

**SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING
FOR ENTREPRENEURS**

Jenni Paajanen

Being an Individual Research Project presented in
part requirement for International Business and Management Studies,
Hogeschool Inholland, Amsterdam/Diemen, The Netherlands.

25.5.2011

Name of Supervisor: Nico Jansen

"This work or any part thereof has not previously been presented in any form to the Hogeschool
Inholland or to any other institutional body whether for assessment or other purposes. Save for any
express acknowledgements, references and/or bibliographies cited in the work, I confirm that the
intellectual content is the result of my own efforts and no other person."

Signed.....

I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to show my sincere gratitude for all the people who has shown me their support and guided me through the process of working on my Independent Research Project. First and foremost, my utmost gratitude goes to Mr. Nico Jansen, Lecturer of the INHOLLAND University whose extensive knowledge and encouragement helped me to stay focused and find the missing pieces of information needed. I will also thank Mr. Micheal Keaney from Metropolia Business School for his interesting lectures, inspiration and support at the very beginning of the process.

Secondly, I wish to thank my fellow double degree students, with whom I have shared this 4 year long journey travelling back and forth between Finland and The Netherlands. Without their support and friendship I would have never got to this stage of my education. Special note goes to: Karoliina Pelander, for sharing our thoughts on a daily basis while living under the same roof; Laura Kukkonen, Laura Paunonen and Elisa Selki, for the stimulating discussions and observations, for the sleepless nights before deadlines, and for all the fun we have had in the last four years. Also I thank my dear friends and classmates: Stefan Katro, Mila Hilden, Stella Ruissalo, Cedrick Van Der Aar, Anki Lindholm and John Sullivan, for taking this journey with me and smiling back at me when I needed it.

Last but not least, I have to acknowledge the help and support from my commissioning client Mr. Thomas Smart, who provided me with excellent feedback and waited patiently for the final product to be seen.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	2
II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
III. LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES	8
IV. GLOSSARY	9
<hr/>	
1. INTRODUCTION	10
1.1 BACKGROUND	10
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT	10
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	11
<hr/>	
2. SECONDARY RESEARCH	11
2.1 DEFINITIONS	11
2.1.1 <i>Marketing Communications</i>	11
2.1.2 <i>Entrepreneurship</i>	12
2.1.3 <i>Social Media</i>	13
2.2 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING	14
2.2.1 <i>Strategies and Objectives</i>	14
2.2.2 <i>Understanding the Marketing Mix</i>	15
2.2.3 <i>Planning the Campaign</i>	17
2.2.4 <i>Integrated Marketing Communications</i>	18
2.3 ENTREPRENEURS AND MARCOM PLANNING	18
2.3.1 <i>Background</i>	18
2.3.2 <i>The Role of Networking for an Entrepreneur</i>	19
2.3.3 <i>Relationship Marketing</i>	20
2.4 SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS TACTIC	21
2.4.1 <i>New Media</i>	21
2.4.2 <i>Traditional Media versus Social Media</i>	22
2.4.3 <i>Social Media Platforms</i>	23
2.4.4 <i>How to Promote your Business Using Social Media</i>	26
2.5 CONCLUSION	28

3. PRIMARY RESEARCH	29
3.1 METHODOLOGY	29
3.1.1 <i>Questionnaire</i>	29
3.1.2 <i>Sampling Methods</i>	30
3.2 THE RESPONDENTS	31
3.2.1 <i>Demographic Data of Respondents</i>	31
3.2.2 <i>Professional Data of Respondents</i>	32
3.3 DATA AND ANALYSIS	32
3.3.1 <i>Part I. Situation Analysis</i>	33
3.3.2 <i>Part II. Objectives</i>	34
3.3.2 <i>Part III. Tactics</i>	35
3.4 CONCLUSION	36
<hr/>	
4. OVERALL RESEARCH FINDINGS	37
4.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	37
4.2 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE CLIENT	41
5. RECOMMENDATIONS	42
5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	42
5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CLIENT	42
<hr/>	
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY	43
6.1 LITERATURE	43
6.3 RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS	43
6.4 INTERNET SOURCES	44
<hr/>	
7. APPENDIXES	45
7.1 COMMISSIONING CLIENT – TS WORLD WIDE HOLDINGS LTD.	45
7.2 SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE	46
7.3 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS	47
7.4 PROFESSIONAL DATA OF RESPONDENTS	48
7.5 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ENTREPRENEURS ON SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING	49
7.6 OUTLINE OF THE INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN	54

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

Title: Social Media in Marketing Communications Planning for Entrepreneurs

Author: Jenni Paajanen

Supervisor: Nico Jansen

Key words: Marketing Communications, Business Planning, Social Media, Entrepreneurship, Conventional Marketing Practices, Networking, Adoption of Social Media

BACKGROUND

The key goal of marketing communications is to build awareness of a business, its products, and its position with the help of customer-focused marketing tactics such as advertising, publicity and e-marketing. Currently there is a great interest towards social media applications like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to name a few. One key topic of debate is the marketing value of social media for business purposes. For entrepreneurs and small business owners, social media can be seen as a good alternative for expensive traditional marketing tactics such as TV or radio advertising. While social media may offer less-expensive channels to build company's promotion mix, social media marketing can sometimes cost more in time than in money. Therefore it is very important to have a clear strategic vision for how social media can contribute to entrepreneur's marketing communication.

PURPOSE

After my client Thomas Smart started observing all the hype and information flow about social media he got the clue to find out whether it could be used as an effective marketing tactic. Furthermore, it was also interesting for him to get more insight on marketing communications planning and learn from new trends in the field of marketing. In order to consult my client on social media marketing, I formulated the following research questions:

- 1) Are entrepreneurs adopting social media tools into their marketing communications planning?
- 2) What benefits entrepreneurs can expect to receive after implementing social media into their promotion mix?
- 3) How can social media tactics be integrated with the rest of the communications mix?

METHOD

This study consisted of both primary and secondary research. Firstly, the secondary research findings introduce the reader into the topic by explaining the most relevant facts and linking the following three subject areas: Marketing Communications, Entrepreneurship and Social Media. To support the theoretical findings, the primary research achieved the exploratory purpose of the research. The key aim of the primary research was to gain a better understanding of how entrepreneurs use and manage social media. For this purpose, an online survey provided the best possible strategy for collecting the data. In practice this meant that 50 entrepreneurs were chosen as convenience sample, representing different industries and nationalities. In the first phase, the questionnaire was handed to the project client and afterwards distributed to the rest of the sample relying on networking.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

From both secondary and primary research, one can conclude that entrepreneurs are familiar with social media landscape and many of them see it as a great marketing opportunity. Entrepreneurs have gained new improved methods of reaching their customers via internet based platforms available today. Businesses don't need to rely on old fashioned marketing channels since they can reach their customers easier for example by setting up an internet blog for an instant 2 way communication or create a fan page on Facebook. This research paper also brought up the benefit of networking which has truly become a common attribute when entrepreneurs are dealing with social media.

What comes to other benefits of social media, it can be seen that social media and entrepreneurship can be combined to create more efficiency, more brand equity, more business opportunities, and more relationships with the target audience. However, it can be seen that entrepreneurs in the sample reveal a tendency to carry out marketing activities in a haphazard manner which limits their likelihood of achieving their targets. For example, not many people are aware of how to control their social media campaigns and how to measure their success. It has also been indicated that conventional approach to reach target segments, still has a strong effect on entrepreneurs. Furthermore, it still seems that social media is seen more as a communication tool rather than marketing tactic to bring returns on investment for a business.

However, what has truly changed is the fact in which degree consumers can be part of the process of marketing communications. Today's consumers have even more power to choose which web pages they choose to go to, which blogs to read and whose fans they declare to be publicly. On the Internet age, the medium is not only the message sent by a marketer. Individuals like you and me, are part of the message and they have a word in modern corporate branding world like never before. Such change in communication flow should be taken into account whether or not entrepreneurs decide to utilize social media into their marketing mix. People are having public discussion, whether you like it or not. Any product or service might be in the spotlight and the business owner may have no control over it. Therefore, it is important to join the debate and start communicating with the target audience using appropriate social media tools.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE CLIENT

Both primary and secondary research findings indicate that social media can provide several benefits for entrepreneurs. This, among other factors pointed out that social media should be included in entrepreneurs' communication mix. Therefore, I advise Thomas Smart to create an in-depth marketing communications plan where social media tactics are integrated with the traditional marketing mix. Outline for this plan was created using SOSTAC planning system which provided the key elements for the planning process, similarly to other marketing planning theories. It was also essential that Thomas Smart adopts a consistent approach to all marketing activities in order to reach the target audience and motivate customers to buy.

III. LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. Rich Picture of Marketing Communications Planning

Figure 2. Marketing Mix in Relation to Marketing Communications Mix

Figure 3. SOSTAC Planning System

Figure 4. Six Steps of Marketing Communications Planning

Table 5. Key Benefits of Networking for Entrepreneurs

Figure 6. 2009 Interactive Marketing Forecast Online Survey

Table 7. The Differences Between traditional and Social Media

Figure 8. Coca Cola on Facebook

Figure 9. Mystery Guitar Man on YouTube

Figure 10. Fashion Blog The Sartorialist by Scott Schuman

Table 11. Aligning Social Media Marketing Tactics with Other Channels

Figure 12. Response Breakdown of the Usage of Different Social Media Channels

Figure 13. Response Breakdown on Traditional Media Relations versus Social Media

Figure 14. Main objectives for entrepreneurs to engage with social media networks

Figure 15. Externally and Internally Facing Communication

Figure 16. Five Key Benefits of Social Media

Please note: If the figure or table is modified from an existing source or if it is directly copied from another publication, the reference information can be found as footnotes. All the figures and tables on the primary research section are my own work, yet they have been put together with the application provided at SurveyQismo.com.

IV. GLOSSARY

Blog: A website, similar to an online journal, where readers can follow chronological entries made by the blog keeper, also known as blogger. The word blog was derived from the combination of the word web and log.

Entrepreneur: Someone who takes initiative by organizing a venture to take benefit of an opportunity and, as the decision maker, decides what, how, and how much of a good or service will be produced. The entrepreneur is usually a sole proprietor, a partner, or the one who owns the majority of shares in an incorporated venture yet it can also describe a person working in a big corporation.

Experiential marketing: Marketing concept that integrates elements of emotions, logic, and mind processes to connect with the consumer.

Facebook: Social networking site where users can create a private profile or a company page. The site offers several applications such as Facebook Ads, Facebook Analytics and Facebook Mobile.

IMC: Integrated Marketing Communications, an approach to achieving the objectives of a marketing campaign, through a well-coordinated use of different promotional methods that are intended to support each other.

Limited liability company: Company working as a legal entity. Also called limited personal liability, since financial liability of each shareholder for the company's debts and obligations is limited to the par value of his or her fully paid-up shares..

Linked In: Business oriented social networking site, where people can create professional networks, search for job offers and make professional profiles.

Marcom: Short term of marketing communications, coordination of promotional messages delivered through one or more channels

Marketing Mix: Also known as the theory of 4Ps: Promotion, Place, Product and Price.

Partnership: Type of business organization in which two or more individuals pool money, skills, and other resources, and share profit and loss as agreed on the terms of the partnership agreement.

Promotion Mix: Promotional element of the marketing mix theory.

PPC: Pay per Click, cost model implemented by search engines or other websites to charge advertisers for each time a user clicks a specific link.

SEO: Search Engine Optimization, process of improving traffic to a given website by increasing the site's visibility in search engine results.

Social Media: Internet-based applications that allow users to interact, create and share user generated content.

Sole Proprietor: Sole owner of a business also known as a self-employed person or sole trader. He or she directs the affairs of the enterprise, bears its risks and losses, and takes the profits and benefits.

SOSTAC®: Acronym for the 6 basic elements of the Marketing Plan:

Twitter: Social networking site, which allows users to publish short messages that are visible to other users. These messages are known as tweets, and can only be 140 characters or less in length.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The topic for my independent research project will cover the following subject area: Social Media in Marketing Communications Planning for Entrepreneurs. The commissioning client for this particular research will be a sole proprietor Thomas Smart who is the owner of TS World Wide Holdings Ltd. The company provides consultancy for cutting edge company strategies, process automation and work-flow optimization. The core service for the company is to lower overheads and help different divisions within larger corporations or freelancers to work together in networked and often international teams using custom developed automated processes and application assisted work-flows. For more information on Thomas Smart and his business, please see the appendix 7.1.

Entrepreneurs and small business owners like Thomas Smart make business decisions on a daily basis. What if one day there is no need to rely on traditional marketing channels such as TV or radio when planning a promotional campaign? Today there are alternatives which cost less money and provide platforms where customers can provide instant feedback for the benefit of both consumers and businesses alike. For example, entrepreneurs can reach their target audience easier for example by setting up an internet based blog or Facebook page for an instant 2 way communication. On the Internet age, the medium is not only the message. Social media allow both businesses and individuals becoming part of the message. If you think about it, everyone can have a word in modern corporate branding world like never before.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The purpose of this research project is to consult a sole proprietor and entrepreneur Thomas Smart on his use of social media in marketing communications planning. In this particular case, Thomas Smart is looking to expand his information on social media and also wishes to identify new ways to implement social media into his business. Many authors of today see Social networks in a very positive light and agree that it is a vibrant resource and an excellent marketing tool to learn about market offerings and stay connected.

Therefore, from a business point of view, it is interesting to know how we can take the best advantage of these resources and new capabilities social media has to offer and also learn to identify what are the most common pitfalls why social media strategies fail.

Social media being relatively new field of study, it is clear that many companies have neither formed a clear idea of its benefits nor identified an effective plan of action on how to successfully use social media in their marketing communications. Therefore, my assumption is that many firms haven't formed a clear strategy on how to use social media and how to include it to their marketing communications planning. Therefore, the key is to understand the overall concept of social media and also to be able to integrate it effectively with the overall marketing strategy.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) Are entrepreneurs adopting social media tools into their marketing communications planning?
- 2) What benefits entrepreneurs can expect to receive after implementing social media into their promotion mix?
- 3) How can social media tactics be integrated with the rest of the communications mix?

2. SECONDARY RESEARCH

2.1 DEFINITIONS

2.1.1 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Marketing Communications also known as Marcom can be regarded as all the strategies and tactics a company does in order to get the marketing message reach their target audience. Alternatively, marketing communications relates to the promotional element of the generic marketing mix theory, also known as the Four Ps¹. Therefore, marketing communication is sometimes referred as promotional mix. The reason for that is that it describes all the elements that are needed to make marketing communications strategy for a business. In that sense, we need to understand that all the activity within marketing communications is focused on the

¹ There are many different approaches in regards to marketing mix, e.g. 4Ps, 5Ps and 7Ps. Jerome McCarthy first called the 4Ps the marketing mix. McCarthy, Jerome (1975) Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach, 5th edition, Richard D. Irwin, Inc.

promotion of a product or service as opposed to corporate communications where the focus of communications work is the company itself. In practice, marketing communications can be seen in such practices as advertising, branding, graphic design, promotion, publicity, or online marketing. For example, creating brand awareness is a marketing communication objective, which will help consumers to distinguish products from one another. In other words, it can be seen as a strategy to differentiate ones product from the competitors' offerings. Having said all that, in this particular research the best short definition for marketing communications is the following:

“Marketing Communications is the process by which the marketer develops and presents appropriate sets of communications stimuli to a defined target audience with the intention of eliciting a desired set of responses”²

2.1.2 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

There are many ways to approach the word entrepreneurship and its definition differs depending on the context. The earliest definition of entrepreneurship dates back to eighteenth century, when it was used as an economic term describing the process of bearing the risk of buying at certain prices and selling at uncertain prices.³ Clearly, today's definition has been broadened to cover not only the risk taking but also to include the concept factors of production. For example, The Business Dictionary (2010) describes entrepreneurship as follows:

“Entrepreneurship is the capacity and willingness to undertake conception, organization, and management of a productive venture with all attendant risks, while seeking profit as a reward. In economics, entrepreneurship is regarded as a factor of production together with land, labour, natural resources, and capital. Entrepreneurial spirit is characterized by innovation and risk-taking, and an as essential component of a nation's ability to succeed in an ever changing and more competitive global marketplace.”⁴

As this definition proves, the concept of innovation is important when thinking about entrepreneurship. This innovation could be related to the process of innovation, product innovation, market innovation, factor innovation, or in a broader scale even organisational innovation.

² Yeshin, Tony (1998) Integrated Marketing Communications, Elsevier Science & Technology

³ Casson, M (1982) The Entrepreneur. An Economic Theory, Great Britain

⁴ The Business Dictionary (2010) <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/entrepreneurship.html> (Accessed 30th of March 2011)

Having said that, it is no wonder why people tend to describe an entrepreneur with words like opportunistic, self-confident or risk taker. Some think that an entrepreneur is an innovator while the others see it solely as someone who creates a new business venture. In this particular research, the emphasis goes to the entrepreneurs who are working for a company or they have a business of their own. Therefore, from a business point of view, we can name a person with entrepreneurial qualities as a sole proprietor or a sole trader. The sole proprietor is the person who owns the company and basically the whole business is run by the individual itself. In addition, we can say that a sole proprietorship is one of the most common legal forms of ownership for new businesses. However, it is good to note that entrepreneurs can equally exist in small firms as well as within large firms, even in ones they did not set up themselves. Burns would use his own definition for entrepreneurship as follows:

“Entrepreneurs use innovation to exploit or create change and opportunity for the purpose of making profit. They do this by shifting economic resources from an area of lower productivity into an area of higher productivity and grater yield, accepting a high degree of risk and uncertainty in doing so.”⁵

2.1.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content.⁶ In my opinion, this definition is rather vague. What this definition doesn't say is what are the characteristics of this content, how much time should the content creation take and to whom it should be directed. Therefore, in order to understand how we want to define social media in this research context, it is important to get the big picture of the phenomenon. According to a small business specialist Kate Horstead, social media helps us getting messages across in as few words as possible, in as little time as possible, to as many people as possible.⁷ From this definition, we can already see the key characteristics of social media which can provide benefits for entrepreneurs who are seeking to engage with their target audience. Most likely, anyone seeking to market their product would rather do it as cost and time effectively as possible. That is one of the key concepts where social media differs with the so called traditional media tactics.

⁵ Burns Paul (2011) *Entrepreneurship&Small Business-Start up, Growth and Maturity* 3rd Edition, Palgrave Macmillan

⁶ Kaplan, Andreas M.; Haenlein, Micheal (2010) Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media, *Business Horizons* 53 (1): 59–68.

⁷ Horstead Kate, (2009) <http://econsultancy.com/uk/blog/3527-what-is-social-media-here-are-34-definitions> (Accessed 30th of March 2011)

As we are interested in understanding social media from a marketing perspective, it is also good to provide some definitions on social media marketing. Since social media is still on its youth, there is an ongoing debate whether social media should be even regarded as marketing or simply kept as user generated content. Without a doubt social media has radically changed the way many people approach their marketing today, there is still the problem whether social media users should be called as social media marketers. For example, business strategist Valeria Maltoni described social media marketing as follows: “I do not think it is appropriate to use the term ‘social media marketer’ as people do not want to hear from companies as represented by marketers, they want to hear from other people.” Similar ideas have been discussed in several other recent publications. For example, Ben McConnell and Jackie Huba wrote about the new form of consumer power and came up with a new definition by calling certain social media users as “Citizen Marketers”. Their basic assumption is that with rise of social media, consumers are quick and enabled to share brands they like. But, they are also active and empowered to point out hypocritically products or services they don't like.⁸

As we have seen, social media have created a dilemma. People do like the idea of communicating with one another, but will the power of internet based conversations work when more and more companies step in. In a sense entrepreneurs can still be seen as a one individual aiming to promote his business. There is a greater chance that entrepreneur start engaging in social media for personal reasons, rather than only aiming for profits. In that context, entrepreneurs are in better position when using social media compared to big corporations whose messaging may seem vague and impersonal.

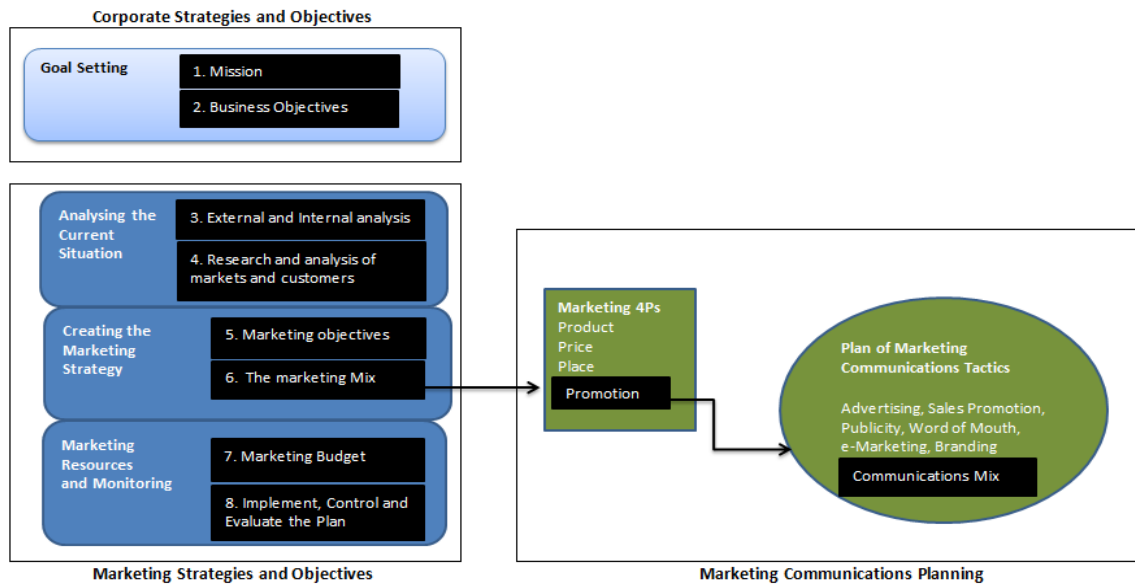
2.2 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

2.2.1 STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

Despite the size of the business, marketing communications planning should be steered by both corporate and marketing objectives and strategies. In order to understand the big picture of the whole marketing communications planning process, we need to provide an overview of the whole strategy structure affecting entrepreneur's decision making.

⁸ McConnell Ben, Huba Jackie (2007), Citizen Marketers: When People Are the Message, Kaplan Publishing

Figure 1. Rich Picture of Marketing Communications Planning⁹



From the chart above, we can see integrated elements which affect the marketing communications planning process. First of all, the section on top left, in light blue color represents the corporate strategy which forms the basis for all the decisions a company makes. Therefore, the corporate strategy can be called as the goal setting where the backbone objectives and mission statement is formed. The section below, colored in darker blue focuses on marketing strategy and objectives. On that stage we can also see the steps which need to be taken when creating a marketing strategy. As we can see, the last part, marked in green represent the marketing communications element in the light of overall strategy objectives and its relation to marketing mix. From this chart, we can understand how communications mix forms the promotional element for the marketing mix which is an important part of the overall marketing strategy. Therefore, we need to be clear on what are the corporate objectives and marketing objectives before applying the objectives for marketing communications planning.

2.2.2 UNDERSTANDING THE MARKETING MIX

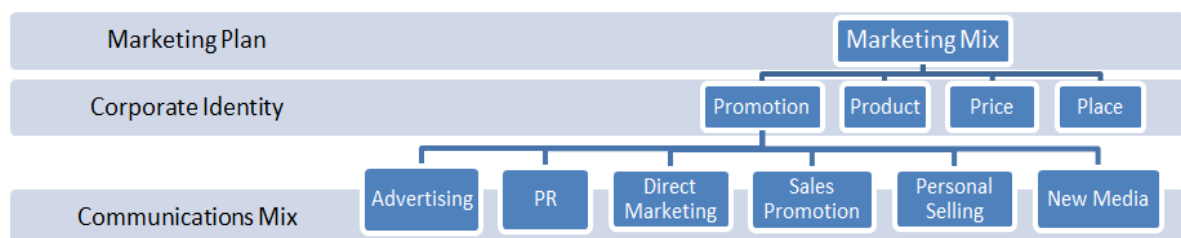
As can be seen from Figure 1, Marketing mix; also known as 4 Ps of Marketing, is a combination of marketing tools that are used to satisfy customers and company objectives. The company's market offer is controlled by the 4 variables known as Product, Price, Place and Promotion. By using variations of these four components companies have the ability to reach multiple consumers within their target market.

⁹ Figure adapted from various sources presented on the bibliography. Main source: Burk Woods, Marian (2007) Essential Guide to Marketing Planning p.5, Prentice Hall

In this research, the focus will go on the promotional element of the marketing mix, also known as the communication mix. According to Rowley (1998), promotion is one of the key 4Ps in the marketing mix and plays an important role in the marketing success. Promotion can ensure that customers are aware of the products or services the company is offering.¹⁰ However, we do need to bear in mind that these 4 elements of the marketing mix should be used in coordination and companies should not rely on only one of these elements.

It is important to coordinate all marketing messages and tactics so that the prospective consumer is not being sent mixed messages that can cause confusion. An example of this could be a company leveraging similar look and feel both for its product packaging and also for the promotional campaigns such as advertisement placed on a website. Having said that, it is important to know what are the elements of the so called marketing communications mix, the so called promotional channels that can be used to send out the marketing message to the end customers. You can plan a communication campaign using one or more of five major tools which are usually categorized under promotional mix. These tools are: advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing and public relations.

Figure 2. Marketing Mix in Relation to Marketing Communications Mix¹¹



However, due to the fast changing communications environment and rising interest towards internet based media platforms, many authors see communications mix as a bigger concept. I created Figure 2 in order to showcase even richer picture of the communications mix of today. This 3 layered concept introduces the broader scale of promotional tools, which will be more beneficial for this research since later focus will be only on internet based communication and social media. Therefore, I have added an extra category to the

¹⁰ Rowley, J. (1998). Promotion and Marketing Communications in the information marketplace. *Journal of Library Review*. Volume 47. Issue 8

¹¹ Figure adapted from various sources presented on the bibliography. Main source: Kotler, Philip; Armstrong, Luis (2007) *Principles of Marketing* 12th Edition, Pearson

traditional communications mix which was also shown in Figure 1. I felt that it is important that the new media is part of the communications mix when it is being mentioned.

The term new media covers all forms of electronic media, yet it is mostly associated with growing involvement with internet based communications. According to Kitchen, new media have been around for some time now, but it is only recently that technological evolutions and changing consumer behavior patterns in media usage have led to a boom in electronic media use.¹² It seems that the Internet has become a mass media vehicle challenging the effectiveness of radio, tv and hardcopy media. Therefore, many authors have also started to talk about e-communications which basically have the same characteristics to the new media: use of the Internet, mobile phones, interactive television and any other electronic media in marketing communication campaigns.

2.2.3 PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN

There are many approaches to building a marketing communications plan, but one of the structures, which is applicable in this particular research is the SOSTAC planning system developed by Paul Smith.¹³ Smith's planning system works as an outline and framework where upon the final campaign plan can be build. Therefore, it gives us an idea what factors need to be taken into consideration during the planning process.

Figure 3. SOSTAC Planning System¹⁴



Another way to describe the process is to provide a figure of the promotional planning process. Basically both SOSTAC presented on Figure 3 and six steps of planning illustrated with Figure 4, have the same key elements which should be taken into consideration when approaching any promotion campaign. As you can see in both

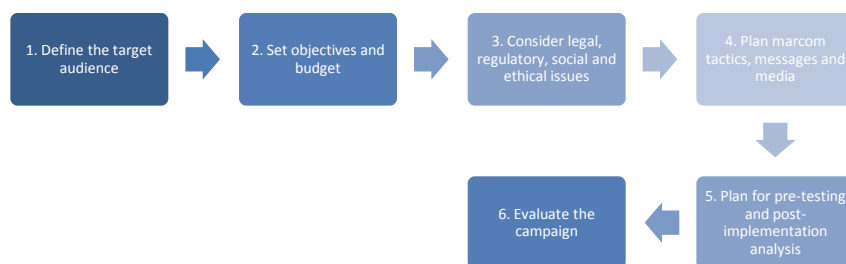
¹² Kitchen, J. Philip & Pelsmacker Patrick (2004) Integrated Marketing Communications: A Primer, p. 110, Routledge

¹³ Smith Paul (2002) Strategic Marketing Communications: New Ways to Build and Integrate Communications, Kogan Page

¹⁴ Smith Paul (2002) Strategic Marketing Communications: New Ways to Build and Integrate Communications, Kogan Page

figures, the planning process begins with defining the starting point, in other words what will be your target audience. The next step is to set the overall objectives taken the whole marketing and corporate strategy into account. An important element is to plan which marcom tactics to use and make a clear plan of action. It is also important to have a control system, in other words make a plan on how to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign and make corrective action in case the campaign does not provide expected returns on investment.

Figure 4. Six Steps of Marketing Communications Planning¹⁵



2.2.4 INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Mangold and Faulds argue that integrated marketing communications (IMC) is the guiding principle that companies should follow when approaching their marketing planning. They see IMC as different methods to organize and control the elements of the promotional mix as seen on Figure 2. In most cases, it is recommended that a company chooses a combination of different marketing communications tactics; thus producing an integrated customer-focused message and with that accomplishing various company's objectives. In this research project, I rely on the assumption that entrepreneurs and marketing professionals should include social media in the promotion mix when developing and executing their IMC strategies.

2.3 ENTREPRENEURS AND MARCOM PLANNING

2.3.1 BACKGROUND

In this particular research, we are interested in how entrepreneurs can approach their marketing planning, keeping mind their special characteristics and differences compared to big corporations. According to Paul Burns (2010), developing a business plan is crucial for entrepreneurs in order to clarify ones business idea and to think through the problems that he or she might need to face.

¹⁵ Figure adapted from: Burk Woods, Marian (2007) Essential Guide to Marketing Planning, p.159, Prentice Hall

The planning process is more important than the written business plan itself and a true entrepreneur is constantly refining the plan to meet changing opportunities and threats.¹⁶

2.3.2 ROLE OF NETWORKING FOR AN ENTREPRENEUR

Networking, also known as the social capital is a concept that helps individuals, in this case entrepreneurs; create network connections and social interactions. Many authors seem to agree that networks have a key role in shaping and forming entrepreneurial processes. According to Anderson et al (2008), networks are recognized to contribute to entrepreneurial capacity by extending the individual's asset base of human, social, market, financial and technical capacity.¹⁷ This argument indicates that engaging in networking is a way for an entrepreneur to access more assets than those he/she possesses and therefore the entrepreneur have better chances in succeeding in the business venture. Similarly, Johannisson and Peterson (1984) claimed that networking can also lead to the actual decision to found an enterprise when you identify the resources possessed by others in the network.¹⁸

Social media can provide a great starting point for an entrepreneur to start investing in social capital. There are numerous benefits in building a network and it will be beneficial to list few of these as presented in Table 5. As we can see, there are numerous benefits of acquiring social capital. It is not only extending of contacts but it can also provide benefits in terms of information sharing, motivation and improving marketing properties of products to name a few. In addition, many experts like Anderson argue that entrepreneurs should look to build social capital which is applicable to their business and their activities. In that sense, social networking is a great way to find similar minded people and start building networks with people from the same industry or field. The upcoming section of this paper will go into more detail on the characteristics and possibilities of social media and also highlights platforms such as Facebook and Linked In which are used for building networks.

¹⁶ Burns Paul (2011) *Entrepreneurship & Small Business-Start up* p.382, Growth and Maturity 3rd Edition, Palgrave Macmillan

¹⁷ Anderson, A. R. and Jack, S., Dodd, S. (2008) Change and the Development of Entrepreneurial Networks over Time: A Process Perspective, *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, Vol. 20 (2), pp. 125

¹⁸ Johannisson, B. & Peterson, R. (1984) *The Personal Networks of Entrepreneurs*, Third Canadian Conference, International Council for Small Business, Toronto,

Table 5. Key Benefits of Networking for Entrepreneurs¹⁹

General Benefits:	Innovation Benefits:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Improving quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Extending of contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Improving marketing properties of products
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Introduction to peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Reduce costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Motivation, support, encouragement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Improve production processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Product or service ideas	

2.3.3 RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

As have been proven in the previous chapter, social media networks can be seen to bring value to entrepreneurs as they provide many tools to have an ongoing discussion with customers and network partners. To connect the so called networking to marketing communication, it is good to mention the so called relationship marketing. According to Chartered Institute of Marketing, relationship marketing can be described as the process of building long-term, loyal, committed and profitable relationships with potential and existing customers through communication and the provision of quality goods and services.²⁰

The biggest differences between traditional marketing and the so called relationship marketing is that relationship marketing encourages close and frequent customer contact unlike traditionally marketing has been seen to be done with the limited contact with the target audience. In that sense, communicating with customers and network members alike have become even easier after the advent of many social media tools. Therefore, I have already identified one linking element between entrepreneurship, marketing and social media.

¹⁹ Table modified from eprint from: Yolande Cooke (2011) Is it possible to construct an entrepreneur's personal network, p.5, University of Brighton [http://eprints.brighton.ac.uk/5348/1/Is it Possible to Construct an Entrepreneur's Personal Network.pdf](http://eprints.brighton.ac.uk/5348/1/Is_it_Possible_to_Construct_an_Entrepreneur's_Personal_Network.pdf) (Accessed 5.5 2011)

²⁰ Chartered Institute of Marketing, Moor Hall, Cookham, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 9QH http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-5231211/Relationship-marketing.html (Accessed 5.5 2011)

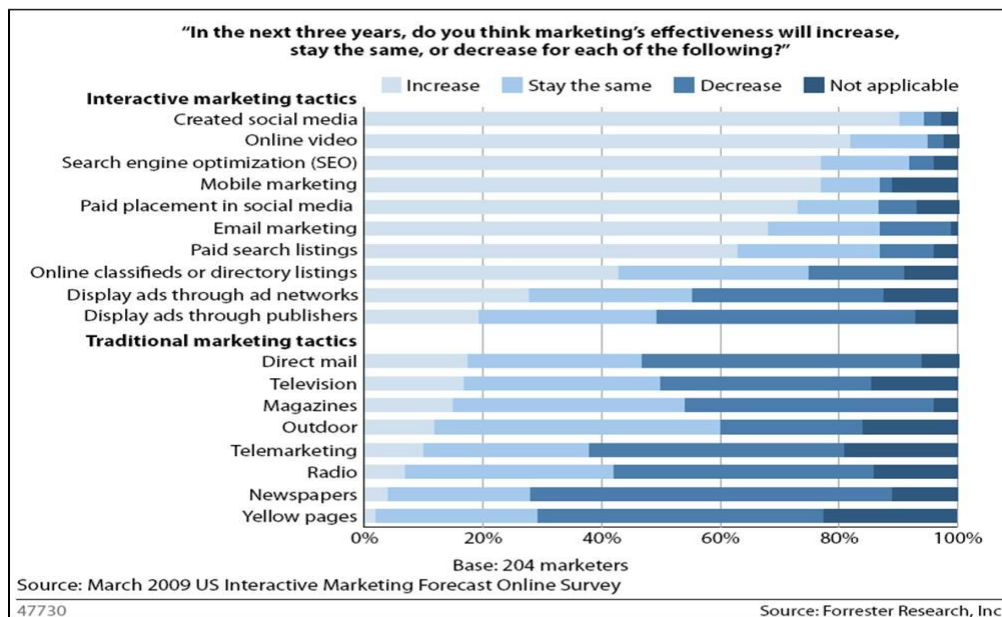
2.4 SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS TACTIC

2.4.1 NEW MEDIA

Marketing tactics and strategies for communicating with customers have gone through many changes with the emergence of the phenomenon known as social media, also referred to as consumer-generated media. In many publications social media is also considered as new media as already mentioned in the previous section of this report. For example, when Forrester conducted a survey and asked over 200 marketers to rank the effectiveness of various marketing tactics over the next three years, interactive tactics such as social media and online video topped the list as shown on Figure 6. It is clear that business professionals believe that social media can be used as a marketing tactic.

Even if social media can be seen as a new trend, online marketing has been around for quite some time. Internet marketing, in the form of Pay per Click (PPC) advertising and Search Engine Optimization (SEO), has been utilised for quite some time and has proven to be effective marketing strategy with good return on investment. Recently, Social Media has been introduced into the scene, and many young professionals, including my client Thomas Smart, are eager to learn more and start investing in this marketing tool. However, there are still many gaps in knowledge and many varying opinions on how it should be used.

Figure 6. 2009 Interactive Marketing Forecast Online Survey²¹



²¹ Forrester Research Inc. Figure collected from a personal blog of Fred Petito:
<http://marketingmemes.blogspot.com/2009/07/marketers-who-want-to-improve-roi-need.html> (Accessed 13.4.2011)

2.4.2 TRADITIONAL MEDIA VERSUS SOCIAL MEDIA

Nobody can deny the fact that we have gone a long way from the time when radio, television and national publications ushered the rise of mass marketing. According to many authors, we are experiencing a transition from conventional marketing to tactics involving social media strategies. For example, Larry Weber, an expert in marketing services argues that social web is more of a new mind set towards marketing practices requiring a new set of tools and skill set.²² On contrast, social media strategist Dave Evans thinks that social media cannot be classified as true marketing channel rather it is an augmentation of conventional marketing practices.²³ As we can see, there is no clear consensus on where social media stands in today's marketing, yet it is clear that it is proven to bring changes to the communication patterns of both companies and individuals. One evidence of this is the way social media is presented in today's media. For example, due to the increasing popularity of social media in 2006, Time Magazine named "You" as the Time person of the year for "the growth and influence of user generated content on the Internet"²⁴

All the points above are just few characteristics of social media which are usually brought up when comparing it with the so called traditional media. The realization of the key aspects of social media is essential in order to fully integrate it for the marketing communication mix. Therefore, it will also be important to understand the differences between traditional media and social media, as outlined in Table 7.

Table 7. The Differences between Traditional and Social Media²⁵

 Traditional Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fixed, unchangeable• Commentary limited and not real time• Limited media mix• Sharing not encouraged• Finite	 Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instantly updateable• Unlimited real-time commentary• All media can be mixed• Sharing and participation encouraged• Infinite
---	--	---	--

²² Weber Larry, (2009) Marketing to the Social Web: How Digital Customer Communities Build Your Business, p.3, John Wiley& Sons

²³ Evans Dave (2009) Interview with Dave Evans, Author of Social Media Marketing An Hour A Day <http://www.toprankblog.com/2009/01/social-media-marketingan-hour-a-day/> (Accessed 20.4.2011)

²⁴ Grossman Lev, (2006) Time's Person of the Year: You: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1569514,00.html> (Accessed 25.4.2011)

²⁵ Figure adapted from: Stokes, Rob (2010) eMarketing: The Essential Guide to Online Marketing 3rd edition, e-book: <http://www.flatworldknowledge.com/pub/emarketing/106238#web-106238> (Accessed 13.4.2011)

2.4.3 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Social media encompasses a wide range of online, word-of-mouth forums including blogs, company sponsored discussion boards and chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer e-mail, consumer product or service ratings websites and forums, Internet discussion boards and forums, and social networking websites, to name a few. Please see more information on social media platforms found as an appendix 7.2.

Social media usage has expanded considerably during the past years. Many argue that the biggest influence have been the growth of popular community-based websites such as Facebook and Twitter. Catching on to the growing new trend, businesses are beginning to extend their online marketing and advertising efforts into social networking. Recently there has also been an ongoing discussion on how social media has also changed the way people design their political campaigns.²⁶ For example, the president of the United States, Barack Obama can be found on Facebook with the following info slot: "This page is run by Obama for America, President Obama's 2012 campaign".²⁷

In order to get a better picture of the social media platforms, it is good to provide few examples of one of the most successful yet very different social media platforms used today:

Facebook

The popularity of Facebook has been a topic of recent authors and even movie writers, which is not a surprise considering its popularity among users: As of July 2010 Facebook had more than 500 million active users, which is about one person for every fourteen in the world.²⁸ To date, the numbers of users have grown up to 600 million in a less than a year²⁹. The concept is simple and it lets users to create a personal profile, add other users as friends and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile. Additionally, users may join common interest user groups, organized by workplace, school, or college, or other characteristics. On a company's point of view this would mean something as follows: Currently Coca Cola has its own Facebook page providing its customers with their latest updates and special offers, alongside with their company info, logos and most importantly a platform for communication. Please refer to Figure 8 to see how the Facebook page of Coca Cola would look like.

²⁶ Levy, R. Justin (2010) Facebook Marketing – Designing Your Next Marketing Campaign, 2nd edition, p.163, Pearson

²⁷ Barack Obama's Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/barackobama> (Accessed 11.5.2011)

²⁸ Zuckerberg, Mark (2010) Founder of Facebook wrote on his blog posting 500 Million Stories <http://blog.facebook.com/blog.php?post=409753352130> (Accessed: 24.4.2011)

²⁹ Carlson, Nicholas (2011) Business Insider <http://www.businessinsider.com/facebook-has-more-than-600-million-users-goldman-tells-clients-2011-1> (Accessed 15.5 2011)

To date, (May 2011) Coca Cola has more than 25 million followers which in Facebook terms means a number of “likes”. The reason why I chose coca cola as my example is that Coca-Cola has secured their spot at the top of many highly ranked Facebook page lists due to their innovative promotions and fun, interactive features. One of their most memorable promotions was the Summer Snapshot contest for 2010, where they encouraged their fans to take photos with the summer Coca-Cola cans. Not only does this get fans involved with their page, but the contest also incorporates photos of their products with fans.³⁰ Furthermore, Facebook has effective analytics capabilities for evaluating the success of the page. These programs were previously only available to Page admins with more than 10,000 fans, but due to recent updates all the metrics are available for everyone.

Figure 8. Coca Cola on Facebook³¹



Youtube

Even though YouTube was created not long ago, in 2005, it has become web's most popular video sharing website. All registered users can upload, share, and view videos with unlimited access as the company uses Adobe Flash Video technology to display a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips, and music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos. Most of the content on the site has been uploaded by individuals, although media corporations such as BBC to name a few offer some of their material via the site, as part of the YouTube partnership program.³² Many young entrepreneurs have found the power of YouTube similarly to Mystery Guitar Man as shown on Figure 9.

³⁰ Porterfield, Amy (2010) 10 Top Facebook Pages and Why They're Successful <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/top-10-facebook-pages/> (Accessed: 10.3.2011)

³¹ Print screen from <http://www.facebook.com/cocacola> (Accessed 24.4.2011)

³² Weber, Tim (2007) BBC strikes Google-YouTube deal on BBC web <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/6411017.stm> (Accessed: 24.4.2011)

Figure 9. Mystery Guitar Man on YouTube³³



In terms of entrepreneurship, it is clear that YouTube can provide a quick communication platform to reach the target audience and build brand awareness with hardly any costs. For example a musician can now be discovered without a manager or publicist by simply uploading a media clip online. Joe Penna, 23 started uploading videos to YouTube in 2006 using a nickname Mystery Guitar Man. His videos has amassed over one million subscribers and over 100 million total views – making it the 8th most subscribed channel on YouTube.³⁴

Blogger

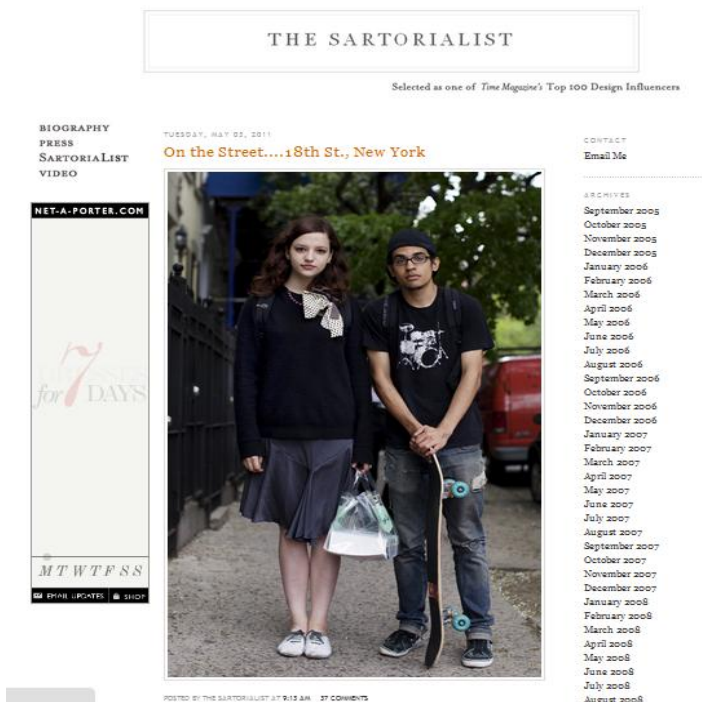
Blogger is one of the oldest sites in the social media scene and is still holding its position strongly. The company was launched by Pyra Labs as one of the earliest dedicated blog-publishing tools in 1999. The company has been credited for helping popularize the format of blogging and generating awareness of blog usage.³⁵ A blog can be seen to function similarly to a website. Blogs are usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. The key function to blogs is that they are interactive, which is also beneficial from a business perspective in order to stay in contact with the customers but also to distinguish them from other static websites. Blogging has also brought up the question of the power dimensions in marketing since consumers seem to share their likes and dislikes publicly and find out about new products on their own and even write about it.

³³ Print screen from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Muu00Q3RhDg> (Accessed 20.5.2011)

³⁴ Tart, Nicholas (2010) Top 25 Young Entrepreneur Success Stories, <http://juniorbiz.com/top-25-young-entrepreneurs> (Accessed 10.4.2011)

³⁵ Webhosting Report (2010) The History of Blogger <http://www.webhostingreport.com/learn/blogger.html> (Accessed 25.4 2011)

Figure 10. A Fashion Blog The Sartorialist by Scott Schuman³⁶



"The Sartorialist" is a fashion blog by Scott Schuman based in New York. He began carrying a digital camera around on the streets of New York City, taking pictures of people who had dressed in some way that caught his eye, and then posting them to his blog maintained on Blogger. Today he has thousands of followers and Time Magazine selected him as one of the Top 100 Design Influencers.³⁷

2.4.3 HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS USING SOCIAL MEDIA?

Today's marketers have big variety of tactics to choose from when choosing elements for their promotional marketing mix. More and more marketers have come to realise the opportunities which today's e-Marketing and Social Media Marketing provides.³⁸ Social media as a marketing communications tactic should be considered as part of the overall marketing plan, linking it to the other promotional activities as discussed earlier when talking about IMC principles. Once the objectives are set and there is a clear picture of the target audience, the next step is to develop a plan for what channels to use and how much time to dedicate.

³⁶ Print screen from: <http://thesartorialist.blogspot.com/> (Accessed 20.5.2011)

³⁷ Schuman Scott, (2011) The Sartorialist (Blog), <http://thesartorialist.blogspot.com/> (Accessed 25.4.2011)

³⁸ Belch, Gerge & Michael (2007) Advertising and Promotion – An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective 7th e, McGraw Hill

As we have proofed, social media outlets are numerous and varied. The 21st century is witnessing an explosion of Internet-based messages transmitted through these media sources. They have become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behavior including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behavior, and post-purchase communication and evaluation. Unfortunately, the popular business press and academic literature offers marketing managers very little guidance for incorporating social media into their IMC strategies. Therefore, many managers lack a full appreciation for social media's role in the company's promotional efforts. Even though social media is magnifying the impact consumer-to-consumer conversations have in the marketplace, methods for shaping those conversations have not yet been articulated. In that sense, one key element is to connect social media tools with the traditional media tools in a way that companies can create a unified message across different channels. Please refer to Figure 7 on how to align social media marketing tactics with other channels.

Table 11. Aligning Social Media Marketing Tactics with Other Channels³⁹

Objective	Social Tactics	Traditional Tactics
Branding	Online videos, Sponsorship	Banners, Advertisements
Engagement	Social networking sites, Widgets, Blogs	Company Web Site, Newsletters
Information Sharing	Social networking sites, Blogs, Community sites, Customer reviews	Press releases, Professional reviews
Networking	Social networking sites	Data bases
Feedback	Comments on blogs and social networks	Personal, face-to-face customer feedback

³⁹ Table adapted from various sources found in bibliography. Main source: Kitchen, J. Philip & Pelsmacker Patrick (2004) Integrated Marketing Communications: A Primer, p.33, Routledge

2.5 CONCLUSION

If I had to put social media in just one category of the marketing mix, it is clear that it falls mostly under promotion. As we have seen, social media can be an effective addition to your communication mix when the planning is based on both corporate and marketing objectives. With an effective social media campaign, entrepreneur can expect to build better customer relationships and also create better knowledge on what is happening in the market place. With social media, entrepreneurs can promote their expertise which in return may increase credibility, build brand awareness and eventually result in better productivity.

Whether an entrepreneur is adapting a strategy to write a professional blog or to make a daily Facebook update there has to be full engagement. In order to become a significant player online, one will need to bring out business expertise and create contacts and start the discussion with customers. Clearly, all this will need time and resources despite the size of the business.

As we have proven, social media landscape offers a great variety of mediums to choose from. Entrepreneurs should realise that it is important to make a communication strategy that brings the best value to their specific product or service. As we have seen, most companies felt that they can benefit from having a Facebook fan page, yet the rest, for example blogs and YouTube channels need expertise and clear plan of action in order to provide benefits. Failed social media campaign will only be bad publicity and in worse cases, may create an image of unprofessional business.

Since social media allows everyone to be part of the communication, entrepreneurs cannot fully control all the information that is available for their customers. Therefore, entrepreneurs should be prepared to deal with negative feedback and take corrective action when needed. This is the main reason why we can understand how important it is to be part of the social media conversations. Ignoring the realities of the impact of all the information transmitted through these forums may in worse cases result in business failure or bad reputation. By including social media in the promotion mix, entrepreneurs have more control on what is happening in the market place. Active usage of social media tools provides managers with a better understanding of social media and a framework for incorporating it into their IMC strategies.

3. PRIMARY RESEARCH

3.1 METHODOLOGY

This research will not only rely on secondary data when finding answers for the research questions; therefore primary data play a crucial role in this research project. The primary data is usually obtained through interviews, questionnaires and observations from a selected target group or sample. In the early stage of the research, I conducted a survey to explore and understand the social media marketing practices currently used among a group of selected entrepreneurs. This survey helped me in refining the current stage of social media usage and also helped me to direct my secondary research into right direction. Data analysis was completed in early May once the targeted amount of respondents was collected. The dates, duration and other specific information regarding the sample are discussed as follows.

3.1.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

Primary research was done by gathering data on whether entrepreneurs have included social media into their marketing communications planning and what are their attitudes towards this type of marketing channel. My hypothesis was that there are still a big number of businesses struggling with certain areas of social media, and this questionnaire helped me to understand which aspects of social media strategy formulation is still unclear and which would need to be looked at in more detail. Thus, it will also help me to consult my client and give him a better idea of social media. Having looked at various strategy theories I decided to divide the questionnaire into 3 categories: Situation Analysis, Objectives and Tactics.

The best way to conduct the questionnaire was to make the survey available online and also rely on social media networks in order to find enough entrepreneurs for the sample. Advantages of Internet surveys are that they may be completed faster than mail surveys, and depending on how the survey is hosted, may be less expensive to conduct than the other survey types. To meet my needs, I used a survey hosting website SurveyQismo.com where the questionnaire was accessible online from every parts of the world.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ To see the full online survey hosted at Survey Qismo, please see the following link:
<http://edu.surveygizmo.com/s3/505016/Questionnaire-for-Entrepreneurs-on-Social-Media-Marketing>

The question selection is just as important as the method used to distribute the survey.⁴¹ While it can be tempting to try to take advantage of the opportunity to ask the survey respondents as many questions as possible, there is a point at which additional survey questions will not contribute anything additional to the survey results, as respondents experience fatigue. In light of this, I wanted to keep the survey simple and as short as possible. Therefore, it took the respondents roughly 2 minutes to fill in the total of 12 multiple choice questions and 1 open ended question. Therefore, most of the data was analysed using quantitative methods.

At an early stage of the survey design process, I formed clear objectives what I wanted to achieve from each question and what information I was looking to find. Please read more background info on my Research Proposal as an appendix 7.7. To give you a quick overview of the questionnaire layout, the questionnaire starts with a number of general questions about the background of an entrepreneur; inquiring info on demographics and professional details. This section simply provided me the proof that the survey respondents met the criteria I needed in terms of the sample and also helped me during the data analysis.

The second part contains 5 questions related to situation analysis, providing me with information on social media usage for marketing purposes. These questions also helped me to analyse whether entrepreneurs felt that social media can provide better benefits than traditional media tactics. Furthermore, the third part asks for social media objectives, in terms of what are the motives for using social media and how effective their campaigns are. Finally, the last section focuses on the tactics, in a way that respondents can freely share their ideas of social media campaigns by answering the final open question. The analysis of this question couldn't be illustrated using quantitative methods; therefore the qualitative approach was used.

3.1.2 SAMPLING METHODS

My objective was to distribute the survey to Mr. Thomas Smart and minimum of 50 other entrepreneurs running their own business or being involved in the business world. At the beginning I identified two sampling methods, in order to meet my objectives. Convenience sampling as a method is often used during preliminary research efforts to get a gross estimate of the results, without incurring the cost or time required to select a random sample.⁴²

⁴¹ Berger, Arthur A (2000) Media an Communiaction Research Methods p.196, Sage Publications

⁴² Lohr, Sharon L. (1999). Sampling: Design and Analysis. Duxbur

Convenience sampling is also known as opportunity sampling which is a type of nonprobability sampling which involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population which is close to hand. This was done through first meeting my client by person and afterwards finding the rest of the sample through technological means by using social networks. In addition, I could also rely on the chain sampling method as my sample consists of people from similar professional backgrounds. The idea behind chain sampling is that a first contact is selected, and afterwards he is asked to suggest other contacts and so on. In addition, I used Thomas Smart's existing network when distributing the survey. To make the survey distribution even easier, I made the questionnaire available online, which allowed me to spread the word and ask research applicable contacts to fill it in. This idea also brought out one of the benefits of using social media networks which gave me more confidence in my research topic.

3.2 THE RESPONDENTS

Due to time and money constraints, I decided to keep the sample size relatively small. It is good to note that the sample reflects the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn yet, I cannot make overall generalizations about the total population from this sample. 51 respondents completed the survey between the period of March 2011 and April 2011. The wanted profile in terms of survey respondents was as follows: an entrepreneur aged between 15-60, desirably a business owner or working for a company or business venture.

As will be shown below, participants were from a mixture of demographics and backgrounds which should have helped to ensure that the results reflect the opinions of variety of entrepreneurs and social networking site users. Before we go into analyzing the data, I wanted to give an overview of the respondents in terms of their gender, age, nationality and form of business.

3.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

The respondents proved to represent both male (48%) and female (52%) viewpoints. The average age of the all 51 participants was 27,7. Furthermore, the vast majority of the respondents (55%) belonged to the young entrepreneurial age group between 21-30.

The age group representing people close to the retirement age counted only up to 2, which is not a surprise considering that social media is a relatively new field of study and mostly used by young professionals who are familiar with new technologies. The geographical coverage of the study covered mostly Europeans yet few respondents were from Asia or the United States. Please see the appendix 7.3 to see all the figures of the demographic data presented above.

3.2.2 PROFESSIONAL DATA OF RESPONDENTS

Since the study is focused on entrepreneurs, it was important to collect information on the individuals' professional background as well. Doing so, I could guarantee that the respondents were currently working in business and I could also see from which professional background they came from. Nearly half of the respondents were individual business owners as the biggest percentage of the survey participants were sole proprietors (45%). Furthermore, the second biggest form of business organization was Partnership (20%) which also highlights that the person was a business owner with one or more business partners. Luckily, all the participants came from a very different professional background in terms of the industry and there is no clear group which scored highest in this category. However, it is good to mention that the biggest number of participants were from the following industries: Professional Services, Food Service, Advertising or Finance. It also seems that most of the participants were entrepreneurs who recently started their business and haven't been operating for more than 4 years. The majority of participants have been in business for only 1 to 3 years (58.8%) the highest percentage counting for 1 year (25.5%). Please refer to appendix 7.4 to view this information in figures.

3.3 DATA AND ANALYSIS

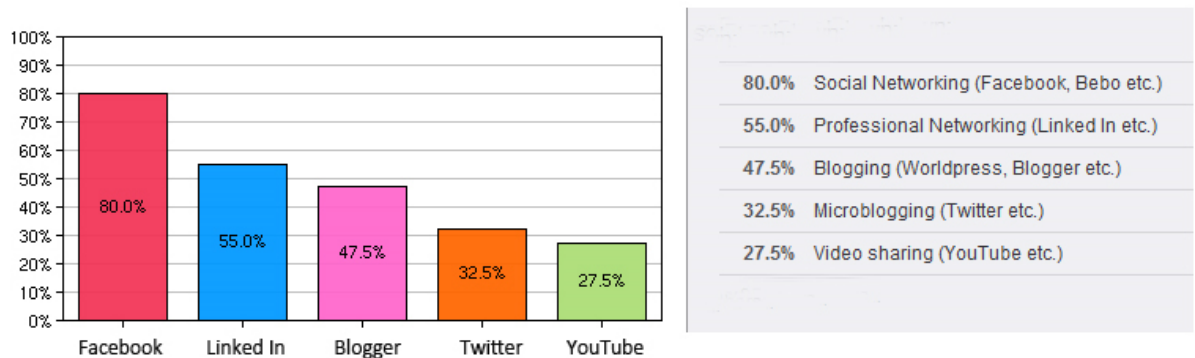
The following analysis is divided into 3 parts, similarly to the actual survey. The best way to highlight the survey findings of each category is to go through the most relevant questions and eventually make a short summary of the key conclusions drawn from each category. The complete survey can be found as an appendix 7.5 alongside with the link for the internet based version. The overall analysis of the results in the light of the research questions will be done at the final section of the research paper using both primary and secondary research findings.

3.3.1 PART I. SITUATION ANALYSIS

This first section helped me to understand the overall knowledge base entrepreneurs had in terms of social media. Additionally, I could analyse whether they have included social media into their marketing activities and which social media tools they were currently using. The most important finding was that 74.5% of the 51 participants were utilising social media into their marketing communications.

Most of the entrepreneurs, who did not utilise social media at all, were from older age groups. From this I could come to conclusion that there was a clear correlation between age and social media usage. In addition, the younger the entrepreneur, the more social media tools they were familiar with. The interesting finding was that almost half of the participants were currently using 3 social media tools at the same time; Facebook, Linked In and Blogger scored highest among all participants with Facebook scoring highest with 80% usage.

Figure 12. Response Breakdown of the Usage of Different Social Media Channels



Another interesting research objective was to analyse whether people feel that they have enough presence in social media networks and do they feel that social media can provide similar benefits as the so called traditional media. It seems that majority of people feel that they don't have enough presence on social media or they don't see the need to engage with customers using this channel. Only 41,2% of the participants felt that they have enough presence on social media. Therefore, I believe that many entrepreneurs don't have a clear strategy when it comes to social media and they don't still see it as part of the marketing mix. However, people do believe that social media is an effective way to engage with the target audience; in some cases even more effective than the traditional media tools such as TV or radio.

When entrepreneurs were asked whether they felt that traditional media tactics is the most effective way to engage with the target audience, 67% disagreed from which 20% disagreed strongly. That is a clear statement that people have started to realise the benefits of social media and they see that it can be effectively used to communicate marketing messages to the target audience.

Figure 13. Response Breakdown on Traditional Media Relations versus Social Media

Do you agree with the following statement: Traditional media relations (print, radio and TV) is the most effective communication channel to engage with the target audience.

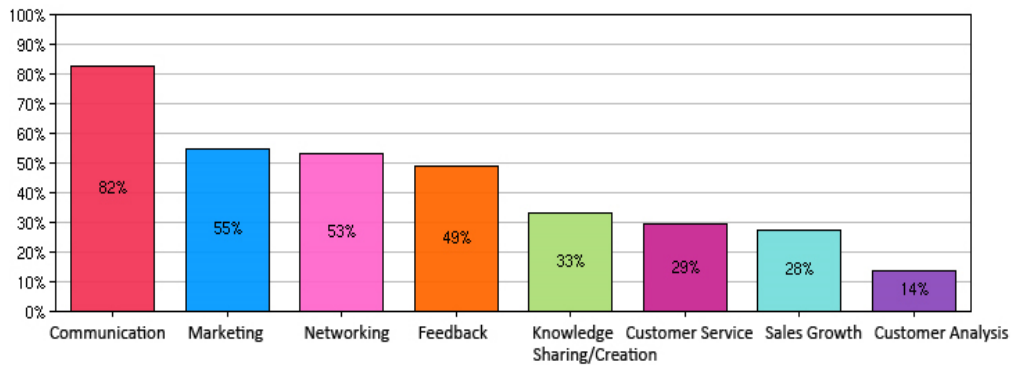
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly agree	2	3.9%	Total Responses	51
Agree	8	15.7%		
Disagree	24	47.1%		
Strongly disagree	10	19.6%		
Neither agree or disagree	7	13.7%		

3.3.3 PART 2. OBJECTIVES

With this section I searched whether entrepreneur’s marketing objectives were in place and what was their motivation for using it. With the results of this part, I could also draw conclusions on whether entrepreneurs have a clear idea on whether to use social media for internal or external communication and how actively they are using social media to meet their marketing objectives.

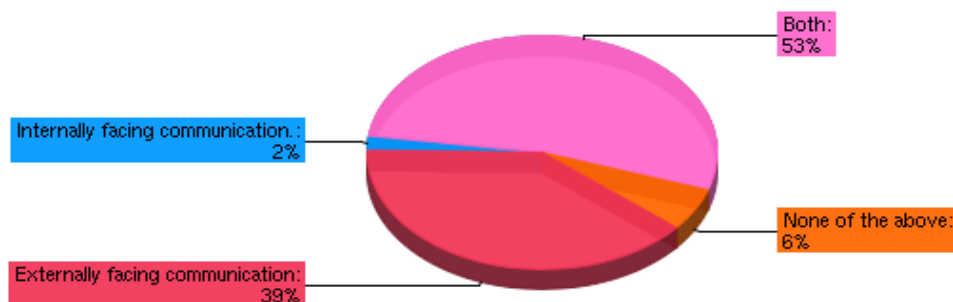
Nearly everyone from the sample group, 82%, felt that the main objective to use social media tools was communication. It is no wonder considering how famous social networking sites have become and how it has abled people to communicate with ease with no restrictions to time and place. Additionally, entrepreneurs felt that social media can be used for marketing, networking and feedback. However, only few entrepreneurs relate their social media objectives to sales growth or customer analysis. It seems that entrepreneurs still see social media more as a social tool, rather than marketing tactic.

Figure 14. Main Objectives for Entrepreneurs to Engage with Social Media Networks



From the result above we can already assume that entrepreneurs most likely use social media for external communication such as marketing and Feedback. 39% of the respondents felt that social media can provide tools for external communication and more than half of the respondents felt that it can be useful for both external and internal communication. Internal communication such as messages between co-workers seemed to be important which can also be seen as the importance of Facebook and other social media tools to keep in touch. In addition, professional networking seems to be important which can be also seen in figure 12. where Linked In scored the second highest right after Facebook.

Figure 15. Externally and Internally Facing Communication



3.3.4 PART 3. TACTICS

The third section of the survey, abled me to get information on the actual doing phase of the social media marketing. Since the last section consisted of only one open question, I could clearly see how much information each entrepreneur was willing to share and what was their idea of a successful social media campaign. It can be seen that companies who were unable to answer these questions didn't have much to say about social media

and I could even suggest that they would hope to get more information about the topic. On contrast, companies who proofed to have many great examples of their successful social media campaigns were confident in what they had planned and mostly with good results. Surprisingly, majority of the examples were campaigns made for Facebook, which once again proofs the popularity of this social media platform.

Here are few examples of the Facebook campaigns the respondents partook in:

-
1. A hairdresser setting up an appointment schedule on Facebook to attract more customers and also to provide better customer service.
 2. A restaurant owner adding his favourite recipes on the Facebook page to share knowledge and to attract customers to comment and eventually enter into the restaurant.
 3. A climbing centre arranging a competition for their Facebook fans to send in a climbing related photograph which they published in a Facebook photo album. The aim was to select 12 pictures to their 2011 calendar, and the chosen images were those which were 'liked' the most. Although seemingly having very little to do with the business itself, this campaign successfully got customers to get themselves involved and boosted the image of the company.
 4. A business professional creating a Facebook Application for a client; generating 40% more visits to the website and approximately 20% more sales during the following months after launch. Additionally, company informed users about new product launches via Facebook and Twitter. Additionally, he acquired work project via his personal Linked In profile.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In terms of social media adoption these findings indicate that majority of entrepreneurs see social media as a great marketing opportunity in which their businesses can build professional networks and engage with customers. Despite the positive image of social media among entrepreneurs, it does not mean that it is actively used to meet its full potential. Majority of respondents had lots of knowledge on social media landscape yet only 41,2% of the participants felt that they have enough presence on social media.

I do believe that many entrepreneurs are still uncertain on how to plan social media campaigns and how to coordinate them with the rest of the marketing mix. Even though entrepreneurs believe that social media is effective tool to communicate and are actively using it for business purposes, there are still a long way to go to regard social media as a part of marketing mix. Only 55% of the respondents saw social media as a marketing channel as majority saw it as a communication tool as presented on figure 16.

This study also concludes that social media marketing is in early stages of its development as for most people social media is more a communication tool rather than linkage to business activities. This can also be seen with the popularity of Facebook, which was originally invented to keep in touch with friends and family, not to market products and services.

4. OVERALL RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this chapter I will discuss the results of the overall research taking into consideration both primary and secondary research in relation to the aims of the project.

1) Are entrepreneurs adopting social media tools into their marketing communications planning?

Results of this research confirm that there are early adopters of entrepreneurs who have fully incorporated social media into their marketing communications planning and created integrated marketing campaigns. One of the key reasons for this was that entrepreneurs see customer interaction as an important feature as shown on Figure 14. Networking also proved to be one of the most appealing aspects of social media for entrepreneurs and their business. On contrast, there are still a big number of business professionals who simply cannot see social media as a part of the marketing mix and it is regarded more as a communication tool rather than marketing communications tactic.

Both primary and secondary research concluded that Facebook is the most popular social networking site. This is not only because 82% of the questionnaire respondents had an account on Facebook as shown on Figure 12. but also due to the fact that it is the most popular social networking site, with the biggest number of users. Furthermore, Facebook has lots of potential when it comes to social media marketing, as it offers advertising

support, pages and campaign analytics programs. Therefore, from a small business point of view, it is also not a big investment to engage with social media since it is free to set up an account on Facebook or any other social media site. What seems to be the biggest challenge to realise, is the fact that an effective social media campaign takes time and great amount of planning since social media can be seen as a platform for 2 way communication.

2) What benefits entrepreneurs can expect to receive after implementing social media into their promotion mix?

Taking advantage of social media is not only an inexpensive way to promote and market your business but has also proven to provide several other benefits. Having looked at the both primary and secondary research findings, I have identified five main benefits that entrepreneurs can expect to gain if the social media plan is effectively implemented. Benefits are also illustrated on Figure 19.

Figure 16. Five Key Benefits of Social Media



One key reason to use social media tools is that it gives you an overview on what's happening in the world. It doesn't only give entrepreneurs more **information** on competitors but it also gives you extensive knowledge on market trends and target markets. That way it is an excellent way to monitor external environment and have a better control over the business.

This research paper also brought up the benefit of **networking** which has truly become a common attribute when entrepreneurs are dealing with social media. The beauty of networking is that it can work in many levels. Firstly, applications like Linked In lets business people create new contacts and corresponding groups based on their interests. For example, if you have recently started up your business, you can join a community group for

starting entrepreneurs. Being involved in such communities, one can share articles, discussions, frustrations and any valuable information about entrepreneurship. Similarly this also works as a peer support and motivation when sharing success stories and business failures. Secondly, social networking tools like Twitter and Facebook can help entrepreneurs establish relationships with suppliers, customers and other business partners.

When entrepreneurs establish presence on the Internet let say by creating a blog and making an active profile on Facebook, they can gain market **visibility** among both existing and potential customers. Being present in social media is a great way to guarantee that your marketing objectives are met. Like any other good marketing campaign, sending marketing messages via social media platforms can generate brand awareness, educate the target audience and increase consumer responsiveness in the marketplace.

The nature of social media allows entrepreneurs to gain immediate **feedback** on their products or services. In that sense business professionals have more awareness on what is expected from them. Whatever people are saying, positive or negative comments, the entrepreneurs can be part of the conversation and take corrective action according to what has been said. Clearly such information flow is not possible with the use of traditional marketing tactics such as radio or TV advertising where the corporate marketers have the full control of the message. Nowadays, social media allows companies and entrepreneurs to respond and communicate to customers, instead of simply sending marketing messages. In that sense, it can be said that with a successful social media campaign, entrepreneurs can build stronger relationships and make faster business decision when customer needs are not met.

As we have pointed out in several occasions, one nature of social media is that the content is user generated and rarely seen as a sole marketing channel. Entrepreneurs can benefit from this perception since marketers are able to speak to their customer in a more personal way. The idea behind this is that the customers feel that they are communicating with a friend rather than a company. This will help entrepreneurs in building trustworthy customer contacts and also giving greater chances of receiving customer recommendations and positive feedback. The overall benefit of this is the greater **customer loyalty** and trust.

3) How can social media tactics be integrated with the rest of the communications mix?

The most important objective when designing social media campaigns is to start the process in a manner that is consistent with the organisation's mission and objectives. This can be done by following a clear structure or plan as already discovered in chapter 2.2 when discussing marketing communications planning. Before social media tactics can be integrated or planned effectively, any good social media campaign should follow the strategic planning process. For example, 5 steps included in the SOSTAC planning system; situation analysis, objectives, strategy, tactics, action and control, will guarantee that the campaign is fully operational. It is good to note, that this model can be applied at any level, whether corporate, marketing or just social media advertising.

The crucial element in order to integrate social media tactics with the rest of the communication mix is in finding the right balance between social media and traditional marketing tools like your printed materials. The ideal communication mix is to have all the tactics working together, aiming for the same strategic goals. Clearly, all the businesses are unique and therefore methods by which this can be accomplished can be varied and modified depending on the type of product or service.

Since we have found out that Facebook is very popular among entrepreneurs, it is relevant to provide a campaign idea including this networking platform. Entrepreneur like Thomas Smart could provide its customers with networking platform by creating a Facebook page and afterwards engage customers by promoting his expertise in using blogs and YouTube. Additionally, Thomas Smart could opt to choose other online and hardcopy marketing methods and have an integrated mix including SEO, PPC, Email Marketing, Banner advertising and hardcopy catalogues to be sent to existing customers. Clearly, the chosen mix of marketing tactics will depend heavily on industry trends, target market and market offering.

The crucial point is to understand that there is no need to start using every single social media application available. It is always important to ask yourself: Who is my ideal customer and which social media platforms they are currently using? What do my customers find interesting and what information they need in order to buy what I'm selling? And eventually, which social media tool will help them connect with my business in the most efficient way?

6.2 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE CLIENT

This section is designed to work as an advisory plan on what steps the client should take in the near future.

Since it is clear that social media provides entrepreneurs with a great variety of benefits, Thomas Smart should start engaging with social media and also include social media into his marketing communications planning.

This will also guarantee that Thomas Smart will be following recent market trends and staying innovative. As we can conclude from both primary and secondary research findings, there are already a great number of entrepreneurs who are taking advantage of social media platforms.

The first step for Thomas Smart is to create an in-depth marketing communications plan. Outline for this plan in relation to SOSTAC planning system can be found as an appendix 7.6. As the research result has proven, planning an integrated and consistent approach to all the marketing activities is crucial in order to reach the target audience and motivate customers to buy. An effective marketing communications plan requires considerable amount of research and also all the information presented in this research paper should be fully understood.

As an entrepreneur, Thomas Smart needs to have an in-depth understanding of target audiences and the processes involved in buying, selling, and communicating. Only after all the background research is done, Thomas Smart can determine what he is hoping to gain from selected marketing activities, what type of information is relevant and eventually which channels would contribute to those objectives in a most desirable way. Clearly, there are other relevant decisions to be made; how much money can be spent, what will be the time frame and are there other resources like human capital needed in order to reach all the targets. Ideally, the marketing plan should outline the communications process step by step, not to forget the plan to monitor and control all the results.

Regardless of the social media platform businesses decide to engage in, building a large group of followers or fans will take time and patience. Therefore, it is important to experiment and get familiar with the social media scene now before a great number of competitors are way ahead of your skills and knowledge.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Since the primary research for this research project was conducted in a short time frame, the future research could seek to test these research findings on a larger sample population through a more extensive quantitative research study. Furthermore, it could also be beneficial to get more qualitative data on social media. For example, it could be interesting to observe what kind of social media campaigns could provide the greatest benefits for entrepreneurs. Later on it would also be interesting to focus on collecting data on new generation entrepreneurs who grew up being surrounded by social media platforms at an early age.

As this study found out that social media can be seen as a new marketing tactic, it is also recommended to review these research findings regularly as more and more research is published. For example, on the course of this research project, Facebook improved its layout, measurement tools and started testing a new application where users can send e-mails directly to Facebook inbox. It is clear that social media applications have started to evolve, providing more and more tools for both businesses and individuals.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CLIENT

Even after Thomas Smart has successfully adopted social media into his marketing practices, it is recommended to keep an eye on social media trends and updates. Since there is still abundance of information regarding social media, there is still a big chance of learning through trial and error. Therefore, the campaign control is essential and marketing plans may need to be altered often.

Once the client have identified the best possible social media platforms, it would be beneficial to engage in experiential marketing. Since social media allows the usage of multimedia applications, there is a great chance of using powerful visual elements. Visual media such as business blog should not only be visually appealing, but also spark the interest using different sensations like sound and other stimulus that is enjoyable to the individual. Such engagement will create stronger customer experiences which then help to establish long lasting customer relationships.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

6.1 LITERATURE

Belch, Gerge & Michael (2007) Advertising and Promotion – An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective 7th Edition, McGraw Hill

Berger, Arthur A (2000) Media and Communication Research Methods, Sage Publications

Burk Woods, Marian (2007) Essential Guide to Marketing Planning, Prentice Hall

Burns, Paul (2011) Entrepreneurship & Small Business-Start up, Growth and Maturity 3rd Edition, Palgrave Macmillan

Casson, M (1982) The Entrepreneur. An Economic Theory, Great Britain

Castells, Manuel (1996) The Rise of the Network Society, Cornwall: Blackwell Publishers, Inc.

Johannisson, B. & Peterson, R. (1984) The Personal Networks of Entrepreneurs, Third Canadian Conference, International Council for Small Business, Toronto,

Kitchen, J. Philip & Pelsmacker Patrick (2004) Integrated Marketing Communications: A Primer, Routledge

Kotler, Philip; Armstrong, Luis (2007) Principles of Marketing 12th Edition, Pearson

Levy, Justin R. (2010) Facebook Marketing – Designing Your Next Marketing Campaign, 2nd Edition, Pearson

Littlejohn, Stephen W (2002) Theories of Human Communication 7th Edition, Clark Bexter

Lohr, Sharon L. (1999). Sampling: Design and Analysis. Duxbur

Mc Carthy, Jerome (1975) Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach, 5th edition, Richard D. Irwin, Inc.

Mc Connell, Ben & Huba Jackie (2007), Citizen Marketers: When People Are the Message, Kaplan Publishing

Saunders, Mark; Lewis & Thornhill (2009) Research Methods for Business Students, 5th Edition, Prentice Hall

Smith, Paul (2002) Strategic Marketing Communications: New Ways to Build and Integrate Communications, Kogan Page

Stokes, Rob (2010) eMarketing: The Essential Guide to Online Marketing 3rd edition, e-Book

Yeshin, Tony (1998) Integrated Marketing Communications, Elsevier Science & Technology

Weber Larry, (2009) Marketing to the Social Web: How Digital Customer Communities Build Your Business, John Wiley& Sons

6.3 RESEARCH STUDIES

Anderson, A. R. and Jack, S., Dodd, S. (2008) Change and the Development of Entrepreneurial Networks over Time: A Process Perspective, Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, Vol. 20 (2), pp. 125

Kaplan, Andreas M.; Haenlein, Micheal (2010) Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media, Business Horizons 53 (1): 59–68.

Rowley, J. (1998). Promotion and Marketing Communications in the information marketplace. Journal of Library Review. Volume 47. Issue 8

Yolande, Cooke (2011) Is it possible to construct an entrepreneur's personal network, University of Brighton

6.4 INTERNET SOURCES

Barack, Obama (2011) Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/barackobama>

The Business Dictionary (2010) <http://www.businessdictionary.com>

Carlson, Nicholas (2011) Business Insider <http://www.businessinsider.com/facebook-has-more-than-600-million-users-goldman-tells-clients-2011-1>

Chartered Institute of Marketing, Moor Hall, Cookham, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 9QH
http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-5231211/Relationship-marketing.html

Evans, Dave (2009) Interview with Dave Evans, Author of Social Media Marketing An Hour A Day:
<http://www.toprankblog.com/2009/01/social-media-marketing-an-hour-a-day/>

Forrester Research Inc. Figure collected from a personal blog of Fred Petito:
<http://marketingmemes.blogspot.com/2009/07/marketers-who-want-to-improve-roi-need.html>

Cavazza, Fred (2010) Social Media Landscape: <http://www.fredcavazza.net/2010/12/14/social-media-landscape-2011/>

Grossman, Lev (2006) Time's Person of the Year: You:
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1569514,00.html>

Porterfield, Amy (2010) 10 Top Facebook Pages and Why They're Successful: <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/top-10-facebook-pages/>

Horstead, Kate (2009) <http://econsultancy.com/uk/blog/3527-what-is-social-media-here-are-34-definitions>

Schuman Scott, (2011) Blog, The Sartorialist: <http://thesartorialist.blogspot.com/>

Solis, Brian (2008) The Essential Guide to Social Media – A Free eBook:
<http://www.briansolis.com/2008/06/essential-guide-to-social-media-free/>

Stokes, Rob (2010) eMarketing: The Essential Guide to Online Marketing 3rd edition, e-book:
<http://www.flatworldknowledge.com/pub/emarketing/106238#web-106238>

Tart, Nicholas (2010) Top 25 Young Entrepreneur Success Stories, <http://juniorbiz.com/top-25-young-entrepreneurs>

Weber, Tim (2007) BBC strikes Google-YouTube deal on BBC web <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/6411017.stm>

Webhosting Report (2010) The History of Blogger <http://www.webhostingreport.com/learn/blogger.html>

Zuckerberg, Mark (2010) personal blog, 500 Million Stories: <http://blog.facebook.com/blog.php?post=409753352130>

7. APPENDIXES

7.1 COMMISSIONING CLIENT – TS WORLD WIDE HOLDINGS LTD.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Name of the client: Thomas Smart

Company: TS World Wide Holdings Ltd.

Website: www.tswwh.com

Location: Yau Ma Tei, Hong Kong

Phone: Asia +852 6843 9917, Europe +31 (0)20 6080054

E-mail: info@tswwh.com

BACKGROUND:

The commissioning client for this IRP project is a British serial entrepreneur Thomas Smart, 28. Thomas is currently doing business in Asia alongside with his business in Europe as an entrepreneur, consultant and web application producer. Thomas started setting up companies in Hong Kong in 2009 and his first step was to expand an existing application development company to new markets. With his entrepreneurial characteristics he ended up running 2 new companies next to the existing one. These companies keep Thomas busy when he is dealing with his entrepreneurial strategy consultancy and mobile service activities. Next to this, Thomas is also holding a company that handles all the shares, assets and profits. For more information on these business practises, visit Thomas Smart's website.

How did Thomas end up becoming an international entrepreneur? With him, the business became part of his lifestyle after his computing and gaming lead him to modifying and recreating games with new graphics and levels and introduced him to the world of programming. Therefore, one can say that Thomas started developing his skills already in his early teens and ended up designing business cards and small websites for fun. Before he had finished his 4 year Multimedia Development Design study at college, he had started his first multimedia company, "BE inspired" located in Amsterdam. All in all, Thomas was managing his own company for over 7 years at a very young age, which clearly proved him with a vast amount of experience. During this time, he was leading a team of 8 employees including Designers and Developers specialising in cutting-edge web technologies. BE inspired acquired some very well-known clients such as Nike, Canon, Yamaha and plenty of famous Dutch brands since his business was based in Holland.⁴³

During 2009 Thomas decided to take a risk and developed his career further. Thomas handed his company over to 3 members of the team and started building his second business endeavor. From late of 2009 he has been building a new international business using a completely new business strategy, including the focus to expand the business into new markets; in his case Asia.

⁴³ <http://thomassmart.com/THOMAS-SMART/Background.html>

7.2 SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE⁴⁴



⁴⁴ Table Social Media Landscape found on: <http://www.fredcavazza.net/2010/12/14/social-media-landscape-2011/> (Accessed 5.5. 2011)

7.3 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 1. Gender of the Respondents

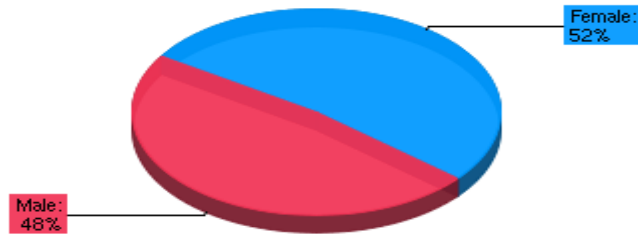


Figure 2. Age of the Respondents

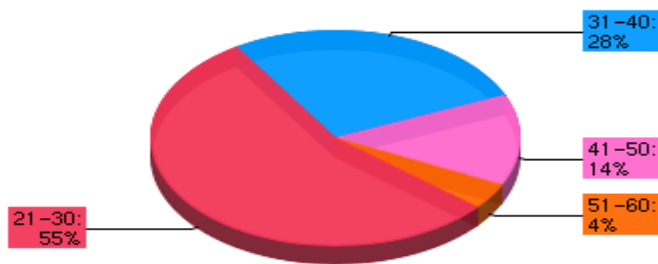
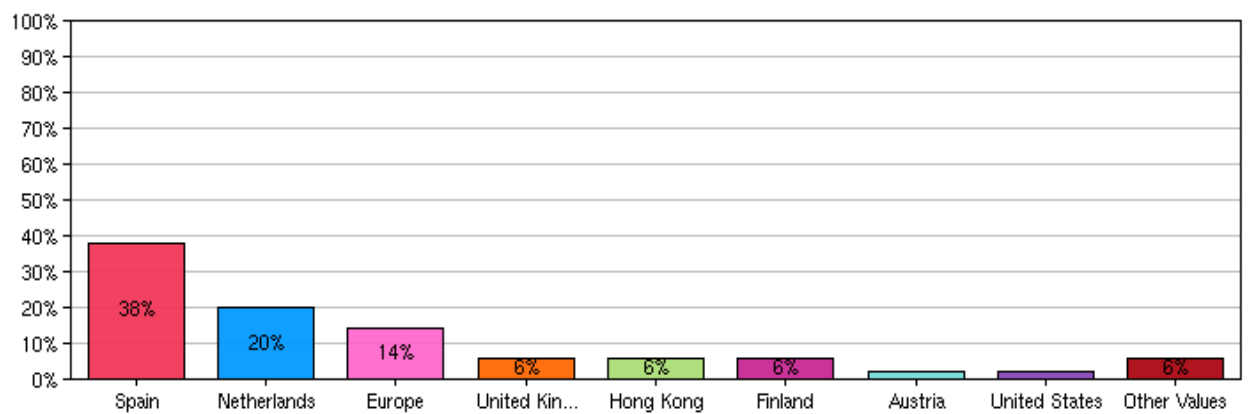


Figure 3. Source Countries



7.4 PROFESSIONAL DATA OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 1. A Form of Business Organisation

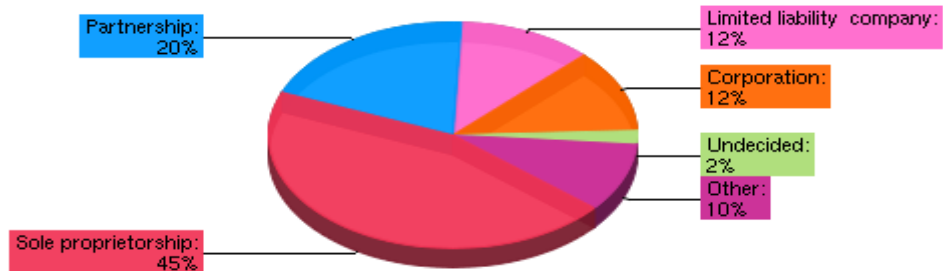


Figure 2. Industry

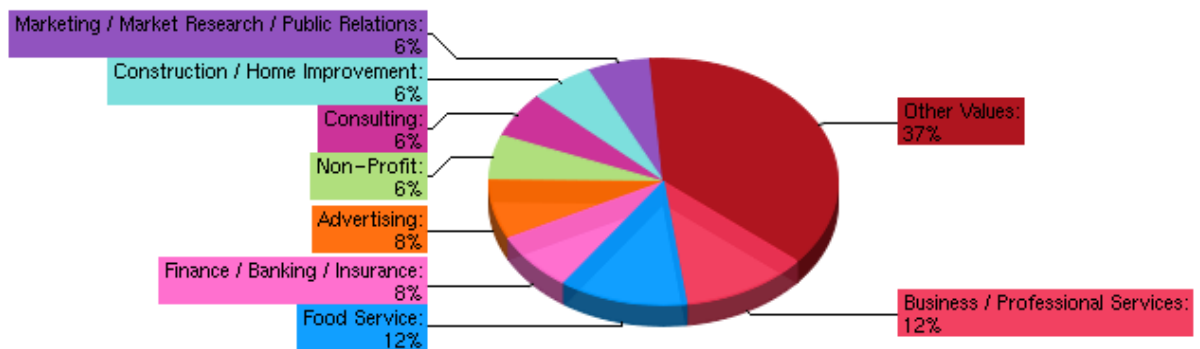
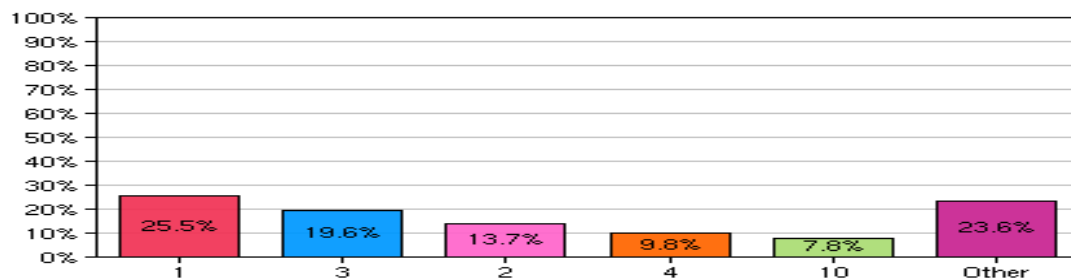


Figure 3. Number of Years in Business



7.5 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ENTREPRENEURS ON SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

This questionnaire was distributed online via SurveyQismo website application. Please refer to the following link to access the complete online version of the survey:

<http://edu.surveygizmo.com/s3/505016/Questionnaire-for-Entrepreneurs-on-Social-Media-Marketing>



The screenshot shows the beginning of an online survey. At the top, a blue header contains the title 'Questionnaire for Entrepreneurs on Social Media Marketing' and a 'Welcome' sub-header. Below this, a white box contains a paragraph of text explaining the survey's purpose: 'This questionnaire forms the basis for my Bachelor Thesis on the topic 'Social media in marketing communications planning for entrepreneurs'. The key aim of this Questionnaire is to gain a better understanding of how entrepreneurs are utilizing social media and whether they have included it in their marketing communications planning. All the information you supply me with will remain confidential and shall be used only in a combined form along with the information supplied to me by other respondents.' Below the text is a 'Next' button and a progress bar showing '0%'. At the bottom, there is a logo for 'surveygizmo' with the text 'Student research survey powered by: Professional research tool with SPSS exports'.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ENTREPRENEURS ON SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

WELCOME

This questionnaire forms the basis for my Bachelor Thesis on the topic 'Social media in marketing communications planning for entrepreneurs'. The key aim of this Questionnaire is to gain a better understanding of how entrepreneurs are utilizing social media and whether they have included it in their marketing communications planning. All the information you supply me with will remain confidential and shall be used only in a combined form along with the information supplied to me by other respondents.

BACKGROUND OF AN ENTREPRENEUR

1.) Are you Male or Female?

Male

Female

2.) What is your age?

- 15-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- Other

3.) A form of business organisation:

- Sole proprietorship
- Partnership
- Limited liability company
- Corporation
- Undecided
- Other
- Other

4.) Number of years in business

5.) Industry:

- Accounting
- Advertising
- Aerospace / Aviation / Automotive
- Agriculture / Forestry / Fishing
- Biotechnology
- Business Services (Hotels, Lodging Places)
- Computers (Hardware, Desktop Software)
- Communications
- Construction / Home Improvement
- Consulting
- Education
- Engineering / Architecture
- Entertainment / Recreation
- Finance / Banking / Insurance
- Food Service
- Government / Military
- Healthcare / Medical
- Internet
- Legal
- Manufacturing
- Marketing / Market Research / Public Relations
- Media / Printing / Publishing
- Mining
- Non-Profit
- Pharmaceutical / Chemical
- Research / Science
- Real Estate
- Retail
- Telecommunications

- Utilities
 - Wholesale
 - Transportation / Distribution
 - Business / Professional Services
 - Other
 - Don't work
-

SITUATION ANALYSIS

6.) Does your business utilise social media for marketing communications?

- Yes
- No

6.1 If yes, which of the following social media channels you are currently utilizing to meet your marketing objectives? Mark all that apply.

- Blogging (Worldpress, Blogger etc.)
- Microblogging (Twitter etc.)
- Social Networking (Facebook, Bebo etc.)
- Professional Networking (Linked In etc.)
- Wikis (Wikipedia, Internal Wikis etc.)
- Events (Meetup, Eventful etc.)
- Social Bookmarking (Delicious, Google Reader etc.)
- Social News (Digg, Mashable etc.)
- Photosharing (Flickr, Picasa, etc.)
- Video sharing (YouTube etc.)
- Live Casting (Skype, Ustream.tv etc.)
- Audio and Music Sharing (Spotify, Last.fm etc.)
- Product reviews (eopinon, tripadvisor.com etc.)
- Community Questions and answers (Yahoo answers etc.)
- Social Media Monitoring (BuzzMetric etc.)
- Social Media analytics (Sysomos MAP, Alterian SM2 etc.)
- Employment websites (Monster.com etc.)
- Crowd Sourcing (i.e. Crowdspring, Innocentive, TopCoder, uTEst etc.)
- Other

7.) Do you feel that your business should have a stronger presence on social media networks?

- I feel that I have enough presence on social media networks
- I feel that I don't have enough presence on social media networks
- I don't see the need to engage with social media networks

8.) Do you agree with the following statement: Traditional media relations (print, radio and TV) is the most effective communication channel to engage with the target audience.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Neither agree or disagree

9.) Do you agree with the following statement: Online social media is the most effective communication channel to engage with the target audience.

- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Neither agree or disagree
-

OBJECTIVES

10.) Which of the following options do you regard as main objectives when you or other businesses engage with social media networks? Mark all that apply.

- Communication
- Networking
- External Knowledge Sharing/Creation (i.e. through blogs, internal wikis)
- Hiring
- Marketing
- Customer Analysis
- Customer Service
- Sales Growth
- Feedback
- Other

11.) Do you feel that social media provides communication platforms for the company from the following perspectives:

- Externally facing communication
- Internally facing communication
- Both
- None of the above

12.) What is the timeline for you to start using social media to meet your marketing objectives?

Already in active use

Intentions to start using it in near future

No intention to start using it in the near future

Never

TACTICS

13.) Please provide an example of a successful social media campaign you have planned or which you have encountered recently.

7.6 OUTLINE OF THE INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Step 1 – How is your business today?

Situation Analysis:

Any strategic plan must start with a clear understanding of competitive dynamics of the marketplace. Key target markets, maybe identified already in the overall marketing plan, will provide information on competitive situation and growth potential for the client's product or service. The full analysis of the business environment including the target markets will provide the best opportunity to develop strong brand awareness and good potential for successful marketing campaigns.

S. W. O. T. analysis is a common tool for providing entrepreneurs with a complete overview of organizational strengths and weaknesses. This analytical tool can be used for both internal and external situation analysis. Furthermore, it also defines potential opportunities and threats. This section is critical because it provides an objective summary of both insights and concerns that will affect the success of future marketing campaigns.

Step 2 – Where do you want your business to go?

Key Objectives:

Once there is enough information gathered during the first phase of the planning process, the next step is to define the key objectives. These objectives are crucial instruments in developing future strategies and marketing tactics. Clearly, these objectives are narrowed down from the corporate objectives, which should be used as a guideline for firm's marketing decisions.

Step 3 – How your business will reach its targets?

Strategies:

The third step is to develop a marketing communication strategy that support both corporate and marketing strategies. These key strategies and company's mission statement will define sales messaging and provide the backbone for the integrated marketing communications strategy.

Step 4 – How the marketing plan will be executed?

Tactics and Action:

After there is a clear idea of which way to go, it is recommended to create a list of marketing tactics available within a desired budget. Eventually the chosen marketing initiatives should support and reinforce the company's positioning, objectives and strategies. It is also worthwhile to identify and produce the marketing support tools that provide the largest return on investment and ones that will substantially increase a client's brand recognition and market share.

Step 5 – How the marketing process will be monitored and measured?

Control:

Currently there are many tools for measuring the success of a marketing campaign. These decisions depend on the tactics used and their specific requirements. The key is to understand the importance of controlling the campaigns and evaluating its progress.

