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Social media marketing plan for Finnish baseball team Kannuksen Ura

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis focused on creating a social media marketing plan for Kannuksen Ura, a Finnish baseball club. The aim was to strengthen the organization's social media presence and engage more effectively with its fans.

The SOSTAC model and SWOT analysis were used as the theoretical frameworks to develop the plan. A qualitative research approach was adapted, and data was collected through interviews with individuals interested in sports and Finnish baseball.

Based on the research findings, a strategic plan was created to help Kannuksen Ura to improve its content quality, visibility and engagement. The results highlighted the importance of setting clear objectives, understanding the target audience, and content versatility is emphasized in successful social media marketing. This plan can serve as a guideline for Kannuksen Ura's future marketing activities through social media.

Keywords: Social media, marketing, sports, Finnish baseball, SWOT, SOSTAC

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	6
2	DEFINING SOCIAL MEDIA.....	8
2.1	Social media marketing.....	8
2.2	Social media marketing in sports	10
2.3	Social media platform.....	11
2.3.1	Instagram.....	11
2.3.2	Facebook.....	12
2.3.3	TikTok.....	12
3	MARKET RESEARCH METHODS.....	14
3.1	SOSTAC model.....	14
3.1.1	Situation analysis.....	15
3.1.2	Objectives	16
3.1.3	Strategy	16
3.1.4	Tactics	17
3.1.5	Actions.....	17
3.1.6	Control	17
3.2	SWOT- analysis	18
3.2.1	Strengths	18
3.2.2	Weaknesses	19
3.2.3	Opportunities	19
3.2.4	Threats.....	20
4	MARKETING ANALYSIS FOR KANNUKSEN URA	21
4.1	Interview as a research method	21
4.2	Content analysis.....	22
4.3	Data analysis.....	22
4.4	Research findings	24
5	SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN FOR KANNUKSEN URA	27
5.1	Situation analysis and strengths of Kannuksen Ura	27
5.2	Weaknesses and threats of Kannuksen Ura	28
5.3	Objectives of Kannuksen Ura.....	29
5.4	Opportunities and strategy of Kannuksen Ura	29
5.5	Tactics and Actions	29

5.6	Control	30
6	CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION.....	31
	REFERENCES	33
	APPENDIX.....	40

1 INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, it has become increasingly important for organizations, including sports teams like Kannuksen Ura, to use social media as an effective marketing tool. The competition in markets is higher than ever. Even though Kannuksen Ura is already present on some social media platforms, it is essential that the team understands how to fully advantage these channels to support their marketing objectives.

Today, more than 3.4 billion people use social media on a daily basis. While social media has shaped various fields, its most significant impact can be seen in marketing and communication if we compare this to the situation 20 years ago. Social media and its platforms have created new places for interactions not only between individuals but also between the consumers and organizations. As a result, even announcements are closer to conversations, because unlike before, people can now comment and respond on those as well. (Lehtonen 2019.)

The primary goal of this study is to create a social media marketing plan for the baseball team called Kannuksen Ura. In modern marketing, almost every organization and company, big or small, uses social media as a part of its marketing strategy (Newman, Peck & Wilhide 2017). Therefore, marketing needs to be evolving alongside changing communication methods (Gil 2020). In this thesis, SOSTAC as well as SWOT analysis are used as the theoretical framework for creating a marketing plan, and the research methods aim to answer the question “What kind of social media marketing content works for Kannuksen Ura?” In this research, the author uses qualitative research methods and interviews to understand what exactly Kannuksen Ura needs to do in their platforms to increase the engagement with consumers. The findings from this research will define the development of the final social media marketing plan. The author also used Co-pilot to ensure good grammar and flow in this thesis, but she did not use it on creating new text.

Kannuksen Ura was founded in 1968, following the merger of two local sports clubs: Kannuksen Urheilijat and Kannuksen Pilke. The decision to merge the operations was made in January 1968, and by May of the same year, the new club, Kannuksen Ura, was officially founded. The name was chosen through a public naming competition. (Kannuksen Ura 2025.)

The club initially comprised 12 divisions encompassing a variety of sports, including athletics, skiing, and Finnish baseball. In 1969, divisions for football and finance were introduced, and ice hockey was integrated into the skating division. By 1970, the extensive number of divisions was identified as a challenge to efficient management. While proposals to streamline the structure were partially implemented, the club continued to operate with eight to ten divisions throughout the 1970s. (Kannuksen Ura 2025.)

This thesis will focus on the clubs, Finnish baseball division, particularly the men's representative team. The author worked as a social media marketer for the team during the summer of 2024, gaining practical experience from creating content. The club uses Facebook, Instagram and TikTok on their primary platforms so they will be the focus of analysis.

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a contemporary and efficient social media strategy for the team. The author aims to create a comprehensive and functional social media marketing plan that enhances the team's online presence and engagement.

In this study, there are certain limitations. Firstly, although there is wide range of literature on social media marketing in general, the author faced challenges in finding sources that focus on marketing within the context of Finnish baseball. Therefore, sources related to general sports marketing and social media marketing have been used to draw conclusions that are also suitable to this case. Lastly, Finnish baseball is popular primarily among certain target groups, which limits its broader appeal with also having several competing baseball clubs that are located near Kannus.

2 DEFINING SOCIAL MEDIA

This chapter will discuss the term social media and its use in marketing. In addition, this section also focuses on how social media is used in sports marketing and what kind of platforms Instagram, Facebook and TikTok are.

When trying to come up with a specific definition of social media, you quickly notice that there is not just one definition, and it is changing all the time. Many people might even understand the term wrong (Kotler 2008). One of the definitions is “impactful channel of communication” (Dwivedi, Kapoor & Chen 2015) and another is that social media is media that allows interaction between people by sharing content, photos, videos or online community sites (Taprial & Kanwar 2012). However, a general definition includes all Internet-based technological applications (Alves, Fernandes & Raposo 2016). Even though there are many definitions for social media, the idea behind it is not groundbreaking and seems to confuse many people. (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

The term social is the whole purpose of social media. Social media is not just about digitization, but it is a way for people to be social and interact with other people by sharing (Isokangas & Vassinen 2010). Social media platforms enable people to be creative, increase interaction and to share content such as videos, photos and different types of texts. Over the past decades, the use of these platforms like Instagram and TikTok has increased considerably and today it is a part of everyday life for people around the world. (Digitoimisto Pulse 2024).

2.1 Social media marketing

Social media enables consumers to conduct more information before making purchasing decisions. Customers can easily access information about similar services and products, which increases high competition between companies and organizations. Recent studies have also shown consistent patterns in how consumers use social media. The demand for personalized products has increased, and customers are participating more actively in the development of services and products by giving feedback and comments through social media platforms. As a result, marketers have now more opportunities to collaborate with end users in processes such as product testing and other development work. This practice is known as co-creation. (Constantinides 2014).

According to Constantinides (2014), in order to effectively leverage social media in any marketing strategy, it is crucial that the organization's website is functional, reliable, and aligns with the expectations of its users. This can only be achieved if they ensure that the site is well-organized, contains all relevant information and it is easy to navigate.

Social media also provides organizations with the opportunity to build relationships with customers, employees and stakeholders. Social media can serve as a channel for information but also as a platform for creating value around a product or service (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch 2017). In addition, it allows communication which marketers can use to target specific target groups. (Viner-ean 2017)

In modern marketing practices, marketers should consider how to use social media to strengthen their customer relationship. This can be accomplished by using a variety of tools such as videos, photos and blogs. When marketers succeed in building a strong customer loyalty, the result can lead to a more authentic and relatable brand image. (Vinerean 2017)

Influencers now play also a significant role on consumer behavior in social media. Many people follow public figures, whose opinion about organizations often has a lot of considerable weight. In some cases, a consumer perception of an entire company may have changed because of influencers' views about the products or services. Influencers may even have as much influence as traditional journalists (Lehtonen 2019). However, influencer marketing, when it is done right, can be a highly effective strategy. Influencers are often seen as professionals in their field and professionals of personal branding since they have been successful of growing loyal audiences. Their product recommendations are seen as a "social approval" and it is influencing in the purchasing decisions of their followers. In the best scenario, influencer marketing strategy can enhance brand awareness and create reliability of the organization. However, the success of influencer marketing depends on selecting the right influencer, so they are aligned with the brands goals and target audience. For instance, a sports club may benefit more from collaborating with a well-known person in their sport community rather than a popular beauty influencer known from testing cosmetics. (Spourt Blog 2025)

2.2 Social media marketing in sports

Historically, before televisions became common, fans primarily found information about athletes and teams through newspapers and participated events in person. This case, fans had very limited opportunities to gather information unless it happened face-to-face with other fans. However, with televisions, the opportunities also increased. Marketing changed completely, since suddenly sports events were accessible to millions of people regardless of where they were in the world. Social media has brought a similar effect with it. Social media now has an impact on fans' interest in different sports, products, and events, affecting also for financial sources of income. (Holland 2015.)

Sports marketing is a strategic process in which marketing activities are monitored, planned and implemented according to the organization's objectives while taking care of the needs of customers. Sports marketers must be able to anticipate consumer demand for each event individually to reach their goals! (Shank & Lyberger 2014,). Marketers can see this while comparing how they do marketing for daily or industrial products; even entertainment services can be seen differently (Beech & Chadwick 2007).

Sports marketing is centered about experiences that create value for customers, fans and the rest of society. Sports marketing, therefore, involves communication and the exchange of experiences. A common misunderstanding is the confusion between sports marketing and marketing through sports, even though they refer to two different concepts. In marketing through sports, sports usually serve as a tool to promote other products or services, rather than being the actual marketing subject itself. (Fetchko, Roy & Clow 2018). For example, the company Oshee uses ice hockey players such as Patrik Laine and Miro Heiskanen to market their sports drinks (Oshee 2025).

There are various aspects of sports marketing. In sports, it is possible to market everything from a single player to an entire season of games or even a single event. Marketing through sports, on the other hand, mainly consists of striving for goals with a precise strategy that includes different companies with which we cooperate. This also aims to grow and maintain, for example, the team's brand and increase its value. (Fetchko, Roy & Clow 2018.)

However, what makes sports marketing difficult are the changing circumstances, where the end results change every time. For example, injuries or unexpected decisions by coaches can affect

outcomes which marketers cannot control. Marketers must therefore be able to do their work proactively with possible variables without trying to effect on the actual game. (Alaja 2000.)

Clear goals usually guide sports marketing. These goals often include increasing ticket sales, raising interest in the sport, and developing the brand of the club or team. This naturally leads to the key questions such as: What kind of applications should be used? What type of content should be produced? How can the performance and effectiveness of these marketing efforts be measured? These aim to answer how this can be achieved. (Holland 2015.)

The importance of social media is has become especially clear when creating content for fans. By creating quality content, sports clubs can create a feeling for fans that they are included in the event, even if they cannot attend in person. One effective way to activate fans is to make content that creates emotional connection to the organization such as posting content about the life of the athletes or through cooperating with sponsors. Social media also offers various tools that can be used to monitor content, helping organizations to understand what works and what does not. (Seymour & Blakey 2020.)

Social media plays a role in sports marketing like it does in every other marketing field. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are part of sports culture today, as they allow for broader and more direct connections with stakeholders, including athletes, fans, coaches, and also other teams around the world. (Abeza & Sanderson 2022.)

2.3 Social media platform

Social media includes various platforms that allow interaction between individual people, namely Facebook and Instagram (Bajpai, Pandey & Shriwas 2012). According to Mou (2020) TikTok and Instagram are currently among the most popular platforms. Facebook still maintains a meaningful role even though it is not so popular anymore (Lee, Hosanagar & Nair 2014). At its core, social media have different applications that enables consumers to share and interact with each other (Vinerean 2017).

2.3.1 Instagram

Instagram was first launched in October 2010 (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhampati 2014). It is an application in social media that has already millions of users. Instagram is used to share content such as videos and photos, but it also allows users to send messages and comment on other's posts. Instagram can be a powerful platform for organizations to strengthen their brand image through visuality. Success on Instagram requires more than just quality content; it also requires consistency, strategic planning, and long-term commitment. Instagram **support** business use, offering features such as follower analytics and publication visibility, which enable organizations to evaluate and optimize the performance of their content. (Suominen 2017.)

Instagram statistics reveal that 70% of consumers use the app to find inspiration for their purchases. It stands out as the most popular platform for consumers to follow and research brands. As a result, users turn to Instagram to discover new products and gather information to make informed purchasing decisions. Instagram's users are across different ages and genders, some of organizations target audience is likely active on the platform. (Instagram marketing 2024.)

2.3.2 Facebook

Facebook was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes". Facebook had almost three billion users in 2021, and it is the biggest social media platform in the world. (Hall 2024.)

Facebook is free platform for everyone where people can make groups, post videos and photos, and text on each other's timelines or in their timelines. On Facebook, people can also send private messages, comment, and like other people's posts. (Hall 2024.)

2.3.3 TikTok

TikTok is a social media platform developed in 2016 that allows users to create and share short videos featuring music, effects, and various editing tools to enhance entertainment and capture viewers' attention (D'Souza 2025). The app operates by letting users scroll vertically through a feed of videos, making content discovery seamless and engaging (Herrman 2019). TikTok has become

a space where people express themselves creatively through short-form video content. (TikTok 2021.)

There has been some uncertainty around TikTok because it is a Chinese company. However, TikTok has maintained its popularity despite the fact that e.g. the United States has voiced concerns regarding privacy protection in the app. (D'Souza 2025.)

TikTok marketing operates through the algorithm of the app, which curates the "For You Page" by showcasing trending videos often categorized using hashtags. The algorithm closely monitors user behavior, such as viewing time and interactions, to recommend content that aligns with individual preferences and interests. (Influencer Marketing Hub 2025.)

3 MARKET RESEARCH METHODS

The theoretical framework is based on a literature review and aims to answer two key questions: 'What approach is most suitable for addressing the problem or answering the question?' This step is crucial for defining the study, and the content of the framework will vary depending on the research type, such as in the case of qualitative research. (Lederman & Lederman 2015.)

3.1 SOSTAC model

PR Smith created the SOSTAC model which is also used in business to create digital marketing strategies. SOSTAC stands for Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Actions, and Control. For digital marketing, SOSTAC will guide you toward better outcomes. (Reed FIDM 2014.)

SOSTAC is a tool that can be used to implement long-term-term tstrategic plan, or it can be used as a tool to implement a short campaign in digital marketing, as it takes into account the different phases of the campaign and as a result usually follows a base of direct tactical actions. (Koivuniemi 2022.) The SOSTAC model is described in the figure below.

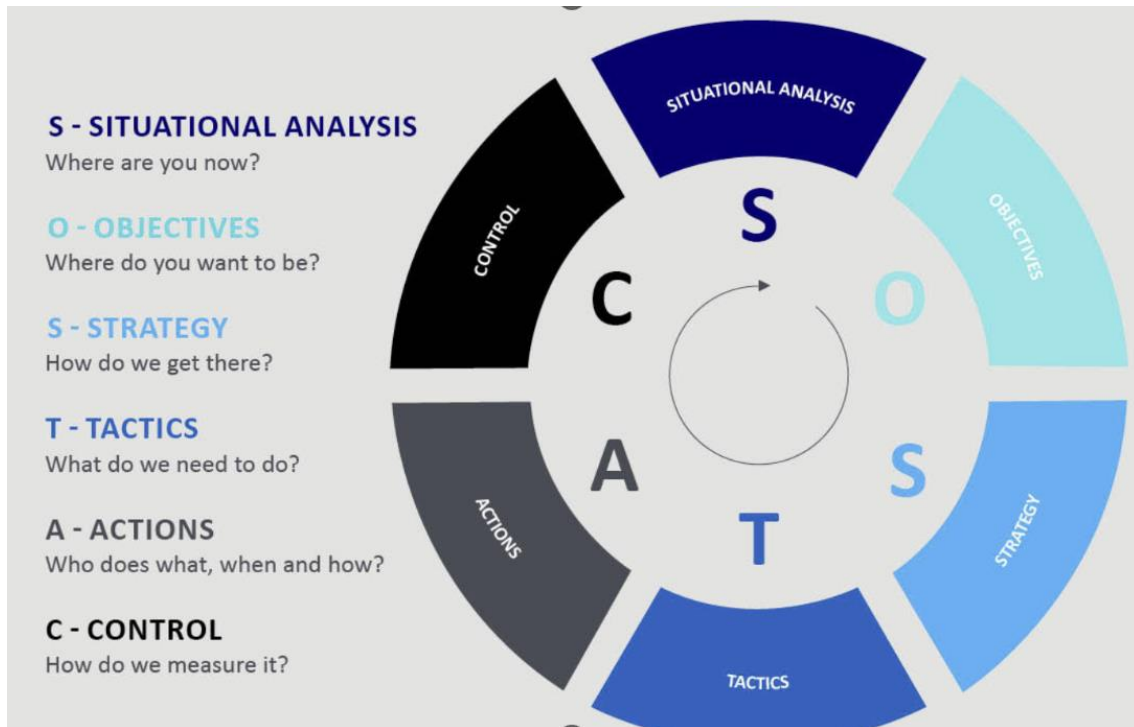


FIGURE 1. SOSTAC- model (Content Hub 2024)

3.1.1 Situation analysis

The primary objective of a situation analysis is to assess the current position of the company within its industry and the effectiveness of its marketing efforts. This evaluation entails analyzing the performance and functionality of the digital marketing channels in use, while also identifying the target audience by addressing key questions: what is being offered, why it holds relevance, and to whom it is directed. (Chaffey & Smith 2022.)

Furthermore, the organization's existing reputation and public recognition provide a solid foundation for this analysis. However, this phase extends beyond recognition to examine the company's understanding of its surrounding environmental dynamics. It is critical for the organization to adopt strategies rooted in the actual conditions of its operating environment. By systematically evaluating external environmental factors, the company can measure its strengths and weaknesses, while also obtaining valuable insights into market trends and consumer behaviors. Such an approach ensures the alignment of business activities with real-world conditions, optimizing performance and strategic decision-making. (Ardeana, Manafe, Pramita & Leo 2022.)

3.1.2 Objectives

One of the key reasons digital marketing efforts can fail is the lack of clearly defined objectives. Therefore it is important for the organizations to carefully consider its goals, whether the aim is to strengthen the brand, increase sales, or something else. Before jumping into strategy, it is always wise for an organization to ask what they want to achieve with this, and which areas they should focus on to improve their marketing? (Smith & Chaffey 2008.)

According to Smith and Chaffey (2008), one of the key goals of social media marketing is to add value for customers. In a digital marketing plan, this means providing content that makes consumers' lives easier and more meaningful. Digital marketing can use social media as a tool since it offers good platforms for delivering personalized and relevant content.

Setting goals in marketing and digital business requires a clear understanding of the current situation, as well-defined objectives are essential for effective planning and future direction. Marketing goals should reflect the company's desired direction, while digital goals should align with and support this overarching vision. Companies should consider both long-term and short-term goals, ensuring that these objectives are consistent with one another. (Blomster, Kurtti, Määttä & Sinisalo 2020.)

3.1.3 Strategy

The strategy part involves identifying the right target audience and developing a unique position in the market that sets the organization apart from its competitors. Although, it might seem like a long phase, it is usually the shortest part of the marketing planning process, but it can also be quite difficult. It plays a huge role in whether the organization will be able to reach its goals or not. (Smith 2015). An important element of this strategy is fostering customer interaction, as building two-way communication helps strengthen the connection between the brand and its audience. When customers feel acknowledged and appreciated, they are more inclined to remain loyal and take an active role in engaging with the brand. (Smith & Chaffey 2008.)

3.1.4 Tactics

In choosing tactics, it is essential to understand how different strategies support various goals, as not all tactics are suitable for every objective. A deep understanding of tactics is important to effectively use the organizations limited resources towards achieving the right goals. (Blomster, Kurtti, Määttä & Sinisalo 2020.)

Blomster, Kurtti, Määttä & Sinisalo (2020) mention digital marketing tactics such as email and social media being commonly used by companies to boost sales. While selecting these tactics, organizations need to design content that aligns with their customers' needs. The effective use of social media requires good content marketing skills.

Social media channels also enable precise targeting of different audience segments. Timely and relevant content increases engagement and enhances user satisfaction. Real-time communication, such as updates helps save time and reduce customer frustration, both of which helps to a better customer experience. (Smith & Chaffey 2008.)

3.1.5 Actions

Marketing actions translate the strategy into concrete steps. These practical measures are designed to help the company achieve its marketing goals. The choice and combination of these actions significantly impact the organization's ability to meet its objectives. To ensure effectiveness, these actions must align with the marketing strategy. By integrating online and offline methods, companies can create diverse and impactful marketing campaigns that resonate with a broader audience, ultimately contributing to the achievement of their objectives. (Furia 2023).

3.1.6 Control

The final step in the SOSTAC model is the process of management and monitoring. This phase focuses on measuring and optimizing the effectiveness of the marketing plan. By tracking progress, companies can ensure that their marketing activities remain aligned with the predefined goals and make adjustments as necessary to maximize success. (Furia 2023.)

3.2 SWOT- analysis

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis is a tool that allows companies and organizations to review internal and external factors that affect their operations. However, the real benefit of SWOT analysis is seen when analyzing the meaning of all these factors and making decisions based on them (Leigh 2009.) SWOT analysis is explained in figure 2.



FIGURE 2. SWOT- Analysis (FWD Focus 2022)

According to David, Creek, and David (2019), the success of a SWOT analysis depends on the ability to identify the most relevant factors for the company. This can be achieved using the AQCD model, which stands for actionable, quantitative, comparative, and divisible. The AQCD model helps a company in several ways. It assists in choosing factors that the company can control, incorporates specific data such as customer numbers into the analysis, helps compare whether the company's situation has improved, worsened, or remained the same, assists in making strategic decisions based on the analysis, and helps identify different SWOT factors to improve resource efficiency and develop a targeted strategy.

3.2.1 Strengths

The strengths section of a SWOT analysis examines the areas in which a company performs well. It recognizes what the target audiences appreciate about the company, how the company is different from competitors, and what unique qualities it possesses. In practice, the strengths section

highlights aspects where the company is already successful and which can be effectively used, for example, in marketing activities. (Raeburn 2025.)

The initial step in identifying strengths in a SWOT analysis according to Gomer & Hille (2015) is to define the reason of analysis, which helps in identifying existing strengths. Quality should be a fundamental aspect of a company's strengths. Additionally, these strengths should be evaluated in comparison to competitors to determine if the company possesses any distinct competitive advantages. Simply, the strengths of a company are the factors within the organization, when leveraged, provide a clear competitive edge.

3.2.2 Weaknesses

Gomer and Hille (2015) define weaknesses in a SWOT analysis as the opposite of strengths, meaning identifying areas where your business is weak. It is crucial to be ruthlessly honest at this stage and recognize the areas that need improvement to develop the most accurate strategy possible. The goal of the strategy at this point is to transform weaknesses into strengths. Additionally, when identifying weaknesses, it is important to assess the potential impact of external threats on the success of the company or organization.

3.2.3 Opportunities

Analysis opportunities stage involves reviewing external positive factors that can provide companies with new opportunities to grow in business, increase competitive advantage, and contribute to the overall success of the company. When looking for such opportunities, it may be a good idea to consider what kind of opportunities there are in the market right now, what kind of trends could be useful in marketing the company, and what kind of positive events are happening in the world that could be utilized. (Business.gov.au 2025.)

3.2.4 Threats

As a final step in the SWOT analysis, potential threats should be identified. At this stage, it is useful to reflect on the weaknesses previously listed and consider how they could develop into threats to the company's success. Other possible threats may include the influence of social media, as customers are increasingly aware of competitors and can quickly become informed about a company's weaknesses. It is also important to consider external factors such as natural disasters or challenging weather conditions, for example, heavy rainfall, which may impact operations. While the list of potential threats can be extensive, it is essential to focus on the most relevant ones from the company's viewpoint. For instance, for a sports club, it is likely more important to consider competitors and weather conditions than changes in international tax laws affecting product sales. (Indeed Editorial Team 2024.)

4 MARKETING ANALYSIS FOR KANNUKSEN URA

The author of this thesis used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research uses smaller groups of cases, since qualitative research does not use statistical information, but rather verbal information. (Cairney & St Denny 2015.)

According to Aspers and Corte (2019), there is no precise definition of qualitative research, but it can be described as a process that focuses on understanding behavior, experiences, and motives, with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding in a scientific context by using methods such as interviews and studies.

Qualitative research seeks to answer the questions "how" and "why" in order to develop a deeper understanding of the chosen topic. Its strength lies in the ability to explore aspects that cannot be captured through numbers alone, such as emotions and personal experiences. (Tenny, Brannan & Brannan 2022.)

4.1 Interview as a research method

Interviews are a widely recognized qualitative research method because of their flexibility in adapting for the goals of a study. One common approach is conducting individual interviews to explore experiences and perspectives on a given topic. (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006.)

The aim of this research is to identify effective social media marketing strategies and catch users' attention with online content. To achieve this, the study involved interviewing five individuals aged 18-24, all of whom have an interest in Finnish baseball. This age group was chosen based on Geuens' (2024) findings, which suggest that most TikTok users fall within this age range.

The purpose of these interviews was to gain insights into the participants' content preferences on social media. By conducting the interviews, the author sought to better understand what types of content resonate most with this group. The interviews were structured as conversational discussions, allowing participants to speak more openly. These interviews were done face-to-face.

4.2 Content analysis

This thesis uses qualitative content analysis to study the interview data. The goal of the analysis was to find out what kind of social media content works best for the target group and how Kanuksen Ura could improve its social media marketing. The data was collected through five semi structured interviews. In the interviews, the participants shared their thoughts about social media, their preferences, and ideas for sports content.

The analysis started by writing down everything that was said in the interviews (transcription). After that, the material was read several times to understand the main points. Then, important words and sentences were picked out and grouped into topics that came up often. These topics were turned into themes, which helped organize the results clearly. The themes were compared with the theory part of the thesis, especially with ideas about social media marketing, sports marketing, and tools like SOSTAC and SWOT.

This method helped to understand what the target group wants and expects from social media. The results of the analysis are used to create the social media marketing plan in the final part of the thesis.

4.3 Data analysis

In this analysis, the author employs the method of thematic analysis, which aims to enhance the reader's understanding of the material by organizing it into coherent themes. A key aspect of this approach is the presence of a clear research question, in this case, "What kind of social media content works in social media marketing?" This question serves as the foundation for developing a practical marketing plan that leverages social media content effectively. (Kallinen & Kinnunen,2021)

Four main themes emerged from the data which were: similarity in preferences, the potential of combining entertainment and informative content, the interview group was limited and should have been broader, and changes in participants' opinions during the interviews.

Interviewees highlighted that social media content should match their personal interests, with entertainment and engagement being key factors. They pointed out that posts need to be both engaging and informative in order to encourage further interaction.

Participants tended to have similar responses. This may have happened since all participants were either Finnish baseball players or individuals already interested in it. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that their preferences for content would also be similar. A key limitation of this study was the lack of perspectives from people who are not yet interested in baseball. Including such individuals could have provided more insights and potentially made the study more comprehensive and engaging. This broader approach could also have offered deeper insight into how social media could create new interest in Finnish baseball and not only try to attract those who are already interested about it. Alternatively, rephrasing the interview questions might have allowed for a more thorough view of this topic.

During the interviews, respondents' opinions often changed as the interview progressed. When reflecting more deeply on the questions, interviewees reconsidered their original responses, suggesting that the interview process encouraged critical thinking, for example, when asked whether the same content should be shared across all social media platforms, the initial response was mostly affirmative. However, as the interviews continued, participants began to suggest that posting different content on Kannuksen Ura's platforms might actually be more effective.

The interviews were conducted in a conversational manner. Toward the end of each session, interviewees tended to give more detailed and relaxed responses. This suggests that participants became more comfortable and thoughtful as the interviews progressed.

4.4 Research findings

The author found out from the interviews that the most popular platforms are Instagram, TikTok and Facebook. However, as the interviews progressed, it became apparent that platforms were favoured for different purposes. Instagram and Facebook are better platforms for publishing official, such as game results and line-ups while TikTok is searched more of entertainment content.

The interviews revealed that while respondents enjoy humorous content, they also appreciate photo posts on Instagram and Facebook. These are easy to browse, and the information is easily accessible. The interviewees mentioned that line-ups, match photos, and game compilations are particularly interesting.

However, the interviewees also expressed interest in match compilations presented as videos, which could be shared on both Instagram and TikTok. What makes this noteworthy is that respondents appear to have evolving preferences regarding content on different platforms. Therefore, a recommended strategy would be to combine photos and videos. TikTok should remain the primary platform for video content, but certain videos, such as match reels, could also be shared on Instagram.

The study revealed that interviewees generally prefer short videos on TikTok. However, they are also willing to watch longer videos if the content is engaging. TikTok videos should therefore be fast-paced and captivating, with an attention-grabbing introduction to encourage viewers to continue watching. The most popular types of content identified include short match compilations, player introductions and interviews, off-season content, and videos filmed by the players themselves. Additionally, behind-the-scenes and training-related content was found to maintain follower interest over longer periods.

During the interviews, respondents were also asked how they would market baseball to individuals who have not previously shown interest in the sport. This question was designed to explore strategies for attracting new audiences, particularly given the earlier theoretical discussion of how TikTok's algorithm feeds users content based on their viewing behavior. It became clear that this question posed some challenges. Many interviewees found it difficult to imagine themselves as someone who was not already interested in baseball. As a result, responses were initially limited. Nevertheless, after some additional explanation, the interviewees were able to provide a few suggestions. These included organizing free games during the summer, hosting "Get to Know Baseball" days, and offering opportunities for the public to interact with players. Such initiatives were

seen as potentially effective ways to spark interest in the sport by creating personal connections, either through direct engagement with players or increased understanding of the game.

Instagram is the most popular app for discovering baseball-related content. The primary focus should be on Instagram, given its large potential audience. TikTok can serve as an additional platform, especially for content targeting younger viewers. Respondents prefer somewhat different content for different platforms. Instagram and Facebook can share the same official content, while TikTok should feature more relaxed, humorous content. Instagram and Facebook should provide match updates, lineups, and official news. TikTok should offer entertaining content, funny moments, and insights into players' daily lives. Combining photos and videos could work well on Instagram.

Suggestions for improving baseball marketing include highlight reels, explanations of game events, short engaging videos, humorous content, and a media person who can explain the sport clearly and entertainingly. Marketing should emphasize highlight videos, players' personalities, and humor. Short explanatory videos about the games could be effective. Instagram is appreciated for its game photos and clear display of results, while TikTok is liked for its game highlights. Instagram's basic content works well but could be more diverse. More content about players' daily lives and personalities could be added to TikTok.

Followers expressed a desire for more player introductions and interviews, lineup announcements before matches, funny videos, and a scoreboard display that highlights social media channels better. Content showcasing players and team life would increase engagement. Social media channels could be promoted more effectively, such as through physical advertisements. To increase interest in baseball, suggestions include short, entertaining videos featuring the best moments of games, stories about players, and collaborations with social media influencers. Content should be short, engaging, and easily shareable. Storytelling around players and the team can attract a larger audience.

People follow social media accounts because the content is interesting, useful, or entertaining, because they know or support the team/players, or because the content aligns with their interests. Kannuksen Ura should focus on authentic and engaging content. Showcasing players' personalities can help attract more followers. The most popular video types include funny videos and bloopers, game highlights and best moments, and videos created by players, including interviews. TikTok should feature short, entertaining, and personality-driven videos. Instagram should combine highlights and informative content.

In summary, Kannuksen Ura's social media strategy should focus on Instagram and Facebook for official updates, lineups, game photos, and results, while TikTok should feature humorous, entertaining, and fast-paced content. Content diversification should include player introductions, interviews, and behind-the-scenes content. Marketing strategies should incorporate a scoreboard display to promote social media channels and collaborations with social media influencers.

5 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN FOR KANNUKSEN URA

Since there is increasing competition between sports organizations, it is important that Kannuksen Ura understands how to use social media more effectively as a marketing tool. Developing a successful strategy requires a well-planned and goal-oriented plan which is easy to follow. This plan is created by using SOSTAC model and SWOT analysis as a theoretical framework and interviews as a qualitative research method.

The theoretical part of the thesis highlights the role of social media in modern sports marketing. The conducted interviews show the importance of producing high-quality and engaging content by using various platforms like Instagram and Tiktok to reach and activate the target audience.

SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) means how the organization in this situation Kannuksen Ura, performs on social media. The purpose of the SWOT analysis is to evaluate how effectively Kannuksen Ura is currently operating on social media, what opportunities exist for further development, and what kind of weaknesses or threats may affect future performance.

Kannuksen Ura does not currently have a social media marketing plan. Therefore, this plan begins with an analysis of the organization's current situation and strengths, forming the foundation for a practical strategy.

5.1 Situation analysis and strengths of Kannuksen Ura

Kannuksen Ura uses Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok as its main social media platforms. The popularity of these platforms has been highlighted throughout the thesis, and it can be considered one of the organizations' strengths that they have already presence on these channels and gained followers.

Although Kannuksen Ura does not yet have a structured social media marketing plan, they actively publish content on a regular basis. Moreover, they have successfully built a strong local fan community that not only follows their social media but also attends their games in person.

In the interviews, the respondents were also asked what they already appreciate about Kannuksen Ura's social media content. Most interviewees highlighted high-quality game photos and clear, informative posts about the games. These findings suggest that the club is already managing its social media in a relatively professional manner.

5.2 Weaknesses and threats of Kannuksen Ura

There are several weaknesses and threats that could impact Kannuksen Ura's social media strategy.

One of the main weaknesses obviously is the lack of a clear plan. While the timing of the posts has been good, there is no consistent strategy, "red a thread", tying the content together. Another weakness is the limitedness of social media followers, which currently consists mainly of local fans, opposing teams, and players' families. Additionally, they do not have a dedicated budget for social media, which limits their ability to use paid strategies such as advertisements or influencer collaborations. However, these could be incorporated into the strategy if Kannuksen Ura decides to make budget for social media marketing.

Location is one of the threats to the organization's operations. Kannuksen Ura faces competition from nearby teams, since they are ~~located~~ more easily accessible to fans. This geographical disadvantage makes it harder for Kannus to attract a broader audience.

Furthermore, social media allows threats like fake accounts. Anyone can create a social media account under the organization's name and spread false information, which could harm their reputation. Therefore, it is crucial for Kannuksen Ura to actively monitor its channels to make sure that there are no fake accounts.

5.3 Objectives of Kannuksen Ura

The primary objective of this plan is to strengthen Kannuksen Ura's position on social media and to increase awareness of the organization. In addition, the plan seeks to boost the number of followers, likes and comments on different platforms and also spark interest in Finnish baseball, encouraging people to attend games on person.

Another aim of this plan is to provide a clear and practical plan that the organization can easily follow and implement to support its goals. Since the club has not set any specific numerical targets, the plan also does not include them. Instead, it focuses on overall improvement on social media activity and visibility.

5.4 Opportunities and strategy of Kannuksen Ura

Based on the findings from the interviews, several opportunities that Kannuksen Ura can use to enhance its social media presence were identified. These include the growing popularity of platforms, TikTok and Instagram, and the general rise in interest toward behind-the-scenes and player-focused content in sports. In addition to these, Kannuksen Ura may also use influencer marketing or paid advertisements as an opportunity to increase their followers. As a response to these opportunities, the strategy focuses on increasing visibility and interaction by producing content that aligns with the interests and preferences of the target audience.

Overall, this strategy aims to strengthen the relationship between the club and its fans, boost engagement on social media platforms, and encourage people to attend matches in person. This can be achieved by consistently producing the type of content that followers find entertaining, informative, and engaging. Also, by using paid advertising for instance in TikTok is recommended in this strategy.

5.5 Tactics and Actions

When it comes to the tactics and actions in the social media marketing plan, content is crafted based on the interests of the target audience, with leveraging current social media trends to add visibility and engagement. As highlighted in the theoretical framework, particularly in the chapter on Social Media Marketing in Sports, activating the fans are one of the key factors in social media

marketing. Based on the interviews, it is evident that followers value entertaining, high-quality content that integrates both images and videos.

Concrete tactics and actions have been developed to set the objectives. These include publishing short, entertaining videos on TikTok and Instagram Reels, featuring humor-oriented moments from the players everyday life. Additionally, high-quality match photos will be shared, along with clear, match-related announcements, such as player introductions. To further engage followers, actions such as Instagram surveys will be used to activate the followers. Lastly, events will be organized where fans can meet players and ask questions, creating a deeper connection between the team and fans.

5.6 Control

The control phase is important part, as it allows for monitoring the plan's effectiveness. Data collected during this phase can be used to develop the plan and understand which types of posts resonate most with the audience on social media. Even though Kannuksen Ura does not have numerical goals, the development can still be monitored through them. For example, the number of likes, comments, and followers can be compared to the time before this plan, providing insight into engagement. Both TikTok and Instagram offer tools that allow users to monitor how many people have viewed their posts, making these valuable resources for following the performance. Additionally, increases in ticket sales or fan merchandise purchases serve shows signs of success.

6 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this thesis was to create an easy-to-follow social media marketing plan for Kannuksen Ura, a Finnish baseball club. The purpose of the plan was to collect information about social media marketing, how it can be applied in sports, and the necessary actions for the club to create content that aligns with its goals on social media. The plan was created in Canva to ensure its accessibility and ease of use for the club. The full plan can be found in Appendix 2.

The theoretical part of the thesis analyzed concepts such as social media, social media channels, social media marketing in sports, the SOSTAC framework, SWOT analysis, and influencer marketing. These theories were applied in the practical part, which involved developing the social media marketing plan for Kannuksen Ura. Additionally, interviews were conducted with individuals interested in baseball to gain deeper insights into the type of content the club should create to attract new followers. The interview questions can be found in Appendix 1.

The most important part of the process while making the plan was the situation analysis. For instance, the analyzed data identified the most suitable social media channels and content for Kannuksen Ura. The interviews also provided valuable information on actions they should take to attract new followers. Entertaining posts are an effective way to engage audiences. Social media should serve as a channel for Kannuksen Ura to potentially draw in new viewers for their games.

The thesis successfully met its objectives by producing a social media marketing plan that can serve as a practical tool for Kannuksen Ura. The plan includes a detailed analysis of the current situation, providing valuable insights into the target audience and the organization's social media presence.

The objectives of the plan were clear and aligned with the organization's needs. The strategy focused on the important aspects, such as identifying the target audience, and took Kannuksen Ura's limited budget into account.

While the author is content with the final outcome, one challenge emerged. During the process the author realized that some of the interview questions could have been asked or formed differently. For instance, the question "How you think marketers could market Finnish baseball better?" I could have asked "What kind of marketing around Finnish baseball you have seen that has been good?"

With slightly changed questions, more detailed insights might have been gained. However, the main objective was achieved, and this serves as a valuable lesson for future research.

There is one key recommendation for Kannuksen Ura that could help improve its social media marketing moving forward: increasing the budget allocated to social media marketing. Kannuksen Ura could increase its social media presence by using paid advertisements or collaborating with influencers. Currently, the content reaches a local audience, but paid ads on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, could significantly expand its visibility. Even a small budget for social media marketing could provide resources needed to reach audience outside their local fans and increase attendance at their games.

For future research the author recommends using a larger interview group. Additionally, further studies could be conducted if Kannuksen Ura increases its social media budget, making it possible to study the potential effects of increased investment on engagement.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Interview questions for the players

1. Do you prefer videos or photos on Instagram/Facebook?
2. Do you prefer short or long videos on TikTok?
3. Which of the following video options do you think is the most interesting
 - a. Player interviews
 - b. Short compilation videos about games
 - c. Introduction to the sport
 - d. Introduction to the players/team
 - e. Footage of their civilian lives filmed by the players themselves
 - f. Material from the “off-season”
4. Which of the following apps you run into baseball the most?
 - a. Instagram
 - b. TikTok
 - c. Facebook
5. Would you prefer to see different content on different platforms, or do you want to see the same photos or videos on every platform?
6. How you think marketeers could market finnish baseball better?
7. What do you like on Kannuksen Ura’s social media?
8. What would you like to see in Kannuksen Ura’s social media platforms?
9. How would you increase interest in Finnish baseball among people who currently have no connection to the sport?
10. What makes you follow different accounts?
11. What types of videos you like in social media?
12. Is there anything you would like to add?

Social Media Marketing plan for Kannuksen Ura

Situation Analysis:

- FaceBook, Instagram and TikTok are the main channels
- Does not have a social media marketing plan
- Target groups is people who are interested about sports and finnish baseball

Marketing Objectives:

- Increase the familiarity of Kannuksen Ura
- Increases the number of followers, likes and comments on their social media platforms
- Get people interested in Finnish baseball so that they come to watch the games

Marketing Strategy:

- Games are good opportunities to join some quality sports
- Getting to know the players
- Focusing engaging local fans more and introducing players to them
- Have events where fans can meet the players and ask questions

Marketing Tactics:

- Product entertaining content on TikTok and Instagram Reels
- Product informative content on Instagram and Facebook
- Player introductions and “day in their life” videos
- Behind the scenes content
- 3-5 posts in a week when season is on, off season 1 post per week
- Instagram surveys to encourage interaction

Marketing Actions:

- Take good quality photos and videos from games
- Players makes video content about their lifes
- Social media manager takes responsibilty for content creation and weekly publishing

Marketing Control:

- Track engagement rates, likes, comments and followers
- Monitoring possible increase of tickes sales and fan products
- Monthly reviews of performance

<p>Strenghts:</p>	<p>SWOT</p>	<p>Weaknesses:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active local fans • Players are willing to participate in content creation • High-quality game photos and videos 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear plan • Followers are mostly locals or family members of the players • No budget for social media marketing
<p>Opportunities:</p>	<p>SWOT</p>	<p>Threats:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing popularity of TikTok and Instagram among young people • Collaboration with players • Possible collaboration with influencers • Attract new fans by meetings with the players 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fake accounts and false information • Location since Kannuksen Ura has competitors with “better” locations • Competing content from other Finnish baseball teams
<p>REMINDERS:</p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on content that resonates with your target group 2. Be Consistent 3. Quality over quantity 4. Measure and Improve 5. Team Effort is key 		