



Instagram Marketing Strategy: Enhancing Social Media Image and Engagement

Tigo Clothing Oy

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ABSTRACT

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Social media marketing has become popular in today's marketing world. Businesses must adapt to new customer engagement and acquisition strategies in order to remain competitive and relevant in the marketplace. One such strategy is an effective approach to leverage social media platforms, such as using Instagram as a marketing tool. The purpose of the thesis is to develop an effective Instagram marketing plan for Tigo Clothing by establishing a clear Instagram marketing strategy. The objective is to enhance Tigo's Instagram presence through engaging social media content that reflects the brand, its core values and store's layout. This is crucial to make the appearance even stronger to attract potential customers to visit the store when its operations are currently limited to its physical store. The focus is on improving visual appeal, increasing brand awareness, enhancing engagement, and driving sales.

The author conducted exploratory studies, including an extensive literature review. The literature review served as secondary data and provided theoretical framework to understand the effective implementation of social media marketing on Instagram. The research method used in this thesis was a mixed research approach. For background information and consumer perspective, a qualitative research method was used by interviewing the company owner and three active retail fashion consumers. Primary data collection involved a quantitative method by testing hypotheses for Tigo's Instagram account by monitoring the results from Instagram insights and benchmarking successful Finnish-based fashion Instagram accounts.

Benchmarking provided insights into social media habits, best practices, and competition analysis. Testing hypotheses guided the development of content and visual enhancements for Tigo's Instagram account with the aid of insights data to assess their effectiveness in engagement. In-depth interviews ensured the strategy aligned with industry best practices.

The findings discovered various tools and practices available and identified the most suitable ones for the company's Instagram account. By following a structured approach with specific steps, the marketing strategy was succeeded. These steps included defining goals, identifying the target audience, establishing the brand's value and competition proposition, creating a content strategy, advertising and tracking the results.

Key words: social media marketing, Instagram, engagement

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ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

E-commerce	Electronic commerce
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
PPC	Pay-Per-Click advertising
ROI	Return on income
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
SMO	Social Media Optimization

1 INTRODUCTION

In today's business world, establishing an online presence is crucial due to the growing trend of online purchases and the influence of social media. Digitalization has significantly impacted consumer behavior, providing businesses with an opportunity to effectively engage with customers, build trust, and establish a strong brand identity through digital platforms. Businesses must adapt to new customer engagement and acquisition strategies in order to remain competitive and relevant in the marketplace. One such strategy is an effective approach to leverage social media platforms, such as using Instagram as a marketing tool. (Deiss & Henneberry 2020). Considering the visually appealing content and wide popularity of Instagram, the platform has become a powerful tool for businesses to increase brand awareness and interact with their customers (Iseli 2021).

The objective of this thesis is to create an Instagram marketing strategy tailored for Tigo Clothing. The thesis aims to focus on two main aspects: developing engaging social media content and maintaining a consistent visual marketing approach that aligns with Tigo's brand identity. By utilizing Instagram as a powerful marketing tool, the thesis aims to develop a marketing plan to enhance customer engagement and optimize social media content which would attract more people and motivate them to visit Tigo's physical store. In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, staying up to date with the latest trends and visual aesthetics is essential for meeting customer interests and remaining competitive. Consequently, the author found this thesis topic holding significant relevance within the current business environment and was excited to conduct the research and find the best practices to reach the goals. This introduction part will delve into further details regarding the case company's background, the purpose and objectives of the thesis, followed by overviewing the thesis process.

1.1 Case company

Tigo Clothing Oy, registered under the name of Tigo Clothes, is a small brick-and-mortar retail clothing store located on Yliopistonkatu, one of the busiest streets in the heart of Turku, Finland. The company is established in 2013 by a couple who have been running the business together ever since. Tigo Clothing

operations are currently limited to its physical store, as the company does not have an e-commerce platform. E-commerce refers to online buying and selling of goods, products, or services. It involves conducting commercial transactions electronically through websites or online platforms. The emerge of e-commerce has brought about a fundamental change in the business landscape, particularly with the rise of online shopping, offering convenience and easy accessibility. This shift has changed business operations and consumer shopping behaviors in today's world. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 505; Blythe 2012, 180.) Despite not adopting e-commerce, the company has successfully maintained its profitability and presence on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook to promote its brand and the clothing it offers.

Tigo Clothing stands out in the market by creating a warm and inviting environment, offering carefully selected clothing that cater to customers of all ages and body types. The company ensures a perfect fit for every individual, prioritizing customer satisfaction and comfort. The store caters to both men and women and retails high-quality clothing from renowned brands (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Tigo Clothing's retailing brands.

One of the defining features of Tigo Clothing is its personalized and friendly customer experience. The store is designed to make customers feel at home, and the staff ensure that customers have a pleasant and knowledgeable shopping experience. The company also has a focus on sustainable fashion, which is becoming increasingly important in the retail clothing industry. However, the company also faces several challenges in the market, including increasing competition from online retailers, changing consumer trends, and economic fluctuations.

In recent years, the retail clothing industry in Finland has seen several trends emerge. According to the company owner, one of the most notable trends is the rise of sustainable and ethical fashion, as consumers become more aware of the environmental and social impacts of fast fashion. Furthermore, there is a growing demand for online shopping in retail fashion as well, particularly among consumers who value convenience and accessibility. Despite these challenges and trends, Tigo Clothing has remained successful due to its unique position in the market. The company values itself on providing personalized attention to each customer, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere, and building a strong relationship with its customers. The products are thoughtfully chosen to ensure that they are of the highest quality, while also aligning with the latest fashion trends. This attention to detail and commitment to quality has helped Tigo Clothing establish itself as a brand of distinction, catering to consumers who value for high-end clothing.

Tigo Clothing currently relies on Instagram and Facebook as its primary marketing channels. The company's Facebook page has currently 3,5 thousand followers and maintains an impressive rating of 4,6 out of 5 based on customer reviews. All the marketing content created and shared on Instagram is automatically forwarded and synchronized with the company's Facebook page. As a result, what is posted on Instagram is also displayed on their Facebook page, ensuring consistency and wider reach across both platforms. Therefore, Instagram plays an important role on their marketing channels. However, specific campaigns have been exclusively released on Facebook to target the audience on that platform, based on the demographic differences compared to Instagram. While the company has been working to enhance its Instagram presence, there is no defined structure or strategy in place for its online activities. Despite this, Tigo Clothing remains active on Instagram and is interested in exploring new approaches to increase its brand awareness. In the thesis Tigo Clothing will be referred to simply as "Tigo".

1.2 Purpose and objectives of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a comprehensive Instagram marketing plan for the case company Tigo Clothing, as they do not have one yet. The company wants to only focus its business on the physical store and is not interested in expanding its business to e-commerce in the future. Therefore, the thesis aims to provide a clear strategy that includes ways to improve visually enhanced Instagram marketing by bringing the company's social media image up to today's standards, which can generate more interest from people, increase engagement with customers, and sales. This is crucial to emphasize and make the company's appearance even stronger to attract customers to visit the store when operating without e-commerce. Keeping up with the latest trends and visual appearance to meet customer's interests in business is especially important in ever-changing digital world. The objective of the thesis is to develop and enhance social media marketing for Tigo's Instagram that corresponds with the store's layout, representing their brand and values. The goal is to improve the visual appeal through the utilization of Instagram tools and identify the most suitable practices for the company. Visual contents will be integrated into this thesis. The research is guided by answering the following research questions.

Question 1: *How can Tigo Clothing develop an effective Instagram marketing strategy that enhances its social media image, generates more interest from potential customers and increases brand awareness?*

This is the main research question, and it answers how to create a comprehensive Instagram marketing strategy that can effectively enhance Tigo's Instagram marketing and communication strategies, leading to improved customer engagement, satisfaction, loyalty, and increased acquisition of new customers.

Question 2: *What kind of visual marketing look would suit the company?*

This question focuses specifically on the visual elements of the marketing strategy and serves as a guide for creating visually appealing content that effectively showcase the company's brand and values.

Question 3: *What are the best practices on Instagram that the company can adopt to enhance its customer engagement?*

This question is to identify effective engagement tools that can help the company improve its communication with potential customers as well as current customers.

1.3 Thesis process

The thesis begins by introducing the case company and outlining the purpose and objectives of the study. The second chapter provides a thorough review of the relevant literature on Instagram marketing, including marketing channels, importance of marketing in today's digital world, social media, Instagram as social media platform, and social media marketing strategy. In the third chapter, the thesis methodology is explained in detail. This includes an overview of how the study was designed and conducted, as well as an explanation of the validity, reliability, and limitations of the research. Moving on to the main focus of the thesis, the fourth chapter presents the Instagram marketing plan that was developed based on the analysis of the data collected during the research, as well as the secondary data, literature. The plan considers the company's initial stage, competition analysis, content strategy, analysis metrics and consumer perspectives. The Instagram marketing plan outlines the specific tactics that are aligned with the purpose and objectives of the thesis and answers the research questions. Finally, the thesis concludes with a summary of the key findings and recommendations for the company. The recommendations will be based on the analysis and insights gained throughout the study, with the goal of helping the company improve its Instagram marketing strategy and achieve greater success on Instagram in the future.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review provides an overview and clarification of concepts relevant to marketing, social media and Instagram marketing. These concepts and theories serve as the theoretical framework of the thesis. The literature establishes the foundation for the thesis and constitutes part of the secondary data. The literature is collected from various recent and relevant sources, such as books, articles, blogs, and previous studies. In particular, the literature review will highlight the marketing trends and the importance of marketing in today's digital world, the advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing, Instagram features and tools, as well as Instagram for businesses and its importance in marketing. Providing clear definitions of these terms helps to understand the topic and important concepts to consider while creating an Instagram marketing plan for the case company.

2.1 Marketing and social media

This chapter of literature review provides a brief overview of marketing, which includes the evolution of marketing, the impact of technology and the role of social media in marketing nowadays.

2.1.1 Definition of marketing

Today's marketing environment has undergone significant changes with the availability of new media tools that provide access to larger audiences and target markets. The focus has shifted from transactional marketing to building consumer loyalty and brand desirability. To stay competitive, organizations and marketers need to adapt and leverage new technologies as a competitive advantage. With the rise of Internet publications and social networks, customers now have easy access to information, discussions, feedback, and reviews about brands and companies. This accessibility has changed the way consumers connect and share their experiences, making research and information gathering effortless than it was a decade ago. (Petersen, Person & Nash 2014, 1-2.) To understand what marketing is, it is crucial to start with the basis and define the concepts that this thesis is focusing on.

The definition of marketing can be described as a set of activities that happens between an organization and its customers. The goal is to persuade customers to choose the marketer's company over its competitors. In order to achieve the goal, marketers must offer customers products or services that meet their desires and expectations while delivering fair prices. The central idea in marketing is customer-centricity, which prioritizes the customer's needs and preferences when making marketing choices. (Blythe 2012, 4.) According to Kotler, Armstrong & Harris (2016), to create value for customers, it is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of a company's consumers and the marketplace it serves. This initial step requires understanding the customer's perspective, which can be challenging. As suggested by Kotler et al. (2016), understanding the customer's needs and wants is the core of marketing, and it lays the foundation for creating value. (p. 6.)

To differentiate the definition between needs and wants, Blythe (2012) explains that a need is a perceived lack, while a want is a specific satisfier that can be transformed into demands (p. 15). Identifying, creating, and developing customer's wants can influence demand, making it possible to become a reality. Therefore, satisfying customer wants is extremely important in this context. (Blythe 2012, 15.) According to Kotler et al. (2016), the process of creating and capturing customer value can be broken down into five steps (see Figure 2). The first four stages focus on generating value for customers and developing connections with them, while the final phase involves capturing value from customers by receiving feedback. (p. 6.)

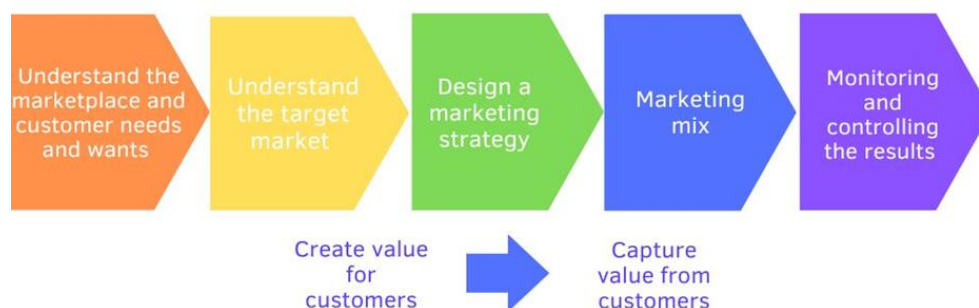


Figure 2. The marketing process (Kotler et al. 2016, 6)

To gain an understanding of the marketing process, marketing aims to achieve two key objectives: awareness and engagement. The first goal is to acquire new customers by emphasizing the benefits of a product or service, which requires proactive efforts from the business to reach out to people. The second goal is to retain customers by persistently meeting or exceeding their expectations and satisfaction levels with the product or service (Moore & Niketh 2010). To achieve these objectives, companies must first understand their customers and the market, and then create a marketing strategy to deliver a company's value proposition to its target customers. Marketing strategy identifies the target market and develops a plan for reaching them. (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman & Hanse 2019, 9.) To implement the plan, companies use marketing tools known as marketing mix, which includes four essential elements: product, price, place, and promotion. By focusing on these four key elements, companies can create a product or service that meets customer needs, sets a competitive price, ensures customer accessibility, and effectively promotes offerings to increase sales and gain a competitive advantage. (Ya-Ling & Li 2018.)

2.1.2 Marketing channels

Businesses can use numerous marketing channels to achieve their goals. Successful communication with targeted customers is important for businesses. With the rapid development of technology and the active role of customers in communication, companies need to carefully evaluate which channels are best suited to their marketing goals and target audience. To reach their target audience, companies have access to a wide range of marketing channels. (Kotler et al. 2019, 591-592.) Kotler et al (2019) identifies the most popular channels being direct marketing (e.g. over the phone or in person), social media marketing, content marketing, word-of-mouth marketing and online marketing. Online marketing involves websites, email, search engine marketing (SEM) and mobile marketing. (p. 564-601.) SEM is one of the key marketing channels that is experiencing significant growth, particularly in the form of search advertisements. These advertisements are strategically placed on search engines to attract users and drive them to a specific website when they search for relevant keywords. SEM comprises two key disciplines: search engine optimization (SEO), which focuses on enhancing a company's organic search rankings, and paid search

marketing, which utilizes sponsored ads based on a pay-per-click (PPC) advertising model. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 36-38),

Since the company has prioritized Instagram as the primary marketing channel, the author will focus on social media marketing. Before diving into social media marketing, it is essential to understand the importance of marketing in today's digital world and understand what digital marketing entails. This knowledge of current marketing trends will be explained in the next paragraph.

2.1.3 Importance of marketing in today's digital world

It is very noticeable that marketing has gone through significant changes over the years, and various trends have emerged to match the technology and lifestyles of its era. Marketers have come up with new ways to promote their products, such as through websites, apps, blogs, videos, and social media. One of the marketing channels, digital marketing, has revolutionized the marketing world in recent years. With technology, marketing has become more innovative, interactive, and connected than ever before. (Kotler et al. 2016, 5.)

It should be emphasized in today's business environment where competition is effectively utilizing the internet that businesses need to keep up with their online presence to remain competitive. (Petersen et al. 2014, 1-2). In the digital world, marketing is fundamental to the success of any business. It serves the primary purpose of promoting and selling products and services. The reason why digital marketing holds significant importance is its accuracy and measurability. While traditional advertising methods, such as newspaper ads are limited in their ability to target audiences, digital advertising enables greater accuracy in reaching users, based on interests and factors, such as age, gender, and location. Digital marketing plays a crucial role in building customer-centric businesses that thrive in active and interactive conversations with customers. Through ongoing dialogue, customers can express their interests, make requests, offer suggestions for improvements, and provide valuable feedback. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 13-14.) While digital marketing and SEO are essential today, traditional marketing techniques such as print, radio, and TV are still effective and suitable for certain types of businesses (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer & Johnston 2009

,562). Moreover, digital marketing often proves to be more cost-effective than traditional methods. It is crucial for businesses to recognize the significance of maintaining a strong online presence to remain competitive in today's business environment, where competitors effectively utilize the internet. By establishing closer connections with customers and understanding their needs, digital marketing adds value to products, expands distribution channels, and drives sales through targeted campaigns across various digital media channels. Additionally, leveraging the company's website enables seamless customer acquisition, sales, and after-sales support. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 13-14.)

In addition to the evolution of marketing in the digital world, it is also important to note the increasing importance of data and analytics in marketing. By taking advantage of the information available, businesses can gain valuable insights into consumer behaviour, preferences, and trends. This, in turn, allows them to create customized and targeted marketing campaigns that improve conversion rates that measure the website traffic and the campaigns, as well as customer satisfaction. Additionally, customer engagement and experience have become central, as social media and other online platforms offer customers more opportunities to interact with companies and share their experiences. Therefore, building positive customer experiences and relationships has become central to maintaining customer loyalty. Adapting to the latest technology and consumer behaviour, utilizing data analysis and analytics, prioritizing customer engagement and experience are key factors that affect companies' success in the digital world. (Deiss & Henneberry 2020.)

2.1.4 Social media as a marketing channel

When the marketing has shifted its place and become more digital, one of the biggest digital marketing channels is social media. It can be defined as a new form of media that involves the use of digital technologies for connecting and communicating with friends, family, and communities (Manning 2014). Social media encompasses different forms of content, such as text, images, and videos, and enables users to create and share information publicly through different channels (Iseli 2021).

With the rise of digital and mobile technologies, interactivity on a large scale became easier for people than ever before. This led to the new phenomenon that allowed for more options for media consumption. In contrast to the times, where people were limited to a few sources of information, nowadays, people have the ability to seek information from several sources and engage in discussions with others through online message forums in response to the information they face. This provides an excellent platform for businesses to offer their customers up-to-date and specific information. (Manning 2014). In contrast to traditional advertising methods such as newspaper ads, social media advertising allows for a more precise approach to reaching audiences. Social media platforms provide an excellent chance to create significant relationships and encourage social interaction through active communication among users. With just an internet connection, anyone can create a social media profile and share any content they desire. (Chaffey et al. 2009,562). However, 13 years old is the required age limit on any social media platform (NSPCC n.d.).

According to Statista (2023b), the four most popular social media channels currently are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram (Figure 3). The figure presents the most used social platforms globally, including messenger and chat applications as well. The statistic is based on the number of monthly active users as of January 2023.

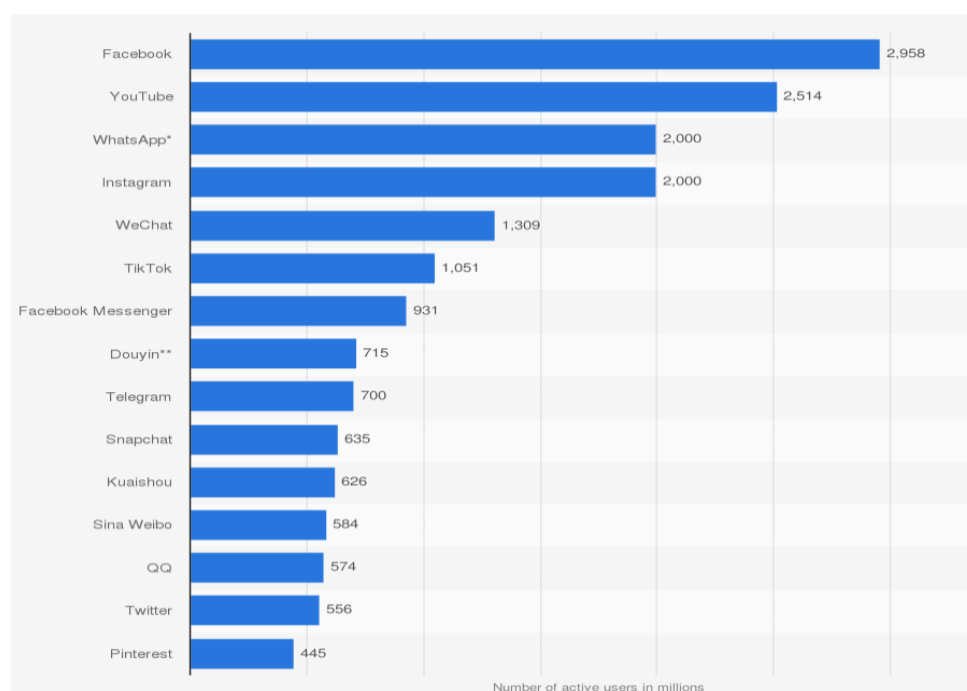


Figure 3. Most Popular social networks worldwide as of January 2023 (Statista 2023b)

As social media grows in popularity, businesses need to understand how these platforms can be utilized effectively to connect with their target audience. Each social media platform has unique features that require businesses to tailor their marketing strategies accordingly. For instance, Instagram is an excellent platform for showcasing products and services by creating visually appealing content, while Facebook is more suitable for text-based presentation, which allows businesses to communicate with their audience and build brand loyalty. (Iseli 2021.)

By knowing the pros and cons of each social media platform, businesses can create a specific plan for their social media marketing and get better results. (Kotler et al. 2019, 610-611.) Social media presence is nowadays essential for businesses, as it serves a tool for an excellent opportunity for businesses to grow and increase visibility. According to HubSpot, “90% of marketers have reported that social media has increased exposure for their business, and 75% of marketers are reporting on how their campaigns are directly influencing revenue” (2022). This is why companies often use social media platforms for marketing purposes. Despite the benefits, social media also brings with it certain challenges. In order to look at both the pros and cons of social media as a marketing channel, the following factors provide insight into these aspects, adapted the information according to Kotler et al. (2019, 611-612) and Chaffey and Smith (2017, 388).

Advantages

- Reach a larger audience.
- Customer engagement. Direct and personal connection with their customers and audience. This can help to build trust and brand loyalty.
- Brand awareness and discovery.
- Influence purchasing decisions.
- Cost-effective content creation. Creating and sharing visual content without having to pay for advertising. Visually attractive content can increase positive interactions.

- Access to paid advertising.
- Driving website traffic. Social media can drive traffic to a business's website, increasing the chances of sales.
- Business insights. Social media analytics provide businesses with valuable insights into customer behavior, preferences, and trends. In addition, providing tools to evaluate and track businesses' performance and success in reaching their goals. This helps in future marketing strategies and decisions. (Chambers, Morehead & Sallee 2020,20.)

Disadvantages & challenges

- Negative feedback and privacy concerns. Social media offers a possibility to leave a comment or review, which puts businesses at risk of receiving negative feedbacks that can spread rapidly.
- Competition.
- Ever-changing algorithms. Algorithm is a system that automatically evaluates, and sorts of content based on a user's engagement and interests. Social media algorithms are continually changing, and it makes it challenging for businesses to keep up with best practices and maintain a consistent presence on these platforms. (Lange 2023.)
- Time-consuming. Social media marketing requires ongoing creation of fresh and regular content, and continuous engagement with the audience across multiple platforms. This time-consuming of social media marketing can pose a challenge for businesses.
- Fake information.

2.2 Instagram overview

Instagram is one of the social media channels and is designed for sharing photos and videos through a mobile app. Instagram was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in 2010 and is currently owned by Meta Platforms, Inc., the parent company of Facebook. (Eldridge 2023.) With over 2 billion monthly active users, Instagram has become one of the largest social media platforms globally (Statista 2023b). Instagram enables users to share their lifestyles and life events through visual content. Engagement is a crucial aspect of the platform, and users

participate by commenting, liking, and sharing. Creating visually appealing and captivating content can help users gain a following outside of their current follower base, providing them with an opportunity to influence Instagram users worldwide. (Coles 2017, 122.) Instagram is especially popular among young people, but its distribution has been leveraged to older generation over time. In order to gain insights into the distribution of Instagram users, the following Figure 4 displays the global audience by age and gender. (Statista 2023a).

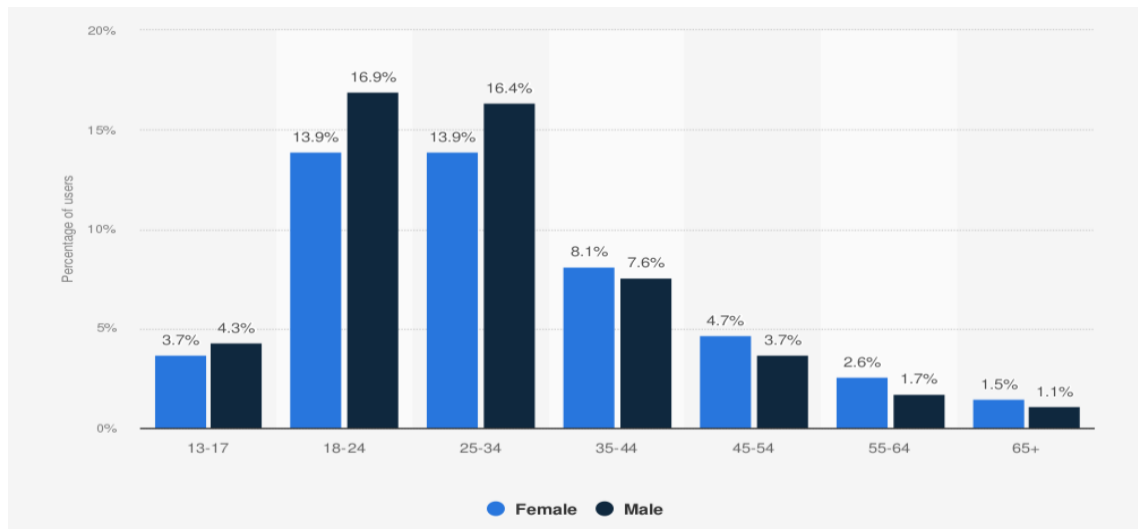


Figure 4. Distribution of Instagram users worldwide as of January 2023, by age and gender (Statista 2023a)

As shown in the figure, the majority of Instagram users, representing 61.1 percent of the total user base are between the ages of 18 and 34. In these age groups, there is a higher percentage of male users than women, but the difference is minor, with a 3 percent variance. Consequently, the 55-64 and 65+ age groups constitute the smallest sectors of Instagram users. In all other age groups, excluding the youngest age group (13-17) and the 18-34 age group, there is a slightly higher percentage of female users. These statistics are of great significance when developing an Instagram marketing strategy and evaluating whether Instagram is the most suitable platform for a brand's specific target audience and industry. To consider the reach and distribution of Instagram, the platform provides features and tools that are utilized to enhance the visual appeal of content and engagement. The following paragraph will provide an explanation of these.

2.2.1 Features and tools

Instagram has a wide range of features and tools that allow users to create and share content, engage with other users, and make purchases through the app. Users can share content that are showcased on their profile, accessible to both followers and non-followers, depending on the privacy settings they choose. Instagram allows users to connect with each other through private messages, also called direct messages, allowing people to interact with each other privately. (Iseli 2021.) To explore these key features and tools on Instagram in more depth, the next section provides a detailed explanation of each.

Profile

On Instagram everyone can create a profile. Profile consists of personal information, Profile Description also known as user's Bio, Posts, Followers, Story highlights, call to action buttons; Message and Contact options, Reels and Tagged posts. After creating a profile, users can generate and share content, follow other users and browse content (Instagram, Features n.d.) Figure 5 below offers a precise visual description of these elements' placement in the profile. The author has provided an example by using the Instagram account of a fashion brand named Papu Design.

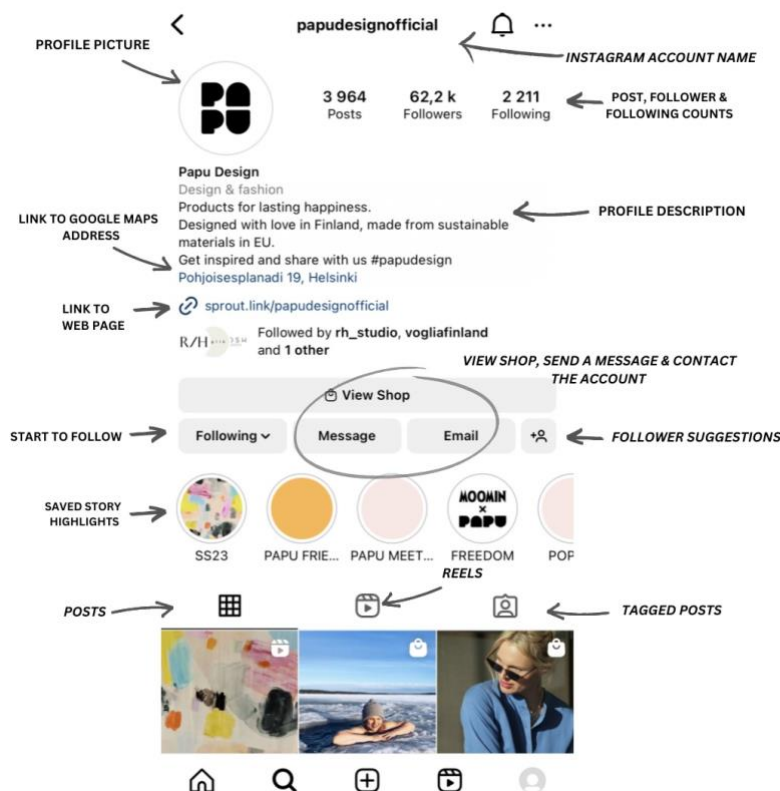


Figure 5. Screenshot of Papu Design Instagram profile. Taken on 18.4.2023.

Feed

Feed is the main section of Instagram where users can post photos and videos to share with their followers (See Figure 6).

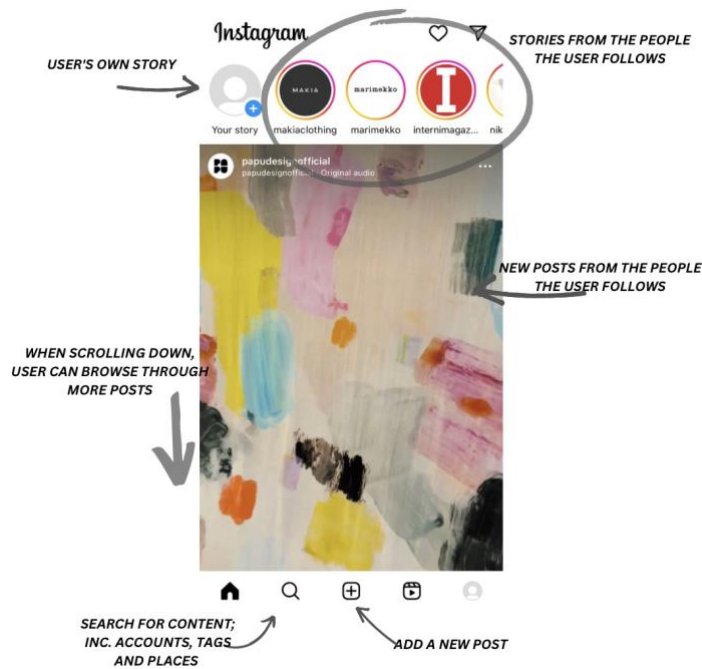


Figure 6. Screenshot of Instagram user's feed

Users can browse through the feed to see posts and stories from the people they follow but it also includes content from companies or users that has paid to be promoted. Instagram employ algorithms to predict the information displayed and the order in which it appears based on a person's profile data. (Iseli 2021.)

Stories

Instagram stories are a type of short-lived media that can be either images or videos. They can be enhanced with creative elements such as stickers, music, question and poll bars, quizzes, links and other users' being mentioned (See Figure 7), making them a fun and engaging way to share multiple pieces of content without overwhelming followers' feeds. (Iseli 2021.)

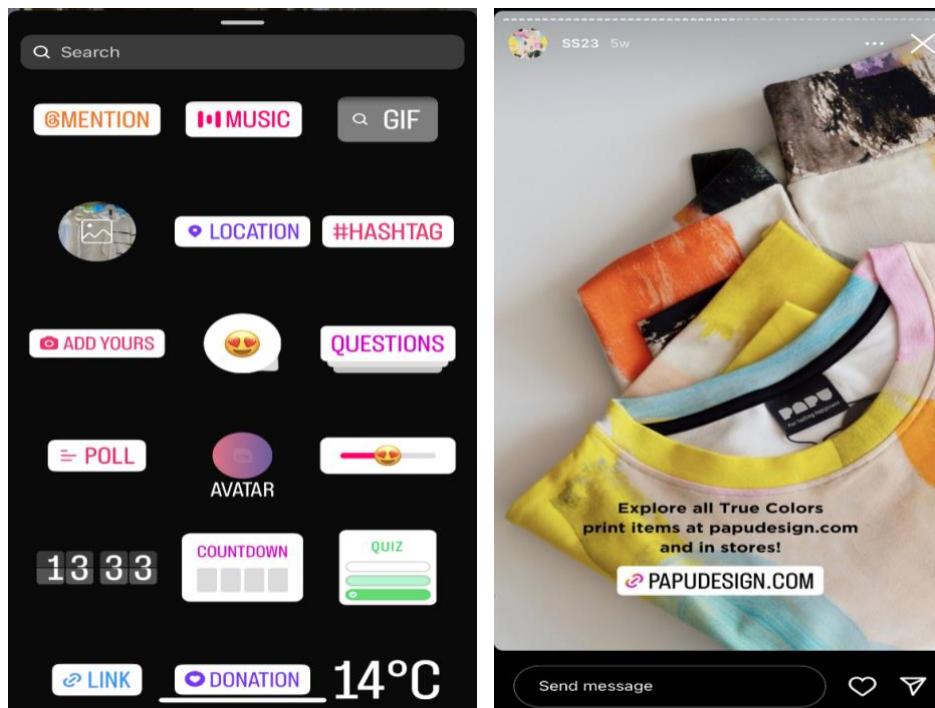


Figure 7. Story features and elements. Screenshot of Papu Design's story. 17.4.2023.

Stories are especially useful for promoting and showcasing new products or services, as well as for engaging with the audience. One of the great features of stories is that users can privately comment and react without others being able to see. This allows for more personalized interactions, including the ability to ask questions privately or express interest in any type of content posted on a story. Videos and photos shared will disappear after 24 hours. After 24 hours the user can save the stories and create a story highlight that appears on user's profile and is a permanent for others to see. With a variety of tools available, stories can be customized in many ways to suit personal needs. (Coles 2017, 124.)

According to a study conducted by Hubspot, short stories that include photos, videos, and text are found to be the most engaging and likeable, as shown in Figure 8 (Bump, 2022).

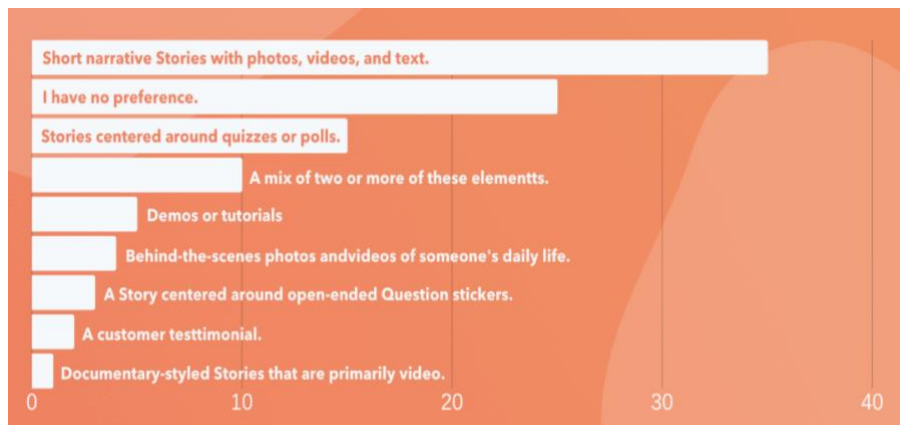


Figure 8. Which type of Instagram Story are you most likely to tap all the way through until the end. (Bump 2022; HubSpot)

People also like quizzes and polls which increases engagement. It has been observed that stories have become one of the most popular features on Instagram. Therefore, by utilizing various story features and posting multiple story content, users can enhance their overall engagement on the platform. (Iseli 2021.)

Reels & IGTV

Reels are short-form videos that can be up to 60 seconds long. They can be shared on a user's main profile page. IGTV is a long-form video that allows users to share videos up to 60 minutes long. This, on the other hand, is useful when a user wants to share longer, more in-depth content. (Instagram, Features n.d.)

Instagram live

Users can stream live videos directly from their camera to the platform. It is a great way to engage with people in real-time and answer questions or address concerns. Live can also be shared to stream together with another Instagram user. Once the Live session is completed, the video will be shown by Instagram for 24 hours, unless it is saved to Instagram TV (IGTV), where it will be retained permanently or until it is deleted. (Iseli 2021.)

Hashtags

Hashtags on Instagram are words or phrases preceded by the “#” symbol, which are used to categorize content and make it discoverable to a wider audience.

Users can add hashtags to their captions or comments on posted content, and when other users click on or search for a specific hashtag, all the posts containing that hashtag will appear in the results. Hashtags can be created by anyone, and some popular ones emerge from social trends, holidays, or events. They are commonly used by businesses, brands, influencers, and individuals to increase their reach, engagement, and visibility on the platform. Hashtags are an important tool in Instagram marketing, as they can help businesses connect with their target audience and build a community around their brand. (Demeku 2023)

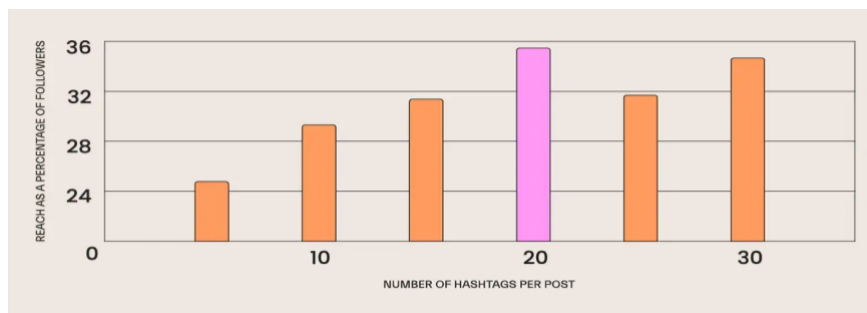


Figure 9. Number of Instagram Hashtags vs. Reach Rate Per Feed Post (Demeku 2023; Later)

As seen in Figure 9, using a moderate number of hashtags is considered beneficial, while incorporating around 20 hashtags has proven to be even more effective in enhancing performance and receiving the highest average reach rate. (Demeku 2023.) It is possible to utilize a maximum of 30 hashtags per post. Although using 20-30 hashtags may seem excessive, it is advisable to incorporate as many relevant hashtags as possible. This ensures that the hashtags are specific to the content and niche of the account. (Iseli 2021).

Instagram Shopping

Instagram Shopping allows users to buy products through the platform. Businesses can link their products in their posts, stories and contact info, which makes it convenient for users to browse online shopping websites through the platform and makes purchasing even more easier. (Iseli 2021.)

As Instagram provides numerous features and tools for users, skilful utilization of these tools can help individuals and businesses create a strong presence on the

platform and meaningfully connect with their audience (Iseli 2021). In addition, Instagram offers more certain features for businesses, which will be further explained in the following paragraph.

2.2.2 Instagram for businesses

Instagram has become a popular platform for businesses to promote their services and products. According to Instagram statistics, a large number of users follow businesses on Instagram, with 90% of accounts following at least one business (Instagram Business, n.d.). People communicate directly with businesses on Instagram monthly and the platform helps to discover new brands, with 81% of Instagrammers using product and service research for this purpose (Bagadiya 2023). Particularly, for small businesses seeking to increase brand visibility with limited financial resources for campaigns, Instagram is a crucial tool for cost-effective marketing (Iseli 2021).

Instagram offers two types of accounts: personal and professional. It is possible to convert personal accounts into professional accounts. After reviewing the features and tools that Instagram has to offer, which are also considered significant for businesses, there are noticeable differences between the two account types. In general, Instagram business accounts provide multiple benefits for businesses and brands seeking to expand their presence on the platform. (Kuligowski 2023.) Specific features, such as the following, are exclusive to professional use that businesses can utilize:

Contact Information

One of the main differences between personal and business accounts is the ability to display contact information. Business accounts can display a "Contact" button that allows users to get in touch with the account owner via email, phone, or address. In addition, contact information typically includes a link to the business website. This contact information section is crucial for a business account, as it can help increase website traffic and provide relevant information about the company. Another feature of business profile is the ability to add a business category under the account name, which can aid people in discovering accounts related to their interests. The categories available for a profile include

options such as "artist," "clothing (brand)," "product/service," "health/beauty," and "shopping & retail". (Instagram, Business n.d.)

Instagram Insights

Business accounts have access to Instagram Insights, which provides detailed analytics about their account performance. Insights can help businesses to optimize customer engagement on Instagram with understanding their audience, tracking post and story performance, and measuring engagement rates with detailed analytics about their account, followers, audience reach, content interactions, paid ad performance, best time to post and profile activity. Using Instagram insights is an excellent method to evaluate the effectiveness of a company's Instagram strategy and make decisions based on the data. (Kuligowski 2023.)

Instagram Ads

Business accounts can run Instagram Ads, which can help them reach a wider audience and promote their products or services. Ads can be targeted to a specific audience and can be in a variety of formats, including photo ads and video ads. Internal data from Instagram indicates that 50% of users become more interested in a brand after they see an ad for it on the platform. This highlights the significant potential impact that advertising on Instagram can have for a brand, especially when considering the platform's vast user base and their level of engagement. Therefore, developing effective advertising campaigns on Instagram is a crucial aspect of any businesses' social media marketing. (Instagram, Advertisement n.d.)

Shoppable Posts

Business accounts can tag products in their posts and stories, allowing users to purchase items directly through the app. It has been revealed through internal Instagram data that 70% of shoppers use the platform to search for their next purchase, indicating that Instagram is the go-to destination for finding inspiration for purchases and discovering new products. (Bump 2022.) See the example of a company using a purchase link in a post (Figure 10).

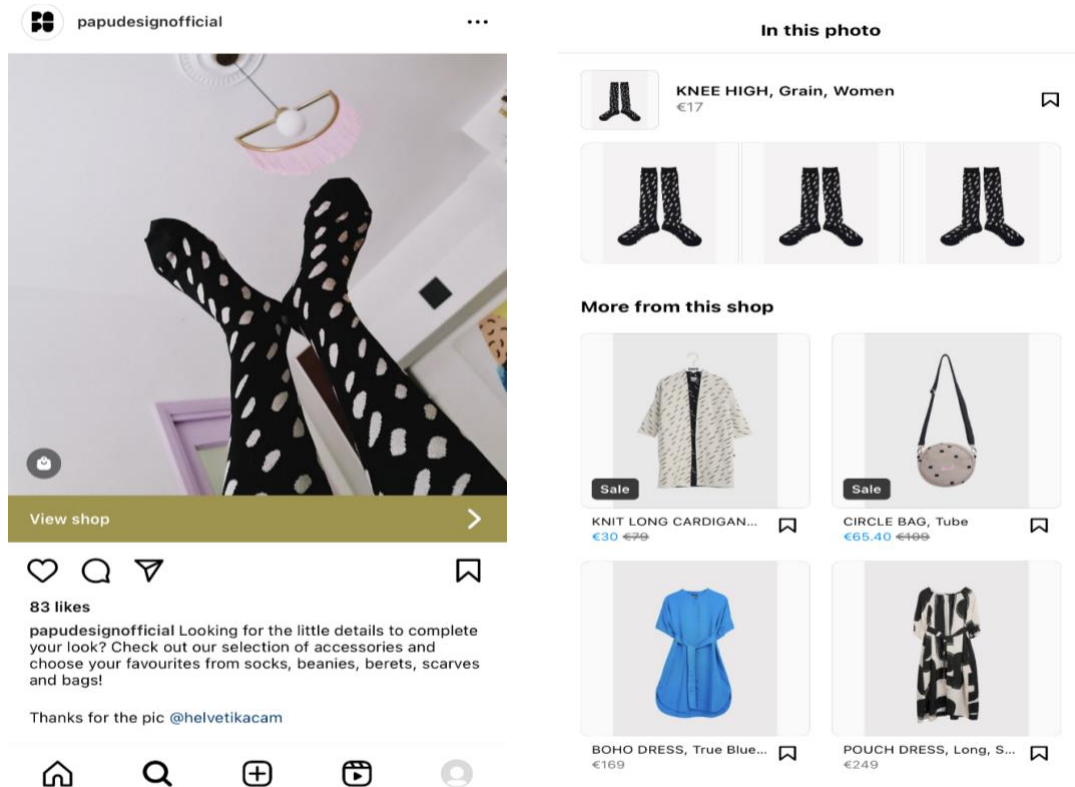


Figure 10. Screenshot of Papu Design's Instagram post with a shoppable link. Taken on 17.4.2023.

The author chose to illustrate to show Papu Design's Instagram shoppable post as an example. By clicking on the "View shop" option within the post, a window opens up as seen on the right in the Figure 10. From this window, users can view the products and make purchases directly through the platform. Clicking on the products will redirect users to Papu Design's website, where the actual purchase can be completed. (Instagram Business, n.d.)

Post scheduling

Scheduling posts is a useful feature that allows businesses to plan ahead and stay organized when creating content for Instagram. With this feature, users can schedule reels and photos directly from the Instagram app, saving them time and effort. (Instagram, Scheduled posts n.d.)

Influencers

Influencers play a huge part of Instagram. 61% of consumers trust influencer recommendations more than brand content (Bagadiya 2023). Influencers are individuals with significant social media followings who can impact their followers' purchasing behaviour. Influencer marketing refers to the collaborative efforts between influencers and brands to promote the products and services. It involves either paying an influencer a flat rate per post to feature a product or service (brand deal), or having the influencer include a link to a purchase gateway in their post, where they earn an affiliate commission for each sale. There are five different types of influencers based on the number of followers they have, outlined below: (McKinsey & Company, 2023)

Nano influencers <10,000

Micro influencers 10,000 to 50,000

Medium influencers 50,000 to 100,000

Macro influencers more than 500,000 followers

Mega influencers over one million followers

Nano-influencers are especially on the rise, with the highest engagement rate at 5%, and 54% of all influencers on Instagram are nano-influencers (Bagadiya 2023). To ensure the success of an influencer marketing campaign, authenticity should be the priority. Brands must build connections with influencers who align with their message and have a significant following in the same area or industry. It is crucial to establish a genuine relationship with creators who support the brand, rather than just gaining product endorsements. (McKinsey & Company, 2023.)

Trends

Instagram also brings enormous trends, that by keeping up, businesses can better tailor their content to meet consumer demand. According to West (2023), the latest Instagram trends are as follows:

- Instagram reels. As a comparison to other types of media on Instagram, reels have gained more popularity.

- Interactive story stickers, such as questions, polls, and quizzes. Studies have shown that with over 62% of users indicating an increased interest in a brand after encountering it in a story (Bagadiya 2023).
- Collaborative posts. The newest Instagram feature that permits users to "invite collaborators" to a post, resulting in both accounts being displayed and the post being published on both profiles.
- Sponsored posts. These are paid promotion posts that appear among users' stories or feeds.
- Carousel posts. A single post that can contain up to 10 photos or videos, making it a versatile tool to share multiple content at once.

After conducting a review of the social media marketing and examining the various tools and features available on Instagram, the next chapter will delve into the development and implementation of a social media marketing strategy.

2.3 Social media marketing strategy

A marketing strategy is essential for businesses as it offers a structured approach to promote products or services and drive sales. Within this overall marketing plan, it is equally vital to have a social media marketing strategy that aligns seamlessly with the content marketing plan. A marketing plan typically includes a situation analysis, specific goal setting, research on the best approaches to achieve the objectives, budget and timeline planning, followed by result monitoring. (Machado & Davim 2016, 49-50.) This requires evaluating social media channels based on business objectives and audience needs, creating a practical plan specifying when, where, and what to publish on each channel, and setting achievable goals. Such an approach enables businesses to understand what to expect and how their social media efforts contribute to the overall marketing success. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 559.) To achieve this, businesses must segment their target market and select specific customer segments to pursue effectively and profitably, rather than trying to cater to everyone. To ensure the effectiveness of their social media marketing strategy, companies need to take specific steps to develop a clear and well-designed approach, which follows: (Kotler et al. 2016, 9.)

1) Define goals and objectives

For the most effective approach to goal setting is using the SMART goals that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound (Chambers et al. 2020, 12). In the specificity phase, the goal should be detailed, by clearly defining what is to be accomplished. For instance, instead of having a general aim of audience growth, it is better to set a specific goal for increasing the number of followers on a particular platform such as Instagram. The second phase, Measurable, requires that the goals are quantifiable, and progress can be tracked. To achieve this, specific social metrics must be identified to define success. For instance, keeping track of the number of Instagram followers is a quantifiable goal that can be measured. In the Achievable phase, goals should be realistic and achievable within the given timeframe. It is essential to ensure that goals are achievable, and that past performance supports the set goal. Moreover, knowledge of industry benchmarks can aid in setting realistic goals. Thus, it is necessary to assess the account's growth over the past few months to determine the attainability of the set goal. The realistic phase stands for evaluating if the goal aligns with the business objectives. For example, if the business aims to increase online sales, a relevant goal could be to increase website traffic from social media channels. The "Time-bound" phase of goal setting emphasizes the importance of establishing a specific timeline for achieving the goal. If the objective is to improve customer engagement, in that case, a time-bound goal could be to increase the customer engagement rate within the next four months. By meeting all the SMART criteria, the goal becomes more structured, precise, and achievable, increasing the chances of success. (Blythe 2012, 249.) According to Singh (2023), the typical goals of social media marketing include “enhancing brand recognition, boosting website traffic, generating more leads and sales, expanding the brand's audience, and promoting community engagement.”

2) Identify the target audience and select the right social media platforms

When a business identifies and selects its target segments, it can tailor its marketing strategies and messaging to appeal to the unique needs and preferences of those groups. This can help the business create more effective marketing campaigns and increase its customer base. A target segment is a

group of people who share similar characteristics, needs, or interests that make them more likely to be interested in a particular product or service. Examples of target segments include demographic groups such as age, gender, income and educational attainment, as well as psychographic factors such as values, attitudes and lifestyle choices. (Moore & Niketh 2010, 38-44.) As social media grows in popularity, it is important to focus the marketing efforts on the most active platforms. Not all platforms may be relevant to the target audience and is therefore important to find the most suitable platform based on the largest user base in the target market. (Iseli 2021.)

3) Define brand's value and competition proposition

In addition to selecting its target segmentation, the company must determine its differentiation and positioning in the marketplace. A brand's value proposition is a clear statement that communicates the exclusive benefit or value that a business provides to its customers. It emphasizes the distinguishing features or characteristics of the brand's product or service that differentiates it from competitors and provides customers with a compelling reason to select that brand over other similar options in the market. Competition proposition refers to the strategies that a business employs to position itself favourably against its competitors in the market. This can include pricing, product differentiation, marketing tactics, or other approaches aimed at gaining a competitive advantage over similar businesses in the industry. (Kotler et al. 2016, 10)

For instance, the social media profile and bio section of a business's account serves as the primary point of reference for individuals seeking to gain a better understanding of the brand. It is suggested to keep the introduction concise and avoid providing a lengthy description of the entire business history. The effectiveness of this section relies on its ability to convey the brand's value proposition while establishing an appropriate tone and style. In order to maintain relevance and competitiveness in social media marketing efforts, businesses can benefit from monitoring and analysing the activities of their competitors. This allows for an enhanced understanding of current industry trends and best practices that the company can adopt to position themselves more effectively. (Iseli 2021.) According to Chaffey and Smith (2017), benchmarking competitors' use of social media allows for the evaluation of their key performance indicators

(KPIs) such as their overall performance, practices, and strategies. These KPIs provide valuable insights into the competitors' audience reach, level of influence, and how they engage with their audience on social media (p. 236-237.)

4) Develop a content strategy

Developing a content strategy for social media involves creating timely and relevant posts that resonate with the audience and align with business objectives. It is important to establish the best times to post to maximize reach and engagement. Visual content is crucial in social media as it is more engaging and attractive than text-based. When developing a content strategy for a company, the content should be new and truthful, simple and smartly created visual. (Moore & Niketh 2010, 75.) The identification of key elements is fundamental in creating a visually effective content strategy. These key factors are provided as follows (Coles 2017, 126; Hirose 2022):

- Post consistently. Major brands post content on Instagram on average 1.5 times per day (Bagadiya 2023).
- Use visuals and photo descriptions to tell a story.
- Use high-quality and eye-catching videos and images.
- Create a colour palette for the brand. Following a certain colour palette or a theme makes posts instantly recognizable to followers.
- Monitor conversations and create relationships.
- Schedule posts at optimal times using a content calendar.
- Monitor trends.
- Follow the competition.
- Choose appropriate hashtags.

5) Promote, advertise and manage budgeting

Allocating a realistic budget for promoting and advertising on social media can help businesses achieve their marketing goals by increasing their reach and attracting new customers. In order to optimize the impact of promotional campaigns, it is valuable to invest time in organizing and coordinating its various components. The specific approach and strategies employed should be tailored to suit the product being promoted and target market, as well as the company's objectives for the campaign. Key factors that marketers should take into account

include: the available budget, the average order value, the potential customer base and the geographic distribution of the target market. Ultimately, the overall goals and desired outcomes of the promotional effort should also be carefully considered. (Blythe 2012, 250.)

6) Track results

Once the plan has been implemented, it is the responsibility of those accountable to ensure its practical success. Monitoring performance through feedback is critical, and ideally. Monitoring and evaluation system should be established before initiating any marketing activity. (Blythe 2012, 251.) Effective data analysis goes beyond simple data collection, allowing businesses to gain valuable insights. Different tools, such as Google Analytics, enable tracking the ROI (return on income) of different campaigns, empowering businesses to optimize their strategies and make data-driven decisions. By focusing on what works and eliminating inefficient tactics, businesses can achieve greater success. In order to conduct a meaningful and functional test, it is essential to formulate a hypothesis and document statistics. Testing without a clear plan or specific objectives can be a waste of time and resources. Having a well-defined hypothesis and a clear timeline for testing will help to ensure a focused and purposeful approach. The findings can be used to generate new hypotheses and plan future tests. (Deiss & Henneberry 2020.)

The performance of social media marketing can be evaluated through various monitoring methods and metrics. To evaluate the success of a marketing program, it is crucial to choose and identify KPIs that measure specific aspects of the campaign, that align with the business goals and assess their impact on achieving those goals. (Moore & Niketh 2010, 73). Common KPI metrics in social media include ROI, sales, engagement metrics, reach and impressions, and follower growth (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 559).

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This third section of the thesis is a discussion of the research methodology. It touches on aspects such as the research design and approach, designing and conducting the research, validity, reliability and limitations that has been considered for the study. In the upcoming chapter, the method used in data collection and data analysis will be outlined in order to be efficient to answer the research questions.

3.1 Research design and approach

In order to develop an effective Instagram marketing plan, the author had to establish a clear strategy for conducting the research. This involved carefully selecting an appropriate research design and approach to ensure comprehensive data analysis and the development of the marketing plan tailored to the specific objectives and target audience. To recap the objective of the thesis, the research was designed to enhance Tigo's Instagram presence by developing engaging social media content that aligns with the store's layout and represents its brand and values. The aim was to improve Tigo's visual appeal by creating visually captivating content and utilizing Instagram tools to increase brand awareness and enhance engagement, as well as increase sales.

The research approach in this thesis is mixed research, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, which are widely recognized as the most common types of research approaches. Quantitative research involves measuring quantity or amount and is suitable for phenomena that can be expressed numerically. It typically uses structured data collection techniques such as surveys and observations, followed by statistical analysis. On the other hand, qualitative research aims to understand behavior and experiences in-depth through non-numerical data analysis, such as textual, visual, or audio data. It is used when research questions cannot be easily answered through quantitative analysis. (Kothari 2004, 3). The mixed research approach in this study was formulated based on the following research questions:

- 1) How can Tigo Clothing develop an effective Instagram marketing strategy that enhances its social media image, generates more interest from potential customers and increases brand awareness?
- 2) What kind of visual marketing look would suit the company?
- 3) What are the best practices in Instagram that the company can adopt to enhance its customer engagement?

To answer these questions and gain valuable insights into Instagram marketing, the author conducted exploratory studies, including a thorough literature review. The literature review served as secondary data and provided a foundation for understanding the effective implementation of social media marketing on Instagram. The previously discussed theoretical framework is collected by various sources, such as books, articles, blogs and studies. Additionally, current and up-to-date data were gathered by studying Instagram tools and features from various online sources. In addition to the theoretical framework, the author has chosen the following research methods as the primary data collection:

- Benchmarking 10 successful Finnish-based fashion Instagram accounts over a two-week period.
- Developing and testing hypotheses for Tigo Clothing's Instagram account over a month-long period and collecting data from Tigo's Instagram insights.
- Conducting in-depth interviews with the company owner and three retail fashion consumers.

The data for the study were collected from two main sources using quantitative methods: the Instagram app's insights feature and benchmarking. Qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews with the owner of Tigo Clothing and active retail fashion consumers. The author considered this mixed research approach to be the most efficient way to collect enough data and address the research questions within a shorter timeframe. By combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, the research incorporates elements of empirical research, as it relies on direct observation and data collection to support and validate findings. Gathering evidence through experiments or empirical studies is

widely regarded as the strongest form of support for a hypothesis. (Kothari 2004, 4.)

The author chose to do benchmarking to identify social media habits, best Instagram practices and strategies, including competition analysis. Benchmarking competitors' use of social media would enable the evaluation of their KPIs, providing insights into their overall performance, visual appearance, influence, publishing frequency and engagement strategies. Benchmarking insights were used in testing hypotheses on Tigo Clothing's Instagram account to improve its content and visual appearance to gain a more professional look. Tigo's Instagram insights were decided to utilize to gather data from testing hypotheses. This would involve the company's Instagram KPIs such as engagement rate, reach, interactions, and overall profile traffic on Instagram that were monitored to track the effectiveness of these practices. The marketing strategy was plan to adjust based on this data. To create the strategy tailored to Tigo Clothing's specific requirements, the author chose to conduct in-depth interviews with the company owner to understand their situation analysis, goals, and target audience. Additionally, interviewing three retail clothing consumers would gather insights into their perspective as consumers, focusing on the factors that contribute to building trust and creating a compelling impression of a company, motivating customers to visit a physical store based solely on their experience on Instagram. This ensured that the marketing plan would be aligned with best practices in the fashion industry and taking into account customers' perspectives.

3.2 Designing and conducting the research

As part of designing the research, the author made a clear plan and started conducting the research in a systematic manner. The first step involved conducting an interview with the company owner and was held on March 15th. This interview served the purpose of gathering insights and obtaining a clear understanding of the study's objectives. It also provided valuable background information about the company and its marketing practices in the initial stages of the research. The interview questions can be found in the appendices (Appendix 5), while the answers are included in the thesis, specifically in the introduction

section that focuses on the case company and in the initial stage of the Instagram marketing plan.

The second step in designing and conducting the research involved benchmarking. By understanding more Instagram marketing, it was needed to dive into Instagram and observe what other brands and competitors are doing in maintaining their social media image. This entailed monitoring the social media activities of fashion brands on Instagram for a duration of two weeks. The timeframe selected for this research was scheduled to start on March 24th and end on April 6th. Through this process, valuable insights were obtained regarding the essential elements for achieving success in Instagram marketing within the fashion industry. This research method was used to identify social media habits, including best Instagram practices and strategies, such as use of Instagram business tools, frequency and timing of posts, content types, use of hashtags and captions, visual elements, and advertising. The participants for benchmarking were selected based on various criteria, including Finnish ownership, store location in Finland, success in the Finnish market, and outstanding Instagram presence and marketing practices. Additionally, it was ensured that the benchmarking sample encompassed at least one retail clothing store and one family-owned business.

The author decided to include Marimekko, Nosh, Makia Clothing, Balmuir, Papu Design, and Billebeino for the benchmarking based on the Finnish Textile and Fashion Association's media identifying them among the top 10 successful Finnish fashion and lifestyle companies in 2019 (Fab magazine 2019). In addition to these companies, the author selected DOTS and Niinmun'design due to their same store location as Tigo's, and DOTS operating also as a retail clothing store. Voglia was selected as a Finnish family-owned business, while R/H Studio was chosen for its high-quality clothing and accessories, with a strong social media presence. The selection criteria also included a high number of followers that these profiles have on Instagram. Since these accounts operate in clothing industry, and are in competition with Tigo, analyzing their Instagram was an effective way to support the following implementation of Instagram content strategy for Tigo. Moreover, as the Instagram audience of these brands comprised of Finnish people as well, analyzing their Instagram engagement and

presence provided valuable insights on the competition and inspire ideas for Tigo to differentiate itself on Instagram.

The third step in conducting the research was developing and testing hypotheses on Tigo's Instagram account for a month. This included creating new visuals to improve consumer engagement KPIs. As the company already had a professional account on Instagram, detailed analytics about their account performance were available through Instagram insights. The testing hypotheses were planned to utilize these analytics to track the success of the changes and improvements made during the time. The testing phase was planned to start on March 28th, shortly after the benchmarking phase started, allowing for the early implementation of ideas and insights gathered from the benchmarking process. Testing phase was planned to end on April 26th. Although the testing period did not cover the entirety of a specific month, such as the entire month of April, it covered a 30-day period throughout March and April.

The testing hypotheses was planned to focus on optimizing Tigo's Instagram profile by using professional tools, adopting a more business appearance, and refining their content strategy. This involved several adjustments, such as visual enhancements, such as selecting engaging and visually appealing content and content types, utilizing hashtags and captions effectively, leveraging Instagram's professional features and tools, and following a content calendar for publishing frequency. Additionally, the Instagram marketing budget and advertising were considered, including the use of one paid advertisement during this period. The company decided to run the ad on both Instagram and Facebook, which means that precise metrics from Instagram Insights won't be available for the ad. Despite the testing period, the ad ran from April 1st to April 30th, covering the entire month. The author decided to provide analysis of the ad based solely on the data collected during the testing hypotheses period. This approach can be used to measure the impact of an ad of the overall performance.

Data collection for analyzing the efficiency and improvements of testing hypotheses began on April 27th. The analytics and metrics were compared to the previous 30-day period before the testing phase (February 26th - March 27th). The analysis focused on metrics such as follower growth, engagement and reach,

content reach, and profile activity, which would indicate whether the hypotheses were successful.

At the conclusion of the research, the author conducted interviews with three customers to gain insight into their expectations and preferences regarding Instagram marketing, while also supporting other research methods. The participants were selected based on their active consumption of retail clothing and engagement. Specifically, participants were required to be females between the ages of 35 and 65, have an Instagram account and follow at least one fashion brand or retail clothing store on the platform. The interviews were conducted face-to-face on May 22nd. The interview questions were carefully selected to gather the desired information. Questions were refined and adjusted multiple times before the interview, to collect the most relevant and accurate answers.

3.3 Validity, reliability and limitations

The research has been conducted with a strong emphasis on ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings, while also acknowledging the limitations and constraints of the study. Ethical considerations, which focuses on the development of an Instagram marketing plan, include ensuring that the case company is fully informed about the study's purpose, the rights of participants, and the usage of their data in the thesis. Measures have been taken to protect the privacy of participants and the company's customers, such as non-identification of personal data and securing data. The author has obtained the required permissions to modify their Instagram page and utilize its Instagram insights. The accuracy and truthfulness of the collected and analysed data have been ensured.

As the benchmarked results were captured over a two-week period, the details regarding content creation and frequency have been documented in Excel charts provided in the appendices. The author maintained a commitment to conducting the research truthfully and representing the benchmarked and Instagram insights in a manner that aligns with the specific dates of the study. Proper naming and compliance with copyright and intellectual property laws has been observed when images or content are used in research. Overall, ethical considerations in this

thesis prioritize the protection and well-being of participants and the company, while ensuring the research is conducted in a responsible and transparent manner. To ensure clarity, additional guiding questions were used during the interviews in case the interviewees needed further clarification. The original questions in the consumer interviews remained consistent, ensuring the validity of the collected answers.

A few limitations of the study should be acknowledged: The hypothesis testing on Tigo's Instagram was carried out for a month due to the limited timeframe. Consequently, the research lacks metrics for measuring the business goal of increased sales. It is important to recognize that obtaining reliable results regarding the profitability of Instagram improvements in terms of turnover it would require several months of observation and was therefore left out in this study. Since this study relied on data from Instagram Insights, it did not cover all the data associated with the ad, particularly considering that the ad was not exclusively published on Instagram. Consequently, it was not possible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the advertising campaign.

4 INSTAGRAM MARKETING PLAN

The author conducted extensive data collection to gather insights on the company's Instagram presence and improvements. This marketing plan has been developed based on the research findings and analysis, which are derived from benchmarking and testing hypotheses, utilizing existing knowledge, and the theoretical framework discussed previously. The analysis focuses on various stages of plan development, including the company's initial stage, objectives, target audience, brand's value proposition, competition analysis through benchmarking, content strategy, using KPIs as analytical metrics, and lastly providing consumer perspective.

4.1 Initial stage

To evaluate the company's initial stage of marketing on Instagram, the author interviewed the owner on March 15th. Defining the initial stage, which encompasses the company's Instagram marketing methods, content creation, use of Instagram tools, post frequency, and advertisements, makes it easier to understand how the goals were established and how results were defined. By analysing the company's goals using SMART criteria and conducting a target audience analysis, the initial stage provides a foundation for creating the plan and enables to better observe the content strategy and improvements made.

4.1.1 Tigo Clothing's Instagram

To start with the initial stage on Tigo's Instagram appearance, it was founded that the company's presence on Instagram was active, with the owner being the primary individual responsible for the marketing efforts. However, the company has planned to expand the marketing efforts by entrusting one of their employees with this responsibility. The company's Instagram account primarily serves as a platform for showcasing new clothing items, as well as announcing campaigns, sales and other information related to the business. As a result of the absence of a structured marketing strategy, the content creation process is not well planned. The company's current approach for Instagram content strategy appears to be based on the idea that regular posting of images and videos on the account is

sufficient for the engagement without further planning in ahead. The posts lack a clear theme and have been published without visually organized content creation that would look appealing on the profile's feed. The content shared is mostly posts that includes images and videos such as reels. Sharing content on Instagram Story is less frequent. Story tools are not in use. On average, 10 minutes are spent on marketing on Instagram per day. The most prominent marketing tactic employed by the company is a word-of-mouth promotion, whereby customers are encouraged to follow the company's Instagram page to receive information about available sizes and new clothing items. This marketing approach has proven to be effective, as it has generated more follower base for the company.

The following Figure 11 provides an overview of how the company's Instagram profile appeared at the beginning.

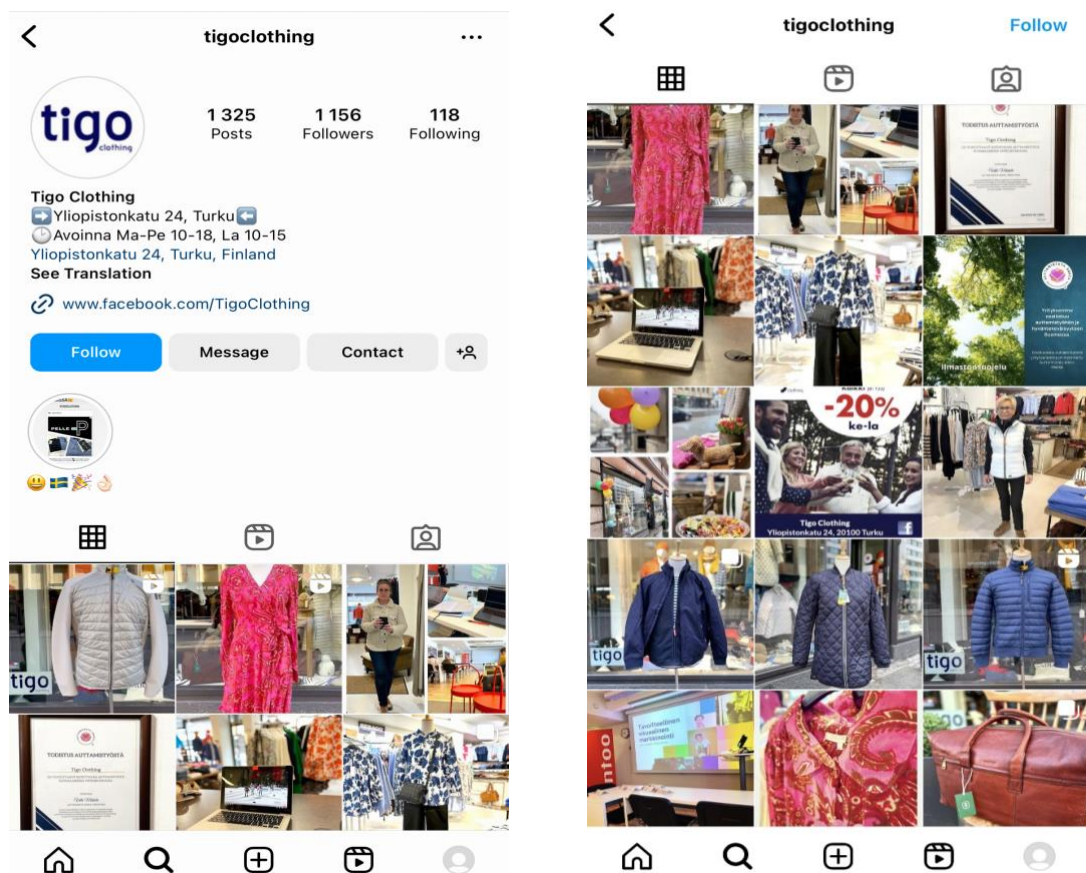


Figure 11. Tigo's Instagram profile and feed. Screenshots taken on 12.3.2023.

Tigo had 1,156 thousand followers at the start. After examining the profile, the profile lacks some of the features of professional account, such as the business

category, storytelling description of the company, and an indication that it is a clothing store. When looking clearer, the profile introduction contains the store address twice, in the text, and linked to a Google Maps. The opening hours were clearly displayed, and their Facebook page was linked in the profile. The presence of a "Contact" call-to-action button indicated that a professional account is being used. Although one of the efficient Instagram features, reels, were being used, but only one story highlight, containing a single picture was present. The content looks a bit messy with various colours, collage pictures (which is a combination of multiple photos in one picture), and various backgrounds that do not match to each other or follow a consistent theme. The profile is not only lacking visually attractive layout but also important business elements and effective use of Instagram features. Since Tigo does not have an e-commerce, the shoppable link tool cannot be used. The traffic to the profile is needed to increase attractiveness and a desire for people to visit the physical store. Upon first seeing the profile, the author immediately identified many areas for improvement and was excited to begin the modification process. However, before making any changes, it was crucial to define the goals and metrics to ensure that the improvements would align with those objectives.

4.1.2 SMART analysis

In using SMART criteria, the goals are set specifically, measurably, achievable, realistically and time-relatedly:

- **Specific:** The goal is to increase brand awareness and engagement on Instagram platform. The goal includes enhancing visual appearance into more professional look with an aim in creating personalized, simple, clear, and easily understandable, eye-catching content.
- **Measurable:** The success of the goal will be measured using Instagram insights on the app. The metrics to be monitored includes growth in content interactions, follower count, reach, engagement, content reach & profile activity.
- **Achievable:** The author is assigned to make the changes, create content and make improvements on Instagram to achieve the goals. By utilizing available resources such literature focused on Instagram marketing, goals

can be achieved. Using reliable sources, testing hypotheses and understanding industry benchmarks are key to making goals achievable.

- **Realistic:** Increasing brand awareness through Instagram by taking a more active approach and experimenting the platform with new techniques and methods in a more professional way to reach the target audience and discover by more people.
- **Time-bound:** The timeframe for achieving the goals is set for 30-day period, covering a month. The author will review the metrics during and after the month to track progress and adjust the goals accordingly.

Besides the SMART goals, the following Figure 12 displays the established goals along with the appropriate metrics for their measurement.

Business goal	Metrics
Get discovered by more people	Reach, impressions and follower growth
Connect with the community	Content interactions
Increase engagement	Interactions, comments, likes, shares, and saves
Increase the number of followers	Followers, profile visits, and reach

Figure 12. Edited version of using Meta blueprint's testing framework (n.d).

4.1.3 Target audience

Tigo Clothing's target audience comprised of women aged 35 to 75 years old. Even though the total Instagram user base are between the ages of 18 and 34, the usage of Tigo's Instagram has been observed to be more prevalent among a specific age range. Therefore, in order to reach the appropriate audience on Instagram, the target segment has been refined to women aged between 30 to 65 years old. According to Tigo's Instagram insights (See Figure 13), the most percentage of the age range of its followers are the age of 55-64. The second age group is 45-54. The third is 35-44 and forth 25-34.

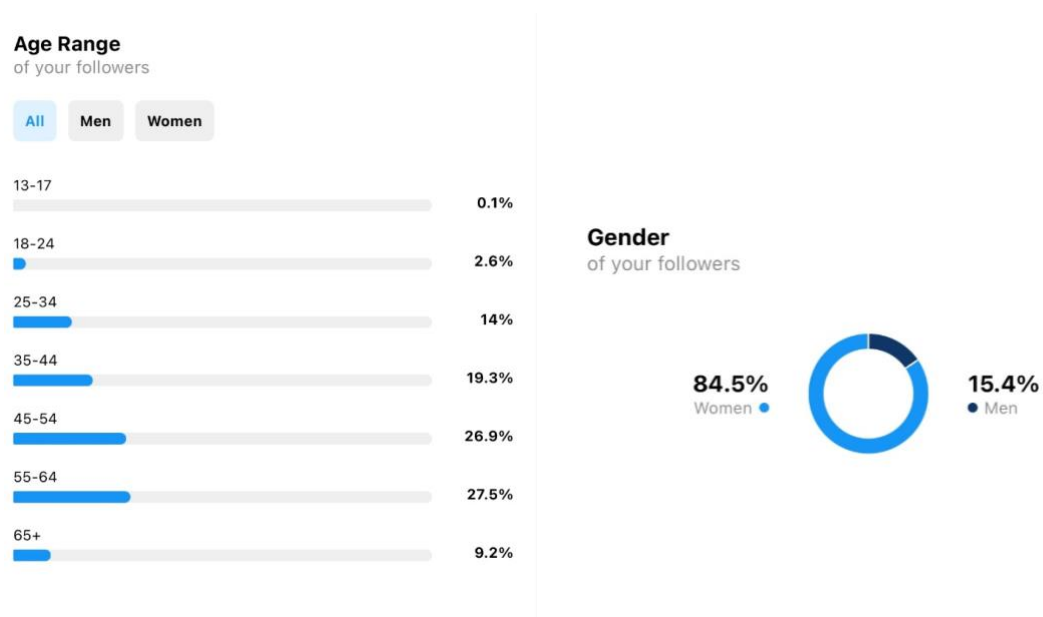


Figure 13. Screenshots of Tigo's Instagram age range of followers. Taken on 15.3.2023.

Additionally, 84.5% of the followers are women and 15.4% men. The decision to focus on women as the main audience for Tigo is based on the information gathered from Instagram and the customer database, which was shared by the owner of the company during the interview. One of the primary reasons is also that women tend to be more engaged with the fashion industry and are more likely to seek out clothing brands and inspiration on social media platforms like Instagram. Over the 10 years the owner of the Tigo has come to this realization that while men in the age of 30-60 may also purchase clothing and accessories, they may not necessarily search for clothing brands or follow fashion influencers on social media to the same extent as women. This has been seen on the engagement behavior on their Instagram. Furthermore, women are more likely to purchase clothing for not only themselves but also their partners and families. This means that targeting women may lead to increased brand awareness and exposure to a wider audience for Tigo. Additionally, women may also be more likely to visit physical clothing stores and bring their partners along, thus providing an opportunity to market to both men and women simultaneously. The company has chosen to focus on women as the primary target audience due to their greater engagement with the fashion industry. As the store is located in Turku, the target location is primarily focused on the Turku area. According to Tigo's Instagram insights the top location is Turku being the first, Kaarina and Helsinki the second, Naantali to be the third and fourth Lieto.

The customer segment consists of individuals who place a high value on quality clothing and fashion brands, and who possess a keen interest in current fashion trends. Due to the high-end nature of the brand's products, the prices are slightly higher than the average clothing prices in the market. As such, the target audience is comprised of individuals who value quality over price. In terms of fashion preferences, Tigo's target audience is likely to be interested in classic, timeless styles that can be worn for multiple occasions. Additionally, their target audience may prioritize sustainability and ethical fashion practices. They may seek out brands that prioritize ethical and sustainable production methods and prioritize clothing that is made with environmentally friendly materials.

4.2 Benchmarking: Competition analysis

Benchmarking provides an analysis of competition, which is crucial in developing Tigo's Instagram marketing strategy. During a two-week period, the author analyzed a total of 10 Finnish-based fashion business accounts to execute their Instagram engagement, as well as their content creation and posting frequency.

The benchmarking timeframe was from March 24th to April 6th 2023. Before analyzing their Instagram content, the author gathered general information, such as the companies' established year and number of Instagram followers to establish a baseline for the companies.

Brand	Established (Year)	Followers* (thousands)
Papu Design	2012	62,2
NOSH women	2009	24,9
Voglia	1983	8,782
Makia	2001	37,8
Balmuir	2007	31,3
Billebeino	2014	47,7
Marimekko	1951	691
Niimun'design	2015	7,239
DOTS	2000	7,784
R/H Studio	2010	17,6

*count numbers taken
on 24.3.2023

Figure 14. Table to show the brands' established year and Instagram follower count (Appendix 1)

The table (Figure 14) clearly indicates that Marimekko has the largest follower base among the benchmarked companies. Papu Design, Billebeino and Makia have a relatively smaller but still a significant number of followers. As it was not possible to determine when the companies started using Instagram, the author included their establishment year to get understanding of how new the companies are. Marimekko being the oldest and Niinmun'design being the youngest company. The age of a brand does not necessarily connect with the number of followers it has on Instagram. For instance, DOTS and Makia were established almost in the same year, one year apart, yet Makia has roughly 30 thousand more followers than DOTS. Factors such as the timing of creating an Instagram page and the effective use of engagement and Instagram features may play a role in this difference. This can be analyzed in more detail of how these accounts are utilizing Instagram for business purposes and how their engagement was during 14 days. The next step was to analyze the accounts visual look which contains an overlook of their business profile and elements, use of Instagram features and tools such as stories, reels, the colour palette in their feed, photo quality, etc.

Appearance & content creation

Upon analysis, it was observed that all the companies utilized storytelling content and included business information in their Instagram bios. They linked their website in their profile and provided a brief description of their brand, along with call-to-action buttons such as "View shop" and "Contact". Moreover, their profiles included business categories, clearly indicating their status as business accounts. Examples of business categories displayed under their account names, included DOTS as a retail clothing store, with a "Shopping & retail" category, Nosh with a "Women's clothing store", and R/H Studio with a "Clothing (brand)" category. However, Makia Clothing and Voglia were the only accounts without a business category.

Each account possesses a unique social media appearance that reflects their brand. All the ten brands showcase high-quality and professional images on their Instagram feeds. Most of the pictures are taken with professional cameras

featuring with models. The photos and the covers are well-planned that fit personally for the brand. For instance, Marimekko and Papu often incorporate their distinctive signature texture in their posts and use colorful images that reflect their clothing. Their color themes are well-organized, with similar color covers placed next to each other to create a cohesive and well-suited look on their profile feed. Similarly, Voglia's sustainable and timeless clothing line embodies modern Finnish design, and this elegance is reflected in their Instagram feed through the use of an ivory color palette, which is considered to be classy, elegant, and calming (Brown 2023). R/H studio also employs a variable color theme, where the background color remains consistent throughout bunch of pictures featuring models, but changes to another color when showcasing different collections (see Figure 15). This clever use of color themes highlights the brand's layout and the various clothing collections, while maintaining a professional and unique appearance. It can be shown that using color patterns and themes on Instagram can help to create a brand's image.

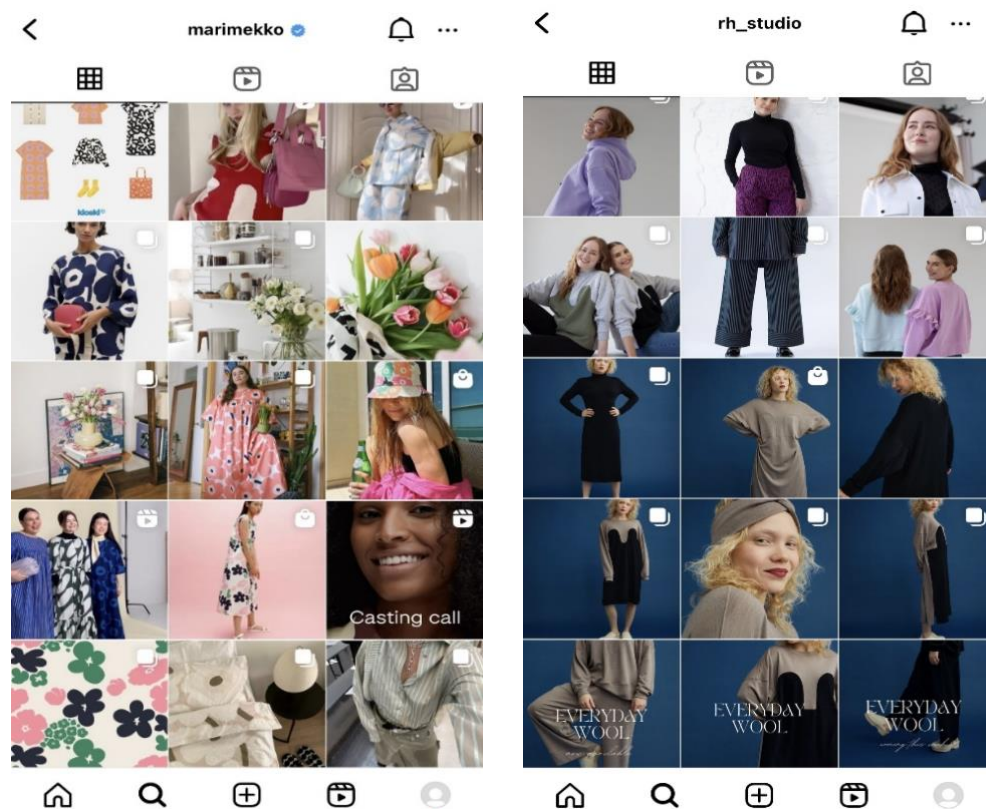


Figure 15. Marimekko's and rh_studio's Instagram feeds. Screenshots taken on 19.4.2023.

The content type on the companies' Instagram feeds mostly comprised posts in the form of images. Reels were also found to be a popular content type and other favorable types included carousel posts, stories, and posts with shoppable links. Giveaways were a popular engagement tool, used by Papu design and Voglia especially. The giveaway seemed to gain a very large engagement, for instance Papu's giveaway post gained likes over 600 as well as the count of its comments, compared to normally Papu's pictures have around 100-200 likes per post. Sponsored posts and commercial collaborations were the most prevalent among the companies. Story content often utilized different tools such as questionnaires, polls, links, tagged posts, music, and text-based stories for information announcements and clothing descriptions. The companies did not typically use in-texts within the posts in the form of images, but rather used texts in the post captions. The captions were clear and concise, and the companies that used hashtags often included a blank row between the text (See Figure 16). This technique helps maintain a sense of organization and prevent an overwhelming look. The level of engagement can be observed through the captions of their posts, as well as the use of questions and other attention-grabbing text, as exemplified in Marimekko's post in Figure 16. Moreover, the companies utilized the phrase "discover more on our website. Link in the bio." in their captions.



194 likes

makiaclothing Up here in the North, most of the year is either winter or fall – or a weird mixture of both. But when the summer finally comes, it's intense. That's when the grey tones make way for livelier colors and patterns. That's when we dress for the never-ending days of Nordic summer.

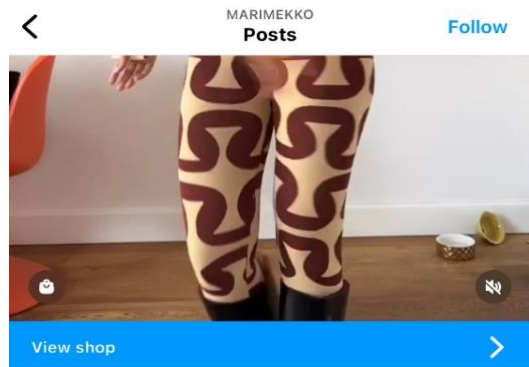
One of our summer collection highlights is the varsity-inspired Porpoise Jacket. Colored in the deep teal Jasper Green, the Porpoise Jacket is a button-up coach jacket with a porpoise on the back, acting as an unofficial mascot for Makia. Alongside the Porpoise Jacket and summer essentials, like shorts, caps, and t-shirts, the drop includes the button-up Kielo and Lynx shirts.

Discover our Summer 2023 drop at Makia stores & makia.com - link in profile. #makiaclothing

#throughtheroughseas #summerdrop #athleticinspired #velodrom #helsinki

April

HASHTAGS



3 717 likes

marimekko @fiahamelijnck serving a new-season style class. Which look are you vibing?

1. Courageous Kouero 🍷
2. Duvet Day Unikko ☁️
3. Coffee Date Unikko ☕

Explore some of Fia's faves at marimekko.com or tap the link in bio. #marimekko

View all 77 comments

30 March

Figure 16. Screenshot of Makia's and Marimekko's post with caption and hashtags displayed. Taken on 6.4.2023.

The author observed variations in the use of hashtags among the companies. Although each company used its name as a hashtag, there were slightly differences in the number of hashtags used in their posts. On average, the companies used 3-5 hashtags per post, except for Billebeino, which did not use any hashtags, and Marimekko, which used only its name #marimekko and occasionally another hashtag related to the season, such as #SS23 for Spring Season 2023. Considering Marimekko's large Instagram follower base, global presence, and popularity among Finnish people, hashtags may not be a suitable or intended marketing tool for Marimekko. This may explain why it only uses one or two hashtags. Nosh, on the other hand, used around 30 hashtags, which aligns with the latest research suggesting that using 20 hashtags can increase reach rate (Demeku 2023).

Publishing frequency

It was found that the companies remained active and published some kind of content almost every day. During the two-week period it was shown that the most activity happened on Monday and least on Sunday (Appendix 1). On average, companies posted 4.6 times per day, combining both posts and stories as seen in Figure 17.

Post frequency		Papu Design	Nosh	Voglia	Makia	Balmuir	Billebeino	Marimekko	iimun'desig	DOTS	R/H Studio	Average
Posts (14 days)	pcs	85	51	39	41	32	59	87	52	125	76	64,7
Publishing frequency (per day)	pcs	6,07	3,64	2,79	2,93	2,29	4,21	6,21	3,71	8,93	5,43	4,621

Figure 17. Posts and publishing frequency of benchmarked companies (Appendix 1)

The most published content during the two-week period, including both story and regular posts, were far and away DOTS with posting approximately 9 posts a day with 125 posts in total, following with Marimekko and Papu Design with approximately 6 posts a day. When deciding on posting times, it is crucial to determine the appropriate posting frequency. While the major brands post content on Instagram on average 1.5 times per day and the recommended

frequency for businesses is generally one to three times per day, it is important to consider the number of followers and the follower base to determine the most effective frequency (Bagadiya 2023; Iseli 2021). As Niimun'design being the youngest company and having the least followers the total publishing frequency per day was 3,7. This is a good amount of post publishment considered to its follower count, which is over 7 thousand, since multiple daily posting may be excessive and overwhelming for smaller follower base and can be considered annoying. However, not posting frequently enough may cause followers to forget about the account.

Compared to all companies, Balmuir, with total of 32 posts over a 14-day period and an average of 2.29 posts per day, was the least active account. Nevertheless, the posts it published were elegant, well-organized, and aligned with the brand's image of "Nordic comfort and lifestyle using the finest natural materials" (Balmuir 2023.) Balmuir's Instagram presence represented their brand well, even with fewer posts compared to other accounts, and this might be one of their strategies that works best for them. It was observed during the benchmarking period that companies tended to publish regular posts and stories at the same time. Voglia, for example, posted only one regular post per week (Appendix 1), but made up for it with more daily stories, resulting in an average of 2.79 posts per day. The frequency of posting varied between posts and stories. Figure 18 illustrates the distinction of the 10 accounts in publishing frequency between regular posts, which are typically images or videos shared on the feed, and stories.

Post frequency	Papu Design	Nosh	Voglia	Makia	Balmuir	Billebeino	Marimekko	Niimun'design	DOTS	R/HStudio	Average (per week)	Average (per day)
Regular posts (14 days) pcs	15	12	2	9	8	8	22	15	14	10	5,75	0,82
Stories (14 days) pcs	70	39	37	32	24	51	65	37	112	66	26,65	3,81

Figure 18. Publishing frequency of compared to regular posts and stories (Appendix 1)

The majority of the content published is in the form of stories, with an average frequency of 26.65 stories per week and 3.81 per day. In contrast, publishing regular posts is less frequent, with an average of 5.75 posts per week, which is less than one post per day. In a meaning of, posting pictures and reels on feed every day may not be essential, and it could be more advantageous to post less

frequently, such as every other day. Compared to stories, stories could be more advantageous to post every day at least one. Observing the time of day when these benchmarked companies' content is published, and the resulting performance of posts is an interesting way to identify and compare optimal posting times. The optimal posting times were either in the morning and afternoon around 10 am and 12 pm, and in the evening around 5 pm and 7 pm (Appendix 2).

Engagement

The companies were engaging with the audience by replying and reacting to comments, asking questions and opinions on story and posts. To assess the effectiveness of their engagement, by measuring engagement rate can show how actively their followers engaged with their content during the two-week period. The engagement rate presents a more comprehensive metric to evaluate content performance, rather than solely focusing on individual measures, such as the number of likes, comments, engagement tactics and tools used for example on their stories (CFI Team 2023). According to Erin (2019) the engagement rate per following can be calculated on Instagram by $(\text{Total likes} + \text{Total comments}) / \text{Total followers} \times 100$. To assess their level of engagement, the general engagement rates, as indicated by Erin (2019), are as follows:

Engagement rate < 1%: low engagement

Engagement rate 1% - 3%: low to average engagement

Engagement rate 3% - 6%: average to high engagement

Engagement rate > 6%: very high engagement

These engagement rates may still vary across industries. According to a study conducted by Cucu (2023), the fashion industry has the lowest level of engagement, with an average engagement rate of 0.36%. These figures serve as a useful benchmark for estimating the level of engagement rates. When the engagement rate is aligned with the average, it can be considered to normal. If the engagement rate exceeds average, it is considered good.

As Erin (2019) states, the total sum of likes and comments are calculated using a single post or the average amount of likes and comments per post and divide it

by total followers. To ensure accuracy, benchmarked companies' engagement rates were calculated by aggregating all likes and comments over the 14-day period and calculating an average amount of the total of likes and comments per post. This value was then divided by the number of their followers at the time of calculation. This decision was based on the varying number of likes on different posts within a day, making it unreliable to select only one post and calculate its engagement rate as a representative value for the company. For instance, the engagement rate of *niinmun'design* was 0.7% based on 51 likes in one post, while another post had 166 likes, resulting in an engagement rate of 2.3%.

The engagement rates of the benchmarked companies are shown in the Figure 19 below and represents how these brands with varying follower counts performed in terms of engagement.

Engagement rate on post per following		DOTS	Makia	Billebeino	Voglia	Marimekko	Niinmun'design	Nosh	Papu design
Total followers	pcs	7,810	37,800	47,700	8,790	691,000	7,250	25,000	62,300
Likes & comments per post on average (past 14 days)	pcs	26	208	221	32	4,529	53	106	117
Engagement rate (%)	%	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.2

Figure 19. Engagement rates on post per following (Appendix 2.)

Balmuir and R/H Studio's engagement rates were not able to be calculated due to their Instagram post likes being hidden, making the calculation impossible. Consequently, their engagement rates were not included in the calculation. After examining the engagement rate of these accounts, it becomes apparent that a high number of followers does not necessarily translate to a higher engagement rate. The data presented in the table reveals that *Papu design*, despite having the second highest number of followers among the companies, has the lowest engagement rate. Conversely, *Niinmun'design*, which has the least number of followers, has the best engagement rate with *Marimekko*. *Marimekko*, with the largest follower base and established fashion brand, naturally receives more attention and interaction on the platform, leading to a higher engagement rate. However, increasing engagement with a larger follower base can still pose challenges, as demonstrated by *Marimekko*, which has 95 times more followers than *Niinmun'design*, yet maintains the same engagement rate. Overall, all the

companies maintain an average engagement rate, except for Papu design, which falls below the average.

The competition analysis provided valuable information for testing hypotheses on Tigo's Instagram account. In the following chapter, the content strategy for Tigo will be explained, considering the insights from the benchmarked companies and using them effectively.

4.3 Content strategy

Tigo's Instagram account was being tested for a month, during which various changes were made to improve the account. The testing hypotheses period was from March 28th to April 26th. To effectively implement the content strategy, it was important to test the hypotheses that aligned with the company's goals. The effectiveness of Instagram features was considered in terms of their ability to engage and reach the target audience. By testing hypotheses through this evaluation, the marketing strategy can be refined and optimized for greater success. The content strategy implemented in this context utilized the framework previously discussed in the literature review.

4.3.1 Visual improvements, tools and engagement

After analyzing and comparing the Instagram presence of 10 successful Finnish clothing brands, the author implemented improvements on Tigo's Instagram account. By conducting an interview with the owner of the company, the author gained a good understanding of how their Instagram account should look to match the store's display, layout, and represent the company's brand and values. As the store provides elegant and high-quality clothing with a cozy and welcoming atmosphere where customers can find carefully selected clothing that fits perfectly, regardless of their age and shape, the visual content was created to best suit this image. The company wanted to maintain a "home-made" feel of their postings, so changes were limited to avoid dramatically changing their appearance.

The study by Jung, Hur & Watkins (2018) found that participants familiar with classical luxury brands perceived simple images as more luxurious than complex images. Classical luxury brands typically use minimalist, simple, and timeless images. Therefore, luxury brands, particularly those with a classical style, should use social media images with less visual complexity to achieve a consistent perception of luxury. Therefore, Tigo Clothing's Instagram brand authenticity was changed to a minimalist and simpler in order to achieve the desired and most comparable look for their high-quality brands. A few minor changes were made to give their Instagram account a more professional and positive appearance. As the Instagram profile was already using a professional account, there was no need to switch from personal to professional. The professional account enabled in-depth analysis and tracking of the account's progress over the previous month. The comprehensive analytics will be presented in the final paragraph of the marketing plan. The visual enhancements can be observed in the following stages:

Profile

To meet the requirements of a business account and stay current with trends and improvements, the Tigo's Instagram profile was first updated by modifying the bio. The changes made to profile are presented visually below in Figure 20.

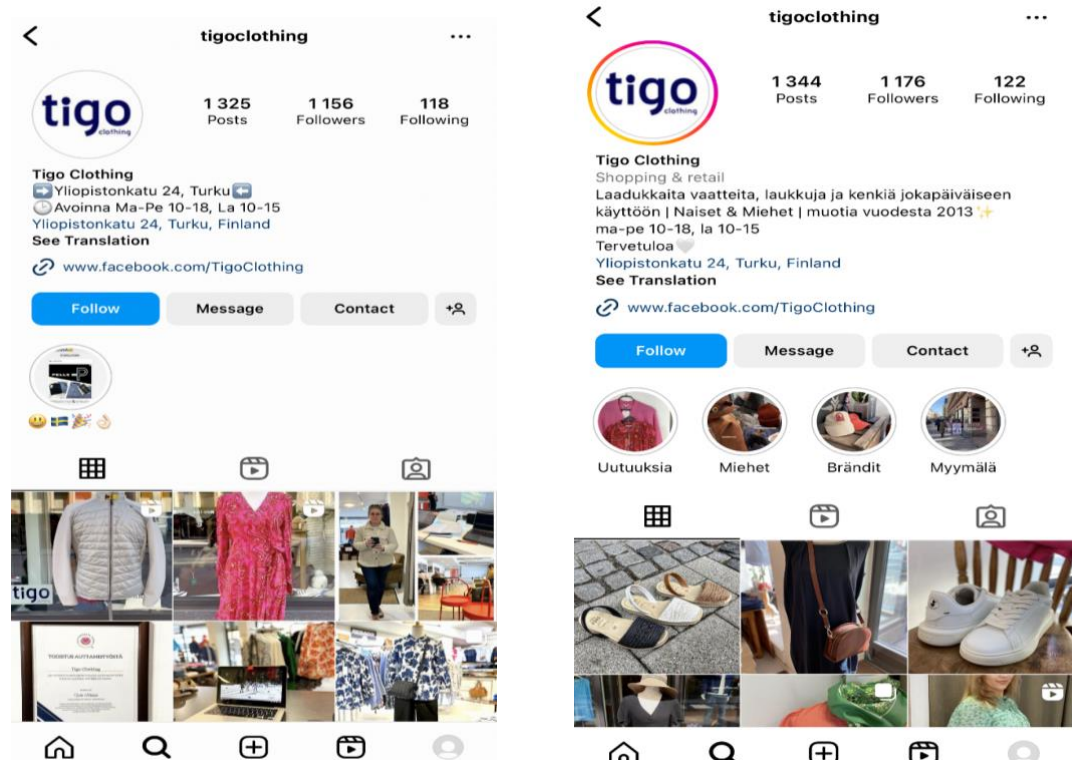


Figure 20. Screenshots of Tigo Clothing Instagram profiles at the beginning vs now. First photo taken on the 12th of March, second photo taken on the 27th of April.

The picture on the left represents the initial look of Tigo's Instagram profile before making any changes. The picture on the right is an updated version of the profile after the changes. It is easier to notice the improvements when comparing these screenshots. As the profile did not have an account category that indicates the professional account, this entailed the addition of "Shopping & retail" category being deemed the most suitable, to clearly indicate that the account is a retail clothing store. The bio was also completely refreshed, utilizing a short, storytelling sentence to describe the company. The most fitting and describing sentence for the company was selected to be "High quality clothing, bags, and shoes for everyday use". Additionally, a small detail about their history as "fashion since 2013" was added in the end. This defines the company and gives a storytelling description. It was recognized that the bio needed to clarify the target audience as well, as the store is aimed at both men and women, the author added "Men & Women", along with business hours for a more professional and organized appearance. The extraneous emojis were removed and replaced with more elegant and refined ones. Furthermore, the store address from the bio was removed but the Google address was retained, which is advantageous for customers as they can easily click the link to view the store's location on Google Maps. As well as the link to their Facebook page was retained, which serves as the primary company introduction webpage.

Story highlights play a crucial role in the visual presentation of an Instagram profile, and as such, the author decided to make changes and create highlights under the categories of 'Store', 'New', 'Men' and 'Brands'. The 'Store' highlight would include videos and pictures showcasing the store's exterior and interior. This serves as a virtual presentation and introduction, enabling Instagram users to preview Tigo's store beforehand. A creative and visually appealing display and information about the store attracts people to explore it further. This is the general idea behind these highlights. The 'New' highlight category would feature content showcasing the latest clothing arrivals. 'Men' would include all products

specifically designed for men, since the average content is focused on women's clothing, it was chosen to categorize one highlight for men to showcase more men's clothing. Finally, the 'Brands' category would introduce all the brands that Tigo retails. The Instagram story highlight feature is an excellent tool for introducing Tigo as a company. Utilizing highlights is an effective way to promote brand awareness through visually captivating storytelling content on the profile.

The colour scheme and profile design underwent a slight noticeable change as seen in the before and after photos in Figure 20. The first impression users receive when browsing content and visiting the profile is from the photo covers displayed on the profile. This emphasizes the importance of creating a consistent brand aesthetic that aligns with the profile bio description and account images. The Tigo's profile gained a more professional and visually enhanced appearance. The following paragraph will delve into the enhancement and creation of content for Tigo.

Content creation

As the benchmarked Instagram accounts used a specific color or theme, Tigo's content was created to have a 'softer' look with simplicity, embracing elegance and natural light and color palettes. The content was made to be visually appealing and compelling for women aged between 30 to 65 years old. Also using more high-quality camera effects and editing the photos to use the same color brightness and tone. The content created was regular posts as images, carousel posts, reels and multiple stories. The author collaborated with the company to equipment improvement ideas, and jointly decided to purchase a selfie LED ring light with a stand that can extend up to 1.60 meters in height. This ring light is particularly useful for shooting videos and providing a more natural and high-quality light when capturing clothing inside the store without natural light. Several pictures were captured using the ring light, and its effectiveness was evident, leading to its intended usage in the future. This equipment is particularly useful for capturing pictures of oneself wearing clothes, especially when no one else is available to take the picture. It is especially helpful for the company because there is one person at a time who is responsible for the marketing and who typically takes photos on their own. They have previously relied on mirror selfies when wearing clothes and showcasing them on Instagram. Although mirror selfies are

also a decent way to showcase clothing items, but they lack the professional look of photographs taken with a camera and better lighting, which the ring light provided. Typically, the lighting inside a store can cause the colors in a picture to appear distorted. This tool offered a variety of color tones that can be adjusted to achieve a more natural and accurate color representation in the picture.

In addition to making the lighting and colors in pictures better, the content improvements also involved showing different types of items, such as dresses, accessories, jackets, shoes, and bags to offer more variety. A well-organized display was achieved by carefully selecting the clothing items, taking into account their colors, and ensuring that the pictures complemented Tigo's Instagram feed. Figure 21 below displays the content that was created and shared during the testing period, as well as a picture of the LED ring light used, showcasing the detailed appearance it offers.

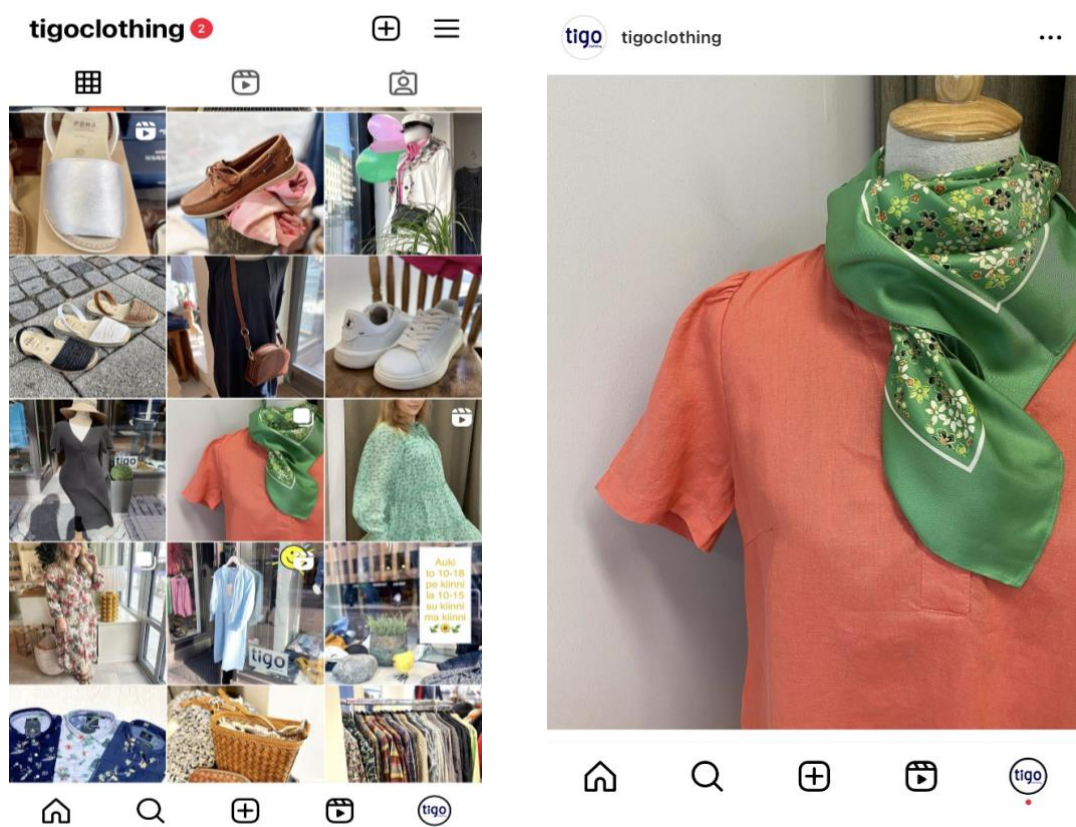


Figure 21. Published content on Tigo's Instagram.

As shown in the published content, the pictures look simpler and contains of one picture, instead of using collage pictures. As previously, a collage app was used

to create collage pictures, which contained a logo of "Pic Collage" that did not look professional. As a solution, it was recommended to discontinue the use of the app and switch to a new app called 'InShot,' which does not leave any marks on the picture and is free of charge. Additionally, it is suggested to avoid using collage frames for regular posts and instead, using carousel posts to add multiple pictures in a single post. This would result in a more organized and visually appealing feed avoiding a complex look. For the further recommendation the collage pictures could be used more on stories.

Texts

The texts were kept simple and descriptive, providing information about the product materials and details, such as prices and sizes. The captions used to be written in a single line, packed with emojis, text, and hashtags, all in the same context without any spacing between them. To enhance text clarity, the author used blank lines to separate the content. In order to engage the audience, an engaging question was added at the end of the caption to encourage comments and increase engagement. Relevant hashtags were chosen for the posts and were recommended to be used each time. The hashtags include different categories such as product material (e.g., #cotton), type of product featured in the image (e.g., #jeans), season (e.g., #spring), certain seasonal products (e.g., #Summerdress), general fashion (#fashion), new arrivals (#new), spring summer 2023 season (#ss23), relevant events and holidays (e.g., #easter), differentiation between men's and women's fashion based on the images (#mensfashion or #womensfashion).

Using 20 or 30 hashtags did not feel appropriate as it was challenging to come up with relevant hashtags for the content, and such, the author decided to use 5-11 hashtags (Appendix 3). In the future, it is recommended to continue testing different amounts of hashtags for long-term effectiveness. The previous method of tagging Tigo's account in the text was replaced with using the hashtag #Tigoclothing. Retail Instagram brand accounts were tagged in the posts and stories, which was a new approach. Tagging brands in stories allows them to reshare the picture on their own story, while tagging them in regular posts notifies them and increases the likelihood of engagement such as likes, comments, or sharing the picture. Keeping in line with the brand's image, Tigo's Instagram

continued to use colorful emojis, while avoiding excessive use of different colors in the same text. This ensured consistency and minimal changes to the brand's visual identity.



Figure 22. Screenshot of Tigo's post caption made by the author. 14.4.2023.

The post above, in Figure 22, illustrates the implementation of a text created using the new approach. The text is divided into clear paragraphs, and the hashtags are placed at the end. The aim was to present the product descriptions and information effectively, with a specific focus on highlighting the material and available sizes in this post. The text incorporated a few emojis that were carefully selected to maintain a cohesive color scheme and align with the overall tone of the post.

Stories

Initially, the company used Instagram Stories but did not fully utilize the available Story tools. To address this, the author decided to increase the frequency of story posts compared to regular posts and took advantage of the Story tools. After benchmarking other companies, it was observed that they typically posted more stories than regular posts, averaging 3-4 stories per day. However, the author concluded that posting an average of 8 stories per week would be a suitable

frequency for a small business. The goal was to share story content at least every other day. Various story tools, such as the questions box and polls, were actively used (see Figure 23). Additionally, the author also shared previously posted posts on a story to increase more visibility to the content shared. The stories were designed to introduce the new arrivals and provide additional details about the clothing items. They emerged as highly captivating and engaging content, generating numerous likes, comments, and reactions. It is recommended to continue utilizing the story tools as they proved to capture a considerable amount of attention. Over time, this has the potential to enhance overall engagement.

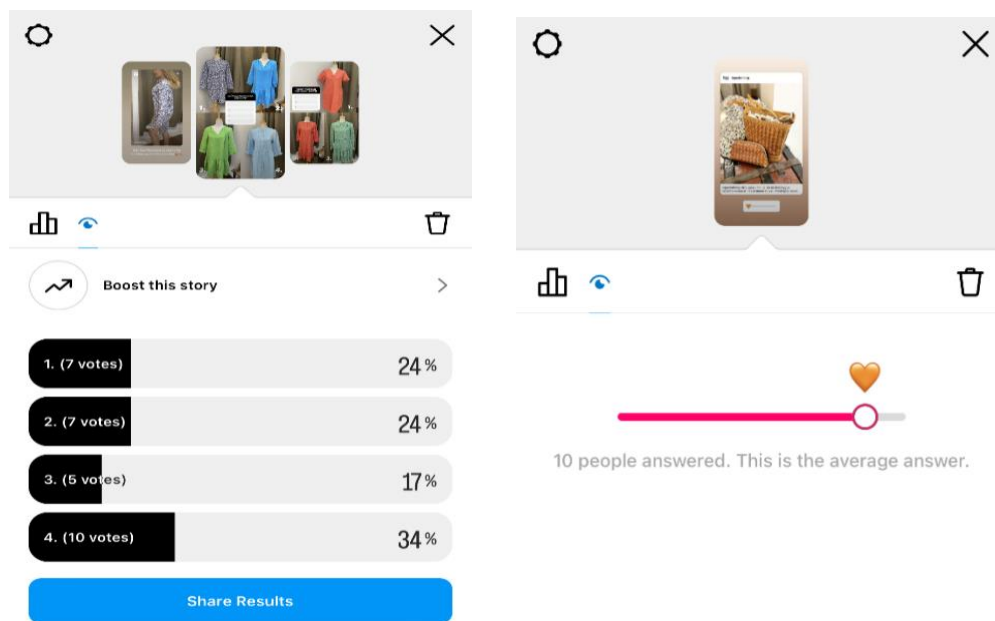


Figure 23. Screenshots of story tools used and their answers.

Engagement

The mentioned tools for stories were effective for engagement, along with actively responding to comments and messages, and interacting with other Instagram users by liking their posts and commenting. It was examined that tagging brands in photos and stories can result in the brand reposting it on their own page, expanding the audience to their followers. Throughout the month, there were several instances where the brand accounts shared the post or story in which the author tagged them. For Tigo as retail clothing store, engaging with these brand accounts might improve partnerships and overall engagement, leading to increased brand loyalty and trust among customers and the audience.

4.3.2 Content calendar

A detailed content calendar template was developed using recommendations from the literature review. It includes different components and information required for creating an Instagram post. This template comprises of nine sections, covering each step of post creation and design, including date, time, topics, number of pictures, reels and stories, campaign/event, caption, and hashtags (see figure 24). The content calendar also acts as a valuable tool for the annual marketing calendar, as it helps to identify upcoming events, such as Easter, which happened to be during the testing period. This allows for effective organization of content tailored to these specific holidays throughout the year.

Date	Time	Picture	Topic	Reel	Topic	Story	Topic	Campaign/event	Caption	Hashtag
March 28										
March 29										
March 30										
March 31										

Figure 24. An example of a content calendar made by the author (Appendix 3)

According to Instagram insights, the optimal posting time for Tigo is after 9am. As seen on the analysis of benchmarking the most efficient time and post frequency was either in the morning around 10 am and 12 pm or in the evening around 5-6 pm (Appendix 2). Moreover, the frequency was calculated being average of 0,8 post a day. From examining the accounts these results were taken in use as inspired ideas for Tigo. Over the month the author posted in total of 30 stories and 14 posts, including two reels and two carousel posts. The average posting frequency was 0.6 posts per day, or roughly every other day, which proved to be effective for Tigo. The Tigo content calendar can be found in the appendices (Appendix 3). The efficiency of the content analysis will be conducted using Instagram insights in upcoming chapters.

Scheduled content on Instagram

The author experimented with the Instagram scheduled content feature by posting a single image, which found to be extremely helpful. By taking multiple clothing pictures in one go and posting them on different days allowed for all the week's photos to be taken in just 1 to 2 days. This made editing and captioning

more convenient since several pictures were prepared in advance. One post could be shared on the same day, while the remaining posts could be scheduled for future dates, saving the daily hassle of deciding what to post. Additionally, scheduled content could be effortlessly integrated into the content calendar to avoid any overlapping. This feature is recommended to get in use in the future as well.

4.3.3 Budget and advertising

Throughout the study, there was a single paid advertisement that ran from April 1st to April 30th. Tigo utilized a raffle, similar to the giveaways conducted by benchmarked companies, to attract attention. The concept of the raffle involved selecting three winners who would each receive gift cards valued at 50€. The ad displayed on both Instagram and Facebook, as these two platforms are under the same ownership, Meta. Clicking on the "Learn more" button on the ad (see Figure 25) leads users to a raffle page, where they have the opportunity to enter by becoming "friends of Tigos". The budget for this ad was 300€ spent.



Figure 25. Screenshot of the ad. Screenshot taken on the publishment day, 1st of April.

The next chapter will include the analysis of the ad, providing an overall analysis and metrics of the content strategy employed and the implemented changes.

4.4 Analysis of Instagram insights

The key performance indicators (KPIs) are used to analyze the testing hypothesis included engagement rate, reach, interactions, and overall profile traffic. The monitoring period was from March 28th to April 26th, which covered 30 days. The results were compared to the previous 30-day period before the improvements were implemented. The overview of the insights indicates that compared to the previous 30-day period (February 26th - March 27th), Tigo's Instagram account experienced a 279% increase in reach, a 20.9% increase in engagement, and a 1.2% increase in account growth. The insights of follower growth, engagement, reach, content, and advertisement are presented in more detail in the following parts. Instagram platform offers detailed information and explanations about each metric of how it is measured, enhancing the understanding of Instagram's analytics. The analysis below is based on the information provided directly by Instagram.

Follower growth

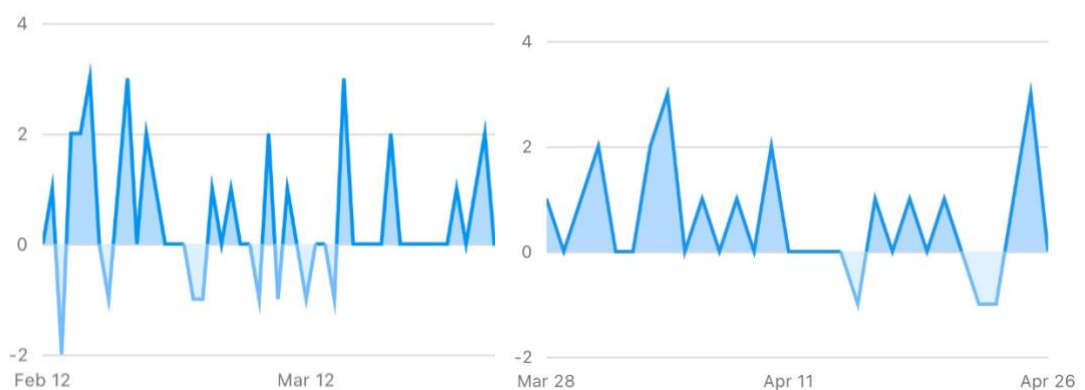


Figure 26. Screenshots of Tigo's follower growth from February 12th to April 26th.

The follower growth in Figure 26, illustrates the period before implementing improvements on Tigo's Instagram content and appearance. It is noticeable that

there was a higher number of unfollows compared to the time during March and April. The positive follower count rate during the testing period indicates an increase in followers over time as Tigo gained 20 new followers, bringing the total follower count to 1,176 compared to the initial count of 1,156 followers, with a 1.2% increase from the previous month. Based on this growth rate, Tigo would potentially gain 240 more followers in a year. However, it is important to consider that follower count and growth can vary significantly over time. This indicates a positive step towards achieving the goal of raising awareness and acquiring more customers through Instagram.

Engagement

The engagement metrics of the company, including likes, comments, and saves, are analyzed to determine the effectiveness of its content in engaging the audience, such as identifying which types of posts generate the most engagement.

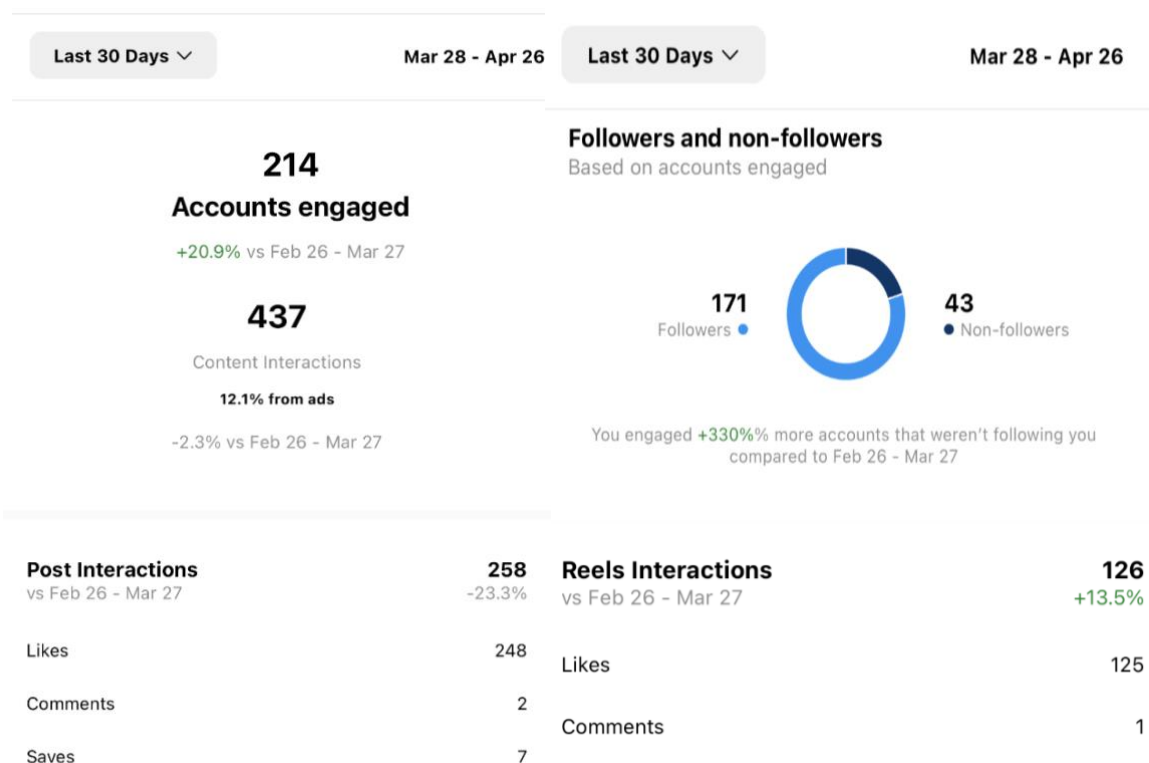


Figure 27. Screenshots of Tigo's Instagram engagement insights. 26.4.2023

Tigo's account engaged with overall 214 accounts which is 20,9% more compared to previous month. 171 out of the total were followers and 43 were

non-followers. The account increased 330% of engagement with non-followers which is a remarkable achievement. The content interactions were in total of 437 which was 12.1% resulted from ads. However, despite this, the content interaction rate decreased compared to the previous month. The post interactions specifically saw a decline of 23.3%, which could be a contributing factor to the overall lower content interactions. To consider the type of content engaged it was seen that reels got more engagement than posts (pictures, including carousel posts). Although the posts managed to gain a total of 248 likes, 2 comments, and 7 saves (indicating that other accounts saved the posts), these numbers were lower compared to the previous period.

When examining the engagement rates of benchmarking companies, the engagement rate per following for Tigo can be calculated using the same formula $((\text{Total likes} + \text{Total comments}) / \text{Total followers} \times 100)$. To ensure relevancy in comparing to benchmarked companies' engagement rates, Tigo's engagement rate was determined within a 14-day during the testing period. From March 28th to April 10th, Tigo gained a total of 196 likes and 1 comment, resulting in an average of 28 likes per post. Considering the follower count at that time, which was 1,176 thousand, Tigo's engagement rate was calculated to be 2.4%. Continuing into the next 14-day period from April 11 to 24th, Tigo's average likes per post increased to 36, resulting in an improved engagement rate of 3.1%. Comparing these rates with the competitors, it is evident that Tigo performed better (Figure 19; Appendix 2). These positive results align with Tigo's goal of enhancing engagement, showcasing its ability to effectively engage with its audience despite having a smaller follower count compared to competitors. This emphasizes that the overall engagement on Instagram holds more significance than the mere number of followers.

The follower insights also provided valuable data about the days of the week and approximate times when Tigo's followers were most active. The information is presented in the appendices (Appendix 4). This data assists the account in determining the optimal posting and engagement times. Tigo's followers showed consistent activity throughout the weeks, indicating that every day is a good day to post. However, the highest number of active followers is still observed on Sundays. This may be attributed to people having a day off and therefore having

more time to engage on Instagram. The most active times vary between 9 in the morning and 9 in the evening, with 6 in the evening being the most active time regardless of the day. The second active times were around 3 pm and 9 in the evening. Considering these times, Tigo should primarily focus on posting during the evenings around 5-6 pm, but can consider any time after 9 in the morning as well.

Reach

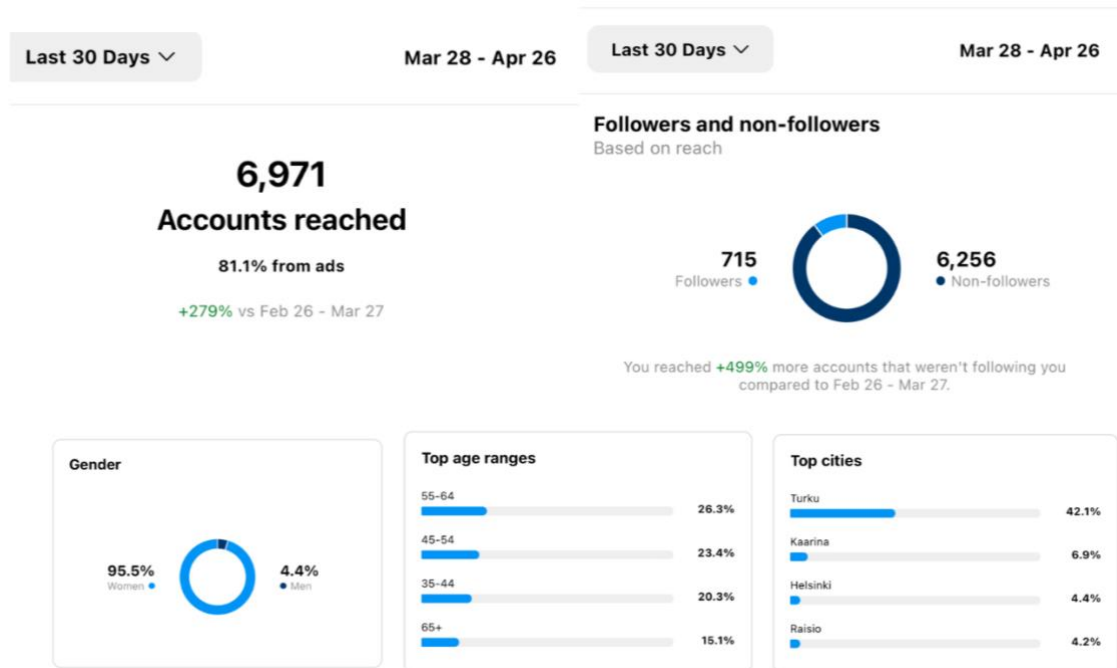


Figure 28. Screenshots of reach metrics on Tigo's Instagram insights. 26.4.2023

Reach represents the total number of Instagram users who viewed Tigo's content. Based on the reach analysis, it is evident that there was a significant increase in the number of accounts reached. During the period, the account reached 6,971 thousand accounts, which is a 279% increase compared to the previous month. The profile's improvements and activities played a crucial role in achieving this result, along with the contribution of an ad that accounted for 81.1% of the total reach rate. The majority of accounts reached were non-followers, totaling 6,256 thousand, representing a 499% increase compared to the previous month. Additionally, 715 accounts of Tigo's followers were reached, and this is over half of the follower base. The goal of raising awareness was successfully achieved, as evidenced by the high number of non-followers was reached, which

can be pronounced as the potential customers. The target audience for Tigo's account was women, and the account successfully reached 95.5% of women. The top age range reached was 55-64 years old, followed by 45-54, 35-44, and last 65+. Between the age range there was only a 3-5% variation, which make the distribution quite even. The top city reached was Turku, accounting for 42.1% of accounts, which was expected, given the store location in Turku. The next cities in order of reach were Kaarina, Helsinki, and Raisio.

Content reach & profile activity

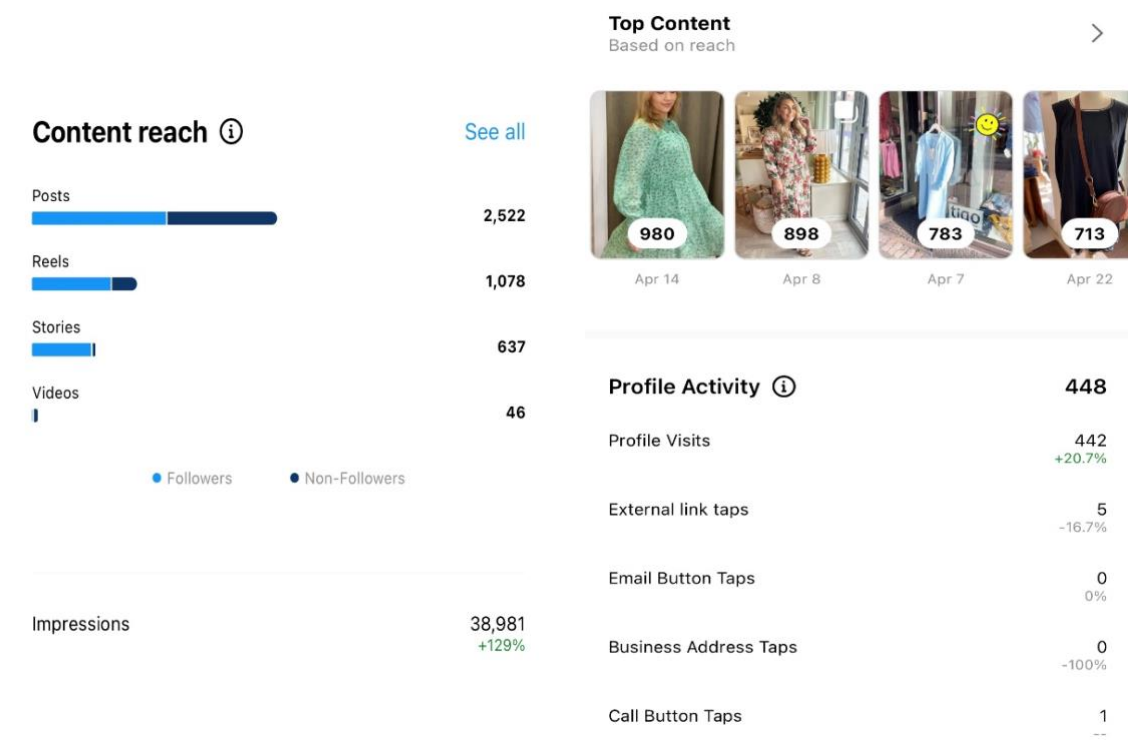


Figure 29. Screenshots of content reach and profile activity metrics on Tigo's Instagram. 26.4.2023.

The posts had the highest reach, followed by reels in second and stories in third. One of the main reasons for posts having a greater reach, especially among non-followers, is the larger number of posts shared compared to reels. Despite stories was posted more frequently, they tend to have limited reach, even when retail brands were tagged in each story to leverage the audience reach. When browsing the Instagram feed of users that the account is not following, it is common to come across reels and posts, while stories are not displayed on the feed and browsing through stories can be challenging.

Impressions on Instagram represent the number of times Tigo's content, including stories and posts, were displayed to users. If a user comes across twice on the same content that calculates it as two impressions but gives one reach (Delfino 2021). Tigo's impressions in 30-day period was 38,981 thousand, which is 129% more than in the previous month. It makes on average of 1,299 thousand impressions a day which feels a very good amount considering Tigo being a small business.

The profile activity tells how many users visited Tigo's profile and used call-to-action buttons. There happened to be 442 profile visits in total, 5 external link taps excluding taps on connected Tigo's Facebook page, and one call button taps which means a user tapped Tigo's phone number or Call Now button. Profile visits increased by 20.7% compared to the previous period. This is considered one of the achievements in the goal of discovering more potential customers.

Advertisement

As the advertisement was displayed on both Instagram and Facebook, Instagram Insights did not provide separate metrics for the advertisement. However, the available metrics from Instagram indicated that the ad contributed to 81.1% of the total reach rate and 12.1% of the overall content interactions. These metrics are used in the period of April 1st to April 26th since the testing hypotheses timeframe was different and ended on the 26th of April even though the ad ran until the end of April. From during this time, the ad increased engagement and gave a lot of visibility and increased awareness from non-followers.

4.5 Consumer perspective

The author conducted interviews with three active retail clothing consumers. The aim of interviewing these participants was to gain insights into their perspective as consumers regarding the type of Instagram content that would motivate them to visit the physical store after discovering it on Instagram. These interviews provide valuable thoughts about Instagram content marketing, offer new improvement ideas, and help identify potential challenges, as well as provide additional support for the findings from previous analysis. The interviewees will

be referred to as Interviewee A, Interviewee B, and Interviewee C when answering the questions. Interviewee A is a 56-year-old woman, Interviewee B is a 45-year-old woman, and Interviewee C is a 39-year-old woman.

1. How often do you use Instagram to discover fashion-related content?

A: Consciously not often, but when I come across fashion-related content it inspires me.

B: Approximately two times a week.

C: I typically browse websites, so I would say about once a week or every other week.

2. What kind of (fashion) content do you find most appealing or engaging on Instagram?

A: I prefer fashion content that features models between the ages of 40-60 and represents a range of normal sizes and different body shapes. It would be great to see various types of content, including videos that showcase the clothing being worn by models, as many pictures and colors as possible, including outfits suitable for different occasions. Inspirational images.

B: Seeing pictures of a complete outfit and not just a single product. For example, accessories from head to toe to make it easy to purchase. Clothes worn by a model so I can see the style and how it fits.

C: I enjoy watching reels and videos featuring domestic brands and their content.

3. How likely are you to purchase clothing or accessories from a fashion brand you discover on Instagram? Very likely / Likely / Unlikely / Very unlikely

A: Very likely

B: Unlikely

C: Likely

4. Do you tend to engage with fashion brands through direct messages, comments, Story engagement tools, or likes on Instagram? Why, or why not?

A: Yes. I want my own opinion to be expressed, and I believe that by doing so, it will give valuable reaction to those accounts as well. I like the pictures that interest

me and I send messages when I'm interested in knowing more about certain products.

B: I mostly engage with liking posts and answering to story tools, but I don't feel the need to comment because I don't believe the administrators have time to read the messages.

C: I occasionally give likes, but I rarely comment since I don't like my name to be shown to everyone in the messages. If I have any questions, or if certain fashion content really catches my attention, I might react to them, such as on their stories, and leave a comment there.

5. Do you find Instagram Stories or regular posts more engaging to you?

A: I find it engaging and appealing to interact with stories that utilize various tools.

B: Stories

C: Regular posts

6. How important is it that a clothing store's Instagram account reflects their brand's values and visual identity?

A: Very important

B: Very important

C: Very important

7. What factors influence your decision to visit a physical store, based solely on the company's presence on Instagram?

A: If I discover that the company operates only as a brick-and-mortar store, it influences me wanting to support them, also, especially if I see the company has a commitment to sustainable development.

B: Mostly, recommendations from friends, such as tagging the company's Instagram account, and if I know that the store has a product/service that meets my needs.

C: Special offers or events, such as coffee and pastries -offer, that are available in the store.

8. What are the key elements that contribute to building trust in a company based solely on your experience with them on Instagram?

A: The account being active and providing company information that are up-to-date and reliable, also having a well-design and up-to-date website.

B: Having a clear layout, proper grammar, and if I see a representative of the company responding to comments/messages.

C: High-quality visuals and videos with a personal touch that align with the brand's mission and values. Consistently posting content also builds trust in the brand for me.

9. Are there any specific types of content or promotions on Instagram that would encourage you to visit a physical store?

A: Content that has a visual appeal, and that the store is showcased on Instagram. The content showing a cozy and warm atmosphere with warm and nice people. Using storytelling content that makes me want to visit the store myself, as well as content with using expertise that explains the knowledge of the selling products and materials.

B: I don't have any specific criteria, except that if they have campaigns or promotions that match my needs at that time, it would encourage me to visit their physical store. What attracts me the most is seeing clothing or accessories that I actually need. The price is not as important as how well it is portrayed and captured, giving it a natural and authentic look.

C: Not particularly, but mainly a good and interesting visual content that personally appeals to me.

The participants in the interview found different types of fashion content appealing, including diverse models in the pictures, complete outfit pictures, and videos featuring domestic brands. The likelihood of purchasing from a fashion brand discovered on Instagram varied among participants. Engagement with fashion brands, participants use direct messages, comments, story tools, and likes to express opinions and seek information. Two of them preferred Instagram stories over regular posts. The importance of a clothing store's Instagram account reflecting the brand's values and visual identity was considered significant. Factors influencing the decision to visit a physical store based on the Instagram presence included support for brick-and-mortar stores, recommendations from friends, and special offers. Trust in a company on Instagram was influenced by factors such as an active account, reliable information, clear layout, responsive

representatives, high-quality visuals, and consistent posting. Visiting a physical store was encouraged by visually appealing content, a cozy atmosphere, storytelling, expertise in product selling, and content tailored to individual needs.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In the initial phase of the study, research questions were presented with the aim of gaining comprehensive insights and answers to these questions at the end of the study. The following outlines each research question and final conclusions with an answer:

Question 1: *How can Tigo Clothing develop an effective Instagram marketing strategy that enhances its social media image, generates more interest from potential customers and increases brand awareness?*

By following a structured approach which specific steps, Tigo can develop an effective Instagram marketing strategy. These steps include defining goals and objectives, identifying the target audience, establishing the brand's value and competition proposition, creating a content strategy, promoting, advertising and managing budgeting, and tracking the results.

A successful Instagram marketing plan entails having a professional business account with essential elements such as the company name, logo, storytelling bio to introduce the brand and company, business category, relevant website link and business hours. The effectiveness of this section relies on its ability to convey the brand's value proposition while establishing an appropriate tone and style. Additionally, using high-quality posts with a consistent theme and use of a content calendar. The content calendar plays a vital role in managing the posting schedule and creating effective posts. It includes details such as posting times, content types, campaigns, captions, hashtags, and upcoming events which also acts as a valuable tool for the annual marketing calendar. Allocating a realistic budget for promoting and advertising on social media can help the company to achieve its marketing goals by increasing their reach and attracting new customers.

According to the answers from consumer interviews, the trust in a company on Instagram is influenced by factors such as an active account, reliable information, clear layout, responsive representatives, high-quality visuals, and consistent posting. Testing different approaches and tracking audience data are essential

for refining the marketing plan and producing engaging content. With these insights, a personalized and successful Instagram marketing plan can be developed to enhance the company's social media image leading to improved customer engagement, satisfaction, loyalty, and increased acquisition of new customers.

Question 2: *What kind of visual marketing look would suit the company?*

The company's Instagram profile's color theme and design should be modified to create a consistent brand aesthetic that aligns with the profile bio and images. To match Tigo's brand image and values, the visual marketing look should have a high-quality, elegant, and natural appearance. Embracing simplicity and using soft colors and natural lighting in the pictures would resonate with the target audience, as they value quality over price. The LED ring light can be utilized during the process of capturing images to ensure picture quality.

The content should be visually appealing and compelling, targeting women aged between 30 to 65 years old. Careful selection of clothing items, considering their colors, and ensuring that the pictures complement Tigo's Instagram feed would create a well-organized display on its Instagram feed. The texts in the captions should be clear and concise, providing information about the product materials, details, prices, and sizes with using blank lines to separate the content between the text and hashtags. Relevant hashtags and a few carefully selected emojis would maintain a cohesive color scheme and align with the overall tone of the post.

Question 3: *What are the best practices in Instagram that the company can adopt to enhance its customer engagement?*

Maintaining an active presence on Instagram is essential for enhancing customer engagement. Regular posting, actively engaging with users through comments and likes, and using relevant hashtags and captions increase discoverability and visibility. Utilizing various content formats such as pictures, carousel posts, reels, stories, or IGTV can boost engagement. Reels, in particular, have shown to be highly engaging and should be prioritized. Collaborating with Instagram

influencers and retail brand accounts can be advantageous. Tagging Tigo's account in their posts and stories, and vice versa, can expand the reach to a larger audience. Additionally, utilizing effective Instagram engagement tools and various story features can further enhance the company's overall engagement. Posting multiple story content with showcasing the clothing is beneficial in this regard.

Instagram business account provides multiple benefits for the company to seek enhancing its social media presence and engagement on the platform. Leveraging Instagram's features, such as tracking audience activity and using insights, helps evaluate the best practices to adapt to enhance engagement and improve the company's Instagram strategy.

5.1 Limitations and discussion

The purpose of the thesis was to create a clear strategy for improving Instagram marketing by enhancing the company's social media image, which would attract more people, increase engagement with customers, and potentially lead to more sales. However, since the objective was to increase sales by attracting potential customers to visit Tigo Clothing's store since its operations are currently limited to its physical store, the author was unable to provide the results of the overall impact on sales. Despite this, the author effectively accomplished the research goals by utilizing Instagram insights to measure and analyse important metrics. The results demonstrated the success of the work, as Tigo's Instagram account witnessed a significant 279% increase in reach, a 20.9% increase in engagement, and a 1.2% increase in account growth. Engagement with non-followers increased by 330%, reaching a remarkable achievement in engaging with potential customers. The majority of reached accounts were also non-followers, totaling 6,256 thousand, representing a 499% increase compared to the previous month. The goal of raising awareness was successfully achieved, as evidenced by the high number of non-followers was reached, which can be pronounced as the potential customers. The target audience for Tigo's account was women, and the account successfully reached 95.5% of women.

The author gained valuable experiences and lessons that provided beneficial both academically and career-wise while writing and conducting the research for the thesis. The author had a few challenges with time management as it took a lot of time to conduct the research and search relevant information from different sources using valuable literature. The practical actions taken to test hypotheses on the company's Instagram account allowed the author to put the ideas into practice. Balancing with a full-time job alongside the research project required effective time management and multitasking abilities. Despite encountering challenges related to time management it served as opportunities for personal and professional development.

5.2 Further research and recommendations

In the future, it is recommended for the company to continue testing different approaches and methods for long-term effectiveness. Moreover, knowledge of industry benchmarks and new trends can help to keep up with current online presence, remain competitive and relevant in the marketplace. As this study could not evaluate the effectiveness in profitability, another research could be conducted tracking the Instagram marketing effectiveness in an increase of sales.

Due to Tigo being a small business with a limited advertising budget, Tigo could take advantages of the advertisements and spend around 600-1000€ per year. The advertising strategy for a year could include two significant month-long campaigns, costing approximately the same amount of 300€ each, and additionally, there could be three to five smaller ads running for 3-7 days each. The campaigns could be similar to giveaways and raffles which are effective types of ads, as they attract attention, are free to participate in, and easy to enter. Alternatively, the campaigns could solely focus on advertising ongoing sales and promotions within the store, while also highlighting Tigo as a brand itself. In the future, it would be interesting for Tigo as being a retail clothing company, to explore collaboration opportunities with nano influencers (those with less than 10,000 followers) through brand deals. This involves paying influencers a flat rate per post to feature Tigo's products, which can help increase brand visibility to a wider audience. It is recommended to consider influencers located in the same area as Turku. According to the literature review, 61% of consumers trust

influencer recommendations more than brand content (Bagadiya, 2023), making this strategy worth considering for Tigo's future marketing efforts. Furthermore, the author suggests that the company consider running an advertising campaign exclusively on Instagram to assess its effectiveness and directly observe the results through Instagram insights. Additionally, it is suggested that Tigo could continue testing different amounts of hashtags customizing the use, based on the specific needs of the company and experimenting with different approaches. This could help to determine the most effective ones for the company (Iseli 2021.)

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Evaluation of benchmarked companies' Instagram accounts: Presence, engagement and post frequency 1 (2)

General	Papu Design	Nosh	Voglia	Makia	Balmuir	Billebeino	Marimekko	Niimun'design	DOTS	R/H Studio
Established year	2014	2009	1983	2001	2007	2014	1951	2015	2022	2010
Posts*	3,939	928	628	1,945	2,841	271	3,371	2,826	2,593	6,475
Followers*	62,200	24,900	8,782	37,800	31,300	47,700	691,000	7,239	7,784	17,600
Instagram account name	papudesignofficial	noshwomen	vogliafinland	makiaclothing	balmuir	billebeino	marimekko	niimundesign	dots_stores	rh_studio

*count numbers taken on 24.3.2023

Instagram Publishing frequency: Including number of published content in a day																
POSTS																
TIMEFRAME (24.3 - 6.4.2023)																
Publishing frequency	Fri 24.3	Sat 25.3	Sun 26.3	Mon 27.3	Tue 28.3	Wed 29.3	Thu 30.3	Fri 31.3	Sat 1.4	Sun 2.4	Mon 3.4	Tue 4.4	Wed 5.4	Thu 6.4	Average	In total
Papu design	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1,1	15
Nosh	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0,9	12
Voglia	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0,1	2
Makia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0,6	9
Balmuir	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0,6	8
Billebeino	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0,6	8
Marimekko	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1,6	22
Niimun'design	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1,1	15
DOTS	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	2	2	1,0	14
R/H Studio	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0,7	10
Average	1,2	0,8	0,5	0,9	0,7	0,9	0,7	0,8	0,7	0,6	0,8	0,8	0,9	1,2	0,8	11,5

STORIES																
TIMEFRAME (24.3 - 6.4.2023)																
Publishing frequency	Fri 24.3	Sat 25.3	Sun 26.3	Mon 27.3	Tue 28.3	Wed 29.3	Thu 30.3	Fri 31.3	Sat 1.4	Sun 2.4	Mon 3.4	Tue 4.4	Wed 5.4	Thu 6.4	In total	
Papu design	6	0	0	12	5	13	6	6	0	0	11	5	4	2	70	
Nosh	8	0	0	8	6	0	1	1	0	1	9	2	1	2	39	
Voglia	1	8	0	1	0	6	2	8	0	0	0	0	5	6	37	
Makia	0	5	1	1	1	7	1	8	1	1	5	0	0	1	32	
Balmuir	0	3	0	3	4	1	0	0	7	1	0	1	1	3	24	
Billebeino	5	10	2	2	3	5	1	4	2	0	2	4	7	4	51	
Marimekko	6	1	7	11	9	1	1	10	0	5	4	1	6	3	65	
Niimun'design	2	1	0	2	1	2	2	3	9	2	4	4	3	2	37	
DOTS	4	5	0	9	28	2	12	7	0	2	9	18	8	8	112	
R/H Studio	1	3	9	8	2	16	0	4	3	6	4	3	3	4	66	
Average	3,3	3,6	1,9	5,7	5,9	5,3	2,6	5,1	2,2	1,8	4,8	3,8	3,8	3,5	3,80714286	

Appendix 2. Evaluation of benchmarked companies' Instagram account: Presence, engagement and post frequency 2 (2)

Engagement rate on post per following		DOTS	Makia	Billebeino	Voglia	Marimekko	Niinmun'design	Nosh	Papu design	Balmuir	R/H Studio
Total followers*	pcs	7,810	37,800	47,700	8,790	691,000	7,250	25,000	62,300		
Total likes* (past 14 days)	pcs	355	1,851	1,754	58	98,627	784	1,254	1,732	?	?
Total comments* (past 14 days)	pcs	5	18	13	5	1,014	11	19	28		
Likes & comments per post on average (past 14 days)	pcs	26	208	221	32	4,529	53	106	117		
Engagement rate (%)	%	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.4	0,2	?	?

* numbers taken on 7.4.2023

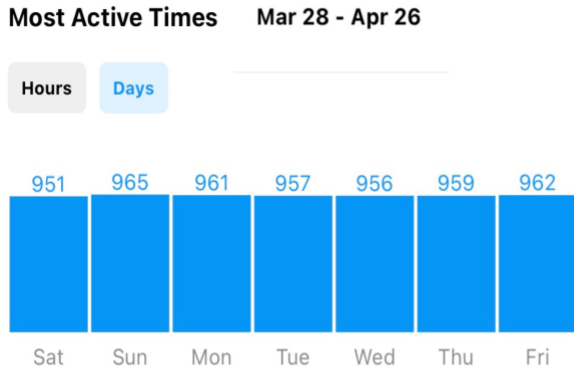
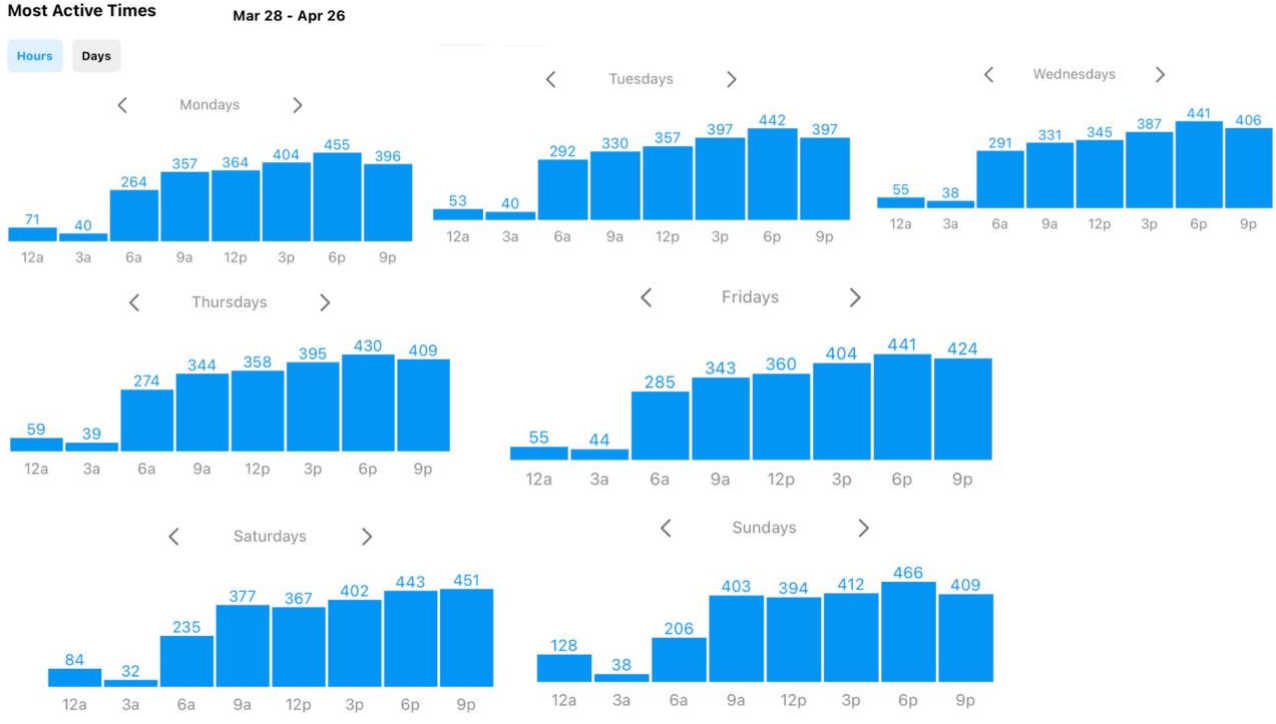
POSTS	THE TIME OF POSTING *time is shown in 24h*													
	Fri 24.3	Sat 25.3	Sun 26.3	Mon 27.3	Tue 28.3	Wed 29.3	Thu 30.3	Fri 31.3	Sat 1.4	Sun 2.4	Mon 3.4	Tue 4.4	Wed 5.4	Thu 6.4
Papu design	15:30	10:25	18	16	17	17	15	10	18	19	16	17 & 18	16:30	11:30
Nosh	11	12		10	15	18	18		12	17	10	18	17	12
Voglia		10:25						18						
Makia	11	11	19	19	11	9	12		12					11
Balmuir	15	21		11			11		10			13		11
Billebeino	17 & 18				18			16				18	17	16:30
Marimekko	16	10	11:30	11 & 15	13 & 16	11 & 18	15	11 & 18	12	9 & 14	16	11	13 & 20	11 & 16
Niinmun'design	18	16			18	19	15	18:30	18	19	10 & 18	18	18	15
DOTS	17	10	10	18		10	18	18	10		10 & 18		10 & 18	10 & 18
R/H Studio	11		10	18		10		13		16	10	10	10	18:30

STORIES	THE TIME OF POSTING *time is shown in 24h*													
	Fri 24.3	Sat 25.3	Sun 26.3	Mon 27.3	Tue 28.3	Wed 29.3	Thu 30.3	Fri 31.3	Sat 1.4	Sun 2.4	Mon 3.4	Tue 4.4	Wed 5.4	Thu 6.4
Papu design	9 & 15:30			10 & 16	17	17	15	17			10 & 16	17	18	15:30
Nosh	11 & 22			9:30	18		18	11		21	10	19:30	18	18
Voglia	10	19		13		11	20	17					11 & 18	17
Makia		9	14	14	11	10	12	11 & 21	12	11	15			11:30
Balmuir		12:25		18:30	15	17			10 & 18	10		11:30	10	10
Billebeino	10 & 16:30	10:25	14	11 & 18	18	19	12	11 & 16			10	11:30 & 18	11 & 18	11
Marimekko	16	10	11:30	11 & 15	13	18	15	11 & 18		9	16	11	20	16
Niinmun'design	18	10		15 & 17	17	19	15 & 18	11	10 & 18	10 & 19	11 & 18	16 & 17	12 & 18:30	11
DOTS	15 & 18	13 & 15		8 & 12 & 14	11 & 21	10 & 17	10 & 11	17		18	10 & 17	11 & 19	10 & 18	10 & 17
R/H Studio	11	11:30	10	18	17	10 & 16:30		13 & 16	20	16	10	10	14	18:30

Appendix 3. Content calendar for Tigo Clothing's Instagram

CONTENT CALENDAR for March 28th - April 26th @tigoclothing										
Date	Time	Picture	Topic	Reel	Topic	Story	Topic	Campaign/event	Caption	Hashtag
March 28	11:30 & 14:00	2	Campaign					Fall and Winter sale; 3 chosen items for 100€	1: Nyt kaikki loput syksyn/talven ale-vaatteet: 3 kpl 100 eurolla ke-Ja. Neuleita, mekkoja, paitoja ym. Holebrook, Claire, Isay jne. 2: Loput ale-vaatteet: 3 kpl 100 eurolla ke-la. Miehillle myös mm. kauluspaitoja ja neuleita	#loputpois #huiippuale #tigoclothing #tyhjennämme #ale
March 29										
March 30	13:00					3	Showing the store outside and inside, using address link			
March 31	10:00					2	Reposting March 28th picture & story of the campaign	Fall and Winter sale; 3 chosen items for 100€		
April 1	12:00	1	Leather women's bags			3	Spring clothing colors		Niin upea ilma. Kesä lähestyy ja kesämekkokausi. Tässä ihana Saddler laukku mekkojesi seuraksi. 199€ ja pikkupussukka 59€.	#tigoclothing #käsilaakku #pikkulaakku #olkalaakku #saddler #saddlerbag #nahkalompakko #nahkalaukut
April 2	10:30					1	Reposting April 1st picture of the bags and using Story tools			
April 3										
April 4										
April 5	14:00	1	Men's new collared shirts						Miehille puuvillaisia kevätaitoja NZA:lta. Hinta 89,95€ ja 99,95€. Näiden kanssa kelpaa lähteä pääsiäisen viettoon.	#tigoclothing #kauluspaita #miestenpaita #paita #kukkapaita #newzealandaucklandclothes
April 6	10:30	1	Store exceptional opening hours					Easter	Aurinkoista pääsiäistä kaikille. Nyt nautitaan juhlapyhistä	
April 7										
April 8	11:00	1	Introducing a new dress presented on a model	1	New linen dress				Part Two pellavamekko vaalean- sekä tummansinisenä. Nämä kannattaa ostaa ajoissa, kun vielä kokoja.	#pellavamekko #parttwomekko #kesämekko #tigoclothing
April 9								Easter break. Store closed.		
April 10								Easter break. Store closed.		
April 11	12:00					2	Reposting April 8th picture and reel			
April 12	14:00	1 carousel post	2 pictures; Flower dress, woman wearing the dress						Tämä isayn kukkamekko on aivan ihanan värinen ja monikäyttöinen. Sopii juhlaan ja vaikkapa kesäiselle torikäynnille. Hinta 129€	#mekko #kesämekko #paitamekko #kukkamekko #tigoclothing
April 13	14:00					4	Showcasing men's clothing items and announcing new Summer dresses	Spring time		
April 14	11:00			1	Introducing new Summer dresses	3	Reposting the reel and showcasing more summer dresses using Story tools		Vau! Nyt olemme saaneet valikoimaamme kesän upeita uutuuksia. Sebagon valkosinikukallinen mekko ja Part Two 100% pellavamekot. Mekot sopivat klassisen istuvuuden takia jokaiselle naiselle ja niitä löytyy nyt useissa eri väreissä! Koot 34-44. Ihania aurinkoisia päiviä kaikille	#pellavamekko #kesämekko #kesämallisto #tigoclothing #parttwo #sebago #uutta #naistenmuoti #hellemekko #pellava #ss23
April 15										
April 16	11:30	1 carousel post	3 pictures; Linen dress in peachy color with a scarf and without and the same dress in green color. Using a mannequin.						Kauniilla yksityiskohdilla saadaan ihaistuttava asukokonaisuus. Tästä pellavamekosta löytyy kaksi kesän väriä. Part Two huivi, viskoosia (39,95€) Part Two mekko, 100% pellavaa (109,95€) Mekon koot 34-42. 44 koko tilattavissa. Oletko enemmän punaisen vai vihreän värin ystävä?	#pellavamekko #kesämekko #kesämallisto2023 #tigoclothing #parttwo #kesänvärit #uutta #naistenmuoti #hellemekko #pellava #ss23
April 17	14:00	1	Black dress with a summer hat on a mannequin			2	Summer dresses		Uusi ihana ja yksinkertaisen tyylikäs mustan värinen leninki, v-aukolla ja kauniilla leikkauksella. Part Two pellavamekko 159,95€ Koot 34-40. Part Two aurinkohattu 29,95€	#pellavamekko #kesämekko #kesämallisto2023 #tigoclothing #parttwo #uutta #naistenmuoti #hellemekko #pellava #ss23 #aurinkohattu #hellehattu
April 18	11:00					4	New collection			
April 19										
April 20	14:00	1	White pair of sneakers			1	New items		Nyt uskaltaa jo pistää valkoiset tennarit ulos. Nämä mukavan kevyet Save the duck kengät sopivat housujen sekä mekon kanssa loistavasti. Kengästä löytyy vielä seuraavat koot: 37-41. (109€)	#kesäkengät #tigoclothing #savetheduck #valkoisettennarit
April 21										
April 22	11:00	1	Dark blue dress with a leather bag on a mannequin			3	Reposting the picture of the black dress & showcasing more new clothing		Yksinkertaisen kaunistu. Uusi tummansininen mekko Pelle P:lta. Mekko puuvilla-bambuviskoosia (90€) Saddler olkalaakku (179€) Aurinkoista viikonloppua kaikille!	#mekko #kesämekko #kesämallisto2023 #tigoclothing #pellep #uutta #naistenmuoti #hellemekko #puuvilla #bambuviskoosi #ss23
April 23										
April 24										
April 25	12:00					2	New shoe arrivals			
April 26	11:00	1	New sandals						Pons-sandaalit ovat tulleet. Huomaa kaunis punosnahka ja sisäpuolella nahkavuoraus. Pehmeä pohja tai muotoiltu pohja. Värinä myös hopea. (119€) Ole nopea, nämä ovat niin suosittuja. Sopivat käytettäväksi hameen, housujen ja shortsien kanssa. Takaremmi ei veny ja mukavuus on taattu.	#sandaalit #ponssandals #ponssit #nahkasandaalit #nahkasandaalitsaisille #tigoclothing

Appendix 4. Tigo's Instagram insights: follower activity



Appendix 5. Interview with case company

Interview with the case company

1. Could you tell about the history and background of Tigo Clothing?
2. How many people do you employ?
3. What kind of products do you sell? Which retail brands does the company carry?
4. What is your target market?
5. What is your company's mission, vision and values?
6. How would you describe your brand image?
7. What are the key areas where you invest in your business?
8. What are the current challenges you face as a retail business?
9. What do your customers value the most: quality, price, or customer service?
10. How do you maintain customer loyalty?
11. What strategies do you use for customer acquisition?
12. Who are your main competitors?

13. Do you have a marketing plan?
14. Who is responsible for marketing efforts?
15. Which social media channels do you utilize for marketing purposes?
16. Which marketing channel is the most important for your business?
17. What is your target audience for social media marketing? What about on Instagram?
18. How do you engage with your audience on social media? What about on Instagram?
19. How frequently do you post on Instagram? And what is your usual posting time?
20. What type of content do you typically share on Instagram?
21. How much time do you dedicate to marketing activities per day?
22. What are the challenges you face specifically in Instagram marketing?
23. What is your allocated budget for marketing?
24. What are your social media marketing goals for 2023?
25. What type of content would you like to showcase on your Instagram account?
26. What benefits do you derive from using Instagram for your business?

Appendix 6. Interview with retail clothing consumers

Interview with retail clothing consumers

1. How often do you use Instagram to discover fashion-related content?
2. What kind of (fashion) content do you find most appealing or engaging on Instagram?
3. How likely are you to purchase clothing or accessories from a fashion brand you discover on Instagram? Very likely / Likely / Unlikely / Very unlikely
4. Do you tend to engage with fashion brands through direct messages, comments, Story engagement tools, or likes on Instagram? Why or why not?
5. Do you find Instagram Stories or regular posts more engaging to you?
6. How important is it that a clothing store's Instagram account reflects their brand's values and visual identity?
7. What factors influence your decision to visit a physical store, based solely on the company's presence on Instagram?
8. What are the key elements that contribute to building trust in a company based solely on your experience with them on Instagram?
9. Are there any specific types of content or promotions on Instagram that would encourage you to visit a physical store?