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THE POSSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN BUSINESS-TO- BUSINESS MARKETING

– Case: Wipak Healthcare



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THE POSSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING

CASE: WIPAK HEALTHCARE

This Thesis concentrates on studying the possibilities and uses of social media in Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing. This particular research was carried out for Wipak, to find the preferences of their customers as well as studying the social media channels adopted by several of Wipak's competitors.

The concept of social media in the B2B context is an area which has not yet been studied greatly, and is thus lacking empirical data. Hence, the most important aspects of B2B marketing as well as the uses of different social media are studied both separately and together in this Thesis.

The aim of this research is to provide Wipak insights to several different social media channels that can be used for marketing as well as their customers' preferences of these channels. The research also studies the customers perceptions of Wipak's current marketing and their knowledge of the different marketing channels used by Wipak. Finally, this Thesis also studies the social media channels used by several of Wipak's competitors and conclusions on which channels Wipak should adopt are made based on the findings of both customer preferences and competitors' strategy.

Data for this research was mainly collected in quantitative form, but also consisted of some qualitative aspects. Wipak's customers were surveyed through an online survey whilst competitors social media uses were studied through the corresponding social media channels.

The findings of this research show that the use of social media in B2B marketing, or at least in Wipak's industry, is not yet the most anticipated marketing channel by customers perceptions but is yet very used by several competitors studied in this Thesis.

KEYWORDS:

Business-to-Business Marketing, Social Media, Marketing, B2B

Rakel Aarnio-Wihuri

SOSIAALISEN MEDIAN MAHDOLLISUUDET YRITYSTEN VÄLISESSÄ MARKKINOINNISSA

CASE: WIPAK HEALTHCARE

Tämä opinnäytetyö keskittyy tutkimaan sosiaalisen median antamia mahdollisuuksia yritysten väliseen (B2B) markkinointiin. Tämä tutkimus on suoritettu Wipakille, ja sen tarkoituksena on selvittää asiakkaiden mieltymykset sekä mahdolliset kilpailijoiden käyttämät sosiaalisen median kanavat markkinoinnissa.

Sosiaalisen median käyttö B2B-markkinoinnissa on alue, jota ei ole vielä tutkittu paljon. Tämä opinnäytetyö käsittelee tärkeimpiä osa-alueita B2B-markkinoinnista sekä sosiaalisesta mediasta niin erikseen kuin yhdessäkin.

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoitus on antaa Wipakille tietoa muutamista erilaisista sosiaalisen median kanavista, joita voidaan käyttää markkinoinnissa sekä sen asiakkaiden mieltymyksistä kyseisiin kanaviin. Tutkimus selvittää myös asiakkaiden näkemyksiä Wipakin tämän hetkisestä markkinoinnista sekä asiakkaiden tietoa Wipakin käyttämistä markkinointikanavista. Lopuksi, tämä opinnäytetyö tutkii Wipakin kilpailijoiden käyttämiä sosiaalisen median kanavia. Johtopäätöksiä siitä, mitä sosiaalisen median kanavia Wipakin kannattaisi käyttää, tehdään asiakkaiden mieltymysten sekä kilpailijoiden strategioiden perusteella.

Opinnäytetyön tutkimus on tehty kvantitatiivisena tutkimuksena, jossa on elementtejä kvalitatiivisesta tutkimuksesta. Wipakin asiakkaat vastasivat sähköiseen kyselyyn, kun taas kilpailijoiden käyttämiä sosiaalisen median kanavia tutkittiin kyseisten sivustojen kautta.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat että sosiaalisen median käyttö ei B2B-markkinoinnissa, tai ei ainakaan pakkausteollisuuden toimialalla, ole vielä odotetuin markkinointikanava asiakkaiden näkökulmasta mutta silti paljon käytetty markkinointikanava kilpailijoilla, joita tässä opinnäytetyössä tutkittiin.

ASIASANAT:

Yritysten Välinen Markkinointi, Sosiaalinen Media, Markkinointi

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

B2B	Business-to-Business
B2C	Business-to-Consumer
SMM	Social Media Marketing
MDI	Medical Device Industry
ROI	Return on Investment
UGC	User Generated Content
CS	Customer Service
SME	Small and Medium sized Enterprise
UK	United Kingdom

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Objective of the Thesis

Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing is different from Business-to-Consumer (B2C) marketing in several ways as the market structure, buyer behavior, demand, and other aspects differ (Vitale et. al. 2011, 8). The market structure of the B2B environment suggests that there are relatively fewer buyers than in B2C mass markets which contain large amounts of buyers (Vitale et. al. 2011, 9) and thus marketing has a very important role in B2B to ensure that it reaches the right audience. Organizational buying behavior is also a very complex process, as the needs of an organization are influenced by many internal and external factors. The buying center of an organization usually consists of stakeholders from various professional disciplines within the organization, including areas such as management, manufacturing and engineering. As of this, marketing to an organization becomes challenging as the marketer must at the same time yet individually be able to influence all stakeholders by satisfying their individual professional and personal needs, as well as the organization's needs (Vitale et. al. 2011, 56).

One of the largest and most significant developments in marketing over the last decade has been the embrace of internet-based media and development of digital marketing. Marketing does not consist only of print-ads and trade shows anymore, but must incorporate many internet-based marketing channels including websites, search engines, email, blogs and social networks (Miller, 2012, 5). Miller (2012,7) discusses reasons why businesses should move to digital marketing, concentrating on the fact that customer businesses expect to find information online and showing statistics from a Marketing Sherpa (2009) survey, which showed that 71% of B2B purchases started from a web search.

This thesis is done in cooperation with Wipak, a leading global supplier of quality packaging films (Wipak, 2014). Wipak is part of the Wihuri Group, which

is a Finnish International Industry and Trade Conglomerate (Wihuri Oy, 2014) operating in four distinct business divisions (Wihuri Oy, 2014). The thesis concentrates on the Medical Packaging sector of Wipak, mainly on Winnovations. Winnovations can be defined as a new Wipak way which is aimed to provide added value to Wipak's customers, and is named integrating three magic words; Innovation, Win and Wipak (Wipak, n.d.).

The objective of this thesis is to find out how Wipak's customers find Wipak's marketing of the Winnovations approach and how effective customers find it, and to provide improvements and analysis of possible new channels of marketing for the company to pursue. As Wipak is a global leader in its sector, the company also wishes to be one step ahead of its competitors with its marketing communications. The aim of this thesis is to give realistic options for Wipak to take into consideration when improving their marketing scheme, as well as information on preferred marketing channels by their customers. This thesis concentrates on only four of the largest social media networks, which are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Motivation to write my thesis for Wipak is my personal interest in the company's growing industry, and the multiple possibilities it has to offer. Also being the daughter of Wihuri Group's CEO, and seeing my future possibly working with Wipak I have great interest in the company's approaches. The idea for the thesis initially came from Wipak, after consulting the company of the possibility to do my thesis for them. I visited Wipak Nastola and had a meeting with Jouni Vikman, Director Healthcare, Anne Lehtovuori, Manager, Business Development & Communication and Nina Tillaëus, Product Manager, Medical Industry to discuss possible topics for the thesis, and were able to tailor a topic that benefits both myself and Wipak. The chosen topic of social media marketing is very motivating as it has not been studied greatly, it is quite a new phenomenon and it also offers multiple possibilities for businesses to enhance their marketing communications. It was decided that this thesis will explore the possibilities of four of the largest social media networks at present.

1.2 Research Questions

In the thesis I hope to answer the following research questions

1. a. Do customers find Wipak's current marketing scheme effective in terms of affecting purchase decisions?
b. How well does Wipak's current marketing reach these customers?
2. What social media network/marketing channels could Wipak use to reach its customers more effectively?
3. Have competitors of Wipak already taken social media channels into their marketing communications and if so which channels?

1.3 The Structure of this Thesis

The second chapter of this thesis will look into the theoretical frameworks. B2B marketing and buying behavior will be explained, to get an understanding of the complexity of the buying process in B2B markets. The third chapter of this thesis will cover digital and social media marketing, also explaining the uses and content of all different social media networks used and analyzed for this study. The concepts will be explained and discussed, to give the reader a clear understanding of the background information used for the research. The fourth chapter will bring together the two concepts explained in chapters two and three, hence introducing the use of social media in B2B context. The fifth chapter will introduce Wipak and Winnovations as a case study so that the reader understands the context for which this study is made.

In the sixth chapter of this thesis, the research methodology will be presented and the choices of the used methodology justified. The chapter also consists of the research design and data collection methods of the research as well as the validity and reliability of the thesis being discussed.

The seventh chapter analyses the research findings. The answers to the interviews will be displayed and analyzed, as well as trying to find connections

between the social media channels used by Wipak's customers, possible customers and competitors.

The final chapter of the thesis brings the research findings together forming a conclusion, and answering the research questions. The conclusion will aim to give Wipak credible information on how to reach their customers more effectively using social media networks in their marketing.

2 BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING

2.1 Business-to-Business Marketing Overview

The different aspects of business-to-business (B2B) marketing introduced in this chapter are those which the author of this thesis finds the most relevant to increase the familiarity of the reader with B2B concepts and hence understand the rest of the Thesis. Due to the lack of available resources and previous studies on the use of Social Media Marketing (SMM) in B2B context the author considered it necessary to explain the main aspects of B2B marketing as well as Digital and Social Media Marketing in the following chapter.

The main factor differentiating B2B markets is the fact that the customers are organizations rather than an individual consumer. Products purchased by individual consumers may also be purchased by an organization and hence it may be hard to distinguish between a business market and consumer market based on the nature of the product. (Brennan et. al., 2011)

There are several ways of approaching B2B marketing theories, from which the most common are the US and the German industrial marketing approach. In the US, B2B marketing used to be considered as a stimulus-response approach which was primarily developed for B2C marketing, and to some extent is still considered with this approach at present. The German approach, which developed also throughout Europe, is the interaction approach. Through this approach marketing is seen as a multi-directional process, where both buyers and sellers act strategically instead of acting in response to stimuli. (Kleinaltenkamp & Jacob, 2002)

The B2B environment will be introduced first to give an understanding of the difference of the B2B market from the B2C market. Products in B2B context are often very complex and thus the B2B marketer must have thorough knowledge and technical expertise regarding the products to provide details to the customer at the time of sale. The B2B market is also very relationship based

and hence the success of the organizations whole product line depends on the sales team in B2B context. (Saeed, 2011; Kärkkäinen et. al., 2010)

The significance of B2B branding will also be discussed as good branding strengthens the overall image of the company, and hence being one of the main aspects of B2B marketing. B2B branding is said to be the most complex issue related to B2B marketing, but has however received very little attention in the last two decades due to the belief that industrial buyers are not affected by emotional values corresponding to different brands. (Saeed, 2011)

This will be followed by a short subchapter on B2B selling to give and understanding of the differences of B2B and B2C selling. Finally, organizational buying behavior will be explained as this must also be understood to be able to understand the complexity of B2B marketing. The buying process in B2B markets is usually complex due to the nature of the products and hence the B2B buyer should be more rational and have comprehensive knowledge about the products and the market situation. (Saeed, 2011)

The topics which will be studied in more depth are B2B branding as well as organizational buying behavior. Marketing through Social Media builds brand image and can strengthen relationships as the organization can increase exposure as well as engage and communicate simultaneously with its customers (Miller, 2011), at the same time keeping in mind the complexity of the buying process of the customer organization.

B2B marketing can be defined as "The practice of individuals or organizations, including commercial businesses, Government institutions, facilitating the sale and resell of their products/ services to other organizations/institutions". (Saeed, 2011)

2.2 Business-to-Business Market & Environment

To understand the complexity of the B2B market one must be able to understand the whole process. A B2B market can be considered as a value chain which initiates from consumer demand for a certain product, and the organisations creating this product are all part of the B2B market – even if the final product is produced for the B2C market. Derived from this consumer demand many business products and services are needed to fulfill the need of the consumer. This whole value chain is known as the chain of derived demand as all the business products and services are created as a result of the consumer demand for the certain product. (B2B International, 2014) Businesses operating in the B2B market participate in creating the final product or service for the consumer. Wipak is one of the businesses in the middle of the chain of derived demand for many industries, as Wipak supplies packaging solutions for the products demanded by the consumers.

The businesses along the chain of derived demand help to make an undifferentiated product or raw material into a differentiated finished product. These businesses add value to the product and hence are important to the value chain. (B2B International, 2014)

The business market differs from the consumer market in several ways, and thus presents different types of challenges and opportunities than the consumer market. Concepts such as relationships, value and buyer decision making function in very different ways than expected in normal consumer markets (Vitale et. al. 2011, 3). The B2B market consists of the sales process between two or more organizations and hence these sales processes are often more complex than in the business-to-consumer (B2C) markets. The distribution channels in the B2B market are usually also shorter and more direct than in B2C markets and have firmer product standards and specifications. (Oxford Learning Lab, 2012)

2.3 Business-to-Business Branding

"Brands are not only what a company sells; they represent what a company does and, more significantly, what a company is." – Phillip Kotler

A brand can be defined as "a collection of experiences and associations attached to a company, organization, product or service; usually by concrete symbols such as logo, slogan, and design scheme" (Vitale et. al. 2011, 312).

Due to the growth in competition and spreading of similar products, as well as the great pressure on pricing, the role of business-to-business branding is increasing as branding can help differentiate the products and compensate on the price pressures by offering additional value to the products. (Vitale et. al. 2011, 312) A trusted brand can act as signals and beacons, offering several advantages to prospective buyers including information, safety and reliability. A brand may also be a symbol for buyers which can simplify the decision-making process; by reducing complexity, providing differentiation and communication values, attributes and benefits as well as influencing the decision in favour of the owning brand. (Ginty et. al., 2012 & Michaelidou et. al., 2011)

M. S. Saeed (2011) discusses the importance of B2B branding. He states that branding is one of the ways to increase customer loyalty and add value for customers as well as to reduce buying risks. It is also stated that the relevance of branding is just as important in B2B as it is in B2C. The B2B market mainly consists of very dedicated markets, which are much smaller and more fragmented than in B2C markets. As of this, B2B branding is about creating and distributing targeted messaging. However, to be successful with the B2B branding and selling, companies must first identify their exact audience, what they need and how their product fills the identified customers need. (Ginty et. al., 2012)

In the B2B market, the most important brand functions are reducing risk, creating value-adding benefits and increasing information efficiency. The importance of these functions was discovered in a study conducted by

McKinsey & Company about the relevance and importance of brands across several B2B markets. (Ginty. et. al., 2012)

2.4 Business-to-Business Selling

At its most elementary form, selling is the exchange of something between two people or organisations. The concept of selling is very complex, and the salesperson must be able to handle all different types of situations and customers to be successful and thus create value for both the buying and the selling organization. In the B2B market, the salesperson's role is viewed also as a value creator as organizations aim more for long-term and relationship-based sales and have a strong sense of partnering with their customers whilst in B2C markets most sales are seen as one-time purchases and hence B2C organizations do not aim for long-term relationship-based sales. The image given by the salesperson to the customer is very important, as on the whole the image is of the selling organization and its value image and hence also contributes to the overall brand of the company. (Vitale et. al. 2011, 282)

The B2B salesperson must also understand the complexity of the buying center and the stages of the organizational buying behavior discussed below.

2.5 Organizational Buying Behaviour

Understanding the buying behaviour of organizations is a very important part of B2B marketing, as the decision making and buying process is very complex and involves several stakeholders. The marketing organization must understand the process to reach the right people of the buying organization and be able to influence the decision in choosing their product.

The buying decision process in the B2B environment follows the same basic steps as the consumer buying process, but the process is theoretically more quantifiable and usually also more visible. In the consumer market most buying

decisions are in-the-moment purchases and depending on the available resources for the purchase, and thus consumers rarely make a value evaluation of the purchase consciously. However, as the consumer makes the purchase they have concluded that the value they will receive from the purchase is greater than the value they are giving up for it, and thus the decision follows the five-stage consumer buying decision framework. (Vitale et. al. 2011, 55)

The consumer buying decision process contains five steps: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase behavior whilst the organizational buying decision process contains eight steps. The buying process is simultaneous, and hence only slightly a “stepwise” process even though it is usually displayed in such a format. The stages of the organizational buying decision process are: problem recognition, general need description, product specification, supplier/source search, proposal solicitation, selection, make the transaction routine and evaluate performance. The organizational buying process can also be displayed in a Process Flow Model way, which is a more realistic way of displaying the process. This groups the eight different steps into four stages, in which the steps overlap. (Vitale et. al. 2011, 55-58) These are both shown in Figure 1.

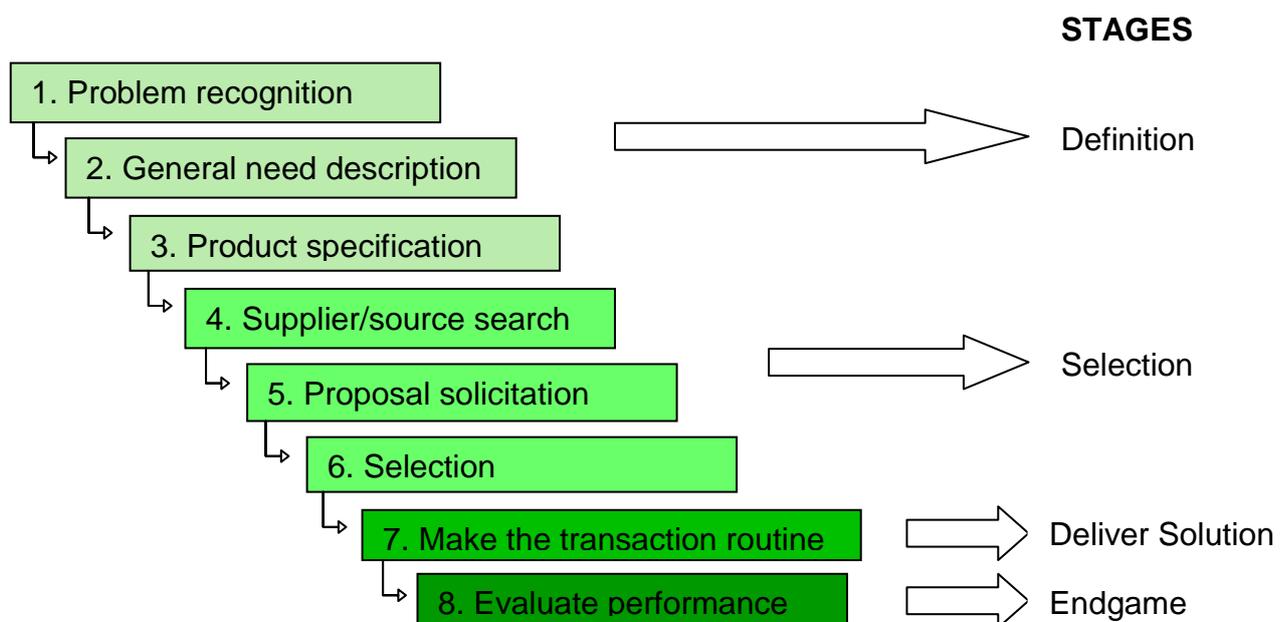


Figure 1. Steps in the Organizational Buying Decision Process and stages of the Process Flow Model (Vitale et. al. 2011)

The B2B market has a much more complex decision making unit compared to B2C markets not only because of the products but also the decision making process as discussed above. The purchase decision of different types of products in the B2B market are done by different people in the organization; high risk purchase decisions are usually made by top management of the organization, whilst less risky purchase decisions are made by middle management. The B2B buying process also differs in complexity from the B2C buying process as the purchases contain more risk, and hence the buyer must have greater knowledge on the products and the market, as well as be able to be rational. (Saeed, 2011)

The target audience for B2B marketing is also complex and dynamic as it is made up of groups of constantly changing individuals with different needs, interests and motivations. The different individuals in the decision making unit and buying center also seek different things, even for their simple, functional needs – buyers want a good financial deal, production managers want high throughput, safety executives want low risk. These are all job related issues affecting the decision, but usually the decision of individuals is also affected by their psychological and cultural views and hence this complicates the decision of selection even more. (B2B Internatioal, 2014)

3 DIGITAL MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

3.1 Digital Marketing

On the whole digital marketing is not that much different from traditional marketing as it still aims to supply customers with the information they need, the difference is the channels used for the marketing. Digital marketing is supplied through internet-based channels such as websites, email and social media. It is said that over 90% of business buyers at present read blogs, search and watch generated video as well as participate in other social media whilst searching for information on products (Miller, 2011). These buyers also appreciate the ease of finding information. It is also stated that over half of business decision makers participate in different social networks including Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube and more B2B companies maintain profiles on these social media networks than their B2C counterparts. (Miller, 2011 & Ginty et. al., 2012) The time of traditional lead generation including direct mail, email and teleprospecting is fading and the changing, integrated online marketing landscape is surfacing (Ginty et. al., 2012), and hence companies must integrate these new channels into their marketing. The use of internet at present should be an integral part of every B2B companies marketing strategy rather than just a resource issue (Chaffy et. al., 2000). Marketing factors including the internet and other digital marketing channels are considered as a vital component of successful B2B practice (Porter, 2001). In a research on B2B International Internet Marketing made by Eid, Trueman & Ahmed (2006) found that by combining several factors which were found to be the most important, including “collaboration with strategic partners” and “integrating internet marketing with marketing strategy”, in a marketing strategy perspective were also found to represent a balanced formula for integrating the internet into marketing whilst also collaborating with strategic partners and customers and hence linking technological processes with strategic goals.

3.2 What is Social Media?

Social media is defined in many ways, but one of the most simplest definitions states that social media is the interaction between people in networks or virtual communities where they create, share and exchange information (Ahlqvist et. al., 2008). A more in depth definition given by Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2010), defined social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (UGC)". UGC are the many forms of media content available publicly and created by end-users, and can hence be seen as the base of Social Media. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) However, a more functional definition of social media suggests that social media refers to the interaction of people as well as referring to creating, sharing, exchanging and commenting on contents in virtual communities and networks. (Ahlqvist et. al., 2008).

Social Media as understood by present actually dates back to the 1990's, when a social networking site called "Open Diary" was founded by Bruce and Susan Abelson. Furthermore, the availability of internet access in the 21st century has led to the creation of several social networking sites including Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

3.3 Social Media Marketing

Social Media Marketing (SMM) is defined as marketing conducted through social media and networking websites. SMM was firstly adopted by the B2C market and has been slower to catch on to the B2B market, however this is changing rapidly (Miller. 2011, 15). Organizations have realized that it may be difficult to reach users who are unaware of the organization through their own websites, and have thus found it useful to develop a presence on Web 2.0 websites (TechTerms, 2010) and hence B2B organizations are following B2C organizations in integrating social media into their marketing mix.

Combining existing marketing strategies with the new set of marketing tools SMM has to offer, companies are able to reduce marketing expenses, increase lead volume and provide a clear and measurable return on investment (ROI) for the money spent on marketing (Bodnar & Cohen. 2012, 3).

Depending on the maturity of SMM in a certain industry companies will face different challenges with the use of it. As an early adopter, a company can more freely replicate what other companies in different industries have done regarding SMM whilst a late bloomer must be more creative in their SMM to make an impression. (Holloman, 2014)

Four of the largest social media networks will be studied in this Thesis - Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube and Twitter. These four social media networks will be introduced in the following subchapters and the possibilities of each channel discussed. The sixth chapter of this Thesis will later bring together the previous chapter on B2B marketing and the current one on Social Media, showing available information on the topic.

3.3.1 Facebook

Facebook was founded in February 2004, and is now the largest social media network in the world, connecting over one billion users. Facebook allows users to create a profile after registration, add friends, exchange messages and join groups of interest. In 2007, over 100,000 companies had created business pages which allowed these companies to promote themselves and attract customers. (Facebook Newsroom, 2014)

A Facebook Page is a public profile that allows businesses, public figures, brands, organizations, etc. to create a presence on Facebook and a platform through which they can connect with other users on Facebook. If a Facebook Page is liked by a user, this user will see the updates of the Page on their Newsfeed whilst if a user likes or comments on a post by the Page this activity may be shared with the users friends and hence increasing the visibility and

reach of the Page. (Facebook Newsroom, 2014) Facebook has seen the possibility of SMM through their website, and have hence opened a website to help companies get started with a business Page and shares information on the possibilities of SMM through Facebook. This website may be found at <https://www.facebook.com/business>, Facebook for Businesses. The way the visibility and reach of the Page can be increased is also explained on the Facebook for Businesses website, with also other useful hints for businesses that may wish to integrate Facebook into their Marketing. Facebook (2014) describes their business page to companies as “Your Facebook Page is the hub for your business on Facebook. You can customise your Page to show your business in the best light. It’s here to help you reach new people and deepen connections with customers.”

Facebook also offers the possibility to advertise the company Page and website, which can be targeted to a specific audience. Facebook has several advertising approaches that can be used to reach the specific target group, and help promote these adverts to users with the highest chances of purchasing. (Facebook, 2014)

3.3.2 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social networking service which is mostly business-oriented. This service was founded in 2002 by Reid Hoffman as well as founding team members from PayPal and Socialnet.com, and launched in May 2003. LinkedIn is mainly used for professional networking and hence gives many opportunities for businesses. (LinkedIn Press Center, 2014)

As most users of LinkedIn are professionals of one kind or another, LinkedIn believes that these professionals need to create faster and better informed decisions to achieve in the accelerated business environment of today. Having a LinkedIn profile and joining the active network of professionals can create unique insights in the form of data that may be used by organizations to modernize the way they hire, sell and especially market. As LinkedIn mainly

consists of professionals from many different sectors, it gives businesses the opportunity to reach these professionals through the LinkedIn network and also allowing these businesses to narrow their search by sector or industry and thus target the right group of people. (LinkedIn Press Center, 2014)

3.3.3 YouTube

YouTube is a social networking service which allows people to upload, watch, discover and share videos. YouTube also provides a forum for people to connect, where they can discuss, inform and inspire other users worldwide. YouTube hence acts as a distribution platform for videos as well as advertisers. YouTube has quite a strong copyright policy and hence the platform is mainly aimed for original content creators. The website was founded in February 2005 by three former PayPal employees, but has been owned by Google since late 2006. (YouTube, 2014).

Videos uploaded on YouTube can be shared and integrated into other online marketing platforms such as websites and Social Media networks, making the company's marketing more interactive and interesting. YouTube has also released a "branding intro" which can be added to all videos on a users channel, to distinguish these videos from others and hence strengthen the brand image of the company or user. (YouTube Creators, 2014)

3.3.4 Twitter

Twitter is a social networking service which allows its users to send short messages, also known as Tweets. Twitter was launched in 2006, and became rapidly popular worldwide (About Twitter, 2014). In 2012 Twitter had over 100 million users and in 2013 it was one of the ten most-visited websites (Investor Twitter, 2014).

Twitter has seen its possibility also for businesses and has hence created a webpage “Twitter for Businesses” (<https://business.twitter.com/>) which shows different uses of Twitter that can help businesses.

One of the main uses of Twitter for businesses is the possibility of followers, mostly customers, to be able to Tweet something they have found of interest, and hence Twitter suggests that their Tweet button be included on the company website or blog, so that customers can share new information they have discovered with their followers (Twitter for Businesses, 2014).

Tweets posted on Twitter can be re-Tweeted by followers, which means that these updates may be shared by a follower to their followers. Instead of having a “Like” button as Facebook does, Twitter uses a “Favourite” button. Tweets on Twitter are not marked as “Favourite” as much as posts on Facebook are “Liked” even though the meaning of these two functions is fairly the same on their own networks. (About Twitter, 2014)

4 SOCIAL MEDIA IN BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS

CONTEXT

The adoption of Social Media in the B2B environment is still in its early stages due to issues related to security, privacy and content ownership. However, well designed and implemented social media tools can actually be exploited better by B2B organizations than those operating in the B2C environment. This is due to the fact that presence on social media enables faster and more personalized interactions between the customer and the selling organization and can hence enhance corporate credibility and deepen relationships, which are crucial factors in B2B marketing. (Kho, 2008) However, Miller (2011) argues that it is only a myth that B2B companies are less engaged in SMM than B2C companies. A research undertaken by Business.com (2009) showed that 81% of B2B companies were present on social media networks, whilst only 67% of B2C companies had presence on these networks. (Miller, 2011)

B2B companies mainly have a smaller potential customer base and a higher average price point and thus by using social media networks to turn customers into advocates pays greater dividends for B2B companies. (Miller, 2011) Another reason why B2B organizations have integrated SMM into their marketing mix is that these networks allow organizations to monitor what prospects are saying about their organization as well as capture interest from those in search of new products or solutions. (Marketo, 2014) A study in 2008 showed that 93% of social media users believe that companies should have a social media presence, whilst at the same time 85% also believe that companies should interact with customers through social media channels. (Cone, 2008)

There are several reasons why B2B organizations should consider integrating social media into their marketing mix. Holloman (2014) gives five arguments why B2B organizations must integrate SMM into their marketing mix;

1. Competitors are doing it
2. It is Cheap
3. It can Influence opinion
4. Become the non-corporate face of the company
5. Can Improve customer relations

In the first argument given by Holloman (2014), he states that businessmen get jealous if their competitors get recognized for something they themselves are not doing, and hence suggests to take a look at what competitors are doing and which channels they are using.

The internet is full of different Social Media networks, and organizations are unable to actively participate in all these networks. As of this, choosing the correct channel depends on the target group to be reached as well as the message to be communicated. One of the most important aspects in SMM is to participate actively and engage in conversations with customers and prospects (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

Research into the uses of social media channels in marketing is very limited, and mainly concentrates on B2C markets even though social media networks are in growing popularity and have potential to support brands. However, subjective evidence suggests that social media is important for B2B companies. (Michaelidou et. al., 2011)

Social media, especially channels such as Facebook and LinkedIn, can be used by B2B companies to communicate with their customers and suppliers, build relationships and trust, and also allow these companies to identify prospective partners in terms of B2B selling. (Michaelidou et. al., 2011) Furthermore, SMM can benefit businesses in more ways than just building relationships, two-way communication and community building. Companies having a strong presence on social media can also benefit their other digital marketing, increasing business exposure, driving traffic to the company website as well as generating leads. (Miller, 2011)

SMM being a new technology, it might not be particularly attractive to B2B organizations. The attractiveness of the new technology and its adoption depends greatly on the innovativeness of the organization in question as well as the innovativeness of the CEO. (Michaelidou, 2011) In addition, a large challenge encountered by B2B SMM is that some businesses block all access to social media networks in the fear of employees wasting time. Miller (2011) displays results from a survey made by Robert Half Technology in 2011 that 31% of companies employing over 100 people forbid all access to social media networks and hence suggests that customers be surveyed about their access to social media networks before adopting these channels into the companies marketing mix.

Michaelidou, Siagmaka and Christodoulides (2011) conducted research on the usage, barriers and measurement of SMM and found that only 27% of the B2B companies participating in the research had presence on social media. From these companies, the majority (77%) used Facebook. A trend was found that if a company used some social network they were also present on more than one site. It was also found that for B2B companies attracting new customers and cultivating customer relationships were the most important factors when using social media in their marketing. This result differs greatly from the research cited from Business.com (2009) which stated that 81% of B2B companies used social media networks. The research conducted by Business.com (2009) covered a larger sample group from a larger area, whilst the research by Michaelidou, Siagmaka and Christodoulides (2011) concentrated on B2B Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SME's) in the United Kingdom (UK).

A problem encountered with the use of SMM by B2B companies is the difficulty in evaluating the effectiveness of SMM in supporting the brand and hence marketing managers are not able to provide quantified data that can illustrate the importance of SMM. With lack of being able to provide creative metrics on the effectiveness of SMM, many B2B companies evaluate the effectiveness in relation to the number of users joining/following the channel created by the B2B

company as well as on the amount of likes and comments made. (Michaelidou et. al., 2011)

4.1 Social Media in B2B Context for Other Purposes than Marketing

Social Media can also have potential in B2B companies' innovation. The recently increasingly important innovation paradigm based on open innovation may have potential through social media networks as knowledge locating outside the company borders can be obtained and hence support the transition towards a more open innovation process. (Kärkkäinen et. al., 2010)

Kärkkäinen, Jussila and Väisänen (2010) researched the potential of social media in B2B companies' innovation and found there to be large potential with the use of social media in innovation. However, as with the marketing, problems found preventing the use of social media for this purpose were mainly the lack of understanding the possibilities and the difficulties in evaluating the financial gains from the use of social media.

5 WIPAK

Wipak is part of the Wihuri Group, which is a Finnish International Industry and Trade Conglomerate operating in four distinct business divisions (Wihuri Oy, 2014). The largest division in terms of net sales is the Packaging division, to which Wipak belongs (Laukkarinen & Parkkonen, 2007, 5) and is known as a leading global supplier of quality packaging films for both the Food and Healthcare markets (Wipak, 2014).

5.1 History & Growth

Wihuri Group's Packaging division was first acquired in 1966, which consisted of a small enterprise employing only 40 personnell and mainly manufacturing plastic bags. This enterprise grew in fourty years to be a leading expert in its field worldwide. The net sales of the company when acquired were roughly 200,000 euros, and by 2005 the net sales of Wipak and Winpak, it's North American "sister" were about 726 million euros. (Laukkarinen & Parkkonen, 2007, 13) The name of the company was Wipakkaus from 1967 to 1973, after which it was named its present, more concise and internationally suited name Wipak. (Laukkarinen & Parkkonen, 2007, 15)

5.2 Winnovations

This Thesis concentrates on Wipak Healtcare and their new way to provide added value to their customers, Winnovations. Winnovations is named using three important words, which are central factors for Wipak; Innovation, Win and Wipak. The website of Winnovations is an open meeting point for people and ideas, and hence could be seen as a source of open innovation for Wipak. Through Wipak's Winnovations spirit the company aims to accelerate the efforts in reaching mutual targets. (Wipak, n.d.)

6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the Thesis will explain the research methods, data collection methods and strategy of research for this thesis as well as discuss the credibility and reliability of the research. This chapter will mainly concentrate on the quantitative research which was conducted as an online questionnaire sent to the population of customers of Wipak, which consisted of some qualitative aspects. The aim of the questionnaire was to find out whether customers and potential customers were satisfied with Wipak's marketing and whether they could be reached via new marketing channels such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

6.1 Research Methodology

Research can be defined as something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge (Saunders et al. 2012, 5).

There are two main types of research methods; quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research is a data collection technique that creates or uses numerical data. Quantitative data can hence be collected for example from questionnaires, graphs and statistics. The other research method, qualitative research, is therefore a data collection technique that creates or uses non-numerical data. Qualitative data can be collected through interviews and open questions in questionnaires. (Saunders et al. 2012, 161)

These two types of research methods, quantitative and qualitative, are often combined when doing research to gain the appropriate information needed for the research. Quantitative and qualitative research can be combined in a questionnaire by having questions with defined sets of answers as well as open questions, or by conducting follow-up interviews after a questionnaire.

(Saunders et. al., 2012) The research for this Thesis uses both qualitative and quantitative research, combining them to try and create a realistic image of Wipak's current marketing and the possible uses of Social Media in Wipak's marketing.

Qualitative data may also in some cases be analysed quantitatively, and hence the distinction made between these two types of research is very narrow. Qualitative and quantitative research can also be viewed as two ends of a continuum, which are often mixed to generate good research. (Saunders et. al., 2012)



Figure 2. Continuum of qualitative and quantitative research (Saunders et. al., 2012)

6.2 Research Design and Process

The research process is usually presented as a multi-stage process which must be followed in order to complete a certain research project, but Saunders et al. argues that the precise number of stages varies. It is said that the process usually consists of the following stages; formulating and clarifying a topic, reviewing literature, designing the research, collecting data, analysing data and writing up conclusions (Saunders et al. 2012, 12).

The research for this Thesis began by formulating the research questions, after which literature was reviewed to gain information on the topics surrounding the research questions. Whilst working on reviewing the literature the research questionnaire was designed in cooperation with Wipak, after which data was collected through the questionnaire as well as from the internet. Data was also collected at the Interpack trade fair which was held in May 2014. Finally the data will be displayed and analysed after which the conclusions will be made.

6.3 Data Collection

The data collected for this research was collected in several different ways. The qualitative secondary data for chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this thesis was collected in multiple ways – using different sources of literature from both books and the internet as well as gathering information from the Social Media websites used in this research. For the first two research questions the data was collected mainly in two ways, through an online survey which was sent to Wipak's customers as well as joining the Wipak team at the Interpack trade fair in Düsseldorf, Germany. Information was also gathered for the last research question at the Interpack trade fair whilst visiting stands of Wipak's competitors, as well as gathering information about these competitors from the internet and searching the marketing channels they use. Respondents of the survey were also given the possibility to answer a question whether they have seen other companies in the same field using SMM.

The effectiveness of Wipak's current marketing for the first research question of this Thesis will be answered with results obtained from customers participating in the study, and hence the result will not be totally accurate in relation to the real effectiveness of the marketing gathered from sales data and ROI data.

The second research question of this thesis, which other marketing channels Wipak should consider to market more effectively to customers will also be answered through results obtained from the customers participating in this research. Results of which Social Media networks customers would like to find Wipak from will be considered as well as those results showing which Social Media networks Wipak's customers are present on to give an answer to the research question.

The third and last research question will be answered by studying the digital marketing and possible SMM of Wipak's largest competitors to give a clear view of the SMM channels used by these competitors. The competitors studied for this research question were supplied by Wipak.

6.4 Sampling, Credibility and Reliability of the Research

Depending on the type of research, there are several types of sampling methods that can be used to suit the research. For this research a list consisting of 834 contacts was supplied by Wipak, which is the whole population of the research group. In some cases several contacts were from the same company from different departments, to give a more realistic and complete perspective of the results obtained. The survey for this research was sent by email to the list of customers supplied by Wipak. The email failed to send to 190 of these contacts, meaning that the survey reached 644 customers of Wipak. The respondents were given two months to reply to the survey, but only 46 replies were received. This could be due to the fact that the survey was sent out in June, and thus holiday season was ongoing.

Sales data supplied by Anne Lehtovuori (Manager, Business Development & Communication, Wipak Healthcare) in November 2014 suggests that over the last 12 months Wipak has had a total of 655 customers. This data may have some statistical bias, in Wipak's case due to invoicing, delivering and other double customer preferences and hence having several contacts from the same customer in the data supplied. Lehtovuori suggests that Wipak Healthcare has between 640 and 650 active customers.

In this research, as data could be collected from the complete population, no particular sampling method was needed. The response rate can be calculated by dividing the total number of responses by the total number of the sample or population with ineligible respondents unaccounted for. (Saunders et. al., 2012)

$$\text{Total response rate} = \frac{\text{Total number of responses}}{\text{Total number in sample} - \text{inelegible}} \times 100$$

As some contacts might also be unreachable, the active response rate takes this into consideration and is therefore slightly more precise. The active response rate is calculated in a similar manner to the total response rate. (Saunders et. al., 2012)

$$\text{Active response rate} = \frac{\text{Total number of responses}}{\text{Total number in sample} - (\text{inelegible} + \text{unreachable})} \times 100$$

The response rate in this research from the population was very poor, only 5,75%. The active response rate of the population was 7,4%.

The results gained from the survey give a slight insight to the views of Wipak's customers on the subject, but they cannot be largely generalized as the active response rate of the population was only 7,4%. As of these results, the conclusions made in this Thesis are not very accurate and must hence be evaluated with caution. Organisations in the B2B sector have unique characteristics and needs, which also limits the generalization of the conclusions for the whole sector..

The second part of the research – studying the uses of SMM by Wipak's competitors will be done in depth to compensate for the lack of answers gained from Wipak's customers, and hence be able to give Wipak a slight view of what their customers want and more accurately what their competitors are doing.

7 RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section of the thesis displays and discusses the results of the survey. Respondents were given the possibility to identify which company they were responding for, but this question was not compulsory to answer and hence all respondents cannot be identified. The findings will be studied anonymously in this thesis.

This chapter will be divided into two main sections to group the answers in an orderly manner and thus help in finding the needed information easily. The first section will consist of the results gathered through the survey. Basic information of the respondents will be displayed in the first subsection, after which questions regarding Wipak's current marketing will be shown. The third subsection of this chapter will display and discuss the parts of the survey that were related with social media. Information gathered at Interpack will be discussed partially with corresponding questions of the survey. These results will not be displayed in the figures shown, as all customers and prospects interviewed at Interpack were not necessarily those from Wipak Healthcare, but from Wipak Food which was also present at Interpack. The information gathered at Interpack will however be mainly used as background information for the author of this thesis, with the most relevant findings included in this section. The second section will show findings of the social media channels used by Wipak's competitors. The last section of this chapter will combine and analyse the information gathered on customers' as well as competitors social media uses.

7.1 Findings and Analysis of Customers' Responses

7.1.1 Basic Information

The first quantitative question of the survey was to gather basic information on the companies answering the survey. The question asked the size of the company for whom the respondent was answering for, giving several defined options from which to choose from. The survey was answered by 46 respondents, of which the majority, 29 respondents (63%) worked for a company with less than 250 personnel. The rest of the respondents were split into four other company sizes; 4 respondents (9%) worked for a company of 251-500 personnel, whilst 5 respondents (11%) worked for a company with 501-750 personnel. Only 2 respondents (4%) worked for a company with 2501-5000 personnel, and the final 6 respondents (13%) worked for larger companies with over 5000 personnel.

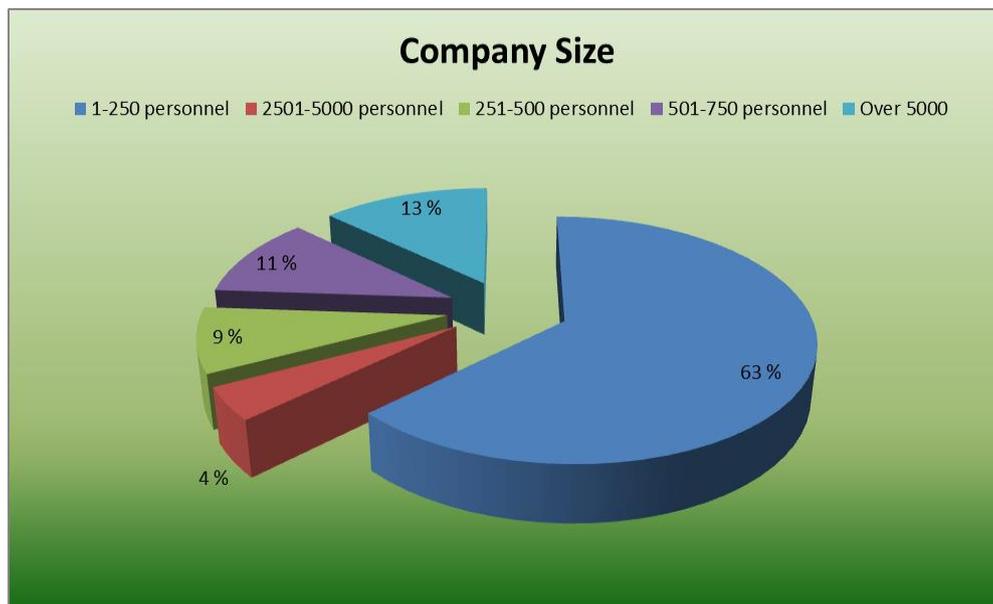


Figure 3. Company Size

The second question of the survey was about the respondent themselves – the department in which they work in the company they are responding for. This

question was asked as it may be possible to see relationships between the department of the respondents and their interest in the topics asked throughout the survey, these will be discussed and displayed later.

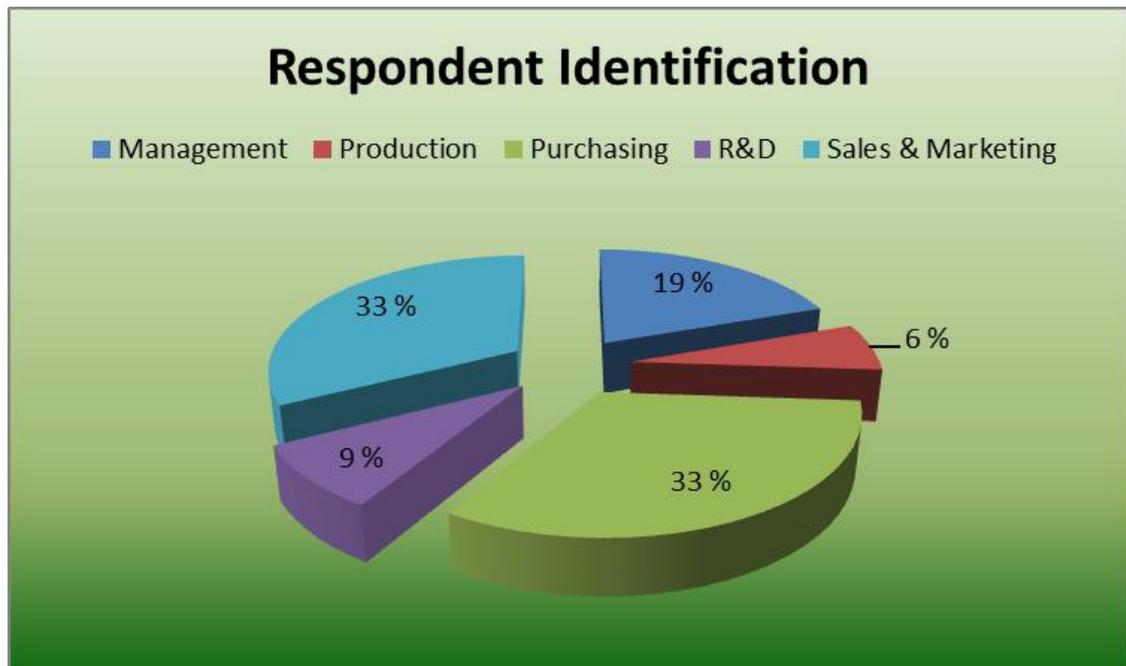


Figure 4. Respondent Identification

The answers gained for the survey covered the opinions of respondents working in all the main departments defined in most companies. Most of the respondents worked for either Purchasing or Sales & Marketing, both groups having 15 respondents (33%). The remaining respondents belonged to Research & Development (9%), Production (6%) or Management (19%). Respondents were also given the possibility to specify their own answer for this question, but all respondents identified themselves to belong to one of the given options.

The third question of the survey was the last question regarding basic information of the company. The question asked respondents how long they have been customers of Wipak for. This question also supplied set answers for respondents to choose from.

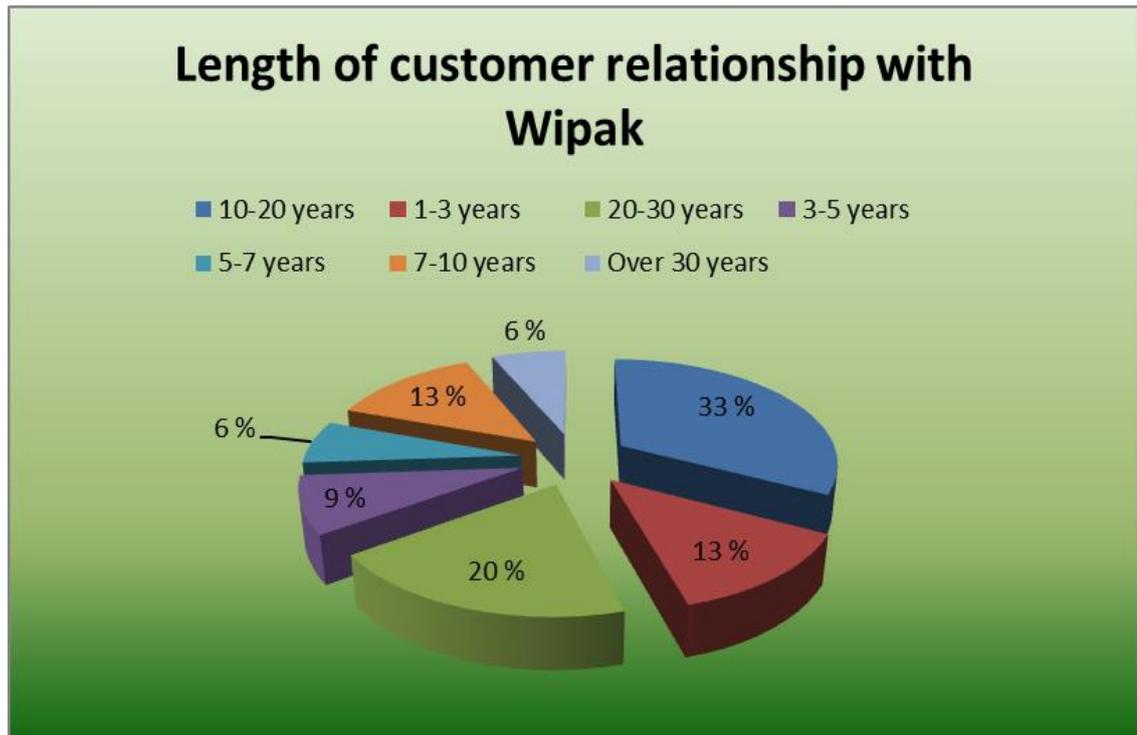


Figure 5. Length of customer relationship with Wipak

As can be seen from the pie chart above, most respondents (59%) were from companies for which Wipak has supplied packaging materials for over 10 years, and hence have long business relationships with Wipak. This also suggests that many of these companies are older than 10 years, and hence they might not use social media channels as actively as newer companies.

7.1.2 Wipak's Current Marketing

The survey also contained several questions on Wipak's current marketing, asking customers how they have heard about different Wipak themes and how they feel about Wipak's website as well as the Winnovations website. This information will mainly be used to answer the first research question of this thesis.

Hence, the fourth question of the survey asked respondents how they have first heard about the Winnovations concept. Respondents were given several options to choose from, but also the possibility to specify their own answer.

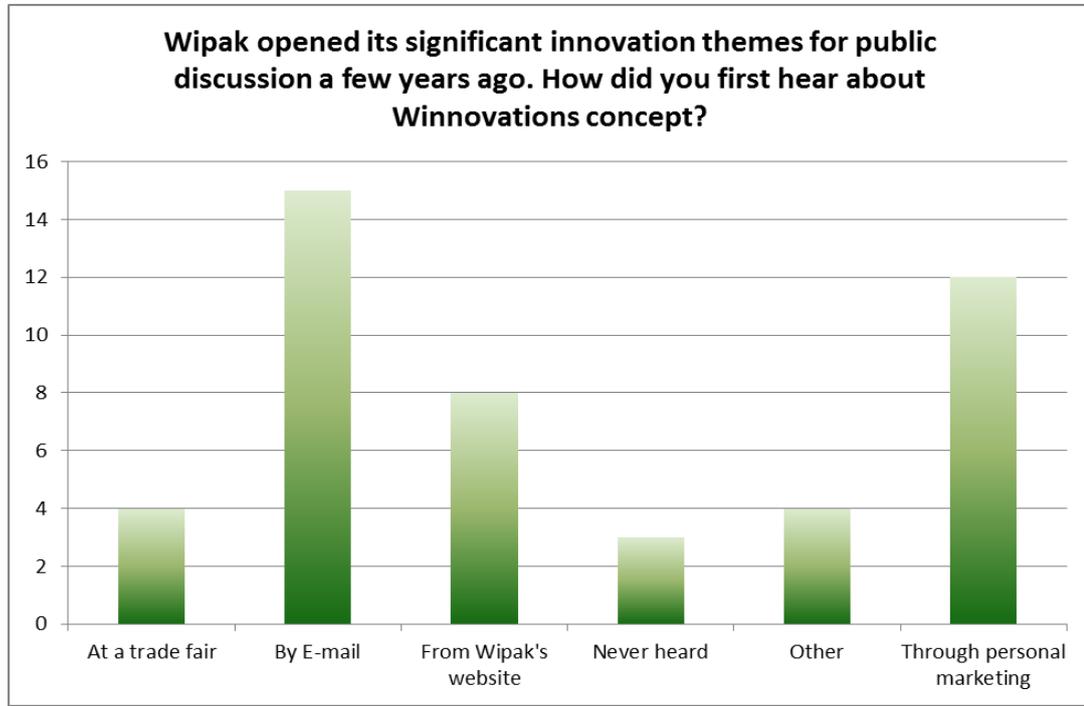


Figure 6. How did customers first hear about the Winnovations concept

Most of the respondents had either heard about Winnovations by e-mail, which is one of the current ways through which Wipak informs their customers about new products and other information or, through personal marketing which is a very important aspect of B2B-marketing. Only very few of the respondents had never heard about Winnovations.

The next question of the survey asked whether customers feel they get enough information on Winnovations.

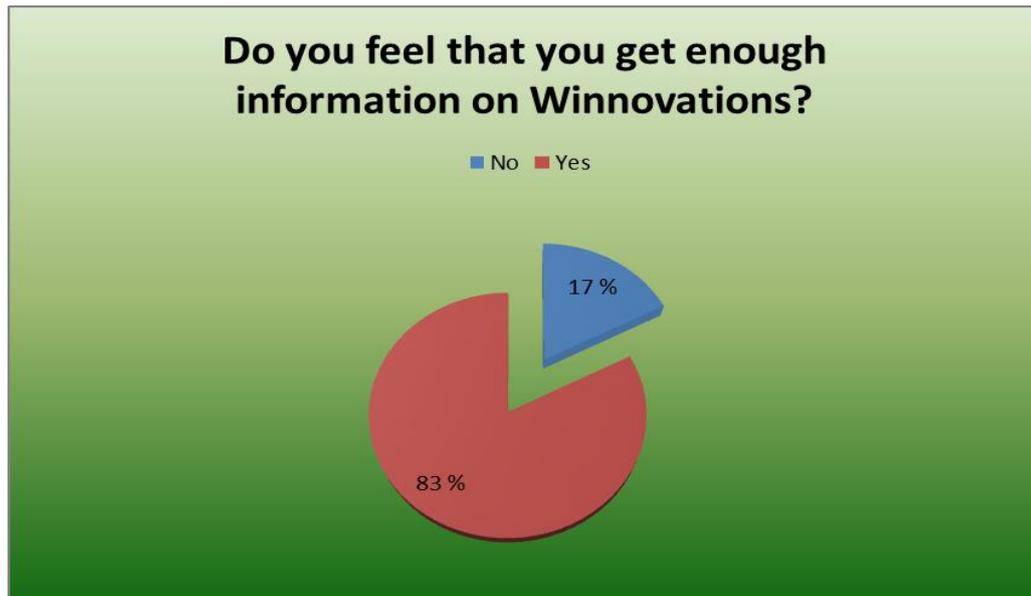


Figure 7. Do you feel that you get enough information on Winnovations?

Most of the customers of Wipak who responded to the survey felt that they got enough information on Winnovations, whilst 8 respondents (17%) felt that sufficient information was not available.

The survey also asked how respondents found both Wipak's website as well as the Winnovations website. Respondents were given several options from which they could select the most suitable responses. Options given to the respondents contained positive, neutral and negative options from which the respondent could select several to describe their opinion of the websites in question. Respondents mainly found both websites good, but overall Wipak's website was preferred to the Winnovations website.

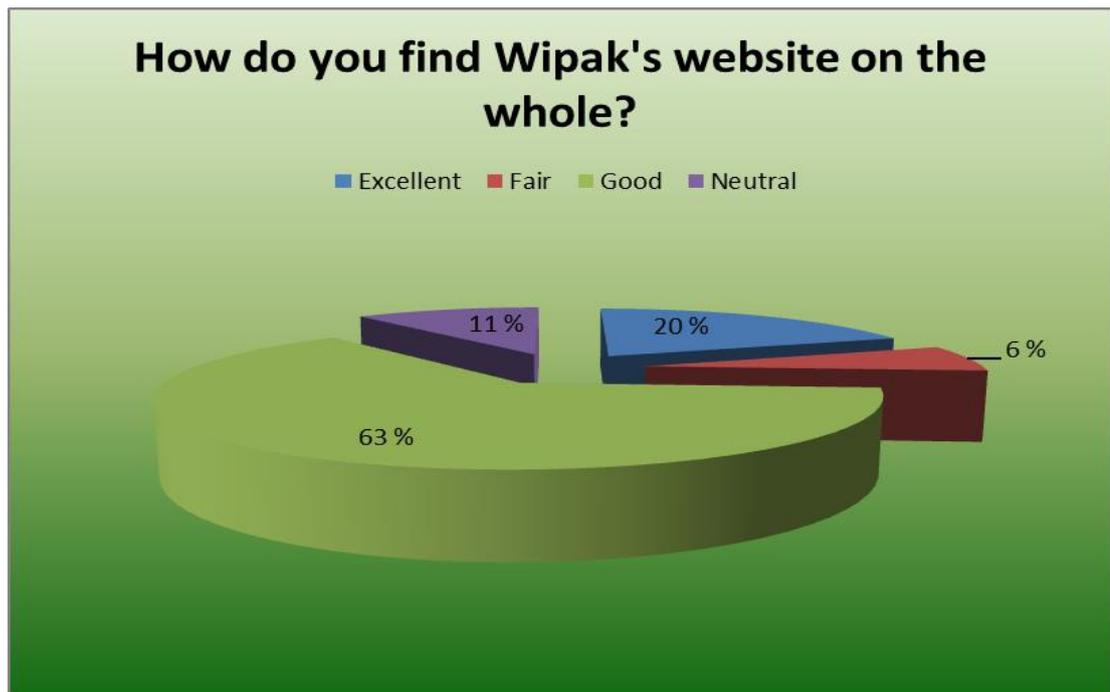


Figure 8. Opinion on Wipak's website



Figure 9. Opinion on Winnovations website

In continuation with the previous two questions, customers were also asked if they were able to find the necessary information easily from the two websites. One respondent felt that they could not find information easily on either website, whilst 36 respondents (78%) felt that they found necessary information easily from both websites. Overall respondents felt that information was more easily available from Wipak's website than the Winnovations website.

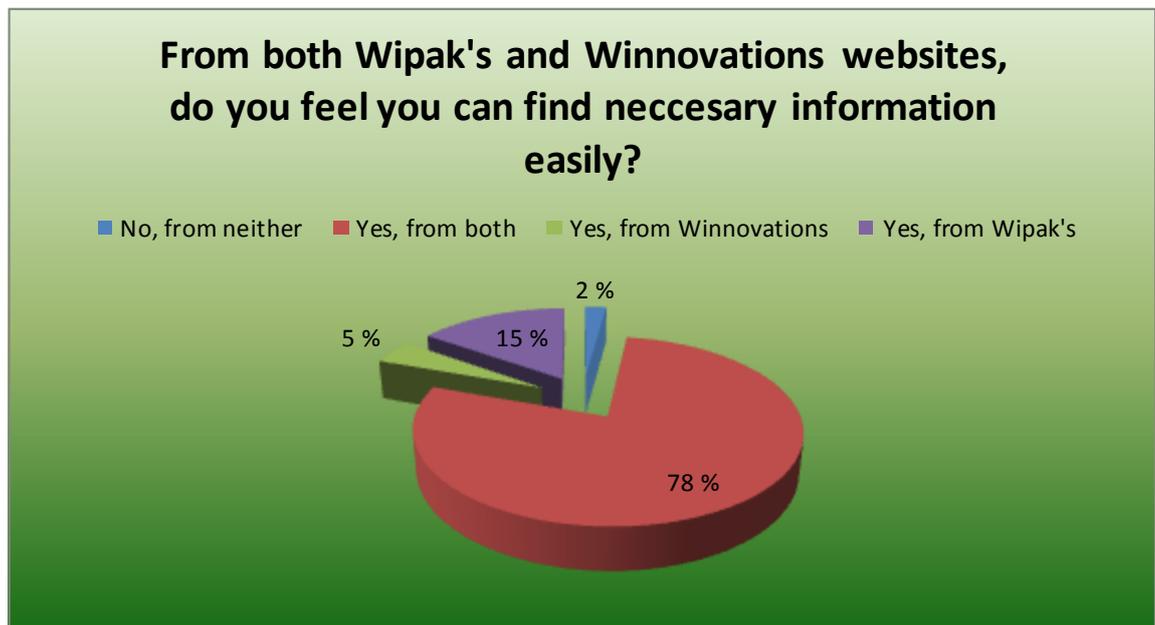


Figure 10. Ease of finding information

Wipak provides an online training portal for its customers, way.wipak.com. Respondents were asked whether they felt that this 24-hour service could support their packaging and product training needs in the future. Respondents were also given the option to specify any specific training topics they would find useful to be added to this service. Most respondents were not able to determine whether the online training portal supplied by Wipak could support their packaging and training needs in the future. 13 respondents however felt that this service would support their needs whilst 6 respondents felt that this service

was not needed. However, the question did not have the option to answer that the respondent was unaware of this provided service, and hence respondents may of chosen “Maybe” even if they were actually unaware of this service.

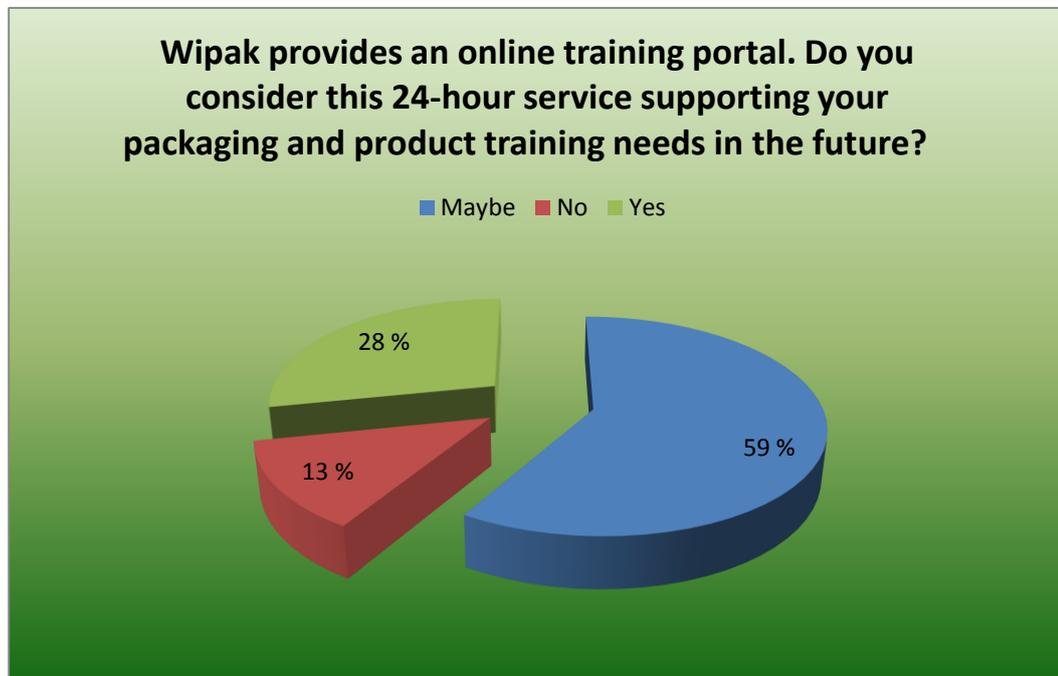


Figure 11. Wipak Way training portal

Respondents were also given the possibility to freely comment on possible new training needs. Very few respondents replied to this question and answers given are displayed below.

- Training with internet is a good option, but it never replaces the real lectures and on site teaching. One could think about having plastics schools with various topics or companies.
- Trainings oriented to production problems when setting up and running different packaging machines with Wipak's products.
- There are too many different national standards for wipak to cover them all.

- A training portal for distributors, customers would be excellent.

Hence can be seen from these answers that even though this internet based portal is welcome by customers, they do not feel that it is enough alone. The importance of relationships and personal contacts in B2B marketing has a strong meaning and hence they cannot be completely covered through online means. However, in one of the later questions of this research a customer suggested Wipak to create better communication and support from a Customer Service (CS) person, working shifted hours. Wipak Way is an online 24-hour service, and hence CS could be integrated with this service.

Marketing which is well constructed can affect the purchase decision of customers. Wipak's customers were asked whether they become interested in new products and packaging solutions from Wipak's marketing as well as whether Wipak's marketing affects their purchase decision.

Most of the respondents (80%) said they become interested of new products from Wipak's marketing, whilst only half replied that Wipak's marketing affects their purchase decision in some way. Customers were given a possibility to answer why or why not the marketing affects their purchase decision. Customers mainly felt that price and quality affected their purchase decision as well as regulatory change and the current market. Most customers also felt that Wipak's quality was good, but the prices for some markets were too high. As customers felt that regulatory change was a great factor in affecting their purchase decision, Wipak should integrate into their marketing how their products fit with the regulatory requirements and changes.

As Wipak operates in the MDI, the regulatory requirements are very high and changing constantly. The importance of sterile packaging cannot be dismissed. Wipak states that both national and international regulatory standards are well excelled by their products (Wipak Medical Packaging, 2014), but as this is a strong factor affecting customer purchase decision it should be integrated into their marketing more actively to assure and remind customers of their high standards.

At Interpack 2014 Wipak had very large attendance and great effort in their marketing. “You & Us – Sustainable Innovation” was Wipak’s theme at Interpack, with the aim of branding their high quality, relationship and co-operation values. Many new innovations were introduced at Interpack and visitors – including customers and prospects, were very interested in these new products.



Figure 12. Interest of marketing

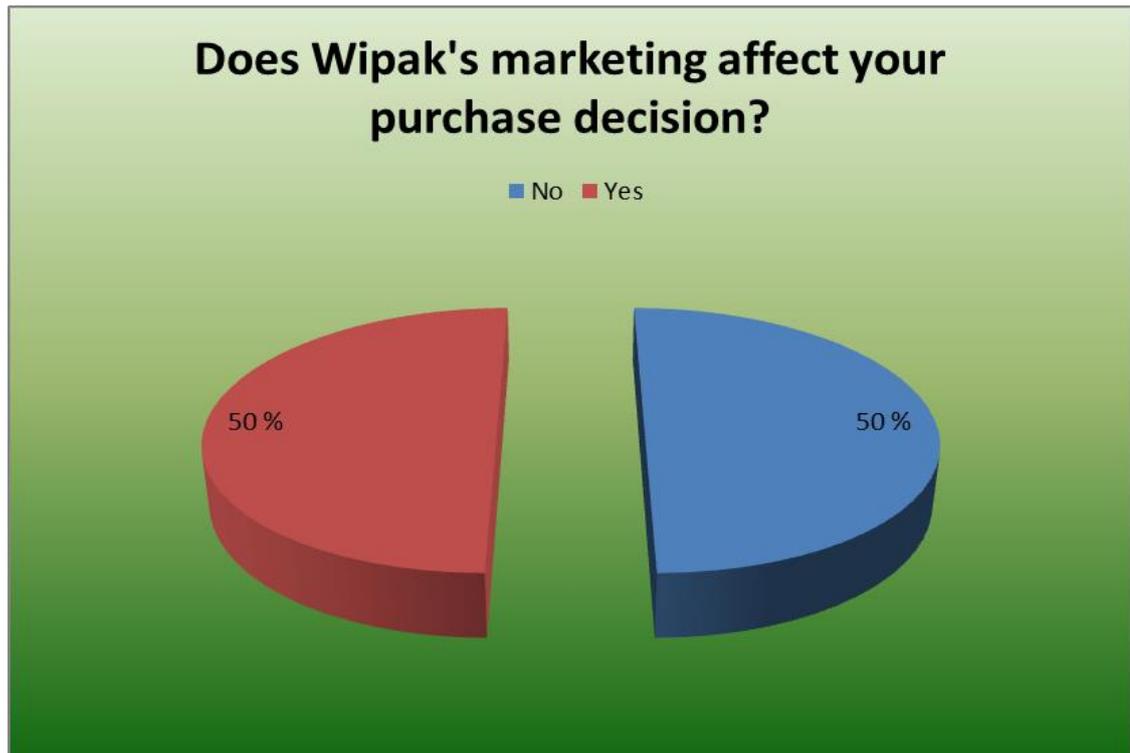


Figure 13. Effect of marketing on purchase decision

Customers were also asked if they had suggestions of what Wipak could do to improve their marketing. This question was not compulsory and thus only few answers were obtained.

Table 1. Suggestions for Wipak to improve marketing

Suggestion

More application & market info, rather than product info

I think their marketing is pretty good. They are constantly informing us about their innovations via mail and email

Marketing is basically in good level.

I have no suggestion because their marketing is good enough.

Free Sampling Program Activities for customers to appreciate the benefits

they can get from the new products.

Wipak is a recognised brand, known for high and consistent quality. We just need to make our prices more competitive.

More translated original brochures in local languages

Better communication and support from a dedicated Customer Service person that works shifted hours. The time difference causes it to be very difficult to get CS at times.

More precise information

Listen to customers

These answers show that even though most customers are satisfied with Wipak's marketing, customers believe that more precise information including application and market related information would make Wipak's marketing even better. One customer also felt that more customer service should be available at different hours, due to time difference as customers are largely spread in different locations. All of these aspects could be added to Wipak's marketing through Social Media.

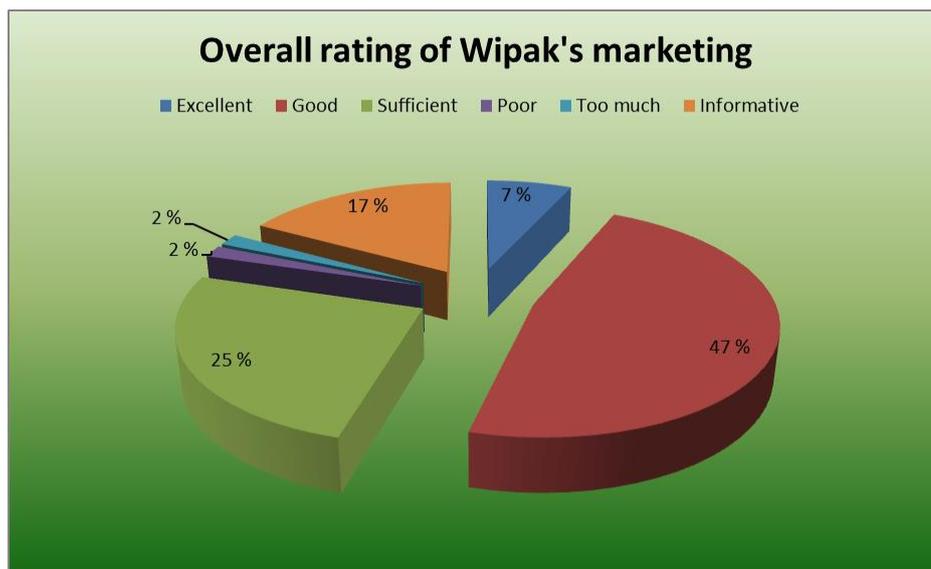


Figure 14. Overall rating of Wipak's marketing

Customers were also asked to rate Wipak's marketing from a given selection of answers. The overall rating was positive, only a few customers felt that Wipak's marketing was poor or too pushy. Most customers felt that the overall marketing was good, or at least sufficient. However, only 17% of responding customers found Wipak's marketing to be informative, which suggests that more of the information suggested above should be added to the marketing. The results are displayed below.

7.1.3 Wipak & Social Media

The survey also consisted of several questions related to social media, asking respondents if they were aware of the social media networks in which Wipak is already present in and whether they would like to find Wipak in other social media networks. Respondents were also asked which social media networks their companies were present in, and if certain social media networks were blocked in their company.

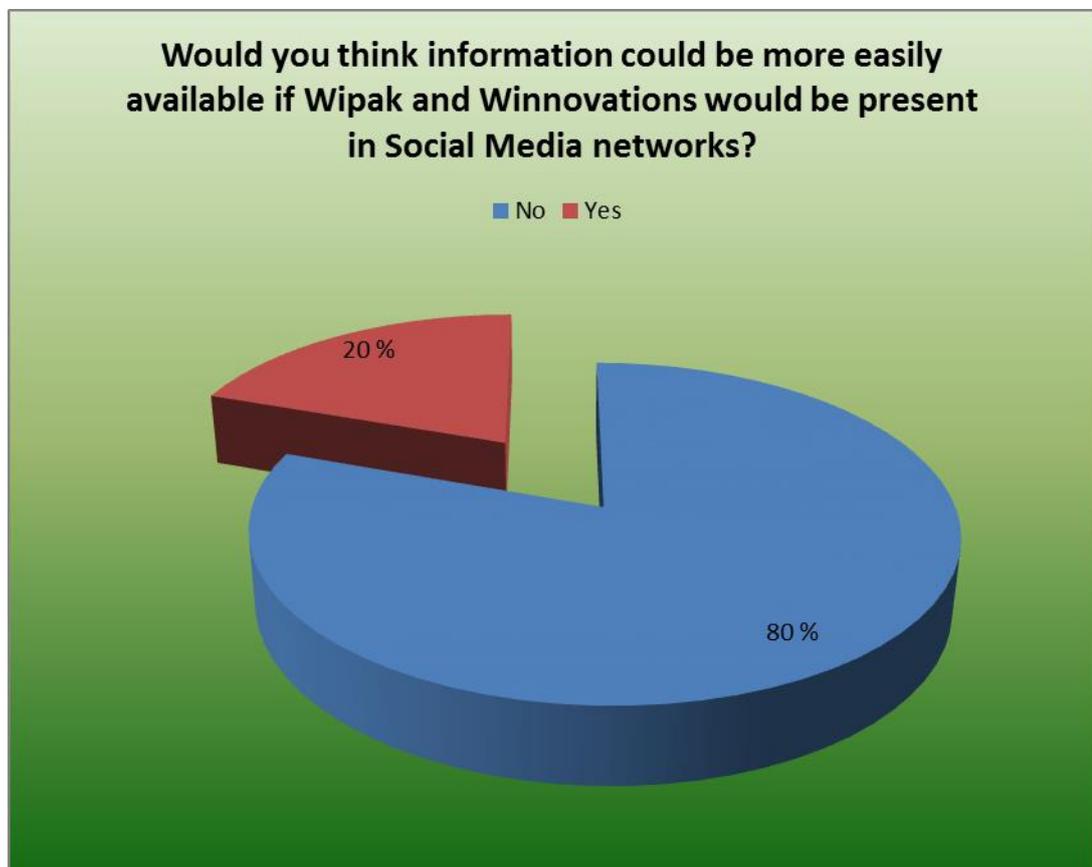


Figure 15. Availability of information if Wipak was present in Social Media

Based on the above pie chart, most respondents did not believe that information would be more easily available if Wipak and Winnovations would be present in Social Media networks. Only 20% of respondents believed that this would

increase the availability of information. There are possibly many reasons to why respondents have answered that they do not think information would be more easily available through Social Media, however one of the main reasons is most likely the fact of SMM only recently making its breakthrough in B2B marketing.

The next two questions focused on Twitter, a Social Media network used for posting short messages called Tweets. Customers were asked whether they would be interested to find information from Wipak on Twitter, and would they follow posts from Wipak on Twitter.

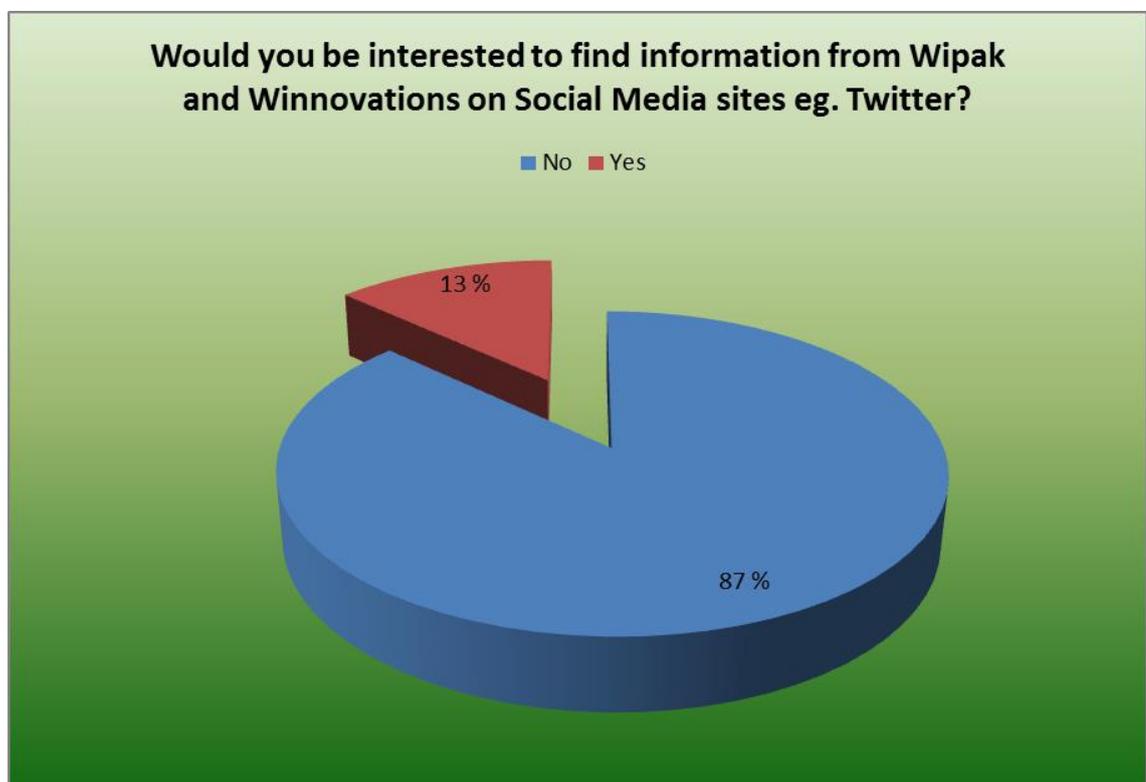


Figure 16. Interest to find Wipak on Twitter

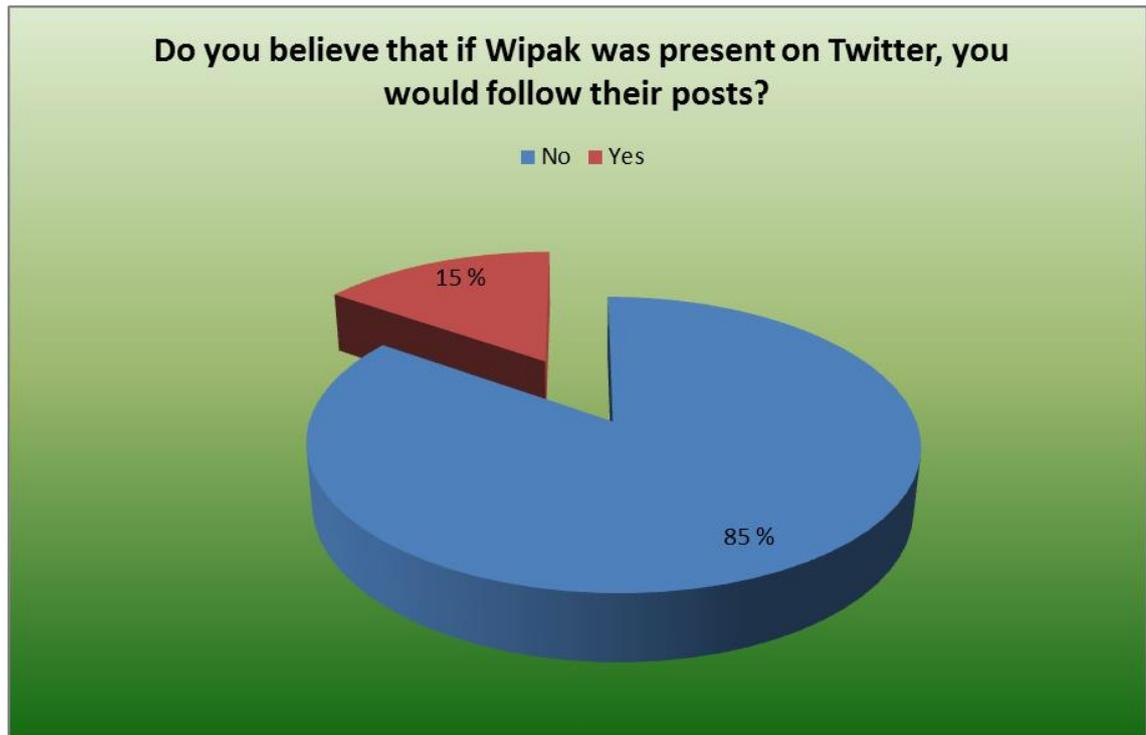


Figure 17. Following Wipak on Twitter

These answers also show the lack of interest of SMM in the B2B sector, as only 13% of respondents were interested about finding information from Wipak from Twitter. However, 15% of respondents would follow Wipak's posts on Twitter. The amount of respondents that would be interested in finding Wipak on Twitter is fairly small, but it could be predicted that the percentage could grow in the near future as SMM is a growing trend in the B2B market.

The 9 respondents (13%) who believed that Wipak being present on Twitter would provide information more easily, were divided by the respondent identification they gave at the beginning of the survey and are displayed in Figure 18. Respondents that felt that this would increase the availability of information were mainly from Sales & Marketing as well as Management. Surprisingly respondents from Purchasing mainly felt that this would not increase the availability of information, as did all respondents from Research & Development.

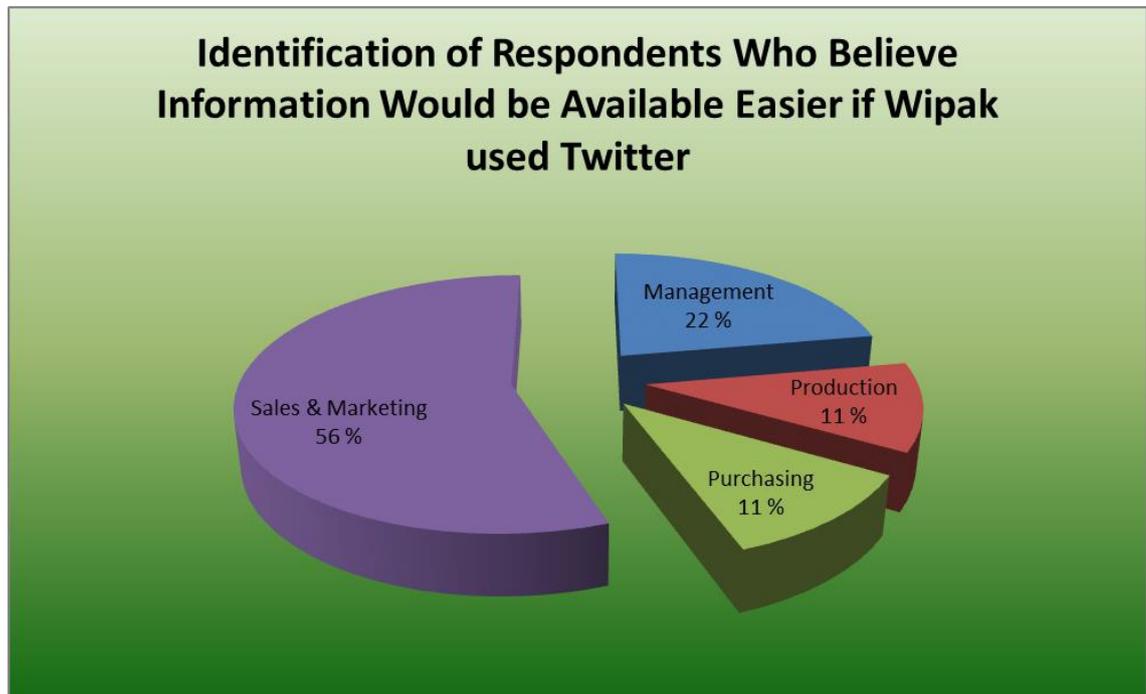


Figure 18. Respondent Identification of those who felt that presence on Twitter would increase availability of information

Wipak Healthcare has their own YouTube channel, in which the company has shared some videos of new products and their possibilities and uses. Customers were asked if they knew about this YouTube channel, and if they did had they visited and found the information available useful or not. The majority of responding customers (72%) were not aware that Wipak was present on YouTube, which shows that Wipak has not informed their customers enough about this marketing channel they are using. In May 2014, Wipak did mention about their YouTube channel on their e-News which was sent to customers by email, but it also available on Wipak's Extranet. 19% of respondents were aware of Wipak's presence on YouTube but had not felt necessary to actually visit Wipak's youtube channel, the remaining 9% that were aware and had visited had actually found the information available useful whilst none had visited and found the information useless. This shows that Wipak is displaying useful information on YouTube but the awareness of customers of this

marketing channel is very small. Customers must be informed about the availability of information through this channel, and the channel must be updated regularly to keep customer interest.



Figure 19. Awareness of Wipak on YouTube

The respondents were then divided by the identification they gave at the beginning of the survey. Management was the group of which most respondents knew about the YouTube channel, but they had mostly not visited. The group of respondents from Sales and Marketing had several people who knew about Wipak's YouTube channel and most of these respondents who knew about the YouTube channel had visited the channel and found the information available useful. Only respondents from Sales & Marketing and Management had visited Wipak's YouTube channel, and hence the awareness of this channel should be increased.

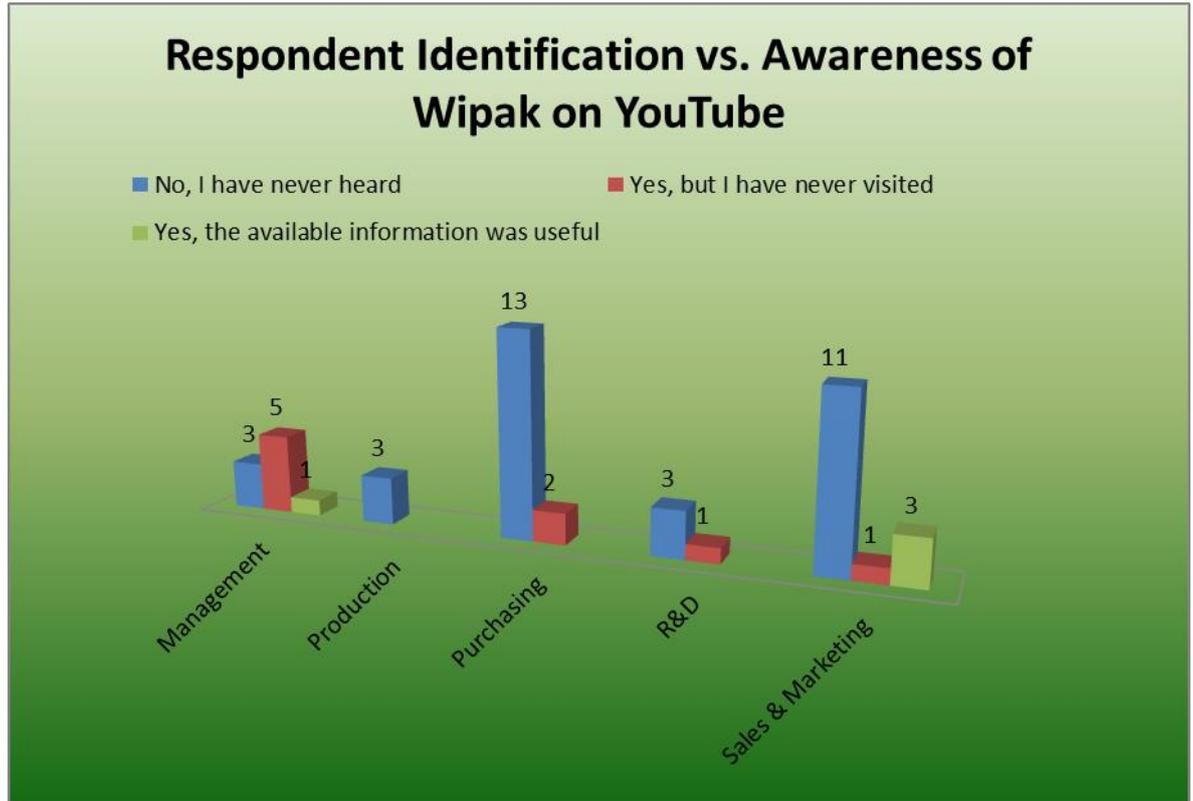


Figure 20. Respondent Identification vs. Awareness of Wipak on YouTube

Wipak also has their own LinkedIn channel, and customers were asked if they were aware of this and whether they followed Wipak on LinkedIn. Out of all the respondents not one followed Wipak on LinkedIn, even though 24% were aware of this LinkedIn channel. The majority of the respondents (76%) were not aware of this channel. Wipak posts both open positions and news updates for customers on LinkedIn, updating information fairly often. The awareness of Wipak's LinkedIn should be increased with customers as this was the only social media network that was not blocked in any company that had access to some social media networks.

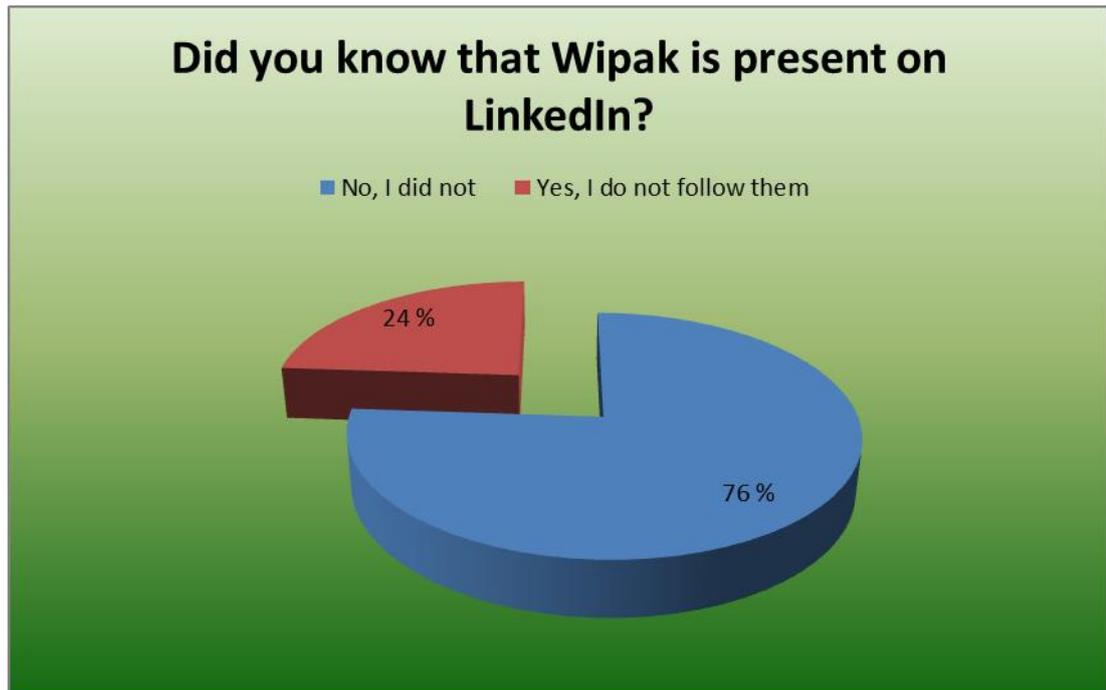


Figure 21. Awareness of Wipak on LinkedIn

Answers gained at Interpack also showed the lack of awareness of Wipak's presence on these social media channels. Wipak did not inform customers and prospects about these channels at Interpack, having no reference to these channels anywhere at their stand. Hence the awareness of Wipak's presence on these channels did not increase at Interpack even though their investment in marketing was otherwise outstanding.

The survey also asked customers which social media networks were used by their companies. 25 of the respondents' companies were not present in any social media networks. Most of the respondents' companies were present on Facebook, 16 of the 21 companies using any social media network. LinkedIn was also popular, 14 companies being present on this channel. Respondent's companies were least present on Twitter, only 10 of these companies having their own channel. 12 respondents' companies were also present on YouTube.

This shows that there is an increasing amount of customers' companies present on different social media channels, and hence these companies could possibly

be reached through different social media channels. However, over half of the responding companies were not yet using any social media and hence these companies cannot yet be reached through these channels. The survey did not ask the respondents whether they were personally on these social media networks, but most likely the majority are present on some of these social media channels. Hence, if Wipak were to use these channels for marketing they could target both organizations as well as individuals working in these organizations.

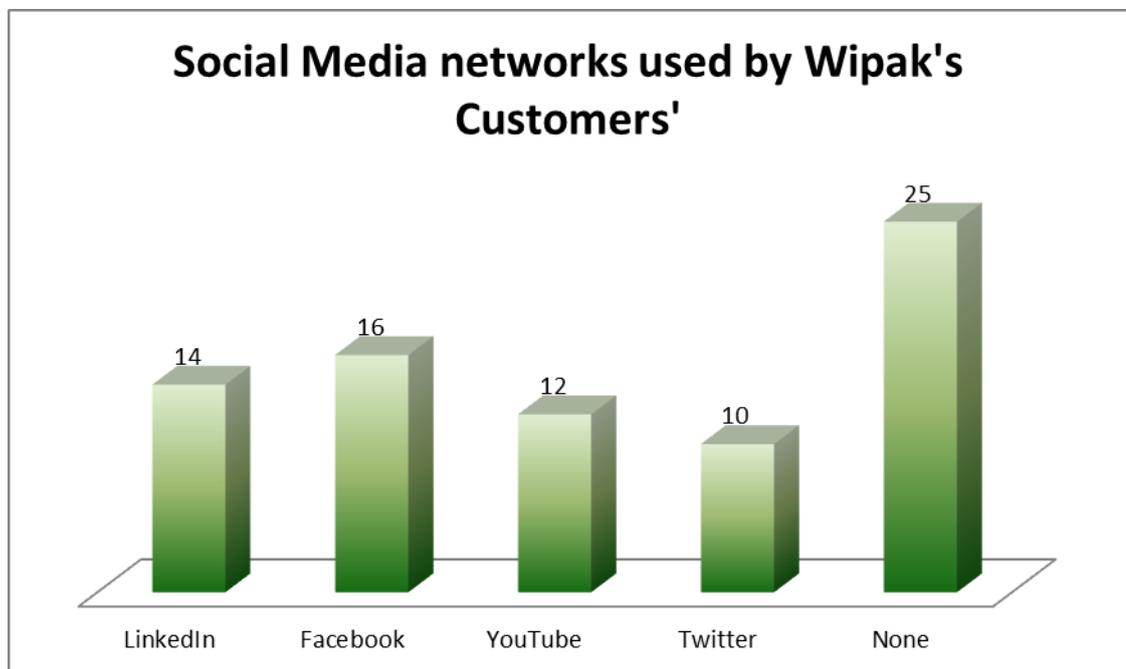


Figure 22. Social Media networks used by Wipak's Customers'

In continuation with the previous question, respondents were asked whether certain social media networks were blocked in their organization. This is an important aspect to know if social media were to be used as a marketing channel, as otherwise it could be hard to reach these customers through social media networks. The majority of responding companies had no social media networks blocked from use. 14% of responding companies had all social media networks blocked, whilst roughly 7% of the companies with access to some

social media had at least one of the following social media networks blocked; Facebook, YouTube, Twitter or Instagram. All companies with access to some social media networks had access to LinkedIn, probably due to the fact that LinkedIn is known as a professional (social) network rather than a social network used in free time. This shows that social media is becoming more popular for professional uses as these networks are mostly not blocked in organizations.

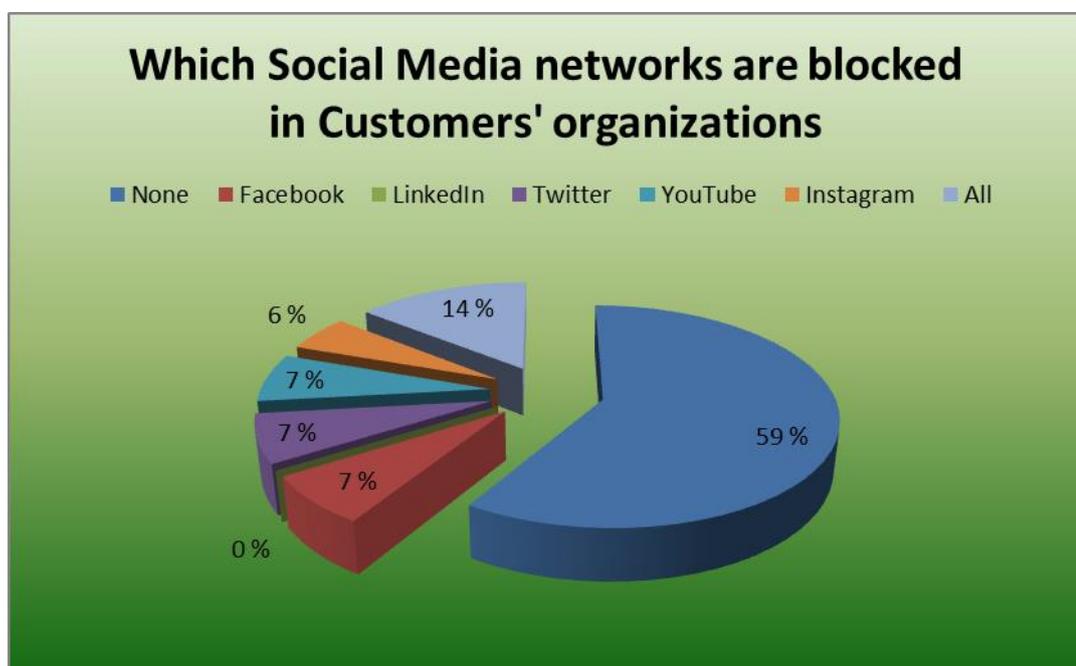


Figure 23. Social Media networks blocked in Customer's organizations

Finally, respondents were asked whether they had seen companies in the same field use social media for marketing. Most respondents had not yet come across companies using social media for marketing in this field, but 28% of respondents had seen at least one company marketing through social media.

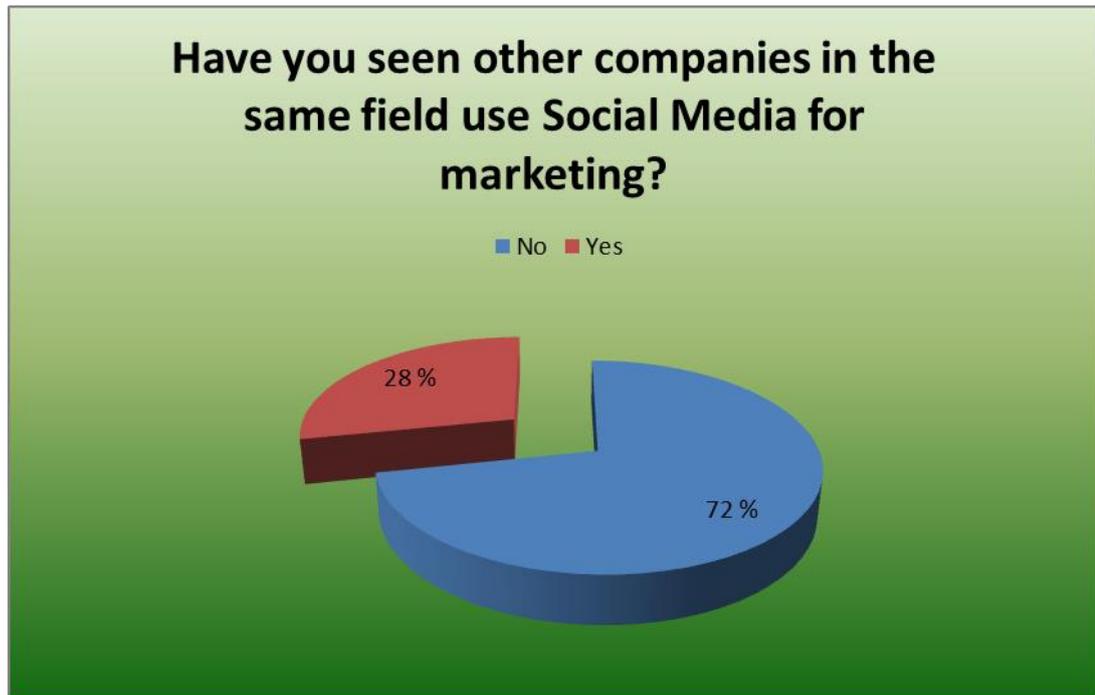


Figure 24. Social Media used by other companies in the same field

7.1.4 Summary & Analysis

Wipak currently has several digital marketing platforms in use including a website for both Wipak as well as Winnovations, a YouTube channel, LinkedIn profile as well as using email marketing to reach customers. Wipak also uses traditional marketing strategies including newsletters and brochures. Customers were asked whether Wipak's marketing affected their purchase decision as well as being asked if customers became interested in new packaging solutions through Wipak's marketing. Customers were also asked had they heard of the several different marketing channels Wipak already has in use and whether the information supplied was of any use. Overall customers were mainly satisfied with the level of information available through Wipak's and Winnovations' websites, whilst also the majority (80%) felt that Wipak's marketing gave interest in new packaging solutions innovated and manufactured by Wipak. Wipak also invested greatly on their presence at Interpack, as this is one of the largest trade fairs in the packaging industry and hence a great place to meet new prospects. Wipak introduced new innovations to the market at Interpack,

and these innovations gained great interest. The current traditional marketing channels used by Wipak reach customers well, as most of the responding customers had first heard about the Winnovations concept through these channels – either by email, personal marketing or through Wipak’s website. Half of responding customers also felt that Wipak’s marketing affected their purchase decision, even though more application and market information was requested by customers rather than just product information. Respondents identifying themselves as Sales & Marketing personnel were mostly affected by Wipak’s marketing, 80% of these responding that Wipak’s marketing affects their purchase decision. The awareness of other marketing channels used by Wipak, including YouTube and LinkedIn was very small.

Customers responding to the survey of this research were asked about their preferences as well as which social media networks their company is present on. From this information together with the information available from these social media networks about their uses as marketing channels assumptions can be made on which channels could reach customers most effectively. Most of the companies participating in this study had access to all social media networks from work, while 14% of responding companies had no access to any social media network, with one respondent replying that it is actually illegal to use social networks in their country. As of this, it must be taken into consideration that even if social media networks are used for marketing they may never reach all customers as some may not have access to social media through their work (Miller, 2011; Kärkkäinen et. al., 2010) – and not all employees are willing to follow job-related issues in their free time. From the responding companies, 54% did not have presence on any social media network, whilst the rest of the responding companies divided fairly equally between LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube. Ten of the responding companies were also present on Twitter. The amount of B2B companies using different social media platforms is expected to increase in the near future (Kho, 2008) and hence it is important for Wipak to design their own strategy to suit the changing marketplace (Darden Business Publishing, 2009). Wipak is also present on YouTube and LinkedIn, but out of the companies using LinkedIn 64% were unaware of Wipak’s presence on this

social media network. The same type of results were obtained for YouTube, 67% of customers present on YouTube were unaware of Wipak's presence on this channel. Wipak also did not have any reference to these marketing channels at their stand at Interpack, nor any reference or quicklinks on their webpage.

7.2 Findings and Analysis of Wipak's Competitors SMM

The final part of the research was to analyse the SMM of Wipak's main competitors. The competitors studied consist of six competitors from the MDI and three from the Striking segment. The competitors will be split into their own sections and their marketing in the Social Media networks discussed in this Thesis will be reported. These results will be used to answer the third research question of this Thesis, as well as to give Wipak suggestions which social media channels are mainly used and hence could be adopted.

Few of these competitors (Amcor, Coveris, Südpak) were also present at Interpack, and their stands were visited in the hope of finding reference of possible SMM used by these companies. None of the studied companies had any signs of SMM at their stands, even though presence on these channels was found and is reported below. However, some other companies present at Interpack had reference to their SMM channels, including icons of the used social media channels on their posters, etc.

7.2.1 Amcor

Amcor is known as one of the world's largest packaging companies, which offers exclusive and innovative packaging solutions that are the head of the packaging industry (Amcor, 2014).

Amcor has taken Facebook into their marketing very fiercely, having several Facebook Pages for the company. Amcor may be found on Facebook as a

Wikipedia based Page as well as a Page created by and for the whole Amcor Flexibles organization. Several different locations of Amcor Flexibles also have their own Facebook Pages.



Picture 1. Amcor Flexibles on Facebook

Amcor Flexibles has joined Facebook in 2008, which is the time when Facebook was beginning to become more popular. Amcor however does not post information on Facebook but shows their presence by having a Page. The Facebook page which is Wikipedia based contains more information on Amcor, and is “liked” by 4,500 people by November 2014 which increases the visibility of the Page and hence the organization.

Amcor is also present on Twitter, posting Tweets several times per week. Twitter shows that Amcor has joined Twitter already in 2009, but has started Tweeting in June 2014. Amcor is still fairly small on Twitter, having only 122 followers in November 2014. Amcor Tweets about important issues such as recycling of their plastic products and pollution, as well as about issues related to their new products and their releases.



Picture 2. Amcor on Twitter

Amcor also has their own YouTube channel where the company posts videos on both new products and interviews with customers showing their satisfaction about Amcor's products. Amcor's YouTube channel has only 111 followers in November 2014, but the search engine result of YouTube gives AmcorPackaging's channel as the first result when searching for "Amcor", and thus makes it easier to find the channel even if not being a registered follower.

Amcor is also an active user of LinkedIn, posting regularly about news, new products as well as sharing Tweets from Twitter on LinkedIn. Amcor is also present on LinkedIn as Amcor Rigid Plastics and Amcor Flexibles Europe & Americas. These separate LinkedIn pages are also updated regularly with also information on open positions in the company. It can be seen that Amcor has adopted LinkedIn as one of their main SMM channels, having 10,030 followers on the corporate LinkedIn page, 17,470 followers on Amcor Rigid Plastics and 13,721 followers on Amcor Flexibles LinkedIn page in November 2014.

7.2.2 Coveris

Coveris is a company which was established in 2013 by a merger of five packaging companies – Exopack, Kobusch, Paragon, Britton and Paccor. Coveris is an international manufacturing company which is dedicated to providing solutions that increase the safety, quality and convenience of products we use regularly (Coveris, 2014). As Coveris is a fairly new name in the industry, the company has taken several social media networks into their marketing.

Coveris' website has quicklinks to two social media networks, LinkedIn and Twitter. The company can also be found on Facebook and Youtube.

Coveris joined Facebook in November 2013, and has shared some information through this channel. However, the company does not have many followers on Facebook and none of their posts have been liked.

Coveris' Twitter page shows that the company has joined Twitter already in 2009, which is impossible as the company was only formed in 2013. Searching the feed of Tweets it can be seen that the Twitter page is one which used to be from Exopack, one of the companies forming the merger. Hence the Twitter page has been very active for several years, and has a total of 849 followers in November 2014. Coveris Tweets about new products and their releases, shares videos and informs followers of which trade fairs they will be present at. Followers of Coveris are not very active, as these Tweets are rarely re-Tweeted or marked as "Favourite".

The company is also present on LinkedIn, updating roughly twice per month about news on the company and new products. All updates of Coveris are shared links to their corporate website, with small introductions to what the update is about. Coveris has only fairly recently starting using LinkedIn as a marketing channel, updates dating back to September 2014. Coveris has 2,663 followers on LinkedIn in November 2014.

Coveris has also very recently created their own YouTube channel. Coveris has uploaded a marketing video on one of their bagging machines as well as a video informing customers about the “Coveris Business System” as the company is quite fresh.

7.2.3 Bemis Company, Inc.

Bemis is a major supplier of flexible packaging used by food, medical and pharmaceutical companies worldwide (Bemis Company, Inc., 2014).

Bemis can be found on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. However, on Twitter the company only has an account, but no information or posts have been added. Bemis may be found on Facebook twice, one Page created by the company and another through Wikipedia. The Page created by the company has very little information about the company and no posts, but nevertheless has its presence. The Facebook Page created by Wikipedia has more information on the company, and has been liked by 1902 people in November 2014 which increases the visibility of the Page and hence the organizations visibility on Facebook.

The company is also present on LinkedIn, updating several times per month about news on the company and new products as well as open positions. Most updates made on LinkedIn are about open positions in the company, but also news updates with links to the corresponding news on the company website. Bemis has been updating regularly on LinkedIn for three months. Bemis has 12,010 followers on LinkedIn in November 2014.

Bemis Healthcare Packaging may also be found on YouTube, but the videos posted are not very marketing related.

7.2.4 Steripack

Steripack is a supplier of sterile packaging solutions and contract manufacturing services who believes they are a market leader in these applications (Steripack, 2014). Steripack has quicklinks to social media networks on their website, including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Steripack joined Facebook already in 2010 and updates their Page quite regularly. The Page however only has about 500 followers in November 2014 and hence the visibility of the Page is fairly small. Steripack also uses Twitter to Tweet news about the company as well as locations at which they can be visited at tradefairs. The LinkedIn for Steripack is very plain, with only information on the company in the profile – no updates or posts by the company. Steripack Test Laboratory also has a LinkedIn profile, but this is similar to that of the company itself. Steripack Test Laboratory may also be found on YouTube, but the latest video was shared over a year ago and hence it could be said that the company does not use YouTube actively for marketing.

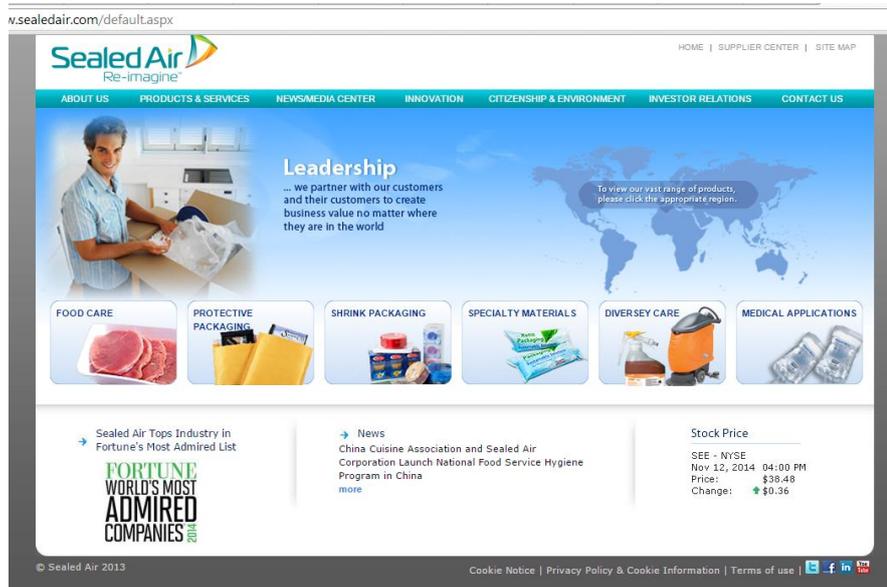
Steripack is present on LinkedIn, but has only started updating this channel in November 2014. Their first and only post on LinkedIn at this time is about their presence at a fair and their location at the corresponding event.

7.2.5 Südpak

Südpak is one of Europe's leading providers of packaging solutions for different applications (Südpak, 2014). Südpak cannot be found on Facebook, Twitter nor YouTube. Südpak is present on LinkedIn, posting news updates fairly regularly and sharing information about the company. Südpak has 251 followers on LinkedIn.

7.2.6 Sealed Air

Sealed Air is a packaging company that produces packaging for food and medical applications as well as other applications. Sealed Air delivers total packaging solutions, technically superior products and practical support across the globe (Sealed Air, 2013). Sealed Air is present on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. Quicklinks to all of these social media networks can be found from the front page of the companies website.



Picture 3. Sealed Air website

As can be seen from Picture 3, the Social Media networks in which Sealed Air is present in can be easily found from the company's website (bottom right corner). Clicking these quicklinks will take the user directly to the company's Page or Feed in these Social Media networks and will therefore increase the awareness of the company's presence on these networks.

Sealed Air uses Facebook regularly to post news about the company and current developments within the organization, and having over 2000 "Likes" in November 2014 and hence followers the company has fairly good visibility due to the way Facebook spreads these Pages with followers' friends. Sealed Air has joined Facebook already in 2010 and has been active on Facebook ever

since. Sealed Air's posts on Facebook have also gathered many "Likes", ranging from 30 to 200 per post, which also increases their visibility on Facebook.

Sealed Air is also an active user of Twitter, Tweeting about news of the company, its recognition for sustainability and also sharing information on their products. Sealed Air has 998 followers on Twitter in November 2014 with several of their Tweets re-Tweeted or tagged as "Favourite" showing that their followers are actively interested in Sealed Air's Tweets.

Sealed Air has also very actively integrated YouTube into their marketing, having 47 videos uploaded onto their YouTube channel in the past 4 years. These videos uploaded onto the company's YouTube channel are about the company's products and their uses, and thus it could be concluded that Sealed Air uses YouTube as a marketing channel as well as integrating these videos into other digital marketing platforms used by the company.

Finally, Sealed Air can also be found to be an active user of LinkedIn having 24,702 followers by November 2014. The updates posted by the company on LinkedIn are similar to those on Facebook and Twitter, as well as consisting of videos shared from the company's YouTube channel.

Overall, it could be concluded that Sealed Air has taken a very fierce approach to SMM and is one of the largest users of Social Media in the MDI.

7.2.7 Sogeva

Sogeva is an Italian manufacturer of products for medical use. The company website states they have ten-years experience in the industry, which is quite little compared to many of the other companies in the same industry. Sogeva's core business is the production of reels and pouches for the sterilization, manufactured with high-tech machinery and with continuous innovation. (Sogeva, 2014)

Sogeva cannot be found on any of the social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn) used for this study.

7.2.8 PMS

PMS is an international manufacturer of sterilization packaging, sterilization control as well as pack closure systems. The company was established in 1997 as a joint venture between a Turkish and a German partner. PMS produces efficient, reliable and flexible solutions for healthcare institutions and medical device manufacturers. (PMS Medikal, 2014)

PMS is present on LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. On LinkedIn the company has a profile, but no information is shared nor any posts or news about anything. PMS is present on YouTube with their own channel, sharing videos about new products and about value adding aspects of the company and its products.

PMS has a Page on Facebook, where it shares news on both products and the company. The Page is liked only by 174 people by November 2014, but nevertheless the company is very active on Facebook. PMS joined Facebook in December 2012, posting quite rarely in 2013 but starting to be very active by 2014 which shows that the company has taken Facebook in as part of their marketing scheme.

PMS has joined Twitter in late 2013 and updates by Tweets a couple of times per month. As of this the company is not as active on Twitter as on Facebook. On Twitter PMS has started following many people and companies, 1,979 in November 2014 and hence the company also has more followers than on Facebook – by November 2014 the company has 606 followers on Twitter.

7.2.9 VP Stericlin

VP Stericlin is part of the VP Group, which was founded in 1896 and is a successfully run family enterprise. VP Stericlin produces sterile barrier systems according to their customers demands, and has been producing in this industry for over 40 years. (VP Group, 2014)

VP Stericlin cannot be found on any of the Social Media networks used for this research, and neither could VP Group.

7.2.10 Summary & Analysis

The SMM of nine competitors of Wipak were analysed. Two of the companies analysed had no presence on any of the social media networks studied. One company was present on LinkedIn but not any of the other social media networks. The remaining six of analysed competitors were present on all four social media networks used for this research. These channels were mostly used actively for marketing, but only 3 of these companies had any reference of using these social media channels on their website.

As Michaelidou, Siamagka & Christodoulides (2011) discover in their research on the usage, barriers and measurement of SMM, the main metrics used to evaluate effectiveness of these marketing channels is the amount of followers present on the channel.

The amount of followers for each of these competitors and Wipak will be displayed for LinkedIn, to give an insight to the effectiveness of the channel depending on the company's activeness. Wipak has 677 followers on LinkedIn in November 2014. The count of followers used for Figure 25 is taken on the 17th November 2014.

Sealed Air was found to be the most active user of social media as a marketing channel, being present on all channels used for this study and having quicklinks to these channels on their corporate website. This can be seen as the large

amount of followers the company has on LinkedIn (see Figure 25). Coveris also had a quicklink to their LinkedIn channel, but does not have so many followers, which could be due to the fact that the company is a fairly new name to the market. However, Coveris does update their channel fairly often and the amount of followers will probably increase in the near future. Amcor Flexibles and Bemis both had a large number of followers on this channel, and both of the companies updated this channel regularly. Steripack has fairly few followers on LinkedIn compared to the four companies already mentioned, however, Steripack has only started updating their channel in the last week. Südpak and PMS have very few followers on LinkedIn, with Südpak frequently updating their channel whilst PMS has no updates on this channel. However, Südpak is not present on other social media networks and thus could affect the awareness of their presence on LinkedIn.

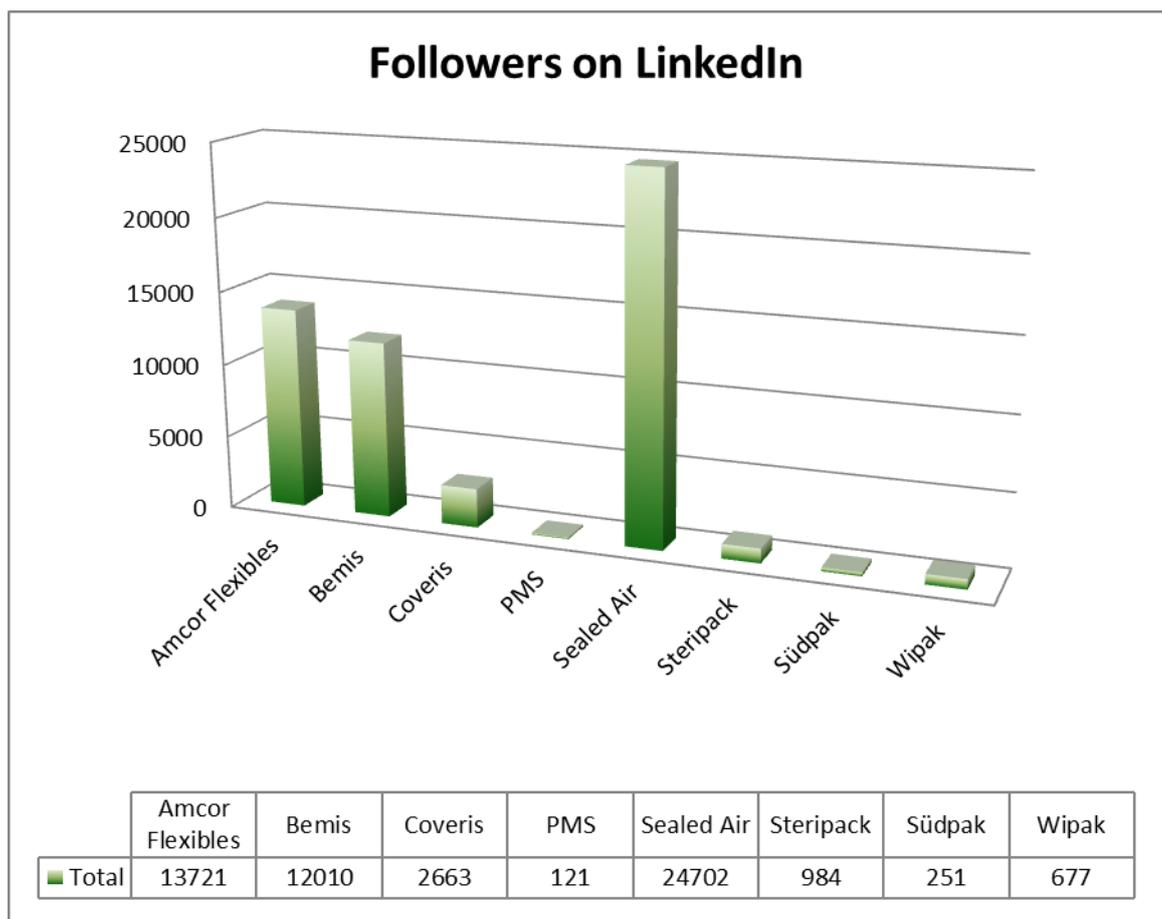


Figure 25. Followers on LinkedIn

Wipak was taken into this comparison to see their effectiveness on this channel compared with the analysed competitors. Wipak has updated their LinkedIn roughly two times per month, sharing interesting facts and information on new products. However, Wipak has not updated their channel in the past two months. Compared to Wipak's competitors who update their LinkedIn channel regularly, Wipak has very few followers. As mentioned in the case of Südpak, one of the reasons may be the lacking presence on other social media networks.

The Web Marketing Specialists on Web Results Direct (2013) discuss several ways in which the amount of followers on LinkedIn can be increased. Firstly, it is suggested to invite related LinkedIn contacts to the company page by sending a direct message through LinkedIn with a link to the corresponding page. The importance of placing a quicklink or otherwise called LinkedIn "button" on the corporate website as well as adding the LinkedIn Company Page URL to other marketing communications to increase the awareness and facilitate customers joining the channel.

7.3 Analysis of the Possibilities of SMM for Wipak

This section will bring together the findings of the previous sections in this chapter. Customers of Wipak participating in this research were mainly present on Facebook (16/46), with Facebook also being the largest social media network at present. The group of users over the age of 35 is also the fastest growing demographic group on Facebook and hence this channel is becoming more interesting for B2B companies (Darden Business Publishing, 2009). From the nine competitors of Wipak analysed for this research, six had presence on Facebook. The ways which these companies used Facebook differed, whilst some posted and updated the channel regularly others just had their presence. YouTube and Twitter were also used by six of the nine studied competitors, whilst twelve and ten correspondingly of the responding customers' organizations used these social media channels. LinkedIn was the most popular in respect to the studied competitors, seven out of the nine being present on this channel. LinkedIn was the second most popular social media network within the customers participating in this study.

From the results obtained it can be determined that Facebook is the most popular social media channel with respect to Wipak's customers participating in this research who use some kind of social media, and users worldwide – having an average of 864 million daily active users in September 2014 (Facebook Newsroom, 2014). Hence, Facebook can offer Wipak a good channel to connect with customers and build relationships and trust (Michaelidou et. al., 2011), but also a large network of users which has a large possibility of containing many new prospects. The innovativeness of an organization is said to be a factor in determining the adoption decision of new technologies such as SMM (Michaelidou et. al., 2011) and hence Wipak should consider adopting SMM channels including Facebook into their marketing as Wipak conveys a message of innovativeness in their marketing and wishes to stay ahead of the market – in both innovativeness as well as marketing. The use of social media also strengthens the brand image of the organization (Michaelidou et. al., 2011)

which is a crucial factor in B2B marketing (Vitale et. al., 2011, 312; Ginty et. al., 2012).

Wipak is already present on two of the other social media networks used for this research, LinkedIn and YouTube. For these to be effective in Wipak's marketing they must be updated regularly and referred to in order to increase the awareness of these channels.

The fourth and last social media channel used in this research was Twitter. Twitter being the least used by Wipak's customers, but yet one of the most actively used by Wipak's competitors. Those of Wipak's competitors that actively used social media as a marketing channel, the same information and updates were shared through the different channels – some even linking one update to the other channels.

Hence, if Wipak would integrate social media into their marketing mix, based on findings showing effectiveness in terms of followers of their competitors strategy, Wipak should consider adopting all of these channels. The same updates and news could be shared through all the different channels as competitors do, and hence Wipak's presence, coverage and reach would be larger on social media channels. Marketing through all these channels also has the greatest possibility of reaching new prospects as well as current customers. Furthermore, having repeated exposure across these different social media channels, customers will be more likely to remember the company if the message conveyed is consistent throughout these channels (Retargeter, 2014a), and hence it is important to ensure that all social media activities are associated with each other (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). Having consistent activities throughout the different social media channels the brand image of Wipak can be strengthened (Michaelidou et. al., 2011). However, in B2B context the content shared on the different channels should be created to suit each channel's audience to maximize engagement (Retargeter, 2014b). It is also discussed that adopting only one channel, the one which most customers are present on, being active with fresh content and engaging in conversations with customers can result as a stronger strategy than using several channels as

companies may not have sufficient resources in terms of time to actively engage in all social media channels (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009) and hence the quality of the posted information may suffer. As the decision making unit of B2B organizations consists of several stakeholders (Vitale et. al., 2011) the message conveyed through these channels should be of interest to all different stakeholders. One of the responding customers identified as Sales & Marketing personnel felt that Wipak's marketing had lack of application and market information, which is the type of information decision makers from management and sales appreciate the most (Vitale et. al., 2011) whilst the product information is of more use to stakeholders from production and development. The responding customers who replied that they were using social media were mainly from Management or Sales & Marketing, and hence Wipak should aim their possible SMM at stakeholders as such to try and affect their purchase decision.

8 CONCLUSIONS

This final section of the Thesis will bring together all the findings of the research and answer the three research questions stated in the first chapter of the thesis. Due to the lack of responses gained from Wipak's customers, even though the conclusions made generalize the answers it must be kept in mind that the majority of Wipak's customers did not respond to the survey and hence the conclusions may not be accurate for all customers.

8.1 General Conclusions

8.1.1 Research Question 1

a. Do customers find Wipak's current marketing scheme effective in terms of affecting purchase decisions? and b. How well does Wipak's current marketing reach these customers?

It can be concluded that the more traditional ways of marketing including websites, brochures, presence at trade fairs and personal contacts used by Wipak are relatively effective in the opinion of the customers responding to this research. The current traditional marketing channels used by Wipak reach customers well, as most of the responding customers had first heard about the Winnovations concept through these channels – either by email, personal marketing or through Wipak's website. However, the awareness of the newer SMM channels adopted in Wipak's marketing was very small. As of this, it could be concluded that whilst Wipak's traditional marketing reaches customers, these newer channels have not yet reached customers very well and hence some actions are needed to bring these channels to the surface. Wipak must inform customers of these newer channels through the more traditional marketing that actually reaches customers, and integrate references and

quicklinks to these channels into their other digital marketing channels – website, email, etc.

8.1.2 Research Questions 2 & 3

*What social media network/marketing channels could Wipak use to reach its customers more effectively? **and** Have competitors of Wipak already taken social media channels into their marketing communications and if so which channels?*

To conclude and answer the second research question it is suggested that Wipak considers integrating all four of the social media networks studied for this Thesis – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube, into their marketing mix but create content suitable for each channel. Suitable content for LinkedIn includes blog posts and other informative content, whilst content suitable to Facebook is mostly rich media content and Twitter suiting mostly content that is relevant to the ongoing stream of sharing and searchable with hashtags (Retargeter, 2014b). If Wipak does not have enough resources to adopt all channels, it is suggested that Wipak either continues growing their presence on LinkedIn as it is largely a professional network (LinkedIn Press Center, 2014) or creates a presence on Facebook, as this is the most popular social media network in terms of Wipak’s customers responding to this research.

Furthermore, Wipak should inform customers of the channels they use by adding references to their other digital marketing channels including their website and e-news. Wipak can also increase awareness on these channels by being active – joining and liking communities of the same target group as well as following their customers and suppliers on these channels. The effectiveness of these channels if measured by the amount of followers, which is the most popular way (Michaelidou et. al., 2011), increases with the activity of the company but also with their presence on other social media networks according to the findings of this research.

The final research question can be answered by stating that most of Wipak's competitors have already taken social media channels into their marketing. LinkedIn being the most popular, with seven of the nine competitors having presence on this channel, and five updating this channel regularly and mainly using it as a marketing channel. Other social media networks studied for this Thesis were Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. These three channels were used by six of the nine analysed competitors.

Additionally, on the WinNews section of the Winnovations website, Wipak informs customers that they are welcome to share these innovative news on Social Media such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter (Winnovations WINews, 2014) but Wipak has not created presence on the two later. Hence, Wipak is on the right track with the different possibilities Social Media can offer, but yet needs to make a presence. If Wipak adopts these channels for marketing, Wipak can also explore the possibilities that social media asserts in terms of innovation and especially open innovation (Kärkkäinen et. al., 2010) to suit the Winnovations approach and strengthen the innovative brand image. Wipak desires to be one step ahead of its competitors, and for SMM this is not completely possible as seen in the results obtained for this Thesis, and hence it could be suggested that Wipak can also explore the possibilities of open innovation through social media.

8.2 Suggestions for Further Research

The response rate for this particular research was very small, and thus it would be interesting to conduct a similar research to gain a higher response rate and hence give a more accurate conclusion for the population. This would need to be done at a different time to avoid holiday season. The response rate might also increase if this research was made through Wipak's official email or other channel, as big organizations are hesitant to reply to students.

If Wipak does integrate social media channels into their marketing strategy, it would be interesting as well as useful to research their effectiveness and awareness as well as customer perceptions about these channels.

The amount of social media networks is increasing rapidly, and some of these networks are targeted for specific uses. This thesis concentrated on only four of the largest social media networks and hence there are several other channels that could be studied. It is possible that in the near future there will be more social media networks that are aimed for industrial uses, and hence researching such networks for their possibilities as marketing channels could be suggested for Wipak.

As briefly introduced in this Thesis, there are also other possibilities in the use of social media by B2B companies. Wipak being an innovative company, with Winnovations being their innovative theme, the possibilities of social media in the context of innovation could be studied and adopted by Wipak.

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APPENDIX 1 - QUESTIONNAIRE



This survey is created as part of a Bachelor's Thesis by an International Business student from Turku University of Applied Sciences. The thesis is done in co-operation with Wipak Healthcare, mainly concentrating on the marketing communications of Winnovations.

To help create a realistic analysis of the current marketing communications, its possible improvements and the adoption of new marketing channels for Winnovations, please answer the following survey. All information will be handled anonymously, and thus it is not compulsory to add any personal/company information to the survey.

Company Name

* Company size

- 1-250 personnel
- 251-500 personnel
- 501-750 personnel
- 751-1000 personnel
- 1001-2500 personnel
- 2501-5000 personnel
- Over 5000

* Respondent identification

- Management
- Production
- Purchasing
- Quality
- R&D
- Sales & Marketing
- Other, please specify

* How long have you been a customer of Wipak?

- Under 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-7 years
- 7-10 years
- 10-20 years
- 20-30 years
- Over 30 years

* Wipak opened its significant innovation themes for public discussion a few years ago. How did you first hear about Winnovations concept?

- By E-mail
- At a trade fair
- From Wipak's website
- Through personal marketing
- Surfing the internet
- Other, please specify

* Do you feel that you get enough information on Winnovations?

- Yes
- No

* How do you find the Winnovations website?
(<http://www.winnovations.wipak.com/>)

- Excellent
- Good
- Neutral
- Fair
- Poor

* How do you find Wipak's website on the whole?
(http://www.wipak.com/en_GB/)

- Excellent
- Good
- Neutral
- Fair
- Poor

* From both Wipak's and Winnovations websites, do you feel you can find necessary information easily?

- Yes, from both
- Yes, from Wipak's
- Yes, from Winnovations
- No, from neither

* Wipak provides an online training portal <http://wip.wipak.com/Home.aspx>. Do you consider this 24-hour service supporting your packaging and product training needs in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Are there any training topics or courses you would suggest to be added, if so please specify.

* Do you become interested in new products/solutions from Wpak's marketing?

- Yes
 No

What would you suggest Wpak to do more regarding their marketing?

* Does Wpak's marketing affect your purchase decision?

- Yes
 No

If not, what does affect your purchase decision?

* Would you think information could be more easily available if Wpak and Winnovations would be present in Social Media networks?

- Yes
 No

* Would you be interested to find information from Wpak and Winnovations on Social Media sites eg. Twitter?

- Yes
 No

* Wipak publishes its news releases at www.wipak.com/wipak_news/en_GB/news/ and wishes that you follow up those. Do you believe that if Wipak was present on Twitter, you would follow their posts?

- Yes
 No

* Did you know Wipak has their own YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/WipakMedical>?

- Yes, but I have never visited
 Yes, but no useful information was available
 Yes, the available information was useful
 No, I have never heard

* Did you know that Wipak is present on LinkedIn? (https://www.linkedin.com/company/wipak?trk=company_name)

- No, I did not
 Yes, I follow them
 Yes, I do not follow them

* Which Social Media networks is your company present in?

- LinkedIn
 Facebook
 YouTube
 Twitter
 Instagram
 None

Other, please specify

* Are certain Social Media networks blocked in your company?

- None
 Facebook
 LinkedIn
 Twitter
 YouTube
 Instagram
 All

Other, please specify

* Have you seen other companies in the same field use Social Media for marketing?

- Yes
- No

If yes, which companies and what Social Media networks?

* On the whole, how do you feel about Wipak's marketing? (you may select many)

- Excellent
- Good
- Sufficient
- Poor
- Very poor
- Too much
- Too little
- Informative
- Useless

Please comment below if you have any additional comments regarding Wipak's marketing or this survey.