

Social Media Marketing Plan for Natural Goods Company

Emma Koivusalo



Author Emma Koivusalo	
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<p>This Bachelor's Thesis is a project-based thesis, and its goal is to create an effective social media marketing plan for Natural Goods Company so that they can engage their customers on social media platforms and gain more visibility. The scope of the project is to provide the case company with an extensive plan which they can further implement in their marketing processes. The project consists of secondary theoretical research, primary research via interviews and design and innovation. The thesis process took five months in total, from January 2018 to May 2018.</p> <p>The theoretical framework, which consists of green marketing, social media marketing and organic cosmetics marketing, builds a base for the social media marketing plan. Green marketing suggests transparency and the integration of green values in all company processes, as well as emphasises that a company should never state to be greener than they are. Social media marketing theory presents methods on how to influence customers via social proof and affinity, how to handle a social media crisis with quick responses and proper protocol and how to measure the results of social media activities with insights programs. Organic cosmetics marketing is in line with green marketing values, declaring that communicating with customers as equals and providing more knowledge are keys to success.</p> <p>The social media marketing plan analyses the existing social media platforms of Natural Goods Company, Facebook and Instagram, and provides improvement suggestions and new design ideas. The use of emotion and people in their content and using commentary posts in both platforms are techniques that Natural Goods Company could use to create more engagement.</p> <p>The plan also suggests YouTube and LinkedIn as new social media marketing platforms that could be taken advantage of, and research shows that especially video marketing as a marketing technique is beneficial in the beauty industry. A content calendar example is provided, and it presents an optimized posting frequency and integration between the existing and new channels. Natural Goods Company could benefit from a more frequent posting pace and the use of communication tools for better engagement of their customers.</p> <p>Engagement and interaction improvement for Natural Goods Company could be compressed into six different factors: creating honest, green content and communicating with it towards both customers and their partners, ensuring their posts are succinct, using video marketing, posting frequently, conversing with their customers and planning an efficient content calendar to make the management of the social media marketing processes easier.</p>	
Keywords Social media marketing, green marketing, organic cosmetics, social media marketing plan, customer engagement	

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1 Introduction

The key of this chapter is to introduce the reader to this project-based thesis and its objectives. Included are the tasks to be undertaken to achieve the objectives, their management methods as well as the expected benefits of this thesis. The attempt is to be as thorough and detailed as possible to ensure the message and target of this thesis becomes clear before proceeding to the theoretical and empirical sections of the work. This chapter also includes a list of initial sources that will be used for research throughout the project process.

1.1 Background

This thesis is a project which aims at an innovative social media marketing plan for Natural Goods Company to optimize their social media presence and therefore gain new customers and increase their sales. Social media is an ever-growing platform for businesses to provide their audiences with captivating content and engage them into discussion and interaction with their campaigns and products. No company can rely on regular television and newspaper advertising or a single customer service line – people expect to find you on Facebook and LinkedIn and will probably not see your beautifully designed campaign if it does not show up on their Instagram feed. The best companies in the field have an extensive social media marketing plan where they take advantage of all the different content marketing options the social media platforms today can provide.

Natural Goods Company have all the tools and potential to be one of the best players in their industry on social media. Organic cosmetics are constantly gaining more popularity and interest among the knowledgeable consumer. According to a recent study by Transparency Market Research (2018), it is estimated that the organic beauty care industry will grow at a yearly rate of over 10% until 2022 and be worth \$18.7 billion.

Natural Goods Company have a very high-quality selection of all types of beauty care, their beautiful visuals and smart content create a unique brand which appeals to many different age and interest groups, and their products speak for themselves. To be able to convey this message and have Natural Goods Company appear as the best option for the customer no matter where they browse contains high value for the company. They wish to always work through their values, so the focus of the plan will be through green marketing practices and models.

Creating this plan for Natural Goods Company is very exciting and interesting for me in many senses. I would like to work with social media in my future career, preferably in con-

tent marketing, and I am extremely concerned about our planet and what heavy consumerism is doing to our eco-systems. It is one of my main principles in life to live as responsibly and ethically as possible without compromising on quality or beauty. Companies like the Natural Goods Company strongly share my idea and vision of how the world should be and how business is conducted, so writing this thesis for them has much personal value. Organic cosmetics have been a passion of mine for many years now, to the point that almost everything in my beauty routine is of natural ingredients.

1.2 Project Objective

The Project Objective (PO) of this thesis is to create a useful and effective social media marketing plan for Natural Goods Company to reach new customers, create engagement and interaction and improve their brand image on the social media platforms. The thesis will achieve this through the following PT's (project tasks):

PT 1. Studying green marketing and social media marketing theory. This task is heavily set in secondary literary and desktop research. I will study books such as the The Green Marketing Manifesto and Social Media Marketing to build a theoretical base for the planning stage. Green marketing is something Natural Goods Company wants to implement in their social media processes.

PT 2. Interviewing a Natural Goods Company representative. This stage is important to establish and clarify the brand identity of the company. The interview will consist of qualitative questions about the company's' core values, green values and current social media processes, which can then be applied to the actual social media marketing plan.

PT 3. Investigating competitors and other players in the field at Luonnonkaunis Natural Beauty Fair 2018. This task builds base for the actual plan with suggestions, tips and pitfalls to avoid and will be conducted through primary research by discussing the issues with organic cosmetics professionals. Project tasks two and three will build the qualitative theory framework.

PT 4. Creating a plan for existing active social media platforms. In this task I will analyze and optimize the Instagram and Facebook of Natural Goods Company via Likealyzer, insights programs and other suitable tools. I will also apply green theory models and social media marketing theory and design new ideas that are in line with the Natural Goods Company vision.

PT 5. Creating a plan for new available social media platforms. In accordance with the Natural Goods Company vision and green marketing models and processes, I will investigate and research whether there are other social media marketing channels that Natural Goods Company could benefit from and how they could take advantage of these channels. Natural Goods Company has a YouTube and a LinkedIn profile; however, these platforms are not promoted and have very little content. Table 1 below presents the theoretical framework, project management methods and outcomes for each project task.

Table 1. Overlay matrix.

Project tasks	Theoretical Framework	Project Management Methods	Output
PT1. Analysing green marketing theory & social media marketing theory for marketing plan purposes	“The Green Marketing Manifesto”, other eco-marketing academic literature, social media marketing literature and articles	Secondary research via literature and desktop	A theoretical academic base for the plan
PT2. Interviewing a Nat Cos. representative	Core values, branding, strategy, forecasts	Interview	To gain an understanding of the brand identity and goals
PT3. Luonnonkaunis-messut (Natural Beauty Fair)	Researching what other players in the organic cosmetics field are doing – what can we learn from them?	Primary research at the fair	A comparison of the current situation – the ability to modify and adapt methods for Nat Cos.
PT4. Creating plan for existing social media platforms	Analysis, optimization, appliance of eco marketing theory and competitor analysis	Design, analysis, insight, plan for improvements	The optimization of all current platforms
PT5. Creating plan for new available social media platforms	Analysis, plan according to NatCos vision, appliance of eco marketing theory and competitor analysis	Design, analysis, plan from the simple processes to the most effective marketing tools.	A precise, detailed plan for Nat Cos to take advantage of all social media platforms.

(Elizabeth San Miguel, 2013)

1.3 Project Scope

The Social Media Marketing Plan is a product much like a catalogue or strategy. The goal of the thesis is to optimize all the existing and available social media platforms of Natural Goods Company for improved customer engagement. We agreed with the company that the actual implementation of the plan would extend beyond the scope of a Bachelor's Thesis. Conducting secondary research via desktop resources, primary research via qualitative interviews and creating and designing new ideas for the platforms is an acceptable amount of work without risking quality and the schedule.

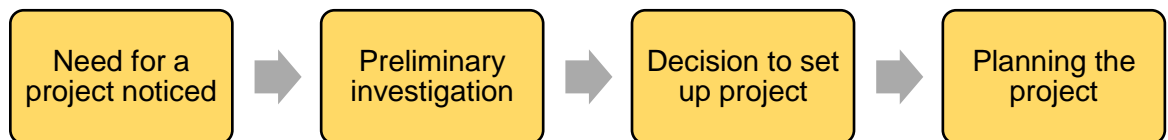


Figure 1. The project scope.

1.4 International Aspect

Social media is a worldwide phenomenon. Along with globalization, the world has shrunk into a concrete, yet complex network of communications and information flow. The product selection of Natural Goods Company portrays this, as well as their attempt to learn and compete with not just the best organic cosmetics companies in Finland, but the best in the world.

In this thesis, all research, design and findings will be conducted in English, and some translation from Finnish primary data collection is required (see Project Tasks 2 & 3). All the programs and suggestions for innovation and design are from international sources and will be adapted with international success stories in mind.

1.5 Benefits

Social media presence, when done right, is extremely beneficial for companies in today's social media-run world. This is especially true in the beauty and fashion industry, where visuality and uniqueness is the key to success. Natural Goods Company's customers are all online, and to better reach their existing and new clientele, it is important for them to optimize all their channels and ensure they are as visible as possible in the most beneficial platforms.

For the customers, the optimization will lead to more engagement with the company and through that, their products. Organic cosmetics are much safer than synthetic chemicals, and making it easy to discuss, learn and interact with more natural options on social media benefits the customers and their health (Paldanius 16 March 2018).

Personal benefits are wide-spread and a great driver in the thesis process. The excitement of working with a company so close to one's own passions and interests will motivate hard work and high-quality output. I am hoping to learn a lot about green marketing processes, social media marketing optimization and the organic cosmetics business. I am also excited to learn about the thesis writing process – conducting a big project that requires challenging time management and a multitude of stages prepares for working life and builds a sense of responsibility for one's own work.

1.6 Risk Analysis

There is a lot of material available and the support from the company is good and consistent. The only risk is that the workload with the Accelerated Thesis Process becomes, along with all other schoolwork, too heavy. This would mean lack of quality in the work itself or then personal problems with health and life management.

This risk can be avoided by following guidelines of a healthy lifestyle and making it a priority: eating right, sleeping right, exercising in fresh air and ensuring there is time to relax and reload. Having a well-planned schedule and complying with it ensures the workload will not go on overdrive and the process is effective yet calm. I have done yoga and meditative practices for a long time and they have proven to help me over any school stress I might be faced with.

The other risk is the ability to attend enough sessions and finding the proper rhythm at the beginning of the thesis implementation process. Fortunately, there are plentiful of advice and guidelines to tackle this problem.

Risks in research and other work include not getting enough valuable data from the Luonnonkaunis 2018 Natural Beauty Fair. I need to form my questions very carefully and consider the possibility that it might not be useful. As an alternative plan, I have considered examining the Instagram and Facebook feed of the most popular and widely-known organic cosmetics stores and drawing up a comparison.

As for secondary research sources, there are a great number of excellent literary and online resources I can use for both the theoretical framework and the empirical part of the

thesis. It is therefore of little risk that I might not find what I need, but it is important to select the sources with a critical eye and read the material carefully and without bias. The selection of the models and theories should be based on the thesis needs. Often with interesting topics one would want to include everything that they find interesting, but closing the thesis and keeping a good structure requires strict demarcation of topics.

1.7 Key Concepts

Social media marketing = marketing on websites and computer programs that allow people to engage and discuss on their phones or computer devices (Cambridge University Press 2018).

Brand image= the brand image is what customer perceive the brand to be from outside the company (Management Study Guide 2018).

Brand identity = the brand identity is what the company perceives its own brand to be (Management Study Guide 2018).

Green/eco marketing = marketing of a product that is said to have no negative effect on the environment (Cambridge University Press 2018).

Organic cosmetics marketing = marketing of cosmetics that have no artificial chemicals (Cambridge University Press 2018).

1.8 Case Company

Natural Goods Company were established in 2008, and is now located in Leppävaara, Espoo (Linnoitustie 2). They operate in Finland and are a part of Transmeri, who acquired them last year. They have an online store where they provide a wide selection of organic cosmetics products, from nail polishes to the most luxurious face masks, hair care and lotions. They also have a B2B-sales channel for companies, and a beauty salon where they sell their products and have a selection of organic beauty and health treatments. The salon is located in Töölö, where their service selection includes facials, hair treatments and cuts, massages, makeup, hair removal, pedicures and aromatherapy. (Natural Goods Company 2018.)

The latest sales figures were available from the year 2016. That year, the turnover was 3.6 million euros (an increase of over 35%) with a staff of 10 people. The profit of the financial year was 124 000 euros and the operating margin was 4.3%. (Taloussanomat 2018.)

The company are active on certain social media platforms, and they have a clear brand image and vision on what they want to convey. Their Instagram posts are full of interesting

content and the pictures are visually effective and in line with the company image. Their Facebook page is up to date and is in line with the Instagram feed. However, there is a lot of untapped potential and resources in social media platforms that Natural Goods Company has not yet taken advantage of. The goal of this thesis is to help the company in figuring out how to best optimize the current platforms and what are things they could do to improve their customer reach and most importantly interaction. They are also very interested in finding more green ways to implement their marketing processes.

2 Project Management Methods

Before starting to implement project stages it is important to clarify why certain stages were chosen and how they will be executed. Below I will describe each project management method as well as the reasoning behind it.

Project Objective (PO): Creating a useful and effective social media marketing plan for Natural Goods Company to reach new customers, increase customer engagement and interaction and improve their brand image on the social media platforms.

PT1. Studying green marketing theory & social media marketing theory. This is something that both Natural Goods Company and the thesis author are very passionate about. Green practices are important for the company and they wish to incorporate it to all their processes, including social media marketing. The purpose of this task is to find the models that can be implemented in their plan and will be conducted via secondary research and publications of the best experts in the field. There is a great deal of excellent data available. Social media marketing theory and trends are also vital for the plan to succeed.

PT2. Interviewing a Nat Cos. Representative. A qualitative, in-depth interview with a company representative is essential in marketing plans. Brand identity and brand image are two different things, and it's important to know everything there is to know about the company's ideas and thoughts on their brand, not just what the customer sees from the outside.

PT3. Investigating competitors at Luonnonkaunis 2018 Natural Beauty Fair. This task, in essential, is finding out what the competitors are doing and asking them about their plans and trends via primary research conducted as a short interview to at least five professionals. The goal is to also receive recommendations about the best organic beauty brands and companies on social media.

PT4. Creating plan for existing social media platforms. This stage includes running Natural Goods Company social media platforms through insights programs and optimizing their current platforms via design and analysis. This phase is also about applying previously studied theory and creativity to formulate new ideas on how to accelerate customer interaction and engagement.

PT5. Creating plan for new available social media platforms. This task is very much like the previous one with the exception that there is no existing platform, so all the work is applying previously researched theory and creatively innovating solutions and methods to take full advantage of previously unknown or unused social media platforms.

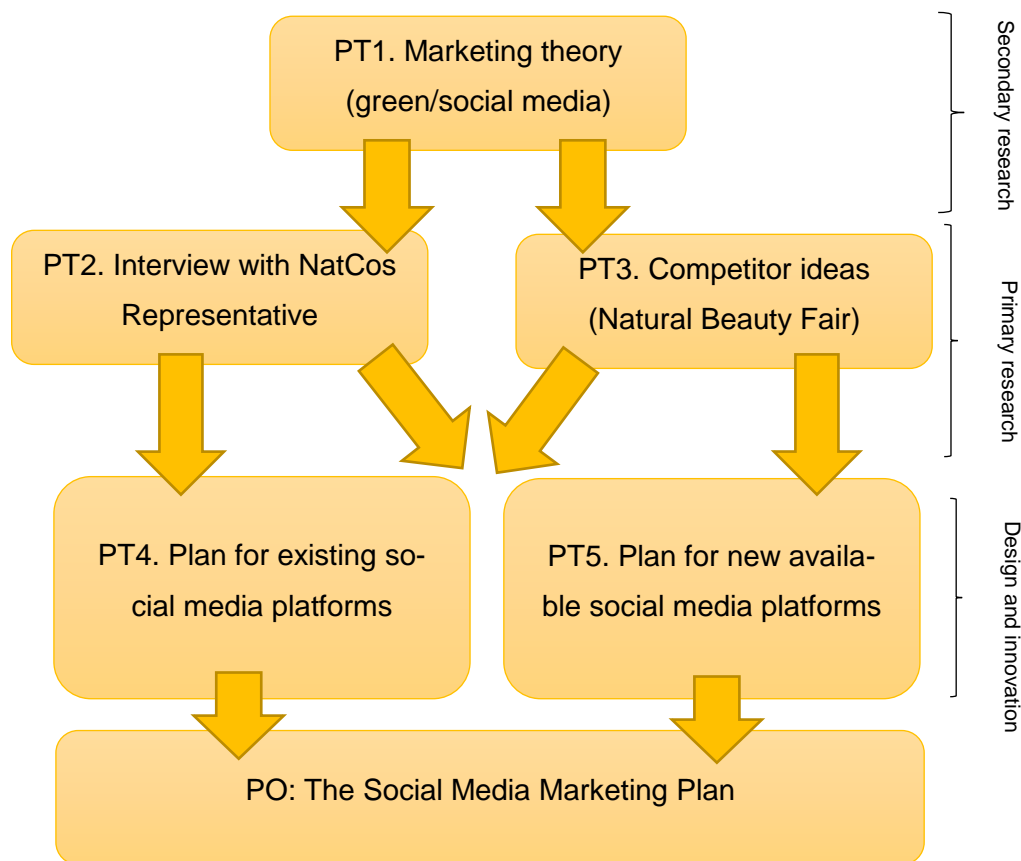


Figure 2. Project management methods

My data collection tools are face-to-face interviews and desktop research. Desktop research is suitable in learning about the different green marketing and social media marketing models developed by professionals and scholars. The primary research is conducted with qualitative face-to-face interviews because an open discussion and sharing of ideas usually leads to best creative results, and the goal of this thesis is not to gather quantitative or statistical data.

3 Green Social Media Marketing

This chapter will guide the reader through the theoretical framework that will work as a base for the social media marketing plan presented in Chapter 4. The different theory categories are divided into subchapters on green marketing, social media marketing and organic cosmetics marketing, with theoretical knowledge on the different marketing practices. The last subchapter is an interview conducted with Natural Goods Company's Marketing Chief Susanna Suomi, where she answers questions about the company's brand identity, green marketing and social media marketing issues.

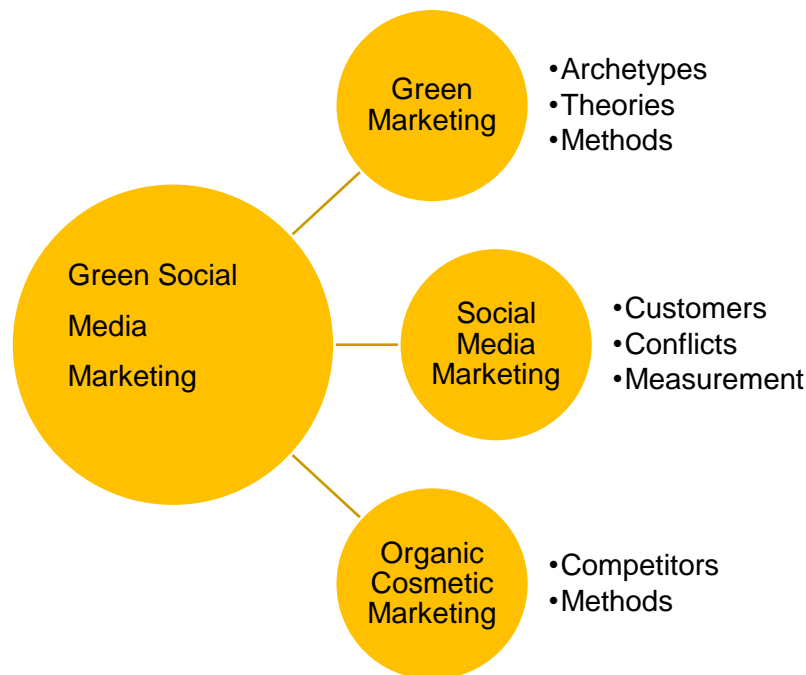


Figure 3. The Green Social Media Marketing framework

Sustainability has several drivers in today's consumer behaviour. The rise of ethical consumerism is due to customers realizing that their purchases do have power and influence in the market, and in cosmetics, they not only value the personal benefits a product has but also the environmental impact it creates (Sahota 2013, 7). Non-governmental organisations and industry representatives are visible in all medias, exposing the chemicals and natural resource exploitation behind products, shifting customer mindsets towards more natural produce (Ibid. 8). Both businesses and consumers have realized that the resources of the planet are finite and that both parties need to take part in the responsibilities of creating a greener business environment (Ibid. 8). Retailers demand transparent and waste-reducing processes from their suppliers and new regulations and laws against wasteful business are created at an accelerating pace (Ibid. 9).

3.1 Green Marketing

Conducting green marketing might only be a very small fraction of doing things better in the world, but it is vital because of its visibility, as marketing can change and influence people's attitudes and lifestyles (Grant 2007, 32). As consumers have become more knowledgeable, there has been a shift in marketing from feeding customers with empty imagery and conceptions to teaching and interacting with them. What the consumer of today expects from marketing is that is not just pleasing on the eye, but also pleasing for the heart and mind (Ibid. 48).

Implementing effective green marketing has countless risks when it comes to the brand image of the company. Declaring themselves the greenest alternative available puts companies under a magnifying glass where every little mistake is scrutinized and any break-ages from the green code are considered tragic events. These companies often find themselves labelled as common green washers, despite their sincere and honest attempts to be greener. (Grant 2007, 79.) Green marketers need to be certain that everything they say is true and sincere. Declaring greener company operations and promising customers higher ethical standards requires a great commitment from the company. It must be certain that the company can follow the guidelines it sets for itself. (Ibid. 83.)

The general guidelines of green marketing put emphasis on transparency and information. The knowledgeable, green customer requires realism, and companies need to admit that there's always something you could do better, and that the proclamation is not that the company is wholly green, but greener. Companies also need to have an extensive set of resources, and they need to be prepared to answer any questions the customers may have about the products and their manufacturing as well as the business practices of the company. A company must be precise in the green marketing processes, demonstrating a clear connection to the environment and only making specific claims and staying consistent in their policies and marketing. (Iannuzzi 2012, 152.)

3.1.1 Archetypes of Green Marketing Practices

Sustainability is a matter which no company can bypass if they wish to succeed in today's business world. However, there are various levels of green business and its marketing, ranging from companies who only seemingly put effort into making their business greener to those who implement deep green values in all their processes. Sahota (2013) divides green marketing into six archetypes.

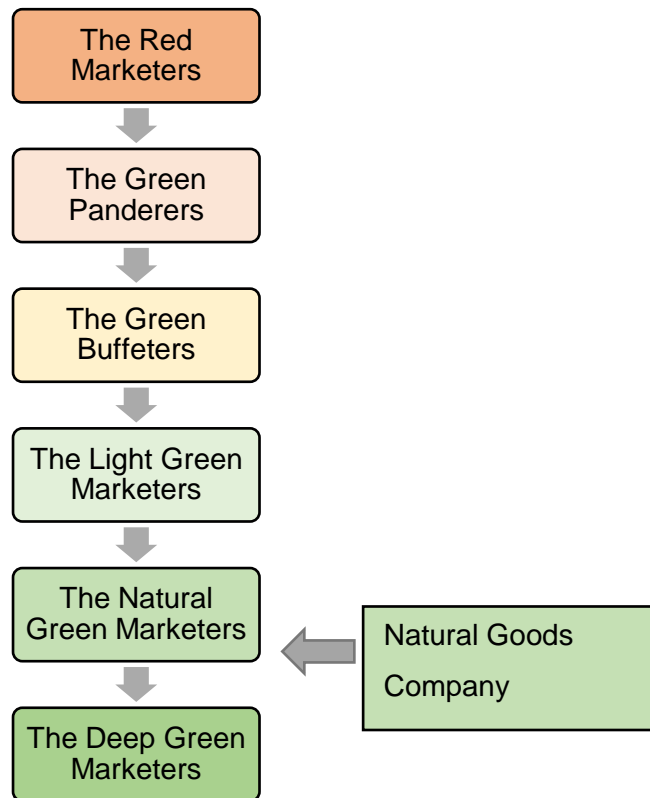


Figure 4. The Six Archetypes of Green Marketing Practices, including the estimated position of Natural Goods Company

The Red Marketers are companies which do not implement any green practices or policies, nor do they plan to. They have completely disappeared from the Western cosmetics market, as almost all consumers have some degree of environmental knowledge. Having no green agenda, real or apparent, leads to a decrease in sales and bad publicity. (Sahota 2013, 246.)

The Green Panderers are the group that might talk about environmental issues, but in practice do very little or nothing to improve the situation. This is typically called greenwashing, where the company might have a sustainable product or two in their selections to appear greener, but otherwise proceed with un-ecological practices. (Sahota 2013, 247.)

The Green Buffeters choose the most convenient and easy to implement that are effort-less, without internal motivation towards the green goals. They might recycle some materials, reduce the use of fresh water, and change their electricity to the eco-variety, but only do so to avoid the frowns of the green community. Commitment to green objectives are not included in their plans. Many companies fall under this category. (Sahota 2013, 248.)

The Light Green Marketers begin posing some measurable sustainability goals on themselves. They are pressurised by the market, and do spend a lot of money and effort, wishing for more profit and wanting to create a more sustainable and responsible image for their company. However, their end result might not be a green, sustainable product. (Sahota 2013, 249.)

The Natural Green Marketers commit to their products and manufacturing being as ecological as possible, and most natural and organic cosmetics companies fall under this category. What might be lacking is the green imperative not being implemented in all the processes of the company, but just the products. (Sahota 2013, 250.)

Deep Green Marketers are the pioneers of the green marketing movement, and they implement green practices in all the business processes inside the company, from products and manufacturing to HR and the technical aspects of the business. (Sahota 2013, 251.)

Natural Goods Company falls somewhere in between the last two categories, as all their products are ethical and green, and they ensure all their office supplies and paper usage is greener than what the general legal standards require. (Suomi 30 March 2018.)

3.1.2 The Five I's of Green Marketing

John Grant defines The Five I's of Green Marketing in his book "The Green Marketing Manifesto" (2007). These I's are requirements of green marketing that should be implemented to create a successfully green marketing campaign or product and can be applied in other green business processes than just campaigning.

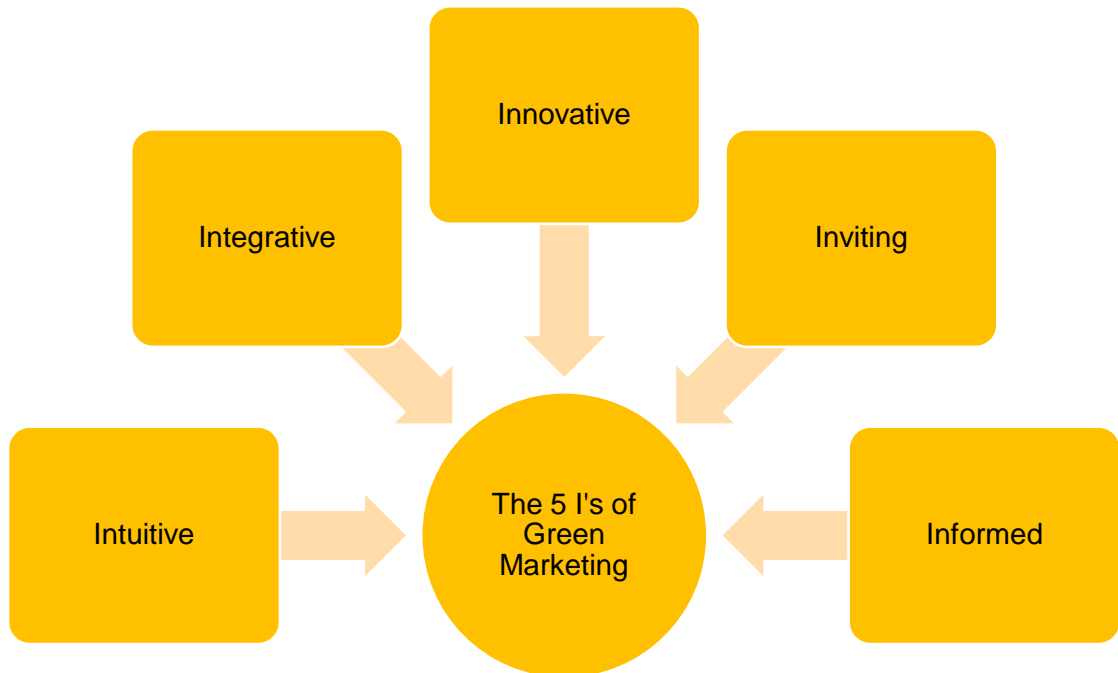


Figure 5. John Grant's 5 I's of green marketing

Intuitive. Ensuring that the green options provided are accessible and easily understood. This, in its essential, is about shifting the ideology of people, where the environment suggests that green products are the new normal, and that selecting a green product is simply common sense. (Grant 2007, 51.)

Integrative. It is important for companies to make sure that the environmental development happens simultaneously with economic development, without one aspect damaging the other. Combining processes of trade, technology, the social aspects of the business and the ecological mindset ensures success in marketing. (Grant 2007, 51.)

Innovative. Green companies are the frontier of a new movement; therefore, they must also be on the front line when it comes to new products and new lifestyles. Sending the message that consuming does not necessarily mean excessive waste and mindless spending separates the greener companies and their strategies from those who promote such destructive consumption. (Grant 2007, 52.)

Inviting. Consumers need to be reassured that choosing a green option is not compromising on quality or efficiency, but that it is an extremely positive shift both for the planet and the consumer. This can also be seen as a challenge of design – green products need a visual that makes them more joyful and fun, not as “unpleasant alternatives” customers have to choose to avoid destroying the world. Green should be the ultimate choice. (Grant 2007, 52.)

Informed. The lack of information amongst consumers is the main reason why people do not consider a greener alternative. The new marketing shift towards engagement and education gives green marketing the opportunity to not “dumb down” to reach customers but to teach them about the products and their use. (Grant 2007, 53.)

3.1.3 Effective Green Marketing

Effective green marketing requires commitment from the top management level. It needs to not only be a part of the products and the campaigns but integrated into all business processes from HRM to technology. What is often lost on marketers but clear in green marketing studies is that green should be a principle, a guideline on how the company conducts business, not a value proposition that enables a higher price on products or brushes up the company marketing campaigns (Grant 2007, 76).

Greener products need to be intertwined with the business strategy, and the company must understand the customer’s desires and goals and align these greener products and their marketing to address them. The marketing needs to be authentic and credible, all the claims and promises need to be substantiated, and the processes are required to be transparent. An important aspect about green marketing is that the green characteristics of the product should never overshadow its purpose. The product or service is the key – it should be excellent and have the sustainability attributes. (Iannuzzi 2012, 164.)

Ensuring your company is equipped with third-party sustainability and eco-certificates, or a company-branded program, brings reliability to the green imperative claims (Iannuzzi 2012, 164). Environmental labels that extend beyond the company products will show commitment to the cause and respect towards other areas of the business. Having a third-party certificate for the entire company aids in formulating green processes in all aspects of the business and sets measurable objectives.

To ensure complete transparency, the best way to implement a wholesome, interconnected green marketing strategy for a company is to conduct a regular audit. The company needs to create measurable objectives and have consistent follow ups on the matters, publishing all the results and data on their own webpages that are available for everyone. In this audit, things to be measured could be the company’s use of water, the consumption of energy, waste reduction, logistics issues such as transportation and distribution, involvement in environmental causes and human resource management. Committing to any of these issues and communicating it to the customers gives the company authenticity in green imperatives. (Sahota 2013, 244.)

3.2 Social Media Marketing

There are many reasons why social media is considered an effective and useful marketing platform. It enables real-time feedback and direct interaction of customers, it does not cost any additional money and it gives access to a big audience with visibility that would be impossible to achieve with traditional media (Coles 2014, 5).

For organic cosmetics companies, the social media marketing platforms enable the communication of the company's green values and ideals and strengthens customer relationships. A direct communication stream towards the customers requires transparency and an open dialogue ensures long-lasting customer loyalty. (Sahota 2013, 12.)

Many companies seem to be using social media marketing without a strategy or clear tactic on how the results of the posts are measured, how comments are managed and what is the true purpose of the posts. They have little knowledge on the involvement of the customers and the reasons behind their social media behaviour, and many companies are struggling with creating a consistent, social media marketing plan objectives that are integrated across channels with a clear structure and measurable results (Rouhiainen 2017a). Natural Goods Company have clear, distinct customer profiles who they target their sales and content towards and have conducted a content strategy for the company's visuals and how they wish to be perceived as a company (Suomi 30 March 2018).

3.2.1 Social Customers

Social media is initially sharing content and interacting with other people and companies. In the process of creating a successful social media marketing plan it is important to understand the reasoning behind the behaviour of the most common social media user. Why users share some posts but not others, what attracts and creates certain behavioural patterns and what creates dislike helps establish company guidelines.

Firstly, checking that all the rules of common engagement and communication are followed leads to more shares. Using crude language, arguing with customers or other companies, badmouthing other companies, bad spelling or the excessive use of caps lock immediately decreases visibility and might even be penalised by Facebook. (Coles 2014, 24.)

Many share content to improve their image on social media and to make themselves appear smarter or trendier. This is referred to as social currency. People are also strongly

led by emotion. If something has touched them deeply, made them laugh or cry, or created sensations of frustration or enlightenment, people almost always share the content in some form. This suggests that creating content not just for the mind but also for the heart would gain more visibility. (Coles 2014, 23.)

When creating content it is important to show the practical value of the product and visualise the problem it solves. Frequently shared content usually provides useful, hands-down information that can be easily digested, like healthy recipes, money saving tricks and simple tutorials. Alongside the practical, all the content should also tell a story. Incorporating the company brand into an appealing storyline sticks with people longer than separate images or lengthy information text. (Coles 2014, 24.)

The social network is experiencing a vast information overload. Consumers are constantly fed data from all corners of the internet and their social media feed is often filled with commercials, content by companies, inviting images and links to countless blogs. Due to this humongous amount of information, humans adjust to the complexity by creating mental shortcuts to simplify decision-making processes. These shortcuts are referred to as heuristics, and consist of things such as social proof, authority, affinity, scarcity and reciprocity. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 176.)

Humans prefer to run in packs, and social proof is a fitting example of this typical behaviour. Acceptance and positive critique by other users and customers are often the main decision influencer when people consider purchases, and testimonials of desirable products are posted on all social media forums. Society is conformed, and although there are individuals who do not believe in agreeing with the masses simply for the sake of agreeing, most humans are reassured and convinced by popular opinion. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 176.)

On the other end, authority influences potential customers with the solemn opinion of an expert (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 177). Organic cosmetics could be endorsed and praised by herbal experts and holistic practitioners as well as Instagram celebrities who flaunt a natural lifestyle. Affinity refers to people making decisions based on how much they like someone or something and can also be related to the authority decision influencer (Ibid, 178).

Scarcity marketing tactics are often seen in social media as limited offers, limited edition products or flash sales, creating the impression of scarcity and therefore accelerating customer efforts in gaining a certain product. The rule of reciprocity, which means that com-

monly people feel obligated to return a favour or debt, is seen in strategies such as sampling. The company does something kind and generous, such as give out a free sample, and the customers feel the need to return the favour. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 179.)

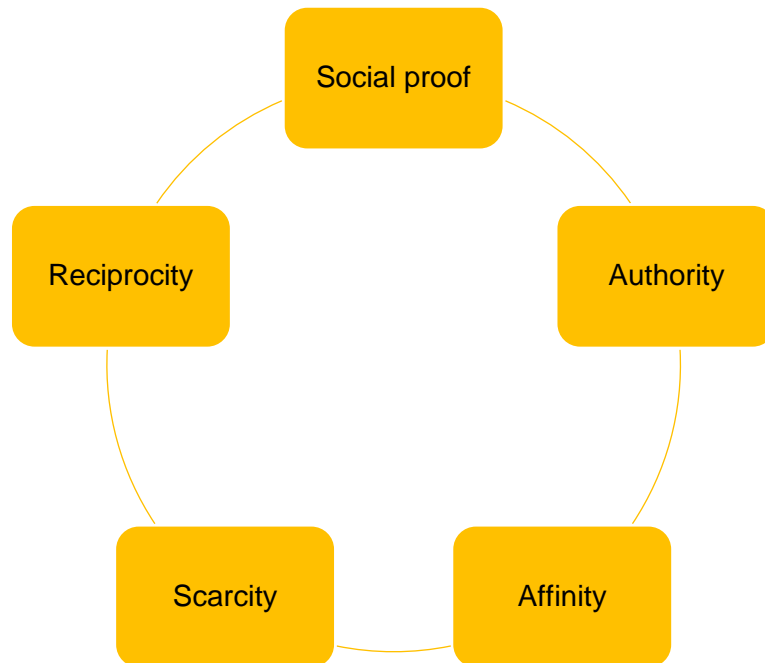


Figure 6. Decision-making influencers on social media by Tuten & Solomon (2013)

Consumer behaviour on social media follows guidelines of mass-mentality and has much to do with traditional psychological traits and patterns. Companies, once aware of these patterns, can best adapt them to suit their needs and specific target audience. Creating a mix that is balanced yet surprising for the consumer provides more exposure and more interest.

3.2.2 Social Media Crisis

Interaction is a key aspect in social media marketing. When conducting business properly, maintaining quality standards and providing the customers with the products and services as promised, the interaction on social media is a positive flow of likes, comments and shares. However, what companies need to prepare for is what to do when they inevitably receive negative feedback or a complaint.

It is a sensible choice to name someone in the company responsible for researching problems that have arisen and finding solutions for them. That same person, or depending on the company's size, an additional employee can then respond to the negative posts. It is important to respond quickly, as negative comments tend to swell out of proportions when ignored and remain calm no matter how aggressive the complaint or comment is. Respect

and acknowledgement of the customer will be visible to everyone on the social media site. (Wood 2017, 204.)

After acknowledging the complaint and responding on behalf of the company, it is to be established whether the complaint was an exception or a part of a bigger issue or problem in the company processes. Private additional information inquiries are always recommended and during these it is important to make the customer feel appreciated. Being sincere, apologising and showing consideration toward the matters at hand improve the image of the company even if there is nothing to be done about the actual complaint. (Wood 2017, 204.)

Once the issue has been resolved, it is a good idea to post about the topic, and maybe even discussing the resolving process and inquiring about additional questions customers may have if the problem was part of a bigger issue. This earns the company respect and dissolves the negative publicity the complaint originally created. (Wood 2017, 204.)

3.2.3 Measuring Social Media

In almost all types of marketing strategy models, the last step is always either control or measurement. This is just as crucial a step in social media marketing as setting objectives and planning a dynamic content calendar. Every step that is implemented in social media ought to be measured to constantly evaluate which methods are working and which methods are not and see the obstacles that require change (Rouhiainen 2017a). What works today might not necessarily work tomorrow in the almost hectic social media world, therefore social media plans should always have room to live and adapt to quick changes. Measurements and controlling of posts creates a framework from which it is easy to draw conclusions and pinpoint new needs. When left unmeasured and unanalysed, the social media activity might lose momentum and the company runs risk of loss due to unnecessary work or in the worst cases, bad publicity.

Tuten and Solomon (2013,186) introduce the idea of social media listening, meaning that organizations attentively and actively listen to what users are saying on social media platforms and gain experience and information on what is trending. A tool for the automation of social media listening is Google Alerts. With Google Alerts, you can save certain keywords, industries and concepts, and the app will immediately inform of changes and trend fluctuations online. The same applies for Google Trends, where the same keywords and concepts can be tested in terms of popularity, area of use, searches and related searches around the words.

Companies should always check how their social media activity generates sales. This can be done by creating a social media-specific campaign, for example, and then evaluating how many people visited the site because of a social media-specific discount code. It is also advisable to check not just the number of new followers or likes but also the amount of website visits generated, and all other elements of interaction related to the posts. (Rouhiainen 2017a.)

Another excellent way of measuring is to use online tools that are most often free and integrated into the social media platforms. Google Analytics, Facebook and Instagram Insights and other similar programs provide extensive data on how well your social media platforms are structured and give suggestions on how to improve interaction or visibility. (Rouhiainen 2017a.)

Insights programs are easy to use and provide pre-analysed data, which saves time for the company. The information given, such as the number of views and likes on certain posts, can be put to immediate use and the company can alter their current plans to match the demand of the users.

3.2.4 Green Marketing in Social Media

Social media marketing is a green marketing opportunity. The resources and channels used for delivering messages and communicating with followers and customers are eco-friendly, since the marketing itself does not require any paper or physical distribution. Social media is, as stated in the concept, social, thus the platforms give a route for companies to discuss and discover from green marketing gurus and what they are doing without having to dig deep into extensive theory frameworks. It enables immediate feedback and the direct communication with other users opens opportunities for innovation and inspiration.

Social media is also efficient in telling your customers about your values and ideologies as well as promoting your products or company. Customers can immediately ask further questions and enhance the message you are conveying. In this instance, it ought to be highlighted that a company should never state any promise or declare anything that they cannot see through or that is contradictory to their standards (Grant 2007, 83). The principles of honesty and transparency that are emphasised in green marketing are strongly applicable to social media crisis management.

3.3 Organic Cosmetics Marketing

More and more people are turning towards organic and natural cosmetics with their beauty issues. Dangerous toxins are everywhere in synthetic beauty care – some petrochemicals that are prohibited in the oil industry are used in cosmetics (Paldanius 16 March 2018). Most deodorants contain aluminium, which is proven to worsen and even cause memory diseases, and many skin care products contain microplastics that absorb into the human body and due to their slow biodegrading, pollute the seas (Sahota 2013, 6).

Luckily for both the organic and natural cosmetics companies as well as the consumer, the trend is nodding towards a more down-to-earth beauty regime. New things are innovated and brought to the market, from unrefined shea butter to organic contouring. People are beginning to take notice of cosmetics packaging, chemicals and the origin of the natural ingredients in the products (Sahota 2013, 6).

The marketing of many organic cosmetics companies relies on the notion that consumers are becoming more knowledgeable. It is important for the consumers to gain insight and read about the ingredients and organic cosmetics in general to understand what it is about (Tammi-Ikonen 16 March 2018). This idea is very much in line with the ideas of green marketing – companies need to view their customers as humans to interact and talk to on the same level, rather than sheep to feed images and empty data.

Often people turn to organic cosmetics rather naturally. Riina Ojanperä, a product developer at FLOW cosmetics, used to be a beautician in the synthetic cosmetics sector, but after starting a family and having her first baby she began to think about the ingredients of the products she was using. She was shocked to find out how toxic they were and began a new career in natural cosmetics. She stated that most of the women in her acquaintance have had the same shift of mindset. (Ojanperä 16 March 2018.)

However, the problem with organic cosmetics marketing is its absolute black-and-white nature. Many people who use synthetic cosmetics and who have not studied the more natural beauty produce feel guilty approaching organic cosmetics, as many seem to think it is an all or nothing-type of lifestyle choice. Customers often feel shamed by the warnings and “preaching” of the natural cosmetics industry and steer away simply due to these emotions. Instead of trying to prove to customers that organic cosmetics is a superior choice and that everything else is dangerous, people should be allowed to get to know the products and then make the decision themselves. (Tammi-Ikonen 16 March 2018.)

To get customers involved with organic cosmetics, creating and promoting events on social media platforms for loyal customers is an excellent way to interact and engage. “Tester” VIP nights make the customer feel important and is a wonderful way for the company to let the customers acquainted with the products hands-on. These events and their promotion on social media creates engagement, when customers and followers discuss their experiences and expand the reach of the posts exponentially. Natural Goods Company has a product selection that speaks for itself, and customers would probably be greatly inspired to produce content about them on their own.

Liisa Seppälä, the owner of Naturellement, stated that the numbers are also in favour of natural beauty products – the bigger synthetic cosmetics companies are losing sales (16 March 2018). The exceptions appear to be the companies who are sincerely interested in making their products greener and use more organic produce in their manufacturing.

Most organic cosmetics companies in Finland promote themselves on Facebook and Instagram as well as their own webpages but have not yet really taken advantage of the other social media channels, such as YouTube or LinkedIn. Finding new, creative marketing methods could result in separating from the rest.

3.4 Natural Goods Company’s Brand Identity and Marketing

This interview was conducted to establish the brand identity and current social media marketing situation of Natural Goods Company. The interviewee was Susanna Suomi, the company’s Head of Marketing and Communications.

Suomi (30 March 2018) identified the ideal customer of Natural Goods Company as four different personalities, all with very different ideas of what they want from organic cosmetics: one is a mixer upper who is interested in organic cosmetics from the trend aspect, but does not possess any obvious willingness on saving the planet, another is a very interested and “enlightened” consumer who wishes to transform her beauty cabinet and fill it with specific products. In their marketing, Natural Goods Company attempts to address the needs and desires for all the four personalities.

As for the company’s own personality, Suomi (30 March 2018) described Natural Goods Company to be laid-back, stylish professionals with a positive attitude, who think about wellbeing as a comprehensive concept that ought to be adapted into all lifestyles. Natural Goods Company also believes firmly in honesty, simplicity and the power of facts.

The competition of Natural Goods Company Suomi divided into two categories: the organic cosmetics online stores as well as the synthetic cosmetics online stores. Suomi felt that any action towards choosing a more natural beauty care method is beneficial for their cause, and in this sense the synthetic cosmetics pose a bigger threat than their organic counterparts. Suomi also stated that they differ from their competitors by having an extensive, professional information database and high-quality content, concentrating on providing customers with actual data rather than just green imagery. (30 March 2018.)

Suomi compressed the key values of Natural Goods Company into five concepts: professionalism, quality, ethics, comprehensive wellbeing and energy. The green aspects of the business are crucial, and do not limit only to the products. From ensuring the coffee cups in the social area of the office are ethically sourced to checking that every single product in their catalogue is organic and natural, Natural Goods Company wants to make sure they respect the environment in all their business levels. Transmeri, who acquired them recently, wishes the company to become a catalyst for greener business processes within the large corporation. (30 March 2018.)

Natural Goods Company are active on two social media platforms, Facebook and Instagram, with the force of two employees. They post on their sites 2-3 times a week and measure the results of the posts and campaigns through post views on a weekly basis. Their greatest wish is to create more interaction and engagement on the platforms, and they are very quick with their responses to customer questions and complaints. All communication is done professionally and in a friendly manner. (Suomi 30 March 2018.)

4 The Social Media Marketing Plan

Basing upon the theories and models presented in the previous chapter, the objective is to now analyse and design various social media marketing platforms for Natural Goods Company in accordance to their wishes to engage and interact with their customers. The existing platforms, Facebook and Instagram, will be run through insights and analysed based on the theoretical part of this thesis, with improvement ideas and suggestions for development provided. The more unused platforms, YouTube and LinkedIn, will mostly consist of design ideas based on green marketing practices and the most effective social media marketing tactics available.

All marketing planning requires research. Natural Goods Company have established their Ideal Customers into four distinct profiles, which are easy to target and create content for. Their content strategy has recently been updated, therefore the ideas in this social media marketing plan, in the case of existing platforms, have more to do with the increase of interaction and engagement of the customers rather than a specific plan for the content. For YouTube and LinkedIn, however, you may find suggestions for the expansion of the current content strategy.

4.1 Facebook

Facebook is the first of the social media platforms currently used by Natural Goods Company. Much of their current feed is links to their wellness blogs that covers topics from their cosmetics products to finding the optimal life rhythm to maximise health and wellbeing. Today, on the 9th of April 2018, Natural Goods Company have 6 748 followers for their Facebook page. Yet, their posts only gain from three to fourteen likes per post, except when they host contests, where the interaction and likes rise up to as much as 800 people.

The analysis of the Natural Goods Company Facebook page was done via Likealyzer, a popular and recommended insights tool which provides data on both the activity and engagement of the page (as well as detailed analysis on how effective the frontpage of the company is and whether the information provided about the company is sufficient, see Appendices). The higher the ratings, the more Facebook algorithms will promote the page. (Likealyzer 2018.)

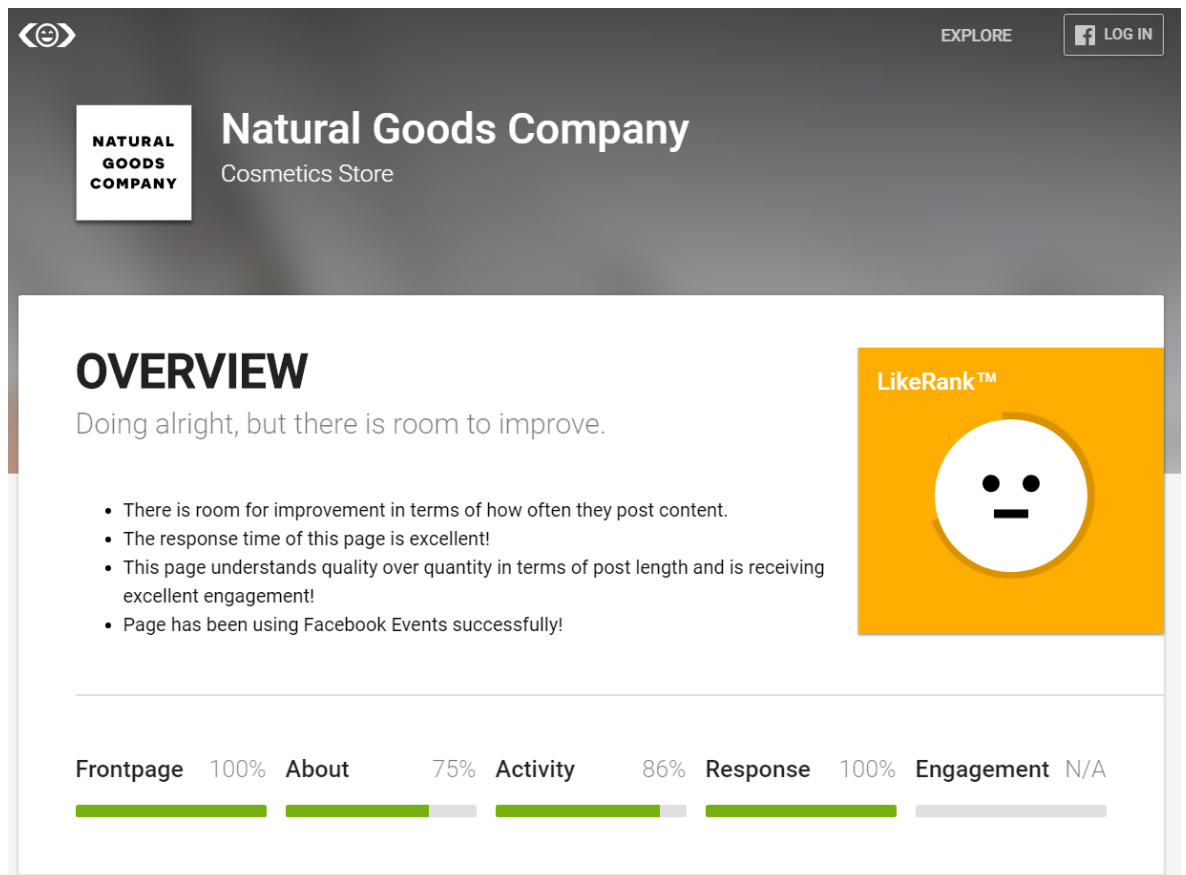


Figure 7. The Likealyzer overview of the Natural Goods Company page, 4 May 2018

The figure above gives an overview of the Natural Goods Company Facebook page and the analysis. As the analysis suggests, the page is doing very well in some activities but there is room for improvement. The overview states that a more frequent post phase could benefit Natural Goods Company, and that they respond to all interaction in excellent time. The post lengths are deemed to be of an appropriate length and the page receives praise on using Facebook Events well. The figures below present each of the categories shown in more detail. The “Frontpage” and “About” sections can be found in the appendices, as they are not directly related to improving customer engagement.

The activity shows that Natural Goods Company posts 0.4 a day on average. For many companies it is considered beneficial to post something daily. This can easily be integrated with other social platforms and for example Instagram posts can be published on Facebook to boost views. It is important to note here that Facebook and YouTube are competitors, so promoting Facebook content on YouTube and vice versa is not particularly recommended, as they are not programmed to promote each other. Later in this chapter, I explain the benefits of using video marketing as a leading social media marketing method and discuss the channels that can be used for the videos. Under Native Facebook Videos, Likealyzer states that videos are the best and most engaging type of content

on Facebook. Natural Goods Company has 19 videos published, but most of them date back to October 2017 or further back. To improve their interaction with followers, Natural Goods Company could include a regular video in their social media marketing.

The average post length is 341, which is rather long for the suggested 40-100-character posts that create more engagement. Rouhiainen (2017a) also suggest this in his research, stating that 80 characters or less are more approachable and more likely to be read throughout. Overall engagement can also be increased by the company itself interacting with partners, bloggers and customers online. According to Likealyzer, Natural Goods Company has liked 51 other pages, and considering how many different organic cosmetics influencers and interests are available on social media, they could make significant additions to their selection of followed people and companies.

ACTIVITY

Activity levels are looking pretty good.

86%

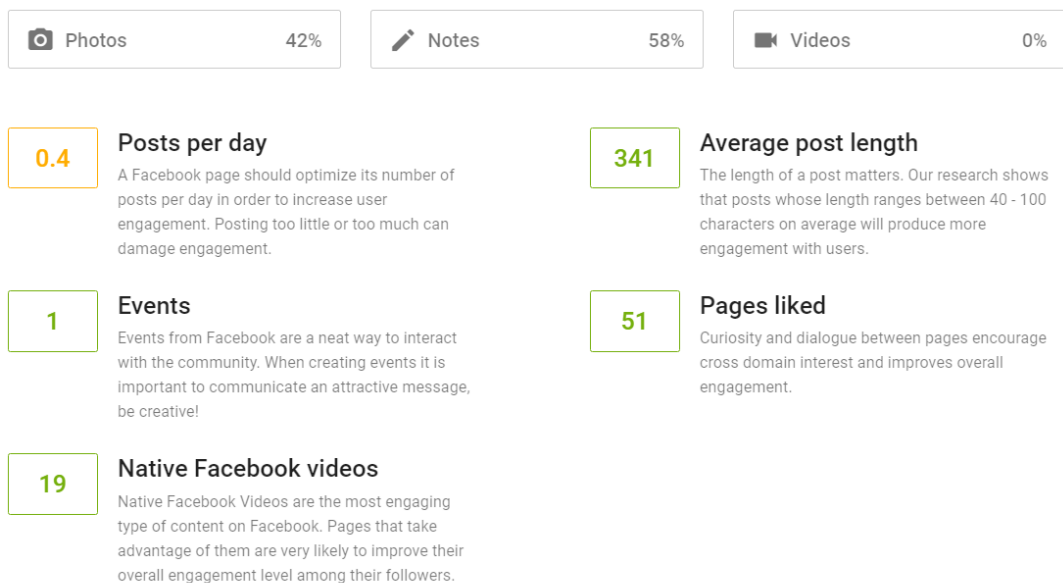


Figure NRO. The Likealyzer analytics on Natural Goods Company Facebook activity

Likealyzer is unable to wholly analyse engagement of a public Facebook page, but it was able to calculate the engagement rate of the communication of the page by dividing the PTAT with the number of likes. It demonstrates that although Natural Goods Company has thousands of people following their page, the content receives a small percentage of interaction.

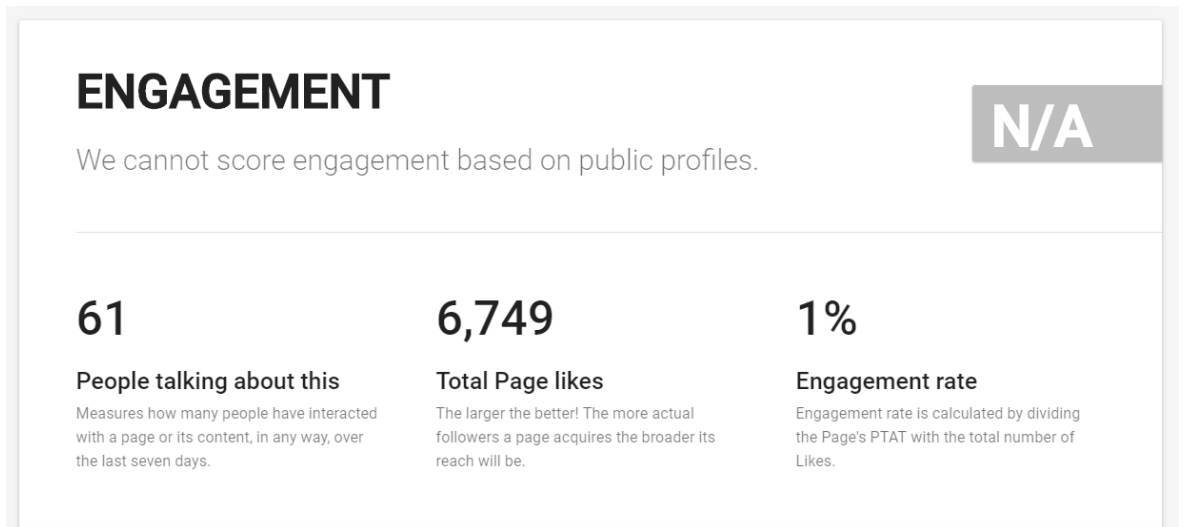


Figure 8. The Likealyzer analysis of Natural Goods Company Facebook engagement

Since the level of interaction on the platform is low, there was no data for response times and rates, but the channel is open for users to take advantage of the comments that have appeared have been responded to immediately.

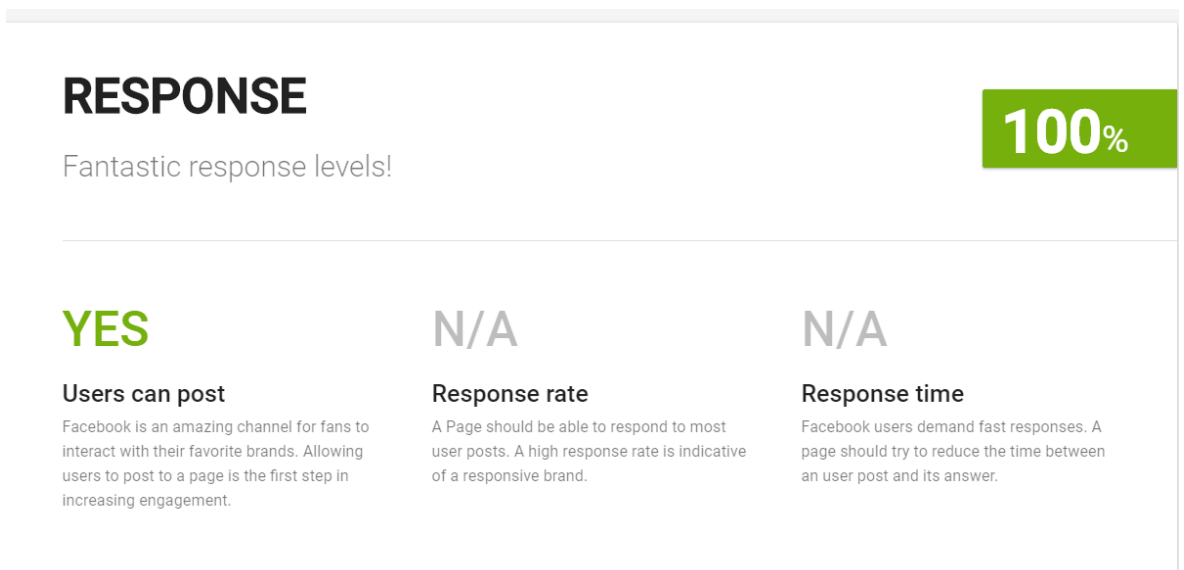


Figure 9. The Likealyzer analysis on Natural Goods Company Facebook response levels

Natural Goods Company is in line with the most recommended green marketing practices when it comes to their Facebook feed. They're very professional and provide the customer with extensive knowledge on the products and organic wellbeing with every post they make. They do not talk down to the customer, and the visuals make the organic products seem desirable. What Natural Goods Company is also doing right is that they are not promoting the greenness of the products over the other product benefits. The product itself is what is marketed for its specific features, advantages and benefits to the customer, and

the fact that it is also green and organic is a self-evident matter the customer may depend on.

What the company requires more of according to their own wishes and the Likealyzer results, is engagement. The more engagement a company receives, the more exposure Facebook gives the company post. It is suggested that using emotions in the posts generates the most shares and engagement. This means that all posts should be platforms for discussion and they should tempt the user to react with something that either makes them laugh or touches them. If using emotions does not feel natural to the company image, another excellent way of creating interaction and engagement is simply asking questions from your followers. Placing a question at the end of a post that is easy to answer and allows followers to express themselves is usually a successful technique. (Rouhiainen 2017b.)

Emotions and questions are not the only things to effect engagement. What most companies do not realise is that Facebook might even penalise companies that push people to like and share their content, in contrast to the importance of the posts including a call to action at other times. Another matter that distinctly decreases interest towards a post is if it is too lengthy. Using 80 characters or less keeps the interest of people, and should the post be a link to the blog, a dynamic but short intro might lead to more clicks and people on the blog and company website. (Rouhiainen 2017b.)

Natural Goods Company has beautiful visuals and product pictures that inspire use and create the image of a clean, ethical business. Research suggest that these pictures could be supported with pictures of people and customers using the products (Rouhiainen 2017b). People are always interested in other people and using people in pictures generates more views and likes (Ibid.).

In the case of Facebook, it is important to evaluate the consequences of current turmoil that the social media company is going through. Scandals and legal cases appear one after another on almost all news channels in Finland and across the world, and the future of Facebook as a popular social media platform might be compromised. When interacting with social media, marketers should adapt and evaluate their own campaigns and processed based on the developments of the platform. A social media platform that is extremely popular and efficient for business purposes one spring might not guarantee success the next. New apps and online content marketing possibilities are constantly created so leaving room in a content marketing strategy for quick changes means the company can adapt to the new situation without turbulence in the marketing department.

4.2 Instagram

Natural Goods Company have over 3000 followers on their Instagram profile, and their posts gather about a hundred likes on average. This increases exponentially when they post a contest, and the previous contest they held on the 8th of March gained over 400 likes. The pictures are very high-quality and linear with the company brand image and identity. The colour scheme used in the pictures is neutral and clean with a bright tone here and there, and the text under the image always presents product characteristics and the advantages to the customer. They are structured, approachable and written in standard formal Finnish. (Instagram 2018.)

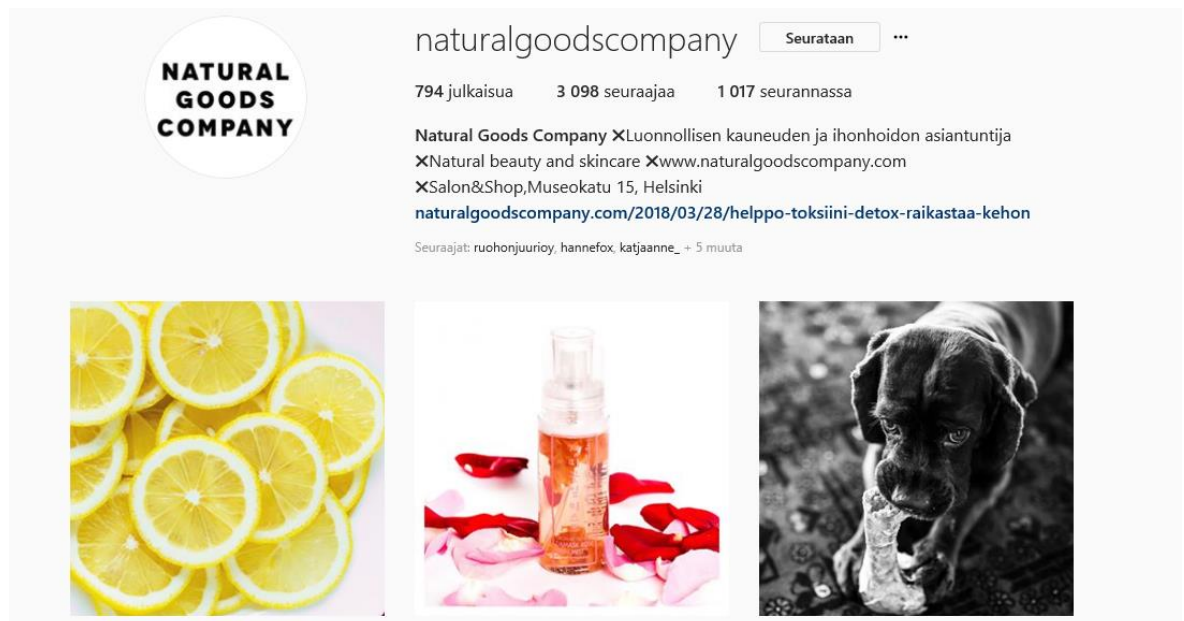


Figure 10. The profile page of Natural Goods Company on Instagram (16 April 2018)

Instagram is the number one platform for customer engagement online, and Instagram users spend time on the forum 45% longer than they do on Facebook. Instagram can, in some cases, be even more popular than the actual webpage of the company, and studies suggest that 30% of Instagram users have made a purchasing decision after seeing the product on Instagram first, while 72% state that seeing a captivating Instagram picture of a product or service increases their likeliness of purchasing. (Yotpo Voice 2018.) This would suggest that implementing a feedback campaign or promoting the newsletter subscription of the company would reach the most customers via Instagram.

Many of the same rules that apply for Facebook also apply on Instagram posting. On Instagram, the emphasis is on the quality of the images posted and the length of the captions. Writing too descriptive, long posts is often unnecessary work, as people rarely read past the first two or three lines that show below the image (Rouhianen 2017a). The excep-

tion to this is if you can produce text that is dynamic and catchy and that creates emotional reactions from the first few words onwards. These types of texts are often human-interest stories on personal accounts.

As stated in the previous chapter on social media marketing, people are keen on expressing their opinion and want their voice to be heard (Rouhiainen 2017a). Natural Goods Company could formulate dynamic hashtags and have people join in the review and discussion of their products via their own images. A new product or series launch equipped with its own hashtag and the Natural Goods Company promise of the best pictures being published on the company's own feed interests the users and creates a distinct interaction between the customer and the company.

To emphasise the factor that Natural Goods Company are a supporter of green values and business processes, posting about those values and the way they conduct their business raise brand image in the minds of the users of the social media platforms. As green marketing theory suggests, declaring yourself righteous and virtuous is never a good idea due to the risk of being put under a magnifying glass (Grant 2007, 79), but writing sincere posts about what the company is doing and why it is deemed important, accompanied by high-quality visuals, creates added value to the customers contemplating on where to buy their organic cosmetics.

4.3 YouTube & Video Marketing

Video marketing is by no means decreasing in the coming years. In a recent survey by Wyzowl, 81% of companies said they were using video marketing as a tool, and 65% of the companies that did not, said they were going to start in 2018. 76% of marketers said that video marketing had increased their sales, and 85% of the customer stated that they hope to see video content from their favourite brands in 2018. (Hayes 24 January 2018.)

Statistics show that the popularity of beauty-related video content is growing rapidly by every passing year: In 2015, beauty-related video content on YouTube was viewed 33 billion times per year, and in 2017, the number of views is 88 billion (Pixability 2018). In a time where beauty tutorials and product review videos are more popular than ever, and the trend is still going up, it is most recommendable for all companies in the industry to tap into this resource.

There are many ways with which Natural Goods Company could benefit from the use of videos and YouTube as an organic cosmetics company. As video bloggers and a more

natural, down-to-earth approach to video marketing keeps gaining popularity, teaming up with a known video blogger or starting a video blog of their own might open a whole new demographic of interested customers. Natural Goods Company could contact these video bloggers and cooperate. Video blogs are an excellent way to impact customers via social proof and affinity. Selecting a credible vlogger partner who shares the values of Natural Goods Company is crucial. Creating a video blog that is run by the company itself would also have plenty of accessible material and interesting prospects, since the product catalogue of Natural Goods Company is extensive. The video blogs could be published on social media platforms and integrated to the Natural Goods Company blog and website.

The mix of content types could be anything from organic makeup tutorials with catchy titles such as “How to Master the Natural Look” to user tips and clips of customer reviews. As Coles (2014, 24) suggests, it is the hands-down type of content that is most likely shared and talked about on the social media platforms. What has been evident through studying the marketing and general position of organic cosmetics is that the main reason people do not use or buy the products is the lack of information. Showing to the customers the textures, ingredients and use of new organic cosmetic innovations would lower the barrier of trying them and familiarize the customer with the products with a very casual, approachable platform. The video content would also be in line with Natural Goods Company’s comprehensive wellbeing values, so that their marketing does not only concentrate on the promotion of products but the wholesome customer experience.

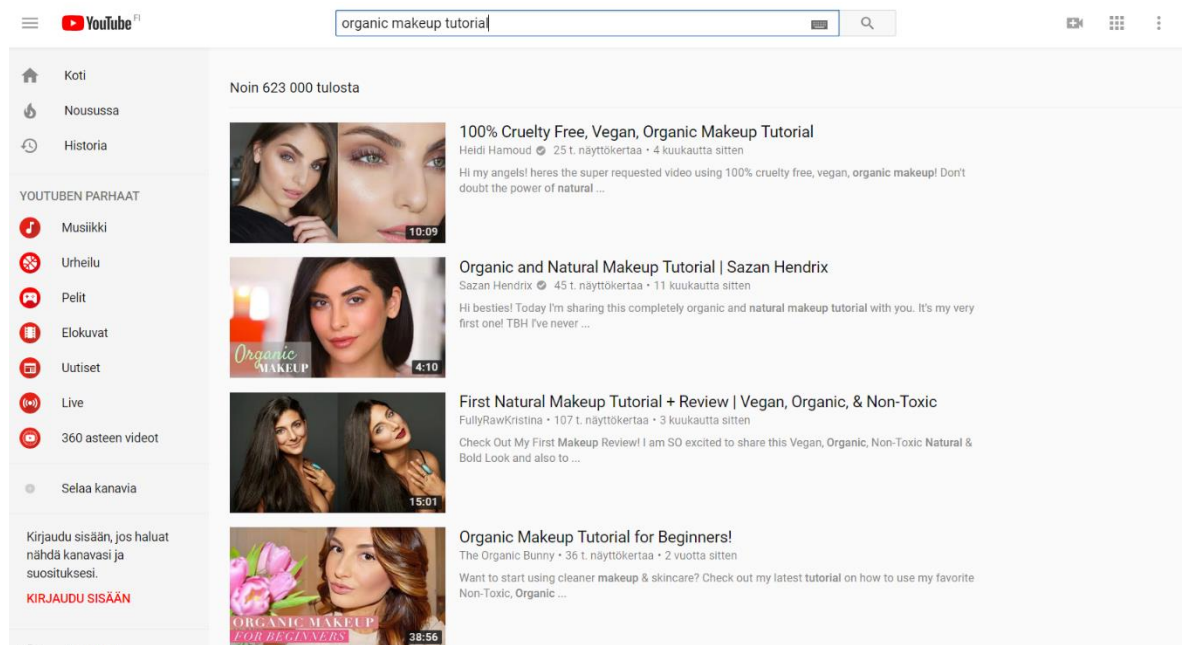


Figure 11. Searching results for “organic makeup tutorial” on YouTube (8 May 2018)

In addition, synchronising the video content with calendar celebrations and the appropriate makeup, seasons and what they require from skincare as well as other inspirations

are always recommendable and create added value for the customer. A good example of this would be a well-implemented Christmas party makeup tutorial with a second part on how to pamper the skin afterwards, or a short episode on the skincare and health benefits of raspberry and the way Natural Goods Company uses it in their products.

As with all social media content that will be provided, the importance of keeping in mind the basic principles of green marketing practices when creating video content ensures success. Being sincere, honest, and marketing the product instead of just the green value creates a professional yet sustainable image that usually appeals to the knowledgeable consumer.

Creating an interesting video requires planning. However, the time put into the videos can be limited by creating an extensive, detailed pre-prepared plan and a base for certain types of videos that is easy to use again. Consistency and recognition are good things, if the content itself is not repetitive. The persons chosen to create the video blogs are to be comfortable in front of the camera and have a natural presence that is in line with the company image. Lighting, background and the structure of the videos is to be carefully selected, but it is important that the video does not seem too scripted, especially in the case of product reviews. If the result is too “perfect”, people may view the video as simply another advertisement or promotional campaign and lose interest in following the company entirely. An effective detail about video marketing that effects the number of views and likes respectively is the use of a good thumbnail that can act as a part of branding. The best video bloggers all have a signature thumbnail style that is distinct and creates an appealing frontpage for the video.

4.4 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a platform that has had a 1000% growth rate in the 13 years it has existed, making it an interesting prospect for both big and small companies (Escobedo 2017). When a company is active on LinkedIn, they have more visibility among other professionals in the same industry and gain access to the global conversation in the field. It also gives many customers the opportunity to give companies high-quality feedback, which is often lacking in other social media channels. Being a professional platform, LinkedIn makes people want to give a good impression of themselves, leaving out excess emotion from the criticism and concentrating on making their point, creating discussion from which the companies may learn and grow from.

Video marketing is also expected to become a trend on LinkedIn. In the survey conducted by Wyzowl, 38% of companies were sharing their video content on their LinkedIn page,

and 3 out of 4 said it had been successful with visible benefits. 55% of the companies stated that they were planning to begin promoting video content on LinkedIn in 2018. (Hayes 24 January 2018.)

In LinkedIn, Natural Goods Company has many prospects and opportunities they have not yet taken advantage of. Currently the search shows two accounts, the Natural Goods Company account and then their NatCos Nordic account. Neither of the accounts are very active, but the NatCos Nordic appears to be the more frequently updated one, and the latest update was to do with the recruitment of a new employee nine months ago. Integrating the two accounts into one unified account creates less confusion in the customers and automatically leads to more followers and interaction. Linking the content from other platforms and the blogs ensures that they're not only seen by personal accounts and users, but professionals who are interested in your content and choose to comment on it, or in the best cases, share it. Social proof works here just as well as it does on Facebook and any other social media platform and getting a stamp of approval from a professional in the field who has credibility and authority might create exponential growth in post views and interaction with the products (Tuten & Solomon 2013, pp. 176-178). It will also emphasise the communicative aspects of social media activities and the interaction creates a more professional brand image for Natural Goods Company, which is something they thrive to be (Suomi 30 March 2018).

4.5 Content Calendar

Currently, Natural Goods Company create 2-3 social media posts on Facebook and Instagram per week (Suomi 30 March 2018). An effective social media presence requires consistency and posting too often rather than too rarely is often recommended. Should they wish to implement another channel or expand their current platforms to include, for example, video marketing, it would require an addition of effort in their social media content calendar.

Below is a table presenting an example schedule for the new adapted social media plan. It is designed with consistency and frequency in mind, taking advantage of all the social media channels that are recommendable for Natural Goods Company. Often companies that only publish content once or twice a week are buried under their more active competitors who are on their social media channels daily (Likealyzer 2018). This does not mean that you should spam your followers with overwhelming content. Showing that you are present is often enough to keep you in the minds of potential customers, and keeping the mix balanced and multileveled decreases the chances of followers thinking of your company posts as "spam".

Table 2. Content calendar example

	MON- DAY	TUES- DAY	WED- NES- DAY	THURS- DAY	FRI- DAY	SATUR- DAY	SUN- DAY
FACE- BOOK	Start of the week- blog post		Interac- tive com- mentary				A post
IN- STAGRAM	Picture post	Story post		Picture post or story post			Picture post for Monday motiva- tion
YOUTUBE				Beauty tutorial		A spa tuto- rial/prod- uct re- view	
LINKEDIN	Com- ment on news or articles		Share news or articles		Write a short post		

In this example, all different social media platforms are integrated to create a unified strategy that is consistent throughout the channels. Facebook and Instagram can always be integrated with one another, for example, as they both belong to Facebook. When publishing something of value on the company blog or webpage, publish a short post to Facebook according to the recommended guidelines and upload the picture on to Instagram with a dynamic, catchy text. If the post is strongly related to your field of work, LinkedIn is an excellent posting forum to attract the attention of both partners and customers who are inspired by the company vision.

Monday is designed with the start of the week and people's busy schedules and to-do-lists in mind. Writing a few encouraging words and maybe a short beauty trick on Facebook gives customers the sense you're looking after them and their health, and a supportive Instagram post will support this idea. On LinkedIn, it is a good idea to browse through the followed topics and companies and comment on things that have happened over the weekend or articles that touches the values or the products of the company. Tuesday is often the busiest day of the week and the most quiet one on social media when it comes to companies and personal account posts, so a simple Instagram story about a day in the office would suffice.

On Wednesday, Natural Goods Company could post a commentary. This could be anything, relating to an event or article in the industry, asking your customers opinions on the matter, or a “What do you like about this product?”- type of question. It can be integrated with LinkedIn, sharing the content in question or creating conversation there.

As the weekend draws nearer and people look for inspiration online, Natural Goods Company could publish a beauty tutorial that is related to either a calendar celebration or the season. It could be a Midsummer’s Night natural makeup routine, a summer party look tutorial or a product review on a new launch, depending on the content strategy. This can be promoted on Instagram with a picture post or Boomerang insert of the video blogger, as it is proven that using pictures of people is more effective and engaging than simple product pictures (Rouhiainen 2017b).

Friday could do with a simple comment or short post in LinkedIn on business processes or green value interest, or even sharing an article from a natural beauty blogger with added thoughts and a question for the customers to gain insight. Saturday is an excellent time to post beauty-related videos, as people are often either getting ready for events, are on day trips or resting at home, all which require specific beauty routines. Creating a beauty care tutorial with tricks on how to hide away marks from a party that stretched out late or simply nurturing your skin after a hard weeks’ work makes the customer feel pampered and cared for. Caretaking is one of the most basic instincts of the human nature, and making your customers feel special, wanted and welcome has never been more important in today’s competitive market. Supporting the release of the video on another platform gains more views.

On Sunday, people are resting and preparing for the following week. Writing a wholesome post about taking care of yourself on the blog and integrating it with Facebook and Instagram inspires and gains views. Motivation and rejuvenation are both common themes that are always popular at the end of the week. Including a link to a favourite yoga video or perhaps a recipe for a cleansing juice or smoothie would make a nice addition. These would of course be incorporated more closely on the blog to make sure the posts on the social media platforms are not too long.

The goal of this example week is to portray the different methods and integrations of the social media marketing platforms there are available for companies. Studies have shown the need for frequency and the techniques that create more engagement and interaction with the customer base and leads to more sales. Content creates added value and mental

images the company creates for customer last throughout the use of the product. The example days are not set in stone and are there only to present the frequency.

The evaluation and measurement of the effects of different social media marketing activities should be made into a consistent process. This way, Natural Goods Company can evaluate quickly on which type of pictures, texts and videos work and which ones require an update or other corrective measures. If all content is created in accordance with the Natural Goods Company content strategy and ensuring they comply with the green marketing guidelines, different types of techniques to reach out to new customers and followers can be tested and measured without running risk of damaging the company brand image or consistency of the core values. The development of social media crisis management could also be intertwined as a measured marketing process and using LinkedIn or other professional platforms to discover new ways to improve crisis management prepares the company for the more unfortunate incidents.

5 Conclusions

The Project Objective of this thesis was to create an effective social media marketing plan for Natural Goods Company and increase their customer engagement and interaction. The plan was based on green marketing, social media marketing and organic cosmetics marketing theories and included both the analysis and further development planning of the different social media platforms already in use and those that were available.

What became evident through the research and the analysis of the social media platforms was that videos are gaining momentum and that especially beauty related content is viewed more frequently. Natural Goods Company would highly benefit from either collaboration with a video blogger or from starting a video blog or other video content type of their own that would be promoted on the other social media platforms. This content could then be published on either YouTube, Instagram and Instagram Stories, or Facebook videos and integrated with other platforms such as LinkedIn. They could also consider short clips from office life and shorter, quaint comments on the industry and upcoming events. These are especially popular in Instagram Stories and create customer loyalty for the brand.

The matter of using people in their content and social media images was mentioned in several different scenarios and considering psychological factors, creating a spokesperson relationship or giving the voice to the followers and customers would make the content of the company more appealing. The analyses showed that there was also need for a more frequent posting pace, so that Natural Goods Company would not drown under the extensive competition for views on the social media platforms. This does not mean the brand identity of Natural Goods Company needs to become more aggressive, nor does it mean that they must push their agenda on their followers. Visibility comes from a mix of different techniques and methods, including public conversation with partners and communicating directly with customers and followers via commentary posts and other engaging content.

Along with rebooting their video marketing, Natural Goods Company would benefit from implementing communicative posts and activity online. Commentary posts, where the company asks for opinions and comments, communicating with partners and other organic cosmetics influencers and creating hands-down, relatable content that ignites emotion are all effective ways to captivate audience. As green values are deeply embedded in the Natural Goods Company vision, discussing issues and bringing the values into the content ensures their recognition. Sharing and discussing content as a company seems

like an unlikely marketing practice but is in fact more relatable to the customer than most campaigns and descriptive, long posts that do not necessarily evoke conversation.

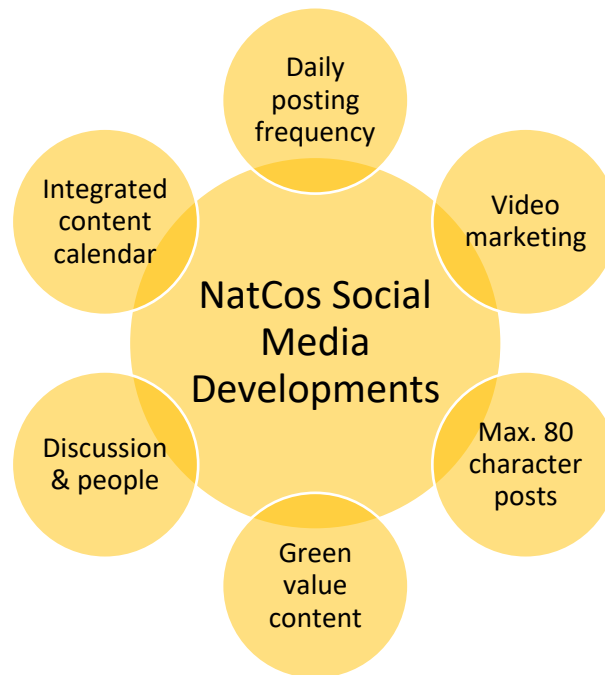


Figure 12. Natural Goods Company social media development suggestions

Natural Goods Company thrives not to just sell organic beauty products to their customers, but to provide them with a wholesome wellbeing experience (Suomi 30 March 2018). The organic beauty industry is about more than just perfect shades of blush, which makes it an interesting and versatile industry with great potential in the different platforms that are used to attract audience. The products are extensions of a greener lifestyle and the ideal of a better, less toxic world. Being relatively new, organic cosmetics marketing could expand its sphere from Facebook and Instagram and develop to be a pioneer, not just product, but also engagement-wise. Considering organic cosmetics, the current megatrends such as emphasis on health and wellbeing, the sustainability crisis and ensuring that business is meaningful and has purpose all support its agenda (Sitra 2016).

Social media is constantly developing towards new things, creating methods and models of marketing that were unimaginable a few years ago. Being in the lead, innovating and reinventing techniques turns companies into trendsetters that separate themselves from competitors. Automation and the digitalisation of data are already present in today's social media processes, and the megatrends suggest that companies may have to consider things like virtual reality and artificial intelligence in their marketing to succeed in the future (Sitra 2016).

This thesis was a remarkable process for me both professionally and personally. Keeping up with a compressed schedule and completing the project tasks was tough work but kept me interested throughout. The green marketing theory proved to be especially captivating and I extended my research beyond the requirements of the thesis and will continue working with the topics even after the thesis is done, simply due to personal interest. Using the theories of all the different theoretical framework categories and applying them to Natural Goods Company platforms was almost thrilling, as I often felt like the ideas supported each other and I was able to intertwine social media marketing and green marketing effectively. The theoretical section of the thesis provided me with such an extensive information load that it was at times difficult to organise and categorise the data to fit the scope and the objectives of the thesis. I found the final categorisation to be fitting to the needs of both the company and the academic requirements.

The support Haaga-Helia provided was sufficient and I was lucky to have a thesis advisor who shared my ideas and thoughts on the process. There was room for flexibility and creativity, and the ideas I presented were never undermined, but developed with constructive criticism. The process itself was well-structured and gave a good frame to develop the work. I was surprised by the amount of freedom given through the implementation and finalization process, since the planning process was very structured with conformed guidelines and exact deadlines. Fortunately, I was not deceived by the freedom and was able to follow the accelerated thesis process. The risk analysis that was created in the planning stage was somewhat accurate, and there was distinct tiredness at the middle stages of the thesis writing, but they were overcome with the suggested measures and taking sufficient breaks. Overall, I am satisfied with the work and hope it brings value to both the academia and the commissioning company.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The interview questions Natural Goods Company

The Interview Questions

Brand identity

Who is your ideal customer?

What kind of personality do you have?

What is your competition?

How are you different?

Green Marketing

What are the core values of Natural Goods Company?

How do green values show in your business processes? Is it just the products?

How does being part of Transmeri affect the practices, considering many of Transmeri's brands and companies are not green?

Do you possess sustainability certificates as a company?

Social Media Marketing

How are you engaging with your customers on social media? How do you interact?

How do you measure the results of social media?

How do you manage complaints and negative comments on social media?

Who is in charge of your social media marketing processes? What do they do and how often?

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Appendix 2. Likealyzer additional analysis

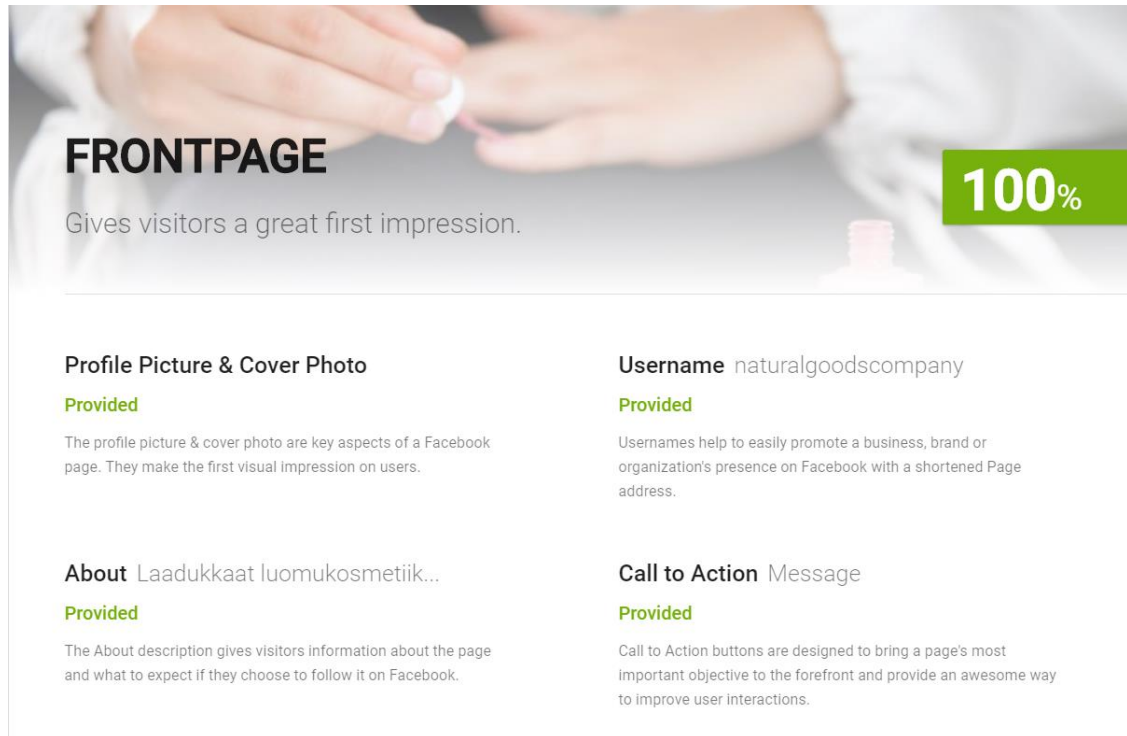


Figure 13. The Likealyzer analysis of the Natural Goods Company Facebook Frontpage

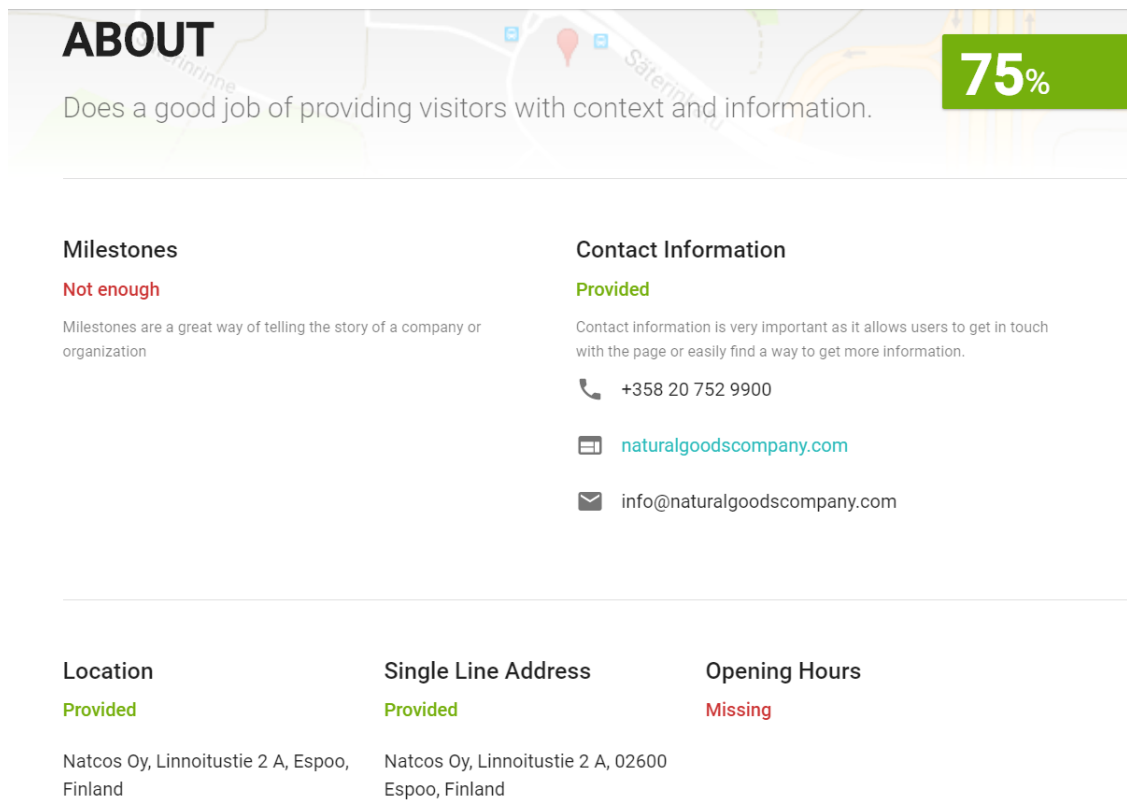


Figure 14. The Likealyzer analysis of Natural Goods Company information on Facebook

Appendix 3. The planned Gantt chart for the thesis process from March 2018.

