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# THE INTERNET AS A COST-EFFECTIVE MARKETING TOOL FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

– case Jukeboxing



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## THE INTERNET AS A COST-EFFECTIVE MARKETING TOOL FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

The objective of this thesis was to examine the opportunities of online marketing for a small company to benefit from. The focus was on low-budget yet effective marketing which a company could establish without outsourcing, the emphasis being on three mainpoints: the company website, search engine optimization (SEO) and social media.

As only being present online is no longer enough, a company aiming to benefit from the cost-effectiveness needs an active, structured strategy and time.

This report begins with a literature introduction to the basics of online marketing. Firstly the features of what a company website represent and how it can be made more attractive and user-friendly are examined. Secondly the functions of search engine marketing are introduced, focusing on a search engine optimization strategy and how ranking is determined in Google . The literature review ends with a chapter on social media marketing, with emphasis on the opportunities of a company Facebook page and blog as part of the marketing strategy.

This research includes secondary data gathered for the literature review and primary data collected by observation and by a survey. For the survey a variety of internet users from ages 20 to 30 years answered questions about their thoughts on online marketing. Together with the literature review, these were used to create the final part of this report.

The third and final part of this thesis was carried out by combining the information gathered from the research to provide a proposal on how it could be utilized by the Turku-based case company, keeping in mind the character of the company and the capabilities of the staff. The proposal consists of advice on how the three areas of the online strategy could be improved

### KEYWORDS:

Marketing, internet marketing, entrepreneurship, online marketing strategy

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## INTERNET KUSTANNUSTEHOKKAANA MARKKINOINTITYÖKALUNA PIENILLE YRITYKSILLE

Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli tutkia verkkomarkkinoinnin perusteita pienen yrityksen näkökulmasta. Pääpaino oli tehokkaassa, pienen budjetin markkinoinnissa, jonka yritys pystyisi toteuttamaan ilman ulkoistamista. Tutkimus keskittyy kolmeen osa-alueeseen: yrityksen kotisivuihin, hakukoneoptimointiin sekä sosiaaliseen mediaan.

Saavuttaakseen verkkomarkkinoinnin kustannustehokkaat edut pelkkä läsnäolo ei ole enää riittävää. Yritys tarvitsee aktiivisen, strukturoidun suunnitelman ja ennen kaikkea aikaa.

Työ alkaa kirjallisuuskatsauksella verkkomarkkinoinnin perusteisiin. Ensimmäiseksi tutkitaan kotisivujen tarkoitusta ja miten saada niistä houkuttelevammat ja käyttäjäystävällisemmät. Toiseksi avataan hakukonemarkkinoinnin piirteitä, keskittyen hakukoneoptimoinnin strategiaan ja miten Google määrittelee sivujen sijoituksen. Kirjallisuuskatsaus päättyy sosiaalisen markkinoinnin lukuun, jossa pääpaino on yrityksen Facebook-sivuissa ja blogissa.

Tutkimukseen kerättiin aineistoa sekä primaarisita, että sekundaarisista lähteistä. Sekundaarisista lähteistä kerätty tieto esitellään kirjallisuuskatsauksessa. Primaarinen tieto kerättiin havainnoimalla, sekä kyselyllä. Kyselyyn vastasi joukko verkkokäyttäjiä ikäryhmistä 20-30-vuotiaisiin. Kyselyssä vastaajat kertoivat tottumuksistaan ja mielipiteistään verkkomarkkinointiin liittyen. Yhdessä kirjallisuuskatsauksen kanssa tämä osio muodosti työn viimeisen luvun.

Kolmannessa ja viimeisessä luvussa tarjotaan tutkimuksen pohjalta tehty ehdotelma siitä, kuinka kerättyä tietoa voidaan hyödyntää turkulaisessa toimeksiantajayrityksessä pitäen mielessä yrityksen luonne ja henkilökunnan tietotekniset kyvyt. Ehdotelma sisältää parannusehdotuksia olemassaolevaan verkkomarkkinointistrategiaan.

### ASIASANAT:

Markkinointi, internetmarkkinointi, yrittäjyys, verkkomarkkinointistrategia

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of online marketing was chosen because of a general interest in the constantly growing dimensions and opportunities it can offer. A special interest was on how a small company could benefit from these and how only being present online is no longer enough to upkeep a durable online strategy. Therefore this thesis will intent to present a guideline on how such a company could utilize the opportunities available and become more active in the field. The case of Jukeboxing is used as an example.

## 1.1 Background of Jukeboxing Oy

Martial arts are an ancient form of discipline which can be divided into three categories; self-defense, combat and competitive. The varieties of styles are endless from Asian to European and American. Nowadays they are, besides all others, a popular style of fitness. Numerous sports schools teach different styles of discipline all over the world. (MartialArts 2013)

Jukeboxing Oy is a gym located in Turku - Finland, specializing on fitness boxing, Muay Thai and Kettle Bell training. Training is offered to a wide range of customers from juniors to seniors and from beginners to the experienced. The founders consist of three experienced and trained sports professionals. The company was established in 2010 and has since been constantly growing in a steady yet slow pace. Until now, a great part of the customers have found the gym through word of mouth.

Functional training has been a rising trend for several years, and even traditional gym-chains have added lessons influenced by combat sports to their training schedules. This has made the markets very competitive - in Turku only there are over 10 gyms specialized in functional training and around another 10 of gym-chains offering lessons carrying the same titles as in Jukeboxing. However Jukeboxing offers a variety big enough to fulfill a customer's weekly exercise needs, still keeping the high expertise of each sport offered.

The personnel of Jukeboxing are professionals in the field of sport, but lack marketing knowledge. Marketing budgets are small and therefore better knowledge on how to implement cost-effective online marketing would be a great asset to the company.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to find out the possibilities online marketing can offer to a company with a low marketing budget such as Jukeboxing. The focus will be on the following three areas; the company website, search engine optimization and social media. What will be looked into are firstly the means of making a website attractive and user-friendly, secondly how the ranking of a web page is determined on search engines and how it can be raised, and finally how can social media, focusing on Facebook and blogs, be interpreted effectively on a company's marketing plan.

In addition the objective is to create a proposal on how the results of the research could be implemented on the case of Jukeboxing Oy, keeping in mind the image and personality of the company and the capabilities of the staff to upkeep and update the tools in hand. The goal is firstly to bring more visitors to the website of Jukeboxing by improving the visibility and image of the company and ultimately to get more paying customers to the gym.

*The research questions:*

- 1. What is online marketing and what are the possibilities of cost-effective online marketing?*
- 2. How can they be implemented on the case company?*

## 2 INTRODUCTION TO ONLINE MARKETING

The internet evolves constantly in an increasing pace. In 1994, the beginning of the internet as we know it, there were about 800 000 pages online, and one year later the amount had multiplied by ten. 13 years later in 2008 the growth was 24 million new web addresses alone during that year. A great part of these websites follow old concepts and copy existing ideas, however new web sites offering something that has not yet been experienced fit in this bunch as well. (Paloheimo 2009, 11-12; Suomen Internetopas 2013)

What makes the internet so attractive for the marketer is the development and growth of it with its endless opportunities of economical and efficient marketing communication. Before websites were found by seeing them on printed adverts or business cards but now one has the possibility to reach an endless amount of audience from around the world at any time of the day. According to a study made by Stefan Lagrosen of Växjö University in 2005, companies agree that one of the greatest benefits of online marketing compared to other means of communication is the possibility of an interactive, two-way communication with the customers. Information can be shared fast, which brings us to the challenge marketers face; the internet world has become smarter as information is shared in good as well as bad. Jumping from a web site to another in search of the best offers is easy, and boring, inconvenient information can be skipped in a heart-beat. The conversation goes on constantly and information about products and services are shared day and night. This gives the company a chance to listen to the users and join the conversation. (Lagrosen 2005; Cox & Koelzer 2004, viii-x)

Besides the efficiency of information sharing and rapid, responsive marketing communications, marketing online can have significant effects on the overall marketing budget. Web presence and advertising can be done with minimal to no costs. Marketing online can, in example, reduce printing and distribution costs in addition to time spent on customer service. (Chaffey 2009, 31) This report will focus on the most cost-efficient tools which can be included to small-sized companies marketing strategy.



## 2.1 Company Website

A website is one of the best mediums in which a company is able to show its identity and brand as they want it to be shown. It is also one of the only online services that can be completely in the hands of the company in terms of design, content and functionality. As an advertising tool, a website is easier and more cost-effective to keep up to date in comparison to other advertising mediums such as brochures. (Kalliola 2009, 177; Strauss & Frost 2009, 295)

A company website should be designed to be operationally reliable, clear cut and informative; the character of the business then defines the formation of the site. What should be clear for the company from the beginning is the definition of the purpose of the website in whether it is established to be a marketing tool or plainly a source for information, in addition to whether visitors are to be impressed visually or just stay as an informative, basic website. Differentiating from competitors can be done with creativeness, which can come from simple functions, such as improving the users experience online by offering a more user-friendly organization of the page. Any technical and visual effects should be examined carefully in whether they bring value to the customer or would they just frustrate a visitor. (Kalliola 2009, 177-178; Stratecomm 2013)

### 2.1.1 Content of a Website

The content and design of a website introduce the operation and brand of the company, which should become clear to the visitor the moment the page displays on the monitor. A visitor should know within a few seconds whether the information sought after can be found on this page; otherwise it might be quickly clicked away anyway. Content that seems useful in addition to being interesting and informative will result in more time spent on the site by the visitor. (Cox & Koelzer 2004, 49-52)

Although the more time a visitor spends on a website the more the probability of him or her turning into a customer grows, ultimately a website should pursue to serve the customer as fast as possible. Factors influencing the time of the

experience include the number of pages and interactions a visitor needs to accomplish his or her task, which is recommended to be limited to the minimum. Tabbed browsing, meaning pages opening to new tabs opposed to the same tab or new window, support an easier and faster browsing experience. (Chaffey 2009, 624)

A good website offers enough facts about the company in a way that is interesting for the customers and stakeholders. This includes information about personnel itself, products and services described from the customers' viewpoint and contact details. Branding or market positioning can be shown in a tagline and should be supported or proved with content describing the company, products or services both written and visually. Photos, pictures and videos are often an easier and faster way to show the companies services, also giving "face" to the company. However all Flash and video should be under the voluntary control of the user. It might be that the visitor is in an inconvenient place for a video to start playing, or using a slow connection which can end up frustrating him or her. In addition by providing interesting content which give answers to the questions of the visitors will attract them, hold attention and bring them back for a new visit. (Cox & Koelzer 2004, 52-75; Kalliola 2009, 178-181; Chaffey 2009, 624)

Succeeding a visitor to communicate back can be done by encouraging them to perform some sort of action on the website. This can be done through online forms or guest books on the website in which the customer can leave contact details to get answers to any further questions. A simple link to an e-mail address is one of the easiest components to include on the website. Web users in general prefer communicating online, so in case the only way to reach the company is by phone, the chance is that they will go somewhere else. (Cox & Koelzer 2004, 76-77)

As information ages fast, keeping a website up-to-date is essential. The chosen program which runs the site has a major influence on the time spent on updating, thus this should be considered already when choosing the program. It is recommendable that the company names an individual or team responsible of

keeping updating organized and scheduled. Online trends change and technologies develop meaning that a larger update or reformation is good to be done every few years. A basic webpage can stand time quite well, but the trendier the page, the more often it needs updating. (Kalliola 2009, 182-185 & 187-188)

Poorly written content can quickly give an image of an unprofessional or sloppy business. Content presented in a language the target customer can easily understand with good spelling, grammar and punctuation will bring a great deal of value to the website. The payback-time of a good copywriter can be short if the own staff of the company is not capable enough to guarantee clear cut formation of the content. (Cox & Koelzer 2004, 122-123; Kalliola 2009, 78)

In addition the content greatly determines the position of the website on search engines. This will be presented on chapter 2.2.

### 2.1.2 Costs of a Bad Website

As having a website has more or less become a basic operational requirement of a company, having one means no longer being a step ahead of everyone else; a bad website now is the way of standing out, though not in a positive way. There are companies spending larges amounts of money and others creating basic sites just to ensure web presence. Bad graphic design, dated texts, bad functionality and false promises can drive the visitor away very quickly, as the site is often the first impression the company can give. Frustration coming from broken links, slow loading time and newsletters that never came gives an impression of a poorly executing, unprofessional and passive company, resulting into many lost potential customers. (Stratecomm 2013)

## 2.2 Search Engines

Search engines have secured their place as the gate to information for internet users and their role is growing, allowing the power to shift more and more from sellers to buyers. In terms of traffic, search engines are the most important reputation aggregators, due to the way they determine the rankings; basing on

popularity. This results in the fact that search engines can also be referred to as reputation engines. (Strauss & Frost 2009, 326; Larvanko 2009, 91)

In Finland search engine equals mainly Google, it having the major, approximately 90%, market share. Therefore this report focuses on search engine marketing in Google. Simply put, search engine marketing is about increasing the products' or service's visibility on search engines which can basically be done in two ways: using paid ads and/or optimization. As a user types in words, the engine responds with a list of websites it believes matches the search criteria based on the keywords and phrases of the content of these websites as well as the amount of quality sites linking to the website. Getting on the list of results requires optimization of a website to match the criteria of Google, which will be presented in the chapter 2.2.3. (Cox & Koelzer 2004, 151; Larvanko 2009, 92)

The uniqueness of search engines in comparison to other ways of marketing is that with the search the user gives a sign of interest to the product the marketer is offering. Instead of trying to reach as large an audience as possible as for example with TV adverts during commercial breaks, the marketer can target the advertising to a smaller target group with an existing interest to the product. (Larvanko 2009, 91)

### 2.2.1 How Google Works

Google has stated to use a changing algorithm with over 200 factors and signals with both positive and negative ranking factors. Positive factors help boost the rank and negative factors are used to eliminate spam that is for example a SEO company using automatically created links in the hope to mislead the algorithms of Google. The process of the search technology involves four main processes: crawling, indexing, ranking and query request and results serving. (Chaffey 2009, 505)

Crawling is performed by robots, also known as spiders, in the purpose of identifying relevant pages for indexing. This happens on the server of the

search engine, which requests a page and follows the links on that page crawling through each following page. (Chaffey 2009, 505)

Indexing refers to the process of the search engine inverting the index, created in order for the search engine to find the most relevant pages rapidly. Instead of having to go through each page containing the search word, the index contains a table of documents including the phrases, titles, Meta descriptions, ranks, authorities and spam ratings of the each site. (Chaffey 2009, 505-506)

Ranking happens after the indexing has produced a general view of all the pages that contained the search word. It sorts out the pages based on the results of the indexing. (Chaffey 2009, 506)

The query request refers to the searcher typing in the search word and the results serving to the list of pages displayed on the result pages. The search engine takes into account the IP address which contains information such as location and previous search queries. (Chaffey 2009, 506)

### 2.2.2 Difference between Advertising and Optimizing

Search engine marketing can be divided into two sectors, search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine advertising. Search engine optimization, which will be presented in chapter 2.2.3, is a marketing strategy which involves optimizing a website to appear at the top of the search engines first pages' organic results, the name used for the list of unpaid results. On the contrary, search engine advertising means paying for an ad to be displayed on the top of the search results. These ads appear on top of the organic searches. Instead of paying for the ad itself as in traditional advertising, the payment is done each time a visitor clicks on the ad, referred to as cost per click (CPC). The manager of the company's search engine advertising campaign can determine with which keywords will the ad be shown. (Davis & Iwanow 2009, 41-43)

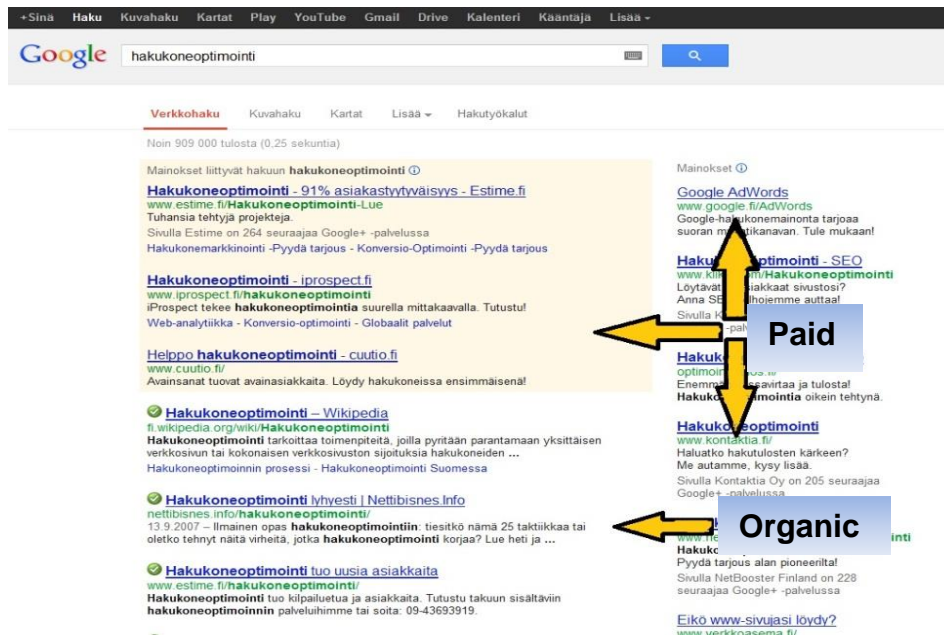


Figure 1 Google Screen Shot (Google 2013)

Being on top of the organic search results does give more credibility and more users tend to rather click on the organic results instead of the paid ad. A research made by GroupM in 2011 based on almost 28 million people in the UK shows that a total of 94% of search engine users clicked on organic results and only a total of 6 % on paid advertisements. (Towers 2012) However studies also show that mostly people do not go further than the first three pages of results so in keywords with big competition a paid ad can at least guarantee a first page standing. (Davis & Iwanow 2009, 42)

### 2.2.3 Search Engine Optimization

The aim of search engine optimization is to find the users searching for information. The users of search engines are most likely already interested in what they are searching for and even wide coverage on search engines can be done with a small effort, depending on the competition of the search and whether the website already has a good base to guarantee visibility. Searchers appreciate credibility and according to a research presented by Chaffey, made by iProspect, 36% of users believe that the companies appearing on the top of

the search result are the top companies in their field. The research also shows that 60% to 80% of searches are organic ones instead of the paid ads. Thus, the name reputation engine. (Chaffey 2009, 507; Larvanko 2009, 91-92)

### 2.2.3 Factors Influencing the Ranking

Achieving a good ranking on the list of search engine results requires the optimization of the website. Listed on the following are the common factors influencing the rankings of search engines. (Chaffey 2009, 507-508)

1. Keyword or key phrase is a term repeated in search engine marketing. This refers to the word a user types in the search box in the hope to find what they are looking for. The frequency of occurrence of the keyword or phrase on the website is a major factor influencing the ranking. However, repeating the keyword with a too high density can make it a negative factor as the search engine will believe that it is trying to be misled (search engine spamming). Legitimate techniques of increasing relevance include keywords or phrases in headings and using higher density in the beginning of the text. Ultimately the text should be written for the visitor, not for the search engine. (Chaffey 2009, 508)

2. As mentioned earlier, good reputation in the eye of Google can be achieved by having incoming links to the website from quality sites (other websites with high ranking). Each link from another site is counted as a vote. The higher the rank of the site and the more similar the context where the incoming link is from, the more weight the link has in terms of ranking. Links to relevant pages within the website are also counted as positive factors. (Chaffey 2009, 508)

3. Pages that include keywords or phrases in the title HTML tag of the webpage as well as in the body text rank higher in search results. Each page on the website should have a specific title including the company name and product or service. The more left the keyword is on the title the more weight it has. This title HTML usually also appears underlined on the search result page with a hyperlink to the website. The more relevant the title to the searched topic, the

more likely it is for the user to click on the link. This also results into a better rank as Google monitors the click through of the sites. (Chaffey 2009, 508)

4. Meta-tags are the HTML source files read by the search engine spiders. These are not visible to the visitors of the website with the exception of the meta-tag description, which can be seen in the search result page, under the hyperlink of the website. Due to spamming of meta-tags in the past, Google denies relevance to them. However other search engines do still appreciate them and the use of a well-written meta-tag description can encourage a search engine user to click on the link, which incidentally improves the click through rate of the site, to which Google does assigns relevance. (Chaffey 2009, 508)

#### 2.2.4 Registering URL

To guarantee the Google spiders and robots to find a website, the URL should be registered on the search engine. Practically this can be done by going to [Google.com/addurl](http://Google.com/addurl) and entering the URL. Registering is free of charge; however search engines may clean their database regularly which means that re-registering is recommended once in a while. (Cox & Koelzer 2004, 146-147)

### 2.3 Social Media

The fundamentals of social media can be defined as a collaborative process which involves three main elements. Firstly social media is built from a number of different social channels, mainly online. Moreover the audience is a part of the creative process or force generating the content. Finally social media changes over time as the collective understanding and acceptance evolves. (Evans 2008, 32-34)

Often authors of social media literature use Wikipedia for the definition as it is seen to be an excellent example of social media: it is the wisdom of the crowd and collective expertise which enables to arrive at an acceptable conclusion. On Wednesday March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 the definition in Wikipedia referred to authors such as T. Ahlqvist, A. Bäck, M. Halonen, and S. Heinonen to state the following:



“Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. -- Furthermore, social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. It introduces substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities and individuals.” (Wikipedia, 2013)

What differentiates social media from traditional media such as newspapers and television is exactly in the participation of the audience. The mass has the power which affects the traditional purchasing funnel. The marketer generally focuses on awareness to drive demand while it is the consideration faze which links marketing and social media together, thus social media marketing. (Evans 2008, 38-43)

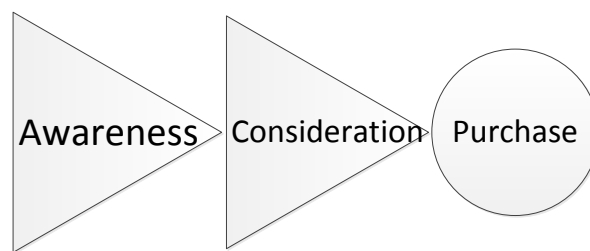


Figure 2 Traditional purchasing funnel (adapted from St. Elmo Lewis 1898)

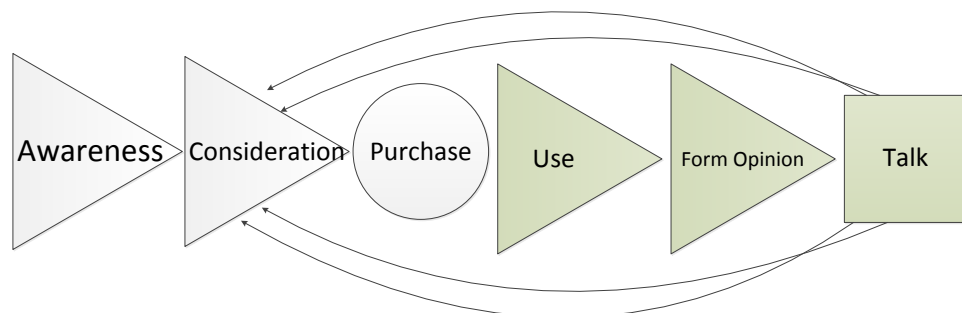


Figure 3 The Social Feedback Cycle (adapted from Evans, D. 2008)

### 2.3.1 Structure of the Social Network

The information within social media flows through networks. Each user evaluates and filters information. The more the information goes through the network, the more reliable it can be considered. As users share and link the information it raises in results also in search engines hence the name reputation engine as discussed in chapter 2.2. (Pönkä 2012, 9)

Strong bonds are born when friends are also friends of friends. A firm network can dominate the web by sharing, even useless, information efficiently. The weak links are important because they form bridges between the clusters of networks. The people outside the network don't have influence but are still part of the entity. (Pönkä 2010, 10)

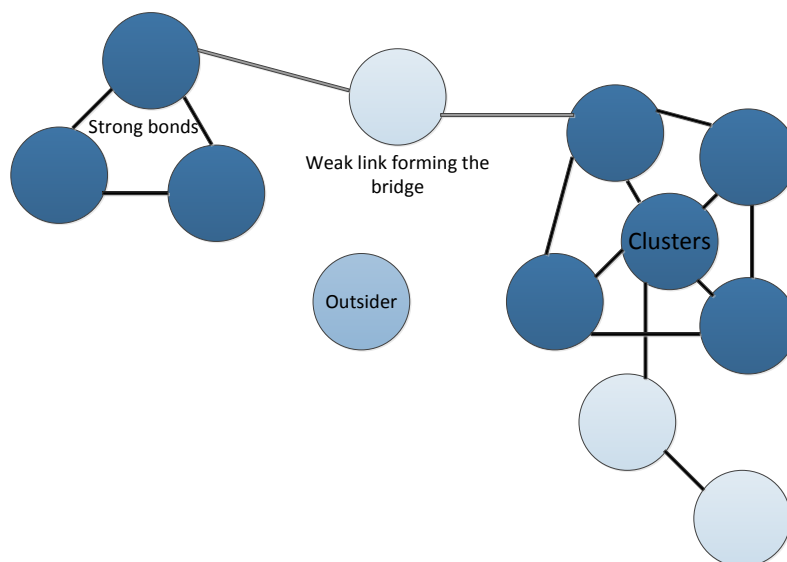


Figure 4 Social media network (adapted from Pönkä 2010, 10)

### 2.3.2 The Value of the Network

The ongoing, two-way communication between the company and its customers brings the uniqueness to social media marketing in comparison to a more traditional way of marketing. It is the conversation that can enable the formation of a great network of audience and what makes social media such an important phenomenon. The traditional saying known to marketers about an angry customer telling up to 20 other people about a bad experience (this is face to

face) can quickly become 20 000 or even 200 000 other people through a social media network. The value of the network can be understood through three basic laws. (Evans 2008 49-54; Safko 2010, 8)

1. Sarnoff's Law. David Sarnoff was a Russian-American pioneer in the business of broadcasting, founder of National Broadcasting NBC and leader of Radio Corporation of America RCA. He introduced the basic law of the typical broadcast application: the value of a network increasing in direct proportion to the number of listeners. Therefore in terms of reach a network of 100 people is 10 times as valuable as a network with only 10 people.

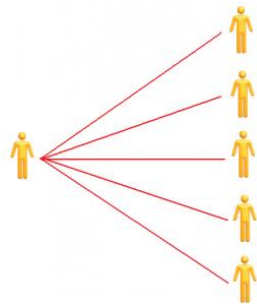


Figure 5 Sarnoff's Law (Social Media Online, 2010)

2. Metcalfe's Law. Robert Metcalfe, Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduate is one of the co-inventors of Ethernet and founder of networking firm 3Com. He formulated the law which shows that the value of networks with communication between members grow as the square of the number of users. Telephone, basic internet communications and emailing are examples of more than one conversation going on at a time where discussion is in both directions. Therefore a network of 100 people is 100 times as valuable as a network of 10 people.

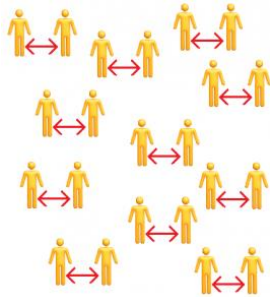


Figure 6 Metcalfe's Law (Social Media Online, 2010)

3. Reed's Law. David P. Reed is a computer scientist, known for his work at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in computer networking. He presented the Law of the Pack – a network and interconnections of groups grow more powerfully. People talk not only with each other but also within groups. A network of 100 compared to 10 has the value of 2 raised by 90<sup>th</sup> more. Contemporary social networks follow Reed's Law such as Facebook, Twitter and Blogs. (Evans, 2008 49-54)

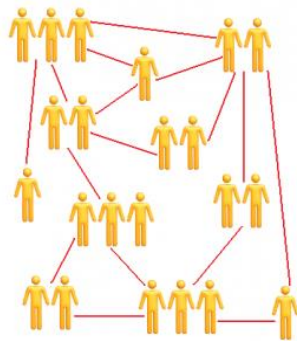


Figure 7 Reed's Law (Social Media Online, 2010)

### 2.3.3 Objectives of Social Media Marketing

Marketing through social media can be seen with three core objectives.

1. Firstly, by *deepening the relationship with the customer*, a company can achieve a large amount of critical network of audience and encourage the interaction going on with the brand.
2. This leads to the opportunity *to learn from the audience*, whether it be in terms of product development, customer service or advertising strategies.

3. The third objective and desired outcome is ultimately *driving the purchase intent* through engagement with the content on the website. Now the customer can re-join the conversation basing opinions on one's own experience which can trigger other potential customers either positively or negatively. (Murdough, C. 2009)

#### 2.3.4 Including Facebook to the Marketing Strategy

In the beginning of the year 2013 an estimate of over 2,2 million Finnish people used Facebook, which is 43,23 % of the whole population, with a growth rate of +2,66% in the last 6 months. This figure however may include a percentage of fake and double profiles. According to the research of comScore and Experian Hitwise in 2010 Facebook passed Google for the first time in the United States on weekly visitors, suggesting people are more and more relying on the knowledge and recommendation of family and friends. Rather than just seeing it as a field for advertising, Facebook can be exploited for all its opportunities. (Linnake, 2010; Daily Mail Reporter, 2011; Social Bakers, 2013) The focus on this research is therefore on Facebook opposed to any other social media platform.

“Everyone” being in Facebook does not bring the power of it nor make it any more valuable to a company. In fact “because everyone else is doing it” would rather suggest not participating. However, social media and Facebook in particular can give a boost to the marketing, so instead than just being present in social media, a company can take advantage of all the possibilities it can offer in expanding and simplifying marketing strategies. (Evans, 2008 49-54)

An active company Facebook page can be viewed as a platform for deepening the customer service of a company. The page should not be used just for a one-way dialog of advertising. Facebook enables a direct channel for interaction with the audience and the company can become “friends” with customers. Besides informing about the latest changes or new releases, the page can also be used to answer questions of customers and gather real-time information and feedback efficiently for research and development of the products or services. Used

actively, a Facebook page can enable the company to be less dependent on search engines for visitor traffic as the people visit the page directly. (Pönkä, H. 2010, 33; 2011; Kelly, 2013)

Choosing not to be a part of Facebook and other social media platforms can lead to the company missing out on a lot of useful information from and about the customer. The company will not know or will end up being the last to know about their customers' thoughts and experiences. The company won't be able to respond to any criticism towards them online which can lead to a loss in both existing and potential customers. (Pönkä 2010, 32)

### 2.3.5 Tools and Possibilities of a Company Facebook Page

Being a part of Facebook means participating in the ongoing conversation online. The role of the company is not to assign what the conversation is about, but they are able to direct where it is going to. This can be done by answering both positive and critical feed-back with thought, bringing up positive topics, asking questions and being generally interested about the activity. Being active doesn't require reaction on everything, but honesty and admitting one's own mistakes is important. (Pönkä 2010, 47)

The possibilities on being active and creating content on Facebook are endless with only the creativity as the limit. The key is to create content interesting for the target group. On the following are listed simple yet effective examples.

1. Text updates. Updating text is of the most common methods for raising interest on the Facebook page. This can include sharing funny incidents occurring among the employees or product, informing about events and happenings or asking questions.
2. Pictures. Visual content can often speak much louder than written text. Upcoming products or services and photos from events are content interesting for target groups along with photos of the personnel and premises'. Photos should be of good quality for a company to offer a professional image of themselves.

3. Videos. Opposed to writing a text any longer than a few sentences, the matter can be spoken by video. A video can contain a brief introduction of the company, interviews of personnel and customers, captures of events and panoramas of the premises.
4. Hyperlinks. A Facebook page is an excellent platform for a company to get visibility for their website, news a blog site. Linking to these pages allows a visitor interested of the topic to follow onto the site and read the whole article. Due to the huge network Facebook enables, the link can be visible to an even greater amount of audience through a user's news feed. Linking can also be done to interesting articles or news outside of the company's own writings still related to the company. (Manninen, 2010)

#### 2.3.6 Company Blog

A blog is an instrument for communication and publication with the emphasis being on the content. The role of blogs in corporate communication and marketing are increasing as blogs are realized to be an excellent medium for triggering conversation amongst the consumers and customers. (Rinta 2009, 151-153)

A research made by HubSpot estimates that active blogging will bring 6,9 times more organic search traffic in comparison to a page with no blog. This can be explained by two main reasons. Firstly, an active blog with an interesting topic can raise interest towards the company. Furthermore as the blog is linked to the company website, the more readers the blog has, the more credibility it gives to link in terms of search engine ranking (see chapter 2.2.3.1). (Rinta 2009, 152; Hubspot 2010)

Blogging tools are mainly free and though the tone of a blog can be unofficial, it should still be written with good language and thought. The writing is directly linked to the company image thus, planning is essential. Honesty and openness in the writings are important along with joining the conversation by answering to

comments. It is vital to keep in mind that the creation may live forever online, whether it is wanted or not. (Evans 2008, 57; Rinta 2009, 160-163)



### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Methodology

Research can be defined as something that people undertake to find out things and collect data as well as interpret the data *systematically*, with a clear purpose. Research methodology involves an explanation of the methods used for the collection of the data and any limitations linked to them. (Saunders et al 2003, 2-3)

The objective of this research was to answer the following questions:

1. What is online marketing and what are the possibilities of cost-effective online marketing?
2. How can they be implemented on the case company?

Data collection methods can be divided into two distinctive techniques; quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data refers to numerical data ranging from simple counts such as frequency of occurrences to complex data such as test scores or prices (Saunders et al 2003, 325). Qualitative data on the contrary is non-numerical and can not be quantified. For example a semi-structured and in-depth interview is considered as an qualitative data collection method. (Saunders et al 2003, 486)

A research can include two types of collected data, primary and secondary data. Primary data is data collected specifically for the particular research project, whereas secondary data was originally collected for another purpose. (Sauder et al 2003, 486, 489)

In this research the literature review was put together by using secondary data, such as books and web articles. Along with the secondary data a quantitative data collection method was chosen to gather primary data was inorder to complete the research for the case company for chapter 4. The primary data included observation and a questionnaire. Data about the usability of the

website, the findability through Google and activeness on Facebook were done by observing. For example, participant observation was used to find out how a user of Google can come across the company website. The list of the results of keywords can be found in table 1 in chapter 4.1.2. Also the following the reactions of users to Facebook posts were followed. The questionnaire will be presented in the following section.

### 3.2 Structure of Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire was to research the time and equipment used on internet browsing as well as personal opinions of webpages and insights to support the findings of the literature review. The questionnaire started with basic demographic questions such as gender, age and how often the internet was used. Questions concerning the structure of a website included thoughts about the most important features of the site, opinions about the use of banners and the tracks that lead to the websites. The structure of the questionnaire was kept simple, easy to understand and fast to answer. All questions were multiple choice questions which could be answered with either one or more options. A comment box was added to a few questions to leave additional thoughts if wanted.

The questionnaire was made by using a free online tool SurveyMonkey.com because of its simple design and good analysis tool for results. The questionnaire was done in both English and Finnish. The English version can be found in the appendices.

### 3.3 Data Collection

The questionnaire reached a total of 497 people through email and Facebook. These people included existing customers of Jukeboxing, students of Turku University of Applied Sciences Lemminkäisenkatu unit, which is located next to Jukeboxing (potential customers) and a variety of random internet users by sharing on Facebook. The selection was limited to an age group of 20-30 years

old, assuming that this was the most active age group of the company's target groups online. Nationality or income didn't have impact.

A total of 66 people responded making the response rate 13,2 % but after subtracting the 4 ineligible responses (age) the total response rate was 13,3%. meaning an authentic generalization cannot be made. However the results gave interesting insights and responses did follow a pattern which reinforced the results of the literature research and could somewhat be taken into consideration in the practical recommendations.

### 3.4 Reliability, Validity and Generalization

The reliability of data collected can be measured by whether similar observations or conclusions would be made by other researchers and whether transparency in how sense was made from the raw data is shown. There may be four threats to reliability, including subject or participant error, subject or participant bias, observer error and observer bias. (Saunders et al 2003, 101)

Validity of a research is the extent to which data collection methods accurately measure what they were intended to measure and to which extent research findings are really about what they profess to be about (Saunders et al. 2003, 492). The main threats to validity are history, testing, instrumentation, mortality, maturation and ambiguity about casual direction. (Saunders et al 2003, 102)

Generalization, which is sometimes referred to as external validity, is the extent to which the results of the research can be applicable to other research settings, in other words how generalizable they are. (Saunders et al 2003, 103)

As this research thesis was made for a particular company, in terms of reliability, validity and generalization the results can only be applicable within this research and to the case company. The purpose was not to produce generalizable theories but to find information for the case company. Eventually because of the low response rate the questionnaire was not very reliable for this thesis either. Low response rate can be explained partly by the date the survey was conducted, which was in the beginning of the summer. This time might not

be as an active time to check emails as for example the beginning of autumn. Had there been more time available, the survey could have been open longer and a follow-up survey could have been sent.

## 4 CASE COMPANY

### 4.1 Analysis of Current Online Marketing Situation

#### 4.1.1 Website

Since the establishment of the Jukeboxing.fi website in 2010, to this date, it has stayed almost the same. Both the design and the content including descriptions and pictures are the same as they were when the website was first published. Naturally the newsfeed and schedules are being updated in terms of content.

The current site has some positive aspects which should be kept despite of any bigger changes. These include firstly the logo of the company, which is presented clearly and distinctively. The colors of the site follow those of the logo, which ties the page up pleasantly. What is also positively notable is that the website contains all information that one could imagine needing, though it could be organized in a more sensible way. From the site one can find all contact details including email addresses, phone numbers and the physical address of the gym in addition to all information about the lessons provided. The timetable is presented clearly and the news feed updated with all important information. Finally the address of the website, Jukeboxing.fi, is good because it is easy to find and to remember.

The main improvements the website needs are related to the organization of the information. The site contains only one page, the homepage, which is filled with text from left to right. This is not very visitor friendly as much of the details drown in the ocean of information. What more, the image of the company might not become clear to first-time-visitors. Though the logo is presented clearly, it could also refer to anything not related to sports. In addition, the market position is not clear, in terms of whether Jukeboxing wishes to be recognized as a combat sports gym or something else. As examples, due to the newsfeed, the words that stick to the eye are yoga and group meditation – is this the image

Jukeboxing wants to give? The page itself is not very interesting, nor does it push an image of a hardcore combat gym.

#### 4.1.2 Search Engine Optimization

When the Jukeboxing website was established some work was done on the search engine optimization. Jukeboxing has achieved a fairly good position on the first page of most of the important keywords, however competition on these words is not high. The site contains most important keywords, but the names used to describe the lessons are different than those commonly known; for example “kuntonyrkkeily” (fitness boxing) is called “kuntoboxing” by Jukeboxing. Whether using a different term is necessary to achieve differentiation should be carefully examined, because it could also be the reason of a lower ranking in the most important keywords in searches on search engines.

Additional improvements to the optimization are closely linked to renewing the Jukeboxing website. As the information is divided into more pages, keywords can be used in a more Google-friendly way, including the use of headings, titles and Meta information.

As shown in Table 1 are the current organic rankings of the keywords in Google. If Jukeboxing did not reach the first 5 pages, it is marked as no result (-).

Keyword	Pos.	Keyword	Pos.	Keyword	Pos.
Kuntonyrkkeily Turku	7.	Kahvakuulailua Turussa	4.	Thainyrkkeily Turku	7.
Kuntonyrkkeilyä Turussa	8.	Kahvakuula Turku	2.	Thainyrkkeilyä Turussa	2. page
Kuntonyrkkeily	-	Kahvakuulatunnit	-	Muay Thai Turku	-
Nyrkkeily Turku	4.	Kahvakuulatunnit	-	Muay Thai treenit Turku	2.

		Turussa			page
		Kahvakuulatreeni Turku	1.	Thainyrkkeilytreenit Turku	10.

Table 1 Position of keywords

#### 4.1.3 Social Media

Jukeboxing is present on Facebook with 198 likes to date (25.4.2013). Since the beginning of the year, the amount of likes has increased by 34. This includes both new likes and a total of 11 unlikes. The fan base is divided by gender to 61,1% of women and 36,9% of men. The largest age group is 25-34 years, with a percentage of 27,3%. 194 of fans state their current country as Finland, which of 170 specify to Turku or surrounding municipalities. The total amount of Facebook users which can be reached through friends of fans is 45,906. (Facebook, 2013)

Posts made by Jukeboxing include mostly information about changes in the lessons and schedules, following those of the news feed of the company website. It can be noticed through statistics that most activity, including post views, page views, and reach to users outside of the fan base, is created by posting pictures; the maximum reach of 2013 is 216 people, which was achieved by posting a picture of an event. It is clear that the more active the fan base is by liking or commenting on posts, the more views the post will get through both fan base and friends of fans.

A Jukeboxing blog exists, but it has only one post made in the beginning of January 2013.

#### 4.2 Suggestions for Development of Online Marketing Strategy

The final part of this thesis will present a suggestions and recommendations for improvements that could be used as part of the online marketing strategy. The

objective in general is to market in a way that will both raise awareness and interest of Jukeboxing as well as respond to the needs of current customers in terms of user-friendliness and corresponding.

#### 4.2.1 Website

*The author of this report does not have the technical IT capabilities required to graphically design and create a professional website, thus the following recommendation are based solely on the marketing perspective. All images created are intentionally simplified to give a directional understanding to support the written point of view.*

The most essential improvement to the website of Jukeboxing, as discussed in chapter 4.1.1, would be to make the site more clear cut with better navigation resulting into a user-friendlier site. This means moving information such as descriptions of the disciplines into separate pages behind links. This would leave only the most important information on the front page. Below is an example of how the front page could be organized. In this suggestion the front page includes the logo and tagline, image of the gym, newsfeed, schedule and names and logos of each sport. Links for any additional information needed are presented noticeably. These links include additional information of the sports, schedules, price lists, contact information, photo gallery, items for sale, corporate information and the corporate Facebook page.





Figure 8 Example of home page

Reorganization as such firstly leaves no room for misunderstandings of the nature of the company. The simple structure enables the visitors to understand by first glance whether or not the page contains the information they were searching for. Additionally the organization enables fast and easy navigation without having to search in an ocean of information.

In this example the positive aspects of the original website are kept. These include the logo and coloring (orange, black and white) as well as the news feed and schedule. The descriptions of the different types of sports offered would be moved to separate pages along with the pricelist and contact details giving the front page more space to emphasize on giving a stronger first impression.

The news feed, which would be the most oftenly changing element on the site should be updated regularly. Scheduled updating would ensure that this wouldn't be forgotten,

In addition the website should be designed to fit mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. According to the questionnaire 87,9% of respondents are able to go online regardless of the place which can be interpreted as an increasing shift towards mobile browsing.

#### 4.2.2 Search Engine Optimization

The SEO strategy goes hand in hand with the alterations of the website. For the SEO, it is important that the program running the website is simple enough for the staff of Jukeboxing to use and modify.

As can generally be concluded, also taking into account the questionnaire made, one of the most common ways to end up in a new website is through Google search. This should encourage to modify the website to be as Google-friendly as possible. A good starting point would be to add the title html to each product page and check/add descriptions. On the following is an example of how the “Kuntoboxing” (fitness boxing) product page could be arranged.



Figure 9 Example of product page

In this example “Kuntoboxing” is the title html and the prime keyword. As discussed in chapter 4.1.2 the value of using the word “kuntoboxing” instead of the more usual “kuntonyrkkeily” should be evaluated. “Kuntonyrkkeily” is an important keyword for Google which should in either case be used anyway in the description. Secondary keywords for this product page would be the name of the company, in this case Jukeboxing, and the place, Turku. In addition the target group could be thought as a keyword. Examples of phrases which could be used: “Jukeboxing tarjoaa kuntonyrkkeilyä Turussa kaiken ikäisille” (Jukeboxing offers fitness boxing in Turku for all ages) or “Tule kokeilemaan kuntonyrkkeilyä Jukeboxingin tyyliin Turussa” (Come try out Jukeboxing-style fitness boxing in Turku). **Bold** and *Italic* can also be used to boost the prime keyword.

It is important to keep in mind that even though the descriptions of each lesson are an important part of the SEO strategy, ultimately it should still be written understandably for the reader, not for Google.

The link “Takaisin” (back) in addition to the other page links is part of building the web of links inside the website makes navigation easier for the visitor and is therefore appreciated by Google. For incoming links from other sites social media has a major role. The company Facebook page and blog are platforms for starting the link building. Eventually the desired outcome is natural incoming links shared by visitors. .

#### 4.2.3 Social Media

The objective of the Facebook page should be not only to serve the existing fan base but also to raise awareness of the company outside of the fan base, thus social media marketing. The key to both objectives is creating interesting content in an active manner, which will result in comments, likes and posts of the fans. The more the fans are activated, the more audience and fans the page will get in terms of reach to friends of fans. As discussed earlier, the 198 fans of Jukeboxing enable a potential reach of over 40,000 people through the social network. The amount of fans is small in comparison to competitors such as

Turun Seudun Nyrkkeilijät, 287 likes, Spartan Sport Center, 1663 likes and Turku Thaiboxing Club, 530 likes. (Facebook, 2013)

According to the questionnaire Facebook is within the top three websites used daily by the respondents alongside search engines and email. What is also interesting is that after Google searches, links posted and shared by Facebook friends are the second most common way to end up on a new website. This indicates the growing importance of social media marketing when it comes to gaining awareness and new customers.

On the following will be listed examples of the types of posts Jukeboxing could share to gain more activity and fans. Examples include encouragement to training, stories about recent events at the gym and basically anything that happens at or regarding the gym.

1. Today's kettle bell will guarantee to make your legs sore. Are you up for the challenge? Join us at 17.00!
2. No it's not an equipment of torture, but the newest member of the Jukeboxing family, the TRX suspension trainer. Come and try it out!
3. 198 likes. What kind of prize should we come up with for the 200<sup>th</sup> liker? Extra burpees in the next training?
4. Free training tonight starting from 18.00. No instructors, all equipment available for your use. Come alone or bring a friend along.
5. Jukeboxing has a stand on the Move Turku event this weekend. Come and measure your striking power on our special punching bag. (picture)
6. What a day at the gym today! Watch out, our customers are becoming very strong. Makes us very proud.
7. Which punching bag of our gym is your favorite? Do you prefer soft or hard, kicking or infighting? (Picture)
8. The gym was full of enthusiastic boxers tonight. Based on the smell of the room, they worked out pretty roughly. Keep it up!
9. Picture of customers in action, with the date as the text.

Scheduling the posts would help keep them consistent. Scheduling can be done by dividing each member of the company a week in which he/she is responsible for all actions on the page, including posting and responding. The posts can be planned together in advanced as done above to avoid lack of ideas. It is also important to follow the statistics provided by Facebook to recognize the results

of the posts. This is a simple way to learn what kind of content raises most interest among fans and friends of fans.

The same general thought apply for the blog. Posting needs to be made active and regular. The blog is run by Wordpress, which gives good details to follow and analyse the outcome of each text. To get an active reader-base, a new post should be written once a week.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this thesis was to show the low-cost marketing opportunities online, which small companies could include in their marketing strategy. The research was focused on three areas, the company website, search engine optimization and social media marketing.

As technology is developing and coming increasingly important, being present online is no longer enough. A poor website can easily damage the reputation of the company by making it seem unprofessional. A website which is not updated can also give an impression of the company no longer existing.

The markets are filling with professionals offering solutions for online marketing, including the creation of a website and organizing of the search engine and social media marketing. It is certainly positive that companies are able to outsource this area to professionals. However for a small company with a low budget the gain might not be beneficial enough to carry the costs of the outsourcing. It is important to first discover the capabilities of the own staff.

For a company to manage its own online marketing requires time and dedication, as in any other area of the business. An online marketing strategy is not something to plan once and wait for results. Evolving technology challenges companies to develop their strategy constantly. A current example of this is mobile browsing, which is becoming increasingly important. Equally important is constant analysis of the outcome of the strategy.

What is suggested is for the company to find a person or company to create the website, if none of the existing staff have the abilities to do so. What should be taken into consideration is that the program is simple enough for the company to keep updated and add/remove pages, texts and pictures. The design should be simple yet effective.

For the search engine marketing the company should spend time searching and considering the important keywords and studying the pages of competitors. Titles and descriptions should be written with care, keeping in mind that it is

written for the visitor, not only rank higher on Google. If the search engine optimization is done well, it is rarely useful for a small company to create paid ads.

Social media marketing should be kept active by scheduling. Facebook and the blog are the platforms where the conversation with the customers is the most personal and requires time. The reach of the posts grows as fans are activated to “like” and comment on posts. By following the insights and analyzing the outcomes of posts the company is able to get a picture of what interests the audience.

This thesis covers only the very basics of online marketing. With more time, further research could be done with measurements and analysis of the outcome of the marketing strategy and how focusing on online marketing effects on sales and awareness of the case company in practice.

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## APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

### 1. Gender

- Gender Male
- Female

### 2. Age

- Age Under 18 years
- 18-23 years
- 24-29 years
- Over 30 years

### 3. How often do you use the internet?

- How often do you use the internet? Several times a day
- At least once a day
- A few times per week
- A few times a month or less

### 4. Do you have the opportunity to go online immediately, regardless of the place, for example by mobile or tablet?

- Do you have the opportunity to go online immediately, regardless of the place, for example by mobile or tablet? Yes
- No

### 5. How reachable are you online?

- How reachable are you online? One can reach me always immediately through, for example WhatsApp, Skype, Viber or Facebook.
- For me to receive the message, I need to open the program first. I check these at least once a day.
- I can be reached only by phone call or traditional text message. I don't check my Facebook or email actively throughout the day.

**6. Which of the following web pages do you use daily? You can choose more than one.**

- Which of the following web pages do you use daily? You can choose more than one. Google and other search engines
- Email
- Facebook
- International news sites
- National news sites
- Skype
- Blogs
- Other. Please specify.



**7. Which of the following is the most common way for you to end up in a new web page for the first time?**

- Which of the following is the most common way for you to end up in a new web

page for the first time? Through Google search.

- I go to the page directly after first seeing the web address somewhere, for example in a printed ad.
- Through a link seen or received from a Facebook friend
- Through a paid advertisement, for example in Google or Facebook.
- Other. Please specify



**8. Please choose three options which you think are the most important features of a company website.**

- Please choose three options which you think are the most important features of a company website. Contact details, which are easily found
- Pictures
- Well written content
- Links to related pages, for example blogs
- Videos
- Graphical design
- References
- Newsfeed
- Other. Please specify.

**9. It is common for a company website to have a banner on the front page with 3 to 4 changing pictures. What is your opinion of this?**

- It is common for a company website to have a banner on the front page with 3 to 4 changing pictures. What is your opinion of this? It distrups me and is very annoying.
- I don't pay too much attention to it.
- I look through the pictures, but don't think it brings value to the page. It could also be done in another way.
- I like watching the changing pictures instead of just one.

**10. How would you predict your own internet usage in the next three years?**

- How would you predict your own internet usage in the next three years? Use on laptop and PC will decrease.
- Use on mobile will decrease.
- Usage overall will decrease.
- Use on mobile will increase.
- Use on laptop and/or PC will increase.
- Usage overall will increase.
- I don't believe my usage will change from what it is now.

Other remarks and thoughts