

Use of Internet as a Marketing Tool by Three Small Firms in Finland

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<p>Sammandrag:</p> <p>Ämnesområdet för detta slutarbete är marknadsföring på Internet och forskningsfrågan är hur finska företag använder Internet som ett marknadsförings verktyg. Syftet med detta slutarbete är således att utforska olika Internet marknadsföringsmetoder. Metoderna som undersöks är webbsidor, online pressmedellanden och nyhetsbrev, bloggar och viral marknadsföring och syftet är att även ge en inblick hur finska företag utnyttjar dessa metoder. De viktigaste referenserna för detta arbete var textböcker och för den empiriska delen användes intervjuer som metod för att samla information.</p> <p>Teori delen för detta arbete visar att Internet är nuförtiden ett kraftfullt och kostnadseffektivt marknadsförings verktyg. Den tekniska utvecklingen har medfört att de personer som jobbar i marknadsförings branchen har varit tvunngna att ändra tankesätt. De gamla reglerna för marknadsföring stämmer inte mera och professionella marknadsförare måste anpassa sig till de nya reglerna för att vara framgångsrika.</p> <p>För den empiriska delen av detta slutarbete gjorde upphovsmannen intervjuer med tre finska företag för att samla information om hur de använder Internet i deras marknadsförings strategier. Resultaten visar att alla företag använder Internet som ett marknadsförings verktyg men generellt sett är Internet marknadsföring i Finland ännu i ett utvecklingskede.</p> <p>Slutsatsen av detta arbete visar att Internet marknadsföring är av stor betydelse och ger även hänvisningar till vilka företag eller personer som skulle vara intresserade av resultatet. Slutsatsen innehåller även upphovsmannens känslor över arbetet såväl som den ger rekommendationer för ytterligare läsning.</p>	
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<p>Abstract:</p> <p>The subject area of this thesis work is marketing on the world wide web and the research question is how do Finnish companies use Internet as a marketing tool. The aim of this thesis is to explore different kinds of Internet marketing methods including the webpage, online news releases and newsletters, blogs and viral marketing as well as to give an insight of how Finnish companies use these methods. The references used for this thesis work is mainly textbooks and for the empirical part interviews were chosen as the methodology to gather information.</p> <p>The theory part indicates that the world wide web is in this day and age a powerful as well as cost-effective marketing tool. As technology has advanced marketers and PR people worldwide have had to shift their way of thinking. The old rules of marketing and PR do not comply anymore but professionals in these fields must adapt to the new rules of marketing and PR in order to be successful.</p> <p>For the empirical part of this study the author performed in depth interviews with three Finnish companies to obtain information of how they make use of the Internet in their marketing strategies. The results of the empirical study shows that all three companies do use Internet as a marketing tool although in general Internet marketing in Finland is still in a developing stage.</p> <p>The conclusion indicates the importance of Internet marketing as well as it gives an idea whom the findings of this thesis work will interest. The conclusion also sums up the author's feelings about the thesis as well as it gives recommendations for further readings about the subject.</p>	
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FOREWORD

The writing of this thesis has been a long and interesting process and there are many people to thank for all of their support during this time.

First of all I would like to thank all the companies and especially all the people that were interviewed for the empirical part of this study. This was crucial information for the thesis and I am very grateful for the information obtained.

Special thanks also goes out to all my peers at the BBA-06 class that have made this time at Arcada very enjoyable. Thank you for all the good times.

The teachers at Arcada also deserve an acknowledgement for all their help during these four years.

My family and friends have contributed with love and support during all of this so definitely a thanks goes out to their direction as well.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor Mr. Sveinn Eldon for all his help during my final thesis as well as general help and knowledge he provided during these years at Arcada as a teacher and programme director. I wish you all the best.

Without the help of all these people this thesis would never have seen daylight so I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of you.

Thank you all!

Filip Rehn

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis work studies different forms of Internet marketing as well as how Finnish companies use Internet as a marketing tool. In recent years Internet marketing has become an increasingly hot topic and one reason why people are so excited about the Internet is the fact that it is an interactive medium where people can communicate with each other beyond time and spatial boundaries. The author felt intrigued by the whole concept and decided to explore it more by writing his thesis about it.

The findings of this thesis work will concern not only the companies that took part in the empirical study but also companies in general and people that are interested in the subject of Internet marketing. This thesis would for instance be a great framework for starting-up companies that want to know more about Internet marketing methods and how to use them.

There are a number of reasons why the author decided to write the thesis on the subject Internet marketing. Firstly, marketing was the author's favorite topic in class and he felt he wanted to somehow specialize in the subject. After graduating from Arcada the author also desires to do a MBA degree with focused studies in marketing and a final thesis in the subject will give a solid foundation for this.

1.1 Aim and research question

The aim of this thesis work is not only to explore different kinds of Internet marketing methods but also to give an insight to the reader how to use these methods in real life to make them as beneficial as possible. The thesis will also show that the web is an extremely powerful marketing tool and is definitely needed in a company's overall marketing strategy.

The research question of this thesis work is how do Finnish companies use Internet as a marketing tool. To obtain information about this matter the author performed in depth interviews with managerial staff in three different companies. The companies are all in different industries however; they are all roughly in the same size range, which make them comparable to each other.

1.2 Methodology and sources

To get as reliable results as possible the author used several written sources when gathering information for the thesis. In the end the sources had somewhat the same information but the author felt the results would not be valid unless the information was gathered from many different sources.

For the theory part of the thesis work mainly textbooks were used. Internet marketing has become an increasingly popular subject in recent years so the author definitely had no problem in gathering information. There were a lot of books, publications, websites etc about the subject.

For the empirical part of the study interviews were chosen for the methodology to gather information. These interviews were then interpreted and used together with the information obtained from the theory part to have a closer look at how Finnish companies use Internet as a marketing tool. The author feels very satisfied with the chosen method for gathering information and he definitely feels that this way he got as much information as possible out of the companies participating in the study.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis work is divided into four main sections; *introduction, the old rules of marketing vs. the new rules of marketing* and *web marketing for companies, empirical study* and *conclusion*.

The introductory section gives a background and a preface to the subject. This section also explains the aim and research question of the study, the methodology and sources used as well as the limitations.

The theory part is divided into two different sections. The first section is under the heading the old rules of marketing vs. the new rules of marketing. This section is about how the arrival of the web has changed the whole concept of marketing and PR and how professionals in these fields have to adapt to the new rules in order to succeed. The new rules gives a good framework of how companies need to adjust and make the web a part of their overall marketing strategy. The second part of the theory section is under the heading web marketing for companies. Here the author points out

how web marketing benefits the buyer as well as the seller. Also theories about different forms of web marketing methods are presented in this section as well as how to apply these methods in real life.

The empirical study of the thesis work highlights how Finnish companies are using the web as a marketing tool. This section includes three different companies as well as a conclusion/discussion part.

The fourth part of the thesis is the conclusion. Here the author gives an overview of the study and recommendations for further readings about the subject.

1.4 Limitations

Because there were so much information about the subject the author had to limit his writings to a certain extent. Not everything could be included in the theory part of the thesis work, therefore the author made the decision to focus on a few web-marketing methods instead of trying to cover them all. This gives a better in depth look at the different methods chosen.

2 THE OLD RULES OF MARKETING AND PR VS. THE NEW RULES OF MARKETING AND PR

In today's society everything changes rapidly. It is crucial to keep up with the changes in order to succeed. Marketing and PR is no conception to this rule. The arrival of Internet has completely changed the concept of marketing and PR. The old rules that most of the marketers used to follow do not comply anymore. The biggest thing that has happened during the last 10 years is that the word-of-mouth network that has always been very important to business has gotten much more efficient because of the Internet. What used to be a conversation at lunch about some product or service is now happening online and millions of people can participate in it. (David Meerman Scott, *The new rules of marketing & PR*, 2009, page 8). "Before the web came along, there were only two ways to get noticed: buy expensive advertising or beg the mainstream media to tell your story for you" (Scott, foreword). The option there is today is way better. Now companies can actually publish interesting content on the

web that their buyers want to consume. It is not necessary anymore to always appeal to the masses but companies can focus on certain target groups to get the most out of their online marketing and PR. Not only is this more efficient than before but it is also more cost saving. Marketing on the web is noticeable cheaper than marketing in newspapers and especially TV and it also has the potential to reach more consumers so it is indeed a very important marketing tool.

2.1 The old rules of marketing

The reason why the old rules do not comply anymore is because they are outdated and ineffective in today's modern world. The old rules do not take into consideration that Internet has enabled companies to market to millions of people without paying a fortune for it because the rules were made prior to the arrival of Internet. With the old rules of marketing companies needed to always appeal to the masses, advertising was always one-way from company to consumer, advertising was based on campaigns that had a limited life, advertising was exclusively to sell products and advertising relied on interrupting people to get them to pay attention to a message (Scott, page 8). This is not the case anymore, instead of searching for the customers with expensive advertising campaigns the customers can actually now search for companies and products on the web and that is why it is crucial for companies to have a strong Internet marketing. For instance, it happens very often that potential customers go to a website and look at a company's products and services instead of going to an actual store. If a company do not have a website or if they do not market themselves properly on the Internet they might very easily loose potential new customers as a result of this. A company needs to be seen on the web.

Table 1. The old rules of marketing (Scott, page 8)

- Marketing simply meant advertising (and branding).
- Advertising needed to appeal to the masses.
- Advertising relied on interrupting people to get them to pay attention to a message.
- Advertising was one-way: company-to-consumer.
- Advertising was exclusively about selling products.
- Advertising was based on campaigns that had a limited life.
- Creativity was deemed the most important component of advertising.
- It was more important for the ad agency to win advertising awards than for the client to win new consumers.
- Advertising and PR were separate disciplines run by different people with separate goals, strategies, and measurement criteria.

“None of this is true anymore. The web has transformed the rules, and you must transform your marketing to make the most of the Web-enabled marketplace of ideas.” (Scott, page 8)

The writer strongly agrees with this statement. Internet is in this day and age such a powerful tool when it comes to marketing and people need to recognize its strength. “In the old days, traditional, radio, television, and direct mail were the only ways to go. But these medias make targeting specific buyers with individualized messages very difficult”(Scott, page 5). This is not the case anymore although some megabrands still uses advertising with broad reach (with an average success) it is safe to say that a lot has changed with the arrival of the web and a smart marketer will recognize this and will adapt to the new rules before it is too late. The old rules might have applied at one point but certainly not anymore. (Scott, page 5)

2.2 The old rules of PR

Table 2. The old rules of PR (Scott, page 12)

- The only way to get ink was through media.
- Companies communicated to journalists via press releases.
- Nobody saw the actual press release except a handful of reporters and editors.
- Companies had to have significant news before they were allowed to write a press release.
- Jargon was okay because the journalists all understood it.
- You weren't supposed to send a release unless it included quotes from third parties, such as customers, analysts, and experts.
- The only way buyers would learn about the press release's content was if the media wrote a story about it.
- The only way to measure the effectiveness of press releases was through "clip books," which noted each time the media designed to pick up a company's release.
- PR and marketing were separate disciplines run by different people with separate goals, strategies, and measurements techniques.

"None of this is true anymore. The web has transformed the rules, and you must transform your PR strategies to make the most of the Web-enabled marketplace of ideas" (Scott, page 13)

When talking about public relations according to David Meerman Scott (pages 10-11) public relations used to be an exclusive club but the Internet has actually made public relations public again after years of almost exclusively focus on media. "Prior to 1995, outside of paying big bucks for advertising or working with the media, there just were not any significant options for a company to tell its story to the world" (Scott, page 10). Today organizations can directly communicate with buyers via various forms of web content (Scott, page 11).

However, one has to bear in mind that the mainstream and trade media are still important for a great public relations program for an organization. For instance, "a

positive story in Rolling Stone propels a rock band to fame. An article in the Wall Street Journal brands a company as a player. A consumer product talked about on the Today Show gets noticed” (Scott, page 11). Consequently, the media are still important but nowadays there are more efficient and easier ways to reach the buyers without using any media coverage. “If you are smaller and less famous but have an interesting story to tell, you need to tell it yourself. Fortunately, the Web is a terrific place to do so.” (Scott, page 13)

2.2.1 Learn to ignore the old rules

To get the most out of the web for a company’s Internet marketing it is basically important to ignore these old rules. Although the media remains an important part of a company’s PR it is crucial to remember that public relations is not just about speaking through the media and marketing is not only about one-way broadcasting advertisements (Scott, page 7). “ Instead of one-way interruption, Web marketing is about delivering useful content at just the precise moment that a buyer needs it”(Scott, page 7). Some PR and marketing professionals that have followed the old rules for most of their career may have a difficult time adapting to the new rules. The new ideas tend to make them uncomfortable but “smart marketers are bringing success to their organizations each and every day by communicating through the Web.” (Scott, page 14)

2.3 The new rules of marketing and PR

In the last 10 years there have been major technological advances, including the explosion of the web and it has had a major impact on buyers as well as marketers worldwide. To do well or even survive in this Internet age marketers must rethink their strategies and adapt them to the new environment of today. (Philip Kotler, Principles of marketing, 2005, page 128)

Recent technological advances, including the widespread use of Internet, have created what some call a New Economy. Although there has been widespread debate in recent years about the nature and even the existence of such a New Economy, few would disagree that the Internet and other powerful new connecting technologies are having a dramatic impact on marketers and buyers. (Kotler, page 128)

“The Old Economy revolved around *manufacturing companies* that mainly focused on standardizing their production, products and business processes In contrast, the

New Economy revolves around *information businesses*”(Kotler, page 131). It is important to remember however that some marketing strategies from the “Old Economy” will still be important in the “New Economy” but marketers must also develop new strategies and practices that are better suited for today’s new environment. (Kotler,page 128)

One phenomenon that has occurred because of the arrival of the “New Economy” is customerisation, which means “leaving it to the individual customers to design the marketing offering-allowing customers to be prosumers rather than only consumers” (Kotler, page 134). A terrific example of this is Dell Computer. They let their customers specify exactly what they want in their computers and then they deliver a customer-designed unit within only a few days of ordering. (Kotler, page 134)

Table 3. The new rules of marketing and PR (Scott, page 25-26)

- Marketing is more than just advertising.
- PR is more than just a mainstream media audience.
- You are what you publish.
- People want authenticity, not spin.
- People want participation, not propaganda.
- Instead of causing one-way interruption, marketing is about delivering content at just the precise moment your audience needs it.
- Marketers must shift their thinking from mainstream marketing to the masses to a strategy of reaching vast numbers of underserved audiences via the Web.
- PR is not about your boss seeing your company on TV. It’s about your buyers seeing your company on the Web.
- Marketing is not about your agency winning awards. It’s about your organization winning business.
- The Internet has made public relations public again, after years of almost exclusive focus on media.
- Companies must drive people into the purchasing process with great online content.
- Blogs, podcasts, e-books, news releases, and other form of online content let organizations communicate directly with buyers in a form they appreciate.
- On the web, the lines between marketing and PR have blurred.

“In an offline world, marketing and PR are separate departments with different people and different skill sets, but this is not the case on the Web” (Scott, page 26). The reason why the new rules of marketing and PR are more effective than the old ones are because they take into consideration this “New Economy” and the fact that Internet does have a strong influence on marketing today.

2.3.1 The long tail of marketing

The theory of the Long Tail is that our culture and economy is increasingly shifting away from a focus on a relatively small number of “hits” (mainstream products and markets) at the head of the demand curve and toward a huge number of niches in the tail. As the costs of production and distribution fall, especially online, there is now less need to lump products and consumers into one-size-fits-all containers. In an era without the constraints of physical shelf space and other bottlenecks of distribution, narrowly targeted goods and services can be as economically attractive as mainstream fare. (Chris Anderson, *The Long Tail-Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More*, 2006, page 21)

This theory also applies in marketing. “Some of today’s most successful Internet businesses leverage the long tail to reach underserved customers and satisfy demand for products not found in traditional physical stores (Scott, page 18). Good examples of this include Amazon, which makes available with a single mouse click hundreds of thousands of books that are not stocked in local chain stores; iTunes, that provides niche music that can not be found in record stores and Netflix, that provides movies beyond the blockbuster hits that can not be found at a local DVD rental store. As a result of this, there is definitely much money that can be made by distributing at the long end of the tail. Big hits are still important but as the above-mentioned businesses have shown you can make money beyond Madonna, Titanic, Lord of the rings and Pirates of the Caribbean (Scott, page 18).” Marketers must shift their thinking from the short head of the mainstream marketing to the masses to a strategy of targeting vast numbers of underserved audiences via the web” (Scott, page 19). This is why Internet is such a powerful marketing tool because you can actually reach customers you would not otherwise reach and best thing is that you can reach these customers without paying a fortune for it.

2.3.2 The long tail of PR

PR is all about reaching the buyers. Instead of spending enormous amounts of money per month on a media relations program that tries to convince a handful of reporters at

certain magazines, newspapers and TV stations to do a story of you companies should be targeting bloggers, vloggers, online news sites, micro publications, public speakers, analysts and consultants that reach the certain audiences that are actually looking for what you have to offer. Nowadays it is not necessary to wait for someone in the media to write about your company but that stage can be bypassed by communicating by for instance blogs directly to the consumers. Companies also have the power to form their own media brand. It is all about being found on Google, Yahoo and vertical sites and RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds. (Scott, page 24)

[...instead of putting all of our efforts into that one potential PR blockbuster (a mention in the major business press), wouldn't it be better to get dozens of the most influential bloggers and analysts to tell our story directly to the niche markets that are looking for what we have to offer?] (Scott, page 25)

Of course it would be nice for a company to be featured in Fortune or Business Week. This is however a far fetch and it will most likely not happen so it is not something that should necessarily be a main priority. (Scott, page 24)

All and all it is important for marketing professionals to take notice that a lot can be achieved by using the long tail of marketing and PR. By using the long tail of marketing a company will save money and when used well this can lead to that bigger bloggers, companies, social medias etc. will take notice of you and from that you could achieve more exposure and eventually be a "blockbuster" yourself.

3 WEB MARKETING FOR COMPANIES

The web has been the revolutionary technology for the new millennium and with the arrival of the Internet companies have had the chance to market themselves in numerous new ways. The Internet has also given the chance for both companies and customers to access and share a huge amount of information with little effort. (Phillip Kotler, Principles of marketing, fourth European edition 2005, page 131)

Recent studies have shown that consumers are accessing information on the Internet before making major life decisions. One in three consumers relies heavily on the Internet to gather information about choosing a school, buying a car, finding a job, dealing with major illness or making investment decisions. As a result, to be competitive in today's new marketplace, companies must adopt Internet technology or risk being left behind. (Kotler, page 131)

Nowadays there are hundreds of different ways a company can perform marketing on the web, anything from a home webpage to an e-mail newsletter to viral marketing and most companies are really taking advantage of this. When used well Internet is an excellent and powerful marketing tool and it gives benefits to both the buyer and the seller.

In this chapter of the thesis work the author wanted to have a closer look at how exactly the web benefits both the buyer and the seller as well as to find out more about what different possibilities of Internet marketing there are. The theory about those marketing possibilities will then be presented as well as a hands-on approach how to use these methods in real life. There were too many Internet marketing outlets to present them all so the author made the decision to focus on a few different ones and then present them as well as a hands-on approach how to use them.

3.1 Benefits to the buyer

“E-commerce (e-marketing and e-purchasing) and the Internet bring many benefits to both the buyer and the seller”(Kotler, page 135). In this chapter the author will look into how e-commerce benefits the buyers. There are numerous ways how customers can benefit from this. Firstly, it can be very convenient in that sense that customers do not have to worry about traffic, find a parking place and go from store to store to examine products. With the help of the Internet customers can do comparative shopping by surfing websites and browsing through different mail catalogues. Buying on the web is easy and foremost private. No need to worry about standing in lines and salespeople that will try to make you buy products you do not really even need. It is definitely more hassle free to shop online in many ways (Kotler, page 135). The only negative thing about online shopping is that you cannot try on anything before buying which can be a bit complicated especially when buying clothes.

Another thing that makes it beneficial for the buyer is the fact that they will get a broader selection of items on the Internet. They can also get products that could not necessarily be found in a local store. Amazon.com and eBay are great examples of this. On those two sites customers can find almost an unlimited selection of different

items and the prices are as well usually cheaper on those sites than anywhere else. (Kotler, page 135)

E-commerce does not only give the buyer a broader selection of sellers and items but it also gives information about companies, their products and their competitors. The buyer can then compare these to each other and find the best deals. Good web sites also offer useful information to the buyer that a salesperson necessarily could not give (Kotler, page 135). “For example, Amazon.com offers top-10 products lists, extensive product descriptions, expert and user product reviews and recommendations based on customers’ previous purchases” (Kotler, page 135). These lists are usually more accurate because it is actually the people that have bought the products that are making them. A salesperson in a store would not necessarily have access to these kinds of lists so the information he would give would only be facts about different products instead of real customers reviews.

The last benefit that the author wanted to take up was that online buying is both interactive and immediate and it gives more consumer control to the customers (Kotler, page 136). “Buyers often can interact with the seller’s site to create exactly the configuration of information, products or services they desire, then order them on the spot” (Kotler, page 136). The web really enables the whole buying process to be much more efficient and the buyers will get exactly what they want. Furthermore, the Internet has empowered the buyers with much more control than they had before. ”For example, computer or car buyers can go online before showing up at a retailer or dealership, aiming themselves with both product and cost information. This is the new reality of consumer control.” (Kotler, page 136)

3.2 Benefits to the seller

Not only is e-commerce beneficial for the buyer but it also brings a lot of advantages to the seller. For instance, when it comes to customer relationship building the Internet is a very powerful tool because companies can online get to know more about their customers specific needs and wants (Kotler, page 136). “With today’s technology, an online marketer can select small groups or even individual consumers, personalize offers to their special needs and wants and promote these offers through individualized communications” (Kotler, page 136). The online customers can then

give something back to the company by asking questions and giving feedback. This whole interaction between the buyer and the seller gives the possibility for the companies (sellers) to increase their customer value and satisfaction via product and service refinements. (Kotler, page 136)

Another feature with e-commerce that brings advantages to the seller is the fact that the Internet and other electronic channels reduce the cost as well as it increases speed and efficiency for the companies. For instance, e-marketers avoid expenses that come along with maintaining an actual store (rent, insurance, utilities and any related costs). Some retailers like Amazon.com are really taking advantage of a negative operating cycle in that sense that they receive the money from credit card companies one day after a customer orders something but then they can hold on to the money for 46 days until they pay distributors, suppliers, factories and customers. So by using the Internet to directly link to distributors suppliers, factories and customers companies can cut down on the costs as well as improve efficiencies in order processing, inventory handling, delivery and trade promotion. Also, by communicating electronically to the customers a company can save a lot of money comparing if they would communicate by paper mail. Nowadays a company can produce all their digital catalogues for only a fraction of the cost it would be to have them on paper and sending them out that way. (Kotler, page 136)

Customization is also a benefit that e-commerce gives to the seller. These days sellers can be more flexible because of the Internet's interactive nature (David W.Schumann, Esther Thorson, Advertising and the World Wide Web, 1999, page 43).” For example, once a paper catalogue is mailed to final consumer or business customers, the products, prices and other catalogue features are fixed until the next catalogue is sent” (Kotler, page 136). With an online catalogue companies can make adjustments whenever, even hourly, adapting to their product assortments, prices and promotions to match the ever changing market conditions. (Kotler, page 136)

A characteristic that also gives benefits to the seller is data collection. This is especially when talking about e-marketing. With data collection a company can easily and inexpensively gather detailed data about their Internet marketing as well as to get information about how many people visited their site, for how long, how they came to

the site, where the visitors originated from etc. This can be very useful information for company's to know. (Schumann, Thorson, page 42)

Finally, maybe the most beneficial thing is the fact that Internet is global medium that allows both buyers and sellers from all over the world to do business with each other (Kotler, page 136). "A web surfer from Paris or Hong Kong can access an online Marks & Spencer catalogue as easily as someone living in London, the international retailer's home town" (Kotler, page 136). The good thing for sellers as well is the fact that you do not have to be a multi million-dollar company in order to go global. Even small e-marketers can access global markets these days. (Kotler, page 136)

3.3 Different methods of web marketing

Like mentioned earlier there are numerous of ways how a company can market themselves on the web. In this case the author chose five different web-marketing methods that will be presented in this chapter. Those include the webpage, online news releases and newsletters, blogs and viral marketing.

3.3.1 The content rich Webpage

Nowadays almost all companies have a webpage. The webpage is sort of an online business card. It is usually the first step of a company's Internet marketing as well as the first thing a potential new customer sees about a company so it is indeed a very important Internet marketing tool.

Websites usually varies quite a bit when it comes to purpose and content. The most basic type of a website is called a corporate website which is basically an informational site set up by a company. Rather than to sell products and services directly a corporate website will answer questions from customers, build on customer relationships and generate excitement about the company. On corporate websites the customer can find information about the company as well as the company's history, mission and philosophy. Also the products and services that the company offers will be found on the corporate website. Additional information that also can be found on a corporate website include current events, company personnel, financial performance, employment opportunities and in some cases even exciting entertainment features to

attract more visitors. To end with, the site can also offer opportunities for customers to give feedback or ask additional questions by making a comment through e-mail when leaving the site. (Kotler, page 145)

Some companies also create a marketing website. It differs from a corporate website in that way that it is created to "...interact with consumers for the purpose of moving them closer to a purchase or other marketing outcome. The site is designed to handle interactive communication initiated by the company" (Kotler, page 145). On a marketing website it is the marketer that initiates the communication and interaction. "Such a site might include a catalogue, shopping tips and promotional features such as coupons, sales events or contests" (Kotler, page 145)

Although almost all companies have a website it does not necessarily mean that all of them are good. A website should contain more than just some basic information about the company. The reason why a website is such an important Internet marketing tool is because "no matter how you choose to deploy Web content to reach your buyers, the place that brings everything together in a unified place is a content rich Web site" (David Meerman Scott, The new rules of marketing and PR, 2009, page 101). On a company's website you can find podcasts, blogs, online media rooms, online news releases etc. All these are brought together at one place and that is the webpage (Scott, page 101). There are a lot of things that need to be taken in consideration when creating a website. "Design, color, navigation and appropriate technology are important aspects of a good website" (Scott, page 101). However, the focus of a successful website should always be on the content.

Yes, appearance and navigation are important: Appropriate colors, logos, fonts and design make a site appealing. The right technologies such as content-management systems make sites easier to update. But what really matter is the *content*, how that content is organized, and how it drives action from buyers. (Scott, page 105-106)

Yes, it is important to have a well-designed page that will attract new customers and keep them on the site and have them come back again but if the content of the page is not up to point the consumers will loose interest. The key to keeping the consumers on the site is to create enough value and excitement as well as a good quality and updated content. (Kotler, page 146)

When the content of a company's website is up to par it is time to think about how to design and create the website. " A key challenge is designing a website that is

attractive on first view and interesting enough to encourage repeat visits” (Kottler, page 147). If the websites feels boring and uninspiring a consumer might not even bother to check out the content. This is the reason why it is important to have a look at the seven Cs of effective website design when creating a website.

Table 4. The seven Cs of effective website design (Kottler, page 147)

- Context: site layout and design.
- Content: text, pictures, sound, and video that the website contains.
- Community: the ways in which the site enables user-to-user communication.
- Customization: the site’s ability to tailor itself to different users or to allow users to personalize the site.
- Communication: the ways in which the site enables site-to-user, user-to-site, or two-way communication.
- Connection: the degree to which the site is linked to other sites.
- Commerce: the site’s capabilities to enable commercial transactions.

“At the very least, a website should be easy to use and physically attractive. Beyond this, however, websites must also be interesting, useful and challenging. Ultimately, it’s the value of the site’s *content* that will attract visitors, get them to stay longer and bring them back for more.” (Kottler, page 147)

Another thing that is good to do for companies from time to time regarding the website is to do check ups about the website’s attractiveness and usefulness. One option is to hire an expert for this but another option and a better way is to have the users to evaluate what they like and what they dislike about the site. For instance, visitors to the construction equipment manufacturer JCB, car manufacturer Peugeot, insurance company Direct Line and candy manufacturer Cadbury’s are invited to do an online questionnaire where they rate their satisfaction about the companies websites (Kottler, page 148). This is a good and easy way to listen to your consumers and keep the website up to date.

So in the end it is important to have a well designed page as well as a good content but in the end it is the content that weighs more. “Many organizations spend much

more time and money on the design and delivery aspects than on the content itself. Don't fall into that trap" (Scott, page 108). A company also have to remember that they are making the website for the customers, not themselves. The key is to understand the buyers and from there build up the website. Another thing that is important to remember is that each organization is an individual and there is no absolute right or wrong way how to create a web site (Scott, page 108-109). There are guidelines for it but in the end the company has to tell their own story in their own way.

3.3.2 News releases in a web world

News releases are another thing that has been changed by the Internet. Back in the day news releases were only for professionals but ever since the mid 1990s everybody with an Internet connection have been able to freely access different companies news/press releases (Scott, page 63). "Doing a press release online is also an excellent mean of spreading your URL around the Internet, enhancing your search engine ranking and bringing new traffic to your website" (Put Your Business Online, Al Kernek, 2005, page 84). These days millions of people read news releases directly without the media filtering them and these are the people the company owners need to be speaking to. Companies do not have to speak through the press anymore (Scott, page 63). Another good thing with online news releases is the fact that comparing to press releases on the TV or radio, online news releases have a longer life span. On the Internet they will generate visitors to a company's website for months or even years after they were first published. (Kernek, page 85)

Table 5. The new rules of news releases (Scott, page 64)

- Don't just send news releases when big news is happening; find good reasons to send them all the time.
- Instead of just targeting a handful of journalists, create news releases that appeal directly to your buyers.
- Write releases that are replete with keyword-rich copy.
- Include offers that compel consumers to respond to your release in some way.
- Place links in releases to deliver potential customers to landing pages on your website.
- Optimize news release delivery for searching and browsing.
- Add social media tags for Technirati, DIGG, and del.icio.us so that your release can be found.
- Drive people into the sales process with new releases.

If you follow these specific strategies for leveraging this once-lowly medium by turning it into one of the most important direct marketing tools at your disposal, you will drive buyers straight to your company's products and services at precisely the time that they are ready to buy. (Scott, page 64)

The web has definitely changed the rules of news releases. As mentioned earlier today marketing professionals can directly reach buyers by using new releases. Media relations and the trade press are however still important for companies and should still be included in the overall communications strategy of a company. But the primary audience is no longer only a handful of journalists but millions of people with Internet access. (Scott, page 64)

Online press releases have more than just direct benefits. They can for instance further establish a company or a person as a trustworthy expert in a certain field or help to reach a worldwide audience in only minutes. There are a number of tips how a company can improve online PR efforts; it is a good idea to combine different methods to gain attention, mix up offline channels like for instance TV, radio and newspapers with your online efforts. It is also good to use press release services such as www.PRweb.com to get additional tools for your press releases. A press release should also always be clear and well written as well as frequently published. It is not enough to publish one and think that will get you anywhere. It is also important to prepare answers to question ahead of time so you will not be taken off guard. And

also, it is not necessary to stick to convention. Controversy is good as long as it is done in good taste. So be yourself and let the world know about you (Mitch Meyerson, Mary Eule Scarborough, *Mastering Online Marketing*, 2008, page 197). One thing that also needs to be mentioned is the fact that a press release should not be written like an advertisement so stick to the facts, write for the target market and always write your press release following a common structure. (Kernek, page 84)

Another online marketing possibility that is quite similar to the press release is the email newsletter. Companies that do not use press releases usually use email newsletters to compensate this. For instance, all of the companies participating in the empirical study of this thesis work are users of the email newsletters but none of the companies use online press releases. An email newsletter is basically a newsletter that is being sent over the Internet directly to the intended readers mailbox. A newsletter usually contains information about a certain company, what they are doing at the moment, how the future looks for them and most of the time they also contain offers. An email newsletter is therefore the ideal choice to use to stay in touch with customers as well as prospective clients (*Creating E-mail newsletters-A Practical Guide for the Real Estate Community*, Al Kernek, 2006, page 6).

“The secret behind a successful newsletter is that the recipient has requested (or “opted-in”) that the newsletter be sent to him or her by either subscribing to it or indicating a desire to receive online information of this nature” (Kernek, page 7). It is also important that the readers’ privacy is assured as well as the option of easily unsubscribing to the newsletter. Spamming is another thing companies should be aware of. A company does not want to be labeled as a spammer because it will alienate the company from the rest of the market and it will cause a negative word-of-mouth chain on the web and this can have severely bad consequences. To avoid being labeled as a spammer it is therefore important that companies always ask for permission before sending out any newsletters as well as provide an easy option for consumers to remove themselves from the newsletter subscription list. When companies do receive a remove request they should comply within 48 hours to make the whole process go as smooth as possible (Kernek, page 7-8).

Today, email newsletters are a great way for companies to maintain contact with customers, sell products and services, offer special promotions and recruit new

customers. Email newsletters have also proven to be exceptionally cost-effective and they will strengthen relationships to the customers as well as increase the possibility of capturing future dealings. They are also good for gathering new email addresses and in that way grow a company's list of prospects. (Kerneck, page 9-11)

All and all online news releases and email newsletters are great ways to give news to the consumers. It is not necessarily always about actually selling products and services but more about giving the consumers an insight of what is going on within the organization and letting them feel that they are a part of the company. It is also a cost-effective online marketing tool as the only cost comes from the creation of the release or newsletter.

3.3.3 Going viral

Viral marketing where other people tell the story for you is not a very common marketing tool but the author felt very intrigued and interested by the whole concept and felt it was definitely worth taking up. Viral marketing is an extremely powerful marketing tool but exceptionally hard to manage.

The concept of viral marketing starts with the premise that people pass or tell people they know about products or anything they like and even dislike. The main objective of viral marketing is to create product awareness among potential customers and among the target market. (Kevin Allen, *Viral marketing 100 Success secrets*, 2008, page 60)

In other words, viral marketing is the word-of-mouth marketing on the Internet. The hard thing for companies with viral marketing is the fact that it is very hard to manage. "The aim is to get the company's customers to do your marketing for you" (Kottler, page 149). Somebody gets a an email or watch a clip on the Internet about a certain company and then they send the email or the link to five of their friends and then they all send it to ten of their friends and so on. So in a way viral marketing works a bit like a real human virus. It is actually the people that are spreading it to each other (Allen, page 34). This word-of-mouth phenomenon is incredible powerful, especially on the web. It could potentially reach millions of people in only hours.

It is very hard to succeed at viral marketing. "The challenge for marketers is to harness the amazing power of viral" (Scott, page 92). In the end it is safe to say that it is nearly impossible to create a web-marketing program that can guarantee to go viral. There is always some luck involved and the timing is crucial (Scott, page 92). But the

thing companies can do is that when they notice that a buzz about them are being created on the Internet they act and push it along instead of just hanging on for the ride. That is if the viral explosion is positive, otherwise a company should try and alienate themselves from it. No company wants to have a negative viral buzz created about them on the web (Scott, page 92)

What are then the requirements to become a successful viral marketer? Well, a viral marketer must possess good skills in multi tasking. A marketing background is definitely a plus but not a requirement. However, to get a viral marketing job a person must possess the creativity and dynamism to create viral material. To work as a viral marketer is one of the most difficult jobs in the marketing field but it can also be very rewarding and exciting. The reason for this is that there are a lot of lessons that can be learned in viral marketing and also numerous contacts can be established via viral campaigns. (Allen, page 120)

Another thing that helps people that are applying for a viral marketing job is to have skills in creating as well as designing web pages. Excellent websites that create an online buzz is a big part of any viral marketing campaign. Nowadays it is not enough to put up a static webpage but the site must be well designed as well as interactive enough to become viral. The final thing a viral marketer should possess is a deep knowledge of modern social medias like for instance Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The reason for this is the fact that social medias play a huge part in any viral marketing campaign and a viral marketer needs to utilize this to get traffic for the viral site. A viral marketer should possess not good but excellent skills in blogging, social networking, community bookmarking and forum hopping. (Allen, page 120)

One site on Internet that has become very popular among viral marketers is the famous video-sharing website, YouTube. Youtube is a site where everyone can upload and watch videos for free. It is very easy to create and upload a video there. All this can be done without any hired help from professionals (Allen, page 91). The fact that YouTube is one of the most popular websites in the world makes it only that much more interesting for viral marketers to use it for their benefit.

According to Mr. Scott there are some tips of how to use YouTube for better viral marketing techniques. Firstly, Scott points out that the video should last for a maximum of three minutes otherwise the audience will lose interest. The description

of the video should also be clear and specific. Secondly, a company should not try to make a video as if a customer made it because consumers will pretty fast notice that the video is “fake” and this will then harm the company as well as its reputation. Thirdly, a nice idea for viral marketing is to have a contest where customers can enter by creating their own videos and upload them on YouTube and then the winner should get a decent price to really encourage customers to do their best. A company would benefit from this in that way that they would get a lot of videos uploaded on YouTube by the actual customers and this could then create a buzz about the company and with some luck involved and with a good timing this could go viral.

In the end of this chapter the author wanted to give a good example of how viral marketing actually works in reality and how a company really took action when they noticed that a buzz was being created about them on the web.

Amazingly, if you toss a Mentos candy into a bottle of Diet Coke, you get a marketing explosion. More tangibly, the mint/cola reaction triggers a geyser that sprays 10 feet or more. This phenomenon was popularized in the summer of 2006 in video experiments produced by Fritz Grobe and Stephen Woltz on their eepybird site (eepybird.com). (Scott, page 91)

After the initial experiment Grobe and Woltz made a new video where they answered the question what would happen when you combine 200 liters of Diet Coke and over 500 Mentos mints. This mesmerized audiences on the web and it caused a viral phenomenon. In three weeks four million people had viewed the video of the experiment and hundreds of bloggers had written about it. Also the mainstream media got excited and Grobe and Woltz appeared on Late Night with David Letterman as well as The Today Show (Scott, page 91).

Obviously the people at the marketing offices got excited when the video took off. Millions of people got exposed to Mentos and the company did not pay anything for this. This is really a classic case of viral marketing. The consumers are doing the marketing for you for free. This definitely gives the company a “street credit”. Thus, Mentos did not have anything to do with the experiment but what the company did afterwards to push along this online buzz is really an excellent example of how to manage a viral marketing buzz. (Scott, page 91)

First of all Mr. Peter Healy who is the vice president of marketing for Perfetti Van Melle USA, makers of Mentos recognized the opportunity to push this viral buzz forward. The first thing he did was to link the video of the experiment to the official

Mentos site. Then he offered his full support to Grobe and Woltz. When the two appeared on Late Night With David Letterman and The Today Show they were chauffeured there with the “Mentos ride”, which is a classic convertible covered with Mentos branding, giving away Mentos samples on the way to add support (Scott, page 94). “Soon after, Healy decided that there might be others who would want to create their own video, so the company launched a Mentos geyser video contest using a purpose-built Web site” (Scott, page 95). The first prize in this contest was 1000 iTunes downloads as well as a year’s supply of Mentos. Over 100 videos were submitted and the views in total were nearly a million. The choice of having 1000 iTunes download as a price was also a smart move. The people at Mentos suspected that people that were taking part in the competition are likely to be more interested in free music downloads instead of traditional prizes like gift cards or free trips. This was also a contributor to the authentic feel to Mento’s attempts to further spread the online buzz about the company. (Scott, page 95)

The other company in the experiment on the other hand did the exact opposite of what Mentos did. Marketers at Coca-Cola wanted to distance their brand from the whole phenomenon because they felt the whole thing did not fit the Diet Coke brand. Coca-Cola could as well have gotten an online buzz out of this but they chose not react and in the author’s opinion this was the wrong choice. The author feels that this would not have hurt Coca-Cola’s reputation in any way, quite the opposite it would have only created a buzz about the company from a funny experiment and they would have obtained some free exposure from it.

Like mentioned earlier it is very hard if not impossible to make marketing campaigns that will definitely go viral but there are cases when an organization possesses so important news to the target market they serve that they know that the news has major viral potential (Scott, page 98). “The hiring of a famous CEO away from another company, a merger or acquisition announcement, or a huge celebrity endorsement deal might be just the thing that lights up the blogs in your marketplace” (Scott, page 98). If a company has news like this it is very important to get the news out there in order to get maximum effect from them. (Scott, page 98)

In the end viral marketing is definitely one of the most powerful and exciting marketing tools on the web. It is not easy to manage and it is hard to harness the

power from it but “...with careful preparation when you are sitting on news and with clever ideas for what has the potential to create interest, any organization has the power to become famous on the web” (Scott, page 100).

3.3.4 Blogs, blogging and bloggers

The word blog is a shortening of the words web log. A blog is basically a website or a part of a website that is maintained by an individual or a company. On a blog a visitor can usually find regular commentary entries, event descriptions and other material like for instance graphic or video content. The entries are usually displayed in a reverse-chronological order. Most of the blogs are interactive which means that visitors can leave comments or even message with each other through widgets on the blog. It is this feature that distinguishes blogs from other static websites. As of December 2008 the blog search engine Technorati (www.technorati.com) was tracking more than 112 million blogs worldwide as well as 250 million pieces of tagged media. (www.wikipedia.org Accessed 14.10.2010)

Ten years ago, the word ‘blog’ didn’t exist. Today mainstream media routinely use the word without bothering to explain it. Web logs have become part of popular consciousness with a speed that is remarkable by any standard. What is this new form of communication that has so suddenly entered our culture? (Blogging, Jill Walker Rettberg, 2008, page 1)

The reason why blogs have become so popular these days is the fact that the technology has made it so easy and efficient for people to get personal or organizational viewpoints out on the market via blogs (Scott, page 45). “With easy-to-use blog software, anyone can create a professional-looking blog in just minutes (Scott, page 45). However, before a company or an individual even starts to think about starting up a blog it is important that they first monitor what is happening in the blogosphere and comment on other blogs. (Scott, page 46)

Table 6. The three uses of blogs for marketing and PR (Scott, page 50)

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To easily monitor what millions of people are saying about you, the market you sell into, your organization, and its products.2. To participate in those conversations by commenting on other people’s blogs.3. To begin to shape those conversations by creating and writing your own blog. |
|---|

There are definitely good reasons why people in the marketing and PR world should take the leap into the blogging world. Firstly, by monitoring the blogosphere you can see what people are saying about the industry you are in as well as what people are saying about the company you work for and the products (Scott, page 50). By doing this "...you get a sense of the important bloggers, their online voices, and blog etiquette" (Scott, page 50). Also a good thing to do as a starting point for all marketing and PR people is to go to blog search engines and run queries on the company's name, products, services and anything related that you are working for and see what comes up. Technorati is a terrific blog search engine to perform this with. By doing this you will gather free information about what people are really saying about the company you work for and then hopefully use this information to improve in lacking areas. (Scott, page 52)

After this monitoring stage a person can start to leave comments on blogs that are important for the industry they are in. By doing this they will start to get known to other bloggers and they can present some opinions before they create their own blog. This is a quite important stage in that sense that it will help a person to get more followers before starting an own blog. The final stage is actually then to create an own blog and start the actual blogging. (Scott, page 50-51)

When a person is then ready to start blogging there are many different services that will make the whole set-up process very easy. There are quite a few sites that will let a person set up a blog for free as well as host the blog on their server. The first major service to do this was blogger.com that hosts blogs at blogspot.com. To this day, it is still one of the most popular blogging sites. Other popular blogging sites include Wordpress.com, Livejournal.com, Typepad.com and lots of other sites that are exclusive to a specific country or region. The only thing these blogging sites require for a person is to create a user account. After that you have to choose a name and a URL for the blog and then you can start creating the blog, choosing from various templates, colors, designs etc. (Rettberg, page 5)

As there are so many millions of blogs on the web, different genres and sub-genres might be identified. Such genres could be the diary-style blog, the filter blog, the political blog or the business blog. All these have distinctive limitations. For instance,

on a filter blog you could not probably find photographs of the blogger's cat and the personal blog would not necessarily include frequent links to newspaper articles about politics or the economy. Of course there are as well then blogs that cross genres so one blog might actually be a part of two or three different genres and sub-genres (Rettberg, page 20). As this thesis work is about web marketing for companies the author wanted to have a closer look at the business blogs and their features.

There is not only one right way to do a business blog. Some blogs can be extremely simple while others may be very complex. The key however, is to have a blog that people actually return to. So although there are many different ways how to build up a business blog there is still the elements of a blog that needs to be included in a simple blog as well as a complex blog. (Blogging for business:everything you need to know and why you should care, Shel Holtz, Ted Demopoulos, 2006, page 12)

The first thing that needs to be on a blog is the name/title of it. The name will typically be displayed on top of the page. A person can be very creative with the name although it is important to remember to be rather conservative in naming a business blog. In general it is suggested that the name of a serious blog should be somewhat moderate. A name that actually has something to do with the blog's topic is a smart way to go. The description of the blog is also important. Most blogs have a descriptive subtitle under the actual heading. This will give the reader a better idea what the blog is really about and the range of topics it will cover. (Hotz, Demopoulos, page 13)

Then there are the posts that are also called articles. These articles contain the content of the blog. They are dated and as mentioned earlier they are in reverse-chronological order in almost all blogs. New posts are added frequently on a typical blog anywhere from weekly to several times a day. It is important to frequently update the blog for that reason to keep the readers coming back. Nobody wants to read the same thing over and over again. The posts on the blog are most of the times text but it can as well be video, audio or graphic content. The posts on a blog lean to be in a conversational tone so the readers can as well be a part of it by leaving comments. In order for a business blog to be effective the posts need to include useful content and be above all nonpromotional. Of course a blogger can mention new services or products or even an award won by the company but these posts need to be written in a conversational style

and not in a standard marketing or business language (Hotlz, Demopoulos, page 13-14). “Posts are not advertisements!” (Holtz, Demopoulos, page 14). A lot of posts often include links. The links are very important in the blogosphere because they connect bloggers as well as readers to each other (Holtz, Demopoulos, page 14). “These links add significant value to readers as they can examine anything commented on or referenced with a quick and easy mouse click” (Holtz, Demopoulos, page 14)

Comments are another key feature of blogs. Most blogs make available for users to leave comments. This allows the users to participate in the conversations and they can make their opinions heard by doing this. However, comments are not the only mechanism enabling conversations on the blog. Trackbacks are another feature that allows users to link web content in blogs. Trackbacks were created to make it easier for users to track down other comments by a specific user on other blogs. However, not all blogging services implements trackbacks. For instance, one of the most popular blogging sites blogger.com does not permit trackbacks. (Holtz, Demopoulos, page 15-16)

Permalinks are also needed on a business blog. “A permalink is a permanent link or URL to a blog post” (Hotz, Demopoulos, page 16). Permalinks are used to find old blog entries easier. After an entry scrolls of the main blog page, the only way a reader can find it is via its permalink. (Holtz, Demopoulos, page 17)

A typical business blog should also contain a sidebar and blogrolls. A sidebar is the narrow areas on the right and usually as well on the left side of the main blog window. The sidebars can basically contain anything but usually a reader can find things like contact information, an “about” section, maybe a picture of the blogger, archives, advertisements etc. on the sidebars. Blogrolls on the other hand are essentially just lists of other blogs. A lot of bloggers list on their blogrolls other blogs they read frequently and blogs they like. Blogrolls are in that aspect quite useful because once a reader finds a blog he or she likes it is likely that in that blog’s blogroll he or she might find other blogs that might be interested. In a sense blogrolls are a bit like what links are on a webpage. (Holtz, Demopoulos, page 17)

More typical features of a blog include archives where a reader can find old post entries, categories that organize the old post entries by date instead of content, a

search feature that is usually on the sidebar that allows the reader to search the blog, the blogosphere or even the whole web. Finally there is syndication that solves the problem how to read all the great information that can be found on a blog. Syndication basically allows the reader to track information in a small amount of time via a program that syndicates all information from a website into a feed that then shows what is new on a website. (Holtz, Demopoulos, page 18)

The last aspect of the blogging world the writer wanted to find out was how companies can benefit from blogging and especially bloggers. First of all it is important to keep in mind that blogging is like many other Internet marketing tools almost free if not free marketing. So if somebody can reach thousands if not even millions of people for free it can obviously if used correctly be a very strong marketing weapon for a company. Another good feature with blogging is the fact that a company can benefit from it by blogging themselves but also by being mentioned in other peoples blogs. If a powerful blogger that has millions of followers' mentions how excellent a certain product is then this can have very good effects for the company that is manufacturing the product.

Blogging is definitely a global phenomenon but there are still companies that do not take it too seriously and do not really follow what is happening in the blogging world by reading blogs and looking what people are saying about the company they work for as well as the products and services. Blogging is most definitely a powerful marketing tool and by getting on the good side of famous bloggers companies can definitely reap the benefits from it (Scott, page 59 and 213). Blogging is also a bit more personal if say comparing to online press releases and email newsletters. If a high executive of a company or even the owner is writing a blog this is a great method for letting readers know what is going on within company and in the author's opinion it also gives the readers a more behind the scenes feeling. A blog does not have to be as formal as for instance an online press release and it is this feature that gives the whole thing a more personal approach, especially when a high ranked person in a company is writing it.

3.3.5 Other forms of web marketing

Obviously there are more web marketing means than the ones that were mentioned in this chapter. For further readings the author would like to point out other web marketing methods including podcasts, e-books, chatrooms, v-logs, forums, message boards, RSS feeds and social medias. Out of these marketing methods social medias is the one method that has become very popular in the last years. Twitter and Facebook has both become very popular means of marketing a company on the web. Again, both services are for free and with so many users of both services they are both a source to reckon with when it comes to Internet marketing.

3.3.6 When 7 becomes 350,000,000

In the end of this web marketing chapter the writer wanted to give an excellent examples of just how powerful the web can be when it comes to marketing. The example is about the launch of a Harry Potter theme park called The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Instead of doing a press release the people at Warner Bros. chose to launch the plans in a very different and unconventional way.

Gordon and her counterpart at Warner Bros. chose to launch The Wizarding World of Harry Potter by first telling the exciting news to a very small group of rabid fans. Seven people at the top Harry Potter fan sites, such as Mugglenet, were hand-selected by Gordon's team, with Warner Bros. and Rowling herself providing input about the choices. These seven (affectionately referred to by Gordon's team as "the AP of the HP world") were invited to participate in a top-secret webcast held at midnight on May 31, 2007. (Scott, page 282)

Gordon and the people at Warner Bros. recognized that there are millions of passionate Harry Potter fans worldwide and they relied "...on a world wide rave" (Scott, page 282) to spread the story about the theme park. In the actual webcast that was hosted by Scott Trowbridge who is the vice president of Universal Creative they discussed how a team of twenty designers are bringing together The Wizarding World of Harry Potter themepark. (Scott, page 283)

Gordon was afraid of a backlash if they had not come with the news to the fans first. She imagined the deep disappointment if the fans got to know about the news from for instance The New York times instead of an insider fan site. (Scott, page 283)

To get the most out of the webcast marketing wise the team sent out e-announcements to their opt-in email list of park guests so they could as well hear the news directly.

The team member also sent out e-announcements to their friends and families. Furthermore, during the actual webcast a Web-micro site about the theme park was created to supply a place for bloggers as well as media to go to for information about the theme park. (Scott, page 283)

Because Gordon and the team launched the whole theme park news through social media where they put the fans first they were able to run the whole project in-house and with a very small marketing budget just to cover the webcast infrastructure, the micro-site production and the cost of a small development team. No agency was hired, no marketing stunts were done, there were no CEO conference calls whatsoever and there were definitely no expensive advertising behind this project but still 350 million people heard about the news after initially only seven people were told about it. (Scott, page 283)

However, it is important to remember that all companies do not have Harry Potter on their team. But it is still a remarkable achievement Gordon and the whole team did and it is the approach they had which was unique and it is safe to say that most of the large organizations would not have taken this approach. This also once again proves just how powerful as well as cost effective Internet marketing can be. By telling seven people it is possible to reach out to 350 million without paying a fortune for it. (Scott, page 283)

4 HOW DO FINNISH COMPANIES USE INTERNET AS A MARKETING TOOL?

To get more knowledge about how Finnish companies use Internet as a marketing tool and to find out how important Internet marketing is to the companies the author made in depth interviews in three different companies. The author felt interviews were the best option for getting as much information as possible. The companies that were interviewed are all in different industries but they are all roughly the same size, which make them comparable to each other. Two interviews were performed with managerial staff in Grani Tennis r.y and Motorcarvan Oy and one interview was performed with Butiken på landet.

4.1 Company 1;Grani Tennis r.y

Grani Tennis is a tennis club located in the city of Grankulla. It was established in 1974 and as of January 2010 it had 610 members and approximately 15 employees.

The writer performed two interviews with the staff of Grani Tennis. One was performed with Mr. Janne Viitala who is the sports director of the club and another one was performed with Mrs. Susanna Etumäki who is the head of staff of the club. The interview with Mr. Viitala was performed on the 2nd of March 2010 and the interview with Mrs. Etumäki was performed on the 3rd of March 2010. Both interviews were performed at the club's tennis facility.

The first thing the writer considered was important to get to know was the different kinds of Internet marketing methods the organization utilizes and according to Mr.Viitala the club has had a website since early 2000 which is updated every week by a company called Tietoverkko that the club has hired. On the website the club also has advertisements from other companies, at the moment they have five but the goal is to have thirty by the end of the year. In addition to this the organization sends an email newsletter to all the members approximately once a month. Mrs. Etumäki makes the information for the newsletter. Both Mr. Viitala and Mrs. Etumäki were quite excited about a new thing that the club will take into use in a near future that will make it easier to inform members about things going on within the club. The club will make a contract with mobile network provider Fonecta that will enable the club to get a program that makes it easy to send out mass emails and text messages to members whenever something newsworthy is happening. Another new thing that was taken into use already is an online tennis court reservation system. This makes it easier for customers to book the courts without making any phone calls or actually going to the facility.

When asked the question how important Internet marketing exactly is for Grani Tennis Mr. Viitala replied that: "Internet marketing is very important both for existing customers and potential future customers. For instance, 100 % of the adults in our tennis groups we have received via Internet marketing."

Additionally, Mr. Viitala said that it is however central to carry on with the “normal” marketing and not only focus on Internet marketing but to combine the two. “Grankulla is a small town so it is important to remember that the word of mouth plays a big role in a company’s success. We cannot only market ourselves on Internet but we need to have a strong presence in the community as well.” (Viitala)

Mr. Viitala and Mrs. Etumäki both felt that although Grani Tennis uses Internet as a marketing tool there are definitely still things that could be improved. Partnerships with other tennis clubs could be improved and with that they could get Grani Tennis links on other websites and also more advertisements on their own. “We definitely use Internet in our marketing but not to it’s full potential, there are certainly things that still could be improved.” (Etumäki)

Grani Tennis has an annual Internet marketing budget of 3000-4000 Euros. Out of this budget 1000 Euros were used in 2010 for buying 1000 Google pay per click. This means that Grani Tennis makes sure that one thousand new visitors will visit their website. The writer found it quite astonishing that such a big part of the Internet marketing budget was spent on this. The writer feels that getting one thousand new visitors on the website will not help the club in a great way. Out of the one thousand people that stumble upon the website Grani Tennis will probably not make that many new customers. And also it is safe to say that that the club has a fairly local clientele. Nobody living in Rovaniemi or other places far away will come to play tennis at the club. Therefore in the writer’s opinion 1000 Euros could definitely be spent in a way that would benefit the club more than this.

To conclude how Grani Tennis uses Internet as a marketing tool the writer’s opinion is that for a tennis club in Finland they take advantage of the Internet in their marketing quite okay although there is definitely a lack of organization in the club. Nobody is really in charge of the marketing and the writer did not really get a straight answer about who is in charge of the Internet marketing either. It would certainly help if they would have one person that would be responsible for it.

As a tennis club in Finland you are limited to a certain extent. It is almost impossible to take full advantage of the Internet because you have a fairly local clientele, you are not selling products online, and you cannot really go international. This limits you a lot when speaking of Internet marketing, however Grani Tennis still uses Internet as a

marketing tool quite okay comparing to other Finnish tennis clubs and the author's opinion is that they will get better at it in the future and learn from previous mistakes, but it would be crucial that somebody would take responsibility for that area. The good thing is that they are trying to develop all the time with new involvements like the contract with Fonecta as well as the online booking system. It is very important that you try to evolve, especially when it comes to the Internet because it is a powerful marketing tool and it can really be helpful if used correctly.

4.2 Company 2; Butiken på landet

Butiken på landet is a chain of shops in Finland and Sweden that sell high quality clothing in unique environments. The shop the writer did the interview with is located in the town of Juva, in eastern Finland on a historical farm and was established in 2001. The shop sells clothing for both men and women from the best manufacturers in Europe. The selection of clothing is unique and the shop carries brands you will not find anywhere else in Finland. (www.butikenpawehmais.fi Accessed 21.7.2010)

One in depth interview was performed with Mrs. Anna Grotenfelt who is the head of marketing at the store. The interview was performed on the 28th of April at the location of the store.

Butiken på landet have a few different ways how they market themselves on the web. Firstly, they have a website that is updated two or three times a month by their Webmaster Joel Puhakainen. They also change the pictures on their website three or four times a year. Secondly, they send out a newsletter usually once a month to everybody that has signed up for their newsletter. However, the store is way more active with sending out normal mail. At the moment the email newsletter is only a support for the normal mail newsletter. The store also has a Facebook profile where they update what is happening in the store and also send out information to everybody that is a fan of the group. Finally, they have an arrangement with Eniro. This means that they have joint WebPages with other Finnish companies where they can have basic information about the store. They have pictures, opening hours, contact information and so on these pages. Then they are as well attached to Eniro's

telephone service. This means that if anyone calls Eniro and asks about butiken på landet the staff at Eniro can tell them the information that can be found on the webpage. (Anna Grotenfelt)

Anna Grotenfelt is the one who is in charge of the marketing as well as Internet marketing for butiken på landet. In the beginning of each year she looks at the figures from the previous year to see if the budget was held, what was successful and what was not. From the basis of this she makes the budget as well as a business plan for the upcoming year. There is an own budget for the website, for the program they use for the e-mail newsletters etc. The budget for the Internet marketing is approximately 5 % of the whole marketing budget. Then she also puts aside some money from the budget that she can use during the year if she gets a good marketing offer but this is for all marketing, not only Internet. (Anna Grotenfelt)

The writer noticed rather fast during the interview that Internet marketing is not very important for butiken på landet although they do take it seriously. For instance, when asked about the significance of Internet marketing Anna Grotenfelt answered:

At the moment Internet marketing is not that important for us. Obviously it is important to be seen on the Internet nowadays but we have noticed that many of our customers are belonging to the age group that doesn't necessarily use the Internet as much as the younger generation. Our customers appreciate more normal mail and also when they need information about something they usually just call us. But things like opening hours, driving instructions and information about discount prices are things they go to our website to check out.

According to Mrs. Grotenfelt butiken på landet still market themselves in newspapers and mail newsletters as much as before the arrival of Internet. On top of this they have also begun to market themselves on the radio. Therefore it is clear that the Internet has not had a huge impact on their marketing. It is only another way for them to market themselves but it has not affected their other marketing outlets. Furthermore, Mrs. Grotenfelt feels that the store does not use Internet to its full potential. They have a rather subdued Internet marketing for that reason that they feel that their customers are not heavy users of that medium yet. Things that could be improved and probably will be in the future are things like buying banners on different newspapers WebPages, optimizing the use of e-mails, having an online store and selling clothes through that, working with Google and AdWords to help people to find the website of butiken på landet with search words like for instance "quality clothes".

As mentioned earlier Internet marketing is not crucial for butikken på landet but the writer felt it would still be interesting to know if Internet has significantly helped their marketing and if they think they have gotten a lot of new customers as a result of their Internet marketing. The writer also wanted to find out if they feel that it is worth the effort to spend time and money on their Internet marketing or is it basically unnecessary.

Mrs. Grotenfelt feels that Internet has not really helped them to get that many new customers however; she said their webpage works as a sort of portfolio for them. Customers that have been to the store tell their friends about it and then the friends go to the butikken på landet website and have a browse. If they like what they see they might come to the store so the website is therefore definitely an important part of the Internet marketing of the store. Mrs. Grotenfelt also said that she has noticed that the website has been a strong medium to attract customers to the “customer days” they arrange at the store. A lot of people go to the “what’s happening” part of the website and also the “pictures” part and then they come to the “customer days” and ask for a specific clothing item they have seen on the website.

You have to remember that it is very easy for somebody to go to a website and get to know a certain company and what they offer. It is anonymous and there is no chance that you get into a situation where you feel that you are pushed into buying something, with other words it is safe. That is the reason why it is very important that our website radiates the image we have in the store as well as contains as much relevant information as possible without getting too heavy. (Anna Grotenfelt)

This is a fact that the writer as well believes is important to think about. A lot of people might be a bit uneasy to go the store if they do not know what the store has to offer for them. They might feel a pressured to buy something if they go to a store. But when they can go to the website and scroll and have a look at all the clothes it is easier for them to go to the actual store. This is the reason why the writer feels that the website might be the most important Internet marketing tool for any company.

All and all Mrs. Grotenfelt experience that at the moment it is not worth to spend more time and money on Internet marketing that they are doing. However, she points out that it is crucial to keep track on the situation and how their customers are using the Internet. In the future it might be necessary to improve their Internet marketing in order to fulfill their customers needs.

For the future butiken på landet have a few things they want to evolve with their Internet marketing. They want to have more banners on chosen WebPages, more work with search words so it is easier to find the store via different Internet search engines, continue to improve their Webpage, work more with Facebook and get more fans and also to work further with the e-mail newsletter. One thing that they are also thinking about is to open a web store so customers could buy the clothes without actually going to the store. However, this is something that will probably not happen in a near future (Anna Grotenfelt).

The conclusion about the Internet marketing of butiken på landet is that they use Internet to their advantage to a certain point very well. They are really on top of what they are doing and they do not exaggerate it. They know that Internet marketing is not crucial for the company but obviously in this day and age it is crucial to be at least seen on the web and they recognize this. Again, as in the previous case with Grani Tennis, butiken på landet is also limited to a certain extent. Mrs. Grotenfelt explains this as following:” We have a unique concept that is very tied to the environment we work in and we really depend on the personal contact with our customers so this is the reason we cannot rely too heavily on the Internet.” This is true. The whole idea with the store is that people come there and have as well perhaps a look around the farm and maybe have a cup of coffee and actually spend some time there. If you take this away there is nothing original about the store anymore. It is just another ordinary clothing store. The more personal business operation you have, the less you can rely on Internet (Anna Grotenfelt). As a result of this butiken på landet uses Internet more as a support for their other marketing and as a place where customers and potential customers can get information about the store.

4.3 Company 3; Motorcaravan Oy

Motorcaravan Oy was chosen by the author as the third company to do interviews with. Motorcaravan Oy is located in Espoo by the lake and they sell caravans as well as spare parts and accessories. The company was established in 1985 and as of March 2010 the company had 6 employees.

The author performed two interviews with managerial staff at Caravan. One was performed with Mr. Tom Sågbom who is the CEO of the company and a second

interview was performed with Mr. Jan-Peter Rehn who is in the board of directors of the company. The interview with Mr. Sångbom was performed 12.3.2010 at the location of the company and the interview with Mr. Jan-Peter Rehn was performed 1.3 at his home in Grankulla.

Motorcaravan has a rather passive Internet marketing. The website they have now is quite new and they have had it for only about three years. Before that they only had what Mr.Sångbom called a “static” website. Their current website is updated rather seldom. The company also sends out an e-mail newsletter approximately three times a month. The newsletter is a very basic pdf file but according to Mr. Sångbom they are thinking about acquiring a new program so they could put a little bit of more effort into the newsletter and make it more represent able. They send the e-mail newsletter to old customers as well potential new customers that have asked to be submitted to their e-mail newsletter list. The newsletters are basically offers that are made to attract potential customers to the store. Tom Sångbom is the person that is in charge of the newsletter as well as the Internet marketing of the company. He makes all the final decisions regarding this area. The company has also hired an advertising agency that keep the website updated. However, the advertising agency does not take any decisions regarding the website but it is Mr. Sångbom who says what they should do and then they only perform those tasks. On top of the website and the e-mail newsletter the company has also bought a few adverts and done some work with keyword optimization but this is still in an early stage.

The writer felt it was important again to know how the staff at Motorcarvan felt about Internet marketing and its importance. According to Mr. Rehn Internet marketing is very important for Motorcaravan in that sense that it is crucial for them to be seen on the web but there it basically ends. That is enough for them at this point. They feel that there clientele is rather old and not too familiar with the Internet so they do not need to have a rather passive Internet marketing for the moment being. It was also interesting for the author to find out that Motorcaravan is the only company out of the three companies participating in the empirical study that has decreased their other marketing outlets since the arrival of the web. According to Mr. Sångbom it has not been a big decrease but still a noticeable. To the writer this feels a bit strange. So the company has a rather passive Internet marketing but still they have decreased their

other marketing outlets. This means that they have all together decreased on their marketing.

As mentioned earlier it is Mr. Sångbom who is in charge of the Internet marketing of Motorcaravan. The advertising agency that keeps the WebPages updated also help out sometimes with coming up with new ideas for. When asked about if Motorcaravan uses the Internet to its full potential and what could still be improved Mr. Sångbom answered: "We definitely do not use Internet to its full potential. For instance, we have no work whatsoever with social medias. A lot of things could definitely be improved". Mr. Sångbom continued explaining that what the company has basically done is put their brochures on the web and made a simple e-mail newsletter. The company's Internet marketing is still in a development stage. A lot of things could be improved like starting working with social medias such as for instance Facebook, buy more adverts and keep on working with keyword optimization and just developing in these areas. In the author's opinion the keyword here is develop. Like mentioned in the earlier companies as well it is crucial with the Internet that people try to develop all the time because everything is changing so fast and new methods of marketing yourself on the web is coming up all the time so it is important to update yourself and keep up with these changes.

According to Mr. Rehn Motorcaravan's Internet marketing budget is approximately 3 % of the company's whole marketing budget. This is roughly the same percentage as the other companies have that are participating in the empirical study. So again the percentage is quite low and the author was curious to find out if the staff at Motorcarvan feel that the Internet has significantly helped the company's marketing. Mr. Sångbom explained that he feels that one important thing is to have informative and objective WebPages. That will definitely work in your favor. The webpage is perhaps the most important thing when it comes to Internet marketing because the webpage is usually the first aspect of a company's Internet marketing a potential new customer sees. If the webpage is not up to standard the customer will probably not bother to get more information about the company. Mr. Rehn also mentioned that the company actually saves money by marketing themselves on the Internet. For instance now they can have all the brochures on the Internet and they don't have to do large mailings anymore. They can just have their website and send out their e-mail newsletter and it is also very easy to update information when you have it all on the

web. In the writer's opinion this is the reason why the company has decreased on their other marketing outlets because they basically feel they don't have to do it anymore when they have the web to work with.

The final thing the writer wanted to find out about Motorcaravan was how the company will develop their Internet marketing in the future. The writer got to know from both Mr. Sångbom and Mr. Rehn that the company has big ambitions for the future. Motorcaravan has already established a company in Russia that sells their products but because of the financial crisis very little has happened on this front and only a few items have been sold so far. However, the company is really set on establishing themselves in Russia and they will release an online store especially designed for Russia where they will sell a limited assortment of their products. In the author's opinion this could be a great move for Mororcaravan. Internet marketing is best suited for big countries because the possibilities of "making it big" are better in those countries. This does not mean that it is easier to succeed in these countries but at least you have a bigger chance of succeeding well because you can reach more people through Internet marketing.

Concluding the empirical study of Motorcaravan the writer feels that the company is in a developing stage when it comes to their Internet marketing. They have tried some different things and now they are trying to figure out what is the best option for them. At the moment the Internet marketing of the company is quite small but the plans they have for the future sounds good. They should definitely start working with social medias and the writer also believes they could take better use of the advertising agency they have hired. Instead of only updating the webpage the company could give some more responsibilities to the agency and see what kind of ideas they would have. The thing that impressed the author the most was the fact that Motorcaravan is trying to reach the Russian market via Internet marketing. This is a bold move because the Russian market can be quite hard to penetrate but if succeeded this can be a huge cash cow for the company.

The writer feels however that the company should do some more research behind their Internet marketing strategies and then decide on a few things they will concentrate on. At the moment they are a bit all over the place, trying all kinds of Internet marketing strategies and it seems they do not really know what they want.

The author feels they really should have a meeting and think over what they want to do and what they feel their customers are demanding from their Internet marketing. In the end it is definitely the customers that need to be taken in consideration because they are the ones that will make or break a company.

4.4 Discussion

After performing all the interviews for the empirical study the author felt quite satisfied with the information obtained. In some cases the author felt the answers were a bit short but altogether the author felt he obtained valid results.

The first thing that did not come as a surprise to the author was the fact that all three companies had a lot in common in their Internet marketing. They all had a working website although there were definitely some differences in them. Butiken på landet and Grani Tennis quite frequently updated their websites when anything newsworthy was happening when Motorcaravan only had put all the information on the website and you could not really see what was going on within the company by looking at the website. Also the only company that had hired a Webmaster was Butiken på landet and it felt in general that they did the most work with their website. The second thing all the companies had in common was the e-mail newsletter. Again, although they all used this Internet tool there were some differences in how they used it. Motorcaravan had a very basic newsletter that they sent out quite seldom when Grani Tennis and butiken på landet made some more effort with their newsletters and they also sent them out a bit more frequently, usually once a month. The actual information in the newsletter was as well a bit different. Motorcaravan had basically only offers in their newsletter and there was not really any information what is going on within the company. Grani Tennis again had a lot of information in their newsletter about what is happening within the company, how the juniors of the club have been succeeding in tournaments, what kind of happenings will be organized in that month etc. Butiken had a bit of a mixture between Grani Tennis and Motorcaravan. In their newsletter they had as well offers but they also had information about for instance when will the next “sales days” be and general information about the store. In general it felt again to the author that Grani Tennis and Butiken på landet put a bit more of an effort in doing their newsletters. The third thing all three companies had in common was links on

other pages as well as adverts on their own. However, in all three companies these Internet tools were all still in a developing stage and not much effort nor money were put into these.

The author was a bit surprised when it comes to the differences between the companies Internet marketing. There were more differences than he thought it would be. Out of all three companies Grani Tennis was the only one that had not done any work with keyword optimization whatsoever. Instead they had put one thousand Euros on buying Google pay per click that quite frankly felt a bit ludicrous to the author. Motorcaravan and Butiken på landet had both done work with keyword optimization although Butiken på landet was definitely a few steps ahead when it comes to this marketing tool. Also, as mentioned earlier Butiken på landet has an agreement with Eniro that enables them to have joint WebPages with other Finnish companies where they can store information about the store and also be attached to Eniro's phone service.

The biggest difference between the companies is the fact that the only one that had done any work whatsoever with social medias was Butiken på landet. They have a group on Facebook and the author's opinion is that Facebook is the new hot spot for Internet marketing. It is free and almost everybody is using Facebook these days. It is very easy to use and it is just in general a great way to market yourself on the web. Obviously the three companies are in different industries so their clientele might differ a bit from each other but that is not a reason to not have a group on Facebook. The word spreads so incredible fast on Facebook and it is just a great place for Internet marketing. So in this aspect Butiken på landet is again definitely ahead of Grani Tennis and Motorcaravan.

Also, another rather huge different between the companies is the fact that Motorcaravan will try to go international. They will try get into the Russian market via Internet marketing. This can be a very smart move because Russia is an ideal country for Internet marketing. Even if the company "only" would sell to a couple of percentage of the population it would be a huge number of items sold. It is definitely not going to be easy for the company to get a footing in the Russian market but there is definitely potential in this move. Also, of the three companies Motorcaravan is without a doubt the company that even has the possibility to go international at this

point so in the author's opinion they are making the right choice. The thing the company should really focus on now is how they will get coverage in Russia. It is crucial for them to get their link on some Russian pages as well as doing some co-operation with Russian social medias otherwise it will be very hard for them to succeed. They have to get the word out there and it will not happen if they do not co-operate with Russian companies as well as social medias.

When comparing the Internet marketing of the three companies with each other the author noticed a few different facts. All companies have basically the same amount to spend on Internet marketing but it feels that Butiken på landet make the most out of the money. They are much more organized than the other two companies and they really sit down in the beginning of each year to plan the Internet marketing for the upcoming year and then really focus on a few things a do them really good. To the author it feels that they are pretty much better in every area when it comes to Internet marketing comparing to Motorcaravan and Grani Tennis. This does not mean that Motorcaravan and Grani Tennis are terrible but they are a bit less organized (especially Grani Tennis) and it feels that they do not really have a plan nor a focus area behind their Internet marketing.

To conclude the discussion part the author would like to point out that as a company in Finland you are limited to a certain extent when it comes to Internet marketing. It is hard to take full advantage of it because Finland is a rather small country with not that many inhabitants and it is definitely not the best-suited country for Internet marketing. If comparing for instance to Germany who is not that much bigger in Finland but still they have over eighty million inhabitants. This would clearly be a better-suited country for Internet marketing because it is possible to reach so much more people that all live in the same country somewhat close to each other. Still, Internet marketing is important for Finnish companies and according to the author all three companies participating in the empirical study do take advantage of the Internet in their marketing. However, it seems like Butiken på landet is definitely the company that take best advantage of the web. All the companies have somewhat the same resources but Butiken på landet are just more focused and better planned when it comes to their web marketing. Even tough all companies are in different industries it should not really make a difference in their Internet marketing. In the author's opinion the problem with Grani Tennis and Motorcaravan is that they have not yet found out

how they want to market themselves on the web and they are still trying out different strategies and basically trying to find their place in the world of Internet marketing. So as for the moment Butiken på landet definitely has the best web marketing of the companies participating in the empirical study.

As for the future of Internet marketing in Finland the author feels that in a couple of years companies will start to take it more seriously and it will become increasingly more important. At the moment Finland is a bit behind in this area but once people will actually recognize the power of the web it will definitely be used more and only get as well more important for companies.

5 CONCLUSION

This thesis work was conducted in order to find out about different methods of Internet marketing as well as to find out how Finnish companies use Internet as a marketing tool. In the author's opinion the findings of this thesis work will interest mainly the companies that took part in the empirical study but also companies in general that want to know more about different methods of Internet marketing.

The topic of this thesis work was web marketing and the research question was how Finnish companies use Internet as a marketing tool. The author approached the heading as well as the research question with great enthusiasm and motivation. The writer felt the best option to gather as much information as possible for the research question was to perform interviews/discussions with managerial staff in three different companies. Hence the method chosen for the empirical study was interviews. All together five interviews were performed and the author felt quite content with the outcome although a couple of interviews did feel a bit uninspired.

The theory part of this thesis work showed that Internet marketing is a worldwide phenomenon and a great and cost-effective way for companies to market themselves. However, it is important for companies to do their research so they get a better picture of the consumers' wants and needs. Careless Internet marketing can give negative publicity. Negative publicity on the Internet can have severe precautions but when used correctly Internet is a great, if not the greatest marketing tool there is. Millions of people can be reached in a matter of weeks if not even days and the best thing is that

companies do not have to pay a fortune for it. This certainly does not mean that Internet marketing is an easy marketing tool to use but it definitely has the potential to give great benefits to a company when used correctly.

The empirical part of this study showed that Finnish companies do use Internet as a marketing tool quite decently but in general Internet marketing is still in a rather undeveloped stage in Finland. It is getting better and stronger all the time, especially when comparing to a few years back. However, Internet marketing is still quite passive in Finland. It is enough for companies at this point to be seen on the web. The author believes that in a couple of years companies in Finland will start to take Internet marketing more seriously and a shift will be seen where Internet marketing is getting more important and companies will actually put more money and effort into it.

In general the author felt satisfied with the obtained results of this final thesis. With that said, this certainly did not come easy. More effort and time had to be used than initially planned. Especially the research stage took much longer than intended. In the end the author felt the extra work did pay off and is very pleased with the end results.

The writing of the thesis work was like a journey for the author and felt he actually learned a lot of new information about Internet marketing while doing the thesis. Many new forms were discovered as well as an approach how to use them and the author feels without a doubt that he will have great use of this information in the future ventures.

For further readings about Internet marketing the author would like to warmly recommend the book *The New Rules of Marketing & PR* by award winning author David Meerman Scott. This book was used quite a lot in the thesis work and it gives a good foundation of the new rules of marketing and PR as well as general knowledge about different methods of web marketing. It would be especially good for somebody that is starting up a business and wants to figure out what Internet marketing methods to use and how to use them.

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7 APPENDIX

List of interview main questions:

1. *What different types of Internet marketing tools are you using and which one is the most important one?*
2. *What is the significance of Internet marketing for your company?*
 - *Is it at all that important?*
 - *Would you manage without using Internet marketing and would you loose customers without it?*
3. *When you started to market yourself on the web have your other marketing outlets decreased or have they remained on the same level as before and the Internet marketing is more like a bonus for you? So how have Internet marketing exactly affected your” normal” marketing?*
4. *Do you have anybody that is in charge of your Internet marketing or which persons make decisions about this matter?*
5. *Do you feel you are using the Internet to its full potential marketing wise? If not, what could be improved?*
6. *Do you have an Internet marketing budget?*
7. *Do you feel the Internet has significantly helped your marketing? Do you feel you have gotten new customers because of it?*
8. *How do you see your Internet marketing developing in the future? Will it become increasingly important or will it never be that important for you? Does it feel that it is something worth putting effort in?*
9. *Additional questions/comments on the subject?*