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OPPORTUNITIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR A GAME COMPANY

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ABSTRACT

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The commissioner of this thesis Fantastec is developing a virtual game world for children called Polar Heroes. The objective of this thesis is to develop a social media marketing plan covering message plan and tactical plan, as social media is becoming more and more popular in business use as it is in consumer use. The commissioner does not have established presence on social media so far and there is no plan for it, therefore in this thesis a plan is constructed based on the theoretical framework.

The theoretical framework consists of marketing theories and social media marketing theories provided by the experts on those fields. The theory first discusses marketing and marketing communications principles and then the phenomenon of social media and its usage as a part of marketing activities. The research methods are qualitative in nature. Desktop research was applied when the theoretical background was conducted.

The outcome of this thesis is a social media marketing plan. As a result this thesis provides the commissioner with a plan to add social media to their marketing activities. This thesis suggests that it is important for the commissioner to utilize social media in their marketing in order to engage their audience as well as interact with them and convert new customers. In addition, this thesis provides the commissioner and readers with an examination of social media and its use in marketing.

As a conclusion, the social media plan is constructed based on the current social media activities of the commissioner, therefore some issues might arise when implementing the plan as the commissioner have not really established presence on social media; issue of lacking resources might come up, but it is also tried to resolve in this thesis. If the plan is implemented successfully there might be high benefit for the commissioner. As for development proposals there are endless possibilities for further measures as social media provides countless number of opportunities for companies. It would be interesting to see further measures as a thesis by a business student where the possibilities of social media in business-to-business use are exploited.

Keywords: marketing, marketing communications, social media, social media marketing

TIIVISTELMÄ

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Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantaja, Fantastec, on suomalainen yritys, joka kehittää virtuaalista lasten pelimaailmaa. Opinnäytetyön tarkoitus on tutkia sosiaalista mediaa markkinoinnin työkaluna sekä tuottaa sosiaalisen median markkinointisuunnitelma, jossa käydään läpi sanomasuunnitelma sekä taktinen suunnitelma. Yrityksellä ei tällä hetkellä ole juurikaan näkyvyyttä sosiaalisessa mediassa eikä sen parantamiseksi ole aikaisemmin tehty suunnitelmaa, minkä vuoksi opinnäytetyössä suunnitelma toteutetaan teoreettisen viitekehyksen avulla.

Teoreettinen kehys koostuu pääosin markkinoinnin ja sosiaalisen median teorioista. Teoriaosuudessa käsitellään aluksi markkinoinnin ja markkinointiviestinnän perusteita, minkä jälkeen sosiaalisen median ilmiö käydään läpi ja esitellään kuinka sitä voidaan hyödyntää markkinoinnissa. Tutkimusmenetelmänä on pääasiassa käytetty laadullista tutkimusmenetelmää. Teoreettisen kehyksen tutkimusmenetelmänä on käytetty kirjoituspöytätutkimusta.

Opinnäytetyön tuloksena on sosiaaliseen mediaan tehty markkinointisuunnitelma, jonka tarkoituksena on avustaa toimeksiantajaa lisäämään sosiaalinen media nykyiseen markkinointitoimintaan. Tämä työ pyrkii osoittamaan sosiaalisen median tärkeyden kohdeyleisön sitoutumisessa, vuorovaikutuksessa ja asiakassuhteiden luomisessa. Lisäksi toimeksiantajalla ja lukijalla on mahdollisuus tutustua teoriaosuudessa sosiaalisen mediaan ja sen käyttöön markkinoinnissa.

Markkinointisuunnitelma sosiaalisessa mediassa on tehty tämänhetkisen tilanteen pohjalta. Joitakin ongelmia voi ilmetä suunnitelman toteuttamisen aikana, kuten resurssien puute, joka on pyritty ratkaisemaan tässä opinnäytetyössä. Suunnitelmasta voi olla todellista hyötyä toimeksiantajalle, jos se toteutetaan huolellisesti. Sosiaalinen media tarjoaa lukemattomia mahdollisuuksia, minkä vuoksi myös opinnäytetyön jatko- ja kehitysmahdollisuuksia on lukuisia. Yksi mahdollisuus on tutkia sosiaalisen median mahdollisuuksia yrityksille kohdennetussa markkinoinnissa.

Asiasanat: markkinointi, markkinointiviestintä, sosiaalinen media, markkinointi sosiaalisessa mediassa,

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Social media becomes more and more popular among the consumers and organizations. It is a phenomenon that affects businesses and marketing. It does not only take an enormous part of the everyday life of common people but also has become a crucial part of business success. Whether businesses are using it actively or just because it seems to be the trend today, it may offer interactivity between the businesses and audience, and also bring organisations closer to people. Organisations have seen the possibilities that social media brings them; they can get people more engaged and boost the awareness of their brand and products.

Social media offers two-way communication for the businesses and their audience. It is about communicating, interacting and engaging the customer to build customer relationships and to gain profit. This thesis aims to give an understanding of the social media and its use as a part of marketing activities. The idea is to encourage communication between those two parties, the commissioner and their target audience.

1.1 Research Problem & Purpose

The commissioner wishes to be more present and interactive on social media. They are interested in finding the most effective channels suitable for their purposes. The research problem therefore is what can be done to improve the social media marketing activities of the commissioner, and more precisely what can be done to engage the target audience.

The purpose of the thesis is to develop a tactical social media plan for the commissioner as well as a message plan. It examines the theories on marketing and social media marketing and results as a social media marketing plan. The outline of the study is on marketing the possible brand on social media. The objective is to find out how to implement the plan for the target group, meaning what is really needed and also how to say and what to say exactly according to the target group needs and wants. Personal aim of the author for this thesis is to get more familiarised with social media marketing. The thesis concentrates on the social media channels which are favourable for the commissioner and their target market. By providing a social media plan the

author presents the commissioner the findings and suggestions on what could be done to engage and interact with the customer in order to get more customers and visibility.

1.2 Framework

The methodology chosen for this thesis is qualitative on nature. The theoretical background and most of the empirical part are conducted as a desktop research. The theoretical framework was conducted from several existing sources in order to provide a broad introduction to marketing principles, marketing communications, digital marketing and social media marketing, and their link together.

The framework of this thesis is on marketing, marketing communications, digital marketing, social media and its use in marketing. The theoretical framework is conducted from the existing theories which are found to be reliable and also from articles and blogs online. The aim is to provide a comprehensive idea on social media marketing and therefore the theoretical background is narrowed down step by step in order to create greater understanding of the path from principles of marketing to social media marketing. The social media plan is mainly conducted based on the theoretical framework. It is divided as follows: from internal and external analysis, to issues and objectives, to message and tactical plan, and to resources, which the commissioner needs to allocate to carry out the plan.

1.3 The Commissioner

The commissioner Fantastec Ltd is a Finnish game development company, based in Oulu and Helsinki. Fantastec is developing an educational virtual gaming world Polar Heroes for young children. The aim is to educate children with fun and rewarding way. There are two characters, one for boys and one for girls and while playing around the game world children are supposed to learn mathematics, general knowledge, social skills and such. It is a combination of multiplayer world, educational games and player feedback and learning services. (Fantastec a & b, date of retrieval 14.9.2013.)

The commissioner has gain interest around the world, for example they have been chosen to be the Third most interesting Finnish ICT Company in Zero to IPO, investment event 2011 and have

won the Innovative Business Idea competition. Their motto is "Fun is our business, and business is our fun", which combines two matters Fantastec would like to offer to children and their parents; the safety and learning of the children and to make it enjoyable. (Fantastec a & b, date of retrieval 14.9.2013.)

2 MARKETING

Marketing is a noteworthy aspect of any business in the highly competitive environment and frequently the success of those businesses depends on marketing ability. Companies should understand the consumer needs and recognize adequate demand for their products and services in order to make profit and grow their businesses. Two main assets that make a large percentage of the value of the company are building brand and loyal customer base, which are significantly due to marketing. (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman & Hansen 2009, 4-5.)

Strategically speaking, marketing is about considering what features to design into a product, what is the best price, what channels to distribute it, how much to spend on marketing, among many other long-term decisions. On the other hand, marketers must consider also tactical and short-term decisions. These may include things like the diverse details, such as exact wording or the colouring of a package, managing the research. Marketing considers both strategic and tactical decisions. Marketing is a never ending process; it must be improved, changed and monitored at all times, but never stopped fully. (ibid., 6.)

2.1 Definition of Marketing

Marketing is a management process where goods and services are moved from concept to customers. It consists of marketing mix, also called the Four P's of marketing; product, price, place and promotion, which will be explained later on in this thesis. The business thinking is anchored in the needs of customer and their satisfaction. The business process therefore in the name of marketing is an effort to realize, create, stir up and satisfy the customer needs. (Business Dictionary a, date of retrieval 9.7.2013.)

Marketing may be understood as a function concentrating on satisfying the needs of the customers. Marketing can also be described as managing customer relationships which are profitable. The goal is to attract new customers and also to keep current customers by satisfying their needs. Marketing therefore is a process by which companies create value for customers to have strong customer relationships in sequence to gain value from customers in return. (Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 5-6.) It is a process covering the planning and execution of the idea, price, promotion

and distribution of goods and services in order to create exchanges that satisfy both the individual and organisational goals. (Kotler et al. 2009, 865.) Armstrong and Kotler (2007, 6-8) define the core concepts of marketing, along these lines;

- Customer needs, wants and demands
- Market offerings
- Customer value and satisfaction
- Exchanges and relationships
- Markets.

Customer needs, wants and demands

The basic idea of marketing is the *needs and wants* of people. Marketers need to understand the needs and wants to create customer value (Hundekar, Appanaiah & Reddy 2010, 6). Since needs are natural to the human marketers cannot create them. Wants are shaped by the society and culture, and may be explained with the entities that fulfil the needs. Wants can develop to demands. People demand products and service with benefit that will add up value and satisfaction. (Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 6-7.)

Market offerings

Market offerings may mean products, services and experiences that satisfy the needs. They can be both physical products and services that are intangible. Many companies pay too much attention to specific products and services, over the benefits and experiences customers might gain with them, this is called marketing myopia. When marketers focus on the existing wants, they might forget to pay attention to the underlying needs. (Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 7.)

Customer value and satisfaction

Armstrong and Kotler (2007, 7-8) also define *customer value and satisfaction.* Customers shape an expectation about the value and satisfaction according to delivered market offerings and buy according to them. Marketers are advised to pay attention to setting up the level of expectation. If expectations are too low, not enough customers are attracted, or if it is too high, buyers may be let down. (ibid., 7-8.) It can be said that the offering is successful when it provide value and satisfaction to a buyer. Customer value can be created through satisfaction and quality, which might lead to loyal customers. (Hundekar et al 2010, 9.)

Exchanges and relationships

According to Armstrong and Kotler (2007, 8) marketing occurs when people make a decision to satisfy their needs and wants through *exchange of relationships*. Exchange here may refer to acquiring a wanted object by offering something for it in return. It can occur when there are people who want to satisfy their needs and wants. Usually those people have something valuable for each other and are capable of communicating with each other, but they also have freedom to reject market offerings. (Hundekar et al. 2010, 8.) Marketing consists of the actions taken towards building and maintaining an exchange relationship with the target group. The goal should be on both retaining customers and attracting new customers. Marketers focus on building strong and lasting relationships by delivering superior customer value. (Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 8.)

Markets

A market may be described as a set of potential and actual buyers of an offered service or product (Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 8). A market is a place for buying and selling and much more, but the main activity is the same; exchange (Hundekar et al. 2010, 4). The buyers share a common need or a want which may be satisfied through exchange relationships. Marketing may be determined as managing markets to attain beneficial customer relationships. These relationships take work to create and attain, hence sellers searching for buyers, identifying the needs, designing market offering, setting prices, promoting them and finally storing and delivering them. Therefore the core activities of marketing are product development, research, communication, distribution, pricing and service. (Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 8.)

2.2 Strategic Marketing

A strategy is a plan that aims to combine organisation's key goals, policies, decisions and series of action in order to create a consistent whole. It may be applied at all levels of an organisation and be valid in any functional areas of management. When referring to marketing there might be pricing, promotion, product, sales, advertising, and marketing research strategies to name few. Effectiveness is more concerned than efficiency when strategies are considered and the process of analysing the environment and designing the suitability between the organisation, resources and objectives and of course the environment. (Proctor 2000, 20.) The following figure 1 shows the steps in strategic planning described by Armstrong and Kotler (2006, 37).

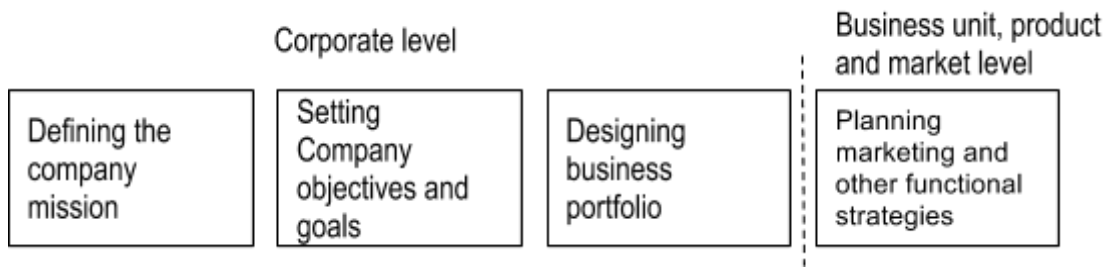| Corporate level			Business unit, product and market level
Defining the company mission	Setting Company objectives and goals	Designing business portfolio	Planning marketing and other functional strategies

FIGURE 1. Steps in strategic planning.

Strategic plan identifies the overall mission and objectives of the company. Usually the consumers are in the centre of the plan. The goal is to construct strong and profitable customer relationships. Marketing strategy is part of the company's strategic plan. The logic by which the company tries to achieve its marketing objectives is defined in a marketing strategy. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 49.)

Large, broad and diverse markets can be divided into groups of customers or segments with certain needs or wants. A company should identify which segments it can effectively serve. Making this decision requires a thorough understanding of customer behaviour and strategic thinking. (Kotler et al. 2009, 333.) Through *segmentation, targeting* and *positioning* the company decides the customers to be served and how it is going to occur. First the total market is identified and then divided into smaller segments, from which the most potential segments are selected. The focus of marketing is then on those segments and the customers from them are tried to served and satisfied. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 49.)

Market segmentation can be divided into two steps: identifying groups of people with same needs and secondly to combine them into larger segment according to their interest to product (Arens, Weigold, Arens 2011, 186). The marketer has to determine which segments are suitable and offer the best opportunities. The grouping of consumers can be done in several ways based on geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural factors to mention. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 50.) The markets are divided into distinct groups and segments with common characteristics and needs and in which the individuals respond similarly to marketing efforts (Fill 2006, 117). It may be wise to concentrate the marketing efforts on meeting the distinct needs of individual market segments. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 50). Because of segmentation firms can easier produce market offers to fit the wants of people. A segment must noticeably be identifiable in order to

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marketer design marketing communications for it and also it should be large enough to increase the sales and profits. (Proctor 2000, 189-190.)

After market segments are defined, one or more segments may be entered. *Target marketing* is a process of evaluating each segments and its attractiveness and selecting which segments to enter. An organisation should then target the segments with a profitable generation of the vastest customer value and sustain it. An organisation with limited resources could decide to serve only one or few special segments, or market niches, which are overlooked or ignored by the bigger companies. On the other hand companies with more resources may choose to serve several related segments: customers with the same basic needs. Many times new markets are entered by serving one segment and after if this is proved to be successful more segments are added. Large companies then again might enter all the markets at once. The leading companies usually have different products for different segments. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006 50.) Target marketing requires finding the main characteristics that divide market into segments. It is also important to know the quantity of customers that are in those segments. Fairly important it is to recognise the best segments with most likely to give desired results. (Proctor 2000, 191.)

Market positioning refers to a clear, distinctive and desirable place which the product occupies. This place is relative to competing products in consumers' minds. It is desired to create a unique market position for the products; there is no point for buyers to buy the product if it is the same as the competitors have. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 52.) Marketing mix programme should support positioning, especially product design and marketing communications (Proctor 2000, 193). Positioning is about how to distinguish the product from the others and how to express the differences to the consumers. In positioning the possible competitive advantages are identified to build the position upon. For example, a company may offer lower prices than the competition do or validate the higher prices with more benefits. The idea is to deliver what is promised. Consequently positioning to be effective, it should start with the differentiation in order to give more value to the customers. Once the wanted position is decided, strong efforts should be taken to deliver and communicate with the target customers. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 52.)

Traditional view on marketing process is that the company makes the product and then sells it to the customers (Kotler 1997, 88). The new view is that businesses consider themselves and the process as a part of value creation and delivery sequence. This value-delivery process is divided

into three parts. The first one is choosing the value by segmentation, market selection and value positioning, which are the essence of strategic marketing. (Kotler 1997, 89.) The marketers develop then a customer-perceived value positioning based on the segmentation, targeting and positioning. The value proposition is build on the product and the benefits which are promised to deliver. It is a statement about the promised experience customer should have. Whether it is kept or not depends on the value delivery, it consists of the experiences on the way to using the product. (Kotler et al. 2009, 78, 388). Second step is to provide value, which occurs via product and service development, pricing, sourcing, making the product, and distributing it. This step is part of tactical marketing. Third phase is to communicate the value, which is also part of tactical marketing. This phase consists of employing sales force, and utilizing sales promotion, advertising, and any other promotional efforts needed. (Kotler 1997, 89.) To deliver the value to the customer the company needs to know their customers. By customer relationship management enables the company to see who the customers are, their behaviour, and what they need and want. (Kotler et al. 2009, 86.)

2.3 Marketing Mix

An organisation designs a marketing mix with the guidelines of a marketing strategy. To find the best marketing strategy and mix the organisation engages in marketing analysis, planning, implementation and control. With these activities the organisation sees and adapts to the actors and forces in the marketing environment. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 49.)
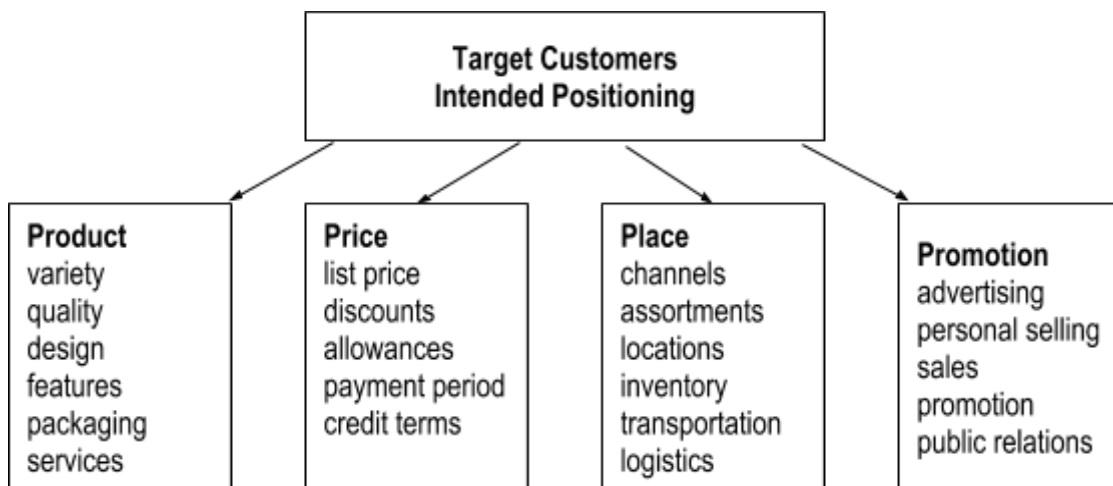
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                        ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                        │      Target Customers        │
                        │    Intended Positioning      │
                        └─────────────────────────────┘
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┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
│ **Product** │ │ **Price**   │ │ **Place**   │ │ **Promotion**   │
│ variety   │ │ list price   │ │ channels   │ │ advertising   │
│ quality   │ │ discounts   │ │ assortments │ │ personal selling │
│ design   │ │ allowances   │ │ locations   │ │ sales   │
│ features   │ │ payment period│ │ inventory   │ │ promotion   │
│ packaging   │ │ credit terms │ │ transportation│ │ public relations │
│ services   │ │   │ │ logistics   │ │   │
└──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────────┘

FIGURE 2. The four P's of Marketing mix. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 53.)

Marketing Mix is conducted by 4 P's; product, price, place and promotion, which are shown in the figure 2 above. The traditional view is to manage the marketing mix after selecting the target market and positioning, which are explained in the previous chapter of this thesis. The marketing mix is sorted into a short and long term decisions, after the organisation has selected the target market. All the marketing mix decisions should be integrated together in order to distribution to suit the product or the service process line up with the pricing strategy and so on. With the aim of being successful organisations should satisfy customer needs, exceed their expectations economically and easily, with effective products priced well, with intriguing communication and in time distribution. (Kotler et al. 2009, 17.) Marketing mix is about delivering a right product at the right time at the right place with the right price with the right message, in other words finding the right mixture that serves the needs of consumer.

In order to marketing be effective all the marketing mix elements are blended into a coordinated program designed for achieving the marketing objectives by delivering value to consumers. The marketing mix is a set of controllable tactical marketing tools for establishing a strong position in the target market. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 53).

Product

The first P, *product*, consists of the features of the product, such as the design, quality among many others. It is the combination of goods and services the company offers to target market.

(Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 52). Product helps customer to create an image of the company. This image is reflected in the perceptions and feelings about the products and services. Quality of a product can provide differences among other products. When it is possible to create differences in the products it is also possible in the quality. Quality reflects consumers' expectations on a product. Usually companies offer more than one product and those products form a product mix, which has width: quantity of lines, length: quantity of items, depth: number of variants of each product, and consistency: how closely related the various product lines are. (Proctor 2000, 213-214.)

Price

The second feature of marketing mix is price, which is the only of tool of marketing mix creating revenue. Simply put, it is the money customer pays for the product (Business Case Studies, date of retrieval 3.9.2013). Pricing is the value of market offer, which has to cover pricing, discounts, allowances and terms of credit. A customer is interested in the price of the product as well as a bundle of expectations of satisfaction. A customer expects numerous things such as after sale service, replacements parts, accessories, guidance, and credit among many other matters. To a company price is the source of revenue and a main determinant of profit, and to a customer it is objective criteria for comparing alternative items and making the final choice. Price is corresponding to the total market offering, which includes a brand name, a package, benefits, service after sale, delivery, and information to consumer and so on. (Hundekar et al. 2010, 44, 77.)

Place

Place refers to the point where the product is made available for the customer. The feature place also consists of various other matters, such as transporting and storing the product. The choice of distribution system depends on the product and organisation. (Business Case Studies, date of retrieval 3.9.2013.) Place is not only the place where the product or service is sold but it is the whole journey of getting it market, it is for example order reception, logistics, channel of supply. There are many possible players in the distribution channel to the market: supplier, agent, distributor, manufacturer, wholesaler, retailer and consumer. Each of these players has a part in adding value. (Cheverton 2004, 290, 297.)

Promotion

Promotion refers to marketing communication; communicating with the customers. It covers the ways of communicating, whether it is advertising, personal selling, public relations or sales promotion or something else. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 53). Promoting a brand is constant long-term job. The idea of any promotional strategy is the objectives; a company should know what they want to achieve which this might prevent them from wasted activities and overspent budgets. The purpose of promotion is to grow the size of the market, grow sales volume, increase market share, support sales drive, improve distribution, compete with the competitors' offer, get people aware, influence customers, and the list could go on for ages, but these are to mention a few. Promotional communication is effective when it reaches the target audience, penetrates the audience's attention with the combination of timeliness, relevance and simplicity, it communicates the intended message, and it bonds the message with the brand name. (Cheverton 2004, 313-314, 317.)

2.4 Customer Relationships

Marketers need to connect with the customers by engaging and informing them (Kotler et al. 2009, 379). Customer relationships might be the most important matter for a company to focus on. Customer relationship management refers to building and maintaining profitable relationships with customers by delivering remarkable customer value and satisfaction. It also covers matters such as acquiring, keeping and growing customers. When customers are satisfied they are more likely to be loyal. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 14.) It may be stated that the only value company creates comes from the customers and the success lies behind getting, keeping and growing customers (Kotler et al. 2009, 380).

Customers are faced with a large variety of different products and services to choose from. The company with the highest customer perceived value usually gets their products sold. Customer perceived value refers to customer evaluating the difference between the benefits and cost of the market offer related to competing offers. Customer satisfaction then again depends on the perceived performance of product corresponding the buyer's expectations. When the performance matches expectations customer is satisfied, and when not, customer is dissatisfied. Highly satisfied customers tend to make purchases repeatedly and also to tell others about their experiences with the product. This might lead to greater customer loyalty which results in a greater company

performance. The idea is to match customer expectations with company performance. When companies try to delight their customers, they promise only what they can deliver and then deliver more than they promised. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 14-15.) It is important to keep the customers satisfied because then they stay loyal longer and also promote the company. High satisfaction creates a bond between the customer and the brand, which leads to less brand switching and more purchasing. (Kotler et al 2009, 390.)

Nowadays there is a trend of some companies being more selective about the customers they choose to serve. They are focusing on the profitable customers, which is called selective relationship management. Companies use customer profitability analyses to find the profitable customers for pamper. As fairly important it is to attain and retain customer for building long-term relationships. The view is on finding, retaining and growing profitable customers. This is the result of changing demographics, sophisticated competitors and overcapacity in some industries which leads to fewer customers to go around. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 17-19, 417.)

The idea is to know the customers in order to serve them properly and to know what influences their decision making. There are several matters that influence the decision making of consumers. It can come from personal influencers such as family, society and culture, or non-personal like time, place and environment. Usually the process has five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation and selection, store choice and purchase and finally post-purchase behaviour, whether it is positive or negative experience. (Arens et al. 2011, 159).

3 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Nowadays marketing requires more than good market offering, attractive pricing and making the offering accessible. Organisations need also to communicate with the current and future customers, stakeholders and the general public. The main question is not only to communicate but also what to say, how, when, to whom and how often. Communication with customers becomes more and more difficult since more companies attempt to attract progressively more empowered customers and their divided attention. Customers are taking more active role in communication process as they decide what they want to receive and how they want to communicate the market offering they may choose to purchase to others. (Kotler et al. 2009, 688-689.) The focus of marketing communications is on the audience. Everything done in the name of marketing communications therefore should be audience-centric. Organisations connect with a variety of audience with the intention of pursuing their marketing and business objectives. (Fill 2006, 4)

Marketing communications refer to planned messages that companies create and disseminate to support their marketing objectives according to Arens, Arens and Weigold (2011, 24). Major tools for marketing communications include advertising, personal selling, public relations, sales promotion and collateral materials. The extent of the use of these tools depends on the marketing needs, objectives and strategy of a company. Each of these tools has a particular opportunities and benefits to offer for a marketer. For example advertising enables a marketer to reach more prospects at once. It also gives room for creativity, it enables the marketer to create an image full of symbolic meaning and benefits for a company and its brand. On the downside advertising is suffering from credibility gaps. (Arens et al. 2011, 14-15.)

Marketing communications is in the centre of market exchanges, which are explained in the chapter definition of marketing of this thesis. For market exchanges to take place marketing communications should deliver messages through appropriate tools and media according to the needs of the target customers. At the same time marketing communications can be used to express different types of messages to the audiences that are already involved. (Fill 2006, 6) There are four main tasks from which at least one should be delivered, according to Fill (2006, 6):

- Inform
- Persuade
- Reinforce
- Differentiate.

Marketing communications can *inform* existing customer and also make potential customers aware of the product. It might try to *persuade* current and potential customers of the appeal of entering into an exchange relationship. Marketing communications may also *reinforce* experiences. This may mean reminding people of a need they could have or of the benefits of past transactions with a view of persuading them entering a similar exchange. It is also possible to reassure or comfort either immediately to make a purchase or more commonly post-purchase. These are important as they help retain current customers and also to improve profitability. It is more cost-efficient than always trying to attract new customers. Lastly, Marketing communications may act as *differentiator,* especially in markets where there is little to differentiate competing products and brands. For example mineral waters are quite a like, so the marketing communications act a huge role in creating brand images, enabling customers to make purchasing decisions. (Fill 2006, 6.)
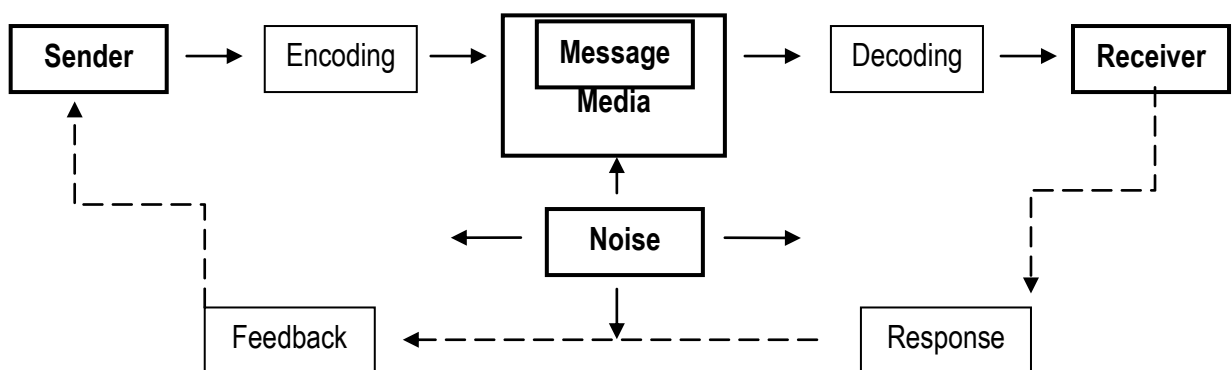

FIGURE 3. Elements in the communication process (Kotler et al. 2009, 694)

There are nine elements in the figure 3 that emphasise an effective communication process. The major parties in communication are sender and receiver. Media and message are the main communication tools and the last four besides noise, represent the major communication functions. Noise means random and rival messages that could interfere with the intended communication.

Senders need to know what the target group they want to reach is and what the responses are that they want to get. Encoding the message refers to the signs, symbols and language to dress up the message that the receiver will understand. When the message is encoded according to the target audience, they might be able to decode it and response to it. (Richardson, Gosnay & Carrol 2010, 5.) The message is send out through media that reaches the audience and feedback channels are created to monitor responses. (Kotler et al. 2009, 694.) Noise characterises the environment in which the communication process occurs, noise in this case means the distracting dissonance of many other messages that are being sent at the same time by other sources. (Arens et al. 2011, 10.) Marketers need to find a way to differentiate from others to get the attention of the target audience. After their attention is caught it may become easier to raise their interest then the desire for the offering and finally get them to act. (Kotler et al. 2009, 695.)

3.1 Effective Marketing Communications

Rather important it is also to develop an effective marketing communications plan. According to Kotler et al. (2009, 696) there are few steps to follow in order to get there, which are shown in the figure 4 below.
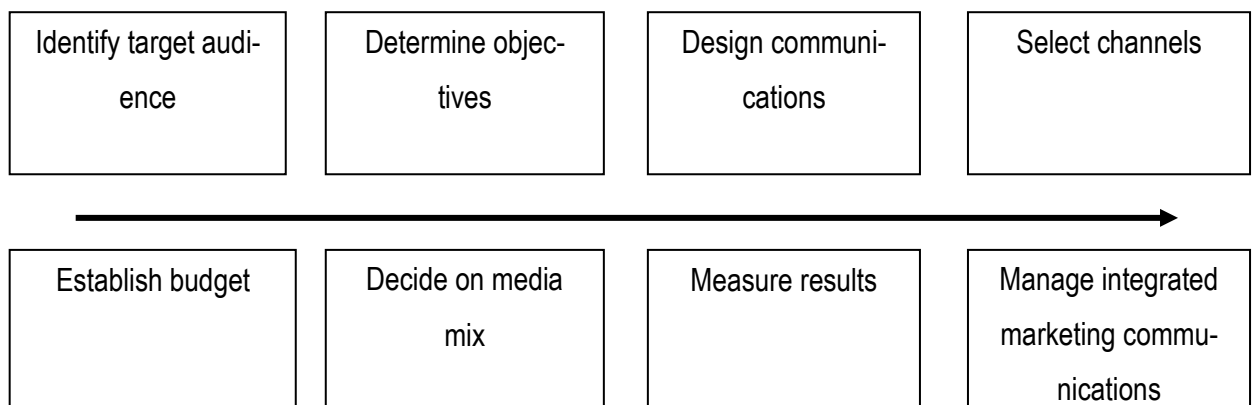
Identify target audi-ence	Determine objec-tives	Design communi-cations	Select channels
Establish budget	Decide on media mix	Measure results	Manage integrated marketing commu-nications

FIGURE 4. Steps in developing effective communications (Kotler et al. 2002 696)

Identify the target audience

The first step is to identify the target audience. The target audience should be clear and should be group of potential buyers of the company's offerings, current users, deciders or influencers. The audience has an influence on the marketer's decisions of what to say, how to say, when to

say, where to say and to whom to say. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 404). It is also important to knowledge whether the target audience is new or current users. Are they loyal to a brand, competitor or someone who switches between brands? (Kotler et al. 2009, 696.) In the case of the commissioner the target audience is quite clear; it is mothers with children aged between 6 to 8 years, since the brand they are offering is for children but the buying decisions come from the parent, in this case the mothers. The target audience is new for the commissioner.

Determine the objectives

Secondly the objectives for the marketing communications should be set, it is easier to act when there are objectives to reach. These objectives may be one or more of the following identified by Rossitier and Percy (Kotler et al. 2009, 696):

- Category need
- Brand awareness
- Brand attitude
- Brand purchase intention.

Category need here refers to establishing a market offering category, for a product or a service, in order to remove or satisfy the difference between a current motivational state and the desired emotional state. For example "a new-to-the-world item" like electric cars could start with an objective of establishing category need. Second one, *brand awareness*, alludes to the ability for audience to recognise or recall the brand within a category with adequate detail to make purchase. Brand recognition may be easier to reach than recall. Brand recall is essential outside the store and recognition inside the store. In the case of this thesis, the market offering is sold in the internet so it is important to have brand awareness in order to get the consumers to become customers. (ibid., 696.) In some cases the target audience is unaware of the product and brand, so it is important to raise awareness and knowledge towards them (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 404). *Brand attitude* means evaluating the brand of how it is able to meet a currently relevant need. Relevant brand needs may be negatively oriented, like problem removal or problem avoidance, or it may be positively oriented, such as intellectual stimulation or social approval. For example, cleaning products often use problem solution. Brand attitude kind of shows the benefit of the brand and its usage. Finally, *brand purchase intention* refers to self-instructions to purchase the

brand or to take purchase-related actions. Examples of this are promotional offers like coupons or two for one-deals to encourage customer to make the purchase. (Kotler et al. 2009, 696-697.)

Design the communications

Third step is to design the marketing communications. It should get attention, hold interest, stimulate desire and finally get people to act, also known as AIDA-model. When designing communications it is important to decide what to say and how to say it. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 405.) Basically it contains three different stages (Kotler et al. 2009, 697.);

- Message strategy
- Creative strategy
- Message source.

Message strategy referring to what to say is the phase where marketer searches for appeals, themes and ideas consistent with the brand positioning and help to establish points of equality and difference. These may be associated to product or service performance, such as the quality and value, as well as they may be related to more extrinsic aspects, like seeing the brand as contemporary or traditional. Buyers expect a reward from the marketing offering: rational, sensory, social or ego satisfactory reward. They might visualise these rewards from results of use experience, product in use experience or incidental to use experience. There could be 12 types of messages when mixing the four reward types with the three types of experience, for example, "removes stains from your clothes" is a rational reward with result of use experience. (ibid., 697.) The commissioner states that their game world for children is educative while fun, which could have the same reward and experience as the example before had.

Creative strategy defines how to say the message. The efficiency of the marketing communications depends on how the message is said in addition to the content of the message. This means that since both are equally important it does not matter if the message is great if it is poorly expressed, then it becomes ineffective. The way messages are translated into a specific communications is called creative strategy, they may be generally categorised into informational and transformational appeals, both of which cover several creative approaches. Informational appeal elaborates on the quality and payment attributes or benefits of the market offering. In advertising this means advertisements that present a solution, demonstrate a clear benefit, and offer a prod-

uct comparison and testimonials from celebrity or unknown endorsers. Logic and reason have a great part in informational appeal, very rational processing of communication is expected from the consumer. There might be one-sided advertisements; praising the product, two-sided advertisements; which are more effective when audience is educated and when something negative need to be overcome, or ones that ask questions and let the audience make conclusions. Transformational appeal on the other hand elaborates on a non-market offering related image or benefit. (Kotler et al. 2009, 698-699.) Emotional appeals raise both negative and positive emotions to motivate a purchase (Armstong & Kotler 2008, 405). Motivational and borrowed interest matters are often used to attract consumer attention and raise the involvement. (Kotler et al. 2009, 699.)

Many companies do not use any other *message source* than the one inside the company. On the other many companies use known or unknown people to deliver the message. A spokesperson should have credibility and the three most often identified factors are expertise; the specialised knowledge communicator have, trustworthiness; how objective and honest the source is seen, and finally likeability; the attractiveness of the source. A state of congruity exists when a person has positive or negative attitude both to message and a source. If person has negative attitude towards one and positive towards the other, attitude change may take place towards the increasing amount of congruity between the two attitudes. (ibid., 699-701.) It is important to understand that the communicator has a huge role in delivering the message, as it affects the message's impact on the target audience (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 409).

Global adaptations to the marketing communications are crucial for the company, if the company is operating globally. They need to figure out whether the market offering is suitable for the country, are the market segments legal and customary, are the message strategies acceptable in the country and whether the communications should be done locally or in the headquarters of the company. (Kotler et al. 2009, 702.)

Select the channels

It becomes harder to carry out the message as the communication channels become more cluttered and fragmented. The channels may be personal or non-personal and there are sub channels in each category. Companies should focus on attaching the cause of the company and the values of their target audience and also to reach the audience in their best place, time and state of mind with the aim of getting the best impact. There are a lot of communication channels to

choose from. Personal communication channels cover word-of-mouth, buzz and viral marketing, opinion leaders and blogs. Non-personal channels then again cover media such as printed, broadcasted, network, electronic and display media, sales promotions, events, experiences and public relations. (Kotler et al. 2009, 702.)

Personal channels refer to two or more people communicating for example; face to face, person to a group of people, over the telephone or through email (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 407). The effectiveness of personal channels comes from the individualised presentation and feedback. These channels can further be distinct to advocate, expert and social channels. Advocate channels consist of sales people of the company who contact buyers in the target market. Expert channels comprehend independent experts giving statements to the buyers. Social channels consist of friends, family, neighbours, associates, among many others, chatting to target buyers. Social channels are very powerful, since most people tend to believe their friends and other associations in making a purchase decision. It may be said that it is important to convince influential persons first in order to them convince their friends of the company. (Kotler et al. 2009, 702-703.) Non-personal channels cover major media where messages are carried out without personal contact (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 409). Non-personal channels are usually paid and are directed to more than one person at a time. (Kotler et al. 2009, 702-705.)

Even though it may be said that one to one marketing communication is more effective than mass, mass media is still a main way to communicate to large target audiences. It affects personal attitudes and behaviour through a two-step process. Usually ideas to opinion leaders come from television, radio and printed communications and from them to other groups, who may be less active with media. There are several impacts concerning the two-step process. Firstly, the influence of mass media on the public opinion is not as automatic, powerful and direct as the marketers have supposed it to be. Opinion leaders act as mediates the message to others. People tend to interact with their own social groups and the opinion leaders inside these groups usually pass on their opinions. Finally it is claimed that messages in mass media should be directed particularly to the opinion leaders and let them forward the message. (ibid., 706.)

Establish a budget

There are different ways to form a budget for the marketing communications. Those ways are briefly introduced here to show how it could be conducted. The empirical part of this thesis does

not contain a budgetary section since it is up to the commissioner to design a budget for their marketing communications.

The budget for promotion can be set at what the company thinks it can afford, this is called the *affordable method*. This method tend to ignore that promotion can be investment and also the impact of promotion on sales volume. This method makes the planning difficult in the long run, as it may lead to uncertain annual budget. *Percentage of sales method* suggests that the promotion budget is set on a specific percentage of sales. The expenditures will then vary with what the company can afford and the relationship between promotion cost, selling price and profit per unit can be seen. *Competitive parity method* refers to promotion budget set on to achieve share-of-voice parity with the competitors. It is said that this way promotion wars are avoided and the expenditures of competitors present the collective wisdom of the industry. *Objective and task method* has some stages to follow in budgeting. Those stages cover the definition of objectives, determination of tasks to be performed in achieving the objectives, and an estimation of performing these tasks. This method requires the management to state the estimations of the relationships between amount spent, exposure levels, trial rates and regular usage. (Kotler et al. 2009, 707.)

Modelling utilizes wide selection of econometric and simulation methods to model the spend levels and how they affect performance in terms of awareness rating, revenue flow and profitability. *Payback period* then again refers to calculating the amount of exposure time needed to cash in the budgeted cost of promotion. Finally, *profit optimisation* stand for tracking the point at which the marginal revenue from spend go above the marginal costs. (ibid., 708.)

Decide on a media mix

When deciding a marketing communications mix, marketers often have to examine the advantages and costs of the tools of communication and also the market rank of the company. The market in which they are selling, consumers' readiness of making a purchase and also the stage in which the product is in the product life cycle are things that should be taken into a consideration. There are eight major communication modes; advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and publicity, events and experiences, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth marketing. The tools in use must be coordinated since they can replace each other in the tool mix. (Kotler et al. 2009, 709.)

Advertising reaches people globally. It may build an image for a product or brand and set off quick sales (Kotler et al. 2009, 708). The idea is to pick the best media for the advertising and to create awareness, educate, inform and persuade. It is a mass communication method and can be used in traditional media as well as in digital media. (Richardson et al. 2010, 58.)

Personal selling is an effective tool in the later stages of the buying process, such as building up a buyer preference, conviction and action. It creates immediate personal interaction where each party can observe the reactions of the other. (Kotler et al. 2009, 711.) It gives an opportunity for marketer to directly communicate with the customer, which gives some control over the message (Richardson et al. 2010, 64).

Sales Promotion is used to get quick response from buyer, including short-term effects like highlighting product offers. Sales promotion tools are for example coupons, contests and premiums among many others. (Kotler et al. 2009, 710.) Sales promotion may be effective when used for increasing sales, encouraging switching brad, trading up and trials, it may increase the frequency and amount purchased (Richardson et al. 2010, 64).

Public relations, PR, may be extremely effective when it is coordinated with the communication mix and is well thought through (Kotler et al. 2009, 710). PR may be used to build relationships, generate goodwill and trust, create stories and discussions, develop positive reputation, and to counter bad publicity. It may be more credible than advertising since it is not paid, as it is mainly third party endorsement. (Richardson et al. 2010, 60-61.)

Events and experiences can be seen as relevant because it involves the consumers personally. Both events and experiences actively engage people as they are real-time. They also are somewhat implicit. (Kotler et al. 2009 710.)

Direct and indirect marketing have many different forms, it might be online or in person for example. Both are customised to appeal the addressed individual. Usually both are up to date and can be prepared quickly. Depending on the person's response the message can be changed and this way direct and interactive marketing are both interactive. (ibid., 710-711.) Online direct marketing gives many opportunities to a marketer since they can practice direct response advertising, sales

promotion like e-coupons, PR like blogs, e-mail, viral and SMS marketing (Richardson et al 2010, 67).

Word-of-mouth marketing, WOM, is usually either online or offline. It is credible since people trust the people they know and respect. This tool may be highly influential and effective. It is very personal as it is a dialogue that might reflect personal facts, opinions and experiences. WOM is timely, it usually occurs when people want it and is most interested, and many times it follows a remarkable events or experiences. (Kotler et al. 2009, 711.) It is interpersonal communication of market offerings where the receiver considers the communicator as impartial. Both negative and positive WOM seem to have a substantial impact on the fortune of the company and therefore should be measured by them. Social networks, like Facebook and Twitter, have become an important factor in both business to consumer and business to business marketing. A major aspect of social media is WOM and the number and nature of conversations and communications between different parties. (ibid., 703.) The niche social network sites also have a potential to spread the message effectively to targeted audience besides the mega-networks like Facebook, which can provide most exposure. In some cases WOM happens naturally with a little help from advertising but many times it is managed and facilitated. Smaller businesses may have bigger effect of WOM since the relationship between them and the customer may be more personal. Customer relationships are strengthened and forged in form of virtual communities, which the companies are seeking. (ibid., 711.)

Measure the results

After the implementation of marketing communications plan, the results of the communications must be measured, meaning the impact on the target audience. Usually audience is asked whether the message is recognised or recalled, how many times it was seen, what points are recalled, how they felt about it; the product and company; both previous and current. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 411.) Behavioural measures are also collected, such as, how many people bought the product, how they liked it, and how many talked to others about it. (Kotler et al. 2009, 713.) Online there are also ways to measure the impact of marketing communications in social media; some of these are introduced later on.

Manage the integrated marketing communications

Integrated marketing communications defined by the American Association of Advertising Agencies refers to a concept of marketing communication planning that recognises the added value of a complete plan. This evaluates the strategic role of communication tools in use with the aim of flawless integration of messages with clarity, consistency and maximum impact. This means managing and coordinating the communication process with integrated marketing communications. (Kotler et al. 2009, 713.) Integrated marketing communications is explained more thoroughly in the following chapter.

3.2 Integrated Marketing Communications

Integrated marketing communications is a method aiming at accomplishing the objectives of marketing campaign with several coordinated promotional methods that support each other. (Business Dictionary B, date of retrieval 29.8.2013). In the past years management of companies have understood that the efficiency of mass media advertising has lowered, consumers are getting more and more sophisticated, sceptical and doubtful, there are huge gaps between what is said for example in the adverts and what the actual truth in the company is and finally, good customer relationships are far more important than making single exchanges. Now there is a trend of integrating all the messages inside the marketing communications in order to be consistent. (Arens et al. 2009, 27.) A use of multiple media for marketing poses a threat, the message in each channel should be consistent in order to customer not to get confused about the company image, brand and customer relationships. In many cases companies tend to ignore the integration of the messages in various channels. This results to a muddled mix of communications. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 365.)

Nowadays marketers need to focus not only to the traditional message channels like magazines, television and other mass media but also to more narrowed media, in which the message may be more personalised. It may be said that many marketers are moving towards more targeted, cost-effective, interactive and engaging media rather than costly mass media, even though it is still very important and effective way. (ibid., 365.) There is a trend of shifting towards marketing programs that are focusing to build closer customer relationships. With the technology available for companies it is easier to keep track of customer information and their needs. (ibid., 364-365.)

Integrated marketing communications is adopted more and more these days. The company carefully plans and integrates the channels to provide a consistent, clear and convincing message for the target audience. It is important to recognise all the contact points where the customer might cross with the company and its brand. Every brand contact delivers a message, good or bad, but the intention is to deliver a consistent and positive message with each contact. The concept of integrated marketing communications leads to a communications strategy which is aimed at building strong and lasting customer relationships, for example by showing the benefit of using the product of the company. It is vital that the feeling, look and message of each channel is the same, the public relations use the same images as the web site of the company has. In some cases companies have pointed a position for marketing director to keep eye on the consistency of the messages and also to have the greatest responsibility on the communications of the company. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 365-366.) It is also possible to opt out the marketing communications to an external company who is responsible of the uniformity of communications (Kotler et al 2009, 714).

According to Kotler et al (2009, 716) there are six criteria that determine whether marketing communications are integrated:

1. Coverage
2. Contribution
3. Commonality
4. Complementarity
5. Versatility
6. Cost.

First matter is *coverage*, which is the portion of the audience reached by each communication option as well as how much overlapping occurs between different options. *Contribution* then again refers to the length to which marketing communication may affect consumer processing and build awareness, induce sale, upgrade image and bring up responses. *Commonality* alludes to "the extent to which information is conveyed by different marketing communications share meaning" described by Kotler et al (2009, 716). *Complementarity* may be determined as the width to which several of associations and linkages are highlighted in the marketing communications. *Versatility* relates to how steady the marketing communications are, how they work for consumer,

how effectively it works for audience who have seen or not seen other communications by the brand. It is important to see the different possibilities for marketing communications against their *cost* in order to achieve the most efficient and effective programme for marketing communications. (Kotler et al 2009, 716.)

3.3 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing refers to a marketing efforts made via electronic media. Digital marketing covers topics such as interactivity, electronic word-of-mouth and the development of online communities. Kotler et al (2009, 124) describes digital marketing communications as "communication and interaction between a company or brand and its customers using digital channels (e.g. the Internet, email, mobile phones and digital TV) and information technology". Online media offers interactivity, it enables businesses to develop and nurture relationships with customers and stakeholders on a global scale cost efficiently (Arens et al. 2011, 525). Marketing is progressively moving towards service, interactivity, connectivity and ongoing relationships. Digital marketing should be integrated with the other marketing activities as a part of deliberate marketing strategy. It poses new possibilities such as new ways to communicate, new customers and markets compared to other channels. (Kotler et al. 2009, 119-120.)

The Internet has been the revolution for digital marketing since it empowers the consumers and businesses more. It enables them to access and share information and such very easily by just a mouse click. More and more people are gathering information from internet before making major decisions, according to Armstrong and Kotler (2006, 437). Digital technology has provided marketers a way to reach customers and serve their needs. It has also changed how companies create and add value for customers and build relationships. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 437.) The Internet can be used for many different purposes; marketers can use it for example as an information channel, a sales channel, a delivery or a distribution channel, a promotional or communications channel (Kotler et al 2009, 120).

The digital age has changed how people think about matters like speed, price, convenience, service, and product information (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 437). Market knowledge shifts towards the consumers as they can easily choose on their terms what they want, how they want it and when they want it (Kotler et al. 2009, 147). According to Hundekar et al (2010, 188) there are

seven unique features in online marketing. It is *ubiquitous,* which means that it amends industry by creating new marketing channels and expands the size of the overall market. New efficiencies in industry operations are created and the costs of firms' sales operations are lowered, and also differentiation in strategies is enabled. Secondly it enables *global reach*, this means that markets are expanded but at the same time industry structure may be changed by lowering the barriers of entry. It also enables global competition. Sales and production efficiency provides lowered costs of industry and firm operations. Thirdly there are *universal standards* which mean that the structure of industry may be changed by lowering the barriers of entry and enhancing competition. Lowering the computing and communications cost, lowers also costs in industry and firm operation costs. This also enables broad-scope strategies. *Richness* of E-commerce refers to information presented in a richer manner with graphics, videos, sound to mention. *Interactivity* alters industry structure by reducing the threat of substitutes with complement customisation. Differentiation strategies may be implemented. *Personalisation and customisation* allow altering of the industry structured by decreasing the threats value chain cost. It also enables the customisation of products and services to correspond the customer needs and wants. *Information density* may enable room for reducing operation costs by lowering costs of obtaining, processing and distributing the information about the suppliers and customers. (Hundekar et al. 2010, 188.)

There are many ways how companies can utilize e-commerce in supporting marketing and promotion. Organisations can use web for attracting new customers through marketing and advertising. They can also serve existing customers by offering customer service and support functions. Developing new market and distribution channels for existing products is possible. They can also develop new information-based products for business to customer and business to business e-commerce. It is also possible to create corporate identity and awareness programmes, product service marketing campaigns to mention few. Companies should consider how they are going reach audience. Implementing digital marketing can help companies with marketing and advertising, brand name management for example. (ibid., 192-193.) According to Dave Chaffey there are 6 main types of digital media communications which can be seen from the figure 5. These techniques are supporting the objectives of offering services to existing customers and also to obtain new ones, which might help to develop relationships. It is still necessary to integrate these methods with the traditional methods such as print and TV, in order to be successful. (Chaffey b 2013, date of retrieval 12.9.2013.)
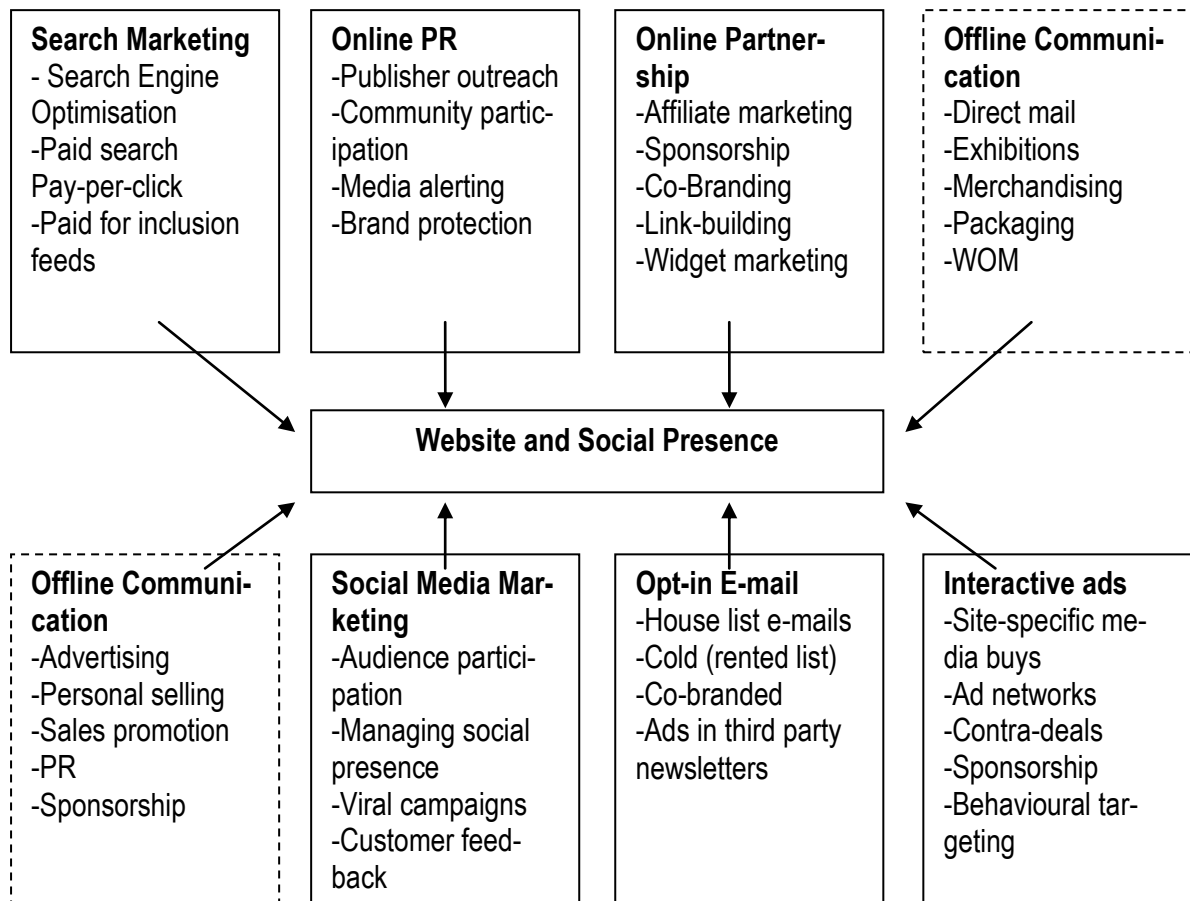
Search Marketing	Online PR	Online Partner-ship	Offline Communi-cation
- Search Engine Optimisation -Paid search Pay-per-click -Paid for inclusion feeds	-Publisher outreach -Community partic-ipation -Media alerting -Brand protection	-Affiliate marketing -Sponsorship -Co-Branding -Link-building -Widget marketing	-Direct mail -Exhibitions -Merchandising -Packaging -WOM

Website and Social Presence

Offline Communi-cation	Social Media Mar-keting	Opt-in E-mail	Interactive ads
-Advertising -Personal selling -Sales promotion -PR -Sponsorship	-Audience partici-pation -Managing social presence -Viral campaigns -Customer feed-back	-House list e-mails -Cold (rented list) -Co-branded -Ads in third party newsletters	-Site-specific me-dia buys -Ad networks -Contra-deals -Sponsorship -Behavioural tar-geting

FIGURE 5. Website and social presence. (Chaffey b 2013, date of retrieval 12.9.2013.)

The focus of thesis is on social media marketing and marketing communications, from which the latter one is explained earlier on and the first on will be explained more thoroughly on the following chapter "Social Media Marketing". Even though the focus is on those matters search engine marketing is also important, therefore it is explained here briefly. Search engines are web sites that are used to finding and retrieving requested information from the web. Since search engines are the gatekeepers of information they are popular among marketers. (Arens et al. 2011, 710.) According to Business dictionary (c, date of retrieval 17.9.2013) search engine marketing, SEM, is a method focusing on purchasing ads which then will appear on pages that are a result of a search on a search engine, such as Google. Search engine optimisation, SEO, according to Business dictionary (d, date of retrieval 17.9.2013) refers to efforts on improving traffic to a website by increasing the visibility of it in search engine results. SEO may be improved when the content is improved and unique and the web pages can be indexed properly. Since the site may appear higher in the search results for information similar to offerings of the web site SEO might lead to more traffic. (BusinessDictionary d, date of retrieval 17.9.2013.)

4 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Many companies are looking for engagement. They start using social media in marketing, public communications and other similar departments trying to directly connect with customers and stakeholders. Usually organizations get involved with social media because they need to be viral, they have had a lot of negative comments, or they want a boost in overall awareness in market places and in the mind of a customer. Still many times social media projects are treated like traditional marketing campaigns when really they should be treated as innovative way of connecting with customers and prospering collaboration with them. (Evans & McKee 2010, 4.)

4.1 What is Social Media

"Social media is that which allows anybody to communicate with everybody. In other words, consumer-generated content distributed through easy-to-access online tools" according to Jim Sterne (2010, xvii). Social media is new set of tools, technology alongside with the traditional marketing. It allows organizations to be more efficient in connecting and building relationships with their customers and prospects. Social media is exponentially more effective than traditional media, such as telephone and direct mail. (Safko 2012, 5.) Social media covers various tools and applications provided in the Web. They are social capabilities which allow communities come together and communicate. (Miletsky 2010, 75.)

The central element of social media is how the Internet and other new technologies are used to move from one-to-many model to many-to-many model, such as Facebook. Anybody can share content, such as videos, photos, blogs, which is the key of the social revolution. The term "Web 2.0" is often related to social media. It holds two elements: firstly the emergence, growth and popularity of social media, and secondly the change of how the control is shared between providers and users. Users are taking more control of their interactions with media, organisations and each other. (Poynter 2010, 182-183.)

The reason behind the efficiency of social media may be the fact that it is two-way communication. The consumers no longer trust or want to hear commercials, but they are keener to informa-

tion coming from people they know and trust. They want to share their experiences with others (Safko 2012, 5). Today when people are no longer satisfied with advertising and promotional efforts as an only source about new products and brands, they have begun to use social media for sharing with others their own experiences to provide a real view. Simultaneously consumers are looking for others' experiences before the actual purchase. Figure 6 shows the purchase tunnel connected with digital word-of-mouth. The circle from expectations to trial to rating to sharing the actual experience is now part of almost every purchase decision. People like to turn to each other for information besides the traditional media channels. (Evans & McKee 2010, 5.)
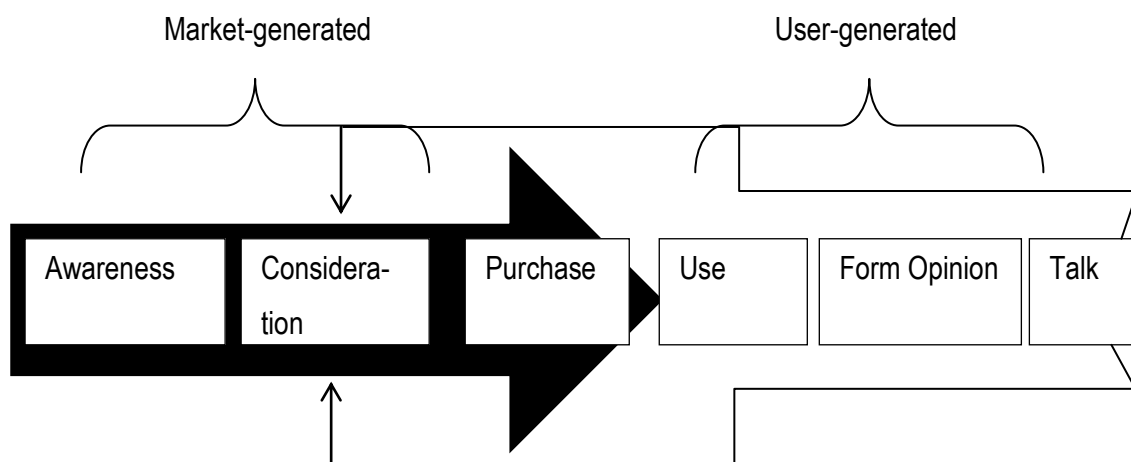
Market-generated   User-generated

| Awareness | Considera-tion | Purchase | Use | Form Opinion | Talk |

Figure 6. Social Feedback Cycle. (Evans & McKee 2010, 5.)

4.2 Social Media Marketing in Business Use

If businesses have a great brand or a product and are in search of more customers, they want people to talk about them. Word-of-mouth, WOM, will take the businesses to the next level, and what could be better place than social media. If a company has a social media strategy and knows how to use basic tools and tactics they can use social media for their advantage. Of course they do not have a total control over the conversation but they may have a substantial influence over it. This influence comes from relationships with customers, employees, vendors, family and friends. (Safko & Brake 2009, 5.)

According to Jason Miletsky (2010, 81) social media marketing can be divided into three categories: public relations, marketing content generation and viral messaging. *Public relations* in social

media marketing mean that marketers are looking for social media channels to spread their message around. News must be trustworthy and valuable to the reader. Marketing content creation refers to the creation of content which is shared in social media channels. Content should be designed in a way that it will be relevant to the audience. *Viral messaging* are usually shocking or entertaining that it evokes high level of interest and the audience therefore is willing to share the message on. (Miletsky 2010, 81.)

Using social media brings a lot of benefits for the marketer. It is foremost cost efficient; it allows marketers to reach target audience without a large budget. If message is done correctly the audience will spread the word for marketers. Social media also brings both broad visibility and narrow visibility, depending what is desired by the marketer. Marketers are also able to observe what is happening on the social media channels and take the information and use it for their own benefit. By allowing people to express their opinions marketers gain trust. It is also possible to create own online communities and build strong connection to their brands by giving information, news and updates and of course give the audience ability to express themselves. Finally increased interactivity and visibility should lead to increased revenue. (ibid., 81-82.)

According to Lon Safko (2012, 6) social media is about listening first, understanding the discussion and speaking last. It is important to establish a relationship before shouting the market offers business has to offer. Needless to say social media has changed how organisations communicate interact and engage with the audience. Now marketers are able to hear what consumers are saying about their products. A good and a bad aspect of social media is that it cannot be seen beforehand what is going to work and what not, but when it does it is going to spread like a wildfire. (Arens et al. 2011, 521.)

4.3 Social Media Channels

Social media is kind of an umbrella term to a wide variety of tools and applications. They allow communities come together, communicate and build upon opinions and ideas of each other. (Miletsky 2010, 75.) They all differ from each other to some extent. They all allow organisations and people to connect with each other efficiently and build relationships (Safko 2012, 5). Figure 7 reveals major social media applications and tools.
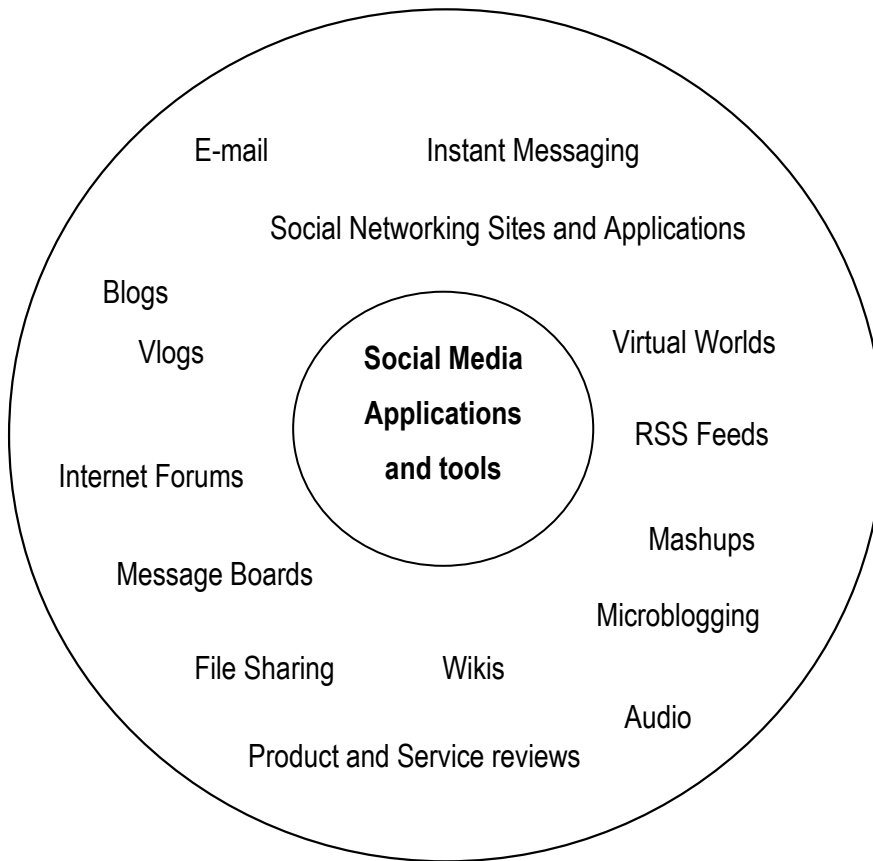
FIGURE 7. Social Media Applications and Tools. (Miletsky 2010, 75-76.)

As it can be seen from the figure 7, there is a lot to choose from. To this thesis most relevant applications and tools are social networking sites and file sharing, in this case photo sharing. *Social networking sites* refer to how people use social media to connect, share, educate, interact and build trust, such as on Facebook. (Safko 2012, 10.) Social networking sites enable businesses to build profiles with differing degrees of privacy, like intranet or public profiles and pages. It is also possible to conduct user lists, from which people can be contacts and also it is possible to access other user lists within the same system. These sites also enable interactive communication and stimulate two-way conversation. It is easier to create awareness and insight in a crowded environment. It also enables different ways to communicate. (Richardson et al. 2010, 2-3.)

Microblogging refers to short-messaging; usually people have less than 160 characters to use. It gives people a chance to keep their friends up-to-date. The value of microblogging comes from the collective sense of short messages, when people receive frequently posts they start to feel for the senders and develop better understanding. For marketers it is a great opportunity to under-

stand the influencers, communicate with customers, raise online profile and generate traffic. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 166-167.)

File sharing includes music, pictures, videos and games. There are many ways to share files to others. There are a lot of ways to share photos, such as Picasa, Pinterest and Instagram. Photo sharing is popular since it captures emotions that can be shared for others to view on comment on. (Safko 2012, 10.)

Facebook

According to Lon Safko (2012, 31) Facebook is the biggest and most popular networking site on the Internet. It was founded in 2004 in Harvard University by M. Zuckerberg, C. Hughes, D. Moskovitz and E. Saverin. Since then Facebook has been made available in more than 70 languages to anyone who has e-mail address and is over the age of 12. It digitally connects people's real-life social connections. (ibid., 31-32.)

The revenue model of Facebook is as follows: paid subscription, free with advertising and free with paid upgrades. It is possible to advertise in Facebook with Facebook ads, marketer is able to use the information provided by the user in their personal profile to target the ads to the right individuals. Businesses are able to use the information to advertise their service, brand, like page, event or other external links by using pay-per-click model. (ibid., 32.) Brands use Facebook to engage with the audience, share deals with them and to get feedback from the customers (Buck 2012, date of retrieval 21.10.2013).

Facebook users are able to connect with their friends and with businesses also. By "like"-ing business pages they are able to get information and updates by those businesses and interact with them. These pages allow businesses to share their professional information and engage with current and potential customers. The like/business pages are also great places to do customer service, PR, sales, marketing and promotion. Building an online community usually takes a lot of time and does not happen overnight but eventually is will pay off when businesses have valuable network of people. (Safko 2012, 33.)

Pinterest

Pinterest refers itself as a virtual pin board. It was launched in 2010. People have done scrap-books of different things for long now. Pinterest takes that concept to social environment. Users can pin photos and videos from different sources; other users, websites and so on, to their pin boards on Pinterest. Each picture features a link back to the original source of content. It brings bookmarking web sites into a visual medium. Users can create topical pin boards and pin images to these boards in categories. They can connect and follow the pins of other users. It brings people with same interest together. (Evans Cario 2012, 2,4.)

For brands Pinterest is a potential traffic driver as it enables them to show images which are visually attractive. On the pin boards brands are able to present the style and values for example to get the brand vivid, but it is not easy to promote the brand in terms of inspiration and ideas. (Socialbakers a 2013, date of retrieval 21.10.2013.) Pinterest has a reasonably short social media life so far, but it has proven to be able to generate an astounding amount of traffic. It can be used also to gain consumer insight and build stronger ties with customer base. Not only big companies can enjoy the benefits of Pinterest, small businesses and individual bloggers have also gained them. Pinterest gives also a chance to demonstrate the value businesses can bring by offering things customers are seeking. It enables to show how the product works. Pinterest also offers additional insight of the consumers, besides web analytics. It also allows site owners and content developers to better understand what catches the eye, how consumers interact and share content and why. (Evans Cario 2012, 14,17,20.)

Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging site, where people and organisations are able to send out their thoughts, news and information with 140 of characters text (Smith 2012, date of retrieval 21.10.2013). Twitter was founded in 2006 by J. Dorsey, N. Glass, E. Williams and B Stone. There are three ways to use Twitter: on a computer, through a mobile app or by sending text message. It is used by millions of users and millions of tweets are sent daily. (Safko 2012, 39-40.)

Lon Safko (2012, 41) states that Twitter is the channel to get the business and its product into the world. It allows businesses to follow leading experts to learn from them and share their informa-tion, be part of conversations, answer questions, share information, generate a topic for discus-sion and keyword search by city or around the world. When following people and businesses it

creates interaction between them and conversation (Smith 2012, date of retrieval 21.10.2013). Building a Twitter community takes time it pays off in the long run. When a business has something to announce the community will respond to it by purchasing, retweeting, or coming to their establishment. It is possible to build a quality community only when time is spent on Twitter relationships, not by being spammy, pushy or trying to sale. (Safko 2012, 41.)

Youtube

Youtube is a video sharing site that enables uploading and sharing videos on the Internet through web sites, mobile devices, blogs and e-mail. Users are able to comment on videos, join communities and use copy-paste code for e-mailing and posting on the web. Businesses are able to do videos about their brand and products and other things and bring them to audience. (Safko & Brake 2009, 529.)

For the commissioner Youtube could be a new way to promote their children's game by taking clips from the actual play, make short stories about the characters inside the gaming world. There are multiple possibilities to promote their brand via videos. Since Youtube is not part of the actual plan, these suggestions are here just to point out the importance of multi-channelling.

4.4 Social Media Strategy

The first to take into consideration when developing social media strategy is to analyse where the business is at the moment. There are several models to utilize in this situation. As for thesis this analysis is done by analysing the product, customers, competition, internal and external analysis are done by using Porter's five forces, product value analysis, and SWOT; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The first strategic viewpoint is according to Safko and Brake (2009, 675) that there are four pillars supporting social media strategy. Each of these pillars supports a platform for engaging customers, prospects and employees. As said before social media is enabling conversation among the audience and market. Businesses want people to discuss about things that will help them to generate revenue or increase profits. For internal audience, like employees and co-workers, it could be that they are able to share their knowledge leading into better products or efficient manufacturing process. For customers and prospects this might mean that they to promote the benefits of a

product to their peers, and the value of engaging their mindshare. (Safko & Brake 2009, 675.) The four pillars of social media strategy are:

1. Communication
2. Collaboration
3. Education
4. Entertainment.

The first pillar, *communication* lies in the very basics of social media marketing, engaging and interacting with the audience. As it is mentioned before communication is the main key for success or failure in social media. Since most of the companies already do communicate with their audience, the focus should be on what is already done and what problems there are. In traditional media the impact of communication cannot be precisely measured, whereas social media offers tools for measuring these things. Every viewing, visit or subscription of the content shared can be measured. In social media the marketer is able to get feedback on the communication. (ibid., 675-676.)

The second pillar, *collaboration in internal means* refers to collaboration in the workplace. Many times collaboration is seen as a process to be managed rather than tool to be engaged. In social media strategy internal collaboration means the tools that are used to foster collaboration with co-workers. There are many tools for collaboration, but as an example are company wikis. It is the place where employees can create and maintain a productivity tool that is altered and improved regularly. *External collaboration* is to engage customers and prospects to some form of collaboration. This can be seen a bit controversial since it cannot be controlled what is said about the company. It would be wise to ponder on does the business gain more by avoiding this kind of engagement or by sponsoring or endorsing this kind of conversation. Is it better to take part into a conversation or create social media tools where people can collaborate? (ibid., 679.) For the commissioner it could be wise to have collaboration with bloggers who have children of the target age.

Third pillar, *education* refers to the expertise inside the company and which should be leveraged in the social media. The expertise of customer can be taken into advantage too. There are several application and tools of social media to educate in order to engage. (Safko 2009, 679.) For

example in Pinterest there can be pin boards of photos educating people of the brand. For the commissioner Pinterest and Youtube could be places to promote the gaming world in a favourable light by educating the audience. Problems can be solved faster when everyone, customers and employees are involved and giving information (Evans & McKee 2010, 191).

The fourth pillar, *entertainment* is also important part of social media strategy. Almost every business can find something entertaining about their product or brand and entertain the audience with. Entertaining though does not always mean funny, humour is hazy, since for some a thing can be funny and for others offensive. By experimenting interesting and compelling content might be the spice for the social media strategy. (Safko & Brake 2009, 680.) For the commissioner entertaining should not be an issue, since they have an educating and entertaining gaming world from which they can create content.

With the right mixture of these pillars a company can make a real success of their social media presence and strategy. Lon Safko (2012, 534) has brought the theory of social media overall strategy a bit further, he has created five steps to social media success, which are only listed here and not explained thoroughly. Five steps are as follows:

1. Analyse existing media
2. Social media trinity (blogging, microblogging, social networking)
3. Integrate media
4. Identify resources
5. Implement & Measures.

According to Dave Chaffey (b, date of retrieval 18.9.2013) a social market plan tactics consists of four key concepts: reach, act, convert and engage. First of course it is important to create content that is relevant and according to the audience. Relevant content kind of earns approval to sell. Content is the conversation starter and problem solver in social media, and it drives the inbound effect from partner sites and outposts. *Reach* refers to building awareness of brand, products and services by driving visits to different web pages like the main site, micro sites and social media sites of the business. Step two, *act* means persuading site visitors and prospect to take the next step when they reach the social network presence or web sites. This might mean finding out more about the company and its offerings, searching to find a product or reading information or blogs. It

is about engaging audience through relevant, persuasive content and clear navigation. Step three is to *convert*. Conversion refers to a point where a visitor commits to form a relationship, which usually creates profitable value for the business. Step four is *engage*. Businesses try to build long term engagement with the customers by building relationships in time through interacting with them by using paid, owned and earned media such as social media. (Dave Chaffey b, date of retrieval 18.9.2013.)

4.5 Ways of Measurement

Social analytics and the need for measuring became when businesses started to interact with consumers in social media and websites. Businesses need a way to understand customer behaviours on social media and manage interactions across the channels. These analytics help companies measure, assess and explain the social media initiative performance in specific business objectives. It makes possible to quantify behaviours, understand effectiveness and to determine the impact of social media to a business. (Lovett 2011, 125-126.) If the return on investment, ROI, is wanted to measure and the rate of conversion determined, then measurement tools need to be in place. Since the Internet is run by computer systems and networks, everything can be measured. There are a lot of tools available and most of them are free. (Safko 2012, 590.)

There are three levels to consider in measuring of social media*: audience, activity and actions.* Social analytics help organisations to understand people and where they assemble online. It reveals who, where and how businesses' friends, fans and followers change over time. It also reveals where they spend time online. Audience metrics may also include social graphic and demographic characteristics. It also helps identify different types of people, leads and others. Activity metrics enable businesses to quantify activity created by brand, initiated by audience and competitors. It reveals how customers react to campaigns and messages and how they spread the information. Actions metrics guide businesses with an image of what actions should be taken to achieve goals and objectives. After recognising the audience and what activities they participate in, it should lead businesses to take actions that will contribute to desired outcomes. (Lovett 2011, 127-128.) According to Jon Rezab (2012, date of retrieval 21.10.2013) on social media channels companies should monitor: the reach, number of fans and followers and compare to competitors; interaction and engagement, how people interact with the posts; and wall posts, mentions and response rate, how well company actually is interacting with followers and fans.

The easiest to monitor every web page and blog is to use Google Analytics, and it is free. Google Analytics also monitor the web traffics. It generates an analytics code that can be place in HTML web site or blog site, and the data is available in real time, detailed. (Safko 2012, 591.) It provides access to variety of information that marketers need to tracking, such as visits, page views, bounce rate and average time on site (Miletsky 2010, 437, 440-441). SocialMention and Google Analytics restore all the tweets, all of businesses' Facebook and other social network comments and also look for trends, negative and positive. If company is using Youtube they can use Youtube Insight to see how many times videos are downloaded, viewed and much more. (Safko 2012, 591-592.) Facebook then again offers conversion measurement tool, to record the behaviour or the target audience who click on ads (Burg 2013, date of retrieval 21.10.2013). It also provides tools for keeping track of the likes, comments, nationality and other information of the likers of the Facebook page. On Facebook there are certain KPIs, Key Performance Indicators, which should be measured and monitored. Those usually are fan growth, people clicking like button; engagement rate, to what extent fans are engaging with the posts of the brand; response rate, how rapidly admin reacts to posts on the wall; most engaging post types, refers to the posts that have engaged the fans most. (Socialbakers b 2013. date of retrieval 21.10.2013.)

Measuring the results of social media marketing is tricky since it is a slow media; it takes time to really know the impact of the efforts made. Target audience goes through several stages before the actual purchase of an offering. AIDA model explains the stages and divide them into four: awareness, interest, desire and action. (Fill 2006, 174.) The marketing communications attempts first to get the people aware of the product in order for them to gain interest. When their attention is caught it is easier to get audience interest in the brand and its products and to get people desire the product. They gain some knowledge of the product and might like what they know. Actions towards buying the product only appear when the consumer has gone through the stages before it; they have some motivational response in their behaviour. (Sherlekar, Prasad, Nirmala & Salvadore 20102010, 258.) Since there are several stages in the communication process where the audience move from the unawareness to the purchase there must be several messages sent through several channels. It must be remembered that is a one influence among many others, especially in social media. (ibid., 258.)

5 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN

In this part of the thesis the social media plan is conducted. The main emphasis is on message and tactics. According to Armstrong and Kotler (2008, 54) there are certain contents in a marketing plan, those contents are applied here according to main idea, social media. First of all the current situation is examined, then the objectives and issues are covered for this plan. Message plan is conducted and after it the tactical plan. The needed resources for implementing the plan are pointed out. The purpose is to reveal the tools for social media marketing and show how it can be utilized in the marketing efforts of the commissioner.

5.1 Situation Analysis

This part covers the situational situation of the commissioner. Their marketing activities mainly in social media are under the scope since the purpose is to create a social media marketing plan of message and tactics.

The marketing activities of the commissioner are currently handled by the CEO of the company and they have a marketing trainee. They have limited resources for marketing due to the size of the company. The CEO has pointed out the fact that they simply do not have the time and the people to do the marketing, especially in social media. They have almost no presence in the social media. They have created Facebook pages for both Fantastec and their game world Polar heroes, but the activity in both is poor. They seem not to have any other social network sites in use. When conducting a quick Google search on Fantastec there are quite a many articles about them and it is easy to find some information, but interacting with them is almost impossible. Poor Facebook pages do not exactly encourage to "like" the page or more to mention it to friends. Still they have managed to do successful viral campaigns, such as funny job opening advertisements that have spread in the Internet like a wildfire. They seem to have the right set of mind but yet again it comes down to the limited resources.

5.1.1 Porter's Five Forces

Michael E. Porter has identified five forces which shape the competition of an industry. Those forces also determine the attractiveness of a market or a segment in a long-run. (Kotler et al. 2009, 304.) Competition is not merely the other players in the market but it is also other competitive forces such as customers, suppliers, potential new entrants and substitutes, which all are competitors with more or less importance (Porter 1979, 2, date of retrieval 11.10.2013). Figure 10 reveals Porter's five forces.

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│ Bargaining power │   │  Rivalry among │  │ Bargaining power │
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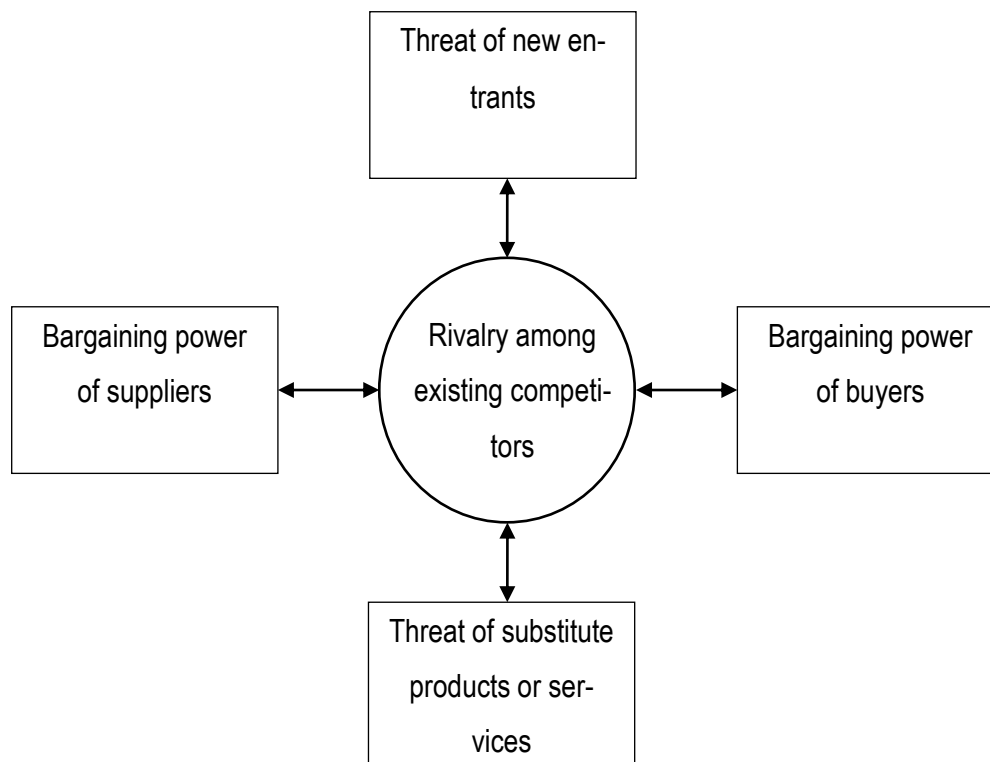
FIGURE 10. Porter's Five Forces That Shape Industry Competition. (Porter 2013, date of retrieval 9.10.2013)

The rivalry among existing competitors may be a threat. When a segment is unattractive it contains many strong competitors who strongly are staying in the segment. Stable and declining markets are also unattractive, exit barriers usually keep companies competing in unattractive markets. (Kotler et al. 2009, 304.) There are several reasons why threat of rivalry may be high. Since the commissioner is operating in the virtual world, Internet and digital devices bring a lot of possibilities for companies. The exit barriers may be low since usually the technology needed can

be sold and therefore the costs are not very high when exiting the market. Internet also lowers the variable costs related to the fixed costs, which leads to pressure for cutting prices (Kotler et al. 2009, 123). Since Internet is available for everyone it widens the markets, thus it is more appealing for the competitors. There are a lot of games for children to choose from in the virtual world, whether they are direct competition or not, educative games or just for entertainment. In order for the commissioner compete with the existing competition they have to be different, they have to have differentiation in their offering to gain competitive advantage for others (QuickMBA 1999-2010, date of retrieval 15.10.2013). It may be stated that the threat of existing competition is high.

Threat of new entrants bring in more capacity, desire to gain market share and sometimes substantial sources. Barriers to entry and the reaction from existing competition pose the seriousness of a threat of entry. (Porter 1979, 2, date of retrieval 11.10.2013.) The most attractive market is a market with low exit barriers and high entry barriers: unsuccessful companies can exit easily and few companies can enter the industry (Kotler et al. 2009, 304-305). To enter the virtual market a company needs to have expertise on matter, have people to know the coding and marketing to mention. It is also required to have the correct technology available to make the product and to get it available. Usually businesses entering these markets are start-ups and it requires money to get the expertise, technology and to start the business. Also it is important to build a brand in order to survive in the virtual world where there are several competitors and again it takes time and money. On the other hand Internet reduces barriers of entry as the physical assets are less needed and fewer people can manage with the tasks, such as sales, also channel access is easier (ibid., 123).

Bargaining power of buyers refers to the ability of customers to force prices down, demand higher quality and even turn rivals against each other (Porter 1979, 5, date of retrieval 11.10.2013). The bargaining power of buyers increases when for example when product is undifferentiated, buyer's switching costs are low or buyer is sensitive about the prices (Kotler et al. 2009, 305). The bargaining power of buyers can be considered high since the internet reduces costs of switching brands and usually people are sensitive about the price especially women. The volume of the buyers is high as said before since the Internet is available everyone. It is easy for the customer to substitute the offering as there are several others to choose from, it might not be directly the same as others but if it is somewhat similar it becomes easy. It is important to have identifiable

brand for customers to remember it and have interest in it. (Mindtools 1996-2013, date of retrieval 15.10.2013.)

Threat of a substitute product or service refers to the threat in which substitutes can place a limit on prices and profits which will lead to fall in prices and profits (Kotler et al. 2009, 305). If the quality can be upgraded or the product can be differentiated the industry may survive the substitutes, and not have limited potential (Porter 1979, 7, date of retrieval 11.10.2013). Internet and virtual world is appealing for many companies and therefore many have established their presence and market offering there. There are brands in the children's gaming industry who have established a strong reputation among the target audience, such as Toca Boca. Since it is not costly to switch the brand the threat of substitutes is quite high.

Bargaining power of suppliers refers to the power of raising prices or reducing the quality of goods (Porter 1979, 5, date of retrieval 11.10.2013). Suppliers may be powerful for example when they are organized, when few substitutes are available, cost of switching suppliers is high or when they can integrate marketing or sales oriented efforts to customers (Kotler et al. 2009, 305). The bargaining power of suppliers is not that relevant to this topic but the cost of labour could be one. There is a equal access for suppliers in the Internet which could pose a threat also (ibid., 123).

5.1.2 Product Value Analysis

Anything that is offered to a market in order to satisfy a need or a want is product (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 199). Product helps customer to create an image of the company, which is reflected with the feelings and opinions of the product. Quality of a product can provide differences among other products. When it is possible to create differences in the products it is also possible in the quality. Quality reflects consumers' expectations on a product. (Proctor 2000, 213-214.) As the competition can be considered high based on the Porter's five forces analysis, it may be quite important to analyse the product value and consider the factors that are different from others.
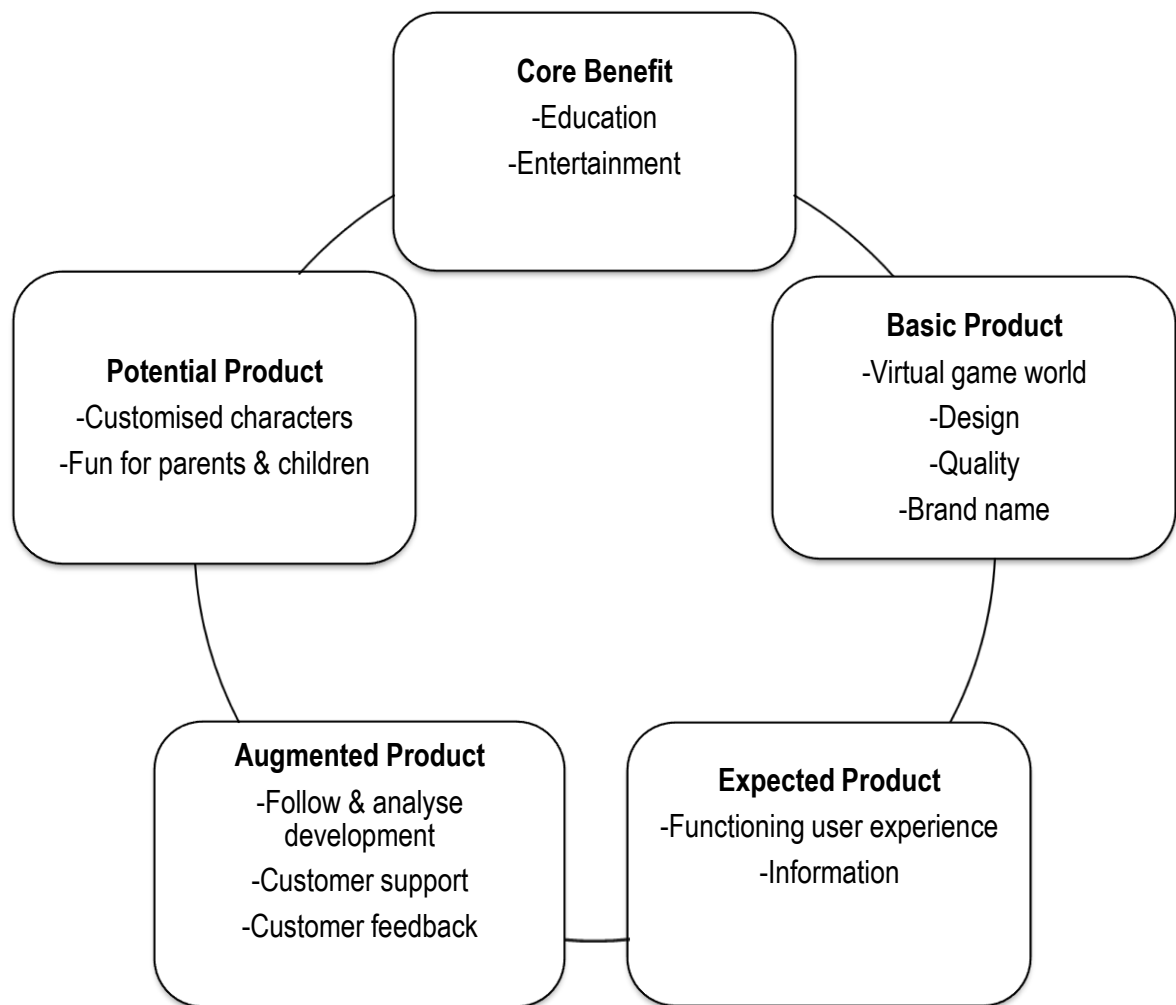
FIGURE 8. Five levels of product based on the virtual game world (Kotler et al 2009, 506).

Product should be thought through with five levels which can be seen in the figure 8. Consumers see the products as a packet of benefits to satisfy their needs. When a product is developed marketers need to identify what is the core the consumer need. They must design the actual product and find way to augment it to offer satisfying customer experience. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 200.) They also have expectations about the product. The potential of the product is based on the augmentations and transformations that may take place in the future. (Kotler et al. 2009, 506.) In this case the product is the virtual gaming world Polar Heroes for young children. It is designed to educate children while having fun.

The *core benefit* addresses the question "What is the buyer truly buying?" Those core benefits may be problem solving benefits or services a customer seeks for. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006,

200.) In this case the core benefits of Polar Heroes may be that the mothers are not only buying an access for their children to play a game but an idea of educating their kids while they play in a safe environment. They have an idea of their children having fun and learning without even noticing it.

Second level is the *basic product*. It can contain the product features such as design, quality brand name and packaging (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 200). The basic product of the commissioner is in a virtual form so the features are the design, quality and brand name. It is important that they offer a virtual world of good quality design and that it is interesting for the children to play. They can also offer a brand name that has a good reputation.

Third level expected product refers to the expectations the buyers have about the product: the conditions and attributes (Kotler et al. 2009, 506). The mothers expect that their children will have an experience that functions well with no bigger problems on the user experience design. They anticipate the world to be fun and educating as promised. They also expect proper instructions on the usage and services provided.

Fourth level is the *augmented product*, which covers the offering of additional consumer services and benefits to provide the most satisfying customer experience (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 200). For parents it is possible to follow and analyse the development of the children. They are also able to give feedback to developers and get support.

The fifth level potential product covers the possible transformations and augmentations related to the product that may occur in the future (Kotler et al. 2009, 506). The commissioner can add section of styling and creating own hero, instead of the current standard characters. This would add value for the children. As for the mothers the game world could have some features for parents and children to play together, like a race related to maths, general knowledge or something else.

Branding is viewed as an important part of product, consumers associated brands with products. A brand is anything that identifies the maker of a product, such as name, design or symbol. Brand name is associated with the quality and consistency of a product. For the commissioner it might be a good idea to build a brand by being consistent in the social media and other communication

mediums in order to build a strong and good image in the eyes of the consumers. The following figure 9 demonstrates the phases that go within building a brand.

Brand Positioning	Brand Name	Brand Sponsorship	Brand Development
Attributes	Selection	Manufacturer's brand	Line extensions
Benefits	Protection	Private brand	Brand extensions
Beliefs & values		Licensing	Multi-brands
		Co-branding	New brands

FIGURE 9. Major Brand Decisions (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 215).

5.1.3 Customer Analysis

According to Arens, Weigold and Arens (2011, 156) there are three categories of customers; the current ones, prospective ones and centre of influence. Current customers usually have already bought something, sometimes regularly. Prospective customers then again are the ones who are thinking about the purchase or are willing to do it. Centres of influence are those whose opinions and ideas are respected by others and are usually the link to the prospective customers. (Armstrong & Kotler 2011, 156). The commissioner, Fantastec has some current customers but the idea would be to get more customers to use their product regularly, therefore the centres of influence are important for them to convince since they need to create some value to the possible customers. There are two segments to which customers are divided in this thesis: the influencers and the prospective end users. The basic information of both can be seen from the Table 1. This division is based on consumer markets and the B2B markets are left out.

TABLE 1. Segmentation: influencers and prospective customers.

Geography	United Kingdom
Gender	Female
Age	25 to 40 years
Marital Status	Married In a relationship Single parent
Children	Aged between 6 to 8 years
Motive	Educative playing environment for children
Income Level	Middle to high

Since the product, Polar Heroes is a virtual gaming world and available in two languages; Finnish and English it may be considered that it has a large market. It can be accessed worldwide but the language options bring limits, the child must know one of the two languages in order to get a full experience. This gives two markets, domestic market and global English speaking market. Global markets may be more appealing for the commissioner since domestic markets can increase the profit only so far. And as for this thesis the global markets are more appealing since it brings more variety and opportunities. The main emphasis is especially on the United Kingdom, since the language is guaranteed and there are a lot of potential mothers willing to invest in their children's free time, for example "mommy bloggers" who investigate the opportunities of Internet for mommies and their kids. It is important to convince the opinion leaders of the mothers, since usually mothers believe each other on what is good for their children more often than advertising. These mommy bloggers may be the centres of influencers since nowadays people get their information from the internet, usually blogs and social networking sites. Consumers are influenced by their need, other people, personal characteristics, environmental factors and the marketing efforts when deciding which product to buy, which brand, how heavily is it going to be used, for example (Ruskin-Brown 2006, 41). This means that the prospective customers are influenced by the heavy users of social media, they seek for the information from other people instead just by the company who is offering the needed product. It is important to recognise this since the social media is about the conversation between people. One option could be affiliate marketing, have a co-operation with those bloggers.

The prospective end customer is a mother with children aged between six years and eight years. Mothers are usually the ones to make the final decisions considering their offspring. These mothers are interested in their children's lives and how they spend their free time and especially the time spent online. For them it is important to know that they are in a safe environment with good stimulus. They are also probably willing to invest in educating environment with no violence and want to feel worriless about the online behaviour of their children. The prospective customers use social media regularly and are up-to-date; they follow certain pages on social networking sites and read blogs, are active on Twitter and Facebook and belong to social networking sites' groups. They want to hear product reviews, complaints, praises and such by others, namely influencers and friends.

Positioning refers to positioning the market offer in a way that the target group recognises the business's offering and image. If a business wants to have a competitive advantage they need to be different to the competition. (Kotler et al. 2009, 360.) The goal of positioning is to establish a recognisable brand to maximise the potential benefit for the business (ibid., 361). The following table 2 presents the customer-focused value proposition for the commissioner, which is a result of positioning.

TABLE 2. Value Proposition.

Company & Market offering	Target customers	Benefits	Value proposition
Fantastec Polar Heroes	Mothers with children aged 6 to 8 years, living in UK	Education Entertainment	Children having fun while learning in a safe virtual environment

Identifying the possible competitive advantages is considered to be important. The competitive advantages of the commissioner are the quality, safety and the educative while having fun factor. These values must be delivered not just promised. The commissioner has a capable staff to develop these features in the game world but they should be communicated in the marketing efforts too. The values and benefits showed in the table 2 are all important, communicable, pre-emptive,

distinctive and profitable (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 188.) The ideal situation would be to offer more for less, have more to offer with lower price than the competitors or to offer more with the same price as the competitors do (ibid., 189).

5.1.4 SWOT

SWOT analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, offer an overall evaluation of a company's internal and external marketing environment (Kotler et al 2009, 101). Figure 11 reveals those for the commissioner based on the previous analyses.

	Helpful to achieving objectives	Harmful to achieving objectives
Internal factors	**Strengths** • Sales proposition • Cost of social media marketing • Possible strong brand • Development possibilities • Clear target group	**Weaknesses** • Resources • Poor visibility in social media
External factors	**Opportunities** • Popularity of social media • Affiliate marketing – mommy bloggers	**Threats** • Competitors • New entrants • Buyer power

FIGURE 11. SWOT Analysis of the Commissioner.

The *strengths* of the commissioner are in the market offering. They have good solid sales proposition, which if marketed properly can turn into huge success, every mother wants to educate their children in safe environment. There are also lot of development possibilities for the game world,

few of them have been mentioned in the "Product value analysis". They also have a possibility to build a strong brand in children's gaming industry. They have recognisable characters and those could be utilised more in their marketing and brand building. It is important to have consistent brand image. The cost of social media marketing is fairly low since most of the channels are free and the paid marketing is not too expensive. With fairly low budget but a lot of time customer relationships can be build and it comes easier to convert to prospect audience into customers. It is also good to have a clear target group as the commissioner has; it is easier for example to target the marketing efforts.

The biggest *weakness* at the moment is in resources. The commissioner does not have enough resources to carry out the social media marketing. It is important to find the time every day for social media and to have content in there. Some companies have one person who has been hired to execute the social media marketing and in some cases all the employees in the company are contributing in it. The visibility of the commissioner in social media is poor; it shows that there are no resources available. Visibility in social media nowadays is very important and it creates additional value for the customer since they can directly contact the company.

There are quite a few *opportunities* for the commissioner. The popularity of social media is definitely an opportunity, since more and more people use social media channels and find their information there it is important to be aware of the power of social media. Usually the target group is present in those channels and with integrated social media marketing and traditional marketing they can be reached. As more and more people spend their time online, blogs are a hit. An opportunity could be affiliate marketing, a co-operation with bloggers who may have influence over the target audience.

The main *threat* for the commissioner may be the competition, the existing one and the potential one. There are already a lot of games available for children, some educative and some entertaining, both existing competition. Since the barriers of entry are not too high it is possible for start-ups to enter the market and pose a threat for the existing companies in the industry. Both types of competition should be recognised and find a way to differentiate from them to be competitive. Buyer power may be considered high since few influencers can influence the whole target group to use other brand over the other, given that people seek information from other people rather than just from the companies.

All in all it may be said that the commissioner has quite unique selling proposition, the game is both educative and entertaining, they seem to have taken into a consideration to differentiate product to fit the niche of safe game environment for small children aged between the years of six and eight. They have competition in the industry but by taking this into account and noticing the possible threat of new entrants it is important to find the competitive advantage over others.

5.2 Objectives and Issues

The objectives for using social media marketing in the marketing efforts is to generate more customers, long lasting relationships with them, increase the profits and to get more visibility in the social media channels and finally generate more traffic to the websites of the commissioner and its gaming world. Since the commissioner does not really have presence in the social media at the moment, the objectives here are to experiment the possibilities, establish presence and how to activate in the social media. These objects could be reached if social media marketing is integrated with the other marketing efforts, since marketing in social media is time consuming way. More time should be spent on the social media and building the presence there. It should be noted that it is not enough just to have the presence but also to be active.

To be more specific the main goals are to establish presence, interact with the audience, get more customers and potential customers, and to enhance visibility through various activities in the social media, such as campaigns, advertising and PR. When a company is active on social media it becomes easier for the audience to connect with the company. It also gives credibility for the company since the audience are able to find the company for example from search engines, have free speech and to interact.

Issues may arise from the resources. Resource is the capability of the company to operate in the social media. Issues arise from time and people, does the commissioner have enough time and staff. Social media requires time, but it is possible to be effective if a person is addressed to the social media marketing and should spent approximately 15 to 30 minutes a day or twice a day for operating. There are loads of platforms to choose from to schedule posts for social media, such as Hootsuite, also some social media networking sites provide scheduling themselves.

5.3 Social Media Plan

Like in any marketing efforts also in social media marketing it is important to have a plan and clear goals which are wanted to achieve by using social media. Since the commissioner does not have almost any presence on the social media channels one of the goals is to make it happen, establish presence. After establishing presence it is important to gain attention and get visibility among the target audience. It is important to keep in mind that all these steps need to be made in order to build relationships with the target group and hopefully to convert them into customers. One of the goals of course is to generate traffic to websites and the game world, to have potential customers interested enough to visit the websites and find more information. There are then two options, whether they find the offering interesting enough to become a customer or ignore it after visiting the sites. This chapter is conducted based on those goals.

The target audience as explained before in the chapter "Customer Analysis" is mothers with children aged between six to eight years, and these mothers are divided into two categories; influencers and prospective customers. The target group is divided as it is important to notice the influencers who affect the customer behaviour of others. The influencers are mommy bloggers who have influence on social media and are followed by the target group, and they spend time online daily and are looking for new helpful things for mothers. The prospective customers spend also time online almost daily and follow the influencers in order to get a scoop of new things. The channels; Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest are chosen because both groups are likely to use these channels. Twitter is a microblogging site which is very popular and used, and mothers are very likely to follow mommy bloggers there. Facebook is used by all age groups and therefore it is easy to approach target groups there since they can be found in shared interest groups and even advertised directly. Pinterest then again is popular social media channel among women, it is an idea bank where women share their interests among others and many brands have been successful there.

When conducting social media marketing plan it is also important to remember to keep clear and consistent image about the brand and the promises that are made. The promises that are made to the target audience have to be backed up by the commissioner. They also need to keep in mind the customer in everything they do and be open for them especially online where the target

group can express their opinions out and open. The commissioner has to be easy to approach, react quickly to any questions and comments. (Levinson & Gibson 2010, 21.)

All the social media marketing efforts should be integrated within the channels and also in the traditional media. The image should be consistent in order to provide a coherent image of the brand and not get the target audience confused. The content provided therefore should be uniformed to keep that consistent image, whether it is text, video or images. This is especially when giving information or promoting the brand and the market offering. The characters of the game could be a great source of entertaining stuff and the commissioner could be the source of more informational content, but also here the content should be consistent. Both the characters and the commissioner should be linked together and not act as a solo player. People should be able to link them to the same brand. The idea would be that the commissioner would have its own Facebook pages and Twitter accounts but also the character of the game world would have its own Twitter account at least and would tweet funny random things and also contact people directly in order to raise interest of the target group. This way in Twitter a community could be raised and customer relationships could be built. Of course in the Twitter account there would be a mentioning of the commissioner and vice versa. In the Facebook the character could post on the behalf of the commissioner and those status update would be entertaining. In Pinterest then again the characters both boy and girl heroes could appear every now and then. The content the commissioner provides could relate to their brand, game world and other important issues related to families and other things that mothers would be interested in. It is important to remember to be active, in posting new content, reacting to questions and comments and also to find new upcoming matters that can be helpful for the commissioner.

In order to appear in the search engine results it is important to carry out search engine optimisation. It is important that the website is designed well and search engines find the index and crawl. Titles and tags, descriptions, page names and texts are according to the target groups' searchers and are optimised for them and to the search engine bots. It is also important that the name of the company is on the social media channels. It is also wise to have the contact information available for the audience. (Levinson & Gibson 2010, 30.)

Affiliate marketing could be on solution also for the commissioner since in the United Kingdom there are several bloggers who are mothers and have influence over others reading their blogs.

They could be offered a free trial or access to the game world and their children could test it as could the bloggers. They would then write a review of the game world and could also give codes for free trial to their readers. This could lead to new customers and help to build communities in social media channels.

5.3.1 Message Plan

The message should be consistent in every channel used, whether it is the conventional media or the social media. Message should get attention, hold interest, stimulate desire and get people to act (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 405). As explained in the theory background message contains three stages: message strategy, creative strategy and message source (Kotler et al. 2009, 697). These stages are considered here to create a message which delivers the four stages of AIDA-model explained above.

Message strategy refers to *what to say*, where points of equality and difference may be pointed out, with product performance, extrinsic aspects and a reward of using the market offering. The message should be appealing to mothers with children aged between six to eight years. It should convince them of the safety of the environment where their children are playing, and still be interesting. It should bring up the quality of the offering, the brand and rational reasons why it would be worth to check it out. The commissioner states that their game world for children is educative while fun, where the reward would be rational with result of using the product. The message delivered should be based on the value proposition which was stated in the chapter "Customer analysis". It should deliver the benefits and the value of the product, the core of the message should be on education, entertainment and safety: "Children having fun while learning in a safe environment".

Creative strategy defines *how to say* the message, and it underlines the fact that the content of the message is equally important as the way it is expressed. The informal appeals show the quality and the benefits of the market offering and emotional appeals could raise positive emotions. It is important to keep in mind that social media is a two-way communication channel, the commissioner cannot just push content which advertises their brand and game world, but to listen and have conversation with the target audience. The commissioner can appeal to emotions of the mothers by clearly stating the benefits and the value which is offered.

Message source refers to *where* the message is and *who* is offering it. The message source of the commissioner is inside the company. The media in this case is of course social media, especially the chosen channels; Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest. The message source could be the company itself but if wanted to be more creative they could use the characters in the game world, especially in Twitter, it would be fun and interesting if the characters were the ones to tweet and would be linked to the commissioner. When the message source then again would be the company itself it would bring in specialised knowledge about the game world and other related matters. When these two would be combined the image would be attractive yet trustworthy and in the future a third party could be brought into the combination, the mommy bloggers. Mommy bloggers would add value by giving an independent insight about the brand. This would lead to a positive image about the brand, but first they need to be convinced to do so.

5.3.2 Tactical Plan

The first thing of course is to create accounts on Twitter and Pinterest, Facebook account already exists. Both Twitter and Pinterest provide good instructions for creating accounts and how to get started. In Pinterest there is a separate account creating for businesses that can be found on the site map of the sites (Pinterest a 2013, date of retrieval 1.1.2013).

Create Community

On every channel it is important to find the influencers on that particular channel. It is important to do this in order to start approaching them. It is important to create a community first, and to learn their needs, values and preferences in order to be able to use them in social media marketing. Before starting to promote the game world, it is important to listen and discuss with the target audience.

On Facebook the influencers and potential customers can be found on groups and communities that are related to families and such, and they usually have blogs that are followed by other mothers. When joining the groups it is easier to contact them by taking part to conversations that are on and by providing opinions and help to them. It must be remembered that the commissioner cannot just join the groups and communities and start to advertise their product. It takes time to build relationships and get visibility among the target audience. This is a non-commercial way of

approaching and it includes listening and discussing with the audience in groups that are not about trying to sell the product. It is important to be active and it also might be a good idea to start own Facebook where the commissioner would be active daily in order to build community and then after a while could mention something about their product for a problem solution. It cannot be underlined enough that nobody likes strictly commercial content only. (Fiercer Media 2013, date of retrieval 5.11.2013.)

On Twitter it is important to get loyal followers to build customer relationships. They can be contacted directly, for example like said before by the character of the game world. They would get interested about it when the character would randomly comment on tweets and find from the Twitter account of the character the link to the commissioner's account. This way they would get familiar with the company and their offering. The influencers can be found from Twitter by searching with hashtags, #family, #mommy and #kids for example or by searching with Twitter search, search.twitter.com, where over 100 million users can be found. There people can be searched by words, language, people, attitudes, dates, containing links, retweets and specific distance of a city, province, state or region. It is possible to search humans based on their thoughts and their interests and then after finding them engage with them. (Levinson & Gibson 2010, 109-110.)

On Pinterest to find the pinners who have influence over other it is important to tailor the pins for the target audience. It is also important to have boards with content on them in order to people visiting the account to find it interesting. It is also important to show inspiring stuff not just the products but it is important to remember to have something about them also. The use of characters and the game world can be inspiring if they are used for giving ideas and entertaining people. It is possible to share videos also on Pinterest. It is possible after creating community to promote Pinterest account and to showcase the pins by sharing them on other channels too. (Pinterest b, date of retrieval 5.11.2013.) It is important to follow other pinners and pin their content too. It is easy to pin things from all over the Internet by adding a pin-button to the web browser.

Engage

Like said earlier social media marketing is engaging with the customers. Engagement refers to conversations with the customers and listening to market place and responding to it. The trick is to make them feel that they are really listened to. Every interaction should add value, entertain or

inform people. When building a community it is important to be active, to engage the target audience. (Levinson & Gibson 2010, 15.)

It is important to provide value adding content to the customers and potential customers. The content should be entertaining or informational. It should be constant and active on every channel used. Every day there should be something going online, at least in Twitter and Pinterest, on Facebook at least every other day since people tend to ignore posts if they feel they are spammy, but every day the commissioner should take part in conversations and listen to the market place. In order to target the content it is important to understand the customer and this comes from building the community, when proper groups and communities are found and target group is properly listened. Value adding content could be free trials of the game world, white papers to educate them about the product, also games and competitions are usually interesting for this kind of target group.

The content should be customised to the target audience. The content should be appealing to them and rewarding. By asking questions and taking them on board for example in colour schemes of something related to the game world, like the outfits of the characters. They should be activated by interesting content, like polls and voting, for example the best past time activities for children. It is important to have their curiosity by telling them about new things and what is going on, in order to them know that the commissioner and game world are on a constant evolving. (Miletsky 2010, 413.) On Facebook it is possible to have applications and to create a competition around it, or for example a guided tour around the game world in order for them to understand what kind of environment their children are going to be playing in. On Twitter to create content to the target group it is wise to use hashtags that are related to their interests and to the industry. When the characters contact the potential customers directly, they should also use hashtags in order to people searching with that word to find those tweets and comments. On Pinterest then again it is about giving ideas, inspiration and showing the values of the company. This happens by repining posts from others, pinning own content and sometimes something about the product. It is important to remember to link all the channels together.

Promotional Efforts

On social media channels it is also possible to do promotional efforts like advertising and PR, of course the whole idea is to market the market offering by engaging customers. Facebook for ex-

ample offers possibility to advertise a status update or to make an advertising campaign. Advertising can help the company to have more likes on the page, promote page posts, and get new users for example. Facebook offers quite specific targeting on the audience, like location, age, gender, pages they've liked and so on. It is important to have appealing picture, get the interest by headline and to have an effective advertising text. Facebook provides analytics for the campaigns and shows which ads have been more interesting. It is important to improve the ads one part at a time and have multiple versions of them. (Facebook 2013, date of retrieval 7.11.2013.) Facebook has provided clear steps on how to make and manage ads. On the adverts the use of the characters would be eye catching, because of the good graphics and colours. The headline could be related to fun, education, Polar Heroes, children, safety, for example "Polar Heroes to educate your children" "Fun, educative adventure for children!"

On Pinterest is possible to have competitions, such as "show us your best pins of your Christmas story on Pinterest!" or "Pin and show us your summer adventure!" and create a pin board of them. Have simple instructions and make it easy to get involved. It is important to keep in mind that Pinterest cannot be used as sponsor or endorser of the company or contest. There are also other rules that need to be followed which can be found from business.pinterest.com/brand-guidelines/. (Pinterest c 2013, date of retrieval 7.11.2013.) These competitions can be promoted in Facebook and Twitter: "Check out our competition on #Pinterest! #Christmas #story".

Twitter also provides ads. It is possible to promote accounts, tweets and trends and use Twitter analytics to track the components of ad activity. Promoting accounts helps the commissioner to build the community of influencers. Twitter offers targeting options of interest, gender, geography for example, in order to the account to be visible for people who are of a target group. (Twitter a 2013, date of retrieval 7.11.2013.) The account will show up in search results and "who to follow" section. Tweet ads are for reaching out to current and potential customers. Targeting happens via interest, gender, geography, keywords, device or similarity to existing followers. These ads appear on user timelines and search results. (Twitter b 2013, date of retrieval 7.11.2013.) It could be useful for the commissioner to promote their tweets and to gain the attention of target audience. On Twitter it is also possible to use images and it could be a good idea for a promoted tweet. The graphic again could be from the game world and the message could have emotional appealing, kind of a story or a feeling with 160 character limit.

All in all the purpose on advertising and promotional efforts is to build stronger community and find new potential customers. The ads, campaigns, competitions and others should be created according to the needs, wants and feelings of the customer. They should be interesting and engaging. It supports the other efforts made in the social media to get more visibility and followers.

Useful Tips

Here some useful tips are introduced. As said before it is important to multi-channel, have many social media channels, establish presence there and also to link all the channels together and also the websites. On the websites there should be logos and plug-ins of the social media channels in use and to be possible to like them or follow them via the website, or to recommend the commissioner and their offering via them.

On Facebook it is possible to have plug-ins to other social media channels, where it is possible to have a link to the Twitter account and/or show the twitter feed and to have a link to Pinterest. It is possible to link Pinterest to Facebook to post all the pins also to Facebook or some of them. It is important to inform the likers, pinners and followers about the other channels used and sometimes repost the posts across the channels. Sometimes they can also just mention: "We're also on #Facebook, like us also there! #Fantastec #PolarHeroes" on Twitter or "to know what those funny little heroes of the game are up to, find them on Twitter @PolarHeroes !" on Facebook, or mention or repost pins from Pinterest. Reposting posts on every channel and using hashtags both on Twitter and Facebook is important in order to target group to find the commissioner.

The graphics used in marketing and social media should be consistent. The colours, font and others should be uniformed in order to give coherent brand image. It can get quite confusing if the commissioner always uses different themes on colouring and graphics so it is important in order to build a brand to have these things discussed. Fantastec can have its own theme and Polar Heroes its own.

In order to manage all the social media channels there are some helpful tools offered by external sources. There are Tweetdeck and Hootsuite to mention for managing some of the social media platforms. Tweetdeck is for Twitter and Facebook. There it is possible to view updates, record and share videos. It is possible to also gather group of contacts. Hootsuite is web based and fully integrated with Twitter. There it is possible to schedule posts for Twitter and Facebook at least. It

is also possible to view updates, retweets, comments and many other things. Basically it is for managing the things that going on, on Facebook and Twitter. Hootsuite also provides analytical reporting of click-through-rates for links, geographic and time. (Levinson & Gibson 2010, 77.) Commissioner should take for example Hootsuite to the mix of social media platforms for management purposes. Hootsuite provides guide to get started. It eases managing the multi-channelling as it can be followed in one place.

All the measures taken in the social media should be measured. As introduced before easiest way could be utilizing the services of Google analytics. It is a free platform which monitors the web traffic and reveals the data in real time and in detail. It provides access to information that marketer needs, such as, visits, page views, bounce rates and average time on site. (Safko 2012, 591; Miletsky 2010, 440-441.) Social mention then again reveals all the comments on social media channels about the company and also looks for trends. It is easy to use; there is a search field where company's name or offering can be typed and social mention track down the data. RSS feed and email alert can be ordered from Social mention. (Social mention 2013, date of retrieval 8.11.2013; Safko 2012, 591.) Table 3 is conducted based on the actions that should be taken on social media.

TABLE 3. The Actions Recommended for the Commissioner.

Channel	Message	Tactic	Resource
Facebook	-Deliver the values of the game world →Fun →Education →Safety -Content about other things than the company and its offering -Content about the company and the offering - Entertaining content	-Build community -Join existing communities -Take part in conversations -Advertise -Competitions →Promote the competitions going on Pinterest -Use of Facebook apps -Content at least every other day -Visit updates from the characters of the game world -Link with other channels	-One in charge of the daily chatting →Consistent content
Twitter	-Deliver the values of the game world →Fun →Education →Safety -Content about other things than the company and its offering -Content about the company and the offering - Entertaining content -Use of hashtags	-Contact influencers with a game character -Link the Twitter accounts together: 1 for information, 1 for entertainment -Daily content -Share content from Pinterest & Facebook →link the channels	-One in charge of twitter accounts →Consistent content
Pinterest	-Same as above -Pin Boards on →family matters →Entertainment →Safety →Education	-Build community for ideas and inspiration -Follow others -Contests -Daily Pinning -Link to other channels	-One in charge of daily pinning, following

5.3.3 Resources

It is important to identify who is responsible of implementing and maintaining the social media tools and plan. It is hard job to figure out who fits the position best; usually it is someone with experience over web and has some networks already in order to reach huge number of people. Existing staff already knows the corporate climate of the company and may be able to produce authentic content and conversations with potential customers. (Holloman 2012, 96.) Therefore sometimes those responsible for social media can be recruited from the existing staff and in some cases it is wise to employ a new employee to do that (Safko 2010, 714). Social media efforts can be divided to more than one person; it can be that every employee has to have a 15 minutes social media moment per day or every other day.

The commissioner of this thesis does not have enough time at the moment to carry out social media marketing they are able hire interns from Universities or Universities of applied sciences, in most cases they have mandatory intern period and do not have to be paid. It may take time to point them the right direction but usually interns are keen on learning new things and are willing to learn. They may need to be taught on how to communicate in a way that is suitable for the company and to be consistent and coherent on all the channels used. It is important to have uniformed content around the web and on the conventional media. It would be wise for the commissioner to have one or more interns to manage social media marketing with help from the staff.

Of course social media marketing like any other marketing requires budgeting. Budget must cover the marketing costs and staff costs. Social media is free of charge and sometimes an easy way to reach and engage customers. Therefore the budget for social media does not necessarily have to be huge, even though it might be wise to budget some funds to paid marketing, as it is possible for companies to advertise on social media channels. The employees get paid on the basis of the terms of the contract terms and conditions. When conducting the budget it is wise to remember that the effects of social media marketing do not usually show right away but in the long run.

6 CONCLUSION

The research task of this thesis was to create a social media marketing plan for the commissioner. The thesis was conducted based on the marketing theories and social media marketing theories and then applied them to practice. This part will discuss the results and outcomes of the project.

Social media is a phenomenon that affects businesses and marketing. Nowadays it is important to have established presence in social media in order to reach for target audience and other way round. The commissioner, Fantastec, operates in the digital world as the product is online. The marketing activities of games offered for children are usually carried out online as the cost is often quite low or close to nothing. The commissioner does not have really any presence on the social media and therefore it is important for them to implement social media into their marketing efforts. The social media phenomenon is therefore introduced via marketing theory background and social media theory in order to give an understanding how these link together. Theoretical background is used in order to understand how social media differ from traditional marketing but also to show the similarities that can be found, such as the importance of customer relationships. It is also important to understand the fundamentals of the social media in order to be successful. Social media is a two-way communication channel where the company cannot communicate its messages one-sided only, but to interact with the target audience and engage them in the conversation.

The analyses performed for the social media plan pointed out that the social media is necessary addition for the marketing activities. The external environment for the commissioner is competitive as there are companies offering games for children and there is threat of new entrants. The competitive advantage of the commissioner is that the game world they are offering is fun while educative and the environment is safe. The target group is active online and is constructed from influencers and the prospect customers and therefore social media could be also likely addition to the marketing. The lack of resources could be a downside for the commissioner but can also be fixed with a use of interns, as the issue now is the lack of time and the number of employees. Social media offers low cost opportunity for the commissioner to build customer relationships and convert new customers with a global reach.

The goal of social media marketing is to increase visibility and gain profit, and this was also the goal for the thesis. The plan analyses the external environment, product and divides the customers into two segments; influencers and potential customers. The social media channels chosen; Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest, are requested by the commissioner and are right for their purposes also in the opinion of the author. All these three channels are highly used in the destination country and also by the target group. The plan explains what is sought to achieve and how these goal may be achieved. The main idea is to communicate with the customers on their terms, as said before social media is a two-way communication channel and it is important to listen to the market place and people. It is also important to communicate the message which is customised to the target audience in a desirable way. These matters have been considered when the plan was conducted.

The main matter to understand was that social media is about communicating with the customer and building customer relationships in order to gain profit, while it is time consuming it is also worth to devote to, as traditional media cannot provide such opportunity to communicate with the customers, and also more and more people seek answers online. The purpose was to show to the commissioner how to grow the community of customers and to engage them. The thesis project seeks to give further understanding of the social media and how it can be used in marketing. The idea is to establish presence for the commissioner on social media and to encourage communication between the company and its audience, directly by the company or the characters of the game world.

7 DISCUSSION

The goals for this thesis were to provide social media marketing plan for the commissioner and to examine social media as a part of marketing activities. The choice of topic came from the author and was suggested to the commissioner after examination of the social media presence of the commissioner. Both parties agreed that there would be a need for social media to be integrated to other marketing efforts. The author was fairly familiar with the topic as she had been conducting social media marketing in her internship. The process started with a thorough theoretical framework based on marketing theories, which was conducted as a desktop research. The path from marketing communications to social media marketing was examined and presented on the thesis. After the theoretical background was conducted it was used to support practice in the empirical part of the thesis. The methodology all in all was a qualitative in nature and carried out as a desktop research. The theoretical background and empirical part gave a bigger picture of social media marketing as an addition to marketing activities.

The thesis process provided the author more thorough understanding of social media as a part of marketing. The main outcomes of the thesis were on social media marketing and what are the fundamentals of it and how they can be utilized for the commissioner's purposes. The purpose was to point out the actions that should be made and what should be emphasised when carrying out the social media plan. Social media allows the company to engage and interact with the customer and to increase the visibility. It also brings the company and the customer closer to each other which help creating customer relationships. As the game world Polar Heroes has no presence on the social media at the moment it is more than preferable to enhance it now.

At first it was rather hazy what the actual project would be, but after meeting with the tutor teacher few times it became clearer and the result was social media plan. At the beginning the plan was to also conduct a test campaign on Facebook but was later on decided to cut off as the campaign would have taken too much time due to the rather tight schedule. The motivation to examine social media as a marketing tool became of interest after the purpose of the thesis was decided. The method chosen was of author's interest but it would have been more positive for the process if the research task would have been precise from the beginning. The theoretical framework gave a comprehensive base for the empirical part and resulted as an understandable plan. Scheduling

of the thesis was prolonged due to too tight schedule at first but the initial plan was to complete the thesis in the autumn of 2013 which was successfully kept. The theoretical background was built on the theories from marketing experts, which provides more reliable outcome. The framework was conducted with the aim of using variety of sources in order to present as reliable work as possible.

The author created social media plan for the commissioner in order for them to know what should be do. Social media plan consists of message plan and tactical plan. The delegation of tasks should be divided between the interns and the marketing personnel. The marketing personnel would teach the interns on what to do and how. The main emphasis would be on building communities and engaging customers by two-way communication. The work is daily and should be clearly divided.

For future development tasks it might be interesting to conduct an action based research where business students could conduct a marketing campaign on the social media channels for Polar Heroes. It would multi-channelled using the chosen social media channels by conducting promotional efforts. Other future development arose during the thesis project, how to exploit social media marketing in business to business, B2B, marketing. The commissioner has suggested that they are interested in finding new partners and therefore it would a likely continuity for this thesis to explore B2B marketing in social media. Of course there is countless number of possibilities for future projects as social media provides various opportunities and the commissioner should take these into consideration and outsource them for business students to have new innovative ideas.

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