

Market Communication for small breweries in Finland

An overview of commonly used social network platforms

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<p>Sammandrag:</p> <p>Mängden småbryggerier har ökat kraftigt under de senaste åren i Finland. I början av 2018 fanns det fler än 130 stycken i landet och på grund av konkurrensen var det viktigt att skilja sig från mängden. Eftersom flera småbryggerier hade en begränsad budget, har flera fokuserat på att kommunicera med sina kunder genom sociala nätverk. Syftet med det här arbetet var att analysera kommunikationen på sociala medier och undersöka hurudant innehåll som har publicerats av småbryggerierna på de olika sociala medierna. Forskningsfrågorna var: Hur kommunicerar småbryggerier med deras kundmålgrupp i sociala medier? Vilken sorts innehåll publiceras på de olika plattformarna? Vad är skillnaden i innehållet på de olika sociala nätverken? Den här texten inkluderade inte reklam eller sökmotoroptimering, eftersom det fanns begränsat utrymme att diskutera ämnena här. Teorin beskrev de planerade Alkoholagstiftningsförändringarna i Finland samt forskning om vad som är värdefullt innehåll och vad man borde tänka på när man publicerar innehåll på sociala medier. Materialet för forskningen var artiklar, böcker, webbsidor, sociala nätverk, statistik och mobilapplikationen UnTappd. Författaren valde att analysera 20 småbryggeriers kommunikation på de sociala medierna Facebook, Instagram, UnTappd och Twitter mellan 20.12.2017 och 19.01.2018. Småbryggerier från olika städer i Finland och av olika storlek valdes ut. Resultaten bekräftade teorin om att det är viktigt att inkludera en bild i en publikation. Kombinationen av text och bild var den vanligaste formen av innehåll i Facebook, följt av länkar till olika webbsidor och bloggar (som även inkluderade bilder), följt av videor. I Instagram var bilder med text den vanligaste formen av innehåll, följt av endast bilder. Mobilapplikationen UnTappd användes främst för att berätta om utbudet av olika öl som småbryggerin erbjuder och som folk kan recensera och betygsätta. Bloggar användes mycket sparsamt av småbryggerierna. Resultaten pekade på att det var viktigt att skapa innehåll som är informativt, engagerande och underhållande och som tilltalar följaren. För att nå följare med olika behov och smaker rekommenderades att man regelbundet publicerar ett brett utbud av olika sorters innehåll.</p>	

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<p>Abstract: The amounts of small breweries in Finland have been growing at a rapid pace, yet the total market share of the 130 small breweries is still less than 5% in the country. This points out the need to differentiate yourself from the competitors. Small breweries often have a limited budget and the social network platforms have been found to be suitable platforms to communicate with customers. The aim of the thesis is to find how market communication in the form of producing interesting content can be a useful method to differentiate yourself from the competitors and making your product known and creating awareness of your company. How do small breweries communicate with people through social media? What kind of content is posted on the different platforms? The method is to analyze the content produced on 20 small breweries social network page by grouping posts into categories and looking at ratios of comments, likes, amounts of followers. The study is not considering Search Engine Marketing and advertising as they are beyond the scope to discuss here. The theory discusses the Finnish Alcohol Law, Branding, Social Networks and what kind of content makes people engage with the company. The expected results point out that a range of different content styles, ranging from text, pictures, video, blogs can be useful to reach a wide range of people.</p>	
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<p>Pienpanimoiden määrä on kasvanut vahvasti Suomessa voimakkaasti viime vuosina, vaikka reilun 130 pienpanimon markkinaosuus on ainoastaan alle 5% Suomessa. Tämän takia on tärkeää erottautua kilpailijoista. Pienpanimoilla on usein rajattu budjetti ja sosiaalinen media on osoittautunut tärkeäksi markkinointialustaksi yrityksille, jossa he voivat olla yhteyksissä asiakkaidensa kanssa. Tämän lopputyön tarkoitus on tutkia miten markkinointikommunikointi kuten arvokkaan, hyödyllisen, sisällön tuottaminen voi olla tärkeä tapa erottautua kilpailijoista ja myös edesauttaa yrityksiä tiedottamaan tuotteistaan ja rakentamaan yrityksen mainetta. Miten pienpanimot kommunikoivat asiakkaidensa kanssa käyttäen sosiaalista mediaa? Minkälaista sisältöä julkaistaan eri sivustoilla? Menetelmänä analysoidaan 20 pienpanimon sosiaalisen median sisältöä ja jaetaan yrityksen sisältötuotantoa eri ryhmiin, esim. vertailemalla kommentien, tykkäysten ja seuraajien määriä. Tämä tutkielma ei ota huomioon hakukoneoptimointia tai mainontaa, rajallisen tilan takia. Teoria käsittelee Suomen Alkoholilainsäädäntöä, sosiaalista mediaa ja minkälainen sisältö miellyttää ihmisiä ja saa heidät olemaan yhteyksissä yrityksiin. Tulokset osoittavat että sekoitus erilaista sisältöä, esim. tekstiä, kuvia, blogeja, videoita voi olla hyödyllisiä saavuttamaan suuren yleisön mielenkiinnon. On hyvä pitää mielessä että eri kanavilla ja sivustoilla on niille omat sopivimmat sisältötyylit.</p>	
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1 RESEARCH TOPIC

1.1 Introduction

In the last few years the amounts of small breweries in Finland have increased significantly. This development has also taken place around the world, with an increasing pace in the last decade or so. In Finland during the last two years the amounts of small breweries have doubled in number to reach over 120 in total (Suomen Pienpanimot 2017). The definition of a small brewery is an annual production of less than 15 000 000L (YLE). However, most of the small breweries produce less than 500 000L/year. There is an incentive to limit production, because of a tax discount which decreases as the production increases. If the production is less than 500 000L they get a 50% discount of the alcohol tax; 30% discount for <3 000 000L; 20% discount for <5 500 000L and 10% discount for <10 000 000L (Finlex 2017). There has been a debate around introducing a term “handcraft brewery” which would include breweries with a production of max 500 000L/year (Viisitähdeä 2017). The three largest small breweries produce around 80% of all small brewery beer.

The development is visible in the retail environment with an ever-increasing selection for the customers in the retail supermarkets (yet the small breweries account for only around 5% of the market) (Tiilola 2015). This growth of small breweries have taken place, while the total beer consumption in the country has actually decreased (Panimoliitto 2016). In this challenging and competitive environment, it’s important to be noticed. There are different ways how you can try to reach customers and make your product known. Considering the legal limitations in pricing and promotion, the small breweries have to get creative in reaching out and making themselves known for the customers.

The focus is to see how you can communicate with your followers through social networks online. Producing interesting content can be a useful method to differentiate yourself from the competitors and making your product known.

1.2 Research aim

In this quickly growing field, which is limited by legal restrictions, it is challenging to grow and compete with other companies. What kind of strategies a company implement can be of critical importance. In this thesis the author will discuss how market communication in the social media can be used by the small breweries to reach out to the public by creating content on the different social network platforms. Both parties can co-create value together. He will analyze the communication on social media channels and see how different aspects such what kind of content is posted by the small breweries on the different social media platforms and how people are reacting to these activities on the platforms.

1.3 Research questions

How do small breweries communicate with their target customer groups through social media?

What kind of content is posted on the different platforms? What are the content differences across the social network sites?

1.4 Limitations

This text will not consider advertising practices nor search engine optimization (SEO) as there is limited space for discussing these topics here in an adequate manner. The main focus of this text is discussing the content produced by the small breweries on their social network sites as well as a few beer social media applications. The content of each post will not be analyzed deeply as it is beyond the scope of this work.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The growing number of small breweries and the increasing selection of their products has provided the customers an ever-growing assortment to choose a product from. This development took first place in the US in the 1990's and later in Western Europe. The growth has been quite remarkable and because of the rapidly increased competition it's

increasingly important to stand out from the competition and to differentiate your product from others'. Some research has been conducted in the industry of small breweries and craft breweries e.g. (Gatrell et al. 2017), (Murray & Neill 2012).

In recent three years some theses have been written in Finland about small breweries. Santeri Virstajärvi (2015) has analyzed if craft breweries are trendy and profitable. Petri Sjöblom (2017) has also written about the profitability. Jonne Lahti (2016) has written about the customer profiles of craft beer drinkers in the capital region in Finland, Petri Hämäläinen (2015) has also analyzed customer profiles, but in the Vaasa and Seinäjoki region.

Jani Hovi's (2016) thesis is about the brand building of an existing craft beer brewery and it discusses how a company can stand out from the competition. Ville Tiilola (2016) has researched how the packaging of the small brewery beer affects the purchase preference for the consumers in retail shops. Benjamin Lahnalampi (2016) has written about marketing of small breweries, based on interviews with three different small breweries. One article from Denmark by Kjelgaard et al. (2017) and one from England (Thurnell-Read 2016) have looked at how a domestic brewer's organization and its members have influenced the market and helped to facilitate a growing interest in craft beer from the population.

The service and communication between the different parties, surrounding the product has not been discussed to the same extent as the product and determinants surrounding the choice of the product. This thesis aims to bridge that gap by analyzing the communication between the small brewery and the followers of the company on social networks. It will discuss the effects of communication through online social network presence where the brewer is present and consider how this type of communication can add value to the company, in this case the small brewery.

This thesis will focus on the dialogue and communication between the social network followers and the small breweries, which includes beer rating sites like UnTappd.

“As customers become more intimately intertwined with each other, with suppliers and with other network actors, the boundaries between previously taken-for-granted categories and roles become fuzzy and overlapping. Should they be considered parties or are they just one?” (Gummesson 2008:12) This thesis will discuss the interplay between the small breweries and the followers on the social networks.

Considering the limited financial resources that many small breweries have, especially in the beginning, communication through the internet can provide cost-effective and convenient ways to reach prospective customers and communicating ideas about a company. Given that there are legal restrictions (which will be briefly mentioned below) to the kind of marketing and promotion that can be done, small breweries have to use all the methods available in raising awareness of their company and their product. It's important to balance between following customer trends and with making the kind of beer that the company perceives and/or knows they can do, which also has a substantial enough target group of prospective customers.

2.1 Alcohol Law

The Alcohol law in Finland limits certain marketing and pricing possibilities for the breweries.

As a general rule the advertising of alcoholic beverages with an alcoholic content of <22% is allowed. There are a number of exceptions to the rule, below are some examples.

Regarding pricing; it's not allowed to sell a package with many products cheaper than it would be to buy an individual unit separately (Alkoholiasiat ravintolassa 2014:2.2.1)

It's forbidden to advertise or indirectly advertise a product if the alcohol content of the drink is portrayed as a positive feature or if the consumption of alcohol is pictured as increasing performance, social or sexual success (Alcohol law in Finland 1994)

It's forbidden to organize free tastings or to give coupons for one free drink in restaurant X (Alkoholiasiat ravintolassa: 2014:2.3).

It's forbidden to organize games, lottery or competition where you can win alcoholic beverages (ibid: 2014:2.4).

It's forbidden to create attention by using big sized advertising or to describe the product in a clearly advertising manner outside the selling location, describing the quality, taste or other qualities (ibid: 2014:2.9).

It's forbidden to share customers own drinking pictures and videos online through social media or different communities. The advertiser shall not urge or encourage customers to share content that the advertiser has produced or that the customer has produced that can be deemed as alcohol advertising in the data network that the advertiser manages (Alkoholiasiat ravintolassa 2014: 2.10).

It's allowed to advertise alcoholic drinks (<22%) on traditional websites and on social media services, as long as the sharing function restrictions are taken into account and the possibility to write on the page and comment is blocked or the advertiser removes customers comments that are considered to be alcohol advertising. However, if the customer created content's principal message is not related to alcoholic beverages, there is no need to delete it (Alkoholiasiat ravintolassa 2014).

2.1.1 Proposed changes

Changes have been proposed to the Finnish Alcohol law dating from 1994 and these proposed changes have been much debated in the parliament, discussions are still on going. Voting on the changes of the law is likely to take place on December 13th in the Parliament (Alcohol Law Change Debate 2017).

The new law would propose, for example: drinks sold in the retail stores would have a maximum alcohol percentage of 5.5% from the previous 4.7% and the requirement of them being produced by fermentation method would disappear. Independent and small breweries (with an annual production of <500 000L) could directly sell their products with an alcohol content up to 12% to customers at the production sites. Happy hour advertising would not be illegal anymore. Restaurants would also be able to sell out alcoholic beverages between the hours 9-21 with the same rules as retail stores (Alcohol Law Renewal 2017).

Some of these proposed changes like the possibility to buy product straight from the production site and as ‘take-away’ from restaurants would increase the availability of small brewery products from the previous law, according to which all products above 4.7% can only be sold at Alko, the state alcohol monopoly, or from restaurants and bars.

Since 1st of March 2018 the new whole Alcohol Law came into power (some parts did already on 1.1.2018) (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2018).

2.2 Brand image

The image of the brand or product can be formed from: the website, packaging, point of sale, PR, advertising, exhibitions, word of mouth and the actual experience of the product. Considering the customer does not have an experience of the product yet, it’s important to try and convey what the product stands for and why the customer should try it instead of other (competing) products. As for the value of brands, it has been shown that identical products that have different brand names cause divergent consumer preferences. From another perspective it can be that products vary physically, however if they don’t have a label or a brand name, it can be very difficult for the consumers to tell the products apart (Riezebos 2003:12).

There are two categories of attributes of a product, *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*. The intrinsic attribute includes functional aspects: e.g. taste; aesthetic aspects: design, colour; structural aspects: shape, form. Extrinsic attributes include things like: brand name, information about the product, packaging and price. The importance of the different categories of attributes or the functional aspects, differ depending on the product type. For some product groups it can be impossible to tell the performance of the branded product before purchase, in this case, the effect of the brand name can be high or very high. Examples of such product groups are e.g. pre-packaged foods and drink products. For these kind of groups consumers have to primarily rely on the extrinsic attributes, when making a decision (considering they have not previous experience or information about the brand in question) (Riezebos 2003:40-45).

This points out to why small breweries with often a limited advertising budget are using eye-catching names and carefully designing the etiquettes of their products to entice customers to choose them, instead of their competitors, as new customers do not have a

guarantee in how the product will actually taste like, and the extrinsic attributes can aid them in their decision-making (Riezebos: 2003:47). Consumers can use branded products to communicate to other people which groups they want to belong to or belong to and by avoiding or using some brands, consumers can try to tell what kind of person they are not or what kind of person they are (ibid:2003:45).

A development that has increasingly taken place after the 21st Century is the move from the idea of the brand being just an extra benefit of a product to being a *concept*. Today there are an increasing amount of companies that establish brands which they hope will be liked by some particular groups of consumers. The core idea of the brand concept is that a powerful and attractive idea is introduced which is not that clearly linked to product advantages, rather more to a lifestyle which is related to the brand. This also means that the relationship management is increasingly important (compared to transaction management) as the brand can be considered to connect the company with the brand customer/consumer (Riezebos 2003:15).

2.2.1 Communication level Co-branding

Co-branding refers to a collaboration between brands which is made apparent to the consumers. It's most recommended to do if there is an added value difference between the brands. It could be useful if the brand needs a *quality perception boost* (Riezebos2003:98). The idea is that if the customers have a very positive attitude to *brand B* and you (*brand A*) collaborate with them, the customers opinion of your brand should be expected to be a little bit positive from the beginning, as the likelihood to try the *AB* product should be higher and if they like it, they should be expected to have a positive attitude of brand A as well (Riezebos 2003:75). This is especially useful for branded products which quality is unknown before purchase, such as packaged foods and drinks. The value of this collaboration for the smaller company is highest if the brand that has the higher reputation is vulnerable to receive negative feedback (Riezebos 2003:98).

One of the benefits of Co-branding is that it can be a low-budget way to develop the brand. Small breweries collaborate with other small breweries, brew together and should be aware which other companies are well-liked and respected and try to connect them to their own company or do collaborations, if possible.

2.3 Social media

Social networking sites have enabled new ways to communicate, interact, socialize, learn, entertain and make decisions as well as buying products (Sabate et al. 2014:1001).

“Social media is the term commonly given to Internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement” (Chaffey & Smith 2013:214).

The needs of information, social interaction and entertainment have been found out to be the main ones that people want to fulfil while using pages on the social media (Wagner et al. 2017:608). There should be a plan to consider what communication approaches can be used across the different platforms and what approaches should be specific for the platform, as there are some variations in the style, suitable content and tone of each platform, e.g. more frequent updates are more common for Twitter compared to Facebook (Chaffey & Smith 2013:263). The social networks mentioned below are networks that have been found to be used by small breweries.

2.3.1 Social networks

Facebook is the biggest social network in the world. In 8 years since its start Facebook has collected over 1 billion users (Kohli et al. 2015:37). For the last quarter of 2016 they reported having 1860 million active users every month (Schulz 2017:27). Facebook is regarded by many companies to be the most appealing social media platform for marketing, especially for B2C companies (Pletikosa & Michahelles 2013:846). Recently after March 2018, Facebook changed their algorithm on their News Feed to focus more on friends' and family's publication than from businesses, however the effects of these changes for the businesses are still unclear (Oberlo 2018).

Instagram is owned by Facebook, it's used to share pictures with people you choose. There is an option to share the same picture also on Facebook. People can like and comment pictures, tag people and write hashtag, by which you can sort pictures with the same hashtags. Hashtags help to categorize the word that comes after the hashtag sym-

bol # (Hashtag 2018). For example, by writing “#brewery”, people can search through all posts that other people have made that includes the same written hashtag “#brewery”, this is can be useful e.g. if there are trending topics. Another function is stories, which can be pictures or videos that last only for 24h and it can be interactive, such as asking a question to choose between two alternatives, and the followers can vote for the option they prefer (Instagram 2017).

The Facebook brand pages can be used e.g. 1) to create contacts 2) communicate with current customers 3) share content from your website or blog 4) gather a community around a topic that interests them 5) managing events and communication surrounding them. It's free to create a page for an organization. The three most central functions in a Facebook page are:

Like-button-by which members of Facebook can become followers of a page.

Tabs-through which users can navigate between different parts of the page. The amounts of tabs and their content vary, but all pages have wall, information and images-tabs.

Publisher-through which content can be added to the wall of the Facebook-page (Juslén 2011:245).

Through participation in brand communities, as in Facebook pages of certain brands and companies, members can post messages, reply to comments and spread word-of mouth opinions, share content about specific brands as well as interact with other people who may have the same interests (Zheng et al. 2015:95).

The small brewery Facebook (brand) pages main purpose is to provide an experience which tells about the brand. This experience is supported with content marketing and there can be interaction between members. These kind of “brand-building” sites are typical for high-value low-value fast moving consumer goods, also known as (FMCG brands) (Chaffey & Smith 2013:12)

Social media can make brands appear more human and interactive, compared to other traditional channels of media. Generally, companies answer questions quicker on Facebook and people appreciate if the communication is more conversational, which also has a positive effect on the brand attitudes (Beukebom et al. 2015:28).

Social Networks can be used for advertising, product development (together with customers) and for looking at and analysing user generated content. Social media marketing can be considered to be a variation of the *word-of-mouth* marketing as one of the intentions is to try and influence how consumers communicate with each other about the company. Through observing conversations and following users' feedback the company may learn about what the customers need, which can eventually lead to co-creation of value if the members ideas are used in creating new ideas (Pletikosa & Michahelles 2013:843-4).

There are different measures that have been used to analyse the "engagement", like click-through rates and page views (depending on the platform) (ibid:2013:845) (ADD extra sources?) Another thing that can be done is to look at the audience engagement, which could be calculated e.g. by dividing the amount of likes or shares a post get, divided by the total amount of followers of the brand (Rowles 2014:138).

2.3.2 Valuable content

Valuable content includes the knowledge, words, information that the companies share for their customers. This content can e.g. help, educate, entertain or inspire their customers. It needs to be noted that the supposed value of some content might change greatly depending on the receiver and their needs. "*All advertisers need a lot more content so that they can keep the engagement with consumers fresh and relevant, because of the 24/7 connectivity. If you're going to be successful around the world, you have to have fat and fertile ideas at the core*" (Jefferson & Tanton 2013:27).

Valuable content includes: *Spotlight*-so they find you (tell them what you do or help), *Star quality*-to make you stand out from the competition, *Buzz*-people talking about and referring to you-*Shelf life*-make people remember you when they will buy, *Personality*-helps to make people like and trust you. As for *Buzz*, people generally will share something if they find it useful or interesting (ibid: 2013:28). It's good to try and show that you are useful for people, e.g. by solving their problems, rather than having an attitude of showing "Look how great this company is". The marketing communication should first add some benefit for the receiving party and secondly to your company. Sharing your knowledge for free can also help people to get a picture of the company as a credible and helpful (Jefferson & Tanton 2013:39-41)

Being able to create remarkable, noteworthy, highly interesting content can be of great value to the company. Content refers to the websites and its texts, as well as to pictures, videos, podcasts and user-generated content as well as interactive features on a page (Chaffey & Smith 2013:34). It can be useful to think and act like a publisher, to focus on making and providing content which is targeted straight to the followers (Scott 2011:28).

There has been some research in recent years regarding what kind of content people are looking for and appreciate on social media company pages (see Schulz 2017; Wagner et al. 2017). Muntinga (2011) and de Vries et al. (2012) mentions that entertainment and information feature as the main reasons why people would engage online with brand-related content. It has been argued whether a rational approach or an emotional approach is more effective for the brand. It can happen that some members of a brand page are looking for entertaining content and some more for information and depending on whether they come across the content they are after at that moment, they will be either satisfied or not and possibly engage with the post by e.g. liking it, commenting or sharing it (Wagner et al. 2017:609).

Schulz (2017) studied the characteristics of brand posts, by looking at the interactivity, vividness, content types, the length and time of the post as well as the number of fans. *Interactivity* means to what extent the brand posts invite the users to respond. Examples are: links to other websites, competitions, questions, votings, hashtags and calls to action. *Vividness* refers to how the information affects the different senses. For example, text, pictures and video all have a different level of vividness, ranging from low to medium and to high respectively. His aim was to see what kind of characteristics and content on social network sites lead to likes, comments and shares from the fans of the brand. As results of his research of apparel and food retailing brand's posts, 90.6% mainly used pictures in their posts. Comments increased with questions, votings, hashtags, contests as well as with a longer time at the top of the page. Food retail product promotions had a positive effect on comments and sharing, but for the retail brands they had a negative affect for liking (Schulz 2017:24-5).

A previous study by Pletikosa and Michahelles (2013) & Sabate et al. (2014) showed that vivid posts with informative and entertaining content increased the amounts of likes and shares that a brand post received. Status posts and posts with pictures lead to more likes and comments than posts with video and links. However, some other research points to posts with videos receiving increasing amounts of likes, comments and shares, but it also varies depending on the video length. The ideal amount of vividness is still debated as it can also depend on the interaction the company wants to get (Schulz 2017:25). Wagner et al. 2017 study agrees that attaching a picture has positive impact on the post popularity, but shared posts are not as popular as the original posts. Some research show that it's more likely that branded content will be shared on social network sites if it provides consumers a chance to give a good impression to others (Eelen et al. 2017:13).

Interactive brand posts, like questions and existing negative and positive comments increased the number of comments a post will receive. Basically, it's like a snowball effect, people prefer to comment if there are already other comments than if there are none or very few (Schulz 2017:25). In de Vries et al. (2012:88) study of 355 brand posts of 11 international brands, rather surprisingly (against the authors' hypothesis) entertaining posts were negatively associated with the number of likes.

There are varying opinions of what time is the best to post. Schulz (2017) research didn't find any difference in the time of the post. Some other research (de Vries et al. 2012 & Sabate et al. 2014:1003) have concluded that weekdays are better than weekends. As a general rule, it's more likely that fans would see a brand post and potentially be engaged with it, if it's created during the active peak hours when the fans are most likely to be online (Pletikosa&Michahelles 2013:848).

The frequency of posting has been debated, but it's very challenging to give clear guidelines, as it depends on the company's customers' expectations and of what your company have to do to meet the objectives. The content should be posted in a natural seeming way, rather than being something forced that is done every day, just because. However, the content that is posted should be interesting and valuable to the customers and it should be posted regularly (Chaffey & Smith 2013:245).

2.3.3 Ways to engage with customers

The company should also listen to what people are discussing in the industry, on competitors' pages and about their own company to understand what the public find interesting, which helps the company to participate and post relevant content in the future.

It can be difficult to encourage participation of people online. According to Jakob Nielsen, in Chaffey & Smith (2013:135), "*in most online communities, 90% of users are lurkers who never contribute, 9% of users contribute a little, and 1% of users account for almost all the action*". It should be made easy for people to contribute, comment and give ratings etc. Companies' goals should be to form relationships and it should be remembered that customers presence on social media is not for buying products, but more for exploring solutions and this means that companies should not push their products or brands excessively (Kohli et al. 2015:43).

A framework to engage customers while meeting your business objectives, called PRACE: *Plan*: carefully what to do, *Reach*: Create, publish and promote the content, *Act*: Make people find you and spend time on the site and like, comment things, *Convert*: Try to get people to buy, *Engage*: People liking and advocating you, reviews, reorders (Chaffey & Smith 2013:44). It's been said that a recommendation from a trustworthy friend communicating an appropriate message can be up to 50 times more likely to make you purchase something compared to a recommendation from someone else (Chaffey & Smith 2013:141). It takes effort and time to build emotional connections. The challenge for companies in the social media is that it's harder to control them there than on the traditional media as consumers tend to trust other users more than sponsored advertisements and this emphasizes the need for the brands to be more open about what they do and the transparency and authenticity will be important qualities to possess (Kohli et al.2015:38).

2.3.4 Mobile applications

Considering that many people use apps to reach social network sites, it's necessary to consider and monitor how the content published looks on smaller screens on phones and tablets. The content should be mobile optimized and not only mobile compatible. This means that the content people are looking for should still be found in the mobile opti-

mized version, people should not need to change to the computer to find what they're looking for (Rowles 2014:44). The user journey can also look different, which is something to consider when analysing how customers find you (ibid: 2014:124). Most Mobile phones nowadays have a GPS system, which allows you to locate yourself, this system has been used by different companies and services to reach out for the customer, so that you can e.g. see which restaurants are close to you (ibid: 2014:194).

The app Untappd allows people to create a profile and save beers you have consumed (to track which ones you have tasted), rate them and write about them, and check-in to locations (bars, restaurants, events). People unlock "badges" based on how many different beers and beer styles they have tried. Other people can then see the total rating of a certain beer, so they can judge whether they want to try it or not. Many pubs and bars list their current beer selection on the app, which can be convenient if people are trying to find a certain beer. This can also help the small breweries to get people to find their products (Untappd 2017). There is another competing app with the same purpose called Pint Please, however their presence is smaller (PintPlease! 2017).

2.3.5 Blogs

With blogs a company can try to influence how people speak about your brand or company: by providing the latest correct information, which can often be found by journalists as some studies have proved that around half of them commonly read corporate blogs to discover news items and things to write about. Blogs can also help in improving the brand visibility and credibility: through giving the company/brand a more human voice, but also by getting higher rankings in search engines. Improving customer relations and getting quick responses in the form of comments, suggestions and complaints (Pelsmacker et al. 2010:590).

It's not advisable to delete negative comments from a blog, clear spam should be deleted, but not statements of disagreement. The blog should have interesting content and it shouldn't only be about the company or the products, but things that are interesting, informative and create value for the reader, such as solving customer's problems. Blogs can be used to ask questions, advice and to promote other people or events and link to other interesting content. If facts are posted they should be supported by sources and if

opinions are stated, it should be mentioned that they're opinions. The text should be easy to read, as in not too long paragraphs and concise (Brogan 2010:71-124).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Material

The data will be primarily collected from articles, books, publications, statistics. Electronic sources, such as social network pages, mobile applications (mainly UnTappd) blogs and forums of the brewers will also be looked into. Secondary quantitative data will be the primary source. The author will research the presence of the small breweries and collect the data, including year of foundation, number of followers on Facebook and their presence on various social media, the information will be used in this research as it shows which social media is relevant to analyze.

3.2 Approach

The methods that will be used are literature review, research and observation online on the various social media platforms. Theory, previous research around the topic and the later collected primary data will aid in answering the research questions.

3.3 Data collection

Some primary data has been collected regarding number of followers and year of foundation of breweries. There will be data collected regarding the content from different small breweries social media platforms. 20 breweries were chosen, with a convenient sample, as the aim was to have a variety of small breweries, representing cities all across Finland who have varying amounts of followers on the social media. The method of convenient sample was deemed adequate for this task considering that the focus was on the social media presence and a random sample could have led to choosing breweries that don't have any or have a very limited social media presence. The list of breweries can be found in the Appendix 1.1. Their content on their social media platform was analyzed, by grouping posts into different categories and by looking at ratios of likes,

comments, shares with the amount of followers of the company. The time period of the social media following was one month, lasting from 20.12.2017 to 19.01.2018. The secondary data will come from various sources as mentioned from literature and from e-journals and from blogs and social media.

3.4 Data analysis

The author will use quantitative analysis and an inductive approach, as he started collecting data regarding the breweries social media presence which led him to focus on certain theoretical aspects. The numerical data has been analyzed with Excel. Some features of deductive approach will be used as well, considering that the theoretical stance will be tested throughout the next data collection and analysis phase (Saunders et al. 2009:490).

3.5 Data interpretation

The data will be interpreted together with the theoretical framework to look at variations, comparisons and patterns in the findings, which will be discussed later in the Discussion section.

4 RESULTS

One month following the updates of the 20 chosen small breweries pages on Facebook and Instagram between 20.12.2017 to 19.01.2018 provided many insights and numbers to analyze and discuss. First Facebook findings will be analyzed, followed by Instagram. This section will explain the findings, which is followed by a discussion in the next chapter.

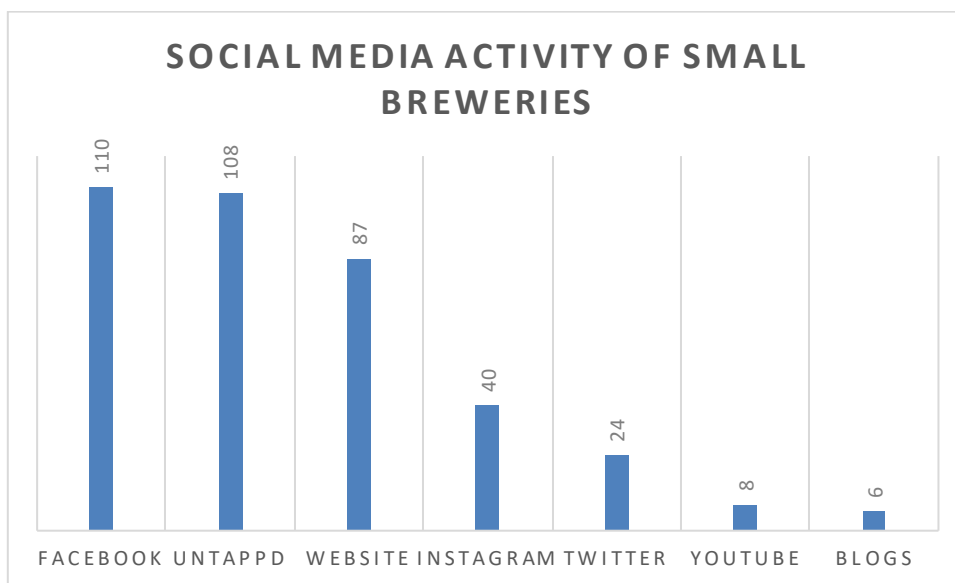


Figure 1.1 compiled by me. Out of the 112 small breweries observed this shows their social network presence.

The research by the author of the social media presence of small breweries in Finland revealed that Facebook is by far the most popular social media platform used for marketing, closely followed by UnTappd. It needs to be mentioned that 4 breweries did not have a presence on UnTappd, quite likely as they have not started their beer production yet (but they do have a Facebook page).

4.1 Communication with customers

There are different ways how the small breweries communicate with their customers through social media. The content varies a bit depending on which social media platform or application is being used.

4.1.1 On Facebook

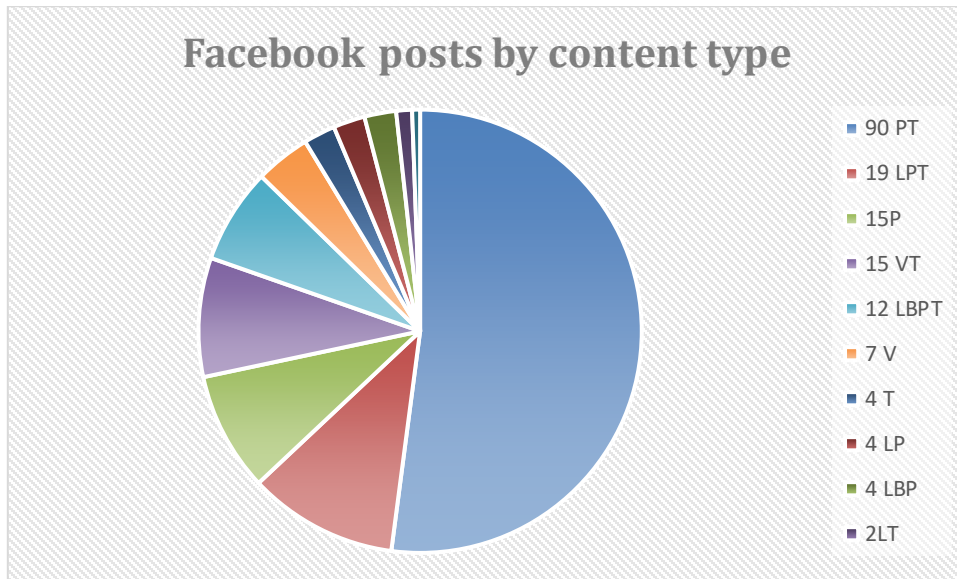


Figure 1.2 of

the different content types on Facebook (compiled by the author 09.04.2018).

This shows the most common posts on Facebook, divided by their content type. P=Picture, T=Text, V=Video, L=Link, B=Blog.

Connected to Schulz (2017) ideas, it can be seen that *vividness* is important, considering that 167 out of 173 posts contained vivid elements, mainly pictures and also videos. *Interactivity* was not as common, 39 out of 173 post included links, there was only three questions posted, one competition and hashtags were very scarcely used.

There are different ways how to split up the content type that the small breweries post. Grouping posts with picture and pictures and text accounted for 60,69% of the total amount of posts, followed by links to other websites/blogs/news 24,26% (almost all of them included a picture as well). Videos and videos with text stood for 12,71% for content and 3,46% of the content was text-only. The most common format was using a picture together with a text below, which was featured in 52,02% of all the posts. The next

most popular type of content was posting a link including a picture and text to another website 10,98%.

As can be seen for Facebook the most common method is to post updates to the followers including a piece of text together with a picture related to the text. The text tends to be quite short, most often less than four sentences long. The followers can like a post, comment it, or share it to other people. If a customer asks a question, they most often get an answer to the question as long as it's related to the brewery or is easy to reply to and does not involve controversial topics. The amount of comments increase if the post of the small brewery ends with a question, for example: "How will you spend your weekend?" Sharing is an activity which is mainly done by the followers, if the post is considered very informative, such as releasing a new product in many stores or entertaining (or a combination of them two).

It's quite common for the small breweries to share links to websites, blogs that have for example written favorably about them, their new releases, or e.g. met some of the owners. A small brewery called Hiisi demonstrated a more rare approach by posting two different bloggers' experience of one of their beer, saying that everyone tastes a beer in their own way. One review stated it was decent, quite average while the other liked it more. Another topic for posts was the (back then) upcoming Alcohol Law legislation which the small breweries tended to share articles and news about and also making jokes, belittling too strict legislation and later thanking the new legislation and the new opportunities it has given them, which the followers seem to have supported as well, considering there was no overt opposing views found in e.g. comments.

A rarer form of communication for the small breweries is videos. The videos are mainly embedded from another social media platform, YouTube, but can be seen and commented, shared and liked on Facebook. Depending on the settings the publisher of the video has set, by clicking on the video it takes you to YouTube, where you can like the video or comment it or save it, if you have a Google account.

As for the Facebook posts, the most common activity is liking the post, followed by commenting and lastly sharing, which happens quite rare. The total amount of updates on Facebook was 173, which means 8.65 per brewery. The most updates one brewery had was 29 (0,935 per day by Tornion Panimo) the least was 1 (Malmgård). The most

average likes per post a brewery had was 303.23 for Brewcats and the least was Top Fuel 10.33 per post. The most average comment amount was 14.42 for Saimaan Juomatehdas. The highest amounts of average shares per post was 11.11 for Fat Lizard.

The highest amount of likes per post was 1100 likes for Fat Lizard. This post was a picture of two of their staff standing outside by a car, by a building which was their new restaurant & bar they opened the next day. The post urged people to come and said that the fastest ones will get a bucket with cool stuff. Considering the amount of likes, comments and shares it's also advantageous, if the post is directed to a wide audience, rather than a narrower one. For example, after the previously mentioned post with 1100 likes, 28 comments and 27 shares, next day they posted how nice it's that there are so many home brewer (competition) contenders and remind people to submit their products to a bar in Helsinki. This post got a mere 11 likes and 1 share.

The highest amount of comments per one post was 93 for Brewcats. This was responses to the question, "What do you have in your glass on Christmas?" The highest amounts of shares per post was for Fat Lizard, 44 for a video. The video showed staff members who were working in a restaurant and who suddenly remember something and then they drive to their (then in construction) restaurant & bar where they have a slice of pizza, connect some tubes of the beer tap and also pour a beer in a glass and look happy.

Looking at relative numbers, the most likes in relation to amounts of followers was by Espoon Oma Panimo who got 38.5% of their followers to like a post (223 likes). The most amount of total activity for one post was achieved by Tornion Panimo who got 704 likes, 47 comments and 28 shares. The post was a picture of their new beer "Tornio Red Ale" and the text explained it's gluten free and brewed by the former brewmaster of Guinness. Ask for it in your shop". Most of the comments ask where it can be found, few say it's good, few say they don't like it.

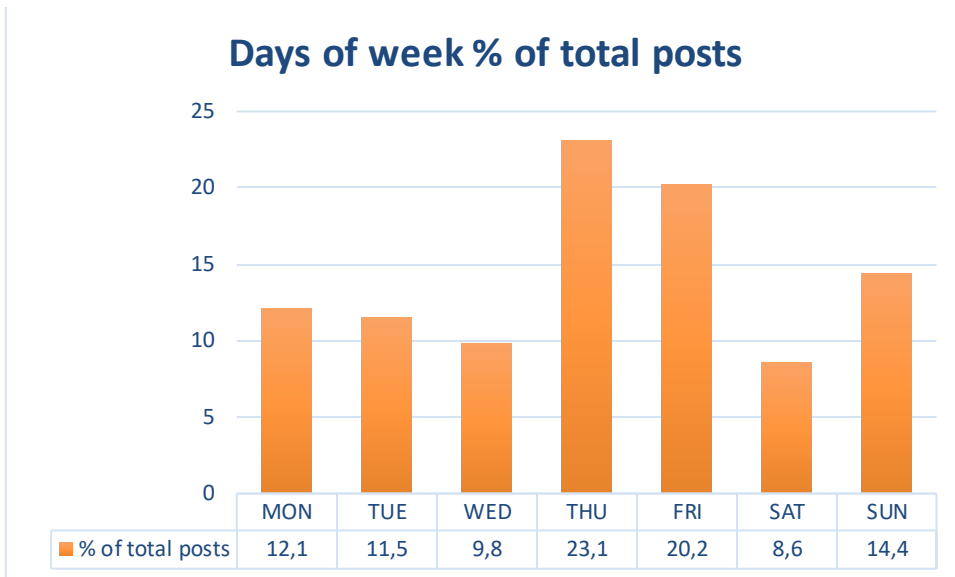


Figure 1.5

Shows when breweries posted content (compiled by the author (09.04.2018)).

This shows the percentage of posts posted on a given day of the week. Thursday was the most common day to post, followed by Friday. Saturday was the most uncommon day. 9 out of 20 breweries posted on Christmas Eve (Sunday) 10/20 posted on New Year's Eve (Sunday). It was rare to see posts posted between 21-08. Otherwise it was quite fairly distributed throughout the weekdays.

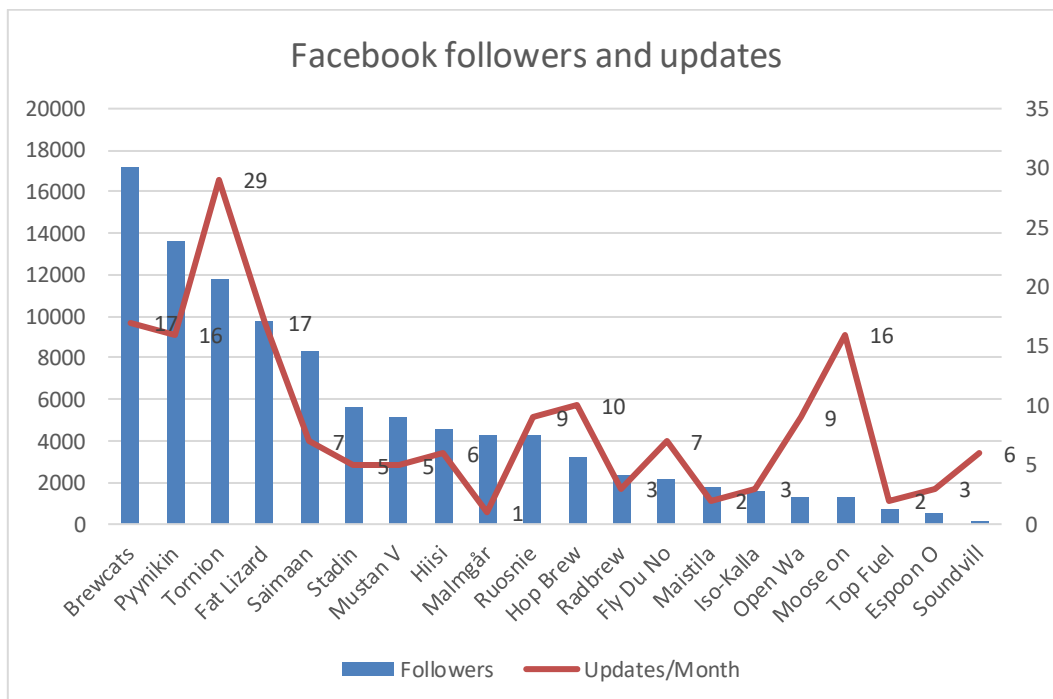


Figure 1.6 shows the relationship with Facebook followers and updates). (compiled by the author (09.03.2018)).

The table shows the amounts of followers on Facebook of the small breweries on the left side and the amount of posts during one month on the right hand. The breweries are organized in a descending order from the one with the most followers from the left to the right. As can be seen there is some relationship between amount of posts and amounts of followers for the four breweries with the biggest following, however after this the relationship between followers and posts gets more uneven.

4.1.2 Instagram

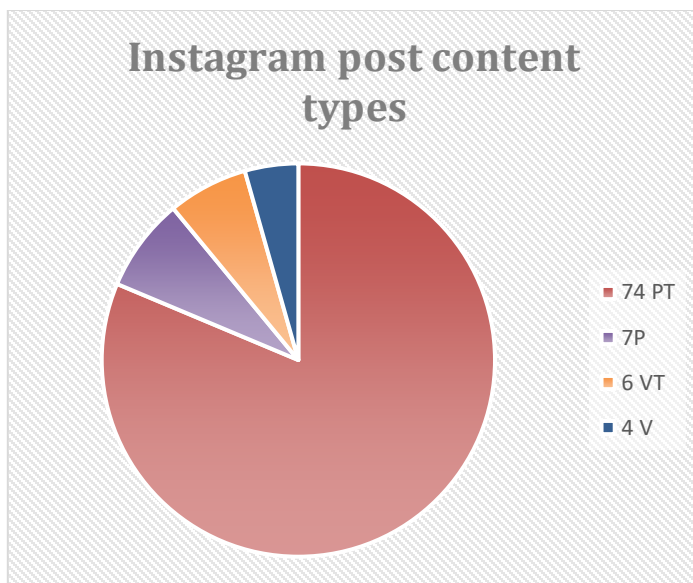


Figure 1.7 Shows the content types on Instagram (compiled by the author 09.04.2018).

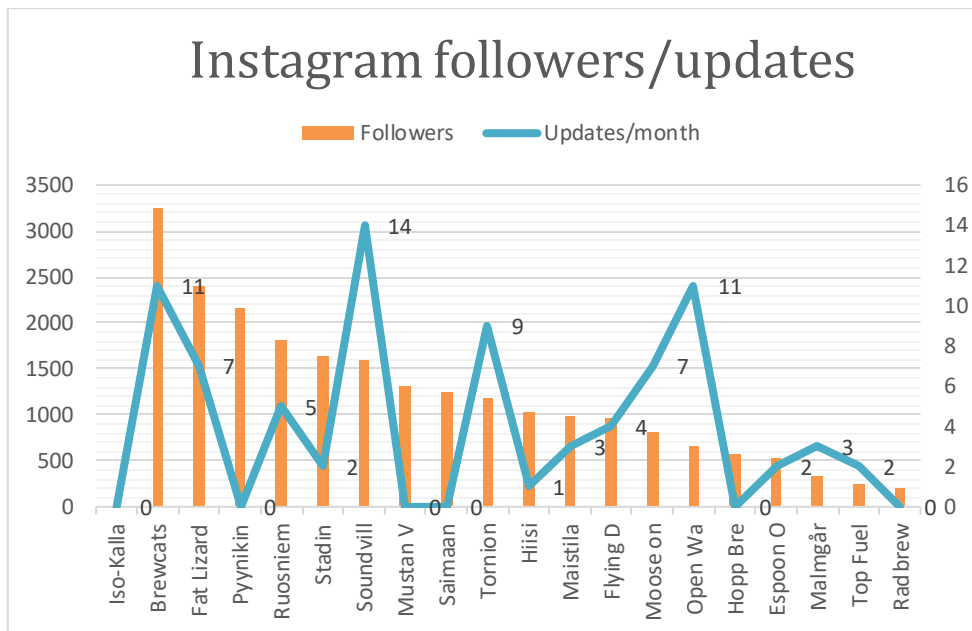
This shows the different types of content posted by the breweries. P=Picture, T=Text, V=Video. As can be seen Picture and text is by far the most common content to include in a post. 19/20 observed small breweries had an Instagram account page. 14/20 Small breweries had been active during 20.12.2017 to 19.1.2018. The total amount of Instagram updates was 91. Divided by amounts of active breweries 6.5 updates per small brewery.

The small breweries mainly use Instagram to post pictures and “stories” which can be pictures or short videos. These “stories” will disappear within 24 hours, which makes them more instant. The small breweries tended to use less text, if any (commonly max two sentences) when posting a picture on Instagram and they posted pictures without any text (more often than on Facebook). 44 out of 91 Instagram updates were the same as

on Facebook, excluding 3 who had different text, 3 had shorter text, 2 had different picture. One brewery included two pictures taken by their users in their updates!

The small brewery with the biggest amounts of average likes was Brewcats with 303 (Note: same amount as Facebook!) The most average comments was also by Brewcats 13,69 (Note: mainly because of one competition with 135 comments, otherwise average was around 3 (still most!). Espoon Oma Panimo also had the best ratio to likes/followers, with 68,19% of their followers liking one post. Most common updater was Moose on the Loose with updates every 0,548 day.

As for the content type 81,31% was a picture with text, followed by 7,69% picture, the remaining percentages was for video and text and video.



Figure

1.8 Shows relationship between Instagram followers and the amount of updates by the small breweries (compiled by author 09.03.2018).

This shows the relationships between amount of followers per small brewery and the amount of updates they post. As can be seen there is not a clear correlation between the two factors.

4.1.3 Website links to social media

All of the small breweries have a website.

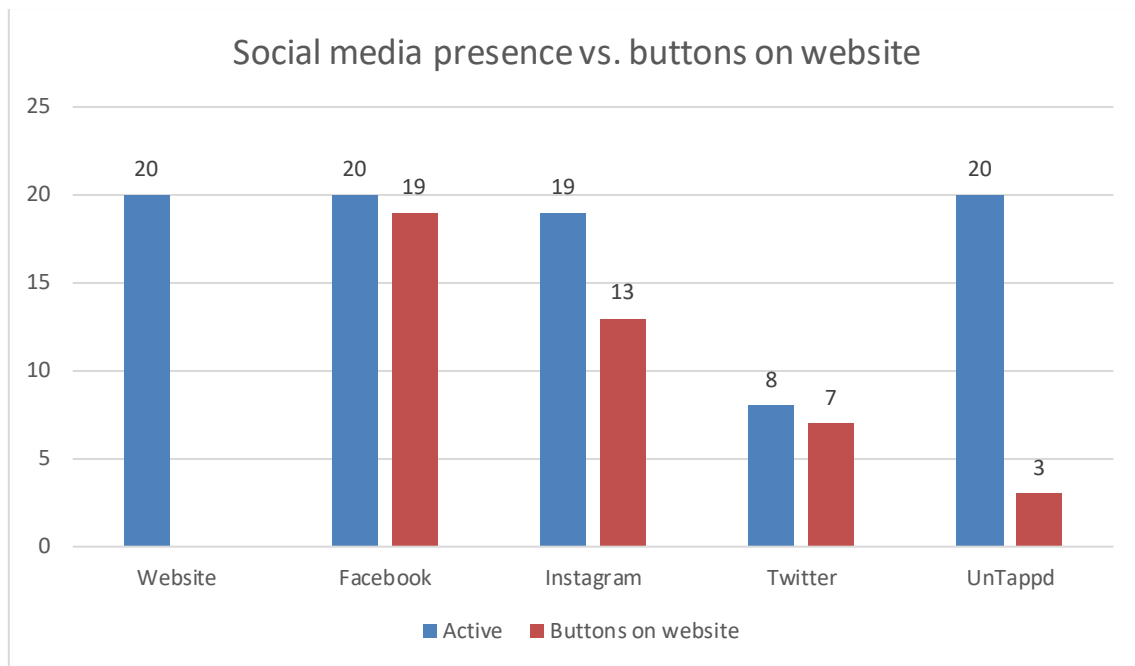


Figure 1.9. Shows the prevalence of social media buttons on websites (compiled by author 20.4.2018).

This table shows the activity of the small breweries researched and how many have buttons on their website directing to social media platforms compared to the amounts of platforms they're present in.

Noteworthy is that Soundville Brewing shows the link to UnTappd for each beer as well as their rating and also a Spotify playlist for each beer. Their beers are named after a certain music-style, e.g. Rap Battle IPA. Moose on the Loose Brewing Co. had a poll asking to vote for your favourite beer of theirs. Brewcats first page tell a short biography of the company and says come hang out with us on Facebook!

4.1.4 Twitter& Blogs

8 of the 20 small breweries were on Twitter. The average post amount (excl. retweets by others) was 2.375 and three places didn't post anything during the observed period. Two of them had not posted since October 2016, A third one since March 2015! The amount of followers' range between 65 and 2657 with 1248 as average amount of followers. The content is mainly related to what is going on in the brewery and what places for example serve the beer, as well as pictures (which can be connected from e.g. Instagram). I didn't observe so much communication with the customers, more so with restaurants/bars/bloggers and the breweries. There are some retweets and likes and comments,

as on Facebook. However, it was apparent that sharing (retweeting on Twitter) the content has a much bigger role than on Facebook and it's much more common.

Blogs were used by five small breweries (one of them had not posted anything since January 2017, another since February 2017). Blogs are used to tell longer written stories, e.g. telling about the history of a beer style with a few pictures or telling about one new beer release at a restaurant and the blog telling about both and their collaboration (marketing for both). One brewery presented food recipes every other week that can be paired with their beers. Four of the observed small breweries have newsletters.

4.1.5 UnTappd

This application/website is used by people to track down which beers they have tried and to earn 'awards' based on the amounts and styles tried, in the app. The users can also add 'friends' and 'like' breweries on the app. Breweries use it to publish their beers, which the users can rate, in this way the breweries can get feedback of what people think of them. Bars can publish their current tap/bottle lists on the application which can encourage people to visit if they have a product that people like or if there is an event. This can also be beneficial for the brewery, as a sort of more indirect marketing. There are 26951 average amounts of ratings/brewery. 656 average amounts of monthly ratings/brewery.

The amount of ratings depends much on how many beers that have been brewed and on their availability. For example, Saimaan Juomatehdas (which has products in most grocery stores) has 22 announced beers on the app, yet 68694 total ratings, whereas Pyynikin Käsityöläispanimo have 209 beers, yet relatively only a little bit of more ratings, 71282. What separates this platform from the others is that the breweries have very little control of their image, as the focus is on the beer reviews made by the members on the platform. It could be considered disadvantageous for the brewery if it happens that people generally give low ratings to their beers. However, the curiosity for testing out something new or something that a person thinks sounds good for their palate could still encourage people to try a product, even if it would have a relatively low rating on the platform.

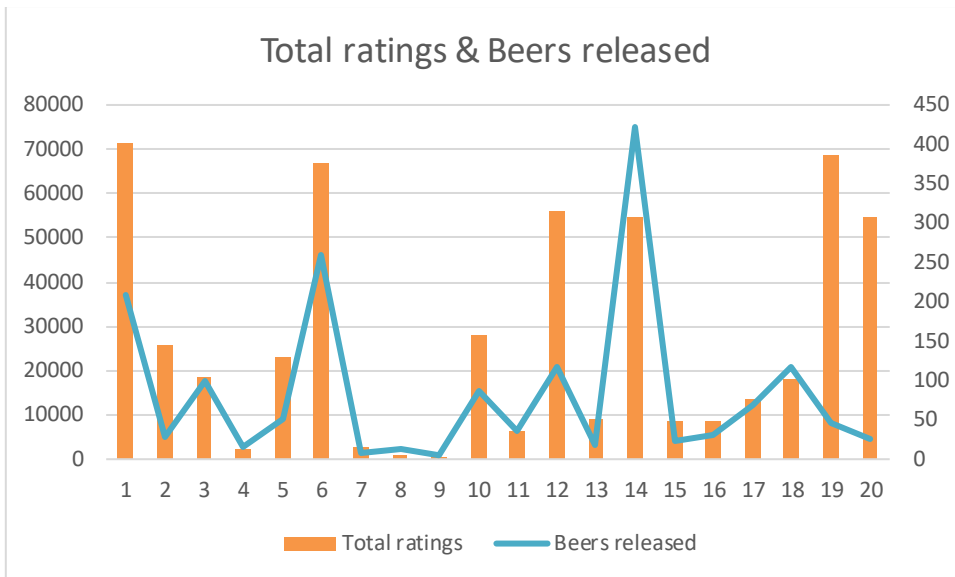


Figure 2.0

(compiled by the author from the app UnTappd 11.03.2018).

The above table shows the relation between total amounts of ratings and amounts of beers released by the different small breweries observed for this study. It can be considered that there is not a clear correlations between total ratings and amounts of beers released, except that it can be seen that if a brewery have not released many beers, it is likely they will not have many total ratings.

5 DISCUSSION

The findings show that posts with the most activity, in the form of likes, comments and shares included a picture and informative content, such as: opening of a restaurant bar by a brewery, releasing a new beer, mentioning won awards. This confirms the study by (Pletikosa and Michahelles (2013) & Sabate et al. (2014)) who showed that vivid posts with informative and entertaining content increased the amounts of likes and shares that a brand post received as well as confirming (Wagner et al. 2017) study that attaching a picture has positive impact on the post popularity. (Wagner et al. 2017) theory that posting a shared post was less popular than an original post was also found to be true, as many blog updates or mentions in the media that were linked by the brewery did not get as many likes, comments or shares as posting their own content did on average. Links amounted to a bit less than a quarter of all the observed 173 posts.

Regarding the different times of posting, the findings points out that Thursday was the most common day to post, followed by Friday and Sunday This finding does partially align with the research by which suggested by (de Vries et al. 2012 & Sabate et al. 2014:1003) that posting on week days is better. This goes against the theory suggested by Schulz (2017) that there isn't any difference in the weekdays of posting. However, it needs to be noted that Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve was two of the four Sundays included in this research which is why it could be expected that there was more activity by brewers posting these days than on an average Sunday.

Chaffey & Smith 2013) argue that it's important for the companies to try and get to know their customers, e.g. by asking questions. (Schulz 2017) pointed out that asking questions and existing comments had a positive correlation with more comments. This was found to be true, however posting questions was only encountered a few times of all the 173 posts on Facebook researched. All those posts with questions, except for one, was by the small brewery who have the largest amounts of followers of all the small breweries in Finland. The questions "What do you have in your glass for Xmas Eve?" got 93 comments, 450 likes, and another question of "What mood are you in for?" one got 611 likes and 30 comments. "Did you have a good week?" got 260 likes, 7 comments. This was above their average amount of likes 303 per post and 11 comments per

post. This brewery happened to have an average of 303 likes per Instagram posts as well. Another brewery posted a question asking if people want their beer to return (to production), 30 people liked and all three comments said yes, which was slightly under their average of 34 likes per post. Comparing the content posted on Instagram and Facebook, there is more pictures and less text on Instagram. It's also much more common to see links to blogs, -newspaper articles and -reviews on Facebook than on Instagram.

One brewery posted a picture of a fancy, small artistic looking meal cooked by a famous chef and the brewery said that it goes well with their beer. They received a comment from a follower saying that *they should focus on brewing beer*. To which the brewery replied: *the chefs do the cooking, they do the brewing. The picture does not have to do with their brewing activity and that they are happy to have noticed how their own beers can be drank on their own as well as paired with food and taken pictures of*. Another follower asked: *And with this I can get rid of my hunger, huh?* to which they replied that *it's a decent set for a starter, and to finish of the hunger you can have a North-grainsmoothie* (which refers to their own beer).

One brewery posted 10 updates in 7 days urging people to invest in a company that is growing malt in Finland, with a countdown on how many days there are left to invest. Each update received between 20-30 likes and 2 comments at most (no shares), whereas the final update about them stopping issuing stocks, received 425 likes and 28 comments and 25 shares! This can be connected to (Chaffey & Smith's 2013) point that the content should not be posted every day, just for the sake of posting. In this case, considering the dramatic change in activity of the followers, it could be seen as people were bored of reading posts about the investment opportunity or ignored it until it was the last day. UnTappd is used by most small breweries, however it's the platform with the least control of your own content, considering that the main activity that breweries can do is to inform about new products and their availability. The users decide with their reviews and ratings what they think of different products. This can be useful if a company makes well-liked products, but it may also have negative consequences if a brewery's products are constantly receiving low ratings.

Riezebos (2003) Co-branding is an activity that many breweries are taking part of and it can be seen as a marketing tool to produce a beer with another brewery (especially if

they are well liked) and adding value to the product that might not have existed without the co-branding.

Blogs were very scarcely used by the breweries and many had not posted any new blog posts in over a year. One brewery posts recipes every two weeks that match with their beers, this can be connected with Brogan (2010) who wrote about the importance of posting things that can be of interest and value to the readers and not only about the company and its products.

6 SUMMARY

The aim was to find out how the social media can be used by the small breweries to reach out to the public by creating content on the different social network platforms and what kind of content is posted on the different platforms? What are the content differences across the social network sites?

An increasing number of small breweries have been established in Finland mainly after 2012, currently there are more than 130 of them in the country. They need to differentiate from their competitors in order to get customers to notice them and to eventually buy their products. Considering the limited funds of the small businesses and the restrictions of the traditional media in the outreach to customers, many have focused more on social networks to inform people about the company, what they do and to communicate with people who are interested in the company. For a company to get more followers (and prospective customers) it should be active and post content that people find interesting and engaging. The content should vary, and it should rather focus on solving customer problems or addressing topics they are interested in, than focusing exclusively on the company and what they do. There are different theories regarding what to post and when to post updates.

The author conducted research to analyze the social media presence and content posted by 20 Finnish small breweries of various sizes located throughout the country between 20.12.2017 to 19.01.2018. Small breweries communicate with their target customer groups on social media by posting pictures, informing about the everyday life in the brewery, events, informing about product releases, availability of products, collabora-

tions and writing about things regarding the industry, such as the changes in the legislation. The social media platform Facebook was the most popularly used platform by the small breweries, followed by UnTappd and Instagram. The content style varies a bit depending on the platform. The results point out that on Facebook; a combination of text and images are by far the most common forms; other forms include links to other websites, blogs (also with pictures) as well as videos. It was very rare to see posts only with text (4 out of 173 posts). On Instagram posting a picture with a text is most common, followed by posting pictures without text. On UnTappd the small breweries can inform about their new products and their availability in restaurants and bars. The main focus of the site is to rate and review beers, this can help breweries to know peoples' opinions about their products. On a general level, posting a variety of content, regularly is recommended to reach a wide audience who might have different preferences.

7 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The choice of the 20 small breweries was a convenient sample, which tried to represent breweries throughout the country of different sizes, yet who still had a presence on social media platforms. It can be argued that choosing different breweries could have led to different results, however considering that the research was focused on what kind of content was more well-liked or created activity (as in likes, comments and shares) among the followers, it could be argued that creating engaging, informative or entertaining content that can e.g. solve customers problems would be rather well-liked if it was posted by any small brewery. Regarding the observation period from 20.12.2017 to 19.01.2018 on the social media platforms, it needs to be pointed out that the activity of the small breweries might not be representational to the activity at any given month in the year, considering that January is a month when approximately 20% of the Finnish population who consume Alcohol choose not to consume it in January (Dry January 2018).

While writing this text the proposed Alcohol Law changes came to be debated and eventually they came into power. As some of the changes took place in early January and the rest in March 2018 there is not much data on the effects of the changes, especially for the small breweries, this could be a topic of future research. Also, after the Alcohol Law changes, many small breweries have opened their own shops directly sell-

ing their products to customers (Small brewery direct sales 2018), this was possible after Mid-February 2018. This has given them more flexibility and possible increased revenue (by cutting out the middleman), since if they produce less than 500'000 L/year they can now sell products containing up to 12% ABV directly themselves, whereas they before would have needed to sell them in the State Alcohol Monopoly, Alko or in the retail store with an Alcohol licence, if it was more than 4.7% ABV (5.5% ABV with the current Law). Further research could be conducted in looking at how these changes have affected the profitability of the small breweries.

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APPENDICES

NAME	ESTABLISHED	LOCATION
Brewcats	2015	Tampere
Espoon Oma Panimo	2016	Espoo
Fat Lizard	2016	Espoo
Flying Dutchman Nomad BrewingCo.	2015	Vantaa
Hiisi	2013	Jyväskylä
Hopping Brewsters	2014	Akaa
Iso-Kallan Panimo	2013	Kuopio
Maistila	2015	Oulu
Malmgårdin Panimo	2008	Malmgård
Moose On The Loose	2017	Pori
Mustan Virran Panimo	2016	Savonlinna

Open Water Brewery	2016	Lemland
Pyynikin Käsityöläispanimo	2013	Tampere
Radbrew	2014	Kaarina
Ruosniemi Brewery	2011	Pori
Saimaa Brewing Company	1995	Mikkeli
Soundville Brewing	2017	Tampere
Stadin Panimo	1998	Helsinki
Top Fuel Beer Company	2014	Lohja
Tornion Panimo	2016	Tornio

Table 1.1. compiled by the author 10.04.2018. The table shows the small breweries and their foundation year and location, observed for the study between 20.12.2017-19.01.2018.