

# The Role of Social Media in Marketing

Analysis of social media role in companies' marketing strategy

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Social media is an important part of marketing. Nowadays all companies need to have social media presence, and proper usage of social media can increase sales and brand awareness. The objective of this study was to gather information about why social media is an important part of a company's marketing strategy and what benefits it has. There was also research about different social media platforms and their benefits.

The theoretical section explored why it is important to invest in social media presence if growth is desired. This study shows that social media usage also grows audience of the brand and is a link that connects the audience to the company. Social media is also an important part of driving sales, creating an online community, and providing customer service and support.

The research has been done by collecting information from various books, studies and articles. The information obtained from the sources has also been compared with the researcher's own experiences of working in the field of social media. The thesis also includes an interview and a social media marketing plan.

The theoretical framework consisted of how B2C and B2B companies can improve their social media marketing. Social media marketing plan was designed to an electrical company called Insplan Oy. The marketing plan explains how Insplan Oy could improve their social media presence, and the work will generate plenty of practical ideas on which kind of content Insplan Oy could add to their social media platforms. This thesis also includes an interview that was conducted for Insplan Oy.

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Keywords: social media, marketing, branding, B2B

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Social media is nowadays a growing platform for marketing and business. Social media has a huge impact on the Internet and society. Social media has created unique marketing opportunities and has encouraged people to influence each other and do the marketing for the brand (Singh, Diamond 2020, Introduction). There are still other marketing channels, but social media is a complementary extension of all of your other marketing efforts (Evans, Bratton 2008).

Companies' social media presence is an important part of creating brand awareness and increasing sales. Social media presence creates challenges and opportunities for marketing and standing out of the crowd is important. Utilization of potential is a way to grow a brand and find new customers. If the company doesn't use social media, it leaves out many customers.

Nowadays people are making more and more online purchasing decisions and it is natural to buy the product online as it is bought from a store. People are also conversing, socializing, and influencing each other online more than ever (Singh, Diamond 2020, Introduction). A product can become popular just because people share it on social media and if the product is talked about in, for example, a popular video, it immediately attracts attention.

Making decisions is moving to the internet in a big way. People are using social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and YouTube to ask each other for advice and guidance as they make purchasing decisions. Companies need to design their websites to allow consumers to bring their social influencers into the decision-making process. Consumers expect and want that because it is the way they are used to making their purchasing decisions. (Singh, Diamond 2020, Introduction.) Nowadays influencing is the way of selling and marketing.

Social media is one of the most important ways to build relationships with customers (Herbert 2013). Many companies interact with their customers on

social media and have there their service and support system. Customer service is a place where using social media companies can resolve customer questions or concerns. (McLachlan, Newberry 2023.) Social media is also a place where companies can communicate with current and new customers.

In this study, I will go through the theory of how companies can benefit from using social media as their marketing tool, how personal marketing works, and how companies can benefit from that. I will go through different platforms and how to use them for marketing purposes. Management tools are also important for social media marketing plans, and I will explain what kinds of tools are available and how to use them.

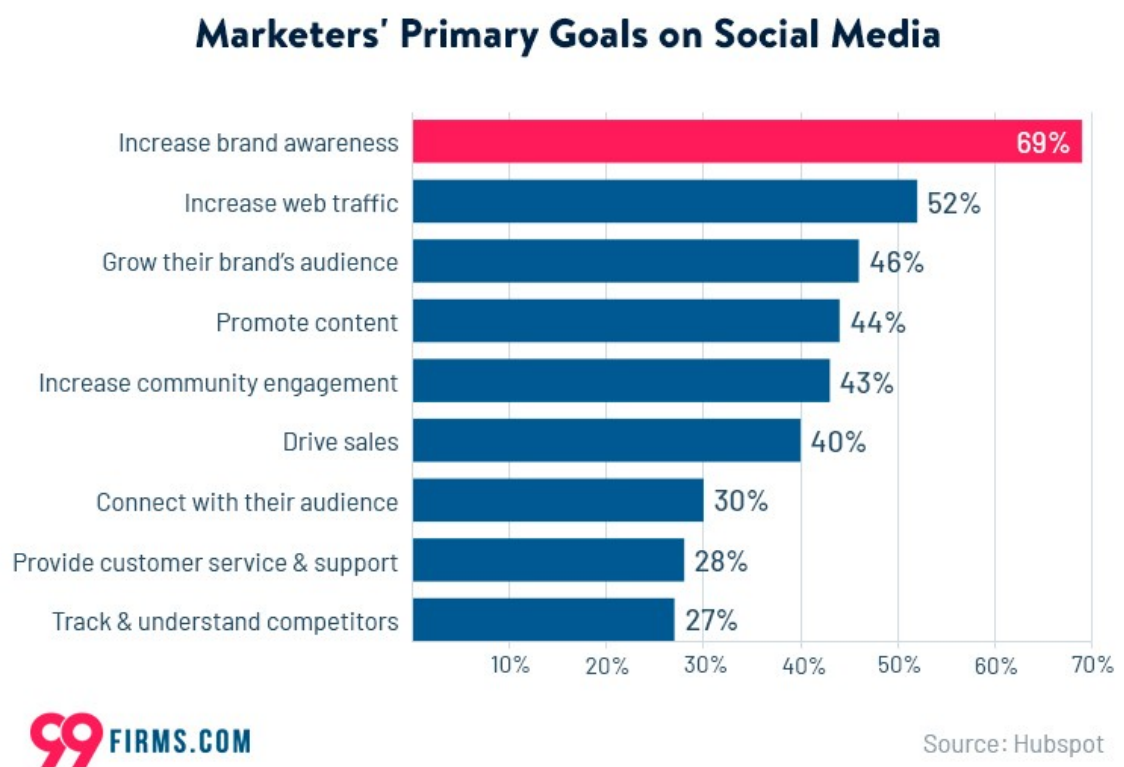
I apply the theory to the social media marketing plan for Insplan Oy. Insplan is a company established in 2015, specializing in expert services for electricity, telecommunications, and lighting networks operating nationwide. Insplan has already a social media presence, but I will give development ideas and a new perspective for their social media marketing plan and how to develop it. The marketing plan is detailed and there is an idea of what different social media platforms and management tools Insplan Oy can use for their marketing purposes.

This thesis also includes an interview with Insplan Oy. The interviewee is insplan's vice president Mika Seppänen, who is responsible for marketing and its development. In the interview, Insplan's social media marketing and the company's needs in terms of marketing are explained. As a research method in this thesis, I used an interview so that when making a marketing plan, I understood what weaknesses there are in their social media marketing.

## 2 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR CUSTOMER

Social media is an integral part of every business. Social media is a way to increase brand awareness, so it is important to plan well which kind of content to post. (Gomez 2023.) It is the way to grow a brand's audience, increase community engagement, and promote content (Oladipo 2023). Social media marketing increases web traffic and that can increase sales. It is a good place to drive sales and advertise products. (Schieren 2023.)

Companies can connect with their audience using social media. People can leave comments on posts and get answers. Social media for example Facebook is a good place to have service and support. Social media is also a place where companies can track and understand competitors (Gajić). If there is for example charity trend it is important to be part of it. Picture 1. is good example of goals of using social media.



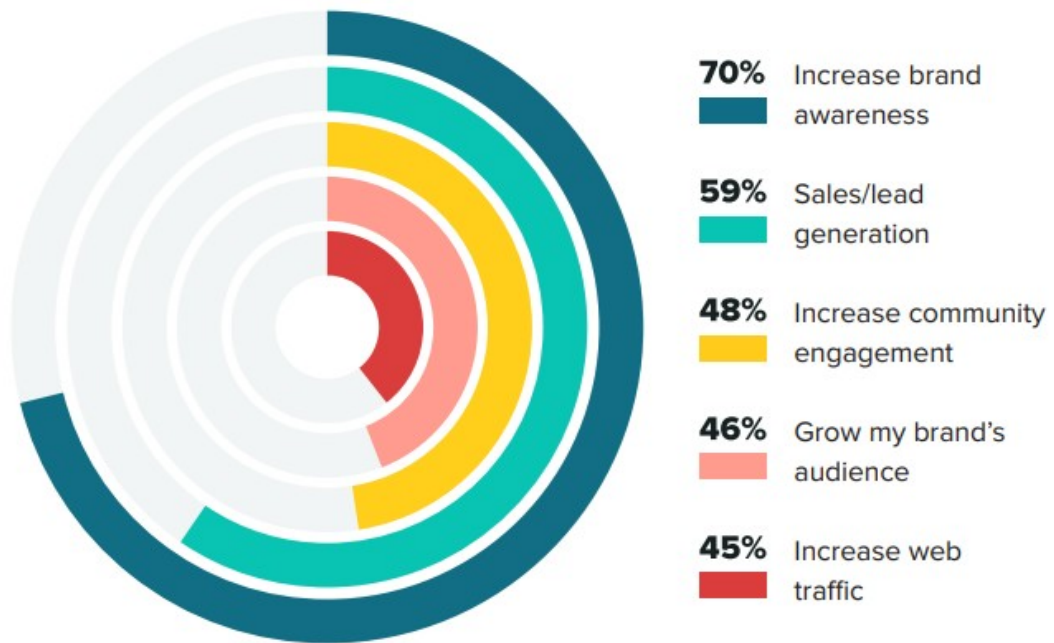
PICTURE 1. Marketer's Primary Goals on Social Media. (Firms.com).

Social media marketing is always part of building a brand and telling the story of the company. That is why it is important to plan well which kind of image creates about the company. Brand building takes time and effort which is why it is important to plan well which kind of social media platform the company is going to use. Every employee is part of building a brand and trust for the customer.

## **2.1 Brand awareness**

Brand awareness is important because companies want customers to remember the brand and make a purchase in the future (Singh, Diamond 2020, Chapter 4). It is important to plan well which kind of story and brand the company wants to create. All posts need to reflect that image. Consistency is the key to making a brand. Picture 2. shows how important goal increasing brand awareness is.

## Social marketers' top goals for social



PICTURE 2. Social marketers' top goals for social (sproutsocial.com).

Brand awareness is the bedrock of a company's sales funnel. It also makes customers familiar with the brand's identity and its products or services. A high level of brand awareness is worth pursuing because it is the competitive edge that keeps a business top of mind for consumers. With High levels of consumer recognition brands can even become synonymous with their product. (Gomez 2022.)

Commonly, marketers use television, radio, print, and direct mail to build brand awareness. Many companies sponsor events, conduct promotions, and invest in product placements. Magazines and newspapers are also used. In the digital realm, companies use websites, paid searches, and video advertising on YouTube and Facebook. Email marketing is also a successful way to build awareness. (Singh, Diamond 2020, Chapter 3.)

Social media is an effective place to build brand awareness because with a loyal customer base company can encourage people to talk about product and their purchasing decisions. The company can also reach social media expert influencers to be part of the campaign. Facebook, Google, and Twitter are so trafficked websites that marketing can be much more efficient than TV could be in the past. As a result, some companies have moved toward a digital-only model for all their marketing efforts. (Singh, Diamond 2020, Chapter 3.)

## **2.2 Telling a story**

Same time as a company builds brand awareness it is important to tell a story. Storytelling is a way of marketing and building a company's brand. Without story telling social media content won't be as successful as it is with a story.

Customers want to narrative to invest in. Stories are not only for entertainment: Our brains are hardwired to respond to stories. Storytelling involves different social media channels to share the narrative of brand in a way that engages, entertains, or informs the audience. The goal of storytelling is to make connections, not to make sales. Stories are lifesaving from an evolutionary perspective and those bring people together to share essential information. (Moss 2022.)

Successful brand storytelling creates the feeling that customer is so connected to the brand that using their product or service makes them feel like the person they aspire to be. Values that the company is sharing established emotional connections with people. When brand stories are innovative, they convey empathy, create experiences, and demand urgency. (Smith 2022.)

A successful story will be created by using narrative techniques. Books, shows, and movies have the foundation of good storytelling. People desire characters, settings, conflict, climax, and resolution. These elements make it possible to build emotional connections with people. When storytelling succeeds brand connects emotionally with the audience and it increases brand recall and evangelism. (Smith 2022.)

It is important to stay true to the brand's identity and use the brand's legacy, aspirations, and values guidelines. Today its creators and marketers work with loyal fans to co-create a brand's essence. The company needs to get customer's perspectives to tell brand stories that resonate (Smith 2022). Sharing memorable moments and using storytelling formats is the way of to make good stories. (Moss 2022.)

### **2.3 Promote content**

Creating and sharing content is not enough for a successful social media campaign. It is important to also promote content. Successful marketing requires that customers engage with posts and click through. (MixBloom 2023.) It is important to make a post every week or try to do it every day. It is essential to add different kinds of content and keep posts interesting for example post videos, reels, and pictures. It is also important to use hashtags but those don't replace keywords. Hashtags give visibility to posts (Hall 2021). Promoting is important part of content creating strategy like in picture 3. it is presented.



PICTURE 3. Content Creation And Content Promotion Strategy For Beginners ([verblio.com/blog/content-creation-and-content-promotion-strategy-for-beginners](http://verblio.com/blog/content-creation-and-content-promotion-strategy-for-beginners))

It's well-worth the effort to create a unique post for each social media channel. It gives your content a fresh feel for all platforms and shows that you've put some thought into each update. Each social media channel has their own rules and what works on one channel may not work on the other so it's one reason to make unique posts. (Peters 2016.)

It is important to plan headline of the post well because it affects on whether people click on the post. A great way to encourage customers to like, share, and engage with the content is Call-to-Action (CTA). It can be for example giveaway where people share and like the post. It is important that CTA is genuine, creative, and original as possible and fits in naturally. (Peters 2016.)

## 2.4 Grow Brands Audience

Using social media properly is a way to reach new people and grow the brand's audience. Even if you have a perfect product, it's all for nothing if you don't have customers and social media is a good tool for that. The company can reach a wider audience by using social media platforms and creating interesting content. When content is interesting and relevant people will share it on their social media. If the product is enough shown on social media people will get familiar with it and they might buy the product. (Macready, H. 2022.)

Building social media communities is a good way to grow a brand's audience. The company needs to create a community for example on Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter. Communities are places where people share and talk about products even if you are not online yourself.

Table 1. shows social media business objectives, goals and metrics. Growing brands audience is one of important objectives. Goal of growing audience spread brand awareness and gain followers and shares.

Business objective	Social media goal	Metric(s)
Grow the brand	<b>Awareness</b> <i>(these metrics illuminate your current and potential audience)</i>	Followers, shares, etc.
Turn customers into advocates	<b>Engagement</b> <i>(these metrics show how audiences are interacting with your content)</i>	Comments, likes, @mentions, etc.
Drive leads and sales	<b>Conversions</b> <i>(these metrics demonstrate the effectiveness of your social engagement)</i>	Website clicks, email signups, etc.
Improve customer retention	<b>Consumer</b> <i>(these metrics reflect how active customers think and feel about your brand)</i>	Testimonials, social media sentiment, etc.

TABLE 1. Social media strategy template (2022)

## 2.4 Connect With Audience

Social media is a good tool to reach out to customers as shown in picture 3. Social media has many ways to interact with customers for example using chat, comments, and private messages. Social media users also share their thoughts about products and it's a great way to connect with customers by creating a poll or posting a question with content. It is also important that social media isn't just business and there is different kind of posts for example inspirational articles, interesting video, or even a meme. (Stephensen, R.)



PICTURE 4. Usage of social media. (<https://simpliskills.in/>)

It is important to respond to customers' messages on social media. One way to connect with an audience is to create a community group. It is one channel where the company can post from time to time its products. Giveaways are also a good way to connect with customers. It is many times part of giveaways that people will share the post, needs to follow the company, or tag a friend to post. (Cox, V.)

It is very important to answer customers' inquiries and comments on social media. It creates a feeling of connection and trust to customers. Fluent communication and customer care are a part of a successful company's brand.

## **2.5 Service and Support**

Social media has changed customer service a lot. Today customers can contact customer service directly online and do not have to wait long times on the phone. Customer service also works through social media channels because customers can ask questions and get answers to them.

Nowadays customers expect a company to have customer service that works through social media. It is important that the company's social media customer service is functional and that the customer's contacts are considered. It is a good idea to offer tips and videos from customer service on FAQs. Different social media platforms can be used for different kinds of customer services for example Facebook can be used for quick responses (Singh, Diamond 2020, Chapter 3).

The size of the available team affects how companies use social media for customer service and what they can offer. It is important to set customer expectations appropriately. It is better to inform when the service team is available and how long it might take to respond. If there are other platforms where customers can get answers faster it is good to let them know. (Mc Lachlan, Newberry 2023.)

Chatbots are a good way to get quick answers to simple questions. Bots also ease the workload of customer service. If the customer does not get the answer, they need via chatbot, the service can direct the customer to a customer service representative.

## **2.6 Drive sales**

Social media is a good platform for increasing sales and running a campaign. Companies can promote their products on their social media platforms or use influencers to promote products. Customers who swear by the brand act as

product advertisers and brand ambassadors. Paid advertising is also often used to increase sales. (McCormick 2023).

Social media today is an effective marketing tool compared to traditional marketing tools such as TV commercials or radio. Social media is used more and more for marketing these days. Some companies use social media as the only marketing channel and effective social media marketing is an important part of modern marketing. (Singh, Diamond 2020, Chapter 3.)

### **2.6.1 Campaign**

Running a social media campaign that works and sells requires creativity and ingenuity. If a company wants the campaign to be successful, it should be planned properly and it is good to spend time on it. A good campaign inspires the customer to get to know the products better and make purchases.

The social media campaign is like any type of marketing campaign. It contains a planned series of events over a specific period. A campaign is designed to achieve a certain outcome that can be tracked and measured. A successful social media campaign considers and is built around each platform's audience, features, and functions. (Kiely 2022.)

Social media campaigns are part of a bigger social media content marketing strategy. Effective content market business and increases SEO, attract leads and promote products and services. Content should directly relate to the campaign and it should be designed to achieve a specific goal. It is essential to have a purpose for a social media marketing campaign. Purpose can be for example to join a new social network and run a brand awareness campaign. It can also run a social media campaign to raise awareness or sales or launch a new product. It is important to plan the platforms that will be used, when to make a post, and how long to keep posting content around this specific goal or topic. (Kiely 2022.)

### **2.6.2 Influencer marketing**

Today some people make the work of a social media influencer as their profession. Social media influencers can promote products or services on their social media channels and reach potential customers. Many companies make deals with social media influencers to sell their products or services and spread brand awareness.

Influencers tend to have loyal audiences which makes marketing fluent. Influencers share posts with their audience, raising brand visibility and they turn potential followers into buyers. Influencer marketing can be for example sharing a coupon code to the audience so they can get a great deal. Product reviews are also an efficient way to draw customers' attention. Influencers can promote the brand and be part of new product launches. The company can also create co-branded products or campaigns in collaboration with influencers. Videos, blogs, posts, and social media adverts are also effective content that influencers can share on their social media platforms. (Alkasingh 2022.)

### **2.6.3 Paid marketing and advertising**

Paid media and advertising are inorganic marketing was handled by the paid placement agency. It means that the company must pay for advertising. Nevertheless paid advertising has become an important part of online marketing. Paid marketing is the way to reach a larger audience and it requires purchasing online ad space. Paid marketing is part of a business's overall strategy to spread brand awareness, and boost sales, traffic, and conversions by clicking on the ad. (Alkasingh 2022.)

If a company wants to showcase its products and services, it can consider paid marketing and advertising. When paid advertising is targeted correctly, it can be effective. It is important that the ads reach the right target audience.

There are different types of paid marketing platforms like social media ads, print ads, and Google ads. When a company promotes its products through social media channels, websites, and any other platforms business demands increase. The main target group of paid advertising is people who have bought the company's products and services before and are interested in them. Paid advertising therefore mainly focuses on a specific target group, sales prospects, or existing customers. (Aryal 2022.)

#### **2.6.4 Sponsorship**

Social media sponsorship is a type of collaboration where a social media account is supported by giving products, services, or money. A sponsor is usually a company or person who financially supports a social media account or influencer and receives benefits in return. Sponsorship is an agreement from which both parties' benefit and it has different conditions. (Alkasingh 2022.)

Companies want to find an influencer in their field who could spread brand awareness and increase sales. Many athletes on social media are sponsored, but a private person can also find a sponsor if they have sufficient social media visibility. Sponsorship contracts can vary in length, and some do not want another sponsor in the same field to act as a sponsor of a certain user account at the same time. (Alkasingh 2022.)

#### **2.6.5 Comparison with other marketing methods**

Social media has changed traditional marketing permanently. Today effective marketing is created when social media marketing is combined with traditional marketing methods. Social media marketing combined with traditional marketing creates even better marketing strategies to reach customers and increase sales.

It is important to integrate social media marketing with other marketing methods. Customers will notice if the company has a disjointed and conflicted

story in different marketing platforms. Social media marketing must be compatible with traditional marketing methods for example with TV advertising, direct mail, public relations, display advertising, and promotions (Singh, Diamond 2020, Chapter 1).

In traditional marketing, it is difficult to target marketing to certain demographic groups, while in social media marketing, it is easier. Attractive advertisements also reach a lot of people who are not potential customers. Social media marketing is powerful and inexpensive compared to traditional marketing methods. (Jones 2022.)

Traditional marketing has its own set of pros and it is a trusted source of information by different people. TV ads appeal more to older customers while Instagram advertising to younger customers. Flyers and newspapers can reach people who don't have social media accounts. Traditional advertising needs a budget to be able to launch and it is more expensive. (Jones 2022.)

## **2.7 Tracking and understanding customers**

The actions and behaviour of customers have a lot of influence on marketing, and it is worth monitoring. It matters how the marketing should be implemented and who the target group is. Understanding customers makes marketing more efficient and, in the best case, increases sales.

Social media monitoring tools help listen out social media conversations. Listening to conversations that are relevant to your brand gives a picture of customers and where to concentrate. Social listening connects with customers, understands social media trends, provides customers support, and measures social media reach. (Lua 2023.)

Part of the services that are offered are standalone monitoring tools and some have features within a social media management tool. Some services gather individual social media mentions and messages. Other services analyze social media content and trends. (Lua 2023.)

## 2.8 Management tools

Management tools are an important way to manage social media posts and keep them on schedule. If there are a lot of posts on different channels, management tools are very convenient. Management tools using saves time and effort and help with planning and analyzing. Nowadays there are many management tools with different prices.

It is hard to keep up with all the different social media accounts even if you are a professional marketing manager. Management tools help make posts with multiple accounts, and it saves hours daily. Social media management platforms like Hootsuite or Sprout Social are tools where posts can be scheduled in advance. (Cawley 2023.)

Social media management tools make it possible that you don't have to be responding to customer service all the time. Chatbots give a bit of time to formulate a response. Still, these features are not a given in most managing tools, but these features can improve a company's social media presence. (Cawley 2023.)

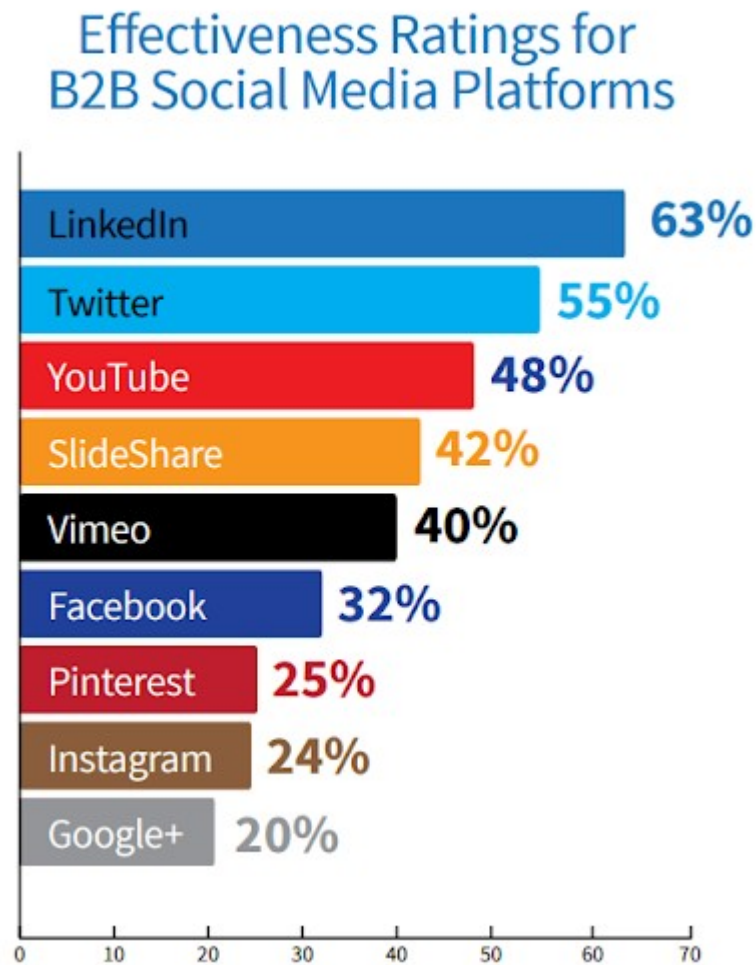
Social media management tools also help to analyze who uses the content and how much. Using social media management tools company gets access to demographic numbers, geographic stats, and other analytics which will improve its social media presence. Social media management tools also offer a way to collaborate with others in a cloud-based platform. (Cawley 2023.)

### 3 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR BUSINESS

Social media marketing for business-to-business goals is marketing services or products for other companies. B2B social media marketing is the future because nowadays business happens more and more online. The company must invest in social media visibility because otherwise, it leaves out potential customers.

B2B marketing approaches more strategically for business owners and decision-makers compared to B2C marketing. B2B marketers also nurture relationships that can lead to purchase agreements. B2B marketing can be practiced on all social media platforms but the balance and type of content will look different than a consumer-focused marketing plan. (Newberry 2022.)

Picture 5. shows how important part LinkedIn is for B2B social media marketing. Companies should therefore invest especially in linkedin. Effective social media platforms are also Twitter and YouTube, so visibility on these platforms also increases sales. It is important for a B2B company to invest in those platforms that support social media marketing and carefully choose the platforms to invest in.



PICTURE 5. Effectiveness Ratings for B2B Social Media Platforms (walnutfolks.-com/ways-to-improve-your-b2b-social-media-marketing-strategy/)

### 3.1 Build trust and increase customer loyalty

When a company invests in B2B social media marketing, it increases customer loyalty and trust. Potential customers use social media platforms and the company's brand is conveyed through them. Building trust cultivates deeper relationships with customers and helps them choose the company again and recommend it to others.

B2B business is built on trust. To make deals, a company must trust another, and building trust is more demanding than running ads and emailing leads. To

build trust, the company must focus on strategies to incorporate qualities like safety, security, and consistency. (Schmukler 2022.)

Brand trust can be measured by the confidence partners have in business. Trust also makes customers confident in starting or continuing a business. Brand trust develops from honest mission statements, visions, and value propositions. Positive brand image and promoting validity values also consistently build trust. Brand trust is immeasurably valuable and losing it can be very harmful to a company. (Schmukler 2022.)

### **3.2 Increase sales and market share**

Social media marketing and brand awareness increase the chances of maintaining old customers and finding new ones. Well-planned and targeted marketing raises the company to the surface and arouses interest. Brand trust and brand awareness help increase sales and market share.

B2B marketing can be improved by focusing on the customer experience and creating content that interests customers. It is important to understand the target group and its needs. Building relationships with other companies is still the most important way to increase sales. Companies can use more direct sales techniques such as negotiation and the provision of services. (Elsa 2023.)

### **3.3 Focus on building relationships**

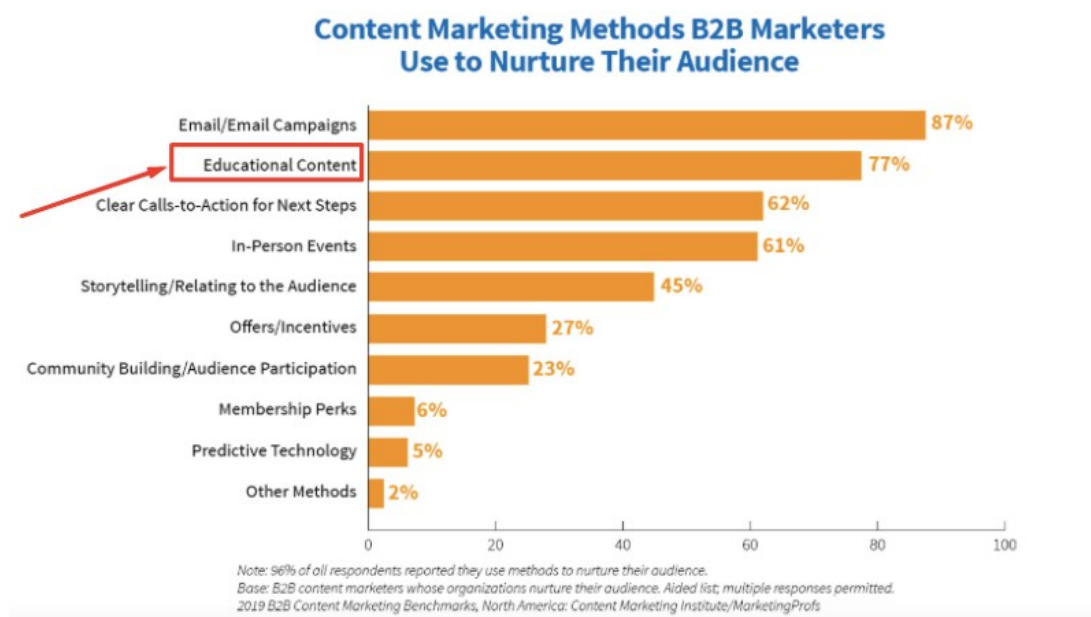
In B2B marketing it is very important to retain customers and focus on building relationships. Good relationships increase sales and maintain business. Building trust and understanding business partner needs is important in B2B. Social media marketing and brand awareness increase the chances of maintaining old customers and finding new ones. Well-planned and targeted marketing raises the company to the surface and arouses interest. Brand trust and brand awareness help increase sales and market share.

B2B marketing can be improved by focusing on the customer experience and creating content that interests customers. It is important to understand the target group and its needs. Building relationships with other companies is still the most important way to increase sales. Companies can use more direct sales techniques such as negotiation and the provision of services. (Elsa 2023.)

### 3.4 Educating audience

Educating the audience is an effective way to demonstrate professionalism and build trust. Educating content is also a way to nurture and grow an audience. Educating the audience is the way to grow business by teaching and without selling.

Educating content tells customers how a service or product works and why customers should use it. This kind of content also adds value to customers and fulfils customers' needs and interests. Educating content also increases brand awareness and quality content can be promoted on social media. Picture 4. shows how highly valued educating audience is to nurture B2B markets audience.



PICTURE 5. Content Marketing Methods B2B Marketers Uses to Nurture Their Audience. (komarketing.com).

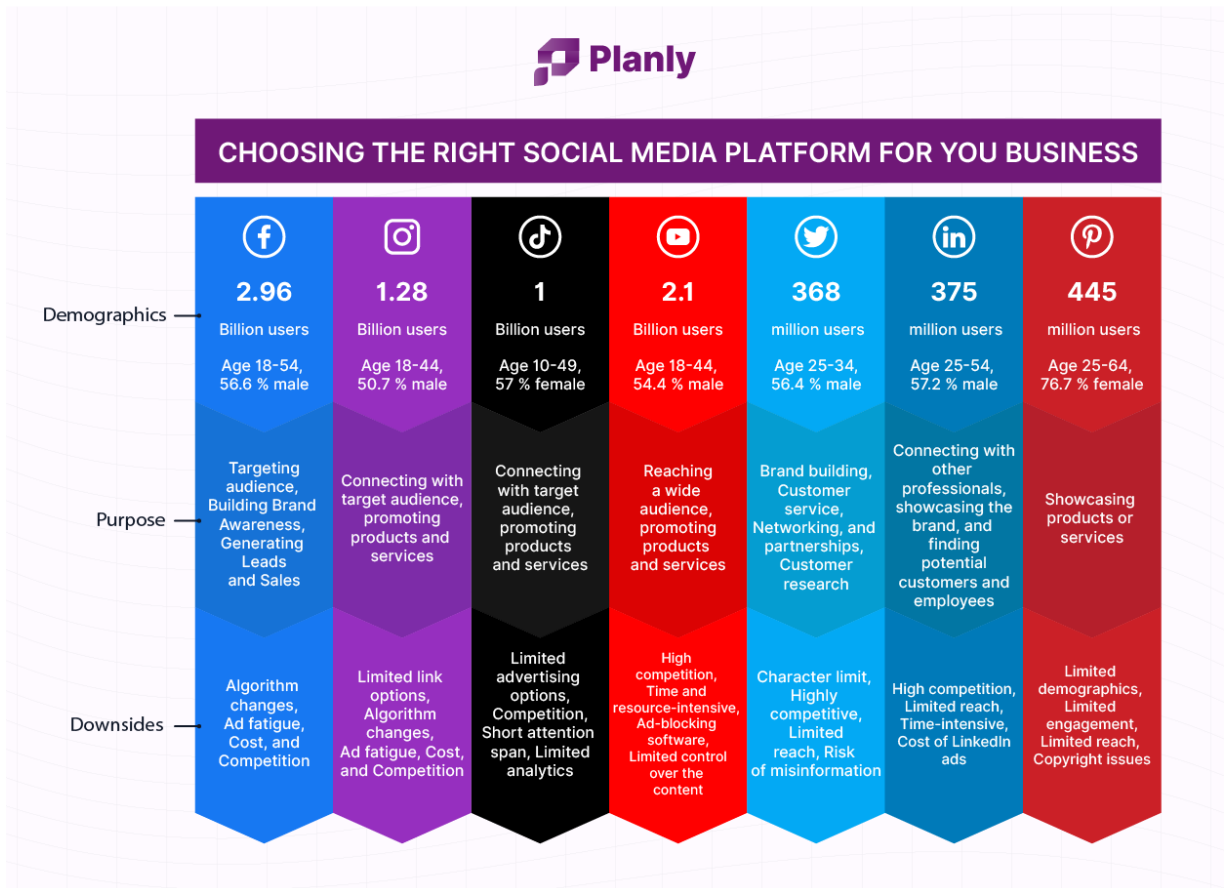
### 3.5 Choosing the right platforms

It is important to plan carefully which platforms you intend to use for social media marketing. It is wise to focus on certain platforms properly and not make content for all of them randomly. The choice of platforms is influenced, for example, by the target audience and customers.

It is useful to set goals for social media marketing and choose a platform depending on that. The content also determines which platform to use for example videos, pictures, stories, and text-based posts. Social media marketing also demands time and effort, so it is important to check resources and choose where to put effort. (Chen 2021.)

It is important to find out which platform the target audience uses the most and through which they can be reached. The industry where the company is also determines what are the best platforms to use. It is also useful to find out which social media platforms the competitor uses and what kind of content is posted there. (Chen 2021.)

Facebook and Instagram help gain visibility, interact with customers, and build a visual image of the brand. For B2B companies LinkedIn is an important place to build connections and target potential clients. YouTube and Tiktok are useful places to reaching a wide audience, interact and share content like picture 6. shows.



PICTURE 6. How to Choose the Right Social Media Platforms for Target Your Buyers? (planly.com).

### 3.6 Interact with audience

Interacting with customers is an essential part of social media marketing. It is the way to build trust and create business engagement. Different social media platforms offer many ways to interact with an audience. It is important to answer customers' comments and feedback on social media platforms and try to create a conversation. For example, Instagram and LinkedIn are viable platforms for that.

Connecting with the audience determines how the target audience reacts for example events, items, or situations. The reaction of the target audience is connected to the growth of the business. Effective interaction with customers separates great companies from the masses. Connecting with the audience allows the company to understand customers' reactions, wants, and needs. (Noorman 2023.)

### 3.7 Track and understand competitors

It is important to stay up to date with how competing companies market themselves on social media. Competitors' social media marketing gives ideas and guidelines for the company's marketing. It is important to stand out from competitors' marketing to attract the customer's interest.

One way to find out your competitors' marketing is to study what keywords they use. Setting up for example Google Alerts company can learn about competitors' traffic to their websites and other channels. Ranking engines such as Alexa can show how competitors' sites compare with their own. It is also important to learn which social media platforms and distribution channels they use. (Singh, Diamond 2020, Chapter 2.)

It is important to find out who the competitor's cooperation partners are. Who they work with says a lot about how they see their audience? It is also worth finding out what Social Loyalty programs they employ. Loyalty programs are a recent trend that rewards consumers for social actions. (Singh, Diamond 2020, Chapter 2.)

It is important to find out competitors' online customer service efforts. If competitors don't offer effective social media service and support other companies can use it as a secret weapon and can stand out from the crowd. Offline connections with customers are also a way to increase customer base consistently. (Singh, Diamond 2020, Chapter 2.)

## **4 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM COMPARISON**

It is important to find suitable social media platforms for the company's needs. Each social media platform offers different features and those can also have similarities. The company's target audience also determines which platform the company should invest in.

The company needs to find the right social media platforms to invest in. It is wise to invest in a certain platform than to post to all of them without planning. Investing in a certain social media platform increases visibility and keeps followers engaged and up to date.

### **4.1 YouTube**

YouTube is a platform for sharing videos. It is the most popular video platform. New features are also sharing short videos, pictures, and text. YouTube's popularity has grown over the years, and it has nowadays 122 million daily visitors. Picture 7. shows how massive ecosystem YouTube has and how much people use YouTube for example YouTube has more than one billion unique visitors per month.

## The Massive YouTube Ecosystem



PICTURE 7. The Massive YouTube Ecosystem (Wordstream 2018)

YouTube was registered on February 14, 2005. It was founded by Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim. The idea was that ordinary people could share their home videos by using the platform. (Hosch 2023.) Nowadays YouTube has all kinds of videos from home videos to music videos and to business videos.

YouTube is a platform that where majority of businesses should invest in because it is interactive, and customers widely use it. Companies also use YouTube for advertising because YouTube runs with advertising videos, and it also has advertising posts with images and texts.

YouTube is a platform worth considering for educational videos. Sharing educational videos helps B2B companies create a professional image of the company and increase trust. Making educational videos can be the reason why customers are interested in the company, and it helps to stand out from competitors.

## 4.2 Facebook

Facebook was founded in 2004. The founders of Facebook were Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes. Facebook is the world's largest social network. It has 1,9 billion daily users and half of that uses Facebook every day. Using Facebook is free to use so it earns most of its money from advertisements (Hall 2023).

Facebook is a popular social media platform where people connect each other with their real names. People can find each other on Facebook and add them as friends. Everyone has their own page where people can for example add text, pictures, and links. Nowadays Facebook is more popular with older people and younger people use more Instagram, so it is an important thing to notice.

On Facebook is an option to set up your page with any subject and people can follow it and like it. That is why Facebook is an important platform for marketing companies. Many companies use Facebook pages to create content and share information about the company and sales. It is about creating community and connecting with customers.

Facebook is good place to build community like picture 7. shows. In Facebook different sites and groups are in important part of communicating. Facebook is effective place to engage with fans and interact with them.



PICTURE 8. Fundamentals of Facebook Marketing (onlinemarketinginstitute.org)

Companies can also use paid advertising on Facebook. Using ads is an effective way to reach more customers. On Facebook company can also target to whom the ads are shown. Facebook also has built in ad-analytics which shows how a company can improve its marketing strategy. (Stec 2022.)

### 4.3 X (Twitter)

X (Twitter) is a place where users can post texts, images, and videos which are called "tweets". Registered users can send messages, post tweets, like, repost, leave a comment, and quote tweets. X is called a microblogging service because the maximum length of the post is 280 characters.

Completed Twitter came out in July 2006. Twitter was developed from the podcasting venture Odeo, which was founded in 2004 by Evan Williams, Biz Stone, and Noah Glass. Twitter was influential in shaping politics and culture in the

early 21st century. (Hetler 2023.) Since October 2022 Twitter is under Elon Musk and now it's called X (Duffy, Smith, Fung 2023).

On X, companies can use ordinary posts for marketing. Planning posts and tweeting regularly is important. X also offers promoted tweets and X ads to reach more audiences. Hashtags play an important role in getting visibility. Users entering the X profile can be directed to the company's website via a link. (Beveridge 2022.)

It's useful to follow X trends and stay up to date on what customers are interested in. Marketers can use X to circle a select group of key brands and influencers. In a circle companies can share industry knowledge that is relevant to the audience. X communities are also good options to interact with the audience.

#### **4.4 LinkedIn**

The founder of LinkedIn is Reid Hoffman. The site was launched on May 5, 2003. Nowadays LinkedIn has over 850 million members (Hanna 2023). LinkedIn is a social media platform designed for business interaction. It is a place where people can share their work history, add friends, send messages, and find new jobs. On LinkedIn, people can research companies and get industry information. LinkedIn is free but with premium membership, people can receive more profiles and see full profiles of any member.

LinkedIn is used by individuals, salespeople, and recruiters. Individuals can find new jobs, make business contacts, manage careers, and read industry news. Salespeople generate leads and can find new potential customers. Recruiters are trying to find an employee for an open position, research companies, and make contacts. (Hanna 2023.)

LinkedIn is an important platform for any company but especially for B2B companies. LinkedIn is a good place for building contacts not selling. It is also a

place where a company can build brand and trust. In LinkedIn companies can share information and news.

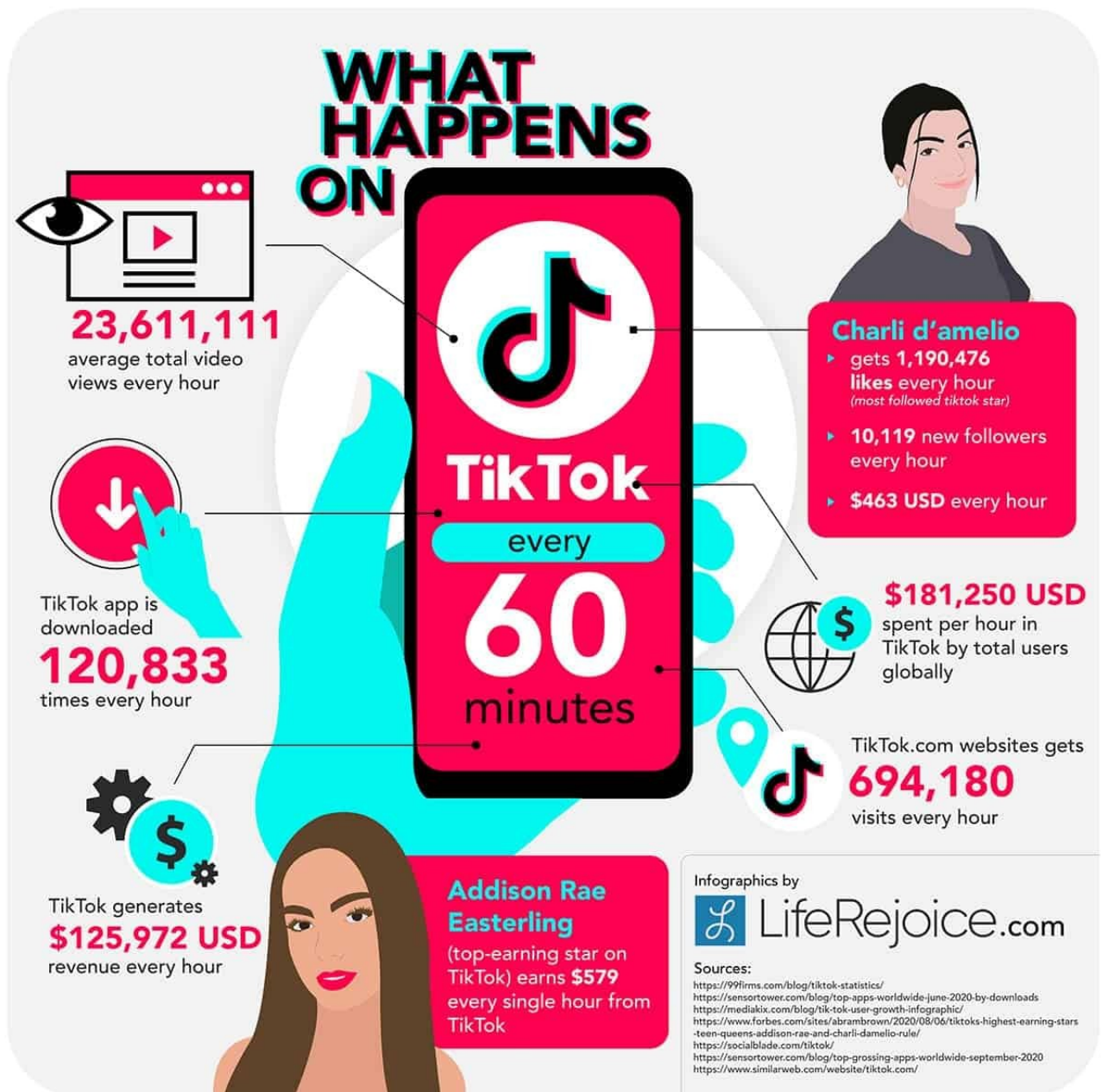
LinkedIn offers analytics which is an effective way to see which kind of content attracts people. It is important to post regularly on LinkedIn, just like on other social media platforms. There is also an option to promote business with paid ads.

#### **4.5 TikTok**

TikTok was released in September 2016. TikTok is a short video-based social media platform. People post short videos on TikTok, and other users can like videos and leave a comment. The duration of videos is from 3 seconds to 10 minutes. Often TikTok videos have music in the background.

TikTok is also an effective platform to promote a brand. TikTok is a place where companies can increase brand awareness and build communities. Platforms offer the opportunity to sell products and services. It is important to define the target audience because TikTok is most popular with teens. (Hirose 2022.)

Short videos are also a good way to get feedback from customers and offer customer service. TikTok also offers the opportunity to create a business account. On TikTok, companies can use paid ads to advertise products and services to target audiences. (Hirose 2022.) TikTok is an effective place to market business like picture 8. shows.



PICTURE 9. What happens on TikTok (unbounce.com/social-media/ultimate-guide-tiktok-marketing/)

## 4.6 Instagram

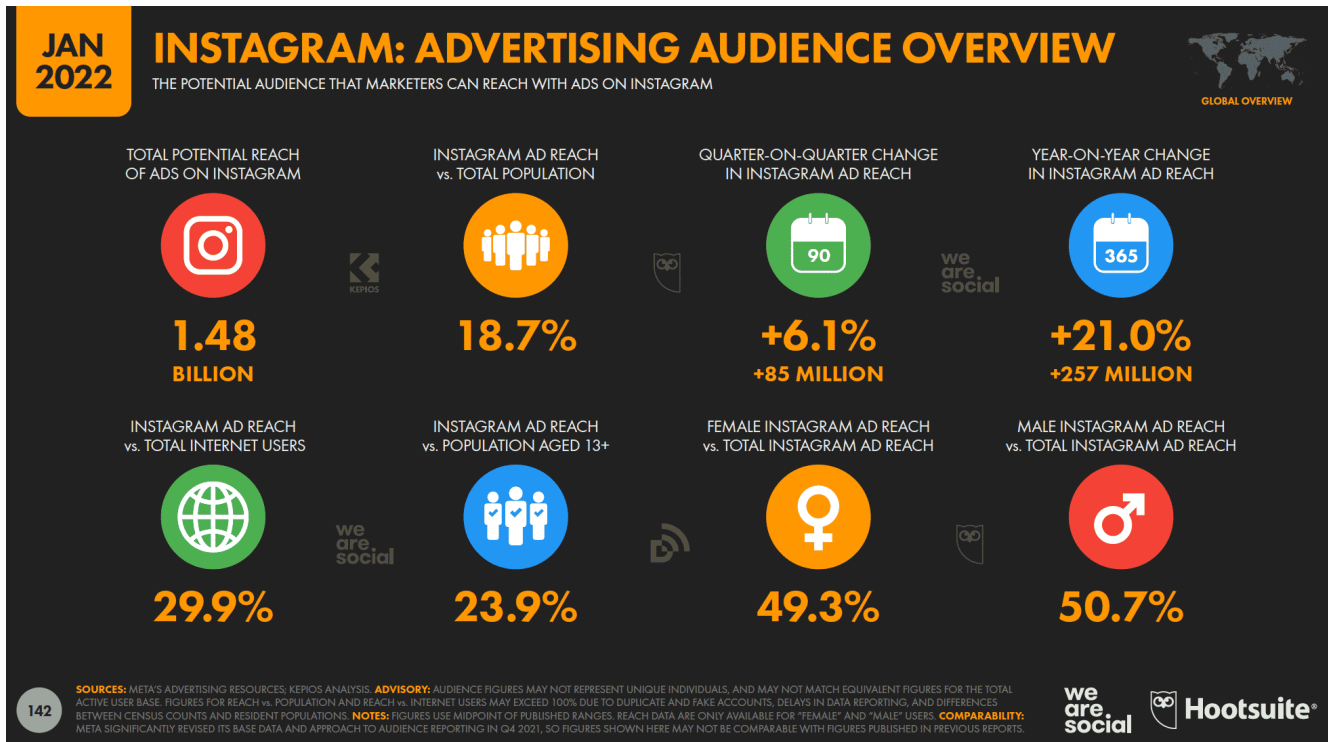
Instagram is a social media platform where people post pictures, stories, and reels. Users can like each other posts, share stories, and leave a comment. Hashtags are an important part of posts and people can also tag their location. Pictures and videos can be edited with filters. Users can determine whether everyone can see their post only a selected group.

Instagram was launched in 2010 by cofounders Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. Now the owner of Instagram is Meta Platforms. Instagram is one of the biggest social media platforms in the world. Instagram has over two billion monthly active users. (Eldridge 2023.)

Instagram is an important social media platform for marketing and every company should use it. Defining the target audience is important before making posts. It determines also which hashtags to use. Overall, it is important to build a consistent brand and post regularly. Planning posts in advance and using a calendar can help with that. Analysis tools help you stay up to date on the account's traffic.

Interaction is an important part of Instagram. Posts can be designed so that they encourage the customer to participate in the discussion and leave a comment. Also, the more people like the post, the more visibility it gets. It is also effective to use Instagram stories and reels not just picture posts.

The option for marketing to keep Instagram live. B2C companies can also do giveaways to get more attention and followers. In Instagram, it is effective to do competitive analysis and get to know what competitors are doing in Instagram. There is also an option for paid ads to marketing businesses if organic traffic is not sufficient. Picture 10. shows how effective Instagram ads are.



PICTURE 10. Advertising Audience Overview. ([blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-marketing/](https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-marketing/))

## **5 RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION**

In this thesis, I will make a social media marketing plan for a B2B company called Insplan Oy. I use as an example the methods I found in the research of my thesis. Comprehensive research has brought me information about different social media marketing methods and their implementation.

I am interviewing Mika Seppänen, vice president of Insplan Oy, for the social media marketing plan. Mika Seppänen is responsible for Insplan Oy's marketing. Currently, the company's social media marketing is outsourced to an advertising agency Don Franco and posts are rarely published.

### **5.1 Interview**

The interview was organized via Teams for Vice President Mikä Seppänen. The interview provided information about the company's social media marketing and the usefulness of the new plan, which I will present in the thesis. With the help of the interview questions, it is possible to dig into the weaknesses and strengths of the company's social media marketing. The interview also brings out the usefulness and necessity of final thesis research.

The interview provides information about the company's social media marketing. In this thesis, I can compare the company's social media plan with the new plan formed with the help of research. The interview contains abbreviated answers to the questions asked.

### **5.2 Implementation of the interview**

The interview has been conducted via Teams with Vice President Mika Seppänen. The time allotted for the interview was 45 minutes, but it stretched to almost an hour. I asked the questions to the interviewee and wrote them down at the same time as the interviewee spoke.

The interview was very informal and the interviewee's objections were extensive. The interview was more like a discussion about marketing than an actual interview. Because of this, the answers are abbreviated from the original discussion. The summary gives a good idea of the main points of the discussion.

However, the interview was successful and provided a lot of information about the company's thoughts on social media marketing. It also gave me ideas on how I can develop my social media marketing plan for the company. For example, it would be good to take the budget into account more closely.

### **5.3 Outcome**

The interview gave a good overview of Mika Seppänen's view of social media marketing. The main thing that emerged was that the company did not value social media marketing as highly as it would be necessary for the growth of the company. In this thesis, I have highlighted how important social media marketing is in terms of company growth and how important it is to invest in it.

Insplan Oy had hopes and visions of how to improve social media marketing, but practically no resources to implement them. For example, the company is aware of how important it would be to include YouTube and TikTok in marketing in order to stand out from the competition but is not ready to take action.

Mika Seppänen has the view that implementation requires an expensive advertising agency to make videos, even though many other companies in the industry have started making videos at a much lower threshold. Implementation is not always about money but about ideas and innovation. I pointed out in the plan that employees can also implement these. During the interview, there was also talk that the company could hire an employee in the future who, as part of other jobs, would implement social media content.

In the interview, it was said that the brand is important to Insplan Oy, but without systematic social media marketing, it is difficult to build a brand. Building a

brand requires taking over at least a few social media channels and posting regularly. For example, Insplan Oy has taken over Instagram, but updates there far too rarely and bad content for business, but still pays for it. However, the company dreams that the account would have more content related to the company, as it appears in the interview.

#### **5.4 Insplan Oy**

Insplan Oy is an expert in energy and telecommunications infrastructure. Insplan Oy offers electrical and telecommunications network, lighting infrastructure, and renewable energy expert services. Insplan Oy was founded in 2014. It is a limited company with its registered office in Porvoo, and its main business is the Planning office.

Insplan Oy already has a social media presence but in this thesis, I am developing new ways for how Insplan Oy could improve its social media. At the moment Insplan has invested the most in LinkedIn, which is a good channel for B2B companies. Some important social media channels like Instagram get too little attention. There are also social media channels that could be useful for Insplan Oy to take over for example YouTube.

Effective use of social media is also an important part of B2B company marketing. In this thesis, I will go through how Insplan Oy could take full advantage of different social media channels and thereby increase visibility. I'm also going to give practical examples of what kind of social media posts Insplan Oy could make for different platforms.

#### **5.5 Social media marketing plan for Insplan Oy**

First I will go through the use of YouTube. Many of Insplan's competitors like Eltel, Despro ja Rejlers have already taken over YouTube and this is where Insplan Oy has fallen behind. Insplan Oy has not implemented YouTube in social media marketing but using it in the right way would be useful to stand out from

competitors. Insplan Oy can target its videos to job seekers as well as customers. The publication rate for YouTube could be a video or two per month.

One way to stand out from the competition is the publication of high-quality instructional videos. This creates a professional image of the company and increases trust. Insplan Oy can also publish employee introduction videos and workplace introduction videos. One possibility is also to publish a video where it explains what kind of services Insplan Oy offers.

Insplan Oy can publish videos about the employees' day and what it includes. This arouses interest among job seekers and those interested in the field. Videos could be made for example about the day of an electrical engineer or landscape designer. This could be done so that an engineer capable of taking videos does it by themselves or so that an assistant is involved.

In addition to this, the company could also publish videos targeted at job seekers. The videos could tell what kind of jobs are available and advertise the company. The purpose of such videos is to arouse interest in the company and increase competition. The goal could also be to increase women's interest in the field. The content for this could be, for example, a video about a female employee, where she talks about the good aspects of the job and why the field is interesting.

An interesting video could also be one where a customer is interviewed and where the customer tells why Insplan Oy is a good company and what it was like to be an Insplan customer. For example, Rejlers has implemented this type of video on his YouTube channel. This kind of customer interview or story with a picture also works as an Instagram post.

Insplan Oy publishes fewer posts on Instagram compared to other larger competitors in the electricity sector for example Eltel and Rejlers. In this matter, Insplan Oy could improve by posting more often. Posting more often brings more visibility and improves the company's marketing. The visual appearance of the Insplan Oy Instagram account is neat and professional but there could be more content.

Currently, there are too many holiday wishes compared to other professional posts. Employees or an assistant could take pictures of the working day and make a post about it, explaining what kind of work is done with Insplan. This would be a good addition to the employee introductions.

The company could use reels and Instagram stories in addition to standard photo posts. New posts on Instagram could be made from the same video material that would be used on YouTube. This brings the opportunity to make Instagram stories or reels about, for example, the working day of a landscape designer. In addition to making a picture post on Instagram about the recruitment, reels or stories could also be published. The same thing can also be marketed in stories to enhance marketing. Highlights could be created on the profile for Instagram stories.

An interesting Instagram post could also be for an employee to describe what kind of company Insplan Oy is. The post could also discuss what kind of workplace Insplan Oy is like and what Insplanian is like. The company could advertise jobs and tell why the employee should choose Insplan Oy

Insplan Oy could highlight values in its publications, for example, safety, environmental awareness, and how employees are considered. Insplan Oy should emphasize responsibility in several posts and tell how the company promotes environmental awareness in its own activities. New employees are also interested in why they should choose Insplan Oy and what kind of personnel benefits the employee gets in that company. Insplan's competitor Rejlers is a good example of this kind of Instagram marketing.

Currently, Insplan Oy has not posted on Instagram even every month. Insplan Oy could benefit in terms of marketing from posting more often and more diversely. The ideal publication rate would be at least two publications per month. Posts can be pictures with text, reels, or stories.

Insplan's LinkedIn account seems professional and competent. However, Insplan Oy could publish more often on LinkedIn based on Instagram publications.

The same goes for Twitter. In Twitter, it would be possible to make more posts. However, it is good for the company to focus on certain channels, and if Twitter selects these channels, more activity is required there as well.

If Insplan wants to stand out completely from other competitors, the wild card is TikTok. An example of using this platform is Eltel. The company has taken over the platform in Denmark. However, using TikTok in marketing requires a lot of ideas and a humorous approach. If the company doesn't want to give a funny image of itself but to remain strictly matter-of-fact, TikTok is not the right channel. The company can also add the same videos to TikTok that it puts on Instagram reels. TikTok is also a platform that requires persistence and regular publishing. It would be good to publish at least once a month.

Increasing the number of publications and social media marketing requires investment from the company and the hiring of an assistant at least part-time. With this method, employees can focus on their tasks and the assistant takes responsibility for the content of social media. Effective social media marketing raises the company to the surface and increases interest in both potential customers and employees.

Social media marketing also requires planning and persistence. Insplan Oy can use a calendar and social media planning tools to help you plan and make posts. It is also important to publish posts at regular intervals.

## 6 DISCUSSION

Social media is an important part of every company's marketing plan, whether it's a B2B or B2C company. The importance of social media is constantly increasing and cannot be ignored. It has become a part of our everyday life and affects us whether we are aware of it or not.

Nowadays every company must participate in social media marketing whether they like it or not. Social media marketing cannot be ignored because most people use it, whether it's personal or business customers. Social media marketing is also free and can bring organic traffic to the site. Paid advertisements are also a good way to boost marketing.

Social media brings us new marketing opportunities . Social media marketing is built around interaction instead of traditional marketing. It can be used to build communities, interact, and get people to participate in the conversation. The successful use of social media increases brand awareness and increases the audience. Successful brand creation also builds brand loyalty in customers.

Social media marketing also requires investment and planning. It is important for a company to know the target audience and the platforms it plans to invest in. Different Social media platforms offer different possibilities for posts, and it is good to be aware of what serves the company's own goals.

Publication calendars and social media planning tools help in organizing posts. Planning is important and saves time when posts are made on different platforms frequently. Posting at regular intervals keeps the audience involved and helps grow the company's audience.

This thesis has found answers to how companies can develop their social media presence. It also gives practical examples of what kind of acts will improve social media marketing. I have comprehensively gone through what should be taken into account in the marketing of B2C and B2B companies and what special features they have.

The interview with Insplan Oy brings up the fact that the company can get new important ideas for social media development from the thesis. This thesis makes the person in charge of marketing think about how Insplan Oy can develop its social media presence and what kind of resources it requires. The work received a lot of praise and the implementation of the work's ideas is being considered.

Analysis of competitors is important information for the company because otherwise time and resources would not be spent on it. Detailed examples of what kind of content the company could produce help in planning the content. New ideas are valuable help in marketing planning.

Regarding the research, I discovered that Insplan Oy was not so familiar with social media marketing and did not take full advantage of social media. Well-implemented social media marketing quickly brings the money back to the company. In a good case, the plan and the interview awakened the company to invest in their social media marketing.

In the future other students can use this thesis for example source of social media marketing methods for B2C and B2C companies. The content of this thesis can be used for example base for research or a thesis on how to develop electricity companies' social media marketing. It also can offer ideas for a thesis that researches B2B or B2C company's social media marketing. This thesis can give ideas for companies on how they can improve their social media presence and increase sales.

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## APPENDIX

### 1. What kind of goals are there in social media marketing?

The goals are one publication per week. We usually do social media campaigns on LinkedIn and Facebook and introduce different themes. The goal is to make posts about everything related to business and publish more professional posts. Too many holiday posts at the moment.

### 2. What kind of brand does the company want to build and what kind of image does it want to give?

Insplan Oy wants the company to convey strong responsibility. We want to bring out a youthful, modern and dynamic operating model. The brand is very important to Insplan Oy.

### 3. How is marketing carried out? How does the company invest in social media marketing?

The advertising agency makes the posts for the company. The goal is to have one publication per week. We also write articles. An important part is business transactions that are made posts about.

### 4. Who implements and plans the marketing?

Advertising agency Don Franco and Mika Seppänen responsible for marketing and sales. Insplan Oy has planned the hiring of a graphic design student for marketing with a zero-work contract. Artificial intelligence is also planned to be used in creating images and designing texts.

### 5. What are the weaknesses and strengths?

The company's weaknesses in social media marketing are lack of time, planning and systematicity. The marketing plan has been put in the calendar,

but not enough time is spent on it. Insplan Oy does not use the graphic software needed to create posts. One big challenge is the budget. Hiring video creators is expensive and not many videos are made anyway.

6. What could the company develop and improve in social media marketing?

According to YouTube and TikTok, entry into social media channels. Add more professional publications to the weekly themes. Instructing employees to take pictures and videos. Company could put some publications and stories on the social wall. Everyday working life could show more in social media publications.

7. How do you want to stand out from the competition and what is the company's advantage compared to others?

With company's own style and by including YouTube in social media channels.

8. Is the new social media plan useful?

Analyzing competitors was helpful. The YouTube video ideas and the preview of the company's everyday description were also useful.

9. Could the proposals presented in the plan be implemented in practice?

Able to implement and we are thinking about whether to implement it.

10. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the plan?

Budget planning is a weakness. YouTube and Instagram plan strength. What kind of "workplace Insplan is" post strength

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Advertising agency Don Franco and Mika Seppänen responsible for marketing and sales. Insplan Oy has planned the hiring of a graphic design student for marketing with a zero-work contract. Artificial intelligence is also planned to be used in creating images and designing texts.

5. What are the weaknesses and strengths?

The company's weaknesses in social media marketing are lack of time, planning and systematicity. The marketing plan has been put in the calendar, but not enough time is spent on it. Insplan Oy does not use the graphic software needed to create posts. One big challenge is the budget. Hiring video creators is expensive and not many videos are made anyway.

6. What could the company develop and improve in social media marketing?

According to YouTube and TikTok, entry into social media channels. Add more professional publications to the weekly themes. Instructing employees to take

pictures and videos. Company could put some publications and stories on the social wall. Everyday working life could show more in social media publications.

7. How do you want to stand out from the competition and what is the company's advantage compared to others?

With company's own style and by including YouTube in social media channels.

8. Is the new social media plan useful?

Analyzing competitors was helpful. The YouTube video ideas and the preview of the company's everyday description were also useful.

9. Could the proposals presented in the plan be implemented in practice?

Able to implement and we are thinking about whether to implement it.

10. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the plan?

Budget planning is a weakness. YouTube and Instagram plan strength. What kind of "workplace Insplan is" post strength