

**Marketing Research;
A Study of Marketing Communication Channels in the Food
Industry**

Huda Elwan

Bachelor's Thesis
Degree Programme in BBA
date



International Business

<p>Author or authors Huda Elwan</p>	<p>Group or year of entry 2012</p>
<p>Title of report Marketing Research; A Study of Marketing Communication Channels in the Food Industry.</p>	<p>Number of pages and appendices 27 + 2</p>
<p>Teacher/s or supervisor/s Evariste Habiyakare</p>	
<p>This research is a marketing research investigating the importance of social media marketing and sales promotions. The purpose of the research is to find out the opinion of the major brands in food industries, about the impact of social media on sales promotions. (By sales promotions we mean face-to-face connections between sales promoters and consumers - demonstrations, samplings, live experiences etc.)</p> <p>The goal is to find out whether brands plan to do sales promotions in the future, or are they just going to focus on social media.</p> <p>Additionally the research will present a full description of the commissioner.</p> <p>The theoretical framework is created in relevance to the topic to support it and give some support to the problem and its findings.</p> <p>The main approach I am using on this research will be face to face interviews. First there will be a questionnaire created by the researcher and that will be used as the base of the interviews. During the interviews I will be using a recording device as long as the interviewee has agreed to it. Additionally I will be taking notes.</p> <p>The reliability and validity part is written to show whether the research is reliable and valid and why so.</p> <p>At the end of this report there is an analysis made of all the data gathered in addition to suggestions and conclusion for the commissioner and the interviewed brands.</p>	
<p>Keywords Marketing Research, Sales Promotins, Social Media, B2B Marketing, Qualitative Research</p>	

Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Research Problem.....	2
1.2	Research Objectives.....	2
2	Presentation of the Commissioner.....	4
3	Theoretical Framework.....	5
3.1	Marketing Communications.....	5
3.2	Marketing Tools.....	8
3.2.1	Sales Promotion.....	8
3.2.2	Social Media Marketing.....	13
3.3	Business to Business Marketing.....	16
4	Research Approach and Methods.....	18
4.1	Research Approach.....	18
4.1.1	Qualitative Research.....	18
4.1.2	Qualitative Research Methods.....	19
4.2	Data Collection and Analysis Process.....	20
4.3	Validity and Reliability.....	21
5	Key Results and Analysis.....	23
6	Conclusion and Recommendation.....	25
	Bibliography.....	27
	Appendices.....	30
	Questionnaire (for the interviewed brands).....	30
	Interviewed Brands.....	31

1 Introduction

This study is conducted by an International Business student studying in HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences as the student's thesis. The thesis is planned to conduct a marketing research, with the goal of finding out social media's impact on sales promotions. In this thesis by sales promotion I mean face-to-face connections between sales promoters and consumers - demonstrations, samplings, live experiences etc.

The research is commissioned by Sales Promotion Agency Expression Ltd. (also known as Marketing Agency Expression Ltd.) The aim of the commission company is to know the opinion of the major brands, in the food industry, whether brands plan to do sales promotion in the future, or are they only going to focus on social media. Sales Promotion Agency Expression Ltd. is a medium-sized marketing agency company that has offices in Tampere and Helsinki. The company is operating fully on sales promotion services.

The thesis is a qualitative research that is conducted via field and desktop studies. The research started with defining the research problem and objectives. This is important to do at the beginning to ensure you are researching the correct and questioned issue. Additionally it will help to understand the aim and the structure of the research. The second step is learning the background of the commissioner and understanding fully their mission and goal with the research.

There will be a theoretical framework written to give us an understanding of the research process; data gathering, analysis etc.

After the theoretical framework, the data collection methodology is defined to be as a support on how to continue forward with the data collection. Additionally it describes the ways of collecting the data and how they were conducted.

At the end of the research there will be a final report written, which include the analysis of the research, conclusion and suggestions to the commissioner and the target group.

1.1 Research Problem

In order to build a proper and sufficient marketing research, I have defined a proper research problem.

The research problem is squeezed into a one main question; **“Which role social media and sales promotions will play in communication with major brand in food industry?”**

Four sub questions are formed to help understand the goal of the research;

1. “Are brand planning to do sales promotion in the future, or are they going to focus only on social media?”
2. “How will the food industry brands connect social media marketing with sales promotion marketing?”
3. “How will social media influence sales promotion in food industry?”
4. “Which strategies should be adopted by Sales promotion companies in order to deal with food industry promotional requirements?”

The reason I have defined a research problem, is to work as a guideline on what is going to be investigated and which sources of information are relevant for resolving the research problem.

1.2 Research Objectives

My main objective is to find out what kind of communication channels will be used by major brands in food industry in the near future. Furthermore, it is important to find out how important sales promotions are to these brands, especially now that social media is growing rapidly and has become one of the main marketing tools.

Every company has their own marketing budget and I am interested to see where it is mainly directed, if the budget is limited.

Many sales promotions follow the products sales on that same day and the promotion employees usually have a target that they are trying to reach. One of the goals of this research is to tell us if the product keeps selling successfully after the promotion day or

does it stop only to that one day; meaning that I will research whether sales promotion truly increases the sales of the promoted product or if it is only sold highly on that one day.

2 Presentation of the Commissioner

Sales Promotion Agency Expression Ltd. (also known as Marketing Agency Expression Ltd.) is a medium-sized marketing agency that offers digital and face-to-face sales and marketing solutions. The company was founded in 2005 in Tampere and now they have successfully expanded nationally and have offices in Helsinki as well. (Marketing Agency Expression Ltd.)

Sales Promotion Agency Expression is connected with two other companies as well; The Marketing Agency Deeper Ltd. and VLOCI Brand Ambassador Services. The companies are joined by cross ownership and they share together office spaces and in some cases customers as well. However when discussing with customer they mainly use Expression when introducing themselves and the company. (Salminen, 2015)

All of the three companies together have had a 2, 2 million euro turnover last year. Additionally in the year 2014, Expression opened two subsidiaries; Expression Baltics Oü in Estonia which is operating in all the Baltic countries and Expression Tanzania Ltd which is located in Tanzania. (Salminen, 2015)

The company's main service is sales promotion services and they have 550 promoters and specialists to implement these services. Their main clients are inter alia HP, Nikon and Sony.

The team has executed over 80 000 promotion days and collected data on two millions face-to-face commercial contacts. The way the company thinks by combining their business, design, technical and consumer knowledge skills, has been a successful combination for the company.

Expression combines marketing communications expertise with strategic insight and omni-channel thinking. (Marketing Agency Expression Ltd.)

3 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is created to help give perspective to the topic of the research. The theory part of the research is gathered via internet, books, journals etc. to support the topic and help in the data collection and analysis phase of the research. (University of Southern California, 2015)

It is important that the theoretical framework demonstrates the meaning of the theories and concepts in a way that they are relevant to the topic of the research. (University of Southern California, 2015)

Creating a theoretical framework will strengthen the study by letting the reader to evaluate the statements of the theoretical assumptions critically. Additionally it helps the researcher to get a base for the hypotheses and to choose the correct research method.

While researching and gathering the theory, there will come up questions that must be answered such as why and how. This will guide you to a more correct path with the research and help you gather the correct information needed. (University of Southern California, 2015)

3.1 Marketing Communications

Marketing communication is a process that involves management in the examination, planning, implementation and control of all marketing communication contacts, media and promotional tools focused at selected target audience in such a way as to derive the greatest economy, efficiency, effectiveness, enhancement and coherence of marketing communication effort in achieving predetermined product and corporate marketing communications objectives. (Pickton and Broderick 2001, 67)

The role of marketing communications is to get a contact to the consumers and give awareness of their company. Communication is the message that the company wishes to send to the consumer and marketing is the way they want to send it.

Marketing communication is a process of management that focuses on external communication with various audiences. The main goal is to create a positive picture of

the organization and its products or services to the audience. (Fill C. & Fill K. 2005, 269)

Marketing communications (MC) is part of the known four P's or also know the marketing mix. Marketing communications are the fourth and most visible tool of the marketing mix. The whole meaning of MC is how the company communicates with its target group's stakeholders to promote and advertise its product or services. (De Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van den Bergh 2010, 3.)

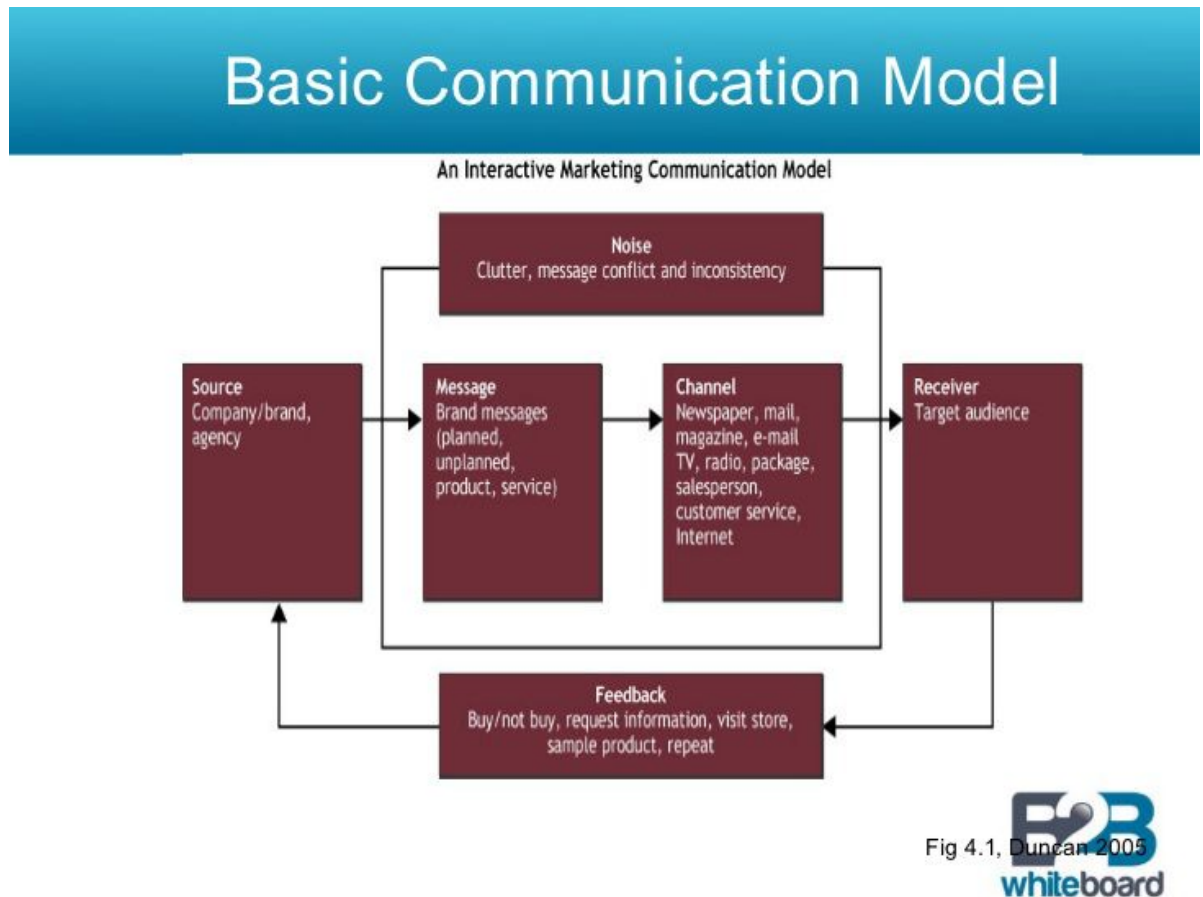
The marketing mix is a strategy that is commonly used and this tool is created from the four P's of marketing. The marketing mix blends these variables together to produce the result it wants to achieve.

The four P's are product (or service), place, price and promotion. Products are the goods and services that your business is selling to the target market. Place is the location and method of distributing the product to the consumer. Place includes the location of your business, shop front, logistics and the internet when selling products or services directly to consumers. Price is simply the amount the consumers has to pay for the product or service that they are purchasing. There are various factors to consider in the price, such as setting, discounts, credit and cash purchases. Promotion is the communication to the consumers where you try to show the benefits and value of your product. This contains inter alia advertising, direct marketing, personal selling and sales promotion. (SmallBizConnect)

Marketing communication process is defined as the exchange of ideas or passing of information, that is part of any advertising or marketing program. The following step in the process is opening up the message, which takes a creative idea and transforms it into advertisements designed for various media (magazines, television, and radio) that get attention. As known there are various methods on how the message is sent to the audience. The last step in the marketing communication process is when a channel delivers the message. Sales usually happen after message has reached consumers senses. Via television the consumers hear and see the ads, yet other touch and read ads.

The process can be disturbed and prevent it from being efficient and effective; a barrier. Barrier can be anything that disturbs the message and it can come up at any stage of the communication process. For example the most common of noise affecting marketing communication is clutter. (B2BWhiteboard, 2011)

Table 1. An Interactive Marketing Communication Model (B2BWhiteboard, 2011)



The following table above shows the basic communication model in interactive marketing.

Marketing communication is important for business, because it is the way they reach consumers, businesses and stakeholders. Therefore it needs to be thoroughly considered on how you communicate with them and what method to use.

Firstly every company needs to create brand awareness; otherwise consumers and others do not know you. Using advertising and promotion strategies, helps to tell the public what your company has to offer. At this stage it is important to understand your demographic groups that will most likely be your customers, and apply the marketing methods to the media that serve these groups. Brand awareness is created by

repeating yourself, so if the customer sees communication from the company many times, there is a higher chance of making sales.

The second factor to consider is how to express competitive advantage. Marketing and communication strategies are created to show why your company is better than the competitors. It is highly important that the marketing message shows unique reasons on why customers should buy your product or services instead of the competitors. Usually the message tells the benefits and how they can solve the customer's problem or meet the need. (B2BWhiteboard, 2011)

3.2 Marketing Tools

Marketing tools are various techniques and materials that are used to promote goods and services. Most companies with the aim to sell goods and services to the public use intensively marketing tools, to gain more success to the business. (BusinessDictionary.com)

Marketing tools are a part of marketing communication, since it is a way to contact and connect with the public (consumers).

Primary marketing communication elements include: traditional mass media advertising (TV, magazines etc.), direct response and interactive advertising (direct mail, telephone solicitation), place advertising (billboards, posters), store signage and point-of-purchase advertising (in-store shelf signs, shopping cart ads), trade- and consumer-oriented promotions (trade shows, samples, coupons), event marketing and sponsorships (sponsorship of arts, fairs, and festivals), marketing oriented public relations and publicity and personal selling. (Shimp 2010, 7)

3.2.1 Sales Promotion

Sales promotion is an important tool of marketing communication and slowly increasing to be one of the most important instruments of the communications mix. Sales promotions are the best short-term device, which is designed to generate an increase in sales of the products. Sales promotion has many various characters that can

be used. The goal in using sales promotion is to create an increase in sales via bringing decisions forward and adding some immediacy to the decision-making process.

Sales promotions have four characteristics (D'Astous and Landreville 2003);

1. **Attractiveness.** This is the degree to which the customer perceives the promotion as being desirable.
2. **Fit to product category.** A promotion which has no relationship with the product is less likely to appeal to customers.
3. **Reception delay.** If the promotional gift or discount will not arrive for some time, it is less attractive.
4. **Value.** High-value promotions work better than low-value ones, yet it is the value as perceived by the customer which is important.

These four characteristics work with each other, for example, an unattractive offer can still work if it is a good fit with the product category.

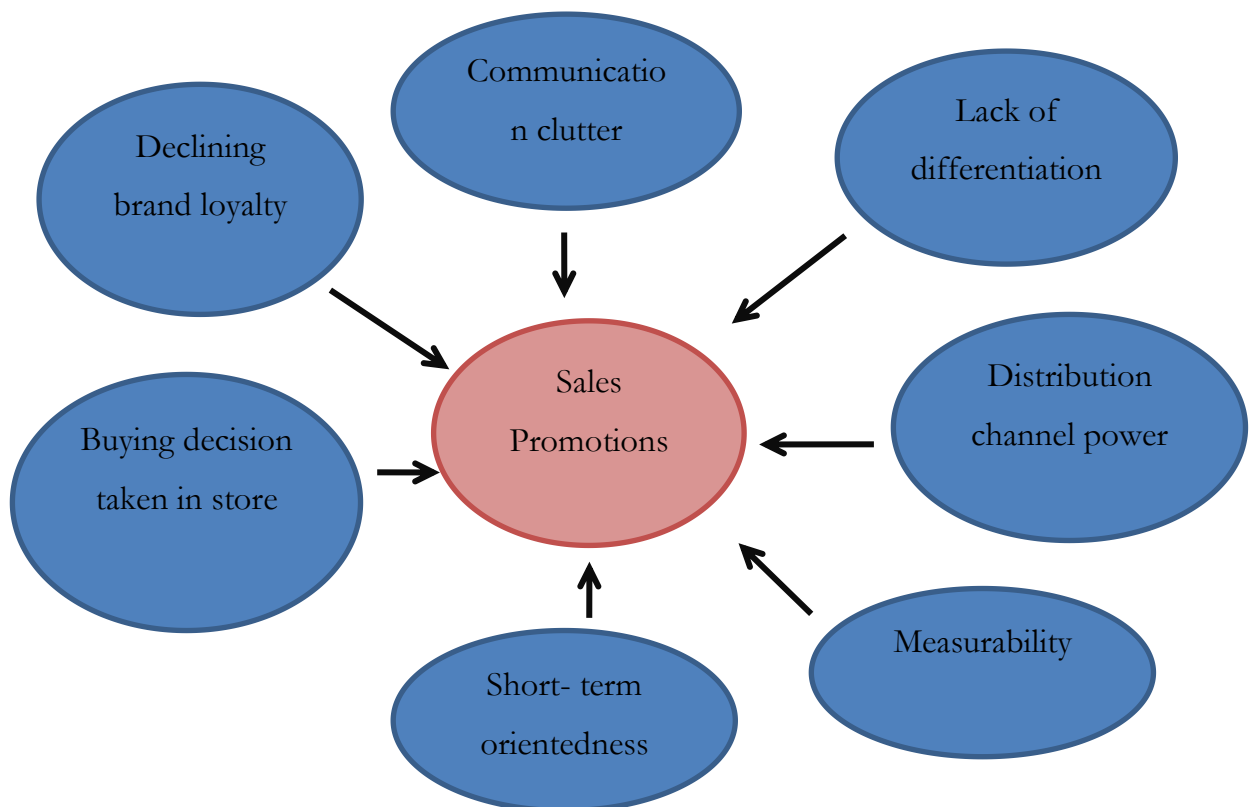
Sales promotion is often most effective in integrated promotion campaigns and often it is used for low-value items. Advertising and PR generate sales in the long term, whereas sales promotion and personal selling are better for generating quick increases in sales. These two methods combined develop the ratchet effect; sales get a quick boost from sales promotions, and then build gradually over the life of an ad campaign (Moran 1978).

When starting sales promotion, there needs to be taken caution. If sales promotion is repeated too many times, it may become part of the consumers' expectations. Additionally the result of brand switching from sales promotions is mainly temporary and it is unlikely that long-term businesses are built up by short-term sales promotions. Sales promotion benefits the consumers that were going to buy the product anyway, meaning that a proportion of the money spent will be effectively wasted. Good targeting can help with this, yet it is important to be careful that the existing customers do not feel unfair, since they did not receive the promotional offer. (Blythe 2012, 203)

The brand values can be damaged from discounting on prices, since the product becomes seen as it would be cut-price. The potential for damage is obvious, because the price is such an important element for quality. (Blythe 2012, 203)

Even though sales promotion is developed to increase quick sales, it can also be used strategically, for example to generate a change in the attitude towards the brand and ultimately brand loyalty, via trial purchases and subsequent learning effects. (De Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van den Bergh 2010, 407)

Table 2. Factors Affecting the Increasing Use of Sales Promotions.



The following table above shows the seven various factors that are affecting the increasing use of sales promotions. Sales promotion has become a useful tool to get attention from the target group and get them to buy their brands. Reaching consumers by advertising has become more difficult.

A part of consumers has slowly become more price-conscious than brand loyal and this result in a response to material incentives, such as promotions. Most of the buying decisions take place in the retail outlet. Incentives and in-store communications

elements are more attractive tools of persuasion, since communications efforts are most effective at the time and place, where the consumer makes their decision. The businesses, who wish to see quick results from their communication efforts, will more likely use promotion tools than long-term advertising campaigns. A promotion campaigns results may be more easily measured than advertising campaigns. The goal of advertising is getting intermediate effects, such as awareness and favorable attitudes, which leads to increased sales. The goal of promotions is behavioral response than can be readily measured. (De Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van den Bergh 2010, 408)

The following table presents the sales promotion techniques according to Jim Blythe, writer of the book “Essentials of Marketing”.

Table 3. Sales Promotion Techniques

Sales Promotion Technique	When to use to get best effect
Free ‘taster’ samples in supermarkets	When a new product has been launched on the market. This technique works by allowing the consumer to experience the product first-hand and also places the consumer under small obligation to buy the product. The technique is effective, yet expensive.
Money-off vouchers in press advertisement	This has the advantage that the company can check the effectiveness of the advertising by checking which vouchers came from which publications. It tends to lead to short-term brand switching; when the offer ends, consumers frequently revert to their usual brand.
Two-for-the-price-of-one	May encourage short-term brand switching. Appeals to the price-sensitive consumer, who will switch to the next cheap offer next time. Can be useful for rewarding and encouraging existing customers.
Piggy-backing with another product; e.g. putting a free jar of coffee whitener onto a jar of instant coffee	Good for encouraging purchases of the coffee to the whitener. Can be very successful in building brand penetration, since the consumers’ loyalty is to the coffee, not to the whitener. Will not usually encourage brand switching between the ‘free sample’ brand and its competitors.
Instant-lottery or scratch cards	Commonly used in petrol stations. The intention is to develop a habit among motorists of stopping at a particular petrol station. In Finland local small stores use these lotteries, e.g. a 10 discount when buying with more than 20 euros.
	Often used for children’s cereals. Can be good for encouraging brand switching and is more likely to lead to permanent adoption of the

Free gift with each purchase

brand because consumers do not usually switch brand when buying for children. This is because the children are not price-sensitive and will want their favorite brand.

There are three ways that sales promotion can be carried out; from manufacturer to intermediary which is called ***trade promotions***, from retailer to consumer, which is called ***retailer promotions*** or from the manufacturer to the consumer which is called ***manufacturer promotions***. (Blythe 2012, 204)

Trade promotions are used for the following purposes;

- To increase stock level
- To gain more or better shelf space
- To launch a new product
- To even out fluctuating sales
- To counter the competition

Retailer promotions are used for the following purposes;

- To increase store traffic
- To increase frequency and amount of purchase
- To increase store loyalty
- To increase own-brand sales
- To even out busy periods

Manufacturer promotions are used for the following purposes;

- To encourage trial
- To expand usage
- To attract new customers
- Trade up → encourage customers to buy the larger pack or more expensive version of the product
- Load up → encouraging customers to stock up on a product
- To enhance brand values (e.g. running some type of self-liquidating offer)

Often, the benefit received from sales promotion are temporary, yet in many cases that is all that is needed, since it is enough to meet the firm's demands. Additionally many sales promotion activities are conducted to somewhat ruin the competitors campaign; using sales promotion to answer to a competitive threat, by offering a price incentive, can be very quick and effective. (Blythe 2012, 204-206)

Sales promotions in Finland mainly consider face-to-face connections such as live experiences and food samplings. These promotions can be very successful, since it gives the consumer an opportunity to taste, feel and see the product in real life. Additionally it usually gives the company, who is promoting their product, a good way to increase their brand awareness.

3.2.2 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is a process of gaining attention and traffic via social media sites. The aim with social media marketing is to achieve marketing communication and branding goals in a form of internet marketing. The primary activities in social media marketing are social sharing such as videos, images and contents.

Using this marketing tool will help the company with website traffic, conversions, brand awareness, creating a brand identity and positive brand associations, communication and interaction with key audiences. (Search Engine Lab)

Before companies consider starting social media marketing, they need to develop a plan. It is important to think about the companies goals and then start creating social media marketing campaigns. (WordStream)

The reason to create a plan helps the company to get to the end goal and think of all the factors; target audience, place, reason, message etc. (WordStream)

There are many various platforms where social media marketing can be executed. However it is crucial to know these platforms ahead, to increase the success of using these platforms, since every platform has its own techniques. (WordStream)

Facebook is one the most known and used social platforms and in the last years it has become a successful platform for companies to advertise. When starting social media marketing in Facebook, it is required to create a Facebook Business Fan Page. It is suggested to pay attention to the layout of the page since its visual component is a key factor of the Facebook experience. Every company who uses Facebook as a platform, needs to keep posting articles, images, videos etc. in their page to assure the connection with the audience. (WordStream)

Google+ is similar to Facebook, making it its competitor, because it advertises the same fun and casual atmosphere. On Google+ it is possible to upload and share videos, photos, and links and view all your +1s. This platform has an advantage of their Google+ circles that allow you to connect your followers into smaller groups that enables you to share information with some followers at the same time as barring others. For example, you might try creating a “super-fan” circle, and share special discounts and exclusive offers only with that group. (WordStream)

Pinterest is a platform that has just recently become a social media marketing trend. Pinterest is image-centered platform that suits well for retail, yet anyone can benefit from it. Additionally it is good for small businesses, because they can showcase their own product offerings at the same time with creating their own brand personality with pinboards. (WordStream)

Twitter is also one the most known platforms within audience. Twitter enables you to broadcast your updates across the web at anytime and anywhere. Twitter is good place to tweet your followers (customers) about discounts, special and other updates. This platform also lets the follower retweet your updates, which means basically more advertisement for your company. It is important that there is a respond to the positive retweets or questions to keep the connection with the customers and this means that when using Twitter as a platform, the business has to be interactive. (WordStream)

LinkedIn is known as the professional social media marketing platform. LinkedIn Groups has a great possibility of entering into a professional dialog with people that work in similar industries. LinkedIn is a place where your customers can give recommendation on your profile and this makes your company appear more credible and reliable for the new customers. (WordStream)

YouTube is a highly known platform and used often; it is the place for creating video content. YouTube is a competitive are and when using it, companies need to think carefully and strategically on what posting there, so the video goes viral. For example

when creating how-to videos it can be easier to get successful with it and they have a benefit of ranking on the video search results of Google. (WordStream)

There are other social media marketing tools that are called location-based social media tools. These platforms are inter alia Yelp, FourSquare and Level Up, where you can register to enter your location spot. After this you can use extra incentives such as check-in rewards or special discounts for promoting. The users and visitors of these platforms most likely will carry their phones in their hand, meaning that they can provide reviews at any time, and this can be either hurtful or successful for your company. (WordStream)

Social media marketing improves site traffic in addition to helping businesses to reach more customers. Using these platforms provide a valuable venue for better understanding and learning from your target audiences. (WordStream)

Table 4. SWOT of the Various Social Media Tools

Tools	Strength	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Facebook	Most used and known	Consumer oriented	More interaction	Other companies use it as well for marketing
Google+	Google+ circles	Not easy to use for newcomers	-	Facebook
Pinterest	New, interesting and fun	Only pictures	All sorts of media to be used	Other platforms that are more known to the public
LinkedIn	Offers jobs and info about various companies	Mostly users are only professionals etc.	Open for not only educated professionals. More marketing about the whole platform.	-
Twitter	Active 24/7 and used a lot by famous people	Not easy to use for newcomers	-	Facebook
YouTube	Very known within the public	Only videos and slow to use	Access to register all, not only 18+	Google+

			years.	
--	--	--	--------	--

Social media itself appeared very quickly to the people and for some it seemed as a passing marketing interest and therefore being an unprofitable one. However the statistics show a different situation. According to Hubspot, 92% of marketers in 2014 say that social media marketing is important to their businesses and 80% say that their SM marketing increased traffic on their websites. (WordStream)

According to Social Media Examiner, 97% of marketers are currently using social media, yet 85% say that they are not sure how to use social media tools in their best way. Therefore it is important for businesses to research the various social media platforms and plan their coming to social media beforehand. (DeMers, 2014)

The Hubspots research shows seven various statistical facts why social media marketing is a successful way of marketing;

- 1) 92% of all marketers refer that their social media efforts are generating more exposure for their businesses.
- 2) 72% of marketers are using social media to develop loyal fans and 71% of them are using it to gain marketplace intelligence.
- 3) More than half of the marketers who are using social media for at least for three years, tells us that it has improved their sales.
- 4) 74% of marketers who has spent 40 and plus hours per week on social media, earn new businesses via their efforts.
- 5) 95% of marketers who are using social at least six hours per week indicate that their social media efforts have increased their exposure on their businesses.
- 6) More than half of the marketer who has used social media for at least one year, report that they have gained new partnerships.
- 7) 69% marketers, who have used social media for at least one year, indicate that social media platforms provide insight in the marketplace and found it useful for building a loyal fan base. (Kusinitz, 2014)

3.3 Business to Business Marketing

Business to business (B2B) marketing is the sale of one company's product or service to another company. B2B marketing methods are similar to consumer marketing, yet they are executed in a different way. Consumers usually choose their products based on price, popularity and other emotional triggers, as when B2B buyers make their decisions only based on price and profit potential. (Marketing-Schools.org)

Since there are a differences in consumer marketing and B2B marketing, diverse marketing strategies and operations need to be implemented to meet the needs of business customers. Consumer marketing and B2B marketing are separated from each other by two main ideas; the intended customer, which is the organization and the intended use of the product to support organizational objective, therefore various marketing programs are needed to reach and influence organizational buyers. (Fill C. & Fill K. 2005, 402)

The following table shows the differences between consumer marketing and B2B marketing. Even though they are two different targets and strategies, yet there are a lot of similarities with each other.

Table 5. The Main Differences between B2B and Consumer Marketing (Fill C. & Fill K. 2005)

Key characteristics	Consumer markets	B2B markets
Purchase orientation to satisfy	Individual or family needs	Organizational needs
Number of decision makers	Small	Large
Length of decision time	Short and simple	Long and complex
Size of purchase	Small quantities	Large in value and volume
Consequence of poor purchase	Limited	Potentially critical
Nature of product/service	Standard range of products	Customized packages
Channel configuration	Complex and long	Simple and short
Promotion focus	Psychological benefits	Economic/ utilitarian benefits
Primary promotional tool	Advertising	Personal selling
Supplier switching costs	Limited	Large

The reasons why organizations buy products and services from other companies are to make new products, enable the production or add into the value process to be more successful. It is highly important that B2B marketers understand their client's full needs before implementing any marketing or advertising strategies. Consumer marketing is effective by advertising widely in various channels and reaches a large amount of people. However in B2B marketing it is more of a personal selling and since it is more unique, the marketers need to be careful of the risk of losing their prospective customers, if they do not take their needs into account.

4 Research Approach and Methods

This chapter presents the various approaches and methods that can be used in research and the ones I have chosen to use in this research. Additionally the analysis process is explained and shown how it was conducted. The last chapter explains the validity and reliability of this research.

4.1 Research Approach

In a marketing research, it is very important to choose the correct research method. There are two main methods existing; qualitative research and quantitative research.

The qualitative method is used for exploration and when the aim is to find out answers for specific questions. Meaning that the qualitative method, researches people's opinions, attitudes, beliefs etc. that can be hard to calculate.

In qualitative research a small amount of respondents is enough, since it does not require large groups for reaching a valid research. (British Library)

Quantitative research has a logical approach, which provides measure of what people think from a statistical and numerical point of view. The quantitative method is researching the data in a structured way, to provide hard facts and statistics. In this method it is needed to survey a large amount of people in order to get reliable statistical results. (British Library)

4.1.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research explores the target audience's opinions, behavior and the perceptions to the topic. This method of researching studies small groups of people and the results are usually more descriptive than predictive.

The qualitative method came at the beginning from social and behavioral sciences; sociology, anthropology and psychology. Nowadays this research method includes interviews with individuals, group discussions, and diary and journal exercises. These

data collection methods are conducted in person, via telephone, videoconferencing or the internet. (Palgrave)

Qualitative research has been proven to be efficient because of its contribution to rich and insightful results; cooperative actions between respondents, as they build on each other's comments and ideas. Using this method of researching gives a dynamic nature for the interviews and group discussion process, since the respondents are engaging more actively than in a more structured survey. In the qualitative research the questionnaires enable to get more deep answers and reach beyond initial responses. Additionally it gives a possibility to record, observe and interpret non-verbal communication (body language, voice intonation) and this is very valuable during the interview and in the analysis. (Palgrave)

4.1.2 Qualitative Research Methods

There are various methods to use for the data collection process in qualitative research. The common way is interviews, either phone, face-to-face or email interviews. In this research the interviews has been mainly phone interviews, with few face-to-face interviews.

When conducting interviews, it allows you to have discussion with the interviewee and open up the subject more. During the interviews you can take notes, tape the interview, rely on your memory or write the answers. However there are pros and cons on all of this ways. It is important to first think about the questions and whether they are closed or open questions. In this research the questions are open questions, where the respondent has the liberty to answer their full opinion with reasoning to why they feel or think this way. The open questions allow you to have a good idea of the various ideas and feelings the respondents have in addition to enabling them to think and talk for longer. Since open questions have so in-depth answers, it makes it harder to quantify the results. When analyzing open questions, the answers need to be read thoroughly and categorize them, so that the final analysis is coherent and sensible. (Palgrave)

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis Process

When conducting a research, there are many various data collection methods. It is important for the researcher to choose the correct method for gaining the best possible data for the research.

The respondents were picked by my choice, yet with the opinion of the commissioner. I simply chose the most known brands in the food industry in addition to few that I feel that are brands which has a great potential to become a successful known brand. The information of the interviewees are researched and then contacted by emails and cold calling. Most of the contact information was found via the brands website, yet few of them I needed to search a bit harder. All the respondents, whom were interviewed for this research, can be found in Appendix 2.

In this research the data is fully collected via face-to-face or phone interviews. The interviews are carried out with a questionnaire that was created by the researcher. The questions are open ended questions, which means that there is a lot of room for the interviewee to stage his/hers opinions and discuss the subject freely.

After the interviews are conducted and the data collected, there will be an analysis created from the data and some suggestions for the brands and the commissioner for the future.

The first step in data analysis process is to clean the data and read it thoroughly. Since I collected the data with notes from the interviews, it is important that I clean out the notes and create full sentences in order to understand the opinion.

Secondly I need to compare the answers with each other and see if there are similarities. I will analyze each questions answer individually and then introduce the results. There will be a contrast within the respondents and some results might be introduced in a statistical way.

4.3 Validity and Reliability

Validity incorporates the entire experimental concept and shows if the results gathered have met all the requirements of the research method. Internal validity experimental design is structured and includes all of the steps in the research method. An inconsistent and unwell design can compromise the integrity, even if the results are very good. The cores of the experimental design are internal validity and reliability. External validity is the process where the results are examined and questioned, to see whether there are any other potentially causal relationships. (Shuttleworth)

Reliability is so to say the measurement of the quality. It means that any results must contain more than one-off finding and be naturally repeatable. In other words, other researchers have to be able to conduct the exact same research, under same conditions and get same results. This prerequisite is essential to a hypothesis establishing itself as an accepted scientific truth. (Shuttleworth)

When defining the reliability, first there need to be groundwork, meaning that it is important to learn the foundation of reliability, the theory of measurement. Additionally the various types of measurement errors need to be understood, since measurement errors are a key factor in degrading reliability. When creating this foundation, we can say that the basic theory and a precise definition of reliability are considered correctly. With this we will see that the reliability cannot be calculate, yet estimated and because of this there are various types of reliability, which each has its own way to estimate reliability. Lastly it is important to integrate the idea of reliability with other major criteria for the quality of measurement and develop and understanding the relationship between reliability and validity in measurement. (Social Research Methods)

Table 6. Four Possible Situations with Validity and Reliability. (Social Research Methods)



The table above presents the four possible situations in validity and reliability. Think of the center of the target as the concept that you are trying to measure. Imagine that for each person you are measuring, you are taking a shot at the target. If you measure the concept perfectly for a person, you are hitting the center of the target. If you don't, you are missing the center. The more you are off for that person, the further you are from the center.

The first one shows us that the target is being hit consistently, yet the center of the target is missed. This means that the values for all respondents are consistently and systematically measured wrongly → reliable, yet not valid.

The second one shows that we are hitting randomly across the target. It is rare that the center of the target is hit, yet on average, the right answer is received for the group. This tells us that we get a valid group estimate, but we are inconsistent, which shows us that reliability is directly related to the variability of the measure → valid, yet not reliable.

The third one presents a case where the hits are spread across the target and consistently missing the center → not reliable and not valid.

The fourth and final one is the “Robin Hood”- scenario where the hits are consistently on the center of the target → reliable and valid. (Social Research Methods)

5 Key Results and Analysis

The interviewed brands in total are six and all of them are quite known brands within the community in Finland. All the interviewed brands can be seen in appendix 2 below.

All of the brands are using social media as part of their marketing tools, yet one of them using only Facebook. Half of the brands use sales promotion consistently or according to the need, in addition to one brand who conducts these promotion days every weekend all over the country.

Most of the brands agree that social media and sales promotions cannot be compared to each other. They believe that goal and effect of these methods varies and they achieve different purposes. Social media attracts a large amount of people simultaneously, yet sales promotions a smaller amount, since it is mainly conducted in the capital area of the country. However the effect of sales promotion is not diminished by this factor.

One of the interviewed brand felt that social media is more current in real time, whereas sales promotion are an in house event. For example they had just arranged a campaign outside where photos were taken of it etc. yet were disappointed that they received them after the campaign and was not able to post them at the same time as the campaign was happening. Another interviewee believes that sales promotions bring successful sales to the product and social media is more successful when trying to generate brand awareness.

More than 85% of the brands state that social media can never take the place of sales promotions and they will be continued, if not increased. They believe that sales promotions are very important as a marketing tool and that it is highly important for the consumers to get to feel, see and taste the product before the sale decision; sales promotions allow this.

50% feel that social media and sales promotions should be connected to each other, for example by advertising the upcoming promotion day beforehand in social media. This could attract more people to the event. The other half has various opinions, mainly depending on the promoted product. If the product is new and launched, then it is good to advertise beforehand in social media, but if it is an old product it is more efficient to concentrate in social media marketing. Additionally one brand felt that promotions without previous information of it are not worthwhile at all.

The interviewees were asked straight forward, which one would they pick, social media or sales promotions as their marketing tool, if they had to choose one. More than half of them would choose sales promotions and the rest prefer social media, because of the factors explained above.

The results also show that sales promotions increase the sales of the promoted product long-term and not just on the promotion day. The fact is that sales promotions are more expensive to conduct than social media marketing, yet because sales promotions has a long-term effect for the companies and their sales, it does not eat away from their budget, but gives more.

In a conclusion after analyzing all the results, I can say that both marketing methods are efficient in their own way. Social media is most affective for various purposes i.e. brand awareness and everyday connection with consumer and sales promotions for the feeling of the product; see, feel, taste. Personally I believe that brands in the food industry need to continue with sales promotions, because it generates more sales and attracts new customers to the product, especially if it is a brand new product. However social media should not be ignored and used as well for other advertisement.

6 Conclusion and Recommendation

This research is very reliable, yet not that valid. The data gathering method and process is a secure and efficient way to collect data. However the amount of the interviewees did not reach the full goal of ten interviewees. I believe that the brand I have interviewed are very interesting and it is good that they are so know, yet I would have hoped to receive more interviews to make the research more valid. Unfortunately the target group was the large food chains and the marketing managers in these companies are very busy, this leads to the fact why the goal was not reached; simply because the managers were not reached.

The theoretical framework was created to support the research and the topics presented are relevant to the subject. In the social media marketing chapter I have explained the various social media platforms and their strengths and weaknesses. The commissioning company should use this information to improve their companies own platforms. In my opinion the website should be remodeled in a way that their services are presented clearly and explained more thoroughly, to attract new customers for them. Currently the visual look of the website is very well made and attractive, and easy to read. However there is not so much information of the company itself and the other marketing services they have. I recommend that they put time on improving their website so it advertises more their various services in order to acquire more clients. Additionally there is no harm in using the social media platforms for marketing their services; personally I believe that LinkedIn and Instagram can be useful for the commissioner (Facebook too, yet it is a bit more consumer oriented).

The sales promotion chapter shows the various ways of conducting sales promotions and the results assures the commissioner that there is a market for them and probably will even increase. It is highly important that the commissioning company takes this attentively because this is their key service. After this research they can suggest these various ways of conducting sales promotions and looking at the results offer to do the social media marketing for the promotion day to satisfy their clients fully.

I gathered the B2B theory for the commissioner and readers to see the difference of B2B and B2C sales, in addition to show some factors required for a successful B2B sale.

My recommendation for the interviewed brands is to put more time on advertising the promotion days in social media or other ways. I believe that most of the consumers would come to the promotions even if it is far from their way, if they knew about it and the product is interesting for them. Personally I would go to the promotions, yet rarely do I know about them. Therefore I think that it is crucial that these promotions are advertised beforehand to receive the maximum outcome.

As a conclusion of this research I feel that the results offered a lot of information and assurance that both marketing communication channels are important and need to be used for the commissioner and the brands to be successful. In my opinion it is crucial to take advantage of these platforms and improve their own methods frequently to stay unique and desirable. Personally I am interested in products and services that provide a lot of information and if it is a food/drink product to know the taste before the sale decision; I do not want to waste my money onto something that I do not know whether I like it or not and I think the majority of people feel the same way.

The whole research and its results can be useful for both the commissioner and the interviewed brands.

Bibliography

Blythe J. 2012. Essentials of Marketing. 5th Edition. Pearson. Essex.

British Library. Qualitative and Quantitative Research. URL:

<http://www.bl.uk/bipc/resmark/qualquantresearch/qualquantresearch.html>. Quoted: 23.04.2015.

BusinessDictionary. Marketing Tools. URL:

<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/marketing-tools.html>. Quoted: 14.05.2015.

De Pelsmacker P., Geuens M. & Van den Bergh J. 2010. Marketing Communications. 4th Edition. Pearson. Essex.

Fill C. & Fill K. 2005. Business to Business Marketing. Prentice Hall. Essex.

Forbes. 11.08.2014. The Top 10 Benefits of Social Media Marketing. URL:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2014/08/11/the-top-10-benefits-of-social-media-marketing/>. Quoted: 15.05.2015.

HupSpot Blogs. 06.06.2014. 16 Stats That Prove Social Media Isn't Just a Fad. URL:

<http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-roi-stats>. Quoted: 15.05.2015.

LinkedIn. Marketing Agency Expression Ltd. URL:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/2790184?trk=tyah&trkInfo=clickedVertical%3Acompany%2Cidx%3A1-1-1%2CtarId%3A1432285662909%2Ctas%3AMarketing%20Agency%20Express>.

Quoted: 12.04.2015.

Marketing-Schools. Business to Business Marketing. URL:

<http://www.marketing-schools.org/types-of-marketing/b2b-marketing.html>. Quoted: 25.05.2015.

Martyn Shuttleworth (Oct 20, 2008). Validity and Reliability. URL:
<https://explorable.com/validity-and-reliability>. Quoted: 19.05.2015.

Palgrave. Choosing Appropriate Research Methods. URL:
<http://www.palgrave.com/studentstudyskills/page/choosing-appropriate-research-methodologies/>. Quoted: 23.04.2015.

Search Engine Lab. What Is Social Media Marketing?. URL:
<http://searchengineland.com/guide/what-is-social-media-marketing>. Quoted:
15.05.2015.

Slideshare. 17.08.2011. The Marketing Communication Process. URL:
<http://www.slideshare.net/nbairstow/marketing-communication-process-8892140>.
Quoted: 12.05.2015.

Small Business Tool Kit. The Four P's of Marketing. URL:
<http://toolkit.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au/part/3/12/56>. Quoted: 17.05.105.

Social Research Methods. 20.10.2006. Reliability. URL:
<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/reliable.php>. Quoted: 19.05.2015.

Social Research Methods. 20.10.2006. Reliability and Validity. URL:
<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/relandval.php>. Quoted: 19.05.2015.

Trent 50 University. Theoretical Frameworks. URL:
<https://www.trentu.ca/history/workbook/theoreticalframeworks.php>. Quoted:
17.04.2015.

USC Libraries. 23.05.2015. Research Guides. URL:
<http://libguides.usc.edu/c.php?g=235034&p=1561763>. Quoted: 02.05.2015.

WordStream. Guide to Using Social Media for Marketing. URL: <http://www.wordstream.com/social-media-marketing>. Quoted: 15.05.2015.

Appendices

Questionnaire (for the interviewed brands)

1. Do you use social media as a marketing tool?
2. Do you use sales promotions as a marketing tool?
(By sales promotions we mean face-to-face connections between sales promoters and consumers - demonstrations, samplings, live experiences etc.)
3. Do you think there has been an impact from social media on sales promotions?
➔ If yes, what do you think about it?
4. How important sales promotions is, when social media is growing this rapidly and becoming one of the main marketing tools?
5. Can social media be equivalent to sales promotion?
6. How will the food industry brands connect social media marketing with sales promotion marketing?
7. Which one do you believe is more affective?
➔ Why do you think the other one is more effective than the other?
8. Do you have any other ideas of generating trial than face-2-face promotions?
(Bars in magazine and buzzador)

Using Both Marketing Tools

9. If your budget allow you to use only one of these marketing tools, which one would it be?
10. Does sales promotion truly increase the sales of the promoted product or does it only sell highly on the promoted day?
11. Which is more productive to your brand, statistically?

Interviewed Brands

1. Kolmen Kaverin Jäätelö (Heikki & Ilkka & Sauli Oy)
2. Pägen (KRISPROLLS)
3. Pingviini (Nestle Oy)
4. WheyHey
5. Arla
6. Nespresso (Nestle Oy)