



## **Social media marketing plan for Lappeenrannan NMKY basketball team**

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## Abstract

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<p>This thesis has been commissioned by Lappeenrannan NMKY basketball team, with the aim of increasing the team's social media engagement and online presence. With increased engagement, the goal is to encourage more young people to take up basketball as a hobby as well as to attract a larger audience to the games. The work is specified to focus only on social media and not on any other digital or traditional marketing form.</p> <p>As the theoretical framework for this thesis, I have chosen to use the RACE (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) model, which was created specifically for digital environments.</p> <p>This is a product-based thesis. In addition to the written document, as the product, I have created a digital social media marketing guide for the team. This guide will provide guidance and ideas on what type of content to create on certain platforms, what the current trends are, when to post content, what platforms to use, as well as why social media should be used in marketing. The digital social media marketing guide will be provided for the team to use. The guide is created for the team to match their current state, but can also be used in the future.</p> <p>Both the guide and thesis are designed to provide assistance and guidance for the team's staff on how to conduct marketing on social media. The project is also a way to learn more about marketing in social media now, as of writing the thesis, recognizing that platforms and trends are constantly evolving. This thesis is based on research and different theories from the field of social media.</p>
<b>Key words</b> Marketing, Social media, RACE framework, Sports Marketing, Content creation

# Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
1.1	Context and History .....	1
1.2	Objectives .....	2
2	RACE framework.....	3
2.1	Step 1: Reach .....	4
2.2	Step 2: Act .....	4
2.3	Step 3: Convert .....	5
2.4	Step 4: Engage .....	5
3	Social media trends, advantages, and disadvantages .....	6
3.1	Social Media Trends.....	6
3.2	Social Media Advantages .....	8
3.3	Social Media Disadvantages .....	9
4	Content Strategy .....	11
4.1	Content types for certain platforms.....	11
4.1.1	Instagram.....	11
4.1.2	TikTok.....	12
4.1.3	Facebook.....	13
4.2	SMM calendar, annual clock, and times to post.....	14
4.2.1	Calendar .....	14
4.2.2	Holidays and special dates .....	16
4.2.3	When to post.....	16
5	Social media marketing plan.....	17
5.1	Lappeenranta NMKY .....	17
5.2	The target audience .....	17
5.3	Implementation of the RACE framework.....	18
6	Discussion.....	21
	References .....	23
	Appendices .....	26
	Appendix 1. Digital social media marketing guide.....	26

# 1 Introduction

In today's business environment, marketing plays a crucial role across all types of organizations—whether it's a large corporation, a small or medium-sized business (SMB), a sports team, or anything in between. Digital marketing, especially social media marketing (SMM), has experienced significant growth. Given the widespread presence of social media in modern society, companies must maintain a strong social media presence to remain competitive. This requires a well-developed strategy. As social media audiences continue to grow, more businesses are leveraging these platforms for marketing purposes in a more efficient and cost-effective way (Melewar et al., 2018.)

## 1.1 Context and History

But what is social media marketing? It is a form of digital marketing on the internet that uses social media platforms as a tool. Multiple social media platforms allow companies to connect with their audience, with the biggest ones being Instagram, Facebook, and X (previously known as Twitter). Within these platforms, companies can build their brand, drive traffic to their website, build community through engagement, and in this way also increase sales (Terrel Hanna, 2025.) In 2004, the social media platform MySpace was the first site to gain one million users. Nineteen years later, in the beginning of 2023, over 59% of the world's population used social media. That is 4.76 billion users worldwide (Hayes, 2024.) The same year as MySpace hit one million users, a platform was launched that holds the number one spot for users today, it is called Facebook. As of May 2023, Facebook held the number one spot by having nearly 3 billion active monthly users worldwide as of February 2025 (Kemp, 2025).

Facebook not only has a lot of users, but also an astonishing advertising reach. As seen in the chart below (Figure 1), Facebook reportedly had an advertising reach of 2.28 billion as of February 2025 (Kemp, 2025). Additionally, Facebook is not only an excellent platform for businesses to post regular posts, but also for events. These two reasons are mainly the reasons why Facebook is still considered the best social media platform for marketing (Hilary, 2024).

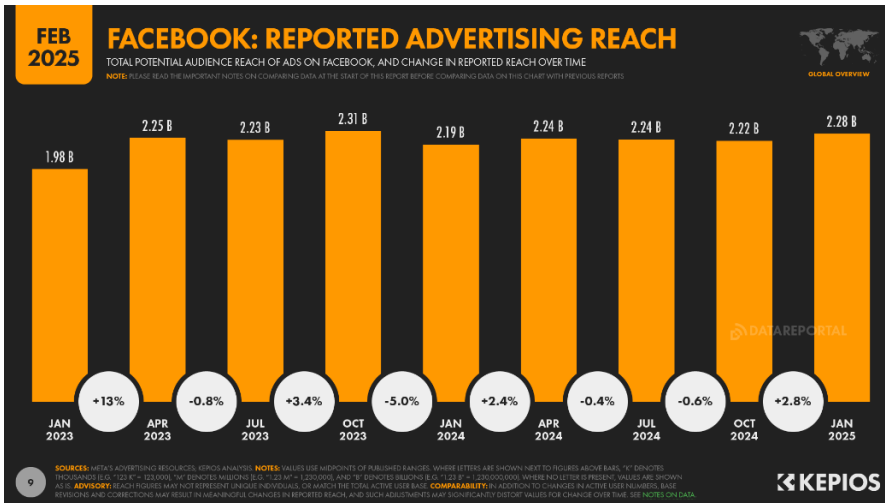


Figure 1. Facebook's reported advertising reach in February 2025 (Kemp, 2025).

Social media marketing enables precise targeting of specific demographics, locations, and interests. This all can be done through content creation, personalized content, and search engine optimization (SEO). Additionally, social media marketing gives the possibility to generate analytics, for example, customer behaviour tracking, which is used to improve strategies and marketing campaigns. All of this can be done very cost-effectively, compared to alternative ways of marketing. With SMM, companies are able to reach global audiences compared to the higher costs and limited reach that TV ads or radio have (Kemp, 2025.)

## 1.2 Objectives

In this thesis, I will create a social media marketing plan for the Lappeenrannan NMKY basketball team (LrNMKY). The team has been operating since 1951 and is currently playing in Division 1A in Finland, which is the second-highest league in the whole country, right below Korisliiga (the top league). This social media marketing plan will be tailored to fit the team's needs in order to improve and create a stronger social media presence. The final product will be developed into a digital guidebook, which will be a simplified and easy-to-use guide. The digital guidebook gives guidance on when to post content based on the social media annual clock, what type of content to post, where to post, and ways to implement a social media marketing model RACE (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) into the team's social media plan. The objective of the digital guidebook is to result in more engagement on the team's social media accounts across various platforms. By gaining more engagement and visibility, the team can attract young people to start basketball as a hobby and get people to attend games. This will ultimately lead to more ticket sales. The goal for growth in ticket sales is 25%, and for social media engagement, 50%, which can be tracked from the team's social media account statistics.

## 2 RACE framework

From the many different marketing models and frameworks such as AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) or SOSTAC (Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, Control) that businesses can use to improve and refine their marketing strategies, this thesis will be using a marketing framework RACE (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage), see illustration below (Figure 2.) This marketing model was created by the co-founder of an online marketing platform Smart Insights, Dr. Dave Chaffey, also the company's content director (Attico International, 2024.)

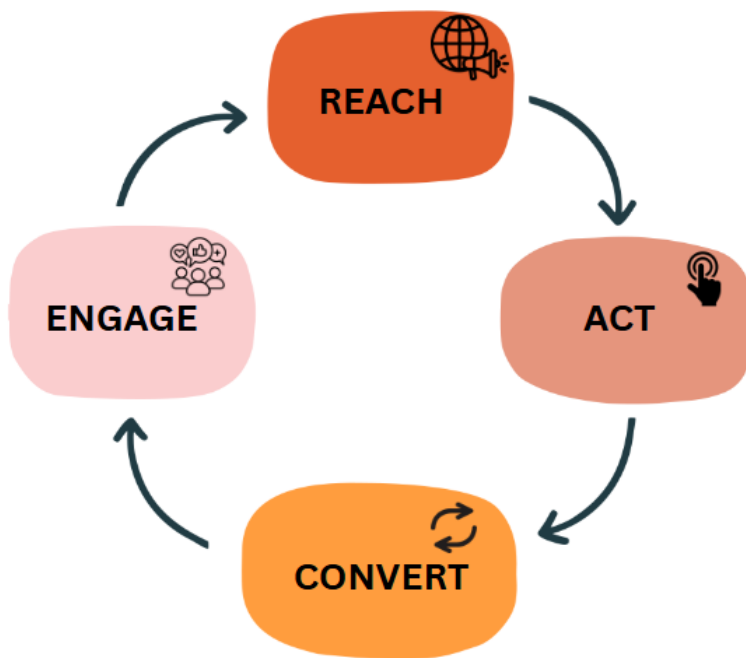


Figure 2. RACE framework (Canva, 2025.)

This particular marketing framework provides a simple direction for businesses to plan their social media marketing strategy. What sets RACE apart is its focus on the customer's lifecycle. It is especially well-suited for example, sports teams that are looking to engage with their community and fanbase through different digital platforms.

The planning model is made from four steps, with each one designed to help brands engage with their customers throughout the customer's lifecycle. These steps give an excellent overview for anyone who wants to create a simple digital marketing strategy (Drokina NI, 2018). The framework is very practical and action-oriented, since it gives tactics that businesses can implement in not only digital marketing but also website and mobile apps. Additionally, the framework helps with

traditional communications, since many marketing outcomes still happen offline, as for the case company Lappeenranta NMKY (Chaffey, 2023).

## **2.1 Step 1: Reach**

The first step of the framework is simple. It is based on search engines, publishers, blogs, and in Lappeenranta NMKY's case, mainly social media. It includes building awareness of the brand and its products and services on different platforms and in offline media, with the aim of increasing traffic on the business's main site or social media pages (Drokina NI, 2018).

It is important to have multiple touchpoint communications. Using just one marketing channel is not the best way to reach potential customers. Different people consume content on the internet at different times of the day, visiting multiple sites with multiple devices. To have multiple touchpoints in digital communication, businesses should have multiple channels and implement social media posting schedule to maximize reach (Radaideh, 2024.)

In addition, repeated communications should be planned. This means to plan out how many times the message is repeated in the same channel, to reach different people at different times. By planning this, more people will get to see the same message that is communicated through the marketing (Mangles, 2024.)

## **2.2 Step 2: Act**

The next step in the process is "Act", which is a shortened version of interact. When put in a simple form, the objective is to create content for the audience to get them to interact. This means creating engaging content for the prospective audience. With successful content, the audience interacts with the posts by liking, commenting, and sharing. Which then results in a wider reach. Interacting can be anything that makes the audience do more than ignore the post. Also, signing up for the mailing list is considered interacting.

This stage can be easily connected to the first stage, "Reach", but it is given its own stage because of the importance of the persuasive activity, which is the main point of getting the audience to interact (Drokina NI, 2018).

For a business to create a successful SMM strategy, it needs to create engaging content. By creating engaging content, it will also be very effective. The audience will engage more with content that is relatable, since it will often be shared to friends and family when they can relate to it. To reach this it is crucial to know and understand the targeted audience, what are their interests as well as pain points.

### 2.3 Step 3: Convert

Naturally, after getting the audience to interact, comes the stage to turn the audience into paying customers. As the name of this step says, this part is about conversion. With sales conversion, businesses can see what percentage of the people who took part in the second step then took the third vital step and turned into paying customers. This can either happen online or offline, since the RACE model is considered a multi- or omnichannel framework (Chaffey, 2023)

To maximize conversion, it is important to make it as easy as possible for customers to navigate through the website or social media accounts. Like Steve Krug, creator of a web optimization theory “don’t make me think”, said in his book *Don’t make me think*: “The main reason why it’s important not to make me think is that most people are going to spend far less time looking at the pages we design than we’d like to imagine.” (Krug, 2014). If a website is complicated and hard to use, it frustrates people who want to make a purchase.

### 2.4 Step 4: Engage

The last part of the process is the way businesses get most of their revenue, from repeat purchases. Around 40% of an average eCommerce store's revenues come from repeat customers, even though they are around 8% of the whole customer base. Studies also show that repeat customers help drive success not only by continually using services or purchasing products but also by recommending the business to, for example, friends, shopping at key times of the year, and also by shopping more than new customers (Conversational, 2024.)

For businesses to acquire repeat customers, they must engage with the customers even after they have gone through the marketing funnel. Customer loyalty can be built by having a good social media presence, communication on the website, emails, or offline interactions (Drokin NI, 2018).

Promoting customer advocacy is a great way to make engagement through business channels. By having good customer advocacy, the audience will share the business online with their connections, which creates more visibility. A great way to create engaging customer advocacy is by creating a “refer a friend” scheme. Meaning that when customers recommend the business to someone else, and get them to use the services as well, they both receive a prize (Mangles, 2024).

### **3 Social media trends, advantages, and disadvantages**

More people use social media now than ever before. As everything from the platforms to SMM strategies evolves, we are also seeing new trends emerge. New trends are affecting what type of content the audience is interested in and how businesses and sports teams need to interact with their audience and fans. It is crucial that businesses follow and keep up with these new emerging trends to have effective social media marketing. Keeping up with the rapidly changing trends also makes SMM more efficient and time-effective than ever before.

#### **3.1 Social Media Trends**

One of the biggest trends in today's social media is the usage of AI. According to Alison Zeller, more than 80% of marketers have created a more efficient workflow and saved time with social media tasks by integrating AI. Especially when it comes to completely rewriting and revising text. It is reported that 75% of marketers planned to use AI in such situations in 2024. This would be a 103% increase from 2023. AI is especially used to create captions for posts. With tools like Copy.ai, businesses can select the tone of voice, provide the prompt, and AI will then do the rest and generate a caption or other kind of content (Zeller, 2025).

For businesses to take the workload off their shoulders and create content more time-effectively, AI chatbots should be utilized. Chatbots can be used to answer DM's (Direct Messages) and FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions) very efficiently using conversational AI (Zeller, 2025). AI can also be used to come up with different content ideas and brainstorm. It is still important to acknowledge the level of trust and privacy with sensitive topics when using AI.

A good example of efficient usage of chatbots comes from an Instagram influencer who specialises in food content. She used chatbots to answer 1,315 comments (by the time writing this). The chatbot was triggered whenever someone commented "APPLES" or posted a comment using apple emojis (Figure 3.). By having the chatbot answer to every comment, the influencer gets more interaction from her audience, which then promotes her content. It also makes it feel a lot more personal to get an answer from an influencer, with 490k followers on her Instagram page (by the time of writing).



Figure 3. Screenshot of the comment and chatbot's answer (Danielle Walker, 2024).

Right after sending the comment, I also received a DM from the influencer that included the Apple Recipe Roundup, (Figure 4.). The DM also mentioned that the influencer would continue to add recipes to the link as she develops more, which encourages people to return for more.



Figure 4. Screenshot of the DM sent by the chatbot (Danielle Walker, 2024).

Platforms such as YouTube Shorts, Instagram Reels, and TikTok all have something that makes them one of the world's most dynamic and captivating platforms. They use the power of short-form videos. As the front-runner, TikTok has been known for challenges and viral dance videos, but has since expanded into a platform that is used by all types of creative creators. Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts have followed right up with TikTok and are offering similar short, engaging, and captivating videos (Dodds, 2024.)

The secret that these platforms have is based on the short-form video and the current fast-paced flow of online consumption. In today's world, attention span is shorter than ever before. Short videos that can be watched on a vertical screen and are easy to digest are more likely to retain viewers' interest throughout the whole video than longer videos that are watched from a horizontal screen (Dodds, 2024). Data shows that videos that last around 11 to 17 seconds are found to be the most successful, and nearly half of users even find videos that are longer than 60 seconds "stressful" (Zeller, 2025).

Lastly, a game changer in social media marketing for businesses is UGC (User-generated content), which is a form of marketing that is not only done by the brand itself, but other users of social media. The main idea is to create content that blends in with content created by other users but serves the purpose of marketing. When the content doesn't look or feel like an advertisement, the audience will stop and stay to watch longer (Rocklein, 2024.)

### **3.2 Social Media Advantages**

Social media is the best way to get recognition, market products and services, reach a wider audience, and overall improve sales. Since so many people can go on social media and interact with content, it is also easier for businesses to gain valuable insight from their audience by seeing what kind of content and in what way people are interacting with it.

Social media is also a way to build a positive brand reputation. For example, consistently monitoring and responding to messages, feedback, and for example, Direct Messages on Instagram, businesses can quickly address any concerns which leads to customer satisfaction. Positive brand reputation is crucial for building trust and loyalty with the audience and customers.

The following chart (Figure 5) shows the benefits that marketers worldwide have gotten by having social media implemented into their marketing. According to the chart, the two most important benefits that businesses can gain from SMM are increased exposure and traffic, with 83% of the respondents saying increased exposure is the leading benefit, and 73% are giving their votes for increased traffic. Both benefits are important for firms looking to enhance their social media presence, engagement with the audience, and drive sales (Statista, 2025.)

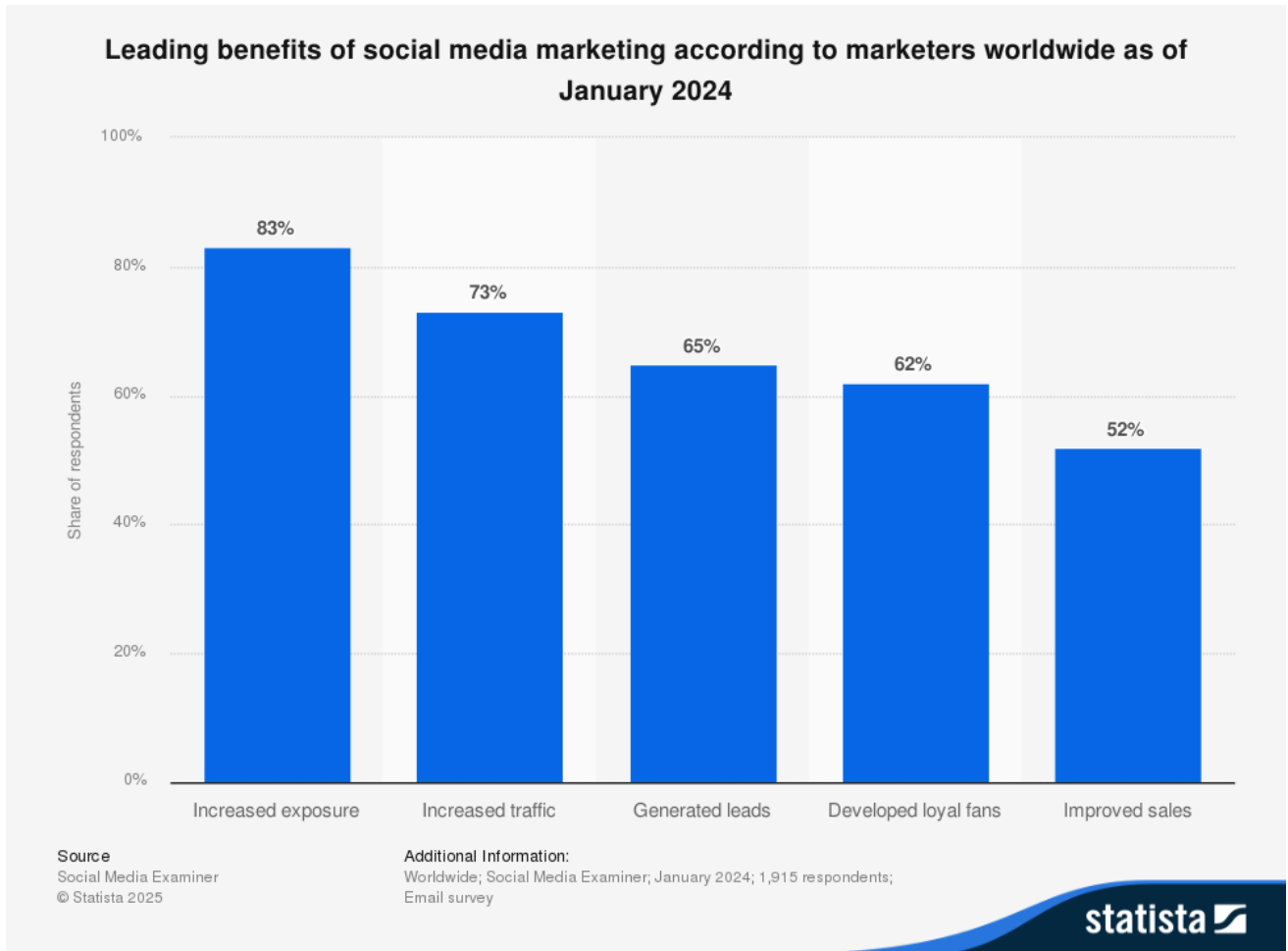


Figure 5. Leading benefits of social media marketing (Research Department, 2025).

Social media is also a very cost-effective way of doing marketing. A major part of social media platforms is free for everyone to access and create content with a profile. Businesses can perform very cost-effective marketing that can also be highly successful, whereas more traditional ways of marketing can be very expensive, especially for small businesses that don't have a lot of funds for a big "traditional" marketing campaign. It is a huge advantage for businesses to reach a target market with little to no financial investment and getting the audience to follow you out of their own will (Arsath, 2018.)

### 3.3 Social Media Disadvantages

Everything that has a positive side also has a negative side, including social media marketing. On a positive note, the disadvantages in social media marketing create speed bumps rather than making the strategies ineffective. For firms to build a strong social media presence, it takes time and effort, since it is crucial to be consistent with the content that is posted (Hayes, 2024.)

It is easy for the audience to make their voice heard on social media, and it is made easy for companies to communicate with their customers. This has a lot of positive effects and opportunities for businesses, but it also poses a great threat. All the feedback from the audience is public. Social media is a place to post about things that people love, but it is also a place to post when a bad experience with a business has occurred. The negative feedback can be seen in many ways. It can be feedback on Google reviews, comments under posts on the company's social media accounts, or posts made by other users on SM platforms (WebFX Team, 2024.)

Social media is full of information, and the spread of misinformation is a huge problem that firms should be aware of. One statement could lead to a snowball effect, with likes and reposts from the audience. Especially for brands or businesses that have a larger social media following, it is extremely important for the people responsible for the company's accounts to ensure all information that is being spread on the internet is correct. Spreading misinformation can be traced back to the company, and the consequences can be severe.

Social media is full of competition. It is a constant fight for brands to appear on the customers' feed (the main page to scroll on a social media platform). And it might not be the easiest job to get a brand to stumble on someone's feed, especially organically. A lot of bigger brands use paid SMM to get their advertisements and content on people's feeds. It can take a lot of effort for a smaller company to keep up with the competition and to steal the audience from other companies. Especially if they have a more established social media marketing (Sinkinson, 2024.)

Lastly, it is very time-intensive. The exchange between interactive and successful takes commitment. To create customer loyalty, get content on the audience feeds, and to create a good brand image, somebody must be responsible and consistent with monitoring the network. This can include responding to positive and negative comments, answering any questions, and creating content that is engaging for the audience. It is a lot harder for businesses without this possibility in social networks to stay in the competition. In conclusion, by inconsistently creating content and monitoring social media, hoping for good results in return, can be left only as a fantasy.

## 4 Content Strategy

Content strategy plays a central role when determining how an organization communicates with its audience. It is about planning, managing, distributing, and creating the right content that resonates with the target audience on the right platforms. A well-built content strategy is essential to maintain consistent engagement with the people, reach a new audience, and strengthen the brand identity.

When creating a content strategy, it is important to figure out what type of content to post to which platforms. Since all social media platforms have pros and cons, it is important to know what type of content works for which platforms. It is also good to know what your competitors are doing to strengthen your own strategies. Additionally, it is crucial to create an SMM calendar, including an annual clock to help with future workload by planning ahead (Aboulhosn, 2024.)

### 4.1 Content types for certain platforms

The leading platforms that will be utilized in the product of this thesis are Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. All these platforms offer distinct benefits for various tasks. They also differ from each other in terms of the type of content that should be posted on each platform, but not always. TikTok and Instagram Reels both have a very similar style of content, and they also often share the trends that people post on the platforms. In this case, cross-posting on TikTok and Instagram Reels is a good way to save time and effort when there is no need to create individual content on both platforms.

#### 4.1.1 Instagram

When it comes to Instagram and Instagram reels, shareable content is the keyword for creating content. Like Adam Mosseri, the Head of Instagram, says:

“If you’re trying to evaluate how your videos (or anything else) are performing on Instagram, one of the best things to look at is the sends. Out of all the people who saw it, how many people sent it to a friend? [Shareable content] tends to perform the best because it drives the most value for the overall community.” (Lang, 2024)

And when creating shareable content, it can be anything ranging from trends and entertainment, such as behind-the-scenes videos, to something that provides value for the audience. It can also be something educational and informative, as well as something that the audience can easily relate to. It is important to keep in mind that Instagram Reels are certainly not the only form of content that should be created on the platform. To create a successful strategy for marketing on Instagram, it should be a balanced mix of single-feed images, Instagram stories, and Instagram Reels content,

with the main focus on Reels (Zalani, 2024.) Even though Reels was launched on the platform only a couple of years ago, it has now become the core part of the product. According to Meta Investor Relations, Instagram users spend around 50% of their time on the app watching Reels. Additionally, businesses need to check their Instagram analytics very frequently to find out what type of content works best for their audience (Connell, 2025).

#### 4.1.2 TikTok

While TikTok is starting to push more photo content on its platform, videos still unarguably rule the app content-wise. As seen from the picture below (Figure 6), according to a social media management site Buffer, longer 180-600 second videos are still getting more views, even though short 11-17 second videos are getting more engagement.

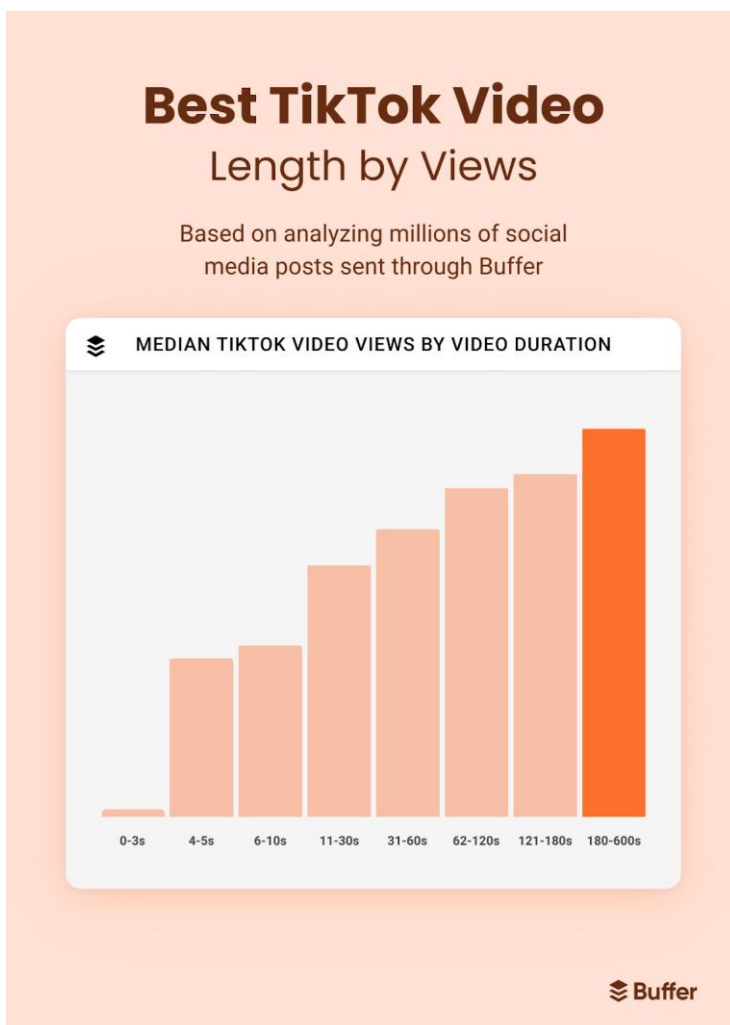


Figure 6. Best TikTok video length by views (Zalani, 2024)

According to the chart, videos ranging from 3 to 10 minutes are performing the best on the platform when looking at views. It is important to keep in mind that even though longer videos get more views and engagement, shorter videos have a much higher total video watch rate.

When it comes to content, TikTok has very similar content to Instagram Reels. The most important thing is to have attention-grabbing content. This means that the key message or the product in question should be highlighted within the first 3 seconds of the video. With the audience's short attention spans, it is good to get straight to the point and keep it simple and direct.

Content that can be posted on TikTok can be very versatile. The best-performing content on TikTok is based on trending sounds. Trending sounds can be a popular and trending song or some other audio clip that is widely used amongst users. It is extremely popular for creators to use trending sounds, and to use them according to a trend, and use them creatively in their own way. TikTok is also full of challenges. A lot of companies promote their brand by creating viral challenges and coming up with a unique hashtag that creators and other users can use when participating in these challenges (Zubtitle, 2023)

#### **4.1.3 Facebook**

Facebook is all about creating a social media community. Businesses and communities can create their own private Facebook groups or create a public community following. These groups create a sense of community. To strengthen the sense of community, businesses should focus on creating high-quality and authentic content. This includes UGC (User-generated content), polls, giveaways, or relevant memes. Facebook is also especially well-suited for posting links. In fact, out of all the platforms, Facebook has the highest click rate on posts that include a link. Businesses can leverage this to get the audience to visit their website.

Content that works on Facebook is usually also humorous. For example, the fast-food restaurant Wendy's is promoting their two options for a breakfast combo in a humorous meme format (Figure 7). This type of content gets a lot of engagement because its audience responds to content that they find entertaining. This also works on Facebook, because people love to share posts on their page, tag friends, and comment on different posts. As seen from the post made by Wendy's Facebook page, the post has 78 reactions/likes, 56 comments, and 6 shares. And all of this just for an advertisement for a breakfast deal. This is a prime example of how humorous content can get the audience to engage with content.



Figure. 7 Wendy's Facebook post promoting a breakfast combo (Wendy's, 10 April 2025)

Lastly, giveaways are a great way to get a lot of interaction and engagement. This also works on many other platforms and is not exclusive to Facebook. No matter what the case is, people don't want to miss a chance to win. Participating can be as easy as leaving a comment. This is why giveaways are one of the best-performing content to post on any social media platform.

## 4.2 SMM calendar, annual clock, and times to post

Managing multiple social media accounts, coming up with new ideas, and planning when to publish content can easily be overwhelming. That is why creating and maintaining a social media marketing plan is very helpful to keep things organized. A calendar keeps things organized and saves them from unnecessary stress (Kenan, 2024).

### 4.2.1 Calendar

Simply, a social media marketing calendar is a strategic plan of posts made for all social media channels in the future. It includes a publishing date and time as well as any links, tags, and media included in the post. These types of calendars can be created from ready-made templates or

designed by someone on their own. See Figure 8 for reference. A content calendar has multiple benefits, and it should be used by everyone who manages one or more social media accounts at a time (Kenan, 2024)

First of all, it is important to maintain an active social media presence by monitoring comments, answering questions and feedback, and most importantly by publishing content frequently. A content calendar allows businesses to prioritize quality over quantity by making publishing more organized. Planning posts and posting content according to a specific schedule also makes the brand itself look more organized and professional.

In terms of quality assurance and taking care of the business's brand, creating a content calendar plays a big role. It is way easier to catch a typo or prevent even worse mistakes when not creating content in a rush.

Combining a social media calendar with social media reporting makes tracking performance and engagement more effective. Monitoring content, checking what content performed the best, and checking when it was published helps identify specific posts with better engagement. This allows fine-tuning of your social media content as it needs to (Kenan, 2024).

Lastly, repurposing the content can also be helpful. It can be done with the help of a social media calendar. From a calendar, businesses can track their past posts and point out high-performing content or content types, and these can then be reused in the future. It not only might perform well in the future, but it will also save time and resources while ensuring quality.

Social Media Content Template (Semrush)										
Channel	Day	Status	Date	Time (GMT)	Post Topic/Type	Copy	Visual Type	Visual (Drive Link)	Link to Assets	Link to Published Post
Instagram	Sunday	Published	1/1/2022	8:00 AM	Event (Greeting)	Happy New Year, Journal Buddies!	Single Gif	N/A		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/linkt">https://www.instagram.com/linkt</a>
LinkedIn	Sunday	Published	1/1/2022	8:00 AM	Event (Greeting)	Happy New Year, Journal Buddies!	Single Gif	<a href="https://drive.google.c">https://drive.google.c</a>	N/A	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/linkt">https://www.linkedin.com/linkt</a>
Twitter	Sunday	Published	1/1/2022	8:00 AM	Event (Greeting)	Happy New Year, Journal Buddies!	Single Gif	<a href="https://drive.google.c">https://drive.google.c</a>	N/A	<a href="https://www.twitter.com/linkto">https://www.twitter.com/linkto</a>
Facebook	Monday	Scheduled	1/2/2022	9:00 AM	Product Update/Announcement	We promised you a great new year—so,	Single Still Image	<a href="https://drive.google.c">https://drive.google.c</a>	<a href="https://www.jou malingwithfrien">https://www.jou malingwithfrien</a>	
Instagram	Monday	Scheduled	1/2/2022	12:00 PM	Product Update/Announcement	We promised you a great new year—so,	Single Still Image	<a href="https://drive.google.c">https://drive.google.c</a>	<a href="https://www.jou malingwithfrien">https://www.jou malingwithfrien</a>	
TikTok	Wednesday	In Progress	1/4/2022	12:00 PM	Employee Testimonial	Journaling for 2023 #fyp #foryou	Video	<a href="https://drive.google.c">https://drive.google.c</a>	N/A	
Twitter	Wednesday	In Progress	1/4/2022	3:00 PM	Research	We found that 99% of people who write	None (Text Only)	N/A	<a href="https://www.jou malingwithfrien">https://www.jou malingwithfrien</a>	
Facebook	Friday	Planned	1/6/2022	5:00 PM	Educational	Welcome to #FridayTips!	Single Still Image	<a href="https://drive.google.c">https://drive.google.c</a>	<a href="https://www.jou malingwithfrien ds.com/blog/di">https://www.jou malingwithfrien ds.com/blog/di</a>	
Instagram	Friday	Planned	1/6/2022	2:00 PM	Educational	Welcome to #FridayTips!	Single Still Image	<a href="https://drive.google.c">https://drive.google.c</a>	<a href="https://www.jou malingwithfrien ds.com/blog/di">https://www.jou malingwithfrien ds.com/blog/di</a>	
LinkedIn	Friday	Planned	1/6/2022	10:00 AM	Educational	Welcome to #FridayTips!	Single Still Image	<a href="https://drive.google.c">https://drive.google.c</a>	<a href="https://www.jou malingwithfrien ds.com/blog/di">https://www.jou malingwithfrien ds.com/blog/di</a>	
TikTok	Sunday	Planned	1/8/2022	3:00 PM	Customer Testimonial	Watch this creative genius at work	Video	<a href="https://drive.google.c">https://drive.google.c</a>	N/A	
Twitter	Sunday	Planned	1/8/2022	2:00 PM	Product Promotion		None (Text Only)	N/A		

Figure 8. Example of a social media calendar (Go, 2024)

### 4.2.2 Holidays and special dates

It is also important to consider important days and holidays during the year. Almost every day is a celebration for something and somewhere, which is why businesses need to recognize and plan the dates that are important to them. These could include holidays such as Christmas, Halloween, and Easter, as well as days such as Valentine's Day, Mother's and Father's Day, or the business's birthday.

During these special holidays and dates, companies should offer deals or promotions or create content based on the event. For example, by creating holiday-themed polls on Instagram Story or Facebook, encourage the audience to share their personal experiences for authentic UGC or to offer special prices for services and products.

### 4.2.3 When to post

When to post on social media is almost as important as what to post. To stay on top of evolving social networks, businesses need to nail the times when they are posting on social media. The audience uses social media at different times, which makes it important to publish content at specific times. This maximizes the engagement and visibility of the content. Even though there are a lot of different studies pointing out different dates and times that are best to post on social media, they should still be taken into consideration.

According to (Singh et al., 2022), it is generally best to post on Facebook between 1 and 4 p.m. This can be a result of multiple different reasons. People are either usually having a quick break at work, or having a lunch break around 1 p.m., and have not started to work yet. And the best times for Instagram to post are Monday and Thursday, around 3 and 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. and 8 a.m. (Singh, Jaiswal and Singh, 2022)

There are also days when it is the worst time to post content. For Facebook, it is reported to be before 8 a.m. and after 8 p.m. This can also be the reason for the higher age of the average user of the platform, since younger people are more likely to stay up later past 8 p.m. When it comes to Instagram, Sundays are reported to be the worst day for posting.

## **5 Social media marketing plan**

This chapter introduces the commissioning organization for this thesis. The chapter will also give information about the commissioner's target audience, how to implement the social media marketing framework RACE into the commissioner's needs, and finally, a digital SMM guide that will be provided for the commissioner to help in the use of social media marketing in the future.

### **5.1 Lappeenrannan NMKY**

The case company and the commissioner of this thesis is the Lappeenrannan NMKY basketball team. A brief introduction to the team and its history, Lappeenrannan NMKY, or LrNMKY for short, is a Finnish basketball team founded in 1951. The team has been playing in Finland's highest men's league during the years 2000-2014 and won the championship in 2005 and 2006. By the time I write this thesis, the team is competing in Men's 1 division A.

In addition to the men's team, the organization has teams ranging from 5 years old to 19 years old, as well as a senior team.

As of now, when writing this thesis, the team has 793 followers on Instagram, 57 followers on TikTok, and 1.7k (1700~) followers on Facebook. The club's latest post on Instagram has 94 likes, on TikTok 1, and on Facebook 51. The goal is to get these numbers as well as the shares for the posts to grow by 50% after providing the team with the product, which is the digital guide for social media marketing.

When it comes to creating content and posts for the team's social media, the target is to post on Facebook between 1 to 4 p.m. Posting before 8 a.m. and after 8 p.m. should be avoided, since the average age for Facebook users is higher than on Instagram. When it comes to posting content to Instagram and TikTok, the team should cross-post on TikTok, since the content is very similar to what Instagram usually has, but go by recommended Instagram posting times. Which is Mondays and Thursdays, either around 3 to 4 p.m. or between 9 p.m. and 8 a.m.

LrNMKY will be in charge of creating the content and planning what to post.

### **5.2 The target audience**

The club's target audience is anyone from 13 years old to seniors who are interested in basketball, but will be specified to 13 to 25 years old for this project, since the outcome is designed to reach younger people who use social media. As mentioned, the goal is to produce more engagement for the team's social media platforms, get more young people to start basketball as a hobby, and get more audience in the team's games, which is the reason the target audience is younger people

who use social media daily. The goal is to reach this target audience and create engagement by creating content that resonates with younger people. This includes the usage of TikTok for its younger audience, leveraging social media trends and posting regularly to maximize the reach.

### 5.3 Implementation of the RACE framework

I have chosen this framework because the RACE framework is built mostly for online environments. On the other hand, for example, the AIDA model was created for more traditional advertising. And the model SOSTAC (Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, Control) can easily get too complex, especially for smaller organizations, like LrNMKY. The RACE framework is also beneficial because it focuses on what happens after the customer is acquired, and not only because it gains attraction. See below (Table 1), how the RACE framework can be implemented for the team's use.

Table 1. RACE framework implemented for LrNMKY's social media marketing

<i>RACE framework</i>	<i>How to implement</i>
<p><i>Reach</i></p> <p><b>Getting visibility and reach for teams' social media platforms</b></p>	<p>Creating engaging content for the team's social media accounts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short clips from games on TikTok and Instagram Reels</li> <li>• Consistently using hashtags such as #LrNMKY, #LappeenrantaBasket, or other trending hashtags to create more discoverability.</li> <li>• Have other local athletes attend or promote games</li> </ul> <p>Using multiple touchpoints in communication, which includes cross-platform posting as well as posting separate content on individual platforms.</p> <p>Optimizing repeated communications, meaning that the club should be posting the same message a few different times to different platforms.</p>

<p><i>Act</i></p> <p><b>Getting the audience to interact with content</b></p>	<p>Interactive Instagram Stories, TikTok's and Facebook posts for engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Q&amp;A's (Questions &amp; Answers)</li> <li>• Quizzes</li> <li>• Polls</li> </ul> <p>Behind-the-scenes content. Clips from practices, gameday road trips, or "my-day" videos filmed by players, to create a more humanized connection with the team.</p> <p>Reposting fans' content on the team's platforms and responding to messages.</p>
<p><i>Convert</i></p> <p><b>Converting the audience into paying customers</b></p>	<p>Creating a sense of urgency or FOMO (Fear of missing out) with countdowns for upcoming games or events, to stories on different platforms.</p> <p>Call-to-Actions when creating posts, especially on Facebook, since it has the highest click rate on posts that include a link. This can, for example, be: "Get your season pass for this limited price!".</p> <p>Giveaways or promotions for upcoming games. For example, ticket giveaway during a game, for a winner, free tickets for the next home game. Creates engagement and possibly gets the audience to support the team by getting refreshments or food during games.</p>
<p><i>Engage</i></p> <p><b>Build long-term relationships</b></p>	<p>Build long-term relationships by sharing posts after games, thanking fans for attending games, and supporting the team.</p> <p>Season recap videos including the fans, best moments, and highlights.</p>

	<p>Creating a community feeling amongst fans. Posting about local events the team is involved in.</p>
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## 6 Discussion

The outcome of this thesis is a digital guide for the Lappeenranta NMKY basketball team. Social media has become an essential part of digital marketing for sports organizations to grow fan bases, create visibility, and drive revenue. The timing for the project has been suitable, since even smaller clubs must invest in their social media presence, and LrNMKY is seeking to gain more digital engagement.

The necessity for the plan has been a clear target since the very beginning. The team has had an inconsistent and non-structured social media strategy. This thesis addresses this visible gap by providing a clear social media marketing plan guide that can help the team increase its fan engagement and visibility. Meaning that the work meets a real need within the sports club.

Usability is one of the most important aspects of this thesis's outcome. The RACE framework was chosen because of its easy-to-use tendencies for smaller organizations. The guide will also include content ideas, platform-specific tips, and content calendar tips for social media marketing planning. The team can leverage these tools to help them create more engaging content and to gain more visibility to reach their goals.

When it comes to possibilities for further development of the team's social media strategies, there are multiple ideas on what to add. These ideas include creating an intern-based or even paid "content team" to manage social media even more effectively. Over time, investing in more advanced social media analytics tools and search engine optimization can help track and optimize performance and gain even more visibility. Gamification could also be a future idea for development. Gamification means creating small competitions or "games," like predicting the final scores of the games or hosting a "best fan photo contest" on Instagram to win small prizes. This can be done to increase interaction and following.

The goal for the outcome of this thesis is to create a social media marketing plan based on different theories and research from the field of social media. This was accomplished during the project. It should be taken into consideration that the industry, trends, and platforms change constantly, meaning that the person responsible for the team's platforms should make changes based on these changes.

Working on this thesis has been a big learning curve for me, not only personally but also professionally, as someone interested in social media marketing as well as Sports Business. It has also been an honor to help my hometown's basketball team, which I have been a part of for 11 years of my life. Through this project, I have learned project management skills for setting clear timelines,

adjusting the scope if needed, as well as countering and solving unexpected problems. Overall, this thesis has strengthened my confidence in conducting social media marketing research and completing bigger projects, as well as clarifying my vision for my future career plans.

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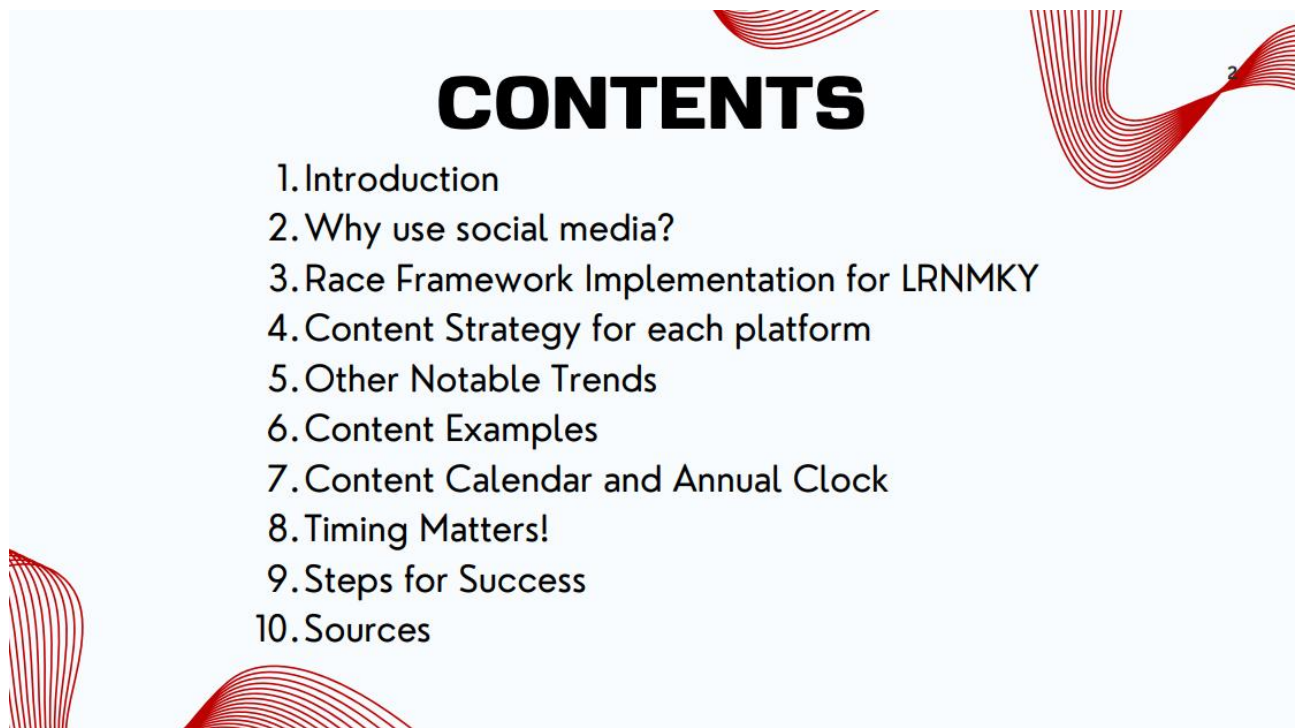
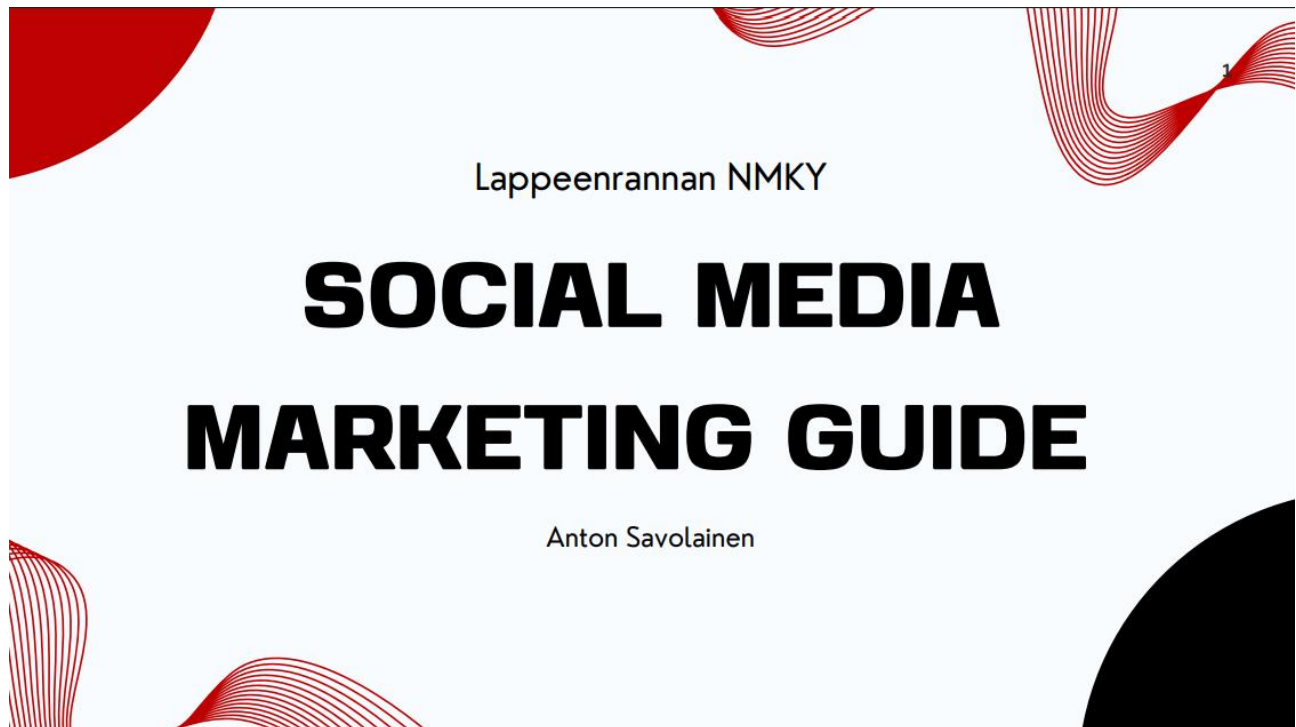
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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Digital social media marketing guide



# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of the Guidebook:

- A practical and simplified approach for Lappeenranta NMKY to enhance their social media presence. The goal is to increase engagement and visibility through tailored content strategies that resonate with the target audience.
- The guidebook is grounded in the RACE framework, which ensures that content is designed to Reach, Act, Convert, and Engage fans and potential customers.

## Guidebook Objective:

- The guidebook is designed to give LrNMKY's staff clear, actionable strategies for social media management, including content creation, posting schedules, and platform-specific tips.
- The ultimate aim is to **increase social media engagement by 50%** and **boost ticket sales by 25%**.

4

## WHY USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

### COST-EFFECTIVENESS

- One of the most affordable marketing methods.
- Major platforms are free to use, making it accessible to all.
- Effective for reaching targeted audiences with minimal financial investment, unlike traditional methods.

### POSITIVE BRAND IMAGE

- Build a positive reputation by engaging with feedback and messages.
- Consistent interaction fosters trust and loyalty among fans, enhancing brand perception.

### RECOGNITION

- Social media is a key tool for gaining visibility.
- Reaches wider audiences and provides insights on what content resonates best through user interaction.

## RACE FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION FOR LRNMKY

### Reach:

Objective: Increase brand visibility.

- Actions:
  - Post engaging content (e.g., highlight reels, player features) across Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.
  - Use trending hashtags (#LrNMKY, #Basketball, etc.) to improve discoverability.

### Act:

Objective: Drive interaction.

- Actions:
  - Create interactive content like polls, Q&As, and challenges.
  - Share behind-the-scenes moments from practice or game day to humanize the team.
  - Encourage fans to engage by reposting user-generated content (UGC).

## RACE FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION FOR LRNMKY

### Convert:

Objective: Turn interactions into conversions (ticket sales).

- Actions:
  - Post time-sensitive promotions (e.g., "Get your tickets now!").
  - Use call-to-actions (CTAs) in posts: "Click the link in bio for tickets" or "Tag a friend and win free tickets."

### Engage:

Objective: Build long-term relationships with fans.

- Actions:
  - Share thank-you posts after games and season recap videos.
  - Highlight fan contributions through shoutouts.
  - Engage in meaningful conversations with followers through comments and DMs

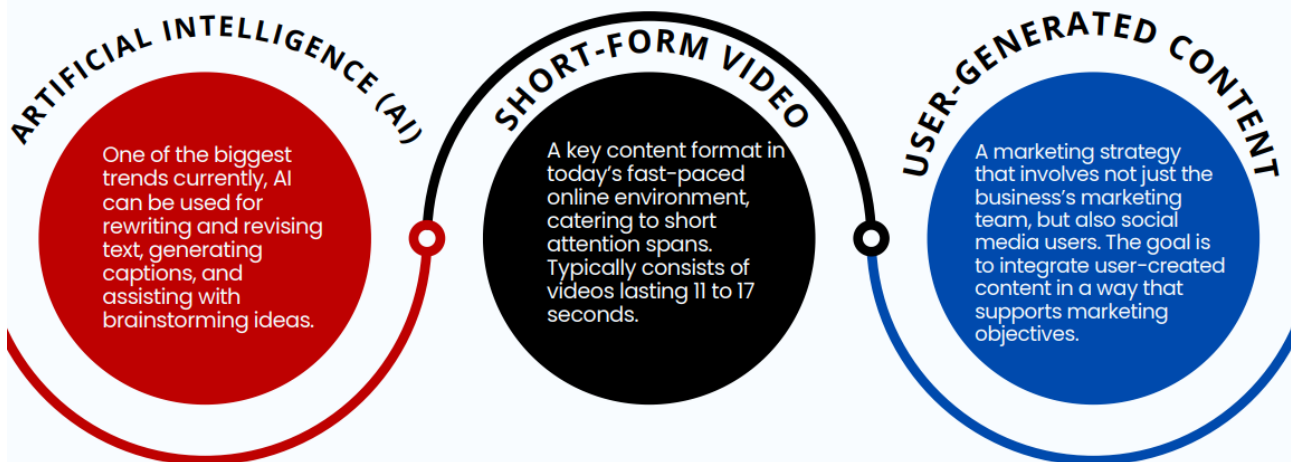
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## CONTENT STRATEGY FOR EACH PLATFORM

TikTok	Instagram	Facebook
Video-centric: Videos are the main content type, driving engagement.	TikTok-like content (Reels): Similar videos for easy cross-promotion	Community Focus: Build trust and loyalty with fans.
Versatile content: Share interviews, behind-the-scenes and game highlights.	Shareable content: Boosts team engagement.	Authentic content: Use UGC, polls, and giveaways for genuine connections.
Hook in First 3 Seconds: Capture attention quickly.	Focus on Reels: Main feature driving visibility.	Links drive Traffic: Posts with links see higher click-through rates.
Optimal length: 3-10 min videos for views; 11-17 seconds for engagement.	Feed Posts: Still important for overall content strategy	Humour works: Light, funny content resonates well with audiences.

8

## OTHER NOTABLE TRENDS



# CONTENT EXAMPLES

## Instagram Reels:

- Behind-the-scenes moments: Footage from team practice, travel to games, or pre-game rituals.
- Player features: Highlight individual players, their training routines, or personal stories.
- Game day countdowns: Short clips building excitement for the upcoming game.

## Tiktok:

- Basketball challenges: Fun, creative challenges that engage followers, like trick shots.
- Game recaps: Quick, high-energy recaps of game highlights (best plays, top moments).
- Fan challenges: Ask fans to share their predictions

## Facebook:

- Polls and quizzes: Ask fans for game predictions or feedback.
- Giveaways: Run regular contests, such as ticket giveaways for the next home game.
- Fan appreciation posts: Feature fan-made content or shoutouts for loyal supporters.

# CONTENT CALENDAR AND ANNUAL CLOCK

## Content Calendar

- Plan posts ahead of time to maintain a consistent online presence.
- Include specific content types for each platform and ensure posting is spread evenly across the week.
- Monitor post performance to adjust content types and schedules as needed.

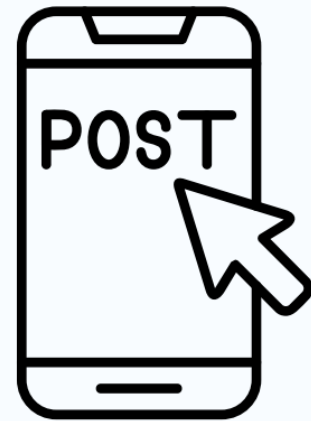
## Annual clock

- Pre-season hype: Generate excitement for the new season with teasers and behind-the-scenes content.
- Game Days: Consistent posts on game days, including countdowns, hype videos, and score predictions.
- Holidays and Special Dates: Create content around Christmas, New Year, and other key events to maintain engagement during the off-season.

## TIMING MATTERS!

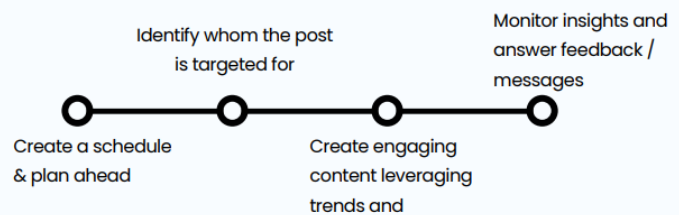
### Optimal Posting times:


- Facebook: Between 1-4 PM (typically during lunch breaks).
- Instagram: Monday and Thursday between 3-4 PM and 9 PM.
- TikTok: Post during peak hours when young audiences are most active (e.g., evenings).



## STEPS FOR SUCCESS


- **Consistent Branding:** Maintain uniform font styles and color schemes across all platforms for brand recognition.
- **Hashtag Consistency:** Use the same hashtags in every post, encouraging fans to join the conversation with team-related hashtags.
- **Visual Cohesion:** Ensure all visuals (images, videos, graphics) align with the team's aesthetic to create a cohesive look across all posts.





Social media success doesn't happen overnight – it comes from leveraging this guide as a help and being creative as well as consistent with managing the team's social media accounts.

Anton Savolainen



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