

Increasing Social Media Engagement through a Digital Marketing Plan

Case: Plootu

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Bachelor's Thesis
Degree Programme in
International Business
May 2016



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Degree programme Bachelor Degree in International Business	
Thesis title Increasing Social Media Engagement through a Digital Marketing Plan. Case: Plootu	Number of pages and appendix pages 36+5
<p>The importance of mastering digital marketing in companies' marketing mix is increasing and expertise in the field is still developing. Digital marketing provides tools to facilitate more targeted and cost-efficient marketing. Not only can marketing teams reach customers all over the world but they can also communicate, interact and engage with them.</p> <p>The objective of this project-based thesis was to increase social media engagement, brand awareness and reach new audiences in social media by implementing a digital marketing plan on Facebook and in Instagram. In addition to creating the digital marketing plan, the project involved multiple additional steps such as creating a brand code, creating content to be published and researching key concepts relevant to the study. The theoretical part of the thesis discusses the link between the concepts of brand awareness, post reach, social media engagement and customer touch point. Advertising material is presented and its effect on selected key measures is evaluated.</p> <p>The case company of the thesis, Plootu, is a furniture store and cafeteria in Helsinki. There are three companies operating in Plootu: A&A Design, Sasu's Playhouse and Rupla Rööperi. Plootu was established in August 2015 as a new concept store and it has great potential for becoming a strong brand by reaching new customers through social media. This thesis provides tools and valuable information about digital marketing and a comprehensive digital marketing plan. The project was implemented in the spring of 2016.</p>	
Keywords Brand recognition, brand awareness, SOSTAC-marketing planning model, social media engagement, Facebook advertising	

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1 Introduction

Social media has changed the world. It has changed the way we communicate, the way we seek information and the way we express ourselves. Social media connects people worldwide. It provides a tool that connects people by their interests, hobbies, opinions and professional knowledge. Social media enables an extremely fast way to share information, be it ideas, events or news; the list is endless.

At the time of writing this, there were 3,3 billion Internet users in the world. 1,6 billion of them were on Facebook and 400 million people were actively using Instagram (Rouhinen 2016, Internet Live Stats 2016.) These figures demonstrate the ways in which people consume media, are changing. There is a clear upward trend in global social media use, as it becomes an increasingly integral part of people's lives. Meanwhile, traditional media such as newspapers, television and radio have less to celebrate, as they have to compete with a network that is rapidly advancing and offers infinite possibilities.

Social media presents a major commercial opportunity. Whether there is an entrepreneur, SME, a multinational corporation, B2B or a B2C company in question, everyone has the opportunity to reach their customers through different social media channels. Therefore social media should be a fundamental component of a marketing strategy. Not only can companies reach more customers, they can communicate, interact and engage with them. Strong visibility in social media attracts people, and therefore can generate growth. Additionally, establishing one's Facebook, Instagram or other social media accounts that are relevant to the business, is usually free of charge. Therefore getting started is extremely easy.

Marketing always needs to be carefully planned and social media based marketing does not make an exception on this matter. Social media does not necessarily offer company shortcuts to big profits or a massive increase in clientele. In fact, bad social media marketing could potentially lead to a disaster. In order to flourish in social media, the company needs to establish an effective digital marketing communications plan. There are various different tools that provide a general template in the process of creating a coherent digital marketing plan. According to Kitchen (2016, 33–64), an effective social media marketing plan can be created by following five easy steps: identifying the end goals and objectives, determining targeted customers, studying how to message the brand to the audience in a personal way, selecting the channels and analysing the results.

1.1 Project objectives and tasks

The project's objective is to increase brand awareness and brand recognition through engagement and better post reach in social media. I will create a digital marketing plan and implements it in Facebook and in Instagram in collaboration with the case company.

PT 1. Establishing the theoretical framework for a digital marketing communications plan

PT 2. Interviewing Plootu's management to determine its objectives and goals

PT 3. Establishing the measures for the digital marketing communications campaign

PT 4. Producing the digital marketing communications plan

PT 5. Implementing the campaign

PT 6. Measuring the success

PT 7. Evaluating the project

1.1 Project scope

In this thesis the main emphasis is on creating a digital marketing communications plan in social media. There are different kinds of marketing planning templates available. I have decided to choose the SOSTAC – tool, which I found to be the most relevant and suitable for the project. In accordance with the case company's request the study focuses solely on Facebook and Instagram, as those are the channels in which it is currently present. Therefore I have excluded all other social media channels. The success of the campaign is dependant on the increase in selected key measures. These key measures are social media engagement (likes, followers, comments and shares) and post reach. No other measurement tools are used. This thesis does not aim to achieve direct financial gains. The reason for this is that Plootu is not a company as itself but a trademark that is owned by three companies. Therefore following revenue figures, ROI (return on investment) or any other financial measures is complicated and thus, will not be discussed. The theoretical framework concerning branding is chosen to be Thomas Gad's 4-D Brand Code Model. In addition to the brand model, I will discuss the main concepts such as digital marketing and social media engagement, whereas key concepts such as brand awareness and brand recognition are only discussed briefly in order to provide context for the reader.

1.2 The structure of the thesis

This thesis details a digital marketing communications plan of a case company, which was implemented in Spring 2016.

This thesis consists of five chapters: introduction, project planning, digital marketing communications plan, implementation of the campaign, and discussion part. The first two chapters focus on introducing the reader to the topic and presenting relevant key concepts and theories. To facilitate readers understanding, I have deliberately chosen to include theoretical references within each topic rather than keep them separate. The relevant literature and theoretical framework that support the actions made in the project are discussed in the same chapter or subchapter, if I have deemed it appropriate.

I interviewed the case company's employees in order to determine the goals and objectives of the campaign. After selecting the key measures of the campaign, I created a 4-D brand code for Plootu. As a theoretical reference for creating the digital marketing plan, I chose the SOSTAC – tool, which provides a comprehensive structure to produce marketing plans. With a detailed SOSTAC-marketing plan I designed a marketing schedule that was implemented in selected social media channels. Finally, the success of the marketing campaign was evaluated by analysing the results comparing them to the selected key measures.

1.3 Key concepts

The key concepts discussed in the thesis are defined as follows:

Brand awareness is the strength of the brand's presence in the consumers mind. It includes brand recognition and brand recall. (Aaker 2010, 10.)

Brand recognition is a reflection to a past exposure to the brand. Consumer remembers that he/she has seen this brand somewhere before. (Aaker 2010, 10.)

Post reach is the number of people you have reached in their social media News Feed. It includes desktop and mobile views. Post reach can be divided into two categories: organic and paid reach. Organic reach is the total number of people who were exposed to your content without paying. Paid reach is the total number of people who saw your post as a result of an advertisement or boosted post. (Facebook.)

Engagement is the level of involvement, interaction, intimacy and influence an individual has with a brand over time" (Corcoran 12 April 2011).

Engagement in social media means any actions that an audience member takes in response to a company's post. Examples of social media engagement actions include liking,

commenting, clicking, sharing, re-tweeting, mentioning, tagging, pinning, re-pinning and following. Actions available to a potential consumer depend on what is provided by the social media channel. Engagement increases the reach and more people will see the content. (Social Media Consultant 7 January 2016.)

4-D Brand Model (also known as Brand Code) is a four-dimensional model used to analyse the strengths and the weaknesses of company's brand. The four dimensions used in the model are functional, social, spiritual and mental dimensions. Brand Code describes how the company differentiates from its competitors and what makes it unique. (Gad 2001, 16-17.)

1.4 Benefits

This thesis is beneficial for the case company Plootu, which will be provided a detailed digital marketing communications plan and assistance in implementing the campaign. The campaign is not only projected to result in increased social media engagement and follower numbers on social media, but also developing company's understanding of effective digital marketing communications. The thesis details theoretical viewpoints such as brand model, which could provide useful insights for Plootu's future campaigns.

The thesis process is beneficial for me in terms of understanding the methods and processes of digital marketing communications and advertising. Throughout the project I will acquire practical skills in developing creative marketing messages and implementing advertisement campaigns on Facebook and Instagram. This project helps me to understand the impact of paid online advertising and characteristics of engaging content.

1.5 Case company

Plootu, furniture store and café, is a new concept store located in Helsinki's idyllic district Punavuori. Plootu opened in August 2015. There are three companies operating in Plootu: A&A Design and Sasu's Playhouse furniture stores and Rupla Rööperi cafeteria. The owners of A&A Design and Sasu's Playhouse hold over ten years of experience with importing furniture and operating a furniture store. Sasu's Playhouse has a second location in Porvoo. Rupla also runs another café in Kallio, Helsinki, which has garnered popular success through holding varied events and art exhibitions. A&A Design's products represent industrial design whereas Sasu's Playhouse furniture can be described as using a rustic countryside style.

Plootu offers medium-priced furniture that is stylish and stands out. It is for people who have a taste for rugged style home decoration. On top of being furniture store with a wide selection Plootu provides a place with a pleasant atmosphere where you can spend time while enjoying a hot or cold beverage made of high quality ingredients. It is an excellent hangout spot for group of friends or individual time spending.

Plootu provides interior design service and a space for private events. It also sell its business partners' products such as Genelec audio systems, HOUM wireless lighting control solutions and micro cement, which is a self-adhesive coating that can be applied to different surfaces.

As a new and somewhat small store, Plootu has an opportunity to reach its customers in social media with very little or no budget. Through Facebook and Instagram, Plootu can reach potential new customers and maintain relationships with existing customer base.

The need for this thesis is the fact that the co-operation of three different companies has generated challenges in marketing. Even after opening Plootu in August 2015, these three companies have completed their marketing as individual companies rather than under Plootu. Plootu has all the potential for becoming a strong brand, however the brand building process requires contribution from all three parties. It currently does not have a person in charge of marketing. This has led to a situation where social media marketing is not planned and therefore it remains vague and ineffective.

2 Essentials of marketing communications

All companies and organisations need to communicate consistently with a variety of stakeholders. For marketing communications, as a very broad and complex subject, it is hard to give one exact definition. Traditionally it was considered as a method to promote and give information about products and services to buyers. However, in reality, marketing communications does cover more than that. It takes into account all the people that influence or are influenced by the company, and therefore as a concept it can be interpreted in different ways. It involves the activities, methods, processes, perceptions and actions that a company has to take into consideration when communicating with their audiences. Efficient marketing communications engages a company's target audience, which finally results in achieving a company's business and marketing goals. (Fill 2013, 17-19)

Marketing communications is going through changes at an incredible speed. Digitalization has had its impact on the way we communicate and what channels we are using. By understanding the changing environment, where the direction is from traditional media to digital media, companies can now communicate interactively with their target audience with more targeted messages. Marketing communication mix consists of three elements: core types of message, categories of media and communication tools. (Fill 2013, 23)



Figure 1. Marketing communications mix (Fill 2013, 24.)

This brings us to a new era of creating the marketing communications mix, where the media, content and messages play the biggest role. Consumers require active engagement with media and they are motivated to generate their own content to be shared with their friends in social media. Whether the format of the message is text, photo or video, the categories can be divided into four different categories: informational, emotional, user-generated and branded content. Less, but yet significant elements are the categories of media and communication tools. Each tool of marketing communications (advertising, sales promotion, PR, personal selling and direct marketing) has its own role in attaining different objectives. Nowadays there is a huge variety of different medias available. These consist of broadcast, print, outdoor, digital, in-store and other media classes. Digital, which is the selected media in this thesis, is growing the fastest, and is therefore crucial for companies to get a hold of. (Fill 2013, 23-27.)

2.1 Digital marketing

The development of digital technology has had a massive effect on the way marketing communications is used, however the real expertise on the field is still developing. Not only does digital marketing communications provide interactivity and creative ways to advertise, it also provides a wide range of different digital media channels, and the number is growing. (Fill 2013, 623.)

Before the launch of digital media channels, marketing campaigns were implemented in traditional media channels: TV, print, radio, and direct mail. However, digitalization has opened up new opportunities, and this has happened very rapidly. Now marketers can choose among PPC (pay-per-click), SEO (search engine optimization), e-mail marketing, video marketing, and social media marketing. The reason why digital marketing is considered to be more efficient is the fact that it provides companies a possibility to target their online audience based on customer profile and previous interactions on websites. This enables delivering messages, which are more relevant and more interesting to the receiver. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 26-27.)

Digital marketing communications enables marketers to browse the variety of channels available and select the ones that their target audience uses. Thus, using different channels in digital marketing communications is referred to as multichannel marketing. By optimizing each channel, personalising the message, and researching customer behaviour, marketers can advertise more efficiently. However, it also enables the audience to get an access to the products and services in the channel that they prefer to use. Rather than mass-marketing to an audience with messages that some of them do not wish to receive, companies can be more precise, accurate, customized, and targeted. This results in digital marketing being incredibly cost-efficient. (Fill 2013, 633-637.)

2.1 Selected channels

Social media channels vary significantly. Social media mix determines what channels company uses in their marketing. There are varying characteristics in different social media channels.

Facebook

With the 1.6 billion users Facebook is the leading social network in the world. For business purposes, Facebook works for almost for any company. 64% of the 1.6 billion Facebook users visit the page everyday. Facebook pages allow companies to interact, communicate, and engage with potential customers. Not only is establishing a Facebook page completely free of charge, there are other advantages too, especially for small and medium sized companies. It provides a platform where uploading content is made easy regardless of what device they are using. For a customer it is more accessible and reliable than traditional website and it allows them to contact a company by messaging them directly as well. In a company's Facebook page consumers can review a company's products, share

photos and videos, and leave comments or recommendations to their friends. (Rouhiainen 2016.)

Instagram

Instagram was the first major social media channel that was accessible through mobile only. 400 million people actively use Instagram and the number is growing. Since its launch at the end of 2010, over 30 billion photos and videos have been uploaded to Instagram. In average 70 million pieces of content are posted every day. It is an effective tool to present your business visually and in industries such as fashion, decoration, culture, tourism, fitness, automobile, food and home and living businesses have had a lot of success with it. (Rouhiainen 2016; Cameron-Kitchen 2016, 210-211.)

Instagram provides a great tool for targeting a company's core business to selected audience. By using Instagram Hashtags that are relevant to the post and have high popularity, companies can find new audiences and increase their following. (Cameron-Kitchen 2016, 216.) For example if the case company Plootu wants to discover people who live near its store in Punavuori, and are interested home décor and industrial design, it should use hashtags such as #punavuori, #sisustusidea, #kodinsisutus, and #teollinenmuotoilu.

Figures show that younger generation Instagram more. Through Instagram, business can reach people aged 15-35 years old as 73% of Instagram users are within that age bracket (Cameron-Kitchen 2016, 61). According to a study published in 2015, 52% of people under 25 years old and 27% aged 25-34% use Instagram in Finland (Yle 2015).

In Instagram social engagement is the highest compared to other social medias. Engagement level can be measured by counting user interactions with brands as a percentage of brands' fans or followers. With a per-follower engagement rate of 2,261%, Instagram engaged people over 10 times more than Facebook, where the engagement level was only 0.216% in 2015. (Elliot 15 September 2015.)

2.2 Project environment

Throughout the project I have participated in the company's weekly meetings to discuss the details of the marketing plan and the campaign. The first steps of the project involved negotiating and researching the goals and objectives of the campaign, budget, and selecting appropriate social media channels. In the very early phases of the project I suggested to creating a Plootu Brand Code (with the template created by Thomas Gad) in order to

support the content published. By collaborating closely and interviewing employees of Plootu, I created a detailed and personalised brand code exclusively for Plootu. By having a brand code, Plootu has suggested guidelines to follow, when creating consistent and unique marketing messages, which are in accordance with the brand code. Finally, I presented ideas for the content used in the campaign, of which the best ones were chosen. After coming to a conclusion with the content in the campaign, I contacted a photographer, people to be photographed, and arranged the day when the photo shootings were to be held.

I prepared the digital marketing plan using the SOSTAC-marketing tool, which systematically demonstrates the different steps of the project, methods, and processes to be taken into consideration. It included a daily marketing schedule for the campaign, which also ensured that everyone knew their roles and responsibilities in the project. During the campaign, I made sure that the tasks appointed to people were completed.

2.3 Branding Plootu

Branding plays an important role in marketing communications. Branding the product or service benefits the supplier, as well as the customer. A supplier can charge a higher price, differentiate from its competitors and get a legal protection for its products. It also enhances customer loyalty and retention. For customers, branding improves the quality of their shopping experience by assisting the customer to identify preferred products and providing psychological reassurance or reward. (Fill 2013, 330-331.)

To fully understand Plootu's brand we have divided the perceptions of the brand into four dimensions. The functional dimension, is the benefit that customer gets from the product or a service. The social dimension describes the social acceptance and the way that the carrier of the logo is seen. The mental dimension states how an individual perceives the brand on a personal level. Finally, the spiritual dimension can be considered as an idealistic dimension. It discusses the brand from an ethical point of view, relating to how society takes responsibility of welfare, infrastructure, cultural development and environmental issues (Gad 2001, 93-98.)

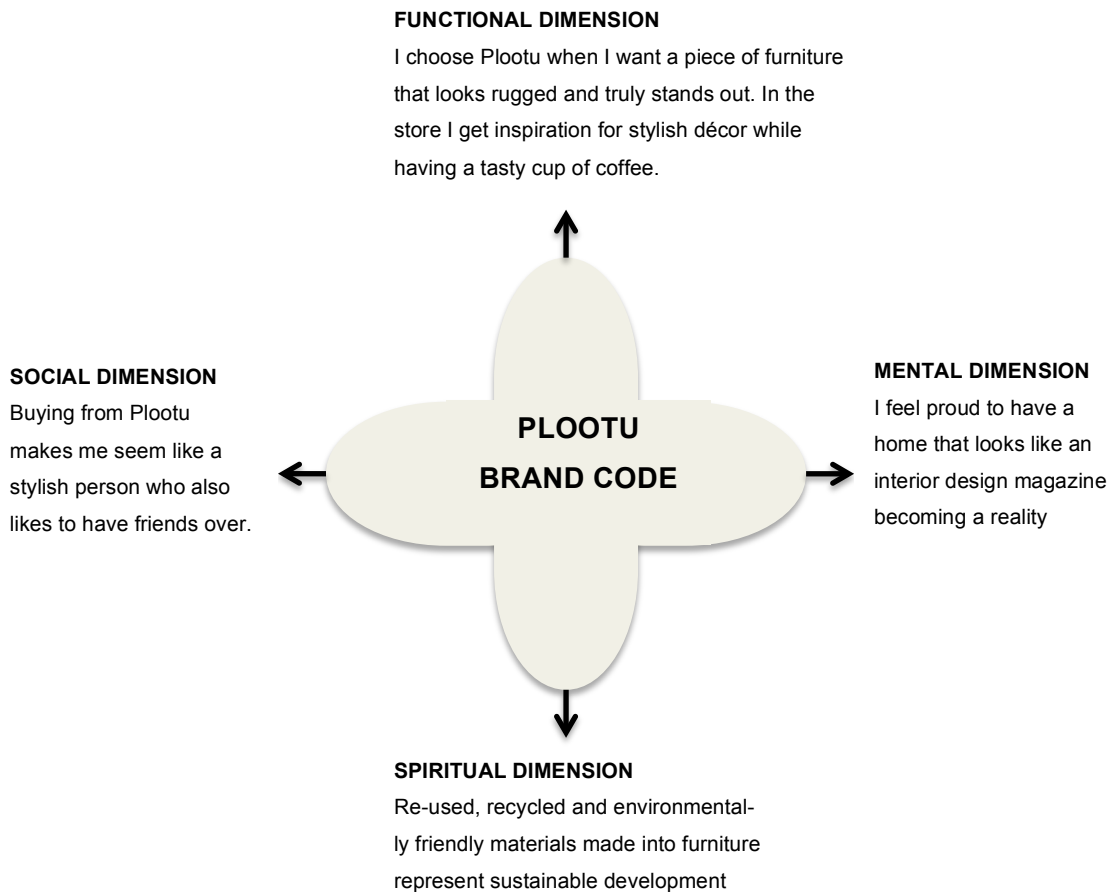


Figure 2. Plootu Brand Code

Plootu Brand Code was created in the workshop in collaboration with Markus Gråsten, who is responsible of marketing at A&A Design. We brainstormed keywords that can be associated with Plootu and divided the words into four categories: functional, social, spiritual, and mental. Finally, with the selected keywords I formed sentences matching each dimension of 4-D brand code. Figure 2 is created on the Thomas Gad’s template and its elements are defined based on the interview (Gråsten 11 February 2016) which states Plootu Brand Code as follows:

Functional dimension: I choose Plootu when I want a piece of furniture that looks rugged and truly stands out. In the store I get inspiration for stylish décor while having a tasty cup of coffee.

Social dimension: Buying from Plootu makes me seem like a stylish person who also likes to have friends over.

Spiritual dimension: Re-used, recycled and environmentally friendly materials made into furniture represent sustainable development.

Mental dimension: I feel proud to have a home that looks like an interior design magazine becoming a reality.

2.4 Engagement and social media engagement

As defined by Forrester (Corcoran 12 April 2011), engagement is “the level of involvement, interaction, intimacy and influence an individual has with a brand over time”.

Involvement is the basic component of engagement. It is often the first point of interaction with the brand. In traditional marketing it includes visits to a store or participation in an event, whereas in digital channels it can be measured for example by the time spent on the webpage. **Interaction** goes deeper than involvement, meaning taking actions towards a brand. This includes requesting additional information, providing contact details, or even purchasing a product or service. In social media liking, commenting or following are considered as interacting with a brand. **Intimacy** is the affection or sentiment an individual holds for a brand. It determines a person’s positive or negative feelings about a brand, his or her opinion and viewpoint and the way that he or she creates content about a brand by using his or her own words. In social media reviewing can be considered as an element of intimacy. **Influence** determines the probability of a customer advocating your brand. It determines the loyalty of the customer and how eager he or she is to recommend the product or service to other customers. In social media it involves forwarding or sharing content to your connections. (Haven 2007, 5-6.)

All these four “I’s” are equally important elements of engagement. Involvement is the presence of a person at the various brand’s touch points, whereas the Interaction happens when the person takes actions while present at those touch points. By only focusing on involvement and interaction in social media the brand might get comments, clicks, page views and likes. However, these measures do not have clear, direct connection with real business results. Therefore Intimacy (the affection a person holds for a brand.) and Influence (The likelihood of a person advocating on behalf of the brand.) are strong drivers in achieving results. (Corcoran 12 April 2011)

As defined by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2012, 319), customer engagement is “Repeated interactions that strengthen the emotional, psychological or physical investment a customer has in a brand”. The commercial aim of engagement is to increase the relationship between the brand and the customer through different customer touch points. It requires the long-term ability to gain a customer’s attention online and offline. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012, 319.)

Why is social media engagement so important? High level of engagement strengthens the relationship and increases brand loyalty. It is the most effective way to develop interaction and affinity between brands and customers. In order to increase brand awareness it is crucial for companies to understand the essentials of social media engagement. Social media is meant to be about participation and interaction, which is a two-way communication between the company and a customer. Also, when establishing a campaign in social media, the metrics must be appropriate for the objectives that the company has set to achieve. Counting followers, likes, and comments are only relevant if those metrics are related to the goals of the brands' social media activity.

The main challenge in increasing social media engagement is the fact that people do not engage with branded content very often. While in 2014 user interactions with brands as a percentage of brands' fans or followers were in Instagram 4.213%, in 2015 it had sunk to 2.261%. Facebook has managed to increase, from 2014 to 2015, their users' engagement level from 0.073% to 0.216%. However, Elliott wants to highlight that top brands in Facebook now have more than double their average number of followers since 2014, while in Instagram the average number of followers reached over 1 million, which is almost five times higher than previous year. (Elliot 15 September 2015.)

2.1 Engaging content

There are certain guidelines to be taken into consideration, when producing content that aims to engage people on social media platforms. The content should match the brand's personality and strategic objectives. In order to manage publishing and save time, a company should establish an editorial calendar to present the type of content, topics, publication venues and the dates to publish. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 126.)

Many companies make a common mistake in social networks by overwhelming the audience with constant announcements that are only business-related. Rather than flooding customers' news feeds, a company should focus on publishing content that encourages people to interact and participate. The most engaging posts in social media are stylish photos that encourage participation. From the customer's point of view this type of communication is more interesting than looking at direct advertisements. (Rouhiainen 2012, 31.)

Good examples of an effective balance between the advertisements and other content can be found in magazines. The reason why people buy a magazine is the articles and

the information it offers for its reader. A magazine's existence, however, is often dependant on the advertisements. A publisher therefore has to focus on quality articles that entice the reader, in order to hold the reader's attention long enough to read the advertisements. If the balance is weighted towards advertisements, less people would read the magazine. Good social media presence for businesses has to keep the same balance: enough useful, interesting and entertaining content will keep the audience interested in commercial messages too. (Cameron-Kitchen 2016, 121.)

A recent study about what people share the most in social media presents one way to categorise the content that engages the audience. These are mostly articles that evoke feelings, especially positive ones. An article that evokes positive feelings is something that makes people laugh or provides a clever solution to a common problem. Stories that are inspirational and give something or someone to admire on, gets shared. For example stories describing how an individual or company became successful under difficult circumstance gets people's engagement. Creative and funny posts shown as a video, animation or meme are amongst the most shared types of content. (Vasantola 2015, 34-38.)

It is important to show that your page is about your audience, not about your business. A simple non-business related question, such as "It is Friday, what are you going to do this weekend?" creates a sense of community and shows that you care about your customers, and are not just trying to simply sell them something. (Rouhiainen 2012, 32.)

In order to increase engagement with content, the headline or caption is important. There are easy, yet effective ways to increase the engagement level. By starting or ending the post with a question, a company can invite people to interact with them. Interrogative keywords such as "where, when, would and should" promote a high engagement rate, too. Companies should avoid writing rambling posts, and stay precise and to-the-point. It is recommendable to create one's own action words and use them in posting. The most commonly user are "like, take, submit, watch, tell us, and comment". Creating a personal one can prove to be even more effective. (Rouhiainen 2012, 32-33.)

There are simple tactics, which are proven to increase social media engagement, thereby strengthening the brand identity among followers. A popular way to boost engagement is hosting social media contests, which at its best can have a huge positive impact on brand exposure. Encouraging people to participate your contest by liking, commenting, sharing or subscribing your post or other content will boost engagement not only among current followers, but it also can results in gaining new followers who want to participate the contest. Price of the contest has to be something to motivate people to participate, for in-

stance free giveaways or discounts to company's product or service. Other effective ways to increase engagement relate to enhancing interaction on a social media page. This means responding to comments promptly, in a conversational and personal manner. Maintaining conversation by ending comments with questions, and sharing content and asking for feedback will generate engagement too. (Zhi 5 August 2015.)

2.2 Importance of boosting posts and advertising

Companies aim to reach as many people as possible with their posts. As more and more companies have discovered the commercial opportunity Facebook provides, the amount of commercial content in Facebook has increased significantly. As people share content with more friends and pages, a competition occurs on what content becomes visible in people's News Feeds. This is why the total post reach, which consists of organic and paid reach, remains low. In 2014 Facebook limited the organic reach for companies who are offering products or services, meaning that if a company wants to promote its business, fewer people would see their posts. As a result, the company would have to pay money to boost their posts in order to reach a bigger audience. Also, the role of engaging content is even bigger. (Cameron-Kitchen 2016, 135-137.)

Online advertisement, especially Facebook advertising, can offer an effective way to generate new leads, and target your content to audiences that have not discovered your brand yet. It is also a tool to maintain communication with your old customers. Online paid advertising does not require a massive budget, but even a small investment can have a considerable impact when growing a company's brand. (Rouhiainen 2016.)

Targeting and knowing your ideal customer is vital in Facebook advertising. A company must understand the demographics of their typical customers. These include age, gender, geographical location and interests. The more specific the targeting is, the more effective the advertisement will be. (Rouhiainen 2012, 47)

2.3 Customer touch points

Customer touch points refer to the customer's journey from becoming aware of the product to the point of purchasing. Every touch point is important in reinforcing customer's perception of the brand. Mastering touch points increases customer's loyalty to the brand and can result into larger amounts of purchasing and additional purchases. If a company fails in delivering a favourable touch point experience, it can result in a negative brand reception. (Greenwald 21 May 2014.)

It is no longer enough for companies to have only a website. Consumers demand more engagement and communication through different touch points before they perceive your brand as trustworthy. These different points of contact are the pictures, videos and information the company shares with their clients in social media. (Rouhiainen 2016.)

3 Digital marketing communications plan: SOSTAC marketing plan

Planning is crucial and essential aspect of marketing. Without plan, company ends up drifting around aimlessly without direction and determined goals. SOSTAC-tool provides a model used by thousands of professionals to produce all kinds of short- or long-term plans. SOSTAC consists of six steps of a planning process: situation, objectives, strategy, tactics, action and control. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 538.) When the plan is detailed and to the point, it enables the organization to be more effective by saving money, time and efforts.

3.1 Situation

Situation analysis provides answers to the question "Where are we now?" It requires internal and external analysis on the company's current situation. A company can select what is most useful for their plan from different analytical areas. The most traditional ones are: Key performance indicators (KPI's), SWOT analysis, PEST, and competitor analysis. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 540-541.)

I have chosen three different aspects in analysing Plootu's current situation. They are KPI's, competitor analysis and SWOT-analysis, which identifies internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats.

Swot analysis

Table 1. Plootu Swot analysis

Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Quality products– Location– Ambiance and atmosphere– Concept– Unique products	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Vulnerable for city renovation which causes blockades– Website– Less known than its competitors– Limited marketing budget– Inconsistent marketing
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– High brand equity– Social media as a cost-efficient channel– Concept– Plootu online store	Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Imitability– Declining demand of high-end furniture

KPI's (Key performance indicators)

There are hundreds of KPI's that companies can study. I have chosen the elements that are the most relevant to the project objectives, including Facebook page likes, Instagram followers, average post reach and social media engagement.

Table 2. Plootu KPI's

Facebook (statistics measured 27 March 2016)	
Total Plootu page likes	794
Average post reach (last 28 days)	578
Average post engagement per media (last 28 days)	
Reactions	12
Comments	0
Shares	3
Instagram account	@plootuhelsinki
Total amount of followers	186
Average likes per picture (last 8 pictures)	12

Competitor analysis

The direct competitors of Plootu are Peroba and Moko Market. Both stores are located in the same area, sell products that are similar to the ones Plootu sells, and have somewhat same target audience. This table analyses their presence on Facebook and Instagram.

Table 3. Competitor analysis

Statistics measured 27 March 2016	Sisustusliike Peroba	Moko Market
Facebook page	@Sisustusliike Peroba	@Moko Market
Page likes	2152	6898
Type of content	Pictures of products, offers	Lunch lists, new products, events, blog post shares, pictures of dishes
Frequency of posting	2-5 posts per month	10-20
Engagement level	Low	Good
Instagram account	@peroba_shop	@mokomarketcafe
Followers	1057	390

Type of content	Product pictures	Pictures of products, dishes, landscape
Frequency of posting	Varies, 0-4 posts/month	3-8 posts/month
Engagement level	Good	Good

3.2 Objectives

Objectives are set to be SMART, meaning “specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, targeted and timed” (Fill 2013, 189). SOSTAC categorises these objectives into 5 S’s; sell, speak, serve, save and sizzle goals (Chaffey 2013, 221). Plootu’s social media campaign lasts for four weeks. Therefore these objectives are short-term.

Sell goals describe how the social media activities will influence the purchasing intention of the customers by generating leads. Speak goals details for examples such as the balance of the ‘sell-inform-entertain’ aspects of the messages, communication of the brand message, and the updates about new products and offers. Serve goals determine the elements of delivering customer-service goals. Save goals focuses on the cost-efficiency of the campaign, however this remains as less significant, yet still considerable part of the goals. Sizzle defines the added value to customers given through social media. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 221.)

Table 4. Plootu 5 S’s

Sell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase engagement in social media – Increase Facebook page likes by 500 – Increase Instagram page followers by 100 – Achieve a Facebook total reach of 10 000
Serve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Decrease response time to 1 hour – Maintain interaction by replying to customers’ comments – Like pictures in Instagram where Plootu was tagged
Speak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Get 5 comments on each post in Facebook – Increase post engagement from average 15 to 50 (>300%) in Facebook – Increase engagement per media 100%
Save	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – More reach with less promotion in Facebook → Organic reach / Paid reach - balance
Sizzle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Add storytelling to product descriptions in online store – Define the benefit for customers to follow Plootu in social media

3.3 Strategy

The SOSTAC-tool suggests a STOP & SIT method to determine the strategic components of the plan. It consists of **segmentation, targeting, objectives, positioning, sequence,**

integration and tactical tools. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 553.) Hereby I apply the method into Plootu's strategy.

Segments & Target markets

Companies cannot communicate with all the customers in large, broad, or diverse markets. However, they can divide the market into small segments with different kinds of people with distinct needs and wants. It involves understanding consumer behaviour and specified planning. A key to marketing success is identifying and satisfying the right market segments. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 213)

When companies divide the market into different segments, they need to identify and profile different kinds of customer who might buy their product or service. In order to obtain the information required, they need to examine the demographic, psychographic and behavioural differences between buyers. After segmentation, a company selects a market that can provide the most beneficial opportunities – the target market. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 10.)

As a target market Plootu aims to reach people within the Helsinki capital region with a segment of mostly women aged 26-40 years old as most of the people visiting the store are within that age bracket. Another segment is men or women aged 30-50 that owns a business in the restaurant and bar industry.

Table 5. Plootu's target market and segmentation

	Customer 1	Customer 2
Geographical location	Helsinki capital region	Helsinki capital region
Gender	Woman	Man, Woman
Hobbies / Profession / Interest	Home décor, fashion	Food, restaurant, entrepreneur, fashion
Age	26-40	30-50

Objectives

As stated above, the primary objectives of the campaign are mainly to grow Plootu's brand visibility through social media. This includes increasing followers and page likes in Facebook and Instagram and growing engagement on Plootu's social media pages.

Positioning

As stated by Kotler and Keller (2012, 276), "Positioning is the act of designing a company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the minds of the target market". In order to position the company's product or service successfully it would have to consider how their offering distinguishes itself from their competitors' offering.

As stated in the Plootu Brand Code, customers choose Plootu when they want a piece of furniture that looks rugged and truly stands out. In the store He or she gets inspiration for stylish décor whilst having a tasty cup of coffee.

The content that will be published in the campaign is in the guidelines of the main slogan and the official Hashtag #erilaistakuinmuilla, which can be translated as 'having something different than the others.' It emphasizes doing things in a different way by mirroring the idea to a unique furniture.

Sequence

Sequence defines the main focus in the plan. Whether it is building awareness or trying to convert customers with social media sales promotions, company should prioritise what comes first. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 554.)

The sequence of Plootu's marketing campaign is to increase brand awareness and recognition through the increase of page likes, post reach and social media engagement. This involves building credibility of the brand.

Integration

"Can the customer can be dealt with as a recognizable individual with unique preferences, regardless of how the customer comes into contact with the brand or organization?" (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 554).

Content aims to integrate prospective customers to the brand. Customers will be provided with detailed decoration solutions and ideas. He or she will be treated as an individual with unique preferences. Content promotes the same values that the targeted customer promotes.

Tactical tools

Facebook is the primary channel selected this digital marketing campaign. The content strategy in Facebook is to promote posts (boost) with content, which was characterised in **positioning**. While the goal is to get the user to visit the Facebook page, he or she can discover other interesting content. Facebook page also provides information about events and products. Instagram remains as a visual channel to support the social media marketing mix, but the main emphasis is on Facebook marketing.

3.4 Tactics

Tactics detail the strategy. In order to obtain a clear picture of the tactics, all the e-tools must be presented in the sequence mentioned in the strategy. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 559.) As the Plootu digital marketing plan contains multiple steps, I will present the schedule and the roles and responsibilities of each person in it.

Every Monday Plootu will publish a post of an advertisement picture. It aims to increase the organic reach. On Tuesdays the same advertisement post is promoted, thus increasing paid reach. The digital marketing communications schedule details the other content and the time of publishing.

The main objectives of the campaign are to achieve an increase in social media engagement, Facebook page likes, Instagram page followers and the total reach. Although promoting and boosting posts increases the paid reach heavily, Plootu should focus on increasing organic reach too, by providing content that is entertaining and has got personal and unique appearance. The pictures have to be relevant to their positioning (#erilais-takuinmuilla, to have something different than the others) and aligned with Plootu's Brand Code. When uploading the photos the focus should also be on the style and the message of the photo caption. With these elements combined the reach and engagement is projected to increase and therefore the desired outcome is to achieve the goals and objectives.

3.5 Actions

Actions detail tactics and provide answers to the question 'who does what and when?' With the digital marketing communications plan and table of actions, where all the tasks are appointed to different persons, the project becomes more convenient to manage.

Table 6. Actions

Task	Who?	When?
Advertisement pictures and promotion	Korteaho	Mondays
Advertisement promotion	Korteaho	Tuesdays
Introduction of an employee	Gråsten	14.4, 20.4
Daily updates on Facebook and Instagram	Korteaho, Luukka	At least 3 times a week
Follow us on Instagram call-to-action in Facebook	Korteaho	Every second Thursday
April's Fool Day Prank	Gråsten, Korteaho, Heiskanen, Luukka	1.4
List of things	Gråsten	30.3, 8.4, 15.4, 22.4
Invitation for a coffee	RUPLA	Saturdays or Sundays
How to make a cup of latte professionally IG video	RUPLA	13.4

3.6 Control

Control is the last step of the SOSTAC-plan and it monitors the performance. It involves examining the effectiveness of the campaign by measuring the results with the selected key performance indicators. The control section of the SOSTAC cycle requires continuous follow-ups of the results and modifying the tactics in order to achieve the desired results. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 567.)

At the end of every week of the campaign I will monitor the impact of the paid advertisement post by evaluating the post and page statistics and selected KPI's. Evaluation involves viewing the numbers of how many people did the post reach, how many people engaged and also potential increase in page likes in Facebook and followers in Instagram. Based on these figures I analyse what went right and what went wrong.

4 Implementation of the campaign

This chapter presents the way in which the four advertisement photos of the campaign were implemented. The effect on social media engagement and the campaign objectives are discussed. The photo captions are translated as well from Finnish to English.

The campaign started on Monday 28 March 2016. It consisted of four main campaign photos that were published on Mondays and boosted on Tuesdays. There were two types of photos; a table setting for a couple and a living room setting for a young man. The furniture was set up in unusual locations in order to get viewers attention. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of each of the advertisement photos, I tested various methods to entice the viewer to interact and engage with the photo.

4.1 First week

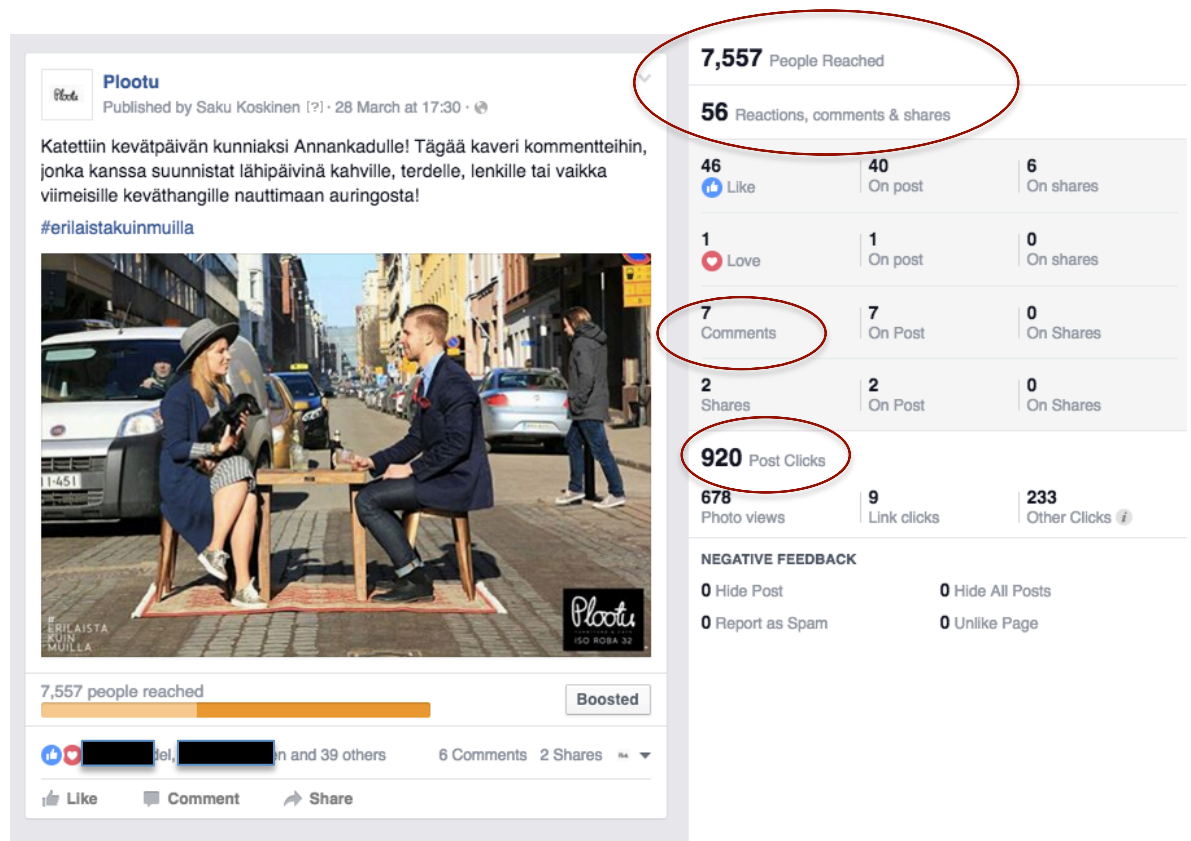


Figure 3. The statistics of the promotional picture of the first week

In the picture of the first week there is a couple having a coffee in the middle of the street. The caption of the advertisement picture can be translated as “We set the table to Annankatu street to celebrate spring! Tag your friend with whom you are planning to go to

enjoy sun with by going for a coffee, terrace or jogging. #erilaistakuinmuilla” The structure of the caption is formed as follows: a casual way of presenting what happens in the picture, a call-to-action and an official hashtag of the campaign.

The photo reached over 7500 people with an organic reach of almost 3000 people and a paid reach of over 4500 Facebook users. Of the 7500, over 900 people photo clicked on it, and it received 47 reactions and seven comments. During the first week the Plootu’s pages likes increased by 26. The same picture was published on Instagram, where it received 31 likes and resulted in attracting 14 new followers.

The first week can be considered as successful, however in order to achieve the given project goals, there are certain improvements to be done in the future. The balance of organic and paid reach was decent but the total reach didn’t make it up to the targeted 10 000 people. The engagement level has to better in order to gain better organic reach. With the paid reach you can exceed it by simply investing more money, but for Plootu it is important to reach people that are relevant to the targeted group. With careful speculation, creating a more encouraging call-to-action and adding a question to the caption, upcoming photos might receive more clicks, comments and reactions.

4.2 Second week

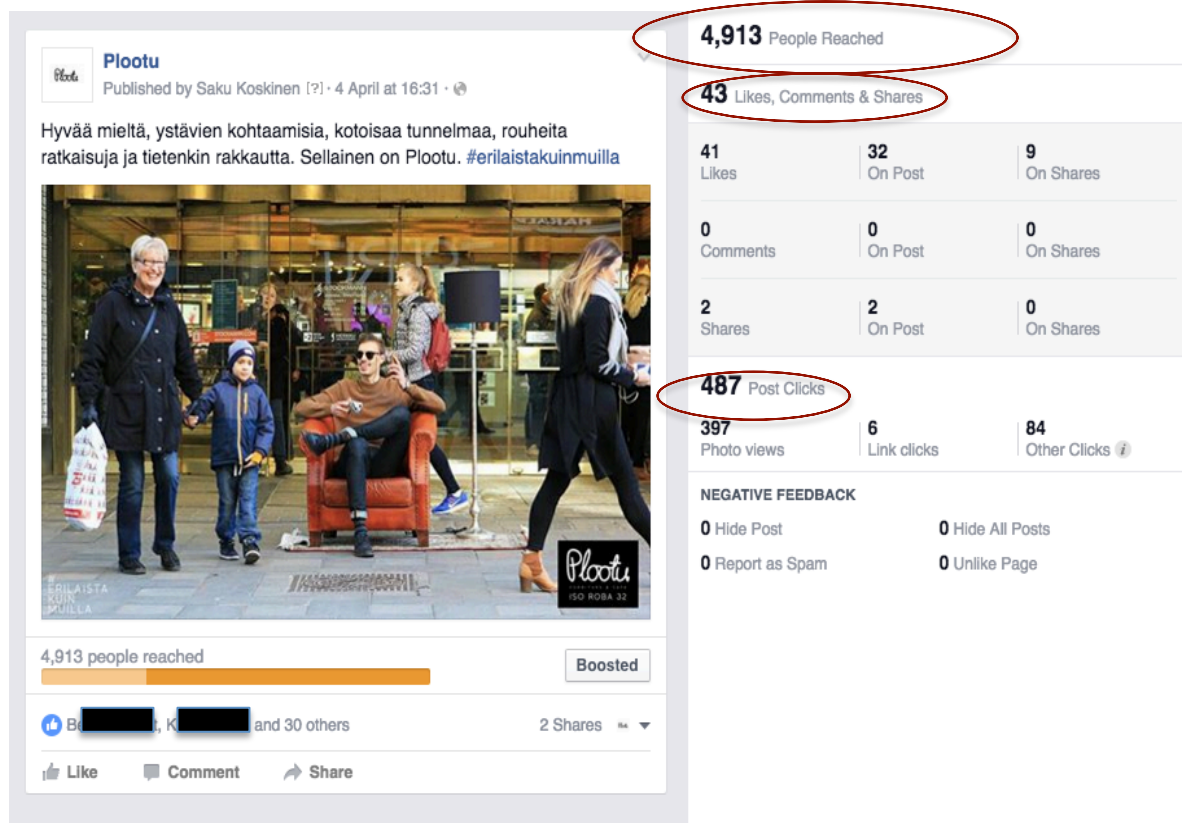


Figure 4. The statistics of the promotional picture of the second week in Facebook

In the second picture of the campaign there is a young man sitting in an armchair in front of a well-known meeting point in Helsinki city centre. The caption of the picture can be translated as follows: "Good mood, meeting friends, cosy atmosphere, rugged solutions, not to mention pure love. That is what Plootu is all about. #erilaistakuinmuilla" The primary message of the caption describes the elements of the brand by stating things that provoke positive feelings (friends, cosy, good mood, love) and linking them to the company.

The photo reached almost 5000 people during the week with an organic reach of over 1300 and a paid reach of over 3500 people. According to the statistics (total clicks and likes) the photo caught the attention of around 10% of the audience it reached. No comments were received on this photo. I believe this is due to the fact that the caption did not have a call-to-action or a question in it. As the photo caption did not invite to participate or engage, it resulted into a lower reach than on the first picture. The same photo was published on Instagram where it received 31 likes. After the second week of the campaign Plootu's page on Facebook had gained 36 new fans and 15 new followers on Instagram. Now Plootu had 855 Facebook fans and 215 Instagram followers.

4.3 Third week

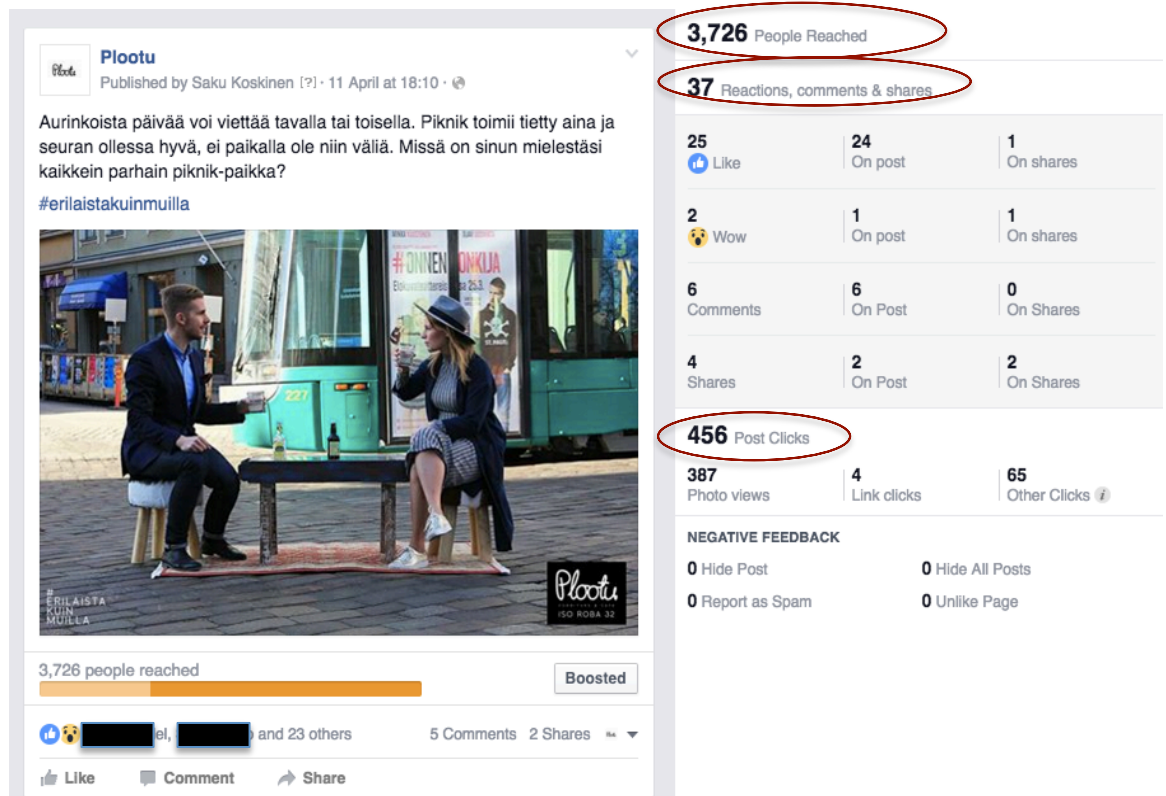


Figure 5. The statistics of the promotional picture of the third week in Facebook

In the third campaign picture there is a couple having a picnic in the middle of the road next to a tram. The caption of the picture can be translated as follows: “There are many ways to spend a sunny day. Picnic is always a good choice and when you are in good company, it does not matter where you are having it. What is your favourite picnic spot?” The purpose was to get people to share their ideas of ideal picnic spots. However, not many people felt comfortable leaving a comment. The question might have been too personal or complicated but it can be assumed, that a low level of engagement resulted in a lower reach than on the last pictures. After the third week Plootu had gained 12 new Facebook page likes and 5 new followers.

4.4 Fourth week

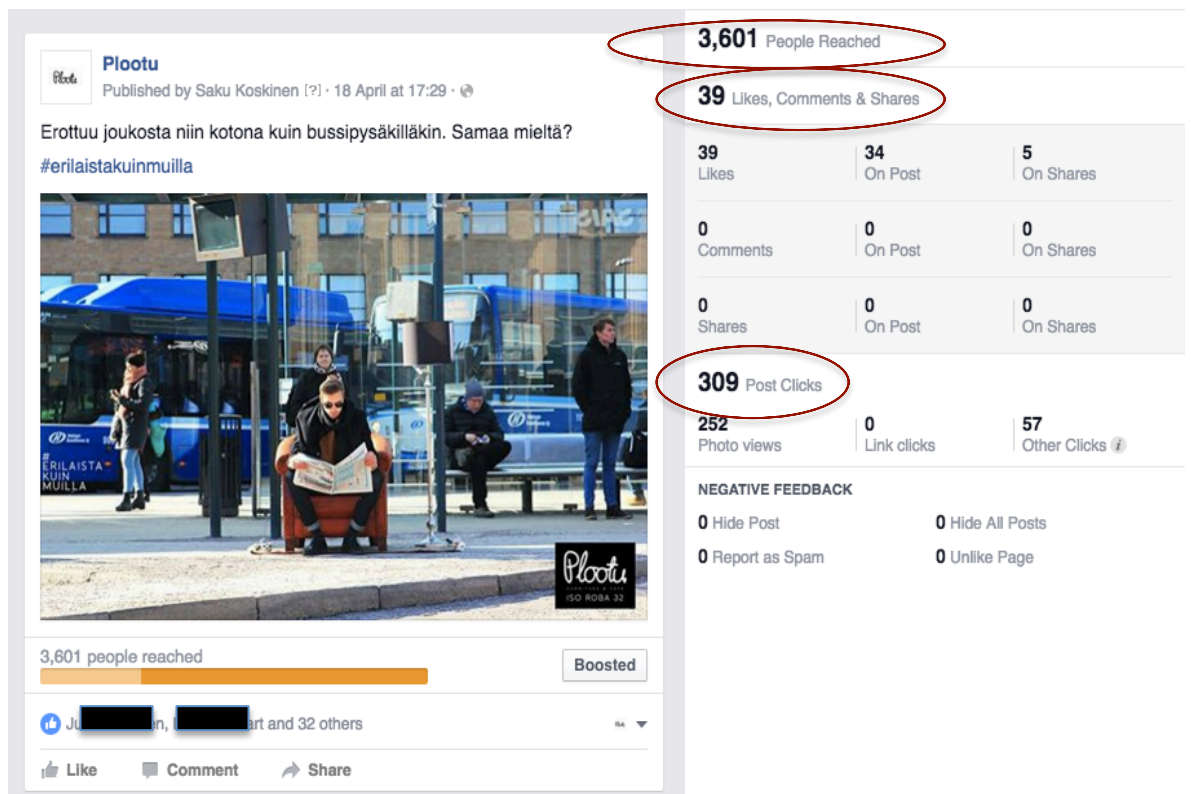


Figure 6. The statistics of the promotional picture of the fourth week in Facebook

In the fourth picture a young man is sitting on an armchair reading a newspaper. The spot is located on one of the busiest bus stops in Helsinki. The caption of the photo can be translated as follows: “Stands out at home, as well as on a bus stop. Would you agree?” The main objective was to demonstrate the unique character of the furniture and get viewers attention with an unusual location for the setting. As the prior efforts to encourage people to comment had garnered mild results, this time the question in the photo caption asked only for a yes or no answer. Be that as it may, not a single comment was received to this picture.

4.5 Boosting posts

The paid advertising settings were kept the same throughout the project. The following table presents the settings of the post boosting in Facebook advertising. It follows Plootu's target market and segmentation.

Table 7. Facebook Post Boosting Settings

Gender	Male and Female
Age	26-45
Location	Helsinki (+40km), Espoo (+40km)
Interests	Interior design, rustic décor, industrial design, coffee, vintage, home décor, Punavuori, Eira
Weekly budget	30 US\$

5 Discussion

The purpose of this project-based thesis was to create a digital marketing plan and implement it on Facebook and Instagram. The project as a whole, involved multiple steps, such as creating a brand model for the case company and content planning workshops, preparing a digital marketing plan and a schedule and finally, implementing it. The main objective of the thesis was to increase social media engagement, as well as to increase brand awareness and acquire new fans and followers in the selected channels. This chapter presents key findings of the campaign, evaluates the success and discusses the reflection on learning.

5.1 Key findings

Table 8. The reach of the campaign photos

Picture	Organic Reach	Paid Reach	Total Reach
1 st week	3025	4569	7594
2 nd week	1386	3549	4935
3 rd week	1162	2659	3821
4 th week	927	2674	3601

As seen on the table, throughout the campaign the total reach decreased. This means fewer people saw the advertisement picture on their News Feed. Even though the budget for paid advertisement was the same every week, the paid reach was almost half on the last week compared to the first week. As the reach is linked to a Facebook algorithm, which affects whether the content is shown on one's News Feed or not, most probably some of Plootu's content was determined to be less important in the algorithm, and therefore it was left unshown. Every picture of the campaign that was published succeeded well in catching viewers' attention. Around 10% of the people that saw the image, clicked on it too.

The objective of this project, increasing social media engagement, turned out to be more challenging than presumed. Challenges regarding engagement concerned the lack of people commenting on photos. Even though lot of people clicked on the images, very few gave it a comment. The question is, if Plootu's targeted audience are even likely to write comments in social media in general. I observed that viewers did not seem to feel comfortable or interested enough to leave comments. We tried different ways to encourage peo-

ple to interact. We asked people to tag their friends, to share their opinions of their favourite picnic place and asked the audience a simple yes or no-question. Very few people participated, and these were mostly people, who knew somebody who works in Plootu. We also made an experiment by not asking anything, in order to compare the outcome. In general most of the people seem to lack motivation to comment or share branded content, unless there is a direct benefit. Product discounts, competitions with a possibility win a prize or raffles motivate people to participate. As a conclusion, based on this campaign, there is not a clear answer to what type of encouragement would work best for Plootu's audience.

Although the level of commenting remained low, people engaged with the pictures by liking and reacting. The average reactions received on Facebook for the four advertisement photos were **37.75**, which is 150% more than the normal average. The average likes received on Instagram for the same photos were 28.25, which is more than double the average. An assumption, that the photos were received as stylish and entertaining, can be made.

In addition to the advertisement pictures, there was other content published as well. One of the best posts according to its reach and engagement, was the store manager interview, a product description written in a personal way, and a shared newspaper article about Plootu. What is common to the posts is that they provided informative and/or entertaining value. They also contained some kind of picture. Especially the store manager interview reached organic reach of almost 2000 people. This type of content is attractive because it provides the audience a glimpse of what happens behind the scenes.

5.2 Project evaluation

The main objectives of the campaign were to achieve an increase in social media engagement, Facebook page likes, Instagram page followers and the total reach. In the following table the goals and whether they were achieved or not, is presented.

Table 9. Evaluation of the campaign

Objective	Achieved	Notes
Increase engagement in social media	Yes	
Increase Facebook page likes by 500	No	91 new page likes
Increase Instagram page followers by 100	No	40 new followers
Decrease message response time to 1 hour	Yes	100% message response rate, 5-min response time

Get 5 comments on each posts in Facebook	No	
Good organic reach / paid reach balance	Yes	

The given goals for the campaign were extremely ambitious. However, not achieving all of the objectives does not result in the campaign being a failure. Considering that the Plootu page has somewhat 800 fans in Facebook, we reached an audience varying from 3600 to 7600 people with each campaign picture. I claim that this has resulted in increased brand awareness and brand recognition, which was one of the aims of the thesis.

The project lasted for four weeks, during which time Plootu's Facebook page gained 91 new fans. Meanwhile on Instagram, 40 new people now follow Plootu. The campaign unfortunately failed to achieve 500 new Facebook likes and 100 new Instagram followers. In order to keep these numbers growing, it is important to stay consistent with posting and provide content that is entertaining, informative and promotes Plootu's brand code.

All the project tasks were successfully completed. Considering the comparison between the average reach before and during the campaign, I claim that the project objective, increasing brand awareness and brand recognition the project objective has been achieved successfully.

5.3 Future suggestions

In order to increase the fan base in Facebook, I suggest trying the 'Promoting Local Business' – tool provided by Facebook. With a small budget, starting from as little as 1€/day, the company can reach people that live within a selected radius of Plootu. As the store is located in Helsinki city centre, Plootu can potentially reach up to 150 000 people within 5 kilometres of the store. A suggested advertisement below appears in peoples' News Feed both on desktop and mobile. The photo caption can describe the store or contain for example an offer or a promotion. This is also a great way to advertise to people living nearby when Plootu has sales or events coming up.



Figure 7. Promote Local Business Advertisement

This project ascertained that having a plan for marketing is crucial. A well-prepared plan saves time and money. Company should not underestimate the importance of planning digital marketing. Plans should include situation analysis, clear objectives (short- and/or long-term), strategy, tactics, actions and control. With a comprehensive plan, the marketing plan is more manageable and therefore more likely to result in success.

WhatsApp already has over 1 billion active users (Rouhiainen 2016.) Plootu can also use WhatsApp as a tool for communication. In addition to being a furniture store and café, Plootu also provides home remodelling and decoration services. I suggest using WhatsApp as a means to offer home decoration services. As it provides a fast tool to send images, a Plootu home decorator can be sent a photo from a customer's home, and the decorator can answer with a home decoration tip. This kind of service enables reaching new customers all over Finland. The same service can be produced with Facebook Messenger.

In the future Plootu should concentrate on the writing. By looking at the statistics of the Facebook posts I noticed that the engagement level tends to be higher, when the captions are well written. Here are some tips for writing photo captions and other texts.

- Include a question in the text. It should not be too complicated but rather simple such as: What do you think? Would you agree? What are you up to this weekend?
- Collect keywords and phrases that Plootu can use in its social media marketing. It is recommendable to have a unique way of expressing in order to stand out from competitors.
- Answer to the comments the Plootu page receives, by simply saying "Thank you!" or "Have a great day!"
- Do not forget that social media should be about entertainment. Humour works.

Instagram is still developing as a commercial platform for businesses and it is growing fast. Therefore it is important to keep posting on a regular basis in order to gain new followers. It is recommended to create ideas together on a weekly basis and mutually agree on who is responsible for each posting. For future purposes, I suggest considering Instagram advertising and test its potential not only to reach new audiences but also to increase sales. Also, increase interaction on Instagram. A great way to increase interaction is to comment on the content your followings have published. This also increases Plootu's visibility and can result into more followers.

5.4 Reflection on learning

Throughout the thesis writing process I have developed my competences in different fields. The project has allowed me a better understanding on digital marketing and social media advertising. I understand its increasing role in the marketing communications mix. Also, I have understood the importance of high quality content in social media and other digital channels. As a main writer of the project I have acquired skills in creating content that can provide its reader with entertaining and informative value. Moreover, it has been interesting to put the theoretical viewpoint into practise. I also found the process of creating advertisement images, from the idea level to the final draft, extremely inspiring.

During the project I understood the importance of marketing planning with realistic goals and objectives. I also noticed that it is important to appoint the roles in the marketing schedule. A comprehensive digital marketing plan made the whole project easier to implement, manage and measure.

Writing the thesis has been the biggest individual assignment I have ever completed. The process itself requires a lot of patience and ability to work independently. I managed to develop skills related to problem solving, time management and creative brainstorming.

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Appendix 1. Plootu digital marketing schedule

PLOOTU DIGITAL MARKETING SCHEDULE / 28.3 - 30.4.2016

WEEK	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
13		28	29	30	31	1	2
	Final preparation of the campaign promotions and uploading advertisement images.	Publish ad picture 1 in Facebook	Promote AD picture 1 / Introducing new way to write product descriptions (kuva A&A nettisivuilta)	Publish content 1 (list of things)	"Follow us on Instagram"-call to action	April Fool's day prank	Invitation for a coffee
14	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Publish ad picture 2 in Facebook	Promote ad picture 2 in FB / How to -video: microcement (FB)			Publish content 2 (list of things)	Invitation for a coffee
15	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		Publish ad picture 3 in Facebook / Promote content	Promote ad picture 4 in Facebook	Rupiguy shows how to make an amazing cup of latte - video	Introduction of an employee (Niko)	Publish content 3 (list of things)	Invitation for a coffee
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
		Publish ad picture 4 in Facebook	Promote ad picture 4 in Facebook	Introduction of an employee (Aleksi Luukka)		Publish content 4 (list of things)	Invitation for a coffee
17	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	Evaluation of the project						

Appendix 2. Advertisement picture of the first week



Appendix 3. Advertisement picture of the second week



Appendix 4. Advertisement picture of the third week



Appendix 5. Advertisement picture of the fourth week

