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INSTAGRAM–ENGAGING CONTENT FOR THE CITY OF SALO
IN ORDER TO IMPROVE TOURISM

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The purpose for this thesis was to create an Instagram profile for the city of Salo and see how to get citizens in Salo to get involved and engaged to the Instagram profile. My research was about how to build an effective Instagram account to improve tourism and what kind of content has the most engagement and involvement.

The key concepts in this thesis are social media marketing and communication, content marketing and Instagram. The quantitative data was collected from 23rd of February to 11th of March daily to see the growth in the amount of followers and how many pictures were found under the #VisitSalo. Last check-up was made in 23rd of April. Before starting to use VisitSalo-Instagram account, the same data was collected from VisitTurku, VisitLohja, VisitHelsinki, VisitPorvoo and VisitRovaniemi in order to make an effective plan for the city of Salo to use.

The idea to create an Instagram account for the city of Salo came from my own observation. Almost every city in Finland are already using Instagram as a marketing tool, based on my own observation it has been effective, fun and personal way to communicate with tourists and citizens. The source material used in this thesis was literature related to tourism, Instagram, involvement, social media and content marketing, pictures on Instagram were also used as a source material.
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1 INTRODUCTION

Using social media when advertising companies, cities and even countries has tremendously became more popular and important due to its cost-effectiveness, wide spreading and in some cases, the easiness. Social media is changing every day, we picked up Instagram for the city of Salo to use in order to maintain different approach in marketing and to attract especially younger citizens, 15-35 years old.

Instagram is the fastest growing social media app. And even now in 2015 it has 75 million users daily, sharing 70 million pictures. Using the right keywords to advertise the city of Salo as a place worth to visit, we aim to increase the amount of tourists on summer 2015. It is important to be active in social media and activate the visiting tourists, entrepreneurs and most of all, citizens.

This research is an experiment of how Instagram can be used when advertising the city of Salo. Goal is to get followers and encourage the followers to share, like and comment in order to get even more followers. The actual plan for the city of Salo to use Instagram is based on the quantitative data collected from other cities Instagram accounts; Turku, Helsinki, Porvoo, Lohja and Rovaniemi.

In order to see whether the theory based on other cities Instagram usage worked or not will be seen by collecting the data of the amount of followers, activity on pictures and the number of pictures tagged under #visitsalo, from scratch and what is the situation after two months. Getting some actual, meaningful results twenty different people were interviewed for feedback about VisitSalo’s Instagram benefits.
2 THEORETICAL STARTING POINTS

2.1 Social media

Social media is a tool for people to exchange, share, create and innovate new ideas in different social media networks. It includes different platforms for two-way communication for example between the company and the customers, or like in this thesis, between the city of Salo and the tourists and citizens (Website of AboutTech; Website of Tufts University). “Social media” is a wide term, which includes a variety of different social media platforms like: social networking sites Instagram and Facebook, encyclopedia Wikipedia and employment network LinkedIn.

All of the different social media platforms have their own purpose. For example, LinkedIn is used for hiring, as an online CV and for headhunters to find the right employees, while Instagram is a photo-sharing app which is based on having followers and to follow others (Website of AboutTech; Website of Tufts University).

2.2 Social media marketing

Social media marketing is usually targeted for different preferences by different users. For example, a company can advertise on Facebook’s sidebar. These are called sponsored ads and they are based on the websites user visits. The information is gathered from the site history. Relevantly new, the ads on YouTube before seeing the video, there are paid ads that user must watch before the actual clip which was wanted to see. Social media marketing provides, for example, a better brand loyalty for the company, lower costs and better insight of the customers (Carbone, 2015; Mistry, 2015; Shiva-Kumar, 2009).

Some users might be annoyed by the ads on their social media platforms and there are applications, such like AdBlock which will block the ads on applications and websites. One more reason why social media marketing is far more effective than the traditional one is, that even if the customers uses the AdBlock, they cannot block what friends likes or shares. And this is why word of mouth in social media platforms is so effective.
Before social media, marketing professionals focused on 4P’s. It is the marketing mix including price, product, place and promotion, basic idea for this is “Putting the right product in the right place, at the right price, at the right time” (Website of Mindtools). Nowadays the problem is that marketers should not only focus on collecting the fans and likes but also connect with them. It is more important and effective to have less fans who actually love the product you are selling, or the brand itself, than lot of fans who follow you just to win some product. Now there is 3E’s for marketers to follow when advertising a company or a product; engage, equip and empower (Whitler, 2014).

2.3 Social media communication

Traditional media like newspapers, radio and television transmits their message in one direction, there is no possibility for receiver to quickly respond or communicate with the sender. There is also the possibility of misunderstood, receiver cannot respond quickly enough and the company might never get a feedback from their advertisement, no possibility for explaining (Carbone, 2015; Website of Social Media Works).

Social media makes it possible for customer to share their own point of view and discuss about the ongoing subject. For example video sharing site Youtube.com allow users to comment on to the videos and share them in other social media platforms. Companies who are using Facebook, Twitter or Instagram allows users to share their thoughts by commenting the posts and pictures, liking and sharing them. It is more convenient for customer to give feedback for the company, it is quick and easy. Companies can collect the data from these platforms whether they want to know which post had the most spread or which has the most involvement, companies can also quickly answer to the feedback, whether it is negative or positive. This way the company can cut down the wrong information which can spread via social media and word of mouth rapidly. Every company should be in social media somehow, even if it means only by being presence. It is good to know what people are talking about the products, services or the company itself and if there is some false information, company can quickly react
into these and correct the misunderstandings. (Carbone, 2015; Website of Social Media Works; ShivaKumar, 2009)

There is lot of different platforms where to choose from, which are preferable to use depending on the company’s target group, are they aiming new customers, are they using social media as a recruitment tool. When company, or in this case city, wants to expand into the social media, they need to think why. After deciding what is their main goal, comes “How?” what needs to be posted and where for aiming their goal.

Word of mouth is effective and it is even more effective digitally. If the company itself has not started to use any social media platforms, it does not mean the company is not there. There is different chats, conversations on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram where people are talking and sharing. If the company is not aware of this, wrong information can spread rapidly. The faster the company cuts down the false information, answer to the feedback, they can reduce the negative feedback. (Website of the Multichannel Magic; Whitler, 2014; Clerck) Three levels in social media involvement, the three E’s (Whitler, 2014):

Engage: Join the conversations happening in social media, listen and answer. Be part of the discussion and presence, fans will feel appreciated when you notice their comments, pictures etc. Whether you wanted or not, the discussion about the products and the company is on, it is best that there is someone taking care of the customers online. This way the spreading of the negative feedback can be reduced spreading so widely and the positive feedback can be promoted and greeted. Website of Multichannel Magic listed three levels of being presence in social media: basic, participating and engaged. Basic in this case means listening to conversations in different social media platforms and responding to the comments about your company, negative and positive. Participating means that company itself starts certain kind of conversations in social media platforms in order to create communities and new level relationships with customers. Engaged, when your company has already created community in different social media platforms with active members they can also take care of responding to negative feedback, since they feel like part of the company and they will share and encourage the positive comments, pictures, feedback etc.
Equip: Provide content for fans, followers, to share, like and comment. Whether it is a good service, stories behind the company or customer stories, fun facts of the company or funny ways to present different products, some reason to follow and talk. It is important to analyze the shared post and pictures, which worked and which did not. This way company can get an insight of what their followers really want.

Empower: Encourage the followers by sharing their thought, pictures, stories etc. By doing this they will share more and feel even more included to the company. Create content for different social media platforms that can be easily shared. Same content does not work in every social media platforms, the content for different platforms needs to be unique. For example, Facebook works for sharing pictures to participate in competitions but with Instagram, even if it is a photo-sharing app, the similar kind of content does not work in there since the picture will stay on the user's profile.

Nowadays it has become possible for individuals around the world to participate into the companies’ and cities’ decision making, innovation processes and marketing by discussing with the admins online in real time, providing them feedback and getting responses quickly.

2.4 Content Marketing

Nowadays it is not just that the company starts to use some social media platforms. There needs to be a plan for it to achieve an effective and functional platform for company’s needs. Now, when the customer service and marketing industry has changed for two-way communication system from the one-way communication where the company advertised their product without receiving the feedback from the customers, it is more and more important to persistently continue advertising, collect the data of the succeeded projects and not succeeded ones and based on this information, improve the services and marketing all the time. Even if it does not bring money to the company straight away, it will pay back in long run (Carbone, 2015).

This way a company and a city can give a bit more personal touch for the customer or tourist. When the content in different social media platforms is informative enough,
personal, professionally done but with the rough twist. It cannot look too professional in order to attract the target group more. There is a good example of one Supermarket, Jounin kauppa in Äkäslompolo, Lapland. They organize lot of activities on their Facebook-page. This quite small, chain store has now 260 000 followers (5.5.2015), and this is in a village with around 600 people. Their marketing is known nationwide due to their competitions and active social media marketing on Facebook. With kind, outgoing personality you can brand yourself and make even a regular supermarket worth to visit. Nowadays 90% of the customers come outside of Äkäslompolo (Piirainen, 2014). Based on the Facebook analytics tool 2347 (5.5.2015) people has checked in Jounin Kauppa and this is only the visitors who use Facebook for checking in new places they have visited. On 2014 increase in sales was 5-7% while other supermarkets were not making increase in sales, some of them were having even decrease in sales (Rintala, 2014).

On 2014, Kubo which is a content marketing agency researched the amount companies are investing on to the content marketing, and how they are going to change it: “Sisältömarkkinoinnin trendit Suomessa 2014”. 200 people in charge of marketing communication took part in the research. 38% of them were part of the higher management team, 16% were entrepreneurs, 20% were managers and 26% were experts.
Chart 1. The amount from the marketing budget used in content marketing (Lintulahti, 2014)

In 2014, 24% of the companies who replied to the research were spending less than 20% of the marketing budget to the content marketing. 33% of the companies were spending 20-39%, 9% spent 40-59%, 20% spent 60-79% and 14% of the respondents were spending over 80% of the marketing budget to the content marketing. Companies were clearly spending either less than 40% or over 60%. Only 9% of the respondents were using half of their marketing budget to the content marketing.

Chart 2. How much the companies will invest in 12 months compared to the previous numbers (Lintulahti, 2014)

75% of the companies who took part in the research are planning to invest more in the content marketing. 28% of them are going to invest a lot more into the content marketing and 47% will invest slightly more in the next 12 months than before the research. 21% will keep the amount invested in content marketing same than before, they might already have a great content marketing usage which does not need improvements for the next 12 months. 3% will invest less than before, the amount of money invested might have been too much for what they have got back from it or they are cutting down expenses. Content marketing, especially in social media, is relevantly new so companies might see this as a pointless cost for business.
Getting followers to the company’s Instagram, Twitter or Facebook accounts is not just that they post something every now and then. It needs to be consistent, regularly updated profiles and interesting content which will bring followers to the company and this way, loyalty (Lintulahti, 2014; Kelly, 2012; Carbone, 2015; Wirthman, 2013). Loyalty, in this case means for example how willing the customers are sharing the company’s posts in social media, will they feel included to the company’s decision making and will they actually buy from the company and recommend it to others, for example friends and family. Companies who took part in the research were already investing in content marketing so those companies who does not invest in it at all, were not in the research, and there still is a tremendous amount of them who are not investing anything in the content creating or social media.

2.5 Instagram

Instagram is a photo-sharing app, which was launched on 6\textsuperscript{th} of October, 2010. It was number one app downloaded from App Store, after 24 hours of its’ launching. Still after five years, in 2015, it can be downloaded only for iPhone and Android phones. In Finnish point of view, Instagram can be used for Windows Phones when downloading either Instagram Beta or 6Tag. In April 2015, Instagram has 300 million users monthly and 75 million users daily. On a daily basis the users share 70 million pictures.

On the user’s profile has the information of how many people the user follows and how many followers user has, how many pictures the user has been tagged and how many pictures posted. There is also a small profile picture and user can add a small
quote or some information or a website. Like on the city of Salo’s Instagram profile:

Picture 1. How VisitSalo profile look in Instagram.

An Instagram user can use an already existing photo or take a new one with the Instagram’s own camera. When adding a picture, user can relevantly easily edit the pictures
by using different kind of filters. This way an amateur photographer can have a professional looking pictures, improve them, highlight, add text etc.

Picture 2. Different filters in Instagram to edit the pictures.

To support the photo, user can add a caption which explains what is in the picture, ask a question or user can add hashtags, so that the picture can be found when other users are searching similar kind of pictures. The user can also add the location via Four-square-app, which has different locations or the user can create its own location. Also who was there when the picture was taken or who is in the picture can be added. Pictures on Instagram can be easily shared also via other social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook only by clicking where user wants to share the pictures. When the user follows someone, the pictures will show up on a stream, this is easy to narrow down only to those users, which the user finds interesting. If the user wants to follow same profiles as in Twitter or follow only friends on Facebook, these accounts can be synchronized with Instagram and user can find them. Sometimes the users do not use their real names on Instagram so this makes it lot easier if you have someone in mind.
3 BACKGROUND FOR THE PROJECT

3.1 Situation in Salo

Salo is a city of 54 200 people in Southwest Finland and is part of Finland Proper Region. Salo is located between Helsinki and Turku, making it an easy to visit due to its centralized location between the main lines for buses, train and a highway. 1st of January 2009 Halikko, Kiikala, Kisko, Kuusjoki, Muurla, Perniö, Pertteli, Salo, Suomusjärvi and Särkisalo were consolidated together and now all the municipalities are called Salo.

Salo is known for its electronic production, which has started already in 1920. After a wide range of electronic production from radios to cellphones, Salo is now supported
by the Finnish government because of the sudden structural change (Website of Saloon.fi, 2015). For years, Nokia was the biggest employer in Salo, they shut down the factory in 2012 which lead to high rate of unemployment being 15, 5%, before this it was already 11, 3%, due to the Nokia’s subcontractors. The actual recession in Salo started when the subcontractors, and everyone else who benefited from the business visitors inside and outside of Finland, needed to shut down the factories and cutting down the costs on 2007 when also Nokia’s biggest subcontractor, Aspocomp shut down the factory. On January 2015 the unemployment rate was 16, 7% (Salon Seudun Sanomat 2015). Due to the recession in Salo and the unemployment rate, it is important for the city of Salo to get citizens involved in the marketing process, getting their loyalty and activate them to improve the city of Salo (Lintulhti, 2014; Kelly, 2012; Carbone, 2015; Wirthman, 2013). Salo does not have enough resources or investment that can be spend on marketing, which is why volunteering is the key thing.

3.2 Marketing in the city of Salo

City of Salo has their own marketing and communication team which is in charge of marketing in Salo. City of Salo owns a limited company, YritysSalo, which is a service center for already existing and future entrepreneurs. YritysSalo Inc. has been established in November 2008, and they started to operate on January 2009, when the 10 municipalities consolidated. They provide mainly free services for entrepreneurs operating in Salo or for those who want to establish a company in Salo or expand. It is funded by the city of Salo and European Union, European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund.

City of Salo has now VisitSalo Facebook page and a website. Which has been and will be the main pages, the primary source for visitors, entrepreneurs and citizens to get information. There is also SaloShops Facebook page and a website, which introduces the location of different stores, events and campaigns. SaloFood is also a website and Facebook-page which puts together locally produced food, restaurants and cafes. SaloShops and SaloFood will be combined with VisitSalo Facebook and website, in order to get more effective and concise marketing for the tourists to find information.
VisitSalo-Facebook page is an active account which is more informative than VisitSalo-Instagram account will be. Instagram is only for pictures with short descriptions but it will support the VisitSalo-Facebook page and VisitSalo website by providing the link in the bio and creating a sneak peak for what is happening on a website or Facebook. Instagram is a possible channel for getting more followers and activity on Facebook and website, more details about different events, offers, news and of course a place to communicate with other citizens or the city of Salo’s marketing team.

Visitsalo.fi is the main page for Salo tourism. It is not as active as Facebook and Instagram, but it is most informative. It will also attract people who are not so familiar with the social media. Information will not change quickly, but there is on-going advertisements and information for long-term plans. Main reason for VisitSalo-Instagram account will be as a lead to the VisitSalo-Facebook page and from Facebook to the actual website. Sijoitusaloon.fi is another website, targeted for people who are planning of moving into Salo, for tourists or for those who want to establish a company in Salo.

Salo tourist center will take part to the travel expo in Tampere on 17th 19th of April and goal was to change the visitsalo.fi website so, that it will combine all the social media platforms Salo is using. It will show pictures of Salo taken by the professional photographers and pictures from Instagram about Salo and Salo citizens. Website, Facebook and Instagram will all advertise each other in order to get the maximum benefits from each site.

3.3 Instagram usage in Finland

Piilotettuaarre.fi created an unofficial and relevantly quick survey of Instagram usage in Finland. Due to the fact that Instagram is relevantly new as a marketing tool and in social media, there’s hardly any researches made for this topic. The quick survey Piilotettuaarre.fi published was released on 26th of February. 152 people who are using Instagram took part in the survey. 33% of the recipients were 30-39 years old, 29% were 40-49 years old and 22% were 20-29 years old. 32% were men and 68% were
women. 37% of the recipients has used Instagram for 1-2 years and 32% has used it less than a year and 21% has been using it for 2-3 years.

Chart 3. Unofficial research made by Piilotettuaarre.fi. Reasons to follow an organization.

Survey defines also few reasons why people has started to follow some organization. 80% of the recipients were following an organization. 43% were following an organization to get inspiration from the organization, 40% started to follow due to organization’s entertaining content and 37% were following in order to get an information about the organization or the products it provides. 29% wanted to follow an interesting story the organization provides, 28% wanted to show their support or respect towards the organization, 25% were following in order to learn more about the organization and 23% wanted to get beforehand information about the upcoming products. 22% were looking for content and information which can’t be found elsewhere, 21% wanted to share their ideas with the organization and provide feedback to them, 12% were looking for sales and 10% were after competitions. 11% wanted to know more about the topic the organization provides, 9% were following an organization for the possibility to get discounts, samples or other benefits, these were recommended by someone.
Even if the survey wasn’t officially done and it included only 152 people who are using Instagram, it gives an idea of what people are looking from organizations, which things attract more and most of all, what kind of reasons there are for users to follow. People are not following a company which hasn’t determined the target group and the reason for the account. If its messy account full of different kind of pictures with poor captions it won’t attract anyone in a long run. 68% of the recipients has used a company’s own hashtag at least once.

3.4 Research Methods

My thesis is an experimental research about what kind of content is most attracting to followers, how to get followers and how to get the Instagram users involved of taking pictures of Salo and encourage them to share the pictures. The research is based on the different theories I found from the website of Multichannel Magic, Kimberly Whitler: Why Word of Mouth Marketing is the Most Important Social Media and J-P Clerck: Understanding Word of Mouth in the Digital Age. The theories I found from these is introduced in chapter 2.3 Social Media Communication. These theories are explaining why it is important to be presence in social media and how to take a full advantage of social media in order to improve sales and company image.

The guideline to use Instagram for VisitSalo in order to get citizens involved and to improve tourism in summer 2015, started by collecting data from five different cities inside Finland, since the targeted tourism with this account are Finns. Observation was made for one month and that gave an idea how to use Instagram, what kind of content is attractive and will get followers, how often to post and what kind of content. The guideline was based on the Instagram usage by Turku, Porvoo, Lohja, Rovaniemi and Helsinki.

Pre-research was quantitative data gathering of the amount of pictures posted, amount of followers, pictures tagged by some other user and the usage of cities own keywords on Instagram. The data was collected weekly during 10th of December to 7th of January by checking each profile manually. There are different tools for Instagram analytics like Iconosquare, which was not used when making an analysis of the different cities.
While the data was gathered, I needed to pay attention to the pictures posted and what kind of captions they had.

Besides that the plan was based also for my own observation of what I have found interesting when following different kind of companies, people, cities and even countries on Instagram. Some of the information written in this thesis and when creating a plan to use Instagram was tacit knowledge of what I have learned in my previous studies and trainings. To support my own observation, Piilotettuaarre.fi created an unofficial survey about the Instagram usage in Finland, main point of the survey and which are relevant for this thesis can be found from the chapter 3.3.

Testing how the plan what was made for VisitSalo-Instagram was analyzed also by collecting the data from the amount of followers, pictures posted and tagged and VisitSalo’s own keyword. This quantitative research gave an idea of how well the profile succeeded in two months, starting on 23\textsuperscript{rd} of February to 23\textsuperscript{rd} of April. In this thesis the success is measured by the amount of followers and pictures tagged with the keyword #visitsalo by other users. For making the results clear, Iconosquare was used to give an insight of the love rate, talk rate and spread rate to prove what it actually means to get followers and pictures under own hashtag.

Qualitative results of Instagram usage is more difficult to measure than the quantitative results. But to get some kind of idea how using Instagram will improve tourism I asked feedback from 20 people via e-mail, phone and Facebook chat and in person. I wanted to get feedback from different kind of Instagram users related to the city of Salo. Seven of them were companies in Salo who were using Instagram, three companies which were not on Instagram, but they had pictures there shared by other users, city of Salo’s marketing team, YritysSalo, citizens and summer citizens who were following VisitSalo.
4 ANALYSIS OF INSTAGRAM USAGE

4.1 Activity on Instagram by other Cities

When starting an Instagram account for the city of Salo, there is the same thing to consider before starting as always: defining the target group. Who the city of Salo wants to reach with this Instagram account? This will define how to do it and why. In the case of Salo, target group was defined as citizens of Salo who are familiar with the social media, preferably the younger citizens, age 15-35. This means that the tone in the pictures and captions needs to be fun, genius and catchy. What also needs to take into consideration, what is Instagram’s own target group? Will Instagram provide a support platform for other social media platforms the city of Salo is already using or will this expand the target group.

Instagram will give a face to the company and to the city, this is why it needs to be thought what will be posted, how often and what is the main goal for doing this. Before starting and in order to aim a rapidly growing amount of followers and the high involvement by the followers I compared what other cities has done and analyzed them, which things worked and which did not.

Before I start to use the Instagram for the city of Salo, theories and plan is based on the Instagram accounts: VisitTurku, VisitHelsinki, VisitPorvoo, VisitLohja and VisitRovaniemi. I chose 5 cities from Finland for this analysis; Turku, Helsinki, Rovaniemi, Lohja and Porvoo. I chose Turku and Helsinki with the well-organized marketing plans and biggest resources to show how investing on Instagram will have an effect of the activity and engaging the tourists. Rovaniemi got into this comparison for its unique image as a Christmas village in Finland. Analyzing the other cities Instagram usage, the quantitative method were used to see how many followers they had when the research was started and how many pictures were posted during the test period from 10th of December 2014 to 7th of January. It is not just the resources and investment on social media marketing and in this case investment on Instagram. Helsinki and Turku, which are investing more and has the bigger resources can show how to keep Instagram account active. For smaller cities, like Salo, these can be guidelines
and examples of what they have done and which things worked. This thesis tries to prove that without investment, by volunteering and activating the citizens to advertise their home can have same increase of followers.

The image is totally different what cities in southern Finland has, but could Salo find out how they could be known just like Rovaniemi is? What is the “thing” for Salo? Also Porvoo and its old town is known from its old houses so it gives a specific image even if the person has not even visited the city. Lohja was the obvious choice when I found out that they have an Instagram profile. The distance between Salo and Lohja is about 60km. The population in Lohja was 47697 on 30\(^{th}\) of September 2014 and being 22\(^{nd}\) biggest city in Finland, when in Salo it was 54341 making it the 20\(^{th}\) biggest city in Finland.

Charts are based on data I collected from five different cities Instagram’s accounts: VisitTurku, VisitHelsinki, VisitLohja, VisitRovaniemi and VisitPorvoo. From the charts, I left out VisitHelsinki making the chart look clearer.

![Chart 4. Amount of followers’ growth from 10\(^{th}\) of December to 7\(^{th}\) of January](image-url)
VisitTurku, with the high investment time wise and resources for advertising the city of Turku via Instagram had the starting point already higher than others and the growth was faster. Starting point on 10\textsuperscript{th} of December in 2014 was 1100 followers, when the follower’s amount in Instagram is over 1000, it shows the amount with 100 followers’ accuracy. When I researched enough on 7\textsuperscript{th} of January on 2015 the follower amount for VisitTurku Instagram account was 1400, so it was 300 followers more in less than a month, meaning 27% increase in the amount of followers. If we compare to VisitLohja, which growth was the slowest with only 8% increase of the followers’ amount in one month, one thing how we can explain the difference by looking at the chart which shows how many pictures were posted. In one month VisitTurku posted 33 pictures when VisitLohja kept the same amount of pictures all the time. VisitRovaniemi 25% increase in the followers’ amount and VisitPorvoo had 16% more followers in one month. It is not only the amount of pictures, but the quality as well. It cannot be seen from the charts what kind of pictures each account were posting during this time. Based on the percentages of increasing amount of followers, Turku which is already known city in Finland has also the most pictures posted and this is where VisitSalo-Instagram profile could aim.
4.2 Involvement in Instagram by Other Cities

When I collected data from different cities Instagram accounts, I also collected data of how many pictures were tagged under their own hashtags. Turku is using two hashtags that Instagram users can tag to their pictures.

![Cities' own hashtags](chart)

Chart 6. Cities’ own hashtags used by other users

Turku is aggressively marketing to get citizens and visitors to take pictures and share them in social media. Another ongoing campaign in Turku where the first picture was published on last fall by VisitTurku, was #kissmyhylje, where visitors were encouraged to take pictures with the seal figure in front of the Turku tourist information center. On 8th of April 2015 with #kissmyhylje there was 31 pictures tagged on Instagram.

What was the point for this ongoing campaign? Bring tourists, citizens, entrepreneurs and everyone who visits Turku together. Pictures of a person kissing a seal figure will not advertise the beauty of Turku itself but it will show the active and innovative atmosphere Turku has to offer for visitors, citizens and entrepreneurs.
5 IMPLEMENTING THE ANALYSIS IN THE EXPERIMENT

5.1 Active Instagram Account

When thinking an Instagram plan for Visit Salo to use, it needs to be as active as possible, thinking of the example from Turku. When considering the resources, the actual time consumed on the Instagram will be closer to VisitPorvoo. Porvoo has done tremendous work for branding themselves as an old town near Helsinki, quite same image than Rauma has. Even if Salo has not determined their actual image yet, VisitPorvoo is the model for Instagram usage for the city of Salo.
Main points from my observation based on other cities’ Instagram accounts and few research about Instagram usage (Website of Wishpond and Bird, 2014) were: Be active, activate the audience, analyze the competitors, focus on the captions, post pictures regularly and advertise your account. Being active in this case, means that liking, commenting and sharing other users’ pictures is important in order to get followers. To show them your account even exists. Also by following other users, who are relevant to your account whether they are customers, citizens, tourists or inspiration some of them will follow you back. Activating the existing audience to get you more followers can be done by posting pictures, where is some kind of catch, a reward, when sharing, commenting or liking. It can also be question where people want to answer back. Every time, when posting a picture, think about the caption. How it will attract users to like, comment or both? How you can get users to share your pictures? What is a goal for this picture? When posting pictures, it does not need to be determined daily what time you will post and what is the content for each day. Instagram is meant to share pictures, a lot of them. On my own observation, good amount of pictures posted daily is 1-5, but not everything at once. This way it does not feel like spamming the followers’ news feed. Other way to advertise your new Instagram account is to advertise it on the websites, Facebook-page, Twitter and other social media platforms the company or city is using.

Instagram plan for the city of Salo:
- 1-3 pictures every day
- Only reposting Salo related pictures from other users
- Giving credit for those taking the pictures
- Sometimes changing the captions and adding emoticons
- Liking and commenting pictures under #salo and #visitsalo daily
- Following the most active accounts posting Salo related pictures

5.2 Involvement by Citizens in Salo

In New York, there was a campaign “We are made in New York” or “Made in New York”, which was promoting New York’s technology industry in order to be an inspiration for future entrepreneurs and showing the meaning for citizens to buy locally
produced products. Salo has similar campaigns, “Salossapitovelvollisuus” started 2011 and “Viisas ostaa Salosta” started 2014. The idea behind the two campaigns are same, supporting citizens to buy from local entrepreneurs. This will create more jobs, maintain the existence of the local stores and restaurants and improve the image of Salo as a supporting place for new entrepreneurs.

People also want to be part of something, to belong into something. They want to be part of improving the brand they like and admire. This is why for example customer service has met it changing point, from monologue marketing communication to many to many communication through different social media platforms. It is not only about companies, but also cities. City of Salo can brand themselves and get citizens loyalty in order from them willing to make a difference in Salo, work for better future after the recession.

Finland’s share of the all travelers around the world was only 0.4 %( Website of Visit Finland 2015). This means that all the cities must think about their own brand and how to separate from other cities in Finland, this way Finland can provide a wide range of experiences and places for travelers around the world. Where cities must focus first, is to get tourists inside Finland.

5.3 Involvement by Entrepreneurs in Salo

When a small company brings their output for advertising the city they do not only get the publicity for their own company, but also to the others who operate on a same area. Some companies may find this not attractive way to operate due to the fact they might accidentally advertise also the competitors. This is why especially in small cities this kind of way of thinking does not work for anyone. Networking is a key thing in small towns, cities and villages. When collaborating, not necessarily with the direct competitors, the city get more publicity and the companies can help each other. Salo has a bit over 50 000 people living in. City this small needs to attract the tourists with the wide range of events, shops, restaurants, cafes, nature. If one restaurant is doing their social media marketing right, that will not do a thing. It may work for the cities and towns
which are close but far from north people are not going to travel to Salo only to eat in one restaurant, they will need the full experience and a wide range of options.

One part of this thesis was to teach entrepreneurs in Salo to use Instagram and encourage them to use #visitsalo every time posting a picture on Instagram. The small seminar was held in the YritysSalo premises on 29th of April. Results of this seminar cannot be seen in this thesis.

5.4 Plan for #visitsalo

Goal for this thesis is to improve entrepreneurs and citizens’ involvement when advertising the city of Salo. Like mentioned before on a chapter 3.3 Instagram Usage in Finland, there is a chart that shows why Instagram users are following organizations. If every entrepreneur, tourist and citizen will advertise the city of Salo in their own Instagram accounts, those who wants to get information about Salo can find it under #visitsalo from Instagram search.

The ideal division how entrepreneurs, citizens and the official VisitSalo Instagram account will publish pictures in the future would mean that the official account would only publish inspirational pictures, competitions every now and then and some information about the places in Salo or the citizens. Based on the chart, Reasons to follow an organization, would mean that when Instagram users are searching #visitsalo material, they would get everything with one hashtag. This requires that the entrepreneurs knows how and when to use hashtags.

When Instagram users are searching for #visitsalo to get inspiration pictures, they can find different kind of pictures provided by the official VisitSalo-Instagram account, citizens, tourists and maybe even entrepreneurs, depending on how it can be combined with their target group and the ideology behind their Instagram usage. Every user can provide entertaining content and an engaging story to follow, whether it is some facts about Salo or the companies or introducing some places, people, events etc. If they are looking for information from Instagram, the official account and every entrepreneur
need to have their own websites written in the bio. Websites and Facebook are still better source for information than Instagram.

One main goal for Salo citizens to follow entrepreneurs in Salo and the official VisitSalo Instagram account is to show their respect and support. Tourists are not so interested of improving Salo and to get it back to its feet, it is more important for the citizens to work for the better future. When citizens are willing to share the information or inspirational pictures and events about Salo in their own Instagram and other social media accounts, it will reach users around the Finland and around the world. By providing every reason for users to search #visitsalo from Instagram will improve the possibility of improving tourism in Salo 2015. If the information about the companies can be found on Instagram’s bio, if the pictures are relevant to show their services it is easy for tourists to find Salo as an active and interesting place to visit, worth to come.

5.5 Engagement on Instagram

In order to engage the audience, admins in social media needs to provide an engaging content. In my test period with VisitSalo Instagram account, I want to see which pictures has got most comments and why. Liking is easy on Instagram, it is just double-clicking the pictures so it does not need very engaging content to do that. Commenting is different, due to the Instagram’s easiness of liking, commenting is not so usual for people to do. Other high engagement act is sharing the pictures on other users’ own accounts.

Engaging the followers of VisitSalo-Instagram account, we are planning to organize few campaigns. Organizing new campaign every now and then is important, followers will not follow if there is only pictures of nature, there needs to be something to catch the attention.

Once a week, every Tuesday, there will be introduced one citizen from Salo. Original name for this campaign was #tiistaityyppi but it was changed because there needs to be Salo included into that hashtag. New name for the campaign will be #mäolesalos and it will introduce, not only citizens, but also visitors in Salo. The campaign is kind
of pointless, but that is exactly why it is so important. Citizens want to see other fellow citizens and tourists want to see where they have visited. #mäolesalos means I’m in Salo, including the name of Salo and with Salo’s dialect. The picture will be an amateur selfie and in the caption will be three questions; Name? Profession/Why are you known for? Best thing/place in Salo?

On 23rd of May will start the project #welovesalo, the best things in Salo, where users will take pictures of the places which are most important for them and add a reason or a short comment on caption. Best picture will win a bike with VisitSalo- and we love Salo-logos. This competition will be advertised in VisitSalo social media accounts, Facebook and Instagram and in two newspapers in Salo, Salon Seudun Sanomat and Salonjokilaakso.

6 RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

6.1 Amount of Followers

The test period for Instagram started 23rd of February and continued until 23rd of April, when the last data was collected. The actual data was collected daily until 8th of April of the amount of followers, pictures tagged and posted.

VisitSalo Facebook profile has started already on 5.4.2014, reaching 992 people by 19th of April 2014 only in 14 days. In two months from 23rd of February until 8th of April, Facebook has got 20 new followers and Instagram has got 273 followers. 64 followers came on a first day. The latest number of followers was 376 on 23rd of April.
Growth on Facebook is a bit slower than in Instagram. Instagram is only 2 months old and VisitSalo Facebook has been there for a year. That is one reason why the number of followers is growing faster on Instagram than on Facebook, it provides something new for those who are interested of visiting or living in Salo. How many followers Instagram got from Facebook and vice versa can’t be analyzed. Both of the account operate separately and with different agendas.

6.2 Involvement on Instagram

During my time as an admin for VisitSalo Instagram account, I collected data from what had the best involvement. Common guideline was that those which had a question on a caption, increased the most comments but not necessarily the most likes.
I picked up two pictures with highest involvement, which is commenting. Both of the pictures had six comments and it was because both of the pictures had a question. First picture where is the little boy playing is reposted and the person who added the picture on Instagram asked on her own profile: Do you recognize the place? Have you visited it? and how do you like it? I just reposted it without changing anything. And it got 6 comments, answering what is the place and commenting how nice it is and worth to visit. It also got 20 likes which was quite regular in every picture I posted.

Second picture, which is actually a video had the most likes, 70 in total. Video was about the northern lights which increased lot of pictures under the #northernlights, that is why this video was found so widely and not only by those who follow Visitsalo on Instagram. Muratmutluphotography, the original source for this video greeted for sharing the video and I answered. Those were the two comments so not too high involvement.

Third picture is from recently opened and renamed, Teijo national park. I reposted the picture and added a question into the caption. After sunny weekend it was appropriate to ask how many visited the Teijo national park yesterday. I got 6 answers and 45 likes.
As engaging content in Instagram it can be measured by following likes, comments and the amount of followers. For giving insights of Instagram which worked and which did not, there are specific apps and websites for it, to measure VisitSalo-Instagram profile, I used Iconosquare to give an insight of the engagement in the VisitSalo-Instagram profile. When thinking about for example a store, the engagement can be measured by looking at the sales from the previous year and how the amount has changed after starting to use social media and in this case Instagram.

One important thing to be measured when thinking about the involvement by other Instagram users is how they are willing to use the specific hashtags like in this case #visitsalo. When the VisitSalo-Instagram profile was established on 23rd of February there was 52 pictures found under the hashtag and after the test period on 23rd of April the number was 399, 107 of them were posted by the VisitSalo-profile.

### 6.3 Feedback from Followers

In order of getting the actual, meaningful results for the city of Salo from VisitSalo’s Instagram usage to prove the theories and to show results supporting the quantitative data collected and analyzed. Feedback of VisitSalo’s Instagram usage and companies own Instagram usage was found important and interesting way to communicate with customers and advertise the services and products. 20 people were asked, how they
feel about VisitSalo’s Instagram profile. Over the discussion with different people
giving feedback, few questions I asked from the companies were: Do they feel they
have benefited from VisitSalo-Instagram profile? Do they think they will benefit from
it? Do they think it will attract more tourists and citizens to visit their company and
Salo itself? From the private people who were either citizens or summer citizens I
asked for example: Do they think it will attract more people to visit Salo? Have they
found/learned something new from Salo? The inquiry was made via e-mail, Facebook
chat, by phone but mainly in person. After the first question, different kind of
comments and questions followed up into the discussion.

Three companies out of ten noticed to get more visibility after reposting pictures from
them. The actual, truthful amount can not be measured. This was based on the
customers who actually mentioned seeing the picture on Instagram and came because
of that. Those who were using Instagram found it very important to be on Instagram,
they could not say how it actually has affected on sales, which was because of
Instagram and which were because of other social media platforms they were using.
None of the companies said it's waste of money and time. Those three that were not
using Instagram, yet, said it was because of the lack of time and resources needed to
get it effective. They said that once they will start it, it needs to be good and there
needs to be time to update it at least every second day.

All of the respondents found it positive that the city of Salo joined Instagram. Few
comments which were answered said that the actual benefits of VisitSalo’s Instagram
usage can be seen during the summer, but there is a major change of pictures shared
under #visitsalo. This will increase the publicity for the hashtag and when there is more
people sharing the pictures with the common hashtag, companies will get publicity
when someone wants to check that specific hashtag.

For the citizens in Salo and the summer citizens it was nice to see new places they
didn’t know that even existed. For example, Teijo and its new national park will, based
on inquiry, get more tourists during the summer months. It was also important to get
featured on the official VisitSalo-Instagram profile, the VisitSalo followers whose
pictures were reposted were appreciated and two of them said they got more followers
after the picture was reposted.
7 ENDING THE PROJECT

7.1 Self-evaluation

Overall when thinking the time I started to collect the data from other cities’ Instagram accounts to the day I finished collecting data from my own Instagram account, VisitSalo I found out, what is important in Instagram and in other social media platforms, as they all go hand in hand with each other. What I did not realize at the beginning was, How important it really is to comment, like and answer back when getting comments.

Based on the feedback I got during my time as an admin for VisitSalo-Instagram account was only positive. The city of Salo and those in charge of advertising the city of Salo, were pleased that I suggested to do my thesis for them and open up the Instagram account, since they did not have enough time or resources to do that but found it very important to show up on Instagram as well.

I think I succeeded in updating the profile and organizing the campaigns for it. I am even prouder to say that I maintain to get the followers only by advertising it once in my own Facebook page, begging friends to follow my account and once I posted the link on Salo’s own mouth to mouth Facebook page, Salon Seudun Puskaradio. So mainly the followers I got were by sharing the pictures, liking, commenting and following other users, by being active. Now after the test period and my thesis, the Instagram account will be advertised better, this was just a test to prove my theories based on other cities’ Instagram accounts.

What I could have done differently is to start collecting the data earlier and having a longer test period with several different campaigns for VisitSalo-Instagram account. Now the test period for my own account was a bit too short and the research a bit too shallow.
7.2 Future Improvements

After the test period one person in Salo tourism team will take over the Instagram account and continue to keep it as explained. The basic rules for keeping the account active does not guarantee the growing follower amount. As was shown in the research with the city of Salo, providing something new all the time to already existing followers will activate more people to follow and share. If the content on Instagram is exactly same every day, every week or even monthly it will lost its interest.

Possible changes how VisitSalo Instagram could be used in the future if it is too time-consuming could be outsourcing it to the digital marketing company, like for local Joy&Order (Website of Joy&Order 2015). Salo tourism center can focus on other things and know that Instagram account is taken care by professional team. Outsourcing to the professionals will cost depending on the admired activity level. How often there needs to be pictures? Will the company take the pictures or will they be reposted from already existing material? How often they need to like the pictures they find under #visitsalo and #salo? How much they need to like other pictures that will be found from other Salo related hashtags? How often there needs to be something new, something that will activate the audience?

If the account at some point will need a facelift, Salo tourism center can outsource the account for different people in Salo. It can be called “takeover by”, like Norwegian clothing store chain, Carlings, is doing (Instagram: Carlings_Official 2015). This takeover can be done for example by Bisnesakatemia in Turku University of Applied Sciences, an entrepreneur in Salo, blogger, politician etc. This can be done every now and then, maximum one week in a month, keeping the account simple and not too wide. It will take time when deciding who’s going to take over the Instagram account, when and how long and when teaching the new temporary user what are expected. Point for this takeover is that the admin, for the certain period, will create an account to look like theirs. If, for example, the admin would be a pub Hometown in Salo, the posts might be related to music, introducing musicians, posting pictures of street art in Salo and if the admin would be a politician, posts might be related to showing entrepreneurs
and people in Salo. These would all be related to the admin in charge, making it personal looking and giving a deeper insight for people looking for information about the city of Salo.

When starting the improvements for the city of Salo, it needs to start from the citizens. If citizens are excited of their own home, they are more willing to share pictures and updates posted by official VisitSalo accounts or creating their own material to be shared. If I compare the citizens in Salo to the people in Pori, there is a difference in involvement and activity. Pori was voted for the happiest city in Finland in 2013 (Yle Uutiset 2014), the involvement and pride being from Pori is something Salo and other cities in Finland needs to work for. When the research was published on December 2014, Pori reacted to this by organizing a carnival “Onnelliste porilaiste kansanjuhla” on 20th of February 2015 in the shopping center Puuvilla to show their happiness (Lehto 2015). Focusing on improvements for better belonging spirit will improve the citizens’ image of their hometown and this way it will spread all over Finland.

Some things Salo is already known in other cities but are a bit unknown for citizens in Salo, but could improve good reputation, creating a brand and give publicity to the city of Salo could be, for example Salo’s publicity nationwide, mostly in Southern Finland, as a good shopping place. There are people from Turku and Helsinki who come to Salo once a summer to visit few small stores and the famous evening market which is held every Thursday during the summer months. Salo is also 8th largest summer home city after the consolidation in 2013 (Suurimmat mökkikunnat Suomessa 2013). This means 7241 summer homes and new citizens for summer months. Due to Salo’s location between Turku, which is 52 km away from Salo and Helsinki in 114 km distance, why the amount of summer homes is not bigger? Salo as a best summer city could be something that would attract the new summer home seekers. Salo is due to its close location to Turku known for its dialect, which is similar to dialect in Turku, but true citizens in Salo knows the difference. Dialect could be something to be advertised nationwide in order to raise the interest for other citizens in Finland.
8 CONCLUSION

City of Salo, a recession victim with the high 16, 7% unemployment rate, has invested in marketing and attracting the interest of tourists. They have done effective work with their Facebook page and their website, www.visitsalo.fi. In April 2015 there will be changes in the city of Salo’s marketing. There are now different websites and Facebook pages, SaloShops and SaloFood. These will be combined with VisitSalo Facebook page and the website to give an easy to use way to find information about Salo and its services. Those in charge of the marketing in the city of Salo thought about starting the Instagram, but without time, resources and idea it was left waiting. My suggestion to open up an effective Instagram and update it regularly was hoped and timing for every one of us included in the process was perfect.

Collecting data from VisitTurku, VisitLohja, VisitPorvoo, VisitHelsinki and VisitRovaniemi gave the idea of how active the account needs to be in order to get followers. Also what kind of posts and captions had the highest involvement? Based on the data, I created a plan for VisitSalo to use. In two months VisitSalo-Instagram account got 376 from 23rd of February to 23rd of April. Pictures to Instagram account were only reposted from other users, 107 in total.

Goal for this account was to activate citizens of Salo, visitors and entrepreneurs to follow, create their own material to be shared on Instagram and this way to spread the word of VisitSalo Instagram account. When comparing how other cities has increased the amount of followers, Salo did quite well. Of course the resources, time and money spend on this project is lower than Helsinki and Turku has but when compared to VisitLohja, the amount in shorter time period was faster. In two months Salo got 376 followers, when Lohja started to use Instagram on summer 2013 having 268 followers on 23rd of April.
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