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Challenges in the Nordic ICT marketing communications

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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Tieto- ja viestintätekniiikan ala kehitty nopeatempoisesti. Kyseinen toimiala antaa yrityksille mahdollisuuden toimia globaalisti laajojen tietoverkkojen avulla. Tämä tuo mukanaan kuitenkin myös haasteita kun asiakaskunta on eri maissa. Maisterityön tavoitteena oli kerätä yleistä, mutta myös maakohtaista, tietoa markkinointiviestinnän toteuttamisesta sekä lainmukaisista säädöksistä pohjoismaissa. Viestintäkanavia joita tutkittiin, olivat sähköpostimarkkinointi, tapahtumamarkkinointi, media markkinointi ja telemarkkinointi.</p> <p>Työn tutkimusmenetelmänä käytettiin tapaustutkimusta jotta tutkimuskysymykseen vastattaisiin toimeksiantajan näkökulmasta. Tiedonkeruu toteutettiin kvalitatiivisella menetelmällä. Ensisijainen tutkimustieto kerättiin markkinointi yritysten haastatteluilla kaikista pohjoismaissa. Toissijainen tieto hankittiin tieto- ja viestintätekniiikan alan tutkimuksista ja tilastoista, viestinnän kehitymisestä sekä maakohtaisista lakisäädöksistä koskien henkilötietojen tietosuojaa.</p> <p>Digitalisoitumisesta huolimatta ihmisten vuorovaikutus on tärkeää liiketoimintasuhteita muodostettaessa ja ylläpidettäessä. Vuorovaikutuksen on tutkittu näkyvän suoraan myynnin kasvuna. B2B suoramarkkinoinnissa, kuten telemarkkinointi ja sähköpostimarkkinointi, tulisi oikea viesti lähettää oikeaan aikaan jotta siitä muodostuisi palvelukokemus. Oikeiden kanavien käyttäminen jolla yritys tavoittaa asiakkaat on yhtä tärkeää kuin itse viesti. Asiakkaiden kiinnostus herätetään selkeällä viestillä kerrottaessa monimutkaisista ICT ratkaisusta. Asiakkaat etsivät ostoprosessinsa aikana tietoa Internetistä ja yrityksen tulisikin tarjota tietoa vaikuttaakseen asiakkaan ostopäätökseen. Mobiilien käyttö laajentuu ja tämä on luonut uuden viestintä kanavan markkinoijille. Viestintä mobiiliin kautta kasvaa ja tästä syystä kaikki verkkoon laitettu sisältö tulisi optimoida mobiililla luettavaksi.</p> <p>Maisterityössä on markkinointiviestinnän hallitsemisen malli jota toimeksiantaja voi hyödyntää luodessaan uusia kampanjoita ja seurattessaan niiden toteutusta. Lisäksi työssä on tilastoja ja tietoa useista eri aiheista joita voidaan hyödyntää suunniteltaessa ja toteuttaessa kohdennettua markkinointiviestintää.</p>		
Asiasanat markkinointi, viestintä, markkinointiviestintä, yritykseltä yritykselle, tieto- ja viestintäteknologia, yritysohjelmisto		

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Information and communications technology (ICT) is a rapidly developing field. Companies operating in the field have possibilities to operate globally through large information networks. This possibility also creates questions when customers are based in different countries. Objective for this research was to gather general but also country specific information on marketing communications and law regulations in Scandinavia. Communication channels that were studied are email marketing, event marketing, media marketing and telemarketing.</p> <p>Methodology of the research used case study to figure out answers to the selected research question from the commissioners' perspective. Data acquisition was done using qualitative methods. Primary data was gathered by interviews to marketing companies in all Nordic countries. Secondary data was gathered from statistics regarding the field of ICT, communication development and country specific data privacy regulations.</p> <p>Although we leave in the digital world human interaction is important to be able to form and sustain relationships with customers. This has been studied to show in increased sales. Direct marketing in business to business, such as telemarketing and email marketing, should be done at the right time with the right message so it would become a service experience. Reaching potential and current customers from channels organization utilizes is as important as the message itself. Clear communication from complex ICT solutions that explain how customer will benefit will increase interest. Customers are looking for information from the Internet and company should provide content to be able to influence on a purchase decision. Use of mobiles are expanding and this has created a new channel for marketers. Communication through mobile is increasing and when creating online content it should always be optimized for mobile.</p> <p>Master's thesis provides a marketing communication management model that commissioner can utilize to create and follow up on campaigns. The study has statistics and information from several topics that can be used when planning and creating marketing communication actions.</p>		
<p>Keywords marketing, communication, marketing communications, business-to-business, ICT, enterprise software</p>		

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Case company

The case company is a Finnish owned and privately held value added distributor and belongs to the category of small and medium-sized enterprises. Nordicism Oy was founded in 2001 in Helsinki. Its key focus is on IT service continuity and infrastructure security architectures. The company's key operating territories are Northern Europe and CIS countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). Nordicism Oy's headquarters are in Finland but company is also located in Denmark and Sweden. (Nordicism 2015, 1)

Nordicism states that its core values are its strengths that include knowledge, loyalty, availability, responsiveness and channel focus. The company's mission is to combine the best knowledge, the best products and the best vendors. Distributor's value added expertise covers information technology (IT) continuity, infrastructure security, critical datacenter solutions and open source in enterprise (Nordicism 2012). The company has been awarded with professional recognitions including HP Elite Linux, Red Hat distributor of the year 2012 and received several other industry specific accreditations (Nordicism 2015, 1).

As a distributor Nordicism operates sales through the channel by building a partner network (Nordicism 2015, 1). The company works together with hundreds of active channel partners and resellers across 15 countries including managed service providers, value added resellers, system integrators, hosting providers and independent software vendors (Nordicism 2012).

The company's focus is on providing value. For partners this means close cooperation and variety of services for all solutions company distributes. Nordicism has listed these services into pre-sales, delivery and post-sales. Pre-sales services include demonstrations, technical presentations, proof of concepts (POC), evaluations and piloting. During delivery the company will provide project management, installation and deployment. After deployment the company supports with continuous training and helpdesk services. (Nordicism 2015)

Nordicmind is a value added distributor of selected ICT products and solutions. As of spring 2016 the product range of Nordicmind includes NoSQL database from Basho, mobile device management with software-as-service solutions from Capricode, unified threat management solutions from Cyberoam, PostgreSQL database solutions from EnterpriseDB, server and network solutions from Huawei, open source desktop virtualization platform solutions from Inuvika, centralized feature-rich system and service solutions from LANDesk, IT management solutions from ManageEngine, Linux platform solutions from Red Hat, hybrid backup solutions from SEP AG, clustering, scheduling and analytics solutions from SIOS Technology Corporation, network, element and mobile management solutions from WebNMS, and scalable collaboration platform solutions from Zimbra. (Nordicmind 2016)

Solutions and hardware Nordicmind distributes is primarily sold for enterprises. Customers that make final purchase decision can be categorized in to target groups of c-level and management level executives. Employees of these customer companies influence purchase decisions and are advocates for new technology to be implemented inside the enterprise's IT infrastructure and environment. Customers have different professional profiles. These can be categorized, as seen in Table 1, in to business management, support, service & operations, design, development and technical management (CEPIS 2014a, 7). In addition to ICT professionals, customers are also channel partners with a profession in pre-sales, sales, account management or marketing.

Table 1. ICT Professional Profiles. (CEPIS 2014a, 7)

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	Chief Information Officer Business Information Manager ICT Operations Manager	DESIGN	Business Analyst Systems Analyst Enterprise Architect Systems Architect
SUPPORT	Account Manager ICT Trainer ICT Security Specialist ICT Consultant	DEVELOPMENT	Developer Digital Media Specialist Test Specialist
SERVICE & OPERATIONS	Database Administrator Systems Administrator Network Specialist Technical Specialist Service Desk Agent	TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT	Quality Assurance Manager ICT Security Manager Project Manager Service Manager

The researcher has been employed by the company from July 2008. During this period company has grown by revenue, employees, subsidiaries and distributed products. The researcher started with managing inside sales and back-office operations. Her knowledge of the field, business and customers grew her to manage channel sales and marketing specialist responsibilities in the company.

ICT can be seen to transform our way of living and being by improving connectivity, enhancing access to services, creating business and new vacancies. Communication is also changing and developing engagement and interaction between humans. The Networked Readiness Index lists countries globally that have been able to boost well-being and competitiveness with leveraging ICTs. Nordic countries were ranked in the top with Finland the second, Sweden the third, Norway the fifth and Denmark the fifteenth. (World Economic Forum 2015) The Nordic countries were already in 2001 in the top 4 for Internet use per resident (Government.no 2001).

European Commission ranked Finland, Sweden and Denmark in the top three measured by "Digital Economy and Society Index" (DESI). The DESI index measures human capital, use of the Internet, integration of digital technology, connectivity and digital public services. Countries Finland, Sweden and

Denmark share same level talent in IT basic skills but Finland leads in advanced IT. Consumer habits differentiate countries in a way that Swedes are generally engaged the most in online activities such as shopping, banking, video, film and music but Danes lead in shopping online and Finns are using online banking more than other EU countries. Danish and Swedish companies are the most digitized among EU countries. Finland was graded as average in digitization. Danish companies lead in electronic invoicing and in Sweden companies are dominant in selling online and using cloud. (TechTarget 2015)

1.2. Presentation of the research problem

Information and communication technology (ICT) field is rather new and there are no standardized best practices for marketing communication. Products are developing and new tools and platforms for communication are being published frequently. The commissioner's customers are based in different countries therefore marketing communication can be challenging due to differences in business cultures as well as in law regulations. If marketing communication does not provide returns then investments become wasted. Nordicism wishes to find answers to these challenges of ICT marketing communications in the Nordic region.

1.3. Research objective and limitations

The aim of this thesis is to help organizations in the ICT sector providing software solutions for enterprises to have information how to make more successful marketing communications. Structure of this work is firstly to build theory of marketing communications and ICT in business-to-business and then secondly gather information how to execute effective marketing communications in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark and to identify common marketing factors. The objective in this work and for the commissioner is to gather general and country specific information of selected methods organization can utilize when planning targeted marketing for the Nordic region and provide tools for measuring profit. Iceland was excluded from this study.

Information and data that is gathered from marketing agencies with interviews of their knowledge and core of business. It came clear from early stages that this information is something not all agencies are willing to share freely for a scientific study. For the researcher the main focus is on combining theory, opinions that resulted from interviews and secondary data that is collected from different sources through the Internet. Language can be also a limitation for the study in data acquisition especially for a secondary source. The research was done only with English and Finnish but some national statistics and releases are only in the local language.

1.4. Research question and related topics

In finding answers to these challenges this study gives insight into marketing communications channels and tools in B2B enterprise software marketing context, with the focus on answering the research question: *How to improve marketing communications of enterprise software in Nordic countries?*

1.5. Structure of the thesis

The thesis starts with an introduction of the commissioner and its mission, business model and operations. Definition for this thesis is given with research aim, objective and specified research question. Theory is combined from industry specific details and concepts of the researched topic.

Methodology includes explanation of the selected research method and how data acquisition and analyzing is processed with qualitative measures. Research analysis is presented with results that are allocated by studied countries and differences in practices. From results thesis will represent key-findings and how those are implemented for the commissioner's practices, also defined as managerial recommendations.



Figure 1. Framework for thesis structure.

2. DEFINING COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS ICT MARKETING

Literature review is a combination of leading theories of concepts studied in the research. Marketing is explained from business-to-business and communications point of view. Profitability and chosen marketing communication tools will be discussed. Development of information and communication technology is studied and enterprise software defined.

2.1. Impact of business-to-business

Small- and medium-sized enterprises have challenges in competing with bigger corporations globally. Companies have the pressure to increase their resources, practices and management. In a nutshell, value generation to compete better. Leadership and self-awareness will give the advantage for SMEs to react to market changes in agile manner. Combining knowledge with strategic partners can benefit both partners. Relationships are built with communication and cooperation. These factors will increase trust and commitment. Alliance between partners can lead to developing new knowledge and superior market dominance.

2.1.1. Principals of industrial marketing

Peter Drucker, a management guru, has stated (1954, 64) that a purpose of a company is to create and to serve customers. With marketing company can

prepare and implement pricing, distribution and promotion of products and services. These implements combined together create a marketing mix of four (4) P's: product, price, place and promotion. (Pelsmacker, Geuens & Bergh 2005, 2)

Marketing mix as a concept has been introduced by Neil Borden in 1953. The concept was created from the idea that managers put together various elements and the mix therefore represents mixture of these marketing elements. From many proposals McCarthy's formula of 4P's turned into a common approach. (Van Waterschoot & Van den Bulte 1992, 84)

Industrial marketing is referred to when buyer is an organization or a company. We also refer to it as organizational or business-to-business marketing. In industrial marketing the purpose is to build a long lasting relationship that benefits both parties, the seller and the buyer. Managing business-to-business relationships requires customer acquisition and retention. Organization decides who they wish to do business with and maintain the relationship. (Morris, Pitt & Honeycutt, Jr. 2001, 3)

The key-element in industrial marketing is the flow of goods and services (Morris et al. 2001, 3). Company should know and understand customer's needs so well that the products will sell themselves to the customers (Drucker, 1954, 64). As products change, so do customers. An example can be given with developing technology. New companies are created around innovation and industrial development. In an effective market-oriented organization marketing is not only a role of a marketing department. It is rather a responsibility of the whole organization. Due to complexity in industries and products marketing activities are produced together, for example, with technical people. (Morris et al. 2001, 5-7)

Business-to-business communication is dominated by Internet connection. Organizations and people can communicate with developed technological devices to locations all around the world, Internet has enabled development of a global world with worldwide distribution channels. Market segmentation and research, even niche marketing, are important for companies. Customers have tremendous amounts of information available and they can use different

channels to make a purchase decision. Also, customers are different from each other and use technology in different ways. (Kitchen & Proctor 2015, 34-38, 41)

Channels where companies reach out to customers have increased significantly. The customer is seen as a strategy in creating more value for the company. Multichannel customer management is seen as a customer-centric marketing function. Channel choices are driven by the customer perception and preferences. It is assumed that the management of the customer relationship can progress along the following steps: recognition of needs, information search, purchase activity and after-sales service. Management of these channels is designed to answer the customer decision process. Company needs to track the customer behavior and know why the customer chose what channels for which purposes and what they purchased. With this information the company can develop a multichannel strategy. The strategy will include channels that are employed, how they are designed, how resources have been allocated across channels and a marketing plan. The customer loyalty has been studied and it is seen that modern channels without a human contact decrease the loyalty but more channels are a better service for the customer which leads to more loyalty. It is also studied that multichannel customers purchase more. (Neslin et al. 2006, 96)

Young & Aitken (2007, 79) argue that 80% of the company profit is created by 20% of the customers. From a strategic point of view building loyal business-to-business relationships seems more profitable than reaching for new customers. What seems to be more cost-effective is the customer retention, not acquisition.

2.1.2. Building value in business-to-business

Business relationships should be built strategically for creating value. SMEs have a limited amount of resources. The company should promote its own expertise and combine knowledge with key-partners that will improve the company's competitive position. This will benefit both parties. A small company will have a potential of sales revenue, brand endorsement and developed technical and managerial competence. A large enterprise can benefit from assets that it can find hard to gather on its own, such as knowledge of the local markets and innovative technology. (Pérez & Cambra-Fierro 2015, 309)

The value for customers has been defined between the value creation and the value generation. The value creation is done by customers with the resources they have received. The value generation instead comes from the company's processes of delivering, developing, designing and manufacturing. (Pérez & Cambra-Fierro 2015, 298)

For an SME to remain competitive it should keep a track of its knowledge and in-depth understanding of its internal processes. The self-awareness will provide understanding for the value creation from integrated processes and a possibility for a fast reaction to market shifts. (Pérez & Cambra-Fierro 2015, 309)

Strategic alliance studies how a company can create value by collaborating with partners. By accessing the resources of those partners, the collaboration can develop new knowledge for both parties that did not exist before. Relationships with suppliers and with customers gives new innovative ways to create value by combining knowledge and skills. (Pérez & Cambra-Fierro 2015, 311)

2.2 Foundations of business communication

Communication is a process in which the information is sent from a sender to a receiver. The main point in business communication is to share data that will assist both parties. Communication in business can be internal or external. In internal communication transferring data is done by the organization's employees. External communication takes place with the organization and outside parties. Successful communication requires knowing the audience. The more we know about the people we are communicating with the easier it is for them to hear, understand and respond to messages in a positive way. (Thill & Bovée 2008, 4, 17)

Building a long-term relationship between the parties is done with communication and cooperation and also shows a sign of trust. The most important issue is exchanging information in a timely manner. The most valued ways to communicate have been proven to be personal visits. It is seen that when the organization's size increases also personal contacts will reduce.

Developing social ties will lead to increased trust and commitment. (Pérez & Cambra-Fierro 2015, 309-310)

Kotler et al. (2012, 782) explain effective business communications to succeed with making a connection, guaranteeing a reward, inspiring into an action and making a lasting memory. These can be accomplished in industrial marketing by using eight key steps in developing communications. Firstly, we need to select our audience. Potential buyers will determine many aspects of what, how, when and where to communicate. Secondly we need to decide on objectives. Objectives can be set on any level of these steps. Their intentions can be establishing a new need or developing knowledge and awareness. Thirdly, we need to formulate communications. A communication strategy should cover the message itself, message creativeness and source of the message. Fourthly, we need to select communication channels that are personal or non-personal. Fifthly we need to design a communication budget suited for the company. Sixthly we need to decide on the media mix where the company will allocate budget over the modes of communication. Seventhly we need to follow and track on real results of the investments that are made, and eighthly, we need to manage integrated marketing communications that identify the added value of these eight steps. (Kotler et al. 2012, 782-78, 789, 793, 801)

2.2.1 Marketing communications

The marketing mix described in the chapter 2.1.1 includes four (4) elements and one of them is promotion. Communication that is promoting for a selected audience can be described as marketing communication. Information is shared about products and services to advise, recommend and to remind how the needs, wants and desires of (potential) customers and consumers are met. The ways and means how marketing communication is executed is ever-changing as technology and media are developing. Communication is influencing the business but also the society. (Kitchen 1999 2; Pelsmacker et al. 2005, preface, 2)

Online communication has brought virtual interconnectedness and consumers are receiving large amounts of data and information that is not tied to a specific time or space (Ünsal et al. 2014). Marketing communication media are changing

and developing as technology is evolving. Customers are using technology and media in different ways and therefore it can be claimed that the markets drive the business. (Kitchen & Proctor 2015, 41)

A communication mix in general includes the following elements: advertising, sales promotions, sponsorship, public relations, point-of-purchase communication, exhibitions and trade fairs, direct marketing communications, personal selling and Internet. Messages through communication can also be identified as being mass communication or personal communication. Mass communication uses a wider audience through general media whereas personal communication is instead using interactive and direct selling actions. The main goal in executing marketing communication actions is to motivate a purchase. (Pelsmacker et al. 2005, 4-6)

2.2.2 Elements in integrated marketing communications

Schultz developed in early 1990s a model called “integrated marketing communications” (IMC). This is a process with what companies enhance their business to bring more revenue by creating a communication plan to support the organization’s goals. Traditionally organizations were leading from top down and departments were responsible only for their own functions and collaboration was done in a lesser degree. Integration is seen so that all marketing mix elements are proceeding in the same direction and serve a common purpose. (Schultz & Schultz 2003, 3; Pelsmacker et al. 2005, 3)

Principles guiding the IMC have been divided in to eight (8) factors. Firstly, the organization should become customer-centric with focusing on the end user, the customer, that will provide resources and revenue for all parties in the chain. Secondly, planning should be done with an outside-in approach where customers are seen and evaluated by the whole company as a continuous income. The third step is for the company to focus on the total customer experience it provides for the customer and recognize the relationship that is built with the product, services and the company as a whole. The fourth principle aligns customer objectives with company goals. The company is building an ongoing business and operates between customer needs and wants and what company is actually able to provide. With IMC the company will not only

increase awareness but also will meet financial goals. (Schultz & Schultz 2003, 49-67)

The fifth principle is in setting customer behavior objectives. The outcomes that are wanted from marketing communications are listed to be acquiring new customers, keeping and taking care of current customers, keeping and increasing revenue or profit from current customers and expand current customers to purchase other provided solutions or products. The sixth principle reminds companies to treat customers as assets. Customers are the ones that provide company its income. In the seventh principle IMC will remind that from customers' perspective marketing communication should be placed in two groups, messages and incentives. Messages are something a company wants a customer to remember about the brand, values, ideas etc. Incentives can be for example short-term offers that will value both the customer and the company. The last eight principle of IMC model is to connect marketing communication activities together with distribution channels. Multi-channels need to support the same message communication is presenting. (Schultz & Schultz 2003, 49-67)

IMC is seen as good and claimed to develop the company's competence in reaching *the right customers with the right message at the right time and in the right place* (Pelsmacker et al. 2005, 3; Kotler et al. 2012, 803).

Integrated marketing communication is a process that has five (5) steps that allow a bigger and longer lasting revenue to flow through time. The process model in Figure 2 has been identified as interconnected and customer-focused. The step one (1) is identifying customers and prospects from a behavior point of view and creating communication with a relevant audience. The step two (2) is estimating the value of customers and prospects. The value in this framework means the revenue flow that will be received by the company. It will determine how much and to whom the company's resources will be used. The step three (3) is planning communication messages and incentives which includes creating the content and communicating it to customers and prospects. The step four (4) estimates the return on the customer investment. It gives a guideline for a company to calculate how successful an activity has been on a case level. The step five (5) includes post-program analysis and future planning. The IMC process is something that should never end and a reinvestment

strategy should be developed for improving the program. (Schultz & Schultz 2003, 69-74)

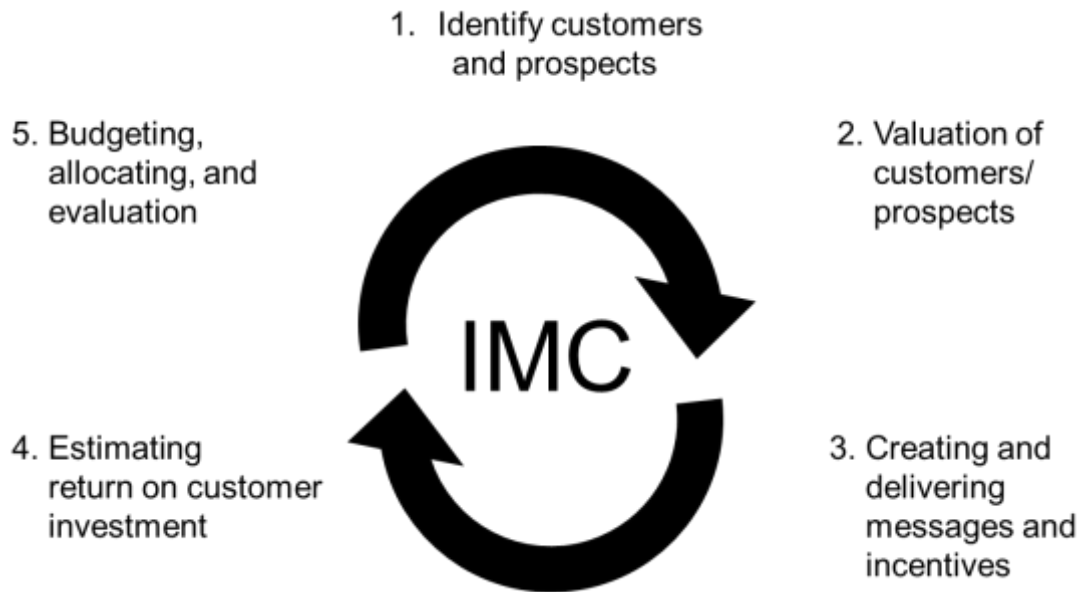


Figure 2. The Five-Step IMC Planning process (Schultz & Schultz, 2003, 69).

In practice, integrated marketing communications have been slowly implemented into the company's processes. Large global companies use different marketing and advertising agencies from several different countries and create communication that is not coordinated through the company but rather from a single division. (Kotler et al. 2012, 802)

In marketing communications it is essential to know what message will appeal to the targeted audience and also what are the channels that will get the message across. After a campaign has ended it needs to be thought how the company will stay in the minds of the targeted audience. (Caemmerer 2009, 535-536)

Although there are five (5) steps in the IMC model this study went more deeply through the steps 3 and 4. These are: creating and delivering messages and incentives (step 3), and estimating return on customer investment (step 4). The researcher has an understanding that the other steps in the IMC process model

are already successfully implemented by the commissioner of this thesis and studying those other steps would also spread research in to other fields such as customer relationship management.

2.2.3 Marketing communication tools

Promotion as a part of marketing mix (Pelsmacker et al. 2005, 2-4) is also referred to as “the communications mix”. The communications mix includes variety of tools as seen in Figure 3 that enable communication with the customer. Companies need to plan how they can reach the customer but also how the customer can easily reach the company. Five (5) principal tools have been listed as sales promotions, direct marketing, public relations, personal selling and advertising. Advertising, sales promotions and public relations are seen as a form of non-personal communication and they can reach a wide audience. Advertising gives a possibility to design a company message and communicate it creatively. Sales promotions increase sales in a short period of time and aim to add value for offered products and services. Public relations include publishing the company’s messages through a third party such as media and events. (Fill 2006, 14-17)

Personal selling and direct marketing give opportunities for a personalized communication either by face-to-face, emailing or telemarketing. This personalized communication aims to gain and develop customer relationships. In the communications mix the Internet is not seen as a communication tool but

rather as a distribution channel that will enable and accelerate marketing communications. (Fill 2006, 16-18)

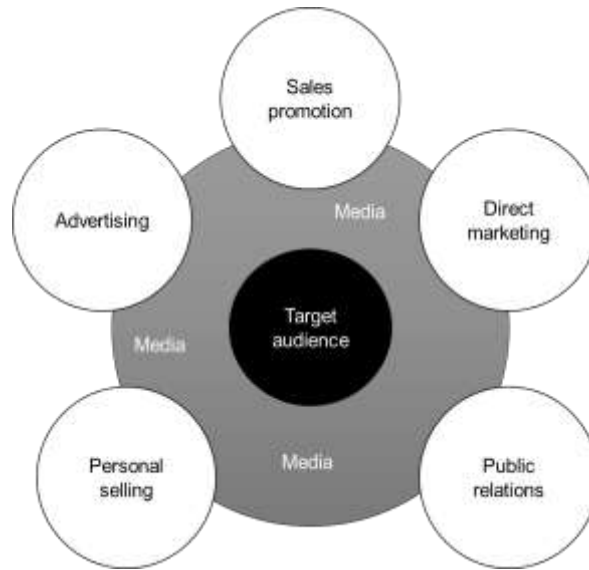


Figure 3. The tools of the marketing communications mix. (Fill, 2006, 15)

2.2.4 Email marketing

Email marketing can be described as a tool for communicating via the Internet. Emails in marketing can be used as a form of creating campaigns or newsletters and it is seen as one of the easiest ways to personalize and customize the company's online presence. (Kinnard 2000, xvii)

2.2.5 Telemarketing

An aim for telemarketing is to increase the revenue, diminish the selling expenses and increase the customer satisfaction. These are done by reaching prospects and customers by the telephone. Services include persuading new customers, selling to the current customers, processing orders and other queries. (Kotler et al. 2012, 842)

2.2.6 Event marketing

Shows, festivals, fairs, summits and seminars are events that take time in planning and marketing. Activity in these company-sponsored events aims to generate interaction concerning the brands. (Kotler et al. 2012, 11, 777)

2.2.7 Media marketing

The objective for media marketing is to find the most cost-effective ways to publish and deliver the content for the target audience. Planning a media selection requires to consider the use of media by the target audience, features of the product, features of the communicated message and the pricing. (Kotler et al. 2012, 816-818)

2.2.8 Profitable marketing communications

All investments should be able to be measured for the payback it provides. Marketing investments can be measured with the return on investment (ROI). It will demonstrate the cost-effectiveness as long as the returns are clearly stated. The aim of the ROI is to measure how much profit the company receives from the investments it makes. Before the actual investment the company should evaluate the potential for the profit so that the company can evaluate the risks. Evaluating the potential profit will give the company a possibility to reconsider if the investment would make more returns elsewhere. Marketing investments should not be seen as a cost but rather as a value it provides. Costs and investments should be deducted from the gains and benefits to calculate the value. (Young & Aitken 2007, 17-18, 27)

Integrated marketing communications are seen as one of the most simplified ways for a company to increase the ROI (Fitzgerald & Arnott 2000, 3). There are two kinds of returns: short-term returns that occur during one fiscal year and long-term returns that are divided for several fiscal years (Schultz & Schutz 2003, 219).

2.3 Information and communication technology

Information technology has been seen as a catalyst for a change. Information is communicated and this communication is done by people. For example, what would social media be like without people posting and communicating the content on the platforms? To enable better communication a change needs to come from the corporate level and promote a behavior that enhances information sharing. (HBR 1999, 1-2)

The Nordic ICT Foresight project was launched in 2005 which included governmental research partners. The project estimated future trends and technologies. Trends and industry in 5 to 10 years were estimated to go towards a mobile network society, personal and tailored communication, multichannel devices and artificial intelligence embedded in material and objects. The project has predicted that after over 10 years period the ubiquitous solutions are embedded in everyday environment, devices and platforms are linking and communicating spontaneously, and ambient intelligence is responsive to human presence. (Norden 2007, 42) Boos et al. wrote in 2013 (1264) that on a large scale the ubiquitous computing technology is expected to happen during several years in the future. The control over technology is seen as an important part and individuals using ubiquitous computing technology currently have been studied and found to feel to be less in control.

Boos et al. (2013, 1262-1263) explain that the most research in ubiquitous computing is done for the societal impact especially for privacy, identity and trust. There is much more to look for in the future in organizations. Ubiquitous computing technologies will contribute to the performance, value creation, business benefits and business drivers that benefit from using ubiquitous computing. While ubiquitous computing technologies are so new and developing, the perception of the purpose is created by the organizational culture and the prior experience with other information and communication technologies.

2.3.1 Development of information and communications technology

Cohen, Garibaldi and Scarpetta (2004, x) explain that information and communication technology (ICT) is seen to be started already in the mid-seventies. The personal computer and the microprocessor that could process and store information changed the technology industry.

A major credit for the invention of the World Wide Web has been given to a British engineer Tim Berners-Lee and the first website went online in the year 1991. From a preserve of academic researchers and developers the Internet opened to everyone. It was said that a fifth communication revolution happened with the launch of the Internet. The number of users grew from 600,000 to 50 million in just 4 years. (Soskin 2010, 6-7)

Berners-Lee has been told to say that it was impossible to predict how users would use the system but as we know, the Internet today brings together millions of users, organizations and their business processes, technology and content with the fact that the underlying technical system is essentially a medium of communication. (Tuomi 2002, 54)

A technological change defines and relates to the way we exist in this world. Tuomi (2002, 219) acclaims that human beings are technological beings and in the development of a ubiquitous society this statement will come more true. Weiser (1991, 91) has defined ubiquitous computing with the following quote: *“The most profound technologies are those that disappear. They weave themselves into the fabric of everyday life until they are undistinguishable from it”*.

Information and communication systems will be visibly embedded in our living environment. Wifi and other wireless network access around us is developing ubiquitous communication, computing and networks. For the Internet of Things to work and technology to disappear from our attention it requires a shared understanding of its users and appliances, software and communication networks to transfer data and tools to analyze data that aims for a smart behavior. (Gubbia, Buyyab, Marusica & Palaniswami 2013, 1645-1646) Privacy and security seems to be at the moment the biggest issue to be addressed within the Internet of Things. Various things will collect and distribute large amounts of sensitive data. (Saint 2015, 75)

Some manufacturers have taken a choice to collect data anonymously and share with only others that are de-identified. Researchers still have analyzed that it is relatively easy to extract complete location information about a single person from an anonymized dataset. As a conclusion a study has reported: "*it's very hard to preserve anonymity.*" (Peppet 2014, 131)

2.3.2 Enterprise software

Enterprise software applications are designed to support business processes that are involving several stakeholders. Software manages large amounts of transaction-oriented data by editing, storing and displaying and by addressing to changing needs. Information is shared from a database when the stored data is needed. Applications that combine and distribute data have been developed for various purposes including for example enterprise resource planning (ERP), supply chain management (SCM) and customer relationship management (CRM). (Subhajit 2007, 16-17; Palanisamy, Verville, Bernadas & Taskin 2010, 611)

The operation scope for enterprise software is wide covering different nationalities, cultures and geography. A demand for enterprise software is also that it should be possible to integrate this software with other applications. (Subhajit 2007, 16-17) Taborda (2011, 13-14) describes that enterprise architecture promotes efficiency in operations and lets organizations to innovate securely.

The Internet has enabled the deployment of ICT in organizations that have improved performance, competitiveness and productivity with an increased information flow. Organizations have been able to enhance with the effects in internal automation and management. ICT has enabled efficient knowledge transfer, cost reduction and implementation of new on-line activities such as production of goods and outsourcing services. (Nordic Council of Ministers 2005, 27)

ICT in enterprises keeps developing and the amount of personnel in job functions is growing in the future. European Union gathered information in 2014 from the industry professionals and the results indicated that the current lack of

e-skilled professionals is affecting the ability to utilize the ICT capabilities in their full potential. In overall, only 23% among the respondents had the competence required for the job across all European countries. (CEPIS 2014b)

2.4. Theoretical framework

The research for this thesis is done in the field of ICT for promoting more effective marketing communications. The commissioner works as a channel partner so business-to-business communication can be seen as one of the most important concepts affecting this study. From marketing communication this study addresses email marketing and telemarketing that are thought to be direct marketing tools. Mass marketing is addressed with media and event marketing. The theoretical framework is illustrated in Figure 4.

Business activities should always be measured. In this research the measurement tool that will be described is the return on investment (ROI). With this approach we can pinpoint clear returns, profits and the effectiveness of marketing communication activities.

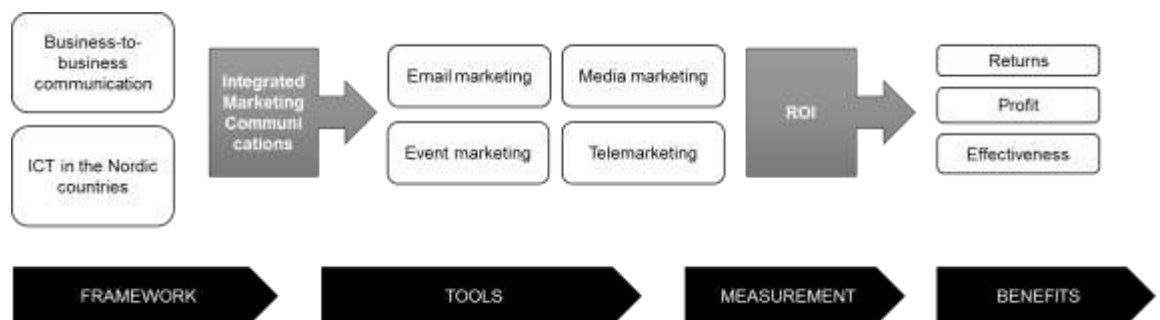


Figure 4. Theoretical framework of the thesis.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the Master's thesis will give a framework showing how the research is conducted. This chapter will explain the case study as the chosen research method. The reliability and the validity are addressed and the research

process is explained. Data acquisition methods include interviews and this chapter describes how the collected data will be analyzed.

3.1 Case study and qualitative data acquisition

Case study according to Gillham (2010, 2, 10) finds out answers to the selected research question from the commissioner's perspective. It uses several sources to justify conclusions and create new knowledge. As we use the case study as a research method the data acquisition is done using qualitative methods. These methods explain the situation as it is and will give an understanding on the selected concepts at the moment.

Qualitative research methods make possible to expand the research to areas in which the other methods cannot be legitimized ethically or do not seem to function in the best way. A qualitative method is a good research method when there is not much information of the situation or when we try to figure out complexities behind the controlled methods. A qualitative case study enables to go deeper in the research by seeing it from a different person's perspectives and figure out the informal reality behind everything. Qualitative methods also support processes that lead into results. In the end, the case study research creates a grounded theory that is based on the retrieved data. (Gillham 2010, 11-12)

3.2 Reliability and validity

The reliability of academic books and reference works is largely determined by the author and the publisher. A book can also represent only thoughts of one individual and therefore provide only opinions of one person with a limited knowledge on the topic. In literature books that have been written by academic professors can often be seen as reliable. The methodology of marketing has been influenced by professors and executives that have published a great amount of material and books that will be also used in this study. These include for example professor's Don E. Schultz and Philip Kotler. Peer-reviewed articles are other important sources for the research. As the articles have gone through peer-review process they can be seen as relevant and high-quality especially if

the study has been referenced notable times. So called grey literature includes publications and websites by governmental and non-governmental bodies, including firms and media outlets. These will be used carefully and the context will be kept in mind (Easterby-Smith et al. 2015, 13-15)

The reliability as a concept in the research is more often used in a quantitative research context. Reliability of the qualitative research has other validation measurements. Tuomi (2007, 151) describes aspects of validation such as collecting data with the following questions: How will the interviews be processed? What is a time frame for analyzing and does it affect the results? How was the data analyzed? How were the results and the conclusions constructed? Is a report liable and is there enough information how the research was processed so that the reader can evaluate the results?

The qualitative research will benefit from specific reporting of how the research was conducted and this will improve the reliability for the results. Conditions and circumstances of producing data should be explained clearly and truthfully. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2002, 213-214)

3.3 Research process

The research starts with defining and introducing concepts. This research will primarily study marketing communications and focus on selected tools that are event marketing, telemarketing, email marketing and media marketing. The literature review should be written in chronological order so that it is easy to follow and construct an idea how terms and concepts have evolved. Terms especially in media marketing have multiplied as the technology has developed with social media and digitalization. The literature review is followed by an introduction to methodology. The qualitative research approach that is used in this study describes the process or the actions and the results are to highlight the perceived effects and causes. The qualitative research can include interviews, surveys with open-ended questions and case studies with a goal of providing details of the context and processes. (Weathington, Cunningham & Pittenger 2012, 404)

A primary source of data will be gathered with the representatives of marketing companies and agencies. The Interviews will be done with representatives located in four countries (Finland, Sweden, Norway & Denmark) and processed with face-to-face meetings and phone calls. Interviewees will receive open-ended questions beforehand and they can also decide if they choose to reply via a Webropol online questionnaire.

3.4 Interviews

A primary source of data in this research are the answers the researcher receives from questions for marketing companies regarding ICT business-to-business communications. These questions are sketched by the researcher and approved by the commissioner. For the commissioner and the researcher the qualitative research approach will focus on questions "how" and "why" for creating a holistic understanding. When interviewing the professionals we need also to reflect the responses to the data available at other reliable sources so that we can claim conclusions to be reliable. (Imms 2002, 37)

Tuomi (2007, 145) has gathered information that should be clarified to interviewees in the name of good ethics. These details include the aim, the methods and the possible risks of the research. Participating is optional for the interviewees and can be cancelled at anytime. The researcher should provide all important details so that the interviewees have a good overall picture of the research. The results can be published also anonymously if the interviewees wish to do so.

3.5 Collecting data

The subject of the thesis requires background information from the researcher and it is important to take field notes on a regular basis throughout the research process. These field notes provide observations and include personal reflections on the data and the research process. The notes can be used later on to interpret the collected data and specific contexts. (Weathington et al. 2012, 403)

There are two sources of data, primary and secondary. The primary data is something that the researcher will collect using methods such as surveys, interviews and direct observations. The primary data can be considered relatively reliable since the researcher will have information where it has come from. The secondary data has been gathered by other persons or an agencies to solve another problem but it will explain, analyze and combine information from the primary source. (Sachdeva 2009, 116)

The secondary source of data will be gathered to find out statistics regarding the field of ICT, communication in general and marketing legislations of all target countries. Research will find out effective ways for communication now and in the near future and implement them for marketing purposes.

The results of a qualitative study rely on the analysis done by the researcher. The researcher can have assumptions on the topics of the research but these should not affect the results. While gathering the data the researcher should avoid making unnecessary too early categorization or analysis. It is common for humans to try to understand the experience. When the data is categorized and analyzed it creates new knowledge and affects our "knowledge framework" in a way that it changes the way we understand the studied topic. This is also called as a paradigm shift. (Gillham 2010, 18)

3.6 Analyzing collected data

The qualitative data is gathered in several stages and often in parallel with different research methods. As a general principal should be that the data should be analyzed as soon as possible after the data acquisition. By analyzing the data right after the acquisition it will still inspire the researcher and the study can still be clarified and required additions retrieved. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2002, 208-209)

The research is not yet complete after the results have been analyzed. The results should be explained and interpreted so that the researcher analyses the results and makes own conclusions based on them. In this thesis the conclusions are provided in the chapter five (5). Interpretation of the results is also clarification and reasoning about the significance of the results.

Researcher, commissioner, the interviewee participating in the research and also the reader of this thesis will all interpret research in their own way and there can even be some disagreement about the results. From the results the research will create a synthesis which will gather the main points and clearly answer the research question(s). (Hirsjärvi et al. 2002, 211-212)

4. RESULTS

This chapter provides the results from the data acquisition and analysis carried out in the research. First, the research explains the current overall focus of marketing and communications. Then, the results are divided in to marketing communication tools. Similarities as well as differences are pointed out between the Nordic countries. Finally, this chapter addresses measuring the success of investments.

Marketing communications as a subject in general is wide. There are as many angles to consider as there are companies, earlier studies and researchers. Together with commissioner researcher limited research to study four (4) marketing communication tools that were considered to be the most significant for a successful business-to-business marketing communication. These tools are: email marketing, telemarketing, event marketing and media marketing.

Interviews for data acquisition were requested from 29 persons and of them 9 replied (response rate 31%). Eventually, an interview was done with 5 participants that appear in Table 2. Interview response rate was 17% and research has responses from all four targeted Nordic countries. (Please note that Iceland did not belong to the targeted Nordic countries).

Table 2. List of respondents participating in the interview

Respondent #	Position in organization	Country	Gender	Type	Date of response
Respondent A	Director	Finland	Male	Face-to-face interview	8th October 2015
Respondent B	Director	Finland	Male	Phone interview	16th October 2015
Respondent C	Director	Sweden	Male	Questionnaire response	21st October 2015
Respondent D	Director	Norway	Male	Questionnaire response	23rd October 2015
Respondent E	Manager	Denmark	Male	Questionnaire response	21st October 2015

4.1 Business-to-business marketing communication

The researcher requested information from interviewees about what they see as the most important business-to-business marketing communication tools. Respondent A argued that the business-to-business marketing uses relatively old-fashioned marketing communication tools, such as print media, and this

may be motivated by having many customers that are older men who are not necessarily well familiar with using the social media. What was interesting and being adopted by respondent A is the use of news videos in business-to-business marketing. Respondent A also said that the most important thing in ICT marketing communication is to communicate clearly and to raise interest.

Respondent B told the content marketing to be the most important method as the customers are nowadays already well prepared with the planned purchase process once they get in contact with a company's sales person. Respondent B argued that the company should think what content it is providing especially on its web site. Marketing automation was seen as the most important method by respondent C with this method the customer can analyze segmented target groups and follow the media behavior about what will be retrieved as target group interest.

The content marketing and the digital communication were seen also important by respondent D and who expressed the usefulness of an approach referred to as inbound marketing. Respondent E thought that all marketing tools that support the customer buying process are important. Top marketing tools that were listed by respondent E were content, social, automation and events.

Marketing predictions that were made for 2015 support the idea of the content marketing raising its popularity, videos being used more by the companies and the one-to-one marketing being increased (Wheelhouse Advisors, 2014). What was found effective globally for the digital marketing is the use of email and social media and from these tools listening to the needs of the customers. Although the digital channels can have a sustainable effect on the audience growth and the ROI, it has been found that the most pressing business challenges have been faced with new business development, acquiring leads with a good quality and trying to keep up to date with marketing trends and technology. (Salesforce 2015, 5-6)

Customer journey is followed with technology. Mobile applications, marketing analytics and customer relationship management (CRM) tools are seen to display how company can meet customer's needs. (Salesforce 2015, 12)

European Communication Monitor studied the expected development of communication channels from the year 2014 to 2017 and the results can be

seen in Figure 5. The communication channel seeming to have the greatest expected relative increase in importance was the mobile communication. It appears that the online communication and the social media have an expected increase in importance as a communication channel. It seems that the face-to-face communication will remain considered as an important communication channel. In addition it seems that TV and radio will have a decrease in the perceived importance as a communication channel. (European Association of Communication Directors 2014, 89)

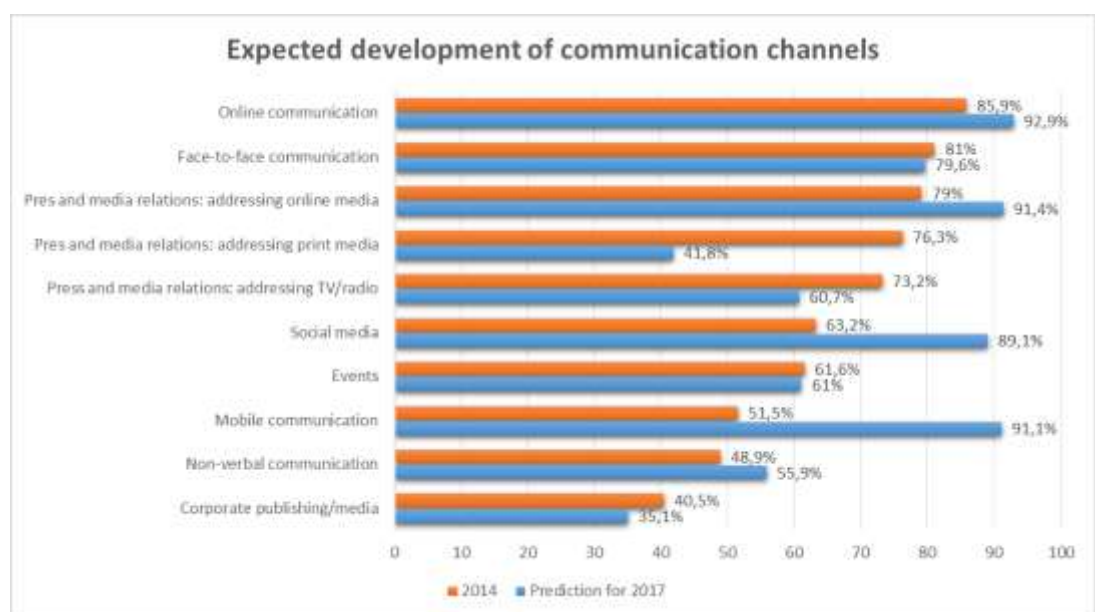


Figure 5. Expected development of communication channels. (European Association of Communication Directors 2014, 89)

Harvard Business Review released a study in which the purchase decisions of business-to-business buyers was studied. The study showed that a direct interaction and references had the biggest impact on influencing a positive purchasing decision. Events, white papers and sales presentations were also seen as important. In this study the least effective way to influence making a purchase decision was through advertising or the social media. (Cespedes & Bova 2015)

In the interviews carried out by the researcher with the representatives of marketing companies an opinion was requested about branding in business-to-

business marketing context. The corporate brand was thought to be essential by respondent A. Respondent B replied that the able to find the company is more important than the brand recognition. Respondent C defined branding in business-to-business to engage the target group and to show how the company's services and products can create value. Respondent D sees branding as a leadership through the digital outreach and from respondent E's point of view branding is crucial. Western brands face a lot of pressure from the low-cost competition and the emerging markets so investing in the brand differentiation and the brand preference is more important than ever.

Research indicates that emotions are important in the business to business buying. The personal value has two times as much impact as the business value. Also, 68% who see the personal value would pay a higher price of a service and 71% of them would make a purchase. Business to business brands have made an emotional connection with 50% of their buyers. (Business 2 community 2014) Forbes listed the most valuable brands in 2015 and four of them in top 5 were information technology companies. Apple as the most valuable company, Microsoft was the second most valuable, Google third most valuable and IBM as fifth most valuable. Only Coca-Cola had reached the fourth position. (Badenhausen 2015)

The content promotion has been considered as the most popular way in connecting with influencers by marketing and communication professionals. Product launches and content creation has been conserved as the second most popular tactic to be used by these professionals. Marketing and communication professionals worldwide saw the biggest challenge in identifying the right influencers. This has lead to difficulties in finding the right engagement tactics and measuring performance of different programs. (eMarketer Inc 2015)

4.2 Analysis by marketing communication tools

The results of data acquisition from primary and secondary sources done by the researcher have been categorized with selected marketing communications tools.

4.2.1 Media

According to the Nordic Research institute the media investments in the Nordic countries were 9.1. billion euros in 2014. Among the four observed countries, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, the smallest advertising and media market was in Finland and Sweden was leading with the biggest annual turnover. The Internet has been the largest media category in the Nordics from 2013. (IRM 2015) According to TNS Gallup Oy (2016) in Finland media marketing was invested most in 2014 among different channels of marketing communications, and the direct marketing was the second biggest form of marketing communications.

In the interviews carried out by the researcher with the representatives of marketing companies the respondents were requested to name the most important business-to-business media in the field of ICT and how to utilize them for marketing communication in the best way. The respondents gave names of media that can be seen listed in appendix 4. In the following some of the responses are discussed. Respondent A mentioned that as the local business market is relatively small the most executives follow business as well as ICT media. According to respondent A the companies should use reference cases to demonstrate products and services. Respondent A also highlighted the importance of video as a media.

Respondents B and D brought up that online media works well for raising the awareness and guiding to company's own web site and other media. Respondent D also raised the company's own web site as the most important media but said that the print media should not be utilized in the business-to-business marketing. Respondent C noted that a customer magazine, in print, would have a strong distribution strategy. Respondent E also referred to print magazines but as leadership publications. According to respondent E the print magazines tend to support the customer journey later so the company should consider what type of content is the most relevant at each phase in the process.

Social media was thought to be generally the most important online media by respondent E. Respondent E also advised to have a total digital strategy and clear objectives for using the online media. According to respondent E the channels should be integrated but the usage differentiated and the right skills

and technologies should be invested and managed in a systematic and proactive manner.

Salesforce study (2015, 35) recommends to use around-the-clock study on social media reachability. The company should be aware when are their customers the most active on social media and target the posts during those peak times. All online experiences should be made available for mobile devices. New business is seen to be made through tablets and smartphones. (Salesforce 2015, 37)

On average Facebook (Figure 6) is the leading social media in all observed four Nordic countries. Instagram is clearly the second most popular social media. Snapchat, LinkedIN, Google+ and Twitter are used less than Facebook and Instagram. The second most popular social media platform varies among the four observed Nordic countries: in Finland it is WhatsApp, in Sweden it is Instagram, in Norway it is Snapchat and in Denmark it is LinkedIn. (Polaris Nordic 2015)

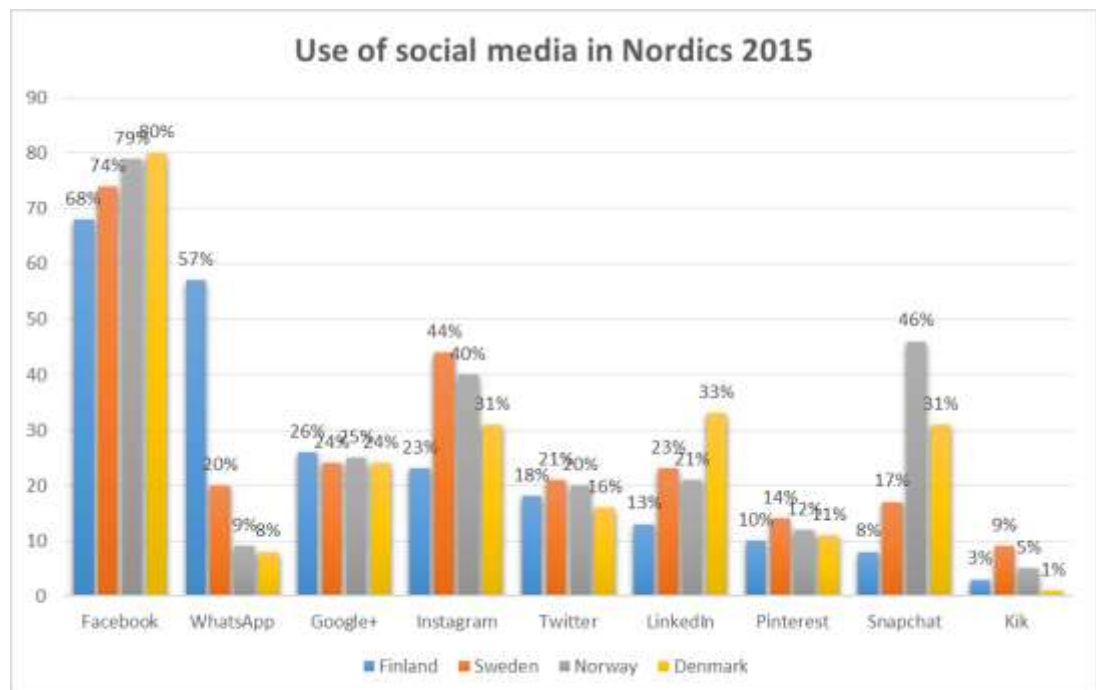


Figure 6. Use of social media in Nordics 2015. (Polaris Nordic 2015)

A study made in Finland revealed that decision makers and specialists in the ICT industry read less industry specific magazines. It shows that business magazines have been able to maintain their readers. The most important source of information for ICT professionals has been the colleagues in other companies and personal contacts. The second most used source of information was colleagues in the same company and external consultants. Electronic sources had only the fifth position, such as web pages, and the magazines had the sixth position. The primary reason for using the social media in the working life in Finland in year 2014 was to gather information. Sharing information, learning and establishing and maintaining co-operational relationships were also a purpose for using the social media at work. (Taloustutkimus Oy 2013; Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2015)

4.2.2 Events

According to respondent A the event marketing seems to be growing and the events are a platform for meeting potential customers face to face. Respondent B said that the face-to-face interaction is important in the business-to-business sales and it is essential what happens before and after the event. Respondent B also argued that an own event is better for providing information and meeting customers. Respondent C replied that the importance of the events depends on the industry but for some suppliers in heavy industries the events and the fairs are the main communication and sales channel. Respondent D replied that the events are a part of the marketing mix and respondent E considers events to be very important and growing.

ICTexpo is a Finnish IT tradeshow for professionals and it is yearly held in Helsinki. It is a two day event that consists of seminars on various stages and exhibitors from the fields of ICT and IT. The tradeshow gathers yearly thousands of visitors and it is the biggest professional IT tradeshow that is being held in the Nordics. Easyfairs gathers yearly information from visitors (Figure 7). The seminars have attracted attention of the visitors and the seminars have been mentioned as the most interesting reasons to visit the tradeshow besides getting an overview of the industry. Visitors also require new information of solutions on the market, find new contacts and want to meet known industry

operators. Making purchases was not often an intention when attending the tradeshow.

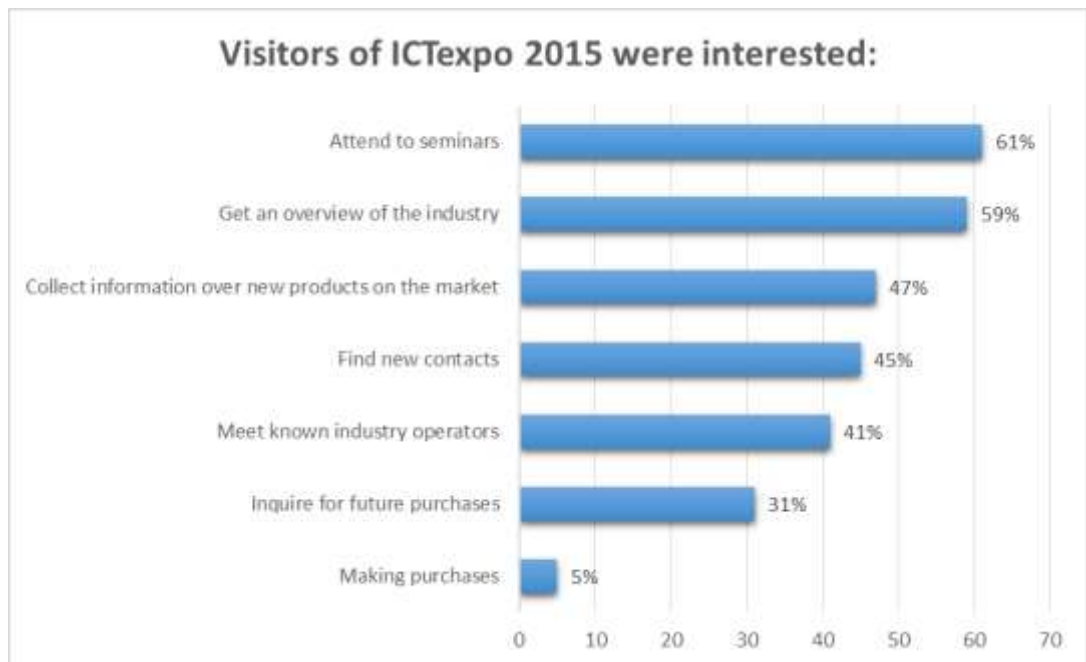


Figure 7. Visitors of ICTexpo 2015 were interested. (Easyfairs 2015)

Although ICTexpo visitors are not keen on making purchases during the tradeshow the most visitors (Figure 8) still decide or have an influence on a purchase (Figure 8). The tradeshow is valued so well that almost all visitors would like to return to the next event.

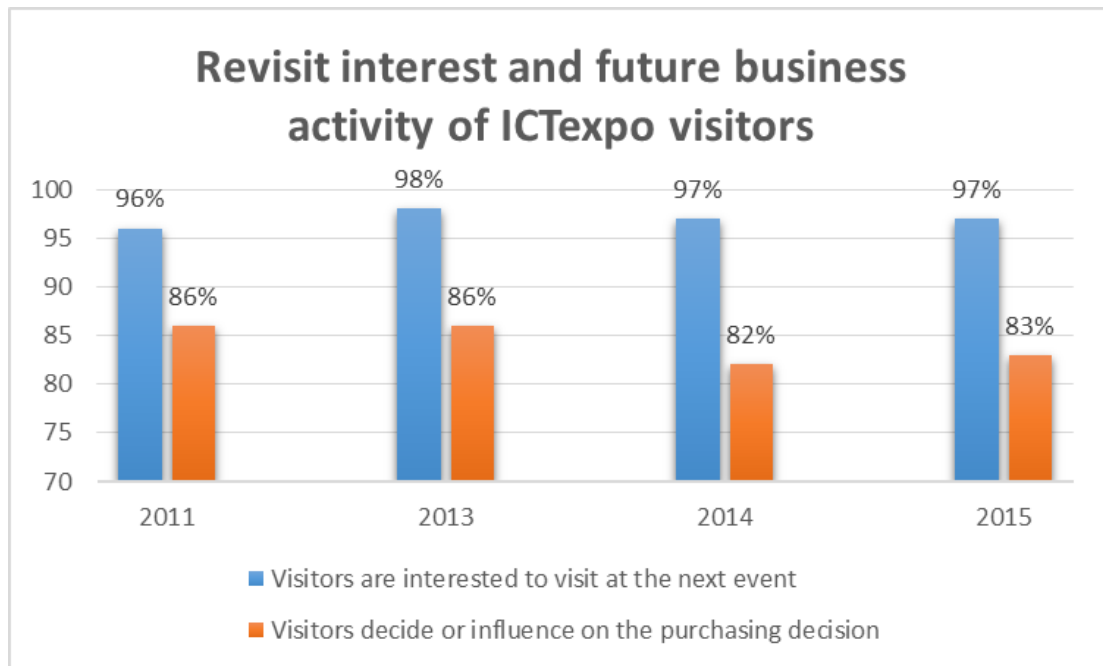


Figure 8. Revisit interest and future business activity of ICTexpo visitors. (Easyfairs 2011; 2013; 2014; 2015)

Event marketing is taking place, not just at the event, but also before and after the event. Social media is the place where marketers are able to increase awareness among potential customers and this is found to be number one purpose to be present in social media. Also promoting and driving attendance and providing information of the event have been the ways in using social media for the events. After the event the social media is used by the marketers to relive highlights of the event. (e-Strategy Trends 2014a; e-Strategy Trends 2014b)

Companies can promote and keep a track of the event-specific information by creating an event specific hashtag (#) to be used in online messages related to the event. An identifier, called as a tag, should be short and easy to remember. If the company already has a generic tag in the social media they could utilize it for making it easy to use by visitors. Influencers in the industries can promote events in the social media by sharing content and should be therefore invited. During the event all speaker sessions should be recorded for later use in companies' marketing purposes. Also speakers should be interviewed and customer feedback videotaped for marketing the next events. Right after the event leads should be contacted and acknowledge for participating. (Advance B2B 2015)

Event landing page should be optimized for mobile. This will drive more traffic to the page where all the information is easy to access. Visitors use social media during events so event organizers should be actively taking part in the conversation. Lasting impact for people comes from personal experiences. This means events should be made more personal. Registration system can be built in so that the visitor is greeted by name once arriving and booths giving unique offers. (Event marketing institute 2014)

4.2.3 Email

According to respondent A email marketing in business-to-business marketing communication is utilized the best way when the sender has already established a relationship with the receiver of the email message. Respondent B and E replied that the best way to utilize email is when it is created for a one segment which means a personalized message and content. When a customer relationship has been first established it is then important to continue with building the relationship. The email is seen as a simple and personal channel to build the right message at the right time that will feel like a service experience. A good way to process email marketing is also when it can be measured. Respondent C also saw that the email should be connected to a marketing automation tool that distributes newsletters to customer segments. It is useful for sales purposes when organization is capable of taking care of the leads. Respondent D considered the email marketing to be at its best when it drives traffic to the company's web site.

The use of emails in marketing communication keeps supporting the revenue since according to a study altogether 74% of the global marketers say that the email marketing enables to produce ROI. The most effective feature in email communication was the content and the design of the email according to the respondents of the study. (Salesforce 2015, 14, 16)

Sending emails should be done at the most optimized time when the receivers are online and actively opening messages. The industry has several marketing automation tools for following the communication activity but the optimal sending time has been studied for marketing purposes to be from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. when the opening rate is the most successful. A study shows that 96% of

marketing emails that are sent during the night and are on the top of the receivers' inbox in the morning are never opened. The most successful day of the week to send business to business marketing emails were found to be Tuesdays with an invitation to a web seminar or a white paper. (Pure360 2011, 2; Pardot 2013)

Creating a subject line for an email should promote increasing the opening rates. An organization needs to think what makes a customer to open the email in a short and descriptive way. Exact words that are studied to decrease opening rates are "free", "help", "percent off", "reminder", "get", "register", "report", "learn" and "book". Positive impact has been studied to be with words like "free delivery", "sale", "alert", "news", "daily" and "weekly". For increasing the opening rates the email subject can include the customer's first or last name or the city where they are located. The sender's name should always be recognizable for the receiver since the receivers open emails more easily from people they are familiar with. Email subject lines are being shortened by the increasing use of mobile devices. An effective email subject line is fully visible the in mobile device of the receiver of the email. (MailChimp 2015; Salesforce.com 2015a; Salesforce.com 2015b)

4.2.4 Telemarketing

Telemarketing has been mentioned to be one of the methods that work best in the business-to-business lead generation although the lead generation was found to be the biggest challenge (MarketingProfs 2013). Telemarketing was found to be one of the least annoying forms of advertising. Only 4% out of 200 managers that were studied thought that receiving telesales calls at work is annoying. In the same study it was found that receiving telemarketing calls at home were found most annoying. For the lead nurturing using a follow-up communication through telephone was found to be effective and very effective by 90% of the respondents. An interesting finding from the survey was that using the social media for the lead generation purposes was found to be more popular than using telemarketing or email marketing. However, the survey showed that using telemarketing or email marketing could provide better quality leads than using the social media for lead generation purposes. A relevant

conversation was found to be important in telemarketing as it engages the decision maker. Tools that have some form of human interaction seemed to build lasting business relationships and make decision makers feel valued. In general the study found that human interaction in some form during the business-to-business sales leads 68% of the cases to close the deal successfully. (SCI Sales 2012)

Solutions that require consulting projects around them when sold to customers should not be sold through telemarketing. Telemarketing with the right product can be a faster, cheaper and more effective alternative than having a face-to-face sales meeting. A seller can benefit from offering a "throw in" product to get to know the customer and gain customers trust. It has been suggested that during a sales call the customer should not feel that the seller is trying to sell to the customer something but rather the seller should make the customer feel that the seller is offering something for free, such as giving an advice that the customer can benefit from. (Österlund 2013)

4.3 Nordic business cultures

Employees in the Nordic companies generally have a low trust in authorities. They are reluctant to accept a control. A good educational system enables to use ICT beneficially in companies. Inside the organizations the managers often prioritize the wellbeing of the employees over customers. The managers often believe that satisfied employees create better products which increases the customer demand. (Mandagmorgen 2009)

Sweden describes its business culture to be relaxed and people talk informally by using the first names and not with the titles. The Swedish work mentality has one specific word "lagom" that can be translated with words "adequate" or "just right". This means the Swedish working culture promotes doing exactly just what is necessary to get the work done but executing the necessary things well. The hierarchy in the Swedish organizations is low. Employees communicate directly with the corporate level. An open discussion among all levels of the organization and affected parties is promoted prior to a decision is made. This practice has an impact in the time period decisions can be made. English language is widely used in businesses in Sweden but knowing Swedish

language is very appreciated. The Swedes are proud of their culture so knowing the local business culture will increase possibilities for a successful business relationship. (Swedish Institute 2015)

Official working hours in Sweden are from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. "Fika" is a known term in Sweden and stands for a coffee break that Swedes often take promptly one or two times per day. These coffee breaks are good for building a relationship either with colleagues or with customers during a business meeting. (Communicaid Group Limited 2016a)

In Norway the hierarchy in organizations is seen as flat. One of the main values in organizations is equality and communication is seen to be informal. The Norwegians appreciate cooperation and inside the organizations the employees are involved in the decision making. The willingness to take risks is seen as a typical characteristics for the Norwegians. (Innovation Norway 2016) A caring society and the honesty are seen also as main values in Norway. When doing business the companies are expected to tell the truth. Information should not be hidden or retained. Once the business relationship has been established the parties are on first name terms. The official working hours in Norway are from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. In Norway there are more women on the management level of organizations than in any other European country. (Communicaid Group Limited 2016b)

The Danish working culture emphasizes the work-life balance and employees are seen as players in a team. This type of working culture has lead to flexibility and personal influence. All this is possible with a personal responsibility, collaboration and communication. The hierarchy in the Danish organizations is seen as flat and employees operate directly with the corporate level management. Knowledge is shared during various meetings but also informally during lunch and other breaks along a working day. (Workindenmark.dk 2016)

The Finns avoid irrelevant small talk and therefore they value the spoken word. Words are chosen carefully by the Finns. Due to the country's history the Finns appreciate and have a very strong national identity. Although the Finns are ready to criticize their own country the foreigners are not advised to do so. English language is well known and spoken in organizations and some companies use it as a primary company language. In workplaces the employees

commonly address each other informally but before changing the business cards the Finnish customers should be addressed formally. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2010)

A study was made about marketing communications in the ICT industry of Finland in 2013. The findings of the study emphasized that communication should be clear and understandable and not IT jargon that the customer does not comprehensively understand. Customers acquire solutions to support their business processes. In the middle of the rapid growth and development period the companies should also assure that the customers understand what benefits and gains they are receiving. (Brand United 2013)

4.4 Data privacy and protection

Companies that gather customer data need to keep in mind law regulations that define how this data can be used for an advantage. Regulations determine in what way the marketing and advertising can be presented so that they do not insult, mislead or become a harassment. European Parliament and the Council have set a directive 2002/58/EC concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communication sector. Advanced digital technologies (5) give possibilities to gather information and reach users easily but the privacy and data protection still need to be addressed. If the privacy and the correct use of data is not respected the national laws of the countries will determine juridical remedies (47). (The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union 2002, L 201/37, 38)

The Finnish law for data protection in electronic communication determines that companies can practice the direct marketing such as telemarketing and email marketing only to such individuals that have given the permission in advance. The declining direct marketing needs to be made easy for the individual. If the service provider receives an email or a text message or a phone call which includes the contact details from an individual while purchasing a product, the service provider can contact the individual with the direct marketing for similar products and services using these contact details. The service provider has to communicate clearly the possibility for the individual to decline the direct

marketing easily and with no charge in each message or contacting efforts that the service provider makes towards the individual. (Finlex 2004, chapter 7, 26§)

Marketing by email in Finland for corporate customers should be done via the same contact details that the customer provided when purchasing a product or a service. The identity of the sender and the purpose of marketing needs to be able to be clearly identified by the receiver. In every marketing message the customer should be given clearly the opportunity to prevent such marketing messages in the future. For the telemarketing the corporate customer should be provided with the information explaining from where the contact details have been received for the telemarketing purposes. In every call the customer should be able to decline the use of the contact details for further telemarketing activities and the customer should be provided with the information about the organization on whose behalf the marketing is made. (Linklaters LLP 2015c)

The direct marketing in Norway is permitted for products and services by email if it is made directly to a corporation or to an appropriate contact person in the corporation. Products and services have to also be relevant to the business. The direct telephone marketing calls for corporate persons are permitted but text messages are prohibited for the marketing purposes without a prior approval. Customers can register to a marketing exclusion register. (Linklaters LLP 2015a)

Sending marketing materials in Denmark through email or as a text message to corporate customers is allowed if the contact details have been gathered with a sale, the contact details are used for marketing similar products or services as previously and the customer has not declined the use of the contact details in such a way. When the customer details are collected and each message is sent the customer has to have the opportunity to decline the use of the contact details for the marketing purposes. The direct marketing calls can be made to corporate customers if they have not registered for national marketing exclusion registers. (Linklaters LLP 2015b)

Marketing by email in Sweden for corporate customers should be done via the same contact details the customer provided when purchasing previously from the same company a product or a service. The identity of the sender and the purpose of the marketing needs to be able to be clearly identified by the receiver

of the marketing messages. In every marketing message the customer should be given clearly the opportunity to prevent such marketing messages in the future. Contacting the corporate customers by telephone for marketing purposes is accepted but in every call the customer should be told who is responsible for the marketing. (Linklaters LLP 2015d)

4.4 Measuring returns and success

The success of marketing communications can have several evaluation criteria. Respondents A and C said that the reachability is one measurement for the success of advertising that is used for example by bloggers. Respondent C advises to think what goals the company has for growing the audience. Respondent C tells it is important to measure and follow the factors that lead to the profitability. Companies should also think what goals they have that show that the audience likes the content. These goals in the social media can include getting comments, shares, likes etc. Also, the company should think what goals it has regarding conversion of activity in to leads and finally into sales.

Respondent A sees the profit to show in the company's result and that there is no one watertight theory or formula to calculate the returns from the marketing communication actions. Respondent A gives an example of brand value and that many units are responsible for creating its value. Respondent D thinks from digital channels received leads ensure that the company is found by those seeking to solve problems and leads should be used as an indicator of marketing becoming the biggest generator of qualified leads.

Respondent B also said that there are several small sub-measurements for returns but in the end the input-output relation would describe the ROI. Sub-measurements can be the amount of leads, the quality, how fast the customer flow moves, the recognition and the reachability. In the digital marketing a trend is to measure everything and in general it is made too complicated and thus the measurements should be in general simplified.

According to respondent E the results and the metrics of the marketing efforts should be linked back to the objectives. Awareness and engagement are early

key indicators. Leads and inbound inquiries are important lower funnel indicators. Marketing and sales qualified leads should be defined separately.

Respondent E advises to start with the investment and objectives. The progress of the marketing efforts should be measured against the baselines. The business case should be created against the core objectives and outcomes. It should also be understood that the marketing and the sales are closely linked but not the same thing. The main suggested marketing metrics are the awareness, the preference, the engagement and the leads. The value of these metrics can be understood only when the full customer journey, including the sales, has been mapped and the conversion rate between every phase measured.

When evaluating globally how the marketers measure the success of marketing in 2015 it turned out that the most important measure was evaluating the revenue growth, the second most important was the customer satisfaction and the third most important was the return on investment. (Salesforce 2015, 4)

5. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will provide key findings from data acquisition done by the researcher about the suggested marketing communication in business-to-business ICT marketing in the Nordic countries. The gathered information is reflected with the case company Nordicmind Oy and managerial recommendations are provided to enhance the management of marketing communication operations in the company.

5.1 Summary of key findings

The research for this Master's thesis was started with the research question:
How to improve marketing communications of enterprise software in Nordic countries?

In the business-to-business marketing communication the human interaction is found to be important. The sales have been found to increase almost by 70%

when the human interaction has been used in some form during the sales cycle. For the companies the events are a great place to meet the customers but there is no clear explanation about how these events will develop in the future as a communication platform. At the moment the events are seen to be important for the face-to-face interaction in business to business marketing and it is considered important to support events with marketing activities happening before and after the events.

The email marketing is also found to be an efficient way to contact customers when the messages are personalized. Contacting the customer should happen at the right time with the right message and this should preferably make the customer to feel the email a service experience that is appreciated. Marketers can use various automation tools to explore the interests of a possible customer. Email marketing should be used as a method to drive traffic to the company's web site.

Media is found to be popular in social and digital form. An interesting opinion was also that marketing communication should be done in channels which are actively used by decision makers. These are profiled as older men that do not use social media as much. The print magazines give an option to publish reference cases and case studies for marketing purposes. Also as market is so small in Nordic countries companies should advertise in business as well as IT magazines. Both are read by executives from IT industry.

Social, digital or print, content marketing is what matters. Often customer is already far ahead in its sales process once an IT seller is addressed. Products should be visible and promoted in the search engines. This will also lead customers to the company's webpage. A clear communication and an understandable message was found to be important. The companies should not use as much IT jargon but instead explain how customers benefit from the products or the solutions.

Telemarketing is found to be one of the best ways to generate leads in business-to-business marketing communication. The leads originating from the telemarketing are seen as quality leads whereas there are challenges to get leads originating from the social media and the digital media even if they are popular to be used.

Measuring the returns of the marketing communications is found to be important but there are many alternative ways to carry out the measurement that can depend for example on the set objectives, the planned outcomes and the tools used to implement the marketing communication. Some measurements that were identified to help evaluating the marketing communications include the leads, the reach rate, the conversion rate, the likes rate and the return on investment (ROI).

Figure 9 illustrates the key findings of this research concerning the major features that have been identified to affect the successful implementation of the marketing communication.

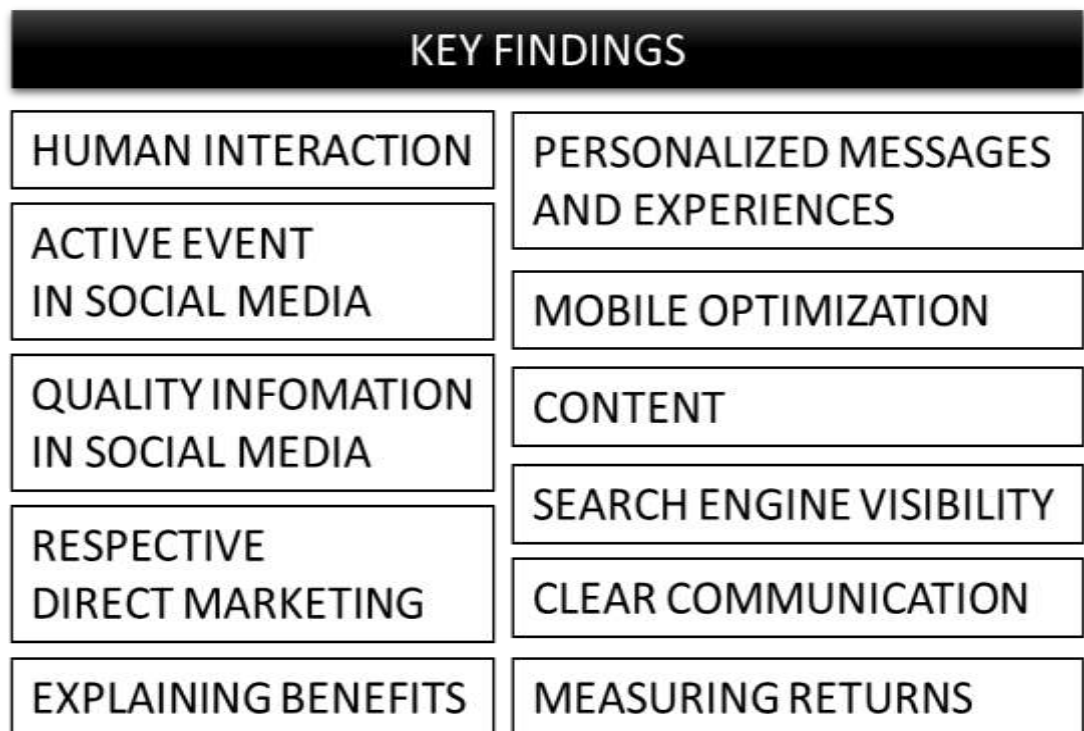


Figure 9. Key findings.

For this study the researcher interviewed five representatives of marketing companies, including four directors and one manager. Marketing as a field is extremely wide and there are many trends and options. One marketing company does not always cover all channels and tools but rather is often specialized. As a conclusion, to carry out successful marketing communication

the company should have in-house expertise to be able to manage marketing communication actions that support company's core strategies and to keep up with overall costs. No one will be able to know the company's customers better than the company and its employees itself.

5.2 Managerial recommendations

Integrated marketing communications model was created for supporting the organization's goals when making a communication plan. Inside this model is the execution of the marketing communication. Figure 10 represents the marketing communication management process model that will assist Nordicmind Oy in meeting the expectations and the outcomes of any activity or campaign in the marketing communication.

Before a marketing campaign is launched the organization needs to think what it does want the outcome to be. From this starting point the objectives and the target group can be specified. Also the company should think what is the budget needed for the marketing activities. Then organization can design the marketing campaign with a suitable idea and the right content. The tools selected for the marketing activities determine how the execution of the marketing campaign is done. During the marketing campaign a follow-up should be done to see what are the results and if some enhancements or changes should be done in order to improve the outcomes. Final steps require measuring the marketing campaign with appropriate indicators and sharing the results with partners, stakeholders and internally inside the organization.



Figure 10. The marketing communication management process model.

The direct marketing can be seen easy the when the company has a large database of contact details of potential or current customers. This kind of databases should not be utilized without taking care of data privacy and possible protection. In order to enable the company to maintain a good reputation it should respect national data privacy regulations. Corporate contacts should be regularly verified with the national marketing restriction lists and at all times these contacts should be openly given the possibility to forbid any unwanted direct marketing actions. The marketing communication should aim at creating a positive interest and not an annoyance.

When creating the content for the marketing communication in the digital environment, the use of mobile devices should be addressed. An optimal time for sending marketing emails is right after working hours. Often at the time the receivers of the marketing emails are shifting from work to home and the emails are opened with mobile devices. Marketing messages need to be easy to see and the links very visible to conveniently click on.

For the marketing communication the events are an important place to meet potential and current customers. The social media provides a platform to draw people to the event, to stay on the top of all important information during the event and afterwards to be able to provide a review of all the highlights. Engagement in the social media for an event, or just generally in the organization, is important and can be boosted with the influencers operating in the same field. Personalized emails are now seen important but so are events. Giving an exceptional treatment during the events, inviting personally and providing special offers just for the event will make the customers interested and engaged. Information and content that is delivered during the events has a significant influence on the purchase decision.

An effective marketing communication is based on the right message at the right time. To send the marketing messages to the right people the organization needs to carefully identify the target group and create the message so that it will value the receiver. Corporate and management level in organizations are interested in the way solutions affect the business. Technical professionals are concerned how marketed solutions will operate in the infrastructure of the company. The personnel of the resellers are interested in what impact the marketed solution will have on their job functions.

Measuring the success of a marketing communication campaign and choosing the right indicators can be formulated based on the set goals and the wished outcomes. Email marketing campaigns can be measured with the reachability. The company can make an analysis about how many emails were opened and acted upon if there are links that activate receivers. Telemarketing can be measured with the amount of leads it provides and making a follow-up to see if the leads proceed finally to a sale. In the event marketing the events can be a place to see how many people registered and to gather leads and sales but it is also possible to make a follow-up with the attendee satisfaction. The social media is a platform to communicate marketing content but also create a buzz around the organization and its events. The success of marketing communication in the social media can be measured with the activity on the company's accounts such as the amount of likes and how much company-related tags have been used and in a what way. The success of marketing communications in the end is measured with the profit of the company and integrated functions in the organization are required to make a marketing impact.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

The studied research questions and subject have been so wide that there would be many ways to continue studying the subject in future. The research could go deeper in the field of ICT and study the same topic from a different technological perspective. For example telecommunications, security and cloud technologies have all different characteristics that could be taken in to consideration when improving marketing communications.

All marketing channels that were studied in this research are interesting and have their own characteristics with the marketing communication. The future research could focus on studying target groups and what would be the most profitable ways to create marketing communications to address different customer profiles.

5.4 Evaluation of the study process and the self-development

This Master's thesis project started in August 2014 when the researcher began the degree program in international business management. It was known from the beginning that the program included a development project for a real-life commissioner from the field of business. It was clear that the researcher's own employer would be chosen as the commissioner and the researcher presented the idea of a development project already in September 2014.

More specific ideas for the development project began to raise both for the commissioner and the researcher but it was not until in spring 2015 when the current topic was decided. The researcher is thankful that the commissioner wished to support her interests and expertise with the selected development project. The idea of the wished development and the aim were quite easy to define but the actual process of how and with what methods it should be addressed was a longer journey.

The researcher tried to find similar previous studies from the field of marketing communications but the found previous studies mainly discussed about creating an appropriate mix of the communication tools. It also became clear during the data acquisition that the development project topic and the targeted region for the research were quite wide. Anyway, with this Master's thesis the researcher tries to give practical suggestions for improving business-to-business marketing communications.

While going through appropriate theories and literature the researcher came across the integrated marketing communication process developed by Schultz. For the development project of the researcher it made sense to design communication that is appropriate for the targeted segment and measure the results. The more the researcher studied the marketing management it was clear that the Master's thesis needed to address measuring of the results. The researcher learnt to believe that what you can measure, you can also improve.

The interviews for this research were done mainly with the directors in marketing agencies. The researcher thinks that the gained answers can be considered to be applied in other fields as well and hopes that the results of the thesis can be used to improve marketing communication in varied organizations.

The degree program has included courses from sales and marketing management in the international business environment context but nothing has educated the researcher more than her own research and data acquisition for the thesis and gathering results that lead to the synthesis for managerial implementation. The researcher has produced thesis during other studies and sees how she has developed in all areas including academic research, writing, data acquisition and analyzing. The researcher has also gained abilities to discuss and argue about the researched topic from a general point of view and not only from the personal perspective that can introduce bias.

For the commissioner the researcher produces a separate managerial guide of key findings of the research and formulates a management process of marketing communication activities. These additional efforts of the researcher aim to ensure that the results can be implemented to the practice when designing the marketing strategies and creating a better marketing communication management.

The researcher is grateful of all the support she received during the study process. The commissioner supported researcher's interests in selected topic and development plans. The supervisor Satu Peltola encouraged researcher in academic studies and to make independent and justified decisions. Researcher also wants to give special attention to her class MB14SY where study processes and questions that rose were discussed together. Lastly, researcher received great support from her love, Lauri Lahti, during the whole study process.

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Table 1. ICT Professional Profiles

Table 2. List of respondents participating in the interview.

REQUEST FOR AN INTERVIEW BY EMAIL

Topic: Request for an interview in a scientific study

Hi,

I am contacting you on an interview request for a master's thesis. My aim is to gather information from the current situation of marketing communications and how it could be improved in b2b context.

I believe your experience and input in this work would be very valuable.

Would you be available for an interview via online meeting (GoToMeeting) or by phone during 6. - 23.10.2015? The interview will last max. 20-30 minutes and will be recorded. Please suggest a date and time that would be suitable for you!

You will receive questions prior to the interview. During the interview we can discuss more.

This interview will be a part of a master's thesis done for degree programme of International Business Management in Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences, Finland.

Master's thesis commissioner is Nordicmind Oy but all results will be public. Nordicmind is a Value Added Distributor of enterprise software in Northern Europe. Information will be primarily used for developing commissioner's marketing communications but also aiming to help organizations in the ICT sector providing software solutions for enterprises to have information how to make more succesful marketing communications between Nordic countries.

When you agree to participate to this interview I will make sure that you will also have the results of the thesis answering to a question "How to improve marketing communications of enterprise software in Nordic countries?". You will be able to use the results for your own business.

You can also choose to participate in the data collection of the thesis anonymously.

Hoping to hear from you. Could you please reply by friday 9th October.

Thank you!

Kind regards,
Riikka Tankka

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ATTACHMENT FOR INTERVIEWEES

QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW:

What do you see as the most important tools for b2b marketing communications at the moment?

How do you see branding in b2b marketing?

What are in your opinion the most important online and print medias in Denmark at the moment?

How should organizations exploit online media in b2b marketing at the moment?

How should organizations exploit printed media in b2b marketing at the moment?

What importance does event marketing have at the moment in marketing communications? In ICT industry? What about in the future?

How should email marketing be utilized in the best way in b2b marketing?

What are the most important criteria to measure the profitability in marketing communications?

What are the indicators that should be used to evaluate the profitability of marketing communications?

FURTHER INFORMATION OF THE INTERVIEW AND THE RESEARCH:

This interview is a part of data acquisition for a master's thesis that utilizes qualitative research methods. The master's thesis is a part of degree programme in international business management, Master of Business Administration.

The master's thesis is produced together with Kymenlaakso University of Applied Science and Nordicmind Oy. The thesis and the results will be public.

The aim of the study is to gather current information from the field of marketing communications and give an advice how to utilize and exploit results in business-to-business communications in the field of ICT.

Interview will be recorded.

Participation in this research can be done anonymously.

LISTED BUSINESS & IT MEDIAS BY COUNTRY

(in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark)

SWEDEN	WEBSITE
Business	
Affärsvärlden	http://www.affarsvarlden.se/
Dagens Industri	http://www.di.se/
DAGENS MEDIA	http://www.dagensmedia.se/
The Economist: Sweden	http://www.economist.com/topics/sweden-1
Veckans Affärer	http://www.va.se/
It	
CIO Sweden	http://cio.idg.se/
Internetworld	http://internetworld.idg.se/
NORWAY	WEBSITE
Business	
Euro Investor	http://www.euroinvestor.no/
Hegnar	http://www.hegnar.no/
Kapital	http://kapital.hegnar.no/
Nortrade	http://www.nortrade.com/
The Economist: Norway	http://www.economist.com/topics/norway
The Nordic Page	http://www.tnp.no/economy
The Oslo Times	http://theoslotimes.com/
It	
Computerworld	http://www.cw.no/
HjemmePC	http://www.klikk.no/hjemmepc/
DENMARK	WEBSITE
Business	
Berlingske Business Magasinet	http://www.business.dk/magasinet/
Dagbladet Børsen	http://borsen.dk/
Focus Denmark	http://um.dk/en/tradecouncil/publications/focus-dk/archive/
Jyllands-Posten	http://jyllands-posten.dk/
Penge & Privatøkonomi	http://penge.dk/
It	
Computerworld	http://www.computerworld.dk/
FINLAND	WEBSITE
Business	
Arvopaperi	http://www.arvopaperi.fi/
KauppaLehti	http://www.kauppalehti.fi/
Talouselämä	http://www.talouselama.fi/
Tekniikka & Talous	http://www.tekniikkatalous.fi/
It	
IT-viikko	http://www.itviikko.fi/sivu.php?page_id=1
Mikrobitti	http://www.mbnet.fi/
Tivi	http://www.tivi.fi/

LISTED IT TRADE SHOWS IN NORDICS

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION	COUNTRY	CHARACTER
Nordic IT Security Forum http://www.nordicitsecurity.com/	3.11.2015	Stockholm	Sweden	Yearly
-				
Nordic Shared Services & Outsourcing http://www.nordicsharedservices.com/	17-18.11.2015	Stockholm	Sweden	Yearly
Tecpoints Årskonferens 2015: Cybersecurity http://tecpoint.dk/event/2015-11-18/	18.11.2015	Hørsholm	Denmark	Yearly
600Minutes ICT Trends and Solutions http://managementevents.com/events/finland/600minutes-ict-trends-and-solutions/637/	24.11.2015	Helsinki	Finland	Yearly
Suomalaisen Johtamisen Päivä http://www.suomalainenjohtaminen.fi/	10.12.2015	Helsinki	Finland	Yearly
Tietohallintopäivä http://waku.fi/tietohallintopaiva/#etusivu	21.1.2016	Helsinki	Finland	Yearly
Jfokus www.jfokus.com	8-10.2.2016	Stockholm	Sweden	Yearly
jDays www.jdays.se	8-9.3.2016	Gothenburg	Sweden	Yearly
600Minutes Executive IT http://managementevents.com/events/sweden/600minutes-executive-it/319/	9.3.2016	Stockholm	Sweden	Yearly
600Minutes Executive IT http://managementevents.com/events/finland/600minutes-executive-it/608/	16.3.2016	Helsinki	Finland	Yearly
itSMF http://www.itsmf.no/invitation-to-sponsors-and-exhibitors-at-the-itsmf-conference-2016-service-management-with-superheroes-of-the-world.5795151-140841.html	13-14.4.2016	Oslo	Norway	Yearly

600Minutes Information and Cyber Security http://managementevents.com/events/norway/600minutes-information-and-cyber-security/63/	14.4.2016	Oslo	Norway	Yearly
ICTexpo http://www.easyfairs.com/fi/events_216/ictexpo-2016_77797/ictexpo-2016_77858/	27-28.4.2016	Helsinki	Finland	Yearly
Security Conference www.securityconf.se	19.5.2016	Stockholm	Sweden	Unknown
NDC Oslo 2016 http://ndcoslo.com/	6-10.6.2016	Oslo	Norway	Yearly
Kyberturvallisuus & ICT http://www.kyberturvallisuusmessut.fi/	09/2016	Jyväskylä	Finland	Unknown
IPEXPO http://www.ipexponordic.com/	09/2016	Stockholm	Sweden	Yearly
Nordic Digital Business Summit http://www.ndbsevents.com/	09/2016	Helsinki	Finland	Yearly
600Minutes IT Management http://managementevents.com/events/finland/600minutes-it-management/622/	7.9.2016	Helsinki	Finland	Yearly
600Minutes Executive IT http://managementevents.com/events/denmark/600minutes-executive-it/195/	21.9.2016	Copenhagen	Denmark	Yearly
600Minutes Executive IT http://managementevents.com/events/norway/600minutes-executive-it/70/	27.10.2016	Oslo	Norway	Yearly
600Minutes ICT Trends and Solutions http://managementevents.com/events/finland/600minutes-ict-trends-and-solutions/638/	3.11.2016	Helsinki	Finland	Yearly
SECTECH http://shows.newmaker.com/fairs/Sectech-Denmark.html	16-17.11.2016	Copenhagen	Denmark	Yearly