# Developing employee advocacy in event marketing communications
# Case: Live Nation Finland

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In the age of social media people have come to trust their friends and family as sources of information more than companies, celebrities or social influencers. On the other hand, company employees are trusted more than executives or corporate social accounts. Employee advocacy refers to promotion of a company's messages, products or content by their employees, nowadays increasingly in social media. Advocacy has become popular as an authentic way to push out stories about organizations and reach new audiences cost-effectively while at the same time increasing employee engagement.

This thesis aims to analyze what factors help to engage employees of one of Finland's leading event promoters, Live Nation Finland, to communicate about the company's events to their own networks in social media. The objective is to engage and integrate the employees to the marketing communications of events through employee advocacy. This thesis also aims to understand how the employees experience their role as communicators in social media.

Employee advocacy cannot happen authentically if the employees are not engaged enough to communicate. Therefore, the theoretical framework of this thesis focuses on the topics of employee advocacy, employee engagement and integrated marketing communications, including social media and content marketing.

The thesis study follows a participatory action research process. The data was collected through quantitative and qualitative methods, and analyzed qualitatively. Two surveys were conducted, one mapping the starting point in December 2017 and another to follow-up on development in July/August 2018. Workshops were used during spring 2018 as a method to involve and engage the employees in the development project. The follow-up survey's results were affirmed with an interview with the company's Marketing Director in August 2018. Internal data and observations also contributed to the research.

The findings indicate that almost all employees were interested in using their social media channels for the benefit of the company's events as employee advocates, though they had mixed experiences as communicators due to different skill sets and expectations. The research shows development in engaging the employees to communicate about the events already during the action research process and results in a framework which can be used to create more engagement and advocacy at Live Nation Finland. Employees' feeling of being valued and involved are in the focus of the suggested framework. This research can be utilized as a benchmark case for other organizations that wish to engage their employees to social media advocacy.

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# 1   Introduction

What is challenging for marketers these days, is that the most trusted media is not what it used to be. The influence of online search engines and social networking sites is almost double compared to for example newspapers and magazines. (Edelman Trust Barometer 2016, 19). Therefore, marketers need to find ways to utilize these new channels more efficiently.

On the other hand, consumers' trust to companies has significantly decreased nowadays. People trust their peers in social media more than corporate executives, online influencers or celebrities. However, employees are seen as more trusted sources of information than the CEOs. (Edelman Trust Barometer 2016, 46.) People see employees as individuals who must have inside information since they work for the company, but they are also seen as peers, therefore they are thought to be more reliable sources.

This thesis is a development project that focuses on engaging employees in the promotion of live entertainment events in social media. The focus is in employee advocacy and engagement and utilizing those to the benefit of creating more awareness for events. The case company is Live Nation Finland which is one of Finland's leading live entertainment promoters.

The competition in live entertainment industry is relatively hard as live events compete over the usage of consumers' free time. Live event promoter companies often offer many events per year, therefore they even compete with themselves. In Finland the competition in the live entertainment industry has increased in the past few years as big international companies have recently entered to or expanded in the Finnish market through takeovers.

On top of that, going to concerts and events is only one option among many where consumers can spend their money on their free time. Therefore, the appeal of going to live events and awareness of various shows needs to be communicated and marketed in the best possible way to increase sales.

However, marketing events requires financial investments and event promoters have limited budgets. Since the cost of marketing communications is not intended to rise, new, innovative and cost-effective ways of marketing need to be ideated and implemented. To keep its position as an important player in the industry, Live Nation Finland needs to market its events better to win the competition over customers.

## 1.1 Case company

The case company of the development project is Live Nation Finland Oy. The company is one of Finland's leading live event promoters which arranges around 300-600 events per year in Finland. The company is based in Helsinki. Live Nation Finland is part of the global Live Nation Entertainment which is the biggest live entertainment producer in the world.

Live Nation Finland produces and promotes events ranging from major outdoor concerts and festivals to arena events, concert hall performances and club shows. In bigger productions, for example in outdoor events, the company is often responsible for building entire concert venues to empty fields for one or two-day events. However, at smaller events, such as club shows, the venues pre-exist, and Live Nation Finland rents the venues for concert purposes whenever booking shows to them.

Live Nation Finland has brought to Finland major artists, such as U2, Madonna, Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen, AC/DC, Bon Jovi, Muse and Foo Fighters. In addition, the company operates as a marketing consultant for arena shows, such as Disney On Ice, Monster Jam and Cirque du Soleil. Live Nation Finland also supplies artists for Finnish clubs, concert halls and festivals, such as Ruisrock and Flow Festival.

In addition, Live Nation Finland represents several Finnish artists as a booking agency. The company books their shows to Finnish concert venues, events and festivals. Some artists are also booked internationally. Live Nation Finland also owns Live Nation Events Club Oy which is the biggest customer membership program in the field of live entertainment in the Nordics.

The yearly turnover of the company is around 40 million euro and it employs about 40 people working on an all-year-round basis, several temporary employees and hundreds of seasonal event workers. Because of summer 2018's company lay-offs the number of employees decreased from the beginning of this thesis process. During the time of the development process, the company was divided into concert and artist promotion, agency, finance and administration, marketing communication, artist management, partnerships and production departments. Since then, a new organization model has been adopted within the company that has merged different departments.

## 1.2   Objectives of the research & research questions

The objective of this thesis is to is to analyze what are the factors that help to engage Live Nation Finland's employees to communicate about the company's events to their own networks in social media. The aim is to get the employees to act as the company's brand and event ambassadors spreading awareness of both.

However, the focus is in the communication about the events the company arranges, not so much in the brand or image of the company. This is because the company's main offering are the events it arranges and most of the marketing is done for marketing these events. Fans buy tickets to the concert of their favourite artist and it does not necessarily matter to their purchasing decisions who arranges the show. The company's name is usually only mentioned as a place to purchase the tickets or get more information on the shows. Additionally, the employees of the company are most likely fans of at least some of the artists Live Nation Finland represents, therefore it can be useful to seize their innate music fandom in promoting the events.

The development project aims to engage the employees of the company to promoting the events in their own social media channels and that way integrate them to the marketing communication process of events. Therefore, the factors that drive engagement in employees in becoming employee advocates for the events need to be analyzed. However, before beginning the development project, the current state of how employees experience their role in communicating about the events needs to be identified and analyzed. The research questions in consecutive order are as follows:

1. "How do the employees of Live Nation Finland experience their role as communicators about events organized by the company in social media at the moment?"
2. "What are the factors that help to engage employees to communicate about the events in social media?"
3. "How can the employees be integrated into social media marketing communications of the events?"

To measure the development during the research period, the employees are asked about their social media communication both at the beginning and at the end of the development project.

## 1.3   Structure of the thesis

This chapter describes the structure of the thesis and aims to help understand the structure of the research. The thesis is divided into introduction chapter 1, theoretical framework chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, methodology chapter 6, research findings chapter 7 and conclusions chapter 8. Each chapter has sub-chapters.

In the introduction chapter the topic and the case company are introduced. Also, the research objectives and questions are explained, and the structure of the thesis is described. Theoretical framework of the research is studied thoroughly in the next chapters. The main concepts, employee advocacy and employee engagement, and integrated marketing communications including social media and content marketing, are researched from various angles. The theoretical framework is aligned with the research objectives and questions in chapter 5.

The methodology chapter explains in detail the empirical research. The research design and methods are described. The reliability and validity of the thesis are analyzed. The findings of the research are analyzed in chapter 7. The findings are categorized to themed sub-chapters that help in answering the research questions. Eventually the conclusions are discussed in chapter 8 in which also reflections on learning, limitations of the study and recommendations for further research are addressed.

The thesis process timeline is described in figure 1. The research process begun in Autumn 2017 with defining the problem, studying literature and meeting the executives of the case company. The research was started with a survey that was sent to the employees of the case company in December 2017. The results were analyzed in January 2018 and presented to the employees in February. Employee workshops for content strategy were designed and conducted also in January. Other employee workshops were designed and conducted in March and April 2018. The development in the case company was evaluated and analyzed in August 2018 after a follow-up survey and an expert interview with the case company's Marketing Director.

The research was conducted as a participative action research process and it follows a cyclical structure. The action research cycles are also included in the thesis timeline in figure 1 which helps understanding their alignment. However, the action research process is described in detail in methodology chapter 6.
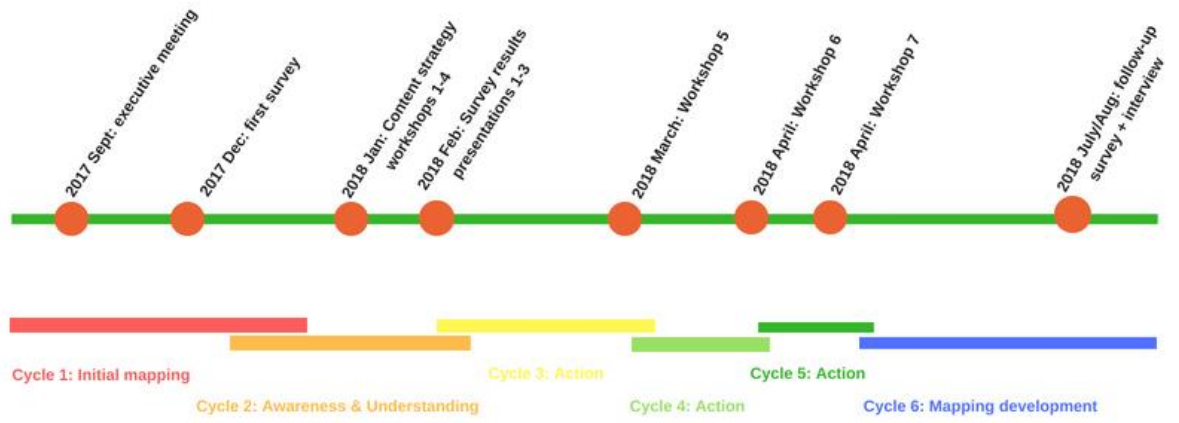
Figure 1. Thesis process timeline.

## 2 Employee advocacy

Employee advocacy is one of the key concepts used in this thesis. The following chapters explore the recent literature on the topic from both the company's and the employee's point of view. The most common challenges of employee advocacy are also discussed. Additionally, some of the key success factors are explored to find proposed solutions for the purposes of the commissioning company of this thesis, Live Nation Finland.

Employee advocacy refers to the promotion of a company's messages, products or content by their employees. Employees represent their workplace in all social surroundings, whether they are clearly aware of it or not. These days this representation happens increasingly online in social media networks. Employee advocacy has become increasingly popular because it is considered to be an authentic way to push out stories about organizations (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 1). It is the word-of-mouth marketing of the digital age (Bailey 2015).

Employee advocacy can also be defined as employees being the brand ambassadors for the company they work for (Smarp 2017). Advocacy is associated with employee pride and belief in what the organization does (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 395). It describes the exposure the employees can generate for companies using their own online assets, but also ensures that employees are proud and motivated enough to share content via their personal networks (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 125). Employees have wide networks of people in social media to whom they can share content that increases the company's reach and credibility all while building their own professional brand (Smarp 2017).

Despite its increasing popularity in brand marketing, employee advocacy is still a new concept in marketing communication vocabulary. Therefore, there is only little academic research on the concept. However, there are several key success factors for employee advocacy that have been identified. They are often presented by companies offering services for building employee advocacy programs and selling their own advocacy platforms. They can offer insights to the topic by introducing key concepts, benefits and challenges for companies that consider starting their own employee advocacy program. Those sources are used in this thesis to present best practices for employee advocacy.

One of the main reasons for the increasing popularity of employee advocacy is its relative cost-effectiveness and positive value for employee relations. If before companies felt they must limit their employees' social media use during work hours, today they have realized

how much potential the employee networks have in helping with distributing its messages to new audiences in an authentic way. (Smarp 2017.)

According to a study done by Hinge Research Institute and Social Media Today in 2016, almost a third of researched companies were actively considering their options for employee engagement on social media. 22 percent were doing pilot testing on different approaches and almost 17 percent had implemented a formal, comprehensive employee advocacy program. (Hinge Research Institute & Social Media Today 2016, 8.) I believe implementing a formal employee advocacy program will become even more wide-spread in businesses in future.

The reason for this is that employees can be a huge asset to companies in social media. Companies can invest in marketing co-operations with social influencers or celebrities, but they will never be as devoted to the company as the employees can be. Those co-operations also require big marketing budgets and are often only short-termed. Employees on the other hand already work for the company and are usually engaged enough to promote the company's products. They are also more trustworthy and authentic sources of information and are seen as experts since they have inside information about company products and strategies. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 1-6.) They promote their companies as both a social influencer and as a marketer (Griffin 2016).

Employee advocate can therefore be defined as an active expert in their field who participates in discussions with informed insight. Social media offers a fast and efficient communication channel for employees to connect with other people. Employee advocacy can be viewed as a mindset or a methodology that helps with spreading company messages authentically (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 6).

However, employee advocacy has also received some critique – mainly because the definition or purpose are not clear enough, and advocacy might be considered to be about getting employees to simply share content about the company they work for. In the long run mere content sharing would lose its authenticity as employees would just be spamming their networks with corporate content. The more involved in the process the employees are and the clearer the professional benefits are to them, the more sustainable the advocacy program will become. (Brain 2018.)

Sometimes the best employee advocates work in less significant or visible roles in the company as those employees are studied to be more trustworthy than the CEO (Edelman Trust Barometer 2016, 46). The most powerful influencers within the organization can be

surprising: it is not necessarily the sales or communications team. Additionally, only a handful of influencers may give the impression that everyone is talking about the company. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 587.)

The focus of this thesis is to develop usage of employee advocacy as a way of word-of-mouth marketing of Live Nation Finland's events in social media. Although employee advocacy is not limited to social media as people represent their company in real, person-to-person interactions every day, in this thesis the focus is in social media. Increased communication in various social networks is expected to raise awareness of the events and create so called fear-of-missing out of events among followers and friends. Advocacy is also expected to increase employee engagement through employee inclusion.

## 2.1 Benefits for the company

The main benefits of employee advocacy for a company are reach, authenticity and credibility and employee engagement. Reach refers to the concept of employees having large networks of friends, followers and other connections on social media. Employees might be able to reach more people than their employer's corporate social media pages combined, and the reach increases naturally by the amount of employees companies have. Employees also might use social media platforms that the company is not using, and that way reach new audiences. It is suggested that the number of employees times the size of their networks equals the potential reach. (Smarp 2017.) According to a study, increased visibility and brand recognition were the main two benefits that companies received from employee advocacy in social media (Hinge Research Intitute & Social Media Today 2016, 14).

However, it is not only about the mere amplification of company content through employees' social channels, but the creation of authentic and engaging content by the employees (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 57). The demand for authenticity in marketing is increasing. People tend to rely on their family, friends and peers over educated "elites" when searching for information to make decisions. The word-of-mouth communication employees generate has an essential role in online marketing, as it is perceived more credible and trustworthy compared to advertising and marketer-generated content. (Smarp 2017.)

According to 2016 Edelman Trust Barometer, the percentage of people who trust information from friends and family on social networking sites was 78 percent. On the other hand, the percentage of trusted information coming from a company CEO was only 49 percent. Employees of the company were trusted more: 55 percent trusted the information coming from employees in social media. (Edelman Trust Barometer 2016, 46.)

Additionally, many companies use well-known online personalities and celebrities in their social media marketing, but people trust them less than the employees – the trust percentages was 42 percent for online personalities and only 32 percent for celebrities. Therefore, the potential of employee credibility as a social influencer is high and increasing in importance. (Edelman Trust Barometer 2016, 46.)

Employee engagement is a major advantage of employee advocacy and the concept of engagement will be studied more thoroughly in chapter 3. People are increasingly seeking to find meanings in their work and expectations for a job have risen. People want to grow, learn and develop in their field of work. The more meaningful job, the greater the effort and commitment to the job. (Smarp 2017.)

It is believed that the willingness of employees to promote the company's brand messages correlates with levels of employee engagement and a positive work culture. Advocacy cannot happen if the employee does not feel genuinely engaged and respected, valued and empowered by their employer. It is said that more than half of employees rank communication and honesty as key factors that drive engagement. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 565.) However, this topic of engagement is discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

An employee advocacy program has the potential to increase employee engagement and commitment and develop internal collaboration between different departments. By empowering employees to act as brand ambassadors, employees can increase their authority to influence others and make an actual difference which can be beneficial to companies. (Smarp 2017.) Benefits for the employees are discussed further in chapter 2.2.

Employee advocacy is especially beneficial for marketing, communication, sales, HR and recruitment functions. As the organic reach in social media has decreased due to social platform companies requiring organizations to pay for visibility, marketers have faced challenges in reaching their social media audiences. Also, the growing popularity of ad blockers has been a challenge for marketers. There is a need for alternative ways to reach the audiences in social and general online media. (Smarp 2017.)

Employee advocacy is an efficient way to increase the company's reach and visibility. Even though it is a way to spread the company's messages, it is done by individuals and is therefore not considered as advertising and thus not blocked by ad blockers. The organic reach of employee shared content is also better than content posted by a company, as social media platforms prefer content that is posted by an individual. (Smarp 2017.)

Employee advocacy is also cost effective as it generates organic reach that does not require financial investments.

Some of the more easily measurable advantages of employee advocacy are increased inbound web traffic, better search engine rankings, increased content downloads and decreased marketing costs. Other benefits are improved brand loyalty, customers becoming advocates and improved customer service. (Hinge Research Institute & Social Media Today 2016, 14.)

From the sales point of view, buyers in many businesses have almost completely moved online to look for information about purchases. According to research, 75 percent of business-to-business buyers use social media for their purchase process. Buyers place great trust in their professional networks and 73 percent prefer to work with sales professionals that have been referred to them by someone they know. Over 65 percent consider their network of colleagues, friends and acquaintances as being important for reference checking. 55 percent of the buyers feel that social media improves their purchase decision so that they feel more confident that they have the information to make their decisions. Also, 54 percent of the buyers feel that social media helps them to feel more comfortable with the expertise and credibility of the vendor. (Jimenez & Schaub, 2014, 5-15.) Therefore, social media and peer-to-peer marketing play a key part also in business-to-business marketing these days.

Employee advocacy benefits the bottom line too. Some studies indicate that there is a twofold increase in company revenue growth with a mere 12 percent increase in brand advocacy. On top of that, leads from employee advocacy are seven times more likely to convert into sales. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 574.)

From HR and recruitment point of view, employee referrals are one of the most effective ways to capture best employees. The most potential candidates probably already exist in employees´ networks and through employee advocacy those people are most likely easier to reach. (Smarp 2017.) If the employees share the company's job postings to their networks, it increases their visibility and reach compared to only having them posted to recruitment websites. According to research, 43 percent of companies see an increase in the number of candidates they reach. On top of that, 50 percent of companies even find an increase in quality among candidates and a third of companies also see a decreased time to hire. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 574.) However, the focus in this thesis is in marketing communications of the events and employee engagement, but employee advocacy might benefit HR and recruitment functions as well.

From a communicational perspective employee advocacy is considered word-of-mouth marketing which is simply people expressing their opinions and creating conversations around the brand. As people trust most the recommendations coming from the people they know, rather than brands or companies, word-of-mouth raises the authenticity and trust of the messages as they are coming from actual people and not from faceless brands. (Smarp 2017.) Since humans are naturally social, social media works best from peer-to-peer. Therefore, it can be difficult for a company to reach the same level of human touch in their communications as their employees can. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 552-558.)

## 2.2 Benefits for the employee

There are also several benefits for employees to become advocates for their company related to their professional and personal growth. Firstly, employee advocacy enhances the employee's professional career. According to a study, becoming an employee advocate in social media has helped the career of almost 70 percent of employees who work in a company that has a formal employee advocacy program. (Hinge Research Institute & Social Media Today 2016, 16.)

One of the reasons for this is that the employee's professional image - their personal brand - is enhanced through advocacy. Also, their professional networks expand since the industry-related social media posts often engage and expand the number of their followers. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 941.) Especially millennials recognize that their professional involvement on social media can differentiate them from their peers (Hinge Research Institute & Social Media Today 2016, 18).

Employees might even become thought leaders in their field of expertise. They get recognition for their work, both internally from company colleagues and externally from other industry operators as the leading experts of their field. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 984.) In social media it is possible to start conversations with other industry experts, for example business partners, and thus increase professional visibility and establish expertise.

Through an employee advocacy program, employees usually get better access to company materials and engaging social media content (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 984). Those materials and contents might have previously been used by marketing, sales and communications departments and not distributed widely among the employees.

The possibilities to keep up with industry trends, attracting and developing new busi-
nesses and opportunities for professional partnerships are also beneficial to employees.
Through employee advocacy they can develop skills that are in high demand in their field
and that way differentiate from their peers. This can lead to more job opportunities or even
career paths that generate new revenue streams. Again, it is the millennials who believe
the most that employee advocacy benefits them to develop their skills, differentiate from
peers and to get access to more job opportunities. (Hinge Research Institute & Social Me-
dia Today 2016, 17.)

Besides advancing the career and expertise level of the employee, advocacy in social me-
dia helps employees to improve their work results in their current workplace too (Smarp
2017). As mentioned earlier, for example leads from employee advocacy are seven times
more likely to convert into sales (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 574) and that can help the
employees to meet their yearly goals quicker and with less effort.

## 2.3   Challenges

Some employee advocacy related challenges have been identified despite all the benefits.
Executive leaders of companies might feel reluctant to give their employees the voice em-
ployee advocacy programs require. Traditionally the company communications have been
handled by specific marketing, PR or communications departments with professional com-
municators. Only the designed company spokespersons, such as company leaders and
communication professionals, have been allowed to publicly speak on behalf of the com-
pany with pre-designed communicational messages. This has been the tradition also at
Live Nation Finland.

Therefore, there might be fear related to employee advocacy, both from the company's
and the employee's side. The company leadership might be afraid that the employees will
slip from the company's marketing messages and leak undisclosed information. After all,
even the slightest company-related mishaps might lead to a PR disaster in the age of so-
cial media. That might lead to loss of company reputation, customers and revenue. Also,
the employees might be unsure of what and when to post to social media or even that
they post something that upsets the company and has repercussions on them (Kunsman
2017).

Employee advocacy requires a company culture that values transparency, freedom and
trust as they are key for employee engagement. Employees must feel that they are trusted
to act as ambassadors and spokespeople for the company. (Smarp 2017.) However,

transparency has not been one of the key drivers in company strategies traditionally due to market competition and this has been the case at Live Nation as well.

Additionally, employees might not be engaged enough to become employee advocates. If so, it would be important to analyze the situation and find out how the company could improve employee engagement. However, employees should never be forced to advocacy since in order for an employee advocacy program to work it requires freedom and commitment (Smarp 2017).

Companies might also be wary of the costs of employee training. Most people today use social media for their personal relationships but to use it effectively for professional purposes requires at least some training and testing. Some studies even go on to say that it is dangerous to assume people can use social media in a business setting (Hinge Research Institute & Social Media Today 2016, 19).

Even though study indicates that social media training for employees has many benefits, not many companies do it. In a study, 72 percent of employees said that they have not received any type of training from their employer. Yet almost 60 percent of the studied employees indicated that additional training on social media engagement would have a major impact. (Hinge Research Institute & Social Media Today 2016, 19.) The cost and time-consuming nature of employee trainings might influence this.

One of the challenges of employee advocacy is that it does not necessarily have clear guidelines or commonly understood definitions. That usually happens if the guidelines are not correctly set (Smarp 2017), or if an employee advocacy project is merely launched without proper training and by ordering all employees to take part in it. That sort of approach would hinder the company from managing the program also in future. It would be better to convey the employees in playing a part in the success of the company and becoming thought leaders in their space (Kunsman 2017).

The personnel might also have negative attitudes that can be potential challenges for employee advocacy programs. They might see employee advocacy as extra work, or they might be concerned of communicating incorrectly and evoking negative attention, for example by spamming their friends and family with corporate content. However, a good, continuous training program would focus on establishing a foundation of both best-practices and standards for how employees should best engage in their social networks (Brain 2018).

## 2.4   Key success factors

Being a new concept, there is only little academic research on employee advocacy and what its key success factors are. However, there are many companies operating on a global scale providing consultation and employee advocacy platforms commercially. Many of these companies publish their own studies and key success factors on their websites and blogs for free. In this thesis the focus is in these identified key best practices for employee advocacy.

The key in planning an employee advocacy programme is aligning it with the company's overall objectives and strategies. It is important to analyze what goals the company wants to achieve with employee advocacy and set objectives for it. The goals should be realistic especially in the beginning of the advocacy program. The executive leadership should be in support of the employee advocacy program. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 2104.)

Companies can begin their employee advocacy programs on a small or a big scale. On a small scale, the companies can first identify a group of early adopters who become a pilot group for the program. This usually takes less training and effort, especially if the members of the pilot group are already motivated and social media savvy. On the downside, getting the pilot group's enthusiastic attitude to spread to the entire organization might take time and other employees feel left out and lose interest since they are not included. (Smarp 2017.)

Another approach is to plan and execute a large-scale launch right away. Thus, nobody would feel left out, and the positive effects of advocacy start showing on a wider scale. However, as with any big initiatives, starting big might be more time-consuming than starting with just a smaller group of advocates. In both approaches however, it is important to identify the key influencers within the organization – the ones who can motivate, engage and act as an example to others – and utilize their influence. (Smarp 2017.)

Employee-centric approach is considered important. The benefits of employee advocacy need to be clearly explained to employees in addition to emphasizing that it is optional. The focus should be on the employees' gains rather than what the company will benefit. Advocacy programs are most successful when participation is voluntary and driven by a genuine desire to engage. (Leitman 2016.)

Motivating the employees to participate is highly important to make the advocacy program a success. Employees need to know why they are asked to be brand advocates. Study

says that explaining the importance of social media was the biggest incentive for participation. Some other motivating tactics might include making the performance metrics visible to others, setting goals for metrics, or making social media engagement a friendly competition. However, monetary incentives, gift incentives or additional benefit incentives were considered not that important for motivation. (Hinge Research Institute & Social Media Today 2016, 23.) This correlates with views that employees love to share what makes them proud and what they are passionate about – not so much because their employer has asked them to do so but because as humans they innately want to do that (Leitman 2016).

Most people have some previous experience on using social media, but it does not mean they know how to use it in a way that benefits them and the company professionally. According to a survey, some of the key training topics employees would find most beneficial would be using social media to create engagement, training on specific social channels such as Twitter, Facebook or Linkedin and various content marketing strategies. Also, motivation trainings and how to generate and nurture leads on social media were requested by the employees in the study. (Hinge Research Institute & Social Media Today 2016, 21.)

Another important success factor is to set clear guidelines for employees on how to act as advocates. The company should have clear social media guidelines the employees can follow which protect the company reputation, avoids confusion about legal issues and drives employee engagement. It should be clear to all employees what is acceptable and what not, that way they can feel more confident to participate and share company related content. (Smarp 2017.)

Giving practical examples of good content that is appropriate to share and encouraging employees with positive feedback is recommended, rather than being too limiting or cautious (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 1774). Employees should be encouraged to post differently to social media than corporations and for example play with their personality because they are posting to their personal networks after all (Hecklinger 2015).

Companies should also analyze what kind of company related content it hopes the employees share on social media. Employees may struggle in finding and creating engaging content themselves, so it is recommended to have quality content examples easily available. Clear guidelines need to be in place with content creation and sharing as well. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 1709.) Content should be easily available as advocacy should require little time or effort, fit into existing routines and have a clear call to action (Leitman 2016).

Many of the employee advocacy consultancies offer their own advocacy platforms and there are plenty of options available, and more are coming to the market all the time. For example, companies like Hootsuite, Smarp, Dynamic Signal and EveryoneSocial offer their own platforms that help companies distribute shareable social media content to their employees. The platforms can provide easy access solutions for content and various performance measurement options. (Conner 2017; Smarp 2017; Leitman 2016; Hecklinger 2015.)

Measuring the results of employee advocacy is recommended. Factors to measure often include how many employees have been reached through the program, what is the engagement level of the advocates, how many posts they share on a given time-frame or how many clicks or website visits the posts shared by employees gained. (Smarp 2017.) An employee advocacy program can add value by collating metrics such as social connections, lead generation, traffic and top contributors (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 1715).

Recognizing participation and successes of advocates is also important. Feedback and reports on performance can inspire further participation. Publicly sharing metrics, such as levels of activity and interaction, can encourage the spread of participation. It is good to keep employees updated on how their social capital increases with advocacy while they grow their professional network and enhance their career. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 1723-1729.)

Finally, it is recommended to be flexible with the program. Employee advocates own their personal social media accounts, so they decide what to share and whether to share the content the company offers. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 1774.) The benefits of employee advocacy need to be communicated clearly and consistently but also remind people that advocacy is voluntary. Employees might be busy with their other work tasks, be in different phases in their career path or have different levels of social media skills, so remaining patient but consistent with internal communication is vital.

## 3   Employee engagement

Employee engagement is a concept that is often closely affiliated to employee advocacy, therefore it is a concept closely linked to this thesis. In this chapter the concept of employee engagement is explored thoroughly. The key drivers of employee engagement are discussed in a separate chapter, as are the benefits and challenges of the concept.

Employee advocates need to be engaged to want to speak for their company (Fradin 2014). In Fleck and Inceoglu's (2010, 33) model of engagement, advocacy is seen as one of the engagement-driven behaviours among with exerting effort and going the extra mile for the job. Engaged employees are more likely to act as positive advocates for the organization, for example by recommending it to potential customers as a trustworthy partner to do business with, or by recommending it to potential job applicants as a great place to work (Fleck & Inceoglu 2010, 39-40).

Employee engagement refers to "a workplace approach that results in the right conditions for all members of an organization to give their best each day, committed to their organization's values and goals, motivated to play part in organizational success with an enhanced sense of their own well-being". It is based on trust, integrity, two-way commitment and communication between the organization and its members. (Engage for Success 2016.)

Research indicates that employee engagement increases business success and performance, productivity and well-being for both the organization and the individual (Engage for Success 2016). The positive organizational outcomes of engagement are studied to be profit, low staff turnover and customer satisfaction. On the other hand, personal gains for the employees are job satisfaction and career progression. (Fleck & Inceoglu 2010, 33.)

However, both academics and practitioners have slightly differing definitions of employee engagement. For example, engagement research pioneer William Kahn describes that "engaged people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances" (Kahn 1990, 694). Robinson, Perryman & Hayday (2004) refer to employee engagement as a positive attitude the employee has towards the company he or she works for and its values. Engaged employees understand the bigger picture of the business and have a willingness to go the extra mile to improve their performance within their job for the benefit of the organization. (Robinson, Perryman & Hayday 2004, 9.)

Engaged employees are motivated to contribute to organizational success and they have an enhanced sense of their own well-being (Engage for Success 2016). Engaged employees are respectful and helpful towards other employees and interested in keeping up with the current developments in their field of work (Robinson et al 2004, ix). On the other hand, "Engage for Success", the movement supported by UK Government, states that they rather support organizations to have their own definition of employee engagement which fits their own purposes (Claxton 2014, 150).

The UK-based Institute of Employment Studies has identified a list of characteristics of what an engaged employee has. They are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of an engaged employee. (Adapted from Robinson et al 2004, 6.)

| **An engaged employee:** | Looks for, and is given opportunities to improve organizational performance |
| --- | --- |
| | Is positive about their work and organization |
| | Believes in the organization |
| | Works actively to better things |
| | Treats others with respect and helps colleagues to perform more effectively |
| | Can be relied upon, and goes beyond the requirements of their work |
| | Sees the bigger picture, even at personal cost |
| | Identifies with the organization |
| | Keeps up-to-date with development in his/her field |

Employee engagement overlaps to some degree with concepts such as work commitment, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviour but has become a research field of its own in the past decades (Robinson et al 2004, 6). An engaged employee can be referred to being "affectively committed" to their work when they have a strong feeling of job satisfaction but there are other components of work commitment, such as affiliative, associative, moral and structural commitment, that can help create employee engagement but are not direct causes for it. The level of how satisfied the employee is to their work – their job satisfaction – is an important area of work commitment, however it is not being viewed as its equivalent. (Robinson et al 2004, 39-40.) Engagement on the other hand is one step beyond commitment (Robinson et al 2004, 23).

Also, organizational citizenship behaviour - the conduct of the organizational members in a helping, loyal, compliant, initiative and self-developing manner - has factors in common with employee engagement. However, organizational citizenship behaviour research is more interested in the character and behaviour of the individual employee. The key components of employee engagement research are both the organization and the employee. (Robinson et al 2004, 8.)

Motivated and engaged employees are thought to be happier and prouder of their work. They want to keep working for the company rather than taking their knowledge and experience to a competitor. One of the ways to increase motivation and engagement among employees is to let them participate in corporate decision-making and development projects (Robinson et al 2004, xi). The key drivers of employee engagement are discussed further in chapter 3.1.

## 3.1 Drivers of employee engagement

The objective of this research is to analyze what are the factors that help increase employee engagement in communicating about Live Nation Finland's events in social media. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the most common drivers of employee engagement to find which ones could be applied at Live Nation Finland.

The key driver of employee engagement is how valued and involved the employee feels. The more valued the employee senses to be for the company and the more involved he or she is with the employer are the strongest drivers for employee engagement. According to research, the more involved the employees are to decision-making, the more engaged they are. This applies also to the extent of how employees feel able to express their ideas and feelings, and managers listening to their views, valuing their contributions and acting upon good suggestions. (Robinson et al 2004, 21-22.)

Kahn (2010) emphasizes that to be engaged people need to feel that they matter and that their contribution has a meaning to the organization. Additionally, they need to feel engagement is overall possible in the given context and that the leaders of the organization truly welcome their engagement and understand what to do with it. (Kahn 2010, 24-29.)

Employees are more engaged when they feel that their voices are being heard and their ideas are welcome, when their organizational roles are clear and match what they wish to become, when they have good relationships with their colleagues and when there is a clear relation between the effort they put in and the outcome. Additionally, they are more

engaged when they are rewarded for their engagement in a way that feels relevant to them – to some it may be more extrinsic rewards, such as money, status or visibility, and to some more intrinsic, such as their feeling of the job and valuation of others. (Kahn 2010, 22-24.)

Employees also need to feel that engagement is possible in the organization. They are more engaged when they feel able to solve problems in a safe environment, for example when they can address difficult situations openly, constructively and together as a group. When there are healthy and productive rules of engagement in place, they can feel connectedness towards their fellow employees. They also need to feel that they are accepted in their different roles, categories and identities and do not need to hide their "true self" in the workplace. (Kahn 2010, 25-27.)

Leadership has a major role in driving engagement. Leaders need to understand the balance between when employees need leadership support and when they need to distance themselves and let the employees figure out the issues on their own. Employees are also more engaged when leaders drive collaboration between departments, business units or employee groups, rather than for example valuing competition. The leadership needs to also be interested in expanding the knowledge through common learning. Employees need to feel validated and respected by their leaders to feel engaged. (Kahn 2010, 27-29.)

The areas that are essential in driving employee engagement are good quality line management, two-way, open communication, effective co-operation within the organization, a focus on employee development, commitment to employee well-being, clear and accessible HR policies and practices, fairness in pay and benefits and a harmonious working environment. Managers should care about their employees and keep them informed, treat them fairly, encourage them, be interested in their career advancement and support employee training and development opportunities. (Robinson et al 2004, 24.)

On the other hand, good internal communication is a key component for employee engagement and it needs to be two-way, not just from top down. Engagement also increases when employees co-operate with the different departments and functions within the organization. The organization needs to have a long-term view of the value of their employees which can be enhanced with trainings and giving them more opportunities for getting ahead in the organization. (Robinson et al 2004, 24.)

The objective of this research is to integrate the Live Nation Finland employees to the social media marketing communications of the company and through this involvement increase employee engagement. The aim is to make employees feel they are part of communicating about the company's events despite their regular work tasks and their position in the company.

One challenge is that the employees in the commissioning company have not been systematically utilized in communicating about the events earlier. Despite the leadership's efforts in making the organization more integrative and strengthening internal communication, the employees are separated to different departments and do not necessarily see or understand what other employees do. Marketing events is still seen as something the marketing department does together with promoters rather than something all personnel could help in. People working outside of marketing department have not been much encouraged to participate in promoting events in their social media channels.

Companies can improve their employees' sense of value and involvement and eventually their engagement level in many ways. The most common ways are various employee trainings, flexible and open communication, performance appraisal, family friendliness, health and safety policies and co-operation between employees and management. (Robinson et al 2004, 23.) Employee engagement can be measured, and it can vary from poor to great. If employees' well-being is nurtured, engagement levels increase. (Engage for Success 2016.)

Having a purpose that goes beyond the benefit of the company's immediate service or product can be one of the most valuable assets a company can have. The brand purpose can inspire and engage employees to become brand ambassadors, therefore the company needs to lead its employees with a common purpose, vision, mission and a set of values. It is crucial to target emotional commitment, not just rational understanding. Plain training and communicating is not enough, employees need to be immersed and engaged through emotional connection. (WARC Best Practice 2017.)

At Live Nation this emotional commitment could be achieved with a connection to the events the company arranges and the artists it represents. Most employees are fans of at least some artists and this emotional connection could be utilized in engaging them to communicate about the artists' events in social media. It would increase the employees' sense of purpose while at the same time it would have benefit the events' visibility in social media.

## 3.2    Benefits and challenges of employee engagement

There are many benefits for having an engaged workforce, both communal and individual. Companies with an engaged workforce do have a competitive advantage but there are also some challenges that have been identified.

Employee engagement leads to improved business outcomes, such as earnings and the bottom line, but vice versa, also improved results interestingly increase employee engagement. Engaged employees feel pride for their work and their workplace and are natural advocates for the organization as they go the extra mile in their performance. (Engage for Success 2016.)

Employee engagement can also help companies be more innovative with their products. The engaged employees are willing to use their knowledge and ideas to improve company products and services, therefore innovations may increase. Productivity can also increase with the level of engagement as loyal employees have less sick leaves, accidents, conflicts and grievances. Engaged employees are committed and loyal to their employer which leads to smaller employee retention. (Engage for Success 2016.)

However, engagement levels can vary, and research indicates that this links with various personal and job characteristics and with experiences at work. Engagement levels may decline as employees get older. On the other hand, engagement levels seem to increase on employees over 60 years of age. Also, managers and professional experts seem to be more engaged than their colleagues in supporting roles even though the latter group may show more loyalty towards their employer. (Robinson et al 2004, x.)

Some research indicates that engagement levels may also decline as the length of employment increases and this can be a challenge for companies. In addition, employees who have experienced a work-related accident or harassment are less engaged. On the other hand, employees who have received formal performance appraisal within the past year, are significantly more engaged than their colleagues. (Robinson et al 2004, xi.)

Employee engagement cannot be forced: engagement cannot be reached by a mechanistic approach in which the employer tries to push and manipulate its employees' commitment and feelings. Employees usually see through such efforts and it can backfire and generate cynicism and other negative attitudes. (Engage for Success 2016.)

Employees constantly look for signals whether their engagement matters, how safe they feel in the organization and whether the management truly welcomes and knows what to do with their engagement. Leaders can be reluctant to reward excellence or on the other hand, to hold others accountable for poor performance, which can weaken the possibility of engagement. Such injustice can create cynicism among employees which can be a long-term challenge to overcome. (Kahn 2010, 24, 29.)

## 4 Integrated marketing communication

In this research employee advocacy is tightly linked to marketing communications of Live Nation Finland's events. The study is based on the concept of integrated marketing communications (IMC) which refers to coordination and integration of all marketing communication tools, avenues, and sources in a company into a seamless program designed to maximize the impact on stakeholders, such as customers. IMC covers all the company's business-to-business, market channel, customer-focused and internal communications. (Clow & Baack 2016, 25.)

Integrated marketing communication approach has been adopted by companies since the 1980s to better coordinate their brand communication. It is believed that integration leading to consistency makes marketing communication more efficient and that way more financially accountable. (Moriarty, Mitchell & Wells 2015, 48.)

Integrated marketing communication is the practice of unifying all brand communication messages together with the messages from the marketing mix decisions (Moriarty et al 2015, 71). Marketing mix refers to the blend of four main marketing activities: designing, pricing, distributing, and communicating about the product – it is often referred also as the four Ps of marketing: product (design and performance), place (distributing channels), pricing strategies and its promotion (communicational decisions) (Moriarty et al 2015, 65). In this thesis the focus is in promotional part of the marketing mix, the communicational decisions.

IMC helps send a consistent message promoting the brand's strategy. Every message is focused and works together, therefore special synergy is created. Brand communication begins with a brand strategy that is presented in the marketing plan. Specific marketing communication areas, such as advertising, PR, direct marketing, sales promotion, brand assets and personal selling, are the tools of marketing communication in an IMC program. Marketing communication is at the centre of brand communication. Therefore, the effectiveness of brand communication depends on how well all the pieces are integrated. (Moriarty et al 2015, 71.) However, the key in IMC is its communication focus – it is not just advertising, or just marketing communication, it is everything the brand says of does. IMC is something that involves the whole organization. (Moriarty et al 2015, 471.)

At Live Nation Finland the IMC campaigns usually focus on marketing the events arranged by the company or the artist brands, not the company brand itself. This is because fans primarily buy tickets to events of their favourite artists: the promoter of the event is

not necessarily relevant when making the decision to purchase a ticket. The brand of Live Nation Finland is mentioned only on smaller focus in the campaigns, usually only as the place to purchase the tickets and find out more information about the event. Because the company's focus in its IMC is in the events it produces or the artists it represents, also the focus of this thesis is in the marketing communications of events – not so much in the brand or image of Live Nation Finland.

Since the 80's the concept of IMC has evolved greatly, especially because the world has moved to a digital and social media era. These days the brand messages are not only dependent on planned and managed marketing communication programs with targeted messages and one-way communication. The new interactive world brings companies new opportunities but also threats with consumers sharing their own messages about the brands in social media. Companies face a challenge in keeping up with the evolving technology and consumers as they find out more ways to listen, respond, and engage their customers in conversation. (Moriarty et al 2015, 48.)

The new set of advertising and promotional venues combined with a multitude of companies pushing their messages to potential customers makes the task challenging. However, there are many opportunities for innovative companies, for example in the areas of social media and content marketing which both have become increasingly popular in companies' IMC programs. (Clow & Baack 2016, 22.)

According to the global Edelman Trust Barometer study, the level of people´s trust in companies has decreased. People trust information coming from their friends and family on social networking sites more than company CEOs and employees. However, employees are seen as more trusted sources of information than CEOs or online influencers or celebrities who are paid to advertise. (Edelman Trust Barometer 2016, 46.) Also, the influence of online search engines, such as Google, and social networking sites, such as Facebook and Instagram, is almost double compared to so called older influencers, such as newspapers and magazines (Edelman Trust Barometer 2016, 19). This is a challenge at Live Nation Finland too.

## 4.1 Social media and content marketing

Two of the more specific areas of marketing Live Nation Finland's events in this thesis are social media marketing and content marketing. They are both key strategies for the company's event marketing and linked to employee advocacy, even though the company uses also other IMC strategies in marketing its events. In this research the concept of content marketing overlaps with employee advocacy in social media as most of the marketing

communications done for the Live Nation Finland events by the employees is based on various social media content.

Most common reasons for companies to do social media marketing are to engage customers or fans, enhance brand image, increase brand exposure, improve search rankings and increase sales. Other reasons are creating an avenue for customer interaction, gathering customer data, increasing traffic to the company website, generating leads and developing a loyal group of customers. (Clow & Baack 2016, 278-279.) Live Nation Finland does not only benefit from social media marketing because of better brand exposure but since the company's website is also an e-commerce site for event tickets, the marketing directly increases ticket sales.

Social media can drive traffic to a company's website. Usually social posts have a website URL linked to them which helps potential customers in social platforms find the company's own site. That way social media can help enhance the brand's image. Social media can also boost organic search rankings with search engines, such as Google. It can also help gain various social media data on potential customers. Companies commonly search and listen what their customers say about them on social media. They also use the customer data received from social media sites to improve their marketing tactics and targeting. (Clow & Baack 2016, 279-280.)

The ultimate goals of any marketing program are developing brand loyalty and increasing sales, this applies also to social media marketing. However, in social media platforms the traditional way of pushing ads and for example sales discounts does not work as people can become annoyed by them. They are on the social platforms to be social with their friends, family or followers, not to be targets of pushy marketing. Therefore, marketers should rather aim to engage the consumers with their brand in social media. Increasing the sales should be viewed more like a by-product of social media marketing. (Clow & Baack 2016, 281.) The utilization of employee advocacy at Live Nation Finland is aimed to face this challenge of pushy social media marketing to a more authentic and credible direction.

Providing useful, funny or otherwise interesting content is the key way of getting consumers to become engaged with the brand. This kind of content seeding includes providing incentives for consumers to share content about a brand. The incentive can be information, novelty, uniqueness or anything that engages consumers with the brand and motivates them to share it with other. The incentive can be financial, for example a concert ticket

competition, or something else, such as a funny meme photo of popular song lyrics. (Clow & Baack 2016, 283.)

The approach of content marketing has developed to describe this kind of continuous marketing strategy providing useful or otherwise interesting content to consumers. The Content Marketing Institute defines content marketing as follows:

> Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distrib-uting valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience – and ultimately, to drive profitable customer action. (Content Marketing Institute 2017.)

The core idea is providing genuinely relevant and useful content to potential customers to help them solve their issues, instead of pitching products or services the traditional way. According to research, majority of companies have adopted content marketing as one of their marketing strategies and the amount is still growing. Mainly this is so because of the benefits content marketing brings to companies: increased sales, cost savings and better and more loyal customers. (Content Marketing Institute 2017.)

Content Marketing Institute goes on to state that content marketing should be part of any company's marketing process, not something separate. Quality content is part of all forms of marketing: social media marketing, search engine optimization, PR and inbound mar-keting. (Content Marketing Institute 2017.) Content marketing has become a key strategy for marketing events at Live Nation Finland as well, even though traditional campaign marketing has not been forgotten.

Providing valuable quality content is essential in content marketing – it is the kind of con-tent that people would seek out and want to consume. Otherwise it could be almost any form of advertising or marketing. There are several ways to do create valuable content, but a few of the most common ones are providing useful infographics, videos, other visu-als such as photos, well-written blog texts, podcasts and guides or books that try to offer solutions to the customer's issues. (Steimle 2014; Patel 2015.)

Due to the popularity of social media, companies are increasingly interested in using it to enhance their online strategy (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 134). However, the decrease of organic reach through company social media channels has led to the need of increase of paid social marketing. Social media platforms prefer content published by real people ra-ther than companies and aim to get the companies to pay for visibility.  The introduction of

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ad blockers has also made it harder for companies to advertise online as they are not able to reach potential customers as they have blocked ads. (Smarp 2017.)

At Live Nation Finland this has led to a situation where the same event marketing budgets need to now also suffice for growing costs of social media marketing campaigns and content marketing. New best practises for cost-effective marketing are warmly welcomed. The objective of this development project is to analyze ways to engage employees to market the events as employee advocates. The new operating framework could help the marketing communication of events by creating more awareness for them and ultimately reducing paid marketing, however these topics are not studied in this thesis and would require further research.

The influence of peer-driven media - peers influencing purchasing decisions and recommending companies - is also on the rise these days. Peers, such as family and friends, and company employees, are studied to be more credible than the company leaders. (Edelman Trust Barometer 2016, 19-21.) Also, human-to-human (H2H) marketing is considered increasingly important as people are looking to connect with their purchasing decisions and want to buy from trusted people and companies (Vajre 2018).

Increasing the employee´s word-of-mouth marketing, for example through referrals and creating conversations, is thought to increase the authenticity of communication and trust as it comes from real people instead of brands or companies. People trust more the referrals from the people they know than from brands. (Smarp 2017.) Integrating the employees to the marketing communications of Live Nation Finland's events in social media is aimed to boost employee engagement and awareness of the events. Eventually the employee advocacy can lead to better trust to the company and its events, though that issue is not the focus in this thesis.

# 5 Summarizing the literature

The presented theoretical frameworks regarding employee advocacy and engagement, integrated marketing communication and social media and content marketing contribute directly to this development project and research questions. The connections are presented in figure 2.
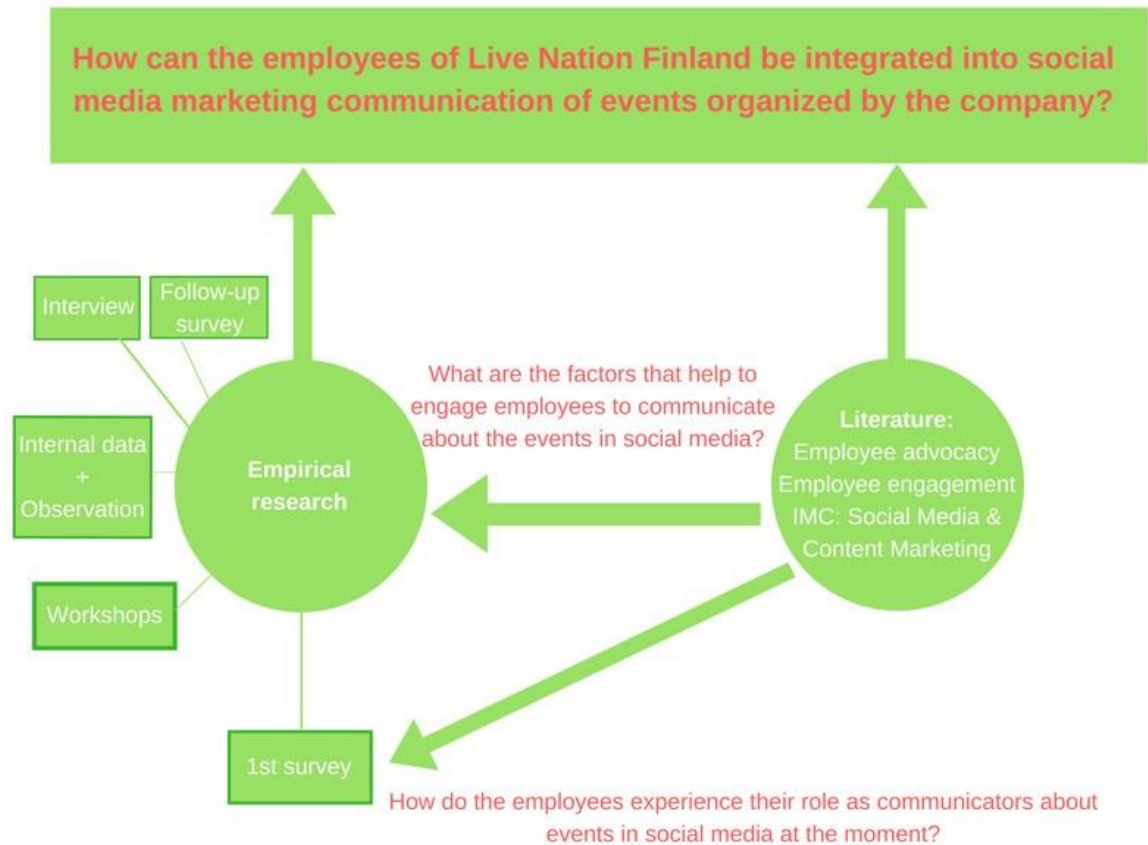


Figure 2. The theoretical framework's contribution to the research.

The literary review has been the basis for this research already in the planning phase. The central concepts of employee engagement and advocacy as well as IMC have been considered when planning the research structure and implementation. Additionally, they have supported and guided the research along the process. The special focus has been in employee advocacy and engagement literature but IMC literature, especially related to social media and content marketing, has provided valuable contribution to this thesis.

The questions for the first survey mapping the current situation of employee advocacy were designed based on the literature. The objective was to determine how employees experience their role as communicators about events in social media. The first survey's results affected the selection of the research methodology and guided the process but at

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the same time the literature provided indispensable guidance. Due to the cyclical nature of action research the literature guided the process in several phases and the outcomes of each cycle could be evaluated and even modified based on the literature.

One of the key issues in the literature that guided the research was that neither employee engagement nor employee advocacy can be forced. They must emerge naturally as a by-product of certain positive actions and behaviours, especially from the executive side. (Engage For Success 2016; Leitman 2016; Smarp 2017.) The optional nature of participating in the action research process was emphasized for the employees at Live Nation Finland but the positive outcomes were highlighted.

Additionally, the key drivers for engagement – for example valuing and involving the employees – (Robinson et al 2004, 22) served as key takeaways from the literature. Main contributions to the research question on what are the factors that help to engage employees to communicate about events in social media came from literature, even though some emphasis was also put in the first survey results.

As the focus of the thesis was to develop the role of the employees as communicators about the company's events and engage them to become employee advocates, the key success factors of advocacy were closely linked to the project. The objective was to engage more employees to participate in communicating about the events to their social networks, therefore key drivers for engagement needed to be studied thoroughly. New ways of working together for the benefit of the events' visibility in social media were needed and the literature provided suitable suggestions on how to achieve the objectives.

For example, the main concepts of social media and content marketing theory helped to create a specific content marketing strategy for the company. Additionally, social media guidelines were set for the employees based on the employee advocacy and engagement literature, as well as social media and content marketing best practices.

Based on the empirical research results and the literature, a framework is proposed which could be used as a guideline at Live Nation for creating engagement among employees to communicate about the company's events in social media. The framework is presented in chapter 7.3 and it proposes a new way to integrate employees to the marketing communication of events.

# 6  Conducting the research: methodology and data

In this chapter the research approach and selected methodology - participatory action research - are explained. In addition, the data collection through employee surveys, workshops, internal data and interview is described as well as the methods used for data analysis. Also, the participatory action research process is portrayed to present the thesis process. Reliability and validity of the research are also discussed.

## 6.1  Participatory action research approach

Action research is a form of enquiry that enables practitioners everywhere to investigate and evaluate their work. It is done by practitioners themselves rather than professional researcher as the action researchers are insider researchers. They see themselves as part of the situation they are investigating and question the current situation and methods of improvement. If they notice something to improve, they try a solution and evaluate the results. Their accounts of practice show how they are trying to improve their own learning and influence the learning of others. (McNiff & Whitehead 2006, 7-8.)

One form of action research is participatory action research (PAR). PAR is defined by the collaborative relationship between the researcher and those being researched. Specific research methods utilized vary but often are flexible and qualitative. They include traditional observations, participant observation and interviews.  PAR seeks to intentionally change the community, parties or policies that are the focus of the inquiry. Therefore, it is differentiated from many "objective" methods of research that only seek to describe, understand and explain the situation rather than change it. PAR is especially useful when involving practitioners directly in social research serves the purpose of bringing skills and experience to facilitate change. (Hannington & Martin 2012, 126.)

The process of participatory action research is dynamic and cyclical in its sequence of planning, taking action, observing, evaluating (including self-evaluation), and critical reflection prior to planning the next cycle (Hannington & Martin 2012, 126). A so-called action-reflection cycle is typical for action research. It is used to describe the cyclical process of 'observe – reflect – act – evaluate – modify – move in new directions' that is quintessential for action research. The process is on-going since as soon as a provisional point of where things are satisfactory is reached, it raises new questions and it is time to begin again. (McNiff & Whitehead 2006, 9.)

The participatory action research was chosen as the method to conduct this thesis because I was working in the company where development was needed at the time of the

research. The objective was to facilitate development in how the employees of Live Nation Finland are integrated into the marketing communications of events in social media. My role as the researcher was to analyse the current situation, plan and implement development actions that engage employees to becoming advocates for the company's events and evaluate the results. Participation method supports employee engagement and action research supports my own learning in leading change and improving the company´s internal and external communications.

## 6.2 Methodological approaches

The chosen research method in this thesis is pragmatism. Pragmatism refers to research where the research question is at the core of the study and attention is in the practical consequences. Pragmatism recognises that there are many ways of interpreting the world and undertaking research. No single point of view can ever give the entire picture and that there may be multiple realities. Pragmatism prefers methods that enable credible, well-founded, reliable and relevant data to be collected that advance the research. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, 143-144.)

Ontology refers to the nature of reality of the researcher. In pragmatism reality is seen as complex flux of processes, experiences and practices that are practical consequences of ideas. Epistemology refers to what constitutes acceptable knowledge for the researcher. Because in pragmatism the focus is on problems and problem solving, it considers practical meaning of knowledge in specific contexts important, and acceptable knowledge is such that enables successful action. (Saunders et al 2016, 137.)

The research approach used in this study is abductive. Abductive approach refers to research where data is collected to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and explain patterns. Its aim is to generate a new or modify an existing theory which is then tested through additional data collection. Suddaby (in Saunders et al 2016, 148) explains abductive approach as moving back and forth combining both inductive and deductive methods – deduction refers to moving from theory to data and induction from data to theory.

## 6.3 Collecting and analysing the data

In this research the data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Part of the data was collected quantitatively from two employee surveys and qualitatively from several workshops and presentations built around the research topic. In addition, internal data, such as employee guidelines, were utilized as well as discussions and meetings with colleagues. Since during the time of the research I worked for the company in

marketing and communications, I also used my own observations and experiences as internal data for the research. In addition, one expert interview was done to confirm the development project's findings. Data collection methods are presented in table 2.

Table 2. Data collection methods.

| Method | Objective | Participants | Time frame |
|---|---|---|---|
| Surveys | Initial mapping + Mapping development | All permanent employees | December 2017 + July/August 2018 |
| Workshops | - Creating understanding & awareness<br>- Engaging employees<br>- Creating content strategy<br>- Training employees to become advocates | Marketing team / All employees | January to April 2018 |
| Internal data & observation | Initial mapping + mapping development | Researcher | September 2017 to August 2018 |
| Interview | Confirm development | Researcher + Marketing director | August 2018 |

The research was launched with an online survey to determine the current situation in the company. The results were used to design the objectives and initial content of the workshops and trainings. The results were also presented to employees to gain early involvement to the development project. Workshops and presentations were arranged to create awareness and understanding of employee advocacy in social media and to engage them to participate. In addition, discussions with employees and my own learning of employee advocacy and engagement throughout the action research process guided the assessment and the planning of the next steps. At the end of the action research process, I conducted a follow-up online survey to determine possible development. In addition, I interviewed the company's Marketing Director to confirm the follow-up survey's results.

Even though the data was collected with both qualitative and quantitative methods, the data was analyzed with only qualitative methods. Qualitative analysis suited this research will since its goal is to increase understanding of the phenomenon (Kananen 2011, 130).

### 6.3.1 Surveys

I conducted two surveys during the action research process. Both were online surveys done using Webropol to ensure the anonymity of the respondents and to gather a large amount of data quickly. The first survey was conducted in December 2017 and used to understand the current level of employee advocacy in social media and identify key development areas. A follow-up survey was conducted in July/August 2018 and used to assess what changes had occurred after development efforts.

Survey method can be applied when the objective is to collect data from a large group of people. It usually gives a general view of the respondents' opinions about the topic. However, it is not the best method to get profound information. (Drake & Salmi 2018.) For this research survey method suited well since the goal was to get general information on the level of employee advocacy and engagement at Live Nation Finland.

The survey questionnaires are presented in appendices 1 and 5. The first survey in December 2017 was done as initial mapping of the current level of employee advocacy and how much the employees were communicating of Live Nation Finland's events in social media. The survey was sent to 40 permanent employees, excluding freelancers but including trainees. The response rate was satisfactory: 23 employees out of 40 responded (57,5 %). The survey was done in Finnish as it is the mainly used language in the company. However, two of the English-speaking employees were not therefore able to answer the survey and that decreased the response rate.

The first survey in December included a set of questions regarding internal communication which were researched to determine the employees' preferences. However, those questions were used as background information only and not used in the analysis of this thesis research. Both surveys also included questions about the background of the respondents, such as department they work in, their age and number of years they have worked for the company. This information was not used in this thesis analysis either as it was aimed only for the company's internal purposes.

The follow-up survey was done at the end of the action research cycles in July/August to determine if the situation had developed and if the employees were communicating more

in social media about the company's events. The survey was sent to 36 permanent employees in July 2018, again excluding freelancing employees. The number of employees was smaller this time because the two English-speaking employees were excluded, and the company did not have trainees at this time of the year. The response rate was higher than in the first survey: 26 employees out of 36 responded (72,2 %).

However, the follow-up survey was conducted in the summertime which is generally a busy season in live entertainment industry due to outdoor events and on the other hand the holidays. On top of that, the company had recently announced co-operation negotiations and a need for employee re-organization. Therefore, the answers were most likely affected by the busy schedules, holidays and employees' fears of losing their job.

### 6.3.2 Workshops

Having employees included in development projects is an important driver for engagement. Therefore, the company employees were involved from the beginning of the action research project to increase the level of their engagement and improving results. They were invited to presentations and workshops where the topic was introduced and developed together. Some of the workshops were conducted in smaller groups and others were aimed for all employees. The conducted workshops, their objectives, participants and time frame are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Conducted workshops.

| Workshop | Objective | Participants | Time frame |
|---|---|---|---|
| Survey results presentations 1,2 & 3 | Creating understanding of current situation | All employees who were able to participate | February 2018 |
| Workshops 1 & 2 | Creating content strategy | Marketing team without director | January 2018 |
| Workshop 3 | Presenting and modifying content strategy | Marketing team with marketing director | February 2018 |
| Workshop 4 | Aligning content strategy to overall marketing strategy | Marketing team without marketing director | February 2018 |
| Workshop 5 | Training employees to create interesting content to social media | All employees who were able to participate | March 2018 |
| Workshop 6 | Training employees how to act as company representative in social media | All employees who were able to participate | April 2018 |
| Workshop 7 | Training employees the basics of Instagram | All employees who were able to participate and felt it was relevant | April 2018 |

My role in the workshops was to act as a facilitator and a researcher. Facilitation means "to make easy" and facilitator is someone who "helps to bring about an outcome (for example learning, productivity, or communication) by providing indirect or unobtrusive assistance, guidance, or supervision" (Maxey & O'Connor 2013, xvii, 2). The objective was to involve the employees in the development process through workshop facilitation.

The results of each workshop also affected the objectives and content of the next workshop; therefore development plans were regularly modified. Detailed memos with my observations were made from each workshop session listing the number of attendees, facilitation method, overall notes, special wishes from attendees and possible adjustments to development plans. An example of a memo is presented in appendix 2.

The results of the first survey were presented in three employee meetings since not all employees could attend at the same time. The objective of these presentations was to create awareness understanding of the survey results, the development projects goals and next steps, for example workshops. The presentations were not as inclusive of employees as the other workshops since they were used more as introduction to the research topic of employee advocacy.

Workshops 1, 2, 3 and 4 were facilitated for the marketing team in a series of brainstorming and ideating workshops. Brainstorming sessions are usually organized to support information gathering and the goal is to get as many ideas as possible. They start with defining the problem and then everyone tries to ideate as many ideas as possible to support the problem solving. After the ideating phase the ideas are organized into a larger group, after which the group decides which ideas are to be implemented and which not. (Drake & Salmi 2018.)

The objective for workshops 1, 2, 3 & 4 was to design a content marketing strategy for the company and plan the next steps of the action research process and the contents of the employee workshops. The content marketing strategy was created as the basis for employee advocacy program. The strategy guided and influenced both the marketing team and employees in the workshops and aligned the advocacy program to the company's marketing and overall strategy.

Workshops 5, 6 & 7 were facilitated for all employees, however all of them could not attend all workshops. The objective of workshop 5 was training employees how to create interesting and valuable content to social media and the need for it came from the first survey results. Also, the content of workshop 6 was designed based on the first survey results and the goal was to compose the basic guidelines for how the employees can and cannot act in social media as representatives of the company. It was conducted in a brainstorming session which supported participation and ideation. There already were some basic guidelines in principle and this brainstorming workshop brought people together to compose them in written and ideate some new ones together.

Workshop 7 was facilitated as a training on how to use Instagram. The need for this workshop came from the employees who participated in workshops 5 and 6. Further workshops for Twitter and Linkedin were planned but due to time restrictions they were postponed to autumn 2018.

### 6.3.3   Internal data and observation

In addition to surveys, workshops and one interview, I utilized internal data and my own observations for this research. The internal data included insights on the company culture I had gained while working for the company, general ways of doing things and most suitable options for action based on these insights. This data emerged in discussions with my colleagues in different phases of the action research cycles. I discussed for example with my colleagues in marketing department, including the Marketing Director, on several occasions. These discussions were separate from the additional interview I conducted with the Marketing Director. I also had a meeting with the CEO and the chairman of the board in September 2017 in which I gained internal data regarding what the guidelines for this research were.

During the action research process, I also reflected the gained data and compared it to my own experiences from the company and its employees. On top of the specific workshop and presentation situations, I made observations from the day-to-day operations of employees in social media. However, detailed research on the employees' social media usage was not conducted.

In observation method the researcher uses their senses to examine people in natural settings or situations. Observation aims to get information on how people truly act and whether they act in the same way as they for example have answered in a survey. Observation offers an in-depth and rich understanding of a phenomenon, situation or setting, as well as the behaviour of the researched individuals in that setting. It is important to systematically take notes of the observations. (Drake & Salmi 2018.) I gathered my observations from each workshop and presentation to detailed memos. A sample of a memo can be found from appendix 2.

### 6.3.4   Interview

Interviews are often used to collect data when the research needs to find out why something is the way it is (Drake & Salmi 2018). The main objective of interview is to also find out about possible problems and development areas (Paul, Cadle & Yeates 2014, 74).

To conclude the action research process and to gain affirmation for the findings, I interviewed the company's Marketing Director via email in August 2018. The interview was a structured interview in which the questions were in a specific order (Drake & Salmi 2018).

The objective of this interview was to get confirmation for the findings from an inside expert instead of only relying on employees' feelings about their social media use and communicating about Live Nation Finland's events. The interview questions can be found from appendix 6.

### 6.3.5  Analysing the data

The survey results were used to understand the current situation of employee advocacy in the company – the first survey mapped the "before" situation and the follow-up survey the "after". Both survey results were analysed by grouping the different survey topics and examining differences and similarities in the answers. The follow-up survey results were also compared to the first survey results to identify development. Open answers were grouped as additional viewpoints and feedback.

The data from the presentations and workshops was initially analysed already during the situations by observing the reactions and views of the participants. The analysis continued with writing a detailed memo of each presentation and workshop and reflectively assessing the outcomes by grouping the reactions, comments and requests from the participants. The assessment resulted in further modifications of upcoming workshops. The results of workshops 1, 2, 3 & 4 were analysed also in discussions between the marketing team and the Marketing Director. Workshops 5, 6 & 7 were analysed in discussions between the marketing team (including the Marketing Director) and the employees who participated in the workshops.

The data collected from the surveys, workshops and the interview were reflected to internal data. Similarities and differences of data were examined through reflection.

### 6.4  Action research process

I had made initial planning for the research context during spring 2017, but the action research began in September 2017 with defining the problem, research scope and objectives. After studying literature on employee advocacy and employee engagement I presented the research to Live Nation Finland's leadership and began working on the implementation. The first employee survey in December 2017 acted as the starting point for the research.

The first survey's results were discussed in January and February 2018 internally within the marketing department in workshops 1, 2, 3 & 4 and in February with all employees in survey results presentations 1, 2 & 3. The goal for these steps was to create awareness

and understanding in a participatory manner for employee advocacy in social media. Also, the company's content marketing strategy was created in a participatory manner and aligned with overall marketing strategy since it was considered to be the basis for the employee advocacy program. Next steps for workshops 5, 6 & 7 and the final survey were planned but left quite inexact as I wanted to give space for employee participation and further modifications.

The action research cycles are presented in figure 3. In addition to initial mapping and creating awareness and understanding the figure includes the action cycle with participatory employee workshops conducted during spring 2018 and a cycle for mapping the development during the summer. The action research process had two parallel objectives: to build an employee advocacy program to help with marketing communications of Live Nation Finland's events and to increase employee engagement to the program through participation.

Figure 3. Action research cycles.

### 6.4.1 Cycle 1: Initial mapping

In **cycle 1**, the scope of the research was defined through internal discussions and observations. Academic literature was utilized to understand the principles of employee advocacy and employee engagement. To gain understanding on the current level of employee advocacy and engagement in the company, it was important to study the employee's views. This was done via an online survey. The survey's goal was to do initial mapping and gain understanding on the research question: "How do the employees experience their role as communicators about events in social media at the moment?"

The survey results were then analysed and evaluated. They were first presented to and discussed with the marketing team which had already begun to plan a content marketing strategy for the company in alignment with the plans for the employee advocacy program.

### 6.4.2  Cycle 2: Creating awareness and understanding

The **cycle 2** begun with diagnosing the needs and objectives for the company's content strategy and employee advocacy workshops based on the survey results. The objective in cycle 2 was to create awareness and understanding of the current state of employee advocacy among the employees and introduce the next steps first to the marketing department and then to all employees. A series of content strategy workshops were conducted for the marketing department both with and without the Marketing Director's involvement. Later the survey results were introduced to all employees.

I facilitated the first content marketing strategy workshop to the marketing team at the end of January without the company's Marketing Director and started with short analysis of the survey results. Involving the marketing team to the process from the beginning was important because of the benefits of participation to employee engagement. The principles of brainstorming where all group members silently write down ideas and later present them to the whole group were introduced – the goal here again was to increase the marketing team's engagement. The brainstorming session resulted in such creative content ideas and vivid discussion that there was a need to continue the discussions the following week in another workshop. In the second workshop the content ideas were developed further and put into a calendar and into a set of guidelines which would be easy to present later to the Marketing Director.

In the third content marketing strategy workshop the marketing team was joined by the Marketing Director who was pleased with the ideas. Following her feedback further development plans were made in order to align the content strategy to the overall marketing strategy of the company. This resulted in the fourth content marketing strategy workshop in which the new content strategy was visualized into a wall poster aligning the ideas tightly to the strategic marketing objectives of the company. This wall poster can be found from appendix 3 with generic areas of strategic focus.

However, by the assigning company's request the concrete implementation plans of the content marketing strategy have been left out of appendix 3 for confidentiality reasons. These implementation plans included confidential tactics to increase website traffic and social media growth, decrease media spend, increase email newsletter subscribers and open rates and strengthen the company's position within the community as a whole and within the live entertainment industry. The fourth workshop resulted in clarification and internalization of the new content marketing strategy by the marketing team. After each workshop I wrote a detailed memo where results and feedback were analysed.

In addition to the content marketing workshops, the survey results were put in a presentable format and presented to the company personnel during cycle 2. Since not all employees could attend the first survey results presentation, additional two presentations were conducted to increase awareness among all employees. The attendance of the first presentation was 25 people, of the second 20 people and of the third 10 people. Because of curiosity and interest, some of the employees came to listen to the results twice, therefore the number of attendees was bigger than the company's employee count. Additionally, some of the marketing team members attended more than one survey results presentation.

In all the survey results presentations the overall atmosphere was interested and positive towards development. I made a detailed memo of each presentation to record employee reactions and feedback. The memos were later utilized when planning and modifying the next steps in the process. The results and next steps were discussed internally in the marketing department and with employees who attended the presentations as the goal was to involve and engage the employees to the process from the beginning. After all the presentations the survey result presentation materials were sent to all employees via email to increase internal communication and further interest.

### 6.4.3   Cycles 3, 4 & 5: Action

**Cycles 3, 4 and 5** of the action research process included workshops arranged for all employees. They are presented as separate cycles as the workshops had different themes and were differently facilitated. Each workshop also affected the planning and implementing of the next workshop as employee reactions were observed and employee feedback was used to modify the next steps. The objective of these cycles was to train employees to act as employee advocates for the company and engage them to adopt the best practices. For the employees of the company these cycles were the most visible and engaging phases of the participative action research process.

In **cycle 3** firstly the objectives for workshop 5 were defined based on the survey results and employee feedback. The goal for the workshop was to train employees to create interesting social media content and engage them to start utilizing the learnings. Therefore, the facilitation of the workshop was as inclusive as possible. The whole marketing department was involved in the planning of the workshop. In addition, the employees were invited to the workshop by utilizing the company's private Facebook group in order to increase engagement. Additionally, they were invited to present their ideas and examples of

interesting social media content by posting them to a special event created under the Facebook group before the actual workshop in attempt to get them engaged already in advance.

Also, the facilitation method of workshop 5 emphasized employee participation as all members of the marketing team presented each their own section in the workshop presentation. The presentation, which was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, was designed to engage the employees as much as possible, such as using examples of previous successful employee social posts from Live Nation Finland's events and encouraging sensible experimentation. Additionally, the goal was to give positive feedback and inspiration to all employees which was hoped to engage them more in future.

In addition, the employees were encouraged to write down all their ideas during the workshop and put them on a whiteboard after which the ideas were discussed together. The workshop gave valuable feedback from employees regarding further facilitation and content of upcoming workshops. For example, it was requested that concrete social media guidelines would be spelled out in written which influenced modifications to later workshops. Additionally, the employees gave feedback that they would like to receive practical training on how to use different social media channels which was considered when planning for later workshops. The atmosphere of workshop 5 was communicative and relaxed which supported the employee engagement goals of the event. I observed development, even enthusiasm in the way people related to the topic. Also, the feedback received from employees after the workshop was very positive.

Workshop 5 was attended by 25 employees. After the workshop the utilized presentation materials and information about the next steps were sent via email to all employees to increase internal communication. I made a memo of the workshop and evaluated its outcomes in additional discussions with the marketing team. I also noticed that my own learning on facilitating a workshop for a larger group grew but I also found that I needed more facilitation training.

**Cycle 4** begun with diagnosing the memo and the feedback from workshop 5 and studying literature on facilitating bigger workshops. I decided to improve the facilitation methods in attempt to let the workshop group to find the results more on their own with less of my participation. I planned a brainstorming session which aimed in a clear set of social media guidelines for the employees. This workshop 6 was aimed to let the employees invent the guidelines themselves so that it would increase their commitment and engagement.

Workshop 6 was conducted on 6th of April in different parts: first the employees were asked to silently write down as many ideas and thoughts possible for 10 minutes on what employees of Live Nation Finland should do in social media. After that, they were invited to discuss their ideas in small groups for another 10 minutes. After the group discussions, each group were invited to present their ideas to the whole group and I paraphrased them in written to a whiteboard where everyone could see them. Then the same phases of brainstorming were conducted to gather the group's thoughts on what the employees should not do in social media. This resulted in a clear set of guidelines for the employees which I then compiled into an internal company-specific list of Dos & Don'ts of Social Media which was sent to all employees via email.

The sample of the list can be found from appendix 4. By the assigning company's request, the practical implementations of the guidelines have been left out from appendix 4 for confidentiality reasons. The Dos list included confidential tactics and goals for employees to communicate about events in social media before, during and after the shows. The Don'ts list included confidential guidelines on how not to communicate in social media. Additionally, I wrote a memo of my observations from the workshop to evaluate the outcomes.

The value in workshop 6 was that the previously unwritten and even unconscious guidelines for representing Live Nation Finland in social media as an employee were spelled out and discussed together. This increased understanding and awareness on the utilization of social media for the benefit of the company and the employees. The attendees of the workshop were able to hear new viewpoints from different people as group discussions were conducted in groups mixing people from different departments. Additionally, new content marketing ideas surfaced which the marketing team could add to their content production plans. People enjoyed interacting and co-operating with other employees and that their views were listened to.

However, the attendance number of workshop 6 was slightly disappointing as it was quite low – only 14 people attended the workshop. I understood that even with careful planning, facilitation techniques and engagement efforts, the employees are busy with their work and I need to be patient and creative in engaging people to attend the workshops. However, I understand that employees might have to finish their other work before they can attend development workshops. In future the timings of the workshops might need to be considered more carefully. Also, it would be beneficial to gather feedback more systematically to improve future workshops and benefit my own learning. However, I observed that the people who attended the workshop were enthusiastic and interested in developing employee advocacy which confirmed the results of the first survey.

**Cycle 5** of the action research process begun again with evaluating and diagnosing feedback from the previous workshops and the survey results. Based on the diagnosis, planning for workshop 7 was conducted by two members of the marketing team in addition to myself. The plan was to make the workshop as practical and engaging as possible, therefore it was decided that the facilitation would be done by the Digital Marketing Manager who knows most about the training topic – Basics of Instagram. The topic of the training was requested in previous workshops, due to the growing increase in Instagram users.

The workshop 7 was arranged on 20th of April and it was attended by 14 employees. The number of attendees was quite average since some of the non-attending employees explained that they already knew the basics of Instagram and would therefore be interested in a more advanced session. As the Digital Marketing Manager facilitated the workshop, my role was just to observe the employee reactions and feedback. The facilitation method was interactive, practical and employee-focused, and questions and feedback were reacted to thoroughly and instantly since the number of attendees was small.

The value of the workshop was that it trained the employees how to use Instagram better and reminded them of how easy and valuable it is to be more active in social media. The training was practical, and the atmosphere was relaxed and enthusiastic. However, the employees were asked if they wanted to same kind of training for Twitter and Linkedin but the reaction was doubtful. Based on this feedback, a decision was made to postpone the plans for arranging Twitter and Linkedin trainings until autumn and thus out of this action research process. I wrote a memo from workshop 7 which assisted in the evaluation of development.

### 6.4.4   Cycle 6: Mapping development

The **cycle 6** of the action research process focused on mapping the development of employee advocacy and engagement in Live Nation Finland. Feedback and results from previous workshops, presentations, the first survey and internal discussions were analysed thoroughly. I also studied new articles related to employee advocacy to enhance my own understanding.

A follow-up survey and its questions were planned during cycle 6. The survey was aimed to research development among employees regarding employee advocacy and their engagement. The objective was to analyse whether the employee workshops, trainings and internal discussions had increased Live Nation Finland's employees' involvement and engagement in communicating about the company's events in social media.

The survey was conducted in July and August of 2018. Due to it being the summer holiday season, it was anticipated that the number of employees replying to the survey would be smaller. Therefore, an interview with the Marketing Director of the company was considered important in order to confirm the survey results and give an additional viewpoint on the action research process. The interview was conducted in August 2018.

The survey and interview results were analysed and evaluated in the final phase of the action research process in August. The results were compared with the first survey results to understand the development among employees. A diagnosis of the entire action research process was conducted during cycle 6 and the validity and reliability of the study was analysed.

Involving Live Nation Finland's employees to the marketing communication of the company's events continues in the company. Engaging the employees to use employee advocacy approaches and analysing the effect on engagement and participation is part of the internal employee strategy.

## 6.5    Reliability and validity of the study

The consistency and repeatability of the measurement and research results, reliability, is a concept that is extremely important to consider in academic research. Research is considered reliable if it can be repeated and the results will be the same which can be difficult in social sciences where the object of research is an individual or a group of individuals. People do not always act in the most systematic and rational way, and this randomness is usually a rule than an exception. (Kananen 2011, 66.)

Another important concept, validity of the research, refers to whether the research answers the questions it is intended to answer. The research is valid if the right things have been studied. (Kananen 2011, 66-67.)

Reliability and validity issues must be taken into consideration during the whole research process: in the planning phase, when collecting the data and when analysing the results (Kananen 2011, 66). However, in qualitative research, due to its nature, there are no absolute truths concerning reliability and validity (Kananen 2011, 69).

Reliability and validity issues have been considered in all phases of this action research process. I have done my best to be unbiased and objective, even though at the time of the research I worked in the researched company. I have aimed to describe the research

structure and process in detail to increase reliability. All the steps are explained in a clear and transparent manner.

Validity is achieved by thorough data analysis which aims to connect the theoretical framework to the empirical data. Additionally, I have aimed to use appropriate measures in all phases of the research process.

# 7 Findings

In this chapter the discussion focuses on the findings of the research. The findings are categorized to themed sub-chapters that help in answering the research questions.

The first chapter discusses the initial mapping of employee advocacy and engagement at Live Nation Finland. It focuses on analysing the first survey results of December 2017 that performed as a starting point for the study and guided the action research process.

The second chapter analyses findings regarding employee engagement. The chapter focuses on the research question regarding which factors engage the employees to communicate about the company's events.

The third chapter collects findings from both employee advocacy and employee engagement and presents a framework on how employees could be integrated to the social media marketing communication of Live Nation Finland's events. Finally, the chapter summarizes the findings in relation to the research questions in a separate chapter.

## 7.1 First survey findings: Level of employee advocacy and engagement

An employee survey was conducted to understand the current level of employee advocacy and engagement in relation to Live Nation Finland's events in December 2017. The survey unveiled both strengths and weaknesses that were used as a starting point for development.

The survey was sent to 40 Live Nation Finland employees. The response rate to the survey was 57,5 percent which was a fairly good number. The survey questions were only in Finnish which resulted in that the two English-speaking employees of the company could not respond which lowered the response rate.

The main social media platforms the respondents were registered to were Facebook and Instagram but also Linkedin, Snapchat, Twitter and YouTube received mentions. However, it turned out that the respondents did not produce content to all social media channels they were registered to: most respondents were producing content mainly only to Facebook and Instagram, as figure 4 presents. In this survey production of content refers to for example doing status updates and posts, sharing of links, pictures and videos and tags to events.

12. I have an account in these social media channels

| | |
|---|---|
| Facebook | 95,65% |
| Instagram | 86,96% |
| Twitter | 56,52% |
| Linkedin | 65,22% |
| YouTube | 39,13% |
| Snapchat | 60,87% |

15. I produce content to these social media channels

| | |
|---|---|
| Facebook | 95,65% |
| Instagram | 69,57% |
| Twitter | 4,35% |
| Linkedin | 17,39% |
| YouTube | 4,35% |
| Snapchat | 26,09% |
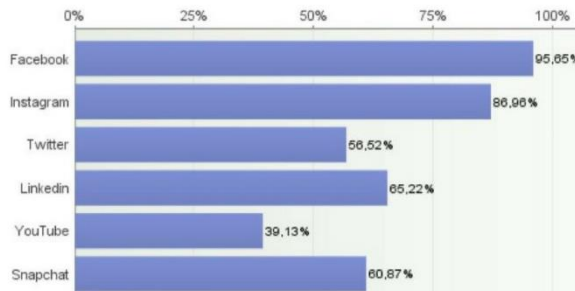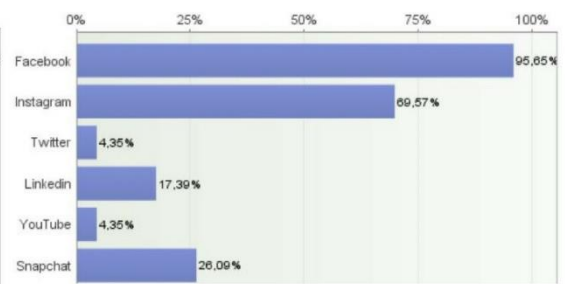
Figure 4. Social media channels and content production.

The reason why the respondents do not produce much content to Twitter, YouTube and Linkedin can refer to the general nature of these social channels: people might register to the platforms but only use them passively, for example just following certain interesting topics or for viewing purposes. Only about 4 percent of the respondents stated that they did not have any social media accounts. Almost none of the respondents had blogs or vlogs of their own.

As figure 5 represents, about 48 percent of respondents stated that they communicate about Live Nation Finland's events either daily or weekly in social media. This is quite a high number and portrays both activity in social media and engagement in communicating about the company's events. This indicates that the starting level of employee advocacy in the company is relatively high.

16. I communicate about Live Nation Finland's events in social media



Daily: 4 %  
Not at all: 4 %  
Weekly: 43 %  
Rarely: 48 %
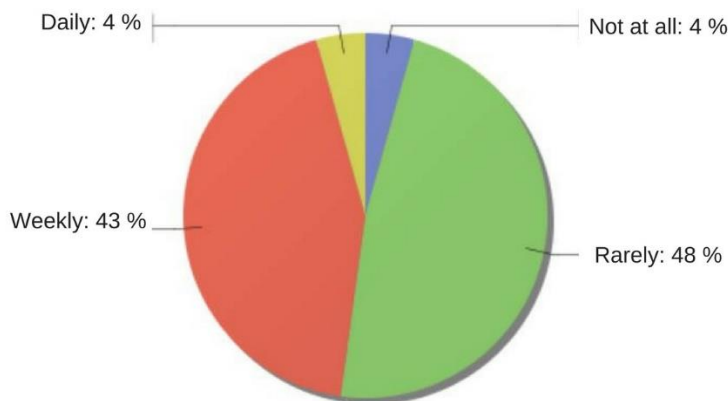
Figure 5. Communicating about Live Nation Finland's events in social media.

The most natural social media channels for communicating among the employees who communicate about the company's events on a daily or weekly basis were Facebook and Instagram. 73 percent of the respondents used Facebook for communication on a weekly basis and up to 18 percent daily. Instagram was used a little less than Facebook: 55 percent of the respondents who communicated about the company's events on a daily or weekly basis used Instagram to communicate about events on a weekly basis but up to 45 percent used Instagram for it only rarely or not at all. Among these active event communicators Twitter, Linkedin, YouTube and Snapchat were used rarely or not at all.

Up to 52 percent of respondents stated that they communicate either rarely or not at all about Live Nation Finland's events in social media. This supports the view that traditionally most of the marketing communications in social media has been conducted by the marketing department, and this approach is relatively widely adopted in the company. The employees have not been encouraged to communicate about the company's events previously.

Among the respondents who were passive in communicating about the company's events in social media, one of the main reasons for this is that they are afraid of spamming their friends. Up to 92 percent agreed or somewhat agreed with this statement. Additionally, up to 75 percent agreed or somewhat agreed that they do not want to communicate about events that they are not interested in. 67 percent agreed or somewhat agreed that there are too many events to communicate about. Interestingly only 8 percent of the passive communicators felt that they only want to use social media for private purposes and 67 percent somewhat agreed with this. Therefore, using social media to communicate about the company's events is not entirely out of the question for these respondents.

Before conducting the survey, my initial assumption was that the employees do not communicate about the company's events in social media because they do not have enough information about them. I assumed that one of the main reasons would be that internal communication about the events is not sufficient for people to communicate.

However, the survey indicated this was not the case. 91 percent of the passive communicators disagreed or somewhat disagreed that they would need more information about events to communicate about them. Also, 91 percent disagreed or somewhat disagreed that they are afraid of their friends asking them additional information about events that they do not have, therefore that was not a reason for their passivity. They were also not

afraid to raise negative discussions in social media as up to 92 percent disagreed or somewhat disagreed with that statement in relation to their communication about events.

Some statements surveying the reasons why the passive communicators do not communicate divided opinions. About a half felt that they do not communicate about events because they do not produce much content to social media anyway. Also, about 50 percent said that they would like to receive training from the company on how to communicate about the events in social media. 66 percent disagreed or somewhat disagreed that they were afraid of their friends asking for tickets to events, yet 33 percent felt they somewhat agreed with that statement so for some respondents it was a valid worry.

However, it was interesting that 59 percent disagreed or somewhat disagreed that they did not feel communicating about events in social media was part of their job. Other reasons among the open answers were that employees do not want to show off with their work, they do not have enough time even though they understand the importance, or it depends on the shows and sometimes they communicate more and sometimes less.

The most favourable ways of sharing content in social media were also surveyed. Out of all the respondents, the most favourable ways of sharing content were clicking oneself as an attendee to a Facebook event created by the company, sharing the Facebook event or the company's Facebook post to one's friends, tagging oneself to the Facebook event or the venue on the event date, sharing photos or videos from the event in Facebook or Instagram. Additionally, sharing photos and videos from events on Instagram divided the respondents: 39 percent did that often or almost always, yet 39 percent did that rarely or not at all. 22 percent shared their event photos or videos on Instagram occasionally.

One of the least favourable ways of sharing content in social media was doing a Facebook Live from events: 91 percent of respondents did not do it at all which is understandable since at the time of the survey, it was a new feature in Facebook. Tweeting either one's own tweets or re-tweeting Live Nation Finland's tweets was also very low which correlates with the previous finding that even though some employees have a Twitter account, they do not produce content there.

Sharing Live Nation Finland's posts in Instagram was also not popular, assumingly because it requires a separate regram app. Instagram Stories was also a fairly new feature at the time of conducting the survey and it was not widely adopted: 52 percent stated that they share photos or videos from events either not at all or rarely and 13 percent do it oc-

casionally. However, 35 percent of respondents were early adopters who posted to Instagram Stories almost always or often. Snapchat was not among the favourable ways of sharing content: 79 percent shared content from events rarely or not at all which describes the overall unpopularity of the platform among respondents.

However, the survey indicated that there was enthusiasm among all the employees to communicate more about the company's events in social media which was positive news in the starting point of development project. In fact, almost all felt that they could imagine themselves communicating about the events more than what they presently do. The enthusiasm is presented in figure 6. This finding gave faith in the success of the action research process as this enthusiasm indicated engagement among employees.

29. I could imagine myself communicating about Live Nation Finland's events in social media more than what I presently do.

No: 4 %

Yes: 96 %
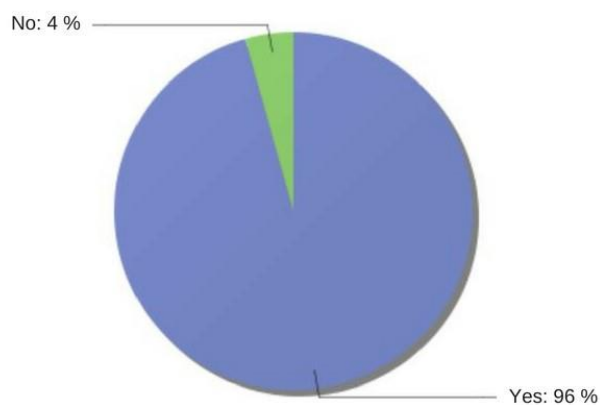
Figure 6. Employee enthusiasm towards communicating more about events.

The employees were also asked about their social media training requests. The most requested training options were how to create interesting content and how to communicate in social media as a representative of the company. Some respondents also requested trainings on what or when they can communicate about the company's events in social media. However, about a third of the respondents chose that they did not want any of the suggested training options.

According to the first survey, the employees at Live Nation Finland had mixed experiences as communicators about events in social media. Some had adopted their role as a communicator strongly, but the results also indicated that some were not active in social media all together or at least not professionally. However, the employees showed significant

interest in learning more about communicating about the events in social media which is a growth possibility.

To understand what factors could help engage employees to communicate in social media about the events and become employee advocates at Live Nation Finland, a question regarding what factors would affect their willingness to communicate was included in the first survey. The results are shown in figure 7.
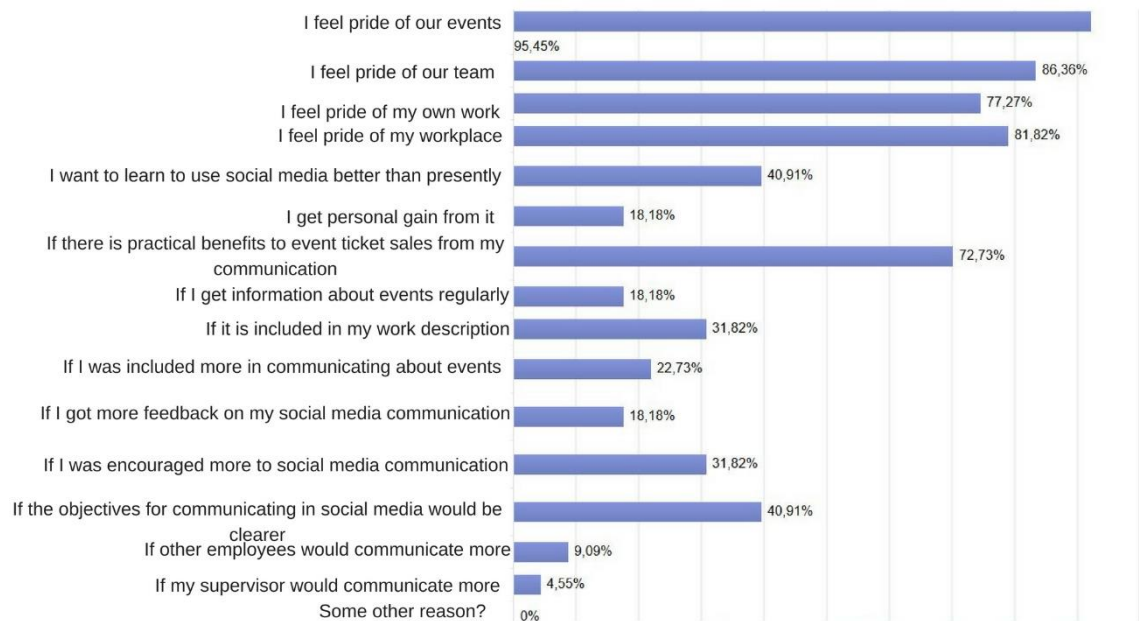


Figure 7. Reasons for willingness to communicate more in social media.

The results were clear: the employees felt pride of the company's events, their team, their workplace and their own work and felt those were the main reasons why they would be willing to communicate more about events in social media. Engaged employees are proud of their work (Robinson et al 2004, xi), therefore it can be claimed that the employees who responded to the survey were engaged. Engaged employees also identify with their organization, believe in it and are positive about their work (Robinson et al 2004, 6) which the survey results suggest about the employees at Live Nation Finland.

The employees also considered that if there were practical benefits to event ticket sales from their social media communication, that would be a reason to communicate more. This indicates engagement as seeing the bigger picture, even at personal cost, and looking for opportunities to improve organizational performance are characteristics of an engaged employee (Robinson et al 2004, 6). Other major reasons were that respondents

wanted to learn to use social media better and if the objectives for communication in social media would be clearer. Wanting to learn and understand better also suggest engagement as engaged employees wish to keep up-to-date with development in their field and work actively to better things (Robinson et al 2004, 6).

Therefore, it seemed that the employees at Live Nation Finland were engaged to their work and the company already in the beginning of the action research process which seemed like a good starting point for this research. However, there was need for development in getting the employees to adopt employee advocacy practices in social media and engaging them in communicating about the company's events more. The employees had not been encouraged to communicate about the events in social media much before this.

The results of the first survey guided the action research throughout the process. They were used as the basis for building engagement and creating employee advocacy in the presentations and workshops. The content of the advocacy workshops included facilitation methods and training that both aimed to engage the employees and increase participation.

## 7.2   Engaging employees towards advocacy

The willingness of employees to promote company's brand messages correlates with levels of employee engagement. Advocacy can only happen if the employees feel genuinely engaged and respected, valued and empowered by their employer. (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 565.) Employee advocates need to be engaged to want to speak for their company and promote its messages (Fradin 2014). The objective of this thesis was to engage the employees to become employee advocates for Live Nation Finland's events in social media.

As involving and valuing employees are one of the key drivers for employee engagement (Robinson et al 2004, 21-22.), they were selected as the main methods in increasing engagement. This also supported the participatory action research methodology. Involving the employees was done by encouraging them to express their ideas and feelings in the workshops and making sure most of employees attended the survey results presentations. The action research process and workshop facilitation methods are explained in chapter 6.4.

Overall, the employees' contributions were valued in the workshops and good suggestions were acted upon. The trainings and workshops were employee-focused and featured flexible and open two-way communication practices and performance appraisal. Also, the first

survey results from December were used as a guideline throughout the process as in what the employees' views were which also increased involvement and value.

As the objective was to increase engagement towards employee advocacy for the company's events in social media, key success factors for advocacy programs were used as a guideline to achieve the goals. As aligning employee advocacy strategy with the company's overall strategies was one of the success factors (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 2104), a specific content marketing strategy was created that aligned with the company's marketing strategies. The content strategy was created with the marketing team which as such meant using the department as a pilot group and starting the process on a smaller scale.

As Smarp (2017) suggests, working with a pilot group usually takes less effort, especially if the members are social media savvy which the marketing team was. The content marketing strategy was developed so that the company would have good content available for the employees to share on their social channels as advocacy requires little time and effort and should fit into existing routines of the employees (Leitman 2016).

Additionally, the whole personnel became involved in the workshops and trainings from early on which on the other hand represented the suggested way of starting the advocacy program in a bigger scale right from the beginning (Smarp 2017). That helped with engaging the employees to take part from the start.

The employees were explained the importance of social media already in the survey results presentations in February. In the workshops and trainings during spring, the theme was investigated further using practical examples and creating clear guidelines together with the employees. As Leitman (2016) suggests, the benefits of advocacy were clearly explained to the employees and the voluntary nature was emphasized as those are drivers of genuine engagement (Leitman 2016).

Flexibility was important throughout the action research process as employee feedback was used to modify the workshops and trainings. Flexibility is recommended because employee advocacy is voluntary, so the employees choose if they wish to share content the company suggests (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 1774).

In July/August 2018 the development was measured in a follow-up employee survey which gave valuable insight on the success of the action research process. The survey was conducted to understand if the engagement tactics to increase employee advocacy

had worked. Additionally, I interviewed the company's Marketing Director to get another viewpoint on the matter than just the employees' own views. The results of the survey and the interview are discussed in the next chapters. They give a measurable view on the success of the action research process.

Measuring the results of employee advocacy is recommended (Smarp 2017). In this research the advocacy programs metrics could have been studied even further, such as measuring social connections, lead generation, traffic and top contributors (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 1715), but these metrics were not included. As the company did not have a specific advocacy platform in use during the time of the research, there was no access to those kinds of metrics. Also, the focus of this thesis was specifically in engaging the employees towards advocacy, not the advocacy results as such. However, in future it would be recommendable to measure the advocacy results also with these additional metrics.

### 7.2.1 Follow-up survey results

The follow-up survey was conducted in the final phase of the research in July/August 2018 to determine the change after the action cycles. The objective was to find out whether the employees were communicating more in social media about the company's events and if the engagement tactics during the action research process had worked. In addition to studying the employees' own views through a survey, a separate interview was conducted with the company's Marketing Director to get another point of view on the matter. The interview findings are studied in chapter 7.2.2.

The follow-up survey was sent to 36 permanent employees in July 2018, excluding freelance employees. The number of employees was smaller compared to the first survey because two English-speaking employees were excluded since the survey questions were in Finnish, and since the company did not have trainees at this time of the year. The response rate was higher than in the first survey: 26 employees out of 36 responded (72,2 %).

The follow-up survey was done in the summertime which is generally a busy season in live entertainment industry due to outdoor events and on the other hand the holidays, so the hectic schedules of the employees might have affected the responses. On top of that, the company had recently announced co-operation negotiations and a need for employee re-organization. Therefore, I suspect that the employees' responses might have been affected by stress. On the other hand, the response rate was higher which means that the results represent a higher number of employees.

The results showed that the main social media platforms the respondents were registered to had not changed since December 2017. Facebook and Instagram were still the main ones, though in this survey the respondents claimed about 5 percent increase in Instagram registrations. Also, Twitter, Linkedin and Snapchat registrations were up 5 percent. This might mean that the respondents who answered this survey had either registered to new social media platforms or the respondents were not the same ones as in the first survey, especially since the response rate was higher.

However, there was change in the content production to these social channels between the two surveys which is represented in figure 8. Producing content (for example posting photos, videos) to Instagram had increased almost 20 percent at the time of the follow-up survey in July/August. Also, producing content to Twitter had increased slightly, about 3 percent. However, producing content to Linkedin, Youtube and Snapchat had slightly decreased between the two surveys.

15. I produce content to these social media channels

| | December 2017 | July/August 2018 |
|---|---|---|
| Facebook | 95,65% | 96,15% |
| Instagram | 69,57% | 88,46% |
| Twitter | 4,35% | 7,69% |
| Linkedin | 17,39% | 7,69% |
| YouTube | 4,35% | 3,85% |
| Snapchat | 26,09% | 11,54% |
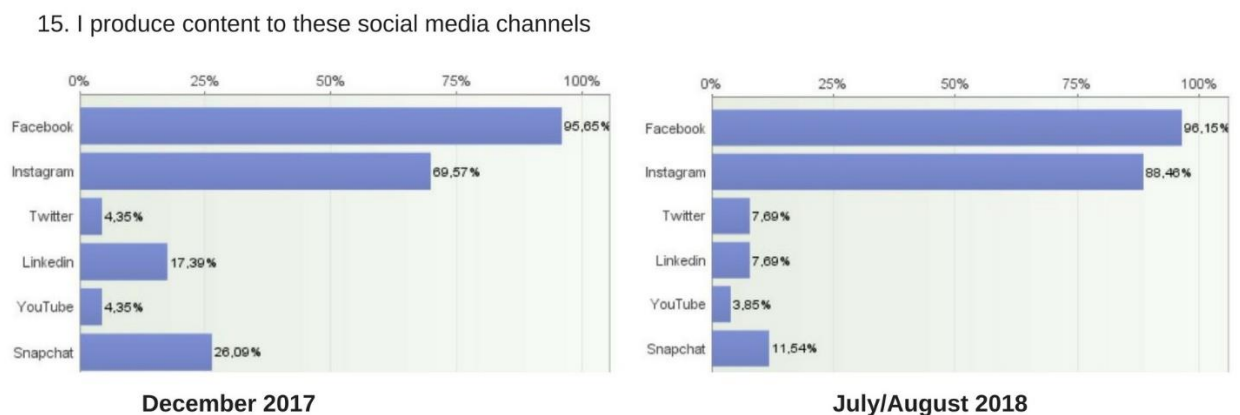
Figure 8. Change in social media content production.

When asked about how much the respondents communicate about Live Nation Finland's events either daily or weekly in social media, the number of employees who communicate rarely had risen which initially can point to a decrease in communication. The change in communicating about the events is shown in figure 9.

However, the reason for this could be that the number of employees who responded to this survey was remarkably higher and represents the views of all employees more realistically. The employees could have also evaluated their communication more realistically now than in the first survey. Also, the employees who responded might have been largely different than who responded to the first survey. Additionally, the workshops and trainings

the employees had received about how often is good to communicate might have affected these numbers. This initial indication to decreased communication was overruled later in the survey when the employees evaluated if their communication of the company's events had changed during the past six months.
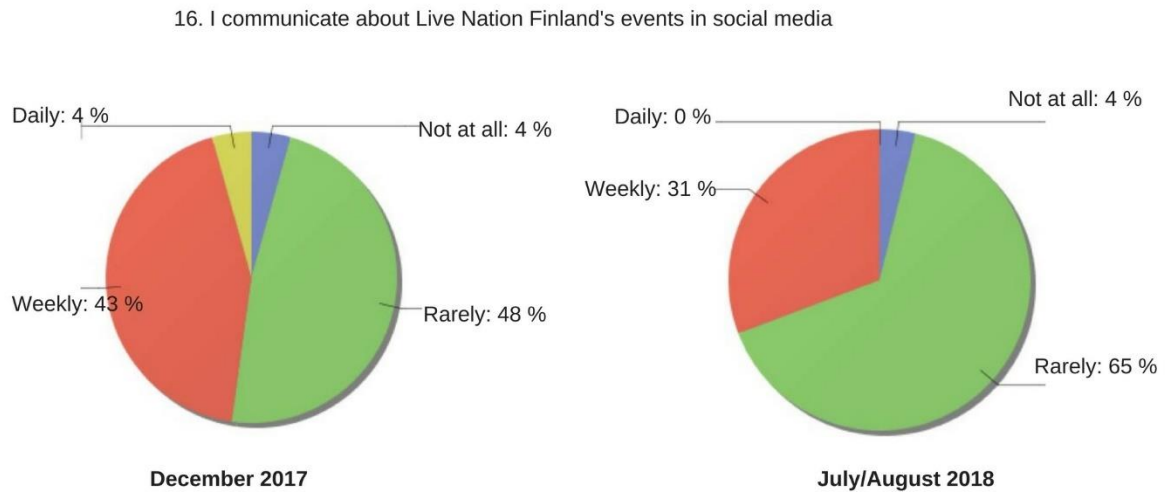


Figure 9. Change in communicating about events in social media.

Based on the results, about a third of respondents communicate about Live Nation Finland's events on a weekly basis which is still quite a high number and indicates engagement and advocacy towards events. This is also presented in figure 9.

The most natural social media channels for communicating among the employees who communicate about the company's events on a daily or weekly basis, which was about a third of the respondents, were still Facebook and Instagram during the follow-up survey in July/August 2018. However, it seemed that especially Instagram had gained more popularity since December 2017.

Almost two thirds of all respondents stated that they communicate either rarely or not at all about the company's events in social media. The number had risen since the first survey in December 2017 despite of the several employee workshops and trainings focusing on increasing communication that were arranged in the spring. Interestingly, the survey did not provide a clear reason for this. Many of the reasons why people did not communicate were the same as at the time of the first survey in 2017, for example that they did not want to communicate about events they were not interested in.

However, there were some significant changes also found among the more passive communicators regarding their communication. For example, only 66 percent considered anymore that they were spamming their friends as oppose to 92 percent in the first survey in 2017. Also, only 44 percent thought that there were too many events to communicate about as oppose to 67 percent previously. The trainings and workshops seemed to have had an effect since the survey also showed that more employees felt that communicating about events in social media was part of their job and that they do not feel they use it for only their private purposes. It was also interesting that the training needs had decreased significantly: almost 80 percent now felt that the lack of training was not the reason for them not to communicate.

When asked about the most favourable ways of sharing content in social media, the situation had not changed much between December 2017 and July/August 2018. They had remained mostly the same despite of slight changes that might have occurred, because the follow-up survey was representing a higher number of and/or different employees in the company or that the respondents answered more realistically after being trained during spring and the topic was more familiar to them.

What showed increase was the sharing photos and videos to Instagram Stories. When in December 2017 over half the respondents did not post to Instagram Stories or did it rarely, in July/August 2018 the number was just 35 percent. Additionally, the number of respondents who share their photos or videos from events to their Instagram Stories often or almost always was up to 46 percent as oppose to the previous 35 percent. Also, the percentage of employees who do it occasionally had risen by 4 percent. This correlates with the overall rise in popularity of Instagram Stories but most likely also the trainings and workshops the employees attended during spring had an effect in adopting this social channel.

The survey conducted in July/August 2018 also asked if the respondents felt that their communication of the company's events had changed during the past six months. This question was aimed to study the development in their communication during the action research process and if the workshops and trainings had had some effect. The survey showed that 42 percent felt that their communication had increased, 46 percent that it had remained the same and about 12 percent felt that their communication had decreased. Since the action research process aimed at increasing employee engagement in communicating about the company's events in social media, this result is quite a positive one – especially for such a short time period with only a few trainings and workshops.

However, it is noteworthy that this question studied only the respondents' own views regarding the matter and does not necessarily signify the reality. If more metrics, such as studying the amount of posts the employees actually did in social media during the timeframe, were studied, the results could look different. The separate interview with the company's Marketing Director was conducted to affirm the results of the survey and gain an expert view on the development. The interview findings are studied in the chapter 7.2.2.

Among the 42 percent who felt that their communication in social media had increased, all respondents felt that they had communicated more frequently about the events. Over a third had started using new social media channels and almost a half felt they were more courageous to communicate about the events. They were also asked if they had increased their communication in other ways, but that question did not get answers.

Likewise, in the July/August 2018 survey almost all the respondents (92 percent) felt that they could imagine themselves communicating more about the company's events in social media which indicates that there still was enthusiasm among the employees towards employee advocacy. This engagement should be utilized in future development projects.

Only 8 percent of respondents felt that they could not imagine themselves communicating more since they either communicate so much that increase would feel like spamming or that they do not use social media and/or believe in its potential as such. They were asked if they would like to have more training from the company to act as an ambassador in social media, but these respondents declined.

The question regarding what factors would affect the employees' willingness to communicate about Live Nation Finland's events in social media did not show significant changes to the previous survey either. The employees were still proud of the company's events, their team, their workplace and their own work and felt those were still the main reasons why they would be willing to communicate more among other ones.

One thing that had changed was that only about 20 percent anymore felt that if the objectives for communicating in social media were clearer would be a reason for them to communicate more as oppose to previous over 40 percent. This could signify that during the action research process the objectives have become clearer to the employees which was one of the goals of the process.

As a conclusion, the survey conducted in July/August 2018 indicated that some progress had been made in engaging the employees to communicate about the company's events in social media. The workshops and trainings had had effect in some of the areas, however some things had remained the same. I feel that many of the respondents had evaluated their social media behaviour slightly more realistically as they now knew more what was expected of them and what being a social advocate for the company stands for. Naturally, since the response rate of the survey was higher, it represented the views of the employees in a wider and more realistic scale than the first survey in December 2017. Also, the busy summer period and the threat of lay-offs might have affected the results.

### 7.2.2 Interview findings

The company's Marketing Director was involved in the research process as a supervisor, a facilitator and an observer so she had a unique perspective to the topic which offered a different angle to evaluate the development. According to her, the employees' communication in social media during the past six months had changed. In her opinion the employees had gained more confidence to their communication of events because of trainings and enhanced internal communication. Also, activating and involving the employees to create content, for example blog articles, had clearly affected their activity in social channels.

The Marketing Director's view was that employees had now gained awareness and understanding that they can experiment courageously with various communication tactics in the way and channel they prefer or is suitable for their purposes. According to her this was directly because of the common training and workshop sessions.

She considered that the development project had had a very positive effect on the work community. According to her, the employees had been for example more forward in suggesting ideas. Communication had become a "common thing" among the employees during the past six months and she considered that very positive.

She viewed that it was a pleasure to notice how positively the participatory project had affected the work community. She considered that the clear reason for the passivity of employees communicating about the events in social media was because employees did not have the needed skills to communicate or the understanding of the channels. She also felt that now that clear guidelines were set and training for different social channels had been arranged, the employees had clearly been more active in communicating about the company's events in social media. Overall, the development project had been a desirable improvement which not many had even thought that was needed.

The findings of the follow-up survey in July/August and the interview in August 2018 both indicate the same conclusion that progress had been made and that the engagement tactics used, such as the trainings and workshops, had had an effect. The interview affirmed the survey's results and offered an expert angle to the findings.

## 7.3 Integration

To answer the research question regarding how the employees of Live Nation Finland could be integrated to the marketing communications of the company's events, the focus is in employee engagement. The key to engagement is involving and valuing the employees as much as possible (Robinson et al 2004, 22). Based on the literature and the results of this action research process I propose a framework, presented in figure 10, which could be used as a guideline at Live Nation Finland for creating engagement. Eventually the engagement can lead to employee advocacy in social media (Fradin 2014) if key success factors are utilized correctly.
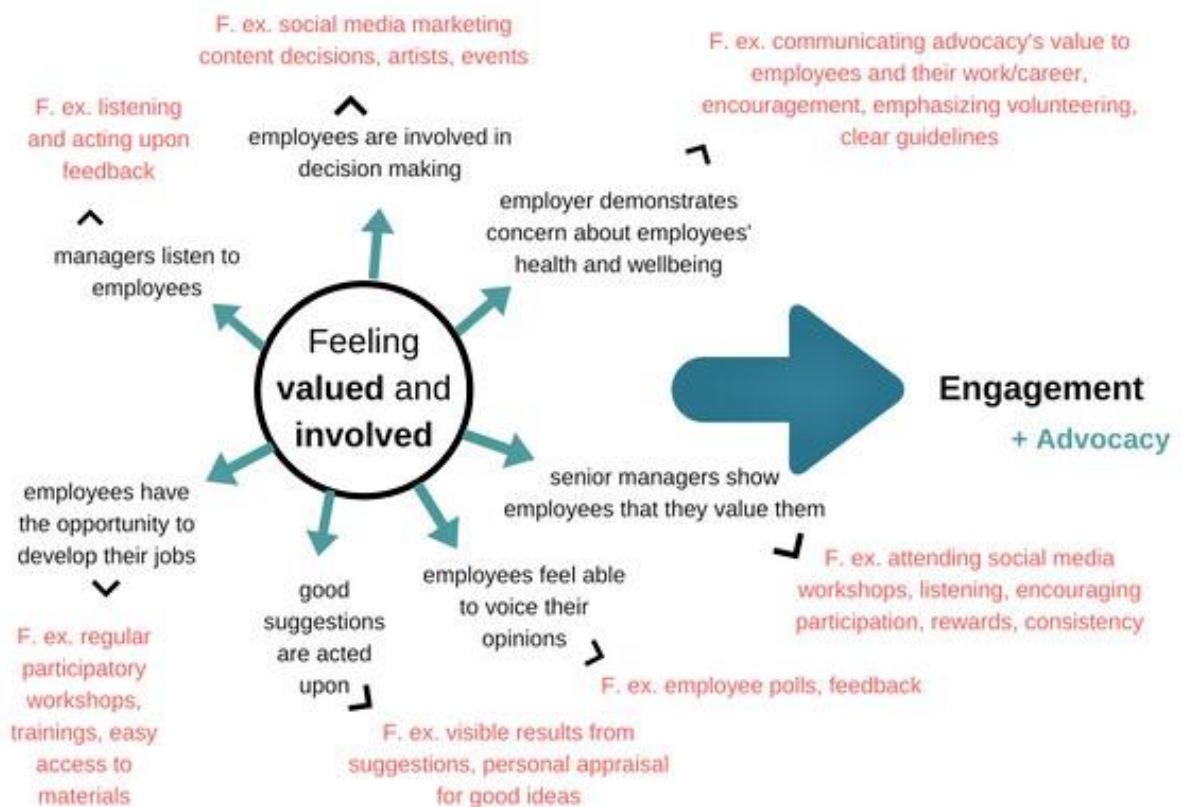


Figure 10. Creating engagement and advocacy at Live Nation Finland. (Adapted from Robinson et al 2004, 22.)

The framework suggests that a focus on increasing employee's perceptions of their involvement with, and value to, the organization will pay dividends in terms of increased engagement levels. The individuals will feel more valued and involved when they are involved in decision making and when the employer shows concern about the employees' well-being. Valuing employees is made visible: they can voice their opinions and good suggestions are acted upon. Involvement increases also when employees are also given a possibility to develop their jobs. Another key factor is simply listening to the employees as they are the ones doing the work. (Robinson et al 2004, 22.)

Additionally, figure 10 demonstrates practical examples of how Live Nation Finland could increase employee engagement. The employees' perception of being involved could be increased with having them take part in the decisions regarding social media content strategy for marketing events. This idea could be applied also to other decisions within the company, such as which artists to focus on and how events are marketed. The mindset inside the company should be that everyone is involved with marketing the events and communicating about them. This mindset seemed to be the key success factor also in this action research process and had not been utilized previously.

The company leadership and managers also must show concern on the employees' well-being in the shape of communication, encouragement and clear guidelines. The focus would be in the employee and their feeling of being valued. It would be important to communicate about the value of employee advocacy to people's work and career, not just what the company would gain. The communication should be two-way, not just from top-down. Additionally, the voluntary nature of advocacy should be emphasized so that it would not increase resentment or a feeling of extra work. Clear guidelines that apply to all could decrease anxiety regarding what the employees are expected of.

It would also be important that the management show the employees that they are valued. The valuation of employees should be made visible. The management could make time to personally attend employee workshops and listen to their concerns. Participation to communicating about the events in social media should be encouraged consistently. The rewards for participation would not need to be monetary but for example public appraisal for successes. Both performance appraisal and pay and benefits can lead to feeling valued (Robinson et al 2004, 23). However, personal gain was not high among the reasons why employees could see themselves communicating more about Live Nation Finland's events in social media in neither of the surveys. Getting feedback of their communication had slightly more popularity and that should be taken into account.

Another way to increase valuation and involvement is letting employees feel they can voice their opinions. At Live Nation Finland this could mean arranging employee polls or feedback sessions. Common workshops seemed to work well in the company as employees were able to express their opinions while learning new information. Employees should also be able to suggest their ideas and see that their suggestions are acted upon. Live Nation Finland could arrange regular sessions, such as workshops, where the employees would be encouraged to suggest ideas. The ideas would be discussed together, and the best ones would be put into practice. Albeit, mere discussion is not enough: employees should be able to see that their ideas are acted upon and get personal appraisal for them. This is closely connected to listening to the employees and their feedback being heard.

When employees have the chance to develop their job, it increases their feeling of being valued and involved (Robinson et at 2004, 22). At Live Nation Finland this could continue in the shape of regular participatory workshops and trainings which seemed to work well in this action research process. Continuous learning would be important as this development project was just a pilot project. Additionally, the employees should have easy access to content and materials to develop their advocacy about the company's events. The content should be easily shareable.

The company could aim to arrange common workshops around employee advocacy and social media content for example every quarter year or before each important season, such as the summer outdoor event and autumn club show seasons. Additionally, plans to engage employees to communicate about the events could be included in the marketing plans of events. This way the marketing manager of each event would have the responsibility of following up with plans to engage employees to communicate in social media about events.

## 7.4   Summarizing the findings

This study gives comprehensive answers to the research questions in relation to the commissioning company, Live Nation Finland. The research questions that were answered were as follows:

1. "How do the employees of Live Nation Finland experience their role as communicators about events organized by the company in social media at the moment?"
2. "What are the factors that help to engage employees to communicate about the events in social media?"
3. "How can the employees be integrated into social media marketing communications of the events?"

In the beginning of the development process Live Nation Finland did not have a concise tradition of including employees in the social media communications of the company's events and this also showed in the first survey conducted in December 2017 which aimed to answer the research question 1. Even though the results of the first survey indicated that the employees were engaged to begin with and interested in communicating about the company's events in social media, they had mixed experiences. In answering the research question 1 on how the employees experienced their role as communicators about events in social media, the response was that some of the employees were more active and some were more passive. However, all employees showed significant interest in becoming more active which was very positive with regards to this action research process.

Oppose to initial assumptions, the employees did not feel they needed more information about the events to communicate about them. The reason for not communicating was mainly because they did not have the necessary skills to act as an employee advocate for the company or that they lacked general understanding what an advocate was expected to do.

The first survey indicated that almost all employees were using social media and interested in using it for the benefit of the company's events. The main reasons for this were that the employees were proud of the events, their team, their work and workplace and that they were interested in increasing event ticket sales through social media communication. This indicates engagement as engaged employees are proud of their work, identify with their organization, are positive about their work and look for opportunities to improve organizational performance (Robinson et al 2004, xi, 6).

In relation to research question 2, the literature was used in the process of finding the answers. Based on the theoretical framework on employee engagement and advocacy, a few key factors were selected and tested to help engage the employees of Live Nation Finland to communicate about the events in social media. One of the key drivers for employee engagement are involving and valuing the employees (Robinson et al 2004, 21-22), therefore they were selected as the main tactics to be tested. Additionally, key success factors regarding employee advocacy, such as involving employees from the start, alignment with strategies, training employees, explaining benefits, emphasizing volunteering, measuring results and flexibility (Hecklinger 2015; Hinge Research Institute & Social Media Today 2016, 21, 23; Leitman 2016; Smarp 2017; Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 1709, 1723-1729, 1774, 2104), were utilized.

The results of the selected tactics were promising. The follow-up survey and the expert interview conducted in July/August 2018 indicated that some progress in engaging employees to communicate about the events in social media had been made. The selected methods had increased participation and further increased communication about events in social media. In summarizing the answer to research question 2, based on the research, the factors that helped to engage the employees to communicate about events in social media were valuing and involving the employees, alignment with strategies, employee trainings and communication, being flexible and measuring the results.

Research question 3 was answered based on both the empirical research results and the literature. Based on the data of the empirical research at Live Nation Finland and the engagement and advocacy literature, I suggested a framework that could be used in the company to integrate the employees to the marketing communications of events. Some of the practical examples of the framework included regular employee workshops and trainings on communicating about events in social media, involving employees in the development and creation of social content, setting clear guidelines and easy access to shareable social content.

Additionally, consistency in communication and encouragement from managers to employees, listening to feedback and suggestions, and acting upon them, were among the suggested actions in integrating the employees to the marketing communications in social media. Another suggestion was to include the objectives and practices for employee advocacy in each event's marketing plan so that the marketing managers could plan, implement and follow-up on employees' communication in social media from the beginning to the end of the event marketing process.

# 8 Conclusions

While the competition over people's free time becomes tougher, the live entertainment industry needs to search new ways of engaging their customers to make them buy tickets to events. Additionally, the industry has recently become even more saturated with competition in Finland when competitors have grown in size and influence. Event promoters also compete with themselves if they offer many events per year as Live Nation Finland does.

Also, employees' demands towards their work and their employer have grown. Employees seek to find meanings and develop in their work. (Smarp 2017.) Therefore, companies need to meet these needs if they wish to attract skilled and motivated workforce in future. Employees should be viewed as major potential for companies that have not yet been utilized in the most rewarding way, even though the understanding on for example employee engagement's role has grown.

On the other hand, consumers' trust in corporations has significantly decreased and the importance of recommendations from friends and family at social networking sites has grown. Peers, including company employees, are considered to be more credible sources of information than the company executives. (Edelman Trust Barometer 2016, 19-21.) Therefore, companies need to evaluate their communicational messages and their distributors and aim for utilize interactive avenues, such as social media. By engaging their employees to advocacy programs, they could enhance their communicational trustworthiness in an authentic way and improve their reputation among consumers.

When this need is combined with the current situation where social media platforms prefer content published by individuals rather than organizations, where companies are made to pay for their visibility and introduction of ad blockers, the ways of reaching potential customers with marketing messages become even more important (Smarp 2017). New, innovative ways of marketing products need to be invented and tested.

This thesis was an effort to tackle these challenges and based on the findings of the follow-up survey in July/August 2018, progress could be seen. 42 percent of the employees at Live Nation Finland felt that they had started communicating more about the company's events in social media which was a very positive result. The change had happened in just about a half year which is a short time for organizational development projects of this scale and scope.

Even though the selected methods of conducting the research, starting the employee advocacy program by including all the employees from the beginning and the time-consuming nature of participatory action research and workshop facilitation, they seemed to bear fruit. According to the expert interview results, the value of the development project for the work community had been significant. Due to the trainings and workshops, employees' awareness of employee advocacy in social media had increased and their skillset had developed, according to the interview. It could also be viewed that the mindset of the employees towards communicating about events in social media changed during the process.

The research also provided the company with valuable deliverables, such as a content marketing strategy and social media guidelines for employees, that had not been written out previously. The content marketing strategy provided the objectives and scope for the development project. Employee advocacy was adopted to the strategy as one way of increasing the company's presence in social media, with special focus for events.

On the other hand, the commonly gathered social media guidelines provided the employees with a clear set of objectives and methods of sharing company-related content. By involving the employees in the guidelines creation process in a brainstorming workshop, it could increase the adoption of the guidelines within the company.

The research also revealed that the employees of Live Nation Finland seemed to be engaged to the company and its events which offers a major advantage for the company. Not all companies have such an enthusiasm towards the company's products and not all employees are necessarily as willing to distribute promotional content on behalf of their employer in their own social networks, which seemed to be the case at Live Nation Finland according to the research. This engagement could be utilized even further in future.

Additionally, the thesis provided a cost-effective solution for further engaging employees, who are trusted as sources of information by their peers and already work for the company, to help in communicating about the company's events and meanwhile increasing awareness of events. The development project was conducted in-house, while I was working for the company, and it was based on sharing the learnings on social media communication, key success factors of employee advocacy and drivers of employee engagement. Information-sharing between departments had not been conducted on this scale previously.

The proposed framework for creating engagement at Live Nation Finland could be used as a simple guideline in future projects. As valuing and involving the employees seemed to work in this development project, they could be useful methods in other projects too.

## 8.1 Reflection on learning

Conducting the thesis in a participatory action research format provided me with a new set of skills for research planning and implementation. I had not conducted a research process of this scale before, so I learned mostly along the way. I had previous experience on project management, but I had not taken on such a major organizational development project before this. Therefore, my project management skills improved notably and knowledge on academic research methods, for example conducting surveys, got essentially better.

Additionally, my understanding of the theoretical framework, such as employee advocacy and engagement, related to this thesis, improved significantly. In this research, I could combine my interest in employees' wellbeing and social media communication in a unique way. After working many years in external marketing communications, I was happy to take on such an employee-oriented approach to communication. However, I struggled with adjusting my promotionally-oriented writing style to the academic one this thesis required because of my marketing communications background.

As allowing the employees to participate in the action research was key in this thesis, I learned facilitation and presentation skills that I probably would not have without this project. In addition, I feel that my leadership abilities grew considerably through workshop facilitation methods and the literature. Studying employee engagement literature could be recommendable for everyone who wishes to learn about leadership. However, during the process I also struggled with getting employees to attend some workshops since they were busy with other tasks. Therefore, patience was needed.

I believe that Live Nation Finland can also learn from this research and hopefully continue to engage the employees in future. The development project seemed to evoke a new sense of common learning and a mindset that everyone in the company communicates.

## 8.2 Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research

This thesis researches only one organization and the findings are related to Live Nation Finland, therefore they are not applicable as such to other companies. However, this thesis can provide a benchmark case for other organizations that wish to engage their employees to advocacy in social media.

Additionally, the surveys conducted for this research did not provide a full view of the employees' opinions as especially the first surveys response rate was only 57,5 percent. Therefore, some important views might have not been included in this thesis. The results of the research also could have been interpreted in another way: as I was involved with facilitating the action research process, I might be unconsciously biased towards some results. The research also studied the organization within a short time-frame and results could have been more substantial had there been more time. For example, getting employees to attend the workshops could have been easier had they been given a longer time to plan their work schedules.

As the research was limited to engaging the employees to communicate about the company's events, not much emphasis was put on the role of leadership. In future, it could be useful to study the communicative behaviours of leaders and what they could add to the topic. For example, facilitating behaviour of leaders is considered to support employee coaching and training, performance feedback, problem solving and encourage self-management (Johansson, Miller & Hamrin 2014, 151), which could be utilized in the framework for employee engagement and advocacy I proposed for Live Nation Finland. This development project lacked the active participation of executive leadership of the company: even though they had verbally given their support, they did not attend all the employee workshops and show their support visibly. However, the more the employees see their leaders participating in social media advocacy, the more likely they will be interested in participating themselves (Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 785).

In future it would be also beneficial to use other metrics in evaluating employee advocacy's success. This thesis focused on evaluating the engagement of employees to communicate about the company's events in social media, but fuller view of the topic could be achieved if the study included factors such as how many employees were reached through the program, how many posts they shared on a given time-frame, how many website visits their posts gained, how much the employees' social connections increased or who were top contributors (Smarp 2017; Sundberg & Donkor 2017, 1715). At Live Nation

Finland it would also be interesting to study if employee advocacy could have effects to event ticket sales, company's reputation or reducing event marketing costs.

These metrics could be easily studied with the initialization of employee advocacy platforms many companies provide, but they would require an additional investment from the company. It is also worth considering if a company with relatively small workforce, such as Live Nation Finland, even needs a separate employee advocacy platform which usually is used in companies with hundreds or thousands of employees. However, adopting such a platform could be beneficial for the globally-operating parent company Live Nation Entertainment which could then offer the global advocacy platform for the usage of its country-specific subcompanies, such as Live Nation Finland.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Survey questions for initial mapping.



*Live Nation Finlandin työntekijät tapahtumista viestijöinä sosiaalisessa mediassa*

Kyselytutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää minkälaisena Live Nation Finland Oy: n työntekijät kokevat roolinsa tapahtumista viestijänä sosiaalisessa mediassa tällä hetkellä. Kyselyn tuloksia hyödynnetään viestinnän johtamisen ylemmän ammattikorkeakoulututkinnon lopputyössä, jonka tavoitteena on kehittää Live Nation Finlandin ulkoista ja sisäistä viestintää. **Kyselyn tekeminen vie max. 10 minuuttia.**

Tärkeimpiä käsitteitä:

Tapahtumalla tarkoitetaan tässä kyselyssä joko ulkomaisen tai kotimaisen artistin konserttia, kiertuetta tai jotain muuta tapahtumaa, esim. erikois- ja perheviihdetapahtumat. Tapahtuma voi olla ns. oma, myyty tai konsulttisopimuksella.

Kotimainen artisti voi olla joko Live Nation Agencyn edustama artisti tai jonkun toisen yrityksen edustuksessa oleva artisti, jonka keikan Live Nation Finland järjestää.

Viestinnällä tarkoitetaan tässä yhteydessä esimerkiksi tapahtumiin liittyvää some-aktiivisuutta sekä tapahtumiin liittyvän tiedon jakamista omissa verkostoissa.

HUOM
Vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti eikä vastauksia yhdistetä yksittäisiin työntekijöihin. Vastaathan mahdollisimman rehellisesti nykytilanteesta.

Seuraava -->

---

Sisäinen viestintä ulkomaisten artistien tapahtumista
Tämän osion tavoitteena on selvittää tämänhetkistä tilannetta tapahtumiin liittyvän sisäisen tiedonkulun osalta. Tapahtumajulkistuksella tarkoitetaan hetkeä, kun tapahtuma julkistetaan suurelle yleisölle ja potentiaalisille asiakkaille esim. lehdistötiedotteen, uutiskirjeen, nettisivujen tai sosiaalisen median näkyvyyden kautta.

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

Ulkomaisten artistien tapahtumat

*Kuinka paljon saat tietoa Live Nation Finlandin ulkomaisten artistien tapahtumista ennen julkistusta? ***
○ Aivan liian vähän  ○ Riittämättömästi  ○ Sopivasti  ○ Liikaa

*Kuinka paljon saat tietoa Live Nation Finlandin ulkomaisten artistien tapahtumista julkistusten jälkeen? ***
○ Aivan liian vähän  ○ Riittämättömästi  ○ Sopivasti  ○ Liikaa

*Kuinka paljon saat tietoa Live Nation Finlandin ulkomaisten artistien tapahtumista tapahtuman lähestyessä? ***
○ Aivan liian vähän  ○ Riittämättömästi  ○ Sopivasti  ○ Liikaa

*Mitä tietoa kaipaisin lisää ulkomaisten artistien tapahtumista?*

*Ehdotukseni tiedonkulun parantamiseksi?*

<-- Edellinen    Seuraava -->

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Sisäinen viestintä kotimaisten artistien tapahtumista

Tämän osion tavoitteena on selvittää tämänhetkistä tilannetta tapahtumiin liittyvän sisäisen tiedonkulun osalta. Tapahtumajulkistuksella tarkoitetaan hetkeä, kun tapahtuma julkistetaan suurelle yleisölle ja potentiaalisille asiakkaille esim. lehdistötiedotteen, uutiskirjeen, nettisivujen tai sosiaalisen median näkyvyyden kautta.

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

Kotimaisten artistien tapahtumat

Kotimainen artisti voi olla joko Live Nation Agencyn edustama artisti tai jonkun toisen yrityksen edustuksessa oleva artisti, jonka keikan Live Nation Finland järjestää.

### Kuinka paljon saat tietoa Live Nation Finlandin kotimaisten artistien tapahtumista ennen julkistusta? *

◯ Aivan liian vähän ◯ Riittämättömästi ◯ Sopivasti ◯ Liikaa

### Kuinka paljon saat tietoa Live Nation Finlandin kotimaisten artistien tapahtumista julkistuksen jälkeen? *

◯ Aivan liian vähän ◯ Riittämättömästi ◯ Sopivasti ◯ Liikaa

### Kuinka paljon saat tietoa Live Nation Finlandin kotimaisten artistien tapahtumista niiden lähestyessä? *

◯ Aivan liian vähän ◯ Riittämättömästi ◯ Sopivasti ◯ Liikaa

### Mitä tietoa kaipaisin lisää kotimaisten artistien tapahtumista?

### Ehdotukseni tiedonkulun parantamiseksi?

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

---

Sisäisen viestinnän kanavat
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

### Ensisijaisesti toivoisin saavani tietoa tapahtumista (voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon) *

☐ osana viikoittaista henkilökunnan sähköpostiuutiskirjettä, joka kokoaa yhteen myös muita kuin tapahtumiin liittyviä sisäisiä asioita
☐ viikoittaisessa vain tapahtumia koskevassa koostesähköpostissa
☐ kutakin tapahtumaa koskevissa omissa sähköposteissa
☐ viikkopalavereissa tiimini kesken
☐ kutakin tapahtumaa koskevissa palavereissa
☐ sisäisellä serverillä (esim. Cloud, "H-asema") sijaitsevasta kansiosta
☐ Jotenkin muuten, miten? [_____]

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

Oma sosiaalisen median kanavien käyttö

Tämän osion tavoitteena on selvittää mitä sosiaalisen median kanavia Live Nation Finlandin työntekijät käyttävät ja mihin sosiaalisen median kanaviin he tuottavat sisältöä.

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

*Minulla on tili näissä sosiaalisen median kanavissa* *

☐ Facebook
☐ Instagram
☐ Twitter
☐ Linkedin
☐ YouTube
☐ Snapchat
☐ Joku muu, mikä? [                    ]
☐ Minulla ei ole mitään sosiaalisen median tilejä

*Kirjoitan omaa blogia* *

◯ Kyllä ◯ Ei

*Teen omaa videoblogia* *

◯ Kyllä ◯ Ei

*Tuotan sisältöä näihin sosiaalisen median kanaviin.* *

HUOM: sisällöntuotannolla tarkoitetaan tässä esim. status-päivitysten ja postausten tekemistä, linkkien, kuvien ja videoiden jakamista, itsensä tägäämistä tapahtumiin, viestien lähettämistä ja vastaanottamista.

☐ Facebook
☐ Instagram
☐ Twitter
☐ Linkedin
☐ YouTube
☐ Snapchat
☐ Joku muu, mikä? [                    ]
☐ Minulla ei ole mitään sosiaalisen median tilejä

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

---

**Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista viestiminen sosiaalisessa mediassa**

HUOM: Viestimisellä tarkoitetaan tässä yhteydessä vastaajan omaa tapahtumia koskevaa tiedonjakamista sosiaalisessa mediassa.

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

*Viestin Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa.* *

◯ En ollenkaan ◯ Harvoin ◯ Viikottain ◯ Päivittäin

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

*Koen itselleni luontevana käyttää näitä sosiaalisen median kanavia Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista viestimiseen.* *

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

|  | En ollenkaan | Harvoin | Viikottain | Päivittäin |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facebook | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Instagram | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Twitter | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Linkedin | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| YouTube | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Snapchat | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

*Joku muu, mikä?*

[                                                                    ]

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

---

*Syitä, miksi en viesti Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa.* *

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

|  | Eri mieltä | Jokseenkin eri mieltä | Jokseenkin samaa mieltä | Samaa mieltä |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Minulla ei ole tarpeeksi tietoa tapahtumista viestiäkseni niistä | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Kaipaisin lisätietoa tapahtumista viestiäkseni niistä | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Kaipaisin yritykseltä koulutusta sosiaalisessa mediassa viestimiseen | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Haluan käyttää sosiaalista mediaa vain yksityiskäyttöön | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| En tuota sosiaaliseen mediaan muutenkaan sisältöä | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumia on liian paljon viestiäkseni niistä | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| En halua viestiä tapahtumista, joista en ole kiinnostunut | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Pelkään spämmääväni kavereitani | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Pelkään että kaverini alkavat pyytämään minulta lippuja tapahtumiin | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Pelkään, että kaverini alkavat kysellä lisätietoja, joita minulla ei ole | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Pelkään herättäväni negatiivista keskustelua sosiaalisessa mediassa | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| En koe, että se kuuluu työnkuvaani | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

*Joku muu syy, mikä?*

[                                                                    ]

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

---

Osallistumismerkinnät Live Nation Finlandin luomiin Facebook tapahtumiin
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

*Merkitsen itseni osallistujaksi Live Nation Finlandin luomiin Facebook-tapahtumiin.* *

(HUOM: Osallistujaksi merkitsemisellä tarkoitetaan tässä yhteydessä vastaamista myönteisesti (olen kiinnostunut / osallistun/ ehkä osallistun) tapahtumakutsuun.)

◯ En ollenkaan ◯ Harvoin ◯ Silloin tällöin ◯ Usein ◯ Lähes aina

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

## Merkitsen itseni osallistujaksi Live Nation Finlandin luomiin Facebook-tapahtumiin *

HUOM: voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon! *-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

- [ ] Vaikka en olisi osallistumassa tapahtumaan
- [ ] Kun mahdollisesti olen osallistumassa tapahtumaan
- [ ] Kun tiedän osallistuvani tapahtumaan
- [ ] Kun haluan vinkata Facebook-kavereilleni tapahtumasta
- [ ] Kun satun huomaamaan tapahtuman
- [ ] Kun saan tapahtumaan Facebookissa kutsun
- [ ] Joku muu syy, mikä? [                    ]

`<-- Edellinen` `Seuraava -->`

## En merkitse itseäni osallistujaksi Live Nation Finlandin luomaan yksittäiseen tapahtumaan koska *

HUOM: voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon! *-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

- [ ] Haluan merkitä itseni osallistujaksi vain tapahtumiin, joihin osallistun
- [ ] En halua jakaa Facebook-kavereilleni tietoa tapahtumista
- [ ] En tiedä olenko osallistumassa tapahtumaan
- [ ] En halua saada muistutuksia tapahtumaan liittyen
- [ ] En saa Facebookissa Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumakutsuja
- [ ] Joku muu syy, mikä? [                    ]

`<-- Edellinen` `Seuraava -->`

Tägääminen ja tapahtuman sijaintitietojen jakaminen
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

## Tägään itseni tapahtumapäivänä Live Nation Finlandin luomaan Facebook-tapahtumaan. *

○ En ollenkaan ○ Harvoin ○ Silloin tällöin ○ Usein ○ Lähes aina

## Tägään itseni tapahtumapäivänä tapahtumapaikan sijaintiin. *

○ En ollenkaan ○ Harvoin ○ Silloin tällöin ○ Usein ○ Lähes aina

## Mieluisin tapani jakaa tapahtumiin liittyvää sisältöä on *

| | En ollenkaan | Harvoin | Silloin tällöin | Usein | Lähes aina |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Klikkaamalla itseni osallistujaksi Facebook-tapahtumaan | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Facebook-tapahtuman jakaminen aikajanallani kavereilleni | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Live Nation Finlandin Facebook-postausten jakaminen | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tägäämällä itseni tapahtumapäivänä Facebook-tapahtumaan | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumassa ottamieni kuvien ja videoiden jakaminen Facebookissa | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Facebook Liven tekeminen tapahtumista | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumassa ottamieni kuvien ja videoiden jakaminen Instagramissa | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumassa ottamieni kuvien ja videoiden jakaminen Instagram Storiesiin | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Live Nation Finladin postaamien kuvien jakaminen Instagramissa | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumassa ottamieni kuvien ja videoiden twiittaaminen | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Live Nation Finlandin twiittien re-twiittaaminen | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumassa ottamieni kuvien tai videoiden jakaminen Snapchatissa | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

## Jotain muuta, mitä?

[                    ]

`<-- Edellinen` `Seuraava -->`

Sosiaalisen median koulutus
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.


HUOM: voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon!
*Toivoisin Live Nation Finlandilta* *

☐ koulutusta sosiaalisessa mediassa viestimiseen yrityksen edustajana.

☐ ohjeistusta siihen, mitä saan viestiä sosiaalisessa mediassa.

☐ ohjeistusta siihen, milloin saan viestiä sosiaalisessa mediassa.

☐ koulutusta kiinnostavien sisältöjen luomiseen.

☐ en mitään ylläolevista.


<-- Edellinen    Seuraava -->


Halukkuus Live Nationin tapahtumista viestimiseen sosiaalisessa mediassa
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.


*Voisin kuvitella viestiväni Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa nykyistä enemmän.* *

○ Kyllä
○ Ei

<-- Edellinen    Seuraava -->


Halukkuus Live Nationin tapahtumista viestimiseen sosiaalisessa mediassa
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.


*Valitse alla olevista väittämistä ne, jotka ensisijaisesti vaikuttaisivat halukkuuteesi viestiä nykyistä enemmän Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa.* *
HUOM: voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon!

☐ Tunnen ylpeyttä tapahtumistamme

☐ Tunnen ylpeyttä tiimistämme

☐ Tunnen ylpeyttä omasta työstäni

☐ Tunnen ylpeyttä työpaikastani

☐ Haluan oppia käyttämään sosiaalista mediaa nykyistä paremmin

☐ Hyödyn siitä henkilökohtaisesti

☐ Mikäli viestimisestäni on käytännön hyötyä tapahtumien lipunmyynnille

☐ Mikäli saan säännöllisesti tietoa tapahtumista

☐ Mikäli se sisältyy työnkuvaani

☐ Mikäli minua osallistettaisiin enemmän tapahtumista viestimiseen

☐ Mikäli saisin enemmän palautetta some-viestinnästäni

☐ Mikäli minua kannustettaisiin enemmän some-viestintään

☐ Mikäli tavoitteet somessa viestimiselle olisivat selkeämpiä

☐ Mikäli muut työntekijät viestisivät enemmän

☐ Mikäli esimieheni viestisi enemmän

☐ Joku muu syy, mikä? [_____]


<-- Edellinen    Seuraava -->

Ei halukkuutta Live Nationin tapahtumista viestimiseen sosiaalisessa mediassa
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

*Vastasit, ettet voisi kuvitella viestiväsi Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa nykyistä enemmän. Kerro lyhyesti miksi et? **

[                                                                                    ]
[                                                                                    ]
[                                                                                    ]
[                                                                                    ]

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

Taustatiedot
Vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti eikä vastauksia yhdistetä yksittäisiin työntekijöihin. *-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

*Työskentelen **
○ Markkinoinnissa / Events Clubissa / Partnership-osastolla
○ Promoottorina tai agenttina
○ Projektikoordinaattorina
○ Talousosastolla
○ Tuotanto-osastolla
○ Muu (esim. respa, ticketing, management)
○ En halua kertoa

*Ikä **
○ 18-37
○ 38-50
○ 50+

*Olen työskennellyt yrityksessä **
○ alle vuoden
○ 1-4 vuotta
○ yli 4 vuotta

[<-- Edellinen] [Lähetä]

**Appendix 2. Workshop memo.**

**Workshop notes**

| | |
|---|---|
| **When:** | |
| **What:** | |
| **Where:** | |
| **Number of people attending:** | ~ |
| **Action research step:** | |
| **Facilitation:** | |
| **Overall notes:** | |
| **Special wishes from people:** | |
| **Possible adjustements to development plans:** | |

**Appendix 3. Content marketing strategy created in workshop 4.**

**Appendix 4. List of social media dos & don'ts drafted in workshop 6.**

# DOS & DON'TS
OF SOCIAL MEDIA

## HOW CAN I COMMUNICATE ABOUT LIVE NATION FINLAND EVENTS IN MY OWN (OR COMPANY'S) SOCIAL CHANNELS?

✓ **Before events:**

*Goals:*

✓ **At events:**

*Goals:*

*What to do:*

*What to do:*

✓ **After events:**

**REMEMBER:** #

• when possible, instert hashtag #livenationfi
• find your own natural and credible way of posting about our events

✗ **WHAT NOT TO DO IN SOCIAL MEDIA?**

**LIVE NATION**
FINLAND

# Appendix 5. Follow-up employee survey for analyzing development.

## Live Nation Finlandin työntekijät tapahtumista viestijöinä sosiaalisessa mediassa

**Tämä on vertailukysely joulukuussa tehtyyn alkukartoituskyselyyn.**
Kyselytutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää minkälaisena Live Nation Finland Oy: n työntekijät kokevat roolinsa tapahtumista viestijänä sosiaalisessa mediassa tällä hetkellä. Kyselyn tuloksia hyödynnetään viestinnän johtamisen ylemmän ammattikorkeakoulututkinnon lopputyössä, jonka tavoitteena on kehittää Live Nation Finlandin ulkoista ja sisäistä viestintää. **Kyselyn tekeminen vie max. 5 minuuttia.**

Tärkeimpiä käsitteitä:

Tapahtumalla tarkoitetaan tässä kyselyssä joko ulkomaisen tai kotimaisen artistin konserttia, kiertuetta tai jotain muuta tapahtumaa, esim. erikois- ja perheviihdetapahtumat. Tapahtuma voi olla ns. oma, myyty tai konsulttisopimuksella.

Viestinnällä tarkoitetaan tässä yhteydessä esimerkiksi tapahtumiin liittyvää some-aktiivisuutta sekä tapahtumiin liittyvän tiedon jakamista omissa verkostoissa.


HUOM
Vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti eikä vastauksia yhdistetä yksittäisiin työntekijöihin. Vastaathan mahdollisimman rehellisesti nykytilanteesta.


Seuraava -->

Oma sosiaalisen median kanavien käyttö

Tämän osion tavoitteena on selvittää mitä sosiaalisen median kanavia Live Nation Finlandin työntekijät käyttävät ja mihin sosiaalisen median kanaviin he tuottavat sisältöä.

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

## Minulla on tili näissä sosiaalisen median kanavissa *

☐ Facebook
☐ Instagram
☐ Twitter
☐ Linkedin
☐ YouTube
☐ Snapchat
☐ Joku muu, mikä? [_____]
☐ Minulla ei ole mitään sosiaalisen median tilejä

## Kirjoitan omaa blogia *

◯ Kyllä ◯ Ei

## Teen omaa videoblogia *

◯ Kyllä ◯ Ei

## Tuotan sisältöä näihin sosiaalisen median kanaviin. *

HUOM: sisällöntuotannolla tarkoitetaan tässä esim. status-päivitysten ja postausten tekemistä, linkkien, kuvien ja videoiden jakamista, itsensä tägäämistä tapahtumiin, viestien lähettämistä ja vastaanottamista.

☐ Facebook
☐ Instagram
☐ Twitter
☐ Linkedin
☐ YouTube
☐ Snapchat
☐ Joku muu, mikä? [_____]
☐ Minulla ei ole mitään sosiaalisen median tilejä

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

---

### Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista viestiminen sosiaalisessa mediassa

HUOM: Viestimisellä tarkoitetaan tässä yhteydessä vastaajan omaa tapahtumia koskevaa tiedonjakamista sosiaalisessa mediassa.

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

## Viestin Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa. *

◯ En ollenkaan ◯ Harvoin ◯ Viikottain ◯ Päivittäin

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

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## Koen itselleni luontevana käyttää näitä sosiaalisen median kanavia Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista viestimiseen. *

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

|  | En ollenkaan | Harvoin | Viikottain | Päivittäin |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facebook | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Instagram | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Twitter | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Linkedin | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| YouTube | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Snapchat | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

### Joku muu, mikä?

<-- Edellinen    Seuraava -->

## Syitä, miksi en viesti Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa. *

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

|  | Eri mieltä | Jokseenkin eri mieltä | Jokseenkin samaa mieltä | Samaa mieltä |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kaipaisin lisätietoa tapahtumista viestiäkseni niistä | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Kaipaisin yritykseltä koulutusta sosiaalisessa mediassa viestimiseen | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Haluan käyttää sosiaalista mediaa vain yksityiskäyttöön | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| En tuota sosiaaliseen mediaan muutenkaan sisältöä | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumia on liian paljon viestiäkseni niistä | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| En halua viestiä tapahtumista, joista en ole kiinnostunut | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Pelkään spämmääväni kavereitani | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Pelkään että kaverini alkavat pyytämään minulta lippuja tapahtumiin | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Pelkään, että kaverini alkavat kysellä lisätietoja, joita minulla ei ole | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Pelkään herättäväni negatiivista keskustelua sosiaalisessa mediassa | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| En koe, että se kuuluu työnkuvaani | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

### Joku muu syy, mikä?

<-- Edellinen    Seuraava -->

Osallistumismerkinnät Live Nation Finlandin luomiin Facebook tapahtumiin
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

### Merkitsen itseni osallistujaksi Live Nation Finlandin luomiin Facebook-tapahtumiin.
*

(HUOM: Osallistujaksi merkitsemisellä tarkoitetaan tässä yhteydessä vastaamista myönteisesti (olen kiinnostunut / osallistun/ ehkä osallistun) tapahtumakutsuun.)

○ En ollenkaan ○ Harvoin ○ Silloin tällöin ○ Usein ○ Lähes aina

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

### Merkitsen itseni osallistujaksi Live Nation Finlandin luomiin Facebook-tapahtumiin *
HUOM: voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon! *-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

☐ Vaikka en olisi osallistumassa tapahtumaan
☐ Kun mahdollisesti olen osallistumassa tapahtumaan
☐ Kun tiedän osallistuvani tapahtumaan
☐ Kun haluan vinkata Facebook-kavereilleni tapahtumasta
☐ Kun satun huomaamaan tapahtuman
☐ Kun saan tapahtumaan Facebookissa kutsun
☐ Joku muu syy, mikä? _____

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

### En merkitse itseäni osallistujaksi Live Nation Finlandin luomaan yksittäiseen tapahtumaan koska *
HUOM: voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon! *-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

☐ Haluan merkitä itseni osallistujaksi vain tapahtumiin, joihin osallistun
☐ En halua jakaa Facebook-kavereilleni tietoa tapahtumista
☐ En tiedä olenko osallistumassa tapahtumaan
☐ En halua saada muistutuksia tapahtumaan liittyen
☐ En saa Facebookissa Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumakutsuja
☐ Joku muu syy, mikä? _____

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

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Tägääminen ja tapahtuman sijaintitietojen jakaminen
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

## Mieluisin tapani jakaa tapahtumiin liittyvää sisältöä on *

| | En ollenkaan | Harvoin | Silloin tällöin | Usein | Lähes aina |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Klikkaamalla itseni osallistujaksi Facebook-tapahtumaan | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Facebook-tapahtuman jakaminen aikajanallani kavereilleni | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Live Nation Finlandin Facebook-postausten jakaminen | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tägäämällä itseni tapahtumapäivänä Facebook-tapahtumaan | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumassa ottamieni kuvien ja videoiden jakaminen Facebookissa | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Facebook Liven tekeminen tapahtumista | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumassa ottamieni kuvien ja videoiden jakaminen Instagramissa | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumassa ottamieni kuvien ja videoiden jakaminen Instagram Storiesiin | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Live Nation Finladin postaamien kuvien jakaminen Instagramissa | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumassa ottamieni kuvien ja videoiden twiittaaminen | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Live Nation Finlandin twiittien re-twiittaaminen | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tapahtumassa ottamieni kuvien tai videoiden jakaminen Snapchatissa | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

## Jotain muuta, mitä?

```
[                                                    ]
```

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]


Mahdollinen muutos Live Nationin tapahtumista viestimiseen sosiaalisessa mediassa
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

## Koen että viestimiseni Live Nationin järjestämistä tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa on tämän vuoden aikana *

○ Vähentynyt  ○ Pysynyt samana  ○ Kasvanut

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]


## Kerro millä tavoin viestimisesi on kasvanut *

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä. HUOM: voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon!

☐ Olen viestinyt Live Nationin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa useammin kuin ennen.
☐ Olen ollut rohkeampi viestimään Live Nationin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa.
☐ Olen ottanut käyttöön uusia sosiaalisen median kanavia.

## Jotenkin muuten, miten?

```
[                                                    ]
```

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

Halukkuus Live Nationin tapahtumista viestimiseen sosiaalisessa mediassa

### *Voisin kuvitella viestiväni Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa nykyistä enemmän. ***

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

⚪ Kyllä
⚪ Ei

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

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Halukkuus Live Nationin tapahtumista viestimiseen sosiaalisessa mediassa
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

### *Valitse alla olevista väittämistä ne, jotka ensisijaisesti vaikuttaisivat halukkuuteesi viestiä nykyistä enemmän Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa. ***

HUOM: voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon!

☐ Tunnen ylpeyttä tapahtumistamme
☐ Tunnen ylpeyttä tiimistämme
☐ Tunnen ylpeyttä omasta työstäni
☐ Tunnen ylpeyttä työpaikastani
☐ Haluan oppia käyttämään sosiaalista mediaa nykyistä paremmin
☐ Hyödyn siitä henkilökohtaisesti
☐ Mikäli viestimisestäni on käytännön hyötyä tapahtumien lipunmyynnille
☐ Mikäli saan säännöllisesti tietoa tapahtumista
☐ Mikäli se sisältyy työnkuvaani
☐ Mikäli minua osallistettaisiin enemmän tapahtumista viestimiseen
☐ Mikäli saisin enemmän palautetta some-viestinnästäni
☐ Mikäli minua kannustettaisiin enemmän some-viestintään
☐ Mikäli tavoitteet somessa viestimiselle olisivat selkeämpiä
☐ Mikäli muut työntekijät viestisivät enemmän
☐ Mikäli esimieheni viestisi enemmän
☐ Joku muu syy, mikä? [                    ]

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

---

Ei halukkuutta Live Nationin tapahtumista viestimiseen sosiaalisessa mediassa
*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

### *Vastasit, ettet voisi kuvitella viestiväsi Live Nation Finlandin tapahtumista sosiaalisessa mediassa nykyistä enemmän. Kerro lyhyesti miksi et? ***

[                                        ]

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

Sosiaalisen median koulutus

*-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

### Toivoisin yritykseltä lisää koulutusta sosiaalisessa mediassa viestimiseen yrityksen edustajana. *

◯ Kyllä ◯ En osaa sanoa ◯ En

### Mikäli vastasit kyllä, millaista koulutusta haluaisit saada lisää? Voit esim. luetella aihepiirejä, toteutustapoja jne.

[ ]

[<-- Edellinen] [Seuraava -->]

Taustatiedot

Vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti eikä vastauksia yhdistetä yksittäisiin työntekijöihin. *-merkintä kysymyksen perässä tarkoittaa pakollista kysymystä.

### Työskentelen *

◯ Markkinoinnissa / Events Clubissa / Partnership-osastolla
◯ Promoottorina tai agenttina
◯ Projektikoordinaattorina
◯ Talousosastolla
◯ Tuotanto-osastolla
◯ Muu (esim. respa, ticketing, management)
◯ En halua kertoa

### Ikä *

◯ 18-37
◯ 38-50
◯ 50+

### Olen työskennellyt yrityksessä *

◯ alle vuoden
◯ 1-4 vuotta
◯ yli 4 vuotta

[<-- Edellinen] [Lähetä]

**Appendix 6. Email interview questions for the company's Marketing Director.**

1. Onko henkilökunnan tapahtumista viestiminen sosiaalisessa mediassa mielestäsi muuttunut kuluneen puolen vuoden aikana?
2. Mikäli mielestäsi on muuttunut, millä tavoin? Miten se on näkynyt?
3. Mikä vaikutus kehitysprojektilla on ollut työyhteisöön?
4. Vapaat kommentit / muita huomioita aiheeseen liittyen?