

A B2C Digital Media Marketing Communications Plan for a Mobile Application Commercial Launch

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<p>The thesis focuses on a B2C Digital Marketing Communications plan on a mobile gamification application. The marketing communications plan takes a clear step away from the traditional views on marketing planning and PR, above all because of the involvement of social media and the massive cultural shift that has deeply affected the way societies use the most widely spread communications platform ever invented, the Internet.</p> <p>The project for which the marketing communications plan is made, is based on gamification and the creation of several interwoven digital services, and has been prepared and built on the technical aspects by the founders from the company during the past two years. A viable marketing plan with a view from outside the technical excellence is therefore seen as highly relevant and useful.</p> <p>The framework for the thesis is based on three different steps: Beginning with a conceptual view on the business proposition of the project from a theoretical point of view, then moving on to the different relevant marketing concepts and models, especially focusing on digital communication and social media, and finally preparing a more practical approach through the importance of influencers in viral marketing through a seven-step social media marketing communications framework.</p> <p>Understanding the connected world and how the digital revolution is changing the way we work is a truly interesting field of study, as it can be applied in a lot of fields of businesses. Utilizing this knowledge for a relevant real life B2C Digital Marketing Communications plan for the company is in my view the best possible real life application of the research social media marketing application.</p>	
<p>Keywords Marketing Communications plan, digital media, social media marketing, gamification, mobile apps, interwoven digital services.</p>	

Table of contents

1	Introduction and background.....	1
1.1	Introduction and Outer Space Labs ltd.....	1
1.2	Thesis topic, PO & PTs	2
1.3	Project Participants	3
1.4	International aspect & Benefits to stakeholders	4
2	Key concepts & Theoretical Framework.....	5
2.1	Gamification and Business Model Generation	5
2.2	The New Rules of Marketing and PR	7
2.3	The communication mix	11
2.4	The Digital Communications Mix	13
2.4.1	Search engine marketing.....	14
2.4.2	Social media.....	14
2.4.3	Advertisements and affiliates.....	17
2.4.4	E-mail marketing.....	18
2.4.5	Viral Marketing.....	19
2.5	Mobile Marketing	20
2.6	Strategic approaches to Social media marketing.....	21
2.7	A seven-step framework for social media marketing communication.....	23
3	Marketing Communication plan Design and Tools	26
3.1	Marketing Communications plan Design	26
3.1.1	The social media platform.....	27
3.1.2	Elements	28
3.1.3	Objectives.....	30
3.1.4	Measurement.....	31
3.2	App Marketing Communications plan Features	31
3.2.1	Smartphone App Marketing	31
3.2.2	Ultimate viral marketing: social networks	32
3.2.3	In-app features and extras	32
3.3	Marketing Communications Tools	33
3.3.1	Maximizing Viral Channels	33

3.3.2 Facebook Fan Page	33
3.3.3 Twitter.....	35
3.3.4 YouTube.....	37
3.3.5 Social Endorsing.....	38
4 Analysis & Summary.....	39
4.1 General analysis	39
4.2 Recommendations for future marketing communication activities	39
4.3 Evaluation of own learning.....	40
References	41

1 Introduction and background

As people are generally currently experiencing a daily data overflow, we are also witnessing a social media revolution. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, blogs, text messaging, wikis, all engage a lot of users. Many of the companies involved in these businesses are only a few years old, yet by now have market capitalizations in billions. Adaptation has been extremely quick. Twitter was launched in 2006, had almost no users until 2009, but has since then seen a steady rise in its user base to 500 million users, of which over half are considered active, Facebook was expected to hit one billion monthly users in September 2012 and LinkedIn an IPO in January 2012 and has about 250 million users today. (Breur 2011, 99)

From a business viewpoint, the growth mentioned above offers remarkable prospects to reach potential customers, as the platform of social networks provides fruitful ground for viral marketing. When users who have no outward interest suddenly praises a product or service, this provides an enormous potential to boost sales. On the other hand, a hate-campaign can demolish a business very quickly. Based on this setting creating a digital marketing communication plan, based heavily on social media, creates an interesting challenge.

1.1 Introduction and Outer Space Labs ltd.

Understanding the connected world and how the digital revolution is changing the way we work has been one of the great changes during the past decade, as it can be applied in a lot of fields of businesses, thus providing people with extensive career & business options in the future. Utilizing this up to date knowledge for a relevant real life B2C Digital Marketing Communications plan is in my view the best possible real life application of the knowledge of the subject.

A fellow GloBBA student, who is also an IT-entrepreneur with several years of experience of international IT entrepreneurship, contacted me in January 2013 about the process of launching a new mobile gamification themed start-up venture, Outer Space Labs Ltd (OSL), with partners and necessary financial backing. He felt that I would be

the perfect person to create a marketing plan to this venture, and asked if I would be interested in this, and knowing I was about to start my thesis project combining these two things in a nice way, would be beneficial for all parties.

The Business idea of OSL is based on gamification and the creation of several interwoven digital services consolidating, aggregating and visualizing geo location and social media data. The goal is to create relevant and valuable user experiences for different geo-location mobile and web applications.

The service collects and pushes data from different social media services. All activities of existing social media services can be harvested and also pushed back if the according API allows it. It's essentially the idea to use social media data in many ways throughout the ecosystem for information visualization, content creation and avatar progression. Since users do a lot of different things on many different networks, this system creates a fun and easy way to consolidate this data to bring added value to the end user by creating more transparency to social activities and connect them also with a geo-location and gamification aspect

The project from the company-side has been prepared and built on the technical aspects by the founders during the past two years, and could be ready for a partial launch within the next few months, if needed, therefore making the creation of a business framework the highest priority. Especially creating a viable marketing plan with a view from outside the technical excellence will be essential, therefore hopefully making the need for any expertise highly relevant and useful.

1.2 Thesis topic, PO & PTs

The thesis Topic & PO is defined as: **A B2C Digital Media Marketing Communications plan for a Mobile application commercial launch.**

Unfortunately the project itself has been delayed to the unforeseeable future, because of other OLS projects requiring attention, therefore the actual product to which the

marketing communication plan is designed, is a fairly vague in its description, making also the plan itself somewhat theoretical and undefined in its practical application.

The following Project Tasks can be identified:

- Research on existing sources for the Theoretical Framework
- Market research both on a local and on an international scale on relevant market segments
- Best Practices, i.e. research on the success of successful social media marketing communication efforts..
- Goal definition, i.e. measurable goals.
- Digital media & SoMe Strategy definition, channel selection & Communication strategy
- Action / Follow-through plan

The following overlay matrix demonstrates the definition of the different tasks in comparison with the theoretical framework and the project objective.

Project Objective (PO)	Project Tasks	Theoretical Framework	Gantt Chart Items	Output
A B2C Digital Media Marketing Communications plan for a Mobile application commercial launch.	Research	Gamification	1-3	Framework
	Best Practices	The New Rules of Marketing and PR	4	Market & BP data
	Goal definition	Business Model Generation	5-6	Analysis
	Strategy definition	The New Rules of Marketing and PR	7	Strategy
	Action / Follow-through	The New Rules of Marketing and PR	8-9	Launch

1.3 Project Participants

As the marketing communication plan is somewhat theoretical and undefined in its practical application, the definition of project participants also becomes quite general.

The project participants can be defined through three different categories:

- Direct participants, including the commissioners from OSL.
- Indirect participants. Including other employees and outsourced task performers within OSL.
- Third party sources. Including other sources of information and best practices within the Finnish mobile gaming industry.

1.4 International aspect & Benefits to stakeholders

As the project features on a mobile application with a global market potential it is fairly evident that the project is truly international in all phases of research planning and execution. Within this view of the level of internalization is the assumption of globalizations and the world being “smaller” and more connected than ever before. Comparing a mobile app with a truly global reach is therefore quite uneven to some product/service a few decades back.

This project has to be seen, as mentioned, as two entwined processes; the Marketing Communications plan and the thesis, each supporting and complementing each other. As the actual real life Digital Marketing Communications plan was set as the main goal of the project, as it is the true value creator for OSL.

Being interested in the “New connected world” and the possibilities social media provides marketing, the sources listed present a few of the books I’ve read during the past year in my process of learning and reflecting on the subject. The concept of gamification has been my latest field of interest as it provides the basis for the company business idea of which the thesis is based.

2 Key concepts & Theoretical Framework

In this chapter the main concepts and theories on which the marketing communication plan is based on are presented. Starting off with a conceptual view on the business proposition of OSL from a theoretical point of view, then moving on to the different marketing concepts, especially focusing on digital communication and social media as marketing concepts, finally focusing on the importance of influencers in viral marketing through a seven-step social media marketing communications framework

2.1 Gamification and Business Model Generation

The theoretical framework for a digital marketing communications plan, especially the social media aspects, creates some referencing challenges, as the concept and application of it is such a recent development, that there is surprisingly little relevant literature on the subject, mostly published during the past few years.

The actual key concepts relate to three different points of view.

1. The customer point of view looking at gamification as an incentive.
2. The Company point of view focusing on the business plan, relying quite heavily on Osterwalder's Business Model Generation concept
3. The marketing communications point of view, looking into the application and measurability of digital marketing theories and methods.

Looking at the Marketing plan from a customer point of view Werbach and Hunter state that research into human motivation gathered from scholarly literature demonstrates that people will feel motivated by well-designed game features. Monetary rewards aren't even necessary, because the game itself is the reward. Videogame players will, for example, invest enormous resources into acquiring virtual objects and achievements that have no tangible value. (Werbach and Hunter 2012, 65)

Gamification: The use of game elements and game-design techniques in non-game contexts (Werbach & Hunter 2012, 26). Games have been around as long as human civilization. Even videogames have a forty-year history and comprise a huge global

industry that generates close to \$100 billion annually. Hundreds of millions of people in every corner of the globe spend hundreds of billions of minutes every month playing console, PC, online, and nowadays especially mobile games. Games are interestingly enough popular in every demographic, gender, and age group, but especially omnipresent among the generation now moving into the labour force. (Werbach & Hunter 2012, 8)

Successful gamification involves two kinds of skills. It requires a perception of game design, and it requires an understanding of business techniques. Few are good at both. Knowing how to carry out a market segmentation or a product analysis does not show you how to create lastingly engaging experiences. (Werbach & Hunter 2012, 9)

The Company point of view featuring Osterwalder's Business Model Canvas is based on a visual chart (see figure 1) unfolding a firm's value proposition, infrastructure, customers, and finances. A company can easily describe their business model with the business model design template, as it offers a single model based on the parallels of a wide range of business model concepts. Its main mission is to assist companies in aligning their activities by exemplifying possible trade-offs. (Osterwalder 2010, 42)

The Business Model Canvas is a simple graphical model describing nine crucial components: Customer segments, value propositions, channels, customer relationships (i.e. self-service or personal assistance), revenue streams, resources, activities, partnerships, and costs. The individual elements all contribute to a consideration of a business' full scope, while the layout encourages thinking on how the different pieces fit together.

When examining OSL, the Business Model Canvas is suggested as a tool of defining the company's business and value proposition. The canvas gives a place to quickly translate any business idea into a testable plan – and vice-versa, which would substantially help in defining OSL's B2C future.

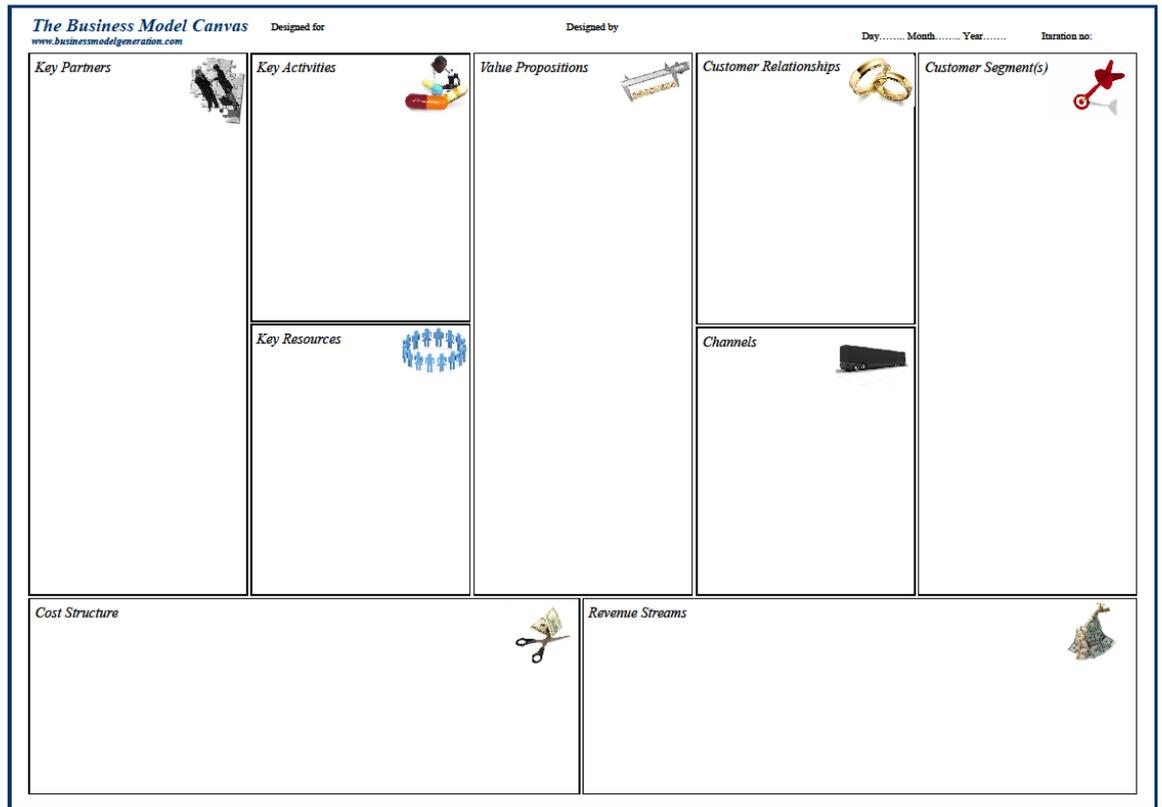


Figure 1. Business Model Generation Canvas (Osterwalder 2010, 44)

2.2 The New Rules of Marketing and PR

Regarding key concepts for a digital media marketing plan, especially the social media communication aspects, creates a bit of an issue, as the concept and application of it is such a recent development, that there is surprisingly little relevant literature on the subject.

The foci in building this Marketing Communications Plan is strongly based on the following general principles on the “New” Rules of Marketing and PR that were quite recently introduced by David Meerman Scott: (Scott 2011, 23)

- Marketing is more than just advertising.
- PR is for more than just a mainstream media audience.
- You are what you publish.
- People want authenticity, not spin.
- People want participation, not propaganda.

- Instead of causing one-way interruption, marketing is about delivering content at just the precise moment your audience needs it.
- Marketers must shift their thinking from mainstream marketing to the masses to a strategy of reaching vast numbers of underserved audiences via the web.
- PR is not about your boss seeing your company on TV. It's about your buyers seeing your company on the web.
- Marketing is not about your agency winning awards. It's about your organization winning business.
- The Internet has made public relations public again, after years of almost exclusive focus on media.
- Companies must drive people into the purchasing process with great online content.
- Blogs, online video, e-books, news releases, and other forms of online content let organizations communicate directly with buyers in a form they appreciate. Social networks allow people all over the world to share content and connect with the people and companies they do business with.
- On the web, the lines between marketing and PR have blurred.

These principles take a deliberate step away from the traditional views on Marketing Communications planning and PR, mostly because of the evolvement of social media. But what we call social media is not media, nor is it even a platform. It is a massive cultural shift that has profoundly affected the way society uses the greatest platform ever invented, the Internet (Vaynerchuk 2011, 138). Consumer expectations are changing dramatically, and social media has altered everything about how companies must relate to their customers. From now on, the relationship between a business and a customer is going to look very different from the way it has looked in the recent past. (Vaynerchuk 2011, 175).

This digital revolution is defining new ways to deliver, combine, and mix up services, resulting in all kinds of smart combinations: streaming music, following other people's book highlights, renting strangers' apartments or cars by the day, negotiating bargain prices from airlines and 5-star hotels, etc.

From a corporate communication point of view on this digital revolution, once something is released online, it can rapidly spin out of control. Undoubtedly, social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, which didn't exist earlier, have gained momentum far more quickly among the people than they have in corporations. Customers are connecting and sharing information at a far faster rate than the companies that serve them. There's no question regarding social networking that many companies lag behind their markets. Their networked customers can easily evade traditional formal channels to get information and support directly from each other.

When thinking about where to go when wanting to make a buying decision today. In general, one goes to peers first. If you want to go to a restaurant, you might go to eat.fi to read recommendations and reviews from customers. Booking a hotel? If you care about comfort and service, you might go to Hotels.com to read some reviews, or if price is a priority, you might go to trivago.com, where you can compare prices. Want to watch a movie? You can find the best picks at Rotten Tomatoes, Netflix, or IMDB, where movie-watchers have a voice.

Peer-to-peer conversations challenge traditional marketing communication channels. Customers basically trust each other more than they trust companies, who have a lodged concern in making themselves look good. A study by Nielsen in 2009 found that 90% of customers trusted recommendations from other customers more than any advertising. Customers have therefore begun to recognize and exercise, the power they possess. This power is not necessarily new, as customers have always had the power to choose what they want to buy and share their experiences and opinions with friends and peers. They have also had the power to promote or demote a company based on promise vs. delivery, and have always been able to vote with their wallets. But the customers have not been connected to a global network with the potential to amplify their opinions and experiences to hurricane strength. And that little thing we call "likes" makes all the difference. (Koulopoulos 2012, 114)

Earlier the view on what are marketing communication channels were quite different are only traditional advertising media were considered valid, especially the five “traditional” channels: television, radio, public relations, print and outdoor, and the internet. However these views interestingly excluded mail, e-mail and telephone, as they were considered to be only communication media, but not advertising media. Slowly a change in these views has progressed in realizing that this kind of discrimination or differentiation has no value, or even causes a reduction of value from the customer perspective. The present marketing communication challenge is to therefore to consider all contact points with customers, and therefore every channel of communication is valid. As the movement towards integrated marketing has been ongoing for a while, the probable long-term challenge for is how to plan/execute marketing communication to include all relevant channels. If someone found it earlier difficult to plan across direct mail and television, the present situation must seem close to impossible.

From a marketing communications point of view; prior to the internet, organizations had only two major choices to create a center of attention: Buy expensive advertising or get third-party ink from the media. But the internet has changed the rules in the past 10 years. For one, we have Google now, but that's only a part of the riddle. What really has happened is that the word-of-mouth network has become more efficient. The web is not TV, and actually according to a recent Nielsen study, nearly 60 percent of us use the Internet while watching TV. Scott states that organizations that understand the so called New Rules of Marketing and PR develop relationships directly with consumers. (Scott 2011, 77)

A common view is that all marketing communication can positively affect both the brand equity and sales. This seem to indicate the need for learning and participation between disciplines, common approaches for defining and measuring, a kind of a “common currency”. Marketing communication basically needs the right mix of channels and disciplines in gaining results, and therefore leads to the assumption that different stakeholder groups need to work as one team to get a range of perspectives and ideas towards a shared result.

2.3 The communication mix

Knowing what we try to communicate, based on our analysis of OSL's needs, the next decision is about what communications tools to use. Looking at communication tool choices in general, the most common methods of choosing communications tools is interestingly sheer habit or blindly copying the competition. Although using best practices method is by no means negative, and analyzing competitor actions is highly recommended, finding the suitable marketing communication mix is something that should be based on the own needs and goals. (McDonald 2012, 280)

According to McDonald (2012, 282) there are three effective ways of choosing the communications mix:

1. Matching the communications tool strengths with the purpose of the communication. A starting point is to consider on four different tasks the communication needs to accomplish:
 - Differentiation. Positioning the company, product or brand to be perceived to be different from the competitors.
 - Reinforcement. Reminding or encouraging customers about a company, product or brand
 - Information. Making user aware of a company, product or brand's existence or specific attributes
 - Persuasion. Encouraging customers to behave or act in specific ways.

Communication tools have different strengths in respect to these four tasks listed above. When informing prospective customers that the product exists and about its basic features, advertising is a good choice. It works also well for differentiating. When persuading prospective customers who already have a favorable attitude to translate this attitude into purchase, sales promotion is the tool to pick. Personal selling and direct marketing do suit persuasive tasks, and can also play a role in reinforcing brand messages to existing customers. (McDonald 2012, 283)

2. Matching communications to segment media consumption. Good segmentation gives a great advantage in selecting the appropriate media. It is vital that segmentation tasks include a profile of media usage for each segment, as this is priceless in selecting the right communications mix. By focusing on the media within the profile of media usage, which are quite unique to each segment, spending can be focused on target segments with communication designed to appeal to each. (McDonald 2012, 283)

3. A Combination of several communications tools in the customer experience. There is a lot of evidence that when targeting a specific segment, integrated marketing communication campaigns work better than single-channel ones. This is based on the assumption that the channels are complementing each other, not just repeating the same message. Diversification of the channels means that TV might be used for initial emotional engagement, followed by direct marketing for stimulating a direct response, and then online for increasing the dialogue. (McDonald 2012, 284)

Mapping the customer's journey from first awareness through to purchase and repurchase is a very useful approach. Communications tools often work in combination at different points of this passage. Earlier, people had a conviction that advertising worked in a wonderfully simple way, with an advertiser sending his message and a target receiving and understanding it. This has, however, become a much more complicated process in today's over-communicated society. (McDonald 2012, 285)

What is new today is that all the interpersonal relationships are visible online. Keeping up with friends, new products, companies, and brands in real time is now a part of our everyday lives. People can share experiences, good and bad, much more efficiently than before. More of people's lives than ever before; choices, problems, successes, are being chronicled, communicated, and shared by ourselves. In a sense, it basically challenges marketing as a discipline to use social networks as a channel for customer engagement

but at the same time be more understanding, more human, and undoubtedly more subtle. (Treadaway & Smith 2012, 48)

2.4 The Digital Communications Mix

The main tools available for online communications can be divided into four categories (Figure 2). Although these tools are divided into categories, it should be seen that they mainly interlope and complement each other. As we are moving from the view of integrated marketing communication planning to the specifics of integrated digital marketing communication planning, it is a clearly distinctive difference in the way integration of different elements is perceived. Therefore the distinction between Search marketing, social media, advertisements & affiliates, and Email and Viral Marketing is something that should be perceived as technical categories from the company point of view, but at the same time as components of the integrated marketing communication message received by the customer.

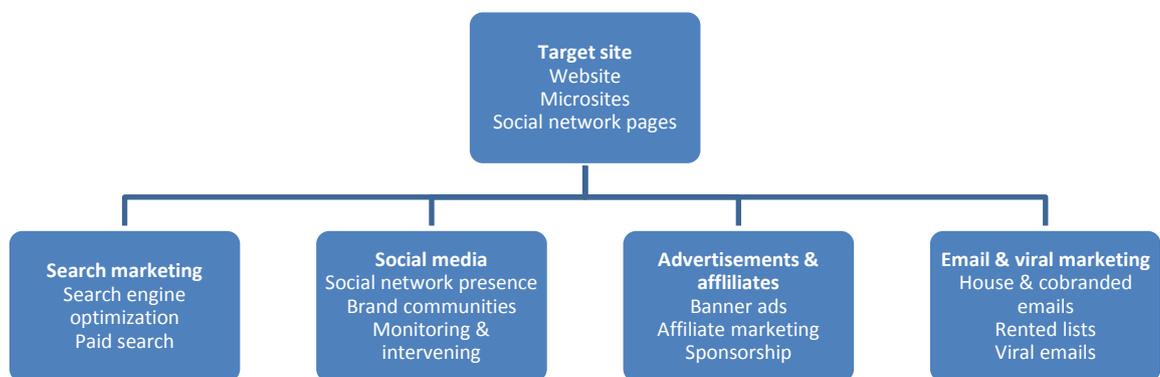


Figure 2. The digital communication mix. (McDonald 2012, 289)

2.4.1 Search engine marketing.

A high amount of customer journeys online begin with a search engine, therefore search marketing is a critical part of the digital communications mix, especially for customer acquisition. In 2009, over 25 per cent of online advertising spending was allocated on paid search; i.e. the items on the search results pages which are used for paid-for entries. As an example, the Google Adwords site explains simply how to participate in paid search, and also has a keyword tool to help find out what expressions customers are basing their searches on. (McDonald 2012, 290)

Equally important in search marketing is search engine optimization (SEO), which ensures that the website logically appears high in the search listing. Also, as paid search did cost an average of \$3 per click or \$8 per 1,000 page impressions in 2009, it could be a cost-effective solution for OSL. There is an excess of valuable information available on how Google and other searches prioritize pages, and also an available selection of optimizing websites to ensure a high search ranking. However, the basic principle in search engine optimization is plain common sense. Good-looking and smart, frequently updated content which many people appreciate, revisit, like and therefore provide their own links to, is high in the rankings. (McDonald 2012, 291)

2.4.2 Social media.

Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace summed up for a third of the online time of Americans by 2010, in comparison against 12 per cent for e-mail and chat. Therefore, it seems a bit odd that actual advertising spending on social networks has been lagging behind, with only 4 per cent of the online advertising spending allocated for that in 2009. This is partly because of the fact that the sheer speed of social network expansion has been so rapid that the traditional advertisers have not been able to keep up with it. While the 4 per cent mentioned is increasing fast, the truth is that it is still an underestimate of the plain extent of marketing effort that is already going into social media. The majority of the real cost of social media marketing efforts is not traditional advertising on the sidelines, but the costs to join in the social media conversation: blogging, brand communities etc. (McDonald 2012, 292)

Generally four purposes of social media can be defined that are of importance to the marketer:

1. Customer insight. Social media provide an enormous source of free qualitative data about how customers think about the company, product, or offering. Some companies even display some of this information straight back to its customers the home page – what the customers are talking about, how much positive/negative, what customers want improved etc. Some companies focus this free market insight by developing communities of innovative, enthusiastic customers, with a purpose of developing and evaluating new product ideas. (McDonald 2012, 292)

2. Brand exposure. The rise of social networking has been accompanied by the importance of social networks on purchase decisions, as a stream of statistics show, such as Gartner's 2010 statement that 74 per cent of consumers are strongly influenced by social networks on purchase decisions. The obvious reaction of traditional marketing people is to add community amenities to their own website, with the purpose of making this the destination of choice for customers regarding these products. This solution can work well with high-involvement categories, but there are two main dangers with this way thinking/action. The first is that not all products have social currency, as is the case with generic fast moving consumer goods. The second danger is that even if there is a relevant conversation to be had, is the brand-owned website the right place for it? (McDonald 2012, 292)

Some principles and practices are emerging in this area. Firstly, every brand cannot host a site, as they cannot hope to host their own television channel. Secondly: marketers of all but the strongest brands need to go to where the customers are. There are actual existing networks for many areas of professional practice, interests and affinity groups, and the general networks, not the companies/brands, host all these communities. As a practical large scale example;

Coke's Facebook site had 11 million members by 2010 and has a light, spirited touch for the brand, starting debates on such topics as 'Where is the strangest place you've ever had a Coke?' While the site is now owned by Coca-Cola, the site was actually started by two Coke enthusiasts. This is where customers are showing the way to the professional marketers. (McDonald 2012, 293)

3. Relationship building. Online or offline, word-of-mouth often proves the most powerful communication tool of all, and it has the benefit of being free. As brand building ends and the sales process begins is usually a controversial point, but social networks do play a role for customers actively involved in a current purchase. One online retailer found in their research that customers viewing at least one product review were over twice as likely to go on to buy the product as those who did not view reviews. Furthermore, products with more reviews on the retailer's site sold better, interestingly regardless of whether the reviews were positive, negative or mixed.
4. Customer service. The fourth use of social media is maybe a bit more ordinary, but no less important: the providing of customer service. Firstly, online advice is much cheaper to provide than telephone support, as less expert time is usually needed, but the online advice also answers to common questions and are therefore available to all, providing a form of economy of scale. Secondly, when compared with the traditional call center, a happy customer can online freely tell others about their experience, providing both word-of-mouth benefits and from the company's viewpoint highly valued feedback

Furthermore, customers can now serve each other, experienced users advising less experienced people. This contradicts to the traditional marketing instincts to have full control over the customer experience, but in this case the loss of control cannot, and should not, be fought. It is actually an unavoidable part of the snowballing customer empowerment which social media now enables. As examples; Apple is active in supporting its user community wherever they are talking to each other. Zappos, a \$1 billion online retailer built on customer ser-

vice, uses social media creatively. Extensive customer reviews do measurably lower return rates and are perfect for search engine optimization. Word of mouth is facilitated by Zappos by a facility to 'share' products with other customers. The site has even a page collecting all mentions of Zappos on Twitter without editing, something which would seem reckless were Zappos customer satisfaction levels lower. (McDonald 2012, 294)

As a summary, social media is can be considered a close to perfect tool for customer service. A practical problem causing delays in its implementation is the unfortunate tendency of many companies to delegate social media to a corner of the marketing department, and not seeing it for the true potential it possesses.

2.4.3 Advertisements and affiliates.

As search marketing and social media have been growing rapidly, the question arises on the role of the traditional banner ad. Statistics show that click-through rates continue their long-term decline, but the same thing happens to response rates of all forms of outbound advertising, mainly due to the fact that we are barraged by ever more messages in ever more media. The decline is also slowing, as from the statistics from 2005 to 2010, therefore showing some positives in the future uses of the banner ads. Banner ads are commonly placed in several ways, notably in three major implementations:

1. On individual sites.
2. On major portals such as Google or MSN.
3. Through ad exchanges such as Google's Doubleclick.

These ad exchanges provide marketplaces which match content sites with ad space to sell with advertisers. Other notable formats include in-game advertising, which is of course interesting for OSR, and digital billboards and other devices. (McDonald 2012, 294)

A related method for banner ad placement is affiliate marketing, in which the banner ad is placed on another firm's website. The classic example of this is Amazon, as mil-

lions of affiliates of Amazon receive a commission of 5 per cent whenever a book sale results from a click through to Amazon's website.

2.4.4 E-mail marketing.

Much like the banner ad, the traditional e-mail campaign no longer catches the excitement of youth in the rapidly changing innovative world of digital marketing, but it is still an important part of the online communications mix. While actual response rates average at around 2.8 per cent, this is mainly because of poorly executed mass marketing with undifferentiated content that is sent to badly maintained lists, which attain response rates of considerably less than 1 per cent. On the other hand, well-designed e-mail campaigns to specifically designed segments using a clean well-maintained database will often achieve 10– 15 per cent click rates. For many firms e-mail could very well form an important part of the firm's customer relationship management strategy in growing the value of the existing customers. (McDonald 2012, 295)

For viral marketing the ease of forwarding e-mails makes it an ideal vehicle for many uses, especially as promotional messages passed from peer to peer. Most viral messages of this form are based on humor. As an example; Coca-Cola's Happiness Machine video, a low-cost ad made explicitly for viral circulation and launched on Twitter, had 2.6 million views on YouTube in 2011. Other recipes for successful viral communication would include their content to be shocking, clever, or compulsively informative. Obviously, these criteria may also be met by material which has actually nothing to do with brands, or which is created for negative purposes to create negative reactions for competitive or other reasons. (McDonald 2012, 295)

Last but not least regarding e-mails, are the all-important inbound e-mails, which may originally be service queries, but equally include the potential to form sales leads. A classic mistake by many companies is that they are so fixed on recruiting customers from their outbound campaigns that no attention or time is allocated to answer e-mails from definitive prospects. It is extremely important to include the inbound communication in corporate marketing plans to guarantee that resources are available to respond to customers when they contact the company.

2.4.5 Viral Marketing

Successful execution of Viral Marketing, also called word-of-mouth marketing, is a concept that engages most marketers today. Social media form an infrastructure that makes it far more possible and executable than ever before. One single person's experience or recommendation can easily be entertainment for thousands if not millions of people. With the arrayed relationships in social media and the platforms available for viewing interesting things, it the substance and content becomes the main feature instead of the question of the possibility to reach a lot of people. (Treadaway & Smith 2012, 46)

Viral marketing is something that cannot be forced, it just tends to happen. When it is forced, it usually comes off as something insincere and most probably has actually the opposite effect of what was intended. When creating a viral marketing campaign, relevant are the assets that are naturally funny or entertaining and truly resonate with people. (Treadaway & Smith 2012, 48)

Viral marketing is something a marketer wants to work for, not against him. Earlier email was a method of spreading word-of-mouth content on the internet. Today, most do not send jokes and such on email, unless the content is truly interesting, really funny, or related to someone's work or social life. Social media is far less restrictive, and it could be said that is basically gives everyone a "loudspeaker". Here lies the opportunity of Viral Marketing on the social media for marketers. Anything done or said, as well as anything to consumers do or say about you, has a true prospective to spread uncontrollably. Customers now have the real power to comment on your brand, product, or company and therefore communicate this directly to a great number of other people much more efficiently than ever before. (Treadaway & Smith 2012, 46)

As said, negative publicity can also spread like wildfire. Today one can often see disgruntled customers willing to share negative experiences they've had with companies on the social media. Empowered customers, particularly active users of social media, know the power of publicity, and they are beginning to use social media to get what they want. A classic example of this was infamous United Breaks Guitars video of July

2009. An unhappy musician whose guitar was broken on a flight posted a video on YouTube that got more than three million views in the first two weeks. The created some truly significant negative publicity, in way never earlier possible. (Treadaway & Smith 2012, 47)

2.5 Mobile Marketing

Mobile marketing is a current form of marketing communications that is growing steadily in popularity. It enables integrating all forms of media and marketing communications in order to drive sales, collect CRM data, and increase viral value. Mobile marketing can take a number of different forms, including messaging, mobile Internet, streaming media, and downloadable content. Consumers are accessible through this developing form of digital media, with mobile campaigns having the capacity to build a database of consumers that can be extracted for better understanding of the consumer's needs. This data can in turn help to develop effective targeted campaigns. (Castro-novo & Huang 2012, 119)

Mobile messaging enables marketers to extend their spread beyond traditional media, especially in direct marketing, when targeting precise segmented target groups and thus encourage instant consumer action upon seeing an advertisement. Different forms these actions would involve are of mobile alerts, content services, mobile coupons, voting, quizzes, and sweepstakes.

The mobile Internet allows marketers to enable the power of the Internet to deliver marketing content. Streaming media enables for content to be consumed as it is delivered, and it be delivered as a choice of either on-demand streaming, or live streaming. Streaming media can be used to deliver communications messages through sponsored advertisement content, video ads, or branded entertainment, all effective variations of a mobile marketing campaign. To increase consumer engagement with a campaign, the use downloadable content, acting as a motivator for campaign participation, can be especially effective.

The effectiveness mobile marketing is usually measured in terms of cost-per-acquisition and the also relative level of user engagement in the different features of the campaign. Furthermore, mobile marketing provides the prospect to leverage social networks to escalate engagement with the brand through the consumption of digital content. As user are highly motivated to use their mobile devices to access social media networks, an arrangement of mobile-accessed social networks can be utilized to push marketing communications and therefore target precise segments of consumers. (Castrotrono & Huang 2012, 120)

A successful mobile viral marketing process include substantial influence of trust and perceived risk. This is especially true for mobile viral marketing actions using recommend-to-a-friend options as a principal focus on trust creation and therefore risk reduction is vital for creating trust among these mobile users. Mobile viral marketing is fairly similar, from a psychological viewpoint, as is word-of-mouth marketing. It is therefore especially important to design and deliver mobile viral content that is timely, up-to-date, and personalized according to individual user identities. The basic requirements for acceptance of information technology, such as usefulness and ease of use, are also essential for mobile viral content. Furthermore, the creating amusing and enjoyable mobile viral content adds to the attractiveness of the offer. (Palka et al 2009, 183)

2.6 Strategic approaches to Social media marketing

A highly important consideration when designing and implementing social media marketing is designing for actual impact. This view focuses on the fact that while many superficial social media marketing actions are important and necessary, they still are isolated in aligning the company's social business vision with its marketing process.

As marketing is nowadays an advanced discipline that does much more than identifies customers, satisfies them, and retains them in its own life cycle. Marketing includes actually demographics, social sciences, psychology, anthropology, and many other fields in maximizing its effectiveness of message transmission and finding customers and generating demand for products and services. (Hinchcliffe & Kim 2010, 82)

In social media marketing, some goals of customer acquisition, satisfaction, and retention still exist, but the view in customer relationship management requires a radical rethink. Earlier it was quite straightforward to understand and measure the effects of actions in a restricted number of marketing channels using precise and branded marketing messages, the numbers game of social media marketing is different. As social media marketing offers the possibility of a large number of channels with less structure makes identifying and segmenting audiences a highly challenging inefficient task. (Hinchcliffe & Kim 2010, 83)

The process of identifying suitable social media segments is, however partly the challenge of social media marketing maximization. The other part is about how to figure the best combination of types of social media to use. From a strategic point of view there are four major strategic approaches to marketing with social media: (Hinchcliffe & Kim 2010, 83)

- Local social media. A primary the choice in the early days of social media; creation of own blogs, discussion forums, and online communities on own sites. This approach allows marketers to retain a high level of control over experiences and content, however it does not fully engage the power of viral marketing.
- External social media. Social media as such started out as a fragmented space, containing millions of individual publishing channels and only a few large, principal social media sites such as MySpace as a forerunner (even these major sites were limited to a few million people at first). Developing over time, global social networks have started to accumulate audiences of significant size, in the process attracting a so called critical mass of users and brands.
- Integrated social media. Multichannel efforts target user brand engagement in multiple ways, combining the previously described local and external social media, as well as different offline experiences. The focus lies in delivering a con-

sistent, up-to-date, and synchronized social media experience, thus preparing large audiences for a deeper consequent engagement.

- Unified social businesses. The latest development of a strategic approach is something that is presently evolving, businesses where the actual boundaries between workers, customers, and partners are indistinct. In marketing terms, defining the front line engagement becomes much more blurred; the most deeply engaged can be employees— or they may be customers or potential customers, or for example workers from a trading partner. The potential on this lies in the fact that user participation might greatly reduce, for example the cost to design, market, sell, and produce products. In a unified social business model, anyone can contribute, and everyone benefits from the result.

2.7 A seven-step framework for social media marketing communication

Kumar & Mirchandani presented in their recent article a seven step model on social media marketing communication effectiveness thorough influential individuals (figure 3), which is a strategy that could also work for OSL.

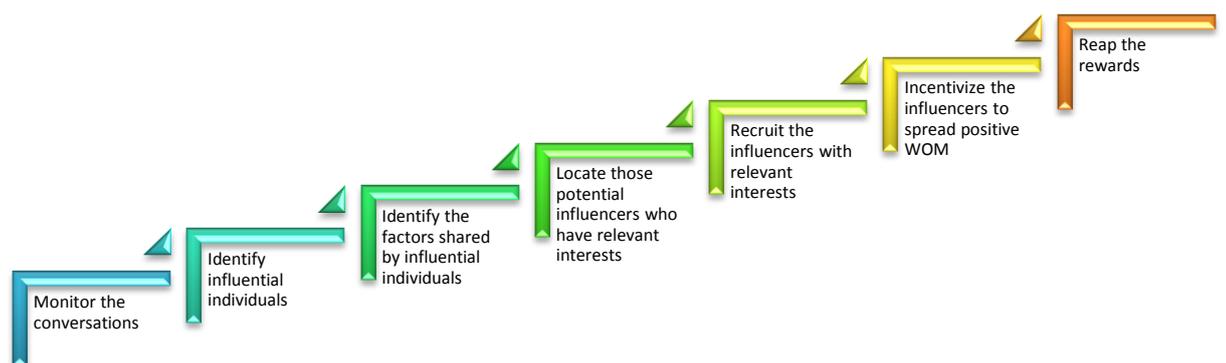


Figure 3. Seven-Step Framework for Social Media Marketing (Kumar & Mirchandani 2012, 60)

The framework consists of the following seven steps:

1. Monitoring the conversations. Companies can gain access to valuable information, influential people and relevant conversations that already show engagement with the brand, by monitoring conversations that are related to the brand/company that are happening in the social media platforms.
2. Identifying individuals, considered influential, who can spread messages. From the data gained by monitoring the discussions, companies can identify a pool of influencers, of whom some might be convinced to spread the company's message.
3. Identifying the factors shared by these influencer. Finding commonalities among these candidates and using these commonalities to create profiles of typical influencers is the next important task. This prepares companies to easier locate the influencers relevant to their future campaigns and encourage them to talk about the company's products or services. These influencers on social media exhibit high levels of engagement in three main aspects: Message spread (the times a message is forwarded, modified/unmodified, by the receivers), Influence (the times the message is in turn re-forwarded by their recipients to their friends), and Social impact (comments and replies received per message).
4. Locating the influencers with interests relevant to the campaign and potential. In finding these potential influencers for a specific campaign, it is not enough to identify just powerful influencers. Instead, identifying those influential users who are above all interested in the company's category of goods and services, is of great importance. By identifying these influencers interested in their product categories, one can go further than simply listening to social media conversations, but instead dynamically identifying potential brand ambassadors.

5. Recruiting these influencers with relevant interest, to communicate about the company's product or service. Once the influencers who are particularly interested in the product or service category have been identified, the next step logical is to recruit those influencers to the campaign or campaigns to spread positive word-of-mouth. Potential ways to achieve this is by developing and designing ways in which influencers can promote positive, traceable and measurable word-of-mouth.
6. Incentivizing the influencers to spread positive word-of-mouth. By creating buzz about the products or services in the social media campaign through influencers, both customers can be retained and prospects attracted.
7. Reaping the rewards from effective social media campaigns. Accurately measuring the performance of the social media campaigns is one tangible result of the above steps. By linking product and brand growth to positive word-of-mouth monitoring and tracking, companies can develop more effective social media campaigns, and as a result see better financial performance, more customer engagement and generally increased brand awareness. (Kumar & Mirchandani 2012, 61)

3 Marketing Communication plan Design and Tools

This chapter focuses on the design and practical tool in an integrated social media marketing communications plan. It presents an integrated model for the market communications plan, focusing on the interaction of the different elements, the looks into some features of modern social media marketing of mobile app's, and finally examines the different tools of the social media marketing communication "toolbox" by recommending practical uses for these platforms.

3.1 Marketing Communications plan Design

There is plenty of marketing literature covering word-of-mouth marketing, Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM), brand communities, Search engine optimization (SEO), viral marketing, guerilla marketing, events-based marketing, and social media each as isolated objects, but fairly scarce on combining these element into a meaningful model incorporating the individual characteristics and advantages of all these. Furthermore, the research in this field has been fairly theoretic in nature, clearly lacking a model that is actionable and can be in a real life environment with a goal to achieve various marketing objectives. To meet this need Castronovo & Huang have developed a model based on the research findings in existing literature, visualized in figure 4. In the model the social media platform serves as the router through which all viable marketing communication actions are connected into one easily accessible, integrated consumer setting. Large portions of the marketing communication plan of OSL are based on this model. (Castronovo & Huang 2012, 120)

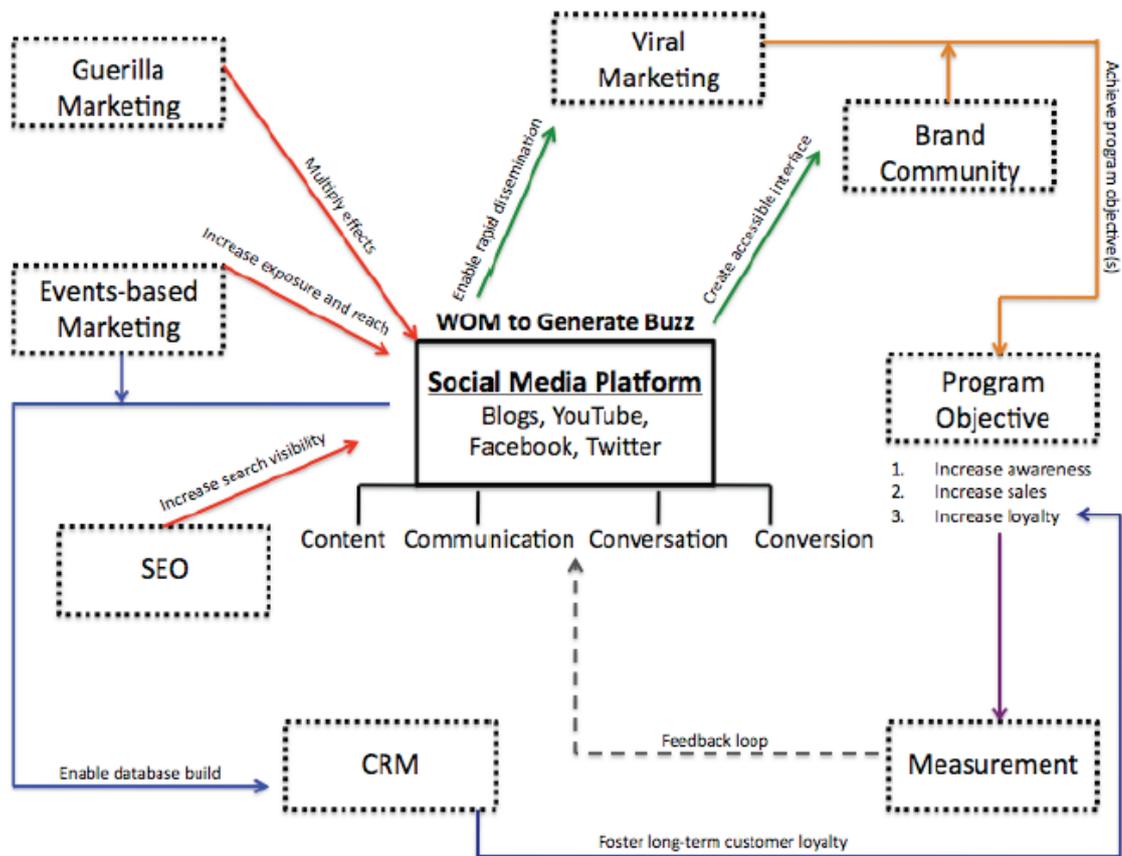


Figure 4. The OSL Social media marketing communication plan based on the model by Castronovo & Huang. (Castronovo & Huang 2012, 134)

3.1.1 The social media platform

The concept of word-of-mouth strategy forms the basis of the marketing communication plan. The whole plan is centered on the goal of creating and sustaining positive “buzz” for the OSL. The different components of the model work in an integrated way to emphasize the message that OSL wishes to communicate to users, thereby enticing user to pass along OSL’s message to other users.

As earlier described, the social media platform serves as the router through which all viable marketing communication actions are connected into one easily accessible, integrated consumer setting. Social media could be described as ubiquitous by nature and is characterized by the ability to almost instantaneously connect an infinite number of people. Therefore, it represents the hub of this model. One prerequisite for social me-

dia to be an effective platform for OSL, is that its presence must funnel through from the OSL main Website.

The platform could in practice take the form of any or all types of social media, including a blog, a YouTube channel, a Facebook page, and/or Twitter account. The specific social Medias chosen for OSL (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blog) reflect OSL's real objectives in terms of the content it wishes to create, how this content will be communicated to the users, the extent to which OSL engages users in a two-way dialogue, and also the amount of user conversion that is being sought. A blog is seen by OSL as an effective way to develop high quality, meaningful content for its users, as well as an effective means for clearly expressing OSL's particular message. YouTube represents for OSL a way in which visual and humorous content can be generated. Facebook and Twitter are OSL's main ways to engage users in conversation. All of these social media formats should have the potential to convert consumers into loyal users by connecting with them on a one-to-one level and cultivating the relationships with them. (Castrotrono & Huang 2012, 123)

3.1.2 Elements

For OSL, guerilla marketing, events-based marketing, and search engine optimization characterize the inputs that support the social media hub. The OSL Guerilla marketing focuses on the building of OSL's reputation through unique tactical marketing executions on a local scale. Using integration of guerilla marketing implementations with the social media hub, in pre- and post-campaign promotions via the social media platform, OSL should be able to multiply the effects of the individual guerilla program. Guerilla marketing therefore feeds into the OSL social media hub to encourage viral spreading through the OSL blogs and social networks that in turn increase the exposure and effectiveness of the individual guerilla marketing program.

OSL's Event marketing focuses on developing single relationships with members of OSL's target audience. As with the guerilla marketing, integrating pre- and post-promotion of the events with OSL's social media platform does enable the lifespan of the single event to be extended and the possible reach of the program to be extended

greatly. An OSL event can be documented through both videos and photos to be incorporated into the OSL social media hub to be forwarded from user to user.

Search engine optimization (SEO) acts as groundwork support for the OSL social media platform. Its existence is reasoned to increase the effectiveness of exposing potential future users to OSL's Website and social media platforms. SEO can be managed by OSL through three possible means: through paid insertion, wherein OSL pays a search engine to ensure the website is present when a potential user types in a particular keyword; paid advertisements, in which OSL pays for its site to appear as an advertisement combined with search results that use a specific keyword; or thirdly organic means, in which OSL manages content creation in a strategic way, enabling thus the site to be listed when potential user make particular search queries. (Castronovo & Huang 2012, 127)

For OSL to engage in effective CRM it has to build a consumer database which is made possible by the events-based marketing efforts and the social media platform described above. An event hosted by OSL as a means of engaging with interested parties provides OSL with the prospect to build its database of potential user and contacts. Furthermore, the social media platform provides OSL with an assortment of ways to interact with the users and get their consent to archive relevant personal information, particularly email addresses. The more comprehensive the OSL customer database becomes, the better equipped OSL also becomes in the ability to effectively understand its customers and target them in meaningful way.

The building of consumer loyalty characterizes the ultimate goal of any CRM program which is why the consumer database is considered a means through which a firm can successfully link the CRM program with this prime objective of increased consumer loyalty. Through leveraging consumer information from its database and translating this information into actionable targeting strategies, OSL can develop and execute personalized marketing efforts for both potential and existing users. These personalized marketing efforts should result in the creation of value for OSL's users, and make

possible establishing and maintaining long-term relationships with these users. (Castronovo & Huang 2012, 128)

Viral marketing and brand community development represent the outputs of OSL's social media platform. The social media platform takes in the data from guerilla- and events marketing efforts, and at the same time leverages the search engine optimization in a way that OSL's alternative marketing actions become integrated and reinforce one another as well as OSL's overall message communicated. OSL's Blogs and selected social networks enable the marketing content to be swiftly spread and transmitted among individuals and groups, thus exponentially snowballing user exposure to and engagement with this content. This constitutes OSL viral marketing strategy. Moreover, the same blogs and selected social networks mentioned provide users with an interface through which they can come together with one another as well as with OSL's people to form a true brand community. This could be described as the definitive expression of true brand loyalty. Through OSL's online viral marketing and brand communities, supported by the social media platform, word of mouth "buzz" on OSL can be quickly created.

3.1.3 Objectives

Looking at the marketing communication plan and its objectives, and ways to effectively accomplish these, three main objectives appear that this plan should enable:

- 1) Increase consumer awareness
- 2) Increase sales
- 3) Increase consumer loyalty.

The objective of increasing consumer awareness of OSL is a result of an emphasis on developing the inputs from guerilla and events-based marketing and search engine optimization into the OSL social media hub. The objective of increasing sales is a result of the emphasis on effectively utilizing the CRM component of the plan. The objective of increasing loyalty is a result in an emphasis on both CRM utilization and develop-

ment of the outputs (viral marketing and brand community development) of the OSL social media hub.

It is very important to note that while different modules of the plan are accentuated in achieving different objectives, the plan will still integrate all of its components into an effective marketing communication plan. The plan is therefore highly synergistic in nature, as for its effectiveness to be optimized, all separate components must work together and feed into one another. OSL's focus in terms of all objectives being pursued will determine how ultimate success of the program is measured at each phase. (Castronovo & Huang 2012, 132)

3.1.4 Measurement

OLS's measurement of the success of this marketing communication plan and its components contributes to a feedback loop that defines how future executions will be adjusted to increase the plan's effectiveness. The whole marketing communication plan must be evaluated both pre- and post-execution in order to evaluate the extent to which OSL's objectives were achieved. Based on these measures, ways to improve forthcoming programs should be identified and integrated into any applicable aspect of the marketing communication plan. (Castronovo & Huang 2012, 133)

3.2 App Marketing Communications plan Features

3.2.1 Smartphone App Marketing

From a business point of view, social media is actually all about marketing. It's a new way to directly impact spread and sales of your product through engagement and interaction with the target audience. Social media offers unique channels where users can directly communicate with others, both one-way and two-way, through direct messaging or chat, on a Facebook wall or using newsfeeds and notifications, posting tweets or re-tweets on Twitter, or even quite often the old-fashioned e-mail. These and other social platform, both general and targeted to a specific niche, form the basis for this new way. (Baker & McCann 2011, 233)

Regarding smartphone apps specifically, Admob reported in June 2010 that roughly 50 percent of iPhone users discover new apps via word of mouth, including social media recommendations. Although the report does not break down additionally which social media channels were used, it does not affect the result for our purposes, because a diverse and targeted approach is still decidedly recommended. (Baker & McCann 2011, 235)

3.2.2 Ultimate viral marketing: social networks

In general two social networks dominate the current social media market: Facebook and Twitter. Because of the sheer number of users across all demographics, it is essential for any app marketing plan using social media to make use of these two, and also to do so in-app as well whenever possible.

At its fundamental state, viral marketing is a method of attaining users that provides more than one additional user for every new user attained. A positive thing from an OSL point of view, is that viral marketing doesn't entirely rest on just one channel any longer. As a matter of fact, in maximizing areas that are overachieving and tweaking areas that need improvement, it is essential to employ as many channels as time and resources allow. In utilizing all possible channels, the end result is a lower overall cost per new user than their expected lifetime value or expenditure. This means that the campaigns are paying off, regardless of the viral component. Cost per user acquisition (CPA), customer acquisition cost (CAC), and lifetime value per customer (LTV) are most often used terms used in measurement, and are the also main metrics OSL will use in the future for measuring marketing effectiveness. (Baker & McCann 2011, 249)

3.2.3 In-app features and extras

Social promotion of an app is important, but inserting Facebook Connect or the capability to Tweet events or share achievements does not make an app a "social app". This simply does not encourage users to download it on these virtues alone. Neither does the ability to promote it via email, although it is a feature most apps ought to have. These extra features add social interactivity that can help promote and extend value, but by themselves they actually hold as little value as side notes for marketing nowa-

days, as they are both simple to do, and most apps actually feature some kind of social connectivity. (Baker & McCann 2011, 251)

True social features, in contrast, are meant to be marketed and called out in the OSL App description, whereas the social extras mentioned above, might be the last point, but definitely not the first one. A true social feature would be one that gives the user the capability to directly go head-to-head against or play or interact along with friends, in-app chat, and photo sharing or collaborating. Since apps with a form of competition, cooperation, or collaboration are becoming more frequent it is these features OSL should focus on making them key marketable features. (Baker & McCann 2011, 251)

3.3 Marketing Communications Tools

When examining the different tools of the social media marketing communication “toolbox”, it quite quickly becomes evident that there is a surplus of options for different platforms and applications. Therefore it becomes essential to match the right tools with the right uses, always appraising own the resources for maintain activity on these platform at a level that really produces results measurable.

3.3.1 Maximizing Viral Channels

It was much easier to comprehend and measure the effects of earlier marketing actions when using a restricted number of marketing channels using distinct marketing messages, but the “game” of social media marketing is quite different. As social media marketing offers the possibility of a large number of viral channels with much less organization, it makes identifying and segmenting customers a highly challenging task, and puts high demands for maximizing these channels.

3.3.2 Facebook Fan Page

A Facebook Fan Page can have millions of fans (likes), frequently top Google searches for a brand, and is an excellent way for users to interact with your brand without trying to attract people to a separate brand website. The simplified goal for a Facebook Fan

Page is to provide information to people interested in your brand or product, keeping them potentially continuously engaged. Updating frequently with the latest news about your product or brand is the factual way to do this. (Baker & McCann 2011, 251)

When a user comes to the OSL's Facebook Fan Page and "likes" it, a notification is placed on the user's wall where suddenly other users can see it, thus starting the much important viral loop. What's more, additional content posted and promoted on the Fan Page will also appear on the users pages. For that reason, the end goal is to get users to like the OSL Fan Page so that their friends will see their endorsement.

The OSL Facebook Fan Pages will consist of a configurable "landing tab" (where users first find themselves, therefore making it vital of it being as engaging and branded as possible), a "wall" that should be updated frequently, where news and user comments can be found, along with tabs/pages, support, contests, and specific information or downloads, and importantly pages about different aspects of your app or brand. One can also have specific fan-only content that can be locked until one "likes" the page.

The following design and features and implementations will be incorporated into the OSL Facebook Fan Page in order to create a refined user experience and optimized results for OSL:

- Using Facebook apps enhancing the OSL Fan Page. Thousands of add-on apps have been created for the purpose of adding interactivity and promote the page. A selection of these will be used for effect.
- Auto-posting selected OSL Twitter feeds for wall content. Using the Facebook app "Selective Tweets" enables doing this without spamming unrelated information.
- A branded OSL landing tab. A critical element of any Fan Page. Some research has shown that having a landing tab can double conversion rates. (Baker & McCann 2011, 258)
- Importing the OSL developer blog's RSS feed for additional content using the Facebook app "Networked Blogs"

- Creating incentives for users to become fans — Will be offering unlockable content such as downloads, wallpapers, exclusive in-app content, discounts, or other promotions to attract users to become fans via the “Like” button.
- Asking for feedback to gain loyalty. Giving support to the OSL app post-release, gaining street credibility with the fans, and showing OSL a developer/brand who listens and attempts to make the app better.
- Promoting real-world events. Bridging the all-important gap between online and offline.
- Funneling fans to the OSL Facebook Fan Page throughout other marketing. Done through all possible means to increase conversion into fans; i.e. email, newsletters, the OSL brand site, OSL developer blog.
- Contests and incentives with rewards. Here one logic prevails: “The bigger the reward, the more shareable the app becomes throughout social circles”. However it is important to see that the reward can be measured in many other ways than just financial value alone.
- Research the possibility to Pay for fans. There are methods to “buy” fans in bulk and fairly cheaply, compared to other marketing efforts. This could be a good way to kick-start the OSL Fan Page.
- Using large profile photos. 200 × 600 pixels that is provide offers a lot of flexibility for something larger and more prominent than the standard square photo.
- Updating frequently. The reason being obvious: Fans will leave if the content is not fresh and frequent. The new information should be unique and nothing should be reposted twice. The frequency is of course a subject to debate, but once per day should be adequate in the beginning. Balancing the own posts with those of users, once they start becoming engaged, is an important aspect later on. Remember to keep new information unique and not repost anything twice.

3.3.3 Twitter

Twitter is another large social network with an important social media status and great viral potential. Twitter differs from Facebook in user behavior in activity frequency, as

users tend to tweet more often than they post on their Facebook wall, and the creation of “re-tweeting” what other users have already tweeted, there can be seen a huge prospective to get more attention for popular tweets. (Baker & McCann 2011, 254)

When looking at an effective integrated social media marketing strategy plan, it is quite essential that OSL should also have a corresponding Twitter feed to reach the most people, and also funnel them into the OSL’s online presence to include the Facebook Fan Page. The following actions are planned for OSL’s Twitter strategy, and future maintenance of an effective feed OSL:

- Offering special codes, coupons, or gifts only to Twitter followers. This can be a powerful method to create incentives for users to become followers.
- Shortening and tracking tweet links. This is done with “Bitly”, a popular link shortener that can turn any link into a convenient length in order to be able to insert it into your 140-character-limit tweets. It also provides detailed tracking of click information for each link, including how many times a particular link was clicked. These tracking metrics are an effective way to iterate on success.
- Following the people who are relevant OLS. On Twitter users look at who you are following, and you will lose credibility if you follow anyone and everyone.
- Effective use of hashtags. A hashtag is a more recent and community-driven development of Twitter functionality. One can insert a number sign (#) in front of keywords so that Twitter can make use of the word itself as metadata in all searches.
- Purchasing Twitter followers. In the same way Facebook fans can be purchased, the same can be done with Twitter.
- OSL tweets should be relevant and varied information to the users. The ratios of tweet contents should be as follows: One-third general info about the brand, one-third relevant info about the industry/app, and one-third sales promotions & marketing. OSL Brand info should include uploading new app pics, OSL staff information, support information, customer/client news, and product tips. Industry info includes news, questions, asking for suggestions, and re-tweeting

information. OSL sales and marketing info can include promotional codes, specials, contests, events, or promotion date information.

- Twitter competitive research. It is important to find out what others in OSL's market space are tweeting about, and try to match or do better for OSL's followers.
- Optimizing OSL's Twitter bio content. The bio content is indexed in search engines, so optimizing keywords for different search engines (Google etc.) is extremely important.
- Twitter links to the OSL website. This will funnel potential OSL followers to the feed. In addition, adding OSL's website URL to Twitter, as cross-referencing Twitter with the brand page, and vice versa, will result in more traffic to both.
- Optimizing individual OSL's tweets for keywords. By using different keyword tools it is possible to optimize searchability for the tweets in search engines.

3.3.4 YouTube

YouTube marketing is an influential and quite recent adapted technique for bringing in new traffic to a brand. The probable main reason for its popularity is that users simply rather watch a video than read text. YouTube Videos enable passive engagement where users spend very little effort to absorb the brand or message. These videos can also be extremely valued for search engine optimization via user reviews for the OSL app, and an effective viral promotion technique if OSL is able to capitalize on a quality viral video. The following basic assumptions will form the base for OSL's YouTube presence:

- Keeping the videos short. The general short engagement attentions span should be utilized to its full extent.
- Keyword optimization in descriptions and title. As with Facebook and Twitter it is possible to optimize searchability for the tweets in search engines.
- Cross- referencing OSL's YouTube with the Facebook Fan Page and Twitter feeds.

- Share information about OSL videos on Facebook and Twitter. Same effects as cross-referencing.
- OSL's YouTube videos should also be embedded and utilized on the OSL website.
- Using humor. Humor is the most effective viral promotion method. Users share funny and positive content more easily than serious content.

3.3.5 Social Endorsing

One of the most prevalent new powers of social marketing is that of endorsing content with your "vote". When a user likes the Facebook Fan Page, the OSL app itself, the blog post or article, or anywhere a Like button can conveniently be added, what happens is that all of the users friends are able to see that he/she publicly endorsed it and will probably also follow it themselves. (Baker & McCann 2011, 257)

This is really effective marketing because it increases OSL's brand awareness for free, and each of the "like" posts have a significant footprint on someone's wall. Fascinatingly, clicking the Like button somewhere provides almost no instant feedback other than possible a counter going up, so users know they are doing something, but often the connection that this will land on their wall is overlooked.

Just as the Facebook Like button, the newer Google + social network has its +1 button with a counter that works in the same way, and Twitter has a public counter for counting the number of Tweets that a particular page or link received. The +1's from Google are shown on a separate page, instead of interweaved within the users news stream, and since the network is just starting to see noteworthy traffic, it is not yet as effective as a marketing practice as the Facebook Like button. (Baker & McCann 2011, 252)

4 Analysis & Summary

The thesis project was originally defined as two entwined processes; the Marketing Communications plan and the thesis itself, each supporting and complementing each other. As the actual real life Digital Marketing Communications plan was meant as the main goal of the project, as it is the true value creator for OSL, but unfortunately as the B2C product has been postponed, the thesis and its learnings became of greater importance.

4.1 General analysis

Answering the question: How can an organization, here OSL, utilize Social Media in their integrated marketing communication? The answer based on the study would be: By redefining itself and the image it perceives to reflect into something that is a part of the connected 21st century society. It is not actually a question of utilization or adaptation; it is more of a question of survival. As the product itself of OSL is something that is an essential part of the connected 21st century society, it is leading the way by itself.

4.2 Recommendations for future marketing communication activities

As the Business idea of OSL is based on gamification and the creation of several interwoven digital services consolidating, it offers huge potential for marketing activities. As the service is based creating relevant and valuable user experiences for different geo-location mobile and web applications, the product can also be seen as a marketing communication tool by itself

The project has been well prepared, and if wanted, could be ready for a partial launch within the next few months, emphasizing the need of a business framework. As said, creating a viable marketing plan with a view will be essential for utilizing the market potential.

As a recommendation I would focus on the product being a marketing communications platform by itself. The concept of utilizing gamification and the creation of sev-

eral interwoven digital services consolidating as a part of the market communication plan presented in chapter 3, offer some extraordinary great opportunities.

4.3 Evaluation of own learning

As mentioned earlier, the project itself has been delayed to the unforeseeable future, because of other OLS projects requiring attention, therefore the actual product to which the marketing communication plan is designed is a fairly vague in its description, making also the plan itself somewhat theoretical and undefined in its practical application.

However, at the same time it has given some deeper insight into the different aspects of word-of-mouth and social media marketing activities from a framework point of view giving some deeper understanding in the interaction of the different elements, and some true meaning to the definition of an integrated marketing plan. Especially the social media platform based marketing communications model by Castronovo & Huang was a true eye-opener in this respect.

As mentioned early on, I possess an interest in the “New connected world” and the possibilities social media provides, and therefore have familiarized myself with some of the sources during the past years in my learning and reflecting on the subject. The concept of gamification has actually been my latest interest also intertwining with the OSL business proposition, therefore giving me excellent first-hand practical expertise on the subject.

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