

# MEASURING SUCCESS OF BRANDED ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Case: InSided B.V.

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ABSTRACT

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The recent trend of online communication became the reason for development of virtual spaces for communication with clients. Organizations aim to increase customer satisfaction, reduce service costs and promote products or services through branded online communities. The case company, InSided, is dedicated to ensuring success of branded online communities by providing professional support services to organizations owning online communities. The thesis aims to determine the key factors driving online communities to success. The study investigates the role of responsive design, systematized community management and professional support services in online community success.

The theoretical framework of the study makes use of secondary data by reviewing the relevant management of branded online communities regarding online community lifecycle. The theory review includes also elements of online community success and possible professional support services of InSided. The author utilizes both the qualitative and quantitative data collection methods for collecting of primary data in the empirical part. Qualitative data, in the form of observation and interviews, reports about content, moderation, design and user experience of Elisa and Sonera online communities. Quantitative data about online communities' traffic complements the research.

The measurement of success of the two online communities proved the need for responsive design, systematized community management and professional support services. The results are reflected in the Define-Measure-Analyse-Improve-Control (DMAIC) model for successful online community management. The author believes in the value of this research for organizations starting online communities.

Key words: branded online communities, responsive design, professional support services, success factors, Elisa, Sonera, InSided

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Amsterdam, the Netherlands, September 2016

Alena Kerosinskaya

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Thesis objectives, research questions and limitations	3
1.3	Theoretical framework	6
1.4	Research methodology and data collection	7
1.5	Thesis structure	10
2	ONLINE COMMUNITIES	12
2.1	Online communities overview	12
2.1.1	Definition	12
2.1.2	Online communities versus social media	14
2.1.3	Branded online communities	14
2.1.4	Responsive online community	16
2.2	Online community lifecycle	17
2.2.1	Development and implementation	18
2.2.2	Construction	18
2.2.3	Establishment	19
2.2.4	Maturity	19
2.2.5	Segmentation	20
2.3	Community Success Engines	21
2.3.1	Design	21
2.3.2	Content	23
2.3.3	Moderation	25
2.3.4	Traffic	27
2.3.5	User experience	29
3	CASE COMPANY: InSided	33
3.1	Company overview	33
3.2	Professional support services and industry insights	33
3.2.1	Strategy	34
3.2.2	Concept	35
3.2.3	Implementation	40
3.2.4	Analysing and reporting	41
3.3	Customer success stories	42

4	CASE STUDY: Elisa & Sonera	43
4.1	Telecommunication industry	43
4.1.1	Company Elisa	44
4.1.2	Company Sonera	44
4.2	Elisa Online Community	45
4.2.1	Elisa Palsta	45
4.2.2	Lifecycle stage	46
4.2.3	InSided role	46
4.3	Sonera Online Community	47
4.3.1	Sonera Klaani	47
4.3.2	Lifecycle stage	48
4.3.3	Lithium role	49
5	EMPIRICAL PART	50
5.1	Data acquisition process	50
5.2	Sonera versus Elisa	51
5.2.1	Design	51
5.2.2	Content	55
5.2.3	Moderators	56
5.2.4	Traffic	58
5.2.5	User experience	60
5.3	Interview results	64
5.4	Results and discussion	66
5.4.1	Results interpretation	66
5.4.2	DMAIC model	67
6	CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	69
6.1	Answers to research questions	69
6.2	Validity and reliability	71
6.3	Suggestions for further research	72
7	SUMMARY	73
	REFERENCES	75
	APPENDICES	84

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. Theoretical framework for knowledge building.....	6
FIGURE 2. Research methodology and data collection. ....	7
FIGURE 3. Thesis structure. ....	10
FIGURE 4 Reasons for launching an online branded community. ....	15
FIGURE 5. Desktop version design versus responsive design. ....	16
FIGURE 6. Community Lifecycle. ....	17
FIGURE 7. Designing community content.....	36
FIGURE 8. User stages. ....	38
FIGURE 9. Elisa online community main page. ....	45
FIGURE 10. Lithium versus InSided online communities. ....	47
FIGURE 11. Sonera online community main page.....	48
FIGURE 12. Navigation tabs of Sonera and Elisa online communities. ...	52
FIGURE 13. Responsive design of Elisa and irresponsive design of Sonera. ....	53
FIGURE 14. Mobile versions of Elisa and Sonera online communities....	54
FIGURE 15. Welcoming email of Elisa and Sonera online communities. ....	55
FIGURE 16. Traffic sources of Elisa and Sonera online communities. ....	58
FIGURE 17. DMAIC approach . ....	68

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. The SMART test for thesis objectives. ....	5
TABLE 2. Built-in activation features .....	37
TABLE 3. Data acquisition process - Gantt chart. ....	50
TABLE 4. Widgets of Elisa and Sonera online communities. ....	61
TABLE 5. Answers to research questions. ....	69

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of the thesis introduces the background of the study, presents thesis objectives, research questions and limitations, outlines the theoretical framework, research methodology and data collection, and clarifies the thesis structure. This chapter is dedicated to the justification of the chosen topic and consistency of the thesis paper.

### 1.1 Background

Nowadays, the word “community” means much more than a community formed by people on some basis. With the growth of the Internet, a need for online communities appeared. Online communities started satisfying different target audiences from groups of gamers to corporate organizations. (Hendricks 2015.) By the year 2016, 89.5% of organizations will make use of social media for business development and marketing (Bennett 2014). Moreover, more and more organizations choose online communities as the main social media channel due to high return on investment. The users of an organization’s online community spend 54% more than non-community customers. In addition, live support costs, on average, 87% more than customer support through online community. (Hinkle 2007.)

There are also some reasons why users are motivated to join online communities. Firstly, users expect to receive special offers by joining a community. Indeed, many organizations maintain users’ interest by providing special offers and coupons for community members. Secondly, some users desire to be a part of some well-known brand. They realize personal identity in this way. Thirdly, users search for entertainment on online communities. The new gamification trend has a big power to attract a lot of people to participate and compete with each other. Finally, the most loyal users join a community to access its content. Hence, community success is partly influenced by the quality of the content. (Inge 2011.)

Previous studies revealed different success factors for online communities. First of all, a community should be focused and observe the sense of the community. Online communities should also differentiate from each other and have more than just a standard set of functions. Finally, a community needs a strong management team. Managing of a community includes improving user experience by creating interesting content, building relationships, controlling conflicts and spam penetration. (Robles 2010.)

A community can face different barriers on its way to success. For instance, if a community does not meet the goals of the organization, it is likely to fail. A community will also fail to reach success with poor management. (DiMauro 2013.) Poor management may result in absence of focus, weak relationships between community members and a lost sense of the community (Crowe 2014).

In order to find proof or disclose previous findings, this research focuses on measuring success of branded online communities. The author of the study wanted to benefit her knowledge of Finnish language and to use knowledge gained during the internship. The author came up with the thesis topic when completing her internship at InSided. The company specializes in building discussion forums, news and blogs, mobile sites and apps, Facebook integrations and reward management systems for online communities (InSided 2016c, 2). This company aims for driving its online communities to success and, therefore, values all the initiatives about research on the topic of successful community management. This study aims to determine which things are working in practice and what the engines to community success are. For this purpose, there were two online communities chosen for the examination, namely, Sonera online community and Elisa online community. For this thesis, Sonera online community is called Sonera Klaani and Elisa online community is called Elisa Palsta. The management team of online communities implies community managers, who are also known as moderators. The author measures the success of Elisa and Sonera online communities following a created research framework.

The chosen communities fulfill the research requirements, as they are comparable due to being originally from Finland and from the telecommunication industry. This study is also interesting because responsive community of Elisa is owned by InSided and the desktop version of Sonera online community is owned by Lithium, which is the main competitor of InSided. As there is a research gap in comparison of responsive online community and desktop version of online community, this study aims to reveal the advantages of having an online community with a responsive design. Furthermore, the author revealed an information gap about the main competitor, Lithium. Thus, the comparison of the community owned by InSided with the community owned by Lithium is beneficial for the commissioning party. Lastly, Elisa online community is complemented by professional support services, while Sonera online community does not have support services. The comparison of the results of the communities is linked to the level of support received.

The company InSided is not the only target audience. This study is believed to be beneficial for companies owning an online community or for companies considering launching an online community. The research was conducted with the focus on the impact of responsive design and role of community management and professional support services.

## 1.2 Thesis objectives, research questions and limitations

The main objective of the thesis is to conduct a research on the topic of branded online communities in order to determine the key factors for successful online community management. This objective implies also analysis of contribution of responsive design together with professional support services to online community success. This objective implies multiple aims:

- Study the existing online communities of Sonera and Elisa and find the major differences between responsive community of Elisa and desktop version of Sonera online community

- Determine the role of professional support services and community management in complementing the success of branded online communities
- Propose a model for successful community management

The hypothesis for the study was formed based on previous researches.

The following hypothesis is going to be examined:

*The responsive design, systematized moderation and professional support services are the key factors to online community success.*

The hypothesis will be accepted or rejected based on the answer to the following research question:

*How can responsive design, systematized moderation and professional support services benefit to online community success?*

In order to answer the main research question and meet the thesis objectives, the following sub-questions were raised:

1. *What are the essentials for branded online community success?*
2. *What are the benefits of a responsive online community?*
3. *How do community managers and professional support services contribute to success of an online community?*

The listed objectives and relevant research questions match the SMART criteria and follow academic research requirements. According to the SMART test, the objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (Saunders et al. 2009, 35). Table 1 visualizes the thesis objectives in a SMART way.

TABLE 1. The SMART test for thesis objectives.

S	Specific	The desired achievement is a model for successful management of branded online communities
M	Measurable	The results are compared with the determined objectives
A	Achievable	The results are feasible due to availability of required data for the research and support of the company InSided
R	Realistic	The objectives were chosen in accordance with limitations
T	Timely	Sufficient amount of time is dedicated to research and analysis following the established schedule for proceeding with the thesis

According to the specific criteria of the SMART test, the main focus is on branded online communities. The thesis objectives are achievable and realistic, as the knowledge achieved by the author during internship at InSided benefits to the research process. Finally, the results are measured and generalized on time according to the established schedule.

The research is completed with certain limitations. One of the main limitations is the specific topic of the thesis. In other words, there is a lack of theory from published sources due to original and contemporary nature of the topic. The second constraint is lack of information about Sonera online community management, which results in building suggestions based on public data about Sonera community managers. Moreover, only the forum and ideation part of the online communities are analysed. The blog is not included in the research, as Elisa online community does not have a blog implemented. Besides, the research is also narrowed by lack of accessibility to website analysis tool Google Analytics. The statistical data was obtained with SimilarWeb and WebPagetest, which are the public substitutes for Google Analytics. Finally, there may be language issues, as the information from Sonera online community and Elisa online community was translated from Finnish into the English language.

### 1.3 Theoretical framework

The theory of the thesis is presented according to a determined theoretical framework. The role of the theory is to create a base and to support the empirical part (Swanson & Chermack 2013, 7). Figure 1 visualizes how the theory is narrowed down to gain particular knowledge about success factors applicable to branded online communities.

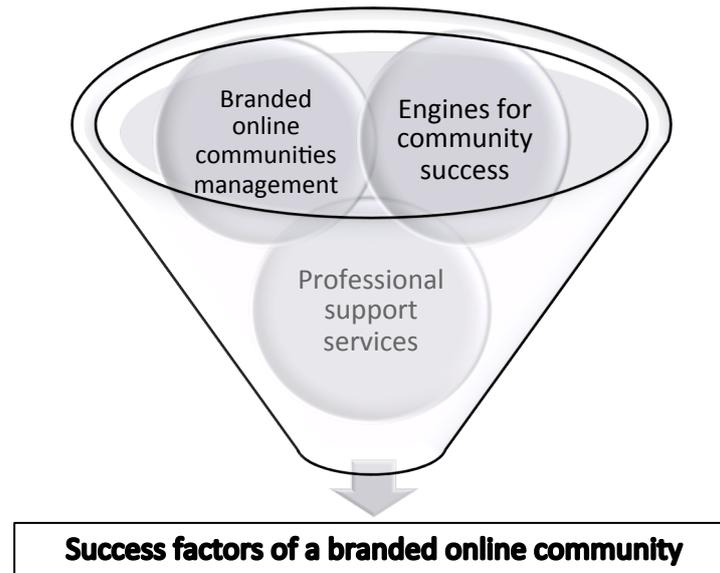


FIGURE 1. Theoretical framework for knowledge building

Initially, the theory is reviewed from a big picture, explaining the common concepts about branded online communities. Branded online communities are reviewed and distinguished from other types of communities. Then, there is a lifecycle of branded online communities and management relevant to each lifecycle stage reviewed. Afterwards, the general engines for community success are introduced. Finally, the focus shifts to professional support services of InSided, which are considered to be one of the major success factors. Such approach to the theory review allows building a logical and consistent knowledge about online community success factors. The results of the theoretical part are tested with the help of the empirical part of the research.

#### 1.4 Research methodology and data collection

This sub-chapter presents the research methods and data collection methods chosen for the study. In order to have a clear reasoning for chosen methods, the description of all types of research methods precedes the presentation of the chosen methods for this study. Figure 2 reflects the chosen methods for the study.

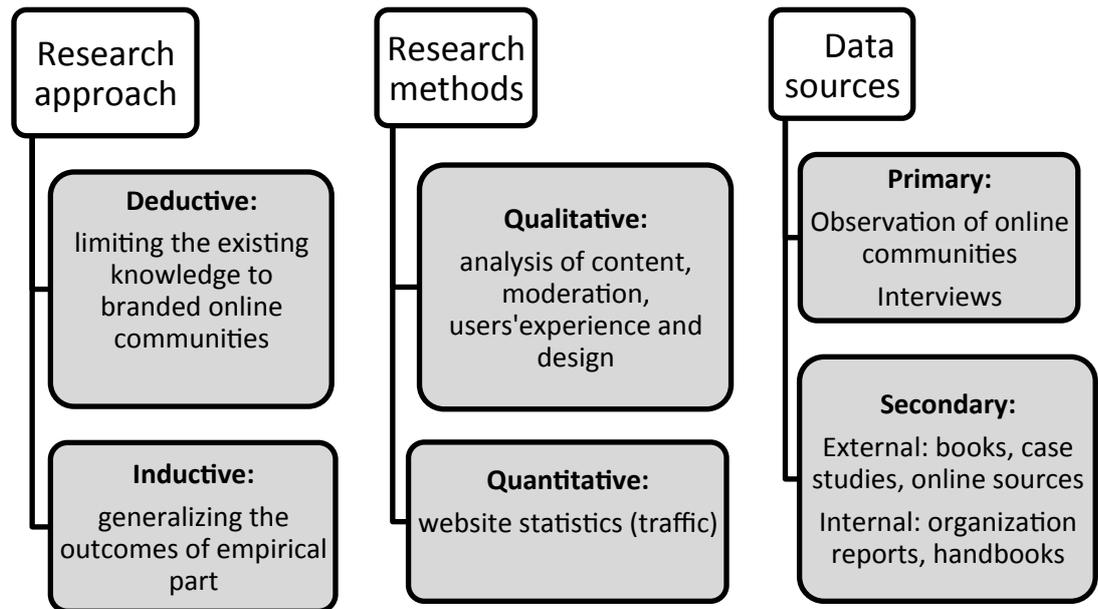


FIGURE 2. Research methodology and data collection.

According to the aims of the thesis, the study has an exploratory and explanatory nature. Exploratory studies are conducted in order to find and explain the background of the problem and a need for improvement (Saunders et al. 2009, 139). As an exploratory study, there is a research of existing online communities of Sonera and Elisa with the purpose to find the major differences between responsive community of Elisa and desktop version of Sonera online community. Thus, the benefits of a responsive online community are considered as the reasons for improvement of desktop version online communities. Explanatory study contributes to the research by determining the relations between variables (Saunders et al. 2009, 140). The variables are professional support services of InSided, responsive design and the performance indicators of research online communities.

Besides, the research depends on the research approach. There are two possible approaches, namely, deductive approach and inductive approach. Deductive approach implies designing own research strategy to test the hypothesis. (Swanson & Chermack 2013, 124.) In other words, the existing theory and based on it hypothesis are tested with the help of own research process (Goddard & Melville 2001, 32). The empirical part of the study is to test the hypothesis that professional support services, systematized management and responsive design can bring success to branded online community. However, the deductive approach may not be sufficient enough to reflect an actual situation (Yin 2011, 95). Therefore, there is also an inductive approach used. Inductive approach is used when the theory is built based on empirical results. The outcomes of the empirical part are generalized to contribute to a broader knowledge building (Goddard & Melville 2001, 32). The outcomes of observation of Sonera online community and Elisa online community provide practical knowledge about performance of desktop version and responsive online communities, effect of management and professional support services.

The research can be quantitative, meaning that data is collected and quantified to answer the research questions (Swanson & Chermack 2013, 414). The other research method is qualitative. Qualitative research focuses on the meanings rather than on numbers (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, 3). Qualitative method prevails in this study. However quantitative method complements the qualitative research with precise figures. Quantitative research is implemented for measuring online communities' traffic, page visits, referral sources and etc. Numerical data is analysed in order to add value to the qualitative research, as the outcomes of the qualitative research are not attained by any means of quantification (Strauss & Corbin 1998, 11). Qualitative research allows interpreting particular phenomena in its natural setting by locating the observer in that world (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, 3). One of the main research methodologies is observation, which is an important part of the qualitative research. By observing the research online communities, it will be possible to partly accept or reject the hypothesis. In addition, interviews with Elisa

community manager, Sonera community manager and InSided community consultant complement the qualitative research.

Furthermore, the study combines both primary and secondary data.

Primary data is known as data which was recorded in real time by observation and measurement. Primary data is an instant reflection of the situation. (Walliman 2011, 70-71.) One of the basic ways to collect primary data is by observing without getting involved (Walliman 2011, 92).

Observation method is independent of respondents' desire to participate in the research or not (Kothari 2004, 96). Thus, the primary data from Sonera and Elisa online communities is collected exactly by observation.

Observation of online communities includes recording data about content, moderation actions, design and some other data available on the communities. Collection of primary data is a necessity for analysis of online communities, which are changing every day. Another way of obtaining primary data can be done through questionnaires.

Questionnaires are often used for explanatory research (Swanson & Chermack 2013, 362). As the nature of the study is partly explanatory, the interviews include the internet-mediated questionnaire for moderators of Elisa online community and Sonera online community and a face-to-face structured interview with InSided senior community consultant.

In addition, secondary data also contributes to the research in general and to the theory review. Secondary data implies all the data that was already collected for some other reason. It is less flexible than primary data and cannot fully answer the research question. (Swanson & Chermack 2013, 256.) Secondary data might also have issues with quality. In order to avoid a risk of getting low-quality data, multiple sources are checked for every subject of the study (Walliman 2011, 69-71). Secondary data exists in many forms, as for example, books, newspapers, organization's reports, particular industry publications, journals and even video recordings (Swanson & Chermack 2013, 259). The secondary data for the theoretical part of the thesis is mostly obtained from such electronic, published and unpublished sources as organizations' reports, books, case studies and

handbooks. Moreover, secondary data is also used in the empirical part for justifying the previous researches with own findings of the author.

All in all, the study is versatile, combining different research approaches, methods and data sources. However, the main research approach is inductive, as the generalized outcomes are to be practiced by other online communities. The main research approach is qualitative, as observation and interviews, which are the key source of primary data, were chosen as the research tools.

### 1.5 Thesis structure

The following paragraph presents the structure of the thesis. The thesis paper is divided into four main parts, namely, introduction, theoretical part, empirical part and the results. Figure 3 below clarifies the thesis structure.

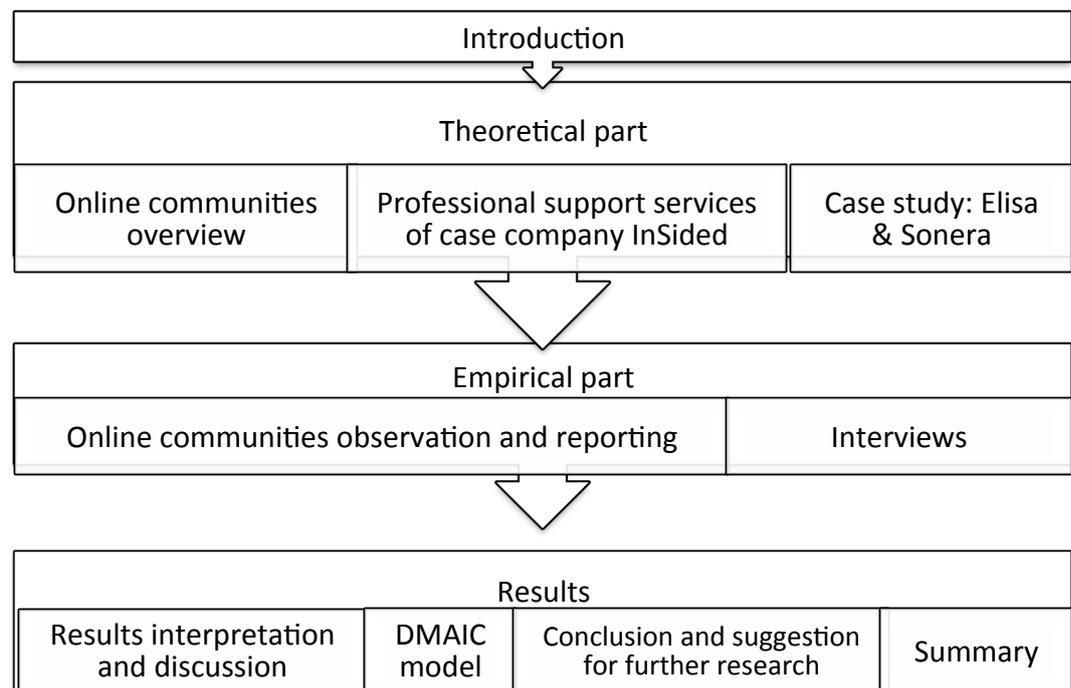


FIGURE 3. Thesis structure.

The first part of the thesis includes introduction to the thesis topic, thesis objectives, research questions and limitations, theoretical framework and research methodology. The theoretical part contains an overview of online communities with the focus on branded online communities and

responsive design, lifecycle of communities and elaboration on factors driving communities to success. The theoretical part presents also the case company InSided and its professional support services. The last part of the theory review includes case study of Elisa and Sonera online communities. The key findings of the theoretical part are examined in the empirical part. Thus, the empirical part includes investigation of Sonera online community and Elisa online community. The communities are compared to each other in order to determine the key strength of responsive online community Elisa, which additionally has professional support services of InSided, and the key strength of desktop version of Sonera online community. Moreover, the empirical part is complemented with interviews. The findings are analysed and discussed in the third part of the thesis. In addition, the results are presented with the help of Define-Measure-Analyse-Improve-Control (DMAIC) framework, which is commonly used in data-driven business. Conclusion and suggestion for further research precede the final part of the thesis, a summary of the whole study.

## 2 ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Online communities have become one of the trendiest destinations on the Internet. It is more convenient than offline interactions, which are limited by time and place. (Resnick & E. Kraut 2012, 1-2.) This chapter introduces the theoretical material about online communities, which are popular in the virtual world. This part is significant for clarification of the research topic and creation of a base for empirical study. The chapter contains three main parts, namely, online communities overview, online community lifecycle and engines for community success. Online communities overview includes online community definition, differentiation from social media and review of particular types of online communities, branded and responsive online communities. The second part is dedicated to community lifecycle stages, which define the actions to be taken towards online community. The third part reveals success factors of online communities. Both technical and management aspects are reviewed.

### 2.1 Online communities overview

The following sub-chapter clarifies the main subject of the study. The definition of online communities is followed by comparison with other social media. Afterwards, there is a presentation of branded online communities and responsive design.

#### 2.1.1 Definition

Literally, online community is a virtual space uniting people. The space is designed to let its members share or acquire particular information and build relationships based on common interests. Online community provides its members with social support, entertainment, and communication, which is more versatile than offline interaction. (Resnick & E. Kraut 2012, 1-2.) The community platform can include blogs, chats, private messages, and forums or discussion boards. These services bring value to community members only when professional contributors, as

community managers and moderators, complement the activity of community members. (Lithium Technologies 2011, 3-4.)

Besides, online communities can be mistakenly called forums. It is a wrong belief, as forum is a part of online community. Forum represents a segment on the website, where users can place their comments (Christensson, 2011). Meanwhile, online community is a multifunctional tool, which includes a variety of features (Lithium Technologies 2011, 3).

All the communities can be categorized in five groups, namely, marketing a business, entertainment, personal development, relationships, and solutions. Marketing a business community is one of the ways for being presented online for organizations. It is reviewed in more details further in this sub-chapter. The second type, entertainment community, is built with the purpose of uniting people with the same interest. (Johnson 2014.)

Usually people spend much time on such type of community due to interesting content as videos (Knafo 2015). The personal development communities also have an interesting content, but with the focus on self-education or growth. Such communities serve people who are willing to improve themselves in certain ways. Another way of improving yourself can be done with the help of forming new relationships. The relationships online community lets its users to be noticed, understood and praised. Users may try to solve their personal problems on relationship communities. However, all the other problems are welcomed on the solutions communities, which are literally meant to provide advice about problems of users. (Johnson 2014.) Some online communities can combine several types of online communities, as for example, telecommunication online community, which combines marketing a business community and solutions community. As the thesis is focused on branded online communities, the theory is introduced from the point of marketing a business and solutions communities.

### 2.1.2 Online communities versus social media

Before launching an online community, an organization should understand possible contribution of the community to the organization in comparison with other social media such as Facebook and Twitter. From a technical point of view, online community can be integrated into any website of an organization, meaning that the organization fully controls the design and functionality of the community. Meanwhile, social media environment is changing independently and can stop complying with the initial requirements of the organization. In addition, community platform allows collecting more valuable information, which can be easily retrieved and analysed. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 25.)

From users' point of view, community unites people with the same interest but without pre-established relations, while social media unites people with completely different sphere of interests (Wu 2011). Based on the interest, users establish their own networks on online community (O'Neill 2013).

### 2.1.3 Branded online communities

Marketing business online communities or branded online communities differ from online communities built for entertainment or educational purposes. However, the intention of branded online communities is to provide enjoyable experience as any other non-commercial community. A successful online community should unite a visitor with the organization, so that there is no barrier in communication between employees and clients (Millington 2012, 185). In case of successfully established communication process within the community, both the organization and its clients generate benefits (Millington 2012, 179).

From an organizational point of view, online community is a platform allowing gathering feedback, promoting its products or services, decreasing support costs, and improving the company image. It is a more profitable way to obtain insights from customers in comparison with direct calls or surveys. (Rossi 2015.) Figure 4 contains the most popular reasons

for launching an online branded community for organizations.

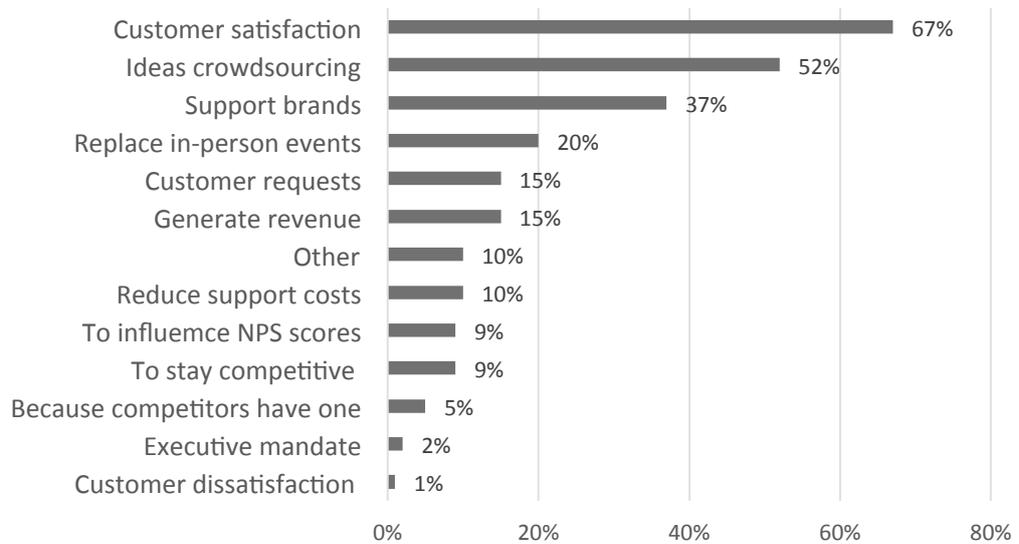


FIGURE 4. Reasons for launching an online branded community (Jones & Sprinks 2016, 23).

An additional option to obtain customer feedback through online community can be done on ideation forum. In comparison with regular forum, ideation allows voting for the best ideas and rising them up in this way to the top of the web page. (InSided B.V. 2016b, 11-12.) For instance, Starbucks has an online community “My Starbucks Idea” with the obvious purpose of letting people share their ideas. For the last six years, they implemented nearly 300 ideas, which were chosen from the online community. Thus, the online community helped Starbucks strengthen its brand and to improve their product due to brilliant innovative ideas from customers. (Hong 2015.)

Furthermore, online community members have a direct influence on the company, what is mutually beneficial. Community members can try to change the organization nature by simply posting on online community, voting for other posts or even arranging boycotts. (Millington 2012, 180-181.) Active contribution of community members is boosted with free samples of products or with discount codes of the organization. Thus, remunerated users become motivated to contribute to the community even more and to promote the community to others. (Millington 2012, 190-191.)

### 2.1.4 Responsive online community

In the following study, responsive online community states for responsive design of online community platform. Responsive design is crucial for success of any web page, as it helps not only to make people visit it, but it makes them stay on the web page. (Dsquared Media 2013.) If design and structure of a web page are badly organized, visitors are not willing to stay on the website (Oberoi 2014).

Responsive platform can be a good solution to avoid any issues with design. Responsive design allows providing the same experience on online community regarding the type of the device and the size of the screen. Hence, online community with the responsive design has a content which resizes according to the screen, creating a more user-friendly experience. Moreover, responsive design makes web pages load faster, providing better performance of the platform. (InSided B.V. 2015a, 1-3.) The response time of the platform depends on increasing load (Newman 2015, 207). The increasing load time of the page makes visitors leave already after ten seconds of waiting for the response from the web page (Nielsen 2011). Thus, fast load time has a positive impact on user experience. Figure 5 presents the difference between desktop version design and responsive design.

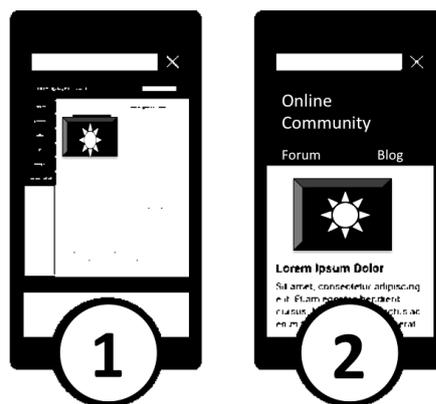


FIGURE 5. Desktop version design (1) versus responsive design (2) (InSided B.V. 2015a, 2).

All in all, responsive design ensures that there is no content duplicated and no visuals overlapping, faster loading time of a page and more structured navigation. (InSided B.V. 2015a, 1-3.)

## 2.2 Online community lifecycle

The following sub-chapter presents an overview of each step of online community lifecycle. InSided (2016b, 1) defines five steps of online community lifecycle, namely, development and implementation, construction, establishment, maturity and segmentation. However, the previous study of Iriberry and Leroy (2009, 14) presents four stages, where inception is followed by creation, growth, maturity or death. The four steps model was later approved by Millington (2012, 24) with some small changes and additions. Both the five-step model and the four-step model imply the same processes of community lifecycle. Therefore, the five-step model is explained with reference to the four-step model in Figure 6.

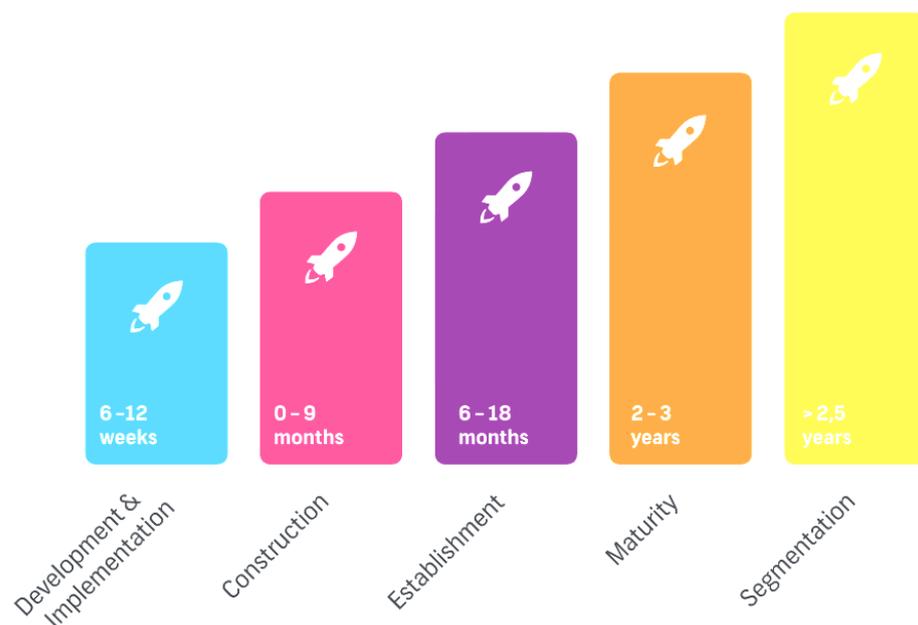


FIGURE 6. Community Lifecycle (InSided 2016b, 1).

The review of community lifecycle is necessary for judgment of moderation actions on Sonera and Elisa online communities. Thus, the analysis of empirical part is done regarding the community lifecycle stage.

### 2.2.1 Development and implementation

The first stage of community lifecycle is development and implementation. This stage is not included in the four-step model of Millington (2012) and Iriberry and Leroy (2009), as it is the very initial step, when online community is not fully available yet.

The stage of development and implementation is crucial for successful development of online communities. This step includes not only technological implementation of online community, but also setting objectives, organizational activities, and arranging community management and moderation. It takes from six to twelve weeks depending on the community concept. (InSided 2016b, 2.)

An interface of online community is designed during technological implementation. The design of online community must follow the brand design, but having its own distinct character. In addition, a community should observe not only a company design, but also the objectives as call reduction and product or service co-creation. Such organizational decisions are part of the development and implementation stage. Other meaningful activities before the launch of a community include creating of content, establishing the reward management system, making activation strategy and moderation training. Therefore, this stage is a foundation for any community. (InSided 2016b, 2.)

### 2.2.2 Construction

Construction is a lifecycle stage following development and implementation stage. It takes place after launch of online community and lasts up to nine months. At this stage, there can be a lack of content and few users who do not have relationships yet. Thus, a community should start attracting people desiring to contribute. Such people can be employees from the organization, experts in the field of community's interest or any other people showing interest in the topic. (InSided 2016b, 3.)

During the construction stage visitors are not willing to register at the community or to return. Therefore, the effort should be put on generating attractive content by creating topics about new items or posting video content. New members can be attracted through personal invitations or e-mails. The invited members should be personally welcomed through a private message. Welcome message should highlight the community goals and invite members to take part in interesting topics. Such moderation inputs will help a community to achieve a critical mass and to boost further growth. (InSided 2016b, 3; Millington 2012, 26-28.)

### 2.2.3 Establishment

The establishment stage of community lifecycle lasts from six to eighteen months after community launch. During this period the community becomes less dependent on inputs of community managers, as there is more and more user-generated content. Meanwhile, community managers can switch to macro-level activities as organizing of online events, Q&A sessions, webinars and offline events. These activities are aimed to build relationships with community members. (InSided 2016b, 4.)

Another way of attracting potential contributors can be done by promotional activities as reaching bloggers and magazines from the same field of interest (Millington 2012, 30). The most active members may be invited to undertake the role of moderators and to generate topics and brainstorm on possible activities (InSided 2016b, 4). Such community members will take part in designing community culture by using a common vocabulary and following participation etiquette rules (Iriberry & Leroy 2009, 14). Furthermore, hiring community volunteers can help to control a community, if it will grow to uncontrollable level. (Millington 2012, 30.)

### 2.2.4 Maturity

By the time of maturity stage, a community has already an established identity and its own culture. The level of activity is high and stable, while active members generate about 90% of activities on community. It is

considered a pre-final evolution of a successful online community, which takes about two to three years after community launch. (InSided 2016b, 5; Millington 2012, 33-34.)

Community moderators perform on the macro-level, while micro-activities, as conflict resolution, spam filtering and responding to posts, are controlled by volunteers (Millington 2012, 34). The attention should be on assigning special statuses for the most loyal and active members as well as rewarding other members according to the level of their contribution. In addition, community managers should be constantly researching and analysing community in order to build the knowledge about community development and business cases. The cases may highlight successful call reduction, building brand awareness and any other impressive achievement. (InSided 2016b, 5.)

#### 2.2.5 Segmentation

The final stage of online community lifecycle is segmentation, in other words, mitosis. In case community members start losing a sense of community, there is a possible decrease of activity. Instead, there might be an overload of activity due to limited amount of control by community managers. In order to avoid such outcomes, a community can be divided into smaller, more focused, sub-communities. (InSided 2016b, 6.) Sub-communities are smaller, but more members have an opportunity to participate. Sub-communities might be defined by demographics, common interest of members or by level of activity. Moreover, the co-founders of sub-communities will actively invite new members by using current relations built in older community. (Millington 2012, 38-42.)

In conclusion, the length of every stage of community lifecycle depends on a type of community. It can take longer or shorter to reach a particular life stage. It is hard to estimate how fast sufficient content will be created and how soon the relationship among members will be built. Therefore, it is more practical to adapt community management referring to the lifecycle

stage itself, but not to the period of community existence. (InSided 2016b, 7.)

## 2.3 Community Success Engines

As was mentioned earlier, success of community depends on the technical aspects as well as on moderators' inputs and user experience. This chapter is dedicated to determining engines that can support successful community development. Firstly, the influence of design and content is reviewed. Secondly, the role of moderator is explained. Thirdly, the relation between traffic and online community is investigated. Finally, user experience summarizes the outcomes of the mentioned success engines. However, these are not the only engines for community success. Professional support services also play a major role and are reviewed later in the thesis.

### 2.3.1 Design

A website of an organization is the first touch point for many visitors. Therefore, the first impression about an organization will be based on design of a website. As there are only ten seconds to grab visitors' attention, design should be supportive in finding the needed information. (Pulizzi & Barrett 2009, 36.) A good design will make visitors stay at the web page, as they consider it worth spending their time. A poor design will make visitors switch to the next website. (O'Keefe 2008, 92.) Making the web page easy for interaction improves user experience and increases traffic. A user-friendly website implies predictable location of the web elements. For example, the top left corner should contain a logo, while the top right corner should provide a search function. The contact information is expected to be in the footer and the main navigation on the top of the page. Readers scan the page from the left upper corner to the right bottom corner. Thus, the most important information should be located according to the eyes' track. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 83-85.) The left side of a page contains important information and the right side related content

(Casey 2015, 127). Moreover, online community should follow a brand design of organization's main website and observe the same colours. In general, images are more attractive than text, but images should not be a substitute for a text, as search engines cannot read images and reflect the result in the textual form. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 84-85.)

Users access websites from different devices and can get a positive experience in case the design functions the way it was supposed to do. Responsive design ensures that a website adapts to the screen of the device. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 179.) Another way to avoid wrong reflection of a design on mobile devices is a mobile version of a website. There are more people using mobiles than computers to access Internet. Hence, having a mobile version of a website is essential for keeping a business up-to-date. (Peterson et al. 2014, 39-40.) Mobile version structure differs from desktop version. The navigation should be located in the bottom of the screen, because mobile devices are usually controlled with one hand. A big size of tabs is also a necessity for easy navigation. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 181.)

In case of online communities, a website of online community is not the only online communication point. Members of online community are also contacted by email, which they have used for registration on an online community. The notification email or an email with newsletter should be properly designed as online community itself. The brand identity is to be delivered through the email. An email template includes pre-designed layout and the organization's logo. The design of the email should be developed taking into account technical characteristics of receiver's email campaign, because Outlook, Gmail and Apple display a content of an email in different ways. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 123.)

To sum up, a website design is responsible for the first impression of the visitor. Based on that, the visitor either leaves or stays on the website. The web design should be understandable and built according to the general structure. If an organization has multiple websites, all the websites should follow one style including mobile versions and customer emails.

### 2.3.2 Content

Content is not only about the text, it also implies images, videos, designs and other user-consumable elements, which contribute to understanding an organization's products or services (Abel & Bailie 2014, 12). Good content is essential for reflecting the value of an organization and attracting new members and potential customers (Casey 2015, 148). Good content significantly influences the buying behaviour, as buyers want to have sufficient information before making a purchase. An organization providing better content is more competitive. (Pulizzi & Barrett 2009, 9.) Attractive content maintains an interest of existing members and helps gaining new users. It is important to publish content, which matches the expectations of reading audience. For this purpose, organizations should learn about readers' demographics, preferences and field of interest. (Casey 2015, 148.)

The content should be designed to meet multiple goals. Firstly, it should be important for members of online community. Secondly, it should reflect business goals of an organization. (Casey 2015, 162.) There are different types of content to meet both the expectations of users and fulfil the company objectives. News content allows sharing important information for the organization and interesting for users. News can be about events happening inside and outside the community, about latest discussions and valuable contributions from the members. Another type of content, similar to news, is the announcement. Announcements emphasize some important news, which are, for example, about changes on the community. However, news and announcements are produced by the organization. The community cannot exist without contribution from users. Users should be allowed to submit news and other relevant content. The users feel appreciated and enjoy having influence over the community. User-generated content also decreases the workload for community managers. (Millington 2012, 96-99.) The combination of user-generated content and professional content is an inherent part of modern marketing (Weber 2007, 33). Thus, online community is a perfect space for the professional content complemented by user-generated content (Weber 2007, 38).

Furthermore, users should be involved not only in content creating but also being a part of the content. Mentioning the names of the users in the posts significantly increases readership, because people are more motivated to read something if they or people they know were mentioned there. Therefore, up to 90% of the content should contain a reference to users in online community. (Millington 2012, 93.)

Any content passes the stages of its lifecycle. During strategic stage the moderators decide which content is needed in order to meet organization's goals and users' interest. Planning of content creation process follows the strategic stage. When the content is created, approved and published, maintaining stage takes place. Maintaining includes reviewing the relevance of the content with the time and editing if necessary. (Casey 2015, 202.)

New content should be published regularly and with the same interval. Community managers need to make sure that there are no long pauses in content publishing. Otherwise, users are likely to switch to other sources of information. (Millington 2012, 103.) For example, online communities should have a newsletter, which needs to be published bi-weekly or monthly. The newsletter includes updates on top stories of the week or a month. (Pulizzi & Barrett 2009, 215.) The newsletter helps users get a quick idea of what happened in the community, when they were not following it for some time (Millington 2012, 89).

If there was already some content created or if content needs improvement as part of maintenance stage, there are some general guidelines how to analyse content. Firstly, readability of the text needs to be examined. Usually users scan text instead of reading from word-for-word. Therefore, it is necessary to have simple page titles, headings, bulleted lists and highlighted text. Amount of text on each page should be limited, as users read about 25% slower online. The text should not be obviously "promoting", as it decreases users' trust to the source of information. (Sheffield 2009, 69-72.) Besides, it can be useful to analyse success of particular posts in order to determine the most popular topics

on the community. Measuring includes calculation of number of topic views, shares on other social media and number of returning visits to the topic. Based on the findings, it is easy to determine what type of content is welcomed on the community. (Millington 2012, 105-106.)

In conclusion, it is important to understand the users for creating appropriate content. Good content should be complemented with appealing designs. (Pulizzi & Barrett 2009, 233.) Finally, there should be a constant monitoring of content quality and relevance.

### 2.3.3 Moderation

The success of a community depends a lot on how the community is moderated. Moderation is far more than simply filtering out inappropriate content and blocking spam accounts. Moderation includes increasing activity on the community, initiating discussions, resolving conflicts, providing interesting content and any other activities supporting growth and development of the community. (Millington 2012, 107.) Without moderation communities become uncontrollable, as spammers are free to attack the community and use it for their own interest. In this case a community suffers from overload of inappropriate information and does not meet the initial purpose of the community. Web robots' penetration can be partly prevented by security check during registration, but real users can easily solve any code verification graphic and start posting on the community. Moderators should remove spam from the community as soon as possible. (Millington 2012, 108-109.) Another obstacles for healthy community are conflicts and fights initiated by users. On the one hand, conflicts leave a negative impression about the community and moderators spend a lot of time resolving debates. On the other hand, conflicts do not damage the community as they increase interest and make obvious which topics users are passionate about. Active debates increase traffic and people return to the community to participate. It is beneficial for the development of the community and prevents community from being boring without emotional engagement. However, moderators

need to control disputes so that it does not hurt anyone. (Millington 2012, 112-113.) Moderators should be good at understanding users and predicting which content and at what time need to be delivered on the community, either to inform and provide answer or to resolve conflict (Peterson et al. 2014, 73). It is a common practice, that customers get a response within fourteen hours, though customers expect the response within two to four business hours. Thus, the sooner customers get a response, the better the customer experience will be. (Santos 2015, 230.)

Online communities are designed to give space for customers to let them say what they want and even criticize. However, some additional effort might be needed from moderators to keep discussions controllable. There can be a special place where users are free to share any kind of feedback. Moderators' role is to guide discussion towards the strengths of the discussed issues. (Weber 2007, 50-51.) Listening to users helps understanding the consumer sentiment and to get real-time information about consumers' experience with a product or service (Perkins 2015, 160).

It is not enough only to make people say what they want, but it is also important to build a relationship among users. Moderators cannot just convince users to form relations with each other. Firstly, users should have a feeling of the community and, secondly, they should have trustful narratives on the community with whom they would like to establish a relationship. (Weber 2007, 80-81.) As the top users have the biggest influence, moderators should create a good relationship with them. It is time-consuming but very beneficial for developing a sense of the community. (Millington 2012, 144.)

It might happen that desired moderation activities are not realized on time. There might be not enough moderators to cope with the workflow or the activities take longer time than it was estimated. (Casey 2015, 112.) In order to have time for different type of activities, as creating content, resolving disputes and removing spam, moderators can create an editorial calendar. Editorial calendar is a schedule, which helps keeping activities of

moderators manageable (Abel & Bailie 2014, 92). In other words, editorial calendar is about scheduled future changes for the website (Sheffield 2009, 124). For example, daily community news can be scheduled daily, while summary of the week can be planned at the end of each week. Moderators should have time scheduled for welcoming new members, promoting stuff and planning the future editorial calendar. (Millington 2012, 104-105.)

All in all, moderators should aim to increase the number of registrations and participating members, to have more user-generated content, and to improve the sentiment and quality of discussions (Millington 2012, 136).

#### 2.3.4 Traffic

The amount of data sent and received during the visit of the website between the computer and website's server is meant by website traffic. Website traffic gathers information about visits and helps determine which pages are the most popular. It means that by analysing the traffic, organizations can get to know the interests of users and adapt the website regarding the visitors' preferences. (Barett 2016.) The traffic sources indicate from where people arrive to the website. The traffic can be segmented into search traffic, direct traffic, referral sites and social media channels. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 96.)

Search traffic comes from search engines (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 91). Google is one of the most popular search engines with the highest search volume. It is important for any website to appear in the top search results and being ranked higher than other similar websites. A good-quality content increases chances for appearing in the top search results. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 53.) Visitors can be forwarded to particular web page of the website, which is known as landing page (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 92). In order for the search engine to find the most relevant landing page, a website should have the best keywords to reflect the content. There are such tools, as Google Keyword Planner and Wordtracker, to find the right keywords for online content. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 50.)

Despite search engines, visitors can also be forwarded from other websites. Such type of traffic is called referral traffic. If users are forwarded from social media, it is not considered as referral traffic but a social media channel. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 91.) Traffic from social media is more valuable as it discloses the profile data of visitors (Peterson et al. 2014, 171). The qualified traffic can be achieved by optimizing social media. Social sharing buttons, which need to be located next to the topic, makes it easier to share interesting content via social media. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 41.) Pinterest, Google+, Twitter and Facebook are common social media channels used for sharing content of the website. Pinterest can be good for sharing visual content and collaboration. Google+ helps to increase brand awareness. Twitter is efficient at making the best of content due to similar structure to online communities and easier navigation with the help of hashtags. Finally, Facebook is the most widely used social network with more than 1.16 billion active users. Facebook can be a good channel to reach users of mobile phones. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 162-165.)

Some visitors can arrive to the website directly without using social media, search engines or referral websites. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 91.) Visitors can just type in the URL and land on the desired page. For this reason, web pages should not have complicated URLs. The link that reflects the page's content is easier to read and memorize. A user-friendly URL contains a topic name, but not series of numbers. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 58-59.)

In conclusion, online community needs traffic in order to grow and develop. The traffic can be influenced by events on the community as product launches announcements, public holidays, updates and etc. (Clifton 2010, 94.) The common traffic boosters are paid advertising, email marketing and social networks (Clifton 2010, 324).

### 2.3.5 User experience

According to McNamara and Kirakowski (2006), the user experience is defined as a relationship between the user and particular system, product or service. In case of online communities, the user has a relationship with a system. The relationship is affected by what kind of experience is received by the user while using the online community system. Improving the user experience is a continuous process, which depends on the community's stage in the lifecycle (Millington 2012, 228). The need for improving user experience arises with the headway through the lifecycle (Millington 2012, 221). User experience improvement includes enhancing the community platform and advancing members' participation experience (Millington 2012, 18).

Before visitors land on the community, they have a travel journey, which starts from the sources, where the reference to the community is located. In order to attract the right people, the link to the community should be accessible on other websites of the organization. (O'Keefe 2008, 92.) For example, such social media platforms as Facebook and Twitter allow posting a question and a link to proceed directly to the discussion on the community. Thus, only people, who are interested in the topic arrive to your community and are ready to register. (Millington 2012, 235.)

User experience starts since the moment visitors land on the community web page. Therefore, it is crucial to understand what kind of visitors appear on the homepage. The homepage should be designed to visitors, which prevail in the community. (Millington 2012, 223.) If there are mostly new visitors, there should be a welcome message on the top of the site. A welcome message encourages the visitors to create an account. However, the welcome message should be visible only for users who are not logged in. (O'Keefe 2008, 96.) Otherwise, the registered members constantly view the message, which is not even addressed to them (Millington 2012, 223).

After the newcomers are motivated enough to become registered members, there is a process of registration coming up. The registration

process should not be complicated as it affects the share of visitors becoming registered members. The more work is required during the registration, the fewer visitors finalise the registration process. The research had shown, that 90% of people facing a long registration process do not proceed with registration. (Drenner et al. 2008, 187-194.) Nevertheless, the registration process cannot be skipped, as it helps to reduce amount of spam and disorderly activity on the community. There will be an overload of promotions, violations and irrelevant content, if the community is in the free access without obligatory registration before participation. (O'Keefe 2008, 25.)

The newcomers are very sensitive and the first participation at the community should leave a positive experience. Newcomers should be involved in the latest activity. Thus, latest activity widget should be a visible element of the homepage. The homepage can showcase the latest news, popular or recently answered topics and the most active contributors. (Millington 2012, 229-230.) Especially the news widget can be helpful for the newcomers, who are hesitating which discussion can be relevant for them (O'Keefe 2008, 236). However, there should not be too much space for discussions, as most of these spaces are likely to remain empty. It is better to provide an area, which unites a broader range of topics. (Resnick & E. Kraut 2012, 239.) The topic categories, which have a lack of activity must be removed or merged with a relevant category. The categories and the topics should be arranged according to amount of views and replies, so that the most popular topics are easy accessible. Arranging the community based on the popularity of content simplifies users' journey to the right content. (Millington 2012, 225.)

In order to make newcomers return to the community more than one time, there should be a notification system established. Notification implies an email received by a member, whose contribution got a reply. By following the link in the email, users are redirected to the action point and are likely to commit another contribution. Most communities have notifications available as a default setting. Despite the fact, that users can switch

notifications off, only few users will change it in the settings. (Millington 2012, 227.)

Gamification is a useful rewarding tool, which makes users return to the community (O'Keefe 2008, 237). The users get points for making good posts, providing particular amount of replies and other type of contributing activities (Vanilla 2016b, 37). Gamification can generate also an opposite effect. If the member is interested in collecting rewards more than in the community, the member will be committing actions, which are rewarded, as posting blank messages, creating irrelevant topics and even inviting random people to join the community. Thus, the gaming system should be arranged in a way to avoid unfair rewarding. (Resnick & E. Kraut 2012, 53-56.)

Online community should also give space for members to share ideas and feedback with the organization. Ideation forum is a special type of forum on the community, where members can post their ideas. Users can influence the organization by commenting and voting the ideas or posting own ideas. (Vanilla 2016a.) Users post in ideation forum in case they have an idea or a problem. Some ideas are valuable for the organization and some will never be realised. In case the management team decided to realize the idea from the ideation forum, it is worth making a post about it in the announcement forum. Thus, users will be motivated to share their ideas and being mentioned as a contributor in the announcements. However, the authors of unrealisable ideas should also be thanked for their contribution and informed that their idea will be recorded and possibly realised some time later. All in all, ideation forum provides space for collecting valuable ideas and both negative and positive feedback, which is valuable for improving user experience. (O'Keefe 2008, 44-48.)

Furthermore, online community should be accessible from a computer and mobile device. More and more online communities experience increase in visits performed with the help of mobile devices rather than personal computers. Therefore, online communities should have a mobile version to activate mobile users on the community. (Millington 2012, 236-237.)

Mobile version contributes not only for improving user experience but also to the organization. As mobile version has a higher loading speed, the chance that the visitor is switching to another source of information is lower. (Ramedani 2015.)

To sum up, there are a lot of factors shaping the user experience. Organizations should keep improving user experience constantly by displaying the latest content on the homepage, keeping the users motivated and rewarded for participation, and listening to the users' feedback as it is the most obvious recommendation for improvement.

### 3 CASE COMPANY: INSIDED

This chapter justifies why InSided was chosen as an example of a successful community producer and community consultant. Firstly, there is an overview of the company. Secondly, there is a detailed presentation of InSided support services and professional competence, which is separated into strategy, concept, implementation, analysing and reporting. The knowledge of InSided partly proves and complements the theory review above.

#### 3.1 Company overview

InSided B.V. is known as Europe's leader in providing community engagement technology and helping companies reconnect with their customers online (InSided 2016a). The company was founded in 2010 and since then it has acquired more than 60 employees and established offices in Amsterdam, Berlin, London and Madrid (InSided 2016c, 4). It is an international company having clients from France, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Germany, England, Portugal, Czech Republic and Brazil. Due to acknowledgment of InSided by such well-known client companies as Philips, TomTom, Elisa and Sonos, it is reasonable to rely on the company's competence in online community engagement technology. (InSided 2016c, 4.)

InSided believes that the technology itself cannot contribute to success without inputs from people. Therefore, even an excellent designed product should be complemented by professional services. Following this vision, InSided provides support in strategy building, design and content development, implementation processes and continuous support after implementation. (InSided 2016c, 4.)

#### 3.2 Professional support services and industry insights

Different professional support services and knowledge base are the main competitive advantages of InSided. The uniquely designed services are

crucial for developing successful communities. (InSided B.V. 2016a, 1.) All the support services can be united in four groups, namely, strategy, concept, implementation, and other support. The first type of support is strategy development for client's online community. The strategy sessions organized by InSided includes determining goals and strategy training workshops. Furthermore, there is support in determining the concept of the community by designing community and integrating it with social media. It also includes content and activation strategy development as part of the support with concept designing. Implementation support follows the concept support and includes testing of the community platform and quality assurance in order to launch the community. After the launch of a community, general support is provided, as for example, different workshops and trainings for community managers, knowledge sharing and updates on how to improve the community in the form of monthly or biweekly reports. (InSided 2016c, 4.) The clarification on each type of support activities is aimed to highlight the role of support services in building community success. In addition, there are the features from InSided knowledge base explained.

### 3.2.1 Strategy

Each organization should have a clear strategy for its online community. The strategy depends on the type of the organization and on the objectives the organization is aiming to achieve with its community. The objective presents where the community should be after a specific period of time. The objective should be achievable, coherent and critical to the success of the online community. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 6-7.)

For example, an organization can aim to reduce service costs by call reduction and forwarding the clients to the community (InSided B.V. 2016c, 6). This objective can also be combined with positioning online community as the major customer service channel for finding answers and solutions. Later on, the objective can become more specific. For instance, users of the community are providing 30% of the answers during the first

year and 50% of the answers during the second year. Another objective can be making the customers happier by providing a space for interaction based on the interest to the organization or brand. In order to measure it, an exit-survey can be established with a grading system from one to ten. The organization should aim for most grades above seven points. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 9.)

For these reasons, the provider of support services should assist with coordinating the activities of community managers on the way to objectives achievement (InSided B.V. 2016c, 6). During the moderation trainings, community managers are taught to perform according to the subscribed roles. It is also necessary to repeat moderation trainings in order to analyse the current way of working and to bring community managers' performance to the next level. (InSided B.V. 2016a, 8.)

### 3.2.2 Concept

Concept development can be considered as part of the strategy as it includes content strategy and activation strategy (InSided 2016c, 4). Content strategy support includes developing of content strategy, forum structure and a content calendar (InSided B.V. 2016c, 31). Activation strategy support combines rising motivation, establishing activity calendar and the newsletter for the online community (InSided B.V. 2016c, 49). Furthermore, activation includes also gamification, which is one of the powerful engines for community activation (InSided B.V. 2016c, 69).

Developing content depends on the community position in the lifecycle. Thus, when the community is in its construction stage, the focus should be on creating attractive content. But when a community is in the maturity stage, the content will have a user-generated nature. Anyway, the content should be created following the community goals as well as the user interest. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 32.) Figure 7 visualizes how to limit the relevant content for the community.

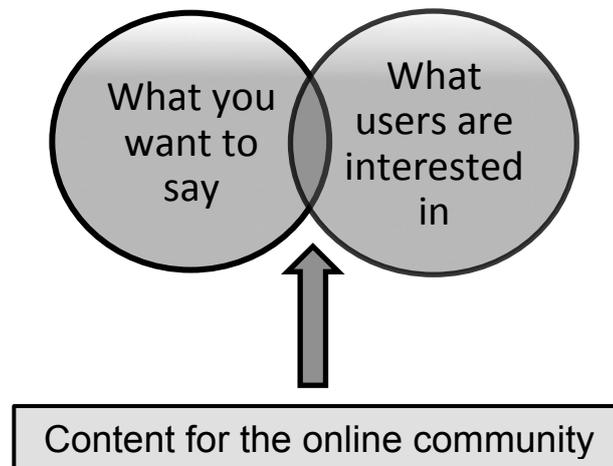


FIGURE 7. Designing community content. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 32.)

As it is shown in Figure 7 the organization should determine which information it wants to deliver to the community members and leave out the share which is not part of members' interest. Finally, studying the competitor's community is also an option to determine what can be applicable to own community (InSided B.V. 2016c, 34). All in all, the common interest of the organization and users should be translated into good content. Good content implies unique, high quality and latest content placed on the relevant place on the community. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 34.)

In order for users to have a quick access to the desired content, the forum structure should be organized in a logical manner. The control environment allows changing the categories and forums when it is needed. There is a need for such a feature, as the structure of online community is a subject to continuous change. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 35-37.) The activity on online community should also be continuous. On average, each forum should have three topics before the launch and at least three activities per day after being live. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 38.)

There are three types of content, namely, informative, activating and research. Informative content varies from community guidelines and description of the forum to information about product or services.

Nevertheless, the purpose is to inform the visitors about a variety of matters. The second type of content, activating content, is dedicated to rising the interest to the topic and motivating to participate. Activating content must be easily reachable and visible. However, the research content mostly benefits to the organization as it aims to gain reviews on some products and services or other type of feedback regarding the organization. In order to keep a good control of all types of the content, it is recommended to follow a content calendar. The content calendar is an advanced tool, which assists community managers with being on track with posting relevant content. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 38.)

The discussion about activating content brings it to the second important segment of concept designing, activation strategy. InSided online communities usually have a predefined set of activation functions (InSided B.V. 2016c, 53). The activation functions from Table 2 are adjustable and can be designed according to the community goals.

TABLE 2. Built-in activation features (modified by the author from InSided B.V. 2016c, 53).

<b>Custom mails</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To welcome new members</li> <li>• Notification about new messages, posts and topics</li> </ul>
<b>Closed groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customization of visibility of particular forums</li> <li>• Making users feel special being included in the closed forums</li> </ul>
<b>Private messages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulation for the users to return</li> <li>• Can be used for welcoming the new users</li> </ul>
<b>Forum notifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeps updated on changes</li> </ul>
<b>Gamification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active contributors are rewarded with pre-set badges and ranks</li> </ul>
<b>In-app notifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving notifications on the mobile device directly from the forum and not only by email</li> </ul>

Despite built-in activation features, there should be other type of activation activities implemented. For example, product tests are always a success as people like testing and keeping the products afterwards. The most active users can be also invited to offline events, where the organization can get to know the main contributors personally. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 57.)

Activation helps generate more active users from random visitors. InSided defines six types of users. Every member starts its journey as a visitor and can end up being a super user. Figure 8 visualizes the hierarchy of users on online community (InSided B.V. 2016d, 3).

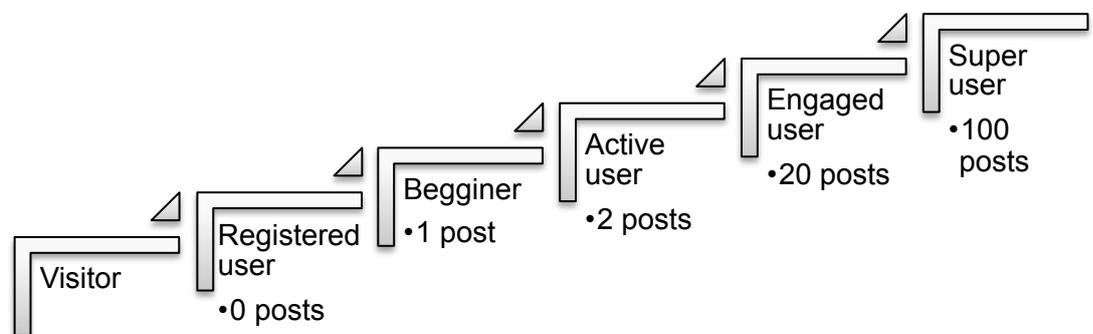


FIGURE 8. User stages (modified by the author from InSided B.V. 2016d, 4).

Visitors are coming to the community, because they are searching for a specific answer to their question. In most cases if visitors find an answer without registration, they are likely not to register. In order to increase probability of visitors to become registered members, it is advised to make popular content visible, have a clear call for an action and the registration button should be outstanding. However, one of the strongest motivations to register is a need to post a question. (InSided B.V. 2016d, 5.) Hence, when the registered user performs its first activity, the visitor becomes the beginner. It is the right moment to provide a positive experience for the newbie and to convince the member to stay on the community for the further participation. Beginners should be warmly welcomed and thanked for their first contribution. (InSided B.V. 2016d, 8.) Once the user

completed its second activity, the user would be counted as an active user up to the moment the user posts on the community for the twentieth time. Active users are valuable contributors and therefore it is worth remunerating them with something small. (InSided B.V. 2016d, 9.) Most active users were driven to participate by opportunity to self-express, get entertainment and help others (InSided B.V. 2016d, 5). The more advanced user type is an engaged user. To achieve this status users should have performed more than twenty activities. Engaged users are already known for other community members and have a potential to become super users. Potential super users should be provided with personal attention. (InSided B.V. 2016d, 10.) If a user reached one hundred posts, the super user status would be granted. Organization should maintain personal relationship with super users, but keep control over their performance, as super users are likely to violate the community regulation being blinded by fame. (InSided B.V. 2016d, 11.)

Another powerful incentive for users to stay on the community is gamification. As it was proved by research, 63% of people are willing to participate in any type of activities if there is a gamification module integrated. InSided developed its own gamification system, which is offered to the organizations together with supportive gamification workshop. The main playful mechanisms are likes, ranks and badges. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 69.) The amount of likes affects the reputation, which gives a sign for other members about value of each contributor. The amount of likes is usually located next to the username. Users have a direct influence on “likes” as they are the one who grants the “likes” to other users. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 70.) However, the ranks can be achieved by performing activities as posting predefined amount of posts, topics, liking other answers, receiving likes, visiting community and etc. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 72.) Furthermore, the behaviour of users is also evaluated and rewarded by badges. Users can get badges for getting predefined amount of followers, being marked multiple times as the author of the best answer and some other achievements. Badges must be a challenging award and should be granted for important achievements,

otherwise the perception of the values of badges decreases in the minds of users. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 74-75.)

All in all, designing concept of the community requires much input for creating content strategy and activating strategy. Both strategies should be created following the goals of the community.

### 3.2.3 Implementation

Implementation is the last stage before the community is officially launched. The main stages during the implementation are integrations and quality assurance tests. (InSided 2016c, 4.) Integrations are adding value to the customer journey. It also helps to generate traffic towards the community, making a community transparent and increasing visibility. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 42-43.)

Integrations are simply known as smart references inside the website or pointing towards some web pages. Integrations perform independently bringing the user to the desired destination. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 42.) For example, “frequently asked questions” integration has an influence on call reduction. It simplifies the process of getting the answer to the question. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 44.)

Implementation stage includes also quality tests as Functionality Acceptance Test (FAT) and User Acceptance Test (UAT). Both quality checks aim to ensure that the community was built according to specifications, that it is following the design and performs properly. The only difference that during the FAT the community is tested from community manager perspective. The FAT includes testing of the community as well as control environment, while the UAT includes only testing of community in the role of a regular user. Both tests help to reveal the bugs in the system and to prevent crashes of the platform in the future. (InSided 2016c, 2-3.)

### 3.2.4 Analysing and reporting

After the community launch and some period being live, the community can be analysed. Making analysis of the community is essential for measuring the success of the community. Rejection to conduct regular analysis reports may result in wasted resources and lost opportunity to improve the wellbeing of the community. (InSided B.V. 2015b, 3.) If to make use of different analysis tools, the analysis of community data can contribute to comparing it with the outcomes of other social media channels used by the organization (InSided B.V. 2015b, 4). The most common analysis tools are exports from the own control environment of the community and statistics from Google Analytics. For example, Google Analytics provide information about traffic sources, clarifying how users land on the community, how many pages were viewed and how many users visited the community. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 63.) Google analytics also provide information about the content, namely, which content generates the most traffic and which subjects are the most popular among visitors (InSided B.V. 2015b, 7). The drop down in traffic can signify that there is something wrong with the content of topics and amount of comments (InSided B.V. 2016c, 63). The amount of topics per category, comments per topic and percentage of answers marked as the right answer can be measured by gathering data from the control environment as well. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 62.)

When the data of the community is analysed, it is the moment to develop the next action steps by referring to the knowledge database. InSided provides access to the knowledge base, where there is a collection of proven whitepapers, case studies, tutorials, training materials, manuals and handbooks. The community owners can find answers on how to write effective content, raise traffic and which actions to take regarding the stage in community lifecycle. (InSided B.V. 2016a, 4.) If there is a need for review of community consultant, InSided provides support calls. Support calls with the community consultant give an opportunity to get advice on successful community management and day-to-day management. (InSided B.V. 2016a, 6.)

All in all, measuring growth and success of the community is based on community analytics. Community analytics should take place on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis. (InSided B.V. 2016c, 61-62.)

### 3.3 Customer success stories

The clients of InSided choose different amount of support services. As was mentioned, professional support services play a big role in community success. Most clients of InSided had succeeded in call deflection, improving customer services and bringing together the dedicated customers. The most successful communities of InSided are telecommunication communities. (InSided 2015, 4-30.) For example, T-Mobile, the largest telecommunication company in the Netherlands, achieved 20% of customer contact handled by the online community (InSided 2015, 6). KPN online community has good results in customer-to-customer help as other telecommunication communities. Hence, regular users provide 26% of help. (InSided 2015, 26.) However, other community types can gain success as telecommunication communities. For instance, TomTom, which is known as global leader in navigation, succeeded with 25% of call deflection with the help of online community (InSided 2015, 14). SNS community is an example of a successful banking online community. The SNS customers are helping to improve company's products and services by active in co-creation on the community. (InSided 2015, 16.)

In conclusion, customer success stories of InSided serve as additional evidence, that the practices of InSided in managing online communities are reliable. The achievements of InSided online communities can be an example of community goals for other communities and how the success can be measured.

## 4 CASE STUDY: ELISA & SONERA

This chapter precedes the empirical part and plays an important role in the overall meaning of the research. The case study of Sonera and Elisa clarifies the background of the research subjects and creates a base for a deeper research during the empirical part. Firstly, Sonera and Elisa organizations are reviewed as part of the telecommunication market. Secondly, Elisa online community is described in accordance with its lifecycle stage and the powering organization. Thirdly, Sonera online community is reviewed from the same perspective as Elisa online community.

### 4.1 Telecommunication industry

The telecommunication industry continues to expand. The growth is boosted by an increase in the amount of smart devices, which require wireless connection. (Wigginton 2016.) Research has shown that there are more mobile-cellular subscribers, than population. Thus, there were 757 million subscribers in Europe by the year 2015. (ITU 2016.) As the demand on telecommunication services increases, competition becomes tougher. Price becomes the only obvious competitive advantage. Many companies try to stay competitive by following customer centricity, which is the way to go. (McSchane 2012.) Especially telecommunication companies define a need for an excellent customer experience as a top priority (EY 2015, 18). In order to succeed in the future, telecommunication organizations should be ready to switch to a new network of technologies with their customers (EY 2015, 27). It is forecasted that online interaction would become the main communication channel for companies and clients, as communities provide convenient way to interact with bigger group of people (InSided 2015, 7). Communities assist organizations with staying competitive and distinguishing its brands (InSided 2015, 4).

This sub-chapter contains an overview of the case company Elisa and case company Sonera. There is a brief introduction of background of both

companies and their attitude towards development and customer connection.

#### 4.1.1 Company Elisa

Telecommunication company Elisa serves 2.3 million customers in Finland. The company is known as the market leader in providing communication and entertainment services. (Elisa 2015a, 1.) Elisa is a customer-oriented organization, striving for excellent digital services (Elisa 2015a, 2-3). Therefore, superior relationship with customers is an essential. For this purpose, Elisa offers an online community, known as the most convenient way to connect with customers. Elisa's online community encourages participating in the discussions, requesting help and sharing customer experience. (Elisa Palsta 2016.) Elisa believes in its customers and allows them to guide the company's performance. Elisa continuously improves its understanding skills by active interaction with customers. (Elisa 2015a, 61.)

In addition to appreciating customer intimacy, Elisa aims for operational excellence and innovative approach towards digital services (Elisa 2016a). Elisa focuses on the things that deliver value for customers (Elisa 2016b).

#### 4.1.2 Company Sonera

Telecommunication company Sonera is also operating in Finland (TeliaSonera 2015b). Sonera is a part of TeliaSonera, which has its roots in Finland. TeliaSonera is an international company, providing telecommunication services in many countries in Europe and Middle East. (TeliaSonera 2015c.) The organization is focused on its customers and social improvement. It is aiming for providing integrated services and meeting all types of customer expectations. (TeliaSonera 2015a, 18-19.)

Sonera provides customer support through its online community. Sonera online community is a space where people can discuss Sonera services, mobile devices and other related topics. The users of the community are

welcomed to bring up the conversation or to provide responses. (Revonmäki 2014.)

## 4.2 Elisa Online Community

The sub-chapter discloses the components of Elisa online community, its lifecycle stage and impact of managing organization InSided. The case study of the online community is a necessity in order to justify findings of the empirical part and to answer the research questions properly.

### 4.2.1 Elisa Palsta

Elisa online community serves as one of the most important customer service channels. The community can be accessed by referral link “Palstakeskustelufoorumi”, which can be found under “Asiakaspalvelu” tab in the navigation link on the official website of Elisa or directly by typing in the link of online community.

The online community follows the brand design and matches the company website. As it is shown in Figure 9, the online community has a simple and user-friendly structure. The main page includes search field, ideation widget, forum widget, and some additional widgets as news, recent discussions, popular topics, honour and some others. Such widgets allow easier navigation and a structured search process.

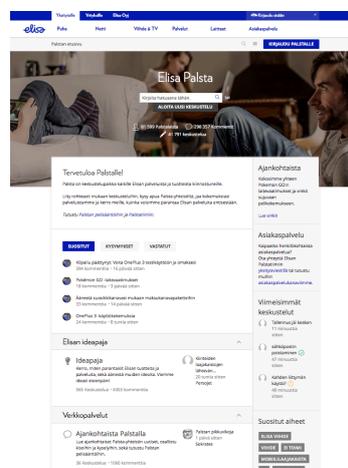


FIGURE 9. Elisa online community main page (Elisa Palsta, 2016).

By the beginning of September 2016, the Elisa online community includes more than 82,000 members, 42,000 topics and nearly 302,000 comments. The impact of each widget, design, contents and other aspects influencing the user experience are reviewed in the empirical part of the study in more details. (Elisa Palsta, 2016.)

#### 4.2.2 Lifecycle stage

It is important to know the lifecycle stage in order to judge the community according to its capabilities (InSided 2016b, 1). From the first glance, Elisa Palsta seems to be an active community, which is definitely not in the beginning of its lifecycle. As the first topics were created more than seven years ago, it means that the community is in the segmentation stage. According to InSided lifecycle, segmentation stage begins after 2,5 years being live (InSided 2016b, 6).

Another evidence of the segmentation is the amount of categories with topics. There are 10 categories: idea workshop, network services, entertainment and cable TV, mobile services, broadband and additional services, phones and devices, other devices, other discussion, English and Swedish, releases. Such a variety testifies segmentation lifecycle stage. During this stage the community is self-supporting, the growth is stable and the activity level increases continuously (Millington 2012, 38-41).

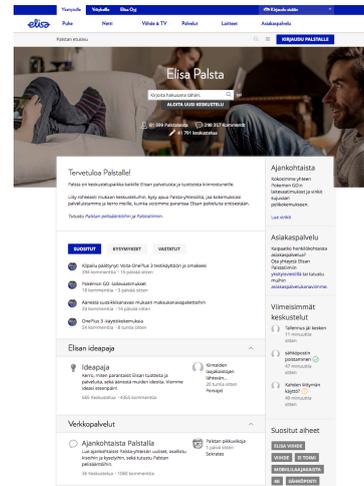
#### 4.2.3 InSided role

Elisa online community is powered by InSided. Elisa receives assistance with running its customer support community from the leading provider of community engagement technologies. (InSided 2016a.) However, it was previously powered by Lithium (Jack 2013). Lithium was the establisher of Elisa online community and was maintaining the community till 2016. By switching to InSided online community, Elisa made a switch to responsive design and to a package of support services. Figure 10 also shows that

Elisa online community has improved its design and forum structure with the help of InSided.



Lithium community



InSided community

FIGURE 10. Lithium versus InSided online communities (Jack 2013; Elisa Palsta 2016).

Despite the fact that Lithium claimed that Elisa had the best community design in 2013, there are obvious improvements of the visuals at Elisa online community by InSided in 2016 (Jack 2013).

### 4.3 Sonera Online Community

The sub-chapter contains an overview of Sonera online community web page and how the community is managed according to its lifecycle stage. The management of the community implies actions of Sonera community managers and the powering organization Lithium.

#### 4.3.1 Sonera Klaani

Sonera Klaani is the name of the Sonera support online community. The community can be accessed from the main website of the organization by proceeding to the tab “Klaani-keskustelut”, which is located under “Asiakastuki” navigation tab. The online community combines forum, blog

and helpful videos. Despite such versatile features, Sonera Klaani is the online community with a desktop version design.

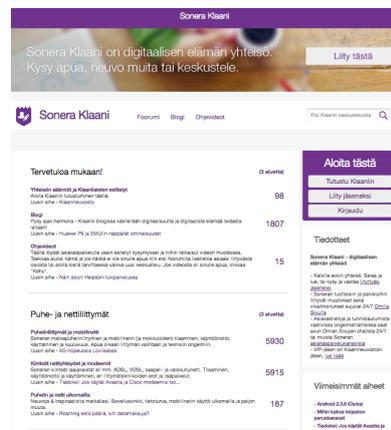


FIGURE 11. Sonera online community main page (Sonera Klaani 2016).

The main page of Sonera Klaani contains nine forum categories, newsletter widget, recent posts, latest solutions and some widgets with user rankings. In comparison with the main page of Elisa Palsta, it is missing some details as time of recent posts, amount of users and pop-up information windows. The difference between main pages of Elisa and Sonera is examined in the empirical part of the study.

The four main community managers of Sonera Klaani provide most of the replies and guide the users to the right source of information. However, the community appeals to all users and encourages participating in the ongoing discussions in order to create valuable content. (Revonmäki 2014.)

#### 4.3.2 Lifecycle stage

Sonera Klaani is a younger community than Elisa Palsta. The Sonera online community is active for less than two years as the first topics were created in the end of 2014. According to InSided, communities that are younger than two years but older than six months, are in the establishment stage of the lifecycle (InSided 2016b, 1). During the establishment phase community managers start focusing more on macro-level activities rather than micro-level activities. Thus, the effort should be focused on activities,

that can affect multiple users at the same time. For example, organization of events can benefit to involving interest of the target audience. (Millington 2012, 29-30.) In addition, content about the community can be a useful tool for users' activation during the establishment stage (Millington 2012, 32). The newsletter widget of Sonera Klaani is an example of content about the community (Sonera Klaani 2016).

#### 4.3.3 Lithium role

Sonera Klaani is powered by Lithium. The online community can be both customised by Lithium and Sonera. For example, most of the settings of online community are controlled by Lithium. Sonera community managers can edit minor settings options, as menu and question titles. (Revonmäki 2015.) It means that the community platform is not flexible due to limited setting options and irresponsive design.

However, professional support services in managing online communities is not the key strength of Lithium as they provide technical support rather than sharing success to running online communities. The best Lithium support package includes assigned technical manager, but no option of having a community consultant. (Lithium 2016b.)

## 5 EMPIRICAL PART

The chapter presents the empirical process and results of the research. Firstly, there is an introduction to the data acquisition process. Secondly, Sonera and Elisa online communities are examined and compared to each other. Thirdly, the results of the interviews are summarized. The final part provides interpretation of the results and DMAIC approach for successful online community management. The empirical part focuses on small details, because small details are essential for building a bigger picture.

### 5.1 Data acquisition process

The process of collecting and analysing data is presented with the Gantt chart. The Gantt chart is commonly used for presenting the amount of work done and time invested (Polakov & Trabold 1923, 5). Table 3 contains the acquisition process only of the data for the empirical part of the study, excluding data acquisition processes for the theoretical part.

TABLE 3. Data acquisition process - Gantt chart.

Type of activities	April 2016	May 2016	June 2016	July 2016	August 2016
Desk research					
Observation of Sonera and Elisa online communities					
Recording statistical data in Excel spreadsheets					
Designing and conducting interviews					
Analysing information					
Summarizing findings and drawing conclusions					

The study starts with the desk research. There were similar investigations reviewed, but the desired results were not found, which contributed to conducting own research. The research continued by observing Sonera and Elisa online communities. This step allowed finding comparable subjects. Thus, the communities were studied on design, content, moderation, traffic and user experience. All the data was recorded into Excel spreadsheets for the following analysis. Meanwhile, there were interviews designed for Elisa community manager, InSided community consultant and Sonera community manager. The results of the interviews are to approve or disapprove the findings of the author's study of online communities. Analysing phase follows collection of data from online communities and interviews of respondents. Finally, all the findings are summarized and generalized.

## 5.2 Sonera versus Elisa

The sub-chapter contains the main findings of the empirical research. The same type of data was collected from Elisa and Sonera online communities. The collected data is compared to each other and interpreted with the reference to theoretical part.

### 5.2.1 Design

As design of the website is the first touch point with the organization, it should leave a good impression (Pulizzi & Barrett 2009, 36). Both Elisa and Sonera online communities follow designs and colours of the organizations' main websites. Sonera online community is recognizable by its mix of white and purple colours, while Elisa has blue and white colours mostly. Both communities have visuals on the top of the web pages. However, Sonera has images as a substitute for text, while Elisa has text over the pictures. The Figure 12 shows that navigation tabs of Sonera are just pictures and cannot be grabbed with the cursor.

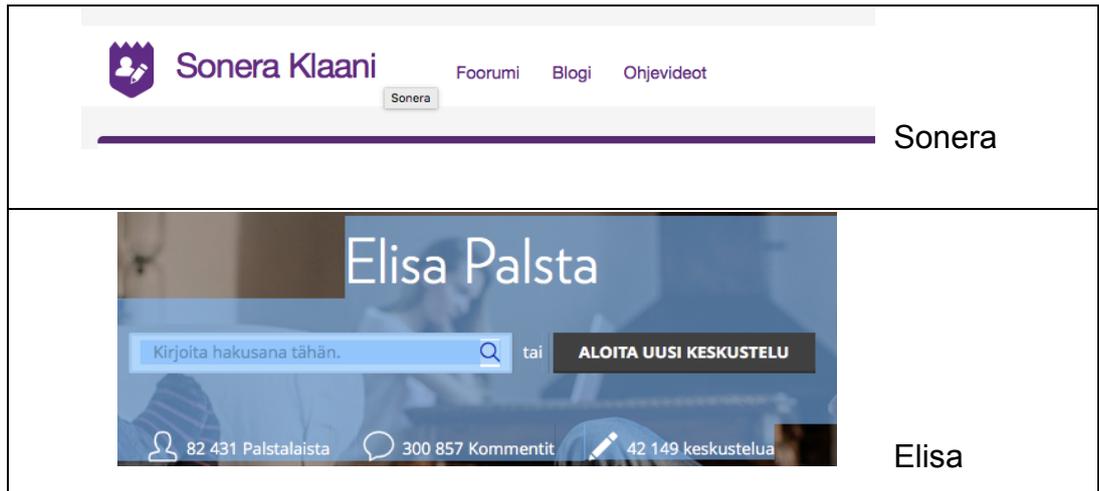


FIGURE 12. Navigation tabs of Sonera and Elisa online communities (TeliaSonera 2015; Elisa Palsta 2016).

Elisa's navigation tabs have text, which can be copied and pasted. It is not beneficial for interaction with search engines, as search engines cannot read images and reflect the result in the textual form (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 84-85). It can be a reason why the online community is located not in the top search results.

Moreover, navigation should be helpful in finding the right information and elements of the website should be located according to general structure (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 83-85). Both online communities have a logo in the top left corner and contact information in the footer. However, the search function is likely to be located in the top right corner (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 85). Sonera has a search bar under the navigation bar in the middle of the web page, while Elisa has it in the top right corner despite having it also in the middle of the web page under the navigation bar. Important information is usually located on the left side of the website and additional information on the right side (Casey 2015, 127). Thus, the topic categories are listed from the left and related information as recent posts, popular topics, rewards and online users from the right side of the online community websites.

Responsive design is also a must-have for the modern websites. It makes the content resize according to the size of the screen. (InSided B.V. 2015a, 1-3.) Elisa and Sonera online communities were opened in the

tablet-sized window, and as a result Elisa performed responsively adapting to any size of the screen easily. Sonera has only a desktop version of the website of the community. Thus, the content is not fitting in different from desktop version sizes of the screen. As it is visible in Figure 13, irresponsible design of Sonera online community cuts away half of the web page, thus hiding important information about recent posts, solutions and online users.

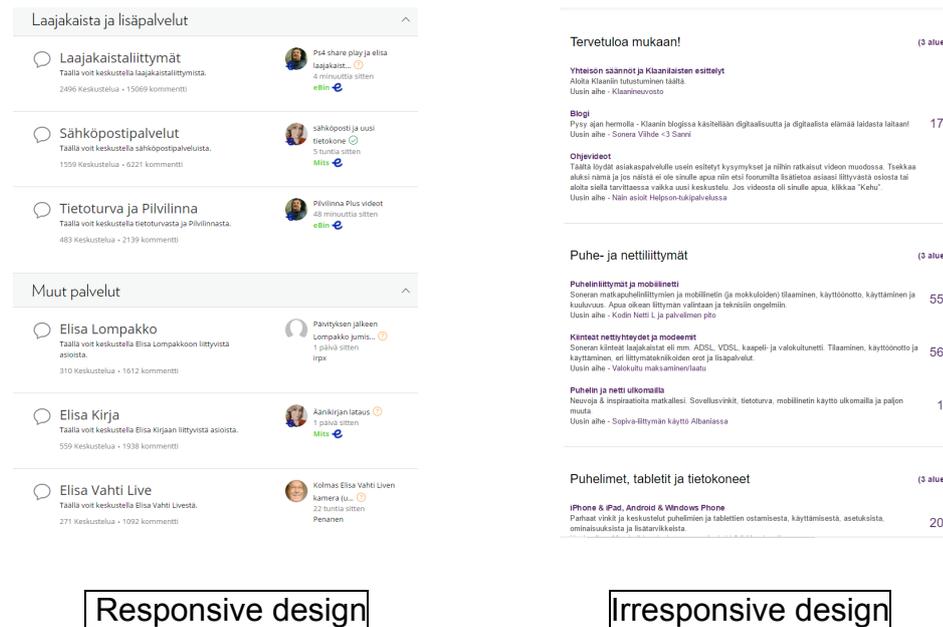


FIGURE 13. Responsive design of Elisa and irresponsible design of Sonera in the tablet-size version (Elisa Palsta 2016; TeliaSonera 2015).

Responsive design also influences the load time of the webpage. It takes on average 6.9 seconds to load a web page of Elisa Palsta. However, the load time of web page of Sonera Klaani takes on average 16 seconds. (WebPagetest 2016.) The load time of Sonera exceeds the possible waiting time of regular visitor, as according to the previous research the visitor leaves the website after waiting for more than ten seconds (Pulizzi & Barrett 2009, 36.) The background of the speed tests can be found in Appendix 1.

In addition, to full version of the website, online communities have mobile versions, which significantly differ from each other. Figure 14 presents the mobile versions of the online communities.

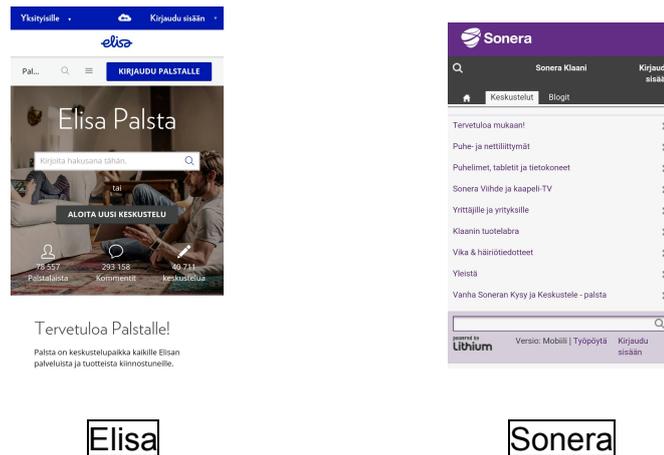


FIGURE 14. Mobile versions of Elisa and Sonera online communities (Elisa Palsta 2016; TeliaSonera 2015).

Elisa online community has a compressed version of the full version. It has the same visuals and widgets with recent topics, online users and etc. Thus, the users can access the community through the mobile version and receive the same experience as in the full version. Sonera mobile version is very limited. There are no visuals, but only a list of topic categories. There is also the description of sub-forums missing. All in all, the mobile version of Elisa is much more advanced than Sonera mobile version.

Finally, the organization is in touch with its users of online community through the email. Email is supposed to deliver the brand identity of the organization. (Frick & Eyler-Werve 2015, 123.) Despite poor designs of full and mobile versions of Sonera online community, it has a better email template, as it is shown in Figure 15.

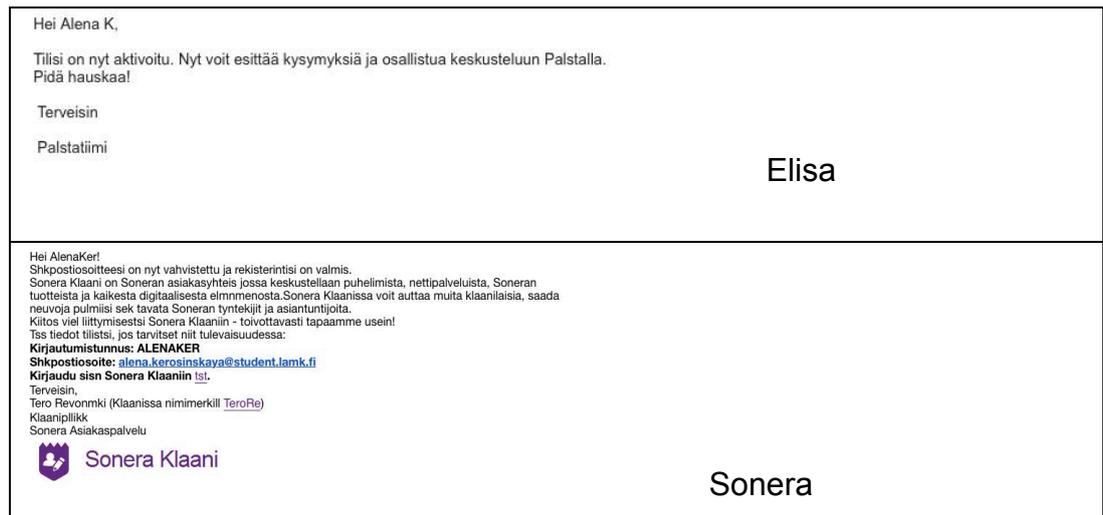


FIGURE 15. Welcoming email of Elisa and Sonera online communities (Elisa Palsta 2016; TeliaSonera 2015).

The text is presented in different fonts highlighting the key information.

There is also a logo of the organization in the footer of the email. However, Elisa has a poorer email template, as there is no logo and less information.

## 5.2.2 Content

Elisa Palsta is a reflection of the company's goals. The organization aims for building value on data and accelerating digital service business (Elisa 2016a). Thus, content represents a big value for the community, which is one of the digital services of the organization. Moreover, Sonera also focuses on providing digital services. (TeliaSonera 2015a, 18-19.) In addition to the news webpage and live customer discussion, Sonera also has an excellent content on its online community. All in all, Sonera has more user-friendly content than Elisa, but Elisa has better visual design of the textual content.

Visual content is as important as textual (Abel & Bailie 2014, 12). Sonera uses images and videos to complement content more often than Elisa. For example, the same topic about Pokémon Go at Elisa and Sonera was presented in different ways. The topic of Sonera was more entertaining with several images and highlighted text. Elisa did not include any images in the same topic, but made it more structural by making use of bulleted

lists. Another example is topic about giving away Huawei Honor 8. In this case, Elisa included images in the attachments, but they were not allocated in the text. However, the post of Sonera was even more appealing, as the content was enriched with images and video materials. On average, the topic titles of Elisa Palsta are shorter than the topic titles of Sonera Klaani. Elisa also simplifies finding the relevant discussion by providing hashtags, which contain keywords of particular content. All things considered, Elisa focuses more on the textual content, which is designed in a reader-friendly manner, while Sonera is good at catching users' attention by images and video content, which has its own sub-forum on the community.

Furthermore, content should always be up-to-date, what means that it is not enough only to create new content, it is also required to update it, when necessary (Casey 2015, 202). Moderators of both communities manage all the content on the community and update it frequently. However, moderators' input can be decreased by inputs from users. The analysis of 100 random topics of each community had shown that the best answers on Sonera Klaani are 58% provided by users, while Elisa has 35% of the best replies from users. Though Sonera has more content created by users, not the best replies are marked under "the best answer". In some cases, just a comical or grateful reply was marked as the best answer, while the real best answer was left unmarked.

In the end, both communities are familiar with its international audience. Despite Finnish being an official language, it is possible to receive support in English. Elisa Palsta has a special sub-forum for discussions in English and Swedish. Sonera Klaani does not have a separate sub-forum, but there are discussions held in English. Moreover, Sonera allows switching to English version of community layout in the settings.

### 5.2.3 Moderators

Moderators or community managers are responsible for maintaining community activities. Sonera is managed by four moderators and Elisa is

managed by five moderators. The performance of each moderator was analysed in order to define if the communities are managed successfully. The total input of Sonera moderators amounts to 3,209 activities. Elisa moderators performed about 4,010 activities so far. On the daily basis, Sonera moderators perform about 5.81 activities per day and Elisa moderators perform 16.35 activities. Thus, the capacity of Elisa moderators is bigger. Moreover, each moderator of Elisa is on average more active than moderator of Sonera. Moderator of Sonera contributes 1.45 activities per day on average, while moderator of Elisa complete 3.27 activities. More details about each community contributor can be found in Appendix 2.

There are different ways on how to increase activity on community. For example, Sonera online community generates interest to the community by offering give-aways for the best story. The post about giving away the phone Huawei Honor 8 received a big response among users of Sonera online community. However, Elisa online community also made use of giving away Huawei Honor 8. Moderators of Elisa Palsta were asking users to share which functions of the phone they would be interested in to test. It caused a ten times bigger amount of comments under the give-away post of Elisa than under the same post of Sonera.

Daily contribution from moderators does not mean that it is constant and with established frequency. The analysis of dates of posts by moderators has shown that posts are published with different interval on both communities. Despite obvious signs of absence of editorial calendar, Elisa online community keeps a minimum of seven announcements per month and Sonera a minimum of five announcements per month. Moderators of both communities turned out to be efficient at removing spam and inappropriate content, as there are only related discussions presented. In addition, moderators keep an eye on active disputes and do not leave the conflicts unsolved. The conflicts are either solved or cooled down by moderators on Elisa and Sonera online communities. Despite the fact, that moderators of Sonera Klaani are still managing the inflow of activities, it is

advised to have an editorial calendar in order to cope with the increasing level of activity in the future.

Finally, a good relationship with active users decreases the workflow and increases the sense of community (Millington 2012, 144). Sonera moderators have a friendship with several users, which are valuable contributors for Sonera online community. However, only two out of five Elisa moderators showed initiative in establishing relationship with users. Despite this fact, users of Elisa Palsta showed own initiative in establishing relationship with Elisa moderators by subscribing on their profiles.

#### 5.2.4 Traffic

There are four possible traffic sources, namely, search traffic, direct traffic, referral sites and social media channels (Frick & Eyer-Werve 2015, 96). Research has shown that the biggest volume of traffic of online communities goes through search engines. Direct traffic is the second source of traffic according to its volume. The rest of the traffic is mostly generated by referrals and social media. The presented data was generated individually for each online community by SimilarWeb. SimilarWeb is a public tool for measuring performance of the websites (SimilarWeb 2016a).

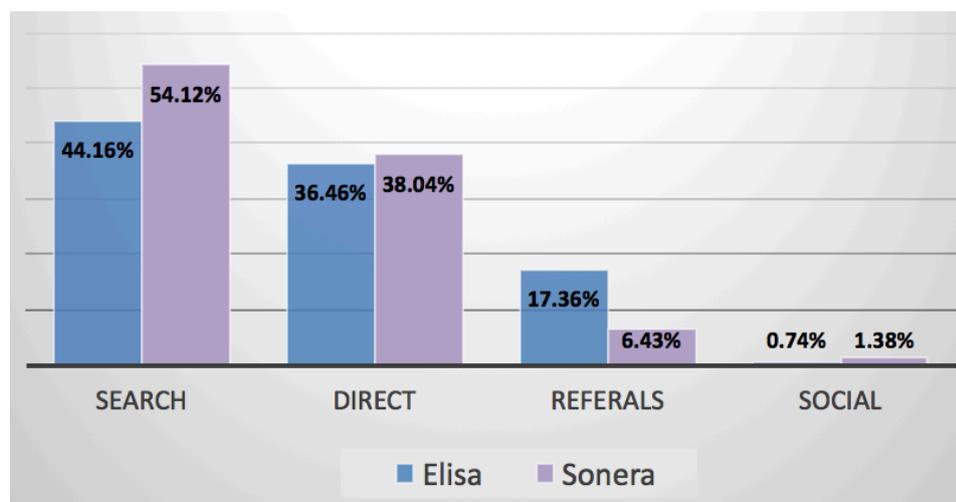


FIGURE 16. Traffic sources of Elisa and Sonera online communities (modified from SimilarWeb 2016b; SimilarWeb 2016c).

The search traffic prevails for Elisa and Sonera online communities. Elisa receives 44.16% of traffic through search engine. Elisa has strong keywords search implemented, which allows it to appear in the top search results. The keywords of organic search are “Elisa Palsta” and “Saunalahti prepaid”. However, Elisa makes use also of paid keyword search to boost traffic with the following keywords: “Elisa Viihde Palsta” and “Elisa.fi Palsta”. Sonera does not have paid search implemented, but the organic keyword “Sonera Klaani” locates the community also in the top search results.

Big volume of direct traffic means that users know the community and arrive by typing in the URL in a web browser. Both communities have user-friendly URLs, as links reflect the content of the pages. For example, the link to the page with the topic “Smart-TV” looks like: <https://palsta.elisa.fi/aiheen-vieresta-30/smart-tv-501140>. In case of a poor link building, the link will contain only meaningless signs, letters and numbers.

Referral traffic of Elisa amounts to 17.36%, while Sonera has only 6.43%. It means, that online community of Elisa is mentioned in more websites. Both communities can be accessed through organizations’ main websites, as the links are mentioned in the navigation bars. There is also a referral to Elisa Palsta on the website Saunalahti.fi. However, Sonera can be referred from the largest mobile forum in Finland called “Matkapuhelinfoorumi”.

Traffic from social media is rather small. The social traffic of Elisa is mostly generated by referring from Facebook and amounts to 67.53% of social traffic. Facebook is also the most popular referral of social traffic of Sonera. Users also land to online communities from Twitter and YouTube. The exact traffic numbers can be found in Appendix 3.

Additionally, users of Elisa online community spend more time on the website than users of Sonera online community. Thus, users of Elisa spend on average 199 seconds per visit, while users of Sonera spend 118

seconds. Elisa users also view more pages per visit. A regular visitor of Elisa views 3.27 pages and Sonera visitor views 3.19 pages per visit. Despite longer duration of sessions of Elisa online community, it has also a bigger increase in sessions. The average increase in sessions of Elisa Palsta is 19%, what contributed to having 250,000 sessions in July 2016. However, the growth speed of Sonera is 11% per month. Therefore, Sonera has about 100,000 sessions in July 2016. The amount of sessions per months is provided in Appendix 4.

### 5.2.5 User experience

The user experience was explored from user's position in order to gain relevant insights. The first interaction occurs when the visitor starts the registration process. The registration process on Elisa Pasta takes about 27 seconds, while it is needed to invest minimum 45 seconds to become a member of Sonera online community. Elisa Palsta requests only three obligatory fields to be filled in and Sonera Klaani obligates users to fill in six fields. Thus, visitors of Sonera should create username, retype password twice, mention e-mail address and complete robot check. On the one hand, obligatory fields protect from penetration of web robots, but on the other hand, it decreases the amount of users finalizing registration process (Millington 2012, 108-109).

Directly after registration users receive a notification email with an activation link. This is done for the purpose of one more security check. After activation of the account users receive a welcoming message and since then they are free to use the online community completely. Depending on the activity performed, users receive notification emails with the link to action point. This is the journey, which members follow both on Sonera and Elisa online communities. Such type of notification system makes users return to the community more than one time (Millington 2012, 227).

The newcomers, without any activity yet, rely on proposed content in widgets. There are some widgets Sonera and Elisa have in common and

some different. Table 4 showcases what are the differences between the same types of widgets.

TABLE 4. Widgets of Elisa and Sonera online communities (modified from Elisa Palsta 2016; Sonera Klaani 2016).

Elisa	Sonera	Meaning
<p><b>Ajankohtaista</b></p> <p>Haluatko Honor 8:n omaksesi? Etsimme nyt kahta vapaaehtoista laitetestaajaa.</p> <p><a href="#">Osallistu kilpailuun</a></p>	<p>Tiedotteet</p> <p>Sonera Klaani - digitaalisen elämän yhteisö</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kaikille avoin yhteisö. Selaa ja lue, tai kysy ja vastaa <a href="#">liittyväksi jäseneksi</a></li> <li>- Soneran tuotteisiin ja palveluihin liittyvät muutokset sekä vikailmoitukset sujuvat 24/7 <a href="#">Omillä Sivulla</a></li> <li>- Asiakastietoja ja tunnistautumista vaativissa ongelmatilanteissa saat avun Omien Sivujen chatista 24/7 tai muista Soneran <a href="#">asiakaspalvelukanavista</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>News</b></p> <p>Elisa: only one topic</p> <p>Sonera: multiple topics</p>

<p><b>Viimeisimmät keskustelut</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Sanapelli 50 minuuttia sitten</li> <li> Saunalahden mobiilidata pätkii  53 minuuttia sitten</li> <li> 4G yhteysongelmia nyt pari viikkoa  1 tunti sitten</li> </ul>	<p><b>Viimeisimmät aiheet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- iOS laitteissa vakava haavoittuvuus. Päivitä iPhone...</li> <li>- Hae Omat Sivut -testaajaksi, saat S-Ryhmän lahjako...</li> <li>- MicroG OGYouTubelle</li> <li>- Webmail pimeänä</li> <li>- Kaapelitv ei toimi</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recent discussions</b></p> <p>Elisa: informative, with visuals and time indication</p> <p>Sonera: only topic titles</p>
<p>Suosittu Kysymykset <b>Vastatut</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> ONE PLUS 3 Soft Gold  2 kommenttia · 9 tuntia sitten</li> <li> Määräaikainen Viasat  2 kommenttia · 15 tuntia sitten</li> <li> 4G yhteysongelmia nyt pari viikkoa  3 kommenttia · 1 tunti sitten</li> <li> Ulkomailla katsominen  3 kommenttia · 7 tuntia sitten</li> </ul>	<p><b>Viimeisimmät ratkaisut</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spotify toisto-ongelma</li> <li>- netti tökkii</li> <li>- Whatsapp ilmoitukset eivät toimi</li> <li>- Multi-sim ja Sonera ID</li> <li>- VMG1312-B10D heinäkuun firmis?</li> <li>- Liikkuva laajakaista ja PS4 + B315</li> <li>- Liika laskutus</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recent solutions</b></p> <p>Elisa: informative, with visuals and time indication; part of integrated widget</p> <p>Sonera: only topic titles</p>
<p><b>Hiljattain paikalla</b></p>	<p><b>Kirjautuneet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Zagna</li> <li> Purnipsi</li> <li> TeroRe</li> </ul>	<p><b>Online users</b></p> <p>Elisa: with pop-up windows for user details</p> <p>Sonera: different avatar sizes and only username</p>
<p>Suosittu Kysymykset <b>Vastatut</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Saunalahden mobiilidata pätkii  9 kommenttia · 53 minuuttia sitten</li> <li> Piiilinnassa plus käyttöliittymän ongelmat  2 kommenttia · 1 tunti sitten</li> <li> 4g Huawei 315s päivitys  10 kommenttia · 1 tunti sitten</li> <li> 100mb nettipaketti mutta 6mb latausnopeus. Missä vika? 8 kommenttia · 1 tunti sitten</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vastaamattomat aiheet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MicroG OGYouTubelle</li> <li>- Käyttökokemukset OnePlus 3</li> <li>- Huawei Honor 8 käyttökokeemukset</li> <li>- Samsung Galaxy Note 7 käyttökokemukset</li> <li>- Sonera Viihde elokuu 2016</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unanswered questions</b></p> <p>Elisa: informative, with visuals and time indication; part of integrated widget</p> <p>Sonera: only topic titles</p>
	<p><b>Eniten ratkaisseet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> tleslo 3</li> <li> PasS 3</li> <li> kjns 2</li> <li> kisseli67 2</li> <li> MMALINEN 2</li> </ul>	<p><b>Trustable users</b></p> <p>Sonera: honour to the users, who provided the biggest amount of best answers</p>

<p>Suosittu Kysymykset Vastatut</p> <p> Klippailu päättynyt: Voita OnePlus 3 testikäyttöön ja omaksesi 394 kommenttia · 1 kuukausi sitten</p> <p> Pokémon GO -laitevaatimukset 21 kommenttia · 12 päivää sitten</p> <p> OnePlus 3 -käyttökokemuksia 55 kommenttia · 2 päivää sitten</p> <p> Sanapeli! 730 kommenttia · 50 minuuttia sitten</p>	<p><b>Popular content</b></p> <p>Elisa: a tip for joining popular discussions</p>
<p>Kunniamerkit</p> <p> mmalinen on ansainnut kunniamerkin Viihteen tuntija</p> <p> ristop on ansainnut kunniamerkin Viihteen tuntija</p> <p> kjns on ansainnut kunniamerkin Puhellittymien tuntija</p>	<p><b>Awards</b></p> <p>Elisa: a tip for joining popular discussions</p>
<p>Mitä on meneillään?</p> <p><b>42 187</b> keskustelua <b>301 107</b> Kommentit <b>82 516</b> Palstalaista</p>	<p><b>Community statistics</b></p> <p>Elisa: information about number of members, replies and topics</p>
<p>Jaa</p> <p> </p>	<p><b>Social media</b></p> <p>Elisa: sharing options</p>

Elisa has more widgets than Sonera. In general, widgets of Elisa are better designed. There is limited information in widgets of Sonera, as there are no authors or time mentioned. Sonera prefers to show popular users, while Elisa presents popular content. In addition, Elisa has information about total activity on the community in numbers and Sonera does not provide this information, what leaves an impression of stagnated community. Finally, Elisa showcases recent achievements of users in the award widget. This is a gamification tool, which is used for community activation (InSided B.V. 2016c, 69).

Besides, Elisa Pasta has such a feature as ideation forum. It allows voting for the best ideas and rising them up in this way to the top of the web page (InSided B.V. 2016b, 11-12). The users of Elisa shared more than 500 ideas, which received more than 4,000 replies. Sonera does not have an ideation forum, but it has an administration section, where users can share

their ideas. It is not that attractive as ideation, therefore, there are only 27 topics and about 400 replies.

### 5.3 Interview results

There were three interviews conducted. The purposes of the interviews were to retrieve primary data on the topic of success factors of online communities and to determine factors relevant to particular online community. The first interview with four open questions was designed for Interviewee 1 from Elisa Palsta. Interviewee 2 from InSided was addressed with three similar questions. The respondent from InSided is also the personal consultant for Elisa online community. The last interview with Interviewee 3 was precisely about Sonera online community. The first and the third interviews were conducted online and the second interview was face-to-face. The questions of the three interviews can be found in the Appendices 5,6,7. The interviews were arranged according to general structure of Turner D. W. (2010, 757), what implies clarification the purpose of the interview, familiarizing with confidentiality of the results, setting the length of the interview, providing contact details for the future contact, proceeding to the interview and recording the received information. The key topics of the interviews were “responsive design”, “success factors of online communities” and “the role of professional support services in community management”. The summarized answers for these topics are presented below, while the interpretation and linking to the research of the author takes place further in the next sub-chapter “Results and discussion”.

#### **Responsive design**

Interviewee 3 admits that responsive design is an essential for the community success; therefore, Sonera Klaani is expected to have a responsive design by August or September 2016. Meanwhile, Interviewee 1 had already experienced the benefits of having a responsive platform. Responsive online community allows “providing excellent user experience, increases usability and improves accessibility”. After switching to

responsive platform “the accessibility across different devices became smoother and especially on mobile devices”. Interviewee 2 confirms: “users can make use of all functionalities of the platform from device with any screen size”. However, users are not the only one generating benefits from responsive design. Responsive design also simplifies moderation process for community managers.

### **Success factors of online communities**

The young communities prefer to hide obvious success factors, as amount of topics, replies and members. Thus, Interviewee 3 keeps the numerical data internal, unless the number will grow enough to be an achievement to display on the community homepage. On the contrary, Elisa Palsta proudly presents its number of members, topics and replies. Interviewee 1 added that such results were achieved by “constant participating and encouraging active discussions”. Community managers of Elisa also boost interest to the community by different competitions and retention campaigns. Moreover, the internal treatment of community should be on the high level according to Interviewee 1. Community moderators “should make sure that the value of customer community is understood and utilized in the best possible way internally”.

### **Role of professional support services in community management**

As was mentioned, successful management of the community leads to success of the community. The community consultant helps community managers to drive their community to success. Interviewee 3 considers “important for consultancy service to assist community managers’ performance in fulfilling the business goals of the organization”. Being a community consultant means “keeping track of traffic measurements, users’ conversation rates and engagement”. Interviewee 1 finds support services of InSided really helpful, especially in terms of monthly calls. “The monthly calls turned out to be a good chance to exchange and cultivate ideas especially on different community activations.”

## 5.4 Results and discussion

The last sub-chapter of empirical part summarizes the findings of the research. The findings are analysed and generalized. Firstly, there is an interpretation of strengths and weaknesses of each online community. Secondly, the success factors of each community are generalized and presented in DMAIC improvement cycle approach.

### 5.4.1 Results interpretation

#### **Sonera online community**

Sonera online community is rather a young community, which is currently during the establishment stage. Due to being in the beginning of its lifecycle, Sonera online community does not reveal its size in order not to weaken the community reputation. Despite lack of moderation capacity, the community has strong community managers, which implement the activities regarding its lifecycle stage. The moderators of Sonera Klaani also have valuable support from dedicated users, which actively take part in the discussions and provide more than half of solutions. There is even a special widget with trustable users, which volunteer to support other users. Users' contribution increases the value of content and simplifies work for moderators. In addition to users' contribution, the content on the community is nicely visualized due to supportive images and video content. Despite poor type of mobile version and absence of responsive design, the community follows brand design. The brand design is even present in the notification emails.

However, absence of responsive design is a substantial disadvantage. According to Interviewee 3, it should have been implemented by the end of August 2016, but the community still runs on desktop version of platform from Lithium. As Lithium is the organization, which powers Sonera Online Community, there are no support services for driving the community to success. It might be the reason for short average duration of sessions and small monthly increase in number of sessions.

## **Elisa online community**

Elisa online community is bigger and older than the Sonera online community and, therefore, is more developed. Being live for more than seven years, Sonera Palsta reached the segmentation stage of the lifecycle. Due to its lifecycle stage, it has a variety of topic categories, which gives a wide range of discussions for users to join. The community and the content of the community are well designed. The content has a nice layout and the topic titles are clear and short. The content satisfies Finnish, English and Swedish speaking audience. In addition to general forum, there is also an ideation forum, which gives an opportunity for users to share their feedback and for Elisa to collect exclusive ideas.

The users also benefit from quick registration process, which takes less than 30 seconds. The user experience is also enriched with convenient widgets. For example, the widget with popular content helps the newcomers to find interesting discussion, while the simple award widget helps maintaining interest of other users by showing recent achievements of other users. Furthermore, responsive design of the community ensures that the content is reflected according to the screen size. Even the mobile version of the community looks as the compressed full version. There is a big moderation capacity which can be a reason for most answers provided by moderators, as users just do not have time to provide their version. The community managers of Elisa Palsta receive support from InSided, which helps to keep track of traffic measurements, users' conversation rates and engagement.

### **5.4.2 DMAIC model**

DMAIC is an approach for managing cycles in data-driven business. DMAIC stands for define, measure, analyse, improve, control. "Define" implies defining goals or problems. "Measure" includes measuring the current performance. "Analyse" phase involves analysis of measured performance and comparing it to settled goals. "Improve" implies actions towards improving performance to meet the goals. "Control" phase means

monitoring of the current gains and sustaining success. (DMAICTools 2016.) This method was chosen for analysis of online community success, as online communities are data-driven and require constant improvements. Figure 17 generalizes the findings of empirical part.

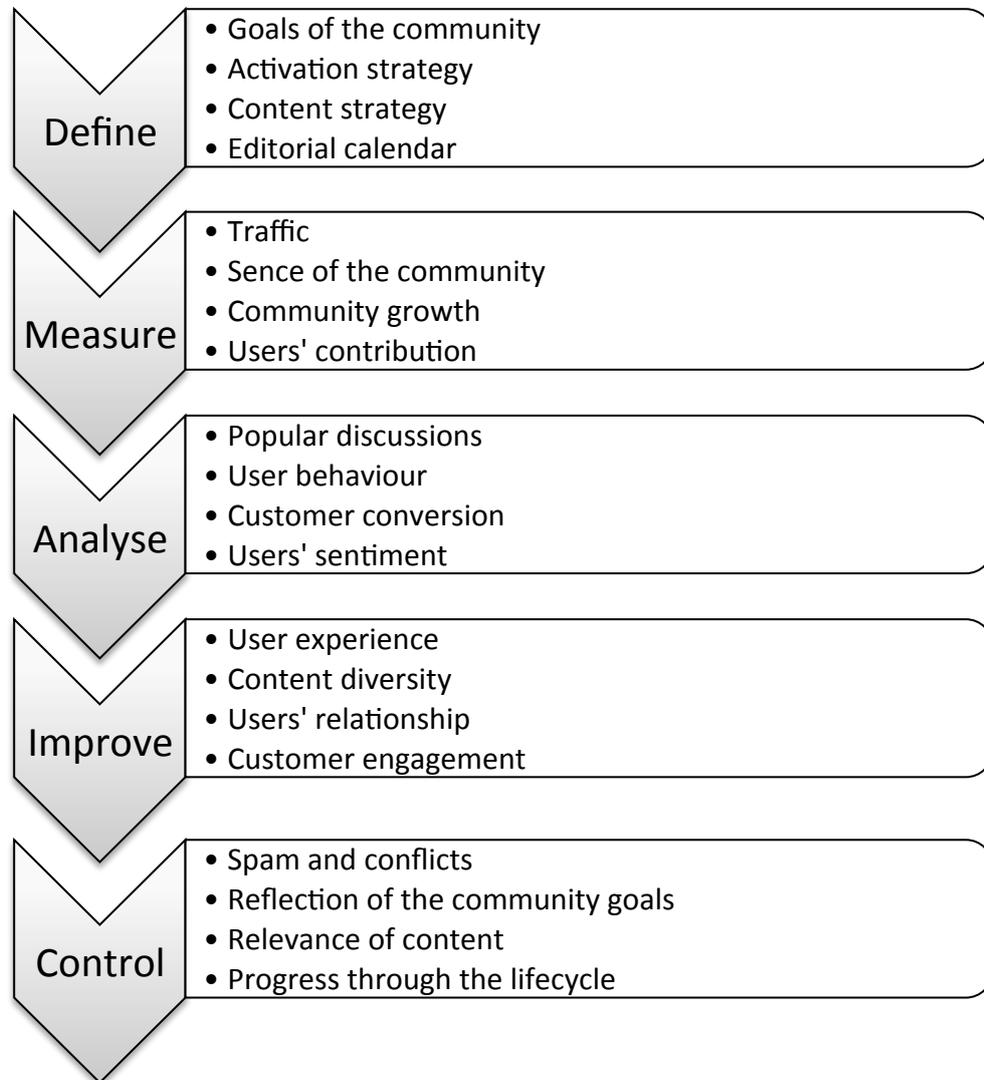


FIGURE 17. DMAIC approach for successful online community management (modified from DMAICTools 2016).

The proposed framework is based on the previous theory review and on the author's findings of the empirical part. It can be applicable to branded online community of any size which has a community manager and established online community platform.

## 6 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following part provides answers to the research questions and justifies the raised hypothesis. Furthermore, reliability and validity issues are clarified and suggestions for further research presented.

### 6.1 Answers to research questions

This sub-chapter contains answers to the research questions of the study. The answers to the sub-questions are presented in Table 4. The answer to the main research question follows the table with sub-questions. Finally, the earlier raised hypothesis is evaluated in accordance with the answers to the research questions.

TABLE 5. Answers to research questions.

Research question	Answer
<p><i>1. What are the essentials for branded online community success?</i></p>	<p>Online community should be a reflection of particular business goals, as for example, cutting service costs or building customer relationships. In order to achieve the community goals, online community should have a dedicated management team, who will guide the community through its lifecycle. Furthermore, the community platform should observe the brand design of the organization, have a predictable structure of the web pages and supporting visuals. All in all, the content should be reader-friendly. Preferably, online community should be complemented with a gamification feature and ideation forum. Lastly, there should be a developed network of traffic sources and advanced mobile version of online community.</p>

<p><i>2. What are the benefits of a responsive online community?</i></p>	<p>Despite the visual benefits of responsive design, it also influences the performance of online community platform. Thus, the responsive online community has faster load time of the web page, what excludes the chance of user switching to other web source. Additionally, the Interviewees proved that responsive design removes usability and accessibility limits, as responsive online community can be accessed from device with any size of the screen.</p>
<p><i>3. How do community managers and professional support services contribute to success of an online community?</i></p>	<p>Community managers take care of the sense of the community, build relationships with members, maintain interest by organizing online and offline events and provide necessary support and remuneration for community members regularly. Community management includes also checking of quality and relevance of the content, analysing community performance and improving user experience. However, the success of community management depends partly on the level of professional support services. Professional support includes keeping track of community progress in terms of traffic measurements and user growth, as well as ensuring that community develops towards defined business goals. Moreover, professional support services allow access to knowledge base with trustable sources about community management.</p>

The main research question:

*How can responsive design, systematized moderation and professional support services benefit to online community success?*

By evaluating the answers to the research sub-questions, it is obvious that responsive design, systematized moderation and professional support services have its individual impact on online community success. Thus, responsive design provides smooth and faster performance of online community across different devices, while avoiding the wrong reflection of content and visuals. Systematized moderation implies consistent contribution of community managers to community by improving user experience, engaging activity and providing different types of support. Finally, the more advanced level of support can be acquired by relying on professional support services, which include sharing of competence about community management and analytical reporting of community performance.

All things considered, the raised hypothesis that responsive design, systematized moderation and professional support services are the key factors to online community success, can be accepted.

## 6.2 Validity and reliability

Validity is a degree to which the findings correspond to the real world (Saunders et al. 2009, 157). The author estimates the conducted study to have high validity. First of all, the internship of the author was dedicated to studying success factors of community management. It ensured high competence of the author in the research topic. Moreover, the secondary data for the study is credible and up-to-date as it was gathered from different reliable sources. The empirical part demonstrated different approaches and tools for data acquisition process, what makes the results impartial. The results of the interviews complemented validity of the author's findings. The goal of the study was achieved, as all the research questions were answered sufficiently.

Reliability implies an extent to which the research and analysis are performed consistently (Saunders et al. 2009, 156). Before collecting data for the empirical part, the author conducted a desk research, which allowed designing further research. The results of the research were recorded after continuous observation which ensured from reflecting only on the momentary situation. If the research is going to be repeated, it is likely to have the same results. Especially the generalized findings have high reliability. However, the results of Sonera online community and Elisa online community are going to lose its reliability as time passes. It is normal for fast-changing online platforms.

### 6.3 Suggestions for further research

The research field was limited by two comparable online communities. Due to this reason, the applicability of the research results was not tested on other online communities. It is recommended to test relevance of the research results by conducting the same type of study with other online communities. However, regarding reliability, the author of the study believes in the same outcome of the research being repeated.

Another limitation was the research about forum and ideation parts of the online community. Besides, Sonera online community has also a blog integrated in the online community. As the influence of the blog feature on the online community was not studied, it is suggested to evaluate the role of blog in online community. In addition, it is worth studying whether the blog brings a valuable complement to online community or remains unnoticed by users.

The final recommendation is about conducting a deeper research about professional support services. The research has proved that the performance of the community managers supported by professional services have higher capacity and response. However, it might be beneficial to analyse the impact of each type of professional support service and to determine the most necessary support services.

## 7 SUMMARY

The popularity of online communities grows together with the increasing need for online communication. A branded online community is a special type of social media used by organizations to achieve business goals. The thesis evaluates the key factors to success of branded online communities as responsive design, systematized moderation and professional support services. According to the research findings of responsive online community of Elisa and irresponsible online community of Sonera, exactly these factors play an important role in online community success. The research aims to complement previous findings and to check, in practice, the factors for successful management of branded online communities.

The theory review of secondary data reflects a deductive research approach. Thus, the existing knowledge about branded online communities management, engines for successful performance and the role of professional support services was limited to success factors applicable to branded online communities. The case study of Elisa and Sonera online community links the theoretical background with the research subjects.

The key findings of the theoretical part have been proved in the empirical research, which included collection of primary data through observations and interviews for qualitative and quantitative analysis. An inductive research approach is used for generalizing the findings about successful management of Elisa and Sonera online communities. The generalized findings are presented in the DMAIC model for successful online community management. Furthermore, the answers to the research questions present more accurate information about the key success factors. Thus, a responsive design turned out to have a direct influence on the performance of online community platform in terms of usability and accessibility through different devices. Furthermore, systematized community management preserves a community from losing its sense, presenting of inappropriate content and fading interest of community members. Finally, professional support services have proved its necessity

for reasonable community actions based on analysis of community performance and common practices accumulated in the knowledge base.

In the end, the results of the research can be utilized by organizations owning or wishing to start a branded online community. The results are considered to have high reliability and validity. However, the research can go further and examine the influence of other components of online community, as for example, blog feature. Additionally, further research can focus on different types of professional support services in order to define what type of support community managers do really need.

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Interviewee 3. 2016. Community Manager. Sonera. Interview 11 July 2016.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Speed test for Elisa and Sonera online communities (WebPagetest 2016).

### Web Page Performance Test for [palsta.elisa.fi/](http://palsta.elisa.fi/)

15/07/2016, 12:17:22 pm

**Summary** Details Performance Review Content Breakdown Domains

Tester: i-5ea888d6

Re-run the test

	Load Time	First Byte	Start Render	Speed Index	DOM Elements
First View	6.978s	0.578s	6.988s	7728	2196
Repeat View	5.265s	1.923s	4.496s	5076	2196

### Web Page Performance Test for [klaani.sonera.fi/](http://klaani.sonera.fi/)

15/07/2016, 11:47:29 am

**Summary** Details Performance Review Content Breakdown Domains

Tester: WPT-EU-02-146.255.33.147

Re-run the test

	Load Time	First Byte	Start Render	Speed Index	DOM Elements
First View	16.060s	0.621s	9.281s	9300	531
Repeat View	8.187s	0.356s	5.181s	5200	530

APPENDIX 2. Moderators' activity of Elisa and Sonera online communities.

Sonera(12,2014)					
Moderator	Link	Evaluation period	Registered since	Total posts	Amount of activities per day
TeroRe	<a href="http://klaani.sonera.fi">http://klaani.sonera.fi</a>	till 13/06/2016	12/12/14	1121	2,04
NikoNo	<a href="http://klaani.sonera.fi">http://klaani.sonera.fi</a>	till 13/06/2016	17/12/14	650	1,17
MiaSL	<a href="http://klaani.sonera.fi">http://klaani.sonera.fi</a>	till 13/06/2016	16/12/14	581	1,05
RaMaria	<a href="http://klaani.sonera.fi">http://klaani.sonera.fi</a>	till 13/06/2016	17/12/14	857	1,55
Total:				3209	5,81
Average:				802,25	1,45

Elisa(2005)					
Moderator	Link	Evaluation period	Registered since	Total topics	Total comments
Mits	<a href="https://palsta.elisa.fi">https://palsta.elisa.fi</a>	till 13/06/2016	23/10/15	40	748
Suvi	<a href="https://palsta.elisa.fi">https://palsta.elisa.fi</a>	till 14/06/2016	07/04/16	25	251
Eb	<a href="https://palsta.elisa.fi">https://palsta.elisa.fi</a>	till 14/06/2017	08/05/15	64	1034
Red	<a href="https://palsta.elisa.fi">https://palsta.elisa.fi</a>	till 14/06/2018	23/10/15	56	939
Take1	<a href="https://palsta.elisa.fi">https://palsta.elisa.fi</a>	till 14/06/2019	09/04/15	45	808
Total:				230	3780
Average:				46	756

APPENDIX 3. Social media traffic sources for Elisa and Sonera online communities (SimilarWeb 2016).

	Elisa	Sonera
Facebook	67,53%	59,58%
Twitter	30,36%	28,36%
Youtube	2,11%	9,71%

APPENDIX 4. Amount of sessions per month for Elisa and Sonera online communities (SimilarWeb 2016).

2016	Elisa	Increase %	Sonera	Increase %
April	150.000		75.000	
May	200.000	133%	80.000	107%
June	220.000	110%	80.000	100%
July	250.000	114%	100.000	125%
Average increase:		119%		111%

## APPENDIX 5. Interview questions for Elisa Community Manager.

### **Part 1: Responsive design**

1. Why did you decide to switch to responsive online community?  
What were you planning to achieve with the new responsive community?
2. How did the new responsive design improve user experience?

### **Part 2: community success**

3. What do you do to drive the community to success? How do community managers and moderators contribute to community success?
4. How do monthly calls and access to inSided's Knowledge Base contribute to your effort?

APPENDIX 6. Interview questions for Sonera Community Manager.

1. How do you manage your community?
2. How big is your community and why this data is not available on Sonera Klaani?
3. Are you going to switch to responsive online community?

APPENDIX 7. Interview questions for InSided Senior Community Consultant.

1. What are the mutual benefits of a responsive online community for community managers and users?
2. How does the community with responsive design differ from the community with desktop version in terms of convenience?
3. What is the role of professional support services in successful community management?