of hiking, will be fresh as new after a few hours. This has been tested and is a great surplus that the product has, having it to wash less and enjoy more.

- Making a tutorial video on how to keep the shirt clean could be useful. Not only it shows the potential customer how to take the most out of the garment, but also the easiness of finding relevant information that a user might have directly on the Instagram platform.

*User recommendations*

Formal Friday must advertise more the customer´s experience with the product. The survey found that almost 55.1% of respondents were somewhat more likely to buy a product online if it was recommended by other users.

- Creating incentives, like for example providing a 10% discount on a future order if the buyer shares thoughts on social media about the product. This boosts the WOM on social media, with the brand being shared to more users and making it a reliable clothing company from which to buy a great product.

*Influencers*

The company is already using influencers, with most of them being in the outdoor lifestyle niche. This is as far as the author is concerned a good way to promote the brand. What could be suggested is that the company could think of finding itself a brand ambassador. It does takes time with all the research and negotiations, but this can be looked at for the long run. The ambassador could be an athlete for example. The benefits of this are:

- They are respected, reliable and with good following bases. The ambassador could be a skyrunner. The company would at the same time; aim at their target audience, create an exciting buzz, be a constant presence around the world during events and reach many new potential

customers through the social media marketing of this partnership. Gaining new customers and enhancing the brands awareness.

- A partnership with an influencer, which has not been done by the brand before, is the one where it is the influencer giving away a product to its followers. This is done totally by the influencer´s part in which he/she presents and gives away the product. This strategy would very well benefit the client company and should not be too hard to accomplish.

- Additionally, clothing garments could be sent to outdoor lifestyle podcasts (Outdoor Evolution or HikeordieTV). These are podcasts with many listeners who are part of Formal Friday´s target audience. Having them wearing and reviewing the brands shirt is a great marketing move. Podcasts many times share their videoclips or information of upcoming videos to their social media accounts. This would increment the company´s reach and awareness. This would ultimately fix the lack of interaction with followers.

*Giveaways*

Giveaways as stated in the theoretical knowledge chapter is a great way for enhancing a brand´s awareness and creating enthusiasm around it. Backed up by the research data, in which 18.4% of all respondents would very likely participate in giveaways, the author proposes the brand to create more seasonal giveaways:

- Formal Friday can do a giveaway contest in which the prize would be a newly designed ultrafine merino wool t-shirt. Giving away a new product instead of an old one or a discount percentage will attract more users to the brand.

- The post must have clear information about the giveaway and its rules. Making the image of the post of high quality is always a plus. The rules of the competition should always be stated in text form and could go as follows: To participate in the giveaway users must follow formal Friday on Instagram, tag two friends on the comment section below and for an additional entry to the contest share the post on the users Instagram story. This will increase the brands reach, follower base and create new potential customers.

Some giveaways can even be done through brand collaborations. This to increment the brands influence on a new level and finding a totally new target audience. Brand partnership suggestions will be given down below, but there is no better way to market a new product merging two or more brands than a giveaway. It would be advisable that if

the client company decides to take upon a brand collaboration path, that they´d advertise it through a giveaway contest, close to the release of the product publicly.

*Brand collaborations*

Partnerships and the development of a new product between two brands has been a trend in the last few years. The author would advise Formal Friday to take into consideration doing a collaboration to increase their brand awareness. The research result was clear, 48% of respondents felt that collaborations between brands were important. Thus, it is important to state that this would be the "harder" development to achieve, at least in the short term. Collaborations tend to take a lot of time between meetings, designing, garment production and testing. The suggestions are as follows:

- A collaboration with another brand would increment vastly the company´s reach. Starting for example with creating a product with a local Finnish brand would even further establish Formal Friday as an outdoor brand to look out to. Creating a product for example with the Finnish outdoor chain store "Partioaitta" would be something exciting and new. You rarely see collaborations between a brand and a retail store. Additionally, this could be more feasible to do since Partioaitta is the biggest retailer in Finland selling Formal Friday clothing. Partioaitta has an Instagram following of over 35k, which would vastly increase Formal Friday´s following.
- When thinking on how to advertise an upcoming collaboration on Instagram the author would suggest the client company to create "mysterious" prior to the release. This helps to create interest and positive excitement between users. A promotional video is always a plus, and as stated priorly, creating a giveaway of an upcoming product collaboration would massively augment the brands visibility in the outdoor market.

Finally, the one suggestion that could be given to the client company is to hire a marketing intern every two semesters to work on the company´s social media accounts. This would save the other company employees time and energy. By applying this, Formal Friday would have the chance of hiring new people who bring fresh ideas to the table. Working there as an intern the author got to experience the challenges that a smaller sized brand faces, when it tries to work on many organizational aspects with a minor labor force. Applying this recommendation would be cheaper to the company and would help them every year mostly on the marketing side, and in general.

9    Conclusions

Overall, the project was finished, and the set objectives were completed. To summarize, there were three goals to this project. The first being to find valuable social media marketing data for the company to use and look at. The second objective was to create a plan of developments regarding the client company´s social media marketing usage, in specific Instagram. The third objective was to answer the thesis question: How can social media marketing be integrated to use in a small company to enhance its brand awareness?

The first objective was accomplished. The questionnaire had 98 respondents answering, with all of them being part of the brands larger target audience; users interested in outdoor lifestyle. Not only did the data collected serve to the company as a benchmark to look at, but it revealed to be an essential part of the developments proposed in chapter 7. Being able to provide something useful that the client company had wished for at the beginning of the project, can be seen as an achievement.

On the second objective of the project the process was longer, and the outcome can be seen in various ways. To arrive at the creation of a development plan of suggestions, the author had to:

- Study methods of social media marketing.
- Create an online questionnaire based on set theories and desired findings.
- Form ideas which with the combination of theories and research results are relevant and concise.

The finalizations of the developments were done by thinking outside the box, analyzing the client company usage of their Instagram platform, and creating new and exciting solutions not done priorly. It was on commission by the company to create development solutions, if they will use them and work, cannot be stated as certain. For sure the suggestions proposed would benefit the client company saving them time and applying new methods to their marketing spectrum.

The last objective was to answer the thesis question on how to integrate social media marketing to use in a small company for brand awareness enhancement. The answer was obtained by explaining theories relevant to the question, through describing different methodologies which ultimately improve a company´s brand awareness and by applying set methodologies with a research basis to it.

What was learned during this project is that Formal Friday would greatly benefit from upping their Instagram marketing methods. The research showed clearly that users active in the outdoor niche are interested in giveaways, brand collaborations, specific content creation,

user recommendations and buying/sharing incentives. Applying set suggestions proposed in chapter 8 would highly increase Formal Friday´s brand awareness spectrum.

The author learned during this project time management qualities, how to connect theories with research methods to find new solutions, and overseeing something assigned by a company which comes with big responsibilities.

It is interesting to note how much can be designed by collecting data from a company´s target audience. The two steps of theoretical studies and research results are key to the proposal of new developments in social media usage. Furthermore, Formal Friday being a smaller sized brand and not having a marketing employee, means that the conditions were optimal for achieving a positive result out of this project and benefitting the client company.

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Figures

Tables

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire questions

# Liite: Kyselytutkimus

### Social media marketing survey for outdoor clothing brand Formal Friday

**1 Age**

Vastaamisohje: *Please select the age group you are part of*

◯ Under 20   ◯ 20-30   ◯ 31-40   ◯ 41-50   ◯ 51-60   ◯ 61-70

**2 When buying clothing garments, do you prefer to shop online or offline?**

Vastaamisohje: *Please select one answer*

◯ Online   ◯ Offline

**3 To what extent does a brand's social media presence influence your purchasing decision?**

Vastaamisohje: *(1 = never, 2 = to a small extent, 3 = to an average extent, 4 = to some extent and 5 = to a large extent)*

◯ 1   ◯ 2   ◯ 3   ◯ 4   ◯ 5

**4 What social media platforms are you most active on?**

Vastaamisohje: *Choose as many as are applicable.*

☐ Instagram   ☐ Facebook   ☐ Twitter   ☐ LinkedIn   ☐ Pinterest   ☐ Reddit
☐ Something else, please specify [ ]

**5 How likely are you to buy a product online if it is also user recommended?**

Vastaamisohje: *(1 = very unlikely, 2 = Quite unlikely, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Somewhat likely 5 = very likely)*

◯ 1   ◯ 2   ◯ 3   ◯ 4   ◯ 5

## 12 On a scale of 1-5, how much do you value collaborations between brands?

Vastaamisohje: *(1 = not at all important, 2 = barely important, 3 = averagely important, 4 = important and 5= extremely important)*

○ 1    ○ 2    ○ 3    ○ 4    ○ 5

## 13 If a brand specializes in outdoor clothing, would it be fine for them to collaborate with influencers not in the field of outdooring?

Vastaamisohje: *(1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly disagree, 3 = Neither agree or disagree, 4 = Agree in someways, 5 = Agree)*

○ 1    ○ 2    ○ 3    ○ 4    ○ 5

## 14 If a brand specializes in outdoor clothing, would it be fine for them to collaborate with another brand not in the field of outdooring?

Vastaamisohje: *(1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly disagree, 3 = Neither agree or disagree, 4 = Agree in someways, 5 = Agree)*

○ 1    ○ 2    ○ 3    ○ 4    ○ 5

## 15 Where are you most likely to find the information regarding promotions of a brand x you like?

Vastaamisohje: *Please select one or more answers*

☐ A promotional social media post     ☐ A promotional social media story     ☐ Email newsletter     ☐ Internet ads

☐ Word of mouth through social media     ☐ Word of mouth through friends or family

☐ Something else, please specify     [                    ]

## 16 How many posts would you say is enough to be positively engaged with a brand you follow on social media?

Vastaamisohje: *Please select one answer*

○ 1 post per day     ○ 1 post per two days     ○ 1 post per three days     ○ 1 post per four days     ○ 1 post per week

○ 1 post per every two weeks     ○ 1 post per month

6 How likely are you to buy a product online if it is worn by an influencer you follow?

Vastaamisohje: *(1 = very unlikely, 2 = Quite unlikely, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Somewhat likely 5 = very likely)*

○ 1　○ 2　○ 3　○ 4　○ 5

7 When buying an outdoor clothing garment, do you value more:

Vastaamisohje: *Please select one answer*

○ Quality and comfort　　○ A reasonable pricing　　○ How trendy it is at the moment

○ Something else, please specify [            ]

8 Do you follow any small clothing brands on your social media accounts? If yes, which platforms are you most active on to follow them?

Vastaamisohje: *Please select one or more answers*

☐ Instagram　　☐ Facebook　　☐ Twitter　　☐ LinkedIn　　☐ Pinterest

☐ Something else, please specify [            ]

9 On a scale of 1-5, how important do you believe it is for a smaller clothing brand to regularly use social media?

Vastaamisohje: *(1 = not at all important, 2 = barely important, 3 = averagely important, 4 = important and 5= extremely important)*

○ 1　○ 2　○ 3　○ 4　○ 5

10 How likely are you to buy a clothing garment from a smaller brand after directly being on their social media account?

Vastaamisohje: *(1 = very unlikely, 2 = Quite unlikely, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Somewhat likely 5 = very likely)*

○ 1　○ 2　○ 3　○ 4　○ 5

11 How likely are you to participate in giveaways on social media?

Vastaamisohje: *(1 = very unlikely, 2 = Quite unlikely, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Somewhat likely 5 = very likely)*

○ 1　○ 2　○ 3　○ 4　○ 5